

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
Darenth Hill EDF Network Improvement  
Darenth, Kent**

**Centred at NGR 556630 171200**

**ASE Project No: 2771  
Site Code: GSG12**

**ASE Report No: 2012205  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-134699**

**By Simon Stevens BA MIFA**

**With a contribution by  
Karine Le Hégarat**



**October 2012**

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**Archaeology South-East  
Units 1 & 2  
2 Chapel Place  
Portslade  
East Sussex  
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830  
Fax: 01273 420866  
Email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)**

**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by EDF to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a c.560m long cable trench at Darenth Hill, Darenth, Kent, close to the site of a Roman Villa complex.*

*No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered, and a small assemblage of flintwork was recovered from the overburden. A topographical survey of the fields traversed by the cable trench highlighted the presence of substantial lynchets resulting from long-term agricultural use of the area.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by EDF to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a c.560m long cable trench at Darenth Hill, Darenth, Kent (centred at NGR 556630 171200; Figure 1)

### **1.2 Topography and Geology**

1.2.1 The trench crossed arable fields between the B260 Green Road and Roman Villa Road. The ground slopes markedly from north-east to south-west and is crossed by substantial lynchets which were surveyed as part of the current project.

1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey, the underlying bedrock consists of the Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formation with a band of Thanet Sand Formation running across the slope (i.e. from north-west to south-east) adjacent to Roman Villa Road. There is no recorded superficial geology over the majority of the route, although Lynch Hill and Taplow Formation gravels are noted close to Green Road. (BGS 2012).

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 Although the work falls outside the usual planning regulation framework, EDF and ASE consulted the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council regarding the impact of the proposed works. Owing to the potential that archaeological deposits might be encountered during the excavation of the cable trench, the monitoring of the works by a suitably qualified archaeologist was considered appropriate.

1.3.2 A generic Specification for the work was produced by the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council (HCGKCC 2011). This document outlined the methodologies to be used during monitoring at the site, and in subsequent reporting of the results.

### **1.4 Research Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The aims stated in the Specification (*ibid.*) were to:

*'contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks.'*

## **1.5 Scope of Report**

- 1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks for the laying of the new cable carried out at the site between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012, and of a topographic survey undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The on-site work was undertaken by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist) and by Rob Cole (Archaeological Surveyor). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation Manager).

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The following archaeological sites and findspots held on Kent County Council's (KCC) Historic Environment Record (HER) are located within a 1km radius of the site as shown in Figure 1.

Number in Figure 1	KCC No.	HER	OS Co-ordinates	Description
1	TQ 57 SE 30		5637 7061	Darenth Court Roman Villa. Scheduled Monument. Substantial courtyard villa.
2	TQ 57 SE 47		5630 7140	Surface find of polished axehead. Study suggested origin in SW England or Wales
3	TQ 57 SE 63		5600 7100	Findspot of the upper half of an undated rotary quernstone
4	TQ 57 SE 64		5600 7100	Flint axehead found in bed of river at Darenth. No other details.
5	TQ 57 SE 65		5611 7079	Human remains with associated Roman pottery found during river dredging in 1957.
6	TQ 57 SE 66		5600 7100	Roman pottery, fragments of tile and animal bones found in gravel pit in the 1950s.
7	TQ 57 SE 70		5607 7080	Fragments of Roman tessellated pavement and Middle Bronze axe found in gravel pit
8	TQ 57 SE 72		5629 7051	Roman bath-house revealed in gravel workings. Area backfilled and deposits left <i>in situ</i> .
9	TQ 57 SE 74		5641 7057	Parchmark appears to show rectangular building with possible 'wings'. Probably Roman in date.
10	TQ 57 SE 77		5600 7100	Site of Roman villa found in 1895 at East Hill. Occupied in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> centuries.
11	TQ 57 SE 91		5630 7060	Anglo-Saxon occupation recorded at Darenth Court Roman Villa. Buildings and C6th pottery.
12	TQ 57 SE 92		5600 7100	Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation site. Exact position unreported.
13	TQ 57 SE 93		5632 7066	Neolithic axe found at site of Darenth Court Roman villa
14	TQ 57 SE 94		5600 7100	Findspot of Mesolithic flint axehead, Exact position unreported
15	TQ 57 SE 95		5610 7130	Possible site of Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) of Darenth. No physical evidence.
16	TQ 57 SE 57		5720 7140	Large denehole observed at No. 18 Langlands Drive, Darenth in 1979.
17	TQ 57 SE 99		5600 7100	Findspot of Roman hoe and pruning hook. Exact location unreported.
18	TQ 57 SE 100		5600 7100	Romano-British 'ritual pit' No further details or exact location given.
19	TQ 57 SE 101		5598 7126	Sherds of medieval pottery found near Darenth church.

Number in Figure 1	KCC No.	HER	OS Co-ordinates	Description
20	TQ 57 SE 103		5600 7100	Findspot of Anglo-Saxon glass bowl. Exact position unreported.
21	TQ 57 SE 108, 109, 110, 111, 112 & 115		5632 7043	Ring ditches noted on aerial photograph. Possibly Bronze in date.
22	TQ 57 SE 136		5620 7140	Post-medieval icehouse at Darenth Grange. Grade II listed.
23	TQ 57 SE 141		5629 7064	Watercress beds shown on OS map of 1897. Destroyed by gravel extraction in 1960s.
24	TQ 57 SE 152		5605 7201	Various possible landscape features seen on aerial photographs.
25	TQ 57 SE 248		57040 71646	Large denehole observed at No. 179 Coombefield Drive, Darenth in 2001.
26	TQ 57 SE 252		57498 71026	Eynsford - Horton Kirby water main. Iron Age, Romano-British & medieval features recorded.
27	TQ 57 SE 274		5590 7036	Establishment founded by Knights Hospitallers c.1200. Moated site.
28	TQ 57 SE 276		56085 71296	Wooden graveboard in churchyard of St. Margaret's. Dated 1859.
29	TQ 57 SE 278		56016 70517	Cropmark showing ditched trackway noted on aerial photographs taken in 2003 and 2007.
30	TQ 57 SE 308		5673 7148	Preserved George VI pillar box. Dates from between 1938 and 1950.
31	TQ 57 SE 1005		5607 7126	Church of St. Margaret, Darenth. Grade I listed building. Late Anglo-Saxon in origin.
32	TQ 57 SE 1014		5617 7159	Ice house in grounds of Darenth Grange. Grade II listed building.
33	TQ 57 SE 1015		5586 7143	Mill House. Grade II listed building dating from early C19th.
34	TQ 57 SE 1038		5584 7147	Ivy Cottage. Grade II listed building, dating from the C18th.
35	TQ 57 SE 1043		56142 71210	Darenth Court House. Grade II listed building dating from C19th.

Table 1: Summary of KCC HER records

2.2 In addition there are numerous entries in the KCC HER relating to finds by metal detectorists in the vicinity of the site, and in the fields traversed by the cable trench. Finds include tile, glass and pottery, as well as a large number of Late Iron Age and Roman coins, Anglo-Saxon brooches and medieval coins, buckles and other metalwork.



**3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The mechanical and manual excavations for the new cable trench were monitored. All available sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features, and all available spoil was scanned for the occurrence of archaeological artefacts, both visually and with a metal detector.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection.
- 3.3 A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive which is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade. Unfortunately at the present time none of the local museums are willing to accept the archive for deposition. The archive consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	4
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	28 digital images 1 short film of machine
Bulk finds	1 box

Table 2: Quantification of Site Archive

- 3.4 At the request of Wendy Rogers, Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council, a topographical survey of the fields traversed by the new cable trench was undertaken in order to produce a record of the lynchets which cross the area. The survey comprised a series of transects crossing the site, running NW-SE along the hillside and targeted to emphasise the prominent landscape features. It was conducted using a Topcon GR3 Network RTK GPS taking measurements at 3 second intervals, generating a total of 3744 individual spot heights. The raw survey data was processed using LISCAD to produce a 3-dimensional contour map of the site (Figure 3).

## **4.0 RESULTS (Figures.2 and 3)**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 Archaeological monitoring of groundworks for the installation of the new cable was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Mechanical and manual excavation of pits at both ends of the scheme were observed. Unfortunately much of the excavation of the actual cable trench was carried out using a Mastenbroek 20/15 trenching machine, which did not allow close examination of the trench sections .

<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max. Deposit Thickness</b>
001	Deposit	Ploughsoil	410mm
002	Deposit	'Natural'	-
003	Deposit	Ploughsoil	590mm
004	Deposit	'Natural'	-
005	Deposit	Ploughsoil	590mm
006	Deposit	'Natural'	-

Table 3: Recorded Contexts

### **4.2 The Stratigraphic Sequence**

4.2.1 Pits to allow connection of the new cable to the existing supply were mechanically excavated at the site. The pit at the western end measured 3m by 2m by 1.2m deep. The stratigraphic sequence consisted of a mid-greyish brown silty clay ploughsoil, context [001], which directly overlay the brownish orange silty clay, context [002]. A small assemblage of flintwork was recovered from the overburden.

4.2.2 A pit of similar dimensions was excavated at the eastern end. Again the stratigraphic sequence was straightforward, consisting of a similar ploughsoil, context [003], which directly overly the 'natural', a brownish orange silty clay containing a large quantity of flint gravel.

4.2.3 The main excavation for the 400mm wide cable trench was undertaken by a trenching machine and therefore could not be closely monitored or recorded. The stratigraphic sequence appeared straightforward; a similar ploughsoil to that seen elsewhere at the site, context [005], which directly overlay an orangey brown 'natural' which varied in texture from silty clay at the western end of the scheme, with sand along much of the western part of the trench, with more gravel-rich deposits further to the east. This reflects the known changes in the character of the underlying geology across the site (see Paragraph 1.2.2).

### **4.3 The Topographical Survey**

4.3.1 The survey of the field crossed by the cable trench highlighted the presence of substantial lynchets running along the slope of the field. No associated deposits were encountered during the watching brief.

## 5.0 THE FINDS

### 5.1 Introduction

Context	Flint	Wt (g)	FCF	Wt (g)
1	2	60	1	34

Table 4: Quantification of Finds

### 5.2 Flintwork by Karine Le Hégarat

- 5.2.1 A single struck flint weighing 11g and a single fragment (34g) of burnt unworked flint were collected from ploughsoil context [001] during the course of the archaeological work at Darenth Hill.
- 5.2.2 The piece of struck flint consists of thin flake, the distal end of which is absent. The artefact displays extensive edge damage implying significant degree of post-depositional disturbance. It was manufactured from light grey flint.
- 5.2.3 The piece of flint débitage is not closely datable and only a broad Mesolithic to Bronze Age date can be suggested.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 No significant archaeological features deposits or finds were encountered during the monitoring. The discovery of prehistoric flintwork is not in itself indicative of settlement and this very limited assemblage appears to form part of a background scatter of such material, similar to that previously recorded in the general area (see Section 2.0).
- 6.2 Clearly the use of the trenching machine was a handicap to the identification of archaeological features and finds in the main cable trench, but the monitoring of the more conventionally excavated test pits at either end of the scheme did not yield significant deposits, apart from perhaps confirming the changing nature of the geological deposits across the site.
- 6.3 The lynchets surveyed at the site are clearly indicative of long-standing agricultural activity at the site, but little else can be added in terms of dating or other details relating to their formation.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

BGS 2012. British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer, accessed 02.10.2012 [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html)

HCGKCC 2011. *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpub. document

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank EDF for commissioning the work. Thanks are also due to the staff of The Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council for their input at various stages of the project. The co-operation and hospitality of the on-site contractors is also gratefully acknowledged.

### HER Summary Form

Site Code	GSG12					
Identification Name and Address	Darenth Hill, Darenth					
County, District &/or Borough	Dartford Borough, Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	556630 171200					
Geology	Chalk, Sand and Gravel					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2771					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 10.09.2012 – 12.09.2012	Topographical Survey 19.09.2012		
Sponsor/Client	EDF					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens/Rob Cole					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by EDF to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a c.560m long cable trench at Darenth Hill, Darenth, Kent, close to the site of a Roman Villa complex.</i></p> <p><i>No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered, and a small assemblage of flintwork was recovered from the overburden. A topographical survey of the fields traversed by the cable trench highlighted the presence of substantial lynchets resulting from long-term agricultural use of the area.</i></p>						

## OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: archaeol6-134699

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#### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Darenth Hill, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a new cable trench at Darenth Hill, Darenth, Kent, close to the site of a Roman Villa complex. No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered, and a small assemblage of flintwork was recovered from the overburden. A topographical survey of the fields traversed by the cable trench highlighted the presence of substantial lynchets resulting from long-term agricultural use of the area.
Project dates	Start: 10-09-2012 End: 16-09-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	2771 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	GSG12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	LYNCHET Uncertain
Significant Finds	STRUCK FLINT Late Prehistoric
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

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#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT DARTFORD DARENTH Darenth Hill
Postcode	DA2 7QS
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 56630 71200 51 0 51 25 03 N 000 15 10 E Point

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#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Kent County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	EDF Energy
<b>Project archives</b>	
Physical Archive recipient	n/a
Physical Contents	"Worked stone/lithics"
Physical Archive notes	No local museum will take the archive.
Digital Archive recipient	n/a
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Digital Archive notes	No local museum will take the archive.
Paper Archive recipient	n/a
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Report", "Survey", "Unpublished Text"
Paper Archive notes	No local museum will take the archive.
<b>Project bibliography 1</b>	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report Darenth Hill, Dartford, Kent



Author(s)/Editor(s) Stevens, S.

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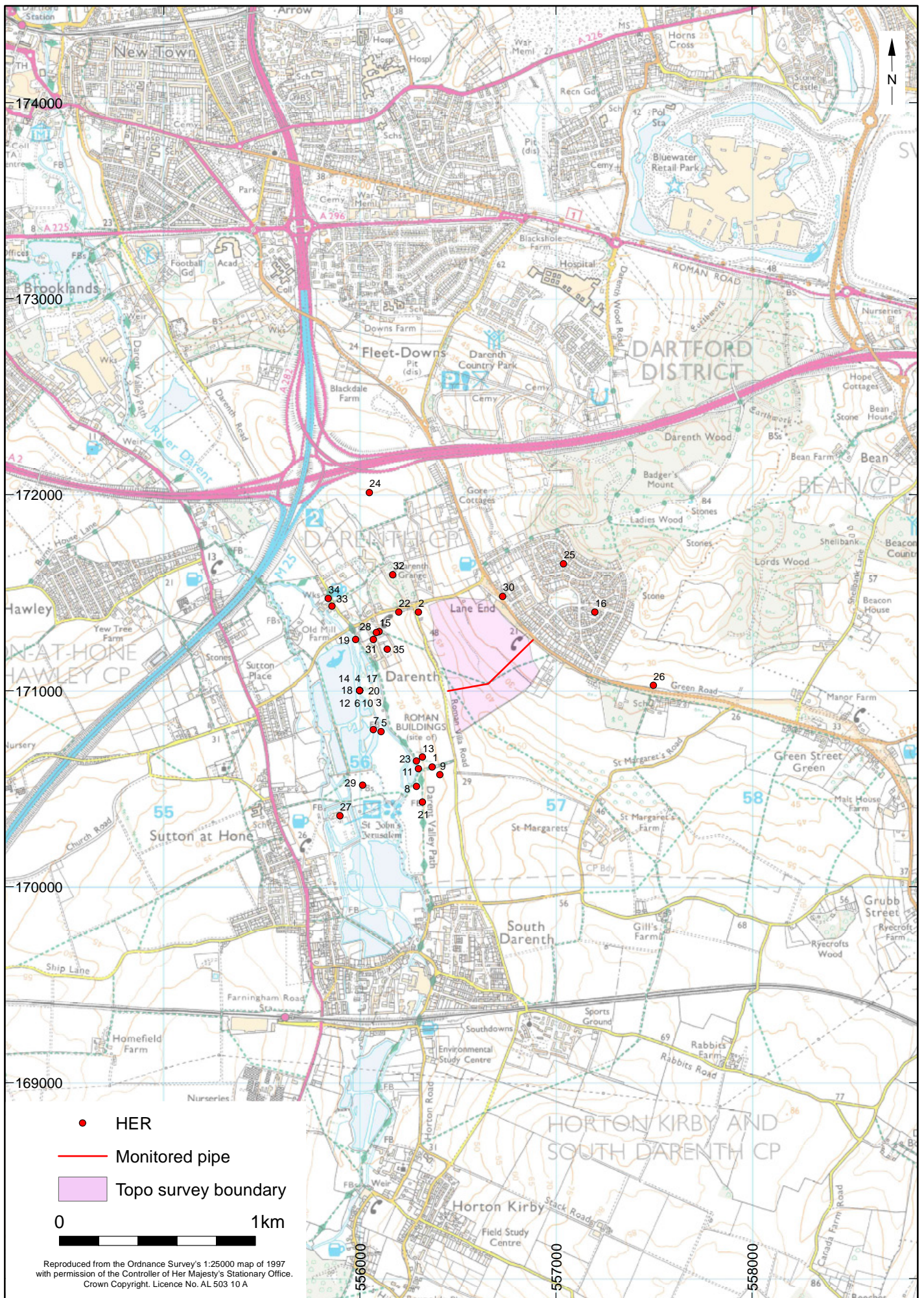
Description ASE client Report. A4-sized with cover logos.

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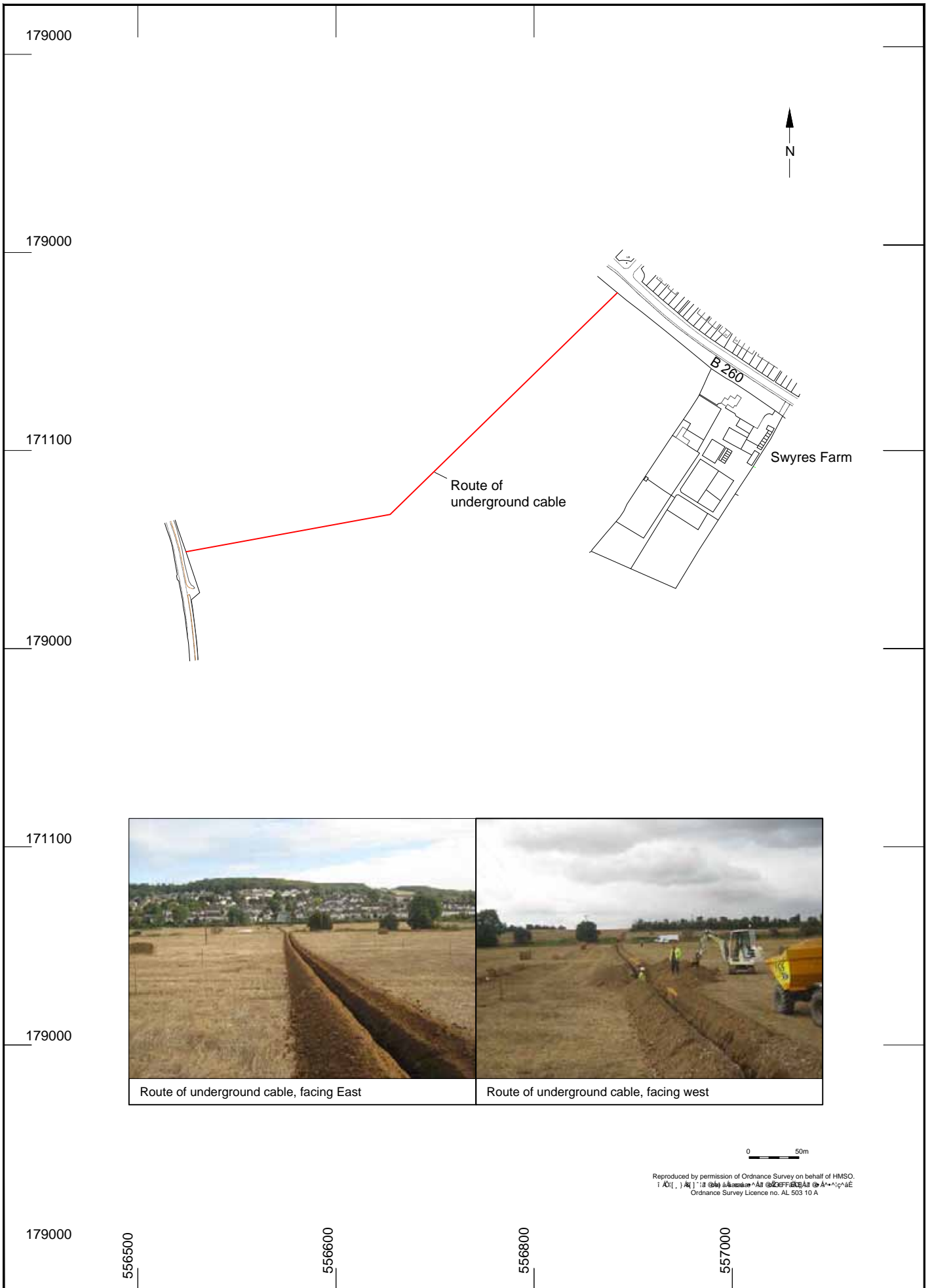
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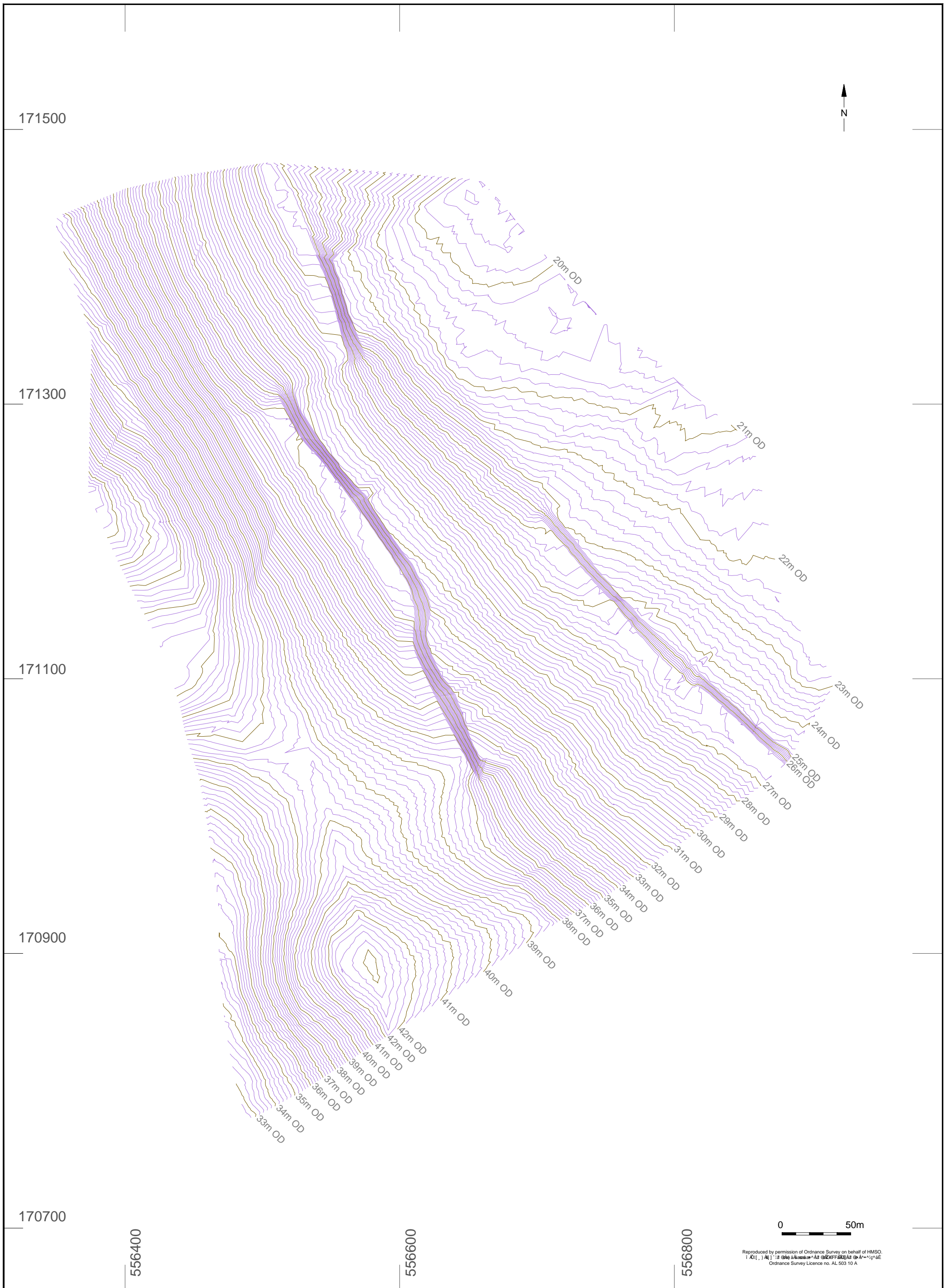


© Archaeology South-East		Darenth Hill	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 2771	October 2012	Site location and HER data	
Report Ref: 2012205	Drawn by: AR		





<b>Archaeology South-East</b>		Darenth Hill		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 2771	October 2012	Plan of cable trench and photographs		
Report Ref: 2012205	Drawn by: AR			



i Archaeology South-East		Darenth Hill	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 2771	October 2012	Topographical Survey	
Report Ref: 2012205	Drawn by: AR		

Head Office  
Units 1 & 2  
2 Chapel Place  
Portslade  
East Sussex BN41 1DR  
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866  
email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk)



London Office  
Centre for Applied Archaeology  
Institute of Archaeology  
University College London  
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY  
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778  
Fax:+44(0)20 7383 2572  
Web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/caa](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/caa)

The contracts division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London 

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