

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on
Land at The White Cliffs, Dover**

**NGR:633499 142200
(TR335 422)**

**Project No: 4518
Site Code: WCD 10**

**ASE Report No. 2010171
OASIS id: archaeol6-86641**



**Chris Russel, BA (Hons)
With Illustrations by Justin Russell**

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DRAFT

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Abstract

Archaeology South East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with the improvement of the path linking the coach park to the visitor centre at the White Cliffs Experience, Dover, Kent (NGR 633499 142200).

A brick wall and a parallel feature containing slate edging were revealed during the works, probably relating to the site's former use as a prison. A gap in the slate edging possibly indicates the position of an entrance into the building and a return in this feature possibly indicates the position of the corner of the building.

A shallow linear feature was uncovered, which may be a garden feature also relating to the period when a penal institution stood on the site.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology, was commissioned by The National Trust to carry out an archaeological watching brief on works associated with a new footpath at the White Cliffs property, Dover, Kent (NGR 633499 142200-Fig 1), hereafter referred to as 'the site' for the purposes of this report.
- 1.1.2 The project consists of improvements to the existing footpath linking the coach park to the visitor centre. These improvements include widening of the footpath, the production of a more consistent gradient and the installation of an all weather surface across the extent of the footpath.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The British Geological Survey map Sheet 290 (Deal) Solid and Drift Edition (1:50,000 scale) indicates that the site lies on Upper Chalk.
- 1.2.2 The site is located to the West of the White Cliffs visitor centre and was comprised of a narrow strip running downhill from the existing coach park. The central portion of the path traverses a flat area terraced into the slope, formerly the site of a building.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 The watching brief at the White cliffs was undertaken on the advice of Caroline Thackary and Lynne Kemp of The National Trust. Prior to the watching brief monitoring, a Desk-based Assessment (ASE 2010) was carried out.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The key objectives of the archaeological watching brief 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 ground works.

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Chris Russel (Archaeological Field Officer) and Rob Cole between 15th September and 20th September 2010. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Fieldwork) and Dan Swift (Post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 A full overview of the archaeological background of the site may be found in Bannister 1999. What follows is a summary with particular emphasis on the periods relating to the area of works.
- 2.1.2 Little is known of the human activity at the site prior to the 19th century although later prehistoric pottery and a possible boundary earthwork of a similar date have been noted nearby at Langdon Hole.
- 2.1.3 From 1884 the site was occupied by Dover Convict Prison, which comprised a series of buildings placed upon terraces cut into the hillside bounded by a precinct wall. Accommodation for the governor and chief warden were situated to the west of the main prison complex outside the precinct wall. The original civilian prison closed in 1897 where-upon the site was handed over to the War Office and used for storage and administration until reopening as a military prison in 1901 (known as Broadleas Military Prison).
- 2.1.4 The second phase of penal use was short lived and the military prison closed in 1909. The site remained in the possession of the War Office but appears to have been moth-balled until the First World War when it was used as a transit camp for troops embarking for France (Langdon Barracks).
- 2.1.5 The interwar period saw a period of demolition at the site with many buildings apparently pulled down by 1925. During World War Two the remainder of the buildings on site were used as storage for a nearby anti aircraft battery and later as a prisoner of war camp for Axis troops captured in Italy. The P.O.W camp closed in 1948 and the site was acquired by Dover District Council two years later. The site was gifted to the National Trust as an open space in 1988.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Ground Works (Fig. 2)

- 3.1.1 The works on site consisted of a topsoil strip along the length of the new path. To the west of the path this strip penetrated to the chalk with a view to creating terraces into the natural geology designed to stabilise this area. In the east the existing path was to remain in situ with a limited strip excavated to an approximate depth of 200mm along its northern edge. Where the existing path was considered too unstable for retention it was stripped to natural chalk, although an area approximately mid way along the path was built up to reach the required formation level.
- 3.1.2 The aim of the watching brief was to monitor these works and to record any archaeology uncovered. The works associated with the new path held the potential to reveal structural features associated with the site's use as a prison.

3.2 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.2.1 Machining was undertaken by a 360-degree mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed ditching bucket. The area was stripped of topsoil and subsoil deposits under archaeological supervision to ensure that any exposed archaeological remains were identified. Excavation began in the east of the site and was carried out in a single direction to enable revealed surfaces to be inspected prior to disturbance from being tracked over.
- 3.2.2 During the monitored excavations all revealed surfaces were examined for the presence of archaeological features and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for the presence of any stray, unstratified artefacts. The uncovered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IFA 2000 and 2001, EH 1991) using pro-forma context record sheets. Level data on site was obtained by G.P.S.
- 3.2.3 A digital photographic record of the areas exposed during the ground works was kept and will form part of the site archive.

3.3 The Archive

- 3.3.1 The site archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices in Portslade, East Sussex pending submission to a suitable local museum. The contents of the site archive are summarised in Table 1.
- 3.3.2 Table 1: Quantification of the Site Archive

Number of Contexts	15
Number of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	None
Photographs	26 digital images

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Table 2: List of Recorded Contexts

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Thickness	Height m AOD
001	Layer	Topsoil	150mm	86.866
002	Layer	Made Ground	170mm	86.716
003	Deposit	Natural	-	86.546
004	Cut	Foundation Cut for Wall	-	-
005	Masonry	East-West Wall	-	86.428
006	Fill	Fill of Foundation Trench	-	-
007	Layer	Garden Soil	-	-
008	Cut	Cut of Eastern Slate Boundary Marker	-	-
009	Masonry	Eastern Slate Boundary Marker	-	86.483
010	Fill	Fill of Eastern Slate Boundary Marker	-	-
011	Cut	Cut of Western Slate Boundary Marker	-	-
012	Masonry	Western Slate Boundary Marker	-	86.356
013	Fill	Fill of Western Slate Boundary Marker	-	-
014	Cut	Cut of Shallow Linear Terminus	60mm	85.491
015	Fill	Fill of Shallow Linear Terminus	60mm	-

4.2 Summary of Contexts (Fig. 3)

4.2.1 The entire stripped area revealed a loose grey-brown sandy silt topsoil and turf along its entire length [001]. Below this in the east was mixed made ground deposit [002] consisting of a mixture of re-deposited chalk and loose patches of building rubble including brick and tile. Where the natural geology was revealed it consisted of solid grey-white chalk [003]. This was recorded at 85.505m AOD sloping southwards to 85.367m AOD in the west of the pathway strip and was recorded at 86.546m AOD sloping gently to 86.509m AOD where it was revealed in the east.

4.2.2 Several archaeological features were uncovered during the works and these were as follows. The foundations of an east-west wall were revealed [005] (see Fig 3). This was made up of yellow- brown frogged bricks 110mm wide x 230mm long x 700mm deep, laid in a stretcher bond. The bricks were bonded by yellow grey sandy mortar. The total width of the wall was not revealed by the path strip but it was seen to a width of 430mm and to a depth of 50mm. This wall was seen to a length of 7.6 metres and was recorded at a height of 86.353m AOD at its western extent and 86.428 AOD where it was seen to dip below the mixed ground deposit [002]. The cut and fill of the foundation trench for this wall ([004] and [006] respectively) were indistinguishable from the adjacent deposit [007] which is described below. As these features were only revealed to formation level it was not possible to ascertain their total depth. It is probable that this wall relates to building 9 shown in figure 4,

which is described as being occupied by offices and stores.

- 4.2.3 Running parallel and to the south of wall [005] was a linear slate boundary demarcation or garden edging [009]. This consisted of sections of slate of varying lengths, most of which were broken along the top edge, but in section showed ornamental 'scalloping' (as shown in Fig 3). This feature was observed again further east where it made a return to the north (see Fig 3). The slate was sunk into a cut [008], which was seen in plan along the southern edge of the feature. Feature [008] was cut into the natural chalk and back-filled by dark grey-brown clay silt with common chalk flecks and recorded as context [010]. These features were only seen in plan at the formation level so their exact depth is unclear. The slate was recorded at 86.356m AOD in the west and 86.483m AOD in the east.
- 4.2.4 Between wall [005] and the western slate boundary marker [009] was a grey brown fine, clay-silt deposit with flint pebble and brick fragment inclusions [007]. This deposit was only seen in plan at the formation level making an exact measurement of its depth impossible.
- 4.2.5 To the west of the slate boundary [009] and separated from it by a corridor of natural chalk was a second slate boundary feature [012]. This was sunk into a linear cut [011] and backfilled with a grey brown fine clay silt [013]. This group of contexts was only observed in plan and ran into the limit of excavation after approximately two metres.
- 4.2.6 The final feature was observed in the western-most area of works and consisted of a linear cut [014] 0.72m wide and 0.06m deep with concave sides and an irregular base. This was filled by a grey brown fine silt [015] with common chalk fleck inclusions. The top of this feature was recorded at 85.491m AOD.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** The works relating to the new path at The White Cliffs revealed a brick wall probably relating to a building which was used as offices and stores for at least part of its life (Fig. 4).
- 5.2** Running parallel to this wall was a linear feature constructed of slate slabs with scalloped finishing along the top edge. This feature may have been designed to edge flower beds in front of the building with the deposit seen between the wall and slate forming a garden soil. This slate linear was seen to make a return to the north in the east giving strong indication that the wall of the building also makes a return in this area.
- 5.3** The slate lined feature had a gap in it, suggesting a possible entrance into the building. A corresponding termination of the garden soil [007] supports this interpretation.
- 5.4** The origin of the shallow feature recorded in the extreme west of the path strip is unclear although it is possible that this also represents the remnants of a garden feature.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The co-operation and assistance of the National Trust is gratefully acknowledged.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	WCD 10					
Identification Name and Address	White Cliffs, Dover					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	TR 633499 142200					
Geology	Chalk					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4518					
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. 15.9.10-20.9.10	Other		
Sponsor/Client	National Trust					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer					
Project Supervisor	Chris Russel					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Archaeology South East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with the improvement of the path linking the coach park to the visitor centre at the White Cliffs Experience, Dover, Kent (NGR 633499 142200). A brick wall and a parallel feature containing slate edging were revealed during the works, probably relating to the site's former use as a prison. A gap in the slate edging possibly indicates the position of an entrance into the building and a return in this feature possibly indicates the position of the corner of the building. A shallow linear feature was uncovered, which may be a garden feature also relating to the period when a penal institution stood on the site.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-86641

Project details

Project name	White Cliffs, Dover
Short description of the project	A Watching Brief during works to improve the pathway between the coach park and visitor centre at The Gateway to the White Cliffs, Dover.
Project dates	Start: 15-09-2010 End: 20-09-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	PRISON Post Medieval
Monument type	PRISON Modern
Significant Finds	BUILDING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BUILDING Modern
Methods & techniques	'Visual Inspection'
Development type	New Path network
Prompt	Conservation/ restoration
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT DOVER LANGDON White Cliffs, Dover
Postcode	CT16 1HJ
Study area	2.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TR 633499 142200 50.8666011925 1.743249694020 50 51 59 N 001 44 35 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 85.51m Max: 86.51m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	National Trust

Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Darryl Palmer
Project supervisor	Chris Russel
Type of sponsor/funding body	National Trust

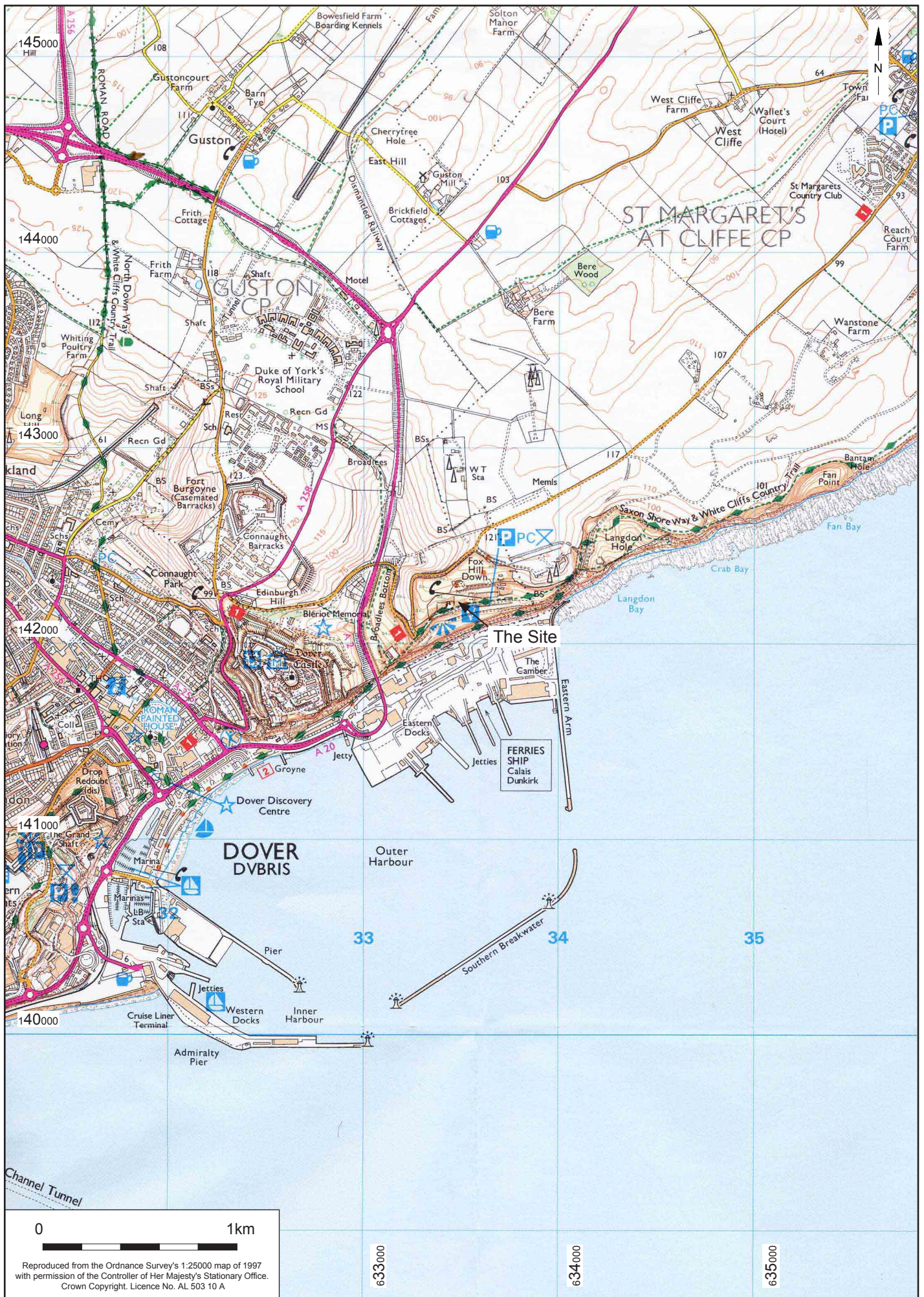
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	National Trust
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Correspondence', 'Diary', 'Drawing', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	White Cliffs, Dover, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Russel, C
Other bibliographic details	report number 2010171
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade

Entered by	Chris Russel (mrchris20042000@yahoo.co.uk)
Entered on	16 November 2010



© Archaeology South-East		White Cliffs, Dover	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4518	Nov 2010	Site location	
Report Ref: 2010171	Drawn by: JLR		



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Project Ref: 4518

Report Ref: 2010171

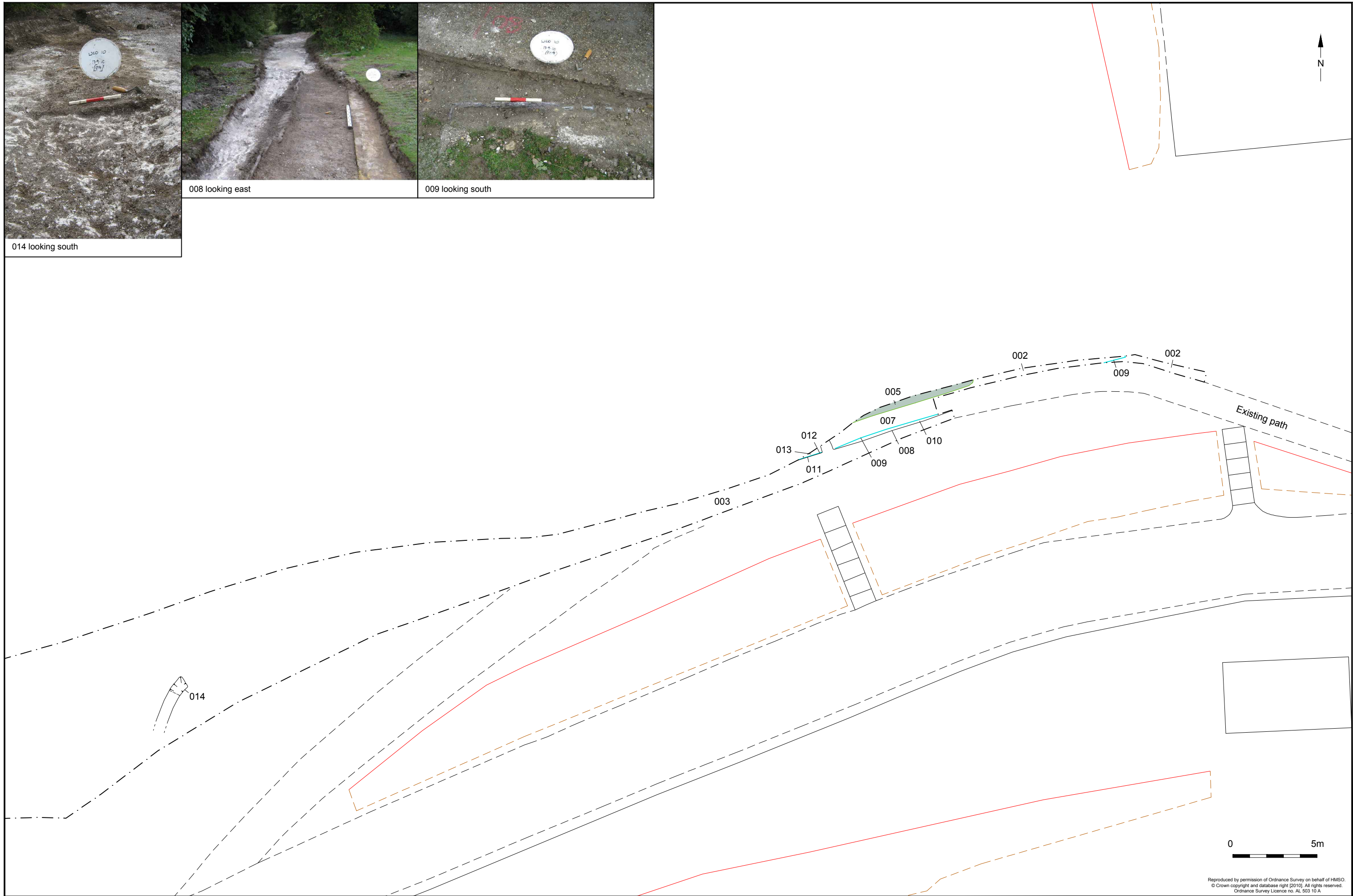
Nov 2010

Drawn by: JLR

White Cliffs, Dover

Site plan

Fig. 2





© Archaeology South-East		White Cliffs, Dover	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 4518	Nov 2010	Site plan and 1978 prison plan	
Report Ref: 2010171	Drawn by: JLR		

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