Reptile Translocation Report

Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill

For Hammond Rutts Investments Limited

Delta Simons Project No. 15-0210.05

Issued: November 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPTILE TRANSLOCATION REPORT

HAVERHILL BUSINESS PARK, HAVERHILL

FOR HAMMOND RUTTS INVESTMENTS

DELTA SIMONS PROJECT NO. 15-0210.05

Purpose	Delta-Simons Environmental Consultants Ltd was commissioned by Hammond Rutts Investments Limited ('the Client') to undertake a Reptile Capture and Translocation exercise from an area of land situated off Bumpstead Road, to the south of Haverhill on the Suffolk/ Essex border ('the Site'). The requirement for the translocation arose following the outcome of a Reptile Survey undertaken by Delta-Simons in July 2015, where a medium population of slow worm small populations of common lizard and grass snake were found to be present within two areas of the Site. The reptiles needed to be translocated off the Site in order to facilitate the proposed development without causing harm to these species. A Reptile Translocation Strategy was agreed between Delta-Simons and the Client, with a specifically created receptor site prepared within land under the ownership of the Client within the northern area of the Site. Management works were undertaken within this receptor site before trapping commenced as it was dominated by scrubland, and not by a mosaic of habitats required for reptile species to thrive.
Current Site Status	The area of the Site that supports reptiles is subdivided into two development plots. The North-East 1 (NE1) and North-East 2 (NE2) plots are situated to the east of Bumpstead Road. Within NE1 and NE2 the majority of the two plots comprises poor semi-improved grassland with areas of scrub and hedgerow field boundaries. Scattered trees were situated along the western edge of the land. There are drains supporting standing water to the west of the Site.
Proposed Development	It is understood that the Client is to develop the Site for commercial and industrial end uses.
Results:	In total 152 slow worms, 21 common lizards and 2 grass snakes were caught and translocated into the receptor site between 19th August 2015 and 28th October 2015. The translocation was undertaken over a period of 49 days. The translocation was considered complete when a total of five clear days had passed by, during suitable weather conditions for reptiles to be active and disperse, without any reptiles being captured.
Recommendations	<u>Recommendation 1 (Maintenance and Management)</u> Regular checks of the reptile exclusion fencing are required to ensure it remains fit for purpose until all development works have been finished within this area of the Site. It is recommended that outside the active season for reptiles (November – March, inclusive) the fence line is checked on a monthly basis, and during the active season for reptiles (April – October, inclusive) the fence should be checked on a weekly basis, and any repairs made within 24 hours of discovering any damage. Annual management within the receptor area must be undertaken to ensure this habitat remains suitable for reptiles. Where appropriate a brush cutter should be used outside the reptile active season in order to control significant scrub regrowth. Alternatively chemical spraying using a knapsack should be undertaken during the main vegetation growing season (May- August, inclusive). In addition, the hibernacula within the receptor site should be maintained. <u>Recommendation 2 (Monitoring)</u>

	Monitoring of the reptile population should be carried out in years 1, 2 and 5 following completion of the proposed development by a suitably qualified ecologist. This will determine whether or not the translocated reptile population is thriving, and should it be found not to be, recommendations will be made for a change in the management and maintenance of the receptor site. <u>Recommendation 3 (Vegetation Clearance)</u> It is understood that vegetation clearance works of those areas of the Site where a reptile translocation was not required will start in early 2016 to facilitate the proposed development. If however, works have not begun by mid-February, it is recommended that the vegetation is cleared from the Site in order to ensure reptiles do not disperse onto these areas from off-Site habitats. This will also prevent the possibility of birds nesting on-Site and eliminate any timing constraints to vegetation clearance works that nesting birds may pose.
This Reptile Translocation Report Executive Summary is intended as a summary of the assessment of the Site based on information received by Delta-Simons at the time of production. The Executive Summary should be read in conjunction with the full report.	

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FOR
HAMMOND RUTTS INVESTMENTS LIMITED
DELTA SIMONS PROJECT No. 15-0210.05

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and Purpose

Delta-Simons Environmental Consultants Ltd was commissioned by Hammond Rutts Investments Ltd. ('the Client') to undertake a Reptile Capture and Translocation exercise from an area of land situated off Bumpstead Road, to the south of Haverhill on the Suffolk/ Essex border (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The area of the Site found to support reptiles comprises an area of land subdivided into two development plots. The North-East 1 (NE1) and North-East 2 (NE2) plots are situated to the east of Bumpstead Road, and support suitable habitats for reptiles, whilst land to the west of the road was not considered suitable for these species.

The requirement for the translocation arose following the outcome of a Reptile Survey undertaken by Delta-Simons in July 2015, where a medium population of slow worms, and small populations of common lizard and grass snake, were found to be present within NE1 and NE2 at the Site.

The purpose of the reptile capture and translocation exercise was to relocate all reptiles found within NE1 and NE2 to a receptor site outside of the proposed development area in order to ensure that reptiles are not harmed by the proposals.

The Site location, the areas found to support reptiles (NE1 and NE2) and the receptor site are shown in Figure 1.

1.2 Site Description

The area of the Site known to support reptiles is centred at Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference TL 67801 44256 to the south of Haverhill. This area of the Site covers approximately 7 hectares and comprises an area of land subdivided into two development

plots. The NE1 and NE2 plots are situated to the east of Bumpstead Road and were the subject of the July 2015 reptile survey (Delta-Simons project no. 15-0201.03). Within NE1 and NE2 the majority of the two plots comprises poor semi-improved grassland with areas of scrub and hedgerow field boundaries. Scattered trees were situated along the western edge of the land. There are drains supporting standing water to the west of the Site.

The Site is located within a business park with a hotel, public house and warehouse situated to the east of the Site. To the south of the Site is the A1017 with farmland beyond, and to the west are further industrial buildings. North are a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential properties. To the east is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) supporting woodland, beyond which are further industrial units. Residential properties occur to the north-east of the Site.

Topographically much of the Site varies in height, since earth mounds present support steep sloping banks within the plots.

The Site layout is shown in Figure 2.

1.3 Proposed Development

It is understood that the Client is to develop the Site for commercial and industrial end uses.

2.0 LEGISLATION

2.1 Reptiles

All six native species of reptiles, including common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix natrix,* smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* and sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (as amended), from deliberate or reckless killing or injury. As such, all reasonable steps must be taken to avoid their incidental mortality when carrying out works.

Smooth snake and sand lizard receive further protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which makes it an offence to damage or destroy places that they use for breeding, resting, shelter and protection. It is also an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill these species, and to intentionally or recklessly disturb them while occupying a structure or place it uses for shelter or protection; or to obstruct access to any structure or place which it uses for that purpose. Further it is illegal to damage/ destroy a breeding site or deliberately take/ destroy the eggs of such an animal.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Review of Previous Surveys

Where possible, information was gathered on any previous surveys that have been conducted at the Site and the results and conclusions were reviewed. The following survey reports were reviewed:

- Reptile Survey, Phase 2 Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill, Suffolk, 22nd September 2006 by James Blake Associates; and
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill, March 2015 by Delta-Simons; and
- Reptile Survey, Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill, July 2015 by Delta-Simons.

3.2 Pre-Translocation Works

The habitat management works in the receptor site were completed on the 17th August 2015. They involved removal of the scrub that was dominating this former grassland area (Appendix II, Photograph 1-4), to return it to grassland habitat. In addition brash and log piles were created.

The receptor site fencing installed as part of a previous reptile translocation undertaken at the Site (see Figure 2 for location), which was in a state of disrepair, was replaced with semi-permanent reptile fencing (Appendix II, Photographs 2-4). This was extended along the eastern boundary of the Site in order to prevent reptiles from within the woodland and scrub habitats off-Site from dispersing onto the Site before the trapping and translocation exercise commenced (see Figure 3). No fencing was used to the south or west of NE1 and NE2 due to the unsuitability of adjoining habitats for reptiles.

3.3 Reptile Translocation

A total of 422 artificial refugia (60/ ha) were placed within the trapping area in order to maximise reptile capture rate as far as possible, since the minimum density of 10 refugia per hectare is that recommended by the Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (HGBI, 1998). The refugia comprised corrugated bitumen roofing sheets measuring 0.5 m

x 0.5 m. After allowing 14 days for the artificial refugia to bed into the different habitats, trapping out commenced.

The refugia were checked twice daily for the presence of reptiles for a total of 49 days, both in the morning and afternoon, with the time between these visits maximised as far as possible. The works were undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist during appropriate weather conditions between 19th August and the 28th October 2015. The animals were captured carefully by hand and placed into a lidded bucket supporting grass for cover, and with air holes, and then moved to the receptor site immediately afterwards. The trapping was ceased after there had been no captures for at least five consecutive days.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Review of Previous Surveys

The reptile study conducted in 2006 found that both common lizard and slow worm were present in the eastern area of the Site. Over five visits a medium population of both species was identified with the counts of slow worms varying between 4 and 14 between survey visits, and common lizard between 12 and 22. A reptile translocation strategy was finalised in January 2007, however, the translocation report was unavailable for a review of it to be completed, such that it is not known how many reptiles, and what species, were translocated into the receptor site at that time (Reptile Translocation Strategy, Phase 1 Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill, Suffolk, 31st January 2007 by James Blake Associates).

Since the reptile fencing on the perimeter of the previous reptile receptor site was highlighted as being in a state of disrepair in the Delta-Simons Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey report (15-0210.03), and the habitats within the proposed development area considered ideal to support reptiles, further reptile surveys were recommended due to the likelihood of the translocated reptiles having previously dispersed back onto the proposed development land, and also, the potential for them to access the Site from the adjacent LNR to the east.

Slow worm, common lizard and grass snake populations were all recorded during the 2015 reptile survey undertaken by Delta-Simons. A medium population of slow worm was recorded with peak count of 11. A small population of common lizard were recorded with a peak count of 5. A peak count of one grass snake was recorded.

4.2 Reptile Translocation

The last reptile caught was on day 44 of the translocation, and after five consecutive clear days following this, the translocation was ceased on the 28th October 2015.

A total of 152 slow worms were moved to the receptor site which included 50 male, 55 female and 47 juveniles. The majority of the slow worms were caught in the grassland within the western and southern area of NE1 and NE2.

A total of 21 common lizards were translocated which included five males, nine females and seven juveniles. The majority of the common lizards were recorded within the grassland adjacent to the warehousing and hard standing in the south-eastern area of the Site and within the grassland adjacent to the B1057, to the west of the Site.

A total of two grass snakes were caught and translocated from the northern area of the Site, adjacent to the receptor site.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The area of the Site that found to support three different reptile species is subdivided into two development plots. The NE1 and NE2 plots are situated to the east of Bumpstead Road, whilst land to the west of the Road was not considered suitable to support reptiles. This area of the Site supports an earth mound covered with limited grassland, and sections of bare ground. Plantation woodland lies in the northern extent of the Site. There are also areas of scrub and grassland along with hedgerow boundaries, and scattered trees along the western edge of the land. There are drains supporting standing water to the west of the Site, and a small pond within the southern area.

Before the translocation commenced a new reptile-proof fence was installed along the northern and eastern boundaries of the Site in order to prevent reptiles from off-Site habitats from dispersing onto the Site. Management works were undertaken within an area of the Site not to be developed that was allocated as the reptile receptor site to increase its suitability for reptiles. The works included the removal of scrub and incorporation of brash and log piles.

After 49 reptile trapping days, with five consecutive clear days of no captures, the trapping ceased on the 28th October 2015. In total, 152 slow worms, 21 common lizards and 2 grass snakes were caught and translocated into the receptor site.

Recommendations have been made for the ongoing maintenance, management and monitoring of the receptor site (Appendix III).

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (Maintenance and Management)

Regular checks of the reptile exclusion fencing are required to ensure it remains fit for purpose until all development works have been finished within this area of the Site. It is recommended that outside the active season for reptiles (November – March, inclusive) the fence line is checked on a monthly basis, and during the active season for reptiles

(April – October, inclusive) the fence should be checked on a weekly basis, and any repairs made within 24 hours of discovering any damage.

Annual management within the receptor area must be undertaken to ensure this habitat remains suitable for reptiles. Where appropriate a brush cutter should be used outside the reptile active season in order to control significant scrub regrowth. Alternatively chemical spraying using a knapsack should be undertaken during the main vegetation growing season (May- August, inclusive). In addition, the hibernacula within the receptor site should be maintained.

Recommendation 2 (Monitoring)

Monitoring of the reptile population within the receptor site should be carried out in years 1, 2 and 5 following completion of the proposed development works by a suitably qualified ecologist. This will determine whether or not the translocated reptile population is thriving, and should it be found not to be, recommendations will be made for a change in the management and maintenance of the receptor site.

Recommendation 3 (Vegetation Clearance)

It is understood that vegetation clearance works of those areas of the Site where a reptile translocation was not required will start in early 2016 to facilitate the proposed development. If however, works have not begun by mid-February, it is recommended that the vegetation is cleared from the Site in order to ensure reptiles do not disperse onto these areas from off-Site habitats. This will also prevent the possibility of birds nesting on-Site and eliminate any timing constraints to vegetation clearance works that nesting birds may pose.

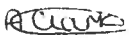
6.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

The behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to characteristics recorded in current scientific literature. This Report, therefore, cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will occur in apparently suitable locations or habitats or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.

The recommendations contained in this Report represent Delta-Simons' professional opinions, based upon the information referred to in Section 4 of this Report, exercising the duty of care required of an experienced Ecology Consultant.

This Report was prepared by Delta-Simons for the sole and exclusive use of the Client and for the specific purpose for which Delta-Simons was instructed as defined in Section 1 of this Report. Nothing contained in this Report shall be construed to give any rights or benefits to anyone other than the Client and Delta-Simons, and all duties and responsibilities undertaken are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Client and not for the benefit of any other party. In particular, Delta-Simons does not intend, without its written consent, for this Report to be disseminated to anyone other than the Client or to be used or relied upon by anyone other than the Client. Use of the Report by any other person is unauthorised and such use is at the sole risk of the user. Anyone using or relying upon this Report, other than the Client, agrees by virtue of its use to indemnify and hold harmless Delta-Simons from and against all claims, losses and damages (of whatsoever nature and howsoever or whensoever arising), arising out of or resulting from the performance of the work by the Consultant.

This Report was prepared by:



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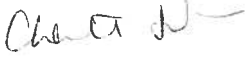

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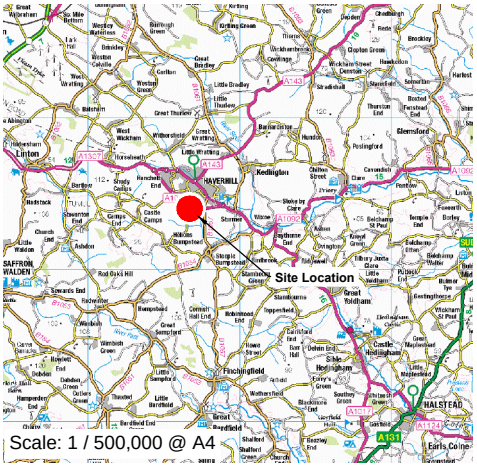
Figures



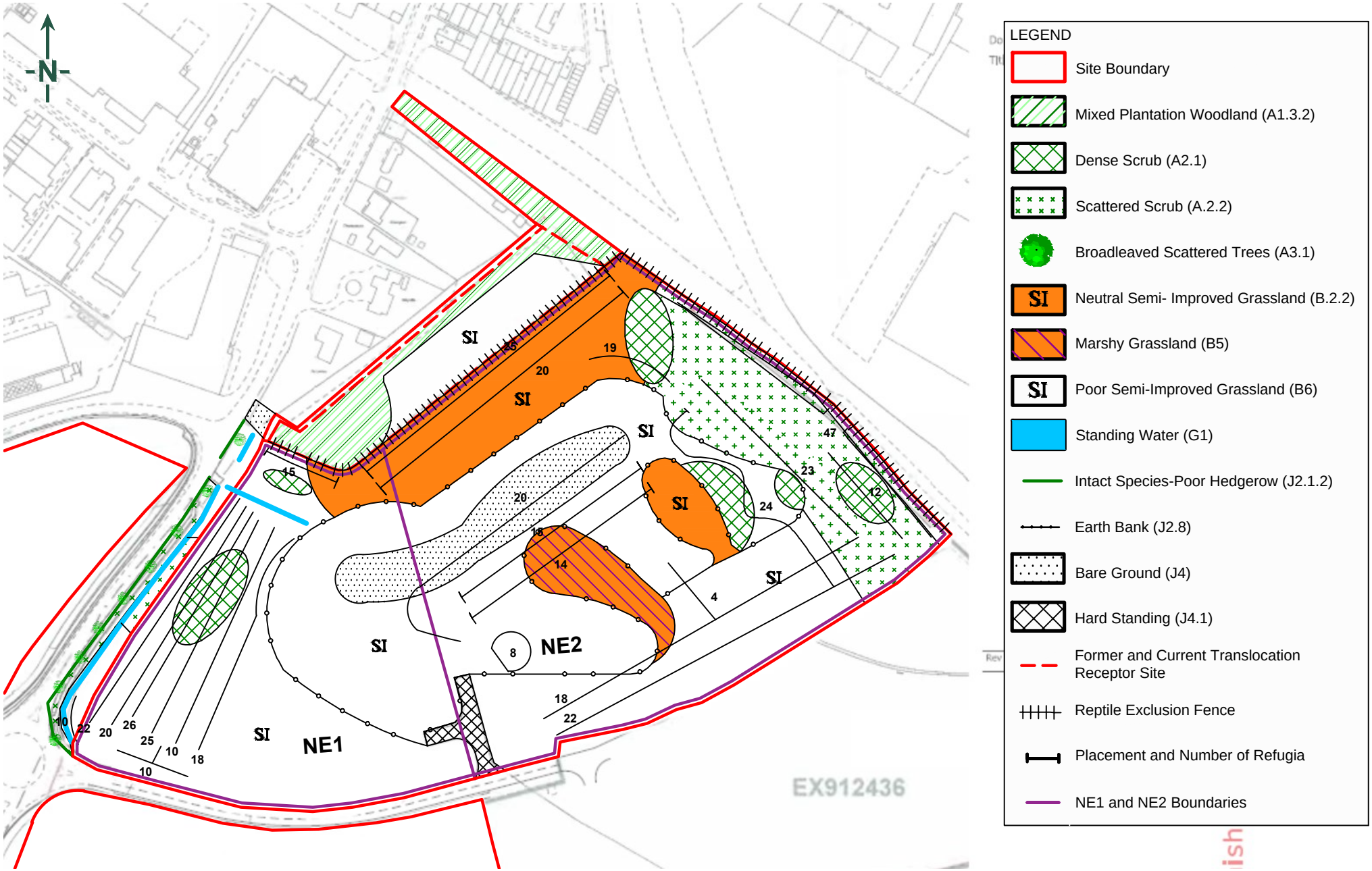
LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Reptile Receptor Area
- Reptile Capture and Translocation Area(NE1 and NE2)

Chalkstone

Scale: 1 / 20,000 @ A4

deltasimons	TITLE: Site Location Map Haverhill Business Park Haverhill	DRAWN BY: DP CHECKED BY: AC DATE: 17 November 2015	SCALE: To Scale@A4 REVISION: 1
			PROJECT NO: 15-0210.05 FIGURE NO: 1



deltasimons

TITLE:
Site Layout and Location of Artificial Refugia
Haverhill Business Park
Haverhill

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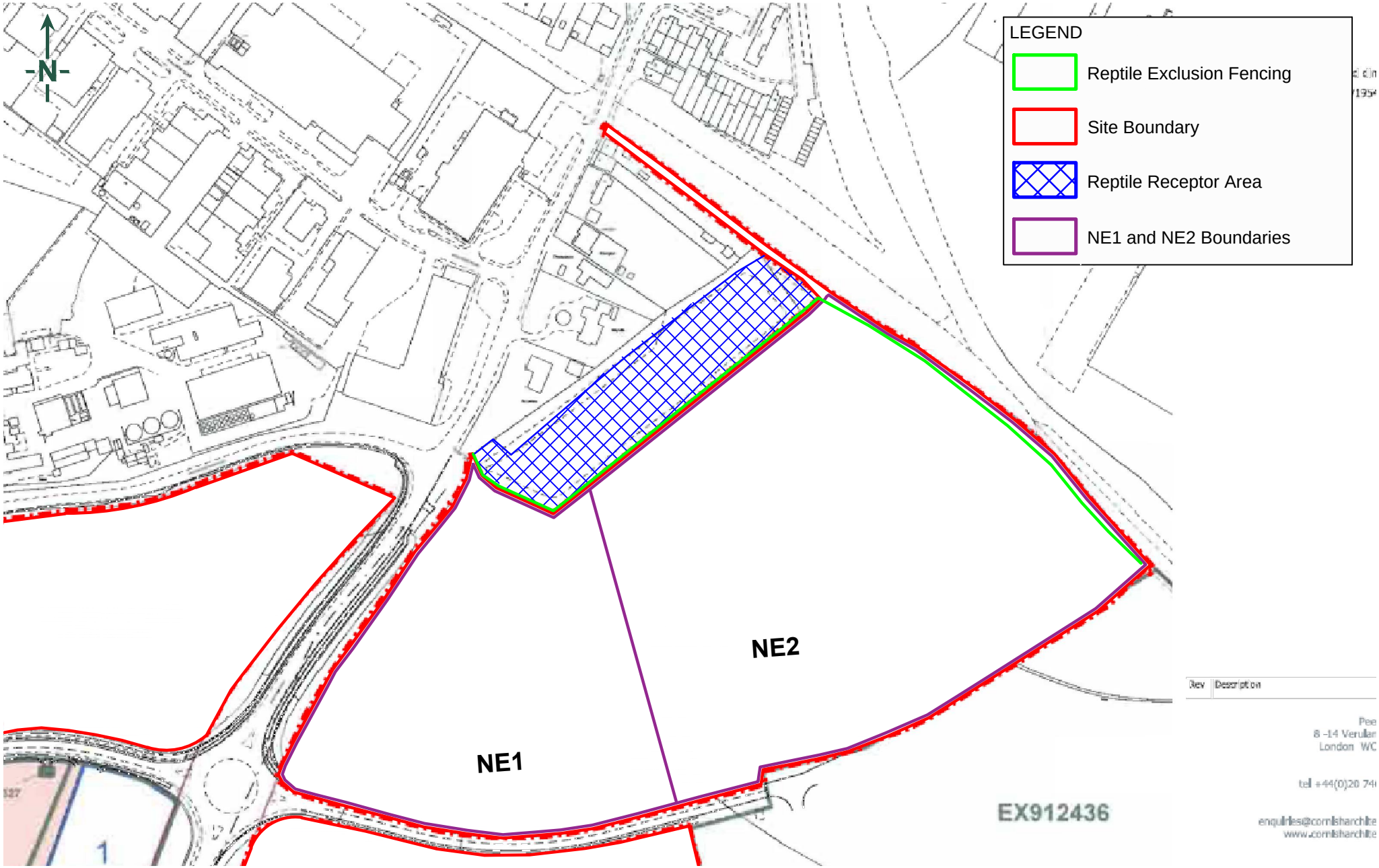
CHECKED BY: AC	REVISION: 1
DATE: 17 November 2015	

PROJECT NO: 15-0210.05

FIGURE NO: 2



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TITLE:
Location of the Reptile Exclusion Fencing and Reptile Receptor Area
Haverhill Business Park
Haverhill

DRAWN BY: DP	SCALE: Not to Scale	PROJECT NO: 15-0210.05	
CHECKED BY: AC	REVISION: 1	FIGURE NO: 3	
DATE: 17 November 2015			

Appendix I

References

Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (HGBI), (1998), *Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programmes: Maintaining Best Practice and lawful standards,* HGBI advisory notes for Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs), HGBI, c/o Froglife, Halesworth. Unpublished.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) HMSO

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), HMSO.

Appendix II

Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill
Delta-Simons Project No. 15-0210.05

Photograph 1 – Management works occurring in the receptor site

Photograph 2 – Receptor site and new fence line

Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill
Delta-Simons Project No. 15-0210.05

Photograph 3 – Receptor site and new fence line

Photograph 4 – Eastern aspect of the receptor site

Appendix III

Appendix III: Detailed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan,

Haverhill Business Park, Haverhill

Reptile Exclusion Fence Checks

In order to ensure reptiles from off-Site habitats are able to disperse onto development plots North-East (NE)1 and NE2, regular fence checks should be made. If any section of the fence line is found to be in a state of disrepair such that it would allow reptiles access onto the Site, it should be mended or replaced within 24 hours of being noted, and ideally as soon as possible to limit the risk of any reptiles accessing the Site. It is recommended that outside the main active reptile season (November – March, inclusive), the fence is checked on a monthly basis and during the reptile active season (April – October, inclusive), the fence should be checked on a weekly basis.

Maintenance of the Receptor Site

To maintain a mosaic of habitats within the receptor site the removal of significant areas of scrub regrowth must be undertaken annually. This removal can either be undertaken by using a brush cutter or a selective herbicide applied with a knapsack sprayer. If a brush cutter is used then the management works must be undertaken outside of the reptile active season (November – March, inclusive). If chemical spraying is chosen, this should be undertaken during the main vegetation growing season (May- August, inclusive).

In addition to the scrub control within the receptor site there should also be maintenance of the hibernacula. A visual inspection should be made annually and new logs should be added to the hibernacula, or new hibernacula created, when the old logs rot and, therefore, become unsuitable to provide shelter for reptiles.

Monitoring of the Reptile Population

It is recommended that reptile population monitoring should be carried out in years 1, 2 and 5, following completion of the proposed development. Artificial refugia should be spread across the Site as was undertaken for the Reptile Translocation exercise. Checking underneath and on top of artificial refugia for reptiles should be completed by a suitably experienced ecologist after the refugia have been allowed to bed into the on-Site habitat for a minimum of two weeks. On those years that monitoring is required, a total of three visits should be made in suitable weather conditions to check the refugia. The results of the monitoring will be used to determine whether a change in the management and maintenance regime of the receptor site is needed.