

# Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework



## CONTENTS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDANCE

THIS DOCUMENT FORMS PART OF A SUITE OF GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

The Worcestershire Farmsteads Guidance aims to inform and achieve the sustainable development of historic farmsteads, including their conservation and enhancement. It will also be of interest to those with an interest in the history and character of the county's landscape, settlements and historic buildings.

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### CONTENTS OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

#### THE FARMSTEAD ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (this document)

This provides a step-by-step approach to considering the reuse of traditional farm buildings and the sustainable development of farmsteads, through identifying their historic character, significance and potential for change.

#### WORCESTERSHIRE FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT

This has an introductory summary followed by fully-illustrated guidance on the county's farmsteads.

#### AREA SUMMARIES

The areas into which the county subdivides, based on analysis of its farmsteads in their landscape context.

#### GUIDANCE ON RECORDING AND RESEARCH

This will help applicants and local authorities to consider the most appropriate level for the recording of a site, either in support of an application or, once permission has been secured, to make a record during the implementation of a scheme.

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY SUMMARIES

Summaries for planners and applicants in each of the county's local planning authorities.

This, large scale, isolated farmstead in Naunton Beachamp, along with the landscape surrounding it, was re-modelled during the mid-19th century. The regular courtyard plan of brick buildings dates to 1840-50, and includes a farmhouse, with attached cider house, cattle housing, stable, three-bay threshing barn and square dovecote. These replaced a moated homestead. A second, large, irregular moat is visible to the north east of the farmstead (centre left). The fields around the farmstead also include medieval ridge and furrow. The farmstead, although converted into residential use, retains its 19th century form and character. Photo © English Heritage. NMR. 27763\_012

## INTRODUCING TRADITIONAL FARMSTEADS

A farmstead is the place where the farmhouse and the working buildings of a farm are located, some farms having field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. Most traditional buildings date from the 19th century and few were built after the 1880s. They display an immense variation in their architectural form, detail and use of materials, reflecting local differences in key functions such as the need to house and process harvested crops and shelter farm animals. Traditional farmstead plans are similarly varied in their layout and scale.



This isolated farmstead, to the north west of Worcester; has traditional buildings, arranged around two yards and 20th century wide-span multi-purpose sheds. The extant traditional farm buildings date from the 17th century to the 19th century and include a timber-framed threshing barn, red brick granary, cart shed, cow house and hop kiln. © English Heritage. NMR. 27763\_018



A cow house, possibly combined with a stable, at Stoke Bliss. This is an exceptionally rare example of an animal house of 17th century or earlier date – the use of square panel framing was used in the West Midlands into the 17th century. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



Dutch barn near Bewdley. Late 19th century example built of timber. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



Hop kilns with cowls and louvre vents. Photo © Worcestershire County Council

# INTRODUCING THE FARMSTEAD ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

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This guidance provides a step-by-step approach to considering the reuse of traditional farm buildings and the sustainable development of farmsteads, through identifying their historic character, significance and potential for change.

## FOR PLANNERS

Traditional farmsteads and buildings are heritage assets which make a significant contribution to both *landscape character* and *local distinctiveness*. In addition, through a diversity of uses, they also influence local communities and economies. As agricultural practices and the rural economy change, many such farmsteads and buildings become redundant from their original use, and are difficult to adapt to current farming needs: without appropriate uses they will not be maintained and may disappear from the landscape. New uses which both enhance and are sensitive to their historic character and significance are to be encouraged.

## FOR APPLICANTS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Using this guidance at the earliest stage in establishing development proposals will:

- Help get the proposed design right for such sensitive sites and buildings.
- Save time and costs before preparing a detailed application for development and other consents, such as listed building consent.
- Ensure that an application complies with national plan policy, and also local plan policies (including the neighbourhood plan if relevant) regarding landscape, the historic environment, neighbourhood issues, biodiversity, siting and design.
- Identify where professional advice and support, and perhaps more detailed survey, would be beneficial to a site to ensure significance is retained.

An application will have a much greater chance of success if these issues are identified and considered at the pre-application stage. It is also beneficial to have pre-application discussions with the local planning authority as these may help to reach an understanding on how the proposal should be taken forward.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

The requirements for sustainable development in rural areas are set out in both national and local planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly identifies the protection and enhancement of the historic environment as part of sustainable development (paragraph 7), and pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 8). The NPPF places good design, local character and conservation of the historic environment at the heart of sustainable development and good planning (paragraphs 58-64, 126-141). It states that the policies contained within it (in paragraphs 18-219) 'taken as whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system'. It stresses the importance of:

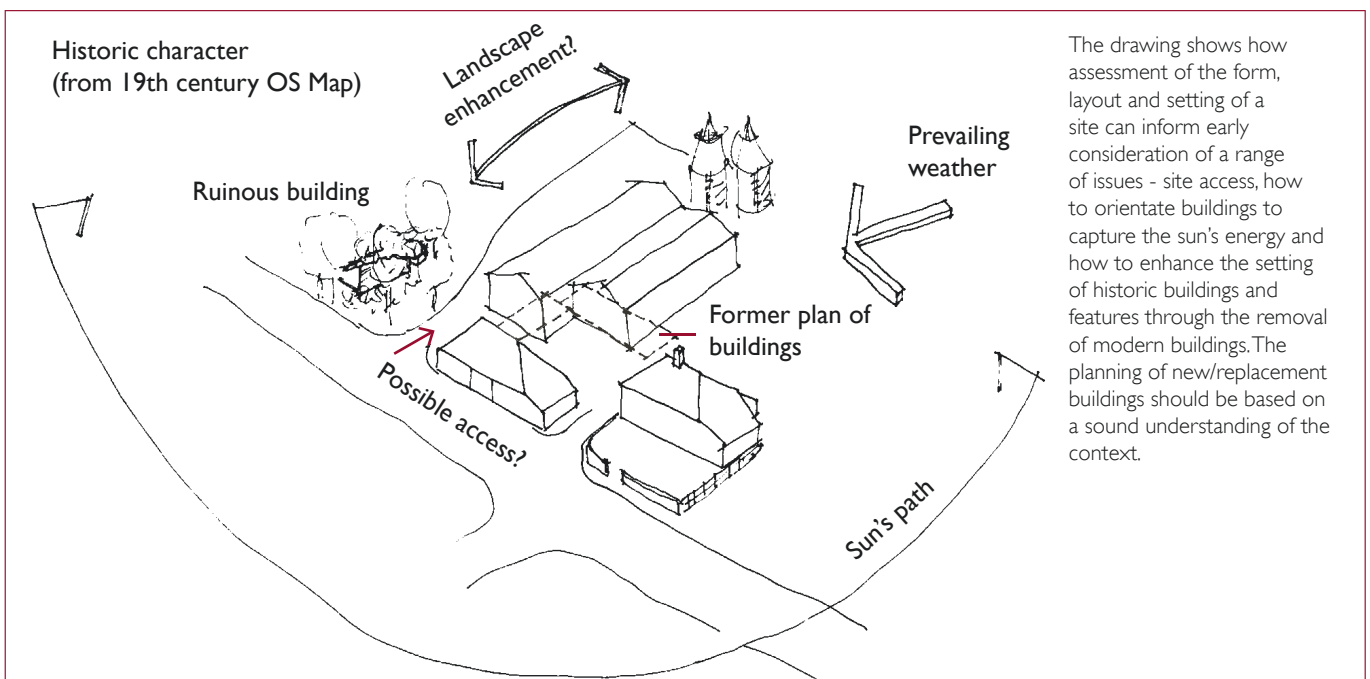
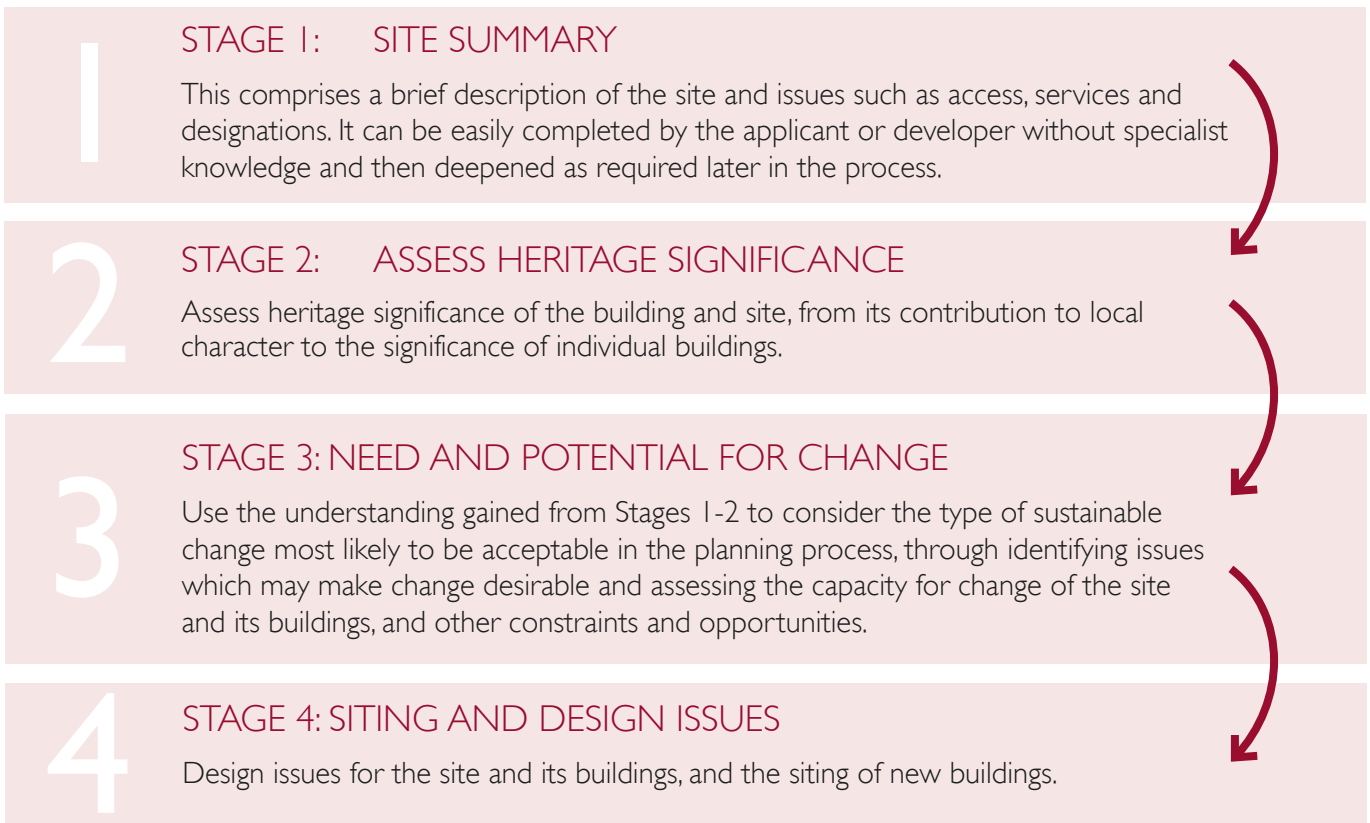
- Retaining and enhancing local character and distinctiveness.
- Conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Government allows owners of redundant farm buildings to establish commercial uses (under the General Permitted Development Order). Now it is proposed for working farms to have permitted development rights to build new dwellings and convert farm buildings to residential use. **STILL AWAITING MORE INFO ON THIS**

Adopted and emerging local development plans all embody the understanding, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. This Farmstead Assessment Framework will help deliver these objectives.

This guidance is set out in four stages, which will help to identify the need and potential for change and then prepare a scheme based on considering:

- *The landscape context*, including its boundaries and the potential that it offers as a habitat for wildlife.
- *The whole site*, including its form and scale, and where buildings are situated relative to historic and modern spaces on the site, routeways and the surrounding landscape.
- *The extent of historic change to the whole site and its landscape context*, including where traditional buildings and farmyards have been lost or redeveloped. This can inform opportunities to retain and reveal the significance of historic buildings and spaces, reinstate lost features and buildings or develop parts of the site.
- *The architectural patterning* present in building styles, materials and details which are important to maintaining or enhancing the character of the farmstead, including the siting and design of any new buildings.



# STAGE I: SITE SUMMARY

This stage will provide an important foundation for discussion with the planning authority and assist in the development of proposals. It is essentially a brief description of the site and its buildings, accompanied by a plan (see next page) showing its layout and distinguishing between any traditional and modern buildings. This plan can be cross-referred to photographs.

## SITE AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Identify:

- The boundaries of the farmstead.
- Ownership or tenancy.
- Use of the site and surrounding area.
- Access to the site, including sightlines from main entrances.
- Routeways within and around the site, including Public Rights of Way.
- Provision of key services such as water, sewage, electricity and telecommunications.
- Heritage assets and other designations on and around the site. One or more farm buildings, or a dwelling on the site, might be listed for its special architectural or historic interest or be sited within a conservation area (see Annex 1 checklist).

## HISTORIC CHARACTER

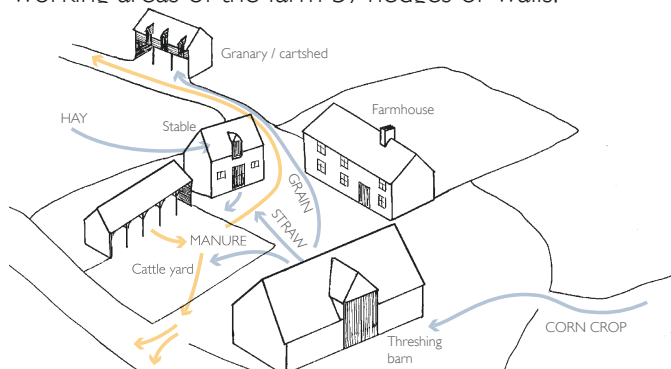
Draw a plan (see next page), identifying how the whole site in its setting has changed but not identifying significance at this stage. In particular:

- Views to and from the site and how these are framed by the surrounding form and features of the landscape, such as boundaries, trees and woodland, settlements and buildings.
- Hedges, walls, fences and other boundaries within and around the site.
- The plan form and layout of the site, distinguishing between traditional and modern working buildings and how they face towards or away from routeways, historic and modern spaces and the surrounding landscape.
- Domestic buildings and their principal elevations, gardens and other domestic areas.
- Other significant features such as farm ponds.

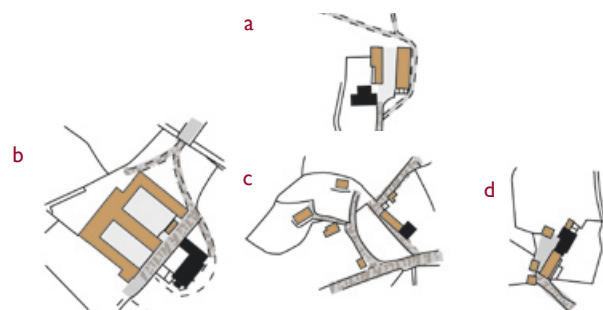
## UNDERSTANDING THE LAYOUT

### THE LAYOUT OR PLAN OF THE FARMSTEAD IS KEY TO UNDERSTANDING AND DESCRIBING ITS CHARACTER

All farmsteads are made up of buildings and spaces that served several key functions, most important being to house the farming family and any workers, store and process corn, hay and any other crops, shelter farm vehicles and implements, shelter and manage farm animals and keep their manure for returning to the fields around them. Gardens usually developed as private areas with a distinct and separate character, screened from the working areas of the farm by hedges or walls.



This drawing shows how basic functions shaped the layout of farmsteads, in this case a loose courtyard layout. Harvested corn crops were brought to the farmstead and processed in the barn, Grain was stored in granaries and the straw was taken to cattle yards, cattle housing and stables where it was trodden into manure and carted out to fertilise the farmland. © Bob Edwards



Courtyard plans, where the working buildings are arranged around one or more yards, are the most common form of farmstead plan. Buildings can be detached (a) or interlinked in different arrangements including multi-yards (b). Dispersed plans (c), where the buildings are scattered and face in different directions, are mostly found in woodland and moorland fringe areas. Linear and other plans, where the working buildings are attached in-line to the farmhouse (d), are mostly found in upland and common-edge landscapes.

## DRAWING OUT A SITE PLAN

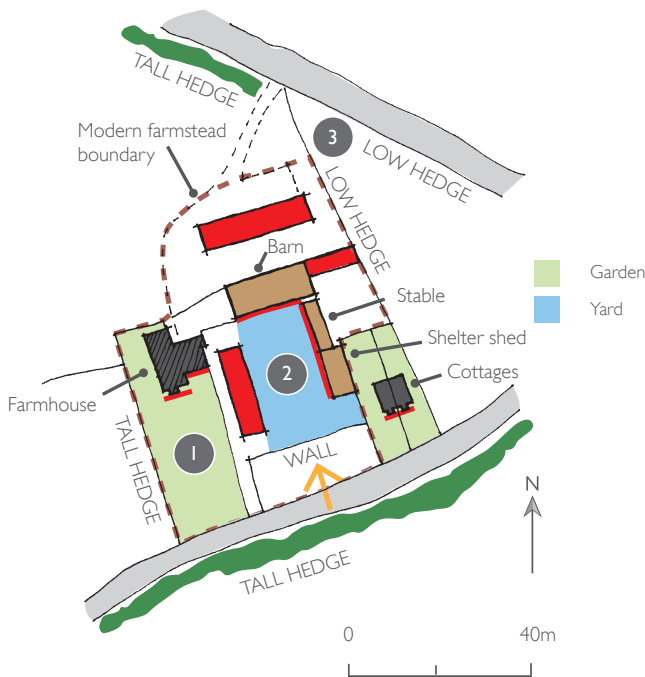
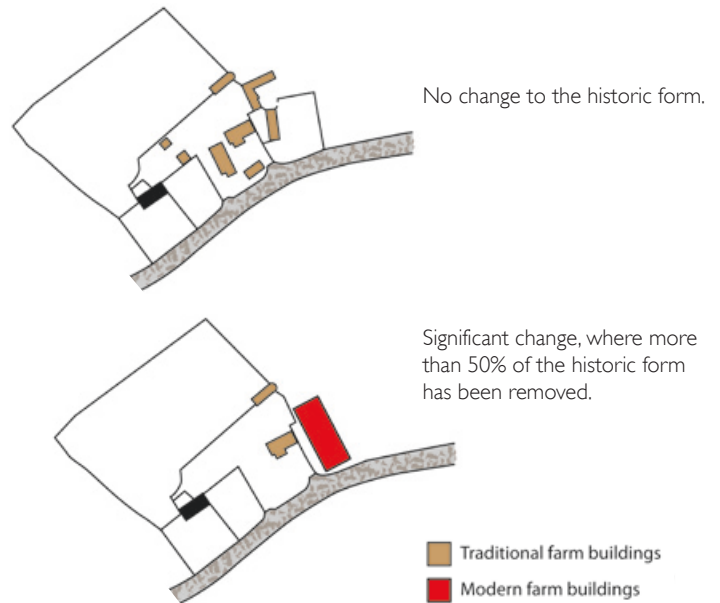
A site plan, distinguishing between traditional and modern buildings, can reveal significant opportunities for enhancement and change. This understanding can be deepened by:

- Comparing site survey to historic maps (see Annex 2) to identify significant areas which have changed – in particular buildings and other features which have been lost or redeveloped.
- Considering whether the site is subdivided into distinct areas as a result of how these have functioned and changed.

## UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

Comparison of modern maps with historic maps of c. 1900, compiled after the last major phase of building traditional farmsteads, can provide a useful benchmark for understanding the survival of the historic form of the traditional farmstead.

### Understanding change



The drawing shows a simple courtyard farmstead. It distinguishes between:

1. The 19th century house, which faces south towards the lane and into its own garden area.
2. The historic farmyard and traditional buildings built of brick with slate roofs. To the west is a mid-20th century cow house built in industrial brick with a corrugated iron roof, on the footprint of an earlier building.
3. The modern working area to the north of the yard, with industrial sheds and separate access from the A road to the north

Details of historic buildings can be numbered on a site plan and cross-referred to photographs and descriptions which note

- Building materials and structural condition.
- Doors and windows, including blocked openings.
- Internal walls, floors and carpentry, including roof trusses.
- Internal features, such as historic machinery, stalls, partitions (including grain bins) and graffiti.

## UNDERSTANDING FARMSTEAD CHARACTER

Fully-illustrated guidance is provided in the Worcestershire Farmsteads Character Statement, presented under the headings of:

1. Historical development – how the county's farming history fits into a national context
2. Landscape and settlement – how farmsteads contribute to the landscapes and settlements in which they have developed
3. Farmstead and building types – how the functions of farmsteads are reflected in a variety of farmstead plan forms and building types
4. Materials and detail – the development and use of materials and building techniques across the county

### UNDERSTANDING FARMSTEAD CHARACTER IN WORCESTERSHIRE

Traditional farmsteads, and their buildings, are an integral part of Worcestershire's landscape. Worcestershire is a rural county characterised by a mixture of settlement patterns. The south east of the county is dominated by large, nucleated villages with few isolated farmsteads; the remainder is distinguished by a dispersed pattern of small villages and hamlets and high densities of farmsteads, both in isolation and in clusters, linked to an intricate network of winding lanes associated with areas of woodland, common and heath. Farmsteads and their surrounding fields reflect landscape change in the 18th and 19th centuries including the reclamation of unenclosed land, the enlargement of fields and the re-organisation of field boundaries.

A distinguishing feature of the county is the rich variation, often within small geographical areas, of farmstead and building types. Courtyard plans, where the working buildings are arranged around a yard, are predominant. These can be small to very large in scale and can have buildings which are 'loosely' or more formally arranged. The smallest scale farmsteads and smallholdings are also significant and are most commonly associated with upland and common-edge landscapes and, in the case of smallholdings, areas profiting from industrialisation and transport developments during the 19th century.



Small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings, associated with the development of rural industries from the 17th century and fruit growing, which boomed during the 19th century, in Buckridge, Wyre Forest. © English Heritage. NMR. 27765\_001



Large scale, isolated farmstead, east of the River Severn. Less than 50% of traditional buildings remain extant, mirroring the loss of field boundaries which has also characterised the surrounding landscape over the 20th century. © English Heritage. NMR.27698\_033



## Building types

A more comprehensive list of building types is illustrated in the **Worcestershire Farmsteads Character Statement**.

**Barns:** **threshing barns** to store and process the harvested corn crop, and sometimes **combination barns** which housed animals and other functions as well.

**Brewhouses and detached kitchens** for brewing and baking are separate from, but close to, the farmhouse.

**Cattle housing:** **yards, shelter sheds** and **cow houses** are mostly of 19th century date, and may be found added to an earlier barn or detached and associated with individual yard areas. Occasionally you find shelter sheds with open-fronted **haylofts** above, which are called **linhays** in the south west. **Ox houses** were used for housing draught oxen.

**Cider houses**, often part of a building, used for milling and pressing apples and pears for the production of cider and perry.

**Dairies**, usually part of the farmhouse, used for the cold storage of milk and making butter and cheese.

**Cheese rooms** are found within farmhouses.

**Dovecotes** were used to house doves and pigeons.

**Pigeon lofts** can also be found in the gables of barns.

**Farm vehicle housing:** **cart sheds** and **implement sheds** were used for the storage of farm work carts and farm equipment, such as ploughs. They were often below granaries and implement housing may be incorporated into the cart shed. **Coach houses** were very similar to cart sheds, but were used to store the farmer's non-work vehicle, a coach or trap.

**Granaries** for the dry and secure storage of grain after it has been threshed and winnowed in the barn, which are a particularly distinctive feature in corn-growing areas. A first floor space, or raised off the ground, close to the farmhouse. In Worcestershire they are often over stables.

**Hop kilns** and **hop stores** were used for the storing and drying of hops. **Hop pickers' huts** were accommodation for temporary workers employed during the hop picking season.

**Horse engines** were for used for power threshing. **Horse engine houses** typically adjoin threshing barns.

**Poultry houses**, sometimes built over a pigsty to deter foxes.

**Piggeries**, for the secure housing of many pigs under one roof, and pigsties comprising a covered pen and yard for a pig.

**Sheep washes** and very rarely **sheep shelters**.

## Building materials

Timber-framed buildings are found across the county and wide swathes of both oak and elm woodland were exploited before brick took over as the predominant building material in the 18th century. Different types of naturally occurring stone were also utilised as building material, including oolitic limestone, soft grey lias and 'Old Red Sandstone'.



A grade II listed, 17th century, timber-framed barn and stables in Martley. © Worcestershire County Council



A loosely arranged group of traditional farm buildings, in Kemerton, constructed of coursed rubble oolitic limestone. © Worcestershire County Council



Brick early to mid 19th century buildings around a courtyard at Shelsley Walsh, looking towards a threshing barn built of weatherboarded timber frame. Photo © Worcestershire County Council

FARMSTEAD CHARACTER AREA SUMMARIES

**The Teme Valley and The Malverns**

An area of mixed farming, combined with hop yards and orchards, where farmland is intermixed with scattered woodland and large tracts of common. High densities of very small scale farmsteads and smallholdings associated with small scale enclosure and medium and large scale farmsteads along the Teme Valley. High concentrations of timber-framed buildings.

**The Wyre Forest, Northern Heathlands and Sandstone Estates**

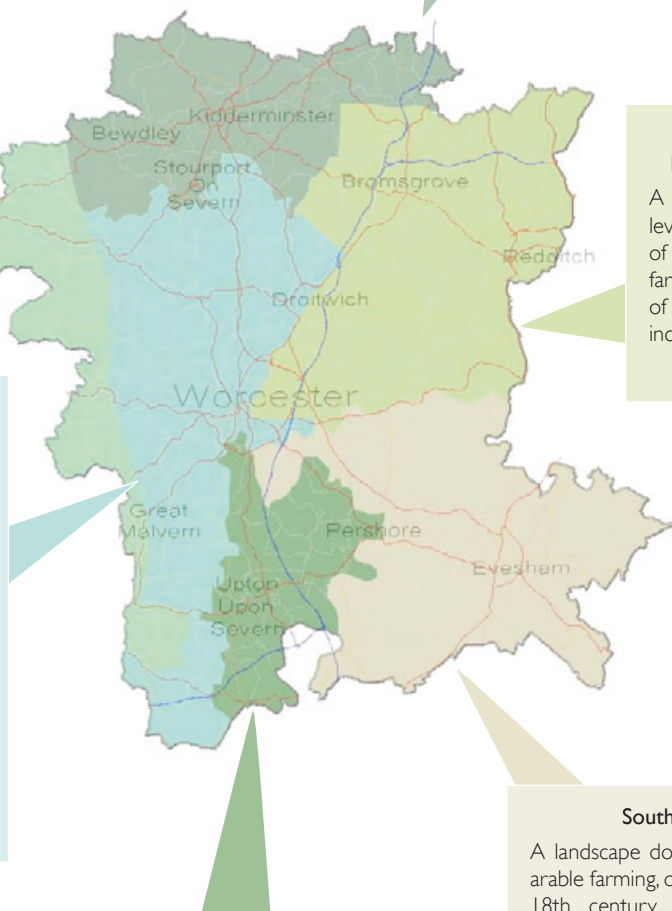
A landscape dominated by large blocks of woodland and 18th century and later landscape re-organisation, including the enclosure of vast tracts of open heath. Clusters of small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings, spurred by the development of rural industries and later fruit production, developed around Wyre Forest.

**The Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East**

A coherent landscape with low levels of change and high densities of small and medium scale farmsteads. High concentrations of shrunken medieval settlement, including moated sites and timber-framed buildings.

**The Central Worcestershire Plain**

Mixed farming settlements usually comprising dispersed rows or loosely clustered groupings of farmsteads and houses. Many settlements have large scale farmsteads which developed on enlarged plots from the medieval period. Extensive evidence for shrunken settlement relating to both strip fields and areas of common. Large areas of piecemeal enclosure, intermixed with ancient woodland. Areas with lower densities of farmsteads typically result from the amalgamation of farms by estates.



**Severn Estate Farmlands**

A transitional landscape, marking a boundary established by the 11th century between village-based England to the east, and dispersed settlement to the west. Medium to low densities of medium to large scale farmsteads within landscapes enclosed from medieval strip fields and meadows. Extensive evidence for shrunken settlement and Romano-British and earlier settlement along the fertile terraces of the River Severn. Large areas of planned and regular enclosure, and plantation woodland created by large estates.

**South Eastern Farmlands**

A landscape dominated by nucleated villages, arable farming, orchards and market gardening. 18th century and earlier farmsteads are concentrated in the villages. Later, isolated, farmsteads, which are predominantly large in scale, are associated with large scale piecemeal or regular enclosure dating from the 18th century onwards. Clusters of small field barns associated with market gardening areas of the 19th and early 20th centuries: most of these have been demolished.

Worcestershire has been subdivided into six Farmstead Character Areas. These are based on analysis of farmsteads within their landscape context and are as follows;

## STAGE 2: ASSESS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of farm buildings and farmsteads, and their settings, can be retained and enhanced through sympathetic change and development. The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the importance of:

1. Retaining and enhancing local character and distinctiveness
2. Conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

### 1. At a basic level, and whether designated as heritage assets or not, significant farmsteads and buildings can contribute to local character and distinctiveness if they have one or both of the following:

- Traditional farm buildings.
- Their historic form as traditional farmsteads, where the historic farm buildings, any houses and spaces relate to each other.

The great majority of farmstead buildings which make a positive contribution to landscape character are not heritage assets and will not fulfil the criteria for designation through listing. The greater the survival of the historic form and detail, the greater will be its significance as a traditional farmstead. Site survey and drawing out a site plan (see page 6) will help to identify the survival of the historic form of the site, its buildings and any historic detail such as building materials, doors, windows and internal features.

The text boxes summarise the survival and heritage potential of farmsteads in the county, and (overleaf) how to identify any additional special significance. Further guidance is provided in the **Worcestershire Farmsteads Character Statement**.

### 2. Heritage assets, including listed buildings, heighten the heritage significance of farmsteads and their buildings

The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation (see designation checklist, Annex 1). Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the amount of detail provided in an application should be 'no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'. It adds that 'As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.' See Annex 3 for guidance on levels of recording. See NPPF paragraphs 126-141 for historic environment issues.

#### Traditional farmsteads in Worcestershire

This text and the further guidance in the Worcestershire Farmsteads Character Statement uses the results of mapping the historic character, survival and use of the county's farmsteads, completed as part of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project (see [www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandfarmsteads](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandfarmsteads)).

81% of over 3,700 farmsteads recorded from historic maps of c. 1900, compiled after the last major phase of building traditional farmsteads, have heritage potential as traditional farmsteads because they have retained some or all of their historic form. 9% of farmsteads have lost all their working buildings but retain the farmhouse, which may be designated as a heritage asset or have some heritage potential. Additionally, some farmsteads and farmstead sites may retain significant below-ground archaeological deposits, including those

that have lost all of their historic buildings.

Outfarms and field barns have been subject to very high levels of loss, 72% of sites being lost from the landscape and just 24% surviving with more than 50% of their historic form.

61% of traditional farmsteads do not have any listed buildings. The criteria for listing farm buildings are highly selective, and some listings were only based on an external examination. This means that significant features might only be revealed during the assessment process, including for buildings which do not merit designation as a listed building may retain important evidence for farming and construction practices. Additionally, some farmsteads and farmstead sites may retain significant below-ground archaeological deposits, including those that have lost all of their historic buildings.

## Special Significance

Some buildings or farmsteads, including examples which are not designated as heritage assets, have the potential for special significance in a local or national context.

### *Landscape setting*

- Small scale farmsteads and smallholdings sited around areas of surviving common and heath.
- Isolated farmsteads and farmstead clusters associated with the earthwork remains of shrunken or deserted medieval settlements and field systems (see cover page).

### *Farmstead groups and buildings*

- Planned farmstead groups including large estate farms and smallholdings associated with planned landscapes such as the Chartist settlement at Dodford and in the Wyre Forest.
- Farmsteads and smallholdings that retain a range of buildings associated with the hop industry, market gardening and the cultivation of fruit.
- 18th century and earlier working buildings, other than barns, including cattle housing and stables.
- Smithies
- 18th century or earlier field barns and outfarms.
- Well documented buildings including those with an unusual history.

### *Materials, fixtures and fittings*

- Thatch roofs, cruck frames and pre-19th century butted timber boarding to the walls of barns are very rare.
- Historic graffiti and other marks relating to agricultural use and folk beliefs may survive.
- Interior stalls and other interior features (e.g. mangers, hay racks) of 19th century and earlier date are increasingly rare.



A cluster of traditional farmsteads associated with the earthwork remains of a deserted medieval village and a complex medieval manorial moated site, incorporating Civil War defences, in Strensham.

© Worcestershire County Council



This late 16th century, timber-framed building, in Crowle, was employed as a cider house during the 19th century; a well preserved horse/oxen drawn cider mill and cider press survives within. © Worcestershire County Council



The Church of St Wulstan and St Oswald was originally a barn (and later a malthouse) associated with a farmstead on the western periphery of the village of Holy Cross, Clent. This grade II listed, 17th century, timber-framed, building, was offered to the Catholic Church in 1926 by Mr Clement Woodward, the farm owner; at the behest of his mother in law, Mrs Elizabeth Cutler. The building was opened for worship in 1927. © Worcestershire County Council

## STAGE 3: NEED AND POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

This stage provides an opportunity to consider those issues which may make change desirable, for example:

- Heritage which is redundant and/or without viable use, and thus actually or potentially at risk.
- Opportunities to retain and reveal the significance of historic buildings and spaces, reinstate lost features or buildings or develop parts of the site.
- Opportunities to create space for job-creating businesses, additional housing, or other uses.
- Wildlife and habitat potential.
- Renewable energy potential.

All references are to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs.

### 1. Capacity for change of the site and its buildings

The character of different sites and buildings will present different constraints and opportunities for conversion and development, whether they are designated as heritage assets or not. Consider, in addition to respecting the significance of the buildings, as identified in Stage 2:

- The scale and layout of the whole site and its setting, including vehicular access to it.
- The scale, provision of natural light and layout of individual buildings.
- The robustness or fragility of building materials and fabric, including the sources, costs and supply of traditional building materials.
- The potential for different uses to work together.

### 2. Access, neighbourhood, contamination and flood risk issues

*Existing and potential access*

- Safe access with clear sightlines onto highways is vital. Intensification of an access or creation of a new access will require approval from the Highway Authority and the local planning authority.
- Some farmsteads or buildings only have single track access and many field barns and outfarms have no vehicular access.

See NPPF paragraphs 29-41 for transport issues. (especially the final sentence of 29), but it is important to take account of the rest of the NPPF, especially paragraph 28, paragraph 55 including bullets two and three, and paragraph 70 bullet four.

*Neighbourhood issues*

- Consider the impact upon any neighbours affected by any increase in traffic and other activities such as over-looking, noise and loss of light.

*Flood risk and pollution issues*

- Flood risk assessments may be required for developments within or affecting Flood Zones, so that the risk of flooding is not increased elsewhere.

- Consider the removal of contaminated material, how to eliminate or minimise the flow and quantity of surface and groundwater (including contaminants), ground conditions and land stability.
- Consider the impact in particular of noise, dust, fumes and light on the surrounding area.

The local planning authority may require a risk assessment of land potentially affected by contamination or with land stability issues. Responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

See NPPF paragraphs 93-108, 120-125.

### 3. Wildlife and habitats

The site, including buildings, planting, ponds and boundary features, can provide significant opportunities for habitats and wildlife, connected to its surrounding boundaries and features. Local planning authority permission will be required for removing hedges that are more than 20 metres long and more than 30 years old. Consider also the need for any ecological surveys, if protected species (including bats) are present.

See NPPF paragraphs 109-125, especially 118.

### 4. Renewable energy

The location, layout and setting of a farmstead can offer opportunities to:

- Minimise energy consumption through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping.
- Generate energy from renewable or low carbon sources - ground-source or air-source heating, geothermal sources, solar and wind power, biomass and anaerobic digestion systems.
- Minimise water consumption through sustainable drainage systems which recycle water (termed grey water). These include reed bed sewage disposal.

See NPPF paragraphs 93-108, 96.

## ISSUES FOR CHANGE

Research commissioned by English Heritage, in partnership with the former Countryside Agency, examined the drivers for change and the effectiveness of national and local policy.<sup>1</sup> It found that historic farm buildings were more prone to both neglect and development than any other historic building type. Residential use made up the great majority of conversions, despite planning policies that favour employment and business uses. It also identified the need for an evidence base, including within Historic Environment Records, and a consistent framework to inform decision-making by all those involved in the reuse and development of historic farmsteads.

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project (see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandfarmsteads>), which was led by English Heritage in partnership with the region's county and metropolitan councils, has for the first time at a regional level identified the historic character and present-day role of farmsteads across a whole region. The headline findings of the study are that:

- Nearly 82% of farmsteads already in existence at the beginning of the 20th century have retained some or all of their traditional working buildings.
- 31% of surviving farmsteads remain in agricultural use with varying degrees of diversification, these being concentrated in the Welsh Borders and the Peak District. No more than 5% have been entirely converted to industrial, commercial or retail use and an additional 5% combine residential use with industrial, commercial or retail facilities. The remainder are in residential use, which can entail the conversion of some or all of their working buildings into housing.
- Regardless of their location, historic farmsteads in residential use are more often used for home-based entrepreneurial businesses than any other dwellings. One out of every 12 residential farmsteads is the registered office of a limited company – a measure that serves as a useful proxy for home-based professional working. Converted farmsteads also provide homes for a business elite – the ratio of 22 directorships of substantial firms for every 100 farmsteads far outstrips the national average for all types of dwelling.

The utilisation of historic farm property to serve directors of substantial business is lower in Worcestershire than in neighbouring Warwickshire, but around the Malvern Hills the tendency is somewhat higher than that found amongst residents of historic farmsteads across the Region.

These figures update, deepen and complement those available for listed working buildings with visible structural failure and evidence of adaptive reuse. These are based on comparison of 1980s with 1999-2006 photographs, from the Photo Image Survey (University of Gloucestershire for English Heritage, 2009). In the West Midlands 27% of listed working farm buildings have evidence for residential reuse (national level 30%), 3% other (national 4%) and 70% (national 66%) have no other evidence for other use. 18.9% have evidence for structural failure (national 8.9%). As expected, this survey established that 60.7% of listed working buildings had been converted to non-farming uses in Bromsgrove district (57.1 to residential), 38.3% in the Malverns (36.1 to residential) and 40% for Wychavon (37.1% to residential): the sample for the other local authority areas were too small for meaningful interpretation.



Conversion to residential use. Photo © Peter Gaskell



This farmstead, in the Teme Valley, is no longer in agricultural use. It has retained much of its traditional form and has farm buildings arranged around a central courtyard. In the 19th century timber-framed farmhouse, dating from the 17th century, was rebuilt to face away from the yard and its traditional buildings, to face its own garden. © English Heritage. NMR 27766\_039

<sup>1</sup> Gaskell, P and Owen, S 2005. *Historic Farm Buildings: Constructing the Evidence Base* (English Heritage/Countryside Agency/University of Gloucester)

## STAGE 4: SITING AND DESIGN ISSUES

Getting the design right is essential on such sensitive sites, and the understanding gained from Stages 1 and 2 will help to prepare a scheme which conserves and enhances the historic character and significance of the whole site. New development might include new buildings, the demolition of modern or insignificant buildings and the opening of spaces to better reveal the significance of heritage assets.

See NPPF paragraphs 56-67.

### *Design issues which might be helpful to consider:*

- Enhance significant views to and from the site, through careful siting of any gardens, boundaries, access and parking.
- Select planting and landscaping (trees, hedges, the restoration of ponds etc.) to enhance the habitat for wildlife.
- Reinstate missing elements that may preserve or enhance the character and significance of the site. This does not generally mean replicating lost buildings but using an understanding of farmstead character to inform new design (see below).
- Retain and enhance the sense of space between buildings, and between working buildings and the farmhouse.
- Minimise alterations to prominent and significant external elevations, through careful attention to internal planning and how and where to introduce or borrow light. The size and detail of window design and materials has a major impact on overall appearance.
- Select paint colours that complement the patina of walling and roofing, using local colours where relevant.
- Repair historic fabric with suitable materials and techniques.
- Where possible conserve open interiors with impressive proportions and long sight lines.
- Retain, where possible, historic features including door and window treatment, exposed roof trusses, floor structure, machinery, floor surfaces and folk marks/graffiti.

There is further detailed advice on the conversion and re-use of farm buildings in English Heritage's publication, *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*. The local planning authority may also have detailed supplementary planning documents including design guidance.

### *New buildings and their siting*

Consider how the understanding of the whole site and its historic plan form, as created in Stage 1, could:

- Secure the future of highly significant or traditional buildings which have low potential for adaptive reuse.
- Inform the siting of new buildings so that they are on the footprint of lost buildings or so that they are sensitive to the historic plan form of the site.
- Make use of materials and building techniques of appropriate quality.
- Minimise fuel costs and reduce carbon emissions at source through careful consideration of site layout, building design and materials.
- Maximise orientation of buildings to take advantage of the sun's energy: many historic farmyards faced south.
- Help to consider whether the site requires enabling development, in order to secure the future of heritage assets.

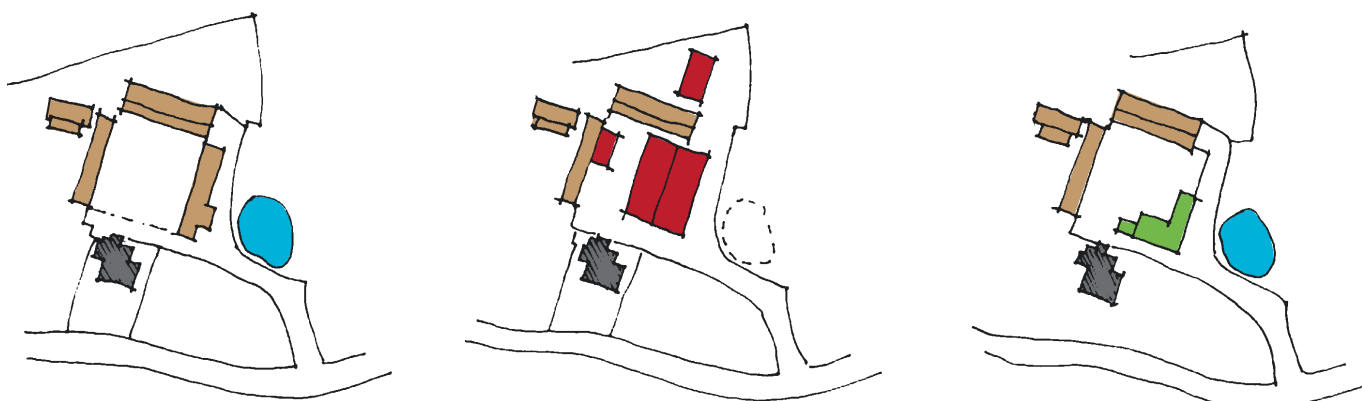
Enabling development is usually defined as development unacceptable in planning terms apart from where it would bring public benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved. English Heritage has produced guidance on this at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/enabling-development-and-the-conservation-of-significant-places>

In rural areas special circumstances for new housing include:

- Where development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset; or
- Where it would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or
- Where development would reuse redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting (NPPF, paragraph 55).

DESIGN GUIDANCE

The drawings in the *Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance* help the user to identify and inform opportunities for new buildings and design which responds positively to local setting and distinctiveness. The worked examples illustrate the issues and opportunities that flow from an understanding of the basic farmstead type and how it has changed. These are not intended as planning briefs or definitive design solutions. In each case there are references to plan form, layout, degrees of enclosure, scale and massing, form of buildings, orientation and detailed design, including form of openings. For more details see Part 5 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance <http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/publications/kent-downs-aonb-farmstead-guidance>.



Historic character (from 19th century OS map)

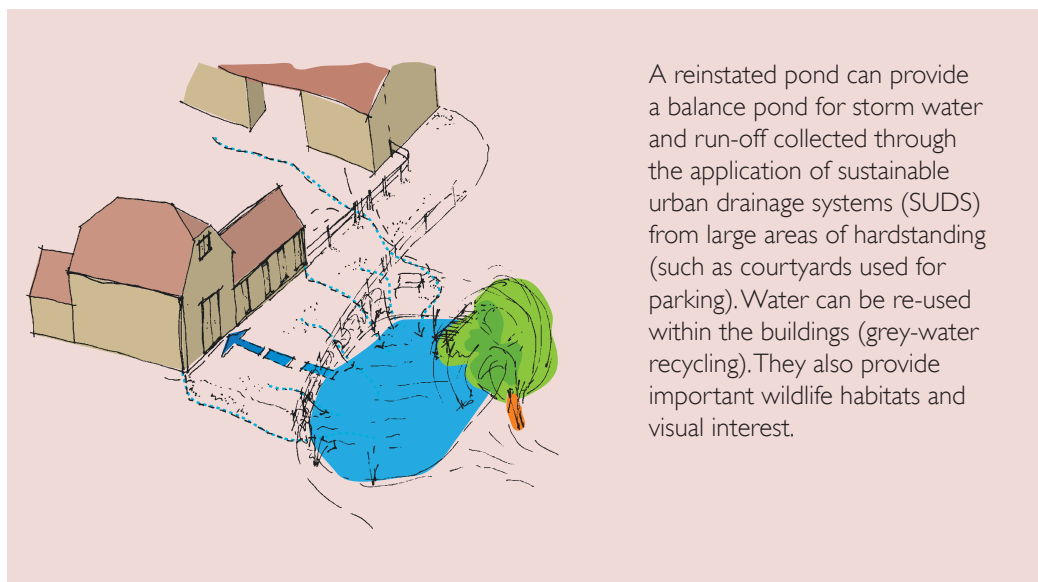
Present inherited character

Future options

An understanding of the present historic character of the site, and how it has changed, can inform options for the demolition of modern buildings (in red) and their replacement with new buildings (in green). The siting of this example (top right) is informed by its historic character as a courtyard plan.

**Key**

- Traditional farm building
- Modern farm buildings / residential buildings
- Farm house
- Potential new / replacement buildings
- Ponds (historic)
- 





## EXAMPLE OF A FARMSTEAD ASSESSMENT

This example uses the Stage 1 and 2 headings guidance. The text can be presented in bulleted form or as free text.



### Summary

A small-scale farmstead with the farmhouse and two agricultural buildings set around a yard, identified from the second edition Ordnance Survey map as having more than 50% of its historic form surviving. The 18th and 19th century red brick buildings, and timber-framed barn, are typical for Worcestershire. An L-shaped earthwork to the south of the farmstead is recorded on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record as a possible moat.

### Site and management issues

#### 1. Site boundary, ownership and use

The present boundary is shown on the map. The farmstead is in single ownership and the two extant traditional farm buildings are unconverted and redundant for modern farming purposes.

#### 2. Site access and services

There is direct access onto a minor road.

#### 3. Designations

None of the buildings are listed.

### Historic Character

#### Setting

- The farmstead sits within a small to medium-scale fields with straight and wavy hedgerow boundaries. There has been minimal boundary loss in the vicinity of the farmstead since the second edition Ordnance Survey map.
- The farmstead is one of two traditional farmsteads near the junction of two roads.
- It is a visible feature in the landscape and the farmhouse, farm buildings and yard can be viewed from the adjacent road.
- The farmhouse is set long to the road and is the most visually prominent building on the site and in views from the road.
- An L-shaped earthwork to the south of the farmstead is recorded as a possible moat, suggesting occupation of the site since the medieval period.
- There is a stream to the south, which probably fed into the moat.

**The farmstead and its buildings**

This is identified as a small scale loose courtyard plan with two detached farm buildings and the farmhouse set around a single yard. The farmhouse faces the road and is set gable end to the yard. The second edition Ordnance Survey map records a pigsty (now lost) to the north west of the farmhouse and two small buildings (also lost) to the north west of the principal farm buildings. One of these small buildings is associated with a small orchard. The farmstead can be divided into the following areas:

- Area 1.** The 18th century house, which faces south east towards the road, is set gable end to the yard. It is typical of many red brick farmhouses in Worcestershire, with 19th century and later alterations, and has a Welsh slate roof.
- Area 2.** The historic farmyard and farm buildings. The surviving traditional farm buildings comprise:
  - A. A timber-framed barn with later brick extensions to the north and south gables. It is said to have late 17th century origins. It is in poor condition.
  - B. A late 19th century stable, built of brick with a tile roof and with a central door, flanking windows and louvre vents on the ridge of the roof.

**Area 3.** Two modern sheds on the site of a small subsistence orchard and a small building to the north west of the farmstead.

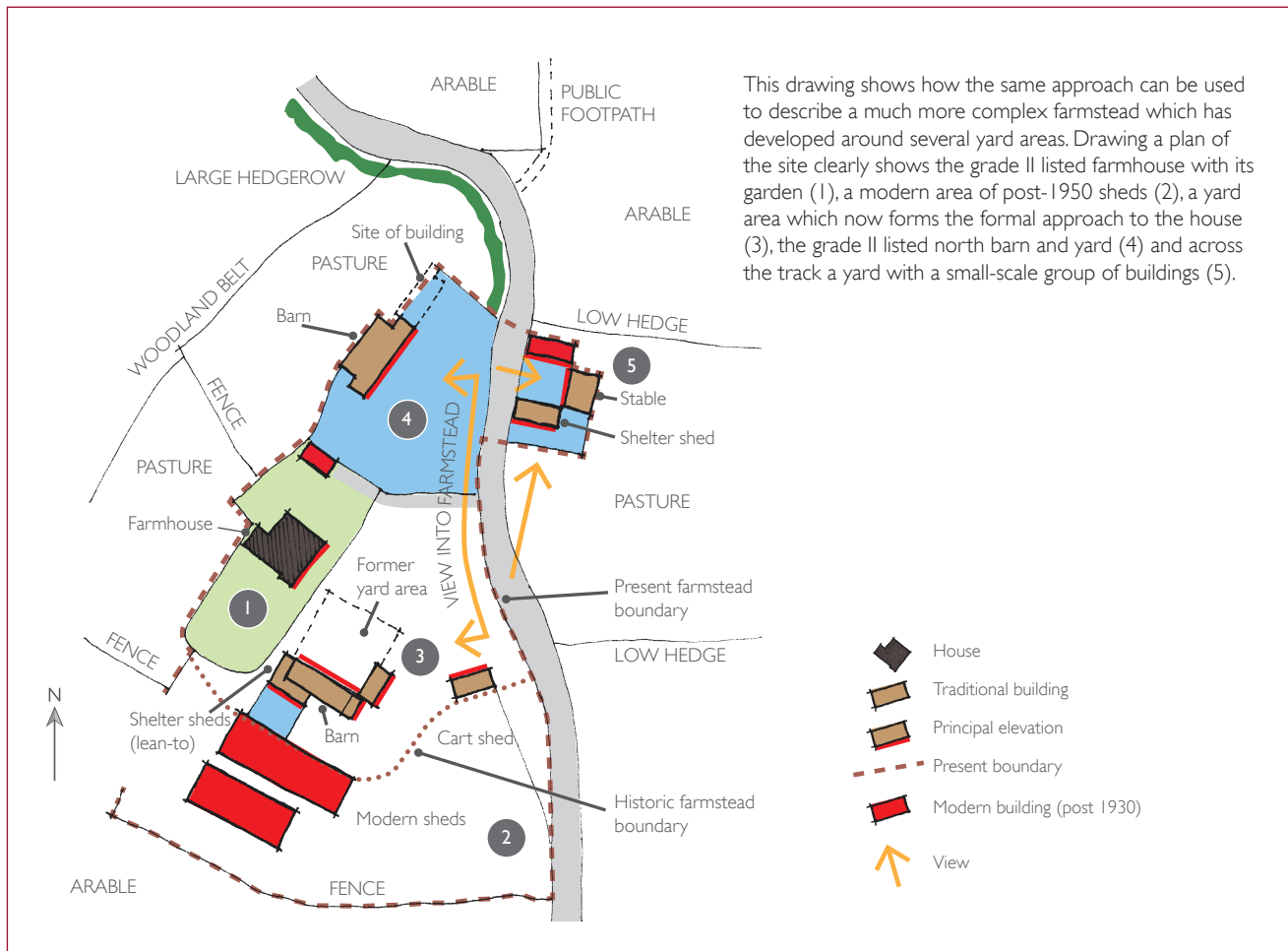
**Significance**  
**As a traditional farmstead**

The farmstead has been identified as having high heritage potential because it retains more than 50% of its historic form recorded on the second edition Ordnance Survey map. Site survey shows that it survives as a legible traditional group, with its house, barn and stable.

The site forms part of a group of wayside farmsteads and cottages, typical of much of the county, set in a small to medium-scale pattern of fields resulting from piecemeal enclosure. The farmstead is sited in the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East Farmstead Character Area, which is noted as having a coherent landscape with low levels of change and high densities of small and medium scale farmsteads. High concentrations of shrunken medieval settlement, including moated sites and timber-framed buildings.

**Special significance**

A possible moat is sited south of the farmstead, this association with a farmstead being identified as a rare surviving feature.



# ANNEXES

References are made to relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

## I DESIGNATION CHECKLIST

The text below provides an introduction to heritage and other designations.

*Designated heritage assets* mostly comprise:

- Listed buildings. Over 30,000 farm buildings have been listed, over 95% of these at grade II and the most important at grade II\* and I. Guidance on the criteria for selection of agricultural buildings, and how to apply for designation, can be found on the English Heritage website at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/>. Pre- July 1948 farm buildings may also be protected if they are or were in the curtilage of a listed farm building.
- Farm buildings within Conservation Areas designated by local authorities, and generally covering settlements. Demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas requires planning permission, and a similar process of justification as for a listed building.

They more rarely (in and around farmsteads) comprise:

- Scheduled Monuments of national importance, mostly in the form of earthworks relating to farmsteads such as medieval moats, settlement and cultivation earthworks, and monastic farms. Scheduled Monument Consent must be sought from English Heritage for any works affecting a Scheduled Monument.
- Registered Parks and Gardens, World Heritage Sites and Registered Battlefields, within or adjacent to which farmsteads may have developed. While no consents specific to these designations are required, conservation of these places is given 'great weight' in the planning process.

Details of nationally designated heritage assets, together with maps showing their location, can be found on the National Heritage List for England at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>. Information on Conservation Areas can be found on local authority web sites.

*Undesignated heritage assets* comprise:

- Buildings and sites identified by local planning authorities during the process of decision-making or through the adoption by the local planning policy of a local list. The effect of an application on the significance of a local heritage asset is a material consideration in determining an application. Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council, Malvern Hills District Council (in construction) and Bromsgrove District Council (in construction)

currently retain local lists of historic buildings and structures which, although not meeting the English Heritage Principles of Selection for national listing, are deemed locally significant and hence worthy of retention.

- Sites of national archaeological significance. Even where sites of national significance have not been scheduled as monuments (see above), if they are of the same significance as scheduled monuments they are treated in the planning system as if they were designated assets (see NPPF paragraph 139).

*Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks*

Within Worcestershire there are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Malvern Hills and the Cotwolds) which are designated for their special qualities or character. Conserving and enhancing the qualities of such landscapes are a material consideration in considering planning applications within or adjacent to them. Section 85 of The CROW Act 2000 places on local authorities a requirement to produce an AONB Management Plan and a 'duty of regard' to conserve and enhance AONBs.

*Green Belt*

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl, and new buildings are generally regarded as inappropriate. Exceptions are specified in NPPF paragraphs 79-92.

*Wildlife and habitats*

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) is the principal law protecting wildlife, habitats and species in Great Britain, and was strengthened and updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). Expert advice will be required to ascertain whether any protected species – including bats, predatory birds and reptiles – are present within or adjacent to a farmstead site. In addition, some farmsteads may adjoin or be sited within:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are areas of land notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of special nature conservation interest.
- Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC), which are sites of non-statutory designation recognised by local planning policies.
- Important hedgerows are protected from removal by the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/hedgerows>).

Curtilage structures. Some buildings and other structures not mentioned on the list entry may still be protected by the listed building regime if they are within the curtilage of the listed building, predate July 1948 and are or were ancillary to the listed building. There are a number of factors that go in to considering the extent of the curtilage of a particular building and whether the ancillary test is satisfied. It may be a criminal offence to fail to apply for listed building consent for works to a curtilage building when it is needed, so any doubt should be discussed with the local planning authority.

## 2 USING HISTORIC MAPS, HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS AND OTHER SOURCES

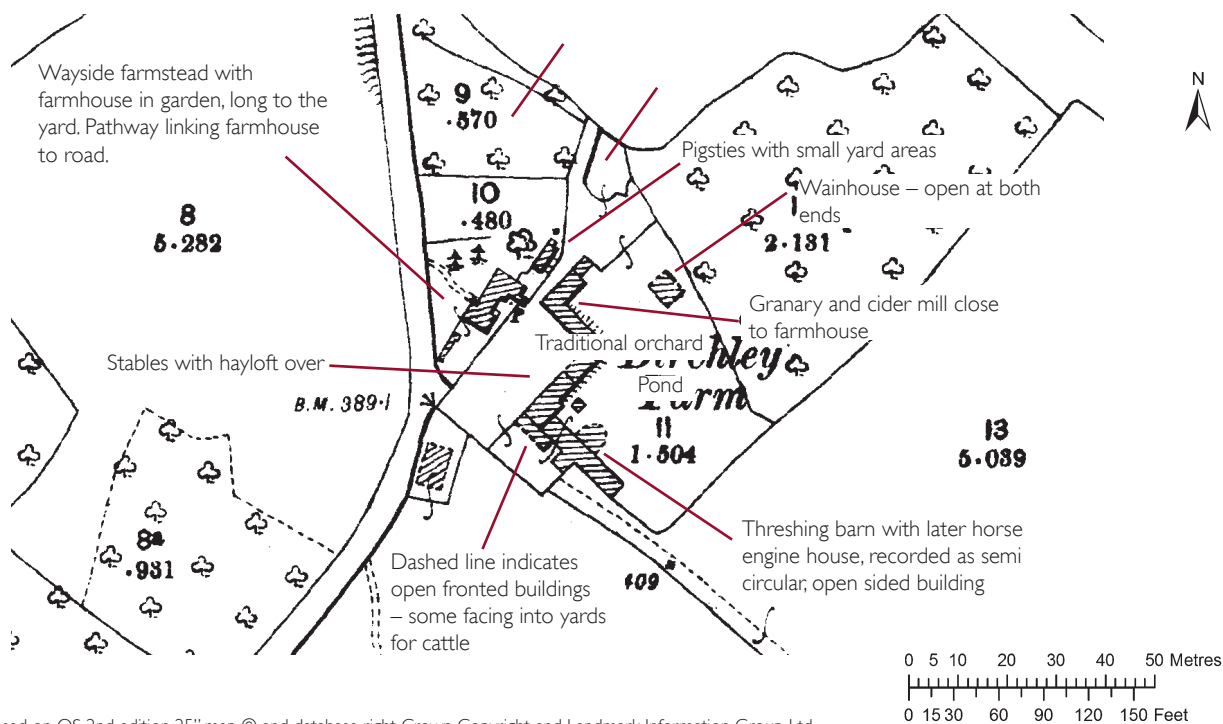
Shown below is an extract from an Ordnance Survey (OS) 2nd edition map of around 1900. Maps of this date provide a useful baseline for measuring subsequent change because they were compiled after the last major phase in the development of traditional farmsteads.

Websites such as Google Earth (<http://www.google.com/earth>) or Bing Maps (<http://www.bing.com/maps>) can be used to provide an overview of a site and its immediate area. The National Heritage List for England (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england>) also has a useful map search section. Images of England (<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk>) includes a single photograph of most of the Listed Buildings that were on the list as of the year 2000.

### The Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service provides access to:

- Information on designated and non-designated historic buildings, monuments, sites and historic landscapes throughout the county (there may be a charge for this service).
- Manuscript and printed records including Ordnance survey maps, tithe and enclosure maps and estate maps. See <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/archaeology/information-and-advice/tithe-and-inclosure-map-project.aspx> for digitised tithe and enclosure maps.

The Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is based at The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester. WRI 3PB (Tel: 01905 765905). See <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/archive-and-archaeology.aspx> for general enquiries.



### Projects in Worcestershire

Further information on projects undertaken in Worcestershire, including the Farmsteads and Landscapes Project, Historic Landscape Characterisation and the Villages Historic Environment Resource can be found at <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/archive-and-archaeology/information-and-advice/projects.aspx>

### 3 LEVELS OF RECORDING

The level of recording should be proportionate to the known or potential significance of the building and site. It may be required:

1. In support of a planning application and to inform the development of a scheme, once an initial assessment and discussion with the planning authority has identified potential for change within a farmstead;

and/or

2. Once permission has been secured, to make a record before and during the implementation of the scheme. The local planning authority may attach recording conditions to a planning or listed building consent to ensure that a record of a farmstead or building is made that will be publicly available or for archaeological recording associated with ground works on the site.

English Heritage's *Understanding historic buildings: policy and guidance for local authorities* (2006) describes the various approaches to and levels of recording buildings. In summary:

- Level 1 is equivalent to the **Site Assessment Summary** explained in this document, and will provide a useful record for the local Historic Environment Record.
- Level 2 is a more detailed descriptive record and assessment of significance, which is often required for sites with designated heritage assets. It will usually take between 1-3 days, depending on the scale and complexity of the site.
- Levels 3 and 4 are appropriate for the most significant buildings, Level 4 being the most detailed with a greater range of drawings. It involves more detailed historical research using estate, tithe and historic Ordnance Survey maps and usually documentary sources.

Further details can be found in the guidance on recording and research.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE

#### Agri-environment funding

Agri-environment funding via the Environmental Stewardship scheme has funded the maintenance and conservation repair of traditional farm buildings. Contact Natural England for further advice and eligibility on the Environment Stewardship schemes (<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>).

#### English Heritage grants

If the farm building is listed Grade I or II\* the work may be eligible for a grant from English Heritage as part of the Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscape grants scheme (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/grants>). The grant application is more likely to be successful if it meets priorities that are outlined in the application pack. The application must demonstrate that there is financial need for a grant and that the work will be undertaken within two years. These and other sources of grant aid are described in detail in the Funds for Historic Buildings website (<http://www.ffhb.org.uk>).

#### Wildlife

English Heritage, National Trust and Natural England 2009. *Bats in Traditional Buildings*. London: English Heritage.

The Bat Conservation Trust provides useful advice about bats and buildings. See [http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats\\_and\\_buildings.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_buildings.html).

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds provides further advice about birds and buildings and on attracting wildlife to gardens. See <http://www.homes.rspb.org.uk>

Natural England can provide further information about England's natural environment and biodiversity. <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>

#### English Heritage guidance

Research at a national level by English Heritage: <http://www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings>

EH 2006. *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*

EH 2011. *The Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*