

Mr L Anthony

By email

Our ref: A1144.004_10052023

10 May 2023

Dear Lloyd

Reptile Relocation Strategy: Land at Henley Road, Caversham

Many thanks for looking into potential reptile relocation sites. It is understood that you have been given permission to move the reptiles to a local site owned by Tarmac.

Method statements

Reptiles

Receptor site

The receptor site being proposed is an area of land owned by Tarmac, which is a flooded former gravel quarry. The site is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 745 764 and consists of rough grassland, rush pasture, carr woodland, scrub, hedgerows and waterbodies. The site is large, covering an area of 20 ha (including waterbodies) and is capable of accepting a small number of reptiles without any need for habitat improvements. The site is shown on Figure 1, Appendix I and photographs of the site are included in Appendix II.

The receptor site will be improved with the installation of three reptile refugia and indicative locations are shown in the Appendices. Refugia are best located in open areas. A refugia is formed by excavating a hole measuring at least 2 m square and 50 cm deep. The hole is filled with a layer of gravel to aid drainage and then filled up with stones, rocks and logs with a pile of branches and brash over the top, creating lots of nooks and crannies where reptiles can hide and hibernate. The finished height of the refugia will be 1.5 m. Wood from hedge laying or scrub clearance is ideal for this. The

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excavated turf and soil would then piled over the top of the logs and brash as an insulating layer and to protect it from frost. Ensure gaps are left for reptiles to enter and exit the finished hibernaculum.

Relocation exercise

Prior to any site works, the reptile relocation exercise will be undertaken followed by a destructive search, to protect reptiles on the site. The objective of this exercise being to relocate the reptiles from the proposed development area to the receptor site detailed above.

A temporary reptile fence will be installed along the east and west boundary of the site to prevent recolonisation during the translocation exercise. There are areas of hardstanding at the north and a watercourse to the south; it is assumed that these areas will form a barrier to reptile movement and fencing will therefore terminate where it meets hardstanding and watercourse. The laying of the reptile fence will require shallow trenching that will require vegetation removal, including areas of ornamental planting and grassland. Trenching will be undertaken by a small tracked excavator or by hand and work will be overseen by an ecologist or ecological clerk of works.

Any features such as rubble piles which potentially afford resting places for reptiles, if present, will be dismantled by hand by a suitably qualified ecologist or ecological clerk of works.

Any other vegetation in the construction area will initially be reduced to a height of 10 centimetres above ground level by hand, brashings and cuttings removed, and the remainder left for a minimum period of 48 hours of fine warm weather before clearing to minimise the risk of harming/killing any amphibians and / or reptiles that may be present and to encourage their movement onto adjoining land.

Reptile relocation

Reptile refuges will be laid out across the site in order to increase the potential for reptile captures; to maximize capture a maximum density of 1000 refuges per hectare will be laid out in a grid in suitable habitat across the site. . The refuges will be allowed to settle and establish two weeks. This will be done when reptiles are active, between April and mid-August to provide sufficient time to complete the process.

Refuges will be checked during optimum weather conditions i.e. when the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold, usually between 08.30 and 11.00 hours or between 16.00 and 18.30 hours and during periods of cloud with sunny spells and little wind.

When walking between refuges, the ground 2 to 3 m in front of the surveyor and existing natural basking sites will be carefully checked for reptiles basking in the open.

Slow worms will be carefully collected by hand and surveyors will wear gloves at all times. The size, sex and age of each slow worm will be noted so that a summary report can be issued at the completion of the translocation exercise.

The site is small and supports a moderate population of slow worm, so an according level of trapping effort will be employed. A minimum of 20 trapping days will be undertaken during optimal conditions (see below). The translocation will continue until five consecutive days with no captures are made.

Animals will be collected in a bucket with vegetation at the bottom transported immediately to the receptor site.

All records will be submitted to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.

Destructive search

Once the reptile relocation is completed, the remaining vegetation and topsoil will be removed from within the construction site. This will be undertaken using an excavator equipped with a toothed bucket. This clearance and topsoil removal will be carried out under the supervision of an ecologist or Ecological Clerk of Works, which will enable a fingertip search and destructive search of the site, and any further reptiles found will be relocated to the receptor site. This destructive search will be undertaken between the end of the capture period and September when reptiles are most active. Once completed, the temporary reptile fence will be removed.

Give me call if you would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely



Alex Crossman BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

Managing Director



 Reptile refugia

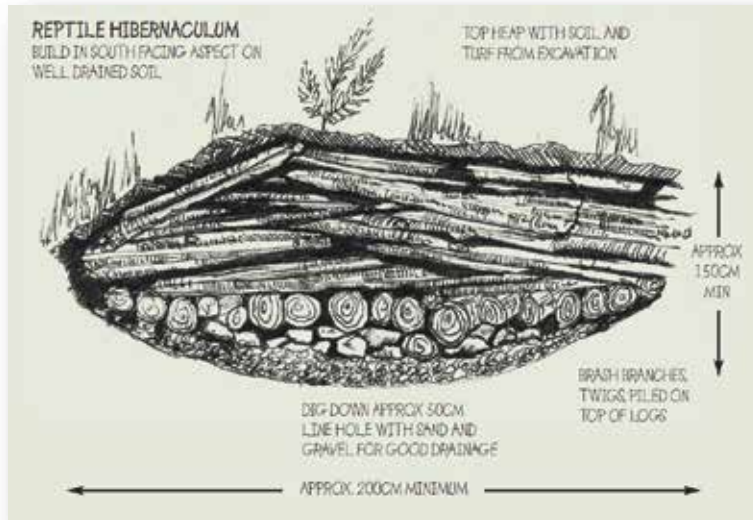


Proposed translocation site owned by Tarmac and available for relocation of reptiles. Highlighted areas provide optimal habitat.

Title Reptile relocation plan

Figure 1

Date 9 May 2023



3 x reptile refugia/hibernacula
will be built on the receptor
site.

Client Mr L Anthony
Title Reptile refugia spec.
Site Henley Road, Caversham
Figure 2
Date 9 May 2023
Scale Indicative



— Approximate allignment
of temporary reptile fence.

Constructed of Caudon
polythen and pegged with
37mm x 37mm x 1200mm
stakes.

Fence will be installed with
trenching machine or
small tracked excavator.

Client L Anthony
Title Reptile Fence Plan
Site 205-219 Henley Road
Figure 3
Date 9 May 2023
Scale Indicative



Photographs



Photograph 1:

Typical habitat on the translocation site, including tussocky grassland and rush pasture



Photograph 2:

Adjacent to the lakes are areas of open willow carr woodland