

# KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

## PART 1

## FARMSTEADS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK



High Weald



Kent Downs

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The Kent Farmstead Guidance is the result of collaboration between English Heritage, Kent County Council and the Kent Downs AONB. It also builds on pilot work developed by English Heritage and the High Weald AONB. It has been revised further following consultation with key stakeholders in Kent. The revision has also integrated the result of the Kent Farmsteads and Landscapes Project, which represents the completion of rapid mapping of farmsteads supported firstly by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee and then by English Heritage. The text was prepared by Jeremy Lake of English Heritage, with contributions from Bob Edwards and James Webb of Forum Heritage Services (substantially to Parts 5 and 6), & publication layout by Diva Arts.

**NOTE. THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS AND CAN BE EXPLAINED IN A RANGE OF LANGUAGES. PLEASE CALL KENT COUNTY COUNCIL'S REGENERATION & ECONOMY'S PROJECT SUPPORT TEAM ON 01622 221866 FOR DETAILS.**

## KEY PRINCIPLES

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The key principles of the approach in this guidance are based on understanding:

1. The character of farmsteads, 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. A simple distinction can be made between traditional farmsteads and their buildings which make a significant contribution to local character and distinctiveness and those 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.
2. Their significance, a factor that can be of critical importance in determining planning applications. Significant traditional farmsteads will make a fundamental contribution to local distinctiveness and a sense of place, through their varied forms, use of materials and the way that they relate to the surrounding landscape and settlement. Some sites or buildings will have special significance in a local or national context, which may require specialist help and will be useful in developing a scheme. This significance can be retained and enhanced through sympathetic change and development of the site in relationship to its setting. The absence of statutory designation does not imply lack of significance, as the great majority of farmstead buildings which contribute to landscape character will not fulfil the criteria for designation.
3. Their sensitivity to the different options for change (see table on next page), key factors being:
  - The type and density of settlement in the area, the amount of land cover provided by trees, hedgerows and woodland, and the provision of vehicular rights of way.
  - How buildings are arranged in relationship to each other and the areas of public and private space around them.
  - The scale and layout of individual buildings, the degree of natural light provided to them and any significant interior fabric or fittings.
  - Their structural condition and the robustness or fragility of the materials from which they are constructed.
  - Habitats for wildlife.

## OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

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 may require planning approval as will most proposals for farm diversification, depending on their impact on the site.

Option	Key Issues to Consider
<p><b>Maintain</b> – through investment and the use of traditional or non-traditional materials</p> <p><b>Conservation repair</b> – as features in the landscape or as significant historic buildings, with minimal or no alteration</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>See page 24 for guidance on grants and maintenance.</p> <p>The key issues to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost of continued maintenance and repair, particularly for farm businesses, sometimes linked to the need for minor adaptation.</li> <li>• The type of repair and its impact on the durability and integrity of historic fabric.</li> <li>• The sources and supply of traditional building materials onto the market.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adapt</b> – to new agricultural or non-agricultural uses as the best way of securing a future for the building</p> <p><b>New build</b> – 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 reuse (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"> <li>• Growth in traffic and effects on neighbours</li> <li>• Views into the site</li> <li>• Setting, boundaries and curtilage, through improvement of access, provision of car parking and gardens, development of prominent viewpoints and elevations</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• The loss of historic fabric or creation of new built elements</li> <li>• The displacement of uses to other buildings or parts of the site.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collapse and loss</b> – 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of any loss, particularly cumulative loss, on the character of the landscape and how it is appreciated.</li> <li>• The historic and architectural significance of the individual site or building.</li> </ul>

## USING THE KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

The Kent Farmsteads Guidance aims to inform and achieve the sustainable development of farmsteads, including their conservation and enhancement. It will help applicants, including agents and architects, and local authorities understand whole farmsteads in their landscape context, complementing the detailed guidance on the adaptation or conversion of individual buildings which have become redundant as a result of changing agricultural practice<sup>1</sup>. It uses the results of national research by English Heritage and also the mapping of the historic character and survival of farmsteads in Kent's landscape by English Heritage and the High Weald AONB Unit.

The guidance can also be used by those with an interest in the history and character of the county's landscape and historic buildings, and the character of individual places.

### PART 1 THE FARMSTEADS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This is divided into two parts as set out below.

#### THE SITE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This has three stages which will help applicants identify the capacity for change, and other issues that can inform the earliest critical stage in the planning process and be taken forward when preparing a scheme.

#### THE FARMSTEADS SUMMARY GUIDANCE

This provides a summary for applicants and local authorities across Kent, of:

- The historic character of farmsteads, focusing on how to identify traditional farmsteads and their buildings, their landscape and settlement context and their function and layout.
- Their level of significance, from their contribution to local character to their special significance, which is important in determining planning applications.
- Their capacity for change at an area and site scale, based on their sensitivity to the different options for change.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS IN THE KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

#### PART 2 (PLANNING CONTEXT)

This sets out the national and local policy context for applicants and local authorities. It also summarises recent research on farmsteads including for each of Kent's districts.

#### PART 3 (KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT)

This fully-illustrated guidance will help users understand the character and significance of Kent farmsteads, presented under the headings of: Historical Development, Landscape and Settlement, Farmstead and Building Types and Materials and Detail.

#### PART 4 (CHARACTER AREA STATEMENTS)

These provide summaries, under the same headings, for the North Kent Plain and Thames Estuary, North Kent Downs, Wealden Greensand, Low Weald, High Weald and Romney Marsh.

#### PART 5 (KENT FARMSTEADS DESIGN GUIDANCE)

This will help applicants, including architects, who are considering how to achieve successful design, including new-build where it is considered appropriate and fitted to local plan policy.

#### PART 6 (GUIDANCE ON RECORDING AND RESEARCH)

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

#### PART 7 (GLOSSARY)

This is a glossary of terms to aid all users.

<sup>1</sup> English Heritage's publication, *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*, 2006, contains detailed advice with examples [\[2\]](#).

## SECTION 1 THE SITE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

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### USING THE SITE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Use this framework to understand the whole site in its setting, and to scope and prepare an application for new development, change of use or listed building consent, and if necessary a Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Statement.

### USE THE 3 KEY STAGES OF THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

# 1

#### SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

- A. Identify the site, access and services, and any designations including its wildlife (habitat and species) interest.
- B. Identify the historic character of the whole farmstead and its landscape setting, and how it has changed.
- C. Identify its level of significance, which is important in the planning process whether it is designated or not.

# 2

#### CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

This understanding will then help you identify any issues at the earliest critical stage in the planning process. Its sensitivity to differing proposals will determine what capacity there is for change and indicate the nature of change that will be most acceptable.

# 3

#### PREPARING A SCHEME

In preparing a scheme consider the likely impact on spaces, routeways, and relationships between buildings and the landscape that are key to the conservation/enhancement of character. Understand how elements of change e.g. parking, gardens, boundary treatments, affect character and consider opportunities for enhancement of features and views.





## ADVANTAGES OF USING THE FRAMEWORK

There are clear advantages for applicants and their agents in using the Assessment Framework. It is important that all development proposals clearly set out how they comply with national and local planning policy. Applicants are advised to consult with their Local Planning Authority and seek professional support and advice at an early stage in the formulation of proposals for the development of a farmstead.

### APPRAISING A SITE AT THE PRE-APPLICATION STAGE

This will help the applicant and local authority to:

- **Understand the character of the farmstead and its setting**, which results from its historic development and function.
- **Identify and assess its significance**, which is necessary for assessing and determining planning applications. Significance can be retained and enhanced through sympathetic change and development of the site in relationship to its setting.
- **Understand the likely sensitivity to the changes being considered**, and other issues that can inform pre-application discussion and be taken forward when preparing a scheme.

Early appraisal is key to identifying constraints and where there may be opportunities for future change which conserve, enhance or better reveal the distinctive character and significance of a farmstead in its setting. Initial discussions with the relevant local authority will indicate if planning permission and or other consents, such as listed building consent, will be required.

### PREPARING AN APPLICATION

Most schemes for conversion and any new development (buildings, gardens, access and parking) are likely to have an impact on the farmstead as a whole and its landscape setting, which need to be considered and positively addressed throughout the planning and design process. The results of an early appraisal will help:

- **Save time and costs** in preparing an application for new development, change of use or listed building consent, and where necessary an accompanying Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement. An application will have a much greater chance of success if obvious constraints, the capacity for change and other key issues are identified and considered at the pre-application stage, and if an applicant's case is well prepared and justified.
- **Inform discussions and negotiations** with other parties that may be affected by the proposals.
- **Identify the need for professional support and advice** including further survey.

### DEVELOPING A SCHEME

The scheme can then use this understanding of the landscape, the farmstead and the buildings to achieve high quality design in the rural context, based on:

- **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**, including boundaries and its potential for wildlife connected to its surrounding area.
- **The whole site**, including its overall form and scale, any designations and 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, including the siting and design of any new buildings.

**STAGE 1 PREPARE A SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

The aim of this stage is to present a basic understanding of the character and significance of the whole site, which can then be used and deepened as required later in the planning process. The examples on pages 11–13 show how it can be rapidly completed without specialist knowledge as short text accompanied by an outline plan, which can identify any sub-areas and be cross-referred to photographs.

**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 (see checklist box on page 7).

**B Identify the historic character**

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 8) 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.
- 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.

**4 Scale, architectural treatment and use of materials.**

- 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 subdivision 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.

**C Identify significance**

There are two levels of significance, the first being most important at this stage:

**1 Significance as a traditional farmstead.**

Whether these have been designated as heritage assets or not, they will have retained one or both of the following:

- Farm buildings with a locally distinctive architectural form and character, and use of building materials.* Traditional buildings date from the 19th century or earlier, and very few traditional buildings date from after 1900 (in most areas around 1880). Early 20th century (pre-1940) buildings can have significance if they have a strong architectural character (as traditional, designed or industrial buildings) or for their special significance.
- Their historic form as traditional farmsteads, where the historic farm buildings, houses and spaces relate to each other.* This has been mapped across the county.

**2 Special significance.** Special significance in a local or national context, which is not vital at this stage but will be useful in developing a scheme.

Further guidance on significance can be found in the Summary Guidance (see pages 18–19).



## DESIGNATION CHECK LIST

### 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 because of its heritage interest'. Individual buildings and sites have different levels of significance, of importance in determining an application.

- Designated heritage assets comprise World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings (Grades I, II\*, II), Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.
- Undesignated heritage assets of archaeological interest and of national significance, which are also treated as designated assets.
- Undesignated heritage assets of local significance, which can be identified on 'Local Heritage Lists' that are often supported by local planning policy. The effect of an application on the significance of a local heritage asset is a material consideration in determining an application.

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/>.

Listed farmhouses and working buildings in Kent include a high proportion, by national standards, of pre-1550 buildings. Kent was last subject to systematic resurvey in the late 1970s, prior to the national resurvey of rural areas in the 1980s and the greater knowledge of rural buildings that has since developed. As a result, there is a large number of unlisted buildings of 18th century or earlier date which may fulfil national listing criteria and are subject to spot-listing applications.

Almost 50% of farmsteads in Kent – a high proportion by national standards – include at least one listed building, most of these (40% of all recorded farmsteads) being farmhouses and most of the working buildings being barns. Only 2% of farmsteads have listed working farm buildings but no listed farmhouse. Less than 1% of outfarms include a listed building.

### Wildlife and habitats

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

#### *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), designated for their special qualities or character, which cover 32% of the area of Kent. These comprise the Kent Downs AONB, which extends into the London Borough of Bromley <http://www.kentdowns.org.uk> and the High Weald AONB, which is mostly in East Sussex <http://www.highweald.org>.

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.

#### *Further information*

For further information see Sources and chapters 7.3 and 8.1.8 of the Kent Downs Farm Diversification Toolkit at <http://www.kentdowns.org.uk>.

A full assessment methodology covering all these designations and suggesting action and mitigation is available in the Kent Downs Farm Diversification Toolkit at <http://www.kentdowns.org.uk>.

**USING HISTORIC MAPS, THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD AND OTHER SOURCES**

Shown below is an extract from the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition maps of around 1900. These provide a useful baseline for measuring subsequent change, because they were compiled after the last major phase in the development of traditional farmsteads. This understanding can then be deepened by using earlier and more recent maps. Most local libraries hold historic Ordnance Survey maps, and county record offices hold these and 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. Some counties have made these available on-line. Historic Ordnance Survey maps can also be viewed at:

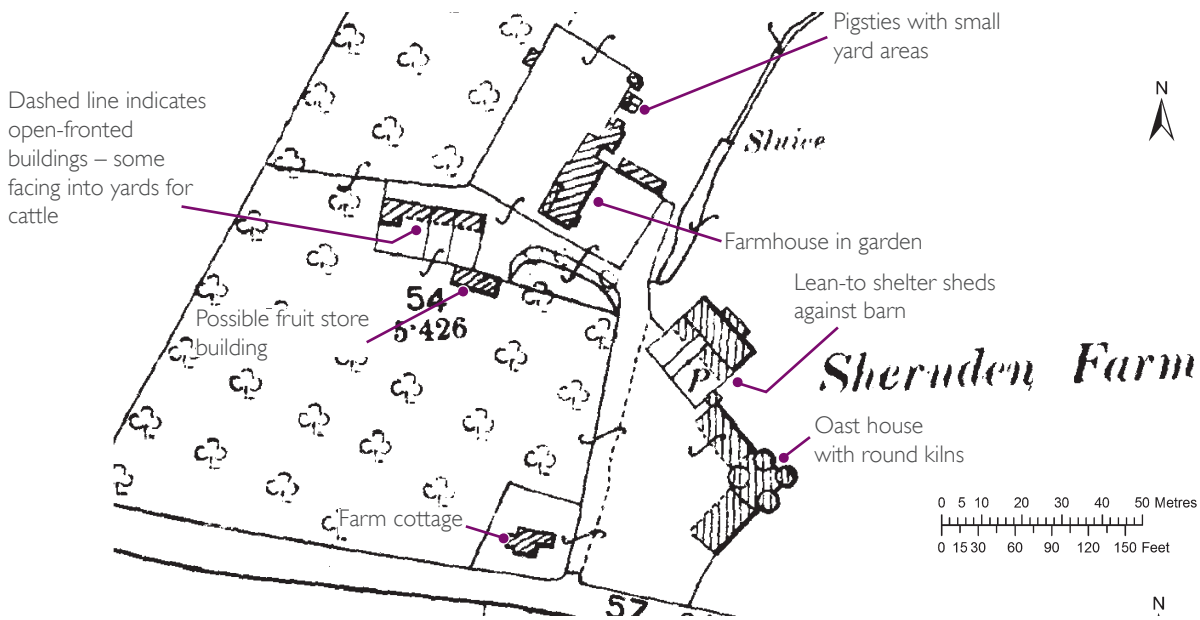
- [www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)
- [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/products/historical-map-data](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/products/historical-map-data)
- [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/ordnance-survey](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/ordnance-survey)

Websites such as Google Earth or Local Live are regularly used to provide an overview of a site and its immediate area.

The Kent Historic Environment Record <http://www.kent.gov.uk/HER> 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 <http://www.kent.gov.uk/kllis>

The Centre for Kentish Studies is the Headquarters for the Kent Archives Service. It holds manuscript and printed records for the county of Kent including tithe and estate maps. See <http://www.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/> for the 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey maps. For Kent Archives see [http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/archives\\_and\\_local\\_history.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/archives_and_local_history.aspx)



Map based on OS 2nd edition 25" map © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (all rights reserved) Licence number 5000394 and TP00024 2011

## STAGE 2 CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

The Site Assessment Summary provides the basis to consider the capacity for change and other issues at the pre-application stage and before presenting a scheme.

### Capacity for change

Farmsteads and their settings have different sensitivities to the options for change, in particular adaptive reuse and new build, and how they impact upon:

- Neighbours affected by any increase in traffic and other activities.
- The whole site and its setting, through improvement and provision of access, parking areas, gardens and new buildings.
- Historic buildings, due to the demand for more natural light (new openings) and the sub-division or amalgamation of spaces.
- Building materials and fabric, depending on the robustness or fragility of the materials from which they are constructed.
- Other parts of the site through displacement of uses.

### Planning policy

- Local plans developed by local authorities generally support the re-use of significant historic buildings, and include specific requirements and planning considerations, particularly in relation to residential additions, alterations and extensions, and issues such as over-looking, noise, loss of light and taking account of biodiversity.
- It may also be necessary to look at any relevant Neighbourhood Plans and other community plans such as Village Design Statement or Parish Plans.

### Heritage consent and potential

- The effect of an application on the significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, is a material consideration in determining the application.
- Any pre-1948 working building or structures in the curtilage (the legal property boundary) of a listed building are considered to be listed and therefore covered by listed building legislation and consent requirements. Scheduled Monument Consent must be sought from English Heritage for any works affecting a Scheduled Monument.
- The pre-application stage may also highlight the need for further information through recording and in some cases a field evaluation of the archaeology of the site and its surroundings. For further details go to PART 6: GUIDANCE ON RECORDING AND RESEARCH.

### Wildlife and habitat potential

- 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.
- Expert advice can be required to ascertain whether a protected species is present within or adjacent to a farmstead site.
- 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 the nature conservation interest of the site and its setting.
- Local planning authority permission is required before removing hedges that are at least 20 metres (66 feet) in length and more than 30 years old.

### Potential for and impact of low-carbon development

This is an essential consideration for all planning applications and includes:

- The pattern and density of settlement.
- 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 building-integrated and free-standing technologies - ground-source or air-source heating, geo-thermal sources, solar and wind power.
- Potential for used (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 issues

- Local employment pressures and opportunities (e.g. trends, nearby markets/employment centres, types of employment, skills).
- Market and rental values for various uses.
- Communications, including access to and bandwidth of broadband.

### STAGE 3 CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING A SCHEME

#### Landscape setting

- Ensure safe access with clear sightlines. Intensification of an access or creation of a new access will require approval from the Highway Authority (as well as the local planning authority).
- Enhance significant views to and from the site, through considering the impact of any gardens, boundaries, access and parking.
- Ensure that the choice of planting and landscaping (trees, hedges, the restoration of ponds etc) fits with the local setting and enhances habitat for wildlife.

#### The farmstead

- Retain and enhance the visibility and character of spaces around and within the farmstead, this including the sense of space between buildings, and between working buildings and the farmhouse.
- Reinststate 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 (see below).

#### The buildings

- Minimise alterations to prominent and significant external elevations, through careful attention to internal planning and how and where to introduce or borrow light. The size and detail of window design and materials has a major impact on overall appearance.
- Select paint colours that complement and do not conflict with the patina of walling and roofing, considering local estate colours where relevant.
- Repair historic fabric with suitable materials and techniques.
- 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.

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

#### New buildings and design

Different opportunities or constraints may be offered by the plan form and the level of change. New 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 will need to be informed by a detailed understanding of the landscape, the farmstead and its buildings.

#### Consider

- 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.
- Use an understanding of the plan form of the farmstead, and how it has changed, to inform the siting of new buildings that are sensitive to and enhance the historic character of the site.
- The use of materials of appropriate quality which is essential in ensuring a successful scheme.
- Minimising fuel costs and reduce carbon emissions at source through careful consideration of site layout, building design and materials. 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.

#### *Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance*

The Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance is intended to help applicants who are considering how to achieve successful design when preparing a scheme, including new-build 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 which conserves, enhances or better reveals the distinctive character and significance of a farmstead in its setting.

#### 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

## EXAMPLES OF SITE ASSESSMENT SUMMARIES

A plan can identify any distinct areas into which the farmstead can be subdivided, and be cross-referred to photographs and a list of the buildings on site. This will help keep the text short and focused. The report and plan can then be used and deepened as required later in the planning process.

### EXAMPLE 1: A SMALL-SCALE COURTYARD FARMSTEAD

#### Summary

This is a loose courtyard farmstead with at its core a group of buildings set around a yard, which was extended with a new shed and separate access to the north in the late 20th century.

#### Site and management issues

##### 1. Historic character

#### Setting

The hedgerows to the site boundary link to similar hedgerows and blocks of woodland in the surrounding landscape.

- 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 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 traditional barn, stable and shelter shed are typical for the area.

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.
2. The historic farmyard and buildings. This survives as a loose courtyard plan with traditional buildings to the north and east of the yard built of brick with slate roofs. To the west is a mid-20th century cow house built in industrial brick with a corrugated iron roof, on the footprint of an earlier building.
3. 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. To its north is a modern working area, with industrial sheds and separate access from the A road to the north.

#### Significance

The core historic farmyard (Area 2) retains the overall form of a traditional courtyard farmstead, and the farmstead clearly forms part of the enclosed landscape within which it developed.





**EXAMPLE 2: 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.

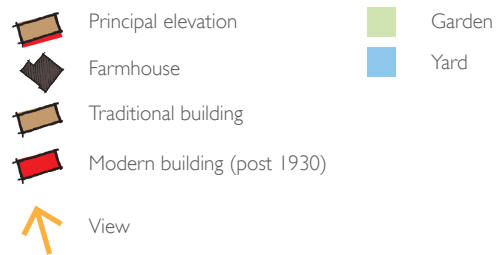
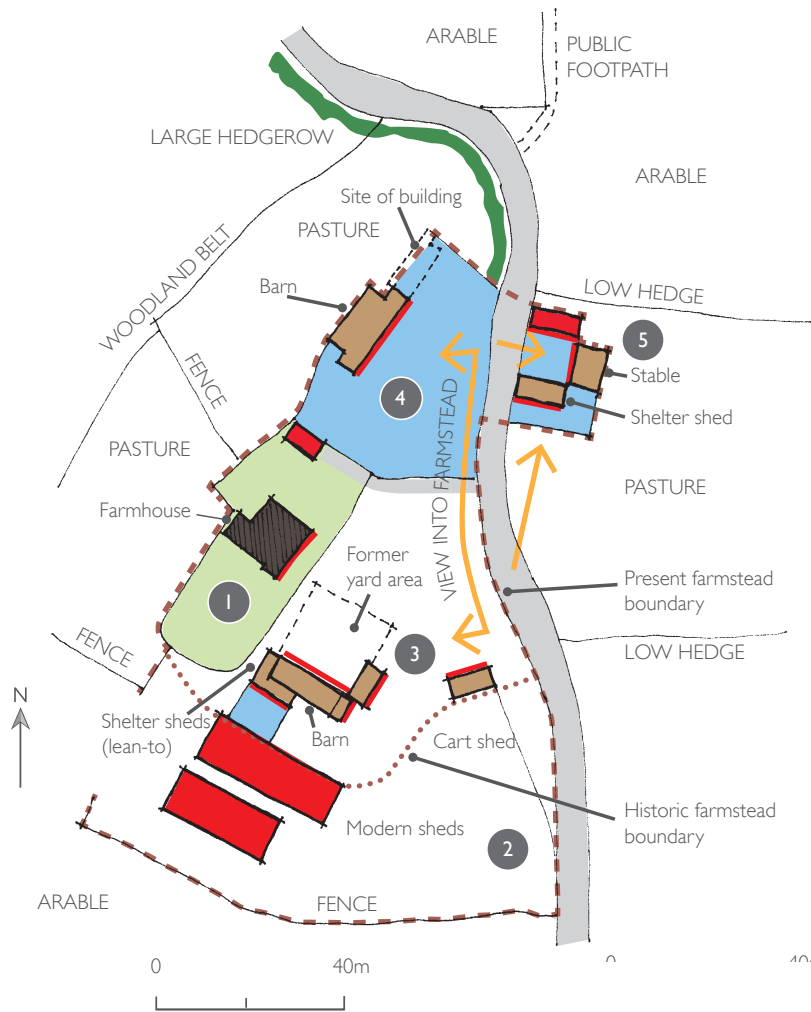
**Site and management issues**

- 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. 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.

**Historic character**

**Setting**

- The farmstead lies within a hollow with rising ground to the north, east and south, and flat land extending approx. ¾ 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 land 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

- 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 farmstead has retained the landscape setting within which it developed, including one of the many trackways in this area that connected woodlands and fields with species-rich boundaries to scatters of dispersed farmsteads and dwellings and the designated ancient woodland to the west.

#### 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 listed barn and farmhouse are of 16th century 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* 5-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.

## SECTION 2 THE FARMSTEADS SUMMARY GUIDANCE

### 1 UNDERSTANDING FARMSTEAD CHARACTER

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. Most were built in the 19th century, and with some local exceptions few were built after the 1870s.

Traditional farmsteads include:

- Buildings of 19th century or earlier date, whether using local traditions or styles or displaying national influences in their architecture or engineering.
- Locally distinctive buildings built up to 1940, designed by architects and engineers for estates and between the 1890s and 1930s for county councils.

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. 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). These can have significance if they have a strong architectural character (as traditional, designed or industrial buildings) or for their special significance.
- Post-1950 sheds which conform to modern animal welfare regulations.

See page 1 of PART 3 (KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT) [\[X\]](#) for more guidance and illustration on this.

The remainder of this section explains two themes are of fundamental importance to understanding the historic character of farmsteads:

1. The landscape and settlement context
2. Their function and layout.



This farmstead on the North Kent Plain was developed with industrial-scale buildings in the late 19th century – the oast for drying and storing hops at the bottom of the photograph and the covered yard for fattening cattle and conserving their manure. All the buildings use locally distinctive brick and tile, and are a significant part of the local scene. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27195 010



This group at Chislet in the North Kent Plain, now in residential use, has retained its large-scale layout of two courtyards and its distinctive farmstead buildings with a rare combination of a 17th century or earlier farmhouse and aisled barns, as well as a complete grouping of later barns and other outbuildings. (© English Heritage NMR 26779 008)

### 1.1 Landscape and settlement context

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

Rural settlement in Kent is dominated by isolated farmsteads and hamlets. Very few farmsteads worked the land from villages, which mostly developed as service centres rather than agricultural communities. Most farmsteads can be seen in relation to the fields around them as well as

orchards, woodland and other features in the landscape. The size and shape of these fields and their boundaries provide clues to their age. Small, irregular fields with large species-rich hedgerows are typical of ancient enclosure and usually associated with small-scale farmsteads, although in many areas farms and their fields were enlarged and amalgamated in later centuries. 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.



Farmsteads in areas of ancient (a) and piecemeal (b) enclosure, which typify most of Kent'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)

(d) The Weald has the highest densities of farmsteads, often small in scale, which are concentrated in areas of anciently-enclosed fields with irregular and wide species-rich hedgerows. This loose courtyard farmstead in the Low Weald has the working buildings built on two sides of the yard, with a detached barn. (© English Heritage NMR 27205 003)

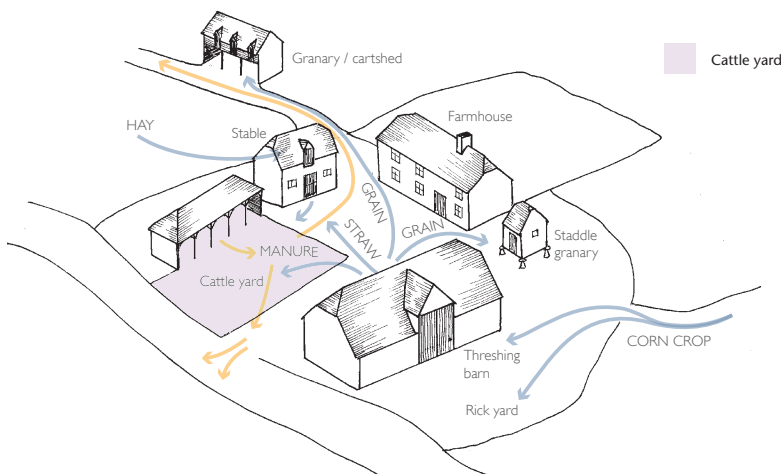
(e) The largest farms and fields have for centuries developed across the arable vales and downs, as here around the medieval church at Nackington in the North Kent Downs. (© English Heritage NMR 27201 017)



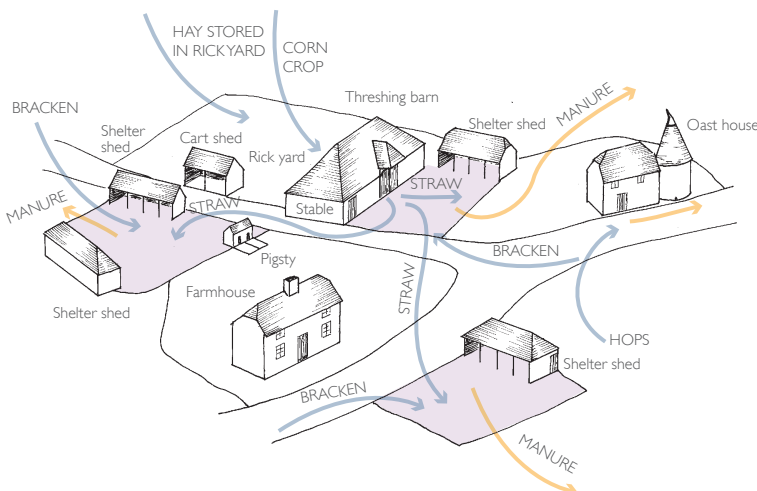
1.2 Farmstead function and layout

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. Most traditional working buildings date from the 19th century, although houses and barns are most likely to be older. These are illustrated in PART 3 (KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT), the most common being barns for storing and threshing the corn crop, stables for horses, cartsheds for carts and implements, shelter sheds and other housing for cattle and oasts for drying and storing hops. Open and enclosed spaces within and around the farmstead were used to stack crops and move animals and vehicles. They can range from spaces that are fully or partially enclosed by buildings to more open areas that serve to link the outer edges of the farmstead to its surrounding landscape. Orchards and small areas of woodland can shelter and screen the farmstead. Gardens can stand within or to one side of the farmstead and were 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.

The range of plan types or layouts across Kent – illustrated on the following page and PART 3 (KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT - display differences in how these buildings and spaces are arranged. The most common broad type are courtyard plans, which have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards. In contrast the buildings and yards of dispersed plans, comprising just over 25% of recorded sites, are scattered within the overall boundary of the farmstead. The Weald has a strong pattern of smaller courtyard farmsteads and dispersed-plan farmsteads. It also has a low but notable distribution of regular covered yards and some of the large-scale regular courtyard plans, especially in areas of former heathland improved for arable farming from the late eighteenth century. North of the Weald there are some dispersed and small-scale courtyard plans, but here the far higher concentration of the largest courtyard-plan farmsteads indicates the dominance of large-scale and arable-based farming enterprises, with local variations in the numbers of smaller farms.



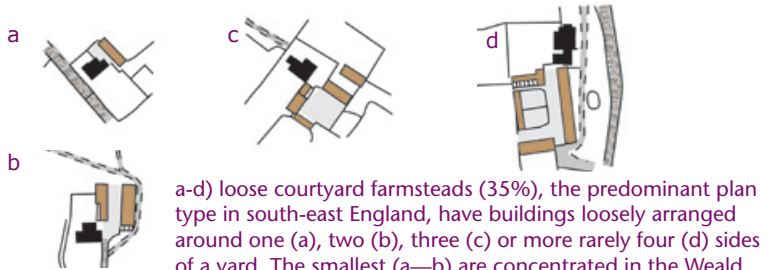
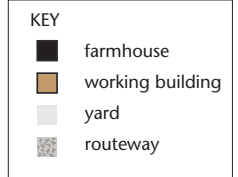
This drawing shows a loose courtyard plan with working buildings arranged around two sides of the yard. The harvested corn crop was brought into the barn for threshing. The threshed grain was then stored in granaries. In this example the seed corn is stored in a staddle granary (a feature of the downlands 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)



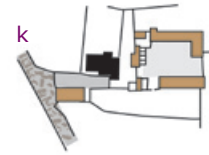
Dispersed plans are often located at nodal points in the network of lanes and tracks, meaning that many have high levels of public access. Dispersed multi-yard plans, as in this example, are concentrated in the Weald. They were often associated with the rearing and fattening of livestock, the various 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)

These drawings show the full range of farmstead plans which are encountered across Kent.

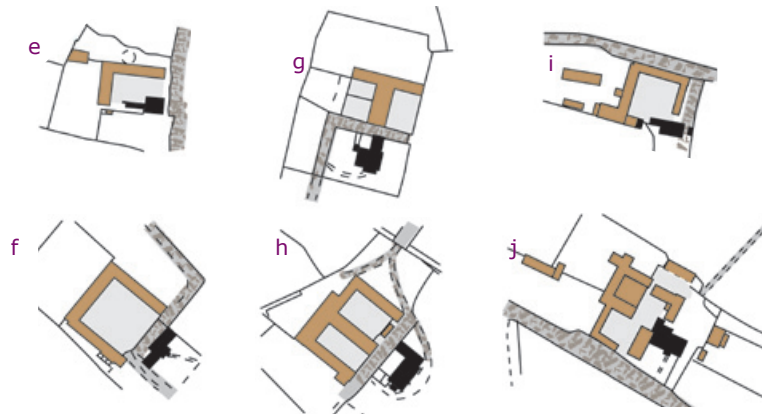
**Courtyard plans** (73.3% of all recorded farmsteads) have the working buildings arranged around one or more yards together with the farmhouse, which faces or is set gable end into the yard, or detached and set away from the working spaces of the farmstead.



a-d) loose courtyard farmsteads (35%), the predominant plan type in south-east England, have buildings loosely arranged around one (a), two (b), three (c) or more rarely four (d) sides of a yard. The smallest (a—b) are concentrated in the Weald and the largest (c-d) in the North Downs, the North Kent Plain and along the edge of the Thames Estuary, and are most likely to be associated with rectilinear fields which suggest successive reorganisation of the landscapes around them.



k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third (7.7%) or fourth (2.8%) sides are generally medium to large in scale and have the same pattern of distribution as the regular multi-yard plans (j) along the foot of the downs in the Wealden Greensand, in the North Downs, North Kent Plain and Thames Estuary.



Regular courtyard plans consist of linked ranges formally arranged around one or more yards:

L-plans (e) are widespread (6.9%).

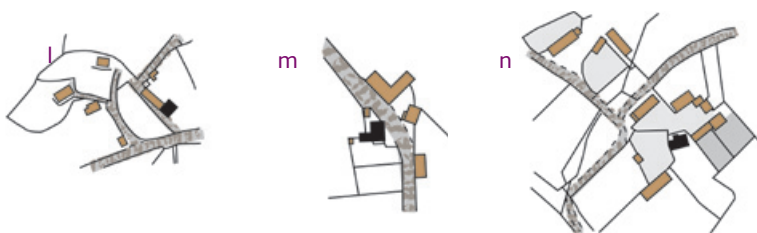
U-plans (f), are concentrated in the western part of the Weald (3.4%).

Larger-scale examples, (see g and h), built to F-, E-, T- and H-shaped plans, are rare in Kent (0.9%), and concentrated in areas of heathland and other land improved for intensive farming in the 19th century, especially in the Low Weald.

Full courtyard plans (i) which are more common (2.7%) but have a similar distribution.

Multi-yard plans (j) are the largest and often most high-status (13%).

**Dispersed plans** (24.9%) are concentrated in the Weald and especially in those landscapes of irregular and often small-scale fields, including those cleared from woodland and coastal marsh elsewhere in Kent. A distinguishing feature of all dispersed plans is the seemingly random arrangement of buildings within a single farmstead boundary, which is usually irregular in shape. They subdivide into:

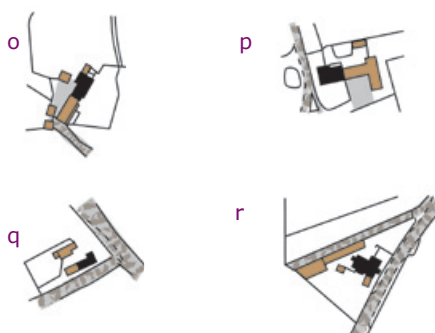


l) dispersed clusters (15.5%), where the working buildings are located within the boundary of the steading.

m) dispersed driftways (0.8%) which are grouped around routeways for moving livestock and are almost all concentrated in the Weald.

n) dispersed multi-yards (8.6%), which are often large-scale farmsteads containing two or more detached yards.

**The other plan types** (2%) are concentrated on 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 comprise:



linear farmsteads (o), where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line (0.9%) or (p) have been extended or planned with additional working buildings to make an L-shaped range (0.5%).

q) parallel plans where the working buildings are placed opposite and parallel to the house and attached working buildings with a narrow area between (0.1%).

(r) row plans, where the working buildings are attached in-line and are concentrated in the Weald (0.5%).

These plans are far more important, and sometimes dominant, in upland and upland fringe areas of England, and around lowland moss and heaths in the west of the country.

**2 UNDERSTANDING SIGNIFICANCE**

**Significant farmsteads will have one or both of the following:**

1. Significance as a traditional farmstead, which can be determined by a non-specialist.
2. Special significance in a local or national context, which may require specialist help and will be useful in developing a scheme.

This significance can be retained and enhanced through sympathetic change and development of the site in relationship to its setting. The absence of statutory designation does not imply lack of significance, as the great majority of farmstead buildings which contribute to landscape character will not fulfil the criteria for designation.

**2.1 SIGNIFICANCE AS A TRADITIONAL FARMSTEAD**

Locally significant traditional farmsteads, whether designated as heritage assets or not, make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. They will have retained one or both of the following:

1. Farm buildings with a locally distinctive architectural form and character, and use of building materials.
2. Historic form as traditional farmsteads, where the historic farm buildings, houses and spaces relate to each other.

Traditional buildings will be of 19th century or earlier date, and very few date from after 1900 (in most areas around 1880). Early 20th century (pre-1940) buildings can have significance if they have a strong architectural character (as traditional, designed or industrial buildings) or for their special significance.

The heritage potential of traditional farmsteads, based on the survival of their historic form by using the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition maps of c. 1900, has been entered onto the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER). 72% of recorded farmsteads have retained some or all of their historic form, rated in terms of:

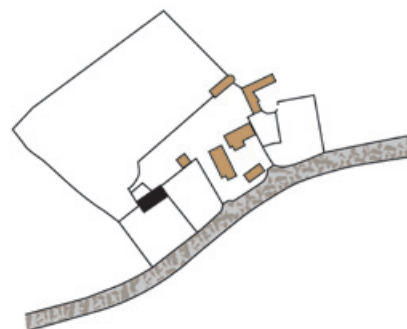
- A. HIGH HERITAGE POTENTIAL. 47% of farmsteads have retained more than 50% of their historic form.
- B. SOME HERITAGE POTENTIAL. 25% of farmsteads have retained some working buildings but with more than 50% loss of their historic form.
- 16% of farmsteads have lost all their working buildings but retain the farmhouse, which may be designated as a heritage asset or have some heritage potential. Buildings, or parts of them, may remain within the footprint of modern sheds. See (C) below.

**Farmstead change**

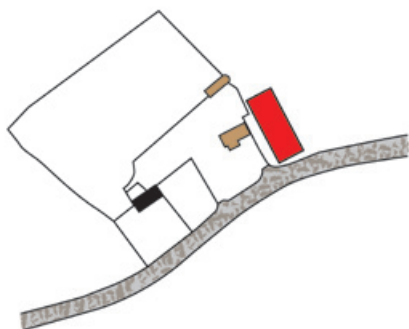
Understanding how a farmstead has changed is a critical first step in understanding its sensitivity to and potential for change. The drawings below show the different degrees of change that can be determined through comparing present sites to those shown on historic Ordnance Survey maps of around 1900 (see page 8 for use of historic maps).



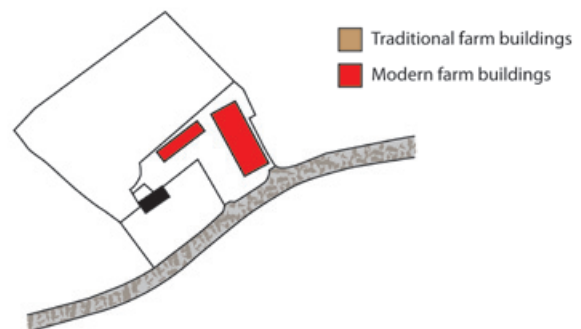
A No change to the historic form.



A Some change where more than 50% of the historic form survives.



B Significant change, where more than 50% of the historic form has been removed.



C Major change, where all the historic working buildings of the farmstead have been demolished and/or replaced by modern sheds, leaving only the farmhouse.

■ Traditional farm buildings  
■ Modern farm buildings



- 1% of farmsteads have lost all their buildings from the 2nd edition maps but usually remain in farming use and 11% of historic farmsteads have been completely lost from the landscape. These may still retain significant below-ground deposits which may be revealed through development.

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 Weald has the highest levels of survival, within landscapes that have often retained patterns of fields and woodland inherited from the medieval period, whereas Romney Marsh, the North Kent Plain and the Thames Estuary have the highest degrees of alteration to farmstead layouts and their associated landscapes (for local variations see pages 20-21).

Outfarms and field barns have been subject to very high levels of loss, 82% of 1933 sites being lost from the landscape and just 14% surviving with more than 50% of their historic form.

## 2.2 Special significance

Some buildings or farmsteads have 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 significant sites and the development of schemes for them. The absence of statutory designation (see page 7) does not imply lack of special significance in this respect.

Special significance is summarised under the headings set out below, and there is further illustrated guidance in PART 3 (KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT).

### *Setting*

- Substantially-intact small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings that are sited around areas of heath and other types of common land.
- Farmsteads within or next to the earthworks remaining from medieval and earlier settlements, cultivation and land use, which are concentrated away from the Weald and number fewer than 20 on Kent's Historic Environment Record.
- Farmsteads that have a clear visual and/or historic relationship to historic parks and gardens, which are concentrated in the Wealden Greensand and North Downs areas and number fewer than 100 on Kent's Historic Environment Record.

### *Farmstead groups*

- Farmstead groups with a combination of 17th century or earlier listed farmhouses (24.5% of recorded sites) and working buildings (7.8%). Kent has a high proportion of the latter in a national context, which field survey of farmsteads across the county (see reference to Kent Farmsteads Survey on page 21) has only increased to 12%.
- Industrial groups of the late 19th century, which are built to regular courtyard plans (sometimes with covered yards) and display the use of industrial building techniques (concrete, cast and wrought-iron for columns, roofs and stalling) and tramways.
- Well-documented and notable farmsteads built to the designs of architects or engineers, which can post-date 1900.
- Well-preserved smallholdings of the 1890s-1930s, built by local authorities (see p. 1 of PART 3: KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT).

### *Buildings*

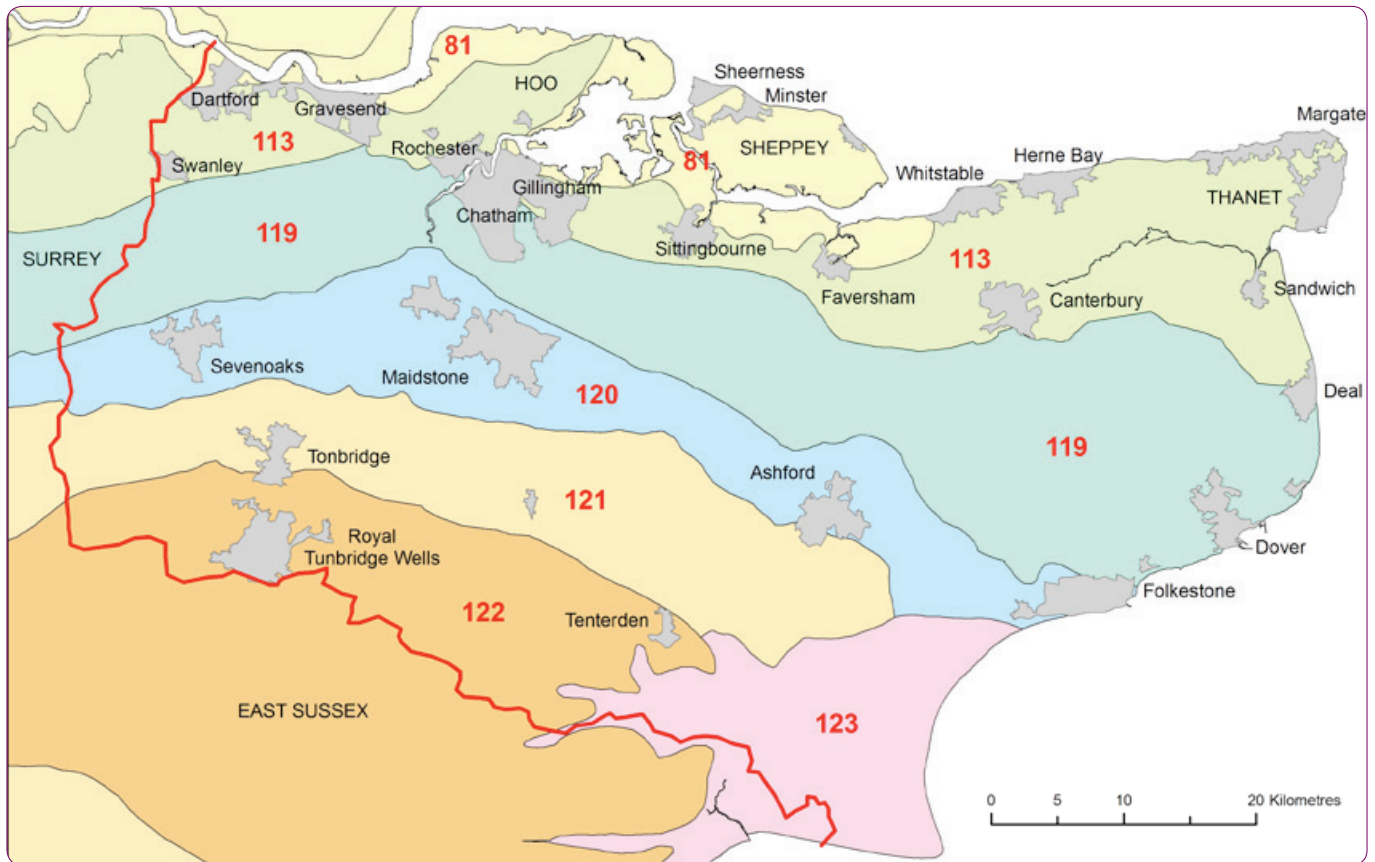
- Evidence for internal subdivision of barns into animal housing, concentrated in the Weald and found in other wood pasture and upland areas of England.
- Evidence for internal subdivision of barns into granaries and cartsheds/stables, which can be found away from the Weald especially in the North Kent Downs and North Kent Plain.
- Aisled barns, which comprise part of a major concentration of aisled barns in south-eastern England that extends into neighbouring parts of Europe.
- Groups of buildings relating to the hop industry – oasts (unconverted ones being very rare now), sometimes evidence for early kilns in other working buildings and hop pickers' huts.

### *Materials, fixtures and fittings*

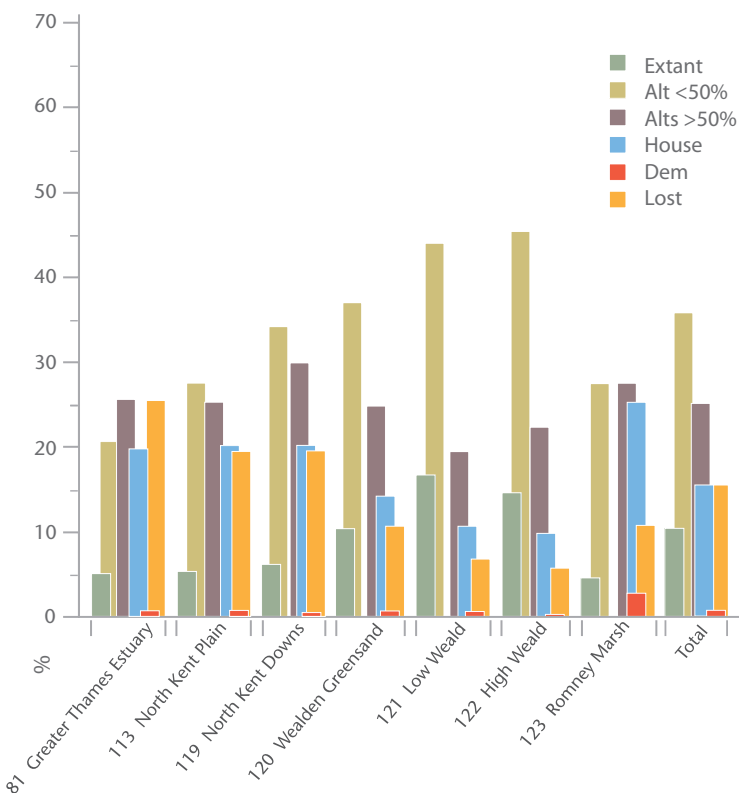
- Thatch, 18th century or earlier brick and 18th century or earlier overlapping weatherboarding and butted boarding.
- Stalls and other interior features (eg mangers, hay racks) in stables and cattle housing of proven 19th century or earlier date which are very rare in Kent.
- Evidence for wattle and daub infill to farm buildings.

2.3 Local variations

Local variations in the survival of traditional farmsteads are set out on this page, followed on the next page by a summary of special significance for National Character Areas in the county.



Kent, showing the county boundary in red and numbers of the National Character Areas (see page 21 for more details of these) that fall within the county, and which are set out in the bar chart below. This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 2011, 100019238



This bar chart shows the level of change recorded since the Ordnance Survey mapping of c.1890-1900 for all of the National Character Areas that fall within Kent. EXTANT indicates farmstead layouts that appear to be unchanged since this date (10.4% for Kent), ALT those which have had some loss but retained more than 50% of their historic form (36.3% for Kent), ALTs those which have retained some buildings but retain less than 50% of their historic form (25% for Kent), HOUSE where only the farmhouse survives (16% for Kent), DEM where the house and all the historic buildings have been demolished but the farmstead site remains (1% for Kent) and LOST where no visible trace of the farmstead site remains (11% for Kent).

*The Greater Thames Estuary*

- Farmstead groups that retain some or all of their traditional buildings are very rare by national standards.
- There are some rare survivals of early multi-yard layouts fringing the coastal marshes, with shelter sheds and other buildings relating to the feeding of cattle and growing of corn on higher land.
- Shelter sheds, including some very rare examples of pre-19th century date, are a highly distinctive building type.

*North Kent Plain*

- Dispersed plans, once common in the area except in Thanet, now rarely survive with little change.
- There is a high concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings, including some highly significant examples of farmstead groups with large barns, stables and cartsheds typical of arable-based agriculture.
- Some manorial complexes, sometimes moated and accompanied by a church.

*North Kent Downs*

- Large-scale courtyard groups with ranges of buildings representative of arable-based agriculture are highly significant.
- Dispersed plan farmsteads that have been subject to low levels of change are rare and significant.
- Small-scale traditional farmsteads are very rare, but were a distinctive feature of this area in contrast to other southern English downlands.

*Wealden Greensand*

- Dispersed plan types, once common in the area, are rare.
- High density of 17th century and earlier timber-framed buildings although early working buildings in the Chart area are rare.

*Low Weald and High Weald*

- This area has the highest percentage of farmsteads with less than 50% change since c.1900 in the county.
- High density of 17th century and earlier timber-framed buildings.
- Many small loose courtyard plans survive with minimal change.
- Dispersed plan types are particularly characteristic of the Weald and sites with little change are particularly significant.
- The area, especially the High Weald, stands out in a national context for its very high densities of historic farmsteads dating from the medieval period and which were established within a landscape largely cleared from woodland.
- This combination of medieval farmsteads and landscapes is highly significant, and it is heightened by the high survival of pre-1750 timber-framed buildings.

*Romney Marsh*

- Few farmsteads have lost less than 50% of the buildings present in c.1900 and a quarter of historic farmsteads are now only represented by a farmhouse.
- Pre-1750 buildings, mainly threshing barns and farmhouses, are rare across the marshes.
- The few surviving lookers' huts for shepherds testify to the importance of sheep to Romney's economy.

The Kent Farmsteads and Landscapes Project has mapped the historic character of over 6500 farmsteads from the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition maps of c.1890–1900, which marks the final phase of traditional farmsteads development. Modern maps were then used to measure the degree of survival. The report and data has been deposited with Kent's Historic Environment Record (HER). The National Character Areas (NCAs) reflect long-recognised variations in Kent's landscape. They are a framework which combine a broad understanding of the historic and natural environment with physical landscape character (see <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/default.aspx>). The understanding of local variations in The Kent Farmsteads Guidance has also benefitted from consideration of the county's Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Landscape Characterisation. For further details of these refer to chapter 6 of the Kent Downs Farm Diversification Toolkit [http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/Farm\\_Diversification\\_Toolkit.htm](http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/Farm_Diversification_Toolkit.htm)

REFER TO PART 4 (CHARACTER AREA STATEMENTS) ▣ FOR SUMMARIES OF LOCAL VARIATIONS THAT USE THE NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS.

### 3 PRESENT AND FUTURE ISSUES

Structural changes in the farming industry have required farmers to construct new buildings that economise on labour and conform to animal welfare regulations. As a result of this, and the demand for living in the rural landscape, traditional farm buildings are largely redundant for modern agricultural purposes, and have been under the greatest threat of neglect on one hand, and development on the other, than any rural building type. *Constructing the Evidence Base* (2005) examined the drivers for change and the effectiveness of national and local policy. Residential use made up the great majority of conversions, despite planning policies that favour employment and business uses. Initial understanding of these drivers for change informed English Heritage's policy position, *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape*, in 2006. This recommended that the starting point for future policy and decision making must be to 'align an understanding of the characteristics of historic farmsteads with their potential for and sensitivity to change, at the building, farmstead and landscape level.' It also identified the need for an evidence base, including within county Historic Environment Records (HERs), to inform decision-making by all those involved in the reuse and development of historic farmsteads.

Evidence from the Historic Farm Buildings Photo Survey (summarised in the *Extending the Evidence Base* report, page 26) provided data for listed working buildings with visible structural failure and evidence of adaptive reuse by comparing 1980s with 1999-2006 photographs. It shows that listed farm buildings in Kent exhibit, by national standards, low rates of structural failure, except in Romney Marsh and the Thames Estuary, with rates of above 20%. The county has high rates of conversion of listed buildings to non-agricultural (primarily domestic) uses – over 40%, the national average being 34%.

English Heritage, and in Kent the High Weald AONB Unit, has 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, 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 appropriate management which considers this contribution when faced with changes that are managed through the planning system.

The contribution of historic farmsteads to local character can be retained and enhanced through a diversity of new uses. 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 <http://www.highweald.org>, and across the West Midlands <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads> 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. The economic value of this residential use can be easily underestimated, however, bearing in mind that farmsteads in residential use 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 Tunbridge Wells, where the owners of historic farm properties are substantially involved as directors and participants in limited companies, and the south and east of the AONB where there is a higher level of engagement with smaller-scale enterprise.

Across Kent <http://www.kentruralnetwork.org.uk/the-kent-rural-evidence-base> there is a continuing pressure to live and work in rural areas:

- 29% of the population lives in rural areas – considerably above the national average of 19%
- 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.
- Consideration of the rural economy and the effect of high quality landscapes on attracting economic development and tourism could be investigated more thoroughly, perhaps through additional pieces of work.

Work in other counties on matching the addresses of mapped traditional farmsteads to a range of data, especially across the West Midlands (see the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads>), has shown that, whilst commercial use is difficult to achieve for historic farmsteads in residential use (which may involve the conversion of buildings) are more often used for home-based entrepreneurial businesses than any other kind of urban or rural property.



## SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE

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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>).

### Local authority and English Heritage grants

Some local authorities may offer discretionary grants for the upkeep of historic farm buildings and it is common for such grant aid to be targeted at listed buildings. Of those authorities that provide grant aid at least half stipulate a restriction to listed buildings or for buildings in conservation areas, some of them also saying the building has to be on the authority's 'Building At Risk' register to be eligible.

The majority of authorities have very small budgets and historic farm buildings are only one of a number of building types eligible for funding.

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 national and regional priorities that are outlined in the application pack. The application must demonstrate that there is financial need for a grant and that the work will be undertaken within two years.

These and other sources of grant aid are described in detail in the Funds for Historic Buildings website (<http://www.ffhb.org.uk>).

### Wildlife

National Trust 2001. *Wildlife and Buildings: Technical Guidance for Architects, Builders, Building Managers and Others*. London: National Trust (<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-wabman.pdf>)

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

### Legislation and Government guidance

*Guide to the Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings*, British Standard 7913 (1998). London: BSI

*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act* (1990). London: HMSO

*The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government

*Town and Country Planning Act* (1990). London: HMSO

### 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 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, 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/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: South East*
- EH 2011. *The Setting of Historic Assets*. English Heritage Guidance
- EH 2011. *The Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*
- 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
- 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
- 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.