



Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

Southern Lincolnshire Edge

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 47



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>).



Temple Farm, Temple Bruer, near Wellingore. The present-day farm is built on the site of a Templar preceptory, the tower of which can be seen on the left of the picture. The farm buildings are constructed of the local limestone with pantile roofs and brick detailing. Photo © Locus Consultants

Front cover: Little Hale, a typical nucleated settlement on the edge of the heathland. Note the typically rectilinear planned enclosure fieldscape, and the sinuous outline of earlier routeways. Photo © Historic England 28554/016



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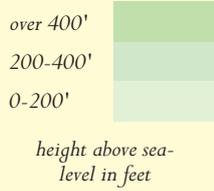
NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 47



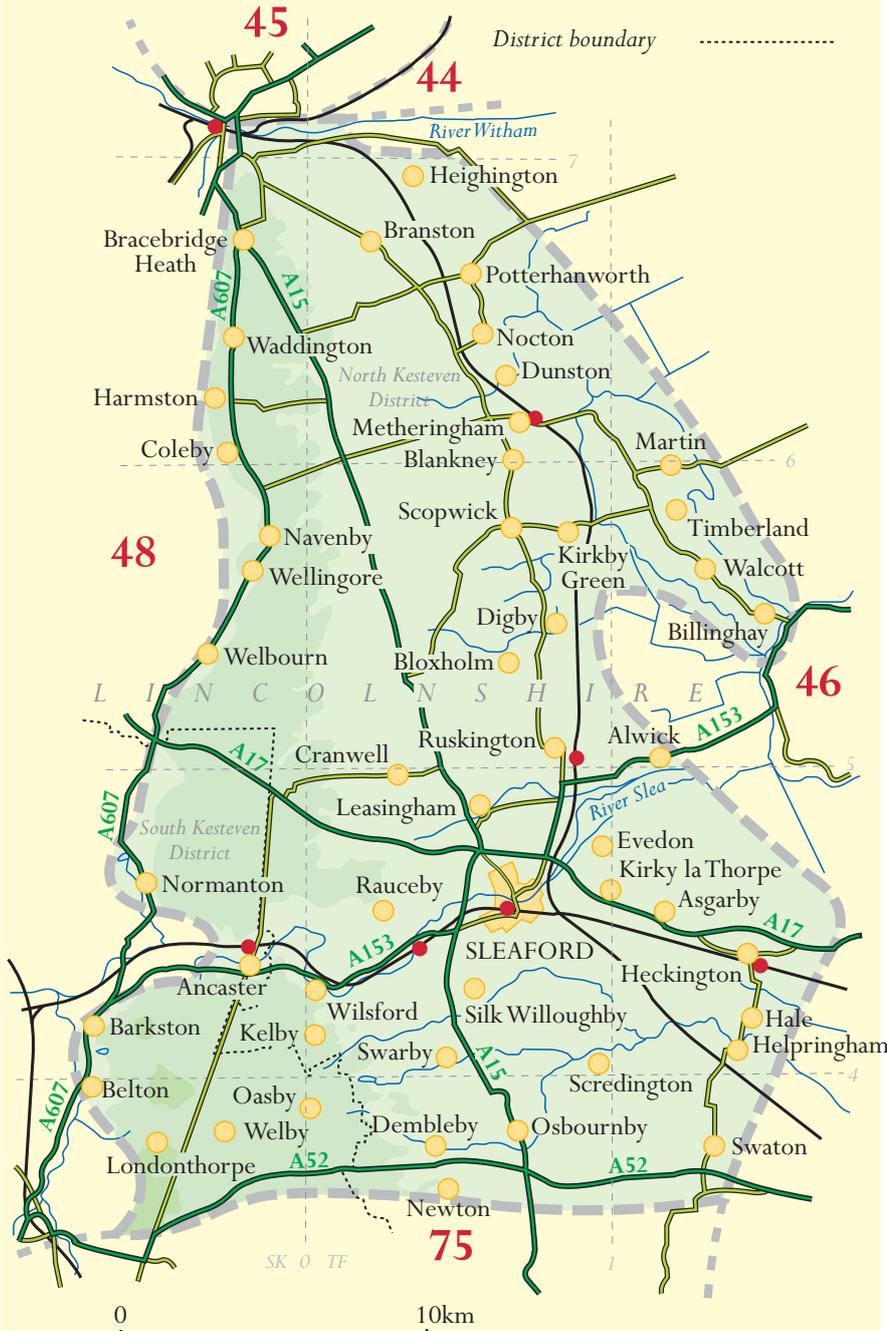
Character Area 47

Southern Lincolnshire Edge

This map shows the Southern Lincolnshire Edge with the numbers of the neighbouring National Character Areas around it.



- Area 47 boundary
- Adjacent Area **46**
- A Road
- B Road
- Railway and Station
- District boundary



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Summary

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

This Character Area describes the southern part of the Lincolnshire Cliff, a limestone scarp that runs along the north–south axis of the county. It shares many features in common with the Northern Cliff Character Area described above. The area is dominated by large-scale arable farming, with many farm holdings exceeding 100ha. There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in the Character Area.

Historic character

- A north–south linear scarp of limestone runs the length of Greater Lincolnshire, with open, former-heath landscape to the east.
- A nucleated medieval settlement pattern follows major routes and spring lines along the scarp.
- There are numerous isolated farmsteads, especially in enclosed former heathland.
- There is a transitional zone of lower ground to the east of the area along the border with the Fens.
- The area incorporates a variety of farmstead types. Older farmhouses, typically found in villages, are often stone-built and have seen the addition of 19th-century working buildings in brick. Away from villages, isolated farmsteads on the former heath are generally of 19th-century origin and are brick built.
- Although courtyard plan farmsteads are more dominant, village farmsteads often have linear or L-shape plans, with the house attached to former working buildings.

Significance

- The mapping of farmsteads in Lincolnshire has shown that the area has, in a national context, a below-average survival of traditional farmsteads from around 1900 – 54% have more than 50% of their historic form surviving (42.85% in Greater Lincolnshire) and 29% (28% in Greater Lincolnshire) retaining some, but less than 50%, of their historic form. Any pre-19th-century buildings are rare.
- Isolated farmsteads generally reflect 19th-century post-enclosure mixed agriculture and ‘high farming’.
- Some older farmsteads on the heath may occupy the sites of former specialist estates and monastic granges.
- Older farmsteads in villages have a more organic and less planned character, and are often associated with irregular pasture fields nearby.
- Local estates influenced village development and continue to contribute to local distinctiveness and architectural design.

Present and future issues

- The centralisation and amalgamation of farming complexes is leading to several historic farms being run from a single farmhouse. Some farm buildings have been retained for storage but farm houses are at greater risk of becoming disused.
- Plans have been proposed for large ‘super-dairy’ farms on the southern heath, requiring

new large modern sheds and related infrastructure.

- In this National Character Area, the Photo Image Project (2006) recorded an average proportion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (35.3%, the national average being 32%).

Historic development

- Archaeological evidence of early settlement is widespread along the southern Edge, including prehistoric linear boundary features and trackways, and the Roman settlement, roads and landscape around Ancaster. Medieval settlement in the area developed in a series of small villages taking advantage of the spring line along the Cliff edge.
- Some medieval villages were abandoned or depopulated as a result of later agricultural changes, but many survived to form the basis of the post-medieval and present pattern of nucleated settlements and very low densities of dispersion. The drier and higher ground of the Cliff and Edge remained largely unsettled until the expansion of enclosed farmland in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and even now the pattern is sparse.
- It is thought that some isolated farms on the heath may have originated between the 14th and 16th centuries as specialist sheep-rearing estates or as monastic granges. The former Templar preceptory at Temple Bruer is an example of this phenomenon. The heathland along the Edge was also used as common grazing land by the villages along the Cliff top. The area was particularly notable for sheep, which were pastured on the heath and allowed to forage in the open fields after the harvest.
- The Character Area is home to a number of large estates, including Belton Park near Grantham, and smaller estates throughout the area. These are often associated with

villages and farms built or adapted by local landowners for their tenants.

- A high proportion (30%) of recorded farmsteads are sited in villages. Most isolated farmsteads relate to 18th- and 19th-century enclosure. The dominant rural landscape pattern of large, straight-edged fields dates from the private and Parliamentary enclosures of open fields and common heath in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the historic mixed farming practices of the area were replaced by large arable farms. These present a stark contrast to the more organic and open landscapes that existed until that point, and mark a key moment of change in farming practice both in the Character Area and in the wider county.
- While there may have been a few isolated farmsteads in the Character Area before this time, it is likely that the majority were founded after enclosure to allow owners and tenants more direct and convenient access to their newly consolidated holdings. This was often particularly advantageous to the so-called ‘improving’ landlords of the late 18th and 19th centuries, with significant investments of capital and equipment driving productivity on the formerly unproductive heath. The Sleaford Maltings, the largest of their kind in the country, are indicative of the vast quantities of grain produced by the surrounding landscape.
- More recently, the intensification of arable cultivation has led to extensive loss of field boundaries, including both hedges and historic dry stone walls. Once necessary to

control livestock, these features became redundant with the changeover to arable cultivation and have since become an

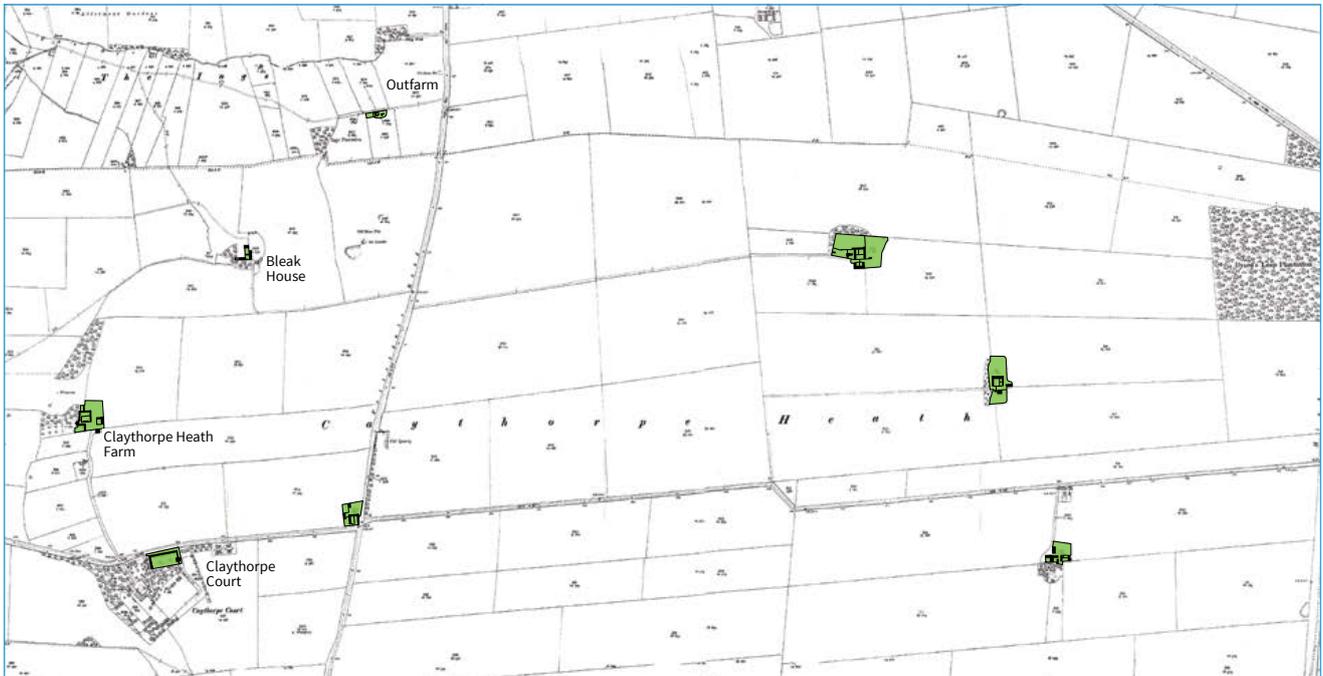
obstacle to more efficient mechanised cultivation techniques.

Landscape and settlement

- The eastern dip slope of the Southern Cliff is much shallower than that of the north, and continues for a greater distance, creating a plateau of settlements between the Cliff edge and the Fens to the east. The former heathland of the Character Area is predominantly located to the east of the A607, the main road running along the Cliff top. The heath is characterised by a strong, rectilinear field pattern of hedgerows and drystone walls, interspersed with isolated farmsteads.
- The Cliff itself presents a stark boundary between the upland heath and the Trent Valley to the west. The primary axis of settlement in the area runs along the top of the Cliff from Waddington to Ancaster, and most villages command wide views to the west. A secondary axis of nucleated villages runs along the edge of the Fens, with parish boundaries extending across the fen-edge. Villages in the area are typically aligned north-south along main roads. Isolated farmsteads are set away from the main roads in areas of former heathland, and often take advantage of dry valleys or other depressions to provide shelter and privacy.
- The rural landscape is dominated by arable fields with long, straight, hedged or walled boundaries and an associated network of straight, wide-verged lanes. Smaller, irregular fields are encountered at the edges of villages or on the steep slope of the Cliff itself, and provide a buffer between the organic character of the villages and the strict, planned fieldscapes that surround them.
- The area is sparsely wooded, with trees typically found on overgrown former hedgerows or as planned shelterbelts, providing protection against the loss of topsoil and shelter for livestock and buildings. The dip slope also retains patches of woodland cover, some of which is recorded as ancient or semi-natural by the Forestry Commission.
- There are fine manor houses dating from the late medieval period. Parklands associated with the country houses of major landowners (Belton, for example) are found on both sides of the Edge along its entire length. These are often recognisable by the survival of pasture, or by the presence of isolated veteran trees in an otherwise arable field. Estate buildings are also a clear feature of parkland landscapes and these take the form of planned regular farmsteads or farmworkers' cottages, often marked with the crest of the relevant estate.

Farmstead and building types

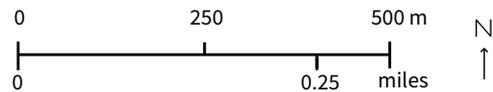
- Pre-19th-century working buildings are very rare, and mostly comprise threshing barns such as those in the villages of Heighington and Potter Hanworth. There are several examples of early 18th-century and possibly 17th-century stone farmhouses in villages. Many village farmsteads fell out of agricultural use in the 17th-19th centuries, leaving little trace of working farm buildings.
- The majority (77%) of farmsteads are constructed to regular courtyard plans, with twice the county average of multi-yard plans (15.4%, average 8%) which have two or more cattle yards. Key elements of regular planned farmsteads in the area include combination barns and mixing barns (the latter without opposing doors for winnowing) with a granary above the main processing space, shelter sheds and loose boxes for cattle, stables and cart sheds for transporting grain and manure. Covered yards – as built from the 1850s for cattle and preserving their manure – were built in greater numbers than the average in Lincolnshire (2.7%, average 1%).



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.

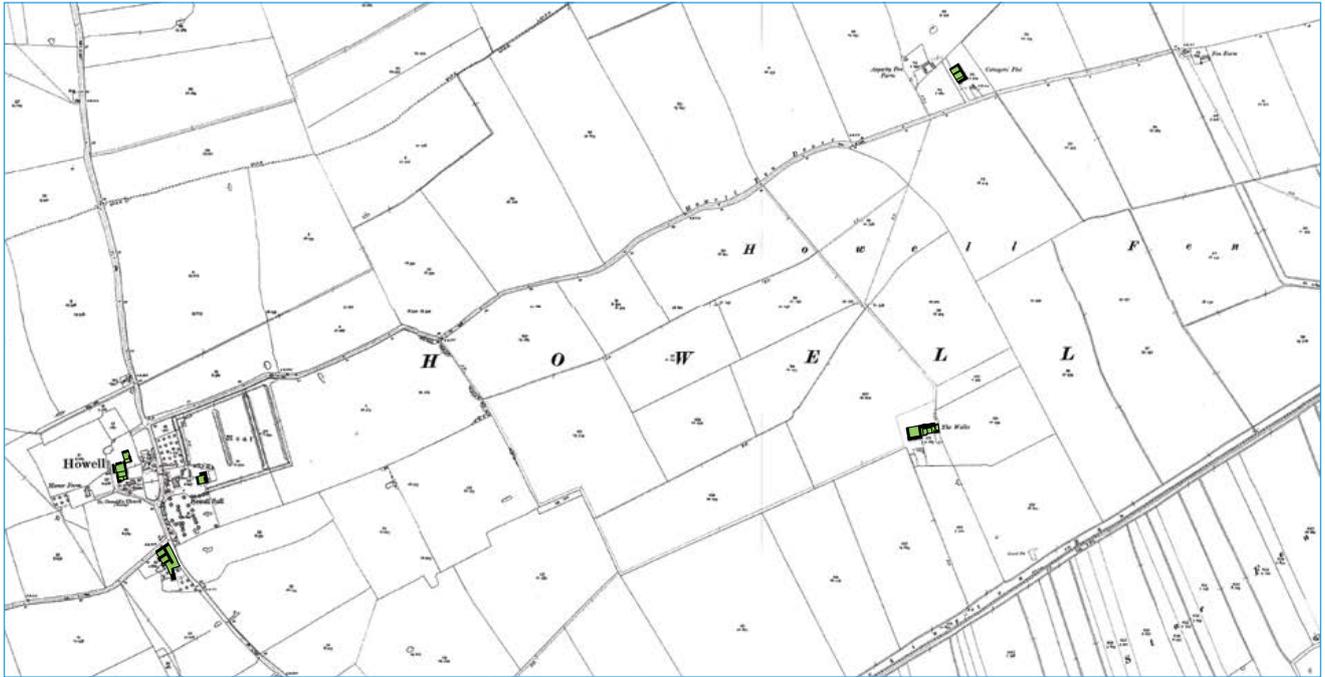


Caythorpe Heath

Isolated farmsteads on Caythorpe Heath, contrasting with the earlier boundaries evident to the west. These are typically large, regular multi-yard courtyard farmsteads set up for arable cultivation, with large combination barns, cart sheds and cattle housing. The surrounding landscape is typical of planned early 19th-century enclosure of the former heathland grazing.

- Small farmsteads including those recorded as linear and dispersed plan types (9.6% of the total) have for centuries been amalgamated into larger farms. They have a similar range of building types but many were extended and remodelled as courtyard plans in the 19th century to allow for more effective arable cultivation – 77% as regular plan forms, and 13% as loose courtyards. Farmsteads of large,

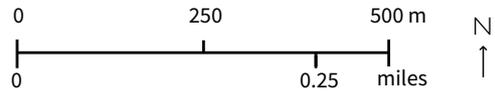
regular courtyard types predominate. There are also some examples of village-based linear farmsteads and loose courtyard farmsteads, typically concentrated in villages and areas of piecemeal enclosure. Pre-enclosure specialist farms on the former heath, as at Temple Bruer, are sited within these areas of piecemeal enclosure.



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



Howell

The medieval settlement at Howell is focused around its medieval church and churchyard cross, and a medieval routeway extends eastwards towards Howell Fen. The farmsteads in the village, and those resulting from early 19th-century drainage and reorganisation of the fields outside the village – some boundaries retaining the curved outlines of medieval open field strips – were rebuilt and built as regular courtyard plans with cattle yards for fat-stock and barns for processing corn and feed.



A regular U-plan farmstead on the edge of Helpringham, with yard now covered by a modern shed. Note the early 20th-century Dutch barn in the foreground, for the storage of arable crops. Photo © Historic England 28554/020



In contrast, this farmstead in the centre of Helpringham village developed within the confines of much earlier plots, with a loose arrangement of buildings around its farmyard. Note again the early 20th-century Dutch barn in the foreground. Photo © Historic England 28554/022

Materials and detail

- The most common building materials are brick and tile. Ironstone and Limestone are also used throughout the area.
- There may be very rare surviving evidence of timber frame and mud and stud, the remnants of pre-18th century building traditions.



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This guidance has been prepared by Alastair Macintosh and Adam Partington, Locus Consultants, with Jeremy Lake.

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