

784-B049272

Former Oak Park School

Reptile Survey Report

NHS Property Services Limited

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Document prepared on behalf of Tetra Tech Limited



TETRA TECH

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APPENDICES

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GLOSSARY

Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition
CEMP	Construction Ecological Management Plan
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ECoW	Ecological Clerk of Works
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MCIEEM	Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
SAP	Species Action Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contents	Summary
Site Location	<p>The 0.781 hectare (ha) site is located north of Lavant Drive in Havant and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 71984 07083. The site comprises predominantly of unmanaged grassland and mixed scrub with a small substation located in the centre. The surrounding landscape includes unmanaged land immediately to the north and east before reaching residential housing, parkland and Elmleigh Hospital. To the south is Oak Park clinic and residential housing and to the west is further residential housing. Approximately 70 m to the west of the site is Lavant Stream.</p>
Proposals	<p>The proposals are for vegetation clearance to be undertaken to inform a future development of key worker housing and associated infrastructure including parking, playground/open space and SuDS.</p>
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 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; and• Provide preliminary advice and outline strategies to avoid/mitigate/compensate for any likely impacts on reptiles.
Results and Evaluation	<p>There is suitable habitat present on site in the form of mixed scrub and grassland areas. The presence/ likely absence surveys recorded a breeding population of slow worm on site. This is likely to equate to a 'low' population as defined by Froglife (1999).</p> <p>Slow worms are protected from killing or injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). As such, a reptile translocation will be required to an offsite location.</p>
Recommendations	<p>A suitable receptor site will need to be identified and enhanced to support the additional reptiles to be moved into it. This may need to be guided by surveys of the receptor site to confirm if it can support additional reptiles. Off-site habitat enhancements should take place as soon as possible to give time for any necessary habitat management.</p> <p>On site:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As much suitable habitat as possible to be created on site with retained connectivity. • Suitable reptile habitat that needs to be removed to facilitate the development will be cleared of reptiles using the prescribed measures; and • Installation of temporary reptile exclusion fencing to prevent the movement of reptiles back onto the development area. <p>Reptile translocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take place between March and October. • Requires the placement of artificial refugia, and then a minimum of 60 days to trap and translocate reptiles. Once five clear days have passed with no reptiles found, no further visits will be required; and • Once the site is clear of reptiles, this will be followed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement strategy (vegetation clearance); and • Destructive search (top-soil clearance). <p>Final development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing to have gaps in, or gaps beneath where possible. <p>Any alterations to the plans are to be reviewed by the ecologist to inform updates to the reptile mitigation and enhancement.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	<p>Under the current proposals, the works can proceed and be carried out on site in accordance with legal requirements for the protection of slow worms if the mitigation within this report are followed.</p> <p>The current proposals should provide adequate and suitably enhanced sections to allow reptiles to recolonise on site post-development and allow movement around boundaries and adjacent areas and so, minimising impacts to slow worms.</p>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tetra Tech was commissioned by Planning Issues Ltd on 20th January 2025 to undertake a reptile survey of land at Former Oak Park, hereafter referred to as “the site”.

This report has been prepared by Assistant Ecologist Georgie Atkinson BSc (Hons) and the conditions pertinent to it are provided in Appendix A.

Reptiles are protected species, full details of that protection, including types of offences and policy position are provided in Appendix B.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The 0.781 hectare (ha) site is located north of Lavant Drive in Havant and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 71984 07083. It comprises predominantly of unmanaged grassland and mixed scrub with a small substation located in the centre. The surrounding landscape includes unmanaged land immediately to the north and east before reaching residential housing, parkland and Elmleigh Hospital. To the south is Oak Park clinic and residential housing and to the west is residential housing. Approximately 70 m to the west of the site is Lavant Stream.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

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The proposals are for vegetation clearance to be undertaken to inform a future development of key worker housing and associated infrastructure including parking, playground/open space and SuDS.

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; and
- Provide preliminary advice and outline strategies to avoid/mitigate/compensate for any likely impacts on reptiles.

The details of this report will remain valid for a period of eighteen months (CIEEM, 2019) from the date of the survey (January 2027), 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

Tetra Tech completed a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site in January 2025 (Tetra Tech, 2025a). The results of this survey have been reviewed and discussed in Section 3.1 below.

Other than the surveys undertaken by Tetra Tech, Tetra Tech are not aware of any previous survey work carried out at the site nor reports pertaining to ecological conditions at the site. However, a planning application for the adjacent site was granted in 2015 (APP/15/00303). The reports for this site were reviewed (Enzygo, 2015). As part of this application this site was included with the presence absence surveys, however, was excluded from translocation efforts.

2.2 DESK STUDY

The desktop study comprised two elements:

- A data search obtained from Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) in September 2024 of records of reptiles within 2 km of the site boundary; and
- Online element including a 2 km search using: Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>) website and Ordnance Survey (OS) and Aerial Imagery (<https://www.bing.com/maps>). This included a search for any designated sites within 2 km supporting reptiles. The search was conducted in January 2025.

2.3 FIELD SURVEYS

2.3.1 Biosecurity

All surveys were conducted in accordance with Tetra Tech Biosecurity Policy (March, 2025b).

2.3.2 Presence / Likely Absence Surveys

All surveys were conducted by experienced surveyors, Project Ecologist Chloe Mockridge-Smith, Assistant Ecologist Georgie Atkinson and Assistant Ecologist Ryan Pearson.

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 24th April 2025 to 8th July 2025 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 on site include features like sun traps, edge habitats, piles of logs, brash and bricks.

Artificial refuges are sections of bitumen roofing felts approximately 1 x 1 m, which are clearly numbered and placed across the site in areas considered to have habitat suitable to support reptile activity (see

Figure 2 for artificial refuge placement plan). As a general rule, the density of artificial refuges used should be 10 per ha. However, given the small area of the site, additional refugia were used in this instance.

On 1st April 2025, 30 refuges were set out in suitable areas, these were then left undisturbed on the site for 23 days prior to the commencement of surveys. This allowed the refuges to settle within the environment and reptiles, if present, to find and utilise them.

Due to vandalism on site r refuges needed to be redeployed on 5th June 2025 and left undisturbed for 12 days with surveys recommencing on the 17th June 2025.

The refugia were checked on seven occasions, in accordance with Froglife (2016). On each visit, each refuge was first checked for basking individuals from a distance before being hand searched for sheltering reptiles. The location and species of each reptile sighting was recorded to allow for analysis of distribution across the site. Where possible to do so animals were also aged and sexed.

Reptiles are active from March to October however it is considered that the most successful months to survey are April, May and September (Froglife, 1999 and 2016); although it is recognised that the exact optimal timing to survey is dependent on environmental variables such as temperature, rainfall and wind. Heavy rain, strong wind and high temperatures are unsuitable conditions to survey for reptiles. Froglife (1999) states that the best time of day to survey for reptiles is between 08:30 to 11:00 and between 16:00 and 18:30 when air temperature is between 9°C and 18°C. Weather conditions were recorded for each survey are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Dates and Weather Conditions – Presence / Likely Absence Survey

Survey No.	Date	Time		Air Temperature (°C)		Wind Speed		Cloud Cover Start (%)		Precipitation (%)	
		Start	End	Initial	Final	Initial	Final	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
1	24.04.25	16:19	16:47	16.0	16.0	Light air	Calm	40	40	None	None
2	01.05.25	09:00	09:40	18.0	18.0	Light air	Light air	20	20	None	None
3	17.06.25	08:30	09:00	18.0	18.0	Light air	Light air	0	0	None	None
4	23.06.25	08:00	08:27	16.0	17.0	Light Breeze	Calm	40	40	None	None
5	27.06.25	08:03	08:29	17.0	18.0	Gentle Breeze	Light Breeze	60	80	None	None
6	04.07.25	08:00	08:30	16.0	17.0	Light Breeze	Light Breeze	0	0	None	None
7	08.07.25	09:00	09:59	16.0	17.0	Light Breeze	Calm	20	20	None	None

2.4 LIMITATIONS

Information on the sex of the reptiles recorded during the first survey is not available. Information on whether the reptiles were adults, sub-adults or juveniles was provided during this survey, and therefore this is not considered to be a limitation of the survey as a population size estimate can still be calculated.

Some of the refugia were misplaced or moved due to vandalism on site. Due to this refugia needed to be redeployed on 5th June 2025. This pushed surveys back two weeks for the bedding period. Surveys then resumed on the 17th June 2025. In addition, temperatures at the start of June were above 18 degrees so would of not been suitable for reptile surveys to continue in those conditions. Surveys resumed once conditions and temperatures were within guidelines, whilst not within the optimal survey period due to ongoing vandalism of the site it was not considered possible to postpone surveys until September. Individual reptiles were recorded during the June and July surveys it and was not therefore seen as a major limitation.

Notwithstanding the limitations highlighted above, the survey effort applied is considered sufficient to meet the aims of the survey and this report, in accordance with the aforementioned guidelines.

The details of this report will remain valid for a period of 18 months (CIEEM, 2019) from the date of the survey (January 2027), 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

A PEA of the site was carried out by Tetra Tech in January 2025 (Tetra Tech, 2025a). The survey found the site to be suitable for reptiles due to the grassland and scrub on site, offering foraging and basking potential for widespread and common species of reptiles.

The adjacent site had planning permission granted in 2015 (APP/15/00303). This site included former oak park school land within the presence/absence reptile surveys. The surveys recorded a good population of slow worms (Enzygo, 2015). Reptile fencing was erected on site in order to undertake a translocation. A translocation of this site was carried out in 2016 with the 353 slow worms caught moved to Staunton Country Park (Enzygo, 2016). The translocation excluded the former oak park school site.

During our PEA (Tetra Tech, 2025a) sections of reptile fencing was found on site, with sections missing and or damaged.

3.2 DESK STUDY

The data search identified no known statutory designated sites which are designated in part for reptiles or non-statutory sites which are known to support reptiles within 2 km of the site.

The data search from HBIC returned two records of common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and 17 records of slow worm *Anguis fragilis* within 2 km of the site within the last 10 years. The closest record was recorded in 2019 in which a slow worm was recorded 20 m north east of site.

3.3 FIELD STUDY

Slow worms were recorded on site, predominantly in the northern section of the site. See Table 2 for summary survey results. When apparent, the sex of the individual was also recorded and noted within Table 2. Figure 3 shows the locations of reptile observations and the full results are given in Appendix C. Figures 3.1 – 3.7 illustrate the results from each survey. No grass snakes were recorded on site.

Table 2. Survey Results of the Site

Survey No.	Date	Records			
		Species	No. Adults	No. Sub-Adults	No. Juveniles
1	24.04.25	Slow worm	5 unknown sex	0	3
2	01.05.25	Slow worm	2 ♀ 2 ♂	0	0
3	17.06.25	Slow worm	3 ♀ 3 ♂	1	0
4	23.06.25	Slow worm	1 ♀, 1 ♂	0	0
5	27.06.25	Slow worm	0	0	1

Survey No.	Date	Records			
		Species	No. Adults	No. Sub-Adults	No. Juveniles
6	04.07.25	Slow worm	1 ♀, 1 ♂	2	1
7	07.07.25	Slow worm	1 ♀, 1 ♂	0	4
Key	♂ male, ♀ female				

As both male and female slow worms were found along with sub-adults and juveniles, it can be assumed that the site or the immediate offsite areas hosts a breeding population.

Based on the peak counts recorded, indicative population estimates (Froglife 1999) would usually require 20 visits to fully inform a population estimate) have been made in accordance with criteria as set out in Table 3 and are shown in Table 4.

As 0.781 hectare (ha) of suitable habitat was found on site and 30 times the recommended refugia density were used to detect reptiles, the peak counts were divided by 30 to allow estimation of the population size from the Froglife (1999) (Table 3).

Froglife's Advice Sheet 10 recommends using 10 refugia per hectare. Thirty refugia were used on site due to the amount of suitable habitat. Therefore, according to the stated guidance, a single refuge should have been distributed on this 0.781 hectare site. This gives a multiplying factor of 30. The peak count of six adults slow worms can then be divided by this multiplying factor to obtain a more accurate population size for the site. Ten refugia per 1 hectare $10 / 1 = 0.01$. $0.01 \times 0.781 = 0.00781$. Closest whole number is 1. $1 \times 30 = 30$ times more refugia. Therefore $6 / 30 = 0.2$.

Table 3. Assessing Population Size using Peak Counts (Froglife, 1999) *

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

* Figures in the above table refer to the maximum number of **adults** seen by observation and/or under refugia by one person in one day.

Table 4. Reptile Populations Based on Adjusted Results to Compensate for Increased Number of Refugia

Species	Peak Count	Population Estimate
Slow worm	0.2	Low population

* Figures in the above table refer to the maximum number of adults seen by observation and/or under mats by one person in one day.

Based on the assessment in Table 4, it is considered that at present the site is likely to support a **low** population of slow worms.

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 IMPACTS

Following the desk study and field survey, a low population of slow worms, likely breeding, have been confirmed as being present on site.

Without mitigation there are likely to be adverse effects on reptiles through loss of habitat, severance of connectivity, killing and injury and disturbance during the construction and operational phase of the proposed development. This would be a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and contrary to local and national planning policy.

4.1.1 Loss of Habitats

Based on the proposals, the mixed scrub to the north and west where the individuals were recorded will be lost permanently and replaced with landscaped and residential areas. The proposals also result in the remainder of the mixed scrub that could also support populations of slow worms will be lost.

Based on the proposals the grassland on the site will also be lost however, some will be created at the western boundary and as part of open space making some areas a temporary loss and others a permanent loss.

4.1.2 Loss of Connectivity

The entirety of the site is deemed suitable habitat for reptiles as it consists of grassland and scrub. The habitat on the northern and eastern boundaries connects to suitable habitat to the north of the site however it is noted the adjacent been granted for development of a care home, and not within control of the client.

The scrub is due to be lost permanently by site clearance. In addition, the construction phase will also result in all areas of the grassland to be lost. This could potentially result in individuals becoming isolated during the works.

The operational phase will create new grassland on site at the west of the site to provide future connectivity, however it is noted that existing infrastructure including roads act as land barriers, likely isolating the onsite population. With this in mind to ensure that the population is sustained a full translocation is deemed best with scope in the proposals to provide future suitable habitat and connectivity to any slow worms within the immediate landscape to the site.

4.1.3 Killing & Injury

Removal of suitable vegetation will be required to facilitate the proposed development. These works have the potential to kill and injure slow worms, if unmitigated, which is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).

During the operational phase there is potential for an increase in the number of cats and other domesticated pets living in the area due to the increase in residential units (The Mammal Society, 1997). Studies have shown that domestic cats do predate on reptiles, affecting the level of biodiversity in the area

(Trouwborst et al., 2020; Trouwborst & Homsen, 2020). Mitigation measures are also required to minimise harm to reptiles due to increased predation pressure from domestic cats.

4.1.4 Construction-phase Disturbance

All works in suitable reptile habitat will cause disturbance to any reptiles within these areas of the site. The disturbance would potentially be fatal should works be carried out during their hibernation period (generally accepted as October to March inclusive), where they are at increased risk of disturbance (unseasonal moving and use of bodily resources, unable to move away from harm) or without removing reptiles first during the remainder of the year. Unmitigated, works to suitable habitat will therefore likely cause harmful disturbance to reptiles, and potentially kill or injure them which would constitute an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)

4.1.5 Operational-phase Disturbance

Increased recreational use on site would likely cause disturbance to reptiles. This would reduce the areas' suitability for basking and would negatively impact upon animal health, due to constant movement away from residents. This would not, however, constitute an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), but would be undesirable as it could affect the ongoing viability of the on-site reptile population.

4.2 MITIGATION

As adverse effects on reptiles are anticipated, mitigation will be required to avoid an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), where it is illegal to cause injury or death to widespread reptile species (those found on site). In addition to this, consideration must be given to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (see Appendix B), which lists habitats and species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, which lists slow worms and grass snakes. Havant Borough Core Strategy: Local Development Framework (Havant Borough Council, 2011) and Havant Borough Local Plan (Havant Borough Council, 2014) (Appendix B) must also be reviewed in order to meet the need of Policy DM8 Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features Policy AL1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.

The mitigation hierarchy principles are:

- Avoidance – to avoid adverse effects as far as possible by designing out or using preventative measures during the construction process thus resulting in an environmental effect of neutral significance.
- Reduction – to minimise adverse effects as far as possible.
- Compensation – involves measures of the same value to off-set the impact; and
- Enhancement – involves improving management of or provision of new ecological features over and above those needed to mitigate and compensate for negative impacts.

4.2.1 Loss of Habitat

To satisfy the wildlife legislation, national and local planning policy and be in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy (CIEEM, 2024), the loss of suitable reptile habitat will be avoided and or minimised.

Where this is not possible, impacts to habitats must be appropriately compensated for and enhancements undertaken. The proposed development will be landscaped, leading to the creation of some areas of semi-natural grassland on site available for foraging and basking reptiles. This grassland will be located in the western section of the site with some limited connectivity around the site in the form of SuDS and trees. The scrub on site will be lost but there will be areas of native hedgerow, within the northern and western boundaries which will still offer protection for hibernating and partially basking reptiles.

4.2.2 Loss of Connectivity

It is anticipated that there will be loss of connectivity due to future development adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries. It is also noted that existing road infrastructure (Lavant Drive and Leigh Road) also act as barriers for movement for the reptiles. Any areas of suitable habitat will be located adjacent to a road therefore offering no methods of dispersal offer a means of dispersal into other areas of suitable vegetation to prevent isolation of site.

4.2.3 Killing & Injury

With works anticipated to clear large areas of suitable reptile habitat to facilitate the development, there is the potential to kill and injure reptiles on site.

Prior to the commencement of any works, any areas of suitable habitat proposed for removal will undergo a series of steps and these will be undertaken in a systematic approach under the strict supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. The works must be done under a detailed non-licensed method statement.

A brief summary of the steps required (with further details in sections below) is as follows:

- 1 Identification of a suitable offsite receptor site.
- 2 Installation of temporary reptile exclusion fencing.
- 3 Translocation of the reptiles.
- 4 Vegetation clearance; and
- 5 Destructive search (top-soil clearance).

1. Offsite Receptor Site

Prior to works on site a suitable offsite receptor site will need to be identified. As the adjacent planning application used Staunton Country Park, in 2016, it is considered that this would be the most suitable receptor site, however, liaison with the Council and Country Park will be required. To ensure suitable and additional shelter sites are available, placement of log piles and or hibernacula will likely be required.

2. Reptile Exclusion Fencing

To protect reptiles from entering the active work site, resulting in killing or injury, temporary reptile exclusion fencing will be installed around the edge of the retained suitable habitat along the site boundaries. The fence line will be erected along the boundaries due to uncertainty and potential of remnant slow worm populations on the adjacent care home site and connectivity to these areas offer a means of colonisation of the site and could bring a larger population of reptiles than surveyed onto the site.

The diagram in Plate 1 shows an example specification for temporary fencing (a polythene and wood stake style is suggested) which is suitable for this purpose. This fencing is durable, lasts approximately two years and can be easily removed after the works are completed.

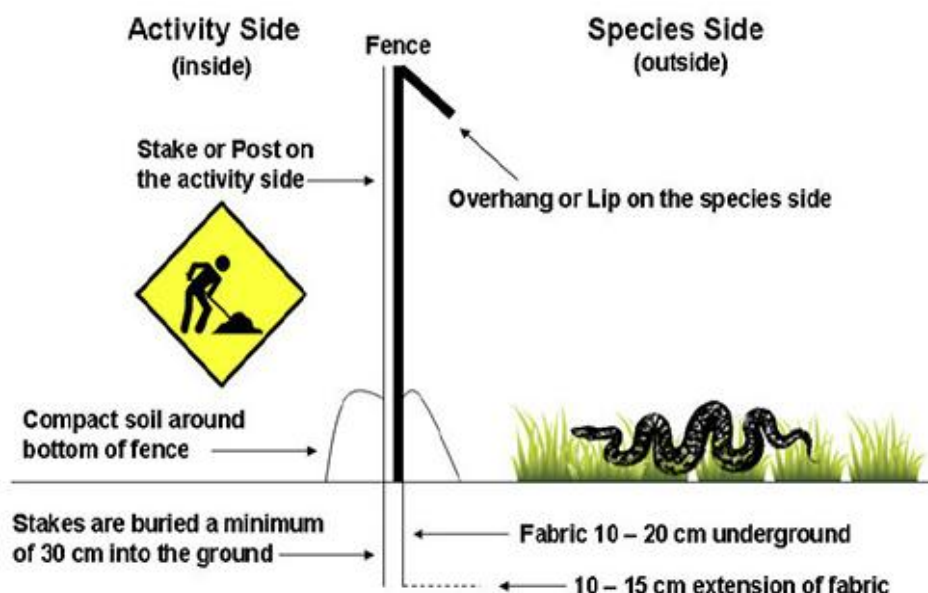


Plate 1 – Example specification for reptile exclusion fencing (Government of Ontario, 2023)

Any entrances or gaps in the fencing (i.e., to allow works access and around the newly created access roads and pathway) must be designed with ‘returns’ at the ends to direct animals away from the opening. Vegetation on the outer side of the fence must be managed to ensure it does not grow tall enough for animals to climb and get back into the works area. The wooden stakes of the temporary fencing must also be placed on the inner (works) side of the fence to prevent animals climbing back in.

Fencing is to remain in-situ throughout the construction phase, to prevent animals from returning to the site during the works. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be in place which will detail the ongoing monitoring of the fence during the construction phase.

3. Reptile Translocation

A translocation exercise will be carried out for a minimum of 60 suitable days (English Nature, 2004), to demonstrate that reasonable measures have been put in place to limit the potential for breaches in the legislative protection of reptiles on site. If it is anticipated that all reptiles are translocated in a shorter period of time, a trapping period of less than 60 days may be agreed with the LPA.

The translocation comprises the following steps:

- Identification of an offsite area of suitable habitat which will be enhanced for the purposes of supporting reptiles will be agreed by the LPA. This would be specified as the ‘receptor site’ for any relocated individuals. The habitats within the receptor area must be diverse in terms of structure and species composition. They will also need to provide all habitat requirements for reptiles such as hibernation and sheltering sites, such that the receptor site can provide for these animals all year.

- Surveys of the receptor site may be required to determine the carrying capacity of the receptor area, and to inform any enhancements required.
 - Habitat enhancements and management may be required to increase the carrying capacity of the receptor site.
- Trapping and translocation of all the suitable habitat to be lost, and any areas likely to be impacted by the construction phase. This would comprise fencing the area to be lost and deploying artificial cover objects / refugia within this enclosed area, to catch reptiles and move them into the receptor site. Habitat manipulation is usually advised to enhance capture methods and involves carefully reducing the amount of suitable vegetation cover by removing brambles, scrub and creating patches of grass which work as islands where remaining reptiles tend to concentrate. This may only be completed during the active season for reptiles (March to October inclusive) and must be conducted by a supervising ecologist. The optimum period for capturing reptiles is generally between late April and June, and late August to late September (HGBI, 2010).

The translocation effort normally required for a **low** population of slow worms involves placing a minimum of 30 refuges per hectare, and a minimum of 60 days of trapping in suitable weather conditions, until there have been five days clear with no individuals found (HGBI, 2010). However, a review of the translocation effort will be undertaken after 30 days. If any changes are considered to the translocation, then this will be agreed with the LPA ecologist. The exact duration of the translocation period is therefore subject to weather conditions and the ability to achieve five 'clear' days.

4. Vegetation clearance

The vegetation clearance will consist of a directional clearance of vegetation so that no suitable vegetation is trampled during this process and to reduce the area reptiles are able to disperse to so if any left after the translocation these can be safely moved to the reptile translocation area. All works must be supervised by a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) and must be carried out during the active season for reptiles (between March and October).

Clearance of vegetation will be completed in two stages:

- Vegetation must be cut down to 30 cm in height and the arisings left for at least 24 hours; and
- Vegetation will then be cut to ground level. All cuttings / arisings should be removed from the area to prevent reptiles using these vegetation piles for shelter. All vegetation removal should be done by hand and not using a rake in case any reptiles are still present.

5. Destructive search (top-soil removal)

This will need to take place where areas of suitable reptile habitat are being cleared (grassland and scrub across the site).

This process is also done in two stages. Stage 1 is a hand / fingertip search and Stage 2 involves topsoil removal.

Stage 1 will be conducted by an ECoW, who will search the ground for reptiles and remove any potential refuges. This will be done at the same time as the grass cuttings (Step 4) are to be removed. Any reptiles found will be collected by the ECoW and moved to the retained habitat strips, at least 50 m away from the site of works.

On the completion of Stage 1 and Stage 2 can commence. This stage involves clearing the topsoil from the work area. This will be done with an ECoW present and using the method below:

- The destructive search will be conducted using a medium sized excavator (approximately 8 - 10 tonnes) with a toothed bucket carrying out a gradual scrape of the top one to two inches (25 – 50 mm) of topsoil.
- The areas where soil is removed will be checked for reptiles by the ECoW and moved where necessary.
- Deeper scrapes will be completed where needed, such as beneath root systems, buried material, cracks or holes in the ground.
- The excavated spoil will be stored, as directed by the ECoW in consultation with the developers, in an area identified as unsuitable reptile habitat (i.e., already devoid of vegetation, such as inside the arable field area) during the topsoil strip; and
- After the strip is completed or a section is completed and a large enough area rendered unsuitable, the excavated spoil will then be compacted to prevent access by reptiles seeking refuge or hibernation within.

A proposed timetable for the works is provided in Table 5. Installation of reptile fencing, reptile displacement (including vegetation clearance) and destructive search can only be conducted during the active reptile season, to avoid disturbing or injuring hibernating reptiles.

Table 5. Proposed Timetable of Works

Proposed Works	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Installation of exclusion fencing												
Reptile Translocation												
Reptile Displacement (Vegetation Clearance)												
Destructive Search (Stage 1 and 2)												

Green=Works may proceed; Red = No works can be undertaken; Amber = Works can only be undertaken during suitable weather conditions.

For works to be undertaken in March, there must be a period of five days prior to works where overnight temperatures are consistently above 5 degrees Celsius, to ensure that hibernating reptiles are not disturbed. The same consideration must be made nearing October, where if temperature conditions overnight are consistently below this, works will need to stop as reptiles may be beginning to enter hibernation for winter. This is necessary to avoid the killing or injury of reptiles which would otherwise contravene the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).

4.2.4 Construction-phase disturbance

The disturbance of the reptiles during the construction phase and how to mitigate this is discussed in Section 4.2.3. If any reptiles are found after the completion of the works to render the site unsuitable for reptiles, the ECoW will be called immediately and any changes or further works to render the site unsuitable will be carried out.

The temporary fencing will need to be maintained and will be checked daily for damage throughout the whole of the construction-phase. This daily check will be done by either the site manager or designated personnel. If damaged, it will be repaired as soon as possible to ensure reptiles do not move back into the active site.

4.2.5 Operational-phase disturbance

For any local populations located within the wider landscape, to ensure movement across the site with access into the newly created gardens as well as other open spaces, either suitable fencing with gaps in it already should be used, or gaps beneath the fencing should be installed. These will also allow the dispersal of reptiles and other wildlife across the site.

Considering the potential for domestic cats within the proposed development, as well as increased disturbance from residents, enhancing the retained habitats to allow for additional shelter and enhanced foraging areas will be a requirement and will help to off-set negative impacts.

4.3 ENHANCEMENT

It is a requirement of the NPPF (Appendix B), the Havant Borough Core Strategy (Havant Borough Council, 2011) (Appendix B) and the mitigation hierarchy (CIEEM, 2024) to provide enhancements for biodiversity as part of development. This will ensure that any residual negative impacts from the proposed development works and operational phase are countered, giving the onsite reptile population a better habitat in which to live in perpetuity. Despite a full translocation being recommended for the slow worm population on site, it is possible that reptiles will recolonise the site following the completion of the works and the removal of the reptile exclusion fence as there is some connectivity to grassland and future development to the north of the site. For this reason, enhancement measures for reptiles are recommended. The following measure is proposed to enhance the site and off-site receptor area for reptiles.

To enhance the landscaped areas of the site, in particular the semi-natural grassland areas, wildflower meadow mixes will be sown to create diverse species rich grassland areas, which will attract insects and mammals for reptiles to feed on. Refer to landscape plan 240301 - 24.2005 - SL-01 - Proposed Site Plan-Ref. The management of the semi-natural grassland areas around the site should also be minimised where possible, to create diversity in vegetation content and structure.

4.4 MONITORING

Post development monitoring of the receptor site is proposed in order to determine the success of the above mitigation strategy. Monitoring will comprise seven monthly checks of artificial refuges following the methodology described in Section 2. Results of the monitoring surveys will inform the long-term management of the site by allowing management prescriptions to be revised.

5.0 SUMMARY

As a result of the findings of this reptile presence/likely absence survey it can be confirmed there is low population of slow worm, likely breeding, on site. From this, it is recommended that:

- Identification of a suitable receptor site to be enhanced (if necessary) to support additional reptiles from the development site.
- Any suitable reptile habitat that needs to be removed will be cleared of reptiles using the prescribed stages and undertaken out at a suitable time of year (generally accepted as March-October) and under suitable weather conditions.
- Enhancements to the boundary habitats to create suitable habitat, including select areas of the site, wildflower meadow mixes will be sown to create diverse species rich grassland areas
- Installation of temporary reptile exclusion fencing to prevent the movement of reptiles back onto the development area during the construction phase.
- A full reptile translocation to be carried out for a minimum of 60 days (unless a shorter period is agreed with the LPA) to ensure to limit the number of breaches in protected species legislation.
- Displacement strategy (vegetation clearance).
- Destructive search (top-soil clearance).
- New fencing around the gardens and other open spaces either suitable fencing with gaps in it already to be used or gaps beneath the fencing to be installed; and
- Any changes within the final plans are reviewed by the ecologist to inform updates to the reptile mitigation and enhancement.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Under the current proposals, the works can proceed and be carried out on site in accordance with legal requirements for the protection of slow worms if the mitigation within this report are followed.

The current proposals should provide adequate and suitably enhanced sections to allow reptiles to recolonise on site post-development and allow movement around boundaries and adjacent areas and so, minimising impacts to slow worms.

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FIGURES

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Refuge Placement Plan

Figures 3 – Reptile Results Plan



Site Location Plan

Former Oak Park

NHS Property Services Ltd

Legend

Site boundary



Notes:

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe
Checked by: Chloe Mockridge-Smith

Figure No. 1
Revision No. A
13 January 2025

0 10 20 30 40 Meters
Scale 1:1,000 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 471985E 107081N



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Artificial Refugia Locations

Former Oak Park

NHS Property Services Ltd



Legend

- Site boundary
- ⬡ Reptile refugia location

Notes:

Drawn by: Chris.Dawe
Checked by: Georgie Atkinson

Figure No. 2
Revision No. A
08 July 2025

0 5 10 15 20 Meters
Scale 1:500 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 471985E 107081N

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Reptile Survey Results

Former Oak Park

NHS Property Services Ltd



Legend

-  Site boundary
-  Slow Worm present

Notes:

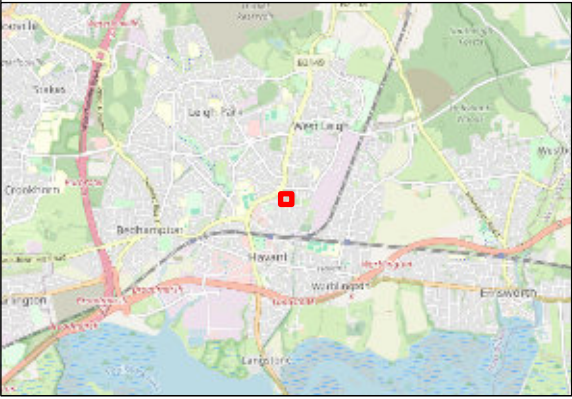
Drawn by: dylan.gussman
Checked by: Georgie Atkinson

Figure No. 3
Revision No. A
09 July 2025

0 5 10 15 20 Meters
Scale 1:500 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 471985E 107081N

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Report Conditions

Appendix B – Legislation & Policy

Appendix C – Survey Results

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

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, *Coronella austriaca*; and sand lizard, *Lacerta agilis* 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.

National Planning Policy Framework

A revised NPPF was issued in December 2024 (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2024) 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 186 of the NPPF 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 Planning Policy

Havant Borough Core Strategy: Local Development Framework (March 2011) (Havant Borough Council, 2011)

DM8 Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features

Development will only be permitted where it protects and enhances local habitats and landscape distinctiveness and which addresses all of the relevant criteria as set out below:

1. Protects natural features of nature conservation and/or amenity importance on the site, for example trees, woodlands, hedgerows, soils, streams, stream corridors, springs, ditches or ponds from damage, destruction and a deterioration in quality.
2. Sympathetically incorporates existing features into the overall design of the scheme including measures taken to ensure their continued survival.
3. Provides new landscape works that integrate successfully with the local environment and existing natural features, using local materials and plant species and making provision for future maintenance of new landscape works associated with new developments.
4. Ensures sequences of greenspaces are maintained and protects the attractiveness and visual amenity of all green open spaces that contribute to the identity of the borough

Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations: Adopted Version (July 2014) (Havant Borough Council, 2014)

Policy AL1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this local plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

1. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or
2. Specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

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.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY RESULTS

Survey No.	Date	Records					Notes
		Mat No.	Species	No. Adults	No. Sub-Adults	No. Juveniles	
1	24.04.25	8	Slow worm	2			
		15	Slow worm	1			
		20	Slow worm			3	
		22	Slow worm	1			
		23	Slow worm	1			
2	01.05.25	8	Slow worm	1 ♀			
		12	Slow worm	2 ♂ 1 ♀			
3	17.06.25	8	Slow worm		1		
		11	Slow worm	1 ♀ 1 ♂			
		12	Slow worm	1 ♀ 1 ♂			
		19	Slow worm	1 ♂			
		21	Slow worm	1 ♀			
4	23.06.25	8	Slow worm	1 ♀			
		21	Slow worm	1 ♂			
5	27.06.25	11	Slow worm			1	
6	04.07.25	11	Slow worm		2		
		15	Slow worm	1 ♀			
		21	Slow worm	1 ♂			
7	08.07.25	11	Slow worm	1 ♂		3	
		12	Slow worm			1	
		14	Slow worm			1	
		15	Slow worm	1 ♀			
Key	♂ male, ♀ female,						

