West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: Summary Report

for

ADVANTAGE WEST MIDLANDS
&
ENGLISH HERITAGE

FORUM
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by

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of the West Midlands Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project (HFC) covering the city and metropolitan areas of Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The mapping was carried out by Forum Heritage Services between April and May 2010.

This project forms part of a regional project investigating Historic Farmstead Characterisation (HFC) in the West Midlands on a county by county basis. The characterisation of farmsteads in the Region was initiated by Staffordshire County Council with support from English Heritage and subsequently funded by English Heritage in Shropshire and Worcestershire with additional funding by the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands, for Warwickshire and Herefordshire. This work has enabled an evidence base for farmsteads to be viewed in their landscape context across an entire region for the first time.

The project more specifically seeks to understand how farmsteads, and in particular traditional farm buildings of 19th century or earlier date, make a fundamental contribution to local distinctiveness and a sense of place, through their varied forms, use of materials and the way that they relate to the surrounding form and patterning of landscape and settlement. 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.

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 to help national and local decision-makers evaluate what future uses for farm buildings should be, to understand how they contribute to local character and to identify the most significant and vulnerable cases. For the first time at a regional level the Project has:

1. Mapped and described the locations and characteristics of all farmsteads, their change over time, and how they relate to the landscape.
2. Described the present day role of historic farmsteads in the West Midland's economy.
3. Developed a set of planning tools to inform spatial planning, land management and economic development.

English Heritage will use the results of this project to help decision-makers to unlock the potential of historic farmsteads, based on an understanding of variations in their local character and significance. Future change in historic farmsteads is inevitable if they are to be retained as a distinctive part of the rural landscape. Where it is fully informed, new uses can make a positive contribution to landscape character and inspire appropriate high-quality new development.

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.

Historic Farmstead Survival and Change

The project mapped 831 farmsteads and 199 outfarms or field barns. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the farmsteads recorded from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey mapping of c.1900 have been lost through urban expansion. However, 120 farmstead sites survive to some degree as recognisable historic farmsteads but only 3 outfarms or field barns survive, mostly within the small areas of rural landscape around and between the urban areas, but occasionally farmsteads survive, converted to other uses, within the built-up area. Of the farmsteads that have been lost from the landscape, those sites that are located in undeveloped areas may represent sites of archaeological interest and the mapping will be used to enhance the Historic Environment Records of Birmingham City Council, Dudley, Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC and Wolverhampton City Council.

Historic Farmstead Character and Context

Whilst the number of surviving farmsteads recorded is relatively small, the mapping within the Conurbation area helps to complete a full picture of the location, density and character of farmsteads across the whole of the West Midlands region meaning that the farmsteads within

the pockets of rural landscape of the study area can be seen in their wider landscape context. Through the examination of the farmstead data against the Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation it has been possible to identify areas where there is a strong surviving association between farmsteads and their landscape which will be important to consider in future management decisions relating to both the farmsteads and the landscape. Analysis of the farmstead data also shows that the character of farmsteads within the Conurbation relates closely to the character of the landscape of the three National Character Areas that cover the Conurbation area: Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau, Cannock Chase and Cank Wood and the Arden.

Current Use

For further details see the *Farmstead Use Report*

- Economic development over two centuries has ensured the highest level of capital endowment within the West Midlands, though as a result few farmsteads survive.
- The likelihood that surviving farmsteads are in residential use is similar to that for the region as a whole.
- Surviving farmsteads are slightly less likely to be in agricultural use than elsewhere within the region and very slightly more likely to have been converted to B1, B2 or B8 use. Several unconverted farmstead sites are used for the storage of caravans.

1.0 BACKGROUND

Farmsteads – and in particular traditional farm buildings of 19th century or earlier date - make a fundamental contribution to *local distinctiveness* and a *sense of place*, through their varied forms, use of materials and the way that they relate to the surrounding form and patterning of landscape and settlement. This is because their character has been shaped by their development as centres for the production of food from the surrounding farmland. Every part of England's farmed landscape has inherited its own distinct and recognisable characteristics, each resulting from a combination of physical and natural factors such as land form and geology, and historical processes such as how individuals and communities have worked and managed the land, in response to local and distant markets.

Funding from the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands, has enabled an evidence base for farmsteads in their landscape context – begun by English Heritage and its county partners in Shropshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire - to be completed across an entire region for the first time. The principal aims of the project are to:

1. understand and demonstrate how the inherited character of historic farmsteads – the way that present patterns express past development and change - contributes to local distinctiveness and landscape character;

2. identify the forces for present and future change, and how historic farmsteads are contributing to the changing structure of rural economies and communities;

3. inform strategic policy and guidance, and the preparation of local policy and guidance to promote sustainable rural development and communities;

4. develop place-making tools that enable users – at the earliest stages of considering change - to understand the constraints and opportunities offered by farmstead sites in their broader context.

This evidence base is needed because structural changes in the farming industry have hastened the wholesale redundancy of historic farm buildings and the decoupling of entire farmsteads from agricultural production. As a result there is a strong but locally varied demand for their conversion to other uses, particularly housing. This, and the development of planning policy and guidance that emphasises the importance of a positive and evidence-based approach to future change informed by a clear understanding of local needs and circumstances, heightens the need to:

1. develop an understanding of the potential for and sensitivity to change of farmsteads in order to inform and guide future change in the form of land management and planning policy and guidance;

2. help those considering adaptive reuse and new build to consider and, where relevant, capitalise upon the distinctive quality of traditional farmsteads and buildings;

3. consider historic farmsteads as part of the wider landscape and in the context of the changing structure of rural communities and economies.

Readers can now find a useful summary of work completed since then, by English Heritage in association with the former Countryside Agency and other key partners on English Heritage's HELM website - under Regeneration and Design, Rural Development

(http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/category.17855). This includes an audit of the effectiveness of policy at national and local level, and the proportion of listed buildings that have been subjected to development pressure and change of use. New policy which states that future strategies and approaches towards re-use need to align an understanding of character with sensitivity to and potential for change, is supported by much larger *Preliminary Character Statements*, consultative documents which represent an initial attempt to understand the farmsteads of each region in their national and landscape context. Guidance on the adaptive reuse of farm buildings - *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: a Guide to Good Practice* – seeks to promote high standards in design and implementation where conversion is considered as a viable and appropriate option.

New character-based tools, focused on the developing an understanding of local character in its broader context, and an assessment framework to inform change at a strategic and site-based scale, are now being developed in order to ensure that future change is informed by an understanding of farmstead character and local distinctiveness.

(See www.english-heritage.org.uk/characterisation for further details on the farmsteads mapping and other work).

The project has been carried out by Bob Edwards and Wendy Edwards of Forum Heritage Services. Bob Edwards, working with Jeremy Lake of English Heritage developed the methodology for mapping farmsteads in the south-east of England.

The study area, the West Midland Conurbation consists of:

- Birmingham City Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC)
- Walsall MBS
- Wolverhampton City Council
- Sandwell MBC

Archaeological planning advice in the Conurbation is provided by Planning Archaeologists based within each of the City and Metropolitan Borough Councils which maintain their own Historic Environment Records (HER). The data generated from this project will be supplied to the HERs.

2.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPE PROJECT

2.1 Aims

The principal aims of the Farmsteads and Landscapes Project are:

- to develop an integrated understanding – for the first time across a government region – of farmstead character, survival and current use within their landscape and settlement context;
- to understand and demonstrate how farmsteads contribute to local distinctiveness and landscape character;
- to understand the present use and social/economic role of historic farmsteads;
- to inform strategic policy and guidance, and the drafting of local policy and guidance.

The project will build on the results of several years of research, which has highlighted the importance of three principal priorities to address:

- Understanding the present inherited patterns of farmstead character.
- Understanding the forces for present and future change.
- Developing place-making tools.

2.2 Objectives

Key objective 1: Enhance county Historic Environment Records through the creation of GIS-based databases recording farmstead address and location, recorded date, historic farmstead type and degree of change, obtained from modern and historic Ordnance Survey maps and other data.

Key objective 2: Analyse this data in combination with a range of address and business data to provide spatial patterning of farmstead use (agriculture, economic, residential) and how farmsteads contribute to the home-based and broader regional economy.

Key objective 3: Analyse this data in combination with county-level and listed building data, and Historic Landscape Character mapping and character areas/types, to demonstrate how farmsteads contribute to local distinctiveness and landscape character.

Key objective 4: Provide a region-wide overview and context for strategies and guidance on targeting resources, research and monitoring, conservation, restoration or enhancement.

Key objective 5: Make available tools for use in developing local planning guidance and casework.

2.3 Products

The key products will be:

- *Farmsteads Mapping*, through the creation of a GIS data set which records the spatial patterning, form, date range and survival of historic farmsteads, capable of analysis

against landscape-scale datasets such as Character Areas/Types and Historic Landscape Characterisation.

- *Mapping Current Use and Context,* through the provision of work in progress on developing the evidence base and data that reveals the current social and economic role of farmsteads.
- A *character framework* in the form of regional and character area guidance that enables users to understand farmsteads in their local-regional-national context.
- *Planning tools* based on an understanding of the potential for and sensitivity to change of farmsteads and their buildings, both at a strategic and a site-based level, and that enable local authorities to develop guidance.

2.4 Applications

These products will inform at a strategic scale:

- Strategic planning
- Strategic land management within the framework of the ERDP, Environmental Stewardship and AONB and National Park management plans
- Inform the Sustainable Communities agenda (for example with respect to the Welsh Marches Initiative and the growth-points agenda), specifically through:
    i. examination of the role that historic farmsteads can play in the long-term future of rural communities in landscapes of different types and with differing patterns of settlement;
    ii. their potential for live/work, and research at a national level on this little-understood aspect of economic activity in rural areas.
    iii. to provide baseline data to inform SEA/SA assessments of the potential impact of growth options and site allocations on landscape character in areas with a predominantly dispersed settlement pattern
- The identification of priority features and areas, for use in designation and the targeting of funds for the Higher Level Agri-Environment Schemes
- The provision of an evidence base and contextual information to inform Local Development Frameworks and Supplementary Planning Documents

At a local and site-based scale it will facilitate:

- Consistent and evidence-based tools for pre-application discussion and development control, including the preparation of Design and Access Statements, Heritage Statements, and listed building consent;
- Place-specific guidance, including Supplementary Planning Guidance;
- The work of local communities and groups – including Leader + and Local Strategic Partnerships;
- Land use management (Farm Environmental Plans and Whole Farm Plans).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introducing Characterisation

Characterisation, as developed since the 1990s, is designed to provide context for the detailed records of individual sites and designated highlights, and inform change, planning and conservation above the scale of individual sites. It has been applied to a wide diversity of outputs outside English Heritage: examples are the Natural Areas developed in order to inform strategies for the protection of wildlife and their habitats, the National Character Areas (www.countryside.gov.uk/lar/landscape) and the development of Landscape Character Assessment as a finer-grained framework for use by local authorities and others (www.landscapecharacter.org.uk).

The National Character Areas (NCAs) have been modified with the assistance of English Nature and English Heritage. These areas (159 in total) are concerned with identifying broad regional patterns of character in the landscape resulting from particular combinations of land cover, geology, soils, topography and settlement and enclosure patterns. They are being used as the framework for the delivery of advice, management and the targeting of resources for many aspects of the environment, most notably in the context of this report the targeting of grant aid under the Higher Level Stewardship Agri-Environment schemes. The NCAs covering the West Midlands Conurbation are shown in Figure 1.

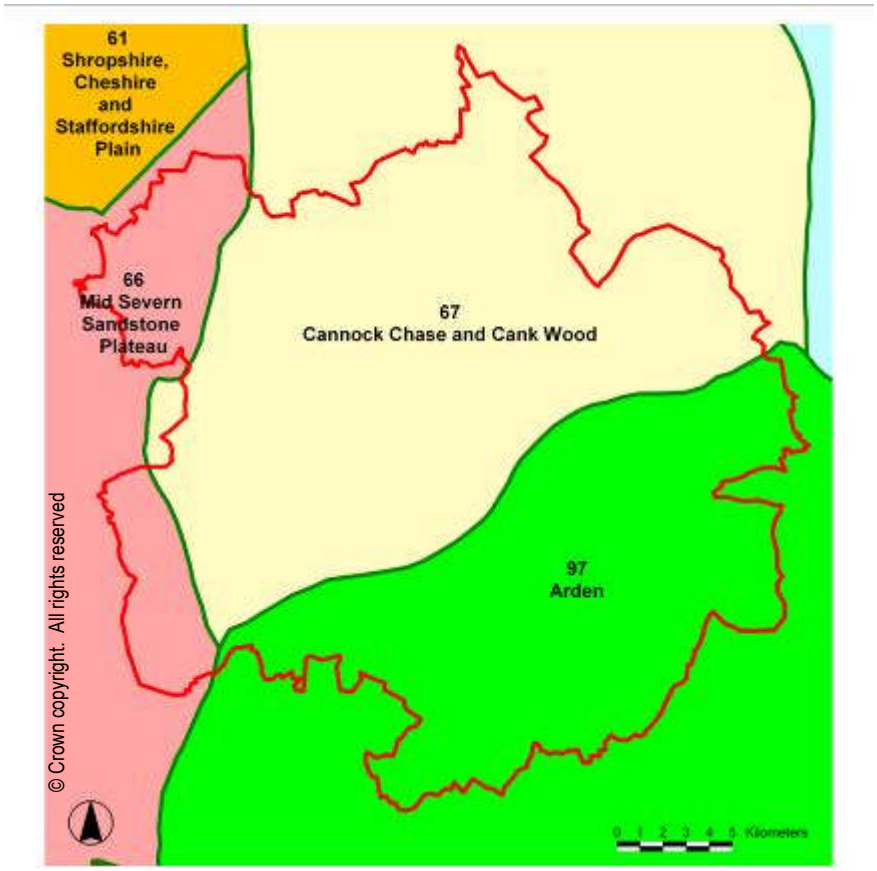


Figure 1 National Character Areas within the study area

Historic Characterisation seeks to interpret and understand the inherited character of all places, and the evidence for change and continuity in the present environment. It is based on the need to understand and help professionals and communities to manage the *present* environment as a product of past change and the raw material for future change. It always works at an area-scale, above that of individual sites and features (protected or not) It differs from research and survey, as undertaken in the historic environment sector, by its promotion of broad and generalised approaches to understanding the historic environment. The key method promoted by English Heritage and its county-based partners (www.englishheritage.org.uk/characterisation) is Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC). This is a tool for understanding the processes of change in the historic environment as a whole, for identifying what is vulnerable, and for maintaining diversity and distinctiveness in the local scene. It is based upon the identification and then analysis using GIS mapping of archaeological, historical and other environmental features (attributes) such as ancient woodland, building plots and enclosed farmland. These are then grouped into land parcels ('HLC polygons' within GIS) and used to identify distinct *character types*, and *historic character areas* which are each defined by a common and/or predominant character. The techniques of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping are then used to map change and time-depth in the landscape.

Throughout the West Midlands Region, English Heritage and its county-based partners are in the process of completing the GIS mapping of the inherited character of the present landscape: this process is known as Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC). Analysing the farmstead mapping data against HLC will deepen our understanding of the degree of change and its resultant character.

The Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation Project covering the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, and Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton was started in 2004 and the data collection phase was completed in 2006. The project used historic maps, modern digital maps and aerial photographs to map the historic character of the present-day landscape and earlier phases of landscape development. Only 10% of the Black Country survives as field systems and so there is limited opportunity to analyse the farmsteads data against HLC.

3.2 Introducing Historic Farmstead Characterisation

In 2004 English Heritage supported a pilot project 'Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Character in Hampshire Project' which aimed to examine methods of assessing and describing the relationships between the character of historic farmsteads and landscape character at a variety of levels from National Character Areas to individual farms (Edwards 2005). One element of the pilot project was the trial digitisation of farmsteads as point data using a Geographic Information System (GIS) within two pilot areas. The analysis of this method of data collection suggested that there was a correlation between farmsteads and landscape character areas, landscape types and historic landscape character areas. Subsequently, the mapping of farmsteads across the whole of Hampshire, West Sussex, East Sussex and the High Weald AONB was carried out (Edwards, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b). In 2007 a project to map the farmsteads of Staffordshire commenced, reporting in 2009 (Edwards, 2009). These projects further demonstrated that the mapping of farmsteads could reveal relationships between farmsteads and landscape character. The mapping focuses on historic farmsteads, i.e. those farmsteads that pre-date the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey mapping of the late 1890s as this is considered to be close to the end of the development of the traditional farmstead displaying vernacular forms and details and before the large scale introduction of mass-produced sheds.

The mapping of farmsteads uses Geographical Information Systems (GIS). It follows the methodology developed and refined during the mapping of farmsteads in the South East and set out in an illustrated guide produced in early 2009 (Lake and Edwards, 2009). 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. A table showing the full set of attributes recorded is presented in Appendix I. Elements of this table are discussed further below.

The West Midlands Conurbation Farmsteads and Landscape Project forms part of a larger project following on from the mapping of farmsteads in Staffordshire with the aim of mapping all farmsteads across an entire region for the first time, thus providing as broad a context as possible to the interpretation of patterns at a local scale. The various county-based mapping projects together with the Conurbation project have been undertaken with support from English Heritage and with additional funding by the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands.

3.3 Historic Farmstead Character Statements

One of the key products of the project is the development of Farmstead Character Statements relating to the National Character Areas (NCAs). They will:

- Provide a summary statement which identifies the key characteristics of farmsteads within the NCA;
- Describe the key historic influences on the development of the area;
- Describe the settlement patterns (nucleated/dispersed) and key landscape characteristics including the date and type of enclosure, the presence of parkland, woodland or common;
- Identify the characteristic farmstead plan types of the area and the key building types. The area will be set within the national context with regard to the presence and time depth of listed buildings;
- Identify the building materials and details that are characteristic of the area. Traditional materials or building techniques that are becoming rare will also be identified;
- Set out the key drivers for change relating to historic farmsteads.

3.4 Historic Farmsteads Mapping

The creation of the polygon data set involved the following stages:

3.4.1 Farmstead Identification

A *farmstead* is the homestead of a farm where the farmhouse and some or all of the working farm buildings are located, some farms have *field barns* or *outfarms* sited away from the main steading. Some areas have concentrations of *smallholdings* whose occupiers worked in local industries and other forms of employment.

To create the farmsteads data:

- Farmsteads were identified from the OS 2nd Edition 25" mapping dating from around 1900.
- Outfarm complexes or field barns were differentiated, where possible, from homestead complexes.

- Small-holdings were either identified individually or where dense concentrations existed were mapped with a polygon to record general distribution

3.4.2 Farmstead Plan Form

Using the 2nd Edition OS map of c.1884 map as the data source plan form for each farmstead was recorded. Plan form was divided into the following principal plan types:

- Regular Courtyard
- Loose Courtyard
- Dispersed
- Linear
- L-plan (house attached)
- Parallel
- Row

These classifications were used to record the principal attribute of the plan. Secondary attributes were also recorded allowing, for example, the distinction between a U-plan regular courtyard and an E-plan regular courtyard. This approach follows a similar methodology to that taken by William (1982: 37) in recording Welsh farmsteads. Other secondary attributes included, for example, where a loose courtyard plan was the principal plan form but there were some detached or dispersed building elements whilst some farmsteads clearly have two yards. The plan form attribute list is presented in Appendix 1. Also refer to *Historic Farmsteads; a manual for mapping* (Lake and Edwards, 2009) for further details on plan form.

In some farmsteads there are additional elements (beyond the primary and secondary attributes) that also warrant recording, for example, covered yards or particular courtyard arrangements such as a regular L-plan within a multi-yard farmstead. Such additional features were recorded within a Tertiary Element field.

The position of the farmhouse in relation to the yard or whether it was attached to one of the working buildings was also recorded.

3.4.3 Farmstead Date

Dating information derived from Listed Buildings and other HER records were added where relevant. The date information was recorded by century except for pre-1600 buildings, which were recorded as 'MED'. Whilst some listed buildings have date ranges that appear to be more accurate, for example, 'early 18th century', in some areas many listed buildings will only be dated to a century. Additionally, the dating of agricultural buildings, particularly those earlier than the 19th century, is often imprecise. Farmsteads identified only from the OS 2nd Edition 25" mapping were assigned a 19th century date which indicates a latest possible date of creation.

3.4.4 Farmstead Location

The location of the farmstead in relation to other settlement was recorded. This allows the opportunity to examine the distribution of, for example, farmsteads in villages, hamlets, loose farmstead groups and those that are in isolated positions and compare these distributions against other attributes and landscape character.

3.4.5 Farmstead Survival

The degree of change experienced by farmsteads between the date of the 2nd Edition mapping and the present was assessed by comparing the c.1900 OS maps and the modern OS MasterMap for the City of Wolverhampton. Elsewhere across the Conurbation change was assessed using aerial photography to compare against the historic mapping.

3.4.6 Modern Sheds

The presence of modern sheds was also recorded, noting where sheds were either on the site of the historic farmstead or to the side. In either case, the presence of large sheds is a useful indicator that the farmstead may remain in agricultural use.

4.0 FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

4.1 Landscape and Settlement

The size and density in the landscape of farmsteads and their fields results from the type of farming ranging from the largest corn-producing farms to the smallest dairying or stock rearing farms and historical patterns of settlement and land use that can reach back into the medieval period and even earlier. In areas of nucleated settlement communities have worked the land from villages and most or all isolated farmsteads were established after the enclosure of open fields or common land. At the other extreme are areas of dispersed settlement of scattered dwellings and farmsteads with few or no villages. Other areas may have a mix of settlement patterns. As a result farmsteads can be found:

- Within or on the edge of villages
- Located in isolated clusters or in hamlets
- Isolated

The fields and the patterns of roads, tracks and woodland around farmsteads reflect centuries of change. The predominant pattern is piecemeal enclosure, where successive change has removed or retained patterns of land use extending into the medieval period and beyond. Regular planned enclosure, often with straight roads and planned woodland, is found in patches, and concentrated in areas affected by later 18th and 19th century improvement – on the uplands and in lowland heaths and mosses. Also found are areas of irregular, small-scale enclosure of woodland, much of which was complete by the 14th century.

4.2 Farmsteads

A farmstead is the homestead of a farm where the farmhouse and some or all of the working farm buildings are located, some farms having field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. A farmer's income has historically been derived from working the land, although some small farms in particular combined farming with other occupations – see Smallholdings 4.4. The scale, range and form of working buildings reflects their functional requirements for internal space, lighting and fittings. Some can be easy to identify because they are highly specialised in function (such as dovecotes, pigsties and threshing barns) whilst the functions of other buildings or ranges of buildings may be more difficult to unravel because they are multi-functional. They all display significant variation both over time and regionally, and are closely related to the overall plan of the farmstead and the way that it functioned and developed over time. Farmsteads and buildings developed to serve the following functions up to the 20th century, which all required:

- Access to and the siting of the house and its garden;
- Different types and size of building and open space, and different flows of movement within and around working buildings;
- Access to routes and tracks;
- The subdivision and different use of spaces within and around the farmstead – cattle yards and areas for stacking corn, hay etc, gardens, orchards, ponds, small field enclosures for milking or sorting livestock.

Historic farmsteads all contain two or more of the following components:

Housing

- The farmhouse is either attached or detached from the working buildings. It may face into or away from the main yard, and will face into or be sited to one side of its garden.
- Separate cottages may be provided for farm workers.

Barns

- Barns are the dominant building on most farmsteads.
- A barn for storing and processing the harvested corn crop over the winter months was the basic requirement of most farms, and corn could also be stacked in yards adjacent to the barn. In all cases the grain was beaten (threshed) from the harvested corn crop on an open threshing floor. Grain was stored in the barn or more usually the farmhouse.
- Barns may also be multi-functional buildings that were sub-divided with partitions and floors to allow the housing of cattle as well as the corn crop and other produce.

Cattle Yards

- Straw was taken from the barn to cattle yards and stables to be used as bedding for livestock. The resulting manure was then forked into carts and returned to fertilise the surrounding farmland.
- Ancillary buildings developed within or around cattle yards, most commonly open-fronted shelter sheds and cow houses. Internal cattle yards typically face south and east to capture sun and light, the openings being concentrated on the yard sides of the buildings.

Yards and related buildings

- Other yards – especially those with more direct access to routes and tracks - were also used to store timber and often farm vehicles and implements.
- Smaller and ancillary buildings set away from the yard are common.
- Cartsheds, sometimes stables and other ancillary buildings can be placed facing towards routes and tracks.

The historic character of farmsteads has thus been shaped by their development as centres for the production of food from and the return of manure to the surrounding farmland. Buildings served to house the farming family and any workers, store and process harvested crops and dairy products, and shelter livestock, carts and implements. Farmsteads required access to routes and tracks, and working buildings were placed in relationship to yards and other areas for stacking crops and managing livestock. Variations in farmstead form, scale and dates reflect agricultural and local traditions, landownership, farm size and a variety of historic functions. Houses faced towards or away from the yard, and may be attached or detached from the working buildings. Most traditional farmstead buildings date from the 19th century, survivals of earlier periods being increasingly rare. Over the 20th century – and especially since the 1950's – farmstead functions have been met in all areas by standardised sheds.

The variety of farmstead plan types - the way the buildings of the farmstead are arranged within the group - reflects their past requirements for storing and processing crops, managing and housing livestock and easy access to routes and tracks. Farmsteads vary enormously in their

scale and the extent to which – as a result of change over time – they incorporate elements of more than one plan type. The principal farmstead types are:

• **Linear** and **L-shaped plans** where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line, which are concentrated in the upland areas of northern and western England including of smallholdings whose occupiers were employed in local industries. These are consistently small-scale family farms, mostly of under 50 acres in size.

• **Row plans**, where the main range of working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row.

• **Dispersed plans**, where the buildings and yards are set within an open area with no clear focal yard. These display a wide range of scales, the key sub-categories being:

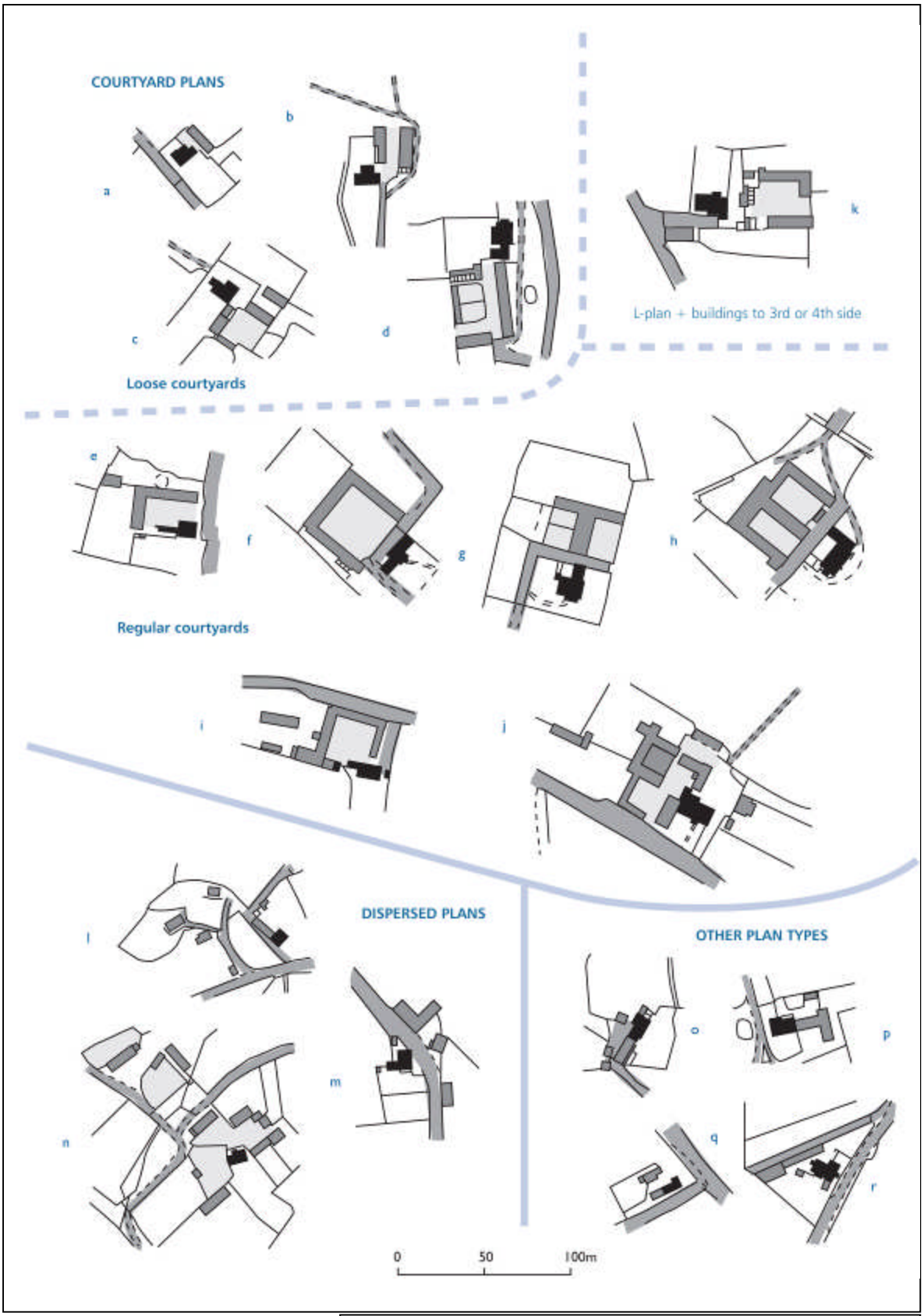
Dispersed Cluster, which includes two or more clusters of buildings within the boundary of the site, which may face working yards;

Dispersed Driftway, where buildings and yards are sited along a routeway;

Dispersed Multi-Yard, where buildings relate to a number of yards that are usually irregularly arranged and detached from one another.

• **Loose Courtyard plans**, a farmstead where mostly detached buildings have developed in piecemeal fashion around one or more sides of an open cattle yard. They can range from small farmsteads with a single building on one side of the yard and the farmhouse to a yard defined by working buildings to all four sides. The farmsteads with buildings to 3 or 4 sides of the yard usually display more coherent (and sometimes quite regular) layouts. The yards served various purposes – general movement and access to the working buildings and sometimes the house, the storage and collection of their manure and sometimes other products such as timber. Some yards served purely as areas for cattle, and are bordered by barns (which supplied straw which was trodden into manure), enclosed and open-fronted cattle housing.

• **Regular Courtyard plans**, where the buildings are carefully planned as linked ranges, and are focused around one or more working yards. Farmsteads can be arranged as a full courtyard enclosing four sides of the yard, as L- or U-shaped arrangements or on the largest farms as multi-yard complexes including E-plan arrangements. Regular Courtyard plans often conform to national ideals in efficient farmstead design, as developed in farming literature from the later 18th century and promoted by land agents, engineers and architects by the mid 19th century.



(Figure 2)
Farmstead Plan Types

a - d Loose courtyards with working buildings 1,2, 3 and 4 sides;
e regular L-plan; f Regular U-plan; g Regular H-plan; h Regular E-plan; I Full Regular courtyard; j Regular multi-yard; k L-plan with building to 3rd side;
l Dispersed cluster; m Dispersed driftway; n Dispersed multi-yard;
o Linear; p L-plan house attached; q Parallel plan; r Row plan

4.3 Outfarms and Field Barns

Outfarms and field barns allowed certain functions normally carried out in the farmstead to be undertaken at locations remote from the main steading.

A field barn is a building set within the fields away from the main farmstead, typically in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other. Field barns could be:

- Shelters for sheep, typically with low doors and floor-to-ceiling heights.
- Shelters for cattle and their fodder (hay).
- Threshing barns with yards.
- Combination barns with a threshing bay and storage for the crop, and housing for cattle.

An outfarm is a complex of buildings set within the fields away from the main farmstead, typically in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other. A cottage for a farm worker could also be sited nearby.

The plan form of outfarms and field barns followed that of farmsteads, having a primary attribute, for example, Loose Courtyard or Regular Courtyard, and a secondary attribute recording the form. Where a field barn stands within a field with no yard it was recorded as Single building.

4.4 Smallholdings

In contrast to farmers, who derived their primary income from the pursuit of agriculture, smallholders combined small-scale subsistence farming to supplement the income derived from other (usually industrial) activities such as woodland management, quarrying, coal or lead mining or metal working. Smallholders often relied upon access to common land and woodland and typically had little or no enclosed land.

Individual small-holdings may be difficult to identify with certainty from historic mapping, and their survival or loss recorded in broad terms. Smallholdings will often be identified by their location in areas of small fields close to areas of common land and dispersed small-scale industry, whereas cottages, which may be of a similar size, will usually be set on roadsides without a clear association with fields. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) can also assist in the identification of smallholdings, as these distinctive landscapes are often identified as areas of squatter enclosure.

There is clearly a degree of overlap in these areas with sites that can be mapped as farmsteads, in particular the smallest farmsteads that can be identified as linear, loose courtyard (the smallest ones in this category with a building to only one side of a yard) and dispersed cluster plans. Their size and association with smallholdings may however imply a similar small-scale subsistence farming practice coupled with other activities.

Once identified, smallholdings have been individually mapped, noting their location and survival. It has also been possible to map key areas of smallholdings, with related summary text that describes their character and degree of observable change; the predominant types are dispersed clusters and loose courtyards with buildings to one side.

5.0 FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPES IN THE WEST MIDLANDS CONURBATION

5.1 Introduction

Since the 16th century writers have made broad distinctions between the contrasting landscapes of farming communities based primarily in villages and focused on the production of corn, and those scattered communities with diverse pastoral economies. The Conurbation sits astride three contrasting areas, notably:

- The Arden with its distinctive pattern of dispersed rather than village-based settlement, with high densities of isolated farmsteads, set within farmed landscapes which were enclosed from woodland (mostly by the 14th century), common land and medieval strip fields. There are in addition a number of higher status properties which may represent a phase of rebuilding, and possible engrossing of holdings, from the 18th century in order to respond to the growing demands of the expanding urban areas.

- Cannock Chase with its characteristic mix of common-edge and small farms, some engaged in industry, intermixed with some larger farmsteads. Small farmsteads fringe the heathland areas, and large farmsteads developed on the better quality land associated with estates enclosing areas of the Chase.

- The Sandstone Plateau which was subject to the highest degree of landscape improvement and transformation in the 18th and 19th centuries where scattered farmsteads are inter-mixed with nucleated villages.

As it expanded, the Conurbation drew on the resources of these areas and further afield. At the end of the 11th century the area of the Conurbation consisted of small settlements, probably no more than hamlets and scattered farmsteads with larger settlements at Dudley and Wolverhampton. Birmingham was, at that time, a lowly valued manor. By the mid-14th century Birmingham was the third highest contributor to a levy on goods after Warwick and Coventry Although there were grants off a market and fairs, Birmingham did not become a borough, a factor that is sometimes cited, together with the natural resources available, for the growth and success of the town although until the late 16th century the town's wealth was based on its merchants rather than manufacture. The town began to expand in the later 16th century due in part to the availability of land from former hospitals and guilds which had been dissolved earlier in the century and the loss of control of the manorial family, the manor becoming a royal possession and the resultant string of absentee landlords asserting less control. From the late 16th century metal-working became the principal activity of the town (Stephens 1964).

Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton developed as market towns serving their rural hinterlands with wool and cloth being important commodities. The towns also began to develop as industrial bases, particularly related to metal working and the development of the coal field by the late 17th century (Thirsk 1981: 180-183), a process that accelerated with the development of the canals in the late 18th century. However, the metal working industries often relied upon small workshops scattered over a wide area where families could combine industry with small-scale farming. Such enterprises were often located in common edge locations where a few animals could be grazed on the common with small enclosures for hay and perhaps barley.

The expanding urban populations stimulated an increase in barley production, and a strengthening of the dairy industry in the surrounding countryside including the production of cheese that was not only supplied to the towns within the Conurbation areas but was also exported to London via the canal network and, later, the railways. Significant areas of orchard were also planted and market gardening developed to provide produce to the expanding population of the Conurbation.

5.2 Landscape and Settlement

5.2.1 Geology and Topography

The Conurbation lies within the Midlands Triangle or Midlands Plain, a large gently undulating area of predominantly drift deposits punctuated by exposures of the underlying sandstones with poorer sandy soils such as Cannock Chase. The Conurbation area lies mainly on two areas of higher ground with the valley of the Severn to the west, the Trent to the north and

The solid geology of the Conurbation is dominated by the South Staffordshire Coalfield, Britain's thickest and richest seam of coal which fuelled the industrial development of the area. Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures underlie the urban areas of Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich and Dudley with isolated outcrops of older Silurian limestones and shales and some igneous intrusions.

Surrounding the coalfields are Triassic-aged shales and sandstones. These underlie much of Birmingham up to Sutton Coldfield. Overlying much of this solid geology are thick deposits of boulder clay and sands and gravel deposited by ice sheets and melt-waters during the Ice Ages (Natural England, 2010).

5.2.2 Landscape Character

The Arden

Historically, the Arden was the least populated part of the county, a slowly evolving landscape of scattered farms and fields with many patches of woodland and common waste; there is evidence that it was used seasonally (through transhumance) by occupants of the Feldon in the medieval period.

Arden was historically a region of woodland and heaths that was cleared in the medieval period into small fields and owner–occupier farms concentrating on livestock, particularly dairying. Settlement was scattered and farms small, connected by a maze of twisted and sunken lanes. The medieval economy of the thinly populated Arden was based upon mixed husbandry in contrast to the Feldon which it adjoins (Dyer 1996: 121). Pastoral farming was further enabled through depopulation and the shrinkage or abandonment of villages in the 14th-16th centuries, the nationally important survival of ridge and furrow reflecting the former extent of open field arable. Enclosure helped to boost production through the rotation of arable cropping in combination with the fattening of cattle and sheep. It was linked to the amalgamation of smaller farms and appearance of large farmsteads in villages and also some in the open landscape.

Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau

Industrial development from the 16th century, closely linked to the navigation of the Severn and the development of canals, declined with the introduction of the railways from the mid 19th

century. On the sandstone plateau to the east of the Severn more corn was grown and fewer cattle were kept than on the heavier soils of the Severn valley itself and elsewhere in Shropshire. The fine, dry, sandy soil was fit for growing rye and barley within medieval open fields and later regular patterns of fields brought about by private or parliamentary enclosure (Hey 1984, p.156). The thin soils of the high ground between the Stour and Severn were influenced by the activities of improving estates from the later 18th century, with some heath and common remaining amongst the predominant pattern of regular and large-scale enclosure. The sandier soils around Kidderminster and Stourbridge, and the more gravelly soils north-east of Bromsgrove were well suited – if fertilised with marl and lime - to dairying. The growing of more fodder crops and clover allowed for dairying to expand from the 18th century in response to demand from the rising industrial populations of the Black Country (Thirsk 1984, p. 186).

Cannock Chase and Cank Wood

Large parts of this wood pasture area, interspersed with large commons, was intensively settled from the medieval period and particularly from the 16th century, with small hamlets associated with industrial activities such as quarrying (limestone and dolerite), coal mining, iron making and edge-tool manufacture. Deep mining of the South Staffordshire Coalfield developed from the 1870s. Piecemeal enclosure of the former common fields was generally complete by the 18th century. By the 19th century the commons - important for the larger farmers and the semi-industrial squatter–cottagers - were being enclosed (Hey 1984, p. 143). Dairying became significant on the heavy, poorly-drained soils in the northern part of the area, where large estates such as Shugborough built some notable home farms (its home farm of 1803 and 1806 is one of the earliest water-powered industrial farmsteads in the country) and were well-placed for export of their produce by canal. Arable farming and horticulture have intensified in importance from the late 18th century on the sandstone-derived soils at the eastern and western edges and to the south of the area.

5.2.3 Settlement

Medieval rural settlements were predominantly agricultural communities. The location of farmsteads, whether grouped together to form nucleated villages or dispersed across the landscape in relative isolation, is largely responsible for the varying settlement patterns that characterise the countryside today although in areas which developed industry, the earlier patterns can be overlain or accompanied by the largely post-medieval settlement associated with those industries.

The pattern of settlement in England, as it existed in the late 19th century, has been mapped and analysed by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000). Their work defined a Central Province stretching from Dorset to Northumbria which is mostly characterised by nucleated settlement and, by the 14th century, communal fields which occupied the great majority of the land area. Flanking this area are a South-Eastern Province and a Northern and Western Province where settlement is mostly dispersed. Situated within these national provinces Roberts and Wrathmell have further defined a number of sub-provinces.

The Conurbation area lies wholly within the Western Province and forms part of *The West Midlands sub-province*. This sub-province historically had significantly lower levels of nucleated village-based settlement. Instead settlement in the area was a mixture of medium to very high densities of dispersed settlement, made up of hamlets, common-edge settlements, roadside cottages and isolated farmsteads, sometimes moated, and medieval in origin (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000: 55).

5.3 Summary of Historical Development

At the end of the 11th century the area of the Conurbation consisted of small settlements, probably no more than hamlets and scattered farmsteads with larger settlements at Dudley and Wolverhampton. Birmingham was, at that time, a lowly valued manor. By the mid-14th century Birmingham was the third highest contributor to a levy on goods after Warwick and Coventry Although there were grants off a market and fairs, Birmingham did not become a borough, a factor that is sometimes cited, together with the natural resources available, for the growth and success of the town although until the late 16th century the towns wealth was based on its merchants rather than manufacture. The town began to expand in the later 16th century due in part to the availability of land from former hospital and guild which had been dissolved earlier in the century and the loss of control of the manorial family, the manor becoming a royal possession; the resultant string of absentee landlords asserting less control. From the late 16th century metal-working became the principal activity of the town (Stephens 1964).

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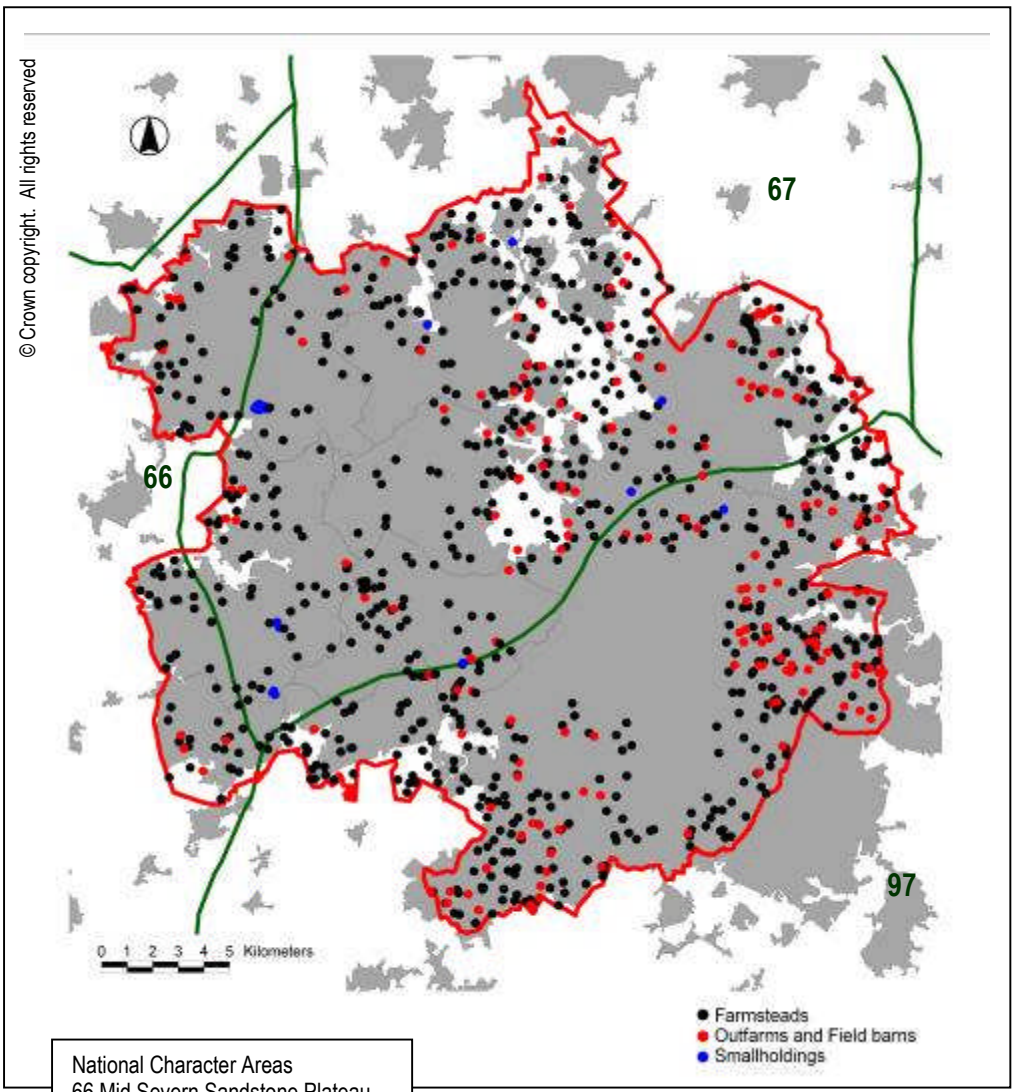
6.0 RESULTS

6.1 Historic Farmstead Records

The mapping of farmsteads across the West Midlands Conurbation recorded 831 farmsteads, 199 outfarms and field barns and 31 smallholdings (Figure 3). Whilst the great majority of farmsteads recorded have been lost due to the expansion of the urban area since the late 19th century, 121 farmstead sites have been recorded outside the present extent of the urban area. Of these farmsteads, 76 survive to some degree as farmsteads (having more than just the farmhouse surviving). Seventeen of these 76 farmsteads have at least one listed building. The remainder are unlikely to have been previously specifically recorded within the various Historic Environment Records covering the Conurbation area although farmstead sites were mapped in the Black Country HLC. The farmsteads mapping therefore has potentially added sites of lost farmsteads that may have archaeological interest as well as providing considerably more detail about the form, character and degree of change of surviving farmsteads sites in the hinterland of the Conurbation.



(Figure 3) All mapped farmsteads, outfarms and field barns and smallholdings

6.2 Historic Farmsteads: Landscape and Settlement Context

A key aim of the project has been to develop an integrated understanding of farmstead character, survival and current use within their landscape and settlement context. To achieve this aim the farmstead data has been analysed against the key records in the National Character Areas, the Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation and listed building records.

The settlement context of the farmsteads was recorded using the following classifications:

Location	VILL	Village location
Primary Attribute	HAM	Hamlet location
	FC	Loose farmstead cluster. This term represents small loose groups of farmsteads where they are not sufficiently grouped to be regarded as a hamlet. A guide of c.300m between farmsteads has been used to date. In areas with a high density of small farmsteads the guide distance may be insufficient to identify farmstead clusters. The farmsteads will probably be linked by roads, tracks or paths.
	ISO	Isolated position. Isolated. Used where a farmstead is located in an isolated position in relation to other farmsteads and settlement.
	PARK	Located within a park
	SMV	Shrunken village site
	CM	Church and Manor Farm group (or other high status farmstead)
	URB	Urban

6.2.1 Isolated Farmsteads

Across the conurbation 831 (71%) farmsteads were recorded as isolated, a figure comparable to Warwickshire. This indicates that they had historically developed as isolated farmsteads within their landscape and settlement context, rather than as part of hamlets of villages. As in Warwickshire, the highest percentage of isolated farmsteads was recorded within the Arden (72.5%) followed closely by the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area (71.9%) (Figure 4). The percentage of isolated farmsteads in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau was markedly lower than the other two areas with 62%.

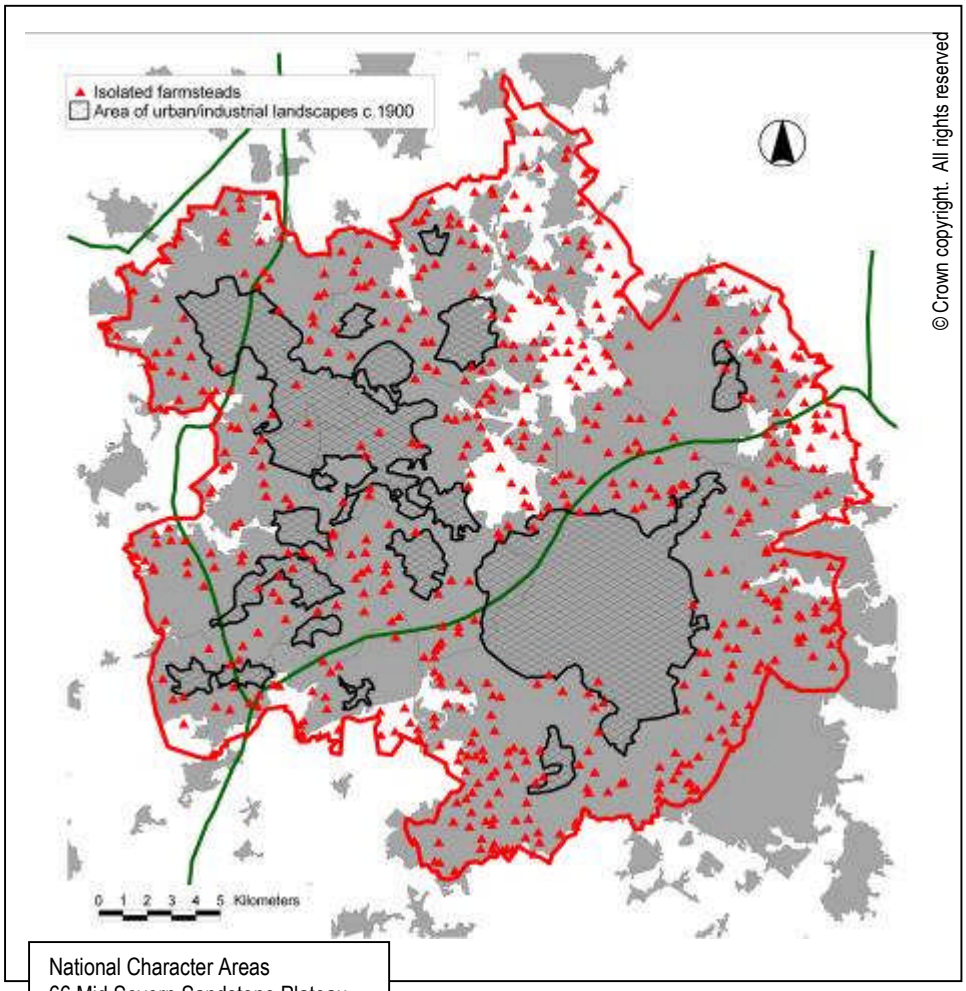


Figure 4 Historic Farmsteads located in isolated positions

6.2.2 *Village-based Farmsteads*

The Conurbation area overall had 11.2% of its farmsteads located within village (Figure 5). This figure is marginally below the regional average of 12.6%. The Arden area contained the lowest proportion of village-based farmsteads (7.5%) reflecting the dominance of dispersed farmsteads that is recognised as part of the character of the area. The Cannock Chase and Cank Wood (13.5%) and Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau areas (15.0%) both had a higher proportion of farmsteads within villages. During the 19th century the growth of industry within the Black Country was resulting in the explosion of population and settlements. This period of growth probably saw the enlargement of small villages and hamlets and the subsuming of isolated farmsteads. In some cases the settlements still had a rural character whilst other had begun the process of urbanisation – farmsteads recorded within these areas are recorded as 'Urban'. Given the character of some of the smaller industrial sites, the identification of farmsteads, particularly small farmsteads, within areas of settlement is problematic and so it is possible that the number recorded within villages is under-representative.

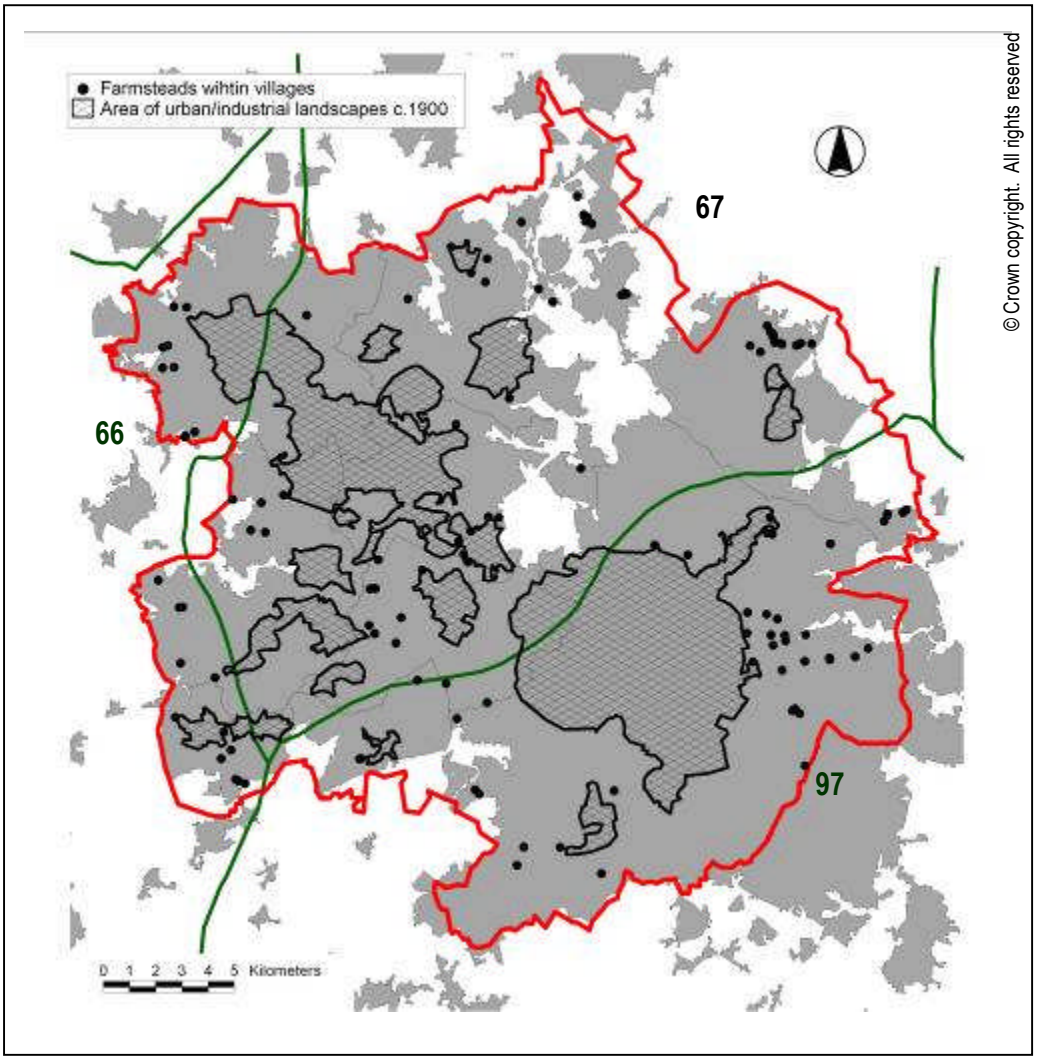


Figure 5 Historic Farmsteads located in villages

6.2.3 *Loose Farmstead Clusters*

A farmstead cluster represents a loose grouping of farmsteads which are not sufficiently grouped to be regarded as a hamlet although in some cases loose farmstead clusters can be named places. Overall 29 farmsteads formed part of loose farmstead clusters and, although they are typically associated with areas with high densities of dispersed settlement, such as the Arden, even within this area they only represented 3.7% of farmsteads (Figure 6). In the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area they formed 3.3% whilst in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau loose farmstead clusters represent 3.4% of farmsteads - but this figure covers just one cluster of three farmsteads. The distribution of this settlement form was uneven across the Arden; the few farmstead clusters are concentrated along the boundary with the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area or are in the far south-east of the character area. Within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area the farmstead cluster sites are concentrated around the area that remains open countryside east of Walsall whereas the village-based farmsteads were concentrated in the area around Dudley.

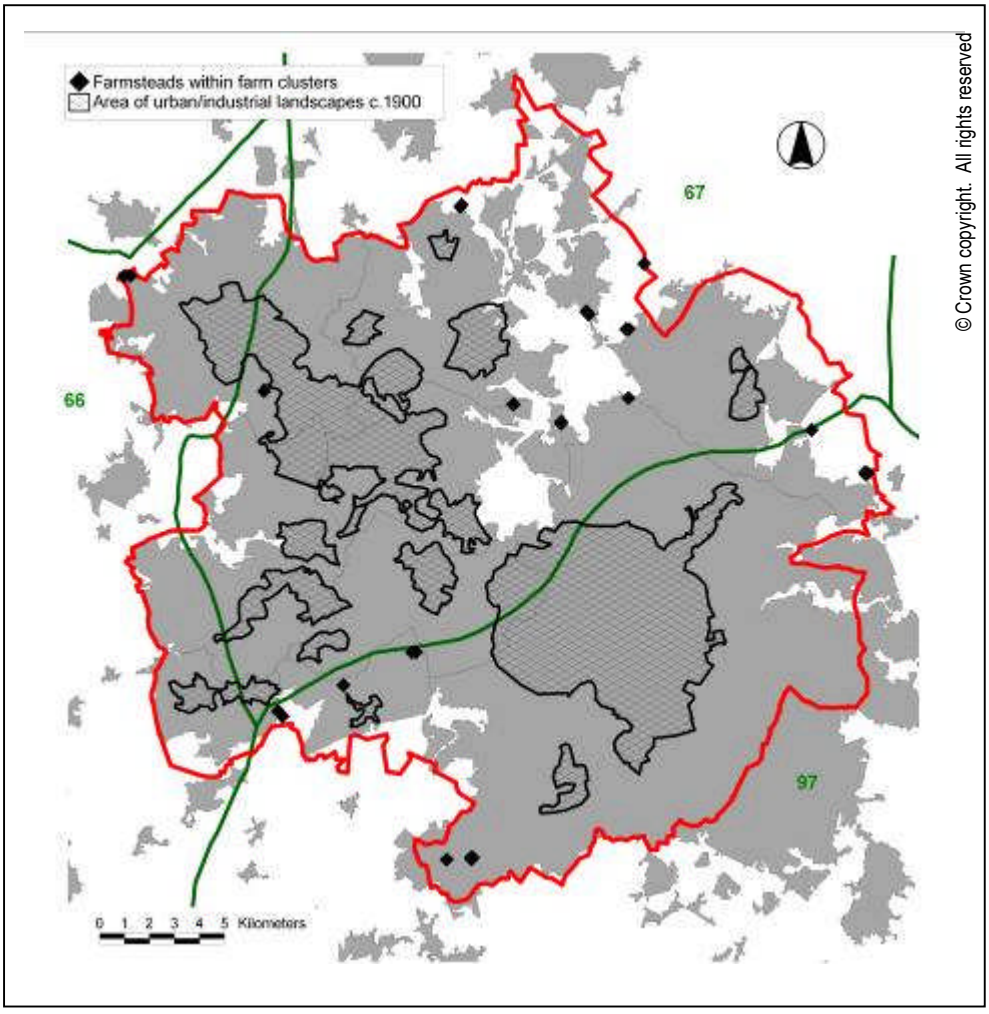


Figure 6 Farmsteads located with farm clusters

6.2.4 Farmsteads within Urban or Industrial Landscapes

The extent of urban development and landscapes which were so heavily industrialised that they could no longer be described as 'rural' at c.1900 have been mapped (Figure 7). Within these areas there are recorded farmsteads, often falling into the isolated location category but the extent of change in the surrounding landscape raises the possibility that many of these farmsteads had either fallen out of agricultural use at that date or were on the verge of becoming detached from farming.

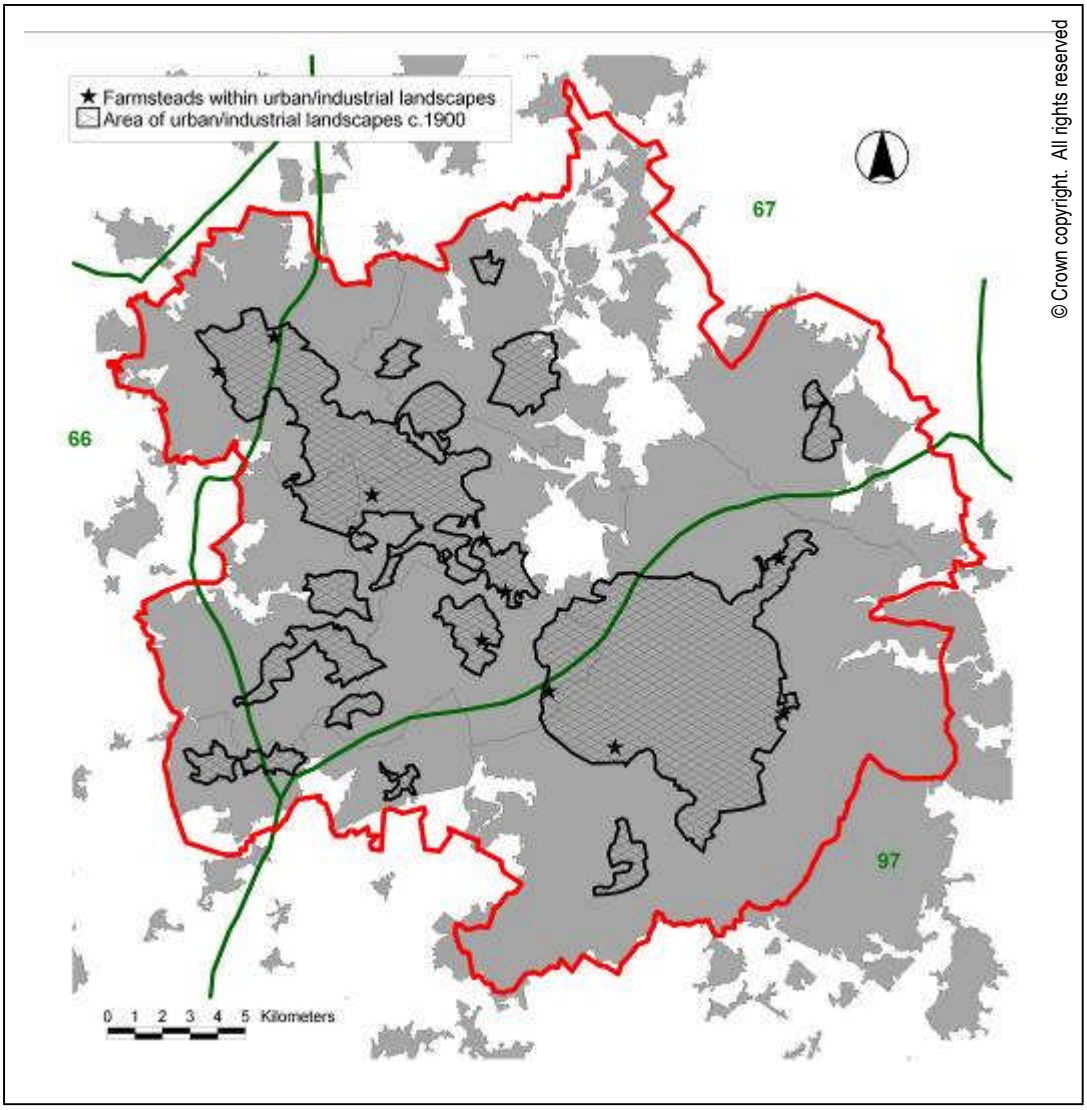


Figure 7 Farmsteads within urban or industrial landscapes c.1900

6.2.5 *Farmsteads within Parks and Designed Landscapes*

The farmstead mapping has only identified 7 farmsteads within parks and designed landscapes, forming less than 1% of all mapped farmsteads. Four of the seven sites lay within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area, three of which lay within the landscape south-east of Walsall. Of these, only one park is still recognisable as such, Sandwell Park, a park that developed from a monastic estate (Figure 8). By the late 19th century suburban pressures had probably resulted in the loss of other parks; an area of landscape near Handsworth within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area retained its park name and associated farmstead but much of the area of the park had been developed into the Handsworth golf course.

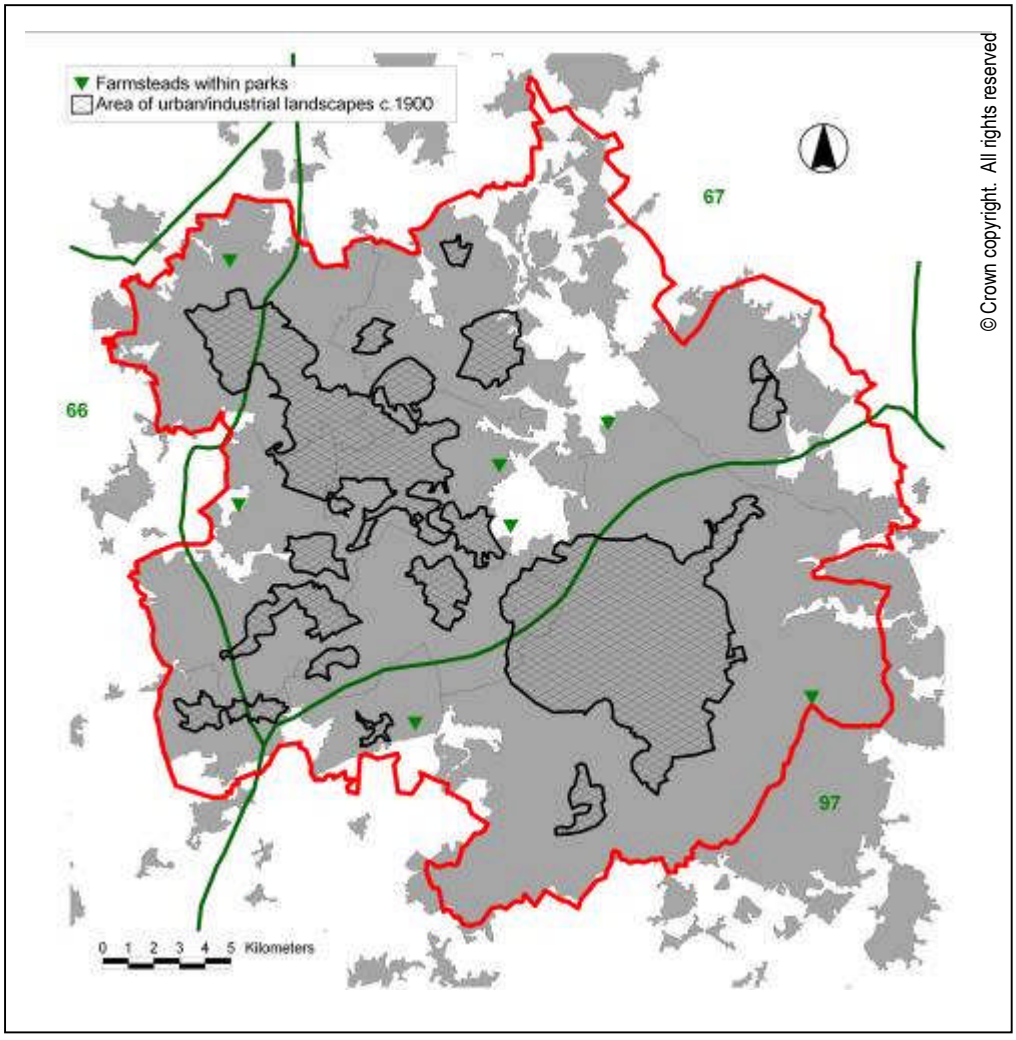


Figure 8 Historic Farmsteads located in Parks and Designed Landscapes

6.2.6 *Farmsteads and Fields*

Farmsteads mapping for the other counties so far completed has shown a strong relationship between the farmsteads data and the patterns of historic fields as interpreted by HLC. The extent of analysis of the farmsteads data against the Black Country HLC is limited due to the relatively small number of surviving farmsteads within small areas of rural landscape that falls within the boundaries of the authorities that make up the Conurbation.

Clearly, across the area there has been considerable development since the late 19th century and most of the farmsteads mapped have been lost from the landscape, their rural context urbanised. Occasionally elements of a few farmsteads have survived this transition and there may be some traces of the pre-urban landscape to which they related including roads, lanes and paths, field boundaries perhaps preserved as boundaries within and between phases of development and small greens or commons.

Surrounding the urban areas of the Conurbation there are small areas of open countryside where surviving farmsteads may retain a direct relationship with their fields. These areas of open countryside are typically relatively narrow belts of farmland between the edge of the built-up areas and the administrative boundaries. The largest area of countryside in the Black Country stretches between Wolverhampton and Walsall, a landscape that contains a wide variety of historic landscape types including ancient irregular enclosures, piecemeal enclosure and the regular enclosure of common and parkland. Even though this is a small area with a limited sample of farmsteads, the farmsteads display clear patterns. Small scale farmsteads including linears and L-plans with attached houses are focused around the areas of regular enclosure of common; farmsteads dated to before the 19th century on the basis of one or more listed buildings are mostly related to fieldscapes of ancient or piecemeal enclosure, as are farmsteads with dispersed plan types.

For further details see 6.4.1.

6.3 20th Century Change

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

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

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

6.3.1 Change to Historic Farmstead Form

As part of the farmstead mapping each farmstead was assigned one of the six survival categories below (Figure 9):

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

Figure 9 Change to Historic Farmstead Form

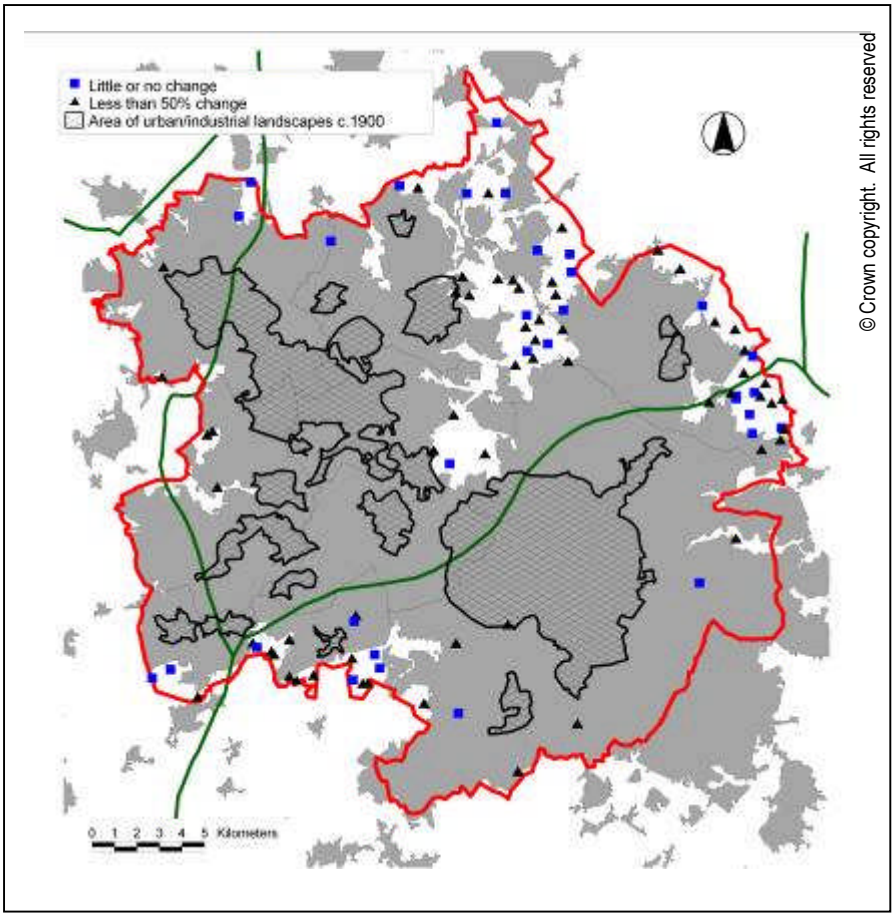


Figure 10 Farmsteads with no change and less than 50% change since late 19th century

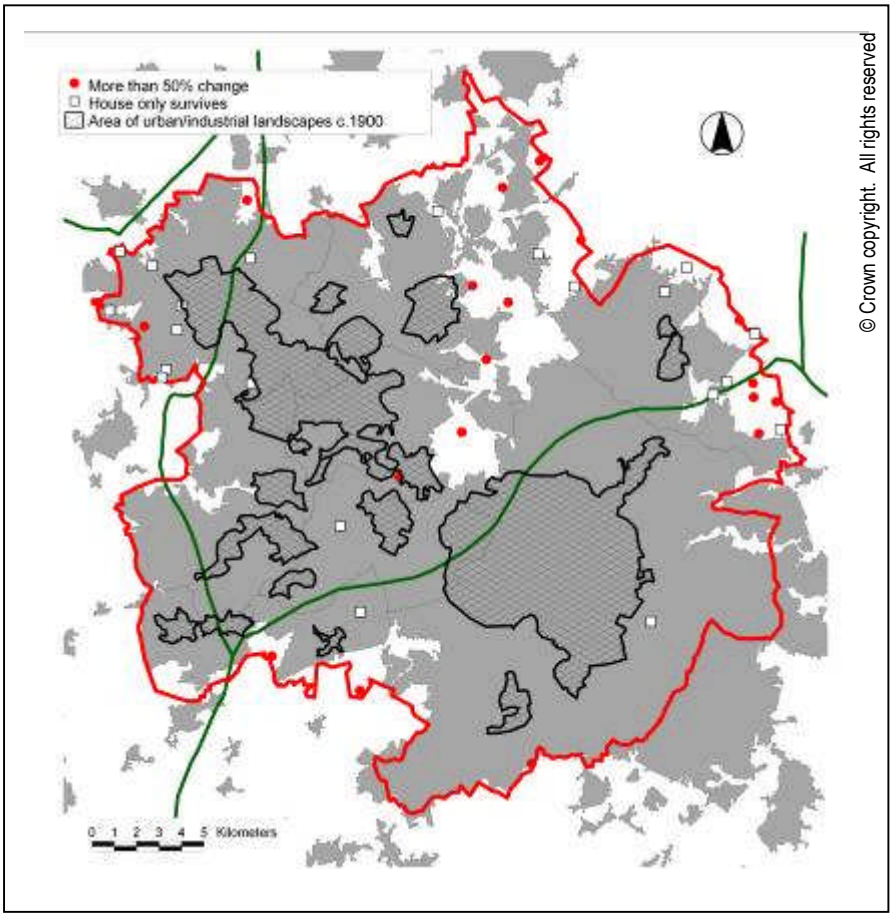


Figure 11 Farmsteads with more than 50% change and farmhouse only survives

It is no surprise that 85% of farmsteads existing in the late 19th century have been completely lost – the primary cause being the growth of the urban area. A few farmsteads have managed to survive this urbanisation of the landscape, often because they were important sites of manorial status or retained late medieval buildings. For example, in c.1900 Oak House lay on the very fringe of West Bromwich but by this date it had been converted to a museum and its garden was a pleasure ground.

Subsumed within the fringes of the urban area some farmsteads of later date survive; these survive through their conversion to residential use, reflecting the value that is now given to farm buildings as potential homes with character. Minworth Greaves Farm, on the eastern edge of the Birmingham conurbation east of Erdington survives largely complete but converted to residential with new housing built to the north.

Of the 832 farmsteads recorded across the conurbation only 91 (10.9%) survive, as either largely unaltered from their late 19th century form or with less than 50% loss of buildings (Figure 10). Only 19 (2.3%) farmsteads survive with more than 50% change and 21 (2.5%) farmsteads which are now represented only by the farmhouse (Figure 11) most of these being houses that have been retained within the expanding urban area, their buildings being demolished to make way for housing estates.

Between the character areas there is relatively little difference in the extent of change recorded, although the small size of the sample makes meaningful conclusions difficult. The Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau differs to some degree from the other two areas, in having a notably lower proportion of farmsteads within the less than 50% change category whilst the number of farmsteads that are now represented by the farmhouse only is also much higher than the other two areas.

NCA	*Extant*	*Alt <50%*	*Alts >50%*	*House*	*Dem*	*Lost*
66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau	4	3	2	7	0	71
	4.6%	3.4%	2.3%	8.0%	0%	81.6%
67 Cannock Chase and Cank Wood	15	30	10	10	4	329
	3.8%	7.7%	2.5%	2.5%	1.0%	82.7%
97 Arden	13	26	7	4	1	295
	3.8%	7.5%	2.0%	1.2%	0.3%	85.3%
Total	**31**	**61**	**19**	**21**	**5**	**695**
	3.7%	**7.3%**	**2.3%**	**2.5%**	**0.63%**	**83.5%**

6.3.2 Sheds

Recording the presence of large modern sheds provides information regarding the present-day character of the farmstead and is a good indication as to whether a farmstead is still in agricultural use (Figure 12). A differentiation is made between examples where the large shed stand on the site of the historic farmstead or to the side (see below).

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

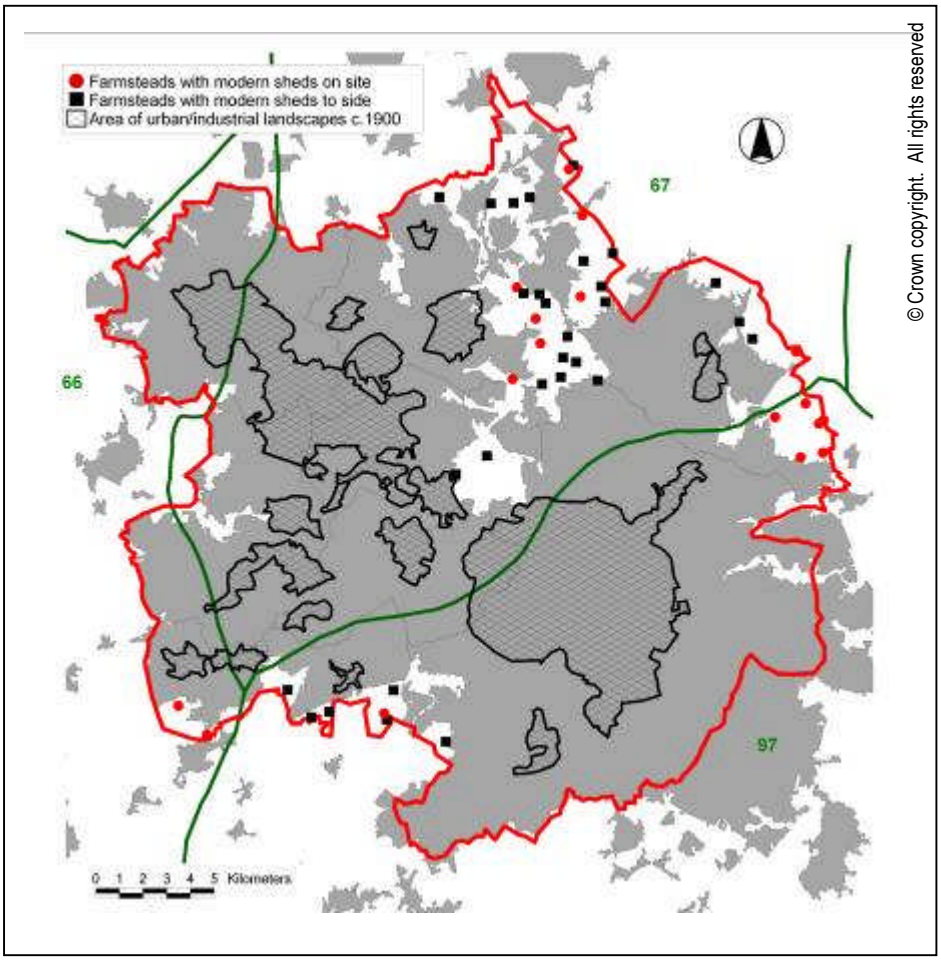


Figure 12
Historic Farmsteads with sheds

The distribution of sheds provides a very clear indication of the extent of post-1950 farmsteads in continuing agricultural use. Whilst the presence of a modern shed on part or all of the footprint of the historic farmstead may imply the loss of the earlier buildings, this is not always the case; historic ranges facing yards may have been retained when yards were covered. In some cases the presence of large sheds on the site can act as a warning that there may be a lesser degree of change than is suggested by the mapping.

The Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA has the highest number of farmsteads that have sheds to the side of the historic plan. This possibility reflects the greater area of farmland that survives within this character area in the Conurbation area.

NCA	***No. (%) of farmsteads with Sheds to SIDE***	***No. (%) of farmsteads with Sheds on SITE***
66. Severn and Avon Vales	0	2
	0%	2.3%
97. Arden	6	7
	1.7%	2.0%
67. Cannock Chase and Cank Wood	24	8
	6.0%	2.0%

Historic Farmsteads with post-1950 sheds

6.4 Dating Evidence for Recorded Historic Farmsteads

The existing stock of traditional farm buildings results from centuries of change and development. As a general rule, farmhouses pre-date farm buildings, even in areas of planned 18th- and 19th-century enclosure. Larger-scale and higher-status buildings, which were consistently used for the same purpose or capable of being adapted to later uses, generally have the greatest chance of survival. It follows that barns are the overwhelming type of building to have survived from before 1750, and that steadings adapted or built anew in the later 18th and 19th centuries have retained evidence for a greater diversity of functions.

By utilising date information held within listed building and Historic Environment Record data, farmsteads can be assigned a date representing the earliest surviving building within the group. The date of the farmhouse and any listed agricultural buildings was recorded separately (Figures 13 and 14). This enables the patterns of inherited farmstead character (including survival and change) to be assessed in relationship to our understanding to the historic character of the landscapes around them.

Date_Cent		Earliest century date based on presence of listed building or map evidence
Date_HM (Date of House based on presence of dated building or Map evidence)	MED C17 C18 C19L C19	Pre 1600 17th century 18th century 19th century (based on presence of a listed building dated to 19th century) 19th century (based on presence on historic map)
Date_WB (Date of Working Building based on presence of dated building)	MED C17 C18 C19L	Pre 1600 17th century 18th century 19th century (based on presence of a listed building dated to 19th century)

Farmsteads by Date (based on presence of listed building)	***Recorded Date: House***	***%***	***Recorded Date: Working Buildings***	***%***
Pre 1600	12	1.4%	1	0.1%
C17	16	1.9%	4	0.5%
C18	19	2.3%	5	0.6%
C19L	4	0.5%	1	0.1%
C19	779	93.7%		

Pre 1600 Farmsteads

Of the 15 sites that have a pre-1600 recorded building, the majority (10) lie within the Arden NCA, particularly along the south-east boundary of the conurbation where they mainly lay in isolated positions within small to medium sized irregular fields of ancient enclosure. This reflects the pattern revealed by the mapping of farmsteads in Warwickshire, where the core of the Arden (adjacent to this area of the conurbation) has the highest proportion of 17th century and earlier farmstead buildings that survive within landscapes with an early pattern of dispersed settlement and medieval enclosure from woodland. These sites represent only 2.9% of recorded farmsteads in the Arden NCA. The Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA has only two farmsteads (0.5%) that can be dated to before 1600 based on a the presence of a dated farmhouse and one with a pre-1600 listed working building. The Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau, the area most subject to 18th century and later transformation of its rural landscape, has just one farmstead of this period.

17th century Farmsteads

The highest concentration of 17th century farmsteads within the Conurbation lies in the north-west corner of the area within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area. This refelcts the pattern recorded in the Staffordshire farmstead mapping although at a slightly lower proportion within the Conurbation, possibly due to the number of farmsteads lost to urban growth. Whilst the fields of the Plateau area have been subject to change in the 18th and 19th centuries, the farmsteads retaining 17th century buildings indicate that the existing fields are the products of reorganisation of earlier field systems which were partly farmed from isolated farmsteads. There is also a small cluster of four farmsteads with 17th century buildings in a small area of surviving countryside on the east edge of the area, predominantly within the Arden but with one example within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area. Of these four farmsteads, two stand on or alongside sites that were moated and so represent farmsteads that originated in the medieval period

18th century Farmsteads

In the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau there are five farmsteads retaining 18th century buildings, 6.9% of farmsteads within this part of the NCA being considerably higher than the proportion of farmsteads of this date within either the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood (1.5%) or the Arden (2.3%). This also reflects a concentration of 18th century farmsteads recorded in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area within Staffordshire and Shropshire.

The tongue of open countryside within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area that extends southwards east of Walsall contains five farmsteads with buildings of 18th century date, one of which is dated by a working building earlier than the farmhouse.

19th century Farmsteads (dated by buildings)

Four of the six farmsteads that can be dated to the 19th century through listed buildings in the Conurbation area are to be found in the area of open countryside extending southwards into the heart of the Conurbation. At least two of these farmsteads were associated with estates although by c.1900, only Sandwell Park Farm lay within a landscaped park and is the only example to have listed farm buildings of the 19th century. One further example was located in what may have been a degraded park which had been turned over to agriculture and, in part, a golf course.

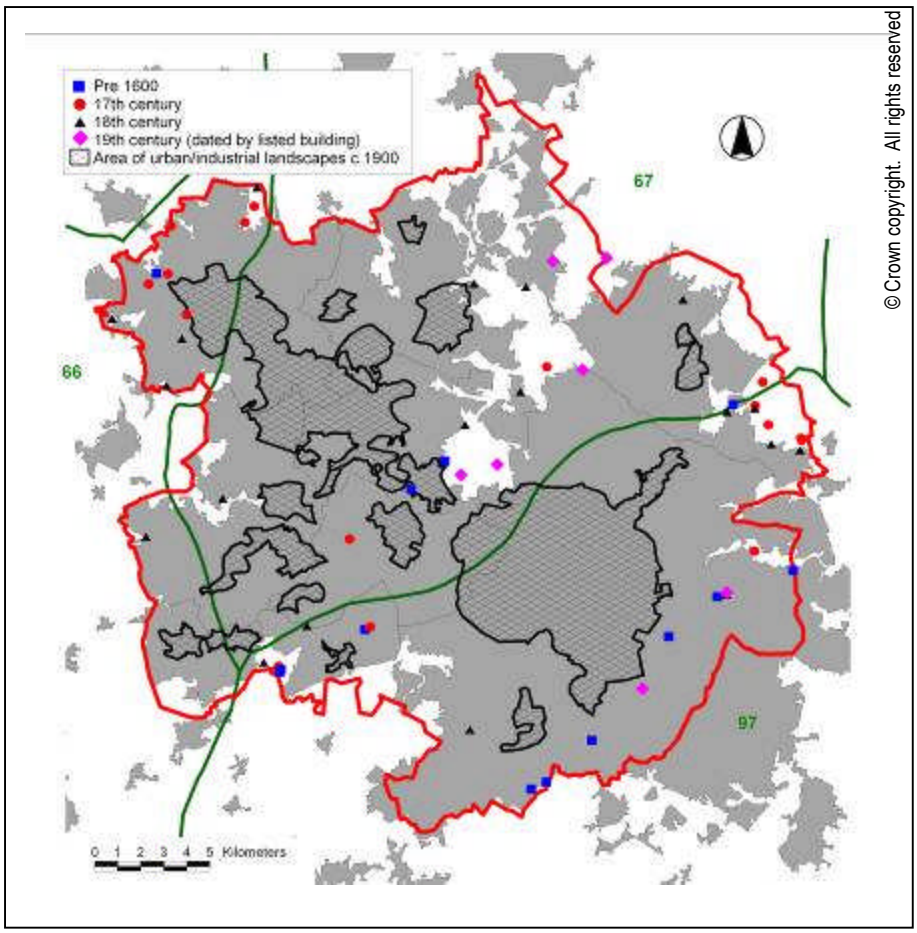


Figure 13 Dated farmsteads based on listed farmhouse

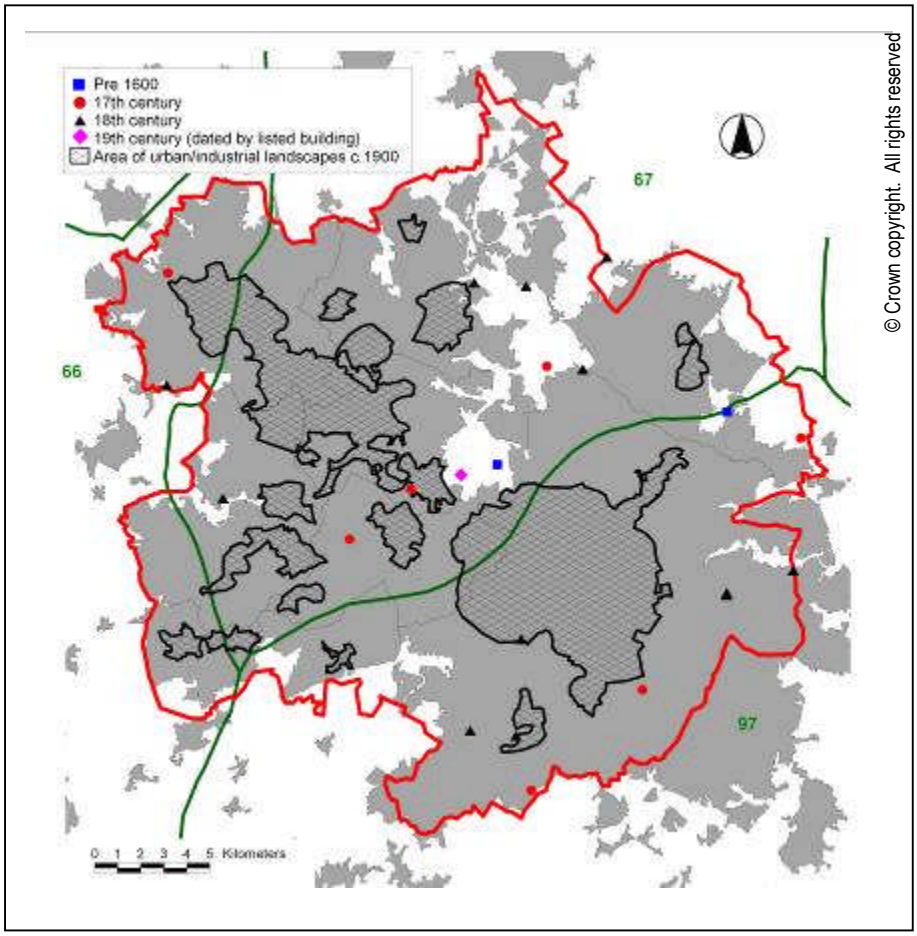


Figure 14 Dated farmsteads based on presence of listed working agricultural building

NCA	*MED*	*C17*	*C18*	*C19L*
66. Severn and Avon Vales	1 (1.1%)	5 (5.7%)	6 (6.9%)	0 (%)
67. Cannock Chase and Cank Wood	2 (0.5%)	3 (0.75%)	6 (1.5%)	5 (1.26%)
97. Arden	10 (2.9%)	7 (2.0%)	8 (2.3%)	0 (0%)

Historic Farmsteads dated by recorded farmhouse against NCA

The question arises as to whether these patterns are genuine historic differences or due to differing rates of survival in traditional farm building stock. There are some important caveats to outline:

1. Some, but by no means a majority, of the results of local recorders have been entered on the National Monuments Record's AMIE database and county-based Historic Environment Records. The most comprehensive data set available is the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest, which has grown since 1947 into an archive of nearly half a million entries, including 30,000 farmhouses and an equivalent number of detached farm buildings and ranges. The great bulk of these were subject to survey and revision during the Accelerated Resurvey of Listed Buildings that took place during the 1980s. Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire were subject to the Accelerated Resurvey of listed buildings in 1984-7, which focused on the identification of legible and significant buildings that fulfilled the criteria for listing. Any analysis of the statutory lists must of cause be subject to a long list of caveats, prime amongst these being the resourcing, data and reliability of survey, and whether or not the investigator was able to examine the interior of buildings and check for evidence of phasing (Gaskell and Owen 2005: 42-51). Subsequent research on individual buildings has shown that many list descriptions place too late a date on them, largely because evidence was missed (for instance, if an internal inspection was not made) or concealed. This is particularly the case in landscapes characterised by isolated farmsteads and hamlets, which were far more time-consuming to survey than areas of nucleated settlement.

2. Another critical factor is that many buildings recorded as historic houses (rather than farmhouses) within villages would have originated as farmhouses and then been converted into housing, including for agricultural workers. The continued presence into the 18th century of open fields and village-based farms in some areas was then succeeded by the movement of farmsteads away from villages. This problem is compounded by difficulties in identifying traditional listed farmsteads in village-based landscapes. The identification of farmsteads depended on recognising coherent farm complexes from the OS 2nd edition mapping. The problem arises in the fact that by the 1880s the process of enclosure of the open fields was complete and the consolidation and growth of holdings was well advanced. Consequently, a large number of village-based farms would have ceased operating by the 1880s making it difficult to identify them from the mapping.

The patterns of survival evident within the farmstead data and the landscape may reflect genuine historical differences. In the Arden the traditional emphasis upon pastoral farming coupled with the development of a yeomanry class of farmer resulted in large scale capital investment in farmhouses and working buildings in the later medieval period and the 16th and 17th centuries. Despite the massive changes during the 20th century within the Conurbation, the pattern of greater time depth in the surviving historic farmsteads compared to the other areas is notable.

6.4.1 Dated Farmsteads and HLC

Both the numbers of dated farmsteads and the extent of field type landscapes are so small within the Conurbation that any analysis of their correlation is of limited value.

There are however, occasions where it is clear that the two data sets relate; one of the few farmsteads dated to the 19th century by a listed building lies on the edge of an area of regular enclosure – also indicative of 19th century improvement in this context - between Sutton Coldfield and Walsall. This area of enclosure was surrounded by a number of farmsteads that clearly relate to it, some of which survive giving this small piece of landscape a distinctive character.

Sandwell Park, the former landscape park to the mansion of the Dukes of Dartmouth retains its home farm, a large regular courtyard steading characteristic of higher status farms within planned landscapes. This farmstead and its setting, if not its wider farmed landscape, are especially significant because they are publically accessible sites where the development of the landscape and its buildings is clearly legible.

Another example where the relationship between the historic farmstead data and HLC is strong is in the south-west of the Conurbation in the area of the village of Lutley south of Cradley Heath. Here four farmsteads of pre-1600, 17th and 18th century date survive within a landscape of piecemeal enclosure and other enclosure of unknown date which displays some characteristics of piecemeal enclosure. These dated farmsteads, together with several other surviving farmsteads add to the significance of this fragment of the rural landscape within the south-eastern part of the Conurbation

6.5 Farmstead Types

6.5.1 The Position of the Farmhouse

The development of the farmhouse has been the subject of regional and national studies (Barley 1961, for example). The dating, planning and scale of farmhouses can tell us much about the former prosperity and development of rural areas. Houses developed from the medieval period as 3-unit plans, with a central hall/kitchen separated by a cross-passage from the service rooms and with an inner room that usually served as a parlour. There are high concentrations by national standards of houses and barns built for an emerging class of wealthier farmer dating from the 15th century and in some very rare instances the 14th century. Some had cross-wings built at one or even both ends.

Smaller farms had 2-unit houses, and the smallest – including smallholdings – simply one unit. There is evidence along the Welsh border, and especially in the south of the region and across into Wales, for longhouses where cattle used the same entrance and were housed in the outer room: these date from the 15th and 16th centuries. By the 17th century, farmhouses in most areas of England (except in the extreme south-west and the north) had been built or adapted into storeyed houses with chimneystacks. By this period parts of the West Midlands (especially Shropshire) and adjacent parts of Wales had adopted the lobby-entry plan, where the main entrance is sited opposite the stack thus making a lobby providing access into the rooms either side (Smith 1975, 456-62).

From the later 17th century (roughly around 1650), services in some areas were being accommodated in lean-tos (outshots) or rear wings: by around 1700 the stair was housed in a rear lean-to or wing also. They have a distinctive outward appearance as the stacks are sited on the gable ends and the door may be either central or off-centre: symmetry is more prized as the 18th century progresses and is commonplace from around 1750.

Houses faced towards or away from the yard, and may be attached or detached from the working buildings (Figures 15-18). Local tradition and status were the principal reasons for whether the house was accessed through the yard and buildings were attached, or whether the house looked toward or away from the yard. Farmhouses included, or were placed very close to, areas for brewing and dairying, and pigsties were often placed close to the houses. As a general rule, farms over 70 acres needed to look beyond the family for additional labour, and so rooms for live-in farm labourers – usually in the attic or back wing of the house – became a feature of many farmhouses.

Each of the recorded farmsteads was assigned one of the following attributes:

ATT	Attached to agricultural range
LONG	Detached, side on to yard
GAB	Detached, gable on to yard
DET	Farmhouse set away from yard
UNC	Uncertain (cannot identify which is farmhouse)

NCA	Attached to agricultural range	Gable on to yard	Side on to yard	Farmhouse detached from yard
66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau	12.6%	17.2%	16.1%	47.1%
67 Cannock Chase and Cank Wood	21.6%	17.1%	19.1%	32.7%
97 Arden	14.3%	19.5%	25.2%	36.7%

Differences in the relationship between the house and the farmyard are noticeable across the Conurbation. Largely because of the greater proportion of linear and L-plan ranges with the farmhouse attached that has been recorded in the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area (see 6.5.2), farmhouses attached to the working buildings represent a higher percentage of farmsteads than in the other two areas. The Arden has the highest proportion of farmsteads with the house set side on the yard whilst farmsteads set gable end to the yard are spread fairly evenly across the Conurbation. Detached farmhouses, where the farmhouse is located away from the yard, are a characteristic of larger farmsteads, particularly those built in the 18th and 19th centuries here the house and gardens could become more 'polite' spaces detached from the smells and noise of the farmyard. Farmhouses in this location form a high proportion of the farmsteads within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau with almost half of farmhouses being detached from the yard.

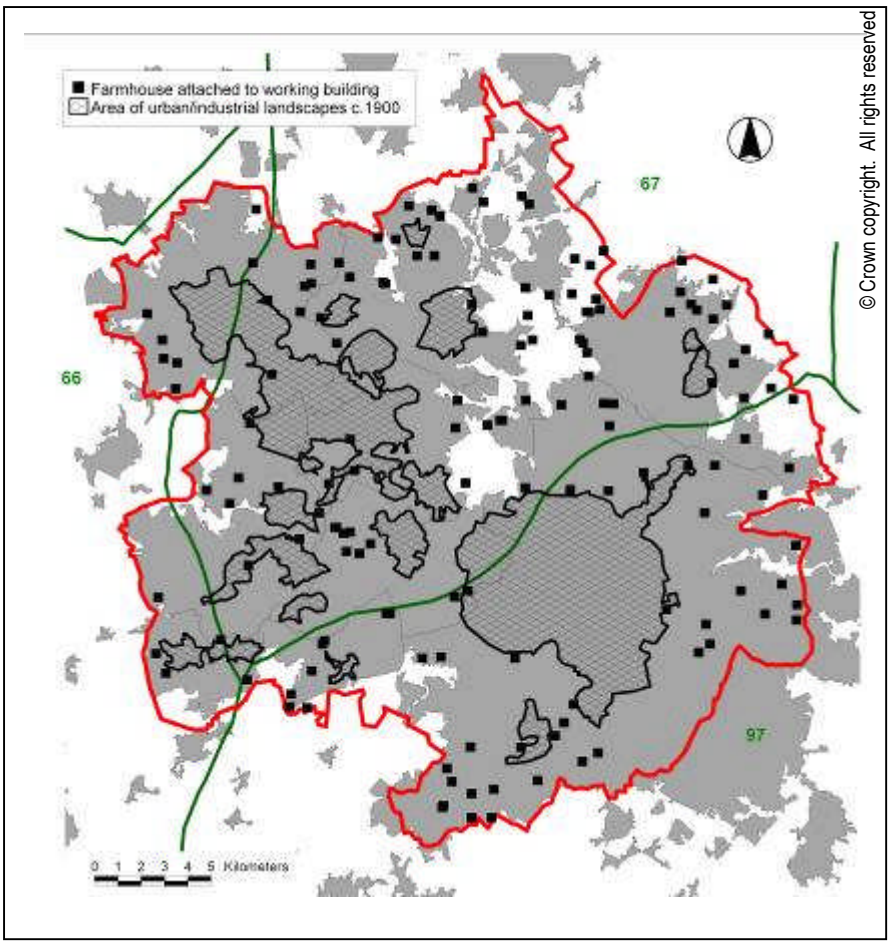


Figure 15 Historic Farmsteads with House Attached to Working Buildings

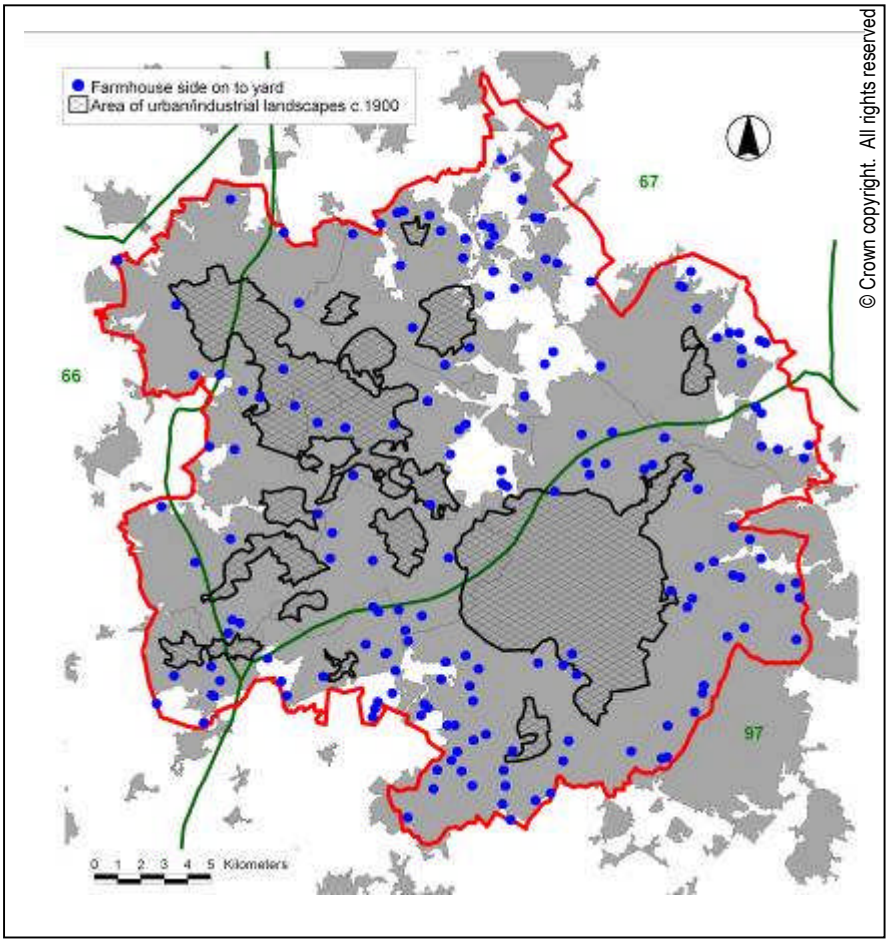


Figure 16 Historic Farmsteads with House Side on to the yard

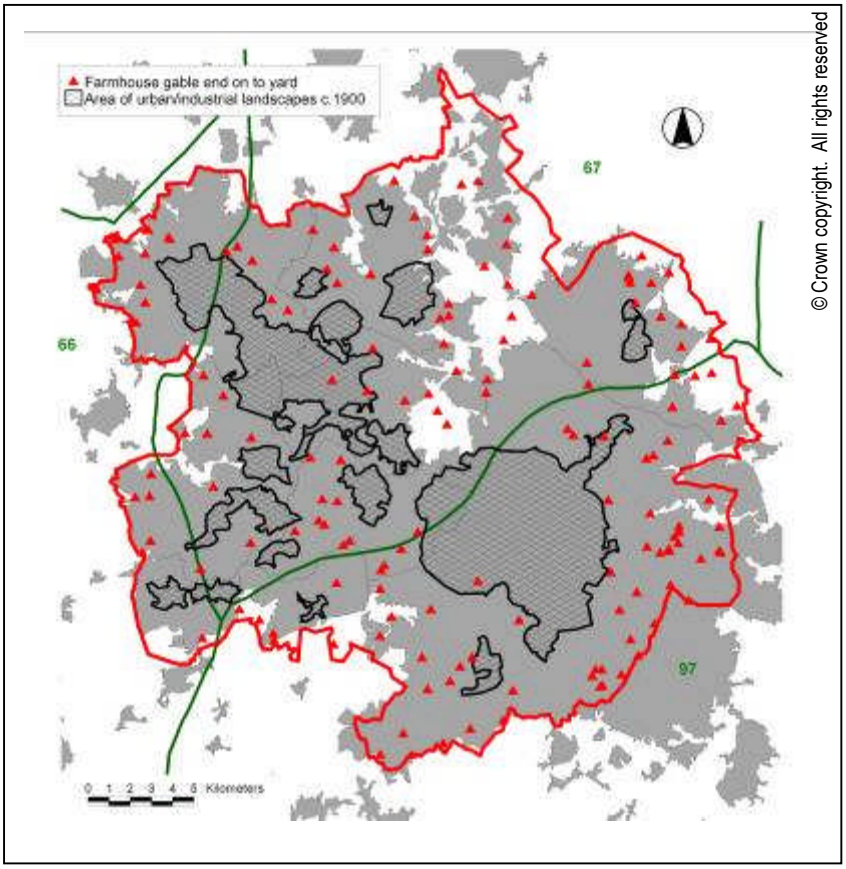


Figure 17 Historic Farmsteads with House gable on to the yard

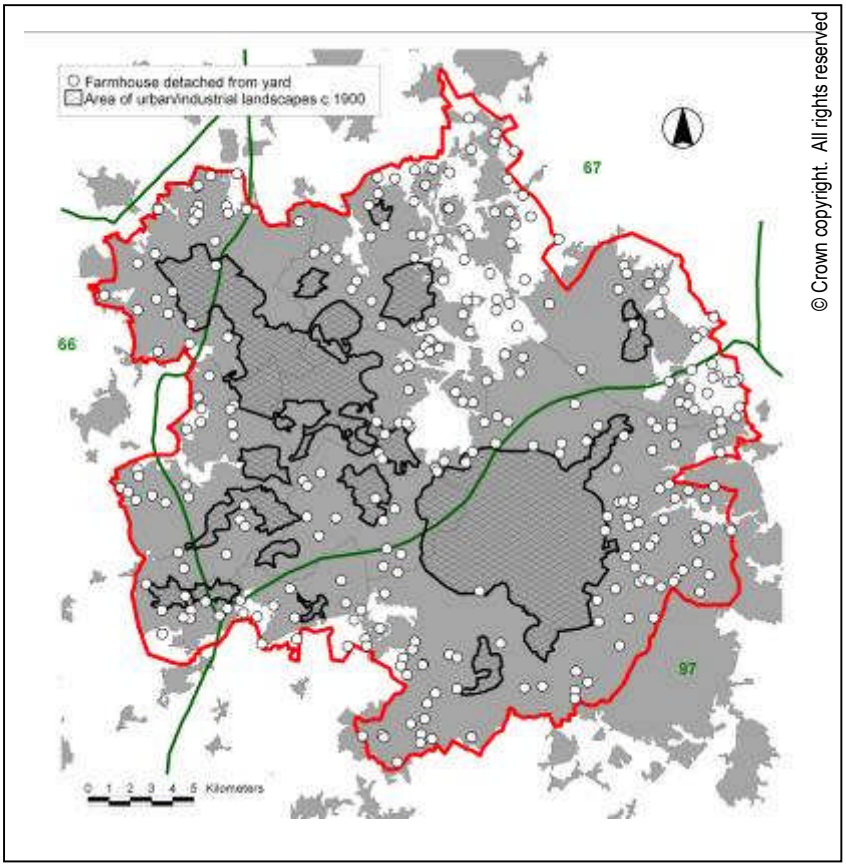


Figure 18 Farmsteads with house detached form the yard

6.5.2 Farmstead Plan Types

This section introduces the method for recording farmsteads by their plan type and summarises the key types and how they rank within the context of the West Midlands. The individual farmstead types are then described, and subject to analysis by Historic Landscape Characterisation and the National Character Areas.

6.5.2.1 The Recording Methodology

All recorded farmsteads were assigned attributes relating to their plan form using a combination of codes representing the broad plan group (primary attribute) and the sub-type (secondary attribute), for example, a loose courtyard with working buildings to two sides of the yard = LC2; a regular courtyard L-plan = RCL (see below):

Plan Type		Combination of Primary and Secondary Plan Attributes e.g. LC3; RC1 etc. (see below)
Plan Type Primary Attribute	DISP	Dispersed
	LC	Loose Courtyard
	LIN	Linear
	LP	L-plan (attached house)
	PAR	Parallel
	RC	Regular Courtyard
	ROW	Row Plan
	UNC	Uncertain
Plan Type **Secondary Attribute**	1, 2, 3, 4	No. of sides to loose courtyard formed by *working* agricultural buildings
	L3 or L4	Yard with an L-plan range plus detached buildings to the third and/or fourth side of the yard (may be used with LC or RC dependent on overall character)
	L	Regular Courtyard L-plan (detached house)
	u	Regular Courtyard U-plan
	e	Regular Courtyard E-plan
	f	Regular Courtyard F-plan
	h	Regular Courtyard H-plan
	t	Regular Courtyard T-plan
	z	Regular Courtyard Z-plan
	cl	Cluster (Used with DISP)
	dw	Driftway (Used with DISP)
	my	Multi-yard (Used with DISP or RC)
	cov	Covered yard forms an element of farmstead
	d	Additional detached elements to main plan
	y	Presence of small second yard with one main yard evident
Tertiary Attribute		Codes as per Secondary Attribute table e.g. cov or combination of Primary and Secondary Attributes e.g RCL notes presence of a prominent Regular L-plan within a dispersed multi-yard group

6.5.2.2 The Principal Farmstead Types

The principal farmstead types (See Figure 2) are summarised below.

Farmstead Plan Types

The principal farmstead plan types divide into:

- Courtyard plans where the working buildings are arranged around a yard
- Dispersed plans where there is no focal yard area
- Small-scale farmsteads where the house and working buildings are often attached, and which can also comprise smallholdings

Courtyard plans

Courtyard plan farmsteads have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards. They comprise 86% of all recorded farmsteads in the Conurbation area. They subdivide into:

Loose Courtyard Plans

Form 34.4% of the total farmsteads recorded across the Region; 28.9% within the Conurbation.

- Have detached buildings facing one or more sides of a cattle yard with or without scatters of other farm buildings close by;
- Are defined by the number of sides of the yard that are occupied by working buildings;
- Display a wide variety in scale;
- Principal openings facing into the yard, external elevations having few openings;
- May have cartsheds, sometimes stables and other ancillary buildings placed away from the yard facing towards routes and tracks;
- Are more likely to have developed over time with buildings of different dates;
- Are concentrated in areas of irregular piecemeal enclosure and often away from areas with large-scale regular enclosure.

Regular Courtyard Plans

Are the largest group of plan types, forming 46.4% of recorded farmsteads across the Region; 57.1% within the Conurbation.

- Consist of linked ranges, often the result of a single phase of building, set around one or more cattle yards;
- The larger-scale examples often conform to national ideals in efficient farmstead design, as developed in farming literature from the later 18th century and promoted by land agents, engineers and architects by the mid-19th century.
- Display greater consistency in the use of materials and constructional detail, often employing more non-local materials like Welsh slate, than other farmstead types.
- Are most often associated with areas of planned or re-planned enclosure.

Loose Courtyard 1 side	These are very small in scale with a working building to only one side of the yard. (6.6% for the Conurbation: 7.3% West Midlands)
Loose Courtyard 2 sides	These are small in scale with a working building to two sides of the yard. (12.2% for the Conurbation: 12.7% for West Midlands)
Loose Courtyard 3 sides	These are medium in scale with a working building to three sides of the yard. (7% for the Conurbation: 7.7% for West Midlands)
Loose Courtyard 4 sides	These have working buildings to four sides of the yard, and tend to be large-scale and formal in their layouts, although there are some examples of small-scale steadings of this type in upland fringe areas in particular. (0.7% for the Conurbation: 2% for West Midlands)

L-shaped ranges with additional buildings to 3 sides or 4 sides	These are medium-large scale courtyard farms which have buildings to 3 or 4 sides of the yard, but one range (to two sides of the yard) is L-shaped in plan. Plans of this form may be derived from loose courtyard origins or represent regular courtyard farmsteads, especially in the smaller-scale examples. 3 sides: 14% for the Conurbation: 11.5% for the West Midlands Region. 4 sides: 1.9% for the Conurbation: 3.5% for the West Midlands Region.
Regular Courtyard L-plan	Small-medium scale courtyard farmsteads where the buildings are arranged as two linked ranges to create an L-shape. They can comprise a barn and attached shelter shed to a cattle yard or an interlinked cattle housing and fodder range. Additional buildings are typically small-scale, and not sited facing the yard. (16.3% for the Conurbation: 10.1% for the West Midlands Region).
Regular Courtyard U-plans	Regular courtyard farmsteads where the buildings are arranged around three sides of a yard which is open to one side, sometimes with a house to the open side. (8.3% for the Conurbation: 8.0% the West Midlands Region).
Regular courtyard farmsteads where the buildings are arranged as F-, E-, T-, H- or Z-shaped plans	These comprise regular courtyard farmsteads where the buildings are arranged around two or more cattle yards. Cattle housing and stabling typically extend as two ranges from the longer main range which includes a barn or mixing house. F: 1.0% for the Conurbation: 1.3% for the West Midlands Region. E: 0% for the Conurbation: 1.5% for the West Midlands Region. T: 1.3% for the Conurbation: 1.3% for the West Midlands Region. Z: 0.1% for the Conurbation: 0.3% for the West Midlands Region. H: 0.0% for the Conurbation: 0.1% for the West Midlands Region.
Regular courtyard multi-yard farmsteads	Multi-yard plans are typically the largest in scale of the regular courtyard plan types, comprising farmsteads with multiple yards which are grouped together and regularly arranged. They often include examples of the other plan types as tertiary plan types. (9.7% for the Conurbation; 4.7% for the West Midlands Region).
Full Regular Courtyard Plans	These are typically large-scale regular courtyard farmsteads where the working buildings are arranged around all four sides of the yard. (6.2% for the Conurbation; 1.5% for the West Midlands Region).
Regular Courtyard Covered Yards	These farmsteads are dominated by a large building forming a covered yard for cattle and date from the 1850s (0% for the Conurbation; 0.7% for the West Midlands Region although covered yards are occasionally associated with other plan types as a secondary element (1.3% within the Conurbation).

Dispersed plan types	
Dispersed plans (4.3% of the total for Warwickshire and for 6.7% for the West Midlands) generally show little evidence of planning in the arrangement of the farm buildings. There are three sub-types: • Dispersed clusters • Dispersed driftways • Dispersed multi-yards Within the Conurbation dispersed plan types are concentrated within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA.	
Dispersed cluster plans	Dispersed cluster farmsteads are typically small steadings that do not have a yard; instead working buildings are scattered around the farmhouse, often within a large, irregular paddock. (2.0% for the Conurbation; 2.9% for the West Midlands Region).
Dispersed driftway plans	Dispersed driftways have a routeway running through the farmstead along which some of the buildings will be aligned. (0.6% for the Conurbation; 1.2% for the West Midlands Region).
Dispersed multi- yard plans	Dispersed multi-yard farmsteads contain two or more yards that are typically detached from one another together with other scattered buildings. (1.7% for the Conurbation; 2.6% for the West Midlands Region).
Linear, L-plan, Row and Parallel plans	
This group of farmsteads generally represent the smallest farmsteads recorded in the Region and are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads. They comprise 9.2% of farmsteads in the Conurbation and 11.7% of farmsteads in the West Midlands Region.	
Linear	A farmstead where houses and working buildings are attached and in-line. Any detached buildings (in more than 50% of mapped sites) are typically small-scale, such as pigsties and calf houses. (3.8% for the Conurbation: 7.3% for the West Midlands Region).
L-plan (attached)	A linear farmstead, extended or planned with additional working buildings to make an L-shaped range. More than 50% have additional detached buildings. (3.6% for the Conurbation: 3.1% for the West Midlands Region).
Parallel plans	A farmstead, often of linear plan, where the working buildings are placed opposite and parallel to the house and attached working buildings with a narrow area between. (0.7% for the Conurbation: 0.6% for the West Midlands Region).
Row	A farmstead where the working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row. (1.1% for the Conurbation: 0.7% for the West Midlands Region).
Smallholdings	
Recognisable smallholdings are uncommon in Conurbation with just 31 examples recorded. They typically have no defined plan type, or comprise examples of the linear and other small-scale plans outlined above. They can be identified from their position, often set within areas of enclosure of common land and associated with areas of industrial activity such as mining or quarrying.	

6.5.2.3 Description and Analysis

This section outlines the principal farmstead types, with distribution maps followed by an analysis of their distribution against the NCAs and HLC.

Courtyard Plans

Loose courtyard plans

Loose courtyard plan types form a lower proportion of the farmsteads within the Conurbation area (28.9%) than the average across the West Midlands region (35.9%).

Type	*LC1*		*LC2*		*LC3*		*LC4*		*LCL3*		*LCL4*	
Mid Severn	*3*	*3.4%*	*12*	*13.8%*	*7*	*8.0%*	*0*		*1*	*1.1%*	*0*	
Cannock Chase	*30*	*7.5%*	*47*	*12.1%*	*22*	*5.5%*	*2*	*0.5%*	*6*	*1.5%*	*2*	*0.5%*
Arden	*23*	*6.5%*	*44*	*12.4%*	*32*	*9.3%*	*3*	*0.8%*	*6*	*1.7%*	*1*	*0.3%*

Loose courtyard plan types against NCAs

Loose courtyard plans are often the product of piecemeal development and can range from small farmsteads with a single building on one side of the yard and the farmhouse (LC1) to a yard defined by working buildings on all four sides (LC4).

Loose courtyard plans with buildings to one side of the yard were proportionally more common in the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area where they represented 7.4% of the recorded farmsteads, marginally higher than in the Arden where they represented 6.4% of the resource and the regional average of 7.3%. In both of these areas small farmsteads are characteristic; in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau larger farmsteads were predominant and within the small part of the character area within the Conurbation this plan type represented only 3.4% of the recorded farmsteads (Figure 19).

Loose courtyards farms with buildings to two sides of the yard were the most common of all the loose courtyard forms with a relatively even distribution proportionally across the three character areas, all being 12-13% of the recorded resource, mirroring the regional average of 12.2% (Figure 19).

Within the small areas of fieldscapes that survive within the Conurbation, these small-scale loose courtyard plan types are found fringing areas of regular enclosure, often resulting from the taking in of former common land as well as in association with areas if irregular enclosure possibly dating from the late medieval period.

Loose courtyards with buildings to three sides of the yard were concentrated within the Arden character area where they represented 9% of the resource, reflecting the tendency for early farmsteads to further develop as farms were amalgamated and expanded in the 19th century (Figure 20). In the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area this plan type decreases in

significance, forming 5.4% of the recorded resource reflecting the predominance of the smaller loose courtyards. In both areas these farmsteads are more likely to be associated with areas of earlier, piecemeal enclosure than regular planned enclosure. This plan type represents a higher proportion of farmsteads within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau at 8%, reflecting the tendency to larger plan types in this area revealed during the mapping of farmsteads in Staffordshire and Shropshire.

Very few loose courtyard plans with working buildings to four sides of the yard were recorded in the Conurbation as a whole; 2 within Cannock Chase and Cank Wood and 3 within the Arden, reflecting the dominance of small-medium sized farmsteads within these landscapes. No examples were recorded in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau where larger farmsteads are characteristic but this reflects also reflects the fact this is a relatively rarely seen plan form across the whole of the Region, representing just 2% of farmsteads (Figure 20).

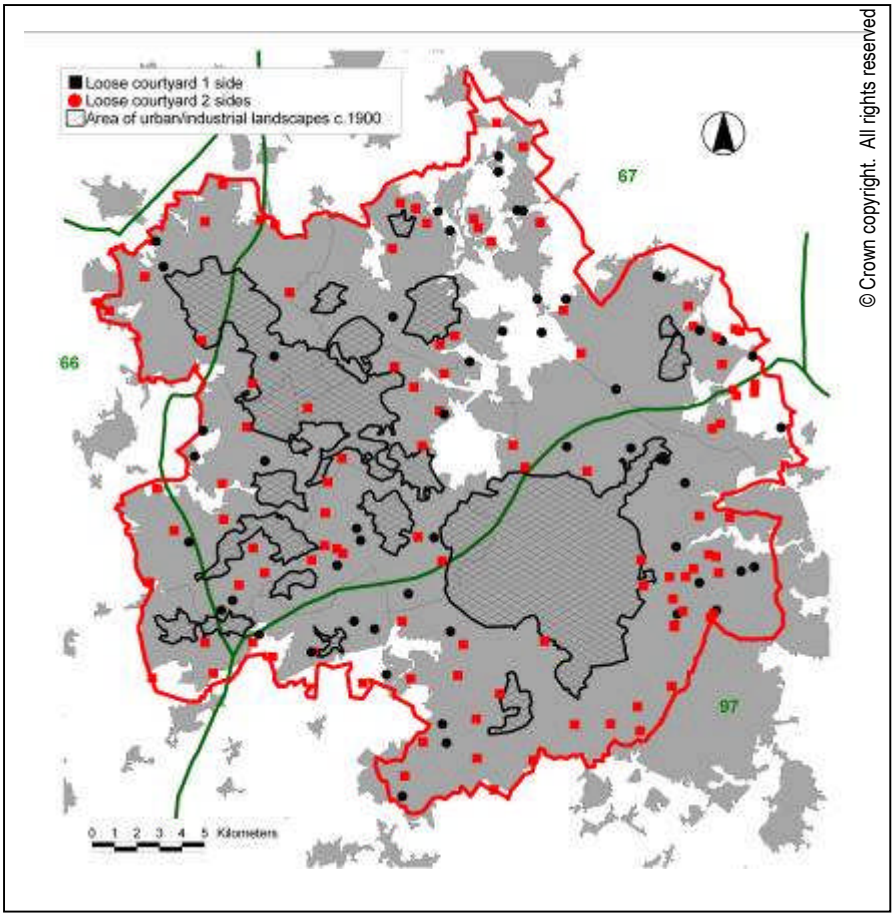


Figure 19
Loose Courtyard farmsteads with working buildings to one and two sides of the yard.

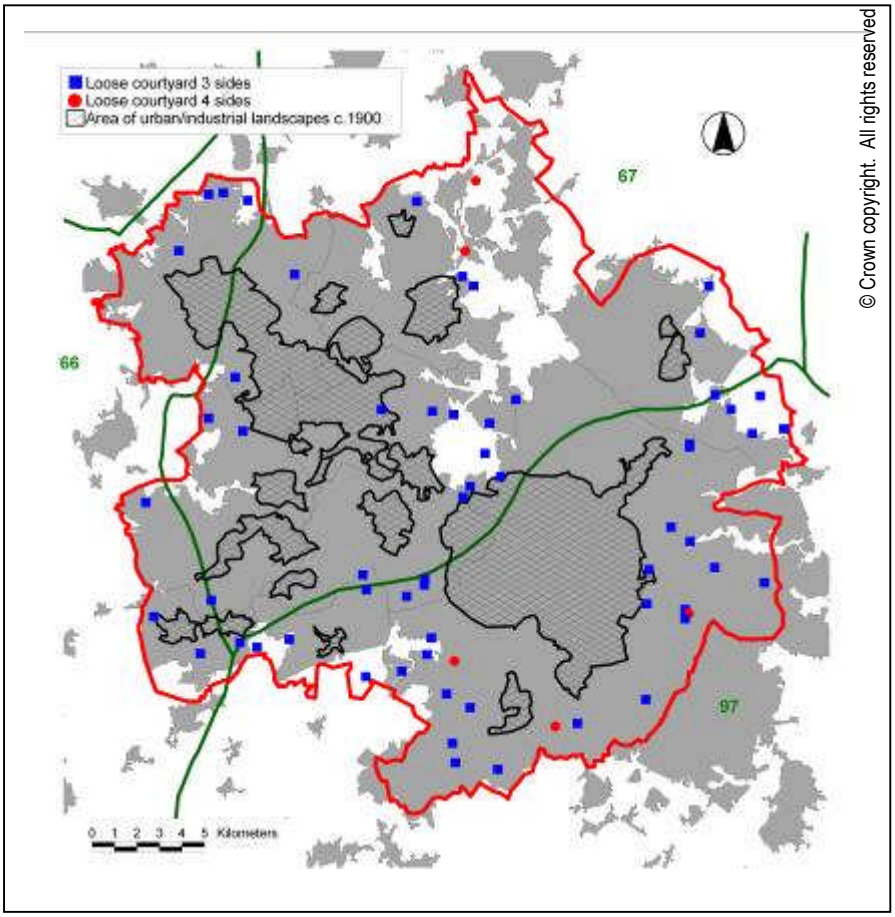


Figure 20
Loose Courtyard farmsteads with working buildings to three and four sides.

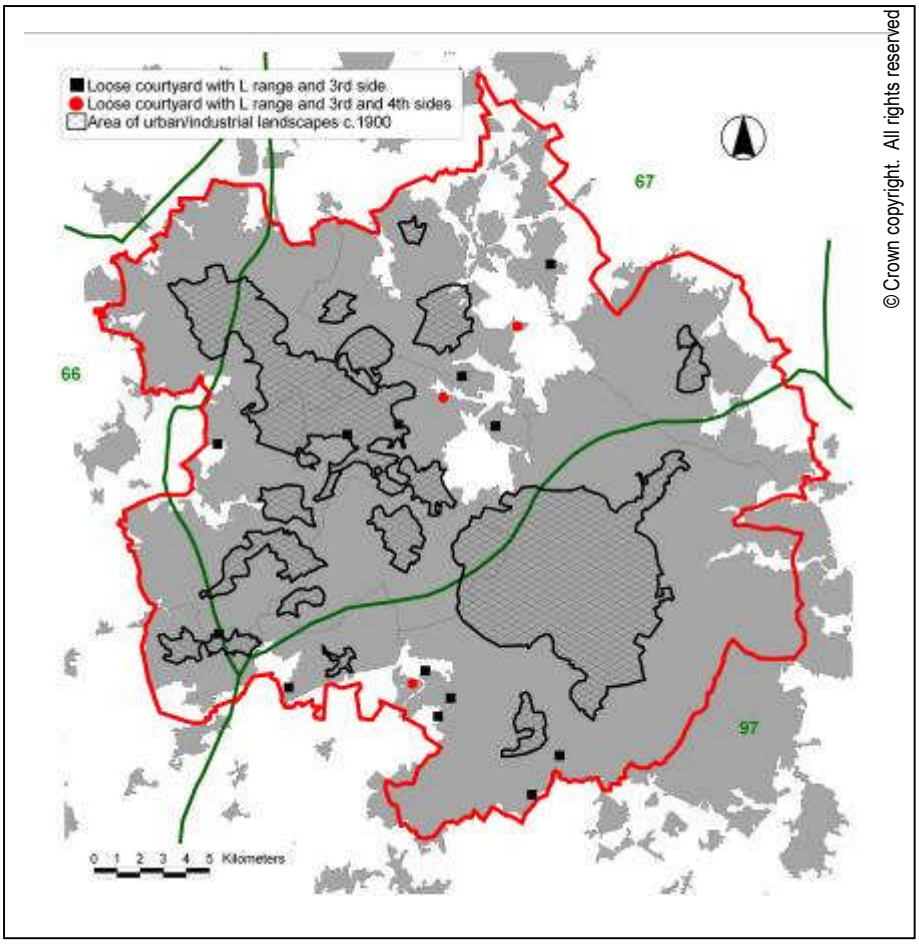


Figure 21
Loose Courtyard Farmsteads which include L-ranges and buildings to the third or fourth side

Loose courtyards with an L-range and buildings to 3rd or 4th sides of yard were not a common form in the Conurbation area; 13 farmsteads with buildings to the third side of the yard 1.6%) and just 3 examples (0.4%) with buildings to the third and fourth sides of the yard were recorded. None of these sites lay within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area, the majority being within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area (Figure 21). These plan types are more common in the southern part of the West Midlands region.

Regular Courtyard Plans

Regular courtyard plans of all types form the dominant plan type across the Region representing 46.4% of recorded farmsteads compared to 34.4% for loose courtyard types. Within the Conurbation this dominance is even greater with Regular courtyard plans forming 57.1% of the recorded farmsteads against 28.9% being Loose courtyards.

Type	RCL		RCu		RCL3		RCL4		RCf	
Mid Severn	15	17.2 %	7	8%	11	12.6%	1	1.1%	0	
Cannock Chase	54	13.7 %	29	7.3%	50	12.6%	5	1.3%	4	1.0%
Arden	62	17.5 %	33	9.3%	43	13.0%	7	2.0%	4	1.4%

Type	RCh		RCt		RCz		RC		RCmy	
Mid Severn	0		0		0		10	11.5%	15	17.2%
Cannock Chase	1	0.3%	8	2.1%	0		22	5.5%	41	10.3%
Arden	0		3	0.8%	1	0.3%	22	6.2%	23	6.5%

Regular Courtyard L- and U-plans

Regular courtyard L-plans are formed by two linked ranges set at right angles to each other. U-plans have buildings arranged around three sides of a yard which is open to one side. Both plan types can be planned ranges of a single phase of building or the result of piecemeal development over time. Brick built ranges can initially appear as single phase buildings but closer examination can reveal phases of development despite similar architectural styles and materials.

These two plan types were common across the whole of the Conurbation, sharing a similar distribution (Figure 22). The Regular L-plans formed a smaller proportion of the farmsteads within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA (13.7% in Cannock Chase and Cank Wood compared to 17.5% in Arden and 17.2% in Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau). As the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area is recognised as an area typically of small farms, in the context of the whole character area it would be expected that the L-plan type would be more common than the larger U-plan farmsteads but within the Conurbation it is possible that the presence of estates and generally larger farmsteads on the better lands of the east of the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area resulted in more U-plan steadings being built whereas they are largely

absent from the core area of industrialised/urbanised landscapes of the west . Proportionally, Regular U-plans were fairly evenly spread across all three character areas.

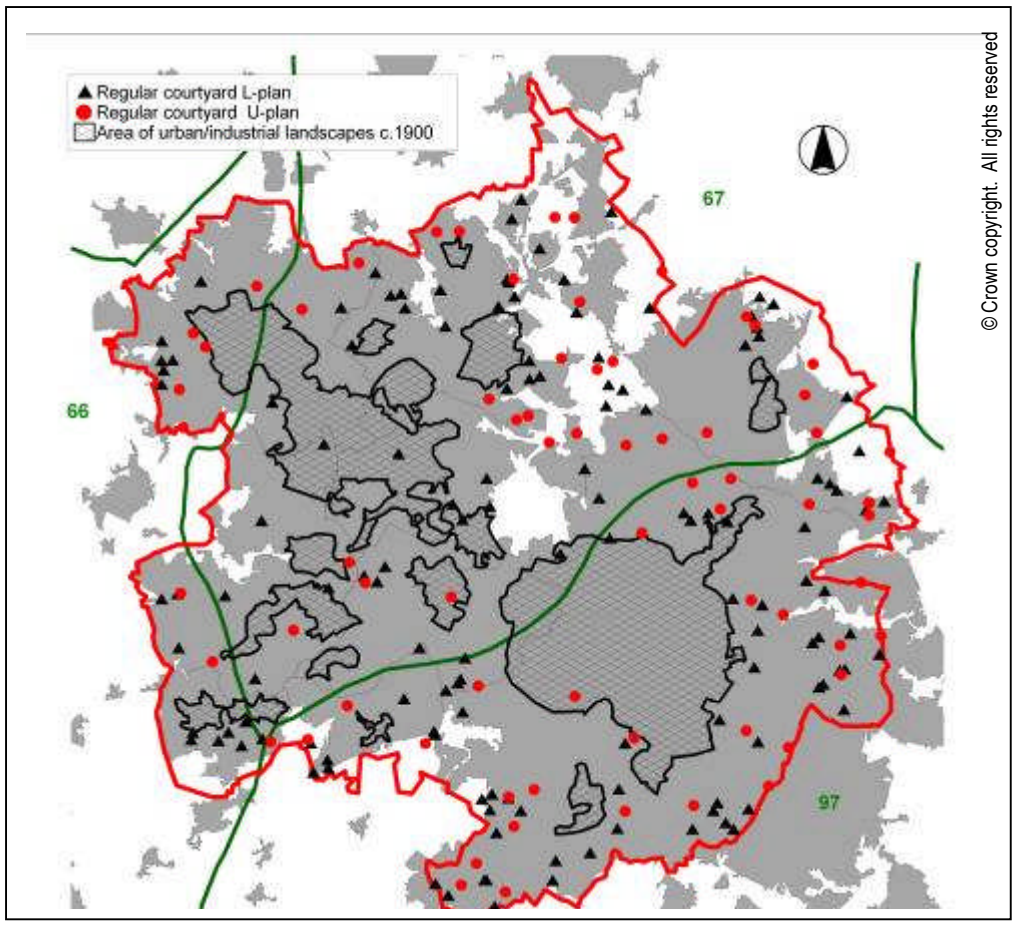


Figure 22 Map showing the distribution of Regular Courtyard L- and U-plans

Regular Courtyard L-plans with buildings to the third or fourth sides of the yard

Regular courtyard L-plans with detached buildings to the third or fourth sides of a yard (RCL3 and RCL4) make up 14.0% of all mapped farmsteads, compared to a regional average of 8.5%. The majority of this group are L-plans with a building to the third side of the yard making up 12.5% of the farmsteads in the Conurbation. As with the Regular L- and U-plans, both the proportion and distribution of this plan type is fairly even across the three character areas (Figure 23).

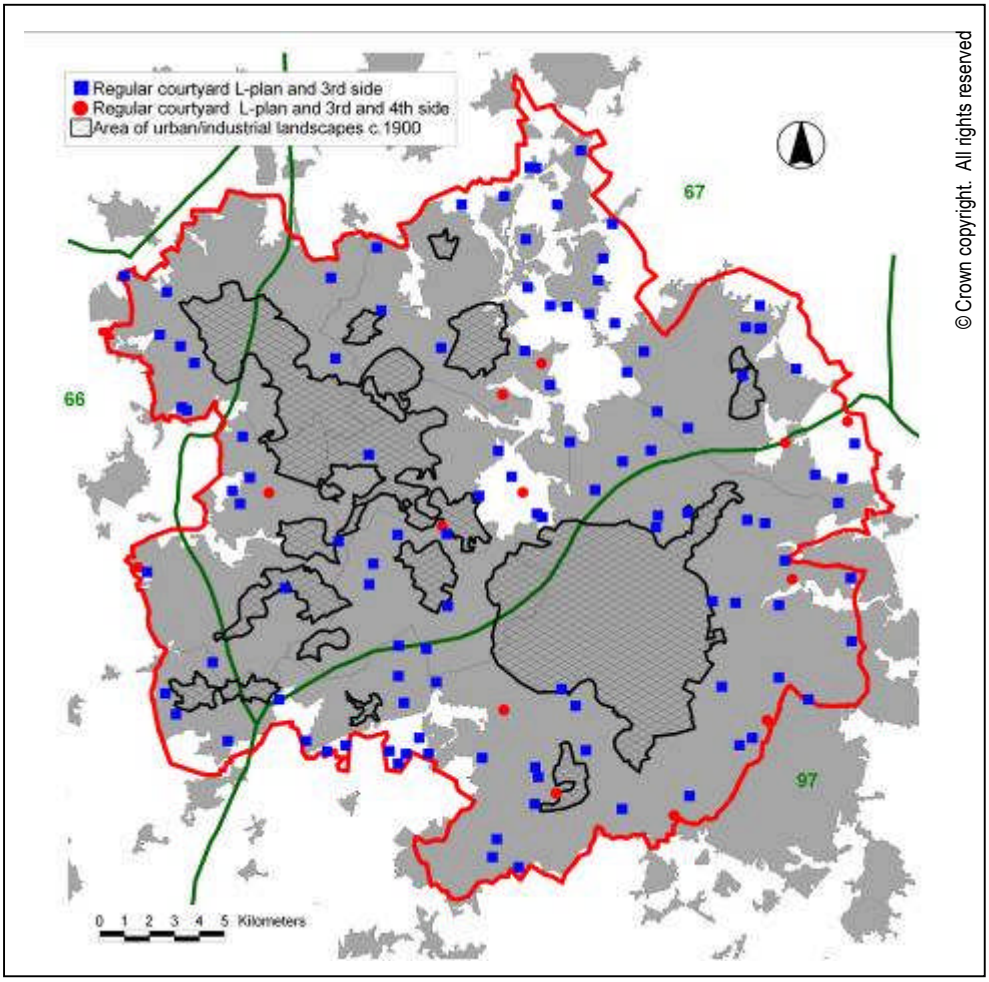


Figure 23
Regular courtyard L-plans with buildings to the third or fourth sides of the yard

Regular Courtyard Multi-yard Plans (RCf, h, t, z and RCmy)

The largest of the Regular courtyard plans are those with more than one yard, namely the E- F- H-, T- and Z-plans and Multi-yard groups. Such plans are generally indicative of farmsteads with holdings of 300 acres or over, which required considerable labour to work them. They are predominantly associated with cattle yards for store cattle/fattening and the production of manure using large quantities of straw (a by-product of the corn harvest), imported feed and hay, with the possible exception of the F-plan layout which may include a cow house/hay barn ranges in dairying areas. These plans are most closely associated with planned or reorganised landscapes. The small numbers recorded in the Conurbation generally reflect the regional averages except for E-plan farmsteads which are absent from the study area. Interestingly, no examples of any of these larger plan types were recorded in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area, where they have been recorded in the Shropshire and Staffordshire part of the character area (Figure 24).

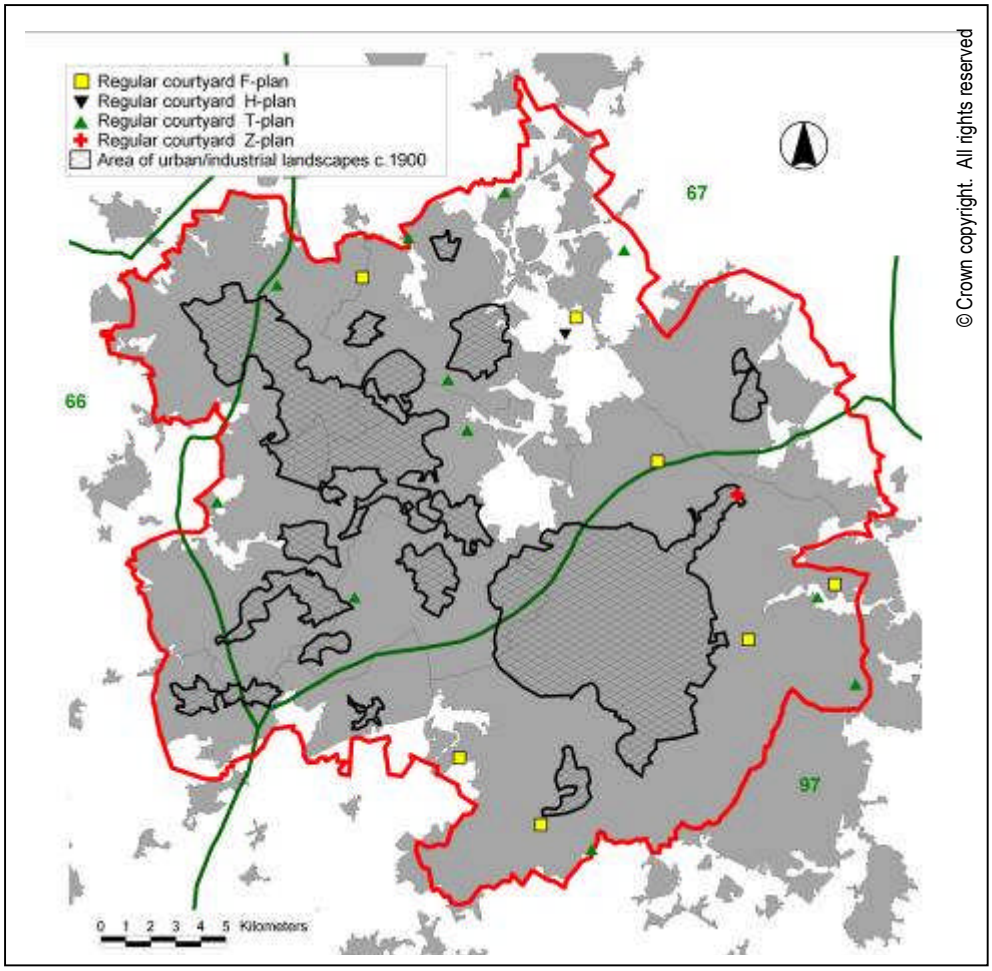


Figure 24 Distribution of Regular Courtyard F- H- T- and Z-plans,

Regular courtyard multi-yards are farmsteads with multiple yards which are grouped together and regularly arranged (other than the defined F, E, H, T or Z-plans, although these can be incorporated as tertiary elements). The proportion of Regular Multi-yards in the Conurbation matches the regional average of 9.7% but across the three character areas they were most dominant in the Mid Severn Sandstone area (17.2%) and least common in the Arden (6.5%) particularly in the area south-west of Birmingham, a pattern which matched expectations (Figure 25).

Within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood the distribution of Regular Multi-yards was similar to that of the Dispersed multi-yard plans (although the former represents a much higher proportion of farmsteads) (Figure 26). This pattern is in contrast to most other areas, for example Staffordshire, where the two plan types have different distributions; the Dispersed Multi-yard plan being a feature of the northern Moorlands part of the county with Regular Multi-yards found across the lowlands. There was however, a marked contrast in the distribution of these two plan types within the Arden; Regular multi-yards alone are recorded in the east of the conurbation whilst in the south there was a small cluster of Dispersed multi-yard plans.

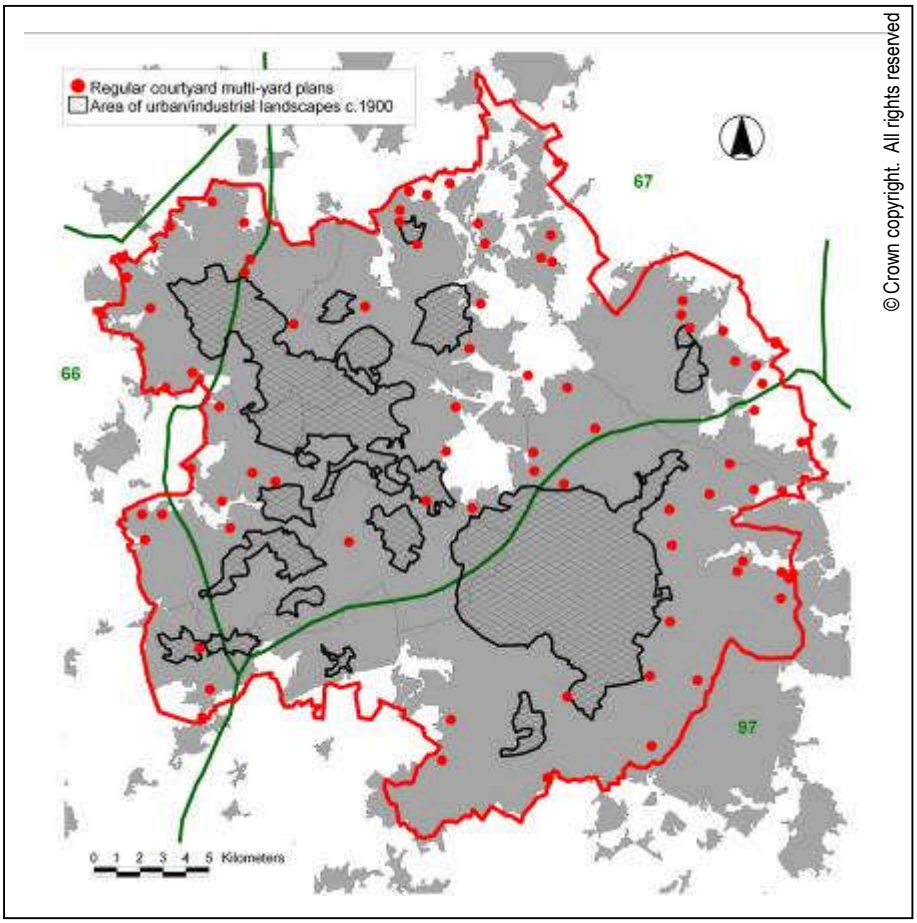


Figure 25 Distribution of regular multi-yard plans

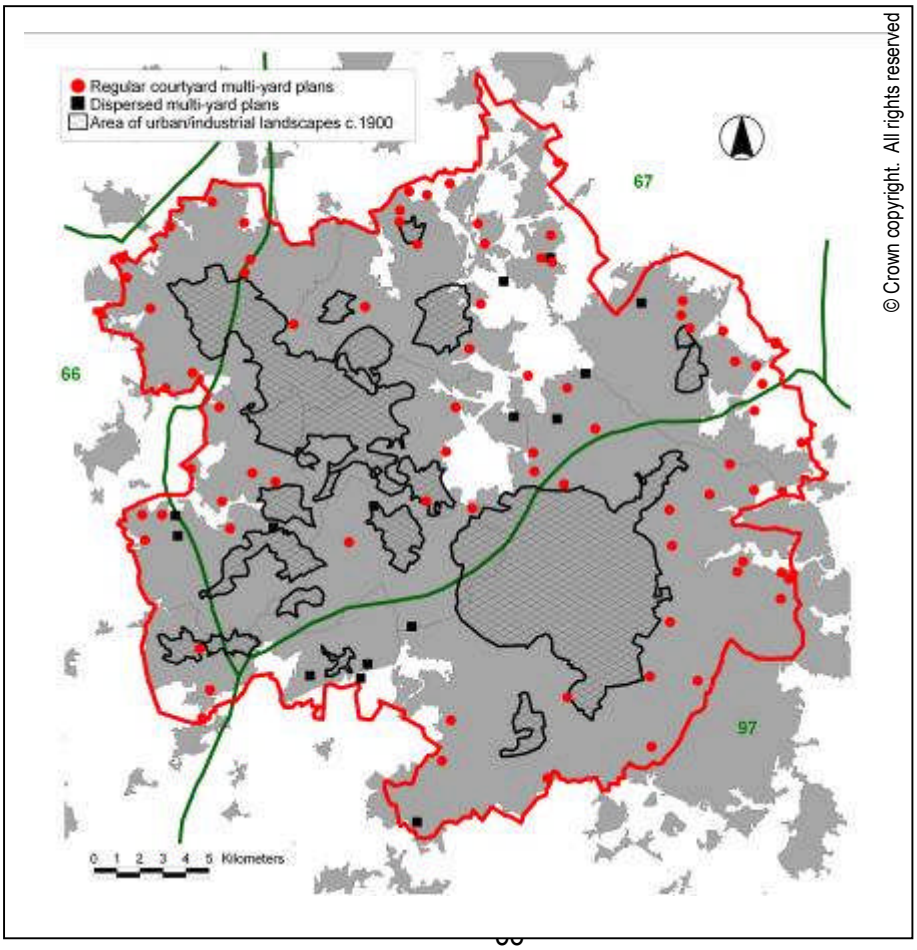


Figure 26 Distribution of regular multi-yard plans against Dispersed multi-yard plans

Full Regular Courtyards

Full Regular Courtyards generally comprise linked ranges set around all four sides of a courtyard. They represent 6.2% of farmsteads mapped across the Conurbation compared to a regional average of only 4.9%. This plan type is synonymous with the classic model farm format of the 1750-1870 periods, and thus of a medium to large scale and associated with areas of planned estate driven enclosure although not all examples will be considered as 'model farms'. Across the character areas full regular courtyard plans are proportionally better represented in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area where larger farmsteads were characteristic (11.5%) and only 5.5% in the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area where larger farms associated with estates created from or on the edge of heathland were built in the late 18th and 19th century. In the Arden, where 6.2% of farmsteads were of this plan form, a number of examples were associated with higher status properties and, as with some of the other larger plan types, may represent a phase of rebuilding, and possible engrossing of holdings, from the 18th century in order to respond to the growing demands of the expanding urban areas (Figure 27).

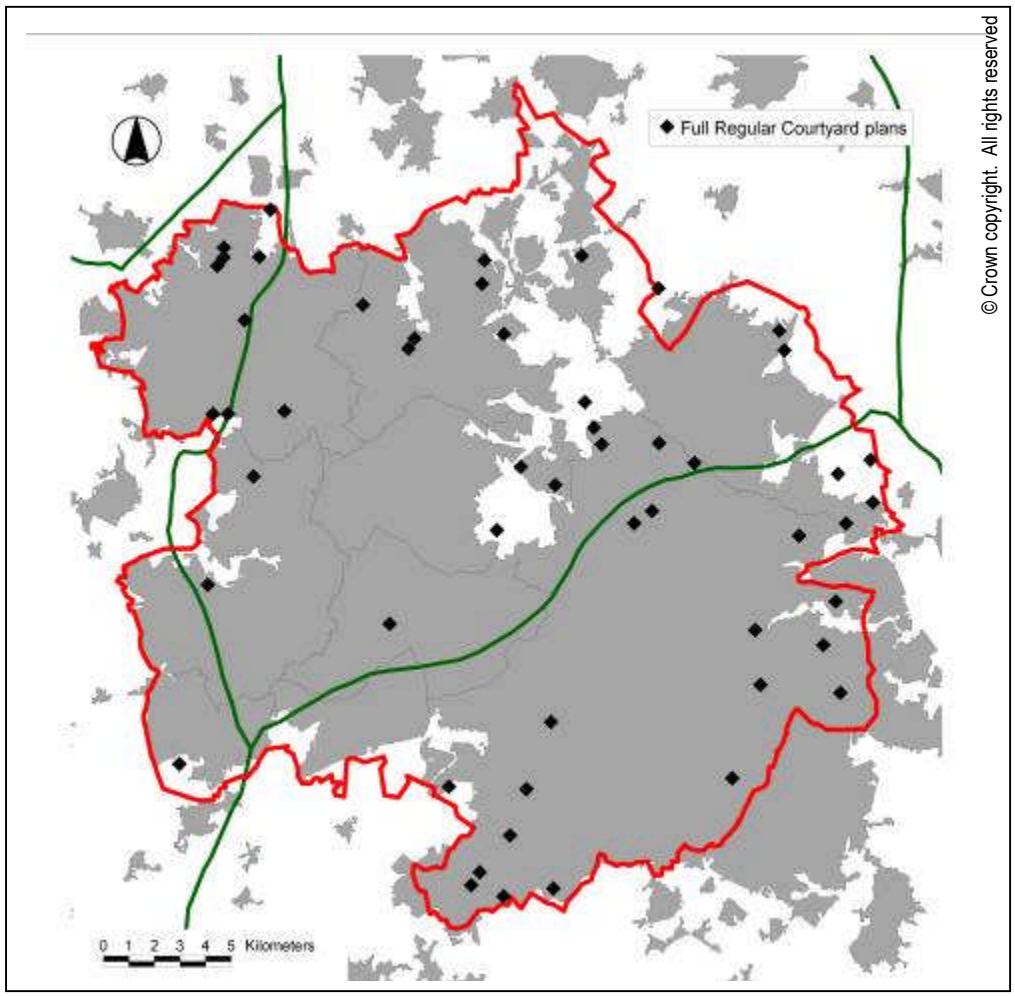


Figure 27 Distribution of full regular courtyard plans

Regular Courtyard Covered Yards

Covered yards are most strongly associated with regular plans and, in particular full regular courtyard plans and regular multi-yard plans. The earliest date from the 1850s and they are either whole new builds (usually of the 1850s to late 1870s, when capital dried up for large scale rebuilding of farmsteads except for a few landowners whose wealth was derived from industry rather than landownership) or more commonly post-1870s adaptations to earlier farmsteads. Occasionally a covered yard building can form the whole of the farmstead but no examples of this type were recorded in the Conurbation area; all the examples are secondary or tertiary elements to regular form farmsteads except one example which is associated with a loose courtyard farmstead with buildings to three sides of the yard (Figure 28).

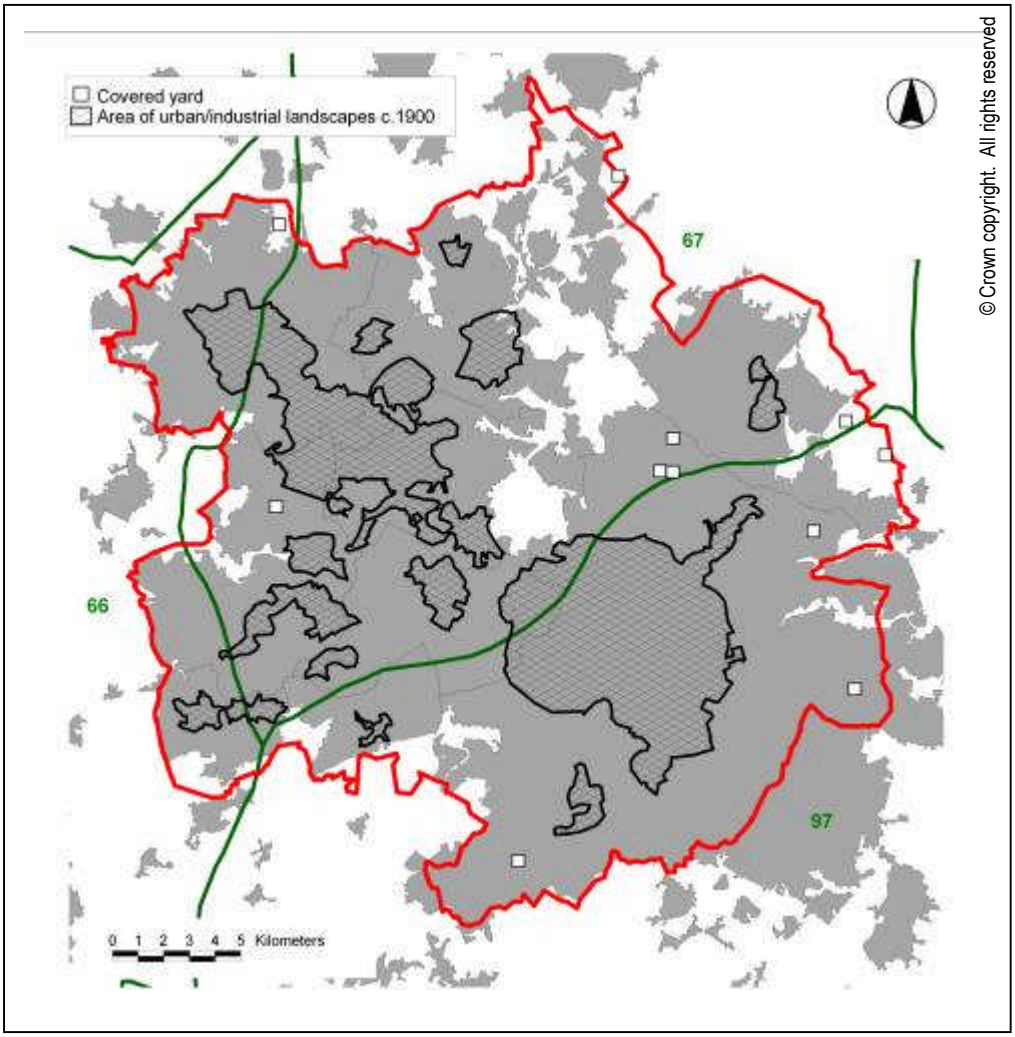


Figure 28 Distribution of covered yards

Dispersed plans

These are farmsteads where the farm buildings and farmhouse are loosely grouped together within the farmstead boundary but with no yard or identifiable principal yard area. They indicate the need to flexibly manage livestock within the boundary of the steading and pre-date the planned farmstead ideals of the 18th and 19th centuries – or at least ignore the movement towards planned steadings. Some limited research has shown that in some areas where dispersed plans were common-place up to the mid-19th century but the majority were subsequently reorganised, sometimes retaining a building such as a barn, to form courtyard plans. It is possible that areas that retained dispersed farmsteads may have had higher numbers of independent free-holders or where there was not a strong manorial or estate structure to either reorganise farmsteads.

Type	*Dispersed Cluster*		*Dispersed Driftway*		*Dispersed Multi-yard*	
Mid Severn	0		0		1	1.1%
Cannock Chase	14	3.5%	5	1.3%	8	2.1%
Arden	3	0.8%	0		5	1.4%

Dispersed Cluster Plans (2.0% in the Conurbation; 2.8% in the West Midlands region)

Dispersed clusters are plans where there is a group of buildings which are not focused on a defined yard area. Many of these farmsteads are small steadings with a farmhouse and just one or two buildings set in an enclosure designed for holding stock. These types of farmsteads have a paddock like feel, set in enclosed areas within which the house and any working buildings are sited and livestock fenced in. They are strongly associated with pastoral farming landscapes, and in areas close to large commons for grazing stock over the summer months.

Within the Conurbation, Dispersed cluster farmsteads can be seen as once being a feature especially associated with the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area where they formed 3.5% of recorded farmsteads. This reflects the pattern seen in other areas where common edge settlement by small farmers, sometimes combined with by-employment in industry, often resulted in small Dispersed cluster farmsteads. This plan type was absent from the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau and relatively rare in the Arden (0.8%).

Dispersed Driftway Plans (0.6% in the Conurbation; 1.2% in the West Midlands region)

Dispersed driftway farmsteads have buildings and yards (regular or loose in their form) sited next to a route way. The small number of this plan type recorded all lie within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area. It is probable that, as elsewhere in the Region, they reflect the movement of cattle onto common pasture in upland and wood pasture locations.

Dispersed Multi-yard Plan (1.7% in the Conurbation; 2.6% in the West Midlands region)

A dispersed multi-yard farmstead comprises buildings related to a number of yards (regular or loose), with the yards irregularly arranged and detached from one another. They are generally distributed evenly throughout the county, but they do seem to be found in areas where regular multi-yards exist, possibly indicating that such farmsteads may have resulted from incremental growth from earlier dispersed plans.

As with the other dispersed plan types, Dispersed multi-yard plans within the Conurbation area were a feature of the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area with the exception of a small area of the Arden to the south-west of Birmingham where there was a small cluster of this plan type. Two examples were recorded within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau, following the pattern of such farmsteads that were recorded within the Staffordshire part of the character area (Figure 29).

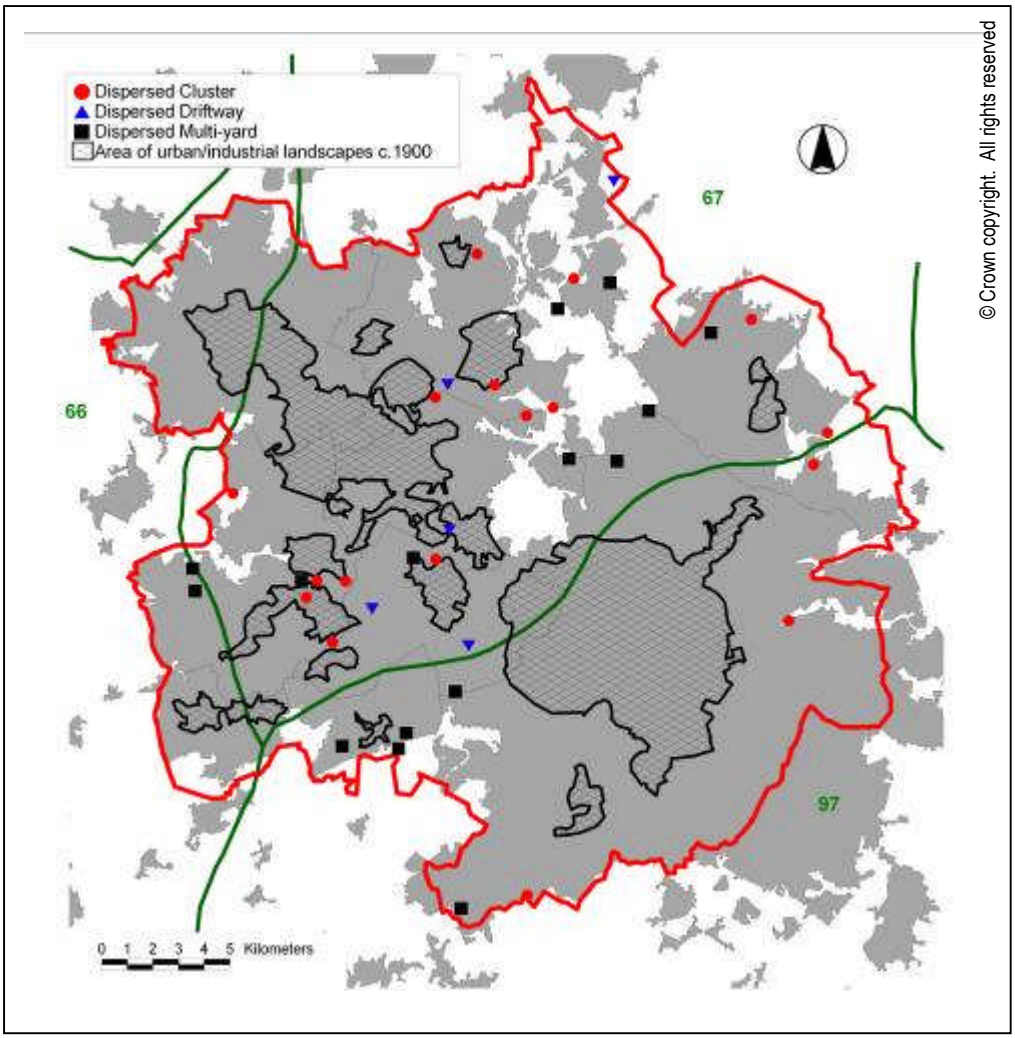


Figure 29 Map showing the distribution of Dispersed farmstead types

Small Plan types: Linear, L-plan (house attached), Parallel and Row

These plan types represent some of the smallest farmsteads. Linear plans and L-plans (house attached) are where the farmhouse is attached in-line or at right angles to a farm building. They are most often associated with upland areas due to their suitability for construction in hilly areas as they can be built along the contour of a hill but are also found in lowland landscapes, particularly in areas where there were smallholdings. There is also a strong correlation between these plan types and the Dispersed plan group; a relationship that warrants further research. Parallel plans are related to the Linear L-plan (house attached) and small loose courtyards by their general small size and frequent association with smallholdings. Row plans are farmsteads which have a particularly long range of buildings, probably incorporating different functions and are typically the result of piecemeal development. Some examples of this plan form can be of medium scale.

Type	*Linear*		*L-plan*		*Parallel*		*Row*	
Mid Severn	2	2.3%	1	1.1%	0		0	
Cannock Chase	23	5.9%	20	5.0%	2	0.5%	3	0.8%
Arden	7	7.0%	9	2.8%	4	1.1%	6	2.0%

Small plan types against NCA

Linear Plans and L-plans (house attached)
(10.4% in the West Midlands region, 7.4% in the Conurbation)
The distribution of linear plans and L-plans with the house attached is clearly concentrated within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA where they formed 10.9% of recorded farmsteads. Several of the L-plan house attached farmsteads were associated with an area of regular enclosure of an area of common land. There were only occasional examples in the Arden or Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau; within the Arden the distribution is clearly weighted towards the south-west of the late 19th century limit of Birmingham compared to the area north-east of the urban area at that date (Figure 30).

Parallel Plans (0.6% in the West Midlands region, 0.7% in the Conurbation)
Parallel plans, although few in number, are however, found in the Arden in slightly higher numbers than in Cannock Chase and Cank Wood. Although parallel plans often also incorporate a linear element, they may also be closely affiliated with small loose courtyard plans, a plan type that was common in the Arden. No parallel plans were recorded within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area, as was the case with the Staffordshire part of this character area (Figure 30).

Row Plans (0.7% in the West Midlands region, 1.1% in Warwickshire)

The distribution of Row plans is also weighted to the Arden area possibly reflecting the slightly larger size that Row plans can attain through development over time – a process that was more

likely to occur in the wood-pasture landscape of the Arden than on the poorer farmlands of the south and west parts of the Cannock Chase (Figure 30).

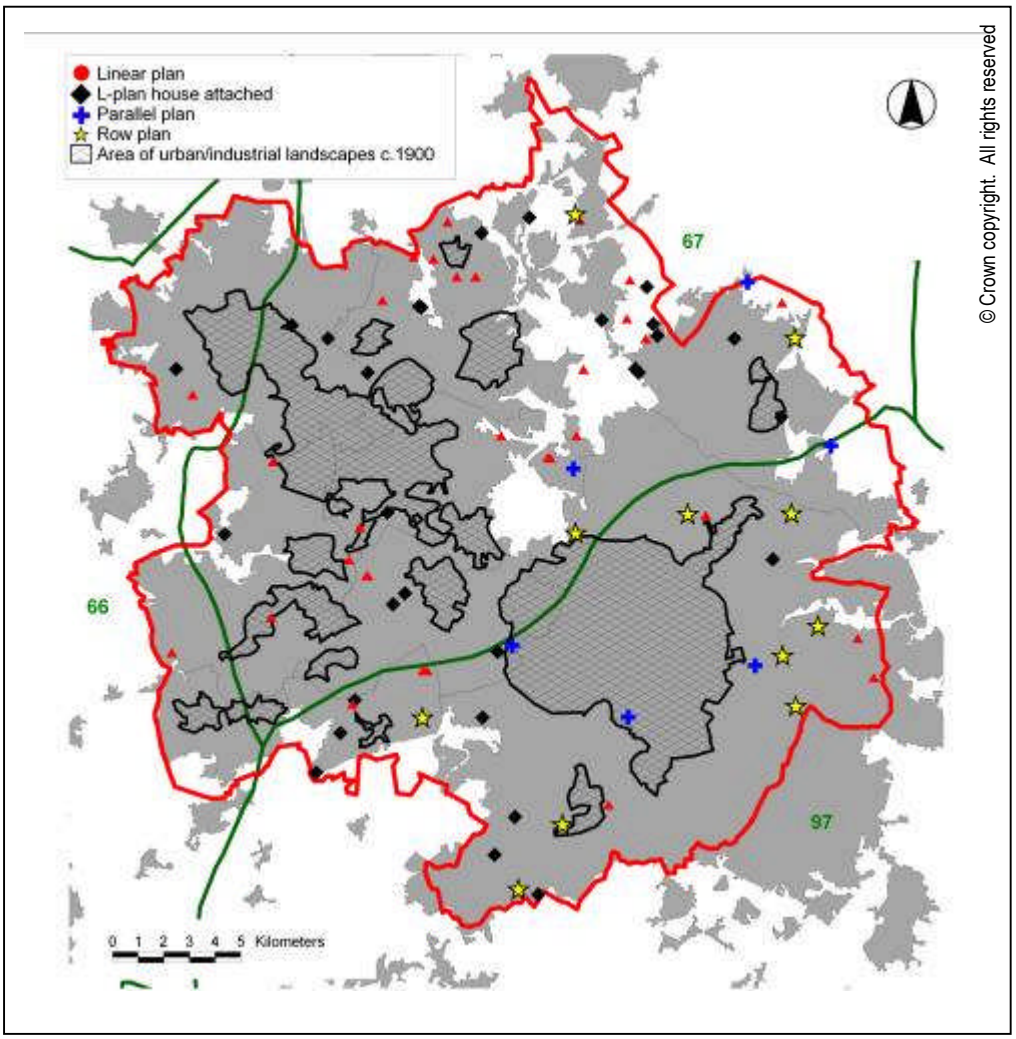


Figure 30 Linear, L-plan House attached, Parallel and Row plans in the West Midlands conurbation

6.6 Farmstead Size

Farmsteads, like fields often increased in size as farms were amalgamated and expanded. Areas with the highest densities of farmsteads typically include small-scale enclosed fields and farmsteads and are likely to have a mix of dispersed farms and cottages, hamlets and small villages. Areas with large planned farms and fields typically have low densities of large-scale farmstead types but may retain smaller-scale farms and smallholdings. The largest farms – typically over 300 acres (120 hectares) in size - had greater access to capital and were usually associated with corn production, which typically demanded more labour for carting, harvesting and processing the crop, and increasingly for yard and stock management (for example in strawing-down yards, lifting the heavy manure-laden straw into middens and carts and for spreading it on the fields). The smallest family farms of less than 50 acres (20 hectares) in size, typically found in dairying, fruit growing and stock-rearing areas, required fewer large buildings. The occupiers of smallholdings supplemented their income from farming.

The range of farmstead plan types are broadly indicative of the size of individual farmsteads, with broad distinctions between small, medium and large scale farmsteads. It has been seen (6.1) that by the late 19th century Warwickshire was marked by larger-scale farms than much of the rest of the region. This is reflected in the predominance of large-scale farmsteads across the county, with the exception of large areas of the Arden away from the Avon vale.

Small-scale farms

Small scale farmsteads include:

- Loose courtyard plans with buildings to one or two sides of the yard
- Linear plans
- L-plan with the house attached
- Parallel plans
- Dispersed Cluster
- Dispersed Driftway

Across the Conurbation small scale farmsteads represent 31.5% of farmsteads. They were predominantly found the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area which contained 55% of the small type farmsteads (whereas this area contained 47.7% of the recorded farmsteads) followed by the Arden where 38% of the small type farmsteads were recorded. In contrast only 6.4% of the small scale farmstead types were recorded in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau where 10.6% of recorded farmsteads were located (Figure 31).

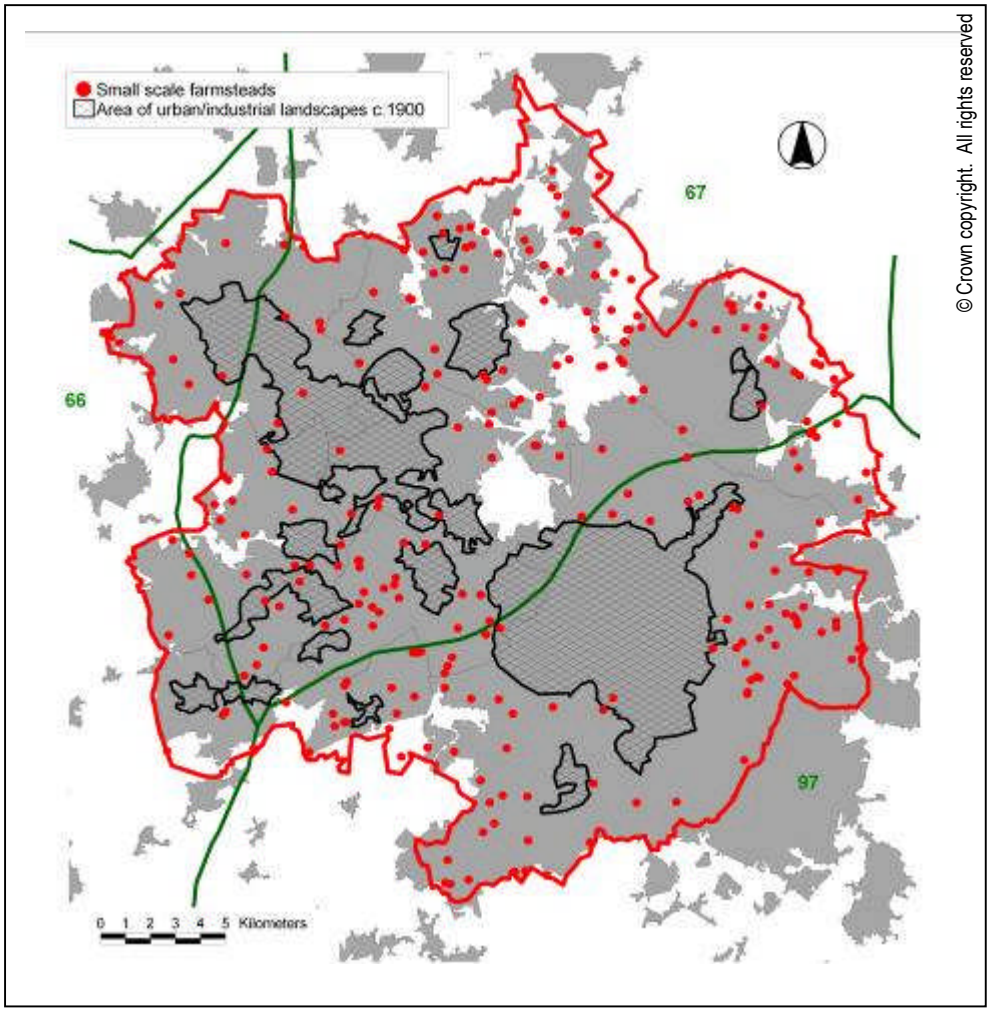


Figure 31 Map showing the distribution of small-scale farmsteads

Medium-scale farms

Medium scale farmsteads include:

- Loose courtyard and regular courtyard plan with buildings to three sides of the yard
- Regular L-plan and those with a building to the third side
- Loose courtyard L-plans with a building to the third side
- U, T and Z plans

Medium scale farmsteads are the predominant group across the Conurbation as a whole, representing 50.8% of farmsteads. The distribution of medium-scale farmsteads is fairly consistent across the Arden and Cannock Chase and Cank Wood areas with 47% and 43% of this group each respectively (Arden's proportion being slight higher than the 41.8% of total recorded farmsteads and Cannock Chase's proportion slightly below the 47.7% of recorded farmsteads). The Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area has 10.6% of the medium scale farmsteads which mirrors its proportion of total recorded farmsteads (Figure 32).

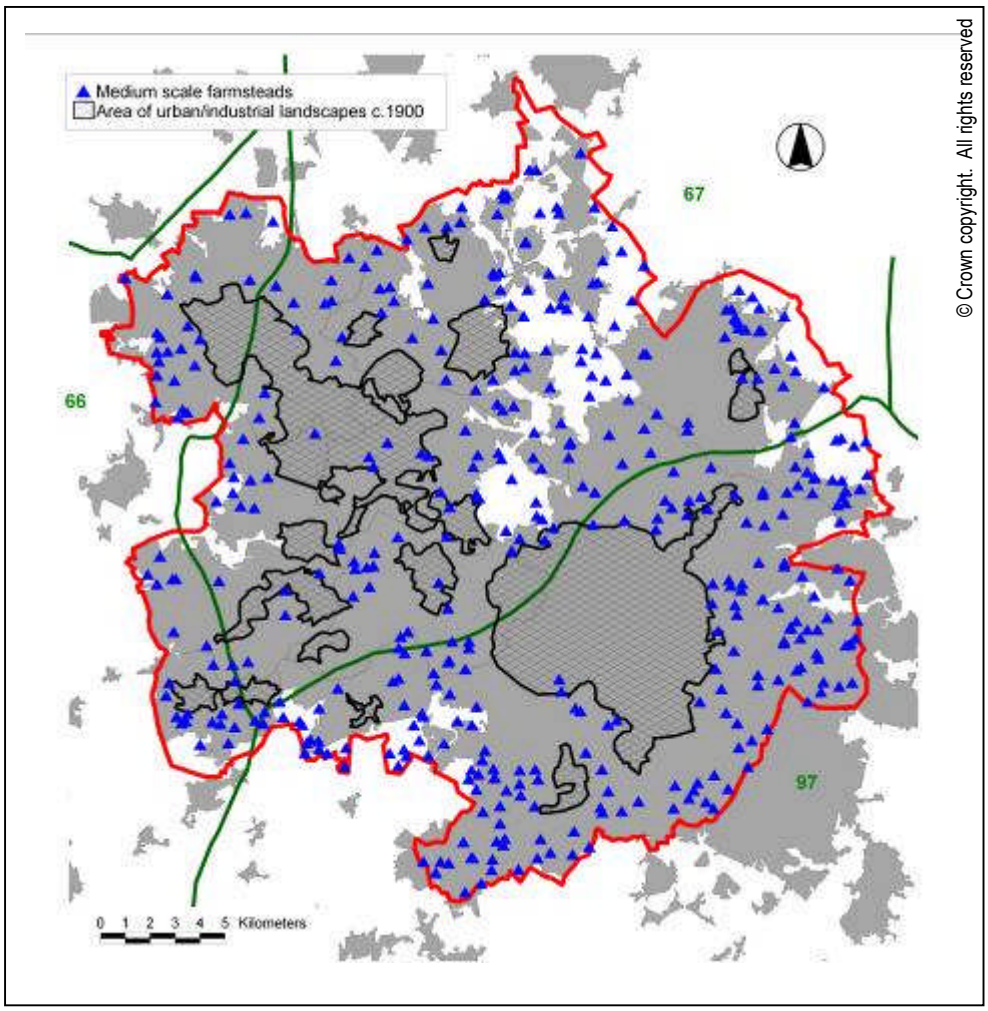


Figure 32 Map showing the distribution of medium-scale farmsteads

Large-scale farmsteads

Large-scale farmsteads, forming 18.9% of farmsteads across the Conurbation, include:

- Loose courtyard and full regular courtyard plans with buildings to all sides of the yard
- Regular multi-yard plans, E, H and F plans
- Dispersed Multi-yards

In the main these large farmstead plan types are the product of the 'high' period of farming during the nineteenth century that witnessed large scale capital investment in building, resulting in these large plan types. This often resulted in new regular farmsteads associated with large-scale enclosure but this group also includes larger farmsteads that developed through the incremental growth of higher status farmsteads.

Across the character areas the larger size of farmsteads within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area is reflected in the 16.5% of large farmsteads recorded within that area which compares with the 10.6% of total farmsteads recorded within that area. The Arden has a lower proportion of large farmsteads compared to its percentage of recorded farmsteads (34% against an overall proportion of 41.8%). The Cannock Chase and Cank Wood area, an area where small farmsteads were concentrated, also had the highest proportion of large farmsteads (46.2%), reflecting the somewhat mixed character of the area with small farmsteads fringing the heathland areas but also large farmsteads on the better quality land and associated with estates enclosing areas of the Chase (Figure 33).

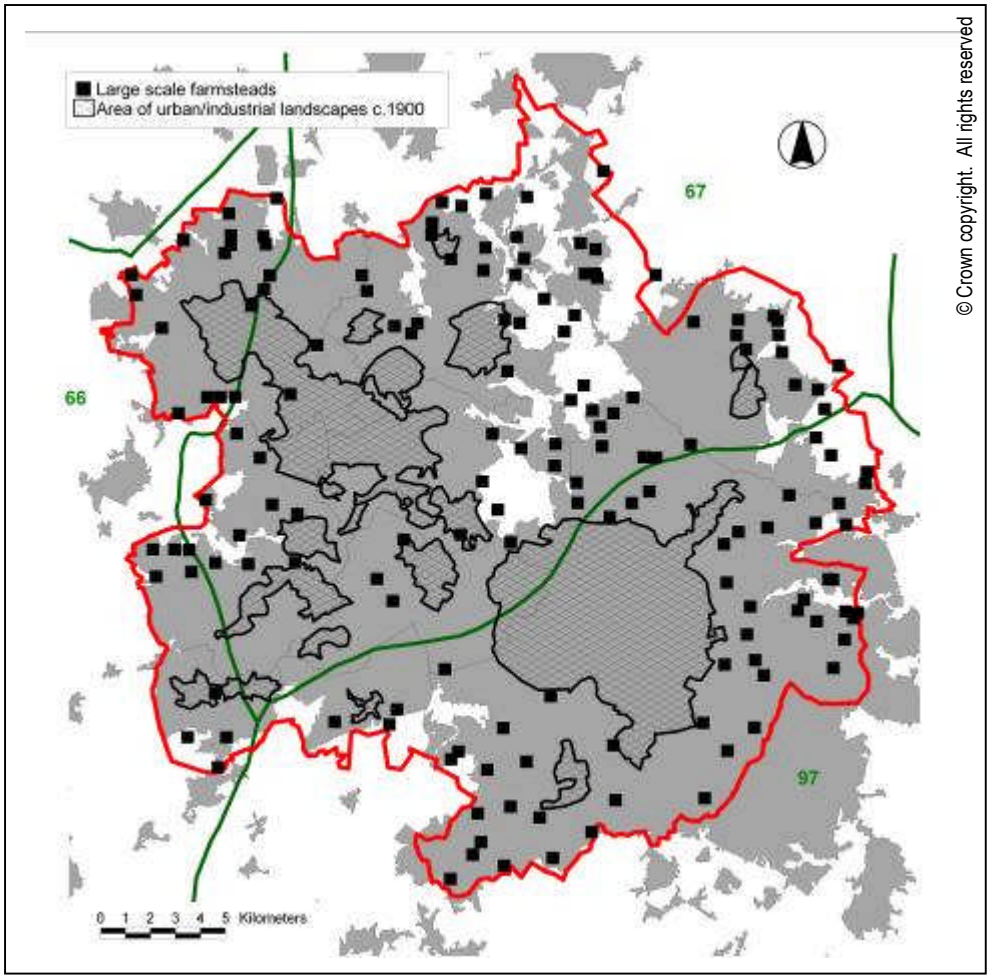


Figure 33 Map showing the distribution of large-scale farmsteads, showing their weighting away from the core of the Arden

6.7 Outfarms and Field Barns

The farmstead mapping has identified 199 field barns and outfarms within the Conurbation area. Of these two thirds (66.3%) were single buildings indicating that they were field barns not associated with a yard area. Of the remainder, 15% were small loose courtyard groups with buildings to one or two sides of yard and 9.5% were regular courtyard L-plan outfarms.

Outfarms and field barns were most strongly concentrated within the Arden and the central part of the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood areas with relatively few recorded examples in the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau area (Figure 34).

Almost all of these outfarms and field barns appear to have been lost from the landscape; surviving examples are extremely rare.

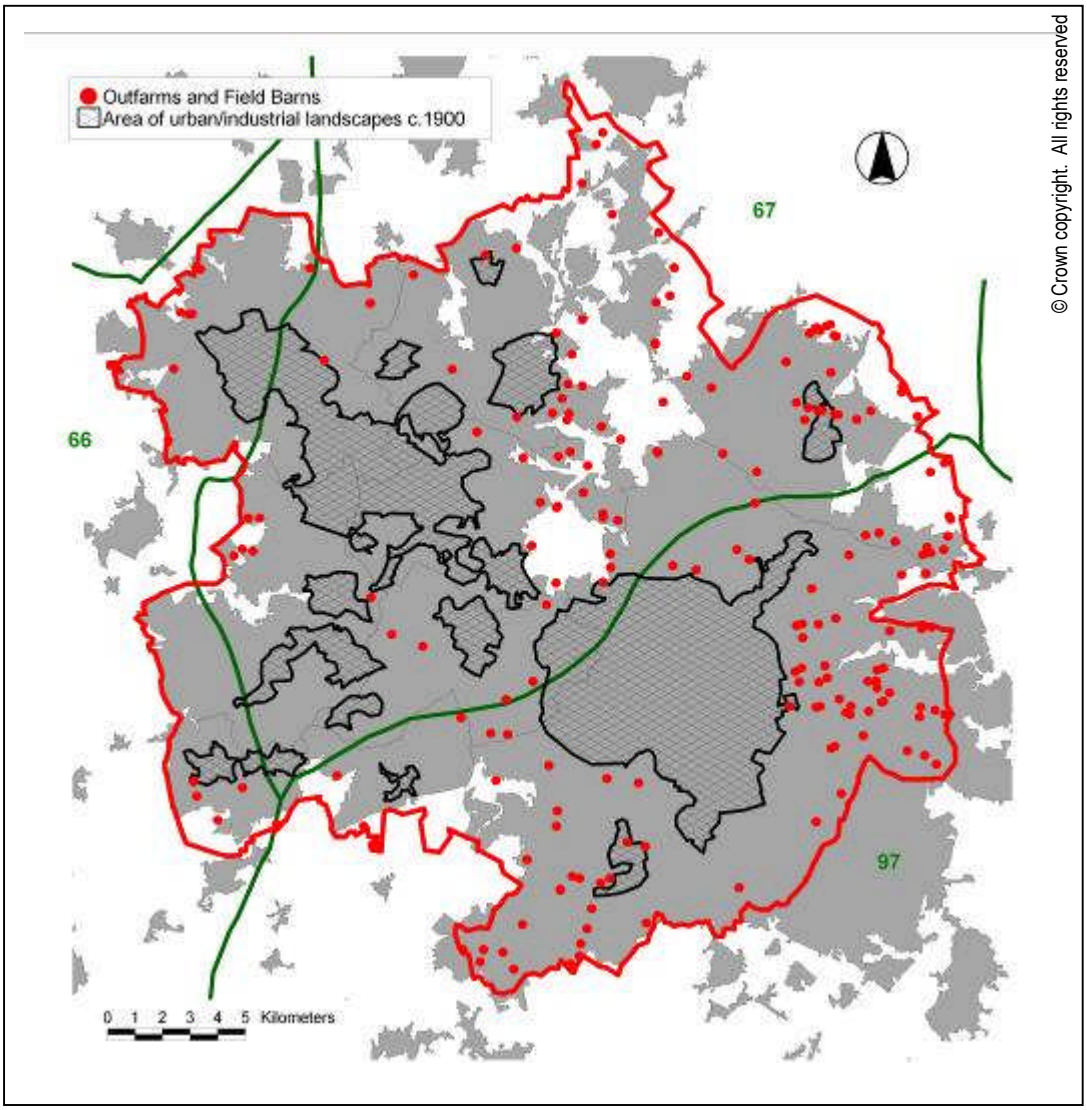


Figure 34 Distribution of outfarms and field barns

6.8 Smallholdings

A total of 31 smallholdings were recorded across the Conurbation, the majority being located within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood character area, many associated with areas of common/waste encroachment and areas of industrial activity (e.g. mineral extraction) (Figure 35).

The close association between smallholding and the availability of common/waste is well demonstrated by the description from the 17th century antiquary, Robert Plot. He described how, in Sutton Coldfield in north Warwickshire, temporary enclosures were made on common/waste for a period of five years or so for a rotation of rye, bailey pulse and oats. The 'sandy soils of the bunter beds, normally waste, would be taken by householders in lots of one acre and cropped for five years before being thrown open again' (Plot 1686 in Hooke 2006: 95). By the end of the 19th century however, it was not possible to identify any small holdings in this area and most if not all the large area of common had been enclosed.

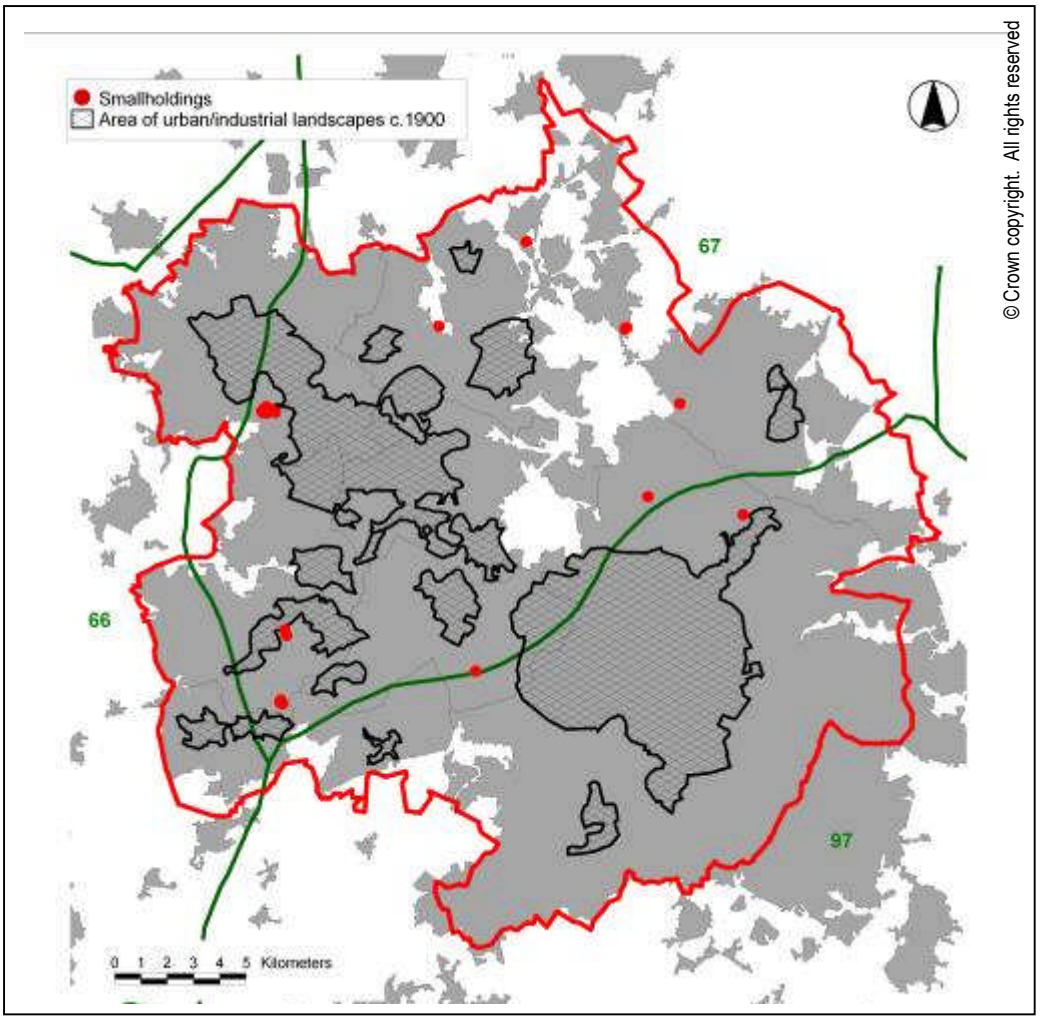


Figure 35 Map showing the distribution of Smallholdings, where small-scale farmsteads are also concentrated.

7.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) Farmsteads and Landscape

The patterning of farmsteads and the date of their buildings invites searching questions about their relationship to patterns of settlement and landscape character.

Farmsteads and Enclosure

- What is the relationship between farmstead date and type and the processes of ancient enclosure from woodland, the enclosure of heaths and the enclosure of strip fields? In the case of fieldscapes created through enclosure by agreement, often poorly documented and where the chronologies are difficult to establish, the evidence from the dating of building fabric can be viewed as a *terminus ante quem* and a vital contribution to our understanding of their development. This applies to both irregular and planned fields in HLC, as the latter can represent the reorganisation of piecemeal-enclosed fields. Some early buildings may relate to earlier phases of development of the landscape, particularly to early enclosed and common-edge landscapes that were reorganised through survey-planned enclosure.
- There is considerable evidence in the Arden for 17th century and earlier common-edge settlement. Farmsteads on the border between irregular and planned enclosure also provide an indication of how later phases of enclosure have separated farmsteads from access to common land.

Farmsteads and Settlement

- The high concentration of early buildings in the Arden has been noted in wood pasture landscapes with dispersed settlement elsewhere in England. Is, for example, there evidence for earlier surviving buildings in the core areas of early irregular enclosure?
- There is considerable evidence in the Arden for post-medieval farm amalgamation and enlargement. To what extent is this reflected in the rebuilding of houses and barns between the later 16th and 19th centuries?
- To what extent is enclosure of blocks of common land etc associated with the establishment of farmsteads on new sites?
- What does the date, scale and alignment of buildings (including houses not associated with mapped farmsteads reveal about the development of villages before the late 19th century?

Farmsteads and Urbanisation/Industrialisation

- There was a strong association between the distribution of small-scale farmsteads and the areas of Cannock Chase where small-scale farming was combined with industrial by-employment although such small farmsteads can be difficult to identify from historic mapping. There is potential for some of these sites to have survived to some extent within the urban areas that will only be identified through more detailed survey and fieldwork.
- In areas where farming was combined with industrial activities, do any buildings retain evidence for industrial processes?
- Can the influence of wealthy industrials or merchants buying into the landowning classes by purchasing or creating estates in the rural landscapes around the historic core urban areas of the Conurbation be seen in farmstead form and buildings?

- Did the development of the canal network and, later, the railways, influence the development of farmsteads that were able to utilise the canal network to gain quicker or easier access to the urban markets, both within the Conurbation and further afield?

Farmsteads and Moated Sites/Shrunken Settlement

- Moated sites and shrunken settlements can reveal important information about the development of higher status sites in the medieval and post-medieval periods – the former being concentrated in the Arden and being of 14th century or earlier date. They have high potential to reveal important material that will have been lost elsewhere through intensive cultivation and settlement, and that can be interpreted in relationship to standing fabric.

2) Farmstead Form and Date

The diversity of plan types displays both conformity to national models (particularly in the case of regular plan farmsteads), the persistence of local trends and adaptation to local circumstances. In combination with the present building stock they provide an indication of where and when change occurred, as a result of factors such as patterns of lordship, tenure and the distribution of wealth and the emergence of market-based and specialised regional economies. Continuity or revolutions in farming practice either swept away or made use of the existing building stock.

Houses

Relationship of houses to steadings. To what extent are houses earlier than, contemporary with or later than their associated farm buildings? How is this reflected in their siting – as detached houses that face away from the working farm, as houses that are attached to their working buildings (this being a strong feature of village-based steadings in Warwickshire or those sited gable-end or side-on to the yard.

Farmstead Types and Buildings

- The strong association between irregular enclosure and some small-medium scale regular courtyard types implies a piecemeal development. To what extent is this true or contradicted by fieldwork and the evidence for phasing?
- Do the key farmstead types reveal differences and patterns relating to the dating of fabric?
    - It is clear, for example, that Regular Courtyard Plans are predominantly 19th century in date and relate to planned enclosure that represents the taking in of common pasture or the reorganisation of earlier enclosed landscapes?
    - What evidence is there for buildings within regular-planned groups that appear to predate planned enclosure?
    - What proportion of large-scale loose courtyard farmsteads (with working buildings to 3 or 4 sides of the yard) result from a single-phase of construction rather than piecemeal development?
    - To what extent do courtyard and U-plan groups absorb earlier L-plan and linear groups?
    - To what extent do L-plan groups absorb earlier linear steadings?
    - How does the survival of small-scale farmsteads relate to the late use of areas of common land?

    - To what extent do dispersed farmstead types relate to the development from farmsteads for the seasonal movement and/or holding of stock as noted elsewhere in the region?
- Farmsteads that had, to some extent, survived being subsumed into the expanding urban areas by the late 19th century are difficult to identify from the 2nd Edition OS mapping. The use of earlier maps including the 1st Edition OS, tithe maps and estate maps could identify such farmsteads and fieldwork used to assess whether any evidence of them has come through to the present.

3) Farmstead Form and Documentary Investigation

- Using census and other information, what is the relationship between the size of farm and the status of occupants (gentry, farmers or those with income from other activities) with mapped farmsteads, different houses types etc?
- What spatial differences are there in the patterning of farmstead types/size between the tithe maps and later 19th century OS maps?
- Is there a link or not between farmstead size and inheritance practice?
- To what extent does the scale represented by the different farmstead types reflect long-term developments in farm size, already visible in the 1840s tithe maps and earlier maps, or later 19th century change? What do later surveys (especially the 1910 Land Tax and 1940 Farm Surveys) reveal about how they changed over the 20th century in relationship to patterns of tenure and land use?

4) Characterisation and Archaeological Investigation

Farmsteads are likely to preserve stratified below-ground archaeology that contains rich potential for revealing settlement change and development. Recording and analysis can provide important information regarding the historic development of buildings to inform development proposals and record buildings before and/or during alterations. It is important that recording requirements are clearly justified and what questions it hoped to answer are set out. Recording and analysis can range in complexity from a rapid assessment of the site to identify the broad development phases, features of interest and the significance of the site to inform development proposals, the production of a photographic archive record of the buildings, cross-referred to a schematic plan of the site, to fully measured survey (for guidance on appropriate levels of recording see *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*, English Heritage 2006).

Detailed fieldwork should seek to explore the dating of fabric in relationship to the character and historical development of settlement, land use and change. This brings a new meaning and relevance to the work of recording buildings on the ground, and ensuring that the results of any recording – no matter how basic – are adequately archived.

Examination of farmsteads and their buildings will reveal how buildings have changed over time, often in response to important developments in agricultural practice or the shifting emphases of agricultural regions, and sometimes how their function has changed altogether. Successive layers of alteration can make the original and subsequent uses of a building harder to identify. For example is it one date, or are there two or more clear phases? Has the building been lengthened or heightened? Does the evidence provided by lost mortices and peg holes in the underside of beams betray any change of use, for example from a multi-functional building to a threshing barn? This can be indicated in masonry (brick and stone) structures through:

- structural joints in masonry walls, whether vertical (the most easy to spot), horizontal (indicating a later heightening of the wall) or diagonal (typically in the gable end, and again indicating a heightening);
- changes in masonry techniques or brickwork bonding;
- blocked openings, which typically relate to a re-planning of the interior;
- identifying inserted openings, as indicated by disturbance to the surrounding walling.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The mapping of farmsteads across the Conurbation recorded 831 farmsteads and 199 outfarms or field barns. Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day 79 or 67.5% do not include a listed building (or 99 farmsteads (84.5%) if sites with listed working buildings as opposed to listed farmhouses are considered). In view of their predominant 19th century date very few working buildings within these farmsteads are likely to meet current criteria for listing. Other than some of these sites being mapped within the Black Country HLC, these farmsteads have largely been unrecorded in the Historic Environment Records that cover the study area and their contribution to the character of the landscape and local distinctiveness has largely been over-looked.

The mapping has allowed the small number of surviving farmsteads within the open landscapes of the Conurbation to be set into the wider landscape context offered by the National Character Areas. Analysis of the data shows that the farmsteads within the Conurbation area fit into these broader patterns of farmstead scale, form and date, confirming their value in terms of helping to define local distinctiveness. The understanding of the contribution that farmsteads can make to the landscapes surrounding the urban areas can be used to support strategic policy development.

The high level of loss of farmsteads due to the growth of the urban areas throughout the 19th century was expected. The recording of farmsteads within the areas of open countryside that fall within the boundaries of the City and Metropolitan areas provides important information about the importance of predominantly dispersed settlement patterns and the character of and extent of change experienced by these sites. The landscapes fringing the urban areas are often under great pressure, sometimes, but not necessarily, from the threat of housing or industrial development, but through inappropriate management and neglect or pressures for uses related to the nearby urban populations. Some of these pressures may also offer opportunities for historic farmsteads to find new roles when agriculture has ceased to have a use for the buildings.

Despite the high levels of loss through urban expansion, some farmsteads survive within or on the very edge of the urban areas, often with fragments of the pre-urban landscape including routeways, boundaries and areas of green embedded into the present day landscape.

The farmsteads data, used in conjunction with HLC where available, has the capacity to help inform land use planning decisions to ensure that the presence and relationships between those elements of the present-day landscape that have historic significance can be recognised, maintained or enhanced.

The farmstead data can also be used directly to inform Environmental Stewardship Plans and Whole Farms Plans and the understanding of character and change will be of use in preparing and considering planning applications. The surviving farmsteads of the Conurbation are important heritage assets that have the potential to add to our knowledge of the development of the landscape.

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Appendix 1: Farmstead Attribute Table

PRN	Unique No.	Numeric sequence chosen to fit with any existing data set PRNs
Site Name	Modern Name (historic name)	Modern farm name with historic name (if different) recorded in brackets
Classification Primary Attribute	FARMSTEAD OUTFARM SMALLHOLDING	Farmstead with house Outfarm or field barn Sites that are, by their form, association with areas of industrial activity or location within areas of small fields (often encroachment onto common) are likely to have been smallholdings
Classification Secondary Attribute	HOME MAN MILL PUB RECT	Farmstead identified as a Home Farm of an estate Farm Buildings associated with a Manor Farm Buildings associated with a Mill Farm Buildings associated with a Public House Farm Buildings associated with a Rectory
Date_Cent		Earliest century date based on presence of listed building or map evidence (Codes as per Date_HM below)
Date_HM (Date of House based on presence of dated building or Map evidence)	MED C17 C18 C19L C19	Pre 1600 17th century 18th century 19th century (based on presence of a listed building dated to 19th century) 19th century (based on presence on historic map)
Date_WB (Date of Working Building based on presence of dated building)	MED C17 C18 C19L	Pre 1600 17th century 18th century 19th century (based on presence of a listed building dated to 19th century)
Plan Type		Combination of Primary and Secondary Plan Attributes e.g. LC3; RCe etc. (see below)
Plan Type Primary Attribute	DISP LC LIN LP PAR	Dispersed Loose Courtyard Linear L-plan (attached house) Parallel

	RC ROW UNC	Regular Courtyard Row Plan Uncertain
Plan Type Secondary Attribute	1, 2, 3, 4 L3 or L4 L u e f h t z cl dw my cov d y	No. of sides to loose courtyard formed by *working* agricultural buildings Yard with an L-plan range plus detached buildings to the third and/or fourth side of the yard (may be used with LC or RC dependent on overall character) Regular Courtyard L-plan (detached house) Regular Courtyard U-plan Regular Courtyard E-plan Regular Courtyard F-plan Regular Courtyard H-plan Regular Courtyard T-plan Regular Courtyard Z-plan Cluster (Used with DISP) Driftway (Used with DISP) Multi-yard (Used with DISP or RC) Covered yard forms an element of farmstead Additional detached elements to main plan Presence of small second yard with one main yard evident
Tertiary Attribute		Codes as per Secondary Attribute table e.g. cov or combination of Primary and Secondary Attributes e.g. RCL notes presence of a prominent Regular L-plan within a dispersed multi-yard group (DISPmy)
Farmhouse Position	ATT LONG GAB DET UNC	Attached to agricultural range Detached, side on to yard Detached, gable on to yard Farmhouse set away from yard Uncertain (cannot identify which is farmhouse)
Location Primary Attribute	VILL HAM FC ISO PARK SMV CM URB	Village location Hamlet Loose farmstead cluster Isolated position Located within a park Shrunken village site Church and Manor Farm group (or other high status farmstead) Urban
Survival	EXT	Extant – no apparent alteration

	ALT ALTS DEM HOUS LOST	Partial Loss – less than 50% change Significant Loss – more than 50% alteration Total Change – Farmstead survives but complete alteration to plan Farmhouse only survives Farmstead/Outfarm totally demolished
Sheds	SITE SIDE	Large modern sheds on site of historic farmstead – may have destroyed historic buildings or may obscure them Large modern sheds to side of historic farmstead – suggests farmstead probably still in agricultural use
HER Record	UID	Cross reference to existing HER number
Converted buildings?	Yes/No	Note presence of converted buildings based on address point data
Confidence	H M L	High Medium Low
Notes		Free text field to add notes relating to the character or identification of a record