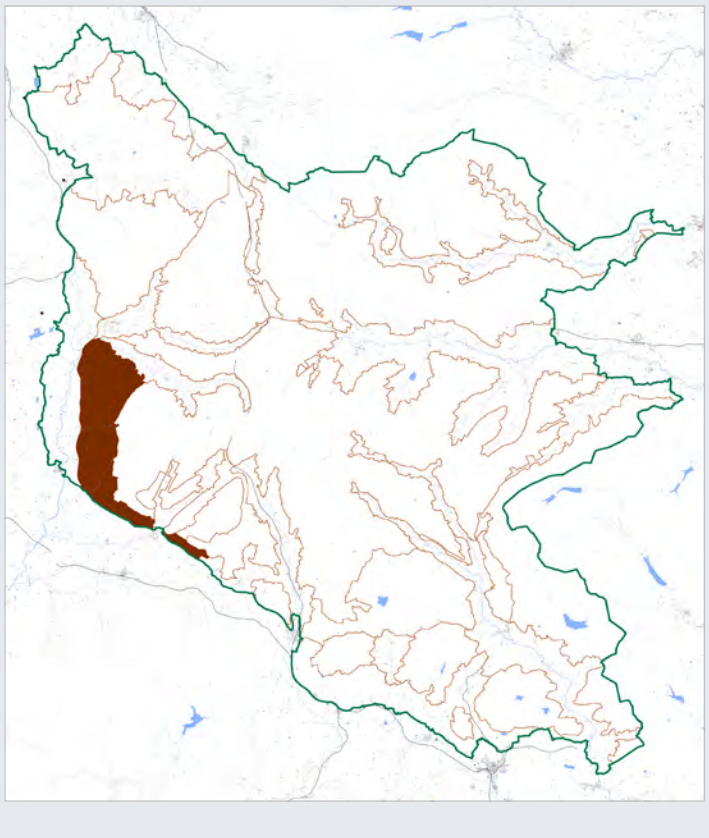
LCA 7 Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes

Yorkshire Dales National Park
Landscape Character Assessment

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Barkin Beck, Barbondale

LCA 7 Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes



Key characteristics

- Open upland ridges on Silurian rocks with a sweeping scale and dramatic steep bare slopes down into Barbondale to the east.
- Moorland fringe landscapes displaying a transition from moorland to farmland on steep slopes to the Lune valley to the west and on the more undulating southern fringes of Leck Fell and Ireby Fells.
- Narrow, wooded gills and gullies, often with semi-natural ancient woodland
- Field patterns are often strongly defined by stone walls; striking contrast between the open, exposed and completely unenclosed moors on the ridgetop summits and the transition from large geometric enclosures on the upper moorland slopes to irregular, smaller enclosures on lower slopes and within valleys
- The transitional landscape patterns are often prominent in views from the surrounding lowlands
- Wooded parkland and estate landscapes, with small plantations and areas of specimen trees are a strong influence on the slopes of Barbon Low Fell and Leck Fell
- Dispersed settlement pattern with villages on lower slopes connected by narrow walled lanes; lanes lead up onto moorland slopes from villages where they peter out as tracks and drove roads
- Contrasting colours and textures of moorland, farmland and woodland vegetation create diversity interest, with strong seasonal variations

Landscape context

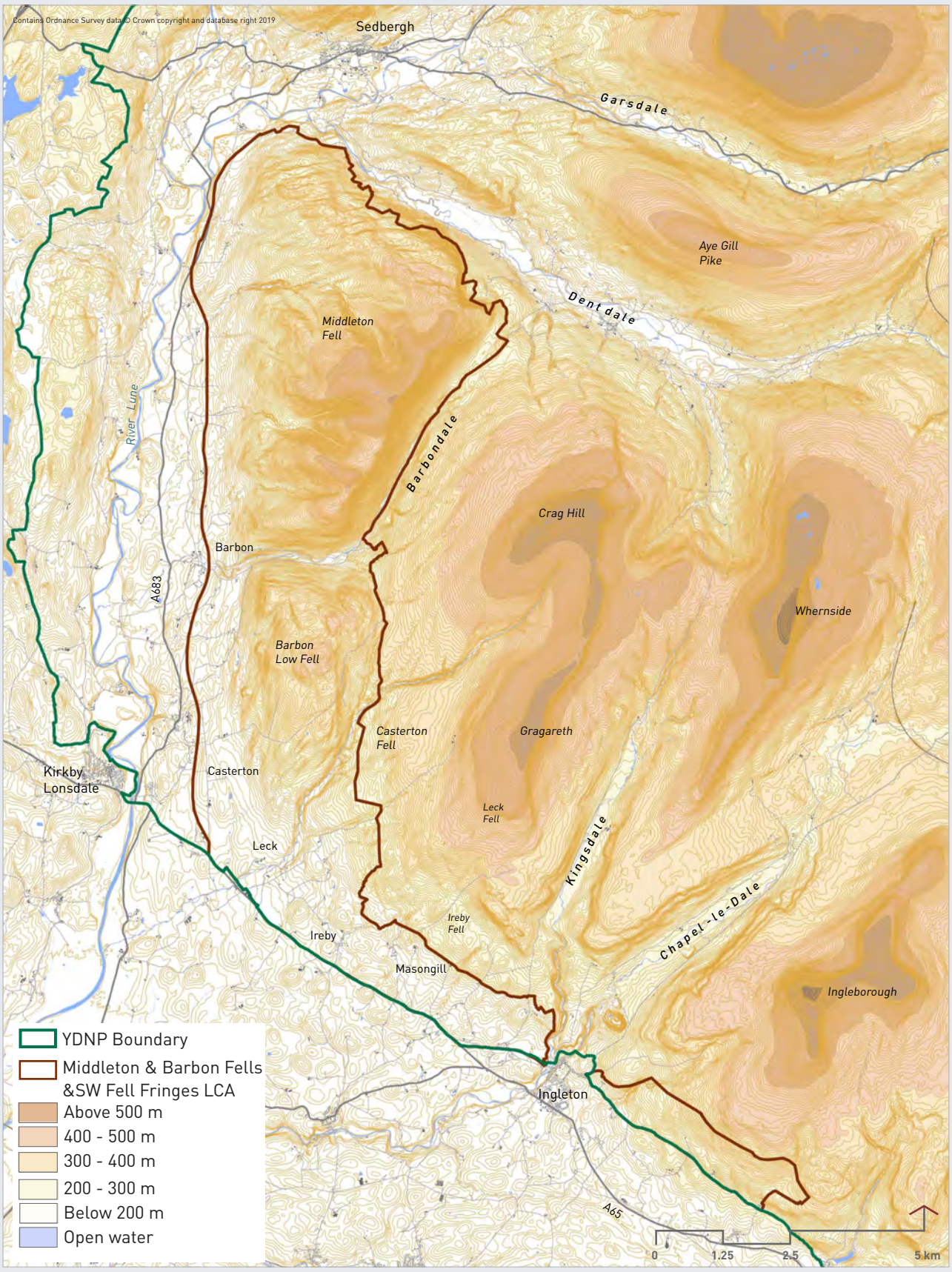
Middleton Fell and Barbon Low Fell are formed from Silurian rocks, which are part of the same block as the steeper, higher Howgill Fells to the north. These upland ridges are more eroded than the Howgill Fells and superficial drift deposits have more influence in softening the landform. Nevertheless, Middleton Fell rises to a summit of 610m and glacial erosion and subsequent weathering has produced steep sided fells, crags, including the dramatic U-shaped valley of Barbondale to the east of the LCA and Combe Scar, a partially formed cirque, eroded by glaciers on the north slopes of Middleton Fell near the northern entrance to Barbondale; it is surrounded by its own moraine of glacial debris.

The eastern part of Barbondale coincides with part of the dramatic Dent Fault which divides the main blocks of Carboniferous and Silurian geology in the vicinity; there is limestone to the south of the beck and Silurian rock to the north.

The fells slope steeply down to the Lune Valley to the west, with the slopes dissected by the courses of the Luge, Wrestle, Thirnbeck, Millhouse and Ashdale gills and scattered with rocks and crags. There is a notably stepped rocky profile at Holme Knott above Sedbergh.

To the east of Barbondale, the uplands of Crag Hill, Gragareth and Leck Fell are underlain by Carboniferous rocks of the Yoredale and Craven groups and are included within the Yoredale Uplands LCA (10). The undulating moorland fringe landscapes to the south of Leck Fell and Ireby Fell lie on an area of predominantly millstone grit geology with a covering layer of glacial till. Here the transitional moorland fringe landscapes are defined by the branching valleys of Leck Beck and Ireby Beck. These valleys have a settled character, which also displays the influence of historic parklands and estates.

Landscape context: Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes

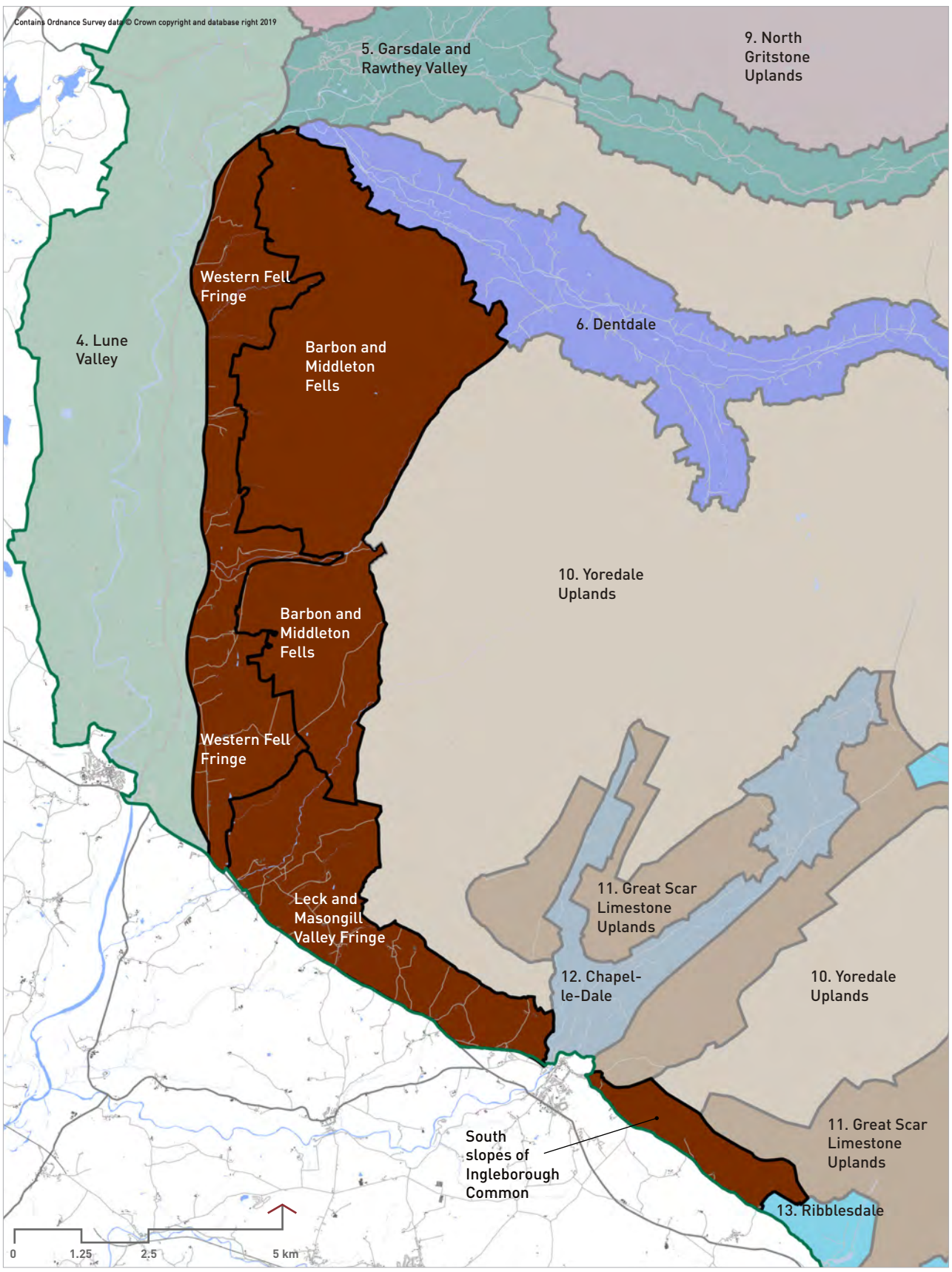


Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA (see page 7)



Slopes of Middleton Fell , looking east from Old Town on the western side of the Lune Valley

Landscape character: Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes



Landscape character

The principal variations in landscape character at a local scale are:

- **Middleton Fell and Barbon Low Fell** - exposed and bare upland ridges underlain by Silurian rocks; dramatic sweeping landforms and brooding landscapes of Barbondale to the east
- **Western Fell Fringe** - steep west-facing slopes of Middleton Fell and Barbon Low Fell, with a transition between the open upland moors and the farmland of the Lune Valley to the west
- **Leck and Masongill Valley Fringe** - valleys to the south of Leck Fell and Ireby Fell, with an undulating settled character.
- **South slopes of Ingleborough Common**, between Ingleton and Clapham.



Barbon Low Fell



Pastures with small streams south of Ireby

Distinctive landscape character

The open upland ridges of Middleton Fell and Barbon Low Fell form a backdrop to views throughout the Lune valley and loom steeply on the western flanks of Barbondale, where the Barbondale Road provides opportunities for some dramatic close views of these Silurian Fells.

The moorland fringe landscapes to the west of Middleton Fell and Barbon Low Fell are a transition between the exposed, open moorlands of these steep fells and the verdant farmland landscapes of the Lune Valley to the west. The southern fringe of Leck Fell and Ireby Fell have a more undulating, settled character, with small mill villages and landscape patterns reflecting the influence of historic parkland and estates.

Middleton Fell and Barbon Low Fell

The landscapes of Barbon Low Fell and Middleton Fell are characterised by steep slopes, high hills and striking landforms, notably in Barbondale which is a dramatic, brooding valley with bare sweeping slopes.

The fells support a diverse range of typical upland vegetation. Acid grassland predominates, with rushes and cotton grass on wetter peaty ground, bracken on lower slopes on better soils and some remnant dwarf shrub heath with heather. North of Barbondale there are no roads and no stone walls dividing the fells. The only features suggesting human influence are a few small tracks, paths, shooting butts and sheep folds. The higher slopes and summits offer long views over the surrounding farmland in the fell fringes and the Lune Valley floodplain to the west and to the Howgills Fells in the north.

Western Fell Fringe

The western slopes of the fells have a transitional landscape pattern, from open moor to enclosed valley farmland. In some places there is a clear and abrupt change from unenclosed fell to the fell fringe farmland marked by a strong wall line, but elsewhere the transition is gradual, with areas of enclosed fell merging with the farmland below. The underlying rocks are everywhere covered by a layer of glacial till and the landform is gently sloping or undulating, sometimes with a hummocky appearance due to the presence of low hills and drumlins. Small becks cut across these moorland fringe landscapes, often within small incised valleys, sometimes with waterfalls and with their courses often marked by the presence of linear broadleaved woodland which are prominent on the fell slopes. Springs, small ponds and wetter grassland in low lying areas highlight minor variations in landform.

On the lower slopes there are medium to large sized enclosures of improved rough grazing and pasture. Fields are usually enclosed by stone walls, or sometimes hedges on lower ground. Patterns of enclosure become small in scale and more irregular in shape on lower slopes. The fields are a mix of permanent improved pasture and silage fields and appear much brighter green in colour than the fells or the enclosed rough grassland at higher levels. Some hay meadows remain but are generally not numerous and there may be occasional arable fields at lower levels. The field boundaries are often, especially at lower levels, dotted with individual trees, usually ash or sycamore, which can give the landscape a well treed appearance in distant views from the Lune valley.

This is a settled landscape with dispersed small hamlets, farms and barns built in traditional local materials of stone, render and slate and linked by small walled lanes. In the lower reaches of Barbondale, Barbon Manor is associated with the enclosed area of Barbon Park on the steep fell side and extensive areas of broadleaved and mixed estate woodland and open parkland with mature specimen trees, which create a bold and colourful contrast with the muted colours of the fells.

Leck and Masongill Valley Fringe

The southern slopes of Leck Fell and Ireby Fell are dissected by the valleys of Leck Beck to the south west and Ireby Beck to the south east; both cut steep, narrow valleys on the upper slopes but broaden to form, undulating valley fringe landscapes on the southern margins of the National Park. The valley of Leck Beck is steeper and more wooded than the valley systems to the east, where is a branching network of tributary becks.

This is an area of transitional enclosed landscapes between the fells and the more intensively farmed land below. It is a sloping and smoothly rolling landscape which is influenced by the estate landscapes associated with Leck Hall, Masongill Hall and Over Hall, near the village of Ireby. Occasional low rounded hills echo the landscape of the drumlin field which characterises the lowlands to the south of the National Park boundary.

There is a diverse landscape pattern. In some areas fields are small to medium in size and irregular in shape, suggesting earlier enclosure, but there are also areas of fairly large geometric planned enclosure eg. north of Leck village. Woodlands, areas of parkland trees, avenues and small conifer plantations are distinctive landscape features associated with estate landscapes. Boundaries are generally stone walls in different types of rock reflecting the material to hand. The fields contain pasture, often infested with rushes, and there are also silage fields and also some remaining hay meadows.

This is a well settled landscape. The small villages of Leck, Masongill, Ireby and Thornton in Lonsdale are connected by narrow walled lanes and there are also many hamlets and farmsteads. Lanes and tracks lead northwards from each village to dead-end as drove roads and tracks on the fells. There is a significant area of enclosures and evidence of multi-period settlement, dating from Neolithic to Romano-British times, at High Park on the lower fell slopes north of the Leck Beck, associated with a medieval deer park which has helped to conserve the earthworks. There is also a defended settlement site south of the Leck Beck at Castle Hill, which dates from the early Romano-British period.

South slopes of Ingleborough Common

The National Park boundary hugs the fell side, following the alignment of Old Road, to the east of Ingleton. This is a simple landscape of walled pastures and open moorland, with occasional isolated farmsteads along the road. The A65 is a strong visual and audible influence in this area and there are long views across the undulating lowlands and Newby Moor to the south (beyond the National Park boundary).



3

Bank Wood on slopes of Leck Fell near Castle Hill

Wooded gill valleys and a transitional pattern of vegetation from rough pasture to scrub and upland moorland



Hummocky terrain and low hills on lower slopes occur as a result of glacial drift

Pastures north of Westhouse

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA (see page 7)

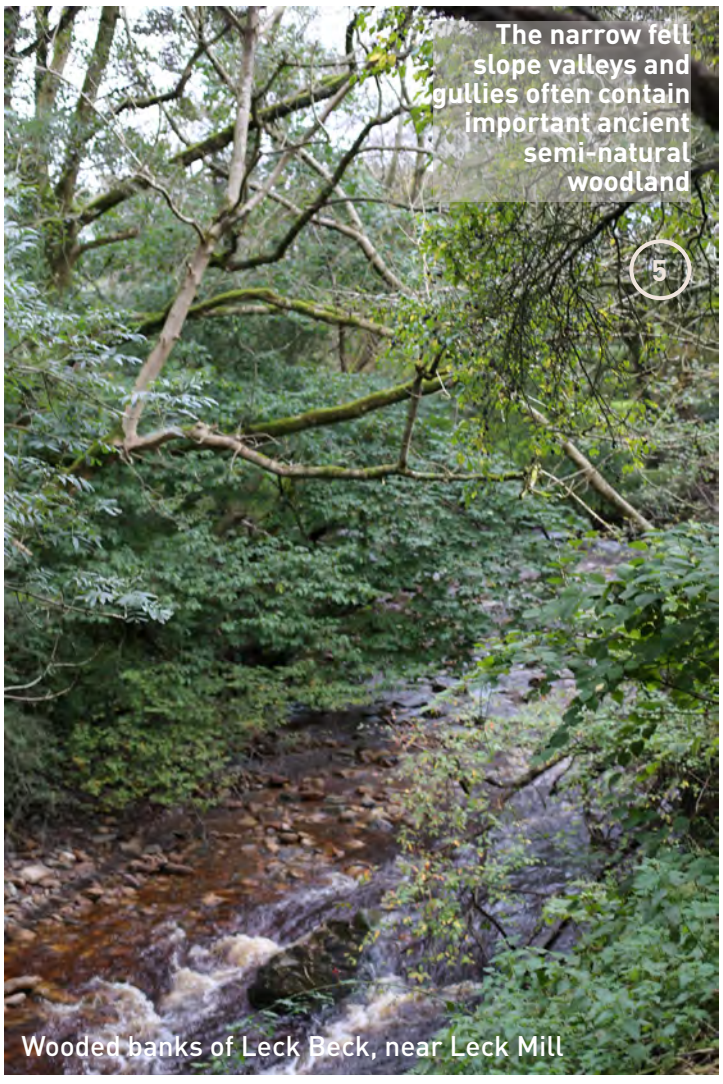


4

Dramatic U-shaped valley, with sweeping bare slopes. The grassy banks of Barkin Beck are a popular family picnic spot in warm weather

Barbondale

Steep-sided fell landscape, with high, open summits which continues the character of the Howgill Fells on a smaller scale



The narrow fell slope valleys and gullies often contain important ancient semi-natural woodland

5

Wooded banks of Leck Beck, near Leck Mill



6

Slopes of Howegill Head and Middleton Fell from the Lune Valley to the west



Jack's Fold, Barbondale, an artwork by Andy Goldsworthy

7

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Intact patterns of stone wall enclosure

8

Slopes of Casterton Fell

Numbered photographs illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features in the Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA (see page 7)



Above Fell House, Barbondale

Distinctive landform of Barbondale, with sparse, prominent patterns of enclosure



Brownthwaite Moss

Exposed, wild and tranquil lfell landscape on open summits



Leck Hall


Masongill



Barn near Mill House, slopes of Middleton Fell

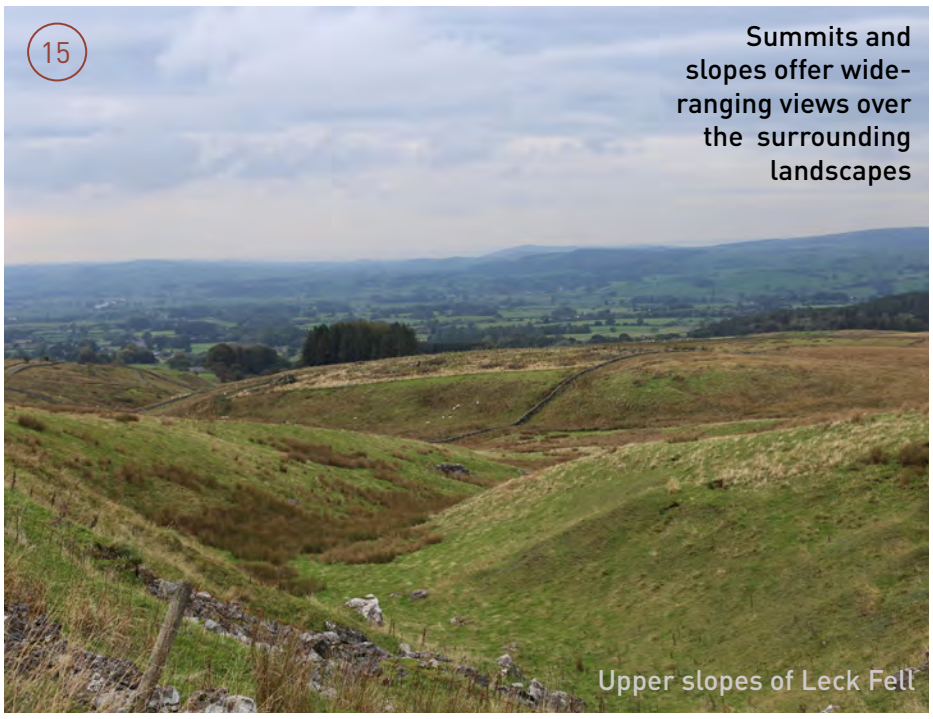


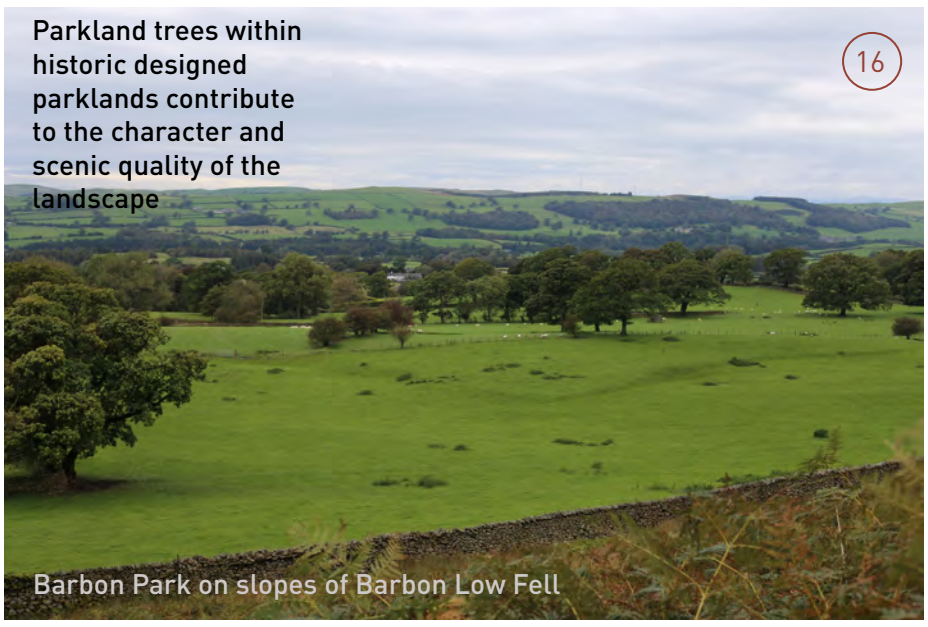
Tow Scar Lane on slopes of Ireby Fell

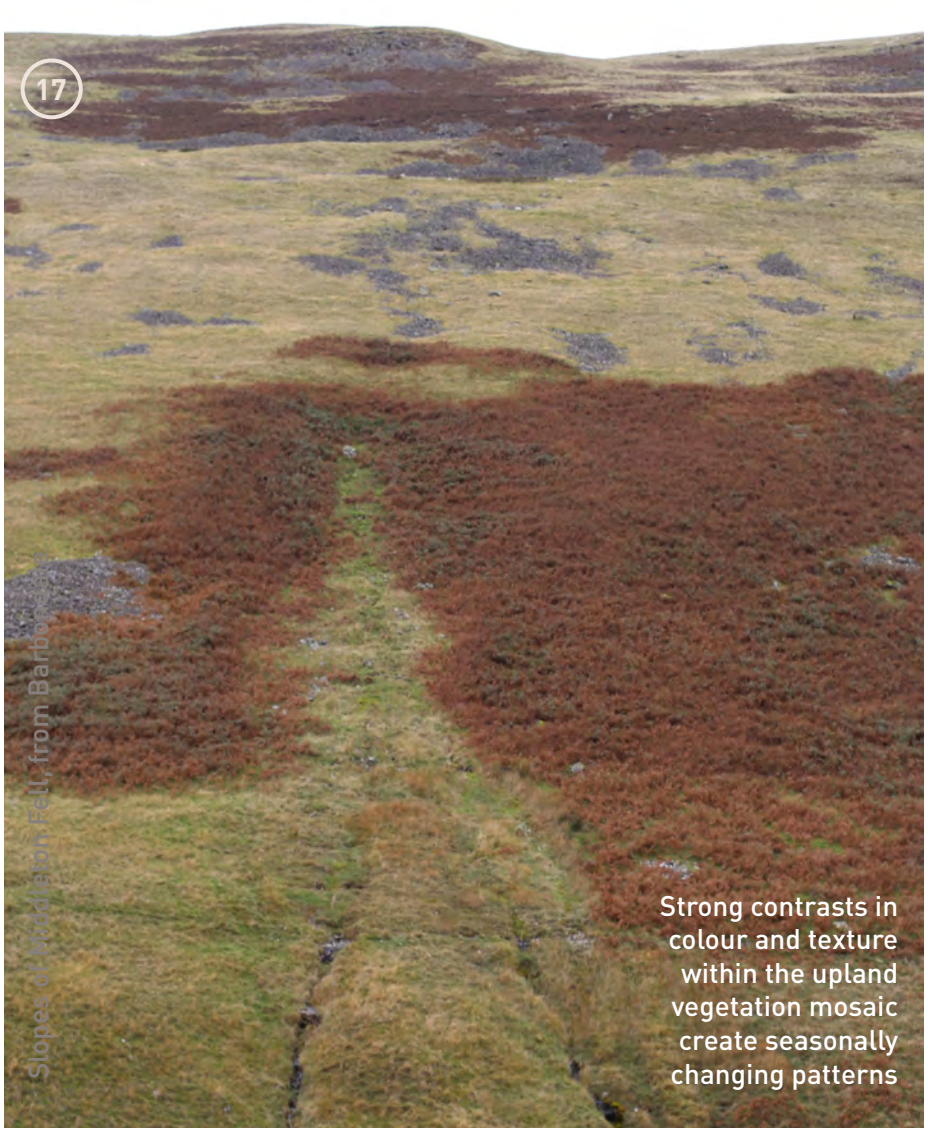
Walled tracks and drove roads, which lead from settlements up onto the moor,



Fellfoot Lane, near Casterton







Key natural, cultural and perceptual features

NATURAL

Steep-sided fell landscape with high, open summits on Silurian bedrock, which continues the character of the Howgill Fells on a smaller scale. (1)(6)

Dramatic U-shaped valley of Barbondale, with sweeping, bare slopes; the Dent Fault runs through the eastern part of Barbondale which, combined with glacial activity, has given rise to the distinctive landform of this tributary dale. (4)(9)

Narrow incised valley gills and gullies on slopes of fells which often contain high quality ancient semi-natural woodlands. (5)

Diverse pattern of upland moorland and heathland vegetation on the fell slopes, including upland calcareous grassland, heather heathland fen in wetter zones. (17)

A gradual transition to rough pasture and improved pasture on lower slopes, interspersed with areas of bracken, scrub and woodland. The wood pasture habitats and veteran trees associated with the small historic parkland landscapes on the fell slopes also contribute to this diverse mosaic of species-rich habitats. (16)

Combe Scar and its associated cirque/corrie is a prominent landmark on the valley slopes near the northern entrance to Barbondale and is designated as an SSSI because the Dent Fault (which runs through this area) has led to the juxtaposition of a varied rocks and soil types - and a richly diverse and uncommon range of flora.

CULTURAL

Areas of historic designed parkland including Fairthwaite Park, High Park, Barbon Manor, Leck Hall and Whelprigg Park, whose parkland trees and enclosures contribute to the character and scenic quality of the area and contrast visually with the open fell above. Fairthwaite Park was a medieval deer park which extended onto Leck Fell and the northern boundary stone wall remains an important feature in the landscape today. (11)(16)

At High Park there is a significant area of multi-period archaeological scheduled earthworks representing settlement, buildings, burial mounds, field systems, enclosures and trackways. (8)(9)(12)(13)(14)

Prominent and intact walled tracks and drove roads and patterns of stone wall enclosure, including unenclosed or parliamentary enclosures on the fells, with former common arable fields associated with the villages on the lower slopes.

Other visible historic features include stone bridges, packhorse bridges, sheepfolds and the former Tebay to Kirkby railway line (see Lune Valley LCA 4 report) along the western boundary of the LCA

PERCEPTUAL

Striking contrasts between the dramatic, imposing fell landscape and the pattern of wall and hedge enclosures, historic settlement, parkland and wooded gullies on the lower slopes, which are prominent in views from the surrounding lowlands. (1)(6)

Sequence of stunning views along Barbondale Road to the sweeping slopes of Middleton Fell and the stony, tumbling waters of Barkin Beck - it is unusual for such a dramatic upland landscape to be so accessible. (4)

Strong contrasts in colour and texture within the upland vegetation mosaic create seasonally changing patterns. (17)

Summits and slopes offer wide ranging views over surrounding farmland to the west, to the Howgills in the north, east into Dentdale and south-east to Whernside and Ingleborough. From the lower slopes there are memorable views across small enclosures to the imposing and steep fells above. (15)

A strong sense of wildness on the upper slopes as a result of the extensive areas of semi-natural habitat, elevation, openness, exposure, dramatic topography and lack of settlement. Wainwright also described the landscape around Bullpot Farm on Casterton Fell as *"a desolate landscape devoid of trees and habitations."* (2)(10)

Artist Andy Goldsworthy has built sheepfolds with sculptural features along Fellfoot Drove Road near Casterton and Jack's Fold in Barbondale. (7)

Photos that illustrate specific key natural, cultural and perceptual features are numbered eg. (10)

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Natural Beauty and Wildlife Special Qualities: Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes

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Sedbergh
Aye Gill Pike
Dent dale
Narrow incised gills and gullies on slopes of fells contain semi-natural ancient woodland
Combe Scar and corrie (incl. SSSI)
Oak Coppy - semi-natural ancient woodland
Middleton Fell
Dent
Flinter Gill
Dramatic U-shaped valley of Barbondale - influence of the Dent Fault
River Lune
Barbondale
Barkin Beck
Crag Hill
A683
Barbon Park - semi-natural ancient woodland
Barbon
Barbon Beck
Barbon Low Fell
Casterton Fell
Leck Fell
Gragareth
Casterton
Kirkby Lonsdale
Springs Wood - semi-natural ancient woodland
Leck
Ireby Fell
Kingsdale
Chapel-le-Dale
Raven Ray - glacial drift at entrance to Kingsdale
Ireby
Masongill
Thornton Force
Pecca Falls
Beezley Falls
Snow Falls
White Scar Caves
Swilla Glen
A65
Ingleton
0 1.25 2.5 5 km

The Special Qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park are described in the National Park's Management Plan 2019-24. This map shows selected special qualities (for which spatial data is available) that are found within the Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA.

This special qualities mapping is shown within the area that forms the backdrop to local views; it reflects the extent of visibility and the overall landscape setting for the Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA

Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA

Natural beauty

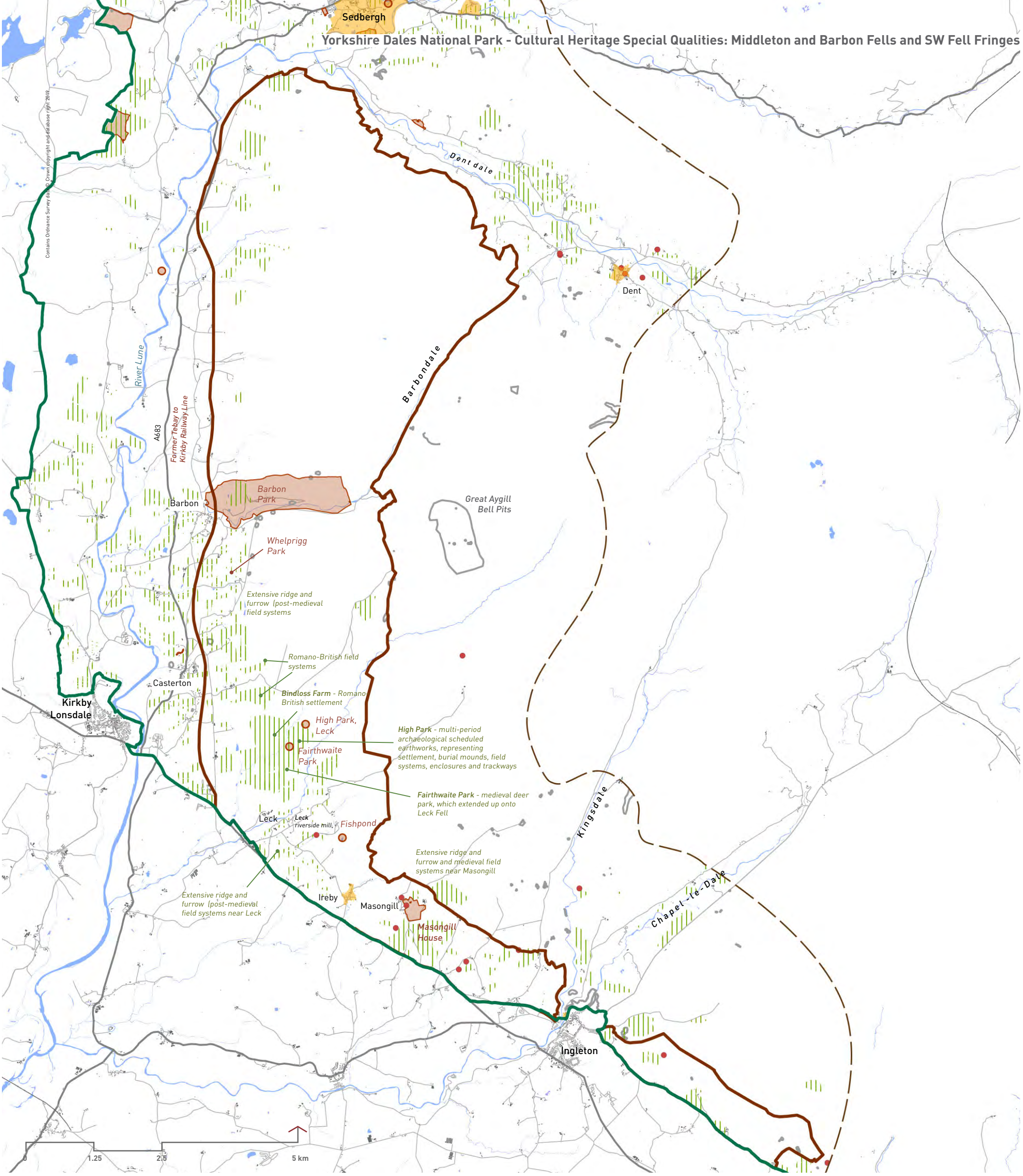
- **Dales with distinctive stepped profiles**
  [Displaying outcrops of rocks from the Yoredale series]
- **Outstanding classic limestone scenery**
  [Underlain by Great Scar Limestone & displaying distinctive karst character]
- **Extraordinary cave systems**
  ['Caves' noted as 'recognised attraction' in YDNPA Visitor Strategy]
- **The Howgills**
  [Areas in the YDNP underlain by Silurian rocks]
- **Significant glacial/post-glacial features**
  [Prominent drumlins and glacial drift landforms]
- **Spectacular waterfalls**
  ['Water features' noted as 'recognised attraction' in YDNPA Visitor Strategy]

Wildlife*

- **Flower-rich hay meadows and pastures**
  [Lowland meadows; Upland hay meadows]
- **A range of rare limestone habitats**
  [Limestone pavements; Lowland calcareous grassland; Upland calcareous grassland]
- **Extensive areas of moorland**
  [Upland heathland; Blanket bog; Lowland raised bog]
- **Small areas of broadleaf woodland**
  [Deciduous woodland; ancient woodland (darker tone)]

*Priority Habitats [S41 NERC Act 2010]

Yorkshire Dales National Park - Cultural Heritage Special Qualities: Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes



Special Qualities of the YDNP

- YDNP Boundary
- Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA boundary
- Extent of area that forms the backdrop to views from the Middleton and Barbon Fells and SW Fell Fringes LCA

Cultural heritage*

- **A traditional pastoral landscape**
  [Traditional stone-built field barns]
- **An exceptional range of archaeology**
  [Strip lynchets & prehistoric field systems that are prominent]
- **Powerful reminders of periods of dominance by large estates and religious houses**
  [Ancient & historic parklands & other ornamental landscapes]
- **The remains of former rural industries**
  [Sites of former lead & coal mines & lime kilns]
- **Historic settlements with distinctive traditional architecture**
  [Conservation Areas]

* YDNPA Historic Environment Record

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