

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Frilsham Mill House, Frilsham,
West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Muddin

Site Code: MHF19/160

(SU 5378 7314)

Frilsham Mill House, Frilsham, West Berkshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for the Bertie family**

by Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MHF 19/160

March 2020

Summary

Site name: Frilsham Mill House, Frilsham, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 5378 7314

Site activity: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 15th January 2020

Project coordinator: Danielle Millbank

Site supervisor: Andrew Mundin

Site code: MHF 19/160

Summary of results: Little ground reduction or significantly intrusive works took place. Therefore there was no exposure nor impact on the archaeological relevant levels. No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were observed over the course of the watching brief.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 11.03.20
	Steve Preston✓ 11.03.20

Frilsham Mill House, Frilsham, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 19/160

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief at Frilsham Mill House, Frilsham, West Berkshire, RG18 9UZ (SU 5378 7314) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Soanes of DRS Builders, 45 Enborne Grove, Newbury, RG14 6BH, on behalf of the owners of the property, the Bertie family.

Planning permission (19/01675/HOUSE) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the conversion of the existing garage at the property to a garden room annexe and carport. The permission is subject to a condition (5), that requires an archaeological watching brief to be implemented and maintained during the groundworks. This is to take place during groundworks as a result of the possibility of damage or destruction of buried archaeological deposits on the site.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and West Berkshire Council's policies on archaeology. The specification was approved by Ms Sarah Orr, County Senior Archaeologist for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin on 15th January 2020 and the site code is MHF 19/160.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Frilsham lies on the Berkshire Downs north east of Newbury on the east side of the River Pang (Fig.1). Mill House lies in an area assumed to be the historic centre of the village, though Frilsham Common is now considered its residential core further to the east. The site is adjacent to the churchyard of St. Frideswide Church, of which its boundary immediately north of Mill House (Fig.2). The manor and its manor farm are beyond the church to the north.

The underlying geology is Second Terrace River Gravel of the Pang Valley (BGS 2000). The site lies at a height of c.83m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

Archaeological background

The grey-brick built 19th century Mill House contained the mill wheel mechanism, and a working steam engine, until it was removed in 1962 (Major 1963, 87) and the building converted to flats. The mill is considered to have been included in the redevelopment of the manor in the 1850's (Ward 2002, 97). This group of buildings, which includes the manor house and 12th century church is considered to constitute the historic core of the settlement. Historically a manor is recorded as existing before the Domesday Survey (1086) (Williams and Martin 2002, 147).

No mill is mentioned in Domesday Book, nor does any record of one occur until 1839 (VCH 1924). The 19th century reconstruct of the manor and the mill are of similar date and in similar style (Tyack *et al* 2010, 308-9).

The West Berkshire Historic Environment Record notes the discovery of a human skeleton found near the site during the 19th century road widening, and noted to be 'of ancient origin' (Gray 1831, 231).

Elsewhere in the parish, the Roman Road linking Dorchester-on-Thames with Silchester was thought to passed further to the east of the site, though rescue observation undertaken during construction of the M4 motorway in 1970 did not located its remains (Wilson and Butler 1971, 26).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project are to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This will involve monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, the excavating of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary.

Results

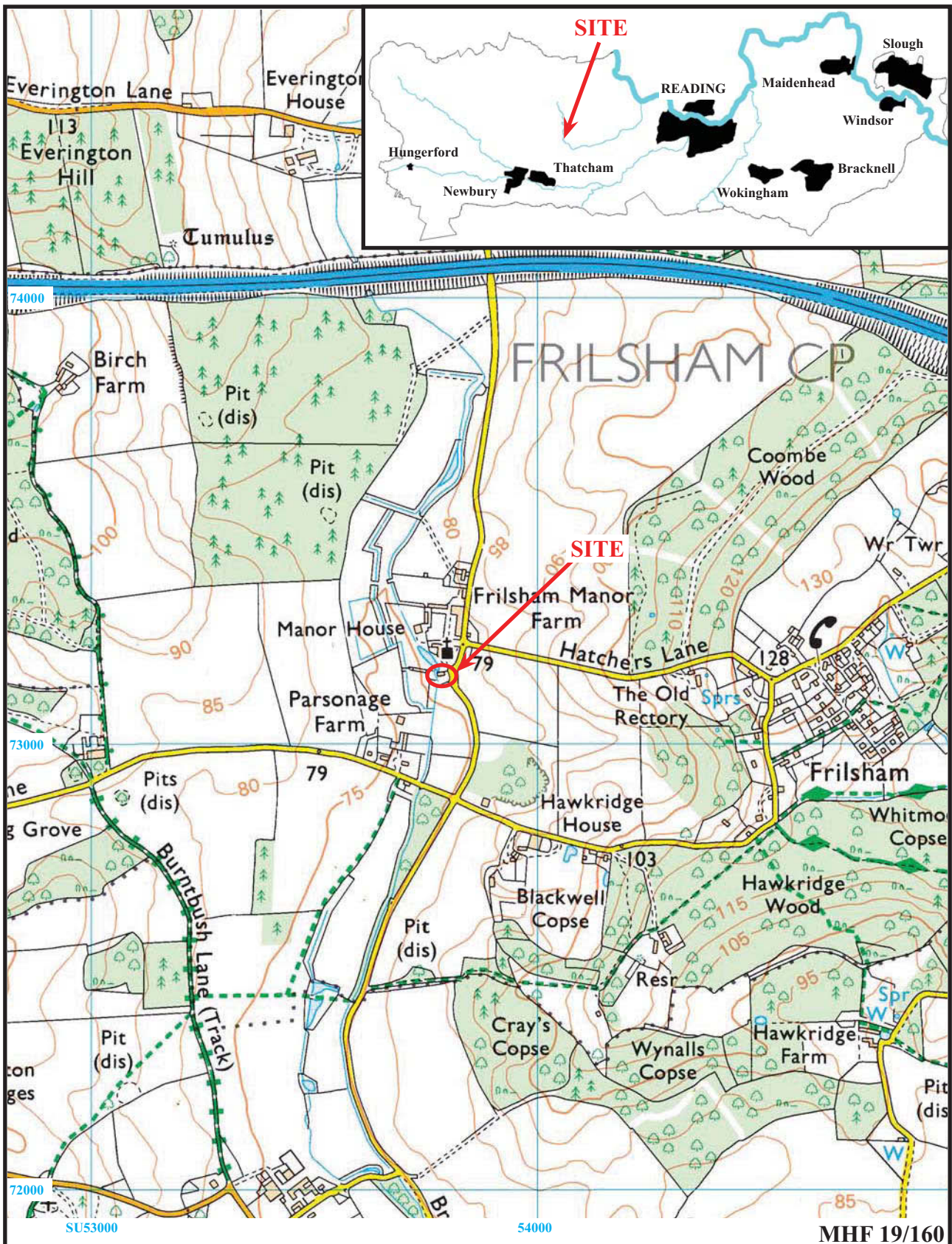
The groundworks consisted of a topsoil strip, excavating to a maximum depth of 0.25m, in the area of the previous concrete slab, for placement of a new slab (Fig. 3). No finds of interest were encountered, and no deposits other than garden topsoil was removed. Minimal topsoil was removed during landscaping of the existing garden to create the two new parking spaces. No other deep intrusive groundworks were due to take place. The groundworks did not involve removal of any subsoil and no natural geology was exposed.

Conclusion

As a result of the minimally intrusive foundation design, no finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

References

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- Tyack, G, Bradley, S and Pevsner, N, 2010, '*The Buildings of England: Berkshire*', Yale Univ Press, New Haven and London
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- Williams, A, and Martin, G.H, 2002, '*Domesday Book: a complete translation*', Penguin Books, London
- Wilson, D, and Butler, F, 1971, 'M4 Survey', *CBA S Mids Newsletter*, Vol.1, 25-26

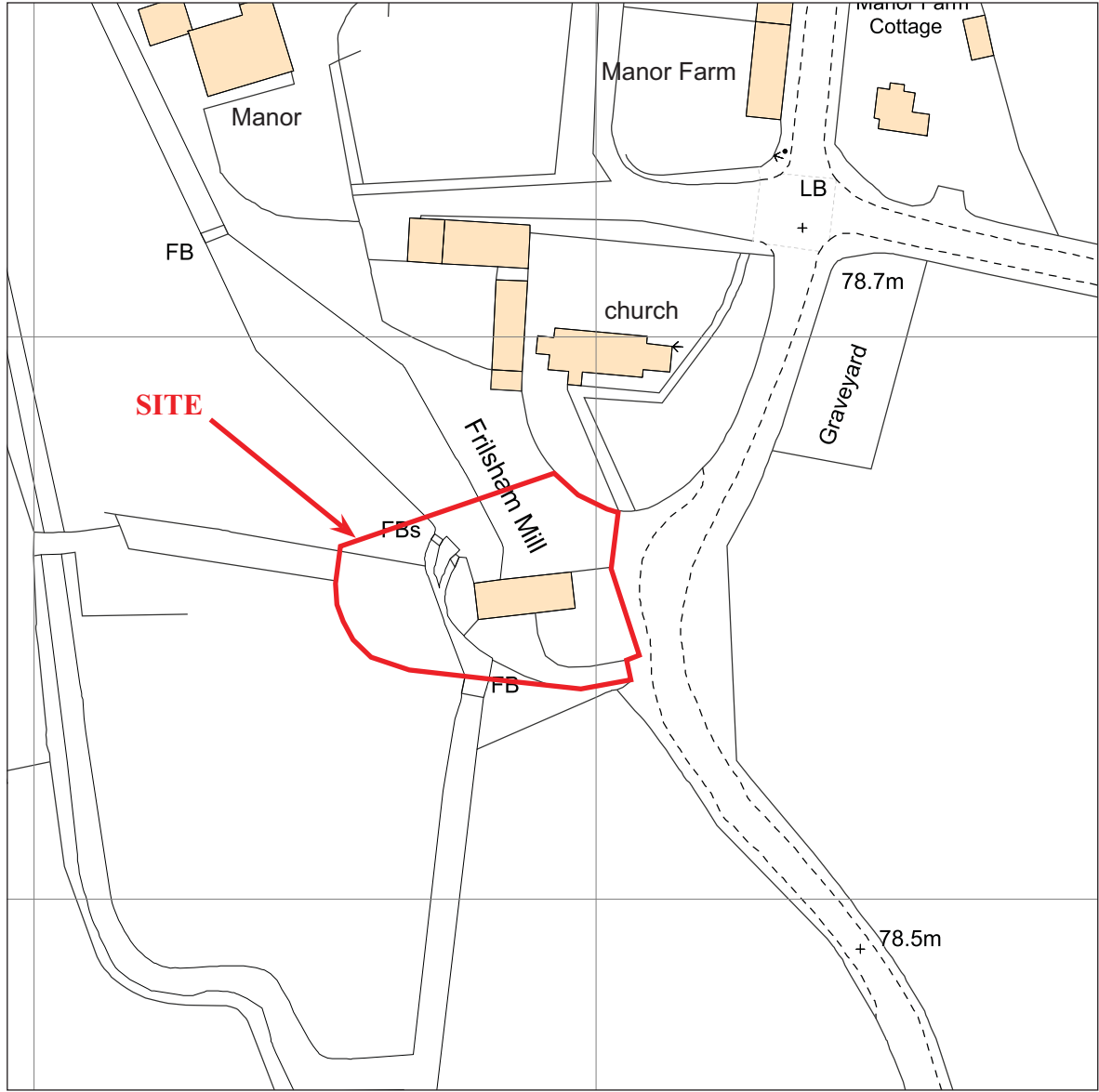


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Figure 1. Location of site within Frilsham and Berkshire.

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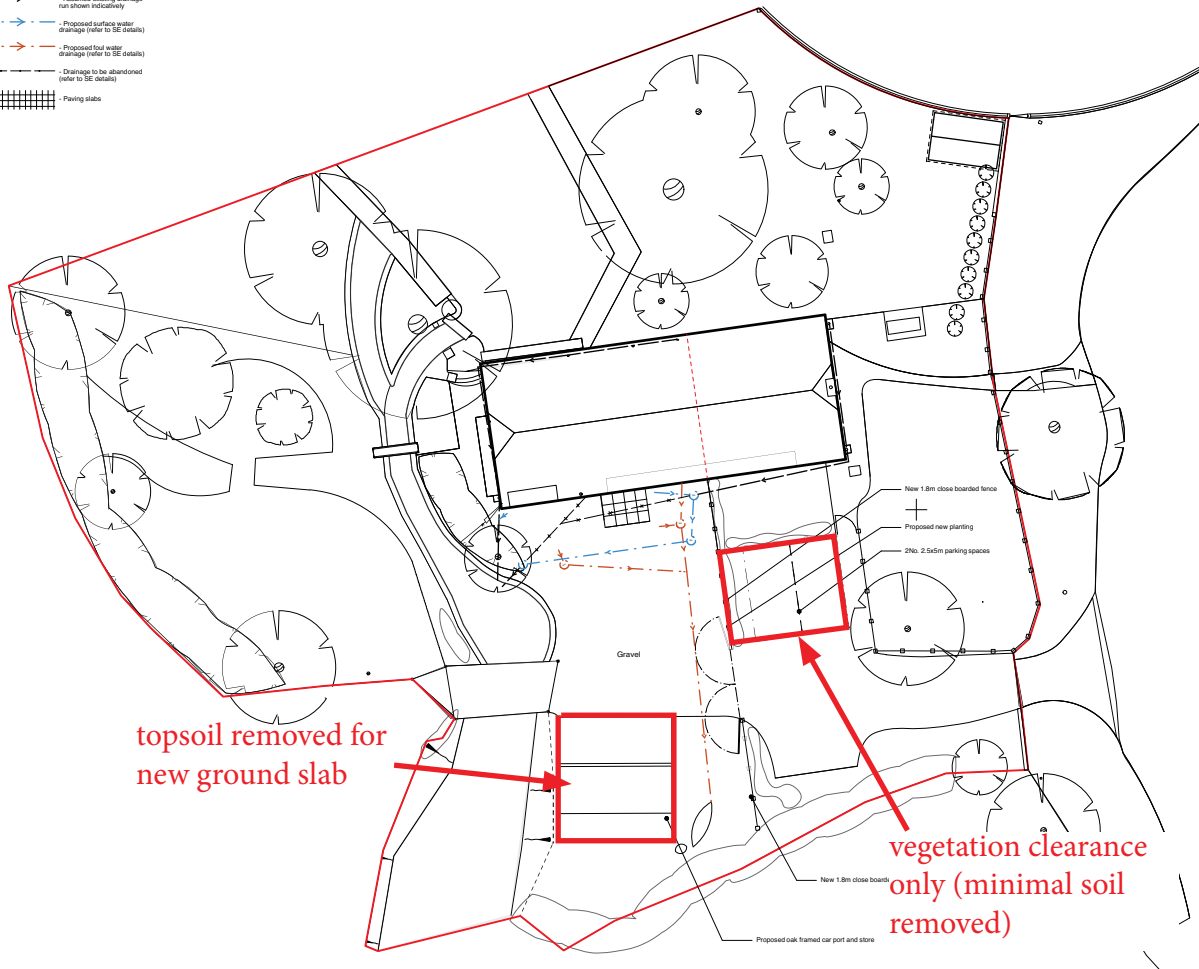
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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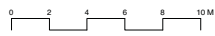
legend:

- - - - - Assumed existing drainage runs shown indicatively
- - - - - Proposed surface water drainage (refer to SE details)
- - - - - Proposed foul water drainage (refer to SE details)
- - - - - Drainage to be abandoned (refer to SE details)
- ▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒ Paving slabs



topsoil removed for new ground slab

vegetation clearance only (minimal soil removed)



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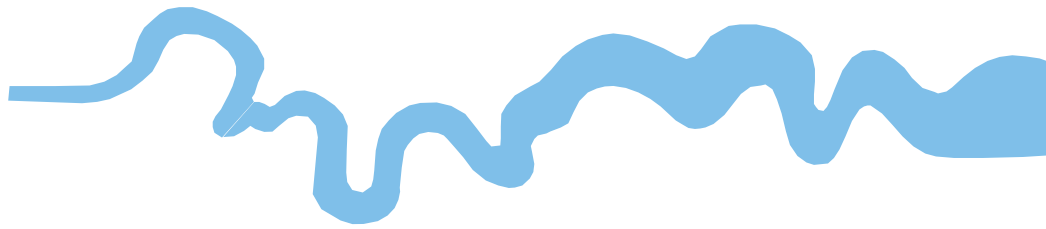
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Figure 3. Detailed location of watching brief.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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