

Synthesis of Rural Buildings in their Setting: Project Report, Case Study and Research Questions



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Synthesis of Rural Buildings in their Setting

Final Report

with Case Study and Research Questions

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Executive Summary

This report - ***A Synthesis of Rural Buildings in their Setting: Project Report, Case Study and Research Questions*** - forms one part of a multi-layered project focused on Worcestershire titled ***A Synthesis of Rural Buildings and their Setting***.

The report incorporates a broad overview of rural buildings in their setting, in east Worcestershire, based on a synthesis of existing knowledge, research, and the products of previous assessment and characterisation projects. It promotes a back to basics interdisciplinary approach to understanding rural buildings as part of their wider context, and aims to support professionals working with whole landscapes, including local authority archaeologists and strategic planners, as well as local researchers. It also offers a framework to guide further research in Worcestershire, but that can be applied across England.

By taking a step back and looking at a place in its broader context the report aims to promote a framework within which an understanding of landscape can enrich our understanding of rural buildings and historic places, and ask questions to inform more detailed recording. Like the Historic Farmsteads Assessment Guidance (Lake, 2015 and Lake, Hathaway et al, 2014), this project offers issues for the historic environment sector to consider and a framework within which rural buildings as an integrated component of landscape can be more readily appreciated and understood.

1. Project Introduction

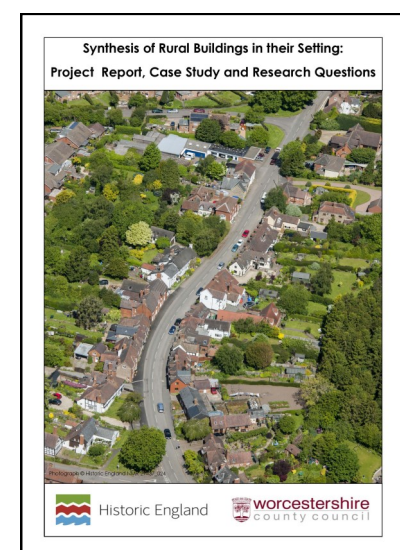
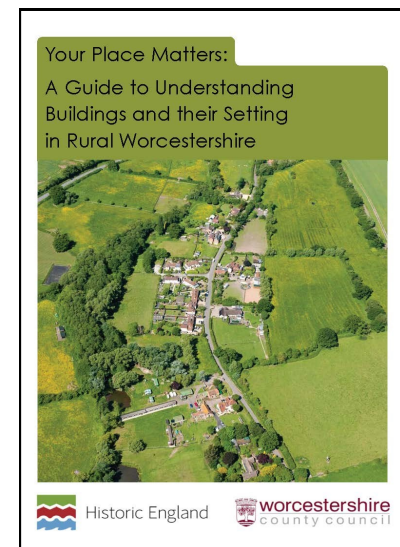
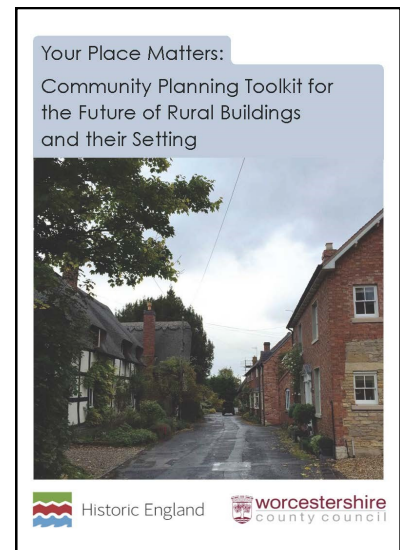
This report - ***A Synthesis of Rural Buildings in their Setting: Project Report, Case Study and Research Questions*** - incorporates a broad overview of rural buildings in their setting, in east Worcestershire, based on a synthesis of existing knowledge, research, and the products of previous assessment and characterisation projects. It promotes a back to basics interdisciplinary approach to understanding rural buildings as part of their wider context, and aims to support professionals working with whole landscapes, including local authority archaeologists and strategic planners, who may have a background in archaeology or landscape, as well as local researchers. It also offers a framework to guide further research, , but that can be applied across England.

It forms one part of a multi-layered project focused on Worcestershire titled ***A Synthesis of Rural Buildings and their Setting***. The project has delivered three products (described on page 3) which build on the results of a decade of place-making research in Worcestershire and promote a strategy and method to stimulate better understanding of the wide range of rural building types in their setting. The main outcomes of the project were to:

- Inform and promote a higher level of protection for historic rural buildings and their settings, specifically through the mechanism of Community-Led Planning, and in-particular Neighbourhood Planning.
- Articulate an up-to-date understanding of historic rural buildings and their settings, based on a synthesis of existing knowledge, research, and the products of previous assessment and characterisation projects.
- Create a research framework to guide understanding of England's rich array of rural buildings, within the context of their immediate setting and settlement, as well as local, regional and national landscapes.

A Synthesis of Rural Buildings and their Setting is a multi-layered project which has delivered the following three products¹.

1. **Your Place Matters: Community Planning Toolkit for the Future of Rural Buildings and their Setting:** step-by-step instructions to support communities to identify the historic character and distinctive quality of an area, and then use it to both deepen their understanding of place and inform and assess opportunities for change. This has been informed by training and guidance for use by local communities, funded by the West Midlands Regional Capacity Fund (Hansen, 2013 - 15) and developed in consultation with community-planning groups and heritage and non-heritage professionals.
2. **Your Place Matters: Understanding Buildings and their Setting in Rural Worcestershire:** more detailed information on the broad range of rural building types and their landscape and settlement context.
3. **A Synthesis of Rural Buildings and their Setting: Project Report, Case Study and Research Questions:** a back to basics interdisciplinary approach, which incorporates a local case study and research framework for Worcestershire, but that can be applied across England, for understanding rural buildings as part of their wider context. By taking a step back and looking at a place in its broader context the report aims to support professionals and local researchers working with whole landscapes and promote a framework within which the connections between rural buildings and landscape can be more readily appreciated, adding a broader layer of understanding to building research.



^[1] www.worcestershire.gov.uk/yourplacematters

1.1 Background to A Synthesis of Rural Buildings and their Setting: Project Report, Case Study and Research Questions

This report - ***A Synthesis of Rural Buildings and their Setting: Project Report, Case Study and Research Questions*** - reflects on current understanding and research of rural buildings and their setting, in England, and more specifically Worcestershire. It then demonstrates how, by asking basic questions and by capitalising on an interdisciplinary approach, we can re-approach and re-connect our understanding of rural buildings and landscape. By adding a broader layer of understanding to building research this framework aims to support professionals working with whole landscapes, including local authority archaeologists and strategic planners, as well as local researchers. Like the Farmstead Assessment Framework (Lake, 2015 and Lake, Hathaway et al, 2014), the report highlights issues and opportunities for the wider historic environment sector to consider and identifies a series of research questions to guide future research and understanding of place, in both Worcestershire and more generically across England, and support future approaches to conservation, through mechanisms such as strategic planning and Community-led Planning.



The small settlement of Rochford sits on the southern terrace of the River Teme in an undulating landscape dominated by scattered settlement, small to medium scale fields, orchards and hopyards. The Grade II* Parish Church of St. Michael, which has its origins in the 12th century, lies to the south of the scheduled, earthwork, remains of a Motte Castle. The settlement, which now consists of a cluster of traditional farmsteads, is most likely an area of shrunken medieval settlement. The remains of a potential Roman road and wall, running alongside the river, suggests that this location may have a long history of occupation. Photograph © Historic England NMR 29440_036

2. Review of current understanding and research into Rural Buildings and their Setting

The following chapter aims to set out a concise synthesis of current understanding and sources of information related to buildings and landscape.

2.1 Rural Buildings and their Setting in Planning and Conservation: Issues and Opportunities

All rural places and buildings are a reflection of how people have lived, worked, thought and related to each other throughout history. They form an integral part of landscape and are defined in The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as resulting from '*the interaction between people and places through time*'. Despite National Planning Policy considering rural buildings in terms of character, landscape setting, potential and design, there is a general perception—echoed in the *Farrell Review (2014)* - that new development often fails to respond to, or take into account, the historic development of a place and subsequently any potential opportunities this historic framework offers for new development.

Ongoing tensions between the different scales of study, which places the detailed study of buildings at one end of the spectrum and archaeological research frameworks, which make little mention of buildings, at the other has discouraged a more considered, strategic understanding of rural buildings, in their setting, that both:

1. appreciates that different users and generations have different ways of looking and thinking about buildings, not just for their constructional detail, their plan form, and their architectural design, but also what examination in their landscape and historic context can reveal about the historic character and development of places, our national story and how they have been perceived and used by individuals, ages and groups.
2. informs heritage management and co-ordinates and promotes historic environment research that engages with both professionals, working in the heritage sector, and community groups and local individuals, whose work, which has largely been an untapped resource up until now, has the potential to greatly enhance knowledge (Hedge and Nash, 2016).

Many Local Planning Authority Historic Environment Records (HERs) also lack adequate planning and conservation expertise (and certainly no resources for local designation at plan-making stage), and even if they did many of the 'coalface' decisions are being made by Development Control officers who – like applicants - are in urgent need of 'broad to narrow' assessment guidance that can be amended and refined in tandem with developments in the planning system, agri-environment (set to change radically post Brexit) and the options open to owners and communities to respond to change. Support for Historic Environment Records, as hubs providing information to a broad range of clients, is utterly critical in this respect. An example of a 'broad to narrow' approach to engagement with Natural England and Defra, are the revised National Character Area Statements. These are critical land management and planning tools that provide a context for understanding past land management, practice and future opportunities in agri-environment, currently Countryside Stewardship.

2.2 Community-Led Planning

Despite the increasing significance of Neighbourhood Plans in Community-Led Planning and the opportunities that the historic character of a place can present to inform rural development, full integration of the historic environment - in-particular an understanding of rural buildings as an integral part of landscape - within Neighbourhood Plans remains inconsistent at the national scale. Work undertaken, including in Worcestershire (Hanson, 2013, 2016), has demonstrated the need for early consultation with the heritage sector, including support for data gathering, beyond that of designated assets (Partington, 2014). Local authorities, including Historic Environment Records, and Historic England's local teams, play a critical role in advising on the preparation of plans and providing information through staff time and training and as guidance. With its increasingly limited resources, the heritage sector is finding it increasingly hard to deliver the sort of intensive, professionally-led characterisation, which has proved effective in urban contexts (Oxford² and Lincoln³) and this, coupled with the loss of historic environment expertise, at both the local and national scale, has escalated the need for cost-effective, practical, step-by-step guidance, which empowers community groups to confidently understand and assess their place and articulate policies for the protection of the rural historic environment, including rural buildings.

^[2] www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20193/character_assessment_toolkit

^[3] www.heritageconnectlincoln.com/article/plans-in-place

Non-heritage professionals engaged with community-led planning are often the primary source of advice for community planning working groups. Many are unaware of the underpinning significance of the historic environment and are therefore unsure of how to assess the historic development of a place and the opportunities and constraints this may have for future development. This is compounded by an absence of the terms 'heritage' and 'historic' in national research and local authority guidance which is focussed on the plan-making process, and rarely engages with information and issues about the historic environment' (Partington 2014), and by an often dis-jointed approach to change that neglects to take into account the inter-relationships between heritage, planning, architecture and biodiversity. Understanding and application of research frameworks is consistently low and although an enormous amount of research associated with buildings is undertaken by community groups and published in a variety of formats, less than 50% of respondents recently surveyed fed research into HERs and less than 15% uploaded information to OASIS (Hedge and Nash, 2016).

Common concerns raised in the context of Neighbourhood Plans, primarily through discussion with communities in local workshops.

- Loss of 'rural' communities particularly in dormitory/commuter villages.
- The large mass of new builds being out of character with existing settlement.
- The lack of affordable housing, resulting in many young people who have grown up in rural areas moving away.
- Tension between the desire to retain the valued character of places, and accommodate the changes necessary for its continued use and enjoyment (Constructive Conservation, 2015 Farrell, 2014).
- Dis-engagement with the heritage sector by individuals who wish to re-develop a historic building or place but who feel that the sector is going to be more of a hindrance than a help.
- A desire on the one hand to understand all aspects of a place, but on the other a perception that 'heritage' is solely focused on the protection of the most valued (generally listed) buildings,

Although many Historic Environment Records are used by community-led planning groups, consultation is often at the later stages of a draft plan, severely reducing the ability to communicate the significance of the historic environment, and the opportunities that it can present, throughout the development stage. It has also been found that communities are often overwhelmed by the huge volume of often abstract information, laden with professional terminology, provided by Historic Environment Records, which often makes it difficult to step back and identify how a place has changed over time, and consequently consider the issues and opportunities that the historic character, of a place, can present for future change. Consultation (Hanson, 2013) has also shown that communities don't necessarily engage with prescriptive typologies unless they are integrated within broader considerations of landscape character, favouring narrative-based interpretations of the natural and historic environment – such as the National Character Areas or Landscape Character Assessment which considers historic landscape character. However, Historic Landscape Characterisation maps (showing the mosaic of character types can be useful in helping community groups move towards a more holistic approach, for example when mapping, footpaths, greens and other amenities onto them.

2.3 Design Guidance

While there have been local efforts to apply an understanding of rural building character to design guidance in England (Green, 2009, Malvern Hills AONB Partnership, 2013) efforts have largely focused on landscapes designated for their special significance and there remains a lack of extensive survey and studies concerning the full range of structures in rural settings, from vernacular houses to smallholdings and suburban villas and bungalows. There are also disparities in design guidance at both landscape and local scales. For example, characterising dispersed settlement in rural areas may exclude a consideration of formerly rural villages, which have become distinctively urban through 20th and 21st century expansion. One example in Worcestershire that has been the subject of recent detailed characterisation is the village of Alvechurch (Hanson, 2013). Here, a dense pattern of distinctly urban spatial planning and architecture has extended the settlement well beyond its historic core. The resulting expansion has created almost a small "new town" character constrained only by major regional transport infrastructure and Green Belt planning restrictions. There is also a need to explore to what extent contemporary, new build 'rural' buildings are still rural. New build may be in a rural vernacular style, however the structure and function may be distinctly non-vernacular, dominated by imported materials, constructional techniques and styles.

2.4 Current approaches to Building Recording

Despite a rich tradition of research and interpretation of England's architectural history, from general guidance (Yorke, 2005, 2006, 2007) to the Pevsner architectural guides (Brooks and Pevsner, 2007 revised) current approaches to the study of rural buildings does not enable analysis of the whole built environment or consider how buildings relate to our understanding of how places have developed and were designed to be seen and experienced, exceptions to this are Matthew Johnson's *Housing Culture: a study of Suffolk houses* (1993) and work on traditional farmsteads (Lake, Hathaway et al 2014) and chapels (Lake, Kelly et al, 2012). A greater focus on elite architecture - large country houses and churches - has often overshadowed our understanding of more modest rural buildings, resulting in a knowledgebase - particularly when it comes to agricultural buildings, rural vernacular buildings, the wider cultural context of distinct types of landscape (from upland vales to estates) and the diverse rural heritage of non-vernacular buildings and associated landscapes - which is inadequate and out of date.

A rapid survey of grey literature reports in Worcestershire, dating to the period 2002 – 2014 and produced as part of recording conditions to planning or listed building consent, revealed that historic approaches to building recording, focus on a systematic account of the building's character, origins, development and use. Although the immediate setting of a site is, in general, taken into consideration, assessment of its character and significance within local, regional and national frameworks is limited. Knowledge of and reference to regional research frameworks associated with the built environment was inconsistent. While it's easy to criticise how the focused nature of building recording pays little regard to context, lack of guidance within the current regional research framework, along with a limited dataset of non-designated buildings, has further impeded consideration of how buildings, of all ages, fit within wider patterns of landscape and settlement. The *West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project* (Lake and Edwards, 2010) has aspired to enrich, deepen and question our understanding of traditional farmsteads and the landscapes in which they sit, and *The Future of Rural Settlement Project* (Bibby, forthcoming) has examined household change in relationship to modern and historic settlement patterns across England, additional opportunities to facilitate more strategic, landscape scale assessment of non-designated, rural buildings, need to be explored.

The last national synthesis, Eric Mercer's *English Vernacular Houses* (1975) focused on 18th century and earlier buildings recorded by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments in England. Since then the definition of rural architecture perceived to be of significance has widened substantially to incorporate both a broader typological range and buildings which conform to more standardised national plans and architectural styles and that may not meet the 'vernacular' threshold but nevertheless are integral to understanding how a place has developed. In Worcestershire, for example, there has been growing understanding and appreciation of the wide range of rural buildings within the county, from Georgian and Victorian buildings (Pevsner, 2007 revised) to traditional farmsteads and smallholdings (Lake, Hathaway et al, 2014), stone buildings⁴ and rural council housing (Dunleavey, 2015). A diversity of factors – the availability and use of materials, local and national traditions and how buildings relate to open spaces of different kinds, settlements, fields and landscapes, as a result of change over the recent and distant past – have given rise to clear patterns of local distinctiveness that have rarely been considered on an interdisciplinary basis.

2.41 The National Heritage List for England (NHLE)

Buildings listed for their special architectural and historic interest, and other designated heritage assets, can be searched on the National Heritage List for England⁵. The National Heritage List for England provides a good starting point for assessing rural buildings at the landscape scale, although variations in the length of building descriptions, means that 'the earliest and evident later observable dates' and 'building material' are the only two categories capable of consistent national analysis (see [appendix 1](#) for example list description). As they are selected according to national criteria for their special architectural or historic interest, Listed Buildings are mostly of pre-1840 date (if clearly legible) or may include progressively more architecturally and historically notable structures into the post-1945 period. They constitute only a small minority of the buildings that contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Many Community-led Planning documents, duplicate national or local lists restricting mention of other buildings, which although not listed in the national context, exemplify successive waves of rebuilding in local and nationally-influenced styles up to the twentieth century and make a critical contribution to the valued character of places.

^[4] www.buildingstones.org.uk/

^[5] www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list

The designation coverage of rural areas reflects decades of survey since the 1940s. The lists in some rural areas pre-dating the 1980s Accelerated Resurvey and in others having uneven coverage resulting from difficulties of access, the speed of survey and differing/evolving levels of knowledge and expertise (Cherry et al 2010). Despite inconsistencies its use in Geographical Information Systems, can enable rapid assessment of the pattern of designated and undesignated buildings, and the development of settlements over the last one hundred and fifty years. Conservation Areas provide an effective tool for protecting settlements, but are clearly less effective and are difficult to apply in areas of scattered rural settlement where there can be a high survival of traditional farmsteads and houses including many of 18th century and earlier date.

2.42 Historic Environment Records (HERs)

Use of Historic Environment Record data, alongside the National Heritage List for England, in Geographical Information Systems, can add additional layers of information to deepen understanding of buildings within their wider settlement and landscape context - the results of characterisation projects, such as Farmstead Characterisation, being the most useful at a strategic scale. Information associated with individual building records is often harder to extract and although the existing 'Monument Type' thesaurus used in Historic Environment Records has been found to be largely effective, the descriptions of individual building types is often narrow and makes no reference to heritage potential at a local or national scale, design or setting. Relationships of individual or groups of buildings, at a local, regional or even national scale, is also absent and records are persistently asset focused.

Buildings are generally searched by area. They can also be searched by monument (building) type, building component, broad period (i.e. post medieval or century) or materials. Searching by architectural form, plan form, bay length or by the numbers of windows across a façade is difficult as it's recorded, if known, within free text. Landscape or settlement component records which have the potential to deepen understanding of a building within its context, are underused and a demonstration of how communities, planners and researchers can understand historic patterns of settlement by looking more broadly at HER and NHLE data, and how this related to the development of settlement, restricted. While efforts have been made, in Worcestershire, to improve the way that data is disseminated for non-commercial searches, specifically searches related to community-led planning, maps are still produced by theme (to prevent over cluttered maps).

Data is presented by period, allowing communities to more readily decipher which heritage assets belong to which period. A (point) map is provided of all buildings recorded on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, dating to the late 19th century.

Although there has been growing awareness of the potential to utilise mobile and other technologies to capture people's perceptions of and enhance their understanding of place (Hein et al 2008), many local authority Historic Environment Records are slow to react to the potential possibilities of this new technology as well as drives to improve the accessibility of information - for example the Heritage Information Access Strategy, funded by Historic England, by declining resources and expertise within local planning authorities.

The Archaeology Data Service has some unpublished 'grey literature' reports on historic buildings⁶. Otherwise, as the farmstead mapping surveys have established, there is no comprehensive database format for un-designated recorded buildings which have considerable potential to enrich, deepen and question our understanding of local landscape character and historic development. Although the majority of Historic Environment Records (HERs) have grown exponentially since their transition from Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs), and now incorporate records associated with a diverse range of un-designated rural buildings, strategic analysis of building data remains difficult due to a combination of factors including, uneven coverage of records, a persistently structure-focused approach to building recording, the results of recording surveys not being comprehensively entered onto HERs and poor understanding of their national coverage and the research questions arising from them not being brought up to date and subject to analysis.

Exceptions are the regular updates of dendrochronology analysis from various sources, including English Heritage, that appear in *Vernacular Architecture* (see [appendix 2](#)), *The Rape of Hastings Historic Buildings Project* which is resulting in the enhancement of the East Sussex HER and of particular interest in this context the *Building Archaeology Research Database (BARD)*⁷, which has used the data set arising from Surrey's Domestic Buildings Research Group (the database has been developed by volunteers, and buildings can be searched by type, date and key features).

⁶ <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/?category=greyliterature&>

⁷ www.buildingarchaeology.co.uk.

This could then enable others to assess in a national context how the age and types of houses across an area – say for Community-Led Planning, or for a research or Heritage Lottery Fund initiative – relates to routeways, fields, settlement growth/pattern etc. and can be assessed. Much of this context will come from the *Future of Rural Settlement* project (Bibby, forthcoming) and liaison with the University of Cambridge which is considerably deepening our understanding of the pattern of post-1851 census change.

2.5 Rural Buildings and Landscapes

Rural landscapes are characterised by a mixture of distinctive settlement patterns which have developed as a result of the unique combination of physical and cultural influences that make one place distinct and recognisable from another. Patterns of settlement display an enormous variation and buildings relate not only to each other but also to the shape and extent of their building plots, routeways, fields and other features in the landscape. Work on settlements has shown that these distinctions have their roots in the medieval period (Roberts and Wrathmell, 2000 and 2002), and work on farmsteads has indicated that their layouts and the dates and types of their buildings are related to local variations in farmed landscapes (Lake and Edwards, 2006).

Two key factors guide the assessment of rural buildings:

1. **Their vast typological range**, from vernacular buildings to gentry, estate and country houses, public housing, farmsteads, smallholdings and villas. Rural buildings thus embrace polite and vernacular forms of architecture,⁸ and cannot be studied in isolation from the influences of urban and suburban architecture and culture⁹.

2. **Their settings**. Studies of vernacular architecture have long been alive to the local traditions and the importance of local geology and resources,¹⁰ but recent work including the development of new tools such as GIS¹¹ have revealed the rich potential for understanding rural buildings in their landscape and settlement context. We need to improve ways of synthesising this understanding, and ensuring that it is integrated into other forms of land management and planning.

^[8] e.g. Burton N (ed.) 1996 *Georgian Vernacular. Georgian Group: Tonbridge.*

^[9] See Guillery P (ed) 2011 *Built from Below: British Architecture and the Vernacular. Routledge, London*

^[10] e.g. Kirk J C 2004 'Butts Cottage, Kirdford: The Conversion of Trees to Timber in the Rural Sussex Weald', *Vernacular Architecture*, **35**, 12-20, Rackham O 1972 'Grundle House: on the quantities of timber in certain East Anglian buildings in relation to local supplies', *Vernacular Architecture*, **3**, 3-8, Harris R, 'The Grammar of Carpentry', *Vernacular Architecture* **20** (1989), 1-8.

^[11] e.g. Lake, J and Edwards, B 2007 'Buildings and Place: Farmsteads and the Mapping of Change', *Vernacular Architecture*, **37**: 33-49, Lake J, Berry E and Herring P 2011 'Chapels and Landscape in Cornwall', in King, C and Sayer D (eds), *The Archaeology of Post-Medieval Religion, Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series*, Johnson, M 2011 *English Houses 1300-1800: Vernacular Architecture, Social Life. Longman: Harlow*

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project¹² (Lake and Edwards, 2010) conducted by Historic England in collaboration with regional development agency Advantage West Midlands and local county and metropolitan authorities, drew together the results of county and metropolitan Farmstead Characterisation projects, at a regional scale, to help national and local decision-makers describe the present day role of historic farmsteads in the West Midlands' economy, evaluate what the future uses for farm buildings should be, identify the most significant and vulnerable cases and develop a set of planning tools to inform spatial planning, land management and economic development.

The project concluded that historic farmsteads make a significant and highly varied contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of the West Midlands have significant potential, through agricultural and other new uses, to make an important contribution to the rural economy, that more than 80% of farmsteads recorded from late 19th century maps have survived across the region (only one third of these in agricultural use) and that the economic benefits of residential use have historically been overlooked in many areas.

In Worcestershire rates of conversion appear to be higher than the average across the West Midlands region with a higher tendency to convert farmsteads for residential use a potential consequence of easy accessibility to the south-east and central conurbation. In Worcestershire, as of 2010, 47.35% of surviving farmsteads had undergone some level of conversion with use for non-agricultural business also higher than the regional average.

In Worcestershire, the ongoing *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire Project* (Hancox, 2010), has also sought to guide research agendas and strengthen the status of non-designated historic buildings as a comprehensive, integrated feature of the landscape. The project has sought to better document the built environment by systematically recording all of the buildings and structures recorded on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map (dated to approximately 1880) but recording remains uneven and is undeniably labour intensive, relying heavily on the availability and energy of volunteers. As of September 2016, only 30% (in terms of area) of the county has been assessed. Records for late 19th and 20th century buildings remains limited despite an increasing appreciation nationally of the historical and architectural significance of more recent development.

^[12] <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/wm-county-summaries/>

There is growing interest in the historical diversity of rural economies and most recently, the Occupational Structure of Britain 1379-1911 project (The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure¹³ has also shown that we should look beyond the influence of farming to better understand the contribution that rural trades and other activities – such as commerce, transport, services and investment - have made to the development and adaptation of rural settlements and local economies over time. The project has indicated that growth in secondary sector (manufacturing and construction) employment took place far earlier than was once supposed, in some areas employing nearly 40 per cent of the male workforce by the early 1700s. It is important to note that the surge of growth in this sector long preceded the technological transformation of major industries which occurred in the later eighteenth century and the onset of modern rates of general economic growth in the early nineteenth century.

A further major finding is that across the nineteenth century it was the tertiary (service) sector which experienced a marked growth in its share of overall male employment, while the share of the secondary sector changed very little. A project nearing completion—***The Future of Rural Settlement***, by Peter Bibby of the University of Sheffield in collaboration with Jeremy Lake of Historic England – is also demonstrating how the density of rural settlement provides an indication of the same occupational and economic forces at work.

^[13] www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/occupations/

2.6 Historic Buildings and Regional Research Frameworks

The Historic Environment sector has seen significant changes, both within the planning process and in how research is generated and coordinated, since Historic England (then called English Heritage) initiated the *West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology* in 2002/2003. This followed the publication of *Frameworks for our Past* (Olivier, 1996) and the introduction of *Planning Policy Guidance 16 (PPG 16)*. Over the last twenty years Historic Environment Research Frameworks have sought to promote cross-sector collaboration and in so doing prioritise and promote areas of research by means of a cost effective and joined up approach. Regional research frameworks have sought to integrate the historic built environment into archaeological research agendas. For example, the *Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research*¹⁴ (ed. Watt, 2011) recognises that '*best practice should encourage the study of buildings in their historical, archaeological and landscape settings – as well as within the tradition of architectural history*' (Belford, 2011, 226) and argues the need to '*look at whole landscapes*' and '*assess the complete building stock of areas rather than just picking out individual buildings*' (Hodder, 2011, 251). Nevertheless, a persistent archaeological bias with regards to structure, content and language, has resulted in buildings, for the most part, remaining persistently detached from their wider context. The enduring cultural divide between archaeological curators and conservation officers (Pye Tait, 2014) also continues to impede any joined up approach to the conservation of rural buildings and settlements.

Despite Historic England's and Pye Tait's (2014) *Review of Research Frameworks for the Historic Environment Sector in England*¹⁵ there has been no overall initiative to comprehensively enhance or update the West Midlands framework to incorporate current planning legislation, or identify regional priorities for future research with regards to the built environment, as has been done in other areas of the country (Giles, 2013) and in other areas of archaeological research.¹⁶

[14] https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/wmrf_he_2016/

[15] <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/research/review-research-frameworks-historic-environment-sector-england.pdf>

[16] Hurst, D (ed), 2017 *Westward on the high-hilled plains: the later prehistory of the West Midlands*. Oxford: Oxbow Books is the second volume in a series -*The Making of the West Midlands*—that explores the archaeology of the English West Midlands region from the Lower Palaeolithic onwards. These volumes, based on the West Midlands Research Framework seminars, aim to transform perceptions of the nature and significance of the archaeological evidence across a large part of central Britain.

In response this project incorporates a research framework for Worcestershire, but that can be applied across England (to deepen understanding of the rich array of buildings, within the context of their immediate setting and settlement as well as local, regional and national landscapes and discovering and enjoying what makes one place different from another. Within Worcestershire a second project *The Assessment, Management and Recording of Heritage Assets a Strategic Approach* (Edwards and Nash, ongoing) has also looked to promote an up to date strategy for archaeological advice with a view to, among other things, better inform research.

3. Case Study

This case study, incorporates a broad overview of rural buildings in their setting, in east Worcestershire, based on a synthesis of existing knowledge, research, and the products of previous assessment and characterisation projects. It aims to demonstrate how, an appreciation of landscape can enrich our understanding of rural buildings and historic places, re-connecting buildings with their wider context and providing a framework to support more detailed study. The case study incorporates a broad overview of available datasets, supported by basic desk-top study, and half a day field survey. Although undertaken by experienced landscape/building professionals it aims to demonstrate a straightforward approach that can be applied by non-heritage professionals and researchers working with whole landscapes.

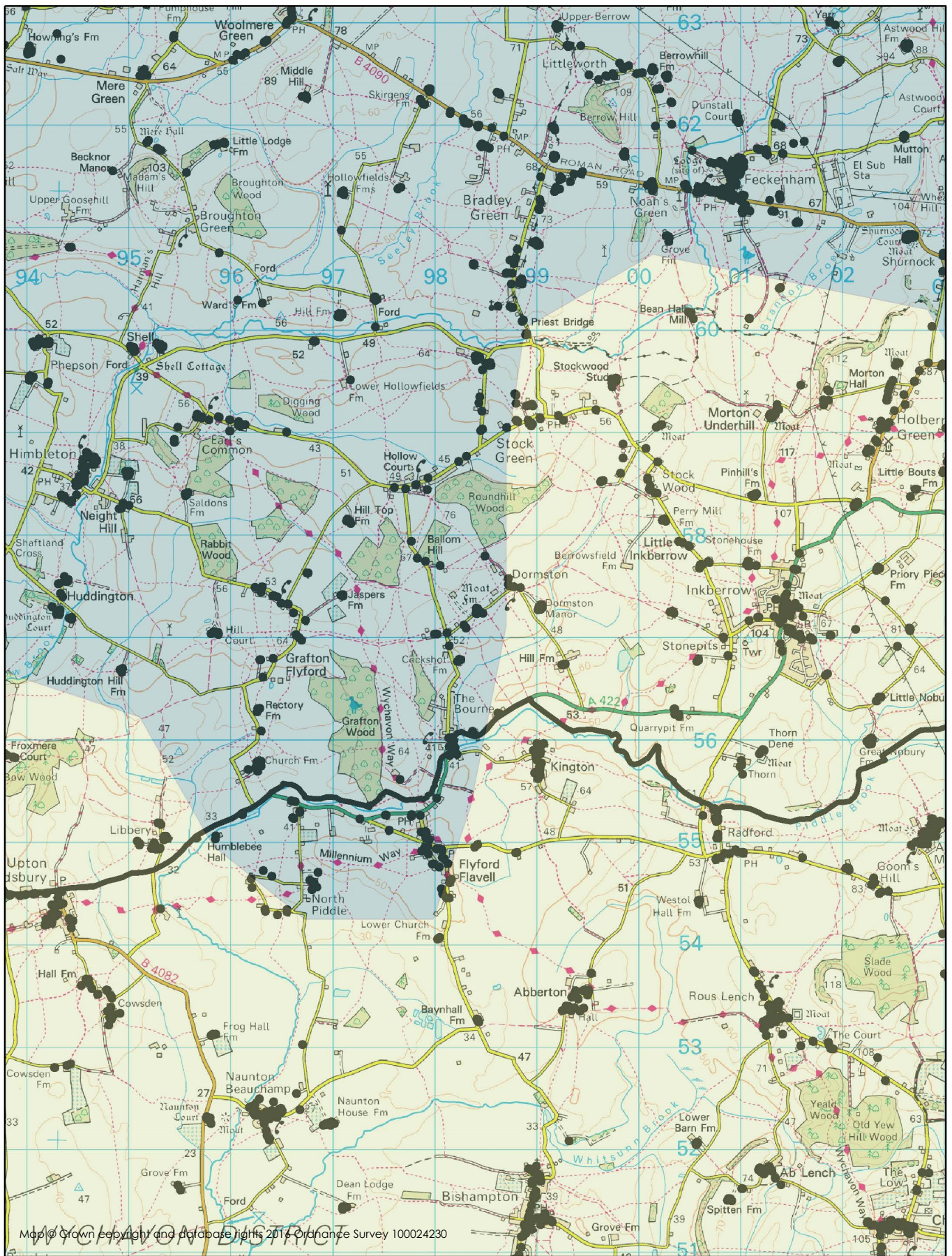
Roberts and Wrathmell Settlement Atlas ¹⁷	Roberts and Wrathmell's Atlas of Rural Settlement in England is a key point of reference for understanding the development of rural settlement in England. The maps of 19th century settlement and terrain from the Atlas are now available as data that can be used in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software.
The National Heritage List for England: Designated Buildings	Historic England's official database of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England.
Traditional Farmsteads in Worcestershire	A dataset derived from the rapid mapping of farmsteads from 2 nd edition Ordnance Survey maps, which were compiled after the last major phase in the construction of traditional farmsteads and their buildings, in order to record their historic character from this period and the survival of their historic form to the present day. The results are then analysed in relationship to other data including listed buildings and Historic Landscape Characterisation in order to better understand farmsteads in their landscape and settlement context. Traditional farmsteads in Worcestershire have been subdivided into six distinctive Farmstead Character Areas, based on analysis of the character of farmsteads in their landscape context.
Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)	A dataset which has identified archaeological, historical and other environmental attributes and grouped them together to define land parcels or 'HLC polygons' within GIS. GIS is used to map the distribution of historic landscape types, with links to written descriptions of them and the historical processes they represent.
Historic Buildings of Worcestershire (HBW) Project	The HBW Project aims to better document buildings across the county of Worcestershire by systematically recording all of the buildings recorded on the 1 st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, dated to approximately 1880.
Synthesis of Rural Buildings in their Setting: Worcestershire	A bespoke GIS layer was created for analysis relative to the typologies and distribution of rural buildings across the county. The 'HBSMR' historic environment record software from exeGesIS was utilised to extract records pertaining to extant historic buildings, which were then collated into categories defined by the English Heritage Thesaurus Class Types (e.g. Agricultural and Subsistence, Civil, Domestic, Industrial etc.) Urban historic buildings were filtered from the dataset utilising the Worcestershire HLC to define the extent of historic towns. Buildings of a historically rural context that were later consumed by urban expansion were not filtered, to allow assessment of their continued influence upon their contemporary setting.

¹⁷ http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/atlasrural_he_2015/

Map 1: Robert and Wrathmell's Settlement Provinces in relation to the boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East (to the north) and South Eastern Farmlands (to the south) Farmstead Character Areas and pre 20th century buildings.

This map shows the *Settlement Atlas* boundary between the Central Province dominated by nucleated settlement and the North and Western Province dominated by dispersed (scattered) settlement in relation to the Royal Forest of Feckenham and South Eastern Farmstead Character Areas (the boundary of which is shown in grey) and pre-20th century buildings recorded on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record. Although the map highlights the contrasting patterns of pre-20th century settlement within the case study area, the difficulties associated with drawing exact boundaries at strategic scales is immediately apparent as indicated by the presence of more dispersed historic houses, north of Inkberrow, within the Central Province and the inclusion of Flyford Flavell, which is a nucleated village, within the North and Western Province.

Map 1



Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2014. Ordnance Survey 100024230

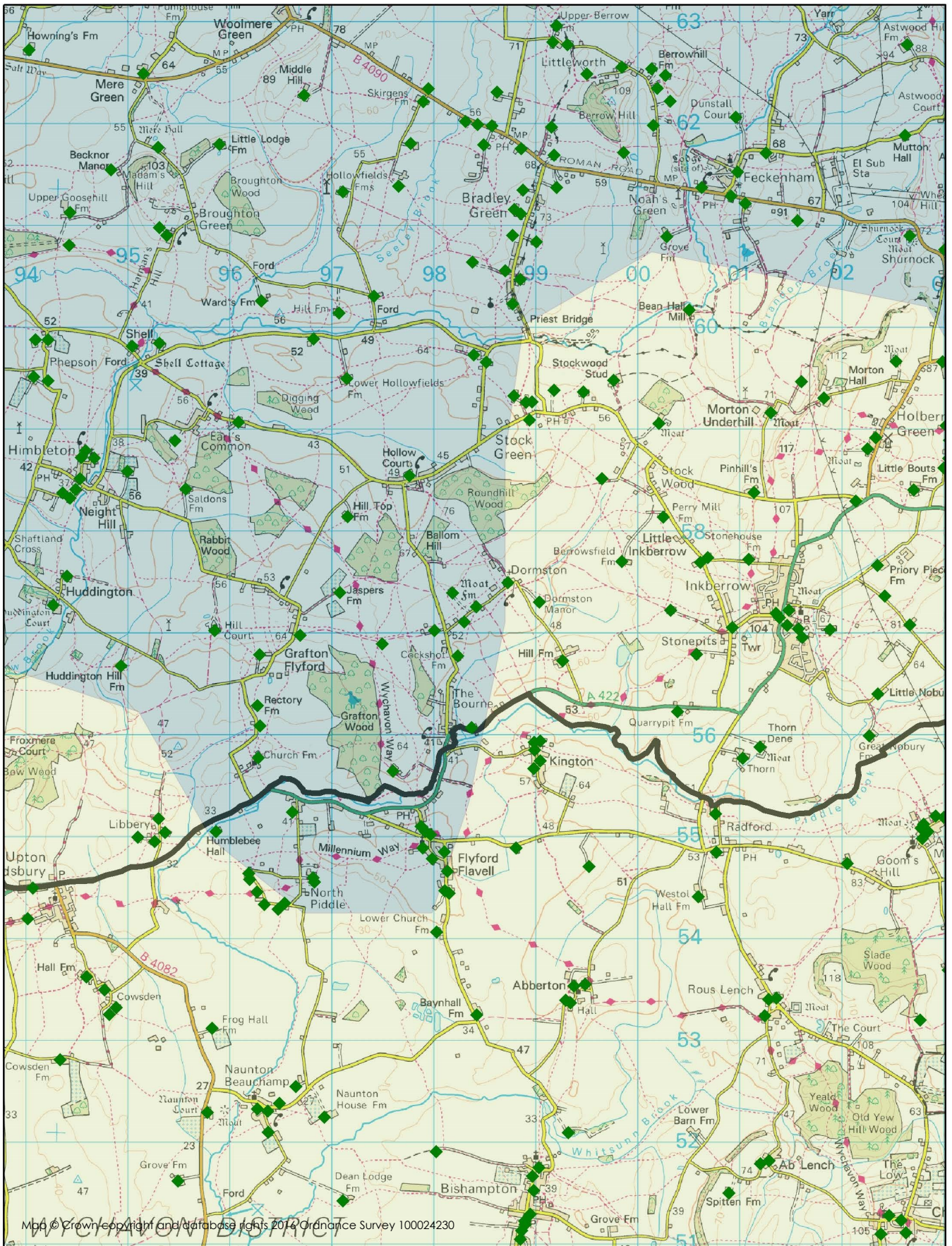
- Central Province
- Northern and Western Province
- Boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmstead Character Areas
- Pre 20th Century Buildings



Map 2: Robert and Wrathmell's Settlement Provinces in relation to the boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East (to the north) and South Eastern Farmlands (to the south) Farmstead Character Areas and Traditional Farmsteads

This map reinforces the contrasts between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmstead Character Areas, more than the settlement provinces, with the scattered strings of wayside farmsteads associated with the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East contrasting with the tightly concentrated clusters of farmsteads within villages, constrained by the need to use surrounding open fields, in the South Eastern Farmlands. The incidence of dispersed farmsteads within the South Eastern Farmlands is extremely low with the exception of the ring of farmsteads to the west of North Piddle, which may relate to a potential former area of common pasture. The maps also indicate a transitional zone, between the two dominant character areas, around Inkberrow, where there is a higher incidence of dispersed farmsteads around the settlement.

Map 2



Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100024230

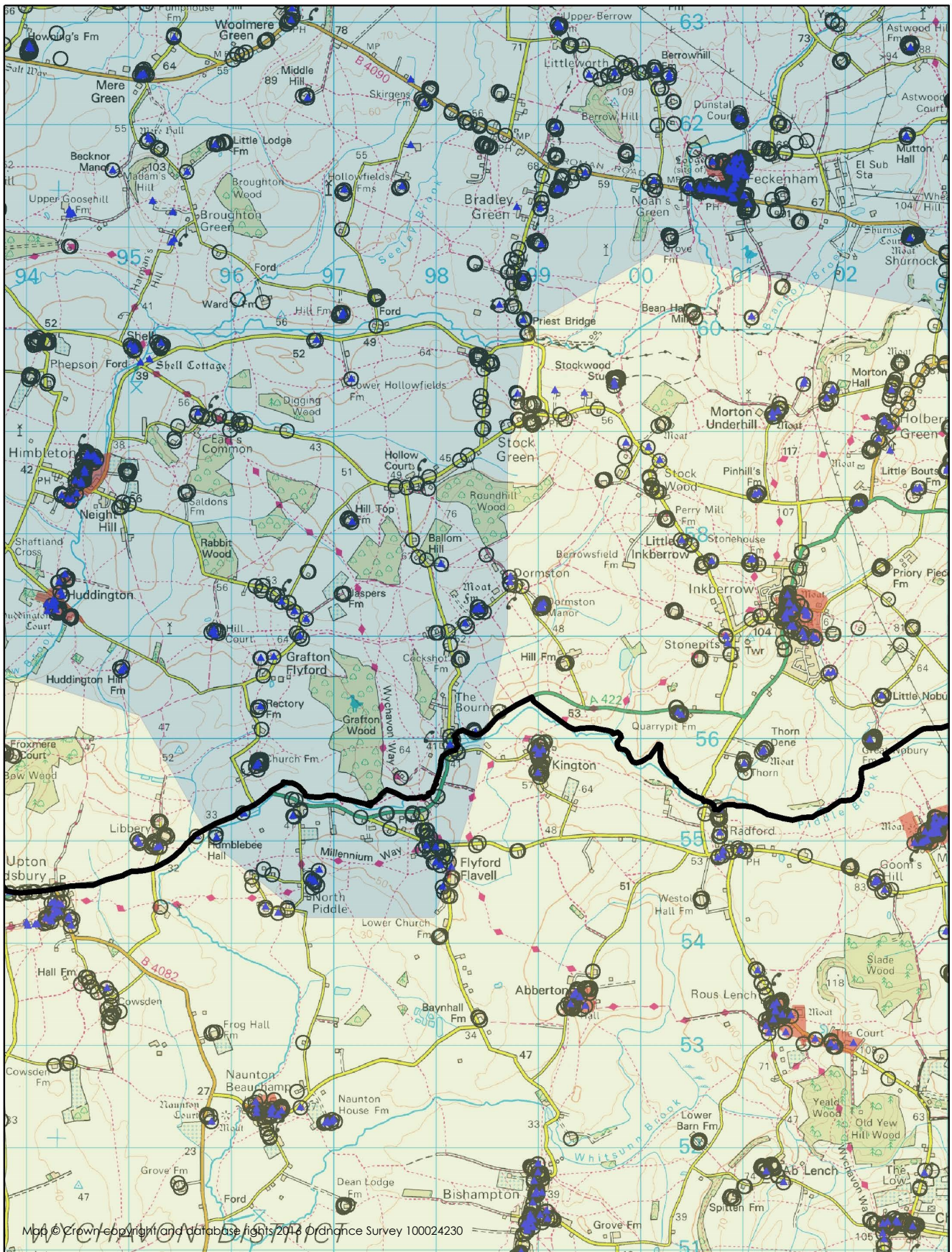
- Central Province
- Northern and Western Province
- Boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmstead Character Areas
- Farmsteads



Map 3: Robert and Wrathmell's Settlement Provinces in relation to the boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East (to the north) and South Eastern Farmlands (to the south) Farmstead Character Areas, Pre 20th century buildings recorded on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

This map reveals that almost all listed buildings within the case study area are pre-20th century in date, reflecting the criteria for assessment used by Historic England. The majority are likely to pre date 1840, the exceptions being estate cottages. The higher proportion of listed buildings in the northern half of the case study area reflects the dispersed character of historic settlement, with listed buildings in the southern half of the case study area, concentrated in tight clusters within the historic core of villages, which have in many circumstances been designated as Conservation Areas. The map again suggests the presence of a transitional zone between land dominated by dispersed settlement and land dominated by nucleated settlement, suggesting that the Farmstead Character Areas present a more accurate picture, of the case study area, and that Robert and Wrathmell's settlement provinces could be refined through analysis of its data alongside other national and local datasets.

Map 3



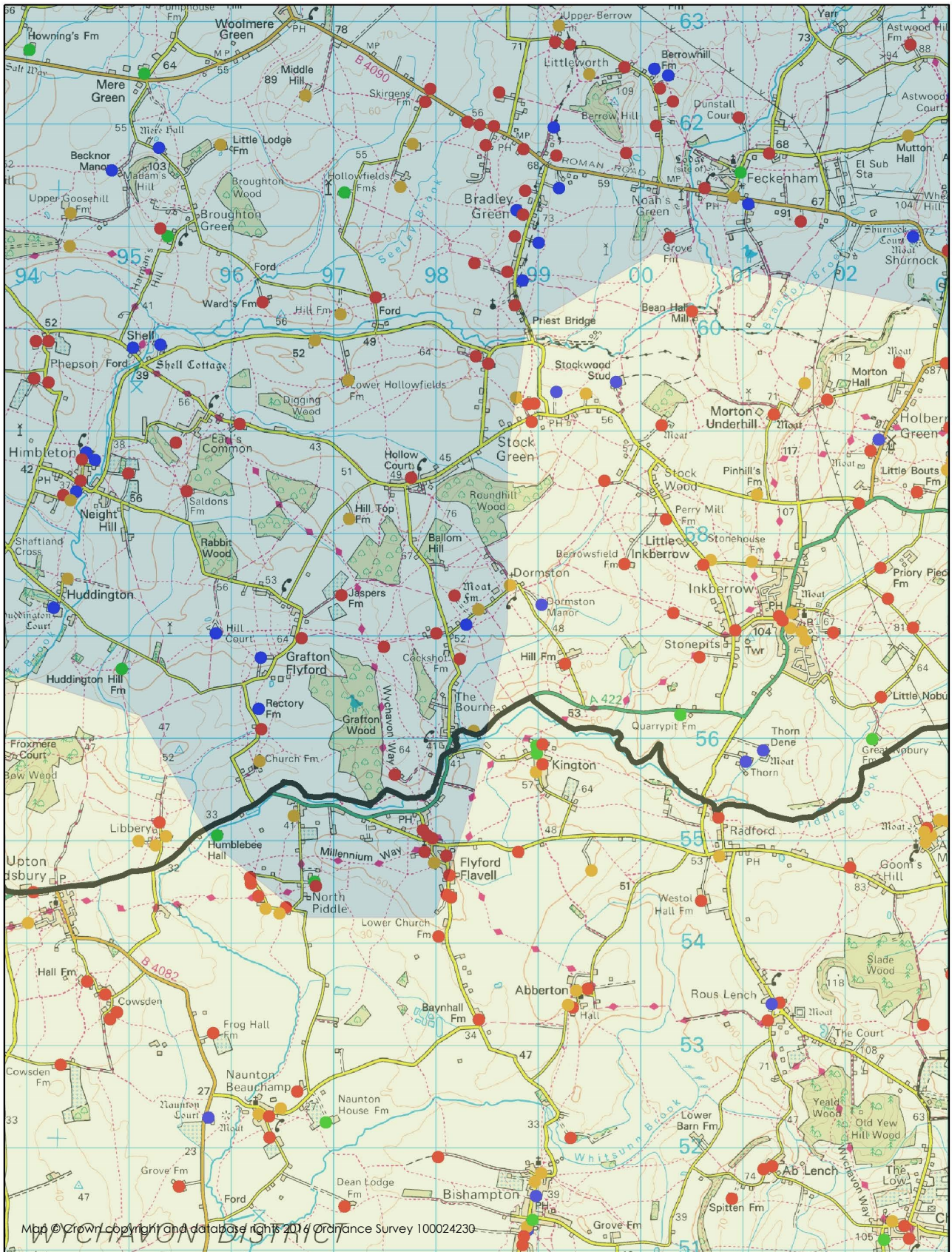
- Central Province
- Northern and Western Province
- Boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmstead Character Areas
- Pre 20th Century Buildings
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area



Maps 4 and 5: Robert and Wrathmell's Settlement Provinces in relation to the boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East (to the north) and South Eastern Farmlands (to the south) Farmstead Character Areas and farmhouse/working agricultural building date (left) and domestic building date (right)

These two maps indicate a greater prevalence of dated buildings within settlements. This may be partly the result of planning related data and contextual surveys undertaken in relation to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. The dating of non-listed buildings, which do not undertake the same level of scrutiny, are generally derived from 19th century maps and given a terminus ante quem of the 19th century until further analysis is undertaken. This can lead to the inaccurate assumption that buildings outside of settlement are later in date. The maps reveal a higher proportion of pre 17th century to the north. 17th century activity is concentrated within nucleated villages, to the south, although notably not so much in poly-focal settlements like Inkberrow and Feckenham. A large percentage of 19th century(?) buildings in Feckenham and around Bradley Green (west of Feckenham) may relate to growth in the needle industry.

Map 4



Map © Crown Copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100024230

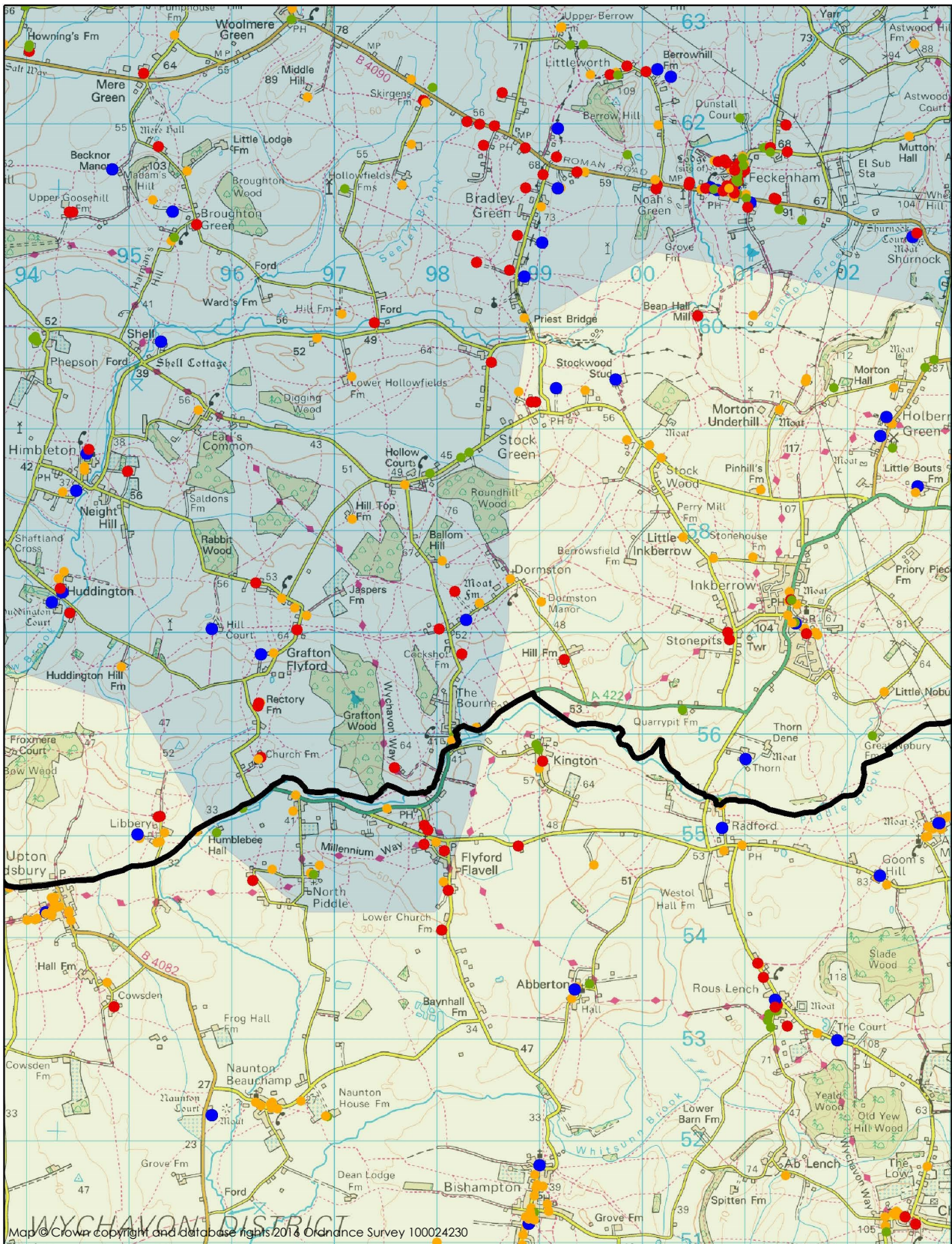
HER Domestic Buildings Terminus Post Quem

- Pre 17th Century
- 17th Century
- 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century

- ▭ Boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmstead Character Areas
- ▭ Central Province
- ▭ Northern and Western Province



Map 5



HER Domestic Buildings Terminus Post Quem

- Pre 17th Century
- 17th Century
- 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century

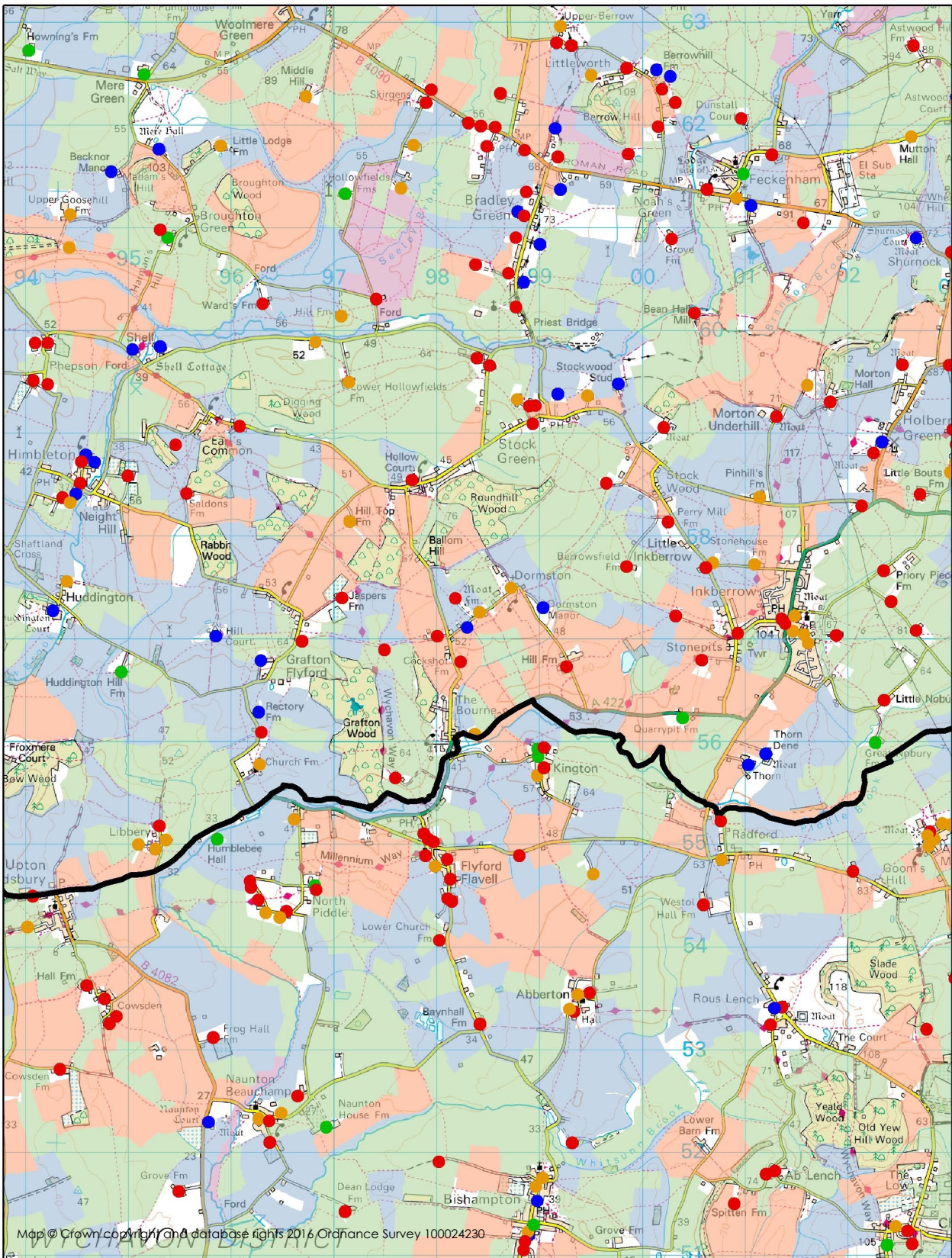
- ▭ Boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmstead Character Areas
- ▭ Central Province
- ▭ Northern and Western Province



Maps 6 and 7: Historic Landscape Characterisation: Fields and Enclosed Land (by extant period) in relation to the boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East (to the north) and South Eastern Farmlands (to the south) Farmstead Character Areas and farmhouse/working agricultural building date (left) and domestic building date (right) in relation to Historic Landscape Character (HLC) Field and Enclosed Land Extant Period

Although the HLC is valuable as a framework for understanding the current landscape, it cannot be accurately relied upon to identify the relationship between buildings and previous landscape character because we have an incomplete picture of previous HLC types. Maps 6 and 7 record the broad date of current landscape features, from the Medieval Period to Post World War II, in relation to building date. The maps reveal little other than older buildings being more evidently associated with coherent 19th century enclosures to the north with later buildings being more dominant outside.

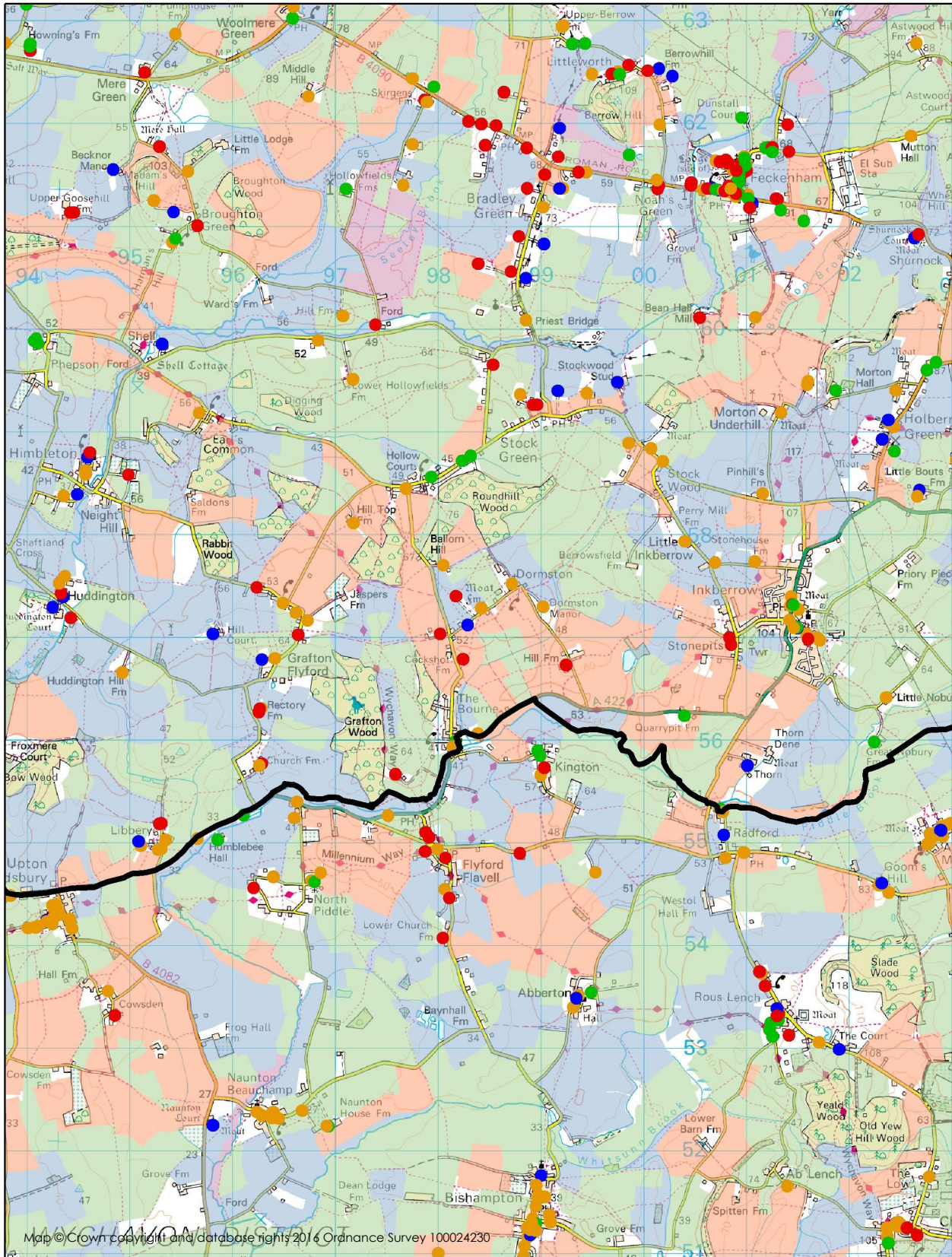
Map 6



- ◆ Pre 17th Century
- 17th Century
- 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century
- Medieval (AD 1066 - AD 1539)
- Post-Medieval (AD 1540 - AD 1799)
- Industrial (AD 1800 - AD 1913)
- Post-War (1945 - present)
- ▭ Boundary between the The Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmsstead Character Area



Map 7



Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100024230

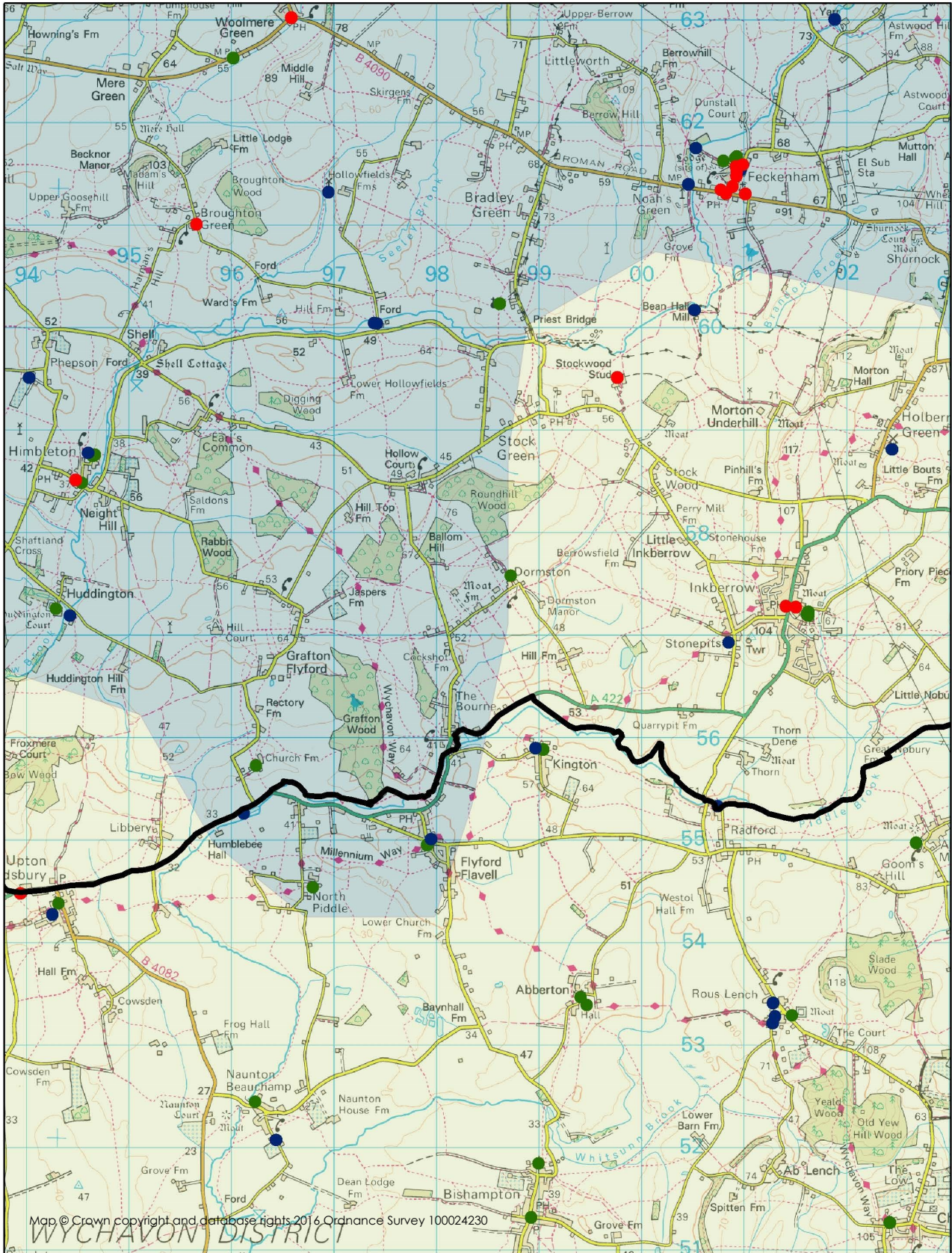
- ◆ Pre 17th Century
- 17th Century
- 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century
- Medieval (AD 1066 - AD 1539)
- Post-Medieval (AD 1540 - AD 1799)
- Industrial (AD 1800 - AD 1913)
- Post-War (1945 - present)
- ▭ Boundary between the The Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmstead Character Area



Map 8 Robert and Wrathmell's Settlement Provinces in relation to the boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East (to the north) and South Eastern Farmlands (to the south) Farmstead Character Areas and building types.

This map reflects the low percentage of records, associated with commercial and industrial buildings, across the county of Worcestershire, records for religious buildings being more consistent, but most likely focused on parish churches and little else. Concentrations of commercial buildings in villages, such as Feckenham are reflective of industries, such as the needle and fishhook industry, which increased notably in scale during the 18th and 19th centuries, and which as a result have left a more visible legacy within the current built environment. Evidence of smaller scale activity beyond the industrial and commercial centres is minimal.

Map 8



Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100024230

HER Building Types

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Religious/Ritual/Funery

- Central Province
- Northern and Western Province

Boundary between the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East and South Eastern Farmlands Farmstead Character Areas



3.1 Field Survey

Rapid field survey – which in this case consisted of less than a day – adds another layer of depth to the initial strategic assessment of settlement and landscape achieved through map/desk survey, including the scale, form and style of buildings in different places. It can then provide a framework for more detailed recording and analysis of buildings and historic places, using the Research Questions in this *Synthesis*, the guidance provided in *Your **Place Matters*** and using more specialist skills where required. The levels of research and recording, and the numbers of distinctive ‘character areas’, can of course be deepened as required or desired, but it is always useful to test these against the first impressions gained from desk survey and field survey.

Observations of the northern half of the case study area (The Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East Farmstead Character Area)

The distribution of 17th century and earlier houses is more even in this area, reflecting the high density of scattered settlement and its mixture of farmland, woodland and heath. Settlement is predominately wayside, scattered along the intricate network of lanes and roads that crisscross the area. Houses, even small scale ones are predominately outward-looking, a display of either status or wealth or perhaps even of individual autonomy.

A significant characteristic is the concentration of smaller 18th century and earlier timber-framed dwellings. These are scattered in chains in landscapes marked by the most mixed historic land-use and smaller scale fields (often enclosed on a piecemeal basis from heaths by the 18th century). Survey indicates that many have been re-fronted or rebuilt, leaving fragments of timber-frame and sometimes external stacks, as at Bradley Green where traces remain in 19th century houses and 20th century bungalows. These appear to be 17th and 18th century, and may reflect the diverse land use and wide range of non-agricultural entrepreneurship (most notably craft specialisation) found within the Forest of Feckenham, which developed under Crown regulation from the medieval period but was deregulated following disafforestation in 1629.

In contrast are many 'high status' sites or 'large' houses (with 5-bay fronts and/or hall and cross-wing plans), as indicated by shrunken medieval settlement, moats, or 'Court' names and surrounded by larger scale, re-organised fields. One of these is Lower Hollowfields Farm, in Hanbury, which sits on the site of a monastic grange and whose demesne fields are clearly visible on present-day maps. Despite these differences, the impression is that all ranges in the social scale were more likely to modify, adapt and improve their building stock rather than re-develop it.



Photo 1: A prestigious late 16th or early 17th century timber-framed farmhouse in Hanbury. Like, many high-status rural and urban houses of this period, the house displays close studding on its main façade – facing the road – in a clear demonstration of wealth and status. **Photo 2:** A small scale, 17th century, cottage down Littlewood Lane. Smaller scale dwellings, dating to this period, are more prevalent in marginal landscapes, with small scale fields, woodland and heath. **Photo 3:** A small scale, 17th century, timber-framed cottage that has been raised to accommodate a second storey. Photographs © Worcestershire County Council.

Focus on Feckenham

The village of Feckenham is situated along two main roads – the Lower Saltway, which joins Droitwich in the west to Alcester in the east and the Ridgeway which passes along the eastern boundary of the parish to Redditch. Feckenham displays a more nucleated character than is typical of the Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East Farmstead character area, with buildings of different dates and styles, densely packed along these two main roads. The village was designated as a Conservation Area in 1969, and as a consequence 20th century development within the established settlement boundary is minimal. It retains a significant number of timber-framed buildings, associated with former farmsteads, dating from the 17th century and earlier. In contrast to the South Eastern Farmlands, however, they are scattered over a wide area and suggest development from a more poly-focal settlement. Much re-fronting and new building dates from its re-development during the 18th to mid 19th centuries, as its economy developed from one, more reliant on farming and cottage industry to one profiting from large-scale industry, commerce and trade. By the end of the 18th century Feckenham was well-known for its manufacture of needles and fish-hooks.

This is reflected in a number of fine, Georgian houses reflecting the growing wealth of its burgeoning middle class in the heart of the village, the prominent location of the early 19th century Needle Mill and the evidence for terrace houses and small, one-bay, cottages for the labouring class and the conversion of at least one barn into a house.



Photo 4: The 'Old Black Boy' appears to have originally been a 5-bay barn, related to the adjacent medieval hall and cross-wing house. Like, many former agricultural buildings in Feckenham, the barn was converted into small, one bay, cottages during the 19th century, to accommodate labourers employed in the needle-making industry. **Photo 5:** The village displays a mixture of buildings, from large scale detached houses to very small scale, one bay cottages. Buildings predominately face the road. The location of earlier timber-framed farmsteads suggests that the village may have originally been more scattered or poly-focal in its character. **Photo 6:** Early 19th century needle mill, now a dwelling. Stuccoed brick on a sandstone plinth, slate roof and decorative lunette shaped windows. Photographs © Worcestershire County Council. **Photo 7:** This late 18th century terrace of four cottages, by the green, probably housed tenants working in the needle industry. Interestingly the chimney stacks on either side are set back, perhaps representing a service room or brew house to the back. A potential workshop, with large windows, low to the ground, is located to the side. **Photo 8:** There is little doubt that Feckenham, as a service hub for communities throughout the wider area, would have supported individuals engaged in a variety of services. This timber-framed farmhouse (see the large stone chimney stack which relates to an earlier timber-framed house identifiable to the rear) was converted into three dwellings, including an outfitters. **Photo 9:** One of a number of large, 18th century, detached houses, built in a classical style. The adjacent timber-framed building was also re-fronted in red brick, during this period. **Photo 10:** A classical architectural style is undeniably dominant in the majority of later buildings. The vernacular revival in architectural style is represented by this pair of early 20th century, semi-detached houses. **Photo 11:** One of a number of 17th century and earlier, timber-framed farmsteads, which would have farmed the open-fields around the settlement, converted into residential. Photographs © Worcestershire County Council.

Observations of the southern half of the case study area (The South Eastern Farmstead Character Area).

The most marked feature of this area is the concentration of 17th century and earlier buildings in nucleated villages, which vary in size and the degree to which they are tight-knit or progressively loose in their planning. Large swathes of open field would have dominated the landscape in-between settlement and expansion, beyond established settlement boundaries, appears to have been severely restricted, the exception being country houses, (reflecting a growing desire for privacy and separation from the general populace), very small-scale, common-edge (squatter) cottages and, from the 18th century farmsteads, relocated away from the villages in the newly enclosed fields.

The majority of 17th century and earlier buildings are as a rule larger in scale than in the northern half of the case study area. Differences in the dating and location of houses of this date within villages reveal the extent to which farmsteads continued to work the open fields around them. With the exception of 15th century Old Rectory, the houses in Abbots Morton were rebuilt in the late 16th and 17th century on constrained plots, with decorative framing facing the village street. The village was dominated by three much larger farmsteads by the later 19th century, but these continued to work the now-enclosed fields around them. In striking contrast is Rous Lench to its west, where two very large courtyard farmsteads were rebuilt in the 19th century accompanied by the construction of workers' houses and a school by the estate based at Rous Lench Court. The fields around the village were enlarged and straightened out in the same period, and the estate was active in remodelling farmsteads, building workers' houses and reworking farmed landscapes across the Lenches to the west. In Abbots Morton farmsteads within appear to have developed or been constrained by the need to use surrounding open fields subject to piecemeal enclosure whereas other settlements have a much more loose arrangement including large scale farmsteads with early buildings which suggests either the development of large farms which altered the layout of medieval nucleated settlement or their development out of more poly-focal settlement.

A greater prevalence of 19th century workers cottages, built in the vernacular styles popular in the period, indicate that landowners continued to re-build tenant housing into the mid 19th century, exercising enormous influence over the quality, quantity and design of new housing. At first glimpse Inkberrow looks quite similar in its planning to Feckenham and may have originally been more polyfocal in its character, expanding as employment in papermaking, and then glove making and needle making increased. Located within Robert and Wrathmell's Central Province, Inkberrow appears to be part of an intermediary zone that retains a combination of features identifiable in both the Central Province and North and Western Province. The church is located on the east of the village, within its own large ecclesiastical space, opposite a well preserved moated site and the Old Vicarage, which like many buildings in Inkberrow (as opposed to Feckenham) has been re-built in a historical, rather than classical style. 17th century and earlier dwellings are scattered along the High Street, south of the church and along Pepper Street. Traditional farmsteads are also scattered, within this area of the as well as beyond the settlement boundary, within a largely piecemeal enclosed field pattern, with some evidence over medieval open field.

Survey indicates that small scale 19th and 20th century housing has responded to the inherited pattern whether its dispersed or nucleated for example the garden style houses in Abbots Morton and bungalows at Bradley Green. Larger settlements, such as Inkberrow, have expanded outwards reflecting national trends.



Photo 12: Farmsteads were traditionally located within villages. This modest farmhouse and outbuilding (now a house) in Abbots Morton are gable end to the road and within their original medieval plots. The building to the right has a shallower pitch to its gable, perhaps indicating that it was originally thatched rather than tiled. **Photo 13:** Many early buildings, such as this cottage in Abbots Morton, display close studding or decorative bracing. **Photo 14:** The majority of surviving 17th century and earlier buildings are high status or associated with large scale farmsteads. The central chimney stack and off centre door indicates that this 'Old Rectory' in Abbots Morton is a substantial medieval hall house, with a service wing (to the left) and a later parlour (to the right). **Photo 15:** Estate cottages, in Rous Lench, built in the rustic, picturesque style made popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. **Photo 16:** The influence of the Garden City movement is unmistakable in these early 20th century houses, in Abbots Morton with their casement windows, rough cast and overhanging eaves. **Photo 17:** The relocation of farmsteads, such as this one east of Abbots Morton and south of Knighton, and the re-design of other domestic buildings as well as fields, during the 18th and 19th centuries, swept away rather than added to the complexity of earlier patterns. Photographs © Worcestershire County Council.

3.2 Case Study: A broad summary of findings

In summary, analysis of the dating, type and distribution of houses and farmsteads across the whole area has shown:

Historic character

- The survival of 17th century and earlier houses is high across the whole study area.
- The Farmstead Character Areas, when interrogated alongside the Settlement Atlas, show a contrast between a predominance of pre-1900 dispersed settlement to the north - where houses and farmsteads (many being pre-1700) are scattered along lanes and sometimes deep within a mixed land use pattern of enclosed strip fields, pre-18th century enclosures, woodland and heathland - and nucleated settlement to the south where, with few exceptions, dating from before the 19th century houses and farmsteads have continued to work the land from villages.
- More 18th century buildings and evidence of re-fronting and intensification and the movement of farmsteads outside of Feckenham accompanying its development into an industrial and service centre.
- Affirmation of the strong contrast between the northern and southern farmstead character areas with many noted 18th century and earlier buildings within later re-frontings and re-buildings. Many are unlisted and if investigated would immediately enhance the HER.
- Much higher levels of 19th century change in the south especially in the Lenches because of the activities of the Rous Lench estate.
- In more constrained settlements buildings are gable on to the street and display more ornamental framing.

3.21 Potential research questions highlighted as a result of the case study.

Research questions

- What is the evidence for re-fronting or rebuilding of pre-19th century houses and to what extent do they reveal differences between the two areas?
- To what extent do 19th and 20th century buildings reinforce or break away from the inherited settlement.
- Is it possible to redraw the dividing line between the two areas, in view of the fact that the line dividing The Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East from the South Eastern Farmlands Character Area cuts across the Roberts and Wrathmell's Settlement Provinces?

Further questions to explore through more detailed work.

- To what extent does 18th century rebuilding, re-fronting in Feckenham relate to industry?
- Does terracing and the conversion of agricultural buildings in Feckenham reflect the infilling of what was formally more poly-focal settlement?
- What were the key occupations of inhabitants of 18th century and earlier housing?
Evidence suggests a mixture of small holding, crafts and trades in the north, where the demands of small to medium scale farms would have been met by the family except in times of high demand.
- What were the key occupations of people in the southern villages? Were they predominately farm labourers?
- What evidence does the dating and planning of houses and farmsteads in relation to settlement layout and plots reveal about the settlement change?
- What is the documentary evidence for the amalgamation of farms and the creation of large farms and associated labour force from the medieval period onwards?

3.22 Broad conclusions emerging from rapid survey of the case study area.

- More 18th century buildings and evidence of re-fronting and intensification and the movement of farmsteads outside of Feckenham accompanying its development into an industrial and service centre.
- Affirmation of the strong contrast between the northern and southern farmstead character areas with many noted 18th century and earlier buildings within later re-frontings and re-buildings. Many are unlisted and if investigated would immediately enhance the HER.
- Much higher levels of 19th century change in the south especially in the Lenches because of the activities of the Rous Lench estate.
- In more constrained settlements buildings are gable on to the street and display more ornamental framing.

4. Research Framework

There are well-informed tools and techniques for recording individual buildings. This 'Back to Basics' Research Framework aims to guide professionals working with whole landscapes - including local authority archaeologists, who may have a background in archaeology or landscape, and strategic planners, as well as local researchers - to step back and consider both how landscape can enrich our understanding of buildings and places and how buildings and places can enrich our understanding of landscape. It aims to promote a broader layer of understanding to building research which can then be followed by more detailed recording if required.

This framework has been designed to complement both the community planning toolkit **'Your Place Matters: Community Planning for the Future of Rural Buildings and their Setting'** and existing guidance on the recording and research of traditional farmsteads, outfarms and smallholdings in Worcestershire. See **'Worcestershire Farmsteads Recording and Research Guidance'**.

Placing buildings in their landscape context

The historic character of England's landscape results from the way that people since the medieval period and earlier have lived within and used the land and its resources. Rural settlement – the villages, hamlets, farmsteads and houses that we call home and visit – is at the core of our everyday lives, connecting us to each other, and to our shared sense of history, and providing a base from which we view and enjoy the wider landscape. Although all landscapes display a variety of different settlement types, most areas are associated with a dominant settlement character. In England the two most dominant historic settlement patterns are dispersed settlement and nucleated settlement. Many nucleated and dispersed settlements are linear or row plan (they form a long line), following a historic routeway and smaller roads that branch off these main routes, others grew around an area of pasture (a green) for common grazing.

Maps show how an area has developed over time, the most easily available being Ordnance Survey maps, dating from the 1880s for Worcestershire, and tithe maps dating from the 1840s. Considering the recorded date of earlier buildings - especially those dated from the 17th century and earlier – and where they are located, is also a useful way of mapping the historic development of an area, complementing the evidence provided by settlement patterns, routeways, fields and woodland. In areas of planned or regular enclosure, early recorded buildings may relate to earlier phases of land use and/or enclosure which have been largely over-written by later change.

Early buildings are generally much sparser in distribution in those areas of England where settlement in the medieval period was dominated by nucleated villages and extensive communally-farmed fields, and where patterns of wealth were less evenly spread and more hierarchical in structure. The growth of nucleated settlement was often driven by affluent landowners wishing to champion their influence, on a landscape and community, and open up markets, from which to increase profits.

Key Questions

Do houses and other buildings in your area mostly cluster in a village or are they scattered across smaller settlements and farmsteads?

Does recorded date indicate any patterns or shift in settlement?

Further Questions

1. *How do buildings relate to surrounding fields, settlement, routeways, waterways, woodland, orchard, parkland and allotments?*
2. *Do buildings relate to successive waves of enclosure that have encroached onto common land, heath or woodland?*
3. *Are early recorded houses and other buildings sited around public open space (such as a green, recreation land or common land used by the public), a church or market place?*
3. *Does settlement have a single, distinctive historic core or more than one centres (focal points)?*
5. *Are early recorded houses and other buildings arranged in a regular (indicating a high degree of planning) or irregular (suggesting haphazard or unplanned growth) pattern?*
6. *Are buildings placed close together or more spread out, with defined open spaces in-between?*
7. *If more spread out, what is the character of open space and how has it changed over time?*
8. *Is settlement characterised by a consistent, linear or inconsistent, winding building line?*
9. *What is the size and character of building plots and how are buildings set within them?*
10. *How has your area developed into its present form? What features have changed/ remained constant?*
11. *Has your area changed rapidly as a result of economic and social changes or more organically?*
12. *To what extent does later expansion respect or disregard the inherited settlement pattern?*

13. *How has the density and setting of buildings changed over time, including their relationship to routeways and open spaces, including gardens?*
14. *What are the patterns of movement through, in and around the area? Are there any significant connections and nodes?*
15. *How is the settlement pattern connected by routeways for vehicles and pedestrians? Are any designated as public footpaths (PRoWs)?*
16. *To what extent do patterns of building relate to road, canal and railway networks?*
17. *What do the date, scale, alignment of buildings (including houses not associated with mapped farmsteads) reveal about the development of nucleated settlement before the late 19th century? Many farmhouses, for example, were aligned to face main routeways, as was the case in high-status town houses, and occupied several amalgamated plots.*
18. *Is the gradual enclosure and privatisation of open land, from the 15th and 16th centuries, reflected in the relocation of traditional farmsteads away from settlement cores and into the newly enclosed fields?*

Buildings and function

While the majority of buildings within our settlements are domestic, some buildings, and the plots they sit within, facilitate a range of industries, businesses and activities from farming, market gardening, orcharding and craft industries to places of worship, commerce and community. Trade and manufacturing made an enormous contribution to rural communities from as early as the medieval period. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, which brought about cultural, social and economic revolution in the techniques of making things, further transformed Britain's economy, enabled by the development of an extensive transport network. Although specialised commercial areas and buildings developed early, and the numbers of shops grew substantially in the 17th and 18th centuries, few buildings pre-dating the 19th century survive in rural locations.

Key Questions

What does the function of buildings and their dates reveal about how places functioned over time, including the development and/or decline of local agriculture, commerce and industry?

Further Questions

1. What do buildings reveal about the growth and/or decline of significant local industries and their relationship with local, regional and even inter-national markets?
2. Were buildings constructed for a specific function or have they been adapted from earlier buildings to meet the changing social and economic needs of a community?
3. What range of retail businesses, crafts and trades are recorded in your area, in The English Trade Directories of the 19th century?
4. Are there buildings with an important community function?
5. Are buildings of different functions, grouped together in specialized areas or more isolated from each other? Are they located in the centre of the settlement, on its edge or distant from it?
6. Are there examples of buildings of different dates/functions which are becoming increasingly rare within local, regional and national landscapes? For example military buildings, field barns and 19th and 20th century allotment buildings, used for shelter and storing tools?
7. Do buildings have significant ecological value or can they provide new potential opportunities for nesting birds, roosting bats and invertebrates?

Buildings and design

Rural buildings can be incredibly diverse in their architectural style and design, with even later buildings often having a greater variety of designs and materials than first appreciated. The date and form of buildings can provide an indication of conformity to national fashions as well as the persistence of local trends and adaptation to local circumstances as well as patterns of investment – i.e. the dates of buildings can reveal peaks in prosperity and economic activity, reflect lack of investment in agriculture or industry or a desire to maintain a historic link with the past or sweep away what has been inherited.

Key Question

How does the design of buildings, of different dates and types, reflect both local vernacular traditions and national trends?

Further Questions

1. What are the dominant building materials? Are materials local to the area or have they been transported in from further afield?
2. In what ways does development reflect changes in the accessibility and affordability of buildings materials and constructional techniques?
3. Are buildings of different dates characterised by a diversity or uniformity of scale, form and design?
4. How have landed estates shaped the tradition, architectural style and design of local buildings?
5. To what extent do later buildings reflect an increasing uniformity and standardisation in house design?
6. Do new buildings reflect a growing environmental agenda and embrace new sustainable technology and design?

Buildings and society

The location and orientation of the houses suggest how their owners saw themselves and how they wanted themselves to be seen, which may have changed over time – for example, a house re-fronted to look away from its working farmyard into its own driveway or garden, with a prospect over the wider landscape, may reflect the burgeoning wealth and status its owner or tenant.

Key Question

What do the types and dates of development tell us about how households and communities organised themselves over time? Think about changing attitudes to housing, education, health and worship.

Further Questions

1. How do buildings reflect the changing size and structure of households over time?
2. How do buildings reflect the changing occupations, affluence and aspirations of their inhabitants?
3. What can buildings tell you about changing attitudes to national and local investment in public housing, education and health?
4. How do buildings reflect changing ways of worship and community life?
5. To what extent have landed states shaped the provision of model villages, local farms, houses, factories, schools and other community buildings?
6. To what extent is social mobility and the massive increase in home ownership, since the mid-20th century reflected in the density and setting of domestic buildings?
7. How do buildings reflect changing attitudes to private space both within society and in the context of planning?
8. How do patterns of building reflect England's transition, during the 19th century, from a largely rural economy to a largely industrial economy?
9. How do patterns of building reflect cycles of prosperity and recession and periods of war and peace?
10. Which buildings have particular significance as prominent landmarks or special associations with local history, individuals or families?

5. Conclusions and Key Opportunities

Approaches to the study of many rural buildings remains persistently detached from settlement and landscape. This is perpetuated by poor cross sector collaboration, a lack of guidance within regional research frameworks and inconsistent and often very limited datasets associated with non-designated buildings. Some other issues highlighted within this report are as follows:

Key Issues

1. A persistent disassociation of buildings from their landscape context and a dis-jointed and often inactive approach to conservation.
2. An enduring perception that 'heritage' is solely focused on the protection of the most valued (generally listed) buildings.
3. Historic Environment data that is often overwhelming , abstract and difficult to break down.
4. Lack of conservation expertise within Local Planning Authority Historic Environment Records.
5. Building records are predominately associated with Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, or the results of development control, resulting in an incomplete picture. Although projects such as the Historic Buildings of Worcestershire Project, have done a great deal to enhance records for pre-20th century domestic buildings survey is time-consuming and largely relies on volunteers. The only inclusive record of domestic buildings being the 1st and 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey maps.
6. Lack of dissemination of community generated research to HERs and OASIS and dis-engagement with the heritage sector .

This report, along with its sister documents, aims to promote opportunities to re-approach and re-connect our understanding of rural buildings and landscape, in support of professionals working with whole landscapes, including local authority archaeologists and strategic planners, as well as local researchers. Key opportunities to be considered include:

Key Opportunities

- 1.** An up to date overview of current research frameworks associated with buildings and their setting, within the West Midlands region (pilot) and then nationally to identify and collate the current resource, identify any gaps in knowledge and support the development of an overarching, research framework, to support and guide academic and community research and promote cross-sector partnership.
- 2.** Engaging professionals and communities involved with planning to look at buildings within their context through sustained engagement, supported by making toolkits, such as, the Farmsteads Assessment Framework and *Your Place Matters: Community Planning for the Future of Rural Buildings and their Setting*, accessible.
- 3.** Re-engaging face-to-face with individual researchers and community groups in support of local research opportunities. Recurrent promotion of Historic Environment Records and OASIS as primary depositories for local research.
- 4.** The application of mobile technologies, including smartphone and tablet apps. to promote use of available toolkits and improve submission of primary data resulting from local research.
- 5.** Promoting a broader level of recording for historic buildings and their setting, within Historic Environment Records.
- 6.** Inform future revisions of existing, related national guidance documents, such as, *Knowing Your Place*.

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West Midlands Research Framework

https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/wmrrf_he_2016/

Worcestershire Landscape Assessment (Worcestershire County Council)

<http://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/website/LandscapeCharacter/>

http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/worcestershire_hlc_2014/

Appendix 1

Example list description via advanced search.

Search Criteria

County: Worcestershire

Heritage Categories: Listing

Period: Jacobean (1603—1625)

MANOR HOUSE

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: MANOR HOUSE

List entry Number: 1081575

Location: MANOR HOUSE, MAIN STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Worcestershire

District: Wychavon

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Bretforton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 30-Jul-1959

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 148651

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

BRETFORTON CP MAIN STREET (south side) SP 0843 - SP 0943

15/48 Manor House

30.7.59

GV II

House. 1605, remodelled 1877. Coursed rubble with ashlar dressings and Cotswold stone roof. F-plan, main range aligned east/west with wings to south. Gable-end stacks to main range. Two storeys with attic lit by two 3-light stone mullioned windows under gables with ball finials. Five windows, the central window a two-storey canted bay with crenellated parapet and trefoiled headed lights. The other windows are 3-light stone mullion- and-transoms with square labels. Entrance to right of centre has a gabled stone porch with ball finials and Tudor arch to door. Datestones in gables. Interior: reported to have early C17 panelling. (BoE, p 100).

Listing NGR: SP0919443873

Selected Sources

Books and journals

Pevsner, N, *The Buildings of England: Worcestershire*, (1968), 100

National Grid Reference: SP 09194 43873

Entry as shown on 01-Nov-2016 at 09:46:56. Not including Ordnance Survey Map.

Example list descriptions via advanced search.

Search Criteria

County: Worcestershire

District/Unitary Authority/Borough: Wychavon

Heritage Categories: Listing

Period: Edwardian (1902-1910)

Dormay Cottages

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: Dormay Cottages

List entry Number: 1167645

Location: DORMAY COTTAGES, 52,53 AND 54

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Worcestershire

District: Wychavon

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Overbury

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 02-Dec-1986

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 148558

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

OVERBURY CP - SO 9637 - 9737 10/105 Nos 52, 53 and 54 (Dormay Cottages) GV II

Row of three houses. 1904 by Ernest Newton for Richard Biddulph Martin. Coursed limestone rubble with ashlar dressings and plain tiled roof with gable-end parapets and ball finials to south front and hipped at rear. Large ashlar stacks with moulded capping, two to main ridge and at ends of main range. H-plan; main four-bay range aligned east/west with two-bay west cross-wing and three-bay east cross-wing. Single storey and attic with half-dormers and string course at attic storey level which is stepped above doorways. South front elevation: windows are mainly of three lights with chamfered mullions and leaded casements. Central part has two ground floor windows, two gabled half-dormers with weatherboarded gables and 3-light leaded casements and beneath eaves to left of each dormer is a rectangular stair light. Beneath each stairlight is a square-headed archway into a small lobby with a half-glazed door. There is a window on both storeys in the cross-wing gable ends; the attic storey windows have hoodmoulds. Beneath the string of the east cross-wing gable end is inscribed "DORMAY COTTAGES/ AD 1904". The east side of the building facing the road has a ground floor window, a central gabled half-dormer and rectangular lights on both floors; beneath the central half-dormer is the entrance to No 54. To the rear of the central range are three gabled wings and to the rear of the cross-wings are lean-to service rooms with catslide roofs. The building appears to have been little altered since it was built. (Newton, W G: *The Life and Works of Ernest Newton*, London, 1925).

Listing NGR: SO9603637852

National Grid Reference: SP 09194 43873

Selected Sources

Books and journals

Newton, W, *The Work of Ernest Newton* RA, (1925)

Entry as shown on 01-Nov-2016 at 09:46:56. Not including Ordnance Survey Map.

Appendix 2

A national database of more than 3500 Tree-Ring Dated Buildings, in England, has been published online by the Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG) <http://www.vag.org.uk/dendro-tables/> © Vernacular Architecture Group 2016

Tree-ring dated buildings © VAG 2016

INDEX OF TREE-RING DATED BUILDINGS IN ENGLAND COUNTY LIST approximately in chronological order, revised 2016.

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Before using the index you are recommended to read or print the *introduction and guidance*, which includes a key to the abbreviations used on the tables.



WORCESTERSHIRE

This file includes some places subsumed by the (now defunct) West Midlands Metropolitan.

County – Historic and later	Felling date range	Placename	Address	VA ref EH ref Other refs	Description / keywords	NGR
Worcs	1214 -1255	Mamble	St John the Baptist	28.144 Sh	Church tower. Also 1582-1618; 1753/4	SO 688716
Worcs	1302 -24	Bewdley	5, 7 & 9 Stourport Rd	37.116 Notm	2-bay open hall (No 7) - base cruck with cusped & moulded arch braces, crown post with curved down-braces, straight up-braces & scissor-braced rafters. 2-bay E wing (No 9) has large panels, jowled posts, curved up-braces, tiebeam, crown post roof and scissor-braced rafters. CIA 45/2005	SO 787754
Worcs	1315 +	Middle Littleton	Barn	11.34 Fl (1)	11 bay stone barn with 8 raised base cruck trusses: arch-braces, spandrel struts, double tiebeams, braced arcade plates; short upper principals, collars, curved wind braces to single tier of upper purlins. In aisled truss at each end the aisle roofs have under-rafters and side purlins.	SP 081470
Worcs	1300 -35	Worcester	Cathedral	26.49 Notm	Nave roof. Re-used timbers reconstructed as from coupled rafter trusses with 'struts on the lower collars and soulaces and ashlar pieces beneath'. Also see 1730.	SO 850546
Worcs	1321 -53	Clifton on Teme	Woodmanton Manor	33.116 Sh	Open hall. Arch-braced crown post roof (inf. Nick Joyce). Floor inserted 1599-1635 (qv)	SO 719605
Worcs	1340	Warndon	St Nicholas Church	30.122 Sh AML 34/98	'Bell frame' – but also see 1424-1456 and 1498.	SO 887568
Worcs	1344	Leigh	Leigh Court Barn	37.108 Sh (2)	Barn. Largest true cruck in Britain – 9 trusses with 10m span. Hipped roof. Main blades 10.5-11m long, whole trees, trimmed: arch-braced collars, saddles, short king-posts support ridge-plates, curved wind braces, tabled and bridled scarfs.	SO 783535
Worcs	1344 +	Bredon	Bredon Barn	13.49 Fl (3)	Aisled; strainer beam, passing arch-braces, raked struts, double rafters clasp side purlins	SO 918370
Worcs	1354 -56	Crowle	Crowle Court Barn	30.120 Sh AML 96/97	Arch-braced (to what?): 'swept' windbraces up to lower purlins. Also see 1506 -1539.	SO 921559
Worcs	1387-1408	Worcester	The Commandery	29.105	West range (N). No roof details.	SO 853545
Worcs	1390 -1415	Pirton	St Peter's Church	45.115 Notm	Brace in timber-framed tower has fdr of 1390-1415, but also see 1471-92, 1507, 1585-1606	SO 885468
Worcs	1420 -40	Shelsley Walsh	Court House	39.127 Notm	Box-framed. 3 bays including remains of a 2-bay open hall. One tiebeam & collar truss has curved struts from collar to principals. Also see 1517, 1580c., 1738.	SO 721630
Worcs	1428 -47	Stourport on Severn	Hartlebury Castle	40.120 DCL RDR 76/2008	Great Hall roof. Short wall posts on stone corbels, principals, collars, V-struts. Formerly with wind-braces, evidence of smoke louvre. Also see 1469, 1608 -29, 1678.	SO 836712
Worcs	1439	Stoulton	Mucknell Farm	39.127 Notm	Remains of cruck truss with collar in later house.	SO 906513

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