
A259
ST MARY'S BAY &
DYMCHURCH BYPASS
5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK STUDY

Jill Eddison
ROMNEY MARSH
RESEARCH TRUST

A Report on the Archaeological Implications
of the Proposed By-Passes for
St Mary's Bay and Dymchurch, Kent
A259

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Mrs Jill Eddison M.A.

Romney Marsh Research Trust
Langley Farm
Bethersden
Ashford
Kent TN26 3HF

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report concerns the line of the proposed by-passes for St. Mary's Bay and Dymchurch and their approach roads, as shown on Figures 1-4, together with a corridor of land approximately 500 m. wide on either side.

1.2 This corridor of interest lies entirely within the Level of Romney Marsh proper.

1.3 The corridor is close to the sea and the whole of it is now, and always has been, below the level of the highest tides.

1.3.1 As a result, any permanent occupation has depended essentially on an efficient system of land drainage. Major and minor drainage channels have always been part of the life on the Marsh. At the same time these channels have served as field and property boundaries.

1.3.2 Because of the liability to flooding, some sites and areas were more attractive for occupation and settlement than others.

1.4 In the course of the last few thousand years Romney Marsh has been subject to prolonged periods of inundation, during which times the sea deposited a significant depth and variety of sediments over the area.

1.4.1 During these inundations successive horizons of occupation have been buried by and encased in various layers of geological sediment.

1.5. On account of the proximity of salt water, certain specialised activities, including fishing, catching of eels, and salt extraction took place on the Marsh. Archaeological evidence of salt-extraction in the late Bronze Age and early Roman period has recently emerged from several locations on the marsh. This is all now buried beneath composite layers of later sediments. There is also documentary evidence of salt-working in the Saxon and medieval periods not far from the corridor of interest. Salt working is inferred by a place name not far from the corridor of interest.

2. THE GEOLOGICAL CONTEXT (Figure 1)

2.1 Romney Marsh has been subject in prehistoric and historic times to periodic inundations by the sea, which have buried successive archaeological horizons beneath later marine sediments.

2.2 In an area so close to the sea, and subject to radical and sometimes rapid environmental changes, the geological record contains palaeo-environmental information essential to the understanding of conditions surrounding past human activities and settlement.

2.3 For both these reasons, it is essential that any archaeological assessment should include reference to the geological context, both to the evidence of past conditions within the corridor of interest itself, and to the evidence of its geographical surroundings at different periods.

2.4 General geological evidence shows that this part of Romney Marsh developed in the shelter afforded by a massive shingle barrier beach which lay to the east of Dymchurch (Eddison 1983). This barrier eventually weakened, and between the late 13th century and 1500 was gradually replaced by the man-made Dymchurch Wall. Both the shingle barrier and the Dymchurch Wall were by definition above the level of the tides.

2.4.1 Remains of this early barrier were found beneath the Dymchurch Wall in 1837, and some recurved shingle ridges extend back across the marshland, becoming more numerous and obvious towards the north. The line of the proposed road crosses one of these shingle ridges at approximately TR 121326.

2.4.2 While the shingle barrier was in place on the seaward side, the area behind it was occupied by a tidal lagoon.

2.4.3 The corridor of interest therefore lay on the seaward edge of a wide tidal inlet, but sheltered from the open sea by a massive shingle barrier beach. This situation would be expected to have been one of the zones of fastest accumulation of sediments. It was therefore likely to have dried out and become suitable for human occupation at an earlier date than the centre of Romney Marsh proper, and most of Walland Marsh.

2.5. The only detailed geological work carried out in this area to date is that of the Soil Survey (Memoir No. 4). The following information is taken from that source.

2.6 Romney Marsh is divided by the Soil Survey into two provinces - the "Old Marshland" and the "New Marshland" - according to the amount of calcium carbonate remaining in the soils. The entire corridor of interest except for the extreme northern end lies in the "Old Marshland", and seems to have dried out for the last time by natural processes by mid-Saxon times at the latest.

2.6.1. The surface layers of this "Older Marshland" are composed mainly of fine-grained sediments, silty-clays, representing a high salt-marsh environment, which were cut across by several sandy channels. The channels were orientated west, north-west and north, confirming that the tides had access to this fringe from the lagoon in the centre of Romney Marsh.

2.6.2 The Soil Survey (p.27) recorded that the pattern of sediments associated with the creeks shows that renewed flooding had disturbed older sediments now beneath the surface. An excavation at TR 082276 near Jesson Farm, St. Mary-in-the-Marsh revealed a dark humus-rich occupation layer lying beneath 3 feet of later loamy sediments. This layer was dated by contained pottery to 1st century B.C. or early 1st century A.D. (Late Iron Age or early Roman period). A similar horizon occurred widely in this area, especially towards the coast.

2.6.3 This occupation site was reported to be situated either on the banks of an earlier creek, or on a land-surface which was subsequently intersected by a creek which developed later.

2.6.4 The Soil Survey suggested on the basis of comparison with similar creeks south-west of Old Romney that the early creeks were infilled in late Roman times. This comparison should, however, be treated with caution, not least because the Old Romney creek material was dated to this period on the basis of a C14 determination of the shell content. The date of the infilling of these early creeks still needs confirmation.

2.6.5 Peat, which underlies large parts of Romney Marsh, is an extremely valuable repository of palaeo-environmental information. At TR 079276, peat was found beneath about 60" of mottled clays, in a similar stratigraphical situation to peat elsewhere on the marsh. An extensive peat substratum, 1- 5 feet thick was found at Orgarswick, just over one km from the line of the proposed road.

2.6.6 There is evidence that at a very late stage flooding occurred, this time from the east. It is likely that this took place just prior to the building of the Dymchurch Wall - or possibly even when it was breached at some later date.

2.7 North of the shingle ridge at TR 121326 the extreme 400 m of the corridor crosses "New Marshland". This section has a different geological context to the rest of the corridor, and is presumed to have dried out at a somewhat later date.

2.7.1 This area was the edge of an inlet by which the tides flowed on to the marshland round the end of the Dymchurch shingle bank. It is presumed to have been the edge of the estuary upon which the Roman fort of the Saxon Shore was built at Lympne. There is also a record of salt-making in mid-Saxon times in this estuary.

SUMMARY

2.8 The geological evidence shows that all except the northernmost 400 m of this corridor developed in the shelter of a massive shingle barrier beach, the forerunner of the Dymchurch Wall.

2.9 Layers of sediment accumulated in salt-marsh conditions, with a high marsh palaeo-environment intersected by a number of creeks orientated towards a tidal lagoon in the centre of the present Romney Marsh.

2.10 At least one occupation layer is buried beneath later sediments. This is of Later Iron Age/early Roman date and was found approximately three feet below the present surface.

2.11 It appears that this occupation in Late Iron Age/early Roman times was followed by a marine inundation which covered at least the Jesson Farm area, and probably the entire corridor, with about one metre of sediment.

2.12 From documentary evidence this land was resettled by mid Saxon times.

2.13 The final geological episode was flooding which came from the east, presumably either just before the Dymchurch Wall was built, or at some later time when it was temporarily breached.

2.14 The northernmost 400 m of the corridor of interest crosses a different geological province. In Roman and earlier times, it was the edge of an inlet of the sea. It probably dried out finally at a later date than the rest of the corridor.

3. THE TOPOGRAPHICAL RECORD (Figure 2)

3.1 Under this heading four types of features are considered: main marsh drains (known in this locality as sewers); minor drainage ditches; roads; and moated occupation sites. The sewers and the drainage ditches provide the usual form of boundaries for fields and property in this area.

3.2 The corridor is crossed by six of the main sewers of Romney Marsh, whose waters are directed eastwards to reach the sea through four outfalls in the Dymchurch Wall. From the north these are as follows:

3.2.1 The Canal Cutting, a straight channel carrying water from the Royal Military Canal. It dates from 1876 and transects numerous earlier landscape features.

3.2.2 Willop, Hornes, Marshland and Clobdsen Sewers. These all (especially the Clobdsen Sewer) follow sinuous courses which were presumably originally adapted from creeks in the high salt marsh. They are evidently of considerable antiquity. Since the Clobdsen Sewer forms one of the boundaries of the Sellinge estate which is understood to have been occupied c. A.D. 700 (see para. 7.2.2), that sewer appears to date from mid-Saxon times at latest. The others in this group are probably of similar age.

3.2.3 The New Sewer. This crosses the Marsh from the direction of Old Romney, and has a notably straight course, transecting many earlier landscape features. It was cut to improve the drainage of the Five Waterings area in the Appledore/Snargate/Ham Street triangle, and since it does not appear on the Tythe Maps, it was presumably cut sometime after 1843.

3.3 The present-day minor ditches, and those shown on the Tythe Maps, have courses varying between sinuous and nearly straight. Some may have originated as salt marsh creeks. When this land surface was settled the existing natural watercourses would have become subject to artificial control. The general lay-out is irregular, without any apparent overall plan.

3.3.1 In addition to the minor ditches in existence today and on the Tythe Maps of c. 1840, a far greater number of ditches, enclosing many smaller fields, can be detected on the aerial photographs. These are described in detail in the next section (para 4.4).

3.4 The line of the proposed road crosses five local roads, namely Botolphs Road, Burmarsh Road, Eastbridge Road, St Mary's Road (formerly known as Yokes Lane) and Jefferstone Lane.

3.4.1 All these roads appear on the early maps (e.g. All Souls CTM 417a/6) but it is likely that all of them are of considerably greater age than that.

3.4.2 Each of these roads links a known inland centre of medieval occupation with the coast.

3.4.3 It seems likely that they may have evolved from tracks which came into use when the Marsh was occupied in Saxon times. To maintain efficient drainage, all ditches would have needed to have been cleansed regularly; the spoil alongside would have provided a slightly raised tract which would have provided a useful routeway, drier than the surrounding fields.

3.4.4 A search made for evidence of other roads or trackways has been unproductive, except for one short branch off the north side of Jefferstone Lane at TR 083280.

3.5 One moated occupation site has been identified, at TR 091299 adjacent to the Eastbridge Road at Marshall's Bridge. See also para. 6.1, site 13, of this report. This site is within 350 m of the proposed new bypass road, and very close indeed to the proposed works for re-routing the Eastbridge Road.

4. THE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD (Figure 2)

4.1 A number of aerial photographic surveys have been conducted over the Marsh. All known surveys carried out between 1945 and 1977 are listed in Section 18 of the Romney Marsh monograph (Eddison and Green 1988). Since that date further surveys are known to have been carried out on behalf of KCC.

4.2 This report is based primarily on the 1945/46 RAF Series. Because this series is the earliest available, it indicates features which have since been removed in the course of agricultural progress. The complex numbering of the runs and individual prints and the variety of dates suggest that there was more than one series of runs. For the purpose of this report three sets have been consulted, as follows:

1. OS 61 July 1945 held at CKS, Maidstone
2. RAF 106/G UK Jan. 1946 held by Brit.Geol.Survey
3. RAF 106/G UK Apr. 1946 held by R.M.Research Trust

4.3 In general, all these emphasize the irregular pattern of the landscape along the whole length of the corridor of interest. The sewers, present-day ditches and roads follow random and sinuous or winding patterns, and fields are of irregular shapes and sizes, in marked contrast for example to those in the planned landscape of the Brookland area of Walland Marsh.

4.4 In addition to the ditches in use at present, these photographs also show an intensive pattern of old, dis-used ditches which gave small, sub-rectangular fields within the present field systems. Some of the fields shown on the Tythe Map were therefore at some earlier period subdivided into ten or more smaller units. This pattern is evident from one end of the corridor to the other (Fig. 2), with small gaps which may be due to unfavourable photographic conditions rather than the absence of the features.

4.4.1 The ditches creating the smaller enclosures are, in general, straighter than those of the large fields.

4.4.2 The ditches creating the smaller enclosures appear to be related to the main sewer and ditch systems. They therefore originated either at the same time as the main drainage system or, more likely, they were inserted into a pre-existing system when holdings were broken up into smaller units. The historical evidence (para. 7.5.3) suggests the latter.

4.4.3. There is nothing to suggest that the closely-spaced ditches pre-date the main sewer system.

4.4.4 In a few places the old, disused, ditches look very much as though they have replaced salt marsh creeks.

4.4.5 Although the geological evidence suggests that the small area of "New Marshland" at the north end of the corridor was reclaimed later than that to the south of it, the intensive pattern of disused ditches continues from one side to the other. Therefore the northern area must have been reclaimed by the time this small-field system came into existence.

4.5 Moated sites.

4.5.1 One large moated site is evident beside the Eastbridge Road, at TR 091299. This is some 340 m from the proposed new bypass road, but very close indeed to the proposed works for re-routing the Eastbridge Road (December 1991 amended plan).

4.5.2 There is one other possible moated site with two moats, at TR 104300.

4.6 Closely parallel ditches, which may be evidence of the ridge and furrow of strip ploughing, have been observed at TR 104308 and TR 102302.

5. THE SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD, KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(Figure 3, and Figure 4 for the medieval churches)

5.1. The Sites and Monuments Record (S.M.R.) has been consulted to determine if any previously known archaeological sites lie in or near the corridor of interest.

5.2 Information relevant to the corridor of interest and its surroundings has been extracted from three 1:10,000 sheets as follows. The selected sites have been numbered, and the site number given below in bold type corresponds to the site numbers on Figures 3 and 4.

5.3 Sheet TR 13 SW
Two sites of interest are recorded on this sheet, though neither site is within the corridor of interest:

5.3.1 The first, at general grid reference TR 1203405 (SMR number TR 13 SW 7) lies approximately 400 metres north of Botolphs Bridge. Because it is off the northern extremity of the map it has not been given a site number in this report. A Saxon occupation and industrial site was excavated on a sand hill here in 1947/48. No report on the excavations was published, and the products of the excavation are in the British Museum. It is understood that two occupation layers, dated c. 800 and c. 1100 were separated by a barren (?dune) layer. Large quantities of cod fish bones were found, and the site is usually associated with a Saxon charter concerning salt extraction (see para. 7.2.4).

1. TR 13 SW 7 NGR TR 10113203
The church of All Saints, Burmarsh is a typical 12th century church, with additions variously attributed to the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

5.4 Sheet TR 03 SE
Two relevant sites are recorded on this sheet, though neither falls within the corridor of interest:

2. TR 03 SE 4 NGR TR 07413212
The remains of the medieval church at Eastbridge. The plan drawn by Erwood shows 12th, 13th and 14th century work. Roofing work was recorded in 1452, but it is reported that soon after that date the church became neglected.

3. TR 03 SE 5 NGR TR 08363069
The site of the church of Orgarswick, whose structure has disappeared. This was reported to be so poor in 1384 that it was exempted from taxation. The building is reported to have fallen into decay in the first half of the 16th century. Although Beresford and Hurst (1971) placed Orgarswick in their list Deserted Medieval Villages, this is disputed by other authorities, and there is no known archaeological evidence that such a settlement ever existed.

5.5 Sheet TR 02 NE
Four sites occur within the corridor of interest on this sheet.

4. TR 02 NE 6 NGR TR 07902855
13th century pottery, bricks and tiles were found at this spot. A mound used to exist here, but was "pushed into a pond" in c. 1950.

5. TR 02 NE 9 NGR TR 08152762
In 1910 when a borehole was sunk for soil analysis, fragments of a 1st century BC or AD cooking pot or store jar were found at a depth of 3' - 4'6", in association with burnt earth and charcoal, beneath which was found the skeleton of an ox or a horse (see also Soil Survey account, paragraph 2.6.2 of this report).

6. TR 02 NE 13 NGR TR 08622809
A circular feature over 100 m in diameter. A surface or parch mark, possibly modern though function unknown. A linear feature with a possible gap enters the circumference of the circle, but is probably unrelated (see TR 02 NE 14, below). This feature was identified in 1987 from Aerial Photograph RAF 106G/UK 1439 F3025, 30.4.46.

7. TR 02 NE 14 NGR TR 08782815
Clearly defined large circular feature almost certainly modern. Identified in 1987 from the same source as TR 02 NE 13.

5.5.1 Three additional sites on this sheet contain information which is or may be relevant to the occupation of the corridor of interest. They are as follows:

8. TR 02 NE 1 NGR TR 098286
During the rebuilding of the Dymchurch Wall in 1837 a large quantity of Roman occupation debris was found extending over several acres. This included "vast masses of pottery", some coins and samian ware, cinery urns, human and animal bones.
In 1978-80 rescue work in the same general area by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit revealed features and pottery of 1st and 2nd century date.
Cunliffe (1988) and others have suggested that this site was a large salt-working site. Cunliffe suggests in addition that this may represent seasonal occupation of the Marsh. Manufacture of salt, and possibly also of pottery, were summer activities which could have been carried out in parallel with tending of animals. In such a system it would have been possible that occupation lasted until early autumn when fattened stock were killed off, the carcasses salted down, and the leather prepared (another process requiring salt).

9. TR 02 NE 2 NGR TR 06482798
The church of St Mary the Virgin, St Mary in the Marsh. This church is of Norman foundation, with a Norman tower. The body of the church is variously reported as being built c. 1270 - c. 1300.

10. TR 02 NE 17 NGR TR 07732908
Part of a large circular enclosure was identified on the north side of St Mary's Road near Swallowtail Bridge, in 1987 from Aerial Photograph RAF 106G/UK 1439 F4029 30.4.46.

6. ADDITIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION

6.1 In addition to that available on the Sites and Monuments Record, further information is available from a small area in the neighbourhood of Marshall's Bridge on the Eastbridge Road. These were field-walked and recorded by Mrs Anne Reeves in 1990 and 1991. Her results, which are marked on figure 3, are as follows:

11. At TR 093297 (AR ref RM 88), an occupation site with early medieval, medieval and late medieval pottery was found during a brief investigation under adverse crop conditions in May 1991.

12. TR 08963036 (AR ref RM 81) Roman pottery finds, and at TR 18913026 an occupation site with early medieval and medieval pottery.

13. TR 091299 (AR ref RM 83) Moated site with medieval pottery and tile as marked on figure 3. Earthworks and medieval field system extend over the whole of this field.

14. TR 093298 (AR ref RM 84) Medieval and late medieval farmstead site with pottery and tile as marked on figure 3. Small quantities of medieval pottery was found elsewhere in this field. Earthworks and field system extend over the whole field.

15. TR 097295 (AR ref RM 85) Early medieval and medieval pottery - a possible occupation site, as marked on figure 3.

16. TR 099297 (AR ref RM 91) Finds of medieval pottery and knife with bronze handle, brought in by a farm worker.

6.2 This small sample survey has demonstrated a remarkable concentration of sites and artefacts in one very small area of the corridor of interest. It strongly suggests that there may be similar concentrations along other parts of the corridor, and quite possibly along its whole length.

6.3 The proposed new road scheme affects this area seriously in two respects.

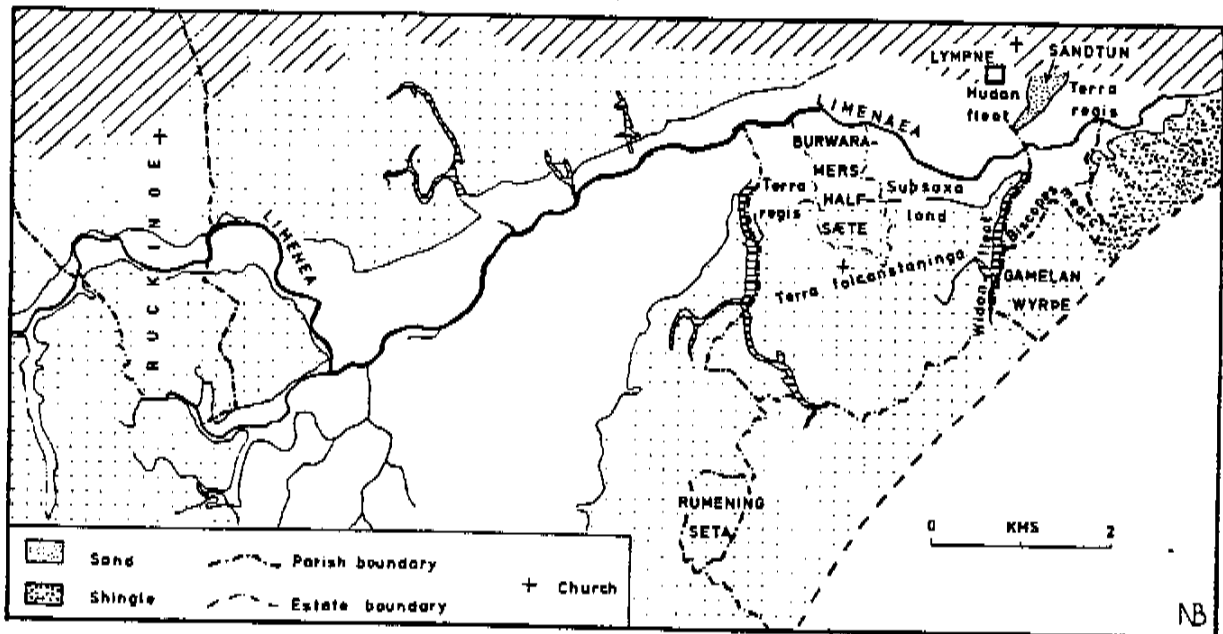
6.3.1 The by-pass itself cuts through the fields in which the occupation site and field systems numbered 11 and 14 lie.

6.3.2 The re-routing of the Eastbridge Road crossing of the by-pass, as amended in December 1991, appears to cut through the occupation site numbered 15, and also crosses the field system numbered 14.

7. THE HISTORICAL RECORD (Figure 4)

7.1 Romney Marsh has an exceptionally rich archive of historic documents which begin in the Saxon period, and of maps which date from 1589. These provide a very valuable indication of the archaeological potential of the corridor of interest.

7.2 Four relevant charters (land deeds) have survived from the Saxon period in the archives of Canterbury Cathedral (Brooks, 1988). Professor Brooks' map, fig.8.5 in Eddison and Green, is reproduced below. The Limen, the watercourse which was the relic of the former Hythe inlet, is featured, together with two creeks which Brooks identified from the Soil Survey map. Salt works at Sandtun indicate an ingress of salt water at West Hythe in 732. But the charters make no mention of provision for sea defence.



7.2.1 Together these charters indicate widespread settlement in the corridor in the Saxon period, including of the northern inlet of the sea, which on geological grounds is considered to be the last to be reclaimed. Details are as follows:

7.2.2 A detached outlier of Sellindge parish is identified as *Rumening seta*, a pasture for 300 hundred sheep given in 697 or 700 by King Whitred of Kent to the Minster at Lyminge. The connection with the upland parish of that name appears to be a very early documentary record of transhumance.

7.2.3 Two other charters dated c. 845 and 946 deal with land round Burmarsh and between that and the sea.

7.2.4 A further charter dated 732 deals with a salt-working site at Sandtun (now in West Hythe). Timber for fuel came from Saltwood, on the upland.

7.3 DOMESDAY EVIDENCE

7.3.1 The Domesday Survey (1086) and the local Domesday Monachorum (c. 1100) between them mention the following settlements with churches, mostly with pastoral and agricultural holdings:

7.3.2 Dymchurch
Blackmanstone (site at TR 072297)
Orgarswick (site at TR 087307: site 3, Fig.4)
held by the Archbishop
East Bridge (site at TR 074321: site 2, Fig.4)
Burmarsh (site 1, Fig.4) held by the Abbot of
St. Augustine's

7.3.3 These records point to the existence of prosperous and significant settlements in the area, with both pasture and arable, around A.D.1100 (Brooks, 1988).

7.3.4 None of the sites of these churches fall within the corridor of interest, but since it is understood that the manors' holdings were dispersed rather than clustered round nucleated settlements, it is very probable that some of their holdings fell within the corridor.

7.3.5 Eastbridge also included significant salt works whose locality is unknown, but which must have depended on an ingress of salt water.

7.3.6 The only local church not mentioned in Domesday is St-Mary-in-the Marsh (unless it is one of the enigmatic, unidentifiable, settlements). (Site 9 on Fig.4.). However, architectural evidence indicates a Norman origin (see 5.3.1. para.9, above).

7.3.7 The line of the proposed road passes through, or very close to, parts of all the parishes mentioned above, as they existed in 1816. These parish boundaries are believed to have existed from a very early date.

7.4 MEDIEVAL (POST DOMESDAY) EVIDENCE

7.4.1 The historical records are thick with medieval holdings in this area. Unfortunately many of these cannot be located on a map. This is due to an unfortunate characteristic of the Marsh: a large number of medieval names disappeared and were not carried forward into the early modern period, when the earliest maps were made.

7.4.2 It is, however, apparent from the documents that this area was thickly settled in the medieval period. The following are examples of some of the records, which have been read by members of the Romney Marsh Research Trust:

Willop: related to Willop Sewer. Part of the manor Aldington, which belonged to the Archbishop. Canterbury Cathedral archives, E.24.

Holewest: linked with Willop in E.24. Since this was where the first section of the Dymchurch Wall had to be built in 1291, part of it was presumably at the then coast.

Dymchurch: In the 14th century tenements were held by at least three over-lords. This indicates the probability that several small halls or courts co-existed (cf. paras. 6.2 to 6.6 above).

Sylenebregge (Sillowbreg): A tenement in early 14th century, reputed by Hasted to be a "manor". Bridge located from O.S. 6" 1st edition, c. 1878.

Shingledehall: A holding of the de Criol family, which can be traced from 1284-5 through the following century. May be pre-Conquest (Ward, Arch. Cant. vol 53, 24-28). This features on the Tythe Map of St. Mary in the Marsh (1839).

Where it is possible to locate them, these are shown on Fig. 4.

7.5 MEDIEVAL POPULATIONS

7.5.1 The following information has been obtained from Andrew Butcher, medieval historian at the University of Kent at Canterbury.

7.5.2 The population of the Marsh was expanding in late 12th century, which reflected a general expansion in the rest of Kent.

7.5.3 The population peaked in mid-13th century, and over-population lead to poverty, and small-size holdings.

7.5.4 The Marsh population in early 14th century included a large number of immigrants from other parts of Kent.

7.5.5 From mid 14th to mid 15th century the population of the Marsh suffered the progressive impact of disease. Into the 15th century new tenants replaced those who had died, but after that de-population occurred.

7.6 Brockmans Barn (?). The maps of both Symondson (1596) and Poker (1617) indicate a building at approx. TR 128324. The Tythe Map for West Hythe (1839) shows "two houses and gardens" at this point.

8. SUMMARY

8.1 Geological and historical evidence shows that nearly all this corridor of marshland developed and was occupied in the shelter first of a massive shingle bank and later of the Dymchurch Wall.

8.2 Until Saxon times the centre of Romney Marsh, to the west of the corridor, was occupied by a tidal lagoon. In Roman times the corridor of interest probably lay between a massive shingle rampart and a tidal lagoon.

8.3 The area around Dymchurch and the site of the former Jesson Farm, near the present St. Mary's Bay railway station, was occupied in the first century B.C. and first century A.D. It is quite possible that this occupation was more extensive, but evidence of this has not yet been forthcoming.

8.4 The finds at Jesson Farm (TR 082276) indicate a Later Iron Age or Roman land surface approximately 1 m below the present surface. The circumstances under which the major finds at Dymchurch were discovered in 1837 suggest that they too were below the present surface, though no record of this was made at the time. On the other hand, Roman artefacts have recently been found on the present surface near the crossing of the Eastbridge Road by the proposed by-pass (see para. 6.1, site 12).

8.5 Assuming that the Late Iron Age/early Roman land-surface is below the present surface, it appears that some time after the first century A.D. the sea inundated the area and deposited up to 1 m of sediment. (Recent work by R.M.R.T. at Broomhill has indicated that such a depth of deposition can take place during 200 years of discontinuous inundation, when a shingle barrier is breached or circumvented by the tides.)

8.6 By c. A.D. 700 occupation of the present land-surface was taking place. A Saxon charter proves that a 134-acre estate existed at Sellinge Farm. The ditches which provided its boundaries are part of the present-day drainage system. The foundations of today's drainage had therefore already been established.

8.7 Domesday shows that by the end of the 11th century all the local churches (except, possibly, St. Mary-in-the-Marsh) had already been founded and prosperous settlements with pastoral and agricultural holdings existed in the area. Eastbridge included several salt-pans, the location of which is not known, but which may lie within the corridor of interest.

continued/

8.8 Documentary records, evidence from aerial photographs, and field work in a small area by Mrs Anne Reeves indicate that part of the corridor was thickly settled in the medieval period, more thickly indeed than at any time since then.

8.9 Population studies indicate that from mid 14th to mid 15th centuries Romney Marsh suffered from the progressive impact of disease. In time this led to de-population.

8.10 The northern-most 400 m had a somewhat different history to the rest of the corridor. Geological evidence shows that at an early stage this area was an inlet by which the tides flowed into and ebbed out of the Romney Marsh lagoon. The Roman fort at Stutfall indicates that this inlet was still open in A.D. 275 to 350. Saxon salt-works show that in 732 there was still a salt-water access to Sandtun, in the throat of this inlet. However, a later system of ditches continues uninterrupted across the boundary of this inlet, showing that by the date those ditches were dug, the northern end of the corridor had been reclaimed for agricultural use.

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Two publications have coordinated relevant information. They are as follows:

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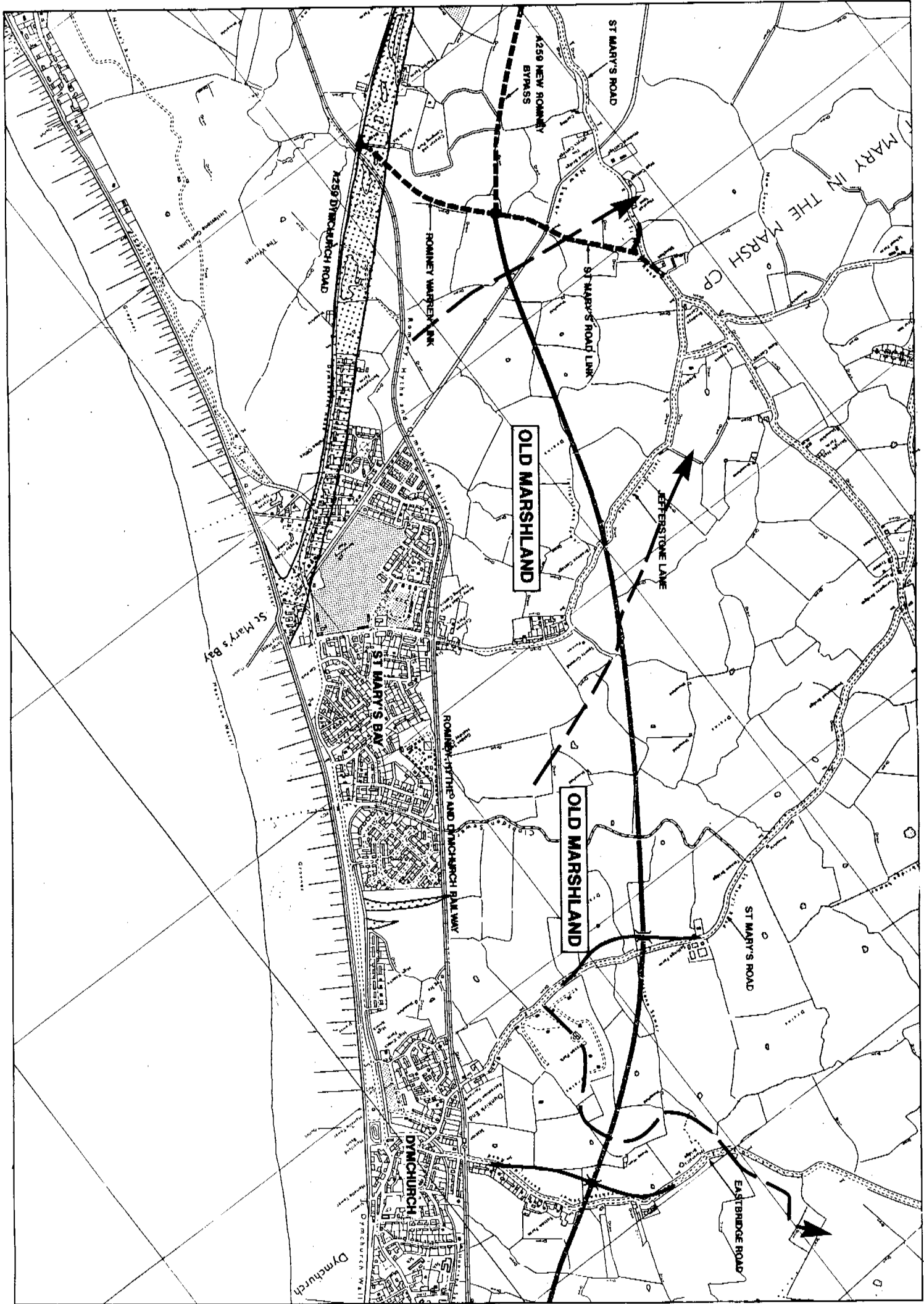
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Eddison, J. 1983: The Evolution of the Barrier Beaches between Fairlight and Hythe. Geogr. Journal 149, 39-53.



OLD MARSHLAND

OLD MARSHLAND

A259 DYMCHURCH ROAD

St Mary's Bay

ST MARY'S BAY

DYMCHURCH

ST MARY'S ROAD

A259 NEW ROMNEY BYPASS

ROMNEY WAREHEN LANE

ST MARY'S ROAD LINK

MARY IN THE MARSH CP

JEFFERSTONE LANE

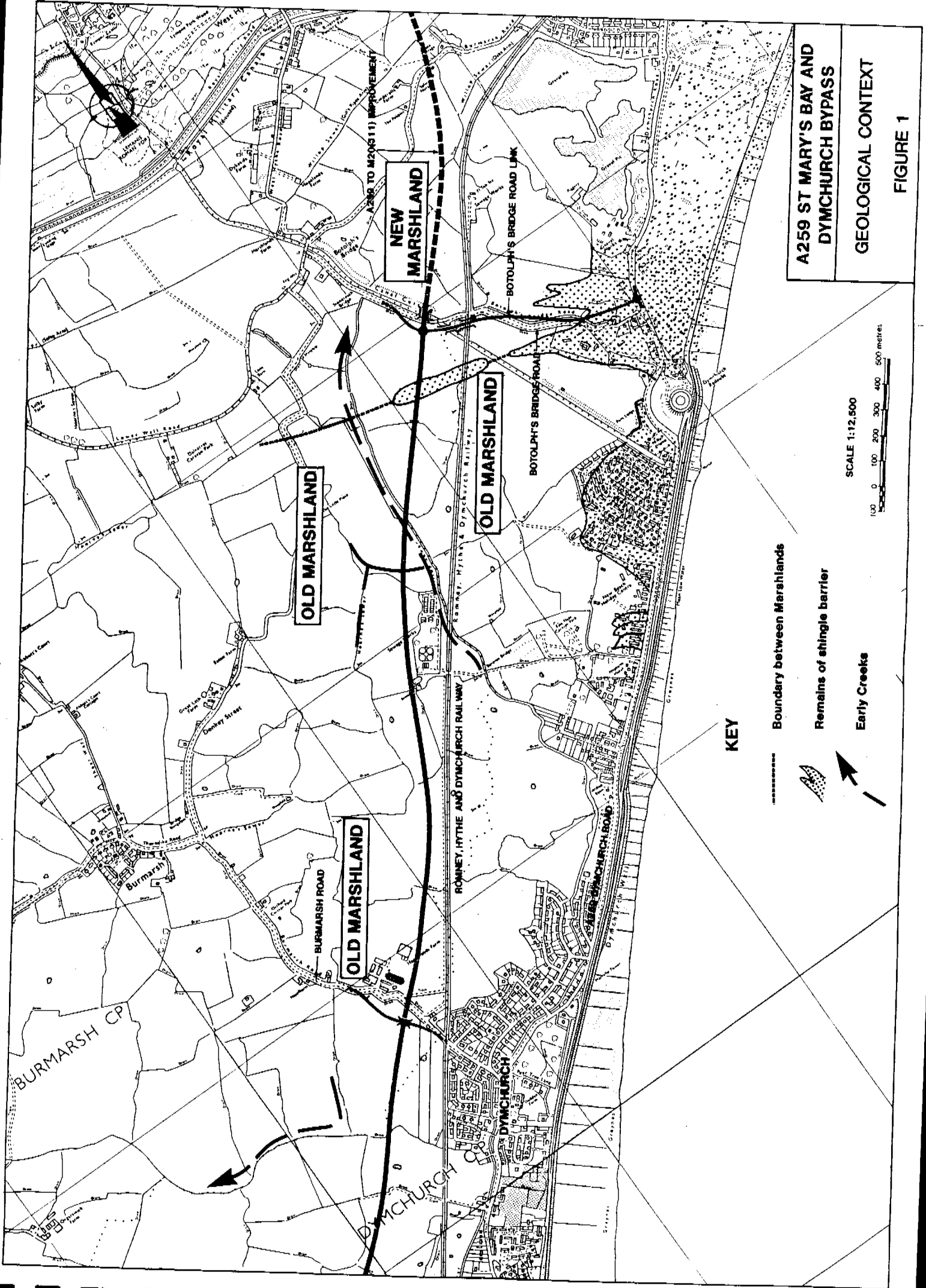
ROMNEY-TYTHE AND DYMCHURCH RAILWAY

ST MARY'S ROAD

EASTBRIDGE ROAD

Dymchurch





**A259 ST MARY'S BAY AND
DYMCHURCH BYPASS**

GEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

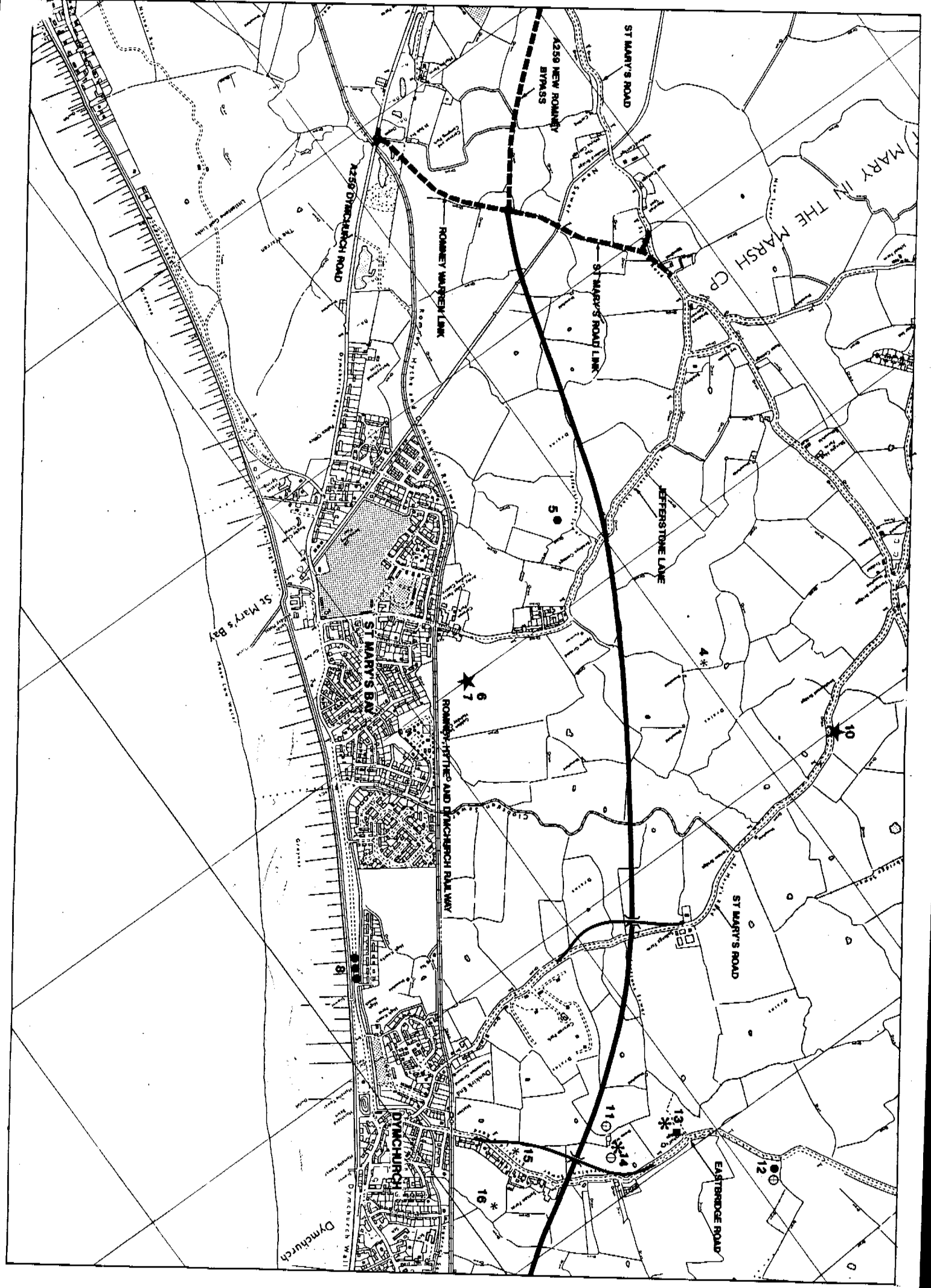
FIGURE 1

SCALE 1:12,500

0 100 200 300 400 500 metres

KEY

- Boundary between Marshlands
- ▨ Remains of string barrier
- Early Creeks



MARY IN THE MARSH CP

ST MARY'S ROAD

1250 NEW ROMNEY BYPASS

1250 DYMCHURCH ROAD

ROMNEY WARREN LINK

ST MARY'S ROAD LINK

JEFFERSTONE LAKE

St Mary's Bay

ST MARY'S BAY

ROMNEY RIFLES AND DYMCHURCH RAILWAY

ST MARY'S ROAD

EASTBRIDGE ROAD

Dymchurch

DYMCHURCH

6 *

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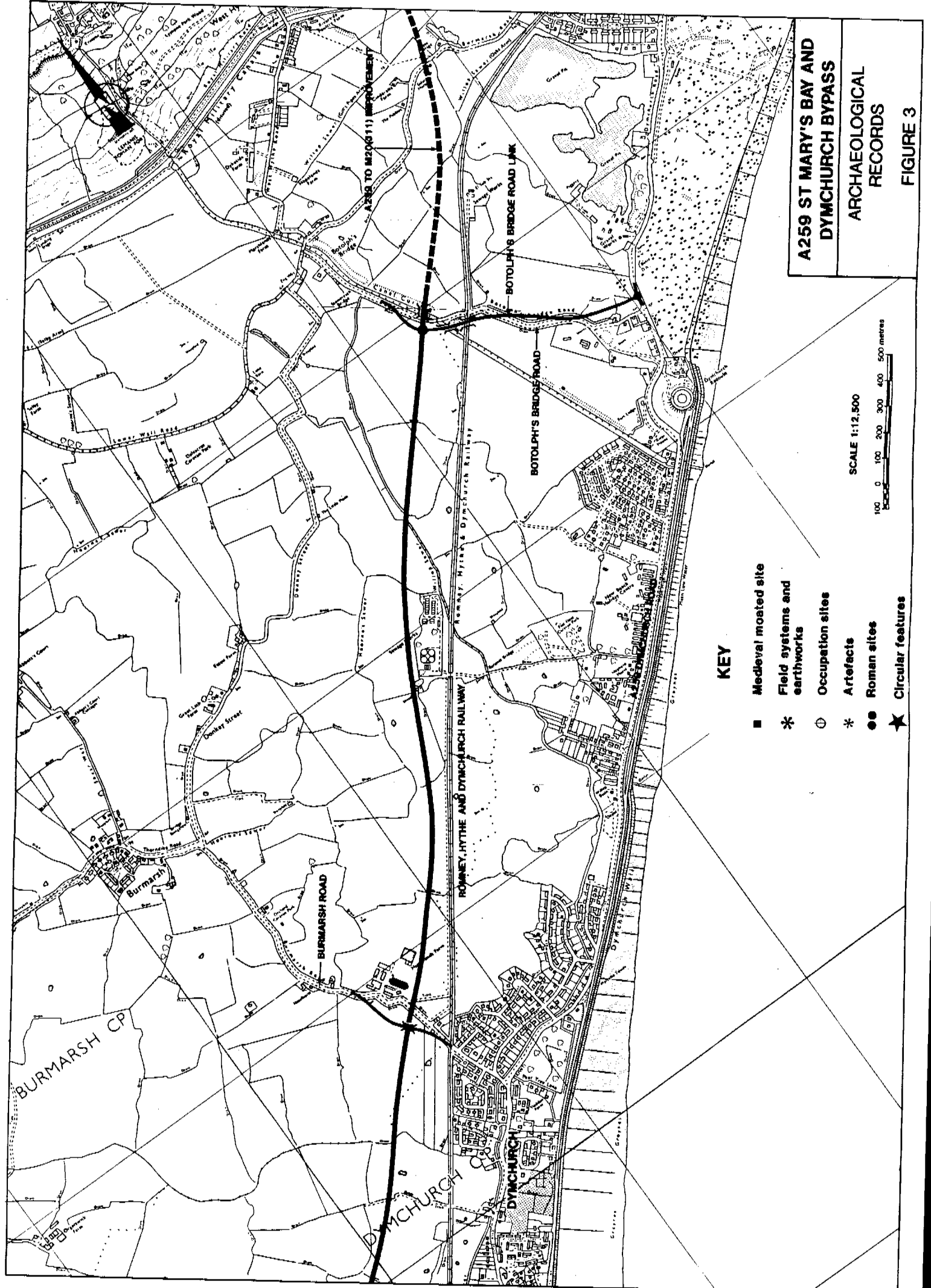
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**A259 ST MARY'S BAY AND
DYMCHURCH BYPASS**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RECORDS**

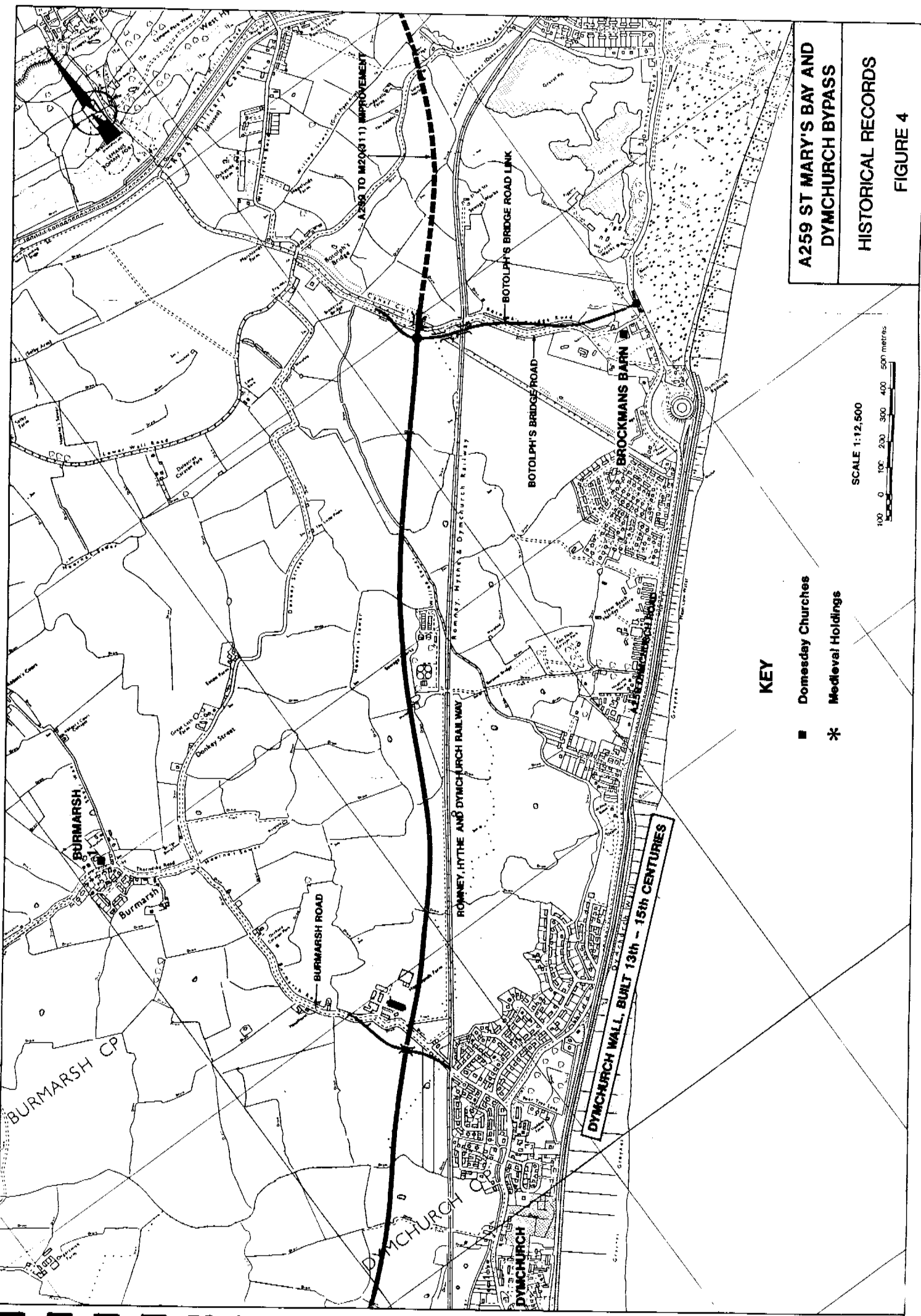
FIGURE 3

KEY

- Medieval moated site
- * Field systems and earthworks
- ⊙ Occupation sites
- * Artefacts
- Roman sites
- ★ Circular features

SCALE 1:12,500

100 0 100 200 300 400 500 metres

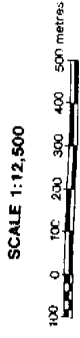


**A259 ST MARY'S BAY AND
DYMCHURCH BYPASS**

HISTORICAL RECORDS

FIGURE 4

- KEY**
- Domesday Churches
 - * Medieval Holdings



A259
ST MARY'S BAY &
DYMCHURCH BYPASS

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD SURVEY

SOUTH EAST
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FAU

Field Archaeology Unit

A259(T)
St. Mary's Bay and Dymchurch Bypass
Archaeological Field Evaluation

A Report
on behalf of
JMP Consultants Ltd.

By

Chris Place BA
South Eastern Archaeological Services

October 1992

Project Number 1992/58

Contents

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6.0 Conclusions.....Page 12

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Department of Transport (DoT) intend to upgrade the A259(T) between Dymchurch and New Romney. This report is concerned with the St. Mary's Bay and Dymchurch (the scheme) section of the project; approximately 11.6km including side roads.

1.2 EC Directive 85/337/EEC (The Directive) requires full environmental assessment (EA) of development projects which are likely to have significant direct and indirect effects on the environment as a result of their nature, size or location. The directive makes provision for the EA of road schemes.

1.3 EA of road schemes is enabled in England and Wales by modifications to the Highways Act 1980 (SI 1988 No.1241; The Highways (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988). The range of road schemes liable to EA is detailed in DoT Departmental Standard HD 18/88. It has been deemed that the scheme under consideration falls within a category requiring EA.

1.4 The Directive and DoT HD 18/88 require that the Environmental Statement contains, *inter alia*, sufficient data to assess the main effects that the scheme is likely to have on the environment and a description of the measures proposed to mitigate adverse environmental effects.

1.5 The EA includes provision for the archaeological evaluation of the land affected by the scheme.

1.6 The purpose of a programme of evaluation is, therefore, to identify areas of archaeological interest, to determine their importance, and assess the likely environmental impact of the scheme on the archaeological heritage.

2.0 Previous Archaeological Work in the Area.

2.1 Little archaeological work had been undertaken on Romney Marsh prior to 1985. Since that date major excavations have taken place at Broomhill Farm (Camber) and on the site of Brett's new quarry to the southwest of Lydd. Surface artifact collection (SAC) has been undertaken around Old Romney and on the line of the proposed Breznett (A2070) road. Extensive SAC has also now been undertaken in the northeast of the Marsh. Much of this recent work has served to indicate the inadequacy of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). (NB This is not a reflection on the compilers and curators of this record but an indication of the paucity of fieldwork in the area.)

2.2 A desk top assessment of the scheme and it's surrounding area has already been undertaken by Jill Eddison (Eddison 1992b). This has included an examination of aerial photographs, a study of the documentary sources and a consideration of unpublished discoveries. Only the main conclusions are presented here and the reader is directed to the report for detailed discussion.

2.2.1 Eddison notes the importance of considering the area in it's geological context. Romney Marsh is an area of reclaimed marshland which has been categorized as either Old or New Marshland. Both areas are characterized by thick marsh and marine deposits which represent the fine balance between the fortunes of land and sea. In such a context it is important to recognize the potential for the burial of important archaeological and palaeo-environmental deposits. The example of a late Iron Age and Romano-British land surface at Jessons Farm (TR 08152762) is mentioned. The discovery of early Bronze Age axes at an unrecorded depth in a quarry near Lydd (Needham 1988) should also be noted.

2.2.1.1 The Jesson's Farm site is recorded in the Kent County Sites and Monument's Record (TR02NE9) as being discovered in 1910 during borehole drilling at a depth of between 3' and 4'6". Artifacts dateable to the late Iron Age or early RB period were recovered along with charcoal and the skeleton of an ox or a horse.

2.2.2 The Kent SMR contains no records for the line of the preferred route though Eddison's work highlights several areas of archaeological interest along the route.

2.2.3 Four classes of feature are considered by Eddison of which three are present along the preferred route.

2.2.4 The preferred route is crossed by 6 sewers or main marsh drains. Two of these are 19th century; The Canal Cutting (1876) and The New Sewer (post 1843). The remaining 4 are potentially of some antiquity and are known as The Willop, Hornes, Marshland and Clobsden Sewers. The Clobsden Sewer forms one of the boundaries of the Sellinge estate which is recorded in a charter of c AD 700 and may, therefore, itself date from that period. The others may also be of that date.

2.2.5 Numerous infilled and plough levelled ditches have been noted from air photographs and are sketched on figure 2 of the desktop assessment. The overall impression is of a great many small fields having been aggregated into the larger present day enclosed areas. The ditches creating the smaller enclosures appear to respect the lines of the main sewers and ditch systems, suggesting that they are contemporary or later. Eddison favours the latter proposal. It is possible that excavation might provide data to confirm this supposition.

2.2.6 The line of the preferred route crosses 5 local roads which may preserve the line of earlier trackways. These may have originated when the marsh was occupied in the Saxon period. It is possible that excavation might provide data to confirm this supposition.

3.0 The Field Evaluation

3.1 The brief for the field evaluation was based upon recommendations resulting from the desktop assessment and was generally accepted by the Kent County Archaeologist.

3.1.2 The county archaeologists' comments regarding machine trenching were noted. However, such work was not acceptable to the DoT and has not, therefore, been undertaken.

3.1.3 The state of drainage ditches in the area of study made it impracticable to systematically investigate them as suggested in Eddison's recommendations. Therefore, this work was not undertaken.

3.1.4 The majority of the land to be affected by the scheme was known to be arable with areas of established pasture also recorded. Archaeological data collection was therefore, based on SAC in ploughed areas and systematic testpitting in pasture. In addition the area of land take was surveyed for any unrecorded earthworks.

3.2 Surface Artifact Collection (SAC)

3.2.1 Artifacts present in the ploughzone are indicative of past human activity. Their systematic collection and record can reveal patterns of discard which may help to define and locate such areas of activity.

3.2.2 This systematic study requires a ploughed surface that has undergone a degree of weathering for optimum artifact retrieval. Therefore, it cannot be undertaken in areas of crop, stubble or pasture.

3.2.3 The land take "corridor", including the side roads, was sequentially divided into 25m collection units. Within each collection unit 3 transects, 12.5m apart and parallel to the centre line of the "corridor", were walked and any surface artifacts collected. Within each collection unit the artifacts from the transects were amalgamated to provide the total for each artifact class.

3.3 Testpitting

3.3.1 In areas unavailable for SAC it was initially proposed to hand dig 1mx1m testpits every 25m (1 per collection unit) to sample the topsoil for artifacts, though this was later adjusted to one every 12.5m to increase the number of samples. Unfortunately the clay content of the soil made sieving impossible, thus all artifact retrieval was by hand.

3.4 Geoarchaeological Assessment

The Geoarchaeological Service Facility (GSF)(Institute of Archaeology, London)is undertaking work into the sedimentary context of the area. Unfortunately this work was not available prior to the completion of this report.

4.0 The Results

4.1 In total there were 406 collection units along the line of the scheme (including side roads). Of these, 289 (71%) units were in arable land and 128 (29%) were under pasture.

4.1.1 Within the arable land, 117 units were ploughed, 109 were harvested but unploughed, and 52 were still under crop. In total 121 units were sampled by surface artifact collection (100% of the available land, but only 41% of the potential land).

4.1.2 Of the 128 collection units under pasture 55 (42%) were sampled by testpitting.

4.1.3 Evaluation by the above two techniques was, therefore, undertaken on 43% of the route. The remainder is effectively unevaluated.

4.1.5 Post medieval artifacts (excluding pottery) were recorded and discarded. They are not considered further. No pre-post medieval class of artifact other than pottery was recovered. Pottery, therefore, is the only class of artifact considered further. It is not possible to directly compare testpitting and SAC results and they must, therefore, be considered separately.

4.2 The Pottery (Drawings 1-30)

4.2.1 Thirty-three fabrics have been recognized and described from pottery collected along the scheme. This includes one sherd of Roman colour coated pottery. The remainder can be divided into four broad chronologically based groups, two medieval and two post-medieval. The four groups are:-

4.2.1.1 Earlier Medieval: AD 1100-1350

4.2.1.2 Later Medieval: AD 1200-1500

4.2.1.3 Earlier Post-Medieval: AD 1400-c1650

4.2.1.4 Later Post-Medieval: AD 1650 onwards.

4.2.2 The infrequency of Early Post Medieval Pottery suggests that it is best displayed as present or absent rather than as a standard deviation. LPM pottery, being essentially modern is not illustrated.

4.3 Surface Artifact Collection Results

4.3.1 Eighty-eight sherds of earlier medieval (EM) pottery were collected. The size of the collection renders the significance of the distribution hard to assess. However, there are three distinct concentrations apparent: transect 383 (chainage 6225.000 to 6250.000) transects 531 to 533 (chainage 425.000 to 500.00 St. Mary's road) and transect 524 (chainage 175.000 to 200.000 St. Mary's road). The latter is +6sd above the mean

4.3.2 One hundred and sixty-seven sherds of later medieval pottery were collected. Concentrations were collected at transects 383(chainage 6225.000 to 6250.000), 522 to 524 (chainage 125.000 to 200.000 St. Mary's road), and 528 to 532 (approx. chainage 350.000 to 475.000 St. mary's road). Transects 524 and 532 are both +6sd above the mean.

4.3.3 Twenty-three sherds of earlier post medieval pottery were recovered from the scheme. This does not appear to be an important component in the collection, but concentrations were recorded at transects 281(chainage 3675.000) and 532 (chainage 450.000 St. Mary's road).

4.3.4 The single sherd of Romano-British colour coated pottery was recovered from chainage 4050.000 to 4075.000.

4.4 Testpitting Results

4.4.1 Compared with SAC, testpitting represents a very small sample size. There is, therefore, difficulty involved in interpreting the results and discerning any patterns.

4.4.2 No earlier medieval sherds were recovered during testpitting.

4.4.3 A total of 6 sherds of later medieval pottery were recovered during testpitting. Two from transect 128 and three from transect 1501.

4.4.4 Only one sherd of earlier post-medieval pottery was recovered from testpitting, and it is, therefore impossible to draw any conclusions except that the low frequency recorded by SAC appears to be confirmed.

4.5 Earthwork Survey

4.5.1 There were no earthworks along the line of the preferred route.

5.0 Areas of Archaeological Interest

5.1 On the basis of the results from the field evaluation the following areas of archaeological interest can be proposed.

5.1.1 Chainage 100.000 to 125.000. A concentration of later medieval pottery collected during testpitting.

5.1.2 Chainage 125.000 to 200.000 St. Mary's road. A concentration of later medieval pottery with an earlier medieval concentration at 175.000 to 200.000. Includes concentrations of +6sd above the mean.

5.1.3 Chainage 350.000 to 500.000 St. Mary's road. A concentration of earlier and later medieval pottery and early post medieval pottery. The highest density of pottery is between chainage 425.000 and 500.000. This area includes later medieval pottery concentrations of +6sd above the mean and the earlier medieval concentration.

5.1.4 Chainage 1550.000 to 1575.000. Later medieval pottery recovered during test pitting.

5.1.5 Chainage 2450.000 to 2475.000. Clobsden Sewer. A modern feature which possibly respects the line of an earlier (Saxon) boundary. Remains of earlier boundaries might be present, though this is perhaps unlikely.

5.1.6 Chainage 3675.000 to 3700.00. Early post medieval pottery concentration.

5.1.7 Chainage 3900.000 to 3925.000. Marshland Sewer. A modern feature of possible earlier origin. Remains of earlier features might be present, though this is perhaps unlikely.

5.1.8 Chainage 4850.000 to 4875.000. Hornes Sewer. A modern feature of possibly earlier origin. Remains of earlier features might be present, though this is perhaps unlikely.

5.1.9 Chainage 5975.000 to 5600.000. Later medieval pottery concentration.

5.1.10 Chainage 6225.000 to 6250.000. Earlier and later medieval pottery concentration of +3sd.

5.1.11 Chainage 7300.000 to 7325.000. Willop Sewer. A modern feature of possible earlier origin. Remains of earlier features might be present, though this is perhaps unlikely.

7.0 Bibliography

Eddison, J. (1992b) A Report on the Archaeological Implications of the Proposed Bypasses for St. Mary's Bay and Dymchurch, Kent.

Needham, S. (1988) A Group of Early Bronze Age Axes from Lydd. in Eddison J., and Green C. (eds) Romney Marsh Evolution, Occupation, Reclamation. pp77-82.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The work undertaken has proved beneficial in defining areas of artifact concentrations, and other areas of archaeological interest. These areas of interest may represent evidence for, *inter alia*, medieval settlement and are worthy of further evaluation. Such work is required to further characterize the archaeological resource and provide sufficient data on it's nature and quality and, therefore, the impact of the scheme. With this information decisions can then be made as to the form that any mitigation measures should take.

6.2 The inability to undertake evaluation along all of the route is an important consideration. It seem likely that as of yet undiscovered artifact concentrations are present in unevaluated areas. Mindful that only 40% of the scheme has been evaluated, it might not be unreasonable to suggest that twice the number of artifact concentrations are likely to be present.

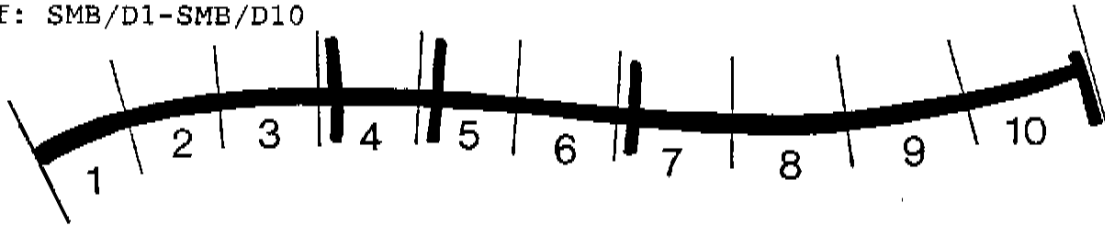
6.3 The field techniques utilized have only evaluated the surface of the land. Evidence has been presented that indicates that important archaeological and palaeo-environmental remains are likely to be present at some depth below the surface. The evaluation cannot provide information on the presence/absence, nature, extent or quality of any such remains.

6.4 It would appear advisable, therefore, to make provision to complete the initial evaluation at some stage. On the basis of these results secondary evaluation as envisaged in para 6.1 should be undertaken to achieve the objectives of the Environmental Assessment.

A259 ST. MARY'S BAY AND DYMCHURCH BYPASS
POTTERY DISTRIBUTION DRAWINGS

SHEET LAYOUT

Ref: SMB/D1-SMB/D10



SCALE: All Plans at 1:2500

DISTRIBUTION PLANS:

Drawing Nos. 1-10 Early Medieval Pottery
11-20 Late Medieval Pottery
21-30 Early Post-Medieval Pottery

KEY:

● $\geq +6sd$

● +5sd

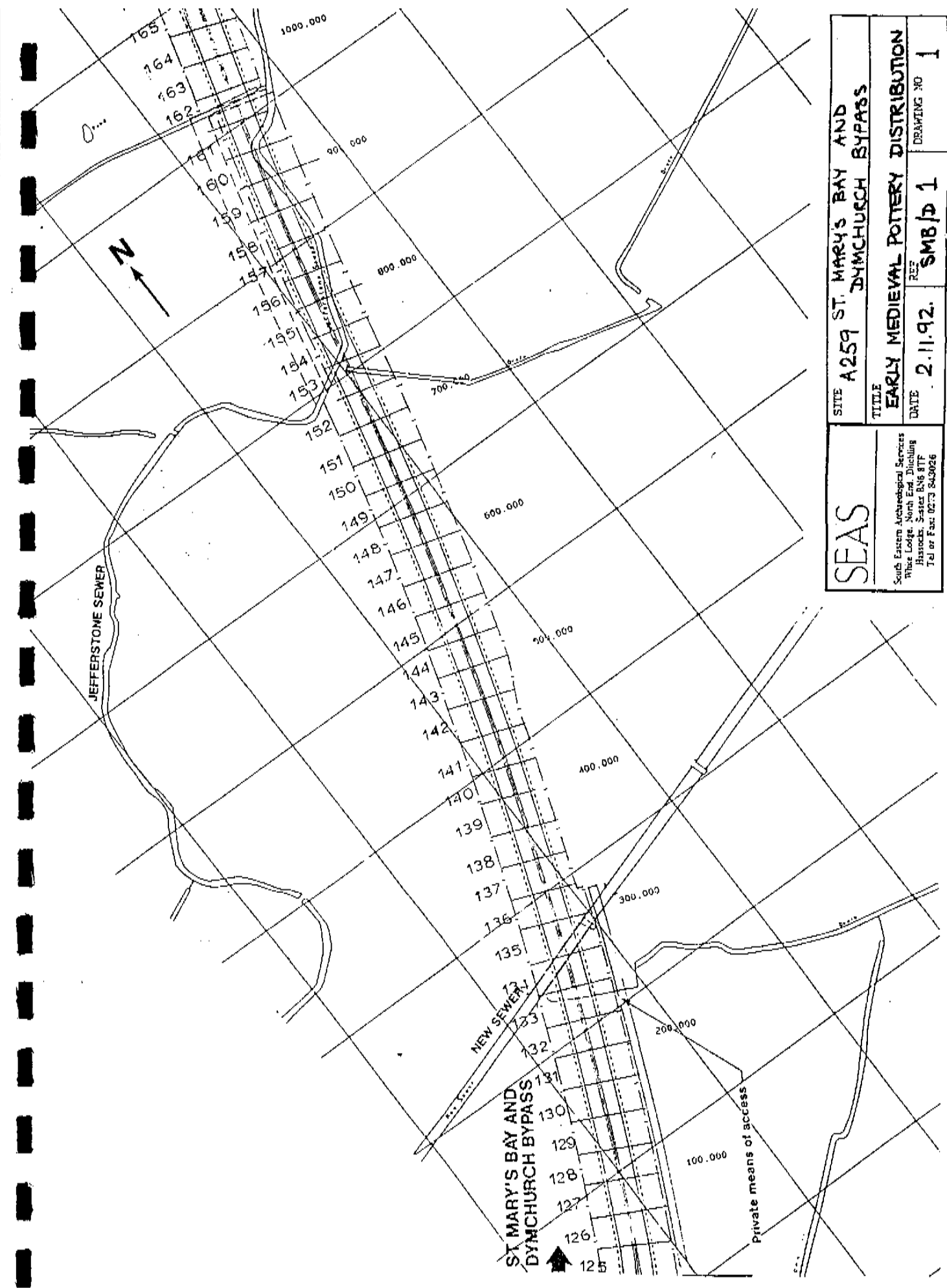
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● +3sd

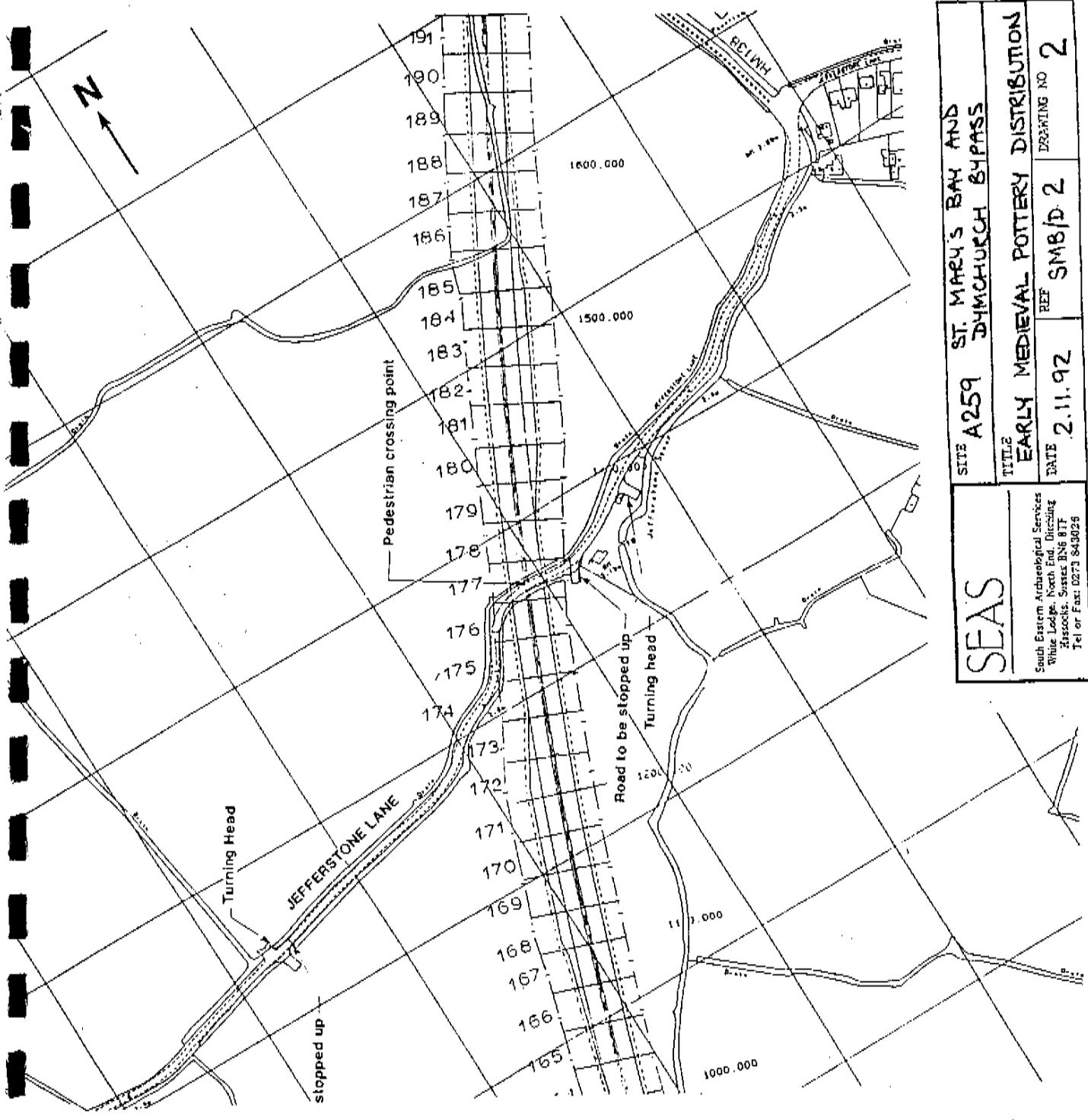
● +2sd

● +1sd

○ Presence of Early Post Medieval Pottery

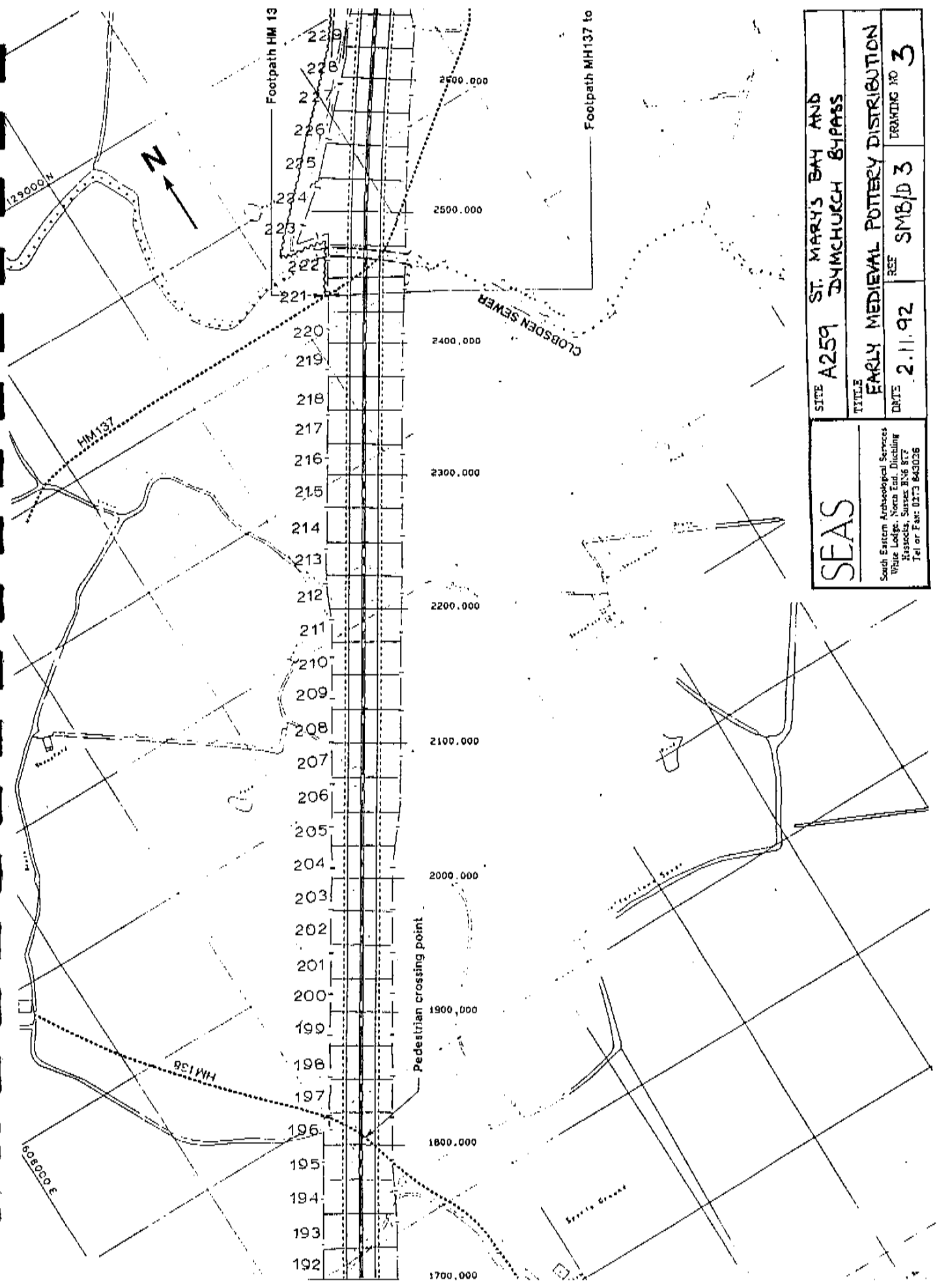


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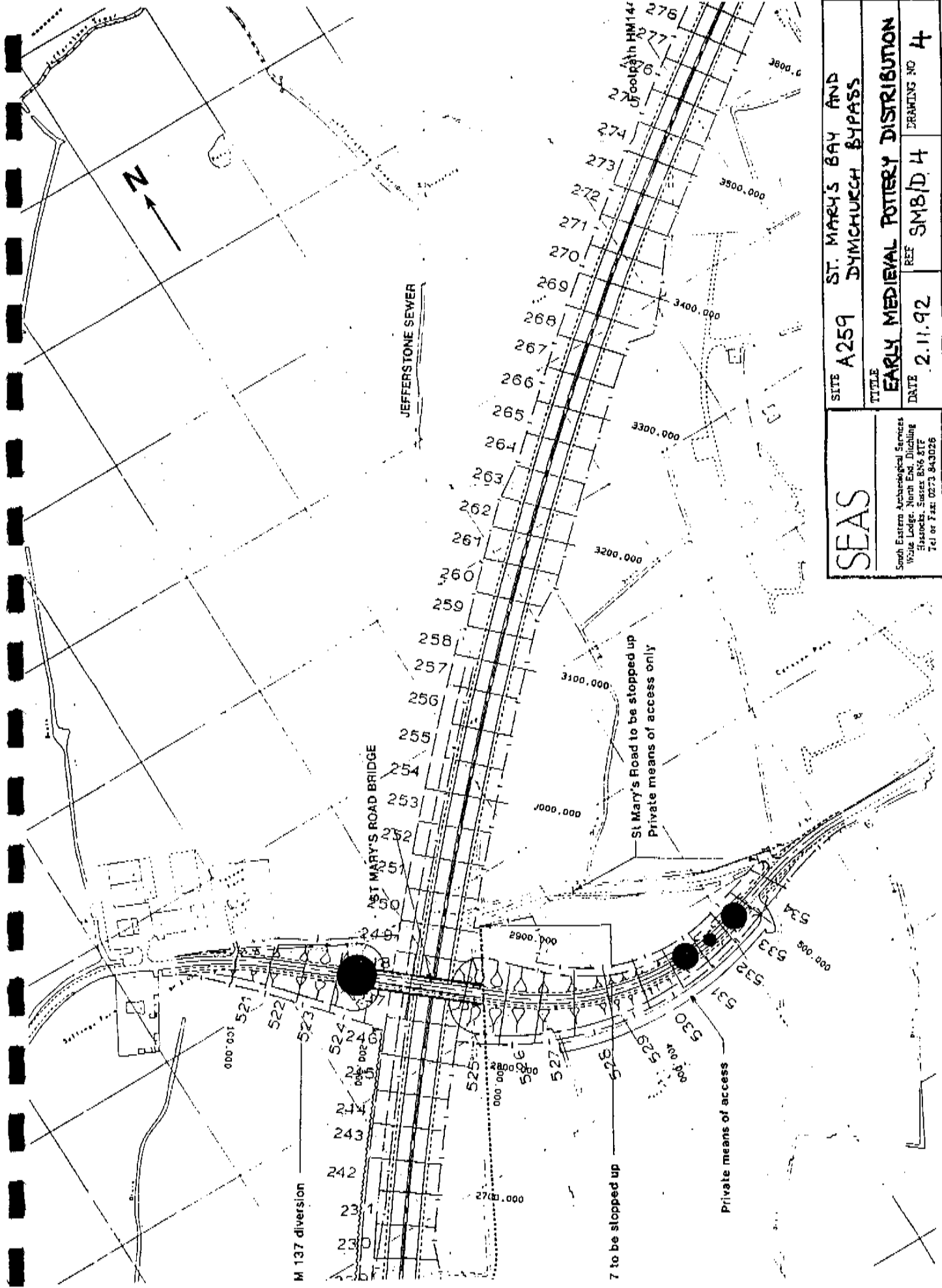


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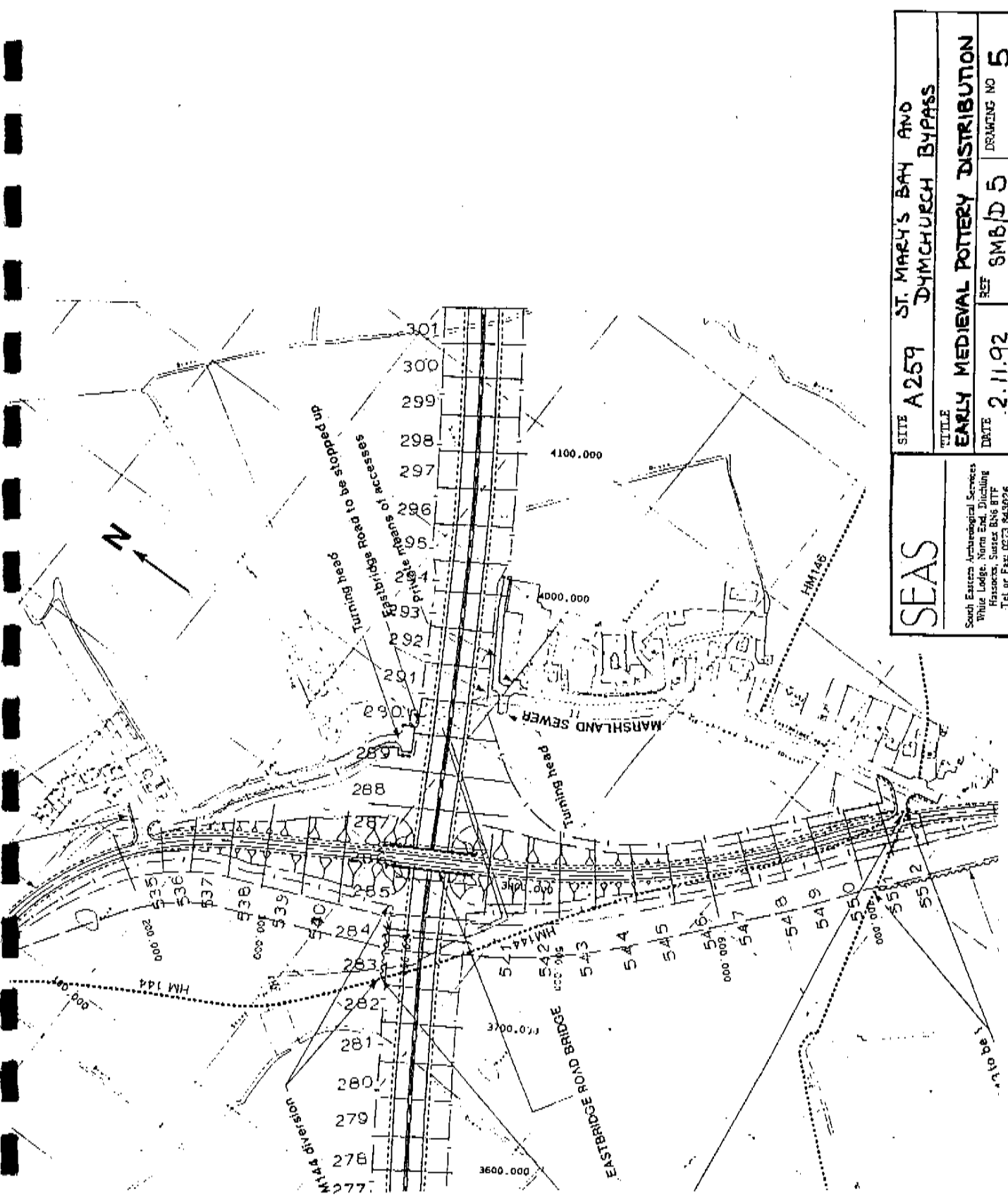
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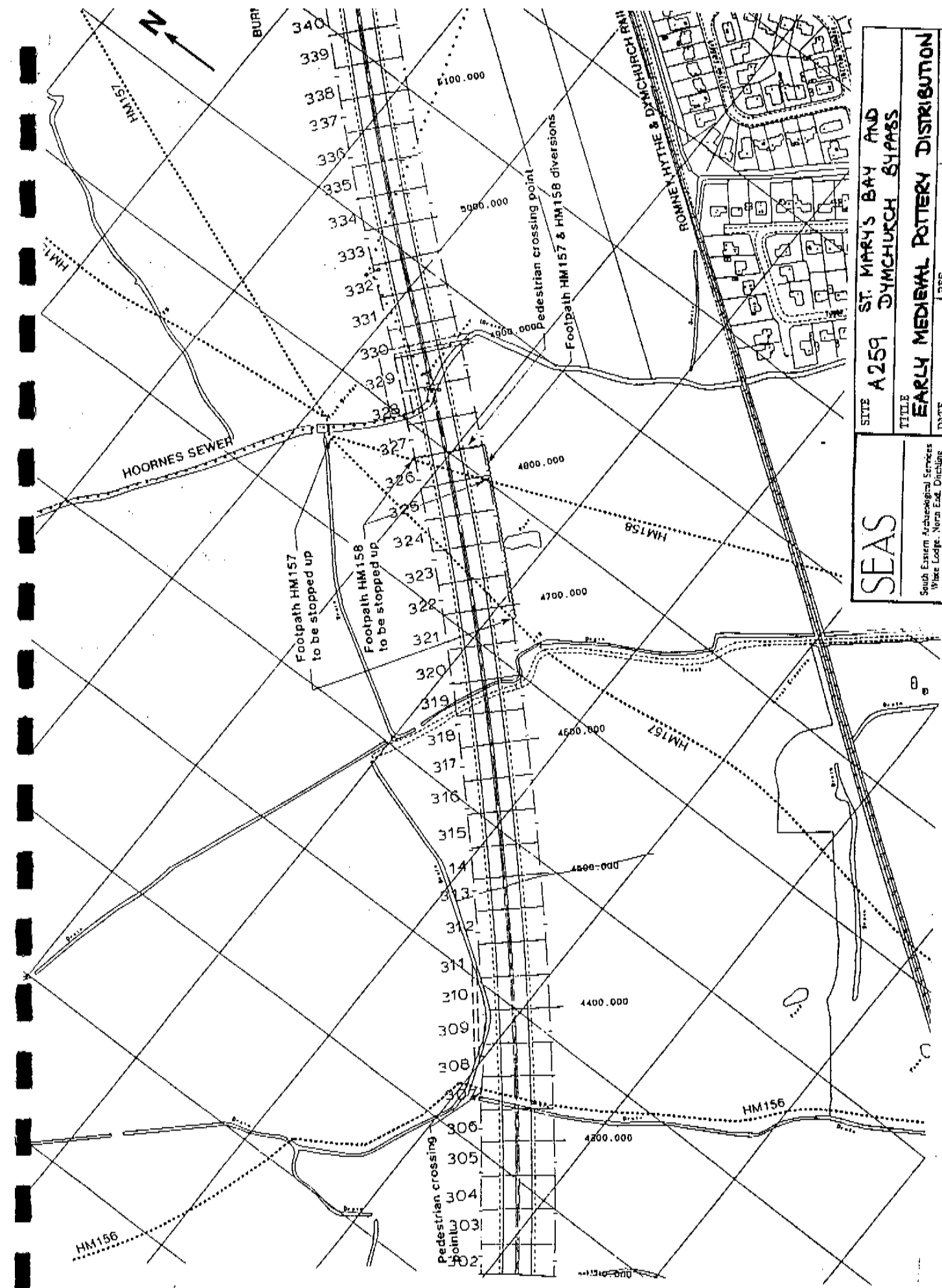
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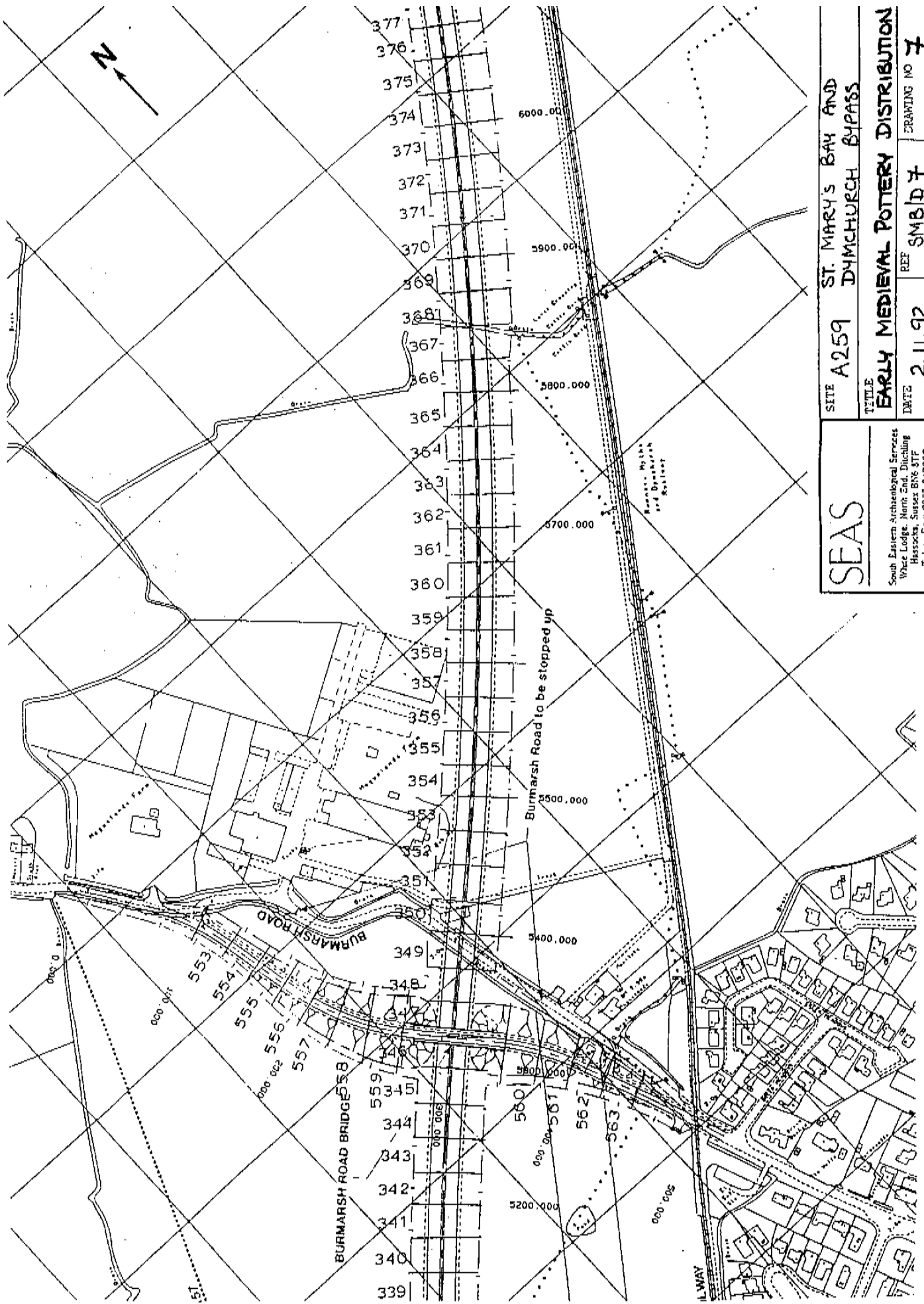


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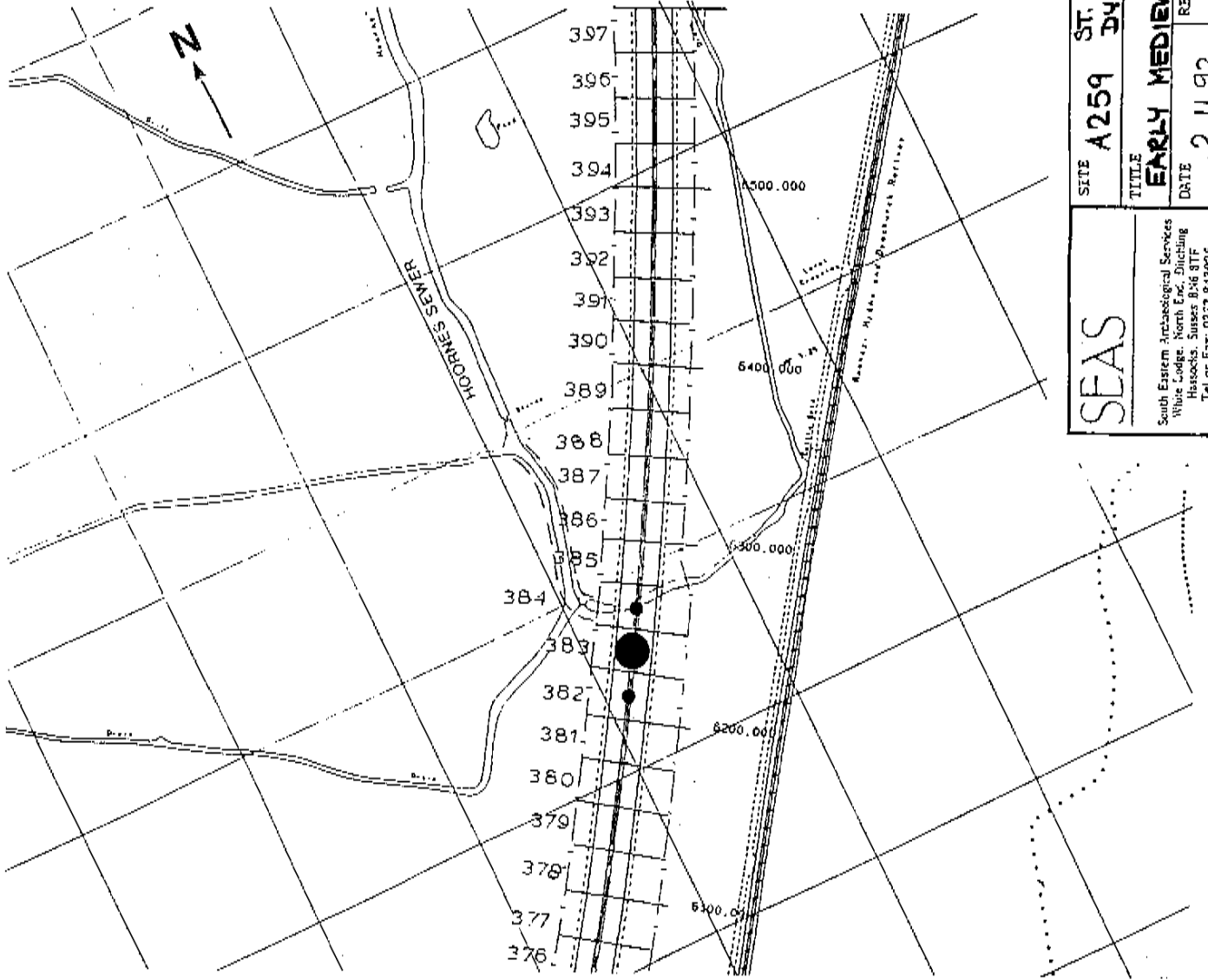
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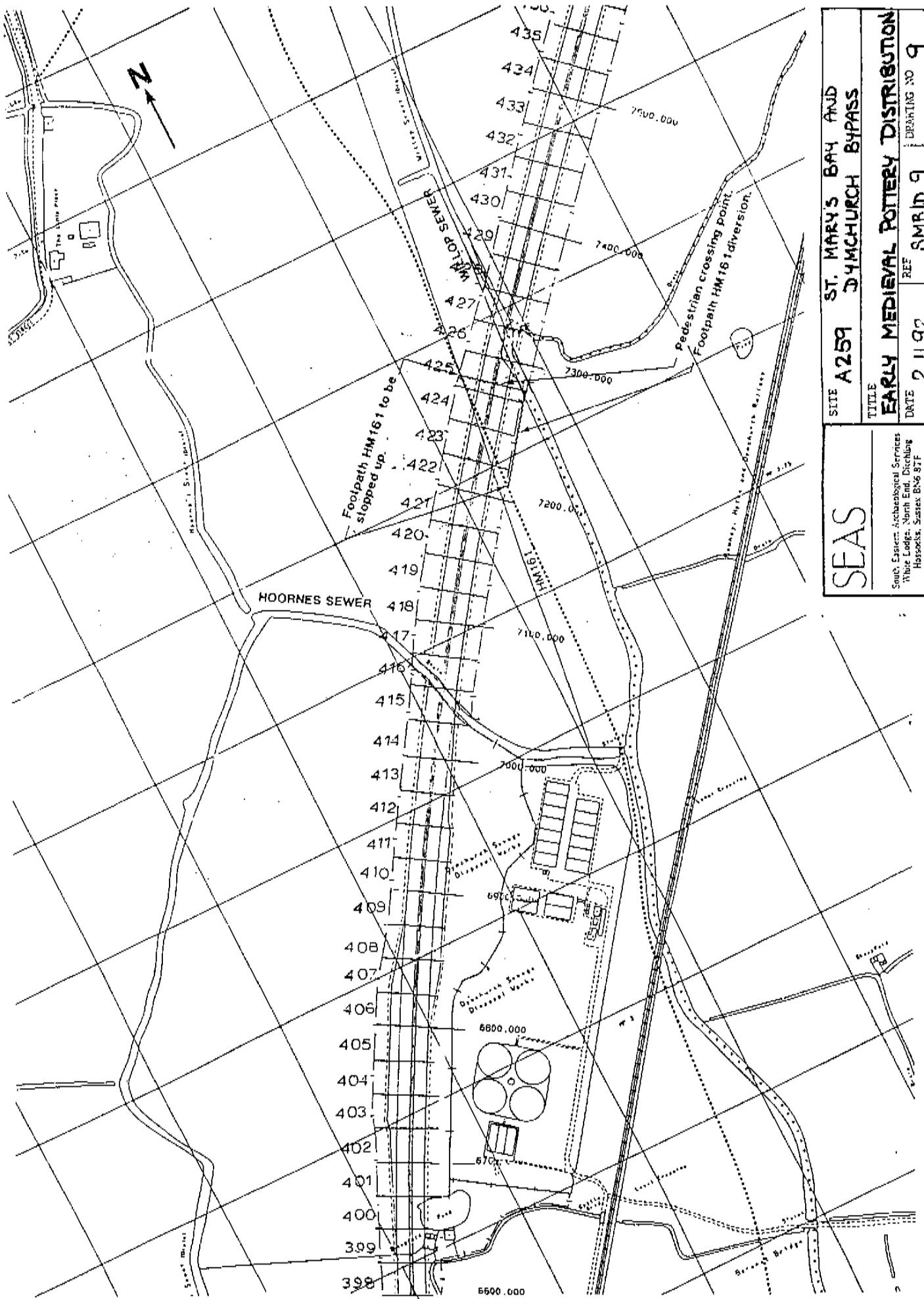
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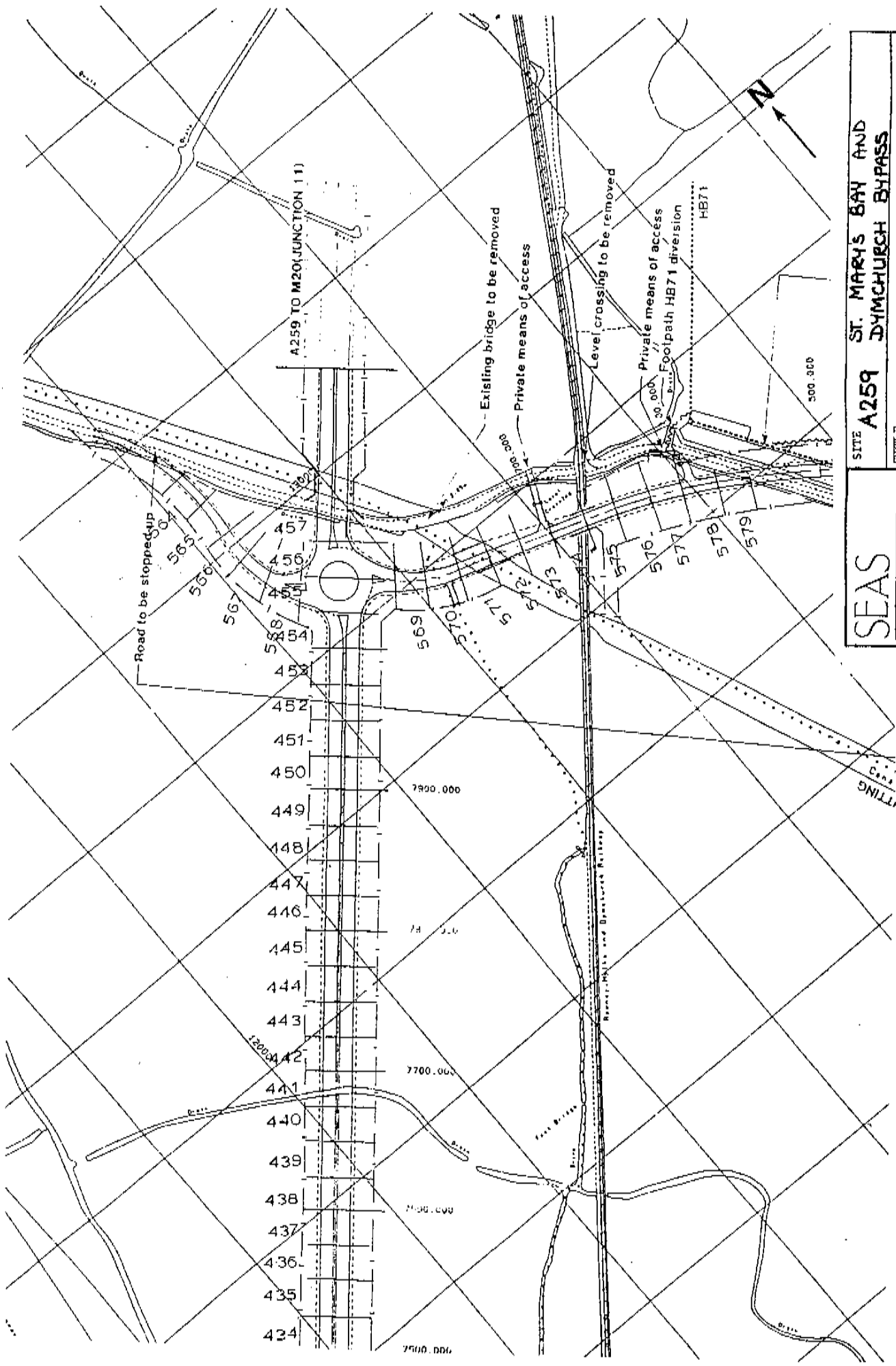
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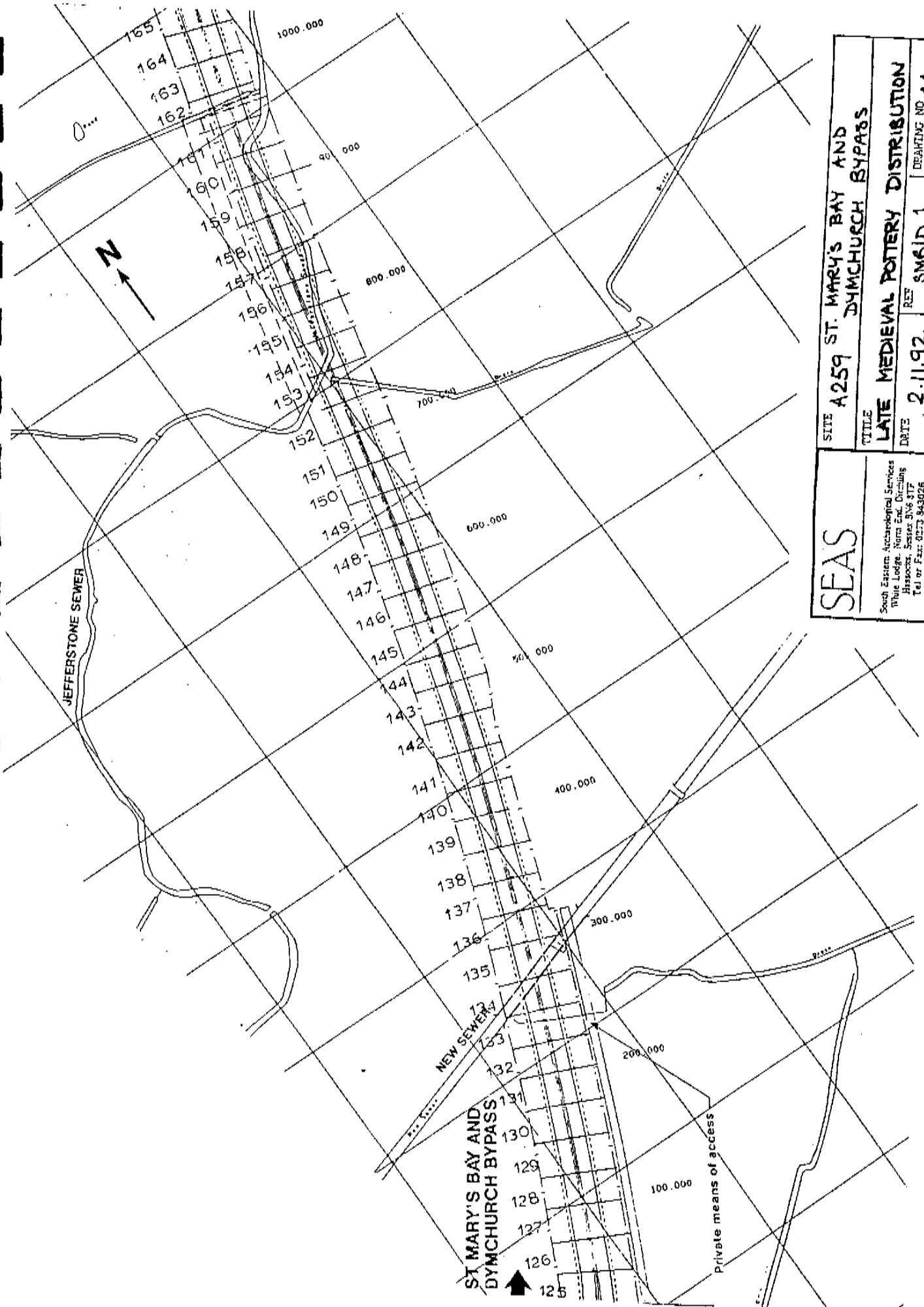
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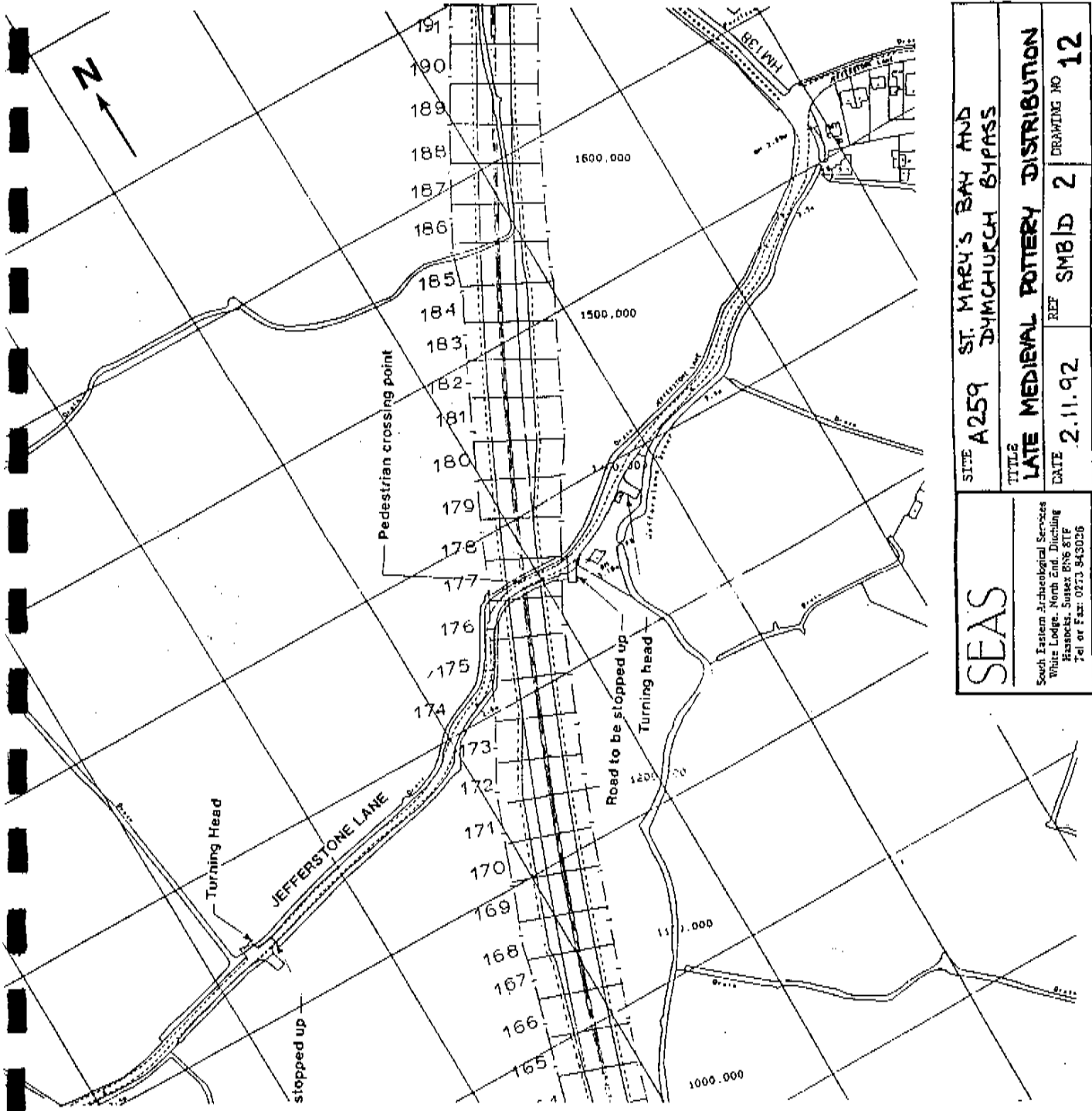
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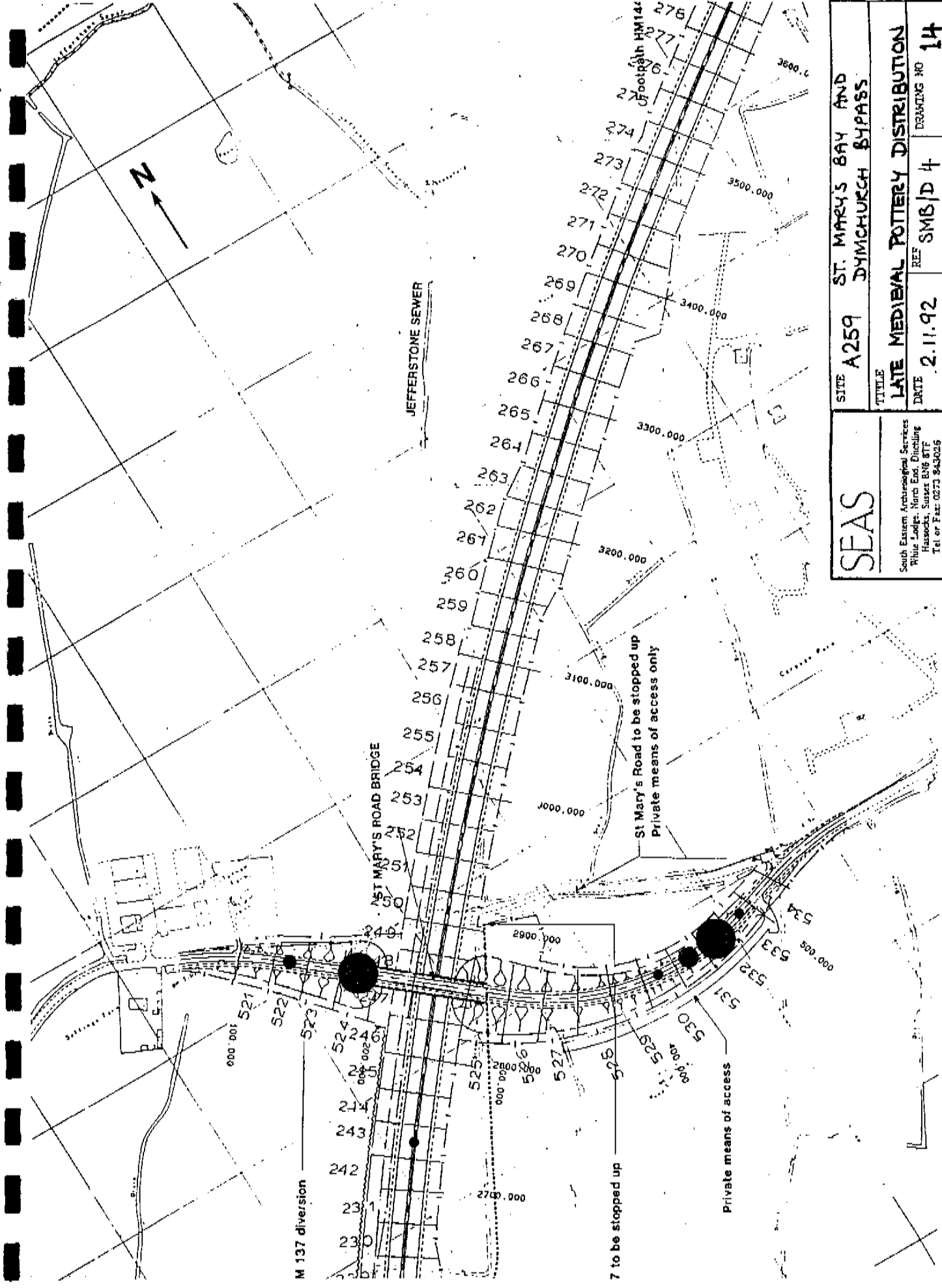
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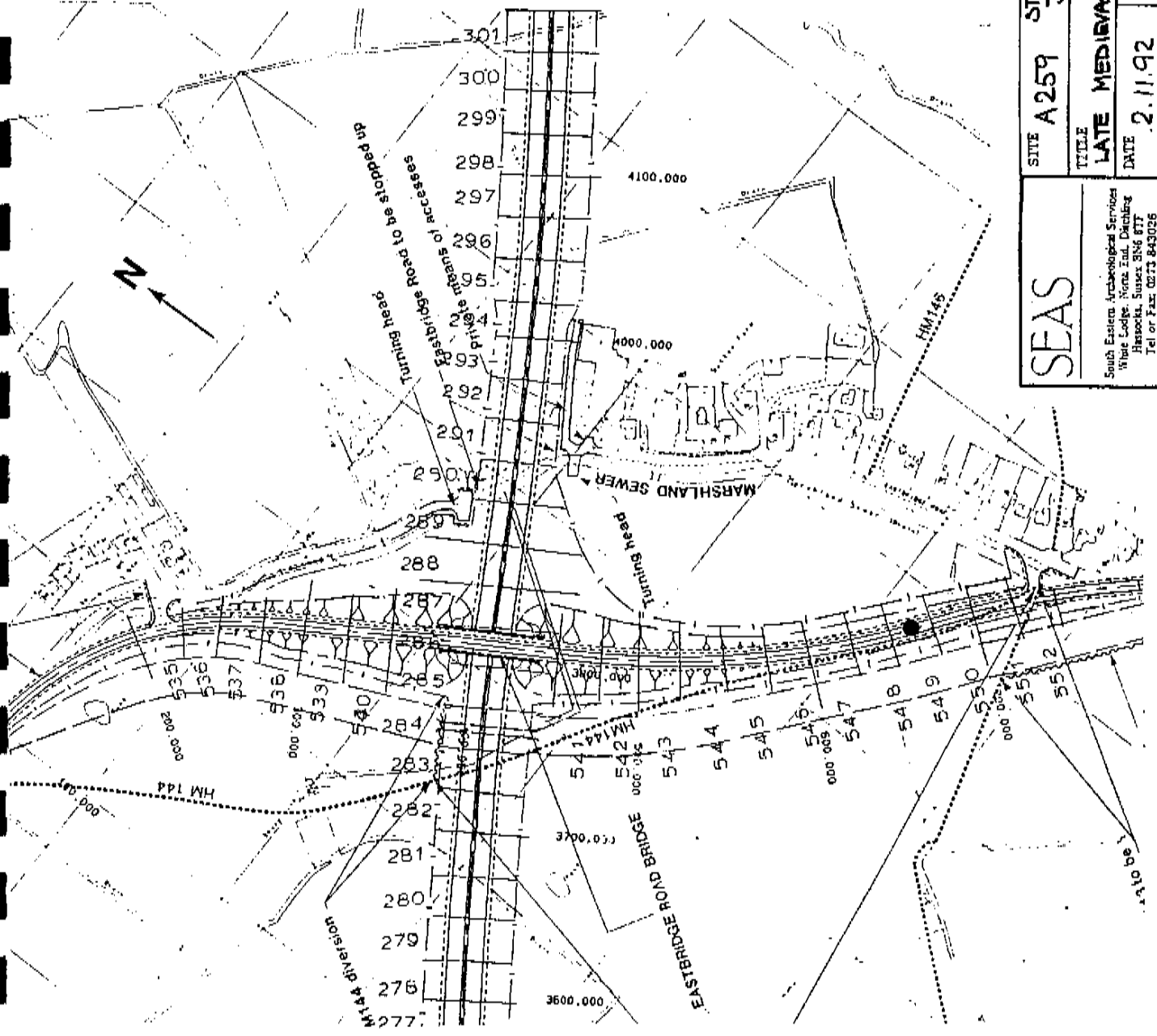
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HOORNES SEWER

Footpath HM157
to be stopped up

Footpath HM158
to be stopped up

pedestrian crossing point
Footpath HM157 & HM158 diversions

ROCKWELL & DYMCHURCH LANE

HM158

HM157

HM156

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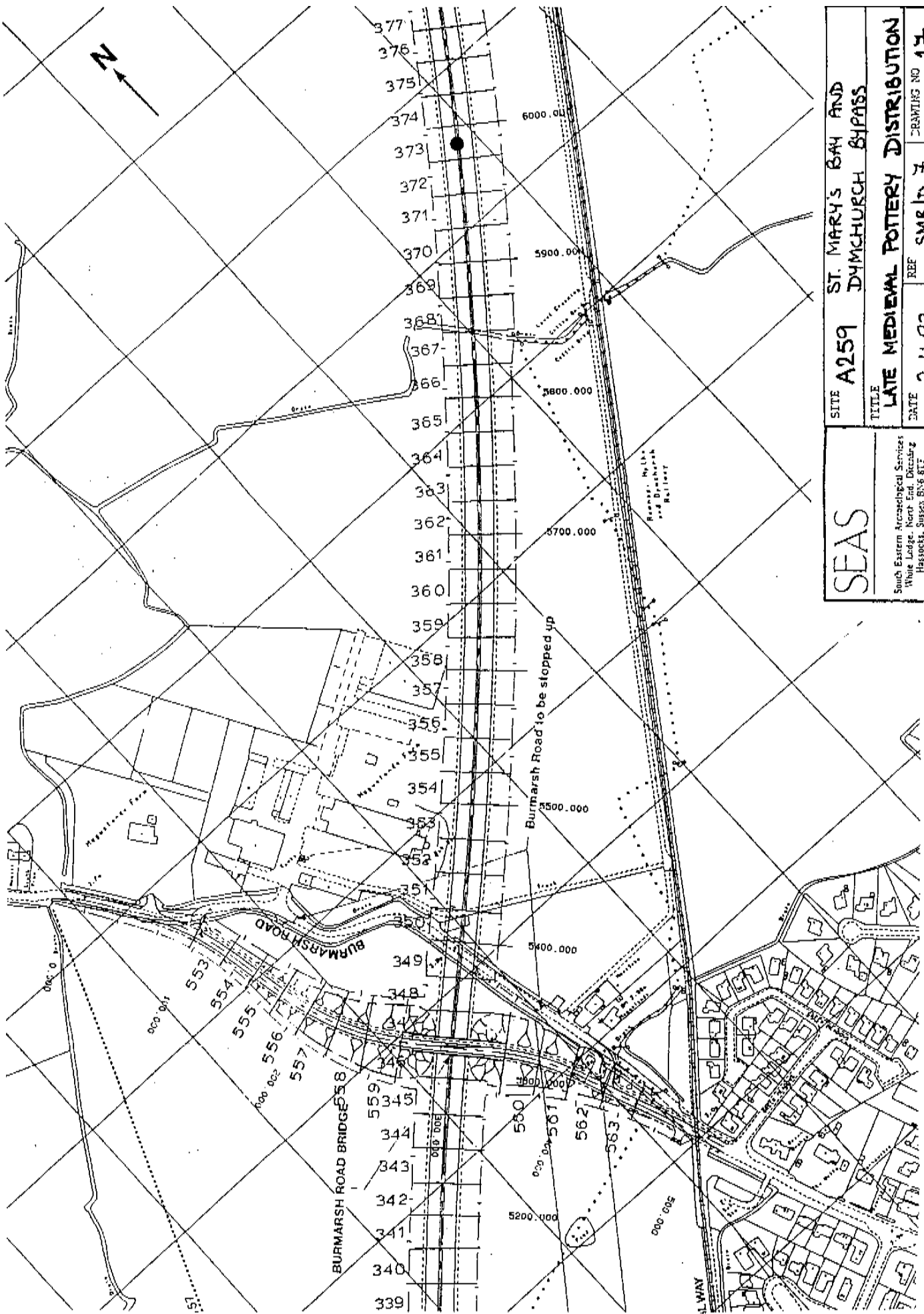
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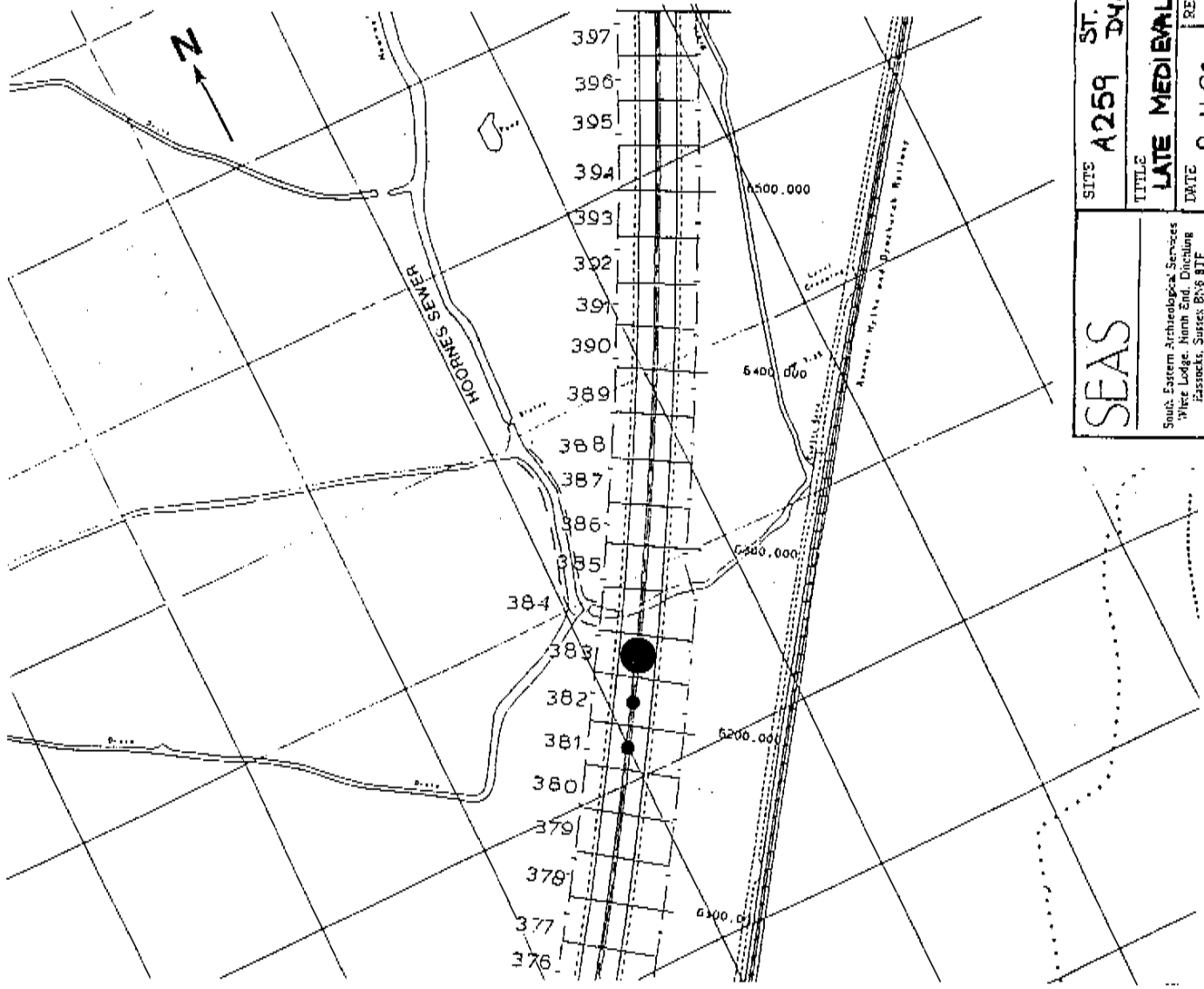
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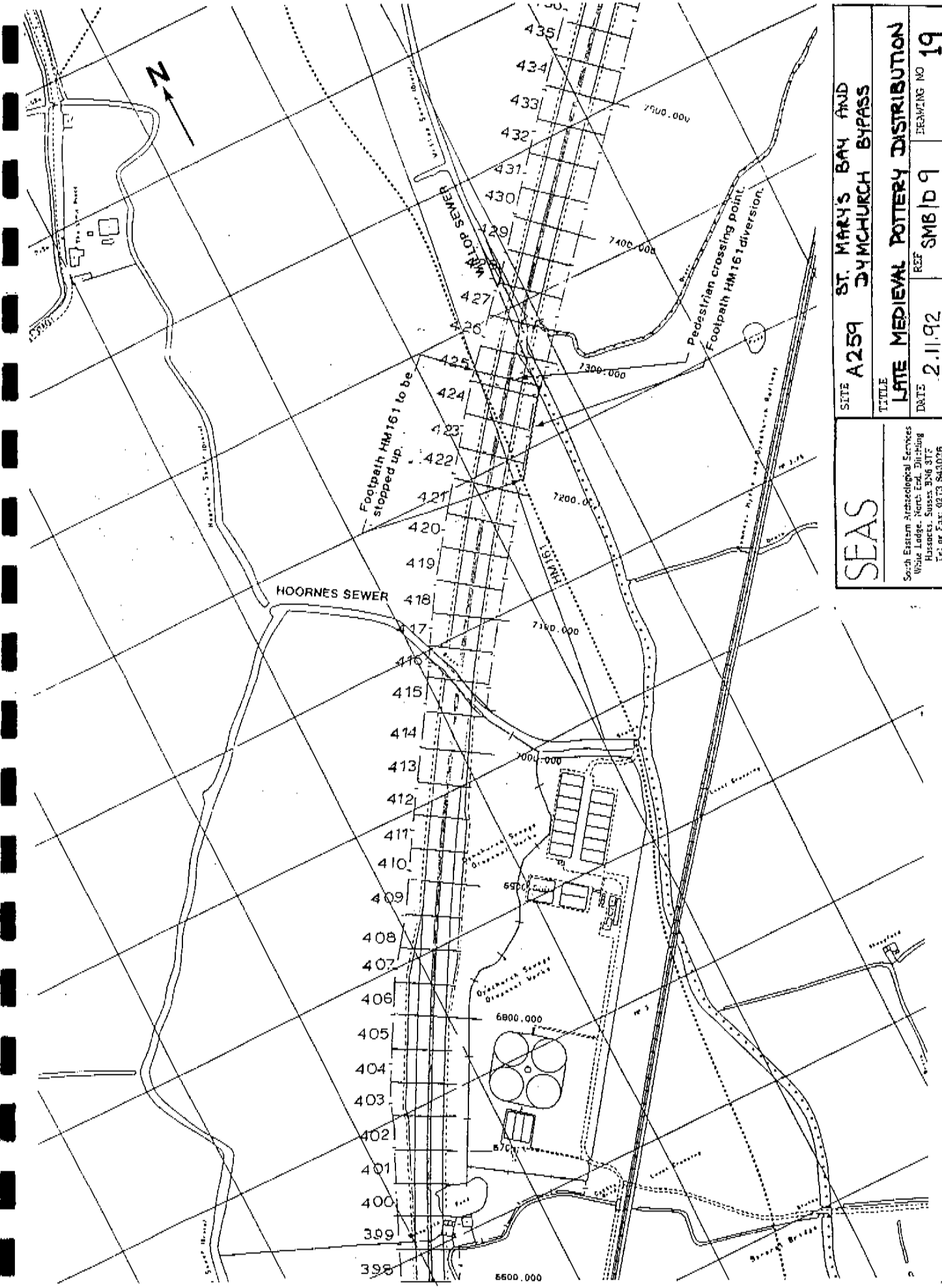
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	TITLE	LATE MEDIEVAL POTTERY DISTRIBUTION	
	DATE	2.11.92	REF
		SMS/D 6	DRAWING NO 16



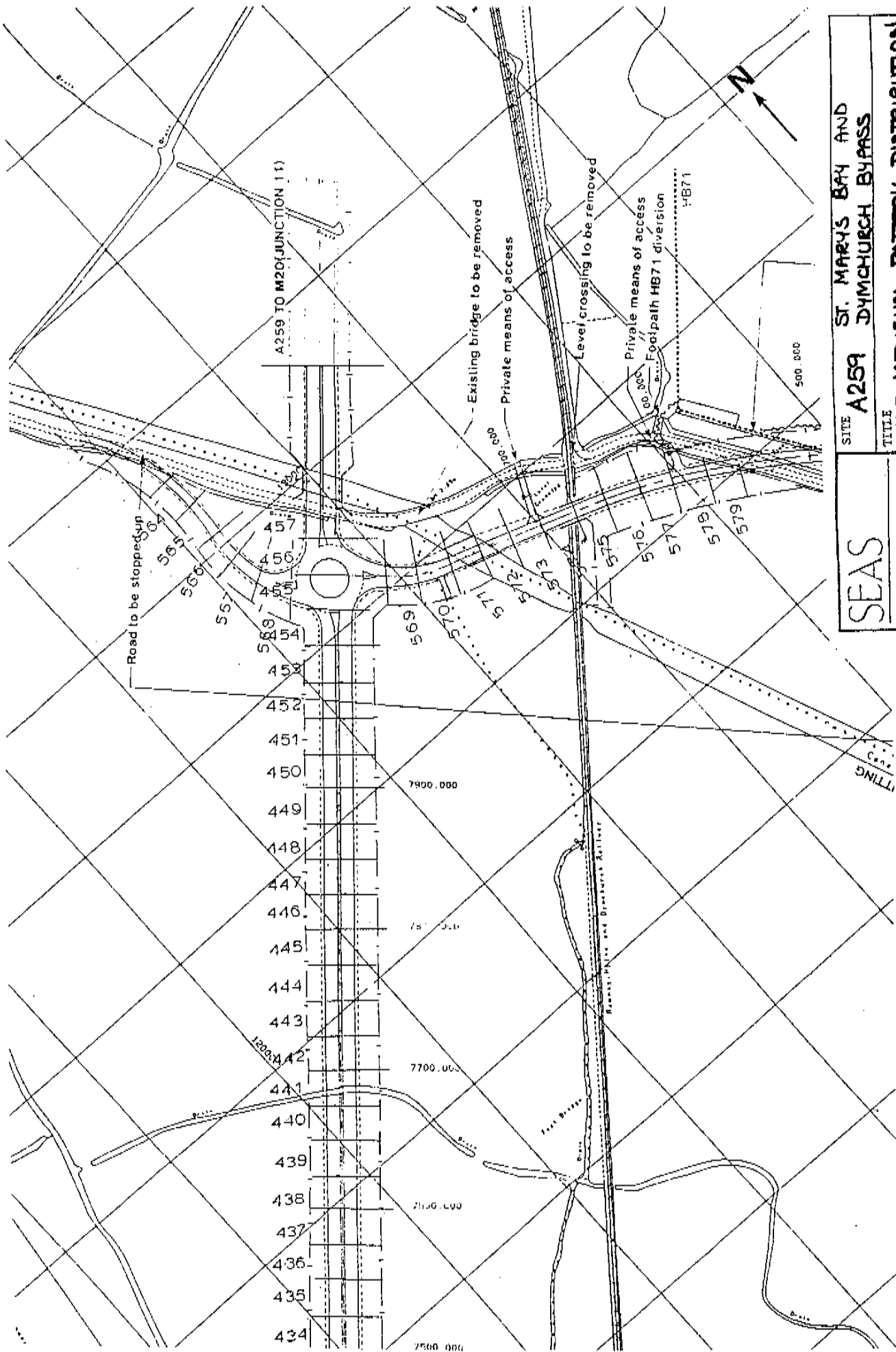
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	A259	DYMCHURCH BYPASS
South Eastern Archaeological Services White Lodge, North End, Oldcourt Hastings, Sussex BN16 8TJ Tel or Fax: 01323 843036	TITLE	LATE MEDIEVAL POTTERY DISTRIBUTION
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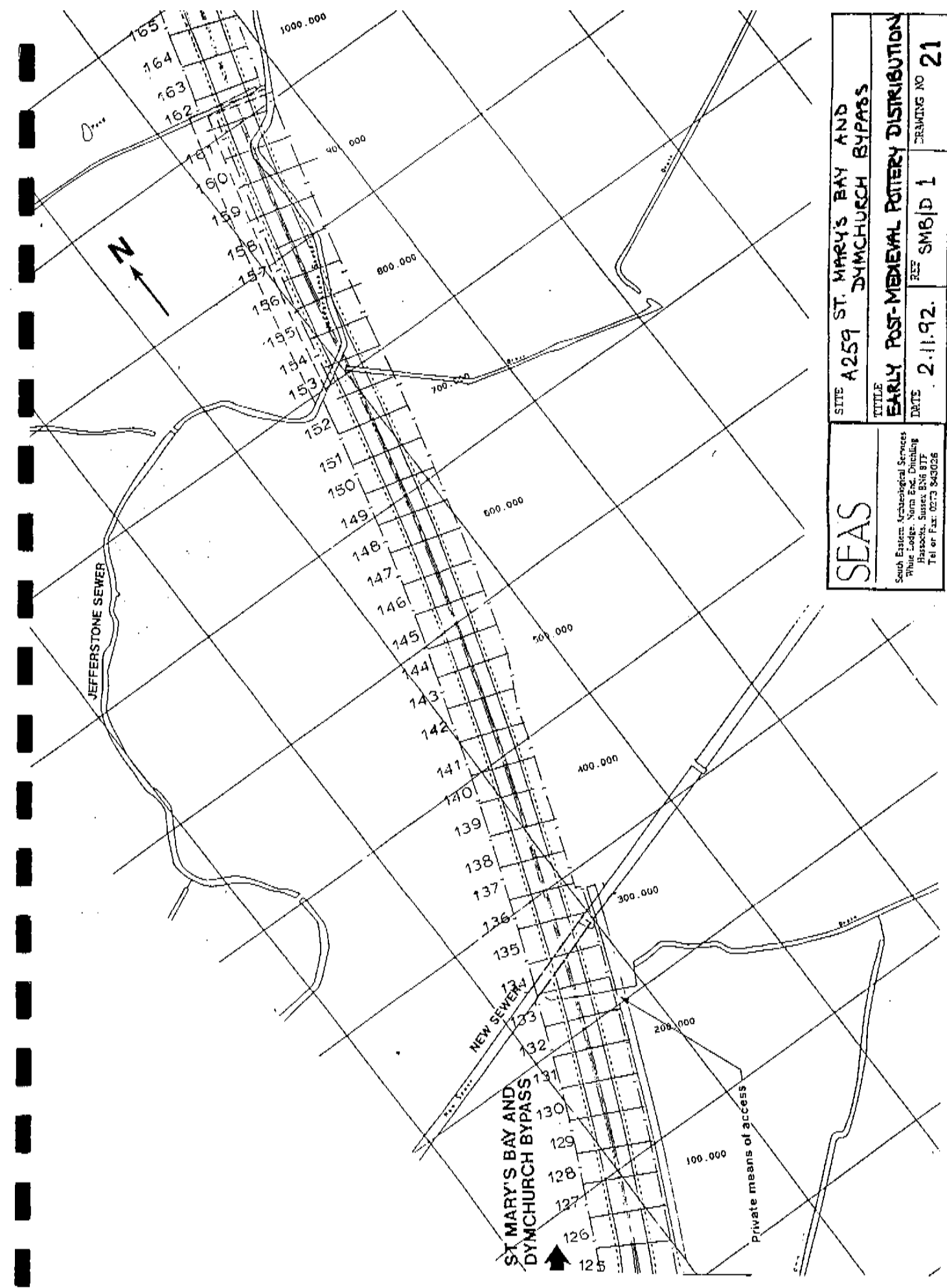
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	TITLE LATE MEDIEVAL POTTERY DISTRIBUTION	
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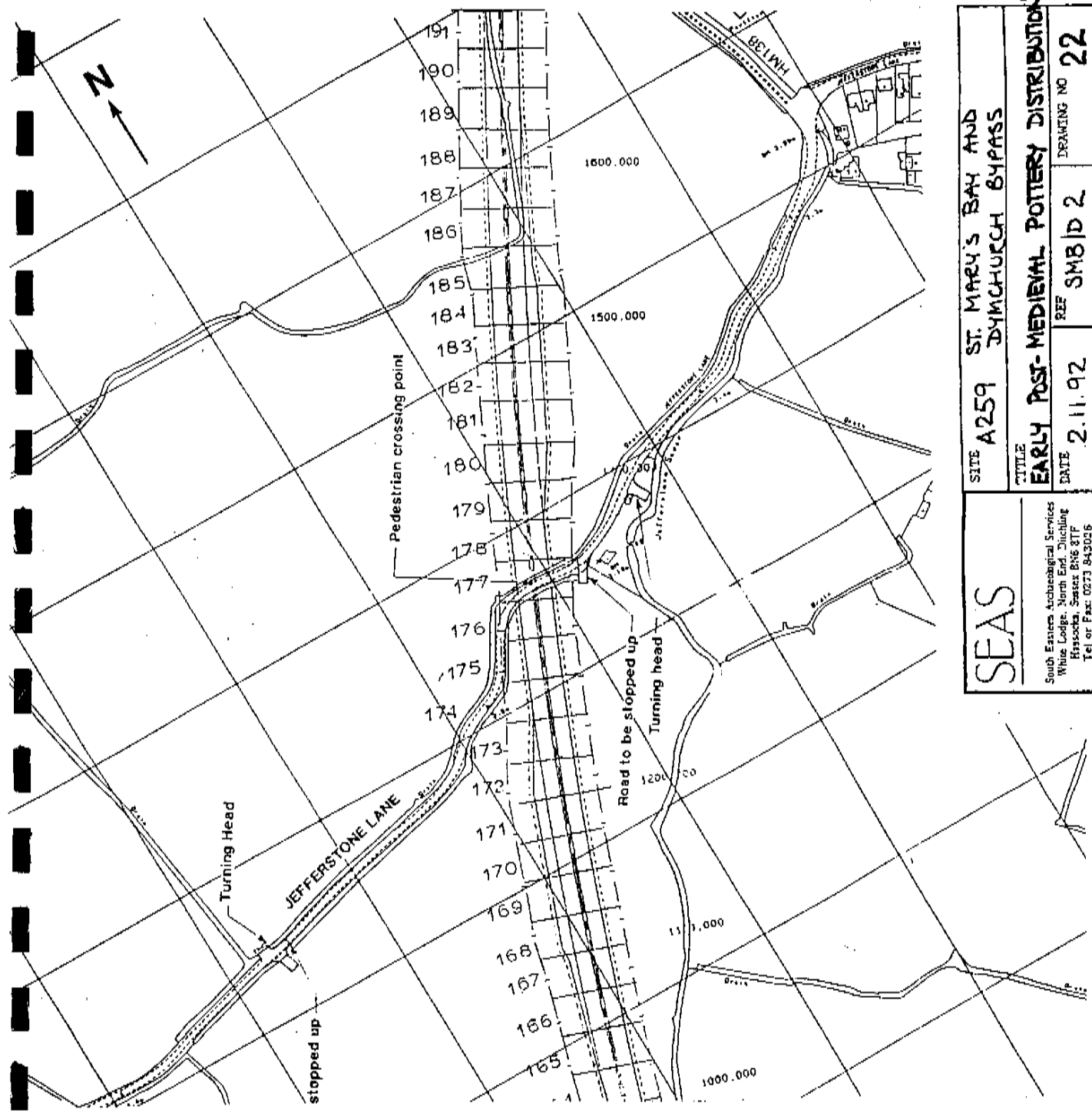
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<small>South Eastern Archaeological Services White Lodge, North End, Ditchling Hassocks, Sussex BN6 3TZ Tel or Fax: 0273 841026</small>		



SEAS	SITE	A259	ST. MARYS BAY AND DYMCHURCH BYPASS
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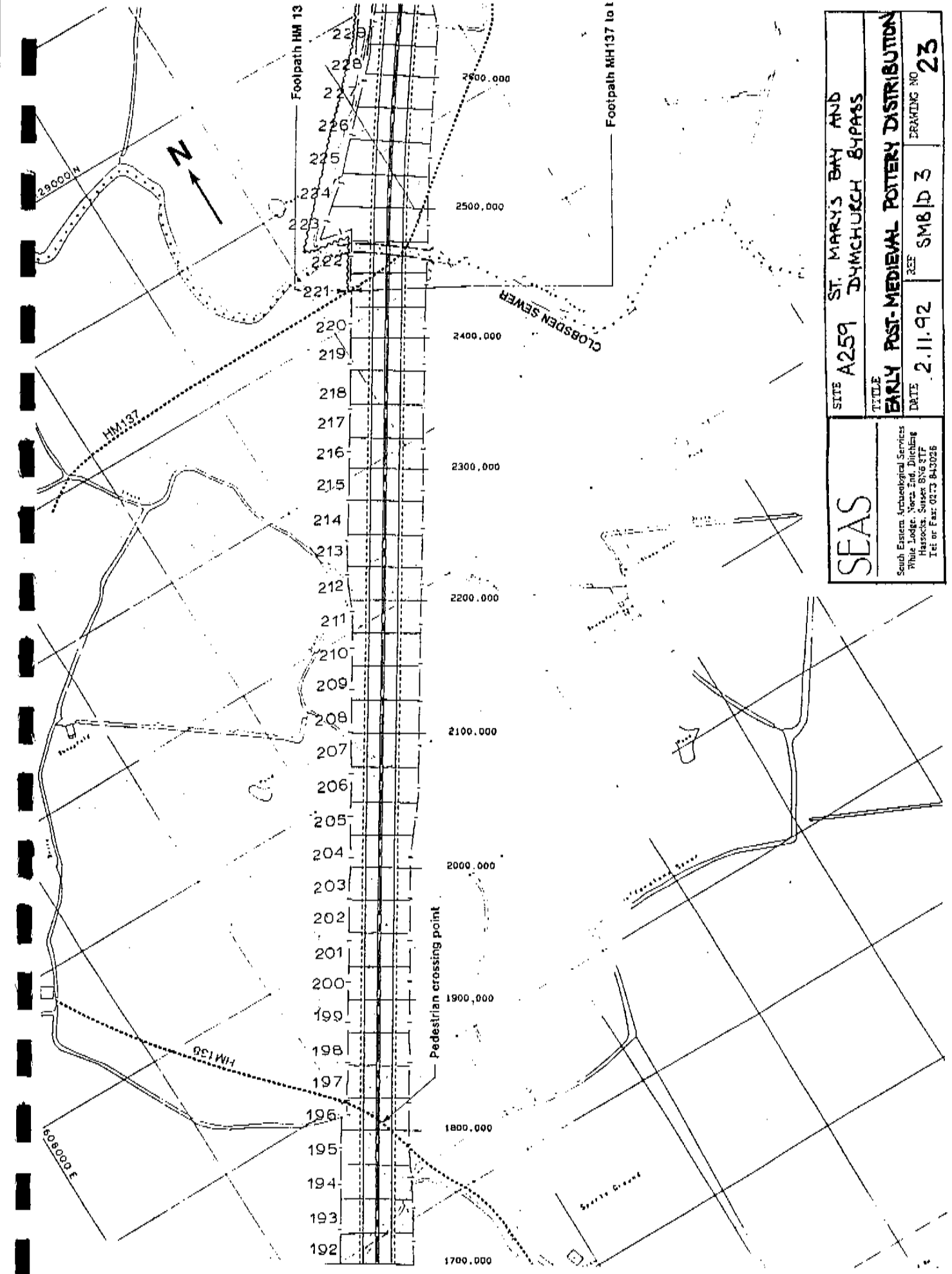
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	DATE 2.11.92.	REF SMB/p 1
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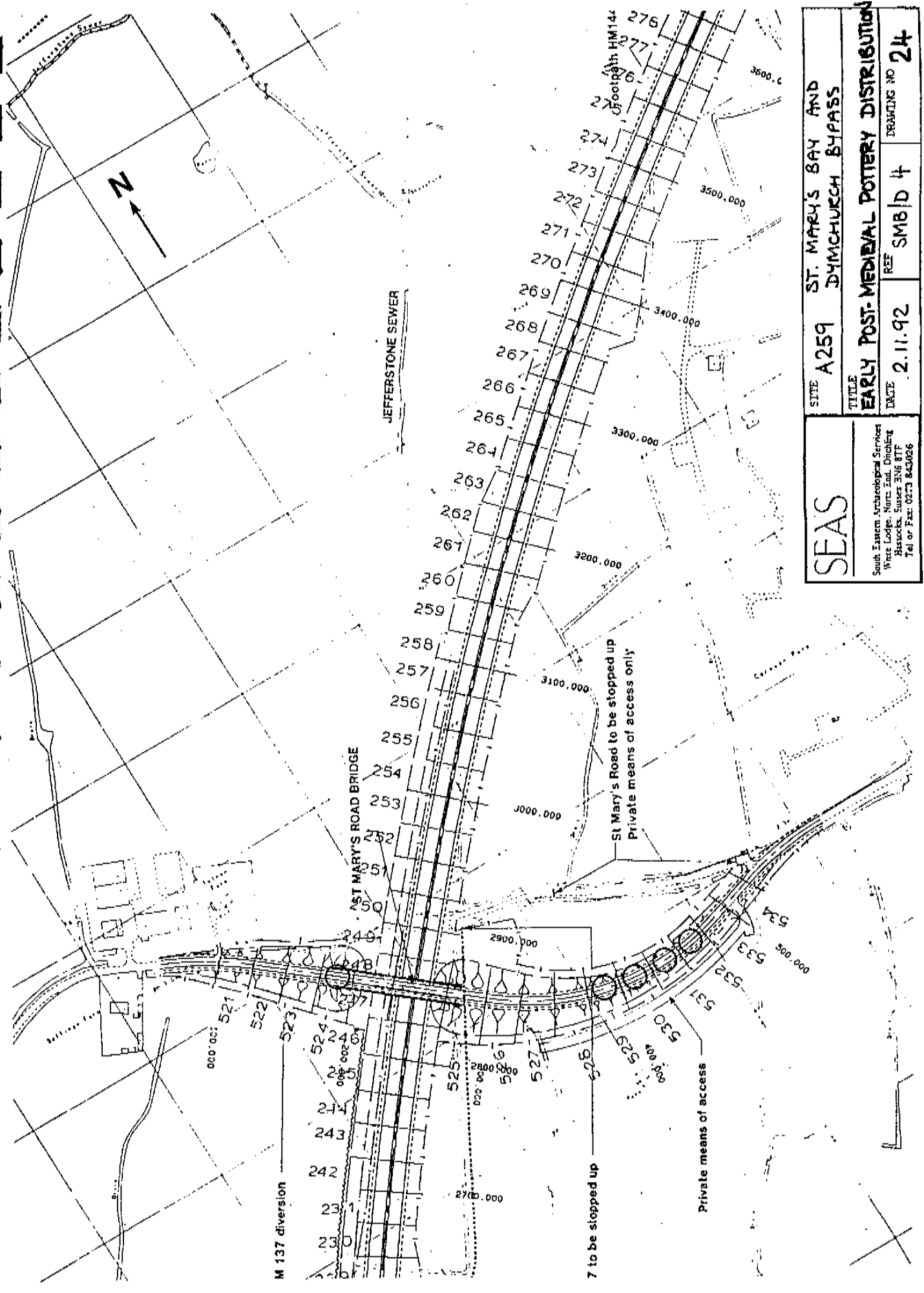
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South Eastern Archaeological Services
 White Lodge, North End, Ditchling
 Hove, Sussex BN6 8TF
 Tel or Fax: 01323 843056

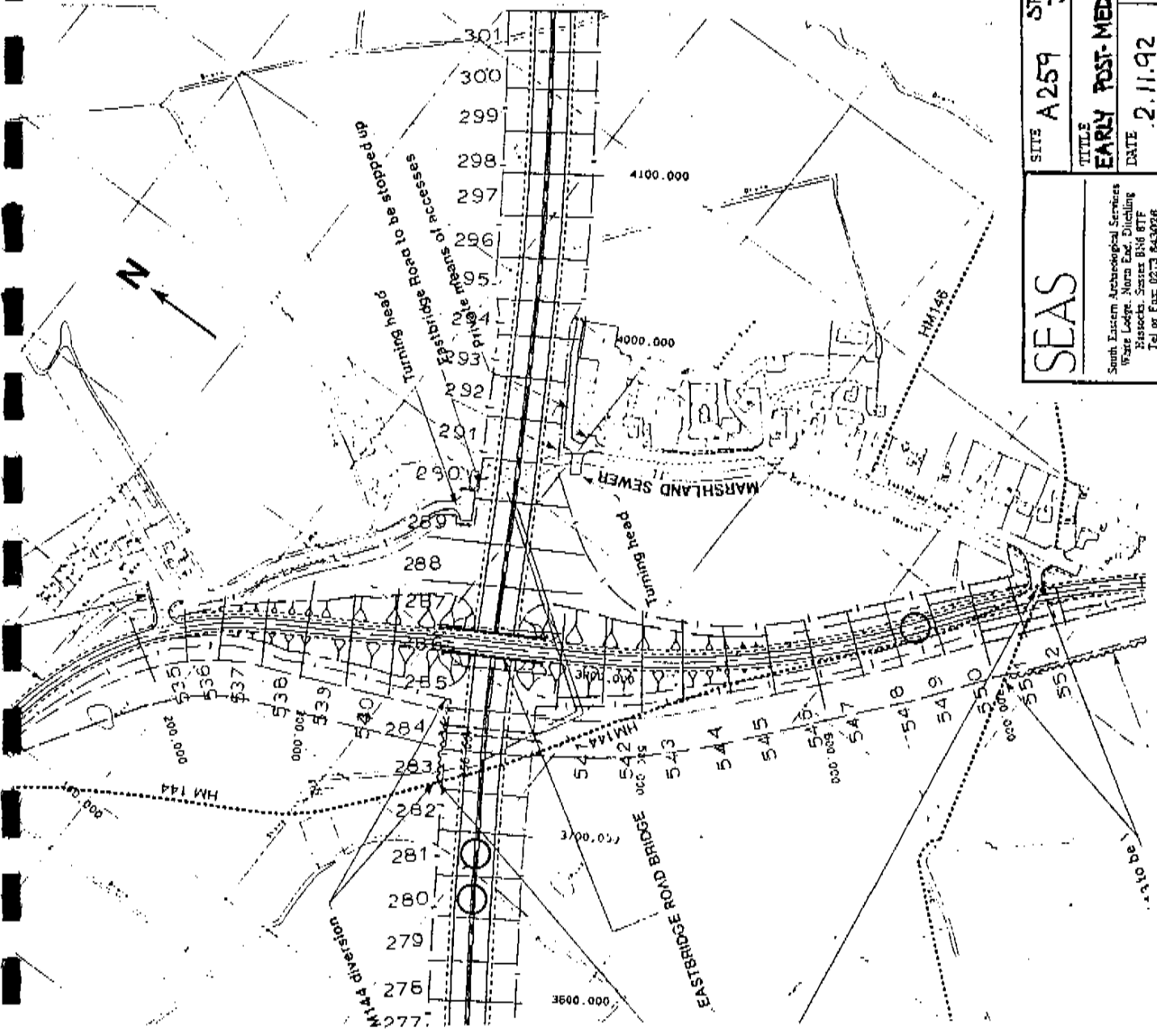
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DATE	2.11.92
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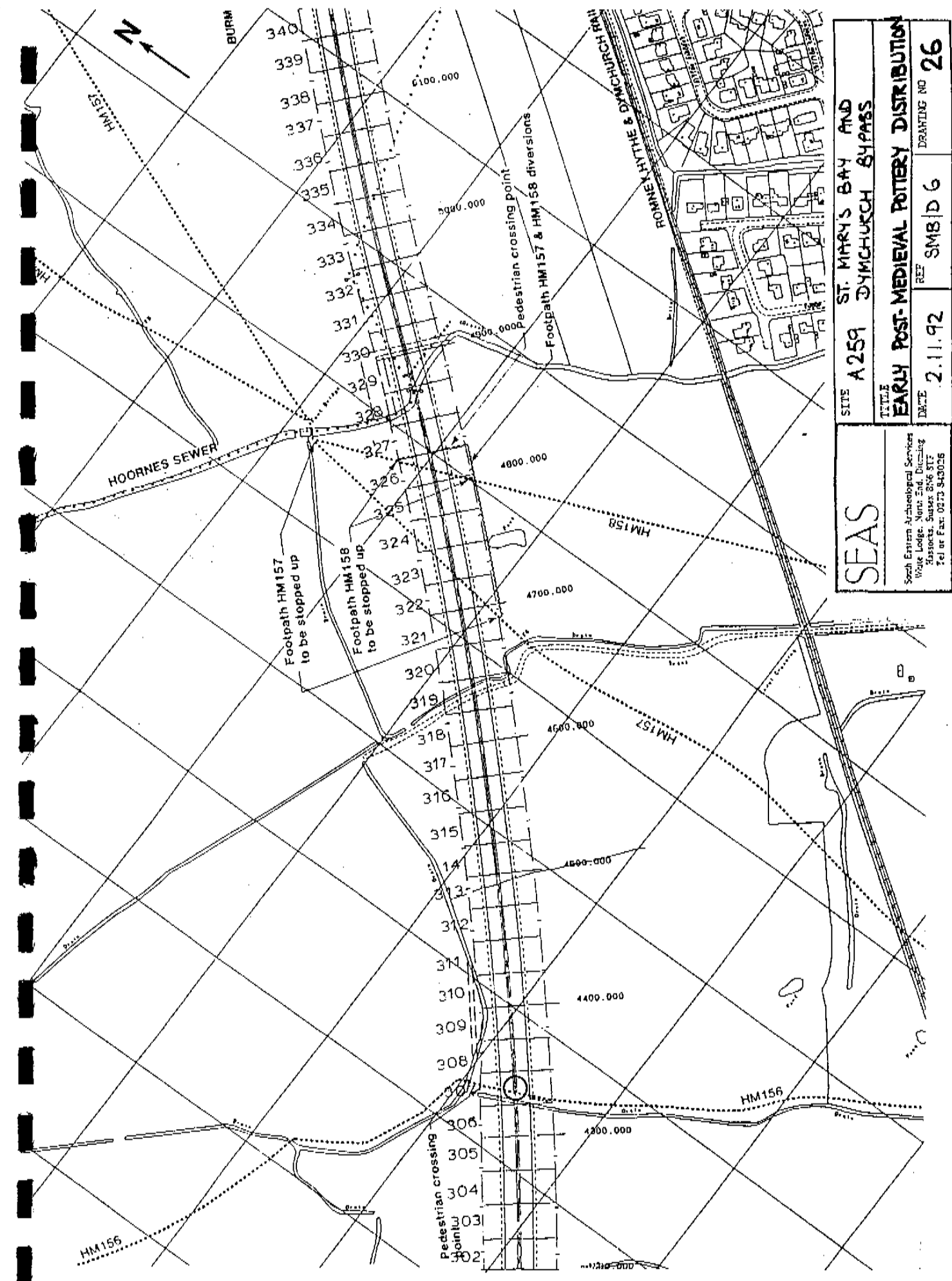
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South Eastern Archaeological Services White Lodge, North End, Ditchling Hastocks, Sussex BN9 3TP Tel or Fax: 01323 843026		DATE	2.11.92	REF
		DRAWING NO	SMB/D 3	23



SEAS	SITE	A259	ST. MARY'S BAY AND DYMCHUECH BYPASS
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	DATE	2.11.92	REF
South Eastern Archaeological Services White Lodge, North End, Ditchling Hassocks, Sussex BN16 8TF Tel or Fax: 0273 843026		DRAWING NO	24



SEAS South Eastern Archaeological Services Ware Lodge, Ware Exd, Ditching Herts. SG16 8TF Tel or Fax 0273 843026	SITE	ST. MARY'S BAY AND DYMCHURCH BYPASS
	TITLE	A259 EARLY POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY DISTRIBUTION
	DATE	2.11.92
	REF	SMB/D 5
	DRAWING NO	25



SEAS	SITE	A259 ST. MARY'S BAY AND
	TITLE	DYMCHURCH BYPASS
South Eastern Archaeological Services Wedge Lodge, North End, Ditching Bassettts, Sussex BN6 5TF Tel or Fax: 01323 543026	DATE	2.11.92
	REF	SMB/D 6
		DRAWING NO
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5700.00
5600.00
5500.00
5400.00
5300.00
5200.00

Burmarsh Road to be stopped up

BURMARSH ROAD BRIDGE 58

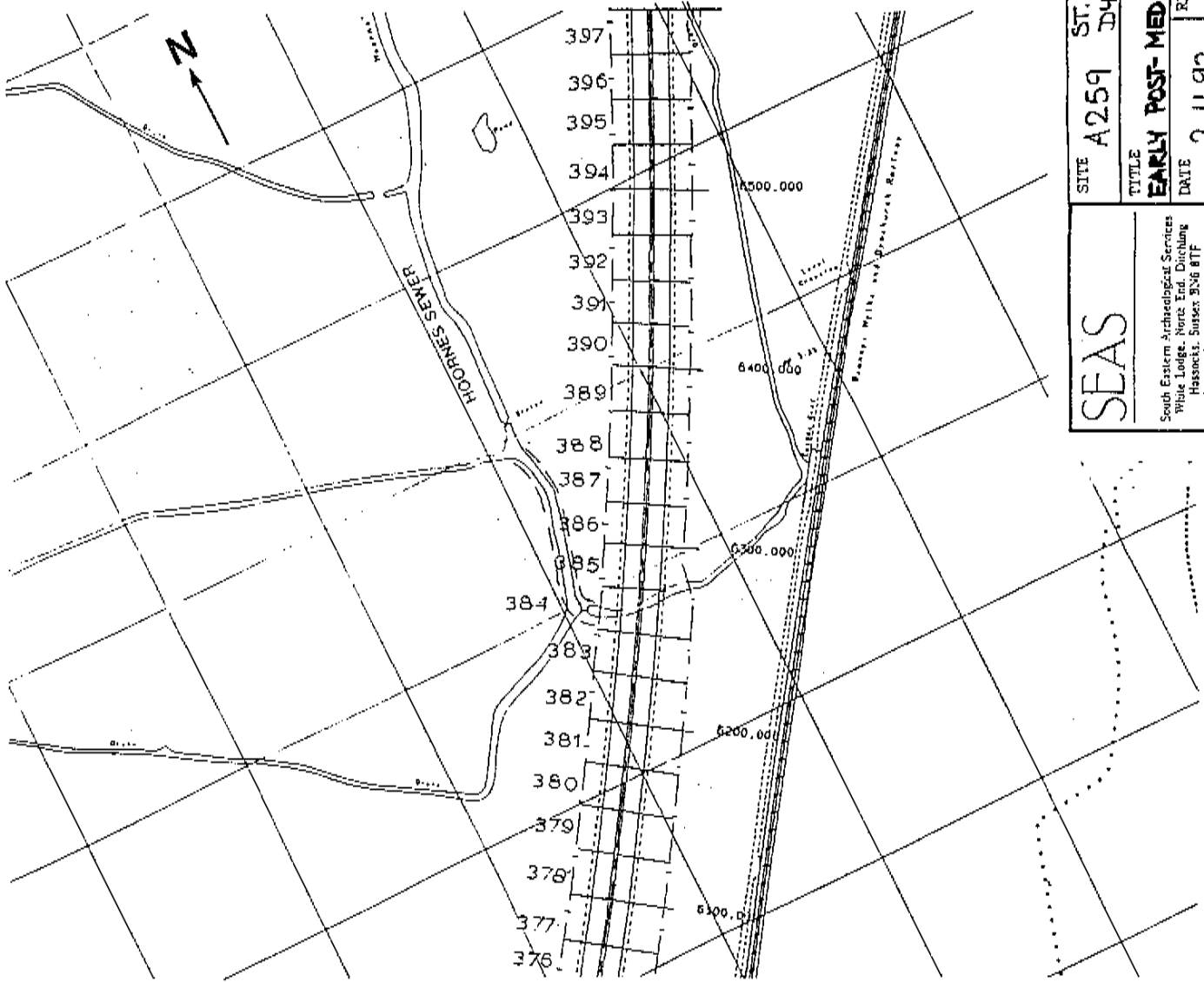
BURMARSH ROAD
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SITE	A259	ST. MARY'S BAY AND DYMCHUECH BYPASS
TITLE	EARLY POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY DISTRIBUTION	
DATE	2.11.92	REF SMB/D 7
		DRAWING NO 27

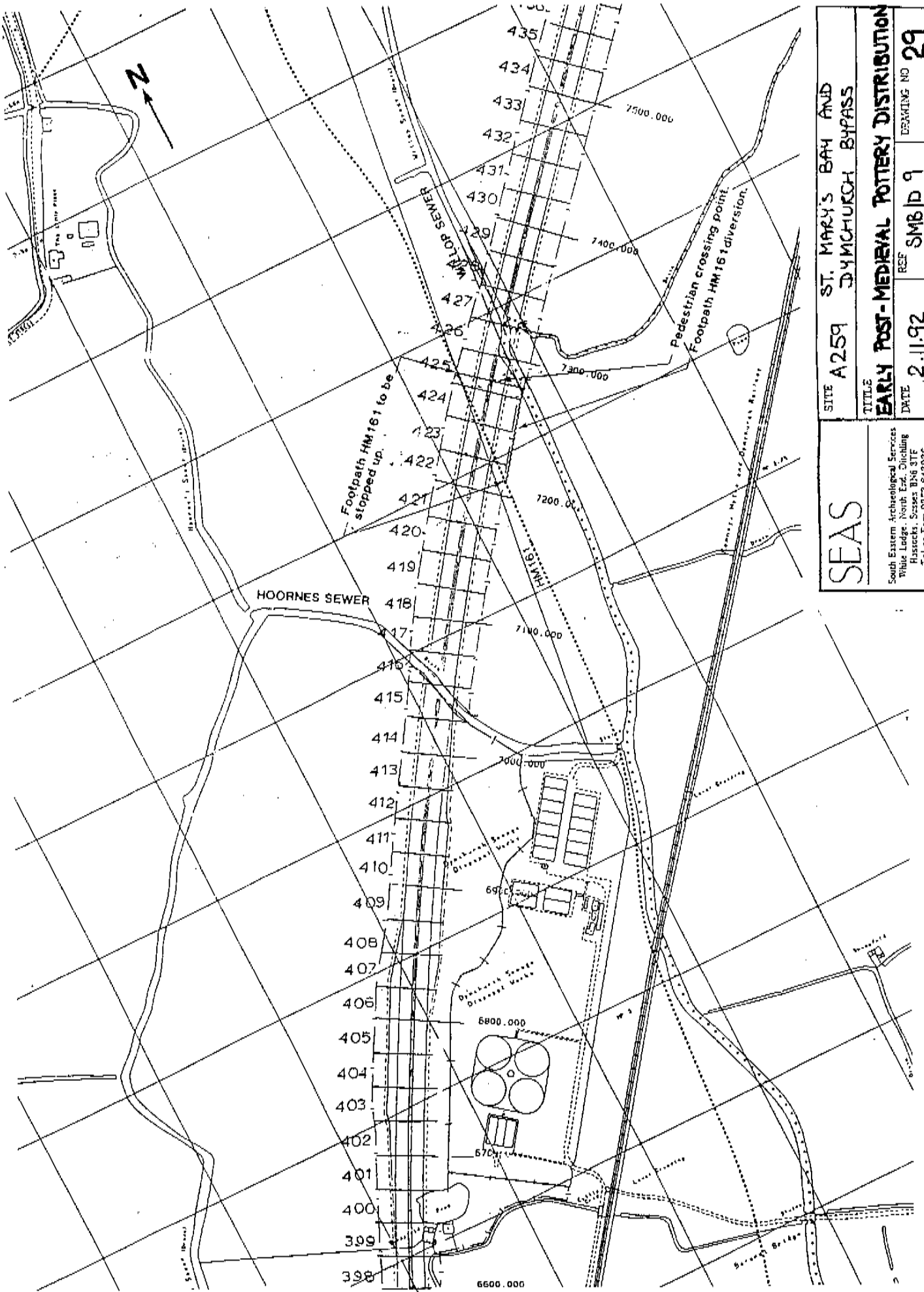
South Eastern Archaeological Services
 White Lodge, North End, Ditchling
 Hissocks, Sussex BN9 8TF
 Tel or Fax: 0273 843026



SEAS

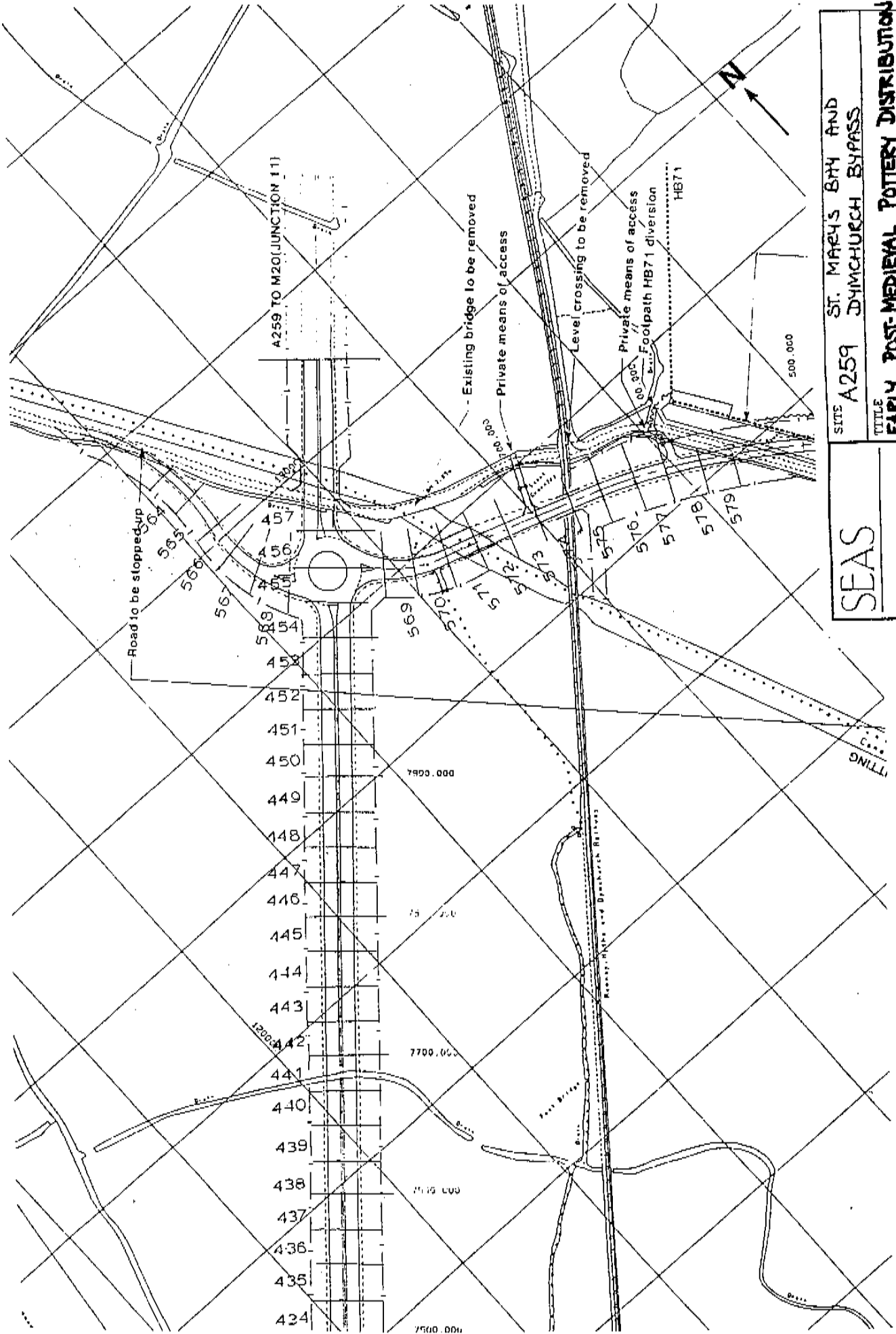
South Eastern Archaeological Services
 White Lodge, North End, Ditchling
 Hassocks, Sussex BN16 8TF
 Tel or Fax: 01323 843026

SITE	A259	ST. MARY'S BAY AND
TITLE	DYMCHUDECH BYPASS	
DATE	2.11.92	REF
		SMB/d 8
		DRAWING NO
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SEAS
 South Eastern Archaeological Services
 White Lodge, North End, Ditchling
 Hassocks, Sussex BN6 3TF
 Tel or Fax: 01273 843026

SITE A259 ST. MARY'S BAY AND
 DYNCHURCH BYPASS
 TITLE
 EARLY POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY DISTRIBUTION
 DATE 2.11.92 REF SMB/ID 9 DRAWING NO 29



SEAS	SITE	A259	ST. MARYS BAY AND
	TITLE	DYMCHURCH BYPASS	
South Eastern Archaeological Services White Lodge, North End, Ditchling Ratons, Sussex, BN16 8TF Tel or Fax: 0173 843626		DATE	2.11.92
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		DESIGNING NO	30