6.0 CHARACTER OF SCARBOROUGH BOROUGH

6.1   This section of the SPD provides an overview of the varying character and identity of Scarborough Borough. It highlights the positive defining characteristics of different types of settlements / areas within the Borough, which should in turn be used to inform design choices; to help 'ground' new developments within their locality. Applicants should draw from these positive characteristics when undertaking the contextual appraisals outlined in Section 5.

6.2   As set out below, character has been considered and is presented across different scales – either at the settlement-wide level or in settlement 'sub-areas' – and where particular defining characteristics are shared across a number of settlements, they have been grouped together accordingly.

Figure 6.1: View from Whitby (West) Pier

Character Overview

"The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them…"
(Paragraph 50, National Design Guide (January 2021)

6.3   The character of Scarborough Borough is rich and diverse; varying between the historic coastal towns of Scarborough, Whitby and Filey, the more recent sub-urban areas, the rural villages and the wider countryside. Broadly speaking, the character of these places is primarily derived from their intrinsic functional relationship with either the coast or the countryside.

6.4   While the Borough's settlements have developed and expanded over time, much of their value is drawn from their past; from the buildings and spaces that emerged in response to the demands of the time. It is this legacy of past development – driven by the relationship with the landscape – which provides many of the positive defining characteristics of the Borough and it is imperative that new development respects and enhances this character.

6.5   A brief overview of some of the key aspects which influence character at the local level is provided below.

Landscape Character

6.6   The Borough's varied and high quality landscape encompasses coastal cliffs and headlands, defined by landmarks such as Scarborough Castle and Whitby Abbey, wild and remote stretches of coast, wooded valleys such as the Esk, genteel coastal resort towns and harbours, expansive open lowland landscapes such as the Vale of Pickering and contrasting scarps, dales and uplands. The landscape is valued for the coastal and rural setting it provides to the Borough's settlements, for its biodiversity and geological interest, and, for the significant opportunities it provides for recreational and tourism activity.

Built Heritage

6.7   The Borough of Scarborough contains over 4,500 Listed Buildings[7], 3 Registered Parks and Gardens and 28 Conservation Areas[8]. These designated heritage assets, together with a vast array of non-designated assets, all contribute to the lasting legacy of built development in the area and reflect different periods in the history of the Borough's settlements. In terms of the Conservation Areas within the Borough, their key characteristics and elements of significance are often identified within their accompanying Character Appraisals and associated Management Plans / policies[9].

6.8   Amongst the most significant heritage assets, the Scheduled Ancient Monuments of Scarborough Castle and Whitby Abbey – on Scarborough's North Bay and Whitby's West Cliff, respectively – dominate the skylines of both towns and provided the focal point for development during the mediaeval period. Much of the mediaeval character has been retained

within these areas (particularly in Whitby) where narrow terraced-streets, tightly packed buildings and yards are still prevalent.

6.9   While they initially developed around the fishing and shipbuilding industries, the coastal towns of Scarborough, Whitby and Filey all grew as seaside resorts over their history. The wide imposing-terraces, landmark buildings and the extensive parks and gardens that developed around the tourism industry remain a significant, distinctive and attractive aspect of the local built environment.

6.10   The majority of the Borough's villages have 'historic cores' and many are designated Conservation Areas. As suggested, these comprise the oldest parts of the settlements and provide many of their positive defining characteristics, including: historic 'burgage plot' layouts, buildings with narrow footprints, steep roofs and traditional materials that often open directly onto the street, and community buildings (churches, public houses, parish halls, etc.) providing a strong focal point for development.

Figure 6.2: North Bay and Scarborough Castle, Scarborough

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[7] Figure includes group listings and buildings within the North York Moors National Park Authority area.

[8] Figure excludes those within the North York Moors National Park Authority area.

[9] See https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/home/planning/conservation/conservation-area-appraisals-and-management-plans

Green Infrastructure

6.11   The Borough's settlements contain a significant number and diverse range of high-quality green spaces and other natural features that contribute positively to their character. These features include formal parks and gardens, urban squares, playing fields, areas of amenity green space, natural and semi-natural green spaces, allotments, etc. Significantly, smaller natural features such as grass verges, hedgerows and trees contribute to character at the street level, and are particularly prevalent in the Borough's towns; alongside the main approach roads and within suburban areas surrounding the urban cores.

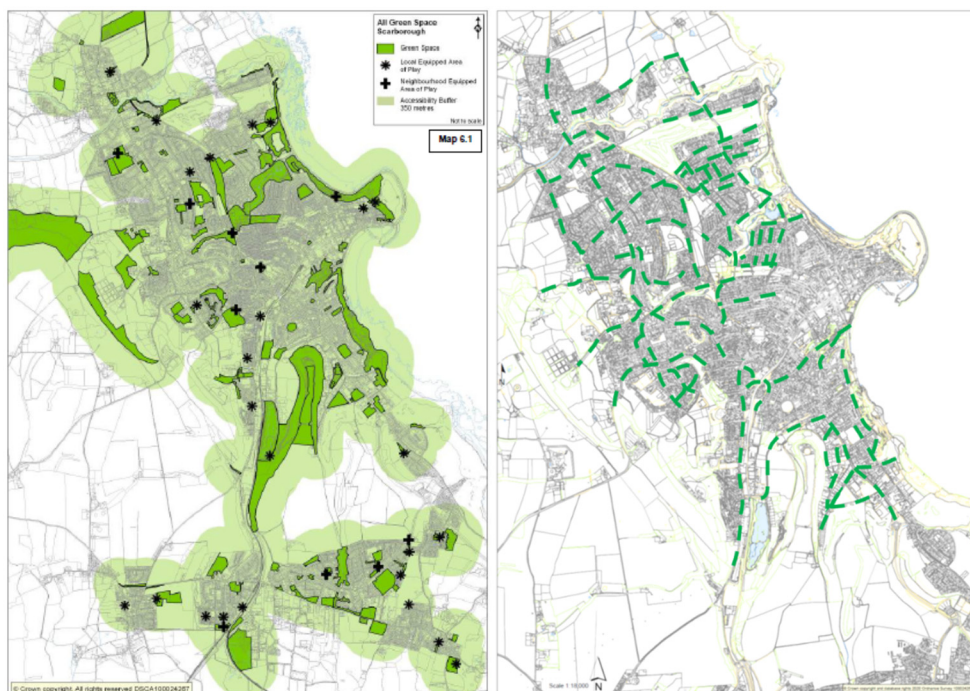*Figure 6.3 (Above Left): Green spaces in Scarborough*
Figure 6.4 (Above Right) Tree-lined streets in Scarborough

Views

6.12   A common characteristic shared across many of the Borough's settlements is the views of key physical and natural landmark features. These include features both inside (e.g. Oliver's Mount, Scarborough) and outside (e.g. North York Moors National Park) of existing settlements and as such, covers both short and long distance views. This not only helps to 'ground' settlements within their setting, it creates distinctive character (separates and differentiates between places) and helps people to navigate their way around the built environment. It is of note that, particularly within the coastal resort towns, buildings and streets are often orientated to provide views of key buildings / landmarks / open spaces. Important views and vistas should be retained and enhanced wherever possible.

Materials

6.13   The prevalent materials of construction utilised within the local built environment – particularly within the older parts of settlements – varies between different settlement groups (see 'Character Areas' below). This is primarily influenced by the varying underlying geology of the Borough, which dictated the availability of materials at the time of construction.

6.14   The difference in materials is most evident in the villages, where properties on the fringe of the North York Moors are predominantly constructed in sandstone / limestone, while properties on the fringe of the Yorkshire Wolds (in the southern parts of the Borough) incorporate chalk stone. Within the larger settlements materials vary between character sub-areas, which reflect different periods of construction and comprise different architectural styles and types of buildings.

Character Areas

6.15   As set out below, character has been considered and is presented across different scales – either at the settlement-wide level or in settlement 'sub-areas' – and where particular defining characteristics are shared across a number of settlements, they have been grouped together accordingly.

6.16   Where particular defining characteristics are shared across settlements they have been grouped together. Clearly, each settlement has its own unique characteristics and this emphasises the need for detailed characterisation work to be carried out by applicants.

6.17   With this in mind, the Borough's settlements can be broadly categorised as follows:

Coastal Towns		
Scarborough	Whitby	Filey
Suburban Settlements		
Eastfield	Osgodby	Crossgates
"Moors Fringe" Villages		
Cloughton	East Ayton	Gristhorpe
Burniston	West Ayton	Lebberston
Scalby	Wykeham	Ruswarp
Cayton	Ruston	Briggswath
Seamer	Brompton	Sleights
Irton	Sawdon	Sandsend
	Snainton	
"Wolds Fringe" Villages		
Speeton	Hunmanby	Flixton
Reighton	Muston	Folkton

Coastal Towns

6.18   The towns of Scarborough, Whitby and Filey can be broadly categorised as "Coastal Towns" owing to their natural setting and collective seaside resort characteristics. Individually, they comprise a number of distinctive character 'sub-areas' which reflect different periods in the history of each town. Again, many of the positive defining characteristics of each town, i.e. those which set the towns apart, are derived from the older parts of the built environment.

Scarborough

6.19   Scarborough town has been broken down into eight different character areas. These are as follows and as show on the diagram below:

- Old Town, Castle and Harbour
- North Bay and North Marine Road
- Foreshore Road
- Central Terraces

- Town Centre
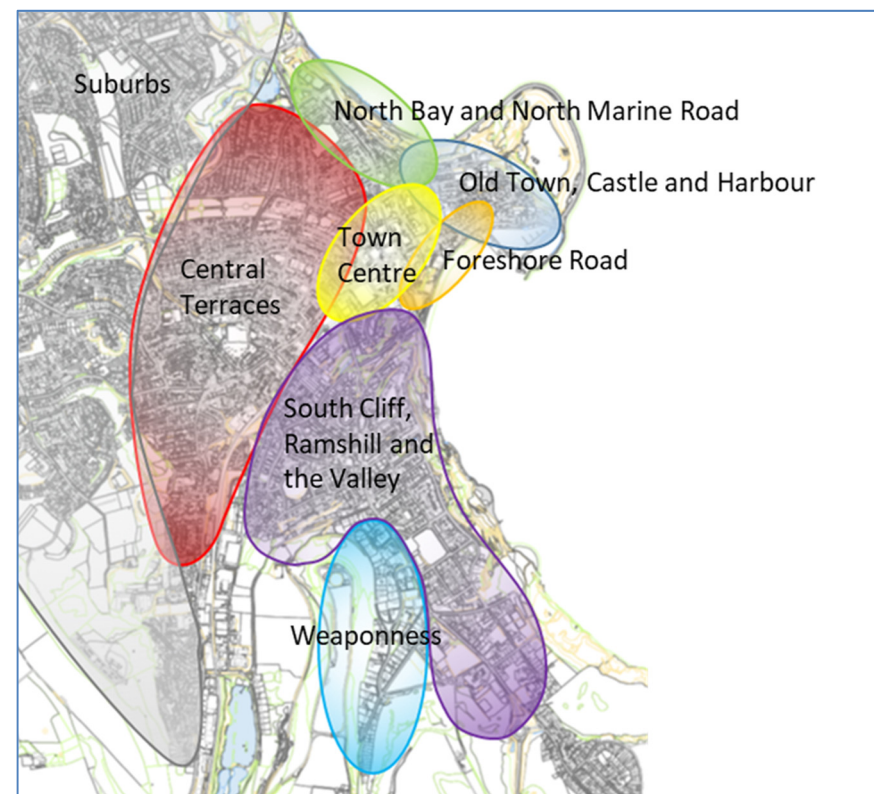- South Cliff, Ramshill and the Valley
- Weaponness
- Suburbs

Figure 6.5: View from Oliver's Mount, Scarborough

Old Town, Castle and Harbour

6.20   As suggested, this is oldest part of the town and thus, has a more 'organic' (rather than a 'planned') feel with a mix of building forms, heights and styles. The area is more enclosed than others within the town, with densely packed, narrow streets and buildings often fronting directly onto the footpath.

Positive characteristics:

- Organic, dense built form with 2-4 storey buildings enclosing narrow streets
- Brick and render buildings with mix of clay pantiles and slate roofs
- Georgian detailing and proportions – decorative door surrounds (including parapets), timber sliding-sash windows with moulded cills and lintels, iron railings
- Street surfacing – cobles and flagstone paving
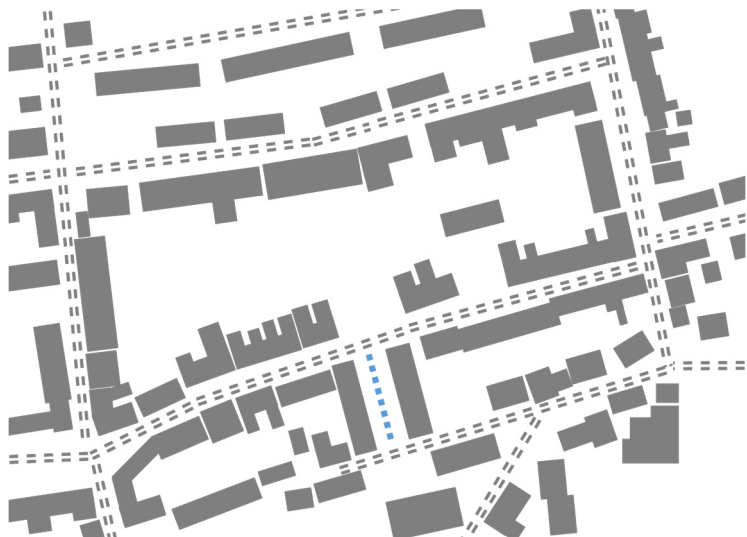- Simple, predominantly slate roofscape – inter-visibility from South Bay

Figure 6.6: Longwestgate

Figure 6.7: Princess Street

Figure 6.8: Quay Street

Figure 6.9: Figure-ground diagram

5-10m

3-4m

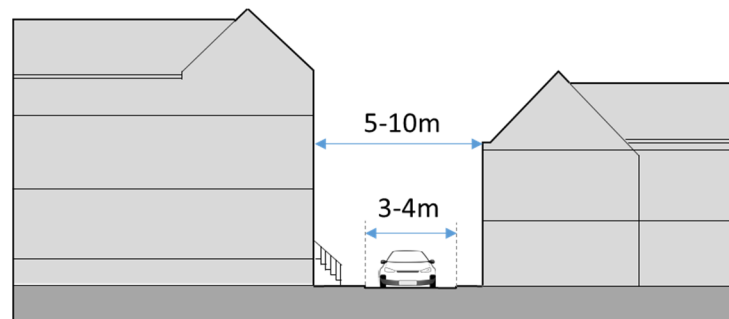*Figure 6.10: Typical street section*

Figure 6.11: Castlegate

Foreshore Road

6.21 Foreshore Road connects Sandside (from the West Pier) to Valley Road and provides many of the traditional 'seaside resort' attractions, such as amusement arcades, food and gift shops, etc. While the quality of the building frontages vary, there are positive aspects to the built environment, including the former St Thomas Hospital, the new RNLI Lifeboat Station and the Lord Nelson Pub.

Positive characteristics:
- Seaside character buildings – amusement arcades, shops and stalls
- Set within the context of the beach, Grand Hotel, Town Hall and St Nicholas Gardens
- Landmark buildings including the former St Thomas Hospital (dated circa. 1850-60), the new RNLI Lifeboat Station, Lord Nelson Pub (imposing, ornate red brick building)
- Vertical emphasis - narrow plots with tall buildings (2-4 storeys)
- White render/painted frontages with canted bay windows, slate roofs, and some half-timber detailing

Figure 6.12: Lord Nelson Pub

Figure 6.13: Foreshore Road
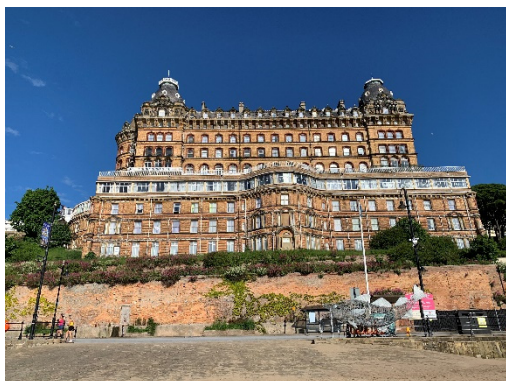
Figures 6.14-17: Foreshore Road (L:R) – Grand Hotel; St Nicholas Gardens and Town Hall; Coney Island Arcade and old St Thomas Hospital; new RNLI Lifeboat Station and Scarborough Castle

North Bay and North Marine Road

6.22   Similar to the South Bay, this area developed during the early to mid-19th Century when Scarborough grew as a coastal resort town. It is characterised by its wide principal streets (e.g. North Marine Road, Trafalgar Square and Blenheim Terrace) and imposing Georgian and Victorian terraces, again oriented to provide extensive views over the North Sea.

Positive characteristics:
- Wide streets and imposing terraces comprising buildings of 3-4 storeys
- Rhythm and uniformity to building frontages, particularly the western frontages
- Boundary walls and railings
- Full-height bay windows, including curved bays
- Brick and slate buildings, some with render
- Detailing - Decorative porticos (pillars with canopy), doors with rectangular fanlights, timber sliding sash windows (mix of Georgian and Victorian proportions), moulded lintels and cills, stringer courses, decorative eaves and cornice detailing

Figure 6.18: Trafalgar Square

Figure 6.19: Blenheim Terrace

Figure 6.20: North Marine Road

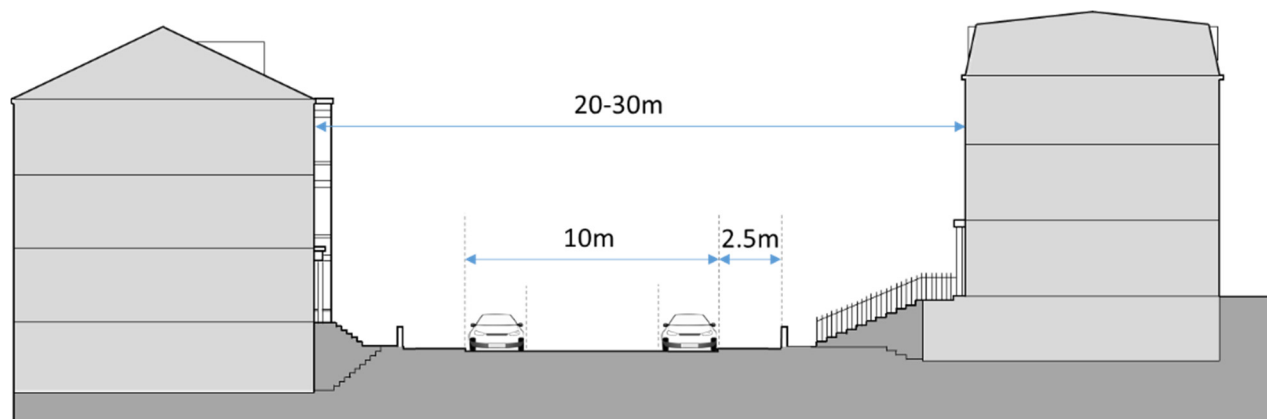*Figure 6.21: North Marine Road*

20-30m

10m   2.5m

Figure 6.22: Typical street section (North Marine Road)

Figure 6.23: Figure-ground diagram

Central Terraces

6.23 An expanse of turn of the (20th) Century byelaw[10] terraced housing forms the spine of the town, extending from the avenues near Peasholm Park in the north, down to and along Seamer Road in the south. The homes built across this area have unique variations in design, but the overall quality of detailing stands out as an important and defining characteristic.

Positive characteristics:
- Grid layout with high-density, terraced development blocks
- 2 to 3 storey buildings
- Front yards with frontage walls to clearly define public / private space
- Purposefully composed corner plots, often with ground floor shops
- Projecting gables to end of terraced blocks and mid terrace add variety and visual interest to roofscape
- Mix of red and buff coloured brickwork with grey slate roofs – co-ordinated use of alternating brick colours between streets
- Detailing – Bay windows, moulded window cills and brickwork lintels, doors with rectangular fanlights above, decorative eaves (brickwork) / cornice detailing
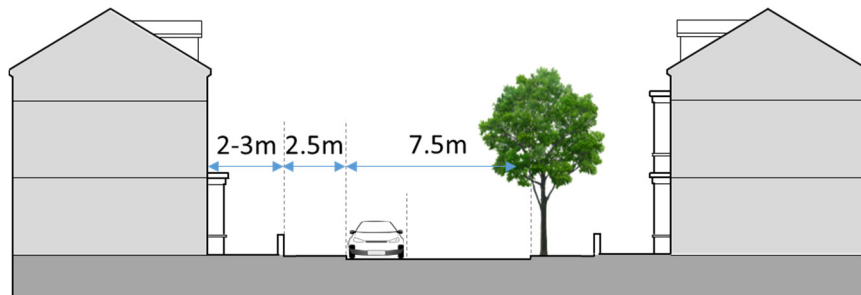- Street trees along principal routes, e.g. Prospect Road and Seamer Road

Figure 6.24: Figure-ground diagram

Figure 6.25: Prospect Road

Figure 6.26: Nansen Street

Figure 6.27: Typical street section – principal routes showing street trees

2-3m 2.5m 7.5m

[10] Homes built to comply with the Public Health Act 1875

Figure 6.28: Ashville Avenue

Figure 6.29: Gordon Street

Town Centre

6.24 The town centre is predominantly a high-density, retail and leisure focussed area, with a mix of high-quality historic buildings interspersed with modern (often poor-quality) infill development. Adjoining streets such as York Place, Huntriss Row and Bar Street retain much of their original character, having seen little in the way of inappropriate/intrusive redevelopment and provide a valuable adjunct to Westborough (the primary retail area).

Positive characteristics:
- Mix of town centre uses with residential pushed to the periphery
- Visual relationship with Scarborough Castle – views down Westborough, Newborough and Eastborough
- Older red brick and/or stone buildings with white render
- 'High status' buildings, e.g. banks (often on prominent corner plots), Post Office, Town Hall, Train Station, Grand Hotel
- Peripheral streets – Huntriss Row, Bar Street, York Place, The Crescent
- Squares and Gardens

Figure 6.30: Westborough / Huntriss Row

Figure 6.31: Westborough

Figure 6.32: Westborough

Figure 6.33: Bar Street

Figure 6.34: Figure-ground diagram

Figure 6.25: York Place

Figure 6.36: The Crescent

South Cliff, Ramshill and the Valley

6.25 This extensive area is broadly characterised by development that occurred between the 18th and 19th Century, reflecting an important time during the town's history when it grew as a resort. Buildings in this area are large in scale, laid out in uniform terraces – often composed around gardens and squares or facing other natural landscape features (e.g. the North Sea and the Ramsdale Valley) – and include many architectural 'landmarks'.

Positive characteristics:
- High-density terraces filtering out to medium density detached and semi-detached development
- Predominant grid pattern layout interspersed with crescents, squares and 'landmark' buildings, e.g. churches, hotels and large detached villas
- 'Feature' streets composed around public squares and gardens with 4-5 storey buildings of stone / white render finish and slate roofs
- 'Secondary' streets comprise 3-4 storey development, predominantly of red brick and grey slate construction
- Victorian architectural styles with different design groups to each street
- Full-height (multi-storey) bay windows
- Projecting gables add variety and visual interest to roofscape
- Decorative brickwork and stonework, e.g. stringer courses, cornicing, eaves detailing, quoins, moulded door and window surrounds

Figure 6.37: Crown Spa Hotel, The Esplanade

Figure 6.38: Prince of Wales Terrace

Figure 6.39: Royal Crescent
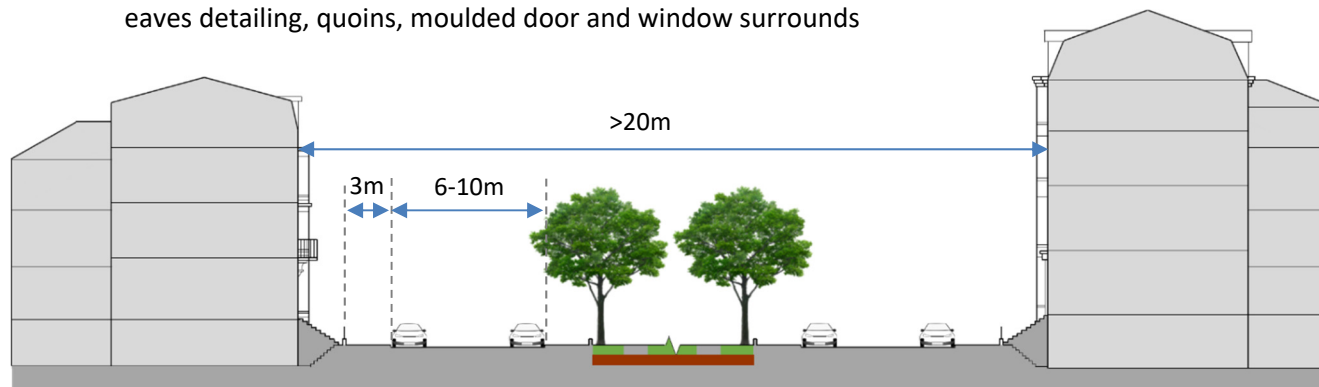

Figure 6.40: Royal Avenue

Figure 6.41: Typical street section

Figure 6.42: Figure-ground diagram

Weaponness

6.26 The area of Weaponness sits on the southern edge of the town, extending down the slopes of Oliver's Mount towards Filey Road. The area was purposefully designed and spaciously laid out in the late 19th century/early 20th century to allow for the construction of large, low-density dwellings in a 'leafy' setting. This character remains and is briefly described below.

Positive characteristics:

- Low density, large and predominantly detached dwellings, set back from the street frontage and within generous, pre-defined development plots
- 'Sylvan' setting with grass verges and trees lining the highway (footpath set behind)
- Strong frontage boundary treatments with a mix of walls (often with iron railings) and hedgerows
- Red brick, white render and rosemary tile buildings in 'Arts and Crafts' style
- Steep roof pitches and complex forms with 'oversized' chimney stacks
- Decorative brickwork and stone detailing

Figure 6.43: Deepdale Avenue

Figure 6.44: Filey Road

Figure 6.45: Weaponness House, Filey Road

Figure 6.46: Deepdale Avenue

Figure 6.47: College Avenue

Scarborough Suburbs

6.27 There are extensive suburban areas beyond the urban core and previously identified key character areas of Scarborough town. These suburban areas have different defining characteristics, each reflecting popular trends at their time of construction, and are of varying quality. The areas of particular note and their positive characteristics are described below.

1930s – 1980s Suburban Development

6.28 Notably, during both the inter-war and post-war periods and up until the 1980s, much of the suburban expansion of the town took the form of two-storey, semi-detached development. For example, the North Leas[11] and Newlands[12] areas and much of Newby[13] is characterised by this type of development. Areas such as these can rightly be criticised for their lack of variety, unique identity or sense of place; aspects that new development must improve upon. However, these areas should also be recognised for what they do right; they are often laid out in clear development blocks, they establish consistent rhythm in plot sizes, building set back and building forms, they clearly distinguish between public and private spaces, and, they provide valuable off-street parking. The shared positive characteristics across the semi-detached suburban areas are set out below.
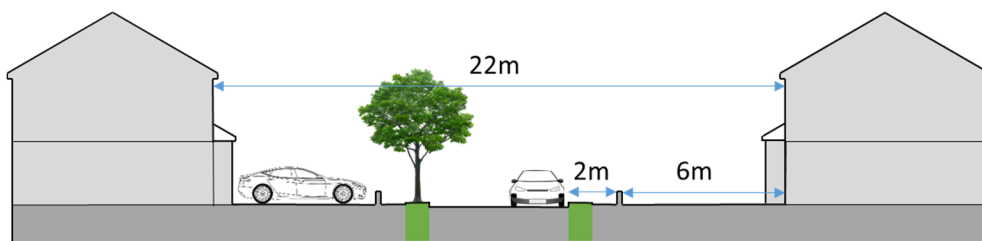
Positive characteristics:

- Medium density (30-40 dph), predominantly semi-detached, two-storey buildings
- Perimeter block layouts with consistent rhythm and proportions in building frontages
- Co-ordinated use of materials – predominantly red brick, some with white rendered upper floors and mostly rosemary (plain clay) roof tiles
- Bay windows – including single and double height, squared and curved, some with hanging rosemary tiles
- Detailing – projecting gables, porches (recessed doorways or overhanging canopies), lintels and cills, stringer courses
- Street-level landscaping, particularly along key routes – e.g. tree-lined roads, grass verges, hedgerows, etc.
- Front gardens with boundary treatments that clearly define public and private space – e.g. low-level walls, hedges, etc.

22m
2m
6m

Figure 6.48: Typical street section

Figure 6.49: Figure-ground diagram

[11] North Leas Avenue, Ryndle Walk, Givendale Road, etc.
[12] Newlands Park Drive, Crescent, Drive, Road and Grove

[13] areas around Fieldstead Crescent, Lady Edith's Park, The Green, etc.

1980s – 2000s Suburban Development

6.29 In contrast to the above, variety is a key characteristic of the suburban developments that were delivered within the town during the 1980s and 1990s, such as those at Hovingham Drive, Newby Farm and Green Howards Drive. Importantly, these areas provide a mix of housetypes – in terms of size, tenure and style – to meet a range of local needs and preferences. However, developments of this time can also feel fragmented, with inconsistent plot shapes and sizes, variation in the set back of building frontages and less permeable/walkable 'feeder road' and 'cul-de-sac' street layouts. Nevertheless, the positive characteristics of these areas are as follows:

Positive characteristics:

- Mix of property sizes, tenures and styles but predominantly two-storey (20-30 dph)
- Mix of materials – red (and other coloured) brickwork with pantiles, sometimes with render
- Bay windows, projecting gables, porches and canopies
- Brick detailing – accented colours, brick lintels and cills, stringer courses and corbels
- Street level landscaping features, including verges, street trees and other planting (e.g. Green Howards Drive)
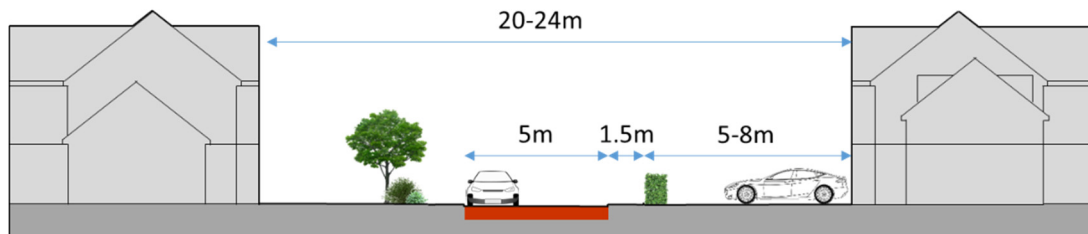

Figure 6.50: Figure-ground diagram

Figure 6.51: Typical street section

Figure 6.52: Newby Farm Road