



Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

Central Lincolnshire Vale

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 44



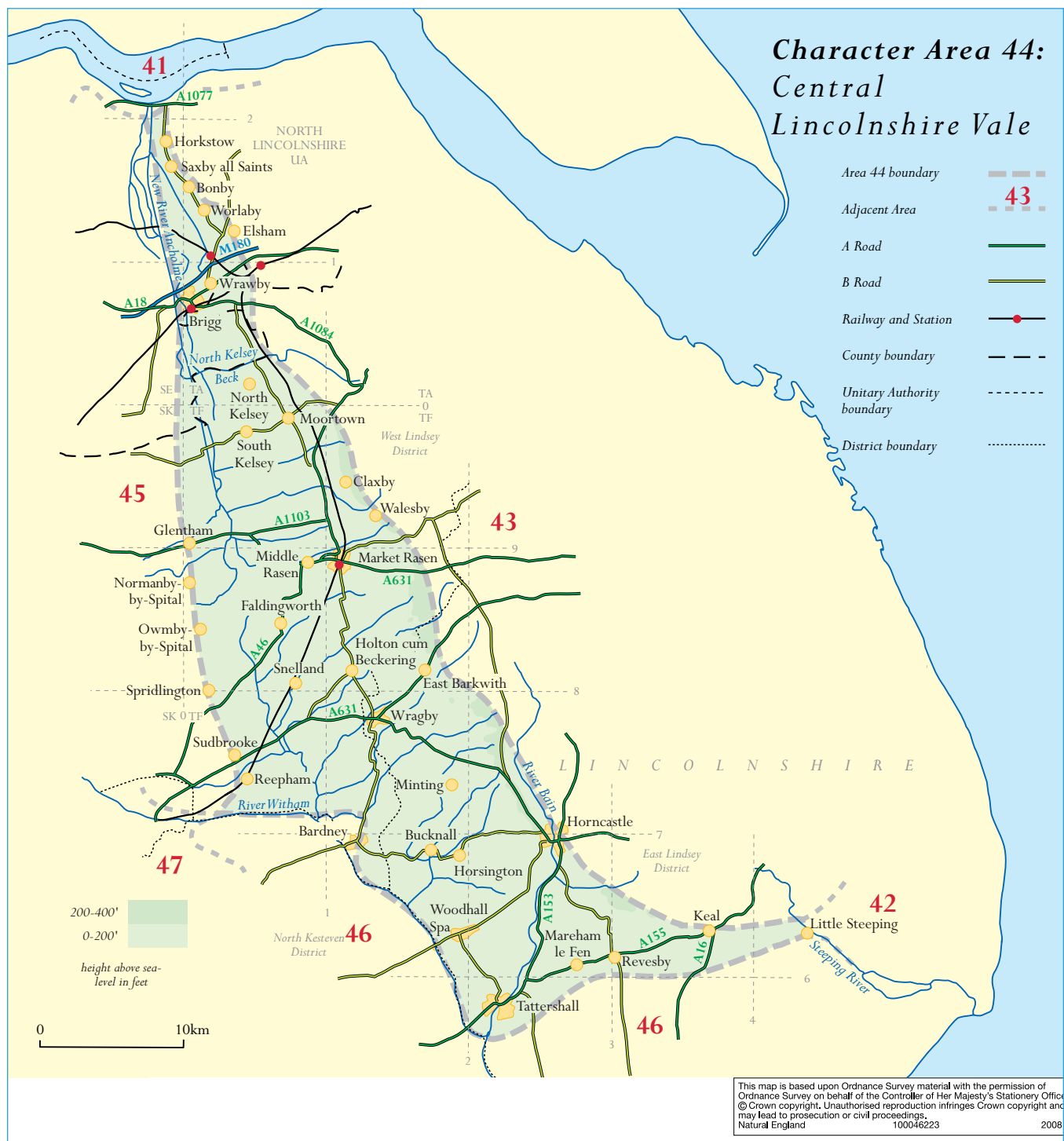
Introduction

The Farmstead and Landscape Statements will help you to identify the historic character of traditional farmsteads and their buildings in all parts of England, and how they relate to their surrounding landscapes. They are now available for all of England's National Character Areas (NCAs), and should be read in conjunction with the NCA profiles which have been produced by Natural England using a wide range of environmental information (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>). Each Farmstead and Landscape Statement is supported by Historic England's advice on farm buildings (<https://historicengland.org.uk/farmbuildings>), which provides links to the *National Farmsteads Character Statement*, national guidance on **Farm Building Types** and a fully-sourced summary in the *Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statements*. It also forms part of additional research on historic landscapes, including the mapping of farmsteads in some parts of England (see <https://historicengland.org.uk/characterisation>).



Corner Farm, Minting. A small isolated courtyard farmstead with a cart shed and combination barn facing on to the main road allowing more efficient transportation and processing of crops. The shelter shed, by contrast, faces inwards into the primary yard. Photo © Locus Consultants

Front cover: Lynwode House, a regular E-plan farmstead with an additional cattle yard (top of image) in the Central Vale. The fine farmhouse is situated at some distance from the working buildings, and presents its main aspect to the wider landscape rather than the farm itself. Although modern buildings have been added to increase the capacity of the farm, the historic shelter sheds and crew yards are still in agricultural use, demonstrating the ongoing application of mixed farming practices in the area. Photo © Historic England 28521/003



This map shows the Central Lincolnshire Vale, with the numbers of the neighbouring National Character Areas around it.

Summary

See the National Farmsteads Character Statement for a short introduction to the headings below, including maps and tables.

A low-lying vale divided into two parts by a central watershed running east–west. The northern half drains through the River Ancholme into the Humber and the southern part into the River Witham, through the Fens and into the Wash. This is a deeply rural landscape and only 2.5% of the Character Area is urban. Of this Character Area, 1% falls within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Historic character

- This is a sparsely populated, medieval landscape of small nucleated settlements and small village farmsteads on high ground.
- There is a high concentration of former monastic sites and associated granges set within their former landscapes in the south of the area.
- Isolated farmsteads mostly date from the 19th century and occupy reclaimed wetland along River Witham or enclosed former waste.
- The area is dominated by courtyard farmsteads, although there is a relatively higher proportion of linear and dispersed types than in neighbouring Character Areas. Buildings are typically reflective of 19th-century arable cultivation, including cart sheds, large combination barns and granaries. Farmhouses may have earlier origins, and often display extension or rebuilding.
- Outfarms and field barns are more common than in other parts of Lincolnshire, reflecting the distance between settlements and farmsteads.
- There was extensive rebuilding in the later 18th and especially 19th centuries, mostly in local brick and pantile with some limestone.

Significance

- The mapping of farmsteads in Lincolnshire has shown that the area has, in a national context, a below-average survival of traditional farmsteads from around 1900 – 47% have more than 50% of their historic form surviving (42.85% in Greater Lincolnshire) and 29% (28% in Greater Lincolnshire) retaining some, but less than 50%, of their historic form. Any pre-19th-century buildings are rare.
- Some farmsteads retain strong links with monastic origins, either in their landscape setting or in their place names.
- There is potential for farmsteads to relate to earlier medieval settlement.
- Gentry estates and parkland have had a strong influence in shaping the formal style of farmsteads and building forms across the area.
- The Limewoods represent England's biggest concentration of ancient small-leaved lime-dominated woodland, and have associated historic features such as farmsteads and fieldsapes.

- There are some rare examples of pre-1750s brickwork and mud and stud.

Present and future issues

- Change from pastoral to arable farming is leading to the obsolescence of livestock-related farm buildings (especially remote outfarms).
- The continuing decrease in numbers of principal farmers and farm labourers with amalgamation of farms may cause disuse of farmsteads as larger holdings are administered from fewer centres.
- The purchase of farmland as an investment or a commodity is potentially leading to redundancy of farmsteads.
- In this National Character Area, the Photo Image Project (2006) recorded a low proportion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (18.3%, the national average being 32%). The project also noted an above-average percentage (25%, the national average being 7.5%) of listed working farm buildings showing obvious signs of structural disrepair.

Historic development

- There is extensive and well-preserved evidence for prehistoric activity in the Character Area, including Bronze Age logboats and funerary complexes, for example the Barrow Cemetery south of Fiskerton, and many small Iron Age farming settlements. The creeks and marshland of the Ancholme Valley in the north of the area provided an important communications route between the River Trent and the Humber. In the south, the area provided the first dry ground to the east of the Witham Fens, and it is thought that several causeways across the fens terminated in this area.
- Of recorded farmsteads, 13% are sited in villages. Most isolated farmsteads relate to 18th- and 19th-century enclosure. The area is sparsely settled, which in part reflects the difficulty of working soils underlain by mudstone bedrock which are prone to waterlogging. Many of the settlements cling to the edges of the area, along the break of slope of the Northern Cliff and the Northern part of the Lincolnshire Wolds, where they follow an ancient spring line. These settlements are nucleated in character, and many of them are referenced by name in the Domesday Survey of 1086, indicating that their pattern was largely established by this point. The land immediately adjacent to the villages was cultivated in open strip fields, as shown by the extensive survival of ridge and furrow earthworks in these areas. However, the heavy clay soil of the area is not easily worked, and much of the medieval landscape of the low-lying areas comprised common grazing, as well as large areas of carr land and water meadows in the Ancholme Valley.
- The Lincolnshire Limewoods, a group of ancient woodlands in the south of the Character Area, provided useful resources in this otherwise sparsely populated area, including wood pasture, game and fuel.
- The remote nature of the area attracted many early Christian religious orders, and the Character Area is notable for the unusually high number of monasteries founded on the marshland island along the east bank of the River Witham from the 7th century onwards. These foundations managed substantial estates in this area and the broader region, and are thought to have maintained and controlled the ancient causeways across the Witham Fens. The monasteries made the first attempts to drain and improve some of the

landscape in the 12th and 13th centuries, especially around the Barlings area, and founded many granges for sheep rearing.

- The Dissolution of the Monasteries between 1536 and 1541 led to a wholesale change in the organisation of the landscape. The new land owners rapidly expanded the conversion of tillage to sheep pasture into much of the area. This process resulted in village desertion and shrinkage, visible in the many deserted medieval villages in the Character Area. The post-medieval enclosure of the landscape necessitated the establishment of further isolated farmsteads and outfarms away from the villages. Some of these were established on former monastic granges, especially in the Ancholme valley.
- During the later 18th and 19th centuries, the agricultural development of the area was heavily influenced by large estates, such as that of Sir Joseph Banks at Revesby and, later,

Christopher Turnor. These estates helped to introduce the same improved farming principles to the area that had been applied elsewhere, including on the Lincolnshire Wolds (NCA 43).

- Through high levels of investment in drainage of former carr land and improvement of the heavy clay soils, as well as the management of manuring in a mixed farming regime, the large landowners enhanced the productivity of the area substantially in the late 19th century. The continued rationalisation of the farmland and reorganisation of scattered holdings into unified estates culminated in the dominance of the estate farms of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These were typified by large, regular courtyard farmsteads with cattle courts, combination barns and extensive cattle ranges. Farms of this kind, such as Grange Farm, West Torrington, were often constructed to pattern-book designs.

Landscape and settlement

- The Central Vale contains several different landscape types: the low-lying former carr land and water meadows of the Ancholme valley in the north, the heavy clay farmlands of the central watershed, and the Limewoods of the south near Bardney. These different landscape types reflect the varying topography and geology of the area, and have resulted in contrasting sub-sections of the overall Central Lincolnshire Vale landscape. Much of the Character Area is characterised by broad, open views, such as the Ancholme Valley, and the 19th-century fieldscapes around Minting and Baumber. By contrast, the Limewoods in the south, also known as the Bardney Forest, are heavily wooded with a strong sense of enclosure.
- Woodland cover varies widely across the area. On the flat land of the Ancholme valley, there are very few trees, and fields are typically divided by ditches and dykes. On the fen edge, gravel terraces and the wolds foothills field

boundary trees are a feature, as are relatively recent stands of poplar trees.

- The majority of settlements are generally small villages which adhere to more elevated areas located at the edges of the Character Area and along the central watershed (for example Market Rasen). These villages are nucleated, and retain much of their 18th- and 19th-century built fabric. The villages are often surrounded by remnant ridge and furrow earthworks in fields of long-term pasture, and occasionally also by earthworks of earlier medieval settlement, such as those at Spirdlington and Goltho.
- Larger market settlements, such as Market Rasen, Brigg and Bardney, provide centres for services and shops. These towns generally retain well preserved 18th-century cores, including some farmsteads of similar date. Modern housing estates dating from the 1950s onwards can be found on the peripheries of the main towns, reflecting the ongoing

movement of populations from villages into centres of service and employment.

- Away from the villages, settlement is dispersed and very low density, largely comprising isolated farms and farmworkers' cottages. These are typically 18th- to 19th-century in date and are set within contemporary landscapes of planned enclosure. In contrast to this, earlier examples, such as former monastic grange sites, are found in the vicinity of irregular piecemeal enclosures, reflecting

former sheep pasturing. The farmsteads themselves are typically large, reflecting their expansive and individual or private farm holdings.

- Although much of the historic character of the area is the result of the influence of large landed estates, relatively few of their formal elements are based in the area itself. Notable exceptions are Revesby and Tattershall, where the houses and associated designed landscapes remain legible in the landscape.

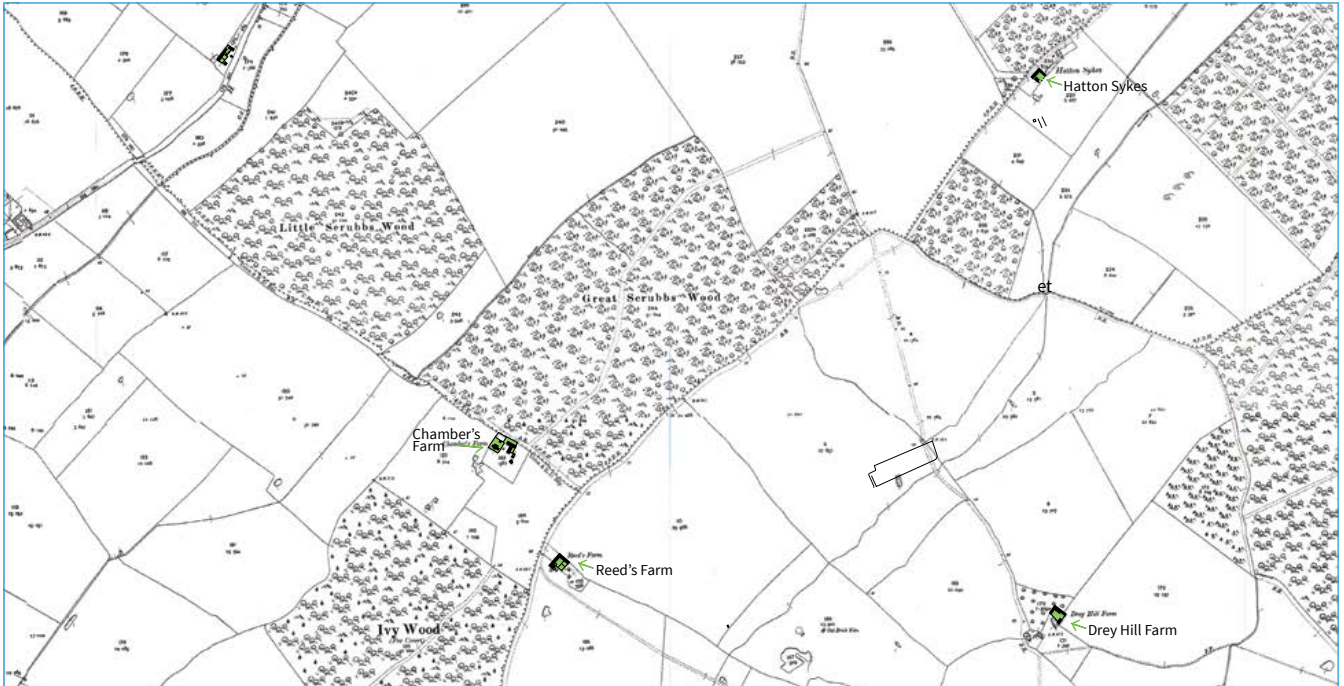
Farmstead and building types

- 18th century and earlier examples are rare, as most villages and towns were extensively reconstructed in the 19th century to allow for more effective arable cultivation. Earlier farmsteads that do survive often display evidence of remodelling in the 19th century, such as those on the Turnor estate near Wragby. The same period saw the construction of several purpose-built 'pattern-book' farmsteads, constructed according to regular plans and upon industrial principles of agricultural management.
- The area also contains a number of 1920s county council smallholdings, often constructed of reinforced concrete, set in holdings of around 50 acres. More recent development of historic farmsteads is also evident, with the prevalence of large modern sheds.

Building types

Farmstead types

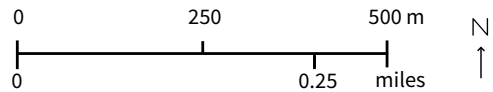
- Regular and loose courtyard types are common in the area, reflecting the 19th-century improvement of the land and subsequent establishment of planned and model farmsteads.
- Small farmsteads including those recorded as linear and dispersed plan types (9.4% of the total) have for centuries been amalgamated into larger farms. Many were extended and remodelled as courtyard plans – 78.6% being regular courtyard (especially E- and U-plans) and 12% being loose courtyard with buildings mostly to three or four sides of the yard. Farmsteads of large, regular courtyard types predominate. Larger farmsteads in the area increase in number towards the border with the Lincolnshire Wolds to the east. To the west, farmsteads with individual access routes tend to be larger courtyard types.
- Key building types, reflecting the transformation of farmsteads for arable production, include combination barns, often very large in scale, and shelter sheds and yards for fatstock. The transition to a more mixed farming regime is demonstrated by the construction of cart shed and granary ranges in the early and mid-19th century. Early 19th-century threshing barns, commonly with loading hatches flanking cart entries, are rare. Horse engine houses (horse gins), which powered threshing and fodder-processing machinery in barns, are now also rare.
- Outfarms and field barns are more common than in other parts of Lincolnshire, reflecting the distance between settlements and farmsteads.



Maps are based on 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey maps, which show farmsteads after the last major phase in the building of traditional farmsteads in England. © Crown Copyright [and database rights] 2020. OS 100024900



Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.



Minting

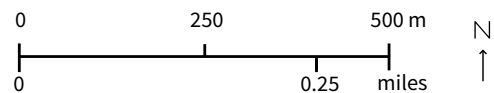
Isolated farmsteads within the Lincolnshire Limewoods landscape. Such farmsteads may have their origins in medieval woodland clearance and colonisation, although – as a result of the redevelopment of these sites for improved agriculture – there is little now to distinguish them from other 19th-century farmsteads. In such cases, there may be heightened archaeological potential to reveal former settlement.



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Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.



North Kelsey

This map demonstrates the stark contrast between the piecemeal enclosure of medieval strip fields around the organically developed village (where 18th-century and earlier buildings are concentrated) and those established after enclosure in the highly regimented fieldscapes on the carr land to the west. Regular courtyard farmsteads are dominant, and reflect also the amalgamation of smaller historic farms and their redevelopment within the village. This pattern is repeated along the length of the Ancholme valley, as well as in the Witham valley to the south. To the south of the village is the medieval fishpond complex and associated features at North Kelsey Grange.



A typical Central Vale granary range with its external steps, Toft Next Newton, constructed in brick and pantile. The development of this range is clearly visible in the change in roofline and materials, indicating a phase of expansion and improvement during the life of the building. The crew yard to the rear of the range has been covered at a later date, and may retain historic built features within its footprint. Photo © Locus Consultants

Materials and detail

- There is early use of brick and imported stone for high status houses.
- Farm buildings are commonly constructed in local brick and pantile, with later examples exhibiting slate roofs, especially in proximity to the railway.
- Ironstone is occasionally used in the north of the area, near Scunthorpe.
- Limestone can be seen in the central and southern parts of the Character Area around

Spridlington and Hainton, occasionally with brick quoins, detailing and buttresses.

- Later farm buildings may incorporate imported yellow gault brick and Welsh slate.
- Mud and stud occasionally survives on older buildings, including farmworkers' cottages in villages. More widespread survival may be disguised by the use of render and by rebuilding.



Historic England

This guidance has been prepared by Alastair Macintosh and Adam Partington, Locus Consultants, with Jeremy Lake.

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The **Greater Lincolnshire Farmsteads and Landscapes Project**, led by Historic England, has mapped the historic character, survival and use of farmsteads. For the Assessment Framework and reports of 2015 see https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/lincsfarm_he_2015/

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