

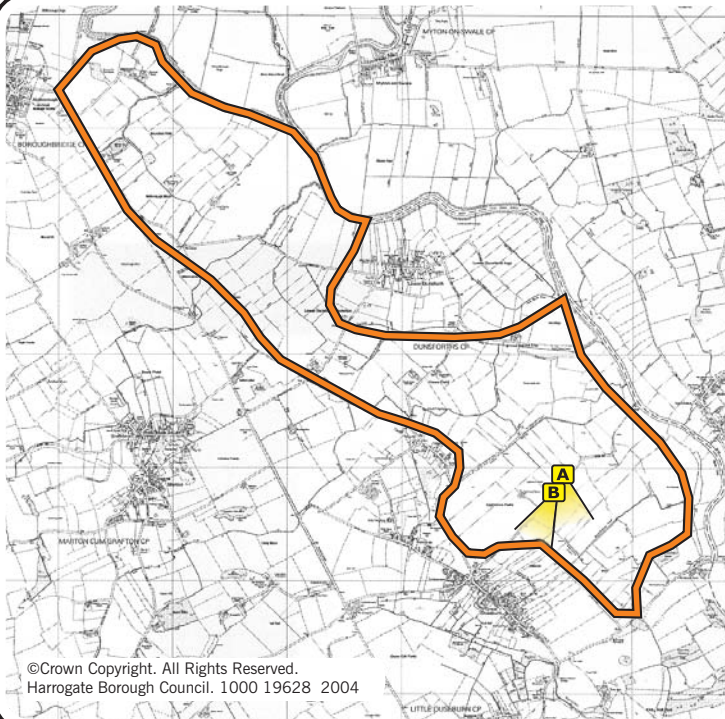
AREA
89

Approved
Feb 2004

A From Light Mire Lane looking towards Kirby Hall.



Aldbrough Moor and Great Ouseburn low lying farmland



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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

This moderate to large-scale agricultural landscape covers 8km² between Boroughbridge and Aldwark Bridge and is bound along its northern edge by the River Ure and sandwiched between the villages of Lower Dunsforth, Branton Green and Great Ouseburn in neighbouring Character Areas.

The River Ure influences the area, specifically at its northern end where it converges with the River Swale and the low-lying, flat land is within the floodplain.

Land use has a uniform appearance of organised drained arable fields intensively-managed for cereal crop production. Field boundaries are fragmented hedgerows the majority of which have disappeared altogether resulting in the amalgamation of fields. There is evidence of a strip field system west of Lower Dunsforth adjacent to Holbecks Drain. Most evidence of early agriculture has been lost as a result of intensive farming methods and parliamentary enclosure.

Woodland cover is an important vertical element in this flat landscape providing a sense of enclosure in an otherwise very open landscape. The absence of any major settlement further contributes to the openness as well as evoking feelings of remoteness marred only by constant traffic noise from the A1(M) in the distance to the west.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with silt and clay drift geology.
- Slowly-permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, stoneless, clayey and fine loamy over clayey surface water gley soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat landform between 15m and 20m AOD.
- Grange Farm Ponds (fish farm) linked to Low Common Drain also linked to Manor Pond.
- Holbecks Drain, Caulkhill Beck & Beck Closes Drain carry water from the farmed land eastwards to the river.
- A few springs and wells are scattered throughout the area including Whitwell and Caulkhill Springs.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Land managed for intensive arable production with improved grassland near to settlement, grade 3 agricultural land.
- Medium to very large fields bound by fragmented hedgerows more prominent along roadsides and generally absent elsewhere.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Very few individual trees along field boundaries including a few hedgerow remnants.
- Very few deciduous woodland blocks and clumps.
- Wildlife interest is limited due to intensive farming throughout the area.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- No major settlement within the area but for a few broadly scattered large scale farmsteads and houses.
- Local building materials include red brick and red tile.
- Several country lanes and farm tracks cross the area and there are public footpaths and permissive rights of way particularly concentrated between Lower Dunsforth and Great Ouseburn.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This area is sensitive to development due to its flat landform and open characteristics. Settlement is scattered across the area generally avoiding the floodplain and concentrated between the villages of adjacent character areas. Further built form in the area may impact upon the separation of the villages.
- Pressure is likely to come from agricultural policy and the changing fortunes of the farming industry resulting in the need for diversification. In some areas this has led to the creation of fishing ponds.
- Limited diversity to this productive landscape has resulted in a limited number of wildlife havens and corridors.
- Large-scale modern farm buildings can be a detractor where they are prominent on the skyline.
- Characteristic views of Ripon and the Church at Studley Park are sensitive to change through inappropriate planting and development.

Guidelines

Aim: To maintain separation between settlements.

- Further built form in this area may result in a loss of distinctiveness between the villages in neighbouring Character Areas. Additional residential development should be resisted.
- New farm buildings need to be located to relate to settlement pattern. Design should consider materials, colour, size and location as well as possible associated planting characteristic of the area. Harrogate Council's Landscape Design Guide: LDG8.1.4 provides advice for woodland planting appropriate to the area.

Aim: To enhance landscape pattern and increase biodiversity.

- Encourage replanting of hedgerows and infilling of hedgerow gaps. Landscape Design Guide: LDG8.2.4 provides guidance on hedge planting for the area.
- Encourage the appropriate maintenance of dikes and becks to improve diversity in the area while maintaining good drainage for the farmland.
- Promote small-scale woodland planting to connect existing woods. Ensure that the openness, which characterises the area, is not lost as a result. Tree planting along watercourse corridors would create natural links highlighting the drainage pattern. Planting design must not impact upon drainage capabilities unless agreed with local landowners and the Internal Drainage Board.
- The creation of wetland adjacent to the river in the floodplain would be appropriate to the open character of the area, improve biodiversity and add interest to the appearance of the open arable landscape. Explore opportunities with DEFRA and the Environment Agency in consultation with landowners.



B A modern farm building off Light Mire Lane.