

Reptile Survey

of

**Land East of Drove Lane,
Yapton, West Sussex**

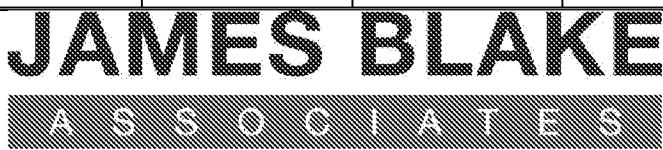
on behalf of

Barratt Homes Southern Counties.

October 2020

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Revision	Purpose	Originated	Checked	Authorised	Date
		DB	SR	JBA	September 2020
Job Number: JBA 19/291		 Title: Reptile Survey of Land East of Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex			

Disclaimer

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 east of Drove Lane, Yapton was undertaken between the 7th August and 14th September 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. However, if vegetation on the northern boundary is to be removed then this should be checked for reptiles by an ecologist prior to works.

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

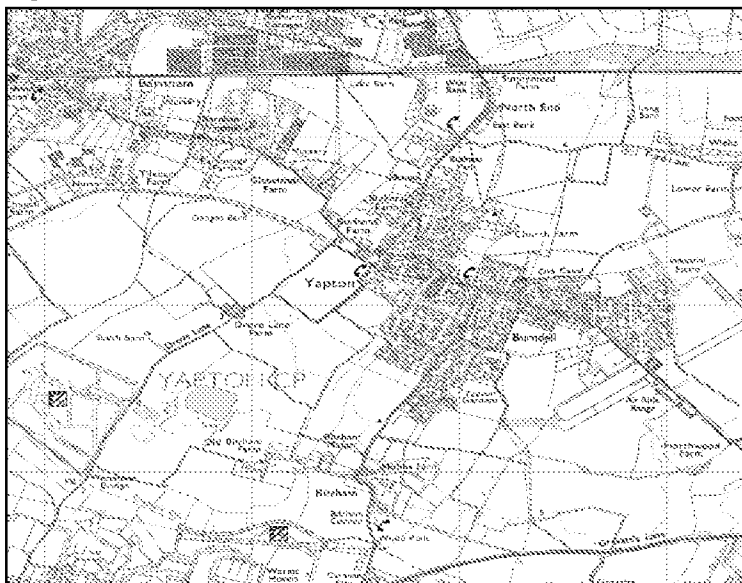
- 1.1 James Blake Associates Ltd were commissioned by Barratt Homes Southern Counties to carry out a reptile survey of land east of Drove Lane, Yapton. The site has no designated conservation status assigned to it.
- 1.2 All reptiles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. 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).

Previous surveys

- 1.3 An Ecological Walkover survey was carried out by James Blake Associates (2020). A reptile survey was conducted in 2016 by Lizard Ecology which concluded a 'low' population of reptiles were present on the northern boundary and northern adjacent habitats.

Site Description

- 1.4 The site is located adjacent (to the east) of Drove Lane and south of the B2233 in Yapton, West Sussex. See Figure 1 for site location. The site consists of arable land encompassed by an intensely managed hedgerow to the north, fencing with scattered trees to the north east, a ditch leading onto a public footpath transitioning into a small section of trees to the east, a small bund to the south and a dry ditch at the west/north eastern boundary (previously a wet ditch (JBA 2020) .

Figure 1: Site location

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Aims and objectives

1.5 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 by Sam Rigg BSc (Hons) ACIEEM, Daniel Blake BSc (Hons) Qualifying CIEEM and Laura Cobden BSc (Hons) MCIEEM between the 7th August and 14th September 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 Thirty five refuges, measuring approximately 0.25m², were laid down on the 7th August 2020. The refuges were laid in all areas of suitable reptile habitat on site, mainly the boundary margins (total of 0.5 hectares); see Appendix A for refuges placements. On each survey visit these items were also checked for reptiles.
- 2.4 The refuges were left for seven 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

- 3.1 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	14/08/20	Temperature: 19°C Overcast with sun breaks	0
2	17/08/20	Temperature: 20°C Sunny with cloudy spells	0
3	21/08/20	Temperature: 17 °C. Sunny with cloudy spells	0
4	24/08/20	Temperature: 19°C. Warm morning with heavy rain in the afternoon	0
5	27/08/20	Temperature: 17 °C. Partly cloudy with sunny breaks	0
6	30/07/20	Temperature: 13 °C. Cold morning with sunny breaks	0
7	14/09/20	Temperature: 18 °C. Sunny with cloudy spells	0

Reptile Population Assessment

- 3.2 Froglife (1999) provides means of evaluating reptile populations based on survey results using a density of 10 refuges per hectare. “low”, “good” or “exceptional” populations are based on numbers of adult reptiles recorded by one surveyor in one visit (see Table 2).

Table 2: Reptile population assessment *Froglife* (1999)

Species	Low Population	Good Population	Exceptional Population
Grass snake	Less than 5	5-10	Greater than 10
Adder	Less than 5	5-10	Greater than 10
Slow worm	Less than 5	5-20	Greater than 20
Common lizard	Less than 5	5-20	Greater than 20

4 Discussion and Enhancement

- 4.2 Survey visits were all carried out in suitable weather conditions at the optimal time of year for reptile surveys.
- 4.3 The density of refuges used was well above the recommended: Thirty-five refuges were used across approximately 0.5ha 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.
- 4.4 There were limitations to the survey as the northern boundary of the site is a public footpath and refuges were disturbed by members of the public; including relocating and removing of mats. A 2016 (Lizard Landscape Design, 2016) survey found a ‘low’ population of slow worms adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. Therefore, if the northern boundary vegetation

is to be removed then the area should be checked for reptiles by a qualified ecologist prior to works.

4.5 No reptiles were recorded using the artificial refuges during the 2020 survey period. 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.

4.5 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 snake and other wildlife.
- Log or rock piles located around the edges of the site could provide potential refuge for reptiles and other wildlife.

5 References

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

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

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

JBA 2020, Ecological Walkover Survey of Land East of Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex

Lizard Landscape Design (2016), Detailed Reptile Survey Report, Land Adjacent to Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex.

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

6 Appendices

Appendix A: Indicative location of reptile mats

