Figure 137 Historic landscape character of the City of York mapped by broad type

Figure 138 The City of York authority by legibility

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Enclosed land

The main aspect of historic character that comes to mind when one thinks of York is the historic city itself. However, within the City of York Council boundary, 71% of the landscape is dominated by enclosed land; the total area for the City of York authority is 27,110 hectares with enclosed land accounting for 19,320 hectares, see Figure 139. Of the 19,320 hectares, only 110 have seen no boundary loss whatsoever, see Figure 140, however four of these are areas of medieval enclosed strip fields. The largest block of these lies outside Bishopthorpe (SE 582476).

Out of 19,320 hectares which have been characterised as enclosed land, 7,636 hectares have seen less than 30% boundary loss since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), indicating very little change in the historic character since then, see Figure 141. When placed in the context of large areas of boundary loss due to the agglomeration of fields, the areas where the boundary loss hasn’t been as marked become more noticeable.

The medieval past of York is evident even today, in the layout of the streets, the buildings such as York Minster and the surviving archaeological deposits. Fields with a medieval origin form part of the historic character of the City of York authority landscape. As part of the HLC project, several, fairly extensive, areas of medieval enclosed strip fields were characterised, totalling 1,546 hectares, see Figure 142. The highest concentration of these field systems lie to the north east of the city and generally consist of medium-sized fields defined by reverse ‘S’-shaped curved hedges. Some of these field systems are extensive and well preserved, with very little boundary loss since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63). An example of this is at Sutton on the Forest (SE 665565) where the enclosed strip fields are found to the east of the village. Covering an area of 109 hectares, these have significant legibility with less than 30% boundary loss since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63).
Figure 140  Areas within the City of York with no boundary loss since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63)

Figure 141  Areas with less than 30% boundary loss since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63)

Figure 142  Enclosed strip fields found within the boundaries of the City of York
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SETTLEMENT

The main settlement within York is the city itself. The historic core covers an area of 134 hectares and has been defined from the AD 1852 Ordnance Survey mapping. It covers the area that lies within the city walls, as well as some parts of Bootham and Micklegate. This area has a high density of dwellings, with much of the medieval street plan still evident in the layout. This area has elements which date back to the Anglo Saxon period, although the vast majority of the buildings in the core are medieval and post medieval in date.

Moving away from the core, there are nearly thirty other settlements within the City of York Council area. The character of the smaller villages tends to be post medieval, with their origins in the medieval period, see Figure 143. In the 20th century, York has seen a large degree of expansion with the creation of planned estates. One of the effects is that a number of villages have become absorbed into the urban conurbation of York, for example Acomb. However, the original village can still be recognised and characterised separately. The modern expansion of York covers an area of 3,143 hectares, which represents an increase in settlement of 690% since AD 1850. This can be seen in Figure 144.

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Figure 143 Map of City of York showing settlement with a post-medieval character
Unenclosed land

One of the important factors of the York landscape, particularly in the core of the city, is the presence of the strays, commons and green wedges, which form open unenclosed land, see Figure 145. There are a number of these, ranging in size from the extensive area of Strensall Common, a military area covering 522 hectares. There are six areas which have been identified as greens, or strays, mostly in the centre of the city.

An example of this is Bootham Stray. Covering an area of over 44 hectares this runs into the city from the north and consists of an open area covered in rough grassland. The area shows little change since AD 1850. As the city has grown up around the green, it has incorporated a small area of enclosed strip fields to the south and a number of planned enclosure fields becoming incorporated within this area, showing the complexity of continuity and change embodied within these landscapes.

A second example of the green open spaces in York is Hob Moor. Forming part of Micklegate Stray, Hob Moor has become surrounded by development. However, even though the surrounding character has changed since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), the legibility is complete. This can be seen in Figures 146 and 147.

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137 ECUS 2000
Figure 145  Greens and commons in the York area (in green) in relation to the settlement, post-medieval (in grey) and 20\textsuperscript{th} century expansion (in red)

Figure 146  Hob Moor in York
Communications have had in important effect on the historic character of York, which has formed a hub on many routes, a role it has fulfilled since the Roman period. There are two main ways this can be seen within the landscape of the area. The first is in the growth of the railways in the late 19th and 20th century. This is demonstrated in Figures 149 to 151 below. At the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), the railway is limited to the area just to the west of the city walls (SE 593514). By the time of the second edition
six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1889-99), approximately AD 1900, the growth has been so substantial that the area of railway covered an area of 86 hectares. The current overall historic character has not changed greatly and the railway still defines the area. The main change in this area, which can be recognised from the current landscape, is that there has been a growth in settlement. However this is embedded within the communication broad type area.

Figure 149  The area of York railway station at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63)

Figure 150  York station at the time of the second edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1889-99)

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Figure 151 York station as depicted on the current MasterMap Ordnance Survey mapping
6 Overview Of the HLC For Three National Character Areas

This section will look in more detail at the historic landscape character for three of the national character areas within the project area: the Vale of Pickering, Southern Magnesian Limestone and Humberhead Levels. In so doing, it will focus on a more local scale and show how historic landscape characterisation can allow us to draw out trends and patterns to inform landscape management. The HLC project also provides information that allows us to build on the description of the joint character area statements, refining them for particular locales due to the historic landscape characterisation process being carried out in detail.

6.1 The Vale of Pickering National Character Area

The Vale of Pickering covers an area of 42,930 hectares and lies in the south east of the study area, within the districts of Scarborough and Ryedale, and wholly within the HLC project area. The national character area statement describes the Vale of Pickering as a low lying undulating area which is bordered by the North York Moors and Cleveland Hills to the north, the Howardian Hills to the west and the Yorkshire Wolds to the south and runs all the way to the east coast.

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Figure 152 The area of the Vale of Pickering national character area (hatched) in relation to the overall project area

157 Countryside Commission 2004
Figure 153  The historic landscape character of the Vale of Pickering national character area mapped by broad type
The superficial geology is a product of the former Lake Pickering, which occupied most of this area during and following the last glaciation. This consists mainly of glaciolacustrine clay, gravel peat and sand. The underlying geology within this area is from the Jurassic Series and consists of Kimmeridge Clay.

A study by period

Modern

The figures below show the distribution of historic character by period. The way that these figures have been generated is by searching the database for all HLC records that fall fully within a date range such as medieval (AD 1066-1539) or post medieval (AD 1540-1900). Some areas do not fall into such neat selections, for example straddling post medieval and modern dates.

Figure 154 shows the distribution of areas which are characterised as modern. Some of these are very large areas, from 500 to 1,200 hectares, and tend to be where there has been large-scale boundary removal in the 20th century. As can be seen from Figure 155, modern improved fields account for 84% of the landscape which has a modern character within the Vale of Pickering.

Figure 156 shows a number of areas which are modern planned enclosure. These tend to be areas which have been reorganised since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63).

This can be seen in the example shown in Figures 157 and 158 at SE 702850. At the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), this area was characterised by piecemeal enclosure. By the time of the modern mapping, the field system had been reorganised and is now defined internally by straight hedges.

Modern settlement covers an area of 930 hectares and the vast majority is characterised as planned estates, representing the modern expansion of existing settlements, see Figure 159.

The most significant areas seem to be to the south of Scarborough (TA 02238886) with the planned estates of Eastfield (TA 04388405) and Osgodby (TA 05748530). Many smaller villages also show evidence of expansion in the modern period, for example at Staxton (TA 01767918) where the settlement has expanded from 3.7 hectares at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), to a size of nearly 20 hectares, see Figures 160 and 161.

The story of settlement patterns within the 20th century is not just one of modern housing estate development. The project has also recorded the character of Irton Manor, see Plate 22. This is a large individual residence that sits in its own extensive grounds, and dates after the second edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1889-99).

Figure 162 shows Irton Manor in the current landscape, Figure 163 shows the area at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63).
Figure 154  Modern areas within the landscape in the Vale of Pickering

Figure 155  Modern improved fields in the Vale of Pickering

Figure 156  Modern planned enclosure in the Vale of Pickering

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Figure 157  First edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), fields replaced by planned enclosure at SE 702850

Figure 158  Modern planned enclosure at SE 702850

Figure 159  Modern settlement in the Vale of Pickering

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Figure 160  Staxton at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63)

Figure 161  Modern Staxton village

Figure 162  Irtton Manor on the modern mapping

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**Figure 163** Irton Manor at the time of the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63)

**Post medieval**

The majority of the current landscape in the Vale of Pickering has a post-medieval character. Figure 164 below shows the location of these areas.

Accounting for 40% of the current landscape, post-medieval planned enclosure is extremely common within the vale, see Figure 165. The vast majority of the post-medieval planned enclosure identified within the project (183 of 185 areas characterised) dates between AD 1750 and 1850. The earliest area of enclosure (where an award could be identified) lies to the north of Nunnington, within the parish of Wombleton. This dates to AD 1670.

What is clear from Figure 166 is the amount of large-scale parliamentary enclosure which is still visible in the current landscape.

Most of the planned enclosure within the Vale tends to be made up of medium sized fields. There is one area, however, where this isn’t the case. Including the parishes of; West Heslerton (SE 91107593), East Heslerton (SE 92557684), Sherburn (SE 95847681), Ganton (SE 98787775), Ebberton (SE 90618362), Yedingham (SE 89297955), see Figure 167.

They form an area where the planned enclosure is characterised by large fields. In many parts of the project large fields (over 10 hectares) have resulted from large scale boundary loss in the 20th century. By contrast these fields were planned to be over ten hectares and have seen very little boundary loss since mid 19th century.
Figure 164  Post-medieval landscape in the Vale of Pickering

Figure 165  Planned enclosure in the Vale of Pickering

Figure 166  Parliamentary enclosure in the Vale of Pickering
Figure 167  Distribution of planned enclosure, in the Vale of Pickering, which consists of large fields (greater than 10 hectares)

Figure 168  Post medieval settlements identified within the Vale of Pickering

Figure 169  Settlements with a medieval origin in the Vale of Pickering

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The settlement pattern within the Vale of Pickering is interesting and reflects wider patterns of drainage, which can be seen within the area. This improves access and increases the potential for the expansion into new areas.

Figure 168 above shows the pattern of settlement which has been characterised as post medieval. There appears to be a very definite distribution, with many villages located around the edge of the area. This pattern becomes more pronounced when we look at the settlements which are post medieval in character, but have a previous character of medieval, as shown in Figure 169.

The correlation between the settlement pattern and the topography of the Vale of Pickering can be seen with the map below in Figure 170, which shows the position of post-medieval villages with a medieval origin in relation to the contours.

As can be seen there is no evidence for settlement over two hectares, within the central area of the Vale. Figure 171 shows the areas of the current landscape which have a medieval character.

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*Figure 170  Distribution of villages with a medieval origin in relation to the contour mapping*

*Figure 171  Areas of the landscape which have a medieval character*

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Within the Vale of Pickering, there are a number of areas which show a fairly high density of medieval enclosure. These fall into four HLC types: enclosed strip fields, intake, open fields and crofts associated with settlement, see Figure 172. This displays a similar distribution to the settlement, mostly being located on the higher ground, but there are some areas which seem to differ from this pattern.

This is particularly noticeable around the Pickering area, where there are a number of large strip field systems, which appear to be found across the lower parts of the Vale. This may suggest earlier phases of drainage within this area, making the landscape more suitable for agriculture at an earlier date.

The woodland pattern within the Vale shows that the existence of pre AD 1600 woodland is limited to the eastern end. This may be as a result of clearance, or may suggest that ancient and semi-natural woodland across the rest of the character area consists of areas of woodland smaller than two hectares.

The historic character of the Vale of Pickering is dominated by enclosed fields, to the degree that there is no unenclosed land within the whole of the character area. The character changes throughout the area, with larger HLC character areas in the centre of the Vale, becoming smaller to the west, and towards the coast.

There is a lot of evidence of boundary loss within the vale, covering over 15,000 hectares. 11,320 hectares of these modern improved fields have been derived from planned enclosure, whilst 4,077 hectares were previously piecemeal enclosure and 1,096 hectares were previously enclosed strip fields, see Figure 173.

Figure 172  Distribution of medieval field systems by HLC type compared to the contours of the Vale of Pickering

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Figure 173  Previous character of modern improved fields
6.2 The Southern Magnesian Limestone National Character Area

The landscape of the Southern Magnesian Limestone is defined by the escarpments of the Upper and Lower Magnesian Limestone, which runs from Bedale at the Northern end, through Ripon, Boroughbridge and Knaresborough and continues to the south of North Yorkshire, ultimately extending at a point near Nottingham. 76 km long and 14 km at its widest point in North Yorkshire, it forms the landscape which lies between the Pennine Dales fringe, and the lower lying areas, represented in national character area terms, by the two Vales of York and Mowbray and the Humberhead Levels, see Figure 174. Within the project area, the Southern Magnesian Limestone covers a total area of 53,890 hectares. The national character area description describes this landscape as one which is mainly arable in character, although these have suffered from increased boundary loss due to the rise in boundary removal in the 20th century.

Due to its role as a major north-south transit route, the area attracts development, particularly focussed on the A1 road corridor. This has been seen over the past decade with the partial upgrade of the A1 road to a motorway, a process that has been steadily moving northwards over the past few years.

This section of the report will give a brief overview of the broad types within this national character area, before exploring some of the HLC types in much more detail.

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Figure 174 The area of the Southern Magnesian Limestone national character area (hatched) that lies within the project area
The national character area statement comments that “although covered in many places by drift deposits, the limestones have a unifying effect on the landscape because of their widespread use as a building material and because of their effect on ecological character.”

Within the character area, the vast majority of land is enclosed land, covering a total area of 43,060 hectares, or 80%. There are a number of significant settlements which can be found within this area, accounting for 2,832 hectare, or 5%, shown in Figure 176. It is interesting to note from Figure 177, that designed landscapes cover 3,422 hectares, or 6.3% of the land. The woodland in the character area is fairly dispersed and tends to consist of smaller areas, rather than the more extensive plantations seen in some other parts of the county.

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158 Countryside Commission 1998
Broad type trends

Figure 176  Distribution of settlements in the Southern Magnesian Limestone

Figure 177  Distribution of designed landscape in the Southern Magnesian Limestone

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Enclosed land

As referred to above, the national character area statement refers to the enclosed land as “most of the farming in this area is intensive and arable. The fields are usually large and geometric in pattern, with long straight roads dating from relatively late planned enclosure. Elsewhere, around some villages, there are small- or medium-sized fields of irregular pattern dating from earlier periods of enclosure of open fields or common grazing.

The HLC clearly illustrates the influence that boundary loss has had on the area. The following map, Figure 178, shows the distribution of modern improved fields within the character area, demonstrating that the change in boundaries has accelerated since the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63).

Modern improved fields cover a total area of 22,280 hectares and account for 41% of the character area. Due to the extensive area which they cover, it is hard to draw out any specific trends, however it is noticeable that there seems to be a higher concentration on the eastern side, which forms the lower part of the scarp slope, running down into the Vales.

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Figure 178 Distribution of modern improved fields in relation to the topography of the Southern Magnesian Limestone
Figure 179  Distribution of enclosed strip fields in the Southern Magnesian Limestone national character area

Figure 180  Strip fields defined by overgrown hedges to the east of Roecliffe
Numerous enclosed strips, or strip fields, form a significant aspect of this landscape, with a distribution that stretches right through the national character area, see Figure 179. There is a particular concentration around the central area, for example SE 3864. This area is also worthy of comment for the fact that out of thirteen groups of strip fields defined by overgrown hedges, seven are found in this area, see Figure 180. These fields are medieval in character and form an important part of the historic character of the Southern Magnesian Limestone national character area. Out of all the 83 areas of strip fields 42 have significant legibility.

Even though boundary loss has had an impact, particularly on the planned large-scale parliamentary enclosure, the enclosure patterns within the landscape can still be seen; 45 areas are still extant. The advantage of the parliamentary enclosure is that due to the dates of the awards being known, the project could closely date the enclosure of these areas of the landscape, with twenty dating to between AD 1750 and 1800 and a further thirteen positively dated between AD 1801 and 1850. 39 of the enclosure awards are defined by hedges, with four defined by overgrown hedges, reflecting the national character area description which states: “large fields bounded by low-cut thorn hedges creating a generally large-scale, open landscape”\(^{159}\).

Whilst the settlement pattern is broadly defined by smaller dispersed villages, there are a number of larger towns within the national character area. To the south Tadcaster sits on an east-facing spur in the limestone, overlooking the Vale of York. Boroughbridge lies on the eastern side, and Knaresborough lies on the other side of the character area, with the ground rising to the west. These towns have a long history, Tadcaster and Boroughbridge, or its neighbouring settlement Alborough at least, have a strong link to the Romano-British period. All the major settlements identified have a market charter dating to the medieval period. These form the nucleus of the towns, and normally form an important focal point within the town as well as being tied heavily to the historic character.

Whilst it is clear that Bedale, Boroughbridge, Knaresborough, Ripon and Tadcaster have all been heavily influenced by medieval activity, the current character owes much to the post-medieval period. The project was able to define the historic core of each town, as visible on the first edition six-inch County Series Ordnance Survey mapping (1846-63), before recording each subsequent expansion. This can be seen with Knaresborough. Figure 181 shows the extent of the historic core which is still evident in the current landscape.

\(^{159}\) Countryside Commission 1998, 60173 Vol 3