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# BARLEY HALL

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## Visual Story and Accessibility Guide for Barley Hall



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# Welcome

Barley Hall is a timber framed medieval townhouse that was once home to the Lord Mayor of York.

Barley Hall was “rediscovered” in 1984, when the site was sold for redevelopment and the full extent of the medieval structure became clear, with some of the timbers dating to 1360.

In 1987, York Archaeological Trust purchased the site with the aim of resorting it fully as a venue for an exploration of York's medieval past- just as they already had done for the Viking period at JORVIK Viking Centre.

At Barley Hall, you can explore life for the wealthy Snawsell family and their servants in 1483.



*Image: the courtyard outside Barley Hall, showing part of the building and the coffee shop to the left.*

# At a glance

Due to the historic nature of the building, Barley Hall has steps and raised thresholds throughout the building.

There is no lift but we have a temporary ramp into the Great Hall and the Steward's Room.

We have public toilets but neither are accessible toilets.

All staff have disability awareness and Autism Awareness training whilst some staff have BSL training.

Glass doors have contrast markings.

We have interpretation available in level 1 Braille translation and in large print. Visual stories are available to download on our website and we have paper copies at our front desk.

We have a complimentary ticket policy for carers and personal assistants, and all tickets are valid for one year, allowing as many returns and re-entries as you like.

Seating is available throughout the building, and we have sensory packs, sensory maps, ear defenders, magnifying glasses and headphones for you to use at our front desk.



Image: the outside of Barley Hall

# Getting Here

From Stonegate, the entrance to Coffee Yard can be found under the 'Ye Olde Starre Inne' sign – look out for the red devil!

From Swinegate, the passageway is at the corner with Grape Lane, under the white painted building.

2 Coffee Yard,  
York,  
YO1 8AR

what3words: this.stump.heat

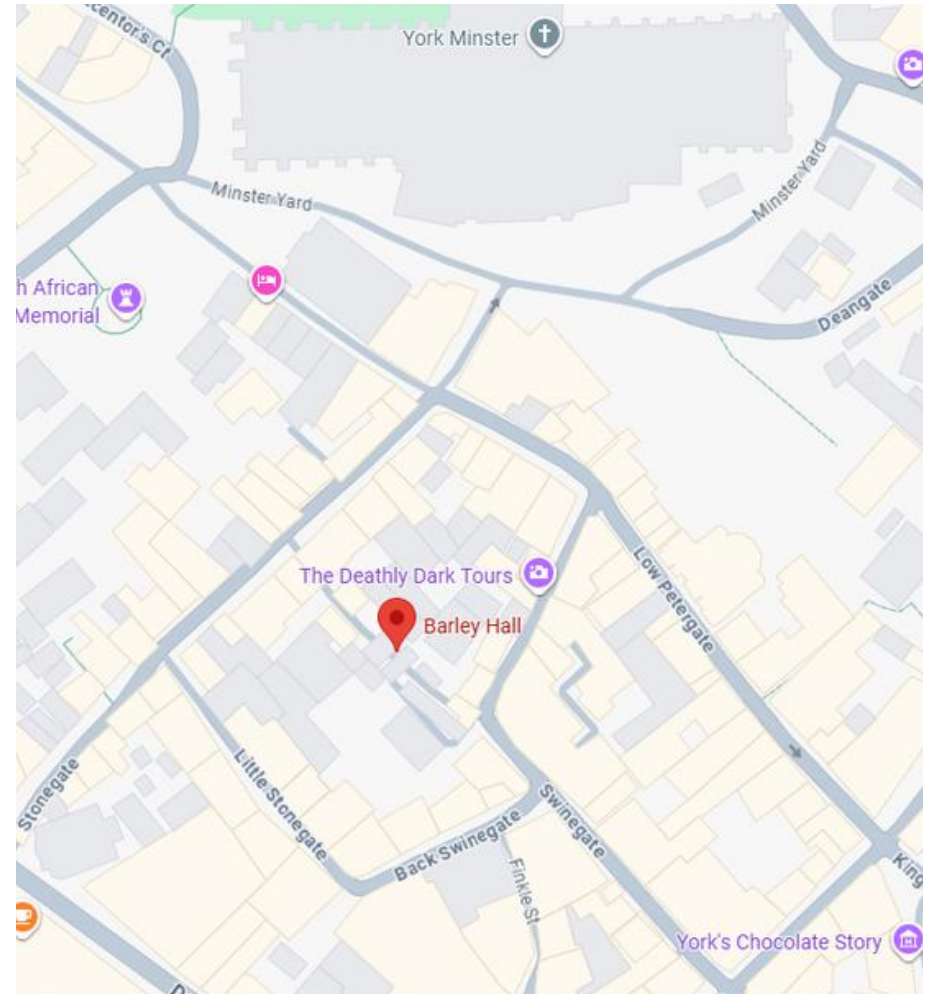


Image: A google map screenshot showing the location of Barley Hall in York



You might hear people talking as they walk down Coffee Yard. You might hear other noises from the busy nearby street of Stonegate, such as buskers playing music or larger groups of people walking around and talking.



There is nothing to touch in the courtyard area, but you might feel that the cobbled pavement feels bumpy beneath your feet.



You might be able to smell coffee and pastries from the coffee shop. There are also some restaurants nearby, so you might smell food being cooked.

If anyone in your group experiences sensory processing difficulties on a trip to Barley Hall, you can collect ear defenders and a range of sensory toys from the Admissions desk to use during your visit. You are also welcome to bring your own additional resources.

# Travel by Public Transport

## Bus

The nearest bus stops are along the A1036, near the Theatre Royal. Both First Bus and Traveline have stops along the road. The bus stop is 0.20 miles / 0.32 km from Barley Hall.

## Train

The nearest train station is York Rail Station. The train station is 0.5 miles / 0.8 km from Barley Hall.

York is on the East Coast main line between London and Scotland. It takes less than two hours to get to York from London.

Trains run every half an hour, with at least 25 direct trains each week day. Direct rail services also run to York from many of the UK's main regional centres. York can be reached easily from all the following centres: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, and Liverpool. There are direct trains to and from Manchester International Airport that run every hour during the day.

# Travel by Public Transport

## Travel by taxi

Barley Hall is located inside York city centre, which is heavily pedestrianised. The nearest drop off point is along Museum Street, which is about 0.2 mi away from Barley Hall.

You can get a taxi with Streamline by calling 01904 656565.

The taxi company has a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

## Parking

There is no on-site parking for Barley Hall. The nearest car park is the Monk Bar car park, just a ten-minute walk (0.4 miles) away.

The car park has 19 dedicated disabled parking bays.

You can find more information about it here:

<https://www.york.gov.uk/directory-record/421/monk-bar-car-park-yo31-7qr>

# Arriving at Barley Hall

When you arrive at Barley Hall you will come in through our admissions/ gift shop area and be greeted by a member of our Front of House Team, who will either redeem your booking on our online system or you can buy a ticket from us. For both the shop and admissions, we take either cash or card.

Some cards we cannot accept, such as American Express.

There is a step (known as a threshold) before entering the building and when going through the other rooms on the ground floor. If you, or someone in your party needs assistance with these, please notify a member of staff. It may get a little crowded in the shop/admissions area, if anyone in your party finds being in a queue or being in large crowds difficult, please notify a member of staff.



*Image: the main visitor entrance to Barley Hall.*



*Image: the admissions area and gift shop.*

# Visiting as a wheelchair user

Due to the historic nature of Barley Hall, unfortunately, some parts of the building are inaccessible to visitors who require wheelchair access.

This is the entire upstairs area of the hall, The Gallery; Parlour; Great Chamber and Lesser Chamber. As well as the Buttery, Pantry and School Room.

It is possible to visit some of the downstairs rooms (Steward's Room, Great Hall and Vestibule) through an alternate entrance.

Because we can only show a limited amount of Barley Hall, wheelchair users can visit Barley Hall for free. Our admissions staff is positioned near the main door so they can assist you.

You can also contact our Reservations team ([groups@yorkat.co.uk](mailto:groups@yorkat.co.uk) or 01904 615505) to prebook a time and we'll be able to send you more information.



*Image: The wheelchair access entrance found via the snickleway*

# Service Animals

At York Archaeology, we're committed to making our sites welcoming and accessible for everyone. We warmly welcome service, assistance, and emotional support dogs—including those in training—at all our attractions.

If you're visiting with a different type of assistance animal, please get in touch with our Reservations Team in advance so we can ensure the best possible experience for you and your companion.

To help keep everyone safe and comfortable, assistance animals should be clearly identifiable and well-behaved. At JORVIK Viking Centre, a harness is recommended for animals using the ride, though it's not essential for visiting the rest of the site.

We're happy to provide water bowls on request, and outdoor toileting areas are available at all locations.

If you have any questions about accessibility or would like to give feedback on your visit, we'd love to hear from you.

# Tours

On weekdays during term time, we may have school groups visiting Barley Hall who often take up entire rooms of the house.

If you or a member of your party are uncomfortable around large crowds, please speak to a member of staff who will be familiar with the tour route and will be able to assist you with your visit to either avoid rooms that are busier or book for a later time.

We also offer optional guided tours of the building. These are tours based on the lives of the family that lived in the building and their servants in the 15 Century, rather than the archaeology or history, and are designed to enhance your visit, by offering a sensory experience of the building at various seasons of the year.

These are completely optional and if you would like to join a tour, but not take part in the sensory element, please let a member of the team know.

# Access Board

Located in the admissions area, next to the window, we have an access board that is available to all visitors.

Included on the access board are the following items:

- Ear defenders
- Floor map of Barley Hall
- Magnifying glass
- Headphones- these can be used for personal music or to listen to the audio located on the 'Beasts' information boards via the QR code.
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- Traffic light system- we also operate a traffic light sticker system and sensory boxes can be borrowed for the duration of your visit.

There is no cost to use these items, we just ask that they are returned at the end of your visit ready for other visitors to use.



# The Steward's Room

To access the Steward's Room, there is a large step before entering the room.

There is a bench on the far side of the room, next to the bed. We ask that you don't sit on the bed as it is quite fragile.

The room is quite dimly lit and small, it is furnished with two tables, filled with various items that need mending like pots and jugs; and things that the Steward would have used to mend them like pliers and a spinning wheel.

There is information to read, and a QR code to scan which will link you to the audio guide.

You can spend as long as you would like in this room. To leave this room, and go into the next, there is another large step to go over.



Image: the Steward's Room

# The Vestibule

The Vestibule is a well lit room. Here, the toilets are located.

Please note that, due to the historic nature of the building as a whole, we do not have an accessible toilet.

There is also a set of stairs to the upstairs part of the hall. These are steeper than modern stairs, so please take care when climbing them, using the handrail provided.



# The Great Hall



*Image: the Great Hall.*

To enter the Great Hall, there is a large step down and a hearth in the centre that dips.

At the end of the Great Hall is a big glass window so you will be able to see Coffee Yard, the alleyway leading to the Barley Hall courtyard. You might see people walking along the alleyway, and some passers-by might stop to look through the glass into the Great Hall.

This area sometimes has volunteers who will tell you more about the Hall if you would like to. The volunteers will also let you handle items. The tables are set as if ready for a meal.

You can pick up items from the side tables but you must not touch items on the top table, these are just for looking at as they are delicate. Sometimes a school party may be eating lunch in this room. If this is the case, please visit the Great Hall on your way out of the building.



Image: the top table in the Great Hall.



Image: the large glass window in the Great Hall looking out at Coffee Yard.

# The Gallery



*Image: part of the Gallery and the staircase.*

The Gallery is a wide open space.

Here, there are some activities for you to do, such as a medieval board game; tracing on the light boxes and there is a tent with dressing up and animals for children to play with.

At one end of the Gallery, is the Lesser Chamber. At the end closest to the stairs, is the Parlour. You can visit these in which ever order you like.

In this space, there is a gentle soundscape which features animal noises and a crackling fire. You may also hear other visitors elsewhere in the building in this area and children using the activities.

In the Gallery you will see some exhibition displays, such as printed boards, banners and table-top activities. There is also a children's area with a tent and cushions.

# The Lesser Chamber

The Lesser Chamber is a well lit room, with more board games and other artefacts to interact with. However, please do not sit on the bed as it is quite fragile.

The Lesser Chamber has been decorated to look like a wealthy person's bedroom in the medieval period. You will see furniture, decorations and objects that might have been used 600 years ago.

There are also some information panels and soft toy bugs as part of the exhibition displays. The room has large high windows so this room can sometimes feel quite bright depending on the time of day.



*Image: part of the Lesser Chamber, with medieval bedroom furniture.*

# The Great Chamber

In the Great Chamber you will see display cases containing artefacts such as animal bones or small objects with animal designs on them from over 500 years ago.

There is low lighting in this room to project the artefacts. This room also has a very high ceiling which can be viewed through a big mirror on a table in the centre of the room.



*Image: artefact displays in the Great Chamber.*

# The Parlour

The Parlour is quite a dark room. You can sit on any of the benches if you would like and you should feel free to pick up any of the items.

Sometimes there will be a school group or tour in this room taking part in an activity. This will make the room a little crowded but you can still look at it and handle the display items if you would like to.

There is a staircase down to the Buttery and Pantry. The stairs are a little bit steep but there is a handrail for you to use.



*Image: the Parlour*

## The Buttery and Pantry

At the bottom of the stairs from the Parlour, you will be in a small corridor with entrances to the Buttery, Pantry and School Room. You will also see a large glass window and you will be able to see Coffee Yard, the alleyway leading to the Barley Hall courtyard. You might see people walking along the alleyway, and on the other side of the alleyway you will be able to see into the Great Hall, where you were before.

The Buttery and Pantry have been made to look as they would in medieval times. They are dimly lit with fake candles. You will see benches displaying replica food and drinks.



*Images: the space at the bottom of the stairs from the Parlour, with Coffee Yard and the Great Hall visible through the glass.*



*Images: the Buttery (left) and the Pantry (right).*

# The School Room

In the School Room you will see a table with some objects and games on it. You will also see wall hangings and printed boards with written information and images related to Tudor schools.

There are also two lit display cases set into the wall displaying artefacts such as medieval toys and writing equipment.

In the School Room you will also see some benches and a video about the work of York Archaeology projected against a white wall. Below the video, there are some large wicker storage baskets.



*Images: Toys and games on the table in the School Room.*



*Images: the School Room as it looks when there are no school workshops taking place.  
The video projected onto the wall and storage baskets in the School Room.*

# Christmas at Barley Hall

If you are visiting Barley Hall in November or December, there will be some festive decorations and new sensory elements.

You will see that many of the rooms have been decorated with wreaths and garlands of green foliage. Most of these will be made of plastic, but there might be some real greenery too. You might also see more candles and extra information boards.



*Image: the Great Hall with extra Christmas decorations.*

## Exit

You will end your visit by tracing your route back through the house.

Once you are back in the Gallery, you will come back downstairs, past the toilets, through the Steward's Room and into the Gift Shop and exit the way you came in.

