

2. Castleton

2.1 Location, Landscape Context and Setting

Castleton is dramatically situated at the end of Castleton Rigg, overlooking Danby Dale and Esk Dale. It is therefore at the meeting-point of three Landscape Character Types: Moorland (LCT 1); Moorland Dale (LCT 2) and Central Valley (LCT 8). The broad Esk Valley runs west-east within a wide floodplain to the north of the village core, with the moorland of Danby Low Moor covering much of the northern side of the Esk Valley. Moorland also covers Commondale Moor to the west, and the linear headland of Castleton Rigg to the south-west. The open moorland contrasts with the intricate field patterns of Danby Dale, located to the south of Castleton. The tree-lined Danby Beck meanders along the valley floor and passes close to the eastern edge of Castleton, separating Castleton from the elevated moorland outcrop of The Howe. The bracken-covered slopes of The Howe, along with the surrounding moorland and dales, form the setting of the village, and can be seen in many views from within the village.

2.2 Settlement form and character

Castleton has a mixture of linear and nucleated forms, reflecting different stages of development. It is an excellent defensive site, with views over the surrounding landscape, and contains the site of a Norman motte and bailey castle. It also functioned as a market town, conveniently located at the crossroads of routes running north-south over the moors, and east-west along the Esk Dale valley. The older part of the village, near the castle, is nucleated in form with tightly packed buildings, and terraced properties extending along the High Street and Church Street. The density of the settlement is relieved by a series of small village greens.

In the later 19th and 20th Centuries, the village expanded in a linear fashion along the road towards Castleton Rigg, presumably to take advantage of the stunning views from here over the surrounding countryside. Because of their elevation, these houses are by far the most visually prominent part of the village, and can be seen from a wide area. There are also some 20th Century cul-de-sacs on the south side of the village, which are generally slightly set down from the ridge top, and a sheltered housing complex near the castle.

The railway line passes through the Esk Valley to the north of the village. Some dispersed development has taken place on the north side of the River Esk, including buildings associated with the railway and subsequently repurposed. This area forms an outlying part of the village, separated by the valley floor which contains a pub, mill, bridge, and cricket pitch.

2.3 Key views, approaches and gateways

Castleton's elevated site means that it is visible over a wide area: from within Danby Dale; from Esk Dale; from Commondale Moor and from Danby Low Moor. Roads approach the village from all these directions, and provide long-distance views of the village in its setting. It is generally the higher parts of the village, where it has expanded up onto the higher land of Castleton Rigg, which are most visible.

Approaches from the south and west pass 20th Century housing on the edges of the village before arriving at the historic core, creating a more gradual approach. There are some older isolated properties along the Danby Brook. Between properties at the western end of the village is an entrance into the historic Quaker cemetery.

Approaching from the north, the village comes in to view as the road descends Three Howes Rigg. The road passes some dispersed development on the northern valley side before passing under the railway line and over the River Esk. This point marks a very distinctive approach and attractive gateway to the village. The cricket pitch is in the foreground, with a steep hillside behind, and some buildings within the village visible on the ridge-top.

Trees and garden vegetation create a very soft approach to the village from the east along Church Street. Between scattered properties there are long views south to The Howe and down Danby Dale, which emphasise the setting of the village. This approach passes the church of St Michael and St George before arriving at the village core.

There are excellent views of the village from The Howe to the east, which (like the surrounding moorland) is common land.

From within the village there are glimpsed views out over the surrounding moors and dales. This gives the village a very strong sense of place. For example, there are views south down Danby Dale from Church Street; framed views of The Howe between buildings looking east along the High Street, and views north towards Danby Low Moor through gaps between properties along the High Street.

2.4 Settlement edges

Trees on the north-eastern side of the village – around the former castle site (Castle Hill) and the church of St Michael and St George – provide some screening. The detached part of the village to the north of the railway line is also relatively well-vegetated, with mature trees filtering views of properties. Elsewhere, settlement edges are generally less robust – most comprise garden boundaries or old field walls.

A key feature of the village edge is the steep fields between the High Street and the cricket pitch. These fields provide a green backdrop in views from the valley floor, and also prevent the village from sprawling down the valley side.

2.5 Heritage and nature conservation sites

The site of the Norman motte and bailey castle on Castle Hill is a Scheduled Monument. There is also a Scheduled Monument covering a prehistoric cairnfield on the summit of The Howe, to the east of the village.

The historic core of the village is a Conservation Area. The Conservation Area extends to include land on both sides of Station Road and Church Street, and between Church Street and The Howe. It covers the Scheduled Monument on Castle Hill, and several listed buildings which include the school, former church, pub and a couple of cottages.

The nature conservation designations associated with the nearby moorland (Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation) extend up to the western edge of the village, wrapping around to include land on the northern side of High Street.

Tree Protection Orders cover trees within the Scheduled Monument on Castle Hill, and between Ash Lea and High Street.

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

- The steep open slopes on the north side of the village, as they form the backdrop to views up from the valley floor, and prevent the village appearing to sprawl down the valley side.
- Elevated land which is visible over a wide area, specifically the western end of the high street. Existing houses on this ridge are very visually prominent.
- Glimpsed views out from the village into Danby Dale and Esk Dale, and across to The Howe.
- The small greens (for example at the junction of Ashfield Road and Church Street, and the corner of Primrose Hill) and views from them.
- Protected Trees; Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and their settings.
- Land designated for its nature conservation importance.



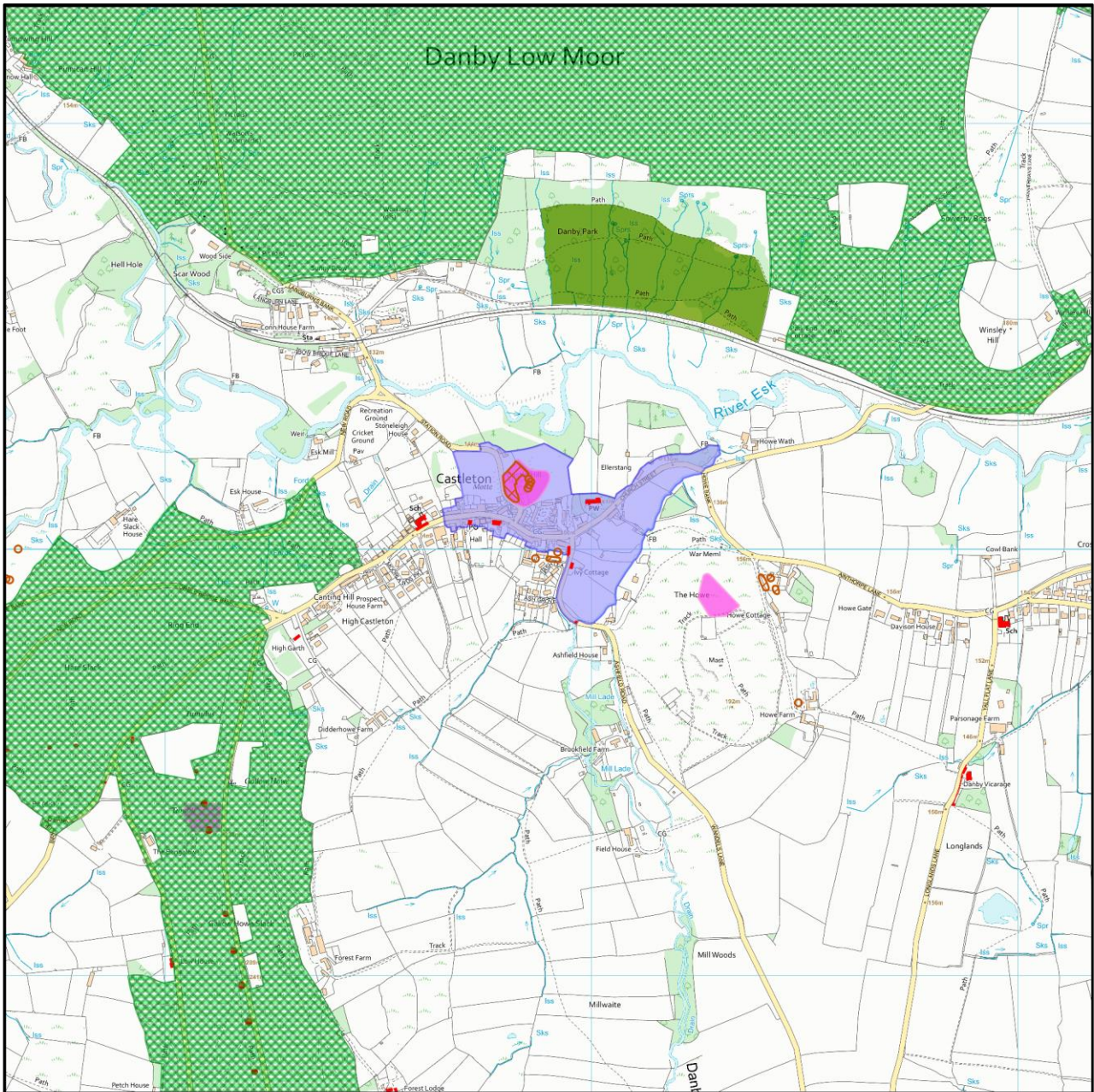
View of Castleton from Commondale Moor. Note the visibility of the ridge-top ribbon development



View of the cricket pitch, green backdrop and ridge-top houses from Eskdale valley floor



View along High Street, looking east towards The Howe



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



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|---------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Scheduled Monuments | Special Areas of Conservation | Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands |
| Listed Buildings | Special Protection Areas | Tree Preservation Orders |
| Conservation Areas | Sites of Special Scientific Interest | Tree Preservation Orders (Parcels) |

Map showing designated sites in Castleton and its environs