

WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS & LANDSCAPES PROJECT

Summary Report



Acknowledgements

July 2010

This publication summarises the results of a collaborative project, based upon the mapping of farmsteads by local authorities in the West Midlands. It was written by Jeremy Lake and Amanda Smith of English Heritage and Peter Bibby of the University of Sheffield, with contributions from Bob Edwards of Forum Heritage Services. We are particularly grateful to Claire Robinson and Sam Holder of Advantage West Midlands for their support and guidance. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution Paul Brindley of the University of Sheffield for his assistance in producing the maps, which was in turn based upon the mapping of farmsteads for each county. We would specifically like to thank Bob Edwards of Forum Heritage Services (for Staffordshire and the central conurbation authorities), Charlotte Baxter and Andy Wigley of the Archaeology and Records Team at Shropshire Council, Ben Morton and Ben Wallace of Warwickshire County Council's Museum Service, Emily Gough and Adam Mindykowski of Worcestershire County Council's Historic Environment and Archaeology Service and Natalie Preece and Neil Rimmington of Herefordshire County Council's Archaeology Service.

The front cover shows a farmstead in the Teme Valley (© Sam Hale).

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project. 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

Historic farmsteads, where the farmhouse and some or all of the working buildings are located, are integral to the rural landscape, communities and economy of the West Midlands. Through understanding the character, condition and present day role of historic farmsteads and their traditional working buildings, policy and delivery programmes can respond appropriately in supporting their sustainable use, conserving landscape character and realising economic benefits. This informed approach responds to the structural changes in the farming industry which have hastened the redundancy of traditional farm buildings throughout the West Midlands. Future change in historic farmsteads is inevitable if they are to be retained as a distinctive part of the rural landscape. The mapping and interpretation of historic farmsteads across the West Midlands offers for the first time a framework for informing this change. The context it provides will help decision-makers to evaluate what the future uses should be and how they can be achieved in ways which are based on an understanding of variations in the character and significance of farmsteads, and their sensitivity to and potential for change.

The Project has established that:

Historic farmsteads are assets which make a significant and highly varied contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of the West Midlands

- 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.

- Nearly 88% of historic farmsteads are sited away from villages and large settlements, and developed within small hamlets or as isolated individual sites or clusters. They are an integral part of an historic pattern of dispersed (as opposed to village-based) settlement across most of the region.
- Local and regional variations in the form and scale of historic farmsteads reflect centuries of landscape change.
- Along the Welsh borders and in the uplands of the north east there are large numbers of surviving, small-scale farmsteads in agricultural use associated with land of high amenity and landscape value

Historic farmsteads are assets which, through agricultural and other new uses, have significant potential to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities away from market towns and other rural centres

- 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*.

This evidence base can be used to inform positive approaches to shaping the character and economy of places, which are tailored to the future conservation and use of historic farmsteads

- Policy and delivery programmes should recognise the continuing need of farmers to introduce new infrastructure, and the declining condition of historic farm buildings. Planning policies should address all end uses and facilitate the sustainable re-use of the resource, including in those areas where farmsteads are located outside villages. Environmental and economic benefits can be delivered through a diversity of uses for historic farm buildings. Where change is fully informed new uses can make a positive contribution to landscape character, inspire appropriate high-quality new development and reveal the distinctive quality and character of historic farmsteads.
- Approaches to the future change of historic farmsteads should be based on appraisal of the historic character and significance of the whole site, and its sensitivity to the type of change being considered. This includes identification of opportunities as well as constraints, from the most adaptable to those significant but least adaptable buildings where low-key and ancillary uses are most appropriate.
- Agri-environment schemes and other grant programmes can best be targeted towards supporting the maintenance of traditional farm buildings in areas of high amenity and landscape value with high densities of surviving historic farmsteads in continuing agricultural use, and towards the most significant but least adaptable buildings.

Next Steps

The next steps for English Heritage are outlined below.

- Use the evidence to inform spatial planning and delivery with local planning authorities and other stakeholders with an interest and involvement in land management and change in rural areas.
- Inform the targeting of Environmental Stewardship and other agri-environment schemes and land management programmes in liaison with Natural England and other partners, and the development of landscape objectives through the West Midlands Landscape Partnership.
- Work with local planning authorities and their historic environment teams on the preparation of Local Development Frameworks, including the policy approach for rural areas, its implementation, and delivery through development management.
- Work with local authorities in utilising the evidence base to inform the preparation of local economic assessments and regeneration strategies.
- Develop for further dissemination case studies demonstrating how the evidence base stored in Local Authority Historic Environment Records can be used and how the planning tools can be applied.
- Work with local authorities and local groups in using the evidence base and guidance to inform community and area based planning initiatives, such as Parish Plans, Village Design Statements and the preparation of local lists of heritage assets.

Further Information

Together with this Report, the Project has delivered the following information:

- **Planning Tools** for informing change at an area and site-based scale
- **Farmstead Character Statements** for the whole West Midlands and the 23 National Character Areas within it.
- **County-based Reports** which summarise the results of the mapping for each county and the central conurbation.
- A **Technical Report** which provides a detailed statistical analysis of the patterns of farmstead use across the West Midlands, and their social and economic role.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Scope of the Project

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project 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:

- Mapped and described the locations and characteristics of all farmsteads based on Ordnance Survey 2nd edition maps of c 1890–1900. These were published after the final significant period of development of traditional farmsteads and the general use of vernacular materials. Modern maps were then used to identify the rates of survival to the present day.
- Compared this information against a wide range of address and economic data to understand the role that historic farmsteads play in the economy of the West Midlands.
- Developed guidance and a set of planning tools to help apply and make use of this evidence base, to inform spatial planning, land management and economic development at all levels.

1.2 Historic Farmsteads and Drivers for Change

Historic farmsteads, where the farmhouse and some or all of the working buildings are located, reflect the development of their surrounding landscapes over centuries. Historic farmsteads and their buildings display an immense diversity in their type, scale, form and use of materials, as well as differences in their survival as traditional groups. As a result they make a varied contribution to the character of the landscape and to local distinctiveness (Figure 1).

The Project responds to the need to inform and manage future change. As a result of changes in agricultural practices, particularly from the 1950s, the future of historic farm buildings is increasingly dependent on finding a use for which they were not originally intended. Structural changes in the farming industry have required farmers to construct new buildings that economise on labour and conform to animal welfare regulations. These changes have combined with the increased size of farms to hasten the redundancy of traditional farm buildings and remove entire farmsteads from agricultural production. In response to these changes English Heritage and the Countryside Agency commissioned research to

examine in more depth the drivers for change and the effectiveness of policy at the national and local level for listed farm buildings. This research also provided for the first time statistically robust national and regional estimates of the structural condition and adaptive reuse of listed farm buildings. It demonstrated that:

- a significant proportion of redundant listed farm buildings are in an advanced state of structural decay, and over half of all listed farm buildings have been subject to planning applications for development;
- the overwhelming majority of conversions are for residential use (70-80%), despite planning policies that favour employment and business uses;
- pressures for change will continue and accelerate in some areas, as farmers seek to rationalise their businesses and construct new infrastructure;
- the majority of local planning guidance, whilst focusing on the issue of reuse, reflects limited knowledge of the character of historic farmsteads and how this has changed over time;
- the evidence base for historic farmsteads in Historic Environment Records is weak, and almost exclusively confined to individual listed buildings. This does not provide a full or general understanding of the character and survival of farmsteads and their buildings, and how they contribute to landscape character and local distinctiveness.



1a



1b



1c



1d

Figure 1 Farmsteads in the Landscape

Historic farmsteads can be defined as the homestead of a farm where the farmhouse and some or all of the working farm buildings are located. They are an integral part of how landscapes across the West Midlands have developed. Farmsteads across the region show great variation from farmsteads with timber-framed barns and cow houses to formally planned, brick-built farmsteads completely built or re-built in the 19th century and often associated with re-organised landscapes.

- 1a. A roadside farmstead in Worcestershire. In the anciently-enclosed landscapes of the West Midlands, isolated farms typically developed along the sides of routeways.
- 1b. A farmstead in the hills of south Herefordshire, where many isolated farmsteads were built after the abandonment of farming settlements from the 14th century.
- 1c. A farmstead sited off its own track in the south east of Warwickshire, where many isolated farmsteads were not built until the enclosure of medieval open fields and common land in the later 18th and early 19th centuries.
- 1d. Two farmsteads in the lowlands of Herefordshire, with the remains of a shrunken medieval settlement around them. The modern agricultural sheds, in the foreground, typify change in the modern agricultural industry and the displacement of agricultural use from the more specialised, earlier traditional buildings.

2 National and Regional Context

2.1 National Context

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 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*, and guidance that promoted high standards in the conversion of traditional farm buildings to new uses. Work conducted since then has:

- explored how agri-environment scheme grants for historic buildings benefit rural economies and communities;
- deepened understanding of the rates of conversion and dereliction;
- piloted the mapping of *all* historic farmsteads, in order to understand how

they contribute to landscape character and determine their present social and economic role; and

- piloted tools for land management and planning, including the identification of key planning and design issues at the earliest stage of the development process.

This expanding body of work has emphasised the need to better understand the social, economic and environmental value of historic farmsteads and their buildings. This, combined with awareness of the drivers for change and their impact, can then help to realise opportunities for spatial planning, land management and economic development. This approach is consistent with national planning policy and guidance (see text box), which encourages local authorities to develop flexible and positive approaches towards rural development, including the sustainable re-use of rural buildings, which are fully informed and reflect local circumstances and needs.

Besides the importance of agriculture as the dominant land use in rural areas, there is now little difference in the employment profiles of different sectors between rural and urban areas. Recent work by rural economists has demonstrated

Key Messages in National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning policy stresses the importance of:

- An evidence-based approach to future change, requiring 'a vision for the future of places that responds to the local challenges and opportunities, and is based on evidence, a sense of local distinctiveness and community derived objectives, within the overall framework of national policy' (PPS 12, *Local Spatial Planning*, 2008, 2.1).
- Not repeating national policy, but having greater detail and a local interpretation of higher-level policy if evidence based and justified by local circumstances (PPS 12, *Local Spatial Planning*, 2008, 4.32).
- Ensuring that 'All development in rural areas should be well-designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness' (PPS 7, *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*, 2004, para. 1) and ensuring that developments 'respond to their local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness' (PPS1, *Delivering Sustainable Development*, 2005, para. 36).
- A positive and proactive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment which is evidence based and takes 'into account the variations in type and distribution of heritage assets, as well as the contribution made by the historic environment by virtue of: its influence on the character of the environment and an area's sense of place; its potential to be a catalyst for regeneration....' (PPS 5, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, 2010, HE3).
- Identifying and assessing the significance of heritage assets (as identified by local planning authorities as well as designated assets that meet national criteria). Using this to inform place-shaping, conservation and new development so that it makes 'a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment'. Identifying 'opportunities for changes in the setting to enhance or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset' (PPS 5, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, 2010, HE 7 and 10.2).
- Achieving sustainable economic growth by promoting thriving, inclusive and locally distinctive rural communities whilst continuing to protect the open countryside (PPS 4, *Planning for Sustainable Economic Development*, 2009). It emphasises the importance of all types of business and enterprise, and the conversion and reuse of appropriately located and suitably constructed buildings for economic development (EC6.2c), noting that 'residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations and for some types of building' (EC12.1).

how hitherto hidden patterns of home-working, partly enabled by access to broadband, are contributing to the economic and social health of rural economies and communities. In its response to the *Matthew Taylor Review of the Rural Economy and Affordable Housing*, the Government accepted a number of key recommendations including:

- ‘the adaptive reuse of otherwise redundant historic buildings could and should play a significant role in delivering’ additional small-scale business, workspace and residential developments’ (Recommendation 29);
- a positive approach to such development which is not linked to public transport ‘would help remove a significant barrier to rural economic development, including the reuse of disused farms or farm buildings, subject to proper assessment of the impact on economic, social and environmental sustainability’ (Recommendation 24).

2.2 West Midlands Context

The drivers for change (see p.3) pose challenges to policies and implementation programmes that seek to promote the growth of sustainable rural economies and communities whilst also protecting and enhancing local character and distinctiveness. In the West Midlands the pressures for conversion on the one hand and dereliction on the other, as measured by statistics gathered for listed farm buildings, are particularly marked. Around 3,400 farm buildings are listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest and are represented on around 16% of historic farmstead sites. At least 30-40% of these listed buildings have been converted to other uses, over 90% to housing. However, this varies across the region, with the peripheral areas to the north east and especially the west having the lowest rates of conversion and markedly above-average levels of disrepair (Figure 2). Without a use, or support for their maintenance and repair from the agri-environment schemes, they will eventually be lost from the landscape.

Long-term planning that meets the needs and aspirations of local communities and economies will require an understanding of the character and function of rural areas in their entirety, including their relationship to urban areas. This is relevant for the West Midlands where 70% of the land is in agricultural production, contributing 1.2% of the value of goods and services produced as indicated by the Gross Value Added measurement (GVA). Despite the broad diversity of land use and agricultural production, farm incomes are volatile and employment in agriculture continues to decline. By contrast the non-agricultural rural economy

annually contributes 36% of regional GVA. Small-scale businesses and self-employment form a significant part of the rural economy in remote rural areas, particularly in north-east Staffordshire, most of Herefordshire and Shropshire west of the Severn. The highest carbon emissions are associated with those accessible rural areas with good connections to larger urban centres, and thus better access to services, transport and the distribution of goods. Despite limited access to second generation bandwidth, there is considerable evidence from national and regional research that home-working is growing in terms of its potential for rural communities and economies.

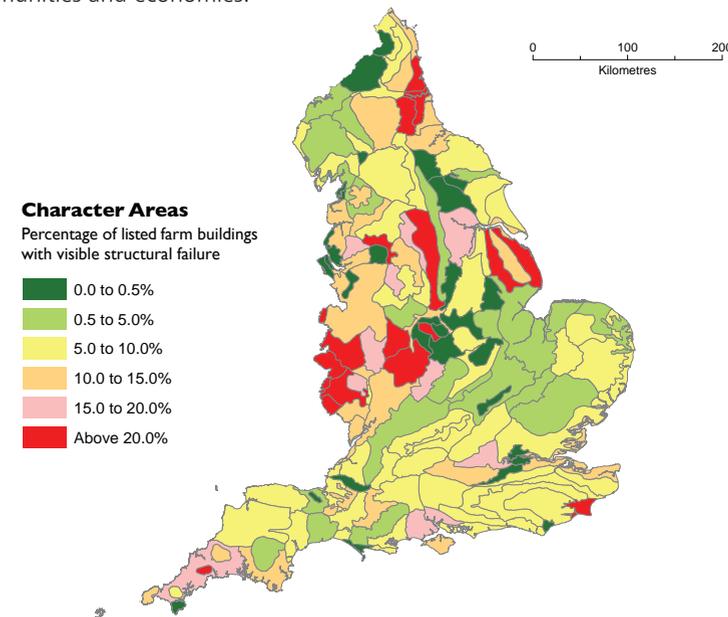


Figure 2: Patterns of Dereliction across England

This national map shows the percentage of listed farm buildings with visible structural failure across the National Character Areas in England (see Figure 14 for a map of these areas). The West Midlands has the highest percentage (19%) of listed buildings in disrepair of any region in England, which hides a larger proportion in significant but less evident decline.

3 The Historic Character of Farmsteads in the West Midlands

Patterns inherited from the past remain legible to different degrees in the present day landscape. The historic character of farmsteads, and their location and density in the landscape, results from hundreds of years of change and the influence of a diversity of factors. Farmsteads form part of a general pattern of dispersed rural settlement across the West Midlands, where villages were historically low in number and concentrated in particular areas. Their form and scale is subject to a considerable degree of local variation, which relates to the size of fields and other elements of the landscape

3.1 Farmsteads and 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 [Figure 3]. 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 (shown in red on Figure 3b) 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.

Figure 3a: Farmstead Change in the West Midlands.

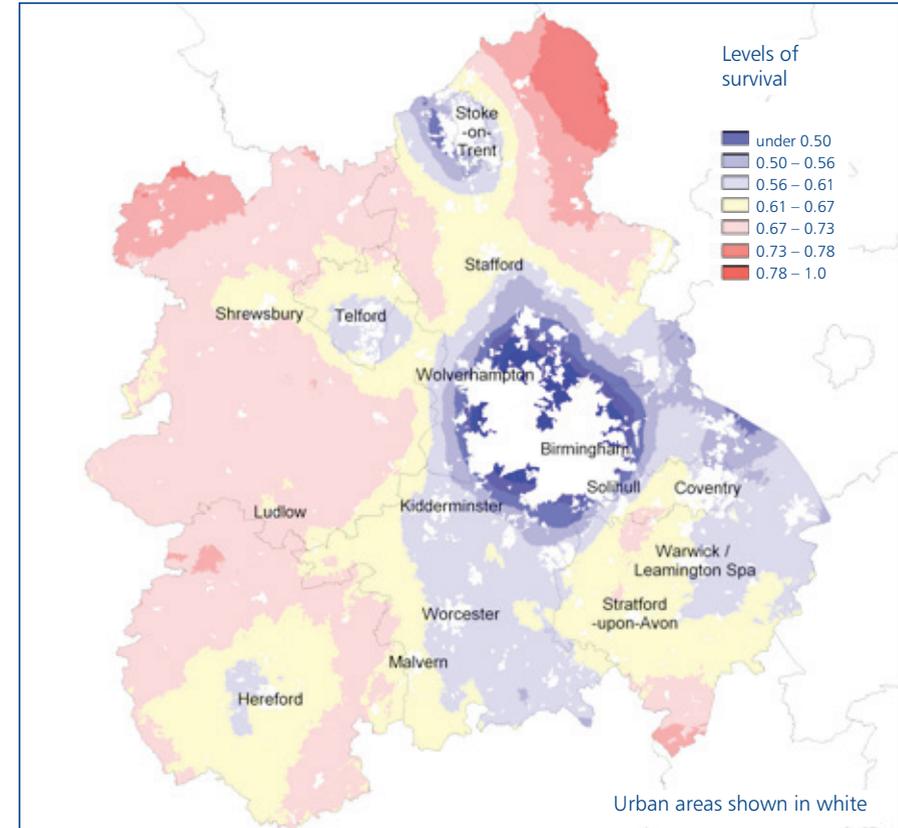
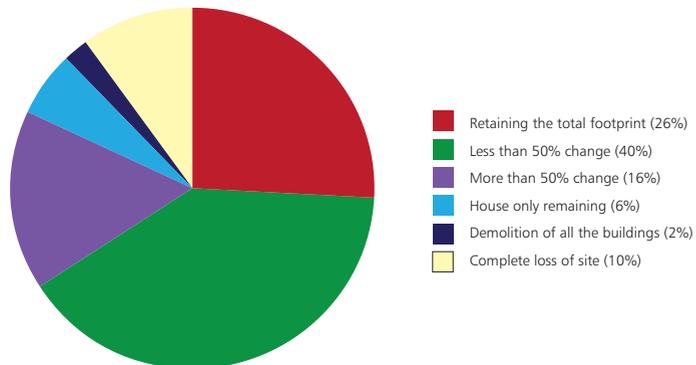


Figure 3b: Levels of Survival

This and other maps have 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

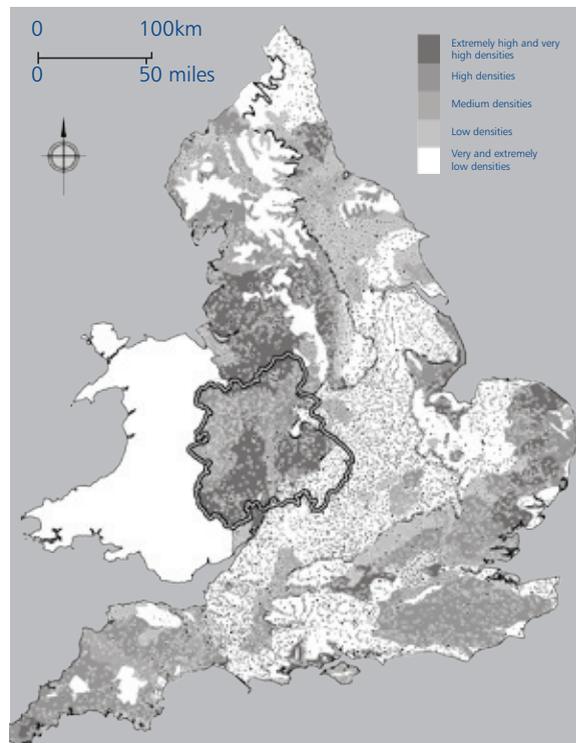
3.2 Farmsteads and Settlement

The Project has demonstrated how the location of farmsteads across the rural landscape of the West Midlands results from past land use and development [Figure 4]. Since the late 18th century the growth of the central conurbation has had a significant impact on agriculture, combined with the expansion and development of existing and new settlements as a result of industrialisation, commuting patterns and planning policies. Dating from the medieval period there is a clear spatial distinction between those landscapes that had been dominated by villages and those of dispersed settlement where villages are relatively few in number and sometimes recent in their development. Villages are concentrated across south and east Warwickshire and Worcestershire. These latter areas form

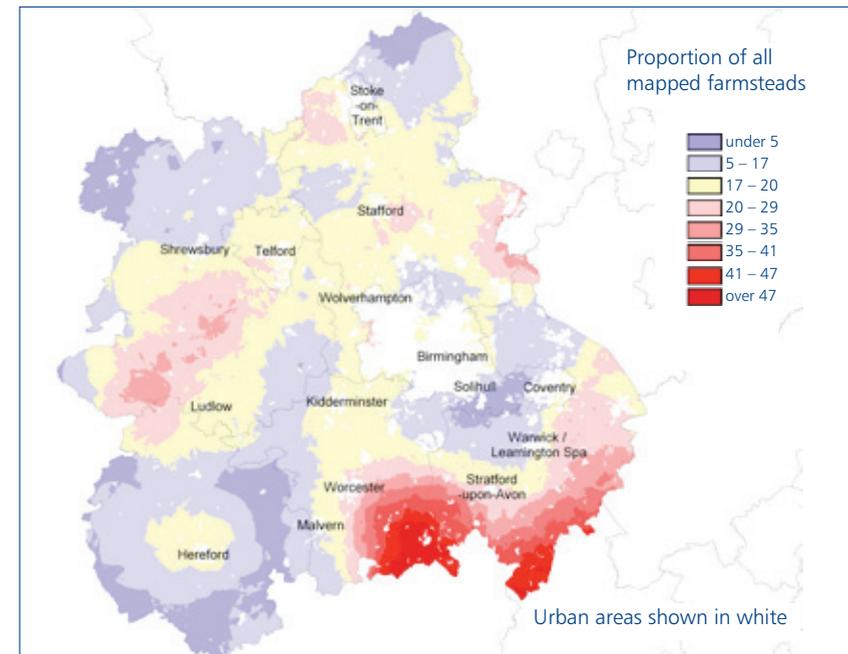
part of the central band of village England where most isolated farmsteads date from the gradual or planned enclosure of the large medieval open fields which extended across most of the surrounding landscape. These village-dominated landscapes are historically very different from the distinctive (and often equally ancient) patterns of dispersed settlement that extend across most of the West Midlands. In these landscapes dwellings, isolated farmsteads and hamlets developed, sometimes in close proximity to each other, in order to exploit complex patterns of fields, areas of common land and industrial workings.

Figure 4: Farmsteads and Settlement

4a. (left) This illustrates an analysis of the settlement pattern of England in the mid-19th century. The West Midlands extends into the central band of village England, but settlement across most of the region is dispersed: darker shading indicates areas with higher densities of dispersal.



4b. (right) Farmsteads in settlements (village and urban) as a proportion of all mapped farmsteads, smoothed to 10 kilometres. The red areas show where the highest proportion of historic farmsteads have remained within villages; 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.



Historic farmsteads identified from late 19th century maps
 0.4% are located within urban areas
 12% are located within villages
 12% are located within hamlets
 1.4% are located within historic parks
 The remainder are isolated but display different densities of clustering

3.3 Farmstead Type and Scale

Variations in the scale and arrangement of buildings within farmsteads reflect farm size, farming practice and the historic function of farmsteads, particularly to store and process harvested crops and shelter and manage animals. These result in different forms and scales of farmsteads, which once mapped display local and regional variation in the degree to which they are intermixed or dominant. Figure 5 shows that the smallest-scale historic farmstead types are a dominant feature of upland landscapes. In contrast the largest-scale farmsteads are dominant in those lowland areas that had been subject to the greatest degree of farm amalgamation and growth up to the late 19th century. These scales are derived from the basic farmstead types that have been mapped (Figure 6).

Figure 5a: Farmstead Scale in the West Midlands

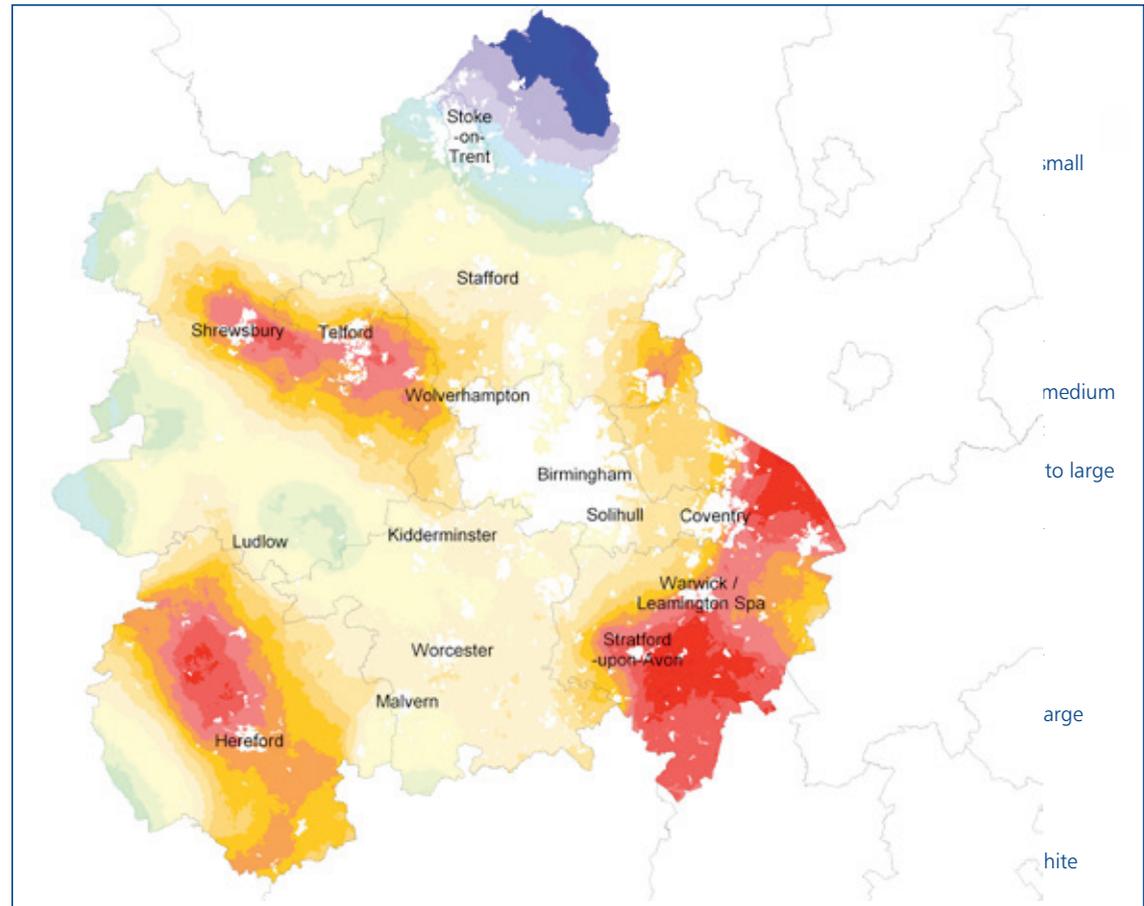
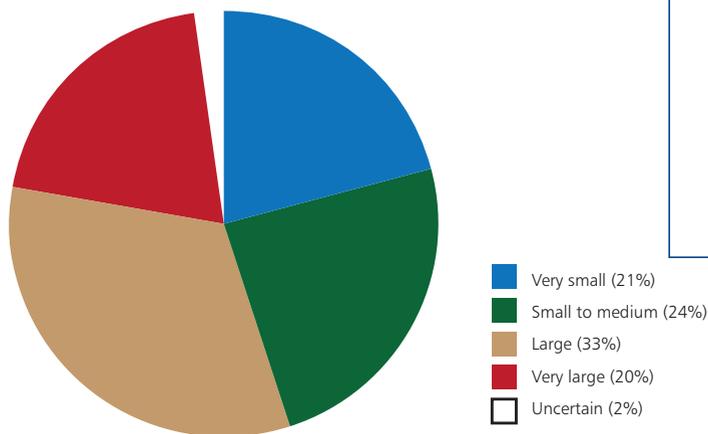
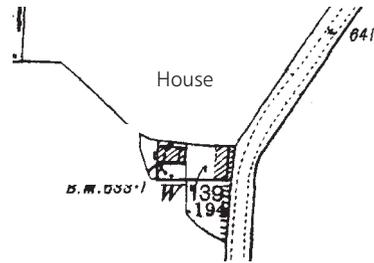


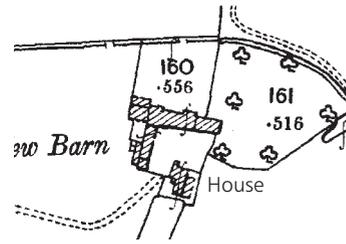
Figure 5b: Farmstead Scale, smoothed to 10 kilometres.

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 Herefordshire Lowlands and central Shropshire extending east of Telford into the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau (see Figure 14).

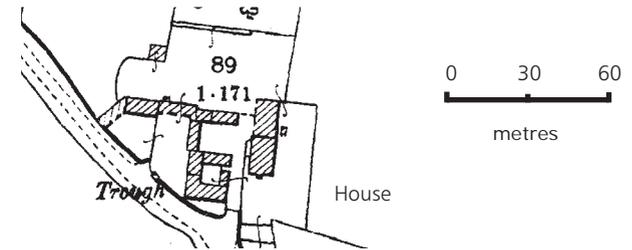
Figure 6: Farmstead Types in the West Midlands, showing a range of examples that survive and (top row) examples from late 19th century maps.



A small loose courtyard plan with the working buildings and working building to one side of the yard.



A medium-scale L-shaped plan with a barn and attached animal housing.



A large-scale regular multi-yard plan.



A small linear farmstead in the Oswestry Hills, where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line. This is the most common layout across the border in Wales and in the upland and some lowland areas further north in England.



A loose courtyard farmstead with a 17th century house, barn and animal house (the single-storey building) in the Avon Valley. In parts of the region there are some very rare surviving groups of the 18th century and earlier that have survived to the present day because they were large enough to meet the requirements of later generations of farmers.



Most working farmstead buildings date from the 19th century, and regular farmstead layouts with interlinked buildings are the most common farmstead layout in the Region – as here in the central Shropshire plain.

3.4 Farmsteads and Landscape

The historic character of the present-day landscape is mapped across the West Midlands through Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), a national initiative funded by English Heritage and undertaken by local authorities. This provides a spatial framework to help understand how distinctive elements in the fabric of the landscape, such as the form and scale of fields, have been formed as a result of past patterns of historic settlement and land use. Fields with highly irregular boundaries may date from the clearance of woodland, often before the 14th century: an example is the Arden south of Birmingham, a landscape studded with farmsteads. Irregular or curved boundaries to fields result from the gradual or piecemeal enclosure of medieval open fields and areas of common land. They display an earlier origin and development than the surveyor-drawn fields with straight, regular boundaries which date from the later 18th and 19th centuries. These result from the taking in of new and reorganisation of earlier farmland, for example in the Clun Forest and the Staffordshire Moorlands. All of these landscapes have been subject to different degrees of later reorganisation and enlargement.

The mapping of farmsteads is contributing further to this understanding. The broad distinctions in the scale of farmsteads and their fields that have been revealed at a regional level (Figure 5) provide a framework for understanding local distinctiveness in the distributions and densities of historic farmsteads at a local level [Figure 8]. The highest densities of farmsteads are found where small farms and smallholdings developed as a result of the clearance of woodland and around heaths, mosses and moorland. In these areas the ratio of historic farmsteads to the existing residential stock is particularly high (see Figure 10). By contrast, those areas with the lowest densities of farmsteads had by the late 19th century been marked by the emergence of the largest-scale farmsteads and their associated fields as a result of the growth of large farms and the intense amalgamation of holdings.

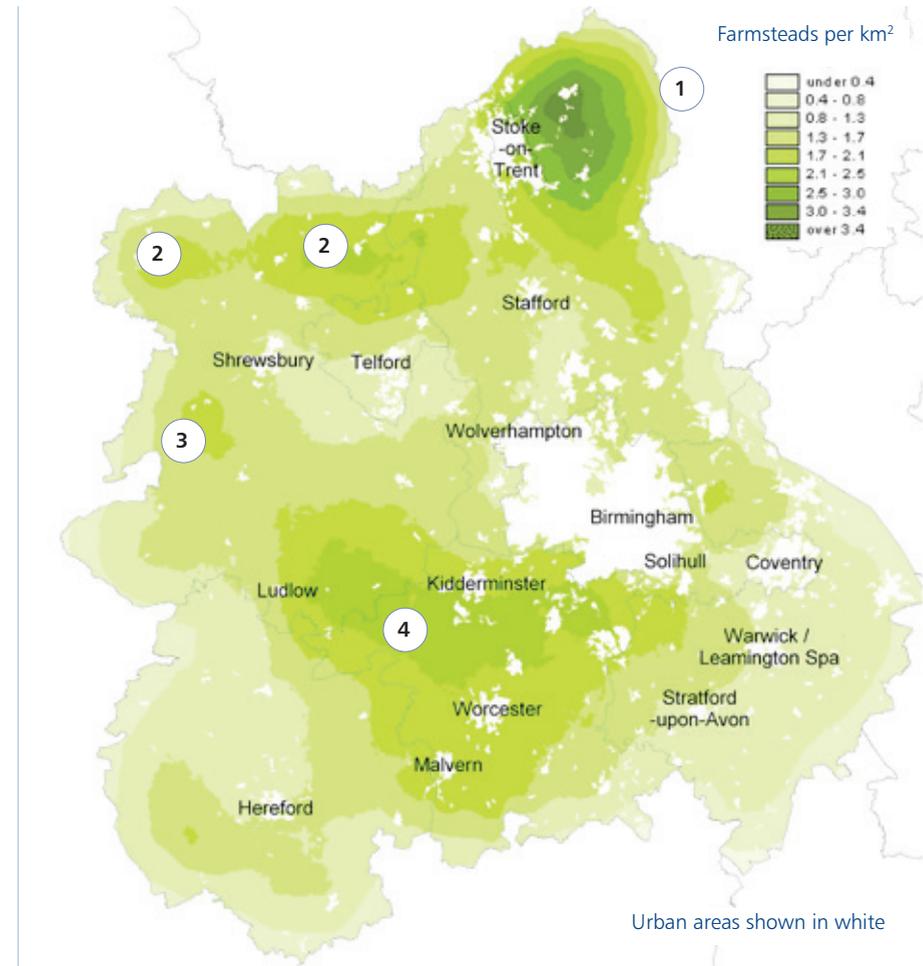


Figure 7: The Varying Densities of Farmsteads

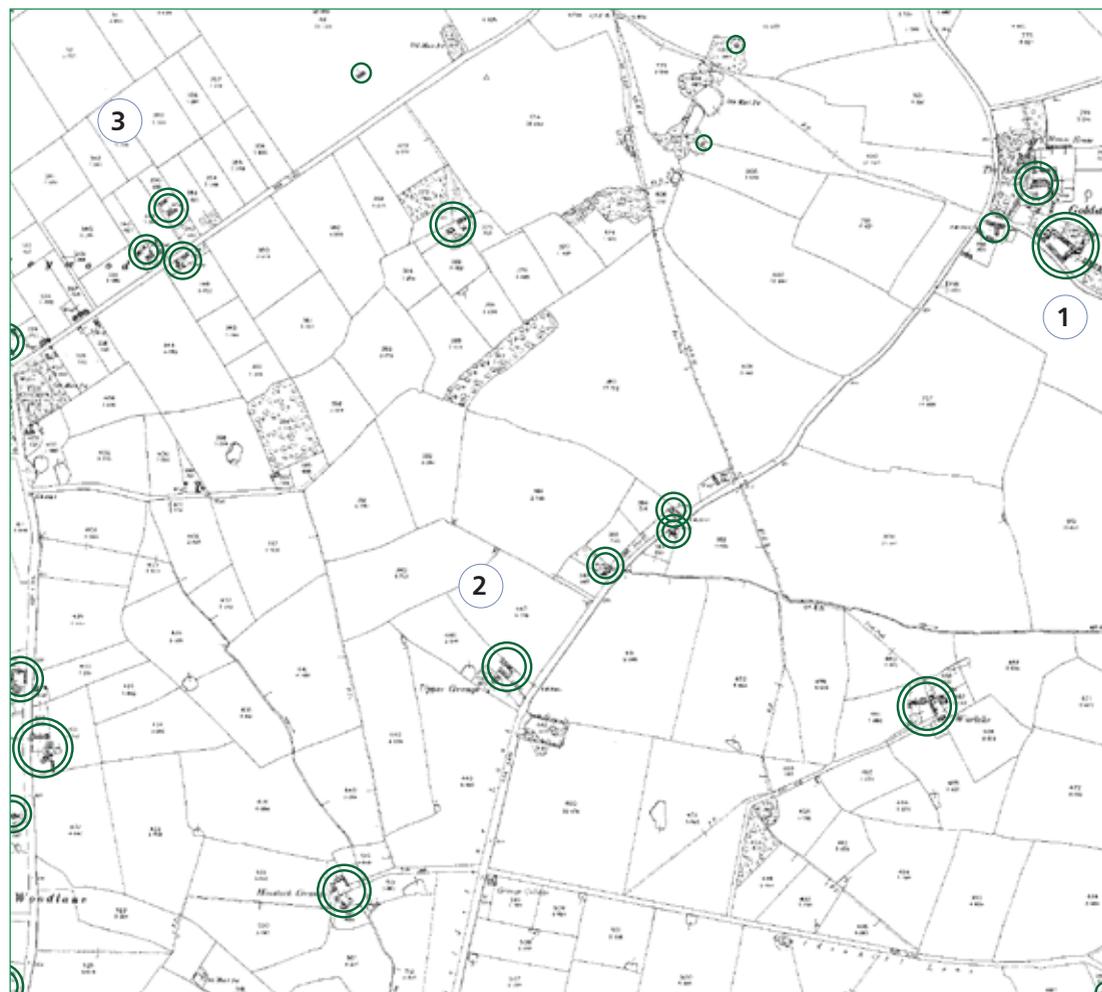
This shows the density of farmsteads in the landscape across the West Midlands; dark green showing areas where there is a high density. Notable for their high densities of small to medium-sized farmsteads are the upland areas of the Staffordshire Moorlands (1), the mosslands, heathlands and uplands of north Shropshire (2) and the Stiperstones (3) and a broad zone

extending from the Clee Hills across the Teme valley and the north of the Severn and Avon Vales into the Arden of Warwickshire (4). There are low densities of farmsteads in the central Shropshire plain, the lowlands of Herefordshire and in the village-dominated landscapes of the south east of the region.

Figure 8: Variations at a Local Level

This map illustrates the relationships between farmsteads and fields at a local level in north Shropshire. Within this small area are three distinct areas of fieldscapes:

- (1) the large-scale piecemeal enclosure around the hamlet of Goldstone results from the development of two large farmsteads which had by the late 19th century provided the foci for enlarged holdings with large fields;
- (2) the smaller-scale piecemeal enclosure to the south-west has some straight boundaries and regular fields resulting from 19th century enclosure and reorganisation, but clearly visible are earlier more irregular patterns of fields which can be read with medium to large-scale farmsteads retaining buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries;
- (3) to the north-west are small regular fields created through the enclosure of former common land, associated with small loose courtyard farmsteads and smallholdings where farming supplemented other forms of income.

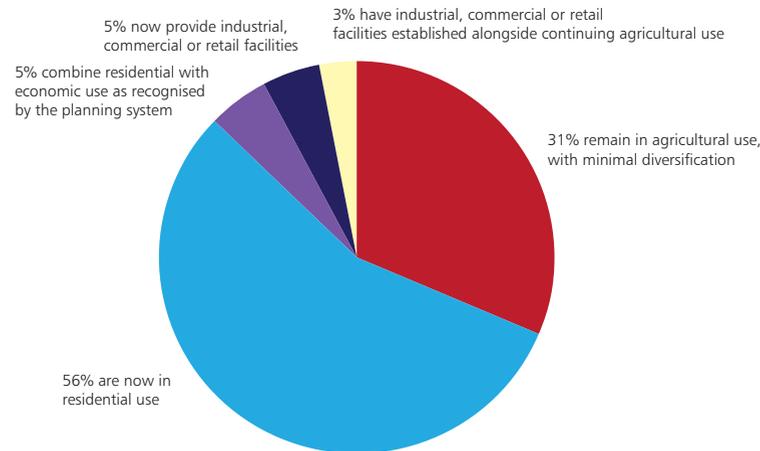


4 The Use of Historic Farmsteads in the West Midlands

4.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the types and patterns of current use of the nearly 17,000 farmsteads which retain some or all of their traditional working buildings from the late 19th century.

Figure 9: The Use of Historic Farmsteads in the West Midlands



4.2 Types of Use

Historic farmsteads in use make a varied contribution to the rural housing stock across the West Midlands (see Figure 10).

Agricultural and Commercial/Industrial Use

Nearly a third of identified historic farmsteads continue to be in agricultural use, although this is a declining proportion. Significant diversification has taken place alongside farming operations in only one in twelve of these farmsteads. This contrasts to the minimal on-farm diversification that helps the primary agricultural enterprise to be retained: these types of activities have not been subject to analysis in this Project.

Despite the support in planning policy for promoting economic use it has proved difficult in practice to secure non-residential after-uses for historic farmsteads.

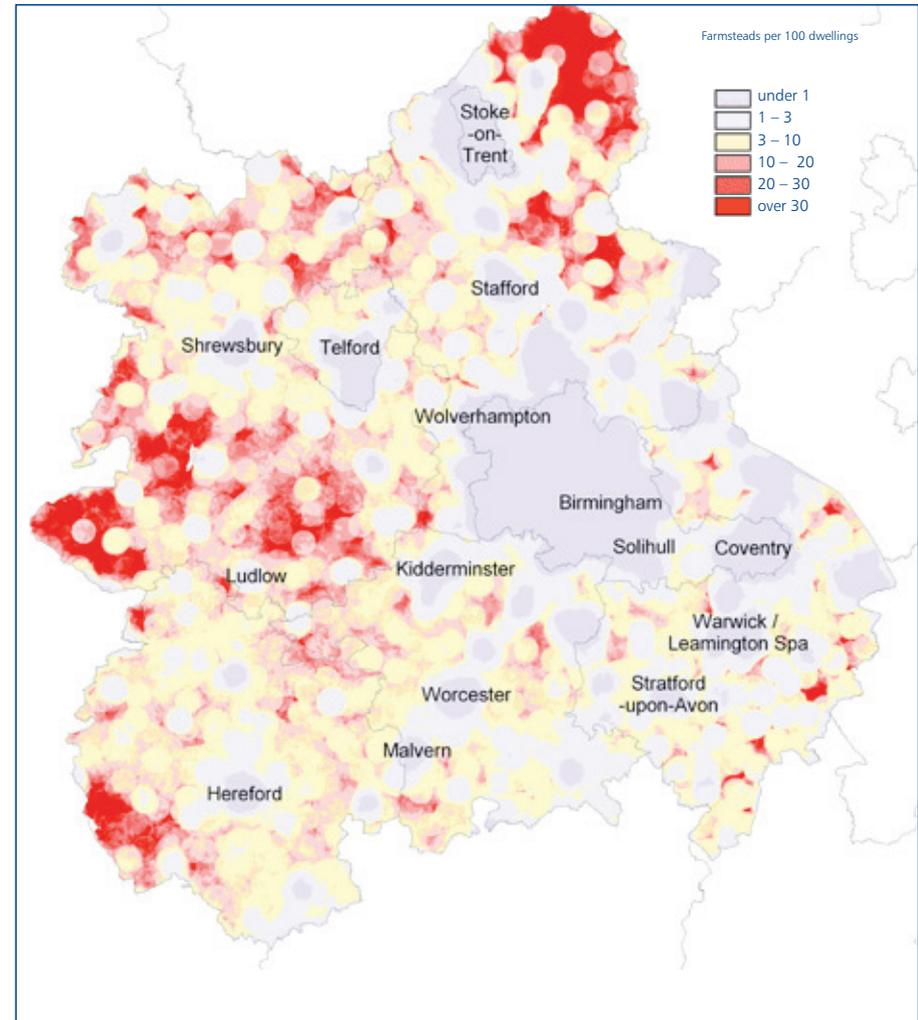


Figure 10 Historic Farmsteads in current use per 100 dwellings, smoothed to 10 kilometres

Those areas where historic farmsteads make the greatest contribution to the rural housing stock are indicated in red.

Where new industrial and commercial facilities have been developed on historic farmsteads (regardless of whether farming continues or not), they have predominantly been workshops (one scheme in four), self-catering holiday homes (one scheme in five, particularly on farmsteads where agricultural use continues), and office space (one scheme in ten, and more on farmsteads where farming has ceased completely).

Residential Use and Home Working

The overwhelming majority of farmsteads in non-farming use provide homes: this includes those farmsteads where some or all of the working buildings have been converted to residential use. It is clear, however, that their economic significance has been overlooked. This is because they provide the basis for a broad spectrum of enterprises which do not require commercial or industrial facilities or infrastructure as recognised by the planning system.

- One in twelve of the farmsteads in residential use are also the registered office of a limited company, this measure serving as a proxy indicator of professional home-based working. This form of business activity, which excludes companies engaged in property management, exceeds the number of historic farmsteads in farming use which have significant diversification and the number converted for industrial or commercial use.
- The economic activity of companies based in residential farmsteads covers a very wide spectrum of activity. Of particular importance are business services (30%), construction (10%), real estate (8%), recreational and cultural services (5%), medical and related services (5%), retail (5%) and catering (4%).
- They often provide homes for a business elite, with 22 directorships of substantial firms (defined as companies with a turnover in excess of £1.5 million per annum) for every 100 farmsteads. This outstrips the national average for all residential property of this type, of 5 in 100 households for urban areas and 8 in 100 households for rural areas.

4.3 Patterns of Use

The inherited character of farmsteads, particularly their layout and scale, affords different capacities for change and new uses. The current economic context exerts the greatest influence on the present-day patterns of use. Of particular importance is how farmsteads are located in relationship to the value of buildings applied to the production of goods and services (capital services in buildings or CSB) and 'economic mass'. Economic mass relates to the potential of the population (by virtue of the aggregate number of households within 10km of any point) to provide a labour force and an aggregate consumer spending. This is why peripheral rural areas such as south Shropshire are regarded as 'low productivity' areas in contrast to the productivity benefits offered by the conurbation core and other areas with high-density populations.

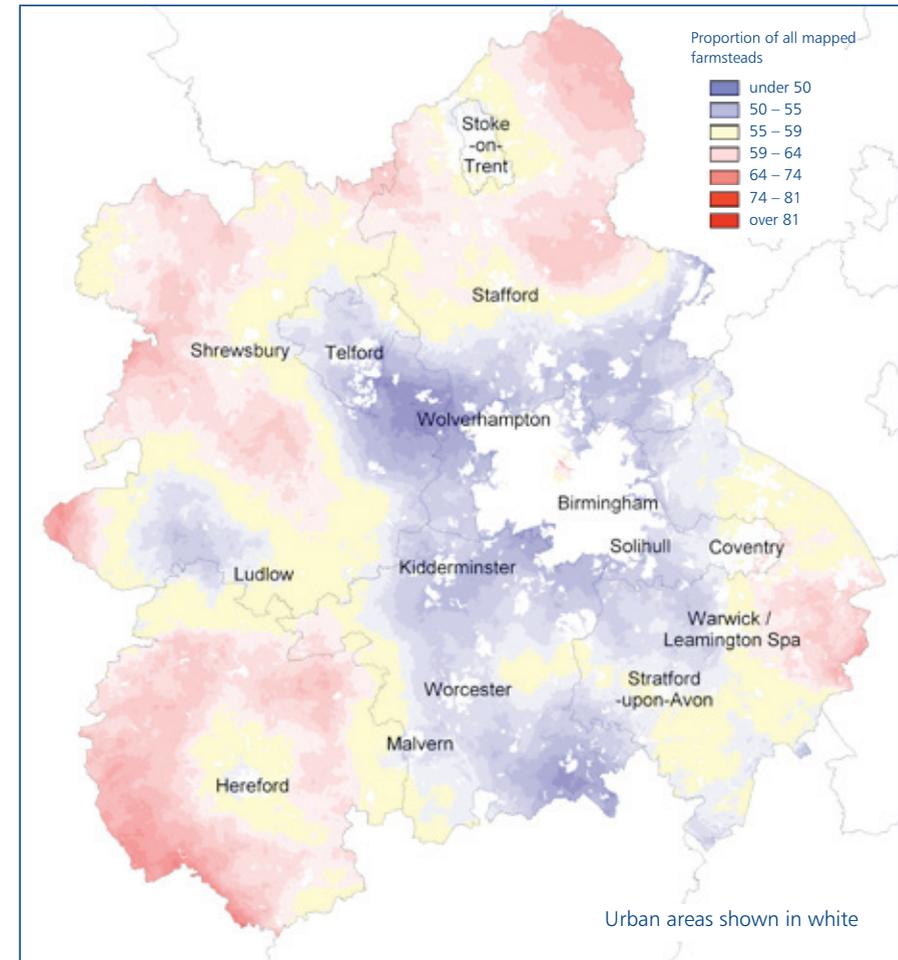


Figure 11 The Proportion of Historic Farmsteads in Agricultural Use, smoothed to 10 kilometres

This shows the principal areas of agricultural use in red, and those areas where the greatest numbers of historic farmsteads have fallen out of agricultural use in blue.

4.3.2 Patterns of Residential Use and Home Working

A greater proportion of the smallest historic farmsteads have been converted to residential use than other farmstead types. This form of use is otherwise evenly spread across all types and scales of farmstead, demonstrating that farmsteads meet a strong market demand in all areas for distinctive living space in desirable locations. Residential use (C3) increases in step with economic mass, occurring most on the fringes of the central conurbation, especially where Green Belt policy restricts other development choices.

Of particular importance is that residential (C3) property can accommodate significant, and until now largely hidden, business activity on historic farmsteads. This partly reflects the fact that the need for office space (a subset of B1 uses) has declined as high-speed internet connection has allowed dispersal of activity into the homes of professional workers, thus reducing employers' office costs. In the West Midlands the proportion of historic farm properties with home-based limited liability companies is more than three times higher than in other dwellings regardless of where they are located. Also, relative to households, they are concentrated in desirable rural locations with high property values which are close to major population centres of high economic mass. These 'exurbs' are physically rural but functionally suburban zones.

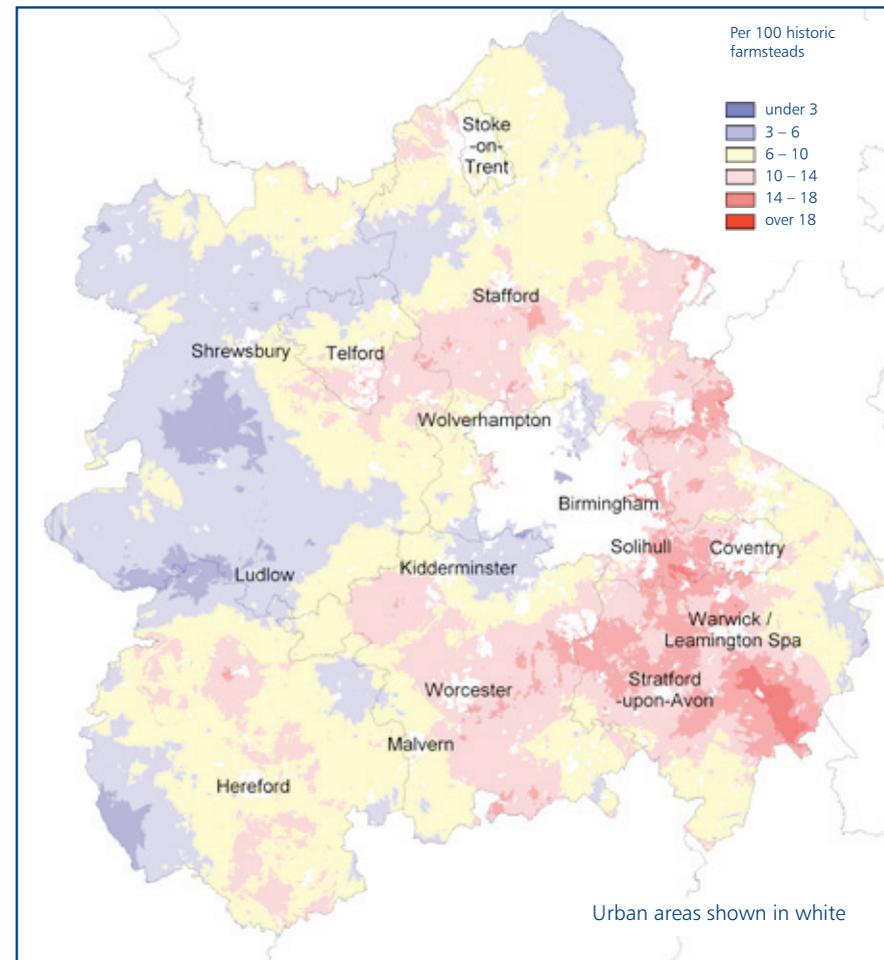


Figure 12 Registered Offices in Historic Farmsteads, per 100 Historic Farms in current use

Areas with the highest concentrations of this type of use are concentrated in areas of economic mass, but not exclusively so.

4.4 Sub-Regional Variation

There is a very clear pattern of sub-regional variation in the current use of historic farmsteads. This responds primarily to economic mass (see 4.3). It is modified slightly by farmstead size and farming specialisation, and is further modified or intensified in areas subject to Green Belt and National Park controls. The key sub-regional variations are outlined in more depth as follows:

- Residential use is most strongly concentrated in the highly accessible *rural areas around the central conurbation*. These are areas characterised by historic patterns of dispersed settlement, where historic farmsteads form an important part of the housing stock of wealthy, residential ‘exurbs’ which are physically detached from the urban core, but functionally part of it. This is typically in association with a particular form of low density residential development, where sporadic dwellings are intermixed with grazing, limited hobby farming and equestrian and related uses (Figure 13). A relatively high proportion of residents participate in non-farming business, either as principals of farmstead-based limited companies or as directors of substantial businesses. Within these areas, farmsteads close to, but outside, settlements are particularly likely to play these roles. These patterns of use and value have intensified within the rigorous context provided by Green Belt policies.
- Residential use is also high at the *southern margin of Stratford-on-Avon and Wychavon Districts*. Despite its low economic mass, this area is favoured by high landscape quality and the availability of historic farmsteads in village settings. Director participation is high with significant commuting beyond the West Midlands.
- In *an area centred on the Malvern Hills AONB*, where moderate economic mass combines with high landscape quality and an inherited stock of smaller-scale dispersed farmsteads, resident participation in substantial business at director level is particularly high (over 36 in 100 households, see 4.2) and the proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use is the lowest of any in the West Midlands.
- The proportion of farmsteads in agricultural use is highest in the *western periphery* comprising much of *Herefordshire and Shropshire, particularly in the western fringes of Herefordshire towards the Black Mountains*. Fewer farmstead residents engage in substantial business as directors, reflecting the disadvantage of poor accessibility to economic centres for groups who need to maintain face-to-face contact. The rate of professional home-based activity in

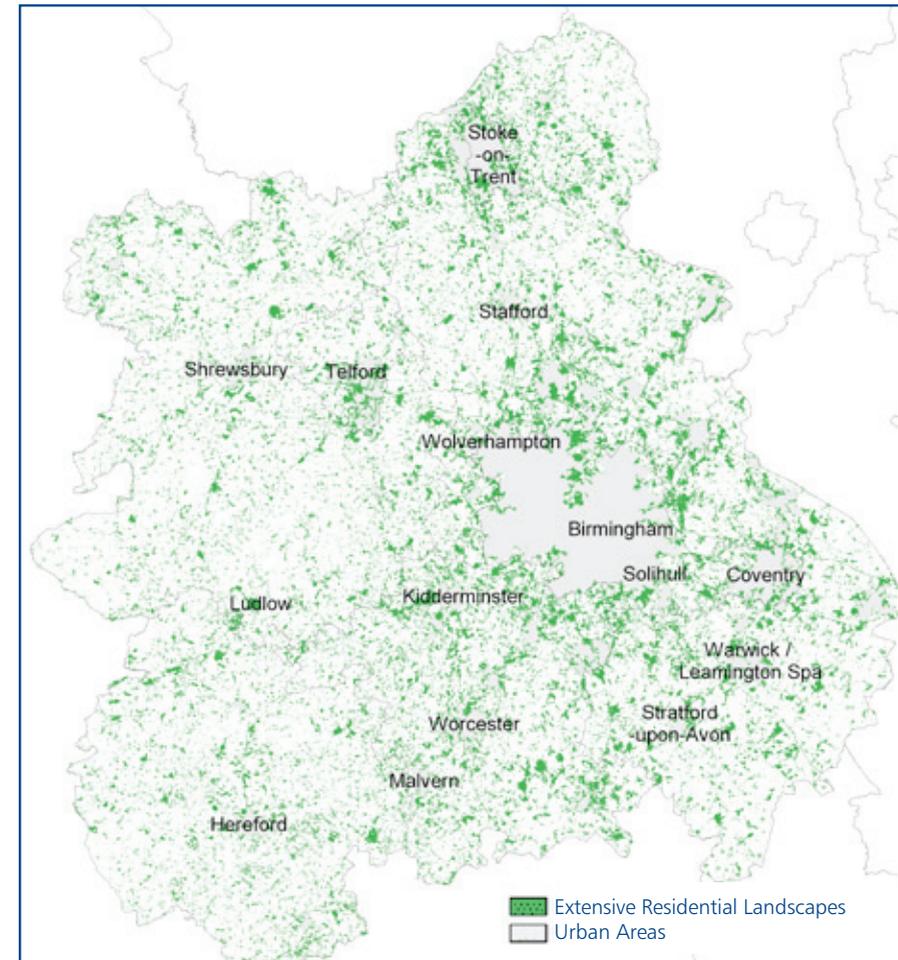


Figure 13 Extensive Residential Landscapes

Major urban areas are shown in grey, and the areas of green show concentrations of low-density residential areas. These are marked by dwellings intermixed with grazing, limited hobby farming and equestrian and related uses.

farmstead properties still exceeds that in other dwellings in the West Midlands, despite variable access to broadband. There is a higher tendency to on-farm diversification involving the creation of business space and tourist facilities in Herefordshire, responding to the inherited character of the large-scale farmsteads across much of the county. There is a markedly higher tendency to residential use, but relatively low in business participation, within village-based farmsteads centred on Craven Arms in the south of Shropshire.

- In *the hinterland of the North Staffordshire conurbation*, where economic mass and pressure for non-agricultural use has been much lower than around the central conurbation, there are two distinguishing sub-areas:
 - The first is very close to the conurbation and in the Churnet Valley where higher economic mass has encouraged a higher level of residential use (though participation of residents in business activity is relatively low).
 - The second is located within and around the Peak District where conversion to residential use has been markedly lower, and diversification on working farms has been higher due to a combination of its peripheral location, agri-environment schemes and policies within the National Park.

5 Policy and Land Use Implications

Historic farmsteads are assets which make a significant and highly varied contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of the West Midlands

Approximately 17,000 historic farmsteads have retained some or all of their working buildings from the late 19th century, around 30% of which have listed working buildings and houses. They are an integral part of the dynamic and ever-changing character of the landscapes within which they developed.

Approaches to future change, whether through spatial planning, place-shaping, economic developing and agricultural policy, can capitalise on the character of farmsteads and their landscapes inherited from the past, by considering:

1. differences in the density, location and contribution of farmsteads to landscape character and the local housing stock;
2. differences in the historic character and significance of farmsteads as a result of past change and traditions;
3. differences in their capacity for change, both in terms of whole sites and their landscape context and that of individual buildings.

Historic farmsteads are assets which, through agricultural and other new uses, have significant potential to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities away from market towns and other rural centres

Over 80% of historic farmsteads have remained as sites in different forms of active use, although with differing extents of survival. Two-thirds of farmsteads are no longer functionally dependent on their locality through agricultural use. Additional research has indicated that changing farming economies are leading to an accelerating demand for new working sheds whilst traditional buildings, where not in low key uses, are being considered as opportunities for diversifying farm businesses and in some cases disposal onto the property market.

The Project has shown that residential and economic use can be interlinked, and that ancillary service sector activity on historic farmsteads can be easily overlooked. Historic farmsteads are a key component in delivering a sustainable and diverse rural economy, comprising start-ups and 'high-end' business activity as well as farm-based diversification in new business sectors. These may utilise but are not dependent on broadband. However, the continuing development and investment in IT infrastructure has the potential to serve a range of uses including professional home-working. Such measures, however, also require support

by a positive spatial planning framework which reflects and responds to local circumstances and opportunities.

Towards the centre of the West Midlands historic farmsteads in accessible rural areas form an integral part of an entire functioning urban zone. They make a special contribution to accommodating both ancillary business activity and a business elite playing a key role in the 'urban' economy.

Towards the northern and western periphery of the West Midlands there are high numbers of historic farmsteads in continuing agricultural use. A high proportion of these are sited within areas of high amenity and landscape value with low productive capacity and prejudiced by low capital endowment. Evidence indicating the high numbers of farmsteads in poor repair (see 2.2) has been reinforced by a condition survey of a sample of those historic farmsteads mapped under this project in the Shropshire Hills AONB. The survey found that around 30% of farm buildings require long-term or urgent maintenance to prevent decline. The farm buildings were overwhelmingly in agricultural use, those in the worst condition being located at higher altitudes more vulnerable to weather extremes. This serves to emphasise that buildings in poor condition, if without a sustainable use or incentives for enhanced maintenance, will eventually be lost from the landscape.

This evidence base can be used to inform positive approaches to shaping the character and economy of places, which are tailored to the future conservation and use of historic farmsteads

For the overwhelming majority of sites across the West Midlands private investment and management offers the most effective long-term solution to maintaining historic farmsteads as assets in the landscape. To ensure that sustainable re-use and economic growth is achieved, change to historic farmsteads needs to be fully informed by a balanced appraisal of wider social, economic and environmental factors, this including an understanding of the significance of the asset and its landscape setting.

A challenge for spatial planning and economic development in rural areas is the formulation of policies and delivery programmes that achieve a balance between promoting economic and social vitality and the protection and enhancement of landscape character and local distinctiveness. This can be achieved by ensuring that policy and implementation are based on an understanding of the character, significance and capacity for adaptive reuse of historic farmsteads and their buildings. All end uses must be addressed, in order to facilitate their sustainable re-use. This informed approach can deliver Government objectives for the historic

environment, as set out in PPS5 (*Planning for the Historic Environment*), and for sustainable economic development as set out in PPS4 (*Planning for Sustainable Development*).

Tailored approaches can be developed by taking into account local variations in the location of farmsteads; their potential for continued agricultural use; the position they occupy in the local housing market and the potential economic benefits of farmsteads and their building stock as residential/live-work and business space; the extent to which they contribute to the overall housing stock; their potential for social housing, including in combination with farm businesses; and the character of places as a result of historical influences as well as recent settlement change. Consideration of the inherited character and sensitivity to change of the whole farmstead site can help develop a strategic and preliminary understanding of the capacity for change. Key issues including opportunities for adaptive use and small-scale development that capitalises on this character, and the conservation of significant buildings with varying capacities for change, can then be identified at the earliest stage in the planning process, including for pre-application discussion.

Environmental Stewardship and other grants for farmsteads in agricultural use can most effectively be focused on those peripheral areas of high amenity and landscape value to the west and north east of the region. These areas have high numbers of historic farmsteads in agricultural use coupled with low capital endowment, in addition to a high proportion of listed farm buildings in poor repair. A second focus should be on those traditional farmstead buildings in all areas, including those subject to high degrees of change, that are judged to be both the most significant and the least adaptable to new uses.

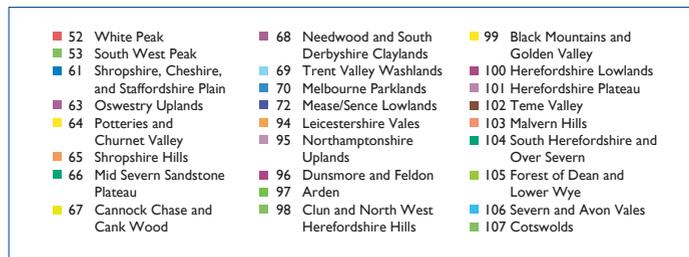
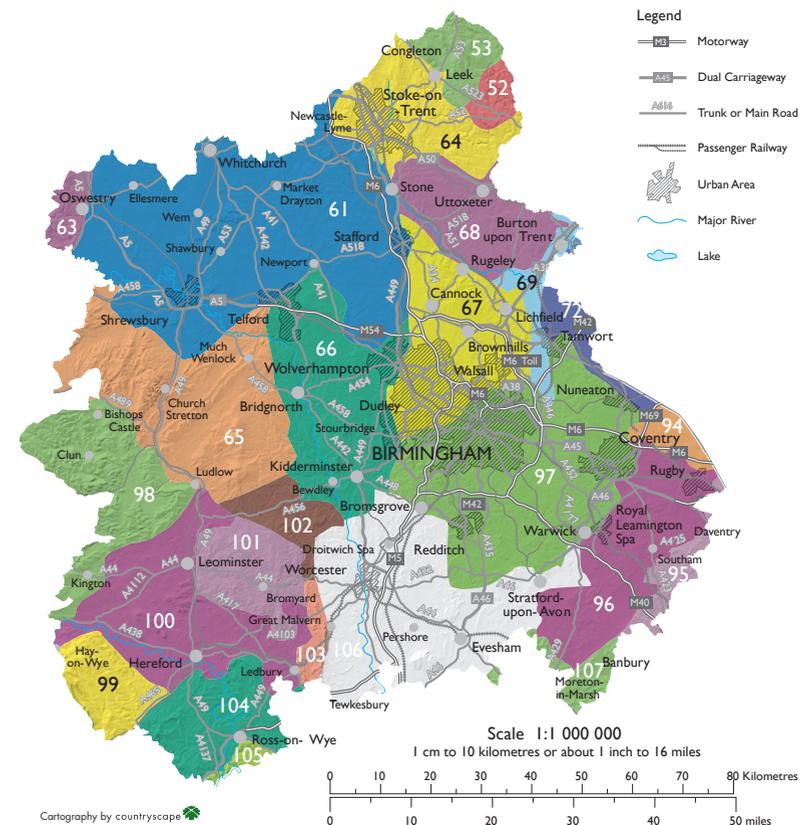


Figure 14 The West Midlands, showing the National Character Areas (NCAs) within and extending across the region. These NCAs combine a broad understanding of the historic environment with physical landscape character and the natural environment. They are used as a framework for analysing the trends and options for future change across landscapes and for informing the targetting of agri-environment schemes. Natural England is leading on updating the NCAs, including the identification of landscape objectives on their future protection, planning and management. The result of this Project will feed into this process for the West Midlands.



6 Recommendations and Next Steps

6.1 Recommendations

Historic farmsteads that are no longer in agricultural use provide opportunities for living space and businesses, and can occupy distinct niches in the property market. These uses can be in keeping with landscape character and local distinctiveness if appropriately informed. Policy and delivery programmes should therefore recognise the actual and potential role of historic farmsteads as an economic asset within a changing rural economy. Recognition should also be given to the role that a strong but adaptable conservation framework plays in enabling sustainable rural development, place-shaping, and a prosperous rural economy.

Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness

The evidence base developed through this Project has delivered an improved understanding of farmsteads as assets that contribute to and can help enhance the distinctive character and identity of rural areas. This offers the basis for an integrated and forward-looking approach which can be delivered through conserving and enhancing local distinctiveness, sustaining quality landscapes and heritage assets, and inspiring high quality and sustainable design in new development and adaptive reuse.

Rural Economy

Local policies and implementation plans should acknowledge that residential and economic use can be interlinked. Greater recognition should also be given to the potential that the reuse and small-scale development of farmsteads can make to supporting the rural economy. Residential use, linked to home-based entrepreneurial business, is a key component of this growth. Policies should hence be more fully informed by an understanding of the drivers for change. They should also recognise that new uses for historic farmsteads and their buildings:

- can make a significant contribution to rural economies and communities;
- can effectively work with the inherited character of whole farmstead sites, thus conserving their distinct character and identity as historic and economic assets; and
- provide a sound capital base for the maintenance and renewal of farmsteads, that extends beyond rigidly defined hierarchies of rural settlement and business.

Tailored responses

The evidence base generated by the Project can be used alongside tools and guidance developed by English Heritage to inform options for future change, spatial planning and site-based assessment, specifically:

- to improve the quality of place-shaping, planning and regeneration;
- minimise risks and delays to planning applications and listed building consent, by informing pre-application discussions and approaches to reuse and good design.

Across the West Midlands there is great diversity in farmstead character and use over short distances. The broad patterns that can be identified at the regional scale provide a context for understanding the key issues at a local scale. This variation requires a tailored response in policy and implementation to ensure that change is sustainable and that benefits for rural communities and economies are maximised.

In terms of the inherited patterns of farmstead and landscape character, there are strong differences between:

- the village-based south and east of the region, where a higher proportion of historic farmsteads (mostly out of agricultural use) are located in villages and possibly within designated conservation areas. Otherwise isolated farmsteads display a tendency to be large-scale, and include some very rare surviving early groups;
- those areas where the overwhelming majority of historic farmsteads are isolated or located in hamlets, and far fewer farmsteads are found within villages and less likely to have been protected within designated conservation areas.

In terms of economic context there are differences between:

- Areas where the participation of residents in business activity (whether farm based or as directors of substantial companies) is relatively high, with particularly high levels of engagement at farmsteads that are easily accessible to substantial urban areas. This is especially the case in the Greenbelt around the central conurbation, and in the Arden area south of Birmingham, which can be viewed as 'exurban' landscapes characterised by an inherited pattern of dispersed farmsteads. This is a settlement pattern distinct from those other settlements in this zone which mostly result from 19th and 20th century development.

- Accessible areas with high quality landscapes and high densities of small to medium-scale farmsteads that have fallen out of agricultural use, but have very high levels of business activity and directorships of significant companies. These areas extend southwards from east Shropshire (the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau) across the Teme Valley and the Malverns to the Forest of Dean.
- Areas of high economic mass but low business activity, principally the Potteries with Churnet Valley, where very high rates of survival of medium to small-scale farmsteads has allowed conversion of over 60% of farmsteads to residential use.
- Areas of low economic mass, principally the Shropshire Hills and the Clun Forest, where the proportion of farmsteads in residential use is high (this largely excluding the largest-scale farmsteads in agricultural use), but participation in business is low whether measured by farmstead-based companies or directorships of substantial firms.
- Large parts of Herefordshire, and to a lesser extent in the central Shropshire plain and Corve Dale within the Shropshire Hills, where the inherited pattern of large-scale farms implies a higher proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use than is typical of the West Midlands as a whole. There is also a higher tendency for diversification on working farms with numbers of holiday homes and workshops above the regional average.
- Areas where the survival rates of historic farmsteads (typically small-medium scale) are high and there are high numbers in farming as opposed to residential use and low participation in business. These comprise the peripheral areas of low economic mass to the north east (from the South West Peak towards Uttoxeter) and west (the uplands of the Oswestry Hills and Shropshire Hills, Clun Forest and the North West Herefordshire Hills and the Black Mountains). Agri-environment schemes have assisted in the maintenance of buildings in poor or declining condition. However, the future of these schemes is uncertain and future changes in the farming industry may release many more sites onto the property market. In the Peak District the numbers of holiday homes substantially exceed regional expectations.
- Differences between the AONBs which reflect the relationship between property prices, local economic conditions and infrastructure, and inherited character. Both Cannock Chase and the Malverns have similar patterns with regard to the mix of farmstead scales. Cannock Chase is an area of major amenity value in close proximity to 19th and 20th century industrial and residential development. The latter has stimulated the high incidence of commercial and industrial use, combined with residential use, shared with the Trent Valley to the east. The

Malverns has developed as a high-status residential area since the 19th century, and this is reflected in the high numbers of directorships.

6.2 Next Steps

The next steps for English Heritage include the following:

- Use the evidence to inform spatial planning and delivery in partnership with other regional and sub-regional stakeholders.
- Inform the targeting of Environmental Stewardship and other agri-environment schemes and land management programmes in liaison with Natural England and other partners, and the development of landscape objectives through the West Midlands Landscape Partnership.
- Disseminate the results of the work and promote the use of planning tools to key stakeholders.
- Share the results of the Project and lessons learned with stakeholders in other parts of the country.
- Work with local planning authorities and their historic environment teams on the preparation of Local Development Frameworks, including the policy approach for rural areas, its implementation, and delivery through development management. This may include the development of Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Work with local authorities in utilising the evidence base and planning tools provided by this project to inform the preparation of local economic assessments and regeneration strategies.
- Demonstrate how the Local Authority Historic Environment Records can be used as a result of this project, in accordance with PPS 5 (*Planning for the Historic Environment*).
- Develop a range of case studies demonstrating the use of the evidence base and the practical application of the planning tools for further dissemination.
- Work with local authorities and local groups in using the evidence base to inform community and area based planning initiatives, such as Parish Plans, Village Design Statements and the preparation of local lists.
- Identify areas for follow-on work.

7 Further Information

Together with this Report the key products of the Project are:

A Planning Tools Report: Tools for informing change at an area and site-based scale, in the form of an *Area Assessment Framework* for use in the development of planning guidance and land management, and a *Site Assessment Framework* for identifying key issues at the earliest possible stage when adaptive reuse or new build are being considered in the context of a historic farmstead.

Farmstead Character Statements: These comprise illustrated guidance in the form of:

- A *West Midlands Farmsteads Character Statement* which outlines the character of farmsteads across the West Midlands, summarising their historical development, landscape and settlement context, the key farmstead and building types, and use of materials. It is followed by summaries of the key findings of the overall project outlining the scale, survival and use of farmsteads for individual county and local authorities and the National Character Areas which fall within the West Midlands.
- *Area Farmsteads Character Statements* which deepen this guidance and help the reader identify the key characteristics for the 23 National Character Areas that fall within or astride the West Midlands.

An Evidence Base

- *County Reports* (including the central conurbation) which analyse the results of the farmsteads mapping held on Historic Environment Records, against the results where available of Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Landscape Characterisation.
- A *Technical Report* which provides a detailed statistical analysis of the patterns of farmstead use across the West Midlands, and their social and economic role.

SUMMARY REPORT

This report summarises the results and products of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project

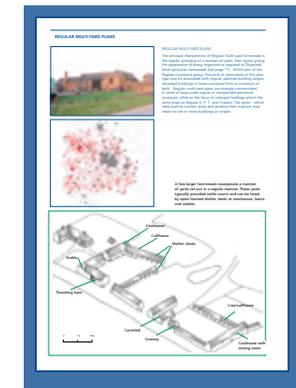
PLANNING TOOLS REPORT

GUIDANCE

West Midlands Farmsteads
Character Statement
Farmsteads Character Statements
for National Character Areas

EVIDENCE

Historic Farmsteads Mapping –
County Reports
Technical Report on
Farmstead Use and Role



Key Sources

Department of Town and Regional Planning, University of Sheffield (2007) *Current Socio-Economic Context of Historic Farmsteads in the High Weald AONB*. Report prepared for High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee. Sheffield: Department of Town and Regional Planning, University of Sheffield www.highweald.org/uploads/currentsocioeconomiccontexthistoricfarmsteads.pdf

Dwelly, T., Maguire K. and Truscott, M. (2007) *Under the Radar. Tracking and supporting rural home-based businesses*. A report prepared for the Commission for Rural Communities by the Live-Work network.

English Heritage, the Countryside Agency and the University of Gloucestershire (2006) *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Traditional Farm Buildings*. London: English Heritage and the Countryside Agency www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Living-Buildings-Long-Version.pdf

Gaskell, P. and Owen, S. (2005) *Historic Farm Buildings: Constructing the Evidence Base*. London: English Heritage and the Countryside Agency www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Historic_farm_buildings_full.pdf

Other work by English Heritage and its partners on historic farm buildings is summarised on the HELM website on www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings

The *Rural Evidence Base* for the West Midlands can be accessed online at:

www.advantagewm.co.uk/what-we-do/improving-places/ruralevidence-base.aspx

Advantage West Midlands commissioned a report on the West Midlands Rural Economy 2008. See:

http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/Images/AWM_114204%20Rural%20Economy%20Bro%20FINAL!_tcm9-16587.pdf

Design and Illustration

This report has been designed and set out by Chantal Freeman of Diva Arts.

The maps (Figures 3b, 4b, 5b, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13) are by Paul Brindley of the University of Sheffield. The pie charts (Figures) are by Chantal Freeman of Diva Arts.

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Figure 4b: Farmsteads and Settlement. 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.

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WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPES PROJECT

COUNTY SUMMARY REPORT FOR WARWICKSHIRE

Executive Summary

Solutions to finding a future sustainable use for historic farmsteads and their buildings require an integrated approach, considering their merits as heritage assets, their contribution to landscape character and their role in the changing structure of rural communities and economies. This report summarises the results of mapping the historic character and present use of historic farmsteads in Warwickshire. This is part of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscape Project (see www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads) which has concluded that:

- Historic farmsteads are assets which make a significant and highly varied contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of the West Midlands.
- Historic farmsteads are assets which, through agricultural and other new uses, have significant potential to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities away from market towns and other rural centres.
- This understanding can be used to inform positive approaches to shaping the character and economy of places, which are tailored to the future conservation and use of historic farmsteads.

The Project has produced:

- 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.
- *Illustrated Farmstead Character Statements* that outline the historic character and present day role of historic farmsteads for the whole region and the 26 National Character Areas that fall within or astride it. These bring together the results of all this work, combined with the results of extensive survey work and other available information.
- A *Farmstead Use Report* which provides a detailed statistical analysis of the patterns of farmstead use across the West Midlands, and their social and economic role.
- A *Planning Tools Report*. Tools for informing change at an area and site-based scale, in the form of an Area Assessment Framework for use in the development of planning guidance and land management, and a *Site Assessment Framework* for identifying key issues at the earliest possible stage when adaptive reuse or new build are being considered in the context of a historic farmstead.
- *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.

An important aspect of this project is the fact that all the partners have used a consistent methodology for mapping farmsteads so that the data can be combined to produce a regional picture of farmstead character. This report summarises the key findings of the Historic Farmstead Characterisation Report for Warwickshire, and the analysis of current use.

Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

Across the county the rates of survival are lower than the average across the West Midlands region, reflecting the continuation of a long historical process of farm amalgamation and rebuilding particularly in the Felden and Dunsmore area. 84% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%:

- 16% of farmsteads have retained all of their historic footprint/ working buildings (regional average 26%);
- 50% of farmsteads have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic footprint (regional average 40%);
- 18% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic footprint (regional average 16%).

Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day 75.5% do not include a listed building.

Landscape and Settlement Context

Across Warwickshire and Solihull the pattern of inherited landscape character has been mapped by the Warwickshire and Solihull Historic Landscape Character Assessment Project (HLC). The county report shows how the farmsteads data can be analysed in relationship to these patterns of landscape character area and type.

- 14% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 12%).
- 5% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%).

Warwickshire contains two very different landscape character zones, separated by the river Avon, with the Arden area characterised by dispersed settlement comprising variable but often high densities of isolated farmsteads and the area to the south of the Avon characterised by large villages with medium-low densities of isolated farmsteads – part of the central band of village England, where large villages working

large open fields had developed by the 11th century. The average density of farmsteads in the landscape is higher than in the landscapes of the eastern part of the county that underwent systematic reorganisation in the 18th and 19th century.

Historic Farmstead Character

The broad farmstead plan types in the West Midlands divide into:

- Courtyard plans where the working buildings are arranged around a yard (85.3%, 75% in Warwickshire)
- Dispersed plans where there is no focal yard area (6.7%, 1.5% in Warwickshire)
- Small-scale farmsteads where the house and working buildings are often attached, and which can also comprise smallholdings (11.7%, 4.8% in Warwickshire).

Small scale farmsteads are low in number (6%, against a regional average of 21%). They are concentrated in the Arden area, and include some rare surviving examples of 18th century and earlier complexes that developed besides common land. In contrast large to very-large scale farmsteads (74% within Warwickshire, against a regional average of 53%).are concentrated in the reorganised broad valleys and estatelands of southern Arden, and in the Avon valley and in the village-dominated landscapes to the south and east. Small to medium-scale farmsteads (20%, against a regional average of 24%) are concentrated in the areas where the pastoral element of agriculture is more dominant.

Significant clusters of single field barns are scattered around major urban centres including for example Solihull and Rugby that witnessed significant population growth in the 19th century. Elsewhere, field barns occur where farms remained within villages. These include some significant early examples. Outfarms tend to be found in areas of large scale late regular enclosure often driven by large estates.

Current Use

- While not urbanised over the last 200 years to the extent of the conurbation, easy access to it has implied higher economic mass and higher capital endowment than any of the other counties in the region (other than the conurbation).
- The likelihood that a farmstead will remain in agricultural use is rather lower than that typical of the region as a whole (and similar to that characteristic of the conurbation).
- The propensity to participate in business – whether as principal of a farm based limited company or as a director of a substantial business - exceeds that typical for the region as a whole.
- Historic farmsteads – particularly in the Arden area - form an important part of the dwelling stock of wealthy residential exurbs, in association with a particular form of low density residential development - where sporadic dwellings are intermixed with grazing, limited hobby farming and equestrian and related uses. There is a strong tendency for residents to participate in non-farming business (as principals of farmstead based limited companies or as directors of substantial business), farmsteads close to but outside villages showing these characteristics to a particularly high degree. These patterns of use and value have intensified within the context afforded by Green Belt protection.
- Residential use is particularly likely along the Avon valley towards and around Stratford, linked to high director participation - with significant commuting beyond the Regional boundary.

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Report by Benjamin Morton of Warwickshire County Council, and Jeremy Lake of English Heritage. August 2010. .

1 THE CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project has mapped and interpreted the locations and characteristics of historic farmsteads, and their current use. Historic farmsteads, where the farmhouse and the working buildings are located, are integral to the rural landscape, its communities and economy. They display an immense diversity in their type, scale, form and use of materials, as well as differences in their survival as traditional groups. They developed in close relationship to their surrounding farmland, and as a result they make a varied contribution to the character of the landscape and to local distinctiveness.

Their future, and in particular that of the traditional farm buildings is increasingly dependent on finding a use for which they were not originally intended. Through understanding the character, condition and present day role of historic farmsteads and their traditional working buildings, policy and delivery programmes can respond appropriately in supporting their sustainable use, conserving landscape character and realising economic benefits. This informed approach responds to the structural changes in the farming industry which have hastened the redundancy of traditional farm buildings.

Research at a national level (www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings) has examined the drivers for change and the effectiveness of policy at national and international levels. This has emphasised the need to develop an evidence base, and for future strategies and approaches towards the re-use of historic farmsteads and their buildings to be based upon an understanding of their sensitivity to and potential for change.

The mapping and interpretation of historic farmsteads across the West Midlands offers for the first time a comprehensive framework for informing change. The regional context it provides will help decision-makers to evaluate what the future uses of farmsteads should be and how they can be achieved in ways which are based on an understanding of variations in their character and significance.

2 HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN WARWICKSHIRE

The mapping of farmsteads across the county of Warwickshire including Solihull recorded 3037 farmsteads and 484 outfarms. The resulting data has been interpreted against the Warwickshire Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC).

Section 6 of the Warwickshire *Historic Farmstead Characterisation Report* displays the results of this mapping, the main findings of which are summarised below. The Annexes to this county summary display the area variations for the county.

2.1 Landscape and Settlement Context

The Project has contributed to an understanding of how the present character of the rural landscape results from past land use and development. The historic character of the present-day landscape is mapped across the West Midlands through Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), a national initiative funded by English Heritage and undertaken by local authorities. This provides a spatial framework to help understand how distinctive elements in the fabric of the landscape, such as the form and scale of fields, have been formed as a result of past patterns of historic settlement and land use.

In Warwickshire most farmsteads are isolated:

- 16% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 12%).
- 5% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%).

Warwickshire contains two very different landscape character zones, separated by the river Avon:

- The area along and to the south of the Avon is characterised by large villages with medium-low densities of isolated farmsteads set within landscapes that underwent systematic reorganisation in the 18th and 19th century. This is part of the central band of village England, where large villages working large open fields had developed by the 11th century. Most isolated farmsteads result from a long process of movement out of the villages into land enclosed from former open fields and common land. This process

commenced in the 15th century, but in some areas isolated farmsteads were not established until parliamentary enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries. The number of mapped farmsteads identified within villages and urban contexts (around 25%) is an underestimate due to the difficulty of identifying those small and middling-sized farmsteads that remained within villages by the late 19th century.

- In contrast the Arden area falls within a western zone of dispersed settlement in England, which extends into Wales. Variable but often high densities of isolated farmsteads that developed within a landscape of scattered farms and fields with many patches of woodland and common waste. Only 8% of farmsteads have been identified within villages, which often developed as trading and then (in the 19th century) residential centres.

2.2 Historic Farmstead Character

Variations in the scale and arrangement of buildings within farmsteads reflect farm size, farming practice and the historic function of farmsteads, particularly to store and process harvested crops and shelter and manage animals. These result in different forms and scales of farmsteads which have been mapped and interpreted for the county and the West Midlands:

- **Courtyard plans** where the working buildings are arranged around a yard (82.3% for Warwickshire and 81% of all farmsteads recorded across the West Midlands) fall into two broad categories of loose courtyard plans where the buildings are detached and loosely arranged and regular courtyard plans where the buildings are all or mostly interlinked and formally arranged.
- On **dispersed plans** (8.5% of the total for Warwickshire and 7% for the West Midlands) there is no focal yard area and the working buildings are dispersed within the boundary of the steading. These are concentrated in pastoral landscapes including areas close to common land for holding stock.
- The **smallest-scale farmsteads**, where the house and working buildings are often attached, generally represent the smallest farmsteads recorded in the Region and in Warwickshire are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads. They comprise 16.1 % of farmsteads in Warwickshire and 12% of farmsteads in the West Midlands.

Analysis of the farmsteads mapping for Warwickshire shows that:

- Very-small scale farmsteads are low in number (6.4%, against a regional average of 21.2%). They are concentrated in the Arden area, and include some rare surviving examples of 18th century and earlier complexes that developed besides common land.

- There are very strong patterns in the distribution of large to very-large scale farmsteads within Warwickshire (74%, against a regional average of 53%). Very large plan farmsteads including regular courtyard E-plan, multi-yard and full regular courtyards are concentrated in the reorganised broad valleys and estatelands of southern Arden, and in the Avon valley and in the village-dominated landscapes to the south and east. This reflects a significant level of re-organisation and rebuilding of farmsteads in the 19th century creating very large farm complexes associated with the fattening of yard and stall-fed cattle.
- Small to medium-scale farmsteads (19.6%, against a regional average of 24.2%) are concentrated in the areas where the pastoral element of agriculture is more dominant. For example, Dunsmore developed as an area of pastoral farming and displays much higher numbers than surrounding areas, reflected also in the almost complete absence of large estates in the area and the fragmented nature of lordship which may have suppressed the growth of larger farms.

Smallholdings were very rare by the late 19th century and concentrated on the fringes of surviving common land. The smallest-scale farmsteads, including very rare surviving example of timber-framed houses and attached farm buildings, are concentrated in these areas.

There are also outfarms and field barns sited away from the main steading:

- Significant clusters of single field barns are scattered around major urban centres including for example Solihull and Rugby that witnessed significant population growth in the 19th century. These relate to the dispersal of small holdings relating to the horticultural industries around these towns.
- Outfarms tend to be found in areas of large-scale 19th century regular enclosure, often driven by large estates.
- Field barns not associated with urban centres tend to be found in parishes where farms remained within villages and worked farmland subject to piecemeal enclosure. These include some significant early examples.

These differences are reflected in successive local movements of rebuilding and investment in farmhouses and working buildings, with 16th century and earlier buildings being concentrated in the Arden. The distribution of 17th century buildings shifts to the Avon Vale, with 18th century buildings concentrated in the limestone uplands and newly-enclosed farmland to the south and east. In addition, extensive survey undertaken for this project has also revealed that there are some exceptionally rare surviving examples of farmstead groups, concentrated in the core of the Arden and the Avon Vale, which retain ranges of timber-framed buildings including barns and animal housing. There are some rare 18th century and earlier examples of isolated field barns.

2.3 Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

Over the 20th century working farms have required new infrastructure, particularly important in the post-1950 period being the construction of industrial sheds built to standardised forms. The sheds of this type have been mapped, and exceed the total now remaining in agricultural use – a reflection of the continuing rate of farm amalgamation.

Comparison of late 19th century and current maps 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. 84% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%. However, across the county the rates of survival are lower than the average across the West Midlands region, reflecting the continuation of a long historical Across Warwickshire 9% of farmsteads have been lost (exceeding the regional average of 10%), these being concentrated in areas of 20th century settlement expansion for example areas within Solihull that have witnessed urban growth as part of the West Midlands conurbation. There are strong differences between:

- the Arden, with high rates of loss (21%) around expanding towns, but over 56% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint;
- Dunsmore and Feldon, with some loss (10%) around towns and other settlements, but 73% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

On 3.5% of recorded sites the house survives but the working buildings have been demolished (below the regional average of 6%), and all the buildings on 2% of sites (regional average of 2%) have been demolished and completely rebuilt.

2.4 Assessing Significance

This understanding of the patterns of inherited character and change, and the products of this project (see 5, Further Information, below) can be used to inform future change, and determine the significance of farmsteads and their potential for enhancement through sustainable development. Significant farmsteads will have one or more of the following:

1. historic groups that contribute to the landscapes and settlements within which they developed;
2. legible historic groups, where the historic buildings can be seen and appreciated in relationship to each other and the yards and other open spaces within and around the farmstead;
3. historic buildings with little minimal change to their traditional form, or in some cases their importance as estate or industrial architecture;
4. locally characteristic building materials;

5. heritage assets, whether the farmstead or any buildings or archaeological sites within it is included on a local list, contributes to a conservation area or is a designated national asset (a listed building or scheduled ancient monument). Less than 25% of farmstead sites in Warwickshire have listed buildings, the majority of these being houses rather than working buildings.

3 THE USE OF HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN WARWICKSHIRE

Professor Peter Bibby and Paul Brindley of the Department for Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield have analysed the farmsteads mapping data collected, matched against postal and business information, to reveal the present social and economic role of historic farmsteads. This is fully reported on in the *Farmstead Use Report* cited above and summarised in Part 4 of The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: *Summary Report*.

This work has shown how, through continued agricultural and new uses, farmsteads have significant potential to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities away from market towns and other rural centres:

- 31% of historic farmsteads remain in agricultural use with minimal diversification.
- The incidence of farmsteads providing industrial, commercial or retail facilities is very small (5%). 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. 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*.

In Warwickshire:

- While not urbanised over the last 200 years to the extent of the conurbation, easy access to it has implied higher economic mass and higher capital endowment than any of the other counties in the region (other than the conurbation).
- The likelihood that a farmstead will remain in agricultural use is rather lower than that typical of the region as a whole (and similar to that characteristic of the conurbation).
- The propensity to participate in business – whether as principal of a farm based limited company or as a director of a substantial business, exceeds that typical for the region as a whole..
- Historic farmsteads – particularly in the Arden area - form an important part of the dwelling

stock of wealthy residential exurbs, in association with a particular form of low density residential development - where sporadic dwellings are intermixed with grazing, limited hobby farming and equestrian and related uses. There is a strong tendency for residents to participate in non-farming business (as principals of farmstead based limited companies or as directors of substantial business), farmsteads close to but outside villages showing these characteristics to a particularly high degree. These patterns of use and value have intensified within the context afforded by Green Belt protection.

- Residential use is particularly likely along the Avon valley towards and around Stratford, linked to high director participation - with significant commuting beyond the regional boundary.

These figures update, deepen and complement those available for listed working buildings with visible structural failure and evidence of adaptive reuse (see Annexes 2 and 3). These are based on comparison of 1980s with 1999-2006 photographs, from the Photo Image Survey (University of Gloucestershire for English Heritage, 2009). In the West Midlands 27% of listed working farm buildings have evidence for residential reuse (national level 30%), 3% other (national 4%) and 70% (national 66%) have no other evidence for other use. 18.9% have evidence for structural failure (national 8.9%). In Warwickshire a high proportion of listed working buildings are in residential use: 38.3% of listed working buildings in Stratford On Avon district are in non-agricultural use (31.2% residential) and 41.2% in Solihull (35.3% residential), 20% in Rugby (same for residential).

- Strategic policy development – The study highlights the dispersed settlement pattern that is the inherited characteristic of the landscape of Arden, now an exurban landscape but where strategic policies need to address maintaining this inherited characteristic in future growth.
- The constraints and pressures on village based farms have resulted in a relatively low number of sheds in areas where farms remained in villages. With the increasing infilling of village historic cores and expansion outwards the long term viability of village based farms must be in doubt.
- Outfarms and field barns are a highly vulnerable element of the rural landscape. They have been subject to high rates of loss (70% of all recorded examples have been lost or demolished), and as their sensitivity to other forms of use is very high (due to their generally limited access and prominence in the landscape). In Warwickshire, there are some rare 18th century and earlier examples of isolated field barns.

Further recommendations are made in the Farmsteads Characterisation Report for Warwickshire.

4 KEY ISSUES FOR WARWICKSHIRE

Policy and Land Use Implications for the West Midlands as a whole, and recommendations and next steps for English Heritage to develop with its partners, are outlined in *The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: Summary Report*.

In addition to these the following issues are of particular relevance to Warwickshire:

- Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day 2253 or 74% do not include a listed building. In view of their predominant 19th century date are not likely to meet current criteria for listing. Designation mainly focuses on the main farmhouse. Only 15% of farmsteads include a working building that is listed. This study shows that there are some areas – notably Arden, but also areas where farmsteads developed in tandem with enclosure before the later 18th century – where it is most likely that early buildings survive. It is clear that there remain some remarkably well-preserved farmstead groups with working buildings of 18th century and earlier date, particularly in the Avon valley and in Arden.

5 FURTHER INFORMATION ON PROJECT REPORTS

West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project Summary Report

This summarises the overall results of the Project. It introduces the background to the project, and the national and economic context. The historic character of farmsteads is then summarised, followed by an analysis of the patterns of use and the policy and land use implications. Recommendations and next steps for further work are then outlined.

Farmstead Character Statements: These comprise illustrated guidance in the form of:

- A *Regional Statement* which outlines the character of farmsteads across the West Midlands, summarising their historical development, landscape and settlement context and the key farmstead and building types.
- *Character Area Statements* which deepen this guidance and help the reader identify the key characteristics for the National Character Areas that fall within or astride the West Midlands.

A Planning Tools Report: Tools for informing change at an area and site-based scale, in the form of an Area Assessment Framework for use in the development of planning guidance and land management, and a *Site Assessment Framework* for identifying key issues at the earliest possible stage when adaptive reuse or new build are being considered in the context of a historic farmstead.

A Farmstead Use Report which provides a detailed statistical analysis of the patterns of farmstead use across the West Midlands, and their social and economic role.

County Reports (including the Central Conurbation) which firstly comprise Summary Reports that draw together key findings relating to the scale, survival and use of farmsteads for individual county and local authorities, and the relevant National Character Areas. These provide links to detailed *Farmsteads Characterisation Reports* that present a detailed analysis of the results of the farmsteads mapping held on each relevant Historic Environment Record.

The full Farmsteads Characterisation Report for Warwickshire is available for download from www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hfc.



In Warwickshire the oldest recorded farmstead buildings (of the 17th century or earlier) are concentrated in the anciently-enclosed landscapes of the Arden and in the rich farming lands of the Avon where large farmsteads developed on the edge of villages or in close proximity to deserted settlements (© Bob Edwards, Forum Heritage Services).



Large-scale farmsteads, most commonly developed in a regular fashion around yards, are a feature of the much of the county, especially in the landscapes away from the Arden where large farms within or away from villages as the land was enclosed and reorganised from at least the 16th century (© English Heritage).

The plan overleaf shows the broad categories of farmstead types that have been mapped across the county and the West Midlands. The illustrated Farmstead Character Statements for the region and the 26 National Character Areas within and adjoining it provide fuller guidance on their landscape and settlement context, and the range of farmstead and building types that are likely to be encountered.

Courtyard plan farmsteads subdivide into:

a-d) Loose Courtyard farmsteads which have buildings loosely arranged around one (a) or more sides of a yard. Those with buildings to one side of the yard are typically the smallest in scale.

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

- e) L-plan, typically small-medium in scale, where additional buildings (if present) are typically small in scale
- f) U-shaped plans 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
- i) Full Regular courtyard farmsteads, typically very large in scale, where the buildings are arranged around all four sides of the yard
- j) Multi-Yard plans 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.

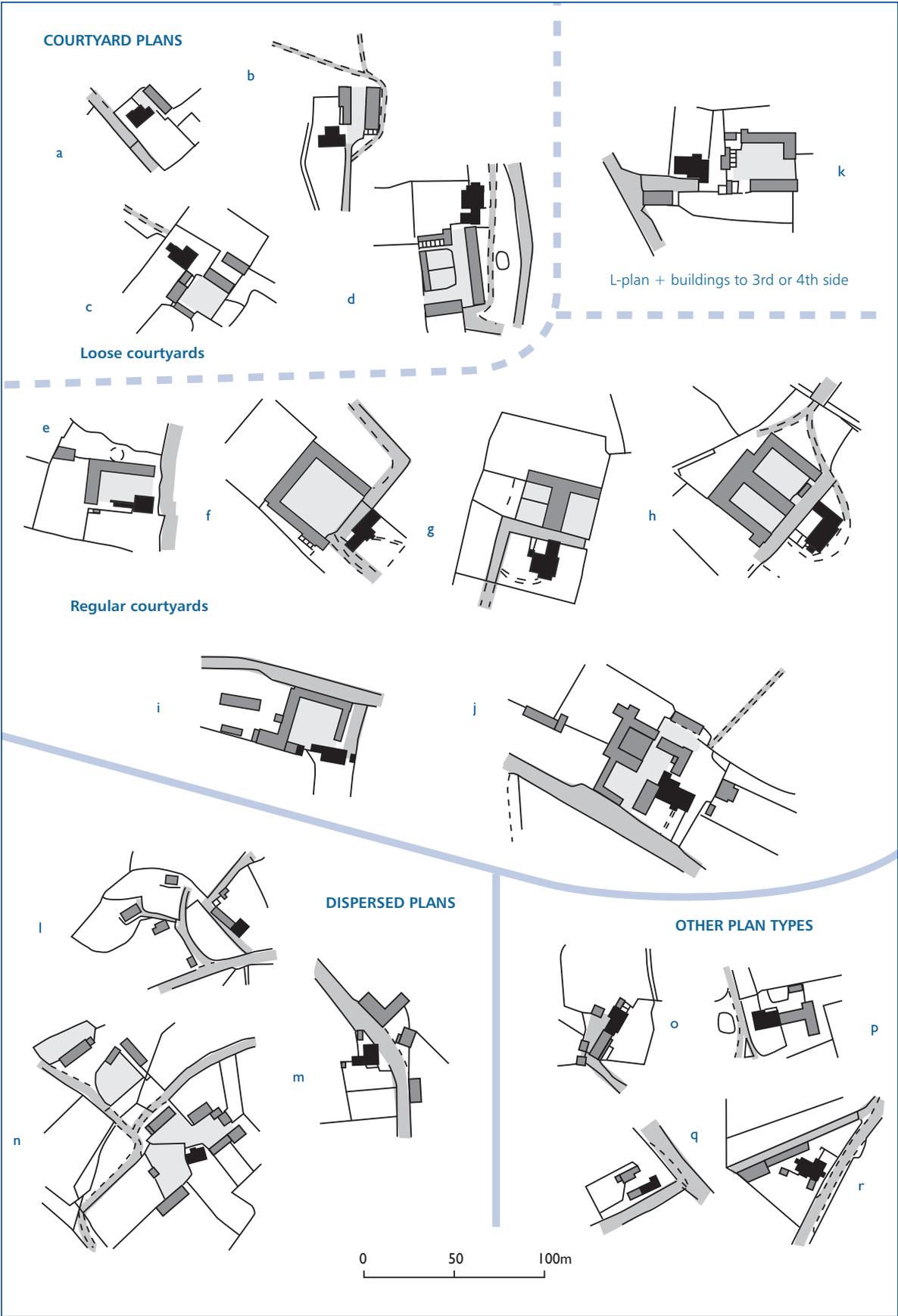
k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides which are generally large to very large in scale.

Dispersed plans subdivide into:

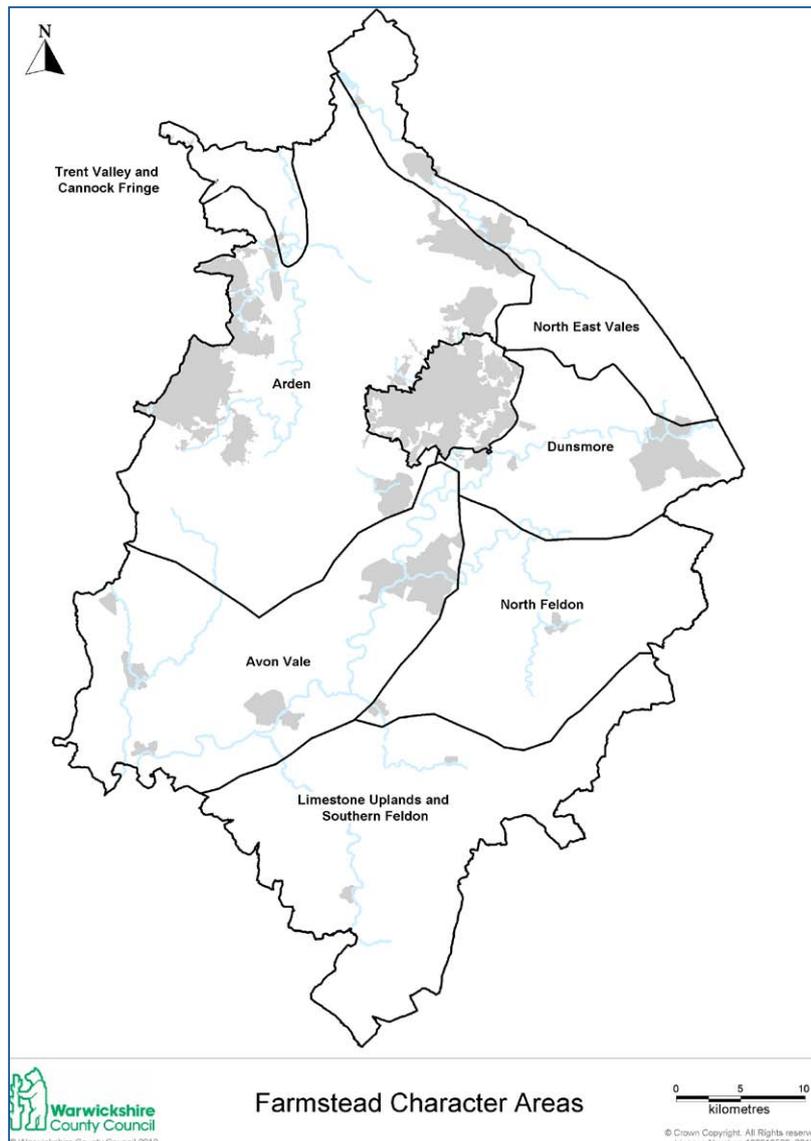
- l) Dispersed clusters where the working buildings are set within the boundary of the steading, and typically the smallest in scale in this category.
- m) Dispersed driftways which are dominated by the routeways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another. These are mostly small-medium in scale.
- n) Dispersed multi-yards 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 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.
- q) Parallel plans 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) Row plans, often medium as well as small in scale, where the working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row.



Annexe 1 Farmstead Character Areas for Warwickshire



The report has analysed the patterns of farmsteads against the National Character Areas and Historic Landscape Characterisation. These have highlighted convergences as well as research questions and some strong differences within the NCAs. It is clear, within Warwickshire that broad distinctions can be made between key areas of the county as outlined below.

Trent Valley and Cannock Fringe

- Medium-large scale farmsteads largely result from a rebuilding in brick in the 19th century, in landscapes of planned enclosure. Some were built for large estates. There are some small-scale farmsteads that remain, usually suited to the sides of former common land.

North East Vales

- Farmsteads in these vales, which extend into the East Midlands, were sited within villages until the enclosure of the medieval open fields which extended over most of the farmland.
- There are low densities of large-scale farmsteads, largely rebuilt in brick with some rare survival of timber frame, which developed within landscapes of planned and piecemeal enclosure.

Arden

- The Arden has higher densities of isolated farmsteads than other parts of the county, many of which were established as a result of woodland clearance by the 14th century. Parks were numerous in this area, as also were country houses and their estates. Parks were most numerous in Arden where there was ample waste

for emparkment leaving sufficient pasture for the domestic stock of the peasantry.

- The area has a much higher survival of 17th century and earlier farmhouses and working buildings, reflecting the development of a wealthy 'yeoman' class of freeholder that prospered as a result of its mixed farming economy with a heavy emphasis on beef production.
- The area has an above-average survival of small-scale farmsteads. There were also many areas of common and heath, on the fringes of which were craftsmen and landless labourers.
- Larger-scale farmsteads and fields developed in some parts of the area over the 19th century, and the late 19th /20th centuries has seen the development of core settlements and many farmsteads no longer engaged in agriculture have fallen into residential use.

Dunsmore

- Village-based farmsteads worked a diversity of farmland and heath on the highest parts of the Dunsmore Plateau.
- Most farmsteads result from the piecemeal and planned enclosure of common fields and heathland to the centre, the latter in the 18th and 19th centuries. Villages retain some early timber frame, often hidden by later rebuilding, and isolated farmsteads (typically medium-large in scale) most date from 19th century building in brick.

Avon Valley

- The agricultural prosperity of this area is evidenced by the high numbers of 17th century and earlier timber-framed houses that survive (and have the potential to survive beneath later recladding) within villages.
- Larger farmsteads developed within or on the edge of villages as they contracted and changed in the 15th-17th centuries, and more rarely in areas of early enclosure from open fields and common land. There are some very intact early groups with timber-framed barns and animal housing, some use of lias limestone and large brick-built steadings also developed within areas of planned and piecemeal enclosure where large farms developed.

Northern Felden

- This area has higher than average densities of medium-large scale farmsteads, which date from the enclosure of the open fields which extended across most of the landscape in the medieval period. From

the 15th century this area developed as a sheep-corn farming economy.

- Farmsteads display a range of scales and materials – 19th century brick, late 17th and 18th century lias limestone and earlier timber frame.
- Much of this enclosure retains its irregular or piecemeal form, implying that farm size was relatively stable and there was less need to comprehensively reorganise fields and farmsteads as larger-scale planned units. However, pre-19th century working buildings appear to be very rare.

Limestone Uplands and Southern Feldon

- The rebuilding of village-based farmsteads appears to have commenced earlier than in the Felden to the north, with many village-based farmhouses rebuilt in timber frame and limestone (lias and ironstone) from the late 16th century.
- Working farms appear to have remained village-based until later than in the Felden to the north, and large-scale isolated farmsteads developed within landscapes that were newly enclosed or reorganised into planned fields in the later 18th and 19th centuries. Pre-19th century working buildings appear to be very rare.

Annexe 2 District Summaries

The county of Warwickshire is a two tier authority area with Warwickshire County Council working in partnership with all the local planning authorities at the lower district level. In addition to these the mapping of farmsteads has covered the wider sub-region including Solihull and Coventry made up from the unitary authorities of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Coventry City Council. There is not enough data for generalisations on current use for Coventry, Nuneaton and Bedworth.

North Warwickshire

- Medium-low rates of survival with 82.9% of historic farmstead (mostly large-scale) sites retaining some working buildings (62.3% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).
- The mix of current uses of historic farmsteads in this district differs little from the regional expectation.

Rugby

- Medium-low rates of survival with 67.4% of historic farmstead sites (medium-large in scale) retaining some working buildings (51.0% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).
- The pattern of use of historic farmsteads is similar to regional expectations although a lower proportion are in residential use and a higher proportion are in agricultural use
- Residents hold 44 directorships for every 100 historic farmsteads.

Solihull

- 92% of historic farmstead sites (mostly small-medium in scale) retaining some working buildings (70.4% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).

Stratford-on-Avon

- 11% of sites have been lost, but otherwise medium-high rates of survival with 90.1% of historic farmstead sites (medium-large in scale) retaining some working buildings (71.1% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).
- The pattern of current use of farmsteads mirrors that found across the region with a slight tendency towards business use ancillary to residential and relatively little on-farm diversification
- Residents hold 42 directorships for every 100 historic farmsteads.

Warwick

- 11% loss of historic farmstead sites
- Medium rates of survival with 82.5% of historic farmstead sites (mostly medium to large in scale) retaining some working buildings (64.1% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint)
- Current use of historic farmsteads within the district closely mirrors regional expectations,
- Residents hold 49 directorships for every 100 historic farmsteads.

Annexe 3 National Character Area Summaries

The National Character Areas (NCAs) combine a broad understanding of the historic environment with physical landscape character and the natural environment. They are used as a framework for analysing the trends and options for future change across landscapes and for informing the targetting of agri-environment schemes. Natural England is leading on updating the NCAs, including the identification of landscape objectives on their future protection, planning and management. The result of this Project will feed into this process for the West Midlands.

Included under the Survival heading are percentages of listed working farm buildings with visible structural failure and evidence of adaptive reuse. These are based on comparison of 1980s with 1999-2006 photographs, from the Photo Image Survey (University of Gloucestershire for English Heritage, 2009). In the West Midlands 27% of listed working farm buildings have evidence for residential reuse (national level 30%), 3% other (national 4%) and 70% (national 66%) have no other evidence for other use. 18.9% have evidence for structural failure (national 8.9%).

The Farmsteads Character Statements for the NCAs in this county cover:

- 69 Trent Valley Washlands
- 70 Melbourne Parklands
- 72 Mease/Sence Lowlands
- 94 Leicestershire Vales
- 95 Northamptonshire Uplands
- 96 Dunsmore and Feldon
- 97 Arden
- 106 Severn and Avon Vales
- 107 Cotswolds



69 Trent Valley Washlands

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with 21.4% of farmsteads in villages and 5.7% in hamlets. Urban development has subsumed many small settlements.
- Low density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Large to very large-scale farmsteads predominant (34 and 29.6%), with smaller-scale farmsteads concentrated in settlements.

Survival

- Low rates of survival – 18% loss, 7% have lost all their working buildings but 57% retain more than half of their historic footprint.
- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 40-50% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- High economic mass relates to a low proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (24%) but with high levels of farm diversification (with creation of office and retail facilities exceeding expectations). More than 70% of farmsteads have been converted to residential use, residents having high participation in small business (11% of farmsteads are company registered offices) but low participation in substantial firms at director level (< 10 directorships per hundred households).

70 Melbourne Parklands

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with (in Warwickshire) 16.7% of farmsteads in villages and 50% in hamlets.
- Very low density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Large-scale farmsteads (66%) predominant, the smaller-scale farmsteads concentrated in settlements.

Survival

- Low rates of survival, in part due to loss (50%) around settlements and to removal of working buildings (house only surviving in 16% of cases),

with 16% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 0.0-5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and above 50% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Sample too small for meaningful generalisations about farmstead use.

72 Mease/Sence Lowlands

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with 19.2% of farmsteads in villages and 3.8% in hamlets.
- Low density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Large to very large-scale farmsteads (37.9 and 26.9%) of farmsteads predominant, the smaller scale farmsteads concentrated in the villages

Survival

- Medium rates of survival outside villages in Warwickshire, with 52% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 0.0-0.5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- A relatively small proportion of farmsteads remain in agricultural use, two-thirds being used for dwellings but relatively high participation in non agricultural farm based business (10% of farmsteads are company registered offices).

94 Leicestershire Vales

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with (in Warwickshire) 15.4% of farmsteads in villages.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Large(49.6%) and very large scale farmsteads (34.1%) predominant, the small-scale concentrated in the villages.

Survival

- Medium-high rates of survival outside villages in Warwickshire, with 69% of historic farmsteads retain more than half of their historic footprint.
- 0.0-0.5 % of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and % with visible adaptive reuse.

95 Northamptonshire Uplands

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with (in Warwickshire) 34.8% of farmsteads in villages and 2.2% in hamlets.
- Low density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Predominant pattern of large (44.4%) to very large-scale (33.3%) farmsteads, with smaller-scale farmsteads concentrated in and around the villages.

Survival

- High rates of survival in Warwickshire, with 66% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 0.5-5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- A relatively high proportion of farmsteads in this NCA remain in agricultural use (37%), although farmstead diversification has occurred to a higher degree than is typical of the Region (with creation of retail and workshop facilities exceeding expectations) and with higher proportions of residents participating in business either farmstead-based or as directors of substantial companies (42 directorships per hundred farmsteads).

96 Dunsmore and Feldon

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with 22% of farmsteads in villages and 1.8% in hamlets.
- Medium-low density of farmsteads in the landscape, with higher densities in the Dunsmore area to north.
- Large (45.9%) and very large scale (29.4%) farmsteads predominant, with large-scale farmsteads concentrated in the Dunsmore area.

Survival

- Medium rate of survival – some loss (10%) around towns and other settlements, but 73% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 15-20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- This area is characterized by the low proportion of its farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (36%), by the relatively high proportion of farmsteads where offices and workshops have been created and by the high participation of farmstead residents as directors of substantial companies (52 directorships per hundred farmsteads).

97 Arden

Character

- High to very high levels of dispersed settlement, with 12.4% of farmsteads in hamlets and 8.6% in villages.
- Medium-high density of farmsteads in the landscape, lessening in the areas from the Avon Valley to Coventry to the south.
- Large-scale farmsteads (38.2%) predominant with low numbers of very small-scale (11.7%) and small to medium (25.6%) and very large-scale (19.8%) farmsteads reflecting a strong degree of local variation in farm and field size.

Survival

- Medium rate of survival – high rates of loss (21%) around expanding towns, but over 56% of historic

farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 40-50% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- High economic mass relates to a low proportion of farmsteads in agricultural use (26%) with two-thirds of farmsteads in residential use with high participation in small business (7% of farmsteads are company registered offices) and a high participation in substantial firms at director level (more than 40 directorships per hundred households) and a relatively high proportion of farmsteads in non residential use outside of agriculture (7%).

106 Severn and Avon Vales

Character

- Contrasting area with high to very high densities of dispersed settlement to west and north, and strongly nucleated settlement to south east.
- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with 23.2% of farmsteads in villages and 13.8% in hamlets.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, in patches of high density to west of Severn and to north.
- Small to medium-scale (27.4%) and larger-scale (33.9%) farmsteads predominant, interspersed significant numbers of very small (16%) and very large-scale (20.8%) farmsteads.

Survival

- Medium rates of survival, with 64% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Although the proportion of farmsteads converted to residential use (66%) is little higher than the regional average, participation of residents in business activity (whether farm based or as directors of substantial companies) is relatively high - with particularly high levels of engagement at farmsteads easily accessible to substantial urban areas.

107 Cotswolds

Character

- Very strong pattern of nucleated settlement within Warwickshire, with 41% of farmsteads in villages and 2.6% in hamlets.
- Medium-low density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Broad range of farmstead scales, small/medium to large-scale (24.7 and 32.4%) being the most common.

Survival

- High rate of survival within Warwickshire, with 73% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 0.5-5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Within Warwickshire this area is characterised by low economic mass with two-thirds of historic farmsteads in residential use but a relatively high proportion (7%) in non-residential use other than agriculture.

Acknowledgements for maps and plans

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Summary

Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to abut the Severn and Avon Vales. To the north and north-east it presents a steep escarpment to the open landscape of the Mease/Sence Lowlands. The eastern part abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south. 32% of the area is urban and almost 5% is woodland. Predominant pattern of high-very high levels of dispersed settlement with village-based settlement in valleys and to south-east, set in varied patterns of fields that reflect medieval woodland clearance, post medieval enclosure of common and later variations in historic farm size. There are four sub-areas:

- 1 An inner ring to the conurbation, with a mix of nucleated and dispersed settlement and of some historic farmsteads set within a greenbelt subject to extensive 20th century suburban development.
- 2 A central band – the historic core of the Arden - with the greatest concentrations of irregular enclosure, dispersed settlement and loose courtyard farmsteads including L-plan layouts with a third building to the yard. There are high numbers of 18th century and earlier houses dispersed across this landscape.
- 3 The southern and eastern fringe extending to Coventry. This is an area with higher historic concentrations of villages and where many isolated farmsteads relate to the post-15th century enclosure of former open fields. Large-scale regular courtyard layouts are predominant, set within landscapes of larger fields and estates with planned woodland, and with some early groups mostly on the edge of villages and in shrunken settlements.
- 4 The Warwickshire coalfield, from Tamworth to Nuneaton, where smallholdings developed alongside mining villages and the continuing growth of larger farms continuing in the Leicestershire Vales.

Landscape and Settlement

- High to very high levels of dispersed settlement, with 12.4% of farmsteads in hamlets and 8.6% in villages.
- Medium-high density of farmsteads in the landscape, lessening in the areas from the Avon Valley to Coventry to the south.
- Large-scale farmsteads (38.2%) predominant with low numbers of very small-scale (11.7%) and small to medium (25.6%) and very large-scale (19.8%) farmsteads reflecting a strong degree of local variation in farm and field size.

Farmstead and Building Types

- Small to medium scale farmsteads, concentrated in areas of irregular enclosure, most commonly comprising loose courtyard and L-shaped layouts with working buildings up to 3 sides of the yard.
- Large regular courtyard groups including multi-yard and E-plans concentrated in areas of reorganised larger-scale fields where larger-scale mixed farms developed.
- Some linear farmsteads in areas of smallholdings and adjacent to former extensive areas of rough commons.

Rarity and Significance

- Medium rate of survival – high rates of loss (21%) around expanding towns, but over 56% of farmsteads recorded from late 19th century maps retain more than half of their historic footprint.
- There are relatively high numbers of 18th century and earlier farmhouses and working buildings, with the strongest survival being within landscapes of irregular (often medieval) enclosure. Across these landscapes are also large numbers of 18th century and earlier houses which were associated with working farms.
- Some farmsteads have a diversity of timber-framed buildings including rare surviving examples of cattle housing and stables as well as threshing barns of varied scales. Unconverted examples are very rare.
- Field barns and outfarms are now very rare.

Drivers for Change

- A low proportion of farmsteads in agricultural use (26%) with two-thirds of farmsteads in residential use. There is a relatively high participation of farmsteads in residential use in small businesses (7% of farmsteads are company registered offices) and a high participation in substantial firms at director level (over 40 directorships per hundred households) and a relatively high proportion of farmsteads in non-residential use outside of agriculture (7%).
- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 40-50% with visible adaptive reuse.



A hamlet of three farmsteads located to the east of Birmingham near the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal. Two of the farmsteads are detached from agriculture, one having little surviving farmstead character whilst the other consists of a medieval house and barn. The third farmstead remains in agricultural use but its historic buildings have been totally replaced by large sheds. The small irregular fields, some reflecting open field strips, have been swept away creating large arable fields – a process which accelerated with the development of large farms well-placed to export produce by canal and then rail in the late 18th and 19th centuries.



A roadside farmstead in the core of the Arden. Much of the Arden is characterised by its network of lanes linking the dispersed farmsteads of the area. Hedgerows along these lands and many field boundaries are rich in species diversity.

I HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

- Arden was historically a wood-pasture region of woodland on the loam and clay-based soils, and heaths on light soils, where dairying and stock farming has been more important than grain production. From the late 17th century the expanding urban population of the coalfields and Birmingham stimulated an increase in barley production, and strengthening of the dairy industry, including the export of cheese to London and Birmingham via the canal network. Significant areas of orchard were planted to provide produce to the Birmingham Conurbation.
- Pastoral farming combined with dispersed settlement fostered the development of a prosperous and independent class of freeholders since the medieval period, reflected in high numbers of high-status moated sites of the 12th-14th centuries, pre-18th century farmstead architecture and gentry houses.
- Heathlands provided a foci for common-edge smallholding and also in part the framework for the development of manorial deer parks in the medieval period e.g. Paddington, Stoneleigh.
- This inherited pattern of rural development has in turn provided the framework for exurban development – including the conversion of farmsteads – into the rural Arden beyond the suburbs of Halesowen and south-west Birmingham, Redditch and Bromsgrove.
- Industrialisation of the Arrow Valley and Redditch in the 18th and 19th centuries was focused on the needle industry, making use of earlier water-powered corn mills. Development of the coalfield in the north-east was linked to the coking and smelting industries.

2 LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT

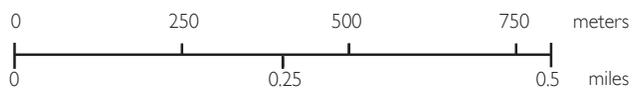
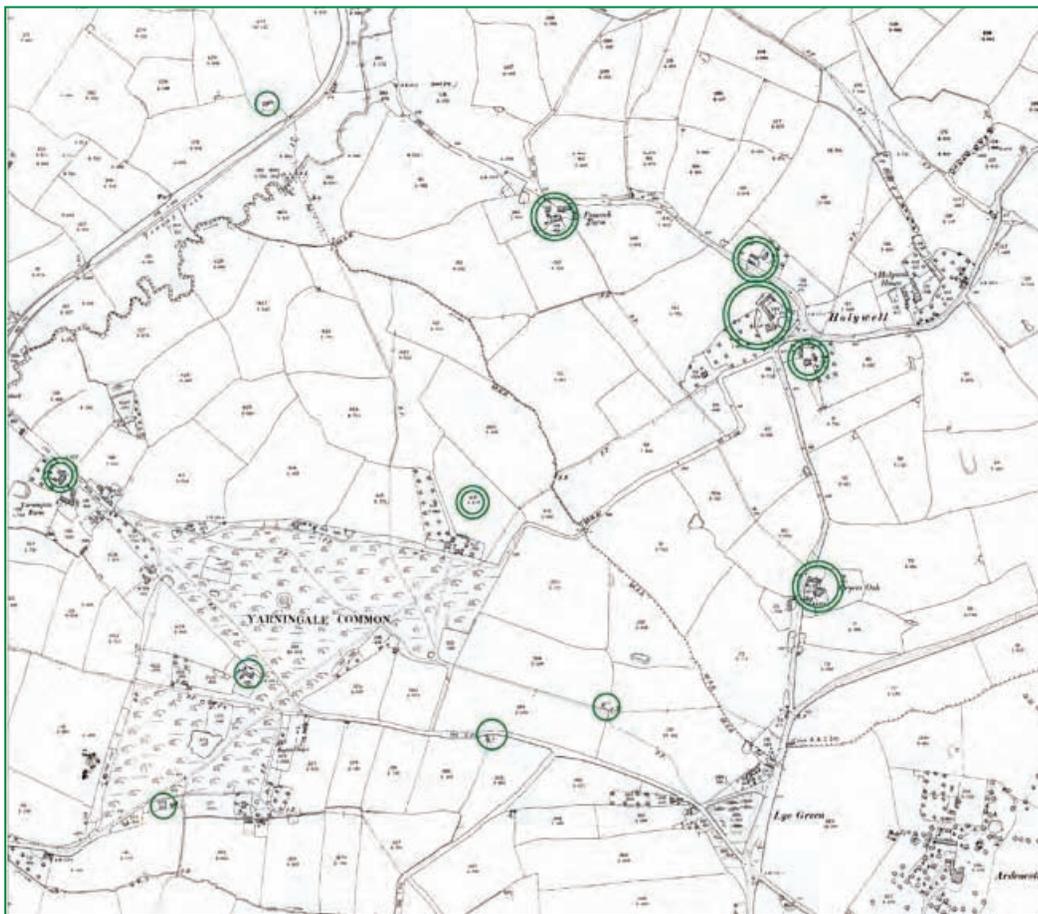
- The wood pasture economy of much of the Arden is still reflected in abundant tree and woodland cover, including mature hedgerow oaks.
- Predominant pattern of high to very high levels of dispersed settlement had developed by the 14th century set within irregular-shaped fields cleared from woodland, particularly within sub-area 2 which had been a relatively sparsely populated area in the 11th century.
- In contrast, sub-area 3 contains extensive evidence of Roman and earlier settlement and developed a more nucleated settlement pattern, concentrated in the river valleys, in the Saxon period. Some

farmsteads moved out of the villages in association with the piecemeal enclosure of former open fields and common land from the 15th century. Many historic houses within the villages originated as farmhouses, changing their function as new steadings were built in the newly-enclosed fields.

- Elsewhere many existing settlement nuclei originated as markets in the medieval period (eg Tanworth in Arden) and expanded into their present form as service and residential centres over the 19th and 20th centuries.

Across the Arden landscape the present scale of fields and historic farmsteads reflects varied patterns of historic farm size and development:

- Some areas with high densities of dispersed settlement dominated by small-medium scale irregular fields derived from medieval woodland clearance.
- The largest fields and farms in the broad river valleys and in the southern band dominated by estates from Warwick to east of Birmingham.
- Areas where the medieval pattern of dispersed settlement sits within enlarged fieldscapes dating from the reorganisation and growth of farms especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, sometimes earlier. Large fields and fields with straight boundaries often sit a broader framework of irregular boundaries and meandering lanes.
- Small to medium-scale rectilinear fields created by late 18th/19th century enclosure of heathland commons.

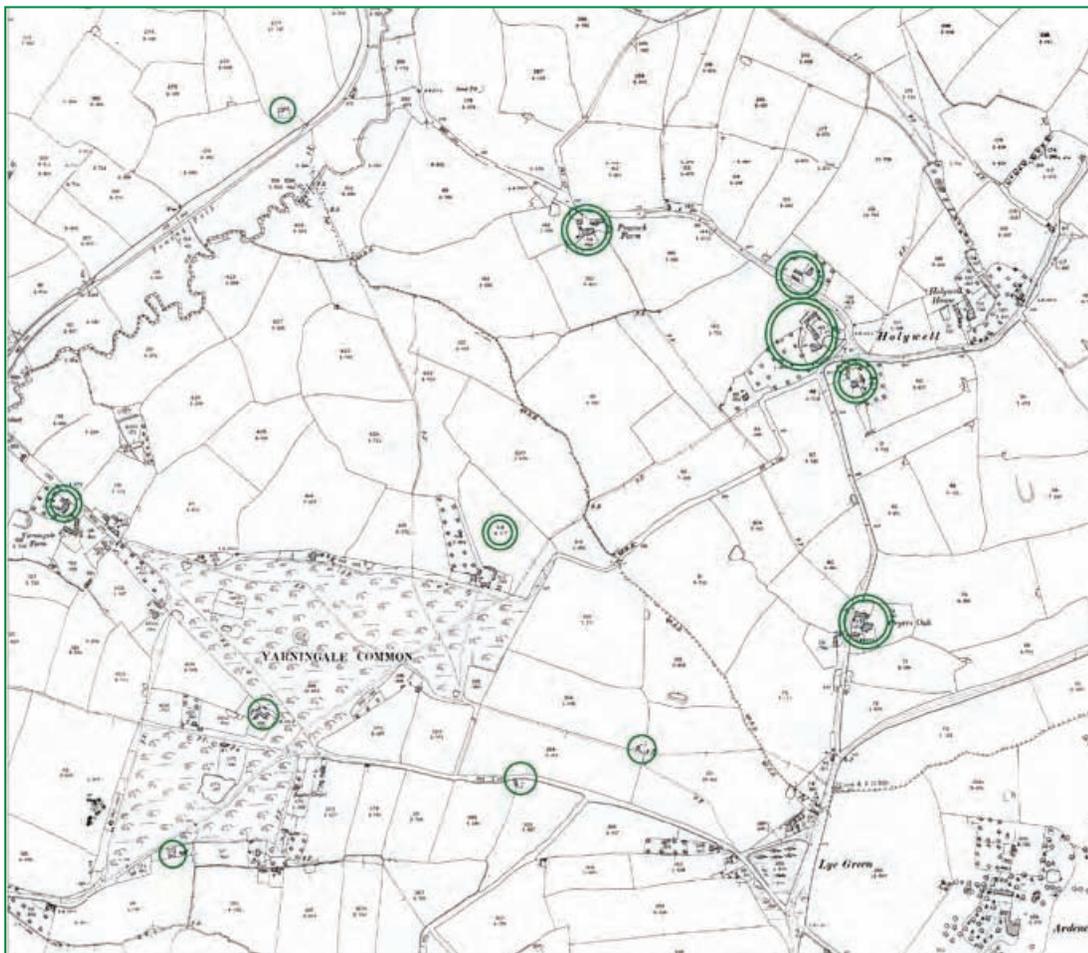


-  Farmstead
-  Outfarm

Fillongley

The core of the Arden is an area characterised by dispersed settlement; hamlets and isolated farmsteads sit within a landscape of small, irregular fields and linked by a network of lanes and paths. The 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 associated with Castle Hills Castle 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, typically forming small loose courtyard groups with working buildings to one or two sides of the yard. 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





Farmstead

Outfarm

Yaringale Common

Within the landscapes of ancient, irregular enclosures, the Arden also contained areas of unenclosed common into the late 19th century. Some small areas, such as Lye Green, were the focus for settlement from the medieval period. Larger areas, such as Yaringale Common, were subject to gradual encroachment and partial enclosure; the east and south-east of the common has a series of semi-regular fields suggestive of enclosure by agreement whereas the small 'islands' of intakes and the narrow plots on the north and west edges are characteristic of squatter encroachments. The larger farms associated with the enclosure of the common tend to be small-medium scale regular plan types as opposed to the loose courtyard plans found amongst the ancient enclosures. Additionally, field barns are found in some of the later enclosures whereas they are largely absent from the earlier irregular fields, possibly reflecting fields that were associated with the older farms which had previously had common rights.

To the south-east of the area is a large house in a parkland setting. Such large houses appeared in the Arden in greater numbers from the late 17th century in tandem with the growth of Birmingham, the countryside attracting some of the wealthier industrialists who could take the opportunity to become landowners. The growing population profiting landowners around the expanding urban areas who could supply the market, a process made easier with the development of the canals.

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3 FARMSTEAD AND BUILDING TYPES

Farmstead Types

- Small-medium scale farmsteads, concentrated in areas of irregular enclosure, most commonly comprising loose courtyard and L-shaped layouts with working buildings up to 3 sides of the yard.
- Large regular courtyard groups, mostly regular E, U-shaped and multi-yard plans, concentrated in areas of reorganised larger-scale fields where larger-scale mixed farms developed – particularly to southern and eastern fringe.
- Some linear farmsteads in areas of smallholdings and adjacent to former extensive areas of rough commons.
- Some row plans in the north-west of the area.
- Dispersed plans relatively rare but a small group of dispersed multi-yards to the south-west of Birmingham.

Building Types

- 5-bay and some 3-bay barns, with some farmsteads having larger barns or groups of two or more barns. Many barns, including earlier examples form part of combination ranges with cattle housing with haylofts over or linked to form row plans.
- Stables including some timber-framed examples of early date and some with granaries above.
- Open-fronted shelter sheds for cattle often attached to an earlier barn.
- Outfarms – mostly comprising a threshing barn and shelter shed - developed in areas of larger village-based farms and large-scale arable farm especially in the south-east. Historically their distribution was almost exclusively restricted to areas of wholesale landscape reorganisation, driven by large estates such as the Ragley Estate (south of Alcester) in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

The Arden, like the Severn and Avon Vales to its west and other parts of the West Midlands, retains some very complete groupings of early timber-framed farm buildings.



Roadside threshing barns to two farmsteads in residential use, with farmhouses of 17th century and earlier date.



It was common for farmhouses to be attached to the working buildings. This early 19th century house has a stable and larger threshing barn in timber frame to the right, and cattle housing (in brick) attached to another threshing barn in timber frame on the left.



This group close to the deserted settlement at Kinwarton in the south of the area includes a single-storey animal house extending forwards from the barn. This arrangement is seen elsewhere in the Avon valley area, extending across the Severn Valley into the Teme Valley. Early animal housing is very rare.

4 MATERIALS AND DETAIL

- Timber-framing was the dominant building form until the 17th century
- Brick increasingly used from 17th century and now dominant.
- Some use of sandstone for walling and plinths, particularly in the north of the area.
- Plain clay tile widely used for roofing.



The rear of a large timber-framed barn. Threshing barns typically had large threshing doors for winnowing the corn crop. As in other wood pasture regions of England, it is probable that many barns combined animal housing. Investigation of buildings such as this will indicate whether they were subdivided into animal housing and lofts for their fodder:



Timber-framed threshing barns are commonly associated with timber framed houses of the 17th century and earlier which testify to the prosperity of farmers in this area.



Barns were commonly extended and refronted in brick, as here in this example converted to residential use in the suburbs of Birmingham. The window openings are not purely domestic: it was common for barns to be converted into housing for dairy cattle in the late 19th century.



An example of an early to mid 19th century threshing barn, altered in order to ensure continued agricultural use in the later 20th century.



Large multi-functional combination barns were commonly built in brick in the early-mid 19th century, and brought many functions together into a single building. This example includes a threshing barn flanked by a stable (right) and cattle housing at the lower end to the left.



A small cow house or stable and cart shed range set in a L-plan. It represents the extension and remodelling of a 17th century timber-framed building, its square panels being typical of the distinct timber-frame tradition which developed in western England. The combination of brick and earlier timber frame is a typical feature of the Arden.



The 19th and 20th century recladding of the buildings in this group obscures an intact loose courtyard group with a small house, a combined barn and stable range and a cowhouse all in timber frame. (© Eloise Marwick/Coventry City Council).



An outfarm group of a threshing barn and derelict shelter shed with a fold yard. These were commonly built to serve large farms in areas of the landscape that were reorganised or subject to new enclosure in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

This is one of the **Farmsteads Character Statements** for the National Character Areas. Further illustrated guidance on historic character and significance, under the same headings, is provided in the **West Midlands Farmsteads Character Statement**. They result from *The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project*, which has mapped the historic character and use of farmsteads across the region, and developed planning tools to inform future change. A *Summary Report* summarises the results of the whole project for the whole region and sets out policy and land use implications, and recommendations and next steps for further work.

The *Rarity and Significance* and *Drivers for Change* headings, and other elements of the main text, are based upon the mapping and interpretation of historic character. These records are stored in the relevant local authority *Historic Environment Record* and there is a *Historic Farmstead Characterisation Report* for each county and the Central Conurbation. These have been used as a baseline to determine the patterns of current use, as summarised for each area in the *Drivers for Change* section. There is a *Farmstead Use Report* for the region.

Also under the *Drivers for Change* heading are percentages of listed working farm buildings with visible structural failure and evidence of adaptive reuse. These are based on comparison of 1980s with 1999-2006 photographs, from the *Photo Image Survey* (University of Gloucestershire for English Heritage, 2009). In the West Midlands 27% of listed working farm buildings have evidence for residential reuse (national level 30%), 3% other (national 4%) and 70% (national 66%) have no other evidence for other use. 18.9% have evidence for structural failure (national 8.9%).

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project is a collaborative project led by English Heritage with the county and metropolitan authorities. 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.



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