

AREA 103

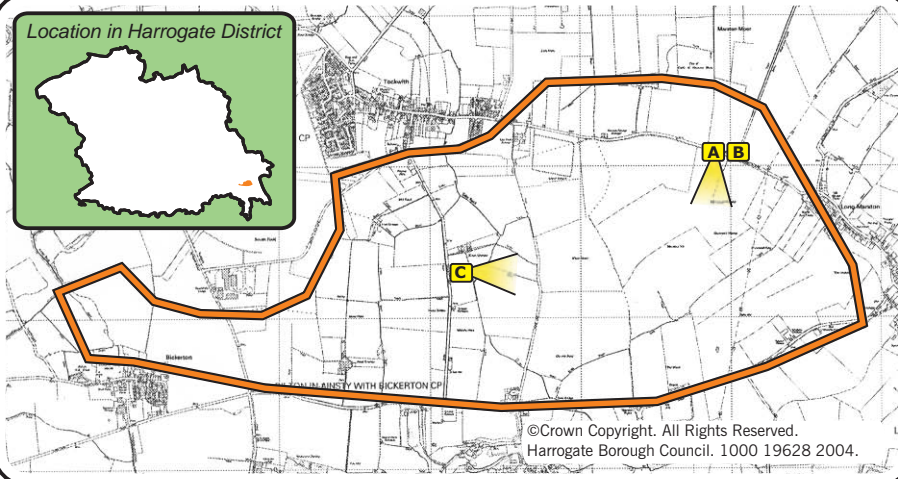
Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking south to Cromwell Plump.



Marston Sloping Arable Farmland

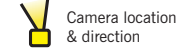
Location in Harrogate District



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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".

Description

This is a large-scale character area between the settlements of Tockwith and Bilton-in-Ainsty covering around 7km². Part of the area is the designated Historic Battlefield of Marston Moor (1644).

The flat landform slopes away to the north towards Tockwith village. Tree cover and field boundaries are sparse and as a result the landscape is exposed offering extensive views that are spoilt by the presence of pylons and telegraph poles.

The uniform arable landscape of muted and organised fields, which were enclosed after 1766, is drained by a network of ditches that eventually feeds into the River Nidd. Despite its uniform appearance the landscape is dynamic as the fields change with the seasons and cropping rotations. Although a common agricultural practice it is more apparent here due to the uniform characteristics and openness of the landscape.

The area is well-tended and balanced and easily accessed by road and public footpath.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with sandy till and till drift geology.
- Deep, well-drained, fine and coarse loamy, slightly seasonally-waterlogged brown soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat and sloping land rising gradually towards the ridge that runs north-south between 40m and 20m AOD.
- Sike Beck plus lots of drainage ditches along field boundaries.



B The Marston Moor memorial.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Arable land intensively-managed for cereal and root crops, grade 2 agricultural land.
- Large fields without formal boundaries in many places.
- Woodland cover in the area is sparse, (Wil-strop Wood, in Character Area 102 to the east, is visible along the horizon).
- Very few individual trees and with little impact (oak and poplar).

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

Settlement, built environment and communications

- No settlement but for one or two individual houses plus Bilton Grange and West Grange that are large farmsteads.
- The area is accessible by Tockwith Road plus two other minor roads that run on a north-south axis.
- A public footpath connects Tockwith and Bilton-in-Ainsty.
- Encore Direct is a high-tech specialist printing company with a large production building, on a former storage site, in an otherwise entirely arable area.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This area is sensitive to development because of its openness and views of it particularly from the north and has little capacity for change if character is to be retained.
- Openness and uniformity of the area makes detractors more prominent e.g. pylons. As a result the landscape is sensitive to change.
- Intensive arable production has resulted in a lack of diversity in landscape.
- Continued loss of hedgerows would result in loss of connection to historic character of the area and its surroundings.
- Levels of lighting in the area are currently relatively low. As a result the area is sensitive to light pollution
- Noise can also be disruptive to the sense of place, particularly in rural areas.
- Cromwell's Clump has views north over the battlefield and is sensitive to change. Opportunities to promote its management and that of other woodland blocks should be considered.

Guidelines

Aim: Protect valued characteristics.

- Gain consensus on what is important in this character area and what changes would be acceptable to landowners and locals alike.
- Avoid introduction of large-scale prominent buildings in the area. Respect settlement pattern and valued vernacular of this and adjacent Character Areas.
- Ensure any new development is associated with existing appropriate development.
- Elements of the landscape at the time of the battle still exist and should be protected from change

Aim: Enhance the diversity of the landscape.

- Promote strengthening of remaining fragmented hedgerows.
- Ensure that any tree planting introduced into this area is appropriate in scale and location to the valued characteristics of this area i.e. its openness and productivity.
- Build upon the historic elements that remain in the landscape providing improved access and interpretation.
- Promote less intensive farming methods to improve wildlife habitats and create wildlife corridors that add diversity to the uniform landscape.

Aim: Integrate existing development and ensure that new development is appropriate to the valued characteristics of the area

- Promote measures to screen the Encore Direct site through appropriate woodland planting.
- Resist the expansion and development of new commercial enterprises that will impact upon landscape character, in particular where noise and light pollution will be increased.



☐ Looking east from Bilton Grange.