

## 4. Historic Farmsteads and Estates

### 4.1. Estates

#### Aims

The objective behind the creation of this dataset was principally to gain a greater understanding of the rural landscape within the Park and how it has changed since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Agriculture and farming were important industries in the Colne Valley Park until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, the pressures of urbanisation and the extraction industry have had a significant impact on historic estates and farmland essentially changing the character of the modern landscape.

Agricultural land in the Colne Valley Park has undergone major change since the 1800's with a significant reduction in available land as well as some change in land use. This report records changes to the agricultural landscape since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and relates these changes to the farmsteads in an attempt to map estate holdings.

#### Methodology for historic estates

This stage of the project involved visits to records offices in order to research enclosure and tithe awards for every parish within the Colne Valley Park (see Appendix 3, Table 6 for dates). The first step in creating a computer based mapping layer focused on digitising the field systems taken from the enclosure awards before examining changes since that time. This rapid survey was carried out across the entire Colne Valley Park in order to begin with an overview of the landscape at this time; Figure 51a shows the major landowners at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The data gathered for the farms and estates interpretation stage was represented on a different layer to the original HLC. Consequently a separate attribute table was created with initial information on surviving farms, taken from the original HLC, incorporated into the enclosed field systems in order to limit repetition between this layer and the original dataset. The attribute table was then adapted to accommodate new information applicable to this stage. Appendix 2: Table 7 outlines the adapted attribute table for this stage. Once complete mapping for the Colne Valley Park was carried out from the enclosure and tithe awards, areas of lost enclosed land (i.e. enclosed land which has been "lost" to other land uses in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) were removed in order to focus on the surviving field systems. Areas of lost enclosed lands were preserved in a separate file for reference.

This layer also recorded other information concerning the current field systems including the condition of the enclosed land, and their land use. This essentially divided land use into arable or animal grazing. This information was gathered using aerial photographs to distinguish between arable land and land used for grazing and as such does not distinguish between land used for dairy farming and land used for piggeries and stables. However, some inference can be made concerning this through proximity to known farms, piggeries and stables. Inevitably this data is provisional and should not be relied upon without further ground-truthing.

## Analysis

**Figure 51: Landscape of the time of the enclosure awards (1820s)**

a) *The major landowners of the 1800s*

b) *Historic landscape survival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century estates*

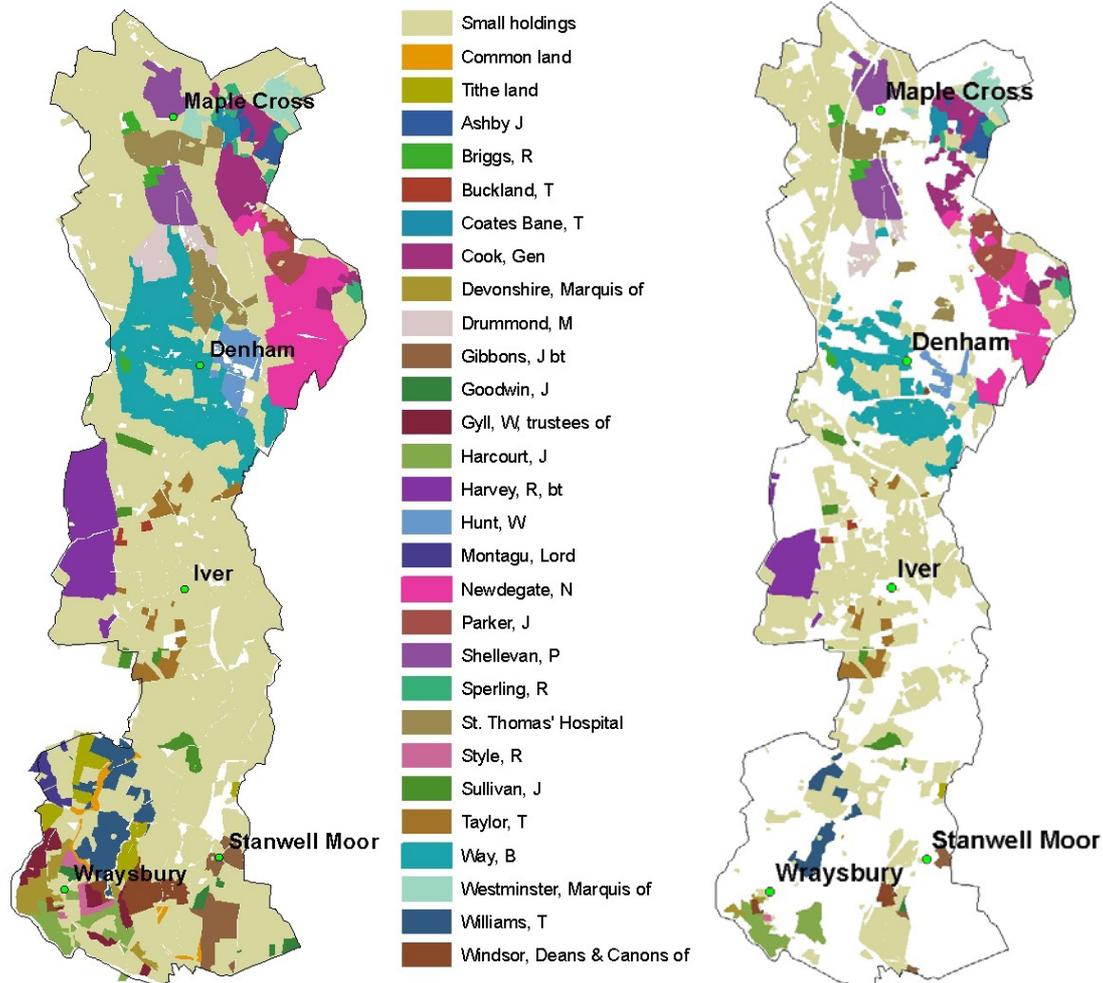
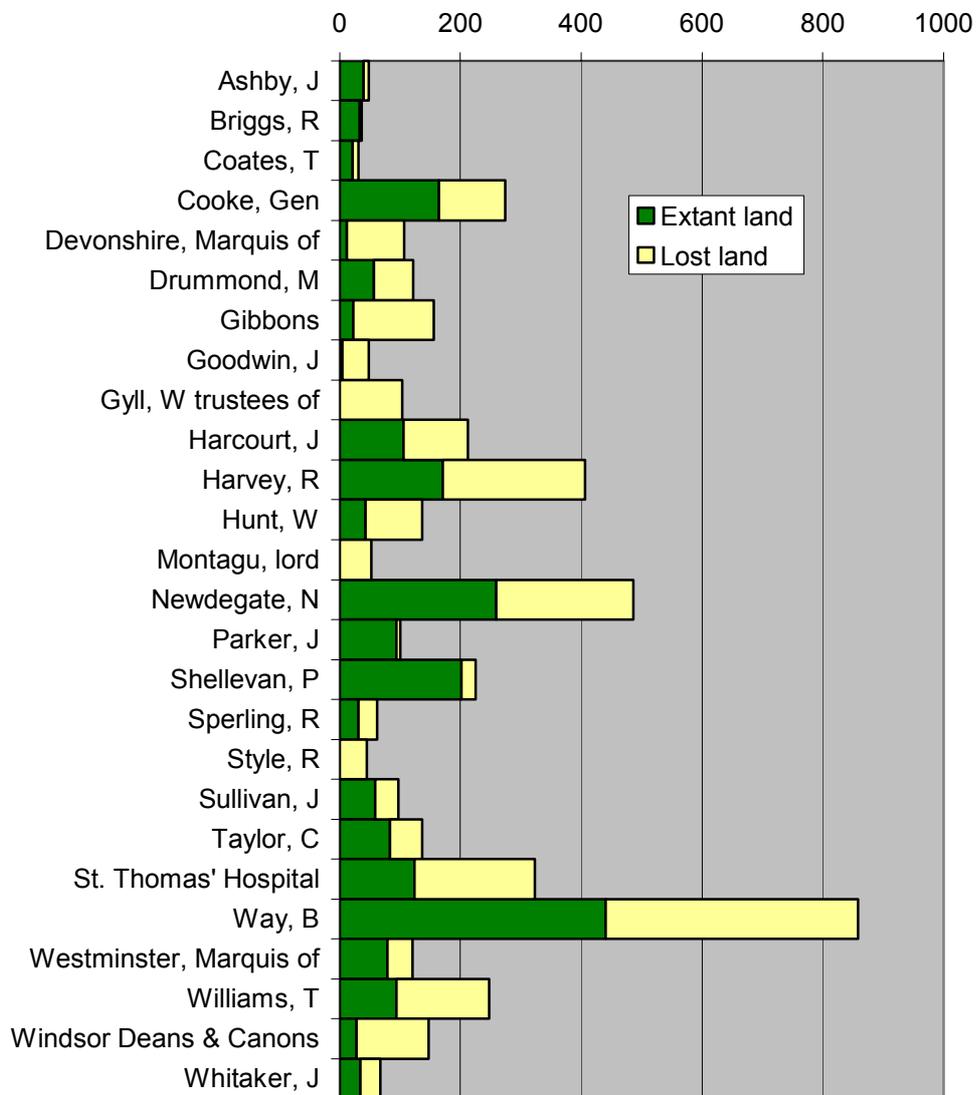


Figure 51a shows the major landowners of the 19<sup>th</sup> century according to their estate holdings at the time of the enclosure awards. A generic term (smallholdings) was used for areas where no ownership was recorded or where individual holdings were limited to one or two fields. Immediate differences can again be seen between the north and south of the Park with the north divided into a few large estates while the south was more fragmented. This can be used to assess levels of preservation of the historic landscapes of these estates; for example, the landscape of the estate of St Thomas' Hospital around Maple Cross remained intact despite the cessation of the hospital in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century because the entire estate was sold to Mrs Goodlake who retained possession until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century (Page: 1925). The majority of the estate belonging to the Newdegate family of Harefield was also sold in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but again has remained intact. Many of the other estates, however, have either disappeared entirely such as William Gill's estate in Wraysbury and that of Lord Montagu in Datchett, or have been significantly reduced as estates were broken up in later years such as the estate of General Cooke in Harefield. Originally bought from the Ashby family prior to the enclosure awards, the estate has since been heavily divided due to the loss of fortune for the Cooke family (Baker et al: 1962). The remainder of the Ashby family estate, totalling some 230ha, survived

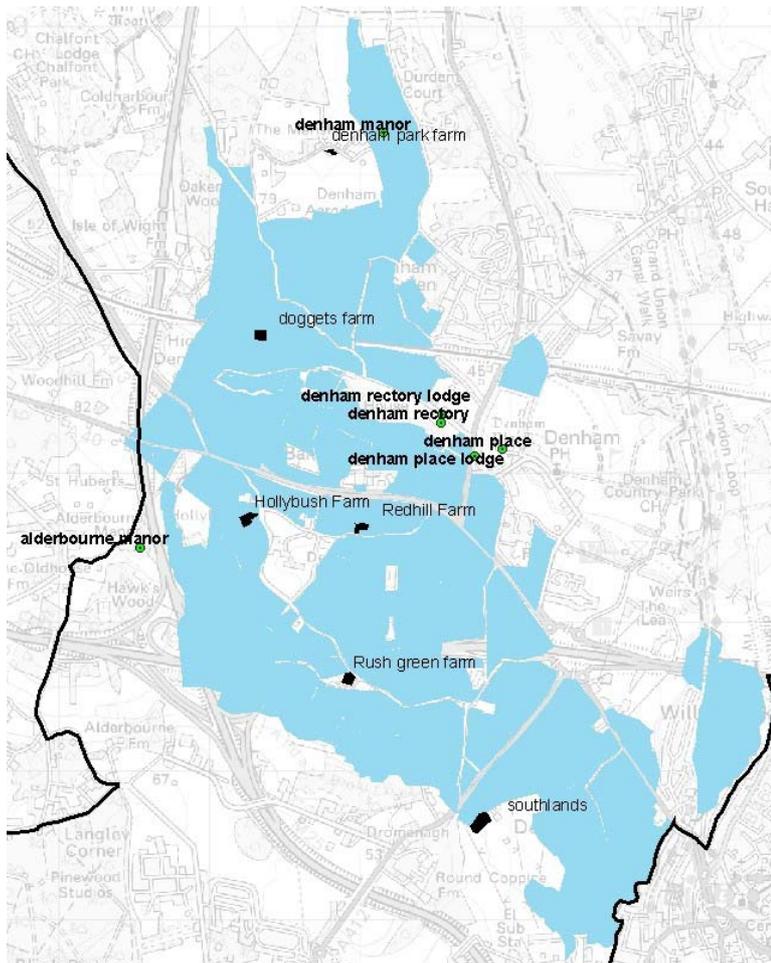
intact until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the land, along with Breakspear House, was purchased by the County Council (Baker et al: 1962).



**Figure 52: Extent of land ownership according to major landowners of the 19th century**

A number of estates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century no longer exist at all, with only one or two estates surviving more or less intact, the principal example being that of the Way family around Denham, yet this landscape is significantly altered in terms of its characterisation possibly indicating that the historic farms and estates previously incorporated into the Way estate have since become estates in their own right. Figure 52 shows the breakdown of land ownership from the 1800's and the present day survival of these estates. This shows that the Way family estate, for example, is approximately half of what it once was indicating a high level of fragmentation in this area, this is in common with all the major estates of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the majority showing at least a 50% loss in land.

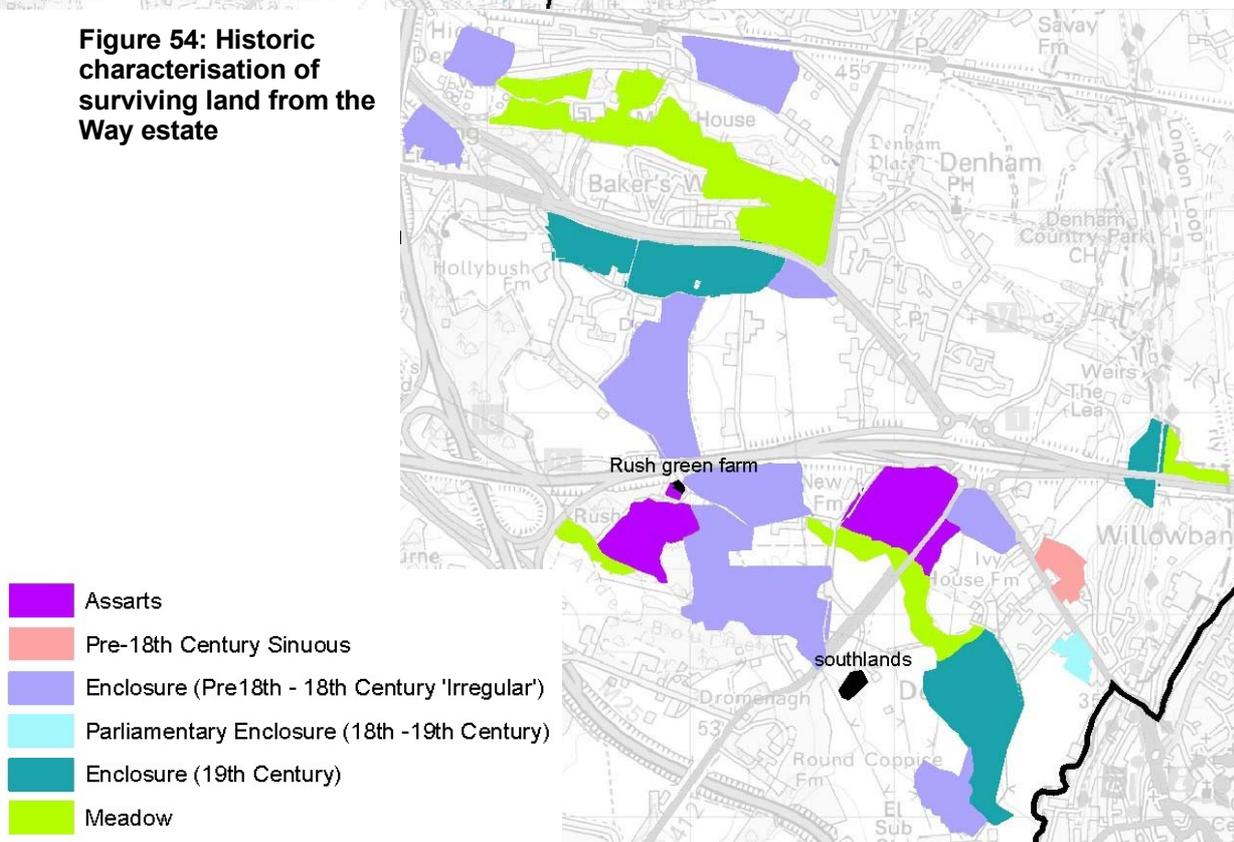
**Figure 53: Extent of the Way family estate in the early 19th century**



### The Way Family Estate

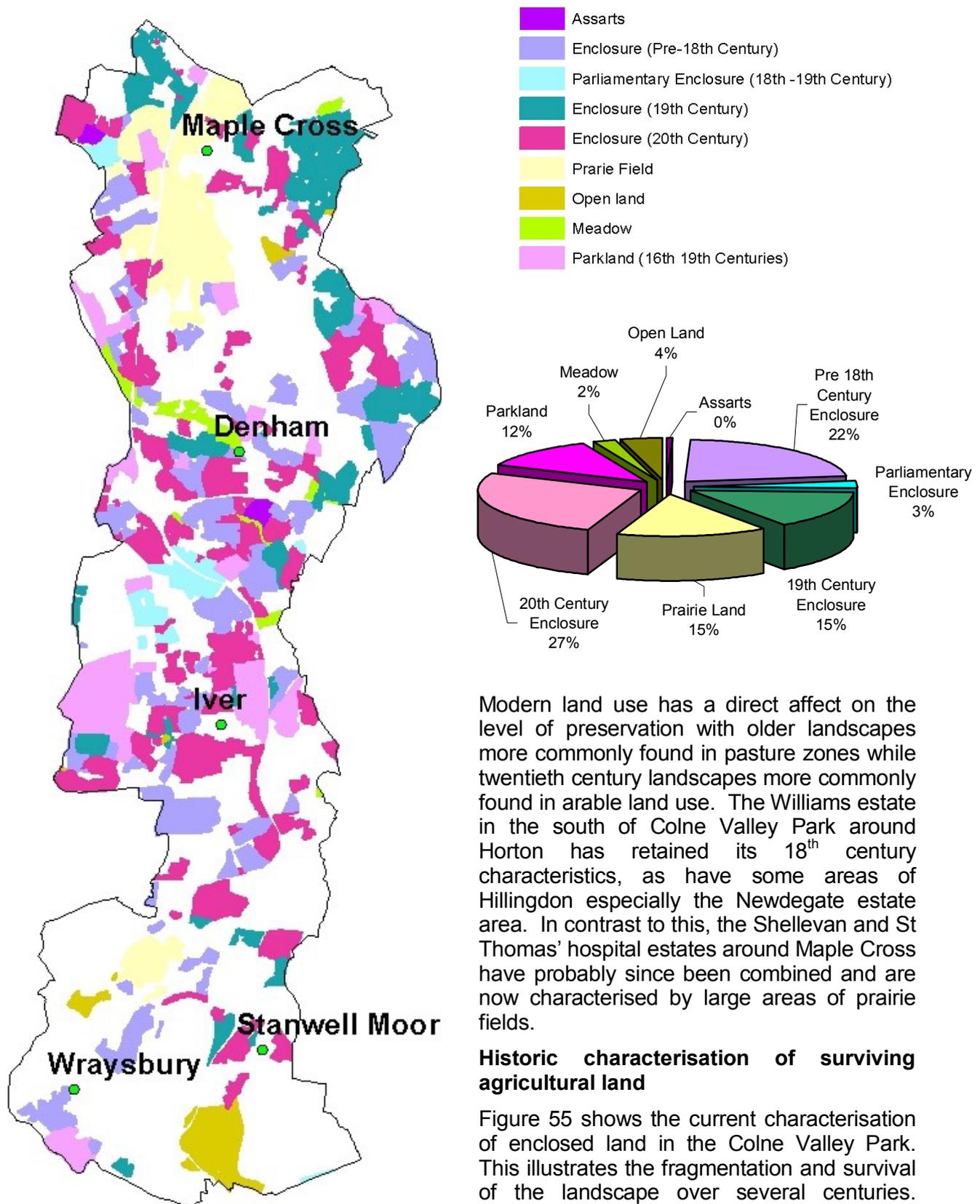
The Way family were major landowners in Denham during the 1800s, they owned over 800ha along with several houses and farms many of which were leased out to tenants (Figure 53). By the present day, however, land that had been owned by them in the 1800s had been reduced to 440ha and of the five farms within the estate in the 1800s, just two have continued as working farms (shown on Figure 54). The characterisation of the surviving land also exhibits some variation between 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century landscapes with some degree of preservation of landscapes such as meadows. Of the non-surviving land, significant proportions are now characterised as golf courses and airfields suggesting that the estate was divided through a small number of large sales in the twentieth century rather than a more gradual decline.

**Figure 54: Historic characterisation of surviving land from the Way estate**



## Historic characterisation of surviving agricultural land

Figure 55: Current characterisation of agricultural land



Modern land use has a direct affect on the level of preservation with older landscapes more commonly found in pasture zones while twentieth century landscapes more commonly found in arable land use. The Williams estate in the south of Colne Valley Park around Horton has retained its 18<sup>th</sup> century characteristics, as have some areas of Hillingdon especially the Newdegate estate area. In contrast to this, the Shellevan and St Thomas' hospital estates around Maple Cross have probably since been combined and are now characterised by large areas of prairie fields.

### Historic characterisation of surviving agricultural land

Figure 55 shows the current characterisation of enclosed land in the Colne Valley Park. This illustrates the fragmentation and survival of the landscape over several centuries. Twentieth century field systems and prairie

fields dominate enclosed land in the Park covering 42% of the landscape. Pre 18<sup>th</sup> century field systems have survived throughout the Park whilst parliamentary enclosure has fared less well with only a small number of surviving field systems, primarily in Buckinghamshire. 19<sup>th</sup> century field systems are characteristic of the landscape around Hillingdon and Rickmansworth with small patches surviving elsewhere in the Park.

**Figure 56: Changes in land use over the 20th century**

*a) 1950's land use*

*b) 1990's land use*

*c) present day land use*

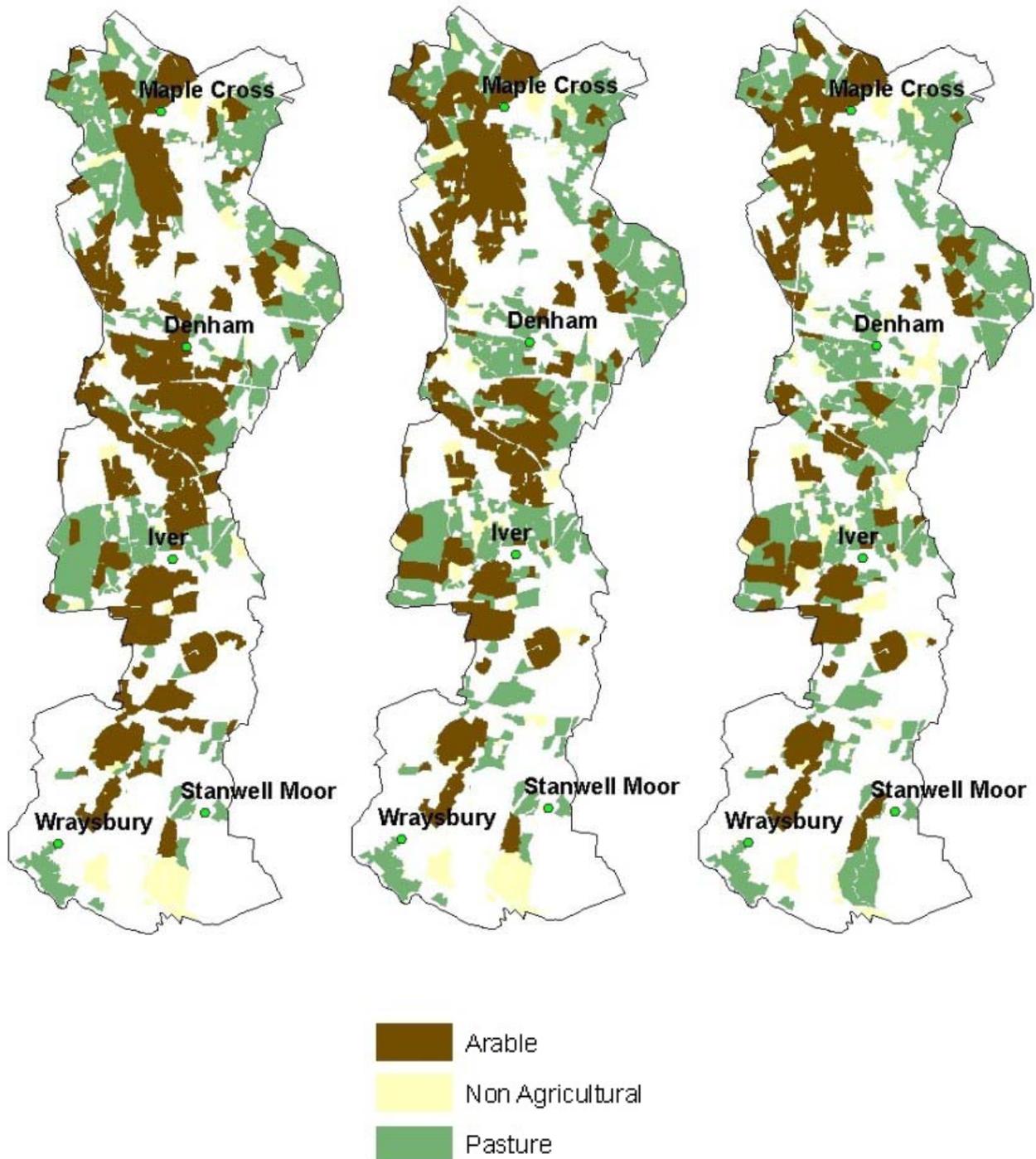


Figure 56 shows the changes in land use over three stages from the 1950's - 2003 the information for this was taken from aerial photographs showing time slices for the 1950's, 1990's and 2003; this shows a significant shift in agricultural land across the middle of the Park moving away from arable farming around Denham and Iver this in part reflects the introduction of a number of piggeries to this area, and Colnbrook. In contrast, land use in the north around the Chalfonts and Maple Cross, has shifted in the other direction with land becoming increasingly used for arable farming. This pattern is very clearly shown in the historic characterisation of the Park (Figure 55). The landscape in the central and southern areas is characterised by smaller field systems of variable morphology and date while the landscape in the north is predominately large open prairie fields. The small area of pasture to the south of Newlands Park represents an area of landscape stability through changing land use as the field systems here consist of primarily small field systems ideally suited to the current land use for horses.

By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosed agricultural land in the Colne Valley Park was roughly equally divided between arable and pastoral land. Unenclosed agricultural land at this point included landscapes where specific agricultural uses might be temporary or hard to discern such as heaths and commons. Some land was currently in use as mineral extraction sites but later reverted to agricultural land. By the 1990's, however, land use had significantly changed again with a shift of approximately 200ha from arable to pasture farming and a further loss of 100ha to non-agricultural purposes. This shift may reflect an increase in specialist farming outside of the traditional dairy production towards piggeries, sheep farming and poultry. It is also likely that this change in land use reflects a shift towards private non-agricultural land use for horse/pony grazing. Land use in 2003 shows a further overall decrease of approximately 250ha in arable land with a locational shift from the central zone to the north of the Park around Three Rivers.

## 4.2. Historic Farmsteads

### Aims

Historic working farmsteads were once a key part of the English landscape, but this resource is fast becoming lost through a combination of urbanisation, re-use or abandonment. Barns and outbuildings, especially, frequently face one of two choices - renovation as a house or business or abandonment and dereliction. This is an important issue as typically only a small proportion of farm outbuildings are registered as listed buildings or included on local HER/SMR databases. This resource assessment attempts to record the farmsteads in the Park in order to gain an understanding of change in the landscape and what factors have affected the survival of the fabric of farm units.

### Methodology

The second section of this stage was a more in depth study of the historic farms within the Park using English Heritage's categories for farmstead morphologies as shown in Table 1 (HELM: 2006) in order to assess first their current morphology and then their condition by assessing changes to this morphology, considering the loss and additions of buildings, between the OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition map and the current OS landline. Farmsteads were also then characterised according to their current use - whether they remain as working farms or whether they have been converted to other uses such as business or residential. Other information recorded included the current size and name of farmsteads.

**Table 1: Farmstead Morphologies (see appendix 3 for greater detail)**

Linear Plan	House and farm buildings arranged in a single line, rare in the south of England.
L Shaped Plan	A possible evolution of the linear plan, house and farm buildings organised in continuous L shape design
Dispersed	Irregular scattering of farm and farm buildings, can often represent two separate farms.
Courtyard	Several courtyard morphologies are used including loose; L plan; U plan and full regular. Farm and farm buildings are arranged around a central area.

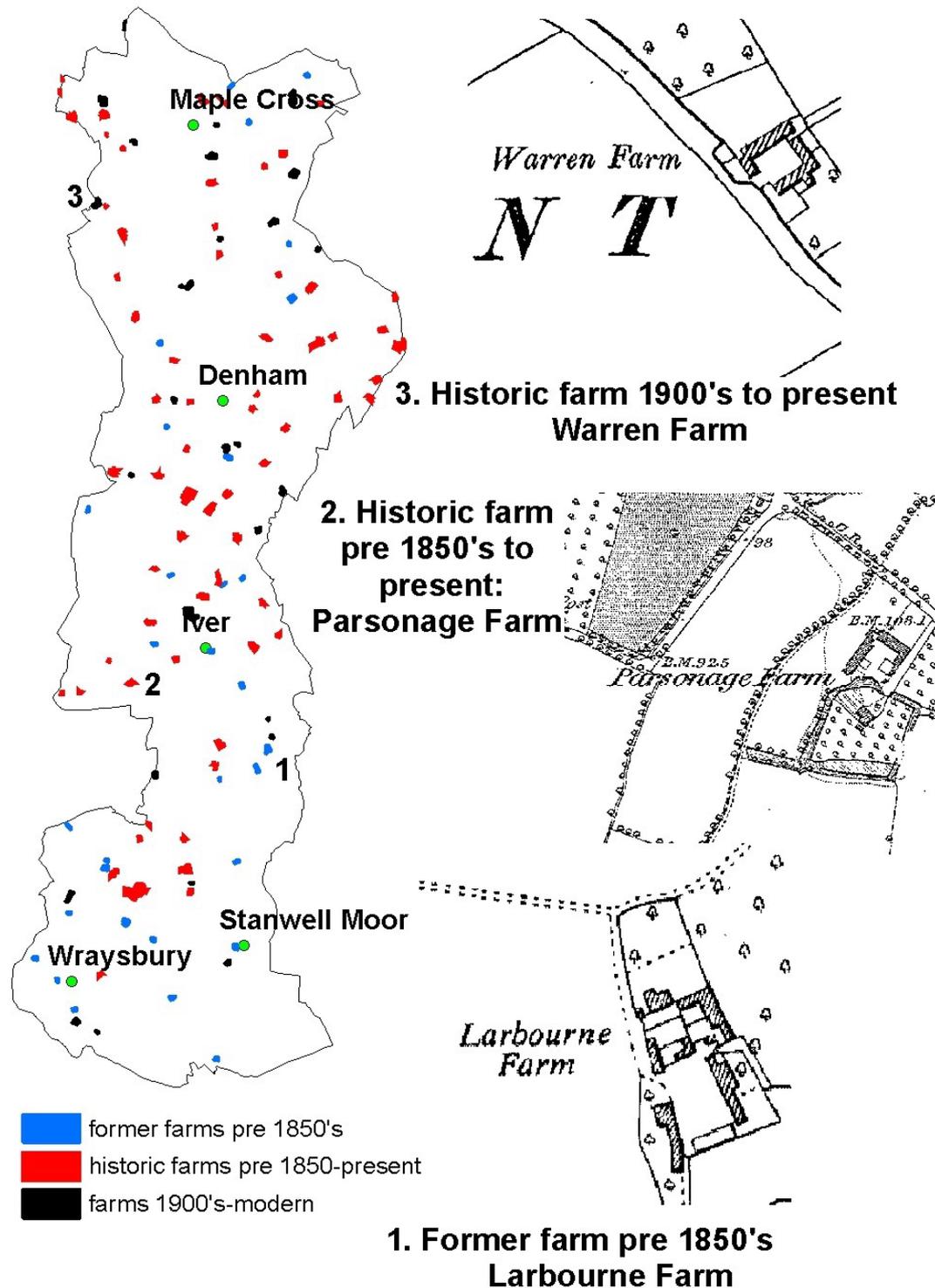
### Analysis

There are approximately 131 farms recorded on the original HLC database for the Colne Valley Park, including modern and historic types. These HLT's were transferred from the original database to the Historic farms and estates layer. 34 are modern farms dating from the OS 1955 map to the present and have therefore been excluded from this section of the project, while the remaining 97 historic farms have been subdivided into farms that first appear on the earliest map sources, characterised as historic farms (69); and those which appear between the OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition map (1876) and the OS 1955 edition, characterised as early 20<sup>th</sup> century farms (28). An additional 33 farms were plotted in the Historic farms and estates database, characterised as farms that appear on the earliest map sources (OS 2<sup>nd</sup> surveyors, historic maps) but that no longer exist.

Figure 57 shows the distribution of farms within the Colne Valley Park, existing farms were taken from the original Colne Valley HLC while non-surviving farms were plotted onto a new layer, modern farms were not included in the historic farmsteads

database. The examples shown highlight some of the characteristics of farmsteads from each period.

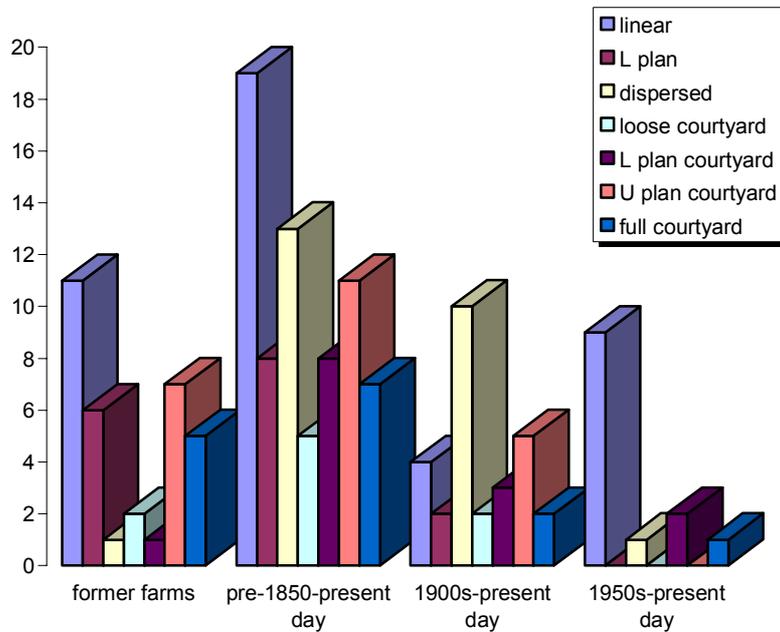
**Figure 57: All farms recorded within the Colne Valley Park © Ordnance Survey (background maps)**



Historic farms built before 1850 tend to be much more varied in style, linear farmstead morphologies account for 28 of the 97 pre 1850 farms but, courtyard farmsteads of varying types including U shaped, L shaped and regular account for

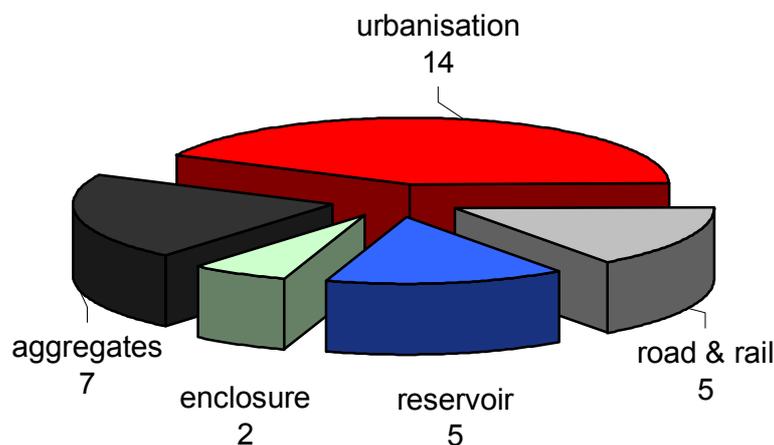
45. This is indicative of a more planned farm unit with a particular function that did not vary to any significant extent. Farms built after 1900, however, exhibit much less variation in morphology as 10 of the 25 farms display a dispersed morphology indicative of *ad hoc* additions and unplanned buildings suggesting more frequent changes to the function and size of the farm and estate in response to changing demands from the agricultural industry.

**Figure 58: Morphology of farmstead by period**



A total of 33 farms are no longer recorded on current maps, Figure 59 illustrates the subsequent landscape characterisation for farmsteads in the Colne Valley Park. The most common single cause of loss is shown to be urbanisation as farms became incorporated into towns and villages and eventually underwent redevelopment. The construction of reservoirs and the extraction of minerals accounted for a loss of 45% (15) of the 33 farmsteads with the major period of loss being during the 1920's growth period. The greatest area of loss occurred in the south and is a reflection of the major changes that took place in the first half of the twentieth century in this area.

**Figure 59: Causes for loss of farms in the Colne Valley Park**

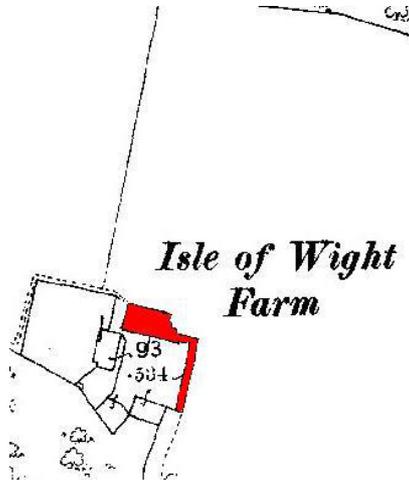


**Examples of typical Colne Valley farms**

**A growing farm: Isle of Wight farm**

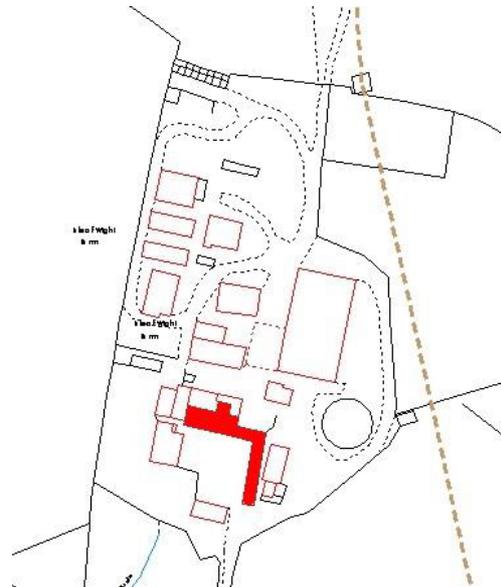
**Figure 60: Isle of Wight farm, Denham parish**

a) © OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1880



The Isle of Wight farm lies just north of Denham Marsh Wood in the parish of Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire. It is an historic working farm dating back to the enclosure awards, morphologically, this farm exhibits an L plan courtyard layout. This farm has grown through the addition of a number of buildings as well as some silos. It is listed as an arable farm in business directories.

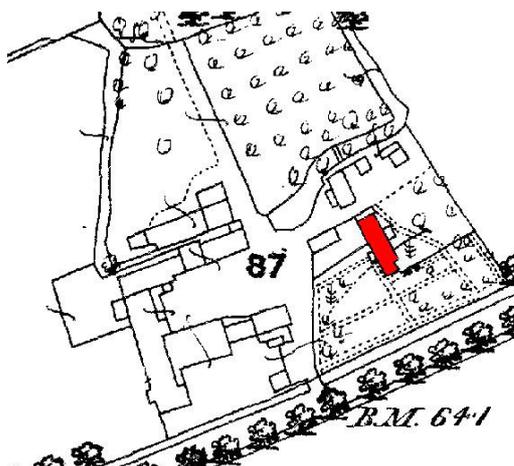
b) © OS Mastermap 2005



**A shrunken farm: Mildridge farm.**

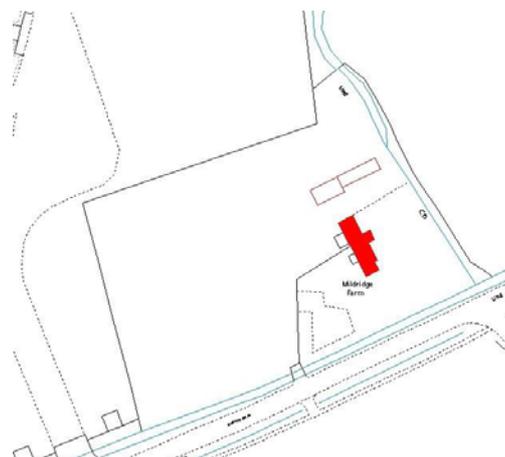
**Figure 61: Mildridge farm**

a) © OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1880.



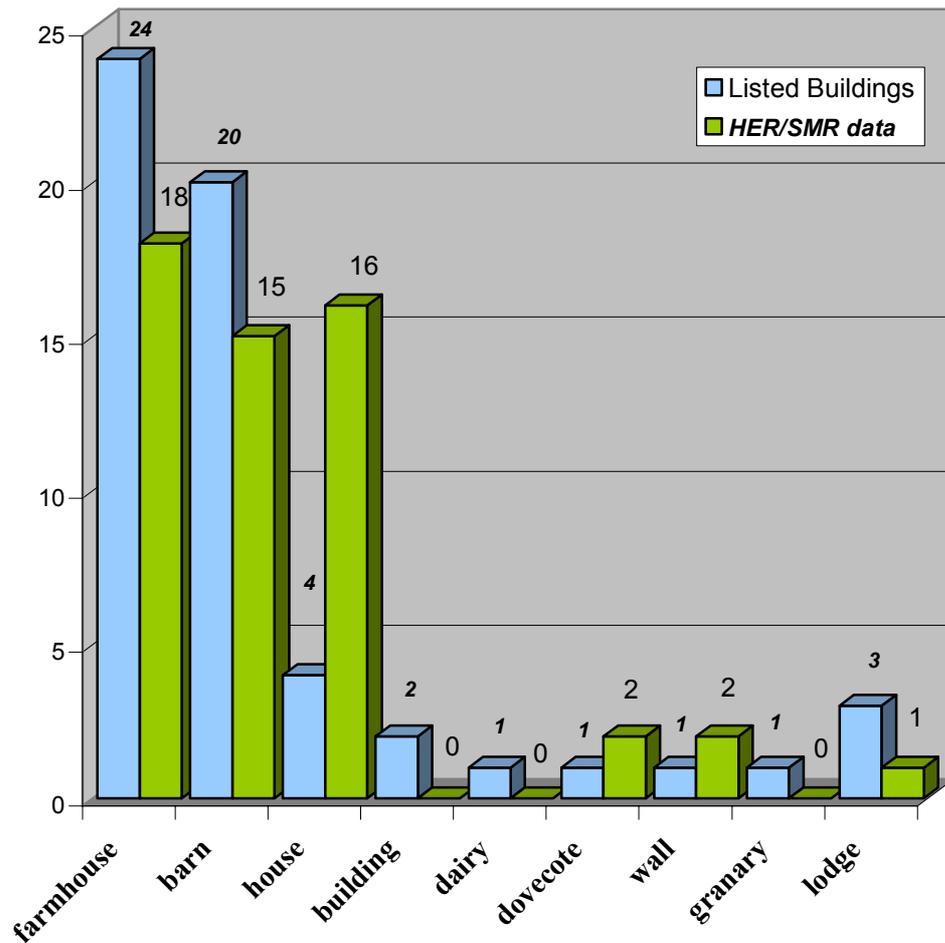
Mildridge farm is in the parish of Horton and lies near the Wraysbury reservoir. It is no longer a working farm having been converted into a residential property. Figure 61b shows the loss of all associated farm buildings along with the garden and orchards with only the main house and immediate land surviving, its current morphology is that of a linear farm.

b) © OS Mastermap 2005



A total of 57 listed buildings relating to farmsteads have been recorded within the Colne Valley Park, Figure 62 illustrates the general descriptions of listings. These 57 listings, however, only apply to 38 of the 89 pre-1950's farmsteads with separate listings for farmhouses and farm buildings. The vast majority of these listings are at grade II, with only Savay farmhouse near Denham listed as grade I and King John's Hunting lodge at Place farm in Wraysbury listed as grade II\*. The majority of listings fall under the category of either farmhouse or barn with a significantly lesser number of historic houses and lodges recorded at farmstead sites.

**Figure 62: Historic farms with listed building and HER/SMR records within the Colne Valley Park**



In contrast, HER/SMR data for the same locations show some significant variations. Medieval and post-medieval farmhouses and barns are under-represented in the HER/SMR records in comparison to the listed buildings data whereas the former should in fact be much more numerous as a record of the full resource. This illustrates an area for enhancement if full HER coverage of built heritage is to be attained. Ancillary agricultural buildings are very poorly represented in both listing and HER data but it is not known without further survey if this reflects poor survival or, more likely, a lack of study.

## **Future Research**

This dataset has a number of practical applications relevant to both the Partnership and to the local community; as a basis for further historical research on the farms and agricultural land within the Park through educational and community programmes to studies of lost farms, the level of preservation of surviving farms and their farm buildings. The data could also be used to examine the place of the farm within the landscape, focusing on the relationship between an historic farm and its surrounding landscape. For this, farms could be studied either on an individual basis or by parish to see how the farm unit and the landscape have changed over the past 200 years, focusing on outside influences such as the pressures of the twentieth century have altered their importance to the landscape and the community. Such studies may also be able to determine current landholdings attributed to each farm, one aspect of this dataset that could not be fully realised.

This database also has applications as an educational tool focusing on the local community; such projects could impact on a number of related subjects beyond history, such as maths and art. The following website details a short course designed by Middle Tennessee State University examining the importance of historic farms, their buildings and their place in the landscape:

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~then/HistFarms/index.html>. This is one example of how a historic farms database can be used and even improved through school projects, the addition of oral histories could enhance this study beyond a purely computer based database and a photographic and artistic archive of the historic farms could also be an important addition. Such studies carried out over several years could provide an ongoing record of changes to farmsteads within the Park and perhaps highlight areas where conservation might be a priority.

Further uses of this dataset might include pattern analysis of farmstead survival in relation to the landscape around them, whether, for example, isolation from farmland has resulted in changing of the farmstead status from working to other forms of use or whether the farmstead continues to function in isolation from the bulk of their farmland.

## 5. Boundary mapping

### Aims of Study

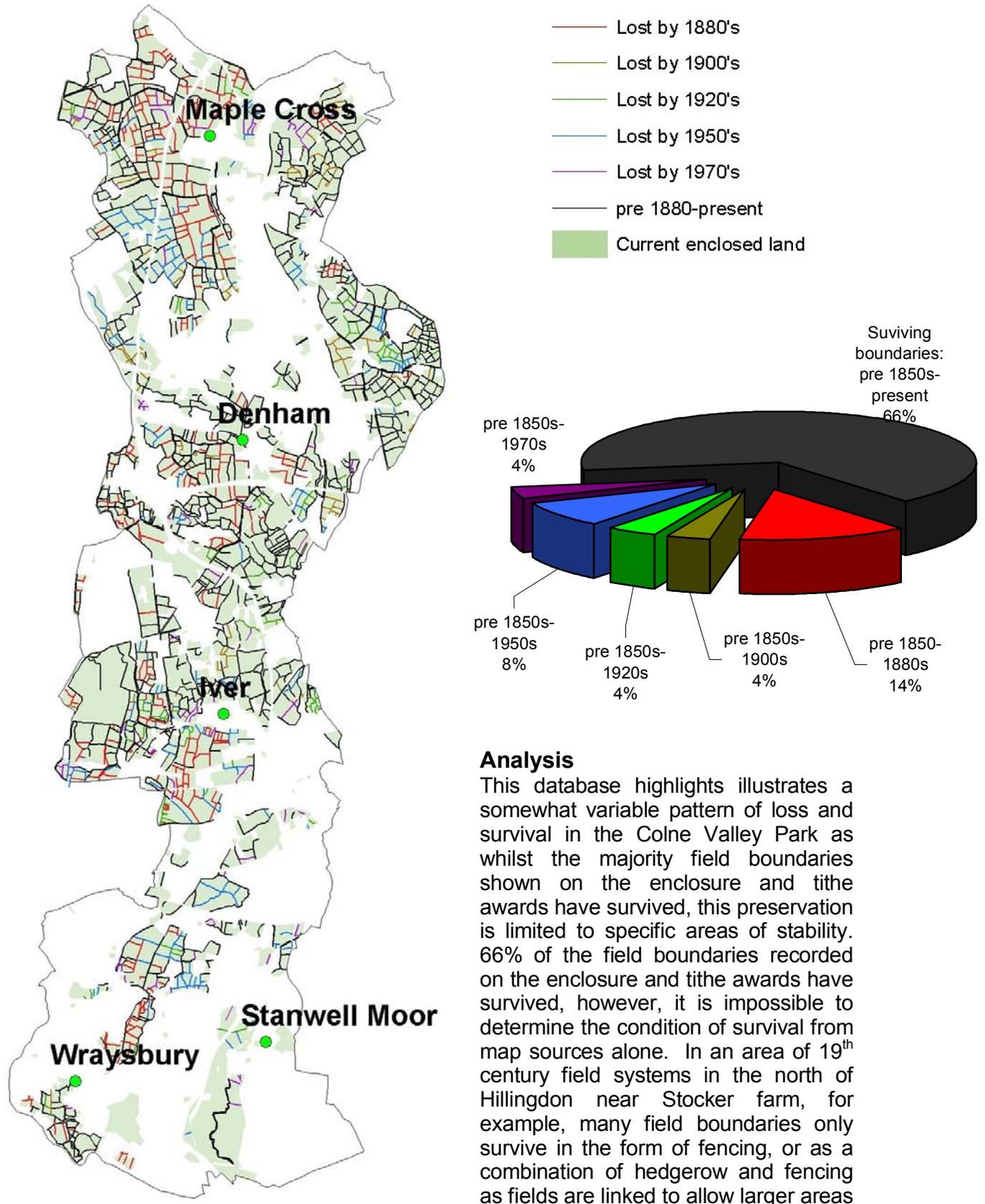
Another feature of this project was to carry out an analysis of field boundaries within the Colne Valley Park in order to identify areas of significant change and survival in the landscape. With the introduction of the Hedgerows Regulations in 1997 better provision has been made for the protection and conservation of important hedgerows, in consequence this, and future surveys, could provide an essential database to aide future planning decisions affecting boundary change. This database will be used as a basis for more detailed hedgerow surveys to be carried out on a parish level, this in turn can lead on to other projects including habitat and biodiversity surveys as well as conservation projects targeting areas under threat of total destruction.

### Methodology

Initial research for this phase was carried out alongside the study of farmsteads and estates through the examination of field boundaries from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. As this layer is based on line rather than area data an entirely new attribute table was created. This dataset focuses on historic boundaries present on the enclosure maps rather than modern additional boundary lines. Unlike the previous two layers created for the general HLC model and the farmsteads layer, this dataset required a more simplified attribute table. Appendix 4: Table 8 shows the attribute table for this layer. This layer includes information on the type - whether a current boundary line is made up of predominately hedgerows, tree lined or fenced, and the morphology of the boundary line. These fields are based on observation from aerial photographs.

The source list for this layer was simplified so that individual OS map series were grouped together into several time slices in order to reduce the quantity of data; each field then indicates the presence of an individual field boundary during each time period. Two fields were used to examine the survival of individual boundaries. Firstly the end period of a given boundary line was recorded in much the same way as period data in the two previous layers using roman numerals to mark the period in which the boundary line disappeared. Secondly the boundary line was given a rating based on its survival from the enclosure maps up to the present day; Figure 63 shows the extent of boundary survival within the Park. Modern boundaries were recorded only when they separated field systems from different landscape characterisations such as settlement or motorways and have not been included in this image (see appendix 3: Figure 2 for full image).

Figure 63: Boundary survival and loss in the Colne Valley Park



for grazing (Figure 64). It is also common for field boundaries to be a combination of types, such as on the Ankerwycke Estate in Wraysbury where the fields are enclosed by fences, hedges and tree line boundaries.

**Figure 64: Fencing used to infill hedgerows, nr Fieldways farm, Harefield**



**Figure 65: Ankerwycke Estate, combination boundary of older trees and more recent fencing**



**Berkin Manor estate boundaries: An altered landscape.**

This small landscape lies just north of Berkin Manor and forms part of the Raynor family estate. Historically this landscape was used as pasture land but in recent years this has changed to arable. The focus area is bordered to the east by the Colne Brook and to the west by Wraysbury reservoir. It is currently characterised as modern prairie land.

**Figure 66: Berkin Manor boundaries**

a) Berkin Manor, Enclosure Map (1799) © BRO

b) Berkin Manor, present landscape

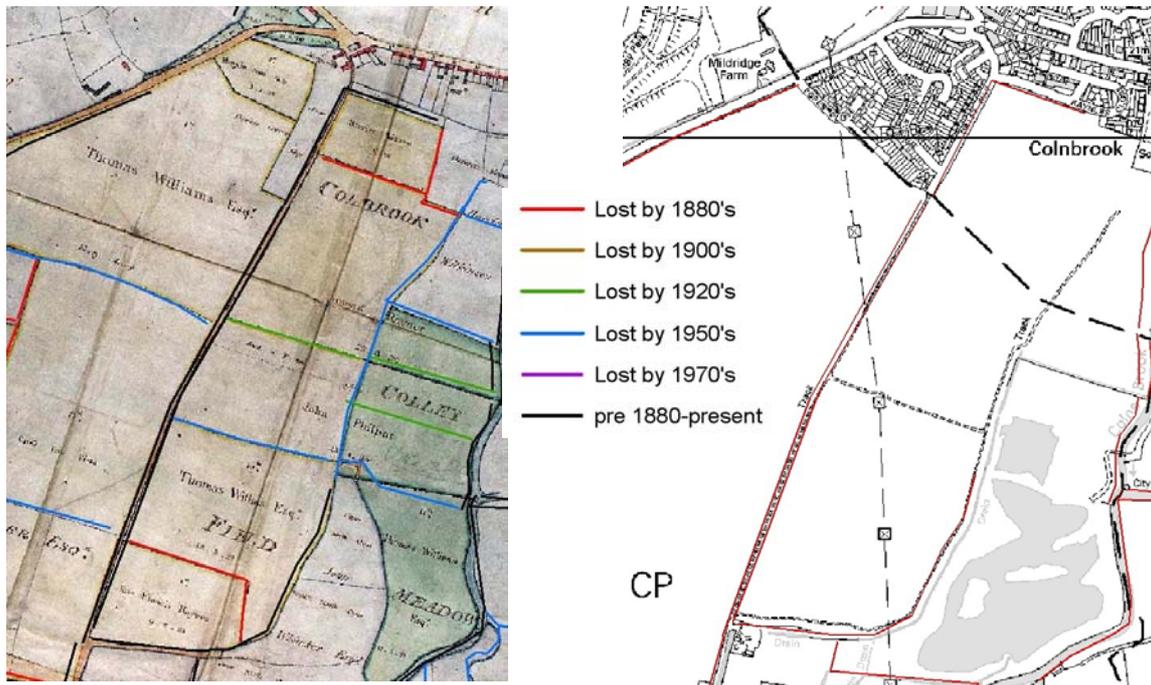


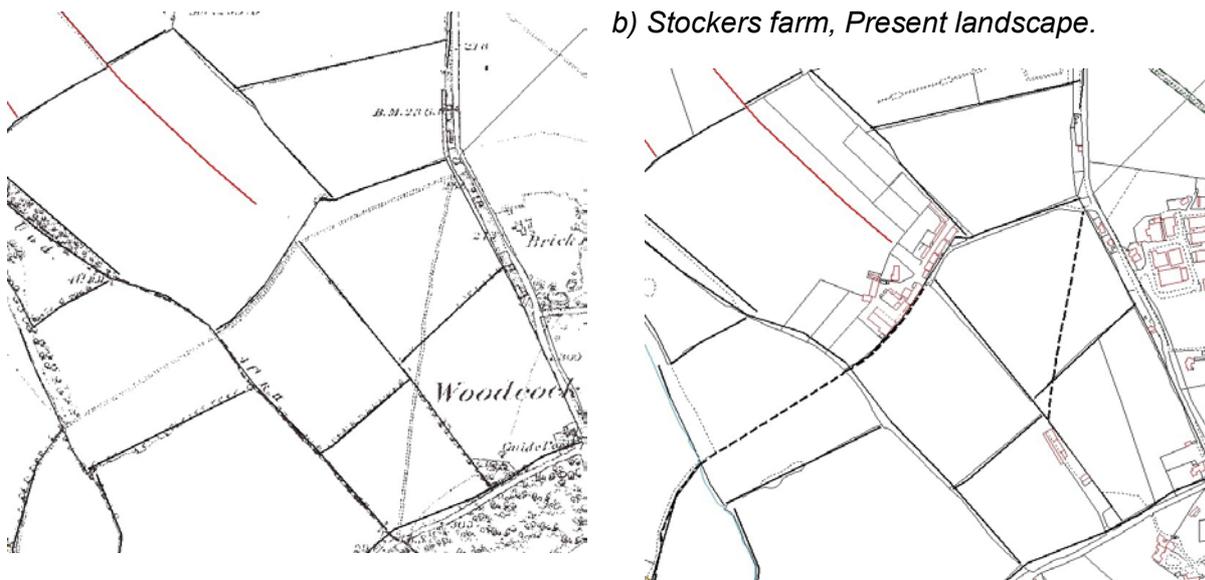
Figure 66 shows that the boundary loss in this area has been occurring gradually since the 1850s as the land use shifted away from the parliamentary enclosed field systems to arable prairie. The biggest period of loss occurred during the 1950s and it is at this point the landscape changed to arable land.

**Stockers Farm Boundaries: A surviving landscape.**

**Figure 67: Stockers farm boundaries**

a) Stockers farm, OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1880

b) Stockers farm, Present landscape.



This area of land lies just south of Batchworth in Rickmansworth in a largely open area; land use is predominately pasture and the field systems date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This area of land is essentially unchanged since the 19<sup>th</sup> century with almost no boundary loss.

## **Future Research**

The data gathered from the boundary mapping stage has many applications outside of the historic environment. Community based and educational projects are an important part of the mission statement for the Colne Valley Partnership and this resource will be used to carry out community based surveys, this could include a map based survey as shown in the following website;

<http://www.dswa.org.uk/Publications/Leaflets/field%20boundaries.htm>

More active involvement at a practical level through biodiversity surveys is another option. The following website gives an example of a simple form that could be used for a community based survey;

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/hedgerowform.pdf>.

This resource will be used by the Colne Valley Partnership as a basis for more detailed studies of field boundaries on a parish level. Current proposals for this include biodiversity surveys of surviving hedgerows and their continued maintenance and to provide an assessment of the quality of hedgerow in an effort to identify areas in need of higher protection and conservation. It is envisaged that this survey will attempt to involve the local community both in the initial data gathering phase and in future monitoring and maintenance of hedgerows. The following website is an example of a volunteer conservation group that works to improve the condition of their local boundaries, they offer short courses in hedgerow maintenance and restoration as well as talks, practical outings for conservation of their local boundaries and opportunities for social occasions.

<http://www.hants.org.co.uk/hev/index.html>

The database can also be use to target areas of particular significance due to their preservation as well as areas under threat from farming processes, urbanisation or industrialisation. This information can then be used to drive conservation programmes within the Park focusing on how local communities could help with conservation practices. Seminars on hedgerow conservation and practical days are also an option.

This database also identifies a small number of areas where hedgerow reinstatement has been implemented following gravel extraction and could also serve to identify other areas and serve as a record of boundary information so that possible reinstatement could occur.