VALE OF YORK

SECTION 7

VALE OF YORK

VALE OF YORK

PART 1 : THE LANDSCAPE'S CHARACTER

Introduction

7.1.1 The Vale of York is an agricultural landscape dominated by a drift geology of glacial tills and lake sediments. Flatter land in the south gives way to more undulating terrain northwards.

7.1.2 The northern and eastern boundaries of this extensive tract of land follow the rising ground of the Jurassic limestones and mudstones. The southern boundary, against the Ouse and Trent levels is less distinctive and is broadly defined by flatter, lower lying terrain and the increasing influence of drainage on the agricultural landscape. The western boundary is defined by the River Derwent which marks the County boundary.

7.1.3 Most of the RLCA is arable farmland with local enclosure and variety provided by the distribution of villages, woodlands and hedgerows. Landscape features, such as the narrow River Derwent floodplain, Church Hill adjacent to Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, and proximity to the Wolds, provide additional local landscape character variations. In many respects the landscape typifies much of that seen in lowland England.

VALE OF YORK LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Physical Influences

7.1.4 The flat and gently undulating topography is largely the product of surface drift geology. The underlying solid rocks are almost entirely obscured by thick glacial till, lacustrine deposits and recent alluvium. Only at Church Hill, near Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, does an inlier of Triassic Keuper Marl rise as a 40m high hill above the surrounding Vale of York.

7.1.5 During the late Quaternary era, the ice briefly advanced across the Vale of York, as far as Doncaster and the Isle of Axholme, before retreating rapidly to a more prolonged ice-front near Escrick. Here it

deposited a crescentic ridge of till, sand and gravel known as the Escrick moraine. This ridge remains visible today curving north-eastward to run into the Howardian Hills north of the study area.

7.1.6 The Escrick moraine approximates the transition between the flatter land to the south and more undulating terrain to the north. The level topography to the south is largely the result of alluvial deposition from the glacially impounded 'Lake Humber' which covered much of the Vale during the late Quaternary period. Laminated clays up to 20m deep in places were deposited giving rise to the wetter soils found in the area today. In contrast, the undulating topography to the north of Escrick moraine is a reflection of the underlying hummocky glacial deposits of sand and gravel which have given rise to lighter, more freely drained soils.

7.1.7 Additional local variation in the landscape is provided by local deposits of blown sands. The free-draining nature of the sandy brown earths derived from these sands render repeated arable cropping difficult without high inputs of fertiliser. As a result there has been extensive planting of the area with pine, with natural regeneration of birch and subsequently oak occurring.

7.1.8 A further local variation is provided by the fluvial deposits and river terraces along the River Derwent. This narrow valley corridor is rarely wider than 1km. However, it has a strong sense of character largely as a consequence of its enclosure and riverside associations.

Human Influences

7.1.9 The Vale of York has seen recurrent settlement and exploitation for several thousand years. Before the Roman occupation of Britain, much of the drier land in the north of the RLCA had been extensively cleared to enable pastoral and small scale agriculture, with a predominantly dispersed pattern of settlement. In contrast, woodland clearance came comparatively late to the south. Here, marshes and a complex pattern of dendritic creeks created a landscape that was largely inhospitable, with only the higher, drier sandy ridges providing suitable land for settlement and agriculture.

7.1.10 In contrast with the rural landscape seen today, the Romano-British period saw the emergence of a thriving pottery industry around Holme-on-Spalding-Moor due to the availability of raw materials and the trade and supply routes provided by the creek systems linking with the Humber estuary.

7.1.11 Enclosure within the Vale of York largely pre-dates the period of Parliamentary Enclosure, although extending into the beginning of the 18th Century many areas of rough or unimproved pasture remained. The area's vernacular is closely allied with the region's agricultural development. Settlement is mostly scattered and restricted to isolated large farmsteads or hamlets, often strung along roads. Good examples are the villages of Sutton-upon-Derwent, Newton-upon-Derwent and Wilberfoss strung along the locally prominent Escrick moraine. Villages in the Vale of York are mostly scattered and tend to be evenly distributed throughout. Stamford Bridge on the River Derwent and Pocklington and Market Weighton on the western margin of the Wolds are the principal towns.

7.1.12 Most buildings are constructed from red 'Barton' bricks and pantile roofs. Occasionally older buildings and churches are constructed from locally derived limestones.

Ecological Influences

7.1.13 The larger part of the Vale of York has been subject to drainage, cultivation and manuring leading to loss of woodland, wet grassland, marsh and, hence, most areas are of little ecological interest. Nevertheless a reasonable cover of hedgerows, trees and farm woodlands exists, particularly in the central area south and west of Pocklington.

7.1.14 Of greatest importance within the Vale of York is the narrow floodplain of the River Derwent. It consists of extensive areas of species-rich alluvial flood-meadow eg the Derwent Ings, Melbourne and Thornton Ings and Breighton Meadows. In the wettest areas, vegetation consists of Glyceria/Phalaris swamp and marsh. On drier areas where flooding is short-lived, grass-dominated alluvial communities remain diverse, with tall herbs such as meadowsweet, great burnet, pepper-saxifrage and ragged robin.

7.1.15 Numerous small ditches criss-cross the floodplain. Collectively these, with the river, support

a number of rare invertebrates notably dragonflies and damselflies.

7.1.16 The Ings are internationally important for the number of wintering waterfowl and waders. The Derwent is also an important flyway for migrating birds. This importance is recognised in the designation of much of the floodplain as a Special Protection Area and Ramsar site.

7.1.17 Within the broad expanse of the Vale, semi-natural vegetation is very restricted and tends to be found on inherently infertile sites eg the heathy communities on glacial sands at Allerthorpe and South Cliffe Commons. Similarly, alluvial hay-meadow flora is restricted to certain small fields of gleyed soil. Flora is characteristic of damp neutral species-rich situations ie grass-dominated but with meadowsweet, great burnet, meadow buttercup, adder's tongue fern.

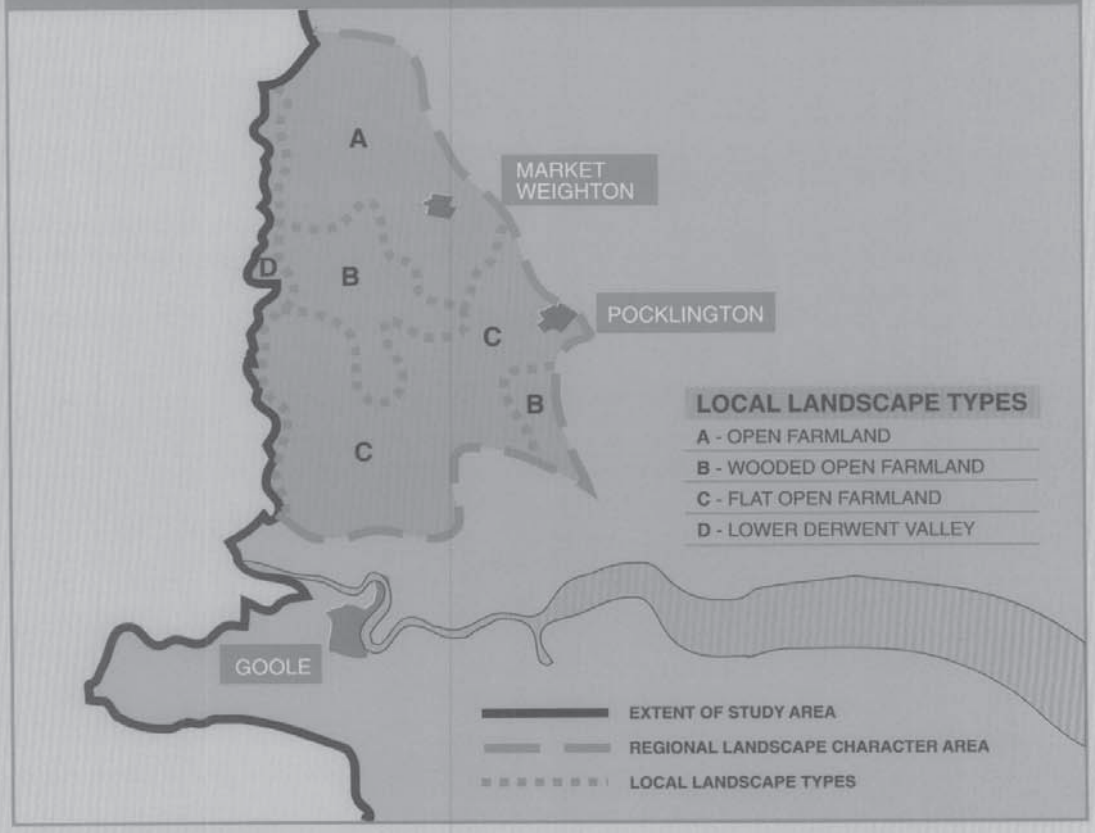
Visual Characteristics of the Landscape

7.1.18 The Vale of York is principally a lowland agricultural landscape with a varying presence of trees and copses, together with low density settlement, providing some enclosure. Variation from this gently undulating Open Farmland is the flatter drained terrain of Flat Open Farmland; an increased distribution of larger woodlands is seen in the Wooded Open Farmland areas. The River Derwent meanders through its narrow floodplain with many parts of it still being managed as it was centuries ago, giving outstanding ecological interest. It is a unique, visually distinctive, type described as the Lower Derwent Valley.

Summary sheets describing these four landscape types are in Appendix One.

7.1.19 In summary, **four local landscape types** have been identified in the Vale of York:-

VALE OF YORK REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



(i) **Open Farmland** - gently undulating arable landscape extending northwards from approximately the A1079 trunk road to the Jurassic Hills RLCA.

(ii) **Flat Open Farmland** - occupying the southern part of the Vale on low lying (below 10mAOD) drained land. This district forms the most geographically extensive tract, extending southwards from the A163 to the M62 where it has an indistinct boundary with the Trent and Ouse Lowlands RLCA.

(iii) **Wooded Open Farmland** - occupies two geographically discreet areas. In the north and centre of the area, orientated along the Pocklington Canal, lies the larger area; while further south and west abutting the Jurassic Hills RLCA is the smaller area.

(iv) **Lower Derwent Valley** - although approximately 25km in length this narrow meandering riverside area is rarely greater than 1km wide. It closely follows the River Derwent between Wressle and Stamford Bridge.

PART TWO : LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES FOR THE VALE OF YORK

Introduction

This part provides guidance regarding landscape issues relevant throughout the Vale of York. The issues addressed are:-

(i) Settlements and Buildings
(ii) Infrastructure, ie Highways, Power Transmission
(iii) Land Management
(iv) Field Boundaries
(v) Trees and Woodlands

Landscape Strategy

The Vale of York is a lowland agricultural landscape area typical of lowland landscapes throughout central England. Within Humberside it has regional similarities to parts of Holderness, Isle of Axholme and southern parts of the Ancholme Valley. Broad landscape strategies should be employed to conserve the landscape whilst providing opportunities to locally enhance specific areas within the Vale that are experiencing particular degradation. Of particular note is the Lower Derwent floodplain, an ecologically unique landscape with a strong visual character. The strategy for this area is one of conservation and protection.

Settlements and Buildings

(i) The Vale has an historic pattern of market towns, villages and hamlets typical of many lowland agricultural regions. Major centres such as Pocklington, Stamford Bridge and Market Weighton are separated by smaller villages, mostly nucleated, such as Wilberfoss and Holme-on-Spalding-Moor. The hamlets and smaller villages are typically more evenly distributed, often of a linear nature, such as Sutton-upon-Derwent, Melbourne and Seaton Ross.

It is important that in any village expansion, the distribution and morphology of rural settlements are protected and preserved. In landscape terms, demands for new housing would be better accommodated though carefully controlled expansion of larger nucleated villages rather than extension of linear villages and hamlets.

Protect the distribution and morphology of existing rural settlements.

(ii) The mature, established character of these villages and hamlets, often clustered around the parish church, green and pub, are important features of the Vale scenery.

Accommodation of new housing should aim to ensure that new developments reflect existing building styles. Whenever possible the re-use of existing redundant buildings should be prioritised above infill or expansion. This is particularly important at the edges of rural settlements where the relationship of buildings to the open countryside is important.

Ensure all new housing developments reflect and relate with their immediate architectural environment.

(iii) Most farms are divorced from villages and typically have new large agricultural buildings situated around an older, usually brick built farmhouse. Often these necessarily large, new farm buildings are locally intrusive due to their mass, building materials and detail.

Farm enlargements should seek to aggregate new buildings and avoid excessive prominence of new buildings in the wider landscape. Wherever possible, new farm buildings should be designed to minimise their impact. Techniques, such as: the use of shadows, different textures and the use of locally-consistent building materials can aid their assimilation. Darker, matt colours are usually less obtrusive than light, shiny colours.

Arrange new farm buildings around existing ones.

(iv) Many older farm buildings are associated with trees and occasional small scale shelterbelts.

New farm buildings should seek to maintain the context of such planting to aid the assimilation of built structures into the wider landscape using, wherever possible, locally occurring tree and shrub species. The use of fast growing screen planting, such as 'Leylandii' should be avoided.

Seek to extend shelterbelt and woodland planting around farm extensions.

(v) Across the Vale are a number of redundant airfields dating from the last war. These sites, such as west of Pocklington and Fangfoss, offer convenient sites for the accommodation of industrial and business units.

Typically these sites appear intrusive in the local landscape and enhancement strategies should be initiated to soften their appearance.

Seek to mitigate the visual impact of existing and new developments on redundant airfield sites.

(vi) Current Government thinking (Rural England - A Nation Committed to a Living Countryside, HMSO 1995) seeks a controlled diversification of the rural economy.

The development of existing or redundant airfields is consistent with this aim. However, any new developments should seek to integrate more fully buildings and activities with their wider setting.

Encourage the development of redundant airfield sites as business/industrial parks

(vii) The Vale of York is a landscape that, though locally enclosed and contained at ground level, is extensively over-viewed from vantage points on the Wolds escarpment.

New developments should consider both their immediate and wider visual context. Any large scale developments, such as institutions, large agri-industrial buildings, should seek situations where they can blend with established woodlands.

New developments in the landscape should consider their widest possible impact, including from those vantage points along the Wolds escarpment.

Infrastructure

(i) Electricity transmission lines emanate from the Drax power station to the south of the Vale and traverse the Vale in an east-west and north-south direction. These landscape elements are very prominent and intrusive.

There are few practical measures available to mitigate their overall impact. In the design of any new woodland, consideration should be given to planting near transmission lines, so that in time the overall scale of pylons in the landscape is diminished.

In the long term seek to plant new woodlands along transmission lines to diminish their perceived scale.

(ii) It is unlikely that the Vale of York will experience particular threats of strategic new roads, especially now that the mooted 'eastern motorway' is off the national agenda. However, road improvements are likely to continue. Improvements of country roads to meet modern highway standards often introduce suburban influences into the rural landscape.

Landscape integration projects could reduce the impact of this and offer means to assimilate the road into its wider setting. Roadside hedgerow thickening, replanting, verge management and limited off-site planting could aid overall assimilation especially if viewed beyond the immediate road corridor.

Initiate roadside landscape improvements along the A1079 (T).

(iii) Road improvements to meet modern highway standards can appear intrusive in the rural environment.

Care should be taken to control the use of concrete kerbing, introduction of railings, lighting, standardisation of road signs and imposition of new alignments. These features often appear alien in a rural setting and should only be permissible where absolutely necessary. Opportunities should be sought to utilise more traditional materials, such as stone kerbs, half batter kerbs or locally distinctive road signs.

Avoid the siting of any new structures in the Lower Derwent floodplain wherever a technically feasible alternative exists.

(iv) The importance of the River Derwent as a wildlife corridor, particularly for migratory and wintering birds is recognised in various international designations.

Any proposals for new linear infrastructure crossing or within the Derwent valley should be subject to strategic assessment (and consideration of alternatives). Design of any necessary infrastructure should seek to negate the ecological impacts within the Derwent floodplain.

Seek to avoid the siting of any large scale infrastructure projects in the Lower Derwent Floodplain

Land Management

(i) The agricultural land through the Vale is of moderate to high fertility, classed mostly as Grades 2 and 3 quality. Intensive agricultural production has led to field enlargement, hedgerow loss and a reduction in overall tree cover.

The restoration of degraded landscape elements such as hedges and hedgerow trees and farm woodlands would be of great benefit.

Encourage the restoration of degraded agricultural landscape features such as hedgerows, hedgerow trees and farm woodlands.

(ii) Modern farming economics have seen increasing reliance on a smaller number of main crops. 'Traditional' cropping patterns and reliance on rotation have become less apparent as crop incentives and fertiliser inputs have affected farm economics.

Recent EC agri-environmental policies promoting opportunities for set-aside, additional crop subsidies and incentives for increased rural diversification should be monitored and implemented wherever possible to seek a more diverse, less mono-culture farmed environment.

Investigate opportunities for rural farm diversification.

(iii) Although today the economy of the Vale of York relies principally on agricultural production, historically its economic base was more diverse.

Encourage the development of a more rural economy such as highlighted in the Governments recent publication 'Rural England: a nation committed to a living countryside'

Encourage the use of set-aside land for restoration of more traditional vegetation eg heathy grassland at South Cliffe, hay meadows on low-lying land.

(iv)Scattered across the Vale of York are a number of important archeological sites and historic buildings

Important archeological sites and buildings, should be identified an protected. Fragile sites could be highlighted on opportunities to enhance historical awareness of the area to the public.

Protect and enhance significant archaeological sites.

(v) Although the Wolds, Hambledon Hills and Derwent Valley/Gorge offer local landscape interest to tourists the majority of the Vale of York offers moderately attractive, though unexceptional scenery to tourists.

Low key specific tourist facilities should continue to be encouraged, such as forest walks in Allerthorpe Common, Stamford Bridge Battle Site, or the Bubwith Rail Trail.

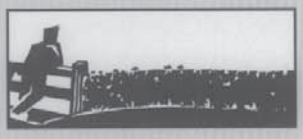
Encourage the promotion of specific tourist attraction sites.

(v) Although there has not been extensive quarrying or extraction of aggregates in the Vale of York, nevertheless there may be a low-level demand for sands and gravels. Any new mineral extraction applications will fall fully within the remit of development plans and would thus be subject to environmental appraisal and conditions relating to after-use and restoration.

Ecological and hydrological impacts of mineral proposals should continue to be considered in detail. Furthermore detailed designs for siting, shaping, construction access and advance landscape planting should be required at early stages in any application process.

New or extended mineral extraction sites should avoid impact on sites of ecological or hydrological sensitivity. Extraction, restoration and after-use could be allowed subject to satisfactory assurances regarding short and long-term ecological and visual benefit.

Field Boundaries



(i) Managed hawthorn hedgerows are the dominant field boundary throughout the Vale of York.

These hedgerows are a vital component of the scenery and policies should be implemented to encourage their protection, enhancement and management wherever possible.

Encourage the protection and retention of hedgerows.

(ii) Hedgerow trees were once more widespread and offered local enclosure and wildlife opportunities. Many trees have been lost through lack of management, inappropriate hedgerow cutting, hedgerow loss and road improvement.

Hedgerow tree planting should be encouraged and hedgerow maintenance techniques promoted which allow regeneration. Any new tree planting should use locally occurring trees such as pedunculate oak, ash and sycamore.

Seek to introduce more hedgerow trees.

Trees and Woodlands

(i) Much of the attractiveness of the Vale of York derives from the presence and scale of woodlands. The woods offer a greater sense of enclosure and habitat diversity.

The distribution of woods across the Vale should be generally increased. However, the size and pattern of new woodlands should reflect the more local landscape character.

Seek to increase the overall distribution of woods and copses across the Vale of York.

(ii) Many woodlands are farm copses managed as shelterbelt, or game coverts. Few are managed for viable wood production. Many woods do not maximise their habitat potential as they are often even-aged, of limited species diversity and lack structural variation.

While various grant schemes offer small incentives for implementation of woodland management plans, uptake of this grant aid has been inconsistent. Encouragement should be given to protect these woods and for strategic management plans to be prepared to diversify their species, age and overall structure. If possible, woodlands should be augmented and linked with existing hedgerows to maximise opportunities for species dispersal and habitat diversification.

Encourage the prepararation of management plans for existing woodlands to ensure their protection and development.

(iii) Ancient and long established woodlands are relatively rare.

Such woodlands require particularly careful management, selective felling, thinning and re-stocking. In particular, proportions of non-native tree and shrub species should be reduced to encourage native species.

Seek to ensure the protection and development of ancient and long-established woodlands.

(iv) The Vale of York may become economically attractive for short-rotation coppice, typically using willows and poplars.

In general this practice can add visual and ecological diversity, although it should be avoided on sites of existing or potential nature conservation interest eg species-rich meadows or permanent pasture.

Promote short rotation coppice on ex-arable land.

PART 3 : GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LANDSCAPE TYPES WITHIN THE VALE OF YORK

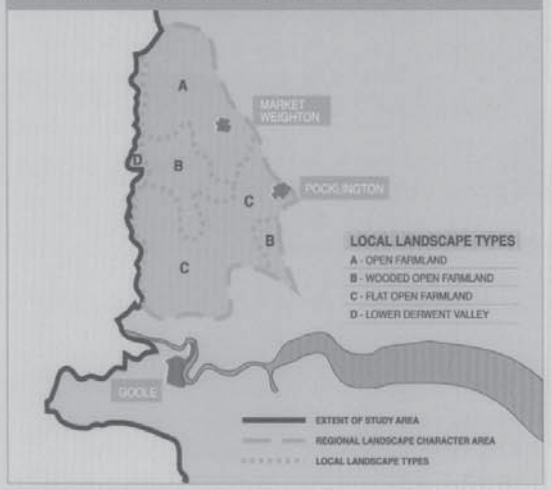
Introduction

7.3.1 This part provides guidance specific to the four Local Landscape Types within the Vale of York. These guidelines are rather more concerned with 'local' issues such as trees and woodlands, field boundaries and land management, than Vale-wide issues such as settlements, new developments and infrastructure. Guidelines for the latter are presented at Part 2 above. Nevertheless, where these issues are of particular importance, such as in the Lower Derwent floodplain, specific guidelines are formulated.

7.3.2 In this section the appropriate landscape strategy for each landscape type is followed by a set of guidelines. The following local landscape types are considered:-

(i) Lower Derwent Valley
(ii) Open Farmland
(iii) Wooded Open Farmland
(iv) Flat Open Farmland

VALE OF YORK REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



Lower Derwent Valley

Landscape Strategy :

Much of the Lower Derwent Valley floodplain is internationally important due to its rich assemblage of flood meadows, riparian pasture, aquatic ecosystems and riparian trees and woods. Not only are extensive parts of the floodplain designated as SSSI but it is also largely identified as a Ramsar site and a Special Protection Area. It attracts exceptionally diverse populations of fish, invertebrates, waders, wild fowl and mammals, including breeding otters, which are rare in lowland Britain. Landscape strategies should seek to conserve its ecological importance whilst providing localised scope to increase the status and importance of specific areas through limited enhancement.

Landscape Guidelines

(a) Seek through appropriate management and development control that sites designated for their ecological importance are conserved and enhanced.

(b) Seek to provide more flood meadow areas along the valley corridor. These areas of flooded pasture were once extensive along the Derwent but as a result of agricultural intensification are now rarer. They are important features both ecologically and visually, representing some of the few areas set to pasture in the Vale of York.

(c) The valley is narrow and this is an important visual characteristic. Limited woodland planting and hedgerow renewal and regeneration along the edge of the floodplain should be promoted. Typically the edges of the floodplain are delineated by country lanes and linear settlements. It is along these lanes and around the villages and hamlets that planting should be concentrated. New planting should seek to control and frame views to the river corridor, rather than to obscure them.

(d) Woodland and hedgerow planting should reflect the distribution and species composition of existing woodlands. Due to the floodplain context the use of

a higher percentage of alders, willows and black poplar in woodland and hedge mixes would be appropriate.

(e) South of East Cottingwith, flood alleviation berms extend along both sides of the river. These berms are visually prominent and have little existing habitat value. Wherever possible, such potential could be realised by various methods including reseeding with species-rich grassland and restricting grazing to winter months.

(f) In the lower reaches of the river, management for flood defence purposes has resulted in a riparian environment relatively devoid of trees and scrub. An increased presence of waterside trees and scrub should be encouraged where hydrological engineering considerations permit. This would offer increased visual and ecological diversity.

(g) The floodplain is characterised by the historic distribution of linearly arranged villages and hamlets along its periphery. Settlements such as Sutton-upon-Derwent, Newton-upon-Derwent and Breighton are strung-out along lanes that exploit the slightly elevated land along river terraces running parallel to the Derwent. Control of new development should seek to avoid any dilution to the character of these villages. Further linear extension of these settlements should be avoided if possible with pressures for new housing ideally accommodated by controlled infill or re-use of existing redundant buildings.

(h) The technical and financial possibilities for removal of flood berms to allow the floodplain to be restored to a more natural state (in which the river can migrate across the alluvial plain) should be investigated with the relevant bodies eg NRA, IDB.

(i) The siting of any new structures within the floodplain should be avoided.

(j) Development which would have a deleterious impact on the floodplain's hydrology should be resisted. In particular, developments which reduce, or increase, the total volume of water or restrict the movement of water across or through the alluvial zone should be resisted.

(k) English Nature and the National Rivers Agency have recently signed a 'memorandum of understanding' with regard to river SSSI's. They aim to produce conservation strategies for all river SSSI's in the country. These are intended to identify and deal with problems such as nutrient enrichment which can affect wildlife interest. Memoranda such as these should be encouraged as a useful mechanism by which land management regimes and policy can be clearly formulated, communicated and implemented.

BEFORE

1. Limited tree cover along riverside.

2. Many hedgerows are fragmented and trees overmature.

AFTER

1. Riverside trees and shrubs should be locally encouraged.

2. Seek to encourage localised flood meadows.

3. Develop planting away from the river corridor to maximise opportunity for ecological dispersal.

Open Farmland - Pocklington, Wilberfoss, Stamford Bridge

Landscape Strategy :

Travelling northward through the Vale of York, the amplitude and gradient of the topography increases. This important feature of the landscape is emphasised by the distribution and arrangement of woodlands and hedgerows. Broad strategies should seek to conserve and locally enhance the increasingly diverse and enclosed landscape character in the north of the Vale of York.

Landscape Guidelines

(a) Existing landscape features such as hedgerows, woodlands and hedgerow trees should be protected from further losses wherever possible.

(b) Policies such as hedgerow renewal and repair, woodland planting and management and grass verge management should be initiated to repair local degradation of significant landscape structure.

(c) New woodland planting should be promoted throughout the area to augment the existing perception of increasing visual diversity and interest.

(d) New woodland planting should be sympathetic to the existing patterns of fields and woodlands.

(e) Where patterns of fields and hedges become subsidiary to the visual dominance of landform ie where the landscape becomes larger scale, its capacity to accommodate larger scale woodlands increases. In such areas larger scale woodland planting should be encouraged.

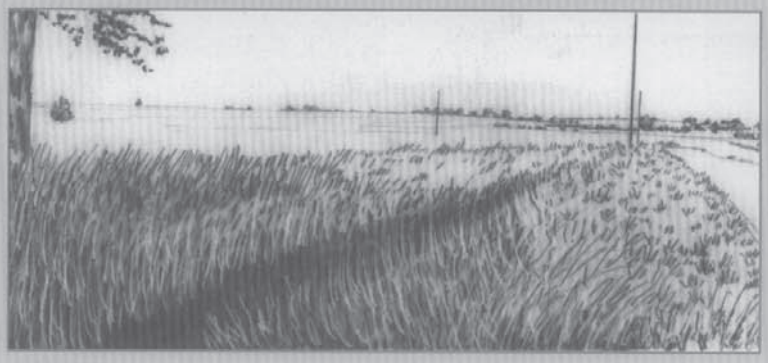
(f) The siting and design of new woods should aim to frame and control views rather than to completely close them off. To emphasise subtle topographical diversity new planting should be targeted, where possible, on hilltops and rising ground.

(g) New woodlands should seek to achieve a harmonious balance of scales. To aid a perception of woodland coalescence, woodlands should be designed with inter-locking shapes especially viewed from primary transportation corridors and settlement fringes.

(h) This landscape type has a relativly high density of market towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads. However, the interface between these and the surrounding landscape often appears stark. This problem is greatest with new development and where the surrounding landscape is experiencing general decline. To mitigate this, policies should be implemented, where appropriate, to soften the edges of rural settlements. New hedgerows, localised woodland planting and the encouragement of hedgerow trees would aid the wider integration of settlement edges.

(i) Seek to conserve village and hamlet character by, where appropriate, limiting expansion or excessive infill of open space within settlements.

(j) To maintain the appearance of the generally attractive, mature and established villages any new development within a village should seek, where appropriate, to re-use existing redundant buildings and be carefully designed to integrate with existing built form.



BEFORE

1. Hedgerows are commonly absent or fragmented.

2. Trees are often over mature.

3. Roadside ditches are usually choked with weeds and debris.

AFTER

1. Encourage new hedge planting particularly along lanes.

2. Plant more hedgerow trees, mostly oak.

3.Clean roadside ditches to maximise their visual and ecological diversity.

Wooded Open Farmland - South Cliffe Common, Pocklington Canal Corridor

Landscape Strategy :

Although large woodlands are very visible in this landscape, the open spaces between woods are relatively featureless due to field enlargement, hedgerow loss and agricultural intensification. The strategy is thus one of enhancement of open spaces. Guidelines concentrate on woodland management, hedgerow renewal and creation of new woodlands.

Landscape Guidelines

(a) Existing woodland blocks have an important compositional role in the landscape providing a level of enclosure and visual diversity. The protection of these woodlands is a priority.

(b) Many woodlands in this area are of a moderate size (ie 3 to 7 hectares) and of a plantation origin. Management plans should be drawn up to seek economically viable use of these woods, whilst maximising visual and ecological diversity.

(c) Substantial areas of new woodland planting are not necessary. However, any new woods should be of a significant individual scale. It is a wide and mostly open landscape in which large woodland blocks tend to sit at an appropriate scale. Small clumps and field corner planting would appear awkward and discordant and as such would be inappropriate.

(d) Small scale woodland planting can be selectively encouraged, even though larger sized woodland blocks are more typical. Creation of field corner and small copse woodlands may be appropriate around intrusive farm buildings and on the periphery of rural settlements, such as in the vicinity of the Pocklington Canal.

(e) New planting strategies should concentrate on the restoration and renewal of hedgerows. These hedges would offer an important compositional role in the landscape and also provide some scope for improved wildlife dispersal between woodlands.

(f) Roadside hedgerow trees, especially oaks, are locally characteristic. Many of these trees are mature. To maintain and augment this character, initiatives to increase the number of younger trees should be employed.

(g) Woodland and hedgerow species can be chosen from an extensive range. Preferred native species will be pedunculate oak, ash, alder, hazel, hawthorn, rowan. These should be used for hedgerows and new native woodlands. In other woodland planting a range of forest trees (including exotics such as pines, sycamore, beech) may be appropriate although the use of willows and hybrid poplars would require more careful visual consideration.

Flat Open Farmland - Market Weighton, Holme-on-Spalding-Moor and Howden

Landscape Strategy :

The flat drained landscape supports a particularly intensive level of agriculture. The scenery is mostly open, broken up by few woodlands. Because of the lack of conventional rural structure, broad landscape strategies should be of enhancement, seeking to encourage more hedgerow trees and woodlands into the landscape.

Landscape Guidelines

(a) The few existing woodland blocks have an important compositional role in the landscape, offering visual containment and diversity. Retention of these woodlands is important.

(b) Many of the existing woodlands have a shelterbelt role and a generally geometric and linear arrangement. This pattern emphasises their visual presence in the landscape. New shelterbelt woodland planting of a similar style should be encouraged to increase the perception of woodland cover.

(c) The general condition and distribution of hedgerows in this landscape type is poor. Most hedges are closely trimmed, gappy or dying-back at the base. Such hedges would benefit management allowing them to grow taller and thicker. Hedgerow tree regeneration should also be encouraged. Cutting on a three yearly, rather than yearly cycle would increase the visual representation and ecological diversity of these hedgerows.

(d) The historic pattern of large hedged fields is being eroded through farm amalgamation and field enlargement. Although the flat topography does not allow field patterns to register strongly, consideration should be given to re-creation of lost hedgerows, particularly alongside lanes, footpaths, bridleways, streams and Parish boundaries.

(e) In the southern part of the Vale of York, modified drainage systems become increasingly influential, often affecting the perception of openness. Most ditches, dykes and watercourses have few associated trees, hedgerows or vegetation. Opportunities should be investigated in consultation with the NRA and relevant IDB's to increase the occurrence of streamside vegetation. Such a policy would offer both visual and ecological benefits.

(f) Market Weighton and Holme-on-Spalding-Moor are the principal settlements. Other than these, rural settlement is sparse and mostly restricted to small villages and hamlets, such as Spaldington and Willitoft. It is important that this sparseness of settlement is maintained. Significant development in the open countryside would be detrimental to the landscape.

(g) In devising land management regimes that are more sympathetic to the interests of wildlife, a balance is required to ensure that the local recreational opportunity of the Canal Corridors is not lost. At present only the lower reaches of the Pocklington Canal to Melbourne are navigable. British Waterways and English Nature have recently signed a declaration covering the three SSSI's along the Pocklington Canal. This declaration formulates a 10 year management plan seeking to provide a balance between recreation and conservation interests. The implementation of this plan should be encouraged as it sets a precedent for such co-operation and could be used as a pilot for other areas.

BEFORE

1. Large agro-industrial scale farm buildings are often visually intrusive.

2. Agricultural intensification has resulted in losses of trees and hedgerows.

AFTER

1. Where possible large farm buildings should be softened with new planting.

2. New hedgerows should be encouraged particually along roads.

3. New tree planting, mostly oaks, should be encouraged.