

AREA 105

Approved
Feb 2004

A View north from Wighill Churchyard.



Wighill Ridge Farmland

Description

This is a diverse landscape on the southern edge of the district east of Boston Spa and north of Tadcaster. It covers approximately 3.5km² and is characterised by a low-lying ridge that separates the River Wharfe valley system to the south from rolling farmland to the north.

Wighill is the major settlement of the area that sits atop the ridge offering stunning and extensive views into the farmland beyond. The setting of the village is intimate with small-scale grass fields bound by fencing and used for stock grazing and a well-wooded appearance. In contrast, the farmland beyond is more open with larger fields generally managed for arable production bound by hedgerows and sparsely-wooded with a scattering of hedgerow trees.

The landscape here is well-tended with hedges in good, clipped condition and the neat appearance of the church which is an important feature to the southern edge of the village. Thorpe Arch Trading Estate is beyond Harrogate District boundary but still impacts on views from Wighill. Further detractors are the amount of traffic passing through the village that creates constant traffic noise in an otherwise attractive landscape.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

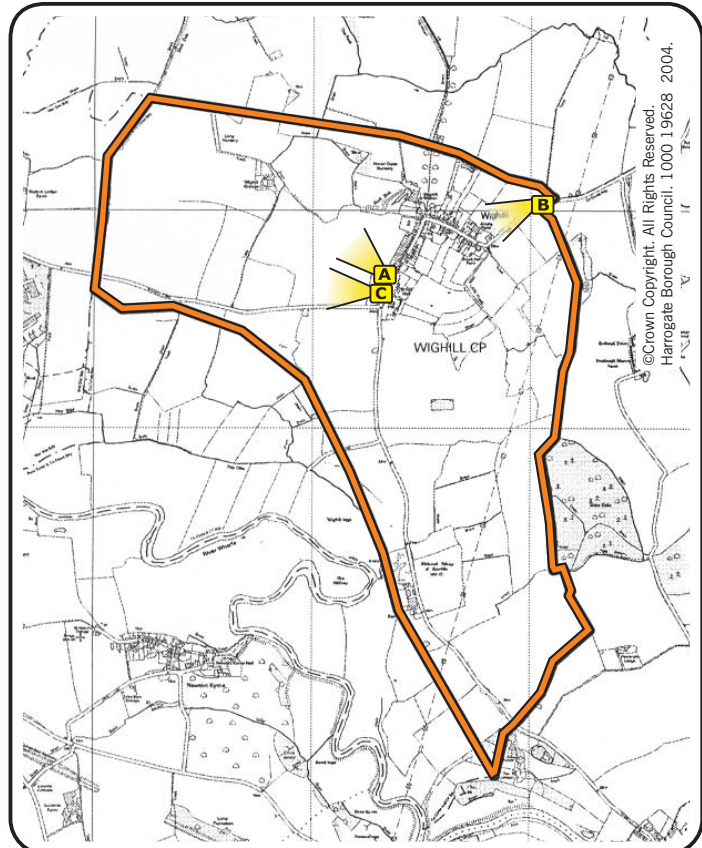
- Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with sandy till and till drift geology.
- Deep, fine loamy, slightly seasonally-waterlogged brown soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Low-lying ridge rising between 10m and 20m AOD.
- Few drainage ditches along field boundaries.

Land use, field boundaries, trees and wildlife

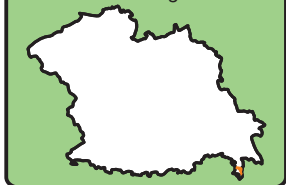
- Land managed for arable production with improved grassland around Wighill, grade 3 agricultural land.
- Fields are small around Wighill becoming large elsewhere bound by hedges and some post and wire fencing.



HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

Location in Harrogate District

- 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".

Settlement, built environment and communications

- Individual trees are scattered along field boundaries close to Wighill. There is a Tree Preservation Order on the avenue of trees near Wighill Manor.
- The main settlements are Wighill village and Wighill Grange.
- Wighill church is an important landmark feature located on higher ground to the south of the village.
- Traditional building materials include Magnesian limestone and tile, red brick and slate.
- The deserted medieval village of Easedike and a moat north of Wighill are of historic interest.



B Site of Easdike deserted medieval village.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- Loss/neglect of hedgerows and amalgamation of fields around Wighill would impact upon the setting of the village.
- Views to and from the church are characteristic and could be altered if inappropriate development were permitted.
- The proximity of Thorp Arch Trading Estate and its possible expansion.
- Potential conflicting guidelines related to landscape and development between the two neighbouring authorities.
- Similar age of trees throughout the area.
- Pressures for landscape change are relatively low and linked to farming. Wighill is within the commuter belt for York, Leeds and Harrogate and so is likely to experience pressure for small scale residential development.

- Extensions to domestic curtilage can impact upon the character of the setting of villages.

Guidelines

Aim: To conserve the rural pastoral setting of the village.

- Encourage the retention of hedgerows field boundaries in the Character Area particularly in the vicinity of Wighill.
- Promote the planting of hedgerow trees and the gapping up of hedgerows.
- Conduct a hedgerow survey in the immediate environs of the village to determine important hedgerows under the criteria of the hedgerow regulations.

Aim: To integrate development with the rural landscape.

- Consult with neighbouring authority regarding landscape guidelines and development.
- Resist development in open areas that would lead to the appearance of sprawl into the countryside.
- Encourage tree planting to follow landscape pattern and landform to soften the appearance of modern development.
- Proposals for change of use (from agriculture to garden) should only be allowed where it will not impact upon the character of the village edge and its setting.



C View of Thorp Arch from Wighill Church.