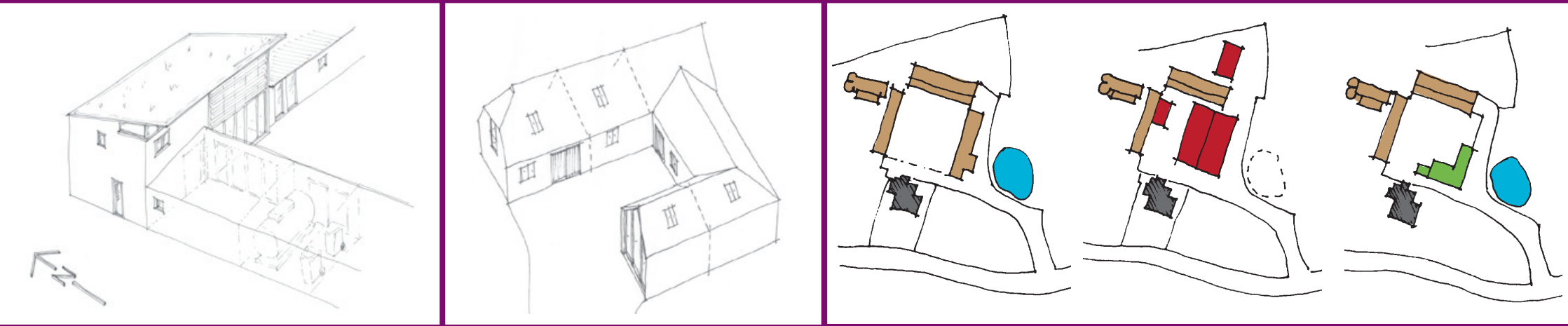


KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

PART 5

KENT FARMSTEADS DESIGN GUIDANCE



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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.

NOTE. THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS AND CAN BE EXPLAINED IN A RANGE OF LANGUAGES. PLEASE CALL HERITAGE CONSERVATION, ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT, KCC, 01622 221541

AIMS AND CONTENTS OF THE KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

The purpose of this guidance is to help achieve the sustainable development of farmsteads, and 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.

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

Detailed understanding of the landscape, the farmstead and the buildings are essential to achieving successful design in the rural context. This design guidance is intended to help applicants who have undertaken the Assessment Framework. It will help in pre-application discussion and in drawing up an application, and will identify and inform opportunities for new buildings and design as well as the enhancement of the character of the landscape and the site.

The importance of good design is underpinned in the principle aims of putting good design at the heart of planning (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraphs 58-64). This has been reinforced in the historic environment by the work of English Heritage in their *Buildings in Context* toolkit. There is further detailed advice on the conversion and re-use of farm buildings in their publication, *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*. This section seeks to provide advice, good practice and general guidance for development in the rural context. The guidance is based on case studies and established best practice seen elsewhere as well as in Kent.

References are made to plan form, layout, degrees of enclosure, scale and massing, form of buildings, orientation and detailed design, including form of openings. The following pages present design suggestions using a selection of the plan types commonly encountered in Kent, informed by an understanding of how the historic character of the traditional farmstead layout (as identified in Ordnance Survey maps of around 1900) has changed. It should be noted that while these examples are based on Kent farmsteads they are not planning briefs or definitive design solutions. They are designed to guide the applicant through a series of ideas and concepts which will hopefully produce a scheme which responds positively to its local setting and distinctiveness.

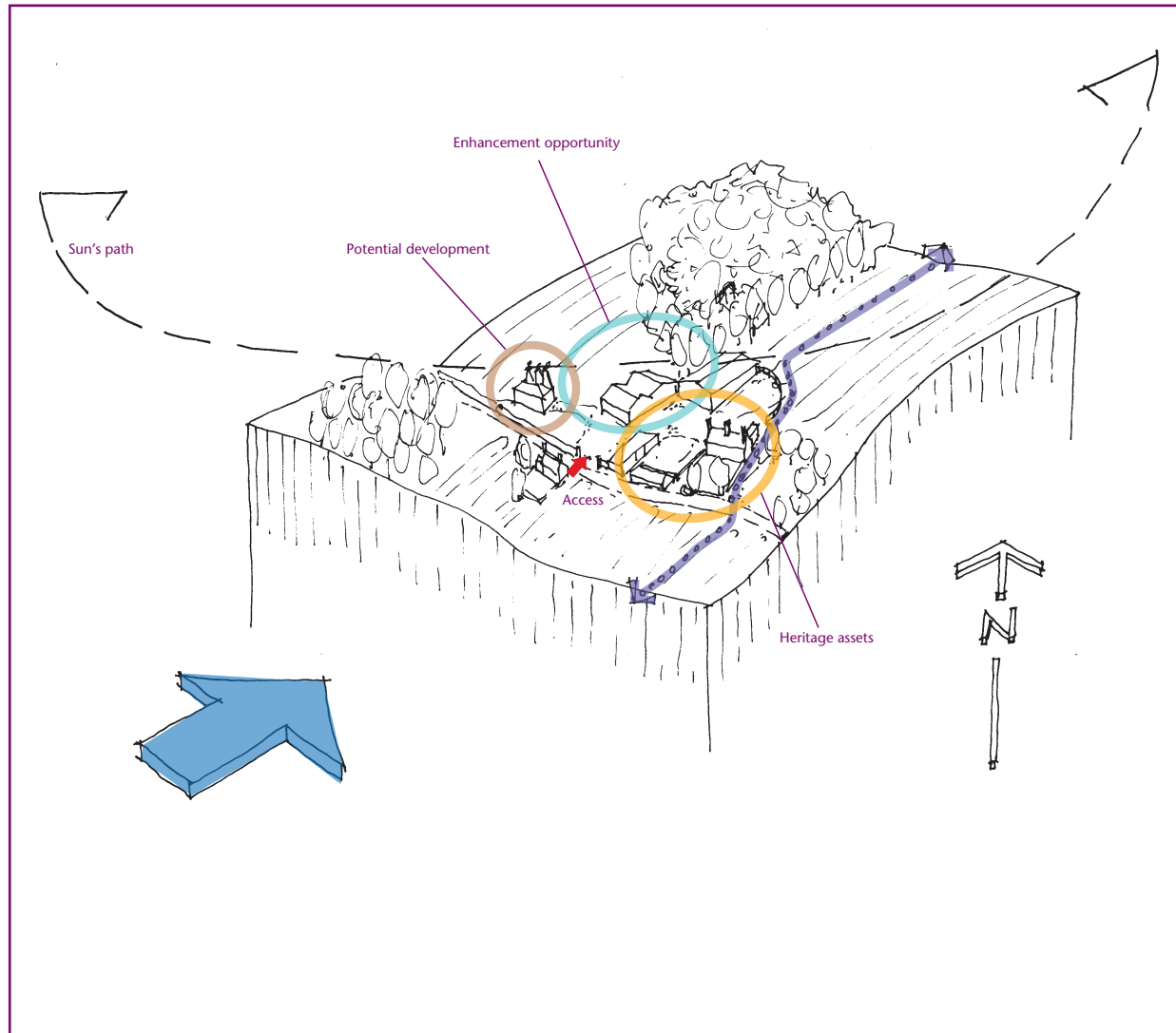
The National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is 'a key aspect of sustainable development' and indivisible from good planning (paragraph 56). Developments should 'establish a strong sense of place' and 'respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials.' (paragraph 58). New buildings (ancillary buildings and dwellings):

- Must conform with planning policy and guidance, the quality of design being fundamental to any special justification for isolated new houses as outlined in paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- May be considered as enabling development to help significant buildings that are highly sensitive to adaptive reuse, to be conserved and reused. ¹

¹ Enabling development is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring public benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved. English Heritage has produced guidance on this at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/enabling-development-and-the-conservation-of-significant-places>

1 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

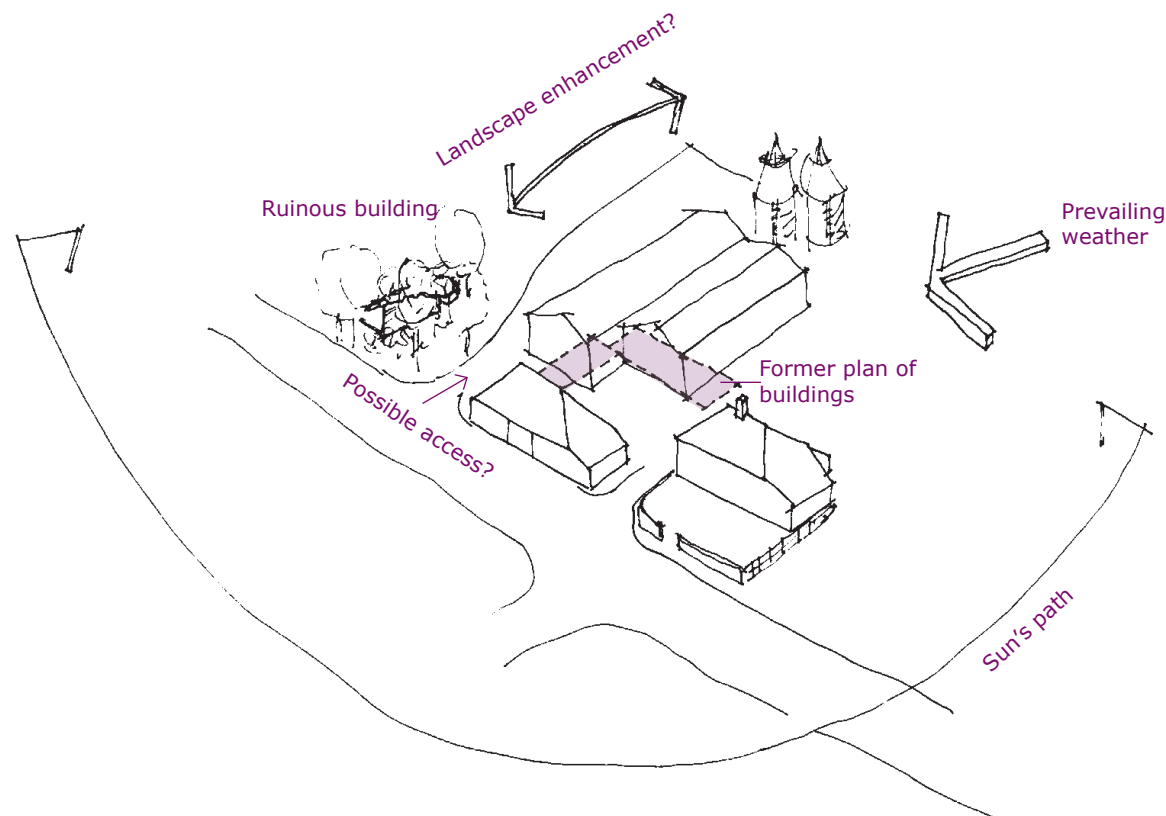


Once familiarised with the relevant character area relating to your site, the following should form the basis for decision making and design solutions.

- Factors such as orientation (which buildings face in what direction and receive the most/least sunlight), prevailing weather, particularly wind direction and existing rights of way – footpaths and driftways.
- Modern underused or redundant farm buildings may provide opportunities for significant enhancement of the site overall, particularly in views to the site from the open countryside.
- Heritage assets and their setting should be very carefully considered. There may be opportunities for conversion and/or extension.

The following pages set out in more detail the opportunities for intervention in the case of traditional farmsteads in the Kent countryside.

2 THE FARMSTEAD GROUP – SITE APPRAISAL



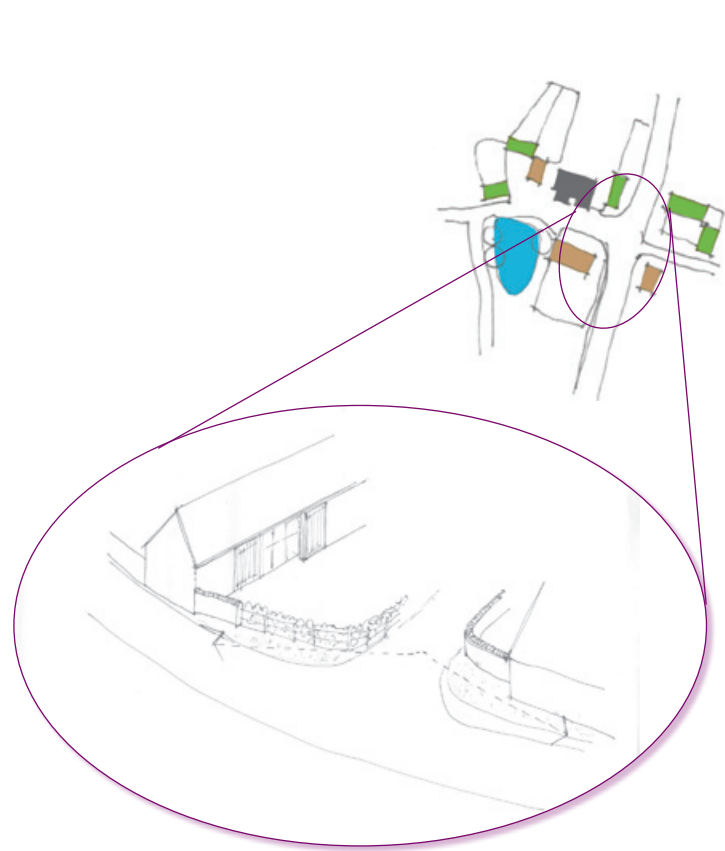
A detailed site appraisal should carefully consider all the assets on the site and the opportunities for change on a site. The planning of new/replacement buildings should be based on a sound understanding of the context.

The site appraisal should consider:

- The maximizing of orientation to take advantage of natural resources (for example the sun's energy)
- Existing and potential access (for existing, proposed and retained uses)
- Potential for enhancement to landscaping
- Opportunities to re-instate or replace ruinous or missing buildings
- The potential removal of unsightly modern buildings
- Opportunities to improve the setting of established heritage assets


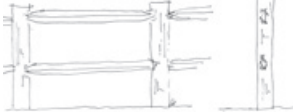

In undertaking the site appraisal the designer must have regard to the original farmstead type and its scale (see [Part 3, Farmstead Types for guidance](#)).

3 THE FARMSTEAD GROUP – ACCESS AND BOUNDARIES



Key

- Traditional farm building
- Modern farm buildings / residential buildings
- Farm house
- Potential new / replacement buildings
- Ponds (historic)
- Lost ponds
- Disused / overgrown ponds

	Brick wall	Hard
	Post and rail	↓
	Hedge	Soft

Boundary treatments
 The type, scale and materials of boundary treatments are crucial elements in the design of new buildings and interventions into traditional farmsteads. These can range from hard; brick and stone through to soft; hedge boundaries. Care needs to be taken with hedge boundaries to choose plants which are indigenous into the area. For more detailed guidance on this matter, the Kent Downs AONB Unit can offer advice and more information can be found on their website; www.kentdowns.org.uk. In general terms the designer is advised to note local species of hedges and trees in the locality, particularly to established farmsteads and use these species in any new development.

Access is a very important factor when considering any intervention to historic farmsteads. Intensification of an access or creation of a new access will require approval from the Highway Authority (as well as the local planning authority). One of the key aspects of design is to (where possible) build sight lines into any proposed development in terms of the access arrangements. These will vary depending upon the

classification of the road and the intended use of the access. Designers should consider very carefully the interface with the roadside and the materials used. In this case a fence hedge behind will control the growth of the hedge and ensure open sightlines are maintained. There are grass verges to either side of the entrance. The highway authority will require these to be maintained.

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

The table shows how the different scales and forms of farmsteads present different sensitivities to new build. The illustrations on the following pages take selected examples of the different historic farmstead types and suggest how the options for change can be informed by an understanding of their historic character as determined from site survey and the use of historic Ordnance Survey maps.

Sensitivity	Issues	Small loose courtyard (1 or 2 sides)	Larger loose courtyard (3 or 4 sides)	Small/Med regular plans (L and U)	Large regular courtyard	Regular multi-yard plans	Dispersed cluster plans	Dispersed multi-yard & Driftway plans	
Measure of sensitivity of the issue in relation to the plan type as existing	LANDSCAPE								
	Enclosure	H	M/H	M	L	M	H	H/M	
	Orientation	H	M	H	M/H	M	L/M	L	
	Access	H	H	H	H	M	M/H	L/M	
Measure of the sensitivity of proposed changes in relation to the plan type	FARMSTEAD – PROPOSED								
	Parking	H	M	H	L/M	L	H	L/M	
	Ancillary buildings	H	H	H	M	L/M	M	L/M	
	Public and private space	M/H	M/H	M/H	M	M	M/H	L/M	
	Boundaries	H	H	M/H	M/H	L/M	H	L	
	Use of materials	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	

Sensitivity to new build is measured as:

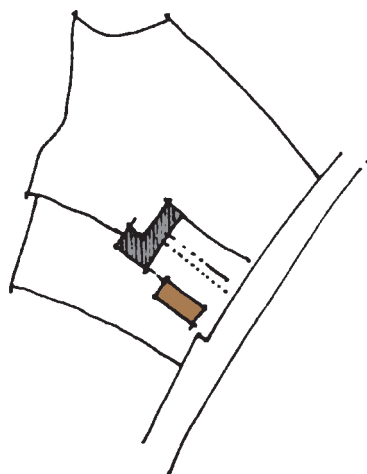
High (H) – this issue is likely to be highly sensitive to change in this plan type and needs very careful consideration and may be a significant constraint to development/further development within this plan type;

Medium (M) – this issue is potentially significant but is probably negotiable subject to detailed design;

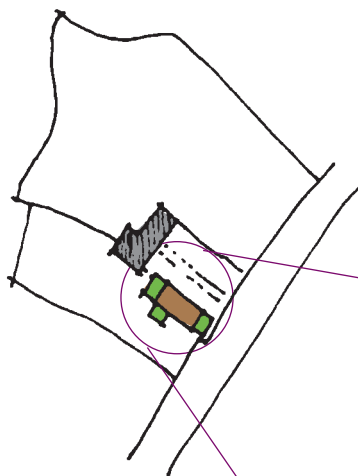
Low (L) – this issue is unlikely to be significant in this plan type and will not pose a significant threat to development subject to mitigation and detailed design.

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

4.1 Loose Courtyard with building to one side of the yard



Present inherited character



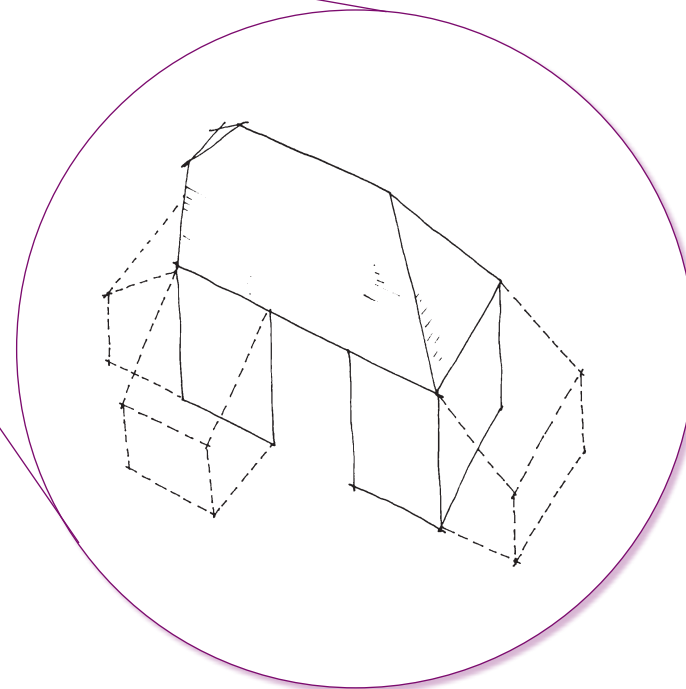
Future options

Some shelter sheds (as shown in the photograph) can run the entire length of a barn side.



The loose courtyard plan in its simplest form may be comprised of a single barn in relation to the farmhouse, forming an informal courtyard space. In this instance there may be only very limited opportunity for intervention as new buildings may change the scale and/or visual relationship of the established building pattern.

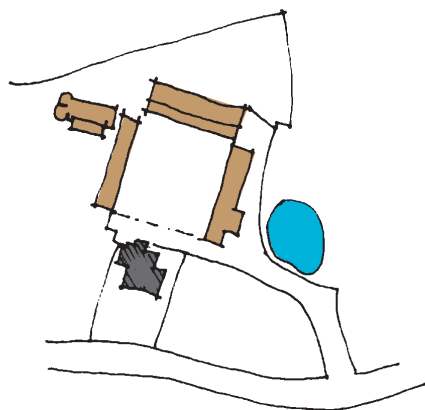
In the example shown, there may be scope for some introduction of shelter shed structures (though probably no more than one in any given example) which may help the designer resolve some of the challenges of building conversion. These structures may contain service areas (plant, toilets, storage) which often require compartmentalization of the original plan form. Alternatively these additions can act as garden sheds, wood sheds and stores, limiting the requirement for externalized structures which could domesticate a rural site.



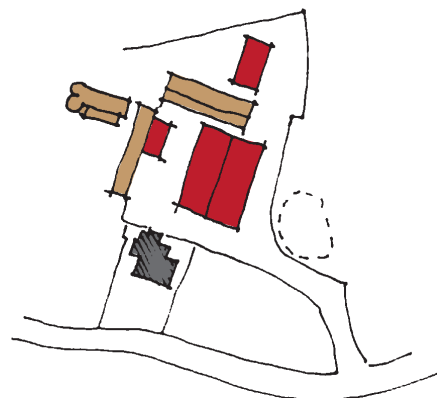
See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Types in Kent for guidance on the key farmstead types [📄](#)

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

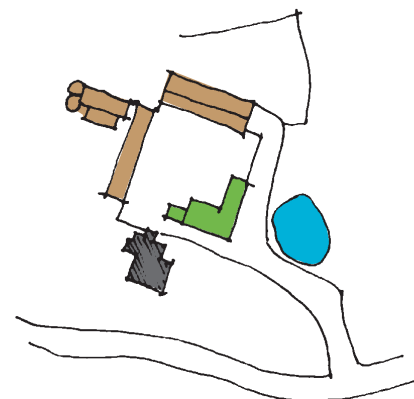
4.2 Loose courtyard with working buildings to three sides of the yard



Historic character (from 19th century OS Map)



Present inherited character



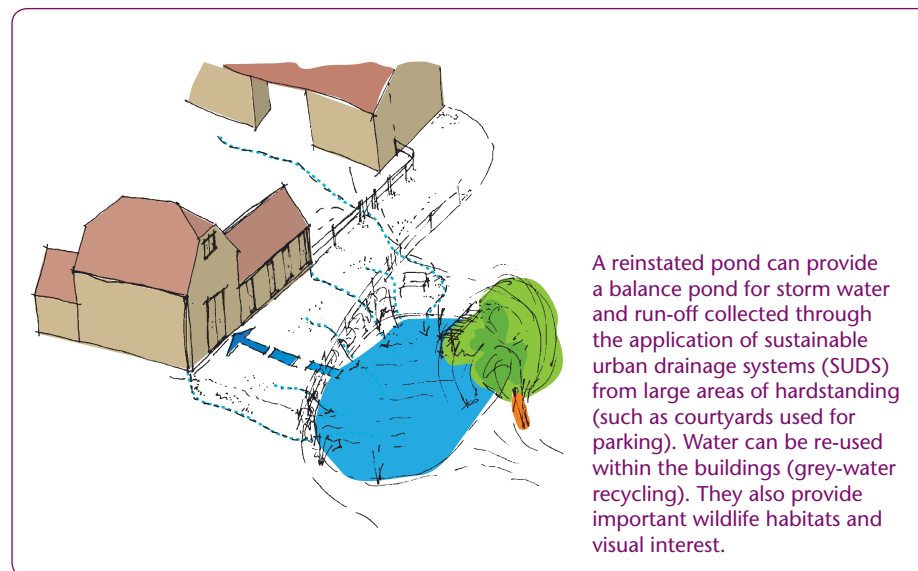
Future options

Key

- Traditional farm building
- Modern farm buildings / residential buildings
- Farm house
- Potential new / replacement buildings
- Ponds (historic)
- Lost ponds
- Disused / overgrown ponds

A key characteristic of the loose courtyard is that the buildings are not linked but separate from each other and arranged to form the courtyard but not fully enclosed (as found in the L and U plan types). There may well be (as in this case) further buildings detached and in some cases some distance from the main courtyard space.

The sketch proposal shown includes the re-instatement of a pond. Ponds were once a common feature of the Kent farmsteads. Many have been filled in or are overgrown and unmanaged. Water resources and the management of water when considering new buildings in the countryside should be one of the key design principles for the designer.

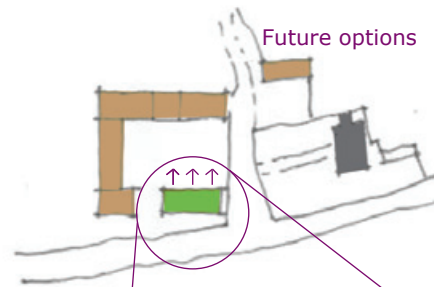


A reinstated pond can provide a balance pond for storm water and run-off collected through the application of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) from large areas of hardstanding (such as courtyards used for parking). Water can be re-used within the buildings (grey-water recycling). They also provide important wildlife habitats and visual interest.

See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Types in Kent for guidance on the key farmstead types [↗](#)

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

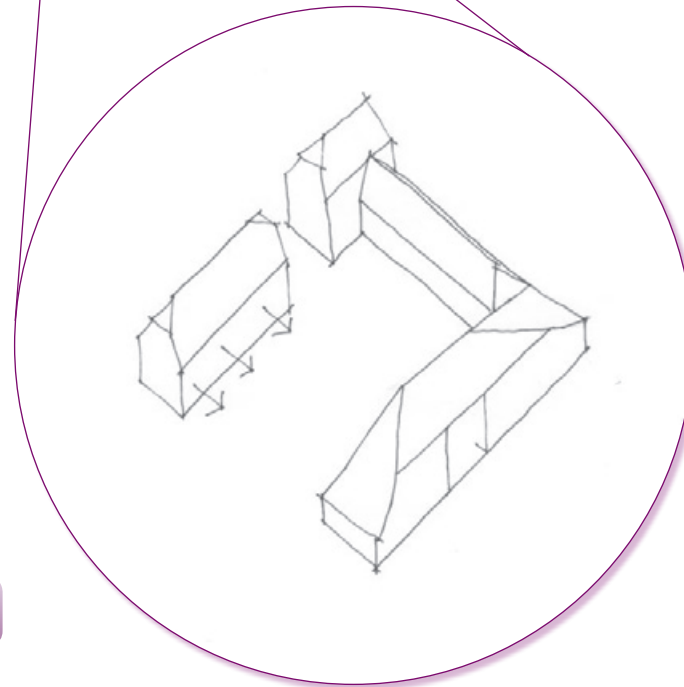
4.3 L plan



Key	
	Traditional farm building
	Modern farm buildings / residential buildings
	Farm house
	Potential new / replacement buildings
	Ponds (historic)
	Lost ponds
	Disused / overgrown ponds

The L plan is a well-defined plan type and is highly sensitive to change. However, it is possible to introduce buildings which do not diminish or change the original form of the farmstead plan.

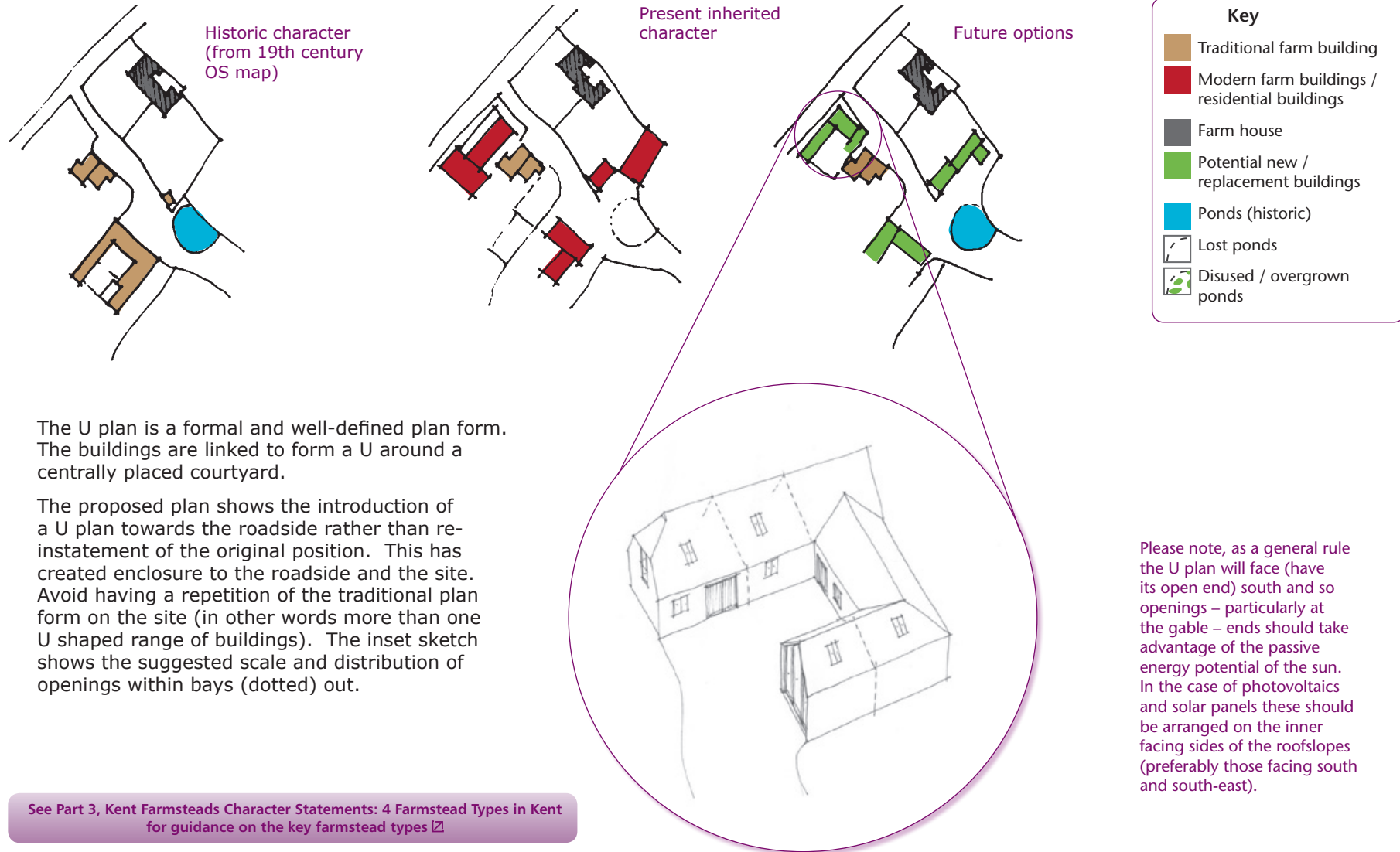
In the example shown, the key principle is that of providing openings facing in towards the courtyard and minimising openings facing out.



See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Types in Kent for guidance on the key farmstead types [↗](#)

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

4.4 U plan



The U plan is a formal and well-defined plan form. The buildings are linked to form a U around a centrally placed courtyard.

The proposed plan shows the introduction of a U plan towards the roadside rather than re-instatement of the original position. This has created enclosure to the roadside and the site. Avoid having a repetition of the traditional plan form on the site (in other words more than one U shaped range of buildings). The inset sketch shows the suggested scale and distribution of openings within bays (dotted) out.

Please note, as a general rule the U plan will face (have its open end) south and so openings – particularly at the gable – ends should take advantage of the passive energy potential of the sun. In the case of photovoltaics and solar panels these should be arranged on the inner facing sides of the roofslopes (preferably those facing south and south-east).

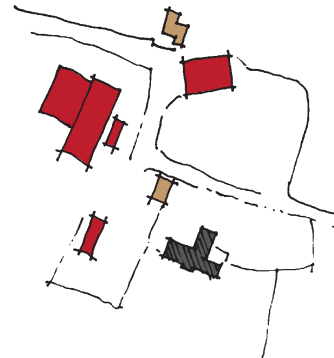
See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Types in Kent for guidance on the key farmstead types [\[7\]](#)

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

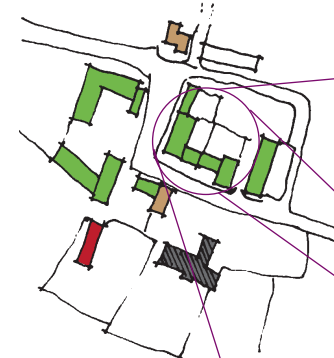
4.5 Regular multi-yard



Historic character (from late 19th century OS Map)



Present inherited character



Future options

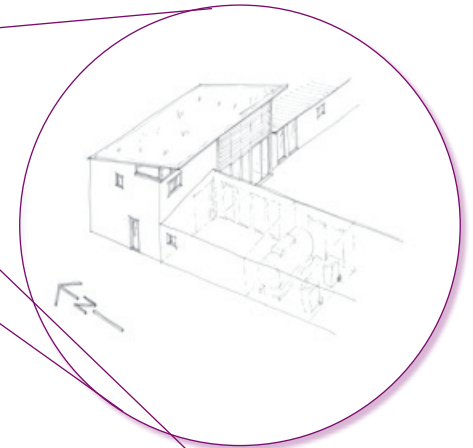
The regular multi-yard can often include a complex series of grouped buildings; attached and detached from each other and formed around a series of yards which are in turn separated by some form of boundary treatment; post and rail or brick or stone wall (approximately 1.2 metres in height). Getting the massing and grouping of buildings right will be the key to working within this plan type. There is however more scope for variation and use of modern forms (monopitch for example) rather than traditional forms in this plan type as the sequence and grouping of buildings enables an architectural identity and coherence to be achieved – something that is more difficult (but not impossible) to obtain with single building interventions.

Key

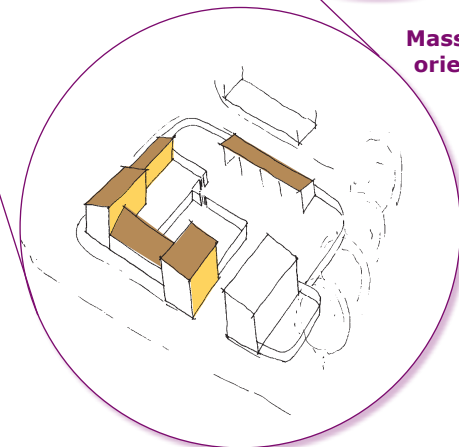
- Traditional farm building
- Modern farm buildings / residential buildings
- Farm house
- Potential new / replacement buildings
- Ponds (historic)
- Lost ponds
- Disused / overgrown ponds

The example shows how to exploit the orientation of the built form, with large windows facing south but regulated by a series of movable louvers to control the level of light and penetration into the building. This can be done electronically when linked to a internal climate management system.

Design



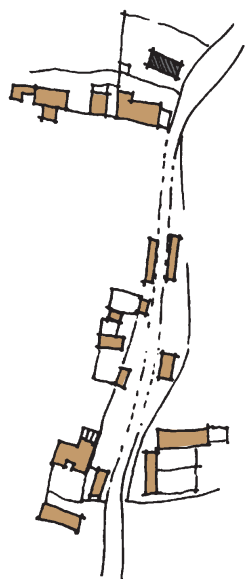
Massing and orientation



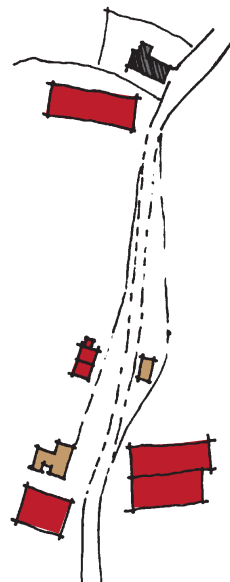
See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Types in Kent for guidance on the key farmstead types

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

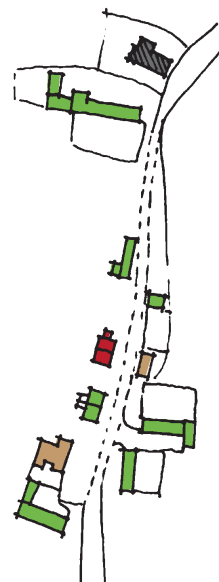
4.6 Dispersed multi-yard with driftway



Historic character (from 19th century OS map)



Present inherited character



Future options

There is generally an informality to the distribution of buildings in this plan type. This can be difficult to replicate with new buildings. A feature of the plan is multiple spaces enclosed by boundaries (the multi-yards) – be this brick or stone walls or post and rail fences. In this respect the closing off of a space for a garden - providing the correct boundary treatment is chosen - is not out of character within this plan type.

See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Types in Kent for guidance on the key farmstead types [\[2\]](#)

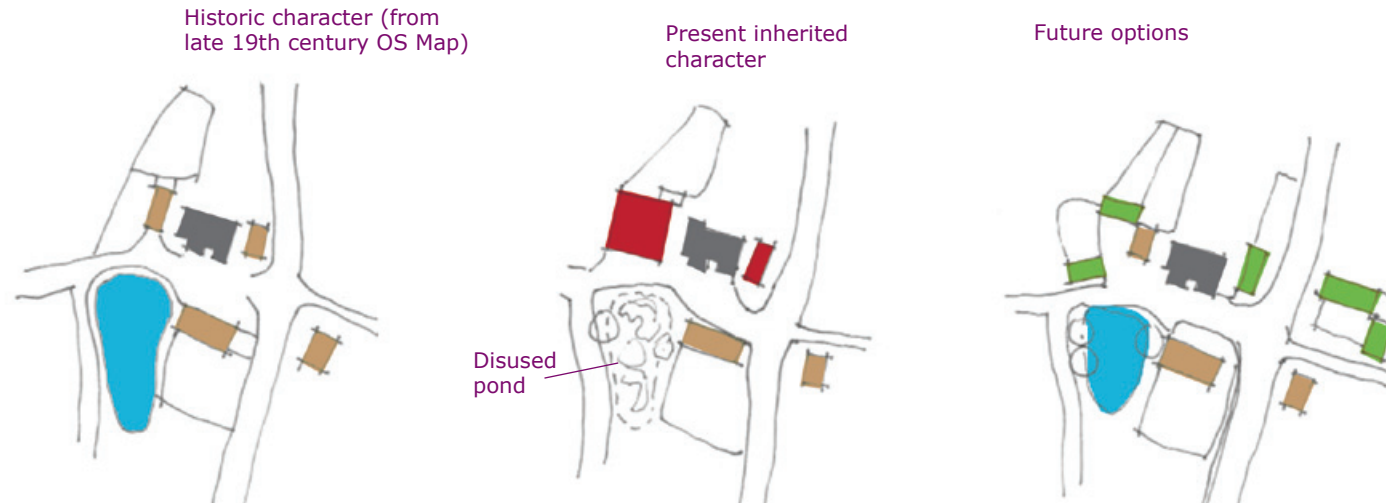
Key

- Traditional farm building
- Modern farm buildings / residential buildings
- Farm house
- Potential new / replacement buildings
- Ponds (historic)
- Lost ponds
- Disused / overgrown ponds

The driftway (shown as purple) is a key feature within the Kent landscape and should remain a principal element of any proposals for change. Buildings should respect and reinforce the line of any historic drift-way.

4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAN TYPES

4.7 Dispersed cluster



There is a definite informality to the grouping of buildings that comprise the dispersed cluster plan type. Care needs to be taken not to formalise groups or intensify areas of development.

This worked example includes the reinstatement and landscaping of a pond.

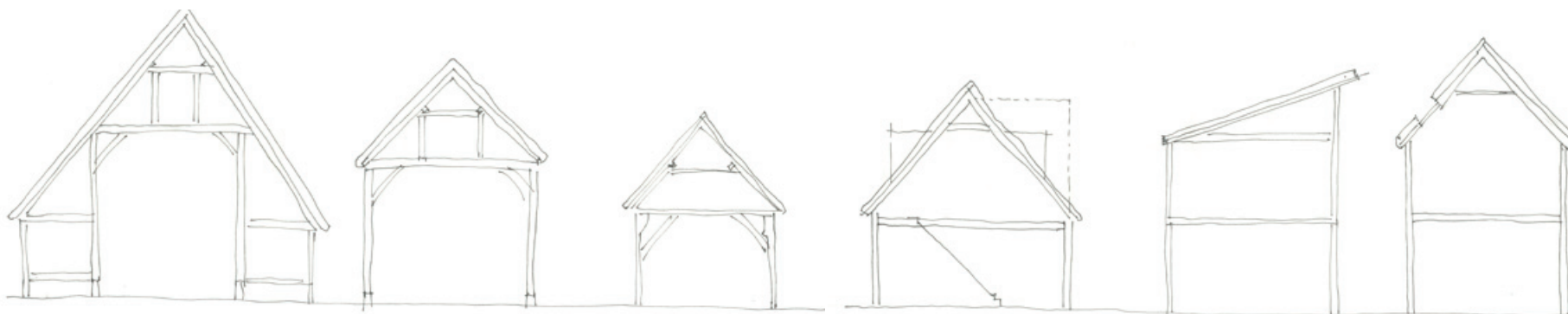


See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Types in Kent for guidance on the key farmstead types [↗](#)

5 BUILDINGS – WORKING WITH SCALE

Historic

Modern



Traditionally scaled buildings:

Aisled Barn

- Large massing
- Eaves swept low which diminishes impact
- Large expanse of roof
- Limited opportunity for openings at upper levels
- Should in most cases be the dominant building on a farmstead (other than the farmhouse)

Barn

- A clearly defined long axis
- Eaves level reflective of a modest two storey residential building
- Eaves sometimes swept low with shelter sheds (see page 7)
- Some opportunity for varied openings
- Is often one of the most dominant buildings in most farmsteads

Cattle House

- Long, low and narrow building
- Single storey, low eaves
- Simplicity to form
- Very limited scope for new openings (other than glazing of open sides)
- A modest building in the farmstead group

one & a half storey

mono-pitch

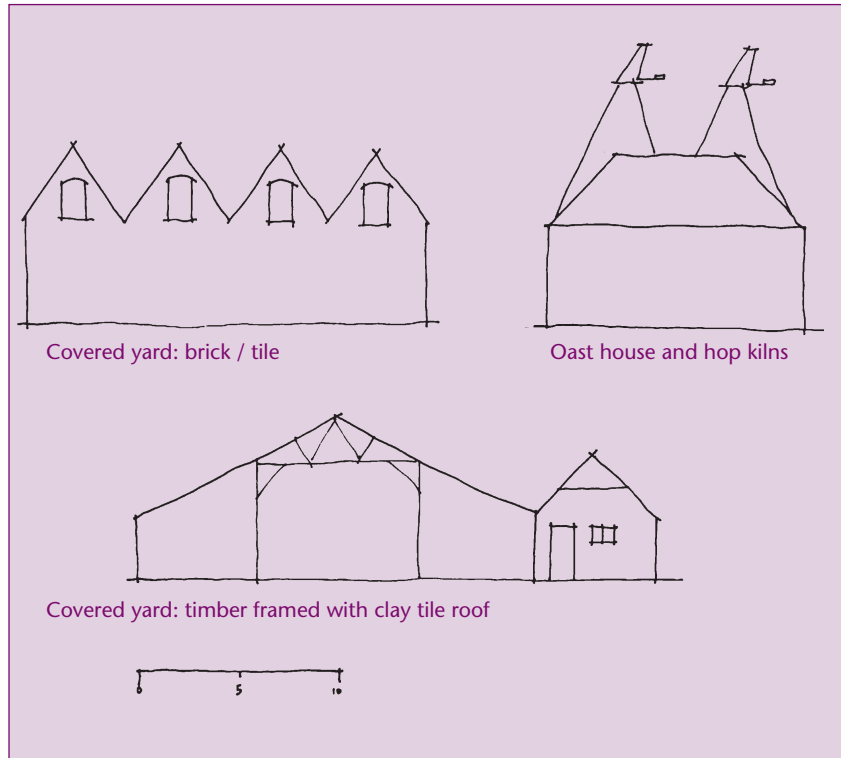
two storey

Proposed new buildings

- When proposing new buildings within the farmstead, designers should consider;
- The appropriate scale of the proposed uses, for example small offices, workshops, storage spaces or industrial units?
 - The hierarchy of buildings within the farmstead; how dominant are the new buildings going to be in the group?
 - The roof form and massing of the buildings, particularly the relationship of length to depth of building – this is (along with the use of locally distinctive materials) often the defining element of a traditional farmstead.
 - The orientation of proposed buildings to maximize the efficiency of openings to allow light into the proposed built form.

See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Building Types in Kent for guidance on the key building types [↗](#)

6 BUILDINGS – LARGE TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE



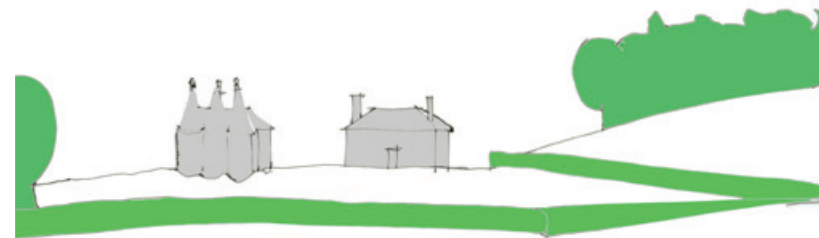
Traditional agricultural buildings in Kent were, in some cases, comparable with the large portal frame buildings seen today. Covered yards are a relatively rare surviving building type but examples do survive in parts of the Low Weald.

When proposing new buildings in the countryside, particularly industrial-type buildings, great care has to be taken to deal with the massing of these structures and their potential impact on the landscape setting of the farmstead.

It should be noted that the traditional farmstead comprised buildings of substantial footprint and form and they produced a distinctive profile largely due to the materials available – timber and clay or slate roof coverings. These dictated the span of the roof structure, although some covered yards are very large and incorporate complex scissor trusses to accommodate the loads imposed by traditional roofing materials.

The designer should carefully consider the form of large proposed buildings within the farmstead context and landscape setting. Design cues can be taken from the distinct and highly contextual (to Kent) oast house form and to a lesser extent the covered yard.

Where proposed buildings will have a significant impact on the views towards a farmstead group, particularly where the group is in a prominent location (as shown in the illustration) great care should be taken in dealing with the massing, profile and material use within this scale of building.



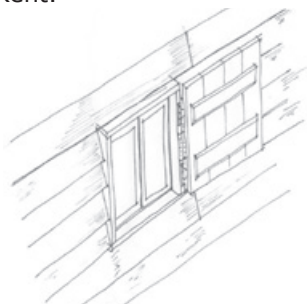
See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Building Types in Kent for guidance on the key building types [↗](#)

7 BUILDINGS – OPENINGS AND PROPORTIONS

In traditional farm buildings, the proportions and scale, former function and positioning of openings is a crucial and defining element of the agricultural character of these building types. New buildings or openings should respond positively to the distribution, scale and proportions of existing established openings in the existing (or lost) farmstead.

The division of bays (shown as dotted lines on the sketches to the right) should be the starting point for the scale and proportions of openings. Please note as a general rule, there is rarely more than one opening (be this a door – single or double, window or ventilation slit) per bay per floor. Often this will only be one opening per bay.

In the example, the new building has responded to the hierarchy of window openings in a traditional three bay barn by focusing openings into the central bay which traditionally was where the large central threshing doors were located. Otherwise, the design has minimised the number of openings within each bay to reflect the character of traditional farm buildings in Kent.

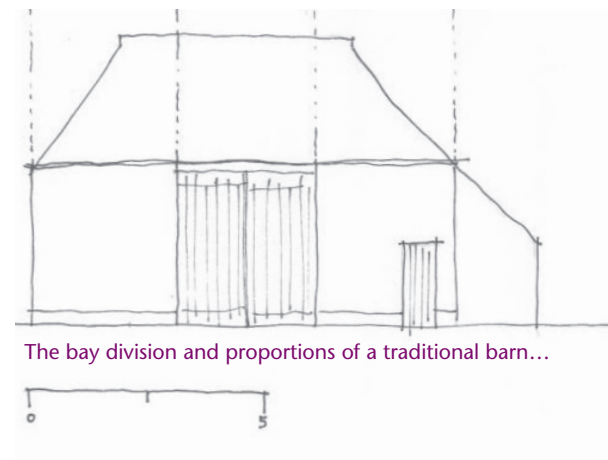


The inset sketch illustrates how new openings (in existing or proposed buildings) might be handled. The key principles are:

- Create a depth to the opening
- Frame the opening
- Keep the glazing and opening lights simple
- Casement to be flush with the frame
- Consider the provision of closable shutter – this could be hinged or sliding (alternative materials may be considered appropriate particularly in an industrial building)



Example of a non-domestic opening in a traditional farm building



The bay division and proportions of a traditional barn...

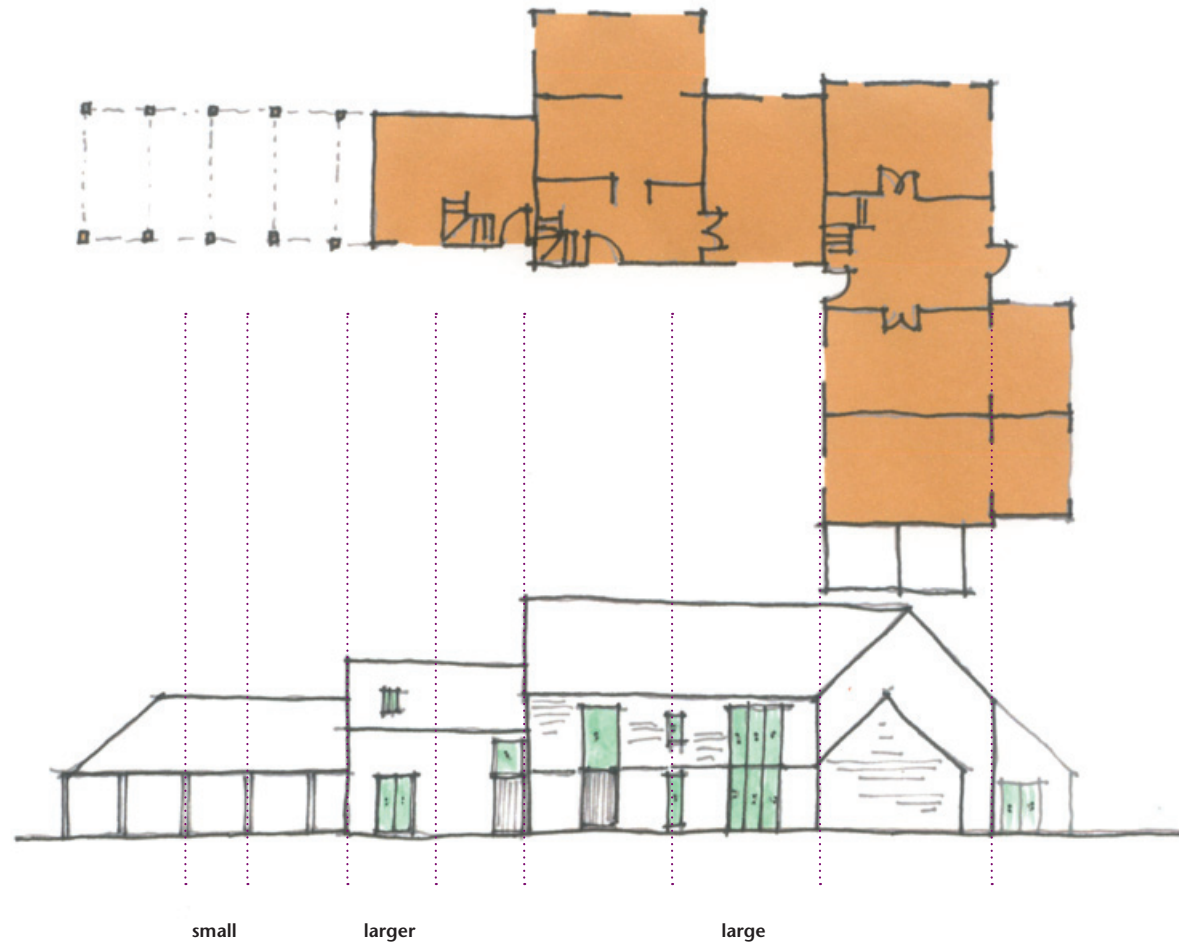


...should be used to inform the proportions and scale of proposed new buildings. The sketch shows a new building which reflects the bay divisions and opening distribution seen in traditional buildings on the farmstead

See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Building Types in Kent for guidance on the key building types [↗](#)

7 Buildings – Openings and Proportions

The use of bay proportions in new build proposals



The width of the proposed bay in any new build should reflect that of the traditional farm buildings of the region and be proportionate to the size (and use of the proposed building). The illustration shows an example of the use of varied bay widths for elements of a proposed 'L' plan range of residential or office or live-work units (please note this is indicative to reflect the use of bays rather than a definitive or suggested design solution)

See Part 3, Kent Farmsteads Character Statements: 4 Farmstead Building Types in Kent for guidance on the key building types [↗](#)