



Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

# Cheviot Fringe

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 3



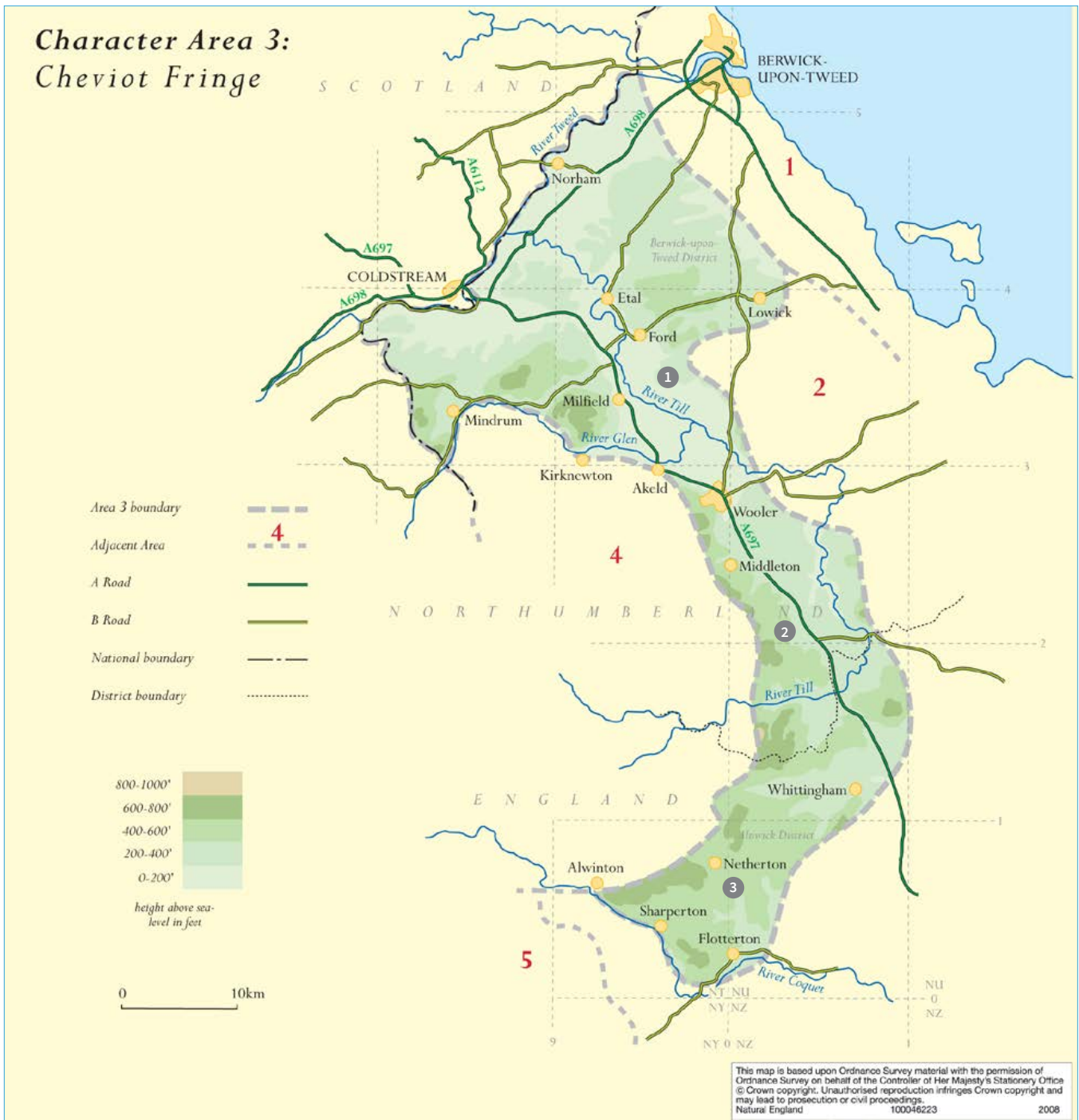
## Introduction

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>).

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**Front cover:** This large, early to mid-19th-century, regular courtyard plan farmstead at Roddam Rigg to the north of Ingram is sited within fields of regular enclosure, probably of the same broad date, which overlay older field systems. It dates from a reorganisation by the Roddam Hall estate. Beyond, on the lower slopes of the Cheviot Hills, sinuous lines of medieval ridge and furrow are crossed by stone walls delineating areas of late, regular enclosure. Photo © Jen Deadman

## Character Area 3: Cheviot Fringe



This map shows the Cheviot Fringe, with the numbers of neighbouring National Character Areas around it. The area subdivisions are:

1. The area north of Wooler, where the largest farms developed around the fertile alluvial terraces of the Till Valley and the Milfield Plain. Large-scale farmsteads and regular enclosure is predominant, and farms often expanded considerably in size over the 20th century as well.
2. The more undulating landscape south of Wooler, which has smaller farms and more evident signs of earlier piecemeal enclosure but which is still characterised by large courtyard farmsteads (by national standards) and regular fields.
3. Coquetdale to the southern fringe, which is an upland dale extending northwards into the Cheviots (Area 4).

# Summary

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

The Cheviot Fringe is a broad valley and plain landscape which forms a belt of lowland wrapping around the Cheviots and separating them from the Northumberland Sandstone Hills to the east. Less than 1% is urban area, and 6% is woodland. A tiny part of the area lies in the Northumberland National Park.

## Summary

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

## Historic character

- Farmsteads are typically late 18th, or more commonly 19th century in date and very large by national standards. They are mostly regular courtyards built around one or more yards for cattle to U-, L- and E-plans, with a fragmentary survival of earlier buildings, set within landscapes reorganised with regular enclosure in the same period.
- The isolated farmsteads and farm hamlets – marked by one or two large farmsteads with workers’ housing and often a grieve’s (manager’s) house – which dominate this area’s settlement pattern, result from relatively recent change in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Around them are the earthworks of shrunken and abandoned villages, and ridge and furrow.
- 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 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 exceptionally high survival of traditional farmsteads, including many built to an industrial scale, within a landscape which retains visible evidence for land use and settlement from the prehistoric period.
- The large scale of its mechanised courtyard farmsteads in their landscape context, together with the Sandstone Hills and coastal plain in Northumberland, comprise a remarkable testament to late 18th- and 19th-century agricultural improvement. The transformation of such an extensive landscape is highly significant in a national context, matched only by the comparable scale of farmsteads and their enclosed landscapes in the Lothians and other parts of Scotland.
- 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.

- Estate yards including smithies are a distinctive feature, and any survivals of internal bellows and fittings are of exceptional rarity.
- Some linear farmsteads, and in particular those where the domestic and working elements are internally connected, represent a significant and final phase of farmsteads derived from the longhouse tradition.
- Working buildings with 18th-century and earlier fabric are of exceptional rarity.
- Bastles 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 (12.5%, the national average being 32%). The project also noted an above-average percentage (14.3%, the national average being 7.5%) of listed, working farm buildings noted as showing obvious signs of structural disrepair.

## Historic development

- For centuries, estates and local communities have used the neighbouring Cheviots (Area 4) for seasonal grazing and the supply of peat and building materials. Moorland was also scattered across this area and exploited by its numerous village settlements.
- This area is marked by light and productive soils, and is sheltered from the prevailing weather and rainfall by the Cheviots. Like the Cheviots, it 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.
- Border warfare resulted in a loss of population between the 14th and early 17th centuries, and over this period groups of small farms were held by farming families in return for military service. Many villages were defended from Scottish raids with a 13th- to 15th-century tower or ‘peel’, but some continued to be built into the 16th century in response to this threat and that of reiving clans along the Anglo-Scottish borders, which worked their way into Glendale and around the southern fringe of the Cheviots.
- The Union of the Crowns in 1603 paved the way for more settled border conditions, including an increase in the droving trade in cattle from Scotland and improvements in pasture and arable production by estates, some derived from fortified predecessors. Bastles continued to be built as the threat from reiving families and uncertainty continued.
- Often, land continued to be farmed in common and tenants’ holdings lay intermixed in strip fields into the 18th century. The transformation of this area’s agriculture from the late 18th century was marked by an emphasis on arable cropping, particularly for wheat. This followed, or was accompanied by, the rationalisation and enlargement of farm holdings. It 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 fertile soils of this area – particularly in the Til Valley and the Millfield Plain. Farms were large, typically running to 300–400 acres, but where they had access to hill grazing for sheep (especially along the border with the Cheviots) farms often ran to 2000–3000 acres.

- The best-known agricultural improvers in the forefront of these new practices were George and Matthew Culley, who made Akeld in the north of the area famous for its turnip husbandry.
- 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.

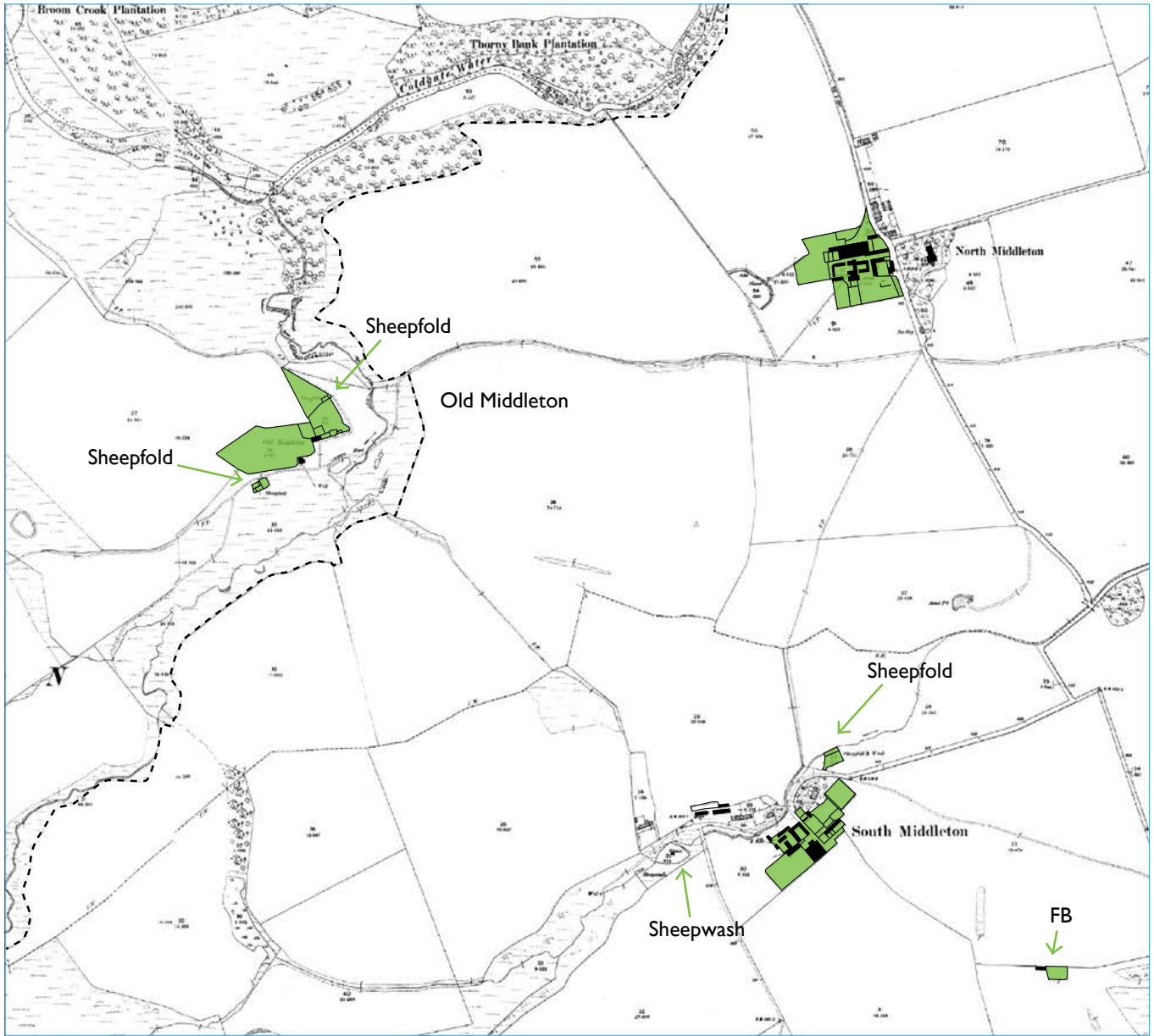
## Landscape and settlement

The present pattern of dispersed settlement, with isolated farmsteads and farm hamlets, dates from when the landscape was hugely altered, re-organised and re-distributed in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Farmsteads relate to large fields with blocks of conifer plantation interspersed with some older deciduous woodland. There are some remains, in the form of earthworks and more rarely buildings, of the village-based settlements that preceded these changes.

- There is extensive evidence, in the form of cropmarks and earthworks on higher ground that remained in use as common land, for Neolithic to Romano-British land use and settlement. Late Iron Age and Romano-British enclosed settlements – often clusters of farmsteads encircled by a boundary wall, and which contain evidence for an expanding population – probably continued in use until the 7th to 9th centuries.



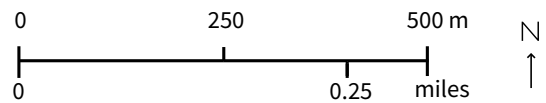
North Middleton Farm is sited under the lee of an escarpment which rises steeply to the open moorland of the Cheviots above. It is a large, 19th-century regular courtyard farmstead with multiple yards and cattle ranges. Still principally a livestock farm, cattle are now generally housed in modern wide-span buildings and the old ranges used for storage. Photo © Jen Deadman



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

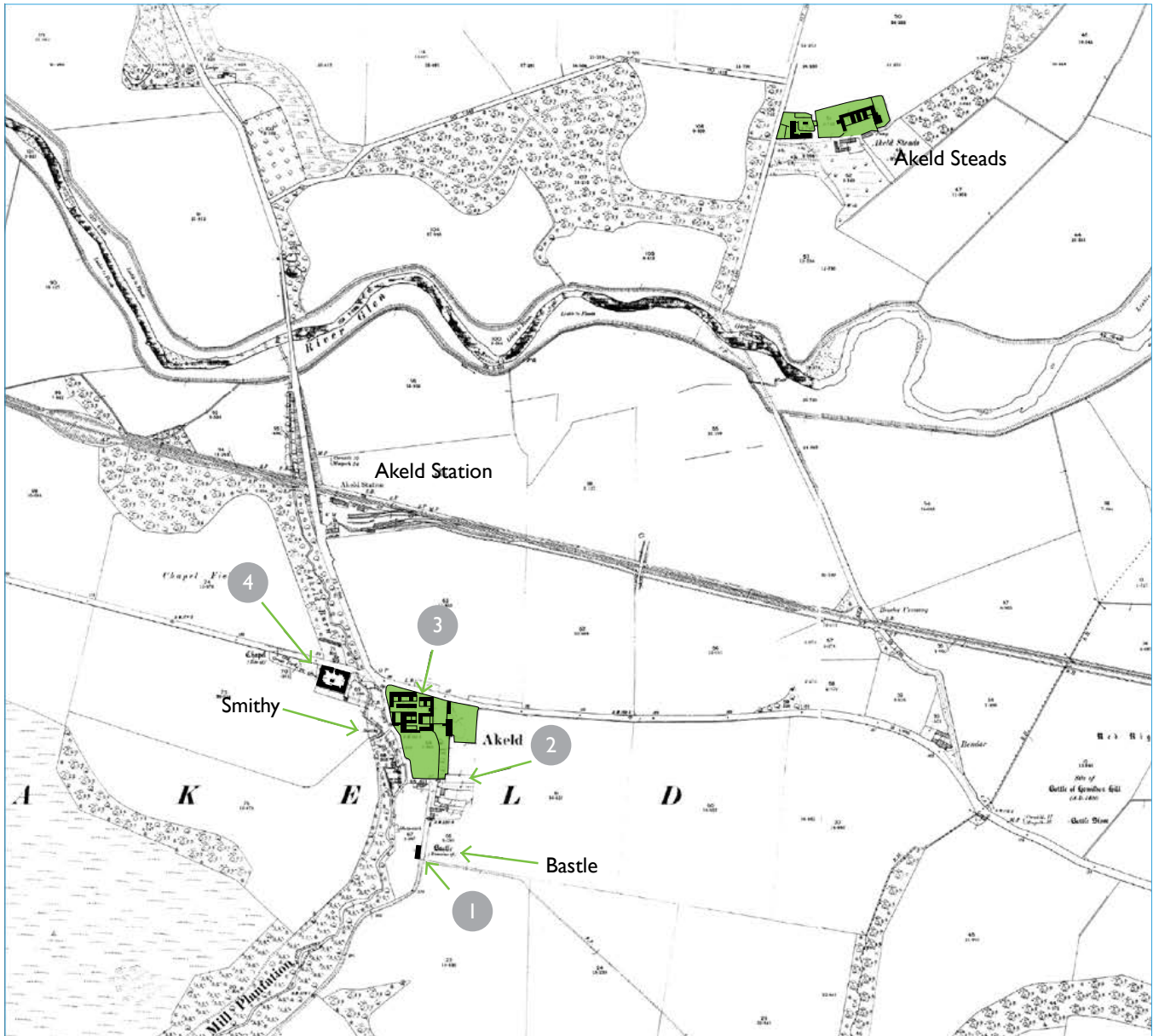


Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.




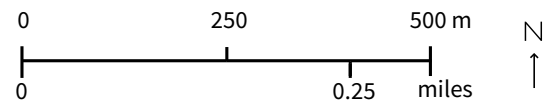
## Middleton

The boundary between the high moorlands of the Cheviots (Area 4 to west, left) and the agriculturally favourable Cheviot Fringe passes through this area. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, the Cheviots focused on the production of sheep, the arable lowlands on corn and yard-fed cattle as well as the fattening of sheep from the uplands. Old Middleton Town in the Cheviots is a shrunken, medieval village, with two small, linear farmsteads and associated yards for sheep which remained in use into the 20th century. By 1759 the village was let to a single tenant. The settlement is thought to have migrated in the late 18th century, with only a few buildings still standing at the old site by the 19th century. North Middleton in the Cheviot Fringe, formerly part of the Tankerville estate, is itself set amongst fields which evidence medieval settlement. By the 19th century, the township of Middleton had been reorganised by the Tankerville estate around two large farms with associated farm workers' cottages and grieves' (managers') houses. These were further rebuilt and reorganised as regular courtyard farmsteads with multiple yards, for the machine processing of crops and the fattening of cattle, in the mid-19th century. Fossilised remains of medieval field systems and settlements are evident throughout.



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



## Akeld

Akeld, sited along the border with the Cheviots (National Character Area 4), was the centre of a pre-Conquest estate. To the south and south-east are abundant cultivation and settlement remains dating from the Bronze Age, the settlements being abandoned before the shift of settlement to the river terraces by the 12th century. Akeld itself is another example of a medieval village reorganised as a farm hamlet in the late 18th and early 19th century. It was protected by a bastle (1), described as a 'fortlet' in 1541. To its north, are the smaller enclosures (2) of the former village which worked land scattered in strips around it. The landscape was reorganised after 1741, and by around 1800 the farmstead (3), on the site of the medieval manor and cottages (4) had been rebuilt by Matthew Culley, who, with his brother George was a noted agricultural improver. The farmstead was again reorganised in the mid-19th century, around multiple yards for fattening cattle. Akeld Steads (5) is a regular multi-yard complex which dates from the same period. The railway was opened in 1887.





Farmstead at Humbleton. Modern sheds have been placed within the large cattle yard, note the T-shaped barn and mixing house range which is characteristic of larger farmsteads in this area. Photo © Historic England 28567/48



Farmstead at Akeld (see page 8), showing the shrunken village with the bastle to left, and the farmstead with its large farmhouse and unusual quadrangle of workers' housing. Photo © Historic England 28566/50

- Many of the farmsteads bordering the Cheviots developed within villages that had been established by the 12th century, and which worked the slopes of the Cheviots, pastured their cattle on the high moorlands and worked the low-lying land to their east. These villages – in striking contrast to the remains of the earlier farming settlements sited nearby on the slopes of the Cheviots (see Area 4: Cheviots for further details) – are sited on lower land that borders periodically flooded farmland. Evidence for 8th to 11th century settlement across this area has proved to be elusive, suggesting that these earlier settlements paid their dues to great ‘multiple estates’, centred on high-status sites (such as the palace complex below the largest hillfort in Northumberland at Yeavinger Bell, in use in the 7th century and possibly the 5th century). It is also possible that the present villages overlie settlements established by the end of the first millennium AD.
- Some of these villages prospered as a result of their position on bridging points or through the droving trade, such as Elsdon which sat at the hub of a number of routes.
- Settlement expanded in most areas up to the 14th century and then contracted, leaving the earthworks of abandoned villages and, in some cases, isolated farmsteads.
- Those villages that remained after the depopulation and abandonment of villages in the 14th and 15th centuries experienced a reduction in their population in the 17th and early 18th centuries. This was accompanied or followed by a rationalisation of the formerly dispersed holdings, and (most commonly in the late 18th and early 19th centuries) by the formation of large tenanted farms. The result was the formation of the present dominant pattern of farm hamlets, with one or two farmsteads and their related housing.
- The predominant pattern of regular enclosure represents successive phases of development. 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. The productive alluvial terraces of the Til Valley and Milfield Plain have the largest fields, fewer and more fragmented boundaries and fewer trees. Considerable post-1950 expansion in arable farming has resulted in enlarged fields and boundary loss.

## 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, a small number 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, water 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 floor for domestic use, were most commonly built in the late 16th and 17th centuries, but are not as numerous as in upper Coquetdale, Redesdale and North Tynedale further south (see Area 5: Border Moors and Forests). They are concentrated within the former villages on the western fringe and to the south of Coquetdale. Their walls are typically around a metre thick and the upper doorway, originally reached by an external ladder, is most frequently set towards the centre of one of the side elevations. Ladders were later replaced by a flight of stone steps. The living quarters of a bastle were heated by a fireplace set against one end wall – usually opposite the end with the byre entrance. Evidence for a timber firehood sometimes remains. A loft area above provided sleeping accommodation. Some were built on a larger scale as stronghouses, including for communal use, and it can be difficult to distinguish between them. Towers and bastles might also be provided with a defensible yard, or barmkin, for protecting people and livestock in the event of a raid.
- Regular courtyard plans, where the working buildings are linked to each other and arranged around one or more yards for cattle, are the predominant plan form of the area. These regular courtyard plans, together with
- surveyed enclosure indicate the hand of estates and take a variety of forms – U-, L- and E-plans. The larger courtyard steadings are associated with the arable exploitation of land on large estates and more fertile soils, particularly north of Middleton and Wooler.
- Loose courtyard farmsteads with buildings set to one or two sides of the yard are less common and are more frequently found on smaller farmsteads.
- Linear plans, with most or all elements of the working farm attached in-line to the farmhouse, are rare in this area but are more common to the south of the Tyne Gap and from the Cheviots westwards. Archaeological and documentary evidence suggests that these, and longhouses where the domestic ends and byres for cattle were interconnected and shared the same entrance, were common across this area and much of Northumberland prior to the 18th century. Most were swept away and lacked the capacity to be extended or adapted: evidence for alternate rebuilding and raising to two storeys, which is common in other northern upland areas, is elusive. Existing examples are possibly 18th century in date. They do not exhibit a communal entry, although there can be a connecting door from the housestead to the byre. They thus represent a significant and final phase of farmsteads derived from the longhouse tradition.
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## Building types

- Threshing and attached straw barns are a distinctive type of building, concentrated around the adjacent parts of the Cheviots (Area 4), across the north of the Northumberland Sandstone Hills (Area 2), the Northumberland Coastal Plain (Area 1) and along the Tyne Gap (Area 11): they extend into the Lothians and other parts of Scotland subject to agricultural improvement in the 19th century. The first floor of the threshing barn had doors for pitching in sheaves of corn and contained the threshing machine,

- the corn being bagged on the ground floor after it was threshed. The position of the hole which took threshed grain from the threshing machine into the grain bins below can be detected by the trimming of the joists around it, usually visible from below. The straw barn, positioned in-line or at right angles to the threshing barn, is typically lower, with slit vents in the side walls, and housed straw before it was spread around the stock yards. Power could also be conveyed to animal-processing machinery in the ground floor of either building (most commonly the threshing barn).
- Multifunctional ranges (also termed combination barns) can predate mechanised threshing barns as outlined above. These have a wide range of functions, and may include the threshing and storage of corn, cow housing, stabling and storage for hay. By the 19th century they are frequently seen to form a unit with threshing barn and horse gin.
  - Wheel houses (locally termed horse gins) had been used in mines for centuries. From the late 18th century, the horse gin was adapted to provide rotary power for powering threshing machines. 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 house with its chimney stack, usually housed together in a lean-to against the side of the barn.
  - 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. Covered yards and ranges of cattle housing, often running in parallel, become a common sight as the land opens up towards the east.
  - Byres (cow houses with stalls for the small numbers of milk cattle) and pigsties, often marked by yards with feeding troughs, are usually placed close to the house.
  - Stables – the number of stalls for horses again indicating the importance of arable cropping in this area – are frequently incorporated in a yard range and are generally lofted over.
  - Pigeon lofts are frequently seen in the gable ends of houses and barns. On the large, 19th-century estates the pigeon loft can be sited at the top of a tower which commands a central position above the main entry to the farmstead.

- Smithies are a familiar sight on farmsteads throughout the area. They are small, often free-standing buildings and are found in the yard area or sometimes close to estate workers' houses on the periphery of the steading.
- Farm workers' cottages and grieves' (managers') houses are most commonly associated with large courtyard farmsteads and sited, sometimes along with riding horse stables, close to the house.
- Buildings for sheep can be difficult to detect as they can resemble shelter sheds or cow houses but have lower eaves. Sheep husbandry rarely required buildings, but required sheep washes and areas for collecting and sorting them, which were often located close to the farmstead.
- There are some field barns, mostly built for the overwintering of cattle and the storage of hay. Their rarity, relative to other upland fringe areas in northern England, partly reflects the importance of rearing and fattening cattle within farmsteads and the importance of sheep husbandry over extensive areas of farmland.



Workers' houses at Akeld, north of Wooler, looking north-east from the lower reaches of the Cheviot Hills. Fields of piecemeal enclosure in the foreground give way to the rectilinear field pattern of later 18th- and 19th-century enclosure. Across this landscape are blocks of conifer plantation interspersed with some older, deciduous woodland. Photo © Jen Deadman



This farmstead and its landscape at West Flodden, seven miles north-west of Wooler, exhibits many of the key characteristics of the Till Plain. It is set in a landscape of large to medium-sized, regular-shaped fields, which are largest on the lower-lying lands around the Till. The conical roof of a wheel house for powering the threshing barn is clearly visible. Photo © Jen Deadman



View up to Branxtonhill from Branxtonstead, three miles from Cornhill on Tweed. In the foreground is a small, 18th- or 19th-century steading which was not as well placed to take advantage of the further expansion of farms in this area over the 20th century. On the hilltop, a larger farm survives, with modern buildings and 20th-century grain silos. Photo © Jen Deadman



Smaller-scale farmsteads can be clustered around the edges of surviving and former moorland. This regular courtyard farmstead is relatively small for this area. It is sited close to Branxtonmoor, south-east of Cornhill on Tweed, within a broad, open landscape of farms with large, rectilinear fields. The ubiquitous range of farm workers' houses is seen to the right, set along the roadside. Photo © Jen Deadman



This rare, surviving 18th-century or earlier linear farmstead, built of random rubble and river boulders, is set in fields of piecemeal enclosure to the north-west of Wooler. To the north are larger, more regular fields indicative of late 18th- and 19th-century enclosure. The house body is one cell and single storey with external access directly into the room. There is no evidence for a loft. The byre has stalls for four beasts, with opposed doors east and west towards the northern end of the byre. The east door opens onto the front yard; the west door (blocked), opens directly onto the fields. The lintel over this door appears to be a re-used cruck blade. The room at the far end has opposed doors at its northern end, and a forking hole in the cross wall linking it to the byre would suggest a loft over a byre or a part-lofted threshing barn. Photos © Jen Deadman



This early to mid-19th-century courtyard farmstead exemplifies many key features of this area. The house faces away from the regular courtyard arrangement of farm buildings, and to the left is the distinctive conical roof of a horse engine house (locally termed a horse gin or gin gang) attached to a threshing barn and straw barn. Photo © Jen Deadman



East Allerdean lies south of the River Tweed on the site of a medieval village which used to be part of the estates of the Bishop of Durham. The large-scale, regular courtyard farmstead, with buildings on all four sides of the yard, was built in the early 19th century and then rebuilt in the late 19th century. The imposing south range with central arched entry and dovecot fronts a large yard with three, late 19th-century, covered stock yards on either side, flanking a central walk way. The farmhouse sits to the east, outside to the yard and away from the road. A row of workers' cottages lies to the north. Photo © Jen Deadman



New Bewick: a substantial mid-19th-century estate farm, all of one build which lies outside the village of Old Bewick, close to the river Breamish. There is a main steading with three covered yards, and a dovecote in the foreground. Photo © Jen Deadman



The late 19th-century covered stock yards. Photo © Jen Deadman



The estate yard, where stables and a long range of single-storey buildings including smithy and cart sheds are open to the road. Photo © Jen Deadman



A substantial mid-19th-century estate farm, all of one build which lies outside the village of Old Bewick close to the river Breamish. The main steading has three covered yards, and a dovecote is prominently sited on the corner of the estate yard buildings. Photo © Jen Deadman



Defensible farmsteads. The remains of the former bastle at Akeld, near Wooler, is possibly of 16th-century origin. It is large for a bastle, and possibly served as a communal 'stonghouse' at the head of the village street which, by around 1800, had been swept away by the present farm hamlet. Of the original building, only the ground floor remains, the rest having been rebuilt in the 18th century. It is not directly associated with a farmstead complex, although the former Manor House stands close by. Oval-shaped earthworks in the vicinity of the building are suggestive of an enclosure and/or foundations of early farm buildings. In the roof of the barrel vault to the ground floor is a small hole which would have allowed access to the upper floors by a ladder. In times of trouble, stock and stores would be secured in the room, the door bolted and barred from the inside and the ladder withdrawn. In more recent times the ground floor has been used as a cattle shelter and the first floor as a granary.

Photos © Jen Deadman







Combination barns. This linear range, possibly of 18th-century date, is a rare, surviving example of a pre-improvement era farm building. It comprises a small combination barn with threshing floor and animal housing adjoining at the far end. The barn has a small entry opening onto a yard area, raised into the roof for extra height. An opposed door opens onto the roadside. Hay was stored to the left of the threshing floor, with a byre to the right. Photo © Jen Deadman



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



Cattle housing. On this smaller, late 18th- or early 19th-century steading, the single-storey byre range adjoins a hay barn on one side of a yard. Photo © Jen Deadman



Adding cattle housing to the core of earlier buildings was common in the second half of the 19th century and was characteristic of farmstead development, particularly on the more prosperous estate farms of north Northumberland. One of the best examples is at Westnewton Farm, Kirknewton: a late 18th-century farmstead, where a range of four new yards (shown to the right) was built near the older barn and stable ranges in the late 19th century. Old and new ranges are sited either side of the track. The old, single-storey building to the left has lidded, wooden fodder boxes fixed onto the outside wall. Photo © Jen Deadman



Late 19th-century cattle units often consist of hemmels and yards with shelter sheds and root houses. The root houses here have outward-facing double doors, through which fodder could be loaded into them, and the rear walls contain a doorway to each yard; each pair of yards, now covered, was served by one root house. Photo © Jen Deadman



Here, the full length of a rear shelter shed from which all the yards branch off is viewed from across the fields, the long, low range a characteristic feature of this particular farming landscape. Note the pantile roof. By the end of the 19th century, slates were usually adopted. Photo © Jen Deadman



**Granaries** A large, eight-bay cart shed with a granary over. A 20th-century corn drier with an auger, to lift corn to the granary, now straddles the roof of the granary. Photos © Jen Deadman



**Stables** are frequently incorporated in a yard range and are generally lofted over. The rubble walling here suggests a date of around 1800 or earlier. Photo © Jen Deadman



At West Flodden, the horse gin is adjacent to the threshing barn which adjoins the large combination barn. The intricate roof structure is still intact. Photos © Jen Deadman



Engine houses. This group at Ford has the chimney stack which served the steam engine and its boiler, housed in the lean-to at the angle between the threshing barn and the straw barn. The steps to the left provide access to a granary. Photo © Jen Deadman



Pigeon lofts are frequently seen in the gable ends of houses and barns. At Akeld bastle, the pigeon loft, sited on the south elevation, comprises five separate stone ledges and stone backing pieces, four pierced with three pigeon holes and the fifth, at the apex, by two holes. Photo © Jen Deadman



At East Allerdean (early 19th century), the arched and gabled entry to the main yard breaks the line of the range at its centre point. The three tiers of pigeon holes sit in a recessed area under the eaves. Photo © Jen Deadman



On the large estates, the pigeon loft is frequently sited at the top of a tower which commands a central position above the main entry to the farmstead. At New Bewick, the tower rises above the adjacent ranges, the ground and first floor acting as reception and offices for the farm. Photo © Jen Deadman



Smithies. This smithy stands by the roadside, adjacent to estate cottages at Felkington, which by around 1800 had shrunk from a village into a farm hamlet comprising one large farmstead. It is characteristically single-storey and has one entrance flanked by a small window. It has a stack set against the gable wall. The crow-stepped finish to the near gable is in the Scottish tradition. Photo © Jen Deadman



This mid-19th-century smithy adjoins an eight-bay cart shed on the hillside above the yard. It is two-storeyed with a lofted area, probably for a farm worker, above the working smithy. The forge and bellows are still in situ as is a quantity of working tools. Photo © Jen Deadman



Cart sheds. At New Bewick, this mid-19th-century, open-fronted, four-bay cart shed, with a roof supported by cast iron columns, lies in a stepped range of single storey ancillary buildings. To the right are cottages and a trap house with a further cart shed to the left. Photo © Jen Deadman



Here, this single-storey, seven-bay cart shed stands alone on the yard perimeter. The hipped roof is a design common to yard buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries. Photo © Jen Deadman]



Field barns. This rare example of a field barn lies in the south of the area north of Rothbury, where fields of 18th-century and earlier piecemeal enclosure, with evidence of medieval ridge and furrow and relict wood pasture, have not been completely obscured by later enclosure. It comprises an open-fronted cattle shelter with hay storage at one end and stands against a stone field boundary for the containment of stock with another set at right angles to the left. All other boundaries in the vicinity comprise banks or hedges. Photo © Jen Deadman

## Materials and detail

- The area has seen extensive rebuilding of the rural building stock since the late 18th century. Clay, stone and thatch were gradually replaced by later, traditional building materials.
- Sandstone, either rubble or dressed, is now the common building material with sandstone roofing slates universal, some existing from the 17th century.
- The arrival of the railways in the mid-19th century made possible the cheap import of blue Welsh slate, and saw the decline of earlier roofing traditions.
- Pantiles were imported and became popular from the late 18th century, with their added advantage of being lighter and requiring less timberwork in the roof. Brick and tile kilns of the later 18th and 19th centuries are to be found throughout the area, indicating a move towards local production.



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