

# **WALK FOUR:**

# **EAST LEAS**

# WALK FOUR: EAST LEAS

On 22 April 2017 the walkers gathered at the old windmill tower on the clifftop to the east of central Folkestone. This was the fourth of the five walks in Folkestone and explored the eastern approach to the town.

The East Leas appears today as a late 19th and 20th century suburban extension to the historic town centre, built within the Pent

River valley close to the harbour. Archaeological evidence, however, reveals the presence of a large Roman Villa on the East Leas as well as evidence of prehistoric human activity of mill stone manufacture and use. For as long as the Folkestone location has provided a convenient way down to the shore it seems certain that people will have followed tracks and paths along the clifftop towards it. Our route

was to follow this same direction, perhaps passing directly along paths of very great antiquity. Within the historic town centre we discovered the abandoned remains of the harbour rail line that continues to divide eastern Folkestone from the remainder of the town.



# THE WALK AND THE WALKERS

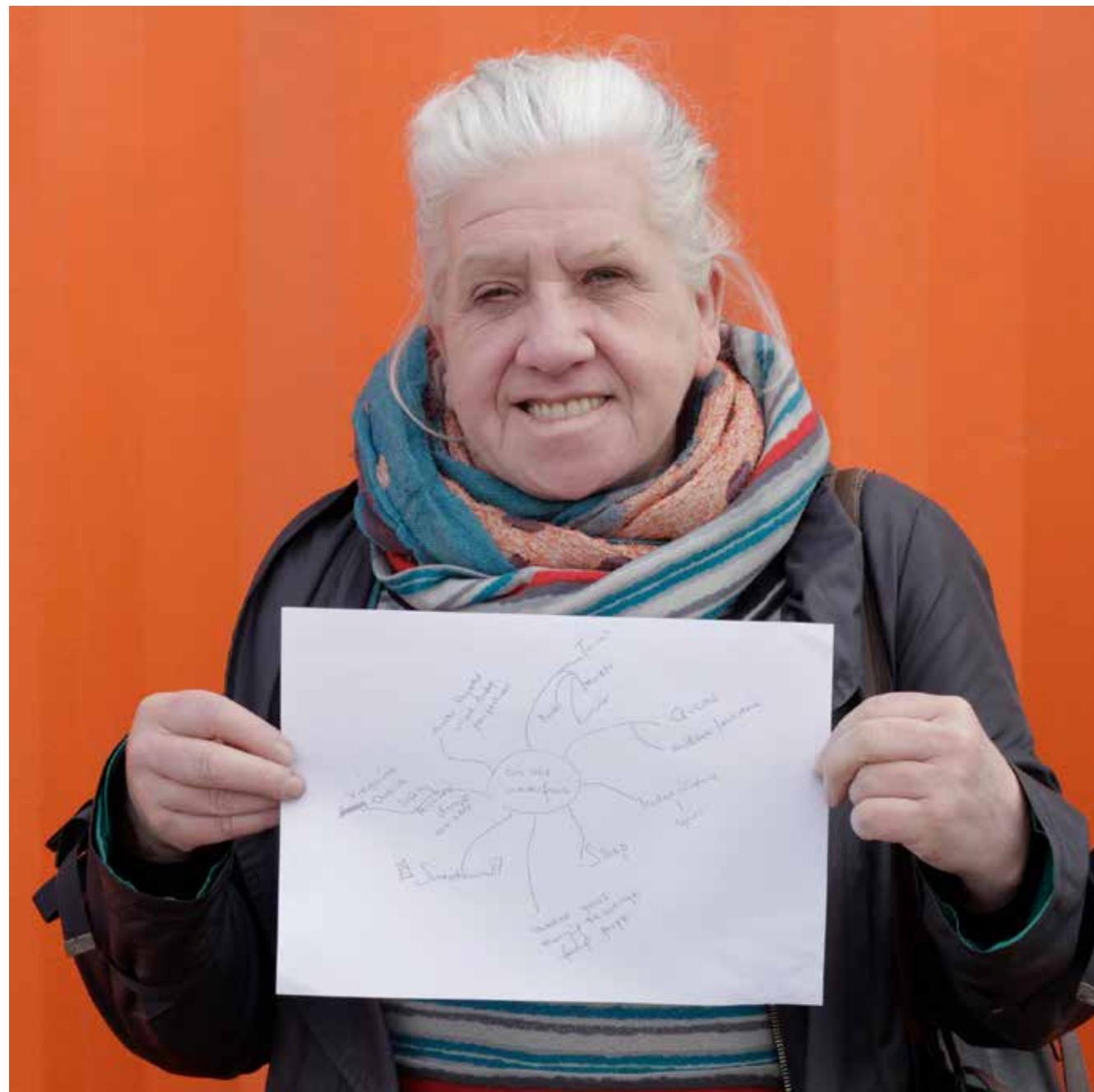
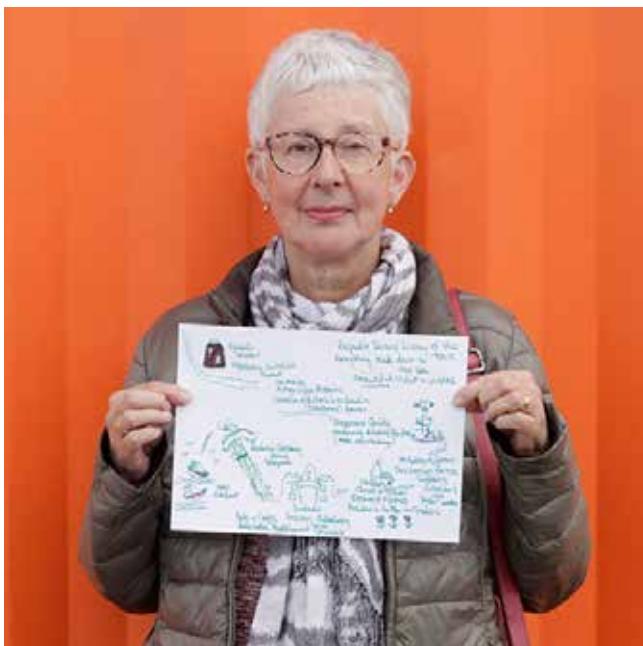
The route for the fourth walk comprised:

The old windmill off Wear Bay Road  
Wear Bay Road  
Martello tower  
The Pavilion  
The Durlocks  
Dyke Road  
Tram Road  
Radnor Street  
Fish Market  
Beach Street  
Harbour Street  
Harbour Approach Road  
Harbour  
Urban Room

The walkers included:

Fran Adison  
Lewis Biggs  
Diane Dever  
Wilma Fraser  
Jan Jones  
David Kitt  
Joy Pascoe  
Jane Unsworth  
Julia Riddlough  
Simon Richmond  
Steven Smith





**Walkers** with their drawn and written impressions after the walk

**An old windmill on the exposed cliffs**

Now slowly being converted into a  
private home





#### Old tracks on the clifftop

We speculate that these natural routes might be very ancient ways into the towns that may have extended across the landbridge to Europe that once existed



The town gathered in the Pent River Valley below the cliffs



The coast of France visible through the mist

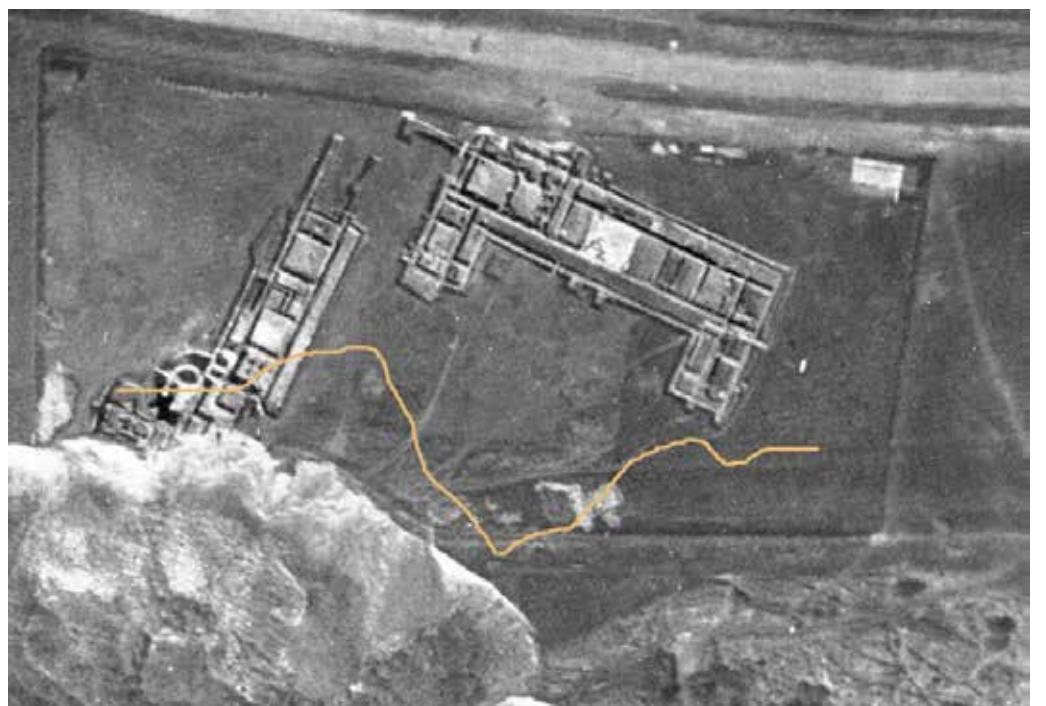


**The Eastern Leas** Site of an important Roman Villa buried below the Leas





**The Roman Villa** Historic view of archaeological excavation (above) and the plan of the villa (right) with the current cliff line shown as an outline



**Historic view of archaeological digging**  
(right) and more recent rendering  
(below) of how the Roman Villa may have  
looked



No 71

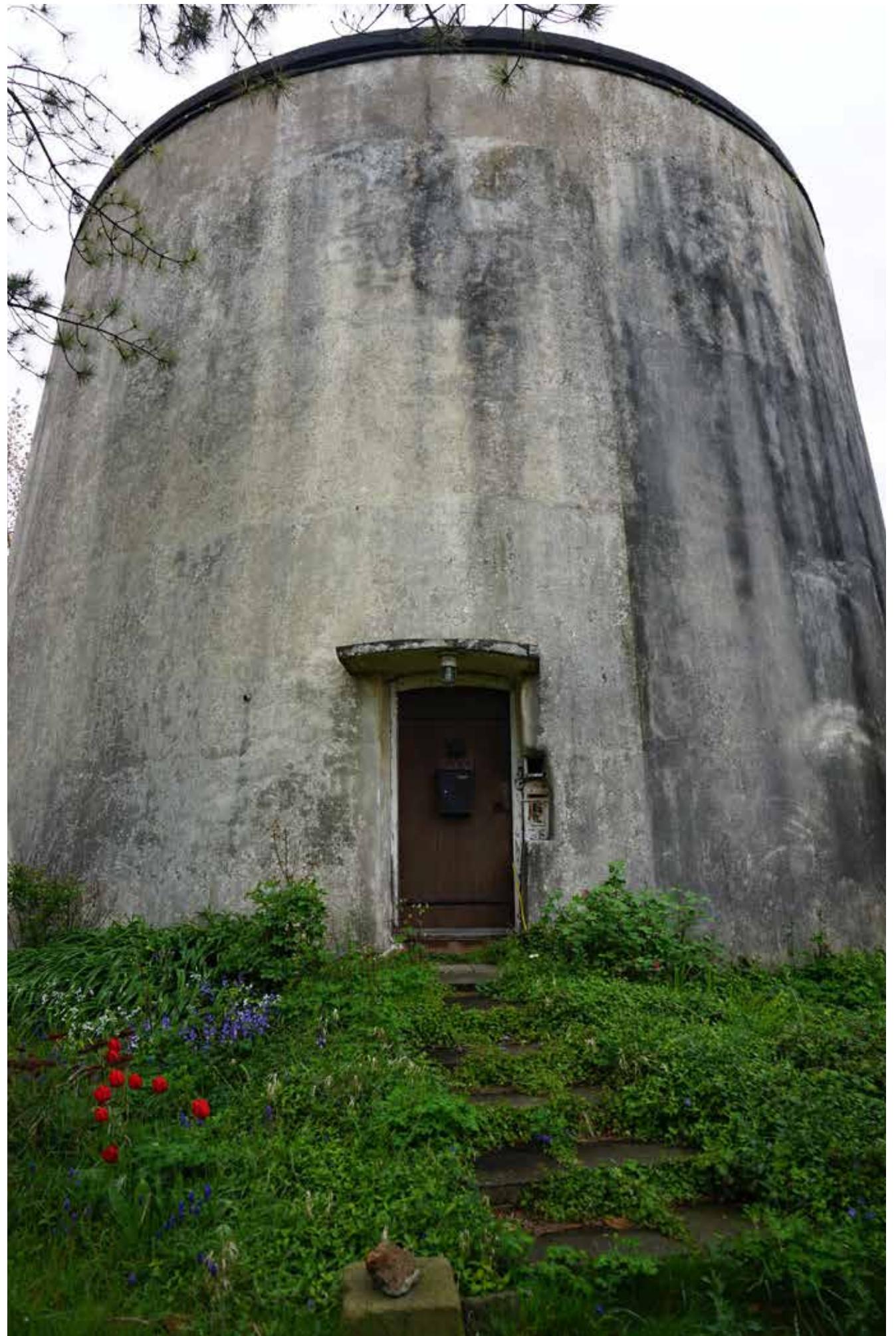
McSwan, Hackett, Jackson, S.E. Winbolt, Rosalind Winbolt, Boyd Wallis





**The Elvis Villa** A contemporary shrine to Elvis overlooking the site of the Roman Villa





**Martello tower** A secretive house  
inhabits the shell of an old martello  
tower on the cliffs



**More Folkestone villas**





Office at the bowling green



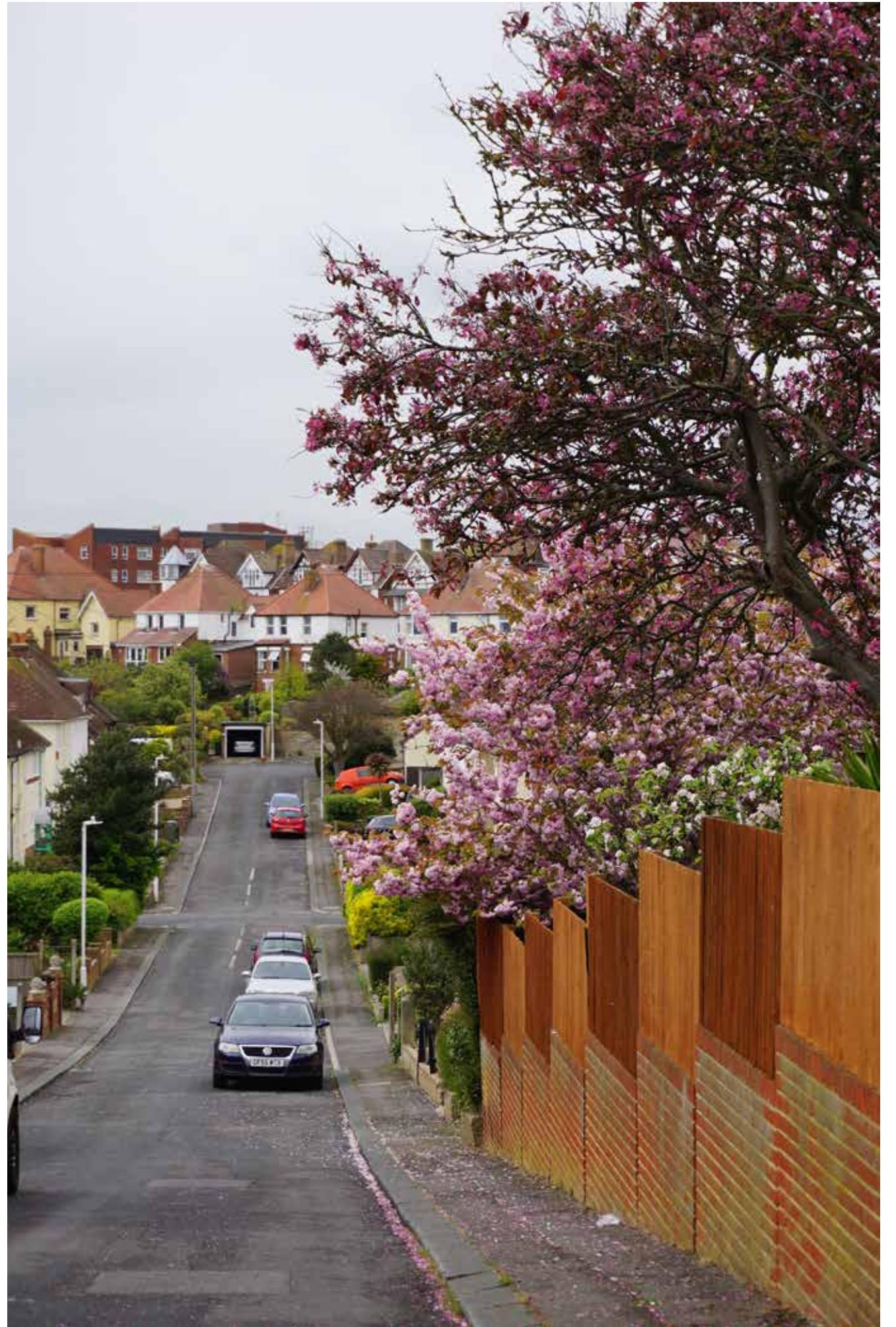
**Martello tower** A defensive marker at the edge of England, vigilant against enemies beyond



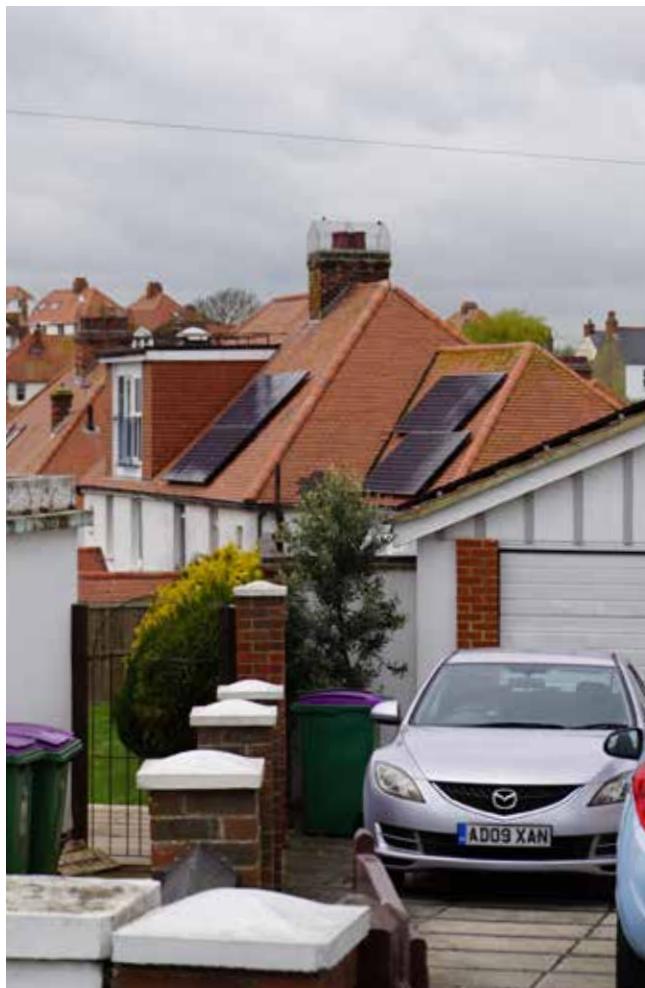
A collage of adaptations within the frame of modernist asymmetry



**Suburban rooftops** An informal matrix of homes and gardens cascades down the valley sides



**Magnolia** The shared display of dozens of modest gardens creates the setting



**Villa life** A world of home improvement projects creating a continual process of adaptation and change



Folkestone's prized horizon



**The Pavilion** A bold effort to create a new restaurant with fine views. How to attract the people to make it viable?



**Harbour Arm**



The East Leas





House and garden



**Time and change in suburbia** The accretion of extensions sometimes overwhelming the original houses buried within



House and parking compound



The Sidney Cooper Weston Monument



**Domestic adaptation** The needs of new owners and the effects of time, wear and decay dictate that every house is continuously adapted and repaired

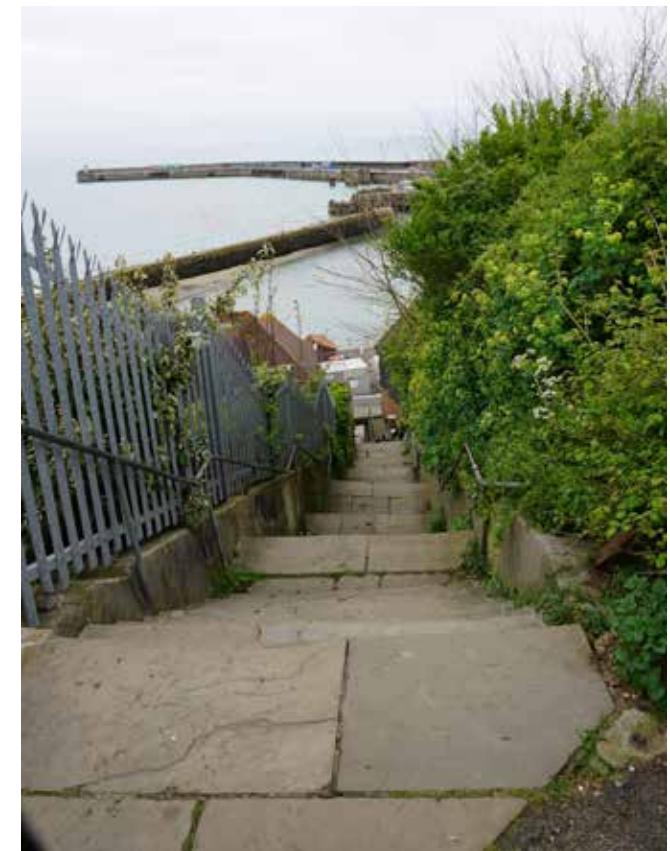
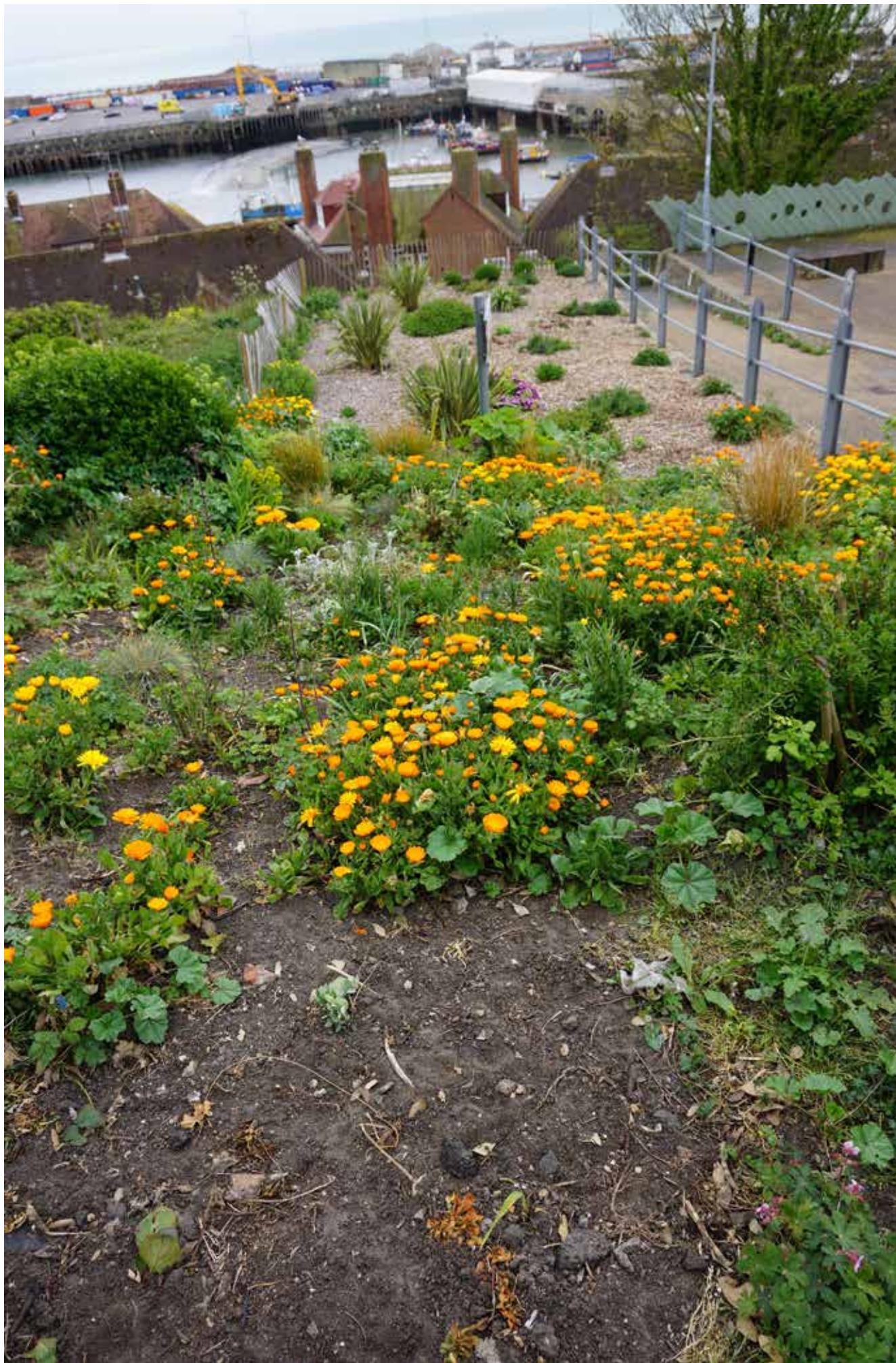
The need for more space from which to enjoy the view or to accommodate the car, perhaps double glazing in more efficient frames or enclosed weather porches, and repair and redecoration in general lie behind modifications to original designs



**St Andrews The Durlocks** The former tuberculosis hospital has been converted to apartments

A landmark on the Folkestone horizon, the design of this very large building masterfully subdivides the overall mass into legible smaller scaled parts so that it reads simultaneously as monumental and domestic





**Community gardening** The local community has begun the task of transforming the neglected municipal spaces along East Leas to create areas of public space and ecological and ornamental gardens



**Community colour** transforming a dull barrier

**The Durlocks** Low-cost model housing commissioned by Sir Philip Sassoon. Built in 1921 and based on 'garden city' design principles





**Walkers taking stock**



The Durlocks Pocket garden



Dyke Road Rock garden



Terraced housing



**The Harbour Rail line** The now derelict and unused track alignment divides the town between East and West

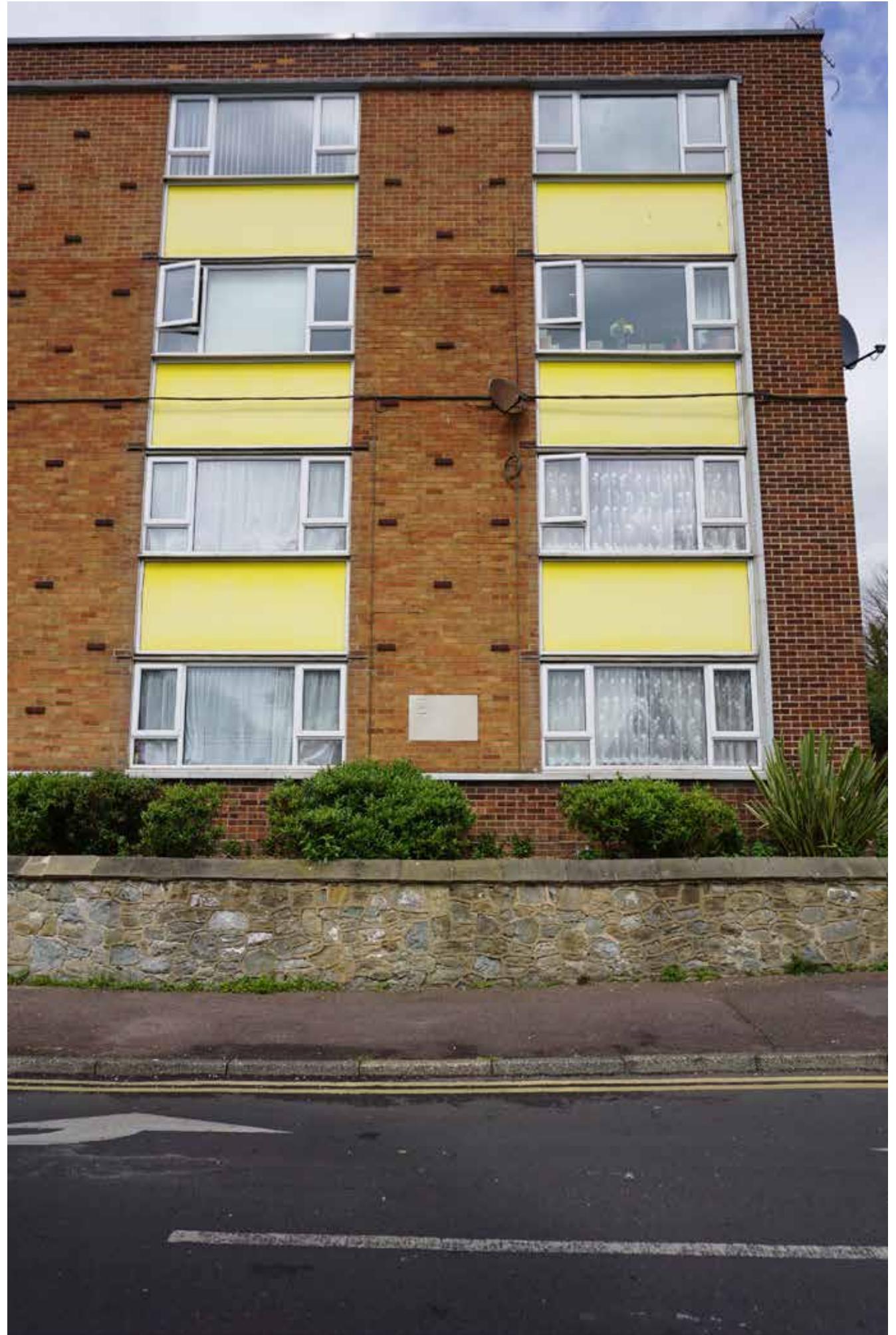


**Tramway** A run-down district alongside the derelict rail line. A potential focus for regeneration?

**Street as car park** A fine side street of buildings showing the effects of long use and wear







**Boulogne Building** A sunny facade expressing the outward-looking optimism of the 1951 Festival of Britain



The Tram Road rail viaduct



Tram Road arch



**Folkestone Trawlers** The long tradition of sea fishing is still alive in the town





Fresh local fish



The harbour



**Low tide** The rail line across the harbour is being restored and will become a new public promenade linking the town to the Harbour Arm

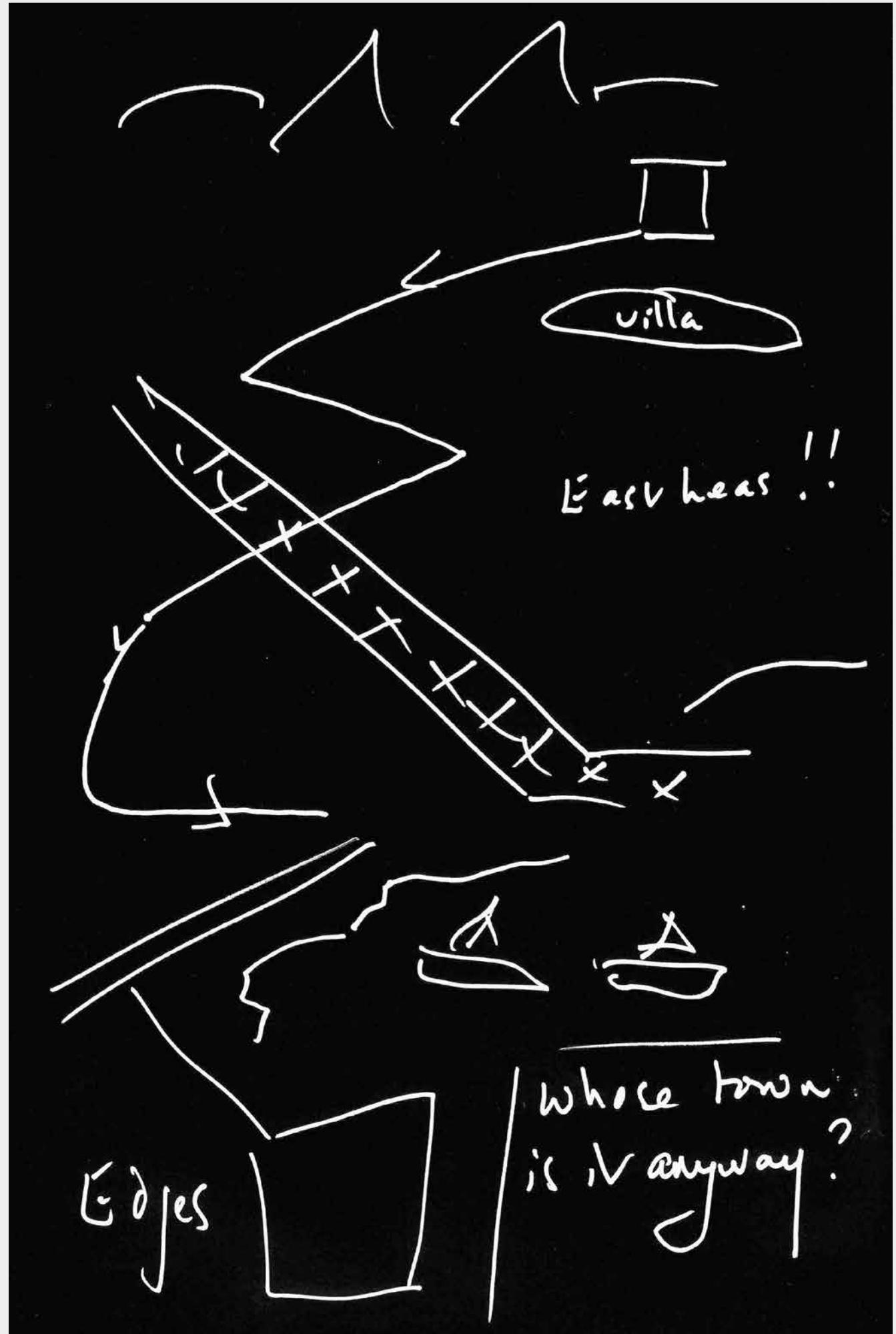


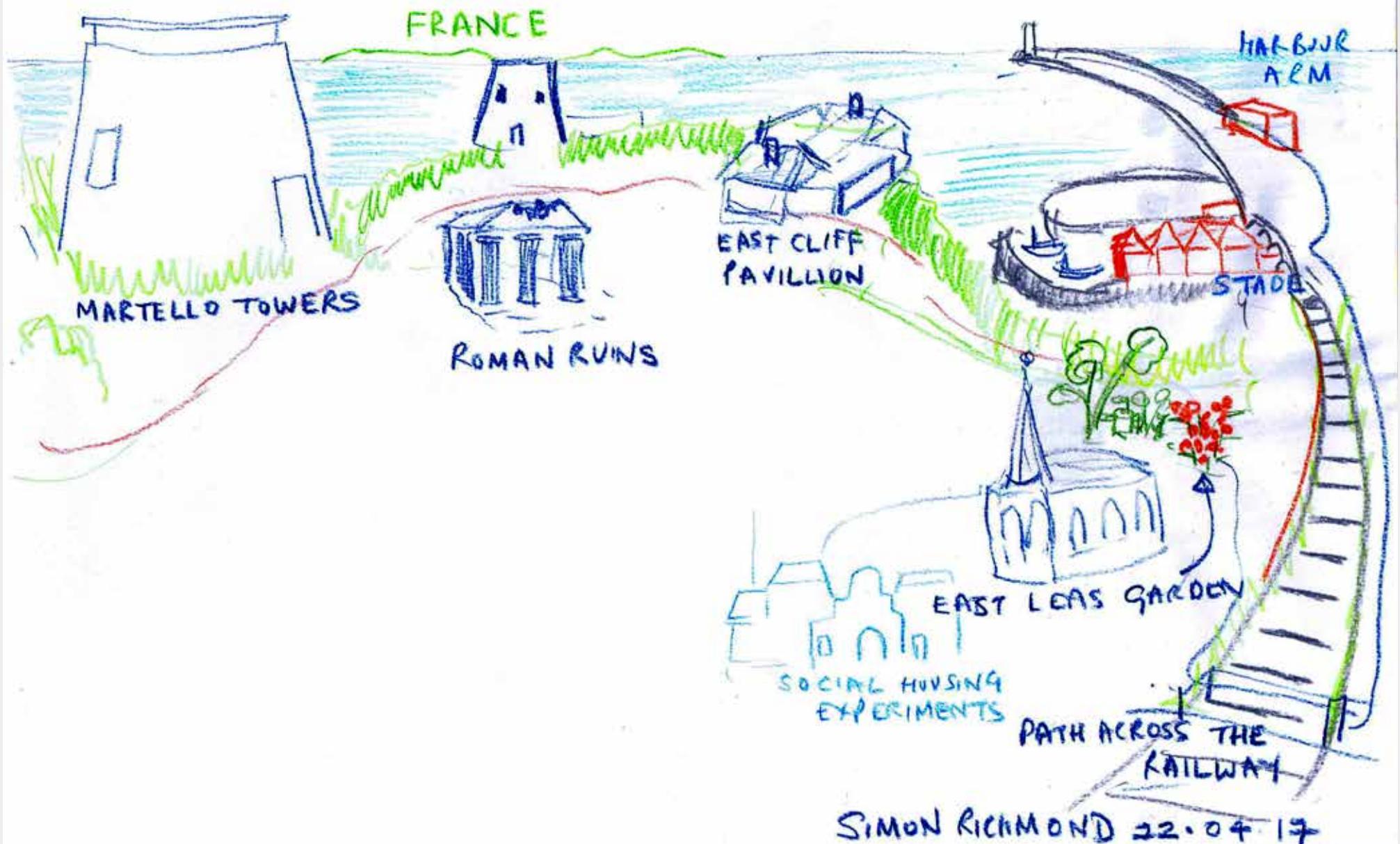
**St Michael** Folkestone is a town of levels: the flat engineered base of the harbour; the shoreline houses above the tide line; the tree-covered escarpment; the architectural skyline of Saints Peter and Michael; and the ever-present hills that frame the town

# IMPRESSIONS

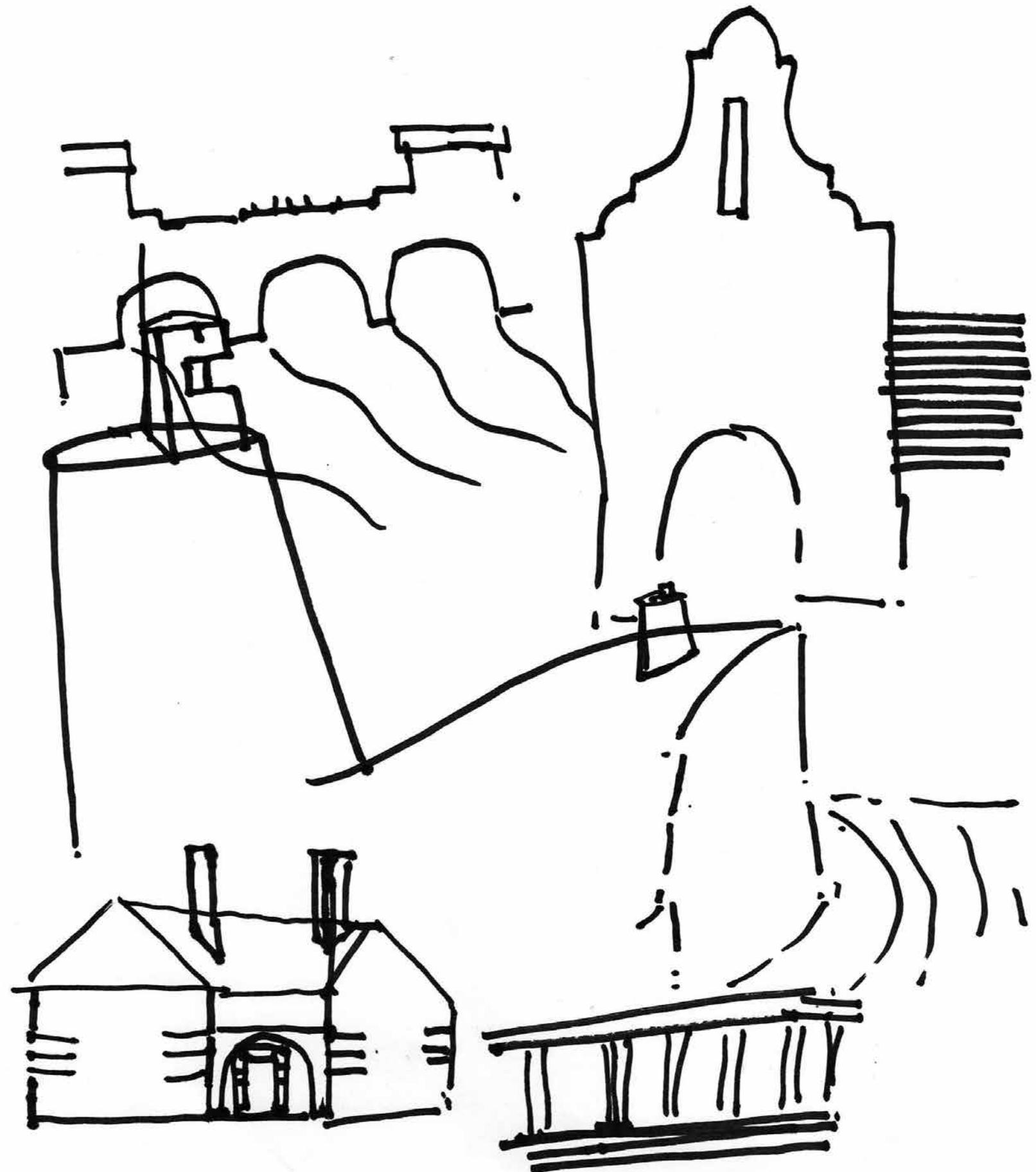
Participants were invited to examine and discuss the urban landscape they had passed through, and to record their impressions. They were invited to prepare a descriptive map or diagram recording their impressions and to make suggestions about what they would change along the route.

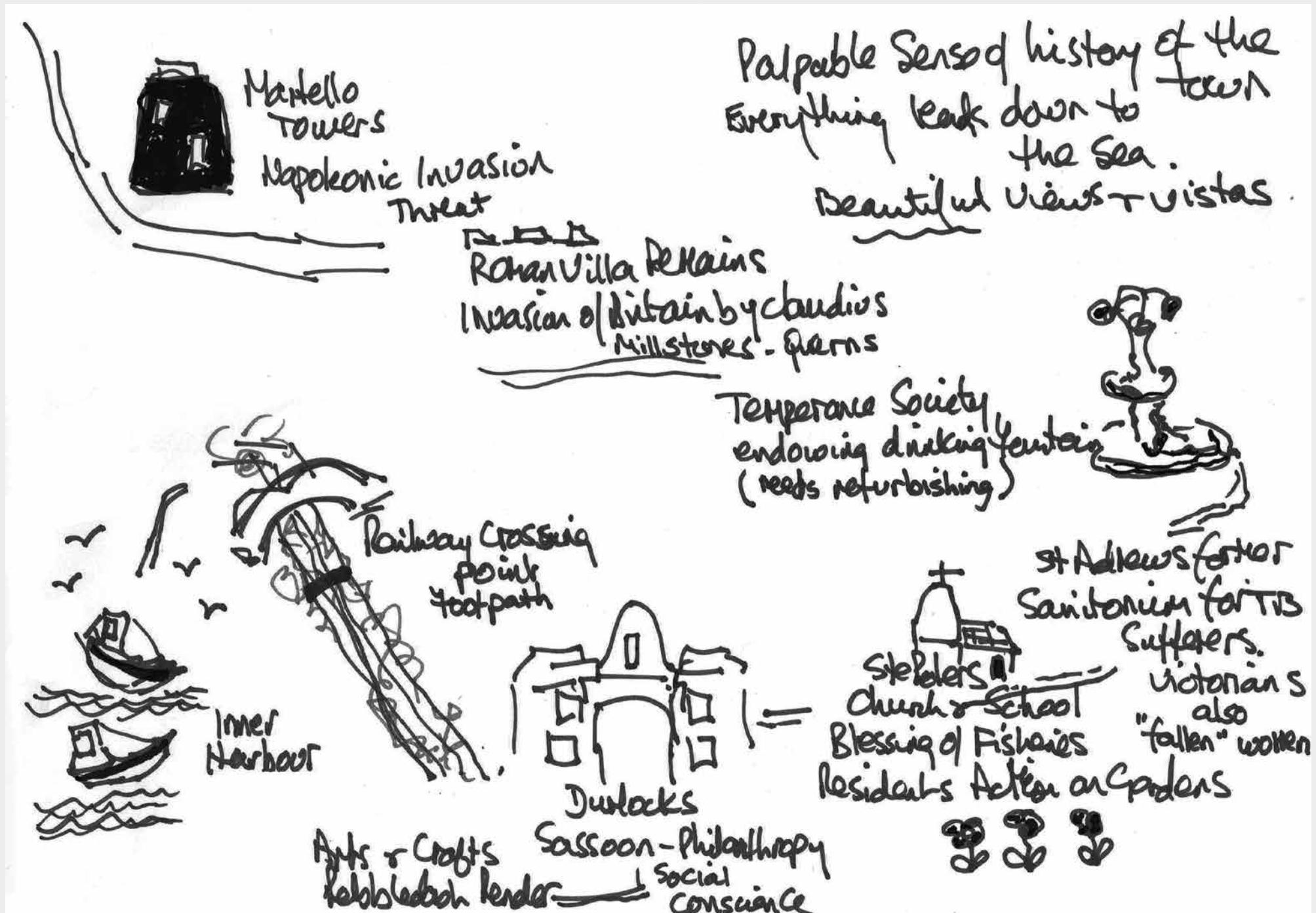
The resulting ideas were discussed over tea and sandwiches.





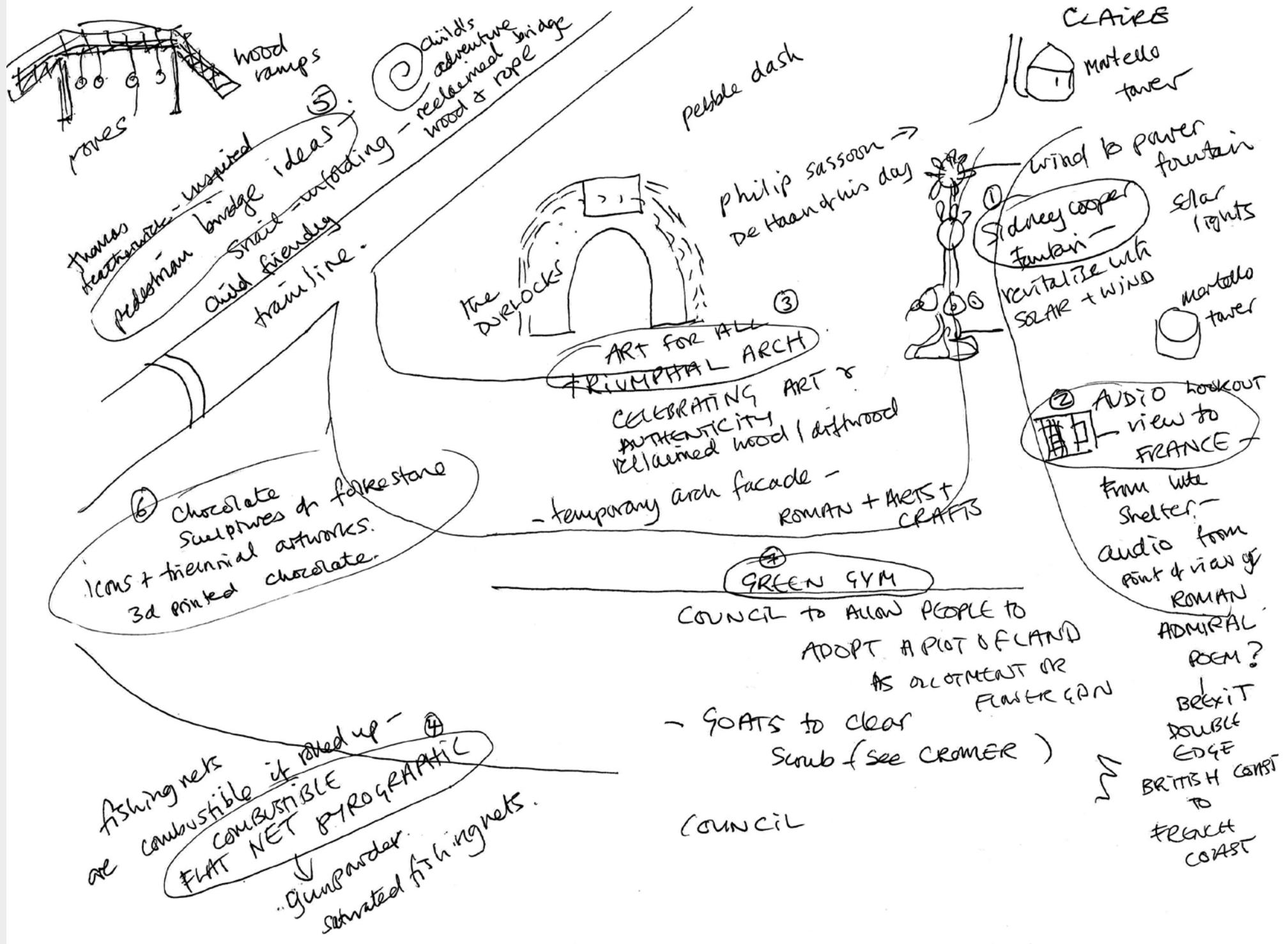
David. 22.04.17





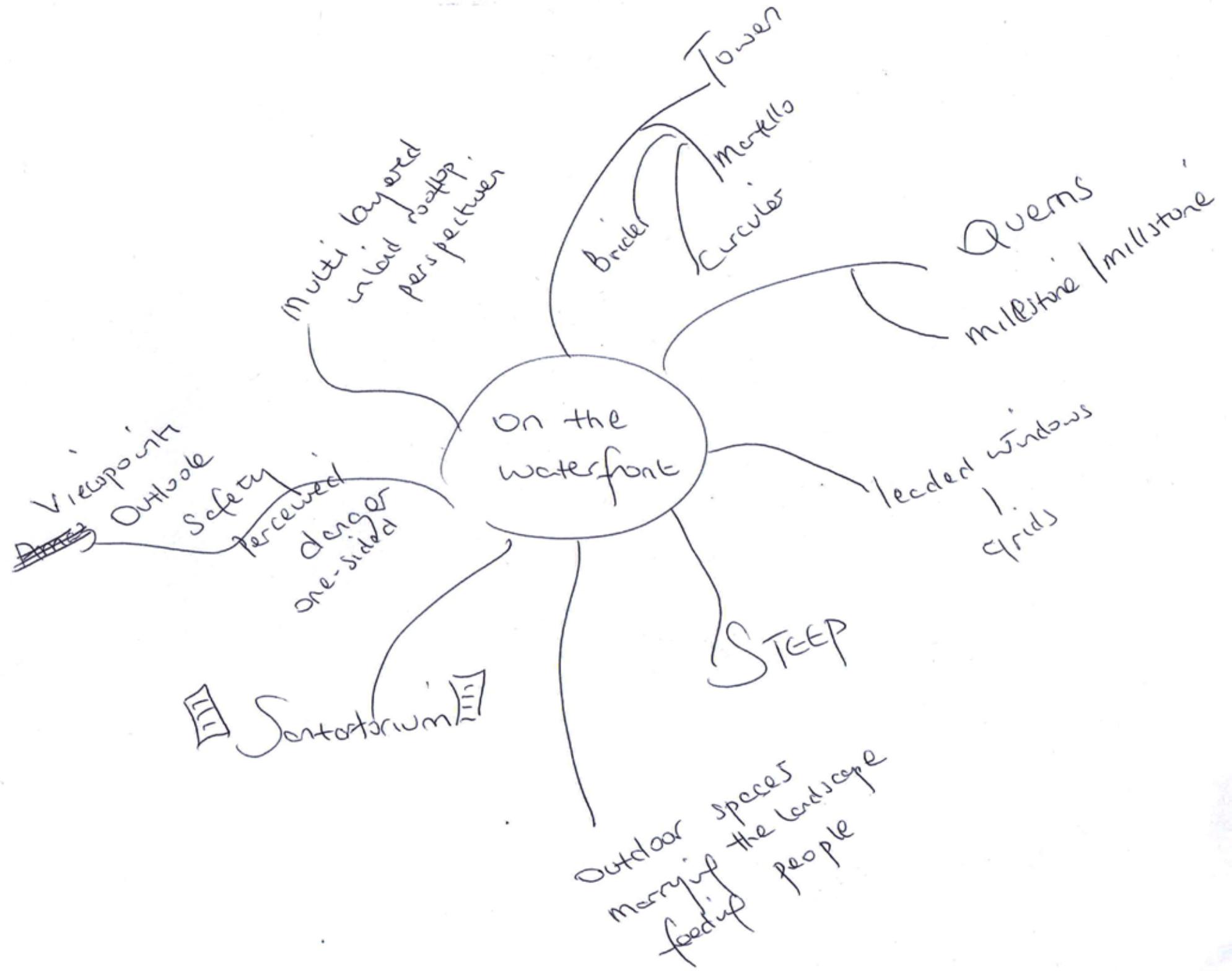
urbis / urbane / urban  
peripheries / borders / edges /  
sections / sectionality | other /  
outer ↘

reclaiming the centre? But  
holding the energy of the edges  
→ <sup>hitching</sup> palimpsest as layers /  
sand on soil / rock on rock /  
(clearing + repairing /  
celebrating 'lost + found')  
resist centring as act of  
colonization — train tracks — right side





- 1) SLOW COOPER FOUNTAIN - <sup>CCARIE</sup>  
REVITALIZE = SOLAR + WIND
- 2) AURIO IN LOOKOUT / MEDITATIVE / POEM  
DOUBLE EDGE / <sup>FRANCE</sup>
- 3) ART FOR ALL ARCH AT DVERLOCKS <sup>BRITAIN</sup>
- 4) COMBUSTIBLE NET INSTALLATION ON BEACH
- 5) PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE IDEAS. EXTENSION OF  
CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND
- 6) CHOCOLATE 3D SCULPTURES
- 7) Green gym initiative on council  
WASTELAND. GOATS. PLOTS FOR VOLUNTEERS
- 8) ORGANIC TOWERS - HYDROPONIC BOTANICALS.  
ALMA ROOF GARDENS.
- 9) Electric cars & bikes for hire from  
STATION. PARK + RIDE.
- 10) ART WALKS / HISTORY WALKS { HEADPHONES  
OPEN GARDENS } APP?  
OPEN HOUSE weeks  
CAR BOOT SALE?



skylines  
steeples  
SKU  
front/back  
wrought iron

TRIPLE  
DECOR  
Bridge  
sell off  
WHICHTY

TO  
ward  
sema

POINT UP  
POINT DOWN  
CORKSTO WAD UP  
perfumes  
WELSPORTS

# NOTES

## First sights

- The best walk yet - diversity - history - discovery
- A wide historical perspective from the walk
- Discovery of new places and new ways of seeing previously familiar place
- Dismay at the design quality of the houses facing the sea view
- Fascination with Graceland - the Elvis tribute house (possible connection with Chinese restaurant in Old Kent Road that used to have an Elvis impersonator in residence)
- Knock down all those terrible soulless houses!
- Boxes!
- These might become listed buildings in the future
- The East Leas is disconnected from the rest of the town, possibly due to the impact of the rail line.
- There is only one crossing point across the line for pedestrians
- Poorer areas of the town to the East - richer areas to the West where the smoke of the town would have had less impact

## Connections

- Differing views about the connectivity of the town
- Issues to do with the 'sectionality' of the town
- Some felt that the West is cut off from the centre by topography and by the impact of the shopping centre

## Centre

- Where is the centre? The Harbour

Square? The large shopping centre / ASDA?

- The soulless shopping centre
- Shopping centre designed to suit people arriving by car only
- Not serving the people in the town
- Car parking is little used
- But people have cars, why not just accept that?
- What then is the purpose of the town centre?
- Experiences
- Pleasure of walking the town
- Social space
- Strong design to knit together the parts of the centre to make it a pleasure to walk around - for the people of Folkestone
- Remake Bouvery Place
- The town centre is empty and dead at night
- Pubs are the only activity at night
- Reinvent the town centre
- Knock all that down as well
- Replace with better new development with shops and stores
- How to make a successful centre with so many people now shopping online?
- What is the town centre for?
- It is not for shopping any more

## Sequence of places West to East

- Sandgate
- East Leas
- Shopping Centre
- Old Town Centre
- East Leas

## East Leas

- The houses on the cliff, Martello towers etc will always be a quiet area of residential streets

- Restaurant development seems to be having difficulty completing to open for business
- There is not much activity - that is part of its attraction - quiet enjoyment of the view
- The activity of the town is always around the Old Town and Harbour
- If you need small grocery purchases residents drive or walk to the relevant facility
- Make a facility like Samphire Hoe
- Much admiration for local people taking over abandoned public space to make gardens

## Market

- There have been various market initiatives around the harbour (French market, Organic market)
- It is hard work to make it pay
- Needs public / community support
- The Thursday High Street market is popular

## Transport

- Many of the old town streets dominated by parking
- Will people abandon car ownership in the future?
- Could the rail line to the harbour link to a park-and-ride facility outside the centre
- Could rail link work at different levels for public access
- Electric bikes would be a great help with the hills
- Would people park outside and live in town - probably not
- Driverless cars will be viable soon
- Cars are just status symbols
- But everyone drives cars why not just accept it?

- There is a certain selfishness about cars - not very compatible with the old town
- Need to promote the delight of walking
- Folkestone is not so large
- Stop cars in some places for special days
- Need to better link the levels of the town
- Lifts, escalators need to be considered
- The old rail line as a public park

### The need for reinvention

- The old reasons for the development and success of Folkestone are no longer relevant
- Need for reinvention
- **FOLKESTONE IS BEAUTIFUL**
- Triennial part of the process of reinvention
- Experimenting with new ideas to see what works
- Ephemeral transformations leading to ideas for more permanent changes
- Artworks engaging with public space and community
- Bottle the Kent River!

### The idea of a permanent arts centre

- Examples include Jerwood Hastings and The Turner Gallery in Margate
- Possible centre for outreach projects with the community
- Folkestone Triennial working from alternative perspective of spending resource directly on artist-led projects rather than investing budgets in running a building
- For example the expenditure of typical arts centre might be 60% on building 30% on staff and just 10% on live arts sponsorship
- The Folkestone Triennial approach reserves most of the budget for arts projects: 85% on arts

- project and 15% on overheads
- The expenditure is focused on arts activity
- The money spent stays in the community and circulates in the local economy
- It is a similar to the model of promoting local businesses that re-circulates money within the local economy rather than exporting profits to remote owners
- Perhaps new forms of promotion are needed to ensure that the initiatives are well publicised and that the beneficial impacts are understood
- Perhaps the town needs a Big Sculpture - Angel of the North?

### Arts-led regeneration

- A people-focused approach rather than a real-estate approach
- Reinventing what already exists and is remarkable
- Dispersal of initiatives across the town
- Many people not interested in formal arts
- Some events attract a very narrow demographic
- Temporary events are very special
- The threshold of a gallery is not attractive to some
- Open Streets Cape town as a reference
- Can still engage a benefit from the less formal arts offering
- It may start with coffee but if provided by local supplier the money re-circulates. Conversation / engagement of many kinds will follow
- Mixed views about the efficacy of an App or arts map
- Past efforts have not resulted in much additional interest in the works

### Cultural coast

- Need to promote the 'cultural

coast' of Kent

- Possibly work with other towns: Margate, Whitstable, Deal Folkestone, Hastings etc
- Linked by train?
- Linked by Boat?
- Joint promotion would be a good idea
- Make as much as possible of the offers and initiatives
- Joint school engagements should be encouraged

### French connection

- View to France is remarkable
- People often confuse the view to France as being a view to Dover
- French connection is there but not strongly felt
- Some antagonistic to the association
- M&S was very popular with the French when it was in town

### Skyline

- Built skyline spires
- Skyline of hills and cliffs
- The Grand Burstin - the ship that never sailed

STONE POLKE



POLKE  
STONE