

# HISTORIC FARMSTEADS CHARACTER STATEMENT



Historic England

# HISTORIC FARM BUILDINGS CHARACTER STATEMENT CS2

## INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIC FARM BUILDING TYPES

This document describes the principal types of building and other typical features that are likely to be encountered on a farmstead and on outlying field barns or outfarms. The significance of the buildings is also described.

The scale, range and form of working buildings reflect their requirements for internal space and plan form, daylighting and fittings. Some buildings were highly specialised in function (such as ash houses, pigsties and threshing barns) whilst others combined in the individual rooms or sections of one range two or more functions.

**Features and fittings** are of utmost importance in helping to define a buildings function and character. Once lost they are irrecoverable. Easily lost in any repair or refurbishment programme are fittings such as doors and frames, floorboards, windows, hooks and cupboards, and original or early plasterwork, both to walls and roofs.

All of these surfaces may contain markings that help interpret a building's use, construction or the culture of workers (such as ritual markings). These can be difficult to identify and therefore risk unintended loss by those unskilled in their recognition. Structural evidence for historical development and internal subdivision can show how buildings have changed in response to national and local trends in agriculture.

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## ASH HOUSE

Ash houses stored ash from the fire hearth over winter, for use as a fertiliser in spring. They are a uniquely distinctive feature on Dartmoor and some other parts of Devon, the majority being found in the north-east area of Dartmoor. A very high national occurrence on Dartmoor and the majority are listed buildings.



Circular stone roofed ash house. © Philip White



Turf covered ash house. © Philip White



Rectangular ash house. © Philip White



Filling hatch to ash house. © Philip White

### *Typical features*

- Small, circular or occasionally rectangular plan building with a small opening for filling and usually a door for ash removal. Typically having a stone roof structure generally covered with natural slate or sometimes thatch.

### *Significance*

- They are of high significance because nationally there are few surviving examples. Similar examples are found in the Channel Islands and north-west France.

## BARN

### THRESHING BARN

The name 'barn' is a generic term often loosely applied to many farm building types.

A **threshing barn** is the most common type of barn found on Dartmoor, usually a tall single-storey building specifically designed for the processing and storage of grain crops. It is found in most areas where land was available for arable production and was the principal building on the farmstead, often following in medieval times after the establishment of a longhouse(s). It typically contains a single threshing floor with bays each side for storing sheaves of unthreshed corn and straw from threshing.

Generally, their small scale reflects the small size of Dartmoor farms with their relatively low acreages of corn grown on the farmstead. Within the National Park, a high proportion of these small farmsteads are found in the **North-eastern farmlands** where arable farming was more important. They date from the 16th century onwards and a high proportion are listed buildings.



A large threshing barn with a cart shed-bay. A barn on a large arable area of eastern Dartmoor. © Philip White



A three-bay threshing barn typical of the north-eastern farmlands with later windows. © Philip White

#### *Typical features*

- Normally a single-storey building set out in bays represented by roof truss spacings with distinctive large full height doorway towards the centre of the main elevation.
- Internal ground-floor areas based on roof truss spacing where the greater the number of bays the larger the size of the farmstead. A bay can also denote an area of further sub-division into incorporation of some stalls for animals with loft for storing grain or hay.
- Threshing floor of 'threshing bay' used for beating (flailing) out the harvested crop. Surviving floor timbers and stone floors with thresholds are often original and conclusive evidence for building type.
- Opposing doors located each end of the threshing floor provide a cross-draught for winnowing. Each of the large barn doors can be split horizontally to form two doors on one or both sides.
- Main doorway to threshing-bay can be large enough to allow a laden wagon to enter and unload and leave through the opposing doorway. However it was common on Dartmoor for the opposing (winnowing) door to be small, and in some cases was a raised opening with shutter rather than a full door for this purpose. With small early threshing barns, this may be associated with possible use of a sledge or small cart for transport rather than a wagon.
- Threshing floor door frames can provide evidence for lost doors, removable central post jointed into the frame head and its threshold for doors to close against. Also, evidence for slots at the base of the doorframe to support boards which retained the grain and excluded animals during the threshing process.
- Other wall openings include high pitching openings for filling storage-bays, owl holes, and ground floor doorways into animal and cart housing.
- Shaft and bearing housings may be found inside or within the barn walls where power drive entered the building from later or lost horse engine house (see p.24).
- Grain was sometimes stored in a cornhole or box in the threshing barn. Freestanding granaries are rare, whilst storage in a loft over other building types like a shippin or linhay were more common.



- Fixed threshing machines remaining *in situ* within barns are now rare. Where these have been lost evidence like fixings, wall plaster damage, and openings with or without shaft bearings etc. are important fabric to be identified.

### Significance

- Threshing barns are often the oldest and sometimes largest building on the farmstead apart from the farmhouse which may have medieval origins. Those which survive provide evidence for their origin, dating and development phases, but only represent a small number of those documented.
- The character of the threshing barn represents the local vernacular especially the materials used like thatch and granite.
- Threshing barns dated to earlier than 18th century are rare on Dartmoor and have high significance.



A projecting porch, with pent roof over, to a threshing barn, typical of single-storey barns of the north-eastern farmlands. © Philip White



A now rare fixed thresher powered from the adjacent round house (horse engine house). © Philip White



Rare cornhole beside wooden threshing floor. © Philip White



Gearwheel and usage marks indicating position of former fixed thresher. © Philip White

## BANK BARN

The **bank barn** is a combination barn type of two storeys, usually cut into a bank or slope affording access to the upper floor threshing area and thus bringing many key farming functions under one roof. They constitute about 30% of all recorded barns in the National Park. The harvested crop and sometimes the grain is kept dry and clean on the upper threshing floor. The lower floor contained a mix of uses including shippens, stables, and very rarely, waterwheels and cider houses. Some date from the early 17th century but the great majority are late 18th to 19th century reflecting the building of high numbers of these type of barn in the decades around 1800 in south-west England.



A four-bay bank barn with lean-to store. © DNPA



A typical late 19th century bank barn with shippen below on the eastern edge of the high moor. © Philip White

*Typical features*

- Rear entry via large barn doors at upper ground level.
- Larger, or more, first floor timber beams to support threshing floor(s) above, usually placed centrally.
- Sometimes, steps provided at front or end in order to access threshing floor(s).
- Wheelpits to drive machinery are rare and usually sited within the barn at one end (see p. 40).
- Upper-level threshing barn, with one or more wooden threshing floors.



Bank barns can be amongst the largest of barns. This example with double threshing floors is in the western moorland fringe. © Philip White

*Significance*

- Bank barns constitute around 30% of all Dartmoor barns. The majority date from the later 19th century and otherwise have similar significance to single-storey threshing barns.
- Pre-19th century cattle housing rare in a national context and of high significance.



## HORSE ENGINE HOUSE (ROUNDHOUSE)

A single-storey attached or adjoining building containing a **horse engine** used for powering threshing machinery and typically found projecting from the rear wall of a barn. A two-storey roundhouse type is virtually unknown on Dartmoor. Horse power was increasingly used from the late 18th century, visible traces being belt drives and holes for drive shafts. Horse power was utilised either within covered roundhouses where horses powered threshing and mixing machinery, or from an outdoor **horse engine** on a level platform beside the barn. The evidence for the latter method, though once commonly used, has been mostly lost due to the portability of the equipment although a hole at the base or higher up the wall would indicate its shaft position.



An open-sided roundhouse with, uncommonly, round piers.  
© Philip White



An open-sided roundhouse allowing for maximum visibility and ventilation. © Philip White



Platform for external horse engine showing overhead shaft hole.  
© Philip White



Roundhouse attached to the rear of a bank barn. © Philip White

*Typical features*

- Often a rounded or polygonal building though rectangular types are also found. All will have at least one relatively large entry opening for horses and for ventilation. Some have granite posts supporting the roof and no side cladding.
- May still be found with housings and/or shafts for transferring power into the barn.
- Circular or multi-sided plan form.
- Heavy beams and other structural timbers supporting roof and machinery can survive.

*Significance*

- Horse engine houses are not common, being found on approximately 15% of all barns on Dartmoor and have significance.



## CART and IMPLEMENT SHED

A cart shed is a building used for housing and protecting carts and farm implements from the weather. It might also accommodate the pony trap. They vary in size from low implement shelters to the larger cart sheds.

Cart sheds were generally late although earlier examples are found on Dartmoor. Their location outside of the dirty yards will help identify their use. They are relatively small and more common than larger waggon sheds designed to house loaded waggons.



Front-entry cartshed often identified by its position alongside a track or field access. © Philip White



A lean-to cartshed with end entry. This is the most commonly found type. © Philip White



An Implement shed (attached to late 19th century barn). © Philip White



A lean-to implement shelter typically found attached to a threshing barn. © Philip White

### Typical features

- Open-fronted and sometimes open at each end, sometimes free-standing.
- Typically attached to a barn or other building as a lean-to or extension.
- Cart sheds often face away from the farmyard giving direct access to the fields or trackways.

### Significance

- Cart sheds are few in number and are late arrivals to Dartmoor, pre-19th-century examples being rare. The size of the cart shed reflects the size and function of the farm. Larger examples are found on larger farms.
- Earlier examples of cart and implement sheds have significance.



## CATTLE HOUSING

Except for longhouses (see p.35) **cattle housing** is not common before the 19th century. Most date from the 19th century and comprise **shippons** (cow houses), **calf houses**, open-fronted **linhays** and **shelter sheds**.

### SHIPPON or COW HOUSE

An enclosed building or part of a bank barn, for stalling cattle (often dairy cattle).

Shippons reflect the importance of cattle in the 19th century farming economy. They are found on more than 90% of farms in the National Park, and are even more common than barns. These are either single-storey or more commonly provided with a hay loft (locally called a 'tallet'), and most date from between the mid 18th – late 19th centuries. They are progressively less common to the east of the National Park where there was more arable land.



A shippon with four doorways and hay loft. This arrangement suggests cattle housed across the building, i.e. in line (parallel) with the front wall. © Philip White



Small shippon often found on small farms. This example is a rare part cob building found in the north-eastern farmlands. © Philip White



A large cattle range with dung pit in a formal courtyard. Such examples are not common on Dartmoor and more likely found to the south-east, reflecting the proximity of the main routes to Exeter and Plymouth markets. © DNPA



An early 18th century shippon, unusually with a barn to the upper part, at a 17th century farmstead on the moorland fringe. © Philip White



An 18th century shippon range with later wing extension. Stalls lie across the building. © Philip White



A cob and stone shippon used later as a milking parlour. Note the later gable door opening. The steps are later and not characteristic of this building type. © Philip White

*Typical features*

- Externally, generally lower doorways than **stables**, with ventilation openings, later wooden frames.
- Limited light and ventilation. Wall openings are largely confined to small openings in the front walls often without glass. Later windows and other features to assist ventilation date from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries, including hit-and-miss ventilators, air pipes and ridge ventilators.
- Internally, ceilings were typically low and there was very little light. Hay was stored above in lofts, increasing the warmth and reducing air flow.
- Cows were usually tethered in pairs with low partitions of wood either along or across the building. The location and number of doors can be important clues in identifying a shippon's internal stalling and feeding arrangements.
- In the 19th century, cast iron divisions in higher status ranges can be found. Feeding arrangements can survive in the form of mangers and water bowls, and feeding passages.

*Significance*

- Surviving pre-19th-century examples – including within **barns** – are rare in a national context and are of high significance.
- Very few cow house interiors of the 19th century or earlier have survived unaltered because recent hygiene regulations for the production of milk have influenced the insertion of new floors, rendered walls, glazed windows and cubicle arrangements.
- Separate housing for **draught oxen** has not been positively identified on Dartmoor; largely because many have been made redundant by the introduction of draught horses during the 18th century. Any ox housing will have generally been modified into cow housing. Surviving examples can often only be identified through documentation and are very rare, and of high significance.

## CALF HOUSE

A smaller scale building or part of a building for housing calves which is usually located close to the farmhouse. They typically have several low, narrow doors, and can therefore be difficult to distinguish from pigsties except for feeding details where these exist.



A calf house next to the threshing barn and opposite the farmhouse.  
© Philip White



Calf housing in a 19th century lean-to added to an earlier and modified building. © Philip White

*Typical features*

- They often have several doors and can therefore be difficult to distinguish from pig houses except where feeding details exist.

*Significance*

- Calf housing is found in various forms and styles and is therefore individual. Since little if any interior features exist they can be easily overlooked. Their presence and location generally indicates a dairying activity and adds evidence to the history of a farmstead. All calf house types have significance.



## LINHAY (DEVON LINHAY)

A two-storey building typically with open-fronted cattle shelter with historically hay loft above. The term **linhay** was used to refer to a wide range of buildings including shelter sheds and field barns.

One variation occurs in the form of the cart linhay whereby the open ground floor is used for cart storage. Such buildings can normally be identified by their position often outside the cattle yard and along a track or facing the fields.

Open-fronted two-storey linhays are distinctive building types, usually facing into cattle yards, but also found sited in infields. On Dartmoor they are generally less extensive and smaller than the larger multi-bay linhays of courtyard farms in mid and east Devon. There is a higher incidence of linhays in the **north-eastern farmlands**.



A rare seven-bay cattle linhay open to the cattle yard. © Philip White



A cart linhay with upper floor removed. Sited at the entrance to the farm. © Philip White

### Typical features

- Open fronted cattle shed and hay loft (termed a tallet). Shorter and milder winters in south-west England enabled cattle to be housed in open-fronted buildings adjoining a yard, and was the case in certain areas of Dartmoor where provision of such animal housing once occurred.
- The tallet may be constructed with conventional floor boards or simply created from wooden poles resting on integral floor beams.
- The linhay will often face into the principal farmyard or be set within its own yard.
- It is quite usual to find part or all of the open-fronted side, especially the upper level, boarded up which was an alteration associated with the development of the dairying industry, and later need to shelter cattle indoors from about the late 19th century.
- Some ground-floor linhay fronts have been blocked to form an enclosed shippon.
- Some tallet floors and support beams may be missing, which can lead to miss identification of the building type. Evidence may be found for sockets in the rear wall and, where timber posts exist containing shouldered joints to the inner face at loft level.
- Important structural woodwork in the form of posts, first floor and roof carcass often survive.

### Significance

- The linhay comprises one of the earliest forms of cattle housing to be found in England where examples date from the 16th century. On Dartmoor 19th century and earlier linhay survivals have high significance.
- Two-storey linhays are characteristic of east Dartmoor, Devon, west Dorset and south Somerset, and there are examples in Wales and along the borders in Herefordshire. There are also similar forms of cattle housing in western France.

## SHELTER SHED

A *ground-floor* open-fronted structure for cattle facing onto cattle yards, sometimes confusingly termed linhays (see above **linhay** section ). **Cattle yards** with **shelter sheds** were typical of mixed farming areas where cattle were housed on the farmstead as fatstock and for their manure.



A large open-fronted shelter shed with hayloft, walled in against the weather. Note the minimal loft vents. © Philip White



A multi-bay shelter shed often found in courtyard layouts or larger farmsteads. © Philip White

### *Typical features*

- Shelter sheds can be detached buildings, or attached to others including the barn linked with enclosed yards.
- Common internal fittings were mangers and hayracks, and sometimes stalls.
- Sometimes doors in one or both of the gable ends near the back wall gave access to a feeding passage.
- On Dartmoor they were often provided with gates (now lost), the evidence for which is in the form of pintles or hinges inside the openings.

### *Significance*

- Pre-19th-century examples are rare and of significance. Shelter sheds forming part of complete historic farmsteads will have significance due to rarity.



## CIDER BARN or POUND HOUSE

The growing of apples for cider was important in a regional area extending from at least Dartmoor to the southern West Midlands.

A few **cider barns** exist today and these are almost all in the more sheltered eastern valleys where historically there were many orchards and where fewer orchards have been lost. They were often not purpose built as such but rather incorporated into small barns or other buildings converted to cider making use. This makes them often difficult to identify. Rarely, a riddler (or apple mill) or its empty location is found in the upper floor close to the cider press below.



A rare 17th century cob building housing a cider barn at a small dairy farm in the **north-eastern farmlands**. © Philip White



A 19th century cider barn with loft showing evidence of use as a threshing barn. The attached building is a later threshing barn. © Philip White

### Typical features

- A loft or half loft is often evident for the storage of apples.
- A riddler, scratter or its feed hole in the loft floor may also be found.
- Occasionally the cider mill or press survives within the building.
- Where the cider barn is a separate building it usually does not have any particular external characteristics, other than a wide doorway allowing for the passage of barrels.

### Significance

- Cider barns are often difficult to distinguish from farm other storage buildings but rare survivals.
- Examples where the cider mill or press survives *in situ* are of high significance.

## DAIRY

**Dairies** were generally attached to or contained within the farmhouse. A number of these rooms still exist with slate or granite slab worktops, and running water for cooling, but now are simply a scullery. Milk was stored and processed to make cream, cheese and butter. Cheese would be stored in a loft above the dairy or in the attic of the farmhouse.

### *Typical features*

- Ventilated or shuttered windows.
- Internal slate shelves and brick/stone floors to keep both the milk and the interior cool.

### *Significance*

- Complete surviving examples with original fixtures, such as slate or stone shelves for cooling the milk, are very rare. This is because changes in hygiene regulations and the centralisation of production through the 20th century had a major impact on dairies, with the majority becoming redundant to their original use.

## DUTCH BARN

An iron-framed, open-fronted building for the shelter of hay or straw. Later examples constructed of steel members or occasionally with timber posts.

Originally hay was stored in lofts above the animals but as the importance of good ventilation for animal welfare was increasingly understood in the 19th century, other methods of storing hay were required either in ricks or purpose-built hay barns. From the late 19th century the iron-framed Dutch barn became a more common feature of Dartmoor's rural landscape.



An unusual example of a Dutch barn constructed with timber posts. the roof supports are in iron. © Philip White



The minimal supports to the corrugated roof shown here are typical of the amount of iron used in these buildings. © Philip White

### *Typical features*

- Iron frames, prefabricated examples usually with a manufacturer's nameplate or relief moulding, with corrugated-iron roofing and sometimes with side sheeting or walls.

### *Significance*

- These are highly distinctive but typical buildings with a widespread national distribution, although they are not common on Dartmoor. Any documented pre-1880s examples will be rare.
- Dutch barns are a little researched type of farm building. Early examples on Dartmoor should be regarded as having significance.



## FARM BIRD BUILDINGS

Farm bird housing can be found in the form of hen houses, goosehouses, or as external doveholes to various buildings.

### HEN HOUSE

Hens usually ran freely about a farmyard, but were encouraged to nest and roost at night safely away from predators. This also meant that the eggs could be more easily collected.



Henhouse above pig housing in a range which forms a loose courtyard. Unusually this pig housing lies along the farm entrance route and is some way from the old house. © Philip White



Interior of a henhouse showing nesting boxes.  
© Philip White

#### *Typical features*

- Hen houses usually include a small pop hole for the hens as well as a full-sized door for human access for feeding and egg-collection.
- The walls could be lined with nest boxes.

#### *Significance*

- Hen houses were usually relatively short-lived buildings and there are few survivals pre-1900.
- Where historic examples do survive they usually form part of another building, such as a pig house: it was thought the chickens would keep the pigs warm and the pigs would frighten foxes away.

### GOOSEHOLE

A compartment for housing geese, either singly or in groups. Geese could be housed in free-standing pens or alcoves in farmyard walls.

#### *Typical features*

- Square stone-lined compartments, almost all of granite, incorporated into a wall or hedge and at ground level.
- Sited near the barn or under steps to threshing floor.
- Historic pens for geese are rare and have significance.
- Geese could be housed in pens, either free-standing or built against a wall.

#### *Significance*

- Records of these features are rare on Dartmoor and have significance.

## DOVEHOLES

These pigeon nesting features are found only occasionally on Dartmoor farm buildings. Freestanding dovecotes are rare on Dartmoor.

### *Typical features*

- Nest boxes were formed in the thickness of the wall as a row of holes high up in the wall.

### *Significance*

- They are rare on Dartmoor and have significance.



Doveholes formed in brick under the eaves of a bank barn dated as 1815. © Philip White

## FIELD BUILDINGS

**Field barns** are single buildings set within the fields away from the main farmstead. They saved on transporting the harvested crops (hay or corn) to the farmstead, and enabled manure from the cattle housed in them to be carted back out to the distant fields. Outfarms provide a larger facility, usually as two or more buildings sometimes with an enclosed yard. They may be retained from an earlier steading having lost the farmhouse and are particularly rare on Dartmoor. They generally date from the 19th century, earlier examples are rare.



A disused field linhay on the south east of the **moorland fringe**.  
© Philip White



A large field barn to the south of the **moorland fringe**.  
© Philip White

### *Typical features*

- Their isolation is their most important feature.
- Some apparently isolated buildings are remnants of farmsteads and may carry greater significance.

### *Significance*

- Field barns occur only rarely on Dartmoor. They are typically small units around the **moorland fringe**.
- Field barns have always been vulnerable to dereliction once redundant. Many field barns present at the end of the 19th century have been lost from the landscape.
- Isolated field buildings are rare and have significance.



## GRANARY

A building or room for the dry and secure storage of grain after it has been threshed and winnowed. **Granaries** can be difficult to detect once timber partitions and fitments have been removed. They are most often formed within a barn as a cornhole or separate room often adjacent to the barn floor, but occur elsewhere including above cart linhays, goose houses and stables. Freestanding granaries on Dartmoor are rare and almost unknown, there being one known at Higher Headborough outside Ashburton.



Granary over a former goose house. © Philip White



Granary over a cart shed in a large 19th century courtyard range. © Philip White

### *Typical features*

- Some granaries are incorporated into the upper floors of barns and other working buildings, especially stables, and also cart sheds.
- Close-boarded or plastered and lime-washed walls internally, and a strong load-bearing floor construction with tight-fitting boards to prevent loss of grain.
- Grain bins, or the slots in vertical timbers for horizontal planking used to make them.
- Sometimes a remnant fillet around perimeter of wall to floor.
- Graffiti, both ritual and occupational, is found more often in granaries than elsewhere due to the importance of the produce stored there.

### *Significance*

- Any surviving examples with internal fittings or forming part of a complete historic farmstead will have significance.
- Most examples are of 19th-century date, earlier examples being of great rarity.
- Historic graffiti is a highly important cultural feature.

## LONGHOUSE

The longhouse is mainly a medieval farmhouse type built down the slope of the land where both humans and cattle lived under one roof, the shippin (cattle housing) being located at the lower end. In early examples, doorways on both sides of the building at each end of the cross passage were shared by both humans and animals, whereas later versions of the longhouse type had a separate doorway entrance into the shippin for the cattle. There are in excess of 120 extant longhouses on Dartmoor but only a very small number survive where the shippin remains intact, whilst the remaining have been subject to some degree of conversion.

Dartmoor has one of the most important groupings of longhouses in Western Europe. The plan form of a longhouse was a two or three room and cross passage layout, with the shippin at the lower end having suitable wall openings for self-drainage and also mucking out of the animals. At the upper end above the cross passage, the principal habitable room was known as a Hall which had a central hearth. Access to an Inner room occurred from the Hall when provided within the structure. The form of the original longhouse type represents 'form following function' and were exemplars of sustainable development.

Evidence for longhouses nationally is mostly confined to the north and west of England. They were a particular feature of upland and upland fringe landscapes, and hamlets in Cornwall and western Devon in the medieval period. Clear archaeological evidence (e.g. excavations at Hutholes and Hound Tor on Dartmoor) points to their importance in the origins of Dartmoor's medieval farmstead type dating from 13th century, sometimes with yards and other smaller buildings.

The early longhouse footprint had considerable influence upon the subsequent development of the Dartmoor farmhouse where evidence for rebuilding, alteration and conversion of the lower end and also upper end of the dwelling is well recorded. This produced a rich variety of individual buildings with distinctive character resulting from change down through the centuries which is clearly visible in this emblematic farmhouse type.



A longhouse with living quarters developed from its original form.  
© Philip White



The shippin end of a longhouse showing ventilation slots. The central hole at the bottom is the drainage outlet. © Philip White

### *Typical features*

- A shared entrance through cross passage for humans and cattle, some having a later and alternative arrangement via a separate door for access into the shippin.
- Whilst commonly most longhouses had opposing entrance doors to the cross passage this was not always the case. There are however a small number where it appears the cross passage is blind being served by only one doorway.
- The longhouse shippin is defined by its central drain with outlet at the base of the end wall, together with narrow vertical ventilation openings and mucking-out wall opening.



*Significance*

- Although many longhouse shippons have in the past been converted a number remain with their shippon intact which is exceptionally rare in a national context. These include: Higher Uppacott at Poundsgate, Bowden Farm at Buckland in the Moor, Sanders at Lettaford, Ley at Widecombe in the Moor, and Higher Shilstone at Throwleigh. Whilst they are rare survivals and exemplars, all other developed longhouses are equally important for sustaining Dartmoor's cultural heritage, character and local distinctiveness, and sense of place.
- Dartmoor's longhouse resource is internationally important and has high significance.
- Longhouses were often grouped together in farming hamlets and associated with strip farming of the surrounding fields. Documentation and archaeological excavation indicate that they had a widespread distribution in the north and west of the British Isles during the medieval period. In much of lowland England from the 14th century they were either absent or replaced by yard layouts with detached farmhouses, barns and cow houses.

## PIG HOUSING

**Pig housing** was common (35% of farms within the National Park) but can go unrecognised on Dartmoor, since outside pig runs were not normally provided. These simple usually low single-storey buildings, externally marked by a range of doorways, can sometimes be confused with calf housing particularly when any internal feed troughs no longer exist. Some pig houses exist with feed troughs built into the walls. On most farms only a few pigs were kept for domestic use and were normally fed on kitchen scraps or whey (by product from cheese making) and so pig housing was often placed near the kitchen, dairy or house.



Pig house with a henloft over in the eastern moorland fringe.  
© Philip White



Pig house for 3 pigs in the moorland fringe. © Philip White



Pig house with trough and shutter located in wall. © Philip White



Pig house of the western moorland fringe. © Philip White

### Typical features

- Pig houses in Dartmoor, as in other parts of Devon and Cornwall, were often built as low single-storey structures comprising 2 or 3 individual cells with no enclosed yards. Occasionally they are found with henlofts above (see p. 32).
- They resemble calf houses and can be hard to tell apart, except where feeding troughs or external feeding openings exist.
- A small chimneystack could mark the position of a boiler house for preparation of swill for pig feed.

### Significance

- Any pre-19th-century examples are very rare.
- Have significance especially if part of coherent farmstead groups.



## STABLE

A building or part of a building, for housing horses and their harnessing and tackle. **Stables** might be for the hack (domestically used horse) or for working horses. Traphouses are often linked to hack stables near to the house. The number of working horse stalls is a good indicator of the number of work horses and amount of arable land on the farm at that time.

Freestanding stables occur and these include 17th and 18th century examples which are usually lofted unless of high status. Late 19th century stables are frequently unlofted taller buildings reflecting the increased awareness of equine health.



Stables for working horses with end-entry cartshed attached.  
© Philip White



Stable for the domestic hack horses. © Philip White



An early stable sited below the granary. © Philip White



A late stable block with trap house. © Philip White

### Typical features

- Stables can generally be distinguished from cow houses as they often benefit from higher internal headroom and taller doors which may open inwards. They might also be found located away from or at the top of the farmyard.
- They are either integrated into other working buildings, especially barns, or less commonly found as detached buildings.
- Wooden or cast-iron (for high-status or late examples) stalls with access to raised manger and hayrack.
- Floors of earth, stone flags and cobbles, and from the mid-19th century of engineering brick, sloping to drainage channel.
- Pegs for harness and tack, sometimes in a separate harness room which may have a fireplace.
- Sometimes chaff boxes for storing feed, and cubby-holes for lanterns, grooming brushes, medicines etc.

### Significance

- After the barn, the stable is often the oldest building on the farmstead, and pre-19th century examples are rare on Dartmoor and have high significance.
- Examples retaining internal fittings including stall partitions and feed racks are rare and have significance.

## ANCILLARY FEATURES

### CHURN STAND

A stand for metal milk churns, often built at the farm gate to save the milk cart or lorry from having to come into the farmyard. Examples are still common but often overlooked with consequent risk of loss.

The sale of liquid milk had become massively important in many areas by the early 20th century. The stand for milk churns, and the abandonment of all but a handful of farmhouse dairies and cheese rooms for new milk-production plants were the other visible consequences of these developments.



A well maintained churn stand though long out of use. © Philip White



A less common churn stand with steps for dual use as a mounting block. © Philip White

#### *Significance*

- Churn stands are easily lost due to decay and damage occasioned by their roadside proximity. They recall past practices and can confirm the location of dairy farms long after any change of use. Their increasing rarity gives them significance.

### MOWHAY

**Mowhay** is a dialect term for a rickyard or stackyard for containing stacks of hay, corn, peas etc. The stacks would sometimes be built on raised platform types to protect the grain from rodents and thatched to protect from rain.

#### *Typical features*

- Raised circular stone platforms or staddle stones.
- The siting of these artefacts near to the threshing barn is important for their identification.

#### *Significance*

- These features are extremely rare on Dartmoor and have significance.



Rickstands are found on Dartmoor and some other uplands and upland fringes. They are relatively rare. © DNPA



## ROOT STORE

As the use of fodder crops, such as turnips, and over-wintering of cattle developed a need to store fodder in earth clamps or small rooms increased on farmsteads.

### *Typical features*

- In some of the better-planned farmsteads the root and fodder stores would be incorporated into the cattle housing, usually located close to where the cattle were stalled with access between the two. On smaller farmsteads the root store was either a separate building or formed part of a bank barn. Often particular features include a wider entrance door opening and root shute.

### *Significance*

- Root stores identified are rare and have significance.

## WATER POWER

On Dartmoor evidence for water power serving a farmstead in the form of leats carrying water to a barn or mill, and its operation of water-powered machinery like a water wheel is exceptionally rare. A suitable source and supply of water for use on a farmstead was also an important resource, and provision of ponds to supply water to drive a mill is other important asset to consider.

Water power has a long history, and use of water for farmsteads provided by leats pre-dated and probably post-dated mechanical developments like for example, the provision of horse power in roundhouses in only 15% of threshing barns, and mechanical threshing by steam traction engine rather than by hand.

### *Significance*

- Evidence for water power carried by leats into Dartmoor farmsteads exists but is little recorded or understood. This rarity value supports this asset having high significance.



A rare example of a water-powered wheelpit in a bank barn. The wheel has been removed and no longer exists. © DNPA

# GLOSSARY

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## Archetype

In this context an artefact that typifies an important or early form, and are seen as a model of a period or a definitive example.

## Bronze Age

Period of human history from (in NW Europe) approximately 2000–900 BC

## Combed wheat reed

A method of thatching in which all the stems of the straw are not bruised or crushed as with longstraw, but rather the straw is laid in the same direction with the butts (or ends) down. The finished roof thus resembles reed thatch rather than longstraw.

## Convertible husbandry

A system whereby some fields were brought into arable cultivation for a short period – usually until the soil was exhausted – and then returned to pasture for a number of years. This system was commonly found in upland areas of the country.

## Cornhole

A box or small room within a barn for the storage of grain safe from vermin.

## Courtyard plan

A farmstead where the working buildings are arranged around a yard. See loose courtyard plan and regular courtyard plan.

## Cob

Earth wall using subsoil dug locally and mixed with water to create a sticky mass wall building material. It may also contain variable amounts of straw, and other secondary materials such as dung and stones. It is placed in shovelfuls and beaten into a mass wall. Bare cob walling usually shows the horizons of 'lifts' indicating the amount placed in each working session.

## Common Land

Land held in common and managed for this purpose by the local community, for grazing animals, fuel, hay etc.

## Corn ditch

A boundary, originally to open moorland, which is formed by a ditch and upright stone face to a bank which is sloped on the field side, thus allowing deer and other wild animals to escape back to the open moorland.

## Dispersed settlement

Settlement that consists of scattered, isolated farmsteads and small hamlets. These can be high in density, especially in areas with small farms.

## Dungpit

An area usually in the middle of a farm yard where dung and soiled bedding is temporarily stored. It may be delineated by a bund or wall often in a circular or semi circular form.

## Enclosure

Enclosure of open land into fields may have occurred at an early date – possibly medieval and in a few rare cases as far back as the prehistoric period. In other areas open fields or common land were enclosed either by agreement or, in the 18th and 19th centuries, by Act of Parliament.

## Field barn

An isolated barn, cow house or shelter shed with a hayloft. Typically found in areas where farmsteads and fields were sited at a long distance from each other.

## Hamlet

A small group of dwellings in a cluster, without a church and therefore of less status than a village. They typically comprise of farmsteads.

## Heritage assets

Artefacts, places or landscapes of historical interest, whether officially designated or not. Designated heritage assets include for example, listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments.

## Infield-outfield system

A type of agriculture practised in pastoral (usually upland) areas, where the fields closest to the farmstead or settlement were the most intensively cropped and animals were only permitted to graze after the hay or corn crop was cut. Beyond was rough grazing for sheep and cattle, which was occasionally ploughed for corn.



### **Irregular enclosure**

Patterns of fields of variable size and form, lacking any form of overall planning and generally reflecting a piecemeal or erratic process of creation. May date from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods, but are invariably pre-18th century. They are often associated with dispersed settlement and commons.

### **Linear plan**

A farmstead where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line. Can include longhouses.

### **Linhay**

A two-storey building having an open frontage for the use of cows. The upper part is the hayloft. The archetypal linhay has timber or stone front posts supporting the main cross beams to the loft. Many have had their open front closed in with cladding.

### **Longhouse**

A building that housed humans and cattle under one roof, with a shared entrance providing access to the dwelling area and to the cattle housing, or shippon at the lower end.

### **Mesolithic**

'The Middle Stone Age': period of human development which saw the spread of hunter-gather communities across north west Europe after the end of the last glaciation period (c 8000–4000 BC).

### **Moorstone**

Weathered granite found at the surface giving the stones softer shapes than angular quarried stone of the 19th century.

### **Mowhay**

A rickyard area sited close to the barn, in which the harvested corn crops could be stored in ricks or stacks to await threshing. The ricks could be built on raised platforms to protect the grain from rodents and thatched to protect from rain.

### **Nucleated settlement**

Settlement pattern consisting mainly of villages with relatively few isolated farmsteads or hamlets.

### **Open-field or strip-field system**

A system in which farmland was held in common with the strips of individual farmers intermixed across several fields, in origin varying in date from the 9th century or even earlier to as late as the 17th century (in northern Northumberland). Open-field systems rarely had hedges between strips or fields. Over time the strips were usually consolidated and eventually enclosed. Enclosure of open fields results in

characteristic field patterns where the boundaries form an elongated reversed 'S'.

### **Outfarm**

A complex of buildings set within the fields away from the main farmstead, usually including a barn for corn and/or hay and cattle housing set around a yard.

### **Pastoral farming**

Farming system based predominantly on the rearing or fattening of stock. Pastoral areas are usually predominantly grassland but in some areas arable cultivation was also important, providing fodder crops for the animals as well as cereal crops for domestic use.

### **Plan form**

In this context the layout of the various buildings forming the farmstead or group rather than a building plan form.

### **Pegged slate**

Small roofing slates laid in diminishing courses and 'hung' onto roof battens or laths by the use of small wooden pegs, with lime mortar bedding and/or torching.

### **Pound**

An unroofed, sometimes compartmented, walled enclosure for the temporary safe containment of animals.

### **Pound House**

In Devon, a cider barn or apple pressing room.

### **Settlement**

In this context a location where a community of people live or have lived having physically established themselves by construction of dwellings.

### **Shippon**

A building where cows were tethered for milking and feeding. A cowhouse.

### **Smallholding**

The smallest scale of farmstead, associated with subsistence farming combined with by-employment in industry. Smallholdings are usually found grouped together around areas of common land.

### **Tallet**

A loft usually above animal housing, and particularly to a Linhay.

### **Tally marks**

Marks of calculation e.g. for sacks of grain or wool bales, inscribed on walls or doors in pencil or with a pointed tool.

**Tithe Barn**

A barn used for the storage of tithes. The tithe was the payment of a tenth of crops and produce paid to the Rector for his maintenance. Payment in kind was changed to a cash payment in the mid-19th century although this occurred earlier in some parishes.

**Torching**

Full torching – The lime plastering of the undersides of the slates and battens in a slated roof for weather resistance and possibly for vermin exclusion. Torching only in plaster fillets against the battens is known as half torching.

**Traditional**

The passing on of skills, methods and practises from one generation to another. Traditional farm buildings pre-date 1940 and pre-date the import of prefabricated materials and buildings onto Dartmoor.

**Venville rights**

Rights of access to the Forest of Dartmoor for daytime grazing of stock.

**Vernacular**

Of architecture – concerned with domestic and functional rather than high status or architecturally designed buildings A characteristic local style using local materials.

**Yard**

An area enabling general movement and access to the farmhouse and working buildings and for livestock, the storage of harvested crops, timber and other products.



## SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

### Historic England guidance

Historic England (HistoricEngland.org.uk), formerly English Heritage (EH), is the public body that looks after England's historic environment. It champions historic places, helping people to understand, value and care for them, now and for the future.

### For guidance on conversion and maintenance see:

EH 2006. *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice*

EH 2011. *The Maintenance and Repair of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice.*

### For an analysis of the evidence base and the drivers for change see:

EH 2009. *Historic Farm Buildings: Extending the Evidence Base*

Gaskell, P and Owen, S 2005. *Historic Farm Buildings: Constructing the Evidence Base* (EH/Countryside Agency/University of Gloucestershire)

### For fully-referenced regional statements with national and regional bibliographies, which also set out the national context for farmsteads and their associated landscapes, see:

EH/Countryside Agency 2006. *Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement* (a series of eight regional documents)

Gaskell, P and Owen, S 2005. *Historic Farm Buildings: Constructing the Evidence Base* (EH/Countryside Agency/University of Gloucestershire)

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EH 2006. *Identifying and Sourcing Stone for Historic Building Repair*

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