

6.6 Case Study 4: HLC Data and Wiltshire Farmsteads Data

Context/Issue

While the HLC dataset is a powerful tool to analyse the landscape in its own right, it is also a useful comparator to use in conjunction with other historic environment datasets. One such dataset is the Wiltshire Farmsteads Project, which was produced by Forum Heritage Services (in 2014) in conjunction with Historic England and Wiltshire Buildings Record. The Farmsteads Project mapped, recorded and analysed all of the historic farmsteads in the county and how they changed and evolved over time. This evidence base for farmsteads was intended to increase understanding of how traditional farm buildings contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place.



Plate 12



Plate 13

The HLC dataset can provide a spatial framework to help understand how elements of the landscape of Wiltshire and Swindon, such as the form and scale of fields, are the result of past patterns of historic land use and settlement. When compared with the Farmsteads Project data it can help to:

- Identify links between farmstead location and the landscape/historic landscape
- Investigate by date and form whether there are relationships between farmsteads and particular landscapes
- Look at farmsteads at a parish level to see if local narratives of character can be identified
- Help to define particular farmstead character areas on the basis of the synthesis of HLC and farmstead data.

Application

There are several ways of using the HLC data and Farmsteads Project data to investigate any patterns or trends in their relationship:

- Comparison of farmsteads data and HLC data at a county level – looking at Broad Types in the landscape and demonstrating general trends in the areas they occupy

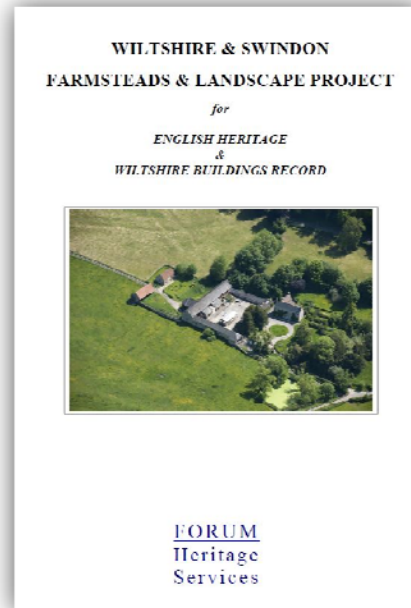
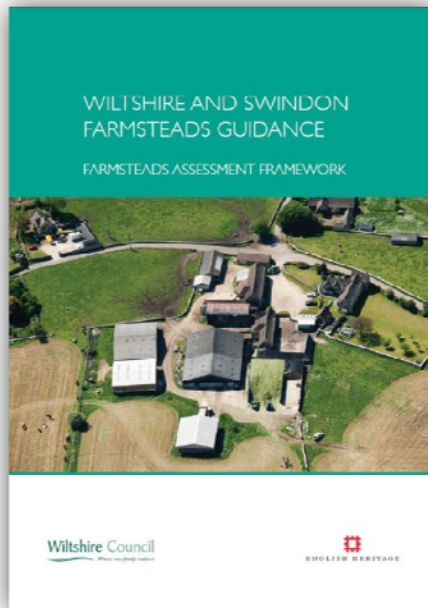
- Analysis of farmsteads data at a parish level using Narrow Type data to show local examples of the interplay between agricultural buildings and the landscapes which they occupy
 - o through the production of maps
 - o through the study of statistics
- Use of HLC and Farmsteads data to generate farmstead character zones – similar to the National Character Areas, but defined on the basis of the relationships between these datasets

Each of these methods will be presented in the subsequent pages and the HLC data will be analysed and discussed in order to answer the relevant questions. Analysis of the HLC data could be performed in relation to various attributes recorded by the Farmsteads Project – here it is primarily built form, but one could also look at date, survival or component type.

The study of Wiltshire's farmsteads, which Historic England funded, can serve as a starting point for anyone wishing to undertake survey or research.

- The ***Wiltshire and Swindon Farmsteads Assessment Framework*** provides guidance for those considering the conversion of farm buildings and the development of farmsteads at the earliest possible stage in the planning process.
- The ***Wiltshire and Swindon Farmsteads Character Statement*** provides an introductory summary followed by fully-illustrated guidance on the character and significance of the county's traditional farmsteads and buildings. Questions to guide future research are appended to this.
- The ***Farmstead and Landscape Statements*** contain more detailed information for each of the National Character Areas (as defined by Natural England) which are wholly or partly within the county.
- The ***Wiltshire and Swindon Farmsteads and Landscapes Project Report*** summarises the results of mapping 4028 farmsteads and 2745 outfarms and field barns across the county. These have been entered on to the county's Historic Environment Record, together with a User Guide on how to use the records.
- The ***Historic Environment Record User Guide*** shows how to use this data when visiting (online, or at the History Centre) the county HER.
- The ***Farmsteads Recording and Research Guidance*** is written for volunteers who are working in building recording groups or who are thinking of operating within one.

Further information about the Wiltshire Farmsteads Project is available from the following webpage: <http://www.wshc.eu/our-services/archaeology/24-our-services/archaeology/226-wiltshire-farmsteads-project.html>



Analysis: Farmstead Types and HLC

The first set of maps that are presented in the following section look at the location of farmsteads of a particular plan form in relation to Broad HLC Types at a county scale. The Farmstead Project recorded various plan forms, which are characteristic of different eras, functions and farming practices. In broad terms these are:

- *Courtyard plans* (78% of all recorded farmsteads), which have the working buildings arranged in loose or regular form around one or more sides of a yard, or more than one yard. The largest are found in arable-farming areas of planned and reorganised large fields, and the smallest in dairying and common-edge areas.
- *Dispersed plan* farmsteads (17%) which either have no focal yard area or consist of several scattered yards and are generally closely associated with wood-pasture areas to the west and north. Larger dispersed multi-yard farmsteads are, unusually, also found in the villages within the chalk downs.
- *Linear* and other farmsteads, where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line, are concentrated around areas of historic common land in the north and west of the county.

These patterns display a long-recognised contrast between the large arable-based farms of the downlands and the Vale of Pewsey, and the numerous smaller dairying farms intermixed with mixed farming in the north and west of Wiltshire. The lowest densities of farmsteads are found in the chalk downs, in land enclosed in the 18th-19th centuries, and the highest in dairying and stock-rearing areas where irregular 17th century and earlier fields are also concentrated. Multi-yard farmsteads, whether dispersed (8.6%) or regular (28%) in form, are the dominant type and reflect the need to subdivide farmsteads into separate yards for cattle, sometimes served by their own barns where corn was processed and straw spread in the yards.

The abbreviations used are summarised below:

- DISPCI = *Dispersed cluster plan*
- DISPdw = *Dispersed driftway plan*
- DISPmy = *Dispersed multi-yard plan*
- LP = *L-plan*
- LC = *Loose courtyard (numbers show how many sides formed by attached buildings)*
- LCL = *Loose courtyard L-plan*
- RC = *Regular courtyard plan*
- RCL = *Regular courtyard L-plan*
- RCU = *Regular courtyard U-plan*
- RCmy = *Regular courtyard multi-yard*

Dispersed Plans

There are three main types:

Dispersed cluster plans are loosely arranged groups of buildings, often with no defined yard area, set within an irregular paddock. They are strongly associated with areas of smallest farms and smallholdings close to former rough land and common and areas of irregular fields resulting from the clearance of woodland in the medieval period. Occasionally this plan type is found on larger farmsteads associated with areas of ancient enclosure. In Wiltshire and Swindon dispersed cluster plans are mostly found in the clay vales of the north and west of the area and on the edge of the New Forest in the southeast. However, some dispersed cluster farmsteads were recorded in the chalk landscapes with a small concentration in the Savernake area of the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs and occasional examples in the chalk valleys.

Dispersed multi-yard plans have their working buildings arranged around two or more yards, usually irregularly arranged and detached from one another. In some cases the yards can also be associated with a trackway so that the farmstead also has dispersed driftway character. These farmsteads typically result from incremental growth and can comprise a mix of loose courtyard and regular courtyard arrangements.

Farmstead Mapping in other parts of England – particularly in an area from Hampshire to Kent - has demonstrated that dispersed multi-yard plans are closely associated with the management of cattle. Whilst dispersed multi-yards are found in highest numbers in the vale landscapes of the north and west, examples were also recorded in the chalk landscapes. This is in contrast to most other chalk landscapes in southern England where this plan type is rare.

Dispersed driftway plans, where the buildings and yards are arranged along a driftway/routeway, are rare in Wiltshire and Swindon.

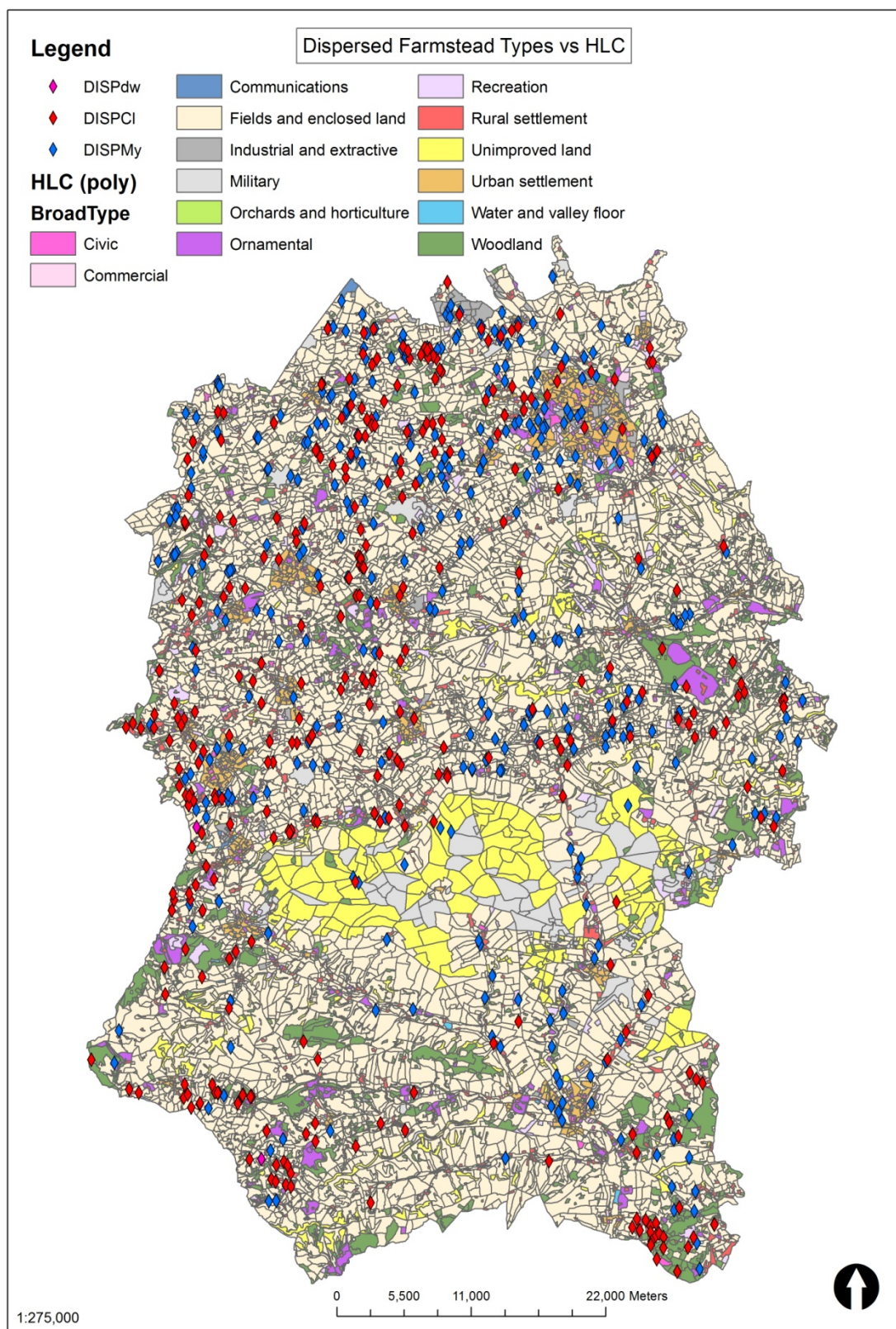


Figure 58

HLC analysis has shown that:

- These are concentrated in the northwest of the county, having some correlation with routeways and river valleys, with very few in the downlands
- There are clear links to areas of ancient woodland and assarted fields – this is particularly obvious in the southern part of the county
- The majority of these farms lie outside the settlements – especially in the smaller hamlets and villages
- They seem to be favoured in valley bottoms and away from steep escarpments
- Potential association with medieval open fields (and strips they are comprised of), as there is good survival and legibility of these in the northern portion of the county

Linear plans and L-plans with houses attached in-line with working buildings

Linear plans have the farmhouse and a farm building, usually a barn, attached in-line with little or no difference in the width of the two elements. Any detached buildings are typically small-scale, such as pigsties and calf houses.

Attached L-plans are linear farmsteads that have been built as or extended into an overall L-plan. Both of these plan types are commonly found in the upland and upland fringe areas of England. In southern England they are mostly found on the fringes of heathland and other areas of common land.

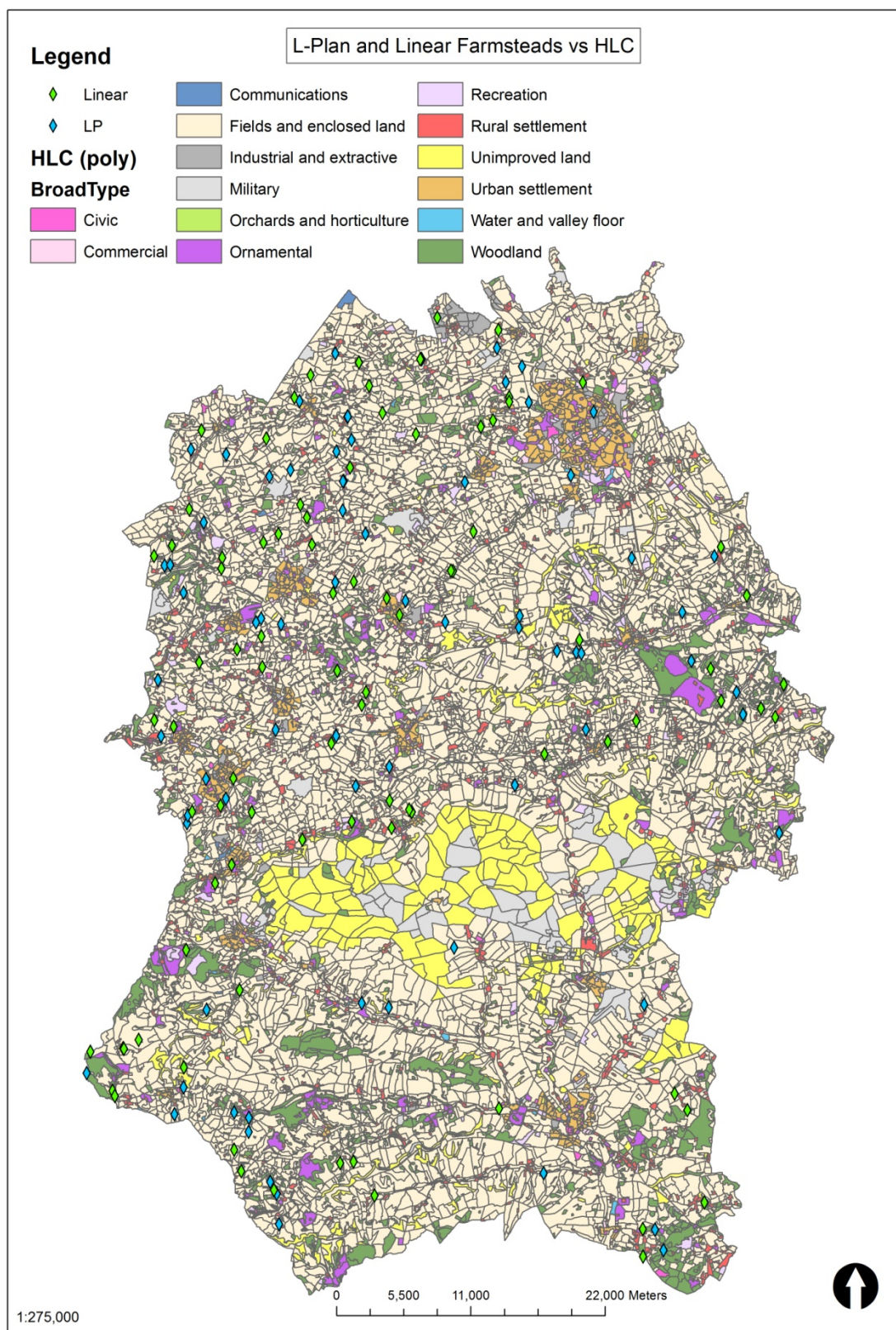


Figure 59

Analysis against HLC has shown that:

- They mostly lie outside settlements, and do not relate as closely to roads and rivers as other types
- They are often situated in the heart of fields and are strongly associated with pre-18th century piecemeal enclosure and former common land

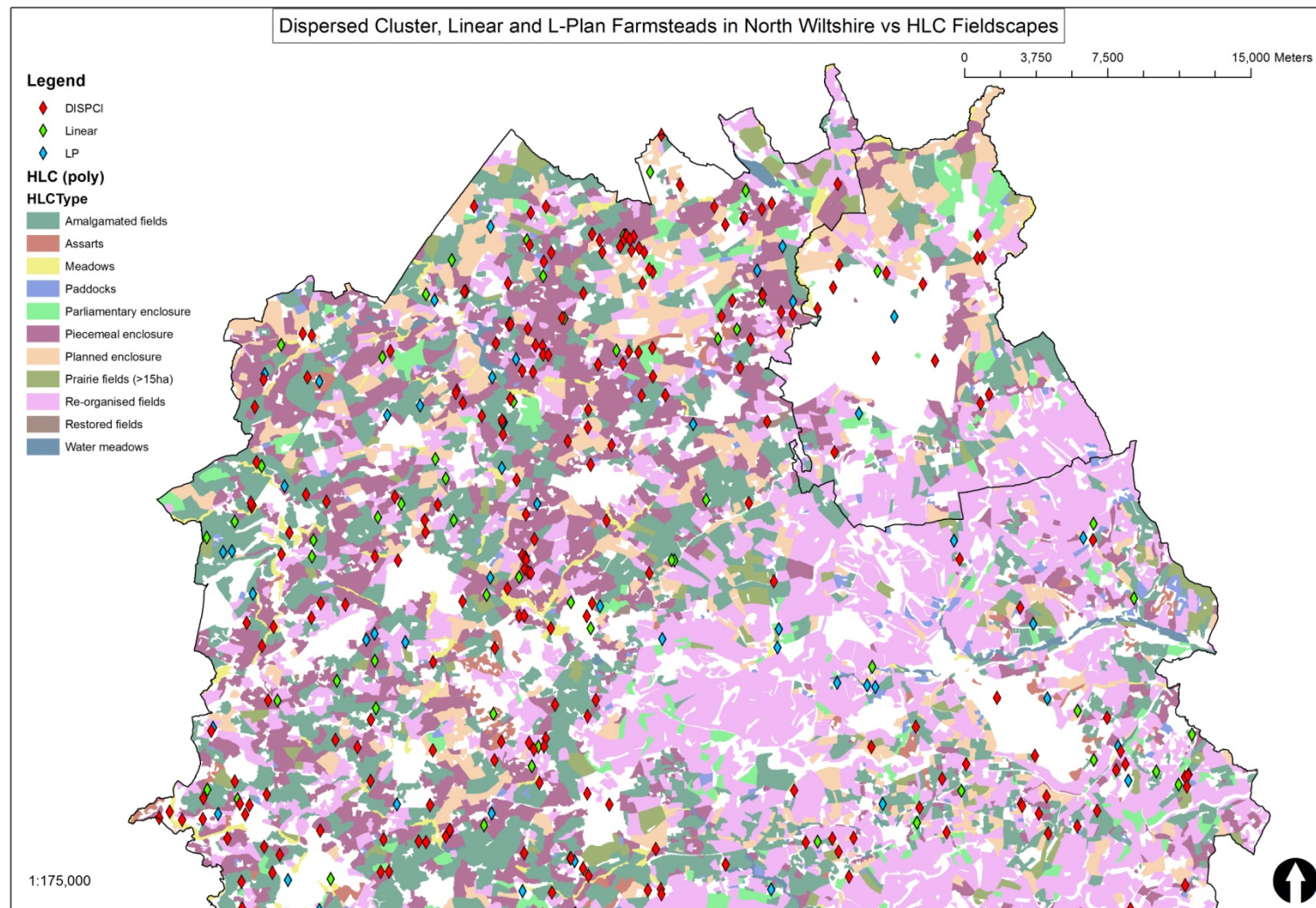


Figure 60

Courtyard Plans

The most common forms of farmstead layout are courtyard plans, where the working buildings are arranged around one or more yards. They fall into broad categories of loose courtyard plans, where the buildings are detached and loosely arranged around one or more sides of the yard (22% of recorded farmsteads in Wiltshire), regular courtyard plans, where the buildings are interlinked and formally arranged (44% of Wiltshire farmsteads) and L-shaped plans with additional buildings facing the yard (12% of farmsteads).

The largest courtyard farms are found on high-status sites, estate farms and in the arable vales, wolds and downlands of England. Cattle yards developed as areas for treading straw from the threshing barn into manure.

The smallest loose courtyard plans, with buildings to one or two sides of the yard, are associated with smaller farmsteads across the whole area, especially in the north and west. They can be found in both piecemeal and planned enclosure fields, and associated with old medieval fields in the central and northern portions of the county.

Those in chalk areas have been subject to high rates of partial or total loss as a result of the continuing restructuring and enlargement of farms across the downlands since around 1900, also reflected in high degree of field loss recorded in HLC.

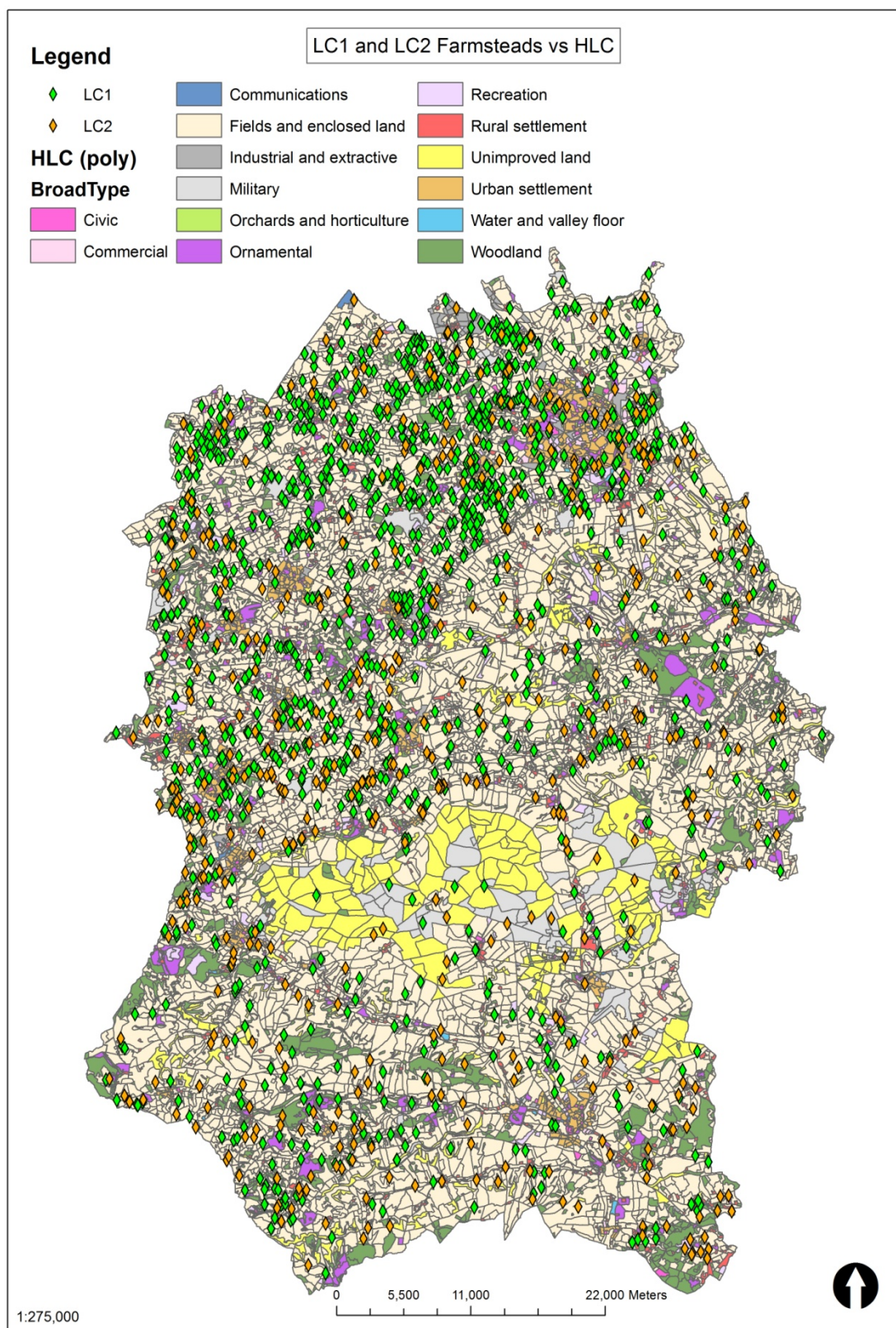


Figure 61

Analysis against HLC has shown that:

- They are closely aligned with the river valleys and ribbon settlements
- Most have close geographic association with settlements, both rural and urban – often with multiple farms of these types existing within the villages, hamlets and towns

The largest loose courtyard plans, with buildings to three or four sides of the yard, are widely distributed but associated with downland settlements and river valleys.

Analysis against HLC suggest a strong association with larger settlements and towns with very few sited out amongst the fields, but also with some links to designed parklands of the later post-medieval period.

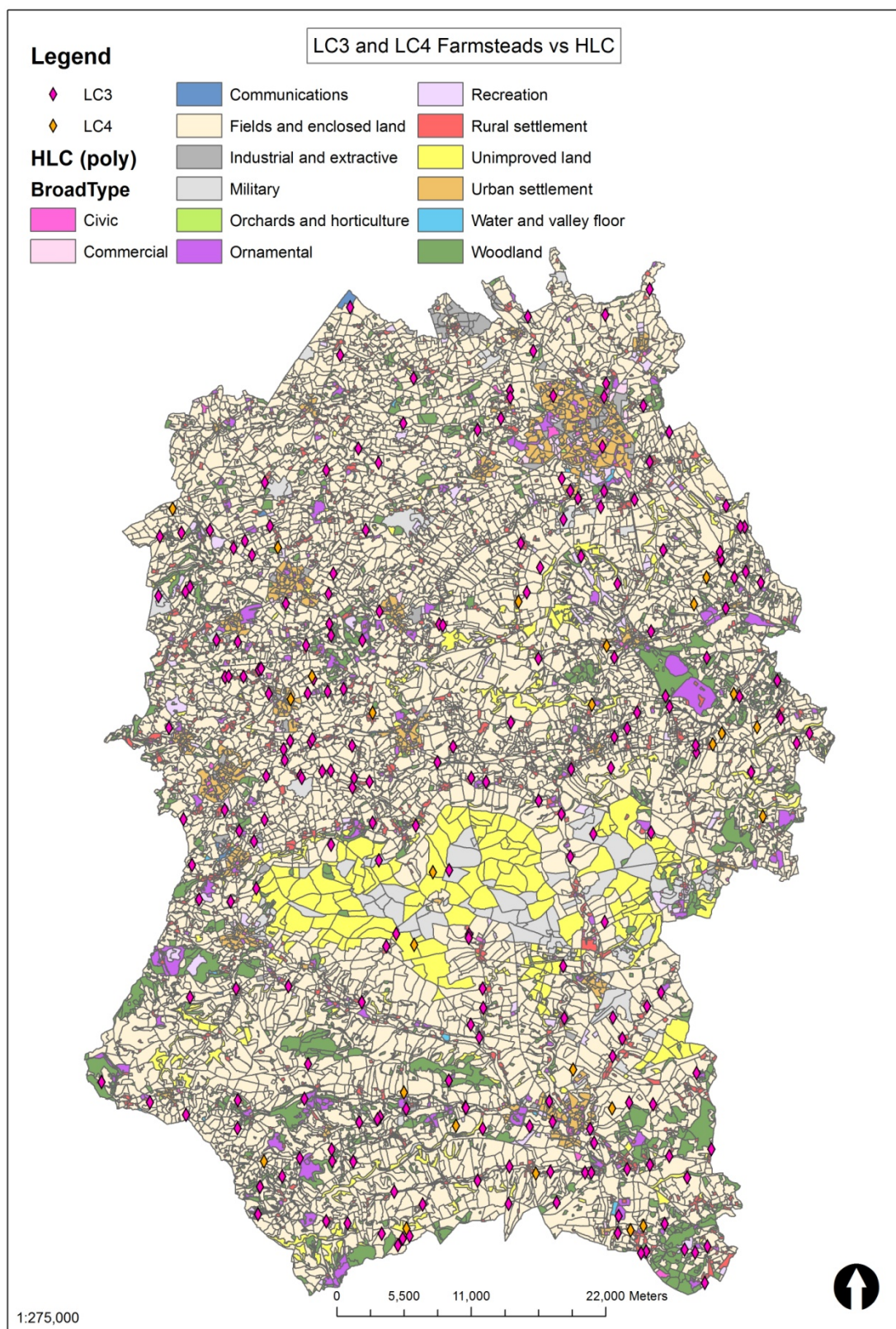


Figure 62

Regular courtyard plans

Regular Courtyard plans consist of linked ranges, often the result of a single phase of building, set around one or more cattle yards but some are the result of incremental growth.

They are mostly of 19th century date and usually display greater consistency in the use of materials and constructional detail, often employing more non-local materials like Welsh slate, than other farmstead types. Very few examples other than L-shaped plans are shown on the tithe maps of the 1830s-40s.

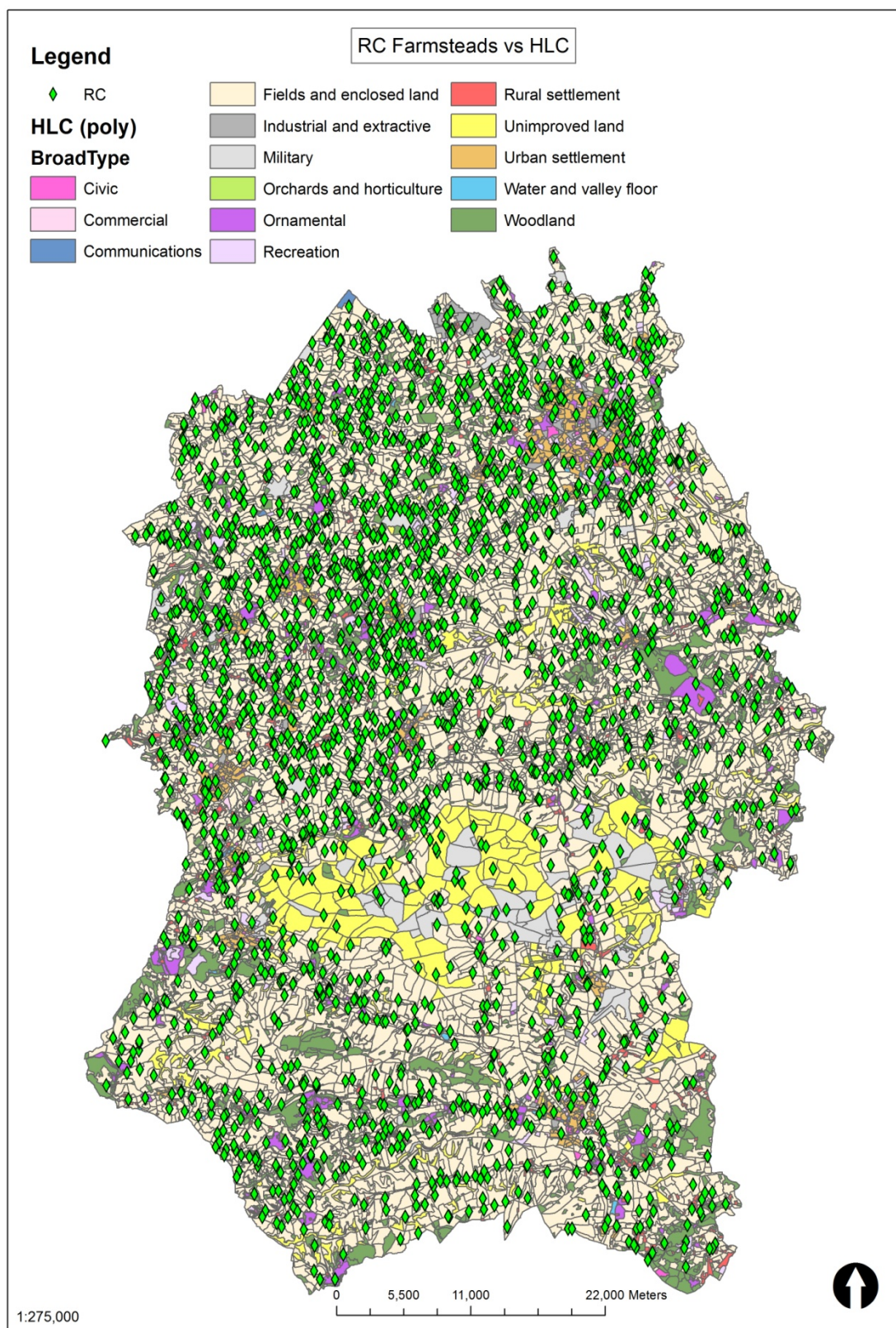


Figure 63

Analysis against HLC affirms the interpretation from the Farmstead Mapping report:

- A widespread distribution across the county, reflecting the density of farmsteads in the landscape as a whole
- Contrasting to the smaller dispersed, loose courtyard and linear types, they concentrate in areas away from woodland and ancient forests.
- Genuine mixture of farms inside and outside settlements, with some concentrations within market towns

Regular L-plans and U-plans

Being typically associated with small to medium scale farms, Regular L-plans are not a major feature of the chalk downland areas although some planned examples were built on the farmsteads of some of the large estates. They are more common in the west of the historic county. U-plan farmsteads are mostly found in the chalk downlands and they were often built away from the river valleys.

This would suggest that they were built during the period of enclosure of the open fields and downland, largely undertaken in the 18th and 19th centuries, with some possibly constructed as outfarms which developed into farmsteads. Many of these U-plans sited away from the valleys have been subject to high levels of change whilst examples in the west of Wiltshire tend to survive with lower levels of change.

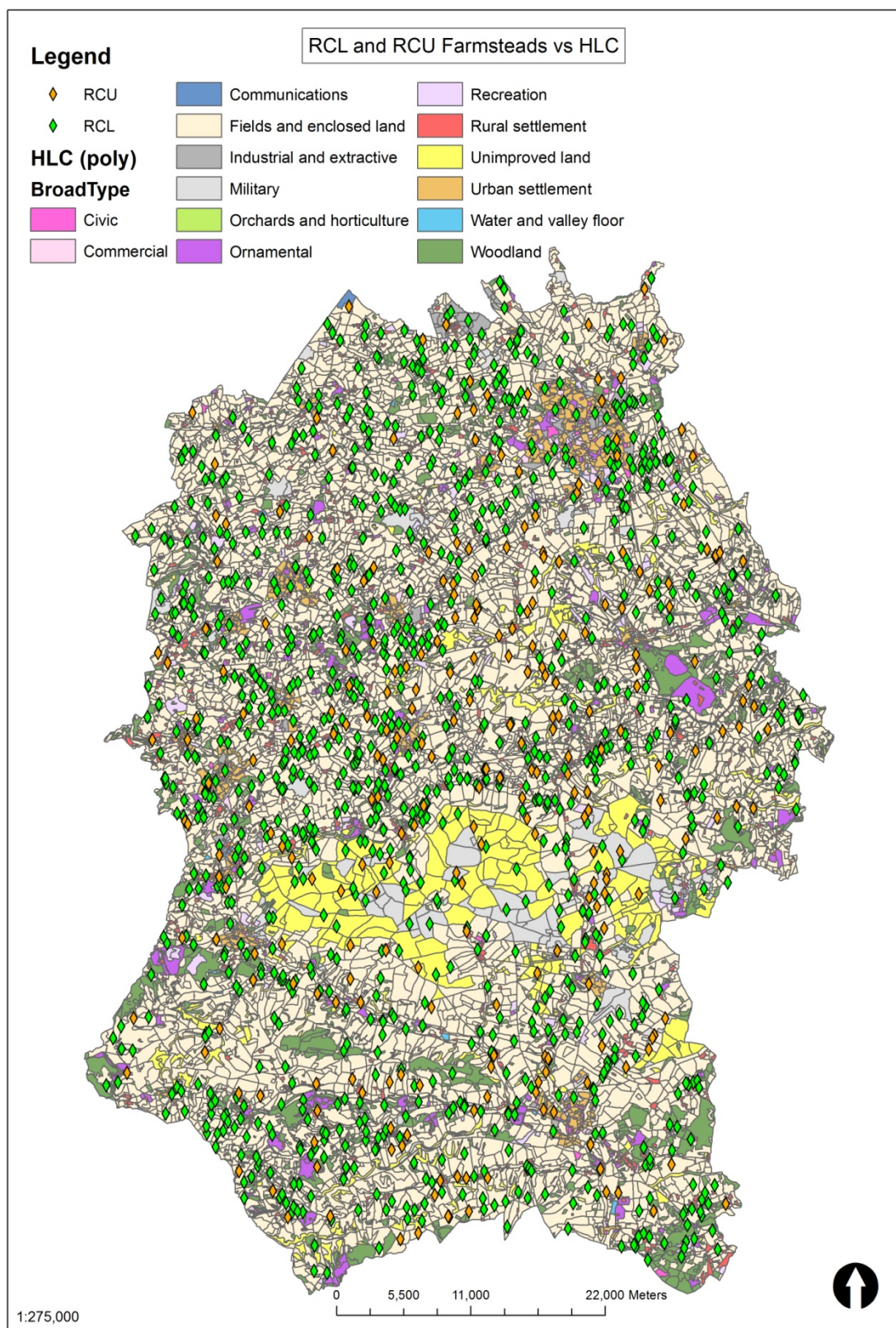


Figure 64

Analysis against HLC suggests:

- Correlation with the L-plans and the river valleys (U-plans sited away from valleys)
- Many of these seem to be set away from wooded areas
- Many of the RCL farms are clustered close to each other, sometimes inter-visible

Regular Multi-yards

These are farmsteads with multiple yards, (two or more) which are grouped together and arranged regularly.

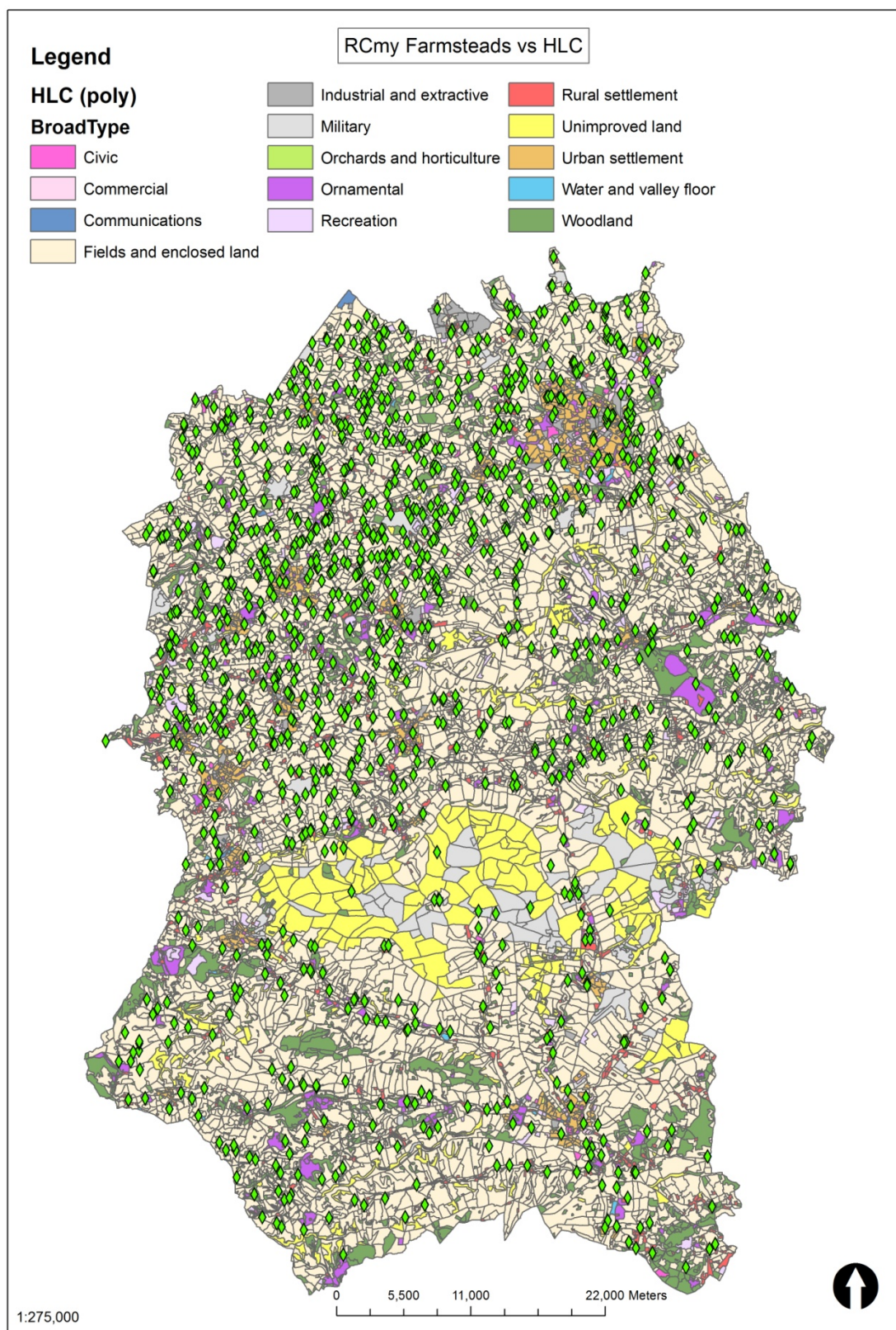


Figure 65

Regular multi-yards are the most common plan type across Wiltshire. High numbers survive with less than 50% loss in the vales landscapes and the Cotswolds. In Hampshire-Kent these farmsteads appear to be strongly associated with areas of mixed farming where the management of cattle was an important feature.

Analysis against HLC shows:

- A strong association with settlements, downland valleys
- Interestingly, as their form suggests piecemeal development albeit less so than with dispersed multi-yards, they have some correlation with less organised fields
- Many of the farmsteads, even those that survive with most of their historic form intact, exist in areas that have been subject to fairly extensive re-organisation. This suggests adaptability to changing requirements

Full Regular Courtyard, E-shaped and other large-scale Regular Courtyard plan types

These generally large farmsteads are most closely associated with the chalk areas, particularly the Salisbury Plain and Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase character areas.

Within Salisbury Plain a number of full regular courtyard farmsteads were constructed outside of the river valleys, possibly associated with enclosure of open fields and the conversion of downland to arable during the 18th and 19th centuries.

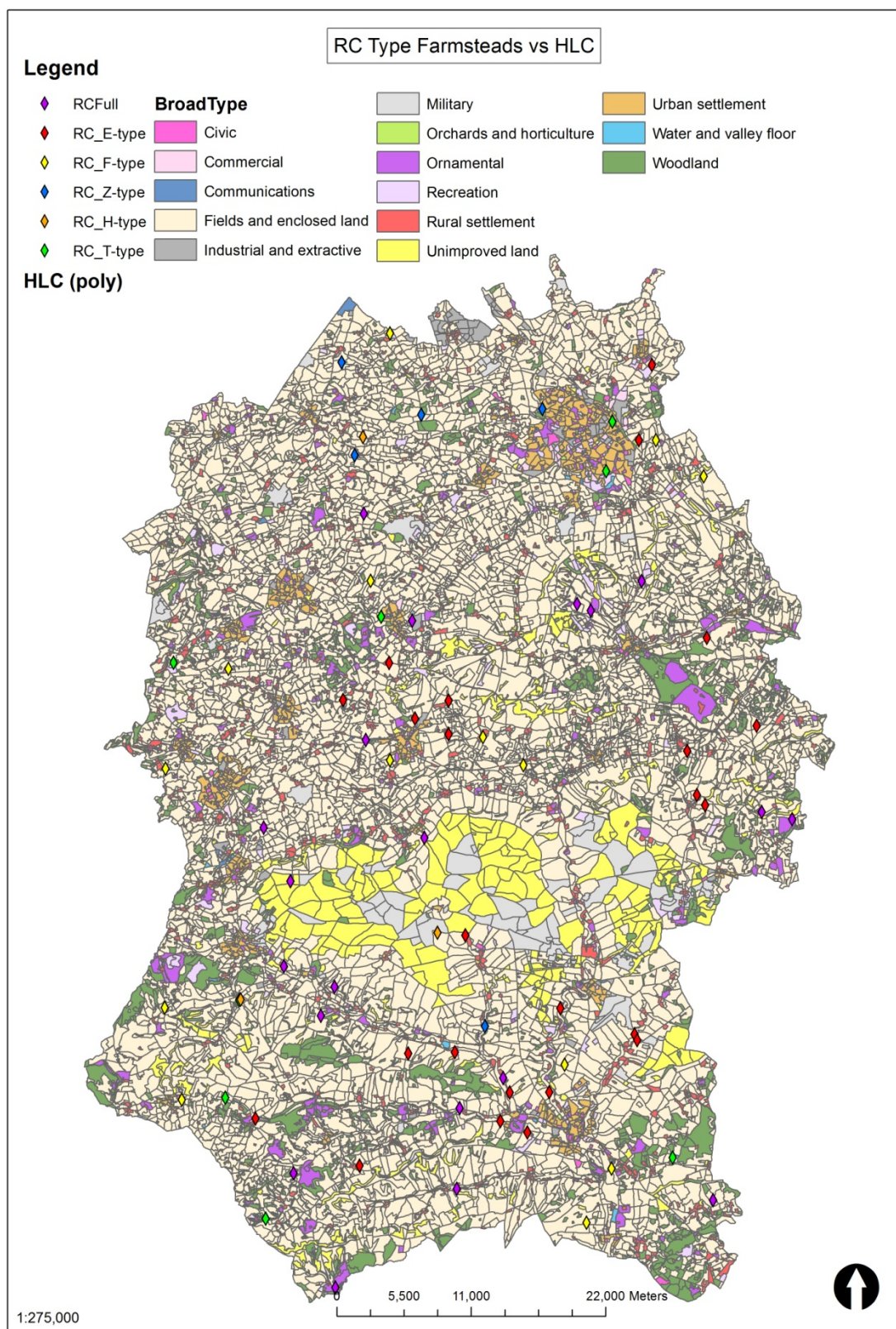


Figure 66

L-shaped courtyard plans with additional buildings to the third and fourth sides of the yard

These are semi-regular farmsteads that have two linked ranges to form an L-shaped element with additional detached buildings to one or both of the other sides of the yard. Such plans can develop through the addition of, for example, a shelter shed being attached to an earlier barn within an existing Loose Courtyard arrangement, or represent a planned group with a Regular L-range with one or more additional buildings.

These farmstead plans generally represent medium to large scale farmsteads and this is reflected by the higher than average proportions recorded in the three principal chalkland character areas; Salisbury Plain, Berkshire and Marlborough Downs, and the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase.

However, greater levels of change to farmsteads of these plan types in the downland areas means that the most complete examples of these plans are found in the west of Wiltshire.

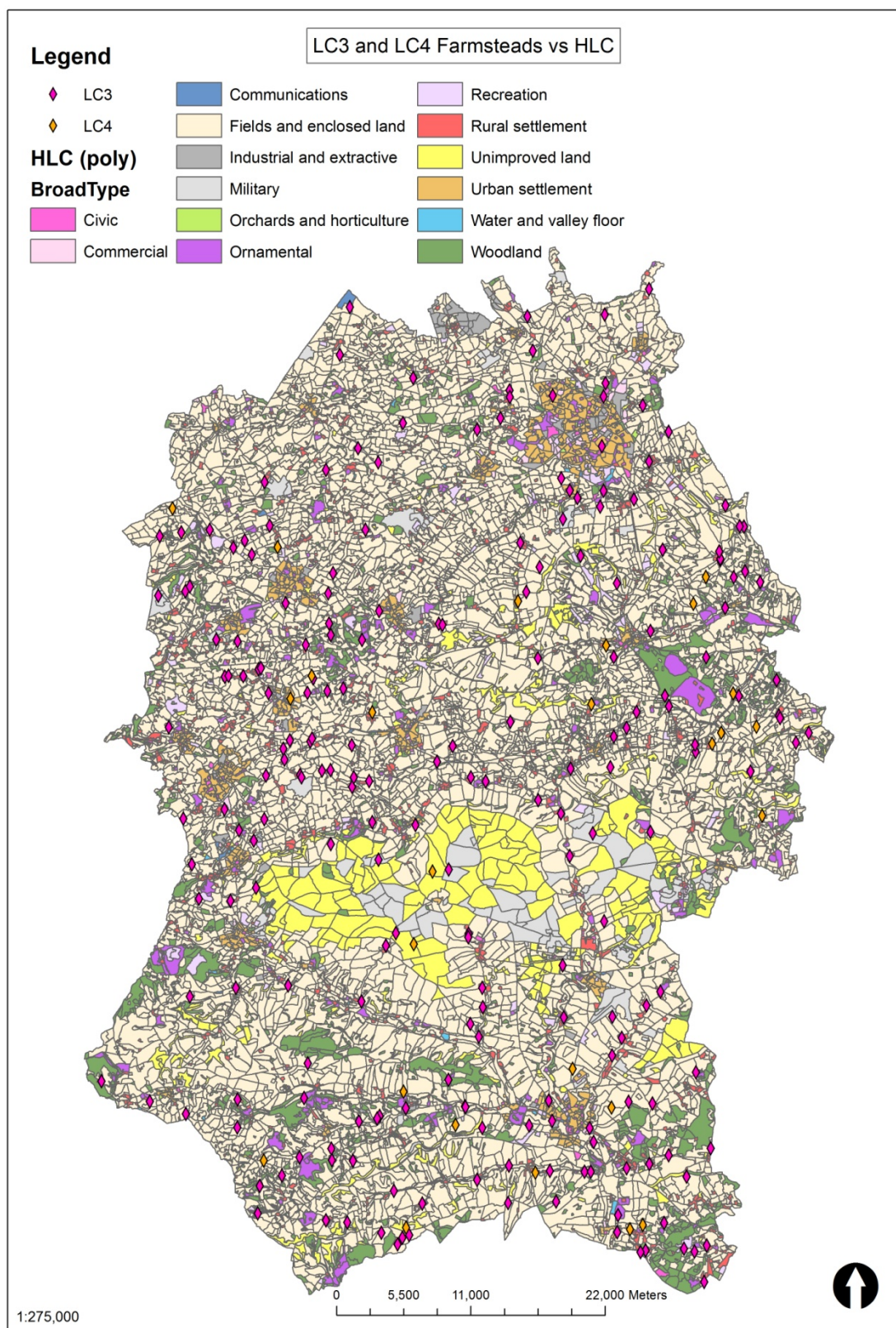


Figure 67