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A259 BROOKLAND DIVERSION, KENT AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

by

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STAGE 1

Project No: 1994/191

February 1995

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South Eastern Archaeological Services

South Eastern Archaeological Services (SEAS) is a division of the Field Archaeology Unit, University College London, one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, SEAS have access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college as well as a range of other archaeological services.

The Field Archaeology Unit and SEAS were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, FAU/SEAS retain a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience. The Unit employs on its staff officers who have previously worked within local government and have experience of archaeology and the planning process, including public inquiry.

Field, desk top and consultancy projects have been undertaken for a wide range of clients, including water and gas utilities, The Department of Transport, major private construction companies, local authorities, English Heritage and a range of other private and public concerns.

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1. INTRODUCTION

South Eastern Archaeological Services (of University College London) was commissioned by Kent County Council's Highways and Transportation, on behalf of the Highways Agency, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the proposed route of the A259 Brookland Diversion, Brookland, Kent.

- 1.1 The route of the proposed road runs from the A259 at the western end of the village of Brookland (TQ 985255), though a mixture of arable and pasture fields, to rejoin the A259 to the east of the village at TQ 993262 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 A specification for the archaeological works, consisting of a borehole survey, trench evaluation and watching brief, was provided by Kent County Council. This report deals with the machine-trench evaluation only. Once all fieldwork is completed a full report combining all three elements of the archaeological work will be produced.
- 1.3 The bypass route lies between the settlements of Brookland and Misleham and is situated in the northern half of the decalcified (old) marshland of Walland Marsh.
- 1.4 The desk-top archaeological assessment by Jill Eddison (Romney Marsh Research Trust 1992) gives a brief summary of the known archaeological data for this area.
- 1.5 This report suggests extensive deposits of deeply buried peat may represent a high vegetated salt subject to human exploitation in the last 10,000 years (Eddison). The principal creek ridge system in the area is considered to be an early channel of the River Rother and it is possible this channel was in use during the Roman period. When this channel silted up it is thought to have formed the present large sandy ridge which covers much of the route.
- 1.6 Current evidence suggests the earliest occupation of the area was during the 9th century, although Brookland may have been established later than Misleham. The church (SMR No. TQ 92NE4) and belfry (SMR No: TQ 92 NE12) at Brookland dates to around the 12th and 13th centuries. Documentary evidence for sea defence and drainage systems is present from the 12th century. Although many of the 17th century drains are still extant, the extent of the earlier system of drainage is not known.
- 1.7 The main aims of the trench evaluation were:
- to establish the nature of the archaeological information identified by the desk-based archaeological assessment by Jill Eddison.

- to ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character and quality of any archaeological remains in other sample areas of the site along the route.
- to ascertain whether any further investigations are needed in specific locations prior to road construction with particular considerations to areas from which topsoil will be removed and the location of proposed drainage works.
- 1.8 This trench evaluation was undertaken by South Eastern Archaeological services during the week commencing 30th January 1995.

2.0 THE EXCAVATIONS: METHODS.

- 2.1 A Trench location map was provided by Kent County Council for the trench evaluation work. However, due to standing water in some fields, and with the agreement of Sally Howard, (the Employer's Representative), two trenches had to be relocated. These consisted of Trenches A and B which were moved to the south and east of their original locations. These trenches remained within the land-take area.
- 2.2 The topsoil was excavated from the trenches using a Kubota KX 151 tracked excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.3 Once excavated the trenches were cleaned by hand in order to locate any archaeological features. A careful search was also made of the spoil heap in order to locate any archaeological artefacts. A summary of artefacts by trench and context is given in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 All archaeological contexts (including the topsoil) were individually recorded on prepared context record forms. Sections and plans were drawn where appropriate.
- 2.5 Once planned, limited further investigation was undertaken in some trenches in order to extract datable material from features. Due to flooding, most features were not fully investigated, however, in most cases sufficient material was obtained to date them and some needed little clarification other than observations made in plan.
- 2.6 No deposits of palaeo-environmental interest were located during the trench evaluation and no environmental samples were taken.
- 2.7 Once recorded all trenches were backfilled by machine to the best of its ability in the waterlogged conditions.

3.0 THE EXCAVATION: RESULTS

3.1 Trench A

(Fig. 2 only)

The natural mid grey silt clay subsoil was located below 300mm of topsoil (Context 1). The subsoil was sampled to a depth of 400mm below the present surface to ascertain it's nature. With the exception of two medieval pottery sherds from the topsoil/subsoil interface the trench was archaeologically sterile.

3.2 Trench B

(Figs. 2 and 9)

- 3.2.1 The area immediately to the south of Trench B consists of a slight rise in ground level compared with the surrounding field. This was sketch plotted in the field (see Fig. 2). The topsoil around this trench contains a relatively dense scatter of medieval pottery and tile. Although the area immediately adjacent the trench was covered with vegetation which prevented a surface inspection, further to the south, in the newly seeded area, much material was visible. Although no systematic collection was undertaken, this concentration appeared to peter out some 16 metres to the south of the trench (Fig. 2).
- 3.2.2 The pottery from the field surface in this area consists predominantly of 15th to early 16th century material although some 13th to 14th century sherds are also present. The topsoil (1) over Trench B was found to be 300mm thick and rested on a light mid grey silt clay subsoil (2).
- 3.2.3 Running north south across the trench, apparently cutting the natural subsoil, was a large cut (Context 4 Fig. 9). The exact edges of this feature were extremely difficult to discern, particularly in the wet conditions. It appeared to contain four different contexts (Fig. 9. Contexts 3, 5, 6 and 7) although it is possible some may have been fills of other cuts recutting 4.
- 3.2.4 Context 3, on the western side, consisted of a mid dark brown grey silt clay with occasional sandstone fragments to 60mm and charcoal pieces to 30mm. This fill contained relatively large quantities of medieval pottery sherds (62 No.), most of which were large, unabraded and often conjoined. The majority of the pottery consists of cooking pots and jugs most of which appear to be of late 14th- to 15th-century date. A single sherd of Siegburg Stoneware was located within 3 and this falls within a 14th 15th century date range.

- 3.2.5 Overlying (?) 3, or set within it, were a number of sandstone pieces, one of which was faced on two sides (Context 7). Whether this represented the remains of an insitu masonry wall/ post-pad or simply material dumped into the fill 3 could not be ascertained from the small area exposed. However, the presence of the faced stone strongly suggests the presence of a building in the immediate vicinity.
- 3.2.6 To the east a dense-packed area of shell was located (Context 5). This consisted of a mid-dark brown grey silt clay containing 70% cockle and 5% oyster shell. This apparent 'shell midden' appeared to dip down to the west to run under fill 3. Its relationship to 6 (see below) was unascertained however it is likely the shell had been deposited to form a pile around which more refuse was tipped.
- 3.2.7 The eastern-most fill of 4 consisted of a mid-dark brown grey silt clay virtually identical to 3 (Context 6). Only one sherd of 14th 15th century pottery was located in its fill. However it differed markedly from 3 in containing numerous fragments of medieval or early post-medieval peg tile. This again strongly suggests the presence of a building close by.
- 3.2.8 The fills within cut 4 could not be sectioned due to water seepage from the top, sides and base of the trench.
- 3.2.9 To the east of 4 was a small pit protruding from the northern trench edge (Context 8). Its fill, of mid dark brown grey silt clay, had a similar loose texture to the topsoil and when sectioned produced no finds.
- 3.4 Trench C

(Fig. 3 only)

Natural silt clay subsoil was located below 300mm of topsoil. With the exception of one medieval and one post-medieval sherd from the topsoil the trench was archaeologically sterile.

3.5 Trench D

(Figs. 3 and 9)

- 3.5.1 Below 250 300mm of topsoil (1) a topsoil/subsoil interface layer was located (2). This was found to be between 100 170mm thick and consisted of a light mid brown grey silt clay. Context 2 gradually gave way to clean natural.
- 3.5.2 Apparently cutting 2, (although this was far from certain as the edges were difficult to discern due to earthworm activity), was a large shallow sloping cut (Context 4) which extending most of the length of the trench and ran further to the north, south and west. Its fill (3), of light mid orange grey

clay sand, contained some darker patches which possessed irregular edges. It is likely these represent dumps of material or animal/tree disturbance.

- 3.5.3 Context 3 produced a small number of unabraded late 15th to mid 16th century pottery sherds as well as a few of 14th to 15th century date. A number of mammal bones and pieces of coal, iron and slag were also located. It seems likely this feature may represent a shallow quarry scoop or pond.
- 3.6 Trench E.

(Fig. 4 only)

Natural mid brown clay sand subsoil was found below 290 - 350mm of topsoil and topsoil/subsoil interface (1). With the exception of two abraded sherds of 13th to mid 15th century pottery and a sherd of 19th century transfer printed china, the trench was archaeologically sterile.

3.7 Trench F.

(Fig. 5 only)

- 3.7.1 The ploughsoil in the field containing Trench F was found to contain a high density of pottery, tile and clay pipes. An unsystematic inspection and collection of the area of proposed land-take around the trench revealed many finds predominantly dating to the 17th century. Although artefacts are numerous, no apparent concentration was noted and it appeared to be an even spread across the whole area. This material did not appear to continue into the field to the west (containing Trench E), although the ground cover here prevented any detailed inspection.
- 3.7.2 The material collected from the surface includes a surprising number of complete clay pipe bowls (24 no.) as well as fragments of many others (30 no.). This suggests the field has not undergone extensive ploughing since their deposition. Virtually all of the clay pipes are of 17th century date which agrees with the majority of pottery, which consists of a high percentage of German Stoneware (including Cologne/Frechen and Westerwald). Some medieval sherds are also present, dating to the 13th to 15th century (20 no.). These were however mainly small and abraded.
- 3.7.3 Within Trench F itself a layer of mid grey brown silt sand with occasional flint pebbles to 30mm (2) was located below 250 350mm of topsoil (1). A distinct boundary was noticeable between 2 and the dark brown grey topsoil (1). However, Context 2, which appeared to represent a topsoil/subsoil interface, varied in depth (50 180mm) and merged gradually into the natural subsoil. Thirteen small abraded medieval sherds (?12th 15th century) and two post-medieval sherds were located in 2.

- 3.7.4 There had been some contamination of the top of natural within the trench, presumably due to animal activity. Despite the quantity of finds in the ploughsoil no archaeological features were located cutting the natural.
- **3.8** Trench G. (Figs. 5 and 9).
- 3.8.1 The ploughsoil around Trench G contained low quantities of both 13th to 15th and 16th to 19th century pottery although none was found during the removal of the ploughsoil from the trench itself.
- 3.8.2 Natural dull brown yellow fine sand was located below 300mm of topsoil (1). The natural had been disturbed in places by animal or tree-root activity but was generally clean.
- 3.8.3 Cutting the natural was a north-south ditch filled with a light-mid grey sand with orange mottles and very occasional flint pebbles to 20mm (Context 3). This had apparently been recut on the same alignment by a smaller ditch (Context 2). The fill of the later ditch, which consisted of a mid grey silt clay, yielded four small abraded sherds of 13th 14th century pottery when it was cleaned. It is likely these features represent drainage ditches.
- **3.10** Trench H (Fig. 6 only)
- 3.10.1 Natural mid grey silt clay subsoil was located below 300mm of topsoil and 130mm of topsoil/subsoil interface (1). The distinction between the topsoil and subsoil was slight and this is seen to be the result of mixing by earthworms during a long pastoral period.
- **3.10.2** With the exception of seven unabraded pottery sherds of mainly 16th to early 17th century date and a number of tile fragments from the topsoil the trench was archaeologically sterile.
- **3.11** Trench I (Fig. 6 only)

Natural dull orange brown sandy clay and clay sand was located below 380 - 410mm of topsoil (1). The topsoil gradually lightened with depth and tended to merge with the top of natural which was both soft and wet within this trench. With the exception of a small number of late 15th to 16th century pottery sherds from the topsoil the trench was archaeologically sterile.

3.12 Trench J

(Fig. 7 only)

Natural yellow brown silty sand subsoil was located below 355mm of topsoil (1). With the exception of some post-medieval material (tile, brick etc.) from the topsoil the trench was archaeologically sterile.

3.13 Trench K

(Fig. 7/8 only)

Natural yellowish brown sandy silt was located below 350mm of topsoil (1). With the exception of two small abraded sherds of medieval pottery; three 16th - 17th century sherds and some brick and tile fragments from the topsoil the trench was archaeologically sterile.

3.14 Trench L

(Fig. 7/8 only)

Natural yellow brown sandy silt was located below 350mm to topsoil (1). With the exception of six 13th - 14th century sherds; four 16th - 17th century sherds and several brick and tile fragments from the topsoil the trench was archaeologically sterile.

3.15 Trench M.

(Fig. 8 only)

Natural subsoil (as in Trench L) was located below 330mm of topsoil. With the exception of four 14th - 15th century (?) sherds; one 16th century sherd and a number of tile fragments from the topsoil the trench was archaeologically sterile.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The natural subsoil along the route was found to be variable between trenches, ranging from almost pure sand in Trench G to silt clays (ie. Trench A). This reflects the complex sequence of sedimentation which has occurred on the marsh in the area of Brookland but generally corresponds well with the results of Jill Eddison's desk-top assessment in pin-pointing the location of the major sandy channel running through the area. Variations within this channel do however appear to be present.
- 4.2 The natural subsoil in many trenches did not facilitate the recognition of archaeological features. Even when present, the exact location of the edges of these features was difficult to ascertain with certainty. This problem was made worse by the generally wet ground conditions and flooding of several of the trenches (Trenches A, B, D, H and I). The data recovered during the trench evaluation is however deemed fairly representative of the archaeological resource situated below the topsoil along the route line.
- Although many trenches had a distinct boundary between topsoil and natural subsoil (ie. Trenches E, F and G) many had an indistinct boundary, sometimes with a topsoil/subsoil interface layer (ie. Trenches D, F, H, I). It seems likely that trenches which showed no distinct boundaries are sited in fields which have been long-term pasture, the boundary between the topsoil and subsoil being mixed by earthworm activity. Some contamination of the surface of the natural subsoil by small artefacts had occurred in several of the trenches (ie. Trench F). This again is seen partly as a result of animal activity and/or ploughing. It should be noted that the removal of 300mm of topsoil during initial road construction works will not reveal the surface of the natural subsoil in many places.
- A general spread of finds was noted in the topsoil for the entire length of the proposed route. Generally these were never in high concentrations (see below). Although many pottery sherds, particularly of the 16th century, seem to be relatively unabraded this could easily be the result of infrequent cultivation rather than indicating a settlement in the immediate vicinity.
- 4.5 One field stands out from this general low spread of artefacts. The ploughsoil in the field in which Trench F was located (Fig. 5 plot 8) contains a much higher general spread of material than the fields to the east and west. The artefacts here consist of a low density scatter of abraded medieval pottery but with a relatively dense spread of post-medieval material. An abnormally high proportion of clay pipe bowls and stems is present in the ploughsoil and, taken with the pottery, points to fairly intense activity during the 17th century. The exact nature of this activity is

uncertain as Trench F located no archaeological features. A number of possibilities can be suggested:

- i) a settlement of 17th century date exists in this field but no features fell within the evaluation trench.
- the material has been derived from manuring the field during the 17th century with domestic rubbish from the village. This would account for the general spread of material (rather than any concentrated areas of finds) as well as the dark topsoil in this field. However, the good condition of many of the clay pipe bowls would suggest arable cultivation has not been great.
- iii) The field was the site of a fair during the 17th century. This may account of the high quantities of clay pipe and German stoneware: the material having been brought to the surface during relatively recent ploughing. If this is the case, most of the archaeological material is likely to be in the topsoil. Although Trench B was scanned using a metal detector time restraints unfortunately prevented an initial search of the topsoil for metallic artefacts around Trench F.
- 4.6 The drainage ditch located in Trench G had been recut/dredged at least once but had finally been filled during the medieval period (if the pottery is not residual). The location of this ditch suggests other historic landscape features may exist between the evaluation trenches. It is possible these could be part of the initial 12th century system of drainage.
- 4.7 The enigmatic, and indistinct feature located in Trench D has been provisionally interpreted as a shallow quarry or pond. As the full extent of this feature is unknown this interpretation is far from certain. However, from the material located within its fill, it appears to have gone out of use during the late 15th to 16th century.
- 4.8 The archaeological deposits located in Trench B demonstrate the presence of in-situ activity area dating to the late medieval to early post-medieval period. Most of the pottery is of 15th to early 16th century date. This in itself is interesting, in that it covers a relatively poorly studied transitional period from the late medieval to early post medieval ceramic traditions. Some 13th 14th century material is also present.
- 4.9 The exact nature of the remains in the trench could not be ascertained due to flooding. It is certain they represent a rubbish deposit, probably from an adjacent settlement/dwelling, although whether this material is deposited within a pit or ditch cut is uncertain. It is also possible the deposits could

represent a midden resting on a slight depression in the natural subsoil. Whatever the case, the deposit represents a potentially important assemblage of pottery and economic/dietary data. The latter is of particular interest for the study of late medieval coastal exploitation of marine molluses from the Brookland area.

- 4.10 The presence of faced stone combined with the large quantities of roof tile and domestic refuse suggest a dwelling in the immediate vicinity of Trench B. Just to the south of the trench a low earthwork mound was noted (Fig. 2) and it seems likely this would be the site of any such dwelling if it existed. Part of this mound lies outside the proposed land-take and will not be damaged. The section within the land-take will be destroyed by the excavation of the proposed road flanking ditch.
- 4.11 No definite features of medieval date were found at the western and eastern ends of Trench B suggesting a fairly well defined site on these sides. The presence of out-lying features or deposits of archaeological interest to the east and west cannot be ruled out however. It seems likely that the ground to the north, between the trench and the present fence, will contain archaeological material as the deposits within the trench continue in this direction. Any deposits to the north of the present fence line (and south of the existing A259) are likely to be badly damaged by the services known to be located at this point.

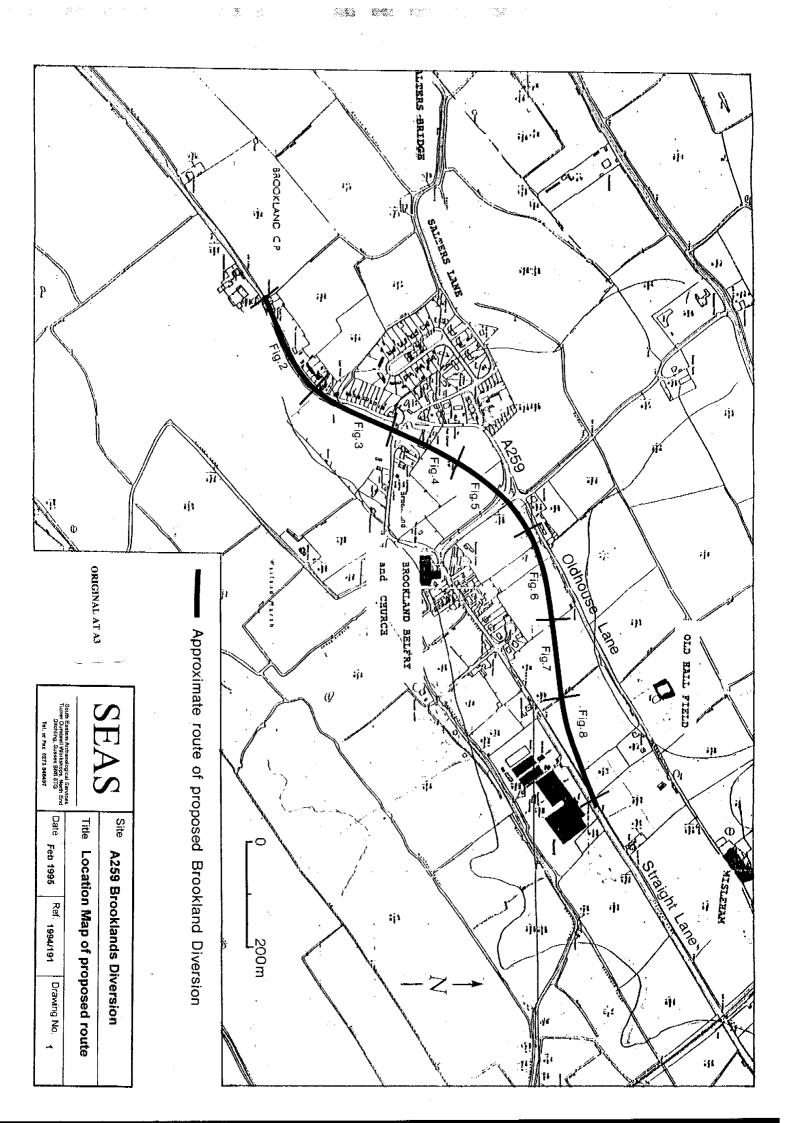
APPENDIX I

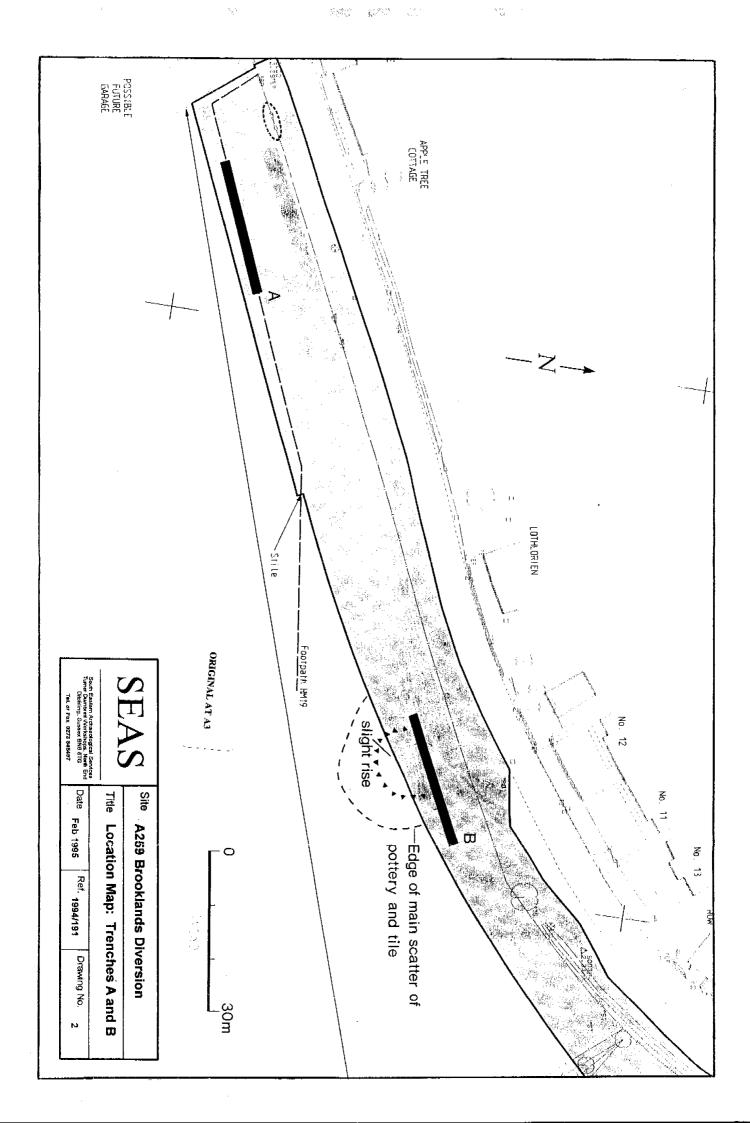
Trench	Description	Medieval	Post-	The	Brick		Shell	Вопе	Other	Darting	Stratigraphic
Context No.		Pot	Medieval Pot			7					Relationship
VI	Ploughsoil	2	•	-	•	1			•	ı	
B Proughsoil	Ptoughsoil	32. Mainly CI5th - early		Not	,		•	-	•		ı
around trench	1	C16th		Collected	-	C19th bowi					
i i	Ploughsoil	9. C13th - C15th	1. C19th	-		1	•	3	-	•	ı
2	Natural			-	<u>.</u>	<u>,</u>		-		-	Below B1. Cut by B4.
83	TEL	79	,		1		Oyster x1	9	Stone x.l	Mainly C15th	Fill of cut B4. Above B5, below B1.
基	Pit/ditch? cut	t					-			CISth	Cuts B2. Filled by B3, B5, B6 + B7. Below B1.
28	Fill	1				,	Oyster x4 + cockle x 10+	ı	-	C15th or earlier	Fill of cut B4. Below B3. Shell midden.
9 8	F111			46		,		٠,		C15th	Fill of cut B4. Above B5? Below B1.
田	Wall remains/fill?		-		1	1	,	,	-	C15th?	Below B1. Within B3?
9B	Pit cont			ŀ			•	-	-	? modern	Cuts B2. Below B1. Filled by B9.
66	記五	1	-	-	•	1	1		-	? modern	Fill of B8
ű	Topsoil		1	_	-	•	-		•	-	
II	Topsoil		7. Mainly late C15th - mid C16th	-	£.	i	ı	93		· .	Above D2, D3 and D4
D2	Topsoil/natural interface		1	,		1	_	. ,	-	•	Below D1 Above natural. Cut by D4?
D3	E	6. C14th - mid C16th	10	r4	-		1	19	Fron nails x 2 Fron slag x1 Charcoal x2 Coel x4	Early - Mid C16th	Fill of D4
五	Cer		-	-	-	ı	-		-	Plate C15th - mid C16th	Filled by D3 Cuts natural + D2

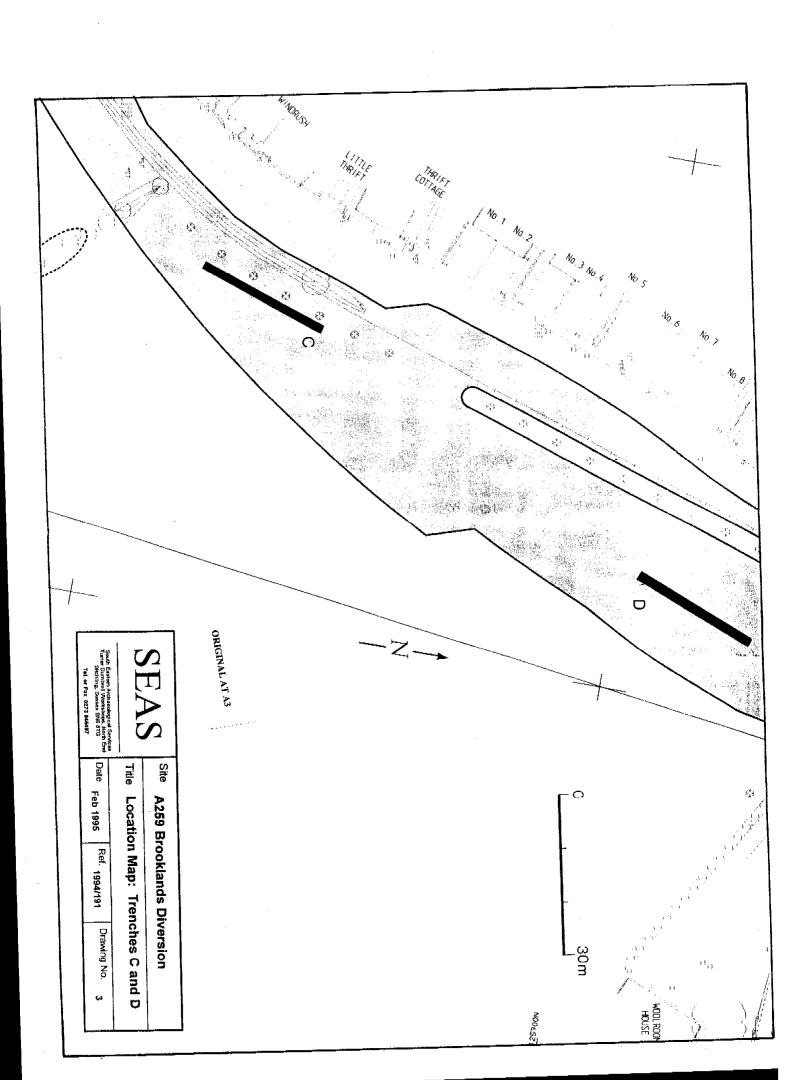
Treach/	Description	Medieval Post	Post-Med	136	Brick	Clay Pie	Shell	Bone	Orber	Dating	Stratigraphic Relationship
Climical ivo.	Plouobeoil	2				,	,		Slate x1	-	-
F Ploughsoil	Ploughsoil	20. C13th - C15th	62. Mainly	Not	Not	St bowls	ı		1		1
around trench	A		C17th	collected	collected	22 stems					
						Malely C17th					
<u> </u>	Programoil	5. C13th - C15th	6. Mainly	**		3 bowls		12	stone xi	-	Above F2
	•		C17th			9 stems			glass x1	,	i.
E	Subsoil	13. C12th - C15th	2. C16th -	3	-	stem x.l	Oyster x1	(-)		Disturbed in	Helow FI
			C17th			C19h				CIME	
G Ploughsoil	Ploughsoil	ţ	4	ന	ŀ	bowl x1	_		1	,	,
15	Plourbsoil			\$		-	_	-	-	1	
G	Cut + Fill	4	-	1			Oyster x1	3	Stone x1	C13th - C14th?	Drainage ditch: recutting G3 Below G1
9	Cut and Hill	,	ı	,			1	-		pre C14th?	Drainage ditch recal by G2. Cuts natural.
Ħ	Topsoil	ı	7. C16th -	21			,	5	Stone x2	-	•
ī	Topsoil		6. C15th -	\$				-	Stone x2	ı	
	Tonsoil		1. C19th	7	3			1	Glass x1	•	•
KI	Topsoil	2	3. Mainly late C15th - C16th	٠	2	1	\$	co.	Glass x1 Stone x1 Inn v1	ı	1
[]	Topsoil	6. Cl3th - Cl5th	4. C16th -	13	3	Stem x1	,		Glass x1		
MI	Topsoil	74. c. C14th - C15th	1. C16th	6	•		ŀ	,	Glass x1 Stone x1	1	

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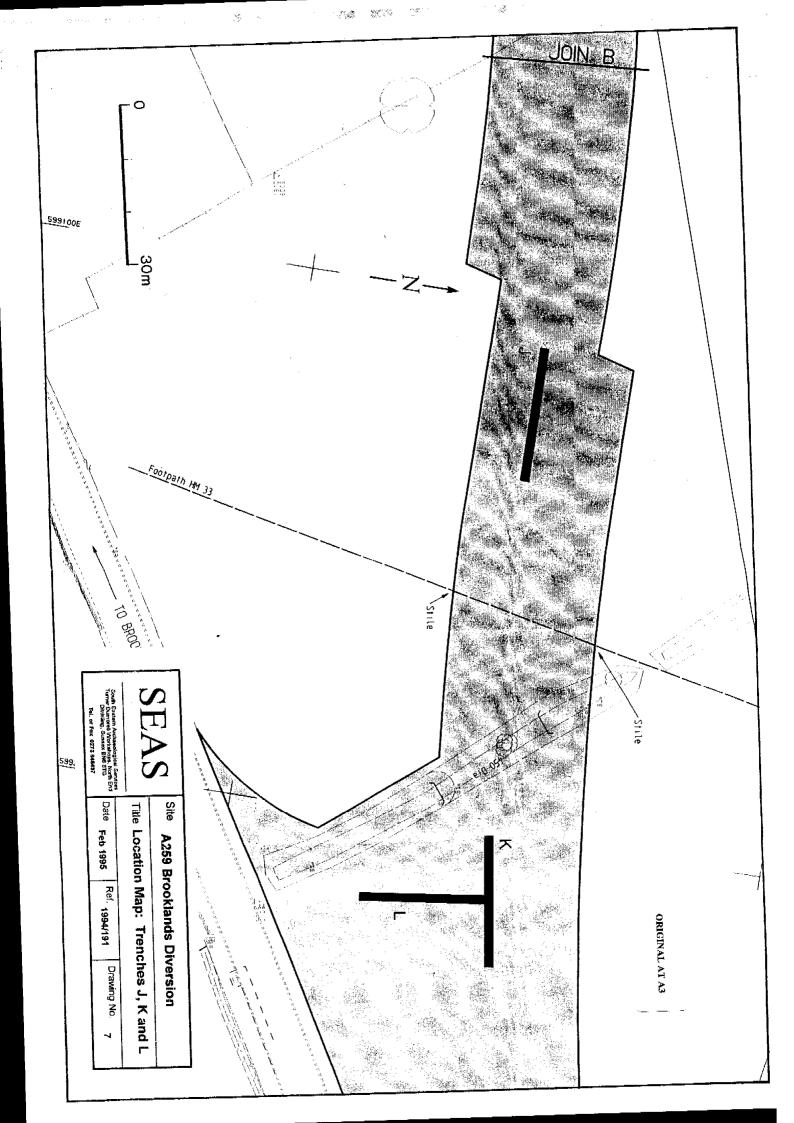


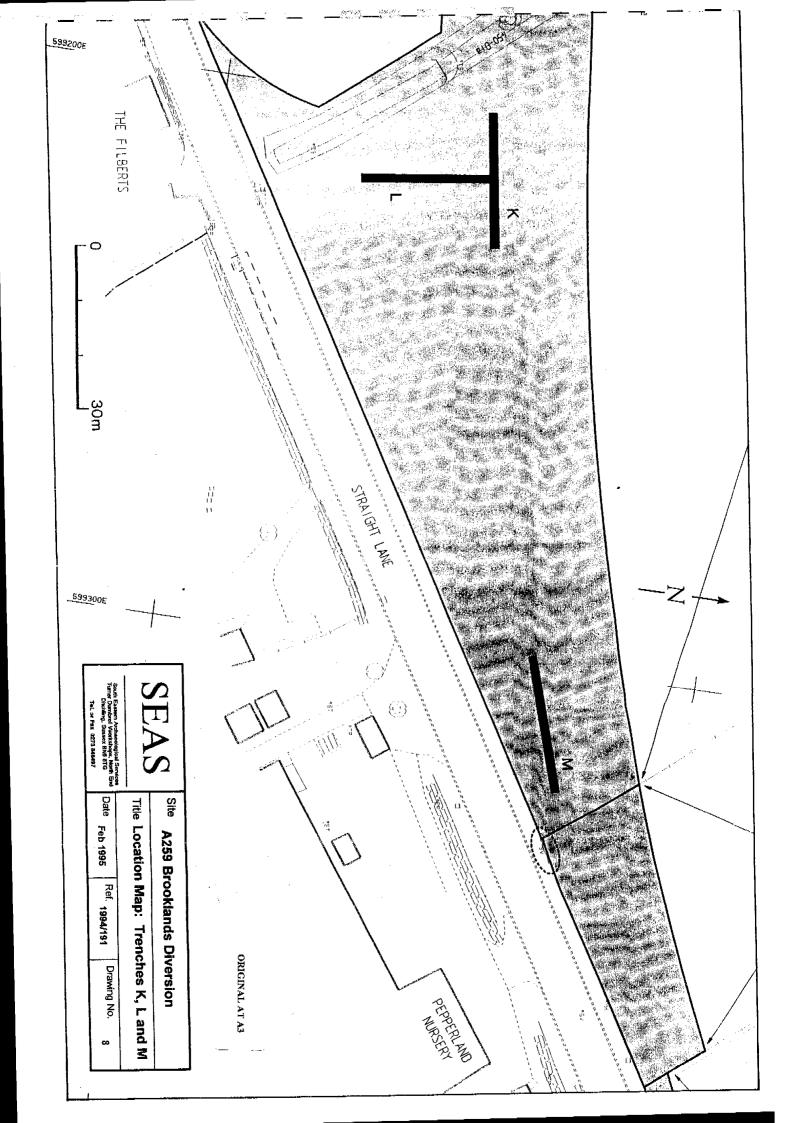
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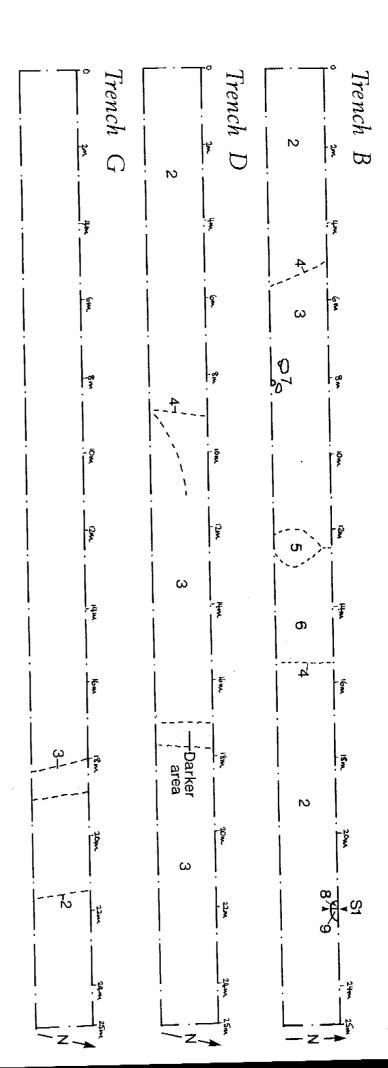
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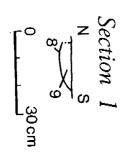
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Sum Ester Workshops, North End Dichling, Sussex BMS 816 Tel. or Fax 0273 845497		SAHS
Date Feb 1995	Title Plans and	Site A259 BI
Ref. 1994/191	Sections: Tre	A259 Brooklands Diversion
Drawing No. 9	Title Plans and Sections: Trenches B, D and G	version

ORIGINAL AT A3