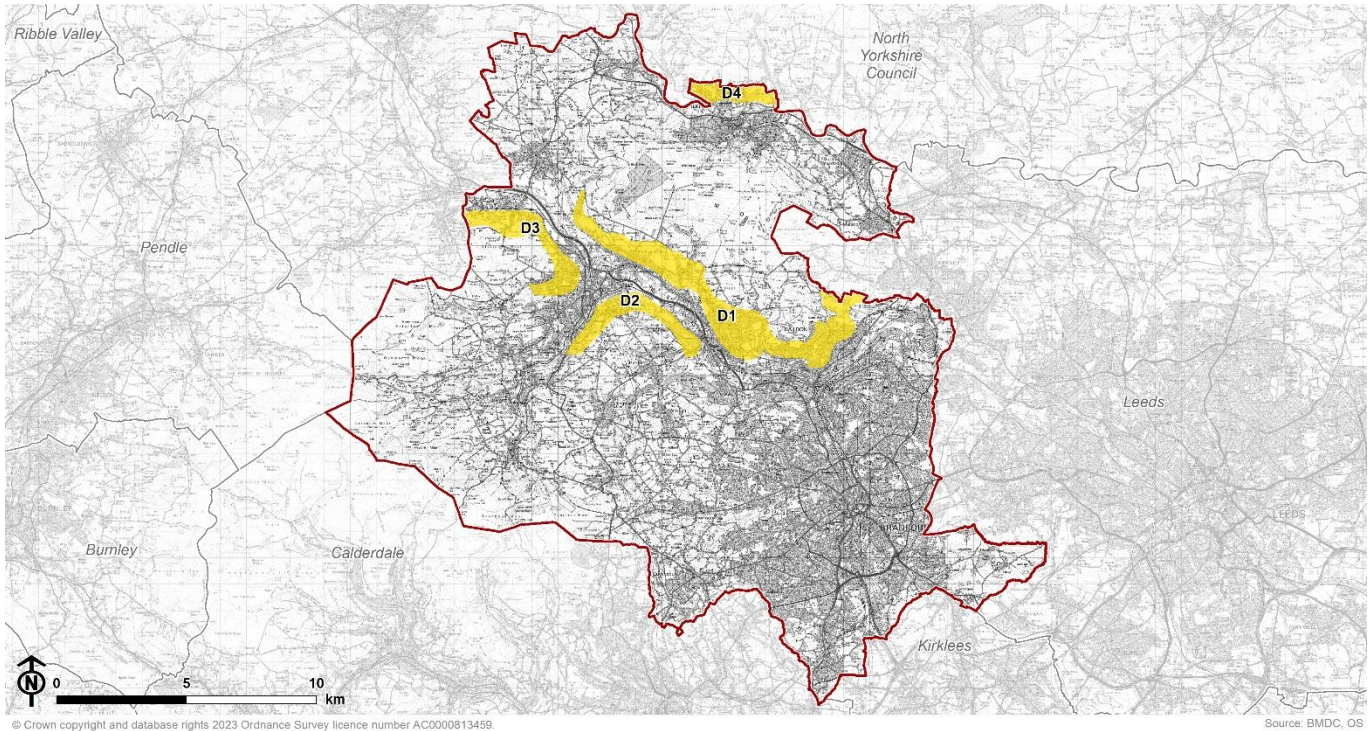


Landscape Character Type D: Steep Valley Sides

Figure 3.68: Location of the Steep Valley Sides



LCT D Overview

The Steep Valley Sides landscape character type contains the sloping sides of the broad settled valleys within the district. Characterised by notable areas of woodland, these valley sides form bold bands of vegetation, distinct from the surrounding open fields. These swaths of woodland sit near areas of settlement, and the steep valley sides provide a visually prominent, scenic backdrop. This landscape character type borders or contains numerous tributaries of the Rivers Aire and Wharfe and contributes to biodiversity rich areas of the district, with local wildlife sites and notable areas of ancient woodland. Vegetation consists primarily of deciduous woodland, with areas of coniferous plantation. Occasionally the woodland wraps around clearings of pastoral fields and golf courses. In many places settlement on the adjacent valley floor has crept up the valley sides.

There are four LCAs within this LCT:

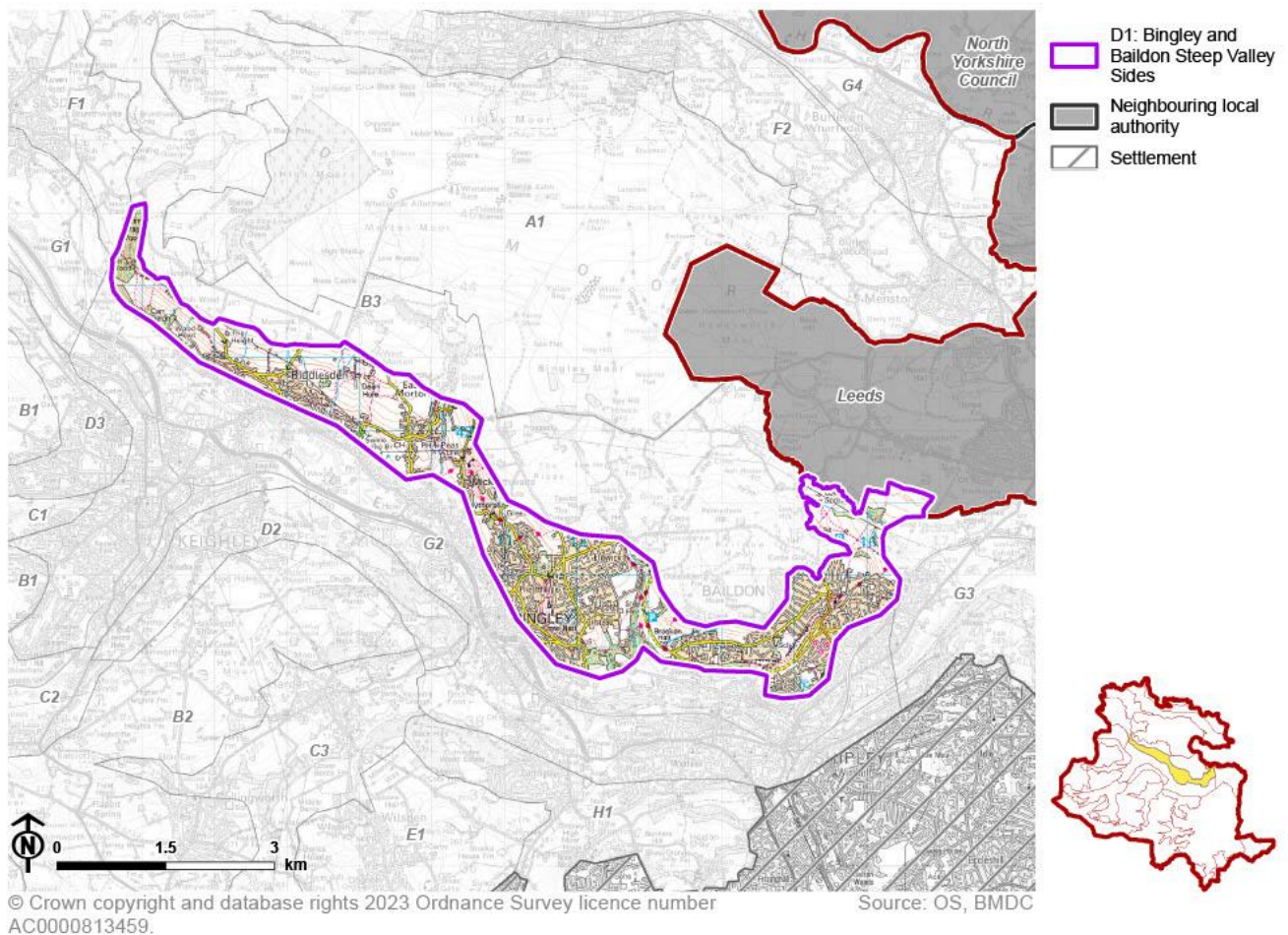
- D1. Bingley and Baildon Steep Valley Sides
- D2. Thwaites Brow Steep Valley Sides
- D3: Hollins Bank Steep Valley Sides
- D4: Middleton Woods Steep Valley Sides

D1. Bingley and Baildon Steep Valley Sides

Location, Context and Summary

The Bingley and Baildon Steep Valley Sides LCA comprises parts of the steep slopes which form the northern edge of the Airedale Valley. The LCA represents a transition from the developed valley of the River Aire to the rural upland moors, including Baildon Moor in the east, Silsden Moor in the west, and Rombalds Moor across the centre. Woodland and tree belts help to integrate settlement into the wider landscape. The characteristic steep slopes are cut in places by large beck which flow downslope into the River Aire. This LCA is distinguished from the low-lying flat valley floor of the G2: Central Airedale Settled Valley Floor and rolling moorland fringes, and B3: Silsden and Baildon Moorland Fringe. In the centre and east the area is dominated by the settlement of Bingley, with generally modern development which has crept up the valley sides from Shipley and around the historic centres of Baildon and Eldwick. The area contains a balance of modern development, woodland and pastoral fields typical of the wider area.

Figure 3.69: Location of LCA D1



Key Characteristics

- Steeply sloping landform which transitions from the built valley floor to the rural urban fringe.
- High number of springs and becks permeate the landscape and, in some instances, form minor tributary valleys.
- Acidic low fertility soil has restricted farming, which is dominated by pasture.
- Piecemeal enclosure creates a pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by drystone walls.
- Woodland blocks are present throughout the area, forming bands across the landscape, particularly following the course of rivers and on the steeper slopes.
- The field pattern, where present is dominated by small to medium scale pasture fields bounded by drystone walls and has an upland character linking to the Moorland Fringe landscape to the north.
- Sprawling modern development on rising landform punctuated by belts of woodland and steep open slopes.
- Settlements within the area have been shaped by the industrial revolution, which is reinforced by the proximity and relationship with Saltaire World Heritage Site.
- Views across the industrial Airedale Valley to the wooded slopes in the south provide a strong sense of place.
- Dense woodland belts on the valley sides and in beck valleys have a strong sense of enclosure, contrasting with the open field pattern on higher slopes.

Figure 3.70: Example photos from LCA D1



Intervisibility from rising valley slopes to settlements below.



Frequent woodland areas create sense of enclosure throughout.



Pastoral fields on rising slopes with views across settlements towards the rising moors.



Bands of woodland form notable contrasts against the surrounding open fields.



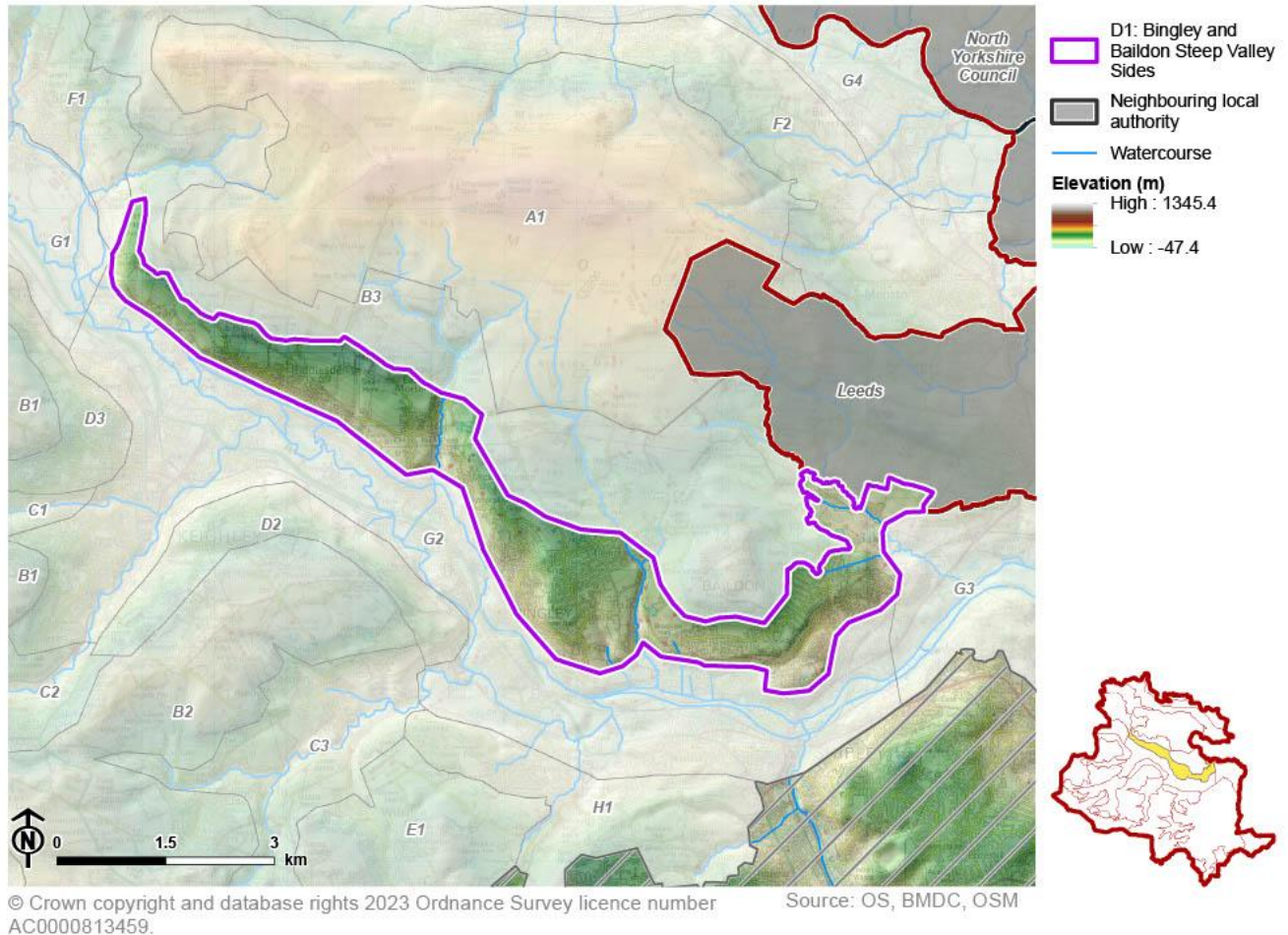
Numerous becks meander down the slopes, typically bound by riparian vegetation.



Intervisibility across settled valley floors to Rombalds Moor.

Landscape Character

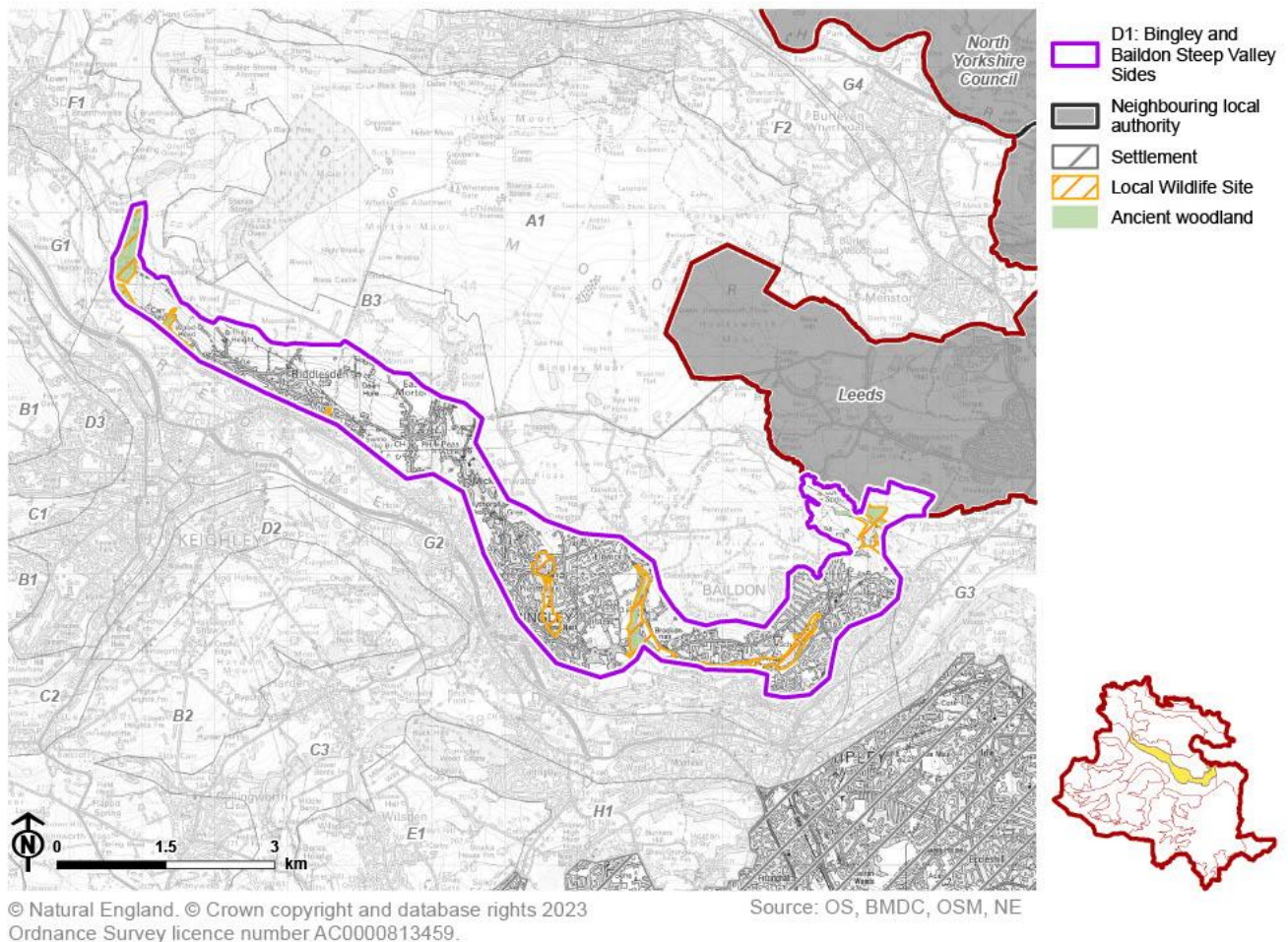
Figure 3.71: Topography of LCA D1



Geology, Soils, Topography and Drainage

- The underlying geology comprises Carboniferous sandstones, siltstones and mudstones, primarily from the Midgely Grit group. In the east, Rough Rock sandstone and the Pennine Lower Coal Formation is present on the higher ground.
- These rocks break down into loamy and clay acidic soils. The soils have impeded drainage and are seasonally wet.
- The topography is characterised by steep slopes rising from around 100m AOD in the south east to nearly 250m AOD in the north west.
- There are a number of springs and small becks which cut through the slopes and drain into the River Aire. The more notable watercourses – Morton Beck, Loadpit Beck and Ghyll Beck create smaller valleys which run perpendicular to the Airdale Valley.
- Large parts of the valley are overlain by Quaternary glacial till. These angular, unsorted deposits are a result of the Aire glaciation during the Devensian period.
- There are some rocky outcrops on the steeper slopes which create distinctive local backdrops. This includes the precipitous rocky crags Baildon Bank Green, Gilstead Crags, Bracken Hall Green, and Spring Crags.

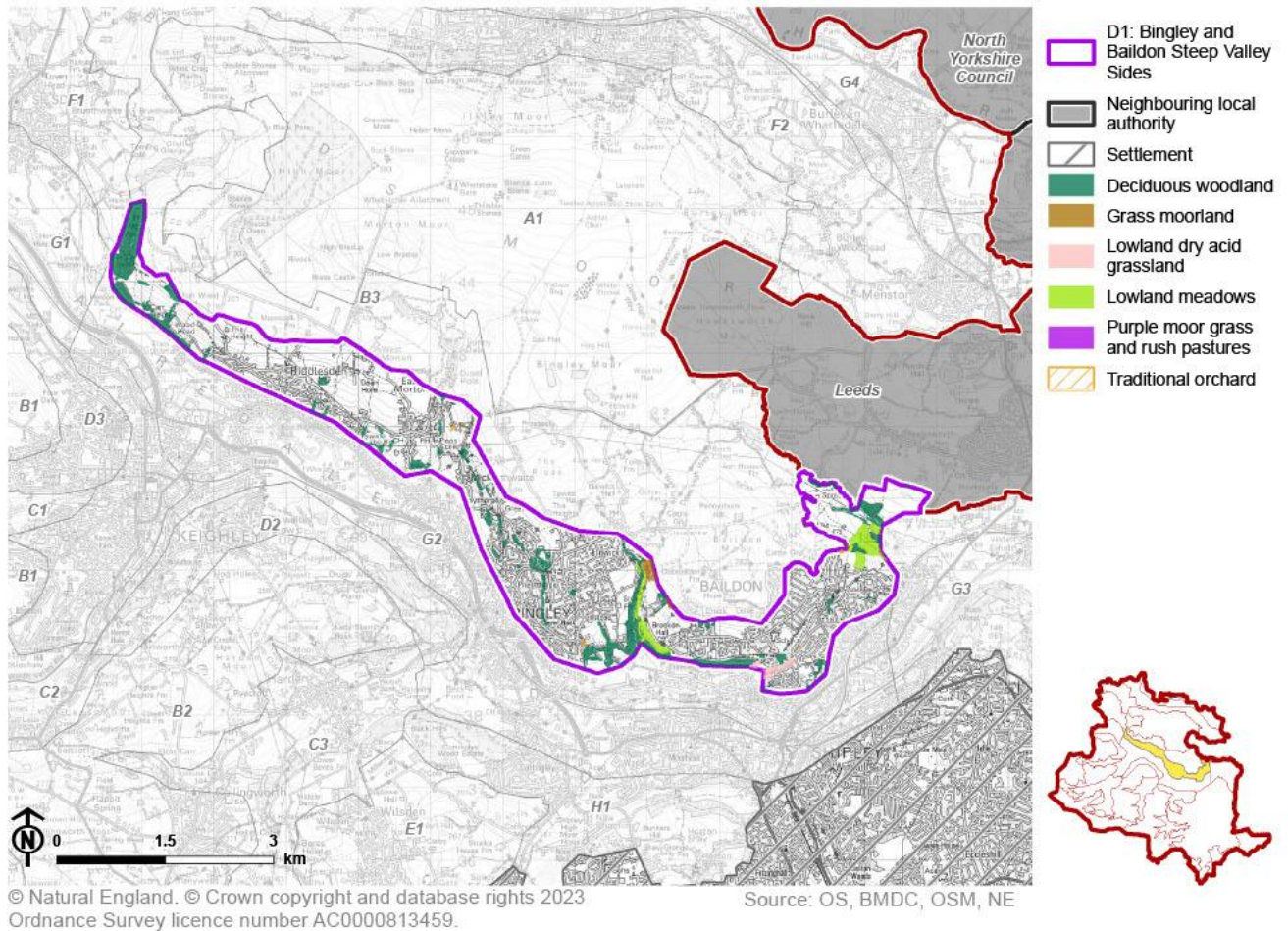
Figure 3.72: Natural heritage of LCA D1



Semi-natural Habitats and Tree Cover

- Semi-natural habitat is predominantly provided by broadleaf woodland blocks and tree belts throughout the area. The majority of these are identified as priority habitat for deciduous woodland.
- Notable woodland blocks include Hawskworth Spring Wood in the east, Walker/Midgeley Woods at Shipley Glen, Clough Beck Wood/Elam Wood, Low Wood and Spring Crag Wood/Alder Carr Wood in the west. These have been defined as ancient woodland and are designated as local wildlife sites. Low Wood is also a Local Wildlife Site.
- Grassland habitats are dominated by semi-improved agricultural grassland. These are predominantly bounded by drystone walls and have limited ecological value. North and east of Riddlesden, hedgerows and tree belts provide some connectivity within the agricultural landscape.
- In the west there are additional grassland habitats. Priority habitat for lowland meadows occur on the high slopes of Shipley Glen at Bracken Hall Green and around Ghyll Beck. Dry acidic grassland is present at Baildon Bank.
- Local wildlife sites, in addition to those covered by ancient woodland, are also present at Baildon Bank, Gilstead Moor Edge and Prince of Wales Park and How Beck Wood.

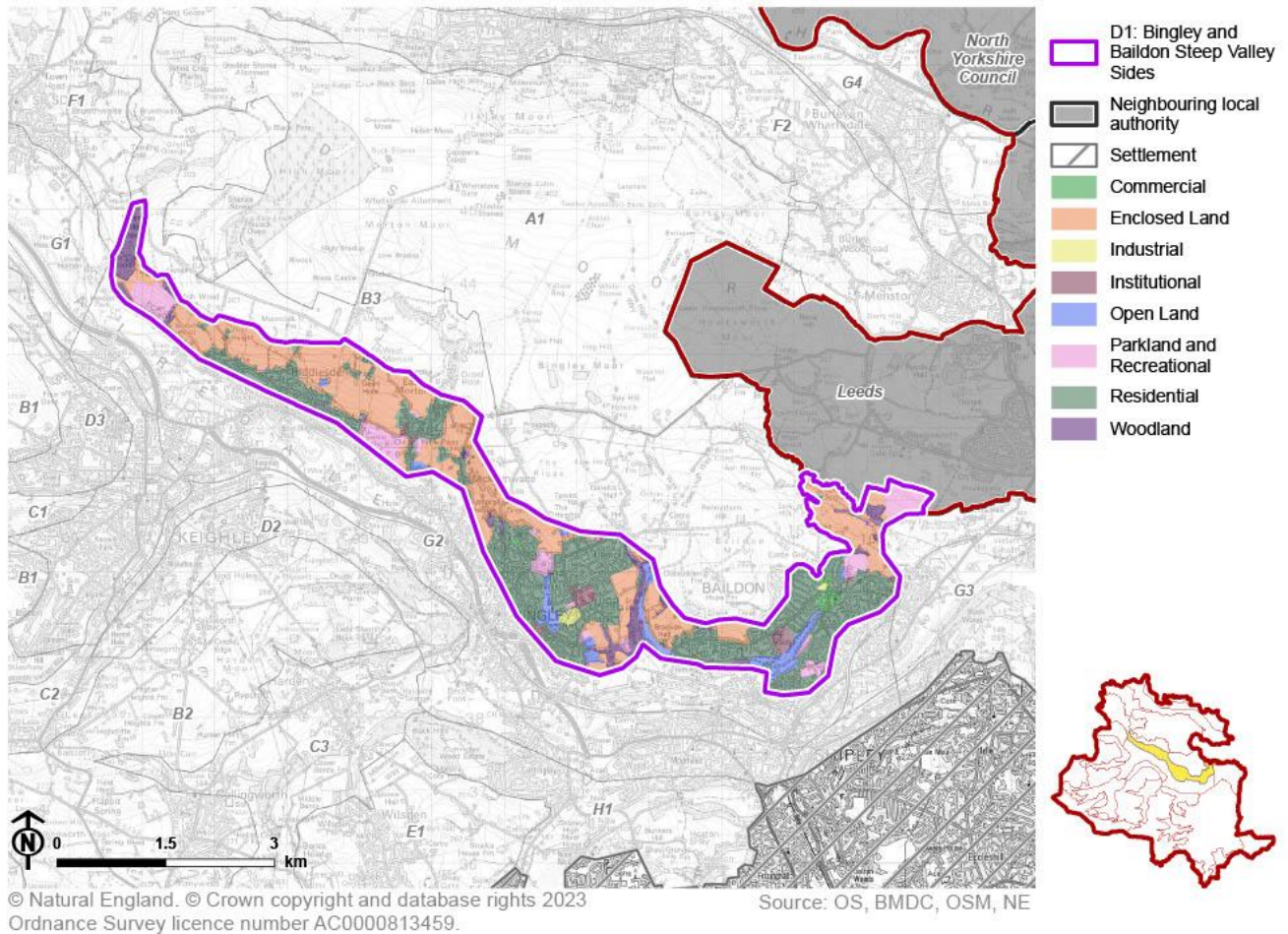
Figure 3.73: Priority habitat inventory of LCA D1



Land Use and Field Patterns

- Agricultural land is primarily semi-improved grassland used for grazing or cut for silage. This reflects the poor quality acidic soils. In the east, smaller areas of open fields are interspersed between belts of woodland and the developed area. To the west there are more expansive areas of agricultural land.
- The field pattern, where prevalent is dominated by small to medium scale pasture fields bounded by drystone walls reflecting historic piecemeal enclosure from former moorland. Some 19th century boundary alterations have straightened the field edges, creating a more regular field pattern in places.
- In the far west, piecemeal enclosure from a former medieval deer park is present between woodland blocks.
- Around Baildon, suspected assart enclosure from historic woodland is present, although subsequent boundary loss has reduced the time-depth associated with this.
- South-east of Eldwick, an area of surveyed enclosure creates a more geometric field pattern above Shipley Glen.

Figure 3.74: Historic landscape classification and cultural heritage of LCA D1

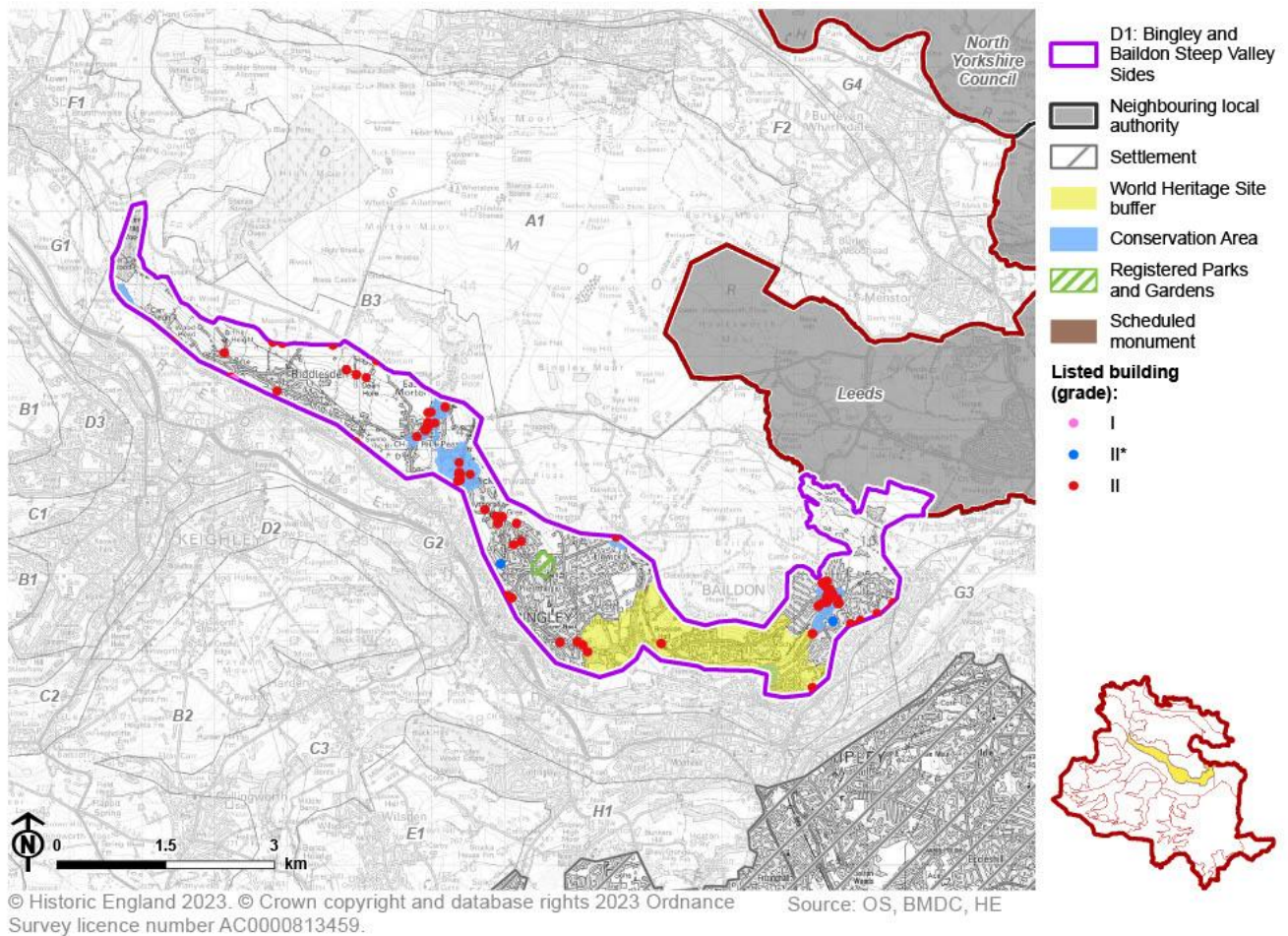


Cultural and Historic Landscape Character

- In the west, the slopes overlooking Saltaire fall within part of the Saltaire World Heritage Site buffer zone, and much of this area is identified as forming either a critical or important rural backdrop to Saltaire⁷. The World Heritage Site is noted for its intact industrial heritage and reflects a 19th Century philanthropic approach to industrial management. From elevated positions within the LCA there are clear views of the World Heritage Site. Woodland at Shipley Glen and, Midgeley Wood restricts views into the rich heritage of the valley, but provide a scenic wooded backdrop.
- Some pre-industrial heritage designations overlap the World Heritage Site. This includes several scheduled monuments, including one known as 'The Soldiers Trench' of prehistoric rock carvings and settlements around Bracken Hall Green and the Grade II Listed Bracken Hall.
- There are six conservation areas, reflecting the historic importance of settlements along the slopes. These generally incorporate the agricultural historic cores of settlements which have since expanded as part of the industrial revolution.
- The Prince of Wales Registered Park and Garden near Priestthorpe and Eldwick occupies a former quarry site. The land was gifted for the benefit of the public by the Enclosure Commission. Extensive tree planting forms an outer circuit of woodland which encloses the park.

⁷ Saltaire World Heritage Site Management Plan (2014)

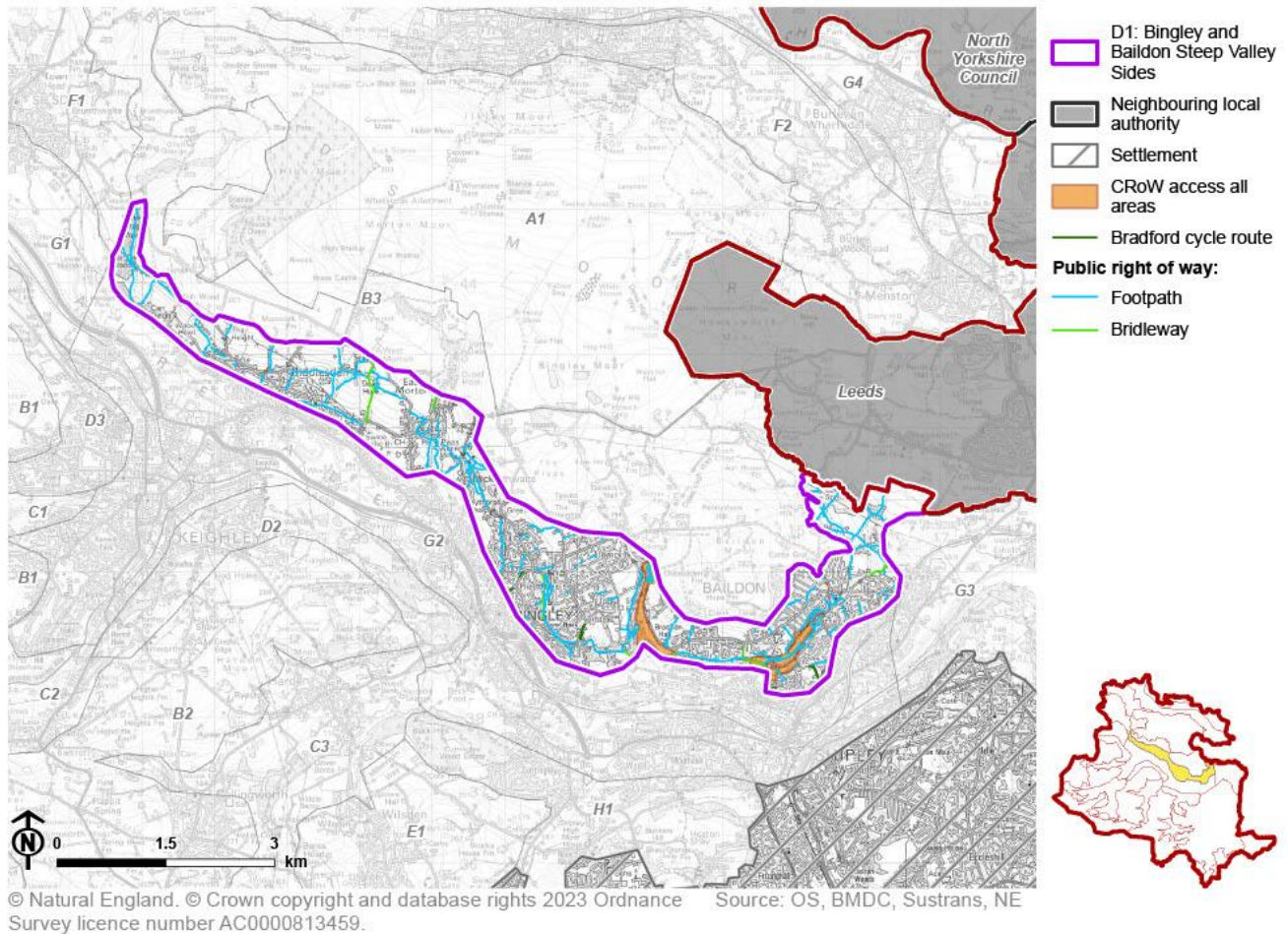
Figure 3.75: Cultural heritage of LCA D1



Settlement and Transport Pattern

- The east of the area is more densely developed with the settlements of Baildon, and the agglomerated form of Priestthorpe, Eldwick and Gilstead forming part of the wider area of Bingley much of which is situated in the neighbouring LCA (G2: Central Airedale Settled Valley Floor). These settlements are principally composed of modern development, often laid out in a cul-de-sac arrangement, although Eldwick and Baildon have historic centres.
- In the west of the area settlement is more sparse and tends to be concentrated on the lower slopes, such as at Riddlesden or related to watercourses, such as at East Morton which developed around a series of mill buildings. In addition, a series of agricultural hamlets and isolated farmsteads survive sitting within preserved agricultural settings, such as at West Morton.
- Geometric development of vernacular terraced cottages are present in places, reflecting the impact of the industrial revolution on the area.
- The road network predominantly comprises lanes, which often traverse the slopes. One of the smaller valleys associated with Loadpit Beck is free from road development and acts as a barrier to movement across the area.

Figure 3.76: Access and recreation of LCA D1



Access and Recreation

- A network of public rights of way and lanes serves the LCA and provides connectivity from east-west through the area as well as with moorland to the north and down into the Airedale Valley. Many of these routes also run through the woodland blocks and along water courses.
- There are two large areas of open access land in the east at Baildon Bank and Bank Hall Green. Bank Hall Green open access leads directly onto common land at Baildon Moor, enhancing the connectivity between Baildon and moorland in the wider landscape.
- Shipley Glen provides a wooded and publicly accessible space located between Baildon Moor and the more formal Roberts Park/Saltaire WHS, offering a well-used recreational link between the two.
- The Prince of Wales Park Registered Park and Garden provides a large open space valued for recreation and close to the settlements of Priestthorpe and Eldwick.

Views and Perceptual Qualities

- Where woodland and tree belts are absent, views are open to the south across the Airedale Valley, including over the Saltaire World Heritage Site. This creates an important sense of place and reflects the important industrial local heritage.
- Development within the area reduces the sense of tranquillity and presence of dark skies. The built environment plays a more limited role in the western extents of the area, which have a higher sense of remoteness.

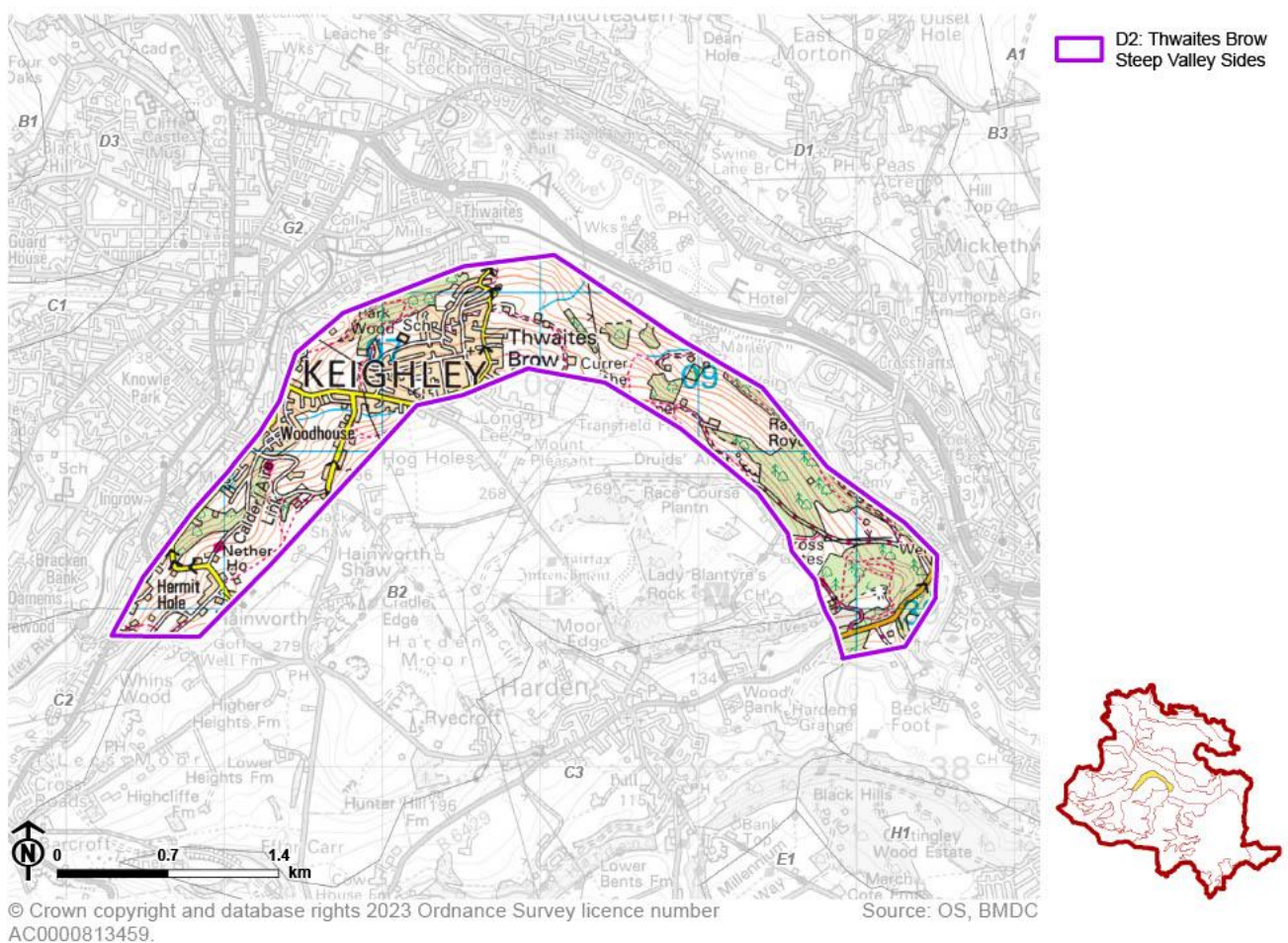
- The juxtaposition of woodland, rural upland fringe character and dense sub-urban style development on steep slopes makes the settlement in the east highly distinctive to the Bradford District.
- Where blocks of woodland are present, these create a more intimate, enclosed character and are important elements in views from across the valley.
- Viewpoints associated with paths at the top of Gilstead Crag offer striking views across the built up Airedale Valley and over to the surrounding moorland.

D2. Thwaites Brow Steep Valley Sides

Location, Context and Summary

The Thwaites Brow Steep Valley Sides LCA comprises the steep slopes which form a distinctive crescent shape, stretching from the southern edge of Keighley to the north western extent of Bingley. The LCA represents a transition from the settled valley of the River Aire to rural upland farmland and moors, joining the Worth Valley in the north west and the Harden Valley in the south. The characteristic steep slopes are interrupted in places by small, mostly unnamed small water courses. Woodland is present throughout but more prevalent in the south east, away from the central settlement of Thwaites. The lowland boundary of the LCA follows the course of the Shipley to Keighley railway line and the A650.

Figure 3.77: Location of LCA D2



Key Characteristics

- Steeply sloping landform which transitions from the settled valley floor to upland plateau farmland.
- Acidic low-fertility soil has limited agricultural productivity. Farmland is interspersed between blocks of woodland and is dominated by grazing.
- The field pattern includes ancient assarts (areas of medieval woodland clearance), reflecting the long history of farming in the area.
- Drystone walls emphasise the varying field pattern and creates a sense of historic character.
- Woodland, including replanted ancient woodland forms the key ecological asset. With the exception of Park Wood to the north, this is more prominent in the south and east creating a naturalistic character.
- In the south east part of St Ives Estate informs a more formal character.
- Increased wealth resulting from the textile industry led to increased development and rebuilding of farms in the late 18th and early 19th century.
- More recent development around Thwaites has impacted on the rural character, particularly in the west.
- Elevated landform and steep slopes offer unobstructed views across Airedale Valley towards Rombalds Moor and create a sense of exposure.
- In the south east there is a sense of intimacy provided by woodland and localised topographical variety.

Figure 3.78: Example photos from LCA D2



Ancient woodland at Park Wood Local Wildlife Site north of Long Lee.



Druid's Altar local viewpoint and historic rock graffiti with views towards Rombalds Moor.



Cattle grazing on gentler slopes at higher elevations near Thwaites Brow.



Drystone walls field margins near Currer Laithe Farm.



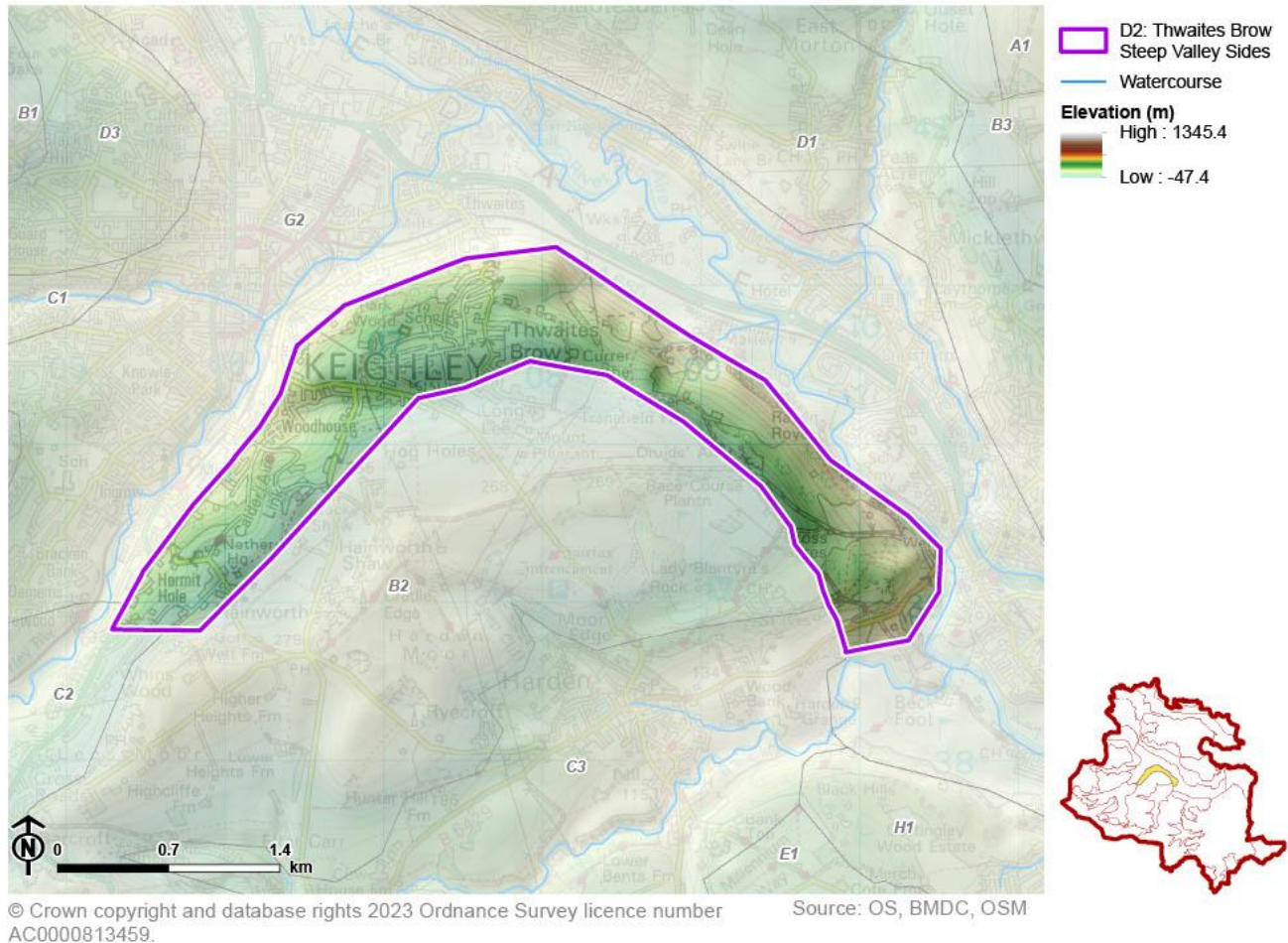
Woodland within St Ives Estate Registered Park and Garden.



Gingerbread Clough within Hainworth Wood Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape Character

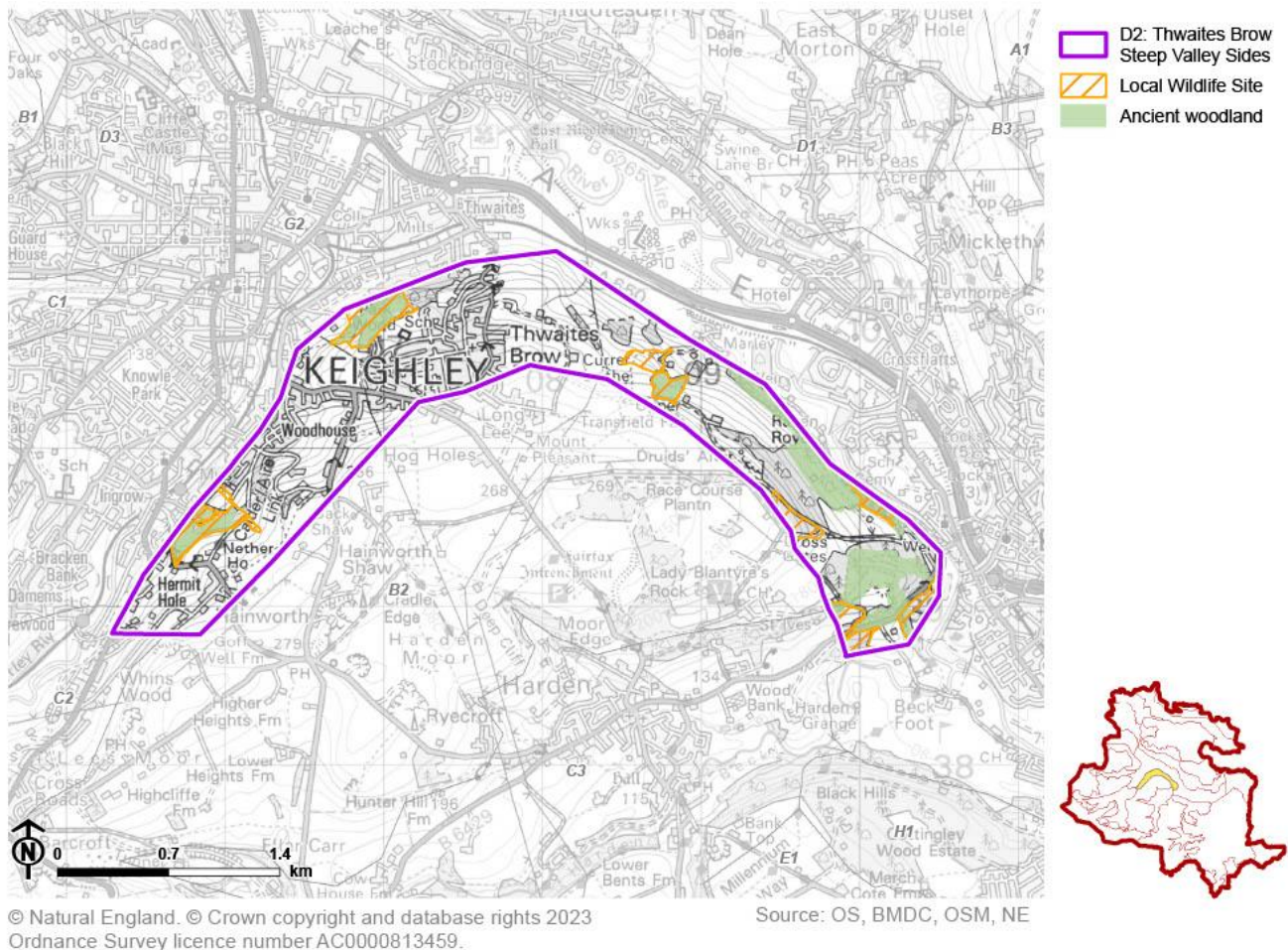
Figure 3.79: Topography of LCA D2



Geology, Soils, Topography and Drainage

- The underlying geology comprises Carboniferous sandstones, siltstones and mudstones, primarily from the Midgely Grit group. Historic fault lines in the centre top of the slopes have brought the younger Pennine Coal Measures Formation alongside the older Midgely Grit.
- These rocks break down into low fertility acidic soils. In the centre and south east this is dominated by freely draining loamy soils. In the west, there are clay soils with impeded drainage.
- There are a number of springs which flow down the slopes, into the River Worth in the north and west and the River Aire in the east. This includes Hog Holes Beck. These springs are more numerous in the east where the soil is freely draining.
- The topography is characterised by steep slopes rising rapidly from around 100m AOD in the north to nearly 250m AOD in the south.

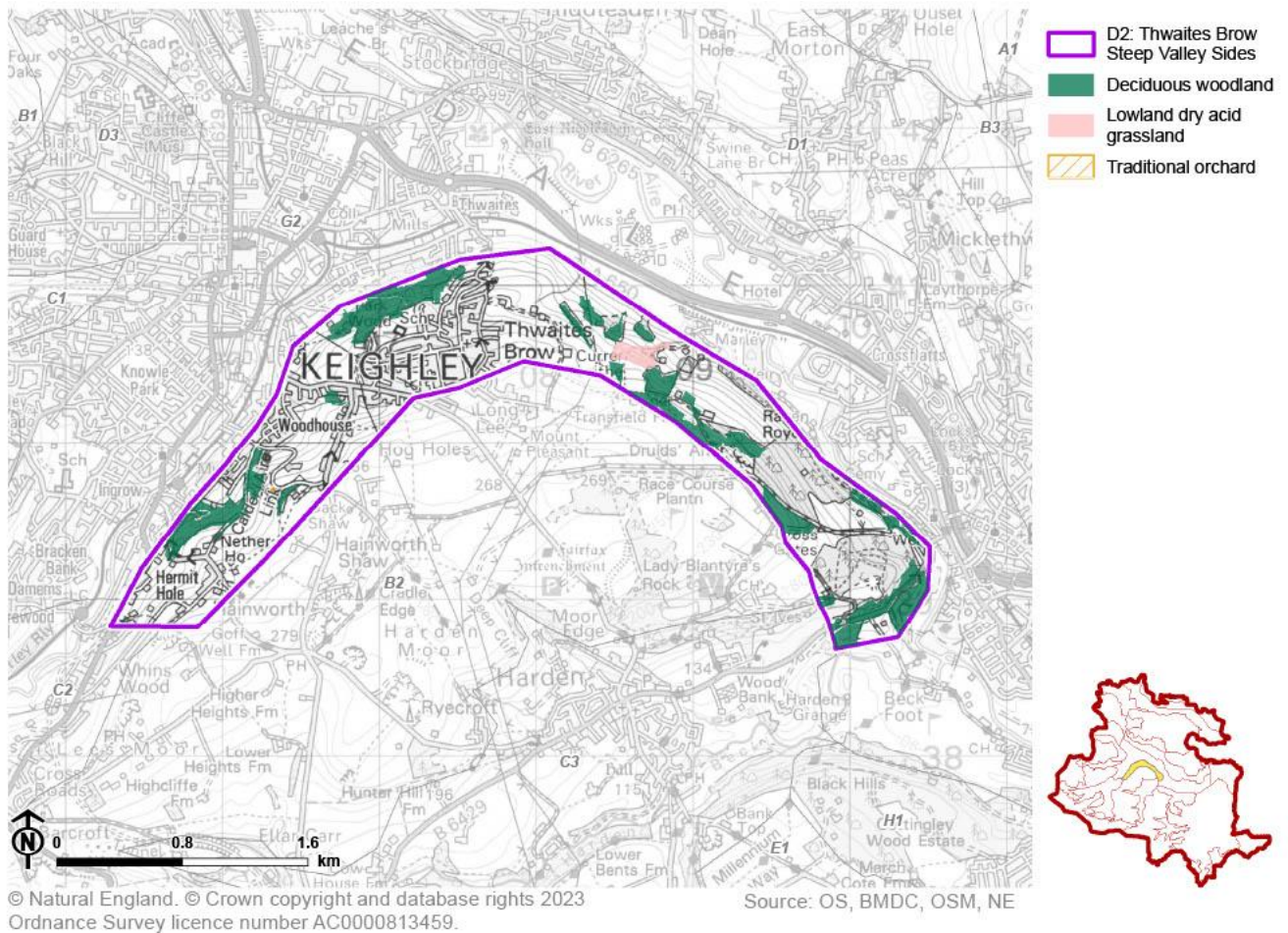
Figure 3.80: Natural heritage of LCA D2



Semi-natural Habitats and Tree Cover

- Tree cover is provided by large woodland blocks and hedgerow trees. Tree cover is more continuous in the east, where there are several inter-connected blocks of deciduous woodland. Some of these have been identified as priority habitat for deciduous woodland and defined as ancient woodland (including replanted and semi-natural). Transfield Wood and part of Hollin Plantation are also designated as local wildlife sites. In the west, the woodland is less frequent but includes large tracts at Hainworth Wood and Park Wood, which are both identified as replanted ancient woodland and local wildlife sites.
- Additional habitat coverage consists predominantly of semi-improved grassland which forms the majority of the farmland within the area. Marley Bog Local Wildlife Site, contains an area of priority habitat for dry and acid grassland.

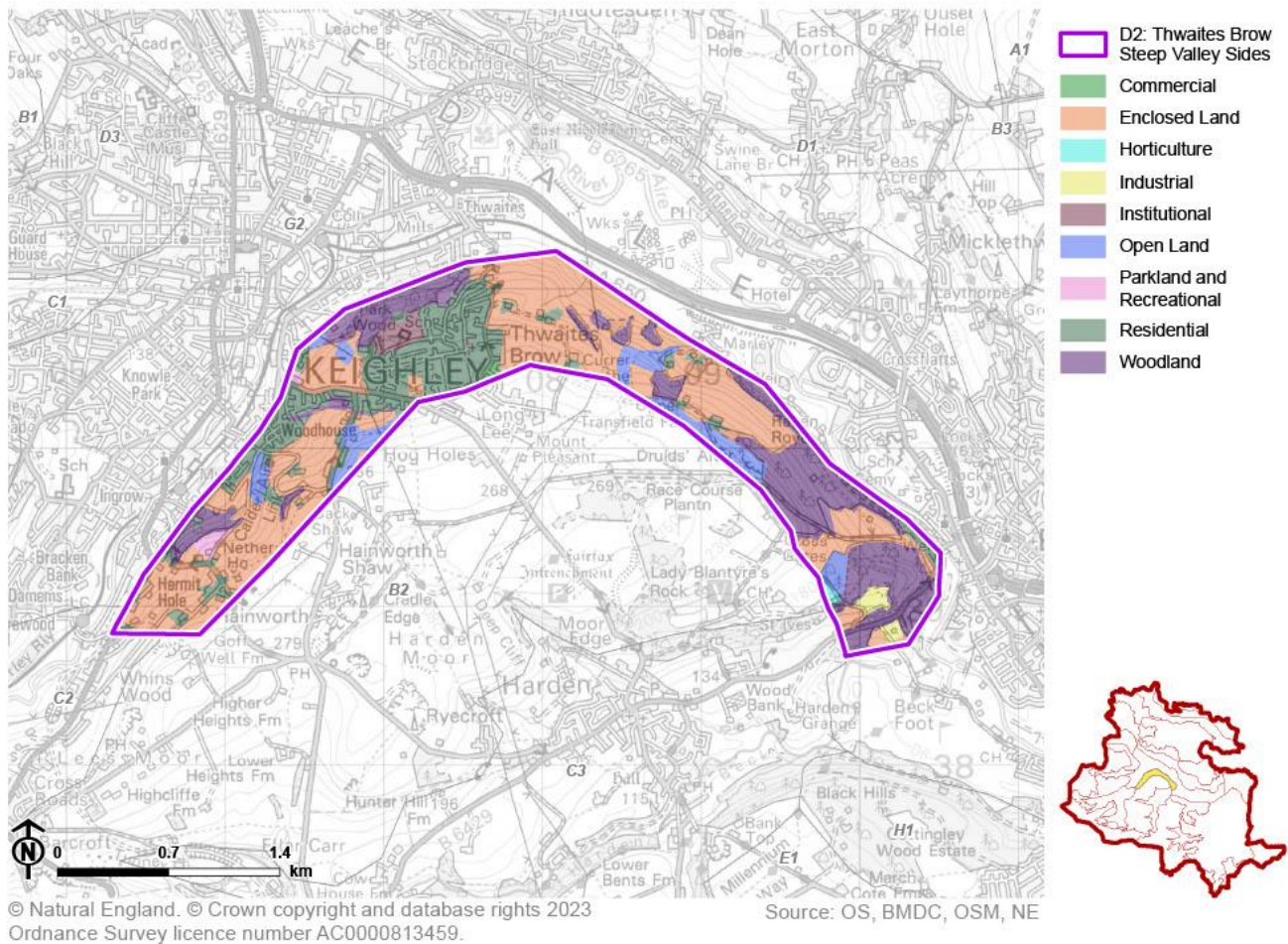
Figure 3.81: Priority habitat inventory of LCA D2



Land Use and Field Patterns

- Agricultural land is primarily semi-improved grassland used for grazing or cut for silage. This reflects the poor quality acidic soils and is characteristic of the wider area.
- The field pattern of agricultural land varies. West of Thwaites, piecemeal enclosure has resulted in irregular field boundaries bordered by drystone walls. Some boundary loss has increased the size of fields in this part of the landscape. East of Thwaites there are examples of distinctive surveyed enclosure, with a regular, straight narrow field pattern.
- In the south and east of the LCA, large parts of the landscape represent assart enclosure. This represents the ancient clearance of woodland cover to form farmland, associated with an individual farmstead and illustrates the long history of farming in this area. Intricate field patterns associated with this type of enclosure create a sense of time-depth.
- East of Thwaites Brow blocks of replanted woodland are also identified as being within the moorland line and enhance the connection to the upland moors.

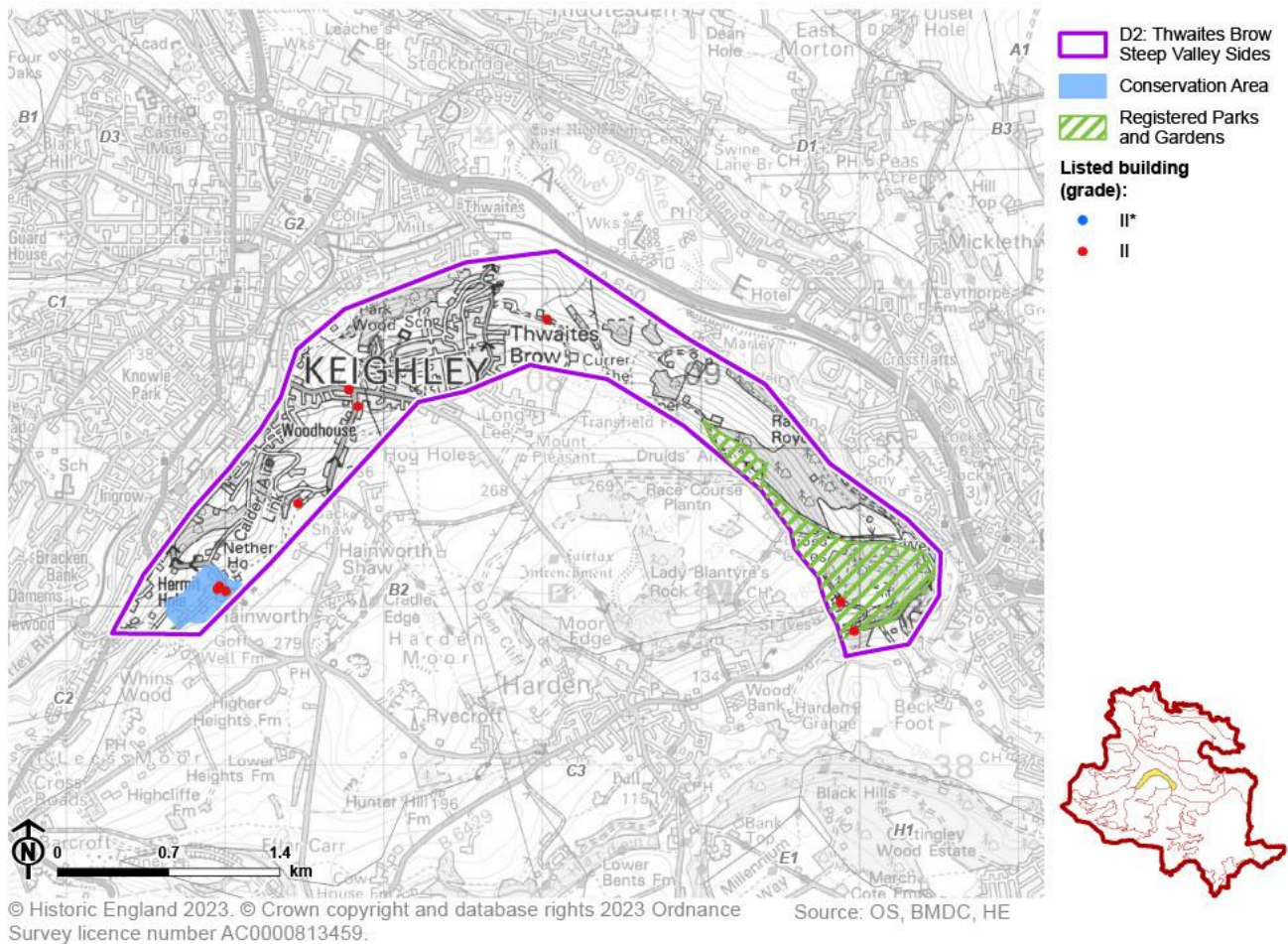
Figure 3.82: Historic landscape classification and cultural heritage of LCA D2



Cultural and Historic Landscape Character

- Within the more rural parts of the LCA, drystone walls contribute to the historic character and enhance the sense of place. This is more pronounced away from the more densely wooded parts of the landscape.
- The small settlement of Hainworth in the west is noted for its cultural significance and is designated as a conservation area. The hamlet developed predominantly in the 18th-19th centuries, when earnings from the textile industry in the wider landscape brought wealth to the local area, resulting in older farms and barns being rebuilt. There are a number of grade II listed buildings within Hainworth, including Hainworth Farmhouse and the K6 telephone kiosk outside Rose Cottage.
- Part of the St Ives Estate Registered Park and Garden sits within the south east section the LCA, informing a more formal historic character. There are two grade II listed buildings within the park: Bettys Lodge and the Entrance gate at Piers.
- Additional grade II listed buildings within the LCA reflect the historic agricultural history of the area. This includes Kirkstall Wood Farmhouse, 23 & 25 Glen Lee Lane (in Thwaites), a Guidestone and Jack Fields. The degree of ancient woodland within the area also contributes to the sense of time depth.

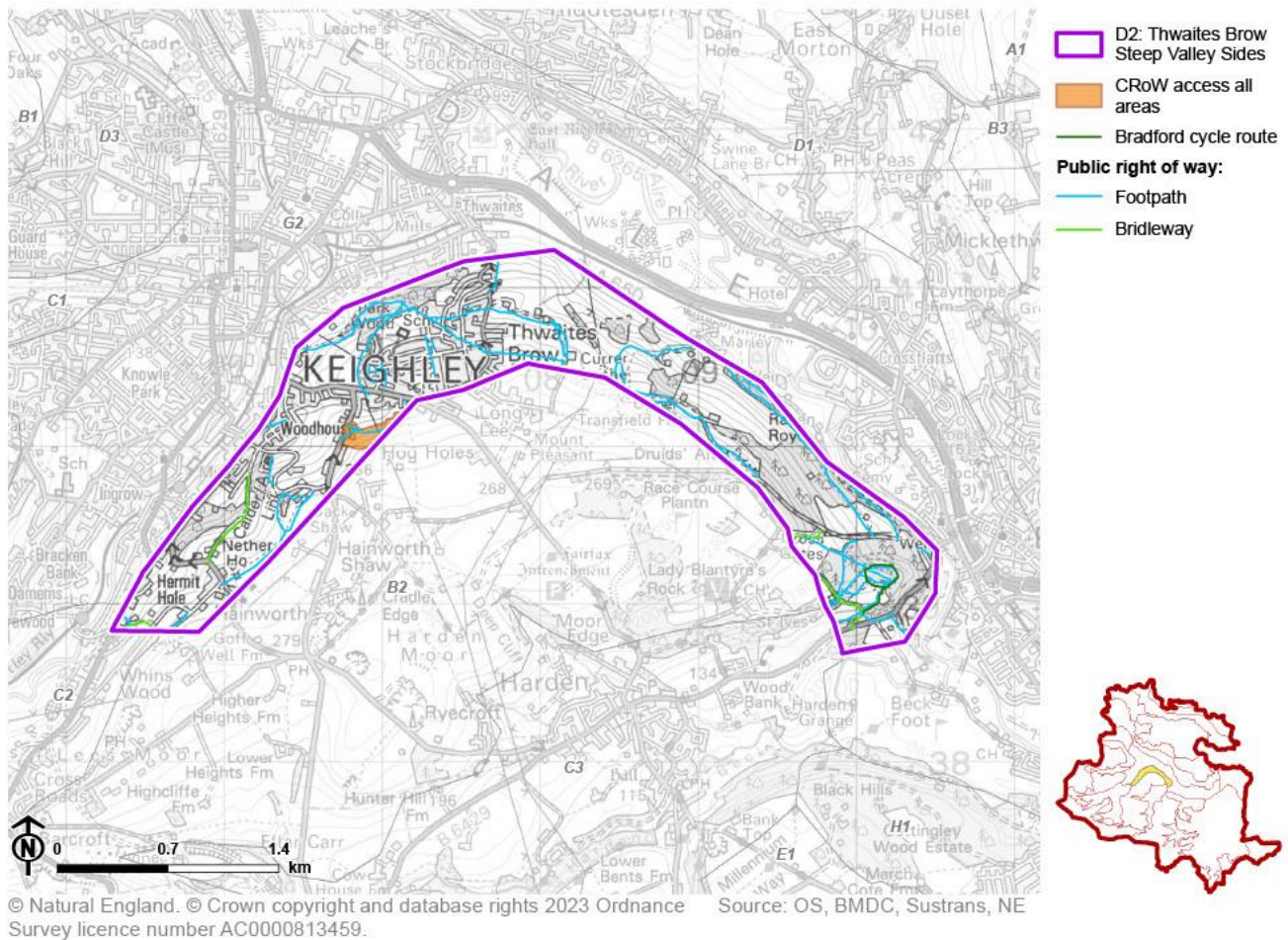
Figure 3.83: Cultural heritage of LCA D2



Settlement and Transport Pattern

- The main settlement in the LCA is Thwaites, which extends from the valley floor to the higher slopes in the centre of the LCA. Development here has occurred gradually since the 19th Century, with a mix of housing estates and old terraced rows throughout. The name Thwaites means 'land severed from a wood, grubbed up and made arable', and reflects the older woodland and agricultural land uses.
- Development on steep slopes makes the settlement prominent in views from the wider landscape. Existing woodland, tree belts and canopy cover around the settlement helps to integrate Thwaites into the wider landscape and softens views of the area from across the valley.
- The road network comprises narrow country lanes which meander up and down the steep slopes.

Figure 3.84: Access and recreation of LCA D2



Access and Recreation

- A connected network of public rights of way and lanes serves the LCA and provides connectivity from Thwaites into the wider landscape. In the south east this includes the Calder/Aire Link and Worth Way long distance walking routes.
- In the east, part of the LCA is within the St Ives Estate Registered Park and Garden which forms an important recreational asset. This includes Druid's altar, a popular local viewpoint and climbing attraction.
- At Hog Holes Brow an isolated area of open access land sits on the border between this LCA and B2 Cullingworth Moorland Fringe. This is a former quarry site and is characterised by rough scrubland and undulating topography.
- There are a number of playing fields and playgrounds close to the urban envelope of Thwaites. These are often connected to the wider network of public rights of way.

Views and Perceptual Qualities

- The sharply rising topography offers striking long-distance views across the Airedale Valley and across to the distinctive upland area of Rombalds Moor to the east, creating an open visual character with a strong sense of place.
- There is strong intervisibility across the Airedale Valley, including with the urban area of Keighley. This adds to the human influence on the landscape and reduces the sense of tranquillity. This is reflected in the higher levels of night blight at the bottom of the slopes and particularly along the edge of Keighley.
- Woodland blocks play an important role in enhancing natural character.

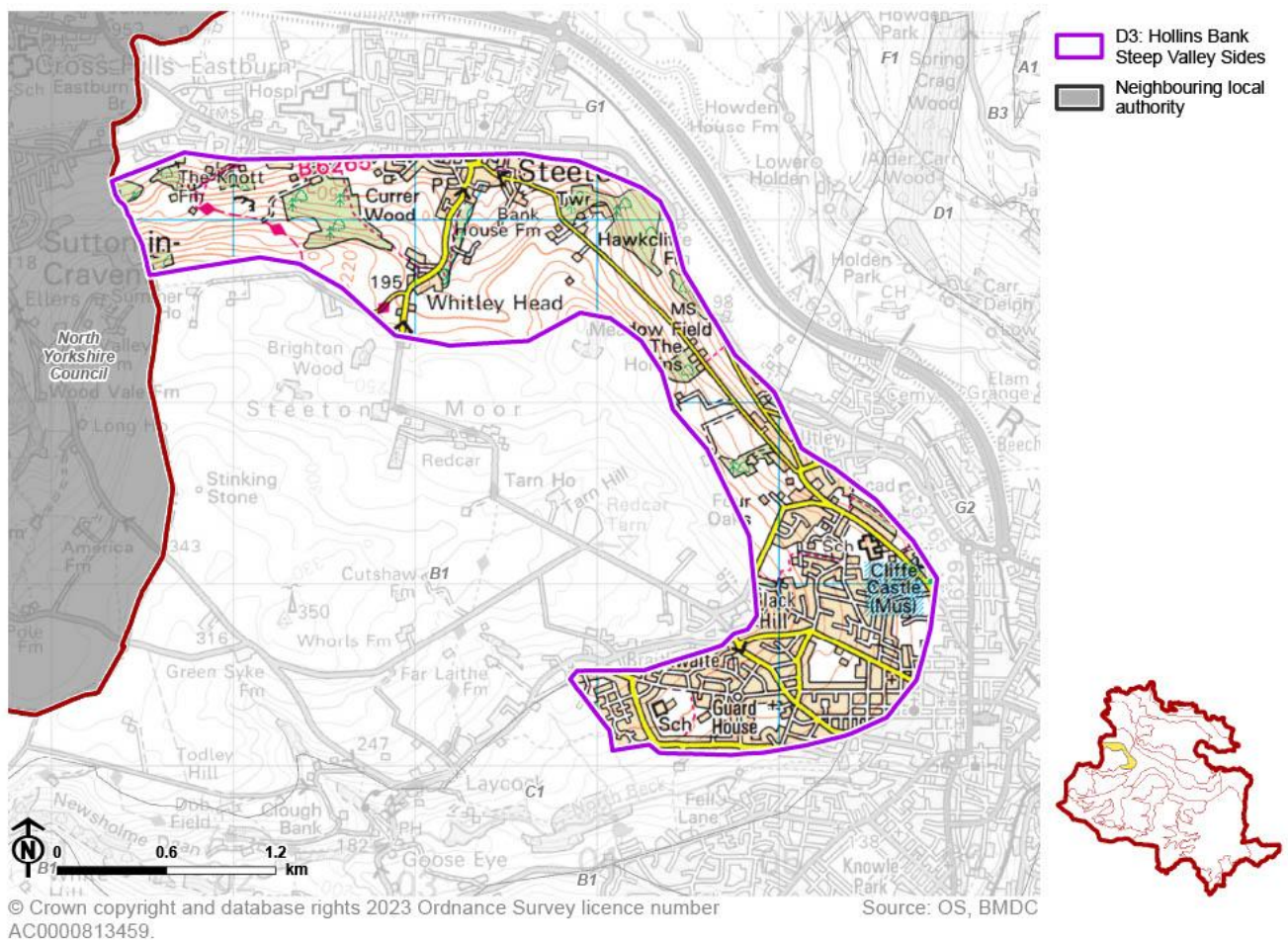
- Woodland creates a sense of enclosure in places which limits the relationship with the settled Airedale Valley, enhancing the localised sense of tranquillity in these areas.

D3. Hollins Bank Steep Valley Sides

Location, Context and Summary

The Hollins Bank Steep Valley Sides LCA comprises the steep slopes north west of Keighley which encompass the transition from the more urban Airedale Valley to the remote upland moorland fringe. The landscape is characterised by settlement on the lower slopes and pasture and moorland habitat at higher elevations. The south is dominated by the urban outskirts of Keighley. Ancient woodland blocks are important natural landscape features. The LCA is bordered in the north by the Upper and Central Airedale Settled Valley Floor (G1 and G2), in the east by B1: Keighley Moorland Fringe and in the south by C1: The Beck Upland Wooded River Valley.

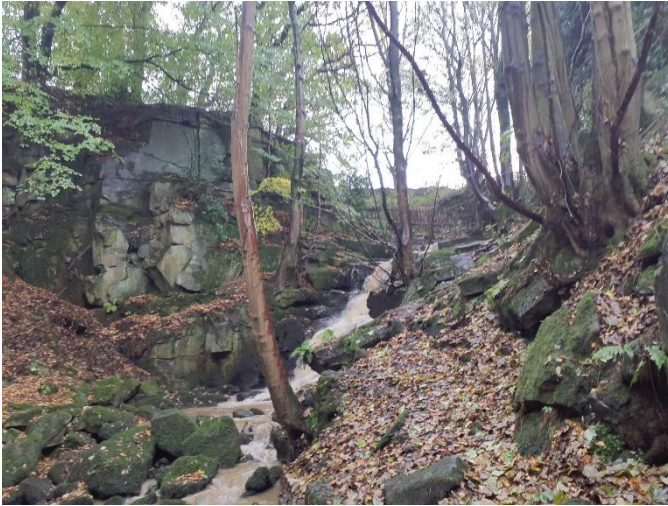
Figure 3.85: Location of LCA D3



Key Characteristics

- Steeply sloping landform which transitions from the busy and more urban settled valley floor to the remote and exposed upland farmland of the Keighley Moorland fringe.
- Acidic low-fertility soil has restricted farming, which is dominated by pasture.
- Piecemeal and surveyed enclosure bounded by drystone walls provides some sense of time-depth and enhances the sense of place.
- Woodland blocks, including ancient woodland, are present throughout the area, following the course of Steeton Beck and also on the steeper slopes.
- On the higher slopes, heathland and moorland vegetation is present and provides a link with the upland moorland fringes.
- Settlements within the area, most notably High Utleigh, originated as agricultural hamlets. This has since taken on a more urban character, associated with the local prosperity brought on by the industrial revolution.
- Views across the industrial Airedale Valley to the wooded slopes in the north provide a strong sense of place.
- Intact field patterns and drystone walls are typical of a distinctive Yorkshire upland fringe landscape.
- The patchwork of piecemeal enclosure, surveyed enclosure and woodland blocks informs a rich tapestry and provides visual interest.

Figure 3.86: Example photos from LCA D3



Priority habitat for deciduous woodland along Steeton Beck.



Tree avenues along Hollins Lane.



Grade II Gate Lodge Listed Building at Whinburn Registered Park and Garden.



Upland birch woodland within the moorland line near Eastburn Crag.



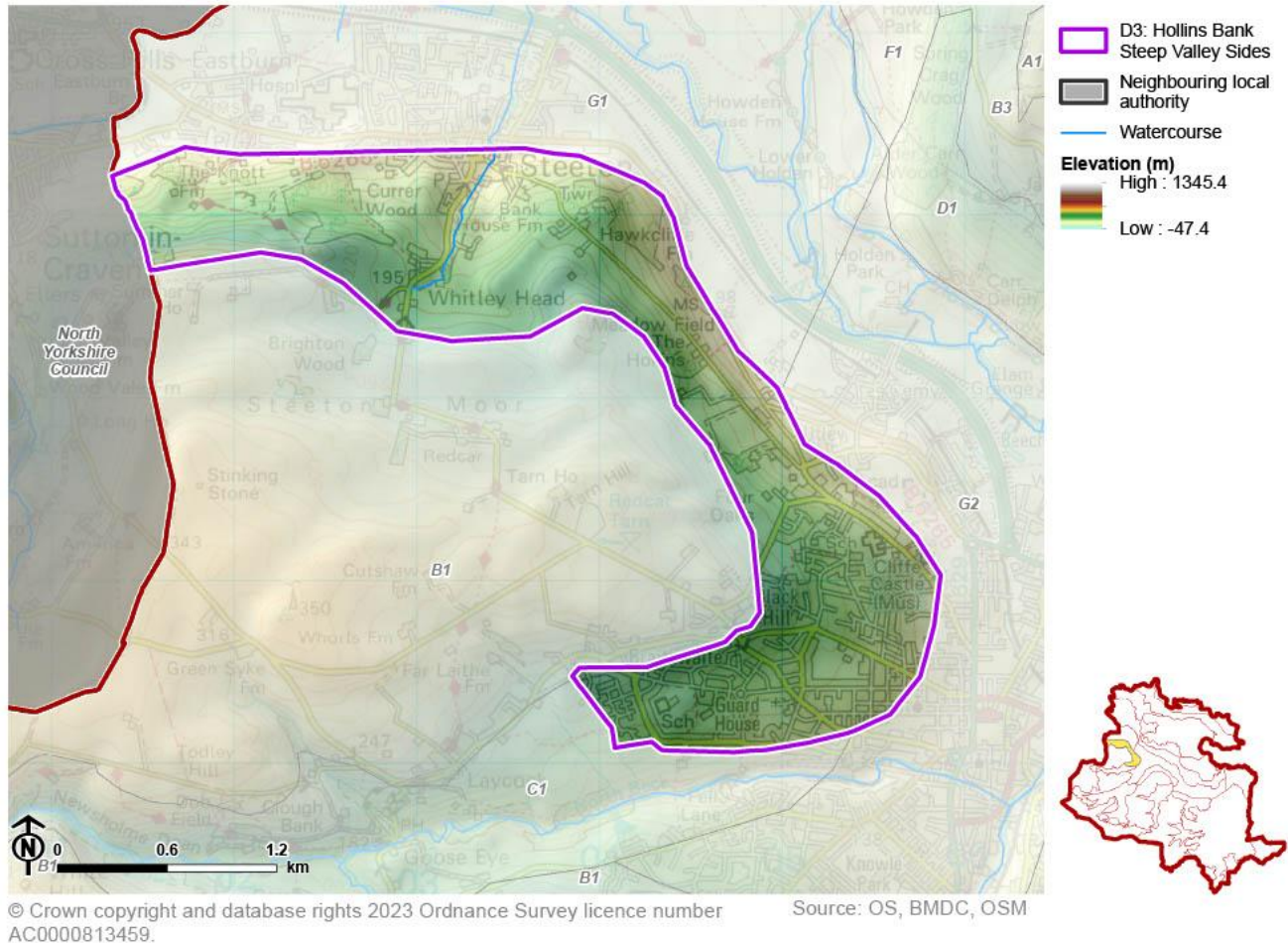
Drystone walls delineating piecemeal enclosure with Currer Wood behind.



Wooded slopes form backdrop to cobbled street at Eastburn.

Landscape Character

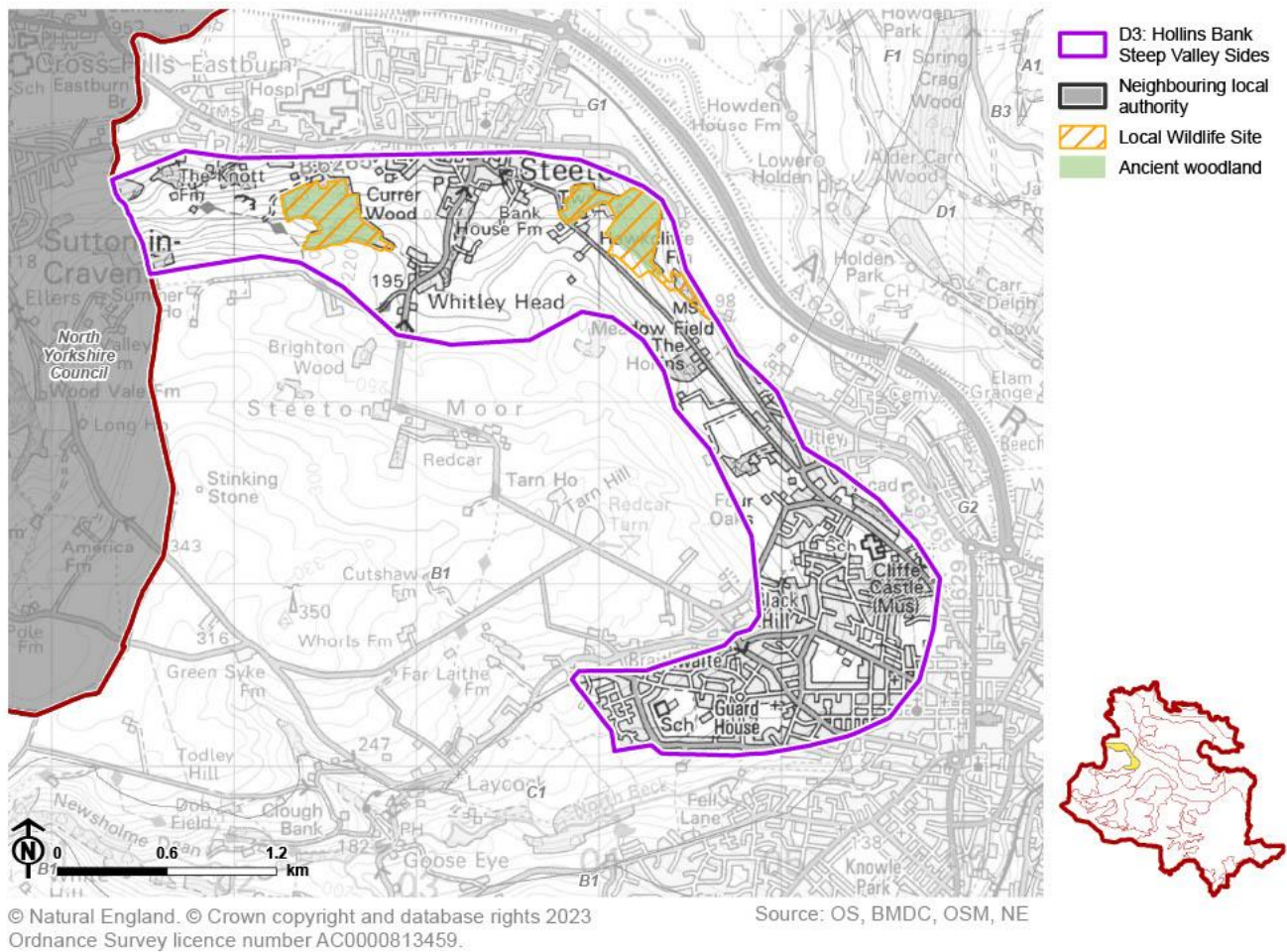
Figure 3.87: Topography of LCA D3



Geology, Soils, Topography and Drainage

- The underlying geology comprises Carboniferous sandstones, siltstones and mudstones, primarily from the Midgely Grit group, interbedded with sandstones, including the Addingham Edge Grit and Doubler Stones Sandstone.
- These rocks break down into low fertility acidic soils. There are three main groups of acidic soil within the area: feely draining loamy soils; loamy and clay soils with impeded drainage; and very acidic, wet, peaty soils.
- There is generally an absence of watercourses within the area, with the exception of Steeton Beck/Redding Gill.
- The topography is characterised by steep slopes rising from just over 100m AOD near the valley bottom on the northern and eastern edges to over 260m AOD on the tops of the slopes.

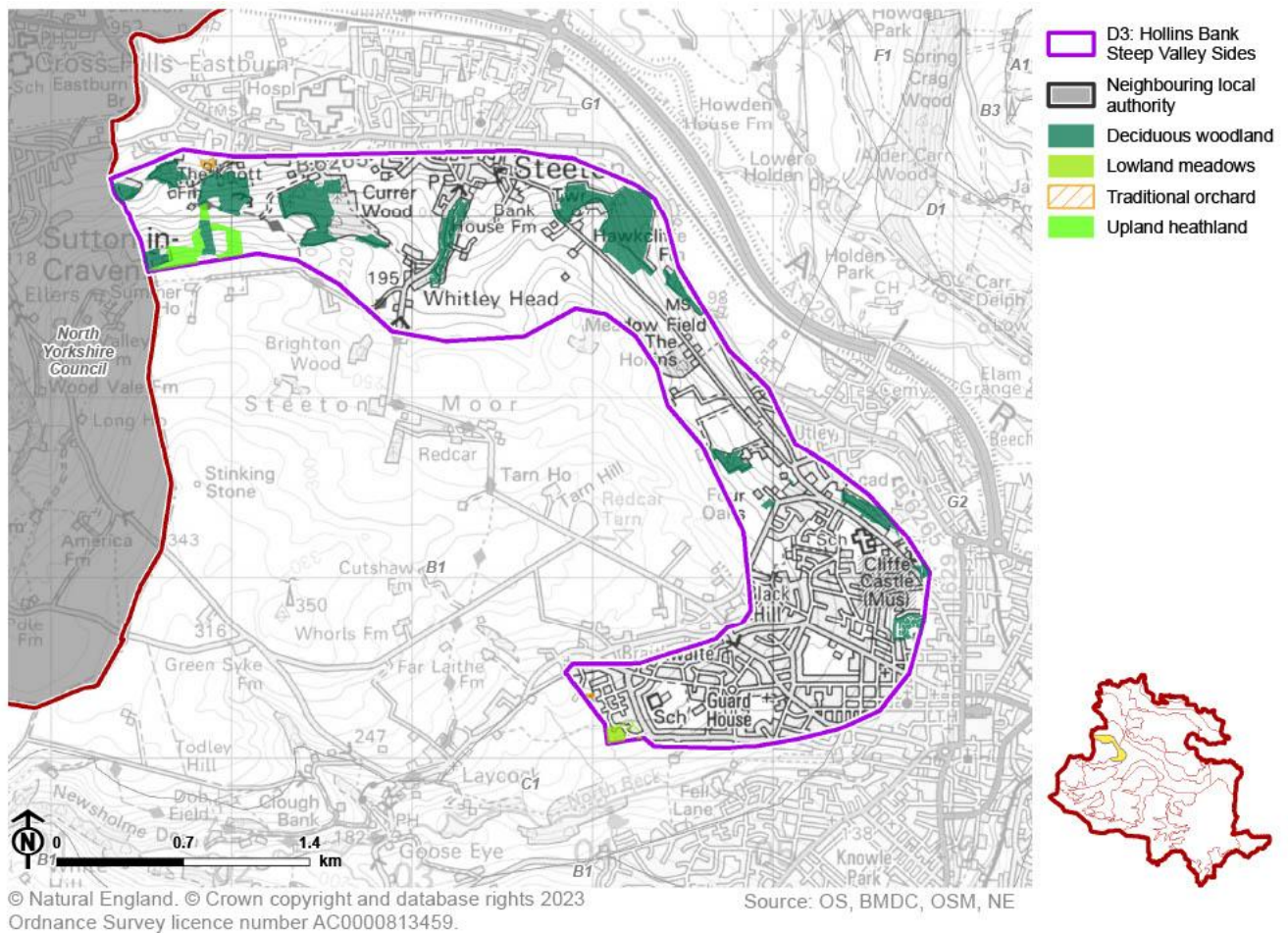
Figure 3.88: Natural heritage of LCA D3



Semi-natural Habitats and Tree Cover

- Tree cover provides the key ecological habitats in the area. Curren Wood and Hawkcliffe Wood are both defined as ancient woodland, identified as priority habitat for deciduous woodland and designated as local wildlife sites.
- The majority of the farmland within the area comprises semi-improved grassland which offers limited biodiversity value.
- At higher elevations there are areas within the moorland line, incorporating habitats associated with the upland moor landscape. These include priority habitat for upland heathland and areas of moorland at Eastburn Crag and Raven Stones.

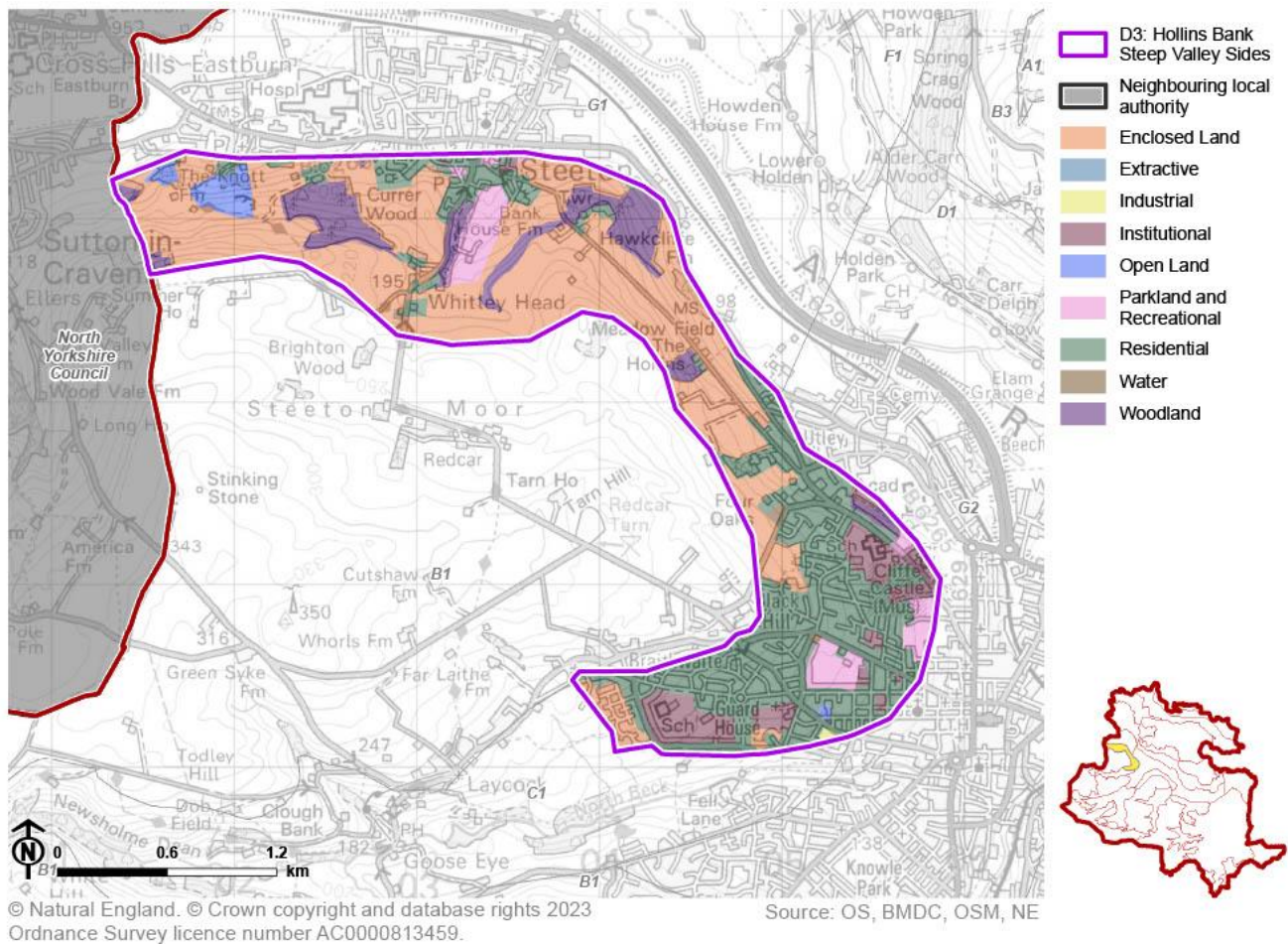
Figure 3.89: Priority habitat inventory of LCA D3



Land Use and Field Patterns

- Agricultural land is primarily semi-improved grassland used for grazing or cut for silage. This land use reflects both the poor quality acidic soils and the steepness of the slopes.
- The field pattern of agricultural land east and south of Steeton is primarily surveyed enclosure. Fields in this part of the landscape are characterised by straight field boundaries running perpendicular to the contours.
- Older piecemeal enclosure surrounds Currer Wood, to the west of Steeton. In places this is characterised by a small, irregular field pattern with a strong sense of time-depth, enhanced by the presence of drystone walls. Closer to the road network and settlements more recent field amalgamation has resulted in a larger scale fields.

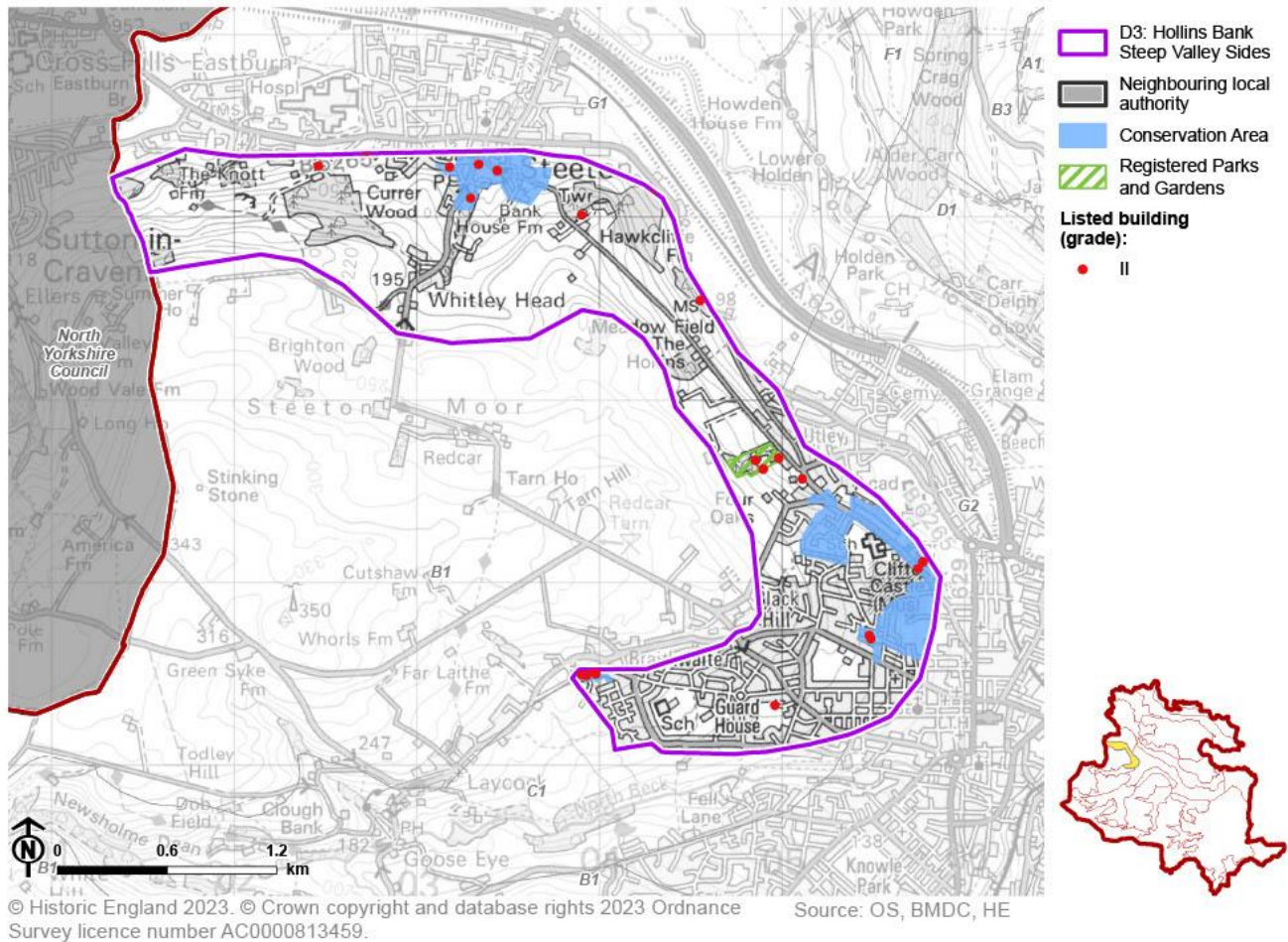
Figure 3.90: Historic landscape classification and cultural heritage of LCA D3



Cultural and Historic Landscape Character

- Within the more rural parts of the LCA, drystone walls contribute to the historic character and enhance the sense of place. This is more pronounced away from the wooded parts of the landscape.
- Listed buildings pre-dating the industrial revolution reflect the agricultural history of the area. These are found within the Braithwaite Conservation Area and the older parts of Steeton Conservation Area, concentrated on the thoroughfares of Old Main Street and Hollins Road (the historic main route between Keighley and Skipton) respectively.
- 18th and 19th century development within the conservation areas reflect growth associated with the introduction of industry linked to the waterways that Steeton is located on.
- In the south east, the LCA incorporates the upper parts of Keighley, High Utley and Low Utley. Development in the less elevated parts of Keighley reflects the local wealth that resulted from the industrial revolution. Devonshire Park and Cliffe Castle Conservation Area features large, detached properties and parks and gardens which showcase this wealth and the philanthropic movement during the industrial revolution.
- The more elevated sections of Keighley comprise modern development which has crept up the valley sides, outside of the natural topographical confines of the town.
- The late 19th/early 20th century Whinburn Grade II Registered Park and Garden, associated with Whinburn Lodge also reflects wealth accumulation from the areas industry. The Grade II listed Whinburn Lodge (also known as Whinburn Hall) and Lodge Gates are present within the park.

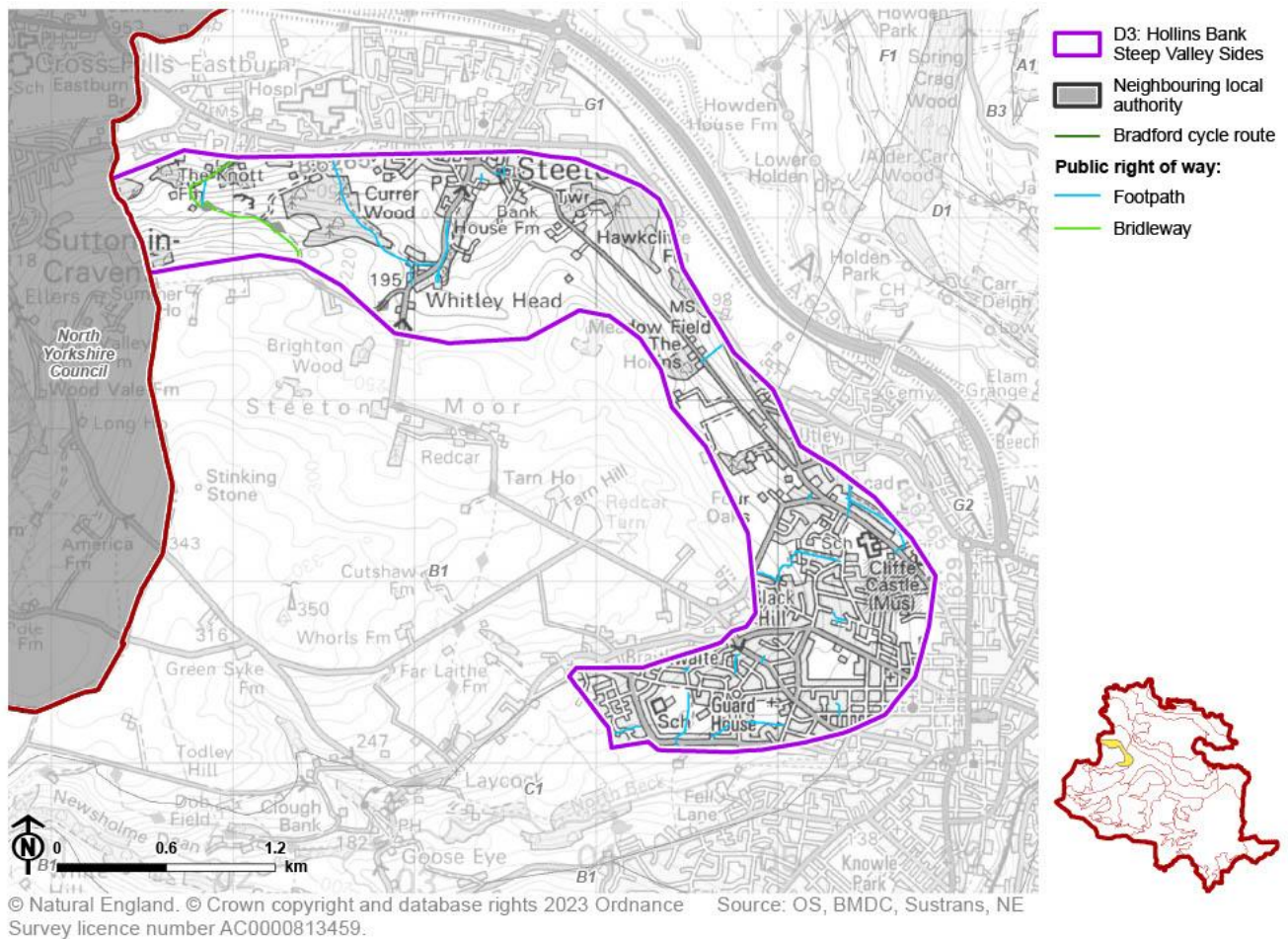
Figure 3.91: Cultural heritage of LCA D3



Settlement and Transport Pattern

- Settlements within the area, including Eastburn, Steeton and High Utleigh appear to rise up from the densely built development in the neighbouring Airedale Valley. Development is concentrated towards the lower slopes.
- Keighley is the exception to this as this settlement has expanded onto higher elevations and absorbed the once distinct village of Braithwaite. More modern development is characterised by straight, abrupt edges which are less integrated than the older historic cores.
- Development on steep slopes is characteristic of the area and forms a notable human element in views of the area from the wider landscape. Tree cover within the settlements softens views and helps integrates them into the landscape. This tree cover is more frequent within Keighley.
- The road network comprises narrow lanes and suburban streets, concentrated within the key settlements. Away from this, the main road network is provided by the ancient Hollins Bank Lane. An old toll road which provided the main link between Keighley and Skipton.

Figure 3.92: Access and recreation of LCA D3



Access and Recreation

- There is a limited network of public rights of way in the area, which comprises short and unconnected sections of footpath and bridleway. The exception to this is part of the Millennium Way long distance walking route which runs through the west of the area and provides connectivity into the wider landscape.
- Open spaces and playing pitches are concentrated within Keighley and have a limited relationship with more rural parts of the area.

Views and Perceptual Qualities

- The sharply rising topography offers long-distance views across the Airedale Valley and beyond to Rombalds Moor in the east. This creates an open visual character with a strong sense of place.
- There is strong intervisibility across the Airedale Valley, including with the central urban area of Keighley. This adds to the human influence on the landscape and reduces the sense of tranquillity. This is reflected in the higher levels of night blight at the bottom of the slopes and particularly along the edge of Keighley.
- Sounds associated with transport and industry within the Airedale Valley is perceptible throughout the LCA, in places mingling with the natural sounds of birdsong.
- Intact field patterns and drystone walls create a distinctive sense of place, characteristic of the typical upland Yorkshire landscape.

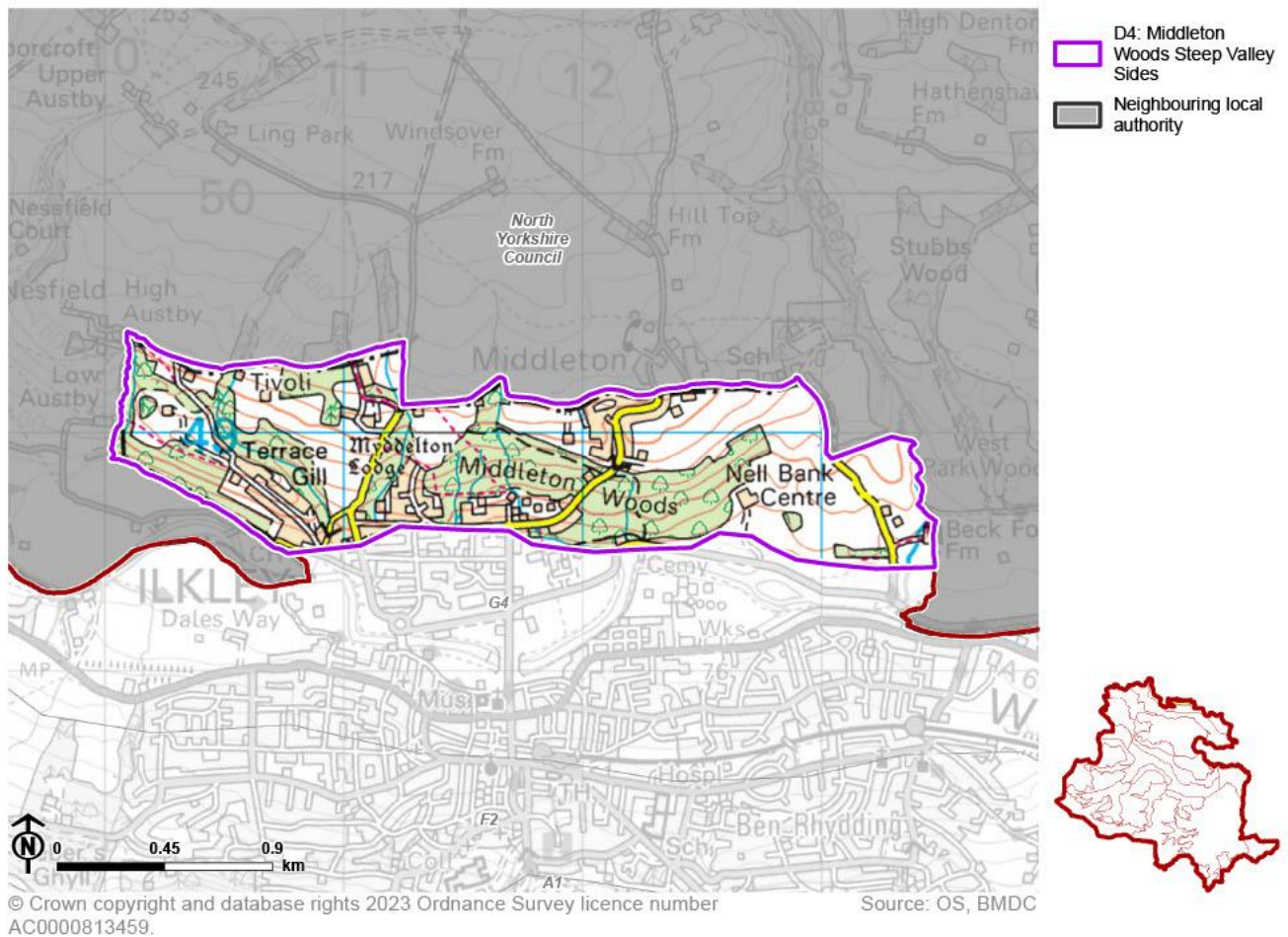
- There is contrast between the busy, urban character close to Keighley in the south east and the rural qualities associated with pasture and woodland at higher elevations in the west. The various influences across the LCA add interest and create a dynamic perception of the landscape.

D4. Middleton Woods Steep Valley Sides

Location, Context and Summary

The Middleton Woods Steep Valley Sides LCA comprises the wooded slopes north of Ilkley. The area encompasses numerous areas of woodland and some limited settlement expansion from the south. The slopes form part of the transition from the pastoral landscape further north to the settled valley floor to the south. Many of the woodlands in this area are ancient and reflect the historic natural landscape which has long been a key feature of the broad valley sides along the River Wharfe. This LCA is distinguished from the low-lying and densely settled Wharfedale Settled Valley Floor to the south.

Figure 3.93: Location of LCA D4



Key Characteristics

- A sloping, undulating landform which falls from pastoral uplands in the north to the more settled Wharfe Valley to the south.
- The underlying geology is generally comprised of Millstone grit, giving rise to more acidic soils and limiting arable farming across the slopes.
- Bow Beck and Old Wives Gill pass through areas of woodland in the far west and east of the area, draining to the River Wharfe in the south.
- Large cohesive areas of woodland, many of which are ancient, cover the slopes and form a natural boundary to settlement in the south.
- Pastoral fields extend into the area from the north, with a mix of hedgerow and fence boundaries which contribute to a strong sense of place.
- A limited number of public rights of way cross through the woodlands from Ilkley, including the promoted Harrogate Link long distance route which connects to the popular Dales Way further south.
- Settlement within the area has primarily expanded outwards from Ilkley, extending and filling gaps in the woodland cover across the slopes.
- Distant southerly views from higher and more open locations to Rombalds Moor provide a strong sense of place, with views more limited by the extensive areas of woodland trees further down the slopes in proximity to Ilkley.
- The more exposed northern extents of the area in proximity to the pastoral fields within Nidderdale AONB have a stronger sense of remoteness and separation from the settled valleys below. Within the southern, heavily wooded extents of the LCA, there is a stronger sense of enclosure and localised sense of place.

Figure 3.94: Example photos from LCA D4



Ancient Woodland at Coppy Wood.



Middleton Woods form a backdrop to pastoral fields, and visual connection to Rombalds Moor beyond.



Dense hedgerows and mature trees along the small rural lanes.



Views north towards the Nidderdale ANOB are foreshortened by rising land form.



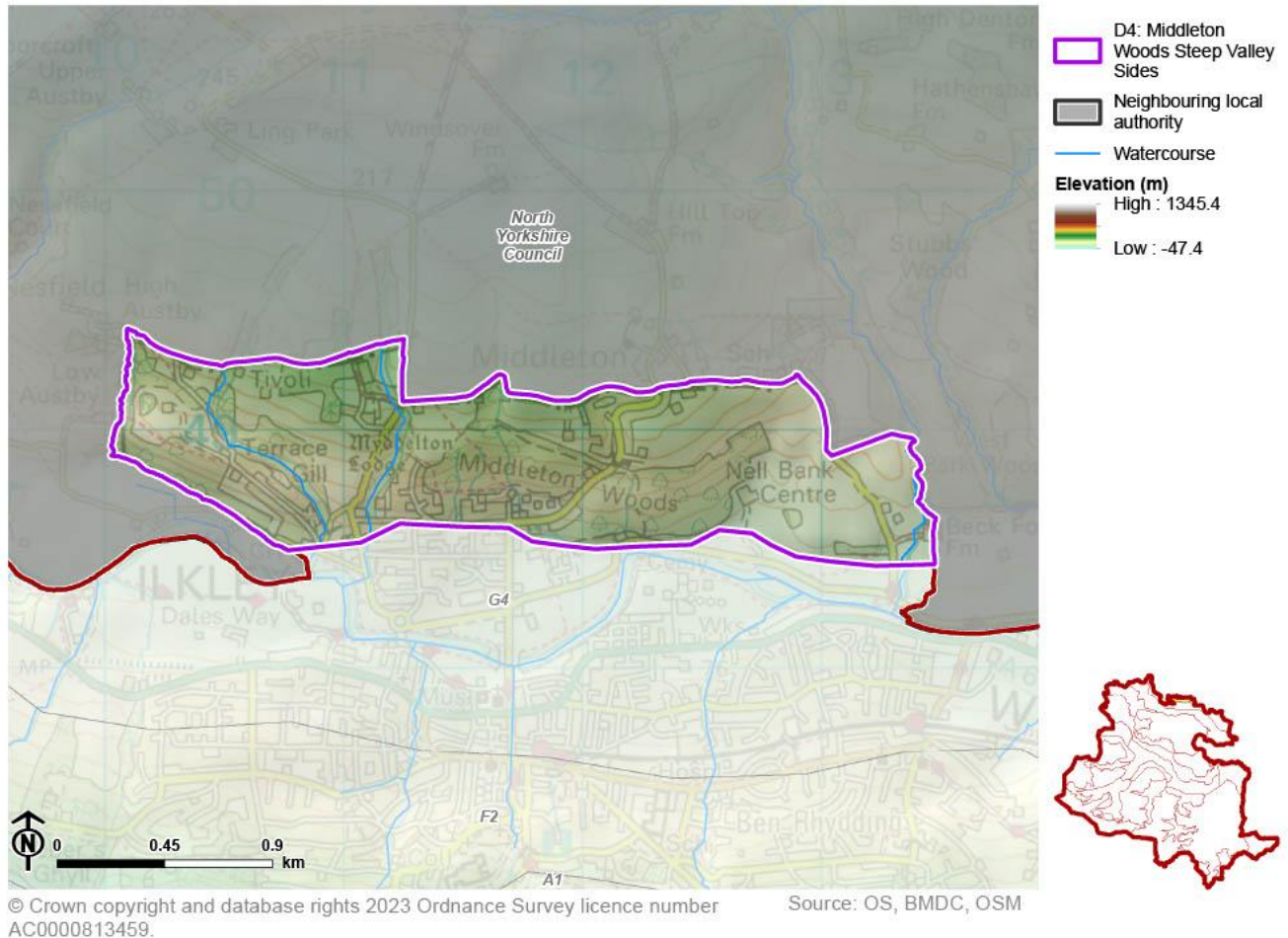
Open access land within Middleton Wood provides recreational value.



Wooded slopes are crossed by public footpaths.

Landscape Character

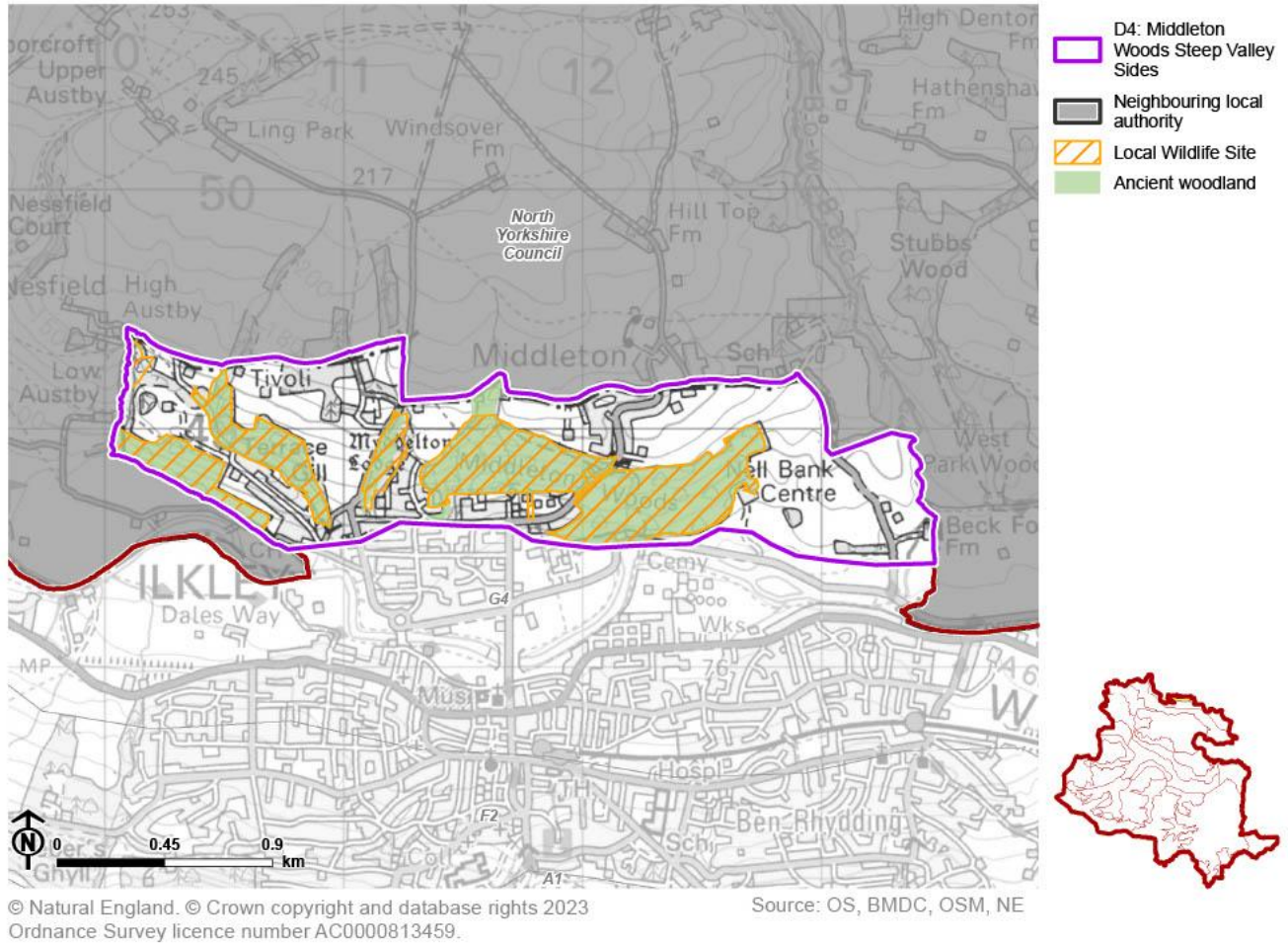
Figure 3.95: Topography of LCA D4



Geology, Soils, Topography and Drainage

- The underlying geology comprises Carboniferous mudstone, siltstone and sandstone from the Millstone Grit Group. The undulating landform across the LCA is a result of the softer mudstones, and has given rise to predominantly pastoral land use, where not covered by woodland.
- The landform consistently slopes toward the river, falling from around 180m AOD along the northern ridge to approximately 90m AOD at the southern boundary in proximity to the River Wharfe.
- Although there are no major watercourses within the LCA, multiple smaller streams flow down the slopes and through woodlands to reach the River Wharfe.
- Along the eastern edge of the LCA, Bow Beck forms a slightly larger watercourse, meandering through dense riparian woodland, and connecting March Ghyll Reservoir in the north (in neighbouring North Yorkshire) with the River Wharfe in the south.

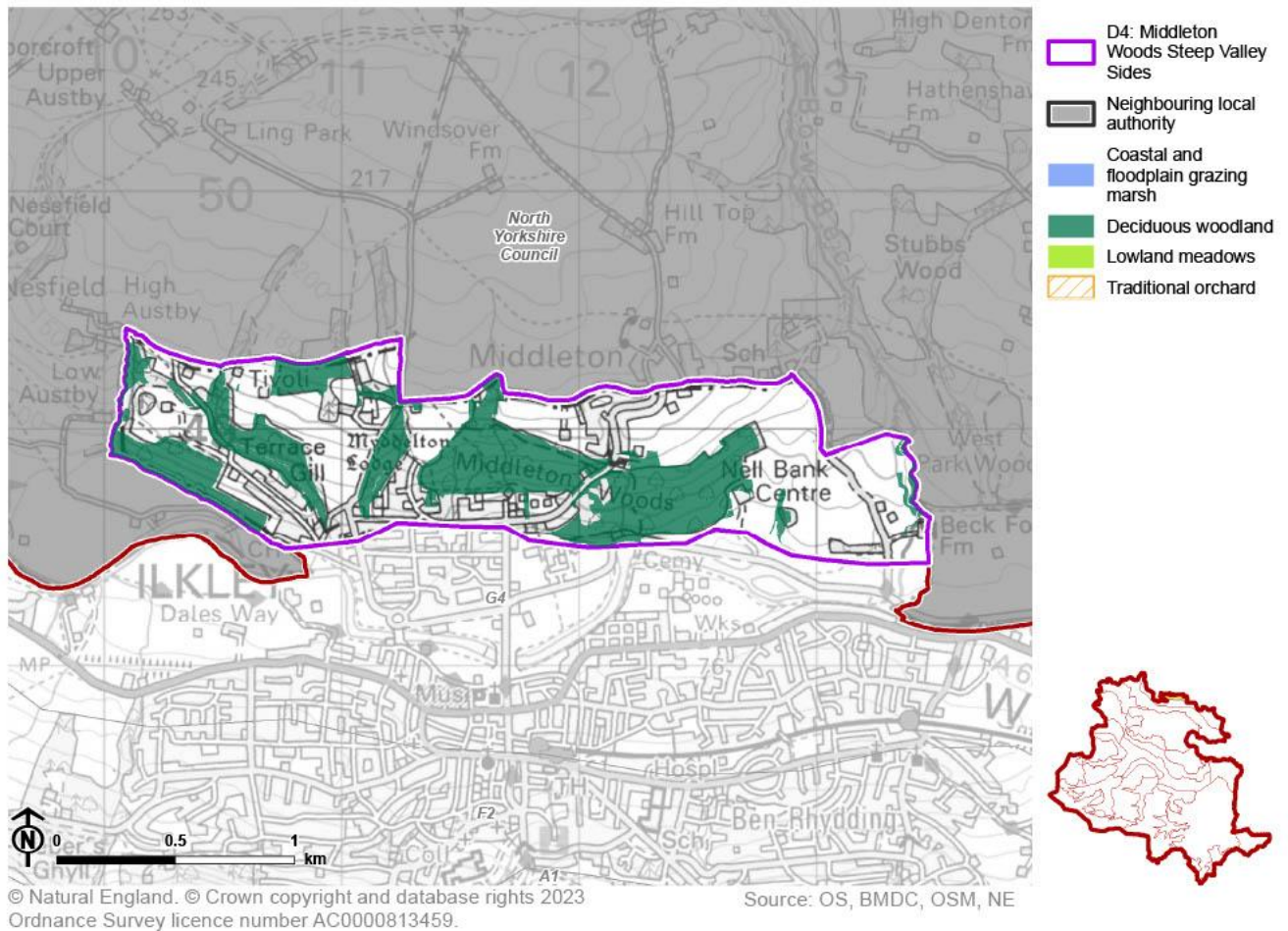
Figure 3.96: Natural heritage of LCA D4



Semi-natural Habitats and Tree Cover

- The LCA is dominated by broadleaved woodland, most of which is defined as ancient woodland and also identified as priority habitat deciduous woodland. Middleton Woods is a Woodland Trust site, and frequently attracts springtime visitors due to its bluebell display.
- Within pastoral fields in the north and east, mature field trees provide ecological connectivity between larger pockets of woodland.
- A number of small watercourses meander through dense riparian woodland across the slopes (notably Old Wives/Terrace Gill to the west and Bow Beck to the east) flowing south towards the River Wharfe.
- Several springs are found across the western extents of the area, throughout pastoral fields around Austby Farm and Myddleton Lodge. A waterfall adjoins a small watercourse at the top of Middleton Woods in the centre of the LCA.

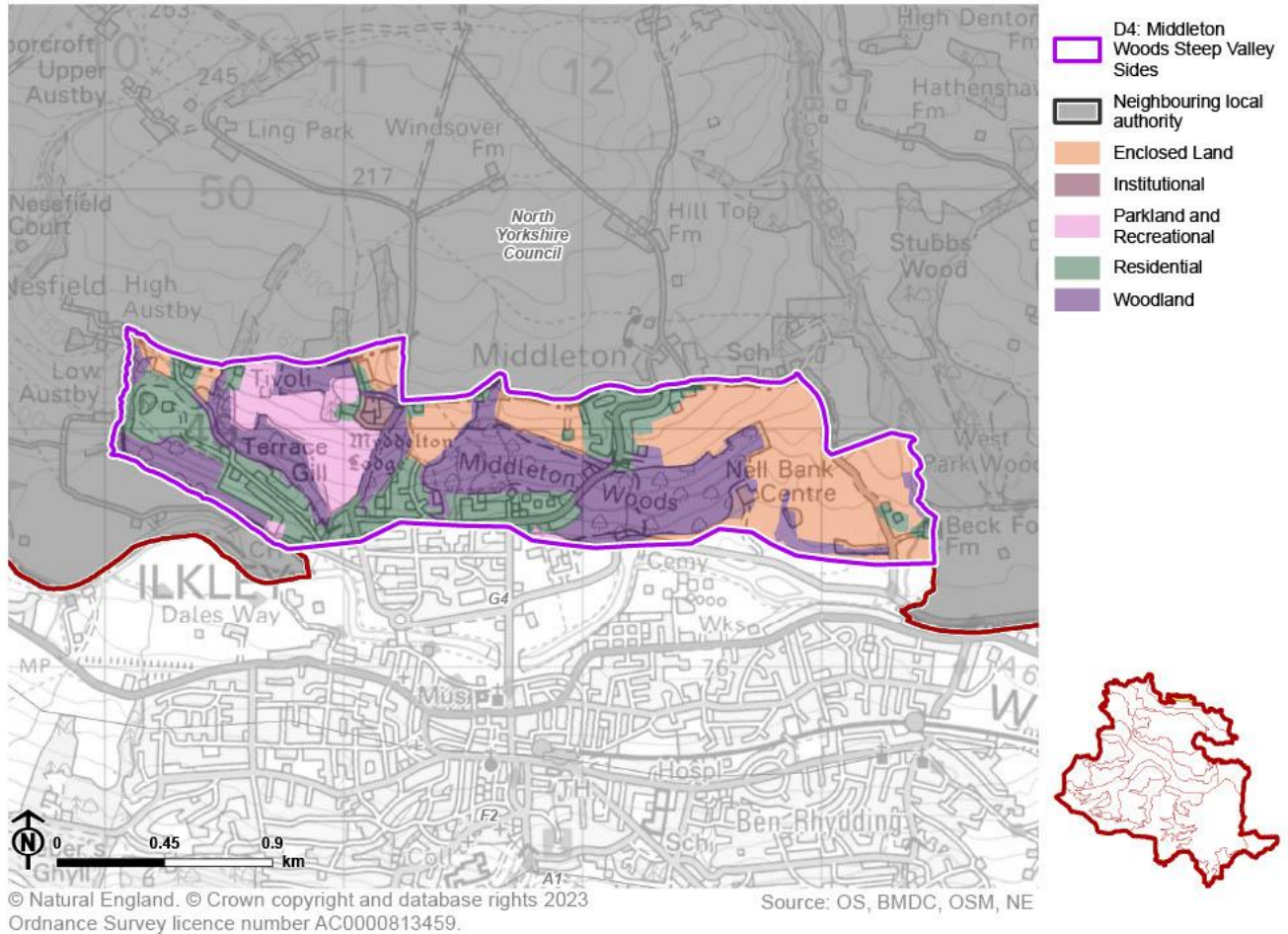
Figure 3.97: Priority habitat inventory of LCA D4



Land Use and Field Patterns

- Agricultural land is primarily pastoral, and generally well-enclosed by the numerous and large areas of woodland within the LCA. Some isolated areas of arable use sit at the eastern edge of the LCA.
- There is an absence of a continuous field pattern, as pastoral fields are separated by the extensive and dense areas of woodland. Field boundaries are somewhat irregular, bounded by meandering woodland edges and streams, resulting in a more organic and fragmented pattern.
- In the north along Slates Lane and Carter's Lane, there has been some loss of internal field boundaries, with late 19th century field agglomeration and straightened boundaries originating from earlier piecemeal enclosure fields. Wooden post and rail fencing has replaced hedgerows in places.
- Designed landscapes associated with some of the larger estate and manor houses (particularly Myddleton Lodge) provide visual interest and are ensconced within large blocks of woodland, contributing to the more pastoral and wooded nature of the LCA.

Figure 3.98: Historic landscape classification and cultural heritage of LCA D4

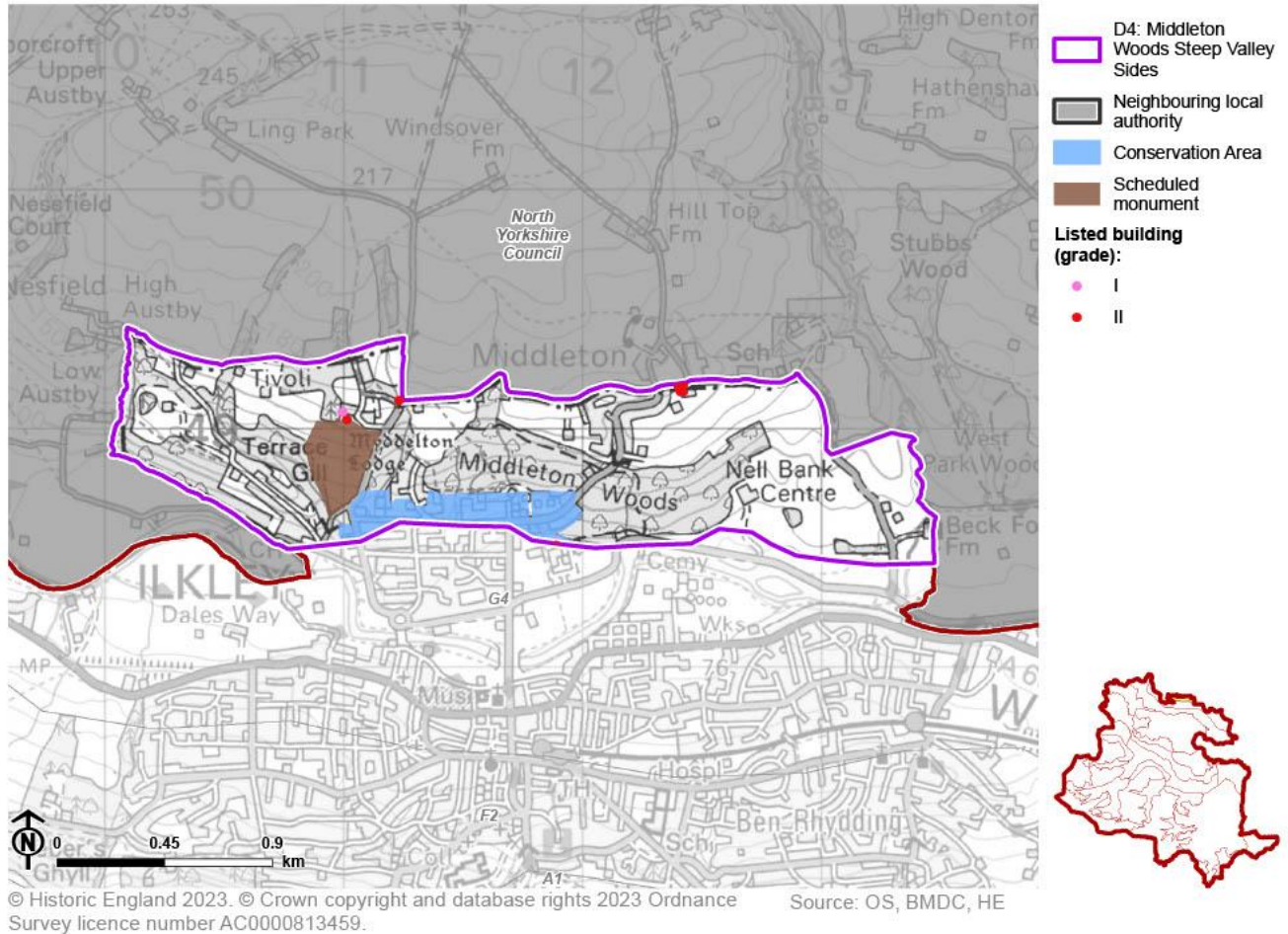


Cultural and Historic Landscape Character

- Across the LCA, traditional hedgerows contribute to the historic character and enhance the sense of place.
- The Grade I Listed Myddleton Lodge sits in an elevated position on slopes to the north, with expansive views over the Wharfe Valley, the settlement of Ilkley and Rombalds Moor beyond. The immediate pastoral landscape is designated as a Scheduled Monument, as part of the historic open field system associated with the lodge.
- A cluster of listed buildings at Grange Farm illustrates the long standing agricultural history of the area.
- The LCA contains the northern extents of the Middleton Conservation Area. The settlement of Middleton was constructed in the early 20th century as an *“exclusive, leafy housing estate for middle-class commuters, with large houses set in generous plots along broad avenues”*⁸.

⁸ Middleton Conservation Area Assessment (2005) City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

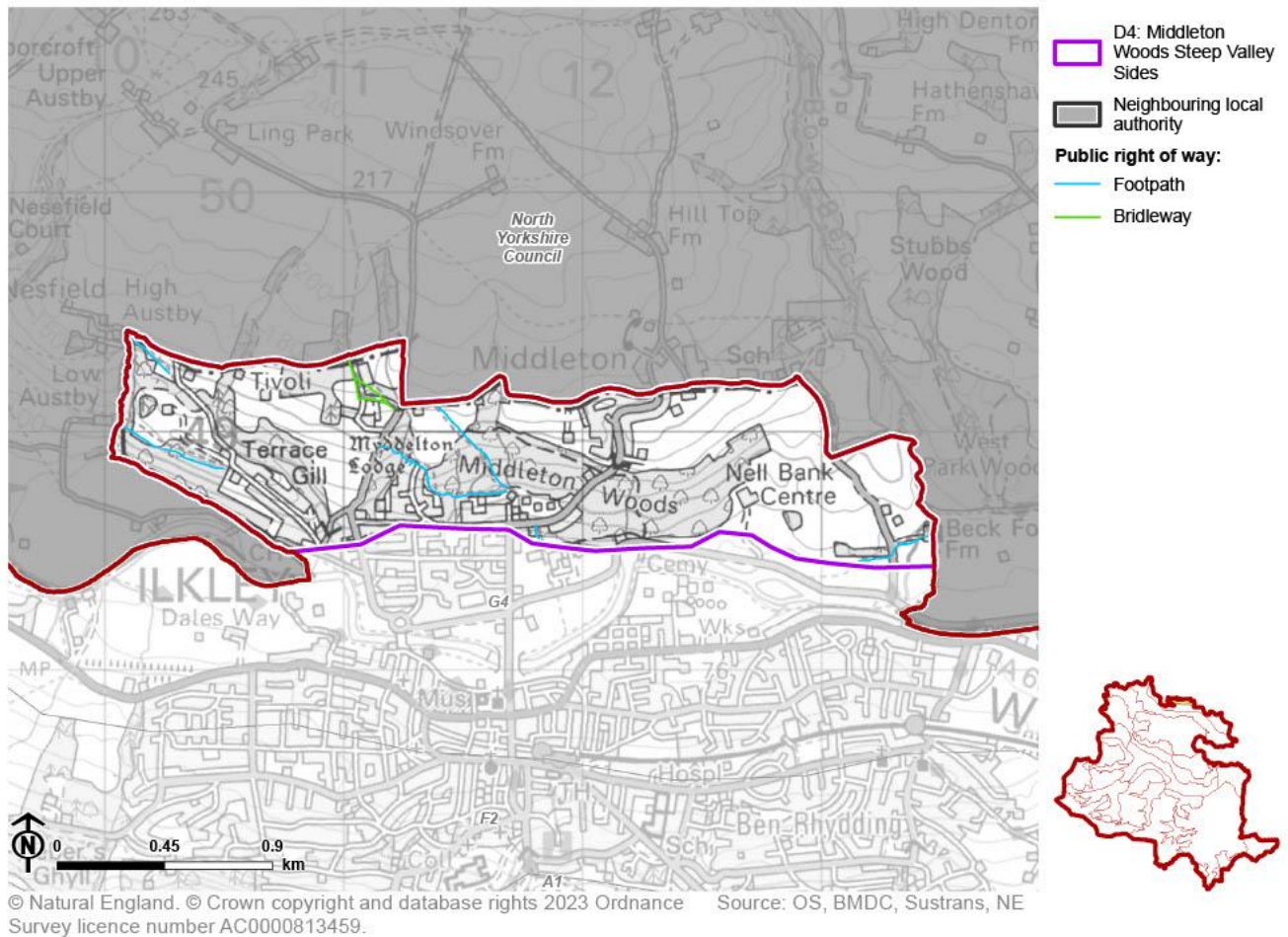
Figure 3.99: Cultural heritage of LCA D4



Settlement and Transport Pattern

- With the exception of Myddleton Lodge, there was very limited development in the area prior to the 20th century. The key settlement areas at present are the edge of Ilkley (including the Middleton Conservation Area, and additional more recent development around it) and modern development in the north east extending south from the historic hamlet of Middleton.
- In general, settlement extending up the slopes from Ilkley has been contained by areas of broadleaved woodland, and as a result is generally well-enclosed and integrated into the surrounding landscape, offering a softened settlement edge. Modern developments along Slates Lane on the northern edge of the LCA are more exposed, with limited enclosing vegetation or landforms.

Figure 3.100: Access and recreation of LCA D4



Access and Recreation

- There are a limited number of public rights of way in the LCA, most of which pass through the woodlands, including the Harrogate Link long distance walking route which follows Curly Hill roadway through Middleton Wood and connects to the long distance Dale Way at Ilkley Moor.
- Middleton Woods is open to public access and contains an orienteering circuit.

Views and Perceptual Qualities

- Views within the LCA are limited by the numerous areas of woodland, although the rising landform of Rombalds Moor can be seen intermittently above the tree line. Along Carter's Lane in the east, expansive views across the Wharfe Valley and to the rising moorlands beyond are afforded by the more pastoral nature of the surrounding landscape with limited areas of woodland.
- The numerous areas of woodland and pastoral fields contribute to a rural and tranquil setting, with limited, well-enclosed areas of modern development. Larger farm structures are visible along Carter's Lane in the east, which retains a more exposed settlement edge and somewhat reduces the strongly rural perception across the LCA.
- The northern extents of the LCA are more tranquil, being separated from areas of dense settlement to the south by the extensive areas of woodland across the central belt of the area. Areas at the southern edges of the woodland possess a more suburban fringe character, being located at the edge of Ilkley to the south.

Pressures and Forces for Change – LCT D: Steep Valley Sides

Climate Change

- Climate change leading to increased periods of drought may result in lower water levels and stream flows, which may impact riparian vegetation along the numerous becks found in the LCAs.
 - D1: Impacts on riparian vegetation and lowland meadow along Ghyll Beck, Morton Beck, and Loadpit Beck.
 - D2: Impacts on riparian woodland and acid grassland along the numerous small becks near Thwaites Brow and Marley Brow, and along Hogs Hole Beck.
 - D3: Impacts on riparian vegetation along Steeton Beck and Redding Gill, altering the visual character of the wooded watercourses trailing up the steep slopes.
 - D4: Impacts on vegetation along the wooded Bow Beck along the eastern boundary of the LCA, and Terrace Gill in the west, as well as smaller watercourses through Middleton Woods in the centre of the area.
- Climate change may result in periods of very sudden and significant rainfall, potentially altering the condition of incised water courses within the wooded cloughs, and causing flooding issues in the Wharfe and Airedale Valleys.

Agricultural Change

- Changing agricultural practices could result in traditional drystone wall field boundaries not being maintained, and field amalgamation. This would erode the valued and intricate field pattern typical of the Yorkshire upland fringe landscape
- Changing grazing pressure, as a result of climate change and changing agricultural practices could result in erosion or removal of valued areas of medieval assarts, typically found around historic agricultural settlements and indicative of the long-standing agricultural settlement in the area.
 - D1: Remnant areas of assarts to the east and west of Baildon and east of Eldwick may be further eroded by field amalgamation and modernisation, reducing the sense of time-depth across the landscape.
 - D2: Impacts on intact areas of assarts in the centre and west of the LCA, east of Thwaites near Marley Brow. Some loss of enclosing woodland and hedgerow, and modern amalgamation in proximity to the A650.

Development

- New development extending up valley sides could potentially erode or fragment the large swathes of woodland across the slopes, interrupting existing ecological networks.
 - D4: The ancient and priority habitat deciduous woodlands at Middleton Woods across the centre of the LCA may be at risk from additional northwards settlement from the settled Wharfe Valley below.
- New development with more exposed edges, in contrast to the historic settlements enclosed within dense woodland, may be more visible on steep slopes rising from the settled valley below. This may interrupt the visual connection between the wooded valley slopes and the upland moors, and the rural setting provided to the settled valleys.
 - D1: Modern cul-de-sac development north of Baildon and east of Eldwick is more exposed, with limited enclosing woodland typical of more historic settlement, altering the perception of wooded slopes gently transitioning into upland moors and pasture.
 - D2: New development around Thwaites has impacted on the rural character, particularly in the west.
 - D4: Settlement expansion at the northern edge of Ilkley could fragment the swathe of woodland which sweeps across the centre of the LCA.
- New or additional lighting schemes accompanying new development may impact the dark skies qualities.

Habitat Management and Environmental Initiatives

- Introduction of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and habitat banking related to Biodiversity Net Gain could alter the existing character through landscape-scale habitat creation and enhancements including management changes in some areas. Such changes should take into consideration the key characteristics of the landscape and seek to build upon and enhance character.
- New pathogens and pests are increasingly putting pressure on natural habitats, most notably ash dieback, in woodlands which result in the need for tree felling to manage this risk.
 - D3: Ash dieback has already led to tree loss within St Ives Estate. Additional tree loss will contribute to significant visual change to the LCA. The impact of this will be dependent on the scale of replanting and landscape management to mitigate this.
- Increasing incentives for tree planting, particularly on slopes surrounding the Aire valley as part of the White Rose Forest's Landscapes for Water initiative. Trees, when not located appropriately, may have a detrimental impact on key views out from the steep valley sides, across the settled Aire and Wharfe valley bottoms to adjacent moors.
 - D2, D3: New woodland planting, once mature, has the potential to screen and interrupt views out across the Airedale Valley and to the dramatic form of Rombalds Moor, which provides a strong sense of place.

Heritage at Risk

- The setting to scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens are at risk of being degraded or altered in character without appropriate management of development and recreational pressures.
 - D1: The rural upper valley side setting of the Saltaire World Heritage Site may be affected by new developments on the slopes of Baildon Moor.
 - D1: The prehistoric stone circle Soldier's Trench, near Baildon, has experienced significant footfall and trampling of vegetation, altering the character of the setting.
 - D2: Strategic felling at Betty's Wood (for disease control) may alter the setting and backdrop to the adjacent St Ives Estate, which contributes a more formal parkland character in the south east of the LCA.
 - D2: Key views towards Baildon Moor from Druid's Altar may be threatened by significant tree planting, which could obscure views, tree felling (for example for disease control), and new developments.
 - D3: Development encroaching up the slopes from High Utley could impact on the rural setting of Whinburn Registered Park and Garden, which is on the Heritage at Risk Register.
 - D4: Encroachment up the slopes from Ilkley may impact on the open and landscaped parkland setting of Myddleton Lodge, and its strong visual connection to Rombalds Moor.

Tourism, Recreation and Access Pressure

- Increased pressure on recreational assets which connect the settlements to more remote adjacent uplands could impact landscape condition and the sense of place in these transitional landscapes.
 - D1: Impacts from recreational cycling along public paths near the wooded Ghyll Beck extending out into rising upland slopes to the east.
 - D1: Near Mickethwaite, enhancements to public rights of way infrastructure, including waymarking and interpretation between Bradford and Saltaire World Heritage Site, would be beneficial in helping to minimise impacts on rural character and would provide education and awareness of the landscape and World Heritage Site setting.
 - D2: Potential proposals to develop St Ives Estate as a Country Park may create additional pressure on this site.

Guidance

- Conserve the characteristic field pattern and prominent swathes of woodland on the highly visible valley sides.

- Maintain characteristic drystone walls, repair where necessary ensuring that restoration is carried out sensitively and with due regard to local style and construction, especially alongside footpaths which are part of the historic network.
- Protect assarts and the irregular and historic field boundaries, avoiding further amalgamation of fields or removal of surrounding woodland.
- Avoid development creep along the fringes of the LCAs, which are highly visible on the steep slopes and which may alter the wooded and pastoral nature of the valley sides. Locate development in proximity to existing settlement centres.
- New development edges should be softened with appropriate tree planting, using diverse and native species, taking into account projected changes to climate and new pathogens.
- New development and associated lighting schemes should be designed so as to minimise night blight and light pollution from the lower slopes and settled valleys below.
- Make efforts to locate new planting where it will not impede outward views from key viewpoints across the Aire and Wharfe Valleys.
- Ensure the setting to scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens is maintained and enhanced. Locate development in proximity to existing settlement cores, and consider utilising new or existing planting to soften settlement edges. Protect the rural setting and key views out and towards Saltaire World Heritage Site.