

AREA 64

Approved
Feb 2004

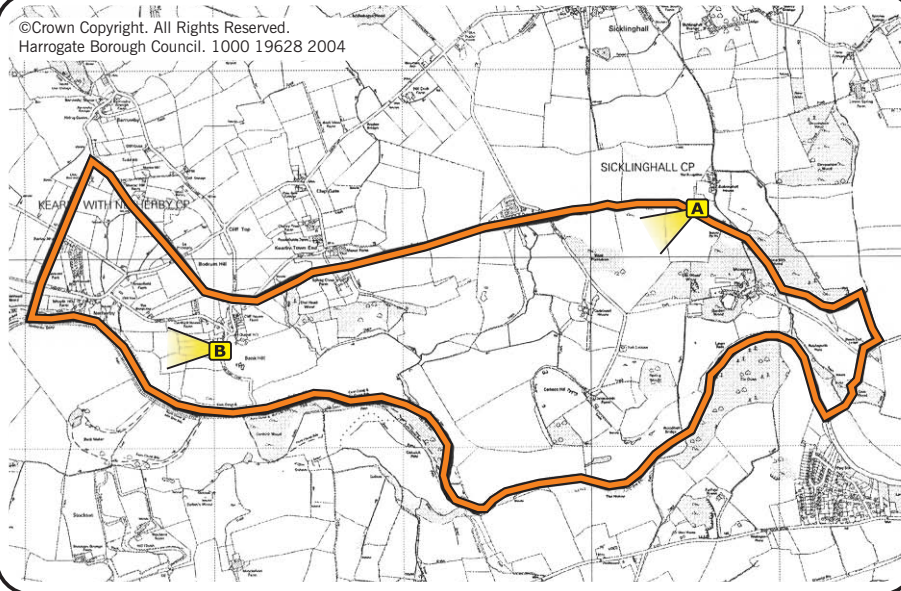
A Looking south west from Sicklinghall House

River Wharfe

(Netherby to Woodhall including Carlston Hill)

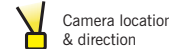


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HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

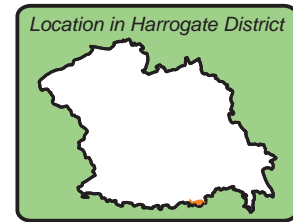
— Area boundary*



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 extends beyond the District boundary to the south to include both sides of the Wharfe Valley. The area comprises the U-shaped valley of the River Wharfe between Netherby and Collingham (outside the District). Within Harrogate District the area covers nearly 4km². The valley sides along this reach of the Wharfe are relatively steep, enclosing the Character Area and channelling views west and east along the valley. The river is well-wooded and a public right of way follows much of its length on the south bank. Access is limited on the north side (Harrogate District). As a result the area is quite isolated despite being close to several villages. This is a peaceful stretch of the lower Wharfe valley with no crossing points for vehicles.

- Several small ponds in the valley bottom.
- The area is at risk from flooding.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Land use of improved and semi-improved grassland.
- Mixed land use of arable and improved grassland fields of various sizes.
- Small blocks of deciduous and mixed woodland plus Ancient Semi-Natural woodland at Limekiln Wood and Owl Head Wood.
- Woodland helps to emphasise valley landform.
- SSSI at East Keswick Fitts.
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation at:
Spring Wood;
Old Wives Wood;
Limekiln Wood.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Magnesian limestone and Millstone grit solid geology with river alluvium drift geology.
- Deep, stoneless, permeable, fine loamy soils over river alluvium.

Landform and drainage

- Flat valley floor below 30m AOD, and sloping valley side rising above 90m AOD. Carlston Hill protrudes from the flat valley floor to a height of 57m on the middle of the Character Area.
- The River Wharfe is the main feature of this area and marks the boundary of Harrogate District.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- No major settlement but several individual farmsteads on the valley side (particularly south facing) and Carlston Hill Farm on the valley floor.
- Limited access to the area.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- ▶ The quiet river corridor is intimate and sensitive to development that would improve access and increase built form. The river's water quality is intrinsic to the character of the area and is sensitive to change as a result of pollution.
- ▶ However, pressures for landscape change are relatively low and largely linked to the fortunes of the farming economy.
- ▶ Woodland and tree management is important to the maintenance of the character of the area and the longevity of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland.
- ▶ Public access to the area is poor on the north side of the river.

Guidelines

Aim: To maintain the intimate nature of this quiet backwater between Harrogate and Leeds.

- ▶ Avoid development other than low-key diversification of an existing use.
- ▶ Avoid development that would increase the need for vehicular access to the area.
- ▶ Explore options to improve public enjoyment of the area, through access agreements, following appropriate routes, that would cause minimal disturbance.

Aim: Preserve and enhance habitat diversity.

- ▶ Work with anglers, the Environment Agency and local landowners to promote habitat management and opportunities for diversification in the valley in line with the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan.
- ▶ Promote proactive woodland and tree management for the long-term future of woodland here.
- ▶ New planting should take account of habitat and wildlife opportunities appropriate to the river corridor.



B Looking west up Wharfedale from Chapel Hill.