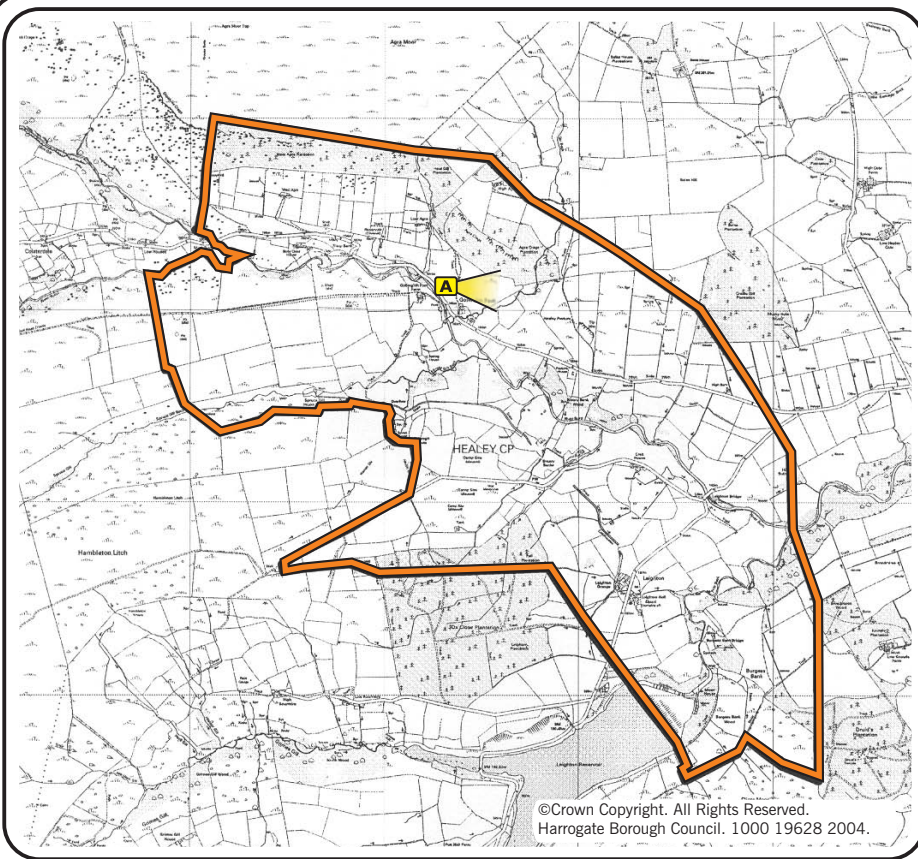


AREA
7




Approved
Feb 2004



Upper Burn Valley
to Pott Beck Confluence



HARROGATE DISTRICT
Landscape Character Assessment

-  Area boundary*
-  Camera location & direction
-  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".



Description

The upper Burn valley is a narrow, V-shaped, steep sided valley with a narrow flat valley floor. The Character Area covers 6km². The valley sides are steep in comparison to those of the neighbouring Pott Beck valley to the south and become less steep towards the confluence with Pott Beck. The area also includes Spruce Gill Beck with its narrow valley running almost parallel before meeting the river Burn. A dense covering of trees particularly on the south facing valley side, enclosing the roads and dispersing outward views, confines the rolling valley sides and accentuates the valley landform.

Land cover is diverse with a mixture of small grass fields tended for livestock bound by walls and fences and areas of neglect covered in bracken and gorse that encroach onto the roads in places. Despite their unkempt appearance these rougher grasses and bracken patches provide a riot of colour and interest throughout the seasons and are important wildlife habitats.



West Agra Plantation dominates views with its harsh straight edges insensitive to landform. Other detractors include an abundance of telegraph poles and farm

buildings made from profiled metal sheeting. Despite these elements this is a generally pleasant and interesting area in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Large earth-fast boulders with cup and ring and other markings area a feature of the area and there are certainly more to be found. Breary Banks navy/POW camp with its memorial is visible for some distance as a wide area of terraces on the hillside, adding to the remote feel of this area.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

-  Millstone grit solid geology and till drift geology.
-  A mix of deep well-drained and seasonally-waterlogged fine loamy soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

-  V-shaped valley landform rising from 130m to approximately 300m AOD.
-  Craggs along the upper valley edge with the gritstone moor.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- River Burn plus Spruce Gill Beck and Pott Beck to the south drain eastwards.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Grassland and moorland managed for livestock.
- Small fields with drystone wall boundaries.
- Forestry consisting of large conifer plantations including West Agra Plantation that dominates the south-facing slope of the valley.
- Several blocks of deciduous woodland including Ancient Semi-Natural at Breary Bank Wood.
- There are no wildlife designations within this area but it is surrounded by the East Nidderdale Moor SSSI.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- The main settlement is the hamlet of Leighton plus several other scattered hamlets.
- Scattered individual houses and farmsteads.
- Traditional building materials are local sandstone with stone slate and blue slate roofs.
- A minor road serves the valley and there are several public footpaths.
- Lines of telegraph poles run up the valley.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This area has limited capacity to accept development. Uncharacteristic farm buildings, which do not respect vernacular architecture, have impacted upon character.
- The large-scale conifer plantations are discordant and do not fit with the generally small-scale character of the area.
- Erosion of the steep valley sides appears to be increasing and may be an issue in the future.
- Stone walls are susceptible to neglect resulting in the loss of characteristic field patterns of the upland valley fringes.
- Fences and telegraph poles detract from character.
- Neglect of redundant vernacular farm buildings.

Guidelines

Aim: To integrate forestry plantations with landscape.

- Promote the diversification of plantation structure through woodland management, introducing native deciduous species and open ground, in line with good practice guidance from the Forestry Commission.
- Modify plantation edges to respect landform and landscape pattern.

Aim: To reduce threat of erosion.

- Reduce run off from moorland by blocking grips to help prevent erosion.

Aim: To preserve settlement pattern and vernacular buildings.

- New buildings must be appropriately located, avoid skylines and be of a scale and design appropriate to the valued character of this area.
- Utilise landform and existing and new planting to integrate new development with its landscape setting.
- Promote the consolidation and repair of vernacular buildings.

Aim: To preserve and enhance landscape pattern.

- Encourage maintenance and repair of dry stone wall field boundaries.
- Rationalise the use of fencing in the area and, where practical, reintroduce hedge and stonewall field boundaries.
- Consider opportunities to put overhead wires underground.