

BRIXHAM TOWN
VOLUME I: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
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PURCELL



TORBAY COUNCIL

BRIXHAM TOWN: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brixham is a historic port town, preserving a diverse range of historic architecture in a dramatic setting. The conservation area designation recognises what is special about Brixham Town, and this document provides guidance on how residents, homeowners, business owners, developers and the local authority can ensure this special interest is preserved and enhanced.

Purpose of this Guidance

The Brixham Town Conservation Area Appraisal seeks to:

- Record and analyse the special interest of the Brixham Town Conservation Area;
- Recognise the designated and non-designated heritage assets which comprise the Conservation Area;
- Identify issues relating to condition and detracting features, as well as opportunities for enhancement; and
- Provide guidance for the positive management, preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

A conservation area is defined as an 'area of special architectural or historic interest the character of which is it desirable to preserve or enhance'. Approximately 2.2% of

England is covered by conservation areas. It is a requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that all local planning authorities 'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of conservation areas within their jurisdiction, and that these documents are periodically reviewed.

How to use the Conservation Area Appraisal

Section 1.0: Introduction explains what is included within the Brixham Town Conservation Area and what makes it special. It sets out the purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal: to define and record the special interest of a conservation area, set out a plan of action for its on-going protection and enhancement, and update the boundary where necessary. This section also sets out the relevant planning policies and guidance pertinent to the conservation area.

Section 2.0: Assessing Character and Special Interest provides a summary history of the conservation area, analyses its architecture and built form, identifies key views and assesses the impact of the public realm, open spaces, geology and topography on the character of the conservation

area. It also looks at Brixham's important archaeological heritage.

Section 3.0: Character Areas illustrates the various areas throughout the conservation area which have their own distinct character.

Section 4.0: Boundary Review sets out the need to review the conservation area boundary and explains the proposed alterations.

Section 5.0: Audit of Heritage Assets explains the various categories used to understand the spread of both statutory (listed/scheduled) and non-statutory designations within the conservation area.

Section 6.0: Issues identifies the main issues within the conservation area and offers advice on how they might be mitigated/improved.

Section 7.0: Opportunities sets out opportunities to enhance the conservation area.

Section 8.0: Conservation Area Designation – Control Measures and Best Practice Guidance sets out the implications for planning/development and best practice for the management of development within

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the conservation area. It includes advice on repair and replacement, maintenance, new development and sustainability.

Please note, a glossary of technical terms used in this document can be found in Appendix C.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need planning permission for demolition and new development with a Conservation Area?

Planning permission will usually be required to totally or substantially demolish buildings or structures within a conservation area (including walls, gate piers and chimneys). Applications for demolition will also need a heritage statement (sometimes called a heritage impact assessment) as part of the application.

Consult with Torbay Council to confirm whether planning permission will be required ahead of any new development.

Are there any additional restrictions on permitted development rights?

Permitted development rights (i.e. changes that are allowed without requiring consent from the local authority) may be restricted. For example, replacement windows, changes to elevational finishes or the installation of satellite dishes may require planning permission. Always confirm any restrictions with Torbay Council before carrying out any works to the exterior of a building within the conservation area. Contact details for the Heritage and Design Team are provided in Appendix C.

What are the implications of Conservation Area designation for tree works?

Trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater measured at 1.5m above the soil level are protected. Any works proposed to these trees require permission from the local authority by means of a planning application. This allows the local authority to determine whether a tree preservation order (TPO) is necessary.

Are there restrictions on advertising and commercial signage?

Advertisements and other commercial signage may be subject to additional controls and/or require planning permission. Contact planning@torbay.gov.uk before installing any advertising infrastructure or commercial signage.

How do I seek pre-application advice?

For pre-application advice on any developments, contact planning@torbay.gov.uk. A pre-planning application will provide guidance on what permission is required.

Please refer to **Section 8.0 – Control Measures and Best Practice**, for further information on development within conservation areas.

Does the UNESCO Global Geopark status bring additional planning restrictions?

No, the UNESCO Global Geopark does not bring any additional planning restrictions over those which already exist in national and local planning legislation, as detailed in Section 1.6.

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Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of the Brixham Town Conservation Area is derived from the following key factors:

- **Historical interest:** the conservation area evidences the origins of Brixham Town as a small fishing port and naval supply station, and its rapid growth in the 19th century.
- **Topography and configuration:** the conservation area has a distinctive topography which shaped the direction of development in the town, resulting in tightly clustered development with an organic character, interconnected with small alleys and flights of steps. The dramatic topography also results in a number of striking vistas and glimpsed views of the harbour and wider town from many positions in the conservation area.
- **Architecture:** the conservation area is notable for the number of surviving 18th, 19th and early 20th-century terraces. There are many other attractive historic buildings which tell the story of Brixham's industrial past and its evolution over the course of the 19th century.



Historic England Archive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of Heritage Assets within the Brixham Town Conservation Area

There are 108 listed buildings within the conservation area, (some list entries cover groups of buildings such as whole terraces); these are recognised and statutorily protected for their architectural or historic interest. Additionally, this Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the buildings, structures and features within the conservation area which make a positive contribution to its character. These are recognised as **positive contributors, local landmarks** and **key buildings of individual heritage interest**. A full audit of the heritage assets within the conservation area is available in Volume II of this report.

Summary of Condition, Detracting Features and Opportunities for Enhancement

Common problems regarding condition include:

- Poor maintenance including blocked gutters and downpipes which encourage staining and vegetation growth throughout the conservation area.
- Misguided repairs with non-breathable materials such as cement-based render and mortar, causing brick and stonework deterioration.

Detracting features include:

- uPVC windows and rainwater goods.
- Insensitively designed modern shopfronts and inappropriate alterations to surviving historic shopfronts.
- Poor quality infill development and pockets of large scale modern development which do not respect historic plot boundaries.
- Large box dormers to historic terraces.
- Television aerials, satellite dishes and external wires.

Opportunities include:

- Upgrading lower-quality modern infill/development.
- Addressing minor detracting features.
- Improving the contribution of modern shopfronts by introducing traditional detailing.
- Sensitively designed new development.
- Heritage led regeneration.

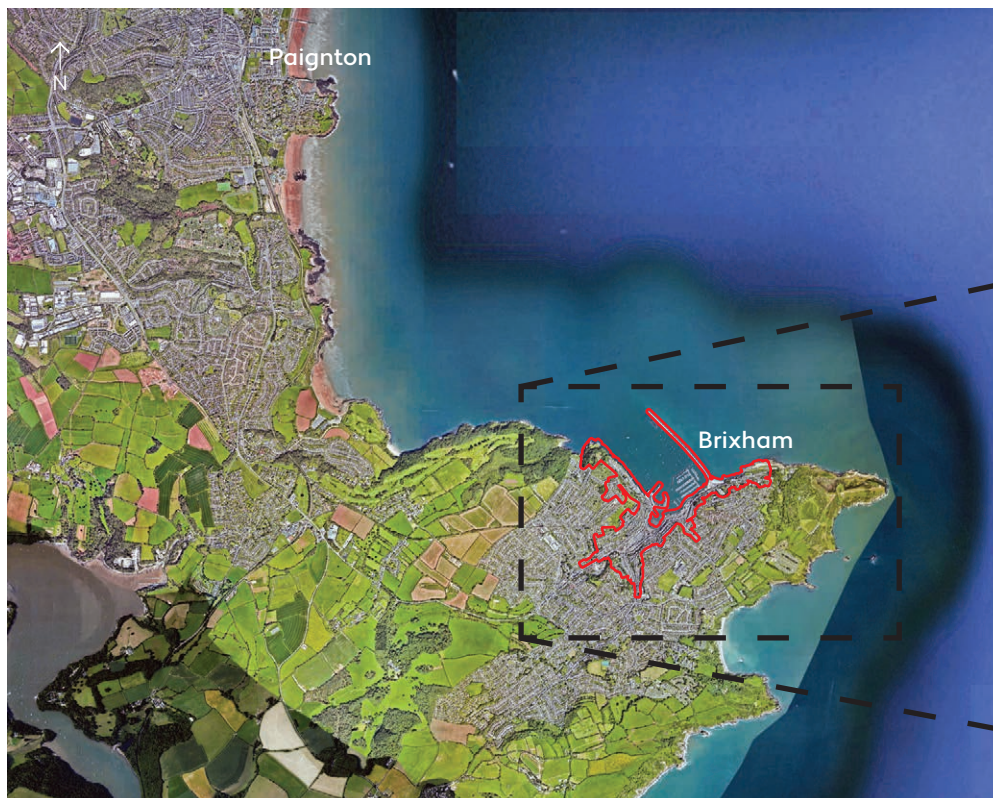
SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION



SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brixham Town Conservation Area

The Brixham Town Conservation Area was originally designated in 1976 and reviewed in 1999 and 2016. The designation covers the historic core of Brixham, around Brixham Harbour, and the 19th and early 20th-century residential development to North/Higher Furzeham Road in the north, New Road in the west, Bolton Street in the south and Berry Head in the east.



Aerial imagery illustrating the location of the Brixham Town Conservation Area in its wider geographical context. High-resolution, zoomable maps are provided within Sections 2 to 5 of this document.

The conservation area was surveyed between 9th and 11th of October 2024.

The proposed boundary changes set out in this document were made available for public consultation between 12th December 2024 and 16th January 2025. A consultation draft of the full Conservation Area Appraisal was subject to a period of public review between 17th March and 7th April 2025. The comments received during these consultation periods were reviewed by Torbay Council and the boundary/document updated accordingly.

This Conservation Area Appraisal was fully adopted by Torbay Council on 17th March 2026.



SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.2 Context and Vision for this Conservation Area Appraisal.

Torbay Council envisages heritage at the heart of the cultural, creative and economic development of Torbay, making our home - the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark - a better place in which to live, work, learn and visit.

Caring for our outstanding historic assets and sharing our stories will maximise the potential for heritage to bring social, cultural and economic benefits to all parts of the Bay. To do this, we will develop better understanding of the risks to historic places and of the diverse meanings of heritage to different people.

Torbay Council recognises that our built, natural and cultural heritage are essential to the future success of Torbay. This approach does not prevent development, but encourages a responsible approach, balancing heritage and local need for the benefit of all our communities, now and for future generations.



SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.3 Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of the Brixham Town Conservation Area is derived from the following key factors:

Historical Interest

The conservation area continues to evidence the origins of Brixham Town as a small fishing port and naval supply station and its rapid growth in the 19th century following the continued success of the fishing industry.

Topography and Configuration

The distinctive and dramatic topography of the conservation area shaped the direction of 18th and 19th-century development, which was required to step up the cliff face and valleys as well as stretching down the lower ground at New Road and Bolton Street. Much development on the higher ground around the harbour is tightly clustered and curvilinear, lending a highly organic character despite the large number of planned urban terraces.

The many elevated positions throughout the conservation area provide sweeping views of the harbour and wider coastline, as well as across the town.

The main historic thoroughfares have been preserved, as have many historic through-roads, alleyways and long flights of steps across the conservation area.

Architecture

The conservation area preserves many examples of 18th, 19th and early 20th-century terraces, which are its characteristic typology. However, there are also several examples of historic industrial, civic and religious structures which demonstrate the origins of the town and its dramatic expansion during the 19th century.

1.4 Definition of a Conservation Area

A conservation area is defined as an ‘*area of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*’⁰¹

Conservation areas recognise the unique qualities of an area as a whole. This includes the contribution of individual buildings and monuments but also of other features, including topography, materials, spatial relationships, thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces and landscaping. All

these features contribute to the character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive sense of place.

The extent to which a building, or group of buildings, positively shape the character of a conservation area derives not just from their street-facing elevations but also from the integrity of their historic fabric, overall scale and massing, detailing and materials. Rear and side elevations can also be important.

1.5 Purpose and Scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal

It is a requirement under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* for all local planning authorities to ‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’ of conservation areas within their jurisdiction and for these documents to be periodically reviewed.⁰²

The Brixham Town Conservation Area was last reviewed with the production of a draft Conservation Area Appraisal in 2016, which was not formally adopted by Torbay Council. The previous appraisal took place in 1999.

⁰¹ Section 69 (1), *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

⁰² Section 71 (1), *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.

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It is important for local planning authorities to maintain an up-to-date strategy for the positive management of conservation areas so that they can be carefully adapted and continue to thrive. These public documents define and record the special interest of a conservation area and set out a plan of action for its on-going protection and enhancement.

Over time, conservation areas evolve and the integrity of characteristics which underpin their special interest may depreciate due to gradual alteration. It is therefore important to review and take stock of the character of a conservation area at intervals to ensure designation is still suitable and that the proper tools to manage change are in place.

Reviews often find that conservation area boundaries were previously drawn too tightly or include peripheral areas which do not contribute to an understanding of its character. Consequently, it is important to review the boundary and include/exclude buildings and spaces which do/not meet the requirements for conservation area designation.

This Conservation Area Appraisal seeks to:

- Record and analyse the special interest of the Brixham Town Conservation Area;
- Recognise the designated and non-designated heritage assets which comprise the conservation area;
- Identify issues relating to condition and detracting features, as well as opportunities for enhancement; and
- Provide guidance for the positive management, preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

Although this document is intended to be comprehensive, the omission of any building, structure, feature or space does not imply that said element is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest of the conservation area. The protocols and guidance provided in **Section 8 (Conservation Area Designation: Control Measures and Best Practice Guidance)** are applicable in every instance.

The assessments which provide the baseline information for this Conservation Area Appraisal have been carried out utilising publicly available resources and through on-site analysis from the public thoroughfares within the conservation area.

1.6 Planning Policy

1.6.1 National Planning Policy

Conservation areas were introduced in the United Kingdom under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. They are now governed under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. The *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised December 2024) sets out the overarching requirement for local planning authorities to identify and protect areas of special interest (paragraph 204).⁰³

1.6.2 Local Planning Policy

1.6.2.1 Torbay Local Plan

The Torbay Local Plan 2012-30 was adopted in December 2015 and a draft update will be published for consultation in Spring 2025. The Local Plan details the local planning policies that will shape and guide development in Torbay to 2030. Of specific relevance to Brixham Town Conservation Area are policy HE1: Listed buildings and Policy SS10: Conservation and the historic environment, which are reproduced on the following page.

⁰³ When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

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Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030

Policy HE1: Listed buildings

Development proposals should have special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building and its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Proposals for the alteration or extension of any listed building will not be permitted if the character of the building would be adversely affected. Suitable uses for listed buildings will be supported where this would help to conserve their historic fabric and character. In appropriate cases, planning policies may be applied in a flexible manner to accommodate such uses. Changes of use, demolition or development which damage the fabric or character of a listed building will not be permitted. New development should respect the significance, scale, form, orientation and architectural detailing of any listed building it affects.

Policy SS10: Conservation and the historic environment

Development will be required to sustain and enhance those monuments, buildings, areas, walls and other features which make an important contribution to Torbay's built and natural setting and heritage, for their own merits and their wider role in the character and setting of the Bay. This includes all designated and undesignated heritage

assets, including scheduled monuments, historic buildings (both nationally listed and of local importance), registered historic parks and gardens, conservation areas, and archaeological remains.

All heritage assets will be conserved, proportionate to their importance. In particular approval of a scheme causing substantial harm to, or loss of, a Grade II listed building, park or garden will be exceptional.

Substantial harm to or loss of designated assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, Grade I and II* listed buildings and Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens will be wholly exceptional.

Proposals that may affect heritage assets will be assessed on the following criteria:

- 01 The impact on listed and historic buildings, and their settings;
- 02 The need to encourage appropriate adaptations and new uses;
- 03 The need to conserve and enhance the distinctive character and appearance of Torbay's conservation areas, while allowing sympathetic development within them;
- 04 The importance of protecting and promoting the assessment and evaluation

of Torbay's ancient monuments and archaeological remains and their settings, including the interpretation and publication of archaeological investigations;

- 05 The safeguarding of the character and setting of Torbay's historic parks and gardens;
- 06 The impact on vistas and views of Torbay's historic features and areas which form part of the visual and tourist appeal of Torbay;
- 07 Whether the impact of development, alteration or loss is necessary in order to deliver demonstrable public benefits, taking into account the significance of the heritage asset. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval; and
- 08 Whether new development contributes to the local character and distinctiveness of the area, particularly through a high quality of design, use of appropriate materials, or removal of deleterious features.

Proposals that enhance heritage assets or their setting will be supported, subject to other Local Plan Policies.

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1.6.2.2 The Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan

The Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by Torbay Council in June 2019, and forms part of the Development Plan for Torbay.⁰⁴ Of specific relevance to Brixham Conservation Area are policies BH6: Roofscape and dormer management, E6: Views and vistas, E7: Protecting semi-natural and other landscape features, and BE1: Heritage assets and their setting. Policy BH6 is of particular importance and is reproduced adjacent.

Policy BH6: Roofscape and dormer management

BH6.1: To protect local amenity, where planning permission is required: Dormers will only be approved where they:

- are modestly scaled;
- are subservient to the roofscape, by being below the ridge line and set in from the sides and eaves lines;
- are sympathetic to the original fascia and eaves and retain traditional roof features (such as chimney stacks);
- do not include inappropriate projecting roof features (such as Juliette balconies or extractor fans);
- use traditional materials and methods of fixing which are consistent with the local character of the area;

- include windows that are subordinate in size, aligned to the windows below and sympathetic to traditional fenestration in materials, form and expression; and
- do not result in a detrimental impact to neighbouring residential amenity.

BH6.2: Design construction should reflect the traditional, intrinsic qualities of the original building.

BH6.3: Large roof-lights or solar panels can be as visually harmful as poorly designed dormer windows. They should be carefully designed and positioned to avoid impacting on the appearance of a building, particularly where they are not a characteristic feature in the area.

⁰⁴ <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/brixham-np/>

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1.6.2.3 Torbay Heritage Strategy

The Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026 was adopted in November 2020. The Strategy produced a suite of objectives for the Torbay Area.⁰⁵

Relevant Objectives from the Torbay Heritage Strategy

ID	Objective	Measure of Success
SEC04	Heritage assets in Torbay are protected from the effects of climate change and carbon reduction is central to their management.	Updated Conservation Area Appraisals assess risks from climate change and all guidance for building owners includes reference to mitigation and/or carbon reduction measures.
SEC04	The special and distinctive characteristics of Torbay's Conservation Areas are, where appropriate, preserved and enhanced.	All Conservation Area Appraisals are reviewed, updated and adopted where necessary. Building owners and managers in Conservation Areas feel supported. Proposals that enhance heritage assets or their setting are supported, subject to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.
SEC06	Building owners, retailers and developers are encouraged and equipped to enhance the built environment in historic areas.	Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal the architectural heritage of their setting are supported. Shop front design guides for Torquay, Paignton and Brixham are published and promoted. Updated Urban Design Guide and Residential Design Guide.

⁰⁵ Torbay Council, Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026, <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/local-plan/torbay-heritage-strategy/>

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ID	Objective	Measure of Success
SEC07	Public spaces in historic areas are easy to navigate and, if possible, enhanced by appropriate street furniture and signage	Unnecessary street furniture and signage is removed. Design of all new and replacement street furniture references and enhances the architectural heritage of its setting. Wayfinding in the public realm clearly and consistently aids navigation to key heritage sites and around the historic environment without unnecessary visual intrusion.
HMN03	Ashhole Cavern and Windmill Hill Cave are managed appropriately and protected for the future.	Management plans are agreed between the landowner, Torbay Council and Historic England, and an ongoing review process is in place. Ashhole Cavern and Windmill Hill Cave are removed from the Heritage at Risk Register. The potential for a wider Monument Management Scheme (MMS) for Torbay is explored.
TRW02	The special character of Brixham Town Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced.	Further loss of natural, local slate roofing is discouraged and its use is supported in new buildings and restoration works. Creative interpretation of Brixham's distinctive heritage is accessible in the public realm.

1.6.3 Guidance

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared in line with guidance published by Historic England, the government-appointed body for the management of the historic environment in England, particularly Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, (updated February 2019). The guidance and publications produced by Historic England are subject to periodic review and users are advised to check for the most up-to-date guidance.

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1.7 English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

Brixham Town is included within the English Riviera Geopark, a designation awarded by UNESCO to recognise areas of exceptional geological significance, which are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.⁰⁶ Torbay was designated as a Geopark in 2007 on account of the international importance of 32 geo-sites spanning 400 million years. The designation recognises the contribution of Torbay to geological and archaeological sciences and the way that the local geology has shaped human history and endeavor across Torbay. From providing shelter to the earliest prehistoric people and animals in Kents Cavern near Torquay, to protecting Nelson's fleet from the prevailing winds and enabling the development of Brixham as a fishing port, the unique geology and landscape has influenced the history of the English Riviera.

The purpose of a Geopark is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between geological heritage and all other aspects of the area's natural, cultural and intangible heritage.

UNESCO Global Geopark status imposes no additional legislation from a planning perspective. However, the designated status of the Geopark is embedded within local planning policy. Torbay Council's working document, *English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark: Briefing Document for Planning* explains the process for planning applications within or near Sites of Special Interest (SSSIs), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and sites of potential geological interest (old quarries, cliff faces etc). There are three RIGS within/partially within the conservation area: Breakwater Quarry, Brixham Cavern and Sharkham Point to Berry Head.⁰⁷ Sharkham Point to Berry Head is also a SSSI.

English Riviera



unesco

Global Geopark

⁰⁷ Torbay Council, *English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark: Briefing Document for Planning*, working document V4, updated 04/04/2024.

⁰⁶ <https://unesco.org.uk/geoparks/>

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



South Quay, early
20th-century

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 provide a brief overview of the history of Brixham. A more detailed history, taken from the draft Conservation Area Appraisal produced in 2016, is provided in Appendix D.

2.1 Summary History

Early History: Archaeological discoveries record prehistoric activity in the area from Middle Palaeolithic times (250,000 – 40,000 BC) – with ancient caves at Ash Hole Cavern, Brixham Cavern and Bench Cavern containing evidence of prehistoric occupation and usage. Evidence has also been recovered for Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman activity in or adjacent to the conservation area.

Medieval Brixham: During the Middle Ages, modern-day Brixham was known as ‘Lower Brixham’. It was not large enough to be mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 (unlike the neighbouring ‘Higher Brixham’, with a nucleus around the medieval St Mary’s Church to the south-west of Brixham Harbour). A manorial survey of 1440 indicates that there were a number of cottages around the inner harbour at Lower Brixham – their inhabitants working at sea.

Tudor Brixham: Although the Tudor town was still very small, it had established itself as a successful fishing port by the 1530s. Brixham Quay appears on a coastal defence map from Henry VIII’s time, in 1540. In 1588, Francis Drake brought *The Capitana*, the first of the great galleons of the Spanish Armada to be captured, to Brixham.

Brixham in the 17th Century: From the mid-17th century, England was engaged in longer-ranging conflict at sea with the Dutch Republic, France and Spain. This saw the development of port facilities and further infrastructure at Brixham harbour. In 1688, William of Orange’s invasion fleet landed at Brixham.

Brixham harbour was the landing site of William of Orange during the Glorious Revolution in 1688.



A statue of William of Orange memorialises the landing of the future King of England at Brixham Harbour in 1688.

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

18th Century: In the 1750s, Brixham constituted a single street leading to a creek and pond between Middle Street and Fore Street – to the north of the present-day central car park. Brixham fishermen pioneered deep-sea trawling in the 18th century, and many cottages were built on the steep slopes surrounding the harbour to accommodate fishermen, sailors and their families. The town became a major fleet anchorage and supply station during naval conflict with France between 1756-1763. The town continued to serve this important function until the cessation of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.

19th Century: Following the waning importance of Torbay to the Navy, activity at Brixham throughout the 19th century was dominated by shipbuilding and fishing – both owing much to the invention of the pioneering ‘Brixham Trawler’ in the early 19th century. The town expanded with new terraced housing, churches, schools and industrial infrastructure, and in the middle of the century boasted the largest fishing fleet in England. The Torbay and Brixham Railway opened in 1868.



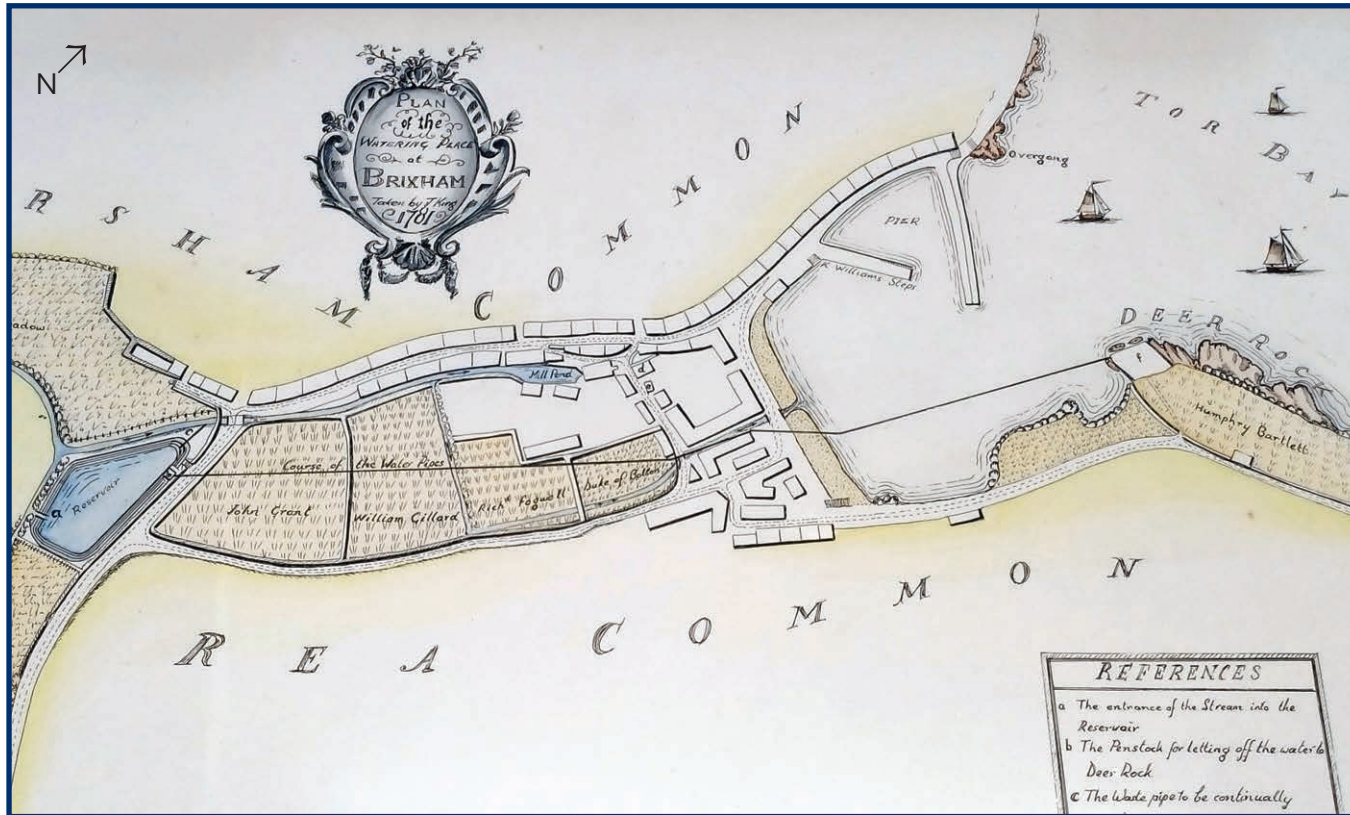
Brixham Harbour from the south-east, 1928. Historic England Archive.

Early-Mid 20th Century: The Breakwater north of the harbour was completed in 1916. Southern Quay was constructed in c.1930. The quays and shipbuilding yards were requisitioned during the Second World War, and the outer harbour main slipway and hard area (Breakwater Hard) was constructed in 1943.

Later 20th Century: Despite the dwindling size of the fishing fleet in Brixham over the early 20th century, the adoption of large trawlers in the 1960s secured the success of the industry throughout the end of the 20th and into the 21st century. The fish market was moved from the existing marketplace to a new area north of New Pier in the 1970s.

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

2.2 Illustrated History



Plan of the Watering Place at Brixham, by J King, 1781. Brixham Heritage Museum.

One of the earliest detailed maps of the town is J King's 'Plan of the Watering Place at Brixham', published in 1781. The plan depicts a settlement focussed around the harbour. The northern boundary was formed by Middle Street, the southern by Fore Street and King Street, and the western by Market/Bolton Street. Built development was limited to the north and partial south side of Middle Street, the western end of King Street and a small area to the west of The Strand.

West of Market Street was a reservoir, which fed King's Quay in the east by means of underground pipes running west to east below the town. The site of the present central car park was mostly occupied by meadows, with a creek and pond on its northern boundary, to the south of Middle Street.

King's plan shows the Eastern Quay in situ, and a now-lost quay known as 'King William's Steps' south-west of the Eastern Quay (which is presumed to have been the landing place of William of Orange in 1688).

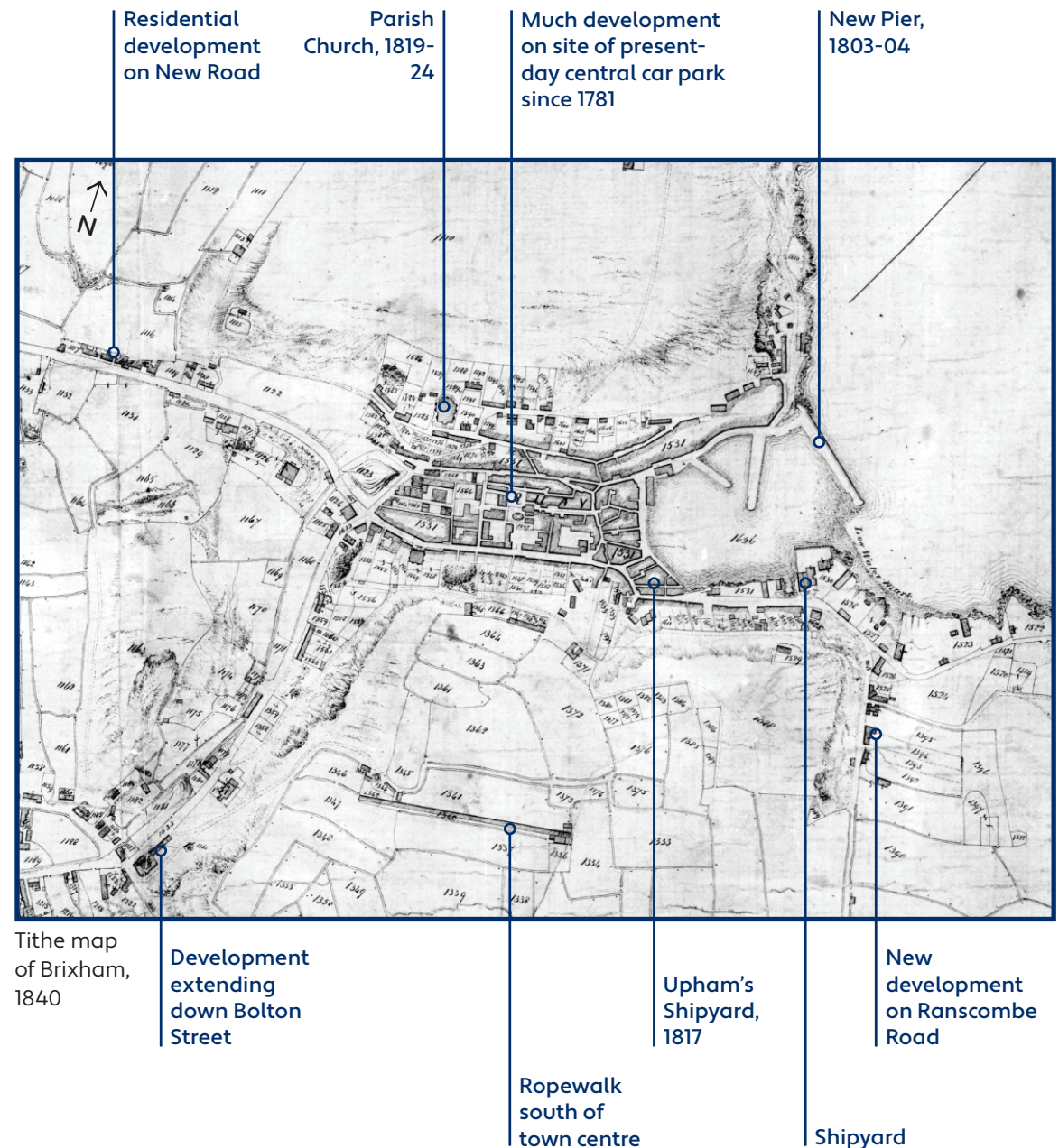
The town was bounded to the north by 'Fursham Common', to the south by 'Rea Common', and to the west by 'Tinkers Wood'.

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

The tithe map, produced in 1840, shows Brixham's growth as a successful fishing port. The central area occupied today by the central car park had been wholly developed. Higher Street had been laid out, connected to Middle Street by Church Hill and Apters Hill. A 'chapel of ease' had been constructed north of Middle Street in the early 19th century, serving the growing population of Lower Brixham – who had until this point been required to attend church in Higher Brixham. The church was ministered by Reverend Henry Francis Lyte from 1824-47, who is best known for his hymn 'Abide with Me'.

The map shows how Brixham was expanding beyond the historic core, with new development on Bolton Street, Ranscombe Road, surrounding the new church and extending down the aptly named 'New Road' – laid out since King's map of 1781. It depicts the Baptist Church of 1801 (at the angle of Market Street and Middle Street), and the Methodist Chapel on Fore Street (1816). The Congregational Chapel in Bolton Street was constructed slightly later, in 1843-45.

The Eastern Quay was reconstructed in 1803-1804, at which time the former pier known as 'King William's Steps' was demolished. Upham's Shipyard (now the site of the residential development at Moorings Reach) was built in 1817, and was the site at which many trawlers and other vessels were constructed throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Although fishing and ship-building were the primary industries in Brixham at this time, the tithe map also shows two ropewalks north and south of the historic core, alongside various quarries and lime kilns.



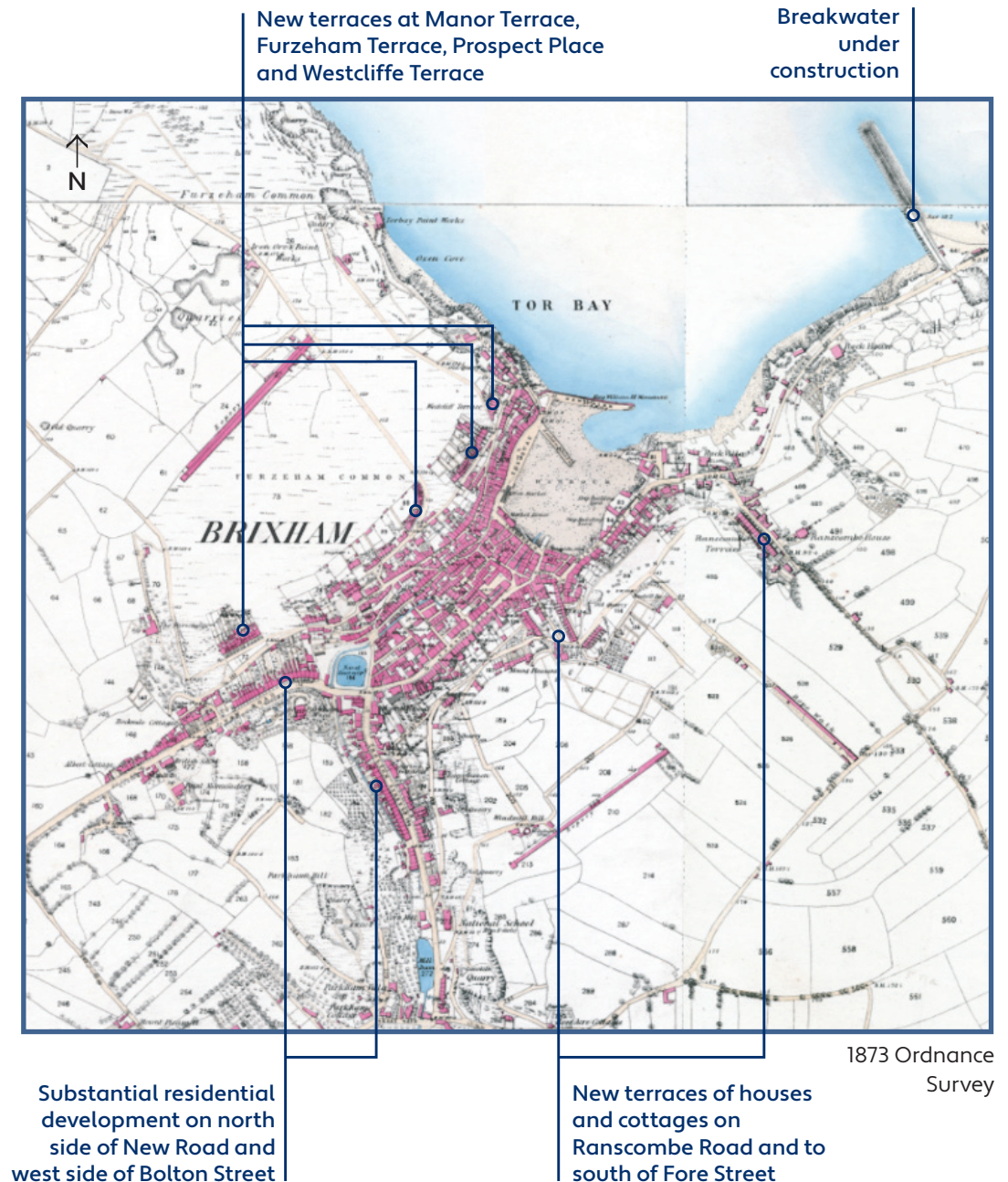
SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Victorian Brixham was characterised by rapid residential development, with terraced housing and cottages being built around the historic core of the town. New residential development took place in every direction, and roads shown only as footpaths on the tithe map (Station Hill and Prospect Road) had been widened to accommodate new development by the 1873 Ordnance Survey. However the development beyond Rock House, on the south side of Berry Hill, and Berry House (now the Berry Head Hotel) was still sparse.

Industry was still an important part of the townscape – the map shows a paint manufactory, malt house and timber yard off New Road, gas works in the town centre and multiple ship-building yards around the harbour. Rust-proof paint was pioneered in Brixham during the mid-19th century, produced in factories at Oxen Cove and New Road.

The map shows the Breakwater under construction – it was begun in 1843 and completed in 1916. At this point, Brixham had both a National School off Bolton Street and a British School off New Road (the hall of the former National School hall survives today). Key buildings shown in the 1873 map which exist today include the post office (now the Brixham Heritage Museum), the Independent Chapel on Bolton Street and the British Seamans' Boys Home (now the Grenville House Outdoor Education Centre) off King Street.

An important moment in Brixham's history was the discovery of Brixham Cavern, also known as 'Bone Cavern' and 'Windmill Hill Cave', in 1858. Now a scheduled monument on the site of the terraces at Mount Pleasant Road, the discovery of prehistoric vertebrate remains was of international significance.



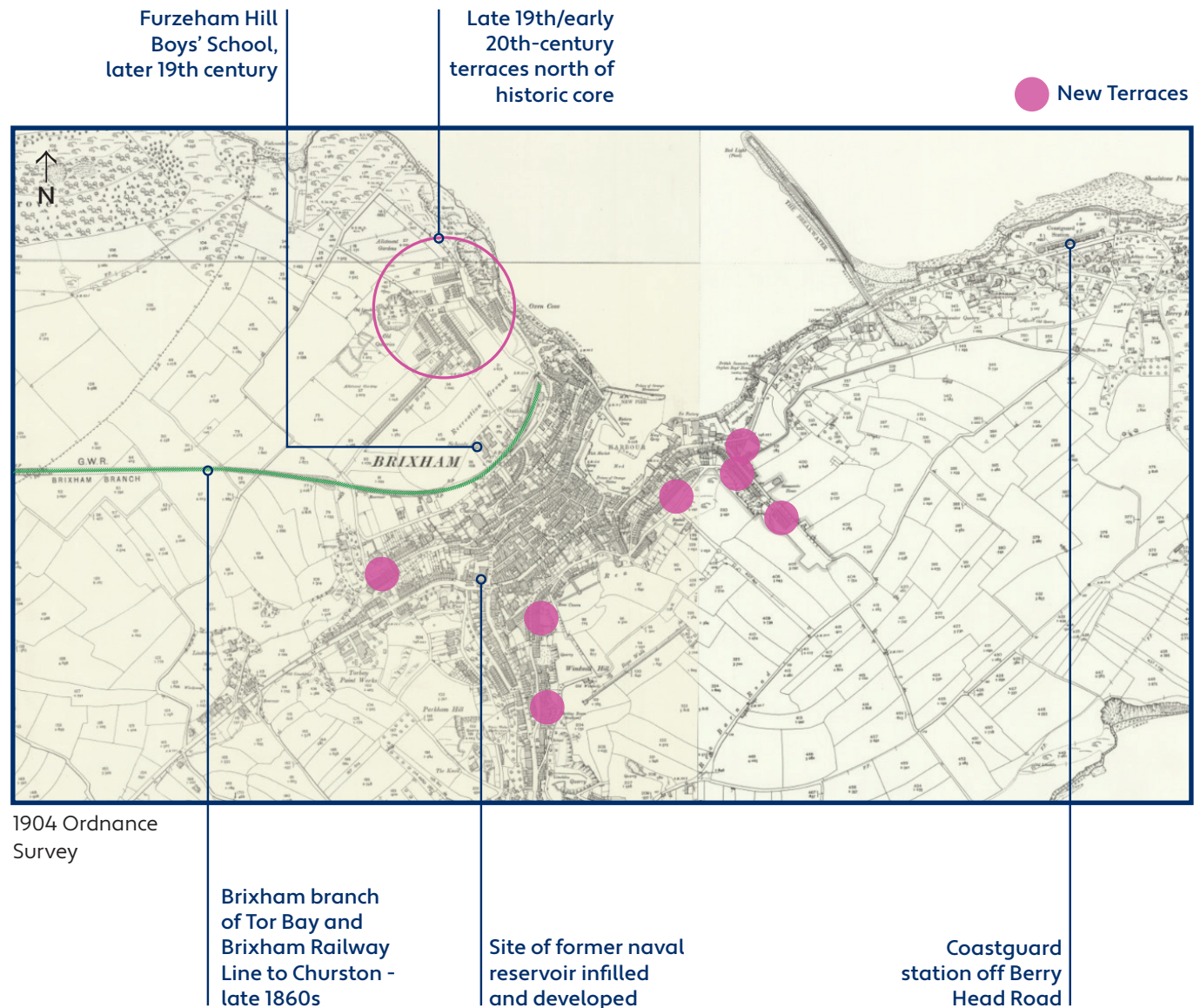
SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

The 1904 Ordnance Survey demonstrates the continued residential development which characterised Brixham during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. New roads and terraces were laid out to the north of the historic core (e.g. Bella Vista Road), south of King Street (New View Road) and north of New Road (Lower Manor Road). The site of the former naval reservoir and the associated watercourse had been infilled and developed as the Town Hall – which is still extant today.

Further development had taken place along Berry Hill – with five linked pairs of semi-detached stone cottages built for coastguards in c.1889. Several other detached houses had been constructed behind the new coastguard station.

Significant changes closer to the town centre included the new railway line and station, which was constructed just south of Furzeham Common in c.1868 (although it is not captured on the 1875 Ordnance Survey). Furzeham Common itself was developed in the later 19th century with the construction of Furzeham Hill Boys' School.

The Breakwater was extended 500m to achieve its current length between 1909 and 1916.



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The 1936 Ordnance Survey and 1940s aerial photography shows the continued expansion of residential development around the outskirts of the town, as well as some areas of infill and rebuilding within the conservation area boundary, during the early 20th century. This includes the extension of the terracing on Glenmore Road, a new block at Nos. 44-70 Middle Street, terraces at 1-6, 7-10 and 11-16 Garlic Rea and long terrace groups on Berry Head Road (Nos.25-57).

The emergency coastal battery at Battery Gardens was built in 1940 to protect the harbour. In 1943, the slipway and hard at the southern end of the Breakwater was constructed in preparation for D-Day, and was used by the United States forces on the journey to Normandy. Two large houses in Berry Head Road were demolished to allow tanks to turn on their approach to the slipway - now preserved as Churchill Gardens.

After the Second World War, Brixham began to capitalise in earnest on its ability to attract tourists. Many larger properties in and around the town were converted to serve as accommodation for holiday makers. During the late 1960s, the gas works and surrounding dwellings were demolished to make way for a multi-storey car park in the town centre (itself demolished in 2004).

The railway station was closed in 1963 and was subsequently demolished and redeveloped as a housing estate. In the 1970s, the fish market was moved to its present position off Overgang. Increased tourism in the 20th century has led to the proliferation of restaurants, cafes and pubs around the harbour.

Towards the end of the 20th century, the remaining industrial infrastructure on the South Quay was removed and the Brixham Marina was developed with associated facilities and a public harbour walkway.



Breakwater, extended
500m between 1909
and 1916

Slipway and hard
constructed in
advance of the
D-Day landings

Brixham as seen in aerial
imagery from 1946. Historic
England Archive.

Warehouses on the South Quay,
associated with shipbuilding
yards in this area

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2.3 Architecture and Built Form

2.3.1 The Distinctive Character of Brixham Town

The physical and historical nucleus of Brixham Town is the harbour. The harbour drove the expansion of Brixham in the 18th and 19th centuries – the town was both an important victualling station for the Navy and a highly successful fishing port. The harbour has also been responsible for the growth of tourism in the town, which saw further expansion over the 20th century and shaped the commercial character of the historic core as it is now experienced.

Today, the harbour has a dual character, being both recreational (with a marketplace, marina and a range of pubs and cafes), and industrial (with a working fishery operating off New Pier and the quay east of Overgang Road).

The dramatic topography of the town is key to the sense of enclosure and density within the historic core; built development steps sharply up the cliff to the north-east and south-west of the harbour. Narrow

and often steep alleyways are typical throughout the town, connecting primary routes to one another and linking historic residential areas to the commercial core.

Unlike the neighbouring towns of Torquay and Paignton, Brixham did not fashion itself as a seaside resort town until after the Second World War. As a consequence, the built form has a more organic and intimate character than other parts of Torbay – lacking typical features of 19th-century seaside towns such as promenades, large sea-front hotels and public piers.

The built form of Brixham gives the town a post-medieval character, with the dominant typology being the late 19th/early 20th-century terrace. The expansive survival of this typology across the conservation area is important. However, the conservation area also derives historical and architectural interest through the diverse range building typologies which can be found throughout. These include churches, chapels, schools and other large-scale civic infrastructure, industrial buildings, substantial villas and humble vernacular cottages.

Brixham Harbour is the thread connecting the town's past with its present. Brixham's success as a **naval supply** station, highly successful **fishing port** and later an important **tourist destination** all derive from its proximity to the harbour, which is still surrounded and overlooked by many historic buildings.



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2.3.2 Architectural Styles and Typologies

Historic Dwellings and Shopfronts

Much of the commercial core, particularly Middle Street, Fore Street, The Strand and the northern extent of Bolton Street, is occupied by historic dwelling houses with inserted 19th and 20th-century shopfronts at ground floor level. Unlike the planned terraces in the surrounding streets, the buildings in the commercial core of Brixham are characterised by variety in style and scale.

Many historic properties along Bolton Street and New Road are still in use as residential dwellings. Together, the 18th and 19th-century houses which survive around the historic core illustrate the evolution of architectural fashions, displaying the Georgian and early Victorian fondness for symmetry and restrained façades alongside later 19th-century tastes for large bay windows and prominent street-fronting gables.



A range of historic buildings converted to provide ground floor shopfronts on Fore Street.



An early 19th-century house on the corner of Fore Street and Bolton Road, with a later ground-floor shopfront.



Grade II listed, early 18th-century cottages at Nos. 24-26 Bolton Road.



The southern end of Bolton Road has a domestic character but is architecturally diverse.

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Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian Villas

The conservation area contains several detached, historically high-status villas – including Rea House (early to mid-19th century), Ranscombe House (early/mid-19th century), Furzesham Court House (1832), Rock House (c.1840) and Wolborough House (1910). The area around Berry Head Road

in particular, towards the eastern edge of the conservation area, is characterised by detached late-Victorian and Edwardian villas. They are a minimum of three storeys high and are adorned with large gables and turrets, in a mixture of exposed masonry and render.

Brixham has a range of architectural typologies, including historic houses, shops, terraces, important civic buildings and industrial infrastructure. All tell the story of Brixham's past.



Rock House, Berry Head Road.



Wolborough House, Berry Head Road.

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The Urban Terrace

The terrace as a typology first appeared at the end of the 17th century, and is characterised by a uniform design, sharing common materials, boundary treatments and planforms. Whilst early Georgian examples were generally high-status developments (such as those found in Bath, Bristol and London), more modest terraces with standard details became common in England during the later 18th century.⁰⁸

Although a distinctive typology seen throughout the 18th, 19th and early 20th century, terraces reflected the wider architectural styles fashionable at the time they were built. Late 18th and early 19th-century terraces in Brixham, which are generally found closer to the historic centre (e.g. those at Pring's Court, Temperance Place and the bottom of King Street) are generally architecturally plain, lacking features such as bay windows, prominent dormers and decorative mouldings found throughout terraces from later in the century. They tend to have classically-inspired, highly symmetrical proportions.

Later 19th-century and early 20th-century generally terraces reflect the late-Victorian rejection of Georgian austerity. Although more restrained examples of late 19th and early 20th-century terraces exist (the development at Mount Pleasant Road for example), they tend to be characterised by prominent bay windows, and are often adorned with sculptural relief and decorative ridge tiles.



An early 19th-century terrace on Ranscombe Road. Note the uniformity of the fenestration across all three houses.



Early 19th-century terraces at Temperance Place.



A mid-Victorian terrace on the west side of New Road. The distinctive street-fronting gables and bay windows with moulded cornices are characteristic of this architectural typology.



A particularly elaborate example of an Edwardian terrace on Berry Head Road.

⁰⁸ Historic England, *Conserving Georgian and Victorian terraced housing, a guide to managing change*, 2020.

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Civic Architecture

The rapid expansion of Brixham over the course of the 19th century is illustrated in the range of civic infrastructure around the historic core. Key civic buildings include the Old Market House on the Harbour (c.1799), the former British Seamans' Boys Home (Grenville House) on Berry Head Road, the Town Hall and former police station (now the Brixham Heritage Museum) off New Road, and the later 19th-century Furzeham Hill Boys School (now Furzeham Primary & Nursery School).

The Old Market House is a vernacular building, constructed using local materials with no (or limited) regard for architectural fashion. It is constructed of exposed rubble stone with large arched openings at ground floor level to permit the movement of goods and people.

Other key civic buildings are 'polite' – designed with aesthetic intent in line with wider architectural tastes. Both Grenville House and Furzeham Primary School

display typical high Victorian detailing – with prominent street-fronting gables, tall windows, decorative ridge tiles and the use of brick dressings to articulate windows, doors and string courses. The Gothic revival style is also illustrated in the late-19th century National School hall on Bolton Street – now the Salvation Army church.

The 1886 Town Hall, in contrast, is constructed in an Italianate classical style, using classically-inspired details such as round-headed arched windows, projecting cornices, crescent-shaped fanlights, key stones and scrolled corbels.

The former post-office (now museum) of 1902 uses a different architectural style again, displaying the late 19th/early 20th-century taste for vernacular-inspired architecture in the use of rich red brick and Tudor-Gothic style window and door openings.

Together, these buildings demonstrate both the success of Brixham in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, and the range of architectural styles which were favoured at this time.



The 1880s Town Hall at Bolton Cross.



The former police station on New Road – now the Brixham Heritage Museum.

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Churches and Chapels

The Church of All Saints, first constructed between 1819-24 and rebuilt 1884-1906, is a focal point within Brixham Town. It is typical of late-Victorian churches – built in the Gothic Revival style with exposed masonry and large traceried windows.

There are several other historic religious buildings within the historic core, demonstrating the breadth of religious practice in Brixham and wider society during the 19th century. These include the Methodist Church on Fore Street (1816), the Baptist Chapel on Market Street (1801 with later extensions), the former Independent Chapel on Bolton Street – now a community centre (1843-45), and the deconsecrated St Peter's Church off St Peter's Hill (1874).

The non-conformist churches constructed in the early 19th century are typical in their use of classical detailing with round-headed arched openings, projecting moulded cornices, string courses and – in the case of the Methodist Church, a classical portico. The mid-late 19th-century churches on Bolton Street and St Peter's Hill favour the Gothic Revival style, with traceried windows and pointed arches.



Baptist Chapel on Market Street, begun 1801.



Methodist Church on Fore Street, built 1816.



Former Independent Chapel on Bolton Street, built 1843-45.



St Peter's Church, built 1874.



Former hall of Victorian National School on Bolton Street.



The Church of All Saints, rebuilt in the early 20th century.

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Industrial Architecture

The historic core retains evidence of the former industrial infrastructure which would have characterised a large part of the town prior to widespread demolition in the 1960s. These buildings are vernacular, prioritising function and economy over architectural fashion. Several examples can be found in the area to the east of the central car park (formerly home to many more industrial buildings before the construction of the multi-storey carpark). They are generally characterised by the use of exposed rubble stone walls, plain architectural detailing and large openings to admit goods as well as light.

The various piers, quays and the breakwater around Brixham Harbour are similarly reminiscent of the town's industrial past.



Looking eastwards down Paradise Place, which retains its historic industrial character.



A former industrial structure on Pump Street.



A former industrial structure off Pump Street.



Eastern Quay, a prominent historic industrial structure at Brixham Harbour.

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Offices and Commercial Buildings

There are several large-scale early 20th-century commercial structures on Fore Street, including the former offices of the Brixham Cooperative Society Limited, Lloyds Bank and a string of three-storey red-brick buildings with ground-floor retail spaces wrapping around the northern side of Fore Street and The Strand. Although occupying a limited area of the town, the large Baroque-inspired gables and rich red brick used on these Edwardian structures makes a striking contribution to the townscape.



Lloyds Bank (early 20th-century), on the corner of Pump Street and Fore Street.



Edwardian commercial structures on the north side of Fore Street/The Strand.

The architecturally striking civic and commercial buildings constructed in the Edwardian period demonstrate the confidence and success of Brixham in the early 20th century. They continue to enliven the streetscape in the historic core today.



BCSL stands for the Brixham Cooperative Society Limited - an important institution for the residents of early 20th-century Brixham.

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2.3.3 Distinctive Materials and Features of Interest

Common local materials used across the conservation area include:

- **Render:** a common finish found almost unanimously across historic domestic buildings, making the few examples of exposed brick or stone particularly distinctive (an example being the late-19th-century terrace on the corner of Ranscombe Road and King Street).
- **Brick:** brick-built terraces are generally finished with render although brick chimneys are visible across the conservation area. Distinctive examples of exposed red brick can be found in the Edwardian commercial buildings on Fore Street/The Strand and at the former police station on New Road. Red brick is often used to articulate openings to rubble-stone buildings around the historic core, whilst red and yellow brick dressings are found on prominent civic buildings such as the Town Hall, Grenville House and Furzesham Primary School.

- **Devonian limestone:** This grey limestone was historically readily available in the area and is found both in rubble form in industrial buildings and vernacular cottages and squared and/or dressed in larger-scale civic buildings and churches. It can also be found in boundary walls throughout the conservation area.
- **Slate:** the most common roofing finish to historic buildings, with some examples of clay and pantiles. Large pieces of purple-brown Devonian slate are often used in boundary walls.
- **Clay:** hung clay tiles can be found in pockets throughout the conservation area, frequently used to decorate gables and dormers on Edwardian terraces. Hard-fired, cream coloured clay pavers, dating from the late 19th century, can be found throughout the commercial and residential areas of the conservation area.



Detail of the late 19th-century decorative pavers found throughout the conservation area.

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There has been widespread replacement of traditional timber sash units with uPVC across the conservation area. Where pastiche replacements have been made in uPVC, these are conspicuous by their disproportionately thick frames and false glazing bars. Despite widespread replacement, there are many instances where traditional timber units have survived.

Doors are a mixture of panelled/glazed timber and modern glazed and uPVC replacements – particularly to domestic properties and commercial units on Bolton Street, New Road and Fore Street.

Common decorative features include:

- Decorative ridge tiles
- Decorative finials to dormers of terraces
- Moulded cornices and window/door surrounds to late 19th and early 20th-century terraces
- Quoins externally demarcating property boundaries
- Red and yellow brick dressings to exposed masonry
- Brightly coloured paint/render throughout

Historic shopfronts are prevalent throughout the conservation area, particularly on The Quay, Middle Street, Fore Street and King Street. However, there are also many examples of unsympathetic modern shopfronts in all commercial areas. Historic shopfronts tend to incorporate a stallriser (a platform below the shop window), glazing articulated by mullions and transoms (horizontal and vertical glazing bars) and

a fascia which advertises the name of the business. The fascia may be flanked by corbels at either end and may sit under a projecting moulded cornice. Traditional shopfronts follow the proportions established by the host building; fascias in terraced buildings generally respect party wall divisions and are situated well below first-floor window cills so upper windows are not obscured.



Example of a traditional shopfront on Fleet Street.

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2.3.3 Urban Grain, Configuration and Direction of Movement

The principal thoroughfares in Brixham today accord with the historic hierarchy of the access routes in and out of the town – all leading towards the harbour. Bolton Street, Middle Street, King Street and Overgang Road experience a steady flow of traffic in both directions, as does the mid-19th-century New Road which leads west out of the town centre. Traffic along Fore Street and the narrow and winding residential streets on the slopes above the town centre is far lighter.

The urban grain around the centre of the conservation area is very dense, with buildings generally fronting directly onto the highway. Long rows of buildings are

punctuated intermittently by narrow passages leading to other streets or providing access to the rear of buildings. This density is continued in the residential areas which developed on the slopes around the historic core in the 19th century – this is particularly noticeable around All Saints' Church. Narrow alleyways and steep runs of steps are prevalent throughout the conservation area, connecting residential terraces to the historic core of the town.

The latest parts of the conservation area to be developed – the suburban streets north-west of Overgang and towards the end of Berry Head Road – are notably less congested with wider streets and designed gaps between buildings.

The **history** of Brixham can be read today in the configuration of the main thoroughfares, as well as the **intricate alleyways** which form connections across the town. Bolton Street, King Street, Middle Street, Fore Street, Overgang and The Strand can all be seen on an 18th-century map of the town.



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2.4 Setting and Key Views

There are several types of views which contribute to and enhance the special interest of Brixham Town and situate the conservation area within its wider setting. The conservation area is bounded to the north-east by the sea. The wider town, which includes the Higher Brixham Conservation Area, is surrounded on all sides by the South Devon National Landscape. An indicative selection of key view types are provided to illustrate the views analysis, and can be cross-referenced with the accompanying plan on page 39. The selection of views shown here is not exhaustive, but includes the most notable examples.

2.4.1 View Out to Sea From the Quays, Breakwater and Coastal Path (views 01, 02, 03, 23 and 24)

These views facilitate wide-ranging vistas across the sea beyond the Breakwater. The sense of openness in these positions draws a striking contrast to the dense urban grain of the town centre. The coastline at Torquay is prominent in views from these positions, helping to situate the conservation area in its wider geographical context as part of Torbay. Berry Head is also highly visible – the exposed masonry of the coastguard cottages on the headland providing a contrast to

the paler rendered finishes which generally characterise the rest of the conservation area.

2.4.2 Views Across the Harbour from the Surrounding Quays and Piers (views 04, 05, 06 and 07)

Views 04-07 facilitate appreciation of the town's dramatic topography – with the colourful façades of the surrounding residential buildings, all orientated towards the harbour, stepping up the cliff-face. Views towards the South Quay take in the imposing 19th-century retaining wall which buttresses the north-west side of King Street. The view from New Pier back across the harbour demonstrates the distinctive 'bowl-shape' of the town, with development curving both around the harbour and sweeping up the cliff face behind.

2.4.3 Views Back Towards Brixham Town from the Breakwater (view 08)

Like the views from New Pier across the harbour, the 'bowl-shape' of the town is readily appreciable when looking back towards Brixham from the Breakwater. The additional distance in views from the Breakwater means the backdrop of the rural landscape is also visible, illustrating the historic relationship between the town and its wider landscape setting.

2.4.4 Views North-East from the Historic Core Towards the Harbour (views 09 and 10)

Views north-eastwards from the town centre out towards the harbour from Paradise Place, Beach Approach, The Strand and Quay Lane are both aesthetically pleasing and historically significant. Intervisibility between these early streets and lanes and the waterfront reflect the historic pattern of development, which has always been orientated towards the harbour as the economic nucleus of the town.

2.4.5 Views of the Harbour from Higher Ground (views 11 and 12)

Elevated, open views down into the harbour are particularly prominent on King Street, but can be found at various positions across the conservation area including from North View Road, Overgang Road and North Furzeham Road. The elevation from these positions enables sweeping views of the entire harbour including the piers, marina and Breakwater. These views are set against the wider coastal backdrop, situating the conservation area within its geographical context as part of Torbay.

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There are also important glimpsed views of the harbour throughout the conservation area from the tight residential developments on the cliff slopes.

2.4.6 Views Across Brixham from Higher Ground (Views 13, 14 and 15)

The roofscape of the conservation area plays a particularly important role in views across the town from higher ground. The variety in building heights, particularly within the historic core, lends the roofscape an organic character. There is a sense of unity however in the historic preference for pitched and/or hipped roofs with slate coverings – the retention of these traditional features enhancing the historic character of the town.

Elevated views across the town provide an opportunity to regard key local landmarks – in particular the Church of All Saints, Furzeham Primary School and Wolborough House.

There are also important glimpsed views of the town throughout the conservation area from the tight residential developments on the cliff slopes.

2.4.7 Terraced Streetscape Views (Views 16 and 17)

Much of the conservation area is characterised by coherent groups of terraced properties ranging from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. The effect of the large-scale survival of such groups is to create multiple self-contained streetscapes throughout the conservation area, which add significant visual interest as well as reflecting the historic development patterns of the town.

The characteristics of the various terraces vary between humble two-up, two-down rows with minimal architectural detail to larger three-storey houses with elaborate mouldings and prominent bay windows.

All rely for their architectural effect on the sense of uniformity – with shared proportions, materials, finishes and boundary treatments. The historic integrity of the terraces varies widely throughout the conservation area, with additions such as later box dormers and uPVC windows detracting from the overall effect.

2.4.8 Streetscape Views within the Historic Core (View 18)

Streetscapes within the historic core of the conservation area capture the diversity in typology, style and scale in this part of Brixham, which contains a range of industrial structures, historic dwellings, shopfronts, civic, commercial and religious buildings.

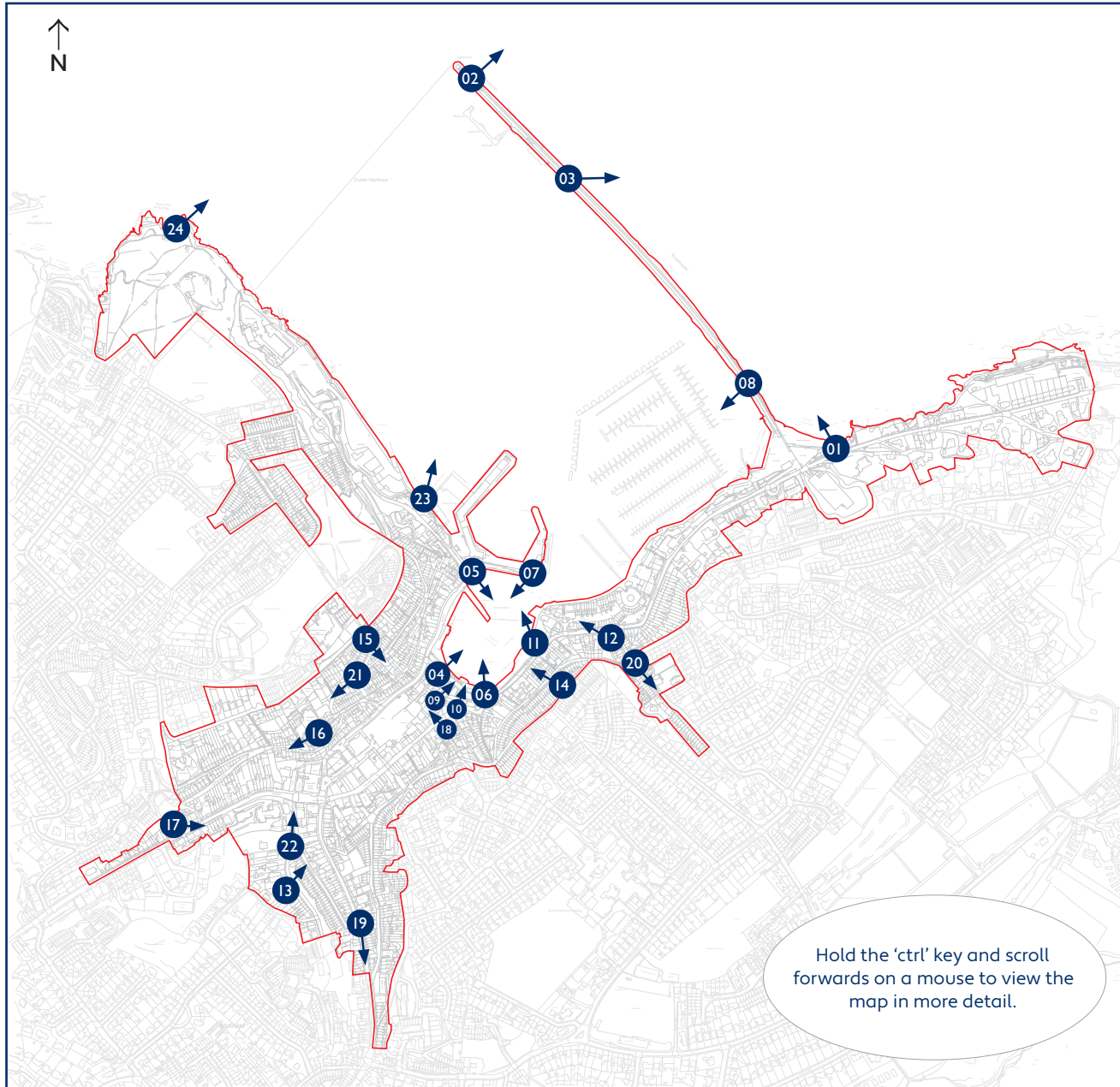
2.4.9 Glimpsed Views of the Rural Landscape (Views 19 and 20)

At certain positions within the conservation area, the rural landscape west of Brixham can be glimpsed. Where visible, this verdant backdrop punctuates the dense urban grain and allows the town to be appreciated within its wider setting. Key vantage points can be found on Bolton Street, Mount Pleasant Road and around St Mary's Church.

2.4.10 View of the Church of All Saints (Views 21 and 22)

The Church of All Saints is highly prominent in views throughout the conservation area, and can be seen from the lowest point in the town centre as well as from higher ground. The church creates a pleasant focal point within the town and references the growth of Brixham which began in earnest in the early 19th century, when the first iteration of this church was constructed.

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This plan is not to scale

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SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



View 01: Looking out to sea from the small beach east of the Breakwater.



View 02: Looking north-east from the end of the Breakwater out to sea.



View 03: Looking east from the Breakwater.



View 04: Looking north-east from The Strand, part of the South-West Coastal Path, out across Brixham Harbour.



View 05: Looking south-east from The Quay on the north-west side of the harbour.



View 06: Looking north from The Strand towards the north-west side of Brixham Harbour.

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



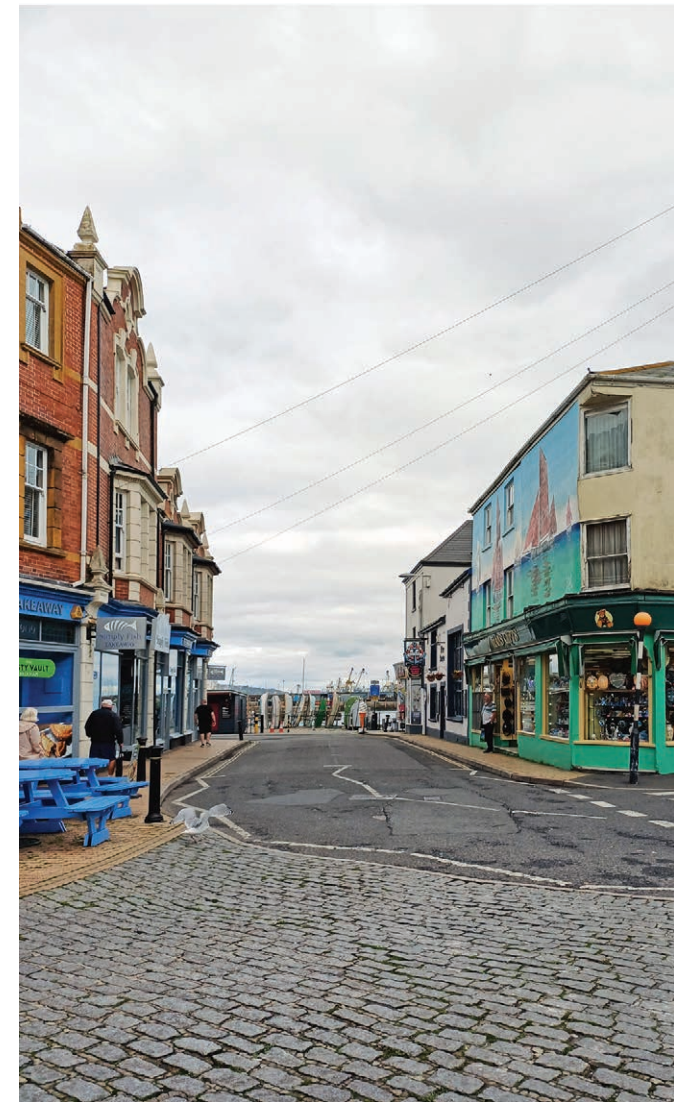
View 07: Looking south-west from New Pier across Brixham Harbour, back towards the town.



View 08: Looking back towards Brixham Town from the Breakwater.



View 09: Looking north-east along Beach Approach towards the harbour.



View 10: Looking north-east along The Strand towards the harbour.

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View 11: Looking across Brixham Harbour from King Street.



View 12: A glimpsed view of the harbour between two buildings on Garlic Rea.



View 13: Looking north-east across the conservation area from Parkham Road.



View 14: View of the roofscape from Elkins Hill.



View 15: A glimpsed view into the town below from Station Hill.

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View 16: A simple historic terrace on Church Street.



View 17: A later 19th-century terrace on New Road.



View 18: The corner of Pump Street and Fore Street, from which can be seen historic shopfronts, former industrial buildings and an Edwardian bank.



View 19: Looking south down Bolton Street away from the conservation area. The rural landscape terminates the view from this position.



View 20: Looking south towards the surrounding rural landscape down Mount Pleasant Road.



View 21: Looking towards the parish church from Station Hill.

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View 22: The Church of All Saints as seen from Parkham Road, off New Road.



View 23: Looking north towards the end of the Breakwater from the South-West Coastal Path.



View 24: Looking east from the South-West Coastal Path at the north of Battery Gardens.

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2.5 Public Realm

The public realm encompasses all the spaces and features which are accessible to the public and help bring together a sense of place as a whole.

Streetlighting generally comprises utilitarian modern streetlamps, with traditionally-styled lanterns around the harbour.

Street furniture is mostly concentrated around the harbour, where there are many contemporary public benches, traditionally

styled bollards, a mixture of smaller traditionally styled refuse bins and larger, more conspicuous modern bins. There are also several small kiosks selling tickets for local attractions on the north-west side of the harbour. There are modern benches positioned at key vantage points along Berry Head Road.

Most surfaces throughout the conservation area have been replaced with tarmac or modern pavers, however there are important areas where historic finishes survive.

Large areas of the pavement at Fore Street retain historic cream-coloured pavers, which can also be found in pockets throughout the wider conservation area. Other historic finishes are preserved on some pavements, alleyways, street gullies, steps and outside historic residential properties. In many places these finishes are clearly worn by many years of use and have a historic patina. Where they survive, these surfaces provide visual interest and enhance the historic character of the conservation area.



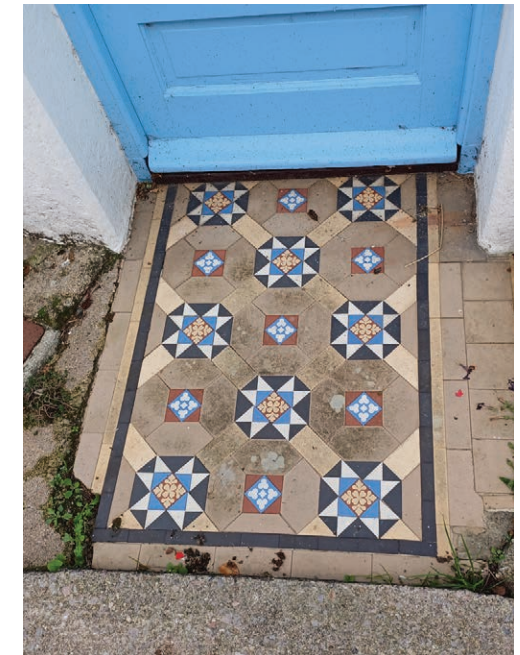
Historic cobbles and kerbstones at the bottom of Ranscombe Road.



Historic surface finish to a private lane off The Strand.



Characteristic cream-coloured pavers at Bella Vista Road.



Victorian encaustic tiles denoting the entrance to a terraced house on Prospect Road.

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Street name plates are generally discreet and are a mixture of modern and traditional in style. Traditional name plates are in keeping with the character of the conservation area.

Boundary treatments are variable. A high proportion of the buildings in the historic core, and many domestic terraces further out, front directly onto the public highway. This negates the need for boundary treatments in these areas. Conversely, many of the 19th and 20th-century terraces across the conservation area are set back from the street – most behind low, rendered boundary walls, some of which are topped with traditionally styled cast iron railings. Gate piers are a common feature both in terraces and historically higher status villas. Some terraces are also raised off the pavement, reached by steep flights of steps.

An important feature of the conservation area are the exposed Devonian stone/slate rubble walls, which can reach considerable heights in some areas. The 19th-century retaining wall on the north-west side of King Street is a particularly prominent feature in views across the harbour.

There are several monuments which create focal points within the public realm and provide a level of historic interpretation. These include the Prince of Orange

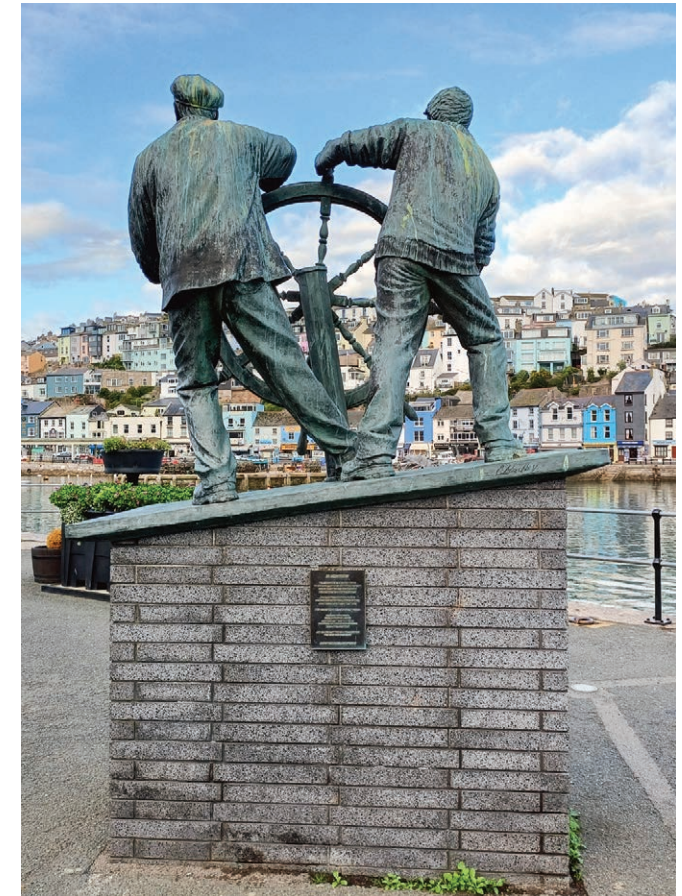


A traditionally styled nameplate. The use of small, dark blue ceramic tiles is prevalent across the conservation area.



Exposed rubble stone wall at Queens Steps.

Monument at The Quay, the Prince of Orange Statue at The Strand, the Man and Boy Monument on Kings Quay, and the war memorial on Berry Head Road.



The Man and Boy Monument on Kings Quay.

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

2.6 Open Spaces and Trees

The dense pattern of development within Brixham means that public open space and mature trees are limited throughout most of the conservation area. Key public open spaces are found around the harbour - in particular the sheltered area at New Fish Quay, the open space outside the Old Market House, Kings Quay, Breakwater Beach, New Pier and the Breakwater. There are also small seating areas on Berry Head Road.

There are small areas of green open space off North Furzeham Road, in the far north of the conservation area. In the far east is Shoalstone Outdoor Pool, off Berry Head Road.



Looking back towards the harbour from the public park off North Furzeham Road.

All these open spaces provide sweeping views across the harbour and points from which to appreciate the dramatic topography of the town.

Mature trees visible from the public realm are generally limited to those in private front gardens - most of which are too small to accommodate larger specimens. Mature trees do occur on the slopes of the inland valleys which flank New Road, Bolton Street and Ranscombe Road. Views of these trees are limited due to the density of development, but where visible, they soften the streetscape and serve as a visual reminder of the rural landscape beyond the town.



A small public open space around the war memorial on Berry Head Road.

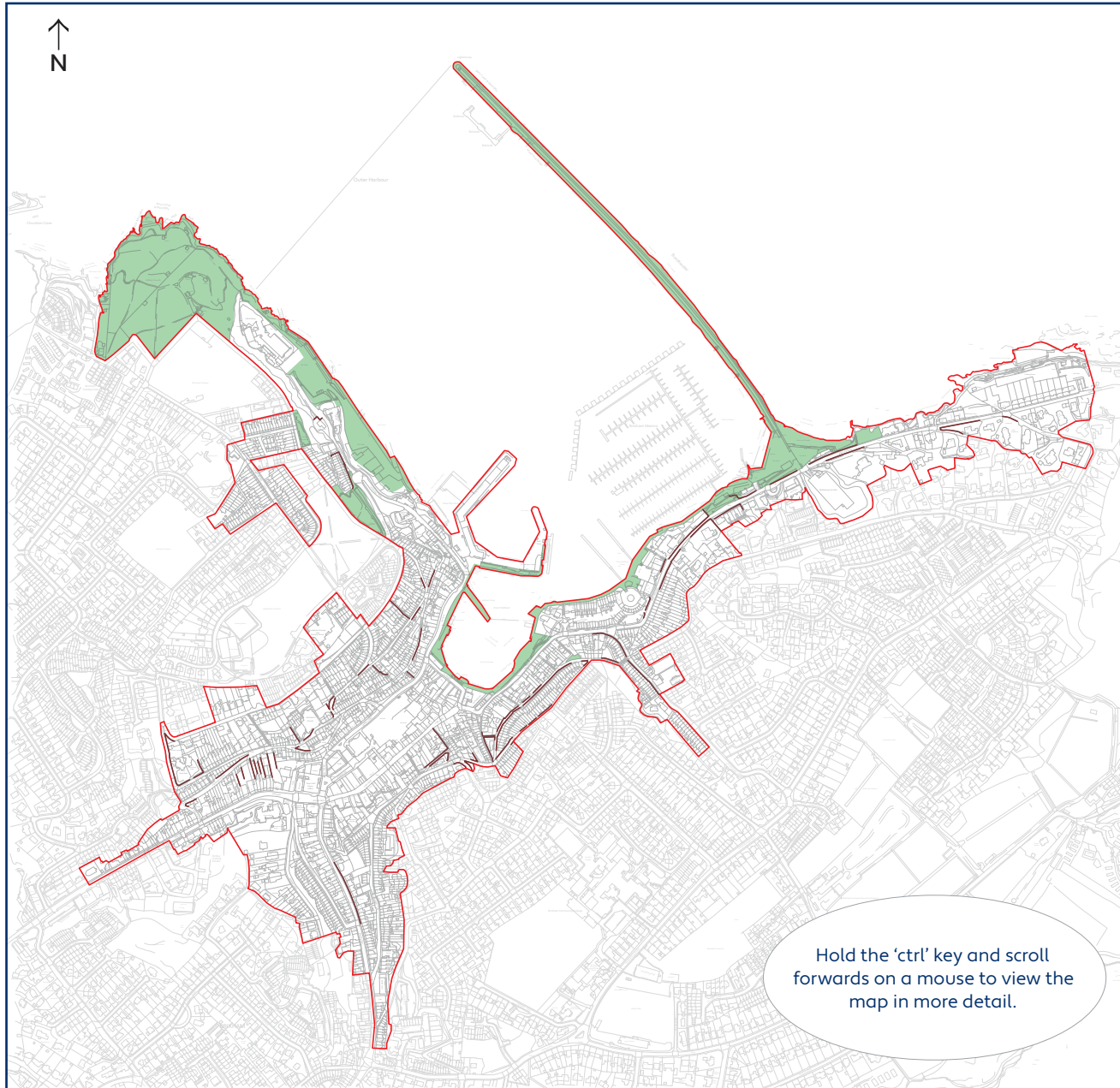
There are denser pockets of mature planting at the peripheries of the conservation area on the western boundary of Vicarage Hill and along Overgang Road, which lend a more verdant character in these areas.

The dense woodland at Battery Gardens to the north and around the Berry Head Hotel to the east frame the town in views from the sea and Breakwater, situating the conservation area within the wider rural landscape.



Looking down Vicarage Hill towards Higher Manor Road.

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



OPEN SPACES AND IMPORTANT WALLS

- Open Spaces
- Prominent Walls
- 2025 Conservation Area Boundary

This plan is not to scale

SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

2.7 Geology and Topography

The bedrock geology of lower Brixham is predominantly formed of Middle Devonian limestone, with overlying soils and shallow, well-drained brown stony clays and clay loams. The former inner harbour between Middle and Fore Streets comprises silty clays with occasional bands of peat, which sit below infill deposits of the post-medieval period. Local limestone is prevalent in the built environment across the conservation area.

Brixham occupies a 'bowl' shape within the landscape, the lowest points being the harbour, the town centre around the central car park, Bolton Street and New Street. Development rises sharply up the cliff face surrounding the harbour, levelling off at the plateaux historically occupied by Furzeham Common to the north and Rea Common to the south. Bolton Street and New Street both sit at the bottom of valleys and are similarly flanked by historic terraces rising steeply on either side. The dramatic topography is highly characteristic of the conservation area and provides many elevated views throughout.

2.8 Archaeological Potential

Brixham has a rich archaeological heritage. Excavations of prehistoric caves at Windhill Hill Cave (more commonly known as Brixham Cavern) off Windmill Road, Bench Cavern (off Higher Furzeham Road – now lost) and Ash Hole Cavern (behind Berry Head Road and just outside the conservation area) during the 19th century resulted in internationally important discoveries.⁰⁹ The town also preserves important archaeology relating to conflict from the Napoleonic wars and the American War of Independence (largely situated around Berry Head outside the conservation area boundary) and the Second World War. The site of central carpark and the quays surrounding the harbour are likely to retain archaeological remains related to former industrial activity in these areas, both pre- and post-medieval.

⁰⁹ Historic England, Windmill Hill Cave, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1008681>; Historic England, Ashole Cavern, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1019133>