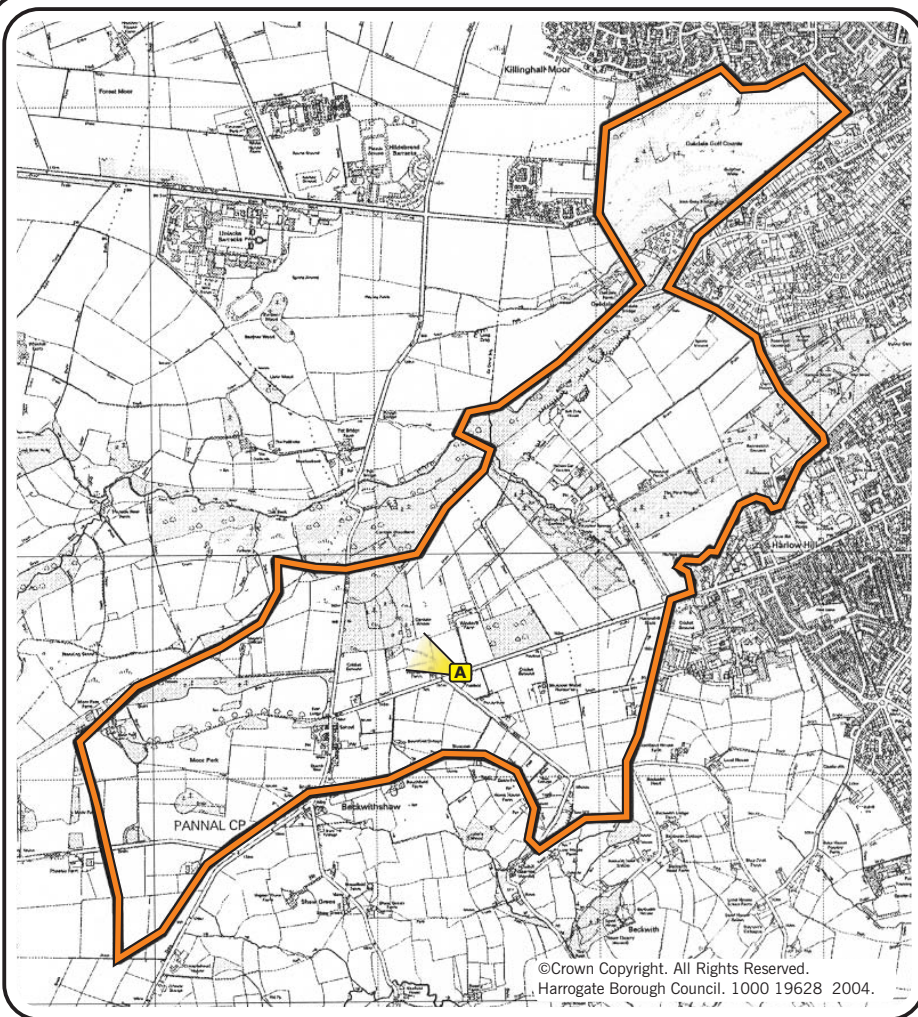


**AREA
59**

**Approved
Feb 2004**

A North west from B6162

Harlow Hill



**HARROGATE DISTRICT
Landscape Character Assessment**

— Area boundary*

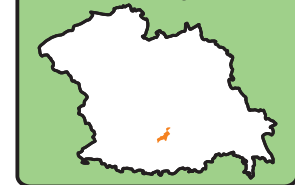
Image location & direction



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".

Location in Harrogate District



Description

This Character Area covers approximately 4.5km² to the west of Harrogate and incorporates Harlow Hill. The geology of the area is distinct from its surroundings as it incorporates the Harrogate Anticline, an area of Carboniferous limestone. This is a moderate scale area that gently rolls and undulates before rising into Harrogate. Valley Gardens is a Registered Historic Park and Garden which extends from the east boundary of the Character Area along the Anticline into Harrogate providing an important link between town and country.

Oak Beck flows through the northern corner of the Character Area and is heavily wooded partially enclosing the space and dispersing views. On the flatter land a few dikes drain water into the Beck.

The land is tended and managed for livestock; field pattern is regular with rectilinear grass fields bound by hedges and individual trees. Some of the hedges are overgrown and fragmented and have been infilled by fencing for livestock control.

Recreation, both formal and informal, is also important here with Oakdale Golf course and the Royal Horticultural Society's Harlow Carr Botanic Gardens being key features.

The main detractors in the area are telegraph poles, post and wire fencing and views of the urban edge including Cardale Business Park.

The area is easily accessible and supports a good network of public footpaths through a pleasant landscape.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Harrogate Roadstone (Carboniferous limestone) solid geology outcropping as a result of the Harrogate Anticline.
- Drift geology of glacial till.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Surface water gley soils consisting of slowly permeable, seasonally-waterlogged fine loamy and fine loamy over clayey soils.

Landform and Drainage

- Rolling, undulating landform rising between 80m and 180m AOD towards Harrogate's urban edge.
- Oak Beck passes through the north corner of the area and there are several small becks

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Grade 3 agricultural land managed for livestock.
- Recreational use including Oakdale Golf Club, the Pinewoods, Harlow Carr Botanic Gardens and Cardale Caravan Park.
- Regular pattern of small to medium sized fields, examples of parliamentary enclosure.
- Field boundaries are hedges, some overgrown and some with fences
- Individual trees are typical on field boundaries.
- There are several woodlands associated with the urban edge, Oak Beck and Moor Park and at Birk Crag on Oak Beck there is a designated Local Nature Reserve.
- Tree cover is a mix of native and non-native species as a result of the Golf course, the Pine-woods, and Harlow Carr Botanic Gardens.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- The western extent of Harrogate influences the east boundary and Cardale Business Park is prominent.
- There are scattered farmhouses and residences including those along Oak Beck, close to the edge of Harrogate. Beckwithshaw is the only village and Moor Park is a large country house recently converted to residential development.
- The B6162 links the area with Harrogate Town centre and the B6161 passes across the area. There is also a network of minor roads and tracks linking dwellings and smaller settlement.
- Public footpaths and bridleways including Harrogate Ringway and The Harrogate Dales Way Link. The area forms part of the link to the town centre via the Pinewoods and Valley Gardens.
- Caravan Park in the Pinewoods off the B6161.
- The area is within the boundary of The Royal Forest of Knaresborough, a former medieval hunting park.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This area is important to the rural setting of Harrogate and provides recreation facilities and opportunities. The future expansion of visitor attractions and new recreation facilities in the area are likely to result in some change which may impact upon landscape character.

- The expansion and possible increase in visitor numbers to Harlow Carr Botanic Gardens is likely to result in pressure for further development of the gardens and its access roads.
- There is a threat of urban sprawl into the area with demand for both business and residential development. The area is well-wooded and has a strong landscape structure but past development has had an impact e.g. the buildings on Cardale Business Park and car parking on minor roads.
- The neglect of amenity and recreation value of this area to the residents of Harrogate may impact upon character in the long term.
- Neglect of woodland has led to Rhododendron ponticum problems in Cardale Wood.
- Erosion and saturation of public footpaths.
- Proximity of urban areas and their influence on the Oak Beck corridor.

Guidelines

Aim: To protect the area's character and improve integration of the urban edge with the countryside.

- Promote planting to screen Cardale Business Park and integrate with existing woodland and trees.
- Proposals for change of use and new built form must fully assess impact on character and the countryside setting of the town identifying appropriate mitigation measures and recognising where proposals may not be acceptable in landscape terms.

Aim: Maintain the amenity and recreation value of the area

- Promote the use, maintenance and management of public footpaths.
- New recreation facilities must be in keeping with the character of the area and not result in the loss or change of key characteristics.
- Encourage the maintenance of public footpaths and consider links into neighbouring Character Areas such as Oak Beck and Stainburn Moor.

Aim: Promote and enhance the diversity of the area for native flora and fauna.

- Encourage proactive woodland management of river corridor and marginal vegetation as a wildlife corridor.

Aim: Protect historic features and their setting.

- The setting of Valley Gardens and the links the gardens have with the countryside through this character area must be preserved.
- Protect the setting and character of Moor Park on the edge of this Character Area with Stainburn Moor grassland plateau.
- Conserve the setting and structure of the 14th century Irongate Bridge across Oak Beck on the edge of Harrogate.