

13. Robin Hood's Bay

13.1 Location, Landscape Context and Setting

Robin Hood's Bay is located on the coast of the North York Moors National Park, approximately 8km south of Whitby, and 15km north of Scarborough. The village was described by Pevsner as *'the most picturesque fishing village in Yorkshire – a maze of steep little streets and passages with houses on a diversity of levels, some of them nice trim ashlar houses.'*

There are three parts to the village: Historic core, Victorian expansion and 20th Century expansion. These are described more fully in the 'settlement form and character' section below. The historic core and Victorian expansion are located within LCA 10e (Robin Hood's Bay Coast). They and the 20th Century expansion is within LCA 4b (Whitby-Cloughton Coastal Hinterland). The boundary of the Coast LCT deviates from its usual line following the England Coast Path in order to include all historic core of Robin Hood's Bay within the Coast LCT.

Its coastal setting is key to the character of Robin Hood's Bay. This is in terms of views and visibility, physical location, cultural traditions (the village started out as a fishing village and is now primarily supported by coastal tourism) and other 'perceptual qualities' such as sounds and smells.

The Coastal Hinterland also contributes to the setting in terms of the farmland which surrounds the villages, and the wooded gorges of King's Beck and Marnar Dale which meet the sea here. The hillside to the north of the village has recently been planted with vines.

The wider marine setting is also important, with open views out to the eastern horizon, and magnificent sunrises over the sea. Occasional ships are the only features which break the horizon.

13.2 Settlement form and character

The oldest part of the village – the historic core – is located at the coast, and extends up Marnar Dale, and the sides of the steep ravine created by King's Beck. Topography limited the land available for building, so houses could only expand upwards, and becks were culverted. The access road is very steep, and some houses can only be accessed through alleys or via steps. Houses may literally be built above others and there are lots of variations in levels. They have been rebuilt over the years, but most appear to be mainly 18th Century. They are built of stone, with distinctive local features including timber-panelled doors, and roofs of red pantile or Welsh slate. Beneath the houses is a maze of tunnels and cellars, and the village was renowned for smuggling. The narrow alleys are edged by pots of flowers and benches as very few of the houses have gardens.

Robin Hood's Bay expanded in the late-19th Century, following the opening of the Scarborough and Whitby railway in 1885. Substantial hotels, guest houses and villas were constructed on the flatter (though still sloping) land above the old village. The Victoria Hotel is the largest of these buildings, which line the B1447 and a series of straight streets off it to the east. The buildings are mixture of terraced and detached properties, sited for their views across the bay, and constructed of red brick. Many contain their original elaborate windows, and there are a wealth of architectural features including turrets, pediments and Dutch gables. Infill plots have been filled more recently,

sometimes blocking the views from older properties. The Victorian station buildings and yard (at the north end of the village) are now workshops and a car park.

20th Century expansion of the village is focussed on the west (landward) side of the B1447, particularly along Thorpe Lane. Behind the mid-20th Century semi-detached houses along Thorpe Lane there are cul-de-sacs of bungalows and a small chalet park. Most of the 20th Century properties are generic in design and layout.

13.3 Key views, approaches and gateways

Robin Hood's Bay's location within a broad bay means that it can be seen from the coast (including in long views across the bay from Ravenscar, and from the England Coast Path/ Cleveland Way and the Cinder Track), from the sea, and from elevated land (such as Brow Moor to the south). Viewpoints are marked on the 1:25,000 OS map near the mast at Brow Moor, and from the Coast Path on the northern side of Robin Hood's Bay. From both these viewpoints the village can be seen within its wider landscape and seascape setting.

Within the village there are many viewpoints from which to appreciate the coast and village. The grassy area near the former school provides a particularly pleasing view across the village's intricate roofscape towards the sea.

Robin Hood's Bay can be approached by road (along the B1447 or Thorpe Lane), by foot along the England Coast Path/ Cleveland Way which follows the cliff top, by foot or bike along the Cinder Track, and by boat from the sea.

Approaching Robin Hood's Bay along the B1447 there are occasional houses, a caravan park and a farm, but views of the village are restricted by topography and vegetation until the road drops steeply down and houses start by the village sign. There is a small amount of 20th Century linear development on the right, and the older terraces (viewed end-on) on the left. The road goes round a sharp bend (crossing the former railway line) before reaching the village proper. Splendid Victorian villas form a focal point in views from the road.

The approach to Robin Hood's Bay along Thorpe Road (from Fylingthorpe) is very short. On rounding the bends between the villages, St Stephen's church appears as a key landmark, and this marks the start of the built-up area. The road is lined by mid-20th Century houses (and occasional older properties), before meeting the B1447 and the substantial Victorian buildings which line it. The B1447 then continues down the hill, before reaching a roundabout giving access to a car park, with modern bungalows and caravans. From here the character of the road changes, becoming largely free of traffic as it drops very steeply into the historic core of the village. Open grass, a viewpoint overlooking the bay, and a belt of trees create a strong sense of separation between the higher part of the village (comprising Victorian and 20th Century buildings) and the lower historic core right on the coast.

When approaching along the England Coast Path / Cleveland Way from the south, there are long views across the Bay from Ravenscar. The path follows the cliff edge along the Bay. The village

appears closer from Cowfield Hill before the path enters the wooded Marnar Dale then emerges on the beach at the edge of the village.

North of Robin Hood's Bay, the England Coast Path/ Cleveland Way run very close to each other. There are spectacular elevated views (including an Ordnance Survey viewpoint) overlooking the Bay. The historic part of the village appears as a relatively small element in this view – a jumble of houses leading up from the beach. However, the open space and vegetation at the southern edge of the village separates it from the newer part of the village, which can't be seen. The paths then enter the top of the village past some detached houses and the Victorian villas on the cliff top. The Coast Path follows the B1447 the hill towards the historic core.

The separation between the historic core and the newer parts of the village are less apparent in views from the sea, where they appear as a more continuous line of buildings gradually rising from sea level to the cliff top. All ages of buildings can be seen, and the church is a prominent feature. As the boat approaches the village, the newer parts largely disappear from view, which is then dominated by the historic core.

13.4 Settlement edges

The open space and trees which separates the historic core and Victorian expansion of the village is a key edge and important to the character of the settlement.

In the historic core, topography defines the settlement edges, which are generally irregular and well-vegetated, particularly in the wooded valleys. Elsewhere, most edges are defined by hedgerows, trees and garden vegetation, creating generally soft edges to the village.

13.5 Heritage and nature conservation sites

All of Robin Hood's Bay is within the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast.

The historic part of the village is a Conservation Area, along with the lower parts of the wooded King's Beck and Marnar Dale Valleys. Within the Conservation Area there is a cluster of Listed Buildings. The parish church is also Listed, along with a small number of older stone-built properties including the Vicarage and an early Manor House (now the Bay Tree Hotel). However the Victorian hotels and villas are not Listed.

The coastal and intertidal area to the east of the village is designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (Robin Hood's Bay – Maw Wyle to Beast Cliff) for its geology, intertidal habitats and cliff habitats. To the south of the village the cliffs and intertidal area are also designated Special Area of Conservation for their vegetated cliff habitats.

Tree Protection Orders cover trees along New Road within the historic core of the village, a line of trees south of Manor Road, and isolated trees in gardens to the west of Station Road.

It is noted that the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (2017) recommends an extension to the Conservation Area to include the Victorian expansion to the north of the village.

13.6 Summary of key elements and features which may be sensitive to development

- The open and wooded land which separates the historic core of the village from later expansion and provides the upper setting to the historic village.
- The wooded valleys which form an undeveloped setting to the historic village.
- The coast, intertidal areas and sea which form the coastal setting to the historic village.
- Views of the village from the sea and the Coast Path, particularly from the south (including the OS viewpoint).
- The open grassy area by the old school, which contributes to the setting of the historic village and also enables views over it.
- The hillsides which form the backdrop to the Victorian development when seen from the Coast Path (from the south) and the bay.
- The intricate roofscapes of the historic core, which may be impacted by taller modern buildings.
- The short gap which separates the villages of Fylingthorpe and Robin Hood's Bay.
- The characterful narrow lanes and passages which could be compromised by insensitive highways works and signage.
- Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and their settings, land designated Heritage Coast, and protected trees.
- Sites designated for their nature conservation importance.



View of the bay across the rooftops of the historic core



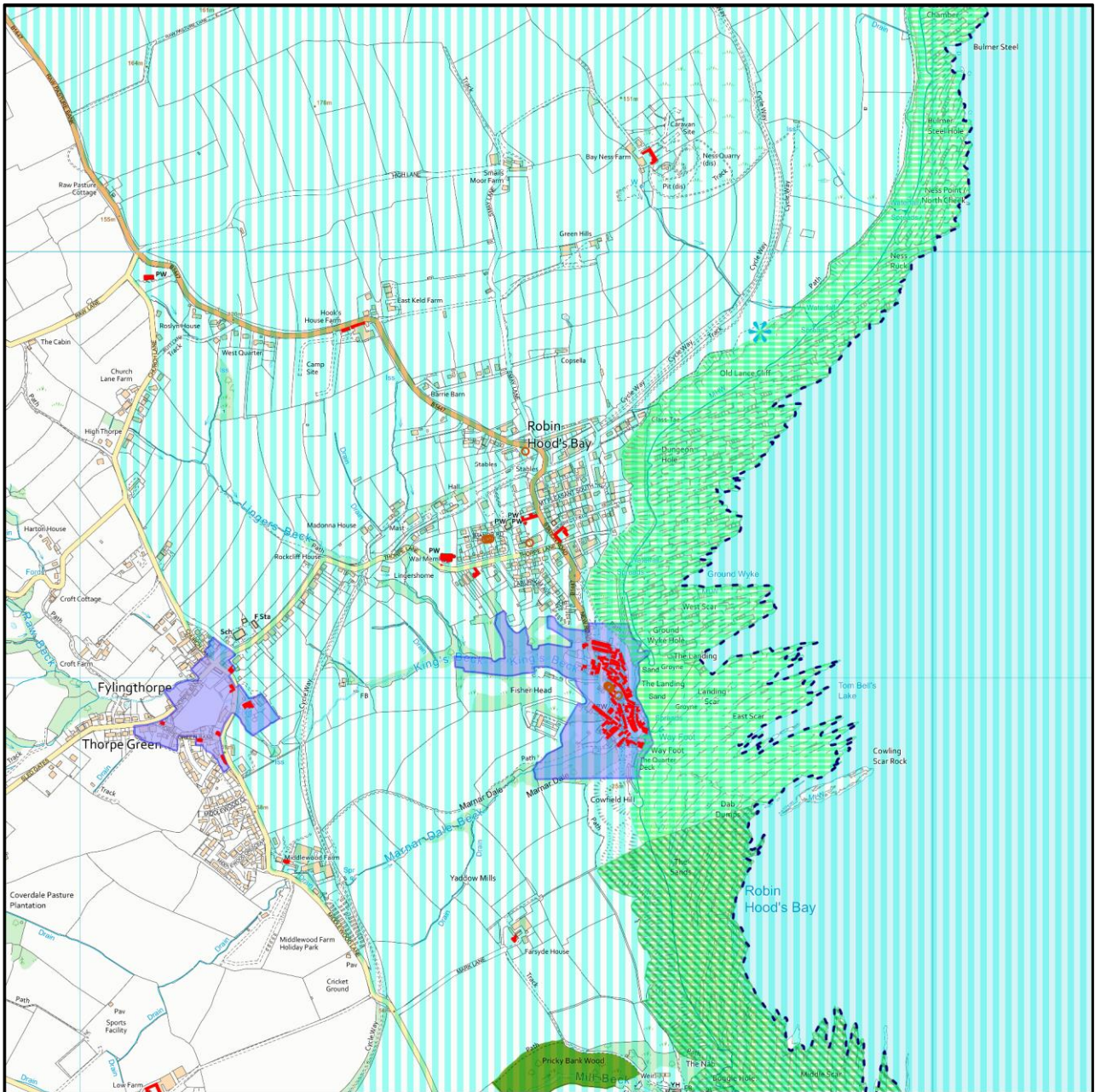
Robin Hood's Bay from Brow Moor. The historic core of the village is nearest the sea. The Victorian expansion is above it to the right, and 20th Century expansion above it to the left.



Robin Hood's Bay from the sea



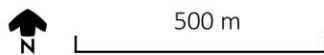
Robin Hood's Bay in its coastal setting, showing the separation between the older and newer parts of the village. The wooded valley of Marnar Dale is in the foreground.



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North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment Update 2021

Settlement Sensitivity Study
 Robin Hood's Bay



- - National Park Boundary
- Conservation Areas
- Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
- Heritage Coasts
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Ordnance Survey Viewpoints
- Listed Buildings
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Tree Preservation Orders

Map showing designated sites and Ordnance Survey viewpoint in Robin Hood's Bay and its environs