Dentdale, looking towards Dentdale Head

LCA 6 Dentdale

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Landscape Character Assessment

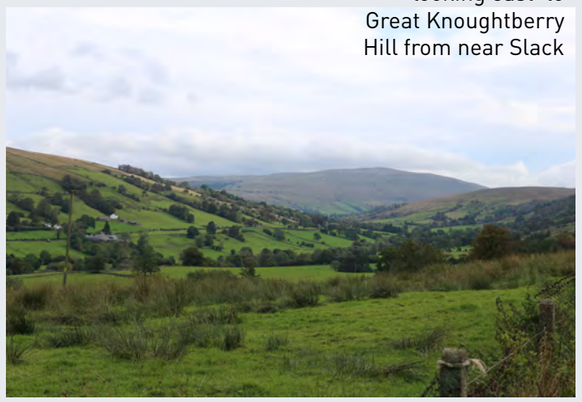
YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

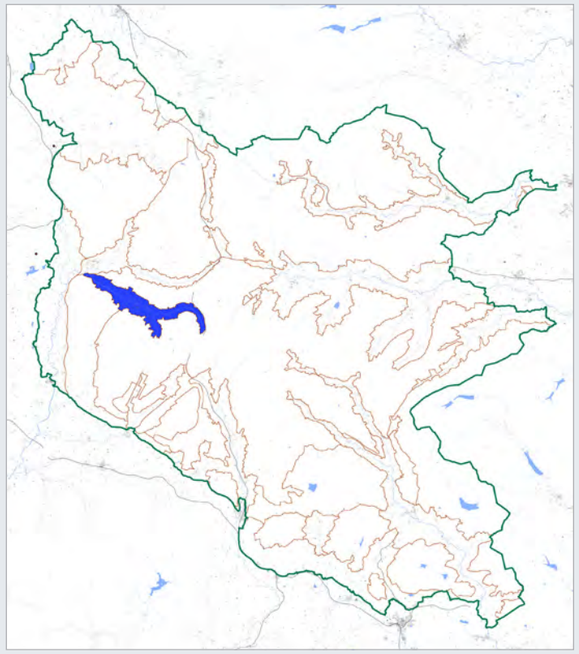
LCA 6 Dentdale

Key characteristics

- West facing sinuous, deep U-shaped glacial valley with gently undulating valley sides.
- Lower Dentdale has a broad and relatively flat valley floor; to the east of Dent, the valley is narrow, with a consistent profile.
- The limestone outcrop of Combe Scar, and the associated corrie below, is a prominent feature.
- River Dee has a smooth, platformed bed with steps or ledges, and extensive tree cover on riverbanks.
- Frequent tributary gills giving valley side a folded, indented appearance, their winding form picked out by abundant tree cover.
- Lush, green, well-treed valley, with linear lines of hedgerows appearing to tumble down the valley sides to connect with densely wooded river banks.
- Picturesque, traditional stone-built village of Dent with narrow, cobbled streets. Many houses within Dent, and other farmsteads sited along the mid-slopes of the dale, have been rendered and painted white.
- Medium to large sized fields with hay meadows, mainly enclosed by hedgerows and some drystone walls.
- Narrow, winding roads with an enclosed character.
- Two local stone viaducts on the Settle to Carlisle Railway are significant features at the head of Dentdale.

Upper Dentdale, looking east to Great Knoughtberry Hill from near Slack





Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Dentdale LCA (see page 5)

Steep wooded tributary gills give the valley slopes a gently folded or ribbed appearance



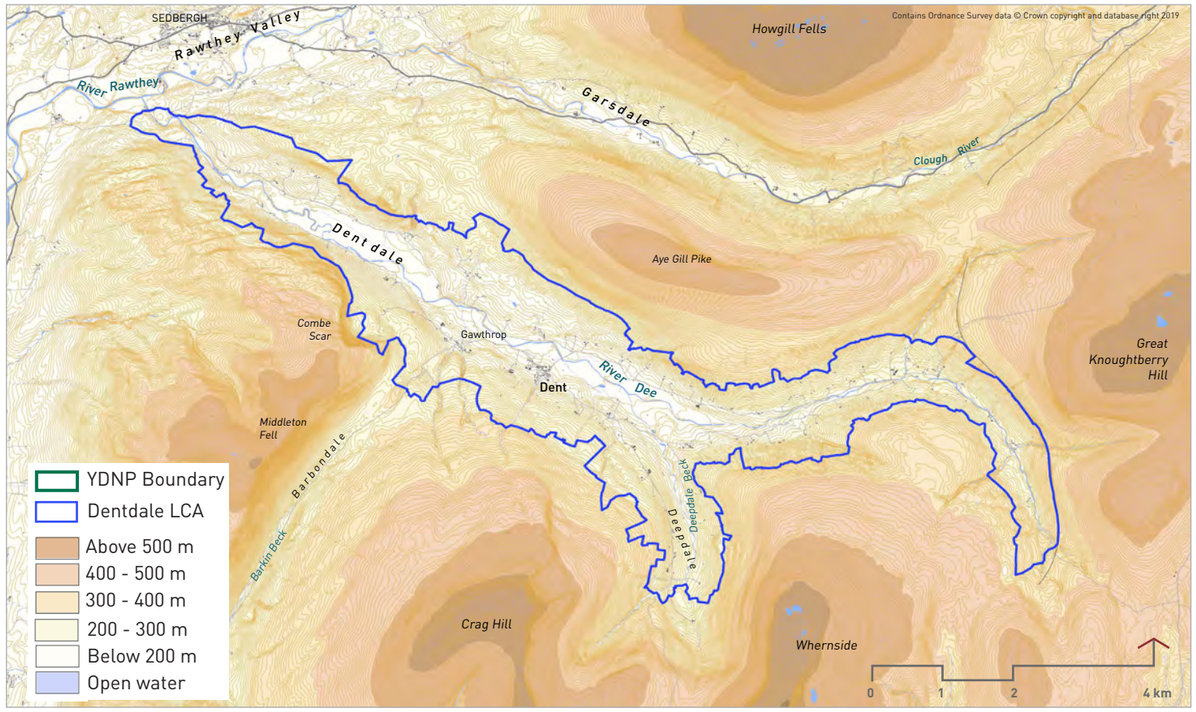
Eastern slopes of Deepdale

Verdant, intimate scale of Dentdale contrasts with the exposed high surrounding moorlands

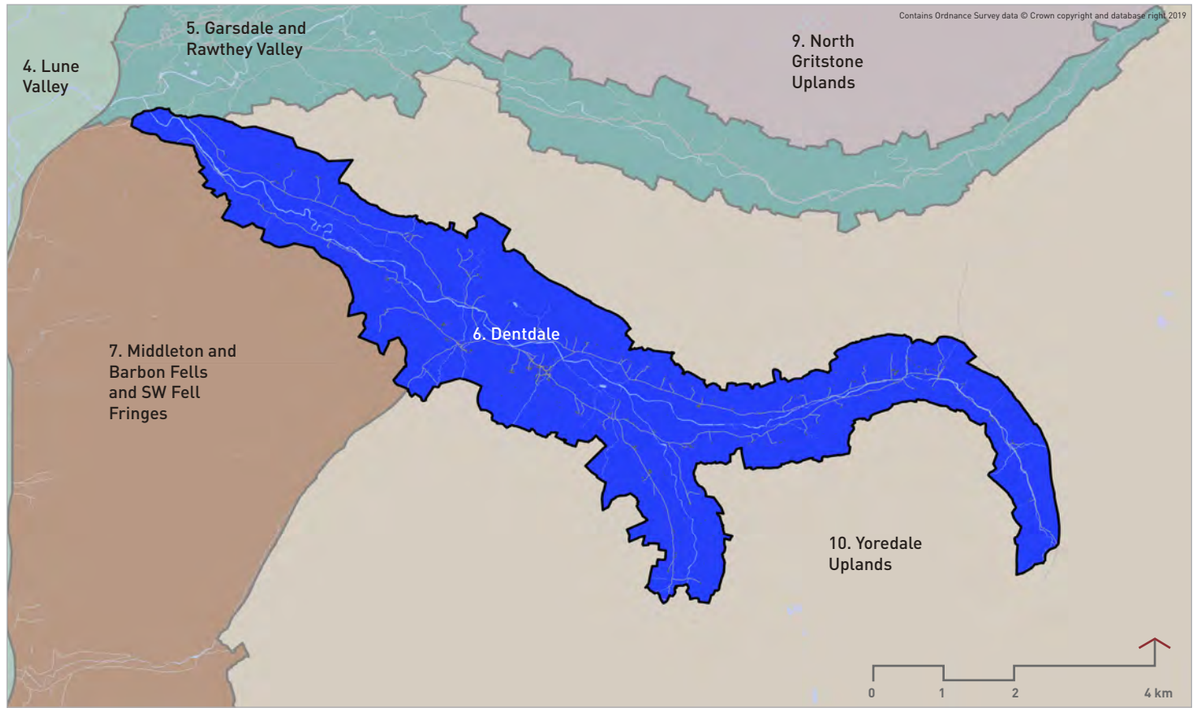


Looking east from Rash Mill

Landscape context: Dentdale



Landscape character: Dentdale



Landscape context

The Dent Fault, which divides the Silurian bedrock of the Howgill Fells to the west from the younger alternating beds of the Yoredale series to the east, runs from Kirky Stephen to Kirkby Lonsdale. It crosses Dentdale near the hamlet of Gawthrop and continues southwest alongside Barkin Beck in Barbondale.

To the west of the Dent Fault, lower Dentdale overlies grey turbidite sandstones and slates of the Silurian period. To the east the Great Scar Limestone underlies much of Dentdale. It is overlain by the Yoredale rocks, which are evident as horizontal scars on some valley slopes. Thin beds of limestone form platformed steps within the riverbed of the River Dee; often the river bed is dry as the water flows below ground; there is a significant and extensive cave system below upper Dentdale.

Dentdale is a steep-sided U-shaped glacial valley, carved by ice sheets. Following the ice age, a meltwater lake formed on part of the valley floor near Gawthrop, leaving a flat valley floor in this area. There is also evidence of the erosive power of the glaciers in the form of Combe Scar, a small corrie, eroded by glaciers on the north slopes of Middleton Fell near the northern entrance to Barbondale; it is surrounded by its own moraine of glacial debris.

Deepdale is surrounded by high fells; the summits of Crag Hill (682m) and Whernside (736m) are to the south and Aye Gill Pike (556m) is to the north. Upper Dentdale curves to the south of Great Knoutberry Hill, with the dale head on Blea Moor. There is a tributary valley, Deepdale, to the south, where Deepdale Beck has incised a valley between the steep slopes of Crag Hill and Whernside. At the lower end of the valley it merges with the broader, more open Rawthey Valley landscape.



Near Lenacre

The broad, flat valley floor in part of Lower Dentdale is the result a glacial meltwater lake


Slopes of Middleton Fell from near Scar Wood

Distinctive landscape character

Both Dentdale and its tributary valley, Deepdale, have a sloping profile with smooth, gently undulating valley sides and a narrow valley floor. However to the west of Dent the valley floor becomes much broader and flatter, giving the lower dale a more open character in this area.

There are many caves, shakeholes and swallowholes high up on the valley sides which are generally not visible from the valley floor. Combe Scar to the north west of Dent is a prominent band of outcropping rock with a corrie below scoured out by glacial erosion.

The River Dee runs through Dentdale with its source at the dale head. It eventually merges with the River Rawthey just north of Abbot Holme. Deepdale Beck joins the River Dee just below Scotchergill. Both rivers are shallow and meandering with stepped and platformed beds and abundant tree cover on both banks making the rivers hard to distinguish on the valley floor.

There are numerous tributary gills on both sides of the valley; their frequency gives an indented gently folded appearance to the valley sides. Most are well wooded and the distinctive, winding form of the gills is picked out by bands of trees.

Dentdale and Deepdale have extensive tree cover, with a high density of woodland copses, hedgerows and individual trees. The hedgerows seem to tumble down the valley slopes to meet with the densely wooded riverbanks. The rich diversity of species and ample tree and shrub coverage combine to form a rich visual tapestry, giving the dale its renowned lush and very green appearance. At the dale head in the higher reaches of Dentdale, the vegetation reduces to scattered clumps of hawthorn, giving the area a wilder appearance as it merges with the adjacent moorland. However, there are also extensive conifer plantation in this area – at Mossy Bottom and Hazel Bottom to the south of the dale head and to the north, on the fells that divide Dentdale from Garsdale.

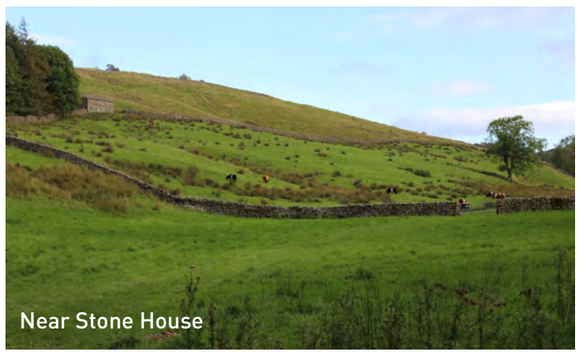
The main settlement is Dent, known as Dent Town, in the middle of the dale, close to the river. It has narrow, cobbled streets and traditional stone houses, many rendered and painted white. Building materials include local limestone with stone flag and slate roofs and occasional red sandstone. Dentdale roads are narrow and winding with numerous trees and woodland areas on either side, reinforcing the verdant, well treed character of the dale.

Individual traditional farmsteads, nestled mid-way up the valley side slopes beside tributary gills, are characteristic of Dentdale. Most are sheltered by trees and are rendered and painted white with stone flag roofs. The scattered stone field barns are not strong visual features as they are typically obscured by the dense tree and hedgerow cover. Drystone walls are also a minor boundary feature overshadowed by the numerous well developed and well treed hedgerows within the dale.

Field sizes range from medium to large, with the smaller fields concentrated around Dent. There are abundant, traditionally managed hay meadows, amongst improved pastureland with some rough pasture higher up the valley sides, where there is a transition to open moorland.

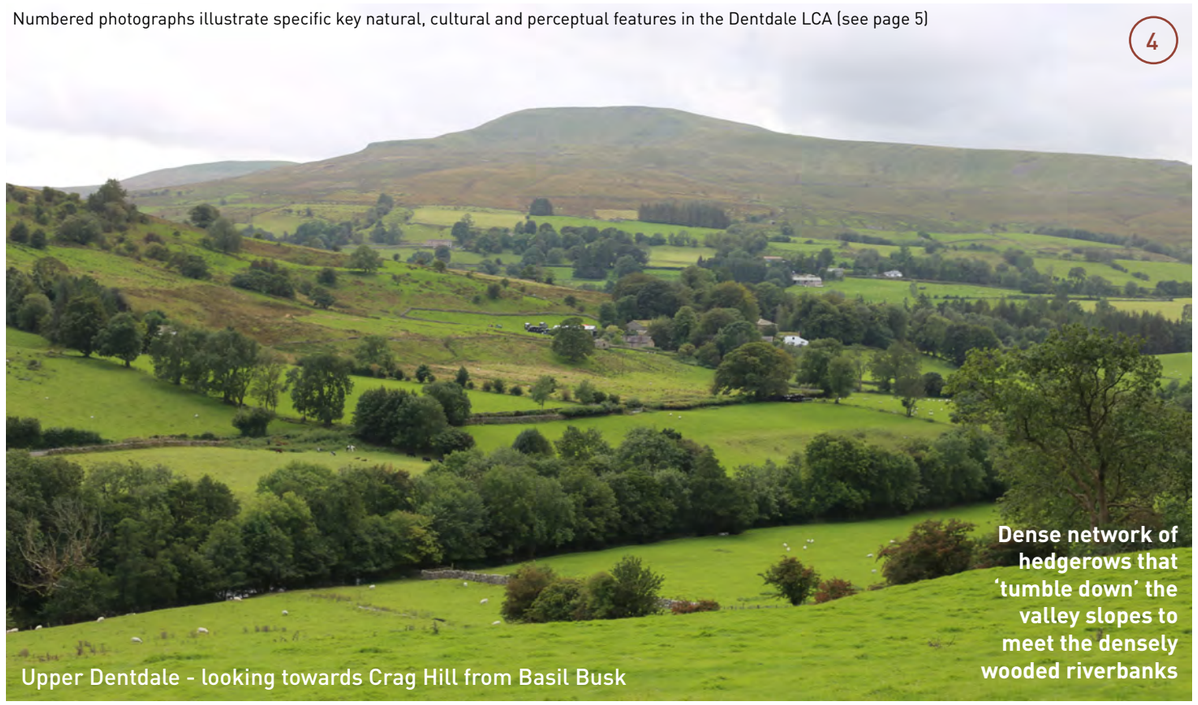
Views out of the valley are well contained by the topography and to a lesser extent the vegetation cover. However, at the lower western end of Dentdale the valley becomes much more open, allowing views into the Rawthey valley beyond. Combe Scar, Gragareth and Whernside to the south are particularly dominant visual features and add to the sense of enclosure within this part of the valley. To the north-west, the hillocky outline of the Frostrow Fells forms an attractive skyline feature contrasting with the smoother, gently undulating valley skylines elsewhere.

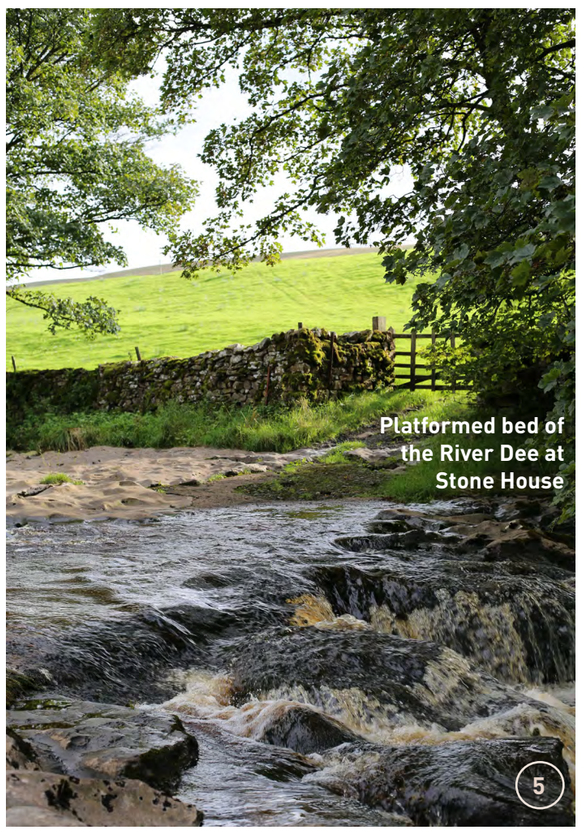
At the head of Dentdale the Settle to Carlisle Railway crosses two viaducts, Artengill Viaduct and Dent Head Viaduct. Both are prominent features constructed in local limestone and nestled amongst the adjacent landform and vegetation.

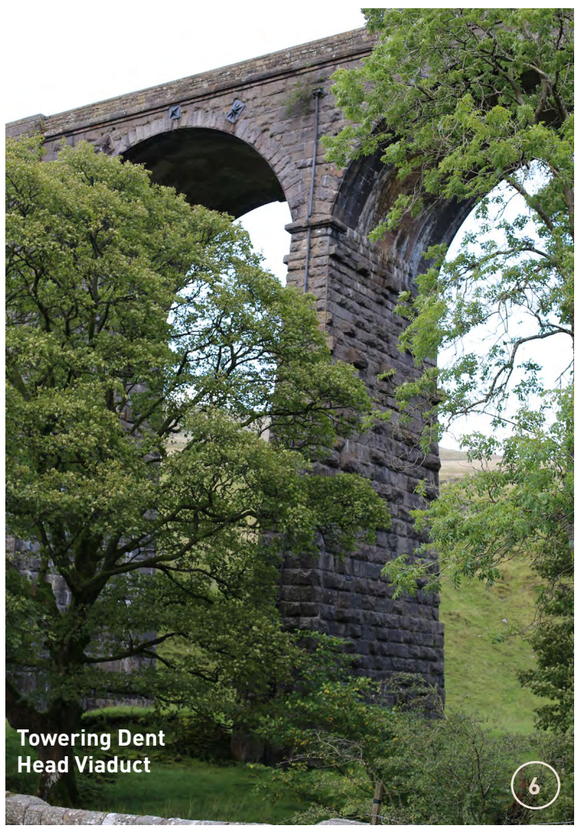


Transition to moorland in Upper Dentdale

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Dentdale LCA (see page 5)







Key natural, cultural and perceptual features

NATURAL

Flat valley floor to the west of Dent, which is the remnant of a glacial meltwater lake. There is a striking contrast between the open, flat pastures and steep, partially wooded valley sides in this part of Dentdale. (3)

Combe Scar and its associated corrie is a prominent landmark on the valley slopes near the northern entrance to Barbondale and is designated as an SSSI because the Dent Fault (which runs through this area) has led to the juxtaposition of a varied rocks and soil types - and a richly diverse and uncommon range of flora. (8)

Numerous steep wooded tributary gills, which emphasise subtle variations in the landform, giving the valley slopes a gently folded or ribbed appearance. Many of the tributary gills contain narrow, winding strips of semi-natural ancient woodland. (1) (7)

Stepped and platformed stony bed of the meandering River Dee, exposing the underlying limestone bedrock. The river sometimes disappears during periods of drought when the water channel flows underground. (5)

Traditional hay meadows - Deepdale Meadows SSSI consists of six unimproved, traditionally managed hay meadows; acidic to base-rich flushes and semi-natural deciduous woodland contribute to rich species diversity. They are part of the North Pennine Meadows SAC.

The Upper Dentdale cave system which is below the valley floor in the Hackergill area. This is a nationally important site (an SSSI) which provides a unique insight into cave formation beneath a major valley floor; some caves carry present-day drainage, but others are fossil passages.

CULTURAL

Traditional tight-grained and small-scale urban grain of the village of Dent, which has twisting narrow cobbled streets and a picturesque character. It is a popular tourist destination. (9)

Rendered white painted buildings, which stand out clearly against the backdrop of deep greens and browns on the valley slopes. (11)

Individual, traditional farmsteads sheltered by trees sited at regular intervals along the valley slopes, typically adjacent to tributary gills - this dispersed settlement pattern dates from the 10th century Norse settlement, when Vikings arrived in the dales. Dentdale has a particularly high concentration of early (17th C) farm buildings, often with a loose courtyard form. (4) (11)

Winding, narrow valley roads running along the margins of the floodplain, with a ladder pattern of narrow tracks and lanes running up the valley slopes perpendicular to the road to connect to individual farmsteads.

Historic packhorse routes - the 'Craven Old Way,' from Dent to Ingleton, climbs over Whernside and another route to Ingleton follows Deepdale to Kingsdale. The walled track of Occupation Road, high on the slopes south of Dent, may also have followed an older packhorse route. (10)

Dramatic viaducts at Dent Head and Artengill on the Settle-to Carlisle Railway at the head of Dentdale. (6)

PERCEPTUAL

Lush, verdant character and intimate, enclosed scale of Dentdale, which contrasts with the exposed high surrounding moorlands. (2) (4) (7)

Remnant landscape patterns reflect the **tradition of crafting in Dentdale**:

- **a nucleated centre with cobbled streets, workshops and inns in Dent**, reflecting a degree of prosperity and trade;
- **small quarries and walled packhorse routes** - limestone was extracted from small quarries and cut and polished to produce 'Dent Marble';
- **riverside mills** - eg at Arten Gill, Stone House and Rash - carded and spun the yarn for Dent's hand knitting industry - in the 17th C Dent became famous for good quality stockings and gloves.

Photos that illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features are numbered eg. (10)



Deepdale from Witton Lathe (gateway from Kingsdale


Stone House



Landmark rocky scar and corrie on the slope of Middleton Fell

Traditional tight-knit urban grain, with cobbled streets and picturesque character



Dent Town



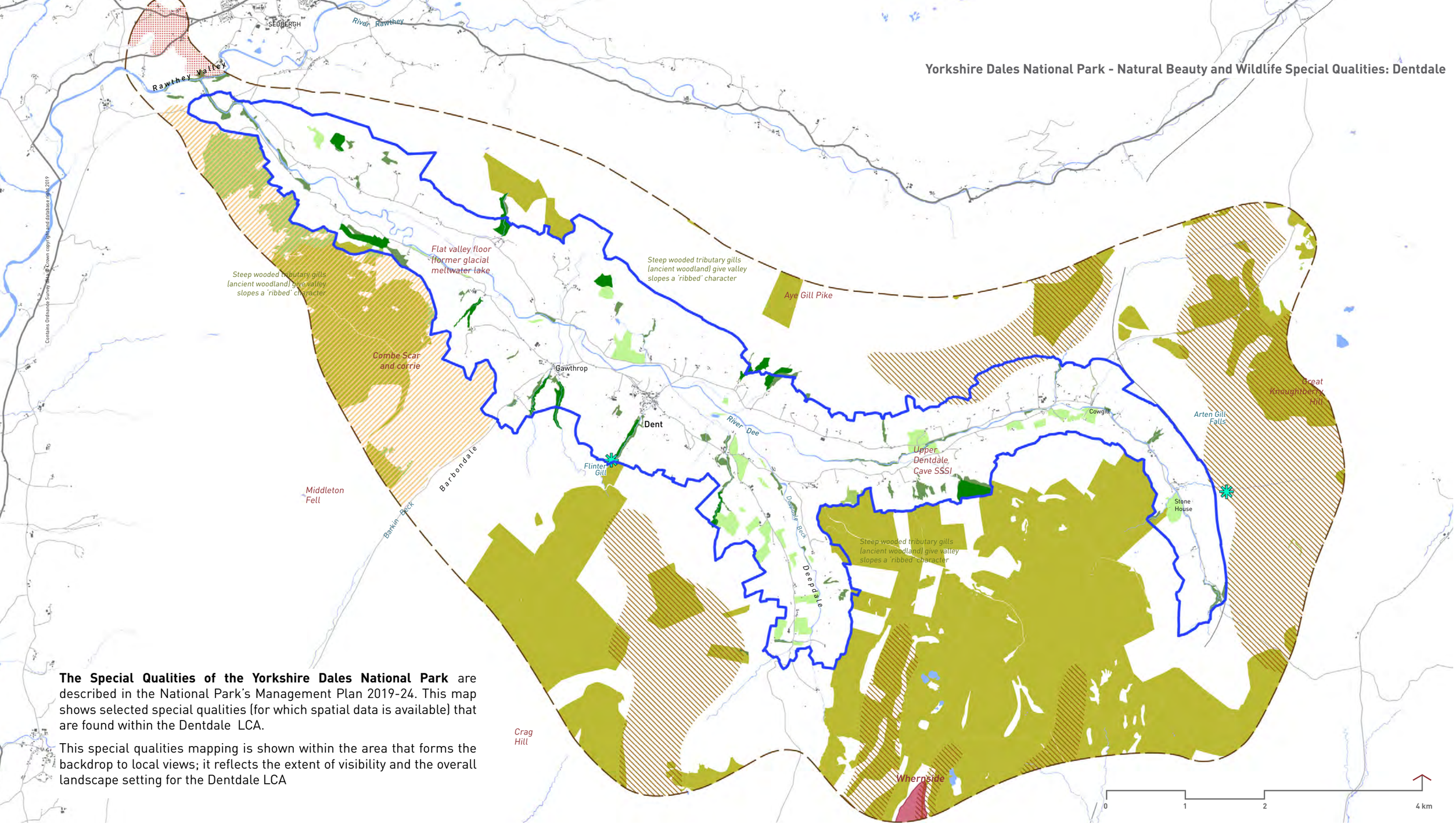
The historic packhorse bridge beneath Dent Head Viaduct



Isolated rendered and white painted farmsteads stand out against the moorland backdrop along the valley slopes

Slopes of Helms Knott

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Natural Beauty and Wildlife Special Qualities: Dentdale



The Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park are described in the National Park's Management Plan 2019-24. This map shows selected special qualities (for which spatial data is available) that are found within the Dentdale LCA.

This special qualities mapping is shown within the area that forms the backdrop to local views; it reflects the extent of visibility and the overall landscape setting for the Dentdale LCA

Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Dentdale LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Dentdale LCA

Natural beauty

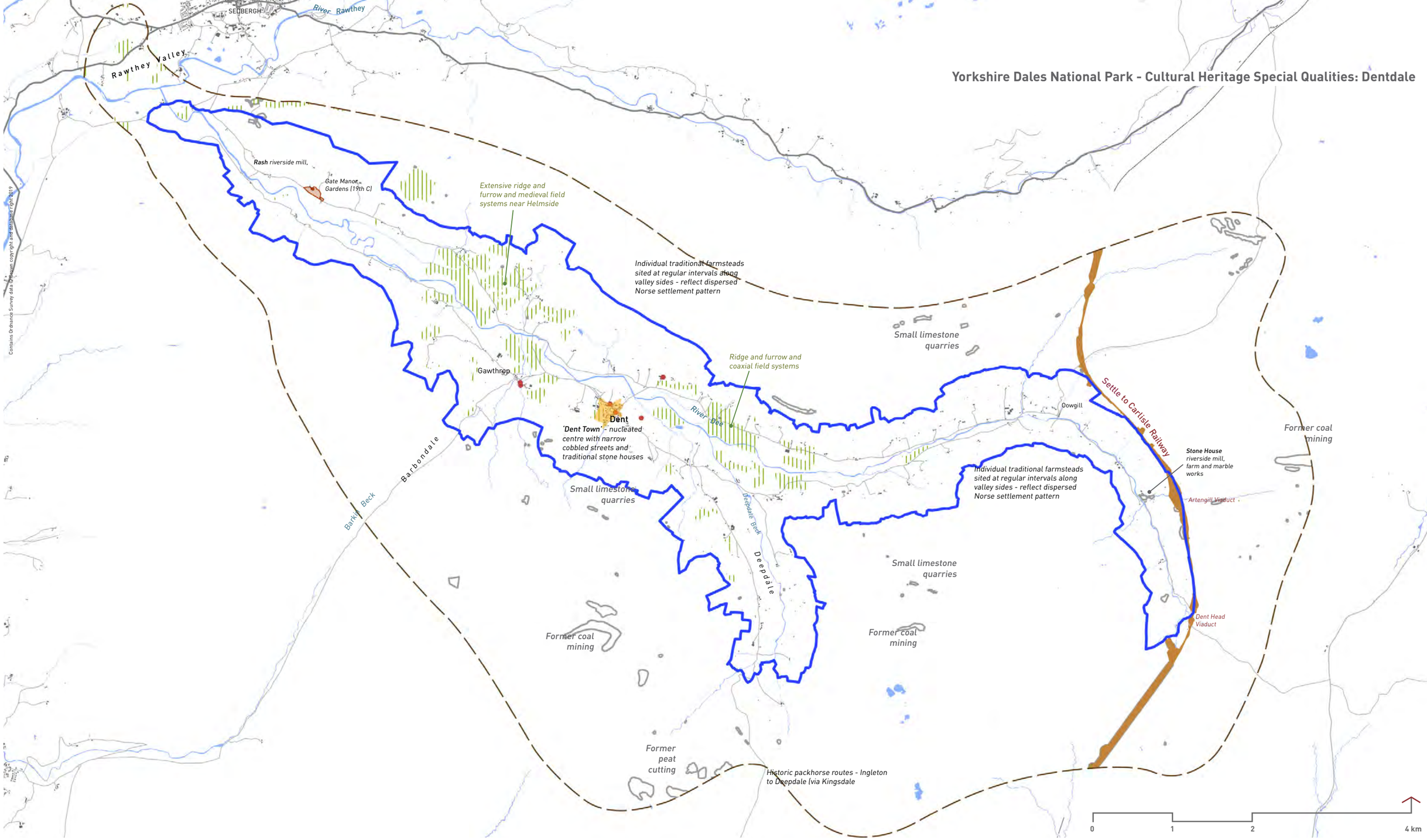
- **Dales with distinctive stepped profiles**
  [Displaying outcrops of rocks from the Yoredale series]
- **Fells that rise to over 700m**
  [eg the Millstone Grit capped 'Three Peaks']
- **The Howgills**
  [Areas in the YDNP underlain by Silurian rocks]
- **Significant glacial/post-glacial features**
  [Prominent drumlins and glacial drift landforms]
- **Spectacular waterfalls**
  ['Water features' noted as 'recognised attraction' in YDNPA Visitor Strategy]

Wildlife*

*Priority Habitats [S41 NERC Act 2010]

- **Flower-rich hay meadows and pastures**
  [Lowland meadows; Upland hay meadows]
- **A range of rare limestone habitats**
  [Limestone pavements; Lowland calcareous grassland; Upland calcareous grassland]
- **Extensive areas of moorland**
  [Upland heathland; Blanket bog; Lowland raised bog]
- **Small areas of broadleaf woodland**
  [Deciduous woodland; ancient woodland (darker tone)]

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Cultural Heritage Special Qualities: Dentdale



Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Dentdale LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Dentdale LCA

Cultural heritage*

- **A traditional pastoral landscape**
  [Traditional stone-built field barns]
- **An exceptional range of archaeology**
  [Strip lynchets & prehistoric field systems that are prominent]
- **Powerful reminders of periods of dominance by large estates and religious houses**
  [Ancient & historic parklands & other ornamental landscapes]
- **The remains of former rural industries**
  [Sites of former lead & coal mines & lime kilns]
- **Settle-Carlisle Railway Line**
  [Conservation Area]
- **Historic settlements with distinctive traditional architecture**
  [Conservation Areas]

* YDNPA Historic Environment Record

sheilsflynn

www.sheilsflynn.com

Cambridge Studio
32 St Barnabas Road
Cambridge CB1 2BY

telephone: 01223 229994
email: cambridge@sheilsflynn.com