

**St Andrew's Church Hall, Albert Road,  
Caversham, Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
For St Andrew's Parochial Church Council**

by Simon Cass  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code SAC 06/94

**March 2007**

## Summary

**Site name:** St Andrew's Church Hall, Albert Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7050 7569

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 7<sup>th</sup> August to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Jennifer Lowe

**Site code:** SAC 06/94

**Summary of results:** No finds or features of archaeological relevance observed within stripped areas

**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 ✓ 03.04.07 Joanna Pine ✓ 03.04.07
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# **St Andrew's Church Hall, Albert Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Simon Cass

**Report 06/94**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Andrew's Church Hall, Albert Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7050 7569) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Wren, Building Surveyor for Ridge and Partners, Beaumont House, 59 High Street, Theale, Reading, RG7 5AL on behalf of St Andrew's Church.

A planning consent (01/01354/FUL) was granted by Reading Borough Council to construct a new extension to the church hall and a separate two-storey office/residential structure at St Andrews Church. This consent was subject to a condition (16) relating to archaeology requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, to comprise an archaeological watching brief. Only a part of the consented scheme was implemented at this time.

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 Mr David Thomason, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisors to the Borough in matters of archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford and Jennifer Lowe between 7<sup>th</sup> August and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and the site code is SAC 06/94.

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 in Caversham Heights in the northern suburbs of Reading. (Fig. 2). The site is situated in a primarily residential area. The underlying geology is listed as Plateau Gravels (BGS 1946) and this was observed on site at approximately 68.4m AOD.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in an area known to have prehistoric deposits surviving. Finds of Bronze Age date are known from a gravel pit (Jesse's Pit) to the south east. Closer to the site,

are the recorded findspots of Lower Palaeolithic flintwork from Albert Road and Harrogate Road, reflecting the presence of human activity in the vicinity of the former course of the Thames (Wymer 1999, map 6). In addition, to the north east Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flints were found as well as an undated pit (Taylor and Pine 2003). Due to this, it is thought possible that there may be further finds and deposits of archaeological interest may be found within the boundaries of the site.

## **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 and digging of foundation trenches and service runs.

## **Results**

The watching brief was primarily concerned with construction of a range of office rooms on the western side of the site (Fig. 3). The initial groundworks comprised removal of topsoil by machine with a ditching bucket for the whole footprint of the new building. This cleanly exposed the natural geology (gravel). The stripping the stratigraphy revealed a shallow topsoil of between 0.15-0.25m thickness directly over the gravel (no section has been reproduced to represent this simple stratigraphy). The gravel was then dug into by approximately another 0.3m using a toothed bucket.

The stripping carried out initially was ideal for archaeological observation but no deposits were observed. Inspection of the surface also failed to reveal any artefacts of archaeological interest. Various modern debris (eg brick) was revealed within the topsoil but not retained.

## **Finds**

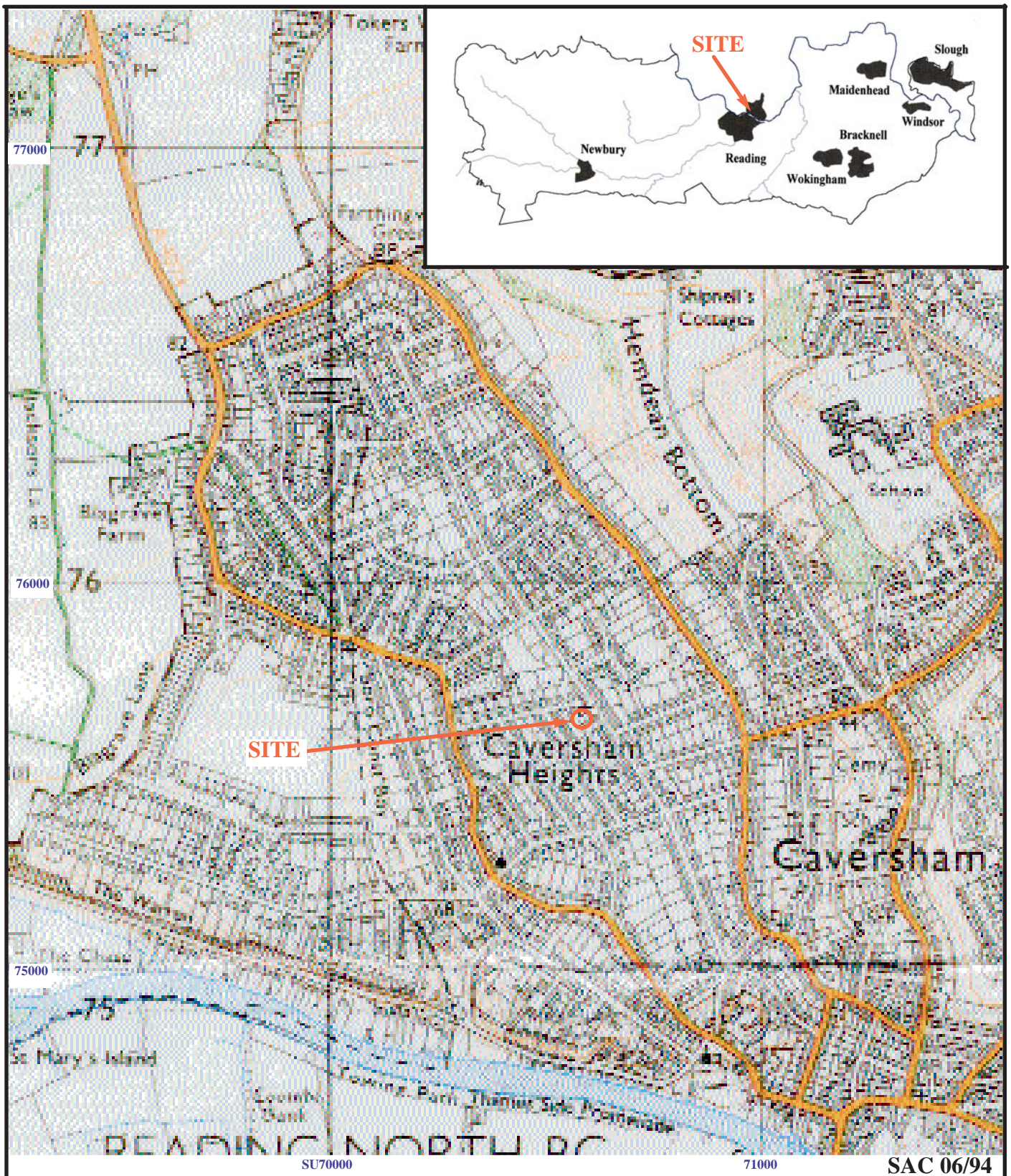
There were no artifacts recovered from this watching brief.

## **Conclusion**

There were no archaeologically relevant deposits or finds observed during this watching brief. Recording conditions were, unusually, particularly good for archaeological observation on this occasion.

## **References**

- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63,360, Sheet 268 Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Taylor, A and Pine, J, 2003, Former Church of Our Lady, Richmond Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, report 03/81, Reading
- Wymer, J J, 1999, *The Lower Palaeolithic occupation of Britain*, Salisbury

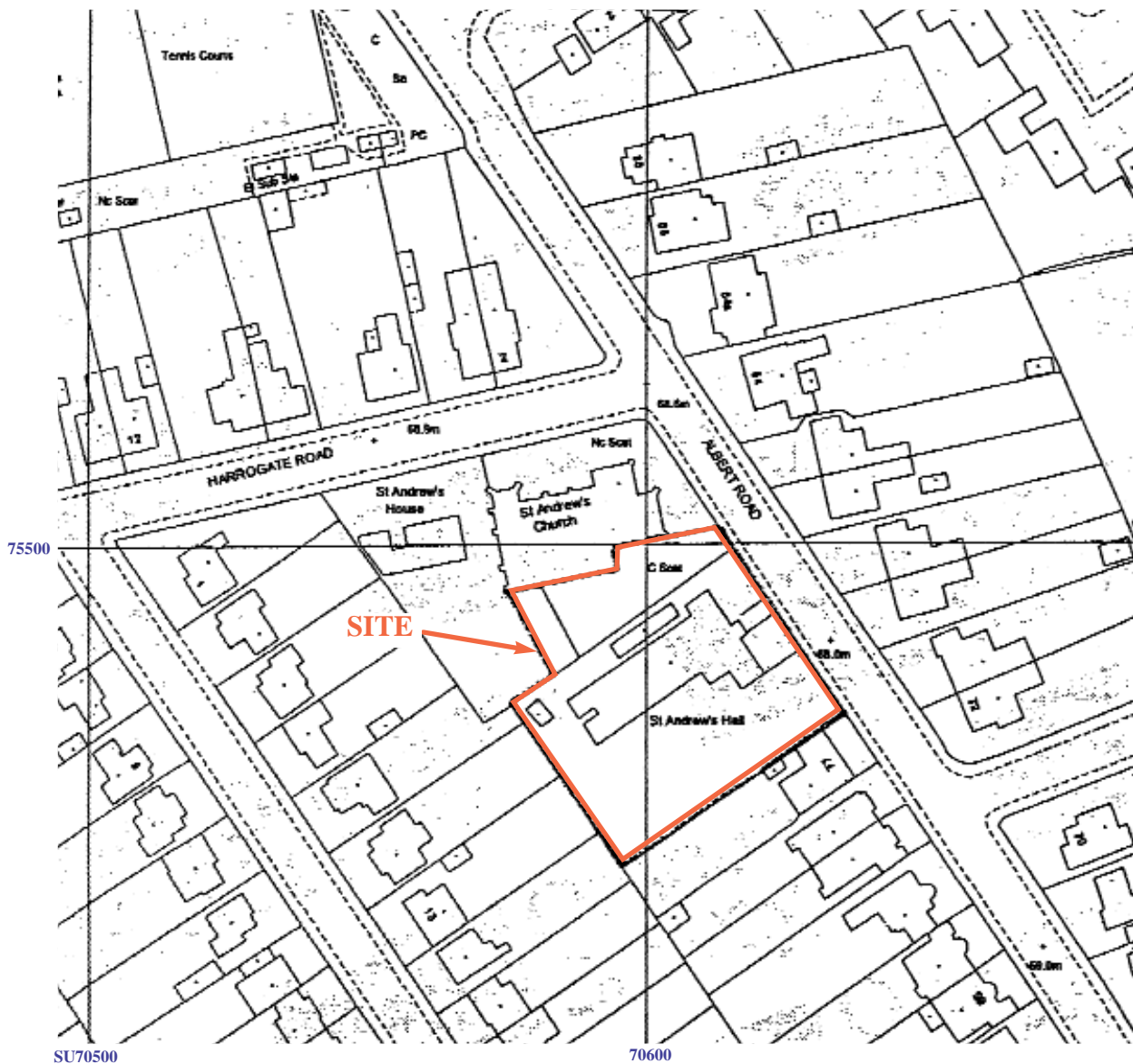


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Figure 1. Location of site within Caversham,  
Reading and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Albert Road.

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