

Dinting Vale, Glossop.

REPTILE SURVEY REPORT

784-B039096 Rev 3

Wain Homes

May 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contents	Summary
Site Location	The site is located south off the A57 Dinting Vale, Glossop (centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SK 01926 94214).
Proposals	The proposal is for a new residential development of 92 properties, associated infrastructure and landscaping.
Scope of this Survey(s)	<p>The purpose of this assessment is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the presence or likely absence of reptiles on site. • Identify if any additional surveys are required to inform this assessment. • Determine if any potential impacts on reptiles are likely to arise from the development. • Provide preliminary advice and outline strategies to avoid/mitigate/compensate for any likely impacts on reptiles. • Identify opportunities for enhancement.
Results and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reptiles were recorded and are considered likely to be absent. • Common toad were recorded on site.
Recommendations	<p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reptiles were recorded during survey; therefore, reptiles are considered absent from the site and no further assessment or mitigation is considered necessary to inform future development (providing works commence within the validity period of this report). • Due to the potential suitability of habitats both on-site and the surrounding area a toolbox talk and Ecological Clerk of Works is recommended to protect any individuals which may traverse through the site. <p>Enhancements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement two hibernacula suitable for amphibian (and reptile) hibernation, to be placed in areas with reduced public interference. • Habitats should be managed to retain suitability for amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates.
Conclusions	The proposed recommendations would allow compliance with legislation.

GLOSSARY

DWT	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
ECoW	Ecological Clerk of Works
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
SAP	Species Action Plan
WCA5	Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 5

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tetra Tech was commissioned by Wain Homes in June 2022 to undertake a reptile survey of following recommendations in the Dinting Vale, Glossop. Ecological Appraisal (TEP, 2022).

This report has been prepared by Consultant Ecologist Katrina Caine and updated by Project Ecologist Jade Armstrong BSc (Hons) MSc and the conditions pertinent to it are provided in Appendix A.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is south off the A57 Dinting Vale, Glossop, eastern Manchester (centered at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SK 01926 94214) and measures approximately 4 Ha (Figure 1).

The site includes plantation broad-leaved woodland in the north with scattered broad-leaved trees throughout the site. The southern area of the site is dominated by marsh/marshy grassland with areas of dense/continuous scrub and tall ruderal. There is also a pocket of semi-improved neutral grassland to the north of the site and a hard standing road forming access to existing adjacent residential properties and an area of running water in the northeast corner of the site.

The site is bordered to the north by the A57 Dinting Vale; to the west by woodland and a rail corridor; and to the east and south by woodland and residential dwellings.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

It is understood that a new residential development is proposed with 92 properties, associated infrastructure and landscaping (Site drawing: 4263 101B Landscape Masterplan). The plans indicate that the marshy grassland, semi-improved neutral grassland, plantation woodland, tall ruderal, introduced shrub and scrub will mostly be lost to facilitate the proposals.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this assessment is to:

- Determine the presence or likely absence of reptiles within the site area.
- Identify if any additional surveys are required to inform this assessment.
- Determine if any potential impacts on reptiles are likely to arise from the development.
- Provide preliminary advice and outline strategies to avoid/mitigate/compensate for any likely impacts on reptiles.
- Identify opportunities for enhancement.

The details of this report will remain valid for a period of **eighteen months** (March 2024) from the date of the survey, after which the validity of this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether further updates are necessary.

The recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the red line boundary or development proposals which this report was based on.

Note that scientific names are provided at the first mention of each species and common names (where appropriate) are then used throughout the rest of the report for ease of reading.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 HISTORIC SURVEYS

Previous reports include:

- Dinting Vale, Glossop. Ecological Appraisal (TEP, 2022)

2.2 DESK STUDY

No update data search was undertaken as the 2022 data within the Dinting Vale, Glossop, Ecological Appraisal (TEP, 2022) was still considered valid.

2.3 FIELD SURVEYS

2.3.1 Presence / Likely Absence Surveys

All surveys were conducted by an experienced surveyor, Tetra Tech Consultant Ecologist Katrina Caine BSc (Hons).

Surveys were undertaken in accordance with the Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent & Gibson, 2003) and Advice Sheet 10 – Reptile Survey (Froglife, 1999) and comprised the use of two complementary methods – direct observation and artificial refuge checks. These two methods were applied over seven visits from July 2022 to September 2022 in suitable weather conditions.

Direct observation required surveyors to walk slowly towards suitable basking spots and artificial refuges, scanning 3-4 m ahead of footfall to observe any reptiles which may be basking out in the open or upon natural/artificial refuges. Natural refuges include features like embankments, compost heaps, hedgerow bases, dry stone walls, sun traps, edge habitats, piles of logs, brash and bricks. Artificial refuges are sections of bitumen roofing felt approximately 1x2m, which are placed across the site in areas considered to have habitat suitable to support reptile activity (see Figure 2 for artificial refuge placement plan).

On 20th June 2022 refugia were set out in suitable areas, these were then left undisturbed on the site for two weeks prior to the commencement of surveys. This allowed the refugia to settle within the environment and reptiles, if present, to find and utilize them.

On each visit, each refuge was first checked for basking individuals from a distance before being hand searched for sheltering reptiles.

Weather conditions for each survey visit are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Dates and Weather Conditions

Survey No.	Date	Time		Air Temperature (°C)		Wind Speed	Cloud Cover (Oktas /8)	Precipitation (%)
		Start	End	Initial	Final			
1	26/07/22	08:30	09:40	14	16	1	3/8	0
2	03/08/22	07:50	09:00	18	18	2	2/8	0
3	22/08/22	08:00	09:10	17	18	3	7/8	0
4	02/09/22	08:10	09:25	17	17	2	4/8	0
5	06/09/22	07:40	09:15	16	16	1	7/8	0
6	10/09/22	08:00	09:20	15	15	2	8/8	0

Survey No.	Date	Time		Air Temperature (°C)		Wind Speed	Cloud Cover (Oktas /8)	Precipitation (%)
		Start	End	Initial	Final			
7	15/09/22	08:15	09:45	12	13	1	7/8	0

2.4 LIMITATIONS

All survey visits were undertaken during suitable temperature conditions, (see Table 1). The temperatures recorded ranged between 10°C – 20 °C, which is within the guidance of 9°C - 20°C (Froglife, 2015).

The surveys were undertaken during the time of year when reptiles are active (March to October). July and early August can be a sub-optimal survey months for reptiles as warmer temperatures mean that they are less likely to use refugia. However, it is noted the temperature ranges during all visits were appropriate for survey.

During the survey multiple mats were removed from the survey site by members of the public, this was not seen as a limitation as this occurred on visit 6 of 7. As the majority of the survey effort had been completed this is unlikely to significantly affect the results gained.

The details of this report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of the survey, after which the validity of this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether further updates are necessary. Note that the recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the red line boundary or development proposals which this report was based on.

3.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1 HISTORIC SURVEYS

TEP (2021) Ecological Assessment.

TEP completed an ecological assessment for the site in November 2021. The desk study completed to inform the ecological appraisal identified one record of grass snake *Natrix helvetica* 800m east of the site.

The survey completed for the ecological assessment recorded dense scrub, tall ruderal, grassland, pond and stream habitats on site, such habitats provide suitable foraging, commuting and sheltering habitat for reptiles, particularly grass snake and slow worm *Anguis fragilis* (WCA5). There is terrestrial connectivity with habitats to the west of the site, along the woodland corridor and railway sidings where reptiles may be present.

No detailed reptile surveys were completed by TEP.

3.2 FIELD STUDY

No reptiles were recorded during any of the seven field surveys carried out on site.

During survey visits, one common toad was recorded on 15th September 2022 and a second common toad *Bufo bufo* was recorded on the 28th September 2022. The common toads were recorded along the northern boundary of the site under refugia mats and during a reptile site visit.

4.0 DISCUSSION

No reptiles were recorded during these surveys. Therefore, reptiles are considered absent from the site at the time of writing this report. Therefore, no further assessment is considered necessary to inform future development (providing works commence within the validity period of this report as highlighted above).

However, it is recommended that a precautionary approach is still adopted due to the potential suitability of habitats present within the site and the habitats immediately surrounding the site (LWS Gamesley sidings) to support low numbers of reptiles.

Before site work begins, all personnel involved will be provided with a toolbox talk by a suitably qualified ECoW to inform them of the potential presence of animals on site. It is recommended that a printout of the toolbox talk slides is then kept in the site office for reference and to be included in any following site inductions.

The toolbox talk will include:

- Risk of encountering species during the works;
- Basic identification of species including slow worm and common lizard; and
- What to do and / or who to contact in the event that an animal is identified during the works.

Key avoidance measures for reptiles during construction include the following:

- All removal of the below-ground parts of cleared vegetation e.g. scrub roots must be undertaken during the reptile active season (mid-March - end October inclusive) to avoid impacting on hibernating reptiles;
- Removal of any other natural and / or artificial refugia will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation period (November – mid March inclusive) and will be supervised by an ECoW;
- Strimming grassland to a short sward to displace reptiles from areas where they could be killed or injured, provided that there is a suitable safe area that reptiles can move to;
- Any pipes stored, or installed on-site, with a diameter of greater than 200mm should be covered or capped at night to reduce the risk of animals becoming trapped inside;
- Backfilling excavations before the end of the day, or covering of excavations greater than 300 mm depth before nightfall;
- Escape routes incorporated into shallower excavations if covering is not practicable, such as escape boards or shallow sloped sides;
- Daily checks of any excavations should be made by contractors prior to commencing work to ensure that no animals have become trapped in the excavations. Should a trapped protected / notable species be found within the works, the supervising ECoW or Natural England should be contacted immediately for advice;
- Storage of waste and materials to avoid creating potential resting places for reptiles, by raising materials off the ground; and

If any injured animals are found during works, then all works should stop immediately the animal should be taken to an appropriate wildlife hospital or centre for relocation. The incident should then be reported to the ECoW and Natural England.

It is noted that common toads were recorded on site. Common toads occupy similar terrestrial habitat niches to reptiles and so have been recorded within this report. Common toads are recognised as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under **Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006a**. Therefore,

legislation requires that planning authorities need to ensure that common toads are protected from the adverse effects of development.

4.1 ENHANCEMENT

It is a requirement of the NPPF to provide enhancements for biodiversity as part of development. As reptiles are considered to be currently absent but have been recorded in the wider area (grass snake 800m) and common toad are present in low numbers, the following measures are proposed to enhance the:

- Create two hibernacula suitable for amphibian (and reptile) hibernation, to be placed in areas with reduced public interference.
- Areas of grassland and potential woodland which have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development should be managed to retain habitat suitability for amphibians and invertebrates in order to maintain foraging value of the site for common toad. Management regimes should include a relaxed mowing schedule.

REFERENCES

- English Nature, (2004), Reptiles: guidelines for developers. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Froglife (1997). Advice Sheet 10 – Reptile Survey An introduction of planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation.
- Froglife (2015) Surveying for reptiles - Tips, techniques and skills to help you survey for reptiles.
- Gent, T. & Gibson, S. (2003) Herpetofauna Workers' Manual. JNCC, Peterborough.
- Herpetological Conservation Trust (2008) National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme.
- TEP (2022) Dinting Vale Ecological Assessment.
- Tetra Tech (2019) Bio-Security Policy

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Reptile Mat Location Plan



Site Location Plan

Dinting Vale

Wain Homes Ltd



Legend

Site boundary

Notes:

Drawn by: CD
 Checked by: JA
 Office: Southampton

Figure No. 1
 Revision No. A

0 50 100 150 200 250 Meters 18 August 2022
 Scale 1:5,000 @A3 NGR: 401924E 394224N

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 Botleigh Grange
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Reptile Mat Location Plan

Dinting Vale

Wain Homes Ltd



Legend

- Site boundary
- Reptile mat location

Notes:

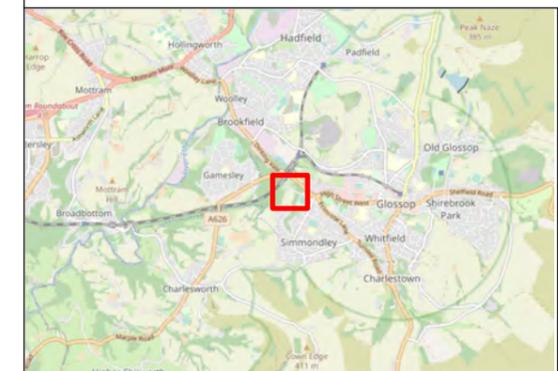
Drawn by: CL
 Checked by: KC
 Office: Southampton

Figure No. 2
 Revision No. A



08 September 2022
 NGR: 401924E 394224N

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APPENDIX A – REPORT CONDITIONS

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The report refers, within the limitations stated, to the environment of the site in the context of the surrounding area at the time of the inspections'. Environmental conditions can vary and no warranty is given as to the possibility of changes in the environment of the site and surrounding area at differing times. No investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or not fully representative information. Any monitoring or survey work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations, including for example timescale, seasonal and weather-related conditions. Actual environmental conditions are typically more complex and variable than the investigative, predictive and modelling approaches indicate in practice, and the output of such approaches cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive or accurate indicator of future conditions. The “shelf life” of the Report will be determined by a number of factors including; its original purpose, the Client’s instructions, passage of time, advances in technology and techniques, changes in legislation etc. and therefore may require future re-assessment.

The whole of the report must be read as other sections of the report may contain information which puts into context the findings in any executive summary.

The performance of environmental protection measures and of buildings and other structures in relation to acoustics, vibration, noise mitigation and other environmental issues is influenced to a large extent by the degree to which the relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the final design and specifications and the quality of workmanship and compliance with the specifications on site during construction. Tetra Tech accept no liability for issues with performance arising from such factors.

APPENDIX B – LEGISLATION & POLICY

Habitats Directive

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, or the 'Habitats Directive', is a European Union directive adopted in 1992 in response to the Bern Convention. Its aims are to protect approximately 220 habitats and 1,000 species listed in its several Annexes.

In the UK, the Habitats Directive is transposed into national law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales, and via the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) in Northern Ireland.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The 2018 amendments mainly related to the impact of the *People Over Wind* decision and some implications arising for neighbourhood plan development and a range of other planning tools including Local Development Orders and Permission in Principle – see here for full details:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1307/note/made>

The 2019 amendments related to the EU exit. Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant. The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of sites or species do not change.– see here for full details:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/9780111176573>

The Regulations make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, take eggs of or trade in smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* or sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

This is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in the UK. Since it was first introduced, the Act has been amended several times. All six species of reptile native to the United Kingdom are protected through inclusion under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and benefit from various levels of protection. This legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure these animals; and
- Sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisement to buy or sell individual reptiles.

The smooth snake and sand lizard are also listed under Schedule 5 Section 9.4b and 9.4c which makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally disturb while occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection; and
- Obstruct access to such a site.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 41 (S41) of this Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list (in consultation with Natural England) of Habitats and Species which are of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal (e.g. planning) functions. The S41 list includes 65 Habitats of Principal Importance and 1,150 Species of Principal Importance, 6 of which are reptiles.

National Planning Policy Framework

A revised NPPF was issued on 20th July 2021 (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2021) and currently supplements government Circular 06/2005, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005).

Circular 06/2005 states that the presence of protected species is a material consideration in the planning process. Paragraph 180 then goes on to confirm that: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) identify habitat and species conservation priorities at a local level (typically at the County level) and are usually drawn up by a consortium of local Government organisations and conservation charities.

Some LBAP's may also include Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and/or Species Action Plans (SAP), which are used to guide and inform the local decision-making process.

Derbyshire biodiversity action plan lists the following priority reptile species:

- Adder
- Common lizard
- Grass snake
- Slow worm