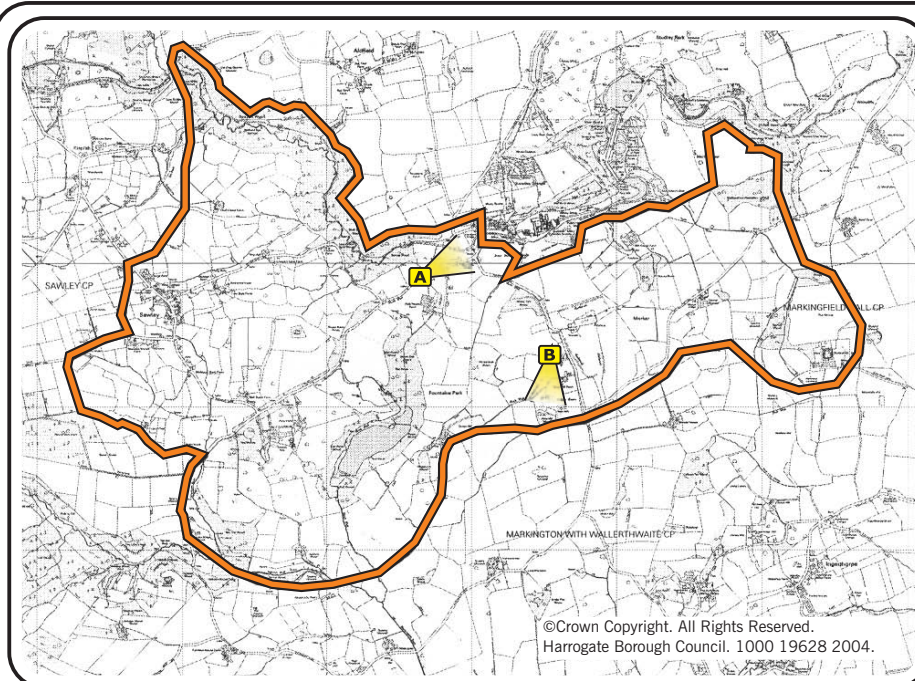
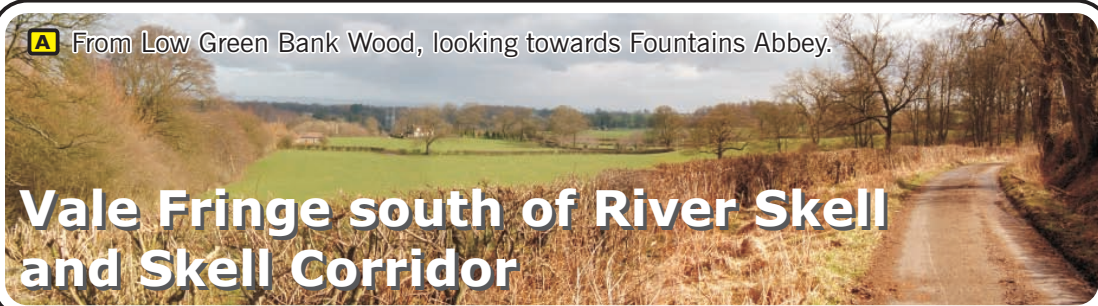


**AREA  
30**

**Approved  
Feb 2004**

**A** From Low Green Bank Wood, looking towards Fountains Abbey.

## Vale Fringe south of River Skell and Skell Corridor



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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

The River Skell corridor marks the northern boundary of this Character Area, which extends south to encompass Fountains Park and Markenfield Hall. The area covers 9.4km<sup>2</sup>. There are many features of historic interest including the Monk Wall, The Tower at How Hill, Fishponds at Park House and a moat at Markenfield Hall. The River is densely wooded as is the rest of landscape with large woodland blocks and park land remnants associated with the grounds of Markenfield Hall, Sawley Hall and Fountains Abbey as well as individual trees scattered along field boundaries. Woodland and tree cover is so dense that it encloses the landscape channelling and framing views.

There are many surviving elements of historic interest in this diverse, harmonious and balanced landscape. Landscape pattern is organised and land management intense. The area is important to the setting of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site to the north.

Much of the area lies within the medieval deer park linked to Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey.

## Key Characteristics

### Geology, soils and drainage

- Millstone grit solid geology becoming Magnesian limestone to the east.
- Surface water gley soils with brown soils along course of river.

### Landform and drainage pattern

- The landform is comprised of the River Skell south valley sides to the north and the gradually undulating slope rising away from the river corridor to the south.
- Topography ranges between 100m AOD in the valley bottom to 160m AOD.
- In addition to the River Skell several becks drain the area.
- Man-made water features include medieval fish ponds at Park House and a large fish pond east of Sawley Hall on a tributary of Markington Beck.

### Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Land use is mainly improved grassland with woodland blocks and shelterbelts associated with Sawley Hall, Markenfield Hall and Fountains Abbey.

## Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Field pattern is the result of early enclosure and the later amalgamation of fields.
- Individual trees scattered along boundaries and parkland trees scattered within fields at Sawley Hall and Markenfield Hall.
- Heavily-wooded river corridor of the River Skell and mixed woodland round the fish pond at Sawley Hall.
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation at:  
Markington Fishpond (open water);  
Studley Royal (neutral grasslands).
- Names such as "Spring Wood" indicate areas of long established woodland.

### Settlement, built environment and communications

- The main settlement is Sawley plus scattered Halls, farmsteads and houses.
- The dominant traditional building materials are gritstone, with stone slate or Westmorland slate roofs, and limestone.
- Fountains Abbey controlled the area prior to the dissolution and there was a monastic grange at Ninevah.
- Historical features from many ages are present including How Hill Tower and the deserted medieval village of Earleshot, earthworks at Ninevah, Monkwall, Fountains Mill and Studley water garden.

## Sensitivities & Pressures

- The area is extremely important to the setting and history of the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site and it shares many of its characteristics with that area. As a result the area is sensitive to change which development (at all levels) could bring and it has little capacity to accept change without detriment to the setting of the World Heritage Site.
- Pressures on landscape characteristics result from intensive farming practices and neglect. Many of the historic and archaeological features are protected. Those that are outside designated sites, but which contribute to the unique "sense of place", are susceptible to neglect.
- Mature trees of a similar age will be lost at the same time with little to replace them. This is a particular concern where many individual trees in field hedgerows punctuate the landscape.

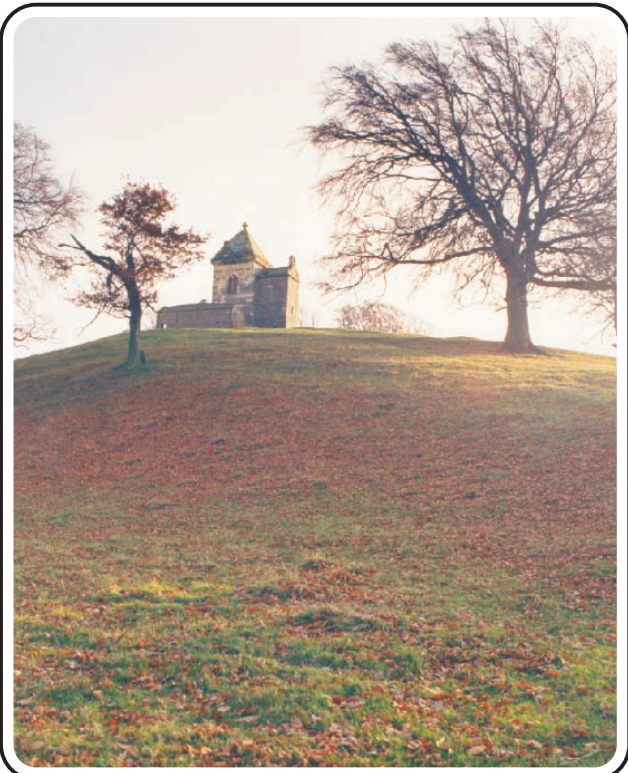
## Guidelines

### Aim: To conserve landscape and historical setting of the World Heritage site.

- Modern farming practices have resulted in damage to archaeological features. Where possible negotiate agreement with landowners not to carry out practices which could cause damage e.g. deep ploughing.
- Identify historic features under threat and develop mechanisms to ensure long-term future.
- Promote the maintenance of field pattern through the repair and management of hedgerows.
- Development proposals should not result in the loss of key characteristics and historic features in the landscape. Important views and the setting of Scheduled Monuments, as well as the World Heritage Site, must be protected.

### Aim: Protect and enhance woodland and tree cover across the area.

- Promote management of woodland and trees to ensure long-term future and contribution to valued character of the landscape.
- Promote the planting of native hedgerow trees as part of the management of hedgerows.
- New tree and woodland planting must respect local landscape pattern. In particular, individual trees are associated with hedgerow boundaries and woodlands tend to be concentrated around settlement and water corridors. Where possible, establish links between existing woodland and trees.



**B** The Tower at How Hill.