

BARN AT PIXTON FARM

IDDESLEIGH

DEVON

Heritage Assessment

Work undertaken by SWARCH for a Private Client

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SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a historic building appraisal undertaken for a farm building at Pixton Farm, Iddesleigh, West Devon. The Barn was built in the 1890s, probably as a stable, adapted to a milking parlour in the mid-20th century. Almost all historic fixtures and fittings, including the original roof, have been lost. The extension is modern but incorporates an earlier yard wall. These structures sit within a farmyard that includes a GII listed farmhouse.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This brief heritage assessment has been produced following a planning application to convert a redundant barn and modern extension into a domestic building (0095/23/PDM). This assessment provides a basic historical summary for the farmstead and a description of the farm building (hereafter referred to as the Barn). A site visit was undertaken in May 2023 to assess the Barn. This work was carried out on behalf of a private client and in accordance with the relevant guidance (Historic England; ClfA).

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The farmstead is located on the north-facing slope of a low ridge, at an elevation of c.180m AOD. The soils of this area are the well-drained fine loamy soils of the Denbigh 2 Association (SSEW 1983), overlying the sandstones of the Bude Formation (BGS 2023).

1.3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The farmstead lies on the south-eastern edge of the parish of Iddesleigh, a parish in the Hundred of Shebbear and the Deanery of Torridge (Lysons 1822). The Manor of Iddesleigh was held by the thegn Britric in 1066 and was held by Queen Matilda following the Norman Conquest. It passed to the Honour of Gloucester and was held by the *de Reigny* family in the 13th century, passing to the Sully, and successively to the families of Vowel, Smith and Bingham, coming by purchase to Sir Stafford Northcote Bart. during the 19th century (Lysons 1822). Sir Stafford (of Pynes House, Exeter) was a prominent Conservative politician during the period 1860 to 1887.

The fieldscape in which the farmstead is located is classified as *medieval enclosures based on strip fields* by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC); this is defined as land first enclosed with hedgerbanks during the later middle ages (Devon County Council HER 2023). The farmhouse is Listed (see below) and its yard is recorded on the Devon HER (MDV122133) as a *farmstead recorded on the 19th century tithe map. The basic plan of the farmstead has remained largely unchanged, apart from the addition of a number of buildings in the late 19th/early 20th century.*

The farm is labelled on the 1843 Iddesleigh tithe map as *Pixton*, then occupied by one Thomas Goss. The Goss family occupied both the farmhouse and the cottage to the south-west until at least 1911 (*Higher and Lower Pixton* in the Census). The size of the farm varied between 70a and 120a. The current farmyard is basically as it was mapped in 1843, with the addition of one large 20th century farm building just to the east. The Barn was, however, built between 1888 and 1904.

Pixton Farmhouse is probably a late (15th century) medieval three-room cross-passage farmhouse, associated with a farmyard of later but still historic farm buildings. No detailed building recording of the property and its associated outbuildings appears to have been carried out.

The listing text (Historic England 2023 UID: 1166054) states:

“IDDESLEIGH SS 50 NE 4/119 Pixton Farmhouse - GV II Farmhouse. Late C16 or early C17 possibly with late medieval origins. Plastered cob walls. Gable ended thatch roof. Brick stack at left gable end and partly projecting plastered rubble lateral stack at front. Plan: 3-room and through-passage plan, lower end to the left heated by gable end stack, hall heated by front lateral stack with integral hall projection adjoining it at the higher end. Unheated inner room. Exterior: 2 storeys. Asymmetrical 4-window front of C19 casements - mainly 2-light to first floor 3-light to ground floor apart from an early C19 partly leaded-pane 3-light casement to right on first floor. C20 gabled open-fronted porch to left of centre with mid C19 6-panel door behind. The chimney stack to its right projects on the left-hand side but continues on the same line to the right forming a slight window bay to the hall.

At the top of the chimney stack is a small slate sundial dated 1720. C19 plank door to right. The left-hand part of the house has an ovolo- moulded wooden wall-plate below the eaves. Interior: hall has 2 moulded cross-beams, one is a half team at the higher end. Below it is early C17 panelling above an integral bench which has a decorative bench end with 2 finials. Inner room has chamfered axial beam with pyramid stops. Hall fireplace blocked but part of chamfered wooden lintol visible. Roof: roof space inaccessible at time of survey but on first floor fairly substantial feet of straight principals are visible which might suggest a C17 or early C18 date although this cannot be confirmed without a fuller inspection, and it is possible that earlier timbers may survive. Other early internal features may be concealed."



FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION.

2.0 RESULTS

2.1 CURTILAGE AND SETTING

The Barn is located to the south-east corner of the farmyard, flanking the approach to the main farmyard from the public road. As such, and as according to the appropriate HE guidance (2018), it falls within the curtilage of buildings associated with the Listed farmhouse. The Barn falls outside the immediate setting of the farmhouse, being screened from the principal façade by the adjacent cob-topped range; however, it may be considered to form part of its wider setting.

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

The Barn is a two-storey rectangular structure of stone rubble with brick quoins and detailing under a pitched roof of recent corrugated steel sheet (formerly slate). The walls have been slightly raised and/or repaired in cement to fit the new roof, and there are sockets in the east elevation for a lost lean-to. To the north it is abutted by a later 20th century building of concrete block, the back wall of

which incorporates an earlier yard wall of stone rubble, under a pitched roof of asbestos or fibre cement sheets.

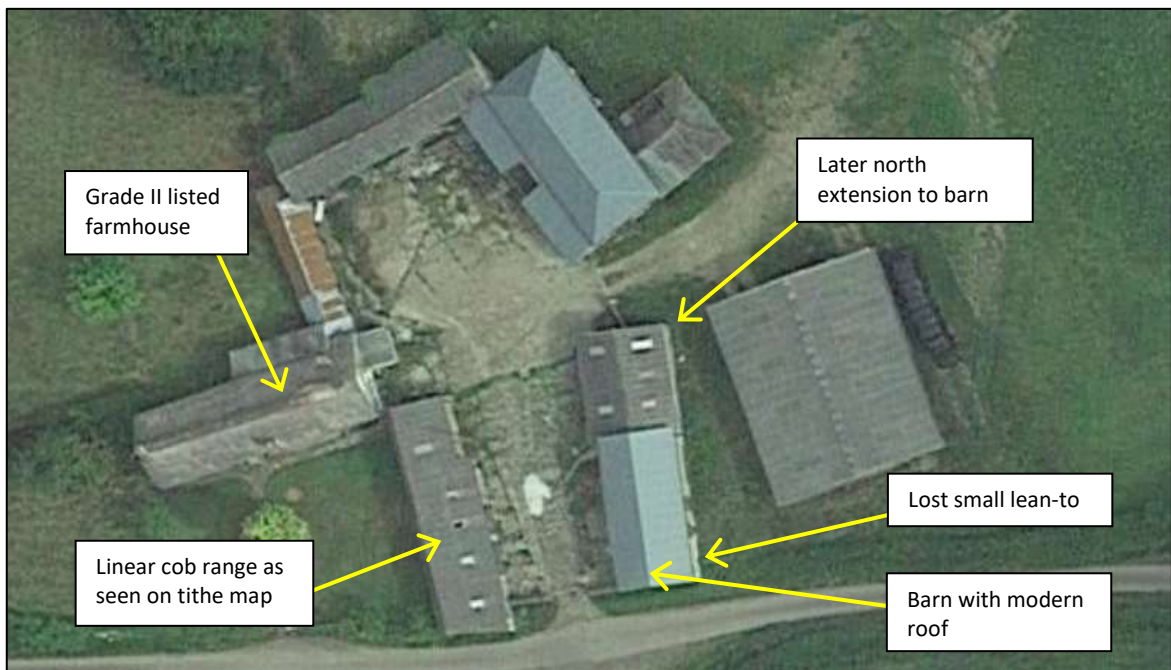


FIGURE 2: PLAN OF FARM YARD AT PIXTON (©GOOGLE IMAGES 2023).

The principal façade of the Barn faces west into the farmyard, with a central ground-floor doorway with windows to each side and a loading door above. The north and south gables are blind, save for a forced door in the north wall providing access to a feed passage from the modern extension. The rear (east) wall features a single double-height opening with a large ground-floor window with loading door above. The doorway and windows in the west elevation have shallow brick basket arches, brick quoins and voussoirs and a single skin brick sill. Internal timber lintels throughout. Pegged timber frames survived but no glazing. No door survived to the opening, which has a slate threshold; the loading door above has a concrete lintel and sill. Internally, there is only the single space. The Barn has lost its first-floor (only the heavy axial beams survive) and the roof structure is modern. It has been converted from its original use – the door and windows would suggest a stable with loft above – into a small milking parlour. The walls have been thickly pointed and whitewashed, and later rendered to chest height. There is a feed passage along the east wall, with cattle stalls with tubular steel dividers for 10 cows. Each stall has rendered feed troughs and nose-fill bowl drinkers. The floor is of concrete with a muck channel to the end of the stalls.

The extension to the north is externally rendered, with a single wide opening in the west elevation fitted with a galvanised steel gate clad with corrugated sheets, and a narrow doorway in with brick quoins and modern timber door in the stone rubble part of the north gable. The rear wall is blind. Internally, there is a single space containing a feed passage along the east wall, and a line of raised feed troughs with hay rack above along the line of the feed passage. The troughs consist of sections of stone and brick linked by concrete block, either repair or adaptation of an earlier layout. The pronounced kink in the yard wall and the use of brick quoins would suggest a building contemporary with the Barn once existed or was intended to be built here.

In terms of their overall significance, the Barn was built in the 1890s to provide additional housing for horses, perhaps for a late transition to horsepower or, more likely, to provide somewhere for riding or hunting animals. While there is brick detailing, almost all the period fittings and fixtures have been lost, probably when it was adapted to a milking parlour in the mid-20th century. It does

qualify as a non-designated heritage asset, and one which does contribute to the group of historic farm buildings but is individually of *low* (local) value.

2.3 BRIEF CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

In general, the proposals for the Barn and extension are fairly sympathetic (see Figures 28-31), and as noted, the lack of period fixtures and fittings to the interiors renders them particularly flexible to adaption. New openings should be distinctly different to the existing shallow brick arched windows, with brick dressings, seen to survive to the ground-floor west elevation, to avoid inappropriate pastiche. Rooflights may be an alternative here.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The Barn was built in the 1890s as a stable and converted in the mid-20th century into a small milking parlour. In that process all the historic fixtures and fittings were lost, and the roof has recently been replaced. The extension provided additional loose housing, incorporating an earlier yard wall within a modern concrete block building. The Barn does lie within the curtilage of the Listed farmhouse, but outside of its immediate setting. The proposals for the conversion of this building can broadly be supported, subject to the sensitive adaption of the spaces and lighting. Proposal drawings are located at the end of this report (Figures 28-31).

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Historic England 2023: National List entry for Pixton Farmhouse

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1166054>



FIGURE 3: HISTORIC MAPS. 1843 IDDESLEIGH TITHE MAP (LEFT), 1ST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP SURVEYED 1888 (CENTRE), AND 2ND EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP SURVEYED 1904 (LEFT). THE BARN APPEARS ON THE 1904 MAP. (TITHE MAP - TNA; OS SHEET DEVON LII.4 – NLS).



FIGURE 4: THE SOUTH ELEVATION OF THE BARN AND THE LINEAR COB RANGE TO THE WEST; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.



FIGURE 5: THE SOUTH ELEVATION OF THE BARN, BLIND AND SLIGHTLY ANGLED TO THE ROAD; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 6: THE WEST-FACING ELEVATION, PRESENTING TO THE YARD SPACE; VIEWED TAKEN FROM THE WEST (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 7: THE WEST ELEVATION OF BARN AND NORTH EXTENSION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 8: THE FARMYARD FROM THE NORTH-WEST CORNER, SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BARN, ITS EXTENSION AND THE GRADE II LISTED HOUSE (EAST GABLE END, FAR RIGHT); VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST.



FIGURE 9: THE FARMYARD FROM ITS ACCESS ONTO THE PUBLIC ROAD. THE LINEAR COB BUILD (LEFT) SCREENS THE BARN (RIGHT) FROM THE HOUSE. VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH.



FIGURE 10: THE EAST GABLE END OF HOUSE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



FIGURE 11: THE NORTH EXTENSION TO THE EAST OF THE YARD; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.



FIGURE 12: THE NORTH AND EAST ELEVATIONS OF THE EXTENSION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 13: THE NORTH AND EAST ELEVATIONS OF THE EXTENSION, LOOKING BACK TOWARD HOUSE FROM THE ADJACENT FIELD; VIEWED FROM THE NNE (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 14: THE EAST (REAR) ELEVATION OF THE EXTENSION; VIEWED FROM THE SSE.



FIGURE 15: THE EAST ELEVATION OF THE BARN WITH DOUBLE-HEIGHT OPENING, AND SCARRING FOR A LOST LEAN-TO; VIEWED FROM THE ESE (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 16: THE ORIGINAL DOORWAY TO THE BARN. BRICK DRESSINGS AND TIMBER SOCKETS FOR A DOOR FRAME THAT NO LONGER SURVIVES; VIEWED SOUTH-WEST.



FIGURE 17: THE SLATE THRESHOLD SURVIVING TO THE CENTRAL DOOR; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (SCALE 1M).



FIGURE 18: THE INTERIOR OF THE BARN; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 19: DETAIL OF THE STALLS AND FEED TROUGH; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.



FIGURE 20: THE NORTH-WEST CORNER OF THE BARN, SHOWING THE SCARRING FOR THE LOFT FLOOR; VIEWED FROM THE SSE.



LEFT FIGURE 21: THE INTERIOR OF THE BARN; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



RIGHT FIGURE 22: VIEW ALONG THE FEED PASSAGE LEADING TO A PLANKED TIMBER DOOR WITH THUMB LATCH IN A PEGGED FRAME; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH.



FIGURE 23: THE INTERIOR OF THE EXTENSION, SHOWING HOW IT WRAPS AROUND THE NORTH-WEST CORNER OF THE BARN; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 24: THE INTERIOR OF THE EXTENSION, SHOWING HOW IT INCORPORATES THE EARLIER WALL; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (SCALE 2M).



FIGURE 25: THE FEED TROUGH WITH FEED PASSAGE BEHIND; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (SCALE 2M).



LEFT FIGURE 26: THE FEED PASSAGE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (SCALE 2M).



RIGHT FIGURE 27: THE FEED PASSAGE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (SCALE 2M).

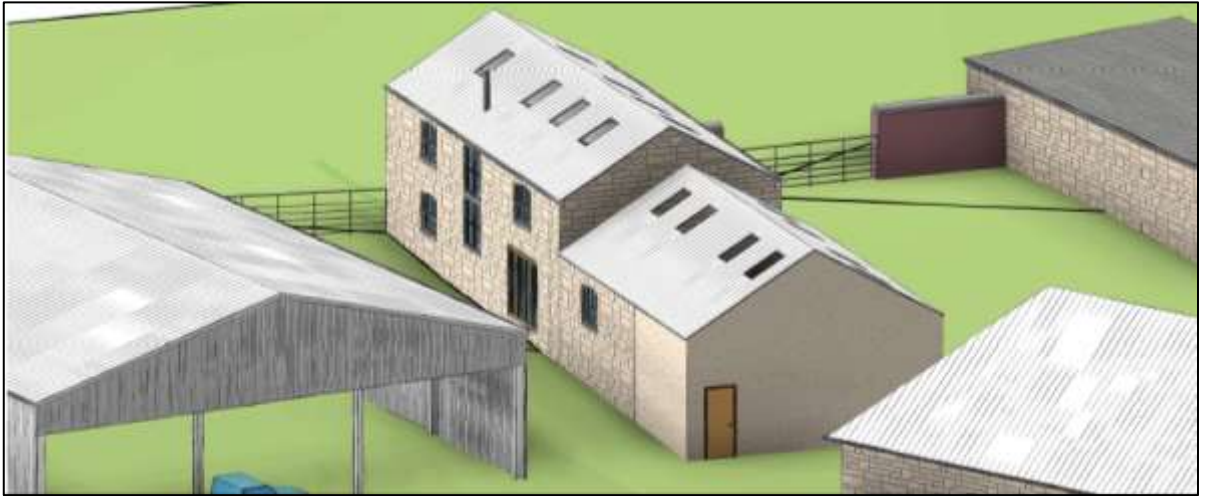


FIGURE 28: THE REAR PROPOSED EAST-FACING ELEVATION. SEVERAL NEW OPENINGS PROPOSED. (SUPPLIED BY CLIENT).

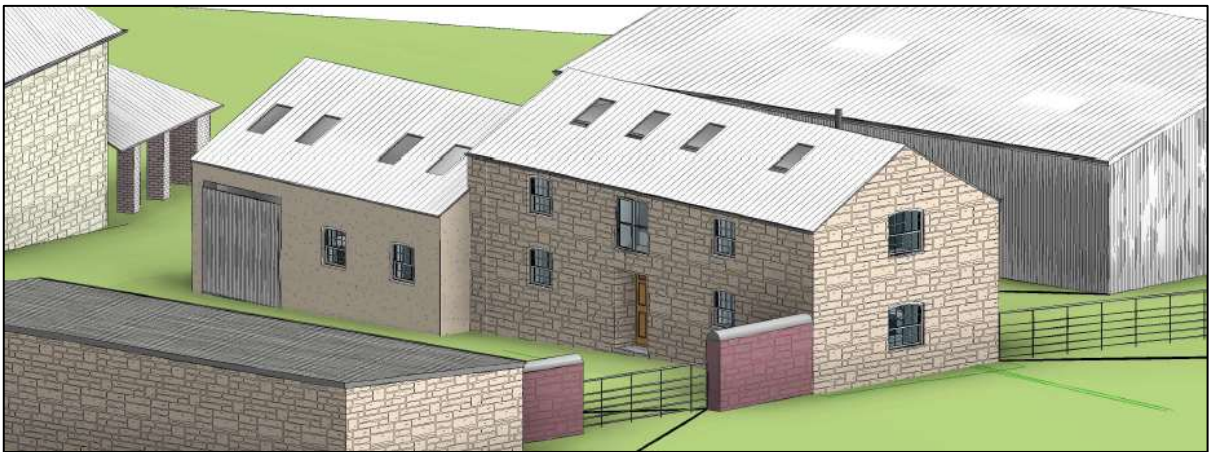


FIGURE 29: THE WEST ELEVATION TO RETAIN THE LOOK OF A FARM BUILDING. FORCED OPENINGS WOULD NEED TO BE DISTINCT WITHOUT BRICK DRESSINGS AND ARCHES TO AVOID PASTICHE (SUPPLIED BY CLIENT).



FIGURE 30: GROUND FLOOR AS PROPOSED (SUPPLIED BY CLIENT).

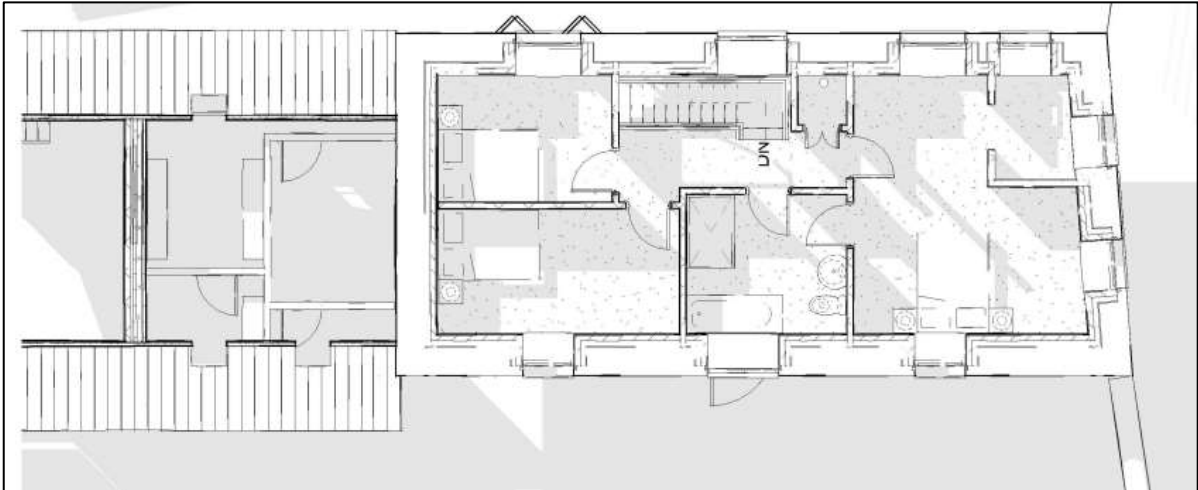


FIGURE 31: FIRST FLOOR AS PROPOSED (SUPPLIED BY CLIENT).