

# Natural England & English Heritage Guidance notes for HLS Targeting of Historic Farm Buildings

November 2008

*This guidance has been produced as an interim measure to support Natural England advisers completing Assessment forms for Targeting Historic Building Restoration in HLS. Over time and in response to practice, this guidance will be developed further. Ultimately each JCA will have its own detailed guidance.*

## SIGNIFICANCE

### 1. Date of Building

- **Pre-1750** Substantially complete farm buildings of this period are rare, reflecting the development of regional and local agricultural areas. Pre-1550 buildings are extremely rare. The largest and most adaptable farmstead buildings, most obviously barns, have the highest rates of survival.
- **1750-1914** Most farm buildings date from this period, and in particular the capital intensive 'High Farming' years of the 1840s to 1870s. Although there was an increasing degree of standardisation (in constructional detail and planning, and in various forms of regular planned groups) this period is still marked by a strong degree of local variation in the scale and form of buildings, and the use of materials.
- **Post 1914** Pre-fabrication and standardisation become an increasingly common feature (eg for county council smallholdings) and in the post-1950 period has come to dominate new farmstead architecture, especially for labour-efficient on-farm production and the housing of stock.

### 2. Status

In all cases the Building Conservation Officer at the local authority will be able to ascertain whether the building is any one of the following:

**Listed:** There are over 69,000 agricultural list entries in England, under 6% of which are listed at grade I or II\*: 55% contain a farmhouse or farm dwelling, 24% a barn function, 6% stables and 11% other functions. But see curtilage below.

**Curtilage:** Any pre-1948 working building or structure in the curtilage (legal property boundary at the time of listing) of a listed building can be considered to be listed and therefore covered by listed building legislation & consents.

**Conservation Area:** Some farm buildings are included in conservation areas focused on historic settlements or more rarely those focused on outstanding landscapes eg the 'barns and walls' conservation areas in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

**Locally listed:** Some Local Authorities have their own lists of locally significant buildings

### 3. Style of Building

The style of a farmstead building results from its form, scale, architectural detail and use of materials, and may reflect local traditions, the policies of estates and national models.

**Vernacular buildings** are characteristic of their locality, rather than following national models or being designed by architects, agents or engineers. They often use locally available materials, although they may include the use of imported brick, slate and other materials as these became available in the area. They will often display evidence for successive change, with farmsteads and buildings developing and being added to over time.



**Designed buildings** usually form part of regular-plan late 18th/19th century groups based on national models, and more commonly result from the building programmes of estates than individual farmers. The groups are usually built in a single phase, sometimes in a recognisable architectural style, and are usually marked by a consistent use of local or imported materials.



**Industrially-produced buildings** comprise factory-made prefabricated structures using steel/iron frames and corrugated iron cladding (eg Dutch barns as used from the later 19th century and examples of 1914-40 concrete and industrial brick structures (eg silage towers) and groups).



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#### 4. Survival of the farmstead as a whole

Ordnance Survey maps and observation of the site can be used as benchmarks for measuring change, particularly useful being maps from the late 19th/early 20th centuries (after which few traditional groups or buildings were built) and the period from the 1950s marked by multi-functional and standardised sheds and working areas. These sheds could be built to one side of the traditional group, or within formerly open cattle yards, leaving it largely intact. County record offices and websites can also hold the earlier tithe maps, which date from the 1830s-40s.

- This question aims to identify the survival of the traditional farmstead group, through measuring the extent to which it has changed since c.1950.
- You should answer this question by looking at the layout of the whole farmstead, and the extent to which its historic form has changed. This can be determined by either a site visit and/or comparison of modern and historic maps showing the arrangement of buildings and spaces. For example, where the farmstead is arranged around a courtyard in a 'regular courtyard plan', you need to assess it based on the survival of the expected formal arrangement of buildings around one or more yards.
- For outbarns, you should consider the building and any associated outshuts/structures as 'the farmstead unit'.

#### Main historic farmstead types:

The main historic farmstead types are shown below, the working buildings being shown on grey and the houses in black:

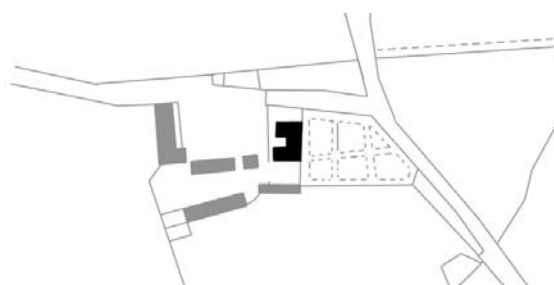
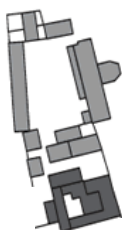
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**Dispersed plans**, which have no focal yard area and where the buildings are clustered, set out around multiple dispersed yards or sited along a track.



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**Loose courtyard plans**, where mostly detached buildings have developed in piecemeal fashion around one or more sides of an open cattle yard.



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**Regular courtyard plans**, where buildings are carefully planned as linked ranges and often result from a single phase of building. Farmsteads can be arranged as full courtyard, L-, U-, and E-plan arrangements, always with one or more yards for the collection of manure.



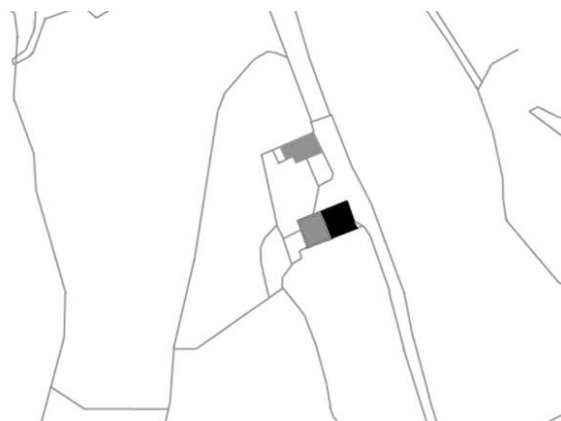
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**Linear plans** where houses and working buildings are attached and in-line, and which are now most common in northern and western pastoral areas.



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**Parallel plans**, the least common type and where the agricultural buildings lie opposite the main house, which is sometimes a linear farmstead range.



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**Field barns** and **outfarms**, which are detached from the main group. These may have been built with yards, and been provided with access tracks.



## Measuring Change

Ordnance Survey maps and observation of the site can be used as benchmarks for measuring change, particularly useful being maps from the late 19th/early 20th centuries (after which few traditional groups or buildings were built) and the period from the 1950s marked by multi-functional and standardised sheds and working areas. County record offices and websites can also hold the earlier tithe maps, which date from the 1830s-40s.

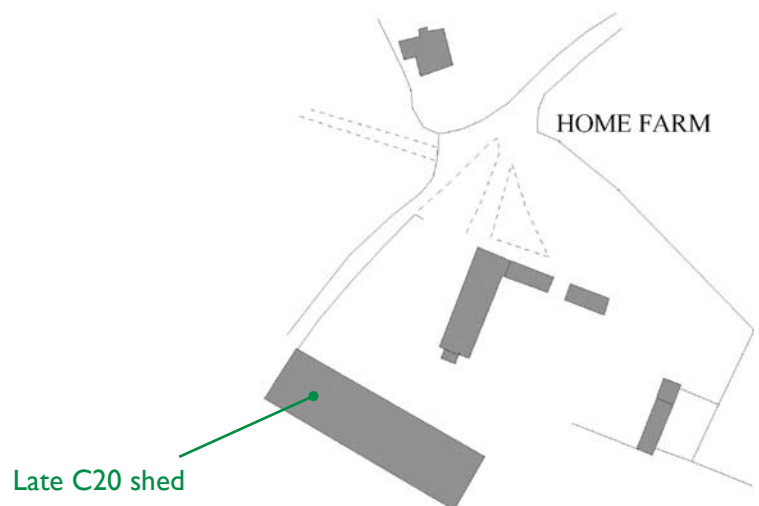
**Substantially intact** – farmstead is largely unaltered from its traditional form



**Partial Loss** – less than 50% loss of buildings



**Significant Loss** – more than 50% loss of buildings



## 5. Significance of the farmstead

This question aims to identify the individual farmstead's national and local importance.

### *Rare survival (national)*

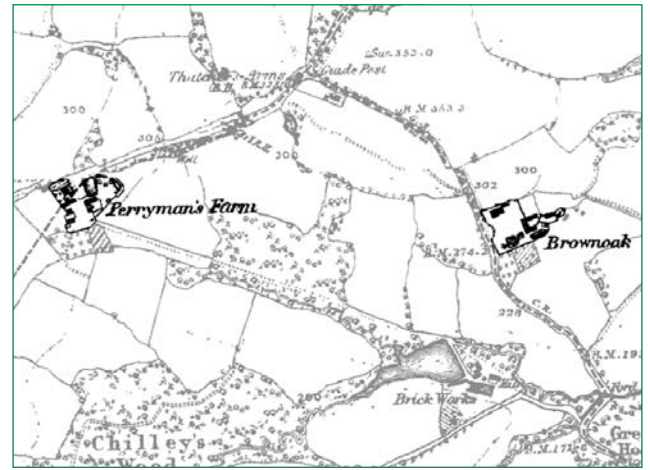
Rare survivals are both coherent in their degree of survival (from 4 above) and include:

- Home farm groups in or on the edge of historic parkland with buildings relating to the working of an estate (eg sawmills, forges, adjacent kitchen gardens etc).
- Planned and model farmsteads with good survival of internal fittings and fixtures (see 8 below).
- Small-scale common-edge or heathland groups.
- Small-scale groups in important rural-industrial landscapes (eg North Pennines lead mine, Cornwall ore mine, West Pennines textiles) which are associated with families engaged in farming and industrial production.
- Rare examples of formerly common farmstead types, as noted in regional and character area descriptions (forthcoming).
- Pre-19th century examples of field barns, and those surviving in coherent historic landscapes and with a strong visual relationship to other farmsteads and features

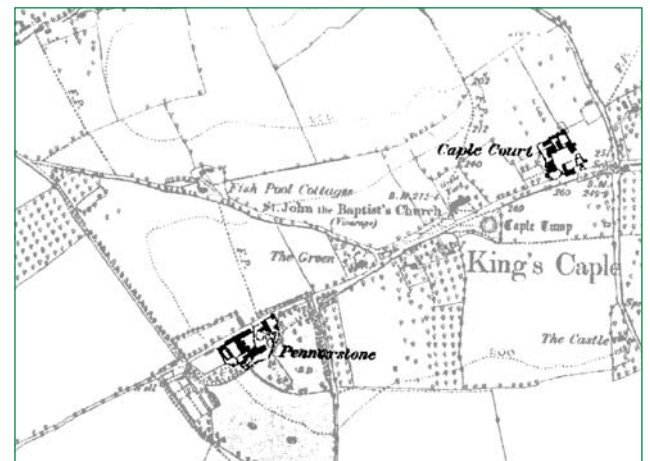


### Isolated farmsteads:

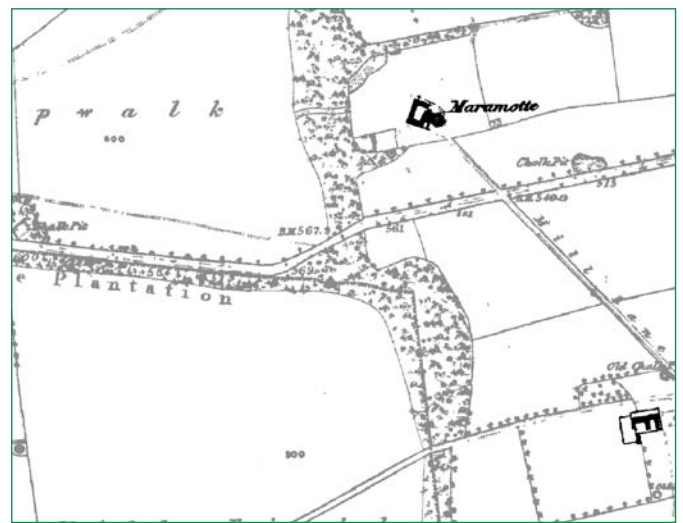
- sited among small-scale and irregular fields, which can result from land and woodland clearance in the medieval period or earlier:



- sited amongst piecemeal patterns of enclosure, which may date from the medieval period.



- sited amongst regular patterns of enclosure, which are most commonly associated with the period after 1750 and the replanning of common land or earlier enclosed landscapes, sometimes with new farmstead sites.



### Limited contribution

Farmsteads fitting into this category will be more difficult to read in relationship to their landscapes, because of the degree of change observable to the group (partial-significant loss as identified in section 4) and/or the surrounding landscape, due to later buildings, infrastructure, boundary removal and loss of woodland etc.

### Low contribution

It is difficult or impossible to read or appreciate the historic character of the farmstead and its landscape as a whole, as a result of the degree of major change to the farmstead (major loss as identified above) and/or the surrounding landscape.

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## 7. Individual interest of the building

**Rare survivals** are:

- Examples of pre-1750 buildings.
- Examples of unconverted building types (eg threshing barns) in areas of high conversion.
- Highly specialised buildings, principally kilns for drying corn, maltings, dovecotes, sheep shelters, goose houses, well houses, sawmills, forges/smithies.
- Buildings with clear recorded evidence for non-agricultural/ industrial manufacture such as cloth (eg in the West Pennines), flax (eg in South Somerset) and cutlery (eg around Sheffield).

**Representative** buildings will be outlined in regional and area statements (forthcoming), and will be recognisable and locally distinctive through their form and use of materials.

**Unrepresentative** buildings are clearly not locally distinctive in their form or use of materials.

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## 8. Fittings and Fixtures

**Rare original features** are:

- Particularly vulnerable historic floors (eg lime ash floors, rush withy floors, threshing floors).
- Doors and windows of pre-19th century date, eg mullioned windows, sliding shutters to windows.
- Dairies with internal shelving etc, barns with in situ threshing machines and other processing machines, horse engine houses with internal gearing, oast houses with internal kilns and other detail, cider houses with internal mills and/or presses.
- Tramways to planned industrial complexes with good survival of other features (below).

**Typical original features**, of 19th and early 20th century date, are:

- Stalls and other interior features (eg mangers, hay racks) in stables and cattle housing of proven 19th century or earlier date.
- Doors (usually planked/ ledged and braced, from c1850 on horizontal sliding rails) with iron strap hinges and handles, and heavy frames.
- Windows, often of a standard type nationally, that are half-glazed, shuttered and/or with hit-and-miss ventilators.
- Historic surfaces such as brick, stone-flag and cobble floors to stables and cattle housing, with drainage channels.
- Industrial fittings (iron or concrete stalls, mangers etc) to planned and industrial complexes, including to inter-war county council smallholdings.

**Secondary features** are those which are not original to the building. For example, 20th century concrete cow stalling in a 19th century cowhouse.

The survival of these typical features is subject to a great deal of local and regional variation, and extreme rarity of survival will be noted if relevant outlined in regional and area statements (forthcoming).

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## 9. Additional Interest

This is an incremental score, as you can score for all three items, with a maximum potential score of 7.

- *Unusual feature of historic interest* includes graffiti or artwork, such as soldiers' graffiti, which is tied in with significant cultural events or occupation.
- *Marks relating to the 'use of land'* include tallies near threshing floors in barns for noting production of grain. *Ritual marks* were used for protecting produce or livestock and are usually in the form of 'daisy wheels' or 'Mary marks'; or graffiti recording names of workers, sales etc
- *Constructional marks* are those associated with the transport and prefabrication of structural carpentry and timber frames, eg shipping and carpenters' marks.

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# VULNERABILITY

## 10. Building fabric

Particularly rare or vulnerable fabric includes:

- Thatch, in particular long straw thatch, heather thatch and solid thatch.
- Historic timber cladding (feather-edged weatherboarding, vertical boarding set into studwork).
- Mud and stud walls (eg in Fylde of Lancashire and East Midlands)
- Wattle or split lath infill to timber frames permitting ventilation.

**Traditional** means a building where only traditional materials have been used, even if these include changes from the original (eg a tile or slate roof that replaced an earlier thatched roof, brick panels or partial replacement of timber frame).

**Largely traditional** means that the building includes some new factory-made materials (eg sheet metal roofs, concrete tiles, sheet recladding of timber frames).

**Extensive use of non-traditional** means comprehensive rebuilding/recladding, or use of non-traditional materials (concrete, industrial brick, sheet roofing and cladding, iron framing) from the outset.

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## 11. Changes to building

**Original Form**

- no observable post-1950 change to original structure

**Largely original form**

- some new openings and extensions, but integrity of historic structure largely intact

**Largely changed**

- new openings and additions have undermined integrity of historic structure

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## 12. Potential for adaptation

The degree of potential for adaptation should be based on a consideration of:

- accessibility - such as access to the site and distance from main road, or location within the farmstead
- scale – the size of building and whether it would be large/tall enough to lend itself to an alternative use
- numbers of openings/degree of natural light
- subdivision of internal spaces.

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## 13. Extent of restoration work required to safeguard & weatherproof building

It is important that we undertake work on buildings that are worthwhile, ensuring their historic integrity and sifting out those that are poor value for money or ineligible. Work must be based on clear evidence and not a speculative or substantial rebuild.

**Extensive rebuilding/structural work:** (Not eligible for this capital item – HAP may be appropriate)

- Building is ruinous
- Less than 75% of the walls standing or in very unstable state
- Little or no roof structure remaining, no clear evidence for form and materials to enable reinstatement

### Substantial work

- Walls are reasonably intact, but may have structural issues such as cracking or bulging, missing or damaged timber components, leaning walls
- Roof requires substantial repair work, which may include renewal of members or relaying/renewal of covering. Can include reinstatement where recent loss of roof, with clear evidence for its form and materials
- Missing, rotten or failed doors, windows, facias, ironmongery
- Decayed or eroded wall face, pointing or external render, causing water ingress/damage

**Minimal** (Not eligible for this capital item – HD I may be appropriate).

- Maintenance work only required. This includes -
- Limited patching of roof or reinstating slipped slates to restore weatherproof condition
- Renewal or repair of extant rainwater goods
- Repainting, minor repairs to timber work
- Repointing of brickwork
- No obvious defects affecting structural integrity

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## 16. Landscape amenity value

This is a visual and perceptual judgement, based on an assessment of the visual contribution that a farm building or farmstead makes to our enjoyment of the landscape. You should consider:

- Whether the building is in a landscape with high amenity value and visitor numbers (eg a National Park or AONB)
- its visual prominence in relationship to land form and other landscape features, particularly in long and middle-distance views;
- how much you would miss it if it was not there.

### High

The area has a good network of Public Rights of Way (PROWs) which in combination with local topography and land cover enable visitors and residents to appreciate farmsteads and their buildings – including the building/site under consideration - as part of landscape character. This is particularly relevant in areas of high amenity value such as AONBs and National Parks where visitors contribute to the local economy.

### Medium

There are good networks of PROWs, but farmsteads are not such a visually dominant part of the landscape and the site/building is not a major contributor to the landscape in long and middle-distance views.

### Low

The site is hidden from view and not located close to a PROW.

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