

Kent Downs AONB Farmsteads Guidance



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This document is intended to inform change on farmsteads across the AONB and is designed to be used with the Kent Farmsteads Guidance. It is divided into three parts:

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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.



1 BACKGROUND

1.1 How to use this guidance

This document provides summary guidance on farmsteads in the Kent Downs AONB and provides information about farmsteads in each landscape character area. It is linked to generic guidance contained in the **Kent Farmsteads Guidance** [↗](#) on farmstead character, assessment and design. It can also be used with the existing suite of guidance documents provided by the Kent Downs AONB unit: *The Kent Downs Management Plan*, *The Kent Downs Landscape Design Handbook*, *The Kent Downs Rural Streets and Lanes: A Design Handbook*, and *The Farm Diversification Toolkit* which are all available on the Kent Downs website [<http://www.kentdowns.org.uk>].

KENT FARMSTEADS ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

See page 2 for contents of this guidance.

The **Kent Farmsteads Character Statement** [↗](#) provides fully-illustrated guidance to help the user identify the character and significance of farmsteads across Kent, and will be of particular use to those who wish to develop a more detailed understanding of the different types of farmstead layouts (farmstead types) and buildings (building types) The **Guidance on Recording and Research** [↗](#) summarises the main issues to consider when undertaking more detailed recording of a site, with a case study and research questions to guide the survey and assessment process.

The **Site Assessment Framework** [↗](#), will help the user identify the key issues for consideration at the earliest possible stage, before detailed proposals are drawn up.

Once the understanding of a site has been gained, the **Design Guidance** [↗](#) can be used. This provides illustrated guidance on design and new build, based on the range of historic farmstead types. It is intended to help applicants who are then considering how to achieve successful design, including new-build where it is considered appropriate and fitted to local plan policy. It summarises the main issues to consider when undertaking more detailed recording of a site, with a case study and research questions to guide the survey and assessment process.

THIS GUIDANCE

Guidance for the Kent Downs is presented under the same headings as Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Character Statements. This comprises fully-illustrated guidance on 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.

Guidance for the Kent Downs Landscape Character Areas is set out under:

- **Farmsteads character and significance**, to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB
- **Design guidance**, which suggests how change can reinforce or enhance this character.

SUMMARY OF THE KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE TO BE USED WITH THE AONB GUIDANCE

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.

1.2 Planning context and issues

Policy context

The CROW Act requires management plans to be produced, published and regularly revised by local authorities. By providing farmstead design guidance, this guidance contributes to the implementation of the management plan objectives and policies for the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2009-2014.

Key issues

- Across the AONB there are high rates of conversion to residential use, and of change to traditional farmsteads on working farms remaining in agricultural use. Listed and unlisted working buildings exhibit low rates of structural failure but very high rates of conversion by national standards.
- The result is that legible groups of traditional farmstead buildings are rare across the AONB. At a landscape scale, farmsteads remain distinctive for their form, mass and use of traditional materials.

1.3 Relationship to the planning application process

This guidance provides advice on the particular qualities of farmsteads in the Kent Downs AONB and can be used in conjunction with other guidance as available. An applicant/s and/or their agent, should always contact the local planning authority (LPA) to confirm whether any consents are needed. Local Plans/Local Development Frameworks including Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents will be available to give local guidance and may even be site specific.

1.4 Relationship to other design guidance

Kent Design Guide [↗](#)

Kent Design – a guide to sustainable development seeks to promote sustainability and good design throughout. Whilst this new guidance provides more detailed guidance relating to farmsteads within the AONB, the Kent Design Guide (published by Kent County Council) should also be followed in preparing development schemes.

Village Design Statements

A number of villages within the Kent Downs AONB have produced village design statements which describe the distinctive character of the village and the surrounding countryside and identify design principles based on local character. These should also be consulted where relevant. For information on Village Design Statements contact the Local Planning Authority/Parish Council or AONB Unit.

2 GUIDANCE FOR THE KENT DOWNS

The Kent Downs is divided into 13 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) shown on the map on the following page. Further guidance on each of these areas, with links to the Kent Farmsteads Guidance, is found in Part 3 below. The information gained can then be used:

- as prompts for site layout and design within each of the defined character areas;
- to inform approaches at the earliest possible stage, thus minimising the risk of obstacles developing at a later stage.

Introduction

A farmstead is the homestead of a farm where the farmhouse and some or all of the working farm buildings are located, some farms having field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. This section sets out:

The significance of farmsteads, which focuses on the survival of traditional farmsteads across the AONB.

The historic character of farmsteads, under the headings of:

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

- Farmstead and building types. Variations in the size of farms and the type of agriculture practised have given rise to a great variety of farmstead buildings and layouts, which in turn relate to the surrounding landscape.
- Materials and detail, focusing on how they have been used on traditional farmsteads.

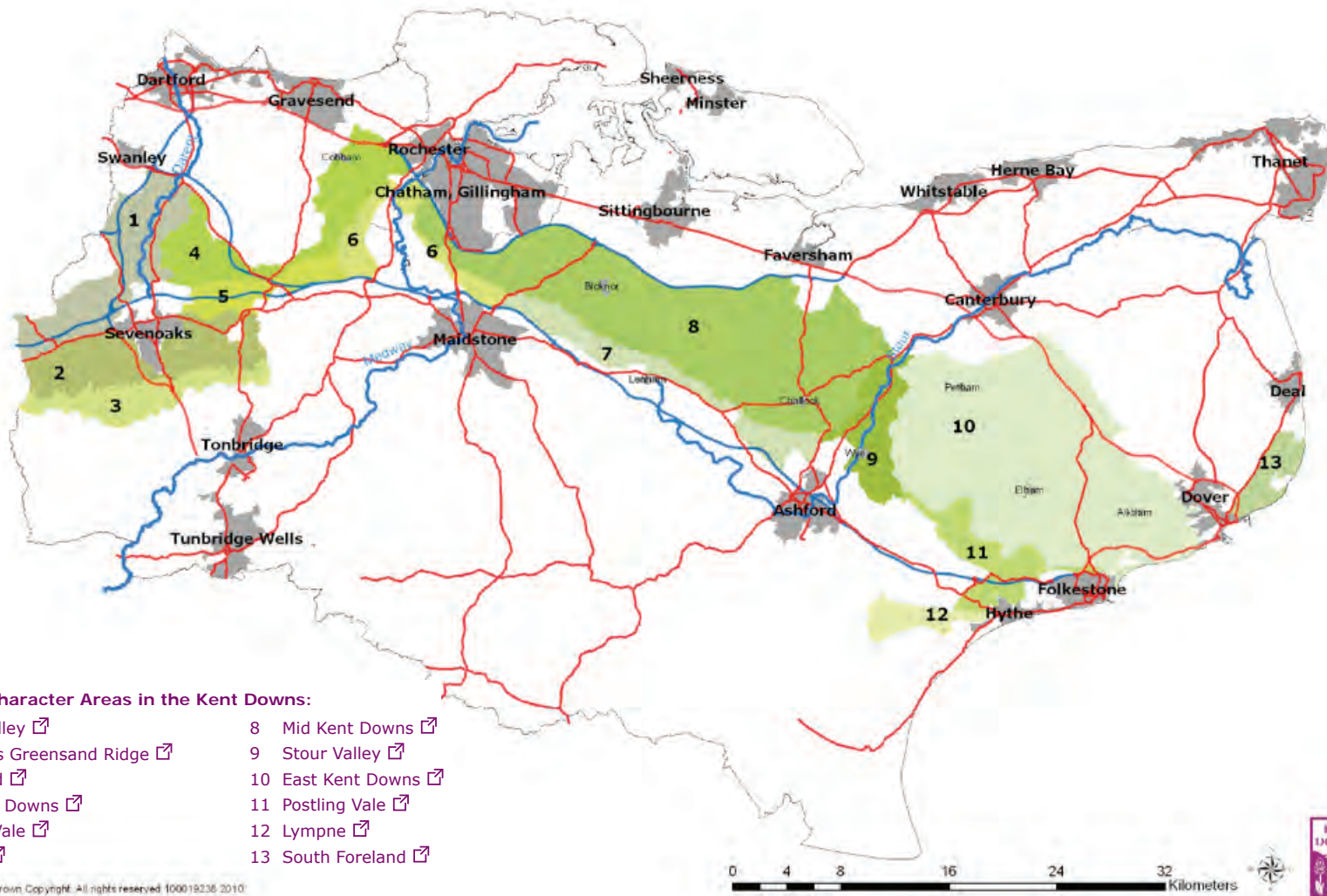
THE EVIDENCE BASE

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.

The Kent Farmsteads and Landscapes Project has rapidly identified and described 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. The data has been deposited with **Kent's Historic Environment Record (HER)** [↗](#).



Within the Kent Downs AONB is a rich variety of landscapes, from the open downland of the East Kent Downs to the anciently-enclosed wood pasture of the Low Weald. Photos © English Heritage NMR 27201 040 (top) and 27205 004 (bottom)



Landscape Character Areas in the Kent Downs:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Darent Valley | 8 Mid Kent Downs |
| 2 Sevenoaks Greensand Ridge | 9 Stour Valley |
| 3 Low Weald | 10 East Kent Downs |
| 4 West Kent Downs | 11 Postling Vale |
| 5 Kemsing Vale | 12 Lympne |
| 6 Medway | 13 South Foreland |

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See pages 8-11 for images of farmsteads in the Kent Downs AONB

Landscape and settlement

2.1 Significance

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

1. Its significance as a traditional farmstead.
2. Its special local and national significance.

Significance as a traditional farmstead

Significant traditional farmsteads and their buildings evidently contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of their area. They do this through their varied forms, use of materials and the way that they can be appreciated as part of their locality. Understanding the degree to which this historic character is legible or not, as a result of past change, is a critical first step. A significant traditional farmstead can be seen and appreciated as having one or more of the following:

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

Each of these headings are further explained below.

1) Buildings

Traditional farmsteads include:

- Vernacular buildings which clearly belong to local building traditions, and were very rarely built after the 1880s.
- Designed buildings which display national influences in terms of their architectural style.
- Buildings such as oast houses and covered yards which may be considered to be industrial in their scale, form and use of

materials such as iron and machine-made brick, but which are locally distinctive.

Excluded from this definition are prefabricated and standardised industrial buildings which display no local variation in their architectural character or distribution. They fall into two categories:

- Pre-1950. 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 (eg fruit and potato stores). Some fruit stores, usually sited close to railway stations, were built in this period. These can only be considered to have significance through their association with the most significant traditional farmstead groups, or if they are considered to be of special significance in a national or local context
- Post-1950 sheds which conform to modern animal welfare regulations.

2) Groups

Traditional farmsteads with the least change to their overall form and fabric are the most likely to make a positive contribution to landscape character, and to require management that takes this into account. Change over the 20th century has resulted in strong local differences in the degrees of survival of traditional farmsteads, meaning that the best-preserved groups have the greatest potential to have special local or national significance. The Kent Farmsteads and Landscapes Project has mapped the historic character of farmsteads from the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition maps of c.1890–1900, which marks the end of the period of traditional farmsteads development. Modern maps were then used to measure the degree of survival, the result being that:

8% (10 % in Kent) have experienced very little or no change in terms of their layout or the survival of buildings

36% (36 % in Kent) have experienced some change but retain more than 50% of their historic form

30% (25% in Kent) retain some working buildings but less than 50% of their historic form

17% (16% in Kent) have lost all their working buildings, retaining only the farmhouse

1.5% (1% in Kent) have lost all their buildings but the site remains a farmstead with modern buildings

7% (11% in Kent) have been completely lost from the landscape.

3) Setting

Farmsteads that are associated with well-preserved settings, meaning that they can be understood and appreciated as part of the landscapes and settlements within which they developed, are more significant than those whose contexts have been substantially changed or lost through redevelopment. Broadly, the parts of the AONB within the Low Weald and Wealden Greensand (the Low Weald LCA 63.6%) and the Sevenoaks Ridge LCA (56%) are the areas that have the highest proportion of farmsteads that have retained more than 50% loss of historic form. The main downland areas of West Kent Downs (34.5%) and East Kent Downs (30%), together with Postling Vale LCA (32.1%) and Lympne LCA (33.3%), have been subject to some of the highest levels of change that has resulted in the complete loss of farmstead character.

Special local and national significance

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

Landscape and settlement context

- 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.
- Farmsteads that have a clear visual and/or historic relationship to historic parks and gardens.

Farmstead groups

- Any groups including a house and working building of 17th century or earlier date are of great importance. The Kent Downs has a high proportion of these by national standards. 33.2% of recorded farmsteads have pre-1700 houses, and 6.8% a pre-1700 working building.
- Substantially intact traditional farmstead groups whose historic character and buildings are clearly legible, and that are noted as locally distinctive (see Part 3 for guidance on the Landscape Character Areas).
- Well-documented and notable farmsteads built to the designs of architects or engineers, which can post-date 1900. These can include industrial groups which are built to regular courtyard plans (sometimes with covered yards) and display the use of industrial building techniques. There are no recorded examples of these in the Kent Downs AONB.

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.
- 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 and detail

- 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 are very rare in Kent.

2.2 Historic character

Historic development

Farmsteads and their buildings reflect the development of agricultural regions and areas. In the Kent Downs AONB the principal agricultural processes from the medieval period have been arable farming, especially in the downlands and vales, and cattle rearing and fattening, a feature of the Weald in particular. Fruit growing and market gardening developed on an industrial scale from the mid 19th century. The hop industry, which developed from the 16th century, reached its peak in 1878 when Kent produced 65% of national output.

Landscape and settlement

The Kent Downs AONB contains a broad diversity of landscape types, from the chalk downs to vale landscapes and the anciently-enclosed Wealden landscapes around Sevenoaks. The AONB is characterised by high densities of dispersed settlement. The farmsteads are mostly sited along the existing road network (medieval and earlier routeways). Farmsteads located within villages are concentrated within the Darent Valley LCA where 25% of farmsteads were in villages, the East Kent Downs (17.2%) and Sevenoaks Ridge LCA (17%) compared to the AONB and county averages of 15%. The West Kent Downs LCA had just 8.6% of its farmsteads located within villages at the end of the 19th century.

Large farmsteads, often manorial, can be occasionally found in close proximity to a medieval church or chapel away from other settlement representing an early church/manor relationship. Farmsteads associated with parkland are concentrated in the Sevenoaks Ridge LCA (11%) against an AONB average of 2.8%.

The fields are generally large-scale to the lower slopes, valley bottoms and the downland plateaux, and smaller scale in the Wealden landscapes to the north of the AONB.

The plan and text on pages 9-10 summarises the principal farmstead types found across the AONB, with the percentages noting the proportion recorded from the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps of c1900.

Farmstead types

Courtyard plans (79.7% of recorded farmsteads in the AONB) are the predominant plan type in the south-east of England. They have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged around one or more yards. The largest are concentrated in the arable eastern downlands and vales and the smallest in the central and western part of the AONB. Courtyard plan farmsteads subdivide into:

a-d) Loose Courtyard farmsteads (37%) which have buildings loosely arranged around one (a) or more (b – 2; c – 3; d – 4) sides of a yard. Across the AONB 27.9% of loose courtyard plans have lost their traditional farmstead character, and 43.2% retain more than 50% of their traditional form,

e-j) Regular Courtyard farmsteads (28.2%) which consist of linked ranges, formally arranged around one or more yards, and subdivide into:

- L-plans (e)
- U-plans (f)
- F-, E-, T-, H- or Z-shaped plans (g and h)
- full courtyard plans (i)
- and multi-yard plans (j) which are typically the largest in scale.

Regular courtyard plans generally have been less susceptible to complete loss of farmstead character. They also represent the group within the AONB that has the highest proportion (47.6%) of sites that retain more than 50% of their historic form.

k) L-plans with additional detached buildings to the third or fourth sides which are generally large to very large in scale (14.5%).

Dispersed plans (18.4% of recorded farmsteads in the AONB), where the buildings and yards are scattered within the overall boundary of the farmstead, are concentrated in Darent Valley and Sevenoaks Ridge LCAs in the west and Lympne LCA in the east. They subdivide into:

- l) dispersed clusters where the working buildings are dispersed within the boundary of the steading.

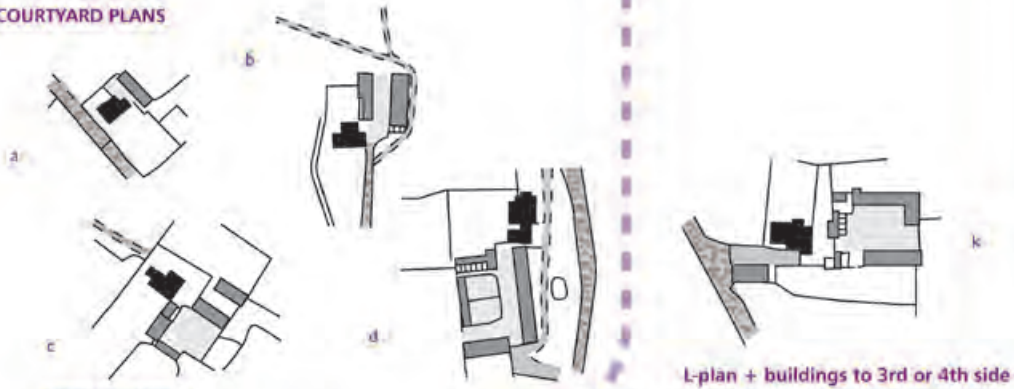
- m) dispersed driftways which are dominated by the routeways to them, and which often served to move stock from one farming zone to another.
- n) dispersed multi-yards, which are large-scale farmsteads containing two or more detached yards, often with other scattered buildings.

Dispersed plan types show the highest levels of change across the main plan type groups – 36.8% of sites have lost their traditional farmstead character. 39.2% of dispersed plan farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form.

Other plan types are very uncommon (1.5% of recorded farmsteads in the AONB) being mostly found in the Mid Kent Downs, Stour Valley and East Kent Downs LCAs. These small scale farmsteads include:

- o) linear farmsteads, where the houses and working buildings are attached and in-line
- p) where they have been extended or planned with additional working buildings to make an L-shaped range
- q) parallel plans where the working buildings are placed opposite and parallel to the house and attached working buildings with a narrow area between. They have often developed from linear farmsteads
- r) row plans, often medium as well as small in scale, where the working buildings are attached in-line and form a long row.

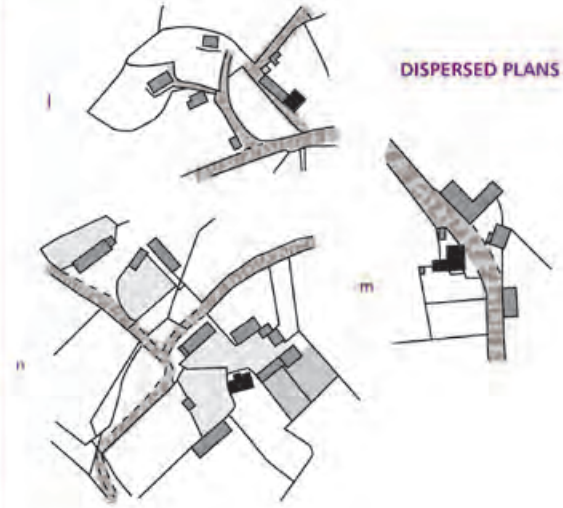
COURTYARD PLANS



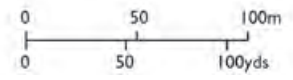
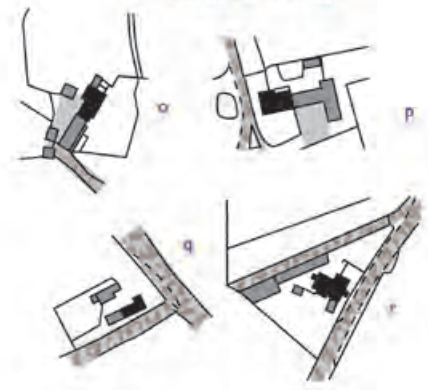
Loose courtyards

L-plan + buildings to 3rd or 4th side

DISPERSED PLANS



OTHER PLAN TYPES



Farmstead types



Large-scale loose courtyard farmstead, East Kent Downs (Area 10). These large farmsteads are typically marked by one or more large barns and a farmhouse of 17th century or earlier date, the granary, stabling and cattle housing built around the yard being much lower in profile.



Looking towards the yard of a large-scale mid 19th century regular courtyard farmstead in the East Kent Downs (Area 10). The low building to the right provides housing for cattle, and the large range is a barn for housing and processing harvested corn and milling feed for the livestock.



Detached buildings with hipped and half-hipped roofs are typical of most farmsteads across the AONB, as also are the low profiles of most buildings in the group except the house and the barn. Hythe Escarpment, Area 12.







Loose courtyard arrangements are the predominant farmstead layout in the Kent Downs AONB, from the Low Weald (left) to the East Kent Downs (centre) and the Darent Valley (right). Photos © English Heritage NMR 27205 013, 27201 025 and 27205 044

Building types

Building Types

Within each farmstead there may survive a range of historic building types, in particular:

- **Threshing barns** , which are largest in scale on the downs.
- Split-level combination barns of the mid-late 19th century.
- Some **oast houses** , typically of 19th century date.
- **Granaries**  are typically of 18th or 19th century date, timber-framed and set on staddle stones or sited over cartshed and stable ranges.
- **Cattle housing** , usually in the form of shelter sheds around sheds.
- A small number of late 18th or early 19th century outfarms survive on the downs, typically with barn and flanking shelter sheds facing into yards.



The survival of aisled barns and fine timber-framed houses dating from the 15th century testifies to the growing wealth of farmers, particularly within and either side of the Stour Valley on the downs. This example is sited in the Mid Kent Downs (Area 7).



Looking into the yard of a small farmstead now in residential use in the Mid Kent Downs. In the foreground, to the right of the entrance, is the distinctive porch and projecting aisles of a 3-bay barn, and to the left is a 17th century or earlier house.



Small-scale unaisled barns with gabled roofs were scattered across the AONB but concentrated on the small-scale farmsteads that surrounded Sevenoaks.



Detached granaries of this type, raised on mushroom-shaped staddle stones, are found across the arable-farming vales and downlands of the AONB.

Building types continued



Oasts for storing and drying hops are found across the AONB, and most examples with square (as here) or round kilns date from the 19th century. Any earlier examples, including evidence for earlier timber-framed oasts, are very rare.



Small-scale farmsteads were a feature of the downlands and the area around Sevenoaks, being typically found in settlements and areas which were most difficult to farm, but few remained in farming use by the Second World War. They are a distinctive feature of the AONB, as well as the larger-scale farms that had developed since the medieval period.



The distinctive profile of a large aisled barn. Aisled barns, as here at Lenham in the Hollingbourne Vale, date from the medieval period and continued to be built into the 19th century across the vales and downlands of the AONB.



It was common for timber-framed barns to be reclad in brick, as here at Brabourne (Postling Vale, Area 11), or stone and for the roof to then be finished with a gable rather than the distinctive hip or half hip.



An aisled barn typical of the medium-scale barns of the Kent Downs. (© Kent Downs AONB)

Materials and detail

Materials and Detail

Working farm buildings in stone and brick, roofed with tile or slate, increasingly replaced buildings in clay, timber and thatch from the later 18th century. Building materials such as softwood timber, brick, slate and iron could also be imported onto the farm via coastal and river ports, canals and rail.

- Timber-framing was used from the medieval period for houses and farm buildings. Its use for the latter continued into the 19th century. Framed farm buildings were clad in weatherboard or plain tile hanging, the latter contrasting with the ornamental hanging occasionally used for houses.
- Bricks made from the local clays were used from the 18th century for farm buildings, in some cases earlier for houses.
- A distinctive 19th century walling technique was the use of brick quoins and bands combined with flint, providing an overall decorative effect.
- Throughout the AONB lower greensand outcrops provided 'ragstone'. This was widely used across Kent from the medieval period, and is mostly associated with 19th century farm buildings.
- Galleting – the use of small flints and stone in thick mortar joints – was used in flint and stone walls. It is a technique found in other southern English landscapes, including the downlands.
- Hipped and half-hipped clay tile roofs are a strong feature, to typically large-scale houses, barns and oast houses, and smaller-scale cattle housing and other structures.



BRICK AND FLINT

Brick quoining is a typical feature of the flint walling used across the AONB.



GALLETING

Sandstone rubble with small stones used for the mortar joints, a technique called galletting. (© Bob Edwards)



WEATHERBOARD

Weatherboard is a typical cladding material for timber-framed farm buildings across the AONB.



BRICK AND RAGSTONE

This shows the richness of detail found on traditional farmstead buildings – plain clay tiles to the roof, a plank door set within a brick-built upper floor and an earlier ground floor of coursed ragstone.

3 CHARACTER AREA STATEMENTS

Listed below are the Kent Downs AONB areas, cross-referred to the National Character Areas that they sit within as outlined in Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance. For a map of the AONB and its character areas see page 7 (in Part 2: Landscape and Settlement)

1. **Darent Valley**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.
2. **Sevenoaks Greensand Ridge**
This area sits within the Wealden Greensand on pp. 16-19.
3. **Low Weald**
This area sits within the Low Weald on pp. 20-23.
4. **West Kent Downs**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.
5. **Kemsing Vale**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.
6. **Medway**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.
7. **Hollingbourne Vale**
This area sits within the Wealden Greensand on pp. 16-19.
8. **Mid Kent Downs**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.
9. **Stour Valley**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.
10. **East Kent Downs**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.
11. **Postling Vale**
This area sits within the Wealden Greensand on pp. 16-19.
12. **Lympne**
This area sits within the Romney Marshes on pp. 28-30.
13. **South Foreland**
This area sits within the North Kent Downs on pp. 10-15.

1 Darent Valley (Brasted to Farningham)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- An area with an arable-based farming with a long history of estate management, extending to the Roman and Iron Age periods as at Lullingstone. Farms had access to a diversity of farming landscapes, from meadows around the Darent to the flanking greensand ridge and the downs.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- Low density of large farmsteads set within a landscape of large-scale fields inherited from the medieval period and earlier.
- Smaller fields to the scarps and the north west which result from the piecemeal enclosure of woodland and subsequent reorganisation.
- 25% of recorded farmsteads were located within villages (AONB average 15%).

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Medium-scale loose courtyard and larger regular courtyard farmsteads had developed in the Darent Valley by the late 19th century, including cattle housing, stables and granaries. Most were the result of rebuilding in the early-mid 19th century, with the

survival of occasional earlier large threshing barns. Regular Multi-yard plans represent 20% of recorded farmsteads and full regular courtyards (5.6%) were also above the AONB average of 3.2%.

- Dispersed plans, predominantly Dispersed Cluster farmsteads represented by 23% of recorded farmsteads.
- Smaller farmsteads (often to L-shaped and U-plan), often with earlier buildings, in south of the LCA.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Most farmsteads result from comprehensive 19th century rebuilding in flint and brick, those in use now marked by large groups of sheds. Timber frame is mostly confined to 17th century and earlier houses and some barns.

Significance

- 21% of farmsteads retain a pre-1700 farmhouse, below the AONB average of 33.2%. There is a low level of survival of pre-1700 working buildings and no farmsteads have a pre-1700 farmhouse and one or more working buildings.
- The area has a high proportion of farmsteads with an 18th century farmhouse (21% compared to the AONB average of 10.9%).
- Survival of farmsteads which retain more than 50% of their historic form is comparable to the AONB and county average at 46.4%.

Design guidance

- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws where they stand close to farmsteads.
- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

2 Sevenoaks Greensand Ridge (Westerham to Ightham)

See Part 3 of the [Kent Farmsteads Guidance](#) for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- The ridge extends either side of Sevenoaks, and was an area of medium-scale farms which by the late 19th century combined arable, grazing and fruit growing, together with the supply of milk and other products by rail to London. Most farmsteads have from that period fallen out of agricultural use, the result being a high density of 19th century and earlier houses and of converted farmsteads that have become absorbed into the extensive residential areas around Sevenoaks.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- High density of farmsteads and dispersed settlement although there is a slightly higher percentage of farmsteads recorded within villages (17% compared to the AONB average of 15%).
- The farmsteads relate to a wooded landscape with heaths, small orchards and fields with irregular boundaries relating to medieval woodland clearance. This was an area probably exploited during the prehistoric period but abandoned to woodland when the soils began to deteriorate, the open areas of common land being the result of use for grazing by outlying manors.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscape.
- Use split chestnut post and rail fencing.
- Reinforce ragstone walls to boundaries, the character of shelterbelts, cobnut plantations and orchards where they exist.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Predominant pattern of regular courtyard farmsteads, mostly regular multi-yard plans which represent 23% of recorded farmsteads.
- This area has the highest proportion of dispersed plans in the AONB (28%), mainly consisting of dispersed clusters with some dispersed multi-yard plans.
- Small loose courtyard groups with buildings to one or two sides of the yard, reflecting piecemeal development over time.
- Oasts and barns (including 17th century and earlier aisled barns) dominate the farmstead groups, with other working buildings being typically small scale.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Predominant materials are 19th century brick and flint, with greensand/ragstone and earlier timber frame. Plain tile hanging and weatherboard to timber frames. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- This area has slightly below the AONB average of farmsteads with pre-1700 farmhouses or working buildings (27% with early farmhouses and 6% with early working buildings). Very few farmsteads retain both a pre-1700 farmhouse and one or more pre-1700 working buildings.
- There is a higher proportion of farmsteads that retain more than 50% of their historic form (56%) compared to the AONB and county averages of 46%.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

3 Low Weald (Crockham Hill to Shipbourne)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- Larger farms and estates developed in this area than in the rest of the Low Weald, an area of medium-scale farms and dispersed settlement which by the late 19th century combined arable, dairying and fruit growing. Many farms in this area supplied milk to London by this period. The great majority of farmsteads have fallen out of agricultural use and become absorbed into extensive residential areas around Sevenoaks.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- Settlement is largely dispersed with few villages or hamlets
- The fields mostly result from the clearance of woodland in the medieval period and have been subject to varying rates of enlargement and change since, and are interspersed with greens, commons and blocks of woodland including to the scarps.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Predominant pattern of regular courtyard farmsteads which represent 43.9% of recorded farmsteads including regular multi-yard plans (16.7%). These farmsteads are concentrated along the northern part of the LCA, mainly falling within the Wealden

- Greensand NCA. There is also a high proportion of full regular courtyard plans (10.6% against the AONB average of 3.2%), Most of these plans are the result of wholesale rebuilding in the mid-late 19th century.
- Dispersed plans represented 22.7% of recorded farmsteads, predominantly dispersed cluster plans (13.6%) but also a higher proportion of dispersed multi-yard plans (9.1%) than compared to the AONB average 3.2%.
 - Loose courtyard plans, mainly with buildings to two or three sides of the yard, represents 21.2% of recorded sites.
 - Some oasts and barns, but multi-functional building ranges are predominant.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Mix of flint, brick, ragstone and timber frame. Plain tile hanging and weatherboard to timber frame. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- 28.8% of farmsteads retain a pre-1700 farmhouse, slightly below the AONB average of 33.2%. 7.5% of farmsteads have a pre-1700 working building, slightly above the AONB average.
- A high proportion of farmsteads (63.6%) retain more than 50% of their historic form, the highest percentage within the AONB.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce the character of shelterbelts, chestnut fencing, cobnut plantations and orchards where they exist.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws, including woodland boundaries.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

4 West Kent Downs (West Kingsdown to Shorne)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- The Kent Downs (especially to the east – see Area 10) were more difficult to cultivate for large-scale arable agriculture than the other southern English downlands, the result being the survival of large numbers of small-medium scale farmsteads into the 20th century.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- High density of dispersed settlement including medium to small-scale farmsteads mostly sited along the existing road network (medieval and earlier routeways), in part the result of 19th/20th century and earlier development on the edge of greens. Some medieval villages such as Cobham, but otherwise the larger settlements represent 20th century growth around major roads.
- Areas of medium-small scale fields dating from the medieval period interspersed with large-scale fields to plateaux – reflecting 19th century intensification of arable farming and the establishment of larger farms - with pre-18th century wavy boundaries. Thick shaws and blocks of woodland.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Predominant pattern of loose courtyard farmsteads which represent 46.5% of recorded farmsteads. These were

predominantly groups with building to two sides of the yard but also included a higher proportion of large courtyards with buildings to four sides of the yard (10.3% compared to the AONB average of 5.2% and the county average of 3.5%).

- 29.2% of farmsteads were of regular courtyard form, predominantly regular multi-yard plans. There were few larger regular plan types.
- Low levels of dispersed cluster and multi-yard plans were recorded.
- Most traditional buildings are small-scale and dating from the mid-late 19th century. Some distinctive threshing barns, with granaries and stables.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Predominant materials are brick and flint. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- 34.5% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form. This is the lowest percentage in this category for any LCA within the AONB.
- The area also has a lower than average percentage of pre-1700 farm buildings; 24.1% have a pre-1700 farmhouse and 1.7% of farmsteads have an early working building (AONB averages 33.2% and 6.8%).

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws, including woodland boundaries.
- Reinforce the character of orchards and plantations where they exist.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

See Part 3 of the [Kent Farmsteads Guidance](#) for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

5 Kemsing Vale (Kemsing to Ryarsh)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- Historically an area of mixed arable and fruit growing with pasture. Larger farms developed in this area than in the adjacent Greensand Ridge.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- A low density of farmsteads relates to an ancient pattern (medieval and earlier) of very large-scale regular fields to the scarp foot of the downs and the smaller-scale and more irregular patterns of fields to the south, with trees to low hedgerows.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Regular courtyard farmsteads were predominant due to a high proportion of regular multi-yard plans (35.5%).
- Loose courtyard plans with buildings to one to three sides of the yard represented 22.6% of recorded farmsteads.
- 20th century change has further reinforced the larger-scale open character of this landscape, with large groups of sheds to working farms interspersed with areas of post-1950 settlement expansion.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Predominant walling materials are flint and brick. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- 45.1% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form. This is slightly above the AONB average and just below the county average.
- 61.3% of farmsteads have a pre-1700 farmhouse. This is well above the AONB average of 33.2%. 9.7% have pre-1700 working buildings, also above the AONB average.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network, interspersed with trees.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

6 Medway (from Birling to Cuxton, Wouldham to Aylesford)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- The large scale of the farmsteads reflects a long history of estates, extending into the Roman period and Iron Age, that exploited the rich pastures and arable along the Medway with access to the downs.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- A low density of large-scale farmsteads had developed within the very large fields of this area by the late 19th century.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Loose courtyard plans, mainly groups with buildings to three sides of the yard, were predominant representing 41.2%.
- 38.5% of recorded farmsteads were of regular courtyard form, predominantly regular multi-yard plans.
- Threshing barns with shelter sheds to cattle yards are common.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Predominant walling materials are flint, brick and tile. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance [↗](#)

- 55.9% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form, above the AONB average of 44.6%.
- There is a relatively high level of survival of early buildings; 44.1% of farmsteads retain a pre-1700 farmhouse and 11.7% have a pre-1700 working building, both figures are higher than the AONB average.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing sparse hedge network.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

7 Hollingbourne Vale

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- This vale at the foot of the downs has a long history of settlement, with Roman and earlier estates. It provided rich arable land which combined with fruit growing encouraged the development of large farms.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- Low density of farmsteads which developed away from the villages on the spring line.
- Large-scale fields, with a mix of regular and earlier wavy boundaries.
- 20th century change has further reinforced the larger-scale open character of this landscape, with large groups of sheds to working farms interspersed with areas of post-1950 settlement expansion that are concentrated around earlier settlements.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Medium to large-scale loose courtyard and regular courtyard farmsteads had developed within a network of large-scale fields. 32% of farmsteads were of regular plan types, predominantly regular multi-yards. 25.5% were loose courtyards with groups with

- buildings to two sides of the yard forming the majority (19.6%).
- The proportion of dispersed plan types (13.7%) is lower in this area than the average across the AONB (18.4%).
- Some pockets of smaller-scale farms, usually in areas where earlier small-scale patterns of enclosure have been retained.
- Key farmstead building types are threshing barns (including large aisled barns dating from the medieval period), granaries, stables and oasthouses. Multi-functional ranges with cattle housing are typical.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Predominant walling materials are brick with some flint and ragstone. High levels of pre-19th century timber frame, clad in plain tile hanging and weatherboard. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- 51% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form, slightly above the AONB average of 44.6%. This area has the lowest level of complete loss of traditional farmstead character within the AONB (13.8%).
- 39.2% of farmsteads have a pre-1700 farmhouse and 11.7% have a pre-1700 working building. The percentage of farmsteads with an 18th century house is higher at 13.7% than the AONB average of 10.9%.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws, including woodland boundaries.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

8 Mid Kent Downs (Boxley to Selling)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- The Kent Downs were more difficult to cultivate for large-scale arable agriculture than the other southern English downlands, the result being the survival of large numbers of small-medium scale farmsteads into the 20th century. These were interspersed with some large farms, usually sited off the road network and most likely to have remained in agriculture. Corn production and grazing was often combined with the growing of fruit and hops in large quantities.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- Farmsteads are predominantly dispersed whilst 14% were located in villages.
- Fields result from a long process of medieval and later enclosure (woodland clearance and later enlargement and reorganisation) interspersed with blocks of ancient and conifer woodland.
- Some isolated farmsteads with shelter belts, and many sited close to orchards and hop gardens.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Loose courtyard farmsteads were the most common plan types representing 46.3% of recorded farmsteads. These were mainly groups with buildings to two or three sides of the yard with

some small and large types. A further 11.2% were plans with an L-range and a building to the third side of the yard.

- 23.3% of farmsteads were of regular courtyard form, predominantly regular multi-yard plans.
- Most prominent traditional farm buildings are threshing barns, displaying a wide range of scales typical of this area. Oast houses are also a prominent building type.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Timber frame commonly used for working buildings, but most 19th century examples of built of ragstone, brick and flint. Plain tile hanging and weatherboard to timber frame. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- 47.9% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form, slightly above the AONB average of 44.6%.
- 44.6% of farmsteads have a pre-1700 farmhouse, well above the AONB average of 33.2%. 9.6% of farmsteads have a pre-1700 working building, just above the AONB and county averages. This area has the highest concentration of farmsteads with both a pre-1700 house and one of more pre-1700 working buildings. These sites are of high significance.
- High rates of conversion to residential use, and of change to traditional farmsteads on working farms remaining in agricultural use.
- Unconverted threshing barns, especially those of 3 bays relating to small-scale farmstead groups, are rare.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws, including woodland boundaries.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

9 Stour Valley (Brook to Chartham)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- The Stour Valley has a long history of estate centres, extending into the Roman period and Iron Age, that exploited the rich pastures and arable farming along the Medway with access to the downs.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- Low density of isolated farmsteads, which result from development away from villages such as Wye and historic estate centres.
- Farmsteads developed within the context of very large-scale regular enclosed fields, scarp-top woodlands and riverside pastures.
- 4.2% of farmsteads are related to landscaped parks, slightly above the AONB average of 2.8%.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Regular courtyard plans (38.3%) were predominant and represented a mixture of regular L-plan yards and regular multi-yard plans.
- Loose courtyard plans with buildings to three sides of the yard are characteristic.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws, including woodland boundaries.

- 20th century change has further reinforced the larger-scale open character of this landscape, with large groups of sheds to working farms interspersed with areas of post-1950 settlement expansion.
- Large threshing barns, including aisled barns, dating from the medieval period. Other distinctive buildings are granaries and stables, as well as cattle housing.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Timber frame commonly used for working buildings, but most 19th century examples of built of ragstone, brick and flint. Plain tile hanging and weatherboard to timber frame. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- 53.2% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form, above the AONB average of 44.6%.
- 44.7% of farmsteads have a pre-1700 farmhouse, above the AONB average of 33.2%. This area also has a high rate of survival of pre-1700 working buildings, 19.1% of farmsteads having an early building compared to the AONB average of 6.8%.
- High rates of conversion to residential use, and of change to traditional farmsteads on working farms remaining in agricultural use. The result is that legible groups of traditional farmstead buildings are very rare.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

10 East Kent Downs (Crundale, Bridge, Capel-le-Ferne to Lyminge)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- A higher incidence of chalk-with-flints made most of this area more difficult to farm than the West Kent Downs, with more woodland. As a result large numbers of small-medium scale farmsteads survived into the late 19th century, but most have since passed out of agricultural use.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- Large farms are usually sited off the road network and are most likely to have remained in agriculture. Larger farms reflect, particularly to the east and in the broad valleys and scarps, the development of large-scale and arable-based farms from the 15th century.
- This part of the downs has a higher rate of farmsteads located within villages (17.2%) compared to the other two main downland areas of West Kent Downs (8.6%) and Mid Kent Downs (14.0%).
- Some isolated farmsteads with shelter belts, and many sited in relationship to wooded slopes close to orchards and hop gardens.
- Fields result from a long process of medieval and later enclosure (woodland clearance and later enlargement and reorganisation) interspersed with blocks of ancient and conifer woodland.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Loose courtyard plans reflecting a long history of development

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws, including woodland boundaries.

and the most likely to include 17th century and earlier barns are the predominant plan type representing 39.5% of recorded farmsteads. Groups with buildings to two or three sides of the yard being the most common.

- In the East Kent Downs there is evidence of 19th century farmstead improvements creating regular L-, U-plan and multi-yard type farmsteads but the larger regular courtyard plan farmsteads are rare.
- Threshing barns dating from the medieval period, including aisled barns. Granaries and stables, with cart sheds, on the larger farms.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Timber frame commonly used for working buildings, but most 19th century examples are built of ragstone, brick and flint. Some use of cobbles. Plain tile hanging and weatherboard to timber frame. Predominant roofing of plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- Farmsteads in this area have been subject to some of the highest rates of change within the AONB. 30% of farmsteads have lost traditional farmstead character although a large proportion of these retain the farmhouse. 37.3% of sites retain more than 50% of the historic form of the farmstead, well below the AONB average of 44.6%.
- There is a relatively low survival of farmsteads retaining pre-1700 buildings compared to some parts of the AONB; 26.1% retain a pre-1700 farmhouse and 3.9% an early working building. Sites with pre-1700 buildings are concentrated with the Petham and Elham (western and central) parts of the LCA.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

11 Postling Vale (Brabourne to Newington)

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- An area of mixed arable agriculture, with medium-sized farms.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- A high density of dispersed farmsteads with settlement nuclei developing in the 19th and 20th centuries around road junctions and occasionally medieval churches.
- 17% of farmsteads were located within villages, slightly above the AONB average.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- A mix of farmstead scales and types had developed in this area by the late 19th century; loose courtyard groups with buildings to two sides of the yard or four sides of the yard were the most common forms of this plan type. Regular U-plan farmsteads and full regular courtyard plans were also found in higher percentages in this area than in many other areas within the AONB. These farmsteads developed within the context of an equally varied scale of fields that date to the medieval period and result from later enlargement and alteration.

- Farmstead buildings display a range of dates, with large numbers of 3 to 5-bay 17th-18th century barns and later animal housing.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Brick and tile are dominant, often recladding earlier timber frame. Plain tile hanging and weatherboard to timber frame where it survives. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- This area has been subject to relatively high rates of loss compared to other parts of the AONB; 32.1% of farmsteads have lost their traditional farmstead character. 37.7% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form, below the AONB average of 44.6%.
- 32.1% of farmsteads have a surviving pre-1700 farmhouse and 6.9% have a pre-1700 working building.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network and to shaws, including woodland boundaries.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

12 Lympe

See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- This area displays strong contrasts between the medium-large scale mixed arable and livestock farmsteads overlooking Romney Marsh, and the small scattered farms of the Marsh itself where large numbers of sheep and cattle from other areas were fattened over summer.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- A small area with a low density of dispersed farmsteads, sited along the road network and down their own tracks, with a few small villages that mostly result from post-1950 settlement concentrated around existing settlement nuclei.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Medium to large-scale loose courtyard farmsteads, typically with buildings to two to three sides of the yard are predominant (groups with buildings to two sides of the yard being most common at 16.6% and three sides having 11.1%). These groups often have distinctive large barns, on Lympe.
- Regular courtyard farmsteads on Romney Marsh had developed

within this landscape by the late 19th century, mostly the result of earlier 19th century rebuilding. These typically formed L-plans or multi-yard plans. 20th century change has further reinforced the larger-scale open character of this landscape, with large groups of sheds to working farms.

- 27.7% of farmsteads in this area were dispersed plan types, mainly dispersed cluster plans.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Predominant walling materials are ragstone, brick and tile with some early timber frame. Plain tile hanging and weatherboard to timber frame where it survives. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some Welsh slate.

Significance

- This area has been subject to the highest level of change within the AONB with 33.3% of farmsteads having lost their traditional farmstead character. 38.8% of farmsteads retain more than 50% of their historic form.
- 16.6% of farmsteads retain a pre-1700 farmhouse, well below the AONB average of 33.2%, and no farmsteads have early working buildings.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network around historic farmsteads.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

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See Part 3 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance for further information under each of these headings [↗](#)

Farmsteads character

Set out below are the special characteristics of farmstead heritage in your area. This is intended to help you recognise what is special in your particular part of the Kent Downs AONB. For further advice use Part 4 of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance.

Historical Development [↗](#)

- An area of large-scale arable farming combined with sheep and cattle.

Landscape and Settlement [↗](#)

- Low density of dispersed farmsteads, sited along the road network and down their own tracks. Historically much of this area was open downland, with settlements concentrated in the fertile dry valleys. Large regular fields established from the 16th century follow the grain of the topography.

Farmstead and Building Types [↗](#)

- Large-scale loose courtyard farmsteads had developed in this area by the late 19th century, within the context of very large-scale regular enclosed fields. 30.8% of farmsteads were the larger loose courtyard types with buildings to three of four sides of the yard and 7.7% had an L-range and buildings to the third and fourth sides of the yard. 20th century change has further reinforced the larger-scale open character of this landscape, with large groups of sheds to working farms interspersed with areas of post-1950 settlement expansion.

- Regular plan forms were predominantly regular multi-yard plans (23.1%) and regular L-plans 15.4%, both above the AONB average.
- Dispersed plans, split equally between clusters and multi-yards (7.7% each) were present but below the AONB average.

Materials and Detail [↗](#)

- Predominant walling materials are chalk, brick and tile with some early timber frame. Predominant roofing materials are plain tile with some use of Welsh slate.

Significance

- Farmsteads in this area have been subject to lower levels of loss of traditional character (15.4%) compared to most other areas in the AONB. However, a low proportion of farmsteads (7.7%) retain more than 50% of their historic form.
- This is an area with a low survival of early buildings, 23.1% of farmsteads retaining a pre-1700 farmhouse and there being no recorded early working buildings.

Design guidance

- Take opportunities to reinforce and enhance the historic character of farmsteads and link them to their surrounding landscapes.
- Reinforce and link boundaries to the existing hedge network.
- Use shelter belts to isolated farmsteads.

[Click to access the Site Assessment Framework \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the Kent Farmsteads Design Guidance \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

[Click to access the guidance for this area in the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook \[↗\]\(#\)](#)

