



Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

Northumberland Sandstone Hills

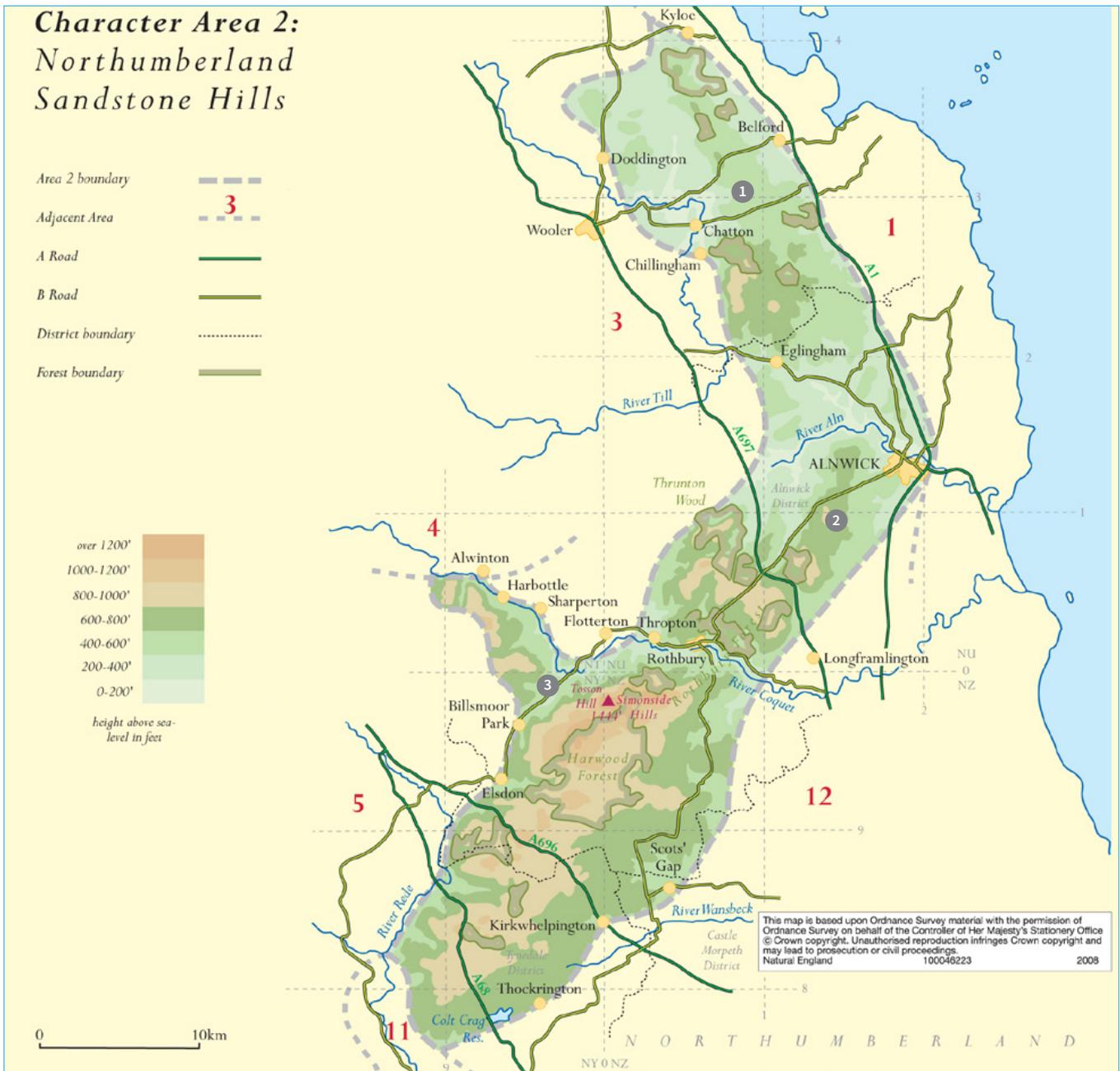
NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 2



Introduction

The Farmstead and Landscape Statements will help you to identify the historic character of traditional farmsteads and their buildings in all parts of England, and how they relate to their surrounding landscapes. They are now available for all of England's National Character Areas (NCAs), and should be read in conjunction with the NCA profiles which have been produced by Natural England using a wide range of environmental information (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>). Each Farmstead and Landscape Statement is supported by Historic England's advice on farm buildings (<https://historicengland.org.uk/farmbuildings>), which provides links to the *National Farmsteads Character Statement*, national guidance on **Farm Building Types** and a fully-sourced summary in the *Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statements*. It also forms part of additional research on historic landscapes, including the mapping of farmsteads in some parts of England (see <https://historicengland.org.uk/characterisation>).

Front cover: View north from West Lyham towards South Hazelrigg in Chatton, showing the mid-19th-century regular U-plan farmstead with its central mixing barn, a small-scale roadside farmstead (Spylaw) and, in the distance, a very large courtyard farm dating from around 1828 at Hazelrigg, which replaced a farm hamlet.
Photo © Historic England 28567/ 054



This map shows the Northumberland Sandstone Hills, with the numbers of neighbouring National Character Areas around it. It subdivides into the following areas:

1. The estate farmlands around and north of Chillingham, where the largest fields and farmsteads have developed.
2. The enclosed farmlands, where estate farmland (including the core of the Alnwick estate) is more frequently intermixed with blocks of moorland (much subject to late 18th- and 19th-century enclosure) extending from this area to the River Coquet. The largest farms are concentrated along the eastern fringe of this area, adjacent to the Coastal Plain (Area 1).
3. The Harbottle and Simonside Hills and the surrounding farmland south of the Coquet, where dispersed settlement is predominant and smaller-scale farmsteads are more commonplace.

Summary

See the National Farmsteads Character Statement for a short introduction to the headings below, including maps and tables.

The Northumberland Sandstone Hills extend in a wide, north–south arc across the county, separating the vales of the Cheviot Fringe from the Northumberland coastal plain. A plateau landscape, covered mainly by moorland and improved pasture, this small Character Area also includes a wide range of other landscape features. Less than 1% is urban area and almost 15% is forested. Of the area, 15% (the Simonside Hills in the south) lies in the Northumberland National Park.

Historic character

- Farmsteads mostly relate to regular enclosure by dry stone walls of the later 18th to 19th centuries, with larger fields and farmsteads developing on some of the arable estate lands; some field boundaries remain from earlier piecemeal enclosure.
- Farmsteads are very large in a national context, particularly in the north and east of the area, and built around one or more yards for cattle. They are mostly regular courtyards built to U-, L- and E-plans, with a fragmentary survival of earlier buildings, set within landscapes reorganised with regular enclosure. There is a greater diversity of scales to the south of the Coquet River, set within landscapes with earlier, dispersed settlement and piecemeal enclosure.
- The isolated farmsteads and farm hamlets – marked by one or two large farmsteads with workers’ housing and often a grieve’s (manager’s) house – which dominate this area’s settlement pattern, result from relatively recent change in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Around them are the earthworks of shrunken and abandoned settlements, and ridge and furrow.
- The 19th-century rebuilding of farmsteads (in some rare instances with fabric of the late 18th century), mostly in sandstone, was commonly completed in two phases that comprised a set of buildings and yards focused on the processing and production of corn and manure from yard-fed cattle, followed by extension, and sometimes complete remodelling from the 1860s, for the fattening of cattle.

Significance

- There is exceptionally high survival of traditional farmsteads, mostly built or rebuilt in the 19th century and including many built to an industrial scale, within a landscape which retains visible evidence for land use and settlement from the prehistoric period.
- The large scale of mechanised courtyard farmsteads in their landscape context, together with the Cheviot Fringe and coastal plain in

Northumberland, comprise a remarkable testament to late 18th- and 19th-century agricultural improvement. The transformation of such an extensive landscape is highly significant in a national context, matched only by the comparable scale of farmsteads and their enclosed landscapes in the Lothians and other parts of Scotland.

- Bastles, although less numerous in this area than further west, are highly significant in a national context, for they reflect the unsettled history of the Anglo-Scottish borders. The yards and surrounding boundaries – dry

stone walls often representing the rebuilding or realignment of turf boundaries – can retain high archaeological potential for the development of bastles in their landscape context.

Present and future issues

- The rate of redundancy for traditional farm buildings has accelerated in recent years, as in other upland and upland fringe areas of England, due to the replacement of stalling by loose housing and the replacement of hay production by mechanised bulk handling.
- The Photo Image Project (2006) recorded an above-average percentage (11.1%, the

national average being 7.5%) of listed working buildings as showing obvious signs of structural disrepair. The sample was too small to note the percentage of conversion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (the national average being 32%).

Historic development

- The area was dominated by arable cultivation in the 12th to 14th centuries, and then mixed farming with an emphasis on the rearing, and sometimes fattening, of cattle and sheep for their meat and wool. Land was held by large estates, which in this period directly managed stock farms in the dales.
- Some villages were defended from Scottish raids with a 13th- to 15th-century tower or 'peel', but some continued to be built into the 16th century in response to this threat and that of reiving clans along the Anglo-Scottish borders. Defensible bastles, where the lower floor was used to house animals and the upper floor for domestic use, were most commonly built in the late 16th and 17th centuries but, with the exception of Upper Coquetdale and Redesdale, they are not as numerous as in the more unsettled Cheviots (Area 4) and the Border Moors and Forests (Area 5).
- The Union of the Crowns in 1603 paved the way for more settled border conditions, including an increase in the droving trade in cattle from Scotland and improvements in pasture and arable production by estates, some derived from fortified predecessors. Bastles continued to be built into the 17th

century, as the threat from reiving families and uncertainty continued (notably with the Civil War), and often land continued to be farmed in common and tenants' holdings lay intermixed in strip fields into the 18th century.

- From the late 18th century, an increase in arable, especially wheat, was sustained by the application of lime and farmyard manure, the folding of sheep in the fields and crop rotations using turnips, which were well suited to the deep fertile soils of this area. This followed or was accompanied by the rationalisation and enlargement of farm holdings.
- A decline in the growing of wheat from the 1870s was accompanied by an increased emphasis on the rearing and sometimes fattening of yard-fed cattle and where rail communications suited the production of milk for export (for example from the 1880s on the Wallington estate).
- Country houses (eg Alnwick, Chillingham and Wallington) and castles with extensive estates and parkland developed in this area, many sustained by industrial wealth in the later 18th and 19th centuries.

- Enclosure of communal townfields and of formerly extensive common pasture on the hills and moors was driven by landlords. As elsewhere in estate-dominated Northumberland, a first phase of the 16th to 18th centuries was followed by often total reorganisation and the final phase of enclosure in the late 18th and 19th centuries, which occurred in tandem with the reorganisation of many settlements and the appearance of large farmsteads with workers' housing.
- Many estates were in the forefront of agricultural improvement; the architect Daniel Garrett drew plans for farmsteads in the 1740s, and David Stephenson and John Green designed new farmsteads for the Duke of Northumberland's Alnwick estate between 1805 and 1833.
- Coal mining developed as a significant activity across the sandstone moorlands in the 18th and 19th centuries. There were also some areas of local industrial activity from the medieval period, such as iron working, coal mining and watermills in the tributary valley of the Grasslees.
- Most of the area is now devoted to permanent pasture for rearing livestock, but arable exploitation is likely to increase in the future.



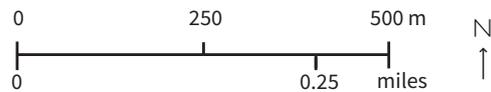
Two farmsteads for housing cattle, one a linear range and to the left an L-plan range, built at the junction of moorland and farmland (note the rig cultivation in the foreground) at Landshott in the west of the area. The small scale of these farmsteads is typical of upland farms in the north-east of England, which grazed large flocks of sheep for fattening on the richer farmland to the east. Paddocks close to the farmsteads were used for sorting sheep. Photo © Historic England 28562/ 066



Maps are based on 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey maps, which show farmsteads after the last major phase in the building of traditional farmsteads in England. © Crown Copyright [and database rights] 2020. OS 100024900

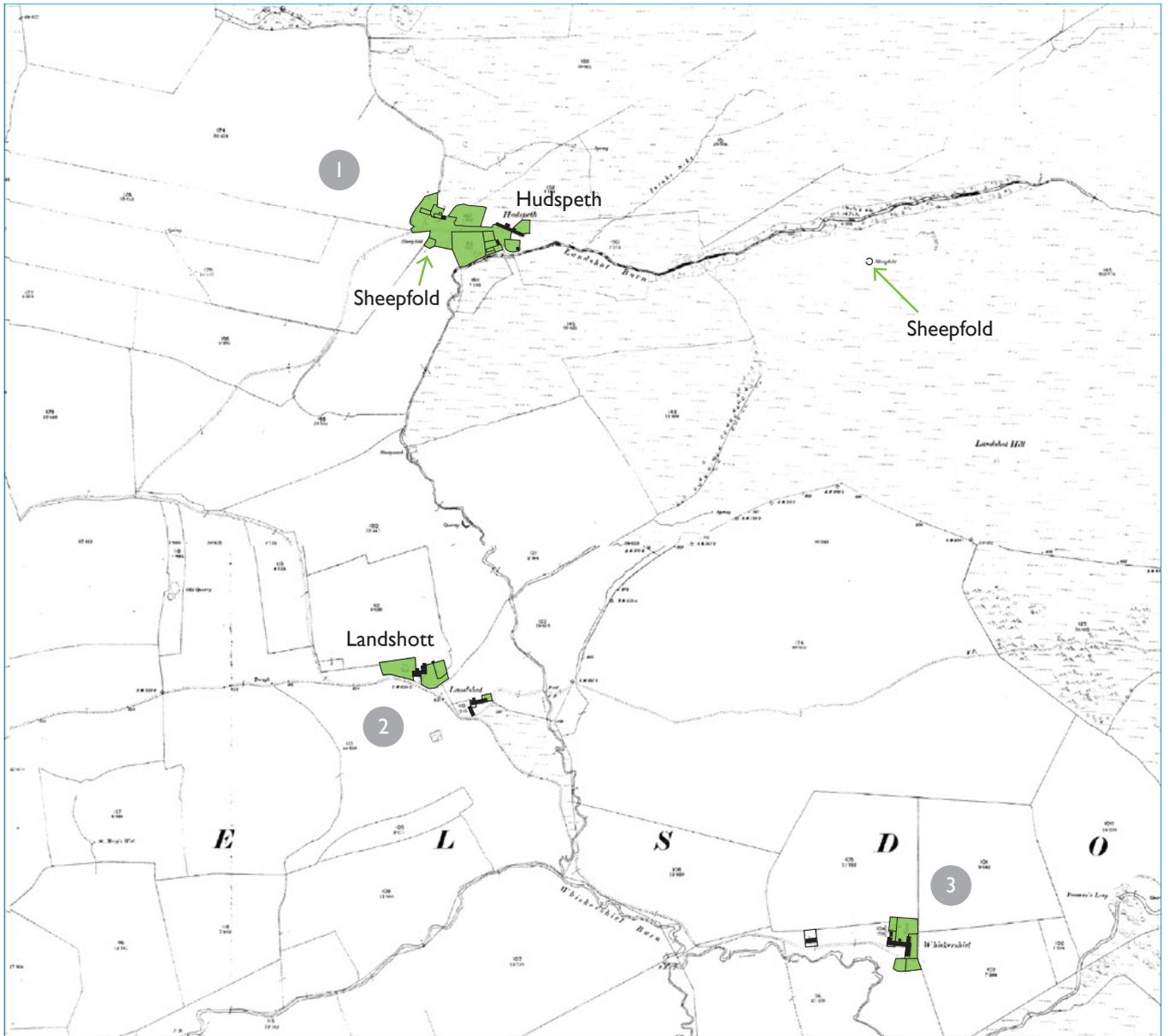


Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.



Chatton

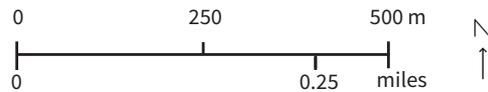
Very clear from this map are the large-scale, regular courtyard farmsteads which in this area are set in a landscape of regular enclosure boundaries. They were rebuilt in the mid-19th century, to machine-process crops and house cattle for fattening. Also visible are mill ponds, as the farmsteads were powered by water. To the east (right of map) is an earlier, linear farmstead, to the west of which are farm cottages and smaller allotments. Clearly visible are the outlines of earlier strip boundaries, showing that the reorganisation of fields in the 19th century has retained traces of the medieval strip fields.



Maps are based on 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey maps, which show farmsteads after the last major phase in the building of traditional farmsteads in England. © Crown Copyright [and database rights] 2020. OS 100024900



Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.



Elsdon

This landscape around Landshott Hill is located to the east of Elsdon, a village which continued to develop into the 19th century due to its importance on the junction of significant routeways. Many of the enclosures, although substantially reorganised in the 19th century, retain the outlines of medieval strip fields in their curved profiles. The linear farmstead at Hudspeth (1), and its enclosures for sheep and cattle, lies south of a shrunken medieval settlement. Landshott (2) and the medieval shieling site of Whiskershiel (3), located at the core of a radial pattern of regular fields. L-plan farmsteads are typical of the upland fringes, with the houses attached or integral to the main range of working buildings.

Landscape and settlement

- The present pattern of dispersed settlement, particularly in the north and east, with isolated farmsteads and farm hamlets, dates from when the landscape was hugely altered, re-organised and re-distributed in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Farmsteads relate to large fields with blocks of conifer plantation. There are some remains, in the form of earthworks and more rarely buildings, of the village-based settlements which preceded these changes.
- The thin sandy soils of the moors, which result from Neolithic and Bronze Age land clearance to provide grazing land, have for centuries been utilised by surrounding communities for summer grazing, with heather and bracken cut for fuel, bedding, roofing and fodder. Extensive prehistoric settlement and ritual remains are concentrated in the moors, including 'cup and ring' marked rocks, Bronze Age burial and field clearance cairns and Iron Age (including Romano-British) enclosed farmsteads: the latter probably remained in use long after the end of Roman occupation.
- There are also remains of shieling grounds and upland grazing pastures (hopes) on the higher ground, the more accessible of these developing as farmsteads from the medieval period.
- The summits and upper slopes of the moorland were used as hunting chase and common pasture in the medieval period, with some parks created for deer. Rothbury Forest and other upland areas were enclosed as private land under Parliamentary Acts in the early 19th century, and apportioned for improved and semi-improved pasture. The hills are now dominated by 20th-century coniferous plantations and surrounded by late 19th- and 20th-century fields.
- Village-based settlement and the market towns of Rothbury and Alnwick were established by the 12th century. Earthwork remains of villages and hamlets suggest that medieval settlement – subject to shrinkage and desertion from the 14th century – was in the 12th and 13th centuries quite extensive to the south and east of the main plateau.
- A high number of farmsteads and related housing for farm workers also dates from the contraction of villages and the reorganisation of holdings in the 17th and 18th centuries, usually culminating in a final phase of enclosure and the creation of farm hamlets out of these villages in the decades around 1800.
- To the south of the Coquet River, this picture is complicated by the appearance of more isolated farmsteads, which either originated as seasonal shielings or as settlements and individual farmsteads carved out of moorland and common. Other farmsteads developed as part of a pattern of dispersed settlement which farmed productive land for corn and hay with access to blocks of common land. Examples of nucleated settlements which developed at significant strategic points are Harbottle, which developed as a market centre around the 12th-century castle, and Elsdon which prospered on the confluence of drovers' roads from Scotland.
- The farming landscape is dominated by a mix of piecemeal and regular enclosure from medieval strip fields, common land and moorland. Piecemeal enclosure which has retained the sinuous boundaries of medieval strip fields is most strongly associated with the scarps of the Sandstone Hills (for example around Alnwick), regular enclosure being especially dominant north of Rothbury.
- Piecemeal and small areas of ancient irregular enclosure, relating to earlier dispersed settlement, is more common south of the Coquet River.
- Blocks of conifer plantation and thin shelter belts reflect estate-based landscape management of the late 19th and early 20th century. Sandstone rubble walls are characteristic of the late 18th- and early 19th-century enclosure in moorland areas, with hedgerows to the lower slopes.

Farmstead and building types

The area's late 18th- and 19th-century farmsteads largely swept away earlier generations of smaller, single-storey (and often thatched) buildings. The earliest buildings on farmsteads are typically the farmhouses, some of which in this area are early 18th-century cross-passage houses with the chimney stack backing onto the passage. The 19th-century rebuilding of farmsteads (in some rare instances with fabric of the late 18th century) was commonly completed in two phases that comprised:

- Building as a farmstead, usually powered by horse or more rarely steam or wind, focused on the storage and processing of corn and the production of manure from yard-fed cattle.
- Extension and sometimes complete remodelling from the 1860s for the fattening of cattle.

Farmstead types

- The key farmstead types which had developed up to the end of the 19th century, and which are still evident today, are courtyard plans where the working buildings are arranged around one or more yards for cattle. Linear, L-shaped and loose courtyards are more common in the south-west, where settlement is dispersed and smaller-scale farmsteads are more commonplace.
- Bastle houses or defensible farmsteads, which are uncommon compared to the west (see Area 5: Border Moors and Forests) and are concentrated in the areas of historic, dispersed settlement south of the Coquet.
- Courtyard farmsteads where the working buildings are arranged around one or more

yards for cattle, normally in a range or series of ranges, are the predominant plan form of the area. They are late 18th or more commonly 19th century in date. Regular courtyard plans together with surveyed enclosure indicate the hand of estates and take a variety of forms: U-, L- and E-plans. The larger courtyard steadings are associated with the arable exploitation of land on large estates and more fertile soils, particularly north of the Coquet River. Large, modern grain silos and storage sheds dominate the landscape to the north and east of this area. Loose courtyard farmsteads with buildings set to one or two sides of the yard are less common and are more frequently found on smaller farmsteads.



Hepple, north of the River Coquet and four miles west of Rothbury. This linear village has evidence for continuance of occupation since the Bronze Age and still retains a defensive tower house. It mainly comprises two large, regular U-shaped planned farms developed as a result of agricultural improvements around 1800 and later. It is set in an open landscape of rectilinear fields and small conifer shelter beds, reworked at the same time.

Photo © Jen Deadman

- Linear plans, with most or all elements of the working farm attached in-line to the farmhouse, are found in the south and south-west of the area. They are more common to the south of the Tyne Gap and from the Cheviots westwards. Archaeological and documentary evidence suggests that these, and longhouses where the domestic ends and byres for cattle were interconnected and shared the same entrance, were common across this area and much of Northumberland prior to the 18th century. Most were swept away and lacked the capacity to be extended or adapted: evidence for alternate rebuilding and raising to two storeys, which is common in other northern upland areas, is elusive. Existing examples of longhouse derivatives are possibly 18th century in date. They do not exhibit a communal entry, but working and domestic areas appear to run under one roof-line. They represent a significant and final phase of farmsteads derived from the longhouse tradition.
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Building types

Building types mainly comprise:

- Threshing and attached straw barns are a distinctive type of building, concentrated across the north of the area into the Cheviot Fringe (Area 3) and the Northumberland Coastal Plain (Area 1) and along the Tyne Gap (Area 11): they extend into the Lothians and other parts of Scotland subject to agricultural improvement in the 19th century. The first floor of the threshing barn had doors for pitching in sheaves of corn and contained the threshing machine, the corn being bagged on the ground floor after it was threshed. The position of the hole which took threshed grain from the threshing machine into the grain bins below can be detected by the trimming of the joists around it, usually visible from below. The straw barn, positioned in-line or at right angles to the threshing barn, is typically lower, with slit vents in the side walls, and housed straw before it was spread around the stock yards. Power could also be conveyed to animal-processing machinery in the ground floor of either building (most commonly the threshing barn). For more details on this arrangement see Area 3: Cheviot Fringe.
- Multifunctional ranges (also termed combination barns) had a wide range of functions – threshing barn, cow housing, stabling, hay lofts – or comprised threshing barns with full-height central threshing floor flanked by lofted bays for animal housing at either end and external openings for pitching hay. By the 19th century they are frequently seen to form a unit with threshing barn and horse gin.
- Wheel houses (locally termed horse gins) had been used in mines for centuries. From the late 18th century, the horse gin was adapted to provide rotary power for powering threshing machines. The horse gins were built adjacent to the barn in which the threshing machine and other fodder-processing machinery was housed, and are usually connected to other ranges in the yard – most commonly a straw barn with easy access to the cattle yard and a granary above a cart shed or cattle housing.

- Lean-tos were used for housing water wheels, the evidence for which can also be seen in the construction of a mill pond and a leat (sometimes underground), to convey the water to the wheel.
- Steam engine houses can be shown to have replaced earlier horse and water power. From the early 19th century, the fixed steam engine was installed on some of the larger farms, appearing at the same time as horse-powered systems. Typically, little remains other than the boiler and engine, usually housed together in a lean-to against the side of the barn close to the chimney stack. They are not as commonly found as in northern reaches of the Cheviot Fringe (Area 3) and the Northumberland Coastal Plain (Area 1).
- Granaries were frequently built as an upper storey over a cart shed or hemmel (see below), the free circulation of air below the floor helping to keep the grain dry. In the most common arrangement, with the cart shed openings in the long wall, the granary is usually approached by a flight of steps against the gable wall.
- Cart and implement sheds are a common yard building and are frequently open-fronted and divided into a number of bays, reflecting the importance of carts and implements for arable cropping in this area. Entries are either arched or supported by cast iron columns. They can be free-standing or part of a range and are often set below a granary.
- Low ranges of cattle sheds and associated yards, particularly to the north and east, often run in parallel or linked around the perimeter of the yard. These include hemmels, a form of open-fronted shed for fatstock, particular to north-east England. The increased importance accorded to fatstock in the second half of the 19th century is also reflected in evidence for the rebuilding of farmsteads with more yards and buildings for cattle, including loose boxes (marked by multiple doors), wide-span sheds and covered yards which also preserved the manure's nutrients. Most covered yards date from the early 20th century.
- Byres (cow houses with stalls for the small numbers of milk cattle) and pigsties, often marked by yards with feeding troughs, are usually placed close to the house.
- Stables – the number of stalls for horses again indicating the importance of arable cropping in this area – are frequently incorporated in a yard range and are generally lofted over.
- Pigeon lofts are frequently seen in the gable ends of houses and barns. On the large 19th-century estates, the pigeon loft can be sited at the top of a tower which commands a central position above the main entry to the farmstead.
- Smithies, a familiar sight on farmsteads throughout the area, are small, often free-standing buildings and are found in the yard area or sometimes close to estate workers' houses on the periphery of the steading.
- Farm workers' cottages and grieves' (managers') houses, are most commonly associated with large courtyard farmsteads and sited, sometimes along with riding horse stables, close to the house.
- Buildings and yards for sheep can be difficult to detect as they can resemble shelter sheds or cow houses but have lower eaves.
- Field barns, mostly built for the overwintering of cattle and the storage of hay, are uncommon. This partly reflects the importance accorded to yard-fed cattle within farmsteads and the importance of sheep husbandry over extensive areas of farmland.



Farmsteads were commonly sited in villages, particularly to the north of the area, before the 19th century. Crown Farm occupies a corner plot in the village of Elsdon, which prospered as a transport hub (at the junction of droeways from Scotland and new turnpikes) in the 18th century. Behind the farm is a large combination barn, making an overall L-plan to what developed as a combined inn and farmstead. Photo © Jen Deadman



Shrunken village on marginal intake land east of Elsdon, comprising a cluster of small, early 19th-century, linear farmsteads with detached buildings including iron-framed hay barns. This is a landscape of former open fields with deserted medieval settlements and also isolated farmsteads established in the same period, relict ridge and furrow and a spread of common land. Photo © Jen Deadman



Late 19th-century farmstead, its house looking away from the regular L-plan range of single-storey working buildings, set in a broad open landscape, half a mile north of Kirkwhelpington in the south-east of the area. It is set in fields of former piecemeal enclosure, now mainly overlain by the larger, more regular fields of 19th-century enclosure. Photo © Jen Deadman



Farmstead on the edge of Belford moor in the north-east of the area, comprising a farmhouse with attached and detached working buildings which were geared to the housing of cattle as well as the processing of harvested corn. Coal mining developed here as a significant industry in the 18th and 19th centuries, but farms remained relatively large in scale compared to those in the south of the area where some small-scale farming was combined with part-time mining. To the left of the steading is a large lime kiln, lime being used to enhance the fertility of these acidic soils. Photo © Jen Deadman



A planned farm of the 19th century, sited in a landscape of piecemeal enclosure with 19th-century plantations and reorganisation of the fields, situated on the outskirts of Belford in the north-east of the area. The farmstead is sited within the motte of Belford Castle, originally a Norman motte and bailey replaced in the 15th century by a defensive stone-built tower. The farm has earlier fabric in its foundations. It stands in fields of piecemeal enclosure, close to the Belford Burn in an arable landscape dominated by corn and oil seed rape. Photo © Jen Deadman



South Hazelrigg. 19th-century planned courtyard farm with associated ancillary buildings set in an open arable landscape of large rectilinear fields and blocks of conifer plantations typical of the designed landscapes in the north and east of the area. Between the two, lies the small steading of Old Hazelrigg. As with many large, planned 19th-century farms in the area, the visual impact of this huge complex in this open and sparsely populated landscape is immense. Photo © Jen Deadman



Isolated, 19th-century linear farmstead set in a landscape of dispersed settlement and small, nucleated villages south of the River Rede. The plan form has been developed further to create an L-shape with an open-fronted yard facing onto the roadside. A cow house or byre forms the return. Note the chimney stack for heating animal feed. Photo © Jen Deadman



The house here is attached to a barn, cow houses and a cart shed. In this example, the working buildings are linked in a row, the roof-line staggered down the hillside. The stepped nature and linear form of the range is an arrangement common to farmsteads of other upland areas, most noticeably the North York Moors. Photo © Jen Deadman



Small, isolated linear steading south of Rothbury and the River Coquet. It is set amongst marshy fields of piecemeal enclosure which relate to relict ridge and furrow. A ruined bastle lies to the east. The farmhouse is single-storey, like those on the Cheviots and extending into Scotland. Photo © Jen Deadman



Isolated, 18th-century, linear farmstead north of Kirkwhelpington, set in fields of piecemeal enclosure and approached down a track through fields evidencing ridge and furrow. The long range comprises cattle housing and a large combination barn. The farmhouse is set forward of the range and faces away from it. Photo © Jen Deadman



This fine, planned regular courtyard group was built in 1827 as the Home Farm to Hulne Park, to the designs of the Newcastle architects John and Benjamin Green. Photo © Mike Williams/Historic England



This mid-19th-century, planned courtyard farmstead near Rothley has a U-shaped yard which encompasses a five-bay open shelter shed, or hemmel, which opens onto its own stone-walled yard. Set away from the yard is the farmhouse and adjoining ancillary building, possibly a dairy or milking parlour. The fields to the foreground have relict ridge and furrow and earlier settlement earthworks. Photo © Jen Deadman



Late 18th- to early 19th-century farmstead north of Kirkwhelpington, in the south of the area, set against the moor edge. Here, the linear range of farmhouse and working buildings forms the backbone of the plan form. Two-storeyed buildings, one a combination barn, project forward of the range to form a U-shape yard, enclosed at one end by a lower building. Photo © Jen Deadman



Early 19th-century farmstead north of Chillingham. The U-shaped plan is infilled with parallel cattle ranges and covered yards, the latter probably 20th century. The yard is flanked by the farmhouse and a short terrace of single-storey farm workers' cottages. Photo © Jen Deadman



Estate Farm at Eglington, north of Alnwick: mid-18th century, further developed in the 19th century. The farmhouse and row of workers' houses sit away from the yard and front the road. The yard is U-shaped, with stables and combination barn flanking a hemmel. At right angles to the combination barn is a granary over cart sheds. Scarring on the wall behind the combination barn would suggest the position of a former wheel house (horse gin). Photo © Jen Deadman



One of three identical, U-shaped, roadside steadings built in the early 20th century at Black Heddon, east of Lowick in the north of the area, each with a tall fodder or mixing barn at the angle of the cattle ranges. The use of brick is very unusual for this area. Photo © Jen Deadman



This late 18th- or early 19th-century combination barn combines various functions in one build, some of which are difficult to determine from the exterior alone. It comprises stables to the left, with external steps to the right of its blocked door to the window. At the far end are cart sheds (20th-century doors) with a granary above. Photo © Jen Deadman



At Spinksburn Priory, the combination barn comprises threshing barn, cart sheds with granary over and accommodation for farm workers. Photo © Jen Deadman



Hemmels – a form of open-fronted shed for fatstock with a small yard – are frequently situated in yards or as in this case sit on the perimeter of a yard. Here the hemmel is divided into two separate areas, each with two arched entries accessing two small, stone-walled enclosures. Photo © Jen Deadman



The arched entries of the hemmels are a characteristic feature of the area. Photo © Jen Deadman



19th-century steading set in the hamlet of East Woodburn in the south-west of the area, showing in the foreground steps to a granary above an open-fronted hemmel for cattle. It has small, part-glazed windows, the lower section being of wooden slats for ventilation. The ridge has raised pieces to aid ventilation. To the left, is a single-storey stable. There is a dog shelter in the recess under the stone steps. Photo © Jen Deadman



Stables are frequently incorporated in a yard range and are generally lofted over. On smaller farms, they either adjoin a yard building or stand alone. At Elsdon the stable and adjoining cart shed are conveniently placed by the roadside. Photo © Jen Deadman



A rare example of an architecturally elaborate stable on a mid-19th-century estate farm. Photo © Jen Deadman



A stable showing a stone slate roof in diminishing courses, with a straight joint to the right, showing that it is an earlier phase of construction than the hemmel, with granary to the right. Photos © Jen Deadman



At Little Tosson on the Harbottle estate, open-fronted cart sheds adjoin workers' cottages outside the yard complex, adjacent to the road. Here, the roof is supported by square stone pillars. The four cart sheds serve the four cottages. Photo © Jen Deadman



Here, once again, the cart or implement is set outside the yard by the roadside. This roof is supported by simple, cast iron columns. Photo © Jen Deadman



Pigsties, often marked by yards with feeding troughs, are usually placed close to the house. At Little Tosson four pigsties served the four farm workers' cottages on the opposite side of the road. Photo © Jen Deadman



This field barn is set by the roadside, close to Belford, in the north of the area and lies a field away from the nearest farm. The building is divided into two shelters of two bays, each with its own small yard. It is late 18th or early 19th century in date. Photo © Jen Deadman



This 19th-century field barn close to Chillingham functions as a small animal shelter Photo © Jen Deadman



A field barn built of pink, grey and yellow sandstone: the random rubble walling has corner quoins and door and window dressings of pink, Milfield Plain sandstone. Note the pantile roof and coping stones at gable ends. Photo © Jen Deadman



The Duke of Northumberland was responsible for rebuilding farmsteads as an integral part of new designed landscapes, as here at this outfarm in the Alnwick area, where several farms were built between 1805 and 1833. Ranges for cattle flank a tall central barn. Photo © Mike Williams/Historic England

Materials and detail

- There was extensive rebuilding of the rural building stock from the late 18th century, with sandstone (either rubble or dressed) and grey slates, or – more rarely – local stone slabs replacing clay, field stone and thatch. Sandstone quarries of many periods, mostly disused, are scattered throughout the hills.
- Generally, stonework is coursed and roughly squared, the yellow sandstone weathering to grey. Dressings to corners and openings are unremarkable, long and short quoins, common to many 18th- and 19th-century buildings, are found throughout. The plain facades are relieved by the arched entries to hemmels and cart sheds with shaped voussoirs and dressed quoin stones. The softness of the sandstone has caused any tooling to be weathered away. The pattern of projecting through stones, evident in other upland areas in northern England, is absent here as is the use of watershot masonry.
- Windows to stables and granaries are universally slatted to the lower section with three small lights to the upper – a common feature of farm buildings everywhere. Animal housing and granaries, as elsewhere, frequently have raised ridge pieces to increase air circulation.
- Orange clay pantiles, common to many areas on the eastern side of the country, were produced locally. They were replaced in the mid-19th century with cheap import of blue Welsh slate, made possible by the arrival of the railway system.
- Stone slate in diminishing courses is now a rarity in this area.
- Wheat straw thatch, used into the 20th century in arable areas, survives in the Tweed valley lowlands.
- There is little evidence of chamfered doorways and lintels, characteristic of the 17th century, to suggest the presence of earlier buildings. Evidence of alternate rebuild and the raising of buildings from one to two stories is elusive. Date stones are not a feature of the area.



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