



Reptile Survey

of

Phases 2-6 and Relief Road, Haverhill, Suffolk

On behalf of

Persimmon Homes Suffolk

June 2019

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| Revision | Purpose | Originated | Checked | Authorised | Date |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--|---------|------------|-----------|
| | | DB | AC | JBA | June 2019 |
| A | Minor changes to map | DB | SR | JBA | July 2019 |
| Job Number: JBA 18/351 | |  <p>JAMES BLAKE ASSOCIATES</p> <p>Title: Reptile Survey of Phases 2-6 and Relief Road, Haverhill, Suffolk</p> | | | |

Disclaimer

James Blake Associates Ltd have made every effort to meet the client's brief. However, no survey ensures complete and absolute assessment of the changeable natural environment. The findings in this report were based on evidence from thorough survey: It is important to remember that evidence can be limited, hard to detect or concealed by site use and disturbance. When it is stated that no evidence was found or was evident at that point in time, it does not mean that species are not present or could not be present at a later date: The survey was required because habitats are suitable for a given protected species, and such species could colonise areas following completion of the survey.

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Executive Summary

A reptile survey of Phases 2-6 and Relief Road, Haverhill, Suffolk was undertaken between the 5th of April to the 22nd of May 2019.

The aim of the survey was to establish the presence or likely absence of reptiles across the site following Natural England approved guidelines. Froglife (1999).

No reptile species were recorded using the site during the survey period. Therefore, no mitigation or constraints to the development apply to the site, with respect to reptiles.

If development does not begin within two years, then the surveys should be updated to ensure that reptiles have not colonised the site in the interim.

Enhancement suggestions are included in the report.

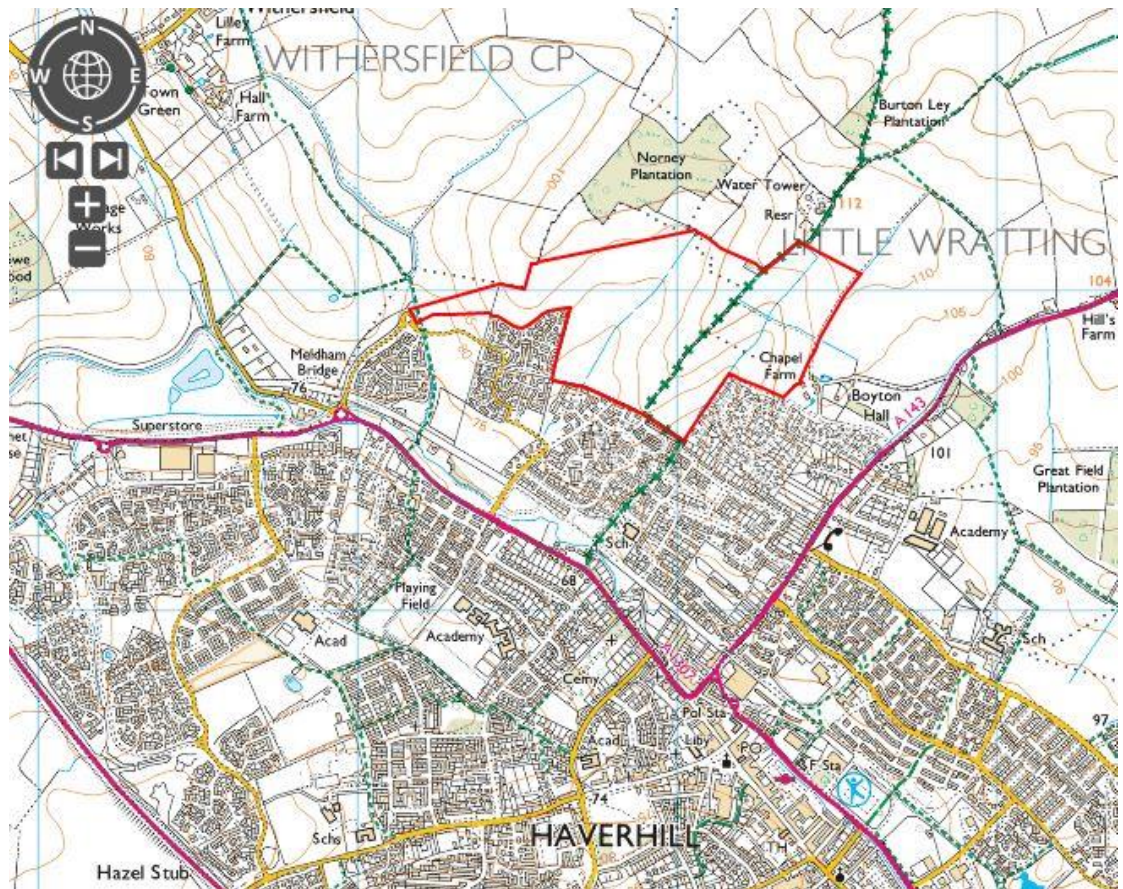
1 Introduction

Background to the study

- 1.1 James Blake Associates Ltd was commissioned by Persimmons Homes, Suffolk to carry out a reptile survey of Phases 2-6 and Relief Road, Haverhill, Suffolk.
- 1.2 The site has no designated conservation status assigned to it. However, Ann Suckling's Way Country Wildlife Site (CWS) is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the Relief Road.
- 1.3 All reptiles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Reptiles such as grass snakes (*Natrix natrix*), common lizards (*Zootoca vivipara*) and slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) are also species of principle importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and are a material consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019).

Site Description

- 1.4 The site is located to the north west of Haverhill Road (A143), north of Haverhill town in Suffolk. Arable fields border the site with residential housing to the south. Norney Plantation County Wildlife Site (CWS), an area of ancient replanted woodland, is approximately 65m north of the site boundary. The wider landscape includes mainly arable fields with scattered woodland. The River Stour lay approximately 1.8km east of the site, and the Stour Brook lay approximately 300m south, along with a series of drainage ditches (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Site location

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Aims and objectives

1.5 The aims and objectives of this survey were to;

- identify the presence of any reptile species using the site;
- advise of any implications their presence would have on the proposed development and suggest appropriate mitigation methods where necessary.

2 Methods

- 2.1 The reptile surveys were undertaken by Sam Rigg BSc (Hons), Kevin Slezacek DipArb MaArborA MCIHort, Christopher Bridge BSc (Hons), Sam Kench BSc (Hons) Qualifying CIEEM, Daniel Blake BSc (Hons) Qualifying CIEEM and Larissa Cooper from James Blake Associates Ltd between the 5th of April and 22th May 2019, on days with suitable weather conditions for finding reptiles (Froglife 1999).
- 2.2 To undertake the reptile survey, artificial refuges (roofing felt mats) were used. These increase the chances of observing otherwise elusive reptiles, which are attracted to these 'refuges' as they can bask on top or regulate their body temperature below the refuges, out of sight from predators.
- 2.3 One hundred and eighty-six, measuring approximately 0.5m², were laid down on the 5th April 2019. The refuges were laid in all areas of suitable reptile habitat throughout the site.
- 2.4 The refuges were left for eight days prior to the commencement of the survey to allow any reptiles present to begin using the refuges and were surveyed on seven subsequent visits to the site. On each visit, refuges were observed from a distance to record any reptiles basking in the sun. Following this, each refuge was approached cautiously and turned over to survey for reptiles sheltering beneath.

3 Results

- 3.1 The desk study uncovered that slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) were found 1.5km south east in 2006. Common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) were found 1km south of the site in 2014 and grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) were found 1.1km south east in the same year.

Survey Results

- 3.2 No reptiles were recorded using the artificial refuges during the survey period. Records from the seven survey visits are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of results for protected reptile species

| Visit | Date | Weather conditions | Reptiles observed |
|-------|---------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 15/4/19 | Temperature:11 °C. Cloud Cover: 40% Beaufort scale: 5 | 0 |
| 2 | 23/4/19 | Temperature:18 °C. Cloud Cover: 25% Beaufort scale: 3 | 0 |
| 3 | 28/4/19 | Temperature:18 °C. Cloud Cover: 20% Beaufort scale: 9 | 0 |
| 4 | 30/4/19 | Temperature:12 °C. Cloud Cover: 80% Beaufort scale: 1 | 0 |
| 5 | 7/5/19 | Temperature:13 °C. Cloud Cover: 50% Beaufort scale: 1 | 0 |
| 6 | 22/5/19 | Temperature:19 °C. Cloud Cover: 50% Beaufort scale: 1 | 0 |
| 7 | 26/5/19 | Temperature:16 °C. Cloud Cover: 10% Beaufort scale: 2 | 0 |

4 Discussion

- 4.1 Survey visits were all carried out in suitable weather conditions at the optimal time of year for reptile surveys.
- 4.2 The site as a whole is a popular area for dog walkers and therefore the artificial refuges near the walkways were disturbed and/or removed on a regular basis. However, due to the number of refuges in areas hidden from the public, it was not considered a major constraint.
- 4.3 No reptiles were recorded using the artificial refuges during the survey period. Therefore, there are no constraints or mitigation requirements for the development, with respect to reptiles.

5 Enhancement Recommendations

5.1 The following suggestions could enhance the value of the site for reptiles and other wildlife post-development.

- Landscaping should include native or wildlife attracting plants particularly a rough grassland area or wildflower meadow to attract invertebrates and foraging reptiles.
- Grass clippings and other vegetation could be collected and composted in a corner of the site. This may (in time) become suitable for breeding grass snakes and other wildlife.
- Log or rock piles located around the edges of the site could provide potential refuge habitat for reptiles and other wildlife.

6 References

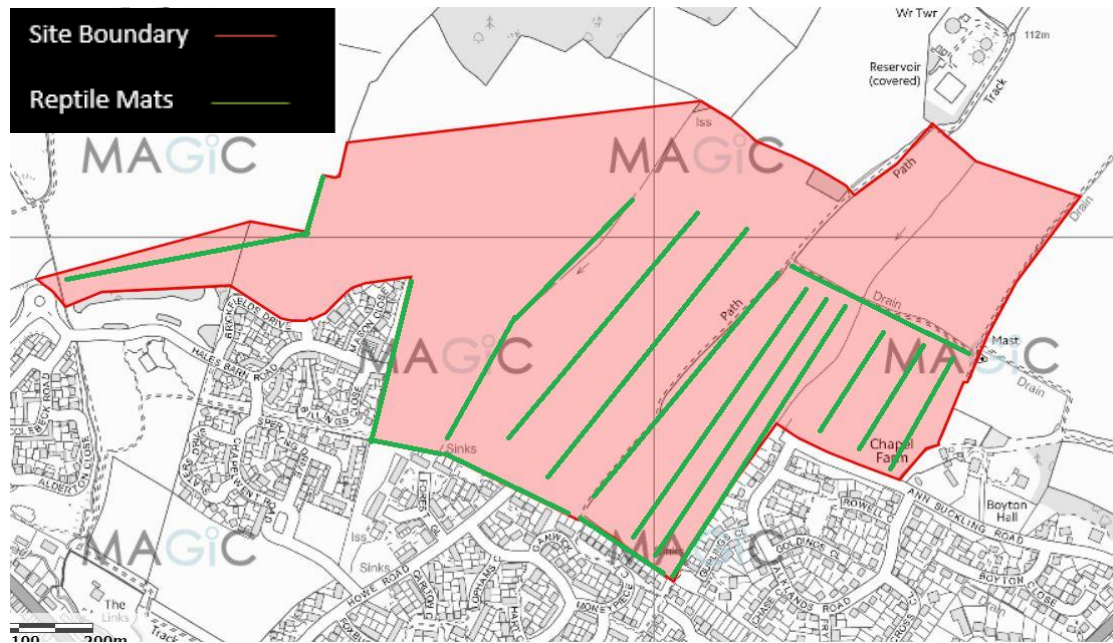
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7 Appendices

Appendix A: Indicative location of reptile mats



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