Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

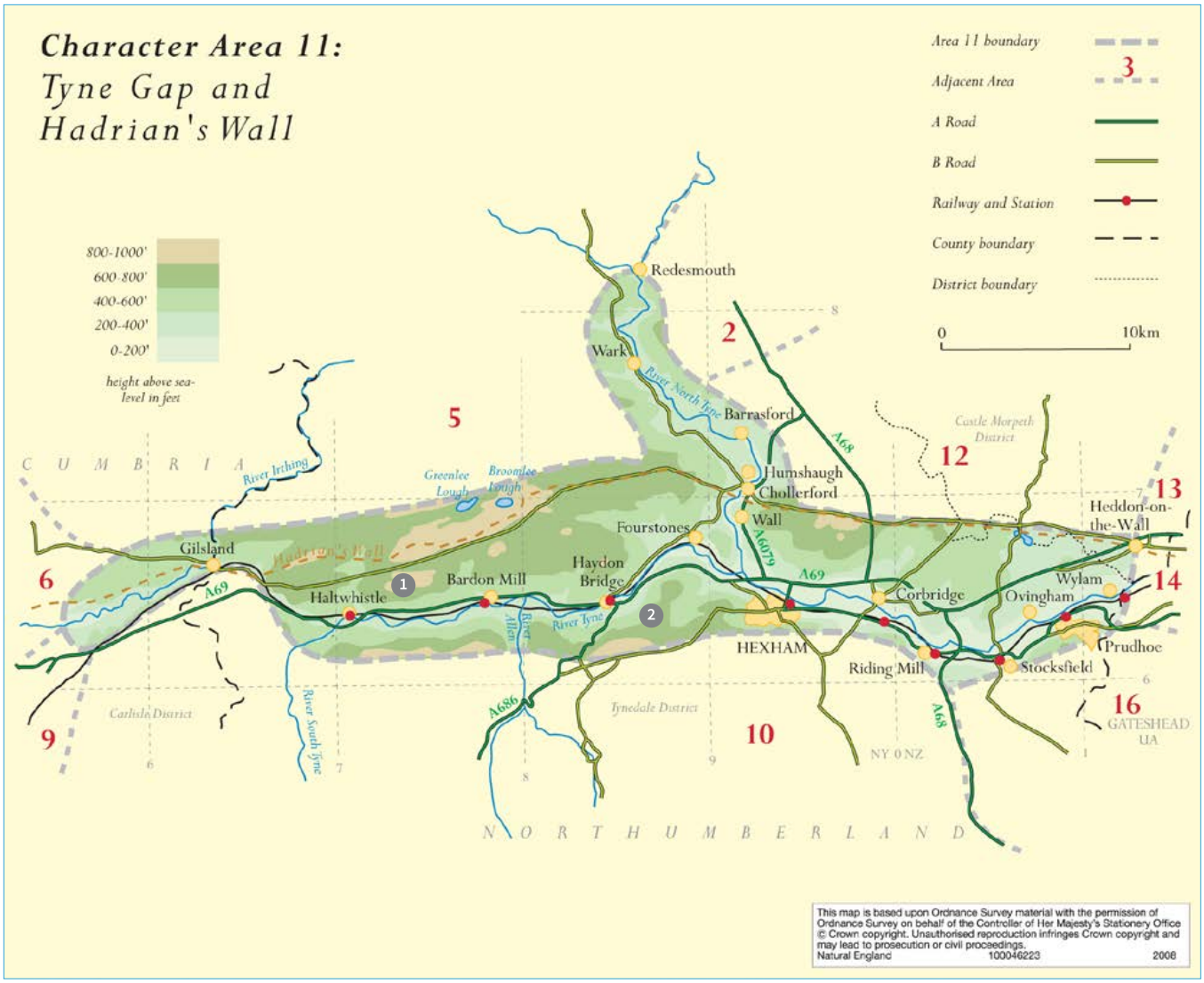
Tyne Gap and Hadrian's Wall

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 11

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: A long, linear, mid- to late 19th-century range in the moorlands at Cowburn Rigg, north of Hadrian's Wall, with the chimney stack marking the boiler for the mixing of animal fodder attached to the row of cattle housing to its left. Photo © Jeremy Lake



This map shows the Tyne Gap and Hadrian's Wall, with the numbers of neighbouring National Character Areas around it. It subdivides into the following areas:

1. The largest farmsteads and fields which developed east of North Tynedale and along South Tynedale, within landscapes of large-scale regular enclosure interspersed with smaller-scale farmsteads and fields
2. Higher densities of smaller farmsteads which developed across areas of moorland, concentrated around Hadrian's Wall to the west of Hexham.

Summary

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

This narrow but distinctive lowland corridor, centred on the River Tyne, separates the North Pennines from the Border country. To the west lie the arable and pastoral landscapes of the Solway basin; to the east are the more densely populated Tyne and Wear lowlands. Urban area makes up 2% of the Character Area and 6% is woodland. Of the Character Area, 16% lies within the Northumberland National Park.

Historic character

- Farmsteads are typically of 19th-century date and relate to farmed landscapes that were either newly enclosed from moorland or reorganised with regular enclosures out of earlier enclosed landscapes and strip fields.
- There is a strong difference between the smaller-scale farmsteads of the moorlands and some more constricted hillside locations (mostly linear, L-shaped and smaller-scale loose courtyard arrangements, and many with single-storey buildings) and the large, regular U-shaped and multi-yard plan farmsteads that developed elsewhere. The latter areas have a richer variety of farmstead buildings (from threshing and straw barns that reflect the requirements of mechanised threshing, to root houses).
- The earthworks of shrunken and abandoned settlements, and ridge and furrow, testify to the shrinkage of settlements from the medieval period, in some cases (concentrated to the east of Hexham, and as typically found further north in Northumberland) as late as around 1800.
- The 19th-century rebuilding of farmsteads (in some rare instances with fabric of the late 18th century) in Tynedale and other mixed farming areas was commonly completed in two phases that comprised a set of buildings and yards focused on the 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 high survival of traditional farmsteads within a landscape which retains visible evidence for land use and settlement from the prehistoric period.
- Evidence for horse, water and steam-powered threshing is highly significant and early in a national context. Any surviving examples of internal machinery – the gearing for horse wheels, mill wheels, boilers and fixed threshing machines – are of exceptional rarity in a national context.
- The area's mechanised courtyard farmsteads, together with those in the Cheviot Fringe, Sandstone Hills and coastal plain in Northumberland, comprise a nationally significant testament to late 18th- and 19th-century agricultural improvement, matched only by the comparable scale of farmsteads and their enclosed landscapes in the Lothians and other parts of Scotland.
- Working buildings with 18th-century and earlier fabric, including traces of heather thatch, are of exceptional rarity.

- Bastles, although relatively uncommon in this area, 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.
- In this National Character Area, the Photo Image Project (2006) recorded a low proportion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (19.4%, the national average being 32%). It also recorded 3.4% as showing obvious signs of structural disrepair (the national average being 7.5%).

Historic development

- There is extensive evidence for prehistoric settlement and ritual sites along the major communication route of the Tyne Gap.
- Hadrian's Wall and related roads, the military camps and domestic settlements follow the Whin Sill outcrop from east to west. Substantial stone-built settlements – dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries and abandoned soon afterwards – were built south of the forts along Hadrian's Wall.
- By the medieval period much of the area had reverted to waste and woodland, leaving only a scattering of small settlements, some fortified as bastles or peel towers along the still active road corridor. Corbridge developed on the site of a major Roman town (Corstopitum), and Hexham's growth was spurred by the market provided by the Augustinian monastery.
- 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. More settled conditions from the 17th century promoted the development of country house estates, some derived from fortified predecessors, and agricultural improvements focused on improved pasture and arable production.
- The export of grain was enabled by the turnpike constructed from Hexham to the coast in the mid-18th century, and east-west communications were further improved by General Wade's military road along the wall. From the mid-19th century, railways within the Tyne valleys opened up markets still further, as well as the residential development based on employment in Newcastle.
- From the late 18th century, an increase in arable production, especially wheat along Tynedale, 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 the deep sandy soils of this area: high quantities of resulting manure enhanced fertility. 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.
- Enclosure of communal townfields and of formerly extensive common pasture on the hills and moors was driven by these estates. 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.

- Rural industries were a significant part of the economy (for example coal mining and iron ore smelting east of Corbridge) but were not associated with the development of surviving small farms and smallholdings with significant by-employment in industry. Industries stimulated the 19th- and early 20th-century growth of Prudhoe (coal mining), Haltwhistle and Haydon Bridge (mining, woollen mills, breweries, brickworks and limekilns) and the expansion of the farming industry.

- Most of the area is now devoted to permanent pasture for rearing livestock, but arable exploitation is likely to increase in the future.

Landscape and settlement

- The remains of medieval settlement and cultivation visible in the landscape (house platforms, lynchets and ridge and furrow) provide a testament to the extent of arable cultivation prior to the contraction of settlement from the 14th century.

- The predominant pattern of settlement, with the exception of the larger villages and small towns which developed on the valley floors and river crossing points, is of scattered farmsteads and farm hamlets. These are set in landscapes of regular enclosure, and some patches of more irregular piecemeal enclosure and of ancient enclosure from moorland and woodland.

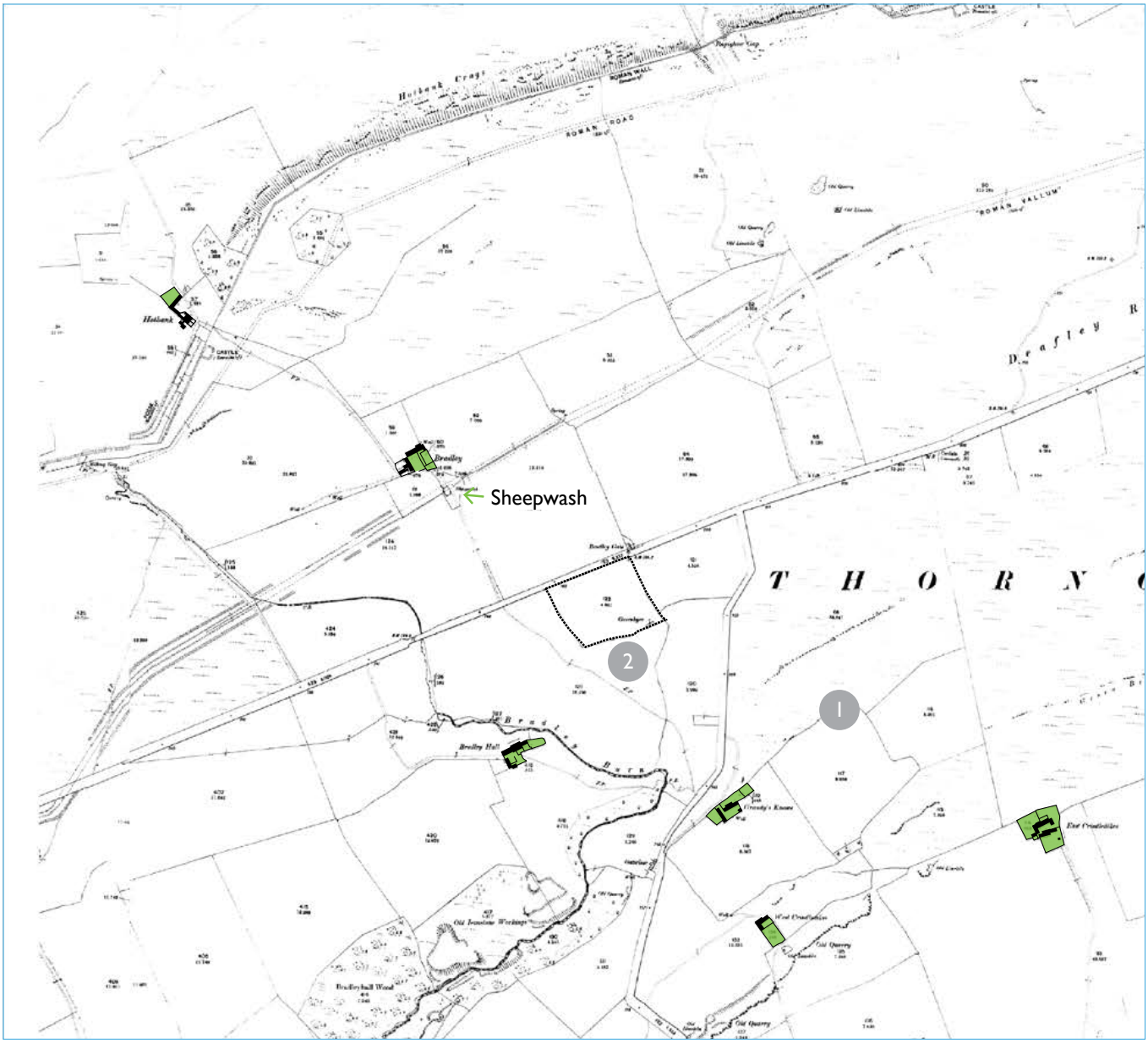
- Individual or blocks of fields frequently have wavy boundaries which retain the outlines of medieval strip fields. Those that are wholly regular have either obliterated all earlier traces or can be found in areas of late-enclosure moorland. Quickset thorn hedgerows, with planted hedgerow trees predominate, with stone boundary walls in moorland areas.

- Many isolated farmsteads along the Tyne and elsewhere date from the movement of farmsteads out of village settlements after the enclosure of open fields: in many areas (such as around Prudhoe) this did not happen until the early to mid-19th century, a long time after enclosure had been completed. Elsewhere many are associated with the enclosure of moorland. A number are found in areas cleared in the medieval period from woodland and moorland, but these are relatively uncommon.

- All areas had access to blocks of moorland, mostly subject to regular enclosure in the late 18th and 19th centuries, which are interspersed across the area and concentrated around Hadrian's Wall to the west. These had been utilised for centuries by surrounding communities for summer grazing, with peat, heather and bracken cut for fuel, bedding, roofing and fodder.

- Plantations and copses of the 19th century are found throughout the area, with older woodland being concentrated in the valley sides, especially in North Tynedale.

- The historical development of this settlement is shared with much of the remainder of Northumberland. The farm hamlets concentrated to the east of Hexham, which have large farmsteads with workers' housing, date from when the landscape was hugely altered, re-organised and redistributed in the late 18th and 19th centuries. This followed the development of large tenanted farms, after the dispersed holdings of tenements that remained in villages had been reorganised and amalgamated. To the north and west the dispersed settlement has medieval origins: farmsteads developed around moorland, including those that developed on summer grazing settlements (shielings), farms held by farming families in return for military service and those that developed as more settled conditions returned to the area (for more details see Area 5: Border Moors and Forests

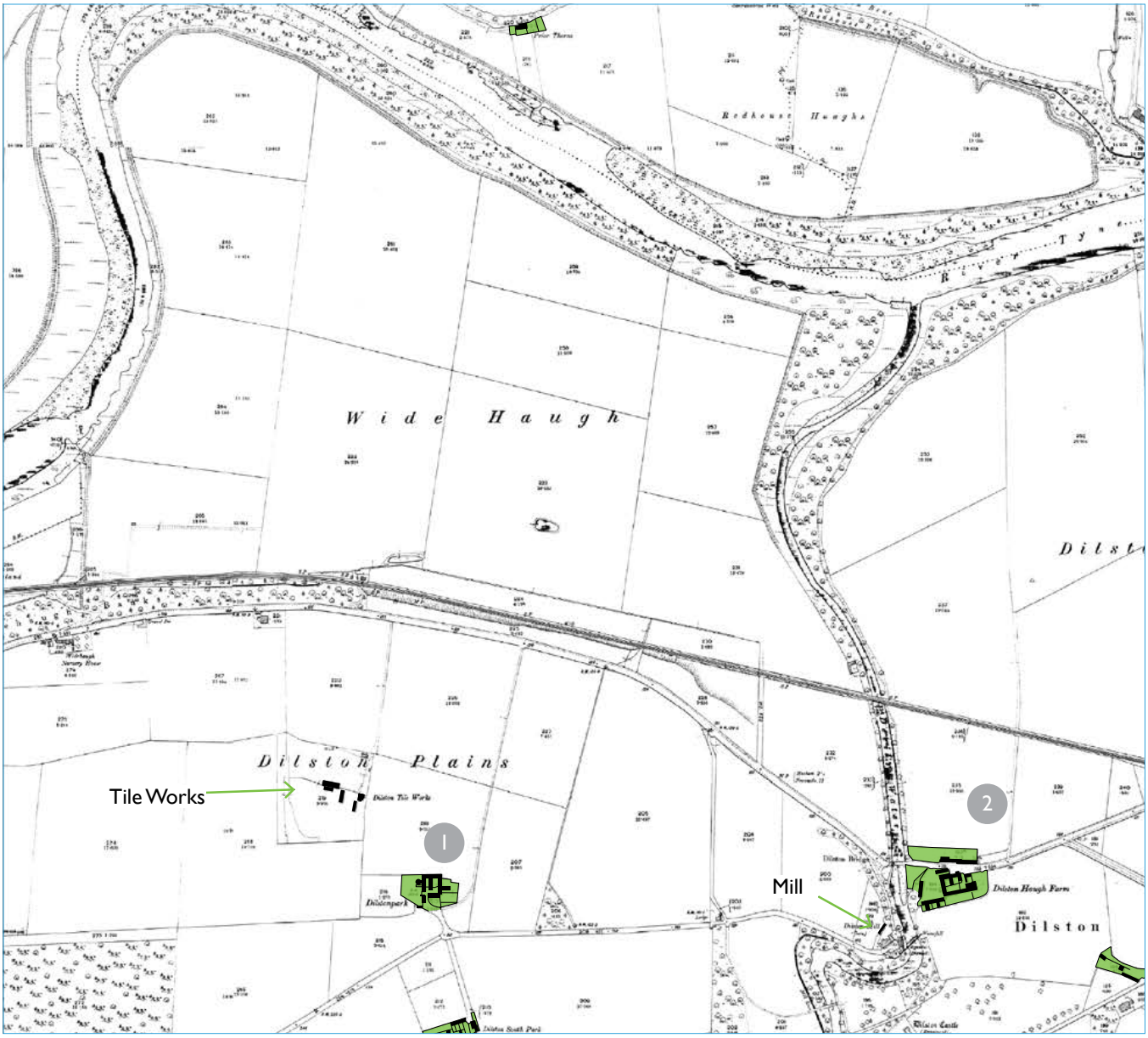


Maps are based on 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey maps, which show farmsteads after the last major phase in the building of traditional farmsteads in England. © Crown Copyright [and database rights] 2020. OS 100024900

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

Crindledykes

Throughout the area are the traces of settlements pre-dating Hadrian's Wall, including small, defended settlements dating from the 5th to 7th centuries BC, which continued to be occupied over the Roman period. The map is bisected by the mid-18th-century, military road just to the south of Hadrian's Wall, and the field boundaries indicate the later reorganisation of earlier enclosures around scattered farmsteads. The farmsteads also mostly date from the later 18th century. The dominance of L-shaped, regular courtyard farmsteads (farmhouses attached to the working buildings) and small loose courtyard farmsteads (the latter with a working building facing into a yard), is typical of the moorland areas around Hadrian's Wall. Some of these originated as summer pasturing stations (shielings), and were developed as bastles after the shrinkage or abandonment of medieval settlements. To the north of Bradley Hall (a medieval hall house, now demolished) lie the remains of a medieval settlement with several rectangular house platforms and field strips bounded by earthen banks and scarps or lynchetts. At least one site (1), incorporates a bastle. A further bastle (2) is attached to a large roughly rectangular enclosure containing the remains of post-medieval ploughing. Limekilns indicate the improvement of land for growing corn and providing richer pasture in this period.



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

Dilston

Dilston developed as a township within Corbridge, and its large-scale, regular courtyard farmsteads were built (and rebuilt) in association with the successive reorganisation of its farming landscape (with enlarged fields and planted woodland) by the Dilston Castle estate in the late 18th to mid-19th centuries. These estates were in the forefront of land improvement along the Tyne valley and the rebuilding of farmsteads in the early to mid-19th century: E-shaped layouts (1 and 2) were a distinctive feature of the largest farmsteads, geared to the production of corn from newly-drained land, which was locally milled and exported. Large corn mills are a feature of the valley. Within the township are traces of the earlier, medieval strip fields which were farmed from nucleated settlements that often shrank into farm hamlets. The tile works were built in the mid-19th century for the supply of drainage tiles.

Many of the farmsteads on the moorlands around Hadrian's Wall, especially to the west of the area, developed as the moors were enclosed in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some developed on earlier shieling sites, or in relationship to medieval and later in-takes from the moor. Photo © Jen Deadman

Steam-powered farmstead of c 1860-70 (note the chimney at the junction of the barn and mixing house range) at Shildonhill. Photo © Historic England 28561/010

Early to mid-19th-century horse-powered farmstead (note the circular horse gin with the conical roof to house the horse walk for powering the machinery). Photo © Historic England 28559/038

for more details). Defensible bastle houses and medieval to 16th-century tower houses provide testament to the unsettled Border conditions of this area that persisted into the 17th century.

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.

- Another key feature in Northumberland, as in neighbouring parts of Durham and Northumberland, was the mechanisation of threshing from an early date. Threshing or winnowing of corn had previously been done by hand on the threshing floor of the yard or combination barn, although occasionally in a threshing barn in the field. By the late 18th century the horse gin, which had been used in mines for centuries, was adapted to provide rotary power for turning the first threshing machine. They are seen adjacent to a purpose-built threshing barn which is frequently connected through to other ranges in the yard. Water power and steam power also appeared at a remarkably early date in a national context, by the 1830s on large regular courtyard plan farmsteads.

Farmstead types

The key farmstead types that had developed up to the end of the 19th century, and that are still evident today, are:

- Defensible bastles where the lower floor was used to house animals and the upper for domestic use, were most commonly built in the late 16th and 17th centuries: they are far more common further to the north (see Area 5: Border Moors and Forests, for more details on bastles), and relatively few are recorded in this area even compared to the North Pennines to the south. Fieldwork is likely to record more examples including those derived from bastles in their arrangement of living room above animal housing.

- Regular courtyard farmsteads have interlinked, working buildings arranged around one or more yards for cattle. U- and L-shaped plan forms are common, those in moorland areas being commonly single-storey in contrast to the more complex storeyed arrangements that developed in mixed farming areas. The larger courtyard steadings, including those built to E-shaped plans, are associated with the arable exploitation of land on large estates and more fertile soils, particularly along the Tyne and to the east of Hexham, extending northwards into the Cheviot Fringe (Area 3) and lowlands of Northumberland and Scotland.

- Loose courtyard farmsteads are typically small in scale, with one or two detached buildings facing a yard and sometimes other detached buildings. These are concentrated in moorland and valley-side areas where smaller-scale farmsteads developed.

- Linear plans, with most or all elements of the working farm attached in-line to the farmhouse, are concentrated in the western moorlands around Hadrian's Wall. They are a common farmstead type immediately to the

south (Area 10: North Pennines), across the western Pennines and the fells and some lowland areas of Cumbria. Archaeological and documentary evidence across Northumberland suggests that these, and longhouses where the domestic ends and byres for cattle were interconnected and shared the same entrance, were common 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 (including in Area 5: Border Moors and Forests, to the north), is elusive.

Building types

In moorland areas, the key building types comprise housing for cattle, often in single-storey ranges, and stables with hay lofts. Elsewhere, the richer variety of building types reflects the requirements of mixed farming. Across the area 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 evident in sheep stalls in moorland areas

Building types mainly comprise:

- Multifunctional ranges (also termed combination barns) in all areas combine a wide range of functions: storing and processing corn, housing, cattle, horses and their hay. Some of these are clearly pre-19th century in date and comprise the principal building on the farmstead. Bank barns, a type of combination barn built into the slope and dating from the late 18th century, are uncommon and concentrated to the west – towards their main centre of distribution in Cumbria. By the 19th century, combination barns are frequently seen to form a unit with threshing barn and horse gin.

In the Tyne Gap and other arable farming areas:

- Threshing and attached straw barns are a distinctive type of building associated with mechanised threshing. These are found further north in Northumberland and extend into the Lothians and other parts of Scotland, subject to agricultural improvement in the 19th century (for further details and illustration see Area 3: Cheviot Fringe). 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 bines 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).

- 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. 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.

- 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 often run in parallel or are 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 are often marked by yards with feeding troughs, which 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.

- Smithies are found on the largest farmsteads.

- Farm workers' houses and grieves' (managers') houses are most commonly associated with the largest courtyard farmsteads and are sited close to the house, sometimes with riding horse stables.

Linear plans This linear farmstead developed as a smallholding in small, regular enclosures just south of Haltwhistle. In its combination of domestic and working areas it closely resembles farmsteads found further south, in the North Pennines (National Character Area 10). Photo © Jeremy Lake

A late 19th-century, linear farmstead in a roadside edge position close to Hadrian's Wall, with a detached calf house or pig sty. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Causeway House, to the west of Vindolanda Fort, is an example of a roadside linear farmstead associated with the enclosure of the moors around Hadrian's Wall. This rare, surviving example of a late 18th-century farmhouse is also notable for its use of heather thatch. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Parallel plans A mid- to late 19th-century, parallel plan farmstead, where the house and working buildings are set in parallel to each other. This arrangement is rarely found, but is typical of the moors. Photo © Jeremy Lake

A regular L-plan farmstead of early to mid-19th-century date, just to the north of Hadrian's Wall, the attachment of the house to the working buildings being a typical feature of upland areas. It is set in a landscape of regular enclosure from moorland. Attached to the house is a combined hay barn and stable, and to the left are single-storey calf houses for rearing stock. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Regular U-plan farmsteads A mid-19th-century, regular U-plan arrangement at Walwick, where by around 1800 several tenements had been absorbed into large farmsteads. The buildings are storeyed and provided hay lofts over stables and cattle housing, with a combination barn built into the rising ground behind. The house faces away from the farmyard, a typical arrangement for more prestigious establishments such as this. Photo © Jeremy Lake

This regular U-plan farmstead on the Bellister estate, to the west of the area, exemplifies many of the key developments associated with the larger farms that developed especially along the Tyne Gap. It was built in the 1840s at the peak of 19th-century agricultural prosperity, and served a mixed farm that extended towards the Tyne. A threshing barn with a wheel house (see Building Types below) projects to the rear of the centre, to the right are a single-storey hemmel and fattening boxes or cow houses for cattle. Within the storeyed building was a straw barn and granary above stabling and another open-fronted hemmel. The cattle were fed on roots which thrived in the area's deep soils: in the centre is a root house for storing roots. These farmsteads were typically extended with more housing and yards for cattle after the 1870s, and to the left is a wide-span cow house of this period. To the foreground on the left is a smithy sited next to the spring, typical of large farmsteads. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Combination barns This large combination barn probably pre-dates the house and is probably of 18th-century date. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Threshing barns An extremely rare surviving example of an 18th-century or earlier working building, which in this case survived through its continued use on a small village farmstead (at Tow House in Tynedale). This threshing barn is also significant for its use of heather thatching and the survival of its interior cruck trusses.

Powering the farmstead Horse power was used from around 1800 in this area. This wheel house (gin gang) projects from a threshing barn. Note the pigsties to its left. Photo © Jeremy Lake

The chimney served an engine house for providing steam power to this regular multi-yard farmstead. Photo © Jen Deadman

At Chollerton a windmill powered a corn mill and the threshing and feed-processing machinery. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Cattle housing The expansion of cattle housing (left) and the covering of yards (right) are typical features of the increase in fattening cattle in the decades around 1900. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Cart sheds The expansion of cattle housing (left) and the covering of yards (right) are typical features of the increase in fattening cattle in the decades around 1900. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Small cart sheds are typical of upland farmsteads, if they are found at all (left), whereas large ranges testify to the vehicles and implements needed for arable farming in Tynedale. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Smithies. A smithy, marked by its chimney stack, is here incorporated into a cart shed range. Photo © Jen Deadman

Field barns. A field barn for cattle. Photo © Historic England

Kilns A kiln for drying corn, a very rare surviving and once-common feature across the moorlands, built into the bastle house at Housesteads Fort on Hadrian's Wall. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Lime kilns Lime was used to enhance the fertility of the area's more acidic soils, particularly during the years of high input and output in the mid-19th century, when some corn was grown around the moorland fringes. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Materials and detail

- Traditional buildings are characterised by use of local sandstone, although later styles are mixed with brick and imported Welsh slate due to the availability of other materials by rail. Pantiles are found in the east of the area.
- Farmsteads and other buildings and boundary walls around Hadrian's Wall can incorporate stone that was robbed from the wall.
- Heather thatch was common before the 19th century, and evidence for this is retained in steep-pitches retained in fabric: surviving examples are extremely rare.

Historic England

This guidance has been prepared by Jeremy Lake with Jen Deadman.

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