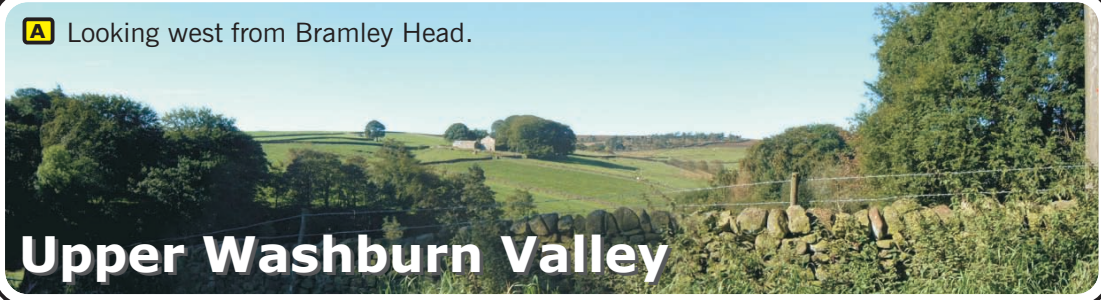


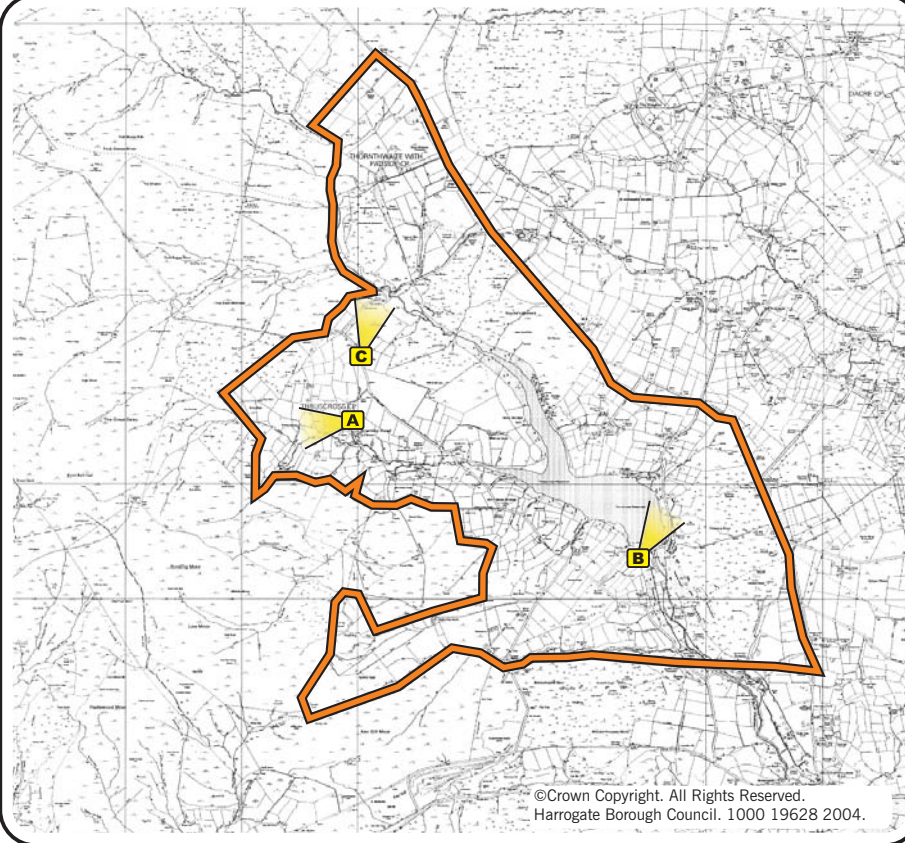
AREA
14

Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking west from Bramley Head.






Upper Washburn Valley



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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 is the upper valley landscape of the River Washburn covering nearly 13km². Thruscross Reservoir was created in the 1950s, and its associated conifer woodland dominates the area and has resulted in a significant change to the landscape character of this relatively narrow V-shaped valley.

The valley is steep in places and enclosed by woodland which channels views and creates an intimate setting for riverside footpaths. Alongside the reservoir the valley sides are broader and conifer plantations skirt the water's edge. Beyond the tree line, at higher elevations, views become extensive across a uniform landscape of grassland that is in stark contrast with the dark moorland vegetation beyond to the west. To the east the area abuts improved upland grass fields.

The landscape pattern is simple with rectilinear, rough and improved grassland fields typical of parliamentary enclosure bound by stone walls and often reinforced with fencing for stock control. Small patches of early enclosure occur around older settlements. This area was also within the boundary of the Royal Forest of Knaresborough, a former medieval hunting park.



The area is isolated with no large settlements or major roads. A network of public footpaths provides access to the valley sides and recreation is an important activity around the reservoir.

Small farmsteads and houses are mainly situated on the north facing side of the valley along Capelshaw Beck.


The landscape is well tended and an important resource for recreation such as walking and sailing and is within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

-  Millstone grit solid geology.
-  Slowly permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, fine to coarse loamy over clayey soils with some peaty soils at higher elevations fringing the moorland.

Landform and drainage pattern

-  V-shaped valley rising between 170m to approximately 320m AOD.



B Over the dam of Thruscross reservoir.

Key Characteristics

- The River Washburn and Capelshaw Beck drain the moor land to feed Thruscross reservoir (dam built 1950s-60s).
- Many springs and wells feed becks that drain into the reservoir and river.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Rough grassland and improved pasture managed intensively for livestock.
- Parliamentary enclosure of medium sized rectangular fields with stonewalls reinforced with post and wire fencing for stock proofing.
- Patches of early enclosure around old settlement such as Croft House.
- Conifer shelterbelts at Carlhow Ridge Plantation, conifer plantation around edge of the reservoir plus mixed woodland along River Washburn including Ancient Semi-Natural woodland at Hanging Wood.
- Very few individual trees in this area.
- Evidence of past quarrying.
- Thruscross Reservoir is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation as an area of open water with a fringing vegetation of rushes, sedges and flowering plants.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- A few scattered farmsteads, and individual field barns in varying states of repair.
- Traditional building material is local sandstone/gritstone with stone slate roofs.

- There is a sailing club and two car parks on the waterside.
- Telegraph poles are highly visible across the area.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- Pressures in the area are likely to result from forestry management and recreation. The changing fortunes of the farming industry could result in the neglect of landscape elements integral to the character of the area e.g. dry stone wall field boundaries and isolated field barns.
- Conifer plantations associated with the reservoir are dominant and have considerable impact upon the character of this upland valley.
- Neglect of vernacular buildings and the limited usefulness of barns in modern farming will lead to loss or pressure to convert, which could impact on the built character of this area and its feeling of remoteness.
- Modern farm buildings detract from vernacular character.
- Lack of diversity in field management results in a stark edge to the character area boundary with the Nidderdale Gritstone Moor.

Guidelines

Aim: Reinforce and enhance landscape pattern.

- Diversification of conifer plantation edges with native deciduous species appropriate to the area (see Harrogate Council's Landscape Design Guidance: LDG 8.1.1) will help soften their appearance and integrate them into the landscape.
- Create links between isolated woodland blocks/plantation respecting landform and landscape pattern.
- Promote diversification of vegetation at moorland edge to create transitional habitats of value to wildlife and enhance landscape diversity.
- Stone walls need to be maintained to retain the farmed character of the area. This is particularly important at the boundary with the moorland and close to built form and roads.

Aim: Retain settlement pattern and vernacular styles.

- Resist residential conversion of barns that would impact on remoteness and cause domestication.
- New farm buildings should be appropriately designed, located within existing farmsteads and avoid skylines.



C Looking north-east to Thornthwaite with Padside.