

This glossary is a preliminary document that can be refined and enhanced with additional photographs and drawings. Text by Jeremy Lake with Susanna Wade Martins and Bob Edwards.

Aisled Barn

A barn in which increased width was obtained through the use of aisles – narrow extensions along one or more sides or ends of the barn.

A series of posts stand in the place where the walls of an unaisled building would run. The roof is carried on beyond the line of the aisle posts so the height of the walls is reduced and the visual mass of the roof increased. Aisled barns are most strongly concentrated in East Anglia and the South East, and are generally associated with high-status buildings of the medieval period and sometimes later outside that area, including a group mostly dating from between 1570–1650 in the valleys in and around the southern Pennines. The latter had very different constructional techniques, and often accommodated stabling and cattle housing in the aisles.



1: The distribution of listed aisled barns in England. Aisled construction, used for domestic buildings from the 12th century at the highest level in society, was suited to the storage and constructional requirements of large barns. The weighting of the distribution is southern English, outliers being generally of a high status and dating from before 1550; a notable concentration in northern England is in the Halifax–Huddersfield area, where the wealth derived from a combination of farming and the cloth industry in the 15th and 16th centuries led to the construction of a notable group of aisled houses and barns. Aisled construction continued to be employed in southern England into the 19th century. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved.

English Heritage 100019088. 2005

2: Aisled barn, Cressing Temple, Essex. One of the earliest barns in England, one of two surviving from an estate of the Knights Hospitaller and erected with timber felled between 1259 and 1280. (South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands)

3: Aisled Barns in Northern England. A large group of aisled barns dating from the 15th to mid 17th centuries is concentrated around the South Pennines extending into Lancashire. This high-status barn built c. 1605 is of nine bays with oxstalls, added in c 1610 in part of one of the aisles, and stables. (Lancashire Valleys)

4: Aisled Barns in Southern England. A characteristic aisled timber-framed and thatched barn located in a village set in a chalk stream valley in Wiltshire. The size of the barn with its seven bays and two threshing floors indicates the importance of corn in this area. (Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs)

© Bob Edwards



Allotment

An area of land allotted to a farmer, often at the time of enclosure. The word changes meaning in the later 19th century, to mean 'land allotted to villagers for growing their own fruit and vegetables'.

Assart/Assarting

The removal of trees to extend or create farmland and settlement, usually reflecting land grants and tenancy arrangements in the medieval period. The result is small-scale and irregular fields.

Arable

Land cultivated for the growth of crops