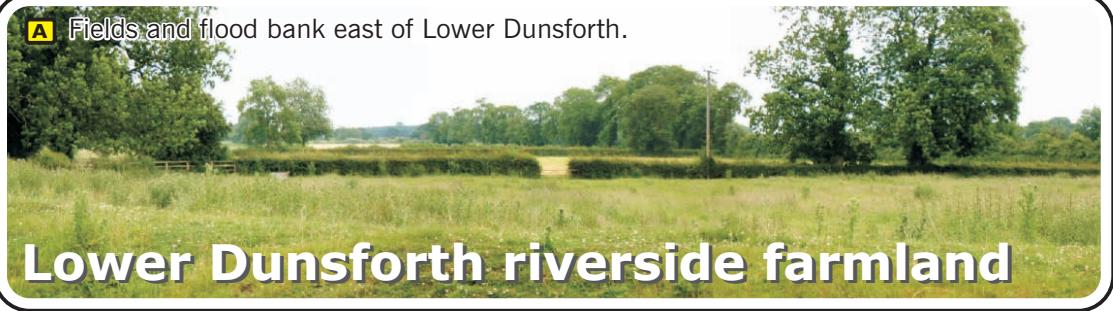


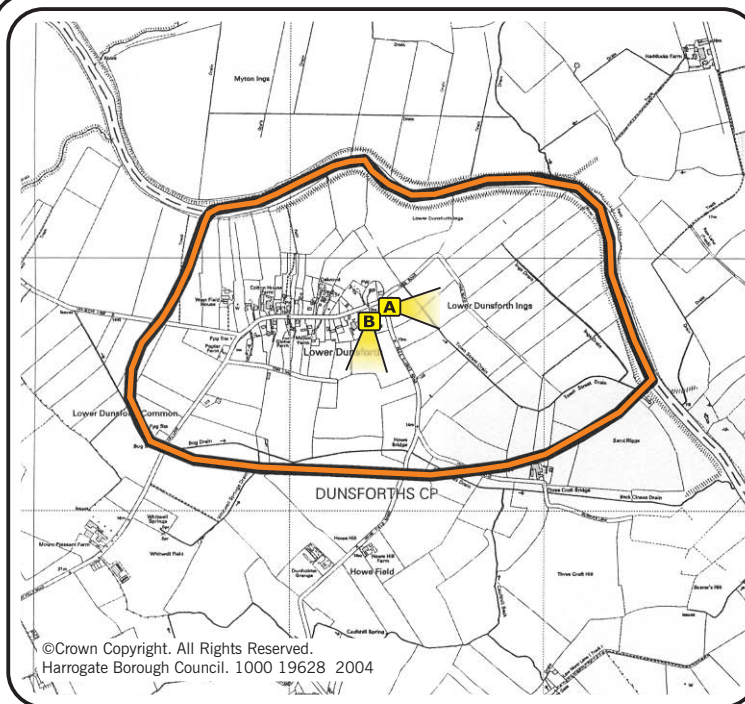
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Feb 2004

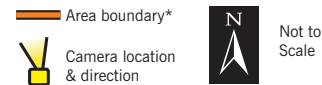
A Fields and flood bank east of Lower Dunsforth.



Lower Dunsforth riverside farmland



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 small-scale landscape covers approximately 2km² and is situated around the village of Lower Dunsforth within a broad meander of the River Ure and south east of Boroughbridge.

Field pattern is diverse with small linear fields of early enclosure stretching between the village and the River Ure in stark contrast with the grid like pattern of rectangular fields elsewhere. The Ings (meadow) east of the village has been drained and what was once seasonally flooded land is now intensively farmed.

Lower Dunsforth is well treed and, together with the built form, creates an intimate village setting. Beyond the settlement, tall and bushy hedgerows compensate for a lack of woodland evoking feelings of enclosure and shortening views.

Land use is simple with muted green fields managed for grazing cows and horses plus a scattering of small arable fields. Although there are no wildlife designations in the area the tree cover associated with the village, the bushy hedges and the presence of the river to the north boundary do provide diversity and habitats for wildlife.

The village has a feeling of remoteness but is easily accessible to its south side by a network of minor roads. The River Ure creates a barrier preventing any connection to the north.

The landscape appears well-balanced but is marred by the use of insensitive temporary fencing and telegraph poles that are detractors in an otherwise pleasant and very attractive landscape.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with silt and clay and alluvium along the river corridor.
- Slowly-permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, stoneless, clayey and fine loamy over clayey surface water gley soils. Stoneless, clayey, fine silty and fine loamy ground water gley soils close to the river.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat landform at 15m AOD.
- The River Ure and its riverbank mark the boundary of the Character Area long its northern and eastern edge.
- The area is within the floodplain of the River Ure. Shallow flood banks protect Lower Dunsforth to the north and east.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Bog Drain, Town Street Drain and Ings Drain drain the low-lying fields.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Land use of improved grassland with a few arable fields. Grade 3 agricultural land.
- Small to medium sized fields including the early enclosure field pattern of medieval tofts in a north south orientation between the village and the river.
- Hedges are tall and in good condition, plus fencing around the settlement for horses.
- Woodland cover is sparse with clumps of trees around Lower Dunsforth and a moderate coverage of individual trees along fields boundaries.
- There is a caravan park on the north side of the village.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- The main settlement is Lower Dunsforth that has a small-scale linear arrangement and includes several farmsteads. The church here has medieval origins but was rebuilt in sandstone with a slate roof in 1860.
- Vernacular building materials are mainly red brick and blue slate.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- The village and its setting is distinct from the surrounding agricultural landscape due to field pattern and tree and hedge cover. The flood protection works are also important to the setting of the village. Changes to these characteristics may impact upon the distinctiveness of the area and its unique sense of place which provides diversity in an otherwise arable landscape.

- The amalgamation of the thin strip fields to the rear of houses and development within them has impacted on the strong pastoral setting of the village.
- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees due to amalgamation of fields will change the character of the landscape as it will become more open.
- Development of village farmsteads and extension of tourism facilities such as the caravan park would impact on character.

Guidelines

Aim: To conserve the diverse pattern and texture of the landscape.

- To encourage the maintenance of the field system around Lower Dunsforth by providing incentives to maintain and restore hedgerows.
- Ensure that new flood defences are appropriate to the character of the village setting.
- Assess the capacity of the village and its landscape character to accept change without detriment to its character prior to considering development.
- Avoid development that involves changing the character of the linear fields to the rear of the village. This applies to garden extensions as well as built development.

Aim: To protect and enhance tree cover.

- Promote the planting of native trees along hedgerows to enhance the village setting.
- Non-native trees may be appropriate in the village setting but should be chosen carefully to complement vernacular.



B Southern edge of Lower Dunsforth.