

□ *Regular plans by secondary attribute*

Regular courtyard plans can be arranged as full courtyard, L-, U-, and E-plan arrangements, always with one or more yards for the collection of manure. Buildings are carefully planned as linked ranges and often result from a single phase of building. They often display greater consistency in the use of materials and constructional detail, often employing more non-local materials like Welsh slate, than other farmstead types.

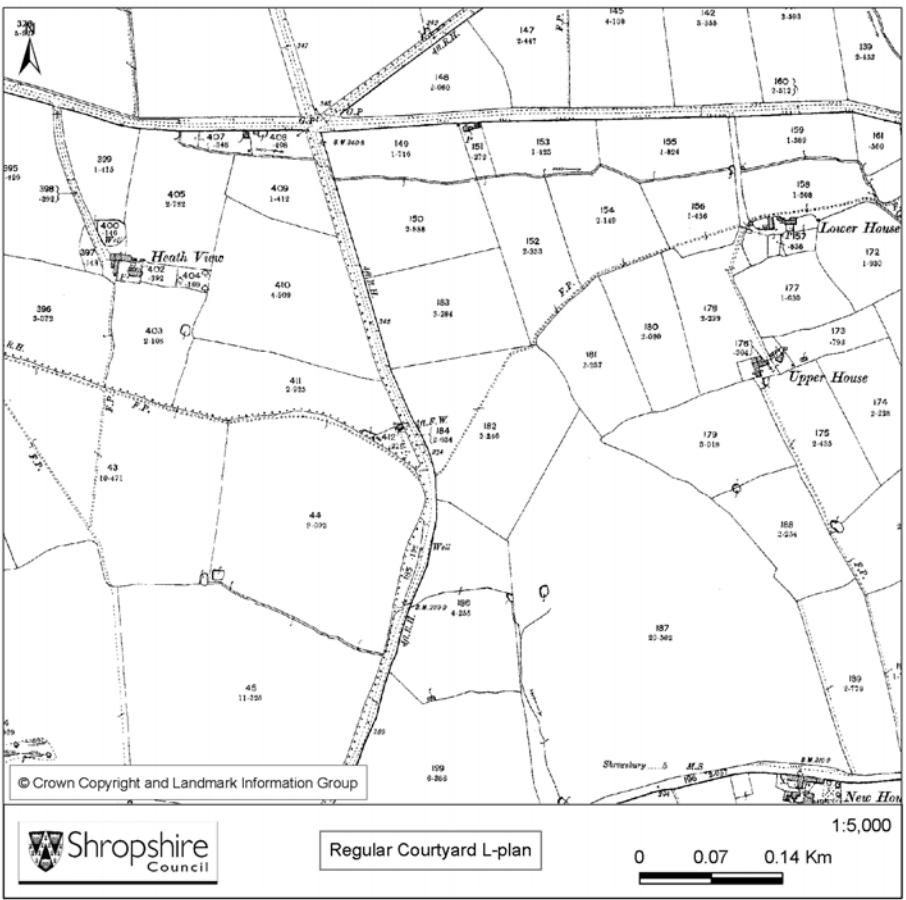
NCA	RCL	RCL3/4	RCu	RCe	RCf	RCt	RCh	RCz	RC	RCmy
Area 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain	270	208	183	62	39	43	3	10	147	354
Area 63 Oswestry Uplands	15	10	13	1	5	2	0	2	7	14
Area 65 Shropshire Hills	125	191	167	24	31	34	5	10	71	141
Area 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau	48	54	74	30	16	16	1	2	66	83
Area 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills	31	19	27	3	6	7	0	1	17	54
Area 100 Hereford Lowlands	3	2	4	0	2	3	0	0	4	4
<b>West Midlands Region</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>
<b>Shropshire</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>

*Regular Courtyard L plans*

Regular Courtyard plans of all types form the dominant farm type in the county, representing 45.5% (2816) of recorded farmsteads compared to the 29.3% of Loose Courtyards. In general the smallest regular courtyard plan is the RCL forming 7.9% of all plan types across Shropshire and making up 17.5 % of all regular courtyard plan forms. They can comprise a barn and attached shelter shed to a cattle yard, or more usually an interlinked cattle housing and fodder range. They can be either organic in their development or planned and of one phase, resulting in a range in size. This size range is reflected in their wider distribution across the county in areas of both small and large farms.

The distribution of Regular L- types is quite even across most of the county with clustering apparent, often associated with areas of smallholdings and smaller farms. In the northern half of the Shropshire Plain however the concentrations of RCL increase significantly, particularly around Dudleston Heath and Wixhall Moss. In the north of the NCA these farmsteads invariably comprise a cowhouse/fodder range related to the small-scale dairying industries within these areas. In the mixed farming areas, where the plan form is less apparent, they are more likely to comprise either a barn and shelter shed, two attached barns, or a multi-functional early-mid C19 range.

Regular Courtyard L-plans with a detached building to the third or fourth side of the yard (RCL3 and RCL4) make up 7.9% of all plan forms, and 17.2% of regular courtyard plans. Whilst they are found in similar numbers to the RCL type they have slightly different distribution. Although there is an increase in density in the northern half of the Shropshire Plain, particularly to the north east, this is not as marked as the RCL plans. Their density is also markedly lower in the Oswestry upland, and they are almost entirely absent from the Clun Hills. Their distribution however looks far denser and more evenly spread across the Shropshire Hills (which contains the highest number), with a slight increase in number to the east of the Clee Hills and south of the sandstone estatelands. Their distribution also appears to avoid the main estate lands across the central Shropshire Plain.



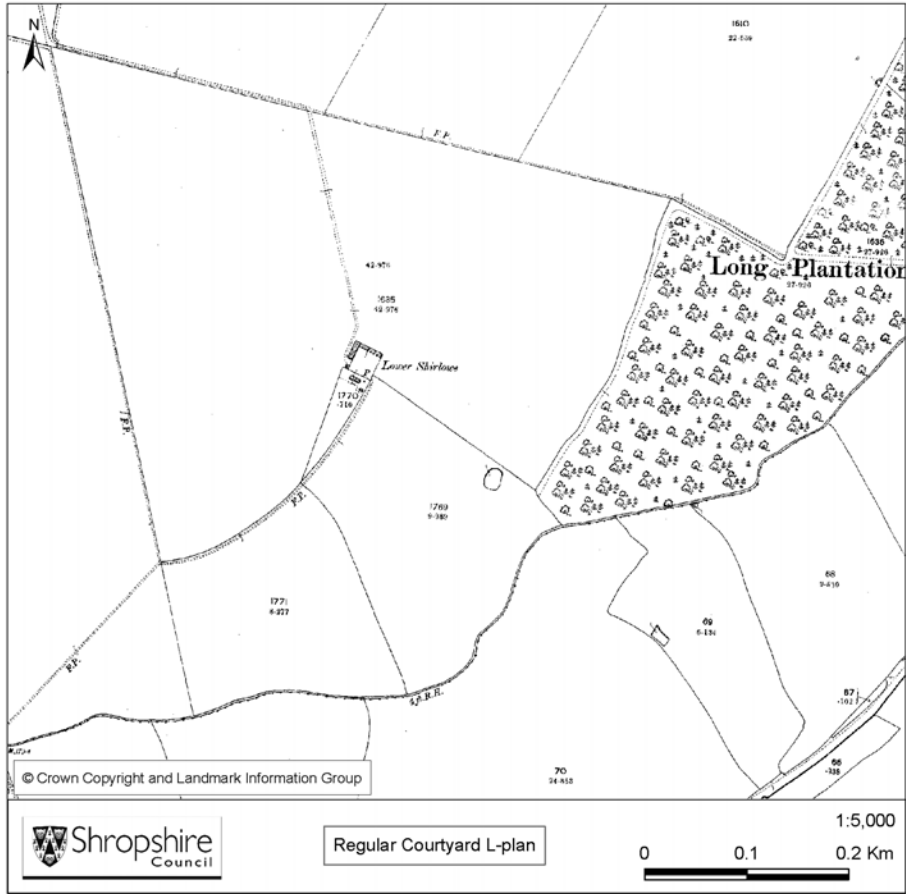
**Figure 36**

Both Heath Farm and Upper House Farm are relatively small regular courtyard L-plans set within small irregular fields.

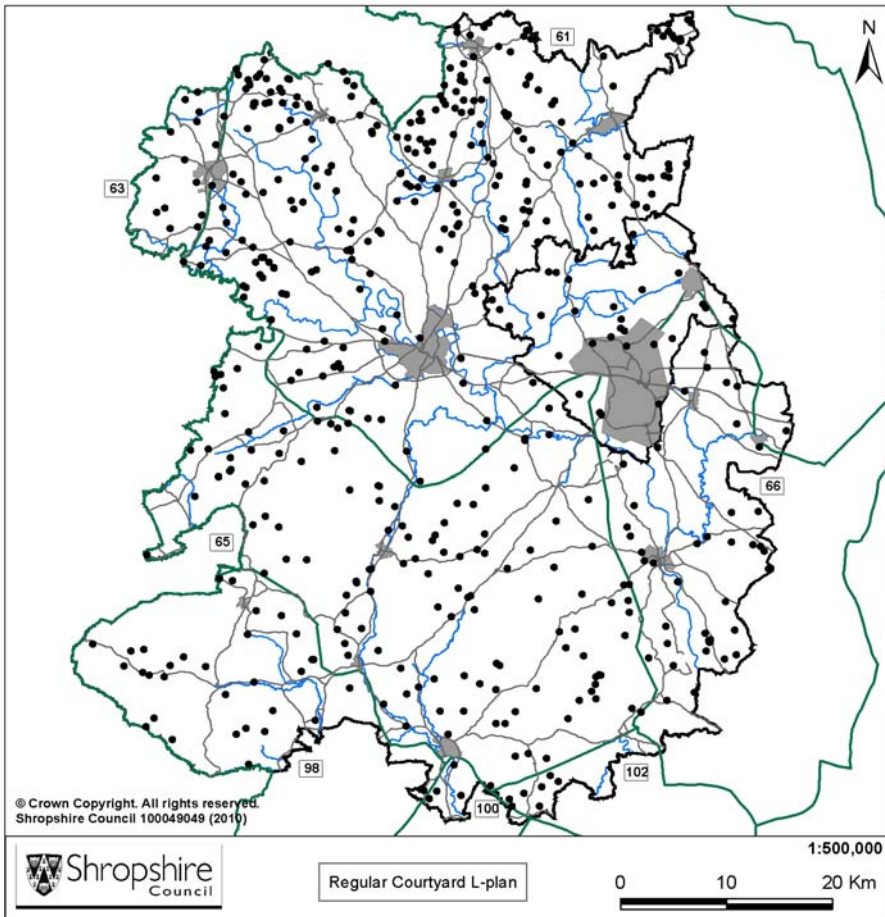
**Figure 37**

Set within reorganised piecemeal enclosure the Regular Courtyard L-plan of Lower Shirlowe Farm (now lost through 20<sup>th</sup> century reorganisation) is far larger and appears more planned

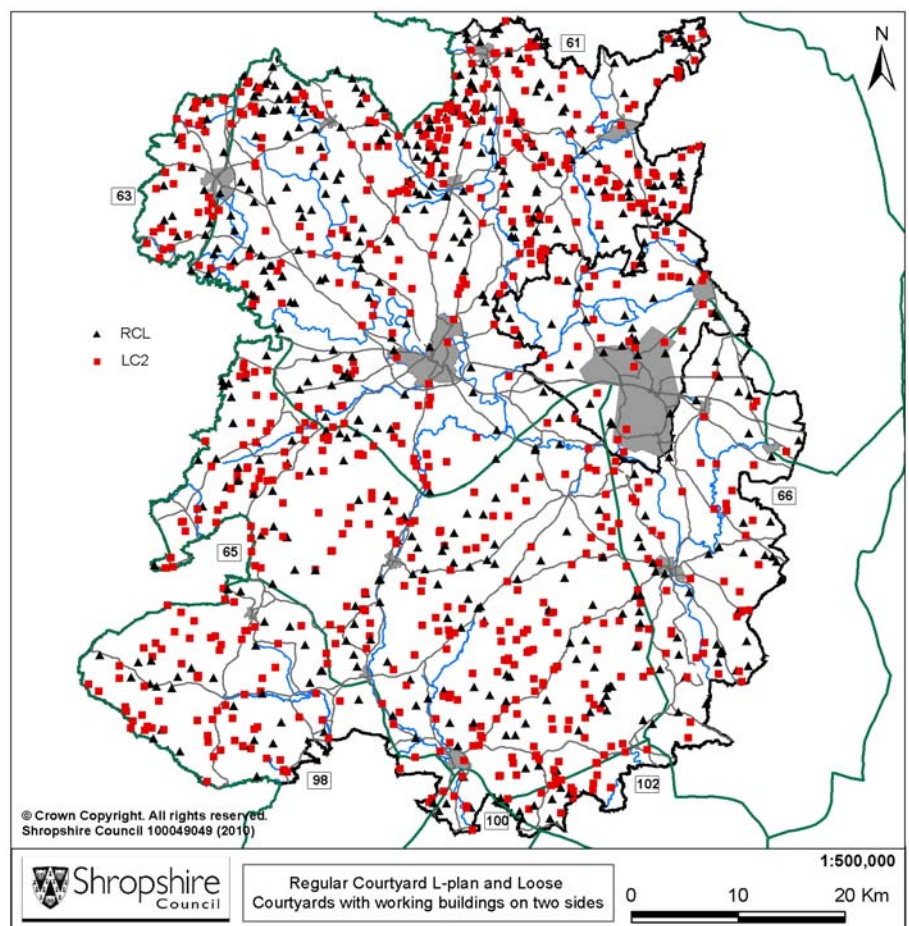
It is still however small in comparison to the large regular planned farmsteads such as the RC E- F- and multi-yard plans.



**Left, Figure 38**  
Map showing the distribution of Regular Courtyard L-plans



**Right, Figure 39**  
Map showing the distribution Regular Courtyard L-plans against the distribution of Loose Courtyards with working building on two sides.



Davies (1952, 99) noted that the L-plan tends to disappear as the farm increases in size over 100 acres, and that L-plans were most strongly associated with 50-100 acre farms. This correlates with both RCL and RCL3/4 plans which are less evident on the estate farmland across the Shropshire Plain and east of the Severn on the sandstone plateau associated with larger farms, and are often found clustered with other small to medium size farms of other types.

#### *Regular Courtyard U plans*

Regular courtyard U plans have buildings arranged around three sides of a yard which is open to one side. RCu plans represent 7.6% of all plan types across Shropshire and 16.6% of all regular courtyards. They occur in greater numbers in the south east of the county, on the timbered plateau farmlands surrounding the Clee Hills and bounded by the river Severn to the east. These areas possess more fertile soils than the uplands to the west, and the production of corn and hay on the plateau would have encouraged the growth of these larger farms. The Timbered Plateau Farmland type extends across the river into the Alverley area, into which the high density of RCu plans extends, highlighting the distinctive correlation between these farmstead types and their landscape. The RCus appear to be less strongly associated with the improved arable vales with the largest farms than they do with reorganised piecemeal and planned enclosure associated with improving estates in both lowland and improved upland areas. Of all the regular courtyard plans they are the most dominant form in the planned steadings in surveyed enclosure landscapes in the uplands. These farmstead types are generally associated with farms of 100-200 acres (Davies 1952, 102) giving them a medium size.

#### *Regular Courtyard T Plans*

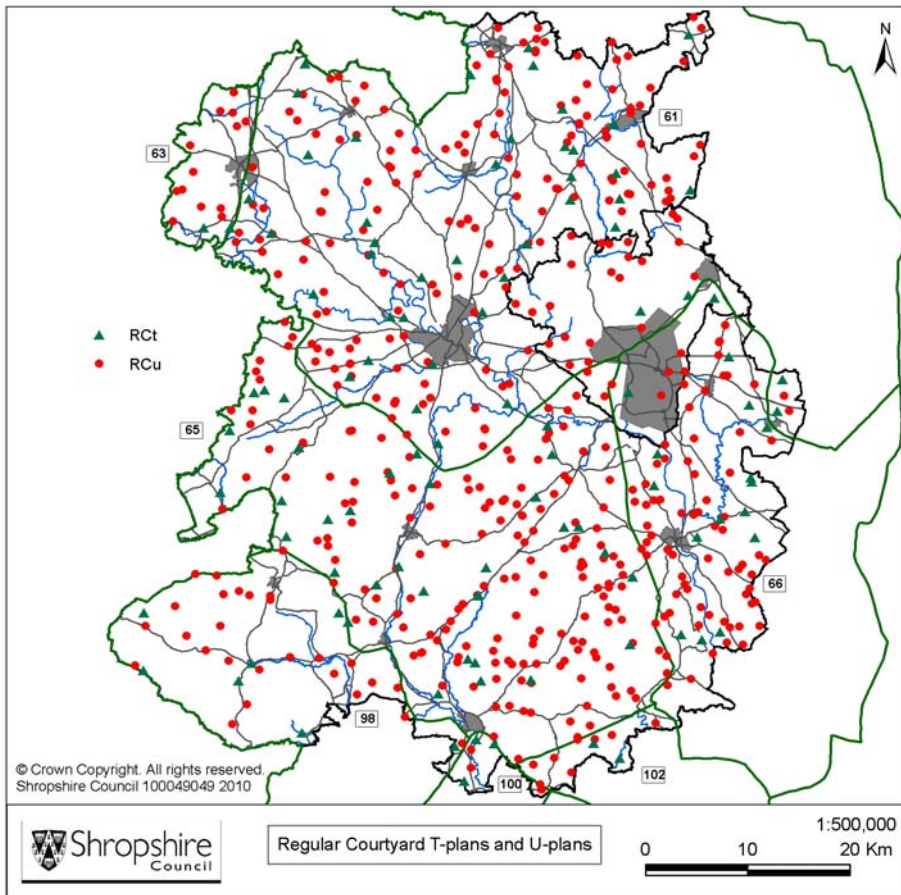
Regular courtyard farmsteads have buildings arranged as two ranges at right angles to each other, and are also generally of a medium to large size. RCt plans represent only 1.7% of all plan types and 3.8% of all regular courtyards. Their distribution is fairly sparse and for the most part evenly spread across the county with the exception of the Clun Hills and Oswestry Uplands. They exhibit a slight bias toward the estate farmland, focused along the valleys in the mixed farming areas. In these arable vales they are more likely to comprise cattle housing facing cattle yards with a projecting mixing barn (for preparing fodder). Although the RCt is a common type in Cheshire on mid-late C19 dairying farms, there is no distinctive pattern occurring along the northern border of Shropshire within the dairying areas, to reflect this model. Where they do occur in the north they are likely to comprise a cowhouse/fodder range with a projecting hay barn.

#### *Regular Courtyard Z Plans*

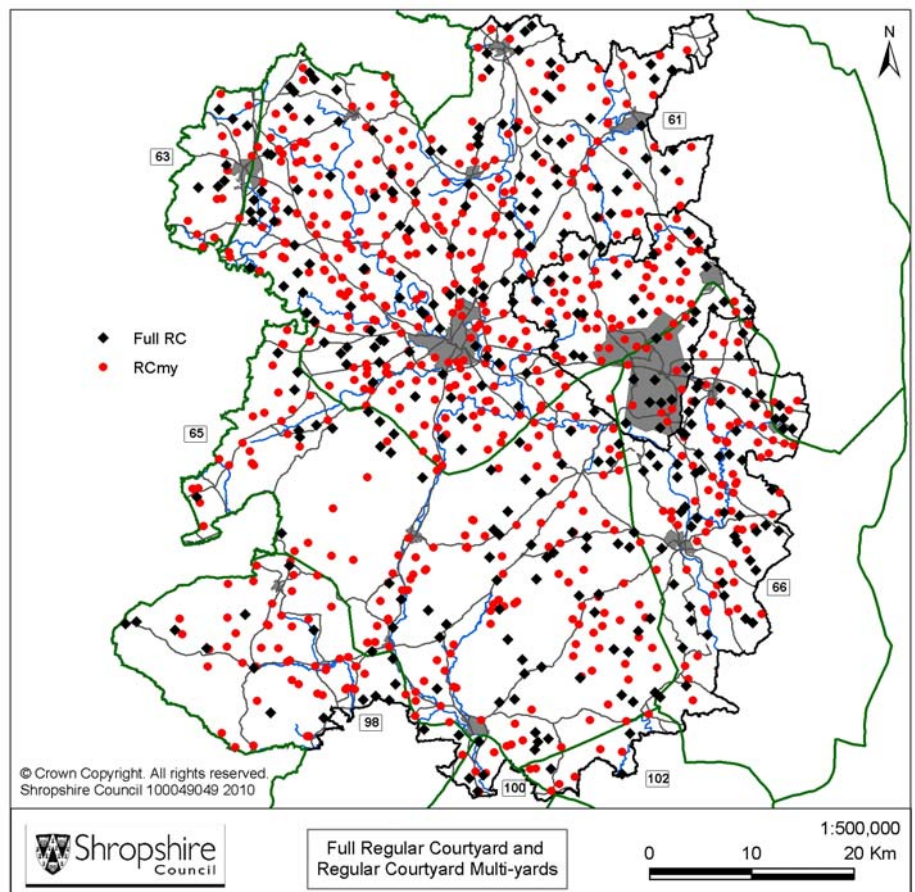
RCz is uncommon form of regular courtyard farmsteads where the buildings are arranged in a Z-shaped form. Within Shropshire they represent only 0.4% of all plan types and 0.9% of all regular courtyards. They are generally medium in size, and in many cases are of multiphase construction. A small majority sit within the principal settled farmlands and the settled pastoral farmlands, and they are generally set away from the estate lands. Most are associated with small irregular fields rather than piecemeal and reorganised piecemeal enclosure

#### *Full Regular Courtyard Plans*

Full Regular Courtyards, where generally linked ranges are set around all four sides of the courtyard, represent 5.1% of all recorded farmsteads and 11.2% of all regular courtyard types. They are usually of a medium to larger size and can include the large complex steadings of large estates. They are also sometimes found as a tertiary element in Regular Multi-yard farmsteads.



**Left, Figure 40**  
Map showing the distribution of Regular Courtyard T-plans, Regular Courtyard U-plans and Regular Courtyard Z-plans



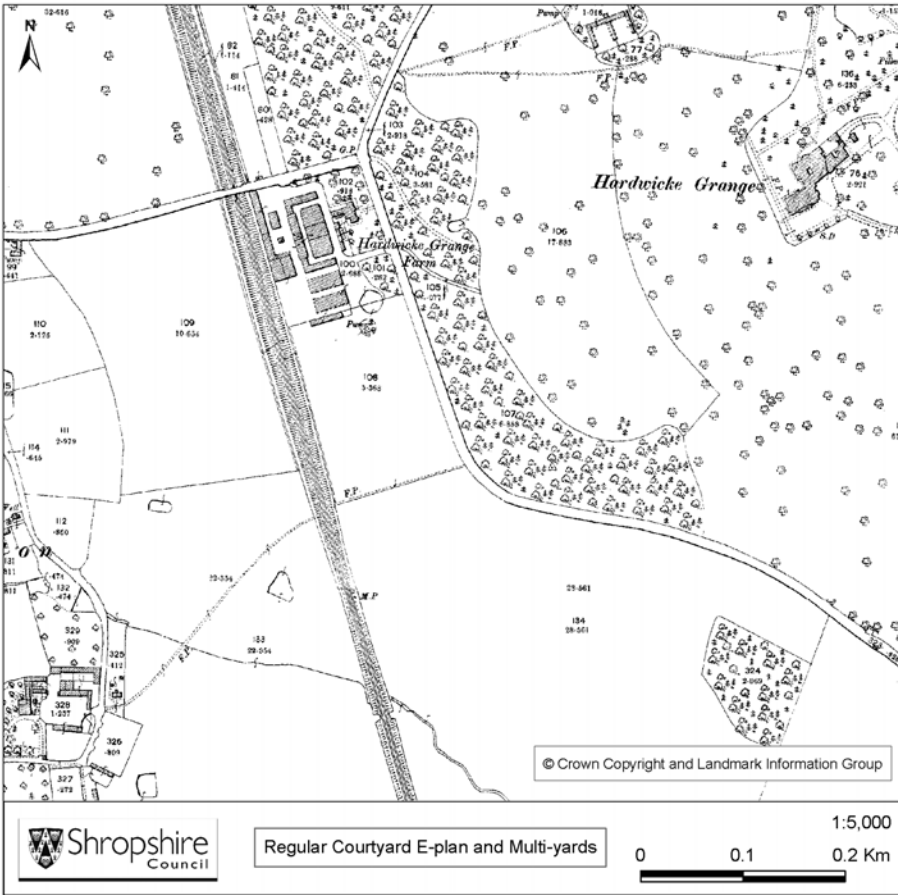
**Right, Figure 41**  
Map showing the distribution of Full Regular Courtyard plans against Regular Courtyard Multi-yards

The distribution follows that of the other larger Regular Courtyard plans, with a central band running diagonally across the county following the Severn flood plain. This plan type is synonymous with the classic model farm format of the 1750-1870s period, so it is not surprising that the majority are set within the estate lands of the Shropshire Plain, the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau and along the Corve Dale. They were also established in areas away from the estate lands where drainage was possible. Several of these are purpose built listed 19<sup>th</sup> century farm building ranges, some including earlier farm buildings that were improved and incorporated into the full regular courtyard plan. Many of the sites are also associated with manors or parkland, suggesting their status as estate centres. A strong distribution is also apparent on the timbered plateau farmlands, following a similar distribution to the RCu. It is possible that some may have evolved from u-plan layouts. Across the rest of Shropshire the distribution in the Oswestry Uplands, the Clun Hills and the Shropshire Hills, and to a certain extent the north eastern area of the Shropshire Plain, are relatively sparse in comparison. Here full regular courtyards are often associated with 19<sup>th</sup> century planned enclosure of the uplands and lowland heath.

#### *Regular Courtyard Multi-Yard Plans*

The largest of the Regular Courtyard plans are those with more than one yard, namely the RCmy, RCh, RCe, and the RCf. They are strongly indicative of farmsteads with holdings of 300 acres or over and sited in landscapes subject to intense capital investment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (especially c1840-1870s). They are predominantly associated with cattle yards for store cattle/ fattening and the production of manure using large quantities of straw (a by-product of the corn harvest), imported feed and hay, with the possible exception of the F plan which may include cowhouse/ hay barn ranges in dairying areas. Regular courtyard multi-yards are farmstead with multiple yards which are grouped together and regularly arranged (other than the defined F- E- H- T- or Z-plans, although these can be incorporated as tertiary elements). RCmy plans represent 10.6% of all plan types, second only to linear farmsteads, and make up 23.4% of all regular courtyard plan forms. Their association with the estate lands is clearly visible, dominating the central Shropshire Plain, the sandstone estate land of the Mid Severn Plateau, and following the estate land running through the Corve Dale, the Bishops Castle basin and the valleys of the Clun Hills. They also feature heavily on the principal settled farmlands where drainage was possible, along the Ape Dale, the Rea Valley and the lowland areas of the Oswestry Hills, they are second only to dispersed multi-yards in these areas. A significant although more dispersed distribution is also apparent on the timbered plateau farmlands east of the Clee Hills. There is a sparser distribution in the dairying areas in the northern Shropshire, the most notable scatter in this area being between Whitchurch and Market Drayton to the east where large mixed farms developed.

Regular courtyard F-plans where the buildings are arranged around one or two cattle yards follow a similar distribution to the Regular courtyard multi-yards (9 of which include a tertiary RCf element). The vast majority lie within the estate lands and some on the principal settled farmlands. On the northern boundary with Cheshire they again focus on the dairying area between Whitchurch and Market Drayton. Regular courtyard E-plan where the buildings are arranged around two cattle yards, have a stronger concentrations on the eastern side of the county, again focusing on the estate lands, principal settled farmlands, and between Whitchurch and Market Drayton. There is also a notable cluster around the Weald Moors, related to estate improvements, and continuing north towards the lowland heaths. A further 16 RCe are featured as a tertiary elements to the RCmy plan. Regular courtyard farmsteads where the buildings are most commonly arranged with cattle housing to two or more cattle yards are the least common of the multiple yard plan regular forms. A further 4 RCh are featured as a tertiary elements to the RCmy plan.



**Figure 42**

Large regular planned farmsteads including two regular multi-yards, substantial covered yards and an E-plan outfarm complex. These are set within a parkland landscape, surrounded by reorganised piecemeal and planned enclosure.

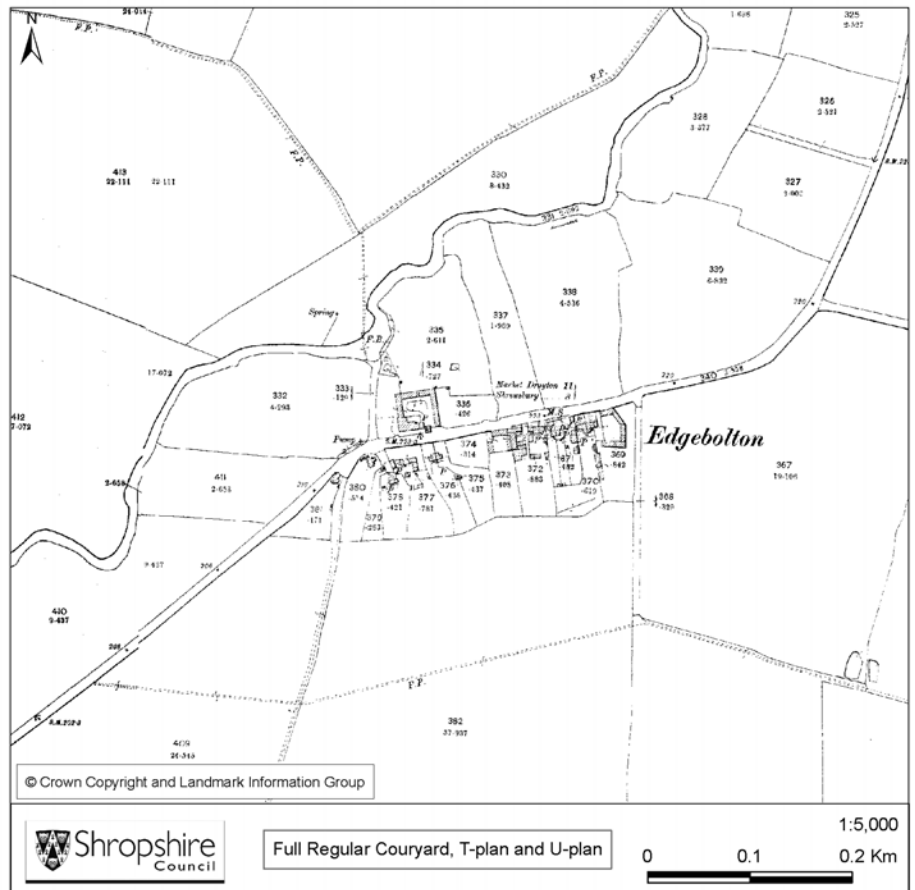
**Figure 43**

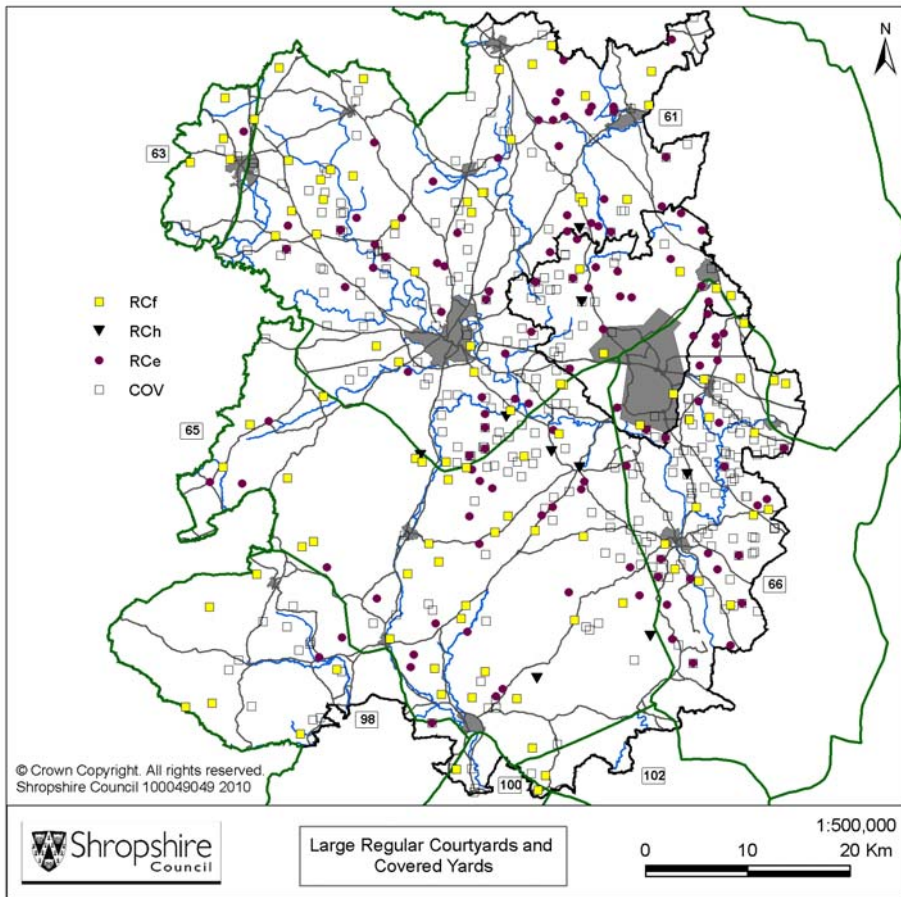
The full regular courtyard of Edgebolton Farm sits on the north side of the hamlet of Edgebolton.

In the centre is Middle Farm House forming a Regular courtyard T-plan developed through incremental growth.

To the east is Two Hoots Farm forming an Regular Courtyard U-plan.

The hamlet and farmsteads are set within a landscape of piecemeal and reorganised piecemeal enclosure to the south and large-scale planned enclosure to the north.





**Left, Figure 44**

Map showing the distribution of Regular Courtyard F-plans, Regular Courtyard H-plans, Regular Courtyard E-plans and Covered Yards

*Covered Yards*

Covered yards are most strongly associated with regular plans. The earliest date from the 1850s and they are either whole new-builds (usually of the 1850s to late 1870s, when capital to invest in building projects dried up on the whole) or more commonly post-1870s adaptations to earlier farmsteads. The latter are found in the angle of Regular Courtyard L-ranges including those with additional working buildings to the third and fourth side or within cattle yards in larger Regular Courtyard farmsteads. Covered yards are rarely associated with loose courtyards and dispersed plan forms.

**Right, Figure 45**

Map showing the distribution of Full Regular Courtyard plans against Regular Courtyard U-plans.

