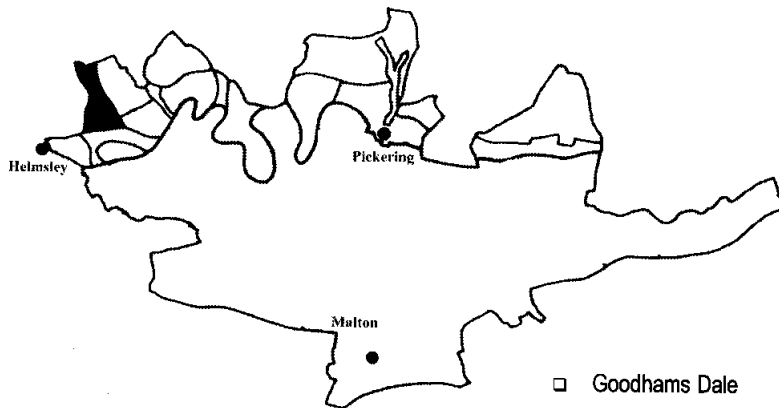


**AREA C** Sloping Wooded Farmland**Key Characteristic Features**

- *Elevated sloping and dissected limestone plateau.*
- *Dense linear valley woodlands.*
- *Medium sized, regular, and linear shaped arable fields bounded by hedgerows with occasional drystone walls.*
- *Stony, shallow soils.*
- *Isolated and relatively inaccessible.*

**Landform and Context**

The *sloping wooded farmland* occupies a small, geographically discreet area at the western end of the Fringe of the Moors. It lies between the A170 in the south and the boundary of the North York Moors to the north and west. To the east, it abuts the *sloping open farmland* that lies east of Howl Dale. It has an elongated appearance on plan that reflects the linearity of many of its characteristic landscape features.

The visual structure of the scenery is strongly influenced by the underlying geology and topography. In this area, the dip slope of the Tabular Hills slopes consistently at a gentle gradient down to the Vale of Pickering. The only marked change in gradient is afforded by the series of dry valleys that extend southwards from the North York Moors towards the Vale.

**Land Use and Landscape Pattern**

The visual effect of the dipping topography, elongated woodlands and presence of incised valleys is to create a landscape that has a strongly linear pattern. Despite the visual dominance of the linear woodlands within the dry valleys, the landscape is predominantly agricultural. Field amalgamation has led to the creation of medium and large fields that tend to be regular and elongated in shape, thereby emphasising the overall effect of the scenery's linearity.

Fields are generally bounded by the occasional drystone wall and well maintained hedgerows that include few trees. Where present, hedgerow trees are predominantly ash. Woodlands are more mixed, although ash remains the dominant woodland tree species. An important characteristic of these woodlands is their visual continuity along the valley sides. Centred principally along Howl Dale and Goodhams.

Dales perform an important compositional role in the scenery and serve to create a range of inter-linked habitats. The relationship these woodlands have with the topography is marked. The continuous sinuous nature of the woodlands, abutting the arable land either side, create a strong, bold edge which is often emphasised by a position on the crest of a valley.

The higher ground exhibits a number of prehistoric tumuli, which are visible as green mounds in the arable landscape. Many of these are designated and statutorily protected as SAM's. It is thought that the function of these was as territorial markers, separating the various tribal groups that occupied the area. It is possible that some of the woodlands may contain, as yet unrecorded, archaeological features, with implications for their future management.

### Settlement

This is a relatively remote and inaccessible rural area with a low population. The only village is Pockley, which is situated on the western edge of the area and partly lies within the North York Moors National Park. Elsewhere farms are dispersed and few in number.

Pockley is linear in form, strung out along one of the lanes, which run north from the A170. Like other roads in the area, it is a cul-de-sac, terminating in the higher moortland to the north, a fact that contributes to the overall impression of remoteness and inaccessibility. Pockley is in effect two small groups of houses separated by an undeveloped field. The main part of the village is to the north with houses set back from the road by steep grassy banks. Although most buildings are typically constructed of limestone with red pantile roofs, there are also several thatched properties that provide picturesque local distinctiveness.

Farms in the area are few and dispersed. They are typical of the wider Fringe of the Moors area in that they include farmhouses and ancillary agricultural buildings that are constructed of limestone and red pantile. Larger barns and storage buildings are constructed from a range of materials, including brick, stone, metal and timber. Farmsteads are typically protected by shelterbelts, comprising predominantly ash.

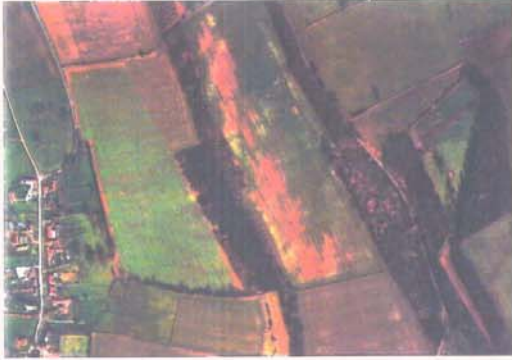
### Subjective Response

This landscape has a secluded and remote quality, despite the fact that it is intensively managed and has expansive outer views to the south. This is due partly to the enclosing influence of the linear woodlands and partly due to the absence of any through road or significant settlement. On the one hand it has a large scale and yet, on another, it appears small scale, even intimate due, again, to the high woodland cover.

### Sensitivity to Change

Development pressure within the *linear sloping farmland* is likely to be concentrated on Pockley, which cannot accommodate significant enlargement without compromising the setting and character of the village.

Whilst the framework of topography, woodland and farm mosaic would seem well-suited to absorbing small scale well sited new development and changing land use patterns without obvious detrimental effect, one of the most important qualities of this landscape, is its sense of remoteness. This could easily be eroded by unsympathetic piecemeal development.



Source: Environment Agency

Pockley (GR 638 860)

# Area C

## Sloping Wooded Farmland

Woodlands tend to be a mix of mixed deciduous and more recent coniferous planting

Valley woodlands serve to emphasise the topography of the area



North of Pockley

Pockley Rigg Plantation

Low Farm



North of Pockley

## Landscape Guidelines

### Landscape Strategy

This is predominantly a farming landscape that, despite pressures from agricultural intensification, retains a strongly rural character. A defining quality of this landscape is its sense of remoteness, imparted by virtue of its elevation, lack of settlement, and presence of densely wooded, incised linear valleys. Landscape strategies should aim to conserve and enhance the existing qualities and seek to resist development or inappropriate land management.

### Land Management

It is important to conserve the remote rural qualities of this landscape, maintain the traditional mosaic of arable fields cut through by densely wooded incised, linear valleys and retain the overall balance of woodland to farmland. Further field enlargement should be avoided.

Management strategies should emphasise the variation in scale and texture between the well wooded narrow stream valleys and the surrounding farmland.

A priority is the conservation and, in places, restoration of calcareous grassland such as that found at Howl Dale. The conversion of arable land to grazed pastures should be encouraged both to extend these ecologically important calcareous grassland habitats and to improve the visual continuity and unity of the upland relief. Any re-seeding of arable land should use a suitable grassland seed mix, of local provenance where possible, which reflects the species found in unimproved calcareous grasslands within the local area.

Management should discourage the improvement of species-rich calcareous grassland by the application of artificial fertilisers, and should seek to control overgrazing.

Important archaeological sites should continue to be protected.

### Field Boundaries

All historic drystone walls should be conserved and restored.

All existing hedgerows should be conserved, strengthened and managed along their existing alignments. Traditional hedgerow management techniques should be promoted, avoiding mechanical over-flailing.

Hedgerow trees are not characteristic of this landscape except near Pockley where they enhance the setting of the village and should be conserved, managed and replanted.

### Trees and Woodlands

The mature woodlands lining the sides of the valleys are visually important, lend much to the area's aesthetic appeal, and should be conserved and managed to achieve a balanced age structure by thinning, and replanting as necessary. Priority should be given to the conservation of woodlands of ancient semi-natural origin, and appropriate management should include maintaining dead trees on site, allowing natural regeneration and coppicing of any previously coppiced sites.

New woodland planting should be predominantly linear and confined to the valleys to ensure that the more open character of the surrounding farmland is maintained.

New planting should be of broad-leaved native species preferably of local provenance. If no survey data is available, woodlands should be surveyed, for both flora and fauna, before any management work is carried out, to ensure rare or localised species are conserved. Any work should take into account the likely impact on these species and ensure that suitable mitigation measures are undertaken.

Management practices should encourage the replacement of exotic conifers by native broad-leaved species. The species mix and the proportion of each species planted should reflect that found in existing ancient semi-natural woodlands in the area. The dominant species are ash, pedunculate oak and wych elm, plus understorey species, namely holly, field maple, guelder rose, hazel and blackthorn.

Given that the wooded areas may contain important archaeological features, it is recommended that the County Archaeologist should be consulted before any major planting or management initiatives are undertaken.

### **Settlements and Buildings**

To conserve the remote rural character of this landscape, development should be strongly resisted. Any changes to existing buildings should take into account the use of the building by birds for nesting and bat roosts.

### **Infrastructure**

The small scale character of the rural lanes and tracks should be conserved and verges and banks managed to encourage native grassland and wildflower species.

### **Priorities for Action**

- Restrict development.*
- Conserve the existing landscape pattern of medium size fields and linear woodlands.*
- Conserve hedgerows and drystone walls.*
- Manage valley woodlands to maximise their ecological diversity, giving priority to those of semi-natural ancient origin.*
- Conserve and restore calcareous grassland habitats.*
- Continue to protect important archaeological sites.*