

6.3 20th Century Change

The end of the 19th century falls at the end of the last phase of investment in traditional farmstead plans and buildings. The rising costs of labour, feeds and other inputs, combined with the decline in prices and rising levels of imports, ensured that little was invested in fixed capital in the period up to the Second World War, although the rates of investment were subject to regional variation. Arrears in rent characterised the period, even in years of relative recovery (such as after 1936 in arable areas). As a consequence there was little fresh investment in farm buildings other than repair and modification, and any buildings constructed tended to be of the cheapest materials. Many, such as Dutch barns, were prefabricated, and concrete and corrugated iron or asbestos sheet were being increasingly used for the refitting of cow and dairy units and the repair of traditional roofs. National and local surveys, such as the 1910 Land Tax Survey, attest to the growing levels of disrepair, especially of pre-improvement farm buildings using traditional materials such as thatch and timber.

The continued promotion of scientifically based agriculture was matched by the application of new ideas on ventilation and farm hygiene to farm buildings, such as the regulations for dairying introduced in 1885. This was affected mostly through the conversion of existing buildings (especially stabling into dairies). In the inter-war period, cereal, poultry and dairy farmers, and pig producers using imported US feed, were in the vanguard of cost-cutting innovation that had a strong impact on post-war developments. County Councils entered the scene as a builder of new farmsteads, built in mass-produced materials but in traditional form, in response to the Government's encouragement of smallholdings of up to 50 acres (20 hectares).

The 1937 Agriculture Act anticipated the need to increase self-sufficiency, and the Second World War witnessed a 60% rise in productivity, the result of the growth in livestock numbers, increasing scientific and government control and guidance, more specialised systems of management and the conversion to arable of permanent pasture. The Agriculture Act of 1947 heralded the intensification and increased specialisation of farming in the post-war period, accompanied by the development of government and industry research and guidance. From the mid-1950s, strongly influenced by American models, there emerged a growing body of trade and advisory literature. The first of these, produced in 1956, highlighted the dilemma of 'old buildings too good to pull down but not suitable for their new purposes' (Benoy 1956). The Government provided grants to cover the capital cost of new building under the Farm Improvement Scheme (introduced 1957). The introduction of wide-span multi-purpose sheds in concrete, steel and asbestos met increasing requirements for machinery and for the environmental control of livestock and on-farm production, particularly of milk. The national stock of farm buildings grew by a quarter between 1945 and 1960 alone. The Agricultural Research Council's *Farm Buildings Survey of England* (published 1967) estimated that the average farmstead contained 6 pre-1914 buildings, 2.4 from 1918–45 and 2.5 built since 1945.

□ Change to Historic Farmstead Form

Each farmstead was assigned to one of six categories below:

Survival	EXT	Extant – no apparent alteration
	ALT	Partial Loss – less than 50% change
	ALTS	Significant Loss – more than 50% alteration
	DEM	Total Change – Farmstead survives but complete alteration to plan
	HOUS	Farmhouse only survives
	LOST	Farmstead/Outfarm totally demolished



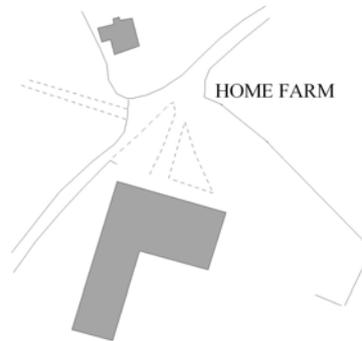
EXT - No change from Late C19



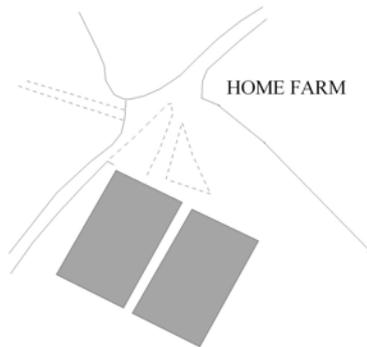
ALT - Less than 50% loss since Late C19



ALTS - More than 50% loss since Late C19
SIDE - Modern shed to side of Late C19 footprint



HOUS - Only farmhouse survives from Late C19 (either as part of a farmstead or alone)
SITE - Modern shed on footprint of Late C19 farmstead



DEM - Farmstead survives but no surviving features from Late C19
SITE - Modern sheds on footprint of Late C19 farmstead

LOST - Farmstead completely lost from landscape through redevelopment or demolition

NCA	EXT	ALT	ALTS	HOUS	LOST
Area 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain	882 (33.9%)	932 (35.8%)	429 (16.5%)	211 (8.1%)	115 (4.4%)
Area 63 Oswestry Uplands	139 (49.8%)	96 (34.4%)	18 (6.5%)	15 (5.4%)	11 (3.9%)
Area 65 Shropshire Hills	624 (32.0%)	722 (36.9%)	376 (19.3%)	141 (7.2%)	71 (3.6%)
Area 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau	172 (25.7%)	258 (38.6%)	137 (20.5%)	41 (6.1%)	55 (8.2%)
Area 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills	177 (31.5%)	209 (37.2%)	103 (18.3%)	36 (6.4%)	28 (5.0%)
Area 100 Hereford Lowlands	3 (6.7%)	25 (55.6%)	13 (28.9%)	4 (8.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Area 102 Teme Valley	28 (33.3%)	37 (44.0%)	14 (16.7%)	7 (3.6%)	2 (2.4%)
Total (% of all farmsteads)	2025 (32.6%)	2279 (36.7%)	1090 (17.6%)	451 (7.3%)	282 (4.6%)

Table 6 Farmstead Survival (percentages against total number of farmsteads in each NCA)

Analysis of the results, provided in table 2 above, shows that farmsteads within some NCAs have been more susceptible to change than others on the basis of the percentage of farmsteads that were recorded within the two categories of least change - EXT, little or no discernable change since the late 19th century or ALT, less than 50% loss of buildings since the late 19th century. On average the survival rate across Shropshire is 71% of farmsteads have little or no change to their historic footprint, 25% have had significant alteration or only have the house remaining, and 4% have been lost.

The Oswestry Uplands NCA and the Teme Valley NCA stand out as having greater survival of farmsteads with 84.2% and 77.3% of farmsteads falling into EXT and ALT categories, although the Teme Valley NCA sample is relatively small and the majority falls outside of Shropshire. There is a slight drop to the next three, with the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA (69.7%), the Shropshire Hills NCA (68.9%) and the Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills (68.7%), all having similar levels of survival, still at relatively high percentages.

In contrast two NCAs showed markedly lower levels of farmsteads survival within these categories of least change: Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau (64.3%) and the Hereford Lowlands (62.3%). The distribution of lost farmsteads shows that the major factor that has resulted in the removal of farmsteads is urban development. For example, on the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau the expansion of Telford has resulted in the loss of many farmsteads. With the Hereford Lowlands, it should be noted that the sample is relatively small, and the majority of the character area lies outside of the county.

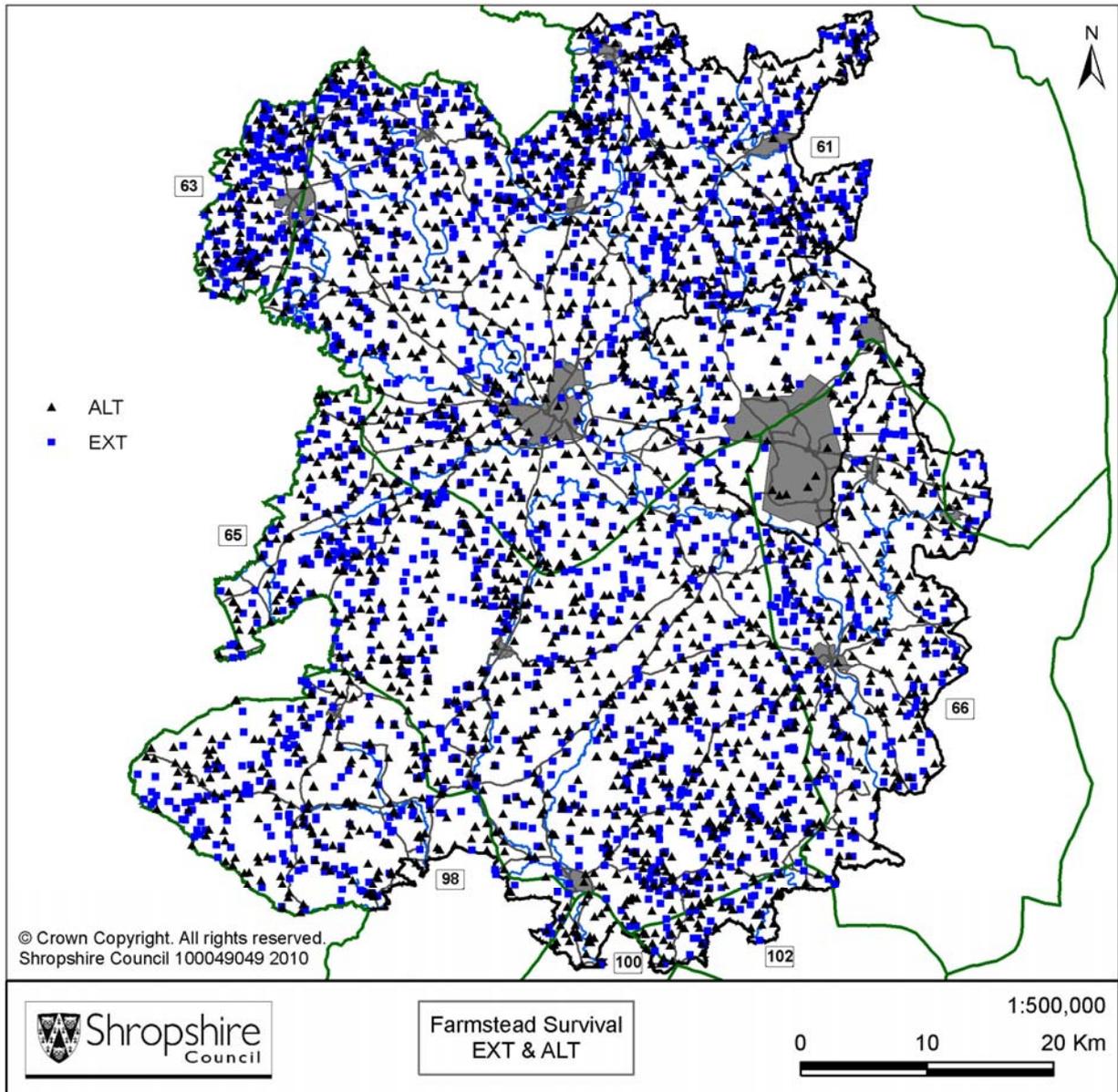
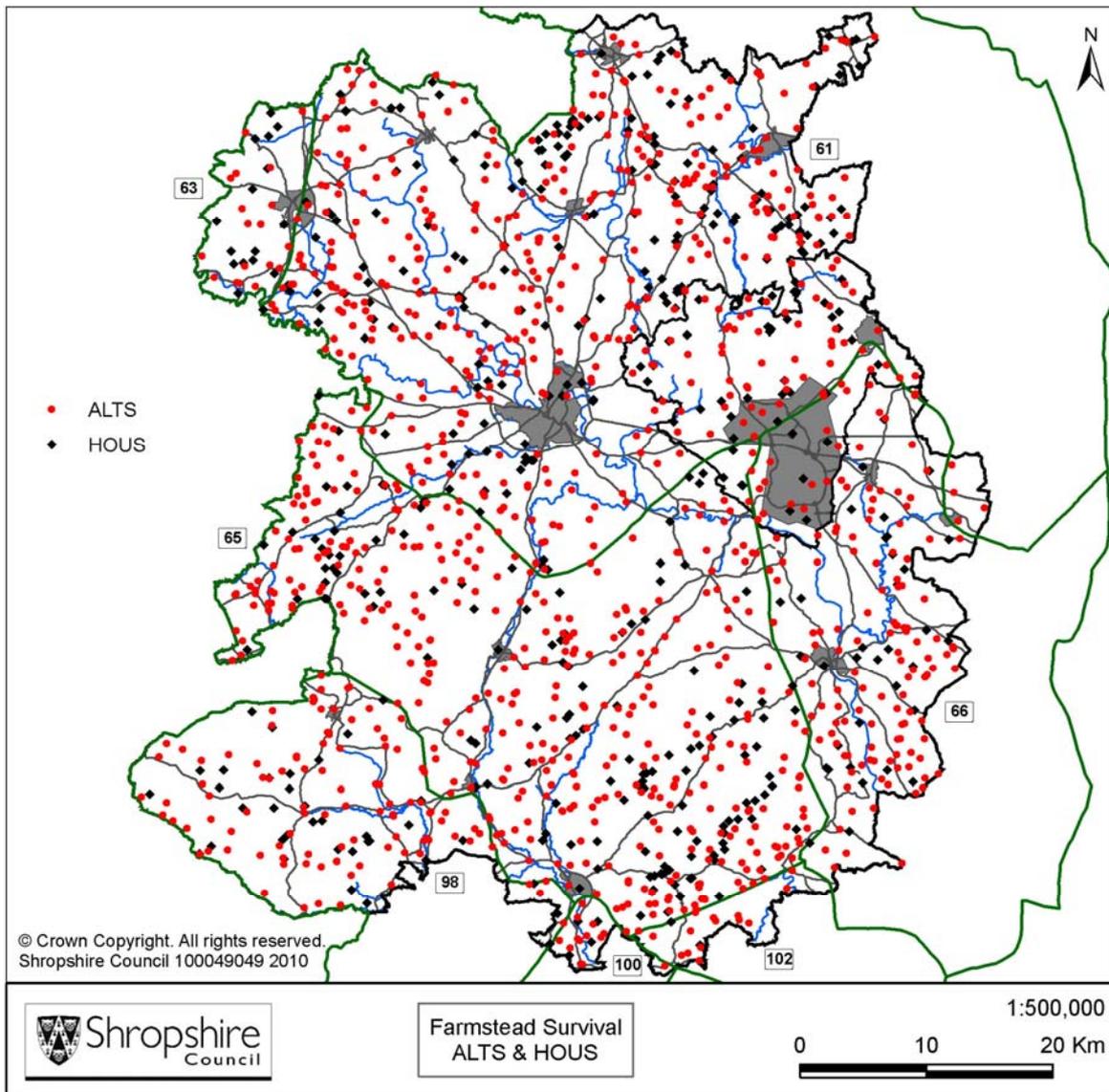


Figure 16 Distribution of EXT - little or no discernable change since the late 19th century and ALT, less than 50% loss of buildings since the late 19th century.

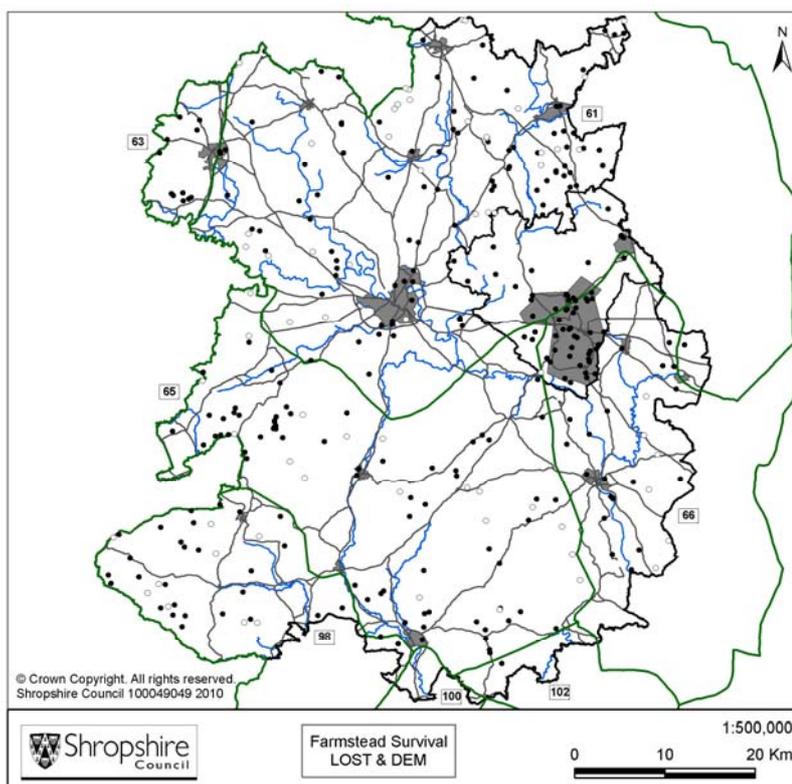


Above, Figure 17

Map showing the distribution of farmsteads that have undergone considerable change in the 20th century. Denser distributions are apparent in upland locations, or within the less agriculturally viable lands such as heath, both associated with smaller farms. Away from these areas, the southern end of the Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau and the south eastern extent of the Cleve Hills plateau appear to be the focus for much change. With well connected route ways to the midlands conurbation, the area is fast becoming a prized location for commuters.

Right, Figure 18

Map showing the distribution of farmsteads that have been lost or entirely replaced by modern farms (DEM) in the 20th century. Note the significant number of lost farmsteads in the Telford area.



PLAN	EXT	ALT	ALTS	HOUS	LOST
LC1	54.8%	19.5%	6.7%	12.6%	6.4%
LC2	35.7%	30.4%	18.4%	10.5%	5.0%
LC3	24.7%	45.6%	21.5%	5.1%	3.2%
LC4	24.4%	48.7%	21.8%	3.8%	1.3%
LCL3	25.0%	52.0%	16.7%	4.9%	1.5%
LCL4	24.5%	39.6%	24.5%	5.7%	5.7%
RCL	44.6%	30.8%	13.0%	8.1%	3.4%
RCL3	34.9%	42.6%	18.0%	4.0%	0.5%
RCL4	21.5%	48.6%	22.4%	3.7%	3.7%
RCu	36.4%	36.0%	18.2%	7.0%	2.3%
RCe	26.7%	41.7%	27.5%	2.5%	1.7%
RCf	27.0%	46.0%	23.0%	1.0%	3.0%
RCt	21.0%	44.8%	21.0%	8.6%	4.8%
RCh	11.1%	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%
RCz	32.0%	36.0%	28.0%	4.0%	0.0%
RC	25.6%	45.2%	24.7%	2.6%	1.9%
RCmy	16.8%	52.6%	24.9%	3.4%	2.3%
DISPcl	9.9%	33.7%	28.7%	22.8%	5.0%
DISPdw	31.1%	32.9%	22.2%	9.0%	4.8%
DISPmy	14.4%	49.2%	31.6%	3.2%	1.6%
LIN	46.2%	23.7%	4.6%	10.9%	14.5%
LP	44.9%	29.9%	9.3%	9.3%	6.5%
PAR	50.0%	19.2%	3.8%	25.0%	1.9%
ROW	42.3%	23.1%	26.9%	5.8%	1.9%

Table 7: Plan types and Change

Of the plan types, the linear farmstead has encountered the most loss in comparison to any other plan form. Those that have been lost are often found in upland locations, associated with areas of squatter enclosure. Smaller plan forms, such as the LINs, LPs, LC1, and the Dispersed driftways and clusters were worst affected by the total loss of the farmstead during the 20th century. These are likely to be the least agriculturally viable plan forms, unable to deal with modern farming practices. They are more likely to have become agriculturally redundant in the early 20th century and are therefore the type of farmsteads to be absorbed into larger farms. During the rationalisation of the 18th and 19th centuries it is likely that these were also the type of farms that were removed during the reorganisation of the landscape. It is therefore likely that the number and distribution of the smaller farmsteads was far more extensive across Shropshire, particularly in northern and eastern areas where rationalisation is most evident.

However of the farmsteads that do survive, the smaller farms are among those least affected by change i.e. EXT - little or no discernable change or ALT, less than 50% loss of buildings. Farmstead plans such as the RCL (75.5%), the LP (74.8%) and the

LC1 (74.3%) have some of the best survival rates, although it should be noted that the farmsteads in these categories have the least numbers of buildings to lose. Despite this, the farmstead plans with the highest survival rates are the RCL3 and LCL3 plan forms, at 77.5% and 77.0% respectively. This may therefore suggest that many of these farmsteads, generally thought of to be of a medium size, can in fact be relatively small. This is further reinforced by the high rate of total loss of these plans.

The plan forms that have experienced the most change are those assigned to the ALTS category - significant loss with more than 50% alteration or HOUS, where the farmhouse only survives. Dispersed Clusters have a combined percentage of 51.5% and Dispersed multi-yards 34.8%. For the smaller Dispersed Clusters, their poorer survival rate may relate their limited 'adaptability' for modern large-scale farming practices. For Dispersed Multi-yards, as we will see in the next section, large modern sheds have often been placed on the footprints of historic working building to convert them to covered yards to house stock. It is therefore possible that survival rates for these farms may in fact be better than anticipated.

▯ *Sheds*

Recording the presence of large modern sheds provides information regarding the present-day character of the farmstead and is a good indication as to whether a farmstead had remained in agricultural use after 1950, when these sheds were widely adopted by the agricultural industry. A differentiation is made between examples where the large shed stand on the site of the historic farmstead or to the side.

Sheds	SITE	Large modern sheds on site of historic farmstead – may have destroyed historic buildings or may obscure them
	SIDE	Large modern sheds to side of historic farmstead – suggests farmstead probably still in agricultural use

Whilst the presence of a modern shed on part or all of the footprint of the historic farmstead may imply the loss of the earlier buildings, this is not always the case; historic ranges, particularly cattle housing, may have been retained when yards were covered. Thus the presence of large sheds on the site can act as a warning that there may be a lesser degree of change than is suggested by the mapping.

NCA	No. (%) of farmsteads with Sheds to SIDE	No. (%) of farmsteads with Sheds on SITE
Area 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain	784 (30.1%)	390 (15.0%)
Area 63 Oswestry Uplands	69 (24.7%)	16 (5.7%)
Area 65 Shropshire Hills	618 (31.7%)	377 (19.3%)
Area 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau	176 (26.3%)	86 (12.9%)
Area 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills	160 (28.5%)	110 (19.6%)
Area 100 Hereford Lowlands	3 (6.7%)	11 (24.4%)
Area 102 Teme Valley	24 (28.6%)	9 (10.7%)

**Table 8: Distribution of large modern sheds
(Percentage according to number of farmsteads in each NCA)**

The highest proportion of farmsteads with sheds located to the side of historic farmsteads is found in the Shropshire Hills NCA with 31.7% of farms in that area. This is closely followed by the Shropshire Plain NCA, where 30.1% of farms have sheds to the side. Farmstead mapping reveals that sheds located to the side feature heavily in stock rearing and mixed farming areas rather than arable, suggesting these sheds are used to house livestock. This is particularly evident in the north of Shropshire where the dairying industry is widespread. It must however be noted that in arable areas cattle yards could be covered and sheds, used for fodder and equipment, could be located away from the steading.

Although the Herefordshire Lowlands has the lowest number of sheds found to the side, it has the greatest number found on the site of historic farm buildings, reflecting the higher rates of change seen in this area. After this there is a drop in the number of sheds found on site, to 19.6% of farms found in the Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills NCA and 19.3% of those in the Shropshire Hills NCA. The Oswestry Uplands NCA has the fewest number of sheds in total, with only 5.6% of the farms having sheds on the site of historic buildings, reflecting the higher rate of survival seen in this area.

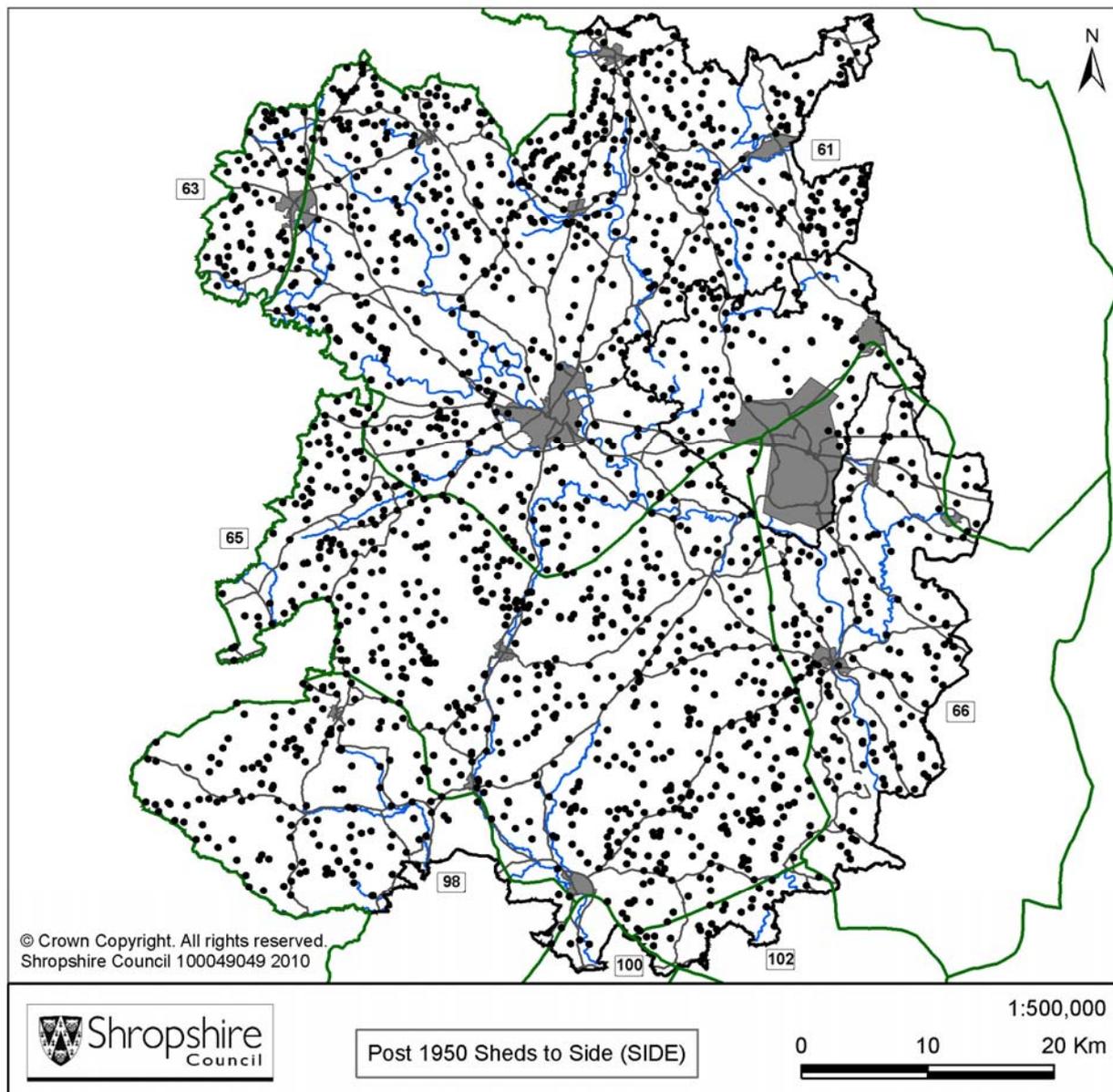


Figure 19: Distribution of Sheds found to the side of historic farmsteads (SIDE)

The plan types most commonly associated with sheds to the side are the RCL3, LCL3, LC3 and the RCu, all generally viewed as medium sized farmsteads. The RCL3, LCL3, LC3 all feature heavily in the northern dairying region along side the smaller RCL plans, which have the highest proportion of sheds to the side compared to any other small plan type. As the dairying industry expanded, modern sheds were needed to house cattle on small to medium sized farms as the historic cattle yards were no longer fit for purpose. Unlike larger farms it was not appropriate to cover over the historic cattle yards due to their smaller size, so new sheds were built to the side. This corresponds to the better rates of survival seen for these farms.

The plan types most commonly affected by sheds on the site of the farmstead are the larger plan forms, with RCmy being most affected, followed by RCe, DISPmy and full RC. These plan types are all characterised by their large cattle yards.

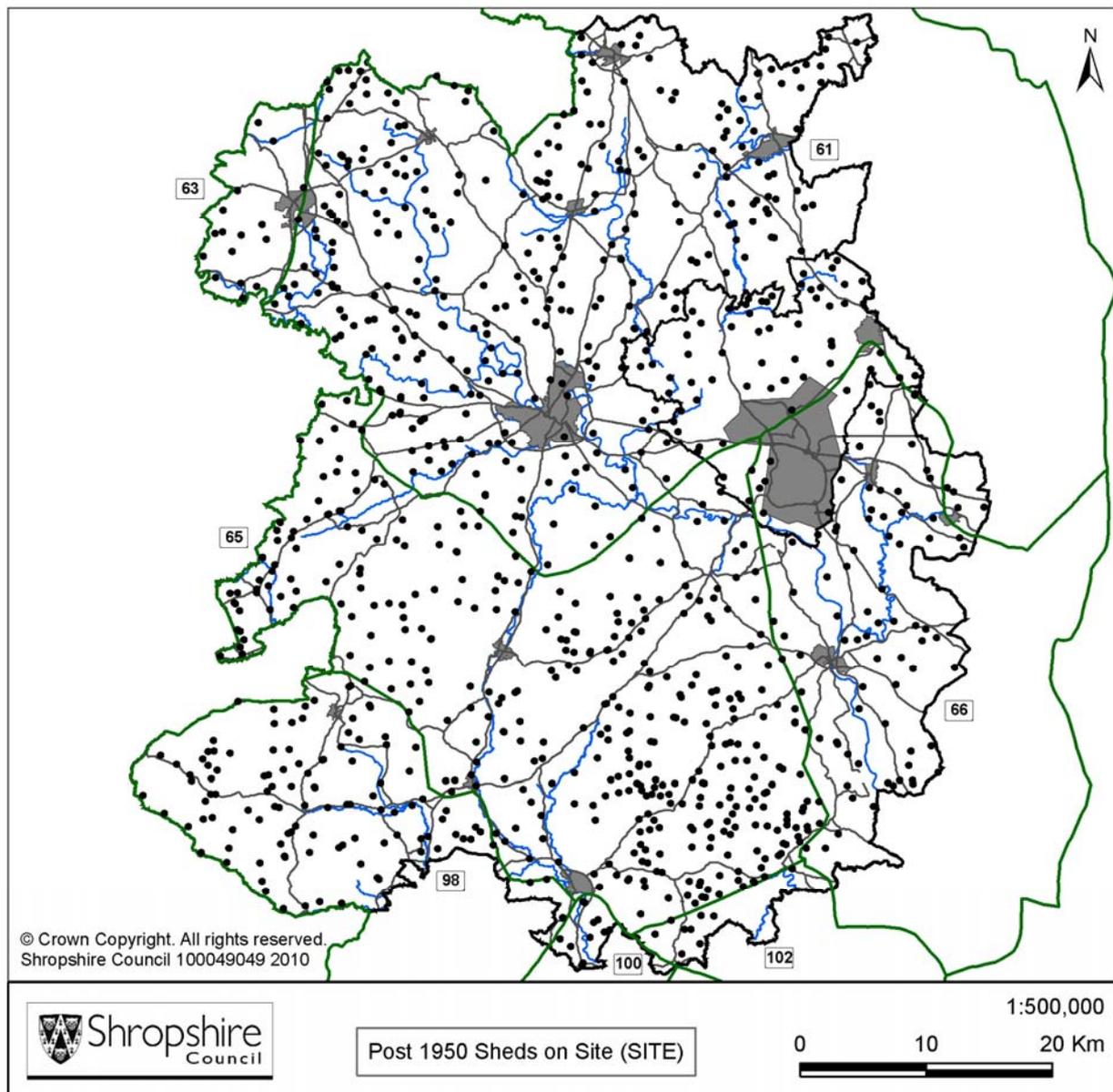


Figure 20: Distribution of Sheds found on the site of historic farmsteads (SITE)

Larger plan forms are far more adaptable, and allow for existing historic yards to be covered over, rather than establishing new ones to the side. This therefore implies that the survival of the historic fabric on farms with sheds on site could be far greater than desk-based mapping can reveal. Although sheds to the side are far more common than sheds on site, the only plan forms where there are more sheds on site than to the side are the RCmy and the LC4.

Large modern sheds can indicate the continuation of farming practice on the site of historic farmsteads, indicating (and not surprisingly) that medium to larger farms are far more capable of being adapted to new agricultural practices. Not surprisingly smaller farms are far less likely to have continued in agricultural use, for example 90% of parallel farmstead and 85% of linear having no associated modern shed. It must however be born in mind that in some cases modern sheds can be completely detached from their associated historic farmstead.