

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan



Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted
February 2016

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Credits

Background to this document

The range and types of farmsteads in our landscapes have been mapped by English Heritage and the High Weald AONB Unit. Study of their historic character and current use has informed a greater understanding of the significance and sensitivity to change of these essential buildings. The developing evidence base and guidance from English Heritage provides the information and assessment methodology in this guidance note. It has also provided character statements for areas nationally and, in this case for Tunbridge Wells specifically, which describe and details those aspects, features and qualities of our local farmsteads that contribute most to their character. The research has re-emphasised the importance of historic farmsteads to Tunbridge Wells' rural areas.

Authorship and Copyright

This guidance has been written by Jeremy Lake of English Heritage and Bob Edwards of Forum Heritage Services with contributions from the High Weald AONB Unit and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The photographs are © Bob Edwards unless otherwise stated.

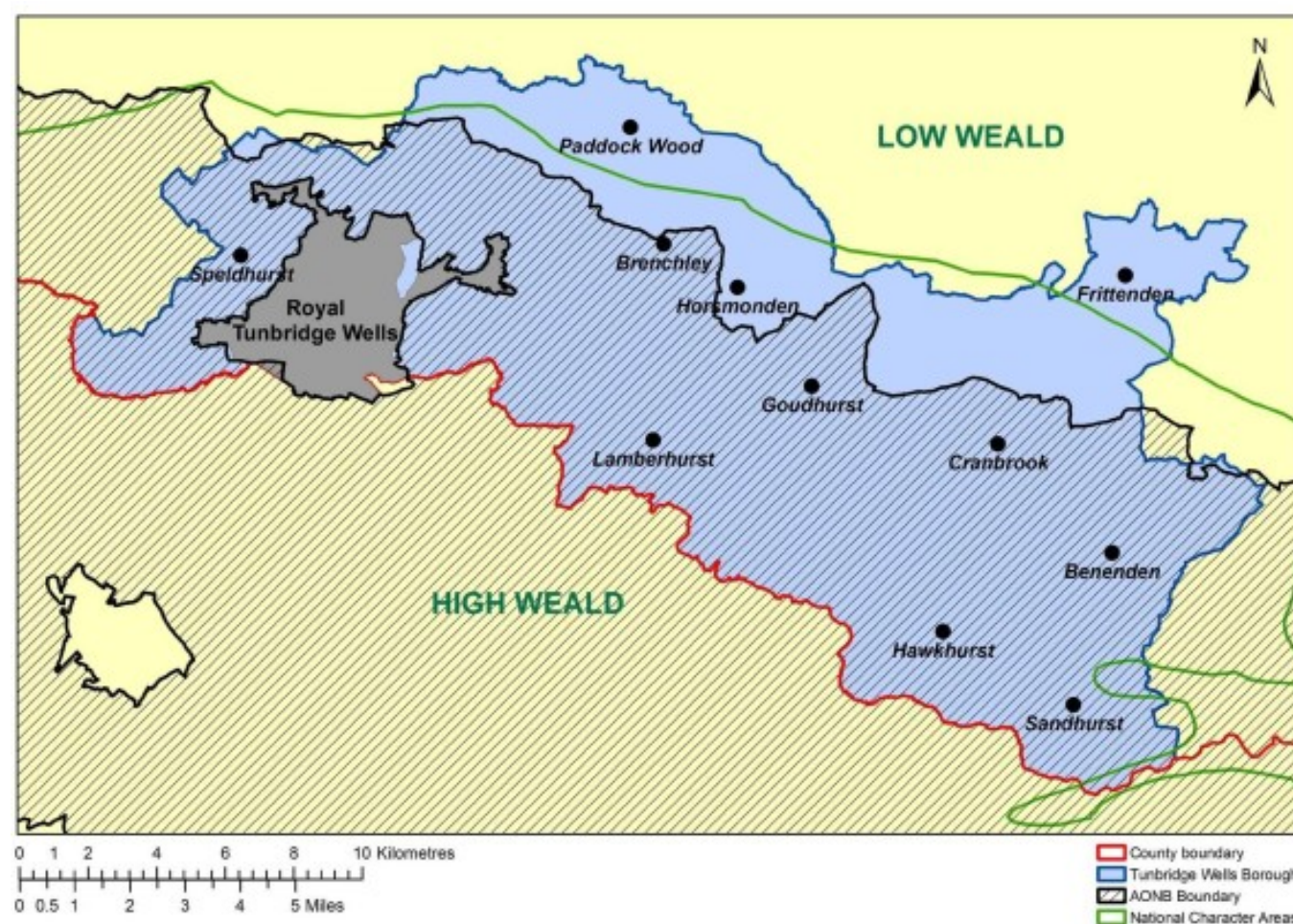


Figure 1 The Borough of Tunbridge Wells showing principal settlements, the extent of the AONB and the boundary between the High Weald and the Low Weald National Character Areas. © Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100024298

Aims and Structure of this Document

Traditional farmstead groups and their buildings make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. They are also assets which, through a diversity of uses, can make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities. Historic farm buildings are, however, largely redundant for mainstream agricultural use as a result of changing agricultural practice⁽¹⁾. As a consequence they are under the greatest threat of neglect on one hand, and development on the other, than any rural building type.

Aims

The purpose of this guidance document is to help secure sustainable development and the conservation of farmstead character in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells through the planning system. It is focused on understanding whole farmsteads in their landscape context, rather than providing detailed guidance on the adaptation or conversion of individual buildings. While farmsteads, as part of settlement pattern, have been identified as a characteristic feature of the High Weald AONB, they are part of the landscape character of both the High Weald and Low Weald Character Areas and this guidance relates to the whole borough. It will help you consider the capacity for change of farmsteads at the earliest critical stage in the planning process, through understanding:

- their **character**, which results from their historic development and function as whole sites, including any routeways and spaces within and around them, and how they are linked to the surrounding landscape and settlement
- their **significance**, a factor that can be of critical importance in determining planning applications
- their **sensitivity** or capacity for the change being considered, and other issues that can inform pre-application discussion and be taken forward when preparing a scheme

Using the Assessment Guidance will help

Appraisal of a site at the critical pre-application stage

An application will have a much greater chance of success if the key issues are identified and considered at the pre-application stage, and if an applicant's case is well prepared and justified. Initial discussions with the relevant local authority will indicate if planning permission or listed building consent will be required. Early appraisal also helps to:

- inform early discussions with the local authority regarding any proposed development, particularly the types of use, level of development, design and landscape criteria and highway issues
- serve as a valuable starting point for negotiations with other parties that may be affected by the proposals
- provide important advice in planning a scheme for a site, including options for conversion, materials and architectural features
- inform the siting and design of new buildings that conform with planning policy and guidance and that may also be considered in the context of enabling development

Prepare a scheme from the earliest stages in the planning process

Using the results of early appraisal to inform the planning process can help save time and costs, identify the need for professional support and advice and create more flexible outcomes that help to conserve and enhance the character of farmsteads.

Most schemes will have an impact on the whole site and the landscape setting, and it will be particularly important to consider:

1 English Heritage's publication, [The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice](#), 2006, contains detailed advice with examples.

- the need for further survey to gain further information about the significance of the site and its buildings in its setting
- how conversion and any new development (new buildings, gardens, access and parking) can respect the historic form of the farmstead in its setting
- how to minimise alterations to prominent and significant external elevations of historic buildings, through attention to internal planning and how and where to introduce or borrow light
- the site's potential as a habitat for wildlife, connected to its surrounding landscape

Key issues when considering change

Future change should capitalise on the significance of traditional farmsteads. National and local research has highlighted the significance of traditional farmsteads as assets which contribute to landscape character, local distinctiveness and rural economies and communities. This requires a flexible approach to all types of use, that informs future change, inspires high quality development and ensures that they can be conserved as historic assets and contribute to local character.

Understand the whole site in its landscape setting, and how it has changed. The visual and functional relationship of farmsteads to the land, including the extent to which they have changed, is key to identifying constraints, what can be enhanced or reinstated and where there may be opportunities for future change.

Consider proposals within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Frameworks prepared by local authorities. While local authority planning policies generally support the re-use of historic buildings to ensure their long-term preservation, they generally contain a strong message of constraint, particularly in relation to residential additions, alterations and also extensions in general. Detailed planning considerations include issues such as over-looking, noise, loss of light and taking proper account of biodiversity.

Using the Guidance

The guidance introduces the planning context and then the three key issues that are needed to help inform the options for change: the **character** of farmsteads; their **significance**; and the **sensitivity** to, or capacity for, the different options for change.

The remainder of the guidance is a twofold approach developed by English Heritage. When used together, **Chapter 2: The Site Assessment Framework** and **Chapter 3: Summary Guidance on Farmstead Character and Significance in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells** will help applicants identify any issues at the earliest critical stage in the planning process, based on understanding the historic character and significance of a site and its sensitivity to the type of change being considered.

Design Guidance has been developed for Kent and can be found at <http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/publications/kent-downs-aonb-farmstead-guidance> and can be read in conjunction with this document and may help applicants who are then considering how to achieve successful design, including new build where it is considered appropriate and fitted to Local Plan policy.

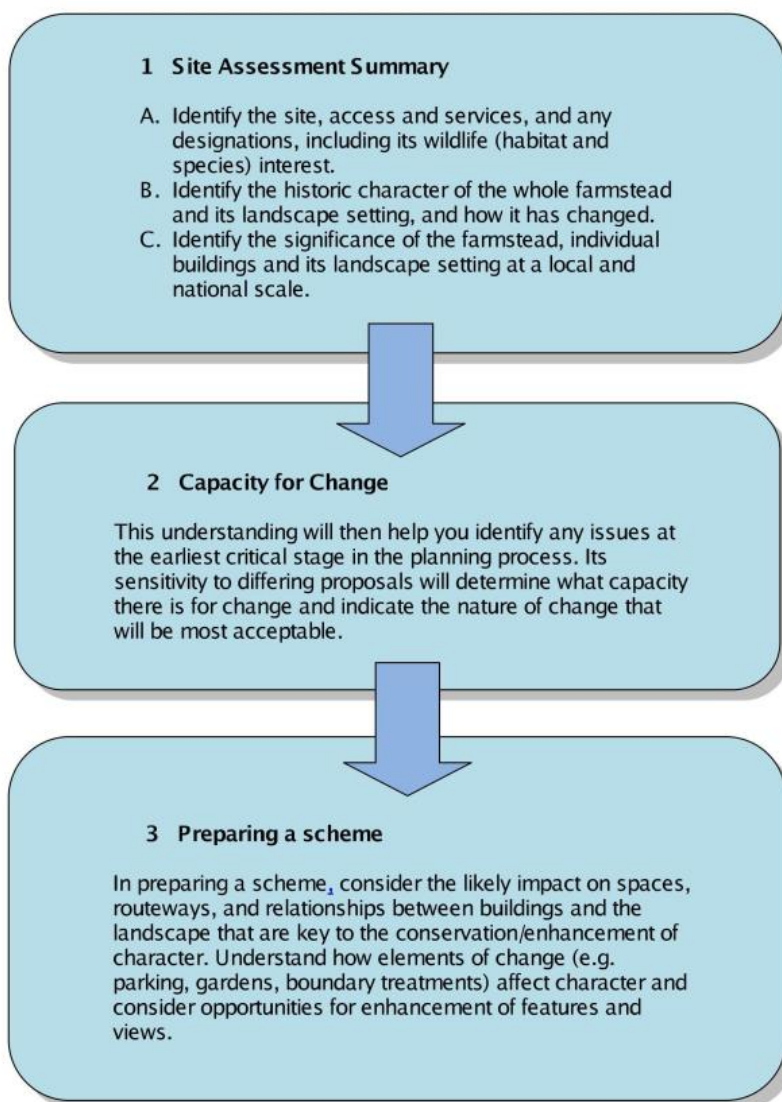


Figure 2 The Site Assessment Framework

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Planning Context

1.1 The planning system is a process that aims to manage change within our urban and rural areas for the benefit of society as a whole. The constraints and opportunities for development in rural areas are set out in national and local planning policy.

1.2 This farmstead guidance takes an evidence-based approach to inform an understanding of site capacity and the appropriate scale, form, location, layout and materials of any development change.

1.3 A range of planning considerations will be taken into account when assessing and determining proposed developments in order to deliver sustainable development. The requirements for development in rural areas are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and local planning policy. This guidance will help applicants and local authorities to address these requirements in a positive and proactive way.

THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework states that "*The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*" (paragraph 6). The Framework adds that the policies contained within it (in paragraphs 18-219) "*taken as whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system*". Paragraphs 126-141 contain detailed policies for the historic environment. It states that economic, social and environmental improvement should be sought jointly and simultaneously (paragraph 8). Pursuing sustainable development, therefore, involves seeking improvements to the quality of the historic environment (paragraph 9). The 12 key principles set out in paragraph 17 include the following:

- seek to secure high quality design
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas
- recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside
- encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance

The NPPF identifies the need for local planning authorities to "*provide up to date evidence about the historic environment in their area (paragraph 169) and prepare local planning guidance which uses historically-based landscape character assessment*" (paragraph 170). In supporting a prosperous rural economy "*Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development*" (Paragraph 28). Means of promoting this through local and neighbourhood plans include the "*conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings*". Local authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation (paragraph 131).

Good design is recognised as "*a key aspect of sustainable development*" and indivisible from good planning (paragraph 56). Developments should "*establish a strong sense of place*" and "*respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials.*" (paragraph 58).

Local authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation (paragraph 131).

In rural areas special circumstances for new housing include:

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

National context

1.4 Change within farmsteads is nothing new. Over the centuries, new types of steading and buildings have been developed, older farmsteads have been moved to new sites or abandoned, and buildings have been adapted to different uses. Since the 1950s, traditional farm buildings have become increasingly redundant, and farmers have required industrial-style sheds and large concreted working areas, often with new points of access, in order to minimise labour costs and meet animal welfare standards. In parallel, a growing demand for characterful rural housing has made historic farm buildings increasingly attractive targets for residential conversion. This has further forced the displacement of traditional farming and forestry businesses from farm yards, putting pressure on open countryside and village edge sites. In coming years these trends are likely to accelerate further in response to the diversification of farm businesses, the growth of larger farming units and the complementary market for smaller hobby-farm units amongst dual-income households. The pace of change will vary from place to place, depending on patterns of redundancy and dereliction; farm income; the broader social and economic character of rural areas; the flow of traditional farm buildings into the property market; the economies of farming and forestry and the relative demands for economic and residential conversion. This requires an informed and flexible approach to the change of use of historic farmsteads, so that they can be retained as distinctive elements of the rural landscape.

1.5 English Heritage's policy statement (2006) recommended that *"the starting point for future policy and decision making must be to:*

- *Promote positive means of managing change which align an understanding of the characteristics of historic farmsteads with their potential for and sensitivity to change, at the building, farmstead and landscape level.*
- *Avoid standard 'off-the-peg' solutions that do not take account of regional and local diversity and circumstances. There should be more emphasis on the quality of design, both traditional and contemporary, including appropriate detailing, materials and craftsmanship and the setting of buildings."*

1.6 Such an approach is fundamental to the objectives of sustainable development in seeking to deliver integrated social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits. It accords with national planning policy and guidance which makes identification, protection and enhancement of the historic environment a strategic priority that should be included in Local Development Documents (LDDs). Such understanding can inform future change and inspire high quality new development that aims to conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area. It is significant in this context that Matthew Taylor's [Review of the Rural Economy and Affordable Housing](#) (2008) recommended that consideration be given to *"how planning policy might allow additional small-scale business, workspace and residential developments (particularly affordable rural housing projects) to be delivered sustainably in rural areas"*, noting that *"the adaptive reuse of otherwise redundant historic buildings could and should play a significant role in delivering this."*

1.7 Government allows owners of redundant farm buildings to establish commercial uses (under the General Permitted Development Order, amended May 2013). Note: this paragraph will be updated before adoption of the document to cover changes to permitted development rights.

Local context

1.8 Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings and the development of farmsteads in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells will be considered within the context of the Borough's Local Development Framework and the associated national policy framework. A range of planning considerations will need to be taken into account when determining proposed developments and it is important that all development proposals clearly set out how they comply with this planning legislation.

1.9 Tunbridge Wells Borough has a very high proportion of historic farmsteads, dispersed across the countryside in a distinctive scattered settlement pattern². They also have a very high proportion of very old individual buildings. The importance and continued protection of this precious historic resource is a key

2 See High Weald AONB Management Plan Objective S1, <http://www.highweald.org/learn/about-the-high-weald/the-settlement-story.html>

aim of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's planning policy. Due to high land values and the high quality of the landscape in the Borough, there is strong pressure for the conversion of traditional buildings to holiday lets and residential use, and also for erection of ancillary buildings, including garages, stabling and workshops for home-based businesses. Modern sheds typically attract applications for B1/B8 industrial and commercial use.



Figure 3 The High Weald landscape is characterised by dispersed farmsteads, many originating from the medieval period and often retaining buildings of 17th century or earlier date as well as the characteristic oast house. Photo © Bob Edwards

1.10 Applicants are advised to consult with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and seek professional support and advice at an early stage in the formulation of proposals for a development that affects a farmstead.

1.11 The Borough Council's adopted [Core Strategy](#) 2006-2026 seeks to strengthen the rural economy through encouraging the re-use of rural buildings for employment use. The development of a range of locally based commercial enterprises will help provide a range of employment opportunities and support a strong local economy. The Borough Council's planning policies therefore prioritise the re-use of rural buildings for economic development purposes. Proposals for conversion to a residential dwelling are required to demonstrate a number of criteria to support why a non-economic use would be appropriate, as well as demonstrating that conversion can be achieved without an adverse effect upon the character of the rural building.

A summary of research on farmsteads and rural economies

Research commissioned by English Heritage, in partnership with the former Countryside Agency, examined the drivers for change and the effectiveness of national and local policy⁽³⁾. It found that historic farm buildings were more prone to both neglect and development than any other historic building type. Residential use made up the great majority of conversions, despite planning policies that favour employment and business uses. It also identified the need for an evidence base, including within Historic Environment Records, and a consistent framework to inform decision making by all those involved in the re-use and development of historic farmsteads.

Evidence from the Historic Farm Buildings Photo Survey⁽⁴⁾ shows that listed farm buildings in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells exhibit, by national standards, low rates of structural failure and high rates of conversion of listed buildings to non-agricultural (primarily domestic) uses – 46%, the national average being 34%. Most of these are to domestic use, only 5.7% of listed working buildings being converted to commercial use. This reflects the broad national picture outlined above.

English Heritage and the High Weald AONB Unit, have recently been working to identify and map the distribution of historic farmsteads, and enhance the county Historic Environment Record (HER). Farmsteads Mapping rapidly identifies and describes the locations and characteristics of historic farmsteads from around 1900, including their plan form, their date as represented by listed buildings, the extent of change and how they relate to the landscape. This provides an evidence base for the development of planning policy, raising the profile of farmsteads as important elements of landscape character. Farmsteads that have experienced minimal change since the late 19th century – whether or not they include listed buildings – are the most likely to make a positive contribution to landscape character, and require an appropriate approach through the planning system to consider this contribution when determining planning proposals.

It is important that the contribution of historic farmsteads to local character is retained and enhanced when brought into a new use. A 2007 report by Land Use Consultants for the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee showed that lifestyle buyers are now 75% of the High Weald AONB's land managers. In the High Weald AONB⁽⁵⁾, and across the West Midlands⁽⁶⁾, the results of Farmsteads Mapping has been used to reveal the current social and economic role of farmsteads. One of the most important facts revealed by this work is that the majority of farmsteads – over a third in many areas, and over 50% in the High Weald AONB – are now in residential use, which can entail the conversion of some or all of the working buildings. Economically, these farmsteads remain important because they are more often used for home-based entrepreneurial businesses than any other kind of dwelling. There is a distinction between the area around Crowborough and the urban area of Tunbridge Wells, where the owners of historic farm properties are involved with substantial companies, and the south and east of the AONB where there is a higher level of engagement with smaller-scale enterprises. These findings complement recent work by rural economists, which has demonstrated how home working, stimulated by access to broadband, is contributing to the economic and social health of rural economies and communities⁽⁷⁾.

Across Kent there is a continuing pressure to live and work in rural areas⁽⁸⁾. 38.5% of Kent's businesses are rural, and an increasing amount are home-based (in the county as a whole, home workers comprise 23% of the workforce). The proportion of small and micro-businesses, and the proportion of the workforce engaged in the knowledge-based economy, is also greater in rural than in urban areas. 78% of farm businesses in Kent have diversified, as against 67% for the South East and 46% for England: diversification, which excludes residential conversion, mostly comprises the processing and retailing of produce, tourism and letting buildings for businesses.

Understanding Farmstead Character

1.12 A farmstead is the place where the farmhouse and the working buildings of a farm are located, although some farms also have field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. The character of farmsteads has been shaped by their development as centres for the production of food from the surrounding farmland, as well as a mix of local traditions and national influences. Farmsteads in the Wealden landscapes that characterise most of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells were also hubs of activity associated with the storage and processing of fruit and the management of woodland: timber, including the hop poles for supporting hop vines, was often stored and processed on farmsteads.

1.13 Traditional farmsteads, which are the focus of this guidance, contribute to local character and distinctiveness through their varied scales, layouts, buildings and materials. The remainder of this section explains two themes that are of fundamental importance to understanding the historic character of farmsteads:

- the landscape and settlement context
- their function and layout

Landscape and settlement context

1.14 Traditional farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of rural settlement and the landscape, and how it has changed over centuries.

1.15 Very few farmsteads worked the land from villages; rural settlement in this part of England is dominated by isolated farmsteads and hamlets which developed from earlier seasonal camps (called 'dens') used for foraging pigs from the communities around the Weald in the Saxon period. These farmsteads are set within a landscape of woodland and irregular small-scale fields, created through assarting of woodland, often with thick wooded hedges and shaws, that largely took its present form by the 14th century and they often have smaller enclosures in their vicinity, which historically included orchards or sometimes cob nut plantations. The woods were used for production of food (cob nut plantations, for example) and the supply of fuel for households and for the iron industry. Timber was exported from the Weald for fuel and building. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many woods were replanted in sweet chestnut and other species for the supply of hop poles to the hopyards. Farmsteads in areas of ancient enclosure often sit astride a road or public path or are at a junction of routeways, which can give high levels of public access to the farmsteads.

1.16 In some areas, farms and their fields were enlarged and amalgamated in later centuries. The enlargement of farms and mixed agriculture in the Low Weald has resulted in generally larger farmsteads and fields. Regular fields with thorn hedges represent enclosure or re-organisation of earlier field patterns in the 18th and 19th centuries, often relating to larger scale farmsteads. In such re-organised landscapes, farmsteads may only have a single, private point of access, which constrains the volume of movement to and from the site.

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- 3 Gaskell, P and Owen, S 2005. [Historic Farm Buildings: Constructing the Evidence Base](#) (English Heritage/Countryside Agency/University of Gloucester)
- 4 For a summary of the Photo Image Survey, which has used a sample of listed buildings to record the rates of conversion and dereliction, see the *Extending the Evidence Base* report on the HELM website <http://www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings>.
- 5 <http://www.highweald.org/text.asp?PagelId=389>
- 6 <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads>
- 7 <http://www.liveworknet.com/uploads/radar.pdf>
- 8 <http://www.kentruralnetwork.org.uk/kent-rural-framework/kent-rural-evidence-base>



Figure 4 Farmsteads in their landscape setting. Farmsteads in areas of ancient (A) and piecemeal (B) enclosure, which typify most of the Borough's farmed landscape, often sit astride a road or public path. Some, especially in the Weald, are located at a junction of routeways which can give high levels of public access to the farmsteads (A). Some farmsteads, usually those within regular enclosure landscapes where the fields and routeways were substantially remodelled in the 18th and 19th centuries (C), may only have a single, private point of access. Drawing © Bob Edwards

Farmstead function and layout

1.17 The layout or plan of the farmstead is key to understanding and describing its character. It is made up of buildings and spaces that served several key functions - to house the farming family and any workers, store and process the harvested corn crop, fruit and hops, shelter farm vehicles and implements, shelter farm animals, and keep their manure for returning to the fields around them.

1.18 Buildings comprise farmhouses, workers' cottages and working buildings. Farmhouses are usually detached from the working buildings, particularly on the largest farms. Farmhouses and, more rarely, barns of pre-1750 date can be found, but most traditional working buildings date from the 19th century. The scale, form and date of farm buildings reflects farm size and the type of farming practised within an area over time. Few buildings, other than stores, milking parlours and metal-framed Dutch barns, were built between the 1880s and the Second World War, before the widespread introduction of wide-span multi-purpose sheds in concrete, steel and asbestos from the mid-1950s.

1.19 Open and enclosed working spaces within and around the farmstead were used to stack crops and timber, move and contain animals, particularly cattle, and to store vehicles. Working spaces and enclosures on the perimeter of a farmstead, including those for managing livestock and stacking harvested corn and hay, serve to link the outer edges of the farmstead to its surrounding landscape, while orchards and small areas of woodland can shelter and screen the farmstead. Gardens can stand within, or to one side of, the farmstead and historically developed as private areas with a distinct and separate character. They may be screened from the working areas of the farm by hedges or walls.

1.20 The most common forms of farmstead layout in Tunbridge Wells Borough, reflecting these differences, are:

- **Courtyard plan farmsteads**, which are the predominant plan type in the South East of England. They have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards. They sub-divide into loose courtyard plans (as in this example) which have one or more detached working farm buildings facing a yard area, regular courtyard plans where the working buildings around the yard are linked and planned in a more regular fashion and L-shaped ranges with additional buildings to a third or fourth side of the yard. Corn crops were processed in the barn, the straw being then taken to cattle yards, cattle housing and stables where it was trodden into manure and carted out to fertilise the farmland. The threshed grain was stored in granaries, seed corn being stored in a staddle granary, while grain for market was stored above a cartshed.

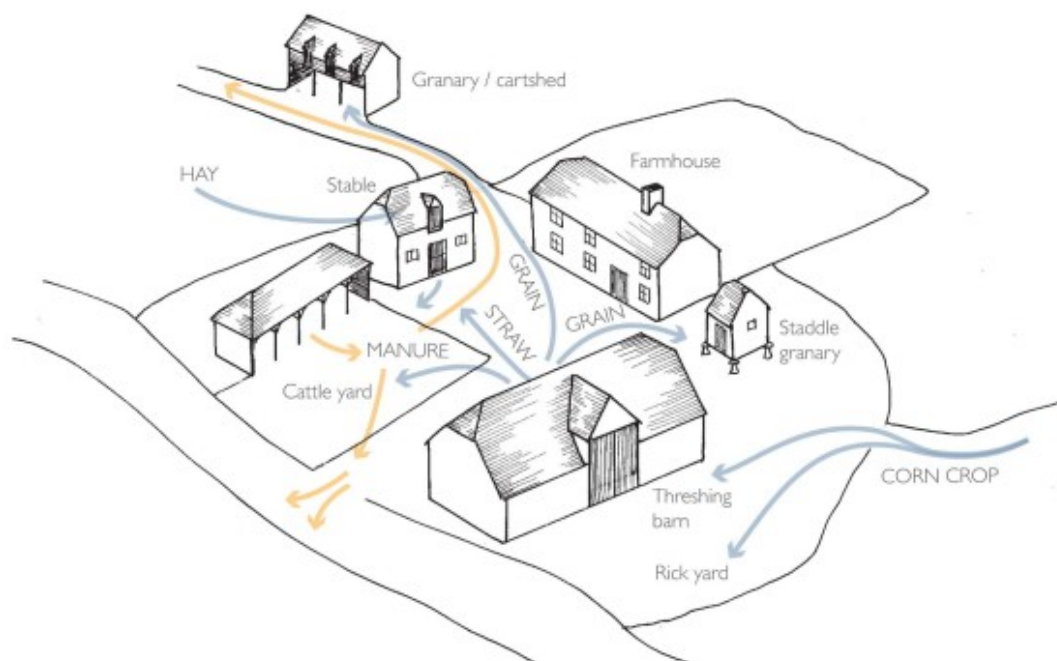


Figure 5 Loose courtyard plan. This drawing shows a loose courtyard plan with working buildings arranged around two sides of the yard. The harvested corn crop was brought into the barn for threshing. The threshed grain was then stored in granaries. In this example the seed corn is stored in a stadle granary (a feature of the downlands and arable vales of Kent) whilst grain for market is stored above a cartshed which typically faces onto a track. Straw from the threshed corn crop was then taken from the barn to be trodden down into manure in cattle yards and associated cattle housing and stabling. It was then returned to fertilise the fields. (© Bob Edwards and Chantal Freeman)



Figure 6 A characteristic larger Wealden farmstead group forming a courtyard with the 17th century farmhouse. The traditional farm buildings include two timber-framed barns, one of which has been partly converted to an oast house, stabling and cattle housing with a mixture of gabled and hipped roofs, framing with weatherboarded walls, brick and clay tiles

- **Dispersed plans**, where the buildings and yards are scattered within the overall boundary of the farmstead. They are a highly distinctive but vulnerable element of Kent's rural landscape and are concentrated in the Weald and other anciently-enclosed landscapes in South East England. Dispersed plans are often located at nodal points in the network of lanes and tracks, meaning that many have

high levels of public access. Dispersed multi-yard plans, as in this example, were often associated with the rearing and fattening of cattle, the various yards being used to separate stock of different age. Corn crops, often grown for fodder rather than market, were processed in the barn, the straw being supplemented by bracken for bedding and eventually being made into manure. The oast house is a specialised processing building for hops, which were rarely stored on the farm for long periods. Manure production was especially important on farms with hop gardens as hops need fertile soils.

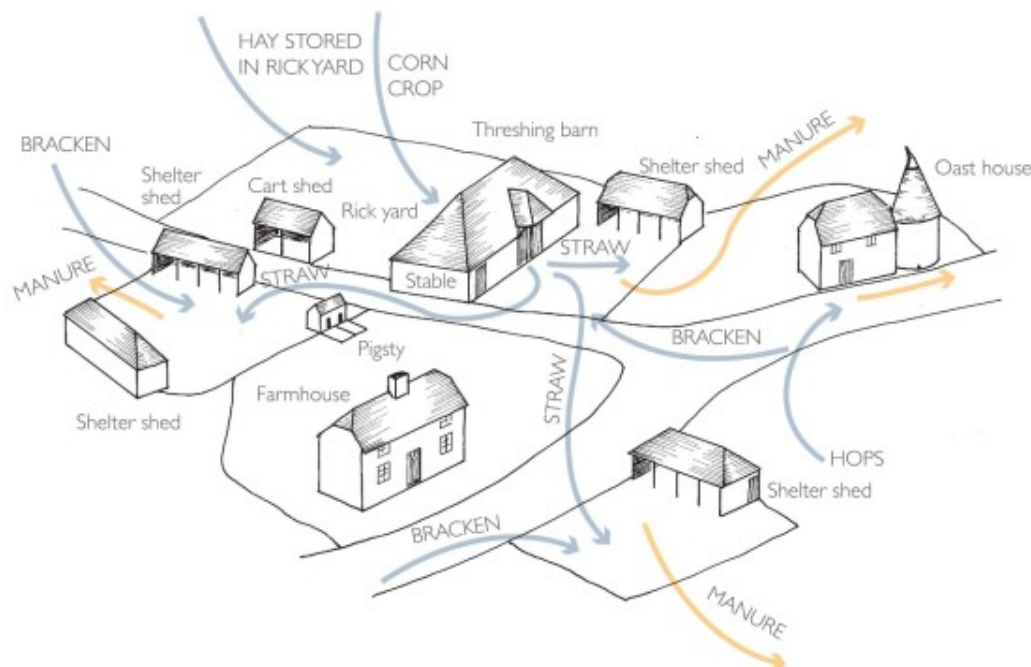


Figure 7 Dispersed plans. Dispersed plans are often located at nodal points in the network of lanes and tracks, meaning that many have high levels of public access. Dispersed multi-yard plans, as in this example, are concentrated in the Weald. They were often associated with the rearing and fattening of livestock, the various yards being used to separate stock of different age. Corn crops, often grown for fodder rather than market, were processed in the barn, the straw being supplemented by bracken for bedding and eventually being made into manure. Manure production was especially important on farms with hop gardens as hops need fertile soils. The oast house is a specialised processing building for hops which were rarely stored on the farm for long periods. (© Bob Edwards and Chantal Freeman)

Understanding Significance

1.21 Significance is a word used to summarise what is important about a building or place, whether it is designated as an historic asset or not. Change to a building or place can either enhance or diminish this significance. In the case of farmsteads, it can be considered at two levels:

- its significance as a traditional farmstead in its setting
- its special local and national significance

1.22 This can be done by using the checklist under the Significance heading (page 37) of Section 3: Summary Guidance on Farmstead Character in Tunbridge Wells Borough).

Capacity for Change

1.23 Traditional farmsteads need a use. The alternative is eventual collapse and loss. All of the options in the table below present issues to consider when considering change for a whole area or an individual site. Proposed non-agricultural uses will usually require planning approval as will most proposals for farm diversification.

Option	Key Issues to Consider
<p>Maintain – through investment and the use of traditional or non-traditional materials</p> <p>Conservation repair – as features in the landscape or as significant historic buildings, with minimal or no alteration</p>	<p>English Heritage has published guidance on maintenance.</p> <p>Small regular payments for maintenance are available through the Environmental Stewardship Entry Level Scheme which is open to all farmers and land managers. Funding for larger-scale repair projects are available under the Higher Level Scheme and for Grade I and II* listed buildings from English Heritage. Grants are generally focused on small numbers of exceptionally significant buildings whose sensitivity to change make them especially deserving of conservation for their historic or landscape value.</p> <p>The key issues to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the cost of continued maintenance and repair, particularly for farm businesses, sometimes linked to the need for minor adaptation • the type of repair and its impact on the durability and integrity of historic fabric • the sources and supply of traditional building materials onto the market
<p>Adapt – to new agricultural or non-agricultural uses as the best way of securing a future for the building</p> <p>New build – to support continued on-farm operations or to provide residential or non-agricultural business accommodation</p>	<p>Adaptation for non-agricultural use and new build will have an impact on the whole site and its landscape setting. The impact will vary, depending on the visual prominence of farmsteads in the landscape, the ease of access to them provided by the road network and their layout and scale. The functional form and simple, agricultural appearance of historic farm buildings is often unsuited to extension and over-fenestration.</p> <p>Adaptive re-use (including diversification projects) and new build for non-agricultural purposes have the potential to maintain or enhance the contribution that the farmstead makes to the landscape, its landscape setting and wildlife. Both will have an impact on the whole site, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growth in traffic and effects on neighbours • views into the site • setting, boundaries and curtilage, through improvement of access, provision of car parking and gardens, development of prominent viewpoints and elevations • the impact on historic buildings, depending on their form and scale, of the demand for more natural light (new openings) and the sub-division or amalgamation of spaces • the loss of historic fabric or creation of new built elements • the displacement of uses to other buildings or parts of the site
<p>Collapse and/or loss – through continued dereliction or demolition and salvage</p>	<p>Dereliction and loss have for centuries followed functional redundancy. Isolated buildings, without access, in deteriorating condition or lacking the capacity to accept alternative uses, are those most at risk. While buildings identified as not meriting intervention or for demolition may occasionally be prominently sited, they will tend to be of low historic or architectural value.</p> <p>Key issues to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of any loss, particularly cumulative loss, on the character of the landscape and how it is appreciated • the historic and architectural significance of the individual site or building

Chapter 2: The Site Assessment Framework

Introduction

2.1 The Site Assessment Framework will, when used with the other chapters in this document, help owners develop an understanding of the historic character and significance of a site and identify any issues at the earliest critical stage in the planning process. Initial discussions with the relevant local authority will indicate if planning permission or listed building consent are likely to be required. The Framework can then be used for the preparation of a Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Statement.

2.2 An application for new development, change of use or listed building consent will have a much greater chance of success if the key issues are identified and considered at the pre-application stage, and if an applicant's case is well prepared and justified.

2.3 Opening a dialogue at an early stage within the context of the local authority's policies can also create more flexible outcomes and save time and costs, particularly with regard to:

- informing early discussions with the local authority regarding any proposed development, particularly the types of use, level of development, design and landscape criteria and highway issues
- serving as a valuable starting point for negotiations with other parties that may be affected by the proposals
- providing important advice in planning a scheme for a site, including options for conversion, materials and architectural features
- informing the siting and design of new buildings that conform with planning policy and guidance and that may also be considered in the context of Enabling Development

Stage 1 Produce a site assessment summary

2.4 The aim of this stage is to present an understanding of the whole site, as short text accompanied by an outline plan and photographs, focusing on:

The whole site , its boundaries, access to highways and services, designations, relationship with surrounding land and potential for wildlife.	The extent of change , which informs opportunities to retain and reveal the significance of historic buildings and spaces, reinstate lost features or develop other parts of the site.
The landscape context and overall form and scale of the whole farmstead, including the way in which buildings face towards or away from historic and modern spaces, routeways and the surrounding area	Architectural patterning , especially the building styles, materials and details that are important to maintaining or enhancing the character of the farmstead in its landscape setting

Stage 1 Produce a site assessment summary

2.5 Two examples of site assessment summaries at the end of this section show how it can be rapidly completed without specialist knowledge.

2.6 The preparation of a Site Assessment Summary falls into three stages:

- Identify the site and any designations
- Identify the historic character
- Identify significance

A Identify the site and any designations

- the present and historic boundary
- ownership or tenancy

- use of the site and the area around it.
- the road network and its capacity, including sightlines from main entrances
- routeways, including Public Rights of Way
- key services such as water, sewage, electricity and telecommunications.
- designations on and around the site, as set out in the text box below

B Identify the historic character

2.7 This is a critical first step in understanding the site's sensitivity to and potential for change. Site survey and then comparison with historic maps (see text box on page 20) will help identify the type and degree of change to the site and its surrounding area, including in some instances where buildings have been rebuilt or even collapsed upon earlier footprints.

1 Landscape setting

- site location and surrounding topography, including archaeological sites (Kent Historic Environment Record <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/>)
- views (to and from the site) and how they have changed, for example as a result of either the removal or new development of buildings, routeways, working spaces and woodland

2 The farmstead

- the scale and form of the whole site and its buildings
- how the buildings group together and relate to each other, access routes and open or enclosed spaces within and around the site. These spaces include fields, gardens or working areas, and can be bounded by hedges, walls or fences
- whether the site can be subdivided into distinct areas, as a result of how they have functioned and changed

3 The buildings

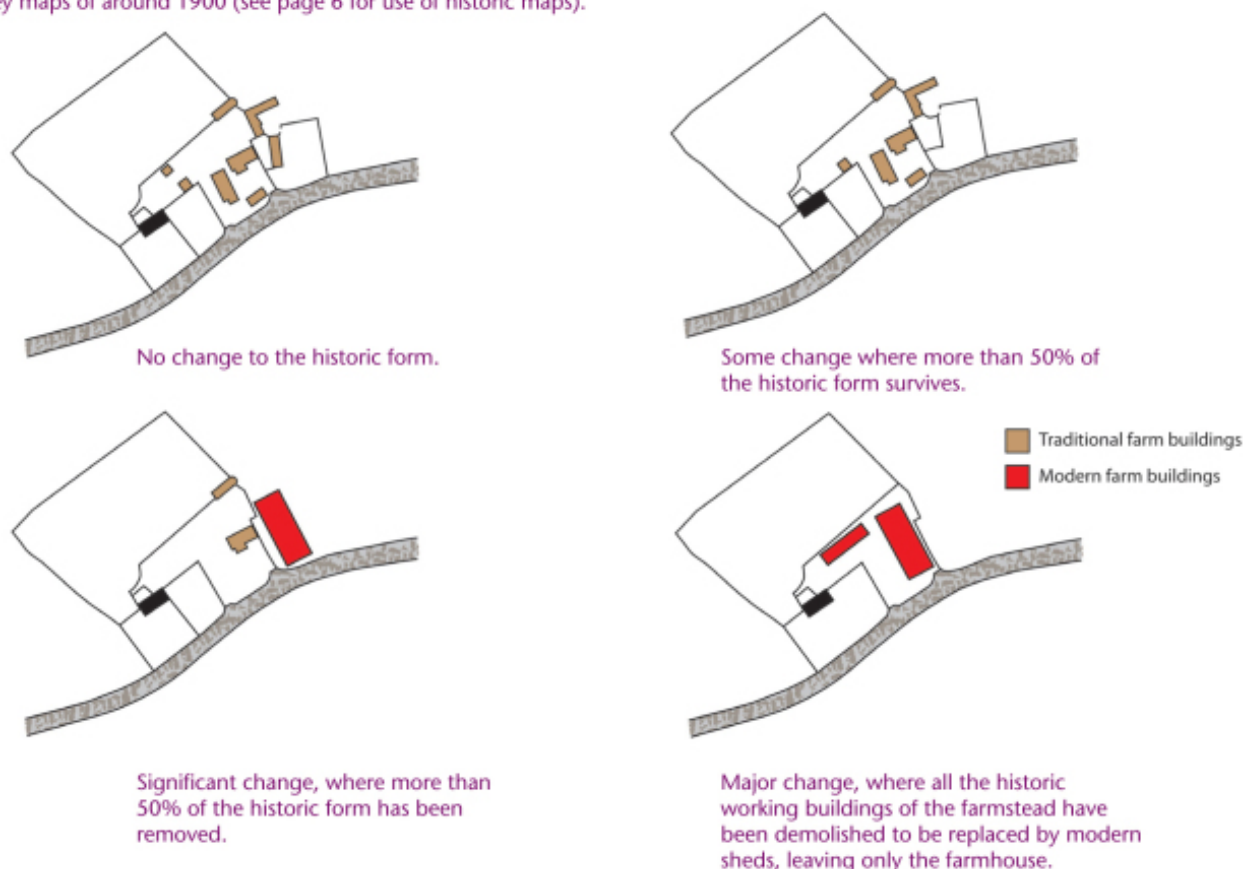
- date and present use, distinguishing between traditional and modern buildings
- scale, architectural treatment and use of materials

2.8 Individual historic buildings can be listed and cross-referred to a site plan, where more detail can also be noted such as:

- plan form and the number and size of openings (including blocked openings)
- evidence for lost floors and partitions or sub-division such as grain bins
- exposed carpentry including roof trusses
- the presence of internal features, such as machinery, stalls, floor surfaces, historical graffiti and marks of lost features
- condition

Farmstead change

Understanding how a farmstead has changed is a critical first step in understanding its sensitivity to and potential for change. The drawings below show the different degrees of change that can be determined through comparing present sites to those shown on historic Ordnance Survey maps of around 1900 (see page 6 for use of historic maps).



1

Figure 8 Farmstead change

C Identify significance

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

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

2.10 The additional guidance text shows how to assess the level of significance as a traditional farmstead, and any special significance which would be useful as a critical first step in the planning process and when developing a scheme.

1 Farmsteads and buildings can contribute to local character if they have one or both of the following:

- traditional farm buildings
- their historic form as traditional farmsteads, where the historic farm buildings, houses and spaces relate to each other

2.11 *The greater the survival of the historic form and detail, the greater will be its significance as a traditional farmstead.* Site survey and drawing out a site plan will help to identify the survival of the historic form of the site, its buildings and any historic detail such as building materials, doors, windows and internal features.

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

2.12 The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation. See National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 126-141 for historic environment issues. The criteria for listing farm buildings are highly selective, and some listings were only based on an external examination. Significant features might only be revealed during the assessment process, including for buildings which do not merit designation as a listed building but may retain important evidence for farming and construction practices. Additionally, some farmsteads and farmstead sites may retain significant below-ground archaeological deposits, including those that have lost all of their historic buildings.

Special significance

2.13 Some buildings or farmsteads, including examples which are not designated as heritage assets, also have the potential for special significance in a local or national context. This can be determined by using the checklist under the Significance heading (page 41) of Section 3: Summary Guidance to Farmstead Character in Tunbridge Wells Borough).

Designation checklist

Heritage assets

Heritage assets are defined as ‘a building, monument, site, place or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions’. These include designated national assets and assets identified by the local planning authority. The effect of an application on the significance of such a Heritage Asset or its setting is a material consideration in determining the application, based on a proportionate approach to determining its level of significance.

Designated heritage assets

Designated heritage assets relating to historic farmsteads will include listed buildings and:

- any pre-1948 working building or structure in the curtilage (legal property boundary at the time of listing) of a listed building. Curtilage buildings are considered to be listed and therefore covered by listed building legislation and consent requirements
- some surviving historic farmsteads are sited in conservation areas. Most of these relate to nucleated settlements
- a very small number of farmsteads that are sited within, or close to, nationally important archaeological sites, which will include scheduled ancient monuments. Scheduled Monument Consent must be sought from English Heritage for any works affecting a Scheduled Monument
- a very small number that are sited within, or close to, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. Such farmsteads are mostly planned home farms and other farmsteads built in a coherent architectural style

Details of all nationally protected heritage assets can be found on the National Heritage List for England at

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>.

Guidance on the criteria and how to apply for designation can be found on the English Heritage website at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/>

Local Heritage Assets

The Borough Council recognises that local heritage assets make a positive contribution to the character of the Borough and these will be identified through the planning process, either at application stage or through plan making.

The effect of any proposals on the significance of an asset itself, or on its setting, will be a material consideration in determining any application.

(See Core Policy 4: Environment of the adopted [Core Strategy](#) and List of Local Heritage Assets SPD, shortly to be adopted).

The [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#), a statutory document under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, identifies the medieval and earlier routeways, which farmsteads frequently relate to, as a fundamental component of the area's special character. The patterning of these tracks, which in some cases may predate the current farm buildings, are important features of farmsteads in their own right.

Wildlife and Habitats

All farmsteads and their landscape settings provide, or can provide, important habitats for local fauna and flora. Local authorities now have a duty (through the NERC Act 2006) to take nature conservation into account. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) is the principal law protecting wildlife, habitats and species in Great Britain, and was strengthened and updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

- protected species – certain species (bats, for example) – are protected as European Protected Species. Expert advice will be required to ascertain whether a protected species is present within, or adjacent to, a farmstead site
- important hedgerows are protected from removal by the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/hedgerows). Local planning authority permission is required before removing hedges that are at least 20 metres (66 feet) in length, more than 30 years old and contain certain species of plant. The authority will assess the importance of the hedgerow using criteria (wildlife, landscape and historical) set out in the regulations
- some farmsteads relate to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are areas of land notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of special nature conservation interest. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are sites of non-statutory designation, assessed by the Kent Wildlife Trust, which is recognised by local planning policies. Other important or notable habitats, such as woodlands, ponds or grassland, may also be present
- surveys of habitats and species are seasonally constrained and need to be well planned in advance of any planning application
- any landscape proposals should take note of species and habitat action plans relevant to the area and guidance on any relevant Biodiversity Opportunity Area statements

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The High Weald (<http://www.highweald.org>) is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Section 85 of The CROW Act 2000 places on local authorities a requirement to produce an AONB Management Plan and a 'duty of regard' to conserve and enhance AONBs. Conserving and enhancing the qualities of such landscapes are a material consideration in considering planning applications within, or adjacent to, them.

Historic maps and site survey

The use of modern and historic maps in combination with a basic level of site survey will help identify the type and degree of change to the site and its surrounding area, including in some instances where buildings have been rebuilt or even collapsed upon earlier footprints.

The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" maps of around 1900 provide the most useful baseline for measuring subsequent change to traditional farmsteads. They clearly show the buildings of the farmstead after the last major phase in the development of traditional farmsteads. The understanding of the development of a farmstead can easily be deepened by looking at earlier and more recent Ordnance Survey maps, earlier maps such as tithe maps which date from after 1836 (when the government decided to commute tithes into money payments) or estate surveys which may assist in dating some of the buildings.

Websites such as Google Earth or Local Live are regularly used to provide an overview of a site and its immediate area. Most local libraries hold historic OS maps, and county record offices hold these and tithe maps. Some counties have made these available on-line.

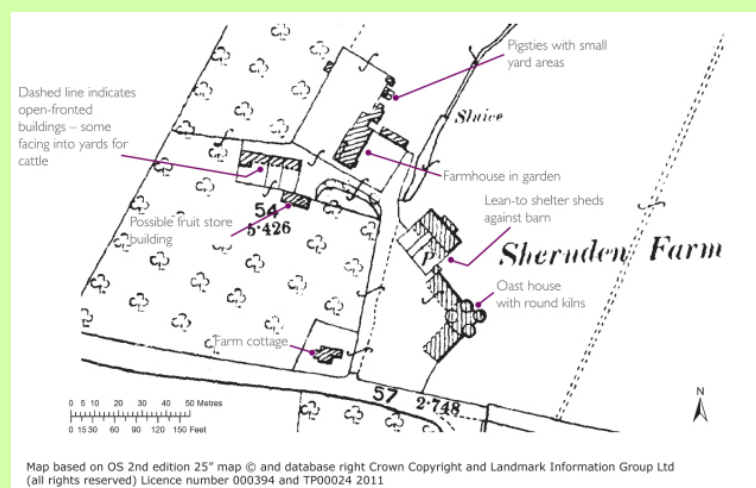


Figure 9 Identifying Buildings

Other useful websites are:

Historic Ordnance Survey maps

www.old-maps.co.uk, www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/products/historical-map-data and www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/ordnance-survey

Tithe Maps www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/tithe-records

The Centre for Kentish Studies is the Headquarters for the Kent Archives service. It holds manuscript and printed records for the county of Kent. See

www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/archives_and_local_history/archive_and_local_history/centre_for_kentish_studies

The Kent Landscape Information System provides detailed information, including maps on the county's landscape and biodiversity. See www.kent.gov.uk/kliis

Kent Historic Environment Record

<http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/>

Examples of site assessment summaries

Two examples are included here. They use the key headings in the Stage 1 guidance, and additional sub-headings (for assessing the farmstead and its buildings, its setting and its survival as a group in its area context) are used as prompts in the section on significance. A very short summary will always be useful unless (given, for example, the small scale and simplicity of the site) this is clearly not needed. The text can be presented in bulleted form or as free text.

Example 2 is a much simpler site than Example 1, which is reflected in the shorter text with fewer headings.

Example 1: A multi-yard farmstead



Summary

This is a large farmstead with several detached yard areas, which has developed around one of the many trackways in this area that connected woodlands and fields to scatters of dispersed farmsteads and dwellings. There has been little change to its historic landscape context, and more than 50% of its historic form as shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Map survives – which is above-average for this area. The Farmhouse and North Barn are listed Grade II.

Site and management issues

1. *Site boundary, ownership and use.* The present boundary is shown on the map, and takes in an additional area with modern sheds to the south. The farmstead is in single ownership and all the buildings are redundant for modern farming purposes.
2. *Site access and services.* The farmstead is 350m from a public B-class road and is accessed by a narrow track which also serves one other house 500m to the south. The track is a public bridleway. A public footpath heads north from this track.
3. *Designations.* The Farmhouse and North Barn are listed at Grade II.

Historic character

Setting

- the farmstead lies within a hollow with rising ground to the north, east and south, and flat land extending approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the west before it falls into a river valley
- the landscape around the site has experienced little change other than the loss of some of the field boundaries marked on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map
- the trackway that passes through the farmstead becomes a sunken lane as it passes through the woodland to the north west. A further track carries the public footpath to the north east affording good views of the farmstead, particularly the eastern group
- post-and-wire fences form the present boundaries to the site, and these probably replaced traditional wooden fencing
- there are limited glimpses of the farmstead in long-distance views from the west, due to a belt of woodland. This is designated as ancient woodland (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>). There is a strip of fields between this woodland, marked by a bank and ditch topped with old coppice stools, and the boundary of the farmstead
- the large modern sheds for housing cattle are the dominant feature in views from the south closer to the farmstead

The farmstead and its buildings

This is a large farmstead with several yard areas detached from one another. It is identified as a dispersed multi-yard plan. More than half of the buildings shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map survive. The main areas, where minor buildings have been lost, are in relationship to the barns in Areas 3 and 4 as set out below.

The farmstead sub-divides into five distinct areas as follows:

1. The farmhouse is a large 18th century red brick house, with a clay tile roof, that faces east towards the track and is set in an enclosed garden area bounded by a brick wall.
2. Modern metal sheet-clad steel-framed sheds to the south of Area 3, representing an extension beyond the earlier southern boundary of the farmstead. There is direct access to these buildings from the track.
3. A former yard area to the east of the house, cleared to form a formal approach to the house, is bounded to the south by a barn of stone rubble and brick. Shelter sheds attached to the barn face east and also south into a smaller yard. There is a cart shed to the east which is partially collapsed and in poor condition.
4. The north barn and yard. The north barn is listed at grade II. It is a weatherboarded timber-frame barn of 5-bays with an aisle to the west. It faces into a large yard area on its east side bounded by the track on the east, brick walls to the south and a fence to the north. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map shows an open-fronted shed to the north of the barn facing into the yard.
5. The east yard buildings. These are small-scale and comprise a stable with hayloft to the east, a shelter shed for cattle to the south and a mid-20th century cow house to the north, all of brick with plain clay tile roofs or modern sheeting.

Significance

1 As a traditional farmstead

Farmstead and its buildings. The group has characteristic traditional barns and minor working buildings in locally characteristic materials. It survives as a group with more than 50% of the traditional working buildings remaining, which relate to their historic areas and yards. The most legible groupings of traditional farm buildings are in Areas 3 and 5. The cart shed in Area 3 is the least significant, being the most isolated of the buildings on the site and because of its very poor condition.

Setting. The farmstead has retained the landscape setting within which it developed. Trackways, some of which pass through and help shape the character of farmsteads as here, are a significant feature of this area. Species-rich hedgerows and small blocks of ancient woodland are another characteristic feature.

Survival in a local context. The overall survival of the traditional farmstead group is above-average for this area.

2 Special significance

- the dispersed multi-yard plan has been identified as a rare surviving plan type for this area, making its above-average survival of special significance
- the farmstead contains two listed buildings which are of national significance. These are the farmhouse and an aisled barn (a distinctive building type in Kent). Both are of pre-1700 date, adding considerably to the significance of the group

Appendix with list of buildings

A brief description of each building and its present use can be listed in an appendix to the summary, and cross-referenced to a numbered site plan and photographs. For example:

North barn 17th century 5-bay aisled barn. Listed Grade II. Weatherboarded timber frame on a brick plinth. Hipped, tile roof. Large doors to central threshing bay with porch to the west side. The brick plinth has been partly rebuilt at the north-west corner with modern brick. Concrete floor. The framing of the barn is in good condition. The barn is used for storage.

South barn Five-bay barn built in sandstone rubble with brick to the corners and sides of the openings, half-hipped slate roof. Ventilation slits to walls. Threshing bay doors and small door in north elevation. Openings to upper parts of each gable. Earth floor. The barn is used for storage.

Cart shed Single-storey cart shed of three bays, open to the north. Brick walls to ends and rear. Gabled roof. Originally plain clay tile roof covering but now stripped. Roof timbers badly decayed. Brickwork poor, west gable has partly collapsed and wall badly cracked at south-east corner. The building has been abandoned and derelict for many years. It is overgrown with nettles and small elder tree growing inside.

Example 2: A small-scale courtyard farmstead



Site and management issues

- 1) *Site boundary, ownership and use.* The present boundary is shown on the map, and excludes part of the historic farmstead to the north west. The farmstead is in single ownership and all the buildings are redundant for modern farming purposes.
- 2) *Site access and services.* The farmstead lies alongside a lane which joins a main A-class road that runs to the north-east of the farmstead with a small field between. As well as the original entrance from the lane a modern access track has been created from the main road to the north.
- 3) *Designations.* None of the buildings are listed and the farmstead is not within a Conservation Area.

Historic character

Setting

- the farmstead sits in a gently undulating landscape of small irregularly-shaped fields surrounded by generally large, wooded hedgerows and small woods that are characteristic of fields cut from woodland from the medieval period. There has been minimal boundary loss in the vicinity of the farmstead
- the main route into the farmstead is via a lane to the south leading to the nearby village. Two semi-detached cottages with front gardens face into this lane to the east of the farmstead

- there is a view into the yard from the lane with the barn being most prominent and the upper storey of the farmhouse clearly visible above the cow house
- the boundaries to the east and south are low hedges whilst the farmyard is separated from the garden of the farmhouse by a tall wall with a high hedge to the west side of the garden. To the north there is no defined boundary beyond the barn, the modern yard area defined only by the extent of concrete
- the southern side of the lane is edged with overgrown laid coppice and widens just below the farmstead to accommodate an old pond

The farmstead and its buildings

This is identified as a medium-scale loose courtyard plan with detached buildings set around a yard. The farmhouse is set to the west of the historic farmyard, which has detached buildings to three sides of a yard that is open to and faces south. The principal buildings facing the yard area are shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, but the oast house has been demolished. To its north is a modern working area, with industrial sheds and separate access from the A road to the north.

The whole site clearly divides into the following areas:

1. The mid-19th century house, which faces south towards the lane and into its own garden area. It is typical of many Victorian houses in this area, with red brick and decorative barge boards to the gabled roof.
2. The historic farmyard and buildings. The surviving traditional buildings comprise a weatherboarded timber-framed barn, a single-storey stable and open-fronted shed facing into the yard, all built in brick with slate roofs. To the west is a mid-20th century cow house built in industrial brick with a corrugated iron roof.
3. North of the yard. An oast house stood to the north of the farmhouse served by a separate entrance from the north, but this has been demolished. Modern sheds have been built to the north of the barn.

Significance

1 As a traditional farmstead

Farmstead and its buildings. The core historic farmyard (Area 2) survives as a legible traditional group, with a typical group of barn, stable and shelter shed which is typical of smaller farmsteads in this area. It retains traditional buildings and the overall form of a traditional courtyard farmstead.

- the date of construction of the timber-framed barn is uncertain, but it is a locally characteristic building
- the stable and shelter shed are typical buildings of the late 19th century, which contribute to the setting of the barn
- although there was no building on the west side of the yard in c.1900, the cow house does provide enclosure for the yard and some separation from the farmhouse and its garden

Setting. The farmstead is a visible feature in the landscape with a good view into the yard area from the road to the south of the farmstead. The small fields with their species-rich hedgerows are characteristic of the area.

Survival in a local context. The farmstead retains more than 50% of its c.1900 form, which is average for this area. Medium-small scale courtyard farmsteads are noted as a characteristic feature of this area.

2 Special significance

No special significance has been identified.

Appendix with list of buildings

A brief description of each building can be listed in an appendix to the summary, and cross-referenced to a numbered site plan and photographs. The descriptions can also flag up issues, for example uncertainty on the dating of buildings, which can be carried forward into the next stage. For example:

Barn A five-bay timber-framed barn with weatherboarded walls, red brick plinth and a half-hipped plain clay tile roof. Central threshing bay with large doors to both sides of the barn. The north wall to the east of the threshing bay has been rebuilt in modern brick. There are possibly re-used timbers in the structure with unused joints in some of the timbers. The date of construction is uncertain and further examination and research is needed to assess its significance.

Stage 2 Capacity for change

2.14 Different scales and forms of farmsteads and their buildings present different capacities for change that are critical to consider at this stage. Different scales and forms of farmsteads and their buildings present different capacities for adaptive reuse and new build, and have an impact on:

- neighbours affected by any increase in traffic
- setting, boundaries and curtilage, through improvement of access, provision of car parking and gardens, development of prominent viewpoints and elevations
- historic buildings, due to the demand for more natural light (new openings), the sub-division or amalgamation of spaces and the impact
- the fabric of historic buildings depending on the robustness or fragility of the materials from which they are constructed
- the displacement of uses to other buildings or parts of the site

2.15 Development proposals will need to comply with the local authority planning policies. While these generally support the re-use of historic buildings to ensure their long-term preservation, with a strong preference for agricultural/economic use, they generally contain a strong message of constraint, particularly in relation to residential conversions and additions, alterations and also extensions in general. As well as considering what use is appropriate for the buildings, detailed planning proposals should address issues such as over-looking, noise and loss of light and to take proper account of biodiversity.

2.16 The following issues are also useful to consider as a part of pre-application discussion before presenting a scheme. It is important that these are not considered in isolation from one another; for example, the potential to provide a low carbon development would need to also consider whether the site is in an isolated location with the consequences this could have for additional vehicle movements, or the impact of development on the significance of the site and any heritage assets.

Heritage potential

2.17 The pre-application stage may also highlight the need to:

- identify previously unidentified heritage assets
- Undertake more detailed assessment and recording, no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset'. Go to Part 6 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for guidance on recording.
- provide a desk-based assessment and in some cases a field evaluation of the archaeology of the site and its surroundings – many farmsteads in Kent stand on sites which date back to at least the 11th century and may preserve stratified below-ground archaeology within their curtilage

Wildlife and habitat potential

2.18 Consider the extent to which the site and its buildings are used, or have the capacity to be used, as roosting, nesting or feeding sites by wildlife, including bats and other protected species. Surveys for wildlife that may be impacted by the proposed development may be required. Seek advice from the local authority regarding the need for an ecological survey to establish nature conservation interest of the site and its setting and refer to English Heritage publication entitled [Bats in Traditional Buildings](#).

Potential for, and impact of, low carbon development

2.19 Low carbon development is an essential consideration for all planning applications and includes consideration of:

- the pattern and density of settlement in the surrounding area
- the potential for home-working
- accessibility, including distance and ease of access to services and public transport
- thermal efficiency, and how this can be delivered without a harmful impact on the character and significance of historic buildings
- the potential for micro-generation through ground-source or air-source heating, solar and wind power and any harmful effects that might arise from installation and/or its operation
- the potential for grey water recycling and reed bed sewage disposal
- the cost and availability of traditional building materials, including locally-sourced materials and the salvage of materials

Economic and community issues

2.20 Consider:

- local views, including Neighbourhood Plans
- opportunities for community and economic use, including social housing provision
- local employment pressures (trends, nearby markets/employment centres, types of employment)
- market and rental values for various uses
- communications, including access to, and bandwidth of, broadband

Stage 3 Checklist for preparing a scheme

2.21 Getting the design right is essential on such sensitive sites, and the understanding gained from Stages 1 and 2 will help to prepare a scheme that conserves and enhances the historic character and significance of the whole site. Proposed changes might include new buildings, the demolition of modern or insignificant buildings and the opening of spaces to better reveal the significance of heritage assets. The following headings are not exhaustive, but will assist in actioning a more robust proposal:

- Setting
- The farmstead and its buildings
- The presence of buried archaeological remains relating to earlier phases of the farmstead or pre-farm activity may constrain and/or inform proposals
- Proposed buildings

See NPPF paragraphs 56-67.

Setting

Issues to Consider

- the functional relationship with the land, and the role of spaces and routeways in relationship to the landscape and buildings, which is key to the conservation/enhancement of character
- understanding how views towards the site which have remained unchanged, or have changed over time – as a result of either the removal, or new development, of buildings, routeways, working spaces, access points, trees and other land cover features – may reveal opportunities to conserve or enhance the character of the site in its wider setting
- the impact of the creation of any gardens, access and parking on the landscape setting. Access is a critical initial consideration, as so much is determined by the capacity of the existing road network and access routes
- any opportunities (for example, in the demolition of modern sheds) for revealing the significance of the farmstead in its landscape context
- any opportunities to enhance biodiversity through the restoration or introduction of features such as hedges, ponds or tree planting

Guidance

- minimise the impact of any gardens, access and parking on the landscape setting
- consider which views to the site are most important and where it may be possible to enhance views to and from the site
- ensure that the choice of planting and landscaping (trees, hedges, shrubs etc) responds to local character and enhances habitat for wildlife
- consider enhancement with tree cover to mitigate against the effects of cold winds
- avoid an increase in boundaries or boundaries of inappropriate character which undermine the integrity of an individual farmstead
- Consult the Kent Historic Environment Record and follow advice given on any necessary assessment measures

The farmstead and its buildings

Issues to Consider

- the opportunities or constraints offered by the plan form and scale of all buildings on the site
- the level of change to individual buildings and the spaces within and around them
- the durability and vulnerability of the building materials. The use of materials of appropriate quality is essential in ensuring a successful scheme. Consider the cost and availability of traditional building materials. The condition of the buildings may also influence planning decisions regarding the potential for re-use

- the number and size of the openings and the need for new openings and the existing sub-division of the internal spaces
- evidence for lost floors and partitions or sub-division such as grain bins
- exposed carpentry including roof trusses
- the presence of internal features, such as machinery, stalls, floor surfaces, historical graffiti and marks of lost features

Guidance

- retain and enhance the visibility and character of spaces around and within the farmstead.
- respect the form, orientation and hierarchy of buildings within the group
- maintain the amenity of the site – the sense of space between buildings, and between working buildings and the farmhouse
- retain solid-to-void proportions (i.e. the relationship of existing doors and windows to wall and roof)
- minimise alterations to prominent and significant external elevations, through careful attention to internal planning and how and where to introduce or borrow light. The size and detail of window design and materials has a major impact on overall appearance
- consider local paint colours, particularly obvious being those associated with estates. Avoid colours (especially white) that jar with the patina of walling and roofing
- conserve open interiors with impressive proportions and long sight lines
- retain, where possible, historic features including door and window treatment, exposed roof trusses, floor structure, machinery, floor surfaces

2.22 There is further detailed advice on the conversion and re-use of farm buildings in English Heritage's publication, *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*.

Proposed buildings

2.23 Where there may be opportunities for new buildings (ancillary buildings and dwellings):

- these must conform with planning policy and guidance, the quality of design being fundamental to any special justification for isolated new houses as outlined in paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework
- they may be considered as Enabling Development to help significant buildings that are highly sensitive to adaptive re-use, to be conserved and re-used

Enabling development is usually defined as development unacceptable in planning terms apart from where it would bring public benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved. English Heritage has produced guidance on this and other key planning issues at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/hpg/decisionmaking/NPPF/>

The NPPF (paragraph 55) states that in rural areas special circumstances for new housing include where development would:

- represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset
- help secure the future of heritage assets
- reuse redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting

2.24 Such development might include the demolition of modern or insignificant buildings and the opening of spaces to better reveal the significance of heritage assets, enhancing the contribution that farmsteads make to surrounding settlement and landscape. Getting the design right is essential on such sensitive sites

and so gaining a detailed understanding of the landscape, the farmstead and its buildings is critical to achieving successful design in the rural context. The following 'issues and opportunities' and 'guidance' should be considered and noted:

Issues and opportunities

- is there potential to reinstate missing elements that may preserve or enhance the character and significance of the group? This does not mean replicating lost buildings, but using an understanding of farmstead character to inform new design. Different opportunities or constraints may be offered by the plan form and the level of change
- whether the introduction of new build could secure the future of highly significant buildings or other traditional buildings within the group that have low potential for change
- the use of materials of appropriate quality is essential in ensuring a successful scheme. Consider the cost and availability of traditional building materials and the potential for salvage of materials
- the siting of shelter belts to protect and mitigate against the effects of cold winds

Guidance

- careful consideration of site layout, building design and materials will help minimise fuel costs and reduce carbon emissions at source
- south-facing frontages with the longest face within 30 degrees of south – ideally facing south-east – can often be achieved, as many historic farmsteads tended to face south to maximise the sun
- potential of the site for micro-generation, combining available technologies sensitive to the landscape and identified heritage assets
- potential to deliver building-integrated and free-standing technologies – solar, wind and water power, use of biomass crops, geo-thermal sources and air-source heating and cooling

Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance

Guidance

Detailed understanding of the landscape, the farmstead and the buildings are essential to achieving successful design in the rural context. The importance of good design is underpinned in the principle aims of putting good design at the heart of planning. (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraphs 58-64). This has been reinforced in the historic environment by the work of English Heritage in their Buildings in Context toolkit. There is further detailed advice on the conversion and re-use of farm buildings in their publication, The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice.

The Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance can be read in conjunction with this guidance as it provides illustrated guidance on design and new build, based on the range of historic farmstead types, where it is considered appropriate and fitted to local plan policy. It seeks to provide advice, good practice and general guidance for development in the rural context. It has been designed to guide the applicant through a series of ideas and concepts which will help produce a scheme that conserves, enhances or better reveals the distinctive character and significance of a farmstead in its setting.

Contents of Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance

Introduction

1. Landscape Context
2. Site Appraisal of the Farmstead
3. The Farmstead Group – Access and Boundaries
4. Design Suggestions for Plan Types
5. Buildings – Working with Scale
6. Buildings – Large Traditional Buildings
7. Buildings – Openings and Proportions

Chapter 3: Summary Guidance on Farmstead Character and Significance in Tunbridge Wells Borough

3.1 The subject of this guidance is the traditional farmstead, its buildings and setting. A farmstead is the place where the farmhouse and the working buildings of a farm are located, although some farms also have field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. Traditional farmsteads and their buildings make a significant contribution to local character and distinctiveness. They do this through variations in their scale, layout, buildings and materials, and the way that buildings of different dates and types relate to yards, other spaces and the surrounding landscape and settlement. Their present character has been shaped by their development as centres for the production of food from the surrounding farmland, as well as a mix of local traditions and national influences.

3.2 Traditional farmsteads include:

- vernacular buildings which clearly belong to local building traditions, and were very rarely built after the 1880s
- designed buildings which display national influences in terms of their architectural style, including those designed by architects and engineers for estates and between the 1890s and 1930s for county councils
- buildings such as oast houses and covered yards which may be considered to be industrial in their scale, form and use of materials such as iron and machine-made brick, but which are locally distinctive

3.3 Excluded from this definition are prefabricated and standardised industrial buildings which are often added to traditional farmsteads but do not themselves display any local variation in their architectural character or distribution. They fall into two categories:

- pre-1950, including timber or metal-framed Dutch barns of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, silage towers, dairies with steel windows and roofs which conform to hygiene regulations and small-scale buildings for unloading goods by lorry (e.g. fruit and potato stores). Some fruit stores, usually sited close to railway stations, were built in this period
- post-1950 sheds which conform to modern animal welfare regulations

Historic Character

3.4 The Borough of Tunbridge Wells lies in the Weald of Kent, primarily in the High Weald National Character Area (NCA), with parts extending into the Low Weald to the north. In the south-east, a small part of the Romney Marsh NCA extends into the Borough, but only two farmsteads were recorded within this area from the 2nd Edition OS maps, so this area has little influence on the character of farmsteads in the Borough.

3.5 The importance of the quality of the landscape of the High Weald is recognised through its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB includes most of the area of the High Weald NCA.

3.6 The mapping of farmstead character across Kent and Sussex has allowed the farmsteads of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells to be put into context. This shows that the farmsteads of the High and Low Weald share many characteristics with farmsteads of the chalk of the North or South Downs or the North Kent Plain. This section describes the key characteristics of farmsteads within the Borough, making a distinction between the High Weald and Low Weald where necessary.

Historical development

3.7 Farmsteads reflect the development of agricultural regions and areas across England, which mixed or specialised to differing degrees in crop and animal husbandry, the production of finished goods such as cheese and investment in new techniques. Farm holdings have generally grown in size, but small farms developed and even increased in number in some areas.

3.8 Many of the historic farmsteads in the Weald originated as summer swine pastures associated with estates to the north and south of the Weald, as indicated by the suffix 'den' in their place names and which gradually developed into permanent settlements by the late Saxon period. Where woodland clearance was greatest, a more regular pattern of enclosure developed, as in the Low Weald. In areas that remained woodland or wood pasture into the 10th and 11th century, field enclosure was more irregular, creating the typical 'assart fields' – small with narrow wooded shaws as seen across much of the High Weald.

3.9 Farms were generally small, commonly being around 50 acres in size. Both the Low and High Weald were relatively free of feudal tenure, so most farmers were freeholders, holding their own land. The extent of arable fluctuated over the medieval period and was combined with the rearing and fattening of cattle as well as of pigs, but generally there was more arable in the Low Weald than in the High Weald. By the end of the 19th century most parishes in the Borough were predominantly permanent pasture.

3.10 In addition to farming, iron and cloth production developed as important industries. The iron industry provided, amongst other things, cannon for the Royal Navy, but factors such as Abraham Darby's development of using coke to heat the furnaces in Coalbrookdale led to the decline of the industry in the 17th century. Cloth making was especially important around the large villages, such as Cranbrook, and some cloth merchants appear to have also dealt in locally made cheese. Both the iron and cloth industries relied on woodland industries and the importance of woodland continued with the rise of the hop industry from the 16th century. Hop farming was a high risk enterprise requiring high levels of capital investment for the construction of oast houses, plus other expenses such as the need for hop poles and increased labour at harvest time. The industry expanded markedly in the later 19th century with the arrival of the railway at Paddock Wood, where warehousing for the storage of hops and fruit grown in the extensive orchards that were also planted in this period, were built. Some larger industrial type oasts were built in the early part of the 20th century as part of the contracts from the larger breweries.

Landscape and settlement

3.11 Historic farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of the rural landscape and how it has changed over centuries. They relate to different scales and patterns of fields, to boundaries, trees and woodland and sometimes to areas of surviving common land and industrial sites. Most parts of the country are characterised by a mix of settlement patterns, but a clear distinction can be drawn between those areas, mostly in central England, dominated by large nucleated villages with few isolated farmsteads, and those areas that have fewer and smaller villages and higher densities of isolated farmsteads and hamlets.

In Tunbridge Wells Borough

- the settlement pattern across the Borough is predominantly dispersed with high densities of isolated farmsteads, 74% of farmsteads being recorded as 'isolated'
- these farmsteads are mostly set within an anciently enclosed landscape of small fields that have their origins in the medieval period
- a small number of farmsteads associated with moated sites are scattered across the Borough

3.12 There are subtle differences between the farmsteads of the High and Low Weald, as described below (see Figure 1 on page 2):

High Weald

- within the High Weald, the pattern of anciently enclosed fields survives to a remarkable degree, often with large wooded hedges and shaws
- the few large rural settlements, for example Goudhurst and Cranbrook, are generally later developments within this pattern of dispersed settlement and served as market centres rather than as agricultural settlements
- there are many hamlets consisting of one or more farmsteads and cottages within the High Weald, except for in the area around Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Royal Tunbridge Wells, the major settlement of the Borough, was founded as a spa town in the early 17th century and grew substantially in the 18th century, attracting wealthy residents to the area, some

of whom created estates in the area around the town. Several farmsteads to the west and north of Royal Tunbridge Wells lie within parkland

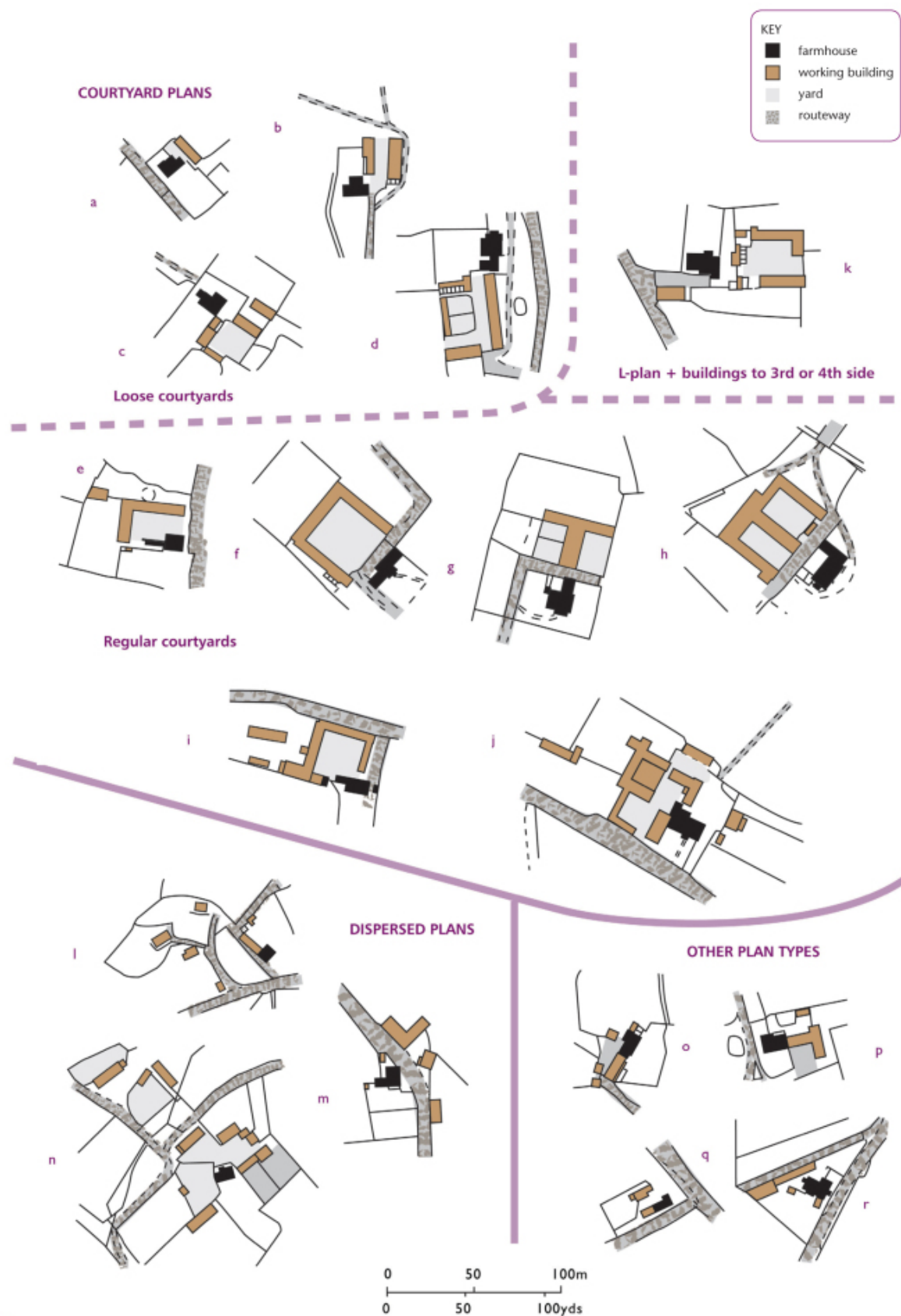
- during the 20th century, the influence of Tunbridge Wells extended out into its rural hinterland, resulting in a feeling of increased suburbanisation, including high levels of conversion of historic farm buildings

Low Weald

- the pattern of early enclosure has been subject to higher levels of change than in the High Weald, leading to the creation of larger fields and farms, although the early origins of the enclosures can still be discerned
- field boundaries tend to be smaller and less wooded than in the High Weald and there are fewer areas of woodland
- the town of Paddock Wood developed from a small settlement that grew up close to the railway station, which was important in serving the hop and fruit farms in the area

Farmstead and building types

3.13 The scale, plan form and date of farmsteads and their buildings reflects farm size and the type of farming practised within an area over time. The Weald in general is an area that is characterised by small-scale farmsteads, mainly of loose courtyard and dispersed plan types.



18

Figure 9 Plan Types

3.14 Courtyard plan farmsteads are the predominant plan type. They have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards. The farmhouse may face into the yard, be set gable end on to the yard or set to one side. They sub-divide into:

- a-d) Loose Courtyard farmsteads, which have buildings loosely arranged around one (a) or more (b – 2; c – 3; d – 4) sides of a yard. They typically developed in relationship to fields that reflect the gradual or piecemeal enclosure from medieval open fields, woodland, downland and heathland. Loose courtyard plans generally, and the smallest of these plans in particular, are highly characteristic of the Weald
- e-j) Regular Courtyard farmsteads, which consist of linked ranges, formally arranged around one or more yards. They are strongly associated with landscapes of reorganised or planned enclosure and sub-divide into:
 - L-plans (e)
 - U-plans (f)
 - F-, E-, T-, H- or Z-shaped plans (g and h)
 - full courtyard plans (i)
 - multi-yard plans (j) which are typically the largest in scale
- k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides, which are generally large to very large in scale. These are concentrated in the vales and the eastern chalk downs, with few recorded in Tunbridge Wells Borough

3.15 Dispersed plans often have no principal yard area, the working buildings and any yards being dispersed within the boundary of the steading. These are concentrated in landscapes of irregular and often small-scale fields, including those cleared from woodland and coastal marsh. These are a highly distinctive but vulnerable element of Kent's rural landscape and are strongly concentrated in the Weald. They sub-divide into:

- l) dispersed clusters, where the working buildings are dispersed within the boundary of the steading. This plan type is common across the whole of Kent, although they are concentrated in the Weald
- m) dispersed driftways, which are dominated by the routeways to and through them, and are concentrated around the droveways for moving livestock in the Weald. A high proportion of the recorded examples lie within the Borough
- n) dispersed multi-yards, which are large-scale farmsteads containing two or more detached yards, often with other scattered buildings. This plan type is also particularly characteristic of the Weald and the Borough

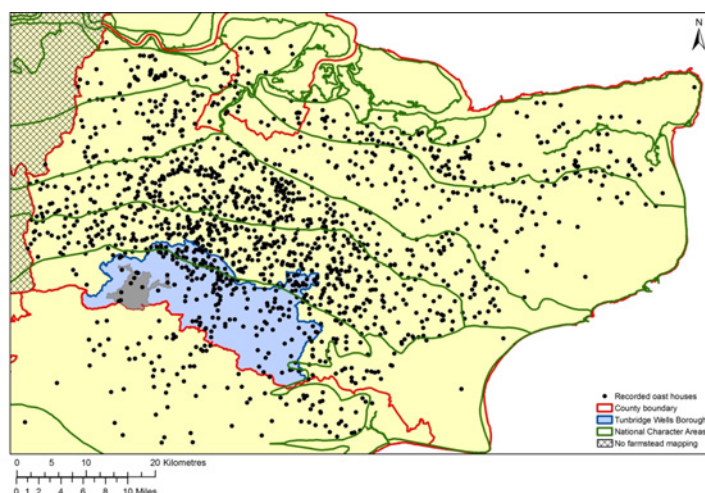
3.16 The other plan types are rare and comprise:

- o) **linear farmsteads**, where the houses and working buildings are attached and in-line, or have been extended or planned with additional working buildings to make an L-shaped range (p). They are concentrated on the small plots that developed within settlements and in areas of small fields, especially within, or on the edges of, the small fragments of remaining heathland. They are a common farmstead type in the north and west of England
- q) **parallel plans**, where the working buildings are placed opposite and parallel to the house and attached working buildings with a narrow area between. They have often developed from linear farmsteads
- r) **row plans**, often medium as well as small in scale, where the working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row

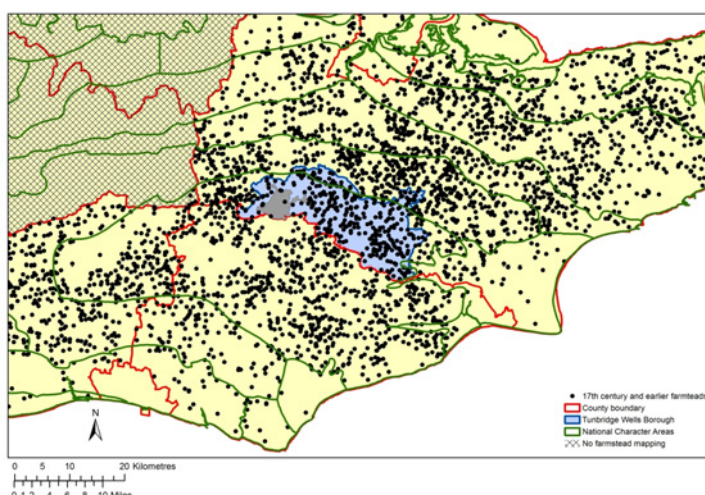
In Tunbridge Wells Borough

- small loose courtyard groups with buildings to one or two sides of the yard are common
- dispersed plans are an important element of farmstead character in the Weald, forming 45% of surviving farmsteads (county average 25%). These are mostly dispersed cluster and multi-yard plans, but 39% of the county total of dispersed driftway plans are within the Borough

- regular courtyard plans form around 18% of surviving farmsteads. Regular L-plans are the largest group and some of these may have developed from small loose courtyard plans
- regular multi-yard plans form 5.6% of surviving farmsteads
- The Weald has very high numbers of farmsteads which retain one or more buildings of 17th century or earlier buildings in a national context
- characteristic buildings include:
 - timber-framed threshing barns, typically of three and five bays
 - shelter sheds for cattle, often with a feeding passage along the rear wall
 - small stable buildings
 - oast houses and other buildings associated with the hop industry, including hop pickers' huts



Oast houses. Oast houses mostly identified from historic mapping. The distribution shows a clear distinction between the density of oasts between the Low and High Weald except on the northern edge of the High Weald and along the Teise valley.



C17 and earlier farmsteads. Farmsteads retaining one or more buildings of 17th century or earlier date. Kent in general, but the Weald in particular, has very high survival of such early farm buildings.

High Weald

- larger loose courtyard plans are concentrated in the west part of the character area around Royal Tunbridge Wells
- there is a low density of farmsteads in the area of Bedgebury Forest
- there is a small number of covered yard buildings in the High Weald representing the main concentration of this plan type in Kent
- there is a small number of full courtyard plans, several being in the area around Royal Tunbridge Wells
- barns in the High Weald often have evidence of sub-division, indicating that they were originally combination buildings providing housing for cattle
- oast houses are concentrated along the northern edge of the area and along the line of the Teise valley, with occasional oasts scattered across the south-eastern part of the Borough. There are few oasts west of Royal Tunbridge Wells
- outfarms and field barns, which have been subject to high rates of loss

Low Weald

- small loose courtyard plan types are concentrated in the area around Frittenden, but there are few in the Paddock Wood/Medway Valley area where farmsteads were slightly larger (loose courtyard three sides and courtyard plans with an L-range and third side)
- farmsteads in the Low Weald experienced greater levels of change in the mid to late 19th century, often in association with the growth of the hop industry. As a result, oast houses in the Low Weald can be of a larger, industrial scale, than is usual in the High Weald
- a high density of oast houses

Materials and detail

3.17 The varied combinations of building materials and constructional details are a major factor in defining local character and significance.

In Tunbridge Wells Borough

- timber-framing was used for farmhouses and most farm buildings until the 19th century. Framing was typically weatherboarded, which may be painted white on some buildings, including farm houses and oast houses. Earlier methods of infilling the framing includes vertical butt-edged boarding and wattle and daub
- brick widely used from the 18th century
- plain clay tile roofs, often hipped
- slate used on some mid to late 19th century farm buildings

High Weald

- sandstone used for plinth walls

Low Weald

- later 19th century rebuilding means that brick and plain clay tile or slate are the dominant building materials

Significance

3.18 Significance is a word used to summarise what is important about a building or place, whether it is designated as an historic asset or not. Change to a building or place can either enhance or diminish this significance. In the case of farmsteads, it can be considered at two levels:

1. Significance as a traditional farmstead, based on identifying its survival in its setting and its local context.
2. Special significance in a local or national context.

3.19 20th century (pre-1950) buildings can have significance if they have a strong traditional character, or if they are of an industrial character for their association with well-preserved traditional farmstead groups or for their special significance as set out below.

Significance as a traditional farmstead

1) Survival in its setting

3.20 Significant traditional farmsteads and their buildings contribute to local character and distinctiveness through their varied forms, use of materials and the way that they can be appreciated as part of their locality. A significant traditional farmstead can be seen and appreciated as having one or more of the following:

1. Legible farm buildings with a locally distinctive architectural form and character, and use of building materials.
2. Legible groups, where the historic farm buildings, houses and spaces relate to each other.
3. Legible settings, where legible farmsteads and buildings can be seen and appreciated as part of the landscapes and settlements within which they developed.

The greater the survival of the historic form and detail, the greater will be its significance as a traditional farmstead.

3.21 Once this basic level of significance has been identified, you can move on to identify and consider the historic character and significance of the farmstead in more detail, using this Summary Guidance. 20th century (pre-1950) buildings can have significance if they have a strong traditional character, or if they are of an industrial character for their association with well-preserved traditional farmstead groups or for their special significance in a national context.

2) Survival in a local context

3.22 The Weald, where most of the Borough's farmsteads are sited, has the highest levels of survival in Kent, within landscapes that have often retained patterns of fields and woodland inherited from the medieval period.

3.23 Change over the 20th century has resulted in strong local differences in the degrees of survival of traditional farmsteads. Traditional farmsteads with the least change to their overall form and fabric are the most likely to make a positive contribution to landscape character. Some areas are marked by high levels of survival, whereas in other areas traditional farmsteads with high levels of change will be relatively rare. The best-preserved groups have the greatest potential to have special significance as set out in 3.27 below.

3.24 The Kent Farmsteads and Landscapes Project has mapped the historic character of farmsteads from the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition maps of c.1890-1900, which marks the end of the period of traditional farmsteads development. Modern maps were then used to measure the degree of survival. The Project recorded a total of 700 farmsteads and 86 outfarms or field barns within the Borough. Despite high levels of conversion of individual buildings to domestic use, a high proportion (84.2%) have survived with some farmstead character to the present day, against an average for Kent of 46.9%.

3.25 Of those farmsteads recorded from the historic OS mapping of around 1897-8:

- 15.7% of farmsteads have experienced minimal change since the late 19th century (county average 10.4%)
- 46.1% (36.4% in Kent) have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic plan form

- 22.1% (25.2% in Kent) have experienced significant change and retain less than 50% of their historic plan form
- 10.1% (15.6% in Kent) have lost all their working farm buildings, retaining only the farmhouse
- 5.1% (12.3% in Kent) have been completely lost or redeveloped
- Outfarms and field barns have been subject to high rates of change – 74% of sites being lost from the landscape

3.26 Those in the top two categories of survival have the greatest potential to be the most locally significant.

Special local and national significance

3.27 Some buildings or farmsteads have the potential for special significance when compared to farmsteads and their landscapes in other parts of England. This may be more difficult to determine and require specialist advice, but it will always be useful in deepening an understanding of the most significant sites and the development of schemes for them. The absence of statutory designation does not imply lack of special significance in this respect.

Landscape and settlement setting

- the Borough stands out in a national context for its very high densities of historic farmsteads dating from the medieval period and which were established with a landscape largely cleared from the woodland by the late Saxon period
- small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings that are sited around areas of heath and other types of common land
- farmsteads within, or adjacent to, medieval moated sites or the archaeological remains of shrunken or deserted settlements
- farmsteads that were associated with the iron industry, especially where there are surviving earthworks
- farmsteads that have a clear visual and/or historic relationship to historic parks and gardens

Farmstead groups

- 6.5% of recorded farmsteads retain a farmhouse and one or more working buildings of 17th century date or earlier. These groups are highly significant and rare in a national context
- dispersed plan types are an important element in farmstead character in the Borough, representing 43% of surviving farmsteads. Sites with little change are particularly significant
- small loose courtyard plan farmsteads with buildings to one or two sides of the yard form 25.3% of surviving farmsteads
- planned farmstead groups designed in a coherent architectural style
- farmstead groups that retain a range of buildings associated with the development of the hop industry
- surviving outfarms and field barns represent a small proportion of those existing at the end of the 19th century – only 22% survive with less than 50% loss of historic form

Farmstead buildings

- many barns, dating from the 17th century or earlier, especially the highly rare examples of the pre-1550 period. Some retain evidence for internal sub-division to provide animal housing and other purposes, such as granaries
- 18th century and earlier working farm buildings other than barns are exceptionally rare
- specialist crop processing buildings such as unconverted oasts retaining internal fittings
- buildings such as barns that contain evidence for being converted to provide early kilns before the widespread introduction of purpose-built oast houses

- buildings associated with the hop industry, such as hop pickers' huts, which may date from the 1900-1940 period and be located on the edge of a farmstead or sited near the hop fields
- pre-1880s buildings and pre-1920s silage towers, using concrete (unrecorded in this area)

Materials, fixtures and fittings

- pre-18th century brick walling
- hand made plain clay tile roofs
- thatch roofs on farm buildings are extremely rare
- there are some very rare surviving examples of pre-19th century butted boarding to the walls of barns. These are generally found on former external walls where renewal of the weatherboarding has not affected the older infill
- evidence for wattle and daub infill panels to barns
- stalls and other interior features (e.g. mangers, hay racks) in stables and cattle housing of proven 19th century or earlier date are very rare

Chapter 4: Sources of Information and Advice

Further information and advice about historic farm buildings and their settings can be found at <http://www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings>, while readers interested in broader aspects of the historic rural environment are recommended to visit <http://www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment>.

Natural England (previously Defra RDS)

Agri-environment funding via the Environmental Stewardship scheme has considerable potential value for traditional farm buildings, on two levels:

- the Entry Level Scheme (ELS) can provide small but regular payments for the maintenance of historic farm buildings
- the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) can provide larger payments for repair projects

Applicants for HLS grants have access to a general guide to the repair of historic buildings. It explains which types of buildings and what restoration works are in principle eligible for grant aid. Successful entry to the HLS scheme may then allow grant aid to be offered for repairs that return an eligible building to sound condition (termed 'restoration' within the scheme). Contact Natural England for further advice and eligibility on the Environment Stewardship schemes (<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>).

English Heritage grants

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

Other sources of information

The Kent Historic Environment Record holds information on historic buildings, sites and areas. It is accessed through the KCC Heritage Conservation team (there may be a charge for this service). Contact the Kent Historic Environment Record, Kent County Council, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 1XX. Tel: 01622 221541.

The Kent Landscape Information System provides detailed information, including maps, on the county's landscape and biodiversity. See www.kent.gov.uk/klis. For further information see Sources and chapters 7.3 and 8.1.8 of the Kent Downs Farm Diversification Toolkit (<http://www.kentdowns.org.uk>).

Wildlife

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

Barn Owl Trust 1995. Barn Owls on Site: A Guide for Developers and Planners. Ashburton: Barn Owl Preservation Trust

Bat Conservation Trust (<http://www.bats.org.uk>)

Mitchell-Jones, A J 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. Peterborough: English Nature

See also: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/wildlifegarden/> for guidance on attracting wildlife to gardens

English Heritage guidance

Research at a national level by English Heritage (<http://www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings>) has examined the drivers for change and the effectiveness of policy at national and international levels. This has emphasised the need to develop an evidence base, and for future strategies and approaches towards the re-use of historic farmsteads and their buildings to be based upon an understanding of their sensitivity to, and potential for, change.

Most of the publications listed below can be downloaded from the HELM website, English Heritage's online resource for owners, planners and everyone else involved with caring for the historic environment at a local level. See <http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance>.

Clark, K 2001. Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation

Clark, J, Darlington, J, and Fairclough, G 2004. Using Historic Landscape Characterisation

EH 2004. Farming the Historic Landscape: Caring for Farm Buildings

EH 2004. Farming the Historic Landscape: An Introduction for Farm Advisers

EH 2005. Outstanding Beauty: Outstanding Heritage: AONBs and the Historic Environment

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

EH 2006. Identifying and Sourcing Stone for Historic Building Repair

EH 2006. Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice

EH 2008. Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment

EH 2009. Farm Buildings and Change on the Bolton Abbey Estate, North Yorkshire

EH 2009. Historic Farm Buildings: Extending the Evidence Base

EH 2011. The Setting of Historic Assets

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

EH/Countryside Agency 2005. Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Traditional Farm Buildings.

EH/Countryside Agency 2006. Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character

Statement (a series of eight regional documents)

Gaskell, P and Owen, S 2005. Historic Farm Buildings: Constructing the Evidence Base (EH/Countryside Agency/University of Gloucester)

History of farm buildings and settlement

Barnwell, P S and Giles C 1997. English Farmsteads 1750–1914 Swindon: RCHME

Brigden, R 1986. Victorian Farms Ramsbury: Crowood Press

Brunskill, R W 2000. Vernacular Architecture: An Illustrated Handbook. London: Faber & Faber

Brunskill, R W 1982. Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain. London: Gollancz

Brunskill, R W 1999. Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain and their Conservation (3rd edn). London: Gollancz

Darley, G 1981. The National Trust Book of the Farm. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson

Harris, R 1978. Discovering Timber-framed Buildings. Aylesbury: Shire Publications

Harvey, N 1980. The Industrial Archaeology of Farming in England and Wales. London: Batsford

Harvey, N 1984. A History of Farm Buildings in England and Wales (2nd edn). Newton Abbot: David and Charles

Lake, J 1989. Historic Farm Buildings, An Introduction and Guide. London: Blandford Press

Lake, J and Edwards, B 2006. 'Farmsteads and landscape: towards an integrated view', Landscapes, 7.1, 1–36

Lake, J and Edwards, B 2007. 'Buildings and place: farmsteads and the mapping of change', Vernacular Architecture, 37, 33–49.

Peters, J E C 1981. Discovering Traditional Farm Buildings. Aylesbury: Shire Publications

Roberts, B K and Wrathmell S 2002. Region and Place: A Study of English Rural Settlement. London: English Heritage

Taylor, C 1983. Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England. London: George Philip

Wade Martins, S 1991. Historic Farm Buildings. London: Batsford

Wade Martins, S 2002. The English Model Farm. Macclesfield: Windgather Press Wade Martins, S 2004.

Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes: Rural Britain 1720–1870. Macclesfield: Windgather Press

Farmsteads and Landscapes in Kent

Babtie Group and Kent County Council 2004. Landscape Assessment of Kent, Kent County Council, Maidstone

Brandon, P 2003 The Kent and Sussex Weald, Phillimore: Chichester

Croft, A, Munby J, & Ridley, M 2001. Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation, Final Report 3 vols. Kent County Council and English Heritage

Edwards, B, Lake, J and Banister, N 2012. Farmsteads and Landscapes in Kent: A Report on the Mapping of Traditional Farmstead Character and Survival. Report for English Heritage

- the evidence base for this guidance, which contains a full reading list

Lawson, T. & Killngray, D. eds 2004. An Historical Atlas of Kent , Phillimore: Chichester

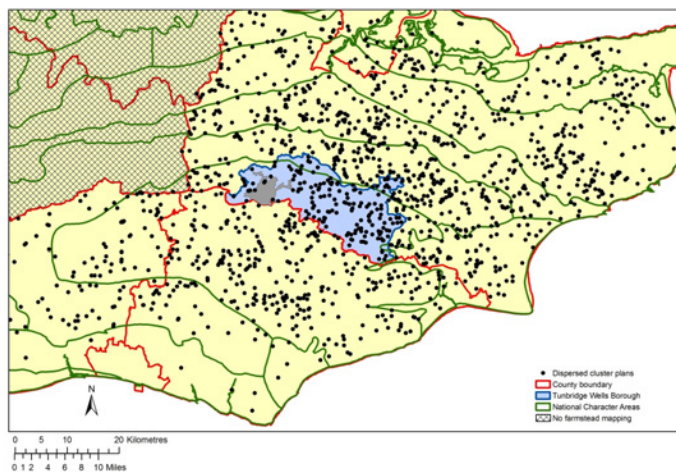
Martin, D. & Martin, B. 2006. Farm Buildings of the Weald, 1450-1750, Heritage Publications: Kings Lynn

Pearson, S. 1994. Medieval Houses of Kent. An Historical Analysis, RCHME: London

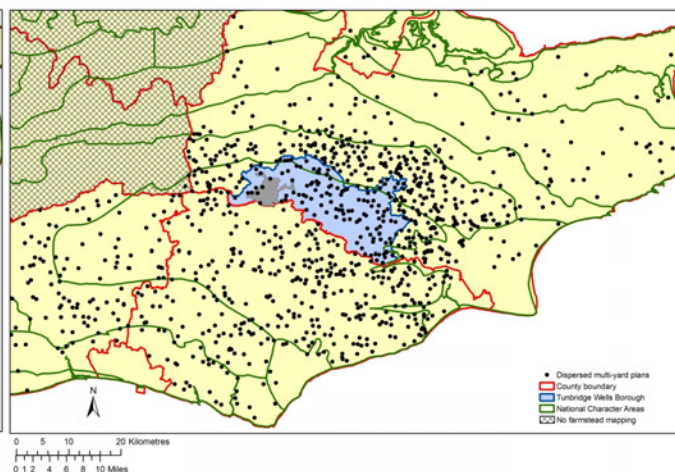
Rigold, S. 1966. 'Some Major Kentish Barns', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 81, 1-30

A survey of a selected number of Kent farmsteads was undertaken in 1994-5 by Jo Cox and John Thorpe of Keystone Consultancy. The records have been deposited with English Heritage's National Monuments Record and Kent's Historic Environment Record

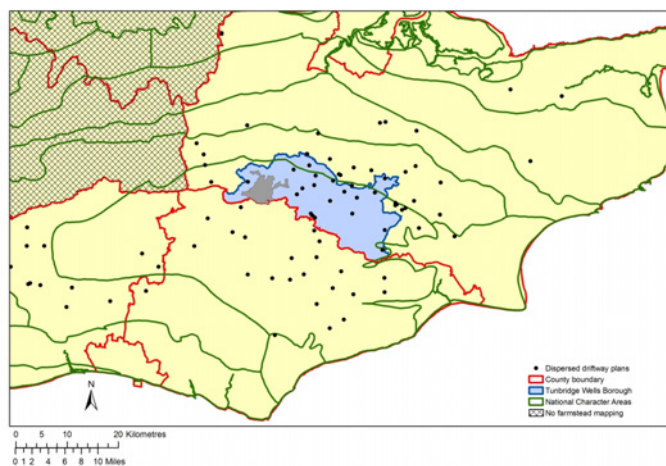
Appendix 1: Maps and Photos



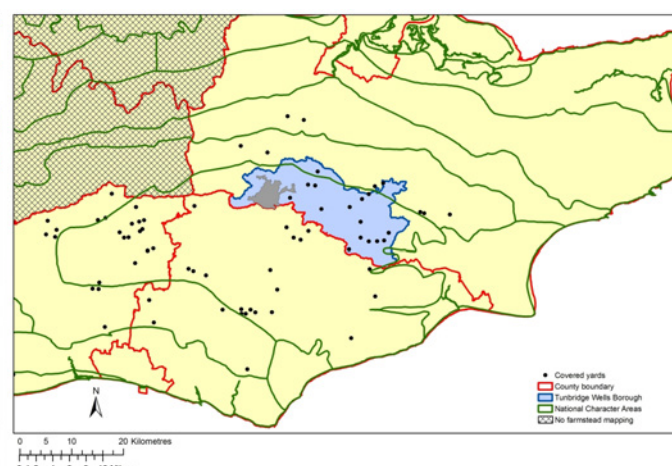
Dispersed cluster plans



Dispersed multi yards



Dispersed driftway plans



Covered yards. Farmsteads with covered yards are rare in Kent with most examples associated with estates in the Weald

Farmstead mapping has revealed the importance of dispersed plan type farmsteads with the Wealden landscapes, particularly the dispersed multi-yard and dispersed driftway plans. © Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100024298



A rare example of an oast house within a 17th century timber-framed barn converted to serve as an oast in the 18th century.



A rare example of an unconverted oast house still being used to process hops.

Some of the largest, industrial scale oast houses, were to be found in the Low Weald



The large number of workers required for hop picking and also fruit picking were housed in 'pickers' huts', ranges of small rooms with a communal kitchen. These were usually located near the hop fields but occasionally on the edge of the farmstead.



20th century hop processing buildings may be of some significance where they are associated with a range of traditional hop industry buildings.



A loose courtyard group with a four bay barn aisled to the rear and with a half hipped roof. The medieval farmhouse stands across the yard from the barn.



Barns of three bays are typical of the Weald. This example dates from the 16th century.



In the 19th century cattle were typically housed in open-fronted shelter sheds which could be attached to the barn or freestanding, often facing into a yard. Open fronted sheds were also used to house tethered cattle.



This large open-fronted cattle shed was built in the Low Weald part of the Borough on a farmstead owned by an estate which was prepared to invest in new buildings in the late 19th century.



Stables are generally small buildings in the Weald. This single storey timber-framed example has a characteristic hipped roof.



A brick-built stable with a granary above. Granaries in the Weald are typically found above stables or cart sheds or formed part of the barn. Free-standing granaries are rare.



This High Weald farmstead group uses characteristic building materials; timber framing with infill panels to the house and weatherboarding to the barn and plain clay tile to the gabled and half-hipped roofs.



Sandstone, often dressed into ashlar blocks, was sometimes used to form plinth walls to barns and oast houses and for smaller buildings. Examples of ashlar sandstone are important survivals.



Thatch was once common in the Weald but is now rare.



This area of lath and plaster within a threshing barn is evidence for its historic conversion to serve as an oast house. Such evidence for the use of barns for processing hops, probably before the construction of a purpose-built oast house on this farmstead, is rare and significant.



Void mortices in the timber-framing of barns often indicate re-used timbers but may be evidence for original floored bays or vertical partitions indicating a multi-functional building.



A timber floor within the threshing bay of a barn. Timber or beaten earth prevented the grain from being bruised during threshing. Timber threshing floors have often been replaced by concrete.



Few unconverted oasts survive with features such as this slatted drying floor above the kiln intact.

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