

AREA

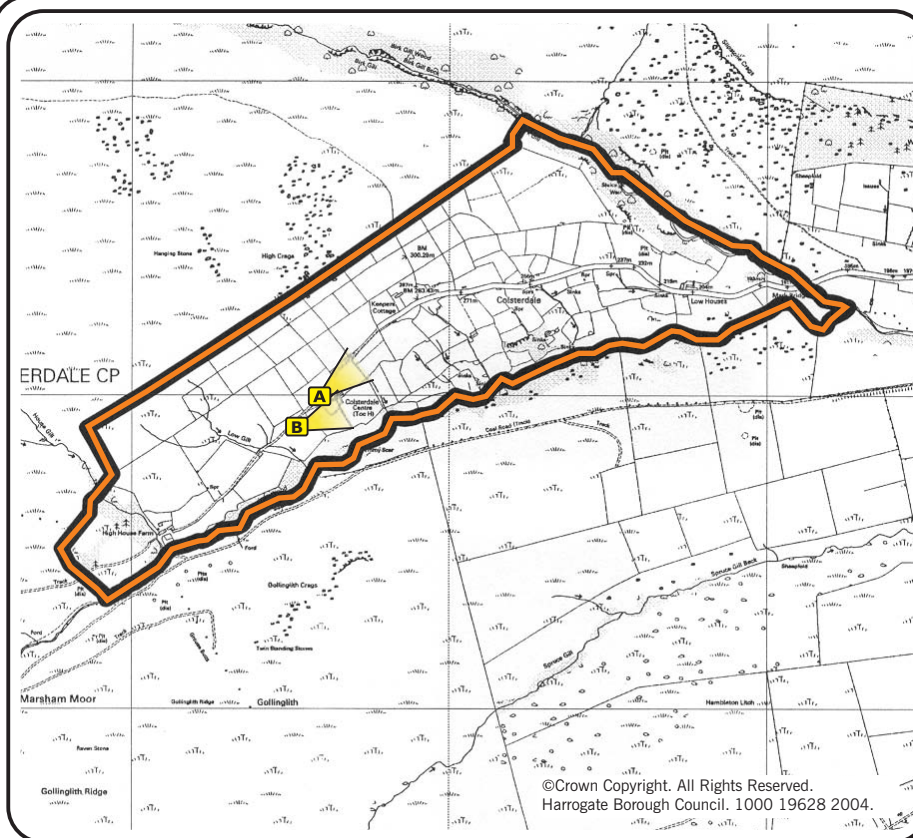
6

Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking north east (down the valley)

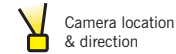


Upper Colsterdale Valley



HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

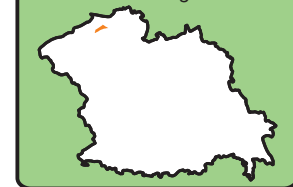
— Area boundary*



Not to
Scale

* NB Due to the nature of landform, surface treatment and soil/geology composition Character area boundaries cannot be delineated precisely and should be considered "transitional".

Location in Harrogate District



©Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved.
Harrogate Borough Council. 1000 19628 2004.

Description

This small character area just over 1km² in size is the upper reach of the Burn Valley at Colsterdale. The V-shaped valley is intimate and confined at the heavily wooded valley bottom becoming more open higher up the valley sides where views across the valley into the moor land are extensive.

On the south facing slope the land is managed for livestock and the fields appear well tended with tidy stonewalls and gateways. The north-facing slope is moorland and as a result has been included in Character Area 1: Nidderdale Gritstone Moor.

Landscape pattern is random and diverse with the higgledy-piggledy older field systems in the bottom of the valley contrasting with the regular form of the newer enclosures further up the valley side. The area is sparsely populated, not easily accessible and feels very remote being surrounded by moorland at the end of a minor road. There are no public footpaths in the area but a bridleway does continue westwards from the road end up the valley into the moorland. The diversity of landscape pattern and land use in such a small area, as well as its isolation, makes this place very interesting, attractive and beautiful. It is within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Solid geology of Millstone grit and till drift geology.
- Brown soils with slowly permeable subsoils, seasonally waterlogged.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Landform is of a narrow and craggy steep sided valley rising from 180m on the valley floor to in excess of 330m along the valley rim.
- The River Burn flows along the valley bottom fed by many gills and becks that drain the surrounding moorlands. (Steel House Moor, Masham Moor, Gollinglith Moor and Colsterdale Moor).

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Fields of improved grassland are managed for livestock.
- Early enclosures occur on the valley floor and lower valley slopes with parliamentary enclosures at higher elevations.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Field boundaries are a mixture of stonewalls and overgrown hawthorn hedges plus random clumps of gorse.
- Individual trees are scattered along field boundaries.
- The valley bottom is heavily wooded with birch and there is Ancient Semi-Natural woodland at Birk Gill Wood.
- The East Nidderdale Moors SSSI borders the area on three sides.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- The main settlement is the hamlet of Colsterdale comprised of a few scattered individual houses, farmsteads and field barns.
- Traditional building materials are local sandstone and slate roofs.
- Historically the north facing valley side has been mined for coal and the pits and the coal road are still visible.
- Twin standing stones on Gollinglith Moor can be viewed from here.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- The remote character of this area is sensitive to development that would improve access and increase built form.
- Unmanaged scrub areas of bracken and gorse are invasive and shroud the roads, when at full growth, blocking site lines for traffic.
- Walls are beginning to fragment and be in filled with post and wire fencing.
- Vernacular buildings, in particular traditional barns, suffer from neglect.
- The area may become an important access point to the open access areas of the Nidderdale Moors, which may increase traffic to the area.

Guidelines

Aim: To preserve unique upland valley landscape pattern and vernacular.

- Maintain and enhance bracken and scrub so that it does not become a danger to motorists and walkers using the road.
- Maintain and restore fragmented drystone walls to conserve the early and parliamentary field patterns.
- Resist development that would result in additional structures in the area that do not conform to vernacular or would change the dispersed building pattern.

Aim: To preserve historic and archaeological features.

- Research historical influences on landscape pattern. In particular there may be areas of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland too small to be registered (under 2 hectares).
- Promote the repair and maintenance of vernacular buildings.

Aim: To ensure that any access and recreation requirements do not detrimentally impact on landscape character.

- Links to the moorland open access area through this character area need to be managed to ensure minimal disturbance to wildlife and impact on landscape character and visual quality.
- Deter increased use of the roads by motor vehicles.
- Signs and facilities to areas of open access should be located on existing access routes and designed to fit with vernacular.



B At Colsterdale Youth Hostel.