Chris Butler MIfA
Archaeological Services Ltd

An Archaeological Watching Brief

on the route of the

Sovereign Harbour Cycleway Network, Phase 2A,

(Ringwood Road to Lottbridge Drove)

EB/3044/CC

Project No. CBAS0260

By
Andy Bradshaw

June 2012

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the route of the Sovereign Harbour Cycleway, between Ringwood Road and Churchdale Road, during excavation to lay a new metalled surface.

At both ends of the site the ground had been landscaped after the Railway was removed and little evidence remained. In the centre the course of the track could be discerned and the positions of the sleepers identified. Additionally discarded rail furniture and fittings, together with a range of other late 19th and 20th century artefacts were also recovered.

Evidence from the watching brief suggests that areas west of the site and east of Horsey Sewer may still retain evidence of the former Railway.

Chris Butler MIfA
Archaeological Services Ltd
Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 811785

e mail: chris@cbasltd.co.uk

Contents

Figures:

Appendices:

1. Introduction

1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by East Sussex County Council to carry out an Archaeological Watching Brief during the construction of the Sovereign Harbour Cycle Network Phase 2A between Ringwood Road and Churchdale Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, in order to record any archaeological remains that may be affected or destroyed by the construction of the cycleway. The remaining section of this phase of the cycleway, between Churchdale Road and Lottbridge Drove will be the subject of a separate watching brief when construction of it commences.

1.2 The cycleway route is located on the east side of Eastbourne, on the Southbourne Level (Fig. 1.) between Ringwood Road (TQ 6133 0069) and Lottbridge Drove (TQ 6231 0127) The route follows the course of Horsey Sewer which flows from west to east to meet Langney Sewer beyond the site boundary before turning south towards the sea. Only the section between Ringwood Road and Churchdale Road is covered by this report.

1.3 The entire site is 1.26km long and 80m wide, and is situated at between 3m to 5m OD (Fig.2). There is a recreation ground to the west of the site with an informal path extending from the recreation ground to Hammonds Drive where the route joins the existing footway. Most of the site is overgrown with some areas being cut back by the Environment Agency twice a year.

1.4 The site is not within a designated Conservation Area[1] or Archaeological Notification Area, although there are Archaeological Notification Areas immediately to the north and south of the site (Fig. 3). The Horsey Sewer forms the boundary between Eastbourne and Willingdon Parishes. The site falls outside the area covered by the Eastbourne Extensive Urban Survey[2]. The Land Utilisation Survey 1931-1935 shows the route of the cycleway to be meadowland with new housing to the south and south-east[3].

1.5 An archaeological assessment excavation[4] was carried out in early 2011 in advance of planning permission, following the completion of a desk-based assessment report[5] which identified the presence of a 19th and early 20th century railway along part of the route, and the potential for waterlogged prehistoric and later deposits at deeper depths.

1.6 According to the British Geological Survey (sheet 319/334), the site is underlain by alluvium with Blue Marl Gault Clay beneath that. Up to approximately the 5m OD contour alluvium will be the predominant substrate with the Gault Clay at near surface in the higher areas above 5m AOD. The soil at the site is described as a slightly acid loamy and clayey soil with impeded drainage[6].

---

1 http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/environment/conservation/conservation-areas/
2 Harris, R. 2008 *Eastbourne Historic Character Assessment Report*, Sussex Extensive Urban Survey.
3 http//landuse.edina.ac.uk/
4 Meaton, C. & Butler, C. 2011 *An Archaeological Evaluation along the route of the Sovereign Harbour Cycle Network Phase 2A (Ringwood Road to Lottbridge Drive),* CBAS0192
5 Butler, C. 2010 *Desk-based Assessment for the Sovereign Harbour Cycle Network Phase 2A, Ringwood Road to Lottbridge Drove, Eastbourne*, CBAS Report.
6 http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/

2.0 Archaeological & Historical background

2.1 A single acheulian hand axe has been found at Lottbridge Drove (MES507). Most local finds of Palaeolithic flintwork come from the South Downs, with the nearest find spots being located in the Cuckmere Valley[7]. This isolated find is from an unusual location, and is probably not in its original context.

2.2 There is no evidence for Mesolithic activity in the immediate vicinity of the site; however there are numerous find spots of Mesolithic flintwork around the edges of the Levels, to the north and east. It has been noted that the Mesolithic sites around the Pevensey Levels occur just above the 5m contour level, where they have not been covered by the subsequent accumulation of peat, and may indicate that the Levels provided an ideal landscape for hunting and fishing throughout this period[8]. The evidence for this period suggests that there is a high possibility of Mesolithic activity being present on the site, given its location adjacent to a 5m contour line.

2.3 In 1995 a Late Bronze Age timber platform and associated trackway (MES7375) was discovered on Shinewater Marsh a short distance to the north of the site. Copper-alloy artefacts, pottery, worked and burnt flint was recovered during the limited excavations[9]. This and other trackways/alignments (MES15463 & MES16119) hint at extensive activity in the Late Bronze Age. A Bronze Age stone macehead was found at Bedford Well Waterworks (MES621) to the south-west of the site.

2.4 The large Saxon Shore Fort at Pevensey was built in the later 3rd Century AD on a peninsular that stuck out into the Levels, and may have provided shelter for a harbour on its protected north side. A pit containing Roman pottery has been found just to the south of the site (MES516) indicating that there may have been activity in this area. During the Saxon period it is likely that few people lived in the area as it was still marginal land on the edge of the flooded Levels.

2.5 After 1066 the Manors of Eastbourne and Willingdon were granted to the Count of Mortain[10]. As well as meadow, land for 28 ploughs and a mill there were 16 salthouses in Eastbourne, whilst in Willingdon there was land for 36 ploughs, 60 acres of meadow and 11 salthouses. The salthouses are likely to have been situated around the edges of the Levels, and indicate the importance of this industry in the area.

---

[7] Wymer, J. 1999 *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain, Vol.* **1**, Wessex Archaeology & English Heritage

[8] Butler, C. 2002 'A Mesolithic site and later finds at Magham Down, near Hailsham, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 139-144.

[9] Greatorex, C. 2003 Living on the Margins? The Late Bronze Age Landscape of the Willingdon Levels in Rudling, D. *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd

[10] *Ibid.*

2.6 There were a number of Medieval settlements in the area which do not appear to have survived, such as Cudnow (MES5053) and Hydneye (MES517) to the north of the site. The latter was a port attached to Hastings from early times although there is practically no significant documentary evidence and the site has been built over by housing development since 1940[11]. Turner maintained that the earliest reference was a deed of 1229 with further mentions in charters throughout the period 1235-60 and 1308[12]. There was probably a small harbour at Hydneye which silted up in the period 1250-1350 depriving the community of its livelihood. This suggests that this land was still marginal, reflecting the risk from flooding and difficulties in reclaiming the land[13], although much of the Levels had been reclaimed by the 13th century[14].

2.7 The presence of the remains of a possible Medieval boat (MES504), probably clinker-built, found in 1963 during sewer laying operations, and possibly a 12th-14th century trading vessel, under the roundabout at the Junction of Lottbridge Drove and Seaside, suggests that this location was on the edge of the navigable waters.

2.8 There is little evidence for the use of this area during the early Post Medieval period until the 19th century. A lease of 1682[15] includes meadow of 4½ acres, part of the Totts, near Lottbridge Drove, together with pieces of marshland. The presence of Lottbridge Drove on the east side of the site suggests that it was used for moving animals around the edges of the Levels between areas of grazing, although it is likely to have originated at an earlier date.

2.9 A map of Eastbourne published in 1819[16] shows the area to the east of Eastbourne up to Lottbridge Drove as 'Pasture Fields'. To the south of Seaside is the loose shingle of the Crumbles, with the Redoubt, West Langney Fort and the Martello Towers 67 to 72. A draft of *c.*1820 shows fields called Great Horsey, Little Horsey, Jordans Field on the Willingdon to Ditton road and others in Willingdon and tenantry land[17]. However it is not clear whether this relates to fields in the area of the site.

2.10 The first indications of land ownership in the area come from the Tithe Maps. The Eastbourne Tithe map of 1841 shows that the fields to the south of the Horsey Sewer are owned by Lord Cavendish and Lord Burlington; and are mostly leased by Benjamin Waters and used for pasture. The Willingdon Tithe map of 1842 shows the fields to the north mainly owned by Lord Burlington and Lord Liverpool and leased to John Waters and James Pagden, again being used for pasture.

---

[11] Burleigh, G.R. 1973 'An Introduction to Deserted Medieval Villages in East Sussex' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **111**, 45-83.

[12] Turner, E. 1867 'The Lost Towns of Northeye and Hydneye', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **19**, 1-35.

[13] Dulley, A.J.F. 1966 'The Level and Port of Pevensey in the Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **104**, 26-45

[14] Salzmann, L.F. 1910 'The Inning of Pevensey Levels', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **53**, 33-60

[15] ESRO ASH/4501/1083

[16] Elleray, D.R. 1995 *Eastbourne A Pictorial History*, Phillimore (Map possibly drawn by W. Figg in 1816)

[17] ESRO ACC3412/3/81

2.11 The 1st Edition OS map (1874) shows that there have been significant changes to the landscape. The Horsey Sewer is shown with a pattern of fields that broadly reflects that shown on the early maps. A tramway runs along its length, crossing it at three places, to run past the Eastbourne Gas Works and on to the Crumbles, with a single branch off the line into the gasworks. Immediately to the south is Horsey Farm, and then further south are Rose Lands and a brickfield.

2.12 The tramway served the beach gravel extraction that was taking place on the Crumbles, and can be seen on the broader OS map extending onto the Crumbles before dividing into three separate branches. In 1857-62 the London Brighton & South East Railway negotiated to purchase not less than 48,000 cubic yards of shingle from the Duke of Devonshire at 1 penny per cubic yard[18], to be extracted from the Crumbles. They constructed a railway from near Eastbourne railway station through open countryside, along the Horsey Sewer, then turning south to cross the turnpike road (Seaside) near its junction with Lottbridge Drove. The railway was 7 yards wide and ran for 3½ miles, and was known as the Ballast Line or the Crumbles Railway. It also served the gasworks from 1870 onwards.

2.13 The Eastbourne Gas Company was formed in 1852[19], and was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1868[20], whilst the brickworks was in existence by 1866, and was operated by James Peerless, who leased the land from the Devonshire Estate in 1860[21]. It continued to operate here until 1899. A second brickworks was located at Roselands, and was operated from 1860 to the 1880's by the Eastbourne Brick Co Ltd[22].

2.14 By the 2nd Edition OS map of 1899 the gasworks have expanded eastwards. A plan of the land intended to be acquired for this expansion by H.E. Jones, Engineer, for Eastbourne Gas deposited in 1879 is held by ESRO[23]. The brickworks have also migrated to the north-east, with allotment gardens along the northern edge of the earlier workings. Rose Lands is now a nursery, with a refuse destructor works and air compressing station located on its north side.

2.15 The tramway now has additional sidings serving the gasworks, as well as continuing on to the Crumbles, where it now runs to the east, while a branch turns south-west before returning westwards to Seaside on an existing earthwork shown on the 1st Edition OS map (MES7968). Housing development has expanded eastwards along the southern side of Seaside. The tramway also later served the refuse destructor works and air compressing station, the brickworks and a timber yard. On the 3rd Edition OS map of 1909 there has been little change in the immediate area around the site, although there has been further housing development along Seaside.

[18] Botha, A. 2006 *The Crumbles Story*, ALB Books
[19] Wright, J.C. 1902 *Bygone Eastbourne*, Spottiswood & Co Ltd
[20] ESRO amsh/AMS5616/2/70
[21] Beswick, M. 2001 *Brickmaking in Sussex*, Middleton Press
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] ESRO QDP/448

2.16 By the 4th Edition OS map (1928) the tramway has developed to include a branch line to the refuse destructor works and air compressing station, and additional sidings at the gasworks. The return route of the tramway to Seaside from the Crumbles is no longer shown, having been dismantled. Some 'tanks' are shown adjacent to the Horsey Sewer north of the gasworks and alongside a footbridge. Major housing development has taken place to the south of the site along the north side of Seaside. Eastbourne Corporation had a licence put a footbridge over the Horsey Sewer in 1926[24], and had an agreement for works in the Horsey Sewer in 1937[25].

2.17 The decline of the tramway began in 1920 when the ballast used on the railways changed to granite chippings and there was no further requirement for the shingle, although the tramway continued to serve the gasworks and other industrial sidings, taking thousands of tons of coal to the gasworks[26].

2.18 A 1947 aerial photograph shows that the pre-war housing development had extended almost as far north as the Horsey Sewer. By the 1962 OS map the housing developments had reached the southern edge of the Sewer, and the tramway is still shown. Between the 4th Edition OS map and the 1962 OS map, the sharper bends in the course of the Horsey Sewer immediately to the north of the gasworks appear to have been straightened out to provide a much gentler curve.

2.19 The tramway had gone by the time of the 1975 OS map, as it had finally been closed in 1966[27]. The 1975 map also shows the commercial developments at the south end of Lottbridge Drove. These had extended along both sides of Lottbridge Drove by the 1981 OS map which also shows new housing developments along the north side of the Horsey Sewer.

2.20 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken out between Monday 28th February 2011 and Friday 4th March 2011 along the route of the Sovereign Harbour Cycle Network between Ringwood Road and Lottbridge Drive (Phase 2A). A total of three trenches were opened, two of which were excavated by machine (Trenches B & C) whilst the third was hand dug by a group of local volunteers (Trench A). Trench A was located on the route of a 19th to 20th century railway line, at a crossing point over the Horsey Sewer. Excavations by the volunteers revealed a number of in-situ sleepers and associated track furniture, along with possible evidence for the original bridge spanning the Horsey Sewer. Trenches B and C were excavated alongside the Horsey Sewer, and no significant archaeological deposits were encountered in either trench. Up to 3m depth of silty clay was exposed in Trench C, and in Trench B peat deposits were revealed at approximately 1.3m below the ground surface.

[24] ESRO SRA7/15/33
[25] ESRO SRA4/6/16
[26] Botha, A. 2006 *The Crumbles Story*, ALB Books
[27] Ibid

3.0 Method Statement

3.1 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with ESCC's *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation in East Sussex* dated April 2008 (Recommended Standards), and in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with ESCC[28]. Originally the watching brief had been intended to cover the entire route of the 2A phase from Ringwood Road and Lottbridge Drove (Fig. 4), but due to ownership complications the eastern section between Churchdale Road and Lottbridge Drove was postponed, and will be the subject of a separate watching brief in due course. Figs. 5 to 8 show the extent of the route monitored under this watching brief.

3.2 The aim of the watching brief was to monitor the groundworks along the route of the cycleway to ensure that any further elements of the railway that survive can be briefly recorded before their destruction or removal. The recording should comprise simple location sketch plans and photographic recording of any sleepers, after minimal cleaning, with more detailed recording only being carried out where other unusual features are encountered. No work was to be carried out on the bridges, although any adjustment to the ground surface or other works at these locations was also subject to the watching brief. The watching brief was also required to monitor locations where any works may have a deeper impact than 300mm. These areas are shown on Fig. 4, and were detailed in Appendix 1 of the Written Scheme of Investigation[29].

3.3 The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. A Garratt ACE 150 metal detector was used at regular intervals to scan spoil derived from the excavations.

3.4 Because of the length of the site and the minimal depth to which the excavations extended the topsoil was divided into three separate contexts; 100, 200 & 300, with any deeper deposits beneath each respective Topsoil Context being numbered 101, 102, etc. 201, 202, etc. and 301, 303, etc. These designations extended from Ringwood Road to Bridge 3 (100 Series), from Bridge 3 to the Eastern end of the former evaluation Trench (200 Series) and from the Evaluation Trench to Churchdale Road (300 Series).

3.5 The route was divided up into 'Chains', starting at the west end at Ringwood Road (Chain 0.0) and recorded at 10 metre intervals (Figs 5 to 8). Although the term 'Chain' is used, in fact this was merely a convention and the measurement is actually metres. All artefacts recovered were recorded using the relevant context number and the Chain for location purposes.

3.6 The topsoil strip and ground reduction was carried out using tracked 3 tonne 360° excavators, with flat-bladed ditching buckets. The spoil was loaded into dumpers before being piled up for later removal from the site.

---

[28] Butler, C. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief on the route of the Sovereign Harbour Cycleway Phase 2A,* CBAS

[29] *Ibid.*

3.7 The watching brief was carried out by the author between the 14th December 2011 and the 27th January 2012, with one visit carried out by Chris Butler on the 17th January 2012.

3.8 The finds and archive will be deposited at Eastbourne Museum (Accession Number 2011.15).

4. Results

Ringwood Road to Bridge 3. (Chain 0.0 – Chain 200. Context Series 100)

4.1 The depth of excavation in this section was shallow as the area had already been landscaped and laid to grass with an existing footpath running down south eastern edge. Due to this previous landscaping the area had been levelled and any indication of the original railway track or sleeper layout had already been removed (Plate 1).

4.2 Immediately underneath the modern footpath a layer of crushed chalk was evident, this being contemporary with the footpath and forming its foundation level; otherwise only a topsoil context of Soft, Silty/Clay Topsoil (Context **100**) was evident across this section.

Plate 1: Ringwood Road to Bridge 3 Section looking NE, note how no impressions of the original track remain.

4.3 To the eastern side of the excavation, at Chain 140, a reinforced concrete Cable Conduit was located (Plate 2). Another conduit appeared on the opposite side of the original track line at Chain 185; both of these continued along the line of the track until disappearing immediately south of Bridge 3. This was possibly the conduit which contained high voltage electric cabling from the railway's later period.

Plate 2: Reinforced concrete conduit found between Ringwood Road and Bridge 3. (Chains 140 & 185)

4.4 At the end of the watching brief, when the new cycleway was being linked to the existing footpath on the northeast side of Ringwood Road a complete sleeper, with its Rail Chairs in situ was found in the ground (Plate 3); however its removal would have involved extending the excavation and removing part of the Ringwood Road footpath. This does, however, indicate that there may still be discreet areas to the west where parts of the railway may still lay undisturbed.

Plate 3: Detail of intact Sleeper and Rail Chair found at the junction with Ringwood Road (Chain 0.0)

4.5 At the end of this section stands Bridge 3, this was excavated down to the concrete bed of the bridge, but no evidence of the railway was found on the bridge, presumably this had been removed when the track was removed.

4.6 Within this section of the construction a secondary deposited Rail Chair, partly broken, with two Rail Chair Screws still in-situ was discovered in the topsoil at Chain 150. This Rail Chair was slightly different from others found, in having only three securing holes, one of which still retained a wooden insert inside. Some scattered fragments of Porcelain and later Stoneware were also discovered, these, as with the Railway furniture above had been disturbed by the late footpath development. Sadly little remained of the original railway over this stretch of the development; those artefacts that were uncovered had obviously been disturbed and were not in their original locations.

Bridge 3 to the Northern End of the Earlier Evaluation Trench. (Chain 200 – Chain 420. Context Series 200)

4.7 The stretch from Bridge 3 to the eastern end of the earlier Evaluation Trench, on the Northern side of Bridge 2, proved to be the most interesting of the three sections involved in this phase of the watching brief. The area here had been left as wilderness along both sides of Horsey Sewer, with only informal footpaths used by ramblers and dog walkers, essentially it remained as it was when the track was lifted.

4.8 The excavation here was necessarily deeper than in the former section and so revealed not only the top of the original track bed, as a distinct context from the surrounding topsoil, the imprint of the sleepers and the definite line of the track as it originally ran through here, but also the original track bed in section (Plate 4). This section (See Fig. 9: Drawing A1, taken between Chain 210 & 220) showed that the bed had a 15cm deep upper layer (Context **201**) of ballast consisting of a dark brown/black soft, silty/clay soil with inclusions of soot (20%) and flint pebbles (50%). Its width was 2.4m and the levels of soot present varied to a brown soil where sleepers had lain, obviously the soot in the deposit had resulted from the locomotives used on the line.

4.9 Beneath this Ballast layer was a layer of topsoil (Context **200**), 6cm in depth, similar to that found in the surrounding area of a soft, brown, silty/clay, with pebbles evident at its upper boundary with (Context **201**). The deposit of soil (Context **201**) had beneath it a layer of crushed chalk (Context **203**). This was the extent of the depth reached on that side of the excavation.

4.10 The track bed section was only visible on the eastern side of the excavation, on the western side the section consisted of topsoil (Context **200**) directly above a natural layer (Context **202**) of a firm, orange/brown, clay which showed up no finds or inclusions and was typical of the local natural clay. See Fig. 9: Drawing A2.

Plate 4: Section from Bridge 3 to Bridge 4 clearly showing the original track bed and imprints of the original sleepers still visible.

4.11 The artefacts revealed in this section showed clearly how the track had been taken up and its original construction, which was Cast Iron Rail Chairs bolted through wooden Sleepers with square Plates on the underside. The Rails were held in place by spring steel Wedges, of a figure of eight design. The wedges were removed and the rail lifted, a number of these discarded Wedges were found at Chain 194, (Context **200**), and at intervals down the line in Context **201**. The Rail Chair Bolts had been cut and discarded as these were found at intervals down the line, notably at Chains 204, 230, and 258, all in Contexts **201** or **200**, continuing at intervals until the end of the excavation immediately before Bridge 2 at Chain 320. The Rail Chairs, along with the Rail itself, were reusable unless broken, so were removed from the site, only one complete example was found at Chain 284 in Context **200**.

4.12 One original distinct feature of this stretch of the line was the branch off to the Destructor Works, now long since gone. There was no evidence of this branch in the track imprint, but its position is still indicated by a gap in the houses along the western side of Astaire Avenue, which now has garages built upon it. (Fig. 2)

4.13 At Chain 228 a flat long leaved door hinge was uncovered, with a flat stable type hinge at Chain 236 and a broken spigot with a square platform at Chain 230; all in Context **200**. Chain 214, Context **200**, revealed a square 'U' shaped, iron artefact, possibly a boot scraper and a window stay. All of this seems to indicate that there once stood here a trackside building, perhaps a Points, or Gangers Shed, although nothing is shown on any of the old OS maps. Adjacent to this collection of building artefacts, in Context **200**, at Chain 210, was the internals of a Pocket Watch, now sadly devoid of case and hands. This all seems to indicate trackside activity along this stretch of the line, possible connected to the branch off to the Destructor Works.

4.14 The line of the track curved slightly to the west over this section to meet Bridge 2 at the far end. The depth of excavation required over Bridge 2 was not deep enough to expose the bed of the bridge, hence any investigation into possible repairs on it structure could not be done.

Plate 5: Track bed approaching Bridge 2 showing the impressions of removed sleepers on the ballast

4.15 Approaching Bridge 2 the imprints of removed sleepers could be seen in the top of the ballast (Plate 5). At Chain 360 the full width of the ballast was exposed, which measured 4.1m. An area of burning starting 1m before Chain 380 and continuing to Bridge 2 covered the ballast and extends outside the area excavated. This layer of burning (Context **204**) was up to 50mm thick and comprised ash, cinder, charcoal and burnt pieces of ballast, and appears to represent in-situ burning that had taken place after the removal of the railway sleepers.

4.16 A small oval area of burning was found on the south edge of the ballast near to Chain 370. It comprised an oval area measuring 1m x 0.75m (Context **205**), although it extended outside the area being excavated, and comprised a reddish brown silty clay loam with frequent pieces of charcoal and ash. A fragment of a London Brick Company firebrick was recovered from this context, which probably represent the emptying/cleaning out of an engine firebox.

4.17 East of Bridge 2 the path of the Cycleway cut across the evaluation excavation trench, re-exposing the sleepers already recorded; these were lifted and 5 were retained on site. In addition to the Rail fittings a Porcelain Ornament, which possibly originally had a transfer print on, set in to a lump of cement was recovered at Chain 360 in Context **300** and a right-angled Bracket at Chain 355 Context **200**.

Evaluation Trench to Churchdale Road (Chain 420 - 820)

4.18 The excavation of the Cycleway then deviates to the west away from the line of the old railway track, which originally continued along the west bank of Horsey Sewer before crossing the Sewer again in front of the present Community Centre and continuing down its southern bank. See Fig. 6.

4.19 Beyond the area of the original Evaluation Trench the excavation for the cycleway cut across the line of the railway track exposing five more sleepers and shadows of the original positions of two more. See Fig. 10.

4.20 In this area a scatter of Rail fittings were found, similar to those found to the north of Bridge 2. Six Rail Chair Screws, 24 cut Bolts & Plates and 6 cut Cap Headed Bolts, again illustrating how the track had been removed and what was discarded.

4.21 Beyond Chain 480, where the Cycleway deviated westward from the line of the old Railway Track until it curved back alongside the west bank of Horsey Sewer, nothing of interest was found, this area being grass verges, landscaped when the housing estate was built. The ground here being a made up with a Topsoil (Context **300**) similar to the surrounding topsoil, the excavation across this area being shallow and not cutting beyond this topsoil.

4.22 From the point at which the Cycleway re-joins the western bank of Horsey Sewer, at around Chain 520, to the bridge at Churchdale Road (Chain 820) excavation was again shallow only just cutting into the Topsoil (Context **300**); the path of the Cycleway being made up to achieve the levels required and so no significant stratigraphy was exposed. The ground along this stretch appeared to be party made up, when the housing estate was built, with modern building debris being found. It is worth noting that in this stretch running up to the bridge at Churchdale Road the cycleway runs on the opposite side of Horsey Sewer from the original track line.

4.23 The only artefacts of note to come out of this stretch were three Rail Chair Screws, this despite the fact the track actually ran on the opposite side of the Sewer to where these were found. Given the corrosion on these particular screws, compared to earlier ones found, the indication is that they were discarded into the Sewer when the track was taken up and later were lifted out during dredging and dumped on to the bank.

4.24 A shallow trench was cut along the western side of the Cycleway between Chain 520 and 820, to accommodate an electricity duct for lighting. This revealed only the topsoil (Context **300**) and made ground from the housing estate construction.

4.25 No other archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief. However, it is interesting to note that sleepers can be seen exposed on the ground surface immediately before the Churchdale Road Bridge, on the southern side of the Sewer; so some, at least, of the track still exists in-situ there.

5. **Finds** by Chris Butler

5.0 The Watching Brief yielded a number of finds, chiefly Railway furniture and fittings, all of which were recovered from topsoil contexts. Most of the recovered pieces were metal items of which similar items have been fully reported on in the evaluation excavation report. These have been fully listed and described in the site archive, and only those metallic items that are different have been described below. The non metallic finds are summarised in Table 1 and described below. See Appendix 1 for photographs of examples of artefacts.

Table 1 The Finds

Context	Pottery	Glass	Ceramic Building Material	Other
100	9/120g	-	-	Bone 1/28g
200	16/230g	10/291g	3/628g	Flint 1/3g Bone 2/67g
205	-	-	1/704g	-
300	29/440g	6/151g	7/788g	Bone 1/40g

5.1 Pottery

5.1.1 All of the pottery found dates to the later 19th or 20th century. Nine English stoneware sherds were found of which seven were probably from the same jar in Context **100**, whilst a large fragment from another jar in Context **200** was inscribed POWELL Co BRISTOL (16). This company had produced stoneware jars since 1816[30] and merged with Price & Co in 1906 and continued to produce stoneware at their factory in Bristol until 1940 when the factory was destroyed in a bombing raid[31].

5.1.2 The largest group of pieces comprises 26 sherds of hard-fired red earthenware, recovered from the west side of Bridge 2 in Context **300**, but possibly deriving from the area of burning located here. These are mostly from earthenware flowerpots, with at least three different forms of flowerpot present, and dating from the 20th century.

5.1.3 The remaining pottery comprised four sherds of porcelain, eight sherds of china, two thin-walled red-glazed sherds, a glazed earthenware teapot sherd and a sherd from a large vessel with internal yellow laze and an external white glaze. All of these date from the later 19th and early 20th century.

[30] http://www.mernick.org.uk/brownjugs/Bristol/index.htm
[31] http://www.kalendar.demon.co.uk/otherprice.htm

5.2 Glass

5.2.1 Glass was found in the topsoil (Contexts 200 & 300), and was predominantly bottle glass. Examples of clear and green bottles were found, together with a single fragment of brown bottle glass, possibly from a Bovril jar, impressed B551/C4/UGB on the base. Four fragments of thick window glass were also found in Context **200**.

5.3 Ceramic and other Building Material

5.3.1 Ceramic building material included fragments from two different types of ceramic wall tile, one blue-glazed from Context **200**, and four fragments from the same tile from Context **300** which was white glazed with a blotchy mocha-type purple pattern. Other pieces were from rough-fabric ceramic insulators and ceramic sink/toilet pieces.

5.3.2 An interesting ceramic piece embedded into a circular concrete base, and filled with concrete, and weighing 661gms, of unknown purpose, was found in Context **300** (Plate 12).

5.3.3 A section from the U-shaped concrete conduit found at Chain 185 was recorded. The piece was 950mm long, 381mm wide and 182mm deep, with the concrete sides being 42mm thick. The lid had similar length and width dimensions, and was 50mm deep.

5.4 Metal

5.4.1 An intact Rail Chair was found at Chain 150, Context **100**, and Chain 370, Context **300**. The first still had two retaining screws and both were notable because of their three retaining holes, as opposed to the usual four (e.g. Plate 6); one of the retaining holes of the first chair still had a wooden insert in place. Several four-hole Rail chairs were also found along the line of the track, most were broken, which would explain why they had been discarded.

5.4.2 A large number of Rail Fittings (Spring Wedges, Bolts, Pins and Plates, Screw Spikes and a fishplate) were found between Chains 200 – 360, this area having been left undisturbed after the line had been lifted. The presence of these items showed how the track was removed by having the rails taken away and then the Rail Chair Bolts were cut and discarded, whilst the Rail Chairs, if not broken, were taken away for reuse.

5.4.3 At around Chain 230 two hinges, and a window stay were found, nearby was the movement and face of a pocket watch, indicating the possibility of a trackside building and activity in this area, near to a known set of points. Part of a cast iron enamelled bowl and a chromed brass shaft seal were recovered from Context **300**, Chain 647, the latter probably not contemporary with the Railway. A pair of scissors was recovered at Chain 320.

5.4.4 An identity disc was found in Context **200**. It is engraved R.N.A.S. / TURNER / ERNEST / EDWARD / A M / F364/ CCE. Ernest Edward Turner is recorded as having been born in 1894 in Bangalore, India, and entered the RNAS in 1914[32]. In 1914 St. Antony's RNAS Aerodrome was established on the site of Eastbourne Flying School, which was situated on the east side of Lottbridge Drove. Hangars and other buildings were erected adjacent to Leeds Avenue and Birch Road. Turner does not appear amongst the list of pupils gaining flying certificates, so may have been one of the ground crew or administrative staff working at the aerodrome[33].

5.5 Other Finds

5.5.1 Four animal bones were recovered during the work. The first from Context **100** was a recent sheep tibia, whilst a sheep metacarpal was found in Context **300**. Two bones from Context **200** were a chopped sheep leg bone, and a cattle rib with a chop mark, and gnawed end.

5.5.2 A single flint flake was found in Context **200**. It was hard hammer struck and had evidence for previous removals on the dorsal side. There was no evidence of platform preparation, so it was not possible to be certain regarding its age.

5.5.3 A pocket watch movement was found in Context **200** (Plate 11). There were no makers marks or other distinguishing features on it.

[32] National Archives ADM 188/1175
[33] McMahon, L. & Partridge, M. 2000 *A History of the Eastbourne Aviation Company 1911-1924*, Eastbourne Local History Society

6 Discussion

6.1 The length of the Cycleway covered by this Watching Brief ran along part of the line of the old Tramway, in fact a branch line of 4' 8.5" gauge, which served the gravel works on the Crumbles and the Gasworks, and which was removed in the 1960's.

6.2 The first part of the site, from Ringwood Road to Bridge 3 had been landscaped, possibly contemporary with the building of some of the surrounding houses and a footpath laid. This had removed most of the evidence for the Railway, although possibly the oldest piece of Rail Furniture (A three hole Rail Chair.) was found in this area, but certainly not in its original position. The excavation through this section was shallow and do not cut much beyond the topsoil, however, at the junction with Ringwood Road a Sleeper, complete with Rail Chairs was found, but was left in-situ. This would indicate that discreet areas of the old line may still exist to the west of the site.

6.3 The centre section between Bridge 3 and Chain 360 was the most intact area, having been left much as it was when the track was lifted. This yielded the most artefacts, principally Rail Furniture, but some building fittings, pottery and other artefacts, which indicated the presence of a track side building, and later activity. The excavation in this area was deeper and so showed, in section, the construction of the track bed and the distinct layout of the track remained in plan. (The locomotives used on the line had left a sooty deposit between the sleepers.) The removal of the track by lifting the rails and then having the Rail Chairs cut from the Sleepers was evident in this section by the consistent spacing of discarded bolts, etc, down the length of the track.

6.4 There was no evidence for the branch off to the former Destructor Works that existed in this stretch, but its position can be seen by a gap in the houses along Astaire Avenue, however it is possible that more evidence for this could still exist to the southeast of the current Cycleway.

6.5 The area around Bridge 2 revealed the Sleepers already known from the earlier Evaluation Excavation, some of which were retained for display, but beyond this more Sleepers were found and again a distinct impression of the track layout on the ground. At this point the Cycleway deviated from the line of the Railway which ran alongside Horsey Sewer and it is evident that more of the line still exists in this area.

6.6 Beyond the current Community Centre, where the Cycleway again runs alongside Horsey Sewer there was very little evidence of the Track, which ran here on the opposite side of the Sewer, except for three Rail Chair Screws which appeared to have been re-deposited by dredging operations in the Sewer.

6.7 There is a distinct area, in the centre of the site where evidence for the railway existed and still does exist, also on the opposite side of Horsey Sewer from the Cycleway. Also it is possible that other areas still exist between Ringwood Road westwards to where the line originally joined the main line in Eastbourne. However this is slowly being removed in detail as this area of the town develops.

7 Acknowledgements

7.1 I would like to thank East Sussex County Council for commissioning CBAS to undertake the archaeological watching brief, especially Alan Cook who made all the arrangements. Martin Ruffle and his team from Raymond Brown Construction Ltd provided invaluable help during the whole of the Watching Brief. Jo Seaman of Eastbourne Museums Service provided assistance and advice.

7.2 The project was managed by Chris Butler for CBAS, and monitored by Casper Johnson, the County Archaeologist, for East Sussex County Council.

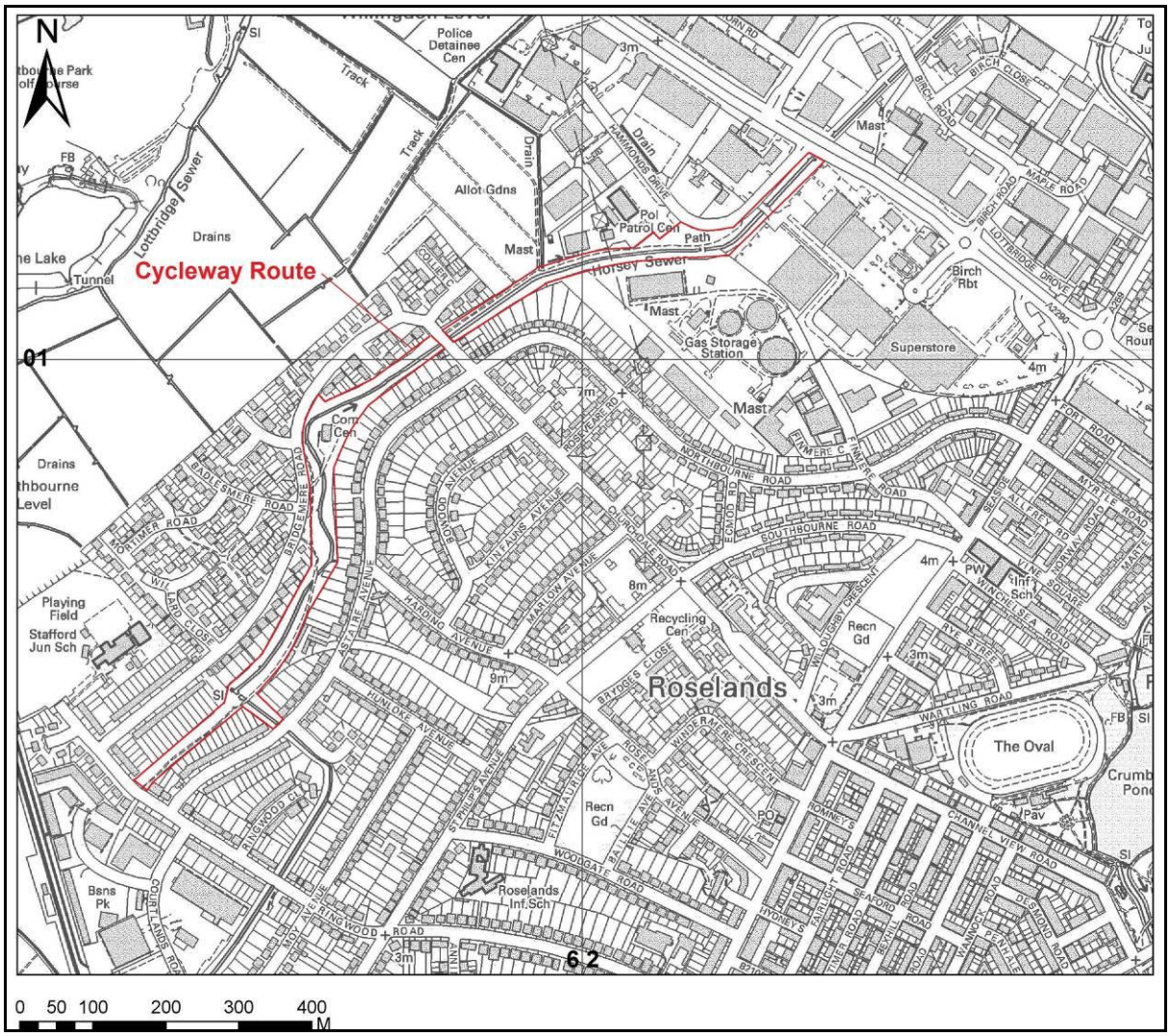


Fig. 1: Eastbourne Cycleway: Location Map
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

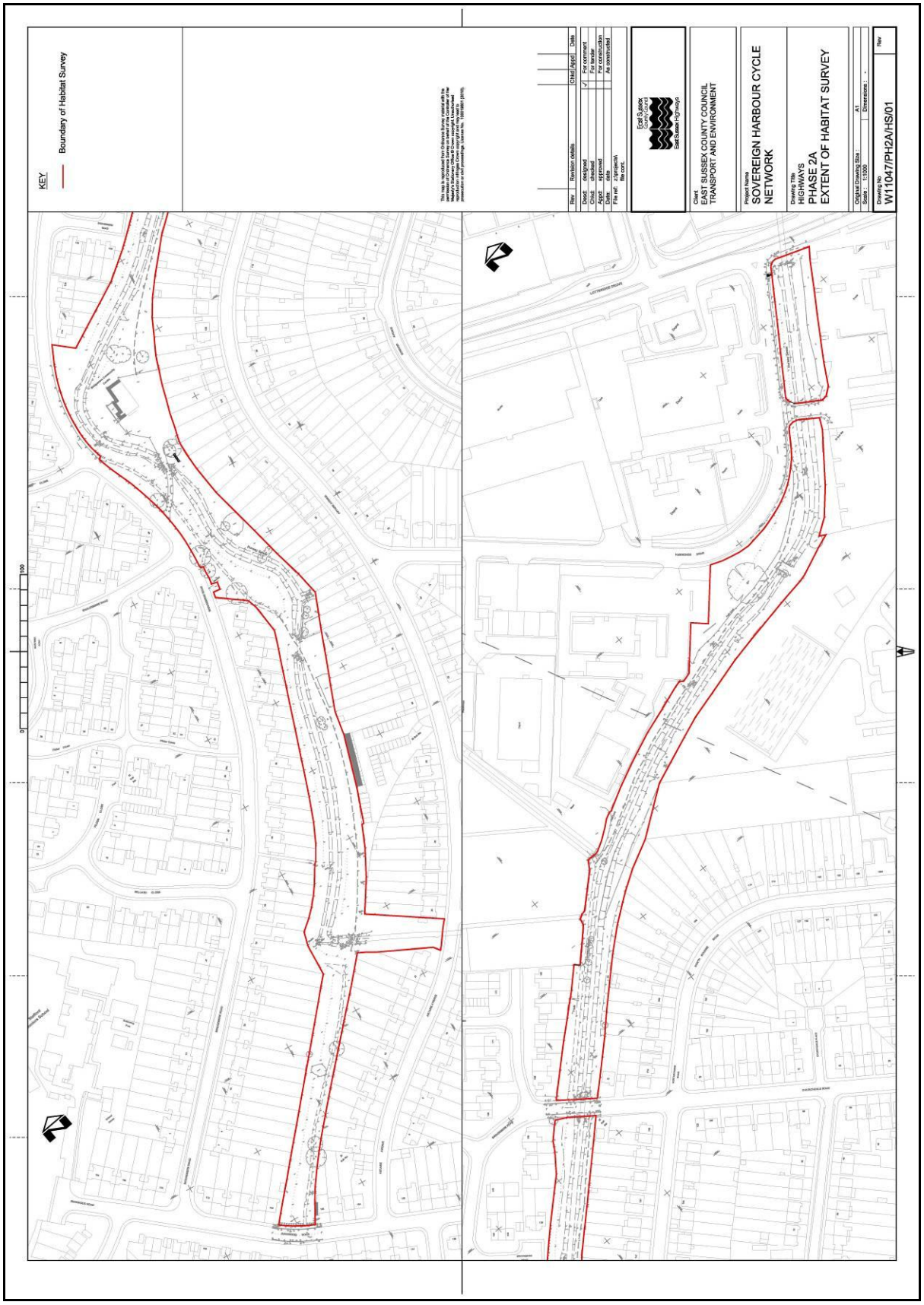


Fig. 2: Eastbourne Cycleway: Map of Cycleway Route
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

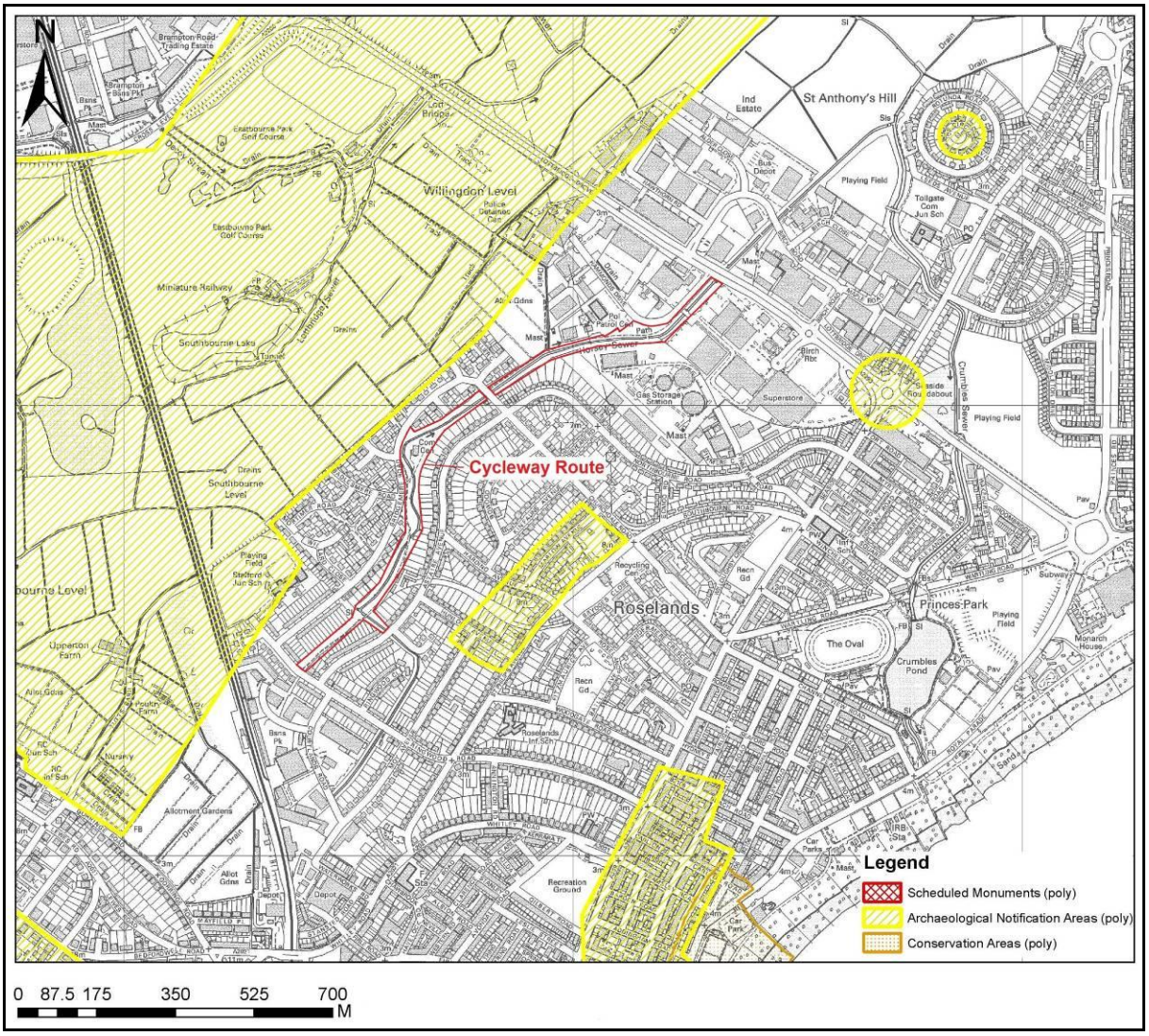


Fig. 3: Eastbourne Cycleway: Archaeological Notification Areas
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

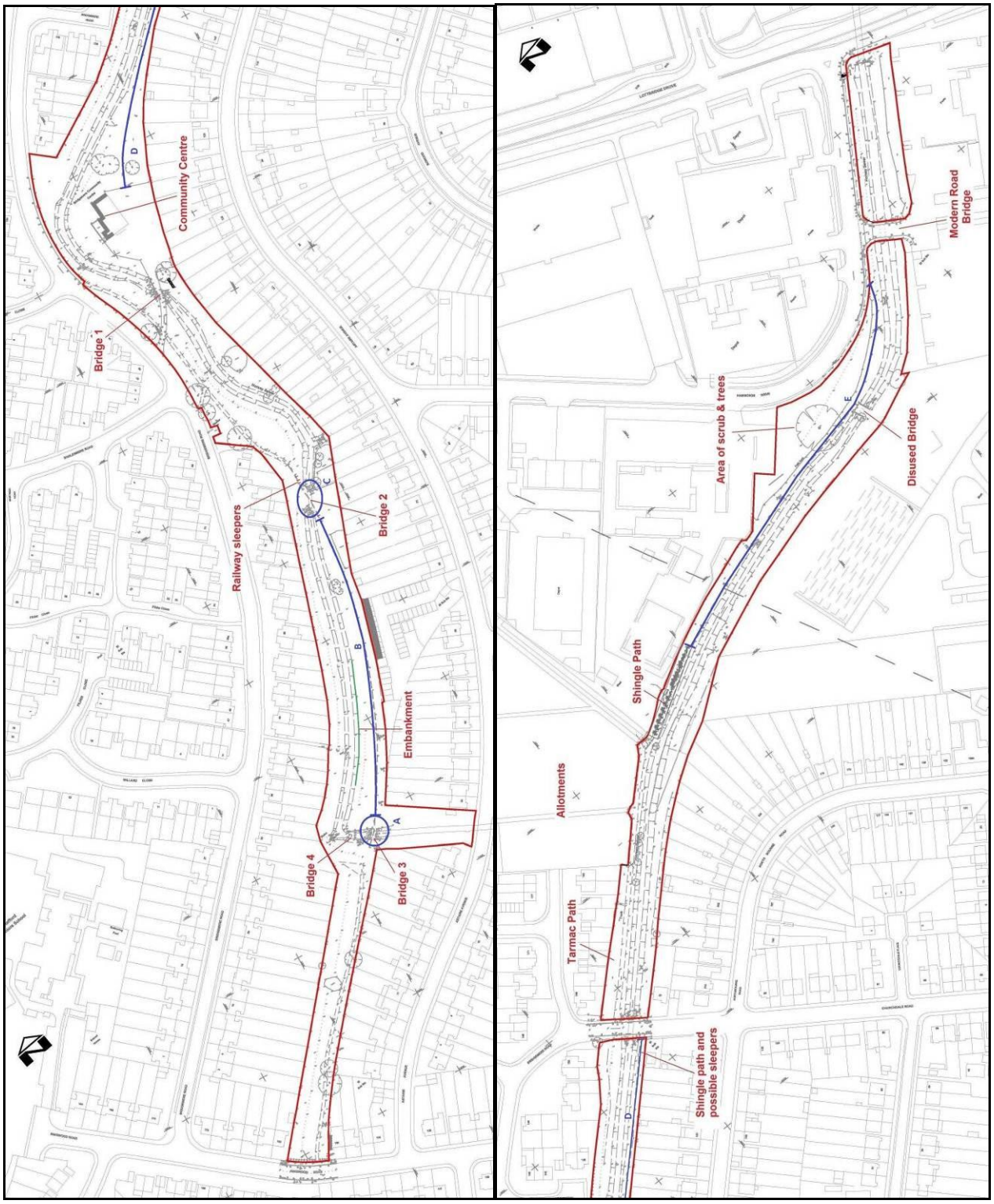


Fig. 4: Eastbourne Cycleway: Cycleway Route showing areas to be monitored

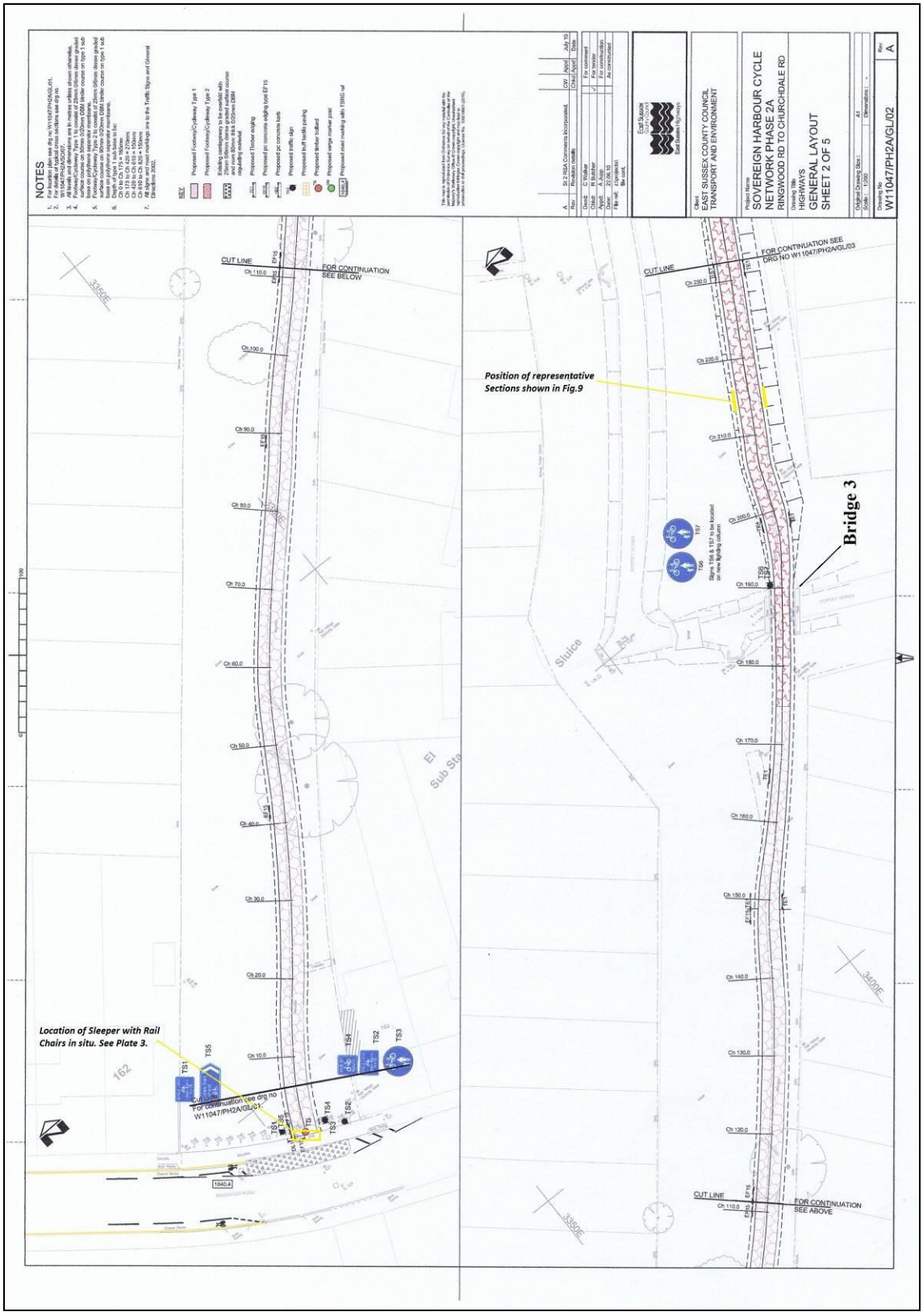


Fig. 5: Eastbourne Cycleway: Cycleway Route (Part 1) Showing Chains

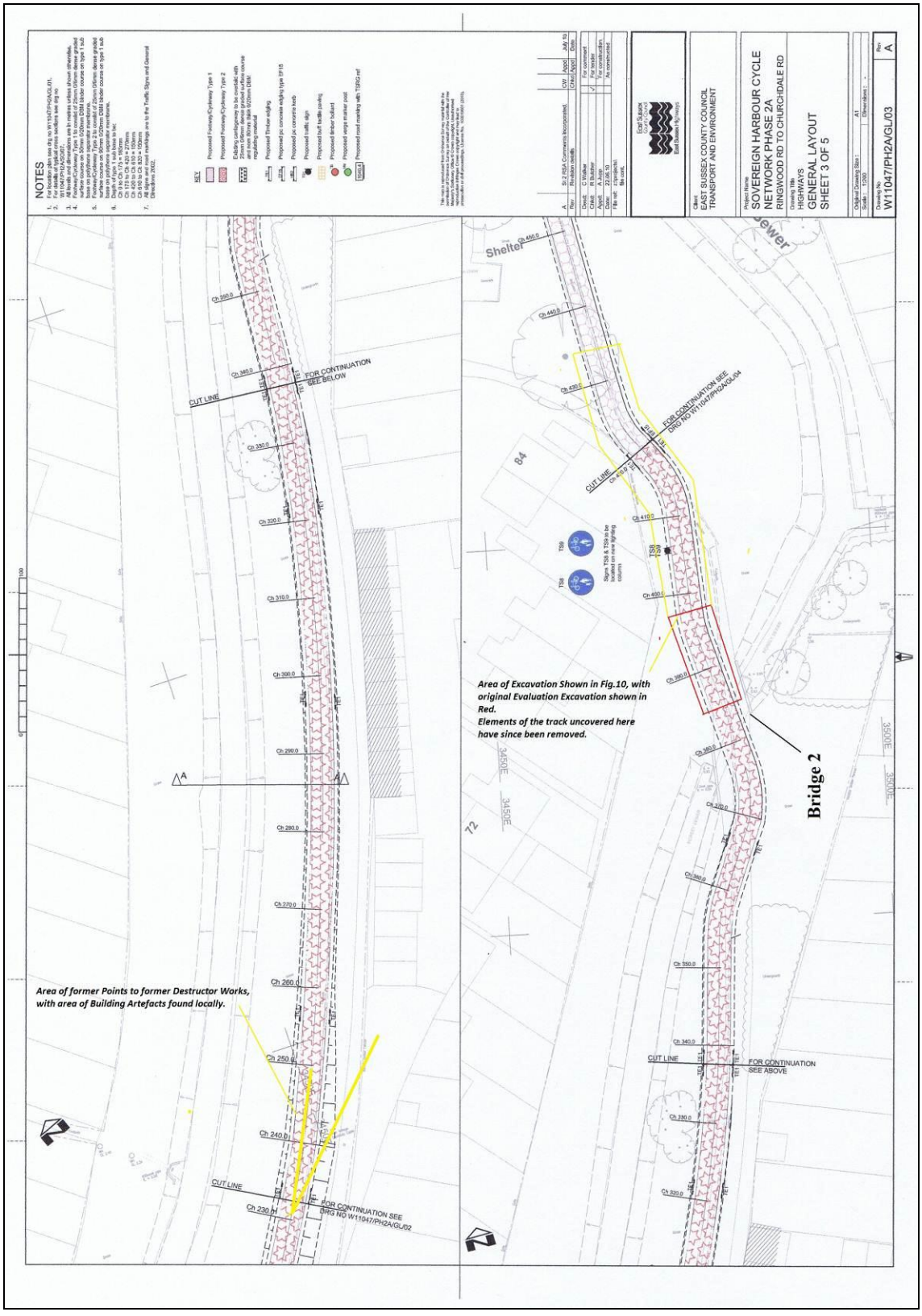


Fig. 6: Eastbourne Cycleway: Cycleway Route (Part 2) Showing Chains

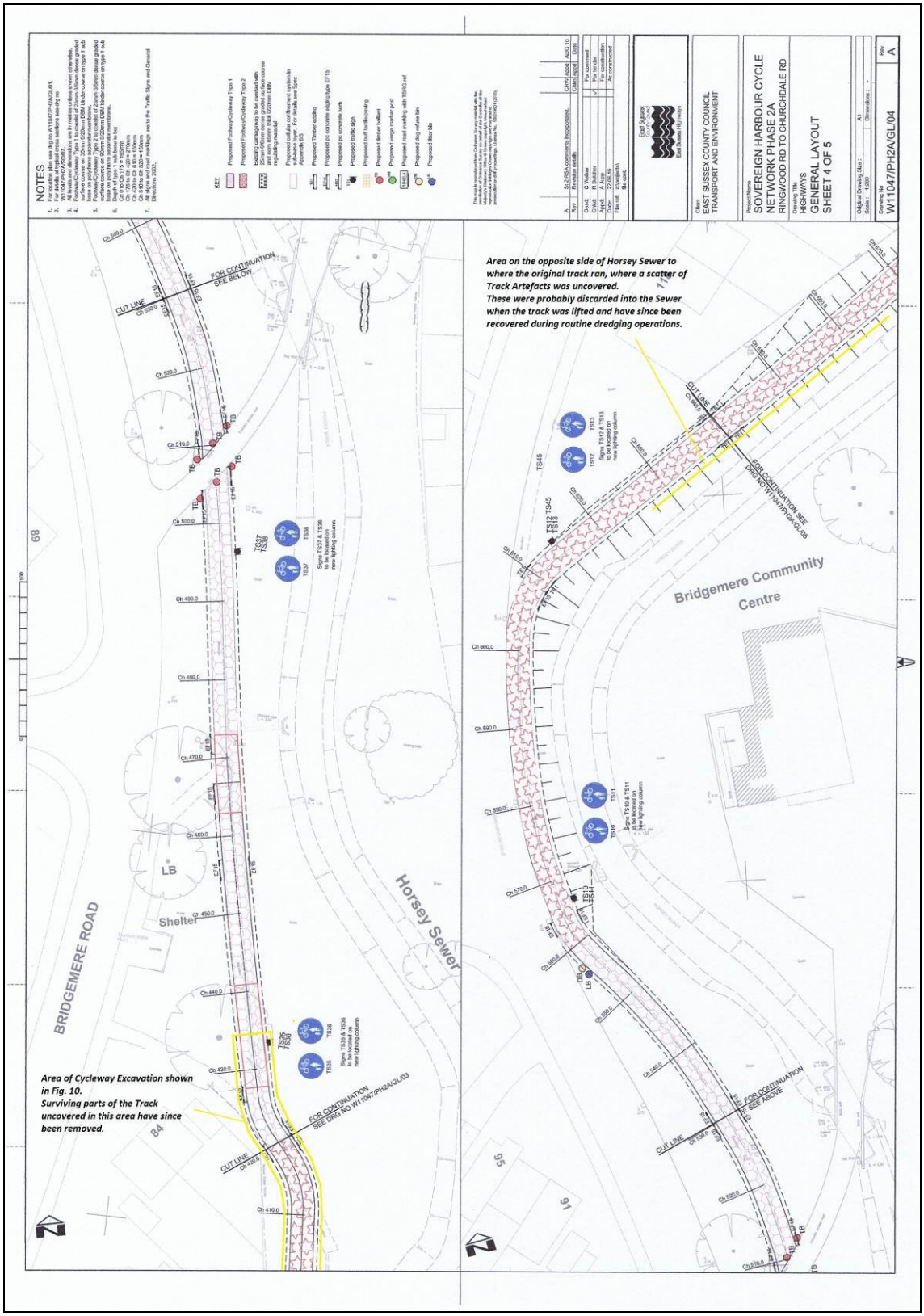


Fig. 7: Eastbourne Cycleway: Cycleway Route (Part 3) Showing Chains

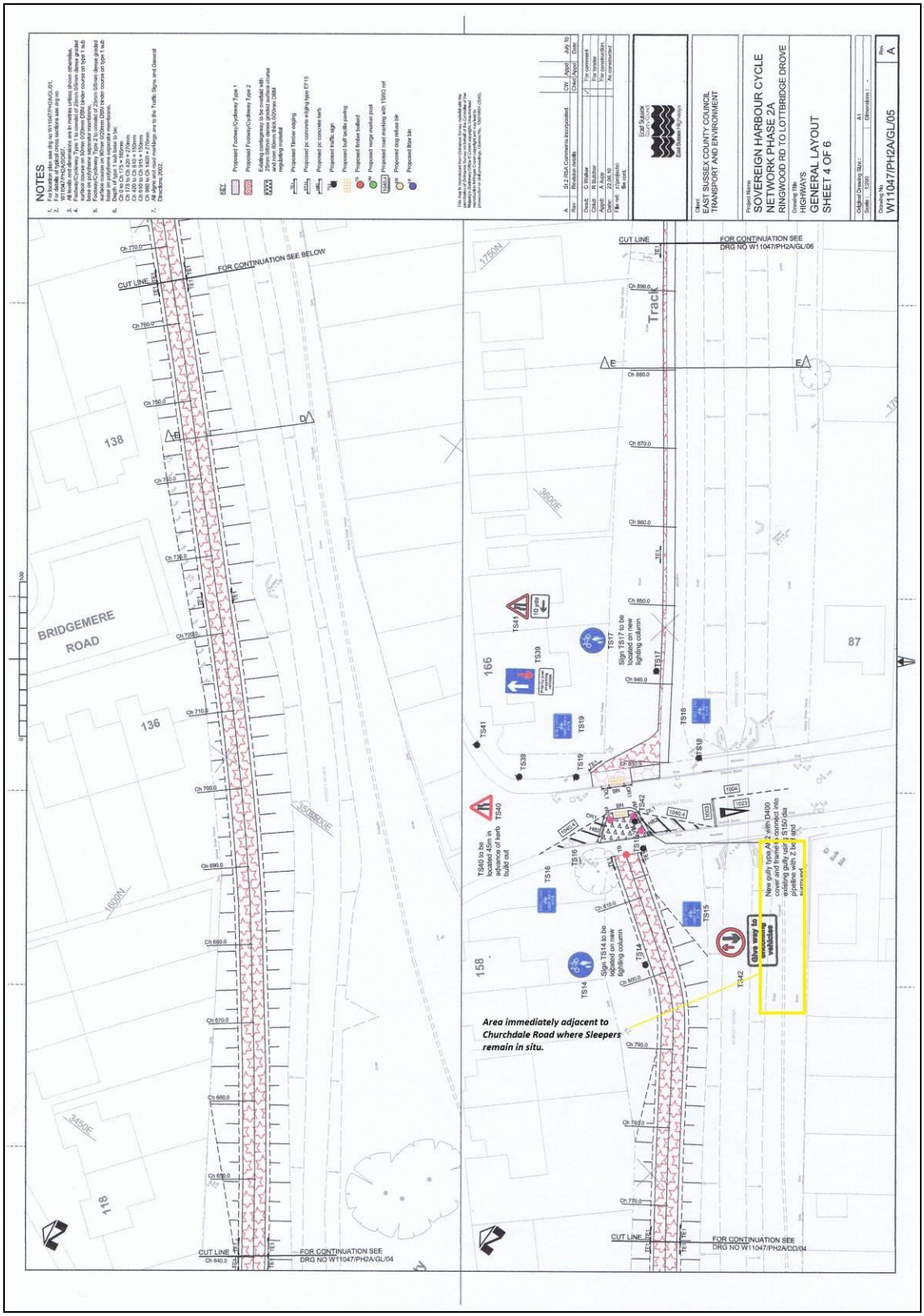
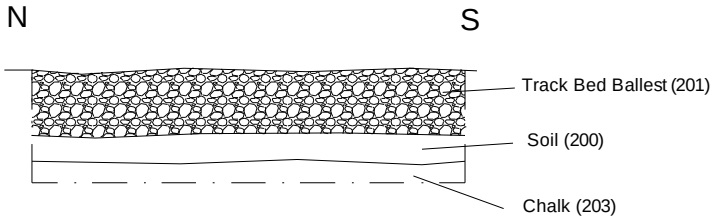


Fig. 8: Eastbourne Cycleway: Cycleway Route (Part 4) Showing Chains

A1. Representative 1 m West Facing Section of Track Bed. Between Ch 210 - 220.



A2. Representative 1 m East Facing Section of Track Bed. Between Ch 210 - 220.

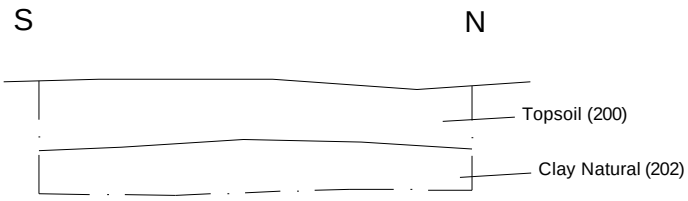


Fig. 9: Eastbourne Cycleway: Representative Sections

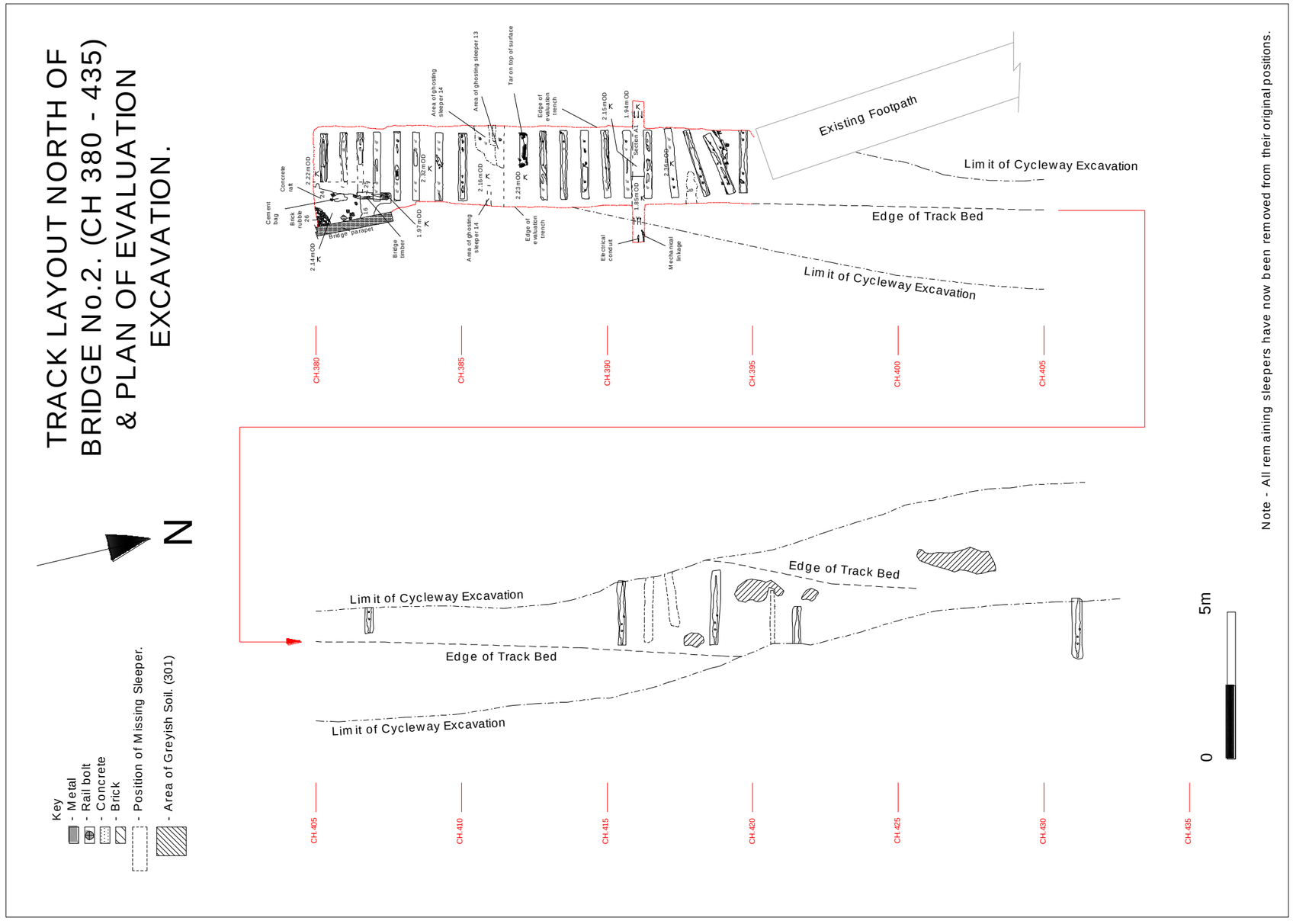


Fig.10 Eastbourne Cycleway – Plan of exposed Railway Sleepers to the North of Bridge No.2, including Plan of original evaluation excavation.

APPENDIX 1. ARTEFACT PHOTOGRAPHS.

(Photographs in this appendix appear in the order in which they arise in the text of the report.)

Plate 6: Fragment of reinforced cable conduit found between Ringwood Rod and Bridge 3

Plate 7: Broken Rail Chair found between Ringwood Road and Bridge 3, note it has only three securing holes and the left one has a wooden insert still in situ. Two Rail Chair Screws were found still in place.

Plate 8: Two Rail Chair Screws found in the Rail Chair shown above

Plate 9: Detail of markings on the Rail Chair Screws shown

Plate 10: A collection of building furniture found around Chain 230, indicating that there was once a building around this point, possible a Points, or Gangers Shed.

Plate 11: Pocket watch movement found in context (200) at Chain 210.

Plate 12: Porcelain Ornament set in cement recovered from Context 300, Chain 360

Plate 13: Right Angled Bracket recovered from Context (200) at Chain 355.

Plate 14: Three Rail Chair Screws found on the west bank of Horsey Sewer in Context (300), these were probably discarded into the Sewer when the track was lifted and later dredged up and left on the bank.

Appendix 2: HER Summary Form

Site Code	SHC.11					
Identification Name and Address	Sovereign Harbour Cycleway, Eastbourne. Phase 2A					
County, District &/or Borough	Eastbourne Borough Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 6133 0069 to TQ 6231 0127					
Geology	Alluvium over Blue Marl Gault Clay					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief **X**	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban **X**	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 13/12/11 to 27/1/12	Other		
Sponsor/Client	East Sussex County Council					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MIfA					
Project Supervisor	Andy Bradshaw					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM **X**	Other		

100 Word Summary.

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the route of the Sovereign Harbour Cycleway, between Ringwood Road and Churchdale Road, during excavation to lay a new metalled surface.

At both ends of the site the ground had been landscaped after the Railway was removed and little evidence remained. In the centre the course of the track could be discerned and the positions of the sleepers identified. Additionally discarded rail furniture and fittings, together with a range of other late 19th and 20th century artefacts were also recovered.

Evidence from the watching brief suggests that areas west of the site and east of Horsey Sewer may still retain evidence of the former Railway.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry.

Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002. Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp. He has also recently undertaken an archaeological survey of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

Chris Butler MIfA
Archaeological Services Ltd

Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 811785

e mail: chris@cbasltd.co.uk