

WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPES PROJECT

COUNTY SUMMARY REPORT FOR HEREFORDSHIRE

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 Herefordshire. 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 Herefordshire, and the analysis of current use.

Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

Across Herefordshire 4% of farmsteads have been lost (well below the regional average of 10%), these being concentrated in areas of 20th century settlement expansion for example the suburban areas of Hereford.

Across the county the rates of survival of historic farmsteads are higher than the average across the West Midlands region. 89% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%. There are strong differences between the low levels of change to the western borders with Wales and the much higher levels of change in the plateau and lowlands of the county:

- 30% of farmsteads have retained all of their historic footprint/working buildings (regional average 26%).
- 35% of farmsteads have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic footprint (regional average 40%).
- 24% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic footprint (regional average 16%).

Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day 60% do not include a listed building. Only 16% of farmsteads include a working building that is listed.

Landscape and Settlement Context

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

Village-based settlement of farmsteads (6%, below the regional average of 12%) and hamlet-based settlement of farmsteads (5%, below the regional average of 12%) are located predominantly in the

low lying areas of Herefordshire and emphasise areas where nucleated settlement has persisted since the medieval period.

Isolated farmsteads account for the remainder, reflecting the fact that the settlement pattern in Herefordshire – as a result of medieval and later changes, and in some places earlier ancient patterns of dispersed settlement - is characterised by a high degree of dispersal. Greater distances between isolated farms are found in the lowland areas of Herefordshire.

Historic Farmstead Character

Large to very large-scale farmsteads – including many with large houses and working buildings of 18th century or earlier date - are concentrated in lowland areas, in contrast to the predominance of smaller-scale farmsteads in the Black Mountains area of Herefordshire and more sporadically (such as around areas of common land) within the Herefordshire Plateau. Small-medium scale farmsteads are more concentrated in the areas where the pastoral element of agriculture is more dominant.

Smallholdings, outfarms and field barns display strong localised patterns. Large outfarms are concentrated within the zones of large-scale farms, often on the

edge of water meadows or within areas of water meadows that were drained in the later 19th century. Field barns are found in fruit growing areas and in the western uplands, where holdings were typically much smaller and more dispersed.

Current Use

- Successive waves of investment have reshaped the county to a lesser extent than much of the region, leaving it with the lowest capital endowment of any West Midlands county but a relatively large number of surviving historic farmsteads.
- The proportion of farmsteads remaining purely in agricultural use is slightly higher than elsewhere within the region but the tendency to diversification of working farms has been higher than elsewhere.
- The likelihood of conversion to residential use is very slightly lower than elsewhere in the region, particularly in the west of the county as a result of poorer access.
- The participation of residents as directors of substantial business is lower than in counties with higher economic mass.

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Report by Neil Rimmington of Herefordshire Council, and Jeremy Lake of English Heritage. August 2010, based upon mapping by Natalie Cook of Herefordshire Council.

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 HEREFORDSHIRE

The mapping of farmsteads across the county of Herefordshire recorded 3092 farmsteads. It has in addition mapped 854 outfarms and field barns which were established away from the main stabling, to the same method. Smallholding zones have also been identified and mapped. The resulting data has been interpreted against the National Character Areas (NCAs), the Herefordshire Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC) and the Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

Section 6 of the *Herefordshire Historic Farmstead Characterisation Report* displays the results of this mapping, the main findings of which are summarised below. This report is available for download through the *Herefordshire Through Time* website (www.herefordshire.gov.uk/htt).

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

2.1 Landscape and Settlement Context

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

Village-based settlement of farmsteads (6%, below the regional average of 12%) and hamlet-based settlement of farmsteads (5%, below the regional average of 12%) are located predominantly in the low lying areas of Herefordshire and emphasise areas where nucleated settlement has persisted since the medieval period - in the area around Hereford, west of Hereford along the River Wye corridor, on the Forest of Dean fringe, and in north west Herefordshire particularly northwest of Leominster. Hamlets are concentrated in the area between Bodenham and Ashperton to the northeast of Hereford and in the River Wye Corridor both to the east and south of Hereford. The landscapes are dominated by a field pattern that has been re-organised by 18th and 19th century regular enclosure, except the Forest of Dean where settlement has probably been more determined by topography and industry.

Isolated farmsteads account for the remainder. Their distribution in some areas reflects ancient patterns of dispersed settlement, notably along the Welsh borders, but across large parts of the county it is clear that most reflect profound landscape change between the 14th and 17th centuries, as small villages were abandoned and large (some exceptionally large by national standards) farmsteads were built in relationship to both shrunken settlements and newly-enclosed fields. This is a very significant development that underpins much of the distinctive character of the county and its vernacular architecture. As a result:

- Greater distances between isolated farms are found in the lowland areas of Herefordshire. In particular lower densities are apparent in the river valleys of

the Herefordshire Lowlands (1.3 farms per sq/km) and in the area around Wigmore and Leintwardine (1 farm per sq/km) in the north west of the county. In both these areas the influence of low-lying land managed as water meadow and the dominance of estates will have contributed to these lower densities.

- High densities of isolated farmsteads are associated with smaller scale farmsteads and ancient field enclosure patterns, and are especially high in the area below the Black Mountains (1.82 farms per km²).
- Higher than average densities occur in pockets and across extensive areas of the hillier landscape of the Herefordshire Plateau (1.54 farms per sq/km) to the east of the county, in the Garway Hill area, and in the Brilley area in the north-western hills. As in the case of the area next to the Black Mountains, these higher densities are characterised by a greater degree of survival of smaller scale farmsteads and ancient field enclosures.

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. The broad farmstead plan types divide into:

- Courtyard plans where the working buildings are arranged around a yard (80.7% in the region, 94.2% in Herefordshire)
- Dispersed plans where there is no focal yard area (6.7% in the region, 3.3% in Herefordshire)
- Small-scale farmsteads where the house and working buildings are often attached, and which can also comprise smallholdings (5.2% in Herefordshire, 11.7% in the region)

These subdivide into narrow categories which are explored in the *County Farmsteads Characterisation Report*.

Courtyard plan farmsteads have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards, with or without scatters of other farm buildings close by. The farmhouse may either face into the yard, be set gable end on to the yard or set to one side. They form 80.7% of all recorded farmsteads in the West Midlands and 94.2% of all farmsteads in Herefordshire. They subdivide into:

- **Loose Courtyard** farmsteads (38.3% for Herefordshire; 29.2% for the West Midlands) which have buildings loosely arranged around one or more sides of a yard. In Herefordshire, the farmsteads of this type most commonly have buildings to two or three sides of the yard, each around a third above the regional average.

- **Regular Courtyard** farmsteads (38.3% for Herefordshire; 29.2% for the West Midlands) which consist of linked ranges, formally arranged around one or more yards. The most common in Herefordshire are those with L- and U-shaped layouts, and those with more than one cattle yard.
- A significant sub-category of **courtyard plans with an L-plan** range to two sides of the yard and additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides (10.5% for Herefordshire; 15% for the West Midlands).

Large to very large-scale farmsteads are concentrated in lowland areas, in contrast to the predominance of smaller-scale farmsteads in the Black Mountains area of Herefordshire and more sporadically (such as around areas of common land) within the Herefordshire Plateau. In contrast the largest-scale farmsteads including regular courtyard E-plan, multi-yard and full regular courtyards are located within the Herefordshire Lowlands area. This reflects a significant level of re-organisation and rebuilding of farmsteads in the 19th century creating very large farm complexes associated with the fattening of yard and stall-fed cattle. Large scale farmsteads are located predominantly in the Herefordshire Plateau in the form of regular courtyard U-plan and in South Herefordshire as regular courtyard L-plan with additional building on third side of the yard. Both the plateau and South Herefordshire have undergone similar development to the Herefordshire Lowlands with a focus of livestock fattening and have undergone a degree of 19th century investment, but to a lesser degree than in the Lowlands.

Middling-scale farmsteads such as the regular courtyard L-plan or loose courtyard plan with working buildings on two sides of the yard are more widely distributed across the county. Both are more concentrated in the areas where the pastoral element of agriculture is more dominant, and many appear to have developed from small-scale farmsteads such as in the Black Mountains. Regular courtyard L-plans, for example, are focussed on the Herefordshire Plateau and represent the initial phase of redevelopment of farmsteads in this area that later became more developed U-plan farmsteads.

Dispersed plans, 3.3% of the total for Herefordshire and for 6.7% for the West Midlands, have no focal yard area and generally show no evidence of planning in the arrangement of the farm buildings. Small-scale farmsteads, where the house and working buildings are often attached in-line are also below the regional average (5.2% in Herefordshire, 11.7% in the region). These farmsteads are located in the Black Mountains area of Herefordshire and more sporadically (such as around areas of common land) within the Herefordshire Plateau. Those in the Black Mountains area are dominated by the very-small scale linear and loose courtyard plan types with a working building to one side of the yard, and the main concentrations of the dispersed cluster plans which have buildings loosely placed within an enclosure for holding stock. These reflect the ancient field pattern of the area and small individual holding size.

Smallholdings are tightly clustered around areas of common land such as Vowchurch and Bringsty Commons. Smallholdings were not previously recorded as a monument type on the Herefordshire SMR. The Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project has created 589 Smallholding records. This is an under-representation of the total number of smallholdings within the county as some areas of smallholding character remain to be mapped as the focus of the current mapping shifted from mapping individual smallholdings to defining smallholding areas. It is the intention, due to the well-preserved character in Herefordshire of these smallholdings and their associated enclosures that the mapping of these smallholdings is revisited and completed for all individual smallholdings in order to inform future priorities in conservation and development management.

Outfarms and field barns display strong localised patterns. Large outfarms are concentrated within the zones of large-scale farms, often on the edge of water meadows or within areas of water meadows that were drained in the later 19th century. Field barns are found in fruit growing areas and in the western uplands, where holdings were typically much smaller and more dispersed.

The very high proportion of farmsteads that have buildings of 17th century or earlier date across the Lowlands and Plateau indicates a corresponding level of rebuilding between the 15th and 17th centuries, seen also in its domestic architecture. They are less common in South Herefordshire and those landscapes that have been subject to higher levels of estate-led reorganisation and the enlargement of fields in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, there is extensive evidence for brick and stone walling to have replaced earlier timber frame in all parts of the county, which is illustrated in the *Farmstead Character Statements* for the National Character Areas.

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

- There are some exceptionally rare surviving examples of longhouses along the Welsh borders.
- There are some very rare surviving examples of 18th century and earlier multi-functional barns and cattle housing, comprising single-storey and storeyed timber-framed and stone structures. These closely resemble those found across the border in Wales and in the western part of the West Midlands.
- Herefordshire has some of the largest-scale farmsteads with 18th century and earlier buildings in England, comparable in their size to those of the vales and downlands on south east England. They retain important evidence for social and landscape change reflected in the form and scale of fields in the landscape.
- Farmsteads are often marked by a wide diversity of historic building types, including hop kilns and cider houses.

2.3 Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

Over the 20th century working farms have required new infrastructure, particularly important in the post-1950 period being the construction of industrial sheds built to standardised forms. 46% of sites have sheds of this type, a figure that exceeds the total now remaining in agricultural use.

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

Across Herefordshire 4% of farmsteads have been lost (well below the regional average of 10%), these being concentrated in areas of 20th century settlement expansion for example the suburban areas of Hereford. About 20 out of 119 are associated with urban expansion, a further 20 are in the Black Mountains fringe and another 20 are on the southern edge of the Herefordshire Plateau.

On 4% of recorded sites the house survives but the working buildings have been demolished (below the regional average of 6%), these being more general in their distribution but with a concentration around Hereford, and all the buildings on 5% (156) of sites (regional average of 2%) have been demolished and completely rebuilt. These are focused around Peterchurch in the River Wye west of Hereford, between Weobley and Pembridge and between Moreton on Lugg and Burley Gate.

Across the county the rates of survival of historic farmsteads are higher than the average across the West Midlands region. 89% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%. There are strong differences between the low levels of change to the western borders with Wales and the much higher levels of change in the plateau and lowlands of the county:

- 30% of farmsteads have retained all of their historic footprint/working buildings (regional average 26%).
- 35% of farmsteads have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic footprint (regional average 40%).
- 24% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic footprint (regional average 16%).

Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day 60% do not include a listed building. Only 16% of farmsteads include a working building that is listed.

2.4 Assessing Significance

This understanding of the patterns of inherited character and change, and the products of this project (see 5, Further Information, below) can be used to inform future change, and determine the significance of farmsteads and their potential for enhancement

through sustainable development. Significant farmsteads will have one or more of the following:

1. historic groups that contribute to the landscapes and settlements within which they developed;
2. legible historic groups, where the historic buildings can be seen and appreciated in relationship to each other and the yards and other open spaces within and around the farmstead;
3. historic buildings with little minimal change to their traditional form, or in some cases their importance as estate or industrial architecture;
4. locally characteristic building materials;
5. heritage assets, whether the farmstead or any buildings or archaeological sites within it is included on a local list, contributes to a conservation area or is a designated national asset (a listed building or scheduled ancient monument). Less than 25% of farmstead sites in Herefordshire have listed buildings, the majority of these being houses rather than working buildings.

3 THE USE OF HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

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 Herefordshire:

- Successive waves of investment have reshaped the county to a lesser extent than much of the region, leaving it with the lowest capital endowment of any West Midlands county but a relatively large number of surviving historic farmsteads.
- The proportion of farmsteads remaining purely in agricultural use is slightly higher than elsewhere within the region but the tendency to diversification of working farms has been higher than elsewhere.
- The likelihood of conversion to residential use is very slightly lower than elsewhere in the region, particularly in the west of the county as a result of poorer access.
- The participation of residents as directors of substantial business is lower than in counties with higher economic mass.

These figures update, deepen and complement those available for listed working buildings with visible structural failure and evidence of adaptive reuse. These are based on comparison of 1980s with 1999-2006 photographs, from the Photo Image Survey (University of Gloucestershire for English Heritage, 2009). In the West Midlands 27% of listed working farm buildings have evidence for residential reuse (national level 30%), 3% other (national 4%) and 70% (national 66%) have no other evidence for other use. 18.9% have evidence for structural failure (national 8.9%).

4 KEY ISSUES FOR HEREFORDSHIRE

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 Herefordshire:

4.1 Historic Environment

- Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day (2818), 1681 or 59.7% do not include a listed building. In view of their predominant 19th century date they are not likely to meet current criteria for listing.
- Designation - About 60% of the historic farmstead resource has no national designation and designation mainly focuses on the main farmhouse. Only 16.4% of farmsteads include a working building that is Listed. In some cases, particularly 19th century farmsteads, the criteria for designation will not be met and an alternative mechanism for preservation of a representative sample needs to be considered such as local listing and enhancing the material consideration of these sites in planning.
- Strategic policy development – The study highlights the dispersed settlement pattern that is the inherited characteristic of the landscape of Herefordshire.

Strategic policies need to address maintaining this inherited characteristic in future growth.

- Local policy development – The study has highlighted the number of farms with agricultural sheds is a higher proportion in Herefordshire than elsewhere in the region (around 50-60% in most parts of the county). This reflects the knowledge that a higher proportion of the county's farmsteads have remained in agricultural use than elsewhere in the region and that the requirements of modern agriculture mean these sheds have been constructed to replace the historic units. Policy should be developed to take account of the potential that sheds offer to a diversity of uses, as well as the impact on landscape character.
- The relatively high levels of survival raise important issues when the data is analysed against use data as these farmsteads chiefly remain in agricultural use. 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. The most significant farmsteads and landscapes need to be identified for enhanced maintenance through the agri-environment schemes.
- Outfarms and field barns are a highly vulnerable element of the rural landscape. They have been subject to high rates of loss (60% of all recorded examples have been lost or demolished), 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.
- 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 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.
- 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 continued relevance of the project will depend upon it being used by professionals, researchers and the public.

5 FURTHER INFORMATION ON PROJECT REPORTS

The **West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project** (see www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads) was conducted by English Heritage in collaboration with regional development agency Advantage West Midlands and local county and metropolitan authorities. The key products are:

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 Herefordshire report is available for downloading through the **Herefordshire Through Time** website (www.herefordshire.gov.uk/htt).



Large-scale farmsteads – exceptionally so by national standards - developed across the lowlands and plateau of Herefordshire from the 15th century. They are an integral part of how its landscape changed, at first in association with the abandonment of villages and the establishment of isolated farmsteads, and then the development of capital-intensive farming from the 18th century (© Herefordshire Council).



Small-scale farmsteads remained as a characteristic feature of hillier areas, as here in the anciently-enclosed landscapes of the Black Mountains where isolated farmsteads have been a part of the farmed landscape from the medieval period (© English Heritage).

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.

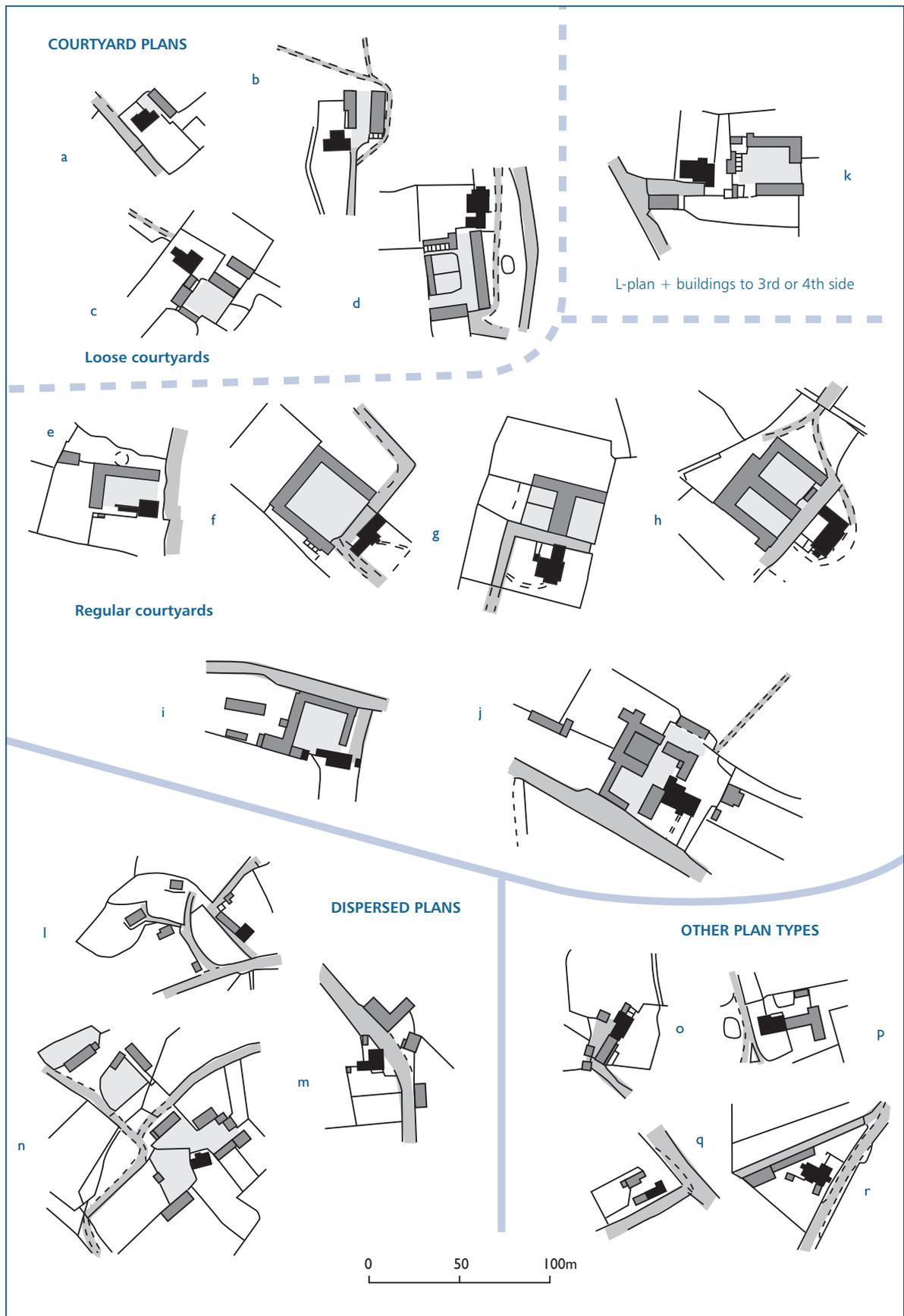
k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides which are generally large to very large in scale.

Dispersed plans subdivide into:

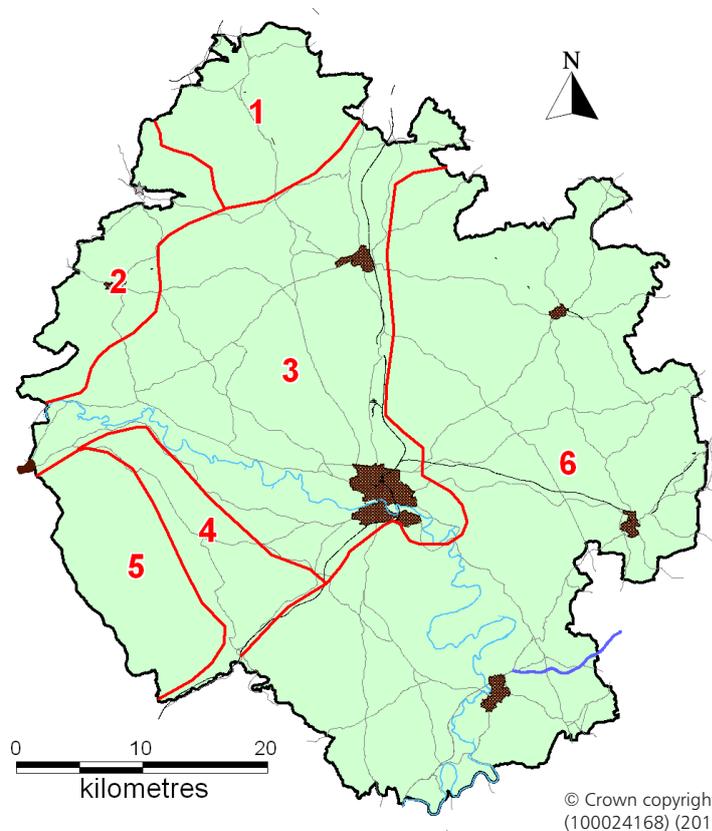
- l) Dispersed clusters where the working buildings are set within the boundary of the steading, and typically the smallest in scale in this category.
- m) Dispersed driftways which are dominated by the routeways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another. These are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



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

1 Wigmore Basin and the surrounding hills

This covers the area of the River Teme, Downton Estate and Harley Mountain. This is a re-organised landscape, comprising regular geometric fields in floodplains and hilltops which partly enclose former watermeadow and rough grazing land. Large farmsteads, in particular multi-yard complexes concentrated along the sides of the valley floors, are a feature of this area, with outfarms on the higher land and some smaller-scale farmsteads concentrated in the hillsides.

2 The North West Herefordshire Hills

This is an upland and upland fringe area with high rates of survival (and including some well-preserved ancient field patterns) and small-scale farmsteads mostly characterised by loose courtyard plans (with working buildings to one or two sides of the yard),

dispersed cluster plans and regular L-shaped plans. These are concentrated south of Presteigne and Kington, larger farmsteads being more prominent in the more reorganised landscapes to the north with its large regular field patterns.

3 The Herefordshire Lowlands from Wigmore Basin to the Golden Valley

This is an area of large mixed with middle-sized courtyard farmsteads, many of the largest (mostly of regular multi-yard form) being concentrated along the sides of the valley floors where villages and hamlets remained as a strong element of the settlement pattern. There is a stronger survival of smaller and more ancient farmstead types and some smallholdings to the south west centred on Madley and where commons survived. There is widespread evidence for settlement desertion and the development of isolated farmsteads in association with the enclosure of farmland from the 14th century.

4 Golden Valley

The landscape within the valley has been successively reorganised, with large courtyard farmsteads and fields (both piecemeal and regular in shape) set around former watermeadows. There are prominent smallholding zones (eg Vowchurch Common) on the fringes of the valley, especially adjacent to the Black Mountains, where smaller-scale farmsteads are more common.

5 The Black Mountains

This is an area with high rates of survival (and including some well-preserved ancient field patterns) and small-scale farmsteads mostly characterised by loose courtyard plans (with working buildings to 1-2 sides of the yard), dispersed cluster plans and regular L-shaped plans. These are concentrated south of Kington and around Brillley. The larger-scale farms, mostly courtyard steadings with working buildings set to 3 sides of yards of loose or regular form, have had higher levels of loss.

6 The Herefordshire Plateau, the Eastern Herefordshire Lowlands and South Herefordshire

This is an area with a broadly similar farmstead character to the Herefordshire Lowlands, but with higher numbers of loose courtyard plans with working buildings to 4 sides of the yard. In contrast to the Lowlands (Area 3), smaller farmsteads developed within its more hilly landscape, which retains a pattern of smaller-scale enclosure slightly less affected by 18th and 19th century change. There is widespread evidence for settlement desertion and the development of isolated farmsteads from the 14th century. Hamlets and villages remained in the lowlands east of Hereford, and around the main routes in this area - from Hereford to Bromyard, Ledbury and Worcester and also in a band following Roman Road (the A417 – Trumpet-Ashperton-Burley Gate and then continuing up through Ullingswick to Pencombe)

Annexe 2 National Character Area Summaries

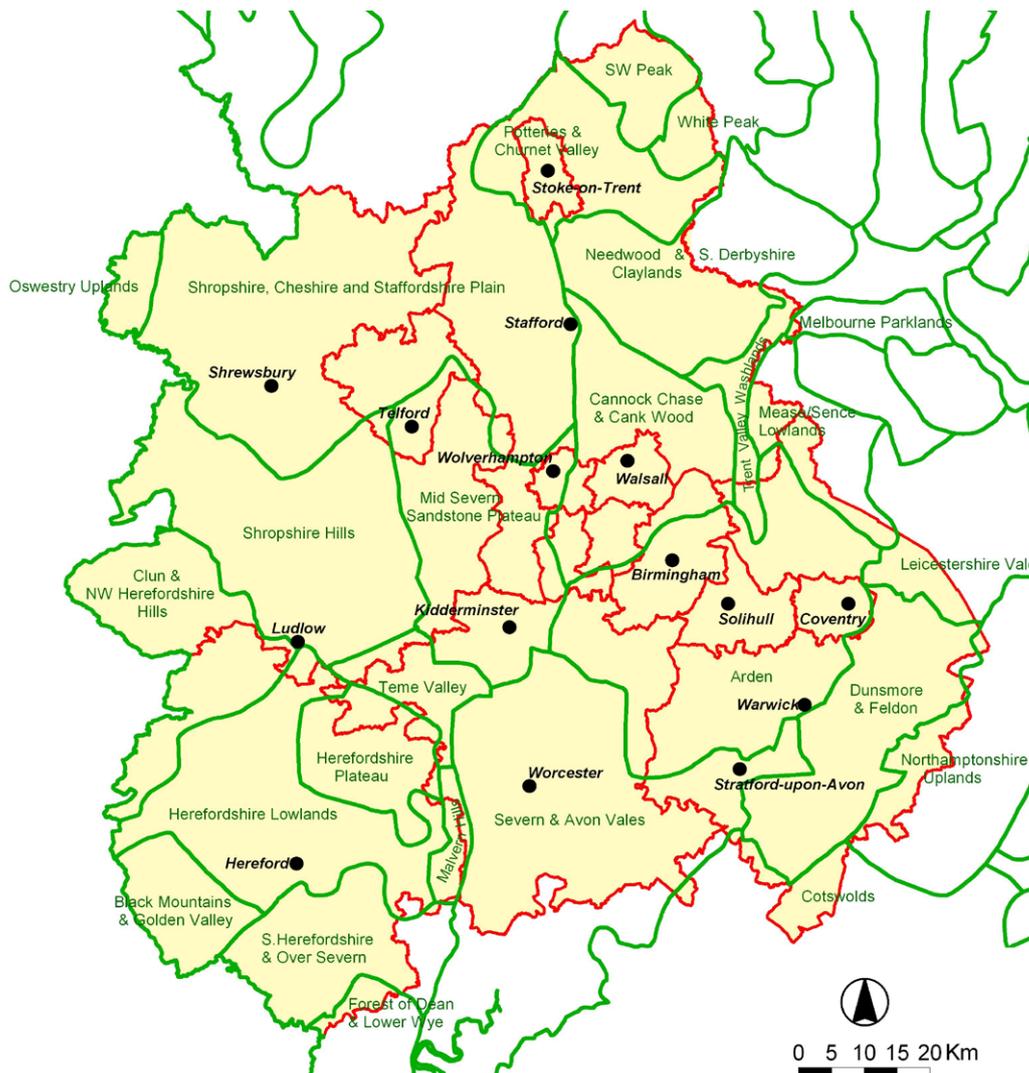
The National Character Areas (NCAs) combine a broad understanding of the historic environment with physical landscape character and the natural environment. They are used as a framework for analysing the trends and options for future change across landscapes and for informing the targeting of agri-environment schemes. Natural England is leading on updating the NCAs, including the identification of landscape objectives on their future protection, planning and management. The result of this Project will feed into this process for the West Midlands.

Included under the Survival heading are percentages of listed working farm buildings with visible structural failure and evidence of adaptive reuse. These are based on comparison of 1980s with 1999-2006 photographs, from the Photo Image Survey (University of Gloucestershire for English Heritage, 2009). In the West Midlands 27% of listed working farm buildings have evidence for residential reuse (national level 30%), 3% other (national 4%) and 70% (national 66%) have

no other evidence for other use. 18.9% have evidence for structural failure (national 8.9%).

The Farmsteads Character Statements for the NCAs in this county cover:

- 98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills
- 99 Black Mountains and Golden Valley
- 100 Herefordshire Lowlands
- 101 Herefordshire Plateau
- 102 Teme Valley
- 103 Malvern Hills
- 104 South Herefordshire and Over Severn
- 105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye



98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills

Character

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

Survival

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

Patterns of Use

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

99 Black Mountains and Golden Valley

Character

- High to very high levels of dispersed settlement, with 12.4% of farmsteads in hamlets and 8.6% in villages (the latter concentrated in the Golden Valley).
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, with high density in the Black Mountains.
- Predominant pattern of small-medium (33.2%) to large-scale (29%) farmsteads across the area, but with a marked tendency for smaller-scale in the Black Mountains where very small-scale farmsteads (22.7%) are concentrated.

Survival

- High rate of survival, with 63% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 0-10% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- This area has the lowest economic mass in the Region and the highest proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use and low residential use (49%), with relatively low participation in business (gauged either by farm based limited companies (1.8%) or directorships of substantial business (12%)).

100 Herefordshire Lowlands

Character

- High to very high levels of dispersed settlement, with 10.4% of farmsteads in hamlets and 2.1% in villages.
- Low-medium density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Large (39.4%) and very large-scale (29.5%) farmsteads predominant, followed by small-medium scale (22.6%) farmsteads which are concentrated east of Hereford.

Survival

- High rate of survival, particularly away from the towns, with 77% % of historic farmsteads retain more than half of their historic footprint.
- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Low economic mass and inherited pattern of large-scale farms implies a higher proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (54%) than is typical of the Region as a whole, with a higher tendency to farmstead diversification (numbers of holiday homes and workshops being above regional expectations).

98 Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills

Character

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

Survival

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

Patterns of Use

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

101 Herefordshire Plateau

Character

- High levels of dispersed settlement, with 6% of farmsteads in hamlets and 3.6% in villages.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, lower towards the Herefordshire Lowlands.
- Larger-scale farmsteads (41.7%), underpinned by a stronger tendency to medium (28.1%) than very large-scale farmsteads (19.4%, concentrated in the broad vales).

Survival

- High to very high rates of survival, particularly to east, with 61% of historic farmsteads retain 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

- Here economic mass is amongst the lowest of any National Character Area in the Region and the proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use amongst the highest, though the tendency to farmstead diversification has been stronger than generally found in the Region (numbers of holiday homes and caravans being above regional expectations).

102 Teme Valley

Character

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

Survival

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

Patterns of Use

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

103 Malvern Hills

Character

- High levels of dispersed settlement, with 12.2% of farmsteads in hamlets and 2.4% in villages.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, high to the Suckley Hills to the north and low in the estatelands to the south.
- Large-scale (38.2%) farmsteads predominant and concentrated to south, but with an even mix of other farmstead scales that display a strong degree of local variation.

Survival

- High rate of survival except around Malvern (7% loss), with 72% of historic farmsteads retain more

than half of their historic footprint.

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

Patterns of Use

- The proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use is the lowest of any in the Region (21%) with three farmsteads out of four being converted to residential use with residents showing high participation in substantial business at director level (39 directorships per hundred farmsteads).

104 South Herefordshire and Over Severn

Character

- High levels of dispersed settlement, with 4.2% of farmsteads in hamlets and 4.3% in villages.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, lower in some of the broad valleys.
- Large-scale farmsteads are predominant (45%), with small to medium-scale farmsteads concentrated in the Garway Hills.

Survival

- Medium rates of survival, with 60% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Historic farmsteads in this area have a highly distinctive pattern of use - the proportion remaining in agriculture being amongst the highest in the Region (41%), with greater tendency to farm diversification (numbers of holiday homes being well above regional expectation) while only 52% have been converted to residential use.

105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye

Character

- Low density of dispersed settlement
- Strong pattern of dispersed settlement, with 2.1% of farmsteads in villages and 10.4% in hamlets.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, lower to the plateau.
- Large-scale farmsteads (45%) predominant, with significant numbers of small to medium (24.7%) and very large-scale (20%) farmsteads predominant.

Survival

- High rate of survival within Herefordshire, with 61% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and above 50% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- This area (within the Herefordshire part) shows a highly distinctive profile with a high proportion of farmsteads remaining in agricultural use (39%) and a (relatively) high level of conversion to non-residential uses outside of agriculture (including provision of holiday homes, equestrian facilities and offices to a greater degree than typical of the Region as a whole) and despite the relatively low proportion in residential use, high participation in directorship of substantial business (55 directorships per hundred farmsteads).

Acknowledgements for maps and plans

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