

WALK THREE: **THE PENT RIVER**

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On the 8 April 2017 the walkers gathered on the Park Farm Industrial Estate under bright spring skies. The intention of this third walk was to follow as closely as possible the line of the Pent River, which flows mostly in culverts under the town to the harbour. The Pent River is perhaps the most important natural feature to have shaped the town. Over millennia the river formed the valley in which Folkestone was

founded at a convenient connection between the downlands and the sea.

The river provided a source of fresh water for the town and a drain to carry away waste. It also provided the energy for turning mills and water for numerous craft and industrial processes. Over time the character of the river would have changed from an essential source of drinking water to a drain

carrying noxious smells and disease; a common fate of urbanised rivers. In response the river was enclosed in culverts and lost to view. With scrutiny, however, the alignment of the river remains evident in the urban layout of the town and its presence is preserved in place names and historic buildings for manufacturing, bathhouses and breweries.



THE WALK AND THE WALKERS

The route for the third walk comprised:

Park Farm Industrial Estate
Park Farm Road
Bradstone Avenue
Black Bull Road
Foord Road
Bradstone Road
Dover Road
Mill Bay
Tontine Street
Harbour Street
Harbour Approach Road
The Harbour
Urban Room

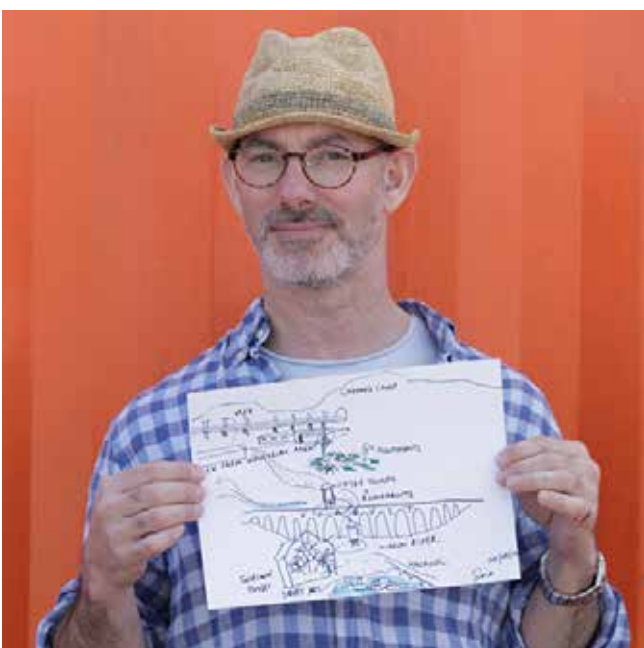
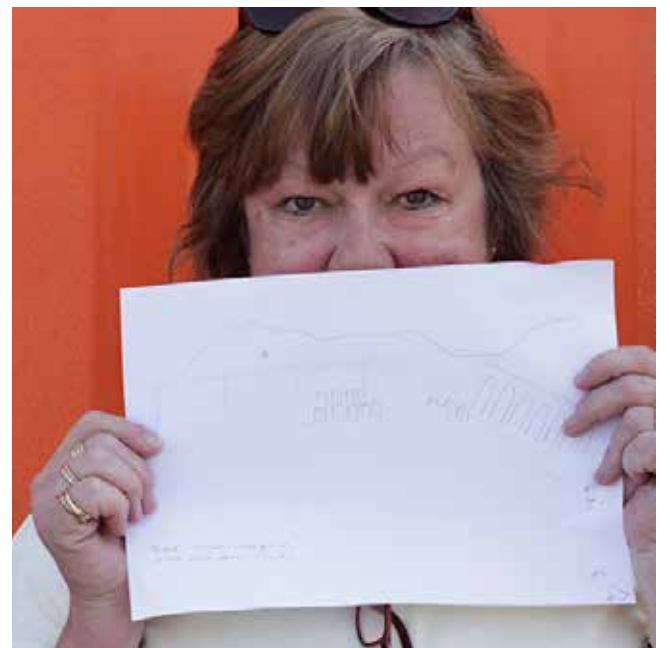
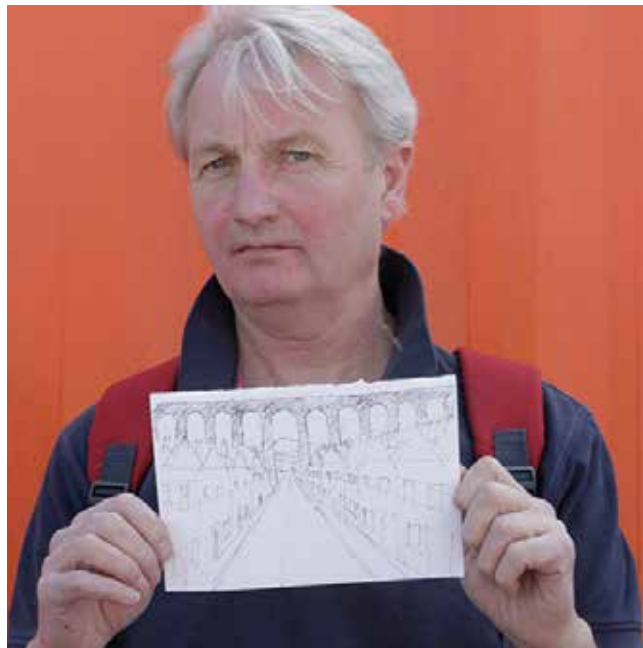
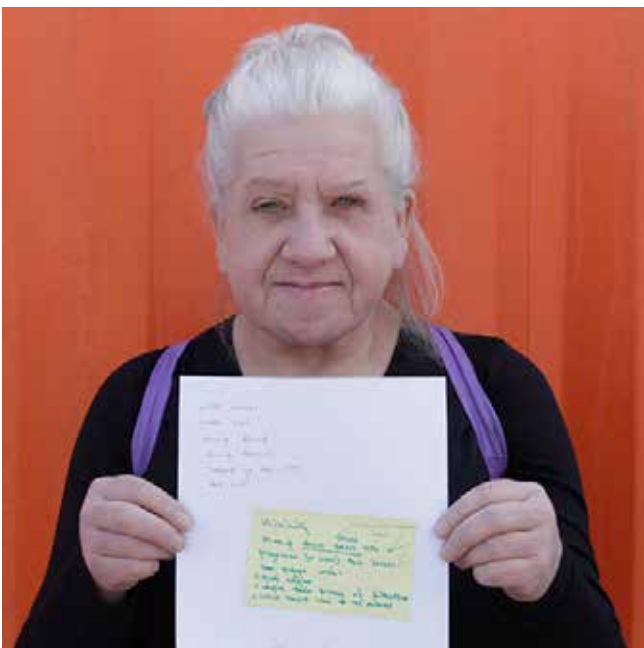
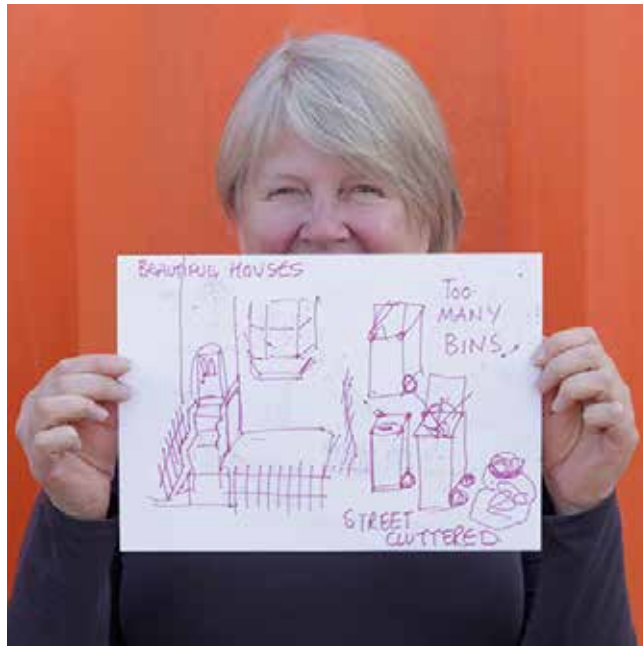
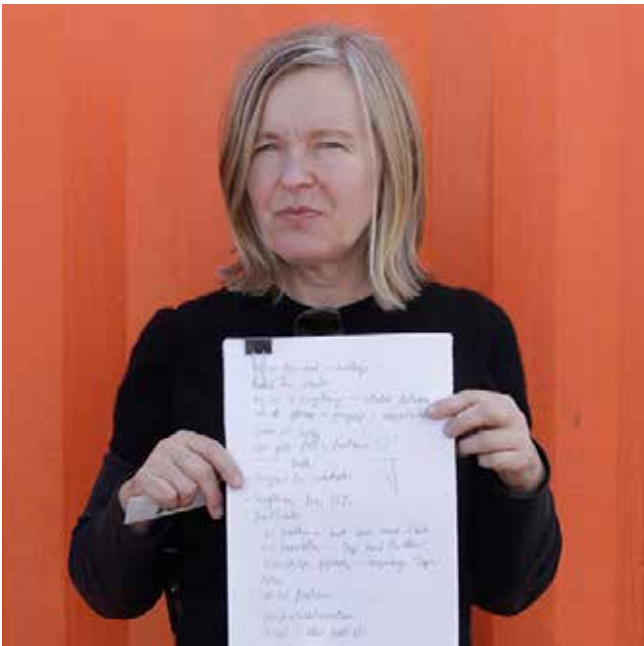
The participants in the third walk were:

People
Fran Addison
Andrew Beeching
Diane Dever
Laura Froude
Wendy Hazell
Dan Johanessen
Nick Johanessen
David Kitt
Chris Poundwhite
Liz Mulqueen
Simon Richmond
Julia Riddiough

Steven Smith
Scarlett Spicer
Jane Unsworth

Dog
Beau







Recording impressions in the Urban Room after the walk



The Pent River is now mostly concealed below ground in culverts. We searched for signs of its presence



Modern Scene Industrial and big-format retail spaces around the head of the Pent

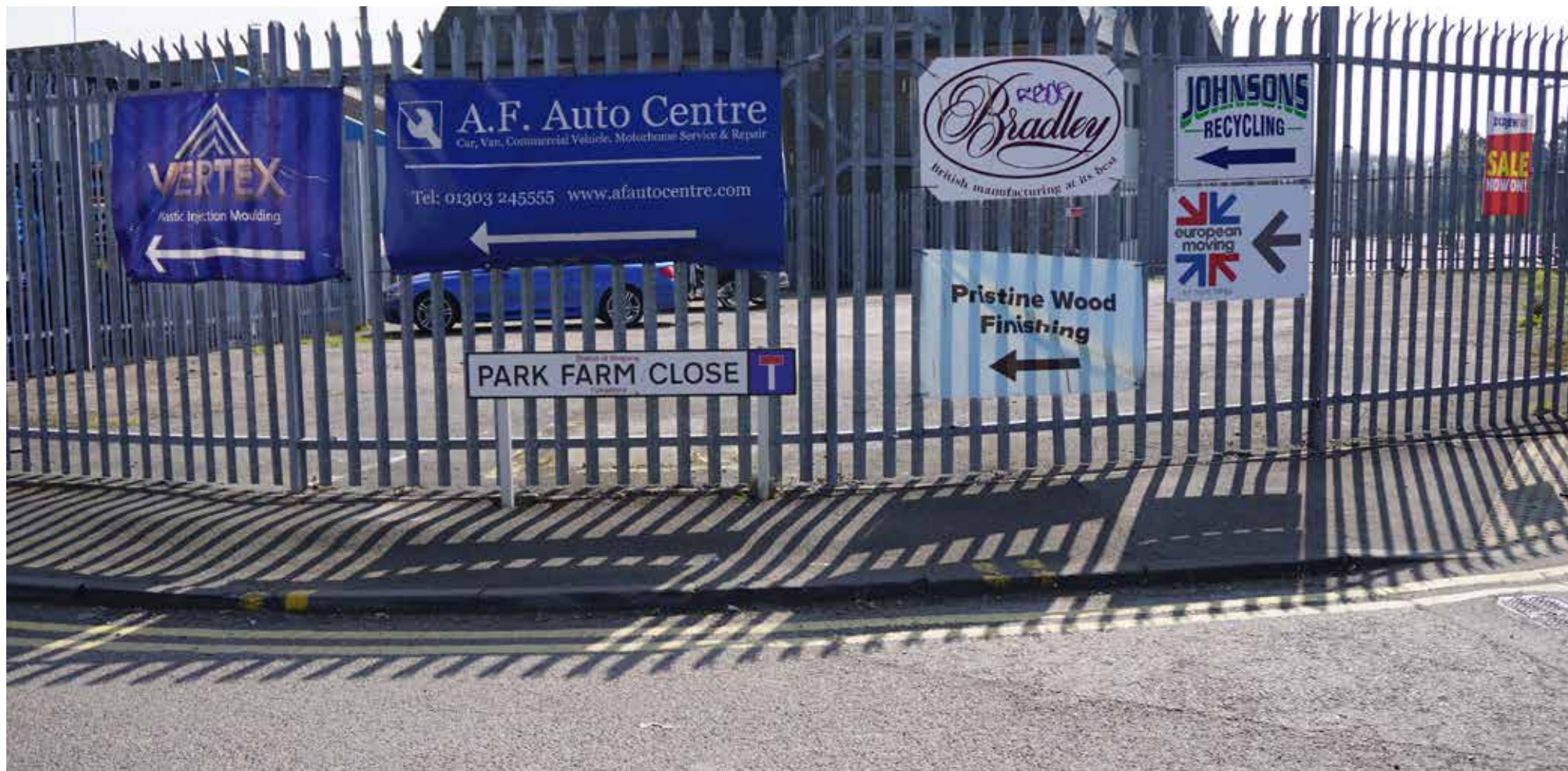


Big-shed landscapes alongside fragments of the former farmland, trees and `ornamental planting





The functional but placeless edge of town Traffic planned, big scale, super-functional, economic space



What Park Farm became A new essential service area of the town





Placeless nowhere A landscape for machines





Edge architecture (above)

The architectural order of systems softened with planting

Signs of the past (right)

Memories of barn and field linger in the street name





A light industrial landscape With willows signalling water below



Allotments watered by the Pent River



Suburban streets informally arranged within the Pent Valley against the backdrop of hills



A **tributary** joins the hidden Pent River



Orientation



The hidden Pent River marked by the back yard fences of houses on either side



Fine small houses heavy with time and wear



The Pent River visible as it cuts a path between buildings



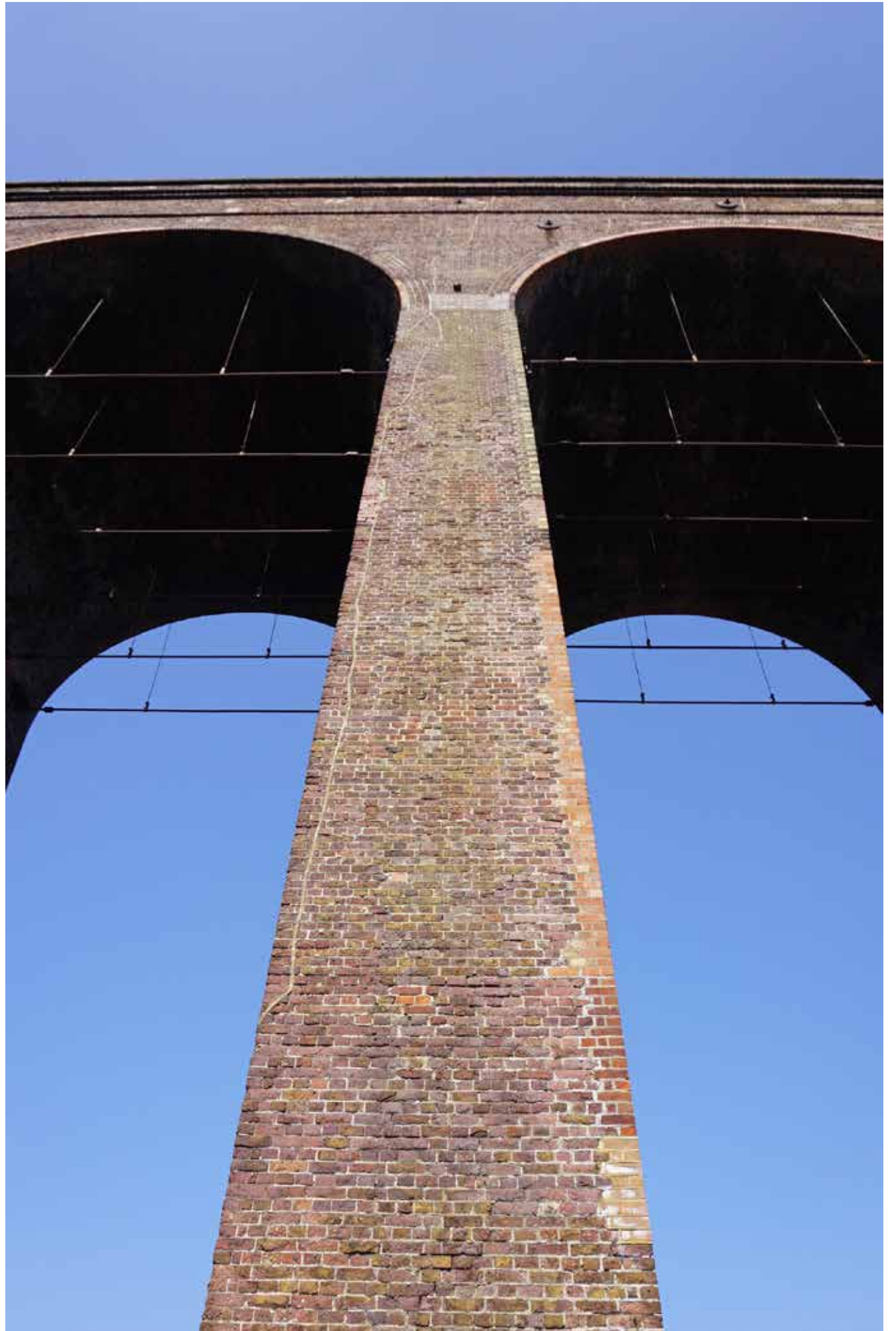
Old bath houses on the bank of the Pent River



The magnificent Cubitt Rail Viaduct spanning the Pent Valley



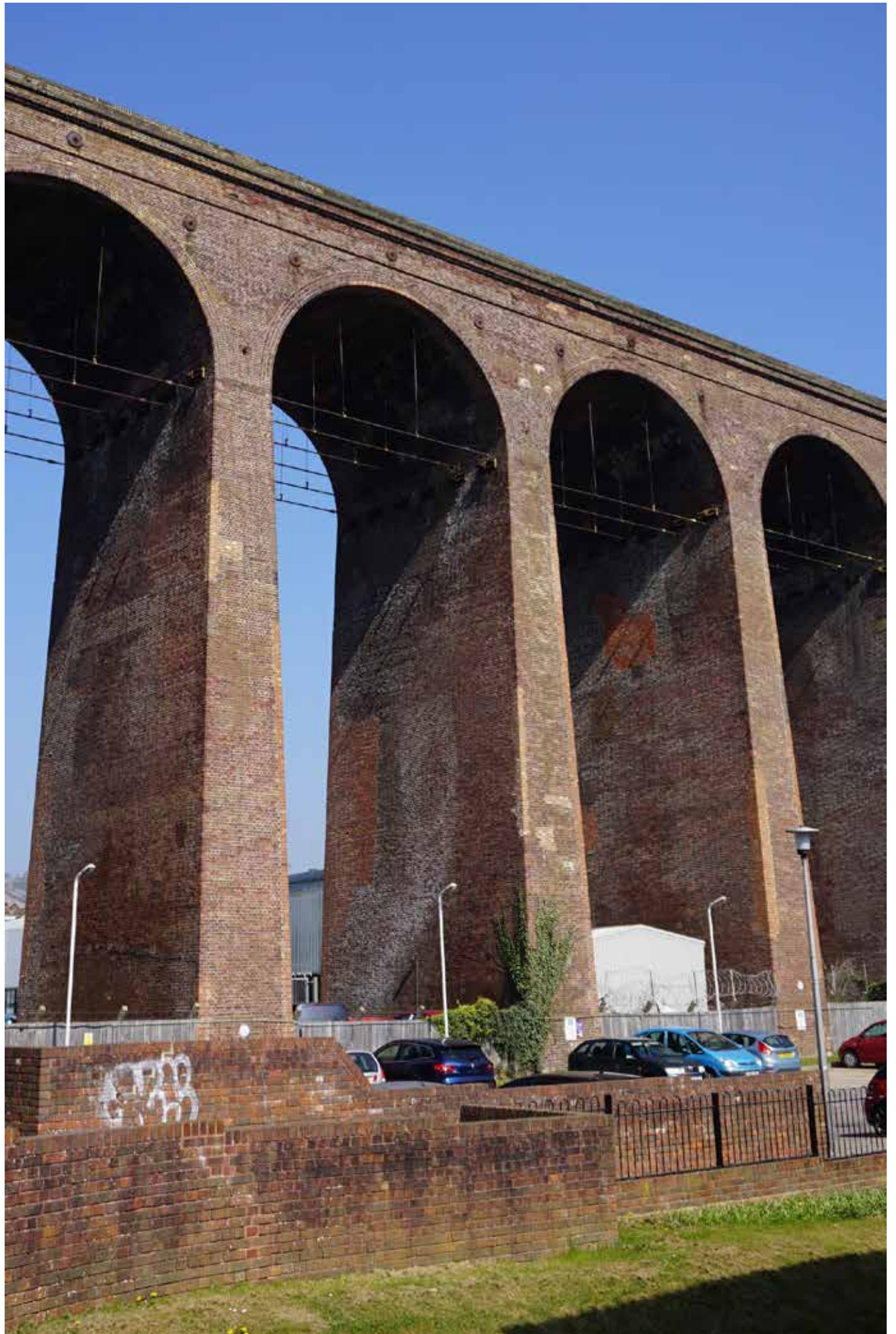
A modern bath house (for cars) on the bank of the Pent River



Cubitt's audacious brick viaduct defying the valley



The urban paradox If this magnificent structure didn't exist its construction would be strongly opposed by the public. Because it does exist, its removal would be equally vigorously opposed





The viaduct A Folkestone icon



The viaduct bridging across Bradstone Road



Bradstone Road An ancient alignment now choked with cars. The future pattern of use?



Line of the Pent River along the back lane between houses

Man-made topography (right) Regrading of Bradstone Road revealing the flank of an ancient graveyard.





Industrial patterns of use associated with the Pent River continue in new forms



Buildings evolving with use



Street art enlivening the site of the new skate park. A sense of dampness and the presence of the Pent River flowing below

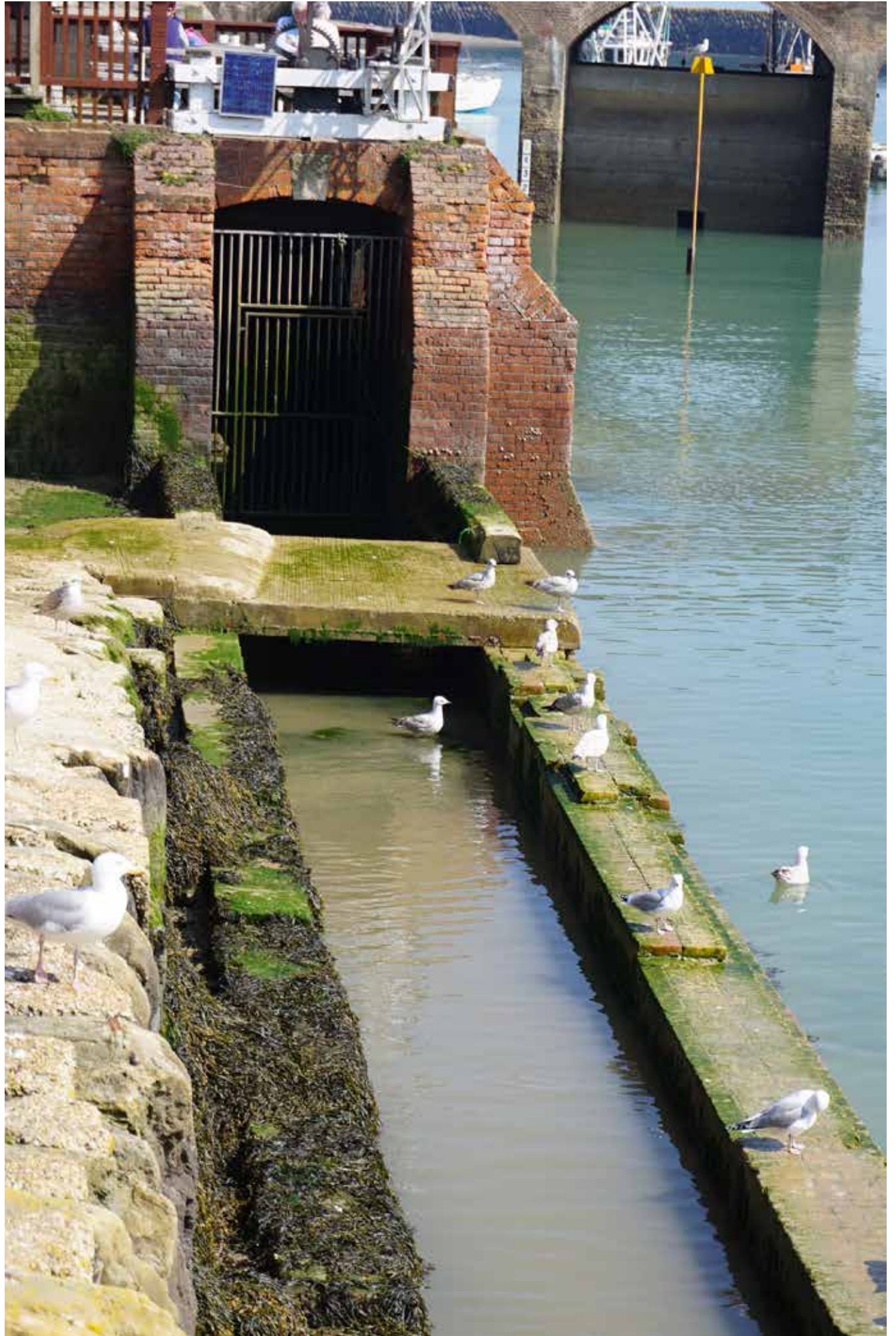
The Pent River alignment (right) behind buildings fronting Tontine Street





Mill Bay No visible water but the presence of the Pent River lingers on in the street name as a source of power to turn mill wheels





At the harbour the Pent River meets the sea, delivering a last service of fresh drinking and bathing water for seagulls before joining with sea water



The harbour (above) and the Grand
Burstin Hotel (right)



A head of Neptune, God of freshwater and the sea, marks the end of the walk

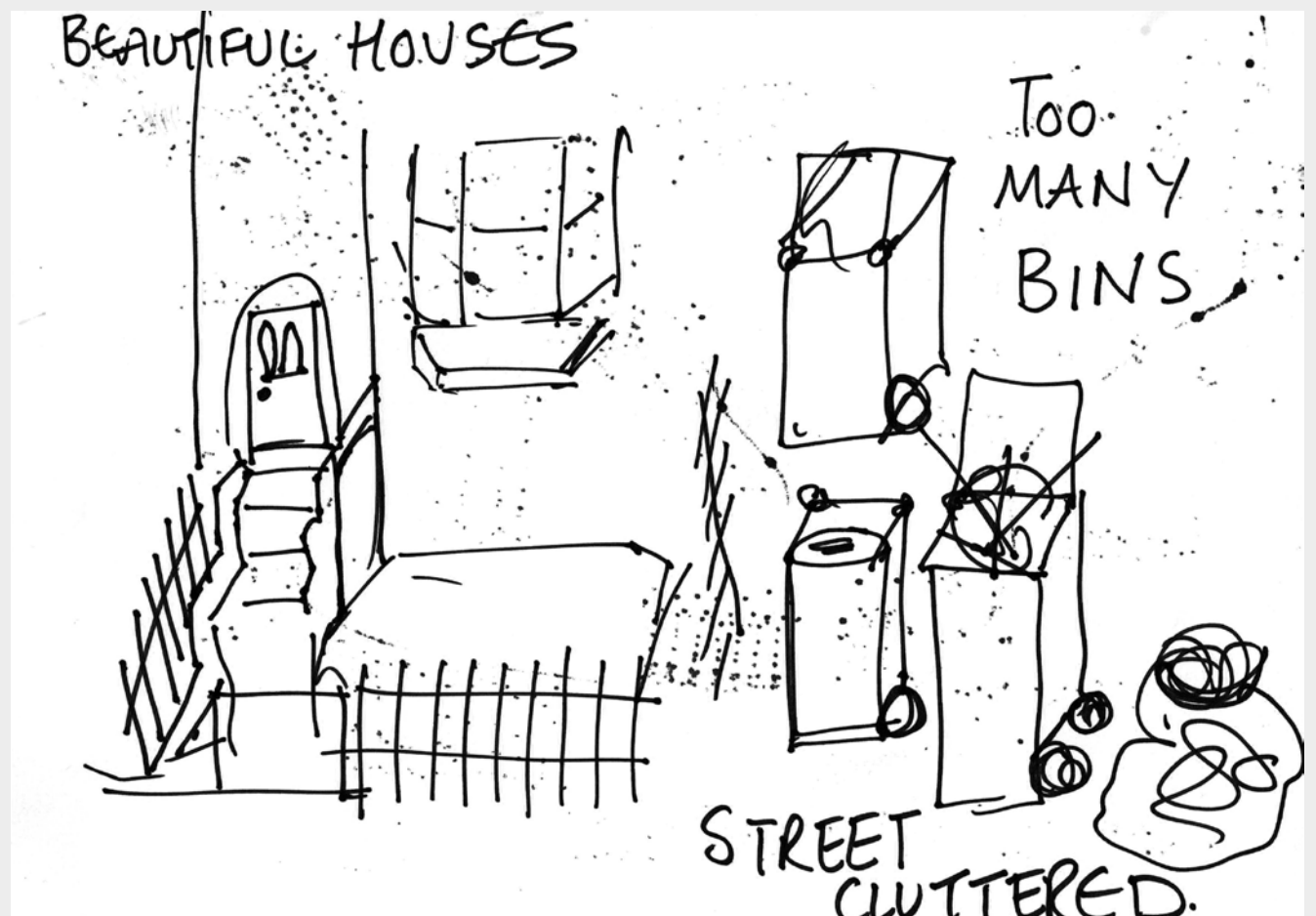
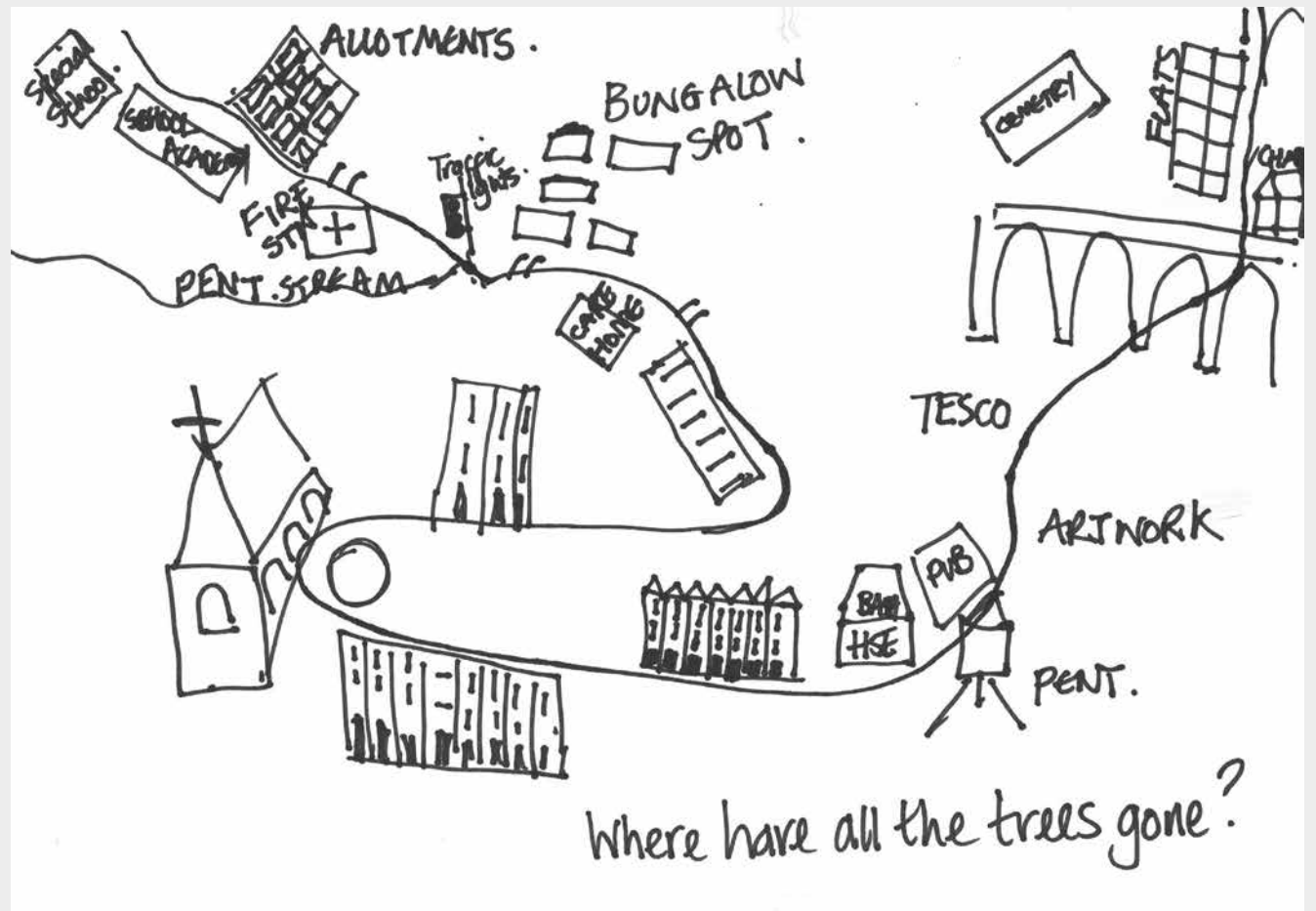
IMPRESSIONS

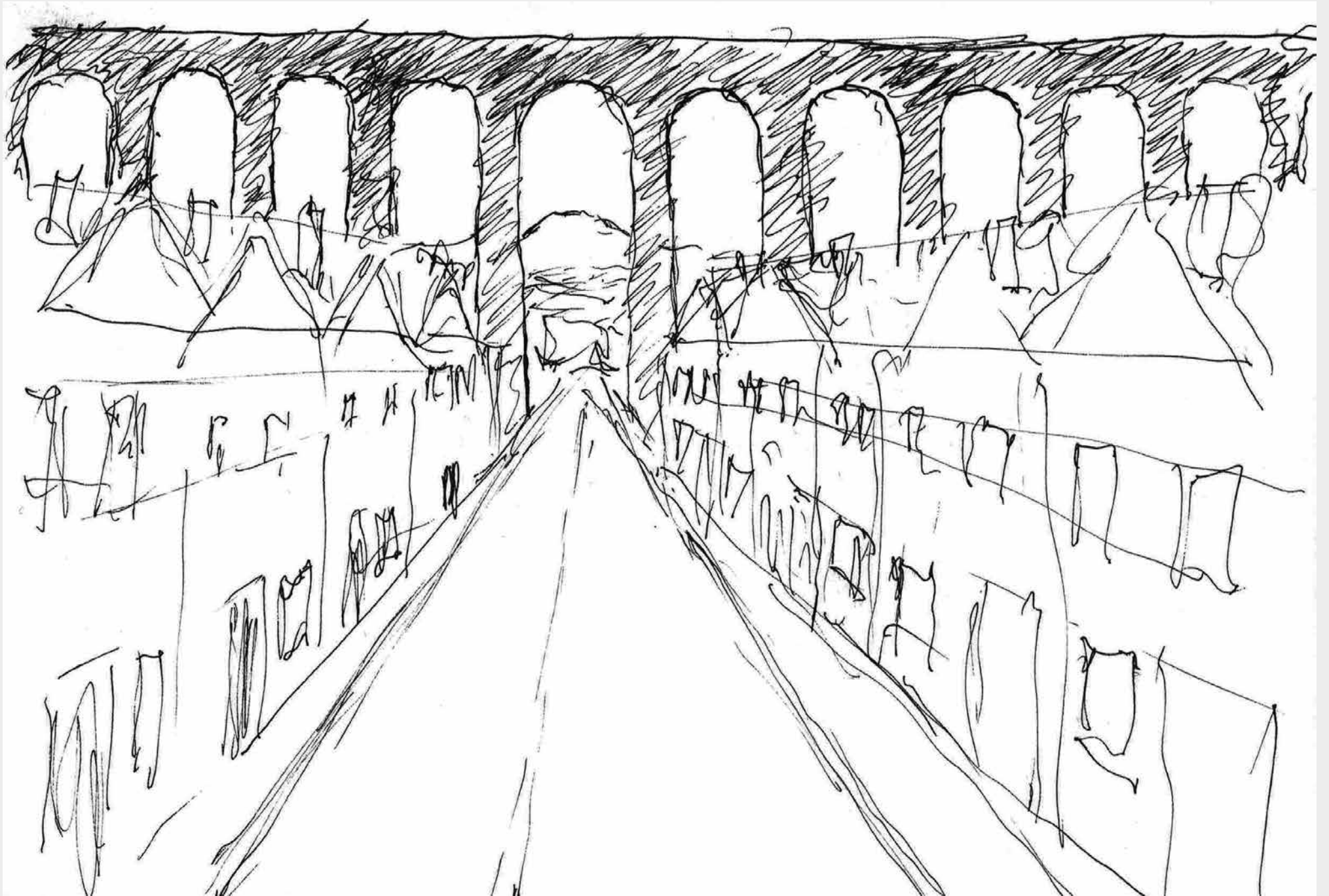
Participants were invited to examine and discuss the urban landscape they passed through and to record their impressions. They were also invited to prepare a descriptive map or diagram recording their thoughts and to make suggestions about what they would change along the route.

A discussion of these ideas over tea and hot cross buns followed.

PENT WALK

Sugarloaf
Caesar's camp
Hills
Motorway
Industrial estate
School
Stream by old bath house
Nice towels
Under viaduct
Red brick
Valley floor
Discovering the track
Victorian hotels
Mosque
Old river bridge
Cheese grater
Wooden wharf below quaterhouse site
Ancient track
Pent exits into harbour





Pent Stream Walk

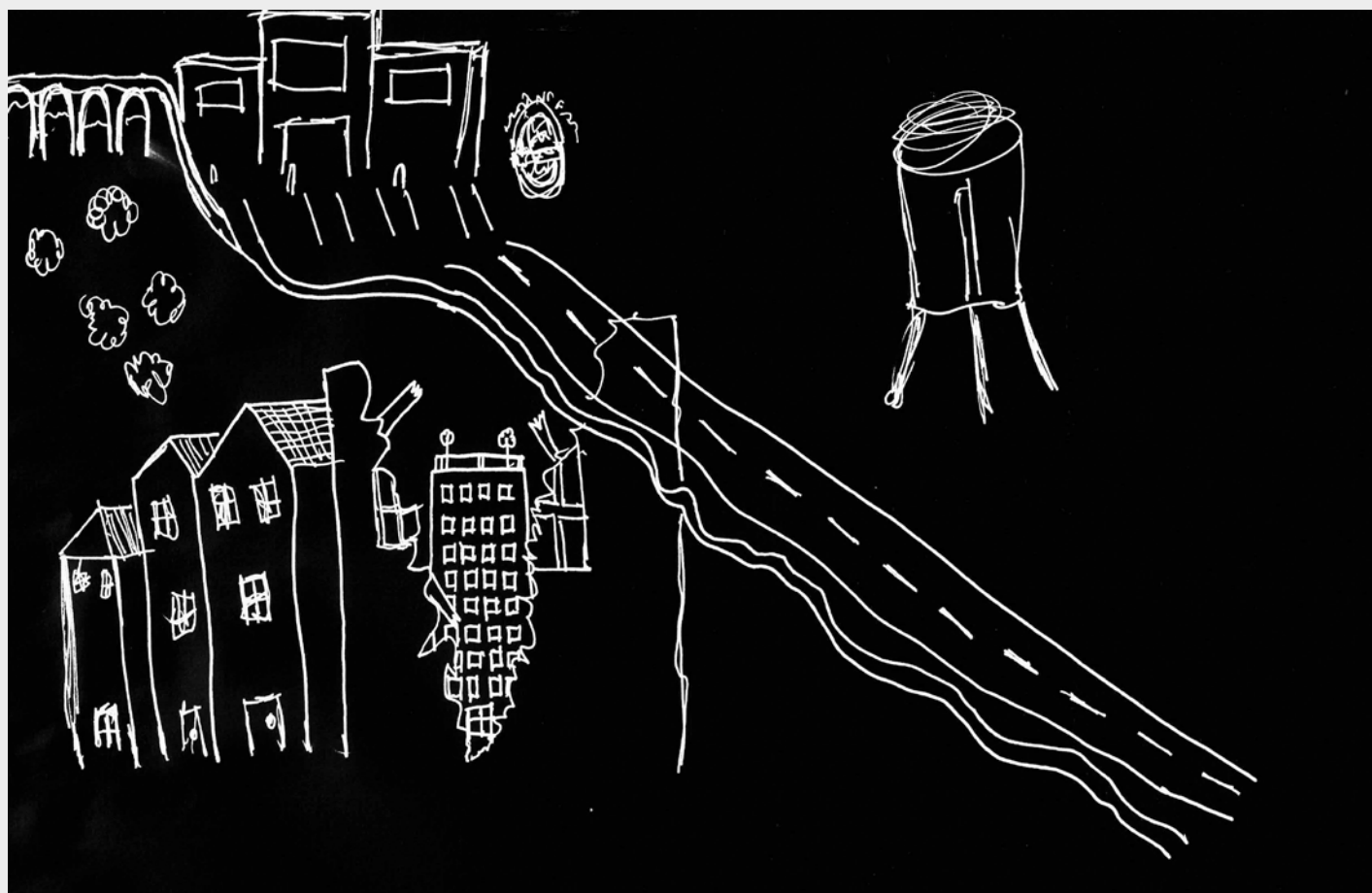
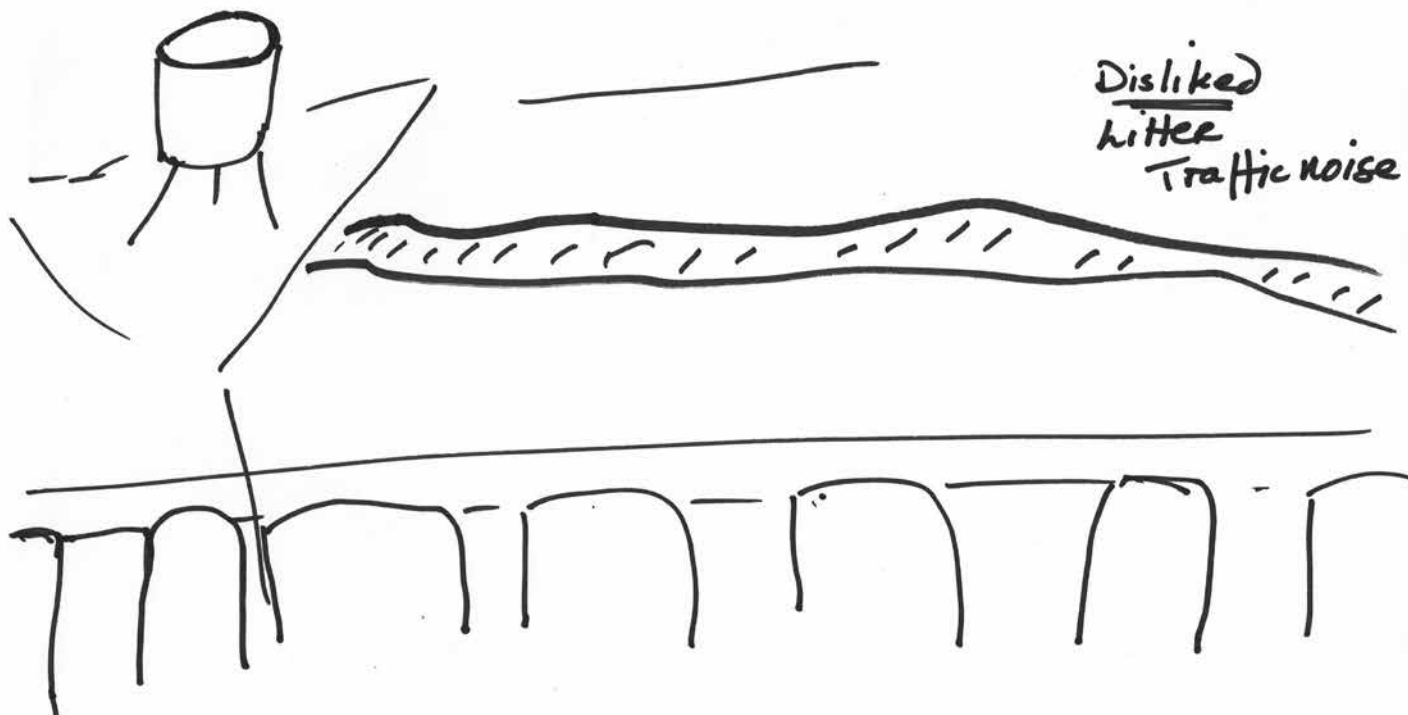
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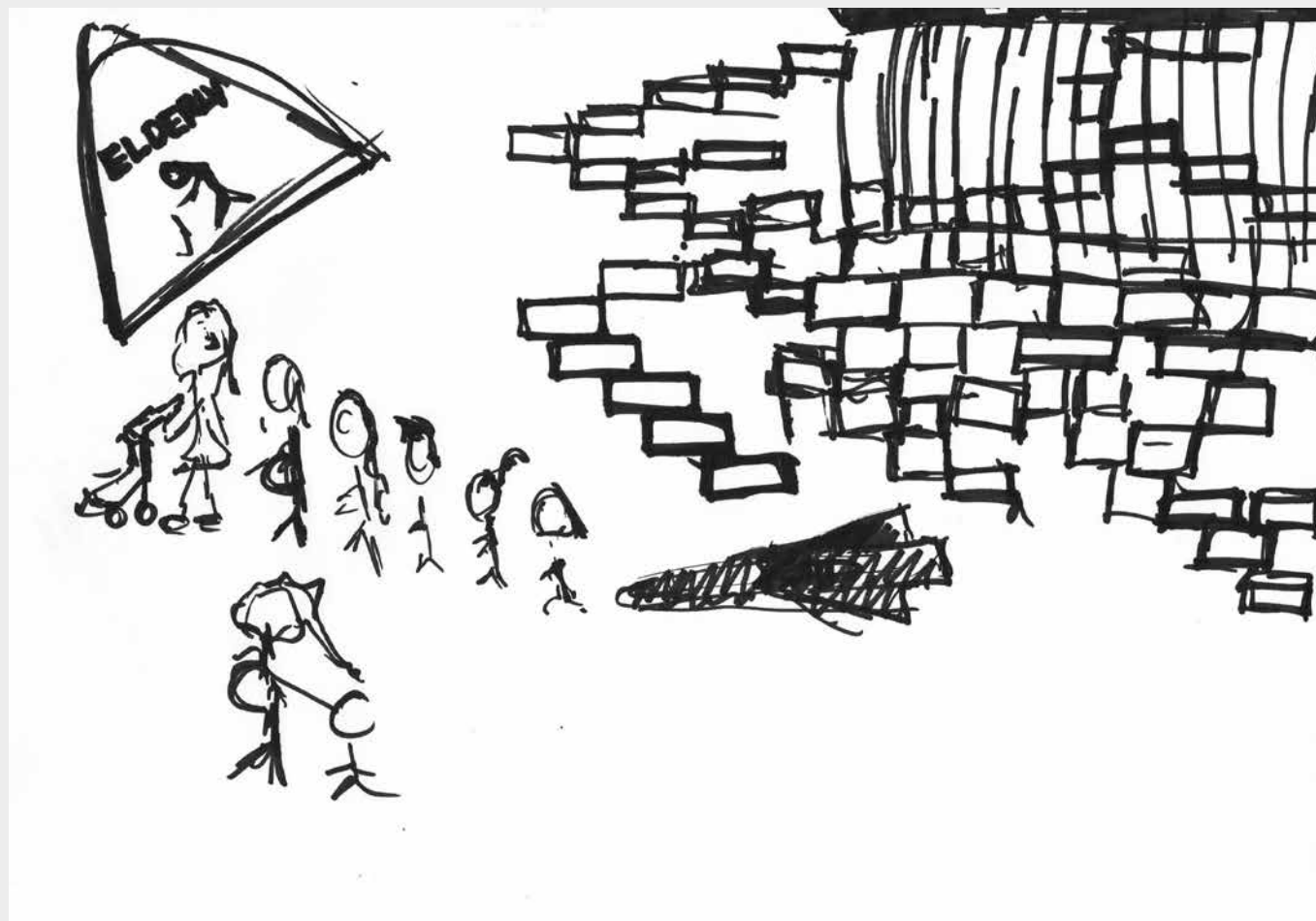
liked

Discovery of old
buildings & history
of Folkestone

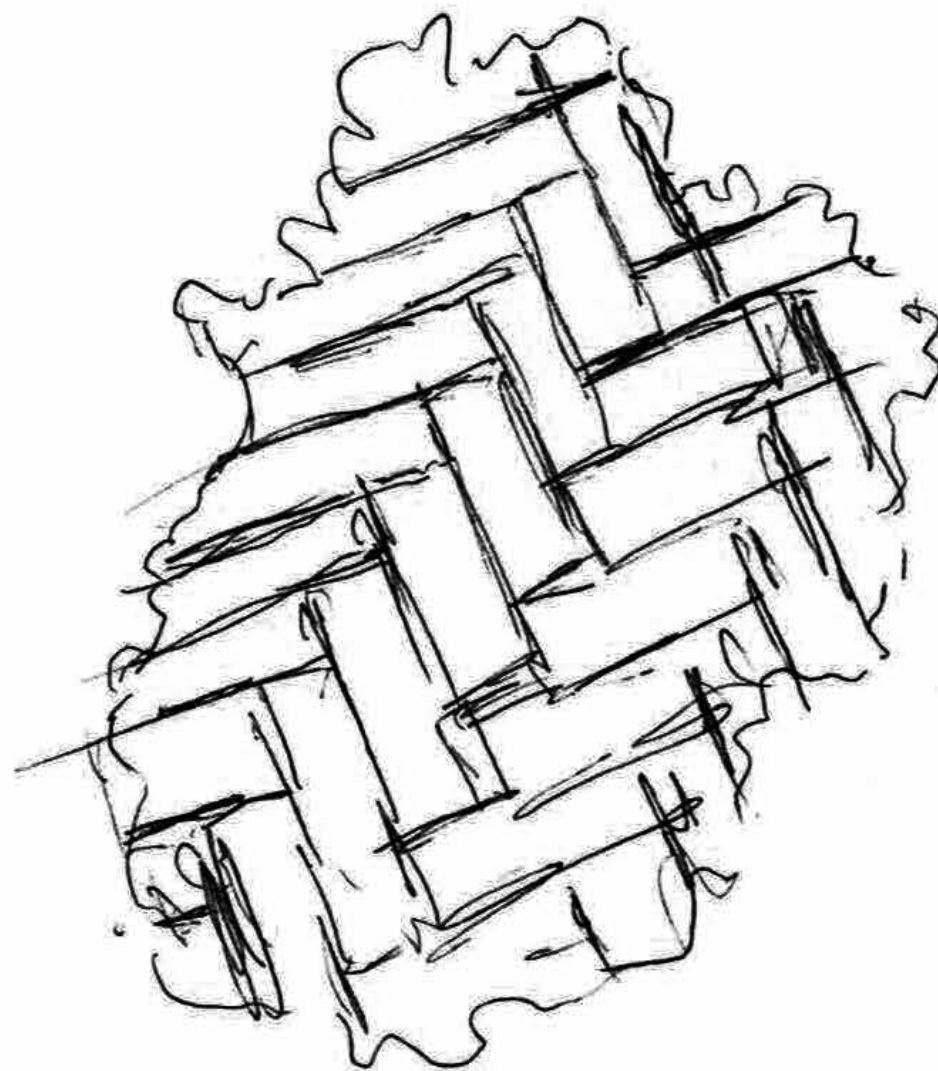
Disliked

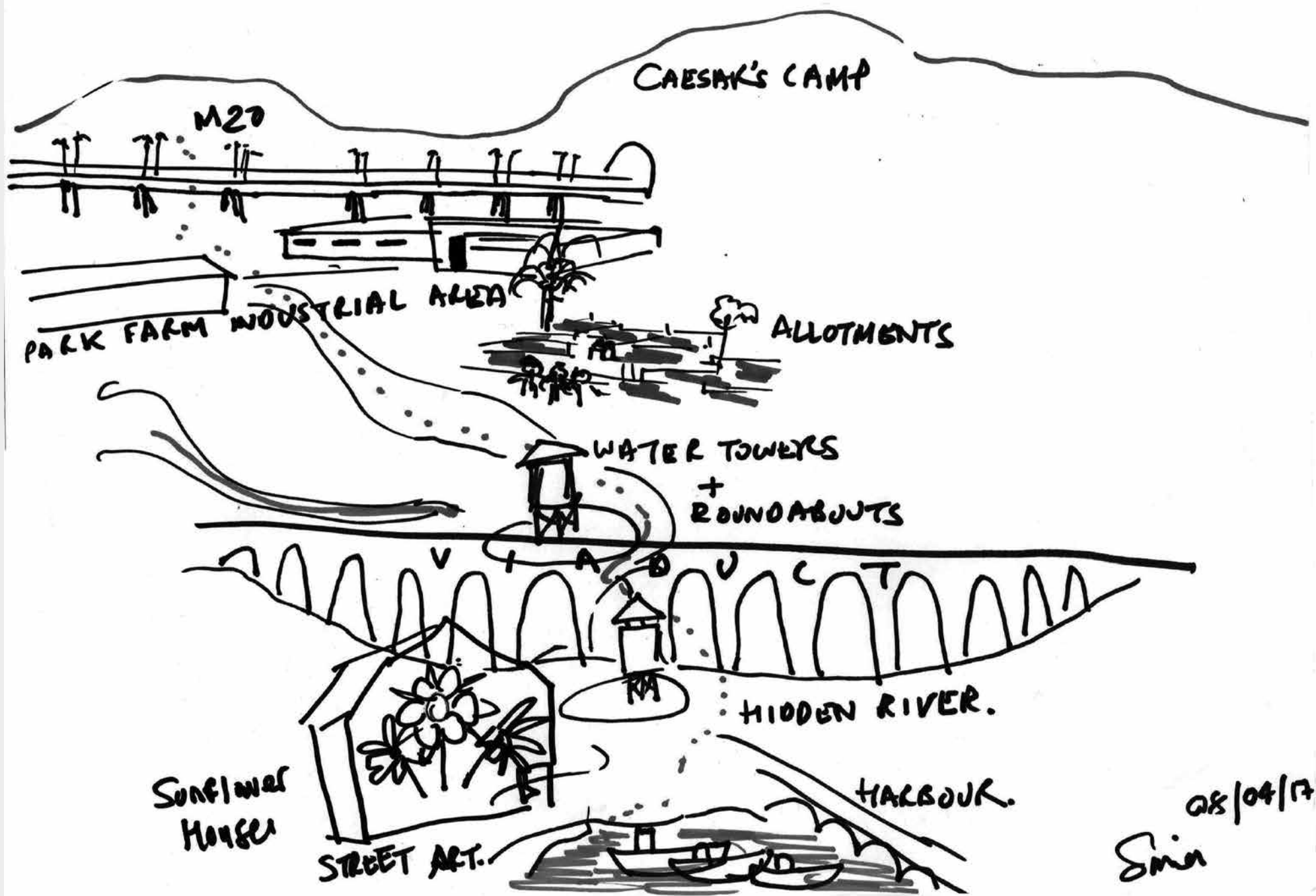
hitter
Traffic noise





7 Victorian labels / mosque
cheese grater / wooden
ancient track / punt exit





NOTES

Bins

- Bins everywhere
- Nice old buildings but blighted by bins in every garden
- Why isn't there a better rubbish collection system?
- Collect every day or when it is needed
- In other countries there are centralised collection points not bins in every household
- We are not used to the idea - it would be abused - attract rubbish and antisocial behaviour
- Subdivision of properties increases the number of bins
- Streets becoming run down as bin alley

Rubbish

- Folkestone has a community project of 'Sprucers' who go out each week to pick up rubbish
- Still it is not enough to keep the place tidy
- Needs a big effort
- Needs new thinking
- Needs a community effort
- If we were more community minded the rubbish collection would be in a centralised area as in other places in Europe
- Need to reduce the amount of rubbish we all make
- Alternative recycling arrangements are needed
- Could rubbish systems be reimagined by artists?

Dystopia

- Dystopian retail park
- Dog end of everything

- Traffic and amputated routes
- Plus some rather lovely parts if a bit rundown
- The walk ends in a seagull pond and a fountain
- Could there be more (see below)

Landscape

- The strong presence of landscape
- Views to the hills
- Generous well managed planting even in the retail park
- The river kept popping up here and there

The Cubitt Viaduct

- Magnificent structure designed by Sir William Cubitt This was the most magnificent sight along the walk
- A vision for a great fountain spilling from the viaduct
- A vision for a walkway across the viaduct - like the New York Highline

Wrapping

- A vision of large tents carried on balloons that can descend and wrap up unsightly buildings
- Installations and activities carried into the town on balloons

Roads

- Terrible roads
- Traffic too fast
- Far too noisy
- Concern about air quality
- More tree planting is needed

- Reduce the impact of traffic
- Clear the town of traffic
- Roads designed to serve the port but port activity much reduced

Transport

- Need new thinking
- Park-and-ride on tram to centre
- Reactivate the tramline to access the harbour
- Tram linked to edge car park
- Build a 'travelator'
- Link to ferry to all the coastal towns - Steam Packet Ferry
- Make some of the town traffic free
- We are unlikely to need cars in the future
- We will move from private cars to hired automatic 'pods'
- In ten years or maybe twenty it will be completely different
- Traffic needs to be calmed
- Folkestone residents very car dependent for their livelihoods and life
- Car parking seen as essential to secure commercial success
- Could the Harbour Arm survive without the adjacent parking?
- Waterfront development to minimise car usage

Houses

- We saw many old houses
- Interesting but in need of much refurbishment
- Tall narrow houses not suitable for families
- No interconnection between spaces
- Not suitable for the way we live now
- Houses full of steps
- Maybe they should be replaced by

- houses people want
- Dover Road is not a good place to live
- Always a great need for cheap housing – essential for the many hard-pressed people

Terraces

- Some of the walkers live in terraced houses and find them to be great places to live
- High density, efficient housing, with privacy and outdoor space
- A great model for new housing
- Density is a good thing if correctly designed
- Not everyone wants a large garden or open spaces
- Terraced house and separate allotment might be a better model
- Perhaps more shared areas are needed between houses
- Perhaps the issue is not the houses themselves but the suitability of the houses to the occupiers
- Singles and couples would suit small houses better than families
- There is always a need for low-cost housing
- Some of the houses for sale are on very short leases / private rental sector etc
- Houses split in to many small flats is common
- Perhaps the regeneration will be though incomers restoring old properties
- Big wave of new people coming to Folkestone now
- Many new people arriving every week
- Is there scope for an Art House use of houses like that in Leeds?

Work

- A post-industrial landscape
- Attraction of things being made

- in low-cost space
- Low-cost space along the banks of the river
- Historically a polluted and unattractive place
- Water used in industrial processes
- Detail and grain of old neglected parts of the town
- The cobblestones showing through the tarmac
- The attractiveness of worn things
- Many small businesses in Tontine Street
- Other work in tourism, leisure nail bars
- Working from home will be an increasing trend
- Alternative intermediate spaces needed to go with this way of working
- Making, crafts, arts all part of the work mix
- Transition to new ways of working is a work in progress in Tontine Street
- Vocational education is vitally important
- Industry moving up stream over time through history

Gas works

- Historically a place of grand houses
- Gas works part of the industrialisation of the Pent River Valley
- Polluted land expensive to redevelop
- Could it be an open space?
- Could it add value to the surroundings?
- Could it be part developed and part open space?

Artworks

- Storm-trooper
- Sunflower house

- Street art
- Hoardings
- Installations
- Potential for more
- Exploration of buried places – Public WCS etc
- Artwork creatively beautifying the town
- Why not a sign on the Folkestone baths to explain what it once was
- Could we have a living wall like that in Margate?

Education

- Traditionally education in Folkestone has been very poor
- Poor education reinforcing extreme poverty
- Lack of aspiration and learning
- New schools have been created
- Now for the first time in many generations children achieving university entrance
- Vocational training is improving
- Linking of colleges across Kent is improving offer and potential for children and young people
- Catering is a big speciality

Local Plan

- The ideas discussed should be included in the Local Plan making process
- Apply online and make sure your views are included in the discussion

Cubitts Magnificent Viaduct

Allotments

gentle soil

small rural

space above

warehouses

Screfix

Maplins

Topstiles

Forrestare Baths
why not a sign to mark this