



**REPTILE SURVEY REPORT
MAPLE ROAD, TANKERSLEY**

JUNE 2017

Prepared By:

Surface Property

1C Swinegate Court East
3 Swinegate
York
North Yorkshire
YO1 8AJ

T +44 (0)1904 682 770 | **E** contact@surface-property.co.uk
W www.surface-property.co.uk

Surface Property is a trading name of Arcus Consultancy Services, Registered in England
& Wales No. 5644976

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Site Description	1
2	LEGISLATION.....	1
3	METHODS.....	1
4	RESULTS.....	1
5	CONCLUSIONS AND MITIGATION	3
	5.1 Potential Effects of Development.....	3
	5.2 Mitigation.....	3
	5.3 Enhancement Measures	3
	5.4 Conclusions	4

Appendix A – Figure 1

1 INTRODUCTION

Surface Property (Surface) was commissioned by Company Shop and Rula Developments Ltd to undertake a survey for reptiles in relation to a planning application for a Distribution Centre with two-storey offices, a service yard and car parking (henceforth referred to as the Development) at Maple Road, Tankersley (henceforth referred to as the Site). This report describes the methods and results of this survey and provides an overview of the associated potential constraints to the Development.

1.1 Site Description

The Site occupies a small area within an Industrial Park and, as such, is bounded by a commercial unit to the east, by Maple Road and further commercial units to the south, a car parking area for a unit to the north, and an area of grassland to the west.

The Site was dominated by periodically managed semi-improved grassland with deciduous woodland to the west of the Site and areas of scattered and dense scrub.

2 LEGISLATION

The common and widespread species of reptiles, adder (*Vipera berus*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), are protected by Section 9(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against intentional killing and injuring (but not 'taking'), as well as possessing, selling and transporting for sale. The rarer and more strictly legally protected species of terrestrial reptiles, smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), are not distributed in the region and so are not considered in this report.

3 METHODS

The reptile survey was carried out between May and June 2017 in accordance with Froglife survey methodology¹. Thirty-six artificial refugia (felt sheets measuring approximately 1 m²), which reptiles preferentially use for basking and resting, were placed in suitable habitat throughout the Site. In addition to the 36 artificial refugia placed on Site a series of tyres, metal sheeting and felt sheets were already present and were also classed as survey refugia. The survey refugia were left undisturbed for a period of seven days before returning to the Site for the first inspections. Inspections were carried out on seven separate days during suitable weather conditions to determine the presence/absence of reptiles on the Site.

4 RESULTS

The weather conditions were considered suitable to record reptile presence, with inspections completed at different times of day during the correct season and under a range of suitable weather conditions.

One grass snake was recorded, within semi-improved grassland. No other reptiles were recorded during the survey. The results are summarised in Table 4.1 and shown on Figure 1. The overall number of reptiles recorded, with a maximum of one on any one survey date, indicates a low population.

¹ Froglife (1999), *Reptile survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*. Froglife Advice Sheet 10. Froglife,

Table 4.1: Reptile survey dates, results and weather conditions.

Date (2017)	Weather Conditions	Slow-worm	Common Lizard	Grass Snake
4 th May	Ground Conditions: dry Wind: none–light Cloud Cover: 30% Precipitation: none Air Temp: 12°C	0	0	0
10 th May	Ground Conditions: dry Wind: none Cloud Cover: 80% Precipitation: none Air Temp: 15°C	0	0	0
16 th May	Ground Conditions: damp Wind: light Cloud Cover: 80% Precipitation: none Air Temp: 17°C	0	0	0
23 rd May	Ground Conditions: dry Wind: none Cloud Cover: 0% Precipitation: none Air Temp: 15°C	0	0	0
9 th June	Ground Conditions: damp Wind: none Cloud Cover: 40% Precipitation: none Air Temp: 14°C	0	0	1
14 th June	Ground Conditions: dry Wind: light Cloud Cover: 20% Precipitation: none Air Temp: 16°C	0	0	0
21 st June	Ground Conditions: dry Wind: light Cloud Cover: 5% Precipitation: none Air Temp: 18°C	0	0	0

5 CONCLUSIONS AND MITIGATION

5.1 Potential Effects of Development

A low population of grass snakes was recorded. Owing to the highly mobile nature of grass snakes, their propensity to disperse from disturbance, and the low number recorded, it is considered that any impact from the Development, once mitigation is implemented, will be negligible. The legal protection afforded to grass snakes and other common species of reptile ensures that no intentional harm should come to them, the mitigation measures detailed below will ensure that the Development avoids contravention of this legislation.

5.2 Mitigation

It is appropriate to implement a mitigation strategy that is proportionate to the risks and ecological impacts associated with the Development. An exhaustive capture, rescue and translocation exercise will not be necessary. However, a translocation exercise for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) is likely to be undertaken on the Site and any reptiles found underneath refugia or in pitfall traps during this exercise will be removed from the Site into nearby suitable habitat.

In accordance with a precautionary approach, Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) will be carried out during site clearance works, in conjunction with mitigation measures and licence requirements for great crested newts. This exercise will be carried out only once the translocation exercise for great crested newts (and other herptiles) is completed, in accordance with the following outline methodology:

- Clearance works will only be carried out when all species of herptile (reptile and amphibian) are active. Although activity is weather- and temperature-dependent, reptiles are usually latest to emerge and are fully active from April to October, inclusive. All works will be directly supervised by a suitably qualified and licenced (for great crested newts) ecologist.
- A hand search of the area will be carried out, with any natural or artificial refugia (e.g. logs and refuse) inspected for sheltering animals; animals would then be removed from the Site into nearby suitable habitat.
- After the ecologist is satisfied with the preparatory works, they will supervise a destructive search of the area. This will involve the removal of all remaining ground vegetation leaving only bare earth. An excavator will be used for this purpose, with the turf/topsoil being placed carefully to one side. Particular care will be required during this exercise, which will be closely monitored by the ecologist.
- Any reptiles caught during this exercise will be removed from Site. In the unlikely event that high numbers of herptiles are present then all works will stop and the Council's ecologist and Natural England consulted to agree appropriate action.

Herptile-proof fencing will be installed around the Site (as part of great crested newt mitigation) and will prevent recolonisation of the Site once it has been cleared.

5.3 Enhancement Measures

In order to provide improved feeding measures and hibernation habitat for reptiles on the Site, a range of enhancement measures will be implemented on the Site.

In order to provide sheltering habitat and a potential feeding resource, a number of log piles will be created within the woodland to be retained. As well as providing shelter they

will act as a food source for insects, which in turn provide food for amphibians, such as frogs and toads, which are grass snakes' main prey.

An on-site waterbody should be created, which will also provide enhanced foraging habitat for reptiles and an additional habitat type to the Site.

Supplementary planting should be undertaken to the retained woodland and should use species of value to wildlife in order to provide enhanced foraging resources (through provision of food for insect larvae and adult insects).

The effects of artificial lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess but it is known that lighting can adversely affect wildlife. Although the Site currently experiences some artificial lighting, especially within the eastern half of the Site, any new artificial lighting should be designed in line with good practice², such as minimising light spill and directing artificial lighting away from the woodland.

5.4 Conclusions

The Site supports a low population of reptiles and, with the above measures in place, potential adverse ecological effects and legal offences will be effectively mitigated to an acceptable level.

The range of enhancement measures suggested for the Site will provide improved foraging and sheltering habitat for grass snakes and other species of herptile.

² Bat Conservation Trust (2014), *Artificial Lighting and Wildlife*.

APPENDIX A – Figure 1

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright 2017. All rights reserved. License number 100048606



- Site Boundary
- Reptile Refugia
- Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*)



Produced By: KB	Ref: 50104-REP-002
Checked By: CA	Date: 29/06/2017

Reptile Survey Results
Figure 1

Reptile Survey Report
Maple Road, Tankersley