

WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPES PROJECT

COUNTY SUMMARY REPORT FOR WORCESTERSHIRE

Executive Summary

Solutions to finding a future sustainable use for historic farmsteads and their buildings require an integrated approach, considering their merits as heritage assets, their contribution to landscape character and their role in the changing structure of rural communities and economies. This report summarises the results of mapping the historic character and present use of historic farmsteads in Worcestershire. This is part of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscape Project (see www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads) which has concluded that:

- Historic farmsteads are assets which make a significant and highly varied contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of the West Midlands.
- Historic farmsteads are assets which, through agricultural and other new uses, have significant potential to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities away from market towns and other rural centres.
- This understanding can be used to inform positive approaches to shaping the character and economy of places, which are tailored to the future conservation and use of historic farmsteads.

The Project has produced:

- The *West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: Summary Report*, which summarises the results of the whole project and sets out policy and land use implications, and recommendations and next steps for further work.
- *Illustrated Farmstead Character Statements* that outline the historic character and present day role of historic farmsteads for the whole region and the 26 National Character Areas that fall within or astride it. These bring together the results of all this work, combined with the results of extensive survey work and other available information.
- A *Farmstead Use Report* which provides a detailed statistical analysis of the patterns of farmstead use across the West Midlands, and their social and economic role.
- A *Planning Tools Report*. Tools for informing change at an area and site-based scale, in the form of an Area Assessment Framework for use in the development of planning guidance and land management, and a *Site Assessment Framework* for identifying key issues at the earliest possible stage when adaptive reuse or new build are being considered in the context of a historic farmstead.

- *Historic Farmstead Characterisation Reports* for each county and the Central Conurbation which present a detailed analysis of the mapping of farmsteads in relationship to landscape character and type, and which are stored on the local authority Historic Environment Record.

An important aspect of this project is the fact that all the partners are using a consistent methodology for mapping farmsteads so that the data can be combined to produce a regional picture of farmstead character. This report summarises the key findings of the Historic Farmstead Characterisation Report for Worcestershire, and the analysis of current use.

Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

In the county 81% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%, but this figures smooths over a generally lower rate of survival:

- 13% of farmsteads have retained all of their historic footprint/ working buildings (regional average 26%);
- 50% of farmsteads have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic footprint (regional average 40%), concentrated in the west of the county, from the Malverns to the Teme Valley;
- 18% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic footprint (regional average 16%).

Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day 37% have a listed building. These mostly comprise houses, with barns of 18th century and earlier date taking up the majority of working farm buildings that have been listed.

Landscape and Settlement Context

Worcestershire is now being mapped through Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLC), which will be completed by 2012. Worcestershire is predominantly a county of dispersed settlement, often with high densities of farmsteads and houses linked to an intricate network of winding lanes.

- 18% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 12%) which are a characteristic of the south east and central east of the county
- 17% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%)

Historic Farmstead Character

Worcestershire is now being mapped through Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLC), which will be completed by 2012. Worcestershire is predominantly a county of dispersed settlement, often with high densities of farmsteads and houses linked to an intricate network of winding lanes.

- 18% of farmsteads are located within villages (regional average 12%) which are a characteristic of the south east and central east of the county
- 17% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%)

Current Use

Across Worcestershire rates of conversion appear to be higher than the average across the West Midlands region. A higher tendency to convert farmsteads for residential use may be a consequence of the county's higher accessibility to the south-east and central conurbation. At present, 47.35% of surviving farmsteads have undergone some level of conversion. The propensity to use historic farmsteads for non-agricultural business use is also higher than the regional average.

The utilisation of historic farm property to serve directors of substantial business is lower than in neighbouring Warwickshire, but around the Malvern Hills the tendency is somewhat higher than that found amongst residents of historic farmsteads across the Region.

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1 THE CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project has mapped and interpreted the locations and characteristics of historic farmsteads, and their current use. Historic farmsteads, where the farmhouse and the working buildings are located, are integral to the rural landscape, its communities and economy. They display an immense diversity in their type, scale, form and use of materials, as well as differences in their survival as traditional groups. They developed in close relationship to their surrounding farmland, and as a result they make a varied contribution to the character of the landscape and to local distinctiveness. Their future, and in particular that of the traditional farm buildings is increasingly dependent on finding a use for which they were not originally intended. Through understanding the character, condition and present day role of historic farmsteads and their traditional working buildings, policy and delivery programmes can respond appropriately in supporting their sustainable use, conserving landscape character and realising economic benefits. This informed approach responds to the structural changes in the farming industry which have hastened the redundancy of traditional farm buildings.

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

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

2 HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN WORCESTERSHIRE

The mapping of farmsteads across the county of Worcestershire recorded 3703 farmsteads. It has in addition mapped 977 outfarms and field barns which were established away from the main stading, to the same method. Smallholding zones have also been identified.

The *Worcestershire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project*, will be available on the Council's website during winter 2010-11. <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/archaeology/information-and-advice/rural-historic-environment/farmstead-characterisation.aspx> The *Historic Landscape Character Assessment* will be available from autumn 2011. The *Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment* is also available at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/landscape-character-assessment.aspx

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

2.1 Landscape and Settlement Context

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

Worcestershire is now being mapped through Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLC), which will be completed by 2012. Worcestershire is predominantly a county of dispersed settlement, often with high densities of farmsteads in areas of woodland, common and heath and houses linked to an intricate network of winding lanes. Settlement-based farmsteads principally comprise:

- 18% of farmsteads which are located within villages (regional average 12%) which are a characteristic of the south east and central east of the county
- 17% are located within hamlets (regional average 12%)

Archetypal nucleated villages are a characteristic of the south east and central east of the county. In Worcestershire, however, the term 'village' doesn't necessarily conform to its predefined stereotype and can often refer to loose poly focal settlements.

Isolated farmsteads account for the remainder. Their distribution mostly reflects ancient patterns of dispersed settlement, but across large parts of the county it is clear that most reflect profound landscape change between the 14th and 17th centuries, as small villages were abandoned or shrank in size to individual farmsteads which were built in relationship to both shrunken settlements and newly-enclosed fields. This is a very significant development that underpins much of the distinctive character of the county and its vernacular architecture.

2.2 Historic Farmstead Character

Variations in the scale and arrangement of buildings within farmsteads reflect farm size, farming practice and the historic function of farmsteads, particularly to store and process harvested crops and shelter and manage animals. These result in different forms and scales of farmsteads which have been mapped and interpreted for the county and the West Midlands:

- *Courtyard plans* where the working buildings are arranged around a yard (87% for Worcestershire and 81% of all farmsteads recorded across the West Midlands) fall into two broad categories of loose

courtyard plans where the buildings are detached and loosely arranged and regular courtyard plans where the buildings are all or mostly interlinked and formally arranged.

- On *dispersed plans* (4.5% of the total for Worcestershire and 7% for the West Midlands) there is no focal yard area and the working buildings are dispersed within the boundary of the steading. These are concentrated in pastoral landscapes including areas close to common land for holding stock.
- The *smallest-scale farmsteads*, where the house and working buildings are often attached, generally represent the smallest farmsteads recorded in the Region and in Worcestershire are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads. They comprise 8.5% of farmsteads in Worcestershire and 12% of farmsteads in the West Midlands.

Very large scale farms had greater access to capital and are predominantly associated with larger scale, regular and re-organised piecemeal enclosure patterns. Medium to large-scale plans are predominant (54%) particularly in estate landscapes and across those areas with more productive soils where corn production was prevalent. These dominate in the south east, but across the remainder of the county there is a strong underpinning element of smaller scale farmsteads. There can be very strong variations, marked by contrasting farmstead and landscape types, in small areas. The smallest scale farmsteads (19%) are predominant in upland, wooded or common edge landscapes with small scale enclosure, including the parishes of Rock, more specifically in those areas with high levels of fruit production such as Buckridge, Wythall and Castlemorton.

Outfarms and field barns display strong localised patterns. Large outfarms are concentrated within the zones of large-scale farms, and field barns are apparent across the county but tend to cluster around the main settlement centres, with denser concentrations in the north of the county particularly in the dairying region, perhaps for sheltering cattle. These are generally not suitable for alternative use, and have been subject to high rates of loss. Over 72% of outfarms and field barns are characterised as lost or demolished. Concentrations are identifiable in those areas with high levels of fruit production, such as the Teme Valley and Pershore, and in those landscapes with nucleated settlement where farmsteads were sited away from their farmland.

Smallholdings survive in distinct zones around areas of common land that survived into the 20th century. They typically have no defined plan type, or comprise examples of the linear and other small-scale plans outlined above. They are predominantly concentrated in areas of fruit production in the west, north-west and northern areas of Worcestershire; notably in a cluster around the fringes of Wyre Forest with scattered examples located in small clearances within the forest. The Wyre examples are closely associated with the development of large-scale fruit production during the 19th century, although some smallholdings predate this

period and are more likely to have developed in relation to forest industries.

The very high proportion of farmsteads that have buildings of 17th century or earlier date indicates a corresponding level of rebuilding between the 15th and 17th centuries across most of the county, seen also in its domestic architecture. They are less common in those landscapes that have been subject to higher levels of estate-led reorganisation and the enlargement of fields in the 18th and 19th centuries, in the village farmlands of the south east and in the northern heaths and commons which were subject to enclosure and improvement in this period.

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

- There are some very rare surviving examples of 18th century and earlier cattle housing, comprising single-storey and storeyed timber-framed and stone structures, and also multi-functional combination barns. These resemble those identified elsewhere in the western borders of the region, extending into Wales.
- Farmsteads have cider houses and hop kilns, mostly of 19th century date but with some surviving evidence for earlier timber-frame and stone cores.
- The largest farms had developed in some of the broad vales by the 17th century, as testified by its domestic architecture and also extensive evidence for early timber-framed buildings embedded within the principal ranges of the large farmsteads which developed here in the later 18th and 19th centuries.
- Large estate farmsteads are intermixed with this inherited pattern of earlier farms, although there is a concentration of them around the Severn south of Worcester.

2.3 Historic Farmsteads Survival and Change

Over the 20th century working farms have required new infrastructure, particularly important in the post-1950 period being the construction of industrial sheds built (either within or to one side of the steading) to standardised forms. 47% of sites have sheds of this type, a figure that exceeds the total now remaining in agricultural use. The Herefordshire Plateau and Teme Valley have the largest proportion of farmsteads with large modern sheds (63% and 55% respectfully). The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills have the lowest proportion (33% and 45% respectfully). This suggests that in the post-1950 period a larger proportion of farmsteads remained in agricultural use in the Herefordshire Plateau and Teme Valley than in the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills.

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

8% of historic farmsteads have been lost (compared to 10% regionally). The expansion of urban areas appears to be the key factor influencing farmstead loss. For example in Redditch parish 42% of farmsteads have been lost; in Worcester parish this figure rises to 49%. The Arden and the Malverns, both areas with high densities of farmsteads, have the highest rates of loss due to higher numbers of farmsteads going out of agricultural use over the 20th century.

9% of recorded sites have only the farmhouse surviving (above the regional average of 6%). Over 2% of sites have been demolished and completely rebuilt (the regional average is 2%).

In the county 81% of farmstead sites have retained some or all of their working buildings, against a regional average of 82%, but this figures smoothes over a generally lower rate of survival:

- 13% of farmsteads have retained all of their historic footprint/ working buildings (regional average 26%);
- 50% of farmsteads have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic footprint (regional average 40%), concentrated in the west of the county, from the Malverns to the Teme Valley;
- 18% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic footprint (regional average 16%).

2.4 Assessing Significance

This understanding of the patterns of inherited character and change, and the products of this project (see 5, Further Information, below) can be used to inform future change, and determine the significance of farmsteads and their potential for enhancement through sustainable development. Significant farmsteads will have one or more of the following:

1. historic groups that contribute to the landscapes and settlements within which they developed;
2. legible historic groups, where the historic buildings can be seen and appreciated in relationship to each other and the yards and other open spaces within and around the farmstead;
3. historic buildings with little minimal change to their traditional form, or in some cases their importance as estate or industrial architecture;
4. locally characteristic building materials;
5. heritage assets, whether the farmstead or any buildings or archaeological sites within it is included on a local list, contributes to a conservation area or is a designated national asset (a listed building or scheduled ancient monument). Of the farmsteads that survive to the present day 37% have a listed building. These reflect high levels of 17th century and earlier rebuilding across most of the county, with lower densities of houses of this date in the south east and the northern sandstone plateau. Agricultural improvement in the 18th century is reflected in higher numbers of listed buildings to the north of the county.

3 THE USE OF HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN WORCESTERSHIRE

Professor Peter Bibby and Paul Brindley of the Department for Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield have analysed the farmsteads mapping data collected, matched against postal and business information, to reveal the present social and economic role of historic farmsteads. This is fully reported on in the *Farmstead Use Report* cited above and summarised in Part 4 of The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: Summary Report.

This work has shown how, through continued agricultural and new uses, farmsteads have significant potential to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities away from market towns and other rural centres:

- 31% of historic farmsteads remain in agricultural use with minimal diversification.
- The incidence of farmsteads providing industrial, commercial or retail facilities is very small (5%). An additional 5% combine residential use with industrial, commercial or retail facilities.
- Residential use, including sites where some or all of the working buildings have been converted into housing, accounts for the remainder. The extent of business activity associated with farmsteads in residential use, as indicated by their role as bases of limited companies and substantial directorships, is higher in historic farmsteads than in other dwellings *regardless of location*.

Across Worcestershire rates of conversion appear to be higher than the average across the West Midlands region. A higher tendency to convert farmsteads for residential use may be a consequence of the county's higher accessibility to the south-east and central conurbation. At present, 47.35% of surviving farmsteads have undergone some level of conversion. The propensity to use historic farmsteads for non-agricultural business use is also higher than the regional average.

The utilisation of historic farm property to serve directors of substantial business is lower than in neighbouring Warwickshire, but around the Malvern Hills the tendency is somewhat higher than that found amongst residents of historic farmsteads across the Region.

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

this survey established that 60.7% of listed working buildings had been converted to non-farming uses in Bromsgrove district (57.1 to residential), 38.3% in the Malverns (36.1 to residential) and 40% for Wychavon (37.1% to residential): the sample for the other local authority areas were too small for meaningful interpretation.

4 KEY ISSUES FOR WORCESTERSHIRE

Policy and Land Use Implications for the West Midlands as a whole, and recommendations and next steps for English Heritage to develop with its partners, are outlined in *The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: Summary Report*.

In addition to these the following issues are of particular relevance to Worcestershire:

- There need to be mechanisms for using the evidence base so that there can be material consideration of sites that make a strong contribution to local character in planning, so that future change can work with and capitalise upon this inherited character.
- The HER dataset created as a result of this project will be used to help inform change and deepen an understanding of the historic character of distinct areas and places across the county, in accordance with PPS 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment). The continued relevance of the project will depend upon it being used by professionals, researchers and the public.
- The project has highlighted the need to use the farmsteads data to inform any future follow-on work, and integrate the results of recording of farmsteads and other historic buildings into the HER. The HER should examine methods of incorporating this data into the HER in a manner that ensures that the results of any recording – no matter how basic – are adequately archived.

Fruit production remains a characteristic economic activity on farms and smallholdings in those areas where orchards have been a traditional form of land-use; although it should be stressed that the scale of production is considerably smaller today when compared with the late 19th century. Recent initiatives and projects (such as the HLF led Grow With Wyre, Landscape Partnership Scheme) have been set up to encourage the development of small-scale orchards aimed at producing fruit for local markets through a co-operative approach.

Initiatives such as Environmental Stewardship and even the emerging Transition movement should contribute towards the drive to promote the restoration and re-use of apple stores and other outbuildings, given they represent an established infrastructure and opportunity to further develop fruit production and storage for distribution to local markets based on the *Grow With*

Wyre model. The project has demonstrated that a substantial infrastructure of apple houses survive in Worcestershire.

With the Regional Spatial Strategy due to be revoked in favour of an emerging *localism* agenda, the focus of new development may shift away from strategic sites and lead to smaller-scale developments that will be aimed at servicing the capacity needs of rural settlements. Farmsteads located in or close to dispersed settlements in Worcestershire may attract such developments, given their existing stock of available buildings for conversion and the space to develop new buildings along side those in existence. The project provides a critical resource to develop planning guidelines and controls that should aim to deliver well-informed, good design that respects farmstead character within the local landscape context. This should help to ensure that local distinctiveness and identity is retained as a fundamental constituent of rural development.

5 FURTHER INFORMATION ON PROJECT REPORTS

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

West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project Summary Report This summarises the overall results of the Project. It introduces the background to the project, and the national and economic context. The historic character of farmsteads is then summarised, followed by an analysis of the patterns of use and the policy and land use implications. Recommendations and next steps for further work are then outlined.

Farmstead Character Statements: These comprise illustrated guidance in the form of:

- A **Regional Statement** which outlines the character of farmsteads across the West Midlands, summarising their historical development, landscape and settlement context and the key farmstead and building types.
- **Character Area Statements** which deepen this guidance and help the reader identify the key characteristics for the National Character Areas that fall within or astride the West Midlands.

A Planning Tools Report: Tools for informing change at an area and site-based scale, in the form of an Area Assessment Framework for use in the development of planning guidance and land management, and a **Site Assessment Framework** for identifying key issues at the earliest possible stage when adaptive reuse or new build are being considered in the context of a historic farmstead.

A Farmstead Use Report which provides a detailed statistical analysis of the patterns of farmstead use across the West Midlands, and their social and economic role.

County Reports (including the Central Conurbation) which firstly comprise Summary Reports that draw together key findings relating to the scale, survival and use of farmsteads for individual county and local authorities, and the relevant National Character Areas. These provide links to detailed **Farmsteads Characterisation Reports** that present a detailed analysis of the results of the farmsteads mapping held on each relevant Historic Environment Record.

The Worcestershire report is available for downloading from:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/archaeology/information-and-advice/rural-historic-environment/farmstead-characterisation.aspx>



Large-scale farmsteads, sometimes to an industrial scale, developed within the arable farming vales of the county, as here in the Teme Valley (© Bob Edwards, Forum Heritage Services).



Small to medium-scale farmsteads also developed in piecemeal fashion on the edge of the Malverns (as here) and along the roads and tracks of the county's anciently-settled landscape. They retain high numbers of 17th century and earlier houses and working buildings (© English Heritage).

The plan overleaf shows the broad categories of farmstead types that have been mapped across the county and the West Midlands. The illustrated Farmstead Character Statements for the region and the 26 National Character Areas within and adjoining it provide fuller guidance on their landscape and settlement context, and the range of farmstead and building types that are likely to be encountered.

Courtyard plan farmsteads subdivide into:

a-d) Loose Courtyard farmsteads which have buildings loosely arranged around one (a) or more sides of a yard. Those with buildings to one side of the yard are typically the smallest in scale.

e-j) Regular Courtyard farmsteads which consist of linked ranges, formally arranged around one or more yards, and subdivide into:

- e) L-plan, typically small-medium in scale, where additional buildings (if present) are typically small in scale
- f) U-shaped plans which are large-scale farmsteads where one side has been left open
- g and h) comprising large to very large scale farmsteads where the buildings are arranged as an F-, E-, T-, H- or Z-shaped plan around two or more cattle yards
- i) Full Regular courtyard farmsteads, typically very large in scale, where the buildings are arranged around all four sides of the yard
- j) Multi-Yard plans which are typically the largest in scale of the regular courtyard plan types, comprising farmsteads with multiple yards which are grouped together and regularly arranged.

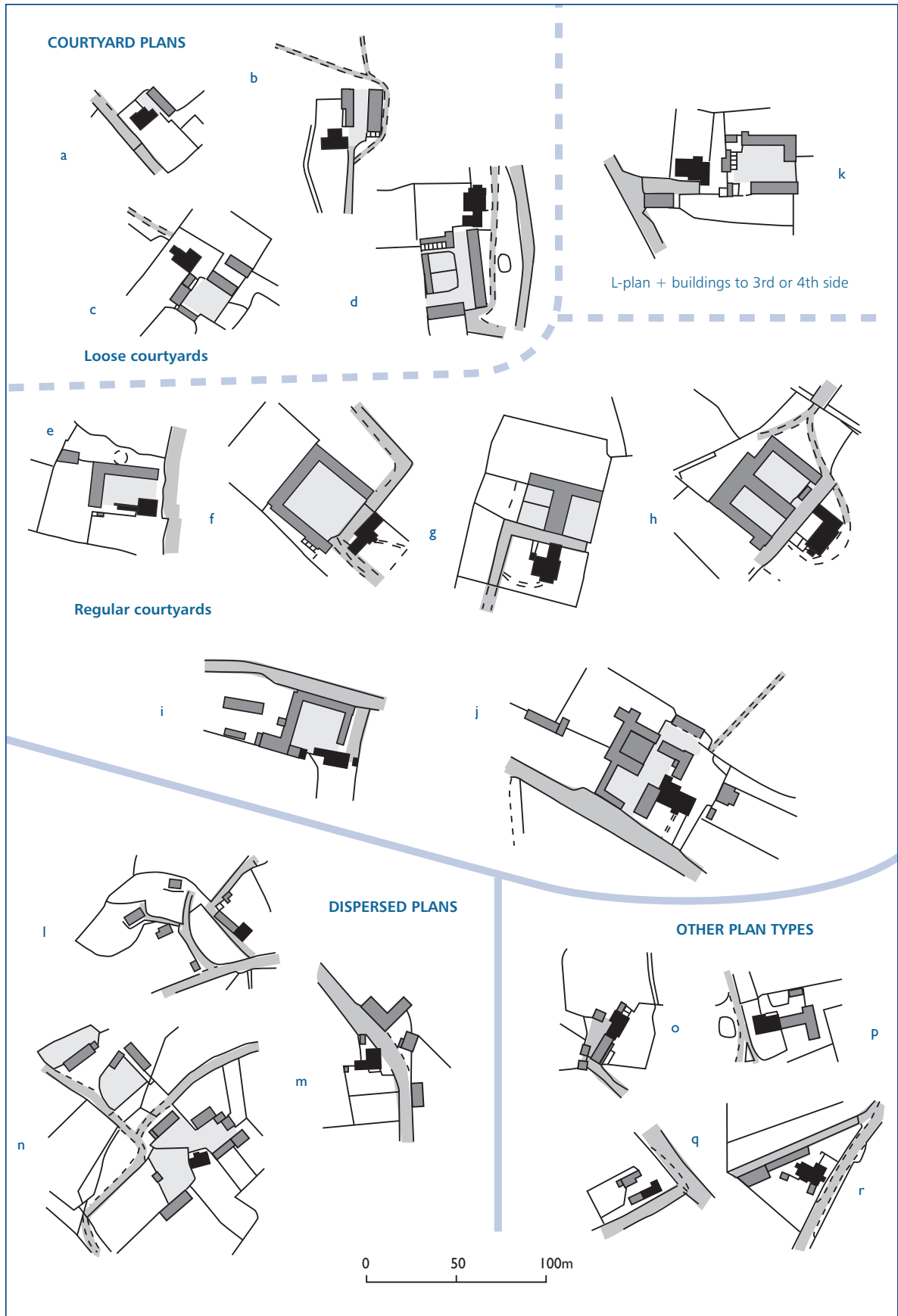
k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides which are generally large to very large in scale.

Dispersed plans subdivide into:

- l) Dispersed clusters where the working buildings are set within the boundary of the steading, and typically the smallest in scale in this category.
- m) Dispersed driftways which are dominated by the routeways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another. These are mostly small-medium in scale.
- n) Dispersed multi-yards which are large-scale farmsteads containing two or more detached yards, often with other scattered buildings.

The **other plan types** generally represent the smallest farmsteads recorded in the region and are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads:

- o) Linear farmsteads where the houses and working buildings are attached and in-line.
- p) L-plan (attached), which is a linear farmstead, extended or planned with additional working buildings to make an L-shaped range.
- q) Parallel plans where the working buildings are placed opposite and parallel to the house and attached working buildings with a narrow area between. They have often developed from linear farmsteads.
- r) Row plans, often medium as well as small in scale, where the working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row.



Annexe 1 Local Authority Areas

Bromsgrove

- High rates of loss to farmstead sites and working buildings.
- Current use of historic farmsteads within the district is similar to regional expectations but with a lower proportion remaining in agriculture, a slightly higher proportion in residential use and a higher proportion converted for B1, B2 and B8 uses
- Residents hold 35 directorships for every 100 historic farmsteads.

Malvern Hills

- High rates of survival with 85.6% of historic farmstead sites retaining some working buildings
- Current use of historic farmsteads differs slightly from regional expectations with a lower proportion continuing in agricultural use and a higher proportion with business uses ancillary to residential use or B1, B2 and B8 uses.

Wychavon

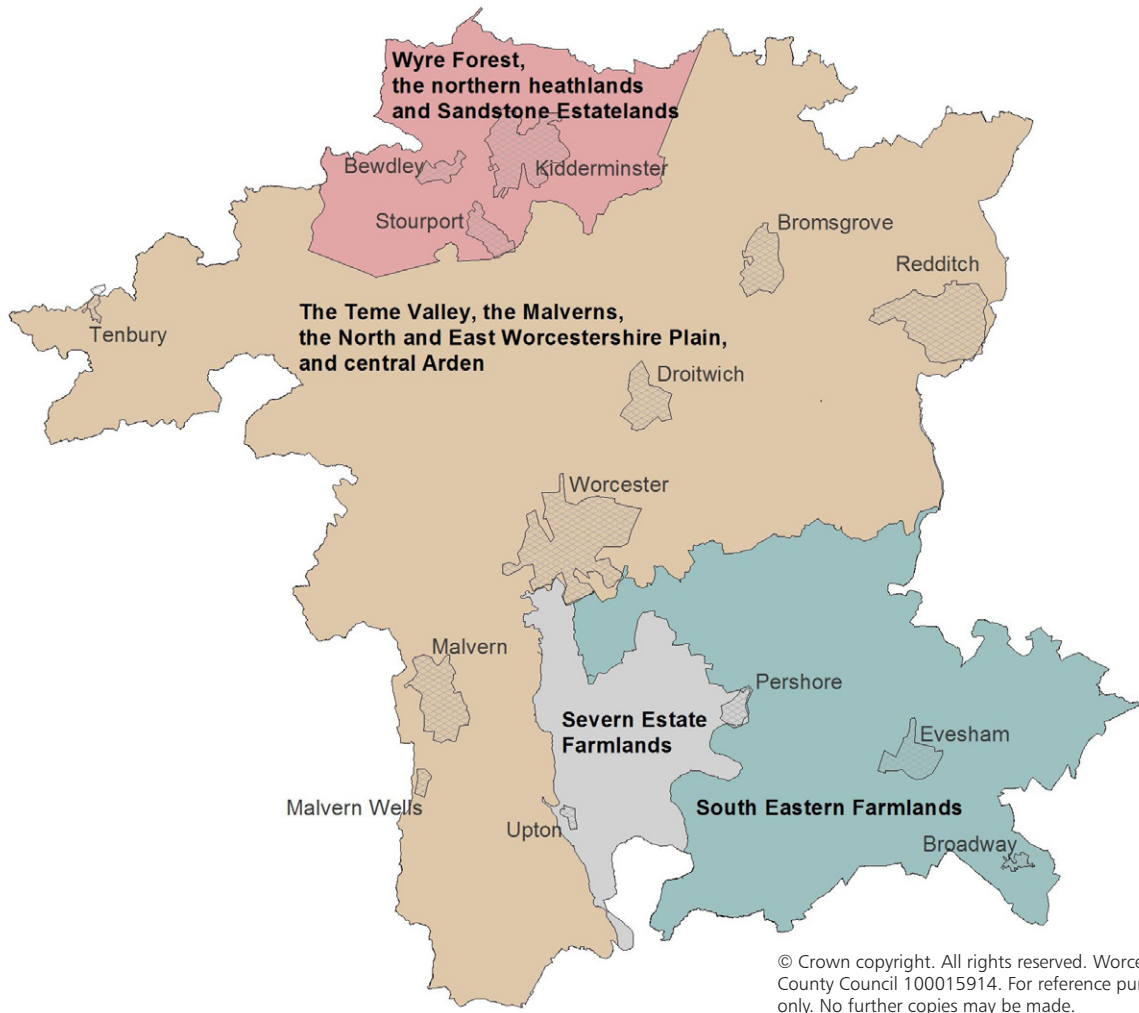
- High rates of survival with 82.5% of historic farmstead sites retaining some working buildings
- The pattern of current use is similar to regional expectations but with a lower proportion in agricultural use and a higher proportion in residential use
- Residents hold 40 directorships for every 100 historic farmsteads.

Wyre Forest

- High rates of survival with 79.5% of historic farmstead sites retaining some working buildings
- The pattern of current use of is similar to regional expectations but with a lower proportion in agricultural use and a higher proportion in residential use
- Residents hold 60 directorships for every 100 historic farmsteads.

Annexe 2 Farmstead Character Area Summaries

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



Wyre Forest and the northern heathlands/ Sandstone Estatelands

Much of the historic character of this area results from 18th century and later change relating to the central conurbation. Small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings developed around the Wyre Forest, spurred by the development of rural industries (especially coal mining) from the 17th century and fruit growing, which boomed during the 19th century. Very few of these remain. The present character of farmsteads across the remainder of the area mostly results from 19th century rebuilding, for the supply of produce to Kidderminster, Stourbridge and the Black Country conurbation, the predominant pattern of regular enclosure resulting from the taking in of commons, woodland and reorganisation of the farmland. There are fragments of the earlier pattern of common-edge settlement and smaller farms, and there are very high levels of residential use and conversion of working buildings in this area.

The Teme Valley, the Malverns, the North and East Worcestershire Plain, and central Arden

An area of mixed farming combined with hops (concentrated in the Teme Valley) and fruit growing, where farmland was intermixed with scattered woodland and large areas of common land. There are high numbers of 18th century and earlier houses and working buildings, relating to medieval and later patterns of dispersed settlement which mostly relates to intricate networks of lanes. These include moated sites of the 14th century and earlier that are concentrated in a north/south band west of the Severn and more broadly throughout the former Feckenham Forest area in central eastern and north east Worcestershire.

Farming settlements or hamlets usually comprise dispersed rows or loosely clustered groupings of farmsteads and houses, many settlements having large-scale farmsteads which developed on enlarged plots from the medieval period. There is also extensive evidence for shrunken settlement which in the medieval

period related to extensive areas of both strip fields and common land. Areas with irregular fields intermixed with ancient woodland are associated with wayside cottages, many of the 18th century or earlier date, and have the highest densities of dispersed farmsteads, often clustered close together and dating from the medieval period. Such settlements are characterised by loose clusters of farmsteads that dominate the character of settlement, with just a few wayside cottages interspersed with the farmsteads.

Areas with lower densities typically result from the amalgamation of farms and the activities of estates, this being reflected in larger-scale farmsteads and fields, with scattered outfarms and 19th century farm workers' cottages. Larger villages typically result from 19th century and later expansion. Large to medium-scale courtyard plan farmsteads, with multiple yards or buildings to all sides of the main yard, developed in relationship to larger-scale enclosures and are intermixed with a strong underpinning number of small-scale farms (notably linear and L-plan (house attached), smaller loose courtyard, L plans and dispersed clusters) and smallholdings which developed around the Malverns, in patches of small-scale irregular enclosure, around large commons which remained into the 20th century (for example in the Castlemorton area) and the hills of the Teme Valley. Within and extending from the Teme Valley towards Worcester are dispersed-plan farmsteads which probably relate to ancient driftways and areas for moving and holding stock.

Severn Estate Farmlands

Medium-low densities of medium to large-scale farmsteads based on cereal production and fatstock, many of which were developed as the strip fields and meadows relating to villages were enclosed. There is also extensive evidence for shrunken settlements in this area and a distribution of moated sites, as well as extensive evidence for Romano-British and earlier settlement along the fertile and free-draining terraces of the Severn. The activities of estates are reflected in the presence of estate cottages, extensive areas of planned or regular enclosure, farmsteads built to a consistent architectural style and planted woodland often set within relic designed landscape that still form the dominant character across large parts of this area. This is also a transitional landscape, marking a boundary established by the 11th century between village-based England to the east and large areas of western England where much settlement is dispersed.

South Eastern Farmlands

This has long been an arable farming area, where orchards for fruit and cider developed from the 17th century and market gardening for the Birmingham market in the 19th century. Farmsteads were sited within villages from the medieval period, the low densities of dispersed settlement resulting from the relocation of farmsteads as the large open fields which extended across much of the farmed landscape were enclosed. This was a process that sometimes was not completed until the 19th century. As a result 18th century and earlier houses, and some working buildings, are concentrated within villages: these include some large-scale farmsteads, typically on the edge of villages or on amalgamated plots within them. Isolated farmsteads are typically large scale, and associated with large-scale piecemeal or regular enclosure and outfarms. 18th century farmsteads are also notable for their disassociation with shrunken or moated settlements, whereas there is a strong correlation between these settlement types and 17th and 19th century farmsteads. 17th century or earlier houses are concentrated in the villages, where houses were often attached in a single range to barns and other buildings, and in areas of earlier dispersed settlement and enclosure around Bredon Hill to the west, in the scarp of the Cotswolds to the east and around the Lenches to the north. Small detached outbuildings distinguished market gardening areas in the 19th and 20th centuries, but most of these have been demolished.

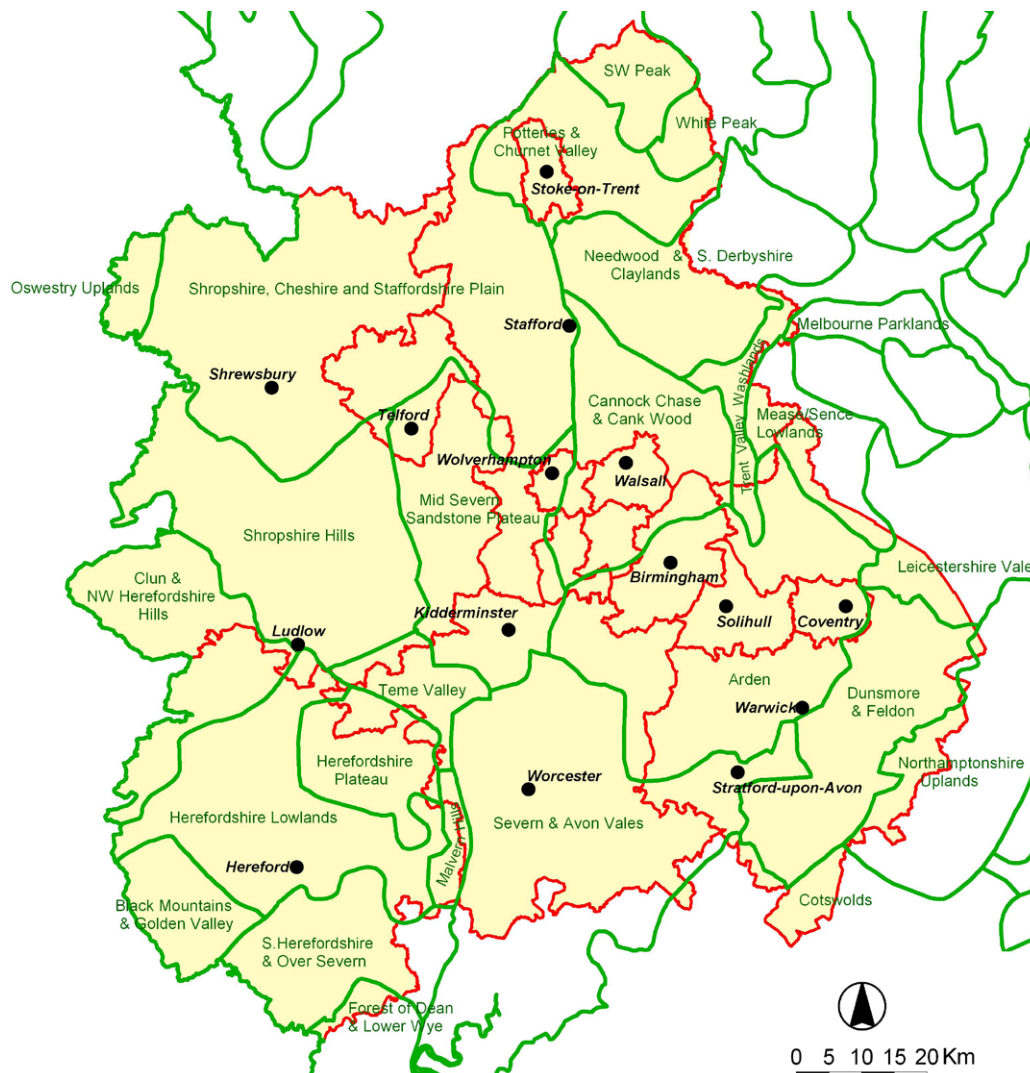
Annexe 3 National Character Area Summaries

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

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

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

- 66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau
- 97 Arden
- 100 Herefordshire Lowlands
- 101 Herefordshire Plateau
- 102 Teme Valley
- 103 Malverns
- 106 Severn and Avon Vales
- 107 Cotswolds



97 Arden

Character

- High to very high levels of dispersed settlement, with 12.4% of farmsteads in hamlets and 8.6% in villages.
- Medium-high density of farmsteads in the landscape, lessening in the areas from the Avon Valley to Coventry to the south.
- Large-scale farmsteads (38.2%) predominant with low numbers of very small-scale (11.7%) and small to medium (25.6%) and very large-scale (19.8%) farmsteads reflecting a strong degree of local variation in farm and field size.

Survival

- Medium rate of survival – high rates of loss (21%) around expanding towns, but over 56% of historic

farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- Above 20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 40-50% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- High economic mass relates to a low proportion of farmsteads in agricultural use (26%) with two-thirds of farmsteads in residential use with high participation in small business (7% of farmsteads are company registered offices) and a high participation in substantial firms at director level (more than 40 directorships per hundred households) and a relatively high proportion of farmsteads in non residential use outside of agriculture (7%).

66 Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau

Character

- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with 11.1% of farmsteads in villages and 17.7% in hamlets.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, increasing in some areas of woodland with very high densities to east of Wyre Forest and to south of Kidderminster.
- Predominant pattern of large to very large-scale plans (34.3 and 28.4%) concentrated in the estatelands of the north, but smaller to south (very small around Wyre Forest) and to west of Severn.

Survival

- Medium rate of survival, with 13% of historic farmsteads lost but 60% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 15-20% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and above 50% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- A very high proportion of historic farmsteads have been converted to residential use (71%) with high resident participation at director level in substantial businesses (39 directorships per hundred farmsteads).

100 Herefordshire Lowlands

Character

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

Survival

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

Patterns of Use

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

101 Herefordshire Plateau

Character

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

Survival

- High to very high rates of survival, particularly to east, with 61% of historic farmsteads retain more than half of their historic footprint.

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

Patterns of Use

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

102 Teme Valley

Character

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

Survival

- High rates of survival, with 70% retaining more than half of their historic footprint
- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious

- signs of structural disrepair, and 20-30% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

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

103 Malvern Hills

Character

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

Survival

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

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

Patterns of Use

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

106 Severn and Avon Vales

Character

- Contrasting area with high to very high densities of dispersed settlement to west and north, and strongly nucleated settlement to south east.
- Strong pattern of nucleated settlement, with 23.2% of farmsteads in villages and 13.8% in hamlets.
- Medium density of farmsteads in the landscape, in patches of high density to west of Severn and to north.
- Small to medium-scale (27.4%) and larger-scale (33.9%) farmsteads predominant, interspersed significant numbers of very small (16%) and very large-scale (20.8%) farmsteads.

Survival

- Medium rates of survival, with 64% retaining more than half of their historic footprint.
- 10-15% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Although the proportion of farmsteads converted to residential use (66%) is little higher than the regional average, participation of residents in business activity (whether farm based or as directors of substantial companies) is relatively high - with particularly high levels of engagement at farmsteads easily accessible to substantial urban areas.

107 Cotswolds

Character

- Very strong pattern of nucleated settlement within Warwickshire, with 41% of farmsteads in villages and 2.6% in hamlets.
- Medium-low density of farmsteads in the landscape.
- Broad range of farmstead scales, small/medium to large-scale (24.7 and 32.4%) being the most common.

Survival

- High rate of survival within Warwickshire, with 73% of historic farmsteads retaining more than half of their historic footprint.

- 0.5-5% of listed working buildings have obvious signs of structural disrepair, and 30-40% with visible adaptive reuse.

Patterns of Use

- Within Warwickshire this area is characterised by low economic mass with two-thirds of historic farmsteads in residential use but a relatively high proportion (7%) in non-residential use other than agriculture.

Acknowledgements for maps and plans

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