

Land at Venn Farm, Brixton, South Hams, Devon

NGR SX 5511 5221

## Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assessment

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On behalf of Barratt Homes  
Exeter Division

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AC archaeology

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# LAND AT VENN FARM, BRIXTON, SOUTH HAMS, DEVON

(Centred on SX 5511 5221)

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## Summary

*This archaeology and cultural heritage assessment has been prepared by AC archaeology during December 2011 in support of a future planning application for a residential development on land at Venn Farm, Brixton, South Hams, Devon (SX 5511 5221).*

*Six designated heritage assets of national significance have been identified within a 500m wide study area centred upon the proposed application site. All of these comprise listed buildings which lie in two broadly discrete areas; Brixton Lodge to the west of the application area, which is Grade II listed and the remaining five to the east including four Grade II listed houses (Eldridge House, The Wicketts, Brixton House and the Priests' Cottages) and the Grade I listed Church of St Mary. While the Wicketts and Brixton House lie in closest proximity to the development (less than c. 135m), there will be no direct or indirect impact upon their setting due to their location within the present village; Brixton House is further screened by mature trees.*

*Fifteen non-designated heritage assets have been identified within the study area. Two of these lie adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposed application area; these comprise Venn Farm and a 19th century milestone. Venn Farm lies adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposed development site. The current farmhouse probably dates to the mid to late 18th/early 19th century and may be constructed upon the site of an earlier medieval farmstead known as La Fen or Forsen. Several outbuildings shown on the 1839 Brixton tithe map and the 1864 25-inch Ordnance survey map to the northeast and southeast of the main farm are no longer present and there remains some limited potential for the sub-surface survival of associated remains. Venn Farm and the holiday cottages (former outbuildings) to the north will not be directly affected by the development proposals and neither will the granite milestone to the south of the proposed application area. Three additional heritage assets were identified in the study area following a review of air photographs; only one, three former field boundaries lies within the proposed application area. The derelict remains of a former mid 19th century garden house were subsequently identified in the northwest corner of the site during the site inspection.*

*The proposed application area is believed to have been first enclosed during the later medieval period. The slightly sinuous nature of the boundaries suggests that prior to this, the field was farmed as open strip-fields until its enclosure. Venn Farm and its outbuildings form part of the core area of the historic settlement of Brixton. The stone revetted hedgebanks which form the north, east and part of the western boundary of the site are recorded on the Brixton tithe map of 1839 and are therefore considered significant when assessed under the 'historic' criteria of the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.*

*This assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development site contains a low potential for the presence of significant buried archaeological remains, with the majority of the area having been predominantly an orchard and strip of pasture/garden since the middle of the 19th century at least. Much of the land has also been recently disturbed.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of a desk-based archaeological and cultural heritage assessment for a proposed residential development on land at Venn Farm, Brixton, Devon, SX 5511 5221 (see Fig. 1). It has been prepared by AC archaeology during December 2011 on behalf of Barratt Homes Exeter Division. The location of the proposed development site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 This study will be submitted in support of a future planning application for the new residential development. The aim of the report is to identify the survival, extent and significance of the heritage assets within the application area, and where appropriate, identify the potential effects of the proposed development on the historic environment.
- 1.3 The proposed development site is situated in the village of Brixton, which lies c. 1.6km to the southeast of Plymstock. It comprises two plots of land bounded to the north by agricultural land, the east and west by gardens, and the south by Venn Farm and the A379 (Fig. 1). It covers an area of approximately 1.2ha and comprises disturbed grassland which is currently occupied by three

modern farm buildings and one derelict late 19th century structure. The ground slopes moderately down from the north to the south, with the land lying between 55-68mOD. The underlying solid geology comprises Middle Devonian slates and pyroclastic rock (British Geological Survey online 2011).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

**2.1** The study has consisted of a desk-based assessment, as defined by the Institute for Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance* (IFA 2008) and *Planning Policy Statement 5, Policy HE6.1* (DCLG *et al* 2010). The study area has comprised a zone of up to a 0.5km wide radius centred upon the proposed development site.

**2.2** The scope of the study has included designated heritage assets (world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservations areas, battlefield sites, registered parks and garden) and non-designated assets (archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings, other historic landscape features or locally-designated features, or areas, of cultural heritage importance).

**2.3** The following data sources have been examined:

- Archaeological records, historic building information and other relevant cultural heritage data held Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (hereafter DCCHER);
- Historical cartographic, photographic and documentary information held by Devon Record Office (DRO) and Westcountry Studies Library (WCSL), both in Exeter;
- English Heritage National Heritage List online website; and,
- Other relevant published or unpublished information.

## **3. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

Relevant protection, guidance and policies relating to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of archaeological sites and other aspects of cultural heritage may be summarised as follows:

### **3.1 Scheduled monuments**

Scheduled monuments, as defined under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) are sites which have been selected by a set of non-statutory criteria to be of national importance. These criteria comprise period, rarity, documentation, group value, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, diversity, and potential. Where scheduled sites are affected by development proposals there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. There is also a presumption against developments which have a significant impact on the integrity of the setting of scheduled monuments. Any works, other than activities receiving class consent under The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1981, as amended by The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1984, which would have the effect of demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, adding to, flooding or covering up a Scheduled Monument require consent from the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

### **3.2 Listed buildings/structures**

Buildings of national, regional, or local historical and architectural importance are protected by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. Buildings designated as 'listed' are afforded protection from physical alteration or effects on their historical setting.

### 3.3 National policy

General policy and guidance for the conservation of the historic environment are now contained in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (formerly Planning Policy Guidance notes 15 and 16), released 23rd March 2010. Archaeological sites, buildings, parks and gardens, battlefields or other aspects of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are now considered heritage assets under a unified policy system. The relevant policies are listed below:

Policy HE1:	<i>Heritage assets and climate change</i>
Policy HE2:	<i>Evidence base for plan-making</i>
Policy HE3:	<i>Regional and local planning approaches</i>
Policy HE4:	<i>Permitted development and Article 4 directions</i>
Policy HE5:	<i>Monitoring indicators</i>
Policy HE6:	<i>Information requirements for applications for consent affecting heritage assets</i>
Policy HE7:	<i>Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets</i>
Policy HE8:	<i>Additional policy principle guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to heritage assets that are not covered by Policy HE9</i>
Policy HE9:	<i>Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets</i>
Policy HE10:	<i>Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset</i>
Policy HE11:	<i>Enabling development</i>
Policy HE12:	<i>Policy principles guiding the recording of information relating to heritage assets</i>

Guidance regarding the assessment of the value of heritage assets has been presented in the English Heritage document (2008) *Conservation Principles – Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment*. More recently, guidance for the assessment of the impact of any proposed development proposals affecting the setting of heritage assets has been set out in English Heritage publication (2011), *The Setting of Heritage Assets*.

### 3.4 Local authority plan policies

Relevant policies for the management of archaeology and cultural heritage are set out in the *South Hams Local Plan Review 1995-2011, Part 1: General Policies*.

#### ***Policy ENV 12: Buildings of historic architectural interest***

- 1. The Council will make diligent use of all the powers available to it to protect important buildings of historic and architectural interest in their setting, whether listed or not.*
- 2. In its assessment of proposals affecting Listed Buildings whatever their grade, and unlisted buildings which contribute positively towards the character or appearance of Areas recognised as being of special landscape or townscape value, the Council will be guided by the principle that presumes in favour of their preservation, including their settings and the features of special interest they possess.*

#### ***Policy ENV 13: Listed buildings – alterations, additions or extensions, including development within their settings***

*The Council will consider applications for works involving alterations (including partial demolitions), additions or extensions to a listed building, or proposals involving development within the setting of a listed building, only if these are submitted with sufficient information to enable their effect on the special interest and character of the listed building in its setting to be properly assessed. Such works or proposals will be permitted providing their siting, their scale and form, and their design, finishes and materials of construction:*

- (a) Respect the characteristics of the building in its setting, including any complementary visual, functional, historic or architectural relationships these have;*
- (b) Retain the architectural or historic features of the existing building which make an important contribution towards its special interest and character, including its plan form and its structural or visual integrity;*
- (c) Do not give rise to any harmful or potentially harmful effects upon the economic viability of the listed building; and*
- (d) Do not involve the loss of features which contribute positively towards the characteristics of the setting.*

***Policy ENV 18: Sites known or potential archaeological interest***

1. Where there are reasonable grounds for believing that important archaeological remains may be disturbed or otherwise adversely affected by development proposals, applicants will be required to include an archaeological evaluation of the development site and its setting and, according to its findings, an indication of how the impact of the proposals on any archaeological remains will be mitigated.

2. Proposals for development which would be likely to disturb or otherwise adversely affect an important archaeological monument or site (whether Scheduled or not), or its setting, will only be permitted where:

(a) The benefits of the development proposals clearly outweigh the desirability for preserving the archaeological remains in situ; and

(b) No reasonable, less harmful alternative exists; and providing that

(c) Prior to the commencement of the development (either through voluntary agreement or planning conditions) the developer undertakes a programme of archaeological investigation, in accordance with a brief agreed by the local planning authority, that will ensure the archaeological remains are properly excavated, recorded, safeguarded and reported.

***Policy ENV 19: Historic parks and gardens and historic battlefields***

Proposals for development within or in the setting of the site of an Historic Park or Garden or Historic Battlefield included in the National Register, or for the time being included in the Local Register will only be permitted providing they conserve and cause no significant harm to the historic character of the site and the features of special interest it possesses.

**4. DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (Fig. 1 & Appendix 1: Table 1)**

**4.1** There are six designated heritage assets within the study area; all comprise listed buildings. The location of these six buildings (Sites B1-B6) is shown on Fig. 1 and they are further discussed below (see also Appendix 1: Table 1 for more details regarding the listing).

**4.2** All but one of the designated heritage assets are Grade II listed. These comprise Brixton Lodge (Site B1), Eldridge House (Site B2), The Wickett (Site B3), Brixton House (B4) and the Priests' Cottages (Site B5). Brixton Lodge and Eldridge House (Sites B1 & B2) are late 18th/early 19th century detached private houses. The Wickett (Site B3) was formerly a range of 18th century cottages in the centre of the village, while Brixton House (Site B4) is a large late 18th/early 19th century mansion, which was once owned by Henry Collins-Splatt. The house is surrounded by extensive grounds, with the western boundary comprising the eastern boundary of the application area. The former parsonage or church house now comprising the Priests' Cottages (Site B5) lies immediately to the north of the church and is considered to be of a c. 15th/16th century date. The southern side of the building lies wholly within the churchyard.

**4.3** All five buildings are situated in the village of Brixton, with Brixton Lodge (Site B1) lying less than 150m to the west of the proposed application area and Eldbridge House (B2) some 170m to the south. The Wickett, Brixton House and the Priests Cottages (Sites B3-B5) all lie between 130m- 285m to the east (Fig. 1).

**4.4** The remaining designated heritage asset comprises the Church of St Mary (Site B6), which is Grade I listed. The parish church has a 13th century tower, with much of the rest of the building being late 15th century in date. The chancel is believed to incorporate elements of an earlier structure. A fragment of font (Site A13) which forms the step of the Priests' Cottages (Site B5) further confirms that the church has earlier origins. St Mary's Church lies some 280m east of the proposed application area.

**4.5** While the Wicketts and Brixton House (Sites B3 & B4) lie in closest proximity to the development (less than c. 135m), there will be no direct or indirect impact upon their setting due to their location within the present village; Brixton House is further screened by mature trees. The western boundary of the grounds of Brixton House (Site B4) forms a common boundary with the eastern



boundary of the proposed application area. Current design proposals indicate that there will be some tree screening added to the eastern boundary of the site (FORM drawing no. 1421 (PL-) 009).

## **5. NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS** (*Fig. 1 & Appendix 1: Table 2*)

**5.1** Fifteen non-designated heritage assets have been recorded within the study area. These sites are shown on Fig. 1 and further discussed below (see also Appendix 1: Table 2).

### **5.2 The Prehistoric and Romano-British periods**

No heritage assets of a prehistoric or Romano-British date are currently recorded within the study area. Such a paucity of evidence ties in with a general absence of remains of this date from the wider area.

### **5.3 The medieval period** (*Sites A5, A7, A13 & A15*)

The village of Brixton (Site A5) lies within the ancient parish of Brixton. It is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as '*Bristona*'. The estate later became divided, with records surviving until 1428. The place name is thought to mean the '*farmstead of a man called Brioc*', being derived from the common OE word *tun* meaning settlement, with the first element likely to be a Celtic personal name (Mills 2003). Venn Farm (Site A7) is considered to be the present-day survival of a medieval farmstead known as *Forsen* or *La Fen*, which became separated from the Manor of Spriddleston sometime during the early medieval period. The name Venn is topographical in origin, meaning marshy land (Gower *et al* 1931, p599). The current house, which appears to be mid to late 18th/early 19th century in date may therefore but constructed upon the site of an earlier building or even incorporate elements of the earlier structure. The 1838 tithe map does show a different ground plan that that recorded on the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Maps 1 & 2 and Section 6.4 below). Venn Farm is not listed.

Other sites of a medieval date include the Church of St Mary (Site B6) and its churchyard (Site A15). The churchyard is originally thought to have encircled the church but has subsequently been extended. One of the steps of the Priests' Cottages (Site B5) leading into the churchyard is formed by the bowl of a Norman font (Site A13) indicating the presence of an earlier structure (see Section 4.4 above).

Venn Farm (Site A7) and the surviving outbuildings lie immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposed new development.

### **5.4 The post medieval to modern periods** (*Sites A1-A4, A6, A8, A8-A12 & A14*)

The majority (11) of the non-designated heritage assets date to these periods and include the following:-

- A memorial stone in chancel of St Mary's Church in memory of Walter Hele who died Oct/Nov 1614 (Site A14). The stone disappeared during restoration works;
- A monument in the churchyard to nine children of the Parsons family who died within six weeks in 1863 from cholera or diphtheria (Site A12);
- Parkland associated with Cofflete House (Site A11). The park at Kitley had been previously destroyed and a new one was subsequently created around Cofflete House;
- An 18th century granite milestone to the east of Steer Point Road inscribed as 17 miles to Totnes (Site A8). The milestone is shown on the 25-inch Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Map 2);

- A coastal semaphore station at Brixton, which had standing orders to report all arrivals/departures to admiralty until it was superseded by telegraph in 1805 (A3);
- A dovecote made of squared stonework spaced to form apertures (Site A4);
- A non-conformist chapel with stable and coach house, which was opened 1893 and closed 1958 (Site A6). A new chapel has since been built on same site;
- An inn which is shown on the 6-inch Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1920 to the southeast of Venn Farm but not the later 1970 map (Site A9). It is recorded as Hound Inn on the 25-inch Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Map 2); and
- Three Second World War structures including two air raid shelters (Sites A1 & A2) and a group of military huts (Site A10).

The milestone is the closest of these eleven sites to the proposed application area, lying less than 10m from the southern boundary on the south side of the A379.

## 6. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA (*Appendix 2: Maps 1-3*)

- 6.1 The Brixton tithe map of 1839 (Appendix 2: Map 1) depicts the proposed application area as two plots. The main plot is shown as being occupied at the southern end by a homestead, with outbuildings to the north and east, a kitchen garden to the south and orchards to the north. Two of the southeast outbuildings are situated on the line of the current access to Venn Farm. A trackway is shown passing through the centre of the plot and forking in a separate plot in northeast corner, before leading into the farmland beyond. The Venn Farm complex appears as the last group of buildings on the western edge of the village, with the core of the settlement lying immediately to the southeast.
- 6.2 The orchards within the central plot are described as *Western Orchard* and *Well Orchard* on the accompanying tithe apportionment of 1840, with the small plot in northeast corner being described as *Millhead*. The homestead is recorded as being owned by the Executors of the Heles Charity, and occupied by Silas Cane, who appears to occupy all of the land within this central area. The adjacent narrow plot to the west is recorded in the apportionment as *Long Green*, owned by the Rev Richard Lane and occupied by Walter Scoble. The land use is given as pasture.
- 6.3 Two of the boundaries within the proposed application area and many of the boundaries to the west are sinuous in shape suggesting that they fossilise the boundaries of the earlier medieval strip fields, which once subdivided the open fields surrounding the village of Brixton. This is confirmed by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (hereafter HLC) which considers much of the application areas to have been open strip fields, which were first enclosed during the later medieval period. The farmstead in the southeast corner is recorded as forming part of the core area of the historic settlement of Brixton, while the orchards are thought to be a modern introduction (Devon HLC online 2011).
- 6.4 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Map 2) depicts a slightly different picture to that recorded on the 1839 tithe map. While the main homestead is shown in the same location to that on the tithe map, there seems to have been an alteration to the ground plan of the farmhouse at its eastern end. There also seems to have been a re-organisation of the outbuildings to the north, which are shown in the C-shaped arrangement present today, with an additional building to the east. The original trackway through the orchard has been removed and a new trackway is shown running along the eastern boundary with a pond lying at its southern end in the farmyard. All of the central area is depicted as a single orchard. The kitchen gardens



belonging to Venn Farm are also shown in great detail. The narrow plot to the east, *Long Green*, now appears part of a garden belonging to a property called Rose Villa, which has been constructed in the plot immediately to the south. A structure situated within its own gardens with a path leading up to it, is shown at the very northern end of the plot (see also Site A16 – Section 9.6 below).

- 6.5 Several minor changes had occurred within the proposed application area by the time the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map was published in 1895 (Appendix 2: Map 3). A small structure (?linhay) is shown adjacent to the northern boundary of the plot recorded as *Millhead*. Also part of the orchard immediately to the west of *Millhead* has been enclosed into a small plot. Noticeable additions beyond the application area include the name of Rose Villa, which is now recorded as the 'Vicarage'. This land is known to have been owned by the Rev Richard Lane in 1839. To the south of the application area both the Hound Inn (Site A9) and a smithy are depicted. The gradual process of settlement expansion within this small hamlet is clearly demonstrated by the construction of Brixton House (Site B1) to the west and the gradual infilling of the land in between with new properties.
- 6.6 More recently one of the Venn Farm outbuildings (the barn) to the east has been converted into the Wheelwrights and two additional farm buildings added to the north. The two outbuildings to the south of Venn Farm (shown on the 1839 tithe map and 1st/2nd edition 1864 & 1895 Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps) and the one adjacent to the C-shaped outbuildings and have since been demolished. The arrangement of Venn Farm itself and the C-shaped outbuilding immediately to the north does not appear to have changed since 1895. A review of maps on Google Earth also reveals that since 2002 (at least), much of the land within proposed the development area was covered by hardstanding and used for caravan storage.

## 7. HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT BOUNDARIES (Appendix 2: Map 1)

- 7.1 The surviving north, east and west boundaries of the proposed application area comprise stone revetted earthwork hedgebanks covered by hedgerows with mature trees. All are '*recorded in a document held at the relevant date at a Record Office as an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Acts*' (c. 1845) and are therefore considered to be '*important*' under criterion 5 (a) of Schedule 1 of Additional Criteria for Determining Important Hedgerows (Part II) of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

## 8. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE Cain Hegarty (Fig. 1)

### 8.1 Introduction

The proposed application site and wider study area were viewed on vertical RAF aerial photographs from a 1946 sortie (RAF CPE/UK/1890 (F20) 4174-415 10-DEC-1946) and an oblique photograph (Geonex 158/92 014-015-OCT-1992) held by DCCHER. The vertical aerial photographs were viewed stereoscopically.

### 8.2 Summary

No archaeological features were noted within or immediately adjacent to the proposed application area. The only features of note were three field boundaries, which were extant on the 1946 RAF photographs but not on the 1992 oblique image (Site AP1). These boundaries are shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1895 (Appendix 2: Map 3). The buildings to the east of the C-shaped outbuildings and in the southeast corner are no longer present indicating that they had

been removed sometime between 1895 and 1946. The orchard to the north of Venn Farm is no longer visible and neither are the two structures shown adjacent to the northern boundary on the Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps of 1864 and 1895 (Appendix 2: Maps 2 & 3).

Other features noted within the broader study area comprise the following:-

- The Second World War group of military huts (Site A10);
- Three small oval or circular earthwork structures located in a field on the junction between Chittleburn Hill and Lodge Lane at c. SX 547 517 (Site AP2), which may be associated with the Second World War air raid shelters recorded in the area (Sites A1 & A2); and,
- A possible enclosure, trapezoidal in shape which is visible as an ephemeral cropmark to the west of Lodge Lane (Site AP3).

## **9. SITE INSPECTION** (*Plates 1-12 & Appendix 2*)

**9.1** A site visit was undertaken on 2nd December 2012 to establish the presence of unrecorded archaeological features within the proposed application area; to review the locations of previously recorded features that may be affected by construction, and to consider the general archaeological potential of the area. Land use, topography and boundary types were also recorded.

### **9.2 Southern entrance of proposed application area** (*Plate 1*)

The entrance to Venn Farm and the site is located to the south of the proposed application area, adjacent to the A379, the main road through Brixton. It is flanked on both sides by two planters created by low curving stone rubble walls approximately 0.3m high. Both abut a southern boundary wall which is formed by a c. 1m high stone rubble wall with mortar bonding (Plate 1). The farmhouse garden lies to the west of the entrance and immediately to the north of the southern boundary wall, in the same location to that shown on the historic maps (Appendix 2: Maps 1-3). A recently constructed small garden to the east of the entrance now belongs to 'The Wheelwrights'. Both the entrance and farmyard have a tarmac surface.

### **9.3 The Wheelwrights** (*Plate 2*)

The Wheelwrights is constructed from slightly coursed stone rubble with grey mortar bonding (Plate 2). The size of the structure suggests that it was formerly a barn. A modern extension has been added to the south side of the building and a porch to the west. There are two anchor pins located on the west side of the main building. No traces of the former outbuildings shown to the southwest of this structure on the 1839 tithe map and subsequent Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps of 1864 & 1895 were noted (Appendix 2: Maps 1-3).

### **9.4 Venn Farm** (*Plate 3*)

Venn Farm comprises a large farmhouse constructed from slightly coursed stone rubble with a light pinkish mortar bonding. It has wooden framed windows with wooden lintels (Plate 3). The south side is rendered and painted white and a small, modern conservatory has been added. The pitched roof is slate tiled, with chimney stacks at both ends; both are rendered and painted white. A mortared, stone rubble wall approximately 2m high runs along the east side of the main house and continues to the north where it encloses another garden on the north side of the building.

### **9.5 Venn Farm – northern outbuildings** (*Plates 4-6*)

The C-shaped former outbuildings immediately north of the main farm have been converted into holiday accommodation, with the former courtyard now a lawn surrounded by a brick paved area

(Plate 4). The outbuildings are constructed from stone rubble with greyish mortar bonding, and stone quoins. The doors and windows are all modern. Gardens have been created along the north and west sides of the former farm buildings; both are enclosed by earthwork banks topped with box trees. The whole of the farm complex appears terraced into the hillside.

Two modern farm buildings have been constructed the northeast of these former outbuildings; both are constructed from concrete blocks and corrugated iron (Plate 5). The southernmost structure is situated on the site of a pond shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Map 2). A trackway to the east of these buildings follows the course of the trackway also shown on the same map (Plate 6).

No traces of the group of outbuildings shown in the vicinity of the northern group of outbuildings on the tithe map of 1839, or the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 were noted during the site visit.

## **9.6 Central and northern area of the site (Plates 7-12)**

All of the area to the north of the farm complex comprises an undulating field, which slopes moderately steeply down towards the south. Much of the land immediately to the north of the farm appears to be terraced and is currently occupied by piles of building, domestic debris and agricultural waste (Plate 7).

Where visible, the western boundary of the application area consists of a c. 1.50m high stone revetted earthwork hedgebank covered by a hedgerow, which includes a number of mature trees (Plate 8). The remains of a similarly constructed, parallel, former north to south field boundary lie some 25m to the east, with c. 2m long sections surviving at both the north and south ends. The rest of the boundary has been recently removed (Plate 9). A Portacabin is located to the west of the southern end of the boundary. This field boundary formerly comprised the boundary between the plots *Long Green* and *Western Orchard* as shown on the 1839 Brixton tithe map (Appendix 2: Map 1). *Long Green* is lower than the land to the east.

The northern field boundary comprises an earthwork hedgebank with a c. 3m section of post and wire fence lying between the northern stub of hedgebank described previously and a gateway in the northeast corner. The eastern boundary is similarly a stone revetted earthwork hedgebank covered by a hedgerow with occasional mature trees.

A small, derelict building lies in the northwest corner of the site (Plate 10). The position of this structure (Site A16) corresponds with a structure shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Map 2). It is brick built and has a slate tiled roof with several surviving ridge tiles, a brick chimney and a large wooden framed window. The building is located on a narrow platform surrounded by brick retaining wall c. 1m high to the south and c. 2m high to the north and west; no traces of the garden shown on the 1864 map are present. A gate, which appears to be contemporaneous with the structure, is located in the northwest corner (Plate 11). A short section of this brick wall also forms part of the main northern field boundary. To the south of this enclosure, there lies a c. 10m long by c. 10m wide concrete surface with traces of an earthwork bank at its southern end. This boundary broadly corresponds with the position of a field boundary recorded in this plot on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Map 2) and later plotted during the aerial photographic transcription (Site AP1).

A modern stable block is situated in the northeast corner of the field. It comprises a single-story stone built structure with doors along the south elevation. The building is surrounded by a post and



rail fence and a caravan is situated to the rear. The land immediately to the south of this structure has been terraced (Plate 12). No traces of the structure shown on the 1895 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map were noted (Appendix 2: Map 3).

## 10. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 10.1 Introduction

This assessment has provided a summary of all recorded heritage assets within the study area as a result of a search of a range of archaeological databases. Each source has its own limitations for example documentary sources were seldom compiled for archaeological purposes, contain inherent bias, and provide a comprehensive basis of assessment only for the last two hundred years. National and county databases are also limited in that they only provide a record of known archaeological data.

10.2 PPS5 provides no terminology or criteria for ranking the significance of non-designated assets. It is therefore necessary to define a method for the assessment of individual heritage features. In the absence of a nationally accepted means of ranking the importance of archaeological and cultural heritage assets (other than the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria for the assessment to national importance), a set of terms has been applied in order to provide a comparison of the relative importance of any cultural heritage features present. The gradings have only been applied to sites within the proposed application area and the broader study area and are set out in Table 3 below and included in Appendix 1: Tables 1-2).

GRADING		GRADES OF SIGNIFICANCE
A	National significance	Any designated or other asset considered to be of national significance due to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. The asset would score high using the non-statutory criteria for assessing scheduled monuments.
B	Regional/County significance	Any asset considered to be of regional or county significance due to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. The asset would score moderate using the non-statutory criteria for assessing scheduled monuments.
C	Local significance	Any asset considered to be of local significance due to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. The asset would score low using the non-statutory criteria for assessing scheduled monuments.
D	Not significant	Any asset that is not considered to be of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest significance

Table 3: Grading of importance of cultural heritage assets

### 10.3 Assets of national significance

The six listed buildings are considered to be heritage assets of national significance. These include the Church of St Mary (Site B6), which is Grade I listed and the five Grade II listed private residences, which include Brixton Lodge (Site B1), Eldridge House (Site B2), The Wickett (Site B3), Brixton House (B4) and the Priests' Cottages (Site B5). All are considered to be of architectural, evidential and historic value, particularly in the case of the Priests' Cottages (Site B5), which have an intrinsic association with St Mary's Church (Site B6) and Brixton House (Site B4) which reflects the wealth of the influential Collins-Splatt family.

### 10.4 Assets of regional/county significance

There are no heritage assets which have been considered to be of county/regional significance.

## **10.5 Assets of local significance**

Thirteen non-designated heritage assets are considered to be of local significance due to their evidential and historic value (Sites A1-A5, A7-A13 & A15). These 13 sites provide information and therefore an understanding of the development, settlement and exploitation of the landscape and village of Brixton, particularly from the post medieval period onwards. All of the features recorded during the review of aerial photographs (Sites AP1-AP3) and subsequently during the site visit (Site A16) are also considered to be of local significance. However the form/date and therefore significance of the enclosure (Site AP3) identified during the aerial photographic transcription may be reviewed in the light of intrusive investigations.

## **10.6 Assets of no significance**

Only two heritage assets are considered to be of no significance. These comprise the site of a non-conformist chapel, which has since been demolished (Site A6) and a memorial stone lost during renovations to the Church of St Mary (Site A14). Both are no longer extant and therefore cannot be considered to be of archaeological or historic interest.

# **11. DISCUSSION**

## **11.1 Designated heritage assets**

The six designated heritage assets *i.e.* listed buildings lie in two broadly discrete areas; one to the west of the application area – Brixton Lodge (Site B1) which is Grade II listed and the remaining five to the east including the four Grade II listed houses (Sites B2-B5) and the Grade I listed Church of St Mary (Site B6). To the west Brixton Lodge (Site B1) is known to have been constructed sometime between 1839 and 1864 (Appendix 2: Maps 1 & 2). To the east the Priests' Cottages (the former parsonage) lie immediately adjacent to St Mary's churchyard; one of the steps leading into the churchyard comprises a fragment of 12th century font (Site A13) suggesting the presence of an earlier church. Although St Mary's Church is late 13th century in date, the main chancel is thought to incorporate elements of an early building. The remaining three private residences in area include Eldridge House, The Wicketts and Brixton House (Sites B2-B4); all are late 18th century in date.

All six buildings are considered to be of national significance due to their listed status. They are considered to be of architectural, evidential and historic value, particularly the Church of St Mary and the Priests' Cottages (Site B5), which are intrinsically associated and Brixton House (Site B4) which reflects the wealth of the influential Collins-Splatt family. While the Wicketts and Brixton House (Sites B3 & B4) lie in closest proximity to the development (less than c. 135m), there will be no direct or indirect impact upon their setting due to their location within the present village; Brixton House is further screened by mature trees. While the grounds of Brixton House (Site B4) and the eastern boundary of the proposed application area form a common boundary, current design proposals suggest that this boundary will be enhanced with additional tree screening (FORM drawing no. 1421 (PL-) 009).

## **11.2 Non-designated heritage assets**

Thirteen non-designated heritage assets have been identified within the study area. The majority (13) are considered to be of local significance because of the evidential and historical information they provide about the development of the village of Brixton particularly from the post medieval period onwards. Two of these heritage assets lie immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposed application area; these comprise Venn Farm and a 19th century milestone (Sites A7 & A8).

Venn Farm (Site A7) lies immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposed application area. While the current structure is unlisted and probably dates to the mid to late 18th/early 19th century at least, it may be constructed upon the site of an earlier medieval farmstead known as *La Fen* or *Forsen*. Several outbuildings shown on the tithe map to the northeast and southeast of the main farm are no longer present, with the current southern access now passing over the location of two of the former buildings. This entrance area may be subject to groundworks as a result of the development proposals and there therefore remains some limited potential for the sub-surface presence of remains associated with these former structures. Venn Farm and the holiday cottages (former outbuildings) to the north will not be directly affected by the development proposals. The granite milestone (Site A8) to the south of the proposed application will similarly remain unaffected.

### 11.3 Historical development of the area

A review of the 1839 tithe map and apportionment of 1840 (Appendix 2: Map 1) has demonstrated that the main large plot of the application area was once occupied by two orchards divided by a trackway with an enclosed plot in the northeast corner (*Millhead*), and the farmstead complex occupying the southern end of the plot. The narrow plot to the west (*Long Green*) is recorded as pasture.

While there is a similar arrangement of the farmstead complex on the later 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Map 2), there appears to have been a re-organisation of the farm itself and the outbuildings to the north, which are shown in the same C-shaped arrangement as they appear today, with an additional building immediately to the east. *Long Green* (the narrow plot to the east) is shown as being part of a garden belonging to Rose Villa, which has been constructed in the plot immediately to the south. A building located within its own gardens is shown at the very northern end of *Long Green*. A new trackway is shown adjacent to the eastern boundary and *Millhead* in the northeast corner is completely enclosed, with the central area remaining an orchard.

Several minor changes had occurred within the proposed application area by the time the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map was published in 1895 (Appendix 2: Map 3). A small structure is shown adjacent to the northern boundary *Millhead*, while part of the orchard immediately to the west of *Millhead* has been enclosed into a small plot.

### 11.4 Aerial photographic evidence

Three additional heritage assets were identified in the study area following a review of the 1946 RAF air photographs; only one, three former field boundaries (Site AP1), lies within the proposed application area. These boundaries were present in 1946 but had been removed by 1992. All three boundaries correspond with boundaries shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1895 (Appendix 2: Map 3) and are considered to be of local significance.

### 11.5 Site inspection

The site inspection determined that the proposed development site is covered by disturbed grassland and is currently occupied by three modern agricultural buildings, with a derelict mid 19th century garden house (Site A16) in the very northwest corner. Current design proposals indicate that this former garden house lies on land, which will become the rear garden of one of the new properties (FORM drawing no. 1421 (PL-) 009). The hedgebank boundary recorded on the tithe map of 1839 (Appendix 2: Map 1) between the two plots *Long Green* and *Western Orchard* has recently been removed. No traces of the former outbuildings in the vicinity of the southern entrance or the C-shaped group of outbuildings to the north as shown on the 1839 tithe map and 1864



Ordnance Survey 25-inch map were noted; neither was the structure shown on the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1895 on the northern boundary of *Millhead* (Appendix 2: Maps 1-3). The trackway along the eastern boundary shown on the 1864 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map is still present.

#### **11.6 Historic landscape characterisation**

The Devon HLC records the majority of the proposed application area as being first enclosed during the later medieval period, with the slightly curving form of the boundaries to the west suggesting that it was originally farmed as part of the open strip-fields that once surrounded the village. Venn Farm and its outbuildings are recorded as forming part of the core area of the historic settlement of Brixton, while the orchards in the northern part of the site are considered to be a modern introduction.

#### **11.7 Historic boundaries**

The surviving stone revetted earthwork hedgebanks, which form the north, east and part of the west boundaries of the proposed application area are recorded on the Brixton tithe map of 1839. These boundaries are therefore considered to be significant when assessed under the 'historic' criteria of the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.

### **12. CONCLUSIONS**

**12.1** This assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development site contains a low potential for the presence of significant buried archaeological remains, with the majority of the area having been predominantly an orchard and strip of pasture/garden since the middle of the 19th century at least. Much of the application area has been terraced or disturbed during the modern period.

**12.2** An earlier medieval farmstead is recorded in the vicinity of Venn Farm and it is quite likely that the present farm is located upon the earlier site. There remains some possibility for the presence of remains associated with former outbuildings shown on 1839 Brixton tithe map and the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of 1864 (Appendix 2: Maps 1 & 2) in the vicinity of the southern entrance and the trackway leading through the farmyard to the north. However both areas may have been subject to significant ground reductions during the creation of the new southern entrance, the construction of the two new farm buildings and the creation of the tarmac surfaces. Their level of survival is therefore questionable.

### **13. ARCHIVE**

**13.1** The paper and digital archive is held at the offices of AC archaeology, in 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ.

### **14. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**14.1** The assessment was commissioned by Catherine Jackson of d2 Planning and Gareth Kendall of Barratt Homes Exeter Division. We are grateful to the staff at Devon Record Office and Westcountry Studies Library for their assistance. The review of air photographic evidence was undertaken by Cain Hegarty who also prepared the illustrations for this report. The site inspection was undertaken by Kerry Dean.

## 15. SOURCES CONSULTED

### Published sources

Department of Communities and Local government (DCLG), Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) & English Heritage, 2010, *PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*

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Mills A. D., 2003, *The Oxford Dictionary of British Place Names*

### Unpublished sources

Wembury tithe map 1839 and apportionment 1840

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25-inch map, Devonshire sheet 124:15, surveyed 1864, published 1866

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map, Devonshire sheet 124:15, surveyed 1892, published 1895

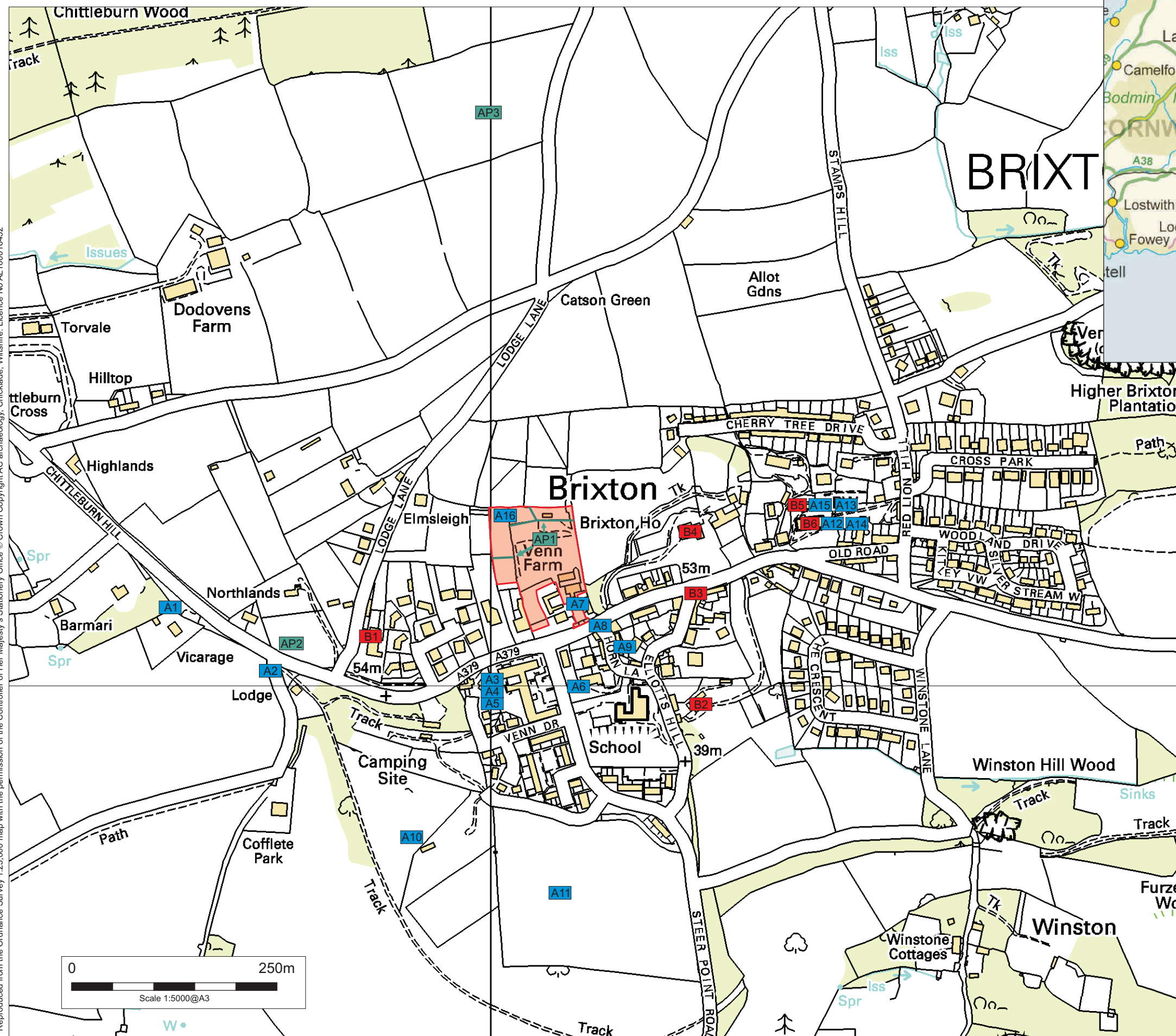
### Internet sources






British Geological Survey online [www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience)

English Heritage Listed Buildings online [www.list.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.list.english-heritage.org.uk)

Devon County Council Historic Landscape Characterisation online [gis.devon.gov.uk/basedata/viewer.asp?DCCService=hlc](http://gis.devon.gov.uk/basedata/viewer.asp?DCCService=hlc)

Google Earth



-  Proposed application area
-  A1 Archaeological sites
-  B1 Listed buildings
-  AP2 Features noted during aerial photographic transcription
-  Former field boundaries

PROJECT  
Land at Venn farm, Brixton

TITLE  
Fig.1: Location of the proposed application area and the heritage assets





Plate 1: Southern entrance to Venn Farm - view from south



Plate 2: The Wheelwrights - view from southwest





Plate 3: North facing elevation of Venn Farm - view from northeast



Plate 4: The holiday cottages north of Venn farmhouse - view from southeast





Plate 5: The two modern farm buildings - view from south



Plate 6: The northern end of the trackway adjacent to the east boundary - view from south





Plate 7: Area to the north of Venn Farm - view from northeast



Plate 8: The western boundary





Plate 9: The recently removed boundary - view from north



Plate 10: The brick garden house - view from west





Plate 11: The garden house, retaining wall and gateway - view from south



Plate 12: The modern stable block - view from west

# Appendix 1

Catalogues of designated and non designated heritage assets



Table 1: Catalogue of designated heritage assets

Site No.	HER Reference	Listed building ref no.	NGR (SX)	Date	Description	Status	Grading of significance
B1	39138	1107826	54859 52048	19th century	Brixton Lodge. Detached house in garden. Circa 1835. Stuccoed. Slate hipped roof with overhanging eaves with moulded soffit. Pilastered corners. Two storeys. South front of four bays. Sash windows with glazing bars in moulded architraves with bracketed cills. Ground floor two splayed bays of sashes and Veranda with openwork cast iron posts. Left hand (west) return, three bays, right hand blind, central porch with two pairs of Tuscan columns supporting heavy entablature, panelled door, rectangular fanlight and narrow side lights. Rendered chimney stacks with moulded cornices.	II	A
B2	-	1325214	55251 51977	Late 18th – late 19th century	Eldbridge House. Large detached house in garden. Late C18. Stuccoed, west side slate hung. Slate hipped roof with moulded eaves. Two storeys and attic. Five bays. First floor sash windows with glazing bars. Ground floor two late C19 splayed bay windows. Central porch with open pediment with traceried fanlight and entablature on Tuscan columns, flush panel glazed door. Two hipped dormers. Circa mid C19 two storey, one bay extension to left (west).	II	A
B3	39161	1107859	55250 52102	18th century	The Wickett, 3, 4 & 5 Elliot's Hill: House, formerly a range of cottages. Original use unknown. C18. Stone rubble. Steeply pitched slate roof with gabled ends. Two storeys and attics. Four window range. Restored sashes with glazing bars, those to left small. C20 glazed door to right. Segmentally arched cartway through to left. Three C20 flat roofed dormers. Stone rubble chimney stack at south gable end, with set offs. Two courses of pigeon holes beneath the eaves. At the rear eight courses of pigeon holes. Both front and rear pigeon holes have stone ledges. External stone stairs to rear door.	II	A
B4	39162	1107858	55295 52181	Late 18th/early 19th century	Brixton House, Main Street. House. Circa late C18 or early C19 house with west front added in 1835 by George Wightwick for Henry Collins-Splatt, and with circa 1850 and late C19 alterations. Rendered stone. The original house has double span gable-ended slate roof. The west front has slate hipped roof. Parapet, moulded cornice and moulded string course. Two storeys. Five bays. Sash windows with glazing bars moulded eaved architraves. Right hand windows blind. Centre first floor Venetian window with blind side lights, cornice, and pediment on consoles over centre light. Ground floor large circa 1850, porch and porte-cochere with Corinthian pilastered corner piers and two Corinthian columns between supporting an entablature with a balustrade. South garden front has mid C19 two storey square and splayed bays. Interior: Corinthian columns to hall screen. Hall also has later C19 Jacobean style wooden chimneypiece and staircase. Drawing room has marble chimneypiece with iron stove on casters which allow it to be drawn forward for cleaning. Circa 1900 chimneypiece in dining room. There is a monument in the church to Henry Collins-Splatt 1800-1891. Reference H Colvin, Biographical Directory of British Architects.	II	A
B5	39163 & 2277	110879	55382 52218	Medieval	Nos 1 and 2 Priests' Cottages: Pair of cottages, probably formerly the parsonage. Circa C15/16, largely rebuilt and extended circa early C19. Stone rubble-slate roof with gabled ends. Two storeys. Long four window range. On the south side, the left-hand (west) end has circa C15/16 two-light stone windows with pointed arch lights, the ground floor window has cusped arches; both have hood moulds. The other windows are C19/20 two-light casements with glazing bars. Stone rubble chimney stacks at gable ends. The west end has C20 extension, the eaves overhang on south side. Plain doorways on the north side have C20 porches.	II	A

Table 1: Summary of designated heritage assets

Table 1: Catalogue of designated heritage assets

Site No.	HER Reference	Listed building ref no.	NGR (SX)	Date	Description	Status	Grading of significance
B6	2273	1325213	55387 52194	Medieval/ Post medieval	Church of St Mary: Parish Church. Circa C13 west tower, remainder late C15. Much restored in 1887 and 1894. Stone rubble with freestone granite dressings. Slate roofs. Nave and chancel in one with large C19 perpendicular five-light east window. Long north and south aisles with C19 Perpendicular three-light windows. South porch with moulded round arch with scrolls at base of jambs. Smaller moulded inner south doorway. West tower in two stages, with diagonal buttresses with set-offs. Corbelled embattled parapet and no pinnacles. Crenellated polygonal stair turret on south side. Perpendicular two and three-light bell openings, three-light Perpendicular west window and moulded two-centred arch west doorway with hood mould. Interior: Five bay north and south arcades with moulded monolithic granite piers with alternating shafts and diagonals, moulded capitals and bases, the north capitals are carved. Wide moulded four-centred arcade arches. Squints. C19 unceiled wagon roofs to nave and north and south aisles. C19 furnishings including carved reredos, pulpit, lectern, choir stalls and screens. Window in the vestry said to come from Spriddlestone qv. Monument: Lucy Penelope Palmer 1834 - kneeling female figure by an urn in marble in relief, by R Walker of Bristol. Reference: R Gunnis Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851.	I	A

Table 1: Summary of designated heritage assets

## Appendix 2

Historic Map Extracts





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Scale 1:2500@A4

 approximate location of application boundaries

#### PROJECT

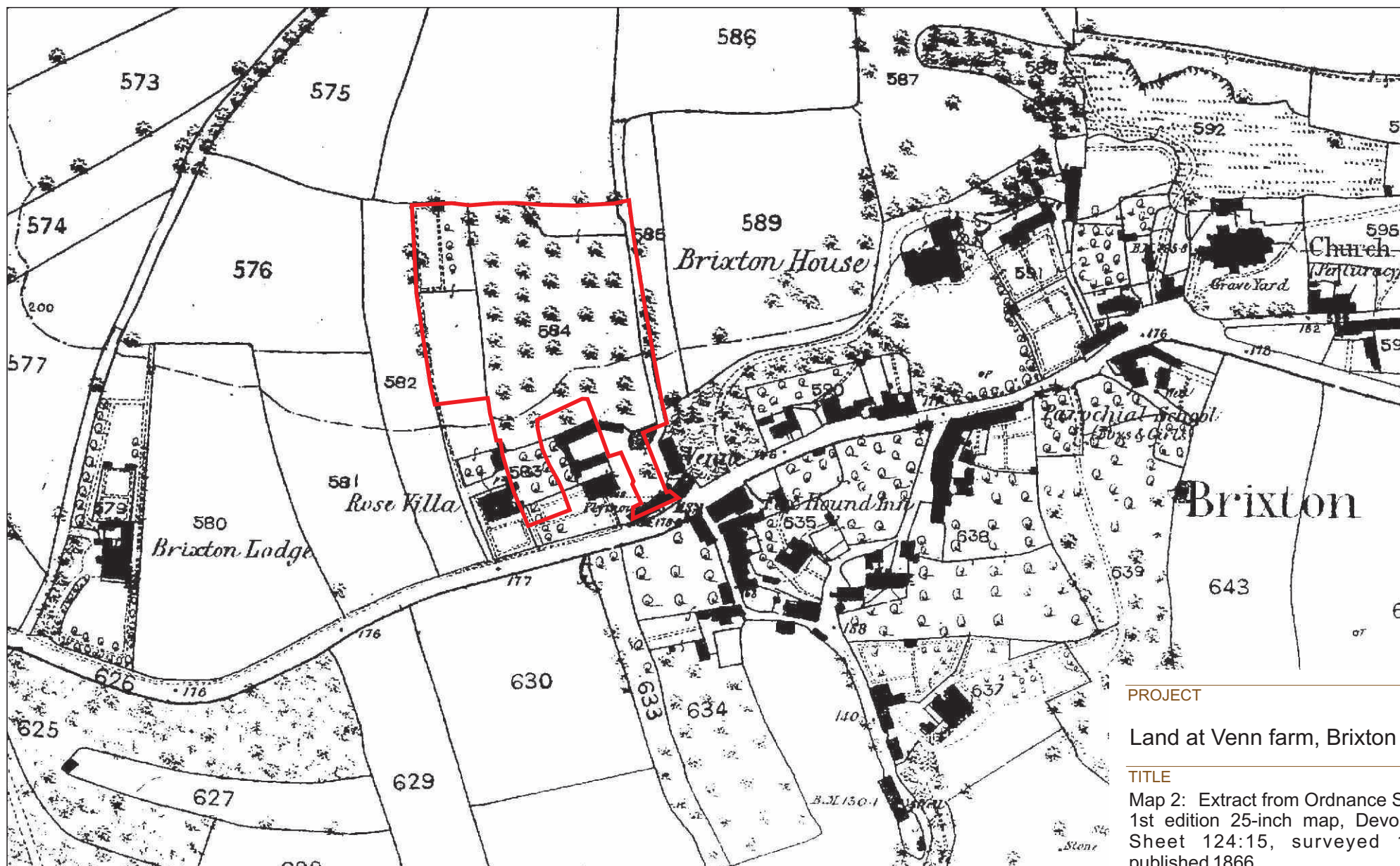
Land at Venn farm, Brixton

#### TITLE

Map 1: Extract from the Brixton tithe map of 1839 (apportionment 1840).







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Scale 1:2500@A4

 approximate location of application boundaries

#### PROJECT

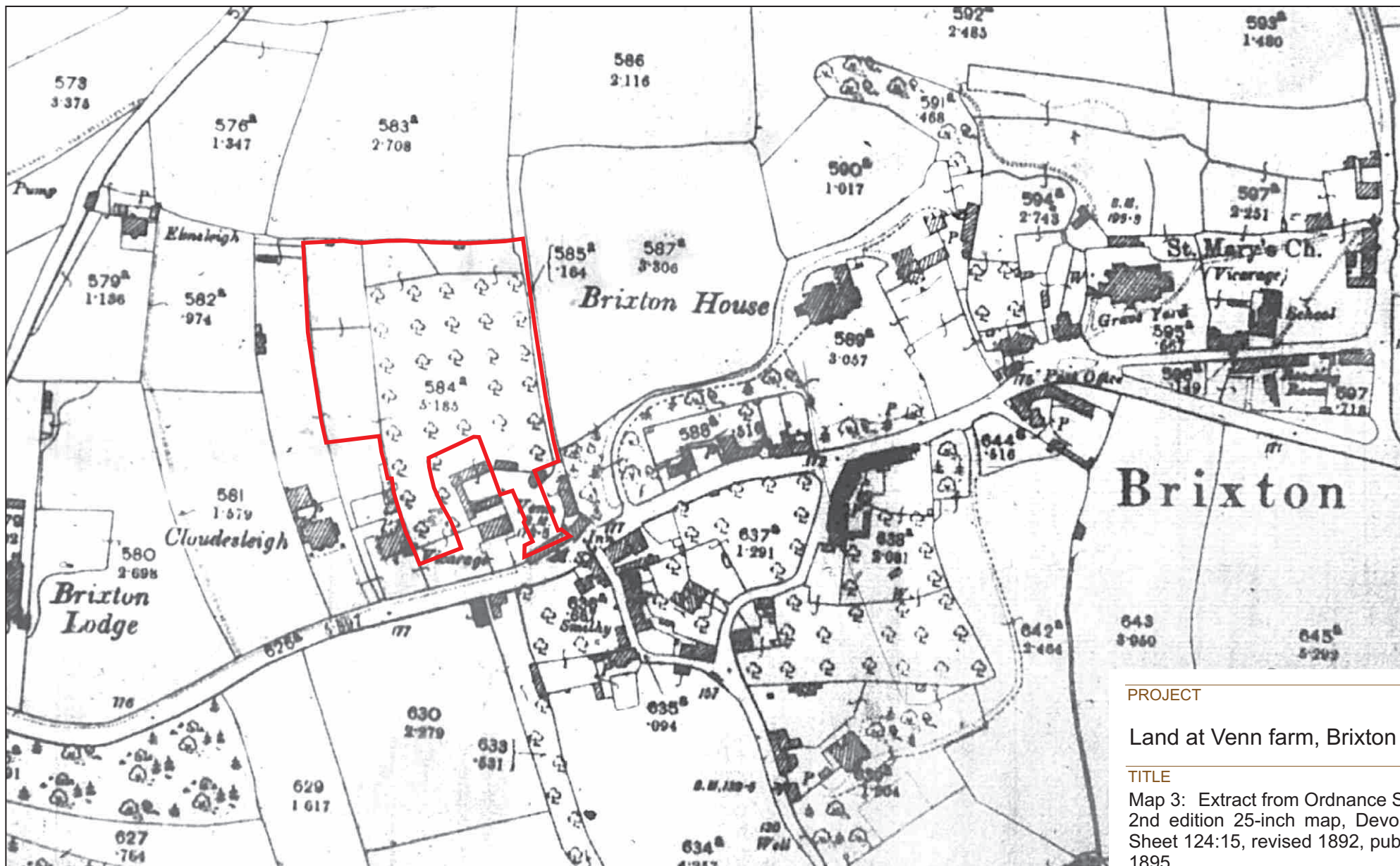
Land at Venn farm, Brixton

#### TITLE

Map 2: Extract from Ordnance Survey  
1st edition 25-inch map, Devonshire  
Sheet 124:15, surveyed 1864,  
published 1866.







#### PROJECT


Land at Venn farm, Brixton

#### TITLE

Map 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map, Devonshire Sheet 124:15, revised 1892, published 1895.



0 100m  
Scale 1:2500@A4

 approximate location of application boundaries

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