



Historic England

Farmstead and Landscape Statement

# Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent Valley

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA 50



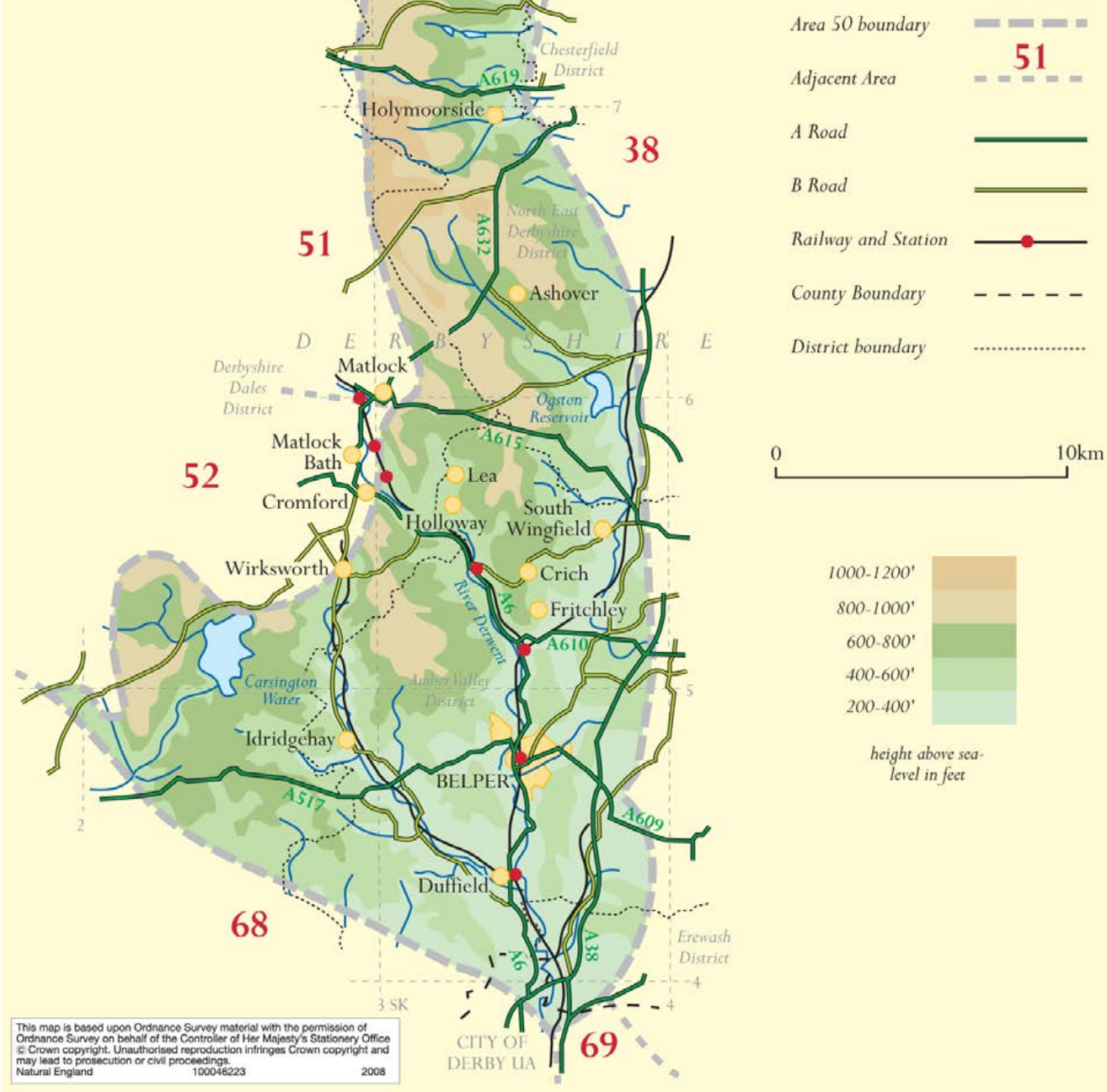
# Introduction

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>).

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**Front cover:** Medium to large-scale farms developed on the southern fringe of the Peak District. This landscape shows unenclosed wastes and commons in the background, farmsteads sited in early 19th-century regular enclosures of commons, and in the foreground a landscape of medieval farmsteads and farming hamlets reorganised in the 19th century but retaining traces of earlier boundaries including the curved profiles of medieval strips. Photo © Historic England 28595/044

# Character Area 50 Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent



This map shows the Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent, with the numbers of 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.

This area is an undulating, well-wooded, pastoral landscape on rising ground between the Derbyshire Coalfield and the Peak District. The area is bordered to the west by the White Peak and Dark Peak, while towards the north the area gives way to the Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe. Towards the east lie the industrial landscapes of the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield. Towards the south-west, there is a transition to the lowland landscapes of Needwood and the South Derbyshire Claylands. The River Derwent flows south out of the area to join the Trent Valley Washlands. Almost 7% of the area is urban and nearly 8% is woodland. Of the area, 2% lies within the Peak District National Park. The Derwent Valley is a World Heritage Site.

## Historic character

- There is medieval pattern of nucleated settlement with isolated farmsteads, mostly associated with later enclosure. The enclosure of the open fields by hedgerows and dry stone walls was underway by the 16th and 17th centuries and included the dispersal of farmsteads of this period around the fringes of the villages.
- Enclosure of the open moor and common – mostly by dry stone walls - began in the same period and resulted in many more new farmsteads being built within the new intakes, as well as isolated field barns.
- Farmsteads were originally linear in form but the increase in the upkeep and overwintering of cattle in the 18th-century gave rise to the development of the courtyard groups evident today.

## Significance

- There is an exceptionally high survival of traditional farmsteads, as in many of the other northern England uplands and upland fringes. This significance is heightened by the fact that the farmsteads and working buildings, including their field barns, sit within a landscape which retains visible evidence for land use and settlement from the prehistoric period. Of special significance in a national context, and for the uplands of northern England, are:
- Working buildings with 18th-century and earlier fabric, which are most commonly found attached to houses or on high-status farmsteads.
- Planned estate farms with evidence for mechanisation.



## Present and future issues

- The rate of redundancy for traditional farm buildings has accelerated in recent years, as in other upland and upland fringe areas of England.
- Many farmsteads are in residential use, including some linked to ‘hobby farming’.
- In this National Character Area, the Photo Image Project (2006) recorded a low proportion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (14.3%, the national average being 32%). The project also noted an above-average percentage (11.8%, the national average being 7.5%) of listed working buildings showing obvious signs of structural disrepair.

## Historic development

- For centuries, communities here have used the moors for summer grazing, with peat, heather and bracken cut for fuel, bedding, roofing and fodder. There is a varied and highly significant pattern of prehistoric settlement and ritual sites along the foothills of the Peaks.
- Medieval settlement was focused on nucleated villages arranged along the valleys and the eastern fringes of the Peaks. Medieval villages were surrounded by areas of open common fields, although it is probable that livestock was always more important. By the 19th century, cattle rearing to supply meat, and dairying with liquid milk production for urban centres, had grown in importance.
- Lead mining and smelting provided seasonal alternatives to farming, and the late 18th century brought further industry to the area in the form of textile mills which benefited from the abundant water power of the Derwent and its larger tributaries. Industrial buildings of this period, together with the associated scattered rows of workers’ cottages, make a major contribution to the character of the area.

## Landscape and settlement

- 17th century and earlier isolated farmsteads, and any related field enclosures, are very uncommon due to most farmsteads being sited within villages. Isolated farmsteads are mostly associated with later enclosure. The enclosure of the open fields was underway by the 16th and 17th centuries and included the dispersal of farmsteads of this date around the fringes of the villages. Former village strip field systems, fossilised in the stone and hedged boundaries of early pastoral enclosures, are a notable feature of the landscape in the south-western corner of the area, west and south of Carsington Reservoir.
- Fields long before the 19th century. Regular lowland enclosures, mostly private, but sometimes completed by parliamentary acts are found along the eastern edge of the area. Further to the west, piecemeal and private processes are reflected in the widespread pattern of irregular and richly-hedged pastures which dominate the Derwent Valley and neighbouring areas.
- Enclosure of the open moor and common in the same period resulted in many more new farmsteads being built within the new in-takes, as well as isolated field barns. The remaining moorland of the higher parishes along the peak fringe, such as Brampton and Ashover, were enclosed by Parliamentary Acts between the 1780s and 1830s, as pressure

mounted to create more productive pasture and arable land. This resulted in the dramatic new landscape of large, square fields and mile after mile of straight boundary walls. These landscapes remain very well preserved, complete with period farmsteads. Substantial

blocks of ancient woodland (intensively managed as a source of charcoal, lead smelting and other industries) are relatively few in the area, although some survive amidst the wooded valleys and the broadleaved plantations of the lower farmland to the east.

## Farmstead and building types

In a national context, this area has a medium degree of survival of pre-1750 farmstead buildings, including cruck-framed and timber-framed barns. Far more common are the later farmsteads, predominantly of L-plan and regular courtyard plans, resulting from rebuilding in early to mid-19th century for dairying (for example on the estates of the Strutt textiles family around Belper) and fatstock.

### Farmstead types

Farmsteads were mostly linear in form but the increase in the upkeep and overwintering of cattle in the 18th century gave rise to the development of the courtyard groups evident today. The key farmstead types which had developed up to the end of the 19th century, and that are still evident today, are:

- Linear and L-plan farmsteads with integral farmhouses where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line, are common farmstead types.
- There are courtyard plans where the working buildings are arranged around one or more yards for cattle. Loose courtyard plans, usually with buildings to two sides of the yard, and regular courtyard plans with U- and L-shaped ranges are found throughout.
- Larger courtyard steadings are associated with arable exploitation of land on great estates and more fertile soils.



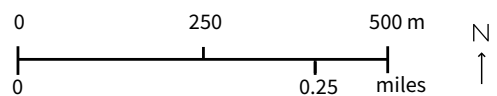
A farmstead on the Strutt estate, near Belper. Photo © Historic England/Mike Williams



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.



## West of Belper

This area, situated three kilometres north of Belper in the south of the area, lies in the mid reaches of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe. Here, field patterns suggest piecemeal enclosure of medieval field systems. Relict strip fields are just discernible around farmsteads redeveloped in the 19th century to a standard L- or U-shaped courtyard plan form, often with the houses attached to them. Linear plan forms are also found absorbed into these courtyards. Crowtrees Farm (1) has a late 18th-century house set along the north of a more formal courtyard group, within fields reorganised with straight boundaries in the same period. The area is a mix of arable and pastoral farming where stone boundary walls predominate, frequently lined with mature deciduous trees.

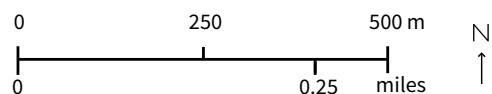




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Farmstead, showing the buildings in black and the boundaries of the main yards (highlighted in green), working areas and gardens.



## Northern moorland edge

This area shows three contrasting landscapes: regular enclosure of moorland, piecemeal enclosure of village strip fields and irregular enclosure with dispersed farmstead sites from the 17th century and earlier. The area to the north, immediately below East Moor and two kilometres west of Holymoorside, specialised in the rearing of cattle and pastoral land use with fluctuating amounts of corn. A grid pattern of late enclosure fields dominates the moor edge to the west with isolated farmsteads set lanes as to the western edge. To the north are the outlines of medieval strip fields, preserved in later enclosure boundaries, extending south from the village of Wadshelf. A cruck barn survives within the village. Elsewhere there is a landscape of dispersed settlement set in irregular-shaped fields that were enclosed by the 17th century, with farmsteads that show in their fabric the development from linear farmsteads into courtyard and multi-yard groups. There is a 16th-century cruck-framed barn at Hallcliff Farm (1); the house at Loads Farm (2) is dated 1713 with attached ranges of outbuildings (including cattle housing) making an L-plan (house attached); there is a two-storey cow house, dated 1713, at Cairgorm (3). Boundaries are marked by stone walls and hedgerows interspersed with hedgerow trees.





Landscape to west of Belper (see map), showing the late 18th- or early 19th-century formal courtyard group at Crowtrees Farm set in a regular layout of fields. Photo © Historic England 28597/034



View looking across Upper Loads, showing farmstead along trackway which led to grazings in land subject to regular enclosure in the early 19th century (see previous page). Photo © Historic England 28595/049





Farmsteads typically developed to a larger scale than within the Peak District. This group was substantially remodelled in the early-mid 19th century. Note how the house faces away from the regular U-plan farmyard, with a cart shed attached to the left and additional cattle housing to the right. Photo © Historic England 28595/ 035



The hamlet of Dethick south-east of Matlock, is sited in an area where farmsteads lie in small, nucleated villages. The fields around the settlement result from piecemeal enclosure of medieval strip fields. Three large courtyard farmsteads of 17th-century or earlier origin are clustered together around the church. Photo © Jen Deadman



**Courtyard Plans** Enclosure of the open moor resulted in the establishment of new farmsteads from the 17th century onwards. This isolated farmstead is one of many situated on the moor edge. In the distance are fields of regular, 19th-century enclosure and large swathes of conifer plantations. Photo © Jen Deadman



This building complex is planned around two yards, with an L-shaped group to the north-east. It is constructed of stone and brick with slate roofs. The farm contains numerous features of design and construction which are characteristic of the Strutt model farms around Belper: stone vaulted ceilings and flag floors for fire protection; the systems for moving feed; the iron roof supports and the unique range for housing wet grain. Photo © Mike Williams/English England



Farmstead of 18th-century date, set in an isolated position away from the road north of Holymoorside. The landscape is one of piecemeal enclosure and relict strip fields. Two sides of the yard are flanked by buildings, including the large combination barn. Photo © Jen Deadman





Large, 19th-century planned courtyard farmstead, typical of the south of the area, where brick is a common building material. Photo © Jen Deadman



**L-shaped plans (house attached)** Rectilinear fields of 19th century planned enclosure are a strong feature of the moorland to the north and north-east, with farmsteads sited along or off straight roads. This enclosure farm is set hard against the road in a familiar L-shape arrangement, with a combination barn attached to the farmhouse and returning to form the L shape. Photo © Jen Deadman



Small, converted linear farmstead set in a landscape of dispersed settlement and wood pasture. The 18th-century farmhouse has a former combination barn attached, now converted to domestic use with the winnowing door still retained in the centre of the rear elevation. Photo © Jen Deadman



### Combination Barns

At the top end of the scale is this large combination barn on the Strutt estate. The barn, adjacent to the stable block, comprises cart house, stables and barn with hay lofts over. Photo © Historic England/Mike Williams



A large combination barn and adjoining working buildings. The farmhouse is set apart from the yard and has a small gig house or stable attached. Photo © Jen Deadman





Granaries are usually located over a cart shed, accessed by external stone steps. Grain can be stored in threshing or combination barns and sometimes in freestanding buildings. Photo © Jen Deadman



**Pigsties** are often found both as lean-tos and free-standing buildings. This sty of c 1900 houses two units each served by a through feeder. Photo © Jen Deadman

## Materials and detail

- There was, in the 18th century and later, extensive rebuilding in stone and sometimes brick walls and slate roofs. Sandstone is the traditional building material with red brick becoming more common further south.



# Historic England

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