

## LANCASHIRE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

## POST-MEDIEVAL ENCLOSURE LOWLAND MOSS

### Definition:

This type comprises a variety of field forms, size tends to be medium (4 to 16 hectares) but with a significant percentage of small enclosures. Two thirds of the type has an irregular layout while the remainder has a more planned pattern. This is a reflection of the piecemeal private enclosure of land in Lancashire in the period between AD 1600 – 1850 rather than the widespread planned enclosure much more prevalent in other parts of England such as the Midlands.

Thirteen percent of this type is on areas that were formerly mossland. Some of this later enclosure on former mossland probably obscures earlier drainage and enclosure but much will truly reflect the massive increase in activity between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries made possible by technological advancements. The presence of long, thin, straight-sided enclosures in former mossland areas indicates moss dales or 'doles' – strips allocated to commoners to cut peat prior to drainage – and tends to relate to the later drainage of the mosses. A large proportion of this type exhibits an enclosure pattern that is different to that of the OS First Edition map of c1850, but the skeleton of the old pattern is still discernible today.

### Typical historical and archaeological components

As with **Ancient Enclosure** the typical historical and archaeological components of the **Post-Medieval Enclosure** type are the boundaries which define the fields, the ditches used to drain them, the roads and tracks which traverse them and the buildings of those living and working within the area. Boundaries include water-filled ditches, quickset hedges, stone walls and fences.

Attributes of the former mossland areas include drainage ditches, causeways, windmills and bridges. There is a possibility of well-preserved archaeological deposits existing under the ground surface where the **Post-Medieval Enclosure** type covers peaty or former wetland soils.

Some of the main ditches are potentially related to an earlier enclosure period, being left in place as they were too large to contemplate changing and because they functioned effectively.

### Enhancing and safeguarding the type

Strategies for conserving or enhancing the **Enclosure** types will vary according to the historic processes of landuse, land management and land gain within each chronological type (i.e. within **Ancient Enclosure**, **Post-Medieval Enclosure** and **Modern Enclosure**). Consequently the measures for enhancement and safeguarding recommended in this section are first described generally, where they apply across the chronological type, and then specifically where they apply to a subtype (for example to enclosed land brought into agricultural production from upland moor or from lowland moss).

- *Conserve* the character of the **Post-Medieval Enclosure** type giving priority to enclosures from lowland moss and upland moor. The type is broadly characterised by three processes of agricultural improvement: the drainage and enclosure of the mosslands of West Lancashire and the Fylde, the enclosure of upland moor on Bowland and the South Pennines and the more general improvement and reorganisation of much of the earlier ancient landscape. Whilst the latter is important it is the former two processes that provide the most significant contribution of the period to the landscape character of the

county – consequently, it is the attributes and timedepth provided by these that should be afforded the greatest priority for conservation and enhancement. In addition, opportunities should be sought for the enhancement and interpretation of post-medieval reclaimed landscapes.

- Enclosed from lowland moss. *Retain* the characteristic pattern and features of lowland moss enclosure. By c.1850 most of the lowland moss of the Fylde and northern West Lancashire had been drained and enclosed – this landscape is predominantly defined by its historic character (i.e. lowland Lancashire remains an 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century reclaimed landscape). A significant proportion of post-medieval enclosed mossland has been lost either to urban expansion (especially Blackpool) or later agricultural rationalisation. The remaining extent of the subtype relates an important story of post-medieval agricultural improvement within the county (and nationally) and mirrors social and technological changes taking place within both the countryside and adjacent burgeoning industrial towns. Key attributes of the type include brick-built farmsteads, cattlesheds (the Fylde still has the greatest concentration of dairy farms in the country), raised mossland roads, bridges, windmills, and evidence of pumping technology.
- Enclosed from lowland moss. *Manage* and *highlight* evidence for timedepth within the landscape. The subtype will contain important relic landscape features, both buried and visible, relating to earlier landuses and environments. The subtype will also contain evidence for earlier, usually medieval, attempts at mossland drainage.