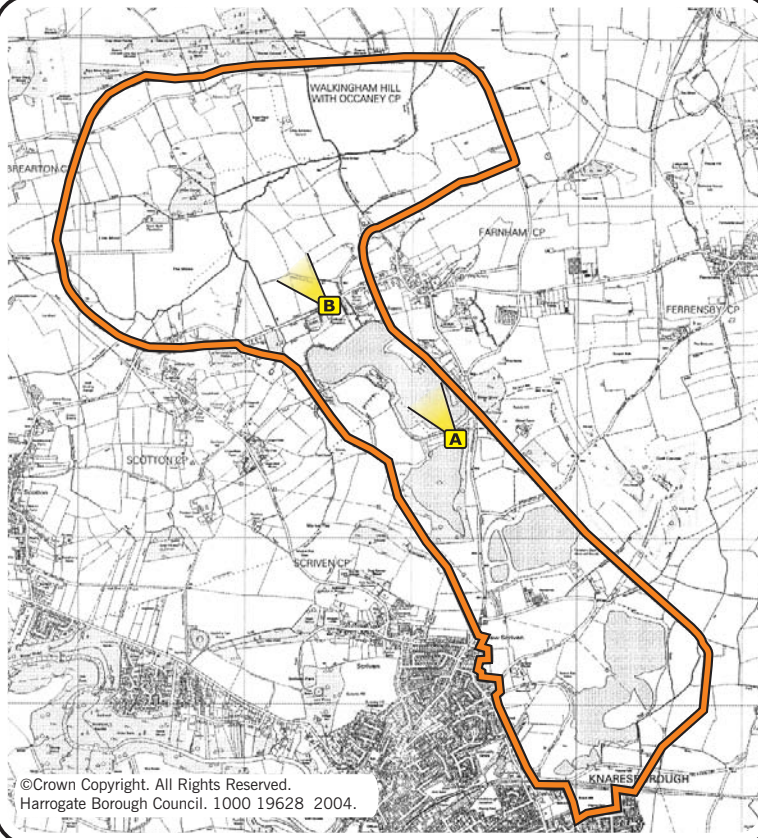


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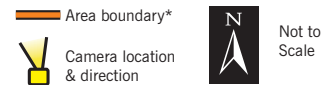
Approved
Feb 2004

A Flooded gravel pit south of Farnham.

Knareborough Reclaimed Gravel Pits



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 area abuts the north east edge of Knareborough and is low-lying and flat consisting of a series of four reclaimed gravel pits that are now lakes. The area covers approximately 6km². It is a small and intimate scale area confined by heavy woodland cover that encircles the large lakes channelling and obscuring views of the water.

Land management is diverse with small grassland fields and root crops for fodder, recreational opportunities on the lakes, and some small industry. Pattern is random resulting from the combination of fields, lakes and woodland. Such a mix of land use is discordant and areas have fallen into neglect with old signs and dilapidated fencing, overgrown hedges and overgrazing degrading the fields. Telegraph poles and pylons are prolific in the area too.

Despite these detractors there are pleasant views towards and from Farnham that is in a neighbouring character area. The area is important both to the setting of Knareborough and as a link to the countryside for the townspeople.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Magnesian limestone solid geology and glacial gravel drift geology.
- A mixture of gley and brown soils, grade 3 agricultural land managed for livestock and horses.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat landform below 50m AOD.
- Four large lakes resulting from gravel extraction.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Mixed use of grass fields for livestock and horses, with lakes for recreation, small industry and woodland.
- Some individual trees along field boundaries including out grown hedges.
- Heavily-wooded lakesides. Much of the tree planting is under 30 years old.
- The area is important for wildlife with SSSIs at Farnham Mires and Hay-a-Park.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- There are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation at:
 - Farnham South Lake (open water);
 - Decoy Fields, Lingerfield (neutral grassland);
 - Farmire (open water)

Settlement, built environment and communications

- A few scattered individual houses and farmsteads as well as small industry and businesses are dispersed around the lakes.
- Building materials are a mix of traditional and modern.
- Public access to the area is limited as there are few public footpaths.
- A dismantled railway passes between two lakes in the south of the area.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This character area contributes to the rural setting of the market town of Knaresborough. Gravel extraction has impacted upon character and as a result this is a relatively new landscape. There are opportunities to build on this to maintain distinctiveness of this attractive rural area.
- There are some unsightly and insensitive buildings of inappropriate size, location and materials in the area, which detract from the generally pleasant character of the lakes and associated recreation facilities. These serve to highlight the sensitivity of the area to inappropriate development.
- Litter and equipment associated with the small industry/businesses is unsightly.
- Due to the proximity of Knaresborough and Harrogate the area is well used for recreation and demand for facilities is likely to persist. For example, the limited footpath network means that walkers are using the narrow and dangerous roads and access to the lakes is currently restricted.
- Loss of hedges and trees along field boundaries away from the gravel pits has impacted upon the more established character.
- Overgrazing and trampling of land particularly that used by horses can give an appearance of over-use and impacts upon biodiversity.
- Poor management of tree planting around lakesides.

Guidelines

Aim: To promote recreation and links from town to country while maintaining distinctiveness.

- Development should be of the appropriate scale and be designed to complement the small scale of the landscape.
- Mitigation measures should include the restoration and introduction of key characteristics such as hedgerows and hedgerow trees and the management of existing new and established woodland.
- Litter control is important to the attractiveness of the area.
- A survey of how walkers use the area and the additional access arrangements needed to improve safety and enjoyment of the area would be a good starting point for future recommendations regarding public access from Knaresborough.

Aim: To preserve and enhance woodland and tree cover.

- Encourage long-term management schemes for new and established woodland.
- Encourage the reinstatement and management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- New native tree planting can be used to better integrate development in the area with the landscape. Harrogate Council's Landscape Design Guide: LDG8.1.3 gives guidance on appropriate native species mixes for this area.

Aim: To promote and enhance the biodiversity.

- The area already includes two SSSIs and three SINCs and opportunities to improve existing habitats and create new ones should be sought.
- The area has potential to be used as an important educational resource.



B Looking north west from Stang Lane, Farnham.