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Report prepared for: Robin Blake

For the Site of: Land at the Corner of Protea Way, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth Garden, SG6 1JT.

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Cherryfield Ecology has prepared this report for the named clients' use only.

Ecological reports are limited in shelf life, Natural England usually expect reports for licenses to be from the most recent or current season. Therefore, should the project not proceed within 12 months of this report an updated survey should be undertaken in order to check for changes that may have occurred on site. Information is believed to be accurate at the time of the survey; recommendations are made without bias based on good practice guidelines within the industry. However, species presence and ecological parameters can change over time.

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Full Common Reptile Survey

0.0 Non-Technical Summary

0.1 Background

The survey follows national guidelines allowing for refuges, commonly known as ‘felts’, to be placed across the site and then checked for reptiles. Recommendations for mitigation if considered necessary are detailed in section 4. If a deviation from the guidelines has been made, this will be detailed in the Method Section.

The following report details the findings and recommendations for the site of Land at the Corner of Protea Way, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth Garden, SG6 1JT.

The client commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake an EA as the proposals include for the construction of commercial units and associated features.

0.2 Results and Findings

Following a Stage 1 Ecological Appraisal undertaken on 30/07/2024 (Cherryfield Ecology, 2024), further surveys were recommended, which included for the set-up and seven checks across the months of September and October. These surveys have shown there is a likely absence of reptiles within the site.

0.3 Impact Assessment and Recommendations

No impacts are foreseen. No further surveys, or mitigation, is required; however:

If works are not carried out within 12 months of this report, an update survey is recommended. If reptiles are found throughout the development, all works must stop, and advice sought.

1.0 Introduction

The client, Robin Blake, has commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake a full reptile survey (FRS) for the site, Land at the Corner of Protea Way, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth Garden, SG6 1JT. Planning permission is being sought to construct commercial units and associated features.

This survey has utilised standard methods for checking for reptiles, by placing out felts, tins or carpet tiles across the site. These are then checked in suitable weather for reptiles. Whilst checking the felts, the surveyor also looks for reptiles moving around the site.

The survey was set up on 20/09/2024 and the inspections were conducted on 03/10/2024, 04/10/2024, 07/10/2024, 11/10/2024, 15/10/2024, 21/10/2024, and 28/10/2024.

The survey can only ever provide a 'snapshot' of the site at the time of the survey and circumstances may change following this report. Health and Safety restrictions or obstructions may limit the ability to find reptiles e.g. flooding.

Biological records have been requested to give the report context and allow a study of the surrounds. The information is often sensitive and, therefore, a synopsis is provided and the full data released separately for verification.

The survey can be conducted between March to October when temperatures of between 9-20°C are generally accepted to be the optimum for reptiles to be active. These months are generally considered optimal for observing active reptiles, except the warmest summer months (where temperatures can exceed 20°C, which is considered sub-optimal).

There are six species of reptiles in Great Britain (Edgar *et al.* 2010) and four of these are commonly found; the Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* and/or the Barred Grass Snake

Natrix helvetica), Adder *Vipera berus*, Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*.

All native British species of reptiles are legally protected through their inclusion in Schedule V of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such, all species are protected from deliberate killing or injury. Therefore, where development is permitted, and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to avoid committing an offence. The same act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without appropriate licensing.

Two species of reptile; the Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca* and Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* are further protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which defines UK protected species of animals (“rare reptiles”).

2.0 Methods

The survey follows the national guidelines, which is taken as following:

- Froglife (1999/2016), Reptile Survey, Froglife Advice Sheet 10, Froglife, Halesworth.
- Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (1998). Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programs: Maintaining Best Practice and Lawful Standards. HGBI.
- JNCC (2004). Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Reptiles and Amphibians.
- Edgar et al. (2010). Reptile Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile

The survey consists of placing out felts, tin or carpet tiles across the site. These are then checked for reptiles in suitable weather and notes are made of the species, sex and age.

From this information, an estimate of the population can be made e.g. more than 5 slow-worms on the site would be a good population.

If a deviation from the guidelines has been made, the reason and justification will be explained below:

Some of the survey effort was undertaken close together to make the most of the weather being suitable on those days (i.e. the 3rd and 4th October) weather was perfect for reptile surveys.

Although later in the season, a translocation was being completed nearby and were having successful capture and activity. Therefore, the survey effort would have found reptiles had they been present.

3.0 Results

The following section details the results of the desk study, inspection and survey, it includes MAGIC information, biological records data and map/aerial photo information.

3.1 Desk Study

The desk study is centred on Grid Reference - TL 22678 32870 and Postcode - SG6 1JT.

3.1.1 MAGIC

The following statutory sites and Natural England Protected Species (NEPS) have been located within the 2km search area (Figure 1).

Table 2: Magic search results

Receptor	Distance and Direction to Nearest (m/km)	Description
Statutory sites	N/A	
Granted protected species licenses	~1.7km to the northeast.	EPSM2011-3393 Plecotus auratus (Brown Long Eared), Pipistrellus pipistrellus (Common Pip)
Priority habitat	~1.3km to the north.	Areas of good quality semi-improved grassland.
	~1km to the northwest.	Areas of deciduous woodland within the 2km radius.
	~550m to the southwest.	Areas of wood pasture and parkland.

MAGiC

Magic Map

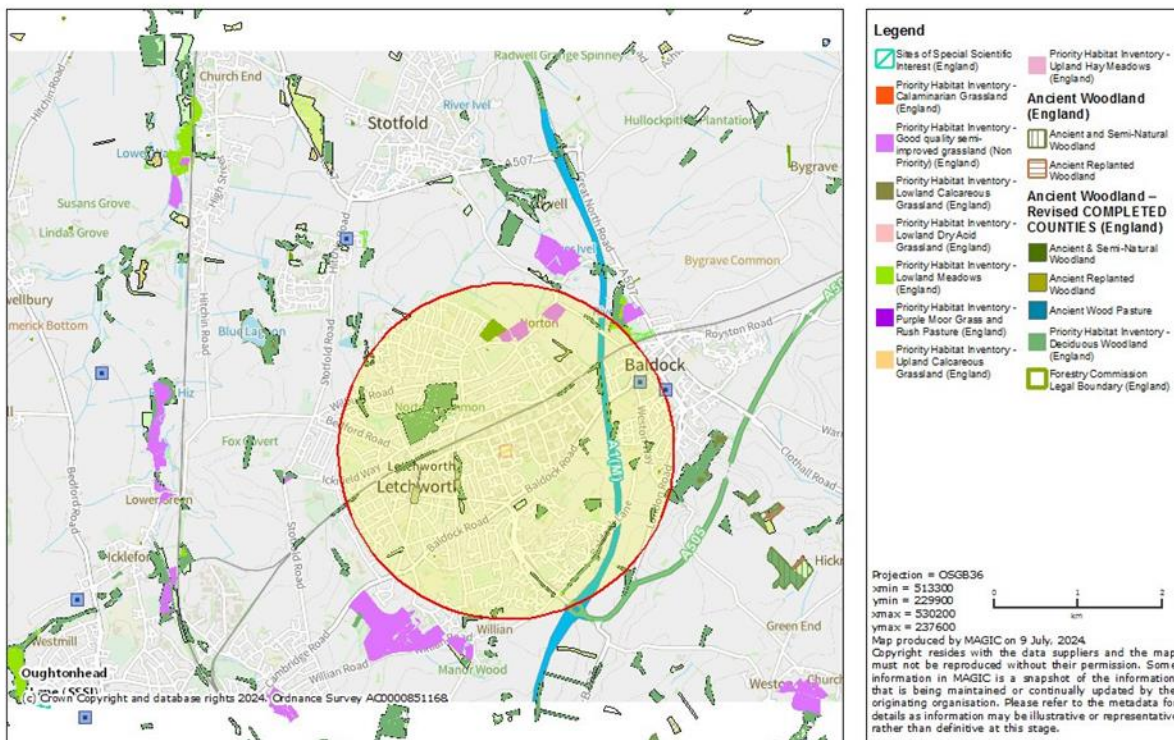


Figure 1: Magic Map Search

3.1.2 Biological Records Data

A standard search of existing records for protected species and nature reserves has been commissioned, below details the results and site context. *Data over 10 years old is not included.*

Biological records were obtained from Herts Environmental Records Centre (2024).

Table 3: Biological Records.

Species	Number of Records	Closest Record (accuracy)	Most Recent Record (year)
Reptiles			
Adder <i>Vipera berus</i>	-	-	-
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	-	-	-
Grass Snake <i>Natrix helvetica</i>	-	-	-
Slow-Worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	-	-	-

No reptile data has been recorded at the site and surrounds.

3.1.3 Site Location and Surrounds

The site is located in SG6 1JT, Hertfordshire and is surrounded by industrial estate and residential housing in the immediate local area. Table 3 details the commuting, feeding and habitat features in a 1km radius of the site.

Table 4: Habitat features suitable for use by protected species.

Feature	Description
Watercourses	There are no significant watercourses within the search area.
Waterbodies	Two small lakes are found ~575m east and ~600m to the west.
Woodland	Large area of woodland ~850m to the northwest.
Linear e.g. hedgerows	Dominated by garden hedges and a railway line ~400m to the north.
Pasture/arable/grassland	Community greens and arable fields ~300m to the southeast.
Other	Golf course ~2km to the southwest.

3.2 Observations

Table 5: Weather Records.

Date	Survey	Weather: Start	Weather: Finish
20/09/2024	Set-Up	Temp: 19 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 50% Precip: None	Temp: 19 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 50% Precip: None
03/10/2024	1 st Check	Temp: 15 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 40% Precip: None	Temp: 15 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 40% Precip: None
04/10/2024	2 nd Check	Temp: 16 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 30% Precip: None	Temp: 16 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 30% Precip: None
07/10/2024	3 rd Check	Temp: 18 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 30% Precip: None	Temp: 18 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 30% Precip: None
11/10/2024	4 th Check	Temp: 14 °C Wind: 0/12 Cloud: 10% Precip: None	Temp: 14 °C Wind: 0/12 Cloud: 10% Precip: None
15/10/2024	5 th Check	Temp: 16 °C Wind: 0/12 Cloud: 40% Precip: None	Temp: 16 °C Wind: 0/12 Cloud: 40% Precip: None
21/10/2024	6 th Check	Temp: 16 °C	Temp: 16 °C

		Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 30% Precip: None	Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 30% Precip: None
28/10/2024	7 th Check	Temp: 16 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 30% Precip: None	Temp: 16 °C Wind: 1/12 Cloud: 40% Precip: None

Table 5: Results and observations of the surveyors' checks (see Figure 2 for Site Plan)

Surveyor	Survey	Reptile Activity Observed and Other Observations
KG	Set-Up	No reptiles found.
JN	1 st check	No reptiles found.
JN	2 nd check	No reptiles found.
KG	3 rd check	No reptiles found.
EB	4 th check	No reptiles found.
KG	5 th check	No reptiles found.
KG	6 th check	No reptiles found.
KG	7 th check	No reptiles found.

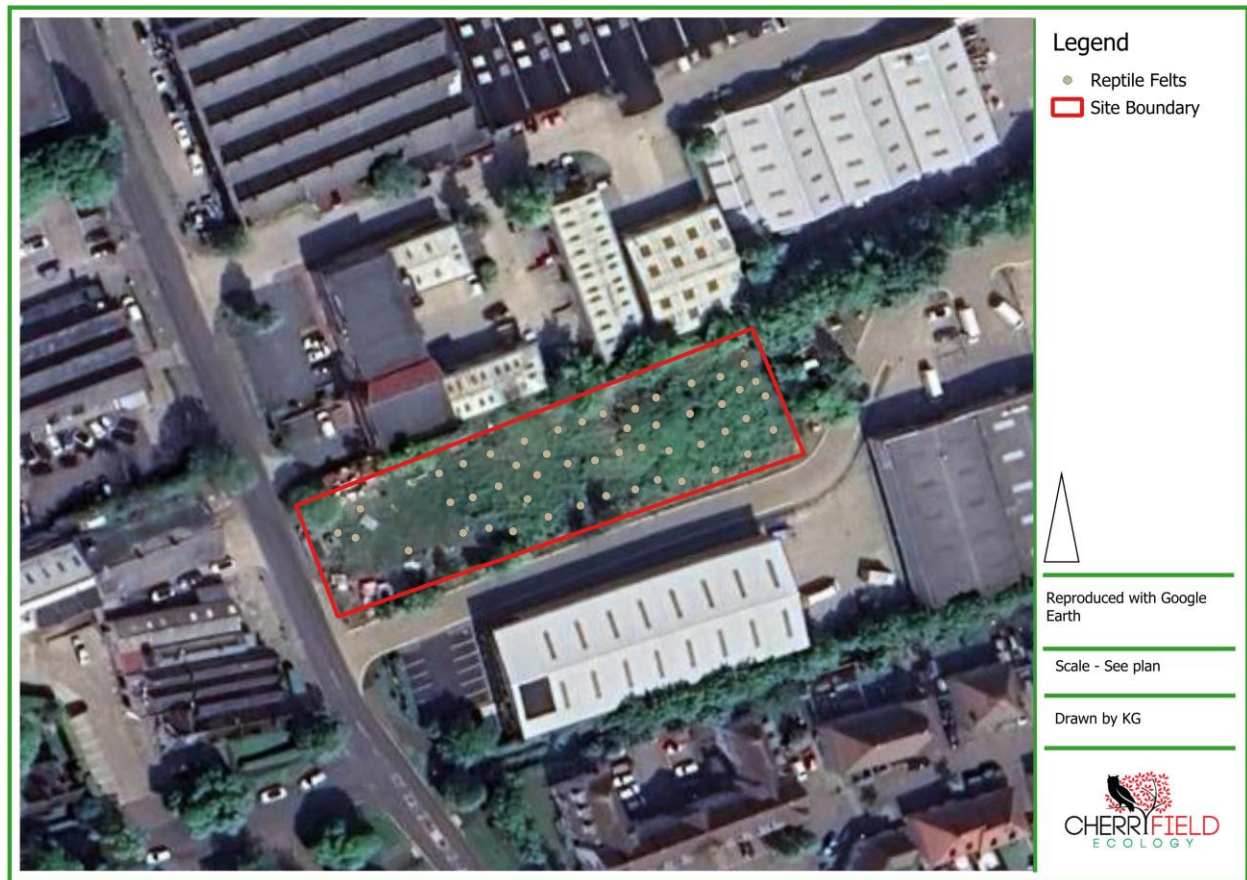


Figure 2: Site Plan- Dots are indicative of location

4.0 Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

The following section details the conclusions, discussion and recommendations in the context of the proposed works.

4.1 Conclusion and Discussion

Following a Stage 1 Ecological Appraisal, a full set of reptile surveys were recommended, as the bramble scrub and tall forbs habitats on-site provides moderate potential for reptiles to be present on site. The surveys showed that there is a likely absence of reptiles present within the site.

4.2 Potential Impact

Impact assessments must be proportionate to the scale of the development (CIEEM, 2018) and the following details a proportionate impact assessment based on current information.

Table 5: Impact Assessment.

Impact	No impacts foreseen
Characterisation of unmitigated impact on the feature	N/A
Effect without mitigation	N/A
Mitigation	N/A
Significance of effects of residual impacts (after mitigation)	N/A

4.3 Recommendations

No impacts are foreseen. No further surveys, or mitigation, is required; however:

If works are not carried out within 12 months of this report, an update survey is recommended. If reptiles are found throughout the development, all works must stop, and advice sought.

5.0 References

CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland:

Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal, September 2018. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, online at

<https://www.cieem.net/data/files/ECIA%20Guidelines.pdf>

Froglife Advice 'Sheet 10' Reptile Survey. An introduction to planning, conducting + interpreting surveys for snake + lizard conservation (1999/2016).

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005a). Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. London: HMSO.

Paul Edgar, Jim Foster and John Baker (2010). Reptile Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth

Records: Herts Environmental Records Centre (2024)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005). Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para.99