



Grand Union Village,
Northolt

Reptile Survey Report

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

on behalf of
HSP Consulting

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental on behalf of HSP Consulting. It sets out the findings of reptile survey work undertaken at Grand Union Village, Northolt (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 The Site occupies an area of c. 0.84ha and is located around central grid reference TQ 123 822, in the London Borough of Hillingdon. The site location is shown in a Phase 1 Habitats Plan provided for reference in Appendix A, which was prepared by Ecology Link Ltd (December 2018). This followed an extended Phase 1 Habitat survey of the Site by Ecology Link Ltd in November 2018, as part of a preliminary ecological appraisal of the Site.
- 1.3 A planning application for the construction of a new single storey 80 Place SEND School (together with associated landscaping, play areas, boundary treatments and car parking) at the Site was submitted to Hillingdon Borough Council in April 2020 (application reference 71486/APP/2020/1369).
- 1.4 The extended Phase 1 Habitat survey report characterised the Site as being dominated by poor semi-improved grassland with stands of tall ruderal vegetation in the west, with amenity grassland in the east. Please refer to Appendix A. The report stated that, "*The site provided very good habitat for common lizards (Zootoca vivipara), slow-worms (Anguis fragilis) and grass snakes (Natrix natrix). The site was small but had good connectivity to known populations of reptiles in the wider vicinity. Reptiles have been highlighted as being present along the Grand Union Canal, Perivale Wood, and other greenspace locations (HS2; Northolt Corridor – Environmental Statements). It is highly likely that a range of reptiles could be utilising the site.*" The report went on to recommend that targeted surveys be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of reptiles at the Site, in order that appropriate impact mitigation measures could be implemented as part of the proposed development.
- 1.5 All native British reptile species are listed within Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded protection against killing and injury under parts of sub-section 9(1) of the Act. In addition, all native British reptile species are adopted as Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England, in respect of Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Reptile Presence / Absence Survey

- 2.1 A total of 40 artificial reptile refugia, comprising squares of bituminous roofing felt measuring 0.5 x 0.5m, were distributed throughout the western half of the Site on 23 July 2020 by Mark Rose MCIEEM.
- 2.2 Following an initial 2-week 'bedding-in' period for refugia, surveys were carried out on seven occasions during suitable weather conditions (e.g. intermittent or hazy sunshine, not too windy, sunny spells following wet or cloudy weather) between 04 August and 04 September 2020. Each survey visit comprised a slow walk of the Site to visually and physically check refugia for the presence of reptiles. On each occasion a visual search was also made for any reptiles elsewhere on Site, such as on a south facing bank in the south of the Site, whilst walking between refugia locations.
- 2.3 The primary aim of the reptile survey was to establish the presence or likely absence of reptile species within the survey area, rather than to estimate abundance or population size. To this end, seven survey checks were carried out; an effort generally considered proportionate in establishing the presence or likely absence of reptiles.

Population Size Class Estimates

- 2.4 There are several published methods for broadly categorising reptile population sizes in the UK, with the most commonly employed by ecological consultants being HGBI (1998) and Froglife (1999). These approaches vary in their application, assumptions and limitations, and therefore outputs have been reported for both methods for comparison below.
- 2.5 The two metrics rely on differing proxies to estimate reptile populations. The HGBI categories are based on adult population densities, as opposed to peak counts. Moreover, the categorisation by HGBI is intended to inform capture effort for translocation exercises and, therefore, is not directly applicable to providing a population size class estimate, though it is widely applied within the industry for this purpose.
- 2.6 The Froglife method is based on peak adult counts where surveys have used refugia densities of 10 per hectare. Surveys carried out by CSA used a density of c. 60 per ha of suitable reptile habitat at the Site, to maximise site coverage and opportunities to confirm the presence or likely absence of reptiles. Therefore, to enable comparison with the Froglife categories, peak counts would have to be divided by a factor of 6 [peak count ÷ (refugia per ha ÷ 10)] so that they are proportionate to the Froglife survey effort.

- 2.7 The Site is c. 0.84ha in total with suitable reptile habitat, comprising grassland, scrub and tall ruderal, accounting for c. 0.63ha of that area. Within this area 40 artificial refugia were used to provide a survey refugia density of c. 60 refugia per ha.

Limitations

- 2.8 The surveys were carried out under suitable weather conditions and by appropriately qualified surveyors. The majority of surveys took place within the month of August; a month where high ambient temperatures can lead to reduced detectability of some reptile species/life stages. However, while peak counts may be modestly reduced, the effect of this limitation is unlikely alter the outcome of a survey seeking to determine presence or likely absence.
- 2.9 A large proportion of the Site around the entrance was strewn with waste materials following apparent fly tipping, however access was able to be gained.

3.0 RESULTS

Reptile Presence / Absence Survey

- 3.1 A summary of weather conditions and findings during each survey is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of reptile survey results.

Survey	Date	Time	Temp (°C)	Cloud cover (/8)	Wind
1	04/08/20	13:45 - 14:30	20	7	3
2	11/08/20	07:45 - 08:30	22	1	0
3	17/08/20	09:15 - 10:00	19	6	1
4	21/08/20	09:00 - 09:30	20	6	4
5	24/08/20	09:15 - 09:45	17	5	2
6	01/09/20	17:00 - 17:30	20	2	2
7	04/09/20	09:00 - 09:30	18	1	2

- 3.2 During the seven targeted surveys conducted under suitable weather conditions, and covering all suitable habitats for reptiles at the Site, no reptiles of any species or life stage were encountered. On this basis, reptiles can be concluded likely absent from the Site.

Population Size Class Estimates

- 3.3 Reptiles have been concluded to be likely absent from the Site, therefore no population size class estimate has been made.

Discussion

- 3.4 All native reptile species are legally protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In the absence of mitigation, development activity at sites where reptiles are present can risk the killing or injury of reptiles, particularly during site preparation works, therefore constituting an offence.
- 3.5 However, baseline surveys at the Site have determined that reptile species are likely absent, therefore these species are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development and no specific impact mitigation measures are recommended. Landscape proposals for the development have already been finalised at the time of writing, therefore no recommendations for site enhancements are included here.

- 3.6 In the event that the proposed works have not commenced within two years, it may be necessary to update surveys to provide an up-to-date understanding of baseline ecological conditions.

4.0 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2015. *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*. Winchester: CIEEM.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2016. *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal*. 2nd ed. Winchester: CIEEM

Ecology Link Ltd, January 2019. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report: Grand Union Village, Northolt.

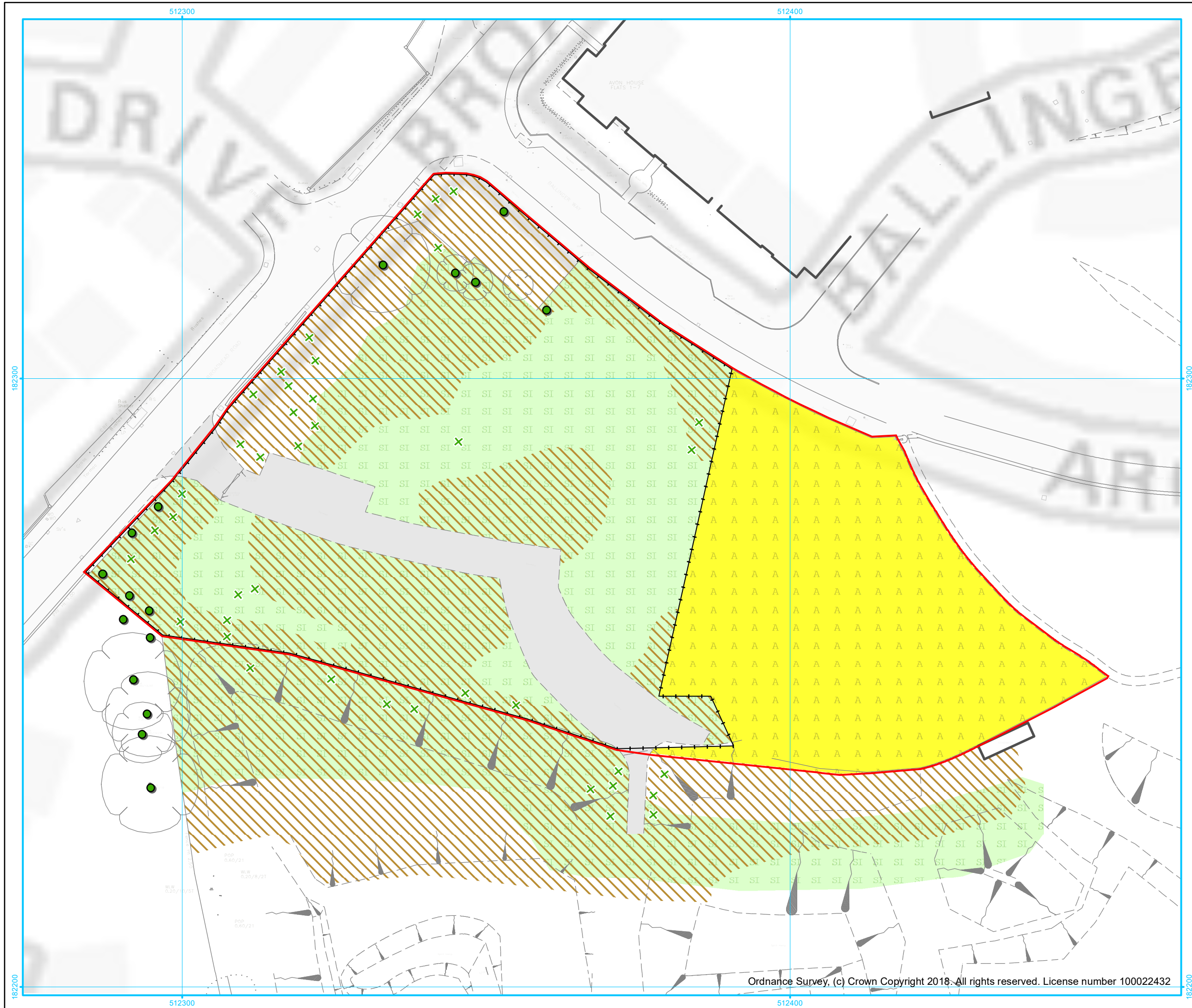
Froglife (1999). Reptile survey, an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife advice sheet 10, <http://www.froglife.org/advice/sheets/htm>

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

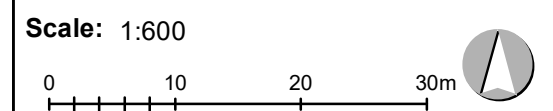
Natural England (2011) Reptile Mitigation Guidelines. Natural England Technical Information Note TIN102. First edition 09 September 2011.

Appendix A

Phase 1 Habitats Plan (Ecology Link Ltd, December 2018)



- Legend
- Approximate site boundary
 - Poor semi improved grassland
 - Tall ruderal
 - Amenity grassland
 - Hard standing
 - Fence (Hording)
 - Individual tree
 - Scattered scrub



Title: Appendix 1 – Phase 1 Habitat

Client: HSP Consulting

Project: Grand Union Village, Northolt

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