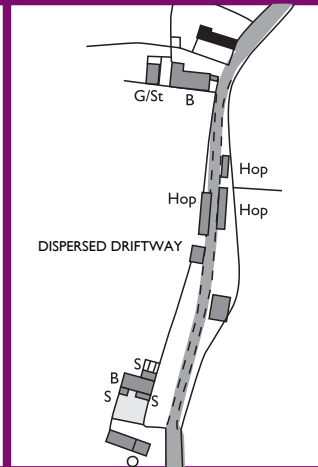


# KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

## AN INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY



## 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 planning context and the key principles to inform the sustainable development of farmsteads – understanding their character, significance and sensitivity to change.

**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**

### **Residential conversion of agricultural buildings under Class MB of the General Permitted Development Order**

Government now allows the owners and tenants of agricultural units to change the use of an agricultural building and any land within its curtilage to residential use. The order applies to the works necessary for the creation of up to three dwelling houses, and a cumulative floor area of 450 square metres. Prior approval from the local planning authority is required to ensure that the change of use and any associated works do not create unacceptable impacts. These cover highways, transport and noise impacts, risks of contamination and flooding, location and siting of the building, and the design and external appearance of the building. Listed buildings and sites with scheduled ancient monuments are excluded, as also is all Article 1(5) land (National Parks, the Broads, areas of outstanding natural beauty, conservations areas, World Heritage Sites and certain areas specified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). For further details see [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/564/pdfs/uksi\\_20140564\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/564/pdfs/uksi_20140564_en.pdf) and for explanatory memorandum [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/564/pdfs/uksiem\\_20140564\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/564/pdfs/uksiem_20140564_en.pdf)

### 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.

## ASSESSING FARMSTEADS USING THE KENT FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

Traditional farmsteads and their buildings are assets which contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through a range of uses benefit the rural economy and communities across Kent. Their significance can be retained and enhanced through sympathetic change and development. The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the importance of:

1. Retaining and enhancing local character and distinctiveness.
2. Conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Farmsteads which have retained traditional buildings and/or their historic form make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, whether they are designated as heritage assets or not. The heritage potential of traditional farmsteads, based on the survival of their historic form from Ordnance Survey maps of c. 1900, has been entered onto the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER).

- 84% of traditional farmsteads (county average 73%) have heritage potential because they have retained some or all of their historic form. The greater the survival of the historic form and detail, the greater will be its significance as a traditional farmstead.
- Only 18% of outfarms and field barns (county average 18%), which are often remote without road access, have been subject to high rates of change, have retained some or all of their historic form.

Use the FARMSTEAD ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK to identify the need and potential for change at the earliest stage of considering change for a farmstead or farm building. This will help to prepare a scheme that complies with national and local planning policy, and save time and resources in the planning process.



Since the 1950s traditional farm buildings have become increasingly redundant, and farmers have required industrial-style sheds and large concreted working areas, often with new points of access, in order to minimise labour costs and meet animal welfare standards. In parallel, a growing demand for characterful rural housing has made historic farm buildings increasingly attractive targets for residential conversion. 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)

Some farmsteads and their buildings also have very high levels of significance in a county or national context, such as medieval barns, groups of buildings associated with the hop industry and farmsteads with two or more 18th century or earlier working buildings. The guidance has used the results of The Kent Farmsteads and Landscapes Project. This project 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 farmstead development. Modern maps were then used to measure the degree of survival.



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. This loose courtyard farmstead in the Low Weald has the working buildings built on two sides of the yard, with a detached barn. (© English Heritage NMR 27205 003)

This has shown that the Weald has the highest levels of survival, within landscapes that have often retained patterns of fields and woodland inherited from the medieval period, whereas the North Kent Plain, Romney Marsh and the Thames Estuary have the highest degrees of alteration to farmstead layouts and their associated landscapes.



The largest farms and fields have for centuries developed across the arable vales and downs, as here around the medieval church at Sextris in the North Kent Downs. (© English Heritage NMR 27201 017)