

# Heritage, People, and Place: A Placemaking Strategy for Bolton Abbey



August 2024

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# Foreword

Bolton Abbey is a place of wonder. Its combination of landscape, heritage and visitor infrastructure provides an exceptional opportunity for people of all backgrounds to experience, learn about and understand our natural world, and the cultural heritage that has been built in and around it over centuries.

The estate has been nurtured and conserved by the Devonshire family since 1753, and treasured by them, those who work on the estate, local communities and visitors from the local area, the United Kingdom and the world ever since.

Generations of caretakers and custodians at Bolton Abbey have worked hard to maintain and preserve the special characteristics that make it the place it is today, and which equally make it so popular and inviting for visitors. However, change has been a constant - to the natural and built environment, to the way that the estate has been managed, enjoyed and occupied, and to the growth of commerce and business. Throughout this evolution, the influence of the Devonshire family has been key in ensuring that any development is sensitively undertaken, with respect to the environment, heritage and the needs of local people.

This moment is no different, and we see a clear need and opportunity to focus on the development of our visitor proposition at Bolton Abbey. Not only will this allow us to respond to changing visitor needs, making us more inclusive to those who want to enjoy and explore the estate in new ways, but it will also futureproof our ability to care for Bolton Abbey's precious and important landscape and heritage.

This plan sets out our proposed way forward and approach.

Heritage, People, and Place: A Placemaking Strategy for Bolton Abbey has been developed over a period of ten years. It is the outcome of intensive area assessment, options appraisals, internal and external consultation and community meetings. As well as ongoing work, engagement and evidence gathering undertaken in close partnership with our local planning authorities and Historic England.

Historic England's Conservation Principles document states that: "Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place and its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations."

This is what our placemaking strategy aspires and intends to achieve. We thank those who have supported us in its development and look forward to the strategy's delivery for the benefit of people and place, in tandem with partner organisations and key stakeholders.

Ben Heyes  
Estates Director, Yorkshire

# Devonshire Group

The Devonshire Group comprises charities and businesses throughout the UK and Ireland, including Chatsworth, which sits within the larger Derbyshire Estate, the Bolton Abbey Estate in North Yorkshire, the Lismore Estate in County Waterford, and the Compton Estate in Sussex.

The businesses include heritage attractions, shops, restaurants and luxury accommodation at Chatsworth, Bolton Abbey, and Lismore Castle in Ireland. The estates include tenanted businesses and residential property, a property development business with a pipeline of 2,000 homes, sustainable forestry and farming businesses and an estate farm shop at Chatsworth.

The vision of the Devonshire Group is to benefit our heritage, our people, and our shared future. Each generation of the Devonshire family is guardian of the fundamental values that enable our enterprises and charities to prosper. Further information on our core purpose and our shared common future can be found on the Devonshire Group website [www.devonshiregroup.co.uk](http://www.devonshiregroup.co.uk).

# Our Guiding Principle for Bolton Abbey

Bolton Abbey is a place of wonder. Its combination of landscape, heritage and visitor infrastructure provides an exceptional opportunity for people to experience, learn about and come to understand our natural world, and the built and cultural heritage associated with it.

The Devonshire family is passionately committed to the power of learning, of shared knowledge and insight. Interventions that introduce new buildings, create new spaces, routes and visitor experiences should be designed and delivered to ensure that the best possible opportunities are created for people to appreciate, learn about, and begin to understand the place that they are in, the Special Qualities associated with it and the contribution that each makes to the Yorkshire Dales National Park.





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# Introduction

This is a Strategy for the future care and management of Bolton Abbey and its environs.

## Rationale

This strategy has been created in response to the need for new tourism related development in the Core Visitor Area associated with Bolton Abbey (the visitor area). New development is needed to maintain the estate's ability to care for the sensitive and important landscape and heritage of the visitor whilst responding to changing visitor demands.

The ability of the visitor to host new tourism related development has been proven via a series of evidence-based studies (see details below). This need has been acknowledged and provided for by the adopted Craven Local Plan and the emerging draft Yorkshire Dales Local Plan.

## Role

The role of the Strategy is to recognise and provide a shared understanding of the special landscape setting and historical significance, and then to inform the scope and design of any tourism and mixed-use proposals within the designated visitor area.

The document is not a Supplementary Planning Guide and does not form part of the Development Plan for either the Yorkshire Dales National Park or North Yorkshire Council.

It is a statement of intent that provides context and vision for the whole visitor area. It will be used as an aid to decision making by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and North Yorkshire Council and will provide an evidence-based context against which to assess proposals.

The role of the Strategy is not to convey specific design details for or precise site areas where development may occur. The Strategy forms a base from which a Design Guide for the Core Visitor Area and site specific design details can be produced, with pre-application engagement with North Yorkshire Council and the Yorkshire Dales National Authority on proposals for change. The Advancing Proposals for Change section of this document provides more details relating to follow-on stages.

## Origin and Production

This Strategy has been produced by Rural Solutions for the Bolton Abbey Estate (the estate). It has been produced in collaboration with the two relevant planning authorities, Craven District Council / North Yorkshire Council, and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Key stakeholders including Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency have played an important role in its development.

In addition, to input from these organisations, the Strategy and Masterplan has been peer reviewed by the estate and its consultant team (including Lichfields, Gillespies, ARUP, BL-Ecology and FAS Heritage).

The document has been produced in response to requirements set out in Policy EC4a of the adopted Craven District Council Local Plan 2012 to 2032 and (draft) Policy E13 of the emerging Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan 2023 to 2040. The document will be reviewed against the wording of Policy E13, together with any other relevant policy as the Local Plan moves through its adoption process.

These policies recognise the status of Bolton Abbey within the spatial strategy of both Local Development Plans (adopted and emerging) as a village with Basic Services suitable to host limited growth to reflect the role of the village as a Tourism Hub. The specific policies (Ec4a and E13) provide for and seek to enable 'the provision of sensitive and sustainable tourism-led, mixed used development ... within the Core Visitor Area.

Throughout its lifetime, the Strategy will continue to be reviewed (and, as required, updated) in response to any prevailing national or local policy changes.

This Strategy is supported by and should be read in conjunction with an extensive evidence base, details of which can be found in the References section. This includes a full analysis of the planning policy context at the time of production of this document as set out in the **Bolton Abbey Development Option Appraisals study** produced by Lichfields. *Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page.*





## Evidence Base

The Strategy has been informed by an extensive series of evidence based studies carried out over the last ten years. These comprise:

- Bolton Abbey Village Masterplan (by CST April 2015)
- Bolton Abbey Heritage Capacity Assessment (by FAS August 2016)
- Bolton Abbey Landscape Capacity Assessment (by Gillespies July 2016)
- Bolton Abbey Village Masterplan High Level Transport Statement (by Arup December 2016)
- Bolton Abbey Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment (by Frey Consulting March 2015)
- Bolton Abbey Staff Accommodation Needs Assessment (by Frey Consulting March 2015)
- Bolton Abbey Estate Tourism Development Strategy (by CST October 2014)
- Bolton Abbey Heritage Landscape Management Plan (by English Nature et al 1993)
- Bolton Abbey Development Options Appraisal (2017)

## Scope and Contents

The Strategy provides insight into the estate's vision and objectives for the visitor area. It goes on to define the area, set out details on its characteristics, its history, the way it has evolved, the role it plays and the way it operates today.

The document highlights the importance and significance of the rich heritage, landscape and access infrastructure associated with the visitor area. It relies upon and links to detailed analysis of the heritage, ecology and landscape significance, land use, architectural and physical character.

The Strategy and supporting studies identify influences and challenges associated with consumer behaviour, climate change, nature recovery and the conservation of heritage and landscape. It also explores the role of the visitor area as a gateway to the National Park for visitors from across the region and the UK more widely, as well as its role in the promotion of enjoyment and understanding of these themes.

The document goes on to consider the type of initiatives and associated development that might be introduced to deliver on the shared vision for the visitor area. It identifies those parts of the visitor area that have been shown (by evidence-based analysis) to have the highest capacity to support change, introduces preferred areas for appropriate and sensitive development, and explains the ways these areas might be used.

Importantly, the Strategy then introduces a set of Development and Design Principles which set out how the scoping and design of proposals should relate to the vision, objectives, and development context. Development proposals will be expected to accord with these principles.

The document then sets out how proposals for change that are envisaged by the Strategy will be advanced, with a Design Guide produced and pre-application enquiries undertaken. Inputs from the planning authorities and Historic England made during the production process or this strategy and further inputs at the post-Strategy stage will be crucial to the delivery of appropriate change.

Finally, the Strategy provides insight into the type of social, environmental, and economic contribution that the initiatives and development considered could make to community, visitors, and shared (estate/North Yorkshire Council/Yorkshire Dales National Park) vision and objectives.





## Devonshire Group Vision and Values

The Devonshire Group's vision is: **Benefitting our heritage, our people, and our shared future.**

This holds true for the Bolton Abbey Core Visitor Area, where 'heritage' is cultural and natural; 'people' are the team, tenants, visitors (paying and non-paying), local community, stakeholders, suppliers, partners, learners, and others beyond who may have yet to experience Bolton Abbey, and 'our shared future' is the environment, wellbeing, education, and a sense of place.

The management policy for the visitor area will therefore be heritage, people and natural capital led; generational in outlook; ambitious in approach. We will adhere to our core values of always improving, decency and being inclusive. Thanks to the hard work of many, we can continue to work alongside stakeholders and policy makers to achieve mutually held objectives and make a positive contribution on a local, national, and global level.

We will protect and enhance the built, cultural, and natural heritage of the precious part of the Wharfe Valley that sits within our custodianship. We will welcome visitors from wherever they wish to come. We will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the visitor area and the contribution it makes to landscape character and scenic beauty. We will work to enable nature recovery, embedding a nature friendly approach in all we do.

We will follow a Triple Bottom Line agenda (people, planet, profit). In short, we will be working to significantly increase the part we can play - on a landscape scale and over the very long term - in climate change mitigation, biodiversity gain, landscape conservation, in thriving communities and local economy.



# Context

The area designated as the Bolton Abbey Core Visitor Area forms part of the Bolton Abbey Estate, a 12,000 hectare property situated in the southern part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the district of Craven.

The estate is made up of extensive tracts of farmland, woodland, and moorland. It includes significant heritage assets such as the Grade I listed 12th century Bolton Priory and associated Augustinian Foundation and the c. 15th century Barden Tower hunting lodge, and fifty two Grade II listed buildings and structures.

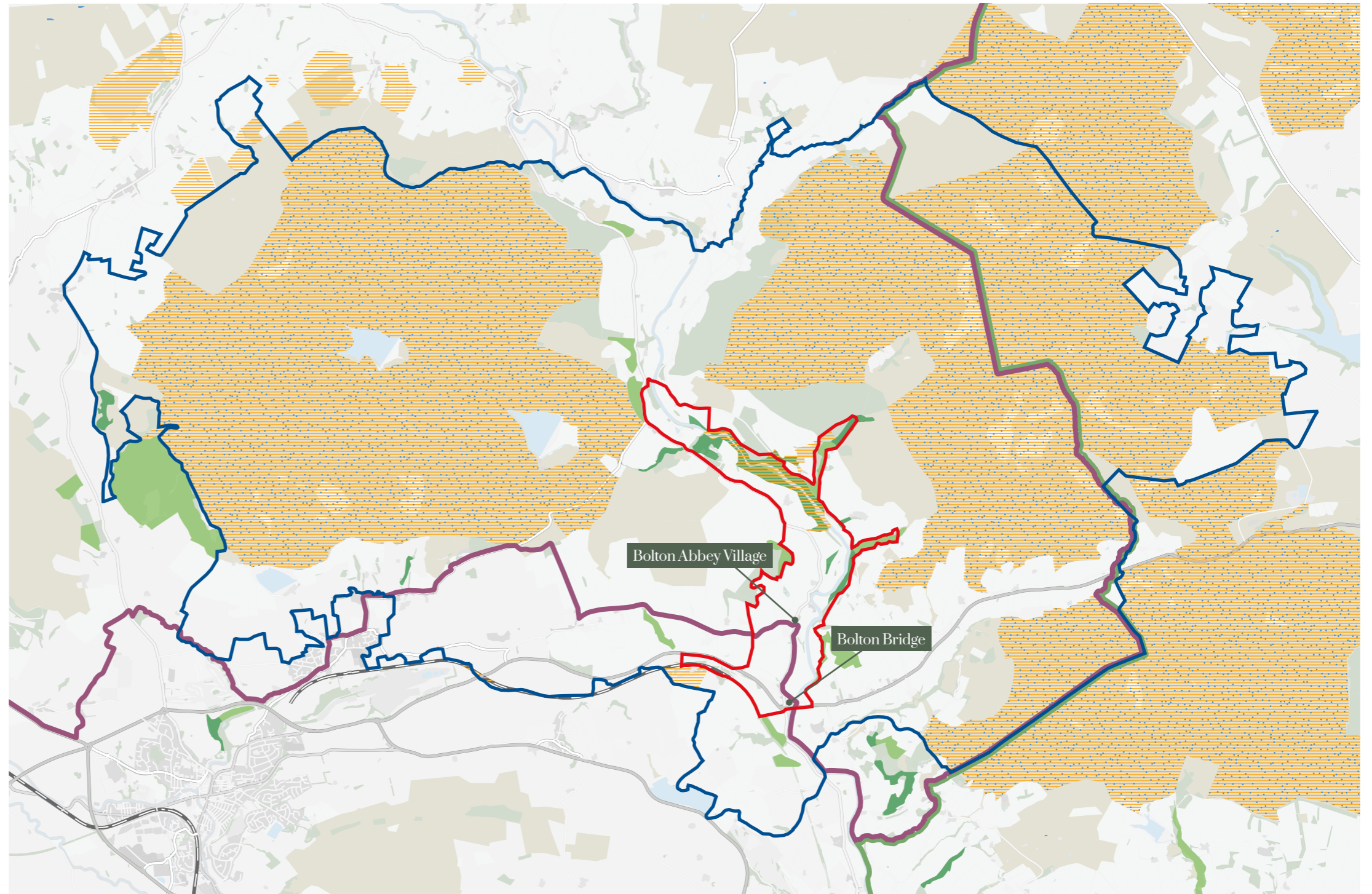
In addition to its setting as a gateway to the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the visitor area is closely physically related to the North Pennines Special Area of Conservation/Special Protection Area, West Nidderdale, Barden and Blubberhouses Site of Special Scientific Interest and includes Strid Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Part of the estate, including the visitor area, is subject to a Heritage Management Plan produced and agreed with the Capital Taxes Office in 1993. Its focus is on the maintenance of heritage buildings, of landscape and the provision of public access.

The Heritage Management Plan is not an impediment to management or commercial enterprise. It is enabling and provides for continued leisure and tourism activity alongside access, farming, woodland management and stewardship of heritage assets and landscape.

The area associated with Bolton Priory, the River Wharfe, Bolton Abbey and Bolton Bridge Villages has been a major focus for tourism activity since the 18th century. The area is of great cultural heritage and landscape significance. It has strong connections with the Picturesque element of the Romantic Movement of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Three aesthetic concepts established during the Romantic era divided the natural world into categories: the Pastoral, the Picturesque, and the Sublime. The Core Visitor Area includes elements of Pastoral, Picturesque and the Sublime landscapes,



but is renowned in particular for its Picturesque elements and association with the Picturesque movement. The Picturesque — a category developed in the late 1700s by clergyman and artist William Gilpin — refers to the charm of discovering the landscape in its natural state. Gilpin encouraged his followers to engage in “picturesque travel” —the goal of which was to discover beauty created solely by nature.

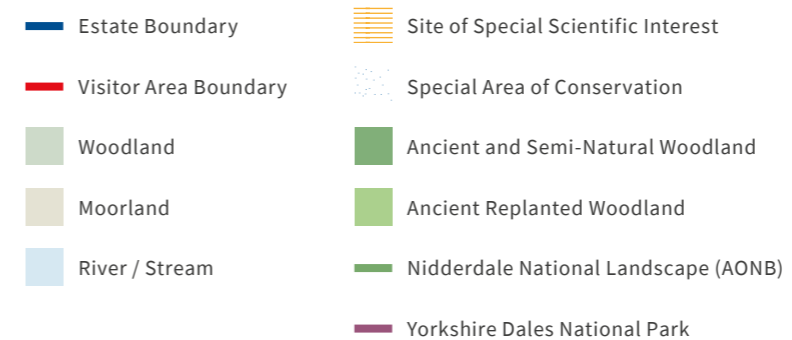


Figure 1 - Bolton Abbey Estate Landscape



The visitor area includes well known destinations associated with the Romantic era, such as Bolton Priory, The Strid Wood, Barden Bridge and Tower and Riverside. The Cavendish Pavillion, a major visitor facility, was first constructed in 1890 and has hosted millions of visitors since.

The visitor area now attracts in the region of 450,000 visitors each year. Whilst a significant number come daily from the local area to walk and exercise their dogs, many, following the habits of earlier generations, come from the urban centres of West Yorkshire and East Lancashire for a day out in the countryside whilst others travel from further afield attracted by history, heritage, and landscape. These visitors are served by a combination of infrastructure (car parks), services (hotels, cafes, restaurants) and access to the extensive trails and open space associated with the river Wharfe, its meadows and Strid Wood.

The area is also home to a vibrant village community, supports a post office and community facilities, and is the working centre of the wider Bolton Abbey Estate and farming community. As such, it fulfils an important village function for the locality as a result of the range of services it offers, many of which are supported by its role as a visitor attraction.

Visitor activity is a major driver of revenue for the estate and provides the funds needed to maintain and conserve the area's natural and built environment. This cost, which has been assessed as c. £1.5 million a year, is increasing as inflationary pressures drive up building and property maintenance costs, and as specialist conservation trades skills become scarcer.

The ability of the visitor business at Bolton Abbey to respond to changing customer behaviour and demand is constrained by its existing characteristics. It is missing a clear sense of arrival, has no wet weather facilities for families, limited outdoor play facilities, lacks opportunity to capture additional or secondary visitor expenditure and, as evidenced by the Bolton Abbey Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment carried out by Frey Consulting (2015) is disadvantaged by a lack of variety in overnight visitor accommodation within a 5km radius.

Furthermore, the estate's ability to respond to growing environmental challenges, opportunities, and associated public policy objectives is affected and constrained by a number of factors. These include the importance of its landscape setting and its heritage status, along with associated challenges such as the energy performance of historic buildings and the generation and storage of renewable energy, within the sensitive setting.

These challenges directly affect the ability of the estate to incrementally strengthen its visitor business through changes to the existing enterprise mix. They risk undermining the relevance and quality of the visitor proposition and the ability of the estate to maintain employment and invest in the proactive conservation of its built and cultural heritage and its natural capital.

The answer to these challenges is the careful and sensitive upgrading of the visitor experience and provision of new facilities to support a broader, more accessible, and year-round offer. Investment is also needed in supporting infrastructure and staff housing.

Top-Left: River Wharfe  
Top-Right: Village Shop / Post Office

Middle-Top: Bolton Priory  
Middle-Left: Cavendish Pavillion  
Middle-Right: Strid Wood

Bottom-Left: The Devonshire Arms  
Bottom-Right: Barden Tower





# Vision and Objectives for Bolton Abbey

The estate's vision is that Bolton Abbey should be a place for everyone; providing opportunity to experience and explore villages and countryside, to spend time with and get close to, the area's significant heritage, landscape, and natural capital assets, providing spaces that are accessible, inclusive, and meet the needs of people of different ages, backgrounds, cultures, and abilities.

This visitor experience should support a vibrant local visitor and land-based economy, the production and sale of nutritious food, and the generation of environmental and public services. It should be delivered with respect for the highly significant heritage assets and landscape setting and in a way that continues to retain quiet areas that support nature and enable the business of land management and stewardship.

To achieve this vision, the estate's future management and investment objectives will need to address:

## Community Needs

Maintaining and growing employment, services, and facilities for the benefit of residents; maintaining and improving access for the widest possible range of communities of interest and those with specialist needs.

## Visitor Needs

The current sense of arrival fails to mark the significance of place and consequently undermines and detracts from the area's heritage and landscape significance, there are no wet weather facilities, limited play facilities, lack of secondary spend opportunities, lack of 'mid-range' [3\*] visitor accommodation, and limited opportunity to connect with the wider estate.

## Business Needs

The vulnerability of the current visitor enterprise to poor weather with associated seasonality, limited local staff accommodation, niche focus of existing hotel, food and beverage, retail and spa offer.

## Conservation Needs

The prospect of diminishing income threatens the ability of the estate to independently fund and administer a programme of proactive environmental management (to enable nature recovery and address the impacts of climate change).

## Heritage Needs

The prospect of diminishing income threatens the ability of the estate to independently fund and manage the built infrastructure of heritage significance and administer a programme of architectural conservation.

## Sustainability Needs

A shift towards a smarter and more sustainable approach to visitor management and travel, improved sustainability within the estate enterprise (including reduced travel to work) and a more balanced approach to energy use.

The objective of the estate is to address these needs through the creation (over 20 -30 years) of new enterprises and facilities to enhance and diversify the visitor offer and local economy. These new enterprises will be supported with appropriate infrastructure and the provision of much needed housing for employees (current and former).



Top: Tithe Barn External  
Bottom-Left: Interior, Before Renovations  
Bottom-Right: Interior, After Renovations

Development within the estate needs to address the long-term sustainability of the business and thereby the conservation and management of heritage assets and landscape setting.

Change will be sensitively introduced, timed to act as logical and appropriate evolution. Proposals will be carefully designed to respond to and reflect the existing character of place and the exceptional significance of the landscape and heritage setting. The estate has a proven track record in this regard as evidenced by award winning projects at Forge Garage, at the Bolton Abbey Village Shop, for the extension of the estate office and the restoration and re-use of the Gd 11\* listed Tithe Barn. The extension of Cavendish Pavilion with a new shop and toilets in a vernacular style reflects another high quality development in recent decades. Where appropriate, opportunities will be taken to enhance the visitor's sense of arrival, to add open space, to improve visitor experience through walking routes, enhanced inter-connectivity and upgraded access and car parking arrangements.

The estate intends to take full control of the design and development process, working to the highest standards of sustainable design and construction. The sensitive and successful conversion of the Grade 2\* listed Tithe Barn at Bolton Abbey (winner of the RICS' "Best Commercial Project" Award in 2019) demonstrates how this can be achieved, along with the increased social, environmental, and economic contributions that new enterprise in heritage spaces can generate.





## The Visitor Area

The visitor area has been defined over time by the actions and activity of visitors. It is the space that attracts and into which infrastructure such as car parking, bridge, trails, lookouts and seats have been introduced over several centuries to support and enable visitor experience and enjoyment.

The visitor area runs northwards from Bolton Bridge along the valley and meadows associated with the River Wharfe extending to Barden Bridge (see Figure 2). The visitor area includes Bolton Abbey Village, Bolton Bridge and Bolton Abbey Station. It includes Bolton Priory and its historic precincts, the Cavendish Pavilion and Strid Wood with its extensive walking trails, seats, and vistas. The historic Barden Tower sits on a prominent bluff overlooking the wider landscape to the north.

Memorial Fountain

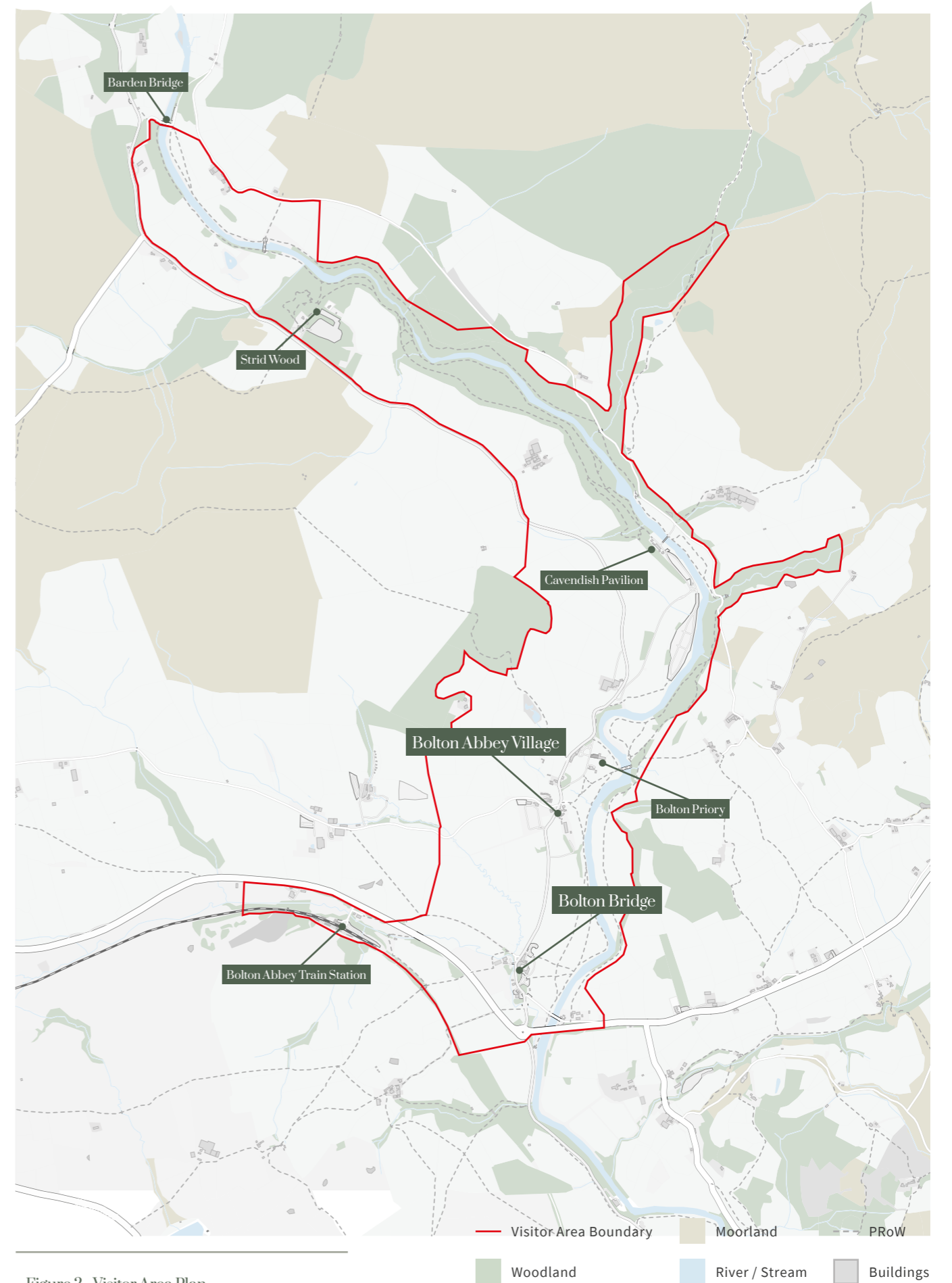


Figure 2 - Visitor Area Plan



The area contains 89 properties, 43 of which are dwellings. The remainder are farms (4), leisure and commercial properties associated with the estate and its community including the Devonshire Arms Hotel and Spa, the Tithe Barn, Post Office, Garage, tea rooms and cafes, and Estate Office. It also includes Riverside, the Ungain and Sandholme, an undeveloped area which is licensed to accommodate temporary events such as outdoor music concerts.

The visitor area has been managed as part of a wider estate for centuries. From the mid-12th century, the manor of Bolton was granted to the Augustinians, to be reunited with the wider estate following the Dissolution in 1539. Subsequent continuity of ownership and stewardship by (and for) a single family since 1753 has maintained this approach.

The fact that the visitor area forms part of a much larger estate (the Bolton Abbey Estate), has significantly added value. It has enabled a pro-active and balanced approach to the evolution and operation of a major countryside visitor destination in harmony with an effectively and carefully conserved heritage and landscape setting.

The ability of the owners and their team to holistically manage the area and to take a long view on investment, combined with their determination to share the enjoyment that spending time in such special places can bring for everyone, provides for a powerful management context.

This combination of factors brings opportunities that are not achievable in heritage and rural visitor destinations with more dispersed ownership and interests. It also places a heavy responsibility on the single owning family and organisation, together with a significant and ongoing financial and operational challenge.



Clockwise from Top-Left  
Strid Wood, Bolton Priory, Devonshire Arms, Cavendish  
Pavillion, Tea on the Green





The effective management of the visitor area is important for the wider area, including the National Park. It attracts several hundred thousand people (c. 450,000) a year from the surrounding urban areas towards and into the National Park and directly employs 160 members of staff.

Many of these visitors travel beyond Bolton Abbey to visit the town of Skipton and into the National Park to destinations such as Appletreewick, Burnsall, Linton and Grassington. The majority spend their entire visit within the visitor area having travelled out and back from home for the express purpose of visiting Bolton Abbey.

During busy periods (such as sunny bank holiday weekends and particularly during the Covid-19 Pandemic), limitations relating to Bolton Abbey's visitor area capacity can lead to an overspill of visitors to other destinations, often in volumes that their infrastructure is not designed to cope with.

The ability of the estate to manage Bolton Abbey as a gateway to the Yorkshire Dales, and to welcome large volumes of visitors on days of high demand offers important benefits to the wider Dales community.

Clockwise from Top-Left  
Rose and Bramble Cottages, Tithe Barn, Strid Tea Room,  
Hole-in-the-Wall



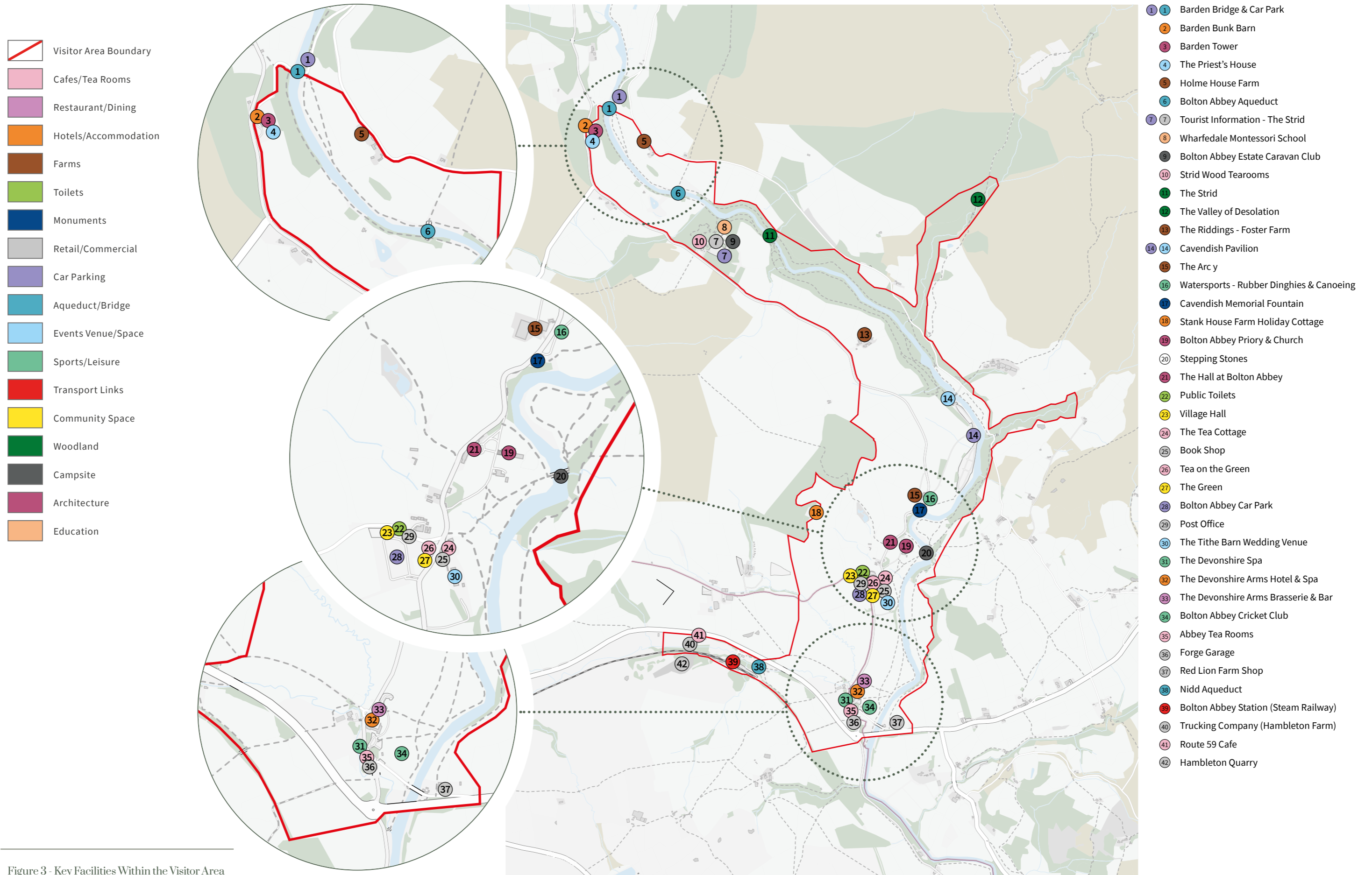


Figure 3 - Key Facilities Within the Visitor Area





Visitors on the Beach Below Bolton Priory

## A Shared Understanding of the Visitor Area

This section of the Strategy provides insight into the heritage, landscape, flood risk, ecology, access, and social-economic context of the visitor area. It does not seek to provide a full description or assessment; these are available in the reports and studies that form the supporting evidence base.

### Heritage

Bolton Abbey is valued for its important heritage assets set against the dramatic landscape of the Wharfe Valley and the moorlands above. The visitor area is set within a historic landscape that has been appreciated by visitors, poets, artists, and writers for centuries. A significant contributor to the character of the valley is the establishment of the Augustinian Priory near what has since become known as Bolton Abbey Village in the 12th century.

### History and Evolution of the Priory/Settlement

Bolton Priory was established in the 12th century, and the remains and heritage legacy are a key part of the visitor attraction today. At the other end of the valley, the 15th century Barden Tower sits on a prominent bluff overlooking the wider landscape.

The Priory remains and part of the village are designated as Bolton Priory Scheduled Monument. The scheduling includes a detached area which incorporates the remains of a medieval reservoir that served the Priory mill. Also scheduled is the area around Barden Tower, including the Tower, and earthwork remains of the associated gardens.

In later centuries, the ruins and surrounding landscape became focal points for artists who appreciated the “Romantic” and in particular, “Picturesque” values of the landscape, such as Girtin, Landseer, Scarlett-Davis, Turner and Wordsworth. Turner visited and painted in the area on at least three occasions, and Wordsworth wrote a verse, “The Founding of Bolton Priory”, set at The Strid. The arrival of the railways in the 19th century brought increasing numbers of visitors, and since then tourism and leisure have been important elements of the Bolton Abbey Estate.

A full assessment of the historic evolution and character of the visitor is provided by FAS Heritage in their reports **Heritage Capacity Assessment** and **Further Heritage Evidence Study**. *Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page.* What follows is a summary of their key findings.

### Historic Character Summary: Bolton Abbey

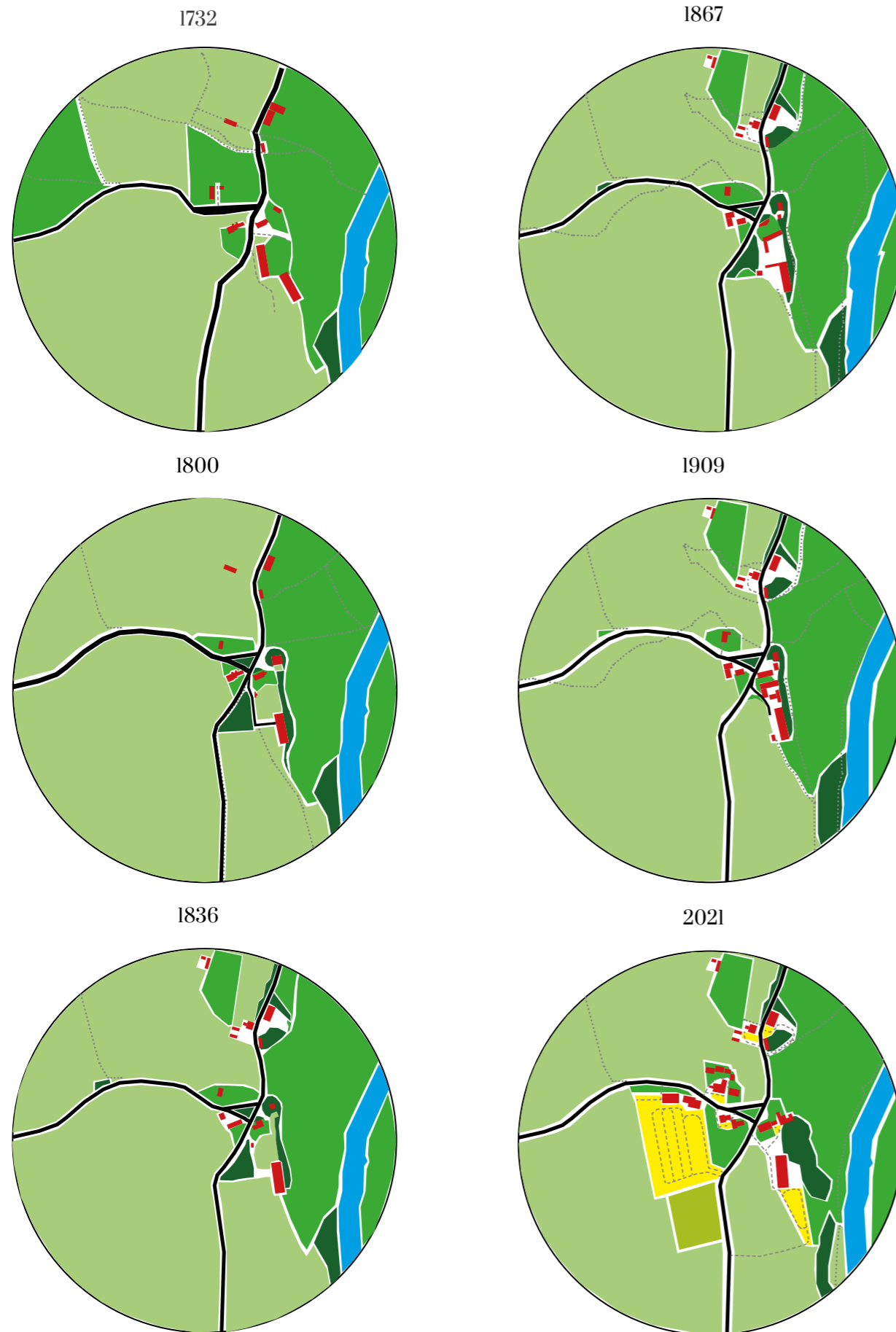
Bolton Abbey Village has its origins in two parcels of the medieval priory precinct which would have been a busy area of agricultural activity, and home to agricultural workers and livestock. Earthworks within the village reflect the former Barnyard and Hind House Close, largely masked by the changes that occurred in subsequent centuries.

Following the Dissolution, these parcels became subsumed into the wider agricultural landscape, as indicated by the extant ridge and furrow across the landscape.

The current character of the village primarily reflects its growth during the 18th and 19th centuries, from a contracted core in the northern part of the former Barnyard. The village developed close to the junction of the main access routes from Bolton Bridge, Barden, and Halton East.



Appendix I – Bolton Abbey Historic Area Character Maps



Bolton Abbey Historic Character: 1732 - 2021

Source: FAS - The Bolton Abbey Heritage Capacity Assessment

- Primary Road
- - - Secondary Streets
- ..... Footpath
- Farmland / Pastures
- POS / Greenspace
- Meadow
- Car Parking
- Architectural Built Form
- Woodland
- River

A small number of dwellings were focused along the Upper Green and around an open area within the village. Tenants' holdings were often fragmented, with gardens detached from cottages. Gradually, through the 19th century, open shared areas were infilled and enclosed to form the layout that survives today.

Plantations and additional buildings would have created a more enclosed sense of space that has more recently been opened by the thinning of trees within and around the settlement.

Documentary sources paint a picture of ad hoc and organic development; cottages, gardens and crofts were added, subdivided, repaired, and removed as the estate required. The majority of documented cottages survive to some extent and are seen to have been constructed with coursed rubble or coursed squared stone with stone quoins, window surrounds and often kneelers. Novel elements, such as ornate chimneys typically used throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries are a recurring feature.

It is these rows of cottages that exhibit clear evidence of piecemeal change, a key characteristic of the settlement. Their layout is not neatly rectilinear or ordered, as in a planned estate village. The early plans of the buildings show that subdivision of cottages resulted in terraced dwellings oriented in opposite directions. There was little or no attempt to present a regular façade.

It was not until the construction of the Cavendish Institute (now the Estate Office), and the alteration of a row of four dwellings (possibly for estate use), that more buildings were constructed using dressed squared stone, presenting a more formal appearance, oriented specifically towards the roads. These represent structures used specifically for communal or estate purposes. The 20th century cottages to the north of the village reflect the appearance of these later structures, rather than the earlier domestic dwellings.







### Historic Character Summary: Bolton Bridge

There is little evidence for the layout of Bolton Bridge in the medieval period, other than the ridge and furrow that can be used to identify the grain of the agricultural landscape. The historic A59 would have been a key route during this period, and Bolton Bridge will have been an important location as the crossing point of the Wharfe from an early date. This is further evidenced by the fact that Red Lion Farm, immediately to the west of Old Bolton Bridge, was a Coaching Inn, as was the Devonshire Arms. Prior to the construction of the Bridge, a ferry operated at this point.



Top and previous page:  
Examples of Quoins and Kneelers Around the Village



The general layout of Bolton Bridge has altered little since the 18th century, represented by dwellings and other buildings strung along the main routeways. Since at least the 18th century, the Devonshire Arms has been a core focal point, as a staging post for those travelling east to west, and a place of hospitality for those visiting Bolton Abbey. Originally oriented towards the approach from the west, the visual impact and prominence of this building has been eroded since the construction of the bypass.







Top: Original Facade of Devonshire Hotel  
Bottom: Turnpike Cottage  
Opposite: Devonshire Hotel and Gardens



The intended impact of the Devonshire Arms has been diminished, and its historic character has not been enhanced by over-formal gardens and modern extension, which appear out of place within an area where the “Picturesque” has long been valued. Historic photographs suggest that the earlier parts of the building would originally have been rendered; this was removed in the late 19th or 20th century.

The dwellings strung along the roadside, often set perpendicular to the highway, have similar character to those within Bolton Abbey Village; subdivided and repurposed as needed.

Some structures are known to have been lost – the former Turnpike Cottage and barn on Ann Flat, and much larger modern structures have been added when compared to Bolton Abbey, including the extension to the Devonshire Arms, and Forge Garage.

Although set away from the key buildings, the creation of the A59 bypass has significantly altered the character and experience of Bolton Abbey. The loss of movement along key routes, the bisection of the former grain of fields, and the changed arrival mean that current experience does not reflect historic approaches to and from the area.

The sense of arrival that would formerly have been signalled by the façade of the Devonshire Arms, or perhaps the presence of the tollgate, has been lost. This sense of arrival was further lost with the development of the A59 as a trans Pennine trunk road. The principal façade of the Devonshire Arms was its central east facing elevation which is listed and now obscured.





### Scheduled Monuments

The Priory remains, and part of the village are designated as Bolton Priory Scheduled Monument. The scheduling includes a detached area which incorporates the remains of a medieval reservoir that served the Priory mill. Also scheduled is the area around Barden Tower, including the Tower, and earthwork remains of the associated gardens.

### Listed Buildings

The wider area contains 35 listed buildings. The listed buildings cluster at the historic focal points of settlement activity, at Bolton Priory, Bolton Abbey Village, Barden Tower, together with more dispersed farmhouses within the wider landscape.

### Conservation Area

Bolton Priory and part of Bolton Abbey Village is designated as a Conservation Area. The heritage context is shown in Figure 4 (overleaf).

Above: Barden Tower  
Opposite Top: Bolton Bridge  
Opposite Bottom: Bolton Priory





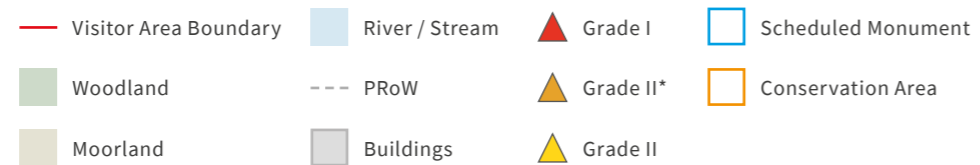
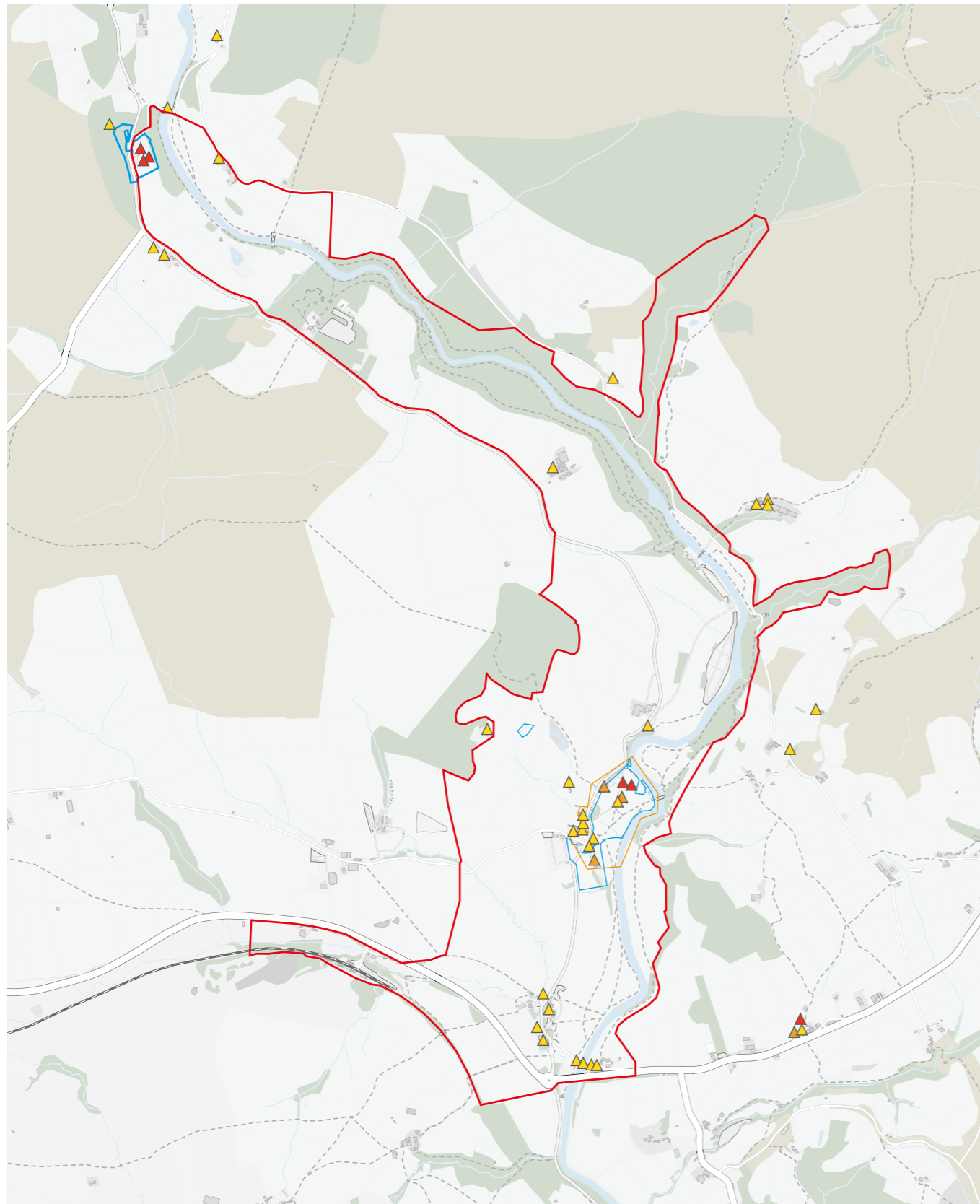
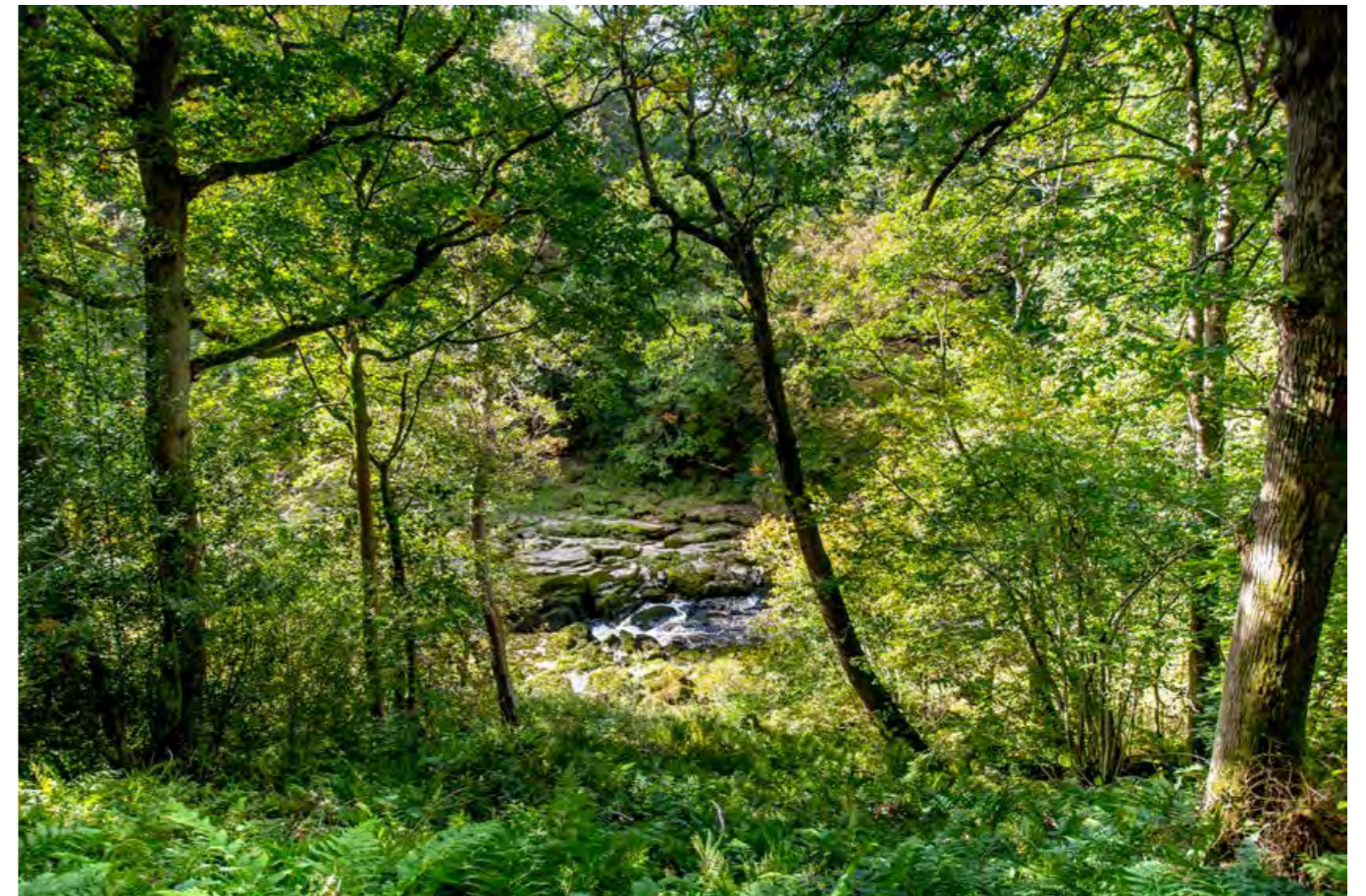


Figure 4 - Heritage Context of the Visitor Area



## Landscape

The landscape of the visitor area offers a microcosm of the wider estate. The River Wharfe, its associated valley and meadows represent a significant change in experience as the Gritstone uplands and moors to the west seem to capture a pastoral lowland environment within.

The skyline experienced from the Wharfe Valley is marked by several sharp cliffs and crags, including Carncliff Crag, Simon’s Seat, Lord’s Seat, North and South Nab.

The influence of the high ground remains ever present, as does that of water. To the east of the Wharfe several fast flowing streams have cut deep gills into the bedrock, dividing the edge of the plateau into separate hills, each rising steeply from the valley. This deeply cut topography of the Millstone Gritstones provides scenery of great variety.

The gills form some of the most attractive scenery on the estate and contribute to the experience for visitors walking the Strid Wood trails or enjoying the riverside meadows. The best known is Posforth Gill in the ‘Valley of Desolation’ with several waterfalls to delight the walker (see Figure 3, key number 12). The original nature trails, seats and views created by the 6th Duke extended further than those used and seen today, including Posforth Gill (north side) and Gill Beck, north of Barden Bridge.



Glacial deposits of tenacious clay with stones and sand prevail in the Wharfe Valley and are classified as Grade 3 agricultural land.

These soils are deep, fertile, well drained, and fairly level in natural terraces surrounded by short steep slopes. There is evidence that in former times some of the fields in the Wharfe Valley were ploughed for cereal crops. These soils provide for good grazing and fine deciduous parkland trees.

Soils in the gills and on the steep hill sides vary greatly in composition and depth, ranging from scree to deep peat and clay pockets.

Post war agricultural practices have introduced applications of artificial fertilisers and chemicals to the valley and some of the surrounding land. This brings with it challenges of nutrient imbalance and leaching. The estate is actively working to reduce application of manufactured fertiliser and chemicals, to maintain the highest possible water quality and to restore soil health.

Conservation of landscape features has been an important part of multiple purpose management on the estate for generations. This continues to be the case. Conservation of Strid Wood is secured through its Site of Special Scientific Interest status and Management Plan.



Clockwise from Top-Left  
Lord Morpeth's Seat, View Up The Valley, Posforth Beck, View  
from Wharfe View Cottage





### Flood Risk

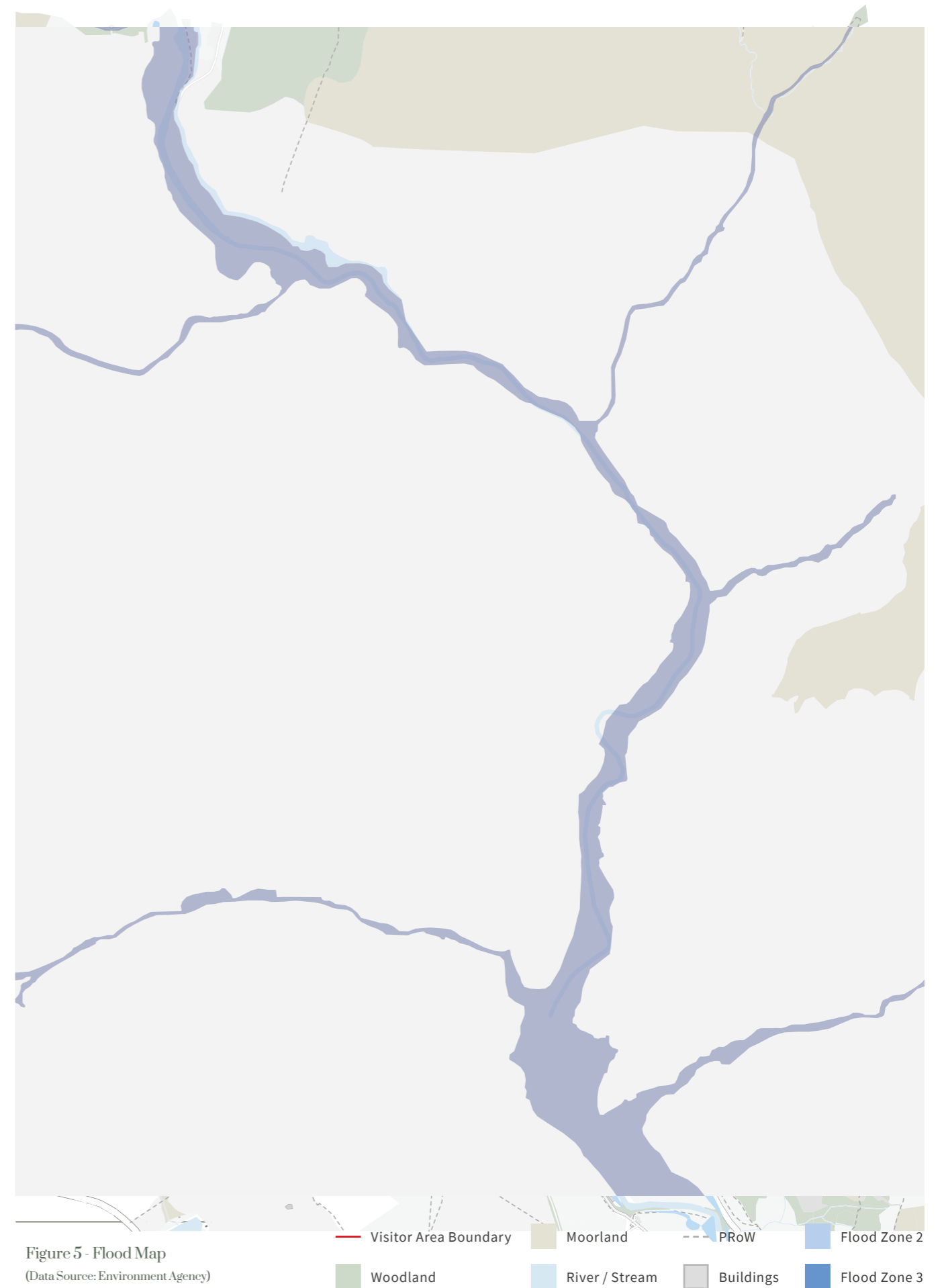
The River Wharfe is a potentially fast flowing river fed by a large upland catchment. Periods of high rainfall generate large downstream flows which can quickly raise water levels, causing the river to overspill its banks and extend onto the river meadow floodplain as happened during the aftermath of named storms Ciara and Desmond in 2021.

This problem may be exacerbated by future climate change unless steps can be taken to slow flows upstream and improve water retention in the catchment, particularly on the moorland.

The estate is actively developing its approach to moorland management with a view to achieving gains in Natural Flood Management.

The risk of floods impacting residential and commercial property has been extensively modelled by the Environment Agency (River Wharfe Modelling Study 2014). Findings of this work have been used to update the Agency’s Flood Map which identifies areas at risk of flooding arising from rivers and seas and categorises the level of risk spatially.

The Environment Agency Flood Map has been used to inform the development capacity assessments undertaken by the estate that have been used as evidence for this Strategy and Masterplan document. A review of the assessment relating to Flood Risk can be found in the **Bolton Abbey Development Options Assessment Study** [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#). by Lichfields (2017).





## Ecology

The visitor area includes and is connected (in wildlife terms) to areas designated for ecological value and importance. These comprise the Strid Wood and West Nidderdale, Barden and Blubberhouses Site of Special Scientific Interest, the North Pennines Special Area of Conservation/Special Protection Area and areas of Deciduous Woodland recorded on the UK Priority Habitat Inventory.

The North Pennine (designated both a Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area) and the West Nidderdale, Barden and Blubberhouses Site of Special Scientific Interest are associated with extensive upland habitats including blanket bog and dry heathland located to the north east and north west of Bolton Bridge and Bolton Abbey.

Visitor activity at Bolton Abbey has no direct impact on these habitats save for their use by walkers from the higher ground using the (car parking, visitor amenity and food and beverage) facilities (during or to serve their walks). The estate manages this access through a combination of facilities, infrastructure, paths and moorland tracks. Income derived from the visitor contributes towards maintenance and management of this infrastructure.

The Strid Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest designation is due to the presence of significant sessile oak woodland which supports a diverse array of lichens and other flora and fauna. The Site of Special Scientific Interest is used as a significant recreational attraction within the visitor which includes marked trails, seats and views of the “Picturesque” Landscape, Montessori School car parking and a caravan site. Beyond the Site of Special Scientific Interest is Ancient Woodland. These can be found in the areas associated with Sandholme, Strid Wood, Barden Bridge and Barden Tower.

Whilst the landscape surrounding the visitor area includes spaces of high ecological value, Strid Wood aside, land uses within are more developed. It includes the two settlements of Bolton Abbey and Bolton Bridge (with associated buildings and infrastructure), the visitor facilities (car parks, buildings, amenities) associated with the Cavendish Pavilion, Sandholme (River Side) and the Ungain.

Visitor access has also influenced the management of undeveloped land. Much of the land is now managed to enable access and prioritise visitor experience and accessibility. Flatter pastures are mown two or three times a year, banks are left uncut, open spaces by the river are fenced off to facilitate stock free access. No cattle are grazed in the area between Barden Bridge and Bolton Bridge to avoid any tensions with walkers and dogs. The maintained trails in the lower parts of Strid Wood enable a significant number of visits which inevitably limit the seclusion available to wildlife in the immediate environs.

Despite regular visitor activity, the visitor area contains a healthy biodiversity. This is demonstrated by recent sightings of Otters (with young) within the River Corridor.

The estate is a passionate and committed conservation organisation and there remain many opportunities to make more space for nature and deliver net gains in biodiversity outside and between designated areas (for example via the creation of new wildlife corridors through developed areas).

The estate works on ecological projects with a range of partner organisations. Examples include ongoing discussions with Raptor Monitoring Groups to formally monitor species such as the Merlin and Short Eared Owl and joining the Curlew Recovery Partnership.

The estate continues to support the British Trust for Ornithology Breeding Bird Surveys at Laund Plantation/ Valley of Desolation and Strid Wood. The estate also seeks to enable ecological survey activity by interested third parties. 2021 saw survey requests relating to the visitor area for Himalayan Balsam mapping from Addingham Civic Society and for a Pied Flycatcher survey and nest box review in Strid Wood.

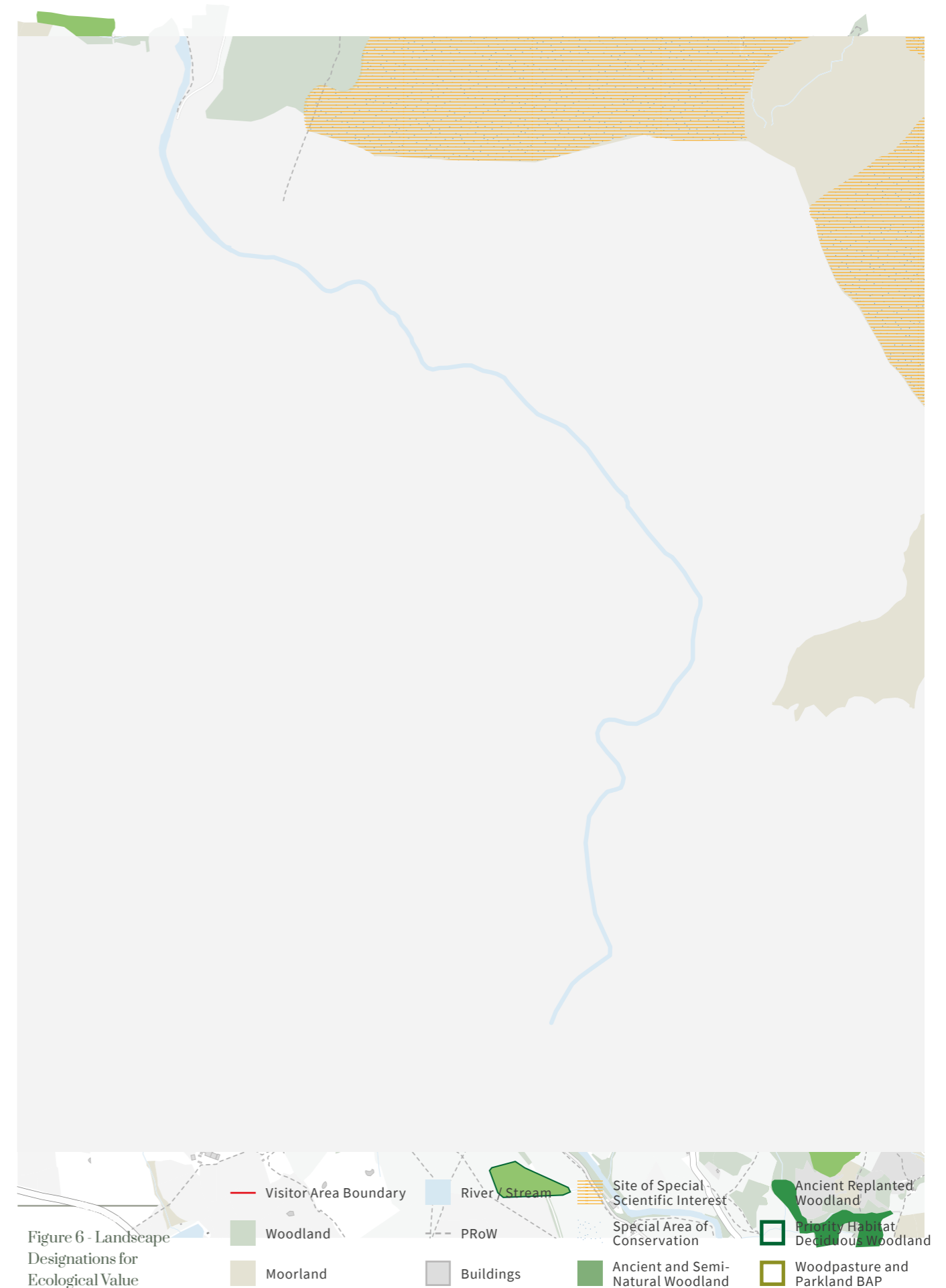


Figure 6 - Landscape Designations for Ecological Value



The estate is also involved with the Making More Space For Nature policy encouraging environmental gain.

It has recently planted 170 acres of new woodland with a further potential 150 acres of woodland planned. New planting is predominantly native breed, riparian plantings providing both buffer to the watercourses and arterial routes for species migration both up and down the Wharfe and up the gills to the moors. In addition, the estate has restored 70 acres of moorland allotment and worked with Yorkshire Water and the Yorkshire Peat Partnership on peatland restoration which around 200km of grip blocking and re-profiling and re-vegetation of over a 100 hectares or moorland.

To support the ecology of its river corridors, the estate seeks to include riparian fencing, with 17.2% (78%) of its 22.1km permanently stock excluded with plans to complete the remaining 4.9km in the coming years.

### Public Access

The visitor area is predicated on access to the estate’s land, visitor services and infrastructure, the two settlements and the facilities and visitor facing businesses that they host.

The area includes several public rights of way, most notably along both sides of the River Wharfe from Bolton Bridge, through Strid Wood and up to Barden Bridge. These footpaths are utilised by The Dales Way long distance route which runs north to south in the valley. The route follows the river and crosses it twice, once at the Priory ruins and then by using the wooden bridge at the Cavendish Pavilion.

There are also public and permissive footpaths providing links from the valley to the Open Access Land on the higher ground to the east of the Wharfe, one of which runs through Laund Plantation, within Posforth Gill, and the ‘Valley of Desolation’.

The visitor area offers far greater access to the public, especially at Sand Holme (riverside), at the Stepping Stones at Bolton Abbey, and at Barden Bridge where family picnics and lazy days are actively supported. Visitors are encouraged and enabled to take opportunities to enhance their physical and mental wellbeing from time spent in the countryside and close to nature.

Access is facilitated by the car parks that the estate provides, by waymarked and surfaced trails (up to 90 miles in all across the estate). Routes are planned to support less able visitors and young families being able to enjoy the easy access areas and visitor sites such as the Priory Church and Ruins, Stepping Stones and the Strid.

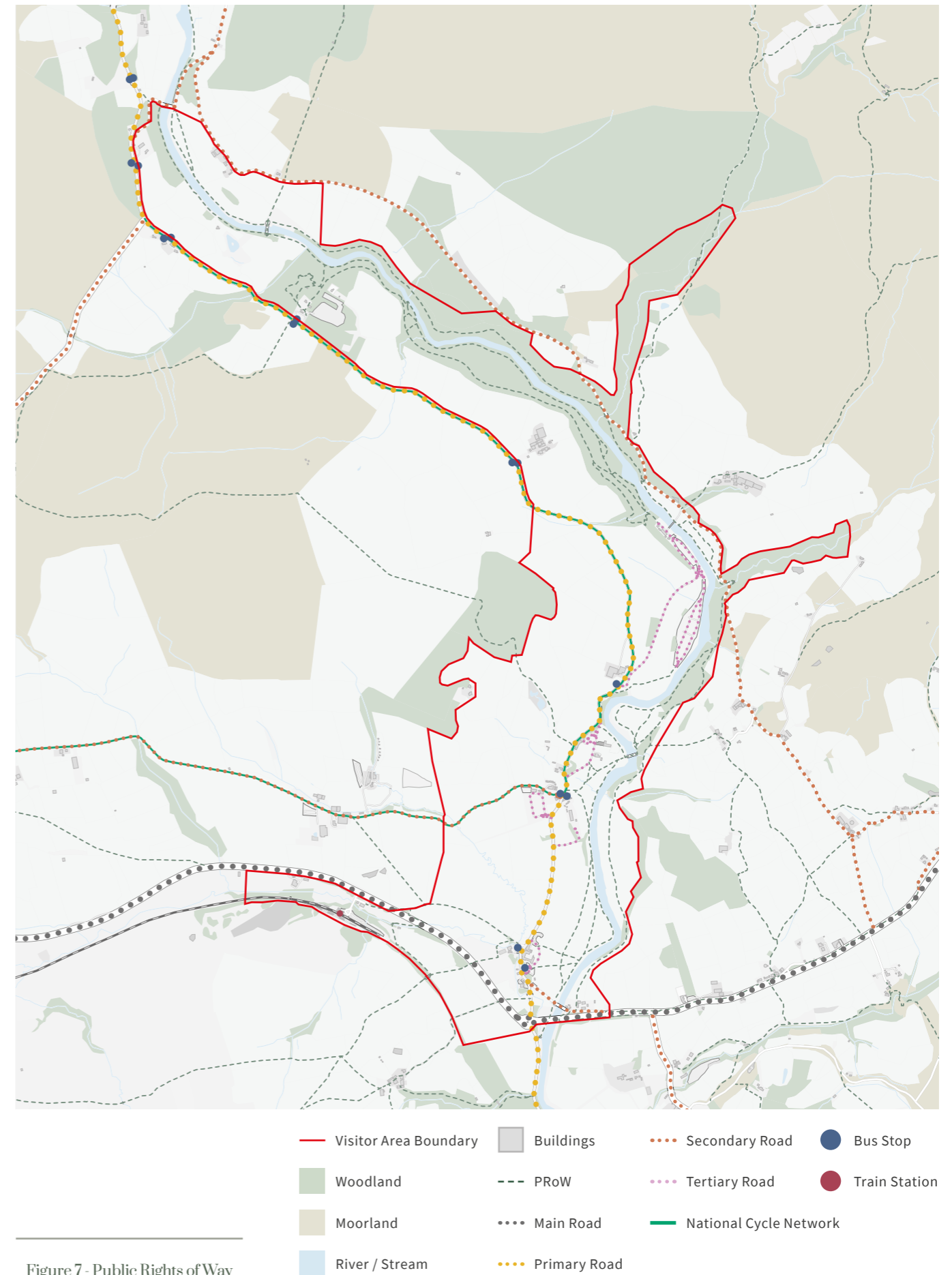


Figure 7 - Public Rights of Way





Access Points

In addition to welcoming visitors, the estate, working alongside colleagues from the wider Devonshire Group, hosts an active education programme, hosting regular school visits and family education sessions.

## People

Bolton Abbey is not solely a visitor destination; it is also a community of nearly 200 residents. The settlements of Bolton Abbey and Bolton Bridge include dwellings, workplaces, and community facilities.

The dwellings support a resident population of c. 180 additional residents of the wider area include those living on the four farms and full-time live-in staff at the Devonshire Arms. Many residents work or have previously worked on the estate, enabling a sustainable relationship between working and living.

Bolton Abbey is a thriving place, benefiting from a range of businesses and service providers owing to the additional buying power associated with (regular) visitors. Services available to residents include the Forge Garage, the Devonshire Arms, the Post Office, book shop, three tea rooms, the Cavendish Pavilion, Wedding Barn, a camp site, a caravan touring site, a static caravan site and open farm.



Top-Left: Mosque Visit  
Top-Right: Visitors on the Welly Walk  
Bottom: School Activity Day



The households and businesses that form the community contribute significantly to the character and economy of the Bolton Abbey Estate.

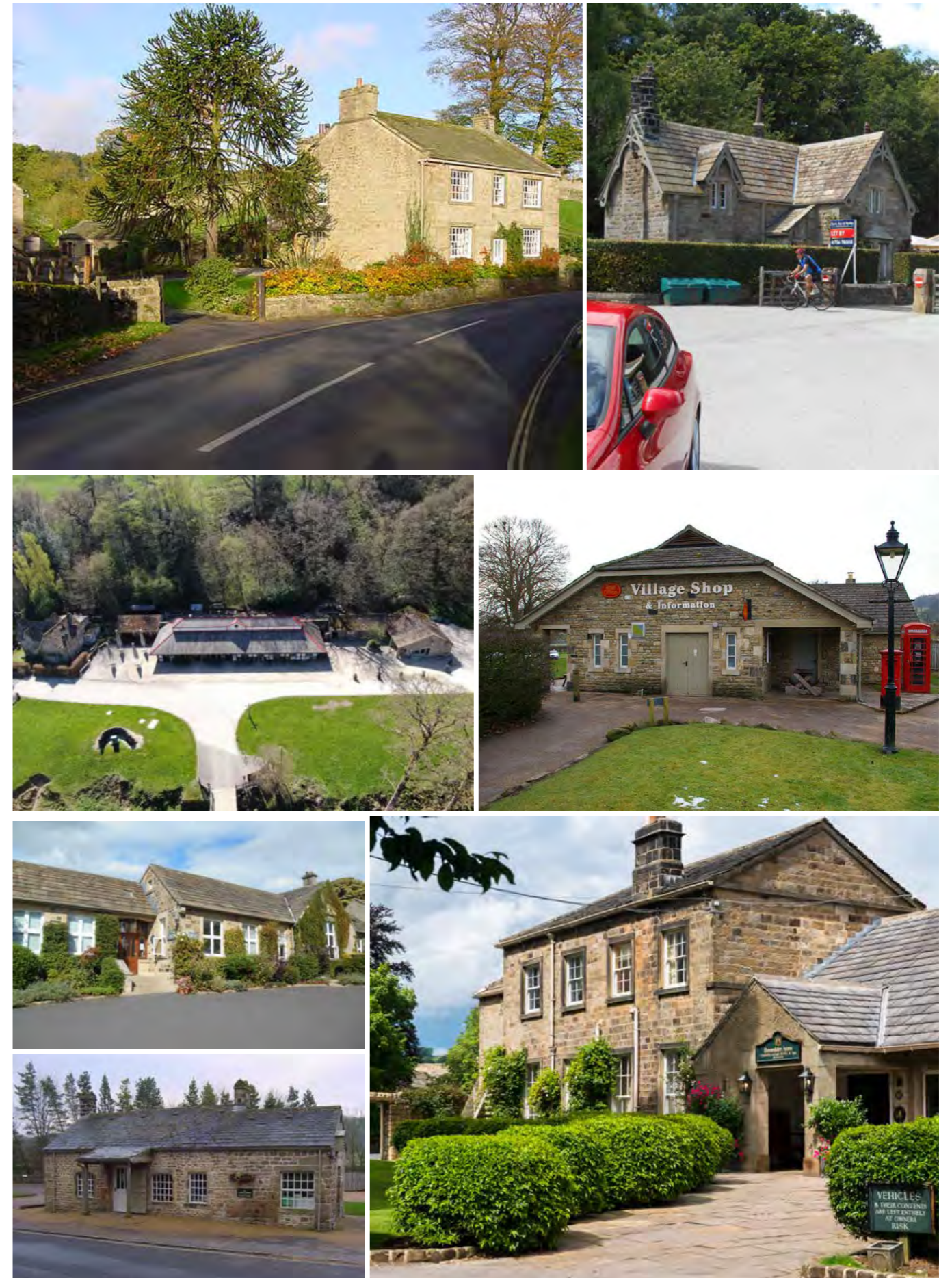
### Economy

The economy of the visitor area is a subset of the wider estate economy. It includes a large visitor facing element, with the hotels, holiday cottages and restaurants trading and generating employment. Independent businesses include the Post Office and Village Shop, Forge Garage, Catgill Campsite, Tithe Barn wedding venue, Hesketh Farm Park, and several cafes.

Several of the estate farms contribute to the economy of the visitor area through the production of food and the provision of overnight accommodation.

The estate also runs a woodlands and forestry enterprise and fishery (Brown Trout and Grayling), employing foresters, gamekeepers, and a River Keeper.

Collectively, the businesses operating in the visitor area employ in the region of 160 people.



Clockwise from Top-Left  
Arches Farm, Wooden Bridge Lodge, Village Shop, Devonshire Arms Hotel,  
Abbey Tea Rooms, Estate Office, Cavendish Pavilion





## Shaping Development Led Change

### Introduction and Process

The shared objectives of the estate, North Yorkshire Council, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and key stakeholders including Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency are to put in place a Strategy that will enable proportionate and appropriate tourism-led mixed use development in the ‘Bolton Abbey Core Visitor Area’ (the visitor area) which conserves and enhances the historic environment and landscape character.

This does not mean that the entirety of the visitor area is suitable to host development. As the summary analysis set out in Section 5 presents, the area is of exceptional landscape and historical significance, containing a large number of designated heritage assets and their respective settings. As such much of the area is hugely sensitive with very limited, if any, capacity to host development led change.

Some parts of the visitor area are developed, however, and host a variety of built form and associated infrastructure. It is these areas that provide the greatest opportunity for change.

During discussions with the two planning authorities and key stakeholders that led to the inclusion of Policy EC4a in the Craven District Council Local Plan, the estate carried out an extensive exercise to understand the characteristics, significance, and constraints (policy, practical and commercial) associated with the visitor area, and to assess opportunity and capacity for (development led) change.

The work considered the character and form of the visitor area and the two settlements within it. Matters researched and assessed included historic character, historic antecedents and evolution of change, heritage significance, landscape character and significance, the architectural character of existing buildings (including the use and source of stone), ecology, public access, vehicular access and highways, visitor activity, economic activity, and community.

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Above: Barden Bridge

Opposite: Fishing in the River Wharfe

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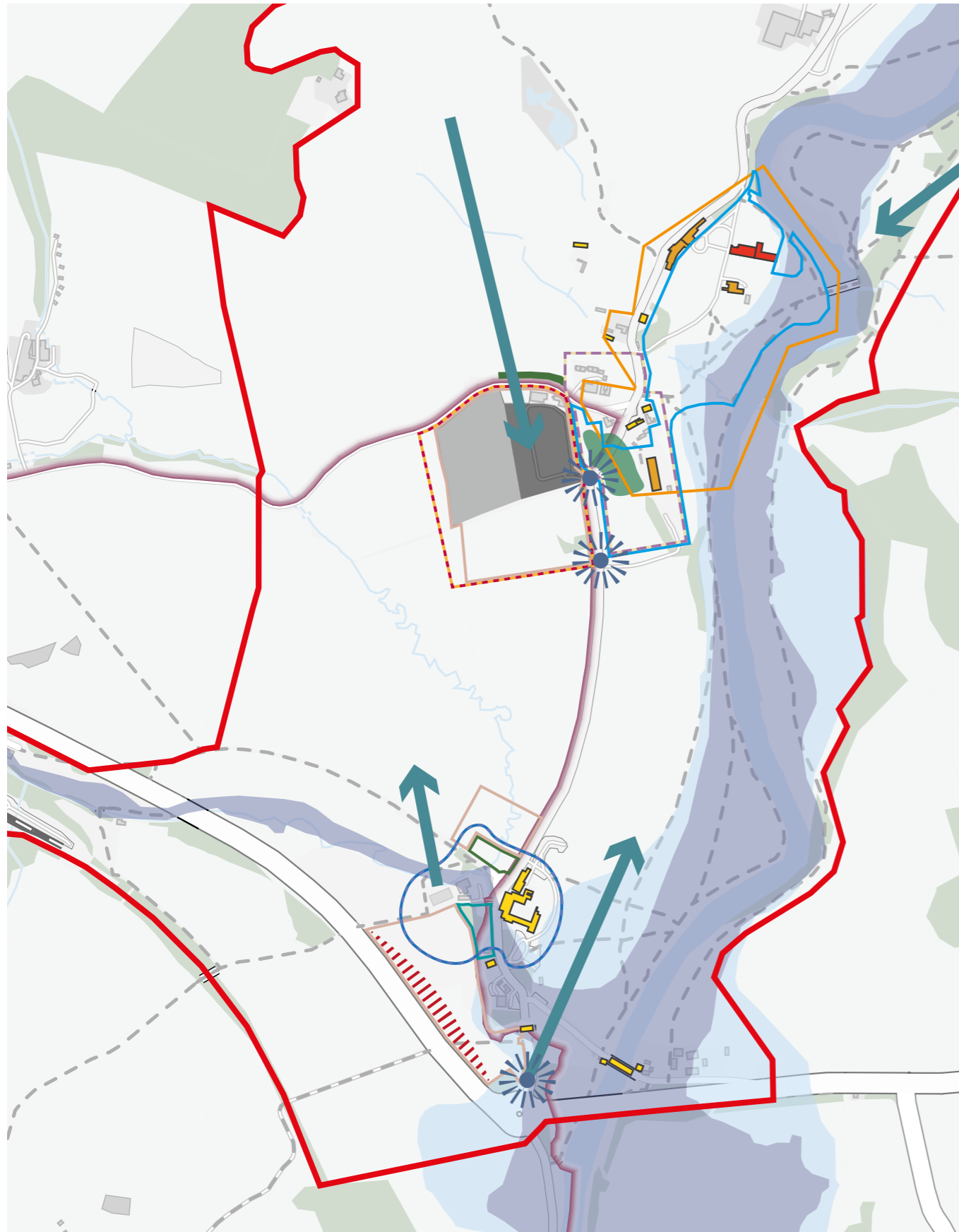


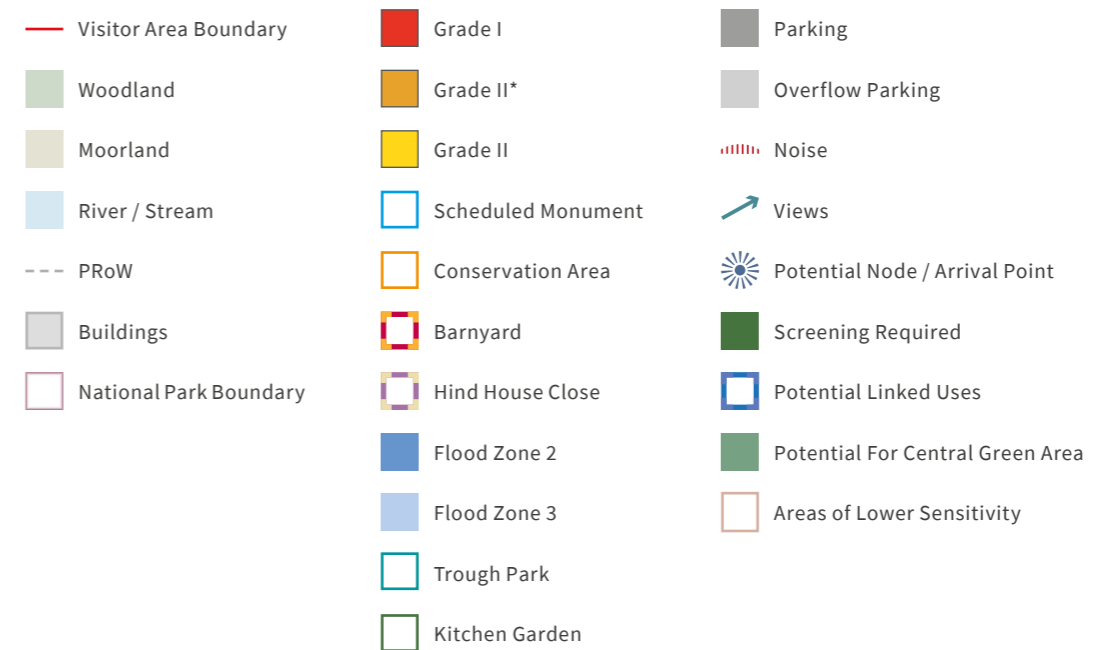
Figure 8 - Opportunities and Constraints Plan

The findings of this work (and technical reports that support them) are set out in the **Bolton Abbey Development Options Appraisal** study [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#) by Lichfields (2017).

They are summarised in Figures 8 (opposite) and 9 (overleaf).

Figure 8 shows the outcome of work to identify practical and commercial constraints and opportunities.

Figure 9 (overleaf) shows the outcome of work to assess the relative capacity for change associated with heritage, landscape, flood risk, ecological, transport, and socio-economic factors of the visitor area. It demonstrates capacity to host development led change in the areas highlighted brown and for enhancement to visitor experience coloured green, subject to the detailed formulation of appropriate and sensitive proposals.





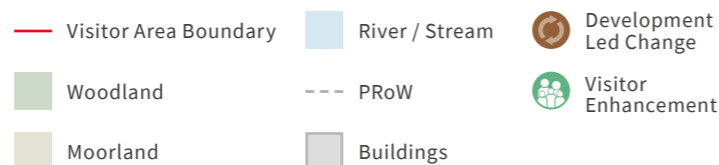
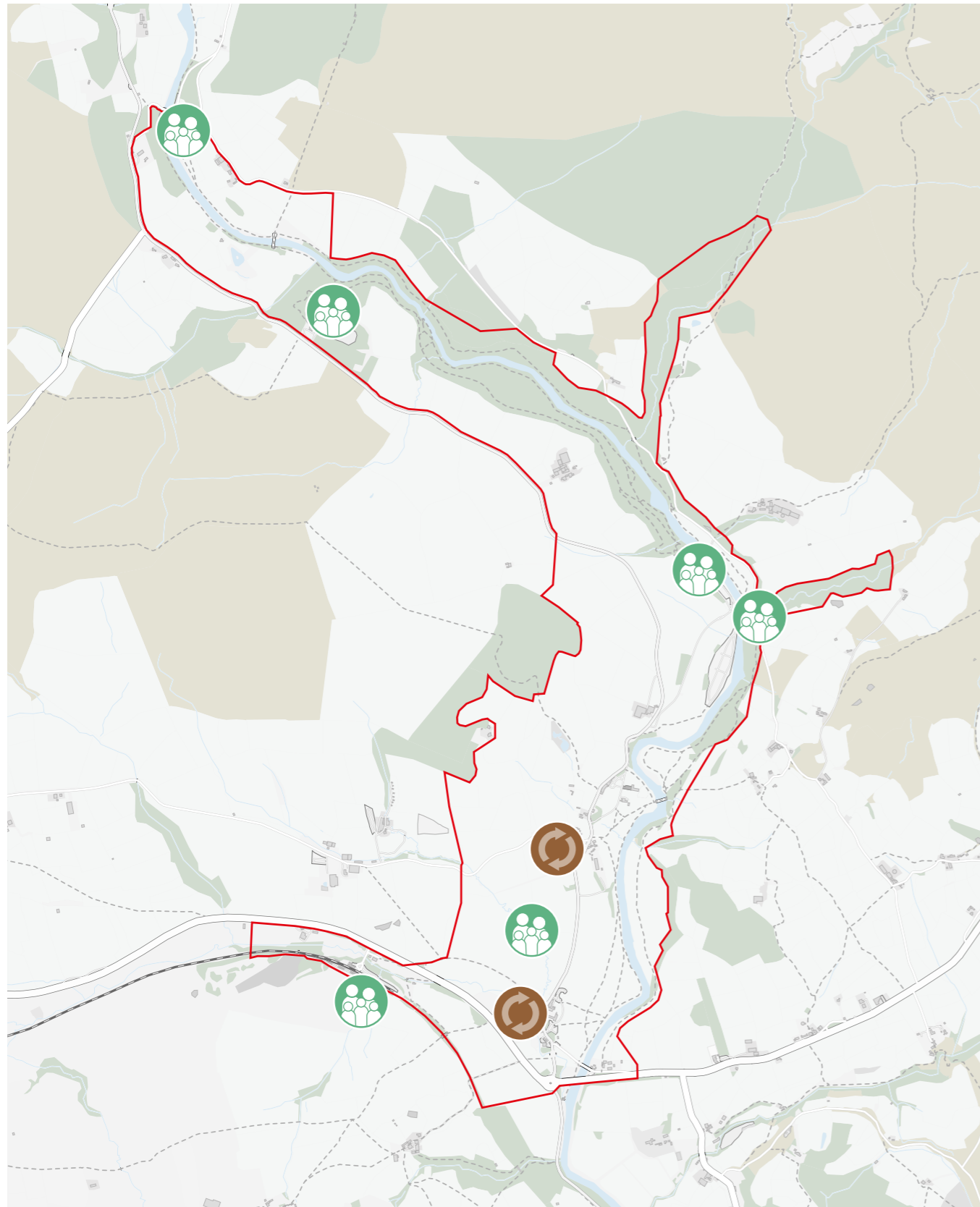


Figure 9 - Capacity for Change Plan



### Enhancing Visitor Experience and Understanding

Several initiatives have been identified to enhance the experience of visitors, to build awareness and enhance their understanding of the visitor area and the role it plays in the National Park. These include the introduction of natural play areas, new footpath links and cycle links, of a ‘Turner Trail’ and viewpoints and areas of habitat creation.

#### Play Areas

Opportunities have been identified to introduce natural play spaces where children (and adults) can interact with the landscape in a fun and engaging way, improving connection with the landscape, and fostering the historic idea (associated with the visitor area) of a place for pleasure and enjoyment. Suitable areas will be where visitors already have good access but there will be limited impact from the introduction of play into the wider setting.

#### Open Spaces

Areas of open space will be created and restored at Bolton Bridge (associated with the former Trough Garden opposite the Devonshire Arms) and at Bolton Abbey responding to the historic Barnyard area.

#### Links and Trails

New off-road footpaths and a family cycle link will help connect the villages and facilities of Bolton Bridge and Bolton Abbey and provide improved links to the Bolton Abbey railway station.

The estate will liaise with the railway station (and associated car park) owners around plans to enhance visitor experiences, to ensure the plans of both organisations can be aligned.

#### Artist Trail and Viewpoints

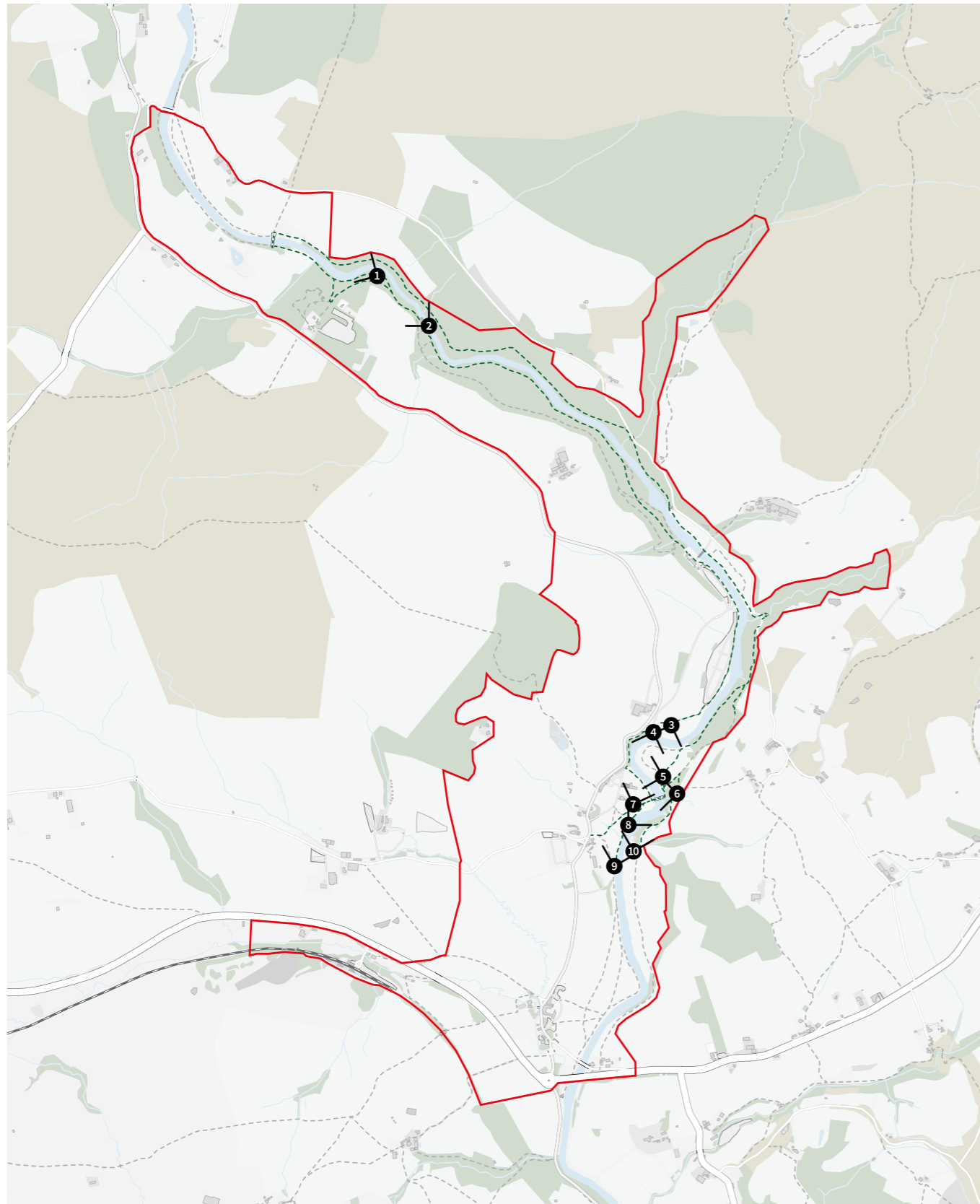
Bolton Abbey and its environs have inspired many artists and poets over time. It is particularly linked to the ‘Romantic’ period of the 18th and 19th centuries with artists such as William Turner creating several masterpieces at Bolton Abbey. There is potential to celebrate this connection through a number of Turner viewpoints sited to form the view captured in Turner’s most famous paintings, linked by a waymarked trail. These viewpoints are presented in Figure 10.

#### Habitat Creation

Several areas have been identified as offering potential for the creation of new wildflower meadows, for tree planting and the creation of new wildlife corridors linking and passing through the developed areas. Interventions in these areas will improve wildlife networks and corridors, help to screen and filter views and improve visitors’ awareness of and connection to nature.

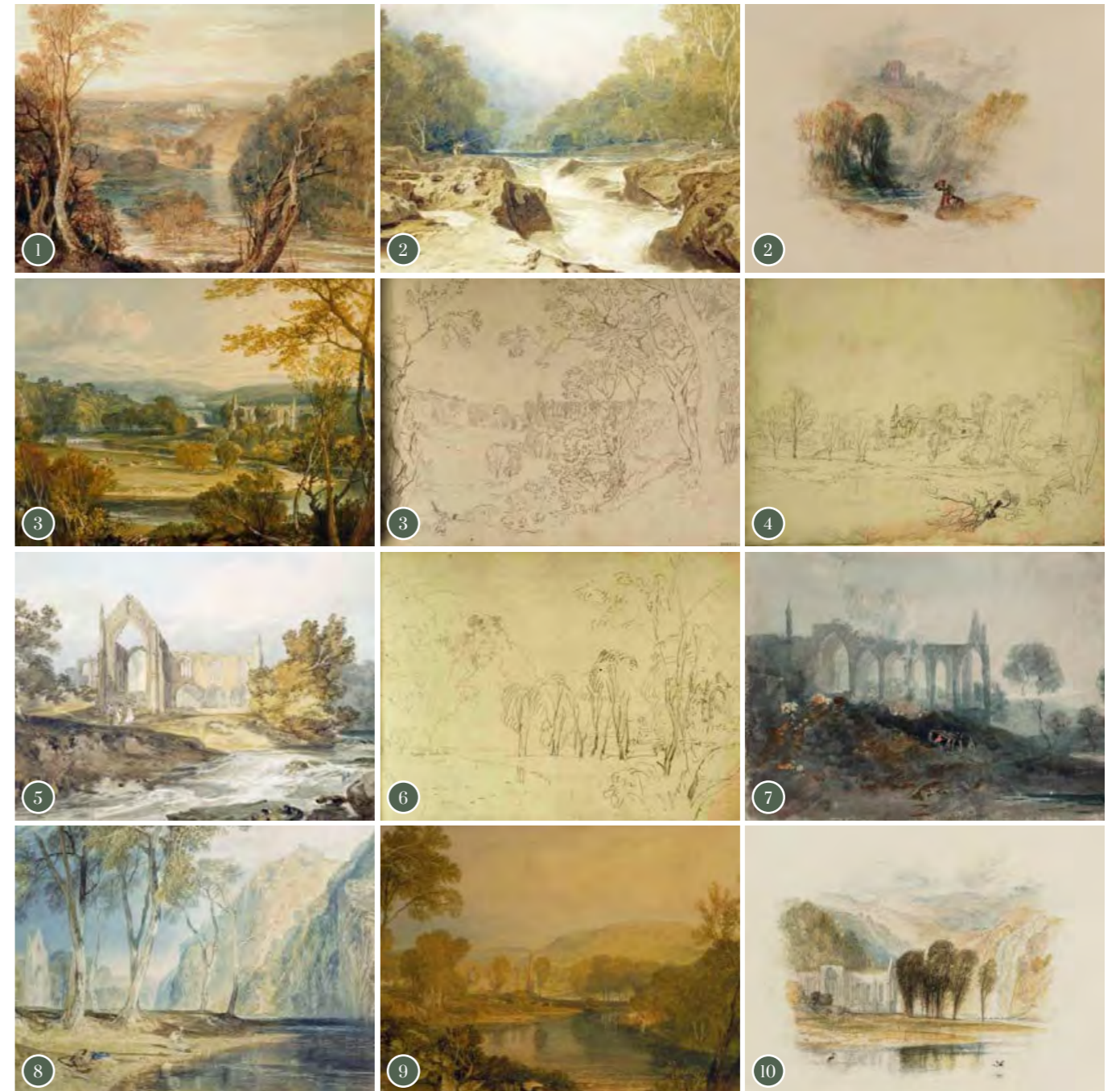
Visitors at the Stepping Stones





- Visitor Area Boundary
- River / Stream
- Woodland
- Moorland
- PRow
- Buildings
- Turner Viewpoints
- Turner Trail

Figure 10 - Turner Viewpoints



Turner Titles

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barden Tower. Water Colour c.1808<br/>Sketch c.1808</li> <li>2. The Strid. Water colour c.1808<br/>Sketch c.1808</li> <li>3. BA from Hartington Seat. Water<br/>Colour c.1809<br/>Sketch c.1816</li> <li>4. BA from the north. Sketch c.1808</li> <li>5. BA on the Wharfe. Water colour<br/>c.1798</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. BA from the East Sketch c.1816</li> <li>7. BA from the south. Water colour<br/>c.1799</li> <li>8. BA. Water Colour c.1825</li> <li>9. BA Water Colour. c.1809<br/>Sketch c.1808</li> <li>10. BA for Poems. Water colour c.1835</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



## Improving and Extending Visitor Facilities and Services

The villages of Bolton Abbey and Bolton Bridge have been identified as the most appropriate locations for sustainable development of facilities and services within the visitor area. Extensive work has been undertaken by the estate's professional team to identify the appropriate areas to introduce new buildings and associated infrastructure.

This work has included a series of feasibility studies and the creation of an active 3D model of the two villages and their environs. Key influencing factors identified during the feasibility work include:

- Historic setting (listed buildings and their setting)
- Landscape designations (Yorkshire Dales National Park)
- Visual impact
- Sustainability
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Visitor experience
- Commerciality of development and operation
- Technical and logistical issues (e.g. flood risk, highways access etc.)

This work has informed the production of an 'Indicative Spatial Masterplan' for the two villages. This is included as Figure 11a and 11b.

It is not proposed that this be treated as a fixed 'blueprint' for future development. The role of the Plan is to provide a spatial overview formed by a response to the key factors and influences identified and considered in the Options Appraisal. The Plan should be used to inform the siting and design of individual proposals, ensuring a complementary approach to existing buildings and uses, and to those that may follow.

Details of how proposals in areas identified in the Strategy will be taken forward are set out in the Advancing Proposals for Change section.

## Potential New Visitor Facilities and Services

The form, shape and range of new visitor facilities and services will be shaped by changing customer behaviour and demands, as well as commercial and market factors. They will be visitor facing (in the main), and commensurate with the location, setting and operation as part of a land-based estate enterprise.

Each proposal will be designed with reference to the Development and Design Principles set out by this Strategy. Each proposal will be subject to full scrutiny and assessment by the statutory planning process.

Careful consideration will need to be given to appropriate design solutions, siting, and scale of development to ensure that it reads as part of, and harmonises with the villages. A thorough understanding of the historical development of the villages and the character and significance of existing buildings within the village is crucial in designing the new buildings.

Such understanding is provided in the Bolton Abbey Heritage Capacity Assessment (by FAS) and has been applied to shape the Development and Design Principles set out in Section 8 below.

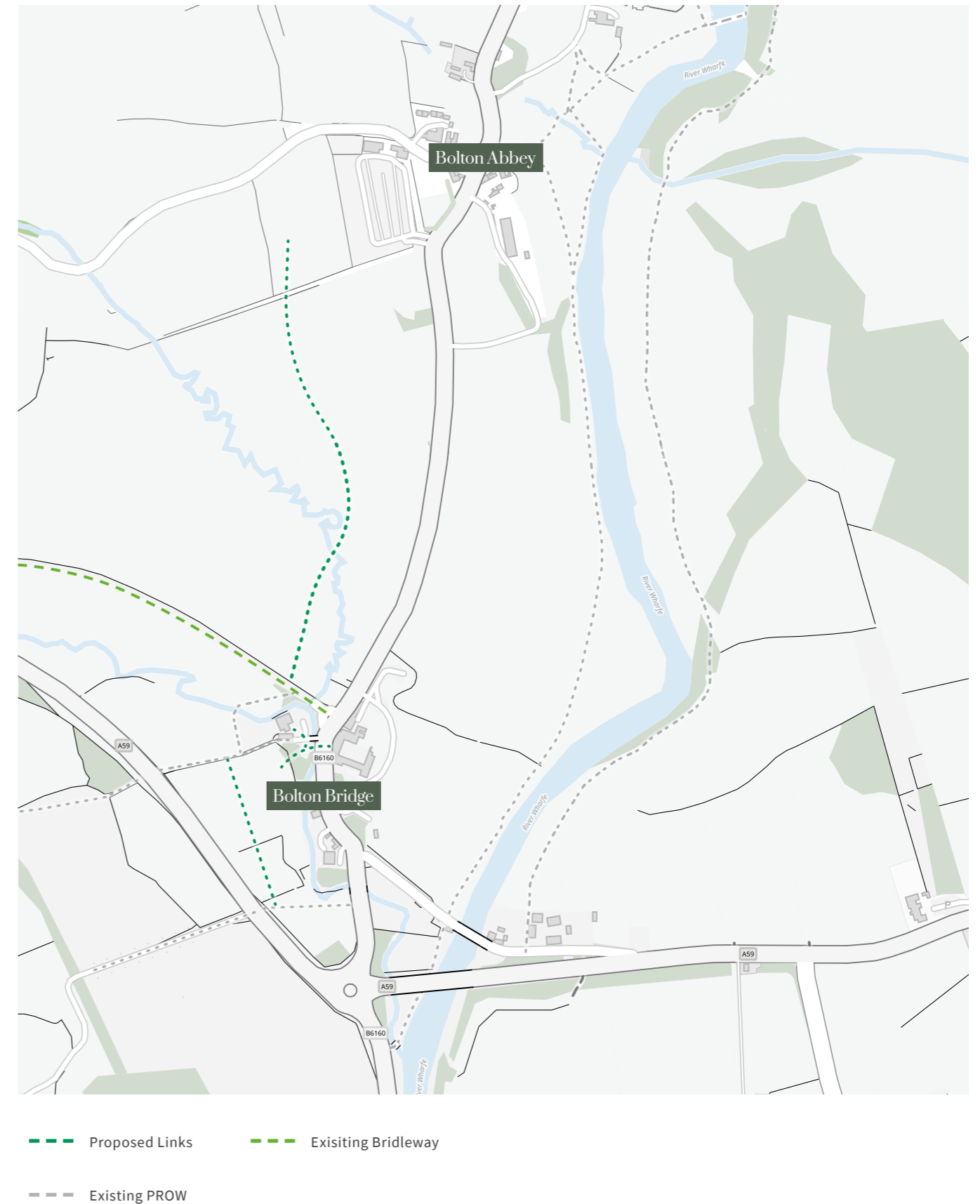
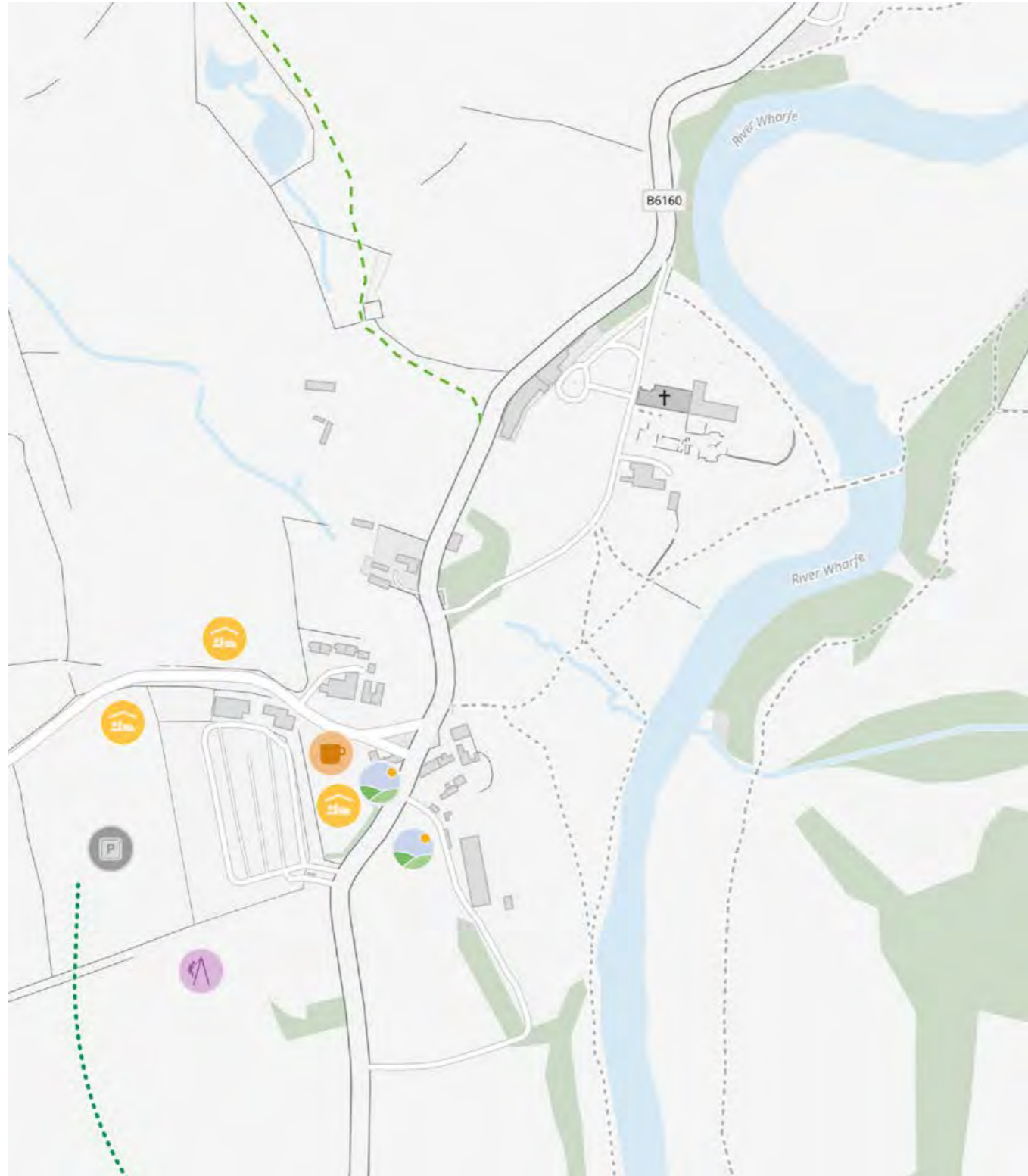


Figure 11: Spatial Masterplan













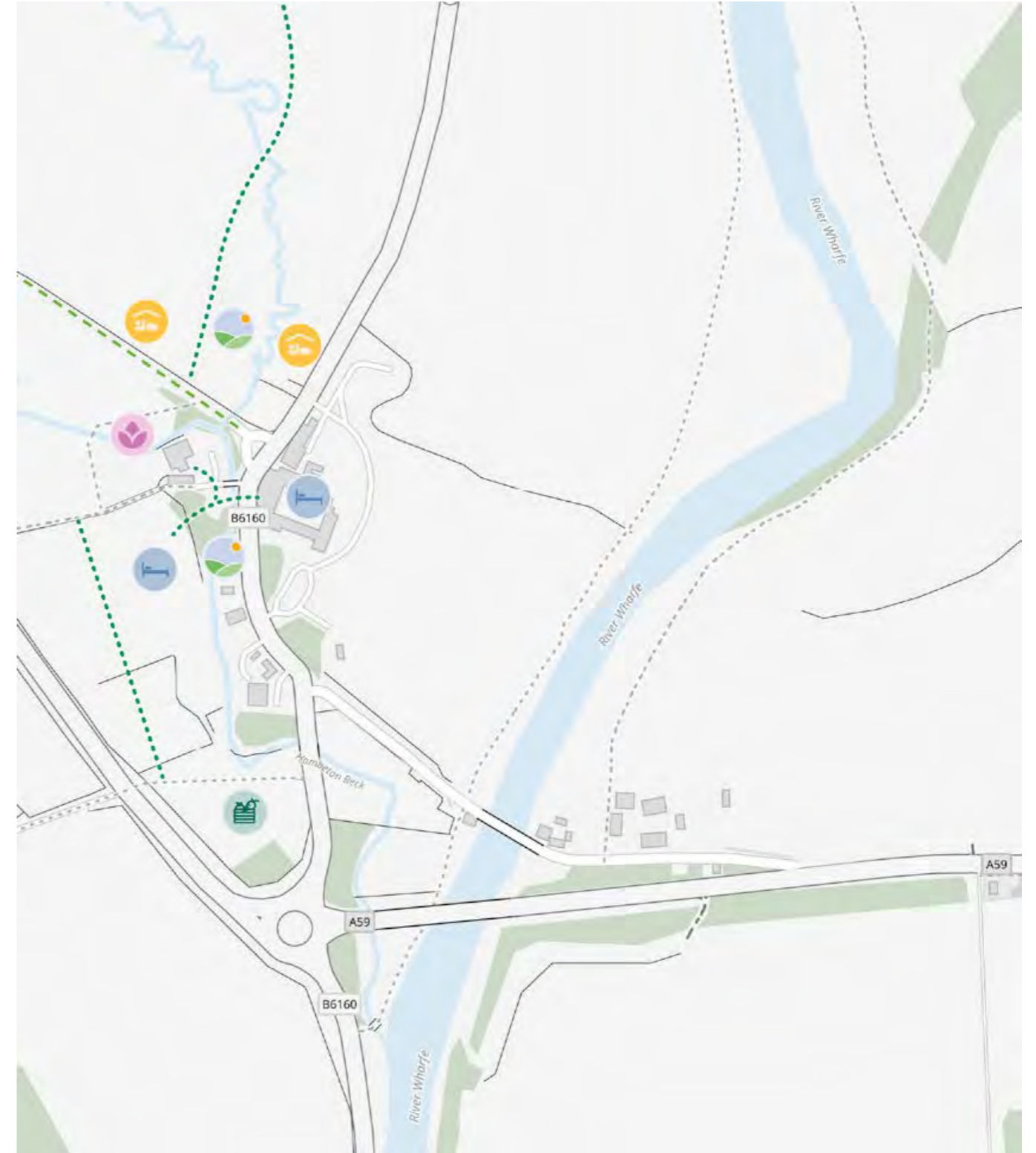
-  Hospitality
-  Play and Education
-  Parking
-  Visitor, Staff and Other Accommodation
-  Green Space (On Former Barnyard)
-  Proposed Links
-  Existing PROW
-  Existing Bridleway

Figure 11a - Bolton Abbey:  
Spatial Masterplan










-  Farm Shop
-  Serviced Visitor Accommodation
-  Spa Extension
-  Visitor, Staff and Other Accommodation
-  Green Space (On Former Barnyard)
-  Proposed Links
-  Existing PROW
-  Existing Bridleway

Figure 11b - Bolton Bridge:  
Spatial Masterplan





## Bolton Bridge

### Approach and Arrival

Works will be undertaken to re-establish a sense of arrival by providing an experience of Bolton Bridge for visitors (especially pedestrians and cyclists approaching from the station) on the old alignment of the A59.

To further support a sense of arrival, facilities for locals and passing visitors, should be visible from the A59 and roundabout. These could include a farm shop selling high quality local produce, a cycle hub and café providing sustainable modes of transport into the visitor area and Yorkshire Dales National Park.

### Serviced Visitor Accommodation

Also visible from the A59, a new hotel will complement the Devonshire Arms Hotel, providing more affordable accommodation to visitors and wedding guests. This will complement and enhance the Devonshire Arms Hotel's important economic role, help conserve this heritage asset in its optimum viable use, add much needed short stay accommodation and improve accessibility to a wider demographic to stay and access the visitor area and Yorkshire Dales National Park.

### Leisure

To complement the two hotels, the existing Spa is to be extended to widen its wellness offer and compliment the surrounding landscape following the grant of a planning permission in 2024 for this.

### Other Accommodation (For Visitors, Residents And Staff)

New buildings located along the old alignment of the A59 in the form of terraced cottages would make sense of and utilise this historic connection. Gardeners' cottages to the north of the existing Kitchen Garden might provide additional accommodation for visitors, staff or residents.



### Plant and Storage

New buildings will require plant and storage. The optimum approach would be to co-locate these systems within a purpose built and accessible building.

### Links and Trails

New and improved foot and cycle path links between Bolton Bridge, the station and Bolton Abbey will improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity. These should be extended to the cycle hub, avoiding the existing road network. Part of the route should provide a safe and secure area for families in the form of a family cycle route.

### Open Space

Trough Garden was known historically as 'the Island' and throughout the 19th century formed part of the gardens associated with the Devonshire Arms. The photo above shows the Trough Garden area. Little is known of the layout until photographs of the 1930s show an open, formal garden set out with paved areas, flower beds and numerous stone trough planters set on drystone plinths. The formality of the 1930s garden, vestiges of which survive, does not reflect the Picturesque values of the wider landscape, and extant features do not positively contribute to historic character or setting. There is an opportunity to redesign this area to create an open space that will enhance the setting of the Grade II listed buildings, and be more in keeping with the character of the visitor area as a whole.





## Bolton Abbey

### Approach and Arrival

New buildings or some other signifier would better signify the entrance to the village. The approach might be opened with the reorganisation and perhaps removal of tall hedges and some of the trees. The significance of the medieval Barnyard should be revealed. These measures will create an enhanced approach and clear sense of arrival.

### Play and Education

A new play and education zone is envisaged at the entrance to the village. This would provide indoor facilities and entertainment for families and groups. The area will need to be accessible and close to parking.

### Archive and Education

The estate would like to create a new, purpose-built space to house its historically important archives, including maps, plans and records going back several centuries. The co-location of this within the education zone would make it more accessible for visiting researchers and support educational use.

### Prayer

The addition of a dedicated prayer room (with appropriate washing facilities) would offer an important amenity to visitors of all faiths encouraging inclusivity and diversity.

### Play Barn

The inclusion of a new play barn in the play and education zone could provide a valuable facility for families and young groups. It would also help to mitigate against the impacts of poor weather on the visitor experience and enterprise.

### Informal Play

An area dedicated for informal outdoor play and recreation would create a useful amenity for visitors and community.

Cyclists on B6160 at Tea Cottage



### Parking

The current parking arrangements can contribute to localised congestion at peak periods, resulting in informal parking on roadside verges, negatively impacting visitor experience and residential amenity. A refreshed approach to parking at Bolton Abbey might include an extension to the existing car park, improved access and pay arrangements and the provision of electrical vehicle charging (supported by local generation and storage).

### Open Space

A new open space, which could be known as the 'Barnyard area' (to reflect the historical reference), could be created in the centre of the village, with the aim of revealing the significance of the historic Barnyard framed by the restored and revitalised Tithe Barn to the east. Well designed, this would accommodate the existing Tea on the Green premises and provide opportunities for the sensitive introduction of new cottages, facing onto the Barnyard from the west, and a new village pub facing the Barnyard from the north.

### Renewable Energy

There is an imperative to bring forward greener forms of energy to serve the visitor area into the future. The estate has an aspiration to create a district heating system to serve the village. This will require a plant building with associated storage, with the location for this to be reviewed and selected as part of subsequent detailed design work. The estate is also looking for ways to support the use of electric vehicles and bicycles. Given the challenges associated with capacity in the National Grid in rural areas this is likely to require local generation (most likely via the sensitive use of PV panels).

### Barden Bridge

The estate envisages Barden Bridge evolving to become an area more akin to the existing Riverside space with access provided to the riverside meadows supported by visitor amenities and parking. This area has been used for car parking for over forty years and any new facilities would support that use; lavatories, staff amenities, grab & go hospitality) akin to the recent refresh of the Burnsall Field car park facilities.

Left: Village Road Towards Village Shop  
Right: Tea on the Green





## Development and Design Principles

This section sets out a series of development and design principles.

These principles provide the contextual design brief for any scheme of development or land use change proposed within the visitor area. It will be the responsibility of scheme designers and promoters to demonstrate how the matters identified in this Strategy and related evidence base have been addressed within any application for planning consent or other regulatory approval.

Decision makers and interested parties should be able to assess adherence with these principles from an application. Decisions should be made in accordance with relevant planning policy (including Policy EC4a of the adopted Craven District Plan and Policy E13 of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan), the relevant regulatory requirements and with reference to this Strategy and Development and Design principles.

It is important to note that the copy set in the grey boxes is offered as a high level statement and summary. These headline statements should be read along with supporting text. The totality of the text is needed to understand the principle and detail of each principle.



## Development Approach

**DEV1** Development should be delivered in a way that will conserve and enhance the Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park<sup>1</sup> within the context of the visitor area. The focus for new development should be on enhancing visitor and resident experience, on local economy, community vitality, and opportunities to appreciate, enjoy and understand the nationally significant landscape, built and cultural heritage associated with the area.

Built development within the National Park or its setting should contribute to the historic narrative of Bolton Abbey Village and its surroundings. It should provide positive additions in terms of visitor experience, amenity, facilities and wayfinding together with additions to sensitive new accommodation for staff and visitors. Where appropriate, landscaping (landform, planting and hard elements) should be used in areas with high levels of visitor activity and associated built environment to ensure their successful blending and integration with the wider landscape, views and vistas, including and especially those of the National Park.

Development outside of the National Park should respect the wider landscape context provided by the National Park. Larger visitor facilities should be clustered around the existing built development associated with Bolton Bridge and the Devonshire Arms Hotel. The area nearest the A59 bypass has the greatest capacity for change and development in this area can make an important contribution to improving and restoring the sense of arrival to the visitor area.

Bolton Bridge is better suited to provide services related to visitor arrival, passing trade, transport, larger scale visitor accommodation and associated uses. As the main visitor hub, Bolton Abbey Village is better suited to uses that improve visitor experience, support an extended season, provide wet weather experience, and smaller scale accommodation. All proposals should look to improve and continue the historic narrative of the villages.

New development should be appropriate to the surrounding context and take account of the type of use proposed and the required form for that use. The choice of sites should be informed by the Strategy and Masterplan, the **Bolton Abbey Heritage Capacity Assessment**, **Bolton Abbey Landscape Capacity Study** and **Bolton Abbey Further Heritage Study** [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#). Close attention should be paid to the historic structure of the settlements including the main arrival, key features, important buildings and identified capacity for change.

**DEV2** Sustainability and future performance of buildings and place should be intrinsic to all proposals. Every opportunity should be taken to incorporate sustainability, improved performance, heritage, landscape, and net biodiversity gains into development proposals.

New buildings will be constructed using appropriate methods and techniques, blending traditional crafts with modern techniques, ensuring that a fabric first approach to energy conservation is embedded within the design. A key focus in design and specification should be on making best use of embedded carbon, on cast the viability of lifetime maintenance and on the overall carbon cost of the building. This approach will contribute towards long-term viability and limit the environmental impact of development.

Every effort should be made to deliver quantifiable net gains in habitat and associated biodiversity that follow the Lawton principles of 'bigger, better and joined up', which contribute to nature recovery and add to the quality of the wildlife network. Enhancements should be sought in the ability for people using and experiencing new built form to appreciate the significance of the surrounding landscape and heritage setting.

<sup>1</sup>Special Qualities are those things which make the area worthy of protection via National Park status, as defined in the National Park Management Plan.

**DEV3** New buildings and spaces must be designed for the widest possible user group. Design must consider and deliver equality of access, experience, and functionality. Buildings and spaces must be accessible, inclusive, and meet the needs of people of different ages, backgrounds, cultures, and abilities.

Bolton Abbey is for everyone. Historic buildings and settings of exceptional heritage and landscape significance can bring challenges for the design and development of new built environments and infrastructure. New buildings must be designed with the present and future in mind. Every effort should be made to put inclusivity and diversity at the heart of the design process.

**DEV4** New development and interventions across the visitor area should incorporate as many opportunities as possible to enable visitor and users to gain an enhanced understanding of the landscape, built and cultural heritage of the visitor area. Opportunities should be taken to help visitors appreciate the significance and relevance of the form and character of the area, and the way in which these contribute to the Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The Devonshire family is passionately committed to the power of learning, of shared knowledge and insight. Interventions that introduce new buildings, create new spaces, routes and visitor experiences should be designed and delivered to ensure that the best possible opportunities are created for people to appreciate, learn about, and begin to understand the place that they are in, the Special Qualities associated with it and the contribution that each makes to the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

This might be done by the incorporation of images and story boards, of interpretative resources (the use of Aps and QR codes at key locations) or the use, and explanation of the use, of design, materials or construction techniques specific to the Yorkshire Dales.

## Heritage and Sense of Place

**HER1** Bolton Abbey and the wider visitor area offers an exceptional sense of place, rich in cultural and built heritage significance and set within world class landscape. It is this quality of place, the significance attached to heritage assets and the contribution made by their setting, that draws and rewards visitors and which must be cherished, conserved, and enhanced when any form of change is introduced.

Bolton Abbey and its surroundings have been a valued destination for visitors and those seeking access to the countryside since the early 19th century, when the network of paths and seats was laid out, and first guidebooks were published. From the late 19th century, the arrival of the railway facilitated access for increasing numbers of visitors. This trend has continued throughout the 20th and into the 21st century.

The benefits arising from proportionate and appropriate change to enhance the visitor experience and economy of the visitor area is recognised and accepted by owners, residents, visitors, and stakeholders alike.

Continuing to provide a place of leisure and enjoyment for all visitors represents part of the heritage of the estate. This will include enabling access to and movement through the landscape and providing the necessary facilities.



In addition to this valuable cultural heritage Bolton Abbey contains heritage assets of exceptional significance, including the Scheduled remains of the medieval Priory, Barden Tower, and numerous listed buildings. The significance of these heritage assets both enhances, and is enhanced by, the aesthetic value of their landscape setting. An overview of the location and extent of these assets is provided in Figure 4.

Bolton Abbey's past is an inspiration for all our futures. The opportunity to spend time in and explore the countryside within the setting of these assets offers an exceptionally rich experience. It creates the conditions for visitors to see, feel and experience the significance of built and cultural heritage within landscape. Every opportunity should be taken to celebrate and respond to the quality of the contribution that Bolton Abbey's cultural and built heritage makes to sense of place and people's experience of it when introducing any new activity, built form or infrastructure.

#### HER2

**The Bolton Abbey Core Visitor Area is of great cultural heritage and landscape significance. It has strong connections with both post-medieval and the "Picturesque" element of the Romantic Movement of the 18th and 19th centuries. Future development should respect this significance.**

Three aesthetic concepts established during the Romantic era divided the natural world into categories: the Pastoral, the Picturesque, and the Sublime. The Picturesque - a category developed in the late 1700s by clergyman and artist William Gilpin — refers to the charm of discovering the landscape in its natural state. Gilpin encouraged his followers to engage in "picturesque travel" - the goal of which was to discover beauty created solely by nature.

The visitor area inspired artists and writers and many of the views painted by J M W Turner and other artists survive largely unchanged, to be identified and appreciated today. Excerpts of these drawings and an overview of the locations from which they were produced is provided at Figure 10.

## Bolton Abbey Village

**BAV1 Future development should respect the character and appearance, the general form, scale, and massing of the historic settlement.**

Bolton Abbey Village is not a planned estate village but has developed in an organic and piecemeal fashion, resulting in an irregular plan and varied roofscape. Generally, domestic buildings are represented by terraced cottages, two-storey in height, with pitched roofs, and occasional end bays or cross-ranges with gables to the front. Alteration over time has resulted in varied fabric, roofscape and plans. More recent dwellings include the larger semi-detached cottages on the northern side of the village. Any future proposals should be in keeping with this character, avoiding overly regular layouts or homogenous design.

Historically, Bolton Abbey Village had a more open character than today; open areas were contiguous with the road, and several cottages had detached gardens. More enclosed, private gardens are a more recent feature. Future development which opens out and allows greater movement through shared spaces would reflect this aspect of historic character (especially that associated with the medieval Priory precinct and Barnyard) and create a greater sense of communal space.

Due regard should be given to the character and significance of the Conservation Area and reference made to the analysis of the Conservation Area provided in the Heritage Capacity Assessment undertaken by FAS as part of the evidence base for this document.

This principle is further developed in BAV2 below.

**BAV2 Future development should enhance legibility of the village layout associated with the medieval Priory precinct and early settlement, respecting and reinforcing known boundary features where possible.**

Bolton Abbey Village formed part of the agricultural zone of the medieval priory precinct, including the rectangular barnyard and Hind House Croft to the west, where agricultural workers would have lived. The western boundary of the barnyard has been perpetuated in part by the road and property boundaries, and the southern boundary is evident as an earthwork; this is one of the more clearly legible elements of medieval layout. Although the western extent of Hind House Close is less certain, the grain of the medieval landscape is reflected in surviving earthworks.

The Tithe Barn is a Grade I listed building and part of the Scheduled Monument. Recent refurbishment has restored the building, and views towards it have been opened out. Future development should ensure that views of and from the Tithe Barn are preserved or enhanced.

## Bolton Bridge

**BB1 Opportunities should be taken to recreate a sense of arrival and to mark Bolton Bridge as a significant point of entry into the visitor area.**

Bolton Bridge has historically been a place of transit, sited at the crossing point of a major route over the River Wharfe (first by ferry, later by bridge). The significance to travellers is reflected by the inn at the Devonshire Arms, and the former Red Lion coaching inn, now Red Lion Farm, the tollgate/turnpike cottage and connections to the railway.

This character was eroded by the creation of the current bypass, but it also provides an opportunity to recreate a "gateway" or sense of arrival lost when the toll gate was removed, which left several historic connections unused or inaccessible and effectively set Bolton Bridge back from the main road. More of a presence is needed that is visible from the A59. Former routes – such as the 'stump road', connection to the railway, and Huffa Lane – should be reflected in the layout of developments, reinstated or reinforced as routes through the landscape.

**BB2 Future development should reflect the historic role, varied size and harmonious character of buildings of different use and type within the settlement.**

Bolton Bridge originated as a small cluster of buildings with built environment focussed at main junctions. Future development should remain clustered around the main road junctions.



As at Bolton Abbey, domestic dwellings of the 18th and 19th century tend to be two-storey terraced cottages with pitched slate roofs. In contrast, the Devonshire Arms is representative of a structure that has been added to and developed at various stages over a 200-year period, reflecting changes in architectural styles. Domestic dwellings and agricultural buildings primarily use coursed rubblestone or coursed squared stone, with stone detailing. As a more public structure that has continued to evolve, the Devonshire Arms exhibits a wider range of stonework and external finishes.

Employing appropriate stonework and external finishes that reflect the use and status of buildings would continue these historical trends and precedents. Areas towards the modern A59 provide ideal opportunities for innovative high-quality design and materials to be used in an imaginative and harmonious way.

Within Bolton Bridge, new development should respect, and where possible enhance, the prominence of the Devonshire Arms and its immediate setting. The current formal gardens are not in keeping with the wider ‘Picturesque’ character of the visitor. They could be improved, and their formal character should not be repeated in any new gardens or landscaping.

The former Trough Gardens (See figure 8 and photo on page 63) represent an opportunity to create an open space that will enhance the character of the settlement, and the setting of the listed buildings. The current layout, representing the vestiges of formal gardens introduced in the early 20th century, does not contribute positively to historic character. The walling along the beck is also 20th-century in date and so has limited heritage sensitivity.

## Landscape

**LAN1 The landscape character of the visitor area should be respected, and its significance conserved when considering the introduction or creation of new development, of new trees, woodland or other habitat as part of any strategy to deliver environmental enhancement or biodiversity gain.**

The visitor area is situated in the valley along the banks of the meandering River Wharfe and generally follows the river valley from northwest to south. The gently undulating landscape form of lowland pastoral fields has a medium cover of vegetation with scattered clusters of trees and woodlands. These form the primary landscape type of the visitor area and are divided by drystone walls and dotted with isolated farms and field barns.

To the east and west, the land rises steeply to the upland moors and blanket bogs that dominate the skyline creating a dramatic backdrop that dominates the lowland landscape. Carving their way down from the upland moors, steeply gullied ravines, gills and becks cascade over waterfalls on their way down to the river.

The drama and tension created between these two landscapes, along with the architecture and priory ruins, attracted artists and writers during the early 19th century. This helped to promote Bolton Abbey as a picturesque tourist location during the “Romantic” era as a place for leisure and relaxation. Views of the upland moors should be retained from the pastoral lowlands to retain the drama and connection.

Whilst screening should be provided around the car park to reduce glare when viewed from afar, it may still be possible to retain views or glimpses of the moors - perhaps cleverly framed by planting or buildings.

## Ecology

**ECO1 Development proposals should include the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain as a core principle. All schemes should seek to exceed any minimum requirement for net gain. They should follow the Lawtonian principles of ‘bigger, better and joined up’, and improve the quality of local wildlife networks.**

Development proposals should recognise the varying degrees of sensitivity that apply to the visitor area in terms of the presence of ecological designations and protected species, seeking to locate new development away from sensitive areas wherever it is practicable to do. To this end, developers should refer to the High Level Ecology Statement 2016 that formed part of the Bolton Abbey Development Options Appraisal Study [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page evidence base.](#)

Individual schemes should be informed by appropriate ecological assessments and a formal baseline assessment using the current Defra Biodiversity Metric. The effects of noise, lighting, traffic generation and drainage associated with new development should be assessed in terms of their potential impact on ecology and suitable mitigation provided. This assessment should be undertaken at an early stage to allow any ecological mitigation to be incorporated into any detailed designs.

The Environment Act 2021 states that all new developments must achieve 10% net biodiversity gain.. In addition, the NPPF and other statutory instruments make biodiversity a key part of the planning and development process. Developments within the Masterplan should deliver net biodiversity gain that directly contributes to nature recovery, following the Lawton Review ‘Making space for nature’ principles of ‘bigger, better and joined up’.[Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page.](#) Every effort should be made to design out biodiversity loss through avoidance, compensation, and on/off site enhancements.

Gains should be secured where best value can be achieved in terms of wildlife connectivity (corridors and stepping stones). Where off-site gains need to be provided, priority should be given to the improvement and enhancement of the habitat sites identified within the Bolton Abbey Biodiversity Net Gain Study [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page \(2022\).](#)

## Design

**DES1 Design of proposals arising from implementation of the Strategy should be informed by a Design Guide for the Bolton Abbey Core Visitor Area.**

**The design of all new buildings and places should demonstrate that they:**

- Are informed by evidence base documents that are references to this Strategy
- Are based upon an understanding of the historical narrative of Bolton Abbey
- Include an architectural character which adds positively to place-making and where possible better reveals the significance of Bolton Abbey
- Achieve landscape enhancements which, where possible, better reveal the significance of Bolton Abbey
- Are informed by robust heritage assessments when the designs will impact upon heritage assets
- The architectural form, character and detailing of new housing and buildings in other uses should be informed by the inherited character of Bolton Abbey Village as identified in evidence base documents that are references to this Strategy



The designs for proposals on sites identified in the Craven Local Plan for larger scale development should, in addition to meeting the criteria set out above:

- Take opportunities to enhance the sense of arrival into Bolton Abbey and Bolton Bridge
- Demonstrate that the designs have emerged from an iterative process of pre-application engagement include the Local Planning Authority, the National Park Authority and Historic England, together with other consultees as appropriate

The visitor area has a long history of settlement and development. The evidence gathered to support this Strategy has demonstrated how the form, role, and function of the area's two settlements have evolved over time.

Bolton Abbey Village is characterised by buildings of various origins including domestic, administrative, institutional, agricultural, infrastructure and boundary. All proposals should look to these existing typologies for design inspiration and guidance.

Most domestic buildings are attached or terraced. Generally, buildings are no higher than two storeys. The largest structure in Bolton Abbey Village is the Great Tithe Barn, and the massing and scale of any new buildings should not be larger than this.

Buildings within Bolton Bridge are generally one to two storeys high, and this height should inform the general height within Bolton Bridge. The Devonshire Arms is the largest building and new buildings should be smaller in scale than the hotel and its campus.

Development that introduces new buildings and infrastructure into the visitor area should continue the story of evolution and change of time. The approach to the design of new buildings and infrastructure should apply the principles set out below:

- Use the development framework and spatial masterplan set out in this document to ensure a cohesive and holistic choice of siting
- Apply high quality design and specify materials that fit the context of place
- Borrow ideas, materials and details from other good quality examples, without replicating entire buildings
- Identify the appropriate typologies: barns, cottages, inns, country residences (manor house) etc
- Provide holistic designs that deliver place making enhancements and include positive design of the spaces around buildings
- Adopt a fabric-first approach to sustainability

Further detail relating to design approaches to be taken for proposals in Bolton Abbey and Bolton Bridge are set out in BAV1, BAV2, BB1 and BB2 above and should be taken into account alongside DES1.

## Materials

**DES2 The palette and use of materials employed in any new development should be in keeping with the historic character of the visitor area and surrounding landscape.**

The two areas of Bolton Abbey Village and Bolton Bridge have a cohesive feel because of the materials used. Whilst there are distinctive differences between the two areas that relate to the orientation of buildings and architectural detailing, there are many similarities in the way materials have been used and detailed.

Stone is a ubiquitous material within this landscape. Stonework makes an important contribution to historic character, with most existing structures using coursed rubblestone, coursed squared stone or a mixture of both, with stone quoins and door and window surrounds. Roofs are generally stone slates.

Dressed stone is more rarely employed, generally found on more public facing buildings such as the estate office or the Devonshire Arms, or on later houses. These observations should inform the construction methods employed within the visitor area. Appropriate architectural features that could be employed to reflect the character of the surrounding buildings include shaped kneelers, quoins, dressed stone surrounds and diagonally set chimneys.

Comprehensive analysis of the use of stone, its hierarchy, source and application is provided in the Bolton Abbey Heritage Stone and Slate Study [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#) Also available for reference is The Field Barns Study [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#). Which sets out the different forms of barn that are evident within the Bolton Abbey Estate and the contribution that they make to the wider landscape and Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

## Public Access and Sustainable Travel

**DES3 Design and materials associated with public access infrastructure and sustainable travel links should promote equality of access for all whilst respecting the context of place and landscape setting.**

The Strategy seeks to enable and enhance access for all. It will deliver new connections and additions to public and permissive rights of way networks within the visitor area. As part of this, it looks to provide:

- A cycle link between Bolton Abbey and Bolton Bridge (similar to one at Ripley Castle) to better connect the two settlements.
- Enhancements to the existing link between Bolton Abbey Station and Bolton Bridge.
- Creation of a new biodiversity area associated with Hambleton Beck
- A new connection through Trough Park to provide access from the Devonshire Arms to proposed new facilities that are to be delivered as part of the masterplan

Throughout the visitor area, a clear Wayfinding Strategy should be developed using natural materials for signage, interpretation, and focal points. This will provide identifiable branding for marked trails and walks, cycle routes and accessible routes, along with conventional Public Rights of Way signage.

In addition to this, new interpretation boards will be provided along the Artists and Poets Trail at key locations. Markers should be wooden or simple laser cut raw metal with integrated graphics.

Generally, paths within the visitor area will be retained as existing. Where new paths are proposed and/or improved access is required for wheeled mobility (i.e. bikes, wheelchairs, pushchairs etc.), firm paths will be introduced. Any crossing points should be well marked and signed.

The Strategy will encourage cycling through the provision of a new cycle hub and café in Bolton Bridge where there will be facilities including cycle parking, cycle hire and cycle repair. Cycle parking will also be provided in the Bolton Abbey car park. Designers should refer to relevant and appropriate guidance (e.g. **LTN1-20 and Sustrans Traffic Free Routes and Greenways design guidance**) [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#).



The primacy of pedestrians on village routes and pathways should be maintained, with improvements to the width of existing footpaths, new footpaths and crossing points. Traffic calming measures should be designed for relevant parts of Green Lane providing an improved pedestrian environment that is safer and more user friendly.

At the same time, it is important to ensure that highway works are successfully integrated into the historic character of the visitor and surrounding landscape by means of sensitive siting, design, materials, and colouring. Designers should refer to relevant and appropriate guidance from **Historic England (Streets for All)** and the **DfT (Manual for Streets and Traffic Advisory Leaflets)** *Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page.*

For matters associated with design of open spaces and 'green routes' please see DES4, for lighting please see DES5 and for public realm DES6.

## Natural and Open Spaces

**DES4 Positive design proposals should be provided for natural, open, and undeveloped spaces. Areas of different character should be designed to fulfil different roles.**

Spaces around buildings should be designed to sit within the context of, and provide views of, the wider landscape. Where existing views of higher ground exist, these should be maintained to engage visitors with the landscape. Several historic and newly introduced 'lookout' seats are set within the existing landscape of the visitor area. These, as well as new proposed seating, should be well marked on signage and wayfinding.

A new cycle link should follow a route that provides views of wider countryside and upland moors with swathes of planting and clusters of trees.

A new or expanded Barnyard area at Bolton Abbey should be informal with areas to relax, picnic, sit and play. New or extended car parking should be presented in a green relaxed setting with good tree cover and informal planting.

Boundary treatments should generally comprise drystone walls for rear gardens and landscapes bounding the wider countryside. At the centre of Bolton Abbey Village and Bolton Bridge, where openness is an important feature, estate railing would be the best option for any essential delineation of boundaries or separation from the road.

The introduction of a hotel at Bolton Bridge would provide an opportunity to restore the landscape. Development should reconnect guests to the "Pastoral" and "Picturesque" by providing uninterrupted views of the countryside and grazing stock wherever possible. Landscape restoration should reflect the artistic not the formal and should avoid the repetition of formal landscape works seen elsewhere at Bolton Bridge (refer to page 69) and on the opposite side of the modern A59.

## Lighting

**DES5 Lighting can be employed to enhance the use of the public realm in the evening - particularly within both settlements but must be designed and introduced with care in order to respect the importance and enjoyment of intrinsic darkness.**

Dark night skies make an important contribution to the natural environment and landscape, including the Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park which is proposed for 'Dark Sky' designation. Light leakage and the resulting light pollution have a significant adverse impact on these assets and qualities and the ability of people to experience and enjoy them.

Development proposals that require lighting should be accompanied by a Lighting Strategy that will promote the efficient, sensitive, and sustainable use of lighting in the public realm and which will incorporate the following principles:

- The physical design of new lighting shall consider new and existing development. Glare or light spill into private property and night skies should be avoided;
- The impacts of new lighting on habitats and wildlife should always be minimised and should never be adverse. Consideration must be given to light sensitive and nocturnal species such as bats and owls, and design should include dark corridors, warm lighting (2800 kelvin max) and low level lights (bollard lighting and very low columns);
- Views of the night sky should be maintained and light spill into the sky should be avoided through design;
- The introduction of new external lighting should only be considered in the settlements of Bolton Abbey Village and Bolton Bridge and only where new external lighting is essential to provide public realm enhancements or appropriate levels of safety to residents and visitors; and
- Development proposals involving new external lighting should be designed with input from a specialist lighting designer.

## Highways, Car Parking and Associated Public Realm

**DES6 Materials, design, landscaping and street furniture associated with improvements to highways and public realm and the extension or introduction of new car parking should be designed to deliver the necessary functionality but should be consistent with the character, setting, landscape and heritage significance of the visitor area.**

The Masterplan will seek to deliver projects aimed at providing improved highway functionality, car parking, public realm, and pedestrian connections. In liaison with North Yorkshire Council, detailed design work will be undertaken to support the delivery of:

- Improvements to the junction of B6160 with Green Lane in the centre of Bolton Abbey Village
- Localised road widening to enable all turning movements, as well as the closure of the separate one way link, adjacent to Tea on the Green
- New footways on the east (1.2m minimum) and west (2m minimum) of the B6160 to connect the village centre with the car park, bus stops and Tithe Barn
- A new wide raised pedestrian crossing over B6160
- Extension to the existing car park at Bolton Abbey Village
- New car parking associated with new visitor facilities and enterprise to be introduced at Bolton Bridge

As part of highway improvements within Bolton Abbey Village, improved bus stopping arrangements will be sought with North Yorkshire Council, in liaison with Historic England. The existing small triangular green space (including trees) should be retained as much as feasible and stone benches provided within the green.

Dedicated routes should be provided for emergency vehicles and waste vehicles as part of individual development schemes. These should include innovative and sensitive screening of bin storage areas where needed externally.





A detailed analysis of highway capacity and trip generation arising from proposals will be required in support of any future planning applications. This should confirm the level of car parking provision and demonstrate suitable highway operation, including at the car park accesses.

Each assessment will need to consider any changes to existing journey patterns and parking demand arising from the proposals as well as cumulative demand (associated with the visitor area). Reports should consider and refer to the **Highway Assessment study** that has been produced as part of the **Bolton Abbey Development Options Appraisal** [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#) to confirm feasibility of principles.

It is important to ensure that highway works are successfully integrated into the historic character of the visitor area and surrounding landscape by means of sensitive siting, design, materials, and colouring. Designers should refer to relevant and appropriate guidance from **Historic England (Streets for All)** and the **DfT (Manual for Streets and Traffic Advisory Leaflets)**. [Hyperlink to be added when documents on web page](#)

## Advancing Proposals for Change

The Development and Design Principles in this document together with the evidence base identified in the References section of this document, provide a firm basis to inform the design and development of proposals for change.

It is acknowledged by the Devonshire Group, which has a track record of caring for and adding to the evolution of Bolton Abbey, that the design of development proposals will be key to the success of the Strategy.

The Devonshire Group will produce a Design Guide for the Core Visitor Area that will inform development proposals that are submitted within the area.

The group will make use of pre-application enquiry services provided by the two Local Planning Authorities and also seek the pre-application input of Historic England on all but minor proposals for change within the Core Visitor Area.





In relation to larger scale development on three identified sites in the Craven Local Plan, pre-application enquiries shall be submitted to North Yorkshire Council, with pre-application advice of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, given proximity of the sites to the National Park boundary, and Historic England also sought, prior to the submission of planning applications.

Pre-application enquiries for larger scale development shall be informed by the Design Guide for the Core Visitor Area.

An iterative approach to pre-application engagement for larger scale development may be appropriate with consultee feedback sought as part of an iterative design process, to ensure that opportunities for high quality change and the delivery of enhancements to the local area, through exemplar development in a heritage landscape setting are realised.

Families enjoying the river

## Outcomes

### Targeted Outcomes

The objective of the Strategy is to enable the next phase of the evolution of the Bolton Abbey Core Visitor Area as a more welcoming, accessible, and coherent visitor experience, and to support the estate's ongoing programme of environmental management and architectural conservation.

Implementation of the Strategy will also help to deliver outcomes associated with sustainable tourism, local economy, thriving rural communities, health and well-being and environmental enhancement sought by partners and stakeholders including the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, North Yorkshire Council, Historic England, and Natural England.

### Access

The successful implementation of the Strategy will bring an improved sense of arrival to both Bolton Bridge and Bolton Abbey, improved facilities to support year-round visitor activity, a more 'walkable' and mobility conscious area with improved access to the Bolton Abbey car park, off road paths, greater opportunities for safe cycling and wheelchair use.



## Economic Development

The visitor area will host new public and visitor facing facilities and enterprises. New lower cost overnight accommodation will be created in association with the Devonshire Arms Hotel. Other opportunities for additional overnight stays will be introduced to the villages. Sensitive economic development will have created new full and part time employment opportunities supported by staff housing and amenities. The additions will help to attract a broader group of customers and increase the resilience of the visitor economy throughout the year. This will bring benefits to the entire economy of the visitor area and create a ripple effect to businesses in the local area.

## Heritage

The highest levels of care will be taken to integrate new development into the historic character of the area and in the ongoing conservation of built heritage and landscape. The recreation of a Barnyard area in the centre of Bolton Abbey Village, framed by the restored and revitalised Tithe Barn to the east, will provide a new opportunity for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the historic village, improve the setting, and offer enhanced appreciation of key heritage assets.

## Environment

Further investments will be made to enhance the environmental capacity of the area, delivering, and securing net gains in biodiversity. Best in class design and architecture will ensure that each new building fits within and adds to the overall character of the visitor area, and the experience and quality of life that visitors, customers, staff, and residents enjoy.

## Community Vitality

Together with other targeted outcomes, investment in existing businesses and creation of new economic opportunity will help to maintain and enhance the vitality of the local communities that form part of and relate to the visitor area. Creation of new housing for staff will help to reduce pressure on the estate's existing stock, making more homes available to rent. Provision of new housing for staff will also boost the capacity and local spending power within the community. Improvements to roads and footways and the recreation of a Barnyard style area of open space will bring added amenity.

## Sustainability

Provision of new housing for staff alongside an expanding tourism business (including a farm shop and pub) will improve the ability of the villages within the visitor area to function sustainably with a high level of self-containment and good access to local services. The addition of off-road trails and cycle routes will enable people to move around the local area without reliance on cars. The continued maintenance and expansion of the area's extensive network of permissive rights of way will support people's health and wellbeing, providing access to safe areas to exercise and clean air. The use of best-in-class design and construction techniques in all new buildings, and the introduction and use of renewable energy, will add to the long-term environmental performance of the settlements.

## Inclusivity

Bolton Abbey is for everyone. The creation of new visitor facilities designed to meet the needs of people of all backgrounds, cultures and abilities will broaden the appeal of the visitor area. Proactive measures to reach a broader visitor base and to adapt the way that services are shaped and provided will help people from diverse backgrounds to feel welcomed and comfortable across the space.

Continued investment in education, outreach and cultural programmes by the estate will generate more opportunities for people of all backgrounds, cultures and abilities to become aware of, connect with and experience Bolton Abbey and the wider Yorkshire Dales National Park.



Visitors Heading Over The Wooden Bridge





## Viability and Deliverability

This section explains that delivery of the Strategy will take place over many years via a process that will be owned and controlled by the Bolton Abbey Estate.

The visitor area lies within and is controlled by the Bolton Abbey Estate. The estate forms part of the Devonshire Group and is managed as part of its wider legacy of land and buildings.

The Devonshire Group is owner of land and property of significant heritage and landscape value. It is responsible for the conservation of these assets, as well as the stewardship of the community and the character of the area. It is the landlord of farms, cottages and visitor facing businesses, and the curators of educational and cultural programmes. Its Hotels and Restaurants division operates the Devonshire Arms Hotel and Spa and the Cavendish Pavilion, directly employing the team that works there.

The estate will lead, direct, and control the implementation of this Strategy through the development of new facilities, amenities, the delivery of environmental enhancement, and creation of businesses within the visitor area.

It will retain ownership of all new buildings and associated infrastructure, operating directly or letting to independent businesses. Where property is let, its use, care and maintenance will be managed via a leasehold agreement which will enable the estate to maintain control.

Change will be gradual. The Strategy will be delivered over a period of many years, perhaps as many as 30. The phasing and timing of delivery will be led by the estate and will be influenced by market factors, visitor demand, and dynamics.

Where changes are introduced, they will be sensitive, proportionate and add measurable value. Development proposals will be subject to internal, peer and public scrutiny where planning permission is required, to the inform formal decision-making process.

All projects, large or small will be guided by, designed in accordance with, and tested against this Strategy.



Projects will come forward only when the estate is confident that they will help to deliver the vision and objectives of this Strategy, and are either commercially viable or financially affordable, without reliance on third party funding or investment.

Where planning permission is required, projects will be progressed via a formal process of pre-application consultation with community, stakeholders and the relevant local planning authority followed by the production, submission, and publication of detailed planning applications with the necessary supporting technical studies.

Where planning permission is not required, for example for environmental or heritage restoration projects, the estate will publicise its intentions and provide information to residents and visitors to help them identify and learn about the changes that have taken place, and the outcomes they are designed to enable.

The Bolton Abbey Estate and its 'parent' the Chatsworth Settlement Trust are proven custodians, operational and development professionals, trusted and supported by community, stakeholders and regulators. They apply relevant best practice at all times and operate to the very highest standards.

We at the Devonshire Group have been responsible for the careful stewardship of the Bolton Abbey Core Visitor Area for over 270 years. During this period, we have welcomed and shared the space with many millions of visitors whilst conserving and enhancing the contribution it makes to the Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The Bolton Abbey Estate, and the Devonshire family are entirely committed to continuing this care and attention.





## Closing Statement

Bolton Abbey is a key recreational and visitor economy asset within the Yorkshire Dales. It plays a valued role as a gateway to the National Park and by providing extensive access to the public to stunning countryside set within a nationally important landscape and heritage context.

Its combination of landscape, heritage, and visitor infrastructure provides an exceptional opportunity for people to experience, learn about and come to understand this part of our natural world, and the built and cultural heritage associated with it.





The visitor facilities provided and maintained by the Bolton Abbey Estate allow hundreds of thousands of people to experience this joy and wonder from spending time with their families within Bolton Abbey's spectacular landscape setting each year.

The Devonshire family is passionately committed to nature, cultural heritage, and to the power of learning, of shared knowledge and insight. To welcoming everyone to this exceptional place.

The Bolton Abbey Estate will continue to manage the visitor to enable large scale public access. Revenues generated from car parking and visitor facing businesses run by the estate (and Devonshire Group) will continue to be retained on the estate and used to support and maintain visitor and access related infrastructure, for the maintenance and conservation of the area's important landscape, and of its environmental and heritage assets.

The operation of these businesses, and those run by tenants on the estate, will continue to provide employment and generate direct and indirect economic benefits to the communities and businesses of North Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Dales.

New buildings, spaces, routes, and visitor experiences will be designed to welcome a broad audience, to enhance accessibility and visitor experience. To ensure the best possible opportunity for people to appreciate, learn about and begin to understand the place that they are in, the Special Qualities associated with it and the contribution that each makes to the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Ongoing educational and cultural programmes will support learning, knowledge, life experience, and both physical and mental wellbeing.

This Strategy will play an important role in guiding and shaping change and assimilating new development into the sensitive landscape and historic character of the visitor area. The analysis and guidance offered has been informed by extensive technical research and investigation across a series of thematic areas and disciplines.

The document will provide a rich source of insight and inspiration to the designers who will take on the challenge of adding to the visitor area's built and natural environment. It provides checks and balances for policy and decision makers, and a wealth of information that those with an interest in the future well-being of the people, landscape, heritage, built and natural environment associated with Bolton Abbey, Bolton Bridge, Barden, the Priory and its precinct, Barden Tower, Strid Wood, the River Wharfe and its meadows, can use to assess and respond to proposals for change.

We at the Devonshire Group offer this Strategy as an enabler. It will help those responsible to guide and shape the future of Bolton Abbey for everyone. We trust it will support you in your endeavours, in the discharge of your responsibilities, and the furtherance of your interests.



# References

## **BADOAS, Lichfields 2017** (*Hyperlink to add*) **incorporating the following evidence base:**

- The Bolton Abbey Heritage Capacity Assessment (by FAS)
- The Bolton Abbey Landscape Capacity Assessment (by Gillespies)
- The Bolton Abbey Transport Statement (by ARUP)
- The Bolton Abbey Village Masterplan (by CST)
- The Bolton Abbey Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment (by Frey Consulting)
- The Bolton Abbey Staff Accommodation Needs Assessment (by Frey Consulting)
- The Bolton Abbey Ecological Statement (by BLE)
- The Preliminary Bolton Abbey Heritage Assessment (by ArcHeritage)
- The Preliminary Bolton Abbey Landscape Appraisal (by Gillespies)
- The Bolton Abbey Estate Tourism Development Strategy (by CST)
- Bolton Abbey Heritage Landscape Management Plan (by English Nature et al)

## **BADOAS Addendum 2023** (*Hyperlink to add*) **incorporating the following evidence base:**

Evidence base (and supporting evidence):

- Bolton Abbey Heritage Stone and Slate Study 2022 (Lichfields)
  - Bolton Abbey Stone Study – Building Stone Survey (P Parsons) page 8
  - Bolton Abbey Heritage Stone and Slate Study - Heritage Baseline (FAS) page 8
  - Bolton Abbey Stone and Slate Study – Physical Character Appraisal (Gillespies) page 9
  - Bolton Abbey Heritage Stone and Slate Study – Sources of Stone and Slate (Lichfields) page 10
- Bolton Abbey Further Heritage Evidence Study May 2022 (FAS)
  - Bolton Abbey Heritage Capacity Assessment page 4
  - Bolton Abbey Heritage Stone and Slate Study page 8
  - Bolton Abbey Field Barns Study 2021 page 10
- Bolton Abbey Net Ecological Gain Study (BLE)
  - UKHab Classification Survey (incl condition and BNG potential)
  - Example BNG Calculation (Spa Development)
- Bolton Abbey Transport Statement 2022 draft (ARUP)
  - BA Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment (Frey Consulting)
  - BA Staff Accommodation Needs Assessment (Frey Consulting)
  - BA Heritage Capacity Assessment (FAS)
  - BA Landscape Capacity Study (Gillespies)
  - Ecological Statement (BLE)

## **Policy**

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Yorkshire Dales Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (adopted 2016)
- National Park Management Plan (revised March 2016)
- Craven District Local Plan 2022 – 2032

## **Additional/Supporting**

- Bolton Abbey Heritage Landscape Management Plan Annual Report Year End March 2021
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Local Plan 2023 – 2040 Consultation No. 5 Preferred Options June 2022
- Devonshire Arms Spa Feasibility Report November 2021
- Tourism, Residential, Agricultural, Woodlands BA Strategies





## Heritage, People, and Place: A Placemaking Strategy for Bolton Abbey

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