

**THE PIGGERY**  
**LOWER BROWNSHAM FARM**  
**HARTLAND**  
**DEVON**

Historic Building Recording



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 220330



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# The Piggery, Lower Brownsham Farm, Hartland, Devon

## Historic Building Recording

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By A. Allen, ACIfA  
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Report Finalised: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Work undertaken by SWARCH for The National Trust (The Client)

### Summary

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*The piggery at Brownsham represents a good surviving example of a mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century piggery associated with a large farmstead in a small coastal hamlet. It sits self-contained within a former historic agricultural landscape that included several known medieval orchards. Earlier mapping indicates another separate building existed to the south-west corner although the only evidence this building existed was from an overgrown rubble heap filling a gap in the hedge to the south-west corner, and slate rubble within the yard. Former renovation works has meant the building has not retained much of its structural integrity, thus the proposed conversion works are considered a good use of the space, although certain design features, including the sliding timber latches to the doors and windows, would benefit from being integrated within the design to uphold the buildings narrative.*

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June 2022

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE NATIONAL TRUST (THE CLIENT)

## PROJECT CREDITS

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REPORT: AMELIA ALLEN, ACIFA  
GRAPHICS: AMELIA ALLEN, ACIFA

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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<b>LOCATION:</b>	LOWER BROWNSHAM FARM
<b>PARISH:</b>	HARTLAND
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	TORRIDGE
<b>COUNTY:</b>	DEVON
<b>CENTROID NGR:</b>	SS 28601 25918
<b>PLANNING REF:</b>	1/1290/2021/LBC
<b>DCHET REF:</b>	ARCH/DM/TO/37263A
<b>SWARCH REF:</b>	HBPG22
<b>OASIS REF:</b>	SOUTHWES1-504222

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by the National Trust (The Client) to carry out a historic building recording for a former piggery in the hamlet of Brownsham, Hartland, North Devon. This work was undertaken to inform and guide the adaptive reuse of the building and provide a record of the building as it currently stood. All work was done using ClfA and Historic England guidelines, and informed by prior WSI (Boyd 21), which were drawn up in consultation with DCHET and the National Trust.

### 1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies just to the south-west of Lower Brownsham Farmhouse, at the southern end of the Brownsham hamlet. The surrounding area, to the south of the hamlet, is mostly covered by trees with occasional open spaces, owned largely by the National Trust. To the north, east and west are large agricultural enclosures. The site lies approximately 800m south from the rugged North Devon coastline, at a height of approximately 118m AOD, and located within the North Devon Area of Outstanding National Beauty. The soils of the site are the well-drained fine loamy or fine silty soils over rock of the Manod Association (SSEW 1983), which overlie the sedimentary mudstone and siltstone of the Ashton Mudstone Member and Crackington Formation (BGS 2021).

### 1.3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within the parish of Hartland, in the historic hundred and deanery of the same name. Hartland derives from the old English meaning 'farm/settlement of *Heorta*'. Hartland, or *Hertland*, was anciently known as the Monastery of St. Nectan and was founded by Githa, who was the wife of Earl Godwin, for canons secular. During the reign of Henry II, the lord of Hartland and patron of the abbey, Geoffrey de Dinant, changed them to canons regular and gave them the church of Stoke Nectan with its chapels and two hides of land at Stoke. He was then deemed the founder. Following its dissolution, the site was granted to William Abbot, Esq. in 1545. One of the co-heiresses of his nephew took the estate to the Lutterells and from there it passed to the Orchards.

The settlement of Brownsham is first recorded as *Bronsham* in the parish registers of 1564, and later named *Brownson* and *Brunheard's Hamm*; recorded on the Devon HER as an early medieval settlement (MDV30775). This name has been deciphered to mean *Brun's Hamm*, or the meadow belonging to Brunheard. There is no reference of a settlement at the time of Domesday recordings, although the name could have changed after this. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) describes the land the piggery is located as an area of *lost orchards*. These orchards were once associated with a house, likely Lower Brownsham Farm,

and are noted to be part of an earlier medieval field system that were *first enclosed with hedge banks during the Middle Ages*.

The hamlet includes several properties, largely owned by the National Trust, with many of them listed buildings boasting largely 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century features. These include: Lower Brownsham Farm (MDV57822), Oak Leaf Barn (MDV75131) located north-east which includes a large barn and pigsties, Brownsham Cottage (MDV75130) and Grade II\* listed Higher Brownsham Farmhouse with an associated 19<sup>th</sup> century well (UID: 1333156), both located to the north-west of the piggery. Furthermore, other pig-stys/ piggerys have been listed in the area, this includes another single-storey build to the north of the site (MDV75131) with associated buildings. Remains of medieval field systems and former orchards are also listed to the north of the site (MDV125543) and to the south-west (MDV43930).

#### 1.4 FORMER STATEMENTS FOR THE SITE

The proposed site is a single storey, stone piggery that has been associated with the Grade II Listed Lower Brownsham Farmhouse curtilage (MDV105463). A description of the piggery given by K. W. Evans in 2000 prior to conservation based repairs to the building reads:

*“Late 18<sup>th</sup> century single storey stone constructed piggery with double pitched slated roof and attached walled compound. The attached drawings show the building to have three doors on the south side and three shuttered openings in the opposite elevation. The yard was cobbled.”*

P. Child in 2001 correspondence about the repairs states:

*The presence of feeding doors and the character of the roof trusses look to be relatively late 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. It is, however, a traditional farm building and, as such, suitable for grant aid for repair under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The proposed repairs by the National Trust are to a high conservation standard.*

The piggery has been associated with the Grade II listed Lower Brownsham Farmhouse with 16<sup>th</sup> century features. The listing text for the property reads:

*Farmhouse. Late C16 or early C17 probably extended in the C18 and refronted in early C19 with C20 internal alterations. Rendered stone rubble walls. Gable-ended slate roof. 2 brick stacks - one at right gable-end and one axial, rear lateral rubble stack with brick shaft and gable-end brick stack to rear wing.*

*Plan: fairly complex development of plan the original form of which is not entirely clear. Probably built as a 3-room-and-through-passage plan house with long lower room to the left, heated by end stack, hall to right of passage with fireplace on rear wall and small inner room with end stack. Probably in the C18 an extension was built beyond the lower room consisting of dairy and salting-room. Behind the inner room is a stair projection adjoining the hall stack which may be a later C17 or C18 addition. C19 small service wing added behind passage and lower room. In the C20 a passage was taken out of the rear of the hall leading from the cross-passage to the stairs and incorporating the blocking up of the hall fireplace. Probably at the same time the partition between the hall and inner room was opened up to create one room.*

*Exterior: 2 storeys. Asymmetrical 5-window front mainly of early C19 16-pane hornless sashes apart from 3 paired 16-pane sashes, one on the ground floor to left of centre and 2 on the 1st floor of which the left-hand one is a later facsimile. To left on 1st floor is blocked window opening. C20 panelled door to right of centre under shallow gabled slate door hood. Rear*

*elevation has a single storey wing projecting to right of centre. To left is a 2 storey lean-to which contains the staircase and the hall stack is between this and the wing.*

*Interior: room to left of passage has a section of C17 panelling above a bench against the wall backing onto the passage with sunken moulded panels with carpenters mitres and moulded cornice above. Chamfered unstopped cross beams. Wide open fireplace with plain wooden lintels and oven at the rear. Dairy to left of this room has slate shelves; a rough cross beam has an axial beam with round mortices for a partition approximately half way cross. To the rear of this are 2 very large granite salting troughs. The right-hand end room has C19 dado panelling and panelled shutters.*

*Roof: the earliest surviving truss is over the passage and appears to have curved (boxed-in) feet, with a morticed apex and collar and trenched purlins. It is not smoke-blackened. The other roof trusses are C18 or C19 with simply crossed apices and lapped collars. To include cob garden wall with slate capping adjoining north- west corner of house and extending up to barn to north-east of house. This house has an interesting plan and retains an attractive facade. It forms part of an unspoilt and picturesque hamlet.*

## **1.5 METHODOLOGY**

The building recording and archaeological monitoring was conducted by Amelia Allen in February 2022. The work was undertaken in line with best practice, and follows the guidance outlined in: ClfA's *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2014) and Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Processes* (2016). The desk-based assessment follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (ClfA 2014, Revised 2017) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (English Heritage 2012). The discussion of setting buildings on the approaches outlined in the appropriate guidance (DoT guidance and Historic England 2015).

 <b>National Trust</b>	<b>Property:</b> Brownsam Piggery	<b>Scale:</b> 1:1,250 @ A4	
	<b>Title:</b> Location Plan	<b>Grid Ref:</b> 228601E 125920N	
	<b>Date:</b> 18/02/2021	<b>Document Name:</b> piggery loc	
	<b>South West: Exeter Consultancy Hub, Kilerton House, Broadclyst, Exeter EX5 3LE Telephone 01392 851691</b>		

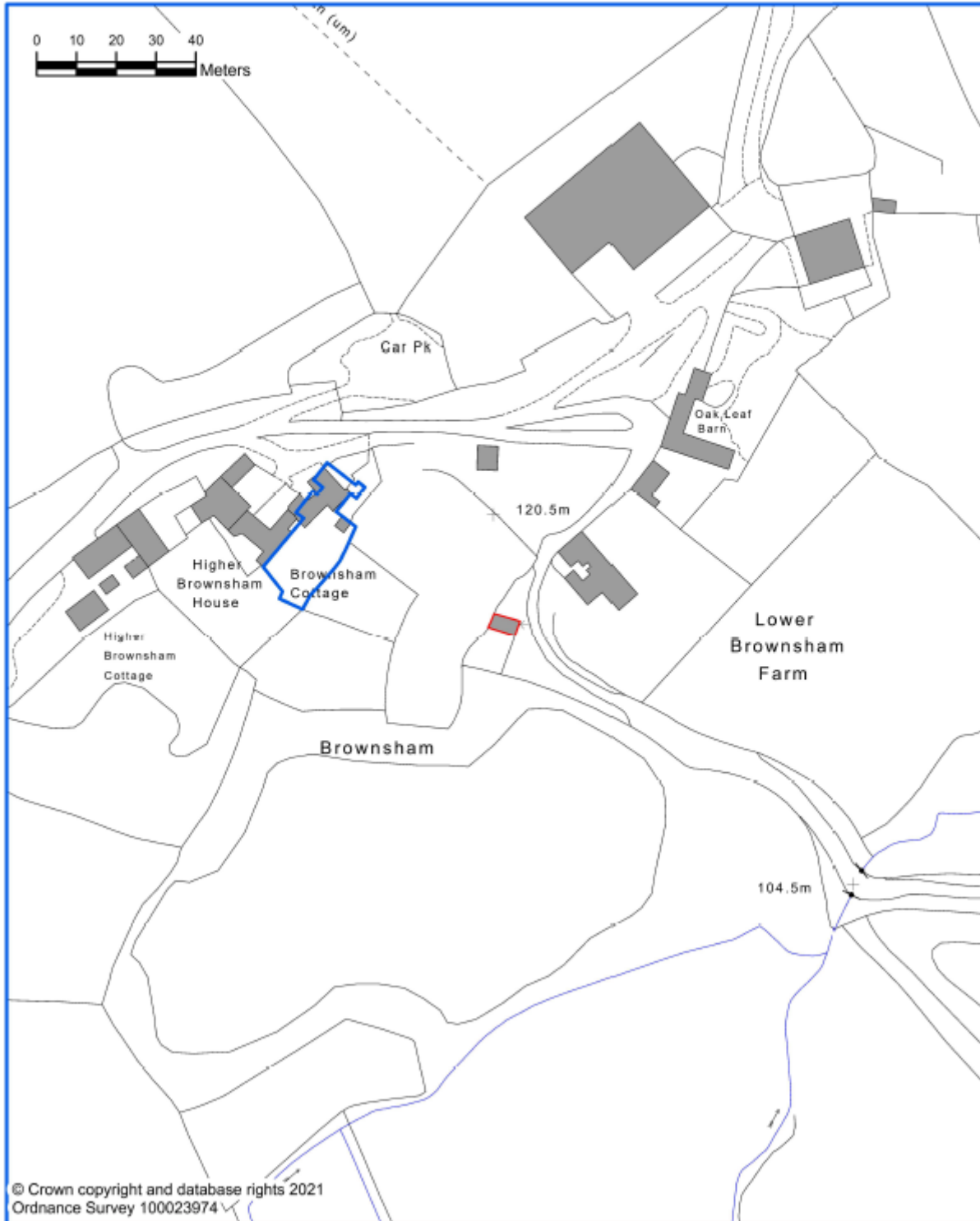


FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP, PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL TRUST.



## 2.0 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 CARTOGRAPHIC RECORDS

The earliest cartographic resource to analyse is the 1-inch Surveyors Draft Map of Hartland, surveyed in 1804. Whilst it is hard to decipher exactly where the piggery may be, it is clear the hamlet included several large houses at this point with large areas of woodland or orchard surrounding them to the south and east. Large access tracks run through Brownsam and head north to the coast, where it stops abruptly; these tracks continue south towards Hartland and join several larger farmsteads within the area, including Beckland, Axmansworthy and Harscot. The coastline includes several well-known places including Black Church Rock accessed from the track south at Brownsam, an area infamous for its isolated geological formation and smuggling activities.



FIGURE 2: THE 1-INCH SURVEYORS DRAFT MAP SURVEYED 1804. APPROXIMATE AREA IS INDICATED.

The next available map to study is the 1842 Tithe Map of Hartland. This map illustrates the hamlet of Brownsam with several larger properties/ farmsteads, owned and occupied by different people (see Table 1). The piggery does not appear to exist within this period and is built later on land occupied at the time of the tithe by *John Dennis Esq.* within the property known today as Brownsam Cottage. Brownsam appears in 1842 as quite a large hamlet with several properties in the area, all of which have likely been modified and extended upon. There are several large access tracks that lead in from the south from Hartland, and continue north towards the coastline. Lower Brownsam Farm sits within plot 2526, labelled *House Court &c* and includes a long range with associated outbuildings, wrapped by plot 2525 which is identified as an *Orchard*.



FIGURE 3: EXTRACT OF THE HARTLAND TITHE MAP, SURVEYED 1842. THE SITE PLOT IS INDICATED IN RED. SOURCE: THE GENEALOGIST.

TABLE 1: TITHE APPORTIONMENT, SHOWING LAND DIVISION AROUND THE SITE. SOURCE: THE GENEALOGIST.

Plot No.	Landowner	Occupier	Name of Plot	Description
2524	John Dennis Esq	Himself	Lower Meadow	Meadow
2525			Orchard	Meadow
2526			House, Court &c.	
2529				
2534			Court, Gardens, &c.	
2535			West Meadow	Meadow
2536			Hill Orchard	Arable
2571	Sir James Hamlyn Bart. & John Galsworthy Esq. & Thomas Williams Esq.	Mary Pennington	House & Court	
2572			Orchard	Orchard

By the time of the First Edition OS maps, the general area has seen little dramatic change. The hamlet has been illustrated with trees on boundaries, and a field to the south-west is depicted as an orchard, likely one of the last remaining medieval orchards of the area, including the orchard associated with Lower Brownsham Farm. The piggery has been built, within its own walled boundaries and a separate square building exists to the south-west corner. This could be associated with the piggery, acting as a sheltered space for the pigs in hot weather, or it could be a separate feed or breeding shed. It is possible the yard may have been cobbled at some point for ease of cleaning, although from the site visit the ground was soft and uneven, and likely included small muddy spaces for the pigs to wallow.

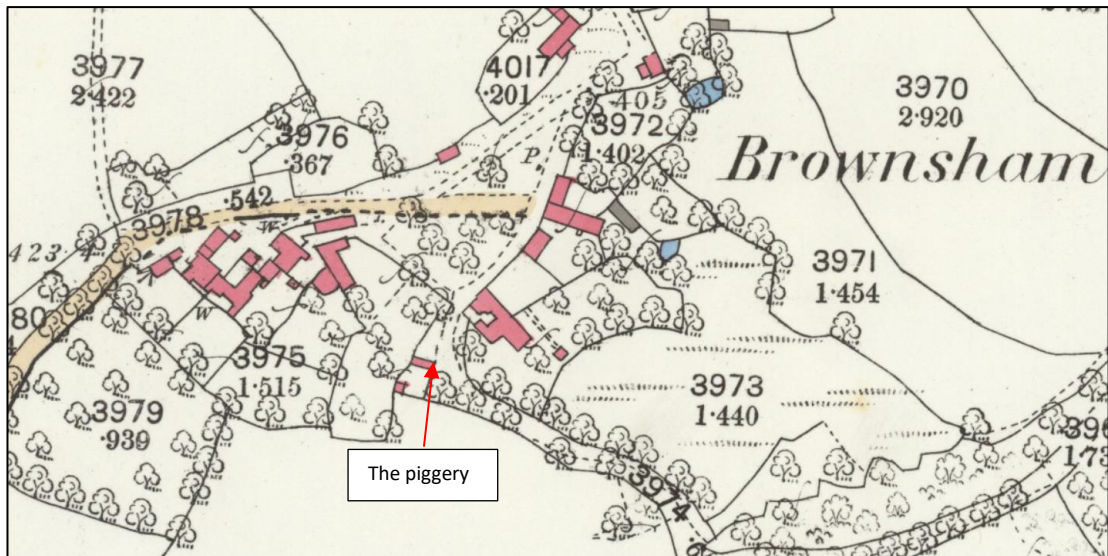


FIGURE 4: AN EXTRACT FROM THE 25 INCH, FIRST EDITION OS MAP OF BROWNSHAM SURVEYED 1884; THE SITE IS INDICATED. (NLS).

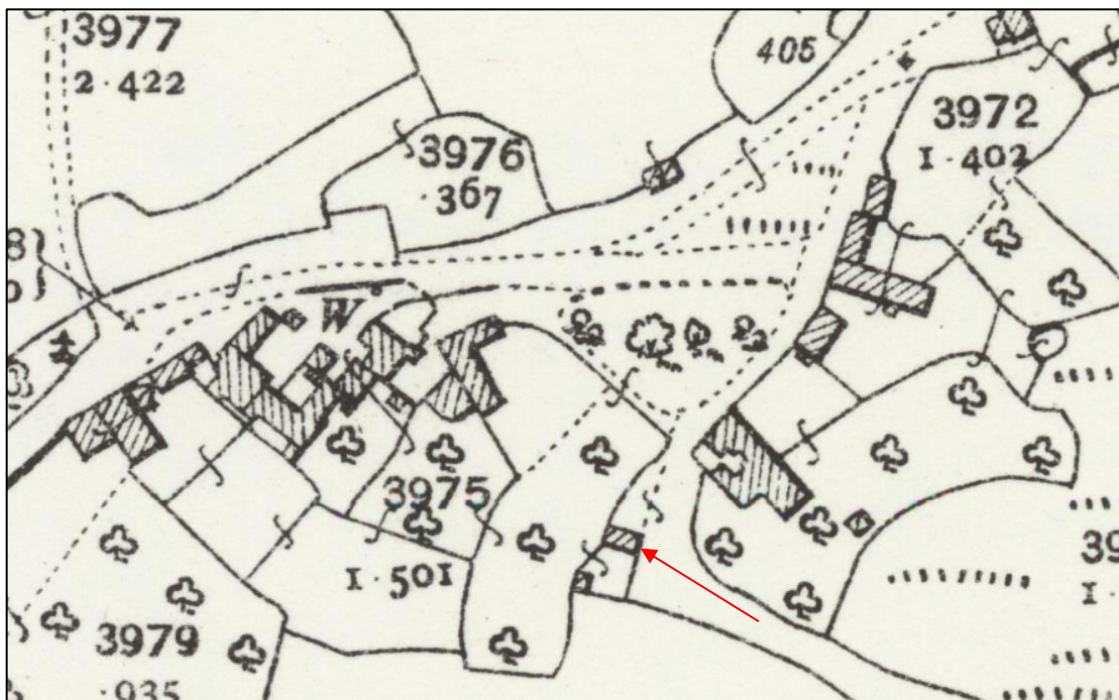


FIGURE 5: AN EXTRACT FROM THE 25 INCH, SECOND EDITION OS MAP OF BROWNSHAM SURVEYED 1904; THE SITE IS INDICATED. (NLS)

The revised edition of 1903 shows little change within the wider area. A lot of the smaller orchard spaces remain and the hamlet has seen some development to individual properties, particularly to Higher Brownsam and Brownsam Cottage. Lower Brownsam Farmhouse has also seen large alterations and extensions. The piggery I depicted as the same as the First Edition and clearly looks to have a fence that enters an orchard to the west, indicating it may still be associated with the property at Brownsam Cottage. Pigs were often farmed near orchards, they were often rotated through these spaces after harvests to clear the orchard floor from windfall, whilst keeping the trees weed-free and turning the soil as they go.

### 3.0 HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

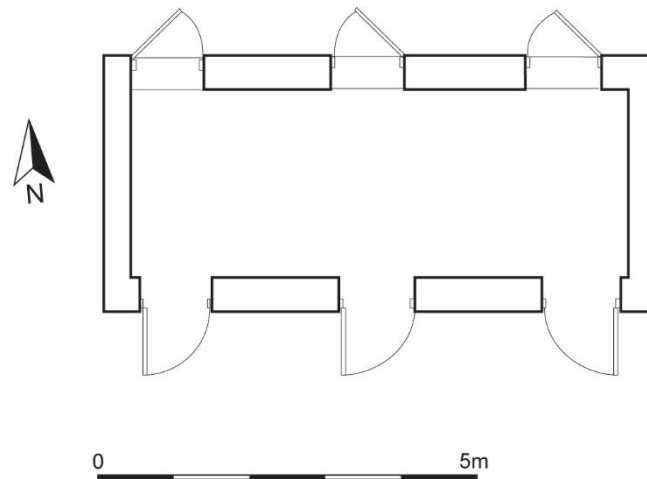


FIGURE 6: THE PIGGERY PLAN (PROVIDED BY THE AGENT) AS IT CURRENTLY STANDS.

#### 3.1 THE WIDER SETTING

The piggery is located within the hamlet of Brownsam, which is situated on the striking North Devon coastline. It sits within the Lower Brownsam Farm listed curtilage which is located close to the south-west coastal path, public bridleways and a network of footpaths that lead through the surrounding woodland and agricultural landscape. The hamlet is largely currently owned by the National Trust, with just a few properties privately occupied - all other properties within the hamlet present in a similar stone fashion, with many of the properties showcasing 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century features and slate roofs.

The piggery is approached from the north via a small access track that leads downhill passing the Lower Brownsam property, it also passes a small, cobbled lane that rises to Brownsam Cottage, suggesting these earlier farmsteads were likely very connected. The piggery sits self-contained just off the access track to the west, on a patch of land that is framed by dry-stone walling and raised hedge banks along the western boundary. It is fairly shaded by large boundary trees and includes a neat stone wall and small wooden gate in the eastern elevation. Further south is a large meadow, of which the piggery shares a small section of its boundary to the south-western corner. The track wraps around the Lower Brownsam Farm, heading east into large agricultural areas and woodland, and beyond to the rugged Brownsam Cliffs where Blackchurch Rock can be spotted.



FIGURE 7: THE NORTHERN APPROACH TO THE PIGGERY PASSING LOWER BROWNSHAM FARM (LEFT) AND A COBBLED LANE LEADING UP TO BROWNSHAM COTTAGE (RIGHT).



FIGURE 8: THE PIGGERY ON APPROACH FROM THE NORTH, SHOWING THE COBBLED LANE CONNECTING LOWER BROWNSHAM FARM (LEFT) TO THE LARGER FARMSTEADS FURTHER WEST. TAKEN FROM THE NORTH.

### 3.2 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The piggery is self-contained opposite the Lower Brownsam Farm property. The building sits to the north end of the small, rectangular plot that is accessed through a small timber latched gate in the southern corner of the east elevation. The associated yard space is uneven and earthy in parts close to the building, with lots of building debris, particularly slate, scattered on the yard floor. It is neatly walled to the east elevation; this wall is rounded to the top and abuts the main building to the south-east corner. There is evidence of some dry-stone walling to the western boundary edge, predominantly to the north corner that abuts the piggery, this is mixed against a raised banked hedge that included recently cut small trees. The southern boundary shares the same boundary as the neighbouring meadow field and looks to be a large overgrown hedge bank with some attempts at coppicing. There is a slight gap to the west corner which has been infilled with overgrown rubble; shaped/ faced stones were visible on the floor by this mound.

The piggery itself is of low single storey, semi-coursed slate build and has been significantly repointed to the eaves using a thick white lime mortar, suggesting a possible former roof collapse. Furthermore, it has also been repointed to some parts of the external elevation including the north and west sides. There are three timber doors to the southern elevation, and three, low-hanging, rectangular timber windows to the north elevation – adding to the buildings appeal from northern approach to the site. The doors are similar and look to be original, although may have been reset within repaired timber pegged frames small slate thresholds remaining to the openings. They are planked timber doors which are ledged and braced to the rear, with large iron hinge straps to the front. They have distinct wooden sliding latches with iron nail fixings – a unique surviving feature to the building. This design is also replicated in the windows within the northern elevation. They to include sliding timber latches with iron nail fixings to the external face, that are also ledged and braced and include large strap hinges with riveted detail to the external face. The windows are small, rectangular, and low-hanging openings to the northern elevation, mirroring the placement of the doors.



FIGURE 9: THE NORTH AND EAST ELEVATIONS OF THE BUILDING, SHOWING THE LOW-HANGING WINDOWS WITH TIMBER LATCHES AND THE EASTERN BOUNDARY WALL FOR THE YARD. TAKEN FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

Internally, the piggery is small and slightly sloped to the east end. There is much evidence to suggest the building has had a lot of renovations works in the recent past. The roof is a new replacement and includes lighter pine rafters, over large, heavy A-frames that is lapped to the ridge and includes modern steel fixings/ bolts. The floor is uneven, and broken in places, although there looked to be some attempt to separate the building with stalls as square holes remain in place and circular postholes. It is possible the floor was originally cobbled, however no notable signs of this were noted. The internal walls have been heavily repointed in a thick, white lime plaster that has changed the overall feel of the building inside. The windows in the northern elevation include deep sills and sawn-cut timber lintels that have been painted black. The windows are similar to the doors and are also ledged and braced internally with the latch sitting to the exterior face – likely designed for ease of access to feed them. The reveals to the doors have been smoothed/ rounded to the corners, so as to not harm the pigs and a small, square stone-lined hole exists in the southern elevation between the central door and the eastern door openings, which is likely a gutter-hole leading into the yard space.

The yard is relatively large and currently housing a large, galvanised tank and rubble. The floor is uneven in patches and notably wetter to the entrance of the building. There is no further evidence within the yard to suggest a trough existed here and no evidence of another separate building existing to the south-west corner remains aside from an overgrown rubble heap. Lower Brownsam Farm can be seen directly from the yard and Brownsam Cottage, although access into the neighbouring western space, which was visible on earlier mapping as an orchard, is impossible given the raised banks on this side.

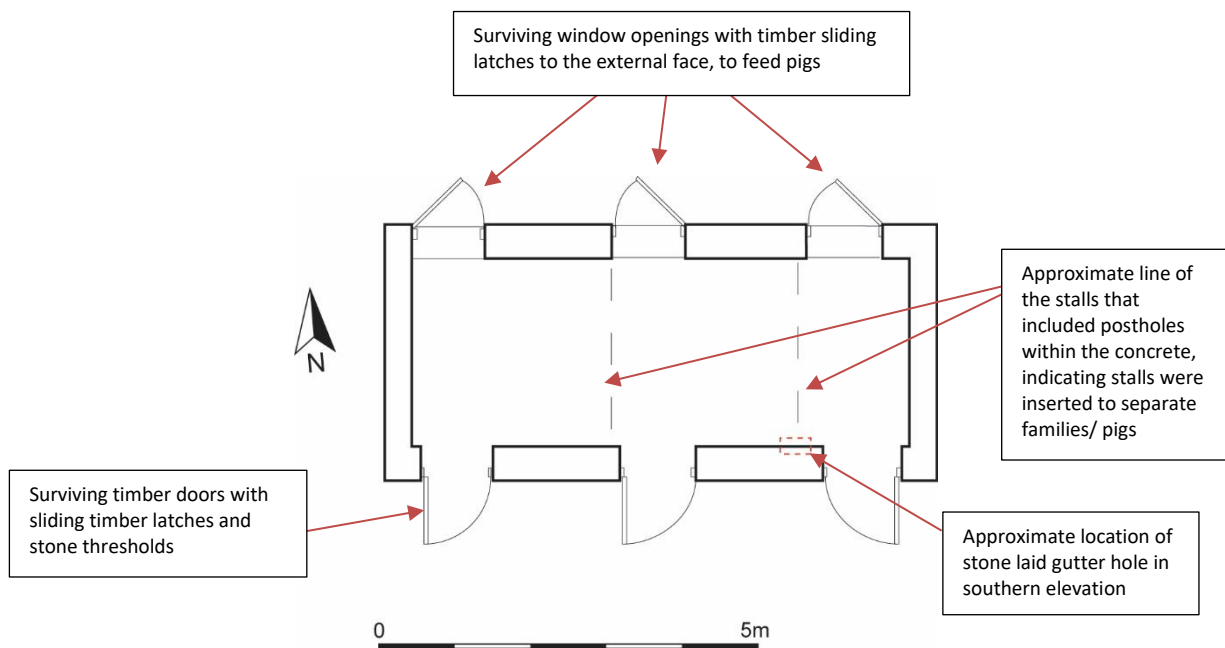
### 3.2.1 SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

The building is a good surviving example of a mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century piggery, and although it has seen some recent renovation works which has changed the aesthetics and general feel of the building, some significant features survive that indicate this space was used for pigs. These include:

- Surviving doors with sliding timber latches and iron straps
- Surviving windows with sliding timber latches and iron straps
- Windows with latches to the exterior face – a unique feature that indicates the building was used for pigs
- Although the floor is now concreted there is evidence of postholes separating the building in to three sections, along the same line as the locations of the doors indicating breeding stalls
- Stone gutter-hole in southern elevation
- Smart walled section of yard to the east elevation of the site



FIGURE 10: REMAINS OF A POSTHOLE WITHIN THE CONCRETED FLOOR IN LINE WITH A STALL SECTION, AND THE GUTTER HOLE IN THE SOUTH ELEVATION.





## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

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The piggery building at Brownsam is a good surviving example of a mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century piggery associated with a large farmstead in a small coastal hamlet. It sits self-contained within a former historic agricultural landscape that included several known medieval orchards. Earlier mapping indicates another separate building existed to the south-west corner although the only evidence this building existed was from an overgrown rubble heap filling a gap in the hedge to the south-west corner, and slate rubble within the yard.

It is clear the site had been neglected for several years due to the reduced overgrown shrubbery within the yard. Recent renovation works indicated the building likely had a full roof replacement and a later inserted concrete floor, along with heavy repointing to the internal walls. These works mean the building has lost a lot of its original form and thus changed its current aesthetic presentation and internal integrity, although evidence of several features remain. The design of the doors and windows are considered to be of classic design, that indicate the buildings' former function, and have been determined as unique features within the build. The yard space has been created with a neat, rounded wall to the east elevation, and raised banks to the west, although there is no real indication the pigs would have been used in the neighbouring orchards due to limited accessibility. The proposed conversion works is considered a good use of the space, although certain design features, including the sliding timber latches to the doors and windows, would benefit from being integrated within the design to uphold the buildings narrative within the hamlet.

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## APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



1. BROWNSHAM COTTAGE BY THE NT CAR PARK AT THE TOP OF THE HAMLET. TAKEN FROM THE NORTH-EAST.



2. ON APPROACH THE PIGGERY FROM THE NORTH, INCLUDING A COBBLED LANE CONNECTING BROWNSHAM COTTAGE TO LOWER BROWNSHAM FARM. TAKEN FROM THE NORTH.



3. THE PIGGERY INCLUDING EAST WALLED ELEVATION. TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



4. THE TIMBER GATE ENTRANCE TO THE YARD. TAKEN FROM THE EAST.



5. THE SOUTH ELEVATION OF THE PIGGERY. TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH WITH 1M SCALES.



6. TIMBER DOOR TO THE WEST SIDE. TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH.



7. THE INTERIOR SPACE OF THE PIGGERY LOOKING TO THE WEST ELEVATION, DOORS MIRROR WINDOWS. TAKEN FROM THE EAST.



8. THE INTERNAL WINDOW OPENINGS WITH LEDGED AND BRACED WINDOWS. TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



9. THE EXTERNAL FACE OF THE WINDOWS WITH SLIDING TIMBER LATCHES. TAKEN FROM THE NORTH.



10. THE GUTTER HOLE TO THE EXTERNAL SOUTH ELEVATION ON THE EAST SIDE. TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.





13. INTERNAL GUTTER-HOLE. TAKEN FROM THE NORTH.



12. POSTHOLES LOCATED IN LINE WITH STALL SECTIONS.



13. THE WESTERN BOUNDARY WALL INCLUDING SECTIONS OF STONE DRY WALL. TAKEN FROM THE EAST.



14. THE GAP IN THE SOUTH BOUNDARY WALL WITH OVERGROWN RUBBLE MOUND. TAKEN FROM THE NORTH.



The Old Dairy  
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