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Initial Rapid Archaeological Appraisal

For

South East Water

Concerning

**Staplecross to Iden: Section 12
Mains Renewal Scheme
Playden
East Sussex**

May 2017



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Cover: Extract from the OS 1st edition 25-inch map (1872) showing Playden village

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1 Executive Summary

This Rapid Appraisal of South East Water's (SEW) proposed Staplecross to Iden: Section 12 Mains Renewal Scheme undertaken by Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) has reached the following conclusions regarding the potential and significance of the archaeological resource within the specific study area, which are summarised below:

- The proposed pipeline scheme does not cross, or run in close proximity to, any Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). Neither does the proposed pass through any Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs) although it does run very close to the ANA associated with the medieval settlement of Playden.
- The scheme passes 272m to the south-west of the Mockbeggar Archaeological Notification Area, which incorporates a late Bronze Age settlement site excavated between 1929 and 1931 and a further area of cropmarks identified in 1979 which have been interpreted as representing an enclosure and a barrow. There is potential for further evidence of prehistoric occupation and possibly funerary activity to be encountered in the wider vicinity of these sites.
- Conjectural evidence, in the form of a pair of parallel ditches visible through aerial survey, suggests that the line of a possible Roman road may be located approximately 667m to the north-east of the scheme. While the projected course of the Roman road would not actually cross the proposed pipeline route, it is possible that archaeological evidence of settlement activity associated with the Roman road may be encountered in this area.
- The eastern terminus of the pipeline lies immediately north of the extent of the medieval hamlet of Playden. Playden is situated within an Archaeological Notification Area, the boundary of which lies in close proximity to the eastern terminus of the proposed pipeline (about 15m north of the route at its closest point).
- Although the pipeline route lies just outside the boundary of the Playden Archaeological Notification Area, there remains potential for evidence of occupation or agricultural features (or possibly evidence of small-scale industrial activity such as pottery manufacture) associated with the medieval settlement to be uncovered during groundworks associated with the proposed pipeline scheme.
- The pipeline route passes in the vicinity of a number of listed and undesignated heritage assets of post-medieval date (the nearest being a cast-iron milepost of 18th century date at Bowlers Town, located about 13m north of the route), but is considered highly unlikely to have an impact upon any of these features.

Conclusion: The archaeological potential of the area traversed by the pipeline route has been assessed as Moderate (with particular reference to evidence for prehistoric and medieval activity). A watching brief is considered to be the most appropriate form of archaeological mitigation, in this instance.

2 Introduction & Methodology

This Rapid Appraisal was undertaken by Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) in response to an instruction from South East Water (SEW) regarding the proposed Staplecross to Iden: Section 12 Mains Renewal Scheme (*fig. 1*).

This Appraisal has examined information on archaeological sites, listed buildings and previous archaeological interventions in the immediate vicinity of the proposed pipeline scheme, obtained from the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) and other readily available sources, in order to provide a summary statement of the extant archaeological potential of the proposed route.

The proposed water mains pipeline runs for approximately 1.1km SE from a connection point on the A268 (Rye Road) to the W of Bowlers Town (NGR TQ 91087 22628) to another connection point on the N fringes of the village of Playden (NGR TQ 91863 22057), about 2km N of the historic town of Rye, East Sussex. The entirety of the route lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is recognized that a considerably expanded programme of research may well be deemed appropriate in due course.

The East Sussex HER reference number for this project is: 196/17.

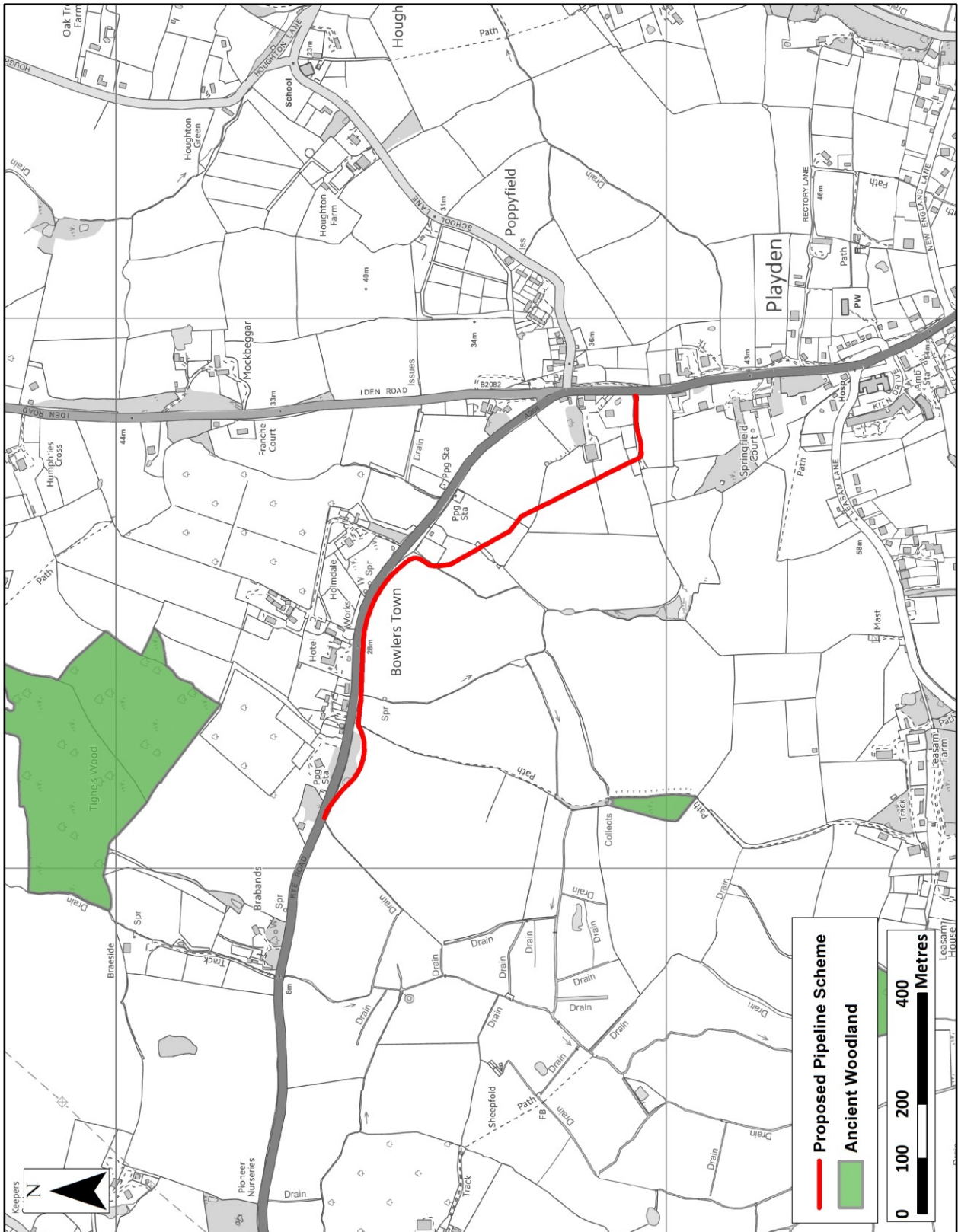


Fig. 1: Plan showing route of proposed Pipeline Scheme
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3 Assessment

The proposed pipeline scheme does not cross any Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) or Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs). However, it does pass through, or in the immediate vicinity of, a number of archaeological features recorded on the East Sussex HER. These are discussed in geographical order (W-E) below:

At the W terminus of the route, the scheme passes within the vicinity of a number of pair of 19th century farmsteads at Holmdale Farm (MES32932; 133m to the NE of the scheme) and Brabands (MES30670; 272m to the W of the scheme), and in close proximity to an 18th century cast iron mile post on the A268 at Bowlers Town (MES33609; 13m to the N of the scheme) and the site of a milestone marked on a map of 1791 (MES26031; 200m to the NW of the scheme). It is unlikely that any of these particular features will be affected by works associated with the pipeline scheme.

The most significant archaeological features identified in the vicinity of the pipeline are the Bronze Age settlement features located between Mockbeggar and Poppyfield. Between 1929 and 1931, a late Bronze Age settlement site was excavated to the SE of Mockbeggar House at NGR TQ 9212 2264 (MES2164; EES9366; c.580m to the NE of the scheme).

The features recorded comprised a ring-ditch (about 20m in diameter) surrounding traces of a circular hut, which appears to have been constructed on top of a deliberate deposition of fine white sand. Possible evidence for a hearth was identified, as well as part of a rectangular enclosure with traces of a ditch and wattle fence. An E-W ditch ran across the rectangular enclosure, passing close to the N of the ring-ditch. Material culture recovered during the excavation included Mesolithic flints, medieval pottery and bloomery slag, as well as fragments of four small flat-bottomed pots, interpreted as being of Middle to Late Bronze Age date. The significant number of flints recovered from the site suggested a possible focus of Mesolithic flint production in this area (Cheney, 1935, 152-64; Cleal, 1982, 1-17).

The Late Bronze Age settlement site at Mockbeggar is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (HE List Entry No. 1002212) and also constitutes the focus of an ANA designation from East Sussex Council. The outer boundary of the SAM lies approximately 508m NE of the pipeline route, while the boundary of the ANA lies approximately 272m to the NE of the pipeline.

The boundary of the ANA also encompasses an area of cropmarks, in the form of an arc and circle, identified in 1979 at Meadow Green and interpreted as representing an enclosure and a possible barrow (MES2291; 337m to the NE of the scheme; Dickinson 1981). It is possible that further evidence for prehistoric occupation or funerary activity (especially dating from the Bronze Age) may be encountered within the wider landscape of the Mockbeggar sites.

To the S of Houghton Farm, conjectural evidence, in the form of a pair of parallel ditches visible through aerial survey, has suggested the line of a possible Roman road aligned N-S and running in a straight alignment for approximately 850m (MES19705; 667m to the NE of the scheme). However, the projected continuation of this possible road would connect the River Rother near Thornsedale Farm to the N, with an area of Romano-British

activity at Saltcote Street, Rye Hill to the S. The conjectural route of the Roman road, therefore, would not run in close proximity to the proposed pipeline, although it is possible that archaeological evidence of occupation associated with the Roman road might be encountered in this area.

The pipeline route lies approximately 630m NE of another ANA located at Houghton Farm, a farmstead of probable medieval origin.

The E terminus of the route is located just to the N of the medieval hamlet of Playden, as defined by the shapefile supplied by East Sussex HER (MES19573). Playden is recorded as 'Pleidena' in the Domesday Survey, and was listed amongst the land of the Count of Eu, lord of Hastings. The village was built within a shallow valley on the edge of the Rother estuary, half a mile to the N of Rye and documentary evidence suggests that both salt production and fishing many have been important industries (Bannister 2008; Martin & Martin 2016). Evidence of medieval industrial activity, in the form of pottery kilns and a tilery (the site of which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument) has also been identified at Rye Hill on the southern fringes of Playden (about 990m S of the pipeline route).

The ANA surrounding Playden is located, at its closest point, approximately 15m to the S of the scheme, and also includes Hook's Farm, a partially extant 19th century farmstead (MES3293; 101m to the SE of the scheme), the site of the 'Peace and Plenty', a building recorded on the 1st edition OS 25-inch map of 1872 (MES26032; 155m to the NE of the scheme), and St Michael's Church, a late 12th century edifice with additions dating from the 14th to 17th centuries (MES2165; 419m to the SE of the scheme).

As the pipeline scheme is located in close proximity to the medieval settlement of Playden, there is potential for agricultural or occupation features of a medieval date (or possibly evidence of marginal, small-scale industrial activities such as pottery manufacture) to be encountered in this area.

Table 1: Archaeological Features in the Immediate Vicinity of the Proposed Scheme

Feature	Date	Nearest Section of Scheme	Distance from Scheme
Cast Iron Mile Post	C18th	TQ 91259 22559	13m to N of the scheme
LBA Settlement	Bronze Age	TQ 91561 22461	580m to NE of the scheme
Enclosure and Barrow Cropmarks	Bronze Age	TQ 91640 22258	337m to NE of the scheme
Possible Roman Road	Romano-British	TQ 91863 22057	667m to NE of the scheme
Playden Medieval Hamlet	Medieval	TQ 91863 22057	15m to S of the route terminus

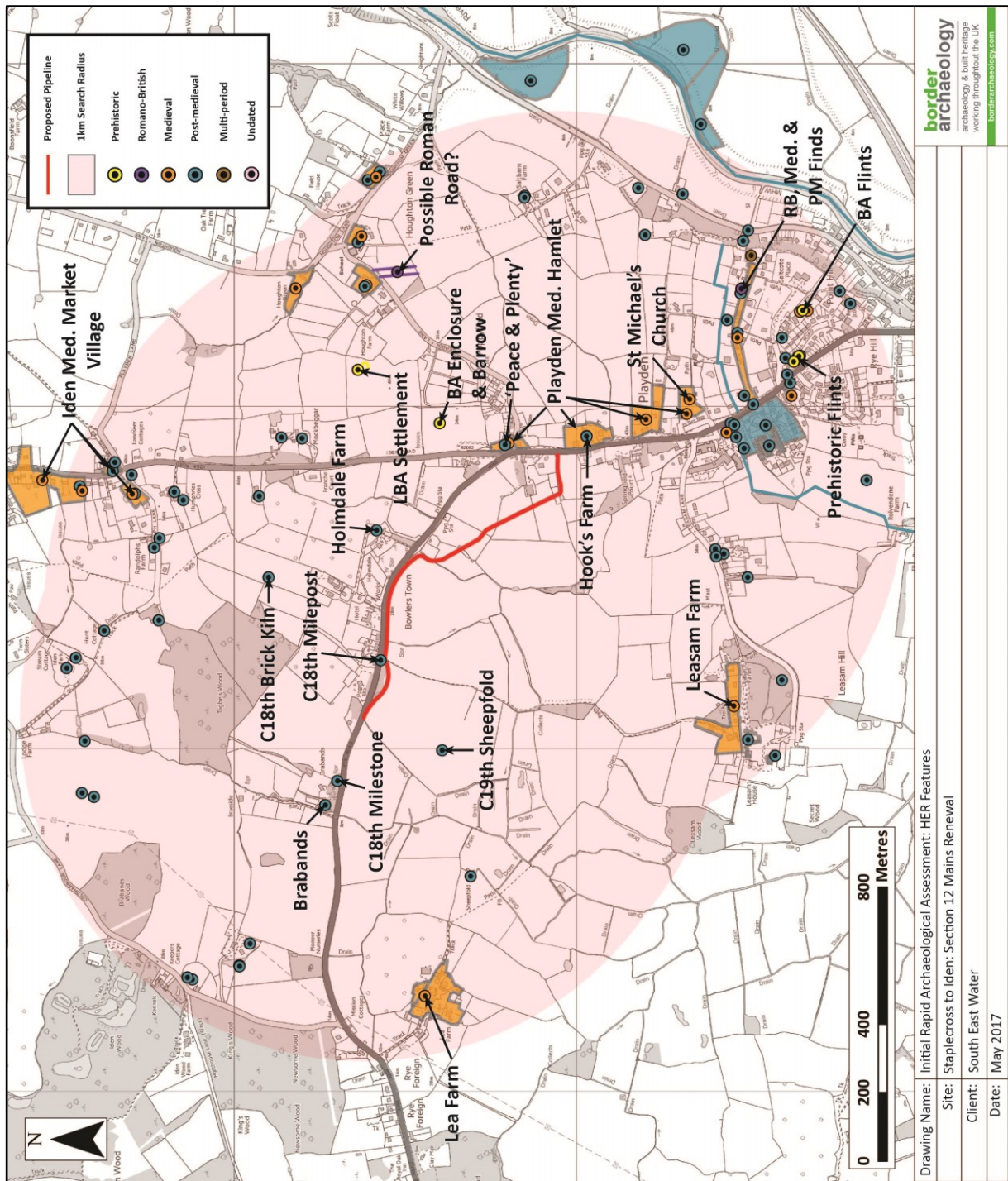
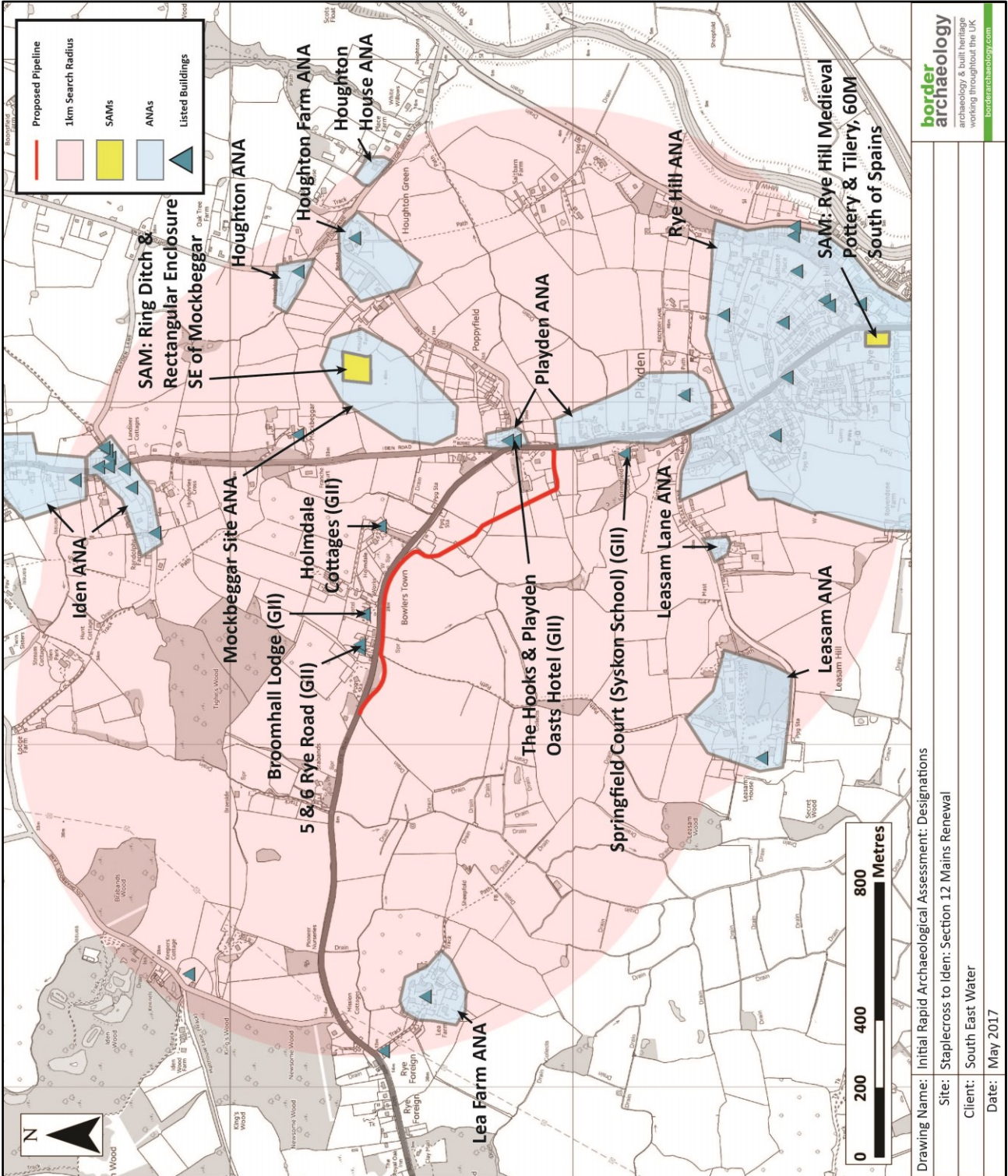


Fig. 2: Plan showing archaeological sites and monuments recorded on the East Sussex HER in the immediate vicinity of the proposed pipeline route

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Fig. 3: Plan showing Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Notification Areas recorded on the East Sussex HER in the immediate vicinity of the proposed pipeline route
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