

**The Vicarage, 64 Friar Street,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
For Greyfriars Church Parochial Church Council**

by Jo Pine and Andy Taylor  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code VFR 06/82

**November 2006**

## Summary

**Site name:** The Vicarage, 64 Friar Street, Reading, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7123 7357

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 13th–19th July 2006

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andy Taylor and Sean Wallis

**Site code:** VFR 06/82

**Summary of results:** No deposits or finds of archaeological interest were observed.

**Monuments identified:** None

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 09.11.06 Steve Preston ✓ 09.11.06
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# **The Vicarage, 64 Friar Street, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

By Jo Pine and Andy Taylor

**Report 06/82**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Vicarage, 64 Friar Street, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7123 7357) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Steve Brown of Ian Hunt Associates Ltd, Ibex House, 85 Southampton Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2QU on behalf of Greyfriars Church Parochial Church Council.

A planning consent (05/00712/FUL) has been granted by Reading Borough Council to convert the former Greyfriars Vicarage building into a nursery school. This is subject a condition relating to archaeology, which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona Macdonald, Principal Archaeologist with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Sean Wallis between the 13th and 19th July 2006 and the site code is VFR 06/82.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located at the western end of Reading town centre, at the western end of Friar Street adjacent to Greyfriars Church (Fig. 2). The underlying geology comprises Plateau Gravel (BGS 1971) and the site lies at a height of c.40m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

In summary the site lies within the historic core of Reading. The town has late Saxon origins but the focus of this is thought to lie to the south of the site at St Mary's Butts (Astill 1978). The environs of Friar Street are a part of the medieval town, and excavations at 95-105 Friar Street, almost opposite the site, revealed medieval and later occupation, with a start date probably in the late 12th or early 13th century (Ford and Ford 2005). Greyfriars

Church is also thought to be the location of the medieval Friary originally constructed in 1233 but relocated to drier land in 1282. The original location though has not been confirmed by fieldwork and an evaluation just to the north revealed nothing of archaeological interest (Ford 1994).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction involved with the construction of the access path, new patio, cycle store and hard landscaping for car parking.

The ground reduction for the new access path and an access ramp were observed, as was the excavation of a soakaway (Fig. 3).

## **Results**

Ground reduction for the new access park showed stratigraphy of topsoil over lying brick rubble and foundations of the former boiler room. A trench 0.60m wide, 13.70m long and 0.40m deep was excavated to facilitate the construction of an access ramp. The stratigraphy in the region was 0.10m of topsoil onto 0.30m of made ground which contained demolition rubble and animal bone fragments.

A soakaway was excavated that was 1.45m by 1.70m and 1.30m deep. The stratigraphy shown was turf/topsoil 0.14m deep over various bands of made ground still visible at the formation level of 1.30m below the present land surface.

## **Finds**

Only modern artefacts such as brick rubble, slate, glass and animal bone, all of which date from the 19th century or later were observed but not retained.

## **Conclusion**

No deposits or finds of archaeological interest were observed during the watching brief.

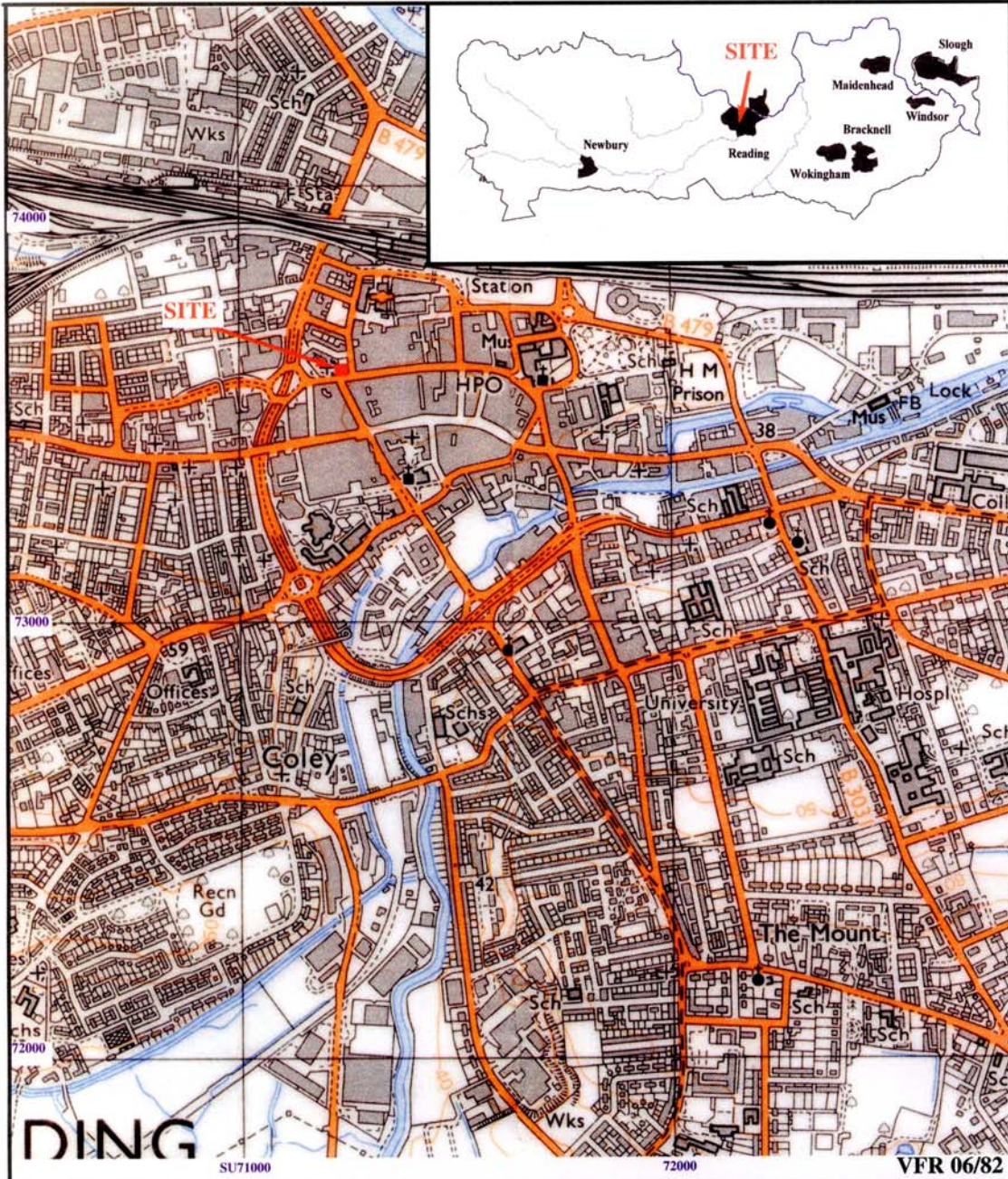
## **References**

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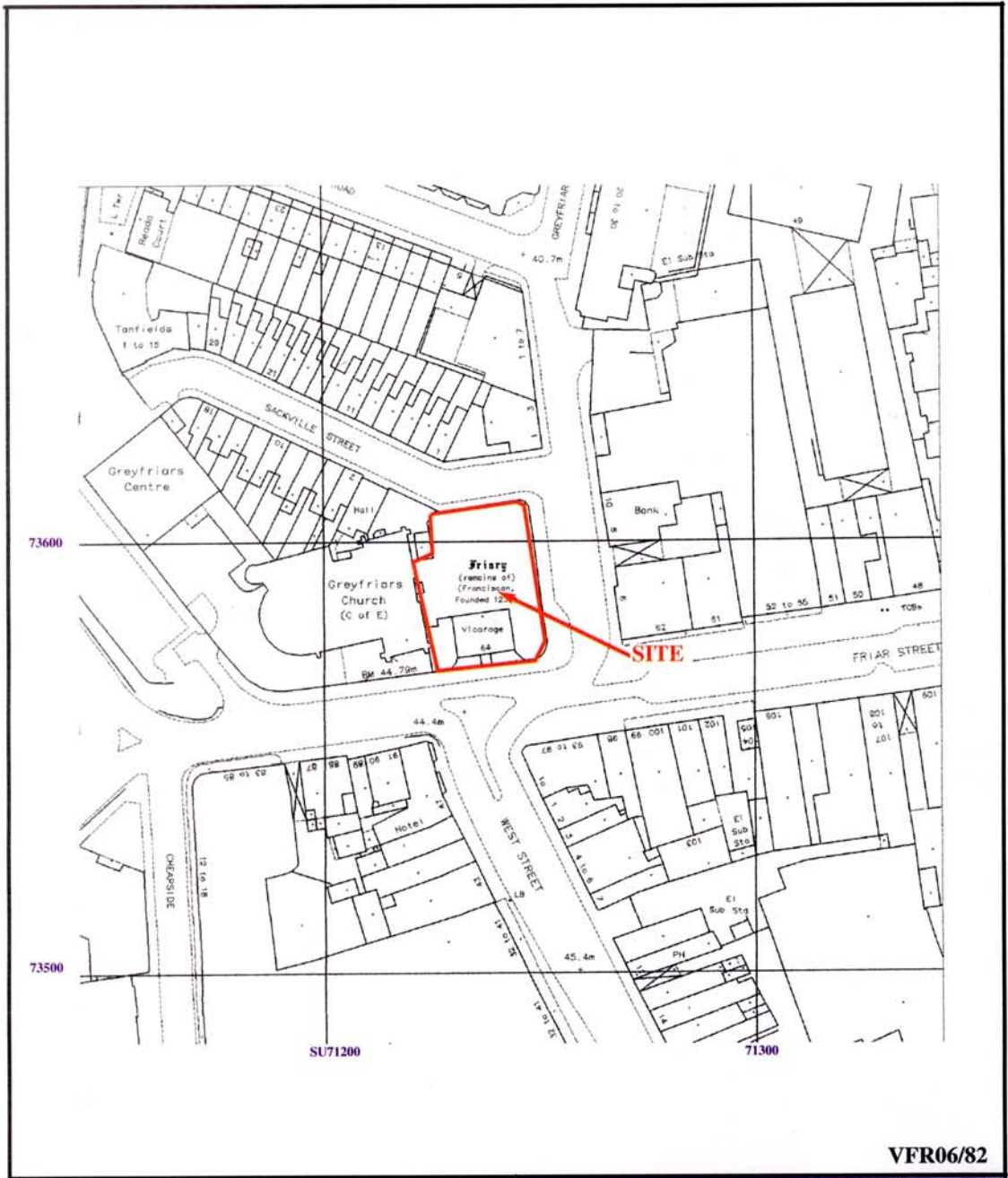


**The Vicarage, 64 Friar Street, Reading,  
Berkshire, 2006**  
An archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Reading  
and Berkshire.

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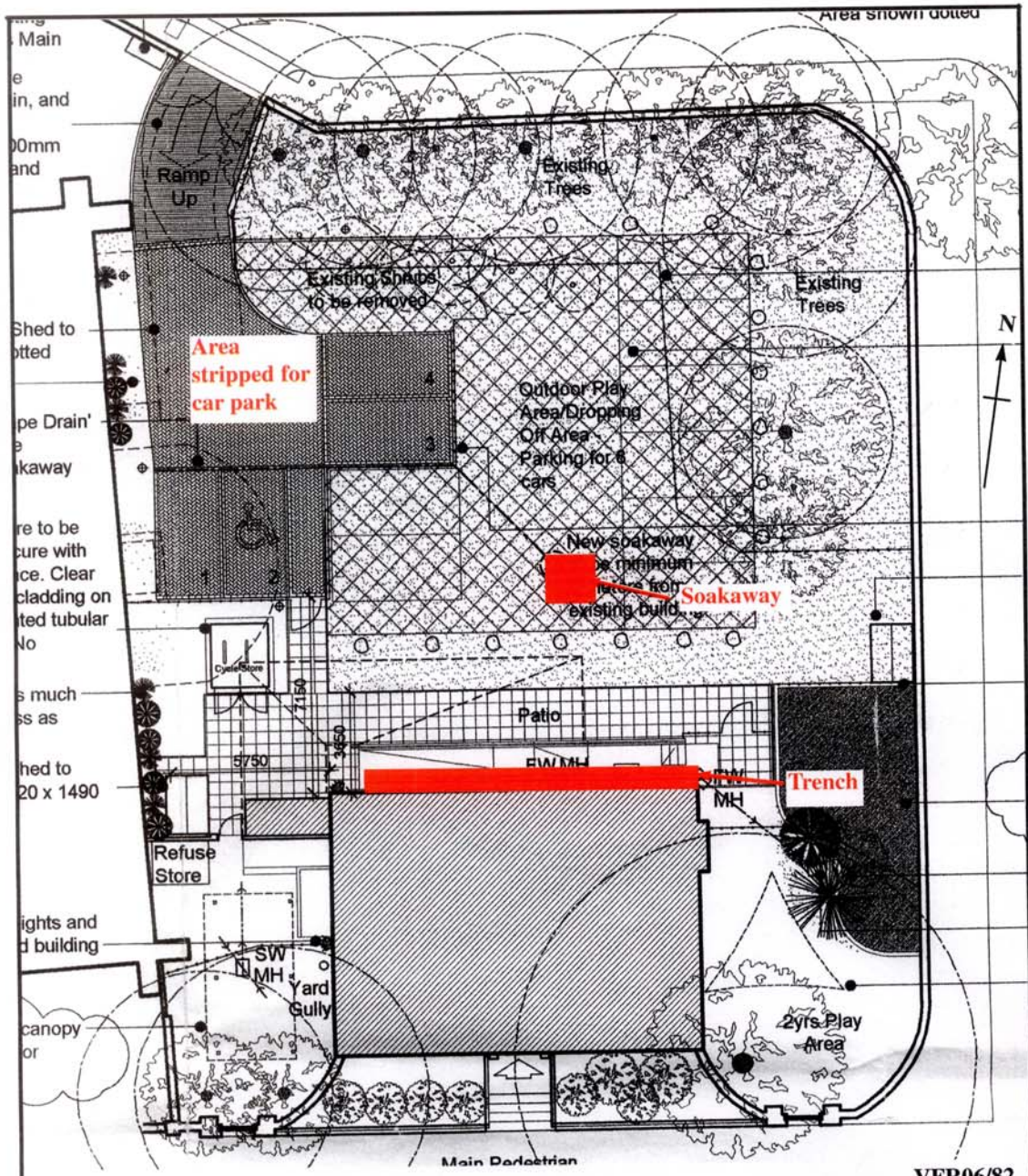
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Berkshire, 2006**  
An archaeological watching brief

Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Friar Street.

Scale: 1:1250.

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The Vicarage, 64 Friar Street, Reading,  
 Berkshire, 2006  
 An archaeological watching brief  
 Figure 3. Location of observations.

Scale: 1:200.

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