

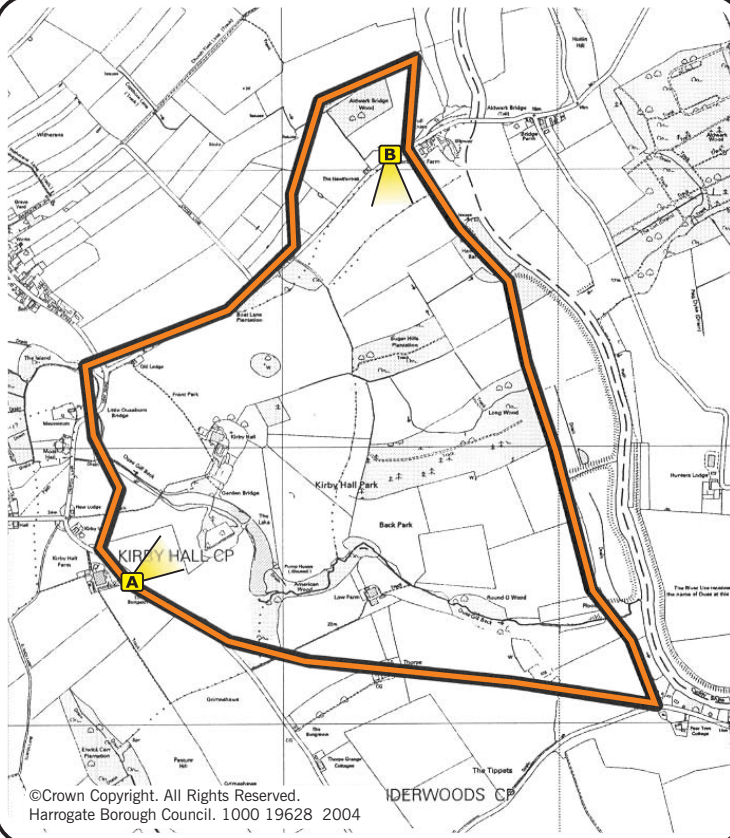
AREA
94

Approved
Feb 2004

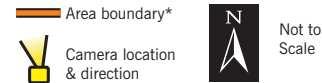
A The view east from Kirby Hall across the parkland.



Kirby Hall Park and 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 area, covering 2.5km², encapsulates a landscape that has been greatly influenced by Kirby Hall. It is moderate in scale and predominantly grassland or parkland with some fields given over to arable production.

Ouse Gill Beck flows from the northwest and gently meanders towards its confluence with the River Ure. At this point the river becomes the Ouse. The narrow Character Area 93: Ure/Ouse Corridor forms the eastern boundary. At two points along its course the Beck is dammed, firstly to create the lake near to, and important to, the setting of Kirby Hall and secondly before it converges with the Ure.

Woodland cover is good, especially along Ouse Gill Beck where trees follow the meandering course of the beck. Elsewhere, rectangular plantations form a tessellated pattern with the regular shape of the surrounding fields. Parkland trees are scattered within the immediate grounds of the Hall. The density of trees contrasts with the surrounding, more open Character Areas evoking feelings of enclosure and dispersing views across the well-tended fields.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Sherwood sandstone solid geology with silt and clay drift geology. Alluvium along the Beck corridor.
- Slowly-permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, stoneless clayey and fine loamy over clayey surface water gley soils. Grade 3 agricultural land.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat to gently undulating landform between 12m and 20m AOD.
- The River Ure/Ouse Corridor marks the eastern boundary of the character area and represents the extent of the Harrogate District boundary.
- Ouse Gill Beck flows southeast and includes two man-made lakes along its course.
- Where Ouse Gill Beck meets the Ure the main river becomes the Ouse.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- ▶ Parkland and improved grassland with some arable fields.
- ▶ Field boundaries are hedges, some fragmented and lost, with fencing.
- ▶ Several medium-sized woodland blocks and plantations called Long Wood, Sugar Hill Plantation, Hawthorn Bank and American Wood along Ouse Gill Beck.
- ▶ Individual parkland trees scattered within grassland closer to the Hall.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- ▶ The main settlement is Kirby Hall with its associated buildings dating back to the 18th century plus one or two scattered farmsteads.
- ▶ Outbuildings tend to be in brick whilst Kirby Hall is Magnesian limestone.
- ▶ No major roads in the area. Lanes and tracks provide access to Kirby Hall and Farmsteads.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- ▶ The parkland character is sensitive to changes in management regime. Tree and woodland management in the area is critical to the maintenance of its distinctive parkland character some of which has been lost over time.
- ▶ The historic importance of Kirby Hall, its parkland and the contribution it makes to the landscape of the area may be threatened by neglect as well as changes in management regime. The water features may be sensitive to neglect.
- ▶ Forces for change are likely to be linked to the fortunes of rural business and agricultural policy.

Guidelines

Aim: To conserve and enhance the parkland characteristics.

- ▶ Development that does not respect and/or results in the loss of key parkland characteristics will be discouraged.
- ▶ Provide support for initiatives to restore and protect the characteristics of the area. For example, promote proactive woodland and tree management and appropriate new tree planting in order to maintain distinctive parkland character and protect built structures in the Park from neglect. This could be facilitated by seeking grant funding opportunities in liaison with the owners.



B looking south from the north of the Character Area across farmland to tree belts.