Mr L Anthony

By email

Our ref:
A113.004_21042023

21 April 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 om 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.

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.

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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 or 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 should 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 mats will be laid out in April, which is at the beginning of the reptile active season. The refuges will be allowed to settle and establish two weeks.

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 15 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 and animals will be kept temporarily in a vivarium so that they can be transported on a twice-weekly basis to the receptor site.

All records will be submitted to Surrey Biological Records Centre.

Destructive search

Once the reptile relocation is completed, the remaining vegetation and topsoil will be removed from within the construction site. This clearance will be carried out under the supervision of an 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

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Managing Director

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Title	Reptile relocation plan
Figure	1
Date	20 April 2023

Photographs

Photograph 1:

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

Photograph 2:

Adjacent to the lakes are areas of open willow carr woodland