

## PLANNING ISSUES

Use the FARMSTEAD ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK to demonstrate how development proposals comply with national and local planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the importance of:

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

Local plan policy generally supports the re-use of significant historic buildings, and includes specific requirements and planning considerations, particularly in relation to residential additions and alterations, neighbourhood issues and taking account of biodiversity. It is important to identify any heritage assets and other designations where specific policies might apply, including listed buildings, conservation areas, Green Belt or the Cannock Chase AONB.

**Use the FARMSTEAD ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK four stages to identify and consider the need and potential for change at the earliest stage of considering change for a farmstead or farm building.**

### 1 SITE SUMMARY

This comprises a brief description of the whole site and its landscape context, and identification of other key issues such as site access, services and designations. It provides the essential first step and can be easily completed by the applicant or developer without specialist knowledge.

### 2 ASSESS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Assess heritage significance of the building and site, from its contribution to local character to the significance of individual buildings.

### 3 NEED AND POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

Use the understanding gained from Stages 1 and 2 to consider constraints and opportunities for sympathetic change and development, and the type of sustainable change most most to be acceptable in the planning process.

### 4 SITING AND DESIGN ISSUES

Design issues for the site and its buildings, and the siting of new buildings.

For English Heritage research and guidance see its HELM web pages at <http://www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings>

This guidance follows the development of an evidence base for the historic character and survival of the county's farmsteads, which has been entered on the county's Historic Environment Record at <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Historic-Environment-Record>. It includes the mapping of historic character, survival and use of farmsteads across the county as part of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project (see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandfarmsteads>).

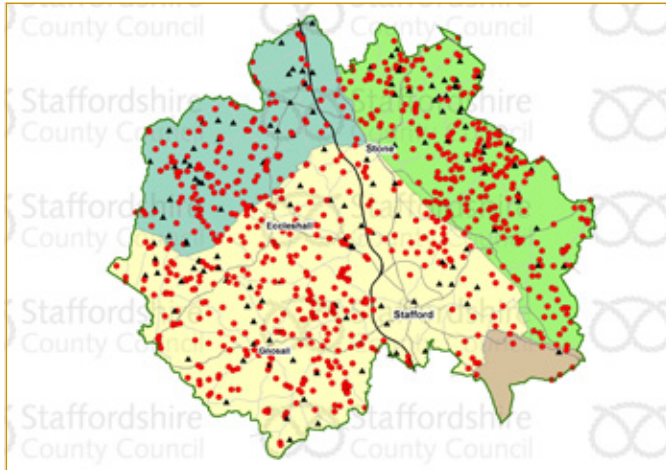
## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS IN THE STAFFORDSHIRE FARMSTEADS GUIDANCE

**STAFFORDSHIRE FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT** provides fully-illustrated guidance on the character and significance of Staffordshire's traditional farmsteads and buildings in their landscape and settlement context, and the areas into which it subdivides.

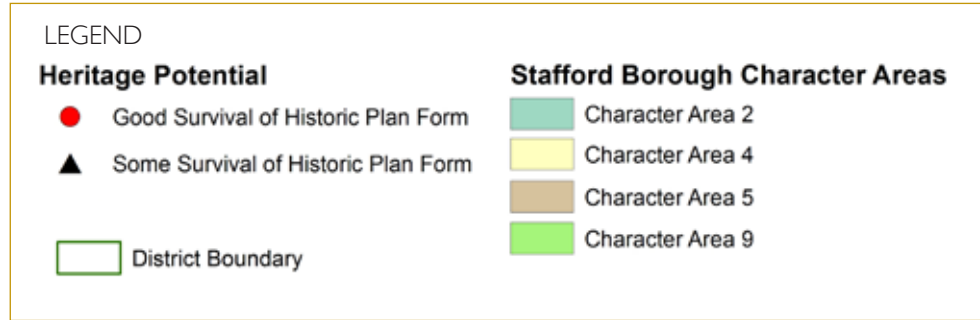
**AREA SUMMARIES** for the areas into which the county subdivides, based on analysis of its farmsteads in their landscape context.

For planning policies in Stafford Borough see <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/forwardplanning>

# TRADITIONAL FARMSTEADS IN STAFFORD BOROUGH



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## HISTORIC FARMSTEAD CHARACTER

- 22% of the county's farmsteads lie within the Borough.
- The county town, Stafford, lies towards the south of the Borough and the heartland of Cannock Chase lies to the south east. In these areas farmsteads are largely absent.
- 47% of the traditional farmsteads have been classified as large loose courtyards (with working buildings to three or more sides of the yard), dispersed multi-yards or large regular courtyards (including E-plans, U-plans and covered yards). These farmstead types are most often located in isolated positions and are fairly evenly dispersed across the landscape.
- Small and medium-scale farmsteads (including regular courtyard L-plans, linear plans and loose courtyard plans with working buildings to one or two sides of the yard) tend to be more loosely clustered. The highest densities tend to lie towards the north and north east of the District, to the west of Stafford, where there are a high number of small hamlets and winding narrow lanes, and in the landscape to the north west and west of Eccleshall.

## SIGNIFICANCE

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 greater the survival of the historic form and detail of the whole farmstead and any buildings, the greater will be its significance.

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 Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

- 70% of recorded farmsteads (county average 59%) have high heritage potential as traditional farmsteads, because they have retained more than 50% of their historic form.
- 14% (county average 9.5%) have some heritage potential because they have retained less than 50% of their historic form.

The remainder may have retained a house (which may be a listed building) or have lost all of their buildings. These may still retain archaeological deposits which can be revealed through development.

## PRESENT AND FUTURE ISSUES

Research led by English Heritage (see text box on first page) has shown that historic farm buildings have been more prone to both neglect and development than any other historic building type. They are also associated with high levels of home-based business use.

- There is a slightly above average proportion (54%) of listed working farm buildings which have evidence for non-agricultural reuse. Most of these are residential and associated with a very high proportion of directorships.
- Higher numbers of farming units involved in soft fruit production.