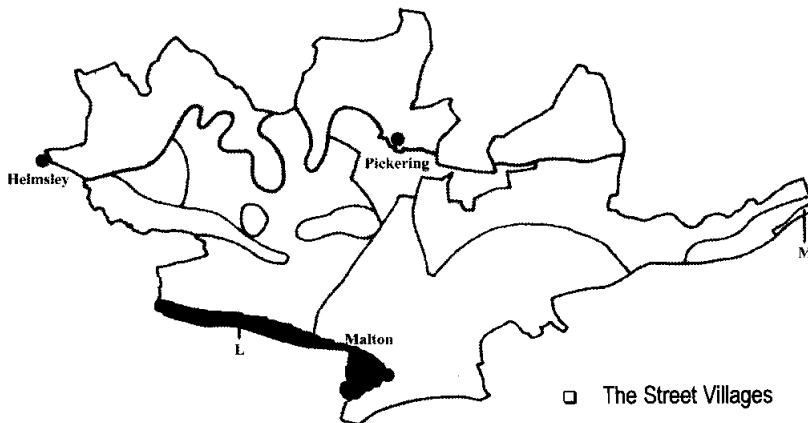


AREA L Howardian Hills Footslope**Preface**

After detailed study it has been identified that the narrow strip of land which extends between Hovingham in the west and Malton/Norton, exhibits characteristics more in common with the Howardian Hills to the south of the study area than with the Vale of Pickering. Indeed, it is felt that the landscape forms part of *The Howardian Hills: Area 29* regional character area as defined by the Countryside Commission and English Nature. However, it is included in this assessment because it lies north of the B1257 and therefore, within the study area.

Key Characteristic Features

- Gently sloping terrain
- Strongly rural and predominantly pastoral
- Distinctive pattern of villages strung along the B1257
- Panoramic views across the Vale of Pickering

Landform and Context

The Howardian Hills footslope comprises a single, broadly linear strip of land that extends eastwards from the Hovingham to Orchard Fields area of Malton/Norton. As suggested by its name, this area forms part of the northern footslopes of the Howardian Hills, which form a prominent ridge to the south of the B1257. Underlain by oolitic limestones, the area comprises uniformly sloping terrain, which becomes increasingly gentle towards the Vale of Pickering as the thick glacio-lacustrine deposits of the Vale of Pickering appear around the 30-35m contour.

South of the B1257, outside the study area, the land steepens and becomes more convex in profile, rising to over 100m AOD.

Land use & Landscape Pattern

The rich, well-drained soils of the Howardian Hills dip slope have given rise to good quality agricultural land and a strongly rural landscape. Fields are large and regular, enclosed by hawthorn hedges with occasional hedgerow trees and little woodland. This lack of tree cover, combined with the elevation, gives the area an open character and affords panoramic views out over the Vale of Pickering.

Settlement

Settlement is concentrated in the line of villages that are strung out along the B1257 along the edge of the Vale. These include Slingsby, Barton-le-Street, Appleton-le-Street, Amotherby, Swinton and Broughton. Collectively, these are known as the 'Street Villages'.

These settlements tend to be small and linear, with houses that are set back from the road behind wide grass verges. Despite some residential infilling and expansion along village edges, the traditional character of these settlements has generally been maintained. The predominant building material remains limestone with red pantile roofs, although the use of brick is becoming increasingly common. In places the use of shallow roof pitches, inappropriate window and porch details combine to have an intrusive effect.

At the eastern end of the local landscape type lies the market town of Malton. Although part of the town lies within the *Howardian Hills footslopes*, most of it lies within the *wooded vale farmland*, where a full description of the landscape and architectural setting and context of this town, and its neighbour Norton, is provided.

Subjective Response

Though relatively small in extent, in visual terms this narrow local landscape type forms part of a wider and more prominent landscape. The Howardian Hills that extend southwards from the footslopes and the B1257, are visible across a wide area and, like the Yorkshire Wolds and Fringe of the Moors area, serve to enclose and give character to the Vale of Pickering. The Howardian Hills are highly attractive, meriting protection and designation as an AONB. Although the landscape of the *Howardian Hills footslope* falls outside the AONB, it nevertheless gives an overall sense of harmony, order and tranquillity.

A notable feature of this area is the general openness of views. Particularly from the B1257, which runs along the 55m contour, there are extensive panoramic views out across the western Vale of Pickering.

Sensitivity to Change

Due to its relative elevation and visual prominence, much of the landscape of the *Howardian Hills footslopes* is visible from the lower lying land in the

Vale of Pickering. In addition, when viewed from the Vale, it visually forms part of the Howardian Hills, which are recognised as being particularly attractive and vulnerable to change. It follows, therefore, that any development could potentially have a widespread and adverse impact.

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 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 dilution of visual structure and cohesion. The effects of field amalgamation have been particularly pronounced in the areas where linear fields extend parallel to the B1257 along the dip slope.

Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Strategy

This is a rural landscape of arable fields and pastures set on sloping terrain above the Vale of Pickering. It is a scenic landscape, its attraction enhanced by proximity to the Howardian Hills, which form a backdrop in southerly views from the Vale. It should be conserved and locally enhanced where the opportunity arises.

Land Management

The visual structure of the landscape should be assessed from the low lying land in the Vale to ensure that the relationship between the higher land and the vale of Pickering is well balanced.

The existing pattern of this landscape, including the overall proportion of farmland to woodland and the pattern of hedgerow trees should be maintained.

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



Source: Environment Agency

Swinton (GR 758 733)

Area L

Howardian Hills

Footslope



'Street Villages' such as Barton-Le-Street lie along the springline of the Howardian Hills and extend into the Vale of Pickering.



The gentle gradient of the Howardian Hills becomes flat at the Vale of Pickering.

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

Field Boundaries

Field hedgerows are an important visual and historic feature of this landscape. A priority should, therefore, be the conservation and management of all existing hedgerows. Hedges should be managed using traditional methods, avoiding mechanical over-flailing. Any suburban species, such as conifer or privet, should be selectively replaced.

Hedgerow trees should be managed to maximise their benefit to wildlife and should not be removed. Any necessary management to existing vegetation 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.

Where possible, former field boundaries that contribute to the creation of a linear and elongated field pattern should be reinstated.

Trees and Woodlands

Where hedgerow trees occur they should be protected, replanted and managed. New hedgerow tree planting should be concentrated near villages and farms and along lanes. Such planting could enhance the sense of scale and distance by improving sequences of views across the Vale without detracting from the overall open character.

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 fungi, hole nesting birds and bat roosts.

There should be no large scale woodland planting. Management of the existing woodlands should aim to increase species diversity by introducing a greater range of habitats. This should be done by thinning, opening up of glade areas and introduction of native tree and shrub species where appropriate. Where possible, dead wood should be left on site to provide habitats for detritivores.

Settlements & Buildings

Villages are concentrated along the B1257 corridor at the base of the Howardian Hills. Coalescence of these villages through ribbon development along this road should be strongly resisted.

Within the 'Street Villages' the use of traditional building and roofing materials should be encouraged, particularly thatch, which is rare in North Yorkshire.

The market towns of Malton/Norton are under pressure for development. This is discussed in more detail within the section on *wooded open vale*. However, further development of Malton on the raised and prominent land of the Howardian Hills footslopes should be strictly controlled.

Infrastructure

There is scope to improve the setting of the B1257, focusing particularly on hedgerow restoration and avenue tree planting on the approach to the villages.

Attractive 'entrance' features could be provided on the approach to the 'Street Villages' along the B1257 similar to those on the approach to Thornton-le-Dale. These could reinforce and reflect the character of the individual villages and may assist in the reduction of traffic speeds.

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.

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

Priorities for Action

- ❑ *Maintain the overall proportion of farmland to woodland.*
- ❑ *Avoid further agricultural intensification and field enlargement.*
- ❑ *Conserve and manage existing hedgerow trees.*
- ❑ *Avoid coalescence of villages along the B1257 corridor*
- ❑ *Avoid prominent expansion of Malton on highly visible raised land.*