

□ *Dispersed plans by secondary attribute*

These are farmsteads where the farm buildings and farmhouse are loosely grouped together within the farmstead boundary but with no central yard area. They indicate the need to flexibly manage livestock within the boundary of the steading.

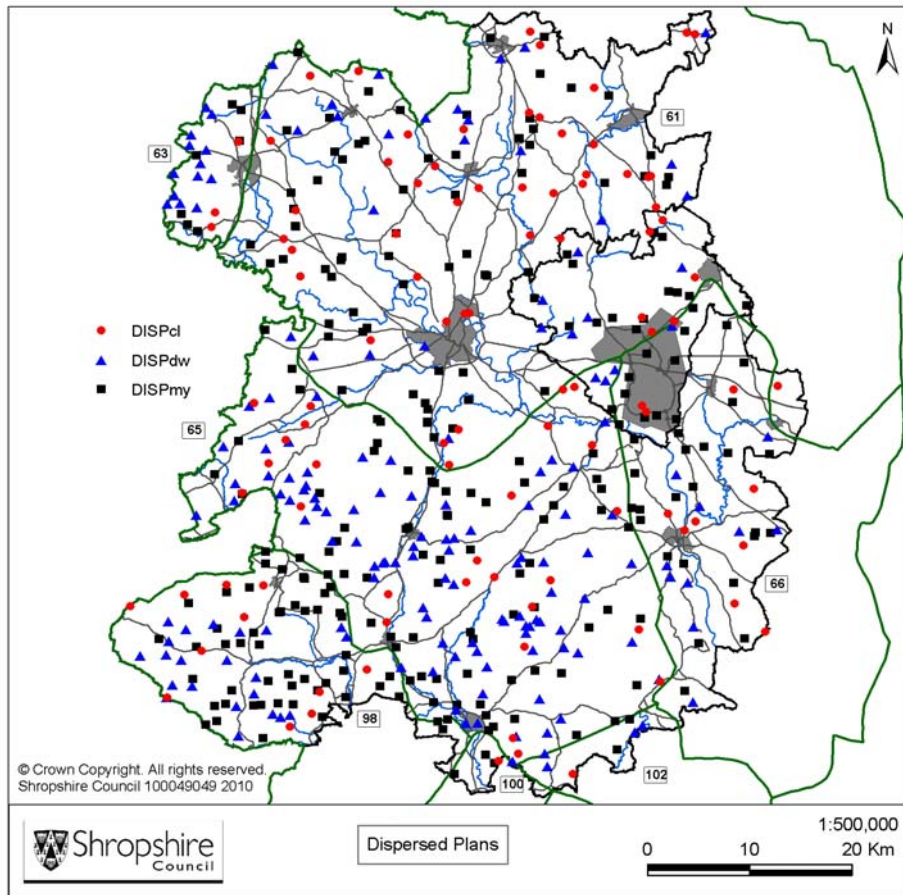
<b>NCA</b>	<b>DISPcl</b>	<b>DISPdw</b>	<b>DISPmy</b>
Area 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain	49	29	80
Area 63 Oswestry Uplands	3	13	7
Area 65 Shropshire Hills	25	93	74
Area 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau	11	11	34
Area 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills	11	22	52
Area 100 Hereford Lowlands	1	0	3
<b>West Midlands Region</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Shropshire</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>

*Dispersed Cluster*

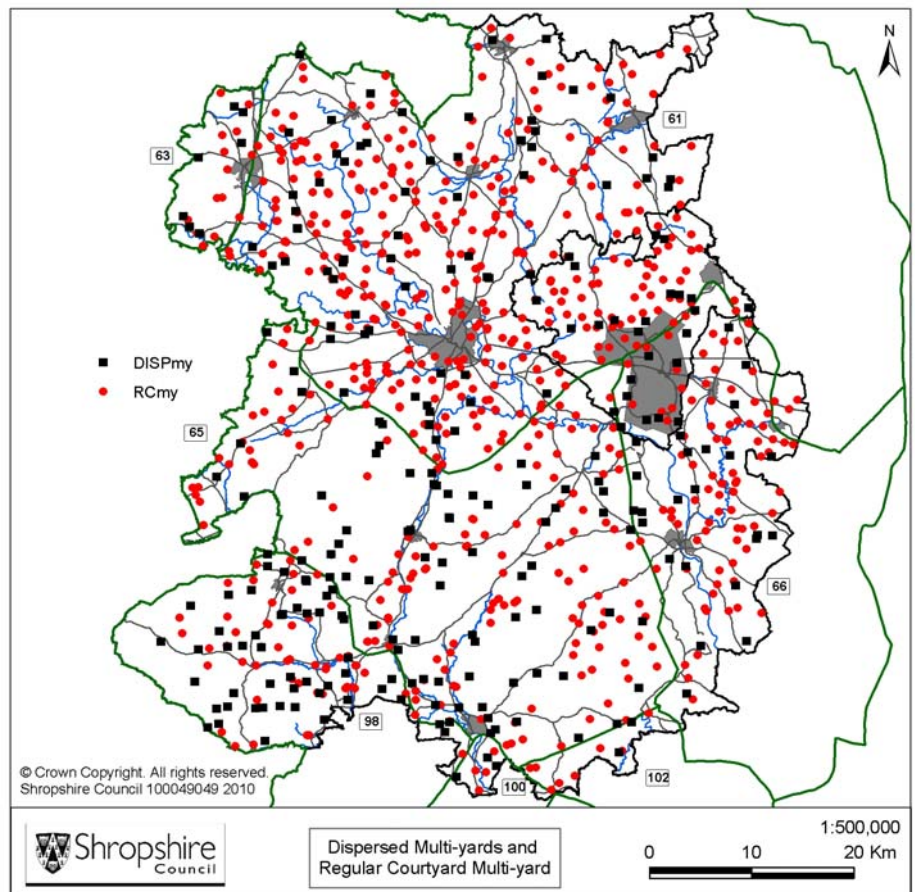
Dispersed clusters are plans where there is a group of buildings which are not focused on a defined yard area. Many of these farmsteads are small steadings with a farmhouse and just one or two buildings set in an enclosure designed for holding stock. These types of farmsteads have a paddock-like feel, set in enclosed areas within which the house and any working buildings are sited and livestock are fenced in. Their plan form and location is intimately related to the movement of livestock and people to seasonal grazing grounds (transhumance). Their distribution is fairly sparse across Shropshire, though it is possible to see a greater concentration in the north east of the county in the lowland heath areas and in small pockets on the uplands of the Shropshire and Clun Hills. They are generally associated with other small farmstead types (LC1, LC2, LINs) as well as smallholdings, and are mainly associated with stock rearing areas. They tend to be situated within small-scale irregular fields, and sitting on the edge of the later planned enclosure, enclosing what were the former common lands.

*Dispersed Driftway Plan*

Dispersed driftway farmsteads have buildings and yards (regular or loose courtyard in their form) sited next to a route way. In Shropshire their distribution is heavily focused on upland areas fringing the moors, particularly in the Oswestry Uplands, Clun Hills and the Shropshire Hills. This is not surprising given that their plan form is directly related to the movement of cattle onto common pasture. They are closely associated with areas of dispersed settlement with small farms, often linked by small lanes and route ways giving access to areas of common grazing. As a result they tend to be situated within small irregular fields, sitting on the edge of the later planned enclosure of areas of former common rough grazing land. They also appear in greater density in areas of smallholdings and industry, particularly the Clee Hills and the Stiperstones. Although generally associated with smaller farms, their size can vary, and in some cases they can form medium-sized steadings.



**Left, Figure 46**  
 Map showing the distribution of  
 Dispersed Farmstead types



**Right, Figure 47**  
 Map showing the distribution of  
 Dispersed Multi-yards against Regular  
 Courtyard Multi-yards

### *Dispersed Multi Yard Plan*

A dispersed multi-yard farmstead comprises buildings related to a number of yards (regular or loose courtyard in their form), with the yards irregularly arranged and detached from one another. DISPmy plans represent 4.1% of all plan types in Shropshire and 8.9% of all dispersed plan forms, making them the most common type within the dispersed group. Although less prevalent than Regular Courtyard multi-yards, they follow a similar pattern. 71 DISPmy farmsteads include a regular courtyard element, and these are almost exclusively present in the mixed arable lowland areas and in the estate landscapes – across the central band of the Shropshire plain around Shrewsbury, along the Corve and Ape Dale, and in the valleys of the Clun Hills. In these parts of the county the DISPmy form can be relatively organised and have separate yard areas divided, for example, by a road. It is possible that such farmsteads were the result of incremental development and may exhibit ranges and yards of different dates built in response to factors such as the increase in size of holding as an alternative to the re-building of a large new single Regular Courtyard group or the need to retain earlier landscapes.

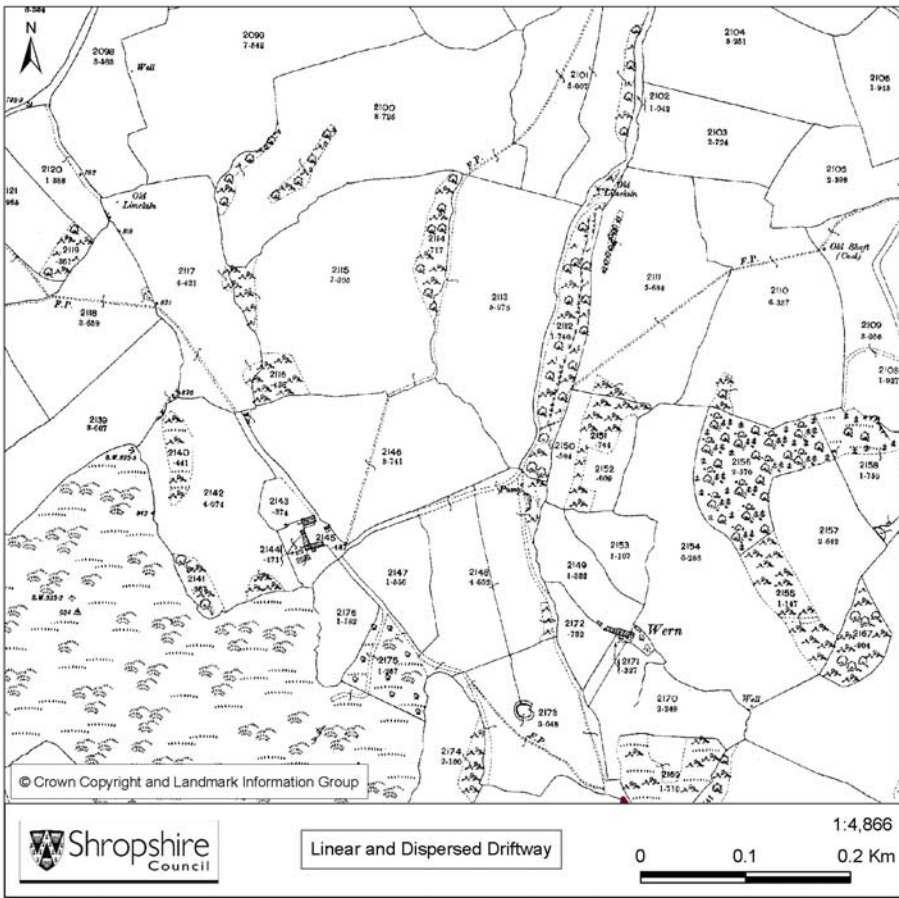
A significant change in the distribution of DISPmy is evident in the Clun Hills where there is a considerably higher density. Unlike the rest of the county here the relative numbers of DISP and RC multi-yard types are more or less equal in number. As well as in the lowland areas, there are significant numbers situated within or on the edge of the upland plateau particularly to the south. They are however less apparent in the Clun Forest where greater numbers of regular planned farmsteads associated with planned enclosure are situated. The Powys estate influence within the Clun Forest may have encouraged greater development here whereas to the south smaller-scale landowners may have expanded on a more incremental basis. The population decline caused by the agricultural depression may also have allowed those who did remain in the area to expand and prosper.

#### ▮ *Linear, L-plan, Parallel and Row plans*

<b>NCA</b>	<b>LIN</b>	<b>LP</b>	<b>PAR</b>	<b>ROW</b>
Area 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain	233	81	36	35
Area 63 Oswestry Uplands	66	26	5	2
Area 65 Shropshire Hills	266	62	10	8
Area 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau	25	23	1	5
Area 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills	73	30	0	2
Area 100 Hereford Lowlands	1	0	0	1
<b>West Midlands Region</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>Shropshire</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>

### *Linear and L-plan (house attached) Farmsteads*

This plan group, where the principal characteristic is the farmhouse being attached in-line or at a right angle to a farm building is the third most common group encountered in Shropshire, representing 14.4% (891) of recorded farmsteads. The majority of these plans (667) are Linear with the house attached in line to a farm building. Linear plans are usually considered to be a characteristic plan form of upland areas due to their suitability for construction in hilly areas and were also economical to build.



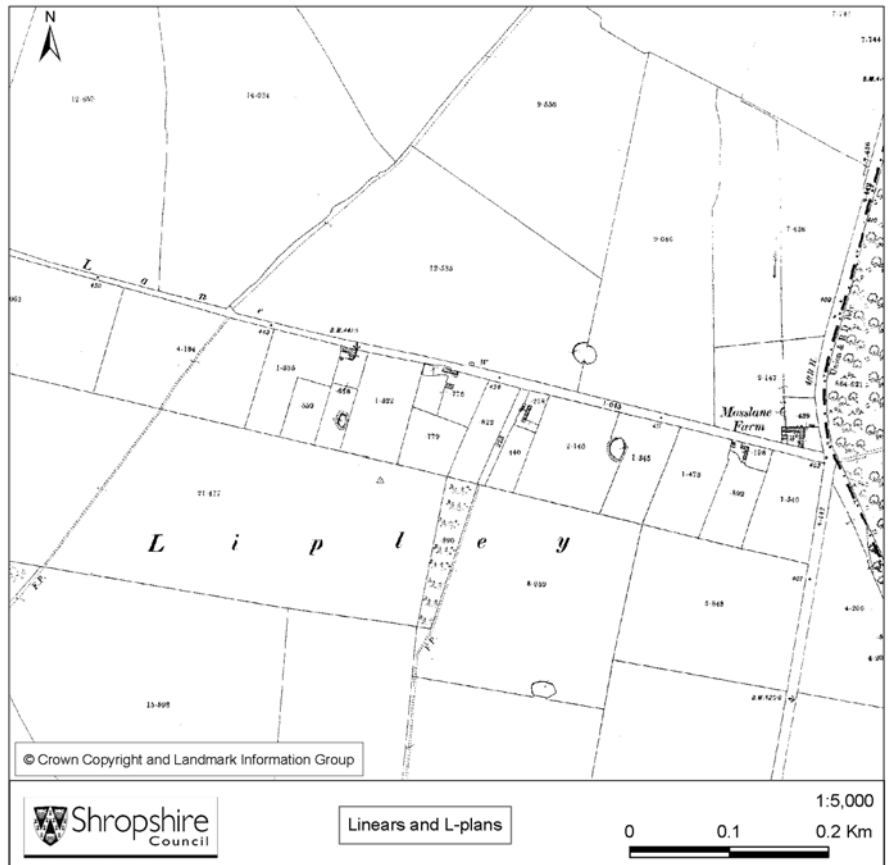
**Figure 48**

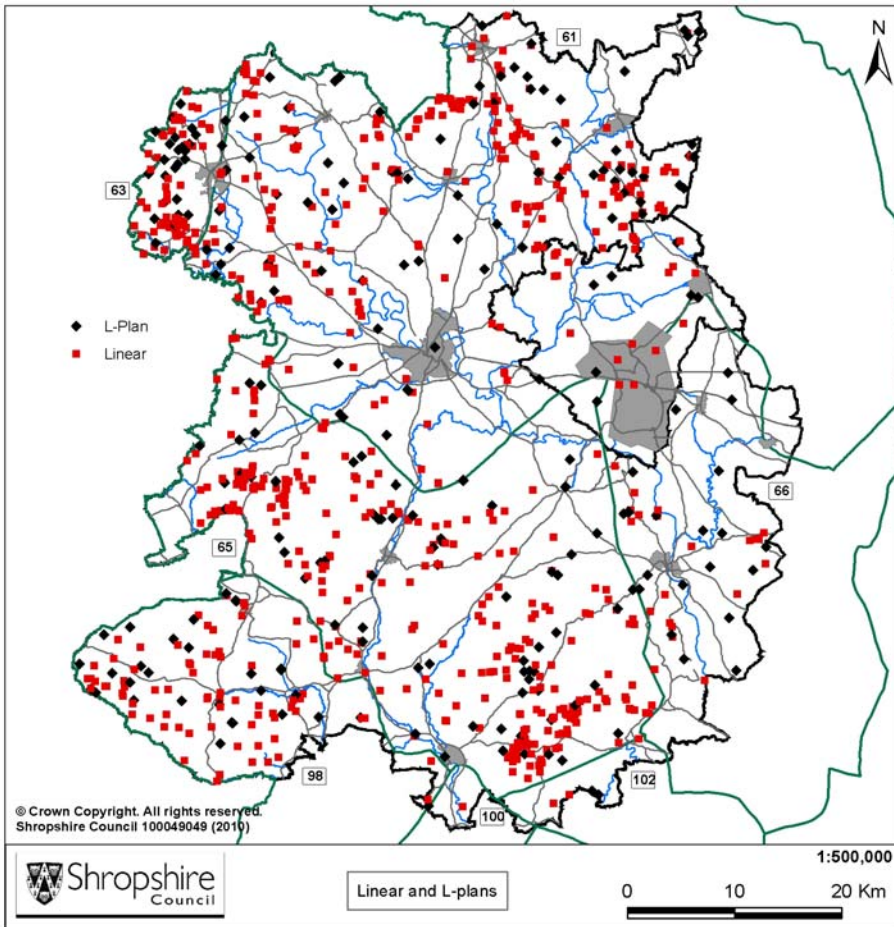
The Dispersed Driftway of Moelydd Ucha Farm and the linear plan of Wern Farm are set within a landscape of small irregular fields.

A small area of unimproved open hill pasture is apparent to the southwest where livestock would have been put to graze.

**Figure 49**

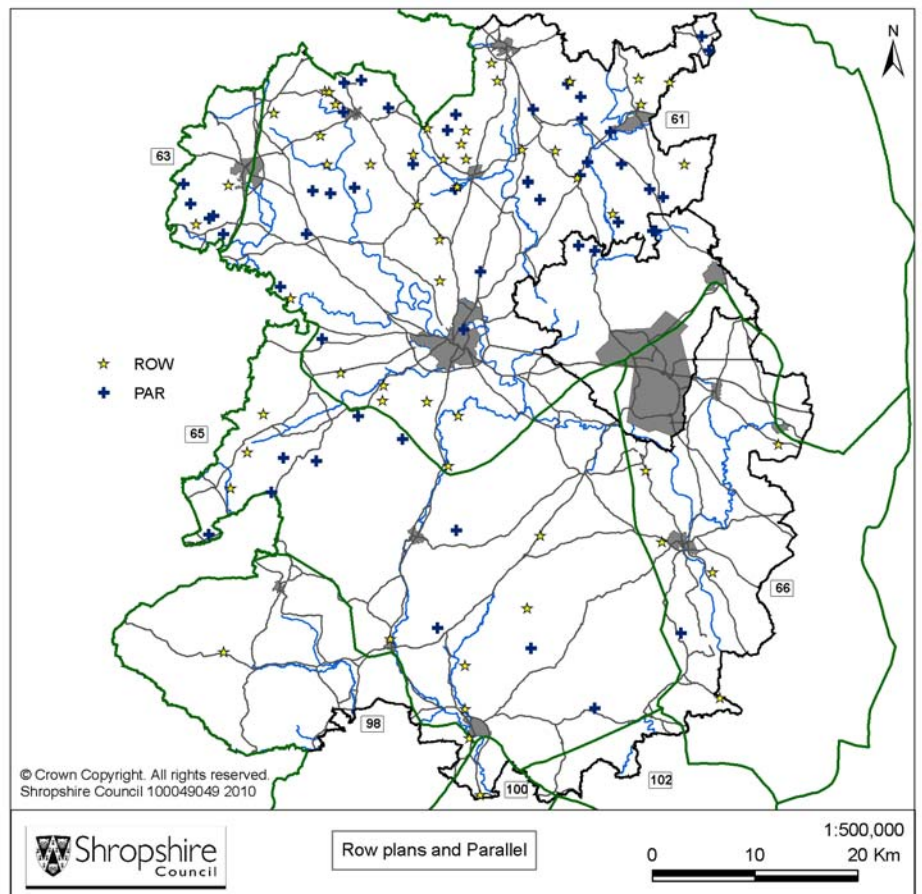
Small Linear and L-plan (house attached) farmsteads set within small planned enclosure. The slightly larger Mosslane Farm, forming an L-plan is likely to be associated with the larger fields.





**Left, Figure 50**  
Map showing the distribution of Linear and L-plan farmsteads

**Right, Figure 51**  
Map showing the distribution of Row and Parallel farmstead plans



The high density of such plans in the southern and north western part of the county is therefore not unexpected. There is a strong correlation with industrial areas, such as the Cleve Hills, the Stiperstones, Llanymynech and the Shirlet Forest. As with other small farmsteads in these areas, the distribution possibly reflects the presence of small farmers who found by-employment in industry. The upland location of many Linear farmsteads is further confirmed by the strong presence in the Clun Hills and in the northern extent of the Oswestry uplands where the draw of industry was not a factor. The majority lie on hill slopes set within smaller field patterns and common edge enclosure, part of more ancient landscapes, with a small minority occurring within 19<sup>th</sup> century planned enclosure.

Perhaps less expected is the number of linear plans within the lowland part of Shropshire, particularly on the enclosed lowland heathland and moors of the north west Shropshire Plain. In the lowland heaths the linear farms are set within a fieldscape of ordered rectilinear fields associated with clusters of small farmstead and hamlets. This landscape was formed in the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries following large-scale improvement, making the farmstead in this area relatively recent in date. Further north of the edge of the wetland of Whixall Moss, the lowland moors are part of a more ancient field pattern of common edge encroachment, assarting and small planned enclosure developing from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The linear farmsteads sit on the roadside on the border of the mosses and the ancient enclosure.

L-plans with the house forming part of an L-shaped range are also concentrated in the southern and north western part of the county, focussing on upland areas. However the concentrations of Linears in the Shropshire Plain are not mirrored by the L-plans. There is a general scatter along the northern border, in the predominantly dairying areas.

When set against HLC there is an apparent correlation between Linear and L-Plan (house attached) farmsteads and Squatter Enclosures. This is particularly the case in the Shropshire Hills and in the small pockets remaining in the Shropshire Plain. Away from the industrial areas many of these have proven to be Medieval or 17<sup>th</sup> century in date. These small enclosure patterns were most vulnerable across areas such as the Shropshire Plain, where most reorganisation occurred, so the mapped examples are likely to be remnants of an enclosure and farmstead type that was once more widespread.

#### *Parallel Plans*

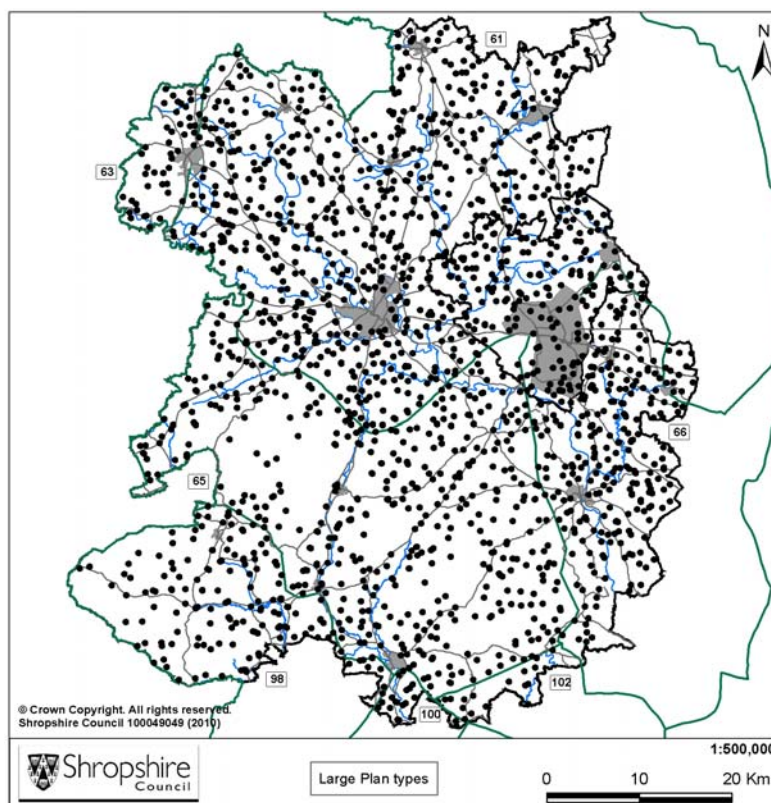
Parallel plans are related to the Linear L-plan (house attached) and small loose courtyards by their general small size and frequent association with smallholdings. The distribution of the small number of this plan type (52) shows these plans as being concentrated in the northern part of the county, in common edge locations and on the lowland heaths and moors. The plan type does not have a strong correlation with upland areas. Those that do are almost exclusively associated with the industrial areas; consequentially none have been mapped across the Clun Hills.

#### *Row Plans*

Row plans, farmsteads which have a particularly long range of buildings, probably incorporating different functions are focussed in lowland areas and with increasing numbers in the north of the county, within the dairying region of Shropshire.

## 6.6 Farmstead Size

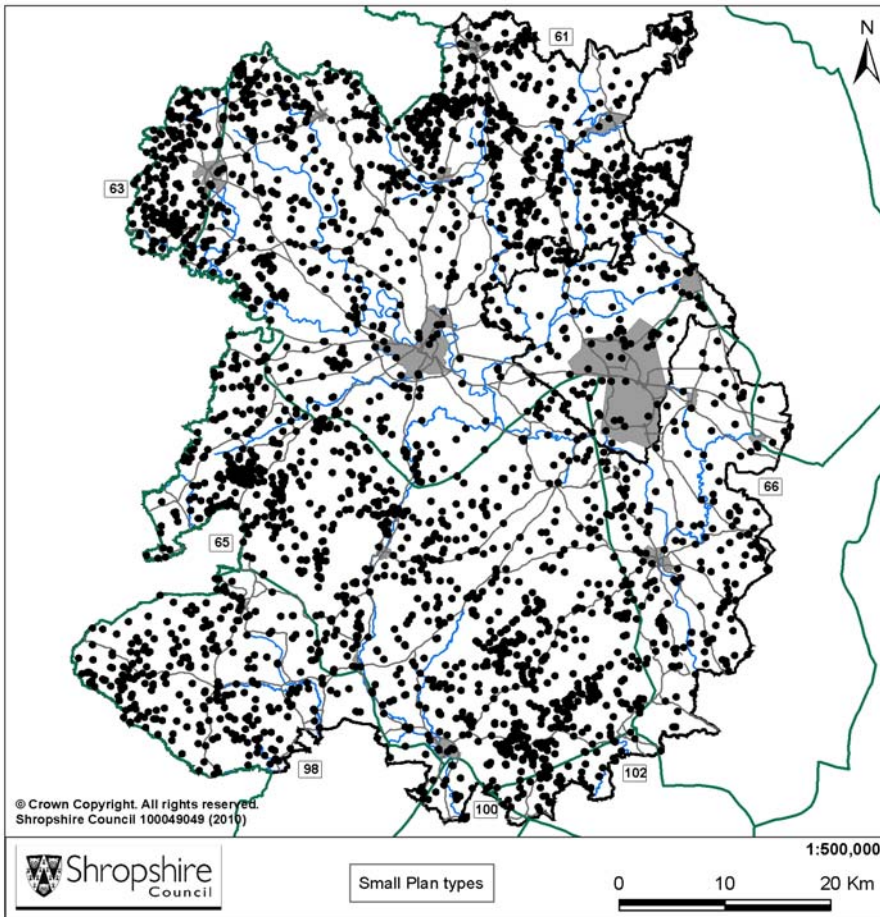
Generally, larger holdings were more likely to be provided with larger and/or more buildings, with the prominent exception of sheep farms which required few buildings but could be very extensive. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the 'contemporary rule of thumb was that a man was needed for every 25 or 30 acres of arable and every 50 or 60 of pasture' (Mingay 1989, 953). Statistics on the numbers of farms by size can be misleading: although 71% of holdings were under 50 acres as late as 1880 (Howkins 1994, 53), the proportion of land area taken up by small farms was much smaller and regionally very varied. The smallest farms were concentrated in upland areas, on the edges of mosslands and heathland, in areas with by-employment in industry and trades and in areas with easy access to urban markets. By the 1850s, medium-size farms – typically mixed arable holdings in the 100- to 300-acre (4-120 hectares) bracket – comprised 30% of all 134, 700 holdings and 44.6% of the acreage; those in the 5-100 acre bracket comprised 62.5% of all farms and 21.6% of the acreage and those over 300 acres comprised only 7.5% of all farms but over 33.6% of the acreage (Mingay 1989, 948-50). The largest farms had greater access to capital and were usually associated with corn production, which typically demanded more labour for carting, harvesting and threshing, and increasingly for yard and stock management (for example in strawing-down yards, lifting the heavy manure-laden straw into middens and carts and for spreading it on the fields). Smaller farms, typically found in dairying, fruit growing and stock-rearing areas, required fewer large buildings and were less likely to have the capital to expend on rebuilding farmsteads to fit with developing agricultural practice. The smallest (of under 50 acres) thrived in fruit-growing and market-gardening areas (often clustered around urban sites), and in areas where farmers supplemented their incomes through by-employment, for example local industries (Mingay 1989, 940). Across West Midlands the average farm size in 1851 was between 100 and 139 acres, with the exception of Warwickshire which formed part of the zone of largest farms extending into southern England (excluding the south-west) (Shaw-Taylor 2005, 196). Between 1875 and 1914, the percentage of holdings under 50 acres (20 hectares) as a proportion of all holdings fell across the region, being highest in Staffordshire and Warwickshire where small-scale farming was sustained by proximity to urban markets (Collins 2000, 1833). The range of farmstead plan types are broadly indicative of the size of individual farmsteads, serving to deepen our historical understanding of the development of farms below regional and county level. There is a broad distinction between the farmstead plans as shown in the distribution maps below.



**Figure 52 Map showing the distribution of large sized farmsteads**

Large-scale farms comprising:

- Loose courtyard with buildings to four sides
- Full regular courtyard plans with buildings enclosed to all sides of the yard
- Regular multi-yard plans, E- H and F plans



**Left, Figure 53**

Map showing the distribution of small farmstead plans

Small-scale farms, comprising:

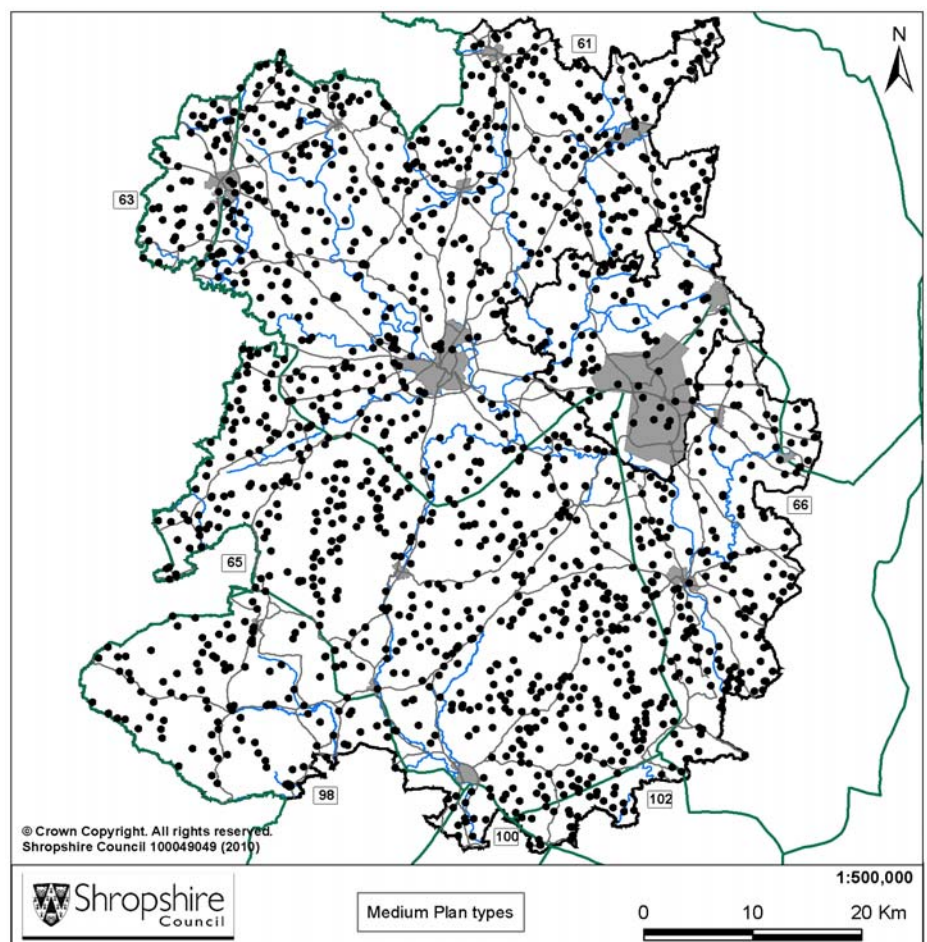
- Loose courtyard plans with buildings to one and two sides of the yard
- Linear plans
- L-plans with the house attached
- Parallel plans
- Dispersed Clusters
- Dispersed Driftways

**Right, Figure 54**

Map showing the distribution of Medium sized farmstead

Medium-scale farms comprising:

- Loose courtyard and regular courtyard plans with buildings three sides of the yard
- Regular L plans and those with building to third side
- Loose courtyard L plans with building to third side
- U, T and Z plans.



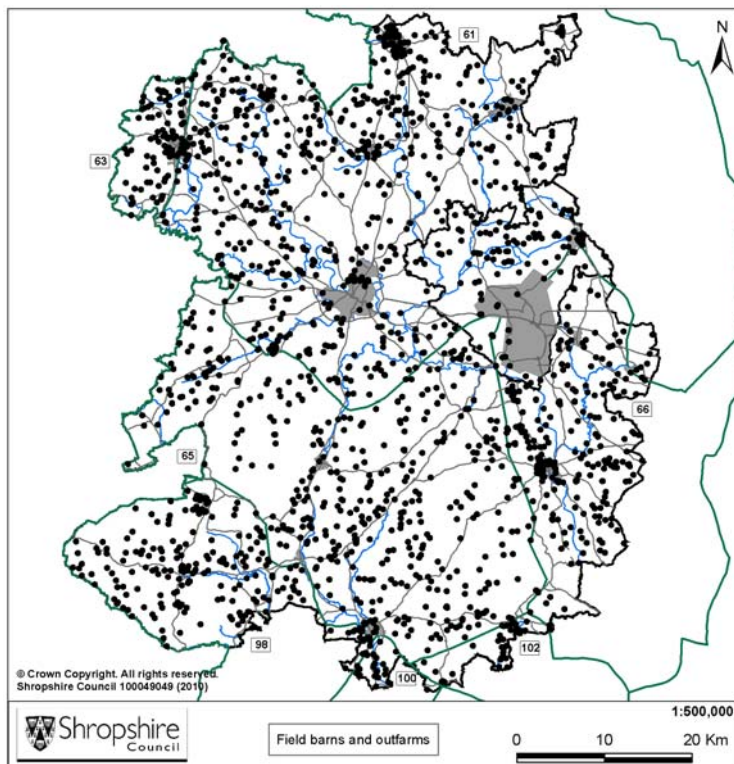


## 6.7 Outfarms and Field Barns

Although the data set for field barns and outfarms is not yet complete, the majority of the county has been surveyed and distinctive patterns area apparent.

Both the field barns (single building or building with a yard) and outfarms (two building or more around a yard) have a distribution that appears to roughly correlates to the larger farmsteads. Out of the 1642 field barns and outfarms twenty-five are dated; three are pre-1600, six are 17<sup>th</sup> century, fifteen are 18<sup>th</sup> century and one is listed 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the majority later in date, this does suggest a link to later and larger farmsteads; perhaps with larger land holdings it was more practical to have field barns and outfarms in the wider estates. However it must also be recognised that later field barns are more likely to survive; the reorganisation of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries would have removed a large number of earlier field barns. The majority of outfarms with well planned large Regular courtyard types are associated with the estate lands. Of note there is a particular distribution in the estate woodlands of Wenlock Edge. Dense distributions are also evident along the northern extent of the county into the Oswestry Uplands where dairying and livestock rearing dominated. Many of the field barns and outfarms will have been used as livestock shelters. Significant numbers of LC1 are present here, likely to be a cattle house and yard. In more mixed farming areas, these plan types could possibly be a barn and cattle yard.

Significant clusters of single field barns are also scattered around the major urban centres including Whitchurch, Wem, Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Ludlow. Smaller concentrations are also present around the smaller settlements. The majority are set within the piecemeal enclosure of the former open field systems. With greater number of individuals holding land outside the settlements, this could indicate the difficulties encountered in amalgamating these land holdings, and suggests that alternative farming practices where in use in these areas.



**Above, Figure 55**

Map showing the distribution of field barns and outfarms

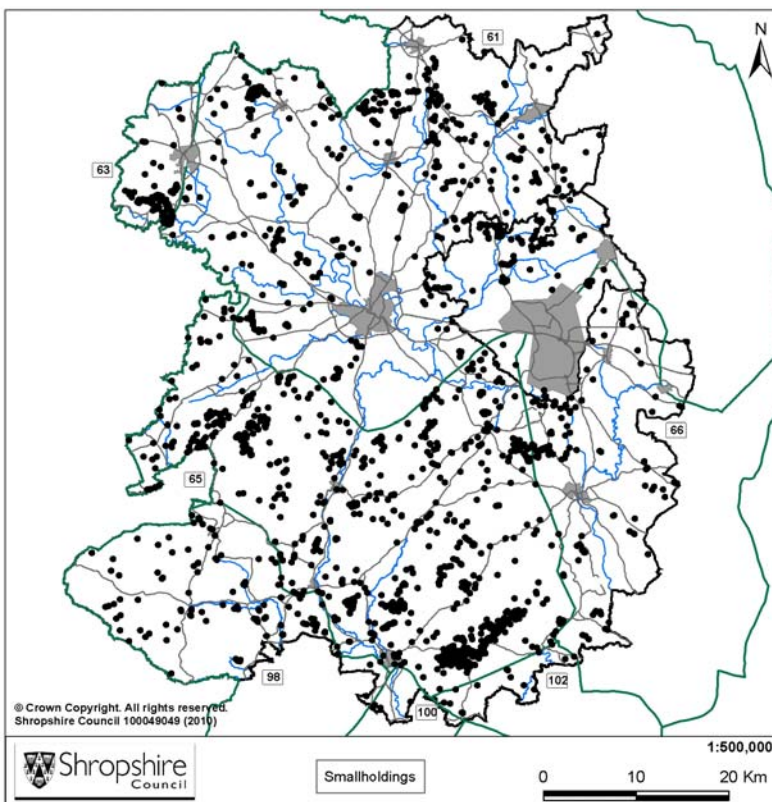
However, whilst field barns appear to be more prevalent in the north and eastern half of the county outfarms which have building to more than one side of a yard increase in number in the southern half of the county with significant numbers in the Clun Hills and in the south eastern extent of the Shropshire Hills. Significant numbers of field barns are found in the northern extent of the Shropshire Plain. The vast majority of field barns do not survive, being no longer practical for modern farming practices, the best survival is so far evident in the south, though it much be borne in mind that this is an incomplete data set.

6.8 *Smallholdings*

Smallholdings play a very significant role in the character of Shropshire's landscape, dominating areas of industrial activity and upland encroachments. The largest densities are found in the Shropshire Hills particularly in the Cleve Hills and Western Uplands, although few of these remain in agricultural use. Significant concentrations are evident around the Stiperstones, Cordon Hill, dispersed around the edge of the Long Mynd and dense concentrations on the Cleve Hills. In the Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau the densest concentrations were within the eastern coalfield; very few now survive following the expansion of the Telford. The Shirlett Forest was another focus for smallholding activity with charcoal burning and coal mining present in the area. In the Oswestry uplands the industry of the Treflach hills drew the smallholder in.

Small pockets of smallholdings are present across the Shropshire Plain, associated with squatter encroachments onto remaining areas of common. In these areas the small-scale subsistence farming could be supplemented by working the land of the larger estates. The estates themselves had varied policies with regard to housing labourers. The poorest were often in small settlements, whilst other had purpose built cottages. In other areas squatter encroachments were viewed as a blot on the landscape and clearance was undertaken as was the case in Lea where squatter cottages were totally demolished (VCH IV, 226-30). The majority of smallholdings in the Shropshire Plain were established on the poorer soils of the enclosed lowland heaths. As has been discussed previously, the majority of smallholdings are associated with the small plan types such as loose courtyards with one or two farm buildings, linear and L-plans (house attached) and Dispersed clusters and driftways.

Survival of smallholdings is relatively poor. The vast majority are no longer in agricultural use, with the majority surviving as the house only. A good proportion have also been lost, the majority located in the industrial areas. Of note it is likely that small holding were farm more extensive in the Shropshire plain along with smaller farms. However the reorganisation of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century likely resulted in a significant loss of smallholdings, long before the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS map was completed.



**Right, Figure 56**  
Map showing the distribution of Smallholdings.