

WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPES PROJECT

COUNTY SUMMARY REPORT FOR STAFFORDSHIRE

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 Staffordshire. 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 Staffordshire, and the analysis of current use.

Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

Across Staffordshire 10% of farmsteads have been lost (matching the regional average of 10%), these being concentrated around Stoke-on-Trent and in the areas of 20th century settlement expansion particularly Cannock.

On 7.5% of recorded sites the house survives but the working buildings have been demolished (above the regional average of 6%), and all the buildings on 1% of sites (regional average of 2%) have been demolished and completely rebuilt.

71.5% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%:

- 34.5% of farmsteads have retained all of their working buildings, well above the regional average of 26%
- 38% of farmsteads have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic footprint (regional average 40%).
- 9% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic footprint (regional average 16%).

Landscape and Settlement Context

Across Staffordshire the patterns of inherited landscape character have been mapped by the Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC). The county report shows how the farmsteads data can be analysed in relationship to these patterns of landscape character area and type.

The mapping shows that across most of the county settlement is predominantly dispersed with nucleated settlement concentrated on the eastern edge of the county.

- 12% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 12%)
- 10% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%)

Historic Farmstead Character

- Very small-scale farmsteads, predominantly linear, L-plan with farmhouse attached and loose courtyard plans with buildings to one side of the yard are concentrated in the north-east part of the county, particularly within the White Peak and South West Peak National Character Areas (NCAs) but extending into the Potteries and Churnet Valley NCA.
- Whilst not present at the same level as in the north-east, small to medium scale farmsteads are present across the whole of the county.
- In the south-west, especially within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau and in the south-east where the Mease and Sence Lowlands NCA pushes into the county, large farmsteads are found in the greatest numbers.

Outfarms and field barns are a highly vulnerable element of the rural landscape, particularly in the upland areas of the north-west of the county. They have been subject to high rates of loss, and as their sensitivity to other forms of use is very high.

Current Use

- Moderate capital endowment masks important variation within the county – access both to the central conurbation (to the south) and to the north Staffordshire conurbation is good, but far lower capital endowment and economic mass characterise the north-east of the county.
- The likelihood of a farmstead remaining in agricultural use is slightly higher than is characteristic of farmsteads across the region as a whole.
- The likelihood of conversion to residential use is very similar to the region as a whole, but residential conversions are concentrated in the south of the county where they are readily accessible to the urban areas of the West Midlands conurbation and the towns surrounding it. Residential conversions also increase in the areas around Stoke-on-Trent.
- Given the accessibility of the county to major centres of population, participation of historic farmstead residents as directors of substantial business appears relatively low (although higher than in Shropshire).
- The propensity of residents to participate as principals of farm-based limited liability companies is similar to that of historic farmstead residents across the region as a whole, as is the likelihood that farmstead premises have been converted to B1, B2 or B8 uses.

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Report by Bob Edwards of Forum Heritage Services and Jeremy Lake of English Heritage, August 2010.

1 THE CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

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

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

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

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

2 HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN STAFFORDSHIRE

The mapping of farmsteads across the county of Staffordshire including the unitary area of Stoke-on-Trent recorded 5501 farmsteads. 2072 outfarms and field barns, established away from the main steading, were recorded to the same method. Entries in the County Historic Environment Record are mostly based on the descriptions of houses and working buildings that have been listed, and this

The resulting data has been interpreted against the National Character Areas (NCAs) and the Staffordshire Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC).

The Staffordshire Historic Farmstead Characterisation Report (see Section 5) displays the results of this mapping, the main findings of which are summarised below.

The Annexes to this county summary display the area variations for the county.

2.1 Landscape and Settlement Context

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

In Staffordshire most farmsteads are isolated:

- 12% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 12%)
- 10% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%)

The mapping shows that across most of the county settlement is predominantly dispersed with nucleated settlement concentrated on the eastern edge of the county. The highest densities of isolated farmsteads are located in the north-east moorland areas of the county where small farmsteads, often of linear plan form, and medium scale regular L-plan farmsteads are often associated with enclosure of moorland in the 19th century. 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 of west Staffordshire, the Sandstone Plateau and east of Cannock Chase. Elsewhere within 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 (70% for Staffordshire 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** (11% of the total for Staffordshire 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 Staffordshire are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads. They comprise 19% of farmsteads in Staffordshire 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:

- Very small-scale farmsteads, predominantly linear, L-plan with farmhouse attached and loose courtyard plans with buildings to one side of the yard, are concentrated in the north-east part of the county, particularly within the White Peak and South West Peak NCAs but extending into the Potteries and Churnet Valley NCA.
- The main landscapes with large-scale regular plan farmsteads and fields, mostly result from of 18th and 19th century farm amalgamation and improvement. In the south-west, especially within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau and in the south-east where the Mease and Sence Lowlands NCA pushes into the county, large farmsteads are found in the greatest numbers.
- 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. Whilst not present at the same level as in the north-east, small to medium scale farmsteads are present across the whole of the county.

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 areas of former heath and common such as around Cannock Chase, on Biddulph Moor and in the Moorlands of north-east Staffordshire. Small pockets of smallholdings survive across the Staffordshire 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 very rare surviving examples of 18th century and earlier cattle housing, and the extent of 19th century change has resulted in these being even rarer than in neighbouring Shropshire and Cheshire.
- There are some 18th century and earlier timber-framed barns, but these are again rare.
- To the northern moorlands and moorland fringes, the farmstead architecture bears a close resemblance to that of the Peak and the southern Pennines.
- Dairying farmsteads with storeyed cattle housing, often L-shaped in plan, are typical of the north of the county and are of a form repeated across the north of Shropshire and into the Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain.
- Large planned estate farmsteads dating from the late 18th century are a distinctive feature of the Sandstone Plateau, and the Staffordshire Plain, part of a distribution extending into neighbouring Cheshire and Staffordshire. These areas have the main concentrations of 18th century houses and working buildings. The Needwood Forest area west of Burton-on-Trent has also been affected by large-scale 19th century enclosure and the rebuilding of farmsteads to regular plans.

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. 19% 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.

71.5% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%:

- 34.5% of farmsteads have retained all of their working buildings, well above the regional average of 26% (regional average 26%).
- 38% of farmsteads have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic footprint (regional average 40%).
- 9% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic footprint (regional average 16%).

There is a marked regional variation to these. One of the most notable factors of the farmstead data is the relatively very high levels of survival of farmsteads displaying little or no change since the late 19th century located within the north-east of the county. Two Staffordshire districts, Staffordshire Moorlands and East Staffordshire have the highest proportion of farmsteads that been subject to the two lowest classes of change across the whole of the West Midlands, in striking contrast to the western part of the county.

Across Staffordshire 10% of farmsteads have been lost (matching the regional average of 10%), these being concentrated around Stoke-on-Trent and in the areas of 20th century settlement expansion particularly Cannock. On 7.5% of recorded sites the house survives but the working buildings have been demolished (above the regional average of 6%), and all the buildings on 1% of sites (regional average of 2%) have been demolished and completely rebuilt.

Outfarms and field barns are a highly vulnerable element of the rural landscape, particularly in the upland areas of the north-west of the county. They have been subject to high rates of loss, and their sensitivity to other forms of use is very high.

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 15% of farmstead sites in Staffordshire have listed buildings, the majority of these being houses rather than working buildings.

3 THE USE OF HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN STAFFORDSHIRE

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 Staffordshire:

- Moderate capital endowment masks important variation within the county – access both to the central conurbation (to the south) and to the north Staffordshire conurbation is good, but far lower capital endowment and economic mass characterise the north-east of the county.
- The likelihood of a farmstead remaining in agricultural use is slightly higher than is characteristic of farmsteads across the region as a whole.
- The likelihood of conversion to residential use is very similar to the region as a whole, but residential conversions are concentrated in the south of the county where they are readily accessible to the urban areas of the West Midlands conurbation and the towns surrounding it. Residential conversions also increase in the areas around Stoke-on-Trent.
- Given the accessibility of the county to major centres of population, participation of historic farmstead residents as directors of substantial business appears relatively low (although higher than in Shropshire).
- The propensity of residents to participate as principals of farm-based limited liability companies is similar to that of historic farmstead residents across the region as a whole, as is the likelihood that

farmstead premises have been converted to B1, B2 or B8 uses.

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%). These figures are provided for the National Character Areas (Annexe 3). They have been deepened for the local authority areas so that residential conversion, so that East Staffordshire (17.1%) and the Staffordshire Moorlands (18.5%) have the lowest rates of conversion, followed by Newcastle-under-Lyme (23.1%), Lichfield (33.3%) and South Staffordshire (40%) (see also Annexe 2).

4 KEY ISSUES FOR STAFFORDSHIRE

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 Staffordshire:

4.1 Historic Environment

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.

The relatively high levels of survival raise important issues when the data is analysed against use data; these districts have the higher levels of farmsteads that remain in agricultural use with the county. Given the projections for the decline in the numbers of farms in the next decade – and animal welfare standards that are making more buildings redundant – it is clear that there are likely to be substantial issues regarding re-use or dereliction of historic farm buildings in these areas, particularly in the Staffordshire Moorlands area where dereliction is already an issue for historic farm buildings.

An important consideration with the farm buildings of Staffordshire is the fact that few farm buildings are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. 771 farmsteads include a listed building but only 204 farmsteads retain a listed working farm building (a barn, stable, granary etc.). However, in areas such as the Staffordshire Moorlands, these farmsteads, which are often of 19th century date, are significant elements within a high quality upland landscape. Their loss would be detrimental to this landscape, part of which is designated as a National Park.

Outfarms and field barns are a highly vulnerable element of the rural landscape, particularly in the upland areas of the north-west of the county. They have been subject to high rates of loss, and as their sensitivity to other forms of use is very high (due to their generally limited access and prominence in the landscape) the

most significant landscapes with field barns need to be identified for enhanced maintenance through the agri-environment schemes.

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.

The county report for Staffordshire was prepared in 2008 before commenced, and will be revised following completion of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project. It is available for download at www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandfarmsteads.



Linear farmsteads, where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line, are strongly associated with the upland and upland fringe landscapes of the north-east of Staffordshire. They are also a feature of former and surviving common land (particularly around Cannock Chase) where small-scale farming – sometimes combined with by-employment in industry – remained important into the 19th and 20th centuries (© Bob Edwards, Forum Heritage Services).



Large-scale courtyard farmsteads developed in the lowlands flanking Cannock Chase and especially in the west of the county where large estates and farms developed. This was a process that went hand-in-hand with the reorganisation and enclosure of the farmed landscape, including as here the planting of thorn hedgerows on new alignments or on the footprint of earlier boundaries (© Bob Edwards, Forum Heritage Services).

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.

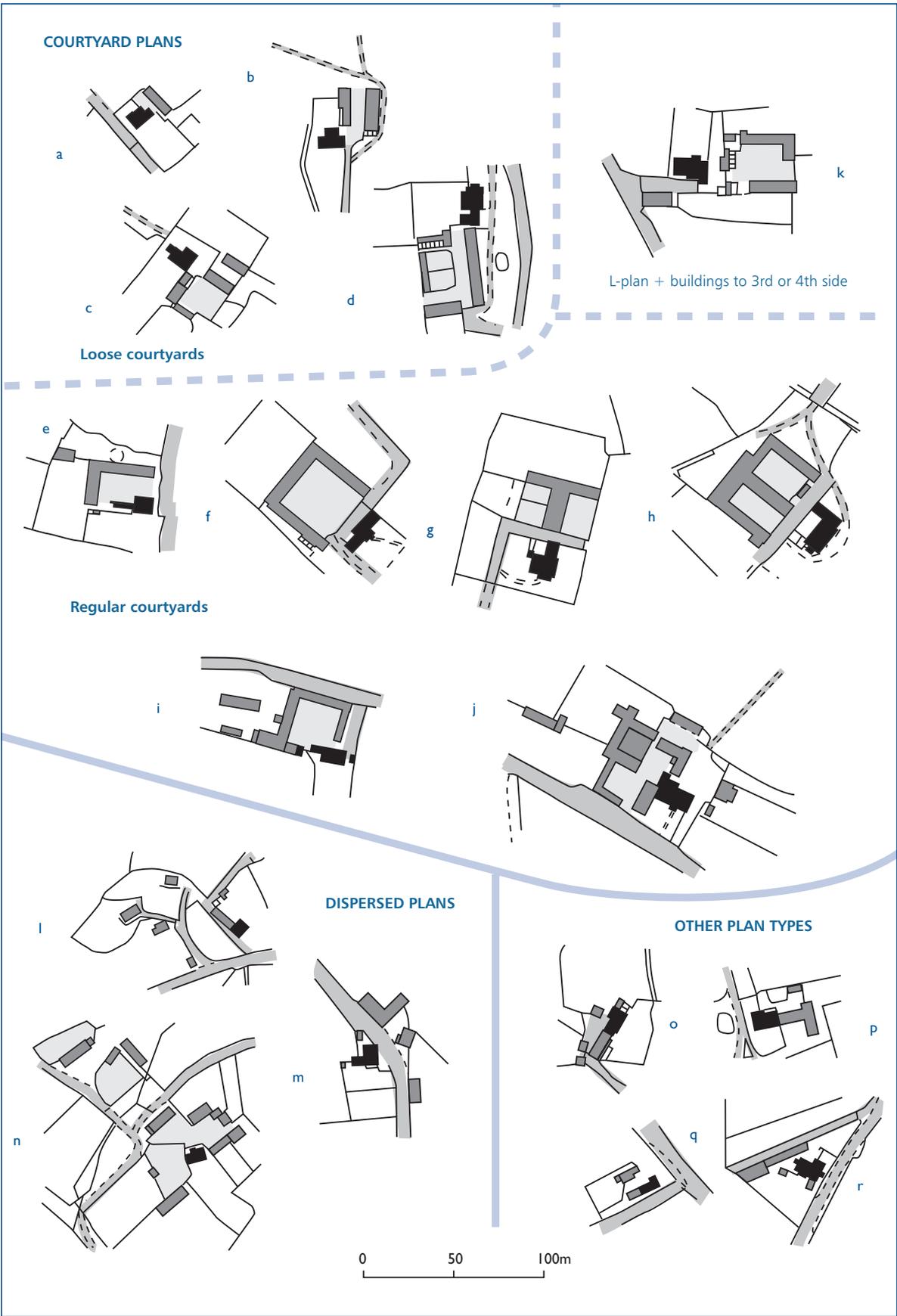
k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides which are generally large to very large in scale.

Dispersed plans subdivide into:

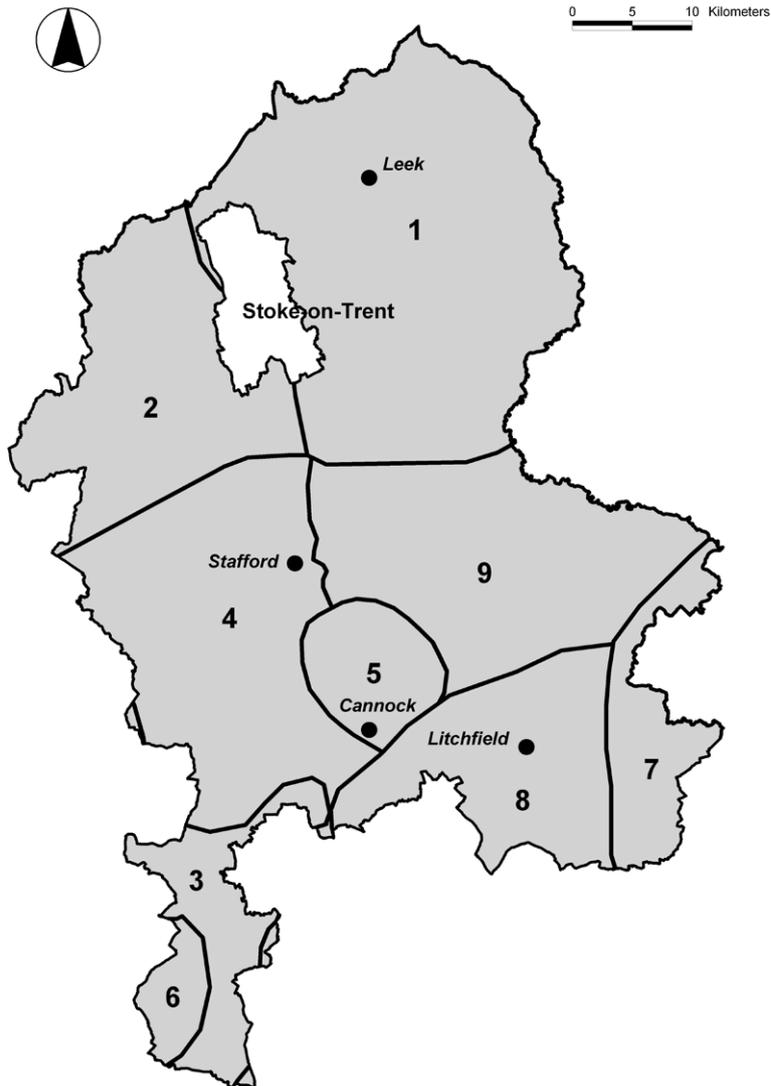
- l) Dispersed clusters where the working buildings are set within the boundary of the steading, and typically the smallest in scale in this category.
- m) Dispersed driftways which are dominated by the routeways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another. These are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



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The West Midlands region can be further divided into Farmstead Character Areas according to the results of the farmstead data. Within Staffordshire the principal areas and character are:

Area 1 The Peaks and the Peak Fringe

An upland and upland fringe farming area with a very high density of farmsteads. To the north and eastern borders of the county small-scale farmstead types are dominant – linear, loose courtyard with buildings to one or two sides of the yard, dispersed driftway and dispersed cluster plans. Farmsteads increase in size to the south, reflected in greater numbers of loose courtyard plan with buildings to three sides of the yard and regular courtyard L-plans with an additional building to the third side of the yard and regular courtyard U-plans.

Area 2 North Staffordshire Plain

High numbers of small-scale farmsteads are intermingled with large-scale courtyard farmsteads, reflecting a diversity of enclosure scale and type in this landscape. The smaller steadings mostly comprise dispersed plan types, loose courtyard plans with buildings to one or two sides of the yard and regular courtyard L-plans: the latter consist of cowhouse/fodder ranges of a type dominant in Cheshire. Larger scale regular courtyard plans include U- and E-plans and some regular courtyard multi-yard farmsteads.

Area 3 Southern Estatelands

This is an area where large and medium scale farms (full regular courtyard, regular courtyard multi-yard, regular courtyard L-plans) developed within landscapes whose fields were subject to successive reorganisation and

enlargement with occasional pockets of smaller plan types including some linear plan farmsteads.

Area 4 West Staffordshire Plain

An area subject to considerable reorganisation and improvement of its farmland in the 18th-19th centuries. Here medium-scale farms (regular courtyard U-plans, regular courtyard L-plans with an additional building to the third side of the yard with some larger estate farms with regular plan types including E-plan farmsteads and regular courtyard multi-yard farmsteads) are combined with a strong underpinning layer of smaller farms (loose courtyard with buildings to one or two sides of the yard and some linear plans).

Area 5 Cannock Chase

The core of the heathland of the Cannock Chase. Fringing the area is a landscape of small-scale enclosures with small plan types (linear, loose courtyard with buildings to one or two sides of the yard and small regular courtyard L-plans) and smallholdings with a larger scale landscape to the west of the heath where there are a number of large farmsteads associated with estates.

Area 6 South West Woodland Fringe

Medium-scale farms developed within landscapes of piecemeal enclosure with heavily wooded boundaries that sometimes reflect medieval woodland clearance. Regular courtyard plans including full courtyards, L-plans with an additional building to the third or fourth side of the yard, U-plans and regular multi-yards, together with loose courtyards with buildings to two or three sides of the yard, are predominant. These relate to landscapes affected by the reorganisation of earlier enclosure and regular enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Area 7 South East Staffordshire

Settlement in this area is predominantly nucleated with surviving farm buildings within villages. Farmsteads here range in scale from small loose courtyard plans to medium-large scale regular L-plans and U-plans with some larger regular multi-yard plans. Where farmsteads are isolated they are usually the result of movement of farmsteads out of the villages after enclosure of the open fields.

Area 8 East Cannock to Trent

In contrast to the smaller farmsteads around the Cannock Chase itself, this is an area of medium to large scale farmsteads (full regular courtyard, regular L-plans with an additional building to the third or fourth side of the yard, U-plans and regular multi-yards) set within re-organised piecemeal enclosure intermixed with small loose courtyard plans and some dispersed plan types.

Area 9 Needwood and South Staffordshire Claylands

This is a landscape where piecemeal enclosure is intermingled with large blocks of regular enclosure that mostly relate to the sores of estates and former common land. The areas of piecemeal enclosure are mostly associated with small to medium scale farmsteads, mostly of loose courtyard type with buildings to one to three sides of the yard, regular L- and U-plans. The large-scale regular enclosure landscapes are associated with large-scale regular courtyard plans including full regular courtyard and regular multi-yard plans, particularly to the south of the area and around the Forest of Needwood.

Annexe 2 Local Authority Summaries

Cannock Chase

- Low survival of historic farmsteads, 32.8% retaining some of their working buildings as well as the house.
- Too few historic farmsteads to make meaningful generalisations about their social and economic role.

Stoke-on-Trent

- Low survival of historic farmsteads, 14.4% retaining some of their working buildings as well as the house.
- Too few historic farmsteads to make meaningful generalisations about their social and economic role.

Tamworth

- 27% of historic farmstead sites retain some working buildings.
- Too few historic farmsteads to make meaningful generalisations about their social and economic role.

East Staffordshire

- High rates of survival with 86.3% of historic farmstead sites retaining some working buildings (79.6% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).
- Shows a slight departure from regional expectations with a higher proportion of historic farmsteads currently in agricultural use and a slightly lower proportion in residential use.

Lichfield

- High rates of survival with 78.8% of historic farmstead sites retaining some working buildings (36.1% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).
- A higher proportion of farmsteads are in residential use than is typical of the region as a whole and a slightly lower proportion in agricultural use.

Stafford

- High rates of survival with 83.5% of historic farmstead sites retaining some working buildings (70.1% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).
- While the pattern of current use of historic farmsteads does not diverge greatly from the regional pattern – it shows some tendency for farmsteads to be more likely to remain in agricultural use, albeit that the propensity for on-farm diversification is low.

Staffordshire Moorlands

- Very high rates of survival with 87.7% of historic farmstead sites retaining some working buildings (82% with all or over 50% of their historic footprint).
- There is a stronger tendency for historic farmsteads to remain in agricultural use and a lower tendency for conversion to residential use than is typical of the region as a whole.
- Lack of accessibility is such that residents of historic farmsteads hold only 9 directorships for every 100 historic farmsteads.

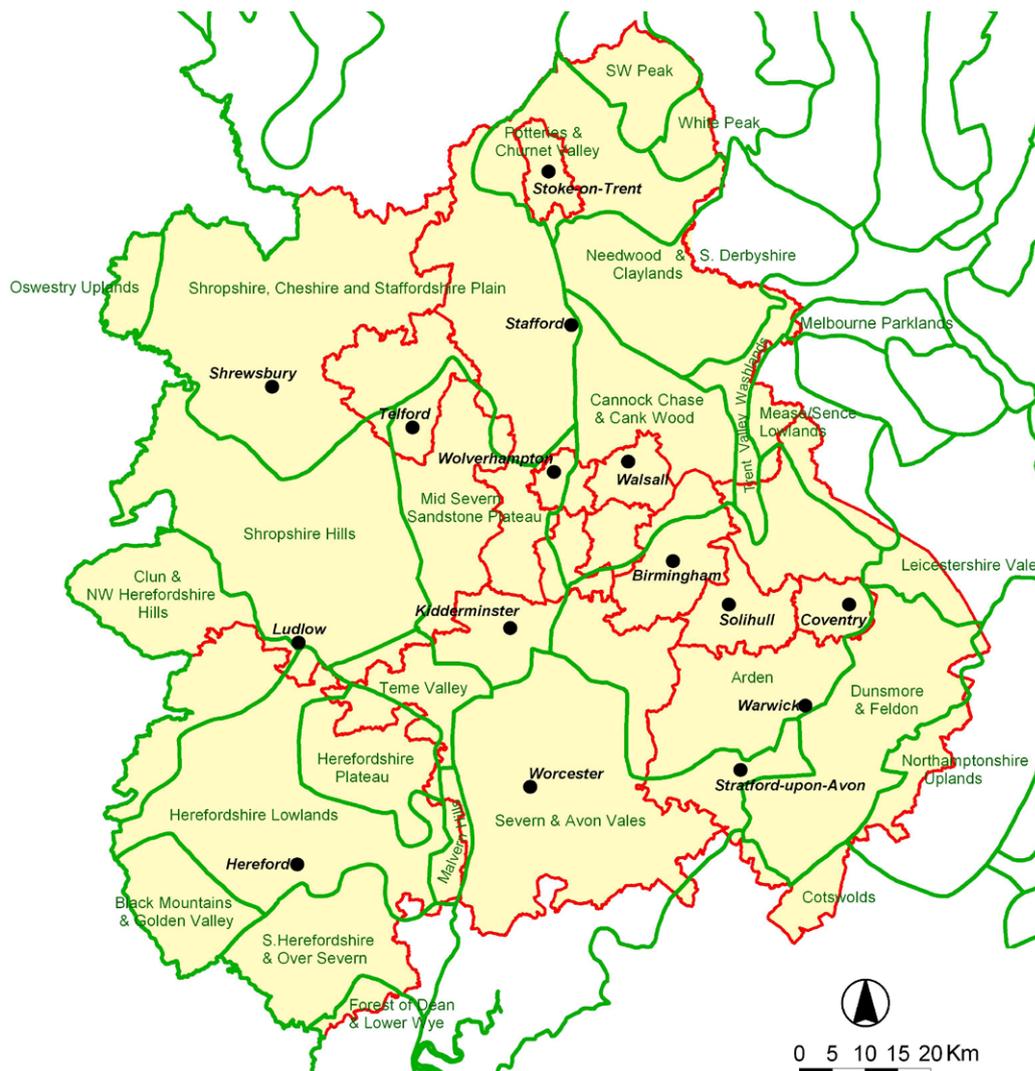
Annexe 3 National Character Area Summaries

The National Character Areas (NCAs) combine a broad understanding of the historic environment with physical landscape character and the natural environment. They are used as a framework for analysing the trends and options for future change across landscapes and for informing the 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:

- 52 White Peak
- 53 South West Peak
- 61 Staffordshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain
- 64 Potteries and Churnet Valley
- 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau
- 67 Cannock Chase and Cank Wood
- 68 Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands
- 69 Trent Valley Washlands
- 70 Melbourne Parklands
- 72 Mease/Sence Lowlands



52 White Peak

Character

- Strong nucleated settlement pattern, with 17.% of farmsteads in villages and 4.5% in hamlets.
- Medium-high density of farmsteads in the landscape, increasing to very high in the west adjoining South West Peak.
- Very small and small to medium-scale (58.3 and 26%) farmsteads are predominant, with some isolated larger-scale farmsteads.

Survival

- Very high rate of survival, with nearly 88% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 5-10% of listed working buildings have obvious

signs of structural disrepair, and 10-20% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Low economic mass and strong planning constraint relate to a high proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (43%) and a (relatively) high level of conversion to non-residential uses outside of agriculture (7%) (including provision of holiday homes, and other tourist accommodation to a greater degree than typical of the Region as a whole).

53 South West Peak

Character

- High degree of dispersed settlement, with 3.4% of farmsteads in villages and 4.7% in hamlets.
- High-very high density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Very small and small to medium-scale (59.7 and 27.5%) of farmsteads are predominant.

Survival

- Very high rates of survival, with 86% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 15-20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- This area has a low economic mass and a high proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (45%) with relatively high diversification of farm business (numbers of holiday homes substantially exceeding regional expectations) but both relatively low residential use (51%) and relatively low participation in business.

61 Staffordshire, 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 Staffordshire to the south.
- 18.1% of farmsteads in Staffordshire 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 Staffordshire and a mix of large-scale farmsteads intermixed with small-medium scale farmsteads elsewhere.

Survival

- Medium-high rates of survival, with 71% in Staffordshire 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 Staffordshire, 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 Staffordshire 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

64 Potteries and Churnet Valley

Character

- High to very high levels of dispersed settlement, with 10% of farmsteads in villages and 7.4% in hamlets.
- Very high density of farmsteads in the landscape, lower to the Churnet Valley and west of the Potteries.
- Predominant pattern of very small farmsteads (48%) particularly around Biddulph Moor, with large-scale (21.1%) farmsteads concentrated to west, in Churnet Valley and in lowlands to south.

Survival

- Very high rates of survival, with 70% retaining more than half of their historic footprint – strong differences between higher loss (high proportion

of the 15% across the area) and alteration around Potteries and to west in contrast to very high survival in the moorlands and Churnet Valley.

- 5-10% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- High economic mass has allowed conversion of three fifths of farmsteads to residential use though participation of residents in business activity is relatively low.

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).

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).

67 Cannock Chase and Cank Wood

Character

- A mixed pattern of village-based and dispersed settlement, with 19th-20th century urban development having subsumed many small settlements - 11.3% of farmsteads in villages and 8.9% in hamlets.
- Medium-low densities of farmsteads in the landscape, with very high densities around Cannock Chase.
- Very small/ small to medium-scale farmsteads (20.3 and 23.2%) dominant across the centre of the area, with areas of large-scale and very large-scale (29 and 13.8%) farmsteads concentrated to east and west.

Survival

- Low overall rate of survival, due to high rates of loss (44%) around expanding towns and other settlements, with 21% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- This area has the highest economic mass and a correspondingly low proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (25%), and also relatively high proportion in non-residential uses other than agriculture (7%).
- The tendency towards diversification of farms remaining in agriculture has been relatively high (particularly provision of workshop accommodation). 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.

68 Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands

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 (in 25-30% range, but very large lowest at 14.7%), increasing to the northern part of the area.
- Broad range of very small to large-scale farmsteads, but with the smaller-scale farmsteads concentrated in the northern more hilly part of the area.

Survival

- High rates of survival, with 75% retaining more than half of their historic footprint
- 0.5-5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- This area has a high proportion of historic farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (40%) with a very small proportion converted to non residential uses other than agriculture.

69 Trent Valley Washlands

Character

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

Survival

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

Patterns of Use

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

70 Melbourne Parklands

Character

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

Survival

- Low rates of survival, in part due to loss (50%) around settlements and to removal of working buildings (house only surviving in 16% of cases), with 16% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 0.0-5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and above 50% with visible adaptive reuse.

72 Mease/Sence Lowlands

Character

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

Survival

- Medium rates of survival outside villages in Warwickshire, with 52% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 0.0-0.5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Acknowledgements for maps and plans

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