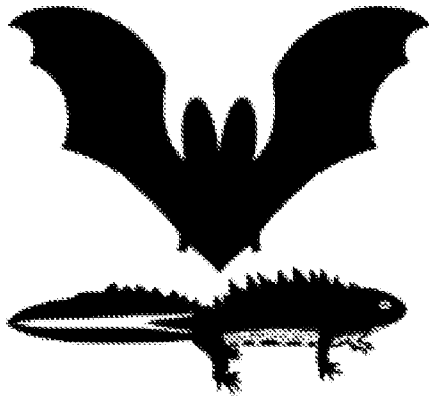
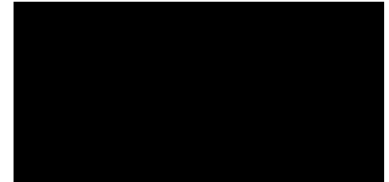




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Outline Reptile Mitigation Strategy Fairmeads Farm

**Binsted Lane
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Arundel
West Sussex
BN18 0LH**

**Thomas Johnson
16-049-RM
March 2017**

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We disclaim any 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.

1.1 Introduction

AEWC Ltd. was commissioned by Deborah Osbourne to create an outline reptile mitigation strategy to inform the proposed development of the site at Fairmeads Farm.

The primary aim of this strategy is to ensure the proposed development does not injure or kill reptiles that may potentially be present using the site and to ensure any population's longevity.

1.2 Background

The site is approximately 1ha in size and is largely semi improved grassland. Scattered trees, scrub, species poor hedgerows, buildings and hardstanding also occur throughout. The site is surrounded by arable fields, treelines connected to deciduous woodland and small number of residential dwellings.

The grassland habitat, in particular, the tussocky, rough grassland forming the eastern two thirds of the site, is considered suitable for reptile habitation. Also, the many wood, compost, refuse and hardcore piles offer good potential for reptile hibernacula.

Current proposals involve removing the two dilapidated buildings and erecting a new workshop and storage barn in the western third of the site (see Appendix I for the proposals plan). The eastern rough grassland will be retained.

A reptile survey has not been conducted at the site to confirm presence, or likely absence, and this cannot be conducted at this time of the year. However, it is believed that a low population is likely to be present given the wider habitat and area. This outline mitigation document is aimed at identifying the survey to be conducted to ascertain the species and population of reptiles that may be present, and outline the mitigation that will be implemented at the site to ensure that if reptiles are present then will be able to safely mitigated for ensuring that they are not harmed or killed and the population will be maintained.

1.3 Legislation

The four common UK reptile species (Adder, Grass Snake, Slow-worm and Common Lizard) are all partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended) with part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5) applying. As such it is an offence to:

- intentionally kill or injure any individual: and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisements to buy or sell individual reptiles.

1.4 Site Mitigation

Pre-commencement mitigation

Prior to starting any works on the site a full reptile presence absence survey will be undertaken to assess whether reptiles are using the site, what species and population.

A minimum of 20 refugia mats, (roofing felt squares $>0.5\text{m}^2$) will be placed throughout the one hectare site. Roofing felt will be used as refugia as it absorbs heat effectively, providing suitable basking locations to attract reptiles in the nearby vicinity. More mats will be placed in areas with the highest potential. 10 mats per hectare are recommended for general surveys (Froglife, 1999) but this number has been doubled to increase the chances of revealing any present reptiles.

The refugia will remain undisturbed for at least one week to allow any present reptiles to become familiar with the mats. Seven surveys of the refugia will be conducted on separate days, during times periods of suitable weather conditions with temperatures between 9-18°C, generally between April and September. The most suitable conditions are intermittent or hazy sunshine, low air temperature and little or no wind (Gent & Gibson, 1998).

The peak count of individual reptiles from each of these survey visits will be used to estimate the population size of any reptiles (see Table 1) and inform the level of mitigation required.

Table 1: Froglife (1999) Reptile Population Size Categories, using the maximum number of adults reptiles seen by observation and/or under refugia, by one person in one day at a refugia density of 10 per hectare.

Species	Low Population	Good Population	Exceptional Population
Adder	< 5	5-10	> 10
Grass Snake	< 5	5-10	> 10
Common Lizard	< 5	5-20	> 20
Slow Worm	< 5	5-20	> 20

Mitigation during development

The level of reptile mitigation required for the development at Fairmeads Farm will depend on the population sizes. The proposed development involves replacing the existing dilapidated buildings and creating two new buildings in the west of the site.

The areas of highest potential are being avoided, i.e. the rough grassland in the eastern two thirds of the site. It is unlikely that this development will have a negative impact on any reptiles present within this area.

Retaining reptile populations on site is the least invasive of mitigation techniques so will be prioritised if possible. If low or good populations of any reptile species are recorded, precautionary mitigation will be adopted. This will involve a habitat alteration technique and destructive search and watching brief. This will start with the progressive clearance of suitable vegetation over a period of time when reptiles are present to slowly cut down vegetation to a suitable low level making the area of proposed works unsuitable and allowing for reptiles to vacate the area of their own volition. This will need to be conducted or supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Once this is complete a destructive search will be conducted and supervised by a suitable ecologist to search and examine the development footprint for any reptiles, including the disassembly and removal of any potential hibernacula on the site. The destructive search will render the development footprint unsuitable for reptiles, encouraging them to use the retained grassland areas.

If necessary depending on the development schedule a temporary reptile fence may be erected around the proposed development to prevent any reptiles from re-entering the site.

If exceptional populations are recorded on site, translocation from the development footprint will occur. This will require:

- erecting reptile proof fencing around the development footprint
- placing refugia mats throughout the development footprint
- trapping and translocating reptiles to the retained eastern rough grassland or to an off-site receptor site. The location and management of the potential receptor site will be detailed once the reptile presence, species and population size has been identified.

Regardless of population size, the retained rough grassland will be enhanced to mitigate for the loss of habitat and hibernacula:

- Hibernacula will be created to replace the many existing debris piles. These will comprise piles of rubble, hardcore and/or logs, capped with topsoil and turf, and will measure at least 3m x 2m x 1m. More hibernacula should be created than were removed. These will be created along the boundary where it will be exposed to the sun and connected to wider areas of suitable habitat

1.5 Conclusion

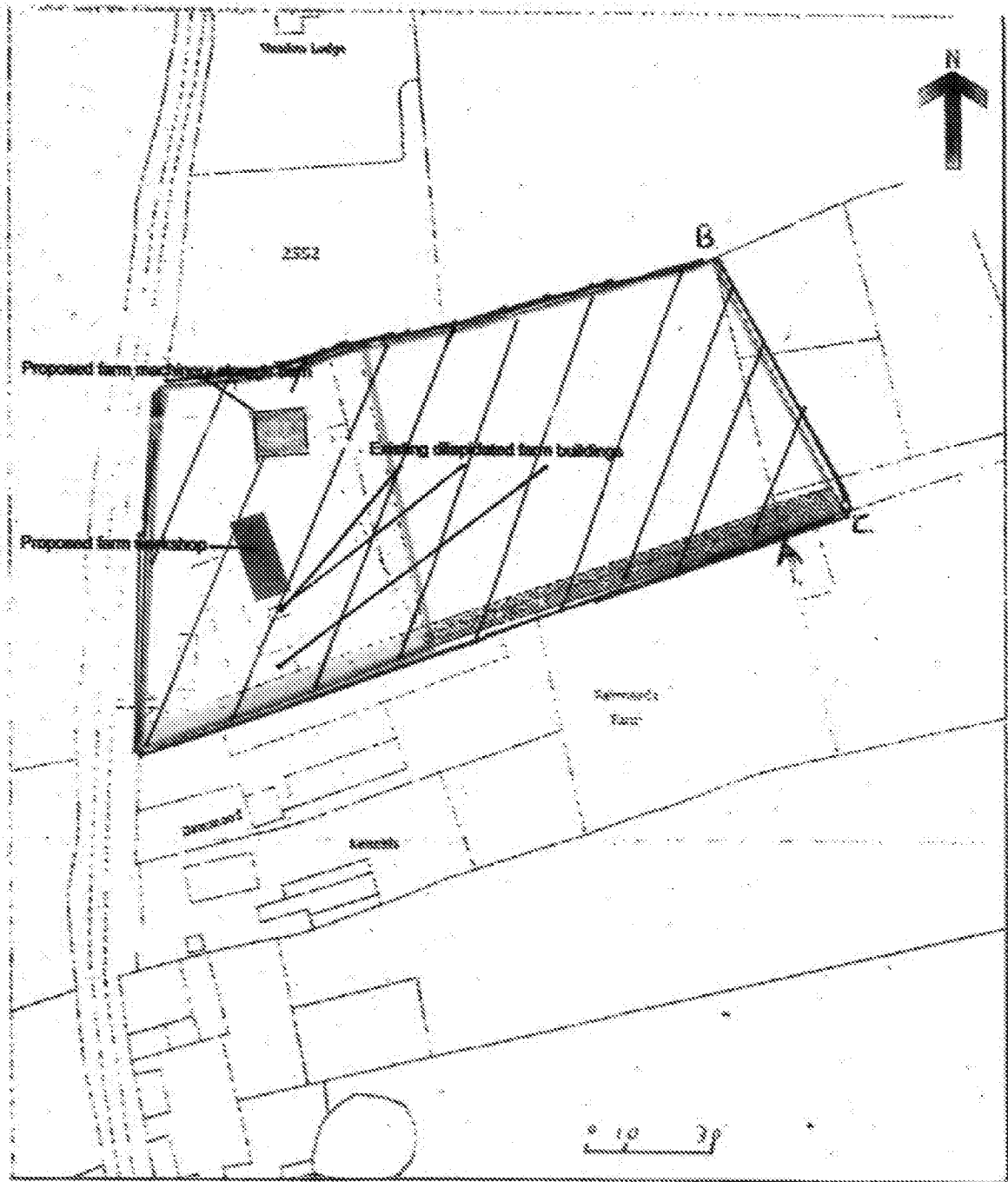
This document will need to be updated and methods confirmed with more detailed and relevant guidance if reptile presence is confirmed and population sizes have been identified. Provided the mitigation measures detailed in this document and the follow up document are implemented, proportionate measures to minimise the risk of negative impacts to reptiles present at Fairmeads Farm will have been taken. Consequently, all legislation pertaining to reptiles will have been complied with during the development process.

1.6 References

Froglife (1999). Reptile survey: An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice Sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth

Gent, T. & Gibson, S. (eds) (1998) Herpetofauna Workers' Manual. JNCC, Peterborough, UK.

Appendix I – Proposals Plan



Rural Associates Project Co-ordination Yaption Lodge North End Road Yaption West Sussex BN18 0DT Tel 01243 886426 e-mail ruralassoc@btinternet.co.uk		
Title Proposed New machinery and tractor storage barn, and farm workshop at Palmwood Farm Blackwell Lane Blackwell Arundel West Sussex BN18 8LH	Client Deborah Osborne Blackwell Cottage Blackwell Lane Norton Chichester PO18 8JU	
Scale 1:1250	Date 16/04/16	Site plan <i>24/07/16</i>