



REPTILE SURVEY REPORT

Chownes Mead, Chownes Mead Lane, Haywards Heath

On behalf of: RCM Partnership LLP

Client:	RCM Partnership LLP			
Project:	Chownes Mead, Chownes Mead Lane, Haywards Heath			
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Validity:

This report is valid for 18 months from the date of the site visit. If works have not commenced by this date, an updated site visit should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess any changes in the habitats present on site, and to inform a review of the conclusions and recommendations made.



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L I Z A R D
Landscape Design and Ecology

SUMMARY

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by RCM Partnership LLP to complete a reptile presence / absence survey of Chownes Mead, Chownes Mead Lane, Haywards Heath (*Central Grid Reference: TQ 31674 23750– hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).

24 no. artificial reptile refugia (*roofing felt; 1.0 x 0.50 m*) were laid out in all suitable habitat on the 10th of June 2024. Refugia were allowed to bed-in for 15 days prior to survey visits beginning on the 25th of June 2024.

No reptiles, or any evidence of their presence such as sloughs, was recorded during the survey period.

The results indicate the likely absence of reptiles on site and that works would stand a negligible chance of breaching the protection afforded reptiles under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by RCM Partnership LLP to complete a reptile presence / absence survey of land at Chownes Mead, Chownes Mead Lane, Haywards Heath (*Central Grid Reference: TQ 31674 23750– hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).

1.2 The site was subject to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in May 2024 which found suitable reptile habitat on site in the form of grassland and tall ruderal vegetation. As much of this habitat shall require removal to facilitate proposals, a full reptile survey was recommended to assess the presence / absence of reptiles on site.

1.3 This report has been compiled in accordance with current guidelines, including British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development, 2013 and CIEEM, 2017 and 2018.

Site Information

1.4 The total site area covers c. 7.4 hectares (ha) of land to the south of Chownes Mead Lane, Haywards Heath. The survey area is bound by large residential properties and their associated gardens to the east and west, Chownes Mead Lane to the north and an area of woodland to the south.

Surrounding Landscape

1.5 The site is located c. 0.2km west of Haywards Heath and c. 1.0km south-east of the village of Cuckfield. Land to the south and west is formed of areas of woodland, ponds and small field parcels, typical of the High Weald.

1.6 The surrounding landscape is suitable for common UK reptile species, however no suitable habitat for sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* or smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* exists in the vicinity.

Development Proposals

1.7 Amendments to hotel layout approved under DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201, new single storey extension to main building and erection of new detached two-storey spa building, provision of relocated secondary access to Chownes Mead Lane, new parking area and landscaping of the site.

Scope of the Survey

- 1.8 The aim of the reptile survey has been to:
- Determine whether reptiles exist on site;
 - Provide an assessment of the distribution and population of reptiles within the site, if present; and
 - Provide a mitigation strategy to ensure reckless killing / injury of reptiles is avoided, such that works would comply with *The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)* and net gains for reptiles are achieved.

2.0 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 All species of UK reptile are listed under Schedule 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Reptiles are afforded protection under section 9(1) and section 9(5) against intentional killing or injuring, offering for sale, transport for sale or advertisement of any live or dead reptile. All UK reptile species are also recognised as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, meaning that local authorities must take into account the conservation of reptiles when assessing a planning application.
- 2.2 Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard receive additional protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which makes it an offence to kill, injure, capture or disturb them; damage or destroy their habitat; or to possess or trade in them.

Licensing

- 2.3 If a site is found to support Smooth Snake or Sand Lizard and disturbance or removal or habitat is unavoidable, a licence will be required from Natural England to allow work to proceed.
- 2.4 A licence must show that there is no satisfactory alternative to the works proposed, and that they are for reasons of health and safety or overriding reasons of public interest. Licenses are only issued once planning permission has been granted.

- 2.5 There is no formal licensing requirement for sites which support only common UK reptile species (slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, adder *Vipera berus* or grass snake *Natrix helvetica*).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Field Survey

- 3.1.1 25 no. artificial reptile refugia (*roofing felt*; 1.0 x 0.50 m) were laid out in all suitable habitat on the 10th of June 2024. Refugia were allowed to bed-in for 15 days prior to survey visits beginning on the 25th of June 2024. The locations of artificial reptile refugia are detailed within *Figure No. 01*.



Figure No. 01 – Location of Reptile Refugia

- 3.1.2 07 no. site visits were conducted, where the number, species, age and sex of the reptile's present were recorded. Debris piles on-site considered suitable as reptile refugia were checked during the surveys, and repeated walkovers of the site were used to search for active reptiles.
- 3.1.3 Surveys were undertaken during recommended times (08:00–11:00 and 16:00–18:30) with suitable weather conditions for surveying reptiles wherever possible (*guidelines recommend temperatures 9–18°C*).

Table No. 01 – Weather Conditions during Surveys

Survey	Date of Visit	Time	Temp.	Weather Conditions
1	25/06/24	16:00	18°C	Dry, WF1, 30% cloud
2	01/07/24	10:00	16°C	Dry, WF1, 60% cloud
3	08/07/24	09:30	14°C	Dry , WF1, 20% cloud
4	10/07/24	09:45	16°C	Dry, WF2, 20% cloud
5	15/07/24	09:00	16°C	Dry, WF0, 40% cloud
6	22/07/24	10:15	17°C	Dry, WF2, 15% cloud
7	30/07/24	07:30	17°C	Dry, WF2, 5% cloud

3.2 Population Assessment

- 3.2.1 Reptile populations were assessed in accordance with population level criteria as stated for the Key Reptile Site Register (*Froglife, 1999*). This system classifies populations of individual reptile species into three population categories assessing the importance of the population. These categories are based on the total number of adult animals observed during individual survey occasions and based upon a survey density of 10/Ha.

Table No. 02 – Population Size Assessment

Species	Low Population	Good Population	Exceptional Population
Slow Worm	<5	5-20	>20
Common Lizard	<5	5-20	>20
Grass Snake	<5	5-10	>10
Adder	<5	5-10	>10

3.3 Details of Surveyors

- 3.3.1 The reptile survey was undertaken by the following ecologists, all of which have extensive experience undertaking both reptile surveys and reptile translocation:

- Catherine O'Reilly – Principal Ecologist, 11 years' experience.
- Hayley Swann – Consultant Ecologist, 4 years' experience.
- Max Day – Assistant Ecologist, 2 years' experience.
- Owen Beesley – Assistant Ecologist, 1 year experience.

- Fleur Booth - Assistant Ecologist, 3 years' experience.

3.4 Constraints and Limitations

- 3.4.1 No constraints were recorded during the survey period.

4.0 RESULTS AND EVALUATION

- 4.1 No reptiles of any species were found during the survey period.
- 4.2 The results indicate the likely absence of reptiles on site. Works would stand a negligible chance of breaching the protection afforded reptiles under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 4.3 No further survey or mitigation measures regarding this species group are required. In the highly unlikely event that any reptile is found on site during site clearance or construction all works should cease while a suitably qualified ecologist is contacted for advice.

5.0 REFERENCES

Froglife (1999) *Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice Sheet 10*. Froglife: Halesworth

Herpetofauna Groups Of Britain And Ireland (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.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (1998) *Herpetofauna Worker's Manual* (Gent, T. and Gibson, S. eds) JNCC: Peterborough