

Reptile Presence/ Likely Absence Report

Brookside Stables

Dagbrook Lane

Henfield, West Sussex

BN5 9SH

NGR: TQ 21240 14896



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Sylvatica Ecology Ltd

Company Registration Number: 07705793

<https://se-planning.com>

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Limitations and Liabilities

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It should be borne in mind that the behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to standard patterns recorded in scientific literature. Therefore, this report 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.

In order to minimise the likelihood of adverse effects on protected animal species over time, it is accepted good practice, in accordance with Natural England (NE) (formerly English Nature) guidance for ecological surveys to be repeated should works be deferred for between 12 -18 months from the date of initial survey.

It is the duty of the landowner, developer and operations managers to act responsibly and to comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to, or during works.

The recommendations and information contained within this report are based on the information provided on the development works prior to the surveys being carried out. Should the development proposals change then the findings and recommendations contained within would potentially require revision.

The findings within this report do not constitute as legal advice. Should this be required, then a suitably qualified professional practitioner should be contacted.

Approved by	Signed	Contact
Richard Law BSc (Hons) MRes CEnv MCIEEM FLS		info@se-planning.com

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a reptile presence/likely absence survey at Brookside Stables, undertaken to support a pending residential planning application. A prior ecological assessment (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd, 2023) identified habitat with potential to support reptiles, triggering this further survey.
- 1.2 The site comprises a small area of mixed scrub, modified grassland grazed by horses and sheep, three buildings (open-faced barn, stable block, static caravan) and hardstanding, bounded by a species-rich native hedgerow. All UK reptile species (including slow worm and grass snake, the species with potential to occur here) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 1.3 15 artificial refugia (roof felt, 100 x 50cm — above the recommended density of 10/ha) were installed within the ruderal vegetation and left in situ for three weeks before checks began, following Froglife (2016) and CIEEM (2021) guidance. Seven survey visits were carried out between 18 June and 12 July 2026, extended beyond the usual April–May window due to sustained hot weather, with checks made in the morning.
- 1.4 Seven survey visits were undertaken (18th, 20th, 22th, 27th and 29th June, and 1st and 12th July 2026), each in suitable conditions — dry ground, temperatures of 15.5–18.0°C, and light winds or still air, under sunny intervals, patchy cloud or overcast skies. No reptiles were recorded on any visit; population estimate surveys were therefore not required.
- 1.5 Reptiles are considered likely absent from the site and are not regarded as a constraint to the proposed development. As a precaution against the negligible possibility of transient reptiles or amphibians, the following measures are recommended during construction, supervised by a suitably experienced ecologist:
- *Hand-clearance of vegetation, with all site workers briefed on reptile/amphibian identification and handling; works to stop and a licensed ecologist to be consulted if great crested newt is found.*
 - *A hibernaculum (soil, stone and untreated wood/cut vegetation) to be created outside the works footprint before construction, as a receptor for any animals found.*
 - *Open excavations to be covered overnight to prevent reptiles, amphibians and mammals becoming trapped.*
 - *Groundworks to be kept as short as possible and carried out in daylight hours only.*
 - *Cut vegetation, soil and debris not to be stockpiled on site, to avoid creating incidental hibernacula.*

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Aim of this Study

- 2.1 This report. report presents the findings of a reptile presence/ likely absence surveys of land located at Brookside Stables, Dagbrook Lane, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SH, centred on NGR: TQ 21240 14896. There is a pending planning application for the construction of residential accommodation. A previous ecological assessment (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd 2026) identified some habitat as presenting potential to support reptile species. Therefore, a reptile presence/ likely absence survey was carried out.
- 2.2 The site supports a small area of mixed scrub behind the stables; modified grassland used for horse and sheep grazing; three buildings, comprising an open-faced barn, the main stable block and a static caravan unit; and an area of hardstanding used for parking and access. A native species-rich hedgerow with trees, dominated by hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble with mature oak standards and ivy through the lower structure, bounds the site. No invasive non-native plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were recorded.

2.3 *Figure 1: Location of Site*



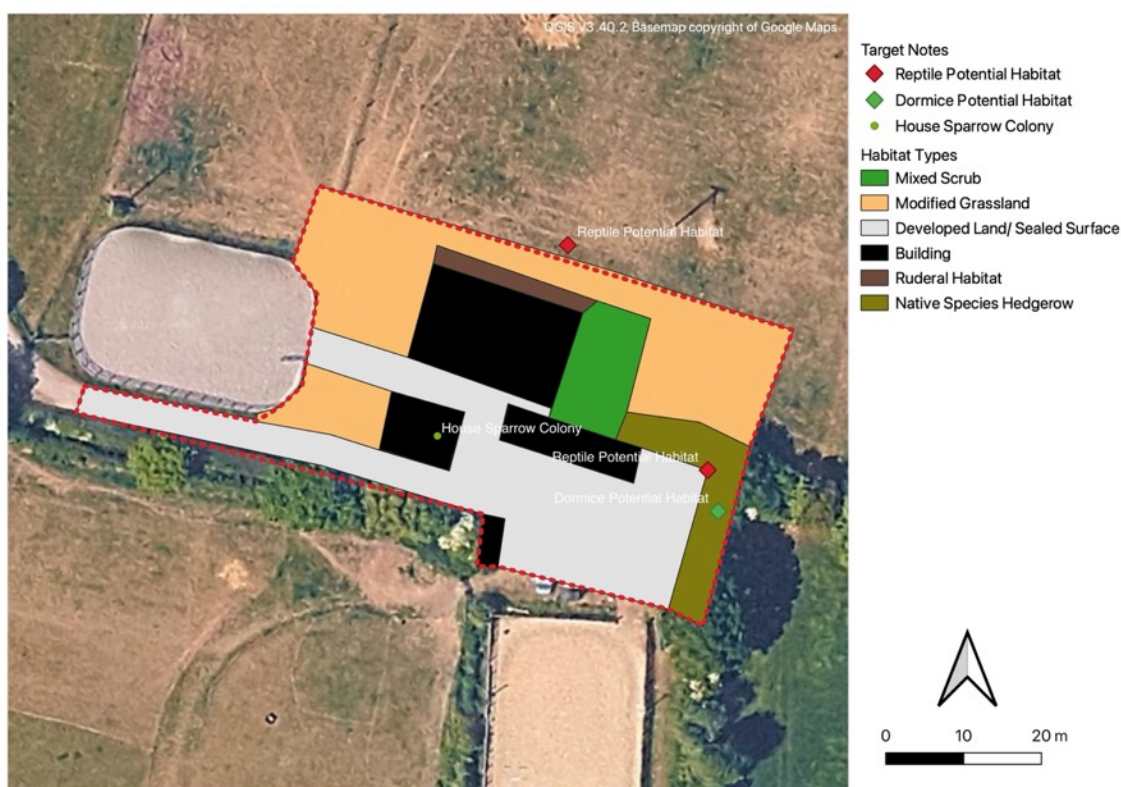
Legal Status of Reptiles

- 2.4 All reptile species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which make it an offence to deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or trade these animals. The common reptile species covered by this Act are slow worm, grass snake, common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and adder (*Vipera*

berus). Other, rarer, native reptile species are offered greater levels of protection, but these are generally found in habitats that were not present within the Site or local surroundings.

- 2.5 There was potential for grass snake and slow worm to be present within the site. As a result of this, further survey was carried out in the form of reptile presence/ likely absence surveys.

2.6 **Figure 2: Habitat Map**



3.0 METHODOLOGY

Survey

- 3.1 A presence/ likely absence survey for reptiles was carried out within the area of ruderal vegetation. The survey methodology followed the guidance outlined in the Surveying for Reptiles (Froglife 2016) and CIEM (2021). The surveys were carried out in June and July 2026. The weather conditions during this time were generally hot with repeated very hot spells. As a result of this, the surveys were conducted over a longer timeframe and in the mornings to ensure conditions for surveys were suitable.
- 3.2 15 artificial refugia in the form of roof felt were placed within the ruderal vegetation area. The refugia was 100cm by 50cm in size. The recommended concentration is 10 per hectare, so the number used was above this minimum number. The refugia were installed and left *in situ* for three weeks prior to

the first survey visit. This was to give a period of time between installation and surveys, which would enable any reptiles that may be present, time to locate the refugia. Refugia was placed within areas of suitable reptile habitat potential, within longer swards, scrub edges and within the more rank grass areas.

3.3 **Figure 3: Refugia Locations**



Lead Surveyor

- 3.4 The survey work and reporting has been led by Richard Law BSc MRes CEnv MCIEEM FLS. Richard has been undertaking ecological survey work within the last 20 years on many different locations throughout the United Kingdom, for a variety of protected species, including bats (2025-85394-CL18-BAT), reptiles, amphibians including great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (2025-85909-SCI-CL08) and terrestrial mammals including dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* (2026-88947-CL10a-DOR) and birds including barn owl *Tyto alba* licence (2026-88948-CL29-OWL). Richard is also qualified in track and sign and trailing *via* an international system of assessment (www.trackercertification.com).

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 This section provides an account of the results from the survey carried out on the buildings and provide the justification for any further recommendations outlined within this report.

4.2 **Table 1: Survey Data**

Survey Number	Start Time of Survey	Date	Temp start and end	Cloud Cover	Ground conditions	Wind strength (Beaufort) and direction	Reptile Numbers and Species
1	08:00	18 th June 2026	16.5°C	Sunny Internals	Dry	S (1)	0
2	08:00	20 th June 2026	15.5°C	Sunny Internals	Dry	SW (2)	0
3	08:00	22 nd June 2026	18.0°C	Sunny Internals	Dry	E (3)	0
4	08:00	27 th June 2026	17.5°C	Overcast	Dry	S (2)	0
5	08:00	29 th June 2026	18.0°C	Overcast	Dry	Still	0
6	07:30	1 st July 2026	16.0°C	Patchy Cloud	Dry	SW (1)	0
7	08:15	12 th July 2026	18.0°C	Overcast	Dry	Still	0

4.3 No reptiles were found during the presence/ likely absence surveys. As a result, population estimate surveys were not then carried out.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary of Predicted Impact

- 5.1 No reptiles were found during the presence/ likely absence surveys. It can be concluded that reptiles are likely absence and are not considered as a constraint to the proposed development works.
- 5.2 In the unlikely event that a reptile is found during the works, then works must cease and consultation with a suitable qualified ecological consultant made. To account for the negligible possibility of reptile and other amphibian to be transiting the site during the works period, a precautionary vegetation cutting regime is outlined below.

Precautionary Vegetation Cutting Regime

- 5.3 A method of works would be adhered to during the construction phase of the development, which will account for the low population of reptiles present on site and to further reduce the already minimal risk of reptiles and other amphibians being harmed during the site works. This would be carried out under the supervision of a suitably experienced ecologist.
- *Vegetation removal would be carried out by hand and these clearance works would be supervised by an ecological consultant. This ecologist would only be required onsite during this vegetation removal but would brief all site workers on reptile and amphibian identification and what to do if one is found and where to relocate it to, with the worker given advice on how to proceed with care and where to relocate any amphibian if required. If great crested newt are found, then the works would cease and consultation sought with the licenced ecological consultant,*
 - *Hibernaculum habitat would be created prior to the start of the construction phase, with this being situated outside of the works impact zone. This would consist of a mixture of soil over stone and untreated wood, normally cut vegetation. Any reptiles and amphibians found would be moved to this hibernacula,*
 - *Any excavations should be covered at night to prevent any reptiles and amphibians falling in and becoming trapped. This would also be applicable to any transient terrestrial mammals.*
 - *Ground works would be carried out for a short a period as possible and all works would be conducted during daylight hours only, so to above the time when reptiles and amphibians are most active,*
 - *The storage of any debris, soil or cut vegetation on site would be avoided to prevent this becoming hibernacula for reptiles and amphibians.*

6.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2021) Competency Standard for Reptile Surveys, Mitigation and Management (Draft)

Froglife (2016) Surveying for Reptiles 1st Edition

Sylvatica Ecology Ltd (2026) Update Preliminary Ecological Assessment. Brookside Stables, Dagbrook Lane, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SH.

Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) The Stationary Office, Norwich