



Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 38

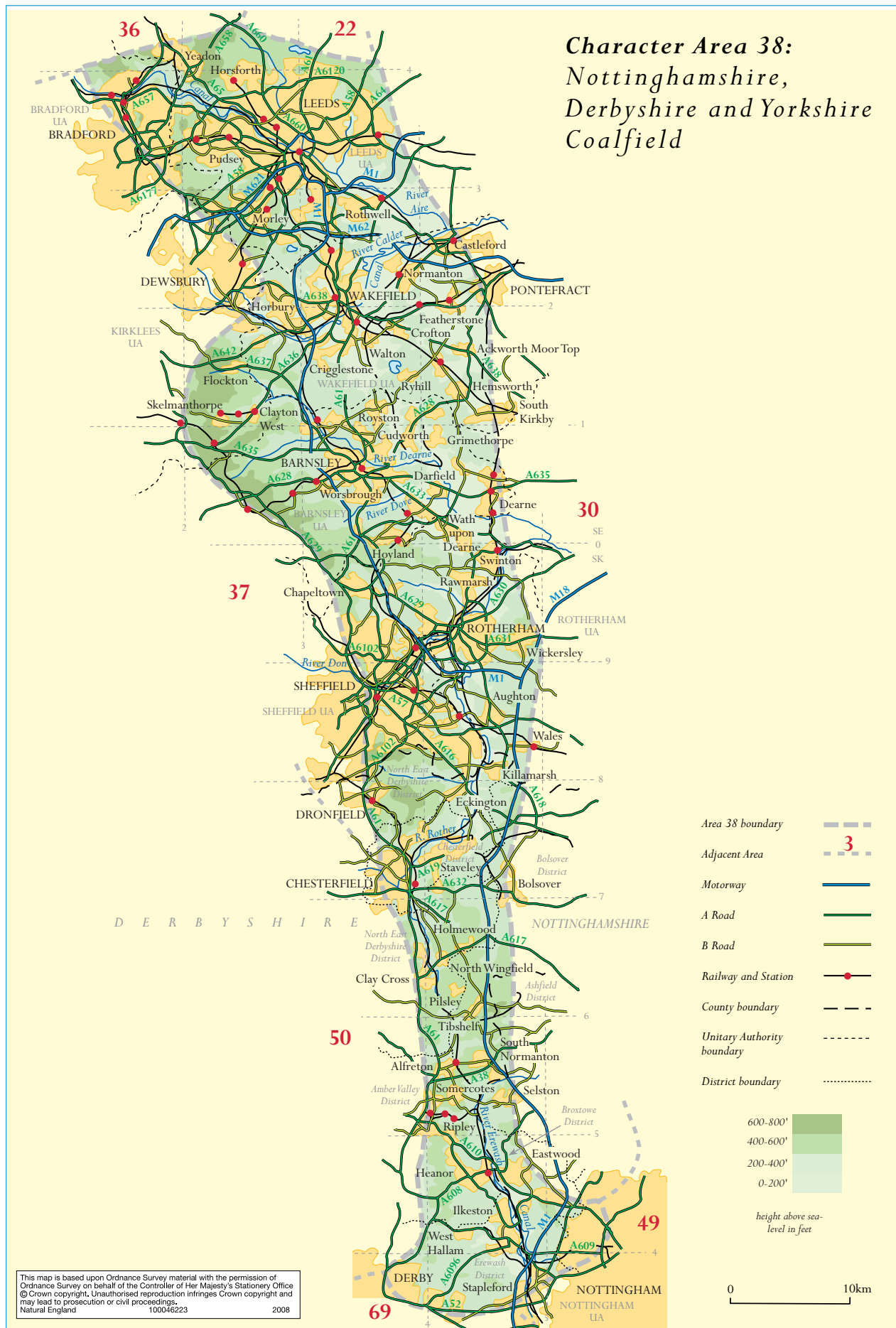


Introduction

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>).



This 17th-century aisled barn is part of a remarkable group of 17th-century buildings at Blacker Hall to the south of Horbury in the north of the area, comprising two aisled barns and a malthouse. The barns have been sensitively converted into use for a farm shop, and originally had timber-framed walls and cattle stalled in the aisles; one has a first-floor granary and another a loft for seasonal farm workers. The farm benefitted from access to the navigable River Calder and the Calder and Hebble Navigation, commenced in 1759. High-status groups such as this, with aisled barns, extend to the area around Sheffield and into the southern part of the Pennines. Photo © Jen Deadman



This map shows the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield, with the numbers of the neighbouring National Character Areas around it.

Summary

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

This is an extensive tract of countryside extending from Leeds in the north to the northern edges of Derby and Nottingham in the south. It has been significantly influenced by the pattern of industrial and urban development. Of the area, 34% is classed as urban, 41% is farmland and 5% is woodland. The area lies outside national landscape designations but falls within the South Yorkshire Community Forest.

Historic character

- The character of this area has been shaped by industrialisation and its location between the Pennines to the west and the long and narrow strip of Southern Magnesian Limestone (NCA 30) to the east.
- Linear farmsteads of a type found across the Pennines are concentrated along the western border of the Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe (NCA 37), but there is evidence across the area for the development of substantial courtyard farmsteads from the 16th century, with barns for processing corn and housing cattle, stables and granaries. These are set within landscapes of irregular and piecemeal enclosure, with some farmsteads set within the later enclosure of extensive areas of common land.
- The use of materials displays a similar contrast between upland and lowland influences, with the use of stone and stone slate giving way to the dominance of brick with remnant timber-frame to the south.

Significance

- Some farmstead sites have been directly associated with the management of land for agriculture and industry in the medieval period.
- There are some rare surviving groups with early fabric, particularly to the north of Chesterfield, with buildings of 17th-century and earlier date.
- Some 18th- and 19th-century planned groups were built for estates, and with the involvement of architects and engineers.

Present and future issues

- In this National Character Area, the Photo Image Project (2006) recorded a high proportion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (40.4%, the national average being 32%).
- The Photo Image Project also recorded an above-average percentage (25.9%, the national average being 7.5%) of listed working farm buildings that show obvious signs of structural disrepair.

Historic development

- Although much archaeological evidence of early settlement and land use has been obscured by later industrial development, there are Romano-British and earlier crop marks across the area and some linear earthworks marking significant boundaries.
- The 12th and 13th centuries saw the intensification of settlement, including moated sites, estates with deer parks, and of the direct management of farmland and industrial sites (particularly coal mines) by monastic and other landlords.
- Arable farming declined in the 15th to 16th centuries, accompanied by the extension of the grazing of sheep and cattle across the landscape and the shrinkage or even desertion of earlier settlements. Pastoral farming was concentrated along the western fringe of the area. Arable-based farming, using roots and grasses in rotations from the mid-18th century and sometimes earlier, has developed as the dominant form of land use across most of the area. Market gardening developed around urban centres.
- Houses, farms and smallholdings developed in association with early industrial activity across this area, much of which was water-powered. Coal mining developed in this area from the medieval period. To the south west, and from the mid-16th to 19th centuries, lead ore was imported from the Peak District, smelted and exported via the Humber. The early textile industry, as it developed from the 16th century, was domestic and sometimes farm-based, as also was iron smelting and the cutlery and steel industries around Sheffield. Ancient woodlands in the valley sides were intensively managed for local industries.
- The application of steam power and major developments in transportation stimulated industrialisation and urban development across this area, from the docks of Leeds in the north to the steel industries that developed in Sheffield and Rotherham and the development of deep mining in the mid- to late 19th century that extended to the south of the area.
- The valleys formed the focus for water-powered industry, canals from the mid-18th century and, later, rail. The development of transport infrastructure included improvements to river navigation (Wharfe, Aire and Calder) and canals from the mid-18th century (including the Rochdale and Leeds-Liverpool canals, the latter opening the Atlantic market).
- Industrial wealth sustained the development of large country houses and designed landscapes, many created during the 18th and 19th centuries by wealthy industrialists and others developed from medieval deer parks (for example Tankersley, Sheffield Park).

Landscape and settlement

- The area is marked by high to very high densities of dispersed settlement dating from the medieval period, with the numbers of medieval villages increasing to the south. There is a high concentration of moated sites, particularly to the south of the area. Settlements to the north were typically set around commons and greens and farmsteads along routeways; they might also be grouped around early estate centres. Industrialisation, especially in the late 18th and 19th centuries, led to the nucleation of some settlements.
- The area is dominated by piecemeal enclosures, sometimes retaining the curved profiles of medieval strip fields, with regular enclosure concentrated in estate lands and in former blocks of common land (for example Eccleshall, Hallam Moors and the Rivelin valley). There are some areas of small and irregular fields, many probably assarted from woodland or developed in the 17th and 18th centuries as small farms and smallholdings with by-employment in industry.

Farmstead and building types

This area has a high density by national standards of pre-1750 farmstead buildings, most of these dating from after the 1540s

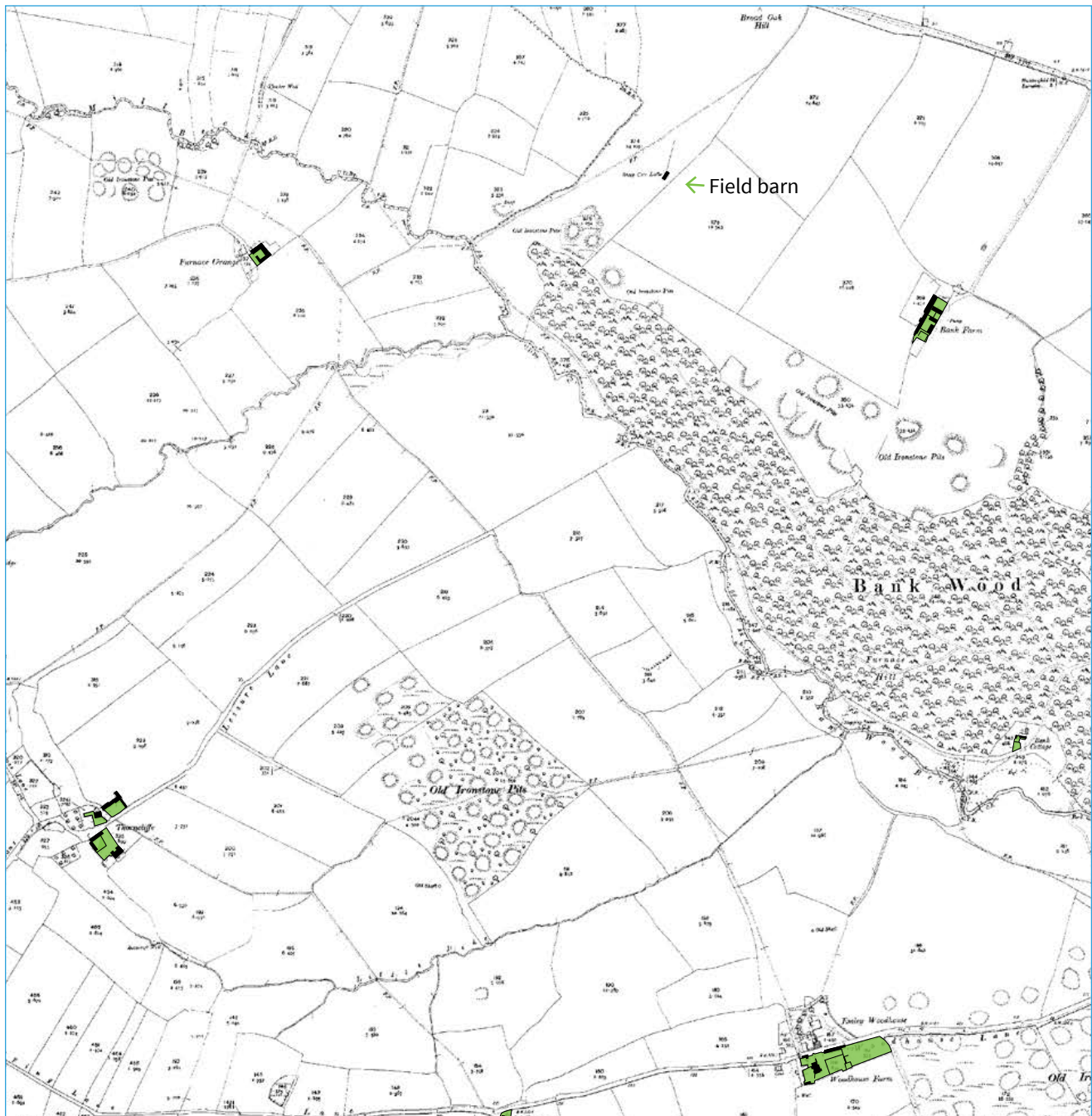
Farmstead types

- Courtyard farms are the most common type of farmstead, often with buildings to three or four sides of the yard or with two or more yards. These illustrate the development of large, arable-based farms from the 16th and 17th centuries, many being built as estates and larger farms which drove agricultural improvement. There are some small-scale, linear-plan farmsteads with farmhouses and working buildings built in-line.

Building types

Building types illustrate the scale of arable farming in this area:

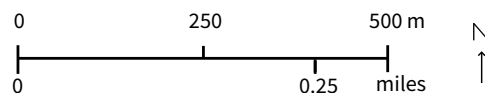
- Threshing barns of five or more bays are common, including cruck and aisled barns (see below).
- Combination barns for also housing cattle with stabling for horses and first-floor granaries are most common on the north of the area.
- Aisled and originally timber-framed barns of 17th-century or earlier date are found to the north of Sheffield, and form part of a regional tradition of aisled construction which extends towards the area around Halifax in the Southern Pennines (NCA 36) and the Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe (NCA 37). They may retain evidence for the housing of cattle in aisles.
- The scale of individual farms and of arable-based farming is reflected in the provision of granaries (frequently built as an upper storey over a cart shed or animal housing), cart sheds, implement sheds and stables.
- The most common buildings for cattle are outshots added to barns, loose boxes for fatstock, shelter sheds and cow houses for dairy cattle.
- Pigsties, often marked by yards with feeding troughs, are usually placed close to the house.
- There are some outfarms with threshing barns and cattle.



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

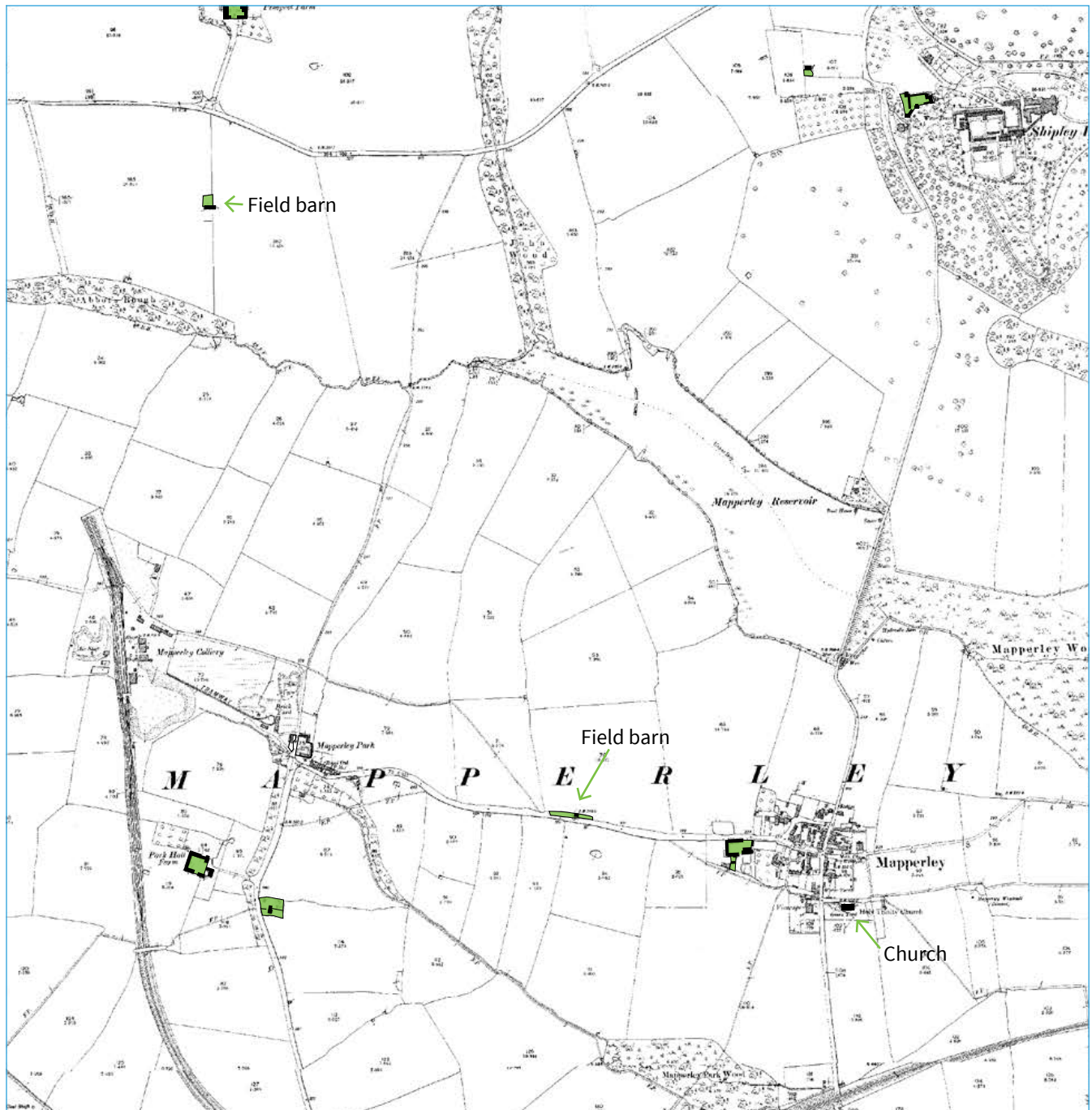


Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.



Denby Dale

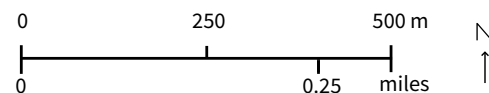
The influence of 19th-century estate improvements, in this case relating to the estate, is most evident around Bank Farm, rebuilt as an E-plan with cattle yards, to the north-east of the map. 16th to 19th-century enclosure and reorganisation is associated with the development of a small number of farms that developed as courtyard groups with aisled barns and cattle housing dating from the 17th century. Some of these developed from the grange farms of Byland Abbey, which were established in the 12th and 13th centuries to farm the land and extract ironstone. Ironstone pits are shown on the map, to the south-east being part of the mines and iron forges to the south of Bentley Grange Farm, which are now one of the best-preserved medieval industrial sites in England. These lie over earlier ridge and furrow, illustrating medieval arable agriculture. The former lands of Byland Abbey in this area were recorded in the late 16th century as being enclosed for sheep and cattle pastures. Fine, 17th-century houses – such as the U-plan example of the 1620s at Thornecliffe Grange to the west and also aisled barns in this area – also provide evidence for arable cultivation on its larger farms.



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



Mapperley

To the north-east is Shipley Hall, built in the early 18th century at the centre of a medieval estate that had been mining coal from at least the 16th century. Wealth from mining, which benefitted from the opening of the Nutbrook Canal in 1796 and later the Midland Railway, funded improvements to the estate from the later 18th century. This included the building in 1861 of a model farm to the designs of W E Nesfield. Farmhouse and buildings, in his distinctive 'Old English' style and including a fine dairy and a water tower, are grouped around three sides of a courtyard. Farmsteads were built and rebuilt to regular courtyard plans in this period, accompanied by the enlarging and sometimes reworking of fields that have been enclosed on a piecemeal basis from medieval strips and meadow land, and which also relate to two 12th- to 13th-century moated sites in the wood to the south and at Park Hall to the south-west of the map.



The other aisled barn at Blacker Hall (see Introduction page), with a door and mullioned window to a granary sited over a stable to the left. Photo © Jeremy Lake



A 17th-century farmstead in Denby Dale to the north of the area, with a 17th-century house and aisled barn with a granary, 19th-century cattle housing and the farmyard wall curved around a dew pond for cattle. It is sited alongside an earlier routeway and in an area with former monastic grange farms, retaining early patterns of enclosure. Photo © Jeremy Lake



An early to mid-19th-century farm to the north of Bretton Park set within a landscape of earlier piecemeal enclosure subject to early 19th-century reworking including with plantations for field sports. Combination barns for processing the corn crop as well as other functions and a large, first-floor granary illustrate the importance of arable farming in this area. Photo © Jeremy Lake



An early example of a large-scale combination barn (dated 1753) with a first-floor granary, at Kirkthorpe in the north of the area. This building also displays an early use of brick for this area. Photo © Jeremy Lake



This farmstead close to the Southern Pennines Fringe (NCA 37) bears a superficial resemblance to the strong vernacular character of the southern Pennines, but illustrates the importance of arable farming in being a granary set over a cart shed. Photo © Jeremy Lake



Barns display a strong contrast between the north of the area, where combination barns combine many different functions into a single range (as on the left at Emley Woodhouse), and the southern part (Stanton Dale, right) where threshing barns are more common. Photo © Jeremy Lake



A field barn for cattle in the north of the area. Photo © Jeremy Lake



The rear elevation of a cow house in the north of the area, showing hammer-dressed detail to coursed and dressed sandstone walling. Photo © Jeremy Lake

Materials and detail

- There is extensive evidence for a 17th-century and earlier tradition of timber-frame, aisled and cruck construction, mostly reclad and rebuilt in stone and brick. Many traditional buildings in local sandstone and Millstone Grit, with roofs of stone slate laid in diminishing courses, date from the 16th and 17th centuries, with brick being most commonly used from the later 18th century in the south of the area. Welsh slate was introduced from the late 18th century.



Historic England

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