Figure 181 The extent of the historic core of Knaresborough still evident in the current landscape

Figure 182 Knaresborough at the time of the second edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1889-99)

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Figure 183  The modern expansion of Knaresborough

High Resolution Aerial Imagery of the UK © ukperspectives.com 2003

Figure 184  Brearton village, SE 321 6095

Figure 182 shows that by the time of the second edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1889-99), there had not been much change in the character of the surrounding landscape, with the town still fairly nucleated. Figure
The North Yorkshire and Lower Tees Valley Historic Landscape Characterisation

183 shows the extent of the modern expansion, which has increased the size of the settlement by about ten times its AD 1850 size.

The vast majority of settlements within the area are much smaller, with 61 out of the 145 areas of settlement characterised defined as villages. Of these villages, nearly half were linear in form. These have a much wider distribution. There is some variety in the linear villages, many of them show a two row form. For example, Brearton (SE 32136095) is a small two row village lying between Ripon and Harrogate, see Figure 184. This consists of two rows of houses, one on either side of the road. There is no back lane to the property boundaries, as can sometimes be seen with linear villages, but there are clear crofts associated with houses in the village. There are four listed buildings in the village with the earliest, East View, dating to the late 18th century. This shows us a situation that has been noted in various other parts of the project area, where there are villages with a medieval origin, that have a current historic landscape character which is post medieval.

By contrast, green villages have a very distinct distribution with six out of the thirteen lying in the area between Boroughbridge, Knaresborough and Ripon. The southernmost green village, Sicklinghall, is right on the border with West Yorkshire.

Figure 185 The concentration of green villages between Knaresborough, Boroughbridge and Ripon.

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Historic Environment Team, North Yorkshire County Council 201
Extraction

The national character area description highlights the use of the Magnesian limestone as a building material as a unifying factor in the character of the area. 62 limestone quarries were identified throughout the whole project area. Of these, 19 (30%) are located within the Southern Magnesian Limestone character area. However, 15 have a post-medieval origin and 11 are still active. One quarry, Quarry Moor in Ripon (SE 30856930) has been reused, in this case as a nature reserve, whilst seven are inactive. The active limestone quarries are fairly evenly spread with four of them having their origins in the post-medieval period.

Database record HNY 589 (SE 51602062), shows that the Darrington quarries around Cridling Subbs in Selby district are is now an extensive area of limestone extraction. Figure 186 below, shows the current extent of the extraction, while Figure 186 shows the extent at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), the extant quarries are marked with black circles. Whilst it may be argued that there is continuity within this landscape, it is clear that the scale of quarrying has increased greatly in the last 150 years changing the historic character significantly. Whereas in AD 1850 the quarries were embedded within the fieldscape, now they have come to dominate it completely.

Designed landscapes

The national character area key characteristics for the Southern Magnesian Limestone description includes “large numbers of country houses and estates with parkland, estate woodlands, plantations and game coverts”. This is very apparent within the part of the character area which lies within this HLC study. There are fifty designed landscapes which have been identified on the Southern Magnesian Limestone. These designed landscapes cover a larger area within the national character area than the identified settlements. It should also be understood that in terms of the HLC project, designed landscapes refers to the extent of the more formal landscapes, whilst the influence of the country estates extends beyond to holdings which lie within the more extensive fieldscape and woodlands, which will be characterised as their respective HLC type. Out of the fifty designed landscapes identified, 48 were commissioned by private individuals or families, with 39 still active and seven reused, the main house being used, for example, as schools or hotels, which has enabled the greater part of the historic landscape character of the surrounding grounds to be preserved. For example, the former Thorpe Underwood estate is now used as Queen Ethelburga’s School. Whilst there has been some change to the designed features, such as the formal gardens and pleasure grounds, as well as the pools found in the grounds, they are all still visible within the landscape. Similarly, with Hazelwood Castle, a country estate dating to between AD 1850 and 1900, now reused as a hotel, the historic character of the grounds is well preserved.

In addition, there are a number of very large estates, for example Studley Royal, including the remains of Fountains Abbey and now a world heritage site, which has a detailed and complex development, with an influence that extends far beyond the extent of the current parkland.

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160 60173 Vol 3 Countryside Commission 1998
In the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the project noted that there was a pattern of clustering, with smaller designed landscapes found within the vicinity of the more extensive estates. This can also be seen on the Southern Magnesian Limestone, particularly around Allerton Park and Studley Royal.

The national character area statement makes specific reference to the influence of these estates in the creation of game coverts. Eleven were large enough to be recorded as part of this project, and eight lie within 1.5km of a designed landscape. It may well be that there are more within the landscape, however due to the project methodology being to only characterise areas larger than two hectares, some may well fall below that threshold, leading to them becoming incorporated into other historic character types.

**Woodland**

The woodland found on the Southern Magnesian Limestone forms an important part of the landscape character, and indeed the cultural character.

Muir states that “when associated with a wood, ‘spring’ almost invariably denotes a coppice rather than a seasonal reference”\(^{161}\). Within the national character area, spring wood (identified through the name) has an extremely limited distribution with five identified lying between Knaresborough and Tadcaster. It is unlikely that these are the only examples of coppiced woodland in the character area. It may be that other, more local, terms have been used. It is also possible that spring wood forms an element of more extensive woodland (see below). There are two examples of ‘Hag’ being used as a woodland name; these two are located in the area between Knaresborough and Tadcaster. ‘Hag’ is a northern English dialect word used to describe an enclosed piece of wood or a copse.

Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) has a much more dispersed distribution within the character area. Whilst many of the ancient semi-natural woodlands identified within this area are fairly small, for example less than four hectares, a number are far larger. The woodland at SE 329581 covers an area of 72.85 hectares, and adjoins an extensive area of ancient semi-natural woodland (restocked). Within the woodland at this location, there are several elements including Coal Pits Wood, Gates Wood and Spring Wood, showing the complexity of woodland and the need to effectively manage the historic character as well as the ecological character. The woodland name evidence at this location suggests that within the woodland different areas were fulfilling different functions to the communities that utilised it.

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\(^{161}\) Muir 2004: 46
Figure 186  The extensive area of limestone extraction at SE 51602062

Figure 187  The location of limestone quarries on the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63) at SE 51602062
6.3 The Humberhead Levels National Character Area

The Humberhead Levels, which lies within the southern section of the project area, is low lying with surface deposits characterised by drift deposits; glacial tills, clays, peat, sand, gravel and windblown sand. The whole character area extends south beyond North Yorkshire, through South Yorkshire and down to Retford in Nottinghamshire. Within the North Yorkshire and Lower Tees Valley HLC project area, it is bordered to the south by the River Went and the River Aire, to the east by the River Derwent, and to the west by the Great North Road, see Figure 188.

The character of enclosure within the Humberhead levels is very different from other parts of North Yorkshire. Whereas the uplands have a high number of dry stone walls, and hedges dominate in the Vales of Mowbray and York, within this national character area fields are normally defined by drainage ditches, see Figure 190 and Plate 23. This gives the landscape a very different character, and it is probably the ability to carry out drainage on agricultural land which has had the greatest impact on the historic landscape character.

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Figure 188 The area of the Humberhead Levels national character area (hatched) that lies within the project area
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Figure 189  The historic landscape character of the Humberhead Levels national character area mapped by broad type

Figure 190  The distribution of fields defined by ditches within the Humberhead Levels national character area.
Figure 191  The distribution of modern improved fields within the Humberhead Levels national character area

Figure 192  The distribution of modern improved fields within the Humberhead Levels national character area by boundary type
This is a landscape which could be seen as consisting mainly of modern improved fields and industry, and there is no denying the impact that they have had on this area. However, the landscape here is much more complex with a high level of time depth, which the HLC project has aimed to capture.

In total, modern improved fields cover 20,590 hectares of the part of the Humberhead Levels national character area that lies within the project area. This accounts for 51% of the area, see Figure 191. The character of these does vary; although the vast majority of these fields are defined internally by ditches, there are blocks of fields with other types of field boundary, see Figure 192.

Within the Humberhead Levels, there are several large areas of parliamentary enclosure. These are well preserved with little boundary loss since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63). One of the best examples of this is the Brayton parliamentary award. Dating between AD 1799 and 1805, the Brayton parliamentary field system consists of medium sized regular fields defined by straight hedges. In total, it covers an area of 1,035 hectares. The earliest parliamentary award in the Humberhead Levels dates to between AD 1770 and 1775 and seems to be part of the Sherburn/Church Fenton award. There has been some boundary loss but 2,668 hectares have significant legibility. There are 2,830 hectares of unknown planned enclosure within the levels. These tend to be smaller in size.

However, the enclosed landscape within the Humberhead Levels character area is not purely weighted towards the post-medieval and modern periods. There are several areas of enclosed strip fields which have been characterised, some fairly substantial. There is a particular concentration in the parish of Balne.

These consist of medium-sized regular fields defined by revers 'S'-shaped, curved hedges and are medieval in character. However, it is not just in the more rural settings that enclosed strip fields are found. At grid reference SE 564245 there are some exceptionally well-preserved enclosed strip fields. Defined by drainage ditches, with a semi irregular field pattern, these lie within 300m of Eggborough Power Station, see Figure 193.

The presence of identifiable assarting within the Humberhead Levels is much more limited, reflecting a pattern seen throughout the project area, and only one area has been definitely confirmed. This lies in the parish of Womersley, and covers an area of 360 hectares. The fields are generally irregular, but it is the position of the woodland which supports the interpretation of assarting. Located in the corners of fields, and along boundaries, the woods are generally mature and suggest the creation of fields from existing woodland. A number of these woodland areas have been removed; however by looking at the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63) it can be seen that there was a higher density. An example can still be seen at SE 545200, see Figure 194.
Figure 193 Enclosed strip fields near Eggborough

Figure 194 Location of assarting in the parish of Womersley at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63)

Settlement

The settlement pattern is fairly dispersed, with Selby as the main town in the area. There are three other historic town cores which have been characterised, including Church Fenton, Cawood, (see Plate 24) and Barlow.

All have seen major expansion in the last hundred years, ranging from 73% in the case of Cawood, to 400% in Selby. The historic cores of these towns are
generally well preserved, although Selby has seen some infilling and change of use. By contrast, it was not possible to define an historic town core for Sherburn in Elmet. The HLC record for this settlement states:

“This is the settlement of Sherburn, which has fragmentary legibility of the previous HLC type. This was previously a nucleated village, however it has not been possible to derive an historic core from the village, which has medium-density housing and public space defined by the shopping arcade. Private space is a combination of front and back gardens. This historic core area can be recognised from the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63); it is focused on the town cross. However, there seems to be no real survivals of buildings from this period to define an historic core. While it is clear that the historic antecedent to Sherburn is the nucleated village, the previous HLC type for the area digitised here was previously piecemeal enclosure, possibly created from the subdivision of strip fields”

There are only four green villages in the national character area. Gateforth (see Plate 25), North Duffield and Brayton all have the green at the centre of the village, whilst the green at Skipwith is at the eastern end. These four villages all have a post-medieval character, however there has been a fairly high degree of change, with areas of infilling and expansion.

Most of the villages characterised are linear, defined by dwellings running either side of a main street. These sometimes have back lanes running behind the properties, an example being Hemingborough, where the extent of the original village is defined by Garthfields Lane. Many of the linear villages sit at the core of extensive modern expansion. Again, looking at Hemingborough, it can be seen that the original village was a quarter of the size of the current settlement.

The expansion of 20th-century settlement has had a major impact on the landscape within this area. In most cases, these planned estates represent the expansion of existing settlements; however in some areas this has been significant enough to subsume the previous settlement. An example of this can be seen at Carlton (SE 645242). Figure 195 shows Carlton at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), and the linear form is very clear, with the properties on either side and the crofts running off from the frontages. By the time of the present mapping, the modern planned estates have expanded to such a degree in Carlton that they now define the historic character, see Figure 196.
Figure 195 Carlton at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63)

Figure 196 Modern Carlton village
Over the 20th century, the Humberhead Levels have seen the growth in heavy industry. These take two forms, influencing and complementing each other.

The first is the mining of the Selby coalfield, see Plate 26 and Figure 197. Probably the latest coalfield to be mined, extraction started in the AD 1970s and was closed in 2004 with the Riccall mine being the last mine to close. The significance of the features associated with the Selby coalfield is twofold. Firstly, it has an important place within the history of mining nationally, as the last deep-shaft mine to be opened. Secondly, the mining gear was designed to have as limited impact on the landscape as possible. The mining head gear was constructed to be surrounded by brick walls. This gives it a very distinctive appearance compared to the more usual architecture of mining.

The second major industry represented within this landscape are the power and utilities installations. There are two of the largest power stations in the country within this area, at Drax and Eggborough see Plate 27. In addition to the actual sites, which cover a combined area of 450 hectares, there is also the associated features and infrastructure. Gale Common and Drax ash disposal sites are both substantial features within the landscape. Gale Common ash disposal site has been landscaped and now functions as a nature reserve, see Plate 28.
7. Other examples of HLC data analysis and potential for further research

As stated earlier in this report, there is tremendous scope for the digital characterisation data to be analysed in a variety of ways, and this report presents just some examples of these. The following sections provide examples of how the data can be analysed at parish and estate level.

7.1 Analysis of Scrayingham Parish

The parish of Scrayingham lies within the district of Ryedale, close to the south-eastern boundary of North Yorkshire, see Figure 198. It covers an area of 1,108 hectares and is generally low lying with the settlement at Leppington situated upon slightly higher ground.

The two main settlements within the parish are the villages of Scrayingham and Leppington. Both are similar in form, a two row village either side of a main road. However there do seem to be differences between them. For example, at Scrayingham there are clear areas of enclosures associated with the dwellings in the village\textsuperscript{157}. At Leppington, there is no clear evidence in the current landscape for such crofts. There are a couple of boundaries at SE 765610 and SE 764612, which may be part of these enclosures, but they seem to be part of the overall pattern of enclosed strip fields that lie to the east of Leppington.

There has been some expansion in Leppington, which has seen the building of a small number of detached houses at the north end of the village, as well as a number of houses built to the west of the main street. At Scrayingham, there has been less expansion, with the building of some new houses, as well as the construction of agricultural buildings associated with farms in the village.

Both villages currently display a post-medieval character. The earliest building in Scrayingham is the former rectory which dates to AD 1704, whilst the north wall of the church was built in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century. However, whilst the villages have seen changes since the end of the medieval period, they both originate in the medieval period. This is reflected in the wider landscape with the presence of enclosed strip fields. There is supporting evidence in the fact that both villages are mentioned in the Domesday Book of AD 1086; Scrayingham is referred to as ‘Escr(a)ingham/Screngham’, whilst Leppington is ‘Lepinton’\textsuperscript{158}.

Areas characterised as the HLC type of enclosed strip fields cover 280 hectares of the parish, see Figure 199. These can be seen throughout the fieldscape between the two villages, and to the south of Scrayingham village. Defined by reverse ‘S’-shaped, curved hedges, they almost certainly represent the previous location of open fields. At the grid reference SE 747604, the ‘S’ curve of the field strips is followed by the road, suggesting that the road was established at the same time as, or later than, the field system. Two very well-preserved fields can be seen at SE 733595.

\textsuperscript{157} HLC records HNY 24510 and HNY 24511
\textsuperscript{158} Smith 1970
Figure 198 Scrayingham parish, including the two main settlements of Scrayingham and Leppington, with inset showing location in relation to the wider project area.

Figure 199 Distribution of enclosed strip fields within Scrayingham parish.
Figure 200  Distribution of unknown planned enclosure within Scrayingham parish

Figure 201  Distribution of woodland within Scrayingham parish