

WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPES PROJECT

COUNTY SUMMARY REPORT FOR SHROPSHIRE

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 Shropshire. 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 are using 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 Shropshire, and the analysis of current use.

Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

Across Shropshire the rates of survival of historic farmsteads are slightly higher than the average across the West Midlands region. 88% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%, the rates of survival being much higher in upland farming areas than the lowlands where large farms developed:

- 33% of farmsteads have retained all of their historic footprint/working buildings (regional average 26%)
- 37% 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%)

Over 75% of these sites do not include listed buildings. These mostly comprise houses, with barns of 18th century and earlier date taking up the majority of working farm buildings that have been listed.

Landscape and Settlement Context

In Shropshire only 13% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 12%), whilst 19% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%). The remainder are isolated and form an integral part of how landscapes have changed from the medieval period. Across Shropshire the patterns of inherited landscape character have been mapped by the Shropshire Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC) and the Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The results of these have been integrated into the

Shropshire Landscapes Typology and this report shows how the farmsteads data can be analysed in relationship to these patterns of landscape character area and type.

Historic Farmstead Character

There are strong contrasts in Shropshire between its moorland and heathland landscapes, with small-scale farms and fields and the highest densities of farmsteads, and the lowland landscapes with large-scale regular plan farmsteads and fields, mostly resulting from of 18th and 19th century farm amalgamation and improvement. Elsewhere farmsteads and the landscapes around them developed in a piecemeal fashion from the medieval period.

Current Use

- Successive waves of investment have reshaped Shropshire to a lesser extent than much of the region, allowing a high level of historic farmstead survival.
- The proportion of farmsteads surviving in agricultural use is very similar to that typical to the region as a whole.
- Diversification in any sense has been lower than elsewhere; the tendency to on-farm diversification has been weaker than in other counties and the tendency to conversion to B1, B2 or B8 use has been slightly lower than elsewhere.
- The likelihood of conversion to residential use is very similar to that for the region as a whole.
- Participation of residents as directors of substantial business is lower than in counties with higher economic mass.

Contents

- 1 The Context for the Project
- 2 Historic Farmsteads in Shropshire
 - 2.1 Landscape and Settlement Context
 - 2.2 Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change
 - 2.3 Historic Farmstead Character
 - 2.4 Assessing Significance
- 3 The Use of Historic Farmsteads in Shropshire
- 4 Key Issues for Shropshire
- 5 Further Information

Annexe 1: Farmstead Character Areas in Shropshire

Annexe 2: National Character Area Summaries

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 SHROPSHIRE

The mapping of farmsteads across the county of Shropshire recorded 6194 farmsteads. It has in addition mapped 1764 outfarms and field barns which were established away from the main stading, to the same method. Smallholding zones have also been identified and mapped. The resulting data has been interpreted against the National Character Areas (NCAs), the Shropshire Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC) and the Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

Section 6 of the Shropshire *Historic Farmstead Characterisation Report* displays the results of this mapping, the main findings of which are summarised below. The Shropshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project, Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment and the Shropshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment are all available on the Council's website, by following links on the Environment Page: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment.nsf>

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 Shropshire most farmsteads are isolated:

- 11% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 13%) -concentrated across the central Shropshire Plain, Corve Dale and the other dales in the Shropshire Hills.
- 19% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%)

The highest densities of isolated farmsteads are located in the Oswestry Hills, the southern uplands and the mosslands and heaths in parts of the north of the county. In contrast the main landscape types with large-scale regular plan farmsteads and fields, mostly resulting from of 18th and 19th century farm amalgamation and improvement, are in the Estate Farmlands in north Shropshire and the broad valleys to the south, the Sandstone Estatelands to the east and the High Enclosed Plateau of the Clun and the Shropshire Hills. In between and across most of the county are landscapes and their farmsteads that reflect a piecemeal process of development from the medieval period, with different degrees of 18th-19th century farm amalgamation and improvement.

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 (75% for Shropshire 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** (9% of the total for Shropshire 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 Shropshire are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads. They comprise 16% of farmsteads in Shropshire and 12% of farmsteads in the West Midlands.

There can be strong local variations in the patterning of farmsteads within small areas, but definite variations between areas have also emerged from the study:

- The Upland Smallholdings around the fringes of high moorland and the Enclosed Lowland Heaths are the main Landscape Character Assessment types with small-scale farmsteads and fields, and the highest densities of farmsteads in the landscape.
- The main Landscape Character Assessment types with large-scale regular plan farmsteads and fields result from 18th and 19th century farm amalgamation and improvement. These are in the Estate Farmlands in north Shropshire and the broad valleys to the south, the Sandstone Estatelands to the east and the High Enclosed Plateau of the Clun, Shropshire Hills and Oswestry Uplands.
- Landscapes affected by the reorganisation and enlargement of fields (piecemeal reorganised enclosure) and large-scale regular enclosure of earlier farmland are also likely to retain early buildings that were incorporated within the replanning of farmsteads to regular forms in the 19th century.

Smallholdings survive in distinct zones around areas of common land that survived into the 20th century. They typically have no defined plan type, or comprise examples of the linear and other small-scale plans outlined above. They are concentrated in the lowland areas of reclaimed moss and heath (in north Shropshire in particular) and in the upland areas with access to industrial by-employment in the southern

Oswestry Uplands, the Clee Hills and the Western Uplands (including the Stiperstones). Small pockets of smallholding survive across the Shropshire Plain; a distribution which may once have been more extensive prior to the reorganisation and amalgamation of the landscape. Surviving examples are very rare.

Outfarms and field barns display strong localised patterns. Large outfarms are concentrated within the zones of large-scale farms, and field barns are apparent across the county but tend to cluster around the main settlement centres, with denser concentrations in the north of the county particularly in the dairying region, perhaps for sheltering cattle. These are generally not suitable for alternative use, and have been subject to high rates of loss.

Extensive survey undertaken for this project has also revealed the diversity of historic buildings found across the county:

- There are some exceptionally rare surviving examples of longhouses along the Welsh borders.
- There are some very rare surviving examples of 18th century and earlier cattle housing, comprising single-storey and storeyed timber-framed and stone structures across the Plain (especially in the northern dairying area), in the Shropshire Hills and along the Welsh borders.
- The largest farms had developed across the valley of the Severn and in some of the broad valleys by the 17th century, as testified by its domestic architecture and also extensive evidence for early timber-framed buildings. These are often embedded within the principal ranges of the large farmsteads which developed here in the later 18th and 19th centuries. 17th century and earlier buildings are concentrated around Shrewsbury, where large farms developed to supply its market, and across large areas of the southern hills and pastures.
- Large estate farmsteads are a distinctive feature of the Sandstone Plateau and the Shropshire Plain, part of a distribution extending into neighbouring Cheshire and Staffordshire. These areas have the main concentrations of 18th century houses and working buildings.

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. 46% of sites have sheds of this type, a figure that exceeds the total now remaining in agricultural use.

Comparison of modern and late 19th century maps, which were published after the final significant period of development of traditional farmsteads, has enabled a regional as well as local assessment of the degree to which historic farmsteads have retained their traditional character.

Across the county the rates of survival of historic farmsteads are slightly higher than the average across the West Midlands region. Across the county 88% of historic farmsteads have retained some or all of their working buildings (regional average 82%):

- 33% of farmsteads have retained all of their working buildings/ historic footprint (regional average 26%)
- 37% 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%)

Across Shropshire 5% of farmsteads have been lost (below the regional average of 10%), these being concentrated in areas of 20th century settlement expansion. On 6% of recorded sites the house survives but the working buildings have been demolished (the same as the regional average of 6%), and all the buildings on 1% of sites (regional average of 2%) have been demolished and completely rebuilt. These are concentrated in areas of 20th century settlement. Fewer farmsteads are located in villages in the northern half of Shropshire, where in most cases only the farmhouse survives or indeed the farmsteads have been lost altogether.

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 Shropshire have listed buildings, the majority of these being houses rather than working buildings.

3 THE USE OF HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN SHROPSHIRE

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 Shropshire:

- The greatest proportion of farmsteads which remain in agricultural use are in the north western and south western parts of the county.
- The greatest proportion which have fallen out of agricultural use are situated in eastern Shropshire and within a part of southern Shropshire in a zone centred on Craven Arms.
- The greatest numbers of registered offices based within historic farmsteads are located in eastern Shropshire to the south and east of Telford.
- A broad East-West divide is apparent across the county:
- Along the Welsh borders are large numbers of surviving farmsteads in agricultural use associated with land of high amenity and landscape value. Condition and use surveys of listed and unlisted farmsteads using the farmstead data have deepened our understanding of the high rates of structural disrepair found on listed buildings: around 30% of farm buildings require long-term or urgent maintenance to prevent decline.
- In the southeast of the county, access to the West Midlands conurbation appears to have increased the numbers of residential conversions of traditional farm buildings.

- It is also clear 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 tools for diversifying farm businesses and in some cases disposal onto the property market.

These figures update, deepen and complement those available for listed working 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%).

4 KEY ISSUES FOR SHROPSHIRE

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 Shropshire:

4.1 Historic Environment

Entries in the County Historic Environment Record are mostly based on the descriptions of houses and working buildings that have been listed, although in Shropshire additional dating information was provided by the 1981-82 Farm Building Survey of north Shropshire which identified 330 farmsteads associated with over 2100 farm buildings, and farmsteads previously recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) collated from unpublished grey literature reports.

There need to be mechanisms for using the evidence base so that there can be material consideration of sites that make a strong contribution to local character in planning, so that future change can work with and capitalise upon this inherited character.

The HER dataset created as a result of this project will be used to help inform change and deepen an understanding of the historic character of distinct areas and places across the county, in accordance with PPS 5 (*Planning for the Historic Environment*). The continued relevance of the project will depend upon it being used by professionals, researchers and the public.

The project has highlighted the need to use the farmsteads data to inform any future follow-on work, and integrate the results of recording of farmsteads and other historic buildings into the HER. The HER should examine methods of incorporating this data into the HER in a manner that ensures that the results of any recording – no matter how basic - are adequately archived.

4.2 Land Use

A number of county level studies have shown how the drivers for change are operating within Shropshire. For example, the Shropshire Farming Study of 2002 found that, despite a 14.6% decline in the number of workers between 1981 and 2001, 2.2% of the county's workforce is employed within the agricultural sector compared to the national average of 1%. Traditional medium sized family farms of 20-99ha are currently experiencing a variety of pressures and decreased in number by 17% between 1981 and 2001. Within the same time period the number of small farms of under 20 hectares have risen by 20%. 28.5% of respondents questioned as part of this study cited the desire to increase holding size or expand farm enterprise as anticipated reasons for change to their farm businesses. In a survey of historic farmsteads on the Attingham Estate, where the mean holding size is 127.5ha, 18% of farmers viewed their traditional farm buildings as a liability as opposed the 73% who viewed them as an asset¹. This work also showed their increased rates of redundancy and use for general storage from 1984. A survey of historic farmsteads in the Wem area found that a greater proportion of working buildings were used for animal housing on its smaller dairy farms, but that an increasing number of farmsteads have been thrown onto the property market: particularly vulnerable are those farmsteads located in areas with poorly-drained soils (the Pastoral Farmlands) in contrast to the Principal Settled Farmlands with its larger farms and varied soil types: commuters live in most of those farmsteads converted to residential use².

4.3 Farmstead Condition and the Agri-Environment Issues

Work using the early results of farmsteads mapping show its potential to understand change, and inform future adaptation and grant strategies by Natural England and others. This has included an evaluation, carried out by a student from Harper Adams College, of the levels of change, conversion and condition farmsteads across North Shropshire that were surveyed by Shropshire County Council in the early 1980s. This showed that coherent and unconverted farmstead groups were concentrated to the west, in the Oswestry Hills, but were in poor condition³. A field-based condition survey of the Shropshire Hills

1 Robinson, J. (2009) *Using the English Heritage Assessment Framework for Examining the Options for Changing the Use of Farm Buildings on Attingham Park Estate*, BSc thesis, Harper Adams University College.

2 Griffiths, P. (2010) *Can Traditional Farm Buildings Help Regenerate the Market Town of Wem, Shropshire*, BSc thesis, Harper Adams University College.

3 Holliday, M. (2008) *Changes in Use of Traditional Farm Buildings in Shropshire*, BSc thesis, Harper Adams University College.

National Character Area (NCA) was also commissioned by Natural England and carried out by Mercian Archaeology over Easter 2008 (Mercian Archaeology), assessing 85 farmsteads selected from 4 representative areas of the NCA's varied landscape. Combining analysis of preliminary results from Shropshire's Historic Farmstead Characterisation against this condition survey sample area data, it has been possible to extrapolate the survey results up to NCA level. While the Photo Image Survey conducted by English Heritage (see above) reported that below 39% of listed farm buildings had been converted to residential or non-farming use in the NCA, whilst between 21-35% were derelict, this survey indicates a higher conversion rate and towards the higher end rate of dereliction. Of the working buildings surveyed, most were in a condition requiring some restoration and maintenance to ensure their survival, with some in a very poor condition. Some farm building types, especially those associated with the common-edge settlements, seem to have experienced the highest rates of conversion.

5 FURTHER INFORMATION ON PROJECT REPORTS

5.1 Products of The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project

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.



Large-scale courtyard farmsteads developed in the dales of the Shropshire Hills and particularly in the centre and east of the county where larger-scale farms had developed from the 15th century. This was a process that went hand-in-hand with the reorganisation and enclosure of the farmed landscape (© Shropshire Council).



Small-scale farmsteads are a characteristic feature of the uplands but are also a feature of the lowlands of the county, especially on the edges of former and surviving common land (moss, marsh and heath) where small-scale farming remained important into the 19th and 20th centuries. This is a loose courtyard plan with a 17th century working building, probably built as a combined barn and cowhouse, to one side of the yard (© Shropshire Council).

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.

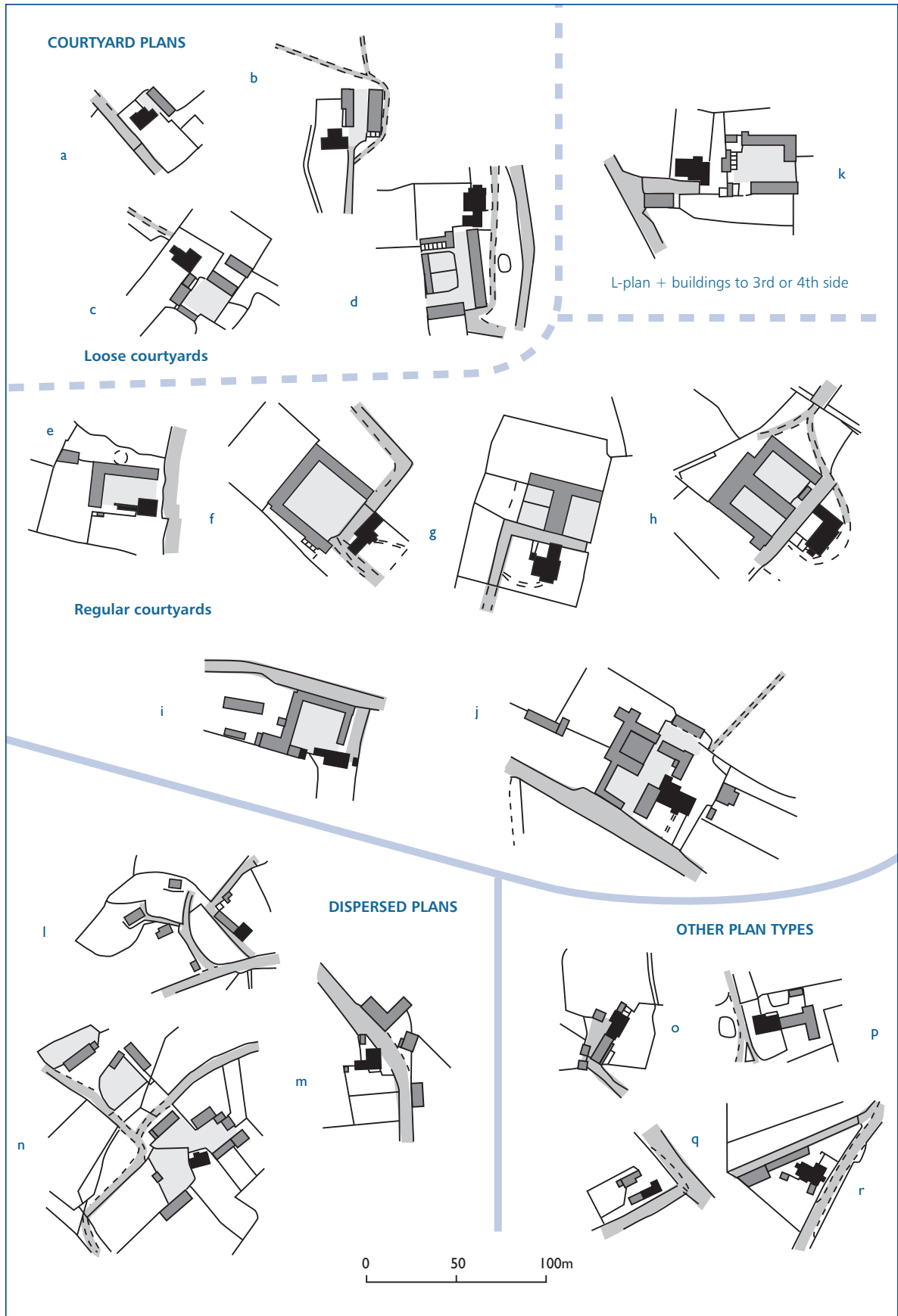
k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides which are generally large to very large in scale.

Dispersed plans subdivide into:

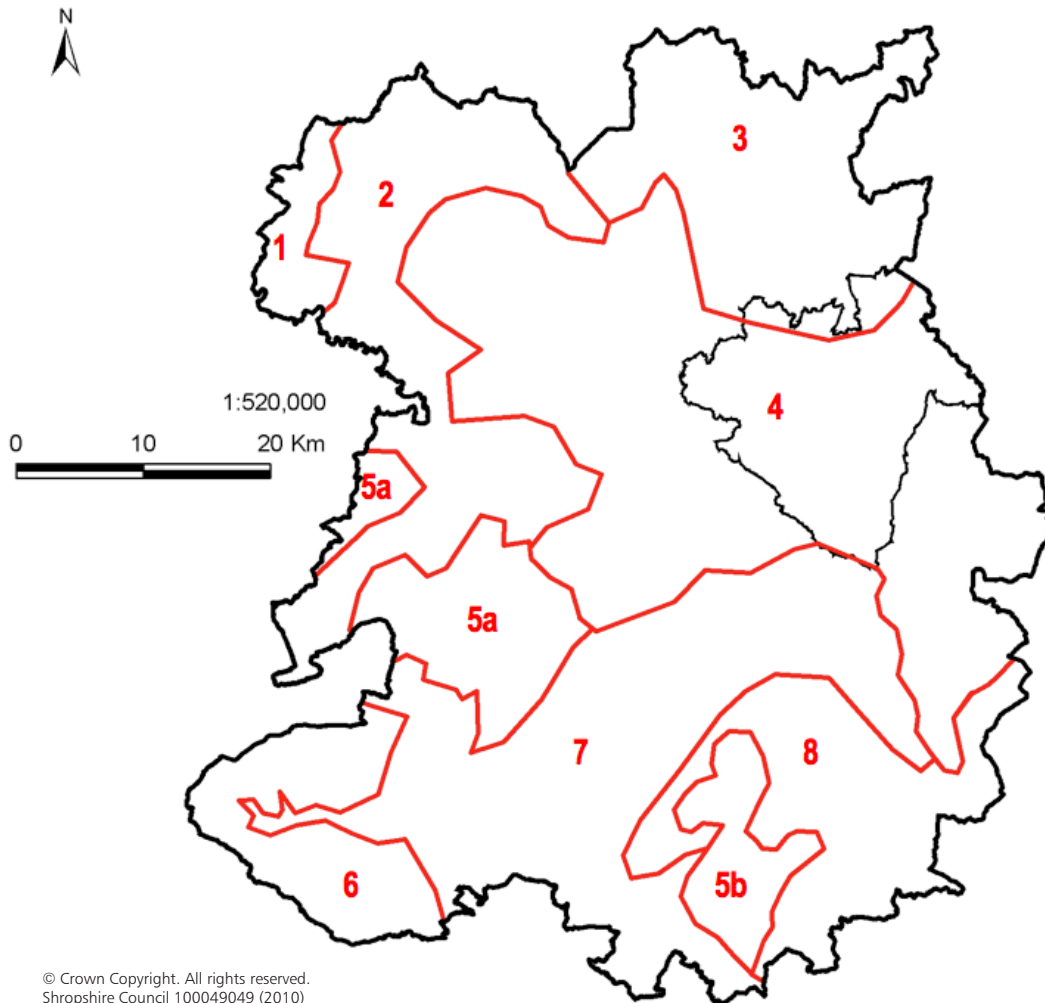
- l) Dispersed clusters where the working buildings are set within the boundary of the steading, and typically the smallest in scale in this category.
- m) Dispersed driftways which are dominated by the routeways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another. These are 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 Shropshire



The county can be further divided into Farmstead Character Areas according to the results of the farmstead data:

associated with the larger farmsteads. Medium-scale farmsteads are concentrated within the former dairying area to the north east.

1. Oswestry Uplands

- High density of dispersed very small hamlets and isolated small to medium-scale farmsteads, set within an ancient pattern of irregular enclosed fields.
- Small to medium-scale farmsteads and fields on the High Enclosed Plateau (mostly small -scale planned late 18th and 19th century enclosure).
- Smallholding landscapes to south, with very low survival of smallholding buildings.

2. North Western Shropshire

- High density of dispersed small hamlets and isolated farmsteads, particularly to the north where dairying survived longest. Irregular fields dating from the medieval period with some reorganised piecemeal and planned enclosure,

3. North East Shropshire Plain

- High density of dispersed small hamlets and isolated farmsteads, set within fields dating from the medieval clearance of woodland, marsh and heath and the later enclosure of common. There are very high densities of farmsteads in the areas of heath and former wetland such as Whixhall Moss.
- Some large nucleated settlements where survival of historic farmsteads is low and some larger farmsteads
- Planned enclosures (mostly 19th century) on heath, which has dense clusters of small farmsteads and smallholdings with some medium to large farms.
- Medium-scale farmsteads concentrated to north east dairying and stock-rearing area.

4. South/Central Shropshire Plain & Sandstone Estates

- Medium density of dispersed small hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Small-scale nucleated settlements on Shropshire Plain, with smaller number of larger nucleated settlements on Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau
- Reorganised piecemeal and planned enclosure reflects the development of estates and large farms across this area, continuing into Ape Dale and Corve Dale. There are pockets of irregular fields, such as around former areas of common land. Includes parkland and industrialised landscapes.
- Large-scale farms reflect the reorganisation and amalgamation in the 18th/19th centuries

5a. & 5b. Shropshire Hills Western Uplands & the Cleve Hills

- High density of dispersed small hamlets, isolated farms and smallholdings set within regular and irregular fields, interspersed with medium and large-scale farmsteads which also fringe the lower edges of these areas.
- Small farmsteads and smallholdings are concentrated in areas of common-edge squatter settlement, with access to by-employment in industry.

6. Clun Uplands

- Low density of isolated farmsteads, very small scatter of hamlets.
- Small-scale and irregular enclosures associated with small to medium-scale farmsteads. Large farmsteads set within regular enclosures dating from 19th century on high plateau.

7. Central Shropshire Hills, Clun Lowlands & Northern Severn Gorge

- Large farmsteads are concentrated around the valley-bottoms where larger farms developed within fields enclosed from open fields around villages. These fields were subject to later boundary removal and reorganisation.
- Increased densities of smaller-scale farmsteads in isolated farms and hamlets with fewer villages in hills and valley sides, which have smaller-scale fields with some later boundary removal.
- Small pockets of smallholdings.

8. Cleve Hills Plateau and South Severn Gorge

- Medium to high density of dispersed small hamlets and isolated farms.
- Piecemeal enclosure intermixed with small irregular fields, and late regular enclosure. Teme Valley characterised by fruit growing and hopyards.
- Medium-scale farmsteads, strong underpinning of small farms and limited large farms.

Annexe 2 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 targeting 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:

- 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain
- 63 Oswestry Uplands
- 65 Shropshire Hills
- 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau
- 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills
- 100 Herefordshire Lowlands
- 102 Teme Valley



61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain

Character

- High and very high densities of dispersed settlement, with larger hamlets and villages concentrated in west Cheshire and to central Shropshire to the south.
- 18.1% of farmsteads in Shropshire and Staffordshire are concentrated in hamlets and 16% in villages.
- Even mix of farmstead scales across the whole area but with strong local variations. Predominant pattern of very large-scale farmsteads across south of area, with very small/small to medium-scale farmsteads to north Shropshire and a mix of large-scale farmsteads intermixed with small-medium scale farmsteads elsewhere.

Survival

- Medium-high rates of survival, with 71% in Shropshire and Staffordshire retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- High-very high levels of survival of historic farmsteads, with lower levels of survival across central Shropshire, east Staffordshire and in east and

north Cheshire.

- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Three out of five farmsteads in Shropshire and Staffordshire are now in residential use - a proportion similar to that typical of the Region as a whole, while the proportion remaining in agriculture (36%) is slightly above the regional average.
- Although the proportion of farmsteads that have been entirely converted to non-agricultural non-residential use at 4% is similar to the regional average, farm diversification has been limited (less than 2% having diversified). Participation rates in business, both in farm based limited companies and as directors of substantial companies, are similar to the regional expectation for historic farmsteads

63 Oswestry Uplands

Character

- Strong pattern of dispersed settlement, with 0.4% of farmsteads in villages and 17% in hamlets.
- High-very high density of farmsteads in the landscape, lower in the eastern lowlands.
- Predominant pattern of very small (45.1%) and small to medium-scale (22.4%) farmsteads, concentrated to uplands, with large-scale farmsteads concentrated to north and to eastern lowlands.

Survival

- Very high rates of survival, with 84% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 10-20% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Agricultural use of historic farmsteads has declined and given way to residential use so that the proportion of farmsteads used as dwellings (64%) is similar to the regional average. Indicators of non agricultural other economic activity are all relatively low (including minimal farm diversification or conversion to non agricultural use, low participation in farm based companies and low participation as directors of substantial companies).

65 Shropshire Hills

Character

- High levels of dispersed settlement, nucleation along river valleys, with 16% of farmsteads in villages and 18.1% in hamlets.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape increasing in the upland areas with very high densities around the Stiperstones and the Clee Hills.
- Broad mix of farmstead scales across the area, with the vales characterised by large to very large-scale farmsteads concentrated in the vales (17.1%), 25.9% around the Stiperstones and the Clee Hills and small to medium (24.3%) to large-scale (32.3%) elsewhere.

Survival

- Medium-high rates of survival, but high away from the vales, with 69% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- The low economic mass of this NCA implies a relatively high proportion of farmsteads remaining in agriculture and explains why indicators of non-agricultural economic activity are all relatively low (including minimal farm diversification or conversion to non agricultural use, low participation in farm based companies and low participation as directors of substantial companies).

66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with 11.1% of farmsteads in villages and 17.7% in hamlets.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, increasing in some areas of woodland with very high densities to east of Wyre Forest and to south of Kidderminster.
- Predominant pattern of large to very large-scale plans (34.3 and 28.4%) concentrated in the estatelands of the north, but smaller to south (very small around Wyre Forest) and to west of Severn.

Survival

- Medium rate of survival, with 13% of historic farmsteads lost but 60% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 15-20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and above 50% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- A very high proportion of historic farmsteads have been converted to residential use (71%) with high resident participation at director level in substantial businesses (39 directorships per hundred farmsteads).

98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills

Character

- High to very high levels of dispersed settlement, with 14.8% of farmsteads in hamlets and 13.4% in villages.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, with areas of high density around Clun Forest and a low density centred around the lowlands to the south adjacent to the Herefordshire Lowlands.
- Large-scale farmsteads predominant (32.4%) but with a strong mix of other farmstead scales. Strong distinction between very small to medium scale farmsteads to Clun uplands, and very large-scale farmsteads adjacent to Herefordshire Lowlands

Survival

- High rate of survival, with 69% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 10-20% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- The proportion of farmsteads in residential use (63%) is high given very low economic mass but participation in business is low - whether measured by farmstead based companies (only 2.3%) or directorship of substantial firms.

102 Teme Valley

Character

- Nucleated settlements along river valleys, with 11.7% of farmsteads in hamlets and 9% in villages.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape across the centre of the area, very high to west and high to east.
- Broad range of scales represented, but medium (26.9%) and large-scale farmsteads (30.5) are predominant.

Survival

- High rates of survival, with 70% retaining more than half of their historic footprint
- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Despite its low economic mass this area has relatively high participation in non-agricultural farm based business (8% of farmsteads are company registered offices) and high resident participation at director level in substantial businesses (36 directorships per hundred farmsteads).
- In this NCA almost two thirds (65.7%) of historic farmsteads have been converted to residential use with 30% remaining in agriculture.

Acknowledgements for maps and plans

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