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Reptile Presence/Absence Survey Report

Land adjacent to Orchard Business Park, Yapton

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Report Summary

1. A reptile presence/absence survey was carried out between 24th of April and the 4th of June 2018 on land adjacent to Orchard Business Park, in Yapton, to ascertain what, if any, reptile species are present on the site as there is a proposal to construct six new residential properties. This is being completed further to a Phase 1 Habitat survey and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out by The Ecology Co-op in February 2018, which identified suitable habitat at the site for reptiles.
2. These surveys were undertaken by Kate Lewis BSc (Hons) MSc.
3. The site is situated adjacent to Orchard Business Park, which is located in the village of Yapton, West Sussex. It comprises a dirt track driveway, and three parcels of closely-mown amenity grassland, two of which appear to be used as garden spaces. These are each partially separated by a fence line and scattered trees. The site is bordered by intact hedges, a wooden fence line and scattered trees. To the north, west and east of the site there are a number of arable fields and to the south is a large residential area.
4. The survey was carried out by placing 14 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. No reptiles were recorded during the survey visits. This survey assessment of the land adjacent to Orchard Business Park, Yapton 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.

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.



CONTENTS PAGE

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	Purpose of the Report	4
1.2	Background	4
1.3	Site Description	4
2	LEGAL PROTECTION	7
3	METHODOLOGY.....	7
4	RESULTS	7
4.1	Constraints/Limitations	8
5	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	8



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report gives details of a reptile presence/absence survey carried out by Kate Lewis BSc (Hons) MSc, on land adjacent to Orchard Business Park, Yapton. The grid reference for this site is SU979037.

The objective of the survey is to identify the presence or likely absence of reptile species at the Orchard Business Park site, to determine approximate populations and provide mitigation advice should it be necessary.

This survey and report was carried out and produced at the request of Crayfern Homes.

1.2 Background

The Ecology Co-operation was commissioned to undertake a reptile presence/absence survey after potential reptile habitat was identified during a Phase 1 Habitat survey and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by The Ecology Co-operation in February 2018 and from biodiversity records requested from Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre. There were 45 records of slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, 15 of grass snake *Natrix natrix*, 1 adder *Vipera berus* and 35 for common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*. The closest of these was for the presence of 26 slow worms at 601m from the boundary of the site, dated between the 30/08/2010-17/09/2010.

The assessment was carried out further to a proposal to construct six new residential properties on the site (see Figure 2).

1.3 Site Description

The site is situated off North End Road, in the village of Yapton in West Sussex. The location of the site is shown in Figure 1.

This is a small site, measuring approximately 0.28 hectares (Ha). It is predominantly comprised of closely-mown amenity grassland (see Figure 3), which is separated into three parcels of land. There is a tightly-mown parcel of land on the western end of the site and two small parcels of land which appear to be garden spaces. The site is bordered by an ivy-covered fence line, a portion of hard standing with ornamental shrubs, a dirt track, scattered trees, a small portion of scattered scrub and intact species-poor hedges. On the northern site boundary within the first garden parcel was an earth bank with longer tussocky grass and some bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub (see Figure 4), which may provide cover and hibernacula for reptiles.



Figure 1. An aerial image showing the location of the site. The approximate site boundary is outlined in red.

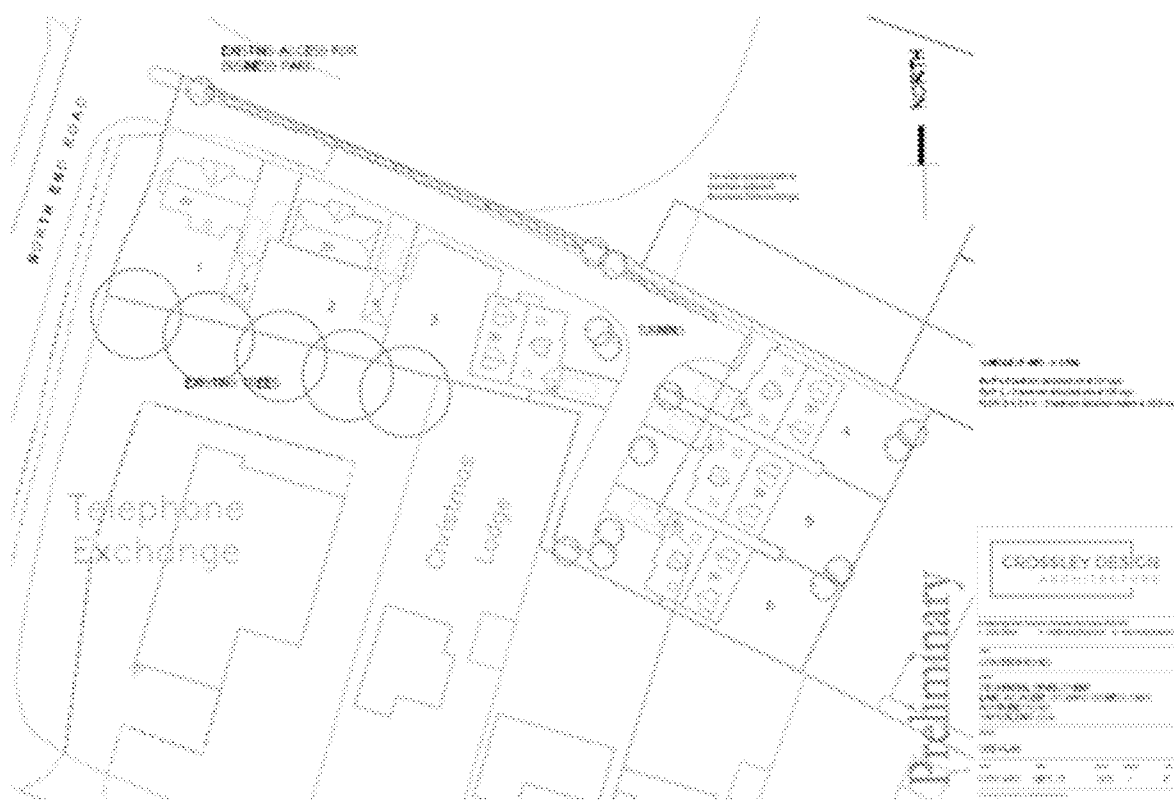


Figure 2. Proposed development plan for 6 new residential properties from Crossley Design Architecture.



Figure 3. Amenity grassland that makes up the majority of the site



Figure 4. Earth bank with longer grass, standard trees and some bramble scrub.



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 natrix*, 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 14 bitumen reptile refugia were placed in the longer grass, and near areas of scrub across the land adjacent to Orchard Business Park on the 11th of April 2018 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 appropriate temperature range stated in the best practice reptile survey guidelines (9-18°C) and without the influence of rain.

A total of seven survey visits are undertaken and the highest count of 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 and scrub 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 by trees.

4 RESULTS

The surveys were carried out between the 25th of April 2018 and the 4th of May 2018. During these visits no reptiles were found under the sheets or observed on the site. The weather conditions and survey results from each visit are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of reptile survey undertaken at Land adjacent to Orchard Business Park. SW – Slow worm, GS – Grass snake, CL – Common Lizard, Juv – Juvenile, SA – Sub adult, F- Female, M – Male.

Date	Start Time of Survey	Air Temp/ Refugia Temp (°C)	Weather Notes, cc = Cloud cover	Species Total
25/04/2018	09:30	13.5/34	CC=60%, BF1, sunny intervals	0
03/05/2018	09:50	14/47	CC=20%, BF0, sunny	0
11/05/2018	10:30	15/45	CC=0%, BF1, sunny	0



Land adjacent to Orchard Business Park – Reptile Survey

Date	Start Time of Survey	Air Temp/ Refugia Temp (°C)	Weather Notes, cc = Cloud cover	Species Total
16/05/2018	15:20	16/27	CC=95%, BF1, sunny intervals/overcast	0
25/05/2018	16:10	17/22	CC=40%, BF0, sunny intervals, hazy	0
29/05/2018	15:00	18/30	CC=100%, BF1, overcast	0
04/05/2018	09:00	17/28	CC=50%, BF1, sunny intervals	0

4.1 Constraints/Limitations

There were no constraints to this survey.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No reptiles were recorded during the survey visits. 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.

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