

KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

PART 3

KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENTS



High Weald



North Kent Downs



Thames Estuary



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

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SUMMARY OF HISTORIC FARMSTEADS IN KENT

1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Farmsteads and their buildings reflect the development of agricultural regions and areas. In Kent the principal agricultural processes from the medieval period have been arable farming, especially in the Isle of Thanet and northern Kent, and cattle rearing and fattening, a feature of the Weald in particular and in combination with sheep in the coastal marshlands. Fruit growing and market gardening developed on an industrial scale from the mid 19th century. Market gardening, with nurseries, orchards and storehouses, developed around stations such as at Paddock Wood, and were concentrated along the fertile coastal margins of north Kent. The hop industry, which developed from the 16th century, reached its peak in 1878 when Kent produced 65% of national output. Hops were often grown in association with other fruits.

2 LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT

Historic farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of the rural landscape and how it has changed over centuries. Rural settlement in Kent is dominated by hamlets and isolated farmsteads that date from the medieval period, which is also the pattern found in large parts of eastern and western England. The Weald has the highest densities of farmsteads, often small in scale, which are concentrated in areas of anciently-enclosed fields with irregular and wide species-rich hedgerows. The largest farms and fields developed across the corn-producing vales and downs.

3 FARMSTEAD AND BUILDING TYPES

The basic forms of farmstead layout are courtyard plan farmsteads, which are focused around one or more yards and comprise 72% of recorded sites, dispersed plans which have scattered layouts and comprise 25% of recorded sites and the remaining 3%, where the working buildings are laid out in a row or are attached in-line to the farmhouse. The smallest-scale dispersed and courtyard plan farmsteads are concentrated in the Weald. They were a strong feature of the Romney Marsh area, but are now rare. The largest-scale courtyard-plan farmsteads are concentrated in the main corn-producing areas of the Wealden Greensand (intermixed with a high proportion of smaller-scale farmsteads), the North Downs, the North Kent Plain and the Thames Estuary.

Barns were built to store and process the harvested corn crop. Kent has a high proportion of medieval barns by national standards. Multi-functional barns for housing animals and their fodder were a feature of the Weald, and large barns – sometimes aisled and comprising two or even more to a farmstead – were a feature of the corn-producing areas.

Granaries and cart sheds are a particularly distinctive feature in corn-growing areas. Once threshed, grain needed to be stored away from damp and vermin. It would be sold off the farm or retained for animal feed.

The largest stables were built in corn-producing areas, where more horses were needed for ploughing and many other tasks.

Oasts in which hops were dried and stored are the most prominent buildings associated with the hop industry.

Yards, shelter sheds and cow houses for housing cattle are mostly of 19th century date, and may be found added to an earlier barn or detached and associated with individual yard areas.

Field barns and outfarms, the latter comprising buildings set around a yard, are mostly 19th century. Some barns on these sites, especially in the Weald, may be much earlier in date. A small number of late 18th or early 19th century outfarms survive on the downs, typically with a barn and flanking shelter sheds facing into yards.

4 MATERIALS AND DETAIL

Historic farmsteads also reflect the county's huge diversity in geology, and differences in building traditions and wealth, estate policy, access to transport links and the management of local timber and other resources. Hipped and half-hipped roofs are the historically dominant roof form, gabled roofs being more generally used from the 19th century. Timber-framing was typically used for medieval houses and barns with the barns and sometimes other buildings being clad in weatherboarding. Brick and flint was used from the 17th century for high-status barns and stables but it was not commonly used until around 1800. Stalls, grain bins and other features, including graffiti and ritual marks, are also found in farm buildings.

AIMS AND CONTENTS OF THE KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

The Kent Farmsteads Guidance aims to inform and achieve the sustainable development of farmsteads, including their conservation and enhancement. It can also be used by those with an interest in the history and character of the county's landscape and historic buildings, and the character of individual places. Traditional farmstead groups and their buildings are assets which make a positive contribution to local character. Many are no longer in agricultural use but will continue, through a diversity of uses, to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities.

PART 1 FARMSTEADS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This sets out the aims and purpose of the Kent Farmsteads Guidance and is divided into two sections:

1. a **Site Assessment Framework** which will help applicants identify the capacity for change and any issues at the pre-application stage in the planning process, and then move on to prepare the details of a scheme.
2. **Farmsteads Summary Guidance** which summarises the historic character and significance of traditional farmsteads across Kent, the areas into which it subdivides and the issues for change.

PART 2 PLANNING CONTEXT

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

PART 3 KENT FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENTS

Fully-illustrated guidance on the character and significance of Kent farmsteads, for use in individual applications and detailed design work, for the preparation of area guidance and for those with an interest in the county's landscapes and historic buildings. The guidance is 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 and for the same purpose, 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 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.

PART 6 RECORDING AND RESEARCH GUIDANCE

This 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.

PART 7 GLOSSARY

This is a glossary of terms to aid the user.

INTRODUCTION

A farmstead is the homestead of a farm. It is the place where the farmhouse and the working farm buildings are located, although some farms also have field barns or outfarms sited away from the main steading. This section sets out the character and significance of Kent's farmsteads, and explains how they and their buildings relate to the landscape and how they vary in terms of their type, scale, form and use of materials.

Site survey and the comparison of historic with modern Ordnance Survey maps enables changes relating to these key dates to be identified.

- **Pre-1900** All traditional farmstead buildings date from before around 1900, and most of them date from the 19th century. They display a strong degree of local variation in their architectural style, scale and form, which reflect both deep-rooted local traditions and national influences.
- **1900-1950** There was little new building due to the long farming depression that commenced in many areas in the 1870s. Traditional farmsteads and buildings dating from this period are rare and largely confined to upland areas of England. Most new buildings comprised Dutch barns, new forms of hygienic dairies and milking parlours, architectural showpieces built with non-agricultural wealth and County Council smallholdings which followed parliamentary acts passed in 1907 and 1908 and after the First World War. The Second World War witnessed a massive rise in productivity.
- **1950s to the present** Wide-span multi-purpose sheds in concrete, steel and asbestos, and their associated hardstandings for vehicles and moving stock, met increasing requirements for minimising labour, the environmental control of livestock and on-farm production, particularly of milk. They were either built on the site of the older farmstead or to one side, often with separate access.



This farmstead shows a clear division between the traditional farmyard to the left, with a converted barn and other working buildings facing into a yard, and the separately-accessed group of modern sheds across the road to the right. (© English Heritage NMR 27205 035)



This is one of a group of rare surviving inter-war smallholdings at Thong close to Gravesend, now included within the conservation area of the village. (© Kent County Council)



A typical mid 20th century shed, with a curved profile to the roof which resembles those used for iron-framed Dutch barns that date back to the late 19th century. (© English Heritage)

1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL BACKGROUND

Distinct agricultural regions have developed from the medieval period, mixing or specialising to differing degrees in the production of corn, livestock or dairy products. They have been influenced by patterns of landownership, communications, urban development and industry, as well as the nature and intensity of earlier land use. Agricultural productivity has long been sustained by new techniques in crop and animal husbandry, and the restructuring and enlargement of farm holdings. The period 1750-1880, and especially the capital-intensive 'High Farming' years of the 1840s - 70s, saw a particularly sharp increase in productivity, followed by a long but regionally varied depression that lasted until the Second World War.

In Kent the principal agricultural processes from the medieval period have been:

- Arable farming, especially in the Isle of *Thanet* and northern Kent (for export to London and also the mostly coastal breweries) and varying in extent and intensity elsewhere. The largest farms developed in arable farming areas.



- Cattle rearing and fattening, a feature of the Weald in particular and in combination with sheep in the coastal marshlands.
- Fruit growing and market gardening, which developed on an industrial scale from the mid 19th century. Market gardening, with nurseries, orchards and storehouses, developed around stations such as at Paddock Wood, and were concentrated along the fertile coastal margins of north Kent.
- The hop industry, which developed from the 16th century, reached its peak in 1878 (when Kent produced 65% of national output) and sharply declined from the 1970s. Hops were often grown in association with other fruits.

Across Kent farming has historically worked alongside, and sometimes in combination with, rural industries:

- The Wealden cloth industry which declined from the later 17th century, just as the urban textile industry was developing in towns to the east.
- The iron industry to the west of the Weald along the Sussex border, which peaked in the 16th/17th centuries and declined from the 18th century.
- Quarrying of stone, sands, clays and other forms of mineral extraction.
- The export of woodland produce, including vast amounts of wood fuel from the Weald.

LEFT Mid 19th century and (to the rear) a 16th century or earlier aisled barn in St. Nicholas at Wade, Thanet. Very few historic farm buildings remain in villages. (© English Heritage)

RIGHT A hamlet located on the edge of the Downs, in the Wealden Greensand, where the farmhouses and working buildings are prominent in views across the landscape. (© Bob Edwards)

Across Kent – as also in large parts of eastern and western England – rural settlement is dominated by hamlets and isolated farmsteads that date from the medieval period.

In landscapes such as The Weald, where there is a high density of dispersed farmsteads, it is impossible to separate settlement from countryside. There are some areas – the valleys of the North Downs, parts of east Kent (such as the Hoo Peninsula) and along the Hollingbourne and Postling Vale – where village-based farmsteads worked communally-managed open fields. These farmsteads have mostly disappeared, and the fields have all been enclosed over the centuries. Many villages result from post-medieval development as retail and transport centres, as industrial centres (eg Biddenden and Cranbrook, centres of the broad-cloth industry) and as a result of 19th century and later settlement expansion: from the mid-19th century this was matched by a decline in the intensity of their role as service centres for surrounding farms.

Farmsteads within and on the edge of settlements can be appreciated in relationship to other historic buildings and surrounding fields.

Other industries (for example, engineering, brickmaking (strong to the 1930s) and brewing in the north-east and along the coastal towns/Medway Valley, and the coalfields in east Kent) worked independently of farming, although the growth of large-scale brewing in the 18th/19th centuries stimulated arable farming.

Levels of population have historically varied across the county. Before 1550 the population was concentrated along the north coast, and by around 1700 London was already providing a focus of suburban growth in the north of the county. 18th and 19th century population increase, often linked to the growth of commercial agriculture, was most marked in parts of west Kent and around the expanding coastal towns, the inland resort of Tunbridge Wells, the naval dockyards of Chatham and Sheerness, the Thames estuary and the valleys of the Medway (improved to help export corn, hops and fruit, and later with light industry) and the light industries of the Cray and Darent. The second half of the 19th century saw further growth in these areas, with the railway network also speeding up the growth of residential development – intermixed with market gardening and horticulture – across the rural areas of west Kent as well as Sevenoaks and the London suburbs. Counter to this, population had already declined in some areas, especially in parts of central and east Kent including the Kent Downs and the eastern Weald.

2 LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT

NATIONAL BACKGROUND

Farmsteads relate to patterns of settlement and development which extend into the medieval period and earlier. In areas of nucleated settlement, communities have worked the land from villages, and most or all isolated farmsteads were established after the enclosure of open fields or common land. At the other extreme are areas that have few or no villages and which have been dominated by scattered dwellings and farmsteads. Other areas may have a mix of settlement patterns.

The size and density in the landscape of farmsteads and the scale and form of fields results from the type of farming, ranging from the largest corn-producing farms to the smallest dairying or stock rearing farms.

Isolated farmsteads, including those in clusters and located in hamlets, can be:

- Sited among small-medium scale and irregular fields, which are often associated with ancient woodland and can date from land and woodland clearance in the medieval period. They have all been subject to different degrees of subsequent boundary removal and change, depending on developments in farm size and type. In Kent the smallest fields are concentrated in parts of the High and Low Weald.
- Sited amongst piecemeal patterns of enclosure, often with a mix of straight and pre-18th century wavy or irregular boundaries. This is the predominant fieldscape across most of Kent, and fields vary enormously in their scale due to their original layouts as well as 18th century and later boundary removal and straightening.
- More rarely sited amongst straight-sided regular patterns of enclosure, which can result from the enclosure of uncultivated land (heathland and parts of the eastern Kent Downs) and the reorganisation of earlier irregular fields.



Farmsteads in anciently-enclosed landscapes sit in relationship to ancient woodland and wide species-rich hedgerows. Views of buildings across landscapes are typically limited, the forms and materials of roofs being particularly prominent.
(© Janina Holubecki, High Weald AONB Unit)



The largest farms and fields are associated with the key corn-producing farms that developed around the edges of the eastern coastal marshlands, across the North Kent Plain and the arable vales and downs. To the left is a farmstead sited amongst regular and earlier enclosures in the eastern Kent Downs (© Bob Edwards) and to the right is a farmstead south of Aldington (see below) in the Wealden Greensand, where fields have been enlarged and reorganised over time (© English Heritage NMR 27202-020). Farmsteads in exposed locations are commonly protected by shelter belts and plantations.



Left: Varied forms and scales are typical of Kent farmsteads, as here in Thanet. (© English Heritage)

Right: Some farmsteads in Kent developed from medieval estate centres and include 16th century and earlier buildings, as in this former monastic grange at Aldington above Romney Marsh. (© English Heritage)



LEFT Roadside locations are common. (© English Heritage)

RIGHT Farmsteads also developed in relationship to greens and 'forstals' – in Kent the term given the area in front of a farmhouse to pen and sometimes to milk stock. (© English Heritage)

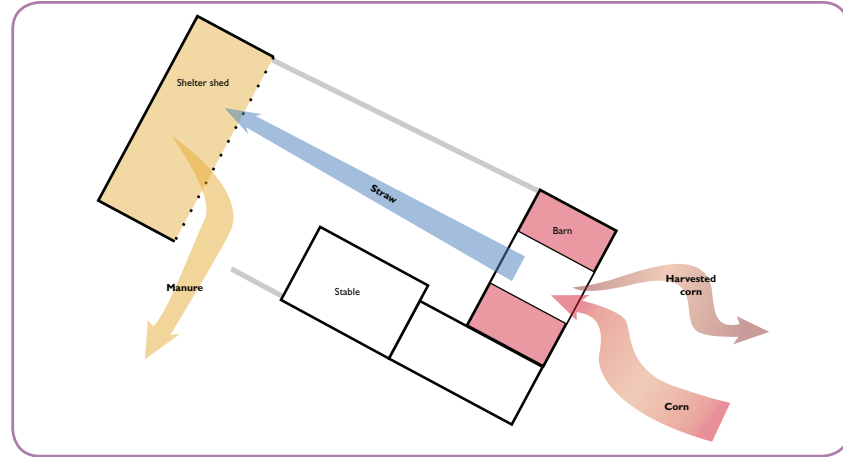


This group in the Low Weald has the house facing into a yard. To the rear of the house is a back kitchen, illustrated on p.33, and in front of the yard is a barn with a lean-to for cattle.(© English Heritage NMR 27205-005)

3 FARMSTEAD TYPES IN KENT

Farmhouses are commonly detached. Those on smaller farmsteads often face into the yard and those on larger farmsteads often face away from the farmyard into their own garden area. There may also be separate houses for farm workers. The smallest farmsteads are concentrated in the Weald and the coastal marshes of Kent, and the largest in corn-producing areas where large capital-based farms developed. The basic forms of farmstead layout, reflecting these differences, are:

- Courtyard plan farmsteads, which comprise 72% recorded sites, and have the working buildings and sometimes the farmhouse arranged in a loose or regular fashion around one or more yards.
- Dispersed plans, which comprise 25% of recorded sites, where the buildings and yards are scattered within the overall boundary of the farmstead and are often very exposed to public view. They are a highly distinctive element of Kent's rural landscape, and now remain as a particularly distinctive feature of the Weald.
- Other farmstead types, where the working buildings are laid out in a row or are attached to the farmhouse, which are rare in Kent.



This simple schematic drawing shows how the harvested crop was processed in the barn and the straw then mixed with manure to be returned to fertilise the land. (© Chantal Freeman)



LEFT A distinctive feature of Kent – shared by other landscapes in eastern and western England – is the large-scale farmstead (often called a Court Lodge farm) sited next to the church, which often developed as a manorial or estate farm. This is the medieval barn and church at Lenham in the Vale of Holmesdale, Wealden Greensand. (© Kent County Council)

RIGHT A small-scale house and barn in the High Weald – a small-scale loose courtyard plan. From the medieval period to the later 18th century, documentary, map and field evidence shows that many farmsteads comprised no more than a house and barn. After this date – and only rarely before – other buildings were added to the group, either by adding aisles or lean-tos to the barns to house animals or building new cowsheds and other types of buildings. (© Bob Edwards)

How farmsteads worked

Farmsteads and buildings in Kent developed to serve the following functions up to the 20th century, which all required:

- Access to and the siting of the house and its garden;
- Different types and size of building and open space, and different flows of movement within and around working buildings;
- Access to routes and tracks;
- The subdivision and different use of spaces within and around the farmstead – cattle yards and areas for stacking corn, hay and timber, gardens, orchards, ponds, small field enclosures for milking or sorting livestock.

Housing

- In almost all cases the farmhouse is detached from the main group and faces into its own garden. In the 18th and 19th centuries houses could be rebuilt to face away from the group into their own driveways and gardens.
- Separate cottages for farm workers, and single-storey huts for seasonal workers in the hop industry, sited on larger farmsteads or dispersed in the landscape.

Crop storage and processing

- A barn for storing and processing the harvested corn crop over the winter months was the basic requirement of farms, and corn could also be stacked in yards adjacent to the barn. In all cases the grain was beaten (threshed) from the harvested corn crop on an open threshing floor.
- Grain was stored in a granary, either a detached building (found in the vales and chalk downs) or more rarely an end bay of the barn or the farmhouse.
- Oasts for drying hops and stores for storing fruit.

Horses and cattle

- Straw was taken from the barn to cattle yards and stables to be used as bedding for livestock. The resulting manure was then forked into carts and returned to fertilise the surrounding farmland.
- Yards for cattle, often bounded by open-fronted sheds and cowhouses, typically face south and east to capture sun and light, the openings being concentrated on the yard sides of the buildings.

General movement and storage

- Other yards – especially those with more direct access to routes and tracks – were also used to store hop poles and often farm vehicles and implements. These areas are typified by open-fronted cartsheds, and oast houses for processing and storing hops.
- Cartsheds, sometimes stables and other ancillary buildings can be located next to routeways.

Loose courtyard plans

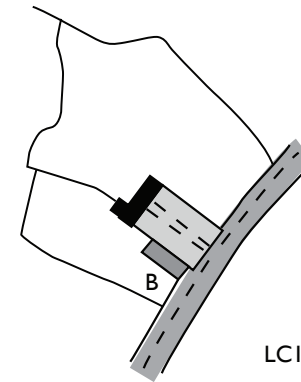
Loose courtyard plans have detached buildings facing one or more sides of a cattle yard with or without scatters of other farm buildings close by. They typically developed in piecemeal fashion and are the dominant farmstead plan type of south-east England. They display a wide variety in scale:

- The smallest examples (above right) with working buildings to one or two sides of the yard are concentrated in the High and Low Weald and often comprise only a house and barn (typically of medieval to 18th century date).
- Medium-large scale examples (below right) with buildings to three or four sides of the yard including large barns are concentrated in the arable vales and eastern downlands, the largest being found on manorial and estate farms and in the scarp bottoms of the Downs. The larger examples can have L-shaped ranges which comprise two attached barns or a barn with attached stable.

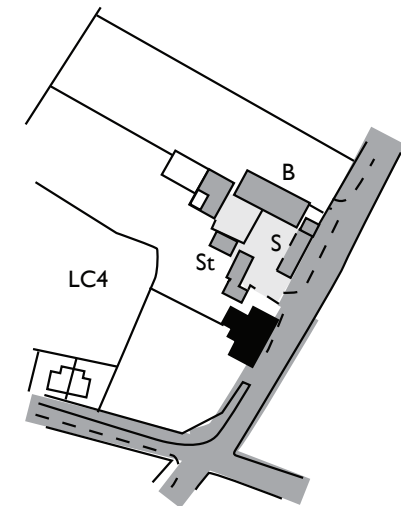
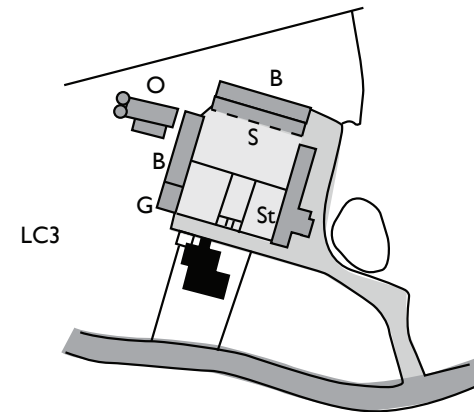
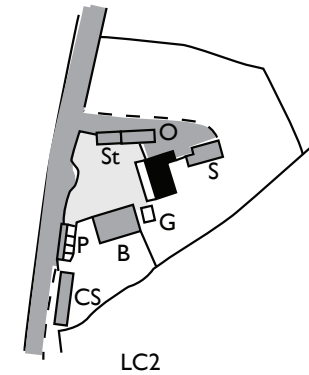
Typical features include:

- Principal openings facing into the yard, external elevations having few openings;
- Some loose courtyards have a later cattle shed attached to an earlier barn which makes an I shape;
- Cartsheds, sometimes stables and other ancillary buildings can be placed away from the yard facing towards routes and tracks.

This range of plan types is shown across Kent in the tithe maps of the 1830s-40s, the distribution broadly matching that of the present day.



WORKING BUILDING TO ONE SIDE OF YARD



Key

B barn	S shelter shed for cattle
CS cartshed	St stable
G granary	■ farmhouse
O oast house	

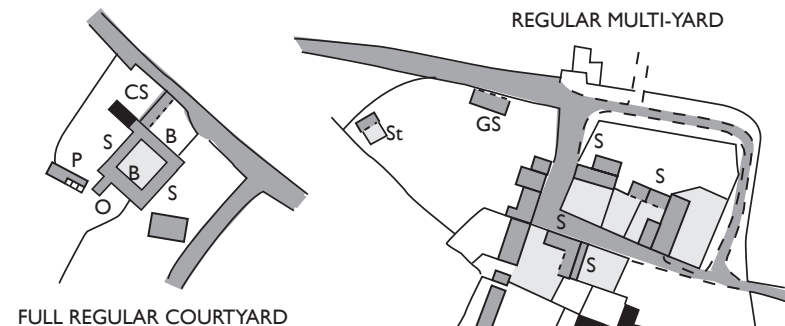
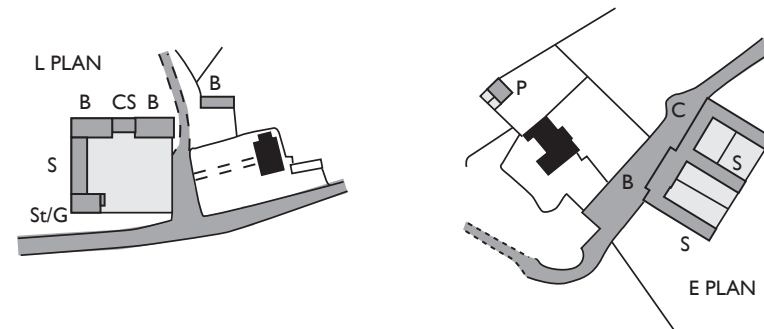
SEE DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES [↗](#)

Regular courtyard plans

Regular courtyard plans consist of linked ranges, often the result of a single phase of building, set around one or more cattle yards. They are typically grouped together in a regular arrangement with straight internal walls and boundaries. They are mostly of later 19th century date and display greater consistency in the use of materials and constructional detail, often employing more non-local materials like Welsh slate, than other farmstead types. Very few examples other than L-shaped plans are shown on the tithe maps of the 1830s-40s. Apart from L-plans, Regular Courtyard Plans are rare in the High Weald.

Typical features are:

- L-shaped and U-shaped plans which usually include a barn or mixing house with attached cattle housing and stables, with or without additional buildings;
- Some high-status examples which can completely enclose all four sides of the yard and include pre-19th century buildings;
- The largest multi-yard and e-shaped plans are strongly concentrated in landscapes enclosed, re-planned or affected by farm amalgamation/boundary removal in the late 18th/19th centuries – especially the isle of grain, parts of the hoo peninsula, the north kent downs and the north kent plain;
- Few openings in the external elevations;
- The house is typically detached and faces away from the yard, often into its own garden.



Key

B	barn
CS	cartshed
G	granary
O	oast house
P	pigsty
S	shelter shed for cattle
St	stable
■	farmhouse

SEE DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES [☑](#)



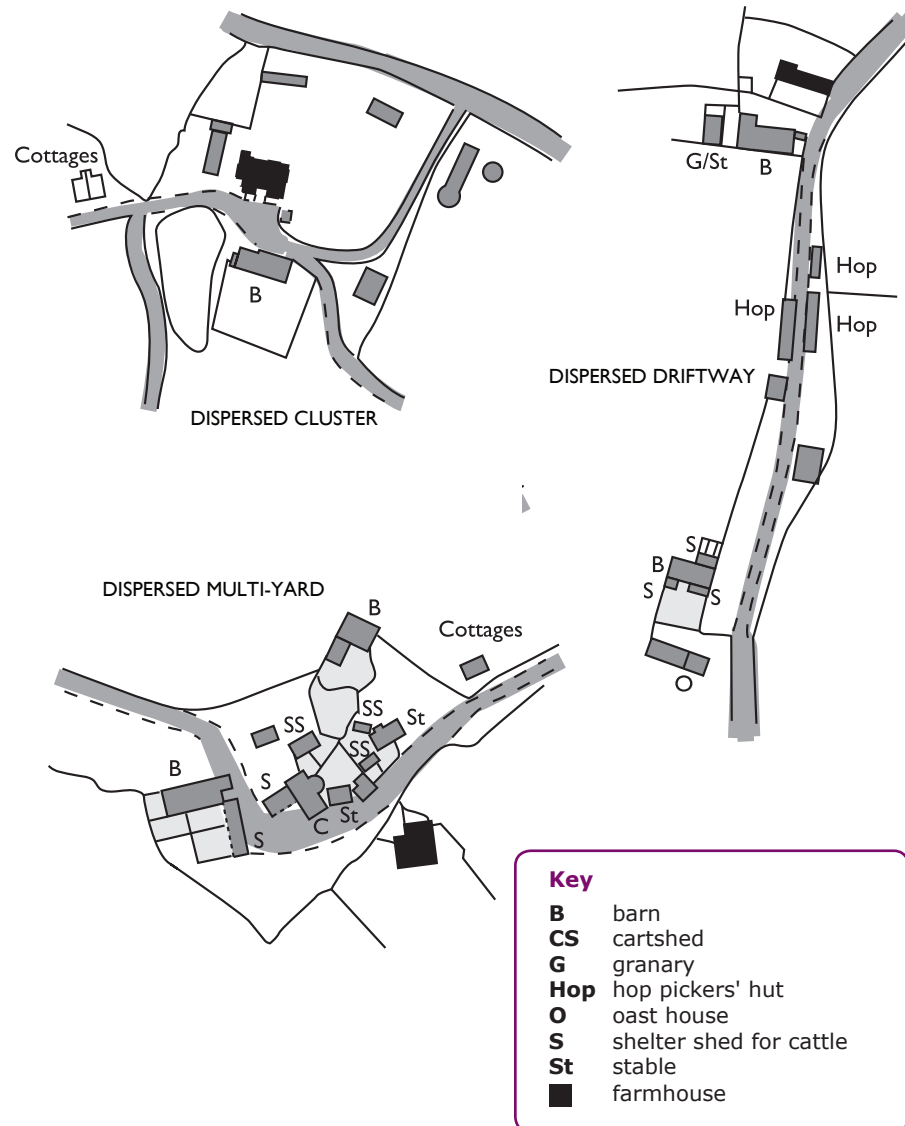
LEFT A house facing away from the main L-shaped farmstead group in the Kent Downs.
(© Bob Edwards)

RIGHT A large downland group, comprising a loose courtyard arrangement with the barns and other buildings facing into a large yard.
(© Bob Edwards)



LEFT Some farmsteads in the downs, as here in this roadside group with a 3-bay barn to the south east of Canterbury, remained relatively small in scale.
(© English Heritage NMR 27201-026).

RIGHT A large-scale mid 19th century group in the Low Weald, with the house to one side and the distinctive form of the large barn.
(© English Heritage)



Dispersed plans

The key characteristic of dispersed plans is the evident lack of planning in their layout. Dispersed plans display an enormous variation in their scale ranging from small groups of a farmhouse and one or two buildings to very large groups with multiple yards. Dispersed plans are often bisected by route-ways and public footpaths giving a high level of public access to the farmstead.

There are three variants of dispersed plans:

- *Dispersed Clusters* are loosely-arranged groups of buildings, often with no defined yard area, set within an irregularly-bounded paddock.
- *Dispersed Multi-yard plans* consist of a number of defined yards and other buildings. The yards are typically detached from one another and may be of loose and/or regular courtyard types.
- *Dispersed Driftway plans* are arranged along wide driftways or tracks and may include one or more yards, short rows of linked buildings and free-standing buildings standing within the width of the track or facing on to it.

Dispersed plans are typically the products of piecemeal development, and are strongly associated with pastoral farming areas. They are an important characteristic of farmsteads in the Weald where they form a high proportion of historic farmsteads and appear as the basic form of farmstead in the 1830s-40s tithe maps. Dispersed plans, particularly Dispersed Cluster plans, are also found in other parts of the county although they tend to be smaller examples.

SEE DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES [☑](#)

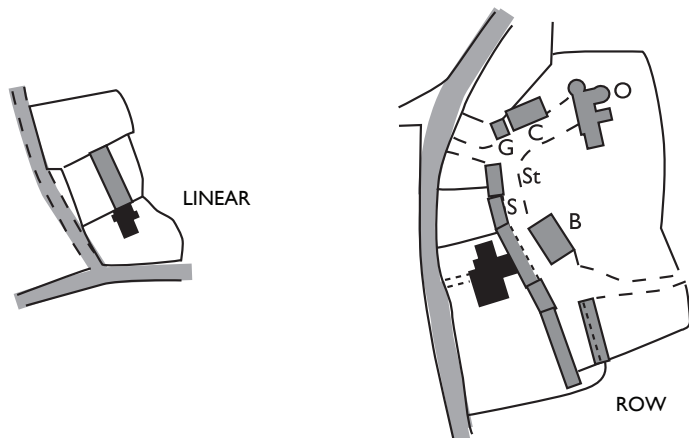
Other plan types

This group typically represents small farmsteads, making them difficult to identify from historic mapping. Linear farmsteads can be derived from medieval forms or be 18th or 19th century farmsteads, often associated with common-edge settlement or industrial activities such as quarrying or mining.

Key characteristics

- *Linear plans* have the farmhouse and a farm building, usually a barn, attached in-line.
- *Attached L-plans* have the house and working buildings attached to each other in an overall L-plan.
- *Parallel plans* have the farmhouse and an agricultural building lying parallel to each other with a small yard area between. Typically the agricultural building lies behind the farmhouse.
- *Linear and Attached L-plans* with unconverted agriculture buildings are very rare.

Linear and L-plans are most common in northern and western pastoral areas and extremely rare in south-east England and Kent, where they are concentrated on smaller common-edge and heathland farms. The few examples that survive typically have an attached farmhouse and barn of different phases.



Row Plans comprise long ranges of buildings, typically of various dates, and often with a series of separate yards. Some larger examples consist of two rows of buildings lying parallel to each other.

- *Row plans* may have a series of yards associated with the various buildings.
- Yards can face towards or away from main routes and tracks.



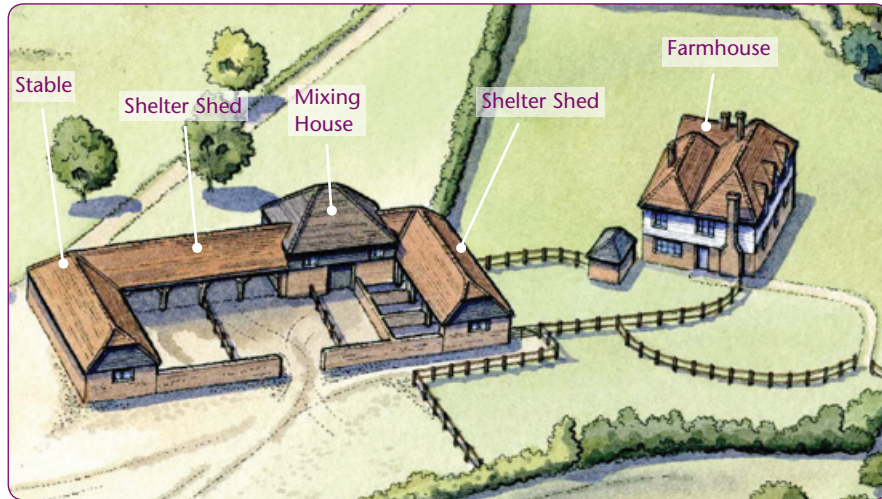
ABOVE A linear farmstead, with the house and working buildings attached in one range, is very unusual in Kent. (© Bob Edwards)

Key

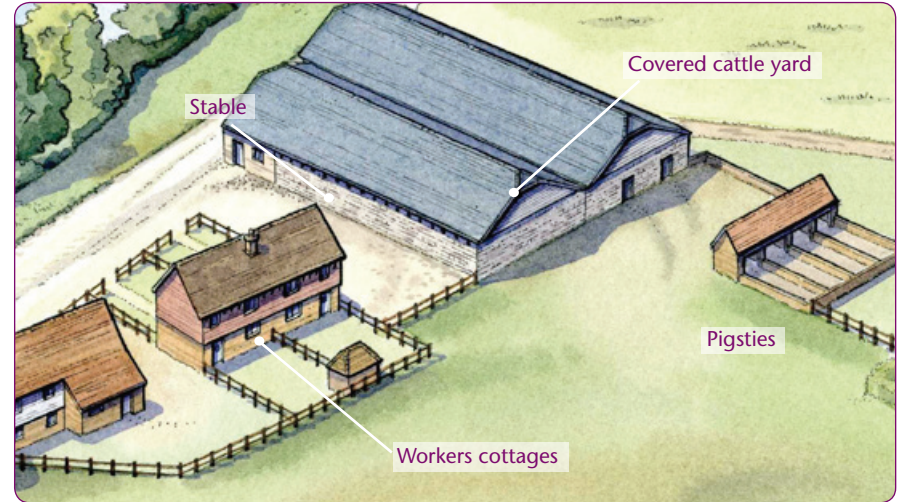
B	barn	S	shelter shed for cattle
CS	cartshed	St	stable
G	granary	■	farmhouse
O	oast house		

The drawings below show a selection of the key farmstead types across Kent, with the functions of the buildings indicated

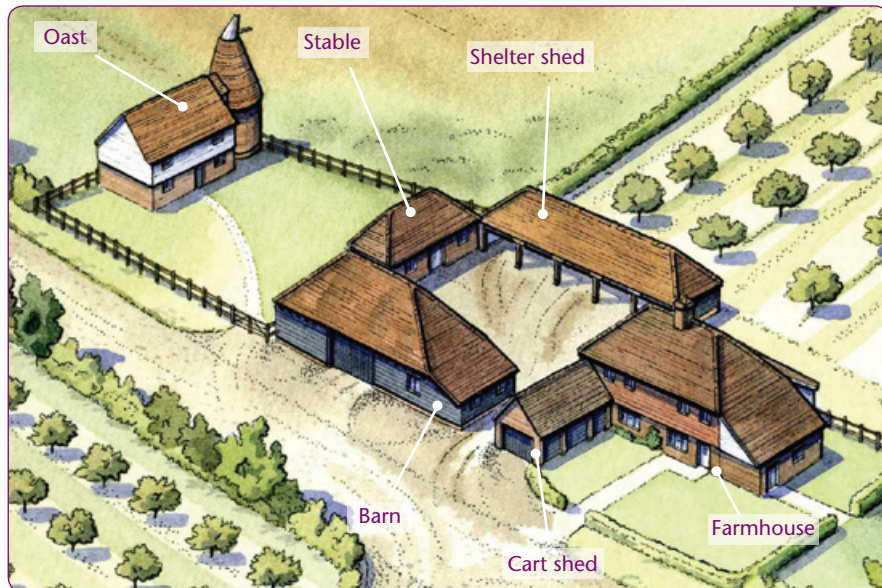
(All ©Donna Scott and High Weald AONB Unit)



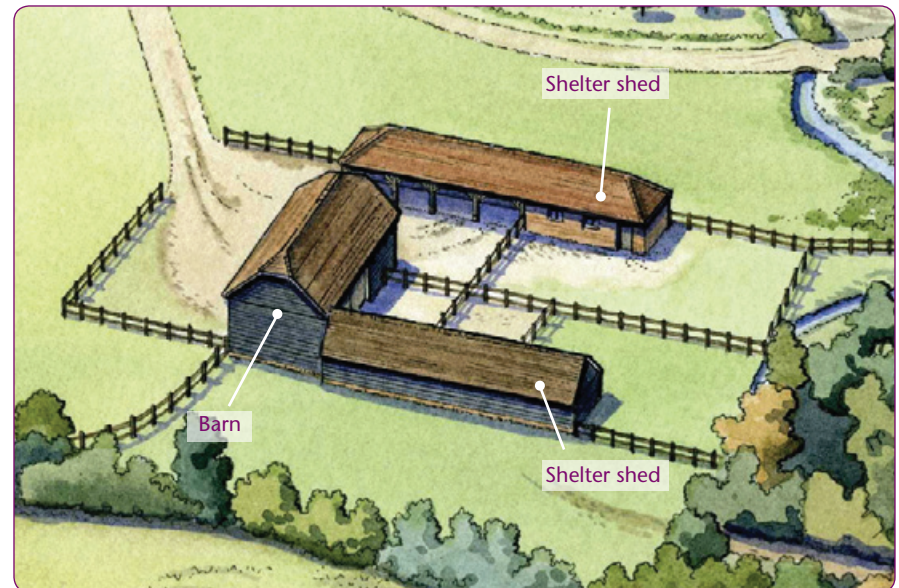
Regular Courtyard U Plan



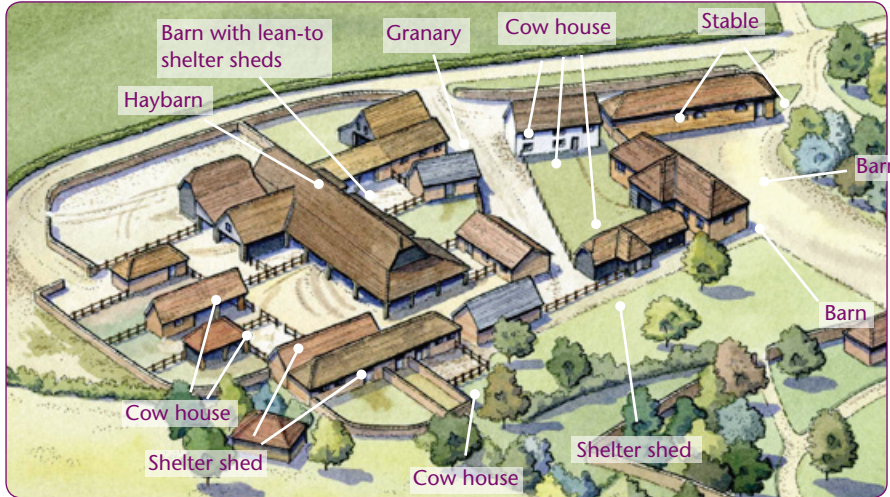
Regular Covered Yard – as used on some farmsteads from the 1860s



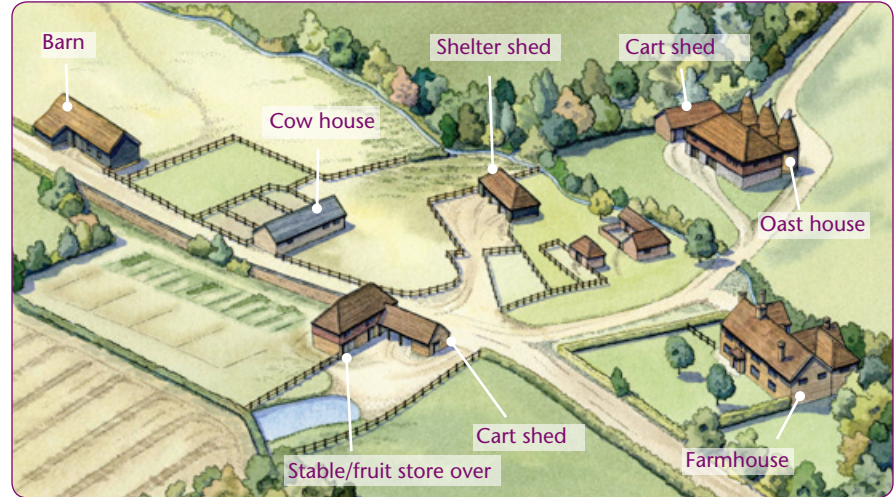
Loose courtyard with working buildings to 3 sides of the yard



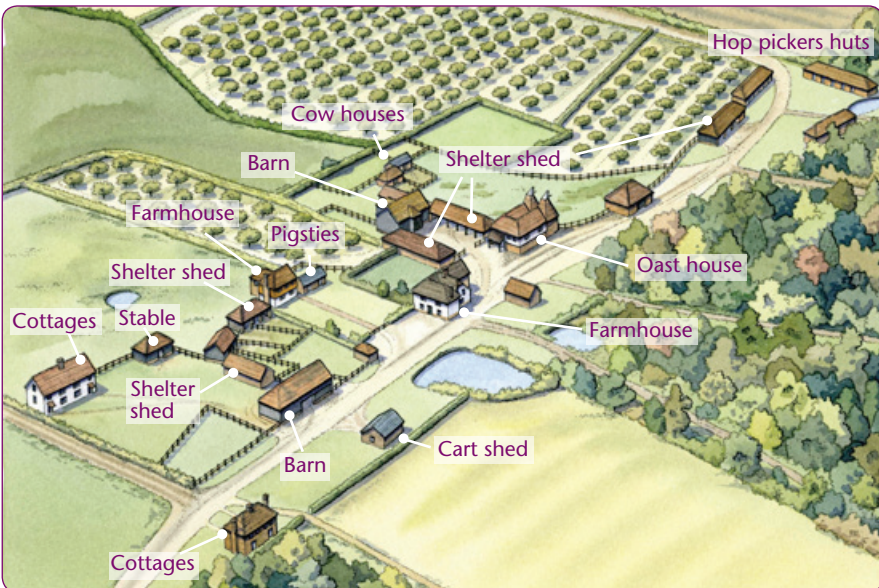
Loose courtyard with L-shaped barn and shelter shed, and additional shelter shed to third side of yard



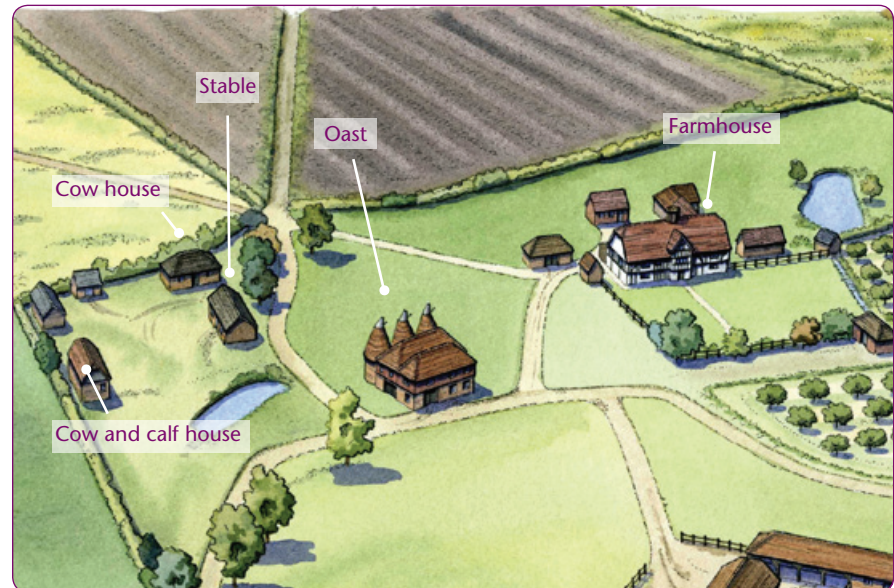
Regular Multi-yard



Dispersed Multi-yard



Dispersed Driftway



Dispersed Cluster

4 FARMSTEAD BUILDING TYPES IN KENT

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the principal farmstead building types and typical features that are likely to be encountered on a Kent farmstead. The rarity and significance of the buildings is also described. The most common traditional farm buildings on farmsteads are:

- Barns for threshing and processing the grain crop, including a high proportion by national standards of 17th century and earlier examples.
- Aisled barns concentrated in the vales and chalklands, multi-functional barns for housing animals and their fodder most commonly found in the Weald.
- Granaries, typically of 18th or 19th century date, concentrated in the vales and chalklands – as also are larger stables and cartsheds.
- Buildings associated with the hop industry, oasts being the most prominent.
- Yards, shelter sheds and cow houses for housing cattle are mostly of 19th century date, and may be found added to an earlier barn or detached and associated with individual yard areas.
- Oast houses and other buildings associated with the hop industry.
- Cartsheds which can usually be identified through their position in the farmstead, often facing away from the yard or onto a road or track.

Field barns and outfarms, the latter comprising buildings set around a yard, are mostly 19th century. Some barns on these sites, especially in the Weald, may be much earlier in date. 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.

Barns

The barn was a building for the dry storage and processing of the harvested corn crop, and for housing straw after threshing before it was distributed as bedding for animals and trodden into manure to be returned to the fields. Barns in Kent are typically timber-framed with brick or stone plinths and hipped roofs. There are some stone-built barns and, from the 18th century, brick barns.

Typical features

- Barns are typically the largest and earliest working building on the farmstead.
- An area (the threshing floor) for beating by flail the grain from the crop and for winnowing the grain from the chaff in a cross draught.
- Doors on the side walls to the threshing floor, one door was usually smaller. Projecting porches a common feature.
- Many barns have outshuts for cattle added to the end or sides (or both), with separate entrances to the yard and no communication into the barn.
- 'Leaps' – a slot in each post flanking the entrance to take a horizontal board which retained the grain while threshing.
- Sometimes evidence – in the form of belt drives and holes for drive shafts – from earlier fixed or portable machinery.
- Ritual and tally marks close to the threshing floor and graffiti.
- Evidence for earlier (including medieval) reused timbers, and for holes (mortices) in the undersides of cross beams indicating former partitions and evidence for animal housing. Until the late 18th century, across the Weald – and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere – most barns housed animals (usually oxen and milk cows) as well as their fodder and the corn crop. After this date, barns were converted into corn storage and processing buildings, and livestock moved out into detached yards and buildings.



LEFT A late 18th century barn in the Greensand, with its distinctive central door to the threshing bay. The low-pitched and half-hipped roof is typical of this date (Wealden Greensand). (© Bob Edwards)

RIGHT Threshing floor and porch. Note the 'leap' – timber boarding which was slotted into grooves in the door frames. (© English Heritage)



LEFT Belt drives and shafting may remain attached to barns. These were linked to portable machines – used from the 1850s in Kent – that threshed grain and processed animal feed. These gave barns a new lease of life, just as hand threshing began to decline. (© Bob Edwards)

RIGHT Brick was used to block this wide door to a threshing floor. Many barns ceased to function for threshing grain by the later 19th century and were used to store the crop or house cattle. (© Bob Edwards)



LEFT The barn was usually sited prominently, as here next to this 15th century house in the Kent Downs. (© English Heritage)

RIGHT The roofs to some barns could be replaced with low-pitched tin roofs in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Internal inspection may show that the wall timbers may be considerably earlier. (© Bob Edwards)

Barns – aisled barns

In an aisled barn the width of the building was increased through the use of aisles – narrow extensions along one or more sides or ends of the barn. 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.

Rarity and significance

Aisled barns are most strongly concentrated in East Anglia and the South East. In Kent they are concentrated in the arable vales and the chalk downs, the largest in the corn-growing areas of east Kent. They include many high status medieval examples.



LEFT The medieval aisled barn at Lenham (Wealden Greensand). (© Kent Downs AONB)

RIGHT A large aisled barn in the North Kent Plain. (© Bob Edwards)



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

Barns – area distinctions

- In the downs and vales large barns – including aisled barns – were built for storage and processing of the grain crop, and related to yards where straw and the manure from cattle was trodden down and redistributed to fertilise the fields.
- Increases in grain production and yields in the 18th and early 19th centuries often led to the construction of an additional barn and in many cases, the enlargement and adaptation of earlier barns.
- Some large barns in the arable areas have attached granaries and stables.
- Wealden barns retain evidence – either in partitions and floors or in evidence for lost partitions and floors – for being combination

buildings in that before the 19th century they housed both animals (primarily cattle) and their fodder. Lean-to additions rather than aisles are more common in this area.

Rarity and significance

- Barns in Kent are mostly of 17th or 18th century date but there is a high concentration, by national standards, of earlier examples.
- Many pre-1750 examples remain unrecognised and unlisted.
- Unconverted examples are increasingly rare, due to post-1970s demolition and conversion.



Small 3-bay barns, built on the smaller farms in the High Weald and around the coastal marshes, have rarely survived. These show a barn on the Hoo Peninsula (left) and one on the edge of Romney Marsh. (© Bob Edwards)



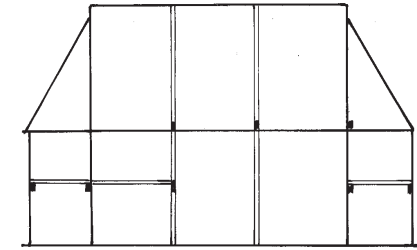
LEFT A barn facing into a cattle yard (High Weald).
RIGHT Larger barns with lean-tos are typical of the Low Weald. (© English Heritage)



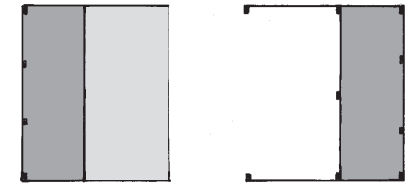
Wealden Greensand. (© Bob Edwards)



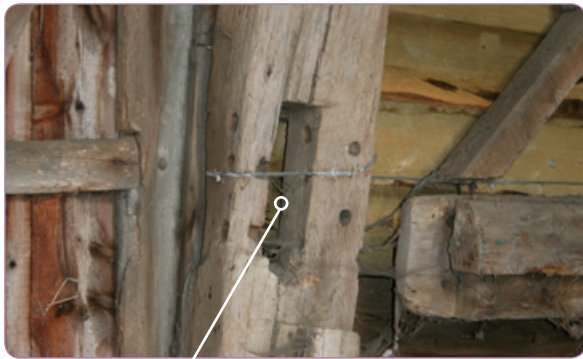
North Kent Downs, east of Wye. (© Bob Edwards)



Longitudinal section



Floor plan



Lost mortice in a wall post for former floor beam. (© Bob Edwards)

Many barns in the Weald show evidence for having been multi-functional buildings, in the form of holes and slots in beams for lost partitions and hayracks (see photograph to left). The drawing above shows floored bays in a barn in the Weald. These were common, and afforded cattle housing at ground floor level with haylofts above, either within the main body of the barn (light grey) or in additions to the barn (dark grey).

Drawing after Martin, D. & Martin, B. (2006) *Farm Buildings of the Weald, 1450-1750*, Heritage Publications: Kings Lynn.

Cart shed

Open-fronted buildings which often face away from the farmyard and may be found close to the stables and roadways, giving direct access to the fields. In many areas cart sheds are combined with first-floor granaries, accessed by external steps.

Typical features

- Open-fronted and sometimes open at each end, although one or two bays may be enclosed with doors for the storage of small implements;
- Evidence for hatches for dropping sacks of grain from granaries into carts, hoists for hauling grain, steps to granaries with internal grain bins and louvered windows.

Rarity and significance

- Pre-19th century examples – especially with historic grain bins and other features associated with granaries – are rare.
- The largest cartsheds are found on large corn-producing farms.



LEFT A cartshed in its typical roadside position. (© English Heritage)

CENTRE A large cartshed with a first-floor granary in the Kent Downs. (© Bob Edwards)

RIGHT Cartsheds were commonly integrated under the stowage areas of oasts – see Hop Industry section. (© English Heritage)

Cattle housing

Until the late 18th and 19th centuries cattle were either housed in multi-functional barns or held in yards with no shelter other than lean-tos in the lee of the barn. After this time cattle were housed in shelter sheds or enclosed cow houses. These are either added to earlier barns or detached and associated with individual yard areas in order to maximise the production of farmyard manure. In the Weald, the provision of separate cattle buildings and yards allowed the removal of the cattle stalls within multi-functional barns.

Any pre-19th century examples, including evidence for cattle housing in multi-functional barns, will be of great rarity.



LEFT Lean-to and cowhouse added to an earlier barn. (© Bob Edwards)

CENTRE Lean-to. (© High Weald AONB Unit)

RIGHT The distinctive low buildings to a cattle yard (© English Heritage)

Cattle housing – cowhouse

An enclosed building, or part of a multi-functional building, for stalling cattle (often dairy cattle). Cowhouses are not a common feature in Kent, but where used they are commonly single-storey and combined in a continuous range with stables.

Typical features

- Lower and wider doorways than stables.
 - Windows and other features to assist ventilation dating from the mid-19th-early 20th Centuries (eg hit-and-miss ventilators, air ducts and ridge ventilators).
- Stalling and feeding arrangements. Cows were usually tethered in pairs with low partitions of wood, stone, slate and, in the 19th century, cast iron between them. Feeding arrangements can survive in the form of hayracks, water bowls and mangers for feed.



LEFT Very few cowhouse or shelter shed interiors of the 19th century or earlier have survived unaltered because hygiene regulations for the production of milk have resulted in new floors, windows and stall arrangements being inserted. (© High Weald AONB Unit)

RIGHT A cowhouse combined with stabling (Kent Downs). (© Bob Edwards)

Cattle housing – shelter shed

An open-fronted structure for cattle facing onto cattle yards. Cattle yards with shelter sheds were typical of mixed farming areas where cattle were housed on the steading as fatstock and for their manure.

Typical features

- Single-storey ranges. Shelter sheds can be detached buildings, attached gable on to a barn or built against the side of the barn.
- Common internal fittings were mangers and hayracks, and sometimes stalls.
- Doors in the gable ends near the back wall gave access to a feeding passage.



- LEFT A small-scale shelter shed in the Weald.
(© Janina Holubecki, High Weald AONB Unit)
- RIGHT A large shelter shed on the edge of the marshland grazing in the Hoo Peninsula.
(© English Heritage)
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Dairy 📄

SEE OTHER BUILDINGS AT END OF BUILDING TYPES SECTION

Dovecote 📄

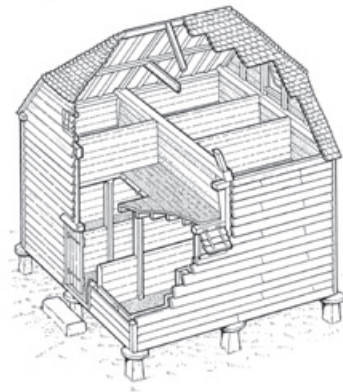
SEE OTHER BUILDINGS AT END OF BUILDING TYPES SECTION

Granary

A building or room for storing grain after it has been threshed and winnowed in the barn, located in the farmhouse, an individual building, typically set on mushroom-shaped staddle stones or brick arches, or on the upper floor of a multi-functional building such as a barn or above a cart shed to secure it from theft, damp and rodents.

Typical features

- Ventilated openings – either louvers, shutters, sliding vents or grilles.
- Close-boarded or plastered and lime-washed walls internally, and a strong load-bearing floor construction with tight-fitting lapped boards to prevent loss of grain.



LEFT A granary on staddle stones in the Kent Downs. (© English Heritage)

RIGHT A cut-away drawing showing the grain bins in a staddle granary. (© English Heritage)

- Grain bins, or the slots in vertical timbers for horizontal planking used to make them.
- Steps at the gable end to the first floor granary, if located above the stable and/or cartshed, or at the end of a multi-functional range.

Rarity and significance

- Some very rare surviving evidence for granaries in the floored ends of barns in corn-producing areas.
- Free-standing granaries are rare in Kent, and are more common in East Anglia and in other corn-growing areas of southern England. Most examples are of late 18th or 19th century date, earlier examples – concentrated in the east of the county – being of great rarity.

Hop pickers' huts

SEE HOP INDUSTRY SECTION

Oast house

SEE HOP INDUSTRY SECTION

Outfarm

SEE OUTLYING BARNs AND COMPLEXES

Pigsty

A building for housing pigs. The main requirements for special accommodation were for farrowing, final fattening and accommodation of the boar. Large numbers of pigs were concentrated in dairying areas or market-gardening areas, and on larger farms where commercial fattening was practised.

Typical features

- Pigsties were typically built as single-storey structures comprising individual boxes, individually or in rows and with external feeding chutes.
- They were often built with their own individual yards.
- Some had upper floors with poultry houses.
- A small chimneystack could mark the position of a boiler house for boiling swill for pig feed.
- Sties were often placed near the kitchen or dairy as pigs were normally fed on kitchen scraps or whey (a by-product of dairying).



(© Bob Edwards)

Rarity and significance

- Any pre-19th century examples are very rare.
- Significant if part of coherent farmstead groups.

Stable

A building, or part of a building, for housing horses and their harnessing and tackle. The largest stables are concentrated in corn-producing areas, where farms were larger and more horses were needed for ploughing and many other tasks. Fewer horses were needed in cattle-rearing or dairying areas.

Typical features

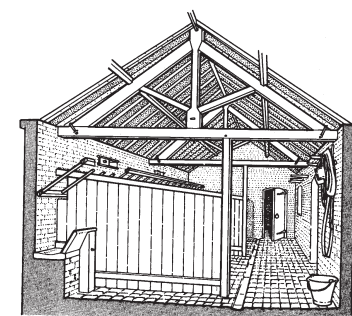
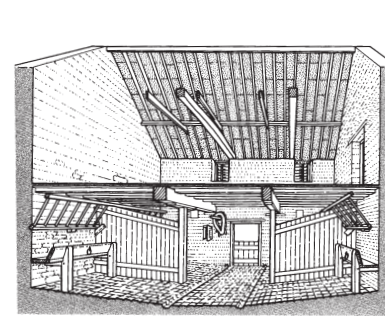
- Earlier stables are usually two-storey and well-lit buildings, with ground-floor windows, pitching openings and ventilation to the hay-loft. In Kent they are commonly timber-framed and weatherboarded, and brick examples date from the 18th century.
- Single-storey stables, commonly with cast-iron ridge vents, were built from the later 19th century.
- Stables can be distinguished from cow houses as they have tall and relatively narrow doors.



A small-scale stable in the Weald.
(© Bob Edwards)



A stable in the Kent Downs.
(© Bob Edwards)



Stable interiors. Single storey stables (as on right) are usually late 19th century.(© English Heritage)

- Wooden or cast-iron (for high-status or late examples) stalls with access to manger and hayrack.
- Floors of earth, stone flags/cobbles and from the mid-19th century of engineering brick, sloping to a drainage channel.
- Pegs for harness and tack, sometimes in a separate harness room with fireplace.
- Sometimes chaff boxes for storing feed, and cubby-holes for lanterns, grooming brushes, medicines etc.

Rarity and significance

- After the barn, the stable is often the oldest building on the farmstead.
- A few stables dating to before 1700 have been identified in local surveys, while many more date from the 18th century. One of the reasons for this rise in number was the decline in the use of oxen.
- The largest stables were built on the larger corn-producing farms.

Hop Industry – introduction

Beer brewed with hops became a popular drink in the 16th century. Before that it had been flavoured with herbs and spices. Beer was the main drink of the majority of the population as water was usually not fit for consumption, and tea and coffee had not become a national institution. Whilst hops were grown on a small scale in many parts of the country Herefordshire and Worcestershire and Kent and Sussex became the two major areas of production. Across Kent nearly every farm had its own hop garden but areas such as The Weald were more suited to growing hops. Today the few remaining commercial hop gardens in Kent occur in the Goudhurst and Lamberhurst area in the valley of the Teise.

The demise in hop-growing which has accelerated in the late 20th century has resulted in many hop gardens being grubbed out and as a consequence, the huts, cookhouses, oast-houses, tar tanks and other associated features have either been demolished, left to decay or as in the case of many oast-houses, converted to residential accommodation.

Farmsteads that retain a range of buildings associated with the hop industry (see below) are highly significant.

Hop industry – oast

A building in which hops are dried and stored. The drying of hops was a delicate process, requiring skill in managing the fire to maintain the correct temperatures. The dryers would often work round the clock, catching sleep in the oast.

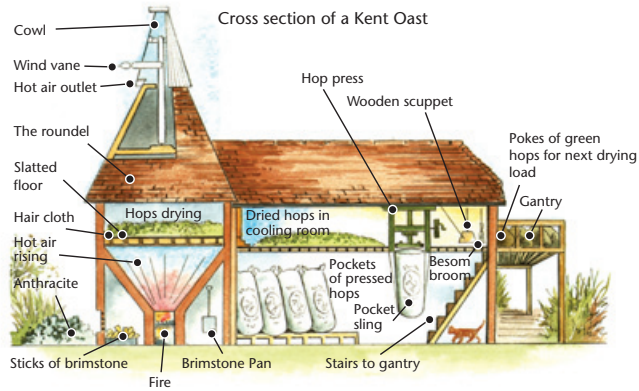
Typical features

- A square or circular kiln, with a cowl on the roof that would extract air through the slatted drying floor on which the hops were laid.
- an attached 'stowage' where the dried hops could cool on the upper floor before being pressed into suspended 'pockets'. The ground floor could be used for storage or was open-fronted and served as a cart shed.

Rarity and significance

- Early purpose-built oast, small buildings which included a kiln and rooms for the green and dried hops, are extremely rare.
- Evidence for early kilns may survive in some threshing barns.
- Surviving kilns are extremely rare.
- Early purpose-built oast houses, small buildings which included a kiln and rooms for the green and dried hops, are extremely rare.
- Only a small number of unconverted oast houses survive.

Hop industry – oasts



LEFT Schematic drawing showing the workings of an oast. (© National Trust)

RIGHT The stowage attached to the kilns may be part of an earlier timber-framed oast. (© Kent County Council)



LEFT Large-scale industrial kilns near Goudhurst. Square kilns were built for a time in the 19th century. (© Bob Edwards)

RIGHT This brick stowage has an internal timber-frame. (© Bob Edwards)

Hop industry – hop pickers’ huts



These are found on the edge of farmsteads (left) or in the open countryside (right). (© Bob Edwards)

Before mechanised picking was introduced in the 1950s, the harvesting of hops was a very labour intensive business and around it grew the 19th and 20th century tradition of Londoners flocking to Kent, Surrey and Sussex in the autumn to pick hops and also soft fruits. Women and children commonly travelled independently of the men, who joined their families at the weekend.

Accommodation for these people was in the first instance rough canvas tents or converted animal sheds, but in the late 19th century moves were made to improve conditions, with purpose-built hop pickers’ huts. These were usually sited away from the steading or at best on its fringe.

Typical features

- They are single-storey structures with rows of doors and windows to small rooms.
- Communal kitchens may be located at the end of the range or in detached buildings.

Rarity and significance

- Surviving groups of hop pickers’ huts are rare.
- Hop pickers’ huts associated with coherent farmstead groups with other hop industry structures (eg oast houses) are highly significant.

Hop industry – tar tanks

Tar Tanks can be found in the fields close to oasts. Creosote for preserving the ends of hop poles was not generally available until 1862 and did not become widely used until the late 19th century. To aid the penetration of the tar into the wood, it was heated in tanks and the poles held in the liquid supported by a wooden frame.

Outlying barns and complexes

Field barns and outfarms are:

- isolated threshing barns or
- groups of buildings set within the fields away from the main farmstead, typically in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other which saved on the labour needed to transport crops and manure to and from distant fields.

Some field barns and outfarms may be the remnants of former farmsteads where the house has been lost but the buildings retained as a result of farm amalgamation.

Rarity and significance

- Field barns and outfarms were once a common feature of the High Weald, particularly in the southern part of The Weald, east of Ashdown Forest. Most of these buildings have been lost from the landscape.
- Most probably date from the 19th century but it is possible that some barns with steep-pitched roofs are earlier.
- Few field barn or outfarm buildings are listed.



Field barn

A field barn in the High Weald. (© Bob Edwards)



Outfarm

Outfarms were typically built with shelter sheds for cattle flanking the threshing barn set around a yard. A cottage for a farmworker could also be sited nearby. (© Bob Edwards)

Other buildings – back kitchens and dairies

Detached building sited close to the house may have originated as dairies or – often in the 16th and 17th centuries – as detached kitchens for brewing, baking and other purposes. Doors will often be

wide, and dairies (which may also be on the north side of the house) may include slate shelves and brick/stone floors to keep the interior cool. Surviving examples are of great rarity and significance.



(© Steve Podd, Farming and Wildlife Group)

Other buildings – dovecotes

Dovecotes were rarely built in Kent, compared to other parts of England. Doveholes let into the gables or under the eaves of buildings are a more common feature.



(© Janina Holubecki, High Weald AONB Unit)

5 MATERIALS AND DETAIL

NATIONAL BACKGROUND

Historic farmsteads reflect England's huge diversity in geology, and differences in building traditions and wealth, estate policy, access to transport links and the management of local timber and other resources. This has contributed to great contrasts and variety in traditional walling and roofing materials and forms of construction, which often survived much longer on working farm buildings than farmhouses. 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. There also appeared in the 19th century a range of standard architectural detail, such as part-glazed and ventilated windows and the use of cast and wrought iron for columns and other detail.

Pre-fabricated construction in industrial materials made its way onto farms from the 1850s, but did not become dominant and widespread until after the 1950s.

- Hipped and half-hipped roofs are the historically dominant roof form, gabled roofs being more generally used from the 19th century.
- Tiles largely replaced straw thatch (and also broom and heather in The Weald and reed in coastal areas) from the late medieval period.
- Timber-framing was typically used for medieval houses and barns with the barns and sometimes other buildings being clad in weatherboarding.
- Farmhouses and cottages are more likely to be clad in painted weatherboard or plain clay tile.

- Weatherboarding is commonly overlapped.
- There are some very rare surviving examples of butted boarding, of pre-19th century date. These are found inside barns, on former external walls. Surviving examples are very rare survivals of a formerly common building tradition.
- Brick used from 17th century for high-status barns and stables but not commonly used until around 1800. Sandstone from Greensand used for walls and plinths.

Typical features

- 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 c.1850 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.

Unusual features of historic interest, often difficult to spot, include:

- Tallies near threshing floors in barns for noting production of grain, and numbers to grain bins.
- *Ritual marks* for protecting produce or livestock, which are usually in the form of 'daisy wheels' or 'Mary marks', or graffiti recording names of workers, sales etc.
- *Graffiti or artwork*, such as soldiers' graffiti, which is tied in with significant cultural events or occupation.
- *Constructional marks* are those associated with the transport and prefabrication of structural carpentry and timber frames (eg shipping and carpenters' marks).



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

RIGHT Hipped roof and weatherboarding. (© Bob Edwards)



LEFT Doors and windows. (© Bob Edwards)

RIGHT Machine-sawn roof timbers, as used from the mid 19th century. (© English Heritage)



LEFT Corrugated iron, as used here on a High Weald barn, was used from the mid 19th century in Kent and saved many buildings from collapse. (© High Weald AONB Unit)

RIGHT Vertical timber boarding pegged into the cross-rails of an aisled medieval barn. This is a very rare surviving example of this type of boarding. (© English Heritage)