

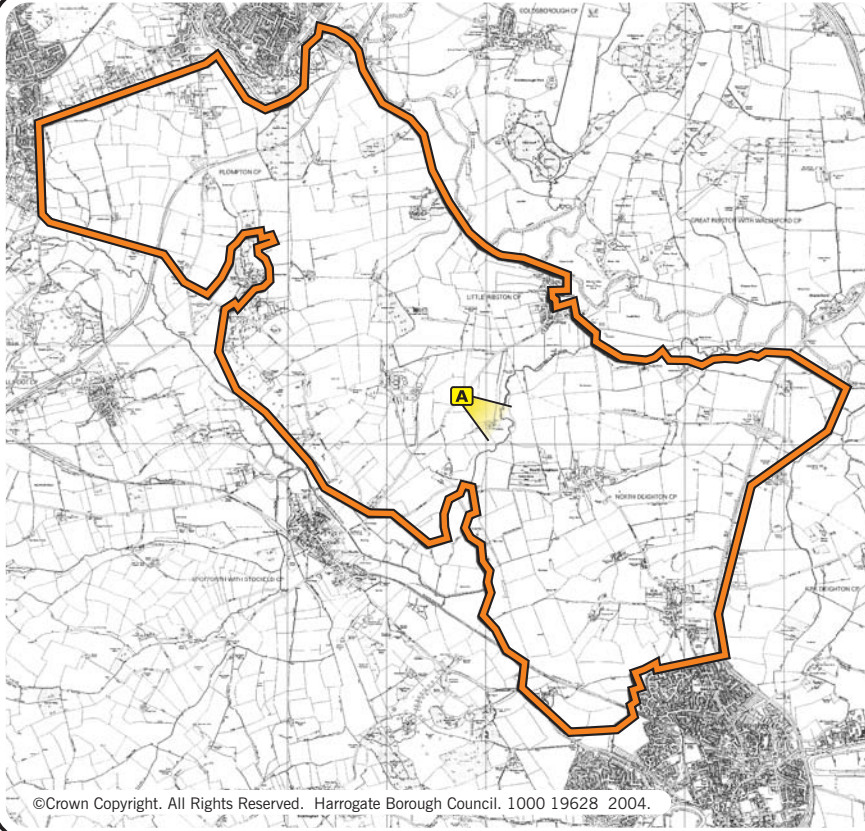
AREA 56

Approved
Feb 2004

A View south east from Spofforth Lane.



Plompton and South Knaresborough Arable Land



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HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

— Area boundary*
 Camera location & location



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".

Location in Harrogate District



Description

This large-scale area is situated between the valley landscapes of the River Nidd and the River Crimple south of Knaresborough. It covers approximately 23km² and extends as far south as Harrogate District's boundary north of Wetherby.

The undulating landform is scattered with various blocks of woodland that disperse views across an otherwise open landscape. Fields are large to accommodate modern and intensive farming practices for cereal production plus some improved grassland for grazing. The amalgamation of smaller fields to create these large fields has led to the dissolution of hedge-row field boundaries and trees (those that do survive along the roadsides often appear neglected).

The other main settlements of the area are built along the Knaresborough Road (B6164) and generally linear in form. Elsewhere individual farmsteads are scattered and accessible by long, private access tracks.

The area is within The Royal Forest of Knaresborough, a former medieval hunting park.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Magnesian limestone and glacial till drift geology.
- Combination of deep and shallow soils, fine to coarse loamy, some over clayey, slowly permeable and well-drained, seasonally-waterlogged brown soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Undulating landform between 35m and 75m AOD.
- The watercourse linking Crimple Beck with the River Nidd contributes to the undulating landform as it crosses the area in a south to north direction from Newsome Bridge near Spofforth to Ribston.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Large arable fields of grade 2 and 3 agricultural land.
- Fields predominantly open with some fragmented hedging in places.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Small woodland blocks on higher ground and infrequent hedgerow trees elsewhere.
- Deighton Spring, Birkham Wood, Bramham Wood and woodland at Scalibar Farm are designated Ancient Semi-Natural woodland.
- Birkham Wood and Newsome Bridge Quarry are SSSIs.
- Braham Fields area is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- Main settlements are North Deighton, Kirk Deighton, and Little Ribston plus scattered individual farmsteads.
- North Deighton was part of the Ribston Estate and is set around a large green. The village is a mix of dwellings and farm buildings. More recent housing does not respect the vernacular.
- Kirk Deighton is recorded in the Domesday Book, and its church is of Norman origin.
- Traditional building materials are mixed, including Magnesian limestone and gritstone with slate and some pantile roofs.
- The A1 marks the eastern extent of the area along the boundary where the rolling landform becomes flat. The A661 Harrogate to Wetherby Road runs along much of the western boundary. There are also several minor roads crossing this intensively-farmed landscape.
- Several public footpaths and bridleways provide links but this network is not extensive.
- The Motte and Bailey east of North Deighton is a medieval fortification and there is a Bronze Age bowl barrow south of North Deighton with evidence of Neolithic settlement beneath.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- The gently rolling landform and open nature of the landscape combined with uniform land use in random, large fields have resulted in a landscape which is sensitive to change from inappropriate development.
- The historic elements of this long settled are being lost to modern farming practices.
- Loss of field pattern and associated hedgerows.
- Lido caravan and camping site is intrusive on the landscape where it has spilled over the Nidd Valley side at Knaresborough.
- Urban edge of Harrogate and new commercial development is intrusive.
- Overhead transmission lines are highly visible.
- The area is important to the setting of Ribston Park and Plumpton Rocks (both Registered Historic Parks and Gardens).

Guidelines

Aim: To integrate existing intrusive development.

- Encourage restoration and management of hedgerows along roadsides, however open nature of landscape does accommodate fragmentation of hedges elsewhere.
- Restriction on extension or new development of caravan/camping site that encroaches onto the skyline beyond the Nidd Valley side.
- Development should be of appropriate scale and material so as not to detract from character of landscape.
- Encourage overhead communications to be placed underground.
- Planting associated with the sewage works in the centre of the Character Area makes an important contribution to mitigating the impact of the site but could be built upon and improved.
- Modern development in villages has detracted from the vernacular. Planting around the village edges could help to define development limits and better integrate modern houses with traditional buildings.

Aim: To enhance and promote archaeological sites and research the landscape's historic origins.

- Protect archaeological features from further degradation and improve public access to them.
- Several parish boundaries are linked to field boundaries and associated hedges could be considered important under the hedgerow regulations. Restoration and management of hedges along parish boundaries is important to the historic character of the area.
- The setting of historic parks and gardens adjacent to the Character Area must be protected from intrusive development and enhanced where possible to improve links with the surrounding countryside (this is particularly important for Plumpton Rocks).

Aim: Conserve the landscape pattern and landform characteristic of the area.

- Field pattern is important and, in some places, may be older than the roads, which cross them.
- Tree planting and woodland planting can be used to complement the rolling landform by avoiding skyline locations and following contours.
- Settlement between villages is sparse and scattered. Here additional built form should be avoided. Where new buildings are required they should be associated with existing farmsteads and located so as not to require new access arrangements.