

Residential dwellings at former nursing home, Ainsworth

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Appendix B
Extracts of Bury Landscape Character Assessment

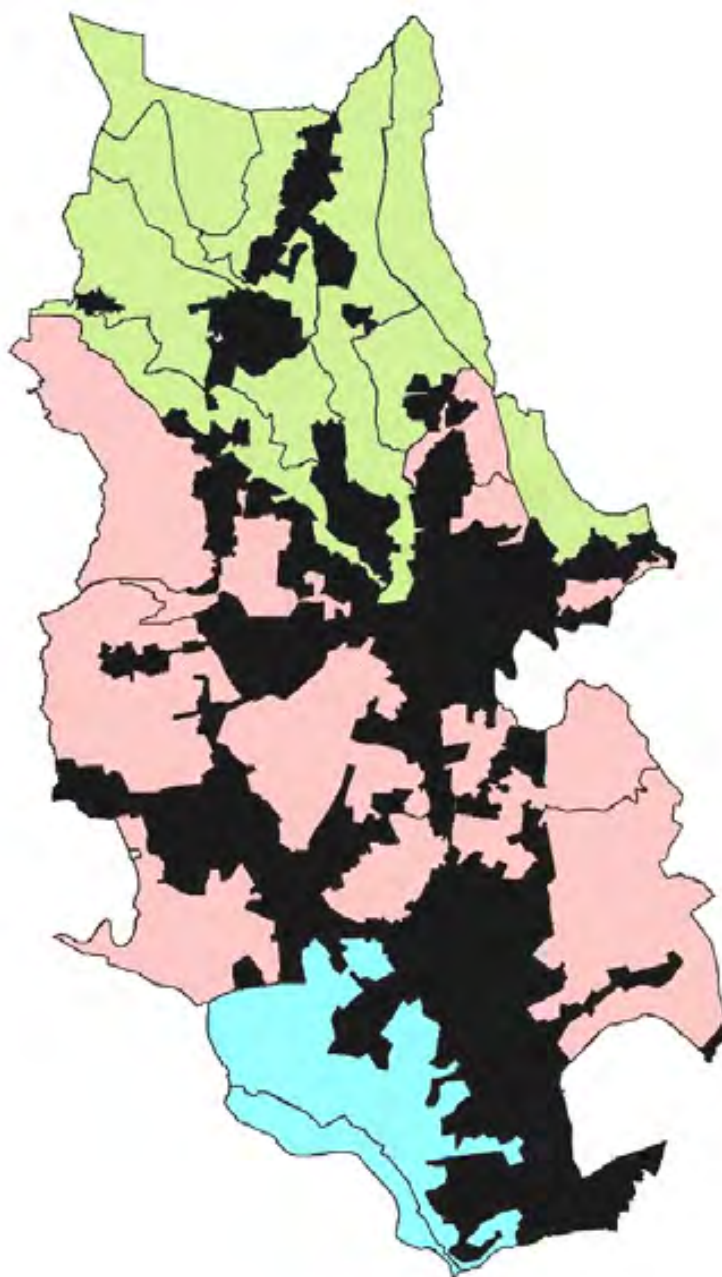
July 2021

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Nationwide Building & Civils Ltd



Landscape Character Assessment

2009



54 / 3 **West Pennine Foothills**

Background

<i>Context</i>	Small hills located between Bury and Bolton
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Natural factors

<i>Solid geology</i>	Distinctive bands of sandstone and undivided sedimentary rock
<i>Drift geology</i>	Predominately till with solid rock at higher altitudes
<i>Landform</i>	Glaciated rounded hills, lower in altitude than moor land plateau
	Affetside has an altitude range of 160 to 260m above sea level
	Ainsworth has an altitude range of 120 to 170m above sea level
<i>Drainage</i>	Both areas littered with small ponds
	Small streams at Affetside feeding into Walshaw and Elton Brooks
	Small streams at Ainsworth feeding into Elton & Withins Reservoir
<i>Ecological sites</i>	Large area at Affetside designated Great Crested Newt site
	Great Crested Newt/other protected species in south Ainsworth
	Wildlife link / Sites of Biological Importance in north Ainsworth area
<i>Woodland cover</i>	Sparse woodland cover with some coniferous woodland on hill tops
	Some peripheral plantation woodland at base of hill
<i>Groundcover</i>	Mostly improved grassland and semi improved neutral grassland
	Small peripheral pockets of amenity grassland

Cultural and social factors

<i>Agricultural land quality</i>	Both areas classified as Grade 4
<i>Infrastructure</i>	Affetside dominated by Watling Street which crosses highest point
	Ainsworth dominated by the B6196 which crosses highest point
	Powerlines cross both hills / both main roads
<i>Settlement</i>	Settlements distributed along local roads
<i>Heritage</i>	Important archaeological landscape with even distribution of sites
<i>Boundaries</i>	Dominated by hedgerows especially along lower levels
	Small cluster of dry stone walls on north facing slope at Affetside
<i>Field patterns</i>	Large well defined field boundaries throughout both areas
<i>Time depth 1848</i>	Both areas dominated by sandstone quarries, coal pits and farms
	Remains of Roman road at Affetside
	Several churches located on hill top at Ainsworth Village
	Bolton to Bury railway line forming southern boundary at Ainsworth
<i>Time depth 1910</i>	Both areas dominated by old sandstone quarries, no coal pits
	Increase in number of buildings on both hilltops since 1848
<i>Time depth 1953 / 1967</i>	Powerlines shown crossing both Affetside and Ainsworth
	Increase in number of residential properties in Ainsworth Village

Landscape description

The West Pennine Foothills at Ainsworth and Affetside form the western fringe of the borough between the towns of Bolton and Bury. The hills are composed of distinctive bands of sandstone and undivided sedimentary rock covered by a layer of till with exposed solid rock at higher altitudes. These glaciated rounded hills are lower in altitude than the moor land plateau areas in the northern part of the borough. The area around Affetside is the larger of the two hills with an altitude range between 160 to 260m above sea level. The area around Ainsworth is smaller with a height range between 120 to 170m above sea level. The hills have long distance views overlooking the town of Bury and Bolton and the height and exposure of the hill at Affetside creates an added sense of wilderness overlooking the Two Brooks Valley.

The hills contain small ponds throughout with small streams along the lower parts of the slope. These streams feed into Kirklees, Walshaw or Elton Brook at the base of the hill as well as Elton and Withins reservoir. The lower parts of the slope on both hills contain large areas designated Great Crested Newt sites. The area around Ainsworth is ecologically richer of the two hills with several protected species sites, a wildlife link and a local ecological designation.

The landscape is characterised by sparse woodland cover with some pockets of coniferous woods on the hill tops and peripheral plantation woodland located at the base of the hill. The hills contain a mosaic of improved and semi improved neutral grassland with the occasional pocket of amenity grassland in peripheral areas. Both areas have a grade 4 agricultural land quality rating in an area which suffers from over grazing on the lower slopes.

Both hills are dissected by main roads which cross over the crest of the hill making the area an accessible recreational resource for the surrounding urban areas with a number of recreational facilities and an extensive rights of way network. The origins of the road at Affetside are Roman forming part of the historic route between Lancashire and Manchester. The road at Ainsworth form one of the more direct routes between the towns of Bury and Bolton. Both roads are crossed by power lines which run through the two hills on a north-south axis. Although the area is squeezed between Bury and Bolton the area contains only pockets of settlement which are limited to the roadside and form part of the main villages of Affetside or Ainsworth. These settlements contain church spires which mark the centre of the village and which act as landmarks throughout the area. The surrounding hillside has an even distribution of archaeological sites throughout although their distribution is more sparsely distributed when compared to the brook landscapes in neighbouring areas.

The field pattern of the area is defined with hedgerows especially along the lower levels with a small cluster of dry stone walls on the north facing slope at Affetside overlooking the Two Brooks Valley. The area suffers from a loss of traditional field boundaries which have over recent years been replaced with post wire fencing. From an historical context these fields were disrupted by sandstone quarries and coal pits dating back to 1848. By 1910 these coal pits had closed and both areas saw an increase in dwellings on the hill top. By 1953 / 1967 the area saw the introduction of power lines and an increase in residential properties at Ainsworth Village.



Plate: 43
Location: Affetside
Characteristic: Views towards Holcombe



Plate: 44
Location: Ainsworth
Characteristic: Church spire on hill top

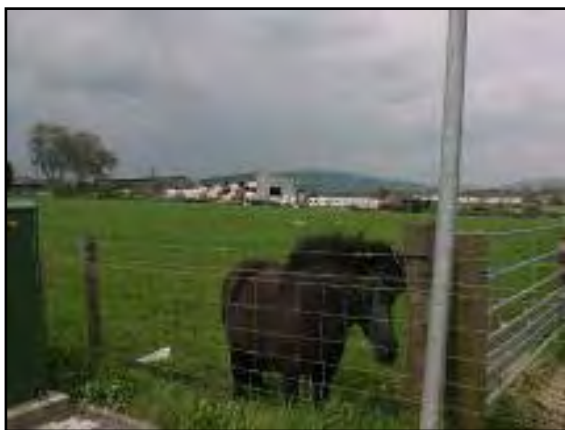


Plate: 45
Location: Affetside
Characteristic: Equine and caravan activities

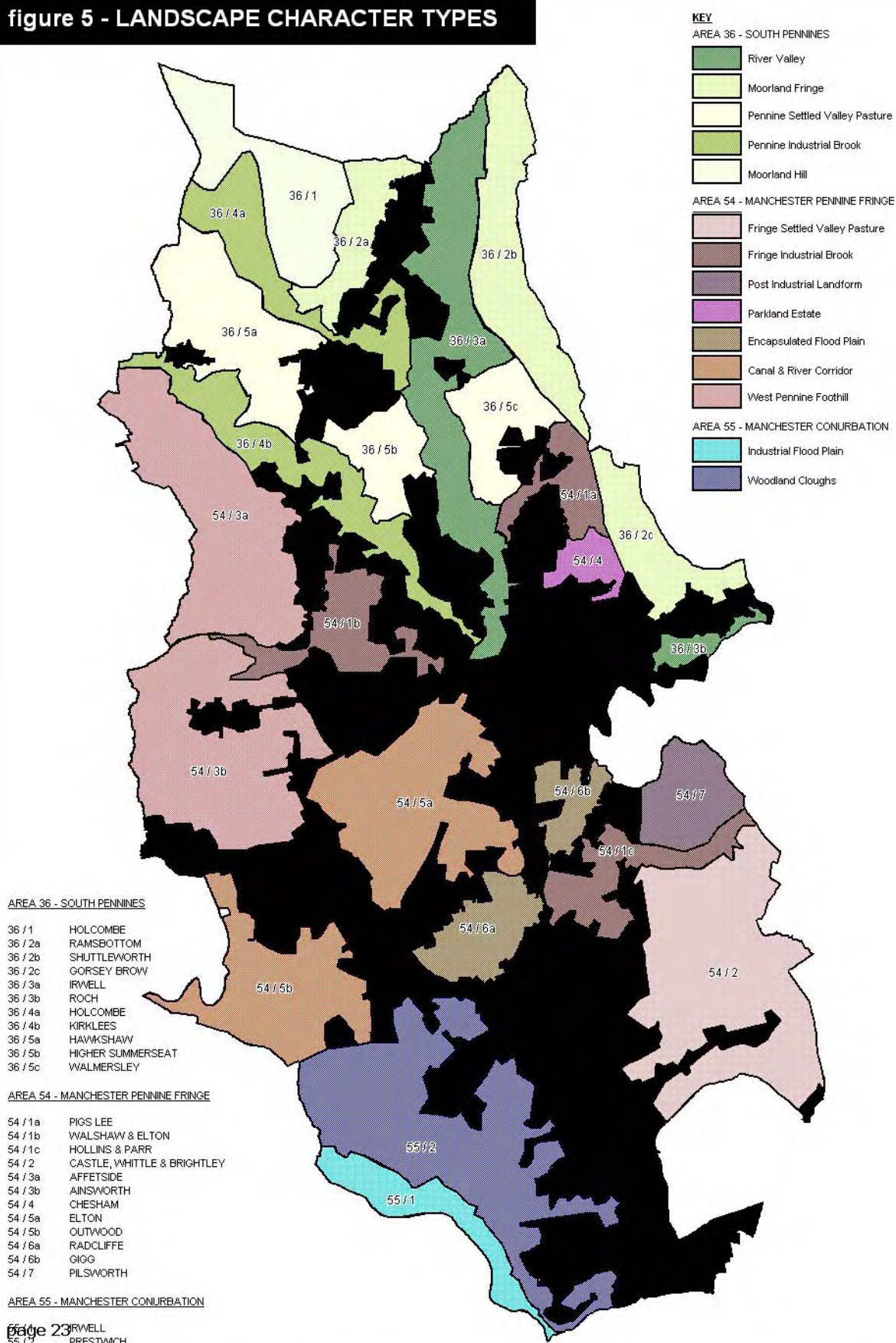


Plate: 46
Location: Affetside
Characteristic: Open panoramic views

Plate: 47
Location: Affetside
Characteristic: Power lines

Plate: 48
Location: Affetside
Characteristic: Roman road

figure 5 - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



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