

AREA 41

Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking west from Fearby Road at west edge of Masham.



River Ure Corridor (Charlcot to Aldburgh Hall)

Description

This area covers 21km² in Harrogate District (it extends beyond the District boundary to include Gebdykes Quarry) and is dominated by the course of the River Ure as it meanders north to south in its broad and shallow valley. The scale of the landscape is medium to large up the valley sides becoming smaller close to the river in the valley bottom.

There are several good views across this open character area. The landscape is diverse and reasonably well balanced with a mix of arable and grassland use. Fields are generally rectilinear, medium to large and bound by hedges many of which are fragmented.

The area has a tended appearance and is interesting and pleasant. However, the river corridor geology contains gravel and sand resources identified in the NYCC Minerals Local Plan and gravel extraction has impacted upon the area creating lakes at Marfield north of Masham. This temporary quarrying activity on the west side of the valley bottom visually detracts from the landscape. In addition there are several prominent large-scale modern farm buildings in this Character Area.

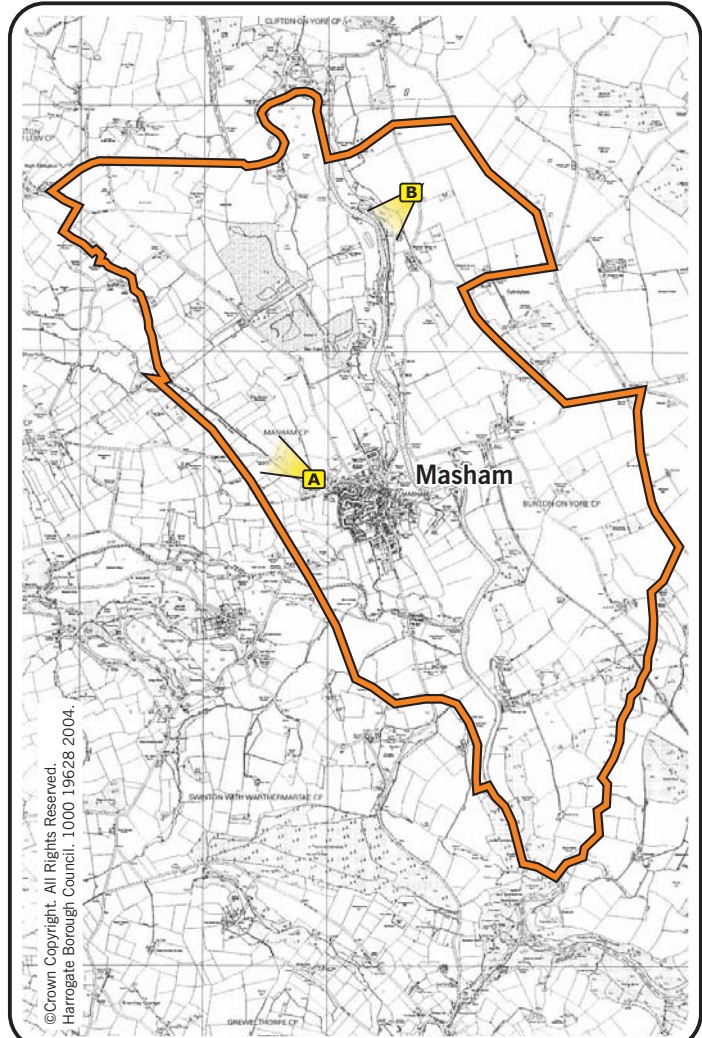
Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Millstone grit solid geology with till drift geology and river terrace and alluvium deposits along the Ure valley bottom.
- Brown soils, deep well-drained fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging with patches of deep, stoneless, permeable, fine, loamy river alluvium over gravel in places.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Broad shallow valley with a flat valley floor and gradually undulating sides from 75m to 110m AOD.
- The River Ure meanders in a southerly direction. The River Burn joins the Ure from the east at the southern end of this Character Area.
- There are a few springs in the area close to the River Ure.
- Marfield Pit Lake is a prominent man-made water body.



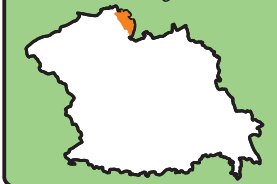
HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

- Area boundary*
- 📍 Image location & direction



Not to Scale

Location in Harrogate District



* 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".

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Land use in the area is mixed arable and grassland with an average field size of medium. Field boundaries are traditionally hedges although many of these are fragmented and fencing is used for stock proofing.
- There are several woodlands and mixed conifer plantations in the area. Parts of the river corridor are well-treed.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- ▶ Marfield Pit is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and Marfield Fen adjacent to it is an SSSI.
- ▶ Gravel extraction at Marfield is the most significant (albeit temporary) visual detractor in this landscape.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- ▶ The market town of Masham, situated on the west valley side just north of the confluence of the River Burn with the River Ure, is the major settlement in the area.
- ▶ Masham market place has been in use since 1393.
- ▶ The base of an old Saxon cross stands outside the present church door.
- ▶ There are several scattered farmsteads along the valley particularly on the west side of the river.
- ▶ Building materials are local sandstone walls with stone slate and blue slate roofs.
- ▶ The stone bridge over the Ure was built in 1755.
- ▶ The breweries are an important feature.
- ▶ The Ure corridor is recognised as an historically important link across the Pennines between Cumbria and the North York Moors and includes the deserted medieval village of Burton on Ure.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- ▶ Despite its relatively large scale the rural character of the area is sensitive to further change. An expansion of quarrying activities could have considerable impact on the river corridor. The setting of Masham is also sensitive to change and development has impacted upon approaches to the town e.g. small industrial units along Fearby Road on the western approach to the town.
- ▶ There is a wide range of activities in this area and that are influential including quarrying, farming and brewing. Tourism and recreation makes an important contribution to the local economy and impact upon landscape character.
- ▶ There is continued pressure for expansion of gravel extraction and quarrying.
- ▶ Intensive farming practice resulting in larger fields and modern farm buildings.
- ▶ Increased pressure for facilities as a result of tourism. In particular caravan parks in the countryside can have detrimental impact.
- ▶ Impact of intensive farmland management and quarrying on the wildlife value and natural beauty of the river corridor.

Guidelines

Aim: To preserve the rural character of the area and setting of Masham.

- ▶ Encourage the repair and management of existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees prioritising the areas contributing to the setting of Masham.
- ▶ Protect the character of approaches to Masham by avoiding inappropriate development. Where development is permitted scale, design and materials as well as planting must respect key characteristics of the area.
- ▶ Preserve settlement pattern through appropriate development. Refer to Harrogate Council's Design Guides.
- ▶ Quarrying activities can have a negative impact on landscape character and views. Every opportunity to mitigate impact through appropriate design should be taken and a programme of restoration should be developed to create and manage wildlife habitats to deliver objectives outlined in the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan.

Aim: To integrate tourism and recreation facilities with landscape character.

- ▶ Tourism facilities need to respect landscape character, vernacular and wildlife. Additional facilities should be restricted to areas already developed. Planting, location and layout to fit with pattern will help mitigate the impact.

Aim: To protect and enhance riverside habitats and preserve the varied texture of the landscape.

- ▶ Promote less intensive farming practices, particularly close to the rivers.
- ▶ Promote appropriate woodland planting along the river corridor and planting of hedgerow trees.



B View west across the Ure valley from north of High Burton on the east valley side.