



Living buildings in a living landscape:

finding a future for traditional farm buildings



ENGLISH HERITAGE



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This publication has been produced jointly by English Heritage, the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division and the University of Gloucestershire's Countryside and Community Research Unit, and is supported by the Rural Development Service and by English Nature. It was prepared by David Ball, Bob Edwards, Peter Gaskell, Jeremy Lake, Amanda Mathews, Steve Owen and Steve Trow, with kind assistance from Julie Ryan. It was designed and printed by Frontier. The research was commissioned by English Heritage and the Countryside Agency.

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English Heritage is the Government's adviser on the historic environment. Central to the role of English Heritage is the advice it gives to local planning authorities, government departments and others on the conservation of historic buildings, sites and areas, archaeology on land and underwater, designed landscapes and the historic aspects of the landscape as a whole. English Heritage also has a duty to enhance people's understanding and enjoyment of their heritage and, as part of this, it manages an estate of over 400 historic properties open to the public.

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working to conserve and enhance England's countryside. The aim of the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division is to help everyone respect, protect and enjoy the countryside, protect natural landscapes, and encourage access to, enjoyment of and sustainable management and use of the countryside.

In accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, English Nature, the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division are working towards integration as a single body: Natural England. It will work for people, places and nature with responsibility for enhancing biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and for future generations.

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All photographs and illustrations are individually credited. For each building illustration throughout this booklet, the relevant Countryside Character Area is shown in brackets within the illustration caption.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional farm buildings are among the most ubiquitous of historic building types in the countryside. They are not only fundamental to its sense of place and local distinctiveness, but also represent a major economic asset in terms of their capacity to accommodate new uses. The restructuring of farming and other economic and demographic changes in the countryside provide both threats and opportunities in terms of retaining the historic interest of this building stock and its contribution to the wider landscape.

This statement by English Heritage and the Countryside Agency provides advice to those involved in planning, grant-aid, management or policy decisions affecting the traditional farm building stock or individual farm buildings.

Further research and guidance on traditional farm buildings is available at the Historic Environment – Local Management website: www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment and www.ahds.ac.uk.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONAL FARM BUILDINGS

Traditional farm buildings make a major contribution to the character of all but the most remote landscapes of England. In some areas, they are a dominant landscape feature; in others their influence is far more subtle, but nevertheless still fundamental. Like the landscapes in which they sit, these historic farm buildings provide a wide range of benefits to modern society:

- they hand down messages from our past – to this and to succeeding generations – telling us how our ancestors farmed and lived, thought and built;
- they represent an historical investment in materials and energy that can be sustained through conservation and careful re-use;
- they are an essential, if often undervalued, contributor to local character, beauty and distinctiveness in the countryside and to the sense-of-place enjoyed by rural communities and visitors alike;
- they are crucial to our understanding of settlement patterns and the development of today's countryside;
- through sensitive re-use, they can alleviate pressure to build on green-field land and reduce the demand for new buildings that may otherwise compromise the character of the countryside;
- they provide an important economic asset for farm businesses or, through adaptive re-use where they have become redundant, a high-quality environment for new rural businesses;
- they are irreplaceable repositories of local crafts, skills and techniques, in harmony with their surroundings and using traditional materials, often closely related to the local geology, that are sometimes not available or too expensive for new building projects; and
- they may provide important wildlife habitats.

Dereliction is a significant and increasing problem facing the traditional farm building stock.

1 Derelict linhay in Herefordshire. (Herefordshire Lowlands)
Photograph Bob Edwards

2 Derelict threshing barn in Warwickshire. (Arden)
Photograph Peter Gaskell

3 Abandoned linear farmstead in West Yorkshire. (Southern Pennines)
Photograph Jen Deadman

THE CHALLENGE

These traditional farm buildings are under great pressure for change. This pressure originates in the mechanisation of farm processes in the 19th century, accelerated by the post-war intensification and restructuring of farming and further exacerbated by changes in traditional patterns of farm management, the merger of farm holdings, rising animal welfare standards, shifting patterns of tenure and, latterly, the decline in farm profitability. The result is the redundancy and disrepair of many historic structures and large numbers of conversions to new uses that are often insensitive to the architectural and historic interest of buildings and their landscape setting. This pressure for change is likely to accelerate further over the next few years as global influences on farming increase, particularly in upland areas. Successful conservation of historic farm buildings and the landscapes within which they sit will be closely linked to the viability of the farming industry.

In the face of these influences, Government is encouraging the planning system to be more receptive to the adaptive re-use of farm buildings as a means of unlocking their potential for rural diversification and regeneration, as outlined in *Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* (PPS 7) (ODPM 2004), while continuing to support the traditional use, maintenance and repair of selected buildings through agri-environment schemes. This presents those making and implementing rural planning and development policy with both challenges and important opportunities in terms of retaining the character and historic significance of the traditional building stock while enabling change.



THE DRIVERS OF CHANGE

In the post-war period many traditional farm buildings have become redundant due to changes in farm structure and farming practice. While some of these buildings have fallen into disrepair or have been converted to new uses, others have remained in low-grade use as modern farmsteads have grown up around them. In recent years, however, a number of factors have combined to force down farm incomes to such an extent that many farmers are now undertaking a fundamental review of their farm businesses, including their traditional buildings. In the coming years the future of tens of thousands of traditional buildings will be decided.

PRESSURE ON FARM INCOMES

In recent years several factors have come together at the farm level to create concerted pressure on farm incomes (MAFF 2000, Lobley *et al* 2002). In the decade between 1995 and 2005 the total income from farming fell in real terms by 60 per cent (Defra 2005).

Consumer demands: Steadily declining proportions of family income devoted to purchasing food has meant that the price of farm products has not risen as fast as that of other commodities. The rate of increase in the cost of farm inputs, such as land, labour, fertilisers and machinery, has tended to outstrip the rise in product prices, which has resulted in downward pressure of farm incomes. In addition, the quality, safety and traceability of food, together with animal welfare issues, are informing the purchasing decisions of a significant and growing segment of the population. Farmers have to adapt to both changing markets and new legislation introduced to address food quality and safety concerns.

Technological change: The agricultural industry continues to adopt new technologies that involve the mechanisation of farming practices. Economies of scale in the application of these technologies encourage the further concentration of agricultural

4 Management options for traditional farm buildings At the level of the individual farm business, the farmer has a number of options for managing traditional farm buildings that may affect a building's character and landscape setting.

Function	Management	Comment
1 Original use	Agricultural	The building is used for its original purpose and continues to play a part in the farming system.
2 Adaptive re-use	Agricultural	The building continues to be used for agriculture but has been adapted to perform a new function.
	Economic	The building is no longer used for agriculture and has been converted to an economic use.
	Residential	The building is no longer used for agriculture and has been converted to a residential dwelling.
3 No use	Maintained	The building is no longer used but is maintained.
	Not maintained	The building is no longer used and is not maintained.
4 Demolition	No development of footprint	The building is no longer used and has been demolished.
	Development of footprint	The building has been demolished and replaced by new development.

output towards larger, more productive farms that are worked by fewer people.

International Trade Agreements: At a global level there has been a concerted effort to address the trade distortions caused by subsidies and tariffs in agriculture. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is following an agenda of trade liberalisation and exposing agricultural production to global markets. As subsidies and tariffs are removed there is pressure on farmers to remain globally competitive.

European and national policy: The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been, and will continue to be, a major driving force for change but it is increasingly being shaped by the WTO agenda, the need to control expenditure and the promotion of sustainable rural development. The 2003 CAP reforms mean that farm subsidies are now fully decoupled from production. The Single Payment Scheme replaces all the former direct payments with a unified system of payments made per hectare of farmland, unrelated to farmers' current production decisions, and greater emphasis is being placed on agri-environmental and rural development schemes.

Exchange rates: From the late 1990s until 2002 the rise in value of Sterling against the Euro had a significant negative impact on farm incomes. It was very difficult for farmers to maintain prices and retain markets when Sterling underwent such a sustained period of appreciation. Its high value made export increasingly difficult, while foreign produce became cheaper and more attractive to the processors and retailers who supply domestic markets. Furthermore, the support and compensation payments for commodities that were protected under the CAP were paid in Euros. This means that as Sterling appreciates in value against the Euro, the level of support payments to farmers is effectively reduced.

CHANGING RURAL ECONOMIES

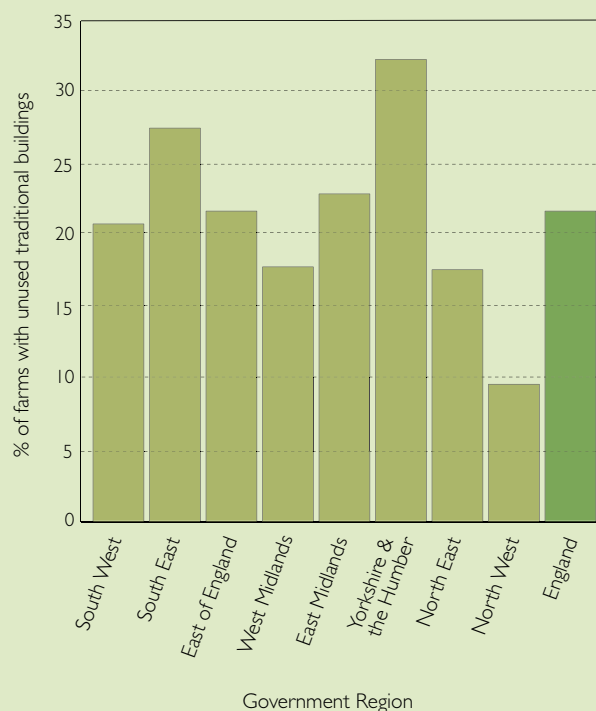
A number of drivers are not directly related to the agriculture industry but nonetheless have a significant influence on it. Of particular importance is the combination of forces that have driven the so-called process of counterurbanisation in some rural areas. Affluent people have moved to the countryside, attracted by the high-quality environment and way of life. This has been helped by changes in personal mobility that have enabled greater distances to be travelled to work, and a range of technological innovations that have enabled increasing numbers to work from home. The desire for country living has also resulted in a dramatic increase in

5 One in five farms have redundant traditional farm buildings.

Redundancy rates in Yorkshire & the Humber and the South East regions are significantly above the

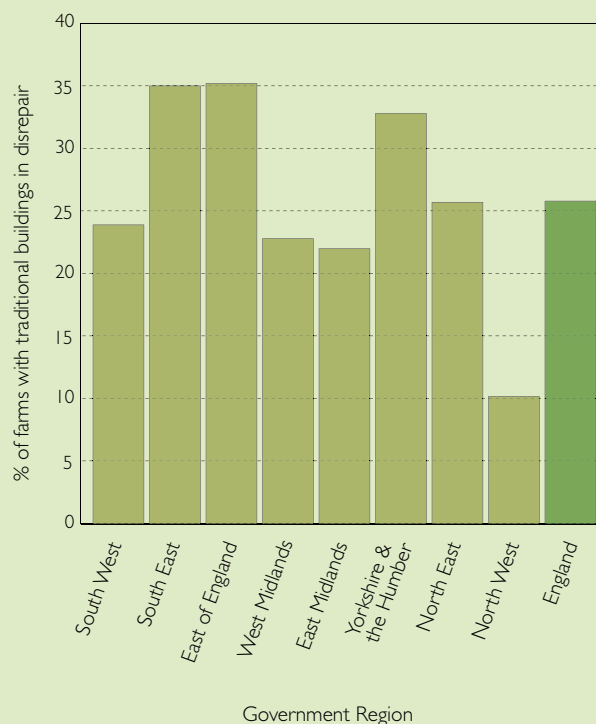
national average.

Source: Data supplied by Defra from the Farm Practices Survey 2004 (excludes farms without traditional buildings)



6 A quarter of farms in England have traditional buildings in disrepair.

Source: Data supplied by Defra from the Farm Practices Survey 2004 (excludes farms without traditional buildings)



the purchase of agricultural land by non-farmers (Haines-Young and McNally 2001, Roberts 2002). Agriculture is no longer the primary economic and social driver in rural areas. Agriculture's contribution to Gross Domestic Product is now less than 1 per cent, and less than 2 per cent of the workforce is now employed directly in farming. As agriculture has declined in importance other industries have grown up in rural areas. There is now little difference in the employment profiles of different sectors between rural and urban areas. Both have experienced strong growth in service sector activities.

Agriculture, however, remains the dominant land use in rural areas and the industry remains very important in determining the future of traditional farm buildings and their wider landscape setting. Tight planning controls over new development in the countryside combined with a growth of demand for both rural workspaces and residences have resulted in increased opportunities for the adaptive re-use of traditional farm buildings in many areas.

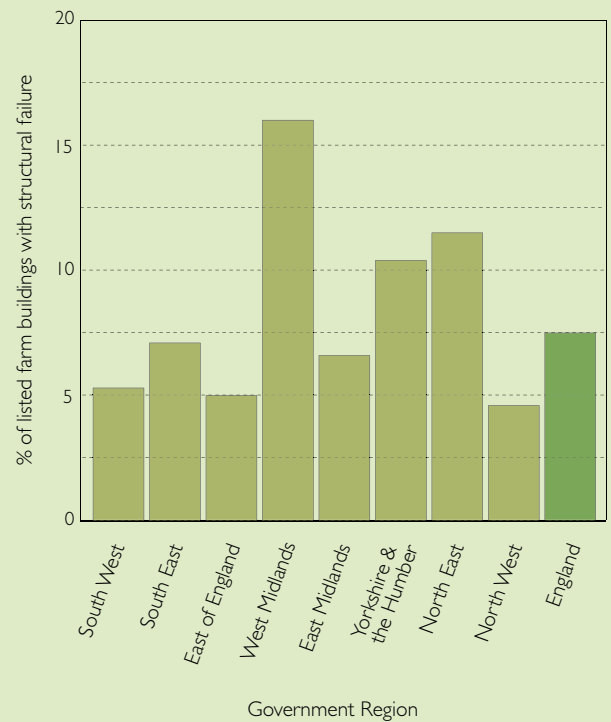
The shift of activities from towns and cities to rural areas that characterises counterurbanisation has coincided with a corresponding shift in Government planning policy towards greater encouragement of economic, but sustainable, development in rural areas, partly to counteract the decline of agriculture. Government statements over the last decade or more have encouraged the re-use of farm buildings, particularly for employment-generating activities. The general shift towards a more permissive stance on rural development, combined with the specific emphasis on the re-use of historic farm buildings, is likely to increase demand for the conversion and re-use of the traditional farm building stock.

FARMING RESPONSES

How farmers respond to these pressures often depends on the nature and location of their farms and their individual circumstances. For example, the range of opportunities open to hill farmers who are remote from centres of population are very different from their lowland counterparts within easy reach of towns and cities. For some the way forward has been to remain focused on developing their agricultural enterprises, while others have sought to exploit opportunities to diversify income sources both on and off the farm. As farmers continue to rationalise and develop their businesses the result will be a tendency for buildings to be abandoned in some areas while in others opportunities for new uses will arise.

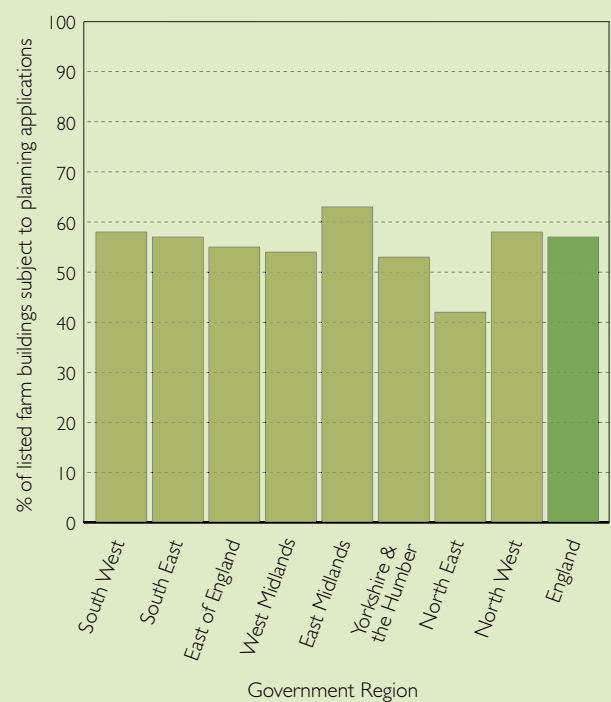
7 A significant proportion of listed farm buildings are in an advanced state of structural decay.

Rates of visible structural failure of principal listed working farm buildings by region.
Source: Gaskell and Clark (2005)



8 Over half of all listed farm buildings have been subject to planning applications for development.

Proportion of listed farm buildings subject to planning applications by region 1980–2001.
Source: Gaskell and Owen (2005)



What is clear, however, is that traditional farm buildings (working buildings rather than farmhouses) have played an important part in the adaptation of farm businesses in the recent past and will play an important part in the future. Recent research by Lobley *et al* (2002), which investigated the restructuring of farm businesses, found that 60 per cent of farmers had liquidated assets, especially buildings, either to pay off debts or to invest in diversification activities and 17 per cent had converted buildings for sale or rent. They also found that 30 per cent of farmers were planning to convert their buildings for sale or rent and 57 per cent were planning to sell off assets as part of business restructuring.

THE EVIDENCE BASE

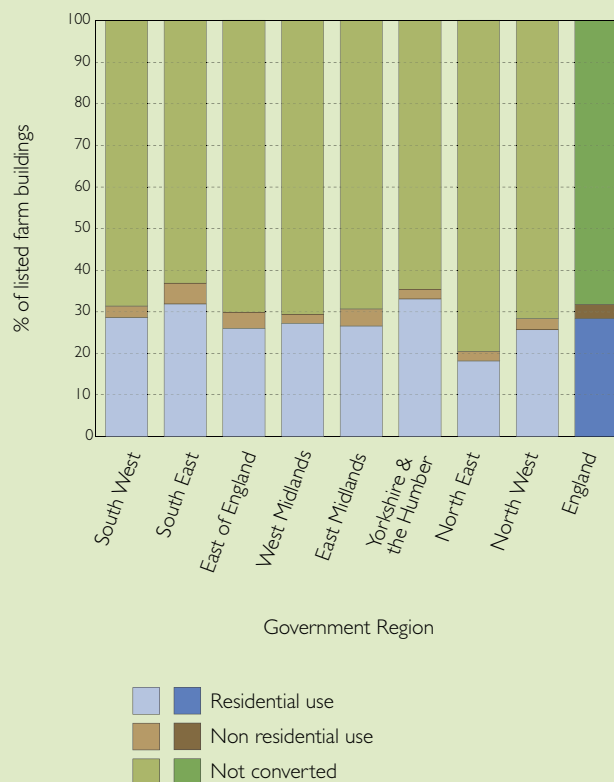
Despite a recent national study (Gaskell and Owen 2005), the evidence base for traditional farm buildings generally remains poorly developed and co-ordinated at the local level. As a result, there are no reliable figures on how many historic structures survive in England, how many are redundant, derelict or have been converted. The majority of farm buildings that enjoy statutory protection are listed at Grade II or are within the curtilage of a principal listed building. While English Heritage maintains a register of the most important buildings that are at risk (listed Grade I or Grade II* or as scheduled monuments), only a small number of rural local authorities currently maintain regularly updated registers that include Grade II listed buildings and curtilage buildings.

The listed farm building resource has already undergone significant change. Over half have been subject to planning applications for development with an approval rate of 81 per cent. By 2004, 31 per cent of principal listed working buildings had been converted to other uses, mostly to residential use (Gaskell and Clark 2005). Conversion rates vary across the regions, with the South East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions experiencing the highest levels of conversion and the North East recording the lowest level of conversion. The frequency of conversion also varies considerably between Countryside Character Areas (see pages 29–31). Areas with particularly high rates of conversion include the Weald, South Devon, the Breckland and East Anglia Chalk, and areas around Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle (English Heritage 2005).

Dereliction is also a significant process with over 7 per cent of unconverted principal listed buildings being in an advanced state of structural decay (Gaskell and Clark 2005). Systematic information on the condition

9 31% of listed farm buildings have been converted to other uses.

Rates of visible conversion of principal listed working farm buildings by region.
Source: Gaskell and Clark (2005)



of the undesignated traditional farm building stock is not generally available. However, the 2004 Defra Farm Practices Survey sought information on farmers' perceptions of the condition of the traditional buildings on their farms and found that among farms containing traditional buildings, a quarter of farmers said they had buildings in disrepair:

Better information on the historic farm building stock is required if future conservation and planning policy is to be effective. This information needs to reflect the whole of the historic farm building stock, not just those that are listed, and must be related to character-based frameworks such as the Countryside Character Areas (see pages 29–31) so that the importance of farm buildings in their landscapes can be fully considered in land-use planning and land and environmental management.

THE CHARACTER OF HISTORIC FARM BUILDINGS

10 Distribution map of listed barns in England dating from 1550–1750

This shows the regional patterns of building and survival.
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English Heritage 100019088. 2005

NATIONAL CHARACTER FRAMEWORK

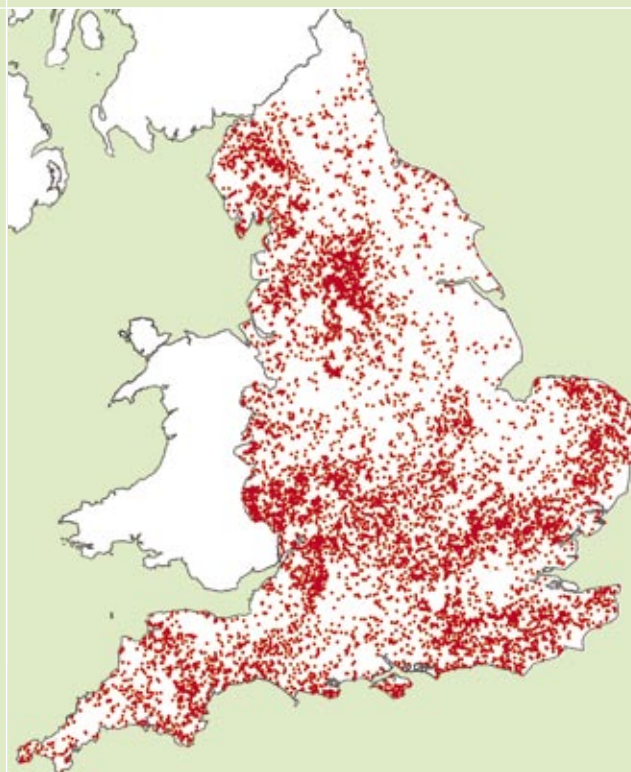
Landscape and Agricultural Context

Patterns of land use reflect cultural factors, climatic conditions and the physical structure of the landscape. The distribution of farmsteads and their dates of foundation are intimately linked to historical field and settlement patterns in the landscape. Nucleated villages, concentrated in a central band running from Northumberland into Somerset and Dorset, were associated with extensive communally farmed townfields (open fields). These were subject to amalgamation and enclosure by tenants and landlords at varying rates from the 14th century onwards. New farmsteads were often created within the new enclosures. In areas of dispersed settlement, characteristic of western and parts of eastern and south-eastern England, farmsteads are either isolated or grouped in hamlets and surrounded by originally smaller townfields associated with more ancient patterns of enclosure and more extensive areas of common pasture. Between the two extremes are areas that contain both nucleated and dispersed settlement to varying degrees.

Agricultural development in England can be divided into the following major periods:

Before 1750. Economic boom in the 12th and 13th centuries, including the development of large farms on monastic and secular estates, was followed by contraction of settlement and the leasing out of estates after the famines and plagues of the 14th century. From the 15th century there was a general increase in agricultural incomes and productivity and the emergence – particularly from 1660 – of increasingly market-based and specialised regional economies. Substantially complete farm buildings of this period are rare: typically only the farmhouse and barn survive, although in upland areas there are many late 17th- and 18th-century farmsteads with contemporary farm buildings attached to the farmhouse.

1750–1880. This is the most important period of farm building development. Increased agricultural productivity,



encouraged by rising grain prices and the demands of an increasingly urban population, was enabled by the expansion of cultivated land (especially from the 1790s to 1815), the continued reorganisation and enlargement of holdings and the final phase of enclosure – concentrated in the Midlands and the uplands of northern England. Substantial improvements in animal husbandry were made with the development of enhanced breeds and better housing for cattle. This improved the quality and efficient redistribution of farmyard manure, so increasing agricultural productivity. The high-input/high-output systems of the 'High Farming' years of the 1840s to 1870s were based on the availability of imported artificial fertilisers, manures and feeds.

1880–1940. There was little fresh investment due to the long farming depression in this period, notable exceptions being some estates and continuing developments in dairying areas. Hygiene regulations in the inter-war period resulted in new forms of cow house and dairy with concrete floors and stalls and

11 Farmstead plan types

(Farmhouses are shaded darker)

Drawn by Stephen Dent

© English Heritage

A Linear plan. House and farm building attached and in line. This is the plan form of the medieval longhouse but in upland areas of the country in particular it was used on small farmsteads up to the 19th century.

B L-plan including the farmhouse. Such plans can be a development of a linear plan or can represent a small regular courtyard plan (see E–G, below).

C Dispersed plan. Within this small hamlet the farm buildings of the two farmsteads are intermixed, with no evidence of planning in their layout or relationship to the farmhouses. Dispersed plans are also found on single farmsteads where the farm buildings are haphazardly arranged around the farmhouse.

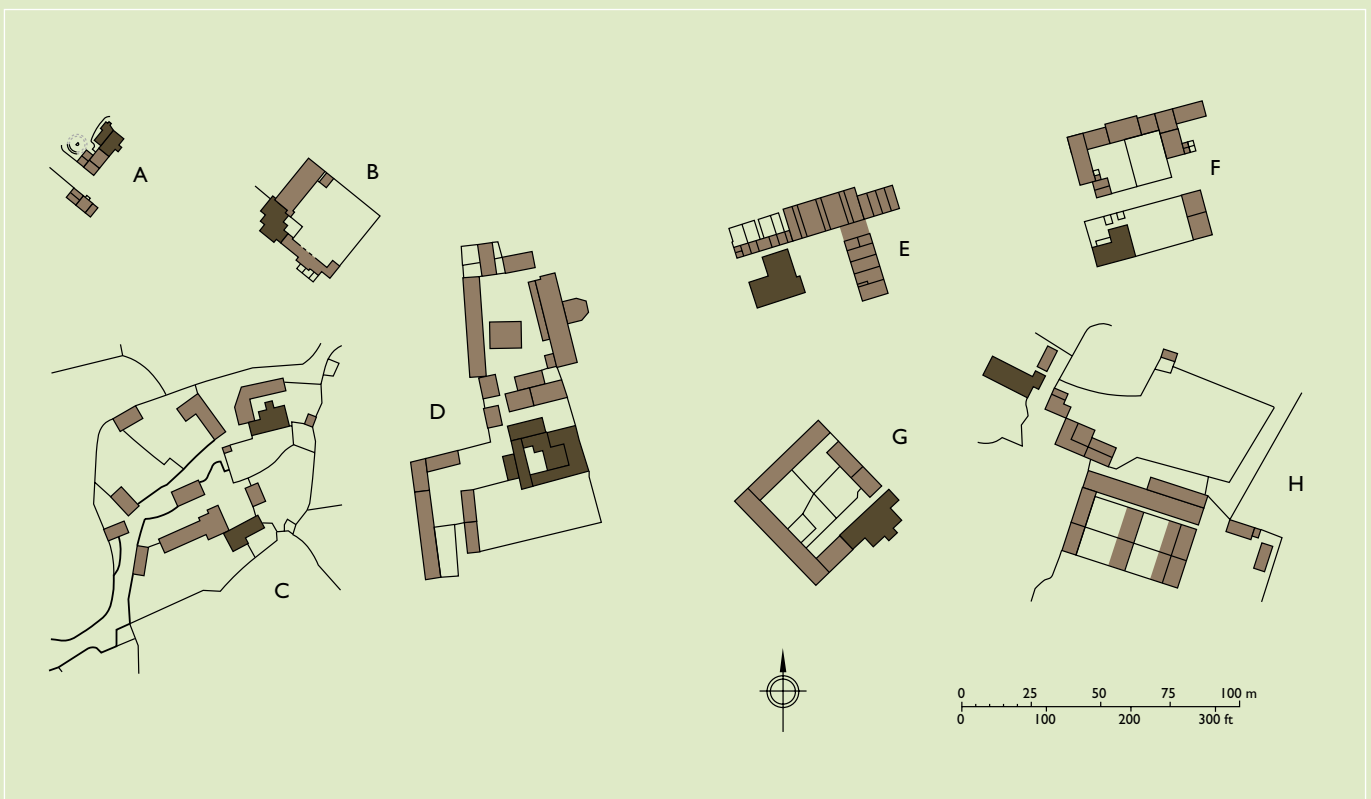
D Loose courtyard. Detached buildings arranged around a yard. In this example the yard is enclosed by agricultural buildings on all four sides with the farmhouse set to one side. On smaller farms the farmhouse may form one side of the yard, which may have agricultural buildings to only one or two of the remaining sides.

E Regular courtyard L-plan. Two attached ranges form a regular L-shape. The farmhouse is detached from the agricultural buildings.

F Regular courtyard U-plan. The yard, in this example divided into two parts, is framed by three connected ranges. Again, the farmhouse is detached.

G Full regular courtyard. The yard is enclosed on all sides by buildings including, in this example, the farmhouse. Other examples are formed by agricultural buildings on all sides with the farmhouse built to one side.

H Regular courtyard E-plan. This plan form (and variations of it with additional ranges) may be found on some of the larger planned farmsteads where livestock were a major part of the agricultural system. Cattle were housed in the arms of E, the 'back' of which provided space for fodder storage and processing.



metal roofs and fittings, replacing earlier forms of housing. Intensive rearing of pigs and poultry required new buildings.

1940 to present. The Second World War witnessed a 60 per cent rise in productivity, a growth in livestock numbers, increasing scientific and government control and guidance, more specialised systems of management and the conversion to arable of permanent pasture. The Agriculture Act of 1947 heralded the intensification and increased specialisation of farming accompanied by the development of government and industry research and guidance. Government grants assisting with the capital

cost of new building under the Farm Improvement Scheme (introduced 1957) met increasing requirements for machinery, the environmental control of livestock and on-farm production, particularly of milk.

Farmstead Types

The scale and form of farmstead plan types are subject to much variation and are closely related to farm size, status, topography, land use and cultural land use influences.

- Linear plans, where houses and farm buildings are attached, are ideally suited to small farms (usually

stock rearing and dairying), especially in pastoral areas. They can range in scale from large steadings of independent yeoman-farmers to the smallholdings of miner-farmers.

- Dispersed plans comprise clusters and unplanned groupings of separate buildings, sometimes intermixed with those of other farms, and range from hamlets where the buildings of different owners can be intermixed, to large-scale individual steadings. These are typical of ancient landscapes.
- Loose courtyard plans, where the buildings are built around a yard with or without scatters of other farm buildings close by, became most strongly associated with large and/or arable farms, most notably in East Anglia and southern England.
- Regular courtyard plans, where the various functions were carefully placed in relation to one another in order to minimise the waste of labour, and where the manure could be conserved, were built – at first on large estates – from the later 18th century.

Building Types

The functions of crop processing and storage and the accommodation of animals and birds determine the variety of building types, which could house one or a combination of functions. The principal types are listed below.

- Barns are generally the largest farm buildings to be found on farms. Barns built for solely storing and processing crops are most commonly found in areas of major arable farming. Multi-use combination barns incorporate other functions, e.g. animal housing, and are more commonly found in upland and pastoral areas. Some barns were adapted for or built to incorporate mechanisation, with horse-engine houses or steam-engine houses projecting from the side of the barn. Evidence for the use of portable threshing machines in the form of drive-belt wheels and drive shafts may survive.
- Field barns or outfarms were built in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other, and also where holdings were intermixed.
- Granaries were either detached or built over stables and cart sheds.
- Cart sheds usually faced away from the farmyard and were typically close to the stables and trackways, giving direct access to the fields.

- Stables for working or riding horses were generally two-storey buildings with a hayloft above, single-storey and better ventilated buildings being more commonly provided from the 19th century. The value of horses meant that stables were well built and often placed near the house and given a certain level of architectural and decorative treatment.
- Cow houses were typically built for dairy cattle and may incorporate looseboxes for isolation of stock.
- Shelter sheds around strawed-down yards and loose housing for fattening stock became more general from the later 18th century.
- Pigsties for the cottage pig or bacon production were widespread.
- Dovecotes for pigeons date from the medieval period to the 19th century. Early dovecotes are usually associated with high-status sites but from the 17th century nest boxes were often provided in other buildings, e.g. gables of barns.

Building Materials

The use of locally available materials, combined with local vernacular traditions, makes a fundamental contribution to regional and local diversity. Traditions such as earth walling, thatch and timber frame survived much longer on farm buildings than farmhouses. From the later 18th century these were replaced increasingly by buildings in quarried stone and brick, roofed with tile or slate.

Standardised forms of construction, including softwood roof trusses, developed across the country from the 19th century. Corrugated iron was used from the late 19th century as a cheap means of replacing or covering roofs (particularly thatch) in poor condition.

Building traditions, as well as materials, display a strong degree of regional and local variation.

The following pages provide a brief introduction to the characteristics of traditional farm buildings in each region. More detailed information on traditional farm buildings can be found in the eight Preliminary Regional Character Statements that support this document and which can be viewed and downloaded at www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment and www.ahds.ac.uk.

Building traditions: aisled and cruck barns

The strong regional differences between building traditions is illustrated in the maps showing the distributions of listed aisled **12** and cruck **13** barns, which broadly show the extent of present survival.

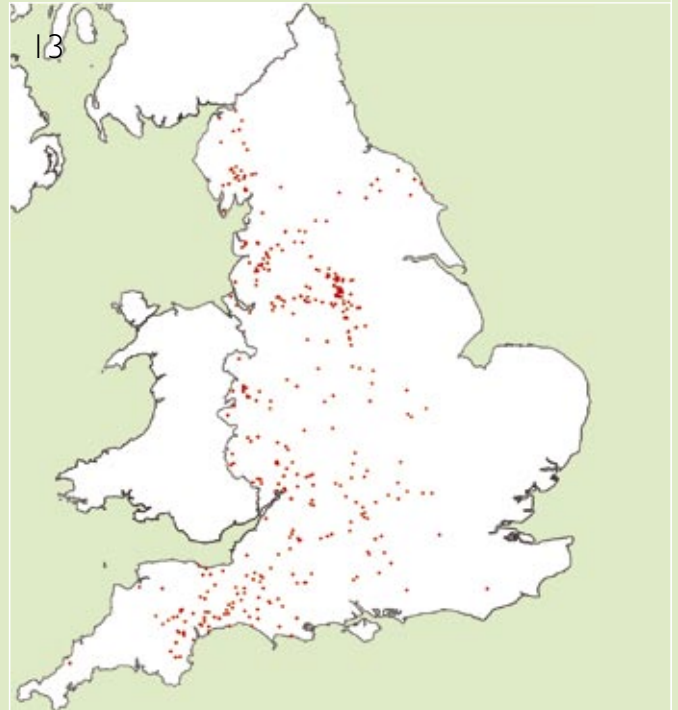
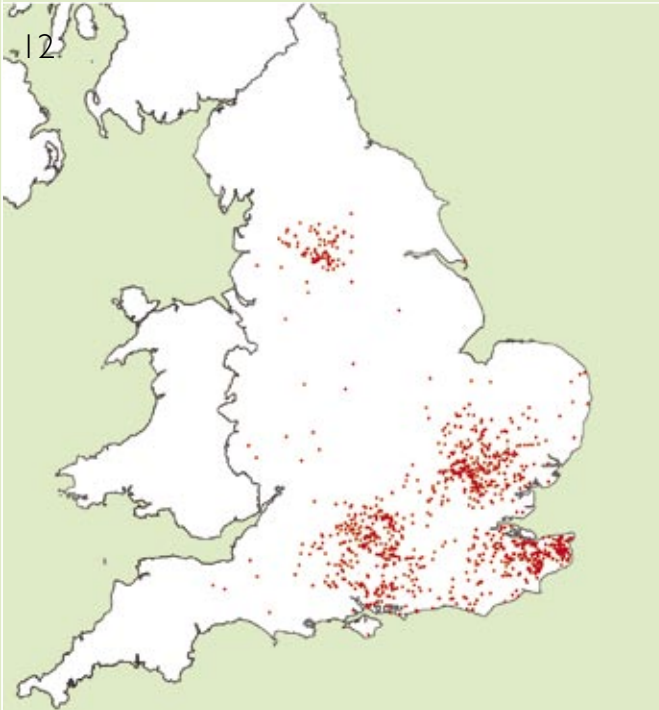
12 The distribution of listed aisled barns.
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13 The distribution of listed cruck barns.
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Aisled barns are mostly concentrated in the south and east of England, with a notable concentration of mostly 15th- to 16th- century examples in the southern Pennines. The earliest survivals of cruck barns are 14th century and the latest are early 18th century.

14 Aisled barn, Cressing Temple, Essex. One of the earliest barns in England dating from the 13th century. (South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands)
Photograph English Heritage/
Michael Williams

15 Barn at Cross Farm, Burgh-by-Sands, Cumbria, showing the full crucks to the interior of a late 17th-century clay-walled barn. (Solway Basin)
Photograph Jen Deadman



SOUTH WEST REGION

16 A Dartmoor longhouse

Longhouses provide one of the earliest examples of cattle housing, with animals and humans originally sharing the same entrance. Rising living standards often resulted in the creation of separate entrances. Around the fringes of eastern

Dartmoor there is a fine group of surviving longhouses of particular importance. (Dartmoor)
Photograph Peter Gaskell

Landscape and Agricultural Context

Dispersed settlement, generally of medieval or earlier origin, forms a significant part of the settlement pattern in the west of the South West Region. Settlement is largely nucleated across most of Gloucestershire and in the valleys of the chalk areas of Wiltshire and Dorset. In other parts of the Region it is mixed.

The mild, wet climate and areas of heavy clay soils of the west favoured pastoral farming, which was dominant from the 14th century. Arable continued to be converted to pasture as areas such as east Cornwall and north Devon focused on the rearing of stock, which was moved eastwards for fattening before being supplied to London and other markets in the south. The clay vales of Dorset and Wiltshire specialised in dairying, with some farms having no arable. Cider production became a speciality from Gloucestershire to east Cornwall, with orchards also replacing arable.

Arable was historically concentrated in areas such as the Cotswolds, the Cornish coastlands, the South Hams of Devon and the Vale of Taunton Deane. It was dominant in the chalklands of the east of the Region, where a sheep and corn system was practised from around the 13th century and expanded with the enclosure and ploughing of the downs from the 18th century.

Farmstead Types

Linear and dispersed farmsteads are widely distributed. The distribution of medieval to 17th-century longhouses, particularly around Dartmoor, is of national significance. Nineteenth-century linear farmsteads in Bodmin, Dartmoor and elsewhere were often worked by part-time farmers employed in local industries.

Loose courtyard plans are largely confined to eastern arable areas and associated with large and gentry farms in the period before 1750.

Relatively few estates built planned courtyard farmsteads, there being some notable examples around Bath and Bristol. Mid-19th-century rationalisation (and often



amalgamation) of Cornish farmsteads typically resulted in the construction of regular plans.

Building Types

Characteristic building types and features include:

- high numbers of pre-1750 farmstead buildings;
- longhouses – buildings with a shared entrance to the dwelling and cattle housing that date from the 15th to 17th centuries;
- large timber-framed or stone-built barns (some aisled in the east of the Region) on the arable downlands and vales;
- small-scale barns typical of mid-Devon;
- widespread evidence for mechanisation in barns, some with surviving wheelhouses;
- multi-use combination barns, with livestock accommodation at one or both ends of the barn (Gloucestershire, the claylands of north Wiltshire and Somerset) or underneath the threshing barn (Somerset, Devon and Cornwall) – the latter include the principal concentration of bank barns outside Cumbria;
- staddle barns, dating from the late 18th to early 19th century, are unusual unaisled timber-framed barns raised on staddle stones. They are found in the

17 An outfarm on the edge of the chalk downs in Dorset. A five-bay threshing barn and a single-storey shelter shed stand within a walled enclosure set within regular fields probably created in the 19th century.

The height of the eaves of the shelter suggests that it was intended for sheep rather than cattle. (Weymouth Lowlands)
Photograph Bob Edwards

18 Facing onto a yard, this bank barn provided accommodation for cattle at ground level and on the first floor a threshing barn with ground-level access at the rear and a granary accessed by steps at one end. (Cornish Killas)
Photograph Bob Edwards

19 Linhays – open-fronted cattle shelters with open-fronted haylofts above – are a characteristic building type of Devon and south Somerset. Outside the South West Region they are only occasionally found in parts of the West Midlands Region. (Devon Redlands)
Photograph Bob Edwards

downland areas of east Wiltshire and Dorset. They are also found in west Berkshire and Hampshire;

- timber-framed granaries set on staddle stones and brick-built granaries on brick arches, mostly 18th to 19th century in date, principally found in the east of the Region;
- linhays – open-fronted cattle sheds with hay lofts dating from the 16th to 19th centuries;
- cattle housing, a very strong feature in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset.
- cider houses, often buildings adapted for cider production in the 19th century – a number still retain the original equipment.

Building Materials

There is a considerable variety of building stone across the South West Region. This includes the chalk of the southern downlands, the various limestones of the Cotswolds, southern Gloucestershire and Somerset, the red sandstones of mid-Devon, and the slates and granites of west Somerset, northern Devon and Cornwall.

This Region is recognised as the principal area of England for earth-built (cob) structures. Timber framing is largely restricted to parts of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire but cruck-framed buildings are found across the Region, with jointed crucks concentrated in Devon, west and south Somerset and west Dorset.

Devon and Dorset have the highest concentration of listed thatched buildings in the country.

For more information about traditional farm buildings in the South West Region visit www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment and www.ahds.ac.uk.



SOUTH EAST REGION

Landscape and Agricultural Context

Settlement in the north and chalkland areas of the South East Region is characterised by nucleated villages with low levels of dispersed settlement. Settlement elsewhere is generally dispersed with hamlets and isolated farmsteads, many of medieval origin.

Probably of greatest significance to the farming of the South East Region is its proximity to London, which provided a growing market for most goods, especially corn and specialised produce such as fruit, cider and hops. Water transport, including coastal shipping, meant that much of the South East Region could continue to specialise in wool and corn production, even in periods when in other Regions arable significantly contracted in favour of pastoral farming. Areas without access to water transport, or where corn was less profitable, specialised in stock that could be driven to market, or in higher value goods that made land transport financially viable.

A distinctive feature of farms of the South East Region was the contrast between the large capital-intensive arable landscapes and the smaller mixed farms of wood-pasture landscapes. The arable areas were hard-hit by the depression of the 1870s, which resulted in a shift to dairying.

Farmstead Types

Loose courtyard plans are the predominant type and can exhibit considerable differences in scale, particularly between arable and wood-pasture landscapes. Dispersed plans are concentrated in areas of ancient enclosure (especially the Weald) and on the heathland fringes where small farms with few buildings were usual.

Longhouses are unknown in the South East Region and linear plans are rare. There are few model farms despite the presence of many large estates.

20 A large loose courtyard farmstead with two barns: the 16th-century aisled barn to the right and a 17th-century 10-bay aisled barn behind the farmhouse, which itself dates from the 16th century. (Hampshire Downs)
Photograph Bob Edwards

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Building Types

Characteristic building types and features include:

- high numbers of pre-1750 farmstead buildings, particularly in wood-pasture areas;
- aisled barns of 13th-century to 19th-century date;
- timber-framed barns including combination barns in pastoral areas;
- brick and flint barns mostly dating from the late 18th century;
- staddle barns, dating from the late 18th to early 19th century, are unusual unaisled timber-framed barns raised on staddle stones. They are found in the downland areas of west Berkshire and Hampshire (also found in east Wiltshire and Dorset);
- detached granaries set on staddle stones, mostly 18th to 19th century in date;
- oast houses in and around the Weald;
- detached stables, often brick-built;
- detached cart sheds;
- open-fronted cattle sheds, often 19th-century additions to earlier farmsteads.

21 Timber-framed weatherboarded granaries set on staddle stones are a feature of the South East and southern parts of the East of England Regions. Most are of 18th- and 19th-century date. (Thames Basin Heaths) Photograph Bob Edwards

22 The oast house is the farm building most characteristic of Kent and East Sussex. Although hop production developed into a major element of the local agriculture from the 17th century, early oast houses are extremely rare. Most are of 19th-century date and many have been converted to residential use.

(High Weald) Photograph Jeremy Lake

23 A single-storey brick-built cart shed of probable 19th-century date. One bay has been divided off and has doors to provide a secure storage area for smaller, easily portable implements. This cart shed

stands on the edge of the farmstead, adjacent to the passing road. (Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs) Photograph Bob Edwards

Building Materials

Some excellent building stones, including limestone in Oxfordshire and the carstone of Surrey and Sussex, were available in the north and parts of the south-east of this Region, in contrast to the chalk areas that only provided flint. Chalk block was occasionally used on the Isle of Wight. Cob (chalk earth) was widely used in the western and northern parts of this Region. Witchert, a form of chalk earth walling, is found in Buckinghamshire.

Timber framing was the dominant building technique across much of the South East Region, with most timber-framed agricultural buildings being clad in weatherboarding. In the clay areas brick had often replaced timber framing by the 18th century. Brick, often banded with flint, was widely used in the chalk areas until the later 18th and 19th centuries.

Straw for thatching was widely available and long straw thatching remains a highly distinctive feature in the west of this Region. Elsewhere, plain clay tiles often replaced thatch. Stone slates were quarried from the limestones of Oxfordshire and the Wealden sandstone of Sussex.

For more information about traditional farm buildings in the South East Region visit www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment and www.ahds.ac.uk.



EAST OF ENGLAND REGION

24 The highly characteristic flat fenland landscape crossed by straight roads and dotted with isolated farmsteads. (The Fens)
Photograph Countryside Agency / David Burton

Landscape and Agricultural Context

Dispersed farmsteads, often moated, and hamlets are characteristic of the anciently enclosed claylands to the south and east of this Region. Nucleated villages are predominant in west Cambridgeshire and north Hertfordshire. Across the fenland the density of settlement is low with small, nucleated villages and isolated farmsteads.

Mixed farming was typical across the East of England Region but some areas specialised. The lightest soils concentrated in north and west Norfolk and Suffolk were suited to sheep and corn and were subject to large-scale enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries. The claylands were best suited to dairying until the development of arable farming in these areas from the late 18th century.

Major improvements in crop rotation, to include winter feed crops (notably turnips) and improved grass varieties, were pioneered from the late 17th century, significantly influencing the agricultural development of England.

Good access to London was a major influence on the East of England Region, particularly in the 19th century when market gardening (often specialising in fruit growing) and dairying increased in importance alongside intensive fattening of livestock imported from Scotland and Ireland.

Barley for malting was an important crop in the Region. Many farmsteads had maltings but in the later 19th century larger scale town maltings dominated this industry and most farm maltings went out of use.

The 19th century also saw the application of steam power to the drainage and reclamation of the peat-based southern fens, which led to the creation of distinctive new landscapes with new farmsteads placed at regular intervals along the roads.



Farmstead Types

Dispersed farmstead plans are most common in the wood-pasture landscapes of the claylands where there are also loose courtyard steadings, often having two or more barns, granaries and stabling, dating from the 17th century.

Regular courtyard plans, many associated with large estates, were built in areas of post-1750 enclosure such as the light soils of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Building Types

Characteristic building types and features include:

- high numbers of pre-1750 farmstead buildings;
- timber-framed barns, many pre-1750, on the Flegg Loams, across the claylands of South Suffolk and North Essex and South Norfolk and High Suffolk;
- aisled barns of 12th- to 19th-century date, particularly in west Suffolk, the Broadland fringe in Norfolk, Essex, Hertfordshire and east Cambridgeshire;
- smaller combination barns incorporating stabling or cattle housing, dating from the 16th century, built on the dairy farms of the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands;

25 Some of the earliest barns in England are to be found in the East of England Region, including the large aisled barn at Cressing Temple built in the mid-13th century. (South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands)

26 Eighteenth-century cart shed / granary extended in the 19th century. (North West Norfolk)

27 Pre-18th-century buildings for cattle are rare. This timber-framed cow shed or neathouse was built in the 16th century but may have originally served as a stable. Timber-framed structures were often replaced by more robust brick buildings. (South Suffolk and

North Essex Claylands)
All photographs 25–27 English Heritage / Michael Williams

- granaries, cart sheds and stables dating from the 17th century and earlier;
- cow houses, locally called neathouses, for milking and feeding;
- cattle houses located on the edge of the grazing marshes of the Norfolk Broads that housed cattle along side aisles facing into a central nave where root crops were stored;
- shelter sheds around straw yards and looseboxes which were increasingly common from the mid-19th century, particularly on estate farms;
- maltings which occasionally survive on farms.

Building Materials

There was limited access to building stone; limestone is found on the western boundary, flint (often combined with brick), carstone, chalk and clunch in north-west Norfolk.

Earth-walling, predominantly clay lump, is concentrated in south Cambridgeshire, south Norfolk and north Suffolk.

Timber-framed buildings remain a distinctive feature across the claylands. Agricultural buildings are commonly weatherboarded.

Brick was used from the medieval period in East Anglia but did not become widespread for farm buildings until the early 19th century.

Long straw thatch has been largely replaced with plain clay tiles or pantiles although it remains a strong characteristic of south Cambridgeshire. Water reed continues to be used in the Broads and parts of the Fens.

For more information about traditional farm buildings in the East of England Region visit www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment and www.ahds.ac.uk.



WEST MIDLANDS REGION

28 A courtyard farmstead with buildings of timber frame and brick and tiled roofs, typical of the claylands of the Midlands. (Arden)
Photograph Peter Gaskell

Landscape and Agricultural Context

The West Midlands Region is strongly characterised by dispersed settlement, although villages predominate in south-east Warwickshire and part of Staffordshire. The landscapes of south Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire are among the most intact anciently enclosed landscapes in the country.

Agricultural diversity was evident from the 15th century: large sheep flocks on the hills, dairying and cattle breeding in the north, beef production in Warwickshire and Herefordshire, mixed arable farming in other lowland areas. Cider-making and hops became major elements of the economy by the 17th century. Much of the Region was enclosed by 1750. Areas of moorland, forests and mosses were enclosed from the 17th century to the mid-19th century.

By the 17th century at least, lead and coal mining, iron smelting and quarrying enabled smallholders to combine farming and industry, utilising common grazing on moorland and heath in the Black Country and Shropshire Hills.

Farmstead Types

Linear plans are often found on small steadings along the Welsh border. Dispersed plans are found throughout the West Midlands Region, although many of the large arable-based farmsteads of lowland vales had loose courtyard plans. Regular courtyard plans were most common on the great estates, particularly in the north and areas where new farms were built on newly enclosed land. L- and T-shaped plans are characteristic of dairy farms in the north of this Region.

Building Types

Characteristic building types and features include:

- large concentrations of pre-1750 farmstead buildings in the anciently enclosed landscapes to the south of the West Midlands Region;
- threshing barns, commonly of five bays with a central

28



threshing floor; larger examples being found in arable-based areas such as the Herefordshire Lowlands;

- wheel houses, for example, on the larger farms on the plains of Staffordshire and Shropshire;
- multi-use barns providing cattle accommodation found in the western hills and the northern dairying areas where high-status, late 16th-century examples survive;
- field barns, dating mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries – isolated threshing barns in Warwickshire and Herefordshire, small stone buildings with haylofts over livestock accommodation in the Peak District and large outfarm groups in areas of parliamentary enclosure;
- free-standing timber-framed granaries and stables dating from the 17th century in the west of the Region;
- 17th- and 18th-century cattle housing (former longhouses and small lofted cow houses) found along the western edge of the Region;
- by the late 19th century the development of large-scale beef enterprises in Herefordshire and the keeping of pedigree beef cattle resulted in extensive new cattle building, including yards with shelter sheds, in contrast to the two-storey cow houses in the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain;
- hop kilns, highly characteristic of Herefordshire and western Worcestershire;