



**North York Moors**  
National Park

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

Thornton le Dale



July 2023

# 1.0 Contents

1.0 Contents.....	2
2.0 Summary of Significance.....	3
2.1 Then and now.....	3
3.0 Introduction.....	6
4.0 Location and Context.....	8
5.0 The History of Thornton le Dale .....	9
6.0 The Ancient Street Plan and Open Spaces.....	16
6.1 The Street Plan.....	16
6.2 Open and Green Spaces .....	18
6.3 Then and now.....	19
6.4 Surface Treatments, Open and Green Spaces .....	25
6.5 Boundaries.....	26
7.0 Archaeology.....	29
8.0 Vistas and Views.....	31
9.0 The Historic Buildings of Thornton le Dale.....	36
9.1 Doors .....	42
9.2 Windows.....	43
9.3 The little details.....	47
10.0 Recommendations for Future Management.....	48
10.1 Conserving and enhancing the street plan, the surfaces, open and green spaces, and boundaries of the Conservation Area.....	48
10.2 Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Thornton le Dale.....	49
10.3 Conserving and Enhancing the Archaeology of the Conservation Area.....	49
10.4 Opportunities to conserve and enhance views and vistas .....	49
10.5 Conserving and enhancing the Historic Buildings of the Conservation Area.....	50
10.6 Opportunities to conserve and enhance the little architectural and historic features .....	50
10.7 Recommended boundary changes .....	50
10.8 Thornton Hall Landscaped Parkland Extension.....	51
10.9 The Linear Field Pattern.....	52
11.0 Conclusion.....	52
12.0 Appendix and Acknowledgements.....	54
13.0 Management Overview .....	55

## 2.0 Summary of Significance

Thornton le Dale has been valued for its picturesque qualities for at least a hundred years. Reginald Jeffery wrote in 1931 in his book the 'History of Thornton Le Dale' that it had a 'glorious charms of sparkling beck and purple clad moor'<sup>1</sup>. The sparkling beck which runs through the village is the unifying character of the place with its white painted fencing, stone culverts and bridges and stone cottages overlooking. This watercourse, in origin a beck that provided fresh water, was rechannelled in the 18th century to create a very deliberate picturesque scene that was an extension of the landscaping around Thornton Hall as well as a power source for the mill. It is this landscaped stream with cascades and crystal-clear water which gives Thornton le Dale its distinctive character with stone cottages set behind accessed via little bridges.

### 2.1 Then and now



Figure 01. Wardill Bros Store is still a regular feature in the High Street

The street pattern of the village is interesting. There are some relics of the planned 12th century layout surviving and hints of its early origins as at least three, possibly four medieval manorial estates. However, surface materials do not reflect this historic story, being mostly tarmac ornamented with painted lines. Today, the High Street and Church Hill are characterised by tall stone boundary walls which channel the traffic in from the east; the most characteristic walling type found throughout the village is limestone with a red pantile coping. In most cases, the walling is softened by wide grass verges or tumbles of vegetation growing over the top.

The buildings are mostly modest, one to three storeys high, many with origins as farms. Most of the larger outbuildings have now been converted to residential use, but they have retained their agricultural character. The predominant building type is cottagey and 18th or 19th century in appearance (many are older), but there are more sophisticated building styles here too of Georgian town houses and Regency villas. The largest building in terms of massing is the Thornton Mill on the northern edge of the village, now converted into offices, but still very much a mill in appearance with its earlier 18th century miller's cottage next door and the millrace nearby. Thornton Hall is one of the larger buildings but its rear faces towards the village and is cut off from view by more massive walls. High Hall is a large double pile building but obscured from the street by

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009 (first published in 1931)

vegetation. Consequently, few of the larger buildings make any significant impact on the streetscape.

Limestone and sandstone are the predominant building materials but there is also a frequent use of narrow Georgian brick which being produced locally in the 18th century is varied in texture and form and carries none of the uniformity of mass-produced brick which arrived in the village from the late 19th century.

In the 18th and 19th centuries many of the cottages would have had thatched roofs. Only one survives today and the predominant roofing material elsewhere is red pantile. Other types exist too, but they are not so characteristic. The street front (or Becksides) has buildings of varied heights and so the roof lines are always broken and the roofscape varied. Chimney stacks, often in brick, add to interest. The cottagey feel to the buildings is reinforced with the widespread use of simple batten and plank doors and traditional window types such as the Yorkshire sliding sash. Doors are often supplied with quirky door knockers and characterful furnishings.

The village is rich in green open spaces. The becksides are bordered with wide grass verges or trees in places and make a positive contribution to the streetscape. Thornton Hall appears to have made a big impact with its parkland landscaping (and appears to have been responsible for the picturesque views in the village too). This parkland was designed to be the subject of an uninterrupted view from the south facing windows of the Hall, across the ha-ha towards pastureland dotted with designed tree clumps, a formal avenue, possibly from the 17th century, and a circuit with pleasure walks. Much of this is outside the Conservation Area and should be brought in. The walled kitchen gardens survive, but the hot houses and flower beds have been replaced with cars, tarmac, and painted parking bays; the border planning helps to soften this. Next to the surviving fishpond (there were two, but one is now dry) there is still a lime avenue that takes visitors from the car park to the village centre.

The other significant green space is the village market cross and the stocks. This area is a little cluttered with street signs and bins which could perhaps be rationalised.

The wealth of views that merit cherishing is mostly within the village and nearly always include a beck and a cottage. This should come as no surprise in the 'prettiest village in England;' why look anywhere else? The old quarry site below the Great Nursery affords views down to pantile roofs from above, but much of this is outside the Conservation Area.

In summary, features of historic or architectural interest which should be sustained and enhanced include:

#### **Considerable significance**

- Linear burgage plots, back lanes, and longer tofts – the ability to distinguish different manorial estates within the layout, association with Roxby Manor.
- Houses front facing onto the street and the channelled views it creates.
- Designed landscape in the centre, reflecting 18th century landscaping principles and extending throughout the village, including cascading beck, 17th century formal landscaping, and possibly a medieval manorial demesne.
- Green with market cross.

- Becksides and tree lined large grass verges to main roads.
- Cobbles to some house frontages, stone kerbs to raised pavements, worn stone steps and Stone kerbing to watercourses.
- Large limestone coursed walls, often topped with red pantiles or stone copes and sometimes with a sweeping shape, Lower coursed limestone walls, often with vegetation tumbling over.
- Ornate Iron railings and gates to high status houses.
- Rustic and dressed stone gateposts topped with finials or copes.
- Evidence of building re-use; changing building form (steeply pitched roofs, heightened buildings, and blocked openings).
- Landscaping and garden archaeology at Thornton Hall including HA-HA and handmade brick kitchen garden wall with ashlar detailing.
- Beckside cottages and Beck Isle thatched cottage.
- The Great Nursery and the views it creates.
- The grade 2\* Church of All Saints and its 14th Century Tower.
- Views from Beck Hall along the beckside.
- Modest scale of buildings, mostly One to three storeys high.
- Broken roof lines with red pantiles and chimney stacks.
- Predominance of stone building materials, usually limestone or sandstone or Georgian brick.
- Stone kneelers and water tabling to roof.
- Georgian symmetry in larger properties.
- Traditional timber window styles – Yorkshire sliding sash (some tripartite), lead glazing, multi pane sash, four pane Victorian sash, Bow windows, Arched, neo-Gothic arched and leaded windows.
- Cast iron rainwater goods.
- Date stones.
- Agricultural character (barns, narrow windows, cart doors, lack of chimneys).
- Gable attic window openings to 18th century houses.
- Traditional doors (most 6 and 4 panelled, some plank and batten) with fanlights and traditional door furniture with boot scrapers.
- War Memorial.
- Stock pounds.
- Traditional Shop Fronts.

The grade 2 listed Lady Lumley's Almshouses.

#### **Some significance**

- Some street names.
- Iron railings to Victorian properties set back from the road.
- Views along alleys and back lanes.
- Glazed openings to doors, half glazed mid-20th century timber doors.
- Stained glass to early 20th century windows.
- Weathervanes.
- Hanging shop signs.
- Becksides fencing in timber, sometimes painted white.
- Estate style Iron railings on Church Hill and High Street.

#### **Limited significance**

- Hedging.
- Brick walls.
- Visually permeable fencing to parkland.

#### **Unknown significance**

- Buried archaeology and fabric within buildings from earlier dates.
- Garden archaeology such as disused and lost wells, cess pits and evidence of earlier activity.

## **3.0 Introduction**

The village of Thornton le Dale was designated a Conservation Area in 1977. Conservation Areas were first introduced in England in 1967 in recognition of the fact that the quality of historic areas depends not only on the qualities of individual buildings but also on the historic layout and interrelationship of properties, the use of characteristic building materials, the character of public spaces, the presence of trees and views between buildings and along streets.



Figure 2: Left - Sandstone cottages under a red pantile roof, notice the Yorkshire Sliding Sash windows. Figure 3: Right – the village comes into its own in the autumn, with a mass of red Virginia creeper climbing up cottages (image by ayorkshirecurl)

These places are protected under the provision of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which defines them as areas ‘of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. There are over 9,800 Conservation Areas in England<sup>2</sup> of which 42 are in the North York Moors National Park.

Historic England recommends that Conservation Areas should be reviewed periodically to assess and communicate why the Area is special and what contributes towards its particular qualities. They also recommend that the boundary of the designation should be reviewed and that guidelines are produced to help with the Area’s long term management. Conservation Areas give broader protection than the listing of individual buildings, as broader features of historic, architectural and landscape interest are recognised as part of their character. Conservation Area designation introduces controls over the way owners can alter or develop their buildings. Owners of residential properties often consider these controls to be beneficial because they also sustain and enhance the attractiveness and value of property within it. These controls include:

- the requirement in legislation and national and local planning policies for new development to preserve and enhance special character.
- control over demolition of unlisted buildings.
- control over works to trees.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/> [accessed 22.12.2016]

- fewer types of advertisements which can be displayed without specific permission.
- restriction on the types of development which can be carried out without the need for planning permission (known as “permitted development rights”).

This report assesses those features and qualities, which give Thornton le Dale its unique special interest and which justify its designation. It seeks to identify the character defining elements of the Conservation Area and describes the degrees of significance that can be attached to those elements such as the street plan, the open spaces, the vistas and views and the historic buildings. It then goes on to make recommendations on how to conserve and enhance those elements of significance and recommendations to guide future management decisions and development proposals.

However, no appraisal can ever be entirely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature, or space in the village, should not imply that it is of no interest.

## 4.0 Location and Context

Thornton le Dale (also called Thornton Dale) is a village in the Ryedale district of North Yorkshire, about three miles east of Pickering on the edge of the North York Moors National Park. It lies on the main Thirsk and Pickering to Scarborough road and on the route of major national walks such as The White Rose Way. It is often referred to as one of the prettiest villages in Yorkshire<sup>3</sup>.

The village is surrounded by arable, pasture and woodland, and the medieval boundaries still survive throughout the village in the form of linear plots of land to the rear of the houses, some containing ridge and furrow. In medieval times, the village lay within the Forest of Pickering; this was not a wooded area, but an area belonging to the Earls of Lancaster that had strict controls over what could take place there and who could use its resources. For the most part, it was managed for the wealthy and the rich and the tenants of the village were excluded from using it unless they could pay the fines. The Forests were gradually enclosed in the 16th century and tenants given more rights and today, the surrounding enclosure pattern beyond the village is a result of the Forest and medieval common lands being enclosed from 1781. The high woods closely over-hanging Thornton were planted in 1797<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gorgeouscottages.com/10-prettyest-villages-north-yorkshire/> and various other sources including Jeffery 1931 (in)

<sup>4</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 26

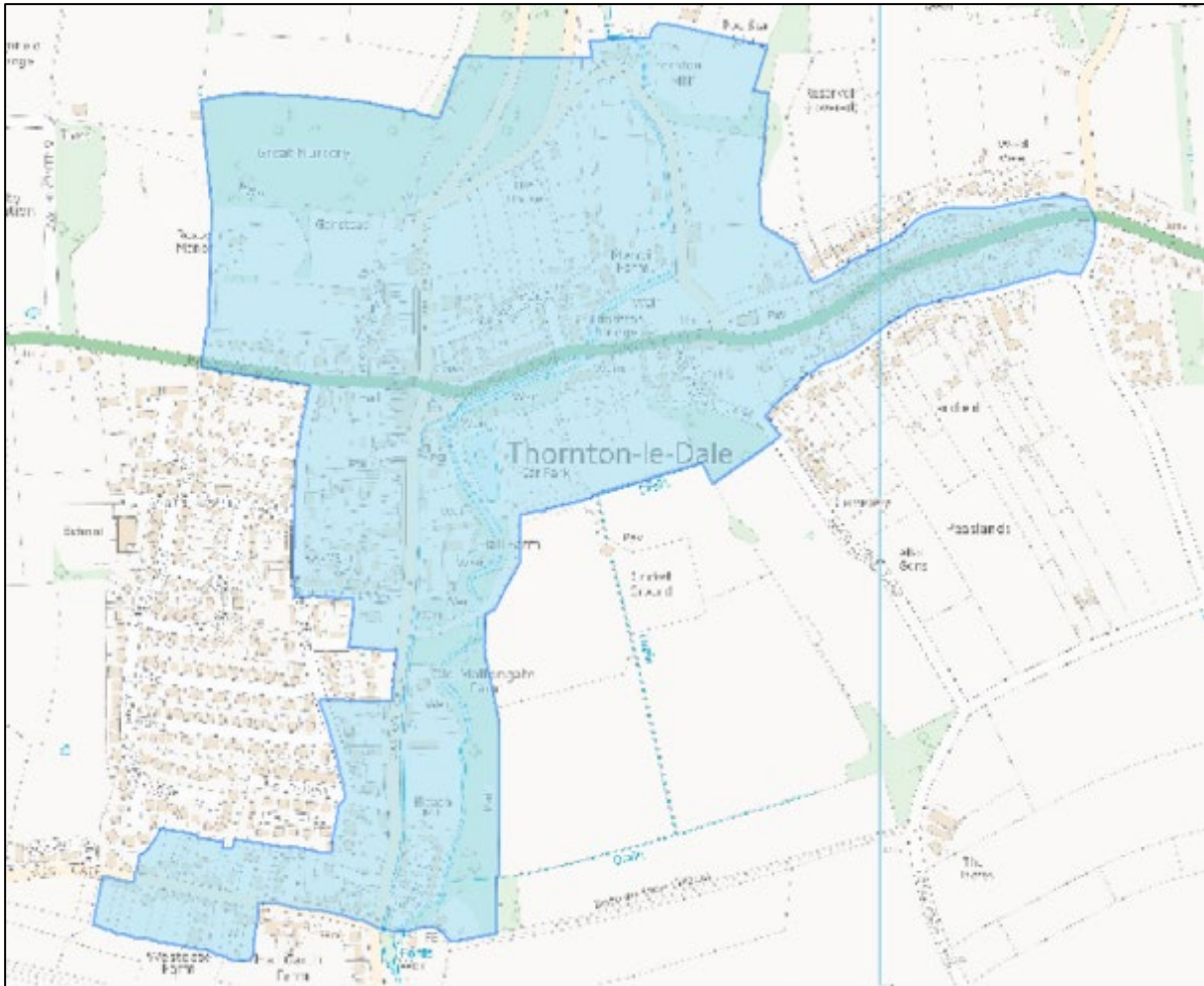


Figure 4. The present extent of the Conservation Area in Thornton le Dale

The stream that runs through the village is also altered. It was redesigned to reflect 18th century landscaping fashions and on the 1729 tithe map was actually on a slightly different course<sup>5</sup>. On the High Street the beck is divided into two separate cascading streams: one for the private benefit of the owners and occupiers of Thornton Hall and the other for the public benefit of residents and visitors in the village. The beck also provided power for two mills, one to the north of the village and the other to the south.

There has been considerable development in the 20th century, especially to the southwest, but this is excluded from the Conservation Area. The local geology is made of limestone, sand and gravel and there is evidence of small scale quarrying to extract these resources in the surrounding area. These local resources are also represented in the building materials used in the village, along with some imported materials such as Welsh slate.

## 5.0 The History of Thornton le Dale

There is no evidence in the village of pre-medieval occupation, although the presence of a watercourse would certainly have helped meet some of the requirements of settlement. However, there is evidence that a settlement existed prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066. The village was known as Torentune in the 11th century Domesday

<sup>5</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 26

Book; the addition of 'Dale' is not found until the 19th century<sup>6</sup>. When the Domesday Book survey took place, the main tenants were Thorbrandr, Gospatric and Thor (suggesting Viking influence and possibly the origins of the name Torentune – Tor's village, farm, or manor in Anglo-Saxon) who had three carucates to the geld and enough land for two ploughs. This suggests three manors in the area. Berengar de Tosny also held one carucate to the geld and land for half a plough and he held a number of other estates throughout Yorkshire. The king also held land in and around Thornton le Dale as did the Count of Mortain<sup>7</sup>. In total there were five villas in Torentune – Roxby, Farmanby, Thornton, Ellerburn and Leidtorp, four of which coalesced into Thornton.

Following the Norman Conquest, Thornton Manor was given to the Crown and later William gave it to his sister Adelaide whose third husband was the Count Odo, the founder of the House of Albermarle. In 1281, the Manor was in the hands of John De Easton and King Edward I granted him a weekly market on the village green (suggesting that the village green was already there or was set out for this purpose)<sup>8</sup>.

The green survives, but the market has long since ceased to operate. The layout of the village is typically 12th century and planned and can still be discerned in places where there are street fronted properties with linear plots to the rear and of course, the village green. It is possible that the 18th century landscaped parkland around Thornton Hall equates to the medieval demesnes of the manor. The demesne land was the ground immediately surrounding the manor house and tilled under the supervision of the lord of the manor or his steward. To the south of this would have been the manor demesne of the Low Hall and another either around Maltongate or Whitbygate and Brock Lane. The presence of a Norman font in the Church of All Saint's<sup>9</sup> suggests that there was a church built here in the 12th century. A new church was built in the 14th century, and this too was considerably altered in the 17th century and again in 1865-6. Elements of the earlier churches survive in the present-day fabric and building.

Other elements important to a medieval village would be the mill and there is evidence for Thornton Mill<sup>10</sup> on Thornton Beck from at least 1200 when the miller was called William<sup>11</sup>, although the present-day Millhouse on Priestman's Lane is 18th century. There was also a mill at Ellerburn (outside the Conservation Area) pre-dating 1227 and that became a fulling mill by 1335, as did Millholme. Weaving is reported as a profession throughout the 14-15<sup>th</sup> centuries and appears as a common industry, albeit at a domestic level in the 16th century. By the 19th century, Thornton Mill was a substantial complex with weirs and sluices. Brook Lane and Ellerburn Road were set out to avoid the linear plots to the rear of Church Hill but to link the village with the mill.

Medieval villages also had pounds to collect stray stock, and these were located near High Hall on the south end of Outgang Lane<sup>12</sup> and another on the west side of Maltongate which can still be seen<sup>13</sup>. Another enclosure near the smithy on Brook Lane

---

<sup>6</sup> Ekwall 1987, 468

<sup>7</sup> Williams and Martin 1992, 790, 820, 872

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.visitthorntonle Dale.co.uk/visitors/village-history> [accessed 200717]

<sup>9</sup> Now a Listed Building, Grade II

<sup>10</sup> HER 8619

<sup>11</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 112

<sup>12</sup> Outgang meaning the way out of the village (HER 7847)

<sup>13</sup> HER 7848

might have been a pound too, but it may also have been a temporary enclosure for horses awaiting the services of the smith<sup>14</sup>.



Figure 5: the 19th century Thornton Mill (now converted into offices)

Traditionally smithies were located on the edge of medieval settlements to reduce the risk of fire, and the 19th century smithy shown on Ordnance Survey maps of 1890 on Brook Lane, conforms to this. However at least two, sometimes three smithies are recorded in historic documents from 1301. On rising ground to the west of Thornton Dale is the site of Roxby Hall (outside the Conservation Area). The earthworks here are of a substantial manorial complex of the late 13th century, replaced in 1540-60 by Sir Richard Cholmeley, who succeeded to the estate in 1538. He built his gallery using stone and slate from Pickering Castle, especially using the material from the King's Hall and the stairs in the chief tower; he also helped himself to the forest oaks. The site of Roxby Hall is now separated from Thornton le Dale by a substantial number of modern houses.

---

<sup>14</sup> HER 784914



Figure 6: The village pound on Maltongate

In the 17th century a number of changes were made in the village that began to shape the village that we know today. A new family was established in Thornton Hall, and it was considerably enlarged. A grammar school was founded and built for the young and twelve almshouses built for the aged poor –these continue to make a positive contribution to the townscape today. There were numerous references to weaving, knitting, and spinning in the village suggesting that houses may have had windows enlarged to allow greater light ingress. Paper making started by 1680 at the latest in two separate mills which went on to be enlarged; by the mid-19th century, the dye was poisoning the trout in the beck and filter beds were built on the west side of the Beck.

A new Rectory was built, and changes were made to the 14th century church. The passing of the Toleration Act of 1689 gave Quakers and Dissenters a little more religious freedom and thus able to look to building their own places of worship or meeting rooms, however the impact on the village in terms of non-conformist architecture was to take a little longer. John Wesley is reputed to have preached at Box Tree Farm probably in 1766. The first Wesleyan Chapel was an existing house dating to 1721 on the north side of Roxby Terrace and Maltongate before a purpose-built chapel was opened in 1813 followed by the Methodist Sunday School three years later. A Primitive Methodist chapel followed in 1891 and two chapels in Pickeringate and Maltongate were built in 1900 and 1909, respectively.

The roads in the village and the bridges had to be maintained by the local community along with other communal assets such as the village pinfolds. The inhabitants were indicted in 1651 for not repairing the highway between Farmanby Gate and Thornton and the same Quarter Sessions decreed that Roger Hunter and William Skelton of Thornton should pay for repairs to Thornton Bridge (just a narrow footbridge at this time) over Thornton Beck which was in very poor condition.

The 18th century brought about widespread reorganisation of agriculture and consequently changes to farm buildings and the surrounding landscape. The process of enclosure had started in 1678 despite much opposition, but most enclosure took place from 1780 removing common fields, meadows and pastures and leading to the collapse of the manorial system as land was divided amongst freeholders. Farms were concentrated into groupings each with access to much more land; strips were amalgamated into fewer farms and for those who benefited from the changes, there was

scope to make money and reinvest it into the farm buildings. The enclosure process, as well as dividing the surrounding landscape of open spaces into large walled fields, also led to improved drainage and streams scoured – maintenance of which was enforced by the local courts. The grounds around Thornton Hall were re-landscaped in the 18th century – sunken fences were installed in 1739. Ellerburn Wood was planted in 1797 on to bare hillside and still make a ‘glorious addition to the charms of the village’<sup>15</sup>.

A number of small-scale industries took place in the village over several centuries and these have left their mark in the building types. Corn milling, fulling, bleaching, wool, hemp and linen weaving, straw hat making, gloving, tanning, lime burning, building, butchering, and game preserving all have a long history, although few have survived to the present day<sup>16</sup>. Weaving often took place in the 17th and 18th centuries in a chamber opposite the living room and relied on wool production from the fells<sup>17</sup>. When the bleaching mills were in production, the fields around them would have cloths stretched out. However, these industries moved from domestic production to steam driven powered machinery in larger mills dependent on coal from the West Riding. Homes were no longer adapted for industry, but new larger industrial complexes constructed. The beck was also diverted in the 19th century to accommodate an enlarged mill complex complete with sluice gates. The public elementary school was built in 1874. The ford was replaced with a widened bridge after the first Baron Feversham’s feet were soaked when his carriage passed through the beck on the way to the hall (or so the story goes). The stream has also altered course – it originally ran on the east of the houses on Maltongate, not the west where it runs today.

The arrival of trains between York and Scarborough from 1839 started to open up greater possibilities in terms of travel and from 1879 the NER began to construct the Pickering-Scarborough branch which passed through the parish and opened in 1882. This led to agricultural labourers leaving the village in search of better paid jobs elsewhere and the importation of new building materials such as Welsh slate for roofing and new design ideas for domestic housing which would ultimately lead to a decline in vernacular building styles. Steam power also dominated existing industries such as paper making which moved to urban centres; the two former paper mills were converted into farms by 1869<sup>18</sup>.

The station closed to passenger traffic on 3 June 1950, but remained open for freight traffic to Pickering after the rest of the Forge Valley Line was closed and pulled up. The last traffic into the station was two Presflo wagons of bulk cement for repairs to the village hall. The station finally closed completely in 1963. The station building was cleared and converted into offices for a company building a gas pipeline to Pickering and later the station site was converted into a caravan site, with the station buildings divided and refurbished as three holiday cottages (outside and south of the Conservation Area).

While the 19th century saw additional new buildings, there were some losses too. The village lost its 17th century Rectory in 1839 when the Rev. J.R. Hill demolished it, building the present day one the following year. The church underwent considerable modifications in 1866 and since 1870 several buildings that had stood alongside Beck Isle were destroyed. When Ellerburn Vicarage was constructed, two ancient whitewashed and thatched cottages on the road front were destroyed to make way for

---

<sup>15</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 91

<sup>16</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 109

<sup>17</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 11416

<sup>18</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 11717

the garden. The losses included twenty six men in the First World War and to help commemorate them a war memorial was placed on the front of the Hill Memorial Institute. Another memorial the following year was the Institute clock for Henrietta Priestman; this clock has since been replaced. The clock in All Saints church tower is also a war memorial dedicated in 1920. Standing along the side of the beck, on Priestmans Lane, is The Mill that Squire G.F.G. Hill rebuilt and enlarged in 1919 calling it Victory Mill. In 1921, the Burgess family moved from Kirby Fleetham, near Northallerton and became famous for making Gold Medal plain flour. In 1963, the mill was adapted for the manufacture of animal feed.

The village poor house was closed and converted into a dwelling called The Old House in 1933. The main increase in building started in the 1960s; a small estate at The Rise was followed by Farmanby Close. Annums Close was built in 1975, to be followed by Castle Close and Castle Road, with a new village school adjoining, to replace the old one. More recently, brick housing estates have been added on the west and the older streets have had new houses built in infill, often the sites of old orchards or paddocks.

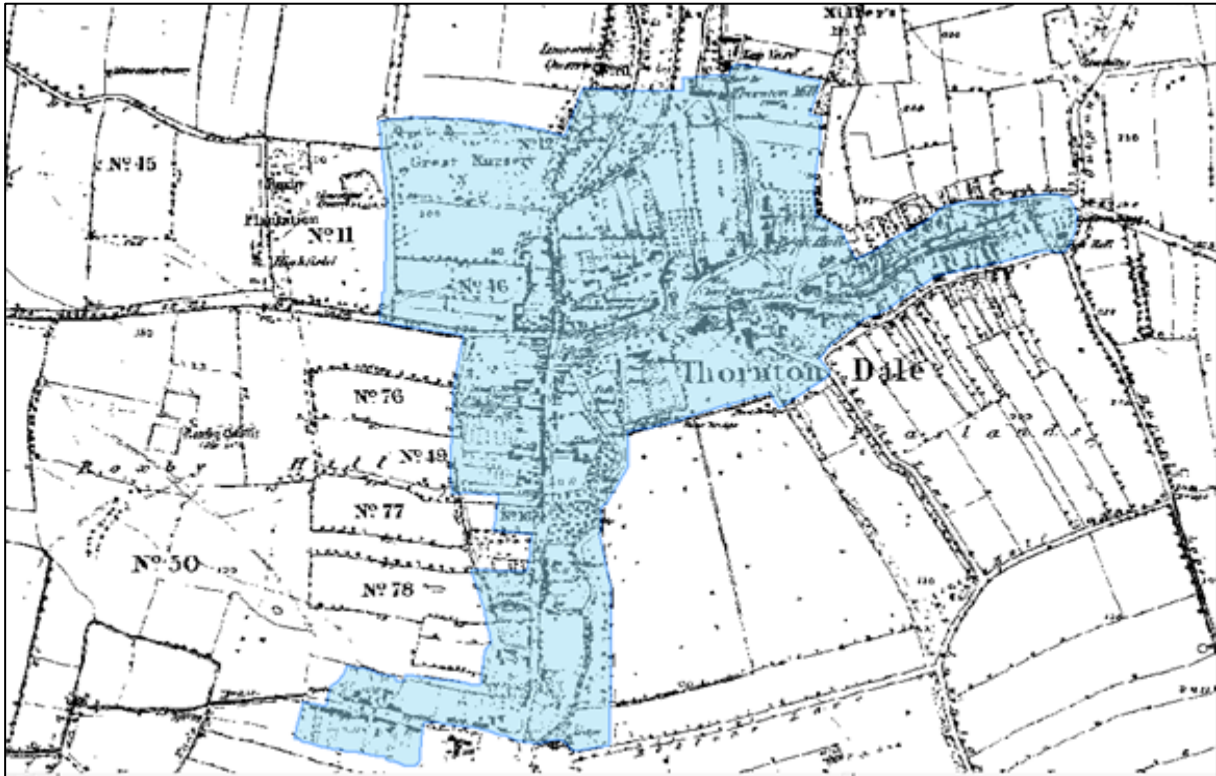


Figure 7. 1st edition 6-inch scale OS map dating to 1848-50

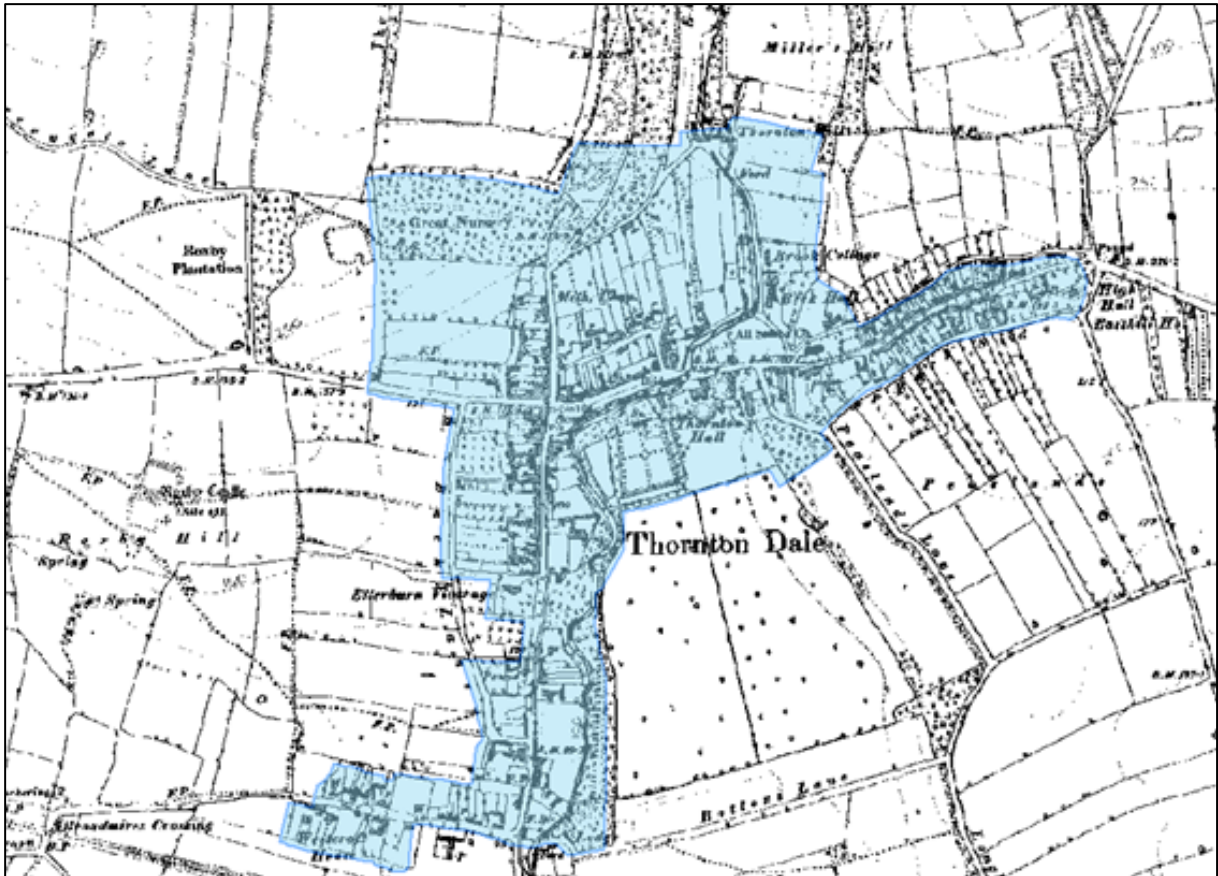


Figure 8. 2nd ed. 6-inch scale OS map dating to 1890. An avenue of trees may be evidence of the pre-parkland landscape.



Figure 9. 3rd ed. 6-inch scale OS map dating to 1910

## 6.0 The Ancient Street Plan and Open Spaces

***In a nutshell: linear settlement with medieval boundaries and street pattern; market cross and replacement stocks within a small green; medieval manorial estate boundaries; street fronted (or beck fronted) housing; English naturalistic parkland, Pleasure Walks and carriage drives, fishponds and walled kitchen gardens overlying formal grounds of Thornton Hall; rechannelled becks with cascades, culverts and bridges, broad grass verges and woodland circuit planting all part of a picturesque design; tall, sweeping limestone walls, often with red pantile copes; metal railings to raised pavements and stone steps to the road; lower stone walls with vegetation draped over; ornate iron railings; timber or metal painted fencing to the beck sides.***

### 6.1 The Street Plan

The street plan in Thornton le Dale is of some interest. The position on the main thoroughfare between Pickering and Scarborough (both with medieval strongholds) was important and many significant journeys of royalty, nobility and ecclesiastics would have passed through here, often requiring the services of local inns, smiths, and joiners.

Street fronted houses with linear plots to the rear are characteristic of settlement layouts from the 12th century onwards and survive well. The land around the village would be tilled by tenants; it was divided into strips known as broadlands, oxgangs, roodlands or lands and allocated on a rota basis to the tenants and to the church and lord using the three-field system. There was also common land and meadow land beyond. These strips of arable land still survive well throughout the village despite some amalgamation taking place from the late 18th century.

Closer to home were smaller garths or crofts and these were located to the rear of the houses on the main road (High Street, Maltongate), but inside the back lanes (Brook Lane, Church Lane, Back Side and Back Lane). The immediate back yard might be a hemp yard and where cess pits or small-scale industrial activity might take place. Again, these land units survive well in Thornton le Dale, although land immediately rear of the historic houses has usually been developed for house extensions, and land along the back lane was often developed from the 18th century for coach houses and then subsequently, more housing. The linear burgage plots survive well, although a few have been amalgamated to create allotments and a burial ground on Peaselands Lane and new housing between Roxby Road and Maltongate. However, they are mostly outside the Conservation Area, and should either be protected by treating them as the setting of the Conservation Area, or the Conservation Area should be extended to include them.

The village green and cross have been altered through the centuries, however. The Rev. John Richard Hill was responsible for planting trees and enclosing the ground but prior to this in 1874 there was a shop and a stable abutting the ancient cross and stocks. These were demolished in 1874 and some of the stones used to build the present village school<sup>19</sup>.

---

<sup>19</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 94



Figure 10: Medieval Village core layouts



Figure 11: Speculative location of medieval manors that evolved into the present-day village and still discernible in the layout of the village today.

The overall plan of the village has the appearance of three villages all strung together. This might simply be a product of an expanding village spreading along the main roads, but it could instead reflect the location of the individual manors that were based here,

and which may have originated in pre-conquest times. It is possible that some of these manors can still be discerned in the layout of the village today. These focus on High Hall, Thornton Hall, Maltongate and Roxby (now largely earthworks to the west of the village and not in the Conservation Area but scheduled as an ancient monument instead).

Beyond the parkland, some of the village roads have altered in the last century. Prospect Place is now longer and Ellerburn Road is now at a higher level above the beck than the original route. Some roads have been lost too such as Clay Pit Lane and Apple Garth Lane; Clay Pit Lane was evidently too marshy, and Apple Garth Lane absorbed into a field. There was evidence of stone trods still visible last century on Apple Garth and now in Garth End. Tradition suggests these were stone tracks used by women going to milk cows or a track to link Roxby Castle to the village – both could be correct, but by the early 18th century the track did not appear to extend all the way to the castle.

Street names are also of historic interest. Dog Kennel Lane marks where the lane dog legged at the kennels associated with Thornton Hall. Priestman's Lane is named after Joshua Priestman who had Beck Hall built in 1830. Outgang Lane marks the route out of the village to the village outfields and harks back to medieval times.

The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

#### **Considerable significance**

- Linear burgage plots, back lanes and longer tofts, location of village green – the ability to distinguish different manorial estates within the layout.
- Street fronted position of houses.
- Location along main roads between Pickering and Scarborough and significant crossroads.
- Designed landscape in the centre, reflecting 18th century landscaping principles and extending throughout the village (including the becks and cascades), 17th century formal landscaping, and possibly a medieval manorial demesne.
- Some significance.
- Some street names.

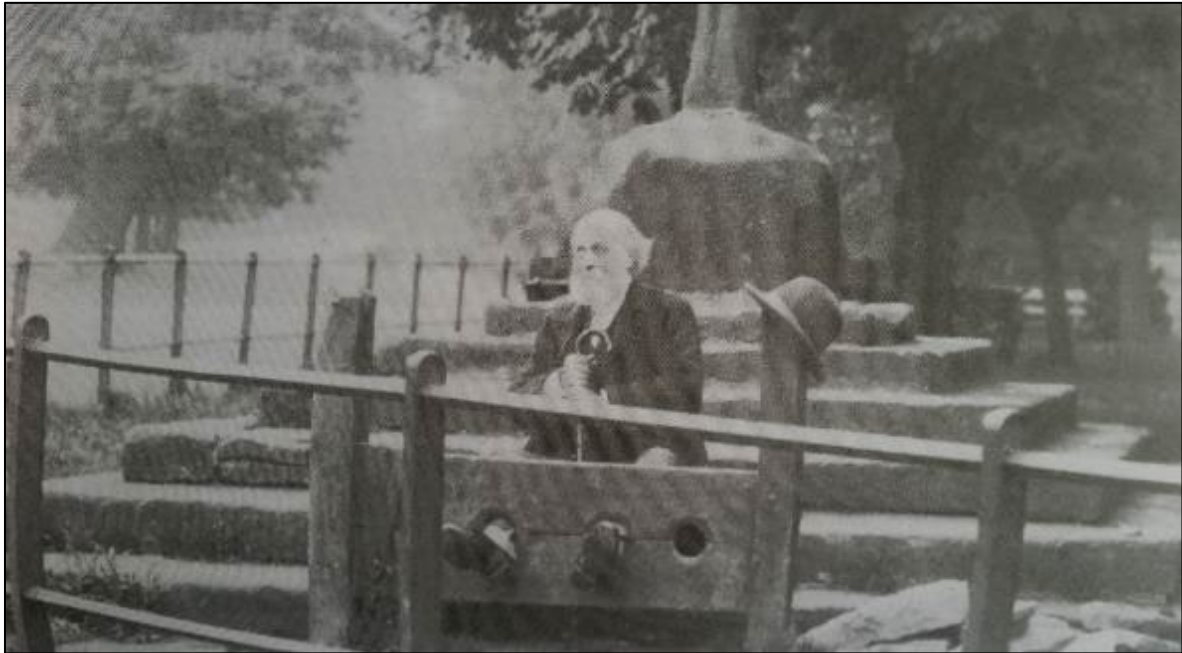
## **6.2 Open and Green Spaces**

Green spaces play an important role in defining the character of Thornton le Dale. The Square is in the centre of the village with its green; in the middle of the small green stands the village cross, a slender octagonal stone shaft, now capped by a stone ball. The base is raised on six stone steps, at the foot of which stands a modern copy of the old stocks. The market no longer operates, and the last time stocks were used for public punishment of wrongdoers was in 1874. Today the Green is a focal point of the village, hosting Sunday afternoon band concerts in the summer and the annual switch-on ceremony of the Christmas lights in December<sup>20</sup>.

---

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.visitthorntonle Dale.co.uk/visitors/village-history> [accessed 200717]

### 6.3 Then and now



**Figure 12 & 13: the village stocks, seen in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and now (2023)**

The other significant green spaces are the tree lined roads with grass verges and cascading waterfalls. These form part of the 18th century landscaping around Thornton Hall and the village, although the Hall is older, and the grounds may have their origins as a manor demesne of the medieval period with several phases of landscaping<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> The land belonging to the Lord of the Manor and located immediately around the manor house which is farmed by tenants as part of their rent

There is evidence surviving of what may be the more formal landscaped grounds that pre-date this mid-18th century landscape design. A row of trees visible on the 19th century Ordnance Survey maps and still apparent today, is typical of a formal approach to the south elevation of the house fashionable in the 17th and early 18th centuries. This avenue was retained when the parkland was redesigned, although the trees may now be replacements.

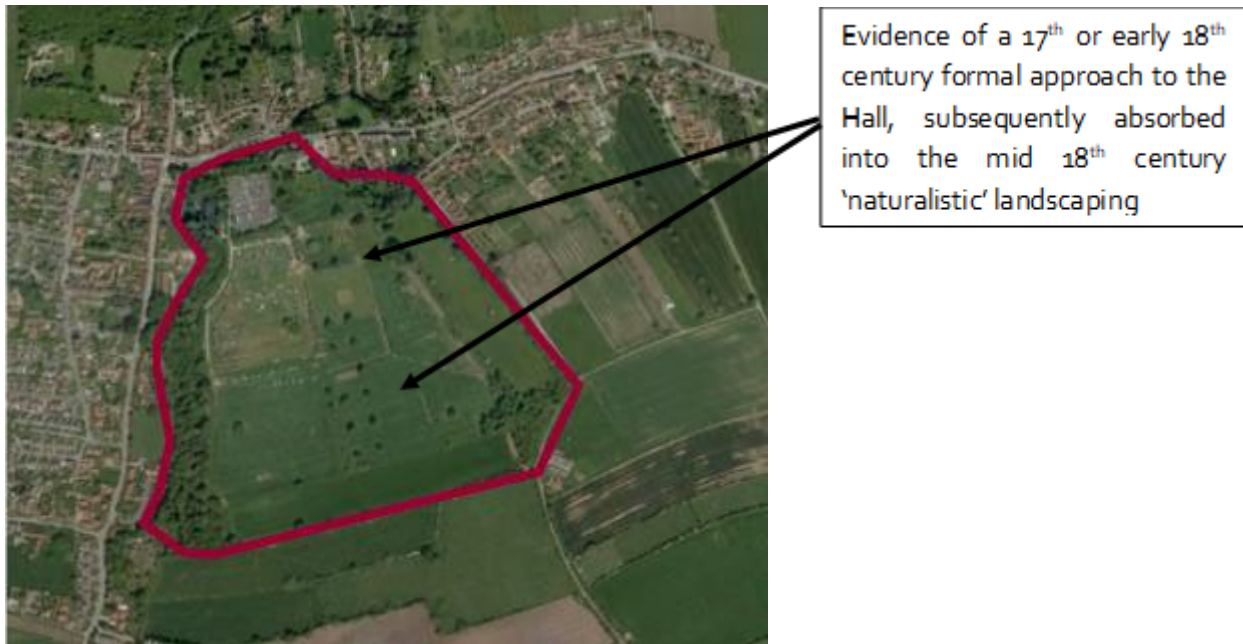


Figure 14. The landscaped parkland designed to create a picturesque setting for Thornton Hall in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Much of this has been excluded from the Conservation Area.

The parkland was re-designed, probably in the mid to late 18th century, to be the subject of an uninterrupted view from the new (in the 18th century) south elevation of the house; the ha-ha inserted to keep grazing animals away from the house without a wall to interrupt the view and a tree planted circuit with pleasure walks and carriage drives provided. The fishpond may have been added at this time or altered to create a more naturalistic shape and trees planted in clumps beyond the ha-ha to create a fashionable parkland view. Many of these features survive, but the parkland beyond the ha-ha and the eastern circuit is currently outside the Conservation Area, although the walled garden, ha-ha and stone bridge are all listed buildings.

Evidence of a 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century formal approach to the Hall, subsequently absorbed into the mid-18th century 'naturalistic' landscaping.



Figure 15. The detailed layout of the walled gardens at Thornton Hall between 1848-52 (OS 1st ed.) The linear south fishpond is now dry, the walled garden used as a car park and the hot houses only evidenced by blocked openings in the walls.

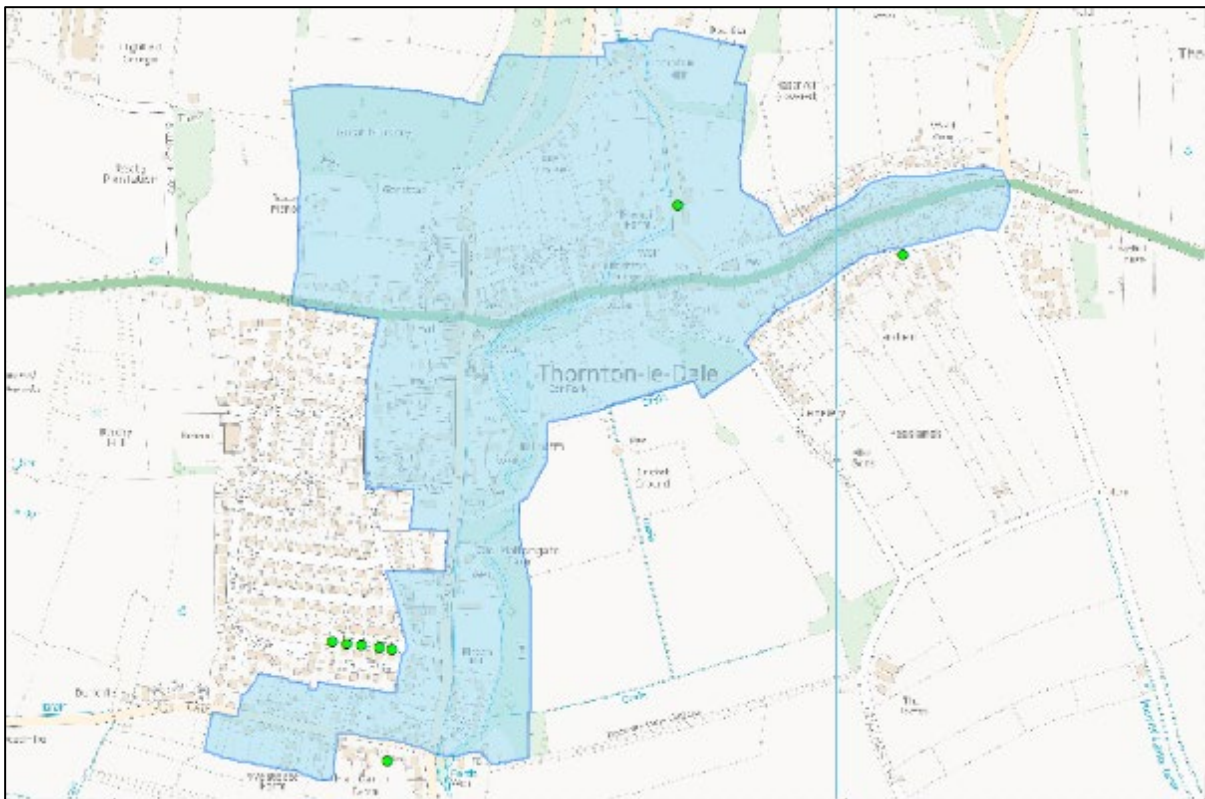


Figure 16. None of the trees that form part of the picturesque landscaping around Thornton Hall, or the village are designated with a Tree Preservation Order. Existing TPOs are shown as green dots.

The walled kitchen gardens (listed) appear to have always been open to the south to allow maximum sunlight or to retain the view. This concern for a landscape that was managed to meet the fashionable ideals of the English parkland scene is undermined significantly by the use of the walled gardens as a car park and the overspill parking which sits within what was once a managed view.



Figure 17, 18 & 19: The former fishpond and pleasure walk along the south side of the Hall dividing the more immediate landscaped grounds from the wider parkland. A beautiful stone bridge is designed to be appreciated on this walk and to afford access across the drain to the wider parkland.

Around the perimeter of the parkland was a woodland circuit and cascading watercourses were a typical fashionable feature; in Thornton le Dale, the beck was divided into two – one half a private watercourse for the parkland and the other half a public picturesque feature for the village. The west circuit of the parkland at Thornton Hall also had such cascades and these now form the backdrop to Maltongate. The east circuit is woodland along Priestman’s Lane. Faint evidence on aerial photographs

suggests that this western part of the landscaped grounds overlay the medieval linear fields that once extended back from the houses on Maltongate.



Figure 20 - 22: Left: The brick and stone kitchen garden walls, now used as a car park, but with perimeter planting to reflect a continuing horticultural use. Centre: The end of the kitchen garden wall is dressed and suggests that the garden was never fully enclosed but open to the south. Below: A lime avenue linking the kitchen garden to Maltongate.



Figure 22 - 23 Left: The beck divides in the village centre; one half runs through the once private landscaped grounds of Thornton Hall and the other runs through the village. Right: The beck was diverted into two parts at Thornton Bridge with a private circuit around Thornton Hall furnished and another running parallel but outside the Hall grounds and along the High Street.

Overall, it appears that when the grounds around Thornton Hall were landscaped with trees, wide grass verges and watercourses to conform to mid to late 18th century 'naturalistic' ideals and further enhanced in Victorian times; there was a clear intention to include the village as part of the landscaping and thus ensure that it would soon be known as one of the prettiest villages in England.



Figure 25 & 26: Wide grass verges and watercourses are essential part of the village's character along Chestnut Avenue, Church Hill, Priestman's Lane and Maltongate.

The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

**Considerable significance**

- Green with market cross
- Association with Roxby Manorial complex
- Cascades and becks as part of 18th century landscaping
- Beck sides and green verges, some tree lined to main roads.
- Naturalistic parkland features (woodland circuits and clumps, ha-ha, bridge)

- Formal garden remains around Thornton Hall
- Kitchen gardens (walled gardens), fishponds, lime avenues

## 6.4 Surface Treatments, Open and Green Spaces

Surface treatments on roads, tracks and pavements are an important part of retaining the historic and picturesque character of the Conservation Area and these vary. The popularity of the village for day visitors has inevitably created a parking and traffic problem which has resulted in a large number of yellow lines and street signs which detract from the historic character. Tarmac is the most common surface treatment and has been used in the walled garden car park (where white painted lines mark out parking bays) and throughout the main roads and even the back lanes. This is softened with stone paving to create walking areas and planting schemes; however, tarmac is also used for paving along Hurrell Lane which then joins the very suburban High Street with a wide expanse of tarmac road with white separator lines and double yellow lines. There is also tarmacked street fronted parking on Chestnut Avenue with parking bays set out with white painted lines; this obscures the frontages of the buildings when the parking places are full. The grass verges and narrow paths help to soften the effect, but the overall character reflects traffic management, not historic interest.



Figure 27, 28 & 29: The use of tarmac and painted traffic control lines particularly in the east end of the village has had an urbanising effect. This is softened by grass verges, stone steps, and a band of cobbles near the churchyard which narrow the road.

The differing heights between pedestrian walkways and the main road on High Street result in raised walkways; these too are tarmacked, but with stone edging to soften the harshness of the tarmac. The stone steps joining the road to the pavement create variety and interest, but also restrict movement for pedestrians. Towards the churchyard, a band of cobbles separates the raised paved area from the road and so narrows the road without recourse to modern painted lines which detract from historic character. The use of some suburban paving to driveways, especially along Church Lane, combined with some development which fails to reflect local character, and tarmacked surfaces, has diminished the architectural interest of this area. For this reason, the boundary of the Conservation Area runs up the centre of the road and excludes development on the north side. Overall, there is a conflict between the special interests of the Conservation Area and the need to control traffic and parking in the village that has created wide expanses of tarmac, painted lines and traffic signs that diminish its historic character.



Figure 30 &31: On street parking detracts from the architectural interest of the buildings and the use of tarmac urbanises the village.

The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

- Considerable significance**
- Grass verges
  - Cobbles to some house frontages
  - Stone kerbs to raised pavements and stone steps.
  - Stone kerbing to watercourses

**6.5 Boundaries**

While there are a variety of boundary types throughout the village, those that are most distinctive to Thornton le Dale’s Conservation Area are coursed limestone walls, often very tall and topped with red pantiles, and timber or metal fencing to the watercourses.

Stone walls of considerable height and grandeur make a strong contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The High Street has particularly distinctive tall stone walls that line the main road and create a channelling effect for the traffic. This is alleviated a little by grass verges. Along High Street and the more minor roads, lower stone walls of coursed rubble predominate, usually softened with vegetation, grass verges and with dressed stone copes. A distinctive boundary feature is the coursed stone wall topped with red pantiles. Such walls lend themselves to sweeping shapes and curves common from the 18th century onwards and have been referenced in some modern development along South Lane. Although the north side of Church Lane is outside the Conservation Area, the stone walls have been retained even where development is modern, or sometimes reduced in height, and continue to make a positive contribution to the streetscape. The sense of enclosure continues with street fronted properties. Rustic stone gateposts survive especially next to former farms, but some farms and houses have ball topped gateposts or other attractive designs to set them apart from the purely functional.



Figure 32: high stone walls are a feature of the area and protect from the beck.

The streets open up where there are watercourses and here the very distinctive boundaries are the timber or metal fences, sometimes painted, that offer a safety barrier alongside the becks and small bridges and culverts; this is the predominant boundary feature along Church Hill, Priestman's Lane and Maltongate. On Church Hill the fencing and massive stone, pilastered walls sit side by side; one forming the boundary to Thornton Hall, the other forming a safety railing for villager's intent on falling into the becks. Railings are also found around higher status houses such as High Hall and Beck Hall and on the frontages of Victorian terraces (usually topping a dwarf wall) and as gates where houses are set back from the street front. They are also used around the churchyard on the High Street and along the pavements on High Street and terminate in attractive swirling handrails. Where the building character becomes more suburban there is a greater use of railings, brick walls and hedging, for example along The Mount and Brookfield Gardens.

Where there are no watercourses, the properties are mostly street fronted on the main roads and so require no street fronted boundaries but do enjoy the occasional surviving boot scraper.



Figure 33 & 34: Ornate iron railings and estate style railings in the centre of the village

In the area occupied by the designed parkland of Thornton Hall, it is the lack of boundaries that are distinctive, with the exception of the three-sided walled garden with handmade Georgian brick and dressed stone detailing. However, as with most mid to late 18th century parkland there is a woodland circuit that forms the boundary to the park, separating village from parkland. The use of modern post and wire fencing around the pasture fields and cricket field help to retain the long-distance views without obstruction.

The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

### Considerable significance

- Large limestone coursed walls to the street front or beck side, often topped with red pantiles or stone copes and sometimes with a sweeping shape.
- Lower coursed limestone walls, often with vegetation tumbling over.
- Beck side fencing in timber or metal, sometimes painted white.
- Grass verges
- Iron railings to raised pavements on Church Hill and High Street
- Iron railings to high status houses
- Rustic stone gateposts
- Dressed stone gateposts topped with finials or copes.
- Ha-ha to Thornton Hall parkland.
- Handmade Georgian brick kitchen garden walls with ashlar detailing in Thornton Hall parkland.

### Some significance

- Iron railings to Victorian properties set back from the road.
- Limited significance
- Hedging

- Brick walls
- Visually permeable fencing to parkland

### **Opportunities to conserve and enhance**

- The designed landscape of Thornton Hall is an essential part of the curtilage and setting of the listed building at Thornton Hall; it should be included in the Conservation Area (this should have no impact on its use as a cricket field)
- A statement of significance should be considered to help better understand the evolution and significance of the designed landscape around Thornton Hall. Following from this, a landscape restoration plan should be prepared to help make future management decisions.
- The use of visually permeable boundaries in designed 'naturalistic' parkland helps to retain intended views.
- Tree preservation orders should be created for the mature trees that once formed formal avenues, clumps, and perambulations in this parkland.
- Back lane developments should respect the linear layout of the inherited medieval field patterns.
- The linear fields inherited from medieval times should be protected as the setting of the Conservation Area or the Conservation Area should be extended to include them.
- The ability to distinguish the evolution of different medieval manors should be retained and new development should avoid blurring this distinction.
- The use of limestone walls with red pantile copes is a means by which new developments can help to fit in with the character of the village.
- The number of highways signs and road markings should be rationalised where it is safe to do so, and traditional surface materials used instead where traffic needs to be better managed. For example, traditional surface materials in specific areas such as on street parking areas or areas where traffic needs to reduce speed can create a similar affect while conserving and enhancing the significance of the Conservation Area. Traditional surface materials such as cobbles can also return a more rural and historic character to back lanes and pavements.
- Reduce signage and street clutter around the Market Cross
- The Market Cross is a listed building and does not need to be Scheduled; it can be de-scheduled without loss of protection or significance.

## **7.0 Archaeology**

**In a nutshell: scarred gable ends, blocked openings, ridge and furrow, garden archaeology, cess pits and wells.**

Archaeology is evidence of past human activity and in that respect, the whole of Thornton le Dale including its buildings and planform, is of archaeological interest. However, there are particular features that stand out as evidence of past human activity, and these contribute towards the village's character or enhance our understanding of how it evolved. The presence of watercourses running through the village is an indicator that the site may have been attractive to prehistoric people with its ready supply of fresh water and well drained rising ground, although these watercourses have since been altered to conform to 18th century ideals of beauty.

The earliest archaeological finds are some doubtful prehistoric finds from the wider area, one of which was found in 1958. There is insufficient information on their discovery available to suggest any further evidence for prehistoric occupation in this area. A little later in date is a Roman coin of the 4th century AD from near Maltongate, but in isolation, no conclusions can be drawn from this regarding Roman occupation in the area.

The village is much more likely to contain evidence of medieval life and later. The houses along the main roads of High Street and Maltongate will be sitting on the foundations of houses dating from the 12th century and so it is possible that back gardens might contain evidence of wells, cess pits and other yard uses.

The landscaped grounds of Thornton Hall appear still to have evidence not just of the 18th century parkland layout, but also a more formal 17th century layout. To the west of Thornton le Dale (and outside the Conservation Area) are the substantial earthwork remains of Roxby Manorial complex and fishponds, surrounded by ancient field systems, and linked to Maltongate with a number of footpaths of ancient origins. The site is now a Scheduled Monument and clearly of considerable archaeological interest. The village cross is also a scheduled monument, although the designation of listed building might be more appropriate in future.

A number of buildings have visible evidence of scarring from lost structures, blocked openings, and altered rooflines. Farmhouses which outwardly appear 17th or 18th century in date, may contain evidence of earlier farm buildings. There is also evidence of reused foundations constructed from massive boulders resulting from earlier cottages on the same sites.



Figure 35, 36 & 37: Blocked openings in the kitchen garden wall show where hot houses were located; the gable ends of houses show evidence of former buildings, increased, or altered roof lines and rebuilt chimney stacks (often after a fire). Fields to the rear of the

houses often contain evidence of ridge and furrow showing where centuries of ploughing have taken place.

Internally, historic buildings may also have other features, often obscured by later plasterwork. They can also represent the availability of new building materials made possible by the arrival of the railway in 1836 or changing fashions in building design. This means that even where a building appears 18th or 19th century, it may contain the hidden remains of a much earlier building.

The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

#### **Considerable significance**

- Evidence of blocked openings and former buildings
- Evidence of changing building form (steeply pitched roofs, heightened buildings)
- Remains associated with the manorial complexes.
- Landscaping and garden archaeology at Thornton Hall
- The village cross

#### **Unknown significance**

- Buried archaeology and fabric within buildings from earlier dates.
- Garden archaeology such as disused and lost wells, cess pits and evidence of earlier activity

#### **Opportunities to conserve and enhance**

- In line with National Planning Policy, developments within the Conservation Area may need to be informed by archaeological work and in some cases, further archaeological excavation carried out before or during development.
- Developments affecting historic buildings may need to be informed by a Statement of Significance
- Review the use of the landscaped grounds of Thornton Hall for car parking after a Statement of Significance and Landscape Restoration Plan has been carried out

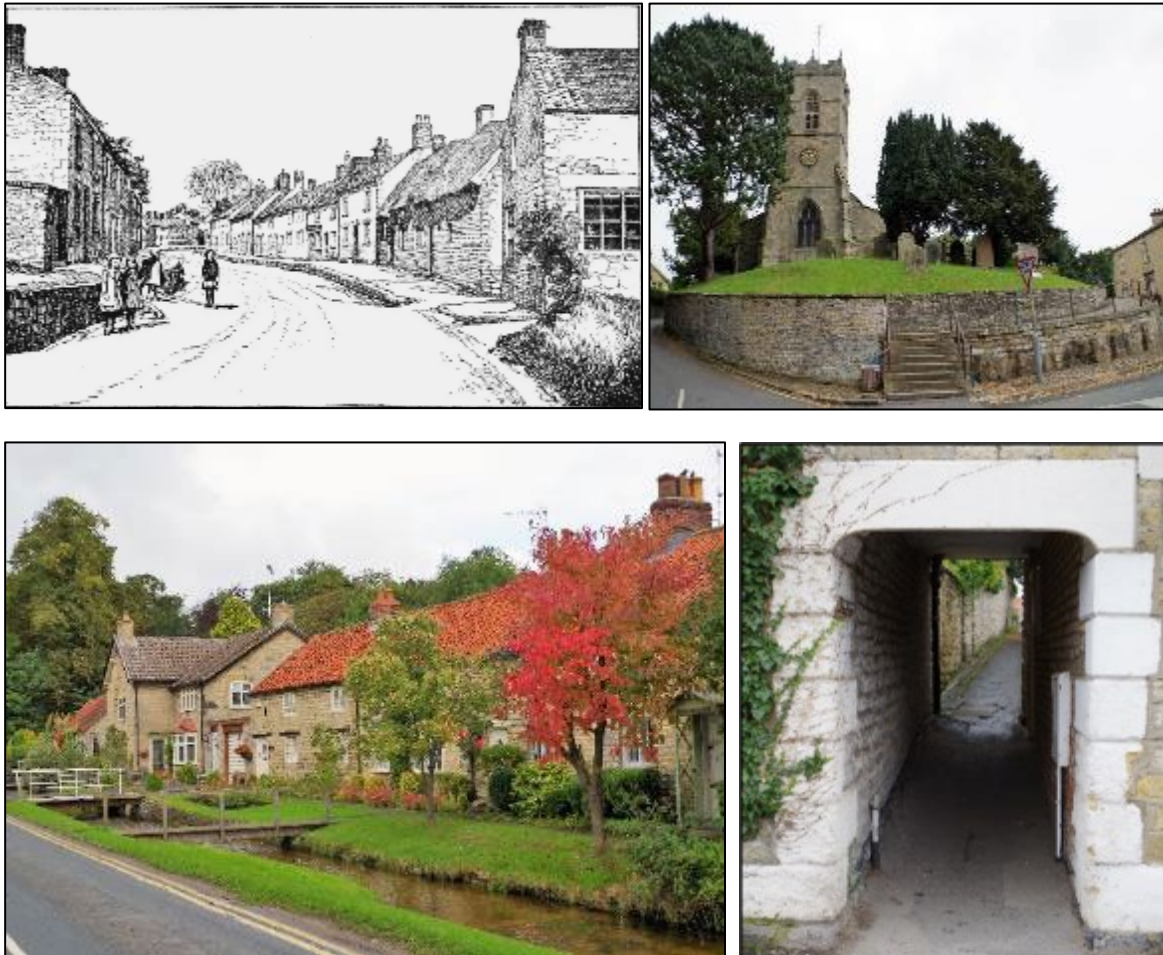
## **8.0 Vistas and Views**

**In a nutshell: pitches and pantiles, trees and cascades, alleyways and high walls as frames, parkland views from Thornton Hall, beck side cottages.**

“From the top of the steep hill west of the village, Thornton Dale has an almost idyllic aspect, its timeworn roofs of purple thatch and mellowed tiles nestling among the

masses of tall trees that grow with much luxuriance in this sheltered spot at the foot of the hills”<sup>22</sup>.

The layout of the village is tightly knitted and surrounded by trees, consequently there are few views beyond the village from within it. The effect of tall walls along the roadsides and street fronted houses is to channel views down the streets, although much of the thatch has been lost since 1905 (see quote above).



Figures 38 - 41: Top Left: early 20th century drawing of the view along the village street channelled by street fronted houses (from Page, W 192, vol 2). Top Right: the church has a prominent position on high ground. Bottom Left: cottages facing the beck sides with beautiful gardens and pretty footbridges. Bottom right: views along alleys and lanes offer glimpses into pretty yards and back streets.

The high ground to the north, below the Great Nursery on former quarry land, affords long distance views back down to the pitched roofs and pantiles of the village below and the fields beyond, but much of this is modern development between the Conservation Area and Roxby. It does however reinforce the importance of maintaining a tradition of pitched roofs in pantile as the predominant building type.

Some buildings are more prominent than others due to their position; the church for example is located on high ground and so makes a strong contribution to the streetscape particularly when seen from the southwest. The market cross in its central position at a

<sup>22</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 325 quoting Home, G 1905 The History of Pickering

crossroads was clearly located there so that it was highly visible at this important meeting place.

The south wing of Thornton Hall was clearly designed to appreciate parkland views to the south, positioned to have uninterrupted views of open expanses of grazing land, dotted with designed clumps of trees, views channelled southwards by the circuit of trees to the east and west. Similarly, Beck Hall appears to have been endowed with large bow windows to its front, designed to appreciate views down the beck towards the bridge on Chestnut Avenue.

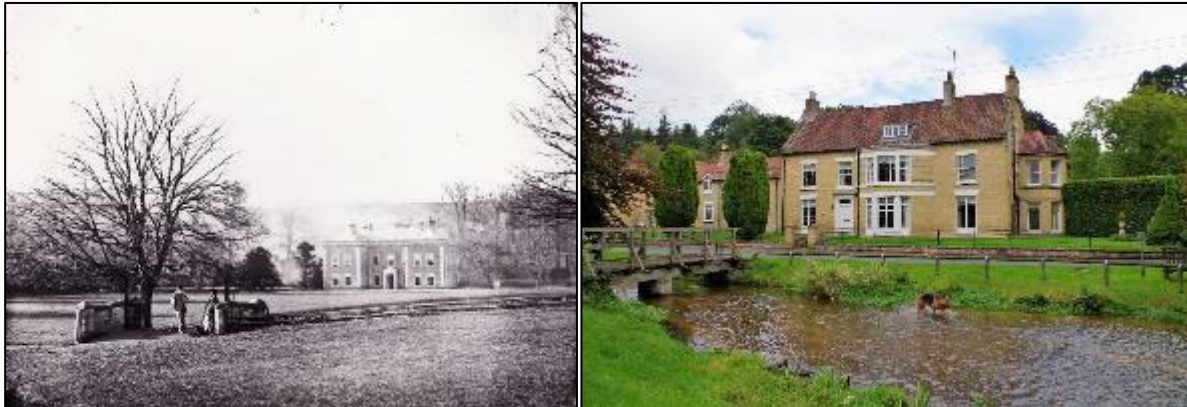


Figure 42 & 43: Left: An historic photograph of the parkland south of Thornton Hall with its two protruding wings and symmetrical windows, designed to capture the view across the parkland. Right: Beck Hall with added cantered bay windows designed to increase light and enhance the views down the beck towards the stone bridge on Church Hill

The village contains some of the most photographed views in the country which contribute towards its claim as the prettiest village in England. Of most note is the view of the 17th century thatched Beck Isle Cottage with the beck in the foreground. This is the subject of photographs, paintings (Gordon Lees being a prolific painter of this cottage), biscuit tins, postcards, chocolate boxes, jigsaws, and calendars<sup>23</sup>. Even without the contribution of Beck Isle cottage, the combination of pretty cottages with beautifully kept gardens and tumblers of flowers cascading over low garden walls overlooking cascading becks, creates a village of views.

---

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.visitthorntonledale.co.uk/visitors/village-history> [accessed 041017]



Figure 44: Beck Isle Cottage from the bridge – one of the most photographed cottages in England

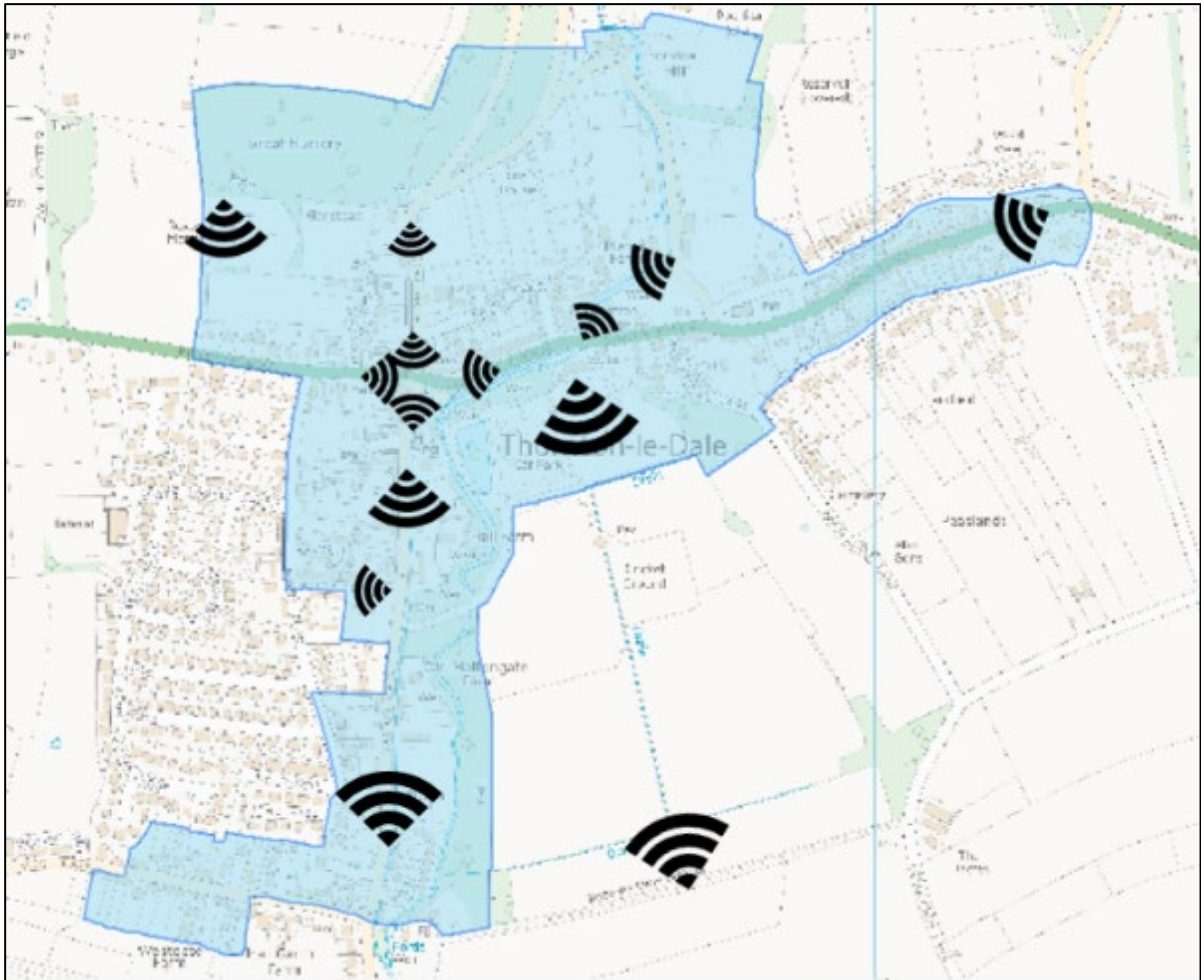


Figure 45: Significant views, the impact on which needs to be carefully considered in future management decisions

The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

**Considerable significance**

- Views of beckside cottages and thatched cottages
- Views from the Great Nursery
- Views of prominent historic buildings such as the church
- Views channelled along roads by street fronted buildings and tall walls
- Views south from Thornton Hall
- Views from Beck Hall along the beckside
- Views of the village cross and green
- Views of becks

**Some significance**

- Views along alleys and back lanes

### Opportunities to conserve and enhance

- Any new development should consider its impact on the views shown on figure 8.
- Distant views of the village should remain as pitched roofs and pantiles with trees interspersing
- A statement of significance for Thornton Hall and its grounds could help to inform a better appreciation of the intended views of the hall from the 17th to 19th centuries

## 9.0 The Historic Buildings of Thornton le Dale

**In a nutshell: mostly modest cottages, one to three storeys high, descending rooflines of pitched roofs and pantiles, corbelling and water tabling, limestone and handmade brick, chimney stacks, dormers and sashes, bays and bows, painted lintels and sills, catslides and chapels, byres, barns and bridges, ancient almshouses, civic and ecclesiastical buildings, manorial halls and one thatched cottage.**

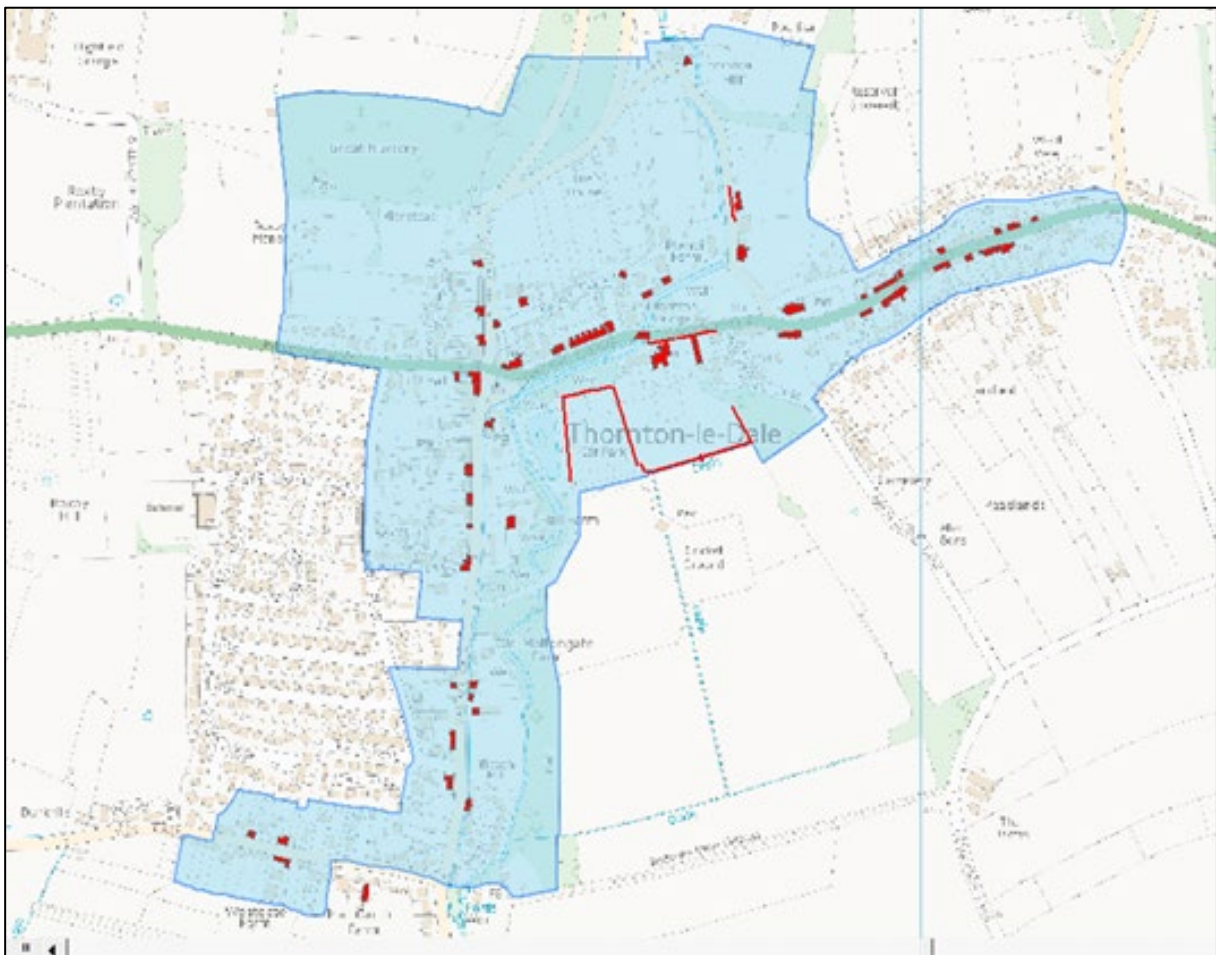


Figure 46: Listed buildings (shown in red)

There are over 75 groups of listed buildings in the Conservation Area; those which are grade II listed are mostly houses, cottages, farmhouses, the grammar school, almshouses, and the mill. It also includes elements of the designed parkland around Thornton Hall such as the bridge over the ha-ha, the ha-ha and the walls along Chestnut Avenue. Thornton Hall itself is grade 2\* and its associated stable block is listed grade II,

as is the Church of All Saints. While there are many listed buildings a good number of well-preserved 18th century buildings are not listed and so a re-listing exercise may be of benefit in the village. The buildings in the Conservation Area are mostly made of limestone and sandstone, although small handmade bricks also appear to have been used throughout the village from the 18th century. The limestone and sandstone was presumably sourced locally and there is evidence of former quarries overlooking the village to the north. Local tradition also suggests that Roxby Manor may have provided ready dressed building stone once it fell out of use.

Traditionally, pointing work was carried out in lime, but there is evidence of some ribbon pointing and cementitious pointing which will damage the stone and brickwork.



Figure 47: Different ownership has resulted in different approaches to pointing. The ribbon pointing on the right with cement will damage the stonework over time.

Most buildings range from one to three storeys, although many single and two storey buildings have been heightened using dormer windows. Farmhouses survive in large numbers and have often incorporated byres into domestic use. The scale of building throughout the village is relatively modest and massing is broken up by varying roofline heights and small traditional windows and doors set back within their apertures.



Figure 48: Red pantile roofing is the predominant roofing material and has replaced thatch since the mid-18th century. There are few examples of slate in the village.

The predominant roofing material is red pantile, with stone water tabling, kneelers (if 18th century) and brick chimney stacks. Red pantile was introduced from about 1740 when they were imported from northern ports into Whitby but local tileries soon became established near Pickering and carried along the dales<sup>24</sup>. Thatch was the traditional roofing material before the mid-18th century and continued into the 20th century. Today, only the picture postcard Beck Isle Cottage continues to use thatch, but some thatch has been preserved under the pantiles at Appletree Farm<sup>25</sup>.

The earliest building is the church with its 14th century origins, but like most buildings in the village it has been much altered over time. Thornton Hall (listed grade II\*) is at least 17th century in origin and occupies a prominent position within the village. While it may have earlier origins (Tudor elements visible in basement – mullioned windows), it is predominantly the 18th to 19th centuries which shine out from the elevations today.

Thornton Hall was originally an H-shaped Elizabethan or Jacobean building, and portions of the old work with a chamfered plinth and mullioned windows remain in the basement. Much of the existing walling above is probably ancient, but the external features are all of the 18th century, at which date a large wing was built out to the north-east of the main block. The present hall is stone paved and has a good 18th-century stone fireplace. The park and its fishponds lie to the south and by the side of the beck.

---

<sup>24</sup> Hartley and Ingilby 1975, 3-6

<sup>25</sup> Listed building description 124109951



Figure 49: Thornton Hall from Page 1923, vol. 2

While there are elements to the landscaping that survive from the 17th century (the palisade walls were repaired in 1734)<sup>26</sup>, it is again the 18th and 19th centuries which are the dominant characteristics. The ha-ha was apparently installed in 1739 and if this is correct, it is a very early example. Lady Lumley's almshouses, on the north side of the main street, consist of a long rectangular block of twelve tenements, one story high, built in 1656 and each having a door and a two-light Jacobean Gothic window with cusped heads. At the east end, but detached from the almshouses, is a schoolhouse of the same date, three bays long.

The walls are of rubble with rusticated angles, a stone cornice, and a small bell in the end gable. The end window is pointed and of three lights of 'Perpendicular' character. The windows on the east side are of two lights and transomed, and there are two, similar, in the north end and one on the west. The door is in the east wall, and at the north end is a modern fireplace. The building has a flat plaster ceiling coved at the sides. Both sets of buildings have been much restored, and none are typical of the character of the local building stock.

The building stock has originated from relatively humble cruck constructed cottages, farmhouses, and byres. Beck Isle cottage is the best known cruck construction dating to the 17th century, but others of a similar date are to be found at Appletree Farmhouse (listed grade II), Church Farmhouse (listed grade II) which also has evidence of its original cross passage and the helpfully named Cruck Cottage which also has its cross passage and many other 17<sup>th</sup> century internal features. Some cottages were very modest before being extended such as the early 18th century Brooklet House, possibly originated as a single roomed house, or larger cottages could be subdivided or enlarged into adjacent byres as required.

---

<sup>26</sup> Jeffery and Snowden 2009, 90



Figure 50 & 51: Cruck constructed houses at Cruck Cottage and Westfield Cottage

From the middle of the 18th century onwards the old houses began to be replaced by two storied, modest sized, four square, Georgian style houses and it is from this period onwards that the present building character in the village is derived. Brook House (listed grade II) captures the simple symmetry of the higher status mid-18th century house.



Figure 52, 53, 54 & 55: Typical examples of 18th century houses. Top Left: 18th century Rockingham House with symmetrical frontage and roof with pantiles, water tabling and

kneelers. Top Right: Brook Farmhouse has similar symmetrical features but is a double pile house, typical of higher status houses. Bottom left: The small eaves windows in 18th century gables is a common feature and the former steep pitch suggests the building was thatched. Bottom Right: an altered 18th century cottage with later windows and door.



Figure 56: Examples of agricultural buildings in the Conservation Area

Many of the properties will have originated as Georgian farms and agricultural character is still very much in evidence along the main roads and the back lane. Most of the large outbuildings have been converted to residential use, but where the large cart openings have been retained and the small byre windows have been reused or referenced, the agricultural character has survived. All agricultural buildings are roofed with red pantile, but chimneys are not characteristic. Skylights are favoured over dormers and simple batten and plank doors help to reflect their original purpose.

The large Thornton Mill has been converted into offices, but it has retained its mill like appearance with rows of small windows, large arched cart doors and even evidence of blocked windows. Its later date explains the use of Welsh slate and its present-day use has necessitated the use of skylights to increase accommodation space. Its association with the earlier miller’s house and the beck is important.

The late 19th century saw a number of significant changes in building type. Victorian civic buildings such as the Hill Memorial Institute and Methodist Chapel on Maltongate exemplify this style with a neo-Gothic style including (in the case of the Institute) highly decorative bargeboards, a public clock, steeply pitched roof, four pane sash windows and

a Welsh slate roof, made possible by the importation of materials using the railway. Despite the Grammar School's 17th century origins, its present-day architectural form better represents its Victorian make-over, although some earlier features can still be discerned. The former chapel on Pickering Road represents the beginnings of 20th century architectural styles. Dating to 1900, many of the flourishes and ostentation of high Victorian architecture have gone and a simpler design faces the road. The modern window detailing diminishes this façade.



Figure 57, 58 & 59: Civic architectural styles introduced by the Victorians but gradually simplified by 1900

Roxby Terrace, Holbeck Terrace and Jessamine Villas represented a new type of building style from the early to mid-20th centuries. Early 20th century architectural styles are exemplified by a simpler style of housing with cleaner lines, but still decorative details such as stained-glass windows, porches, and timber windows and doors, but often with late 20th century replacement features in plastic because of their lack of designation status.



Figure 60 & 61: Jessamine Villas and Roxby Terrace represent early 20th century building stock which tends to suffer from not being old enough to list and so traditional features are lost. However, both rows have good survival of traditional timber doors and porches and stained glass windows.

## 9.1 Doors

Most door types in the village are traditional timber batten and plank doorways that have been used for centuries on domestic and agricultural buildings, these fit with the cottagey character of most buildings. Eighteenth century doors are often wider and set within large dressed stone surrounds, but not always. Six panel doors are also to be

found which were popular in the 18th and early 19th centuries, but they tend to be in larger houses.

The Victorian period brought in more ornate styles to shopfronts and civic buildings, but while the batten and plank door remained popular, the typical four panel door was also introduced, especially into town house style buildings and where designs were selected from blueprints brought in from elsewhere. Both Georgian and Victorian doors brought in light through over lights above the door. The 20th century fashions for doors sought styles that were still in timber, but with glazing in the door to bring in more light. The oval glazing to the top third of doors was common in the 1930s and 1950s and can be seen at Jessamine villas, while an earlier assortment of half glazed doors can be seen at Roxby Terrace.

The batten and plank timber door remains popular in the Conservation Area although modern replacements often have some glazing to bring more light into the entrance hall and black metal door furniture to add historic character.



## 9.2 Windows

Traditional window types are to be found throughout the Conservation Area, although there have been some losses where plastic window replacements have been used particularly along Pickering Road and parts of High Street. The traditional Yorkshire sash can be found throughout the area but there are also variations such as a tripartite Yorkshire sliding sash.

Small multi paned windows remained in use throughout the 18th century, some side hung casements, but most sliding sashes with any number of little panes, often eight over eight, but also six over six. Dormer windows are common from the 19th century onwards as roof space was converted into living accommodation. Victorian dormers were decorated with barge boarding, while others were fitted with a red pantile roof to match the rest. In more recent times, skylights are used to avoid disrupting the roof line, but it does increase light pollution.



The early shop fronts from the early 19th century were relatively small with tiny panes of glass, often bowed and there are a few examples surviving. Larger plate glass became more accessible and affordable from the 1860s. Despite the availability of such glass resulting in the fashion for two over two panes in sash windows, the Victorians also liked to hark back to medieval and Tudor styles and so fitted out the 17th century almshouses with leaded windows set into neo-Gothic arches. On Maltongate an early shop front complete with consoles, tiles and a sash window can still be found. It appears not to be listed despite its rarity.



Figure 62: A traditional village shop front with blue tiled stall riser.

The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

#### Considerable significance

- Modest scale of buildings, mostly One to three storeys high
- Street fronted properties
- Broken roof lines
- Predominance of stone building materials, usually limestone or sandstone
- Predominance of red pantile and chimney stacks
- Stone kneelers and water tabling
- Georgian symmetry in larger properties

- Traditional timber window styles – Yorkshire sliding sash (some tripartite), lead glazing, multi pane sash and four pane Victorian sash
- Traditional timber doors panelled or plank and batten.
- Cast iron rainwater goods
- Date stones
- Agricultural character (barns, outbuildings, narrow windows, cart doors, lack of chimneys)
- Mill and its associated miller's house and other features associated with water management for the mill
- Gable attic window openings to 18th century houses
- Over lights to doors
- Bow windows
- Thatched cottage (one!)
- Arched, neo-Gothic arched and leaded windows
- Traditional Shop Fronts

#### **Some significance**

- Glazed openings to doors, half glazed mid-20th century timber doors
- Stained glass to early 20th century windows

#### **Limited significance**

- Porches
- Dormers
- Bay windows

#### **Opportunities to conserve and enhance**

- The increasing use of plastic windows and doors has eroded the historic character of some parts of the Conservation Area such as High Street and Pickering Road, although the withdrawal of permitted development rights will have arrested this process. Homeowners need more advice on the effectiveness of secondary glazing and traditional sustainable materials regarding insulation and long term maintenance
- A relisting exercise in the village will increase the number of buildings designated
- Any new development needs to be modest in scale and reference traditional building materials; most development has traditionally been street fronted (but some with gardens), any new development should retain this layout.

- Massing should be broken up with varying roof lines, small windows, and simple timber doors, although glass can be used as a building material where visual permeability is required
- Cast iron rainwater goods should be retained or replaced with like for like materials when defective
- Information on appropriate pointing materials and styles will help homeowners protect the building fabric from damage
- Agricultural character should be retained where it survives
- In line with National Planning Policy, alterations to listed buildings and significant other buildings should be informed by a Statement of Significance and any necessary recording work of architectural features.

### 9.3 The little details

**In a nutshell: date stones old and new, gateposts, boot scrapers, rails and steps, war memorial and weathervanes, age worn steps and stocks and ancient village pounds.**

Historic and architectural interest in the Conservation Area is derived from small features that individually might make little impact, but collectively, contribute considerably to its character. These are the sorts of things that add local distinctiveness and texture to the built environment and, often, a sense of connection with history – these can all too easily be overlooked, replaced, ‘improved’ or ignored, adding to a subtle sanitisation and erosion of local distinctiveness. These are the sorts of things we do not always notice until they are gone.



The following elements have been identified as being of significance to the Conservation Area:

#### Considerable significance

- Traditional door furniture
- Datestones
- Stone gateposts
- Decorative iron gates, wooden gates
- Railings to house fronts
- Boot scrapers
- Worn steps
- Rails in metal and timber

- Pounds

### **Some significance**

- War memorial
- Weather vanes
- Hanging shop signs

### **Opportunities to conserve and enhance**

- Small historic features are to be cherished and quirky hanging signs and ornamental details on buildings can add interest
- The war memorial is in an obscure position. Can it be moved to a more prominent one?
- The village pound on Maltongate has had some maintenance with tree removal, but is under appreciated and could benefit from a little more conservation and some interpretation

## **10.0 Recommendations for Future Management**

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal has also identified what the architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area is and how that contributes towards its significance. This process has flagged up a number of features which merit conservation and enhancement and which should be taken into consideration in any management decisions in the future. These ‘opportunities to conserve and enhance’ have been included in the main report so that it can be clearly seen why they are being recommended because they follow on from the statements of significance. For ease of use, they will be duplicated here.

### **10.1 Conserving and enhancing the street plan, the surfaces, open and green spaces, and boundaries of the Conservation Area**

- The designed landscape of Thornton Hall is an essential part of the curtilage and setting of the listed building at Thornton Hall; it should be included in the Conservation Area (see above)
- A statement of significance should be considered to help better understand the evolution and significance of the designed landscape around Thornton Hall. Following from this, a landscape restoration plan should be prepared to help make future management decisions.
- The use of visually permeable boundaries in designed ‘naturalistic’ parkland helps to retain intended views
- Tree preservation orders should be created for the mature trees that once formed formal avenues, clumps, and perambulations in this parkland.

- Back lane developments should respect the linear layout of the inherited medieval field patterns
- The linear fields inherited from medieval times should be protected as the setting of the Conservation Area or the Conservation Area should be extended to include them
- The ability to distinguish the evolution of different medieval manors should be retained and new development should avoid blurring this distinction

## **10.2 Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Thornton le Dale**

- The use of limestone walls with red pantile copes is a means by which new developments can help to fit in with the character of the village
- The number of highways signs and road markings should be rationalised where it is safe to do so, and traditional surface materials used instead where traffic needs to be better managed. For example, traditional surface materials in specific areas such as on street parking areas or areas where traffic needs to reduce speed can create a similar affect while conserving and enhancing the significance of the Conservation Area.
- Traditional surface materials such as cobbles can also return a more rural and historic character to back lanes and pavements.
- Reduce signage and street clutter around the Market Cross
- The Market Cross is a listed building and does not need to be Scheduled; it can be de-scheduled without loss of protection or significance

## **10.3 Conserving and Enhancing the Archaeology of the Conservation Area**

- In line with National Planning Policy, developments within the Conservation Area may need to be informed by archaeological work and in some cases, further archaeological excavation carried out before or during development.
- Developments affecting historic buildings may need to be informed by a Statement of Significance
- Review the use of the landscaped grounds of Thornton Hall for car parking after a Statement of Significance and Landscape Restoration Plan has been carried out

## **10.4 Opportunities to conserve and enhance views and vistas**

- Any new development should consider its impact on the views shown on figure 8 and 13 (see above).
- Distant views of the village should remain as pitched roofs and pantiles with trees interspersing

- A statement of significance for Thornton Hall and its grounds could help to inform a better appreciation of the intended views of the hall from the 17th to 19th centuries

## **10.5 Conserving and enhancing the Historic Buildings of the Conservation Area**

- The increasing use of plastic windows and doors has eroded the historic character of some parts of the Conservation Area such as High Street and Pickering Road, although the withdrawal of permitted development rights will have arrested this process. Homeowners need more advice on the effectiveness of secondary glazing and traditional sustainable materials regarding insulation and long term maintenance
- A relisting exercise in the village will increase the number of buildings designated
- Any new development needs to be modest in scale and reference traditional building materials; most development has traditionally been street fronted (but some with gardens), any new development should retain this layout.
- Massing should be broken up with varying roof lines, small windows, and simple timber doors, although glass can be used as a building material where visual permeability is required
- Cast iron rainwater goods should be retained or replaced with like for like materials when defective
- Information on appropriate pointing materials and styles will help homeowners protect the building fabric from damage
- Agricultural character should be retained where it survives
- In line with National Planning Policy, alterations to listed buildings and significant other buildings should be informed by a Statement of Significance and any necessary recording work of architectural features.

## **10.6 Opportunities to conserve and enhance the little architectural and historic features**

- Small historic features are to be cherished and quirky hanging signs and ornamental details on buildings can add interest
- The war memorial is in an obscure position. Can it be moved to a more prominent one?
- The village pound on Maltongate has had some maintenance with tree removal, but is under appreciated and could benefit from a little more conservation and some interpretation

## **10.7 Recommended boundary changes**

The Conservation Area Appraisal process is designed to review the boundaries of the Conservation Area. This will be done in consultation with the local community, but one

significant extension is proposed to better reflect the architectural and historic interest of the village.



Figure 63: Left: the likely extent of the parkland associated with Thornton Hall. Right: the proposed extension to the Conservation Area in red (existing extent in blue)

**10.8 Thornton Hall Landscaped Parkland Extension**

Thornton Hall has always been associated with a significant land parcel. The character and size of this has changed over time, but its present day character is derived from the fashions of the late 17th century and more significantly from the English parkland scene of the mid-18th century. The Hall was redesigned broadly at the same time that the park was laid out in order to place the finest guest rooms so that they had the best view south towards the parkland; they are part of the same design and should be considered as one heritage asset, even if they are now in separate ownership. Understanding of the design of the Hall is impossible without an understanding of its associated landscape. Currently the Hall is within the Conservation Area as are parts of its grounds(walled gardens, fishponds, west circuit), but a significant part of the parkland which was laid out and designed to be appreciated from the south elevations of the Hall are excluded from the Conservation Area. The Heritage Asset has been cut in half by the Conservation Area southern boundary.

The proposed boundary would bring the parkland into the Conservation Area and the new boundary would be along Botton’s Lane (possibly the original 17th century access). This would impose no constraints on the cricket club (there is a long tradition of cricket clubs setting up in such parklands from the late 19th century), but future developments south of Thornton Hall would need to consider their impact on the intended views from the Hall. As the Hall is a listed building and the parkland its curtilage and setting, this should be a consideration in the planning process anyway. Bringing it into the Conservation Area will raise the profile of the significance of the parkland and create opportunities for resources to better understand the history of the park and the Hall and an enhanced management regime.

## 10.9 The Linear Field Pattern

The linear field pattern first set out probably in the 12th century and likely to have been enclosed in the 16th century survives well throughout the village. They survive particularly well south of South Lane, while others have been amalgamated to form larger fields. These merit conserving because they are evidence of the medieval village and its agricultural origins and are therefore of historic interest. This does not preclude any development taking place, but where alterations are proposed, the impact on the pattern would need to be assessed. In recognition of their historic interest, the linear fields should either be considered as part of the Conservation Area's setting which provides some additional planning controls, or they should be included in the Conservation Area. The extended part of the Conservation Area that would result is shown below. This would about the proposed extension to include Thornton Hall's parkland (see above).

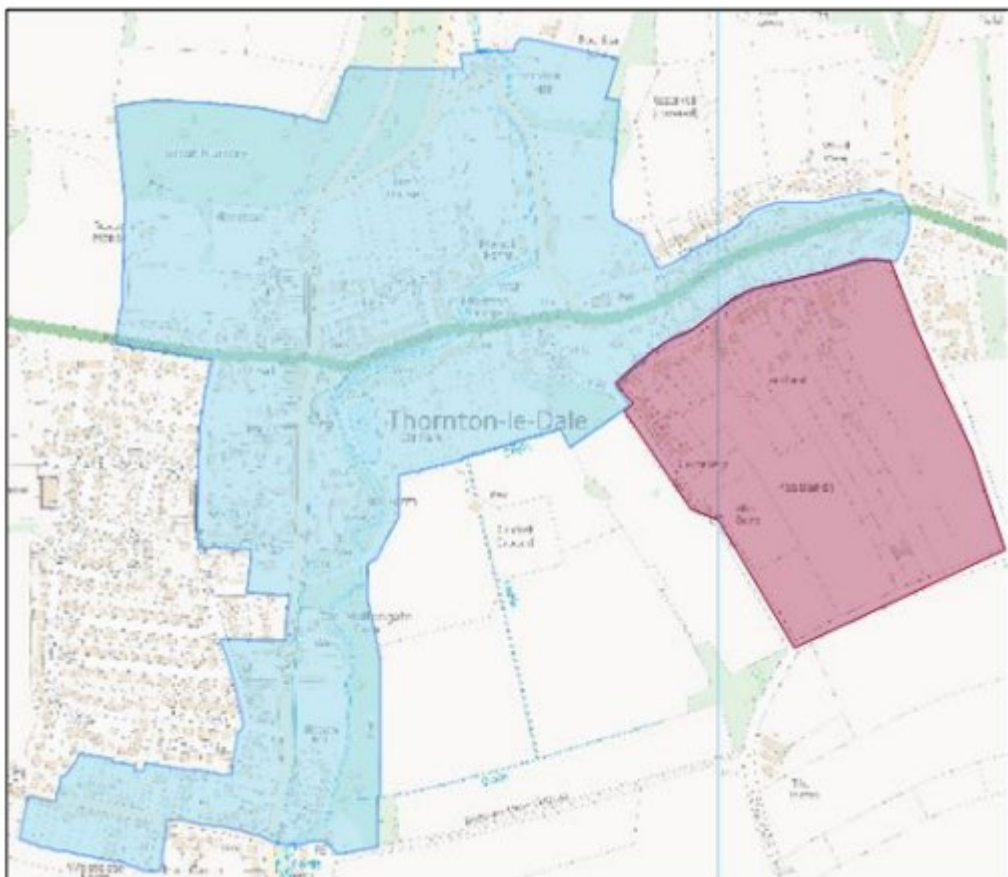


Figure 64: The proposed extension to the Conservation Area boundary to include the Medieval linear field plots

## 11.0 Conclusion

Thornton le Dale has been valued for its picturesque qualities for many years. The sparkling becks with cascades and tree lined walkways set it apart from other villages. These becks were tamed and rechannelled in the 18th century to create a very deliberate picturesque scene that was an extension of the landscaping around Thornton Hall as well as a power source for the mill. It is this landscaped stream with cascades and crystal-clear water which gives Thornton le Dale its distinctive character. The wealth of

views that merit cherishing are mostly within the village and nearly always include a beck and a cottage.

The street pattern reflects 12th century planning and amongst the buildings and green spaces, the possible layout of medieval manors can still be discerned. Overlying this in the centre of the village is the parkland of Thornton Hall which has also made a significant contribution to the special qualities of the Conservation Area because the naturalistic design was not restricted to the private parkland, but also extended into the village.

The buildings are mostly modest, mainly constructed of limestone and sandstone (but brick is used too), one to three storeys high, many with origins as farms. The predominant building type is cottagey and 18th or 19th century in appearance, but there are more sophisticated building styles too of Georgian town houses and Regency villas. Some civic architecture is also apparent but stands out as being untypical in terms of architectural styles and materials. The largest building in terms of massing is the Thornton Mill on the northern edge of the village, now converted into offices, but still very much a mill in appearance with its earlier 18th century miller's cottage next door and the millrace nearby. Thornton Hall is one of the larger buildings but its rear faces towards the village and is cut off from view by more massive walls.

The street front (or becksides) has buildings of varied heights and so the roof lines are always broken and the roofscape varied. Chimney stacks, often in brick, add to interest. The cottagey feel to the buildings is reinforced with the widespread use of simple batten and plank doors and traditional window types such as the Yorkshire sliding sash. Doors are often supplied with quirky door knockers and characterful furnishings.

The village is rich in green open spaces. The becksides are bordered with wide grass verges or trees and make a positive contribution to the streetscape.

The other significant green space is the village market cross and the stocks. This area is a little cluttered with street signs and bins which could perhaps be rationalised.

The appraisal has set out what is significant in terms of the architectural and historic interest of the village and made a series of recommendations to help conserve and enhance these special qualities. It has recommended including the parkland associated with Thornton Hall and the linear fields in an extended Conservation Area. It has identified opportunities for further research into Thornton Hall and its parkland and potential community heritage work at the village pound. It has also made recommendations to help guide future development, traffic management and building alterations so that the picturesque qualities of the village can continue to be appreciated for a further hundred years or more.

## **12.0 Appendix and Acknowledgements**

National Planning Policy Framework

The Town and Country planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (69, 70, 71 & 72)

Historic England Advice Note 1 Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019)

**North York Moors Local Plan (July 2020)**

Editions Alecto (Domesday) Limited 2003 Domesday Book. A Complete Translation

Bulmer 1890 History and Directory of North Yorkshire

Ekwall, E 1987 The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Placenames

Jeffery, R and Snowden, K 2009 The History of Thornton le Dale

Natural England 2015 National Character Area Profile 25. North York Moors and Cleveland Hills.

Ord, J.W 1846 The History and Antiquities of Cleveland

Page, W 1923 'Parishes: Thornton Dale', in A History of the County of York North Riding: Volume 2, ed. William Page

(London, 1923), pp. 492-497. British History Online

<http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/vol2/pp492-497> [accessed 21 July 2017].

Pevsner, N 1966 The Buildings of England. The North Riding

## 13.0 Management Overview

### Development Management

The Local Planning Authority are dedicated to managing Conservation Areas in accordance with the above detailed Planning Policy and Legislation. Development in a Conservation Area is controlled under the requirements of the General Permitted Developments Orders, Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Advice on development within a conservation area is available on the Authority's website. It is also recommended to submit a 'pre-planning application' to determine if planning permission is needed and any constraints upon development, before submitting an application. Planning Enquiries can be sent to [planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk](mailto:planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk)

### Archaeology

Developments on a small and large scale have the potential to impact upon archaeological remains. Any application for development will be subject to meeting archaeological requirements in the submission, determination, and post-decision periods. The Authority's Historic Environment Records and their specialist archaeological advice team can be found on the North York Moors National Park Authority Website. Enquiries can be sent to: [conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk](mailto:conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk)

### Nature Conservation and Wildlife

The Authority will determine applications for development in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, section 15 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment). Enquiries can be sent to: [conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk](mailto:conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk)

### Trees

Trees in the Conservation Area are protected by the designation where they have a stem diameter greater than 75mm (3 inches) when measured at 1.5 metres (5 feet) above ground level. Anyone wishing to prune or remove a tree must seek the necessary permissions from the Authority. Enquiries can be sent to: [conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk](mailto:conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk)

### Building Conservation

The current Conservation Area is covered by an Article 4 Direction, for further details on what this covers please find it on the website [northyorkmoors.org.uk](http://northyorkmoors.org.uk), or email the Building Conservation Team. The building Conservation team provide specialist advice on development to listed buildings and within Conservation Area. General enquiries can be sent to [building@northyorkmoors.org.uk](mailto:building@northyorkmoors.org.uk) and applications for specialist pre-application advice can be submitted via the Authority's website. Information on Conservation Areas [www.northyorkmoors.org.uk](http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk)