

Sub-Rural Fringe

Areas within this Zone

'Dearne Valley Park', 'Kendray and Worsbrough Bridge'

Summary of Dominant Character

The historic character of this zone is defined by an open landscape with strong rural indicators such as open space, relict field patterns and boundaries, high levels of woodland and a general absence of housing or active industry. Nevertheless, the influence of nearby or surrounding urban settlement has fundamentally altered their character. All these areas have previously been dominated by agricultural or industrial character (sometimes both), however these activities have now generally ceased and the management of these landscapes is generally concerned with maintaining their amenity value as green spaces whilst encouraging opportunities for recreation and biodiversity. The character areas within this zone feature a wide variety of character types dating to many different periods, ranging from ancient woodlands to pockets of 20th century housing. As a result, this zone is often one of character transition, areas of sub-rural character often blending or interlocking with adjacent urban landscapes.

In the Sheffield City Council area, a number of areas clearly fit into this description, mostly large areas retaining substantial rural characteristics that have been enveloped by urban settlement but preserved as parkland. The topography of Sheffield has been particularly influential on the development of this landscape type around the city, due to large areas where gradients are too steep for large-scale urban development, and the early activities of philanthropic individuals and groups (Sewell 1997, 208-210). In Barnsley a similar process has occurred but here the areas of 'Sub-Rural Fringe' are mostly creations of the late 20th century. Areas of relict countryside and scrub developed on former industrial sites have been improved for use as urban green spaces as part of the regeneration of the district.

Relationships with Adjacent Character Zones

This zone is related closely to the suburban landscape that surrounds it, having been retained and landscaped for its amenity value.

Inherited Character

The 'Kendray and Worsbrough Bridge' character area represents a remnant of agricultural and common land that was subsumed by the expansion of Barnsley town's municipal suburbs in the 20th century. The public park that now makes up most of this land developed in around 1980 (South Yorkshire

Forest Partnership 2000) but there are still remnants of older landscapes surviving. There were large areas of common across this area in the 18th century much of which was enclosed as part of the 1779 Barnsley Parliamentary Award (English 1985). Barnsley cemetery, itself established in 1860-61 (English Heritage 2005, Listed Building ref: 333693/ 333692), retains several boundaries from the regular field pattern of this enclosure award.



Figure 1: Barnsley cemetery; established on part of the 18th century surveyed enclosure of Pinder Oaks Common and part of the commons enclosed by the 1779 Barnsley Parliamentary Award. Cities Revealed aerial photography © the Geoinformation Group, 2002 overlain by 1855 OS mapping © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2008) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

Also within this area was Pinder Oaks house, this was known from at least the 17th century as the home of William Taylor (Hunter 1831, 292) and the building was used as the Pinder Oaks Maternity hospital between 1921 and 1970 (The Welcome Trust 2007). Although the building has been demolished and the area is mostly reverting to scrub, some property boundaries do remain, as do features that may have been part of an ornamental garden associated with the house. These sorts of features within a scrubland landscape are amongst those most vulnerable to change within this zone.

‘Dearne Valley Park’ was also developed in 1980 (South Yorkshire Forest Partnership 2000) as part of the regeneration of the district. There has been some substantial alteration of the landscape when it was converted into public parkland but there are still survivals of earlier activity.

The early histories of the lands within this area are centred on the medieval priory at Monk Bretton. Adam Fitz Swane founded a Cluniac priory, dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, in c.1154 (Rigold 1968, xi), as was a

common practice for the early Norman barons. The site transferred allegiances to the Benedictine order in 1281 (Hey 1986, 59-60) and the monks remained as important landowners in the region until the dissolution of the monastery in 1538. At this time parts of the monastery were demolished and the priors house was adapted into a dwelling. Although partially demolished there is good survival of the monastery, which in places stands to two stories there are also two fishponds that partially survive as earthworks.



Figure 2: Part of the upstanding remains at Monk Bretton Priory. © SYAS

Lands that have been associated with the monastery included Cliffe Wood, an ancient woodland that bears some evidence of coppicing and was used as a source of timber for local coal mining and iron ore production (South Yorkshire Forest Partnership 2000). There were also a number of mill sites know to have been owned by the monks over the years and utilised for corn grinding. The best surviving example being Priory mill, which is likely to be of 13th century origin but was heavily remodelled in the 17th century (English Heritage 2005, Listed Building Ref: 333721). In 1878, Barnsley Borough Council bought the mill and surrounding land for the development of a sewage farm (Umpleby 2000, 145-6) and the mill fell into disrepair. It has since been redeveloped as a pub and the surrounding landscape landscaped as part of the public park.



Figure 3:
Priory Mill. ©
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Many of the industrial activities of the monks at Monk Bretton were eventually to be followed by other land owners through the 16th and 17th century but it was not until the 19th and 20th century that industrial and extractive use of this area was to have a significant impact on the landscape.

Numerous collieries developed along this stretch of the river Dearne and they were associated with large numbers of railway lines running from all points of the compass, curving and crossing one another to reach each colliery. These have left their impact on the landscape in the form of linear earthworks that have often become the route for new footpaths though the area. This is also true for the course of the Dearne and Dove Canal; the infilled canal is now a footpath running thorough Cliffe Wood.

Another significant industry in the development of Barnsley was linen production. Within this area there were several sites associated with this industry. These included a chemical mill concerned with the production of bleaches (Umpleby 2000, 143); Hoyle Mill Bleachworks and Beevor

Bleachworks, which were both in operation in the late 18th to 19th century (Taylor 1993, 28-32, 40-42); and a calendering works where cloth was “pressed under rollers for smoothing or glazing” (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 1973), which was also part of the Hoyle Mill works (Umpleby 2000, 143). Remains of the water powered sites and bleachworks have been removed by the development of the Dearne Valley Park but the bleaching greens themselves are probably unlikely to have had a significant impact on the landscape in the first place as they were really only areas of land set aside for cloth to be spread upon after washing.

Later Characteristics

As much of this landscape has been landscaped and altered in the recent past there has been little opportunity for later developments within the zone. The forces for change within the areas are likely to involve continuation of this ornamentalising of the landscape as part of the improvement of the public spaces within the district.

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