WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS
& LANDSCAPES PROJECT

Regional Statement

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Work by English Heritage and its partners on historic farmsteads and farmbuildings can be accessed on the HELM website - **www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings**.

In 2006 English Heritage and the Countryside Agency published a policy statement for traditional farm buildings, *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Traditional Farm Buildings*. This policy statement followed research that examined the effectiveness of policy at a national and local level and the drivers for change stressed the need to understand how and why historic farmsteads and their buildings are changing, and the importance of finding new uses that conserves their character and contribution to the local scene. It established that the evidence base for historic farmsteads in Historic Environment Records is weak, and almost exclusively confined to individual listed buildings. The statement recommended that 'the starting point for future policy must be an understanding of the character, condition and sensitivity to change of farm buildings and the relationship of farm steadings to the wider landscape. Character-based frameworks, which develop an understanding of the resource within its broadest possible context, should provide the context for future decision making'. It was accompanied by *Preliminary Regional Character Statements*, including a fully-referenced document for the West Midlands, and guidance that promoted high standards in the conversion of traditional farm buildings to new uses. Work conducted since then has piloted tools for land management and planning.

This document has been written by Jeremy Lake of English Heritage's Characterisation Team with assistance from Bob Edwards of Forum Heritage Services. All photographs are by English Heritage and Forum Heritage Services unless otherwise acknowledged. The regional distribution maps are by Paul Brindley of the University of Sheffield, based upon OS Survey data © Crown Copyright and Database Right 2010.

This Regional Statement forms part of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project (see **www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads**). Further guidance on the historic character and significance of farmsteads can be found in the Farmsteads Character Statements for the National Character Areas, which summarises their historical development, landscape and settlement context, the key farmstead and building types, and use of materials.

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Historic character statement: farmsteads in the West Midlands

Introduction

Historic farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of the rural landscape and how it has changed over centuries, with different scales and patterns of fields, the siting of woodland and trees that supplied fuel and building materials, quarries and other industrial sites and also the patterns of roads, tracks and paths that gave access to and around them. A farmstead is the homestead of a farm where the farmhouse and some or all of the working farm buildings are located, some farms having field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. The character of farmsteads has been shaped by their development as centres for the production of food from the surrounding farmland, the result being an immense range in their type, scale, form and use of materials. They have always evolved, the result being the loss of buildings, the addition of new buildings, total replacement and, sometimes, total loss.

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscape Project (see below) has mapped the character of farmsteads across the region, and this Regional Farmsteads Character Statement brings together available source material, general observation and the results of Historic Farmsteads Mapping. This is based on the comparison of modern maps with 2nd edition OS County Series mapping (c 1890–1900), close to the end of the final period of development of traditional farmsteads and the general use of vernacular materials.

This guidance outlines the typical features of farmsteads and their buildings across the West Midlands region, as well as their rarity and significance. It is designed to be used alongside the **Area Farmstead Character Statements** which deepen this guidance and help the reader identify the key characteristics of farmsteads in their landscape context for farmsteads in the the 26 National Character Areas that fall within or astride the West Midlands.

These statements form part of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project (see **www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads**). It is a collaborative project, led by English Heritage in partnership with the region's county and metropolitan councils and with the support of Advantage West Midlands. The Project has:

1. Mapped and described the locations and characteristics of over 22, 000 historic farmsteads, how they have changed over time and how they relate to the landscape.
2. Described the present use of historic farmsteads and their role in the economy of the West Midlands.
3. Developed a set of planning tools to inform spatial planning, land management and economic development

The other key products are:

- *The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project*: *Summary Report*, which summarises the results of the whole project and sets out policy and land use implications, and recommendations and next steps for further work.
- *Historic Farmstead Characterisation Reports* for each county and the Central Conurbation which present a detailed analysis of the mapping of farmsteads in relationship to landscape character and type, and which are stored on the local authority Historic Environment Record.
- *A Planning Tools Report*.
- A *Farmstead Use Report*, which summarises the types and patterns of use of farmsteads.

Farmsteads Mapping Methodology

Farmsteads Mapping is a rapid and cost-effective method of recording the patterns of historic character and change, and understanding how all farmsteads – not just those that are listed or recorded – relate to the inherited character of the landscapes around them. The methodology (see www.english-heritage.org.uk/characterisation for further details) has been piloted in the South East, and uses a Geographical Information System (GIS)-based methodology for the rapid quantification of the number, form and distribution of historic farmsteads, outfarms and isolated farm buildings. It provides baseline data for the distribution and pattern of historic farmsteads during the late 19th century, using historic Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, and also quantifies the survival of farmsteads by comparing the historic maps with modern OS maps. It can greatly increase the ability of local authorities, utilising their Historic Environment Records, to deliver an informed understanding of the inherited character of the whole historic resource in its landscape context. It has demonstrated clear links between inherited landscape character and the date, density and distributions of the plan-form of farmsteads.

The methodology utilises 2nd edition OS County Series mapping (c 1890–1900) to identify farmstead and outfarm or field-barn sites. This 1:2500 survey provides a record of farmsteads close to the end of the final period of development of traditional farmstead forms and the general use of vernacular materials.

The key attributes recorded are:

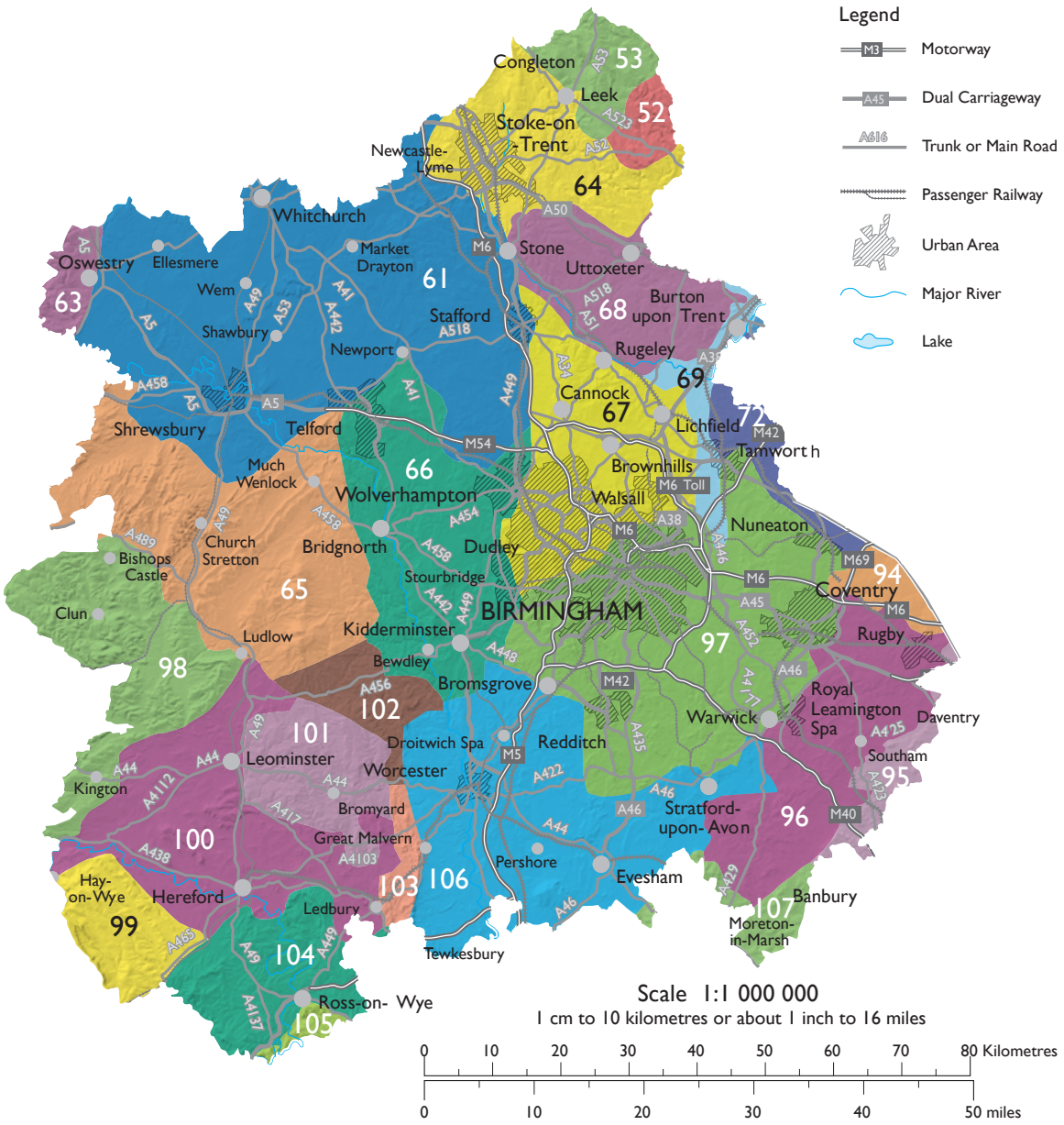
- farmstead name (modern and historic name if different),
- plan type,
- the date of the farmstead based on that of the oldest standing building (utilising listed-building data)
- the degree of change experienced since the late 19th century (through comparison between the 2nd edition mapping and modern OS Mastermap depiction).

This methodology allows the rapid production of an independent data set recording all farmstead sites present in the late 19th century, which can:

- identify significant characteristics of farmsteads (plan form, date and degree of change) and their relationship with patterns of visual and inherited landscape character;
- provide a baseline for mapping change and for extensive and targeted field survey aimed at deepening an understanding of the principal characteristics of farm-building types, including, form, construction materials, state of repair and conversion to other uses.

Outfarms, field barns and areas marked by smallholdings have also been identified and subject to historical analysis.

National Character Areas in the West Midlands



- 52 White Peak
- 53 South West Peak
- 61 Shropshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire Plain
- 63 Oswestry Uplands
- 64 Potteries and Churnet Valley
- 65 Shropshire Hills
- 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau
- 67 Cannock Chase and Cank Wood
- 68 Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands
- 69 Trent Valley Washlands
- 70 Melbourne Parklands
- 72 Mease/Sence Lowlands
- 94 Leicestershire Vales
- 95 Northamptonshire Uplands
- 96 Dunsmore and Feldon
- 97 Arden
- 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills
- 99 Black Mountains and Golden Valley
- 100 Herefordshire Lowlands
- 101 Herefordshire Plateau
- 102 Teme Valley
- 103 Malvern Hills
- 104 South Herefordshire and Over Severn
- 105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye
- 106 Severn and Avon Vales
- 107 Cotswolds

The map shows the National Character Areas (NCAs) within and extending across the West Midlands, which combine a broad understanding of the historic environment with physical landscape character and the natural environment (see http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/default.aspx). Each statement is set out under the headings of Historic Development, Landscape and Settlement, Farmstead and Building Types and Building Materials. A summary page for each NCA also outlines the Rarity and Significance and the Drivers for Change. (Based on Ordnance Survey mapping, with permission. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Cartography by Countryscape).

Summaries of the National Character Areas referred to in this document

52 White Peak An elevated plateau, where high densities of isolated farmsteads mostly relate to the movement of farmsteads out of the villages into enclosed open fields and regular enclosure of common land in the 19th century.

53 South West Peak Very high densities of isolated farmsteads, mostly mostly within anciently enclosed landscapes.

61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain A rolling plain with high densities of medium to large scale isolated farmsteads, with strong contrasts between the dairying north and the arable south, with pockets of improved moss and heath.

63 Oswestry Uplands High-very high density of farmsteads in the western uplands, lower densities of larger-scale farmsteads in the eastern lowlands.

64 Potteries and Churnet Valley Very high density of farmsteads in the landscape, lower to the Churnet Valley and in the estate landscapes west of the Potteries. Some areas of small farms and smallholdings.

65 Shropshire Hills Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape increasing in the upland areas with very high densities around the Stiperstones and the Clee Hills representing small farms and smallholdings often linked to industrial activity. Large-scale farmsteads concentrated in the vales where settlement was village-based.

66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, with large-scale farmsteads that developed outside villages except higher densities of smaller farmsteads to the south around Wyre Forest and Kidderminster.

67 Cannock Chase and Cank Wood A mixed pattern, with strong contrasts between the large farmsteads of its estate landscapes and the high densities of smallholdings and farmsteads around Cannock Chase. 19th-20th century urban development has subsumed many small settlements to the south part of the area.

68 Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, increasing to the pastoral northern part of the area where there are more medieval hamlets and earlier isolated farmsteads.

69 Trent Valley Washlands, 70 Melbourne Parklands, 72 Mease/Sence Lowlands, 94 Leicestershire Vales, 95 Northamptonshire Uplands These areas have low densities of large to very large-scale farmsteads in the landscape, with smaller-scale farmsteads concentrated in settlements and in areas of early enclosures not subject to 19th century reorganisation. .

96 Dunsmore and Feldon Medium-low density of farmsteads in the landscape, with higher densities in the Dunsmore area to north, mostly resulting from the movement of farms out of villages.

97 Arden Medium-high density of farmsteads in the landscape, lessening in the areas from the Avon Valley to Coventry to the south and highest in the historic core of the anciently-enclosed Arden. Major loss of farmsteads to the north-west due to the urban expansion of Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield.

98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, with areas of high density around Clun Forest and a low density centred around the lowlands to the south adjacent to the Herefordshire Lowlands.

99 Black Mountains and Golden Valley Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, the rich arable lands and larger farms of the Golden Valley contrasting with the smaller-scale farmsteads in the anciently enclosed landscapes of the Black Mountains.

100 Herefordshire Lowlands Large and very large-scale farmsteads predominant, especially around its wide floodplains, the scale of fields in the landscapes also resulting from the development of large isolated farms from the medieval period.

101 Herefordshire Plateau An area subject to the same forces for change as the Lowlands (100) but there are higher densities of medium-scale farmsteads that remained with its undulating plateau landscape.

102 Teme Valley Medium density of often large-scale farmsteads developed around the rich arable floodplains, with higher densities of smaller farmsteads in the remainder of its undulating landscapes.

103 Malvern Hills Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, high to the anciently-enclosed landscapes of the Suckley Hills to the north and low in the estatelands to the south. Strong suburban influences evident in its landscape from the 19th century.

104 South Herefordshire and Over Severn The predominant pattern of medium-large scale farmsteads results from the same forces for change as Areas 100 and 101, combined with the retention of ancient enclosure in some areas.

105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye Strong pattern of dispersed settlement that developed within landscapes cleared from woodland, a mix of scales resulting from 18th and 19th century farm amalgamation/improvement and the retention of smaller farms in some areas.

106 Severn and Avon Vales Contrasting area with high to very high densities of isolated farmsteads of varied scales to west and north, and low densities (generally larger in scale) in the village-based landscapes to south east.

107 Cotswolds Medium-low density of large-scale farmsteads in the landscape, resulting from the gradual movement from the 14th century of farmsteads away from village-based settlement. Small farmsteads are associated with the anciently-enclosed tight valleys and scarp edges.

Section 1 Historical Development

National Context

Distinct agricultural regions developed across England from the medieval period, mixing or specialising to differing degrees in the production of corn, livestock or dairy products. These regions were influenced by patterns of landownership, communications, urban development and industry, as well as the nature and intensity of earlier land use. Agricultural productivity has long been sustained by new techniques in crop and animal husbandry, and the restructuring and enlargement of farm holdings. The period 1750-1880, and especially the capital-intensive 'High Farming' years of the 1840's-70's, saw a particularly sharp increase in productivity, in which the rebuilding of farmsteads played a prominent role. This was followed by a long but regionally varied depression that lasted until the Second World War. From the 1950s, farmsteads have further expanded in size in tandem with the construction of new standardised infrastructure (most commonly steel sheds) that are vital to the modern farming industry. At the same time, traditional farmsteads and their buildings made redundant for modern farming purposes have passed into new (predominantly residential) forms of use.

Regional Context

The West Midlands covers much of what has been described as 'the Midlands Triangle' – a large central plain that is undulating rather than flat – and is surrounded by areas of upland. Carboniferous rocks to its centre provided the coal and iron on which the region's industrial development was based. Geologically the oldest, hardest rocks occur as isolated outliers in the South Shropshire and Malvern Hills, whilst Herefordshire is dominated by the Red Devonian Sandstones and Marls that produce the characteristic red Herefordshire soils. To the north, into Shropshire, limestones and shales give rise to ridge and valley scenery. To the south-east is the limestone scarp of the Cotswolds, which has provided good soils for arable farming in combination with the fattening of cattle and sheep. The upland areas of the western borders and the north-eastern corner of the region have poorer quality land and a cold, wet climate which have been significant limiting factors to agriculture. Dairying has been historically concentrated in the heavy clays of the north of the Shropshire and Staffordshire Plain. Some of the best quality agricultural land is to be found around river floodplains and the broad valleys within hilly landscapes such as the Shropshire Hills and the Teme Valley, where intensive arable production combined with the fattening of stock has been important, often using rich meadowland is found along some of the valleys. Across Herefordshire, and extending into the adjacent parts of Shropshire and Worcestershire, orchards and hop fields are characteristic. The Vale of Evesham and the upper Avon and Leadon valleys are important horticultural areas.

Across the West Midlands the principal agricultural processes, expressed in strong regional differences by the 17th century, have been:

- Arable farming, which was combined with the fattening of cattle in the lowland vales and on the sandstone and limestone plateaux. The largest farms developed in arable farming areas, and industrial-scale brewing stimulated barley production in some areas.
- Cattle and sheep rearing, particularly in the hill farms along the Welsh border and in the Peak District area.
- Dairying, which became very strong along with pig-keeping in the north of the region and around Kidderminster.
- Fruit growing and market gardening, which developed on an industrial scale from the mid-19th century around Evesham and to the south and east of Birmingham.
- The hop industry, which developed from the 16th century in the south of the region, reached its peak in the 1870s and sharply declined from the 1970s. Hops were often grown in association with other fruits.
- The cider industry, which developed on a commercial basis for export from the later 17th century. Factory-produced cider (e.g. Bulmers in Hereford) became increasingly important from the 1870s.

Farming has historically worked alongside, and sometimes in combination with, rural industries:

- By the 17th century at least, lead and coal mining, iron smelting and quarrying for stone, clays, sands and other mineral extraction enabled smallholders to combine farming and industry, utilising common grazing on moorland and heath in the Potteries, the Black Country, the east Shropshire coalfield and the Shropshire Hills.
- Involvement in manufacturing such as nail making in the Black Country or textiles.
- The export of woodland produce.

Comparison of modern and late 19th century maps, which were published after the final significant period of development of traditional farmsteads, has enabled a regional as well as local assessment of the degree to which historic farmsteads have retained their traditional character and survive in different types of use (see pp.7 and 13-19 of ***The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: Summary Report***.

In summary:

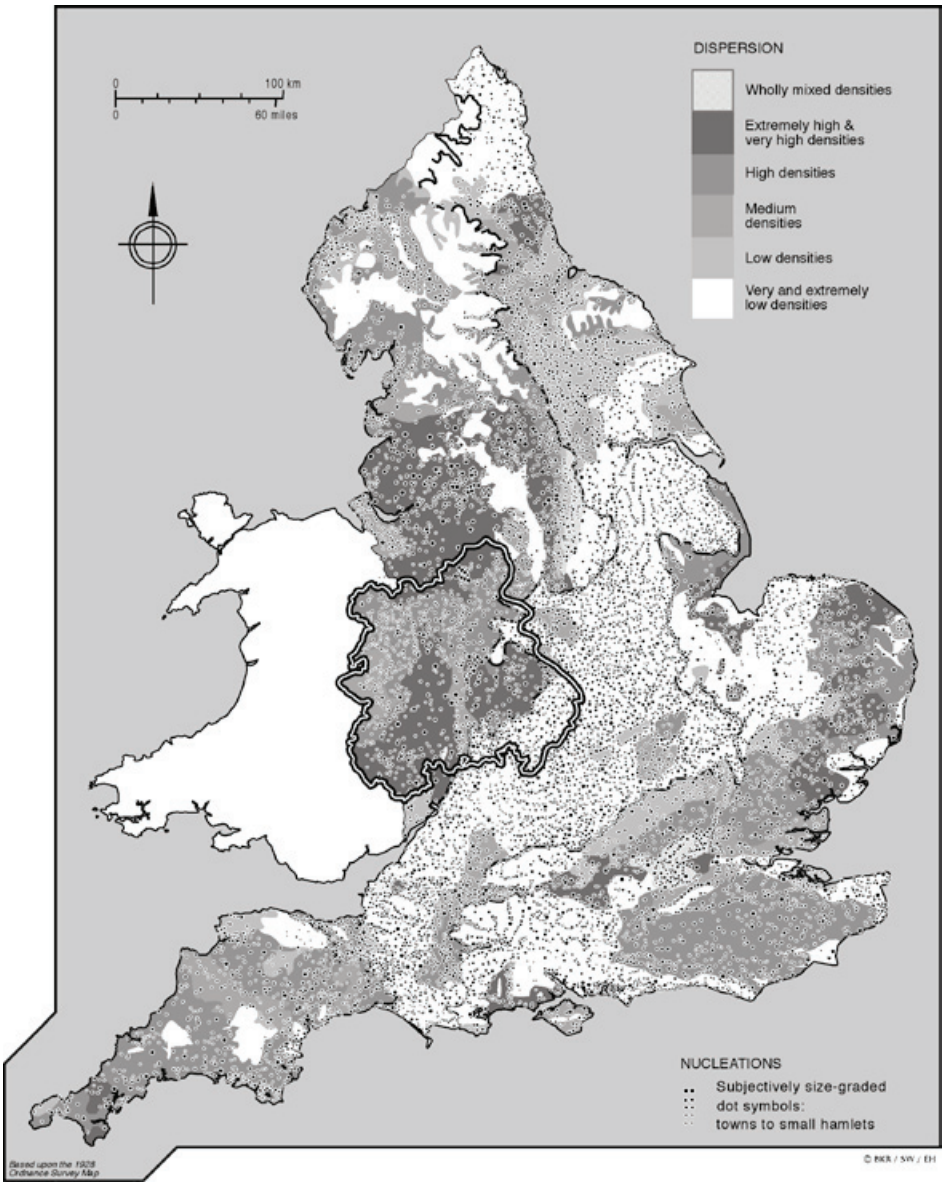
- Approximately 17,000 (82%) of historic farmsteads, as recorded from late 19th century maps, have retained some or all of their traditional working buildings. 65% of these have fallen out of agricultural use. The survival and densities of historic farmsteads are lowest in the south east of the region and some arable areas, and highest in upland or pastoral farming landscapes.
- 31% of historic farmsteads remain in agricultural use with minimal diversification. This use is most strongly associated with the largest farmstead types. There are also high numbers of medium to small-scale farmsteads in agricultural use across the uplands of the Welsh Borders and in north-east Staffordshire (including the Peak District). Other research outlined in this report has indicated that on working farms there are high numbers of traditional buildings without a use which are in significant decline.
- Historic farmsteads that combine significant diversification (requiring planning permission) with continued agricultural use (3%) are concentrated towards the west of the region, particularly in Herefordshire where large-scale farmsteads developed.
- The incidence of farmsteads providing industrial, commercial or retail facilities is very small (5%) and most strongly associated with the largest farmstead types. An additional 5% combine residential use with industrial, commercial or retail facilities.
- Residential use, including sites where some or all of the working buildings have been converted into housing, accounts for the remainder (56%). Small-scale farmsteads are the most likely to have passed into residential use, but otherwise this type of use is evenly distributed across all types and scales of historic farmsteads.
- The extent of business activity associated with farmsteads in residential use, as indicated by their role as bases of limited companies and substantial directorships, is higher in historic farmsteads than in other dwellings regardless of location.

Section 2 Landscape and Context

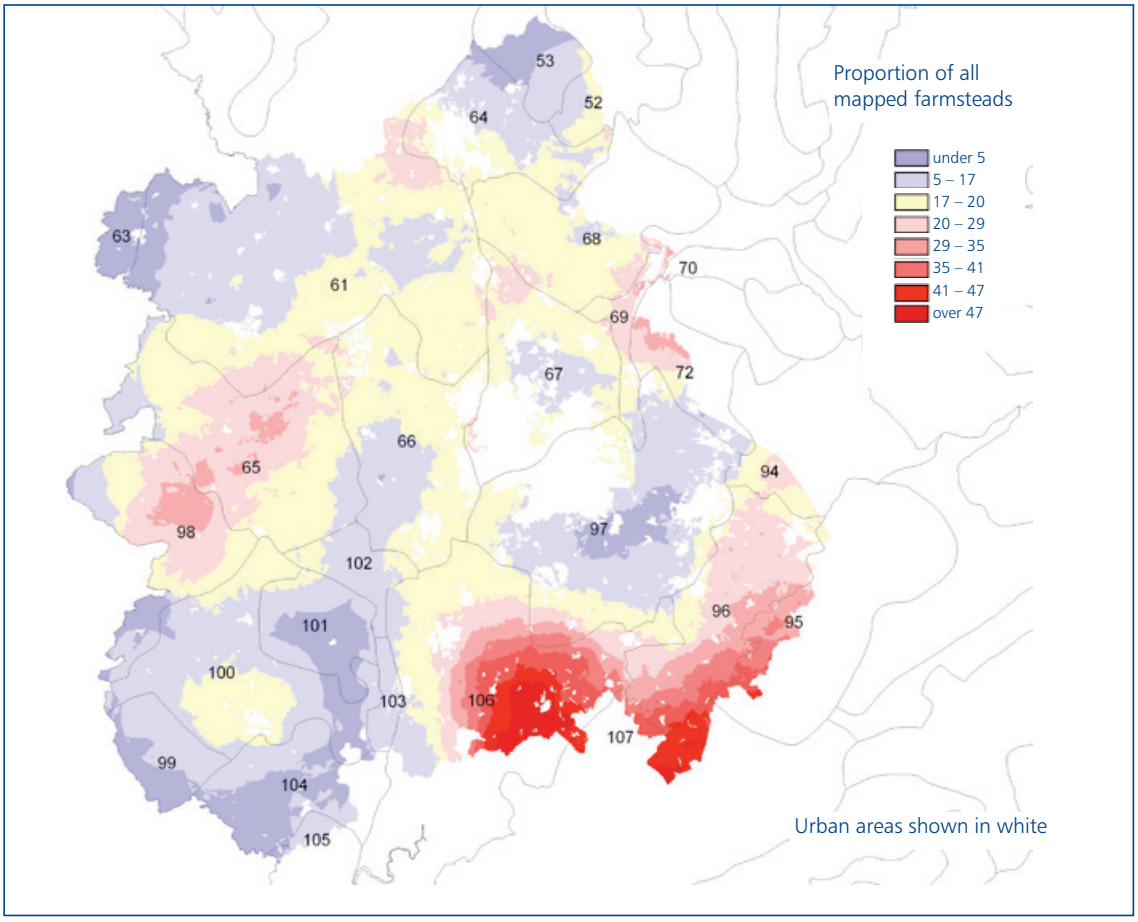
This section introduces how farmsteads have developed within the context of their landscapes and communities. This is fundamental to understanding how farmsteads contribute to the distinctive character of areas across the region, an issue which will be further explored together with the mix of farmstead types and their scale in Section 3.

Farmsteads and Settlement: National Context

Farmsteads relate to patterns of settlement and development which extend into the medieval period and earlier. Rural settlement in England can broadly be divided into two types - nucleated villages and dispersed farmsteads and hamlets. In areas of nucleated settlement communities have worked the land from farmsteads located within villages, and most if not all of the relatively few isolated farmsteads were established after the enclosure of open fields or common land. At the other extreme are areas that have few or no villages and which have been dominated by scattered dwellings and farmsteads and hamlets; some of these are on the sites of shrunken medieval villages or lie within historic parks. Other areas may have a mix of settlement patterns.



This map presents an analysis of the settlement pattern of England in the mid-19th century which identifies a Central Province, mostly characterised by nucleated settlement (villages are indicated by the dots) and once dominated by communal fields, and two outer Provinces with high densities of dispersed settlement. Most of the region has high levels of dispersed settlement (darker shading indicating high densities), which is the predominant form of settlement across the border in Wales. Based upon 'England: Rural Settlement in the mid-19th century'. Source: An Atlas of Rural Settlement in. England (2000) © English Heritage/Roberts, B.K. and Wrathmell, S.



Farmsteads in Settlements (village and urban) as a Proportion of all Mapped Farmsteads, smoothed to 10 kilometres. The red areas show where farmsteads are mostly found within villages, and where there are relatively few isolated farmsteads; yellow areas where small villages and isolated farmsteads and hamlets are intermixed; blue areas where settlement is largely dispersed with scattered farmsteads and hamlets and there are few or no villages.

Farmsteads located within villages represent 12.6% of the recorded farmsteads. In areas of nucleated settlement village-based farmsteads were historically much more numerous, but have reduced in number over time as working farms moved to new sites. Large villages are characteristic of the south-east of the region.

Over 12% of mapped farmsteads developed within hamlets, which appear across the region but are not a feature of the village-based landscapes to the south east. They typically comprise 3-4 farmsteads (often with additional dwellings) which are tightly clustered together, or arranged along a road. Some villages shrank into hamlets, and some hamlets into individual farmsteads.

By far the majority (over 70%) of farmsteads in the West Midlands region are dispersed across the landscape, located in relative isolation from each other. On occasion isolated farmsteads can be loosely clustered together and often linked by a network of lanes and footpaths but are insufficiently close to be considered as a hamlet.

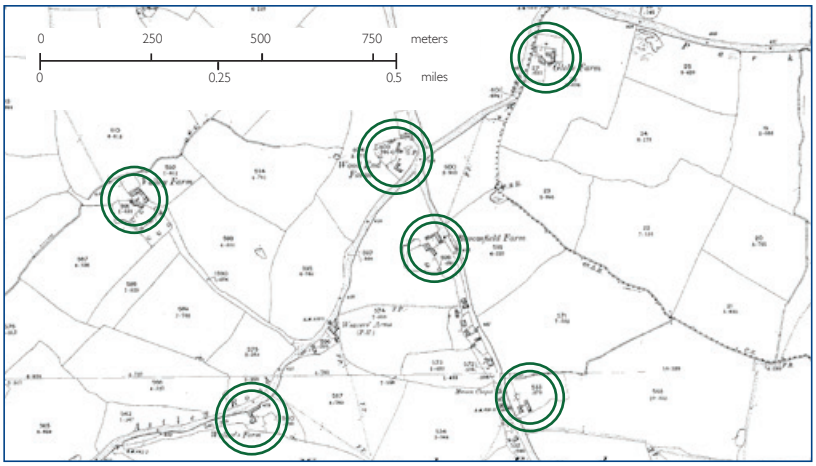
Farmsteads and Landscape: National Context

There is a great complexity of historic landscape types found across the West Midlands region, but the main broad types found in association with farmsteads are:

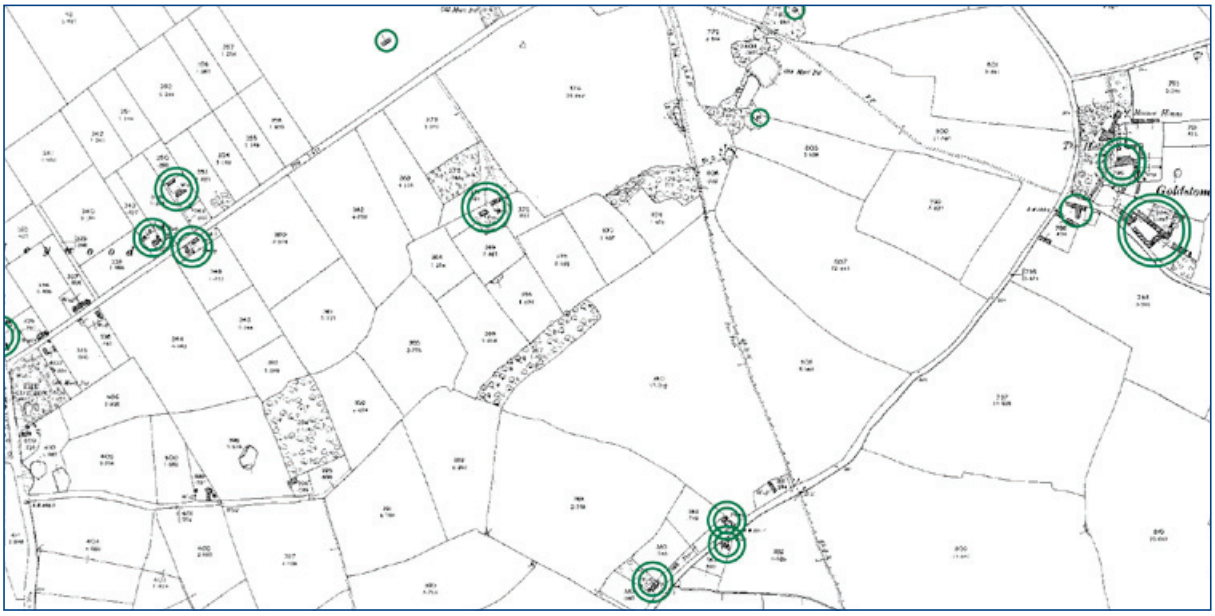
- *irregular enclosure* from areas of woodland and rough grazing around areas of common land (heath, mosses and upland moor), resulting over time from the activities of small farmers and smallholdings.
- *piecemeal enclosure*, which may retain the curved form of medieval strips into which the medieval open fields around villages and other settlements were subdivided. It results from a long process – starting in the 14th century – of farm amalgamation and the exchange of land between farmers, and often the resiting of farmsteads away from settlements.
- *reorganised piecemeal enclosure*, where the development of large farms has resulted in the removal and sometimes the straightening of boundaries to larger-scale fields. It results from the development of larger farms and estates in the arable lowlands, commonly in the 18th-20th centuries.
- *regular or planned enclosure* of common land and areas of rough grazing (concentrated in heathland, mosses and upland moors), as well as the reorganisation of earlier enclosed farmland. It usually results from a later process of formal agreement between the late 17th and 19th centuries, often driven by estates and in some cases by parliamentary act.

Irregular or wavy boundaries to fields are more likely to be species rich and include high numbers of old trees, and relate to ancient parish boundaries, result from the clearance of woodland or relate to the boundaries of medieval strip fields which had been amalgamated and enclosed on a piecemeal basis. These fields are typically smaller in scale away from the areas of large farms - in hilly and valley-side landscapes where small farms remained, around the fringes of uplands and lowland commons and around villages. They can also be quite large in scale, reflecting long processes of farm amalgamation and the development of large farms, as here around the meadowlands of the Teme Valley. They are often intermixed with straight boundaries, such as the ones illustrated below, especially in landscapes where the farmland was successively reorganised in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Regular boundaries to large fields in landscapes of planned enclosure, and within landscapes of piecemeal reorganised enclosure, are the most likely to be of hawthorn or blackthorn with few boundary trees.
(Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain)



Fillongley in the Arden (97), which is an area characterised by dispersed settlement; hamlets and isolated farmsteads linked by a network of lanes and paths. The irregular fields within this area are largely the result of the clearance of woodland from the 14th century although the larger fields on the western edge of the map were probably created when a medieval deer park was given over to farming. Many of the farmsteads in this area are of medieval origin, often retaining timber-framed farmhouses and barns of 16th-17th century date loosely arranged yards. Map based on OS 2nd Edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2005) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024



Hinstock in the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain (61). This landscape shows three distinct phases of enclosure. Large piecemeal enclosure fields to the north-east surround the hamlet of Goldstone with its two large farmsteads. Smaller, irregular fields stretch away to the south-west – whilst there are many straight boundaries, the survival of occasional irregular boundaries hints at an earlier field pattern of piecemeal enclosure that has been re-organised in the 18th or 19th centuries. These are associated with surviving farmsteads with buildings of 17th and 18th century date with medium-sized loose courtyard farmsteads. To the north-west is an area of regular enclosure of common land creating small, regular fields accessed by straight roads and tracks. These small fields are associated with small loose courtyard farmsteads with a building to one side of the yard and smallholdings. Map based on OS 2nd Edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2005) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

Whatcote, Dunsmore and Feldon (96). Piecemeal enclosure surrounds the typical Feldon village of Whatcote, the boundaries of the fields following the lines of the cultivation strips into which the open fields around the village were subdivided. Most of the medium scale farmsteads remained within the village after enclosure although Kirby Farm to the east appears to have been relocated to sit within its enclosed fields. Field barns and outfarms serving some of the more distant fields were a feature of this landscape although many have been lost since the late 19th century: one is shown to the south of the map. Map based on OS 2nd Edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2005) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

Farmsteads in shrunken settlements

A small proportion of farmsteads (1.4% of the total recorded) are located within the earthwork remains of recorded shrunken medieval settlements, sometimes representing the last vestige of settlement on the site. This is particularly evident in Shropshire where over 3% of isolated farmsteads stand next to the remains of medieval villages, especially in the Shropshire Hills area and extending up towards Shrewsbury. (© Herefordshire Council)

Farmsteads associated with churches

High status farmsteads, often Manor, Church or Court Farms can be found associated with a medieval church and no other houses or farms. These sites often provide a focal point within parishes with dispersed historic settlement and 1.1% of recorded farmsteads are part of this form of settlement.

Farmsteads in landscaped parks

Some farmsteads have significant historic associations with historic parks and gardens (1.4% of the total). These farmsteads often have regular, planned courtyards and can display finer architectural treatment than the local vernacular farmsteads, reflecting both the wealth and commitment to agricultural improvement of their owners, setting an example to local farmers, but also sometimes forming an important part of a landscaped park. (© Herefordshire Council)

SECTION 3 TRADITIONAL FARMSTEAD TYPES

National Context

The principal function of farmsteads has been to house the farming family and any workers, store and process harvested crops and dairy products, provide shelter for livestock, carts and implements and produce manure for the surrounding farmland. Farmsteads required access to routes and tracks, and working buildings were placed in relationship to yards and other areas for stacking crops and other produce and managing livestock. In particular:

Housing

- The farmhouse can be attached to the working buildings, be positioned on one side of the yard or stand detached from the farmyard with their own driveways and gardens, a position often seen in larger farmsteads of the 18th and 19th centuries.
- Accommodation for farm workers in the house (usually in the back wing), in working buildings or as cottages on larger farmsteads.

Crop storage and Processing

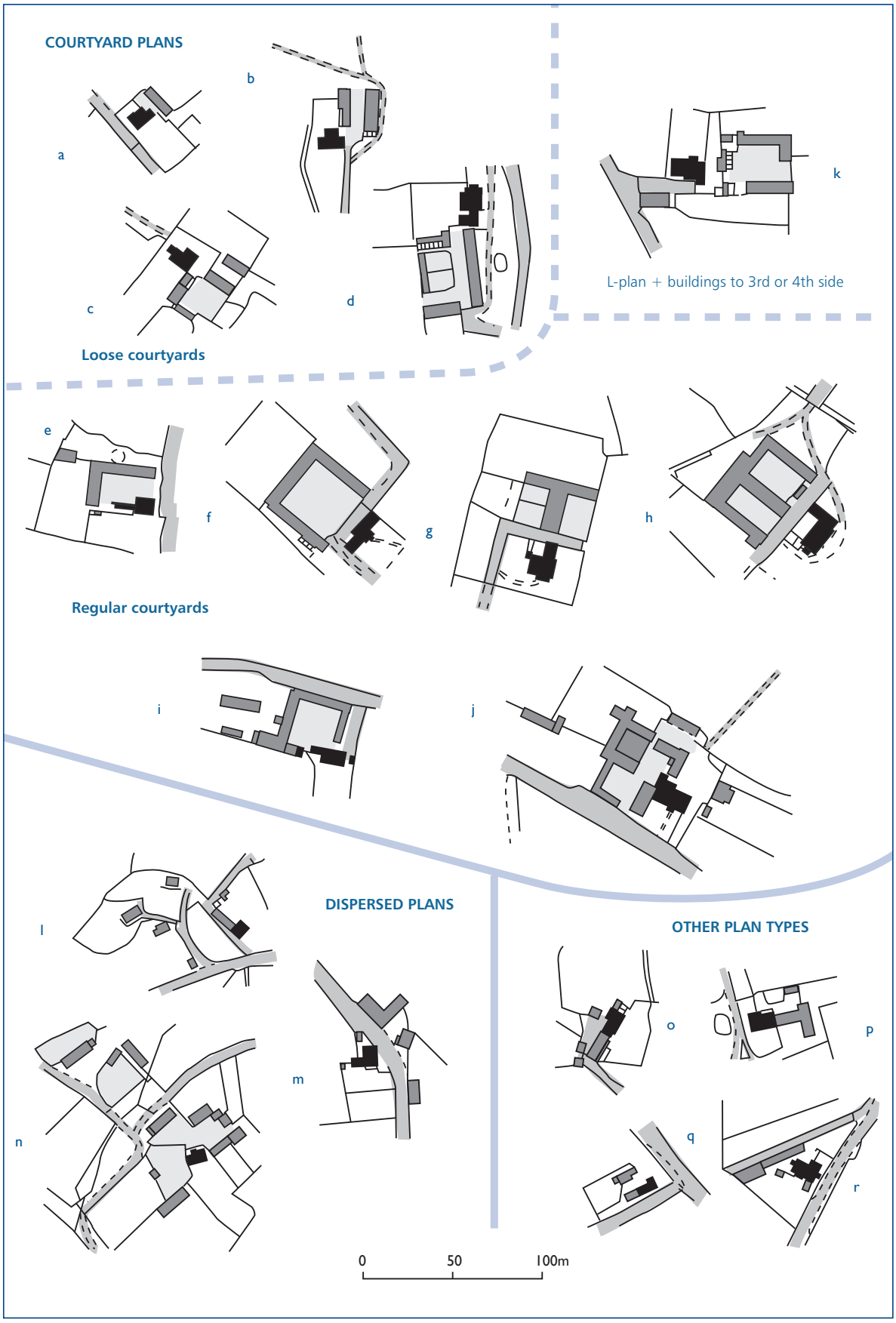
- A barn for storing and processing the harvested corn crop over the winter months was the basic requirement of farms, and corn could also be stacked in yards adjacent to the barn.
- A granary for storing grain in either the house or within a multi-functional range of buildings.
- Oasts for drying hops, mills and presses for cider-making and stores for storing fruit.

Horses and Cattle

- Straw was taken from the barn, after threshing, to cattle yards and stables to be used as bedding for livestock. The resulting manure was then forked into carts and returned to fertilise the surrounding farmland.
- Yards for cattle, often bounded by open-fronted sheds and cowhouses, typically face south and east to capture sun and light, the openings being concentrated on the yard sides of the buildings.

The range of resulting plan types (see following page) result from differences in the historic function of farmsteads, and in particular the extent to which they needed space and buildings to store and process harvested crops (corn and fruit) and shelter and manage animals.

Historic farmsteads often consist of buildings spanning a wide date range and a variety of materials.


COURTYARD PLANS
a
b
c
d
Loose courtyards
k
L-plan + buildings to 3rd or 4th side
e
f
g
h
Regular courtyards
i
j
DISPERSED PLANS
l
m
n
OTHER PLAN TYPES
o
p
q
r
0
50
100m

The broad farmstead plan types divide into:

- **Courtyard plans** (80.7%) where the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards. with or without scatters of other farm buildings close by. The farmhouse may either face into the yard, be set gable end on to the yard or set to one side. the working buildings are arranged around a yard
- **Dispersed plans** where there is no focal yard area (6.7%)
- **Other farmsteads**, mostly small in scale, where the house and working buildings are often attached, and which can also comprise smallholdings (11.7%)

Courtyard plan farmsteads subdivide into:

a-d) Loose Courtyard farmsteads (29.2%) which have buildings loosely arranged around one (a) or more (b – 2; c – 3; d – 4) sides of a yard. Those with buildings to one side of the yard are typically the smallest in scale, and those with four the largest.

e-j) Regular Courtyard farmsteads (46.4%) which consist of linked ranges, formally arranged around one or more yards, and subdivide into:

- e) L-plan (10.1%), typically small-medium in scale, where additional buildings (if present) are typically small in scale
- f) U-shaped plans (8%, F on plan), which are large-scale farmsteads where one side has been left open
- g and h) comprising large to very large scale farmsteads where the buildings are arranged as an F-, E-, T-, H- or Z-shaped plan around two or more cattle yards (a total of 4.5% for the West Midlands).
- i) Full Regular courtyard farmsteads, typically very large in scale, where the buildings are arranged around all four sides of the yard (4.9%).
- j) Multi-Yard plans (8.1%) which are typically the largest in scale of the regular courtyard plan types, comprising farmsteads with multiple yards which are grouped together and regularly arranged.

k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides (14.9%), which are generally large to very large in scale.

Dispersed plans subdivide into:

- l) Dispersed clusters (2.9%) where the working buildings are set within the boundary of the steading, and typically the smallest in scale in this category.
- m) Dispersed driftways (1.2%) which are dominated by the routeways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another. These are mostly small-medium in scale.
- n) Dispersed multi-yards (2.6%), which are large-scale farmsteads containing two or more detached yards, often with other scattered buildings.

The **other plan types** generally represent the smallest farmsteads recorded in the region and are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads:

o) Linear farmsteads (7.3%), where the houses and working buildings are attached and in-line.

p) L-plan (attached), which is a linear farmstead, extended or planned with additional working buildings to make an L-shaped range (3.1%).

q) Parallel plans (0.6%) where the working buildings are placed opposite and parallel to the house and attached working buildings with a narrow area between. They have often developed from linear farmsteads.

r) A row plan (0.7%), often medium as well as small in scale, where the working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row.

Farmstead Scale and Density in the Landscape

A defining characteristic of the West Midlands is the mix of strongly contrasting farmstead and landscape types often in close proximity: the region generally regarded as a smoothed out/clay soil character that defies division into sub-regional areas. Grouping the key farmstead types into categories based on scale does indeed show a scatter and intermingling of farmsteads scales across the region, but very clear areas emerge that are linked to predominant scales of enclosure.

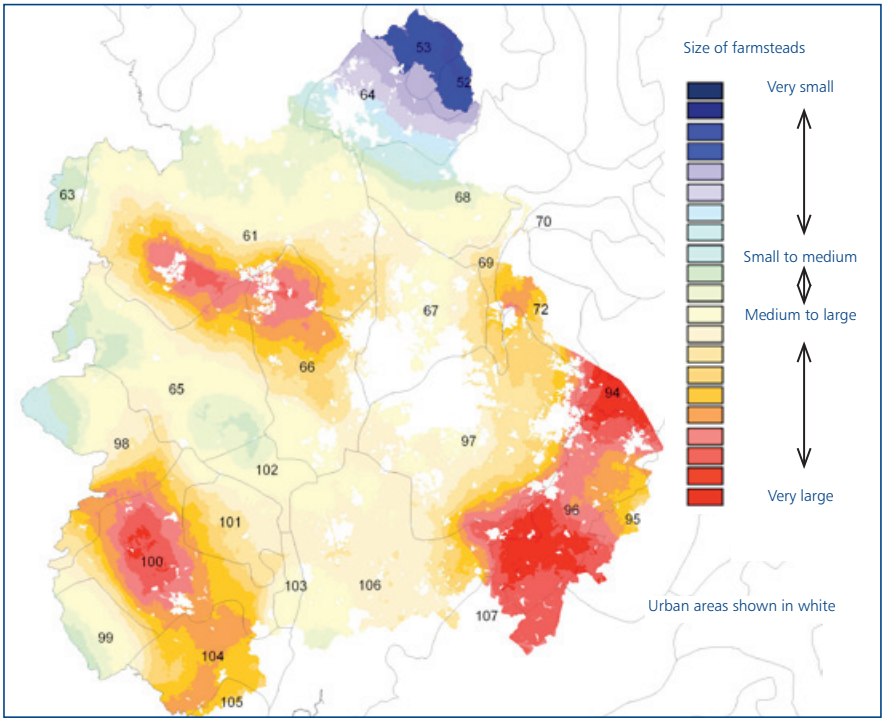
The various farmstead plan types generally fall into one of four scale categories:

Very small-scale farmsteads 21.2%

Small-medium scale farmsteads 24.3%

Medium-large (or large) scale farmsteads 32.7%

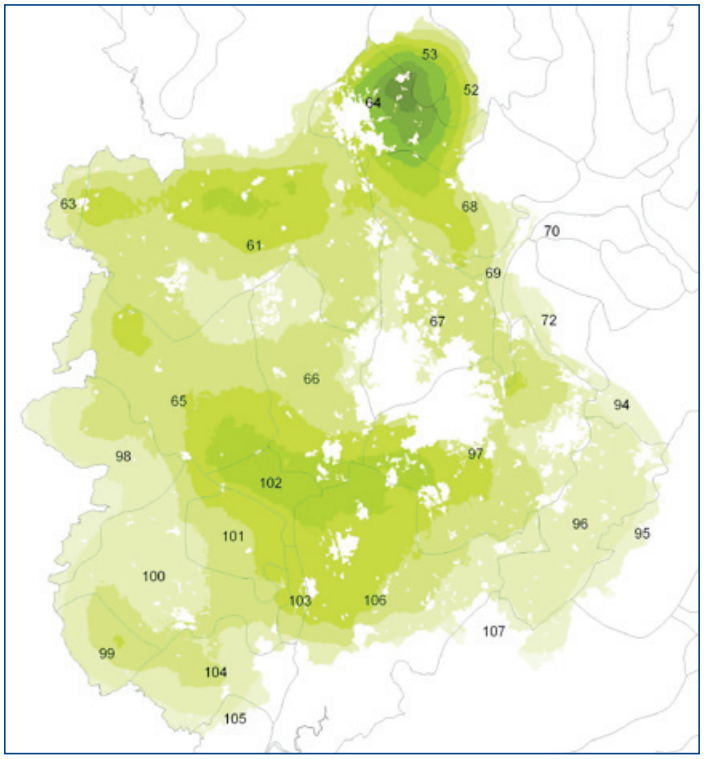
Very large-scale farmsteads 20.1%



SCALE MAP

Farmstead Scale, smoothed to 10 kilometres.

The uplands of north-east Staffordshire, including the Peak District National Park, has the highest density of small-scale farmsteads (in blue). The zones dominated by the largest-scale farmsteads (in red), with buildings to all sides of the yard and multiple yards, are concentrated in the village-based landscapes of Warwickshire away from the Arden – the Avon Vale in the eastern spur of 107, and 94-6), the Herefordshire Lowlands (100) and the central Shropshire Plain and plateau landscape (61 and 66) where large-scale farms had developed by the 18th century and continued to expand.

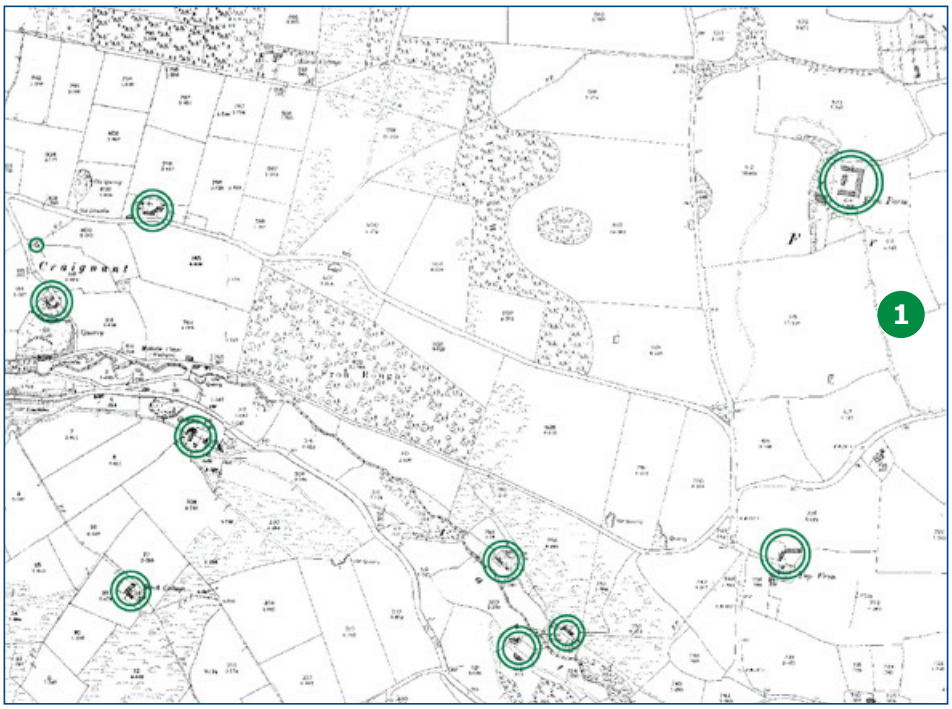


DENSITY MAP

This shows the density of farmsteads in the landscape across the West Midlands; dark green showing areas where there is a high density. The lowest densities (in light green) are found in areas where large arable-based farms developed, and the highest in areas of small cattle-rearing and dairying farms as well as areas of common-edge settlement next to heaths, moss and moorland. Notable for their high densities of small to medium-sized farmsteads are the upland areas of Staffordshire Moorlands (in and around areas 52 and 53), the mosslands, heathlands and uplands of north Shropshire (61), the Stiperstones in the Shropshire Hills (65) and a broad zone extending from the Clee Hills (to the east of 65) across the Teme valley (102) and the north of the Severn and Avon Vales (106) into the Arden of Warwickshire (97). There are low densities of farmsteads in the central Shropshire plain around Shrewsbury (61), the lowlands of Herefordshire (100) extending to the Wigmore Basin in Clun (98)and in the village-dominated landscapes of the south east of the region.

The scale and density of farmsteads in the landscape is intricately related to how landscapes changed over time, and in particular the patterns of enclosure – the shape of fields and the form of their boundaries.

- Areas with the highest densities of farmsteads typically include smaller-scale regular or irregular enclosed fields with large numbers of small to medium-scale farmstead types.
- Areas with lower densities of farmsteads typically include larger-scale enclosed fields with lower numbers of large-scale farmstead types.
- As time passed, fields increased in size, and where they did, holdings were amalgamated or enlarged and farmsteads became more and more spread out. The farmsteads themselves also increased in size along with their surrounding fieldscapes.



Craigant, Oswestry Uplands (63), an area which includes some high densities of farmsteads. The larger-scale farmsteads (including the regular U-plan Fron Farm - see (1) marked to right) to the east sit within landscapes with large-scale fields created through piecemeal enclosure and (to the west of the road) planned enclosure. To the south along the river valley are small to medium scale irregular fields created through piecemeal enclosure, the farmsteads mostly comprising linear and L-shaped groups. To the north-west the planned enclosure of common land has produced blocks of regular fields, often small in scale, reflecting the small size of many of the farms that had rights on the common. Map based on OS 2nd Edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2005) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

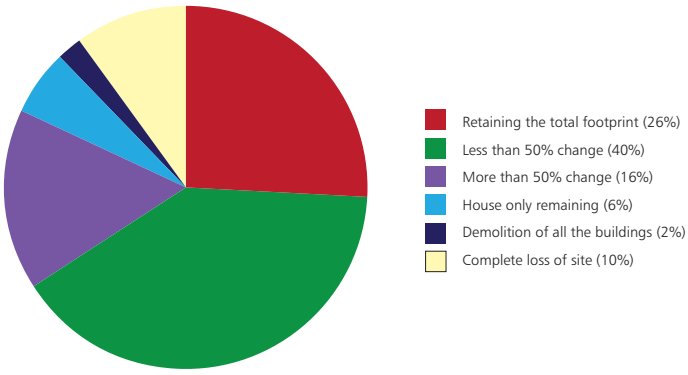
Staunton-on-Arrow, Herefordshire Lowlands (100), in an area dominated by large farmsteads dispersed across the landscape. Many of these moved out of the villages in the 13th-14th centuries, possibly in association with the piecemeal enclosure of the open fields that spread across much of the area. Many of the farmsteads within this landscape were also subject to enlargement and re-organisation, typically creating regular courtyard or regular multi-yard plans although substantial earlier buildings such as barns would be retained and form part of the new layout of the farmstead. Map based on OS 2nd Edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2005) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

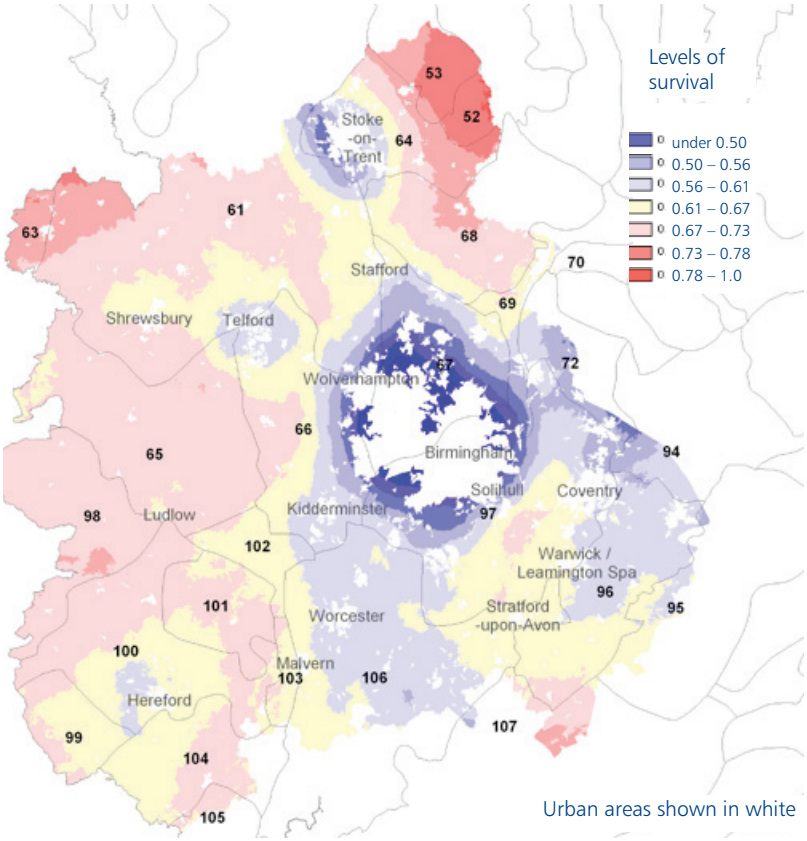
Farmsteads and 20th Century Change

Over 22,000 farmstead sites have been identified from late 19th century maps across the region, and then compared to current maps. This has enabled the degree of change for each farmstead to be measured, enabling a regional as well as local assessment of the degree to which historic farmsteads have retained their traditional character. This shows that nearly 17,000 (82%) of these farmsteads have retained some or all of their traditional working buildings, the highest rates of survival being concentrated in the north and west of the region. The highest rates of survival are typically associated with farmsteads located within historic parks, where 91% of sites retain some or all of their working buildings, followed by hamlets (86%), isolated locations (81%) and villages (79%). Only 10% of historic farmstead sites have been completely lost since the late 19th century. Over 80% of this loss is the result of urban expansion rather than the abandonment of the site.

The smallest-scale farmsteads have historically been absorbed into larger complexes, and have been subject to the greatest levels of loss over the 20th century. The largest-scale farmsteads have on the other hand been most likely to have survived at the core of farm businesses, but to have had some alteration to their layout and demolition of buildings (see tables at end of this report).

Pie chart showing farmsteads change in footprint from the 2nd edition map





The map has smoothed the results of the farmsteads mapping to an average of 10 kilometres, in order to show the levels of survival of traditional farmsteads. The numeric values assigned to the colours represent the likely levels of survival within each coloured zone on the map as shown below:

1.0 Extant
0.7 Less than 50% change
0.5 More than 50% change
0.3 Complete alteration to plan
0.2 Only the farmhouse survives
0.0 Farmstead lost

Urban areas shown in white

Farmstead Date and Landscape

By utilising date information held within listed building and Historic Environment Record data, farmsteads can be assigned a date representing the earliest surviving building within the group. The date of the farmhouses and any listed agricultural buildings is recorded separately. This information is either based on external or internal survey, and in the case of the former the external form, materials and style may only show the visible and evident time-depth of the present building stock. The resulting broad and large-scale patterns provide a broad indication of both different phases of rebuilding across the region and where the inherited building stock was reused – either because of its robustness and/or because farmsteads were not affected by later phases or reorganisation and the enlargement of holdings.

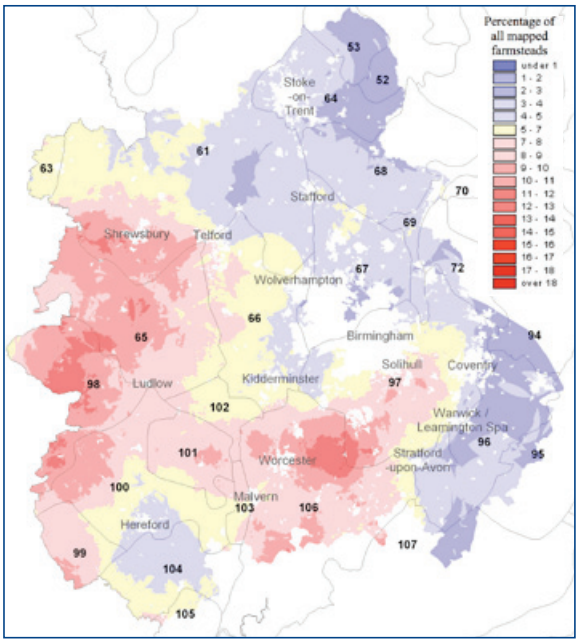
At present it is possible to display the patterns of individual listed buildings by date which display a strong degree of local and regional variation.

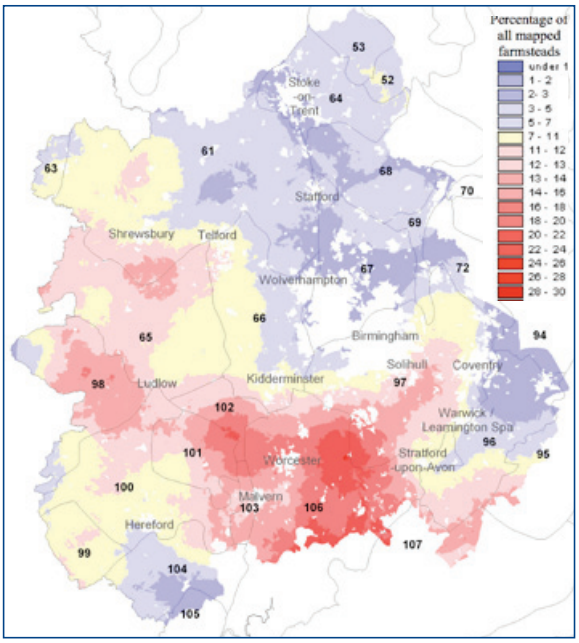
There is a considerably higher concentration – high by national standards (see p.42) - of barns pre-dating 1550 and 1750 within the southern and western parts of the region where large numbers of farmsteads were rebuilt as the settlements changed and fields were enclosed. The distinctive character of other parts of the region results from more recent change. The mapping of farmsteads in Staffordshire, for example, has shown that within the upland areas of the Staffordshire Peak District there are few farmsteads that contain listed buildings dating from before the 19th century. Within this area there is a high density of farmsteads set within a landscape that is largely a product of 19th century enclosure. The historic character of this area is similarly coherent and legible, as both the farmsteads and the landscape have experienced little overall change since the 19th century.

Table 1. Dated Farmsteads

NCA	Pre 1600 %	C17 %	C18 %	C19 %	unknown %
ARDEN	4.5	10.6	6.1	78.7	0.0
BLACK MOUNTAINS AND GOLDEN VALLEY	7.1	8.7	2.7	81.5	0.0
CANNOCK CHASE AND CANK WOOD	2.1	2.2	4.5	90.9	0.4
CLUN AND NORTH WEST HEREFORDSHIRE HILLS	8.7	12.1	5.0	72.6	1.6
COTSWOLDS	1.3	16.7	17.3	61.5	3.2
DUNSMORE AND FELDON	0.8	6.7	6.6	85.6	0.2
FOREST OF DEAN AND LOWER WYE	4.2	0.0	8.3	87.5	0.0
HEREFORDSHIRE LOWLANDS	4.9	11.8	5.2	78.2	0.0
HEREFORDSHIRE PLATEAU	7.8	13.8	7.1	71.3	0.0
LEICESTERSHIRE VALES	0.8	0.0	0.8	98.4	0.0
MALVERN HILLS	2.4	20.3	4.9	72.4	0.0
MEASE/SENCE LOWLANDS	0.5	1.6	4.9	92.9	0.0
MELBOURNE PARKLANDS	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
MID SEVERN SANDSTONE PLATEAU	3.2	7.0	9.2	79.0	1.5
NEEDWOOD AND SOUTH DERBYSHIRE CLAYLANDS	1.4	4.2	5.2	88.9	0.4
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE UPLANDS	0.7	9.6	5.9	83.0	0.7
OSWESTRY UPLANDS	4.0	6.1	5.1	79.1	5.8
POTTERIES AND CHURNET VALLEY	1.1	5.3	3.3	89.5	0.8
SEVERN AND AVON VALES	7.3	17.7	7.4	67.4	0.1
SHROPSHIRE HILLS	7.4	10.5	4.0	75.2	3.0
SHROPSHIRE, CHESHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE PLAIN	3.8	6.9	6.3	81.2	1.8
SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE AND OVER SEVERN	2.4	5.8	2.4	89.4	0.0
SOUTH WEST PEAK	0.6	5.2	2.7	91.6	0.0
TEME VALLEY	5.6	18.6	9.9	65.2	0.7
TRENT VALLEY WASHLANDS	1.9	4.4	10.7	83.0	0.0
WHITE PEAK	1.3	5.4	6.7	86.5	0.0

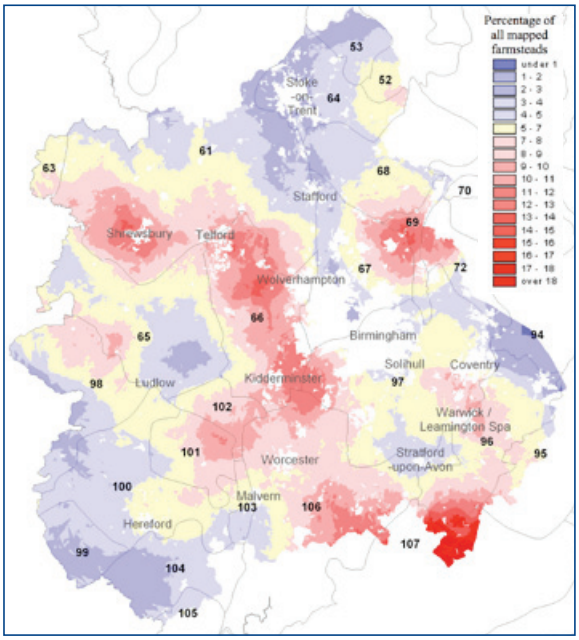
This table shows the percentage of farmsteads within each National Character Area that have buildings recorded as being 16th century or earlier, 17th and 18th century. These are predominantly farmhouses rather than working buildings.

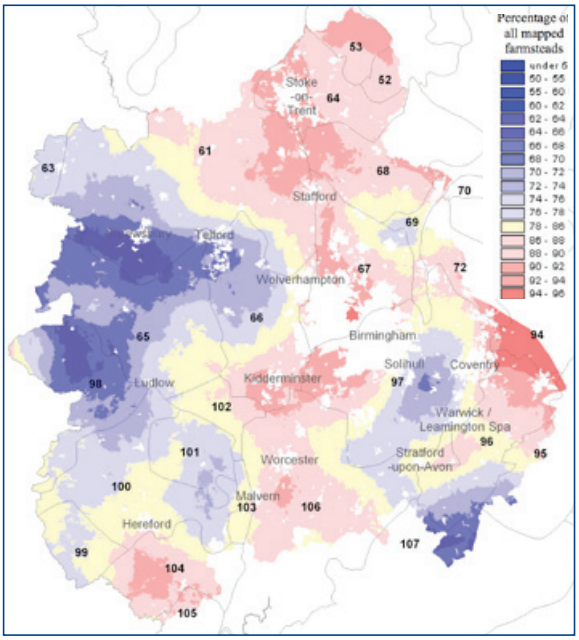




(Left) 16th century and earlier buildings survive best in the core of the Arden (97), in the anciently-enclosed and village-based landscapes of the Severn and Avon Vales (106), extending through the Herefordshire Plateau (101) into the western part of the region: these take in a diversity of landscapes, from the arable farming areas of the Herefordshire Plain (100) and the Severn plain around Shrewsbury (61) to the broad dales of the Shropshire Hills (65) and the upland fringes of Clun (98) and the Black Mountains (99) which prospered in tandem with the adjoining areas of eastern Wales.

(Right) This effectively intensifies the patterns of the earlier map, but extending into the fertile terraces of the Avon (the eastern spur of 107), southern Felden (96), Cotswolds (107) and Northamptonshire Uplands (95) fringe where many 17th century farmhouses survived as part of working farms into the late 19th century. 17th century and earlier buildings in the village farmlands of south-east Worcestershire and much of Warwickshire are concentrated within the villages or in clear relationship to patches of early enclosed land. Early buildings otherwise relate to the predominant patterns of dispersed settlement across the rest of the region, including the shrinkage and abandonment of villages from the 15th century and the establishment of isolated farmsteads. It must be emphasised that recorded farmsteads within villages represent those that by the late 19th century had not been separated from agricultural activity. Corve Dale is prominent, as is the barley-growing area north of Shrewsbury where again there is a large number of early barns and other working buildings that have been absorbed into enlarged brick buildings.



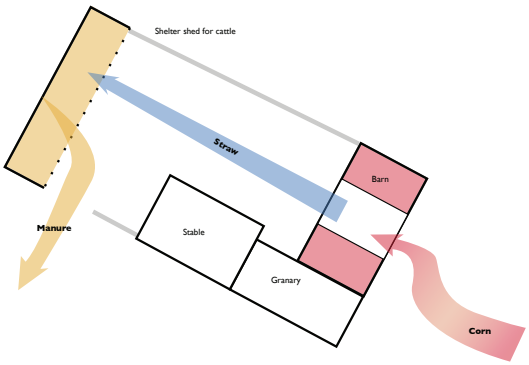


(Left) Strikingly different distributions are apparent from this map, showing the areas that experienced the most intense transformations of agricultural practice and landscape in the period from the later 17th century – from the Feldon and Dunsmore (96), an area focused on the Trent Valley (69) and the Mid Severn Plateau (66) and Severn plain (61) where large farms continued to develop in association with the reorganisation of earlier enclosures as well as regular enclosure.

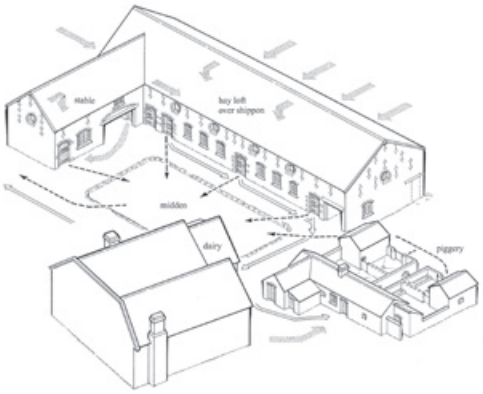
(Right) Farmsteads with recorded 19th century buildings extend into areas that have been hitherto absent from the mapping by date, particularly notable being concentrations in South Herefordshire (104), the area around Kidderminster (south of 66) into Cannock (67) and the rest of Staffordshire, and the eastern fringes of region which extend into the village landscapes of the East Midlands.

COURTYARD PLANS

Courtyard plan farmsteads have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards. The yards were used as areas for gaining access to the house and the working buildings, or could be entirely devoted to the management of livestock. In all cases, the manure would be collected in the yard and redistributed to the land. The drawings below illustrate the basic principles of the courtyard plan, as they applied to arable-based and dairying farmsteads.



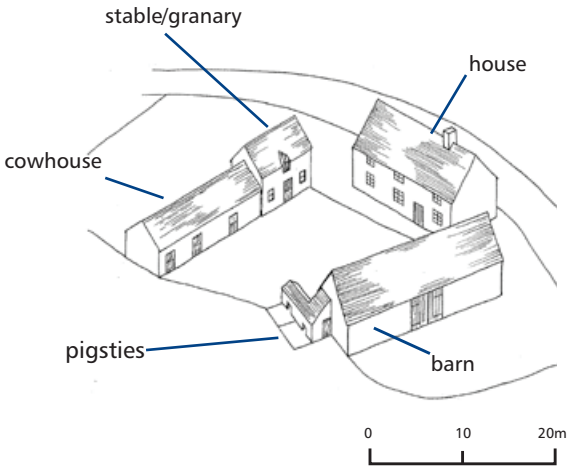
This simple schematic drawing shows the basic flow of processes on an arable-based farmstead. The harvested corn crop was brought to the farm and stored in the barn or stacked outside. It was then threshed and winnowed in the central threshing bay of the barn. Grain was then either fed to the livestock or taken to the granary and exported from the steading. The straw remaining from the harvested crop was then taken to the cattle housing and the yards, where once mixed with their manure it was returned to fertilise the land. (© Chantal Freeman)



The principal aim of farmsteads on dairying farms was to house cattle and their fodder, principally hay. The drawing of a dairy farmstead typical of the north of the region shows the basic flow of movement, hay being brought into lofts above the cattle, manure being returned via the yard to the land and pigs which fed on the liquid whey (a by-product of making cheese and butter) being housed close to the house. (© English Heritage)

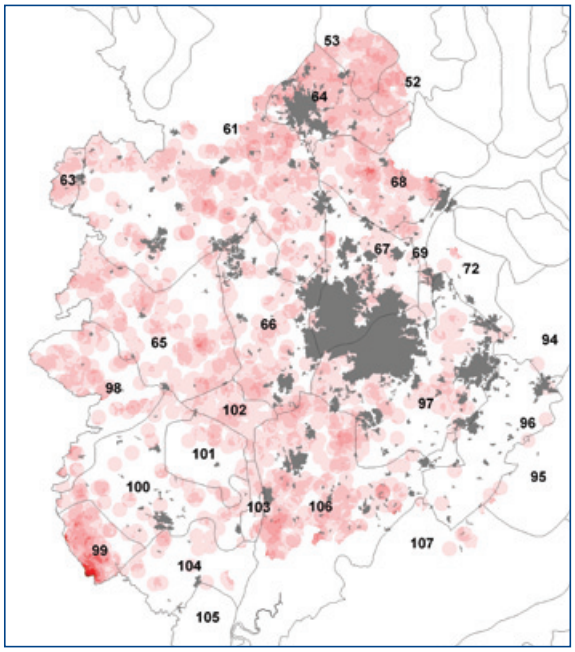
Loose Courtyard Plans:

- form 29.2% of the total farmsteads recorded across the West Midlands;
- have detached buildings facing one or more sides of a cattle yard with or without scatters of other farm buildings close by.
- are defined by the number of sides of the yard that are occupied by working buildings.
- are often the product of piecemeal development.
- display a wide variety in scale.
- principal openings facing into the yard, external elevations having few openings.
- may have cartsheds, sometimes stables and other ancillary buildings placed away from the yard facing towards routes and tracks.
- are more likely to have developed over time with buildings of different dates.t
- are concentrated in areas of irregular piecemeal enclosure and often away from areas with large-scale regular enclosure.

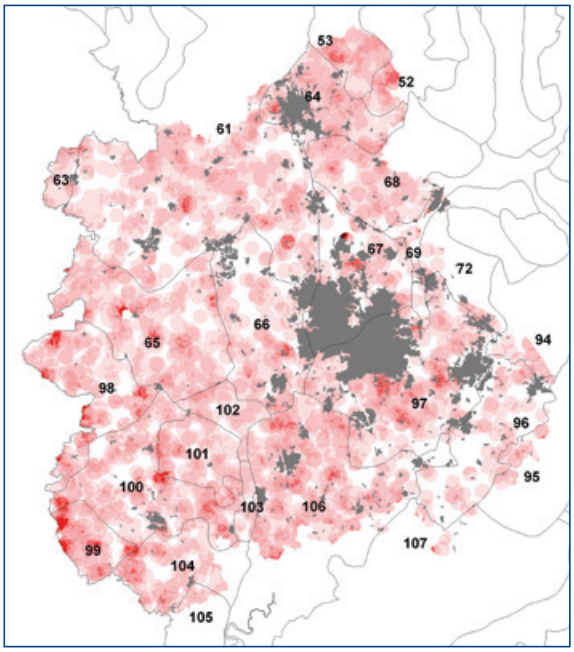


Loose Courtyard Plans
Loose courtyard plan farmsteads are often the product of piecemeal development and can range from small farmsteads with a single building on one side of the yard and the farmhouse to a yard defined by working buildings to all four sides. Typically the buildings around the yard face into the yard and have few, if any openings in the external elevations. The farmhouse may also face into the yard, be set gable end on to the yard or set to one side.

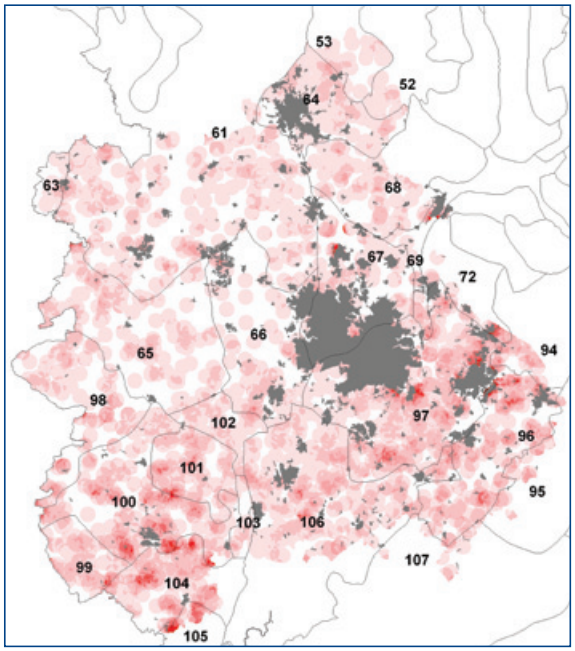
Loose Courtyard Plans:

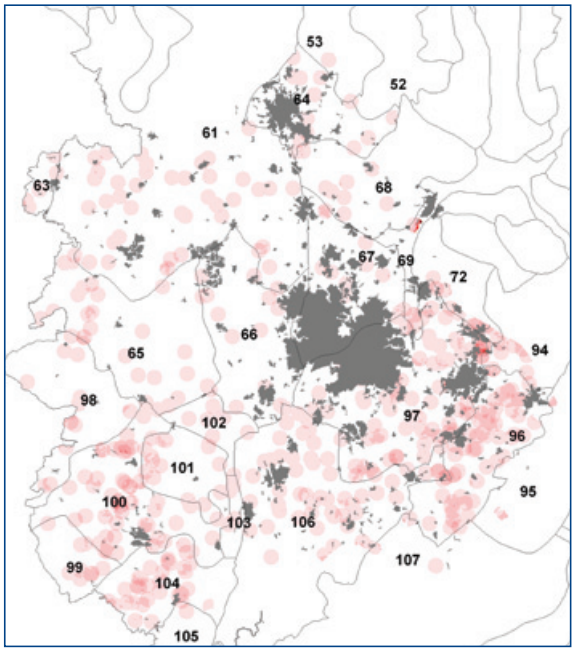


The smallest examples with working buildings to one side of the yard (7.3%) are concentrated in the uplands, within and bordering the Peak District and along the Welsh Borders, in industrial areas where small farmers had access to other sources of income such as quarrying or mining and in other areas with very small farms and smallholdings, such as heathland and wetland. They also form a strong underpinning element from the Severn and Avon Vale (106) across Wyre Forest and into the southern Shropshire Hills (65).



Examples with buildings to two sides of the yard (12.3%) are found in the same areas, but also have a more general distribution across the region. There are noticeable concentrations in the anciently-enclosed landscapes of the Arden (97) and the Severn and Avon Vales (106, especially west of the Severn), the Garway Hills (west of South Herefordshire (104), the Black Mountains (99) and 'hotspots' in areas where large-scale farmsteads are dominant such as the Dinmore Hills in the Herefordshire Lowlands (100).





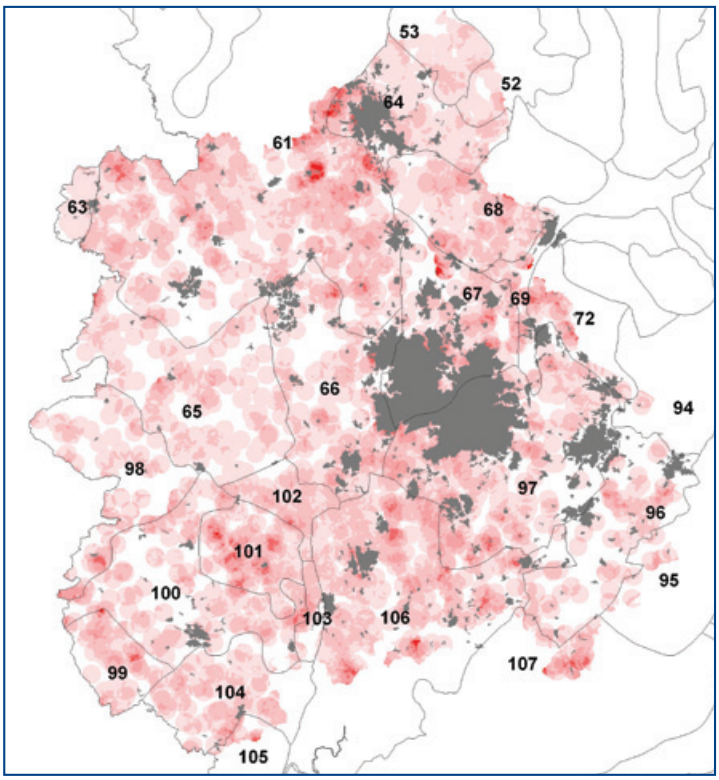
The larger examples with buildings to three (7.7%) or four (2%) sides of the yard are more likely to be formally planned and are found in association with larger-scale fields in landscapes of reorganised and regular enclosure where larger-scale farms had been developing from the 15th century. Those with working buildings to three sides of the yard are concentrated in the Shropshire and Staffordshire Plain (61), the valleys of the Shropshire Hills (65), the anciently-enclosed core of the Arden (97) and across the south of the region but away from the river valleys and lowland landscapes where the largest-scale farmsteads had developed by the late 19th century. In contrast, loose courtyards with working buildings to four sides of the yard are associated with the arable vales and lowlands of Herefordshire and in those landscapes where the largest-scale farms developed away from villages in the south east of the region.

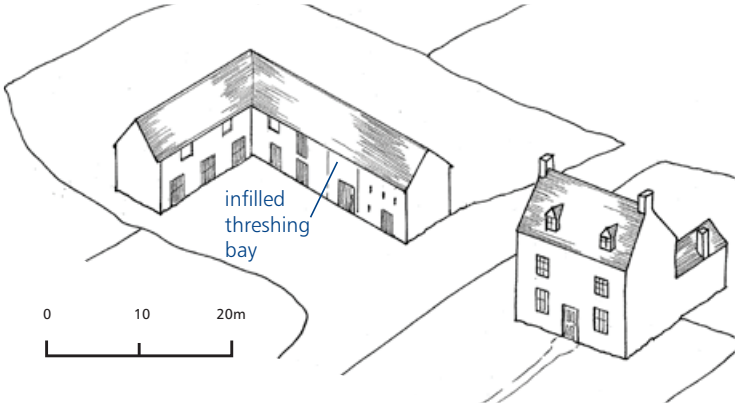
REGULAR COURTYARD PLANS

- Are the largest group of plan types, forming 46.4% of recorded farmsteads across the West Midlands.
- Consist of linked ranges, often the result of a single phase of building or rebuilding, set around one or more cattle yards.
- The larger-scale examples often conform to national ideals in efficient farmstead design, as developed in farming literature from the later 18th century and promoted by land agents, engineers and architects by the mid-19th century.
- Display greater consistency in the use of materials and constructional detail, often employing more non-local materials like Welsh slate, than other farmstead types.
- Are most often associated with areas of planned enclosure.

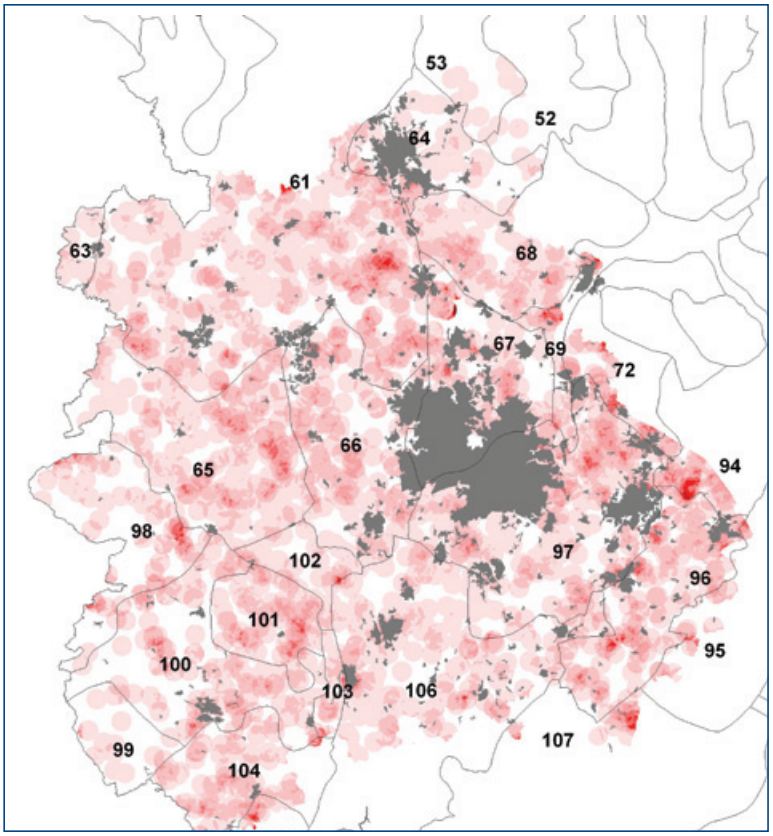
Regular L Plans

(Herefordshire Plateau)
Regular Courtyard L-plan steadings (10.1%) generally comprise the smallest of the regular courtyard plan types although occasionally they are associated with larger farms. They are strongly associated with dairy farms in the northern half of the Shropshire and Staffordshire Plain (see Character Statement for 61), part of a distinctive type of dairying farmstead that extends into Cheshire and Lancashire. Many farmsteads to the east of the region and north of Birmingham are of this form. Also notable are concentrations in the southern vales and hills of the region where small-scale mixed arable farms remained as a strong element of the farming landscape into the late 19th century. Here farmsteads are most likely to include a threshing or combination barn with an attached storeyed animal house or a single-storey shelter shed for cattle.

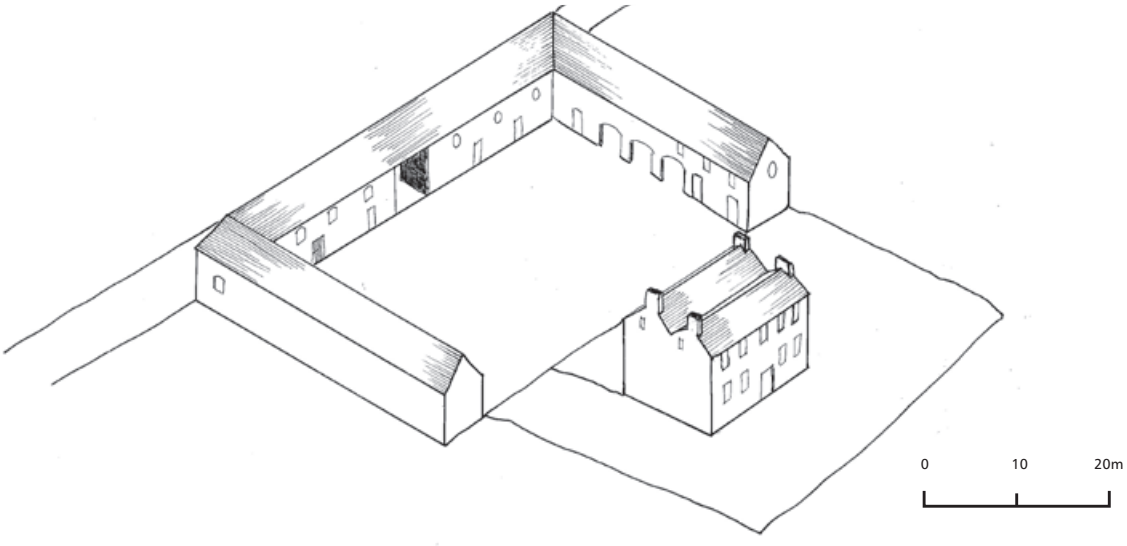




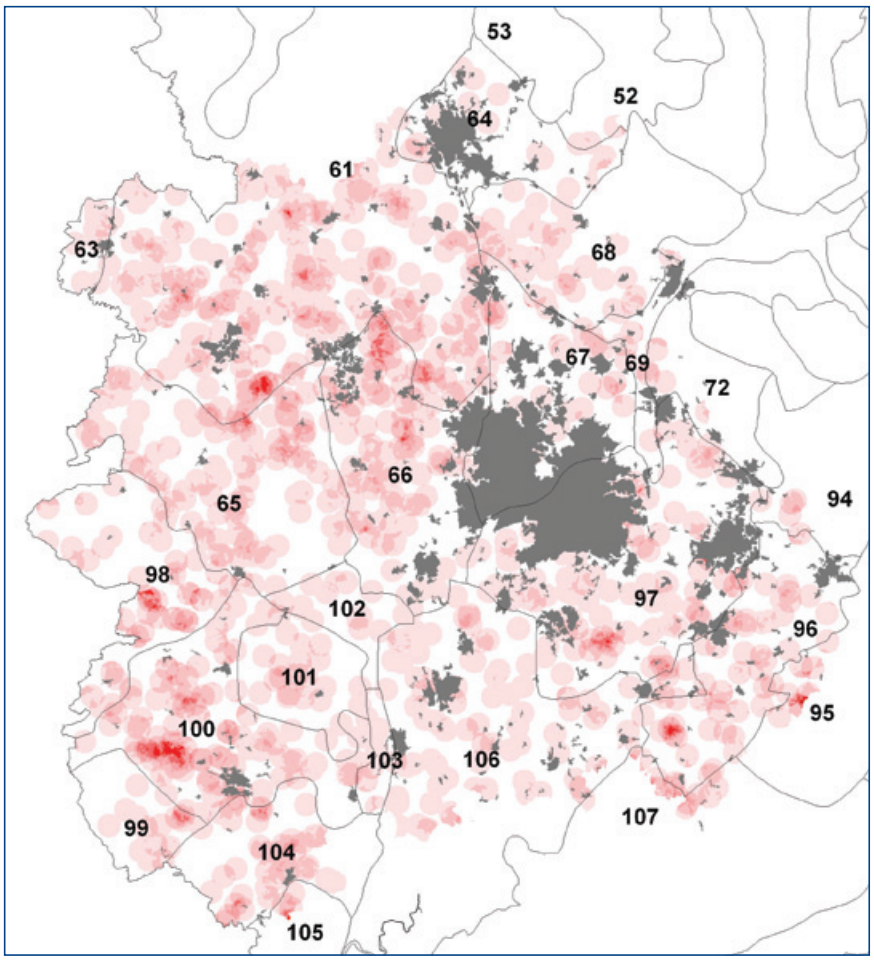
Regular U Plans



Regular Courtyard U-plans (8%) are medium-scale steadings which are strongly associated with mixed arable farms in areas of reorganised piecemeal and planned enclosure where improving estates had been active in the 19th century, for example in the Clee Hills Plateau to the east of the Shropshire Hills (65).

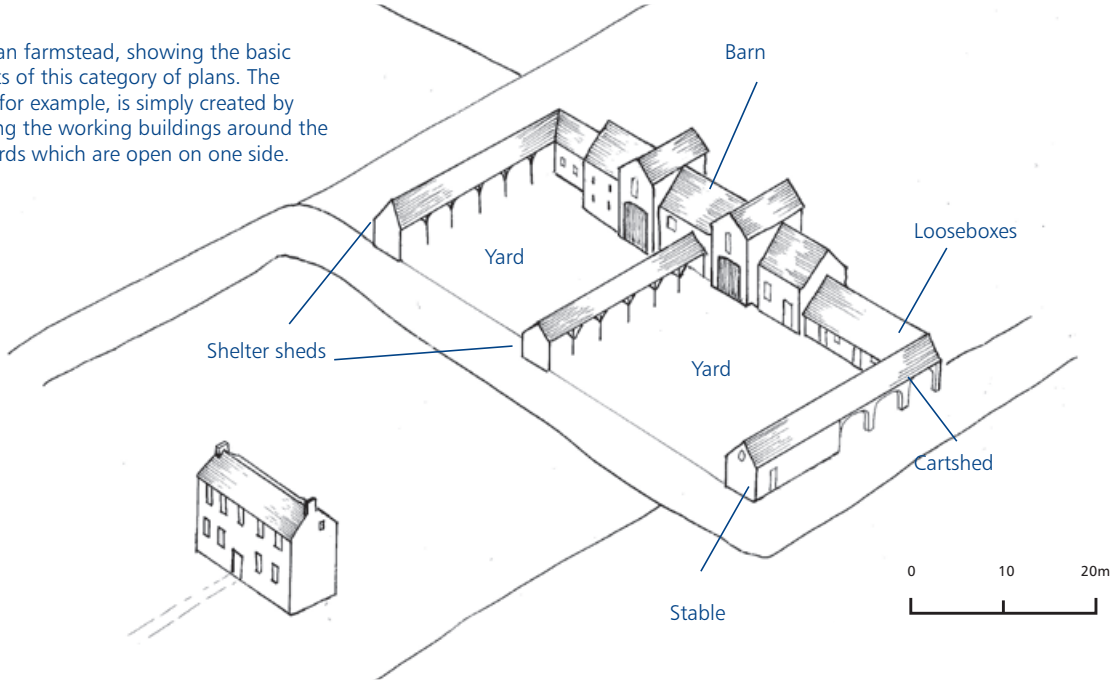


Regular and E- F- T- and H-plans



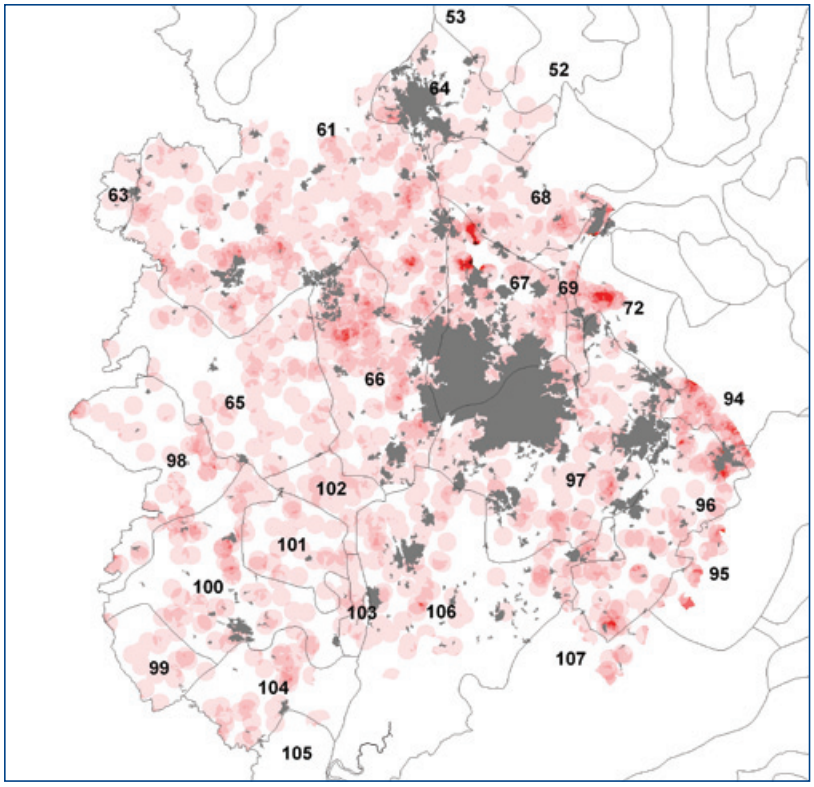
These regular plan types offer different arrangements of linked ranges to create at least two yard areas and are strongly concentrated in areas affected by the activities of improving estates in the 19th century, especially in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau (66) and extending into central Shropshire and the adjoining parts of Staffordshire. As these plans (3.2% of all farmsteads recorded) are typically associated with arable-based farms on estates they are often of some architectural quality with decorative brickwork or detailing.

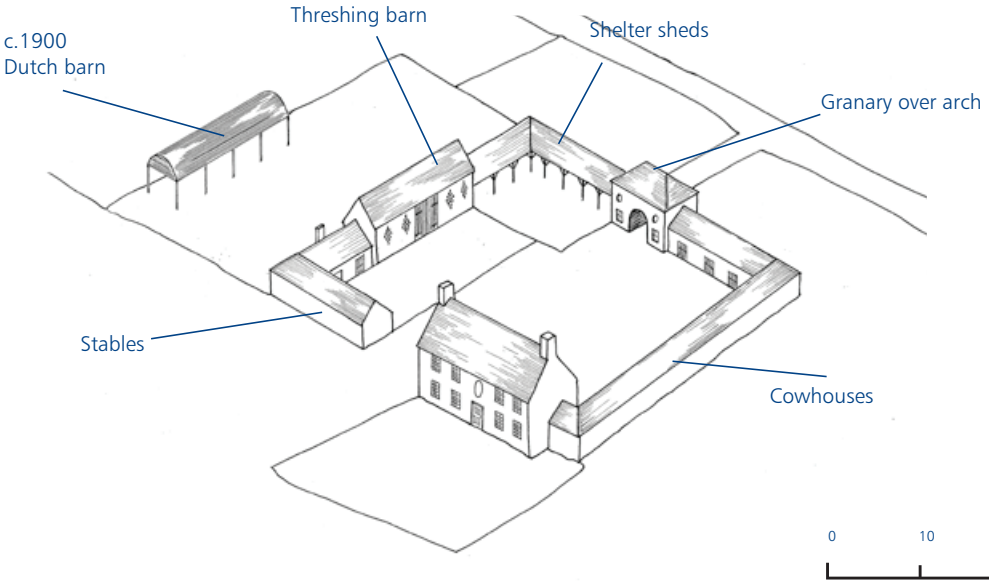
An E-plan farmstead, showing the basic elements of this category of plans. The E-plan, for example, is simply created by arranging the working buildings around the cattleyards which are open on one side.



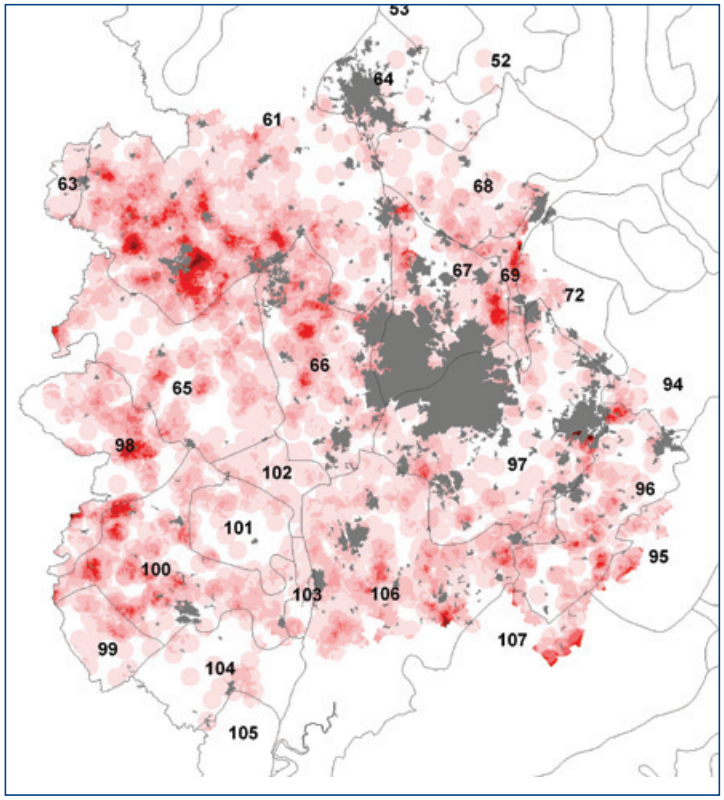
Full Regular Courtyard Plans

Full Regular Courtyard plans (4.9%), where ranges are linked around all four sides of the yard, are strongly associated with the home farms of estates and areas of planned enclosure or reorganised piecemeal enclosure where large arable-based farms developed in the later 18th and 19th centuries. There are notable concentrations extending from the north of the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau (66) to the Mease/Sence Lowlands (72) and the Trent Valley (69), where large estates were very active, and in the village-dominated landscapes of the south-east where very large-scale farms developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some clearly developed from L-shaped and U-shaped plans.

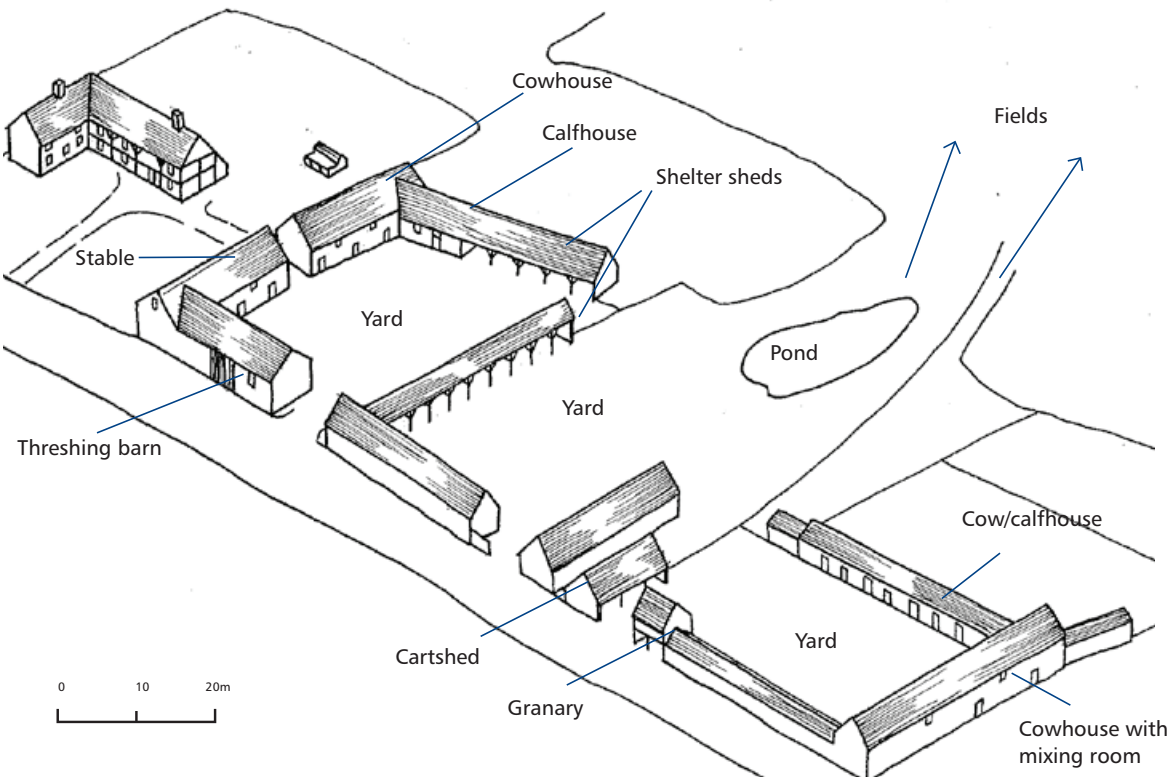




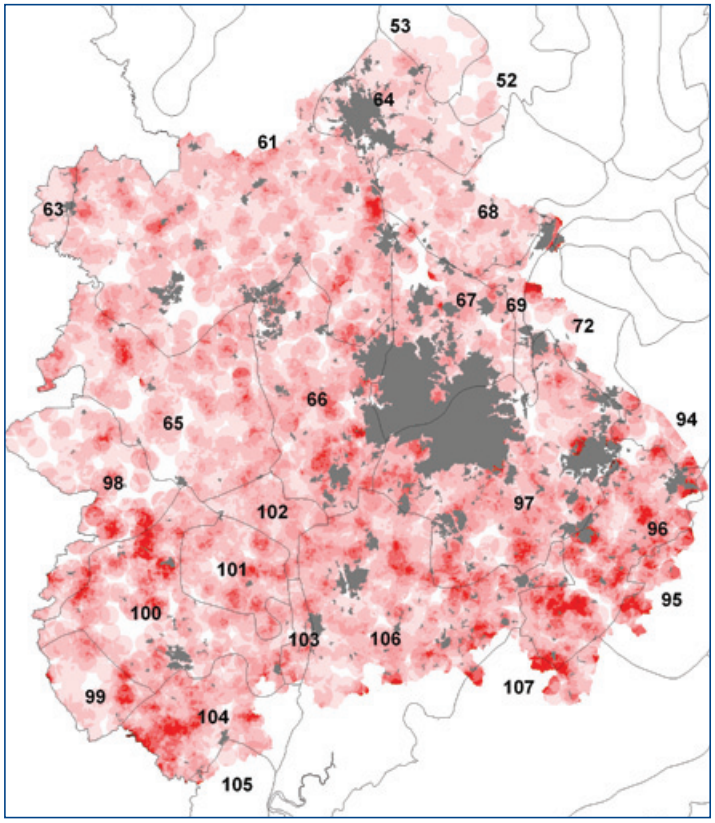
Regular Multi-Yard Plans



Regular multi-yard plans (8.1%) are strongly concentrated in areas of large-scale regular or reorganised piecemeal enclosure. They are the largest-scale of the farmsteads which developed on arable-based holdings and required wage labour to manage livestock and return their manure to the land. Many originated as loose courtyard plans. They are concentrated in the areas where the largest-scale arable-based farmsteads developed – from the Wigmore Basin into the Herefordshire Lowlands (100), the Plain and Sandstone Plateau of Shropshire and Staffordshire (61 and 66) and the village-based landscapes of the south-east.



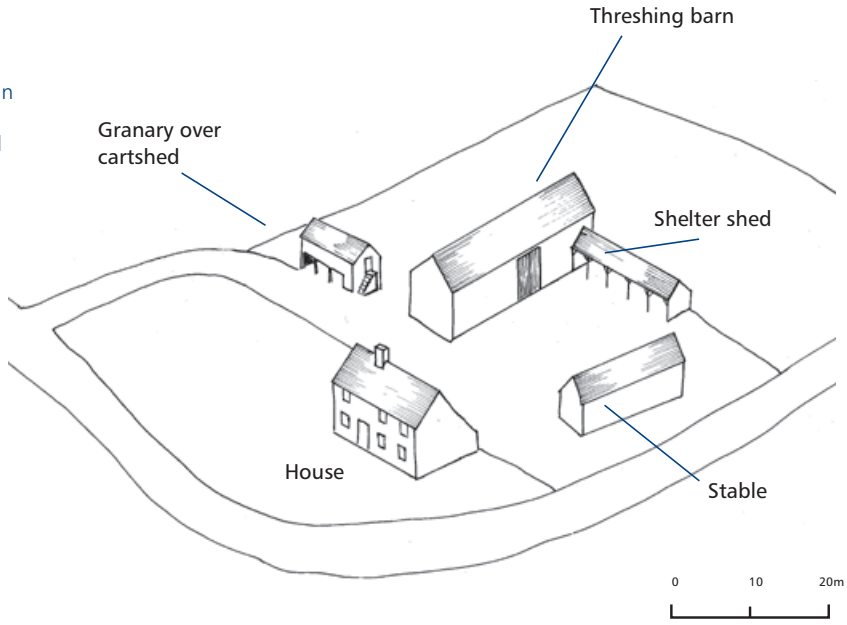
L-Shaped Courtyard Farmsteads with Additional Buildings to the Yard



Clearly visible in this group is a multi-functional barn with a lower range attached to it. A detached range stands in the foreground. (Cannock Chase and Cank Wood)

These are semi-regular farmsteads that have two ranges linked to form a L-shaped element and additional buildings to three (11.4%) or four (3.5%) sides of the yard. Such plans may originate from a loose courtyard with the L-plan element being, for example, a multi-functional range including a barn or a shelter shed added to an earlier barn. Alternatively, the L-plan range may be of a single build and have the characteristics of a Regular Courtyard L-plan with some additional detached buildings.

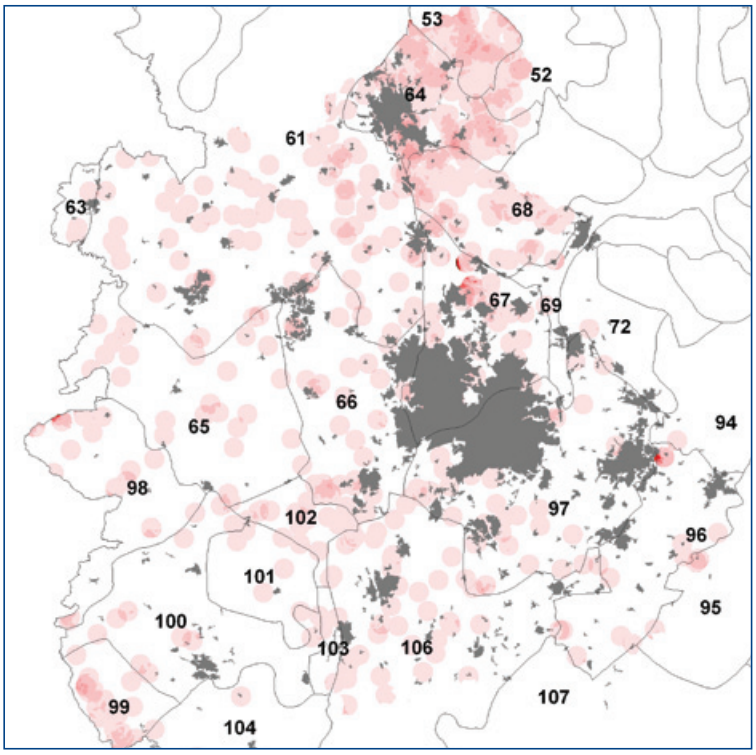
There is a marked tendency for these plans (especially in the smaller-scale examples) to be regular in their form. They are most densely concentrated across the southern half of the region, like the larger-scale loose courtyard plans. They are most strongly associated with the village-based landscapes of the south-east, in the northern half of the Herefordshire Lowlands (100) and its extension into the Wigmore Basin (98), and from the Golden Valley (99) to the eastern half of South Herefordshire (104) where large-scale arable-based farms developed.



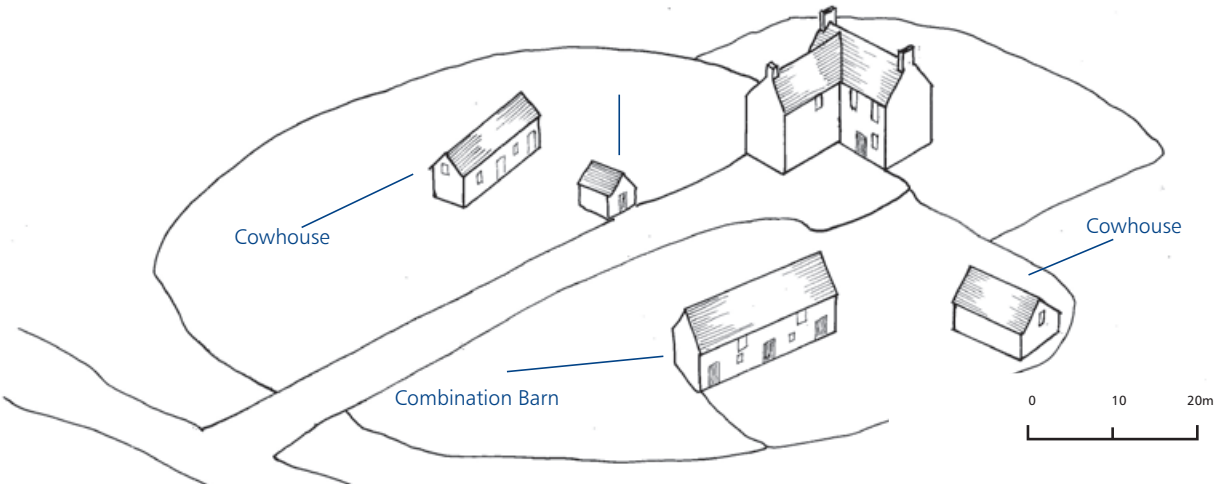
DISPERSED PLANS

- Form 6.6% of recorded farmsteads in the West Midlands region.
- Typically have an irregular arrangement of buildings with little evidence of overall planning in the positioning of buildings.
- Are often bisected by route-ways and public footpaths giving a high level of public access to the farmstead.
- Are most commonly found away from areas of planned enclosure and within landscapes of irregular and piecemeal enclosure.
- Can display great variation in scale.

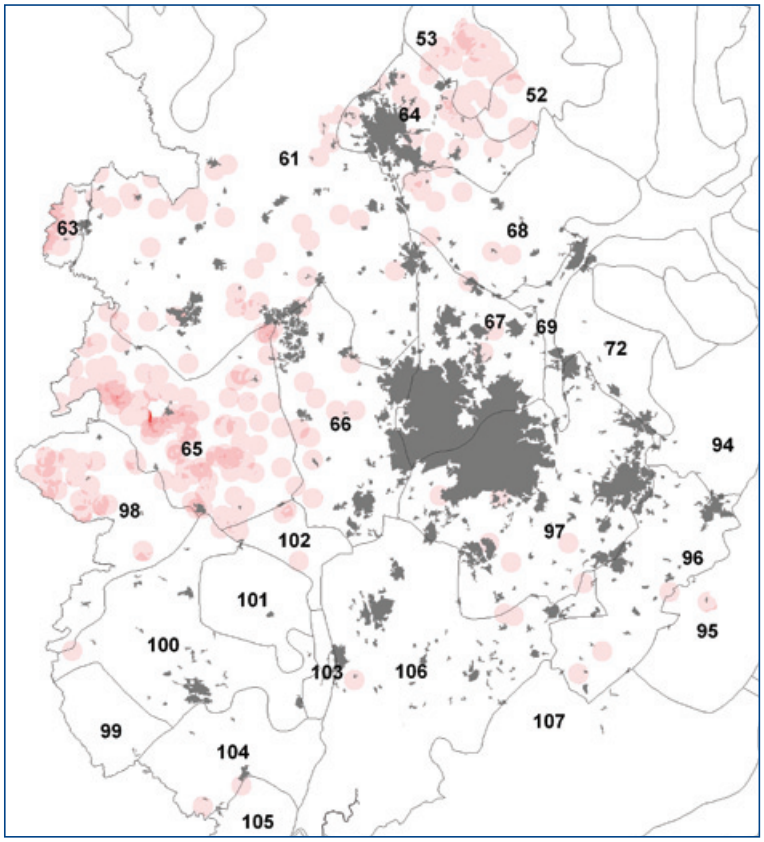
Dispersed Cluster Plans



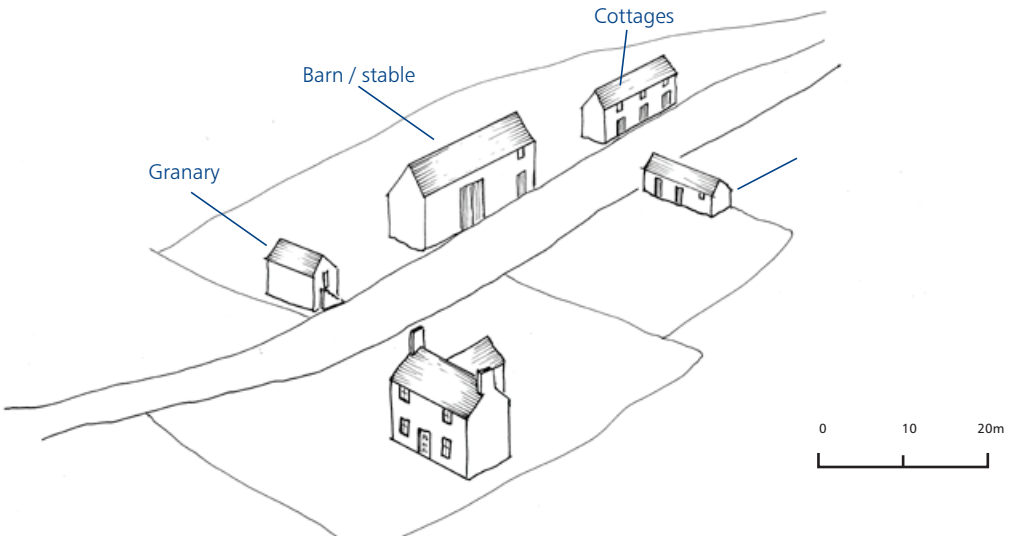
Dispersed Clusters (2.9%) may comprise no more than a house and a working building, but in all cases the buildings and working areas are scattered within the boundary of the steading. They are strongly associated with areas of the smallest farms and smallholdings, and tend to be situated within small-scale irregular fields, and on the edge of areas of planned enclosure of former rough land and common.



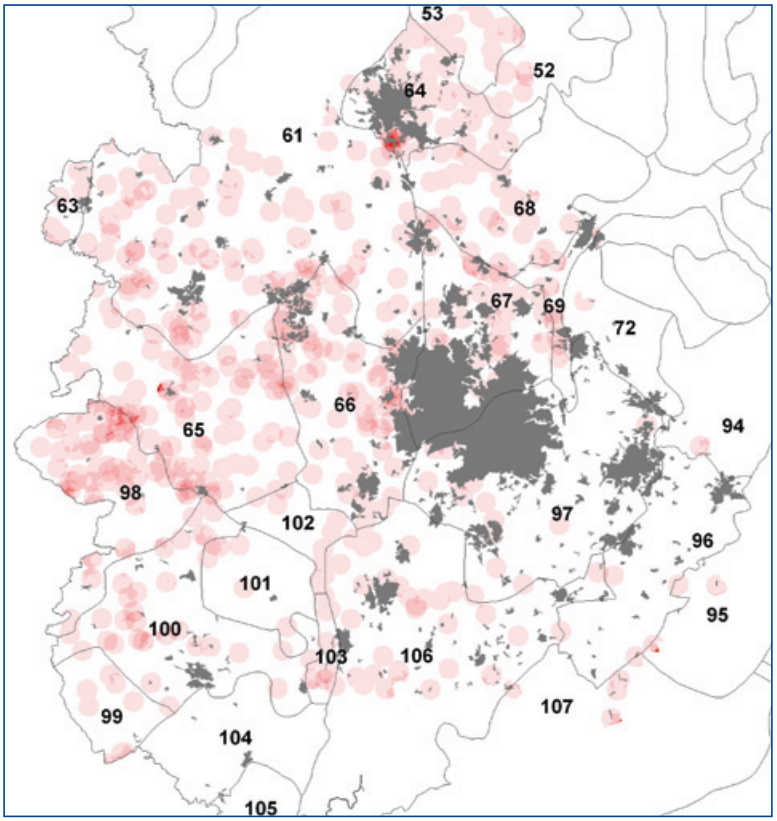
Dispersed Driftway Plans



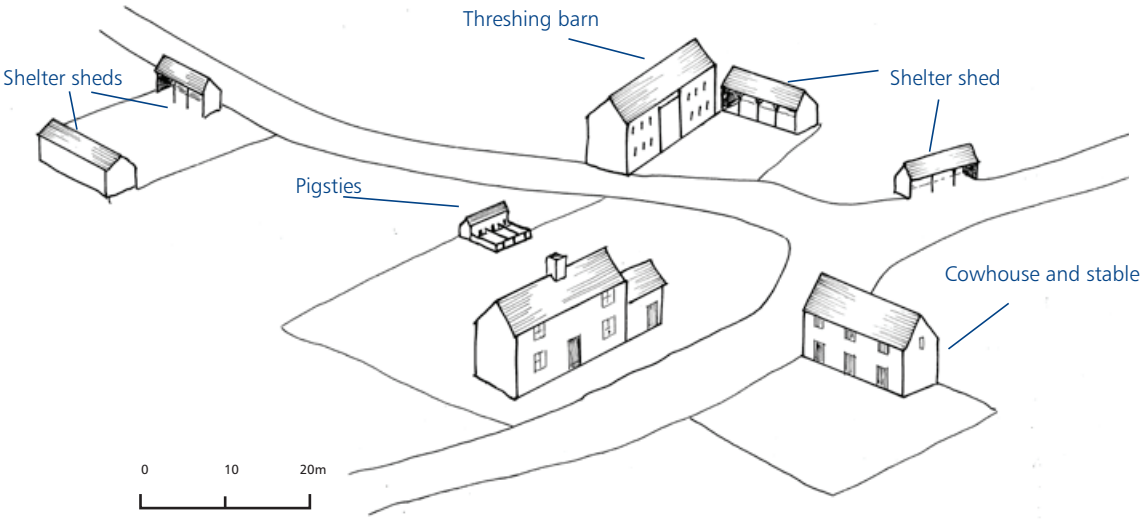
Dispersed Driftway plans (1.2%) are arranged along wide driftways or tracks and may include one or more yards, short rows of linked buildings and free-standing buildings standing within the width of the track or facing on to it. Like the dispersed clusters they occur in areas of smallholdings. They are also strongly associated with farms that had access to – and developed along - routes and tracks for moving livestock from rearing to fattening areas, and to large blocks of common grazing land. This explains their proximity to upland grazing areas especially around the Peaks (52), the Shropshire Hills (65) and the Clun Uplands (98): the latter relate to the medieval drovers' routes extending into Wales. East of the Malverns (105), they are concentrated in pockets of anciently-enclosed land (especially the Arden, 97) and around large areas of common land such as Castlemorton south-east of the Malverns. They also occur in Arden (97) and the Feldon (96) where they again appear to relate to routeways for the movement of stock.



DISPERSED MULTI-YARD PLANS



Dispersed Multi-yard plans (2.6%) are the largest in scale in this category. Like the Regular Multi-yard plans, they consist of a number of defined yards and other buildings. In contrast to the Regular Multi-yard plans the yards are typically detached from one another and comprise a mix of loose and regular courtyard arrangements. They are found across the region, but generally appeared to have developed away from the village-based landscapes of the south-east except a scatter along the scarp of the Cotswolds (107) and Northamptonshire Uplands (95) where cattle fattening developed in the 18th century. They are often found in areas where regular multi-yards exist, possibly indicating that such farmsteads may have resulted from incremental growth from earlier dispersed plans.



OTHER PLAN TYPES

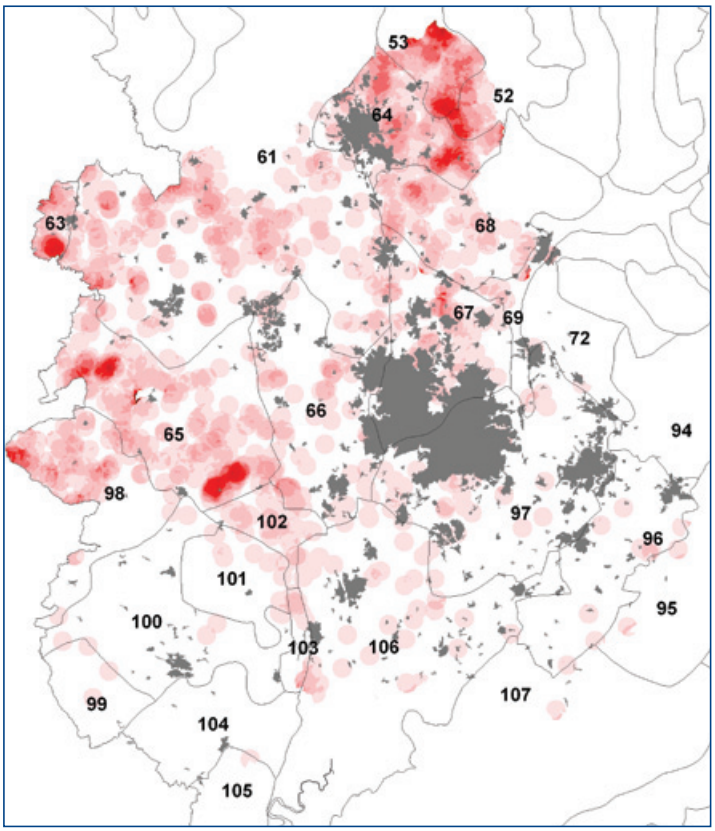
Other plan types:

- This group, which includes Linear farmsteads, L-plan farmsteads with the house attached forming part of the L-plan, Parallel plans and Row plans typically represent small farmsteads which can make them difficult to identify from historic mapping.
- They form 11.8% of recorded farmsteads in the West Midlands region.
- They are often associated with common-edge settlement or industrial activities such as quarrying or mining where farming was combined with industrial activity.

Linear Plans

(Potteries and Churnett Valley)

(Clun)

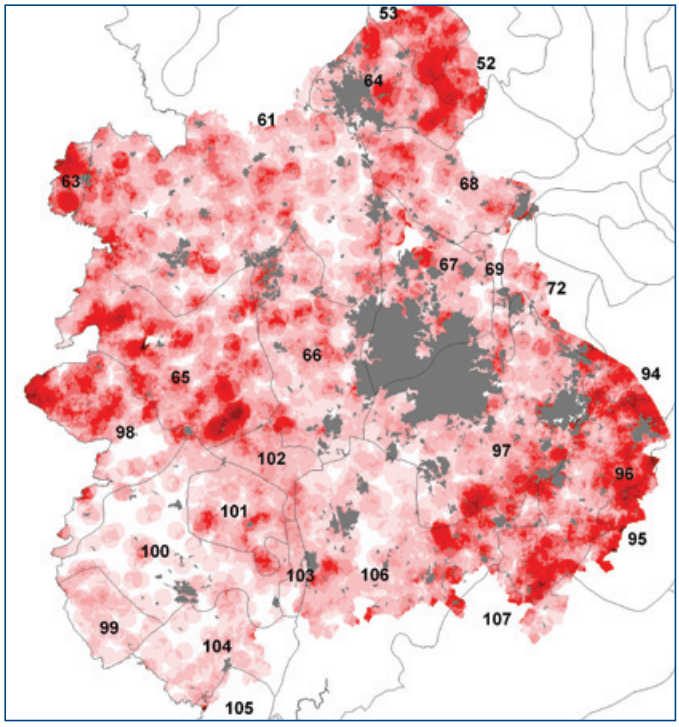


Linear plan farmsteads (7.3%) have the farmhouse and a working building attached in-line with generally little difference in the width of the two elements. Linear farmsteads are strongly concentrated in hill-farming areas, including smallholdings where by-employment in industry was available such as in Cannock Chase (67) and in the Shropshire Hills (65). They are most common within and around the Peak District (52 and 53) and along the Welsh borders (except the Black Mountains), reflecting their dominance in the Pennines and Wales. In these hill farming areas linear farmsteads are typically built along the contour of the land, or across the slope with the cattle housed in the lower end. There are a few examples of medieval longhouses, concentrated in western Herefordshire, but these mostly form part of now larger farmsteads and often the longhouse has been downgraded to become a cow house after a new farmhouse was built in the 18th century. Linear plans are also found in lowland areas alongside areas of roadside common land and on the edges of mosses and heaths where they can form an integral part of small-scale regular fields, associated with clusters of small farms and hamlets, which date from the 18th and 19th centuries.

L-plan (house attached) plans

(Potteries and Churnett Valley)

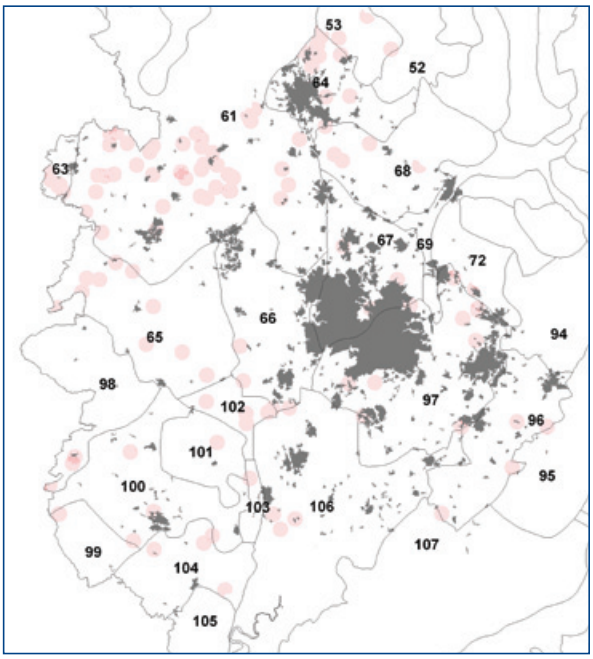
(White Peak)



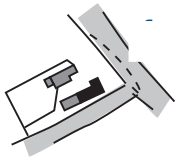
Attached L-plan farmsteads (3.1%) consist of an L-plan range which incorporates the farmhouse. Some of these farmsteads originated as Linear plans and share the same characteristics. L-plans are strongly focused on hill farming areas, and are elsewhere associated with small stock-rearing or dairying farms close to areas of historic heathland and mossland. In the south east of the region they are associated with village-based farmsteads (where houses and working buildings developed within the inherited constraints of their plots) and small farms that developed around large areas of heathland in the Arden (97) and northern Felden (96).

Parallel plans

(Shropshire Hills)

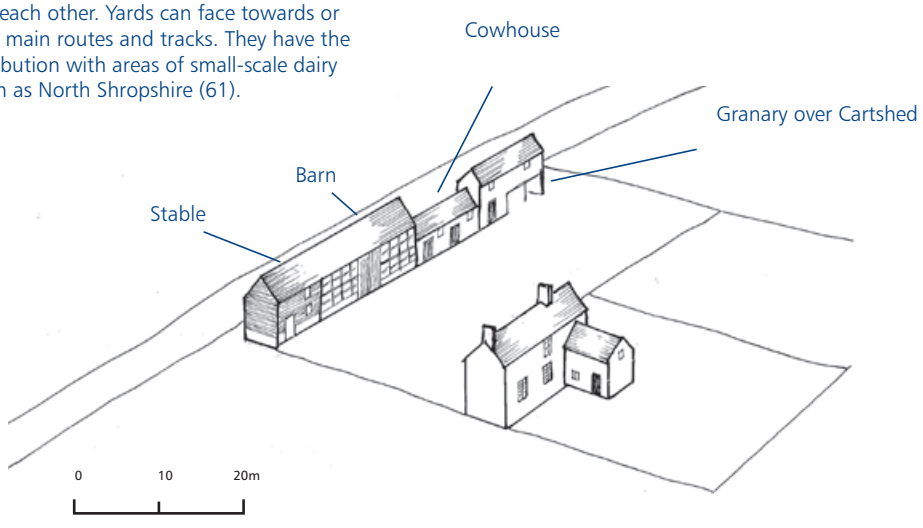


Parallel plans (0.6%) have the farmhouse and an agricultural building lying parallel to each other with a small yard area between. Typically the agricultural building lies behind the farmhouse. They are distributed across the region and strongly associated with common-edge locations, including lowland heaths and moors. The latter explains their concentration in the northern Shropshire plain (61) and across to the South West Peak (53).



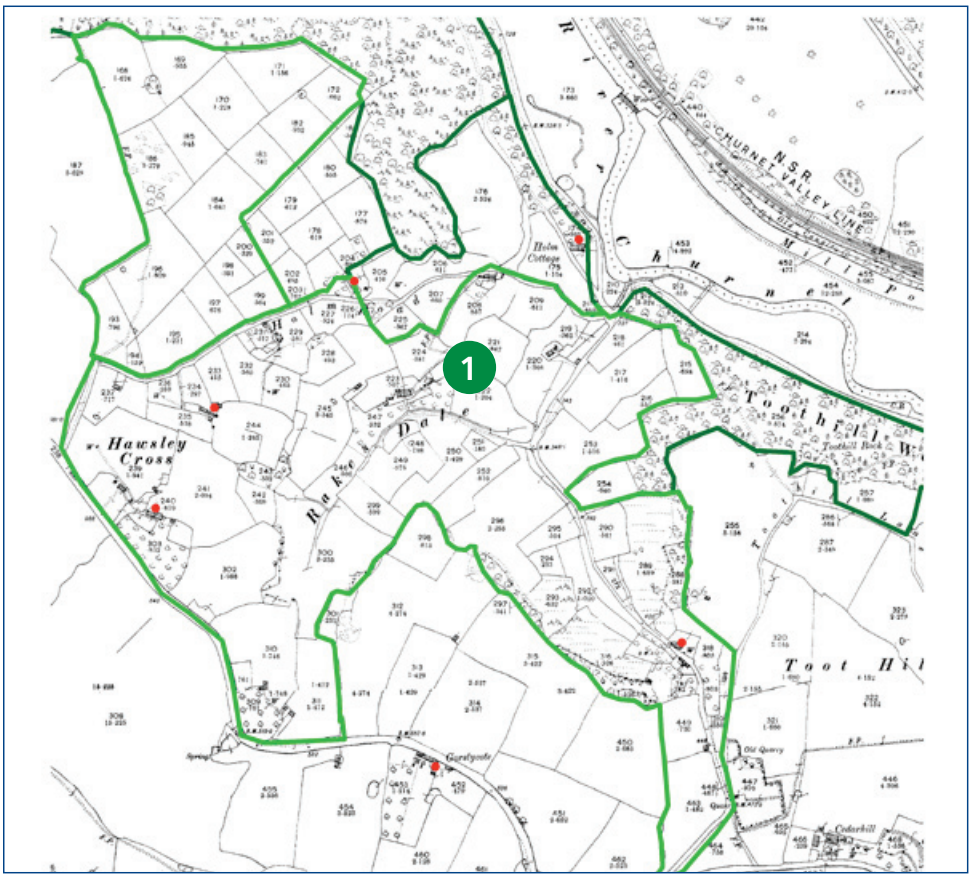
Row plans

Row plans (0.7%) comprise long ranges of buildings, typically of various dates, and often with a series of separate yards. Some larger examples consist of two rows of buildings lying parallel to each other. Yards can face towards or away from main routes and tracks. They have the same distribution with areas of small-scale dairy farms, such as North Shropshire (61).



Smallholdings and Smallholding Landscapes

In contrast to farmers, who derived their primary income from the pursuit of agriculture, smallholders combined small-scale subsistence farming to supplement the income derived from other (usually industrial) activities such as woodland management, quarrying, coal or lead mining or metal working. Smallholders often relied upon access to common land and woodland and typically had little or no enclosed land. Smallholdings will often be identified by their location in areas of small fields close to areas of common land – what Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has identified as areas of squatter enclosure - whereas cottages, which may be of a similar size, will usually be set on roadsides without a clear association with fields. There is clearly a degree of overlap in these areas with sites that can be mapped as farmsteads, in particular the smallest farmsteads that can be identified as linear, loose courtyard with a building to only one side of a yard) and dispersed cluster plans. Their size and association with smallholdings may imply a similar small-scale subsistence farming practice coupled with other activities.



An example of small linear farmsteads and smallholdings clustered around a small area of historic landscape character type 'Squatter Enclosure' in the north-east of Staffordshire, showing the close association of this enclosure type and small linear and L-plan steadings. The farmstead within the centre of the area (numbered 1 on the map) is a small dispersed cluster, a plan type that is also closely associated with common-edge landscape types. This map contains Staffordshire County Council DSD GIS data. Based upon Ordnance Survey material © Crown Copyright and database right 2009. All rights reserved. License number 100019422

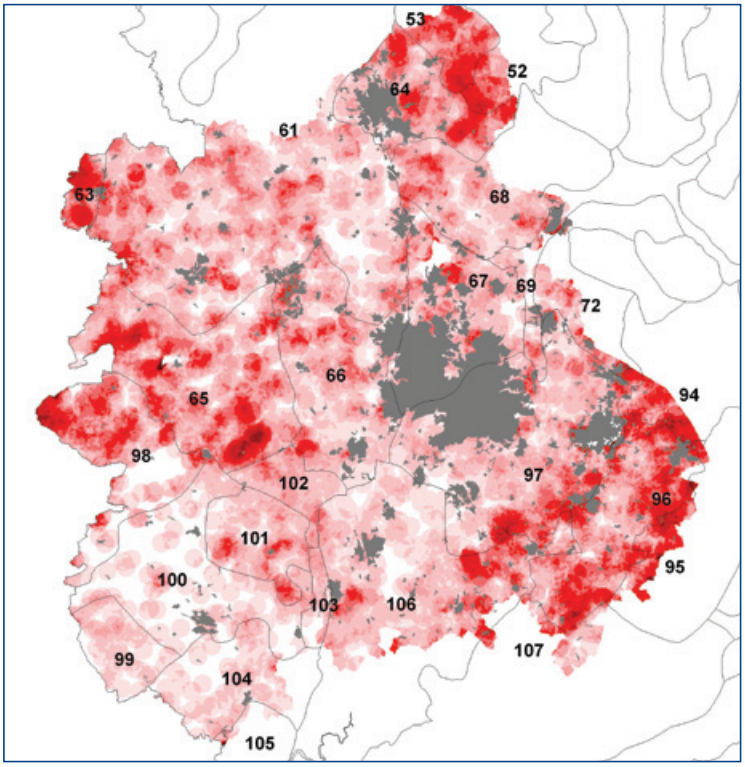
THE FARMHOUSE

Farmhouses faced towards or away from the yard, and may be attached or detached from the working buildings. Local tradition and status were the principal reasons for whether the house was accessed through the yard and buildings were attached, or whether the house looked towards or away from the yard. Farmhouses included, or were placed very close to, dairies and rooms for making and storing beer and cider. Large farms often had rooms for live-in farm labourers – usually in the attic or back wing of the house.

Houses attached to the working buildings

(Arden) © Peter Gaskell

(Teme Valley)

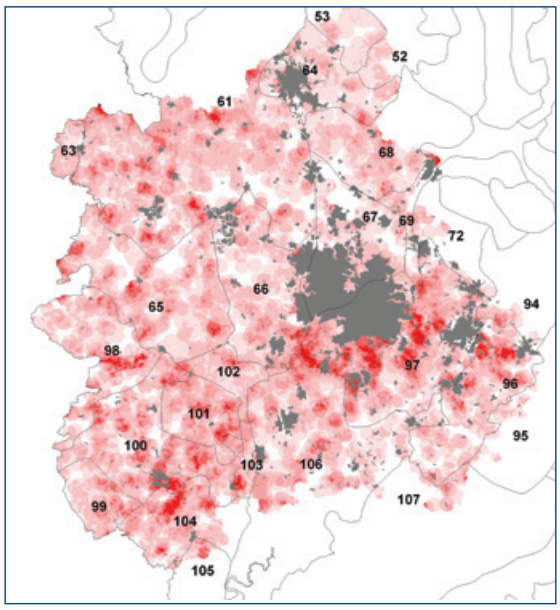


Houses attached to the working buildings. Across the region small-medium scale farmsteads are the most likely to have the house attached to the working buildings. To the south east of the region, in the village lands of Warwickshire and Worcestershire, the earlier farmsteads that developed within villages are also more likely to have the houses attached to working buildings. Isolated farmsteads in these areas are far less likely to have buildings of 18th century or earlier date.

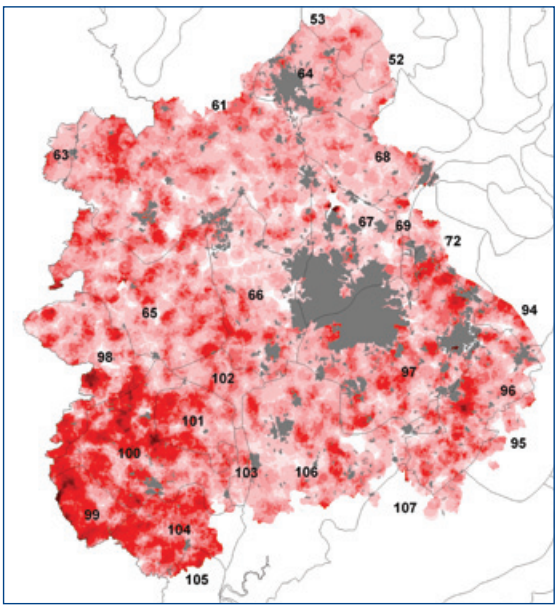
Farmhouses sited along one side or gable to the yard

(Arden)

(Herefordshire Lowlands © Herefordshire County Council)



Farmhouse gable to the yard.

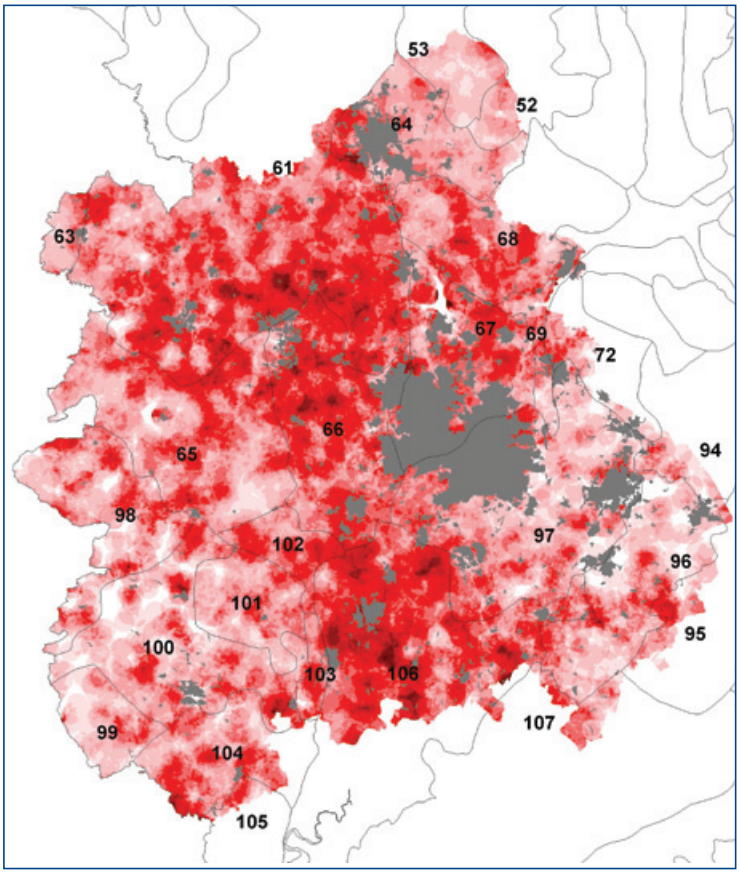


Farmhouse sited along side of the yard.

Farmhouses sited along one side or gable to the yard. This arrangement is most strongly associated with farmsteads that developed in piecemeal fashion over the generations, and where the owners or tenants still had a close relationship to the workings of the farmyard – especially the loose courtyard and L-shaped plans, but including a significant number of the larger regular courtyard plans. U-shaped farmsteads were often planned with the house along the open side of the yard. The distribution maps show very different distributions. In the core of the Arden (97), where farmsteads had developed on the same sites within anciently-enclosed landscapes from the medieval period, the piecemeal growth of largely isolated farmsteads seems to have resulted in a large number of detached farmhouses and farmhouses built with their gable ends facing the farmyard. In contrast in the Feldon (97) many of the regular 'improved' farmsteads of the 18th and 19th centuries have houses facing side on to their working yards, regardless of whether they are attached or not.

Farmhouses detached from the yard

(Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau)



Farmhouses detached from the yard. These typically face away from the working yard, into gardens with separate access and overlooking a 'prospect' of gradually or newly-enclosed landscapes. They are strongly associated with high status sites or the larger regular courtyard and loose courtyard plans, and thus demonstrate the status of their tenants or owners.

(Herefordshire Plateau)

SECTION 4 FARMSTEAD BUILDINGS

This section describes the principal farmstead building types and typical features that are likely to be encountered on a West Midlands farmstead. The rarity and significance of the buildings is also described.

Most traditional farmstead buildings date from the 19th century, survivals of earlier periods being increasingly rare. As a general rule, farmhouses pre-date farm buildings, even in areas of 18th- and 19th-century enclosure. Large-scale buildings (in particular barns), which were consistently used for the same purpose or capable of being adapted to later uses, generally have the greatest chance of survival. See pp. 20 - 21 for more on farmstead dating.

By the late 19th century mass-produced buildings were becoming available, the Dutch barn being the most commonly seen prefabricated building of the period. This period also saw the first use of mass concrete for walling and after World War I greater standardisation in building forms. The increasing use of machinery after the Second World War and changing animal welfare standards resulted in the development of larger multi-purpose pre-fabricated buildings that have no regional characteristics.

Vernacular buildings are characteristic of their locality. They often use locally available materials, although they may include the use of imported brick, slate and other materials as these became available in the area. They will often display evidence for successive change, with farmsteads and buildings developing and being added to over time.

Designed buildings were usually built in a single phase and sometimes in a recognisable architectural style. They are usually marked by a consistent use of local or imported materials, and can be designed by architects, agents or engineers.

Factory-made prefabricated structures using steel/iron frames and corrugated iron cladding (e.g. Dutch barns as used from the later 19th century) and examples of 1914-40 concrete and industrial brick structures (eg silage towers) and groups.

A modern shed. Large industrial sheds have been a feature of farmsteads since the 1950s, and are vital to the modern farming industry. They are either sited to one side of the steading, or were provided with a separate new access. Over 40% of surviving historic farmsteads have sheds, a figure that indicates continued agricultural use since this period but which now exceeds the numbers in farming use.

Barns

The barn was a building for the dry storage and processing of the harvested corn crop and for housing straw after threshing and before it was distributed as bedding for animals and trodden into manure to be returned to the fields.

Typical Features:

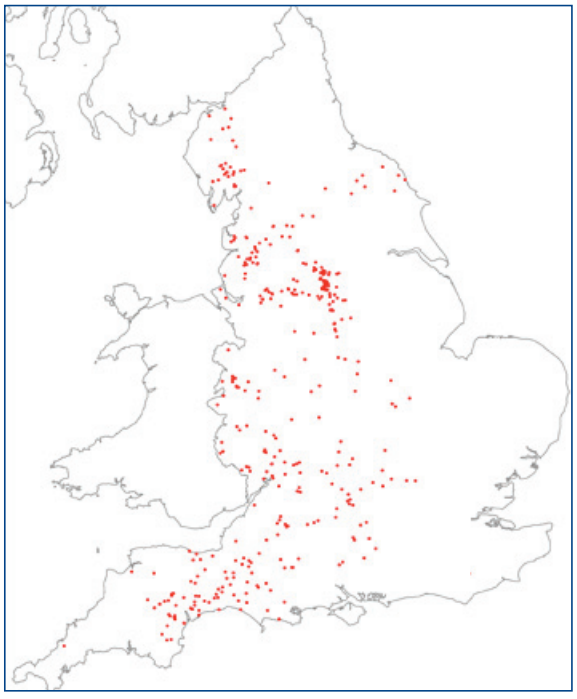
- An area (the threshing floor) for beating by flail the grain from the crop and for winnowing the grain from the chaff in a cross draught.
- Opposing doors on the side walls to the threshing floor.
- 'Leaps' – a slot in each post flanking the entrance to take a horizontal board which retained the grain while threshing and kept animals out
- Ritual and tally marks close to the threshing floor.
- Evidence for earlier (including medieval) reused timbers, and for holes (mortices) in the undersides of cross beams indicating former partitions and evidence for animal housing.
- Many barns have outshuts for cattle added to the end or sides (or both), with separate entrances to the yard and no communication into the barn.
- Examples of wheel houses, where horses powered threshing and mixing machinery, are occasionally found on larger farms, particularly in the arable lowland areas
- Belt drives and holes for drive shafts from earlier fixed or portable machinery.

Area Distinctions:

- The largest barns, typically of five or more bays, of 16th – 17th century date survive in the lowland arable areas of the region – where the largest-scale farmsteads are concentrated (see pp. 17 - 18).
- Surviving cruck frames, many of which exceed three bays in length and were built on large or high-status holdings, are concentrated in the south and west of the region.
- In much of the upland areas of the region the barn was of lesser importance from the 18th century onwards as the extent of arable decreased - surviving barns often show evidence for conversion to cattle housing with blocked threshing bays. More commonly, early barns have been replaced by multi-functional ranges with cattle occupying all or part of the ground floor and which incorporated an area for mechanical threshing.

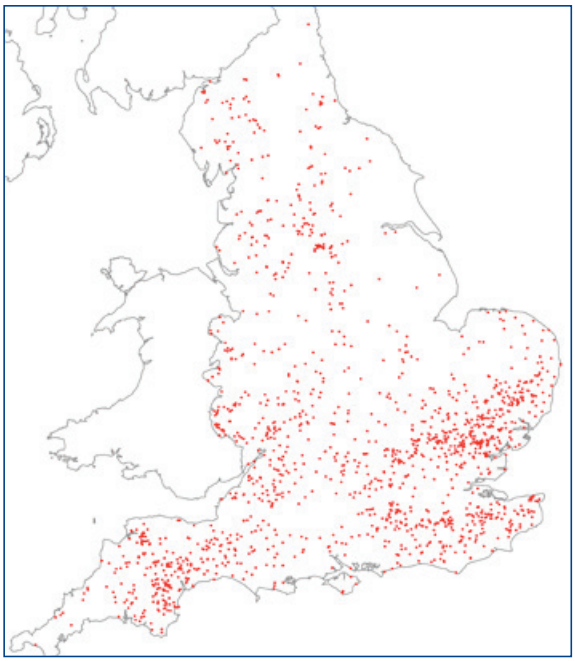
Rarity and significance:

- Barns are typically the largest and earliest working building on the farmstead. Many early timber-framed examples were encased in brick and stone and remain unrecognised and unlisted.
- Barns in the West Midlands are mostly of 17th or 18th century date but there is a high concentration, by national standards, of earlier examples in the southern part of the region

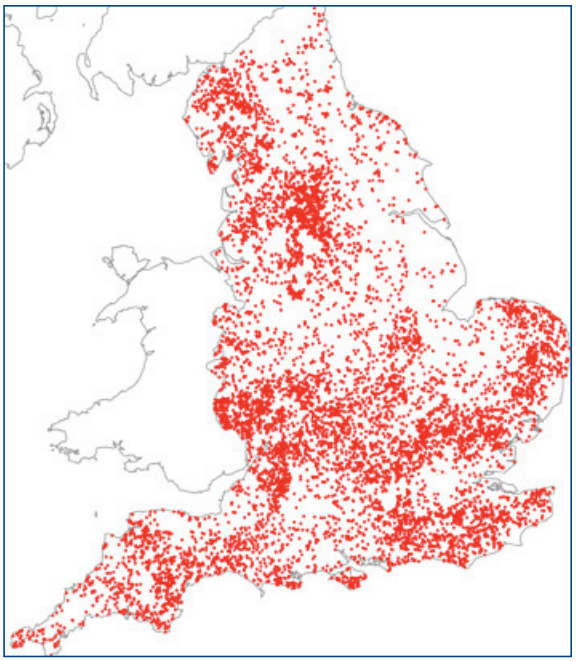


(Above) Interior of cruck barn at Binweston in north Shropshire. © Shropshire Council.

(Left) The distribution of listed cruck barns in across western England. In the West Midlands crucks are more common in the south-west of the region. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2010



Listed barns dating from before 1550. The south and west of the region contains some of the earliest examples of barns in England.



Listed barns 1550-1750. High numbers of barns of this period survive in England with the south-west of the region having one of the highest concentrations of such buildings.

Timber-framed barns in the West Midlands typically have gabled roofs. The square panel framing of the walls is usually clad in weatherboarding or infilled with brick. Doors or openings high in the side wall may be evidence for haylofts above animal housing within the barn (Left: Herefordshire Lowlands Right: Shropshire Hills).

In north Shropshire in particular it is not uncommon to find timber-framed barns that have been clad in brick; in this case the framing of the gable has been left exposed but where the cladding is on all sides only internal inspection can identify the early origins of the barn (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Brick barns of the 18th and 19th centuries are common across much of the region. This barn has a central threshing bay and a characteristic ventilation pattern created in the brickwork. Such barns are rarely listed (Severn and Avon Vales)

Barns in the West Midlands often formed part of combination ranges incorporating stabling, cattle housing and grain and fodder storage. In this range, the threshing bay has been partially blocked (Shropshire Hills).

Changing farming practice could leave buildings redundant; the reversion of arable to pasture across much of the north of the r egion and in more marginal upland areas meant that barns were either replaced or converted to new uses – often resulting in the blocking up of the threshing doors (White Peak).

A water wheel attached to the gable end of a combination range to power threshing and mixing machinery (Herefordshire Lowlands).

A flywheel attached to the exterior of a barn which would have been powered by a portable steam engine (Cannock Chase).

Horse engines attached to barns were more common in the arable lowland areas of the region. Such polygonal or circular buildings housed a horse engine to power threshing machinery inside the barn. Surviving engine houses are now rare and any containing machinery are extremely rare (Left: Herefordshire Plateau, Right: Arden)

Cartsheds

Open-fronted buildings which often face away from the farmyard and may be found close to the stables and roadways giving direct access to the fields. In many areas cart sheds are combined with first-floor granaries, accessed by external steps. Where cart sheds form part of regular plan farmsteads the cart shed will typically face outwards, representing the only major series of openings in the external elevations.

Typical Features:

- Open-fronted and sometimes open at each end although one or two bays may be enclosed with doors for the storage of small implements.
- Cart sheds are typically either single-storey buildings or have two storeys with another use such as a granary above.
- Evidence for hatches for dropping sacks of grain from granaries into carts; hoists for hauling grain; steps to granaries with internal grain bins and louvred windows.
- Small, multi-functional buildings that incorporate a one- or two-bay cart shed, a stable and a granary are also found on some smaller farms, for example in the hill country of Herefordshire and Shropshire.
- Trap houses may also form part of the domestic service buildings near the farmhouse.

Rarity and Significance:

- The size of cartsheds reflects the size and function of the farm – larger examples are found on large arable-based farms.
- Pre-19th century examples – especially with historic grain bins and other features associated with granaries – are rare.
- The earliest surviving cart sheds date from the 17th century but the majority are late 18th or 19th century in date.
- The largest cartsheds are found on large corn-producing farms.

Single storey five bay cartshed (Arden)

Cartshed bays set into the external wall of a regular planned farmstead (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Cartshed with granary over allowing carts to be loaded directly from the granary. This cartshed adjoins a stable and faces onto a road running alongside the farmstead (Oswestry Hills).

A single bay cartshed or trap house combined with a stable on a small farmstead (Arden).

Cattle housing

COWHOUSE

Across much of southern and central England before the late 18th and 19th centuries cattle were either housed in multi-functional barns or held in yards with no shelter other than the lee of the barn. After this time cattle were housed in enclosed cow houses or shelter sheds facing onto yards for the production of farmyard manure.

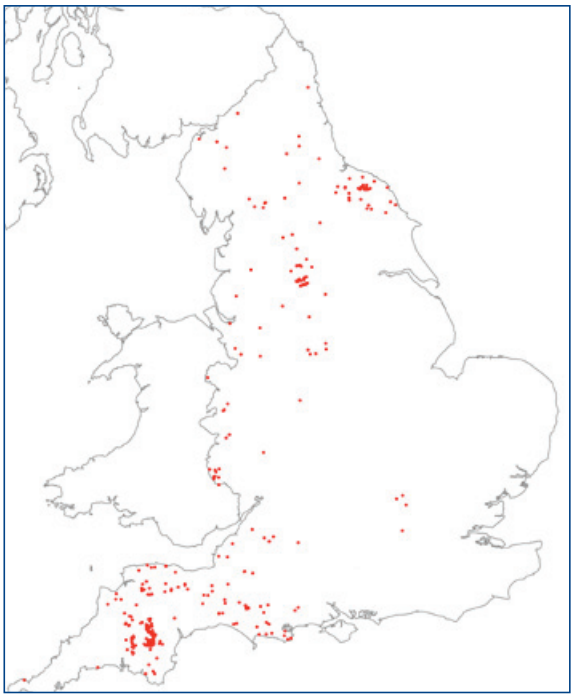
An enclosed building, or part of a multi-functional building, for stalling cattle (often dairy cattle). The West Midlands has some very early and important examples of accommodation for cattle. In the Welsh borders area a number of former longhouses survive and there are also lofted cow houses dating from the 17th century.

Typical Features:

- Externally, lower and wider doorways than stables.
- Cow houses can be found as lean-to structures built against the side of a barn.
- Most linear and L-plan ranges with house attached in the north-east of the region and other upland areas of the region have a cow house attached to the farmhouse.
- Windows and other features to assist ventilation dating from the mid-19th-early 20th centuries e.g. hit-and-miss ventilators, and air ducts and ridge ventilators.
- Interior stalling and feeding arrangements. Cows were usually tethered in pairs with low partitions of wood, stone, slate and, in the 19th century, cast iron between them. Feeding arrangements can survive in the form of hayracks, water bowls and mangers for feed.
- Loose boxes provide an individual cubicle for housing fatstock and can be found in the form of lean-tos attached to barns or other buildings, or as continuous ranges within late 18th and 19th century planned farmsteads where the loose boxes may back onto a feeding passage.
- Bull pens, essentially no more than structurally enhanced loose boxes, have been an integral component of commercial beef and dairy farms since the late 18th century.

Area Distinctions

- Longhouses are found in the upland areas of the Welsh borders.
- Lofted cow houses dating from the 17th century are concentrated in the western parts of the region.
- On the larger-scale dairy enterprises in the north-west of the region on the Staffordshire and Shropshire Plain, cattle housing similar to that found across the border in Cheshire was provided. Here brick shippons with large haylofts above were typical and were characterised by decorative ventilation panels in the hay storage areas above and dominant loading bays, often in the form of circular pitching eyes.



Listed cow houses in England. Early examples of buildings for cattle are predominantly found in the upland parts of the north and west of England including along the Welsh Marches.

Rarity and Significance:

- The small number of longhouses along the upland western fringe of the region mostly date from the 15th and early 16th centuries (see p. 47). They are rare survivals and are of high significance. Some surviving examples have been relegated to a farm building on the construction of a new farmhouse in the 18th or 19th century.
- Any pre-19th century examples, including evidence for cattle housing in multi-functional barns, will be of great rarity.
- Cow houses forming part of linear ranges are a common feature in the north-east of the region although the cowhouse has often been converted to form part of the domestic accommodation.
- Surviving examples of 18th century and earlier cowhouses are rare in a national context and are of high significance.
- The majority of cowhouses date from the late 18th and 19th centuries and are common across the region.
- Very few cow-house interiors of the 19th century or earlier have survived unaltered because hygiene regulations for the production of milk have resulted in new floors, windows and stall arrangements being inserted.

Two storey cattle houses of 18th or early 19th century date are commonly found across the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain and in the west of the region. The example to the right has a partly open fronted hayloft similar to the linhays of Devon (Left South Herefordshire and Over Severn, Right: Herefordshire Lowlands).

A cowhouse with doorways set in the gable end of a combination barn (Black Mountains and Golden Valley).

Cowhouses were often attached as a lean-to to the sides of barns (Forest of Dean).

In the Severn and Avon Vales, and extending into Arden, tehere are some very rare surviving examples of animal (probably cattle) housing attached to barns(Arden).

To the north and west of the region are some very rare examples of 18th century and earlier storeyed and single-storey cattle housing (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

A range of loose boxes forming part of a large regular courtyard farmstead. Loose boxed allowed closer management of individual beasts for fattening or at times such as calving (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Linear plan farmsteads in the upland areas of the region usually have a cow house with hayloft over attached to the farmhouse (White Peak).

A longhouse in the Black Mountains. Longhouses, where people and animals were housed in a single linear range and shared the same entrance, are more common across the border in Wales.

SHELTER SHED

An open-fronted structure for cattle facing onto cattle yards. Cattle yards with shelter sheds were typical of mixed farming areas where cattle were housed on the steading as fatstock and for their manure. This building type is found across most of the region.

Typical features:

- Single storey ranges. Shelter sheds can be detached buildings, attached gable on to a barn or built against the side of the barn.
- Common internal fittings were mangers and hayracks, and sometimes stalls.
- Doors in one or both of the gable ends near the back wall gave access to a feeding passage.
- Two storey examples with an open, or part open, hayloft above are of the similar form to linhays which are concentrated in south-west Somerset and north Devon.

Rarity and Significance:

- Shelter sheds are a common building type.
- Pre-19th century examples will be rare and of significance.
- Shelter sheds forming part of complete traditional farmsteads will also be of significance.

Open-fronted shelter shed facing into a cattle yard where the manure could be trampled with straw before being returned to the fields ((Black Mountains and Golden Valley).

Shelter sheds with low eaves, as here in Dunsmore and Feldon, would have sheltered young stock or even sheep (© Warwickshire County Council).

COVERED YARDS

Covered yards, built from the 1850s, were designed to the shelter of cattle and their manure, preserving its value as a fertilizer. Covered yards can form part of planned and model farm complexes of the 1850s to c1880, be the later roofing over of a yard or be separate, detached wide-span buildings.

Typical Features:

- Covered yards needed adequate ventilation, and could be provided with complex systems of louvres and shutters.
- Covered yards built on the home farms of large estates can be of some architectural quality and incorporate cast iron stalls and feed and water bins.

Rarity and Significance:

- Covered yards that form part of coherent planned and model farm complexes of the 1850s to c1880, and later examples with architectural quality are significant;
- Covered yards inserted into pre-existing open cattle yards from the late 19th century are much more common.

(Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain)

(Herefordshire Lowlands)

DAIRY

A detached building, or more often a room at the rear of the farmhouse, where milk was processed to make cheese and butter. Cheese would be stored in a loft above the dairy or in the attic of the farmhouse.

Typical features:

- Externally wide doors and ventilated/shuttered windows.
- Ornate dairies may form part of estate home farms.
- Internal slate shelves and brick/stone floors to keep milk and interior cool.

Rarity and Significance:

- Complete surviving examples are very rare.
- Original fixtures, such as slate or stone shelves for cooling the milk, are now very rare.
- Cheese rooms for the storage of cheese are now especially rare and hard to identify.

Dairies were often attached to the north side of the farmhouse as a lean-to (Severn and Avon Vales)

Some dairies were built as substantial additional wings, especially in dairying areas as here to the right of the farmhouse, and may have first-floor cheeserooms with loading bays (Severn and Avon Vales)

Dovecotes

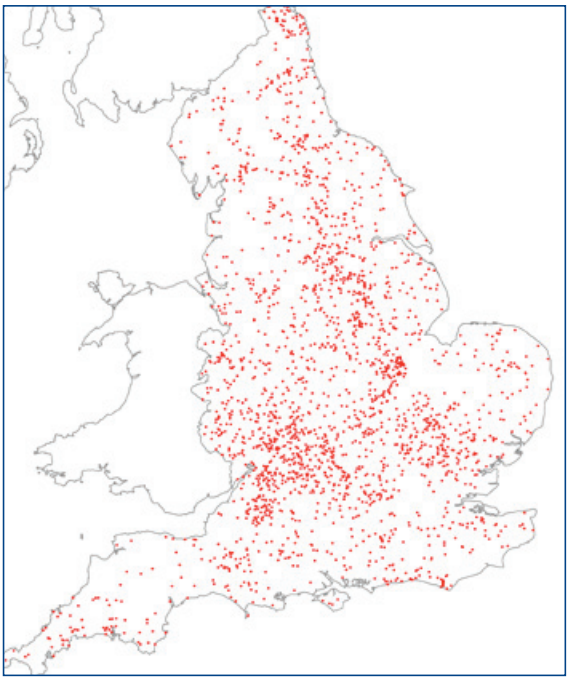
Dovecotes are usually square or circular towers with pyramidal or conical roofs for housing pigeons and their manure, or are incorporated into other buildings such as the gable of barns.

Typical Features:

- The earliest examples are medieval but the majority date from the 18th and 19th centuries, built mainly for their picturesque value and typically associated with manor or gentrified farmsteads.
- Dovecotes are usually stone or brick-built but there are some timber-framed examples in the West Midlands region.
- Dovecote doorways were low to discourage the birds from flying out;
- Nest boxes, in the earliest examples formed in the thickness of the wall but usually in stone, brick or wood.
- A potence, a central pivoted post with arms supporting a revolving ladder, provided access to the nest boxes for collection of the young birds (squabs) and eggs.

Rarity and Significance:

- Dovecotes are rare by national standards in West Midlands.
- Within the West Midlands there are some rare survivals of timber-framed dovecotes.
- Most dovecotes were built to ornament home farms in the 18th and 19th centuries.



Listed dovecotes in England. Whilst dovecotes are found in most areas, there is a greater concentration in the south of the region. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2010

- Surviving internal fitments are of great rarity, notably potences and removable wooden nest boxes.

Medieval circular dovecote (Arden).

Timber-framed dovecotes are rare nationally with most examples being found in the West Midlands and along the Severn Valley in Gloucestershire (Herefordshire Lowlands). 149817 Taken as part of the Images of England project © Mr Chris Tresise

Brick-built hexagonal dove-cote (Shropshire Hills).

An elaborate dovecote set above a stable. This building forms part of the farmstead associated with an estate (Shropshire Hill).

Nest boxes for pigeons were often incorporated into the gable ends of barns or, as here, stables (Herefordshire Plateau).

Granaries

A building or room for storing grain after it has been threshed and winnowed in the barn located in the farmhouse, on the upper floor of a multi-functional building such as a barn or above a cart shed or an individual building, typically set on mushroom-shaped staddle stones or brick arches to secure the grain from theft, damp and rodents. A few examples of granaries located over a horse engine house also survive in the region. In parts of the West Midlands grain storage could also be combined with oast houses or maltings, leaving little physical evidence for the role of grain storage in the building.

Typical features:

- Ventilated openings - either louvres, shutters, sliding vents or grilles;
- Close-boarded or plastered and lime-washed walls internally, and a strong load-bearing floor construction with tight-fitting lapped boards to prevent loss of grain;
- Grain bins, or the slots in vertical timbers for horizontal planking used to make them;
- Steps at the gable end to the first floor granary, if located above the stable and/or cartshed, or at the end of a multi-functional range.

Granaries can be located in the end bay of barns, indicated by a small loading door or external steps (Top: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain. Right: Shropshire Hills).

Below: A granary located on the upper floor of a combination range (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Rarity and Significance:

- Some very rare surviving evidence for granaries in the floored ends of barns in corn-producing areas.
- Granaries were a common building type on arable farmsteads, typically found in association with cart sheds or in combination ranges and usually dating from the late 18th or 19th century. Where examples survive with internal fittings or form part of largely unaltered farmsteads they will be of significance. Earlier examples will be rare and of greater significance.
- Free-standing granaries are rare in the West Midlands with the few examples being found in the south-eastern part of the region. They are more common in East Anglia and in other corn-growing areas of southern England. Most examples are of late 18th or 19th century date, earlier examples being of great rarity.

Granaries over cartsheds could allow the loading of sacks of grain straight into carts below through trap doors in the floor (Left and centre: Clun and North West Herefordshire Hill. Right: Arden).

Hay barns

The storage of hay for winter fodder was a major concern on many farms. Initially hay was stored in lofts above the animals but as the importance of good ventilation for animal welfare was increasingly understood in the 19th century, other methods of storing hay were required – either in ricks or purpose-built haybarns. By the late 19th century the iron-framed Dutch barn was becoming a common feature of farmsteads.

Typical features:

- Open-sided structures with roofs supported on high brick, stone or timber piers.
- Prefabricated iron framed Dutch barns may be partly enclosed by corrugated metal sheeting.

Rarity and significance:

- Traditionally built hay barns forming part of coherent traditional farmstead groups will be significant.
- Iron framed Dutch barns are a little researched type of farm building. Very early examples could be regarded as having some significance.

Hay barn with brick gable walls with a large panel of ventilation holes (Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills).

Hay barn set on brick piers (Potteries and Churnet Valley).

Prefabricated iron framed hay barns became widespread in the late 19th century. Often disregarded, early examples could be of significance especially if they form part of a well-preserved group.

Stone-built hay barn (Shropshire Hills).

Hop Pickers' Huts - SEE HOP INDUSTRY SECTION BELOW
Hop kilns - SEE HOP INDUSTRY SECTION BELOW
Outfarm - SEE OUTLYING BARNS AND COMPLEXES

Pigsties

A building for housing pigs. The main requirements for special accommodation were for farrowing, final fattening and accommodation of the boar. Large numbers of pigs were concentrated in dairying areas or market-gardening areas, and on larger farms where commercial fattening was practised.

Typical features:

- Pigsties were typically built as single-storey structures comprising individual boxes, individually or in rows and with external feeding chutes;
- They were often built with their own individual yards;
- Some had upper floors with poultry houses;
- A small chimneystack could mark the position of a boiler house for boiling swill for pig feed.
- Sties were often placed near the kitchen or dairy as pigs were normally fed on kitchen scraps or whey (a by-product of dairying).

Rarity and Significance:

- Any pre-19th century examples are very rare.
- Significant if part of coherent farmstead groups.
- Pigsties are most strongly associated with the dairying areas of Shropshire and Staffordshire and in the cider-producing south of the region.

A 'poultiggery' – a series of pigsties with a hen house over forming part of a large regular courtyard farmstead on a dairy farm. The pigsties are located near to the farmhouse and dairy (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Single storey pigsties with brick-walled pens (Arden) © Peter Gaskell

Poultry

Poultry keeping was usually the preserve of the farmer's wife and so the hen house was usually close to the farmhouse.

Typical features

- Hen houses usually include a small pop hole for the hens as well as a full-sized door for human access for feeding and egg-collection.
- The walls could be lined with nest boxes.
- Geese could be housed in pens, either free-standing or built against a wall.

Rarity and Significance

- Hen houses were usually relatively short-lived buildings and there are few survivals that can be described as historic. Where historic examples do survive they usually form part of another building, such as a pig house: it was thought the chickens would keep the pigs warm and the pigs would frighten foxes away. The combination of a hen house located above a pig house was described as a poultiggery in some areas (for example in North Shropshire).
- Historic pens for geese are also rare and significant.

Goose pens (Herefordshire Plateau).

Stables

A building, or part of a building, for housing horses and their harnessing and tackle. The largest stables are concentrated in corn-producing areas, where farms were larger and more horses were need for ploughing and many other tasks. Fewer horses were needed in cattle-rearing or dairying areas. Oxen used for ploughing until the 18th century would also be housed in stables but no purpose-built oxen houses are known to have survived in the region.

Typical features:

- Earlier stables are usually two-storey and well-lit buildings, with ground-floor windows, pitching openings and ventilation to the hay loft. In the West Midlands they are commonly timber-framed and weatherboarded with brick examples dating from the 18th century onwards.
- Early examples have the stalls across the end walls, whilst in examples dating from the later 18th century onwards the stalls are usually along the side walls, allowing more scope for lengthening the building and thus housing more horses.
- Stables dating from the 17th and 18th centuries are also found as part of combination buildings; for example, in Herefordshire stables are often attached to barns.
- Single-storey stables, commonly with cast-iron ridge vents, were built from the later 19th century.
- Stables can be distinguished from cow houses as they have tall and relatively narrow doors.
- Wooden or cast-iron (for high-status or late examples) stalls with access to manger and hayrack.
- Floors of earth, stone flags/cobbles and from the mid-19th century of engineering brick, sloping to a drainage channel.
- Pegs for harness and tack, sometimes in a separate harness room with fireplace.
- Sometimes chaff boxes for storing feed, and cubby-holes for lanterns, grooming brushes, medicines etc.

Rarity and Significance:

- After the barn, the stable is often the oldest building on the farmstead.
- A few stables dating to before 1700 have been identified in local surveys, while many more date from the 18th century. One of the reasons for this rise in number was the decline in the use of oxen.
- The largest stables were built on the larger corn-producing farms.
- Examples retaining internal fittings including stall partitions and feed racks are rare and significant.

Large arable farms needed teams of horses. The stables here are conveniently located close to the cartsheds in the attached range. (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Detached stable building on a medium sized farm (Shropshire Hills).

Hop Industry

Hop growing is a highly characteristic feature of the landscape of the Teme Valley, the lowlands and plateau in Herefordshire, and west Worcestershire. This is the second major concentration of this industry outside the South East of England. Hops were grown in increasing quantities from the 18th century in the southern part of the region, particularly to the north-east of Hereford. By the early 19th century Herefordshire was supplying 24% of the hops grown in England and Wales.

HOP KILN

A building in which hops are dried and stored. The drying of hops was a delicate process, requiring skill in managing the fire to maintain the correct temperatures. The dryers would often work round the clock, catching sleep in the stowage.

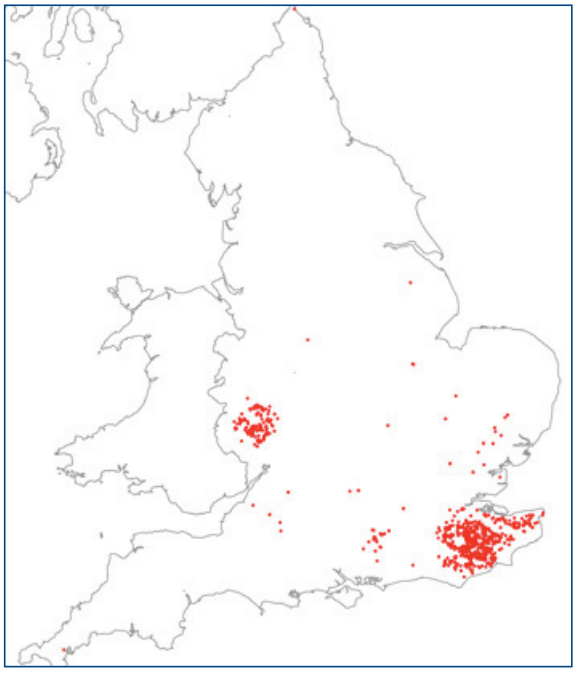
Typical features:

A hop kiln comprises:

- A square or circular kiln, with a cowl on the roof that would extract air though the slatted drying floor on which the hops were laid.
- An attached 'stowage' where the dried hops could cool on the upper floor before being pressed into suspended 'pockets'. The ground floor could be used for storage or was open-fronted and served as a cart shed.

Rarity and Significance:

- Early purpose-built hop kilns, small buildings which included a kiln and rooms for the green and dried hops, are extremely rare.
- Evidence for early kilns may survive in some threshing barns.
- Surviving kilns are extremely rare.
- Early purpose-built oast houses, small buildings which included a kiln and rooms for the green and dried hops, are extremely rare.
- Only a small number of unconverted hop kilns survive.



Listed hop kilns and oast houses in England. Herefordshire and Worcestershire have one of the two main concentrations of listed hop kilns in the country. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2010

A circular hop kiln which has been added to the side of an earlier barn which was also used as the stowage (Herefordshire Plateau).

A 19th century purpose-built hop kiln and stowage. This example has three square kilns (Malvern Hills).

A pair of square kilns with modern staging to give access, indicating the recent continued use of the kiln for drying hops (Herefordshire Lowlands).

A large early 20th century hop kiln (Herefordshire Lowlands).

The slatted drying floor of a kiln (Herefordshire Lowlands).

HOP PICKERS' HUTS

Prior to the introduction of mechanised picking in the 1950s the harvesting of hops was a very labour intensive business which relied on high numbers of workers, most of whom came from the urban areas of the Central Conurbation. Initially, accommodation for these workers was rough canvas tents or converted animal sheds, but in the late 19th century moves were made to improve conditions and recommendations for improved accommodation in brick built huts were made.

Typical features:

- Hop pickers' huts are found on the edge of farmsteads or in the open countryside near to the hop gardens.
- They are single storey structures with rows of doors and windows to small rooms.
- Communal kitchens may be located at the end of the range or in detached buildings

Rarity and significance:

- Surviving groups of hop pickers' huts are rare;
- Hop pickers' huts associated with coherent farmstead groups with other hop industry structures e.g. hop kilns are highly significant.

Cider houses

Growing of apples for cider was important in Herefordshire and parts of Worcestershire from the medieval period, becoming large-scale from the mid- 17th century. These areas form part of the principal cider-making region of England which extends into western Warwickshire and the south west as far as east Cornwall.

Typical features

- Cider houses are frequently incorporated into other buildings ranged around the yard. Where the cider house is a separate building it usually does not have any particular external characteristics, other than a wide doorway allowing for the passage of barrels.
- Occasionally the cider mill and/or press survives within the building.
- On farms where cider was grown for export cider houses could be built with a storage area for barrels.

Cider houses are rarely identifiable externally (except for possibly a wider door) and can be combined with other functions such as here where there is a hop stowage above (Herefordshire Lowlands).

Rarity and Significance

- Cider houses are often difficult to distinguish from other storage buildings on the farm.
- Examples where the cider mill or press survives in situ are of high significance.

A cider mill in-situ. (Herefordshire Lowlands).

A rare survival of a cider press in-situ within the cider house (Herefordshire Lowlands).

Steps to a cider cellar where the barrels would be stored. Stone ramps either side of the steps aided rolling the barrels in and out of the cellar (Herefordshire Lowlands) © Joan Grundy

Outlying barns and complexes

Outfarms and field barns allowed certain functions normally carried out in the farmstead to be undertaken at locations remote from the main steading.

A field barn is a building set within the fields away from the main farmstead, typically in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other. This includes areas where holdings remained dispersed, in particular around towns and villages. Field barns could be:

- Shelters for sheep, typically with low doors and floor-to-ceiling heights.
- Shelters for cattle and their fodder (hay), with or without a yard.
- Threshing barns with yards.
- Combination barns with a threshing bay and storage for the crop, and housing for cattle.

An outfarm is a courtyard complex of buildings set within the fields away from the main farmstead, typically in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other. A cottage for a farm worker could also be sited nearby. They are a distinct feature of large village-based farms, such as in Worcestershire, and areas subject to large-scale planned enclosure such as the Clun Hills.

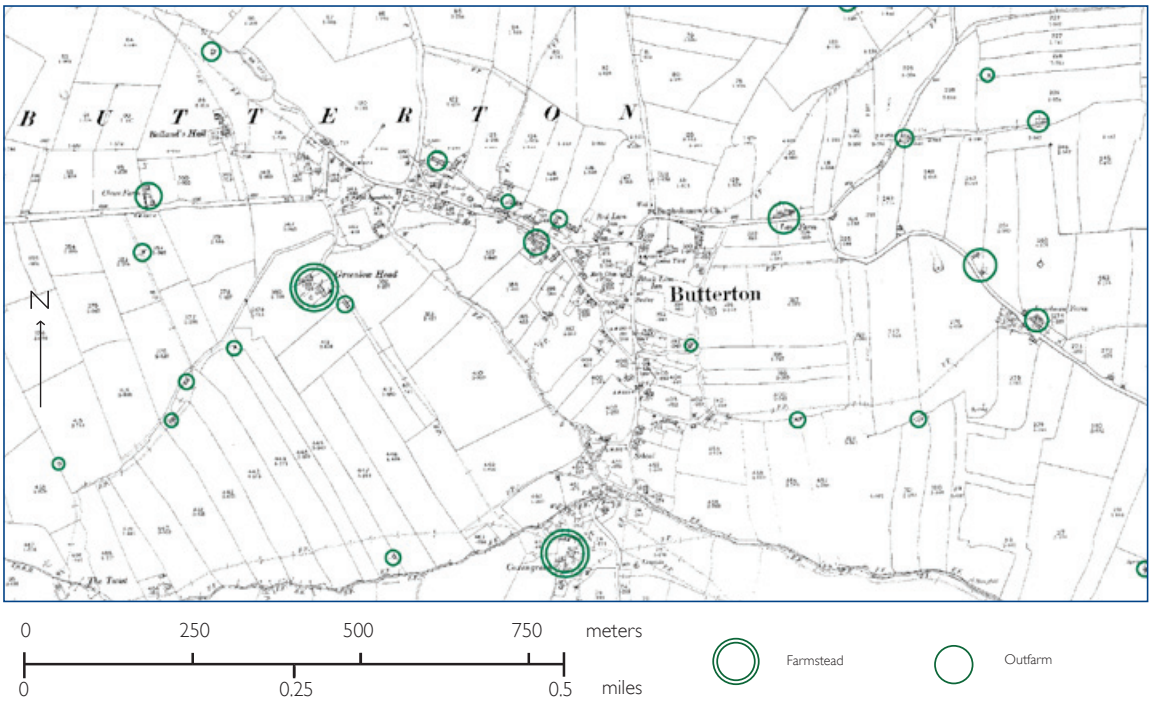
A large U-plan range of shelter sheds set within the arable fields of the Severn Valley (Severn and Avon Vales).

An outfarm with a threshing barn and ruinous shelter shed allowed the processing of the corn crop and the production of manure to be undertaken within the arable fields, reducing the need for labour (Arden).

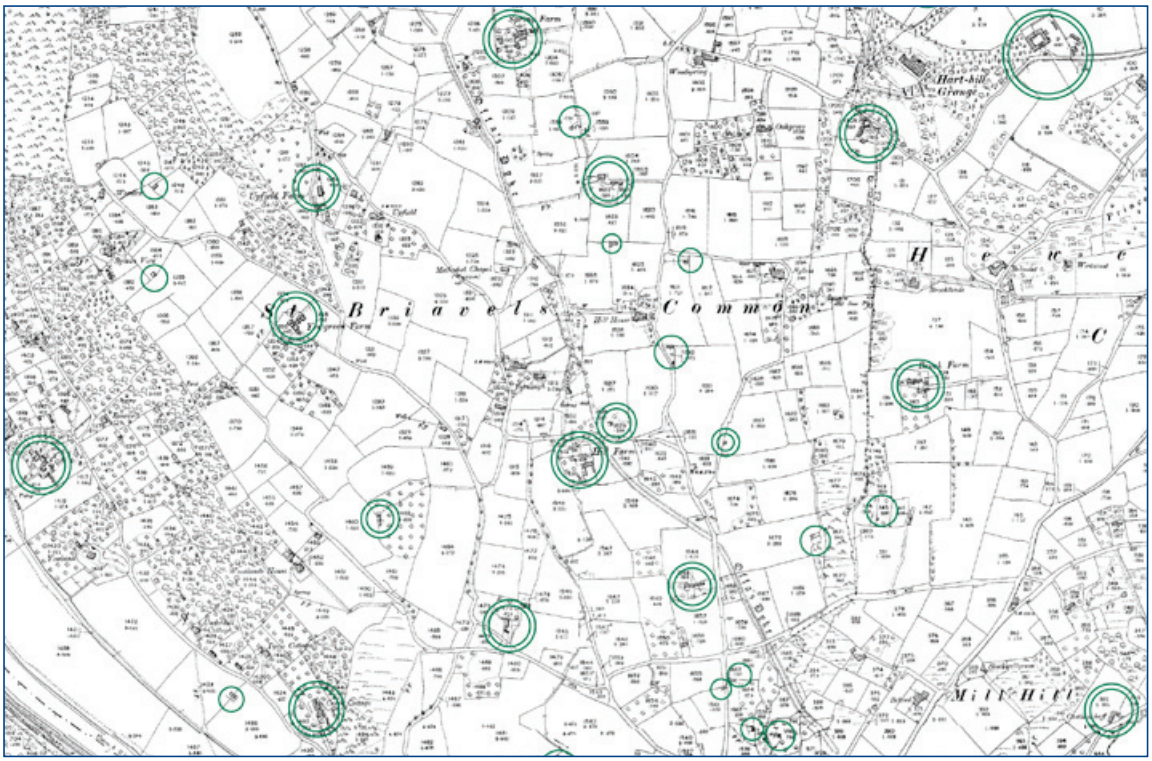
Outfarm with a threshing barn and now ruinous shelter shed (Black Mountains and Golden Valley).

Field barns are a strong characteristic of the Pennine uplands of north-east Staffordshire. The majority are redundant and falling into ruin (South West Peak).

A small field barn – actually a cowhouse located on the edge of a village (Potteries and Churnet Valley).



Butterton is a classic example of a nucleated village in the South West Peak (53) surrounded by the fossilized strips of its former open fields with more regular fields of enclosure of common to the north-west. Apart from one or two farms, most of the farmsteads replaced in the village core although by the late 19th century the number of farms had dropped to five medium sized farmsteads and numerous field barns had been constructed within the enclosed fields. Map based on OS 2nd Edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2005) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024



Amongst the farming community on St Briavels Common in the Forest of Dean (105) there was one large house set in a small park-like setting with a regular courtyard farmstead and numerous small houses owned by cottagers who found employment in woodland industries, mining or quarrying. Although attempts were made to prevent encroachment on the common, by the early 19th century many small farms and cottages had been built on the common, usually associated with small closes. The numbers of field barns reflect the dispersed nature of many of the holdings in this landscape. Map based on OS 2nd Edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2005) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

SECTION 5 MATERIALS AND DETAIL

MATERIALS

Historic farmsteads reflect England's huge diversity in geology, and differences in building traditions and wealth, estate policy, access to transport links and the management of local timber and other resources. This has contributed to great contrasts and variety in traditional walling and roofing materials and forms of construction, which often survived much longer on working farm buildings than farmhouses. Buildings in stone and brick, roofed with tile or slate, increasingly replaced buildings in clay, timber and thatch from the later 18th century. Building materials such as softwood timber, brick, slate and iron could also be imported onto the farm via coastal and river ports, canals and rail. There also appeared in the 19th century a range of standard architectural detail, such as part-glazed and ventilated windows and the use of cast and wrought iron for columns and other detail.

Prefabricated construction in industrial materials made its way onto farms from the 1850s, but did not become dominant and widespread until after the 1950s.

Earth-walling, locally known as mud, is found in eastern Warwickshire (mostly in the Dunsmore and Feldon area) using the yellow-brown Liassic subsoil.

There is a rich **timber-framing** tradition across much of the West Midlands region, including cruck construction, particularly in Herefordshire and Shropshire. Square panel framing is a distinctive regional tradition that extends into the adjacent parts of the North West and South West. **Brick** largely replaced timber from the 17th century although the tradition continued in Herefordshire into the 19th century. Farm buildings often combine weatherboarded timber framing with stone for plinths and sometimes gable walls or framing with brick panels.

- There is a great variety of brick and **stone**, which mostly dates from the late 18th and 19th centuries.
- **Welsh slates** and **clay tiles**, the latter manufactured in the predominant brick areas of north Shropshire and Staffordshire, were used from an early date but from the late 18th century replaced locally-produced roofing materials (including thatch) in many areas.
- **Local stone slates** were available in some areas. Split sandstone slates are found in the east of the region, especially in Shropshire and Herefordshire.
- There are some very rare surviving examples of **butted boarding** and **openwork timber panels**, of pre-19th century date. These are found inside barns, on former external walls. Surviving examples are very rare survivals of a formerly common building tradition. The West Midlands is the major region in England where these features are still found.

Straw thatch was a common roofing material used in arable areas but it was often replaced with plain tile or pantile. Surviving examples of thatched farm buildings are concentrated in southern Warwickshire (Dunsmore and Feldon).

Stone capable of being slit into thin sheets for making roofing slates is found in Herefordshire (sandstone) and in the Cotswolds (limestone) , each having its own character, both in terms of the colour of stone and the size of the slates produced (Black Mountains and Golden Valley).

Clay tiles and Welsh slate were increasingly used from the late 18th century.

Sandstone rubble is a common material used in the west of the region.

The limestone of the Cotswolds is a distinctive building material used for walling and stone slate (Cotswolds).

Old red sandstone used as ashlar is characteristic of north Shropshire and west Staffordshire (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Stone rubble walling often has brick quoins and dressing to window and door openings (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Earth walling is rare in the West Midlands but a small number of 'mud' walled farm buildings can be found in southern Warwickshire (Dunsmore and Feldon).

Timber-framing, here with brick infill panels, was a common method of constructing buildings until the 18th century (Herefordshire Lowlands)

The use of woven laths to fill the upper panels of timber-framed buildings is a characteristic of barns in Herefordshire (Black Mountains and Golden Valley).

Brick became the dominant building material for farm buildings from the 18th century, often replacing or encasing earlier timber-framed buildings (Teme Valley).

DETAILS

Surviving fittings and details within farm buildings are mostly of 19th and early 20th century date but occasional examples of earlier doors, windows and flooring can be found.

Typical Features

- Stalls and other interior features (e.g. mangers, hay racks) in stables and cattle housing of proven 19th century or earlier date.
- Doors (usually planked/ledged and braced, from c.1850 on horizontal sliding rails) with iron strap hinges and handles, and heavy frames.
- Windows, often of a standard type nationally, that are half-glazed, shuttered and/or with hit-and-miss ventilators.
- Historic surfaces such as brick, stone-flag and cobble floors to stables and cattle housing, with drainage channels.
- Industrial fittings (iron or concrete stalls, mangers etc) to planned and complexes, including inter-war county council smallholdings.

Rarity and significance:

- Particularly vulnerable historic floors (e.g. lime ash floors, rush withy floors, threshing floors, slatted drying floors in hop kilns).
- Doors and windows of pre-19th century date, e.g. mullioned windows, sliding shutters to windows.
- Dairies with internal shelving etc, barns with in situ threshing machines and other processing machines, horse engine houses with internal gearing, hop kilns with internal kilns and other detail, cider houses with internal mills and/or presses.
- Tramways to planned industrial complexes with good survival of other features (below).

Unusual features of historic interest, often difficult to spot, include:

- Tallies near threshing floors in barns for noting production of grain, and numbers to grain bins.
- Ritual marks for protecting produce or livestock, which are usually in the form of 'daisy wheels' or 'Mary marks'; or graffiti recording names of workers, sales etc
- Graffiti or artwork, such as soldiers' graffiti, which is tied in with significant cultural events or occupation.
- Constructional marks are those associated with the transport and prefabrication of structural carpentry and timber frames, eg shipping and carpenters' marks.

Historic door showing evidence of careful historic repair (Herefordshire Lowlands).

Timber mullion and transom window of late17th or early 18th century date (Shropshire Hills).

Hit and miss ventilation shutter – a characteristic feature of 19th century farm buildings (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Circular pitching holes are a common feature of brick-built farm buildings, especially across lowland Staffordshire and north Shropshire (Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain).

Carpenter's marks on timbers of a timber framed barn (Herefordshire Lowlands).

Hay racks within a shelter shed (Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills).

Detail of a fine eaves detail on the gable of a stone cow house (Potteries and Churnet Valley).

Mounting block outside a farmhouse (Potteries and Churnet Valley).

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