

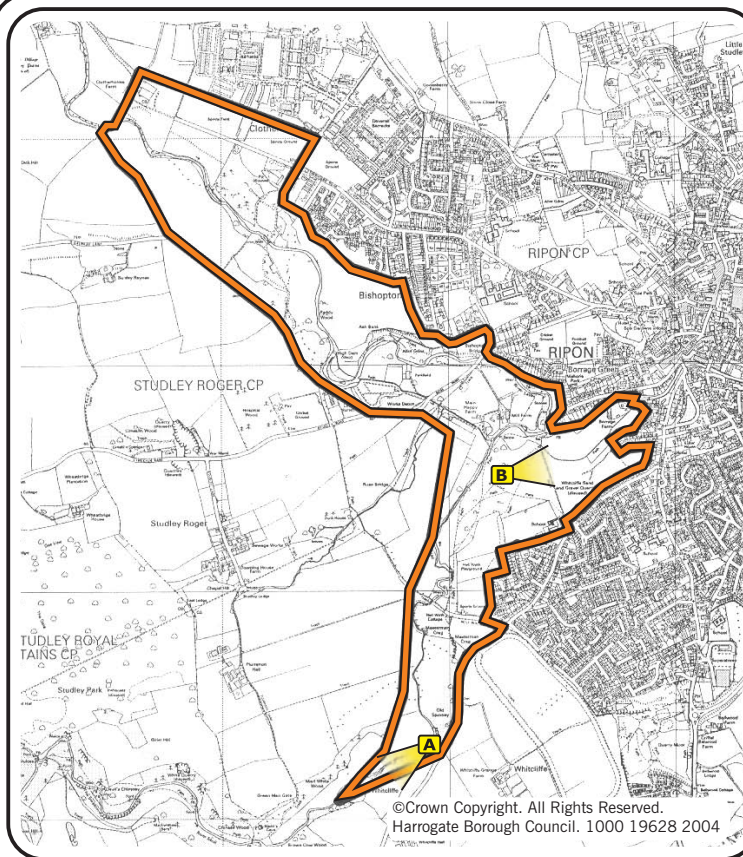
AREA 45

Approved
Feb 2004

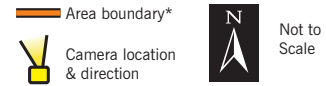
A Skell Valley at the southern end of the Character Area.



West Ripon Rivers Laver and Skell Confluence



HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment



*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 linear area encompasses the final reaches of the River Skell and River Laver corridors and their meeting point west of Ripon. From this point the Skell flows eastward through Ripon on its final journey to meet the Ure east of Ripon. The area covers 1.8km² and abuts the western edge of Ripon with a diverse land use providing recreational opportunities for local communities and tourism. There is a camping and caravan park at Bishopton between Studley Road and the River Laver and a large recreation area at Hell Wath between the edge of Ripon and the Skell. Public footpaths cross the area close to Ripon but do not follow the rivers far into the countryside.

The river corridors are shrouded in dense woodland. This creates an intimate setting for riverside activities and a strong network of public footpaths makes this part of the area accessible and provides important links into Ripon and towards Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal in the west. The woodland also serves to maintain a separation between the World Heritage Site and Ripon.

This landscape is well tended and managed to a high standard that makes it both interesting and attractive.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Magnesian limestone solid geology overlain with sandy till and till drift geology plus river terrace deposits.
- Deep, well drained, coarse loamy and sandy brown soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Narrow river valley, with steep sides in places and a flatter valley floor.
- The Laver valley broadens upstream around Clothholme.
- River Laver and River Skell confluence.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Mixed land use of grass fields and recreational public open space with facilities, allotments and gardens, grade 3 agricultural land.
- Caravan and camping site north of the B5265 on the south bank of the River Laver.
- The river valleys are well wooded and a Tree Preservation Order covers some areas.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Several disused sand and gravel quarries and one still in use at Bishopton.
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation at Atkinsons Quarry, waterlogged ground supporting wetland plants.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- Main settlement is the urban edge of Ripon as well as a few scattered farmsteads and individual houses. Bishopton is an 18th century settlement on the edge of this area and now linked to Ripon by modern housing development. The meadows linked to Bishopton are within the Character Area.
- One road bridge crosses the River Laver here. Other crossings are footbridges and small private vehicular bridges.
- Public footpaths and bridleways run the course of the rivers and cross them connecting Ripon to the countryside and the Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- The river corridor landscape follows the natural meandering course of the two rivers. Quarrying within this corridor has impacted on rural character in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The character of the river corridors is distinct due to the extent of woodland cover, the valley landform and the high concentration of recreational use due to the close proximity of Ripon. The area is sensitive to changes in these characteristics
- Characteristic views of Ripon and the World Heritage Site are sensitive to change through inappropriate planting and development.
- Pressure to extend gravel extraction activities is likely to continue.

- Neglect of river valley trees and woodland could result in changing character.
- Water quality is important to character and pollution from runoff as well as rubbish dumping along the banks of the river impacts upon the attractiveness of the area.

Guidelines

Aim: Protect the river valley landform.

- Proposals to extend quarrying activities must demonstrate need and lack of suitable alternatives as well as incorporate appropriate mitigation measures integral to design and a monitoring system for reinstatement work related to quarrying.
- Tourism facilities should be low-key avoiding prominent locations. Development requiring extensive earthworks will not be permitted.

Aim: To protect and enhance river corridor habitats and integrate with recreation use.

- Promote appropriate woodland and tree management along the river corridor.
- Monitor rubbish dumping along the riverside and introduce systems to reduce the amount of dumping and manage the clearing of rubbish through education and raising awareness of the value of the river corridor habitat.

Aim: To protect and enhance the setting of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site.

- Encourage the retention and enhancement of existing agricultural/parkland character between Ripon and the World Heritage Site.
- Promote historic restoration between Ripon and Fountains Abbey, taking account of key views to Ripon Cathedral.



B From Hell Wath fields east towards Ripon.