



The Ecology Co-op

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Reptile Presence/Absence Survey Report

Land North of Tile Barn Farm

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Report Summary

1. A reptile presence/absence survey was carried out between the 14th of May and the 23rd of June 2020 on land north of Tile Barn Farm to ascertain what, if any, reptile species are present on the site, further to a proposal to construct a residential dwelling and access road. This survey has been carried out further to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) by The Ecology Co-op on the 8th of April 2020 by Sophie Bradfield BSc, which identified suitable habitat at the site for reptiles.
2. These surveys were undertaken by Sophie Bradfield BSc using widely accepted best practice methods.
3. The site is situated North of Tile Barn Farm in Barnham, Bognor Regis, West Sussex. The size of the area surveyed is approximately 0.1 hectares and comprises traditional orchard trees, scattered semi-mature trees, non-native shrubs, tall grassland, a leaf litter pile and a species-rich mature hedgerow.
4. The survey was carried out by placing 9 artificial refugia in suitable areas across the site. A total of seven survey visits were undertaken and the highest count of reptiles from these visits used to estimate the population of each reptile species on the site as low, medium or exceptional.
5. This survey has concluded that there is a likely absence of reptiles across the proposed development site and therefore there is no need for species-specific mitigation. However, in the unlikely event that reptiles are discovered during any stage of the construction then work must be suspended, and a suitably qualified Ecologist must be contacted.
6. Several notable bird species including green woodpecker, dunnock and song thrush were observed on site during the reptile surveys. The species-specific bird boxes identified in the PEA will house both woodpecker and song thrush and must be incorporated in the design. Further details can be found within the Method Statement.

This report has been prepared by The Ecology Co-operation Ltd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. This report only becomes the property of the client once payment for it has been received in full.

We disclaim responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report gives details of a reptile presence / absence survey carried out by Sophie Bradfield BSc, on land north of Tile Barn Farm, Barnham, Bognor Regis. The grid reference for this site is SU 96455 03806.

The objective of the survey is to identify the presence or likely absence of reptile species at the land north of Tile Barn Farm, determine approximate populations and provide mitigation advice should it be necessary.

This survey and report were carried out and produced at the request of Appleton Town Planning.

1.2 Background

The Ecology Co-operation was commissioned to undertake a reptile survey after potential habitat was identified during a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by The Ecology Co-operation in April 2020¹ and from biodiversity records requested from Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC). Records for slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus* were identified within 200m of the site from the SxBRC data search, with the most recent records being slow-worm and common lizards dated 2015.

The assessment was carried out further to a proposal to construct a residential dwelling, to include an access route with a visibility splay along the western boundary hedgerow. Two new hedgerows to the north and south are included within the landscaping plans (see Figure 2).

1.3 Site Description

The site is situated north of Tile Barn Farm, Barnham, Bognor Regis Sussex (see Figure 1). The site comprised priority habitat traditional orchard trees, scattered semi-mature trees, non-native shrubs, tall grassland, a leaf-litter pile and a species-rich mature hedgerow (see Figure 3 to 5). The site is well connected to other habitats favourable to reptiles with the hedgerow and its grassy margins continuing to the north and to the south.

¹ The Ecology Co-op (2020). Ecological Impact Assessment. Land North of Tile Barn Farm.



Figure 1. An aerial image showing the location of the site. The approximate site boundary is outlined in red. Image produced courtesy of Google maps (map data ©2020 Google)

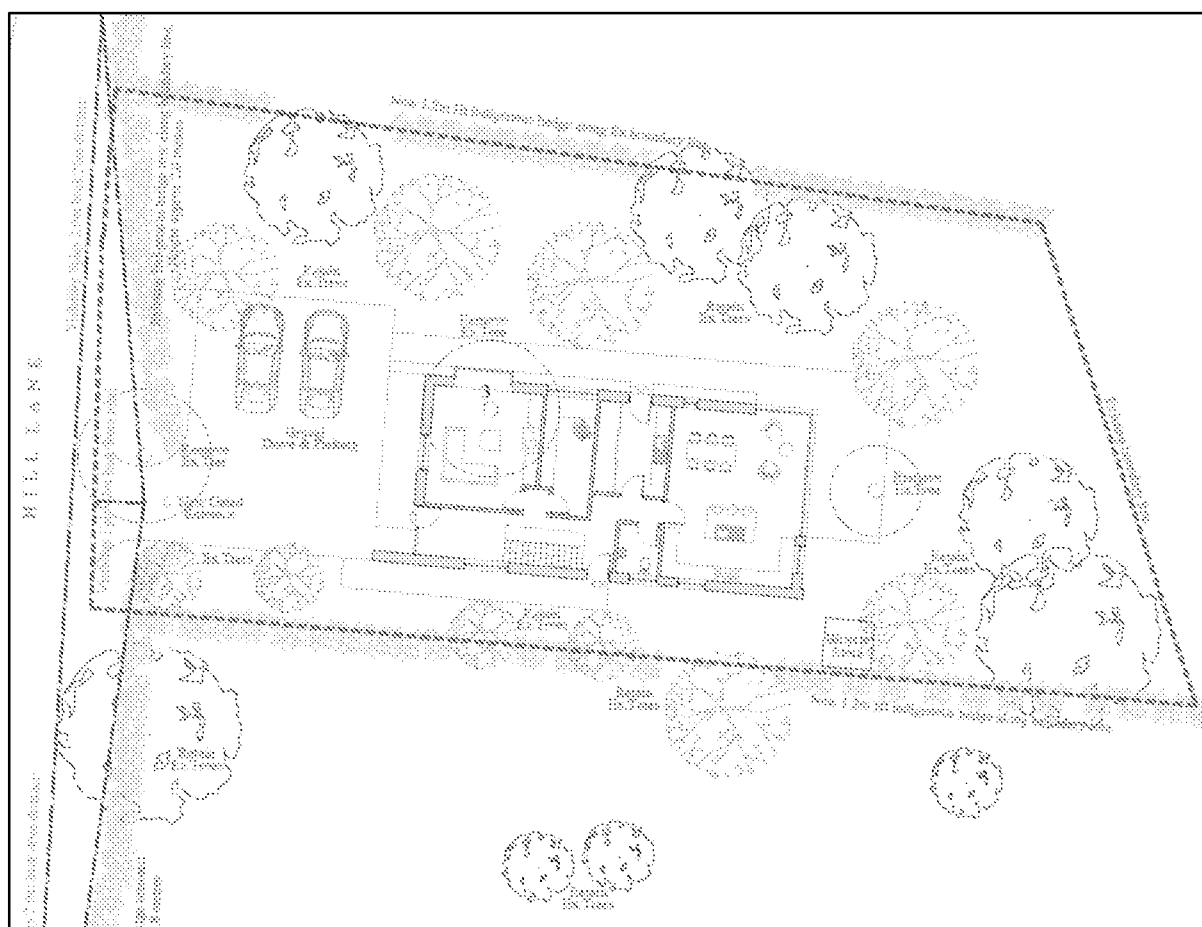


Figure 2. Proposed elevation plan, with the red line boundary highlighted in red. Three trees for removal are indicated by the dashed circles, whilst the visibility splay can be identified by the brown lines. Two new hedgerows are proposed along the northern and southern boundaries. Drawing no. 06 dated December 2019 produced courtesy of Pullen Architecture.



Figure 3. A view of the site looking west, with 11 fruiting trees in total within or adjacent to the site. The species-rich mature hedgerow is visible just beyond the trees.



Figure 4. The species-rich hedgerow where the new access road will be, looking west from within the site boundary. The leaf-litter pile can be seen within the north-west corner of the site.



Figure 5. Scattered trees including ornamental and non-native specimens to the east. Beyond this lies an arable field which is frequently harvested for crops.

2 LEGAL PROTECTION

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to reptiles. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation, but summarises the salient points.

Common lizard *Lacerta vivipara*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, and adder *Vipera berus* are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in respect of Section 9 (5) and part of Section 9(1). This protection was extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Under the legislation it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of these species; or
- Sell or attempt to sell any part of these species either alive or dead.

3 METHODOLOGY

The survey was carried out by placing artificial refugia around the site, in areas of suitable habitat for reptiles, which heat up in the sun and provide cover. A total of 9 survey sheets were placed in the long grass, close to shrubs, near the hedgerow and close to a leaf-litter pile on the 4th of May 2020 and left for a minimum of ten days to 'bed in' before the commencement of the survey. Reptiles are attracted to these refugia to warm up in the mornings and late afternoon to regulate their temperature and a suitably qualified surveyor can count the number and in some cases the sex of each species present. All survey visits were completed within the allocated temperature range stated in the national guidelines (9-18°C) and without the influence of rain.

A total of seven survey visits are undertaken and the highest count of adult reptiles from these visits is used to estimate the population of each reptile species on the site as low, medium or exceptional. The survey refugia were placed around the site, focusing on the areas of long vegetation where they would warm up in the morning or afternoon sun. The survey sheets were spaced evenly in all suitable reptile habitat around the site, where possible avoiding areas that would be constantly shaded.

Whilst there are no current formally adopted survey guidelines for common reptile surveys, the methodology described above is widely accepted and conforms to general guidance produced by Froglife².

² <https://www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Reptile-survey-booklet-3mm-bleed.pdf>



4 RESULTS

Table 1. Results of reptile survey undertaken at land north of Tile Barn Farm, Barnham.

Date	Start Time of Survey	Air Temp/Refugia Temp °C	Weather Notes, cc = Cloud cover	Species Total	Notes
14/05/20	14:45	14/30	50% cc, light breeze	0	Grass had been mown, client informed to avoid mowing.
18/05/20	08:30	13/30	5%cc, still	0	
27/05/20	08:30	17/39	5%cc, still	0	
05/06/20	09:45	14/42	25%cc, light breeze	0	Song thrush observed on site
09/06/20	17:15	16/17	10%cc light breeze	0	Green woodpecker seen
15/06/20	09:20	17/30	80%cc, still	0	
23/06/20	07:35	16/36	0%cc, still	0	Dunnock seen

4.1 Constraints/Limitations

The grass was found to be lightly mown on the 14th of May however the mats and the tall grass around the reptile mats remained intact. In addition, the grass remained at a height of approximately 15cm, therefore it is considered unlikely that mowing has significantly impacted the survey findings.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey assessment did not identify the presence of reptile species at this site. As the surveys were conducted without any notable constraint, it is concluded that it is unlikely that any reptiles were present foraging across this site at the time of the survey. As no reptiles have been identified during this assessment, there is no need for any species-specific mitigation or further survey effort. However, if any reptiles are discovered during any stage of the construction then work must be suspended, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice.

Further to the reptile survey findings, several protected bird species were identified on site. The nest boxes detailed in the PEA report are suitable for nesting song thrush and green woodpecker which reinforces the importance of including these specific bird boxes as part of the mitigation and enhancement strategy.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology-Co-op.