

Lidsey Road, Woodgate

Reptile Survey

May 2021



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on behalf of Southern Housing Group Limited
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Lidsey Road, Woodgate

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Report Ref: DFA21027V2

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Derek Finnie Associates was commissioned by Thakeham Client Ltd on behalf of Southern Housing Group Ltd to undertake a reptile survey of an area of land known as Lidsey Road, Woodgate, herein referred to as the 'Site'.
- 1.1.2 Previous planning applications have been submitted on the Site, which were supported by several ecology survey reports undertaken by The Ecology Consultancy and Arbeco, including a reptile survey conducted in 2017.
- 1.1.3 Thakeham has submitted a new application for the Site which covers the demolition of Wings House and the erection of 71 replacement dwellings (70 net new dwellings), access arrangements, sustainable drainage measures, public open space, landscaping, and all other associated works.
- 1.1.4 The following report presents the findings of a reptile survey undertaken in 2021, which was conducted following a request from the Council's Ecology Officer. The report presents a summary of the previous survey results, outlines the methodology employed in 2021, presents the results, and describes the proposed mitigation strategy based on the results.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 As well as reviewing previous survey results for the Site, biological records were obtained from Sussex Biological Records Centre as part of the previous assessments.

2.2 Field Survey

- 2.2.1 A total of approximately 45 refugia consisting heavy duty roofing felt, approximately 0.5m², were placed in suitable locations across the Site (Figure 1). To maximise the efficiency of the survey, the refugia were concentrated in areas which appeared to be more likely to support reptiles; principally around the periphery of the grassland areas where a change in structure of the vegetation was apparent. The Site covers approximately 2.8ha. Hence a total of 45 refugia represents an approximate density of 16ha⁻¹, which exceeds the minimum of 10ha⁻¹ recommended by Froglife (1999).
- 2.2.2 The refugia generally heat up quicker than the surrounding environment, which makes them attractive to reptiles which need to attain a certain body temperature to hunt effectively. Thus, careful inspection of the refugia results in a more effective way to locate these often elusive animals.
- 2.2.3 The refugia were placed on Site on the 19th March 2021 and allowed to 'bed in' for one week before the survey proper began. The refugia were then checked on seven subsequent occasions throughout the survey period, as shown in Table 1, on suitable days, which are classified as sunny, or partially sunny days, with little or no wind and an air temperature between 8°C and 19°C.

Table 1. Survey dates and weather conditions

Visit No.	Date	Weather
1	27/03/21	10°C, sunny, light wind
2	03/04/21	11°C, 2/8 cloud
3	10/04/21	12°C, 1/8, light wind
4	18/04/21	12°C, sunny, no cloud
5	24/04/21	13°C, 1/8 cloud, mod wind
6	01/05/21	14°C, 0/8 cloud
7	05/05/21	12°C, 0/8 cloud, light wind

- 2.2.4 In addition to checking the artificial refugia, other suitable natural basking areas around the Site were carefully inspected from a short distance using Leica 10x32 BGA binoculars. This ensured that a thorough coverage of the whole site was achieved.

2.3 Constraints

- 2.3.1 Access was available to all areas of the Site.
- 2.3.2 Two refugia were removed by third parties during the survey. However, this small loss in refugia is not believed to have affected the survey efficacy significantly.
- 2.3.3 No significant constraints to the survey were encountered, hence confidence in the results is high.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 Record from SBRC show slow worm, grass snake and common lizard have all been recorded within 2km of the Site.

3.2 Previous Survey

- 3.2.1 The survey results presented by Arbco are summarised in Table 2 below (no information is presented on the sex of the common lizard encountered, with all being recorded as 'Adult' only).

Table 2. Survey Results from 2017.

Date	Slow worm			Common Lizard	
	M	F	SA	Ad	SA
14/09/17	-	-	-	-	-
19/09/17	1	-	3	2	-
22/09/17	1	2	4	3	-
26/09/17		5	8	3	-
29/09/17	1	6	11	5	-
03/10/17	-	-	6	3	-
05/10/17	-	3	3	1	-
Peak Count	3	6	11	5	0

- 3.2.2 The majority of the reptiles encountered were found towards the periphery of the Site, with a higher concentration in the south and south west.

3.3 Field Survey

- 3.3.1 The results from the 2021 survey are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of 2021 Survey Results.

Date	Slow worm			Common Lizard		
	M	F	SA	M	F	SA
27/03/21	-	1	-	-	-	-
03/04/21	1	2	-	-	-	-
10/04/21	5	4	-	1	-	-
18/04/21	4	7	-	-	-	-
24/04/21	7	3	-	-	1	-
01/05/21	6	4	1	-	-	-
05/05/21	7	2	1	-	2	-
Peak Count	7	7	1	1	2	-



- 3.3.2 The number of reptiles encountered in 2021 are comparable with the results returned from the 2017 survey, although the number of common lizard noted in 2021 were slightly lower than in 2017; however, this is likely to be a result of survey bias.
- 3.3.3 Fewer sub-adults were found in 2021 than in 2017, but this is due to the 2021 survey being undertaken earlier in the season, prior to the main breeding season.
- 3.3.4 The distribution of reptiles was also similar (Figure 1), with the majority of records originating from the south west area of the Site.
- 3.3.5 Overall, the 2021 surveys results demonstrate that there has been no significant change in the reptile population within the Site since 2017.

3.4 Summary

- 3.4.1 A total of two species of reptile have been recorded for the Site in both 2017 and 2021. Using the Froglike (1999) criteria, the Site supports a 'Low' population of common lizard and a 'Good' population of slow worms. However, care must be taken when using these criteria as there is no area component within the assessment, i.e. a 1ha site containing more than 20 slow worms would be classed as 'exceptional' as would a 100ha site. In this example, the population within the smaller site, in terms of density and overall number, is likely to be more important than the larger site but this is not reflected when using Froglife's evaluation criteria. Nevertheless, the reptile populations within the Site would be assessed as being of Local value using the CIEEM (2018) guidelines.



4 MITIGATION

4.1 Rational

- 4.1.1 To ensure no harm or injury occurs to any reptile as a result of the development, it will be necessary to ensure that the construction zone is free of reptiles prior to the commencement of works. Measures will also need to be put in place to ensure reptiles do not enter the Site once construction is under way.

4.2 Avoidance Strategy

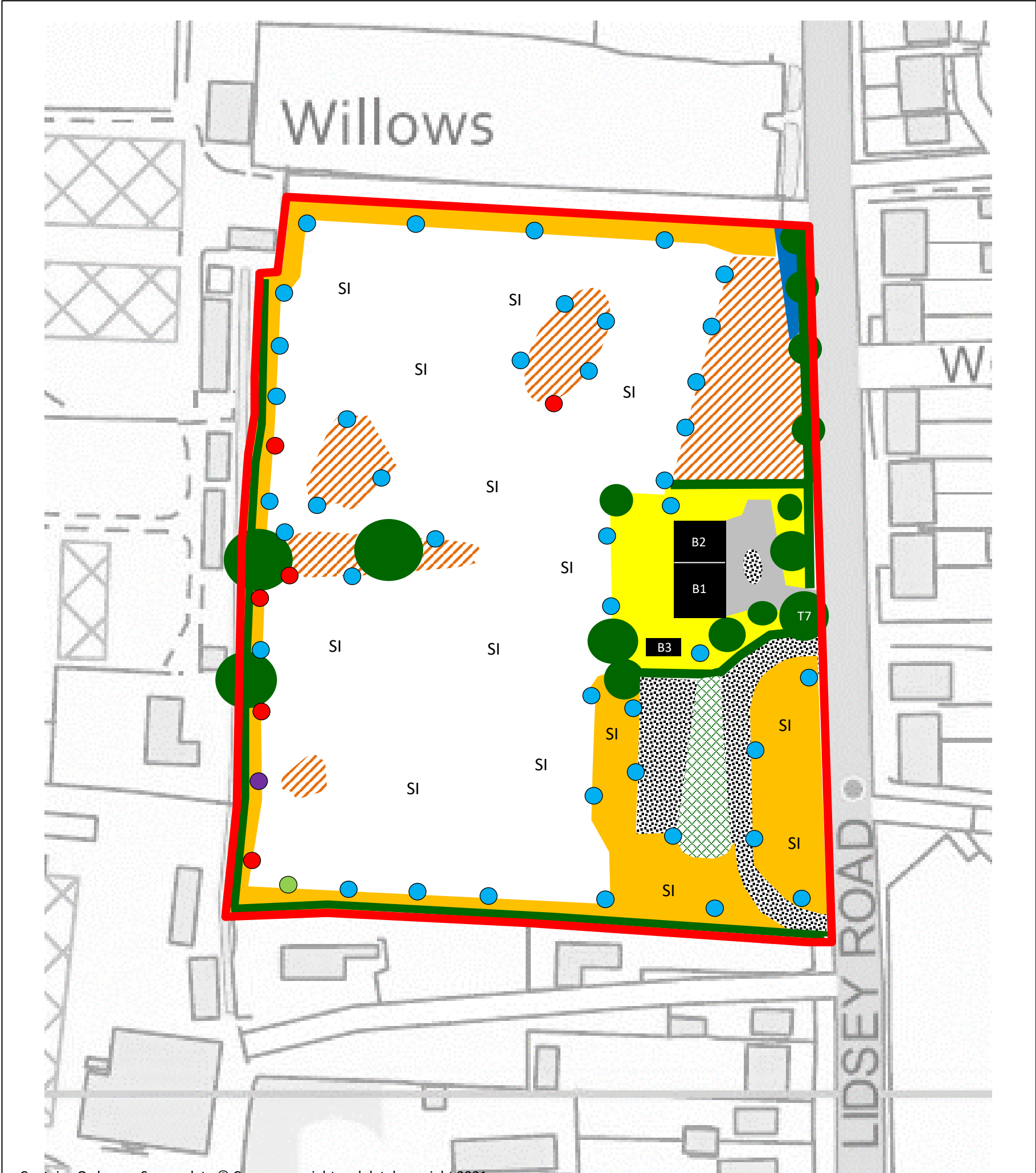
- 4.2.1 Prior to the commencement of construction activities within the Site, a Reasonable Avoid Method Statement involving habitat manipulation will be undertaken across the Site. The vegetation within the Site will be gradually reduced in height over several weeks during the reptile active season, with the height of the cut reducing each time. The cutting would start in the east of the Site and move towards the west, where an area specifically designated for wildlife will be created (See Section 13 of the Landscape Strategy, Allen Pyke Associates Ref: 2949-RE-01). This will encourage any reptile present in the Site to move towards the wildlife area of their own volition. Any structures within the Site that may harbour reptiles will be dismantled by hand, with any reptile encountered caught and immediately released in the wildlife area. On completion of the habitat manipulation, the wildlife area would be surrounded by temporary reptile exclusion fencing to prevent any reptiles re-entering the construction zone.
- 4.2.2 On completion of the development, the reptile fence would be removed, allowing the reptile to colonise green spaces throughout the development, thus ensuring the long term, favourable conservation status of the population would be maintained.



REFERENCES

Charter Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2018. *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Third Edition.* CIEEM, Winchester.

Froglife 1999. Reptile Survey. *Froglife Advice Sheet 10.* Froglife



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Legend:

- Refugia – no results
- Refugia – Slow worm record
- Refugia – Common lizard record
- Refugia – Slow worm and common lizard

Drawing No: Figure 1

Title: Reptile Locations

Date: May 2021

Project: Lidsey Road

Client: Thakeham



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