



A strategic approach to
managing traditional farm
buildings

A perspective from England

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English Heritage



European Heritage Heads Forum Amsterdam 2011



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It is the *working buildings* of the farm - not the farm houses - that are the subject of this presentation

In the 1960's (last complete field survey) England contained 0.3 million farm houses and 1.1 million working farm buildings located on around 300,000 farm holdings.



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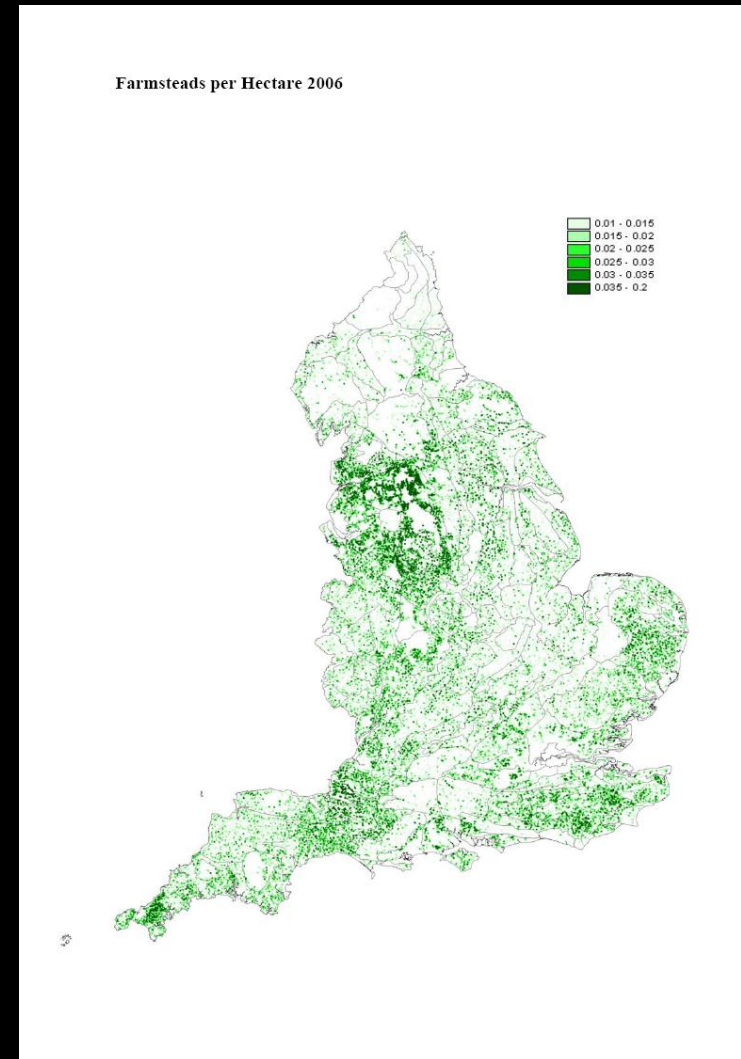
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There are c. 70,000 entries on the statutory lists of historic buildings for traditional working farm buildings (shown on map).

A larger (but unknown) number of buildings are protected by “curtilage” listing



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34% of England's principal listed traditional farm buildings have already been converted to new (non agricultural) uses

Some well...

...some badly



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9% of the principal listed traditional farm buildings that have not yet been converted to new uses are now visibly derelict...

.... A far greater number - perhaps a third - are also “at risk”



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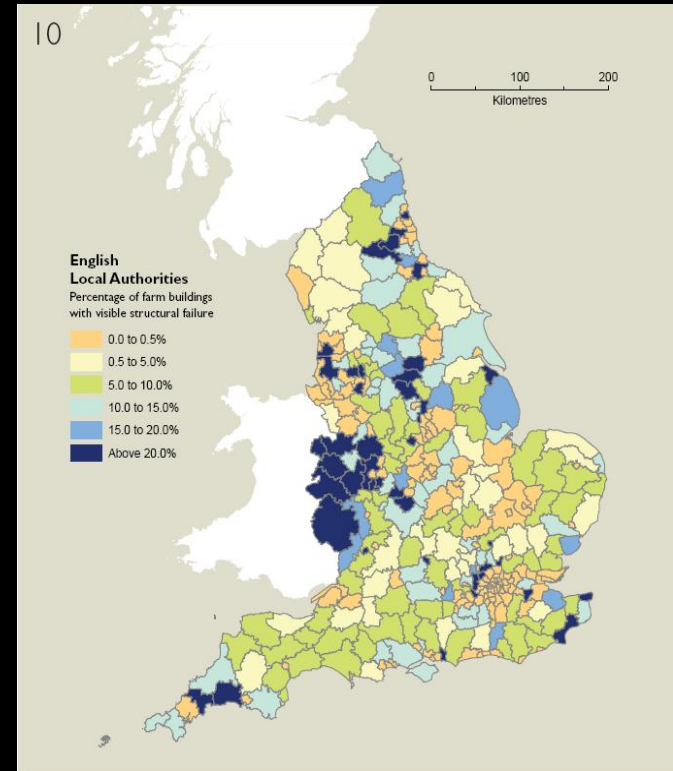
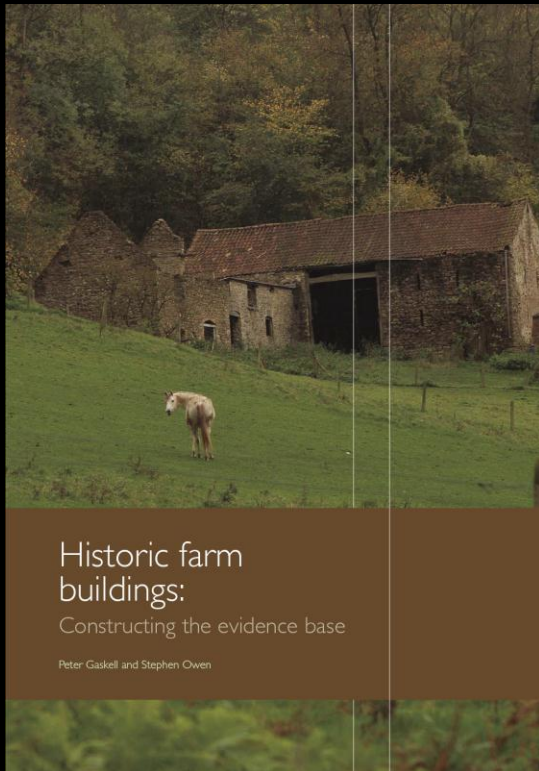
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Evidence base and national-scale mapping

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Living buildings in a living landscape:

finding a future for
traditional farm buildings



Farming the historic landscape:

Caring for farm buildings



The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings:

A guide to good practice



The Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Farm Buildings:

A Guide to Good Practice

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England's environmental farming (or agri-environment) schemes currently contribute up to 9 million Euros a year towards the conservation repair of traditional buildings in the countryside





Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
East Midlands Region



Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
East of England Region



Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
North West Region



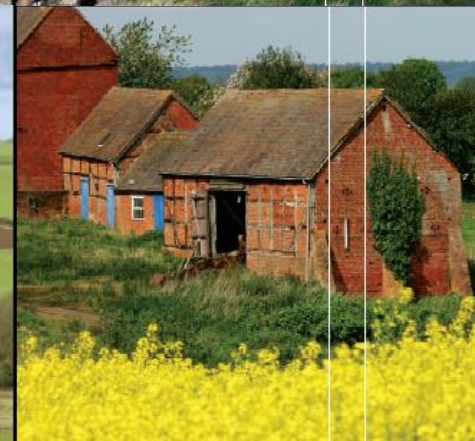
Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
North East Region



Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
South East Region



Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
Yorkshire and
the Humber Region



Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
West Midlands Region



Historic Farmsteads
Preliminary Character
Statement:
South West Region



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Select Joint Character Area

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JCA Map Assessment Framework Glossary Sources Dating

Joint Character Area 130: Hampshire Downs

Farmstead Types

In common with other chalk downland areas in the south, the buildings of the farmsteads of the Hampshire Downs demonstrate the importance of arable farming but rarely do they reflect the importance of sheep. This was an area of large and capital intensive farms, there being extensive evidence for large barns and courtyard layouts dating from the 17th century and sometimes earlier.

Farmstead Types

The chalklands were characterised by large arable-based farms, which developed from the 15th century and by the 19th century were amongst the largest by national standards. Large barns were built for storage and processing of the grain crop, and related to yards where straw and the manure from cattle was trodden down and redistributed to fertilise the fields. [1]

Increases in grain production and yields in the 18th and early 19th centuries often led to the construction of an additional barn and in many cases, the enlargement and adaptation of earlier barns. In this way many farms were provided with two or more barns and, in some cases, a stable barn.

Loose courtyard plans predominant, and where bounded by buildings of 18th century or earlier date include the earliest surviving farmstead layouts in the country.

Large farmsteads may have buildings on all sides of the yard whereas smaller holdings will have buildings on one or two sides of the yard only. Some courtyard groups may have subsidiary individual ranges or buildings.

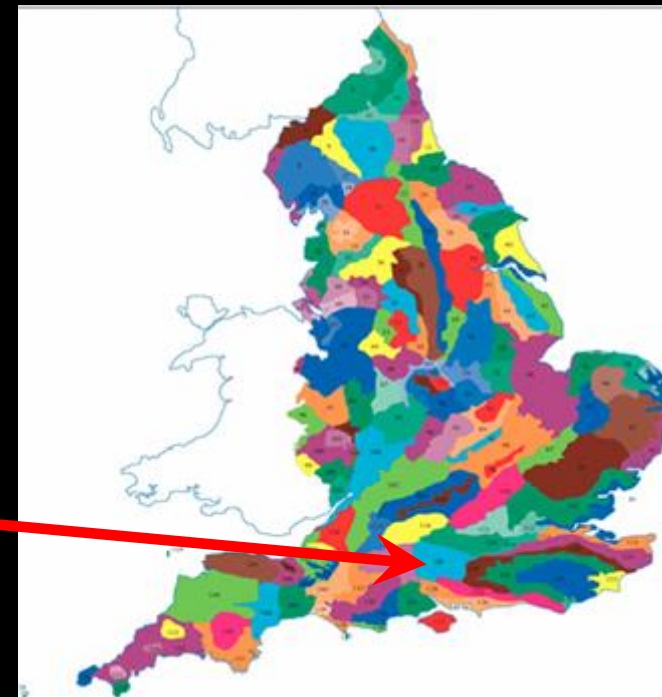
Regular courtyard plans usually found on 19th century farmsteads associated with enclosure of downland or larger estates.

Some of the smaller farms in the north-west of the area had buildings set in an L-shape plan.

Farmhouses or settlements may form one side of the yard but typically farmhouses stand to one side of the farmstead and face the street. Farmhouses in open landscape typically detached from the main group, with elevation facing away from yard and with own gardens. Through-passage plans predominant into 17th century, but plans tend to become more centralised and symmetrical, with services moved to rear outbuilds or wings, from the mid 17th century.

3. In the villages of the Test Valley and its tributaries the large Manor farms were after the 15th century typically leased by the gentry and sub-let to tenant farmers. They often developed an courtyard-plan steading, such as this example with two barns: the late 16th century axial barn to the right and a 17th century 10-bay axial barn behind the farmhouse which itself dates from the 16th century. (Robin Schwartz)

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Character descriptions have been developed for all 159 Landscape Character Areas to assist planning and land management decisions



WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS & LANDSCAPES PROJECT

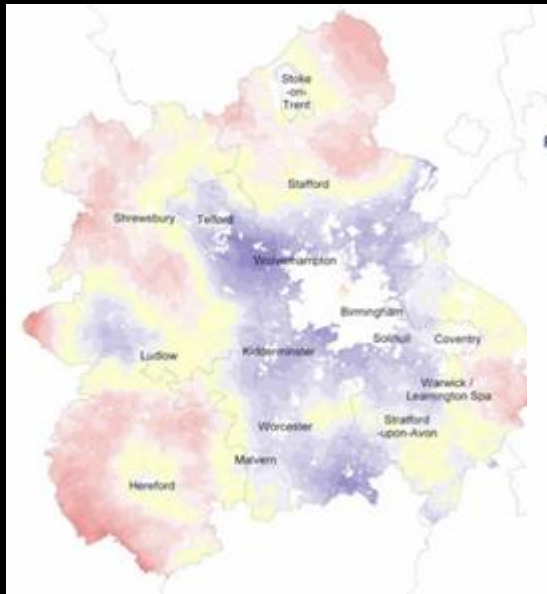
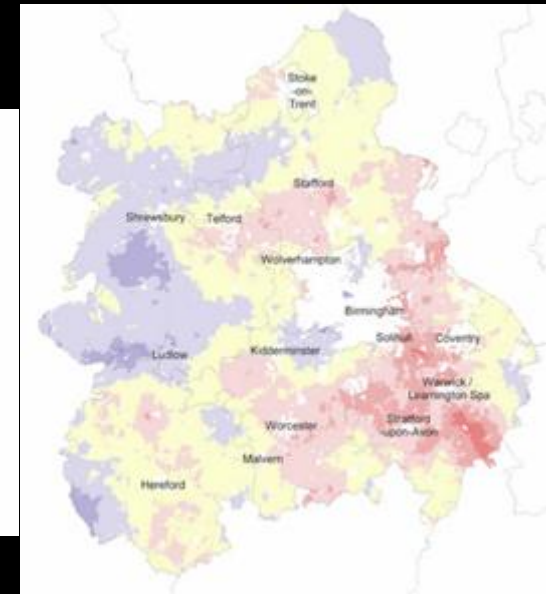
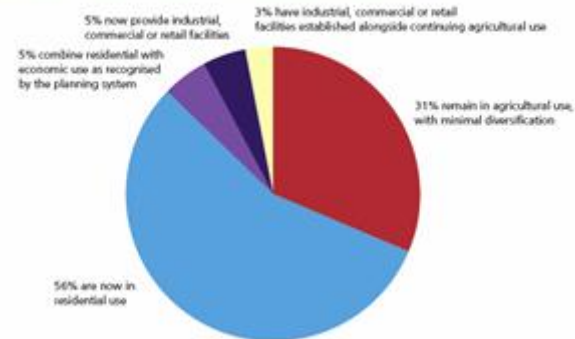


Figure 9: The Use of Historic Farmsteads in the West Midlands



Farmsteads with
continuing agricultural use

Farmsteads with business
office use

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Historic Farm Buildings



Traditional farm building still in agricultural use in the Yorkshire Dales National Park © English Heritage

Historic farm buildings make a fundamental contribution to the landscape character and local distinctiveness of rural areas and are vital to our understanding of the development of agriculture and today's settlement patterns.

Historic farm buildings also provide an important economic asset for modern farm businesses, often continuing in use on the farm. Where they have become redundant, they can provide a high-quality environment for new businesses or housing through adaptive re-use, helping to alleviate build pressure on green-field land and reducing the demand for new buildings in sensitive rural areas. Good design, responsive to local building traditions and landscape character, is essential if converted buildings are to enhance, rather than compromise local sense-of-place.

Regeneration & Design

- Building in Context design programme
- Transport
- Regeneration
- Living & Working Countryside
- Tall Buildings
- Suburbs

Further reading

- Caring for Farm Buildings
- Historic farm buildings: Constructing the evidence base
- Heritage Counts annual report
- Thematic Research
- Historic Farmsteads
- Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice
- Yorkshire Dales
- Building Value
- Farm Buildings and Change on the Bolton Abbey Estate, North Yorkshire: A Character-based pilot study

Document downloads

- Living buildings in a living landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings long version (4108 Kb)
- Living buildings in a living landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings (1584 Kb)

ABOUT HELM

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[HERITAGE PROTECTION REFORM](#)
[LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICE MAP](#)

For further information see: <http://www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings>