



North York Moors
National Park

North York Moors National Park Settlement Sensitivity Study

Final Report
December 2021



FIONA FYFE
Associates Ltd.



North York Moors
National Park

North York Moors Settlement Sensitivity Study 2021

Fiona Fyfe Associates
on behalf of
North York Moors National Park Authority

Final Report, December 2021



Introduction

Purpose and methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify the key sensitivities associated with each of the 16 'Larger Villages' within the North York Moors National Park, plus the town of Helmsley. It is these places where small-scale development (such as affordable housing schemes) is most likely to be located.

A settlement's character and 'sense of place' can be eroded by development which does not respect its form, landscape setting, distinctive features or views. By identifying and protecting the sensitive features of each settlement, it is hoped that any future expansion will not damage the settlements' unique character and sense of place, and will also be sensitive to the landscapes in which the settlements are situated.

The studies were prepared by qualified landscape architects with extensive experience in landscape and visual analysis, and sensitivity assessment of settlements. They were undertaken at the same time as the update of the North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment.

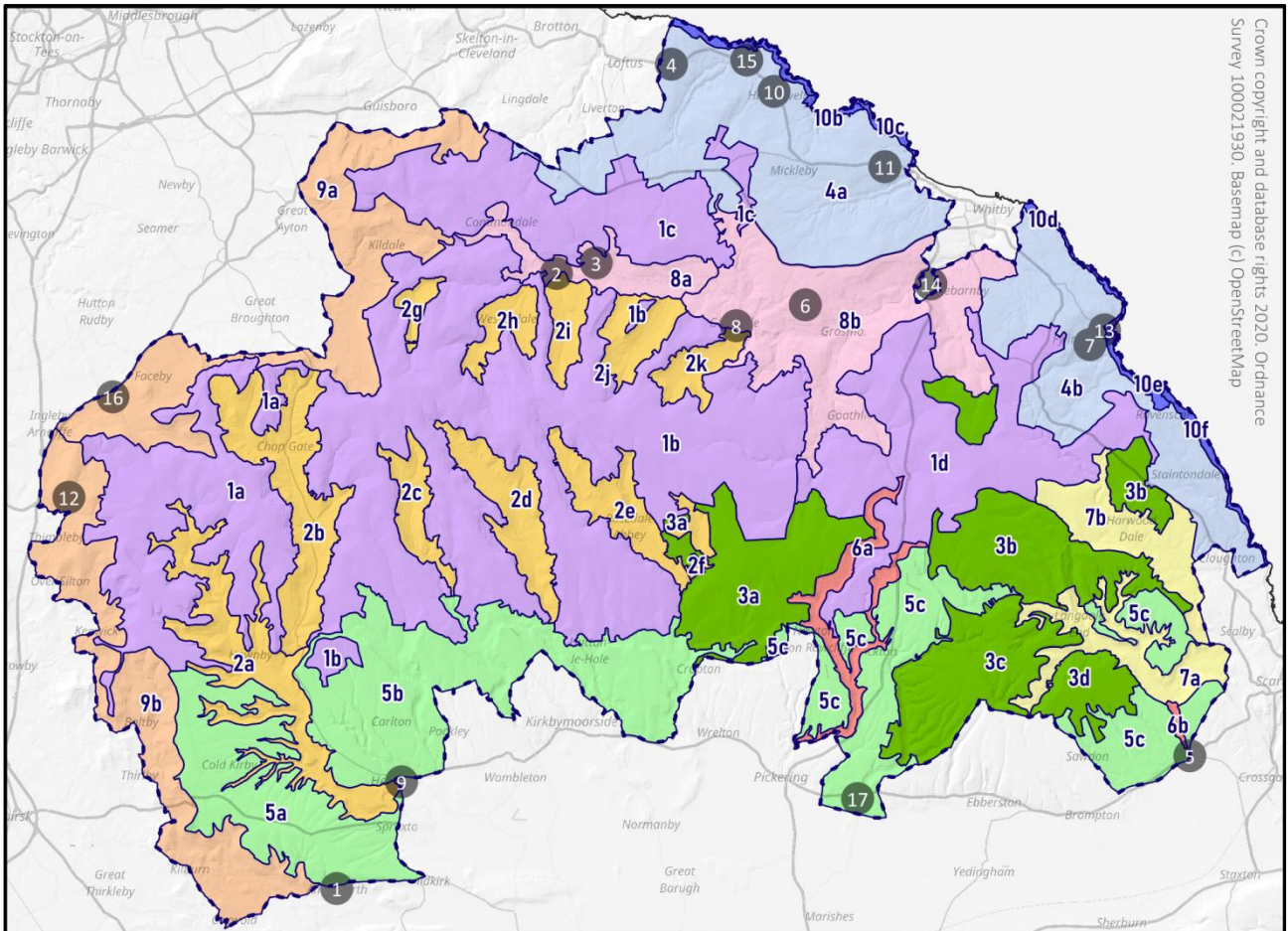
Desk studies and fieldwork were undertaken to understand settlements' landscape context, form and character, approaches and gateways, edges, and visual relationship with their surrounding landscape.

It is important to note that the study identifies the key sensitivities of settlements as a whole, rather than considering individual development sites or specific schemes. The authors did not visit every land parcel, lane, footpath or potential viewpoint, as this was outside the scope of the brief. This document therefore does not replace the need to undertake an appropriate level of detailed appraisal once specific development sites and proposals are being considered.

The settlements covered by this study are shown on the following map, together with the Landscape Character Types found within the National Park. The settlements are:

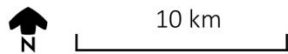
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Ampleforth | 2. Castleton |
| 3. Danby | 4. Easington |
| 5. East and West Ayton | 6. Egton |
| 7. Fylingthorpe | 8. Glaisdale |
| 9. Helmsley | 10. Hinderwell |
| 11. Lythe | 12. Osmotherley |
| 13. Robin Hood's Bay | 14. Sleights |
| 15. Staithes | 16. Swainby |
| 17. Thornton-le-Dale | |

North York Moors Settlement Sensitivity Study 2021
INTRODUCTION



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North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment Update 2021
Settlement Sensitivity Study
Landscape Character Types and Areas



- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Ampleforth | 11 Lythe |
| 2 Castleton | 12 Osmotherley |
| 3 Danby | 13 Robin Hood's Bay |
| 4 Easington | 14 Sleights |
| 5 East and West Ayton | 15 Staithes |
| 6 Egton | 16 Swainby |
| 7 Fylingthorpe | 17 Thornton-le-Dale |
| 8 Glaisdale | |
| 9 Helmsley | |
| 10 Hinderwell | |

- - National Park Boundary

● Settlements

□ Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Types

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Moorland | 6. Glacial Channels |
| 2. Moorland Dales | 7. Limestone Dales |
| 3. Forest | 8. Central Valley |
| 4. Coastal Hinterland | 9. Western Escarpment |
| 5. Limestone Hills | 10. Coast |

Map showing settlements covered by the Settlement Sensitivity Study, and National Park Landscape Character Types

Settlement diversity and sense of place

The settlements of the North York Moors are both distinctive and diverse. This diversity arises through a combination of their varying origins and development (which affect their form and layout) and their location within the landscape (and therefore their visual and functional relationship with it).

Settlement form and development

The origins of settlements are very varied. They include: market towns which developed at crossroads and have a nucleated form (e.g. Helmsley); Norman planned villages, which are generally linear in form, with properties in linear plots facing each other across a wide main street (e.g. Levisham); coastal fishing villages squeezed in at the base of cliffs or within steep-sided coastal valleys (e.g. Robin Hood's Bay); or dispersed villages, with origins as individual farms which have gradually infilled and merged into a single settlement (e.g. Glaisdale).

Most settlements display several phases of development. The historic core often has medieval or even earlier origins, and houses dating up to the early 19th Century. Most of the buildings are vernacular in style, constructed of local stone with red pantile roofs. Many of the historic cores of settlements are Conservation Areas.

Many settlements saw expansion in the 19th Century. This takes a number of forms, including compact terraced miners' cottages with a less locally-distinctive style (e.g. Upper Rosedale), and substantial villas along roads or sited to maximise coastal views (e.g. the upper part of Robin Hood's Bay).

Early-mid 20th Century expansion has often included 'ribbon development' along roads on the edges of villages (e.g. Danby), or denser estate-style developments (e.g. the upper part of Staithes). Much Mid-20th Century development was not in keeping with local vernacular styles or built form, and often lacked the strong association with the landscape found in the original settlement (see 'settlement location' below). Recent decades have seen a reduction in linear development, with new housing tending to be located within land parcels on the edges of settlements, or infill of plots within settlements. Stricter planning laws have meant that the vast majority of recent development is in keeping with local character and traditional building materials, enforcing the distinctive character of settlements within the North York Moors.

Sometimes the original form of a settlement has been obscured by later development, but elsewhere the historic form remains intact and easy to identify. In the coastal villages of Robin Hood's Bay and Staithes, new parts of the villages have developed on the cliff tops above the old villages, separated by small areas of undeveloped land. These small undeveloped areas are hugely important because they provide a visual and physical break between the old and the new, and are fundamental to the settings of the old coastal villages.

Settlement location

The location of settlements within the landscape is as variable as their form. Some are within valleys or nestled at the foot of slopes (e.g. Thornton-le-Dale). Others may be higher on valley sides (e.g. Egton). Some may be close to the coast, but set back from the cliffline and sheltered by landform (e.g. Hinderwell), whilst others (such as Runswick Bay) are right on the beach.

Sometimes the surrounding landform itself is an important component of settlement character. For example, Ampleforth is located on a terrace within a steep escarpment, and Castleton is on a mound at the mouth of Danby Dale.

Buildings, landmarks and designated sites

The unique sense of place created by the combination of settlement form and location is further enhanced by the presence of distinctive buildings or landmarks within the settlement or its setting. For example, Duncombe Old Castle and park adjacent to Helmsley, or the prominent church tower at Swainby. Usually such prominent sites and features are designated for their nature conservation or cultural heritage value. Examples of such designations include Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, Tree Protection Orders, Heritage Coast, National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Views, approaches and gateways

Views from within the settlement to its surroundings or distinctive landmarks are a constant reminder of its location and identity, and add greatly to its sense of place. Views towards the settlement, where it is seen in its landscape context, are also important.

The topography and form of a settlement will affect the approaches to it. Sometimes the approach to a village is an important part of its character (for example a long hill or tree-lined avenue). In some cases a sense of arrival at the village is sudden; in others the village can be seen over a long distance. Often individual houses or linear development (especially along main roads) creates a sense of gradual arrival, and it can be difficult to define a clear 'gateway' to the settlement. Elsewhere a lack of peripheral development, or a significant building such as a church on the edge of a village, creates a strong gateway and an immediate sense of arrival at the historic core.

Design principles

The *National Park Design Guide* should also be referenced when locating and designing development in the National Park.