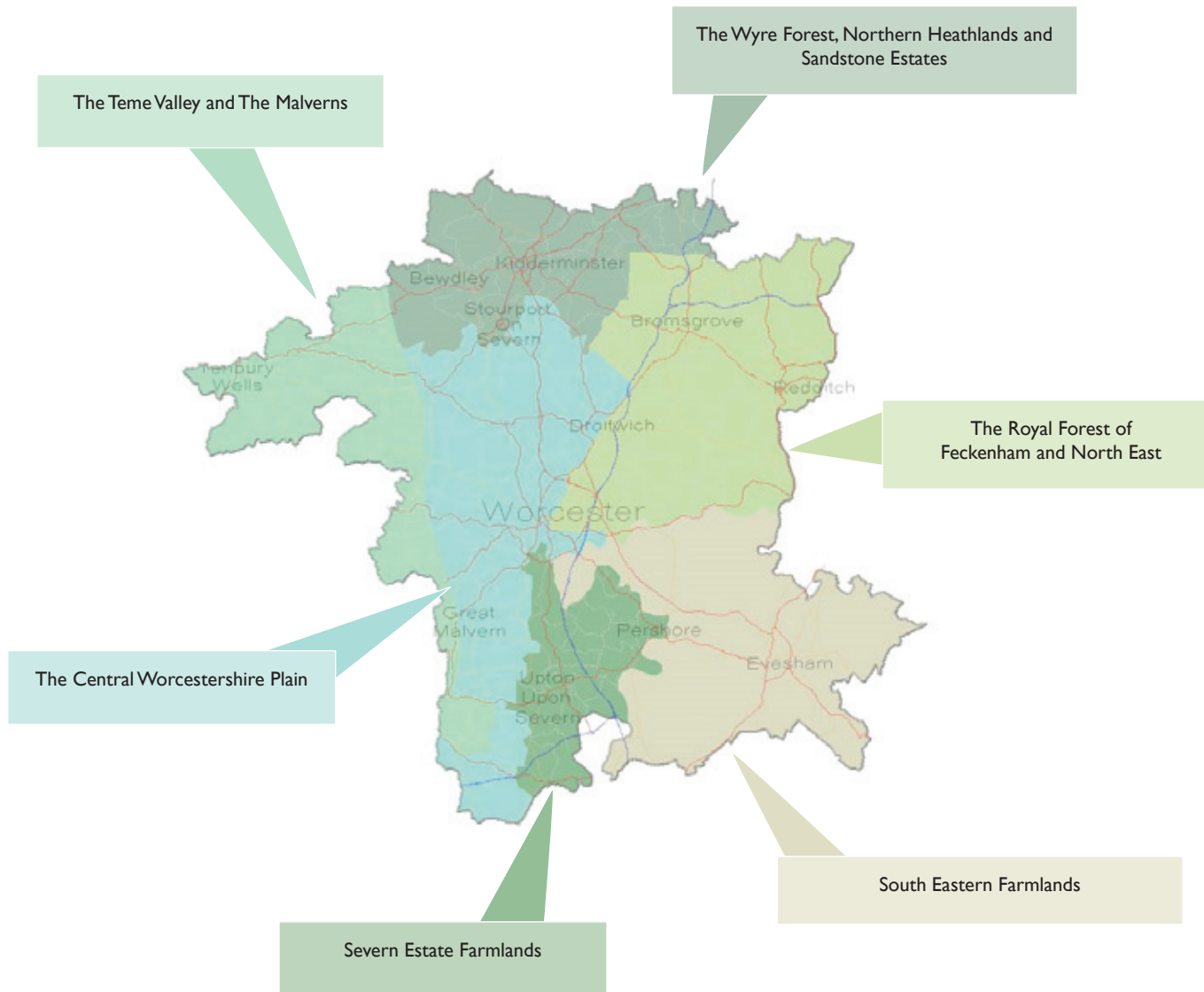


Worcestershire Historic Farmsteads Character Areas



This document forms part of the Worcestershire Farmsteads Guidance. It introduces the six Farmstead Character Areas into which Worcestershire has been subdivided, based on analysis of its farmsteads in their landscape context.

The Worcestershire Farmsteads Guidance comprises a suite of additional documents to help assess historic farmsteads and inform future change. Additional documents include:

SITE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK This provides a step-by-step approach to considering the reuse of traditional farm buildings and the sustainable development of farmsteads.

WORCESTERSHIRE FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT Illustrated guidance which will help users understand the character and significance of Worcestershire's farmsteads in their landscape context.

GUIDANCE ON RECORDING AND RESEARCH which will help applicants and professional advisers to consider the most appropriate level for detailed recording of a site.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SUMMARIES

The Teme Valley and The Malverns

This is an area of mixed farming, combined with hops and fruit growing, where farmland is intermixed with scattered woodland and large areas of common. High densities of very small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings, associated with small scale enclosure, dominate the hills of the Teme Valley and the Malvern fringe while concentrations of small to medium scale farmsteads, associated with early post-medieval piecemeal enclosure, are found throughout the Character Area. Within and extending from the Teme Valley and The Malverns towards Worcester are dispersed-plan farmsteads which probably relate to ancient driftways and areas for moving and holding stock. Large scale farmsteads, resulting from the piecemeal enclosure of open fields around medieval settlement nuclei, including high status manorial sites are concentrated along the fertile river valley. The increased gentrification of estates during the 18th and 19th centuries led to significant re-organisation of the enclosed landscape and the remodelling of manorial sites into large country houses with landscaped parks.

There is good survival of historic farmstead sites retaining working agricultural buildings, including cider houses and cow sheds, often distinguished by double wooden doors. Timber-framed buildings, dating to as early as the 15th century, are characteristic of the area. Malvern Stone and red-brown and grey-green sandstone have also been used as building materials. Weatherboarding is a common form of cladding for timber framed buildings. Field barns, which were a distinctive part of the post medieval landscape are becoming increasingly rare.

69% of traditional farmsteads are considered to have high heritage potential; 24% have some heritage potential.



A landscape of smallholdings, some of which include small 17th and 18th century houses typical of the northern Malverns area, at Old Storridge Common. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27700/003



Re-organised piecemeal enclosure, formal parkland and traditional orchard associated with a country house, north of the River Teme. Five square hop kilns, constructed in 1913, are sited to the right of the mill ponds. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27766/025



Large scale farmstead, re-modelled in the 18th century, approximately 100m east of the River Teme. Distinctive features include terraces surrounded by a retaining wall, an 18th century dovecote and two square hop kilns. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27764/029



Timber-framed animal housing clad in weatherboard, close to a linear farmstead on the edge of Coombegreen Common. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



Large scale, 18th century farmstead associated with isolated, 12th century church in Knighton-on-Teme. Photo © Worcestershire County Council

The Wyre Forest, northern heathlands and Sandstone Estates

A landscape dominated by large blocks of woodland and 18th century and later landscape re-organisation which included the enclosure of vast tracts of open heath.

Clusters of small-scale farmsteads, including linears, and smallholdings developed around the Wyre Forest, spurred by the development of rural industries, especially coal mining from the 17th century and fruit growing, which boomed during the 19th century. Small scale isolated farms, with fields of assart origin, most likely developed as a direct consequence of the evolution of woodland management. Areas were probably cleared for subsistence purposes by those individuals that worked and managed the forest during the late medieval/post medieval period.

A pattern of regular enclosure and medium to large scale courtyard plan farmsteads, associated with 19th century re-organisation of farmland and the enclosure of common, heath and woodland, to meet the growing demands of urban markets in Kidderminster, Stourbridge and the Black Country conurbation, dominate the remainder of the character area.

Only 9% of farmsteads have recorded 17th century or earlier buildings, as opposed to a county average of 22% and there are very high levels of conversion, for residential use. Red and grey sandstones have been utilised as a building material throughout the area.

66% of sites are recorded as having high heritage potential; 21% have some heritage potential.



Two small scale, isolated farmsteads in the Wyre Forest. This farmstead, in the foreground, set within its slightly irregular enclosure, occupies the site of a medieval farm. The farmstead in the background, which sits within a more regular enclosure, recorded as traditional orchard at the end of the 19th century, is dated to the first quarter of the 20th century. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27765/027



A striking landscape of small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings associated with the development of rural industries from the 17th century and fruit growing, which boomed during the 19th century. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27765/001



Large-scale regular courtyard plans are typical of the home farms on estates across England, and this assemblage of surviving traditional farm buildings (the home farm of the Arley Castle estate) is a good example of its type. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27766/014



An isolated field barn, for grazing stock (historically cattle) at Pound Green Common. Circa 1830 in date. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



A 19th century shelter shed, associated with a large scale farmstead to the west of Kidderminster. Photo © Worcestershire County Council

South Eastern Farmlands

The South Eastern Farmlands has long been an arable area, where orchards for fruit and cider developed from the 17th century and market gardening, for the Birmingham market, developed from the 19th century. Farmsteads were sited within villages from the medieval period, the low densities of dispersed settlement resulting from the relocation of farmsteads as the large open fields, which extended across much of the farmed landscape, were enclosed. This process was sometimes incomplete until the 19th century. As a result 18th century and earlier houses, and some working buildings, are concentrated within villages: these include some large-scale farmsteads, typically on the edge of villages or on amalgamated plots within them.

Isolated farmsteads are typically large scale and associated with large-scale piecemeal, or regular, enclosure and outfarms. 18th century farmsteads are also notable for their disassociation with shrunken or moated settlements, whereas there is a strong correlation between these settlement types and 17th and 19th century farmsteads. 17th century or earlier houses are concentrated in the villages, where houses were often attached in a single range to barns and other buildings, and in areas of earlier dispersed settlement and enclosure around Bredon Hill to the west, in the scarp of the Cotswolds to the east and around the Lenches to the north. Small detached outbuildings distinguished market gardening areas in the 19th and 20th centuries, but most of these have been demolished.

57% of sites are considered to have high heritage potential; 34% have some heritage potential.



The fields in this landscape north of Kemerton mostly result from the post-medieval enclosure of strip fields around the settlement, where most of the farmsteads continued to be sited into the 19th century. Some clearly retain the curved boundaries of these medieval strips and others reflect the reorganisation of the farmed landscape with enlarged fields and regular boundaries. These village-based farmsteads were also served by field barns and outfarms which are shown in the foreground. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27761/016



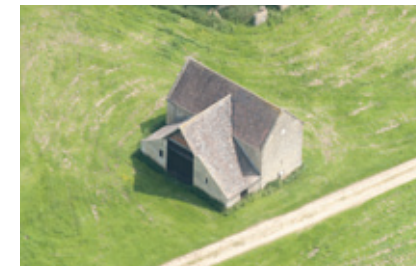
A mid-18th century regular L-plan farmstead, constructed of coursed stone rubble, on the slopes of Bredon Hill. The 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map records a covered yard, now lost. The L-plan comprises a threshing barn, with its large central doorway, attached to single-storey cattle housing. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27761/031



Early 20th century detached outbuilding associated with market gardening and allotments in North and Middle Littleton. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



A mid 17th century, part timber-framed, part limestone rubble barn with four framed bays aligned east/west. There are cart entries on the south side only and a 19th century lean-to addition with a catslide roof adjoins the west elevation. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



18th century, coursed limestone rubble barn, associated with ruined farmstead in Kemerton. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27761/004

Severn Estate Farmlands

A landscape dominated by medium to low densities of medium to large scale farmsteads, based on cereal production and fatstock, many of which developed as the strip fields and meadows relating to villages were enclosed. There is also extensive evidence for shrunken settlements and a significant distribution of moated sites, as well as extensive evidence for Romano-British and earlier settlement along the fertile and free-draining terraces of the Severn.

The activities of estates are reflected in the presence of estate cottages, extensive areas of planned or regular enclosure, farmsteads built to a consistent architectural style and planted woodland, often set within a relic designed landscape. This is a transitional landscape which marks a boundary established by the 11th century between 'village-based' settlement in the east and more dispersed settlement in the west.

61% of sites are considered to have high heritage potential; 27% have some heritage potential.



Isolated farmstead, east of the River Severn. The 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map records a large scale farmstead with regular courtyard multi-yard character. Less than 50% of traditional buildings remain extant, mirroring the loss of field boundaries which has also characterised the surrounding landscape over the 20th century. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27698/033



The settlement of Clifton in Severn Stoke originated as a village of many farmsteads. The settlement today shows the impact of settlement change since the 14th century in the abandonment and amalgamation of medieval farms and the development of larger farms. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27699/048



A regular courtyard Model Farm, built in 1851, set in straight boundaries and enclosures dating from a reorganisation of the landscape at the same time. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27762/006



A large scale, 18th century farmstead, with regular courtyard character; sitting within a landscape of planned private enclosure associated with Pirton Court. Pirton Pool and the landscaped park can be seen in the background. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27762/00627699/029



An estate farmstead, associated with Croome Court, with significant loss of traditional buildings. The 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map records a large scale farm with three yard areas, two of which were covered. Photo © English Heritage. NMR.27699_20

The Royal Forest of Feckenham and North East

A complex and coherent landscape with low levels of change and high densities of small to medium scale farmsteads associated with early post-medieval piecemeal enclosure. The high number of 18th century and earlier timber framed houses and working buildings relate to medieval and later patterns of dispersed settlement and intricate networks of lanes. These include moated sites of the 14th century and earlier.

This area features a significant concentration of shrunken medieval village sites and extensive evidence for post-medieval dispersed settlement relating to piecemeal enclosure of former open fields.

Timber-framed buildings, often dating to as early as the 15th century, are a characteristic of the area. Green-grey sandstone was also used as a building material. Despite a high proportion of early timber framed buildings there are a significantly lower proportion of designated assets throughout the area than in the remainder of the county.

62% of sites are considered to have high heritage potential; 25% have some heritage potential. The area has experienced high levels of farmstead loss as a consequence of urban expansion and industrialisation around Redditch and Bromsgrove.



This is a medieval farmstead site, with fragments of a moat and a 16th century timber-framed house, which developed by the end of the 19th century into a loose courtyard plan with late 18th – 19th century brick working buildings to three sides of the yard and additional detached buildings including a Dutch barn of c. 1900 to the top left. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27701/018



An interrupted row settlement, with small to medium scale farmsteads, surrounded by an amalgamated piecemeal enclosure landscape at Bradley Green in Feckenham. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27701/016



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



16th century timber-framed farmhouse in Feckenham. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



An early 17th century farmhouse in Stoke Prior. Timber-frame with painted brick and rendered infill, extended in painted sandstone ashlar. Photo © Worcestershire County Council

The Central Worcestershire Plain

The Central Worcestershire Plain is characterised by mixed farming settlements or hamlets usually comprising dispersed rows or loosely clustered groupings of farmsteads and houses. Many settlements have large scale farmsteads which developed on enlarged plots from the medieval period. There is also extensive evidence for shrunken settlement which in the medieval period related to extensive areas of both strip fields and common land.

Areas with irregular fields intermixed with ancient woodland are associated with wayside cottages, many dating to the 18th century or earlier, and have the highest densities of dispersed farmsteads, often clustered close together and dating from the medieval period. Such settlements are characterised by loose clusters of farmsteads that dominate the character of settlement, with just a few wayside cottages interspersed with the farmsteads.

Areas with lower densities typically result from the amalgamation of farms and the activities of estates, this being reflected in larger scale farmsteads and fields with scattered outfarms and 19th century farm workers cottages. Larger villages typically result from 19th century and later expansion.

61% of sites are considered to have high heritage potential; 30% of sites have some heritage potential.



This is a medieval farmstead site, with fragments of a moat and a 16th century timber-framed house. It developed by the end of the 19th century into a loose courtyard plan with late 18th – 19th century brick working buildings to three sides of the yard and additional detached buildings including a Dutch barn of c. 1900 to the top left. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27701/018



An interrupted row settlement, with small to medium scale farmsteads, surrounded by an amalgamated piecemeal enclosure landscape at Bradley Green in Feckenham. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27701/016



A timber-framed threshing barn with re-used 15th century crucks. Photo © Worcestershire County Council



This large scale, isolated farmstead, along with the landscape surrounding it, was remodelled into a U-shaped plan in the mid-19th century. The range of brick buildings replaced a moated homestead. Despite being converted into residential use the farmstead retains its 19th century form and character. Photo © English Heritage NMR 27763/017



A 17th century, timber-framed barn in Hanley Castle. The ground floor was replaced in brick when the barn was sub-divided into housing for cattle. Photo © Worcestershire County Council