

RPS

SITE OFF MOSQUITO WAY,
HATFIELD: REPTILE SURVEY
REPORT



SITE OFF MOSQUITO WAY, HATFIELD: REPTILE SURVEY REPORT

27th October 2017

Our Ref: OXF10702

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Date:	27/10/17
Project Number/Document Reference:	OXF10702-R-001b
Client:	Primmer Olds B.A.S.

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To achieve the study objectives stated in this report, we were required to base our conclusions on the best information available during the period of the investigation and within the limits prescribed by our client in the agreement.

No investigative method can completely eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise or incomplete information. Thus, we cannot guarantee that the investigations completely defined the degree or extent of e.g. species abundances or habitat management efficacy described in the report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- RPS were commissioned by Primmer Olds B.A.S. to carry out surveys to establish presence / absence of reptiles in areas of suitable habitat on site.
- The study area is located within the Goodman Hatfield Business Park west of the city of Hatfield in Hertfordshire. It comprises a semi-natural grassland field immediately south of the newly constructed PCL Transport Warehouse. The site is 1.6 ha in size.
- The immediate surrounding area is both residential and industrial with Mosquito Way and Gypsy Moth Avenue bordering the site on the southeast and southwest respectively.
- Reptile sheets were placed out on the 15th of September 2017 and ten survey visits were carried out in September and October during suitable weather conditions to check for the presence of reptiles.
- No reptiles were found on site and reptiles are therefore not considered a constraint to the proposed development work on site.

1 INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

- 1.1 RPS were commissioned by Primmer Olds B.A.S. to carry out surveys to establish presence / absence of reptiles in areas of suitable habitat on site.

Development proposals

- 1.2 The proposed development involves the construction of 131 units together with roads and other associated infrastructure.

Aims and objectives

- 1.3 The aims of the further survey work were to:

- determine presence / likely absence of reptiles.

- 1.4 The objectives of this report are to provide:

- the results of the surveys;
- an evaluation of these results; and
- identification of outline mitigation requirements if required.

Study area

- 1.5 The study area is located within the Goodman Hatfield Business Park west of the city of Hatfield in Hertfordshire. It comprises a semi-natural grassland field immediately south of the newly constructed PCL Transport Warehouse. The site is 1.6 ha in size.
- 1.6 The immediate surrounding area is both residential and industrial with Mosquito Way and Gypsy Moth Avenue bordering the site on the southeast and southwest respectively.
- 1.7 The National Grid coordinates for the centre of the site are TL 2154 0927.

Conservation Status

Reptiles

- 1.8 All common UK reptile species (adder, grass snake, common lizard and Slow-worm) are protected through part of Section 9(1 and 5) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prohibits the intentional or reckless injuring or killing of reptiles.

2 METHODS

- 2.1 Artificial refugia in the form of sheets of roofing felt, approximately 0.5 m² in size, were placed in likely basking spots (for example, un-shaded patches next to cover, in areas of long grass and next to potential hibernation sites such as piles of rubble, logs or disused rabbit burrows).
- 2.2 A total of 78 sheets were set out in the grassland on site. Sheets should be set out at a density of >50-100/ha.
- 2.3 The site was visited on 10 days in September and October during suitable weather conditions. Reptile activity is greatly influenced by weather conditions, with reptiles most likely to use refugia in temperatures of between 10°C and 18°C (Froglife, 1999), in hazy or intermittent sunshine with light winds (Gent & Gibson, 1998).
- 2.4 The optimum time to survey reptiles is between August and September but additional visits were made in October during suitable weather conditions.
- 2.5 The weather conditions and temperatures for each visit are set out in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1. Reptile survey dates and weather conditions

Visit Number	Date	Temperature °C	Cloud Cover	Wind
1	20/09/17	19	6/8	Light
2	22/09/17	14	0/8	Calm
3	25/09/17	17	8/8	Calm
4	27/09/17	15	8/8	Calm
5	02/10/17	16	3/8	Calm
6	04/10/17	13	7/8	Calm
7	06/10/17	12	1/8	Light
8	09/10/17	17	8/8	Calm
9	12/10/17	13	2/8	Light
10	19/10/17	17	8/8	Light

- 2.6 Each visit involved walking slowly around the entire site, checking suitable reptile basking and refuge areas and checking all of the reptile sheets on site.

3 RESULTS

- 3.1 The location of the reptile sheets is shown in Figure 3.1.
- 3.2 No reptiles were found during the ten survey visits on site.

4 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Reptile sheets were placed out on the 15th of September 2017 and ten survey visits were carried out in September and October during suitable weather conditions to check for the presence of reptiles.
- 4.2 No reptiles were found on site, and therefore they are not currently considered to be a constraint on the proposed development.
- 4.3 The sward height was 30 - 40 cm on site, however, prior to the fourth reptile survey the grass was mowed to ground level leaving a small fringe approximately 1 – 2 m along the edge of the site (see Photographs 1 to 5). An additional three survey visits were undertaken to ensure that seven visits were undertaken on the short sward grassland in suitable weather conditions.
- 4.4 Due to the relatively short sward height at the start of the survey, it is considered that the mowing is part of the regular management regime in place on site, and this is not expected to have adversely impacted on the ability of the reptile survey to detect reptiles if present. Although many of the reptile sheets needed to be replaced.
- 4.5 The site is not connected to any other areas of suitable reptile habitat and given that the grassland on site is regularly managed, the site itself is not considered suitable for reptiles.
- 4.6 As the site is isolated from surrounding habitat by industrial development and roads, reptiles would not be able to establish on the site in the future.

5 REFERENCES

Froglife (1999). *Reptile survey, An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*. Froglife advice sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth

Gent, A. & Gibson, S. (1998). *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*. Peterborough, UK. Joint Nature Conservation Committee

FIGURES

Figure 3.1. Reptile survey sheet locations

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Photographs

Photographs 1-3: Site prior to mowing





Photograph 4 & 5: Site after mowing

