

Farmsteads in the Suffolk Countryside

Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service



Funded by
Historic England





Background

- Series of nationwide HE funded projects starting in Hampshire in 2006
- Suffolk Thematic Survey (Aitkens and Wade Martins 1998)
- Contribution to local distinctiveness
- National Character Areas
- East of England Preliminary Character Statement
- Lack of hard data

Potted history of farms



- 1550 and earlier – monastic and secular estates, survival of wealthier farmers in some areas
- 1550-1750 – regional and local markets, specialist landscapes and farmsteads, mixed farming
- 1750-1840 – landlord led improvement, new techniques and livestock breeds
- 1840-1880 – high input, high output systems, mechanisation, manure production, imported materials, local variation
- 1880 – 1950 – early C20th depression, some growth in dairying and other sectors, prefabs and concrete
- 1950 to present (reduced numbers holding, sheds, government grants)



Aims and Objectives

- Provide a comprehensive evidence base
 - where are our historic farmsteads and what condition are they in?
- Understand the scale of change
- Highlight considerations for future development proposals
 - do we have enough information?
- Assist in management decisions
 - what is significant?
 - is recording required to capture evidential information?
- Ultimately, help secure a sustainable future and increase awareness/knowledge

Methodology

- Historic Farmsteads: A Manual for Recording (Lake and Edwards)
- Used in other projects nationwide
- Computerised, desk-based rapid assessment
- Base map is OS 1886 edition 6” compared against modern mapping
- Tithe maps
- Aerial imagery
- 5886 individual entries
- 18 months part time for two members of staff

Methodology

- Looks for:
 - Primary plan form
 - Attached ranges
 - Position of farmhouse
 - Subsidiary plan forms
 - Location of farmstead in relation to settlements
 - Size of farmstead
 - Survival
 - Current Use

ACT 051: Farmstead: Acton Hall

Monument MSF42288 Filtered

New Copy Delete Link Task Bookmark Report Menu Close

Record Type: Farmstead (FMS) HER No: ACT 051 Search:

Name: Farmstead: Acton Hall

Summary: Acton Hall is a farmstead visible on the 1st Ed Os map. The farmstead is laid out in a regular multi yard pattern with full-plan elements. The farmhouse is detached and set away from the yard. The farmstead sits alongside a public road in an isolated location. There has been a significant loss of working buildings with large modern sheds on site.

Type(s): BARN, FARMHOUSE, FARMSTEAD, REGULAR COURTYARD FULL PLAN, REGULAR COURTYARD MULTI YARD

NGR: Centred TL 8911 4544 (144m by 100m) Map: TL84NE Scientific Dating: Add

Description	Tree	Location	Status & Codes	Land Class	Contacts	Scores	Not to Publish	Mgmt Hist	Next Pref Ref	Metadata	Attributes
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Type: Farmstead Association:

Plan: Primary Attribute: Regular Courtyard Secondary Attribute: Multi-yard

Tertiary Attributes: Full Regular Courtyard plan

Farmhouse Position: Farmhouse set away from yard

Farm Location: Isolated position by public road

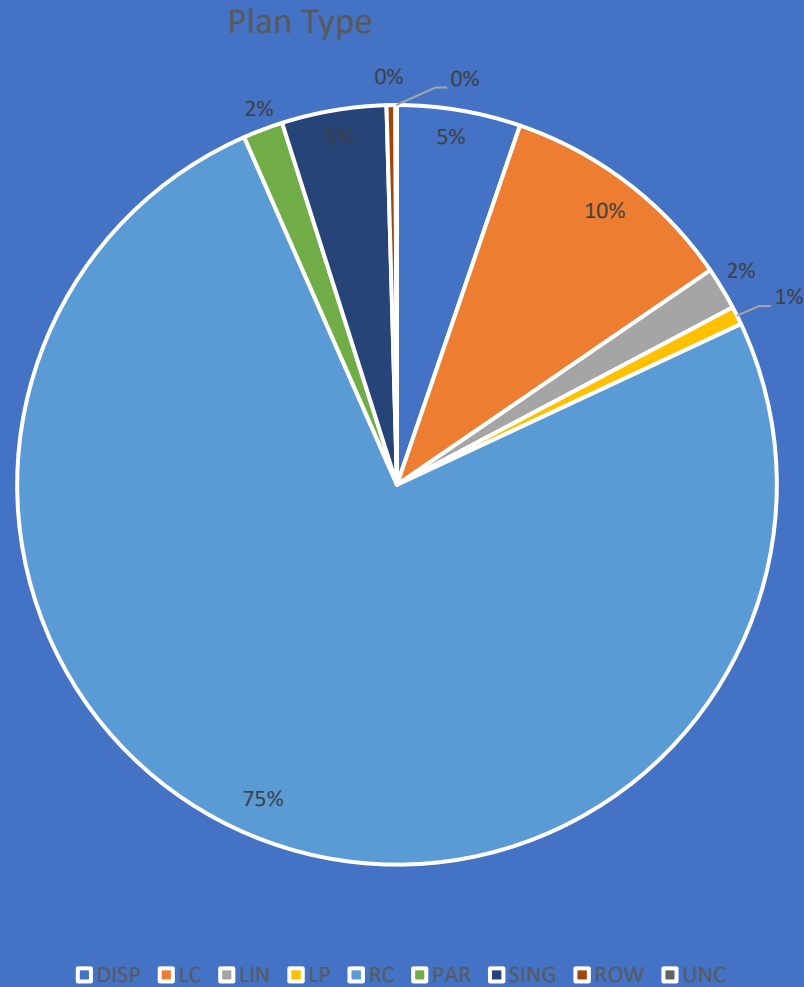
Survival: Significant Loss Size: m Scale: Large

Additions:
 Sheds on site of historic farmstead
 Sheds to side of historic farmstead
 Large-scale additional infrastructure

Dominant Use: Agricultural
Conversion:
Confidence: High

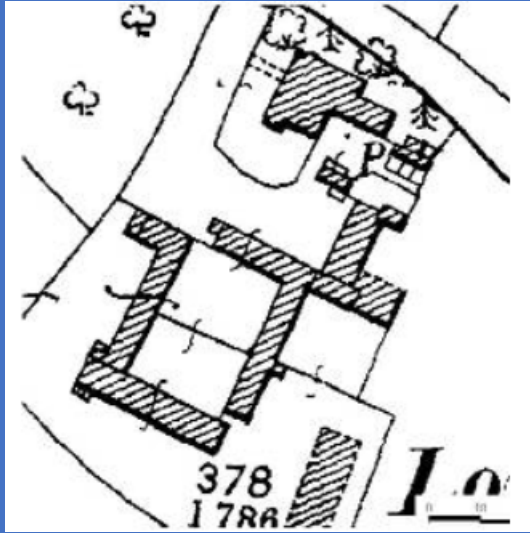
LibraryLink: Resources: 0 Tasks: 0

Plan type results

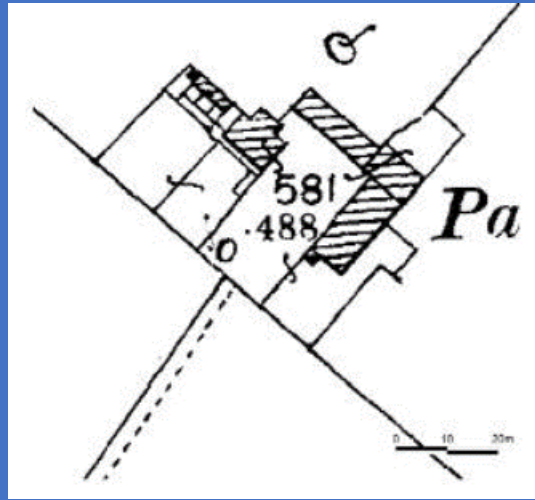


Plan type: regular courtyard

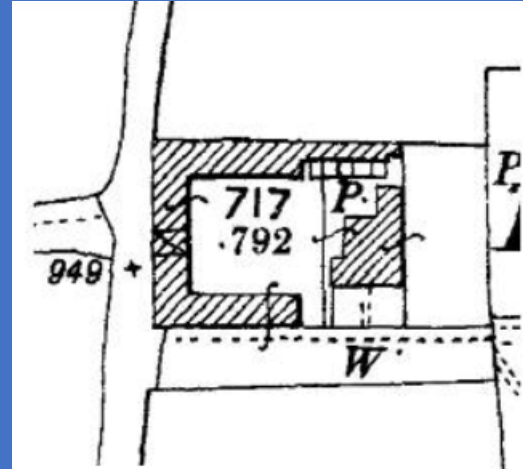
- Planned farmsteads, reflecting industrial farming techniques of the 19th century to varying degrees
- Rectilinear forms with attached ranges
- Buildings focused around one or more yards
- Can be large or small
- Wide range of secondary plan types
- Most common type in Suffolk (75.4%)



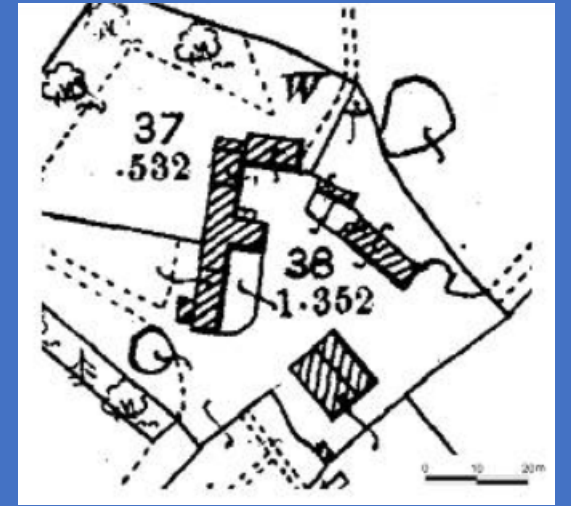
Full courtyard



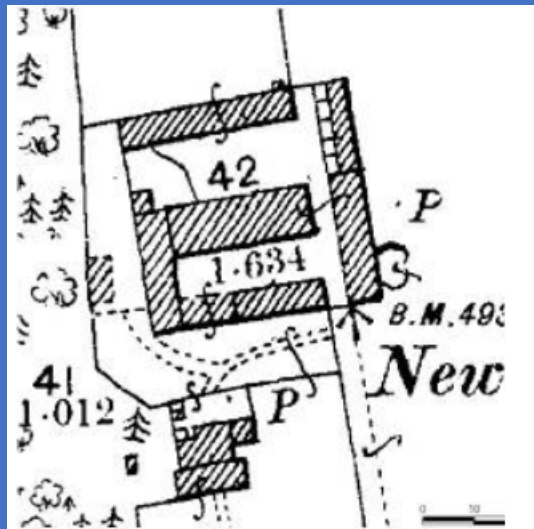
L-Plan



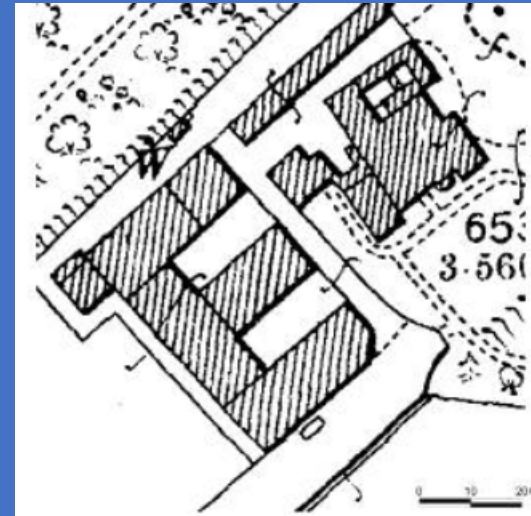
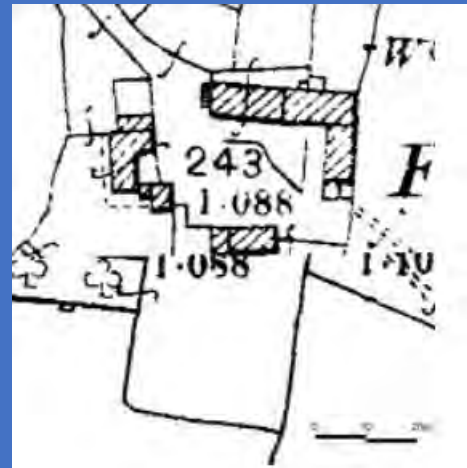
U-Plan



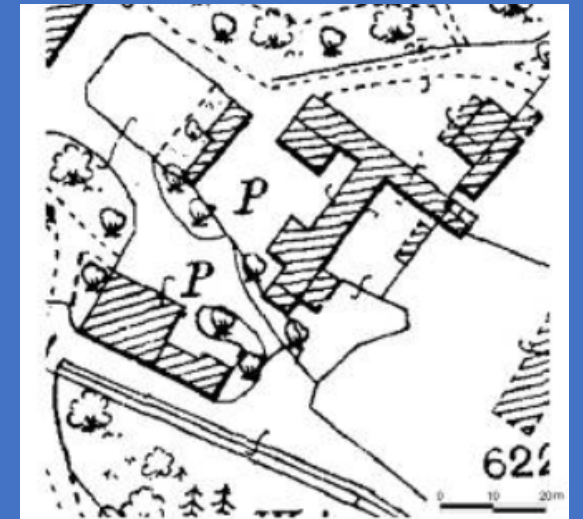
F-Plan



L-Plan with buildings
to the 3rd/ 4th side



E-Plan



T-Plan



Shardelows Farm, Cowlinge
Full courtyard plan



Moat Farm, Groton
L-plan



Church Farm, Elmsett
U-plan



Rookery Farm, Cratfield
F-plan



Botwright's Farm, Mendham
L-plan buildings to 3rd side



Yew Tree Farm, Laxfield
E-plan



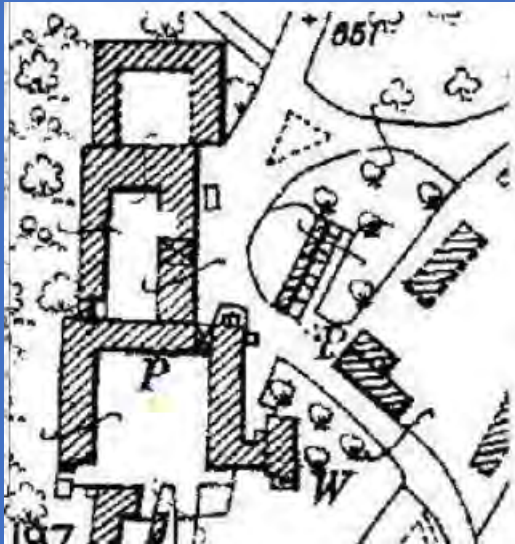
Park Farm, Buxhall
T-plan



Moore's Farm, Felsham
H-plan

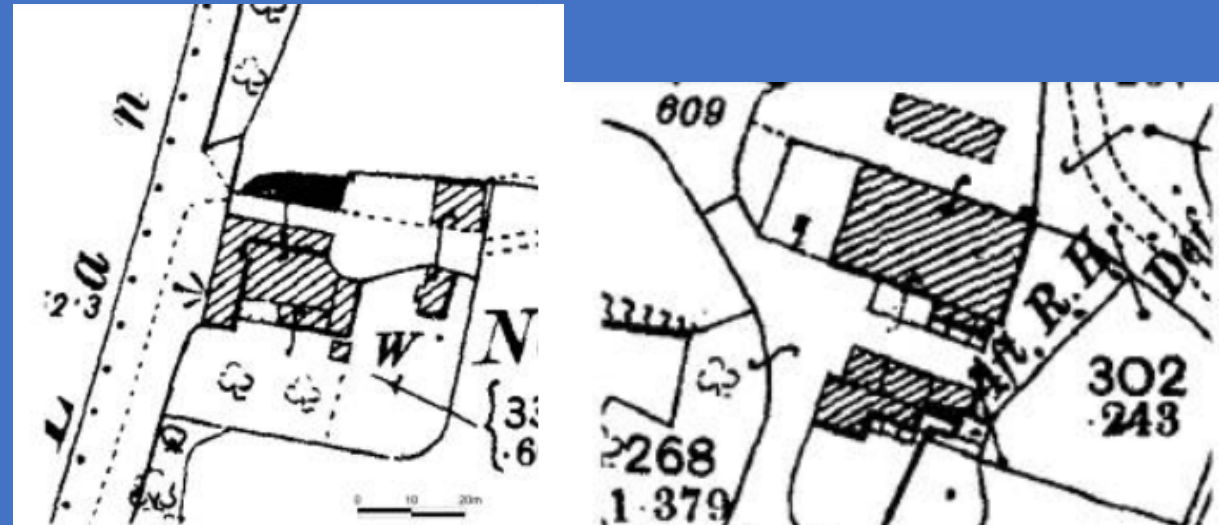
Multi-yards

- More than one principal yard area
- Regular arrangement of yard areas in relation to one another
- Usually attached by buildings serving one or both sides of the yard



Covered yards

- The yard area is between buildings is covered
- A purpose built wide-span building
- Quality of manure was improved by keeping it out of the elements





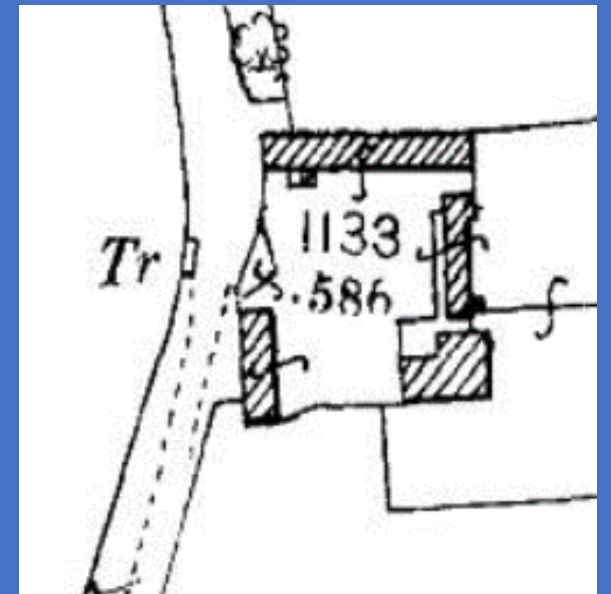
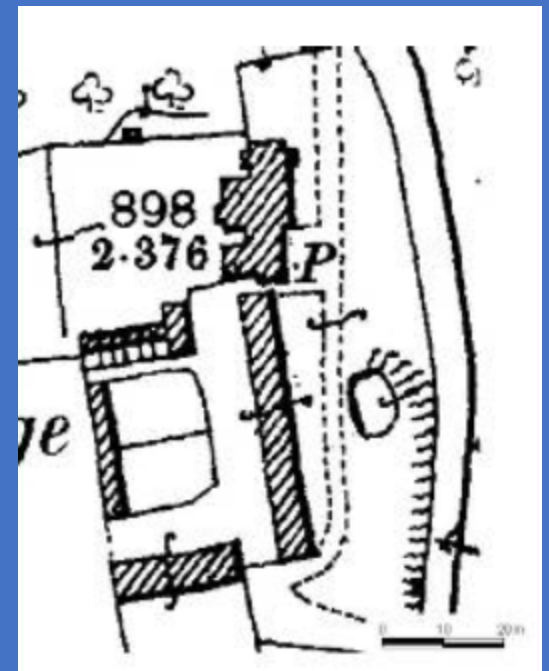
Denham Farm, Denham
Regular courtyard multi-yard



Station Farm, Copdock
L-plan on the 1st ed OS but later
turned into a covered yard

Plan type: loose courtyard types

- Buildings arranged around a central yard
- Ranges separate from one another
- Indicative of more incremental growth and change in the use of the farmstead
- Second most common type (10%)
- Most frequently occurring secondary type is 2 and 3 sided loose courtyards





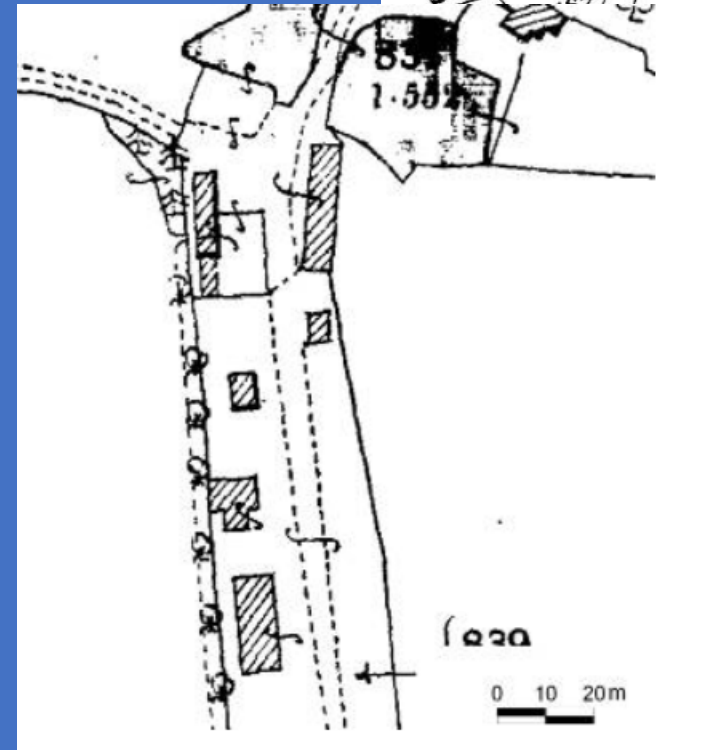
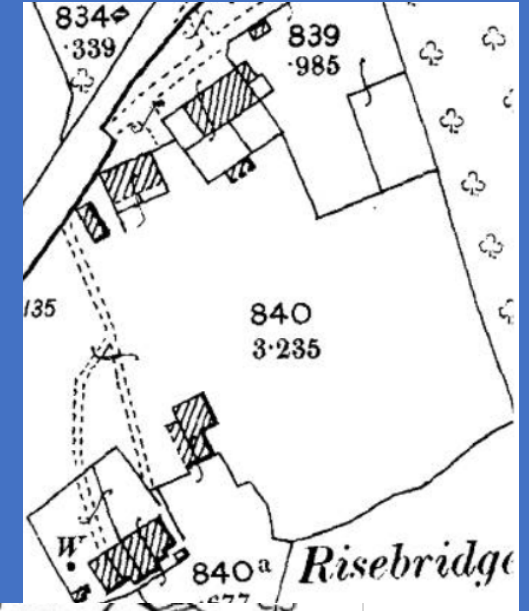
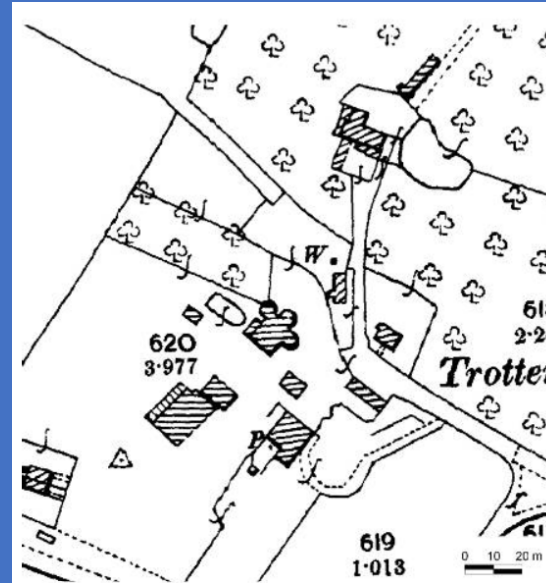
Strickland Manor Farm, Yoxford
Loose courtyard three-sided plan



Rose Farm, Metfield
Loose courtyard two-sided plan

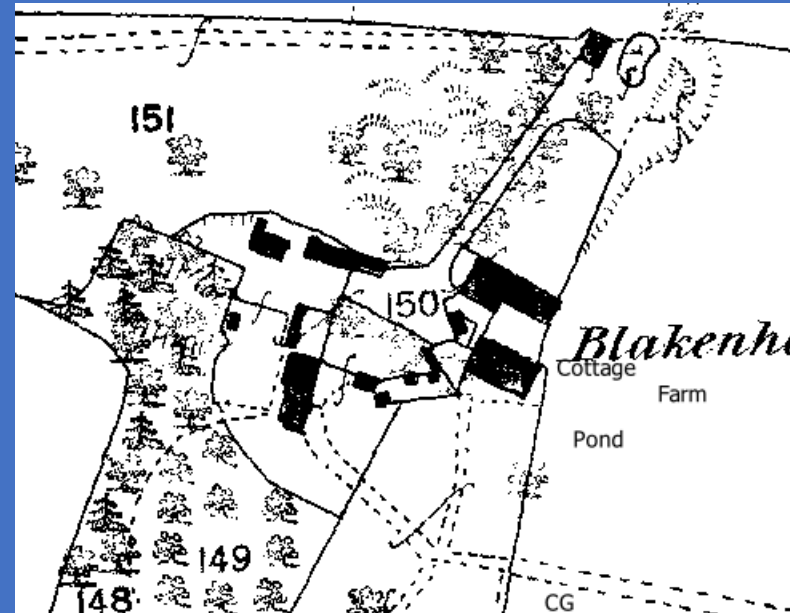
Plan type: Dispersed

- Buildings set within a general area but no main yard
- Cluster plans: little or no attempt at planning. Usually associated with small farmsteads
- Multi-yard: Buildings relate to a number of yard areas, usually detached from one another
- Driftway: Detached buildings along a routeway, often a public right of way
- Only 5% of Suffolk's farmsteads fit into this category





Little Wenham Hall
Dispersed multi-yard plan



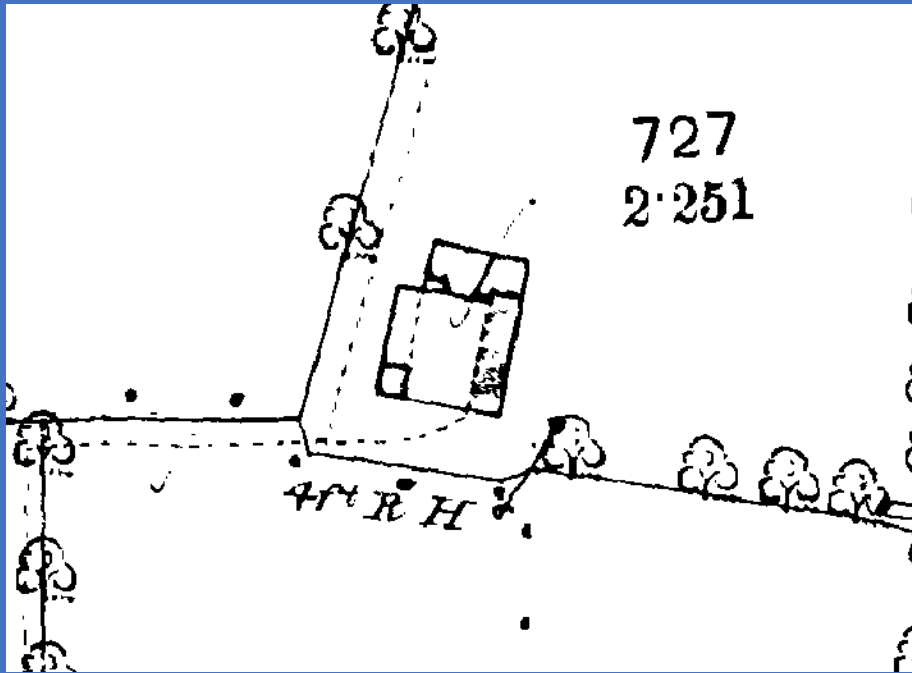
Little Wenham Hall
Dispersed cluster plan

Other types

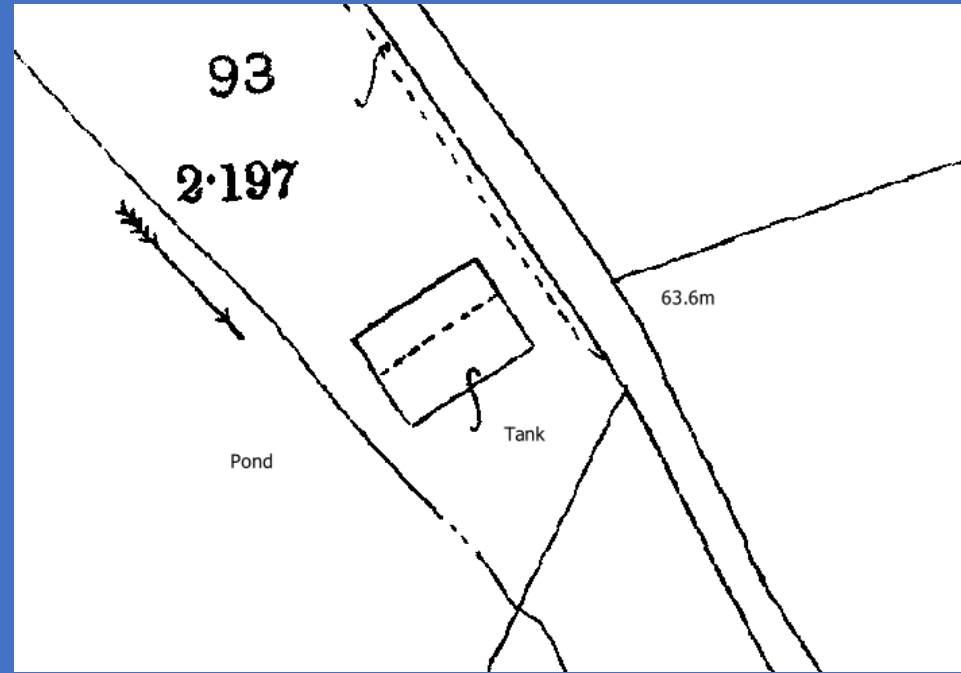
- All other types are rarer than RC or LC plan farmsteads
- Linear – house and working buildings are attached and in-line
- L-Plan - house is attached to the working buildings forming an L-shape
- Parallel – working buildings are opposite the house with a narrow area in between
- Row – working buildings are attached and in-line
- Very small % of these types identified in Suffolk
- Identification bias

Outfarms and Field barns

- Outfarms – one or more buildings set around a yard away from the main farmstead

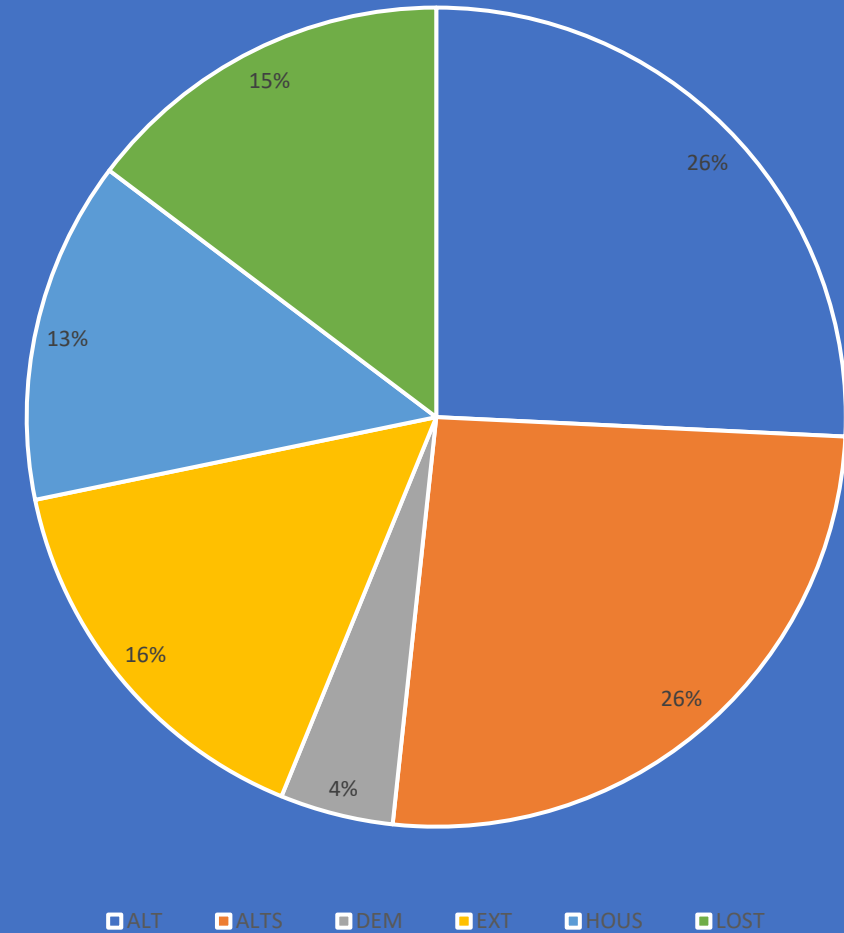


- Field barns – single buildings set away from the main farmstead



Survival

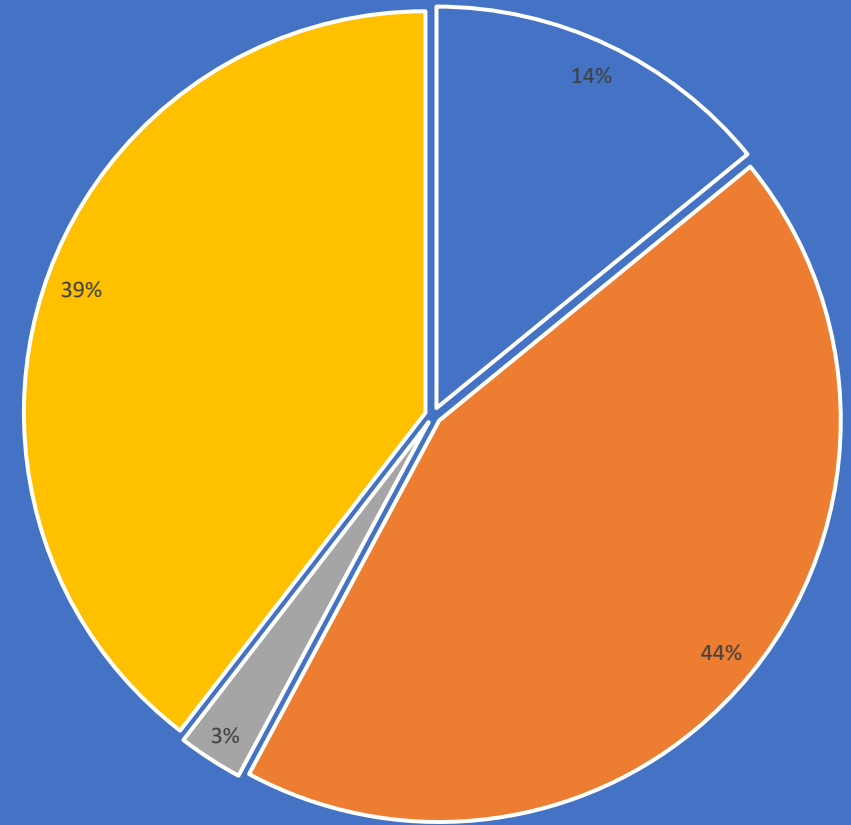
- EXTANT – unchanged farmstead
- ALT – partial loss (less than 50%)
- ALTS – significant loss (over 50%)
- DEM – no historic buildings, modern buildings only
- LOST- farmstead no longer exists
- HOUSE – farmhouse only





Trends in current uses/conversion

- Approx. 60% of recorded farmsteads have been at least partially converted
- Generally either still in agricultural use or residential



□ ABAN □ AGRIC □ COMM □ RESID

Managing change

- Individual buildings
- Strategic planning
- Listing review?



Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework and Practice Guide
 - A heritage asset is defined as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest.
 - Heritage assets can be designated (listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments) or non-designated (identified by the local planning authority as having local or potentially higher interest).
 - Proposals will be subject to the requirements of chapter 16 of the NPPF, 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', including paragraphs 203:
 - The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- Local Policy (e.g. related to non-designated heritage assets)
- Local validation requirements/SPD
- Local Lists



Guidance

- Historic England have guidance on assessment and managing change
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/rural-heritage/farm-buildings/>
- ... and national guidance on assessing character, significance and sensitivity
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/rural-heritage/farmsteads-character/>

There are local validation requirement and Supplementary Planning Guidance or Documents on non-designated heritage assets



Future Research

- Character areas/landscape and settlement



Sharing knowledge

- Workshops for planners
- Building expertise at SCC
- Dedicated project website
- Blog/Facebook
- Councillor briefing
- SCOF

