

## 16. Swainby

### 16.1 Location, Landscape Context and Setting

Swainby is located on the western edge of the North York Moors National Park, in the foothills of the Cleveland Hills and the valley of the Crook Beck. It is within LCT 9: Western Escarpment, in lower-lying land close to the National Park boundary. The A172 forms the National Park boundary at this point, and runs close to the north-western edge of the village.

To the west of the village (beyond the National Park boundary) is the Vale of Mowbray. To the east and south (within the National Park) land rises steeply through the Upland Fringe and onto the high moorland of the Cleveland Hills. To the north-east of Swainby, land rises towards Whorlton Castle and village.

The rising land of the Cleveland Hills, often clothed with trees, forms a distinctive horizon to the east and south of Swainby. The valley of the Crook Beck (Scugdale) is well-treed, and extends up into the moorland near the watershed at Benky Hill.

Approximately 1 mile north-east of Swainby, on slightly higher land is Whorlton Castle, a well-preserved medieval castle with earthworks of gardens, fishponds, field system and a deserted medieval village. An old railway line runs along the eastern edge of the village, still evident in places as a strong line of vegetation.

### 16.2 Settlement form and character

Swainby has its origins as a linear village, alongside the Crook Beck which flows down from the Cleveland Hills and along Church Lane. As a linear village following a stream perpendicular to the ridge it is typical of villages within this LCT. Most buildings in the older part of the village are constructed of sandstone (sometimes finely tooled with herringbone patterns) and with pantile roofs, but there are also some brick and/or rendered properties - particularly towards the northern end of the village - which appear to date from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Buildings are near-continuous on the western side of the stream. They face the road and stream, and are generally close together, creating a dense feel. In the northern part of the village (north of Church Street) there are roads on both sides of the stream, creating a symmetrical pattern of stream, roads and buildings.

The Crook Beck is crossed by road and foot bridges which form distinctive features in the main street. One of the road bridges is located next to the church, close to the junction with Church Lane, which leads to the neighbouring hamlet of Whorlton. Some ribbon development has occurred along Church Lane.

Another road bridge and junction occurs at the northern end of the main street. Historically it would have been the junction of roads to Potto and Ingleby, but the historic road layout has been changed by the later imposition of the A172.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the village expanded on the western side, behind the historic linear form. There is some 1930s housing along Black Horse lane, Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century housing at Garbutt Lane and Emerson Lane, and slightly later 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing at Claver Close. The latter also contains a school constructed in the 1960s but now derelict and awaiting redevelopment for housing and a car park. A caravan park is located on the eastern side of Crook Beck, to the south of Church Lane.

### 16.3 Key views, approaches and gateways

Approaching from the east from Whorlton, down Castle Bank, there is an initial glimpse of the church tower, before the rest of the village gradually comes into view. Church Lane is the most visible part of the village in this view. It is seen with the Cleveland Hills behind, and with valley-floor meadows in front. Hedgerows and vegetation along a disused railway line add to the green setting of the village.

Approaching from the south, along Coalmire Lane / Shepherd Hill, and Holgate, there are distant views of the village looking down from higher land. Scattered houses along the lanes create a gradual approach to the village. There is not a strong gateway, but there is still a sense of arrival at the more built-up part of the village.

Approaching from the west along Black Horse Lane, again there is a gradual approach due to linear development. There are long views across open fields towards the Cleveland Hills before the more built-up part of the village is reached.

From the north, along Swainby Ellers, there are distant views of the village against a backdrop of the Cleveland Hills. There is an awkward staggered junction across the A172, which forms the village gateway. Views within the village looking south and east include the Cleveland Hills as a backdrop, and often the Crook Beck and its bridges in the foreground. These views are generally framed by properties flanking the main street.

Passing the village on the A172 heading south-west, distant views of the village are hidden by the rising land around Whorlton Castle, and a slight road cutting. Close to the village there are glimpsed views to the church and rooftops across open fields, but they are filtered by vegetation in hedgerows and the old railway line. Again, the forested Cleveland Hills form a distinctive backdrop and skyline to the village.

### 16.4 Settlement edges

The strongest settlement edges are formed by vegetation along the disused railway line, and the southern part of the Crook Beck. There are also several mature hedgerows which help to filter views of the village. The historic property boundaries on the western side of the village have been lost to later development up against them. This 20<sup>th</sup> Century development follows field boundaries and its edge is formed by a mixture of garden vegetation, fencing and old hedgelines. Property boundaries along Church Lane, including those backing on the playing field, are a mix of scrappy fencing and vegetation.

## 16.5 Heritage and nature conservation sites

The Swainby Conservation Area covers the historic core of the settlement along the main street, and also extends north-eastwards to include Whorlton, Whorlton Castle, and the open land between Swainby and Whorlton Castle. It includes a number of Listed Buildings and structures. Several are concentrated along Church Lane, including the church, Church Farm, and the Victorian former school building. There are scattered Listed Buildings along the High Street, including 18<sup>th</sup> Century stone cottages, a bridge and pinfold. Whorlton Castle and church are listed Grade I. The castle undercroft is listed separately as Grade II\*.

Whorlton Castle is a designated Scheduled Monument, along with the surrounding church, and earthworks of the motte, park pale, fishponds, field system and deserted medieval village. The castle had its origins as a Norman motte and bailey, but continued in use throughout the medieval period. The Norman gatehouse was later remodelled in stone as a defensive Tower House in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. It remains standing to roof height, and is an imposing structure. Associated earthworks also relate to the later medieval emparkment of the estate. The late-medieval gardens are a rare and unusual survival in northern England, and include the remains of a complex water management system created to supply large ponds. The 12<sup>th</sup> Century church is largely ruined except for the chancel.

There are no designated nature conservation sites within the village or its immediate environs.

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

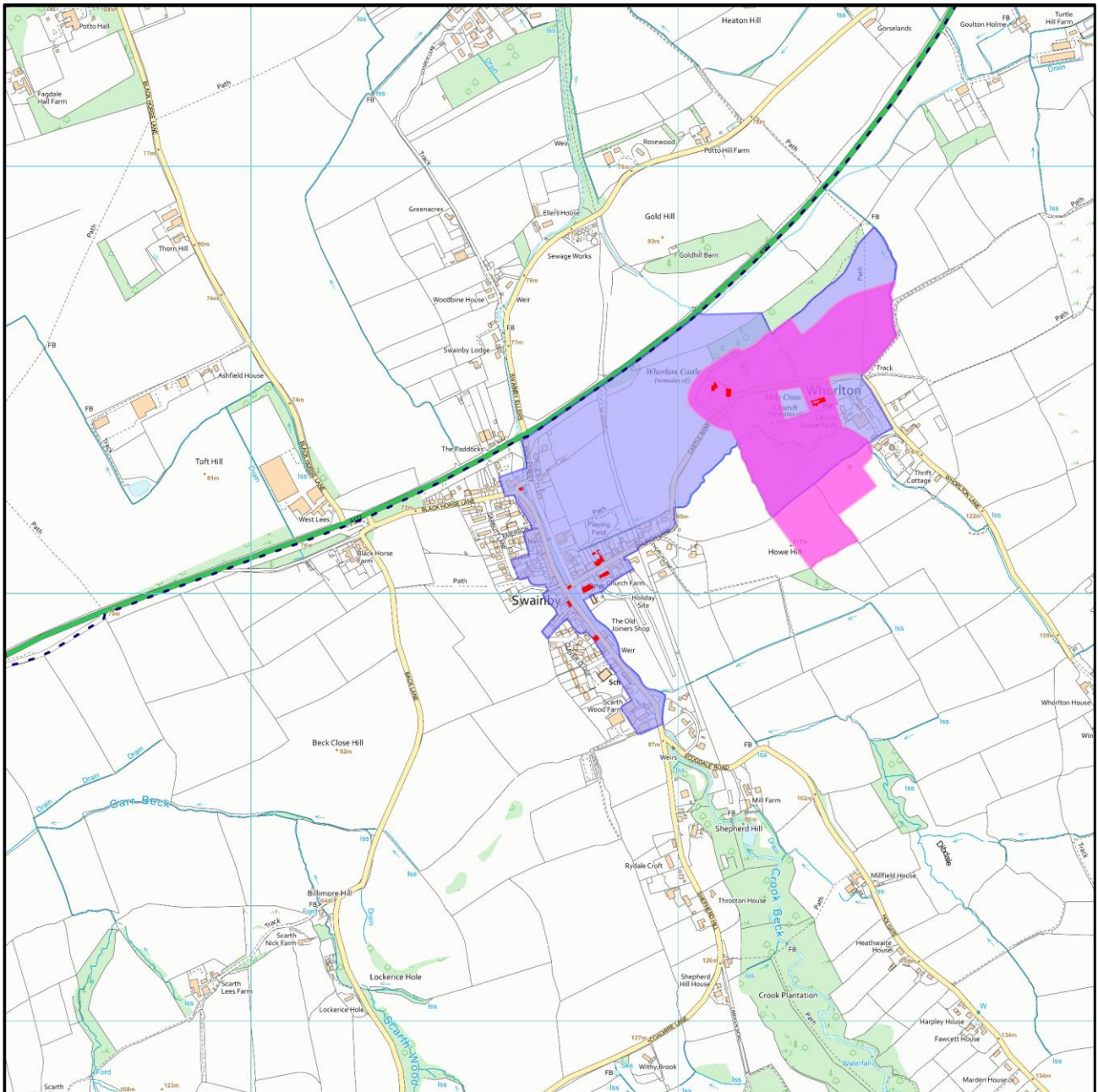
- Views towards the Cleveland Hills from within and immediately surrounding the village (for example looking north from Black Horse Lane).
- The traditional village form, particularly the relationship between the Crook Beck, buildings, roads and vegetation.
- The horizon formed by the Cleveland Hills to the east and south.
- Sloping open fields on the north-east side of the village (beyond the disused railway line) which form the setting and approach to Whorlton Castle (Scheduled Monument).
- Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and their settings.



View of Swainby from the south, looking from the lower slopes of the Cleveland Hills across the Vale of Mowbray. The church spire can be seen above the largest field tree on the right of the picture. Most of the buildings which can be seen in this view date from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, widening of the village from its traditional linear form.



View south-east along the High Street, showing the historic core, church spire and the bridge which carries Church Lane over the Crook Beck. The wooded slopes of the Cleveland Hills form the horizon.



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**North York Moors Landscape  
 Character Assessment Update 2021**  
 Settlement Sensitivity Study  
 Swainby



500 m



- - National Park Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Monuments

Map showing designated sites in Swainby and its environs