

AREA

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Approved
Feb 2004

A Roundhill reservoir looking up the valley.



Upper Pott Beck Valley Reservoirs

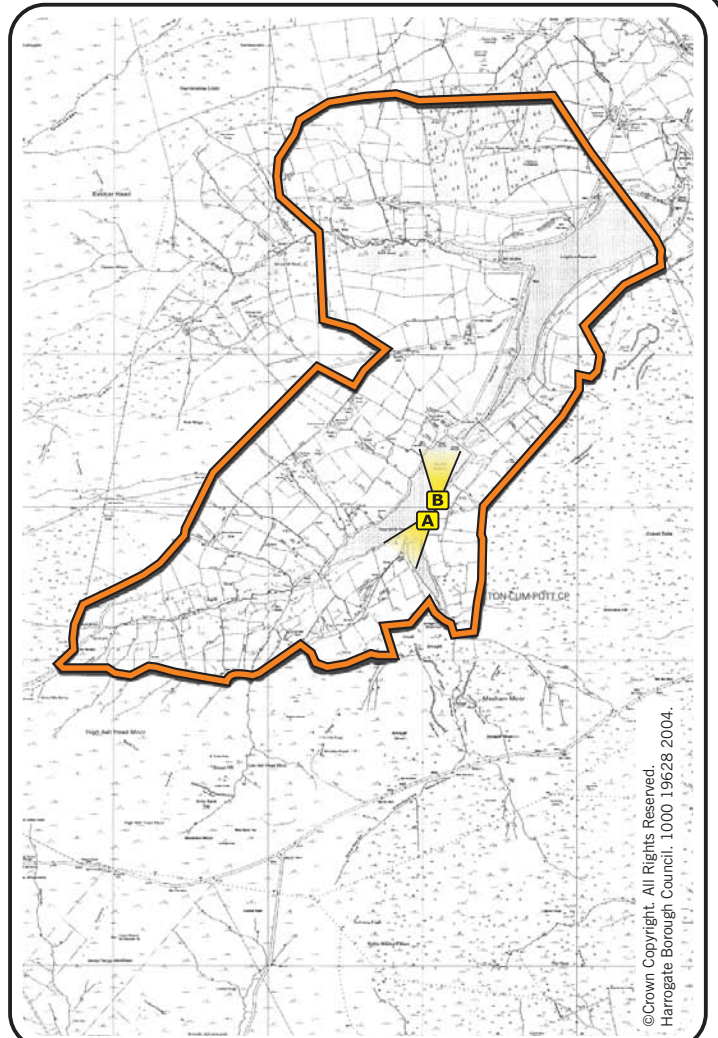
Description

This Character Area covers more than 7km² and is the upland reach of the flooded Pot Beck Valley including Grimes Gill. The character of this area is relatively new and has resulted from the creation of two reservoirs in the deep narrow V-shaped valley. The landscape is large scale and open with a simple pattern of rectilinear fields up the valley sides around Leighton Reservoir becoming more irregular at the upper end of the valley. Colour is muted with the reservoirs providing a contrast to the surrounding green fields. The area feels remote and tranquil and has an organised and tended appearance. Improved and semi-improved pasture is concentrated on the south and southeast facing slopes of the valley with rough grass on the north- west facing slope.

Tree cover in the area is sporadic with clumps along Agill Beck and Grimes Gill and individual trees along field boundaries and within fields. Woodland cover is greater around Leighton reservoir giving a more enclosed feel. There is evidence of a medieval deer park that encompasses the area around Leighton reservoir. A small area of wood pasture on the boundary of this area has survived which may date from monastic times when Fountains Abbey managed the area.

There is evidence of past quarrying which probably provided building materials for the construction of the dams as well as stonewall field boundaries.

This is an interesting area within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with a varied history resulting in the landscape pattern seen today.



Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Millstone grit solid geology and till drift geology.
- Surface water gley soils, slowly permeable seasonally-waterlogged, very acid in areas with a peaty surface horizon.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flooded upland V-shaped valley with sloping sides rising from 200m to 300m AOD.
- Rock outcrops and crags are characteristic of the valley rim.

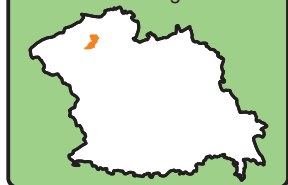
HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

Location in Harrogate District

- Area boundary*
- Camera 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".

- The valley has a south west to north east orientation with two reservoirs and their dams (Roundhill and Leighton) plus two notable tributaries called Pott Beck and Grimes Gill which arise from the surrounding moorland.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Semi-improved and improved grassland in small to medium sized rectilinear fields with dry stonewall boundaries.
- Woodland cover is concentrated around Leighton Reservoir and Grimes Gill.
- Ox Close Plantation is a large conifer wood on the south east facing valley side of Leighton reservoir and a prominent feature on the skyline between the Pot Beck and River Burn valley systems.
- North Wood, South Wood and Arnagill are all Ancient Semi-Natural woodlands.
- There is an area of wood pasture which has been mentioned in the records of Fountains Abbey.
- Historically the area around Leighton reservoir became a deer park after the dissolution of the monasteries.
- The two reservoirs are designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Settlement pattern, built environment and communications

- Two houses built with the dams at Leighton and Roundhill reservoirs plus a few scattered houses on the south and southeast facing valley sides.
- Traditional building materials are local sandstone with slate roofs.
- Buildings are prominent due to lack of tree cover and the valley landform.
- Arnagill tower is a prominent feature linked to the construction of the dams.
- A minor road runs along the northwest valley side up onto the moor. There are very few public footpaths in the area.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This area is sensitive to further change. The construction of the reservoirs has already significantly altered the upland valley landscape resulting in an open character that could not easily accommodate development with out detriment to visual quality.

- Much of the tree cover in the area appears to be of a similar age and lack of pro-active woodland and tree management will result in long-term change and loss of small patches of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland and historic wood pasture.
- Neglect and loss of stonewalls and the use of post and wire fencing will increase the openness of the area making it less distinct from the surrounding moorland.
- New buildings and conifer shelterbelts associated with the dam construction are not typical characteristics.
- Historic and archaeological features have not been recognised by formal designations and may be lost.

Guidelines

Aim: To maintain distinctive character of the upland valley.

- Promote appropriate woodland management and planting, while maintaining the open character of this area.
- Development in this area may significantly impact upon character and views. Guidelines are needed for design of new farm buildings where need is established.
- Encourage the repair of stone walls and traditional management of grass fields.

Aim: To conserve historical features.

- Promote historical research in consultation with local communities.
- Identify archaeological features that may be added to the SMR database.
- Give protection to the area of wood pasture and areas of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland working with landowners and the Forestry Commission to develop management plans.



B Roundhill Reservoir looking down the valley.