Gladman Developments Ltd

North Road (Land off), Glossop

REPTILE SURVEY REPORT

June 2013

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 FPCR Environment & Design Ltd were commissioned by Gladman Developments Ltd to undertake reptile surveys at a site proposed for development for the land at North Road, Glossop.

1.2 The site is located within the northern extent of Glossop town centred on grid reference SK 033 952 (See Figure 1). Surrounding landscape is composed predominantly of agricultural land, with residential development and gardens present to the south. Howard Park is situated directly south-west from the site boundary, providing a large area of green open space and a large network of trees.

1.3 Proposals for the site are for the creation of up to 150 dwellings and associated public open space.

1.4 The site comprised approximately 5.75 ha of grassland of varying management and diversity with trees, scrub and ruderal communities bounding the compartments. The site's perimeter is demarked by hedgerows, mature trees, scrub and barbed wire fencing. A drainage ditch and hedgerow bisect the site. Three waterbodies were identified immediately adjacent (within 3m), 40m and 60m from the site boundary. Stands of Japanese knotweed were identified within 5m from the site's north-eastern boundary. This species is classified as an invasive weed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under Section 14, Schedule 9 of the same act it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause the species to grow in the wild.

1.5 This report details the results of reptile surveys carried out in 2013.

2.0 LEGISLATION

2.1 All common reptile species, including slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and grass snake *Natrix natrix*, are partially protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation protects these animals from:

- intentional killing and injury;
- selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale or publishing advertisements to buy or sell a protected species.

2.2 This partial protection does not directly protect the habitat of these reptile species; however where these animals are present on land that is to be affected by development, the implications of the legislation are that providing that killing can reasonably be avoided then an operation is legal. Guidance provided by Natural England (English Nature 2004) and the Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK (Herptofanual Groups of Britain and Ireland 1999) recommends that this should be achieved by ensuring that:

- the animals must be protected from injury or killing;
- mitigation is provided to maintain the conservation status of the species;
- following operations the population should be monitored.

2.3 All common reptile species, including grass snake, are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Desktop study

3.1 In order to compile existing baseline information, relevant ecological information was requested from both statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations including:

- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (http://magic.defra.gov.uk)
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
- Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group (ARG)

3.2 Further inspection, using colour 1:25,000 OS base maps and aerial photographs (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) was also undertaken in order to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.

3.3 The search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence, as follows:

- 5km around the application area for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites).
- 2km around the application area for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- 1km around the application site for sites of County Importance (e.g. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) / Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and species records (e.g.: protected, UK BAP or notable species).

Field Survey

3.4 A strategic reptile presence / absence survey was undertaken at specific locations identified as offering potential habitat within the area of survey. The survey was undertaken based on methodology detailed in the *Herpetofauna Workers Manual* (Gent and Gibson, 1998) and *the Froglife Advice Sheet 10 - Reptile Survey* (Froglife 1999). Methods involved a search for basking reptiles on / under naturally occurring and strategically positioned artificial refugia. These were placed in locations that offered the most suitable habitat for common reptiles, i.e. structurally diverse grassland habitats with areas of bare ground/short vegetation. A total of 63 refugia were placed within the survey area. The indicative location and numbers of refugia placed is shown in Figure 1.

3.5 All of the surveys were undertaken between 17th May and 1st July 2013 by suitably experienced FPCR ecologists. The prevailing weather conditions, including relative wind speed, cloud cover, ambient temperature and any other notable weather, are provided in Table 1.

3.6 In addition, the surveys also followed the guidelines' recommendations by:

- Using regularly spaced corrugated tin sheeting / roofing felt (0.5m^2) as artificial refugia, with a black upper side;
- Approaching refugia from downwind and avoiding casting a shadow and with care so as to not disturb basking animals when checking;
- That lifting and replacing tins, to check for the presence of reptiles underneath in hot weather is undertaken with care, to avoid potential harm to any animals underneath;

Table 1: Date and Weather Conditions during Reptile Surveys

Survey	Date	Time	Temp.	Cloud	Rain	Wind (Beaufort Scale 0 - 12)
1	17.05.13		15	50%	None	0
2	31.05.13	9.30 - 10.30am	12	20%	None	0 - 1
3	05.06.13	9.30 - 10.30am	14	80%	None	0
4	11.06.13	8.30 - 9.30am	11	50-80%	Rain before and after - light showers	3 - 4
5	18.06.13	9.00 - 9.45am	16.2	60%	None	2
6	25.06.13	8.30 – 9.30am	16	40%	None	1
7	01.07.13	9.00 – 10.00am	12	90%	Light shower	2

Assessment

3.7 Reptile populations were assessed in accordance with population level criteria as stated in the Key Reptile Site Register (HGBI, 1998). This system classifies populations of individual reptile species into three population categories assessing the importance of the population (Table 2). These categories are based on the total number of animals observed during individual survey occasions.

Table 2: Key Reptile Site Survey Assessment Categories (HGBI 1998)

Species	Low Population (No. of individuals)	Good Population (No. of individuals)	Exceptional Population (No. of individuals)
Adder	<5	5 - 10	>10
Common lizard	<5	5 - 20	>20
Grass snake	<5	5 - 10	>10
Slow worm	<5	5 - 20	>20

Survey Limitations

3.8 There were no survey limitations and all surveys were carried out during suitable conditions. The survey results are therefore considered sufficient to adequately assess the presence or absence of reptiles and their population size (if present).

4.0 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Desk Study

4.1 There were no statutory or non-statutory sites within the search area that had been designated as a result of the reptile populations they support.

4.2 The local ARG group did not provide any specific details of records within 1km, however grass snake *Natrix natrix* and common toad *Bufo bufo* have been identified within the local area.

Reptile Survey

Habitat Assessment

4.3 Habitat suitable for reptile occupation (foraging, basking and cover) was noted throughout the sites' margins and within the tussocky grassland compartment. The hedgerow and drainage ditch bisecting the site were also considered to provide commuting and foraging opportunities for reptile species such as grass snake. These habitat features are to be retained and incorporated into the soft landscaping plans for the site. The further heavily managed grassland habitats were of limited use due to their lack of structure.

4.4 Areas lost to development would therefore be negligible, with habitat unaffected being far more likely to harbour populations of reptiles than that which will be removed.

Field Survey

4.5 Table 3 below gives full details of all reptile surveys undertaken. During the surveys no reptiles were recorded. Common toad *Bufo bufo* was recorded on three survey occasions.

Table 3: Reptile Survey Results

Survey	Date	Common Lizard	Grass Snake	Adder	Slow Worm	Other
1	17.05.13	None	None	None	None	
2	31.05.13	None	None	None	None	4 juvenile toads
3	05.06.13	None	None	None	None	
4	11.06.13	None	None	None	None	
5	18.06.13	None	None	None	None	7 adult toads

Survey	Date	Common Lizard	Grass Snake	Adder	Slow Worm	Other
6	25.06.13	None	None	None	None	3 adult toads
7	01.07.13	None	None	None	None	

Discussion

4.6 Consistent with the absence of local records, reptiles have not been recorded during the seven survey visits of the application site. From these results it can be concluded that the presence of reptiles can be reasonably discounted. It is, therefore, considered that these species provide no statutory constraints to the proposed development of the site and no further survey or mitigation is considered necessary.

4.7 Small numbers of common toad were recorded during the survey. Common toads, although still relatively common and widespread, are listed as Species of Principal Conservation Importance, due to continued population decline. As the development proposals will retain the habitats where they are found, along the hedgerows and brook, they are unlikely to result in any adverse impacts to the population of the species.

4.8 In the highly unlikely event that reptiles are recorded during works, activities should cease immediately and FPCR Environment and Design Ltd contacted for further advice.

Approximate locationa & number of reptile refugia

Total: 63

Gladman Developments Ltd

Land off North Road
Glossop, Derbyshire

REPTILE REFUGIA PLAN : 17/4/13

NTS @ A3 EJW

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