



THE LANDSCAPES OF NORTHERN RYEBLE

An Assessment of the Vale of Pickering and the Fringe of the North York Moors National Park
with Management Guidelines for their Future

August 1989

THE LANDSCAPES OF NORTHERN RYEDALE

**An Assessment of the Vale of Pickering and the Fringe of the North York Moors National Park,
with Management Guidelines for their Future**

A Study

By

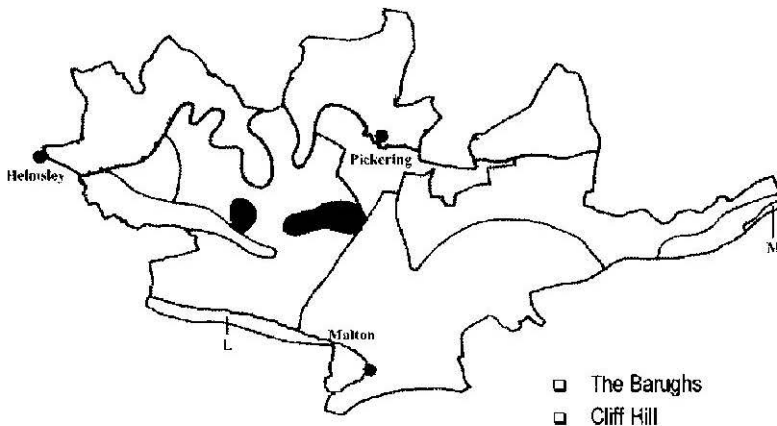
GILLESPIES

For and on behalf of

Ryedale District Council

August 1999

AREA A Undulating Farmland



Key Characteristic Features

- Gently rolling relief.
- Varied patchwork of farmland and small woodlands defined by hawthorn hedgerows.
- Predominantly arable land with some pasture set in medium, regular shaped fields.
- Villages tend to be nucleated and located on the higher ground.
- Roads traverse the area in a regular pattern, usually with wide grass verges and bounded by hedgerows.

Landform and Context

Undulating farmland in the Vale of Pickering occupies two discrete areas. These share many characteristics in common with the *undulating farmland* in the Fringe of the Moors to the north. The larger area rises to around 40m AOD and is centred on the villages of Great Barugh, Little Barugh and Kirby Misperton. The second area rises to 46m AOD and is much smaller. Known as Cliff Hill, it lies just to the east of Salton, close to the confluence of the rivers Rye and Dove.

This landscape type is very much a product of the underlying geology, which has created small pockets of slightly higher ground in the western Vale. These areas of higher ground are emphasised due to the flat and low lying nature of the surrounding landscape.

Land Use and Landscape Pattern

The overall appearance of this strongly rural landscape is of medium, predominantly arable, straight edged fields enclosed by hedgerows with occasional trees. Regular small scale woodlands, that are predominantly mixed deciduous, introduce further enclosure and visual interest. Villages, hamlets and farms are concentrated on the higher ground of this local landscape type and are linked by narrow lanes, typically enclosed by hedgerows with wide grass verges.

Settlement

Historically, settlement has favoured the higher ground in and around the Vale in preference to the wetter lower lying areas. This settlement pattern prevails today, with the areas of *undulating farmland* containing a higher concentration of settlement than the surrounding low lying parts of the Vale.

The main villages are Great Barugh, Little Barugh and Kirby Misperton. The largest of these settlements is Kirby Misperton, which is notable for its associations with Flamingoland, a theme park that is one of the most visited tourist attractions in the north of England. All the settlements have an essentially linear character that is typically orientated along a main street. In Little Barugh this linearity is enhanced by 'the Green' which is a visually important open space that serves to enhance the setting of the village.

The villages exhibit a wide range of building materials including brick, variegated brickwork and dressed sandstone with red pantile, slate and thatched roofs. Farm complexes feature prominently in local views, although they are often partially screened by tree cover.

Subjective Response

The *undulating farmland* is an attractive agricultural landscape with a gently undulating topography that is elevated above the surrounding Vale. There are some important views out across the low lying ground, a feature that sets this local landscape apart from other open farmland types. The scenery has a harmonious rural quality that nevertheless displays subtle variations in character throughout. In many ways, the landscape is reminiscent of the surrounding Fringe of the Moors.

Sensitivity to Change

Due to its elevation and visual prominence, much of the landscape of the *undulating farmland* is visible from the surrounding lower lying land. It follows that this landscape is sensitive to change and that any form of built development could have a widespread influence. However, the hedgerows, small woodlands and particularly the undulating landform, allow some scope for small scale development, provided it is carefully sited in sheltered locations and that associated planting is designed to integrate closely with the surrounding landscape pattern.

Any changes in the landscape pattern should seek to strengthen the visual structure and identity of the local landscape. Although small scale, relatively scattered changes to the landscape pattern could, and have been, absorbed, the cumulative effect of piecemeal changes can result in a degraded landscape, where the overall integrity of the visual structure is lost.

In some parts of the area, pressures from intensive arable farming have led to field enlargement and the removal of hedgerows. This has resulted in the erosion of the strong hedgerow network and an overall loss of visual structure and cohesion. Elsewhere, pressures from recreation are apparent. Despite its size, the Flamingoland development at Kirby Misperton has little visual impact on either the local or the wider landscape. Indeed, the mature trees within its grounds and the buff coloured brick lodge provide an attractive focal point to the northern end of the village.

Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Strategy

This is an elevated landscape of arable fields and pastures, with small villages and hamlets set in undulating terrain. Fields are medium to large and bounded by hawthorn hedgerows and occasional woodland blocks. There is a sense of elevation with some important views out across the Vale. It is an attractive and visible landscape that should be conserved and locally enhanced.

Land Management

The visual structure of this landscape should be assessed from the surrounding Vale to ensure that the relationship between the higher land and its adjacent landscapes is well balanced.

Panoramic views from the higher land out across the Vale towards the Howardian hills to the south and the Fringe of the Moors to the north are a distinctive feature of this landscape, which should be considered when planning landscape change.

Specific landscape features such as individual farm buildings, copses, hedgerows and landform are of considerable importance, particularly in distant views from the Vale. The visual quality of such features is valuable to the landscape. Attractive features should be conserved and those that have a negative visual influence should be identified as a priority for removal, enhancement or screening.

It is important that the tradition of quiet enjoyment of this countryside is maintained through the control of new recreational facilities. Any further expansion of Flamingoland, including the provision of tall rides or upgrading of the local road network should be carefully considered to ensure that any adverse visual effect on the wider landscape is minimised.

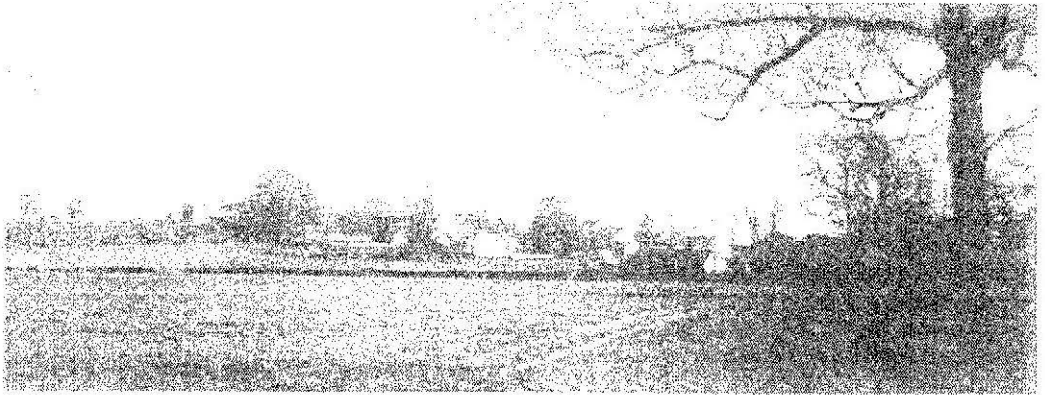


Source: Department of Agres.

Great Barugh (GR 74N 70E)

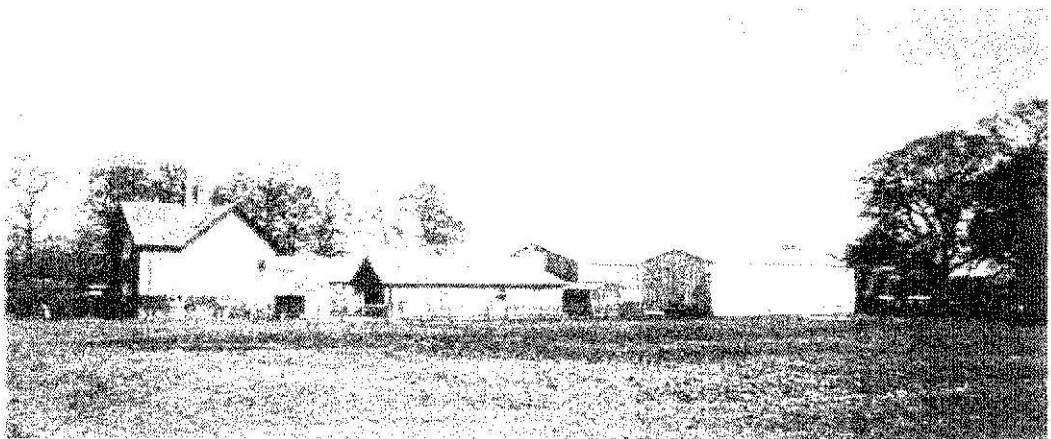
Area A

Undulating Farmland



Brawly

Modern farm buildings are often out of scale and constructed from less appropriate building materials.



Field Boundaries

The scale of its patchwork of fields, hedgerows and woodlands determines the visual structure of this landscape. Future management should ensure that the existing hedgerow network is maintained and reinforced along its existing alignments. Linkage between hedgerows and woodlands should be encouraged to maximise visual and wildlife benefits.

The conservation and management of all existing hedgerows should be encouraged. Any suburbanised hedges that contain exotic species such as laurel or conifer should be replanted.

Where they have been removed due to agricultural intensification and field enlargement, hedgerows should be replanted along historic alignments. New planting should be designed to strengthen the existing hedgerow network, defining the lane and field boundaries in areas where it has been depleted. Gaps should be replanted using locally occurring native species such as hawthorn, holly or hazel.

Traditional hedgerow management techniques should be encouraged and mechanical over-flailing avoided.

Hedgerow trees are an important visual and historic feature in this landscape. However, many are overmature and in need of surgery or replacement if they are to continue to play a positive role. Any trees requiring surgery or removal should be checked for roosting bats or nesting birds before any work is undertaken. Naturally regenerating hedgerow trees should be encouraged and trained up.

New hedgerows should be planted to provide visual links with woodlands and to enhance the setting of farms and villages within the wider landscape.

Trees and Woodlands

The existing cover of small woodlands and shelterbelts should be maintained. Existing woodlands tend to be small and regularly arranged. Whilst the current distribution of tree cover could be increased, any new planting should seek to replicate this arrangement, be of an appropriate scale and relate to the landform and existing field pattern. New planting could include a variety of forms such as hedgerow trees, copses and individual specimens.

To conserve the existing landscape character, new woodlands should be broad-leaved, using locally occurring native species.

Settlements and Buildings

Traditional farm buildings should be conserved wherever possible. Although conversion of redundant buildings may be appropriate, this should be handled sensitively and only permitted if the traditional architectural features and rural setting are to be retained. All alterations or restorations of existing farm buildings, should take into account their use by birds during the nesting season, and roosting bats. Restoration work should include, where possible, the preservation of bat roost access points so that the roost may be maintained.

To conserve the rural character of this area, large scale development should be resisted. Although some small scale village infill may be appropriate, this should be handled sensitively. All efforts should be made to resist suburbanisation through inappropriate construction and detailing. Empty plots are often archaeologically sensitive, containing important information about the development of the village. Planning conditions will often be required to ensure that this information is recorded.

Development should seek to strengthen the existing pattern of nucleated village form.

Infrastructure

The existing character of the rural lanes should be maintained, resisting upgrading schemes such as road widening or straightening and the introduction of kerbs, which can be a suburbanising influence. Informal car parking on grass verges, lay-bys and farm entrances should be controlled.

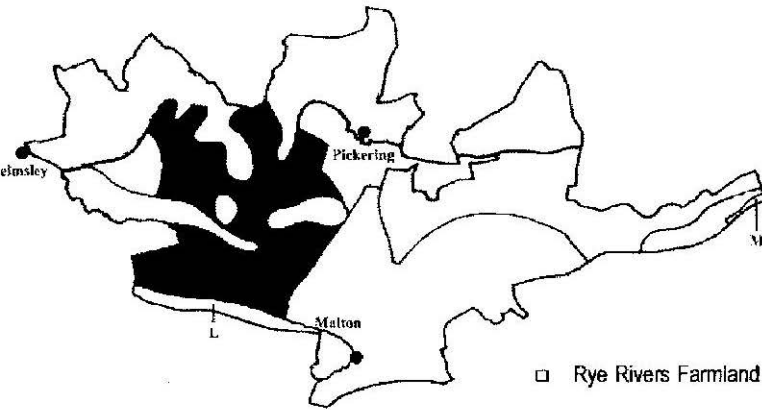
Verges and banks should be managed to encourage native grassland and wildflower species.

Because this area is generally visible by virtue of its elevation, proposals for the siting of urban structures such as power lines or telecommunications masts should be strongly resisted.

Priorities for Action

- Conserve the existing landscape pattern of medium sized fields, becoming smaller and more treed near settlements.*
- Conserve and, in many instances, restore hedgerows and hedgerow trees to enhance the structure of the landscape.*
- Manage woodlands to maximise their ecological diversity.*
- The character of the built environment should be protected.*

AREA I Western Vale Farmland



Key Characteristic Features

- Gently sloping land, rising to the south and west.
- High cover of hedgerow trees, with little woodland.
- General absence of settlements, other than around its fringe.
- Accessible landscapes close to well frequented tourist destinations.

Landform and Context

The *western vale farmland* is found on the clay soils in the west of the Vale. The area lies to the west of both Pickering and Malton/Norton, extending westwards to a boundary with the Howardian Hills along Caulkleys Bank and the river Rye. To the south, the boundary is defined by the B1257. To the north it forms a boundary with the Fringe of the Moors, which in this location, follows an irregular line from Helmsley to Pickering and includes several promontories of elevated land that extend southwards to Broats Hill, Great Edstone, Normanby and Riseborough Hill.

Land throughout the *western vale farmland*, although generally flat and low lying, is varied. The terrain lies between 22-23m AOD in the east and rises to some 30-35m AOD in the west. Along its southern edge, the escarpments of the Howardian Hills, between Amotherby and Caulkleys Bank and between Nunnington and West Ness, dominate views and serve to contain the landscape creating locally enclosed scenery. This is particularly apparent north of Hovingham and Slingsby. To the north of the area,

the undulating farmland that characterises the Fringe of the Moors serves to contain views, although the sense of enclosure is less profound.

Land Use and Landscape Pattern

The *western vale farmland* is an agricultural landscape of mainly arable fields with floodplain pastures alongside the streams and rivers. There are few non-agricultural land uses within the area and existing developments are generally balanced and attractive, containing cohesive arrangements of traditional buildings. The more elevated land that surrounds much of the area and features in many outer views serves to strengthen this rural quality and provides an attractive backcloth to the agricultural scenery.

A defining feature of this local landscape is the relatively high level of tree cover compared to other parts of the Vale. Although woodland blocks are present, these occur less frequently than in the *wooded open vale* to the east. The tree cover is provided instead

by the high concentration of hedgerow and riverside trees. Where the few woodland blocks occur, they are typically regular in shape, and comprise mixed planting of recent origin. Most of the woodlands, like others through the Vale, are the product of game covert planting and consequently, have a similar form and age structure.

The pattern of medium to large, geometric fields is largely the product of the seventeenth and eighteenth century enclosures. Fields are bounded by hawthorn hedgerows with hedgerow trees including oak and ash and locally high concentrations of holly.

Similar to many other parts of the Vale, the landscape is drained to facilitate intensive arable cultivation. However, unlike areas to the east where the drainage has necessitated wholesale alteration of the landscape's drainage pattern, river systems in the *western vale farmland* remain generally more naturalistic, although some of the raised floodbanks have an artificial engineered appearance. These rivers mostly flow in a southerly direction, off the Fringe of the Moors, and include Hodge Beck and the rivers Dove and Severn, all of which are tributaries of the river Rye.

Settlement

Villages, such as Hovingham, Slingsby, Barton-le-Street and Amotherby are located on the more elevated land of the B1257 corridor, where they lie within the *Howardian Hills footslope* local landscape type. The B1257 connects Hovingham in the west with Malton/Norton in the east.

Other villages, which exert a visual influence on this area, yet strictly lie outside it, include Wombleton, Great Edstone, Normanby, Marton, Salton, Great and Little Barugh and Kirby Misperton. Larger settlements actually within the *western vale farmland* are few in numbers. Like Brawby and Great Habton, they tend to be located along the river Rye. Dispersed farmsteads are more common. These farms are typified by the presence of a farmhouse constructed from local stone and red pantile roof. Most farms also include some shelterbelt planting, which serves to soften the overall appearance and aid their integration into the well-treed landscape.

A network of lanes and tracks connect these dispersed farms, hamlets and villages. The lanes are bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees, grass verges and occasional ditches.

Subjective Responses

Although it sometimes lacks detail and interest, overall, much of this landscape has an attractive rural quality, which is particularly influenced locally by proximity to Caulkleys Bank.

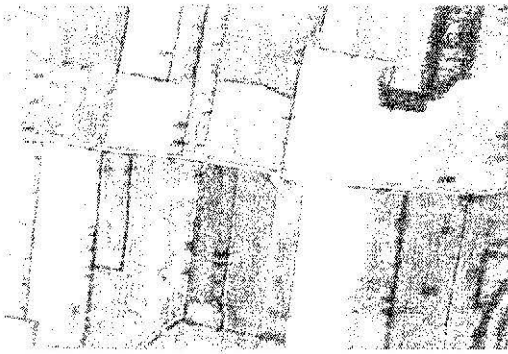
It is an accessible landscape that lies close to visitor attractions including Helmsley, the Howardian Hills and Flamingo land. Because of this it has a less remote sense of place than other parts of the vale.

Sensitivity to Change

Development would be generally detrimental to the character of this attractive area, much of which is highly visible from the surrounding hills. However, due to its continued vulnerability to seasonal flooding, the area is unlikely to come under significant development pressures which are, instead, likely to be focused on the existing settlements that lie along the B1257 corridor, within the Howardian Hills.

The hedgerows and occasional woodlands provide some scope for screening small scale development, if it is carefully sited and if associated planting is designed to integrate closely with the surrounding landscape pattern. However, care must be taken to ensure that piecemeal development does not erode the overall rural character.

The most vulnerable landscape element is the strong, geometric hedgerow network, which provides an overall visual structure. Pressures from intensive arable farming have already led to the removal of hedgerows in many parts of the area and there is an urgent need to stop any further loss.



Source: Environment Agency

North of Kirkby Wisperton (GR 780 815)

Area I

Western Vale

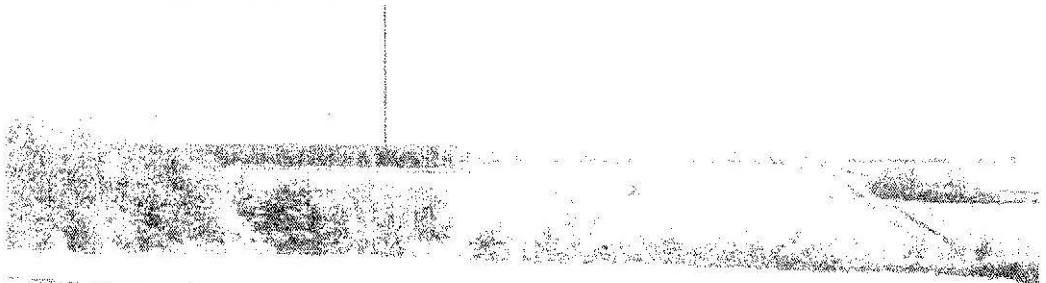
Farmland

The flat low lying land is strongly oriented and typified by moderate and large-scale fields.



View looking westwards towards Normanby

Woodland blocks incorporating hedgerows and hedgerow trees are characteristic of Western Vale farmland.



View looking southwards from Cauldeys Bank

Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Strategy

This is a farmed landscape, which although locally exhibiting some local decline in landscape, retains a strongly rural character. It comprises predominantly arable land with a higher concentration of pastures along the corridors of the rivers Seven, Dove and Rye. A defining quality of this landscape is the relative absence of woodland. Tree cover is instead provided by the high number of hedgerow trees, mainly oak and ash with occasional holly. Additional tree cover is also found along the river corridors where it mainly comprises alder and willow. The overall high tree cover contributes to the attractive character of this landscape, which should be conserved and locally enhanced.

Land Management

Wherever possible, the visual structure of the landscape should be assessed from the surrounding higher ground to ensure that the relatively open, structured character of this landscape including the overall proportion of woodland to farmland and pattern of hedgerow trees, is maintained.

The primary objective should be to avoid any further agricultural intensification and field enlargement. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are an important defining feature of this landscape and should be protected, managed and replanted along their original alignments.

Specialist studies should be undertaken to ensure the best approach to maximise the visual, ecological and floodplain management requirements of all the watercourses in the area. Further canalisation and dredging of watercourses should be resisted and traditional stream management encouraged. In particular, it is important to allow the rivers to adopt their natural course, seasonal flow and erosion patterns.

The riparian habitats on the rivers Rye, Dove and Seven and their tributaries should be conserved and priority should be given to the ecological improvement of these areas. Aquatic and riparian plant communities should be conserved by limiting the spread of cultivated land and preserving a margin of unmanaged grassland between the agricultural fields and the riverbanks. The conversion of arable

fields to permanent pastures alongside riverbanks should be encouraged. Any re-seeding of arable farmland should comprise a suitable seed mix, where possible of local provenance, which reflects the species found in unimproved grasslands within the local area.

The floodplain pastures should be managed using traditional techniques to conserve species diversity. The stocking level of grazing animals should be controlled to prevent overgrazing and extensive poaching of the land.

The calcareous streams and rivers of the Rye system should be conserved by controlling water pollution, particularly from agricultural sources, to protect the invertebrate and fish populations.

Field Boundaries

Field hedgerows are an important visual and historic feature of this landscape and should be a priority for conservation. The vegetation of any associated ditches should be left undisturbed as far as possible since these areas, together with the hedgerows, provide valuable wildlife habitat within an area of intensive agriculture. Hedges should be managed using traditional methods, avoiding mechanical over-flailing.

Hedgerow trees and scrub along the ditch sides should be managed to maximise their benefit to wildlife and should not be removed. Any necessary scrub removal should avoid the bird-breeding season, and trees should be checked for bat roosts and nesting birds before felling or tree surgery.

Wherever possible, hedgerows should be replanted using locally occurring native species, such as hawthorn, holly or hazel to strengthen the hedgerow network, defining lane and field boundaries in areas where it has been depleted.

Trees and Woodlands

Hedgerow trees are a defining feature of this landscape and should be planted to provide visual links with woodlands and to enhance the setting of farms and villages within the wider landscape.

Naturally regenerating hedgerow trees should be encouraged and trained up.

Where hedgerow oaks are common, individual oak trees should be planted sporadically within hedgerows and occasionally within pastures to replace existing overmature specimens. New oaks should be planted with the space to grow up as specimens with a fully developed crown.

Tree surgery may be necessary to safely retain and improve the appearance of some of the older hedgerow trees. All tree management should take into account the possible presence of hole nesting birds and bat roosts.

It is important that all groups of trees along the riverside are conserved since they form an important part of the wildlife corridor. Care should be taken when carrying out tree surgery or necessary felling since these trees possibly harbour roosting bats, in particular Daubenton's bat which feeds mainly over water and often roosts close to waterbodies.

Whilst there should be no large scale woodland planting, there may be scope to for new waterside planting of appropriate wetland tree species. This would help protect and enhance the visual influence of streams and rivers in the wider landscape. Such planting should reinforce the existing pattern of small groups and sinuous lines, marking bends in the streams or, at a broader scale, the outer edge of their associated damp grasslands. It should comprise suitable species such as alder, goat willow or crack willow.

Settlements and Buildings

Traditional farm buildings should be conserved wherever possible. Although conversion of redundant buildings may be appropriate, this should be handled sensitively and only permitted if the traditional architectural features and rural setting are to be retained.

All alterations or restorations of existing farm buildings should take into account their use by birds during the nesting season, and roosting bats. Restoration work should include, where possible, the preservation of bat roost access points so that the roost may be maintained.

Wherever possible, the rationalisation of farm buildings and the removal of modern farm buildings should be considered.

To conserve the rural character of this area, large scale development should be resisted. Although some small scale village infill may be appropriate, this should be handled sensitively. All efforts should be made to resist suburbanisation through inappropriate construction and detailing.

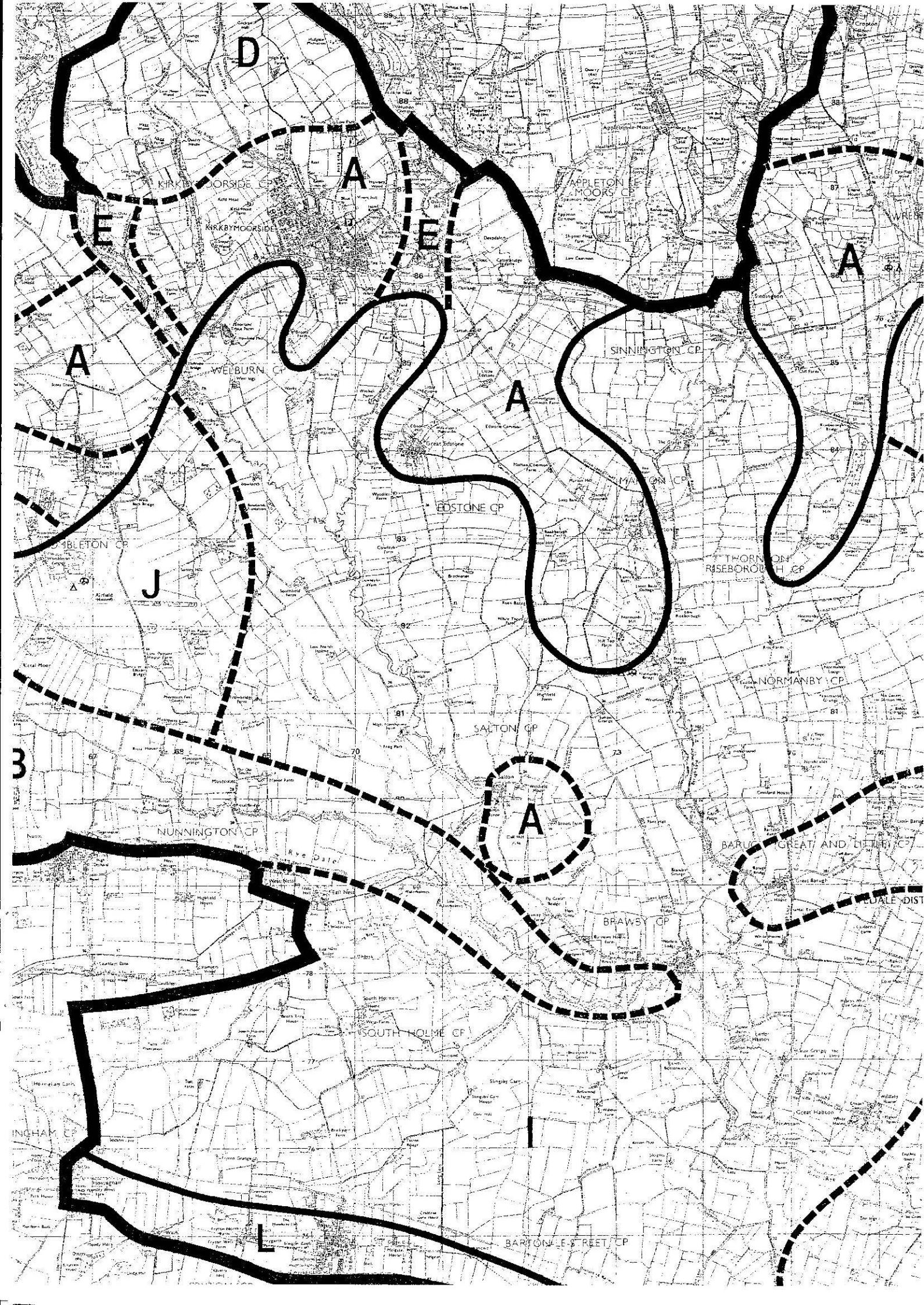
Infrastructure

The existing character of the rural lanes should be maintained resisting upgrading schemes such as road widening or straightening and the introduction of kerbs, which can be a suburbanising influence. Informal car parking on grass verges lay-bys and farm entrances should be controlled.

The introduction of further transmission lines into the open countryside should be resisted. If unavoidable, great care should be taken in their siting to minimise their visual impact.

Priorities for Action

- *Conserve and, in places, restore the network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and avoid any further field enlargement or hedgerow removal.*
- *Encourage conversion of arable fields to grazed pasture particularly along river corridors.*
- *Encourage the rivers to follow their natural course and pattern of erosion.*
- *Introduce buffer zones and planting to encourage broader river landscape corridors wherever possible.*



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WELBURN CP

EDSTONE CP

SINNINGTON CP

THORNTON RISEBOROUGH CP

NORMANBY CP

SALTON CP

NUNNINGTON CP

BARTON GREAT AND LITTLE CP

BRAWS CP

SOUTH NOLLE CP

INGHAM CP

BARTON E-STREET CP

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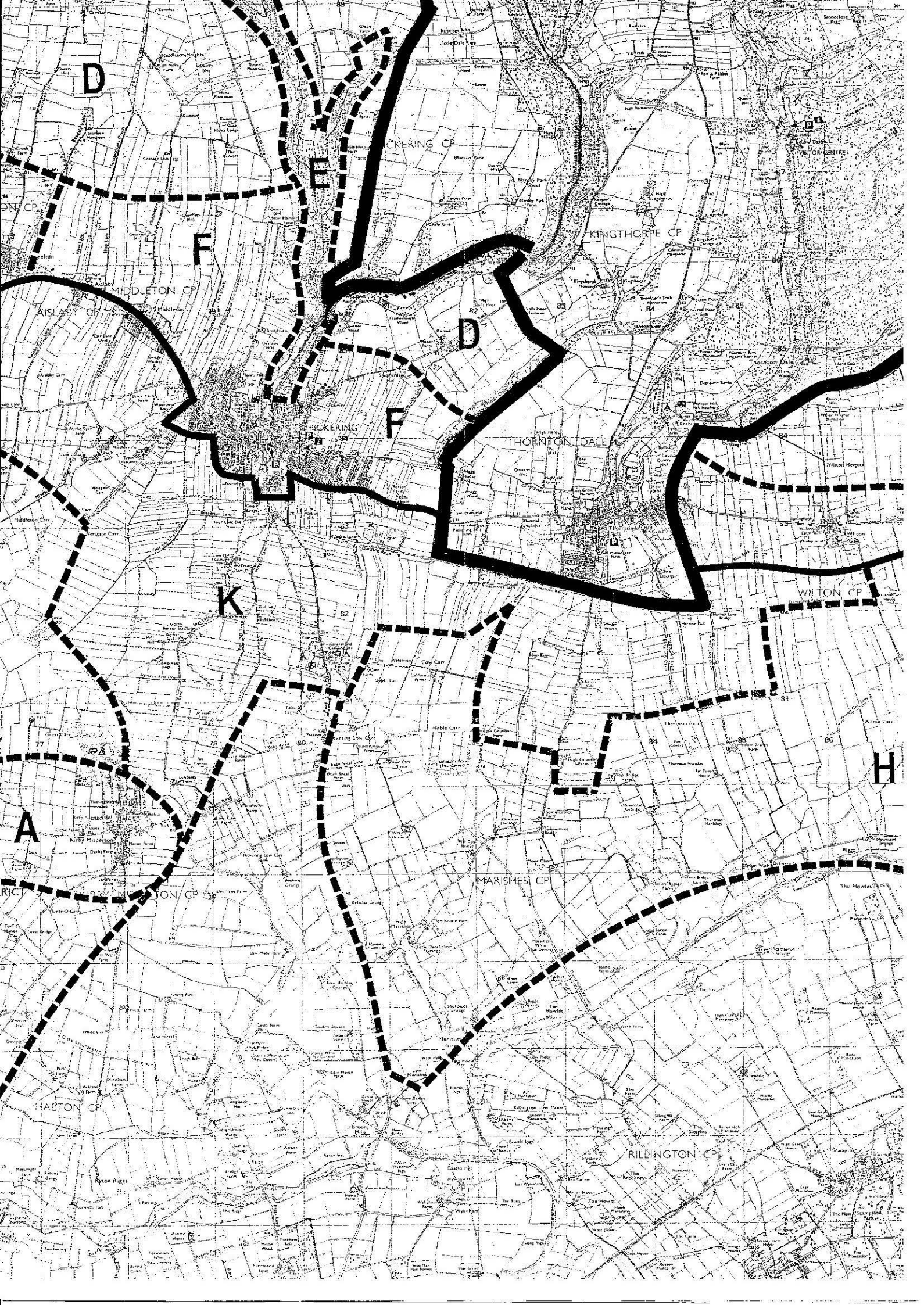
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