

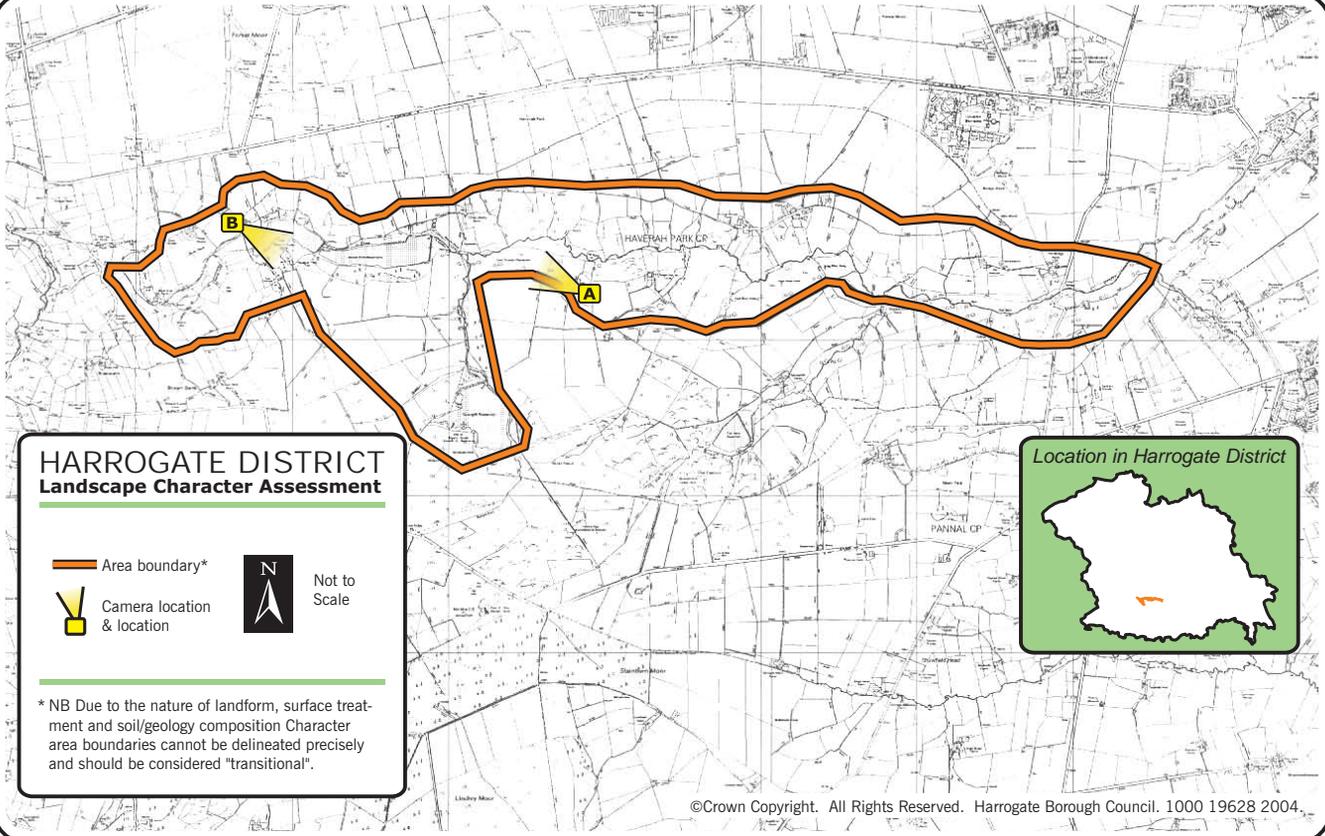
AREA 21

Approved
Feb 2004

A Beaver Dyke Reservoirs.



Oak Beck and reservoirs



Description

This is the small-scale valley landscape of Scargill Beck and Oak Beck. The becks join and flow east towards Harrogate. The valley covers over 5km² and sits between the extensive, raised plateaux of Forest Moor to the north and Sandwith and Stainburn Moors to the south.

The valley sides are shallow as they slope away from the valley floor. There are two small reservoirs in the upper reaches of the two valleys: Beaver Dyke Reservoir along Oak Beck and Scargill Reservoir along Scargill Beck. The openness of the upper valley reservoirs contrasts with the more enclosed wooded river corridor.

Land management is simple with heath and rough grassland managed for light grazing evoking feelings of wildness in the upper reaches of the valley. Large rectilinear fields typical of parliamentary enclosure and bound by stone walls are evident along the top edge of the valley. Early enclosure field patterns are evident in the valley bottom around the scattered farmsteads.

This area feels remote but it is accessible by minor tracks and public footpaths.

Historically the area is at the centre of the ancient medieval deer park of Haverah and also lies within the

boundary of The Royal Forest of Knaresborough. This is an attractive character area and its connection with Harrogate makes it an important rural to urban link valued by both local residents and tourists.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Millstone grit solid geology.
- Slowly permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, fine to coarse loamy over clayey soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Small-scale broad, V-shaped valley landform between 120m AOD and approximately 200m AOD.
- Small becks drain the surrounding moor and feed into Oak Beck, which flows east and eventually, joins the Nidd outside the character area.
- The two reservoirs are significant water features in the upper valley landscape.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

Land use, fields, boundaries and trees

- Rough grassland and heather managed for rough grazing becoming improved down the valley.
- Several blocks of woodland along the river corridor including Ancient Semi-Natural woodland at High and Low Boar Hole, south west and east of Throstle Nest farm.
- Open with some large rectangular parliamentary enclosure fields bound by walls and a few trees.
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are:
 - Pot Bank Marsh consists of waterlogged ground dominated by rushes and supporting other wetland plants.
 - Beaver Dyke Reservoir, open water with a fringing vegetation of rushes, sedges and flowering plants.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- No major settlement, several scattered individual farmsteads.
- The area is in the Haverah Medieval Deer Park and the remains of a medieval lodge, known as “John o’ Gaunt’s Castle”, south of Beaver Dyke Reservoir is of historic importance.
- A footpath, the Harrogate Dales Way Link, runs through this area.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This relatively remote area is sensitive to additional built form and changing fortunes of farming that result in management changes. Improved access and increase visitor numbers would also impact.
- Pressure for landscape change is low and is influenced by changes to the rural economy.
- Neglect of woodland management will decrease the long-term sustainability of land in this well wooded area.
- Small woodland blocks may be ancient but are not registered if less than 2 hectares and therefore not recognised as important.

- The historic fabric of this landscape holds important clues to the development of its character and is sensitive to change through neglect.
- Possible increase pressure for access to open country through this area from Harrogate as a result of the right to roam may impact upon the use of the area and its currently quiet nature.

Guidelines

Aim: To reinforce and enhance diversity of land cover and textures.

- Promote management of existing woodland and planting of new woodland to fit with landscape pattern, create links between existing woodland and fit in with the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Planting new woodland to create links between existing ones will enhance woodland character.
- Encourage diversification of grassland communities through management.

Aim: Protect the historic fabric of the landscape.

- Research the history of the landscape in the area and provide interpretive information for users of the footpaths. Of particular interest are remnants of the medieval deer park.
- Identify historic and archaeological features suitable for scheduling.

Aim: To promote sensitive access to open country.

- Identify appropriate access points and ensure that new facilities, signs and paths are low-key and respect landscape character.



C Beaver Dyke Reservoirs.