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Job Number: JBA 19/283		 JAMES BLAKE A S S O C I A T E S Title: Reptile Survey of Land at Water Lane, Angmering, West Sussex			

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James Blake Associates Ltd have made every effort to meet the client's brief. However, no survey ensures complete and absolute assessment of the changeable natural environment. The findings in this report were based on evidence from thorough survey: It is important to remember that evidence can be limited, hard to detect or concealed by site use and disturbance. When it is stated that no evidence was found or was evident at that point in time, it does not mean that species are not present or could not be present at a later date: The survey was required because habitats are suitable for a given protected species, and such species could colonise areas following completion of the survey.

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Executive Summary

A reptile survey of land at Water Lane, Angmering, West Sussex was undertaken between the 7th April and 22nd May 2020.

The aim of the survey was to establish the presence or likely absence of reptiles across the site following Natural England approved guidelines (Froglife, 1999).

No reptile species were recorded using the site during the survey period. Therefore, no mitigation or constraints to the development apply to the site, with respect to reptiles.

If development does not begin within two years, then the surveys should be updated to ensure that reptiles have not colonised the site in the interim.

Enhancement recommendations have been included in the report.

1 Introduction

Background to the study

- 1.1 James Blake Associates Ltd were commissioned by Barratt Homes Southern Counties to carry out a reptile survey of land at Water Lane, Angmering, West Sussex.
- 1.2 The site has no designated conservation status assigned to it.
- 1.3 All reptiles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Appendix B). Reptiles such as grass snakes, common lizards and slow worms are also species of principle importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and are a material consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019).

Site Description

- 1.4 The site is approximately 9.3 hectares in size and is located to the south of Water Lane in the town of Angmering, West Sussex. The wider landscape includes the town of Angmering, residential and arable land. The A280 runs east of the site (see Figure 1 below).
- 1.5 The majority of the site comprises grazed improved grassland which is sub-optimal for reptiles, however, areas of semi-improved grassland, scattered scrub, marshy grassland and stream are present on site which provide good quality foraging habitat for reptiles. Rubble/debris piles on site provide reptiles with sheltering and hibernating opportunities. An area of compost/manure provides egg laying opportunities for grass snake.

Figure 1: Site location

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Aims and objectives

1.6 The aims and objectives of this survey were to;

- identify the presence of any reptile species using the site;
- advise of any implications their presence would have on the proposed development; and
- suggest appropriate mitigation methods where necessary.

2 Methods

- 2.1 The reptile surveys were undertaken between the 7th April and 22nd May 2020 on days with suitable weather conditions for finding reptiles (Froglife 1999).
- 2.2 To undertake the reptile survey, artificial refuges (roofing felt mats and corrugated metal sheets) were used. These increase the chances of observing otherwise elusive reptiles, which are attracted to these 'refuges' as they can bask on top or regulate their body temperature below the refuges, out of sight from predators.
- 2.3 One hundred and thirty five refuges, measuring approximately 0.25m², were laid down on the 7th April 2020. The refuges were laid in all areas of suitable reptile habitat throughout the site (see Appendix A). A number of existing potential refuges were also present on the site, such as rubble/debris piles. On each survey visit these items were also checked for reptiles.
- 2.4 The refuges were left for eight days prior to the commencement of the survey to allow any reptiles present to begin using the refuges and were surveyed on seven subsequent visits to the site.
- 2.5 On each visit, refuges were observed from a distance to record any reptiles basking in the sun. Following this, each refuge was approached cautiously and turned over to survey for reptiles sheltering beneath.

3 Results

Previous surveys

- 3.1 A previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) carried out by The Ecology Partnership (2017) commissioned by Rydon Homes and Gleeson Strategic Land Ltd. was referred to within James Blake Associates recent PEA report (JBA, 2020). A 2km data search was requested from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre which highlighted a slow worm record approximately 2km north east in 2013 (The Ecology Partnership, 2017).
- 3.2 A reptile survey by The Ecology Partnership (2017) was undertaken between the 6th and 31st May 2016. Reptiles were deemed to be likely absent from the site during the time of the 2016 reptile survey.

Survey Results

- 3.3 No reptiles were recorded using the artificial refuges during the survey period. Records from the seven survey visits are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of results for protected reptile species

Visit	Date	Weather conditions	Reptiles observed
1	15/04/20	Temperature: 15°C Cloud Cover:30% Beaufort scale: 2	0
2	17/04/20	Temperature: 14°C Cloud Cover:20% Beaufort scale: 4	0
3	21/04/20	Temperature: 12 °C. Cloud Cover: 10% Beaufort scale: 4	0
4	24/04/20	Temperature: 16°C. Cloud Cover: 0% Beaufort scale: 4	0
5	27/04/20	Temperature: 15 °C. Cloud Cover: 90% Beaufort scale: 1	0

6	30/04/20	Temperature: 13 °C. Cloud Cover: 50% Beaufort scale: 3	0
7	22/05/20	Temperature: 18 °C. Cloud Cover: 70% Beaufort scale: 2	0

4 Discussion and Enhancement

- 4.1 Survey visits were all carried out in suitable weather conditions at the optimal time of year for reptile surveys.
- 4.2 The density of refuges used was well above the recommended: one hundred and thirty five refuges were used across approximately 4.8ha of land (suitable for reptiles), whereas guidelines suggest ten per hectare. Given that the density of refuges used during this survey was higher than ten per hectare, the findings are not considered to be directly comparable, but provide an indicative representation of use of the habitats within the site boundary by reptiles. By using an increased survey density, reptile populations are less likely to be under-estimated and it provides a more conservative approach to preservation of the local population status of reptiles (See Appendix A for indicative location of reptile mats).
- 4.3 No reptiles were recorded using the artificial refuges during the survey period. Therefore, there are no constraints or mitigation requirements for the development, with respect to reptiles.
- 4.4 However, habitats on and adjacent to, the site were considered suitable for reptiles and it is possible that if the site remains unchanged, reptiles could colonise in the future. Therefore, if development has not commenced within two years from the date of the surveys then the surveys will need to be updated to ensure that reptiles have not started using the site in the interim.

5 Enhancement Recommendations

5.1 The following suggestions could enhance the value of the site for reptiles and other wildlife post-development.

- Landscaping should include native or wildlife attracting plants particularly a rough grassland area or wildflower meadow to attract invertebrates and foraging reptiles.
- Grass clippings and other vegetation could be collected and composted in a corner of the site. This may (in time) become suitable for breeding grass snakes and other wildlife.
- Log or rock piles located around the edges of the site could provide potential refuge habitat for reptiles and other wildlife.

6 References

Edgar, P., Foster, J., and Baker, J. (2010). *Reptile Habitat Management Handbook*. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth.

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Gent, A.H. and Gibson, S.D., eds. (1998). *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*. Peterborough, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

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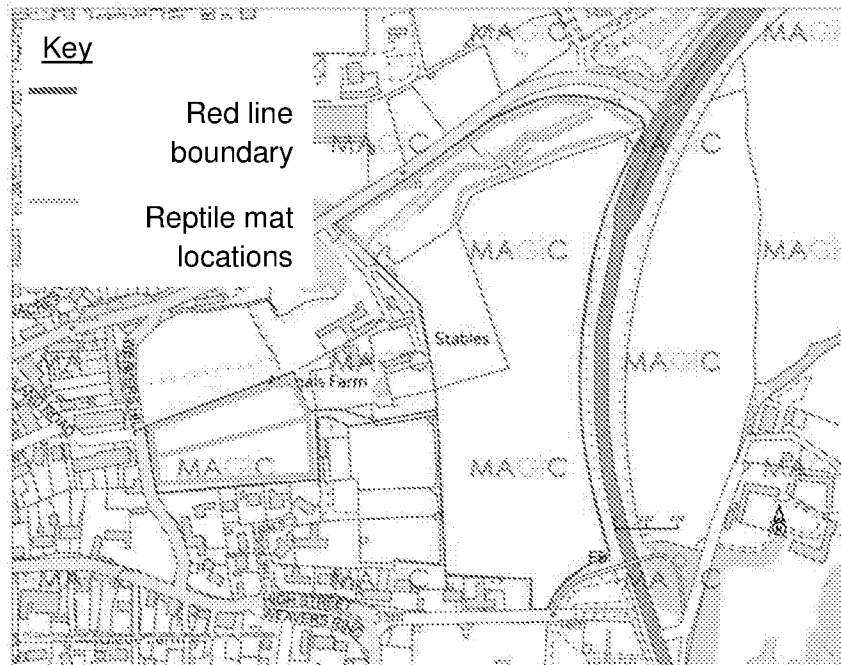
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National Planning Policy Framework (2019), 978-1-5286-1033-9.

7 Appendices

Appendix A: Indicative location of reptile mats



Appendix B: Relevant protected species legislation

Species	Relevant Legislation	Level of Protection
Reptiles	Partially protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act.	The WCA (1981) makes it an offence to: - intentionally kill or injure these animals - sell, offer for sale, advertise for sale, possess or transport for the purposes of selling any live or dead animals or part of these animals