



**L I Z A R D**

Landscape Design and Ecology

## **REPTILE MITIGATION STRATEGY**

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**Penlan, Kingfield Close, Woking, Surrey**

On behalf of: Victus Homes

<b>Client:</b>	Victus Homes			
<b>Project:</b>	Penlan, Kingfield Close, Woking, Surrey			
<b>Reference:</b>	LLD3115-ECO-REP-003-00-Reptile			
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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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## SUMMARY

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Victus Homes to complete a Reptile Mitigation Strategy at Penlan, Kingfield Close, Woking, Surrey (*Grid Reference: TQ 00702 57222 – hereafter referred to as ‘the site’*) as requested by the Local Planning Authority to discharge planning Condition No.15.

The initial site-visit identified the site as potentially supporting reptiles in very low numbers. Due to the small scale of the site and only isolated areas of reptile suitable habitat, a phased clearance of vegetation within the site is deemed sufficient to ensure the protection of any reptiles present on site.

Works will proceed as follows.

- All vegetation within the construction zone shall be cut in a directional manner from north to south to a height no lower than 150mm. Works to remove the vegetation shall be undertaken outside the nesting bird season which runs from March to August inclusive.
- Following the initial cut, tree stumps and roots should be removed outside the reptile hibernation season (e.g. avoiding November – February inclusive).
- A subsequent cut shall then reduce the vegetation to <50mm rendering it unsuitable for reptiles after a fingertip search of the area. All works except the initial cut to 150mm shall be supervised by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist.
- Following completion of the vegetation cut, a destructive search shall be completed whereby the top 100mm of soil is turned over, using a toothed bucket excavator to ensure that no reptiles remain within the construction zone.
- Directly following the Destructive Search, reptile mitigation fencing should be erected along the site boundaries to ensure no reptiles can re-enter the site.
- Vegetation within the site and is to be kept short (<50mm) prior to and during work to prevent reptiles recolonising the area.

The implementation of the above mitigation measures will ensure that that no reptiles are harmed and the development proceeds in accordance with The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Victus Homes to complete a reptile mitigation strategy for Penlan, Kingfield Close, Woking, Surrey (*Grid Reference: TQ 00702 57222 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).
- 1.2 The site was subject to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The site was revisited on 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 to validate previously reported site conditions. Due to the presence of suitable reptile habitat on site in the form of grassland, tall ruderal vegetation and scrub, a reptile mitigation strategy is required to ensure no reptiles are harmed during the course of works.
- 1.3 This report has been compiled to allow discharge of planning condition no. 16 which states:

### **'Planning Condition No. 16**

Prior to the commencement of development, hereby approved, an appropriately detailed Reptile Mitigation Strategy should be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Reptile Mitigation Strategy should include, but not be limited to:

- Map showing the location of all of the ecological features
- Risk assessment of the potentially damaging construction activities
- Practical measures to avoid and reduce impacts during construction
- Location and timing of works to avoid harm to biodiversity features
- Responsible persons and lines of communication
- Method of works
- Reptile receptor site locations, to include carrying capacity and assessment.
- Reptile capture threshold limit.
- Use of protected fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

Reason: To ensure the protection of wildlife and the habitat which supports it and secure opportunities for the enhancement of the nature conservation value of the site.'

**Site Information**

- 1.4 The site measures approximately 0.2 hectares (ha) and is comprised of a residential building, amenity (modified) grassland, introduced shrubs, tall ruderal vegetation, scattered trees, dense scrub and hardstanding. The site is bound along the western and northern boundaries by a public footpath. Along the eastern and southern boundaries, the site is bound by a residential property and Loop Road Recreational Ground respectively.

**Surrounding Landscape**

- 1.5 The wider landscape is predominantly urban in the form of the suburb of Kingfield. Directly to the south and east of the site is the Loop Road Recreational Ground. Further east and south are arable fields which begin at their closest point approximately 490 meters southeast from the site. The surrounding habitats outside of the site to the south comprise of untended verges, of ruderal vegetation and bramble scrub.

**Development Proposals**

- 1.7 The development proposals include demolishing the existing building for the provision of 3no. detached houses with associated hard and soft landscaping.

**Scope of the Report**

- 1.8 The aim of the reptile mitigation strategy has been to:
- Outline all relevant legislation applying to reptiles.
  - Outline the possible impact pathways resulting from the proposals.
  - Propose suitable mitigation measures to ensure no reptiles are harmed during works.
  - Detail when works can be undertaken.

## 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, common lizard, adder or grass snake).

### **3.0 BASELINE ASSESSMENT**

#### **3.1 Field Survey**

3.1.1 During the initial site visit on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 the site was assessed as having *“only become suitable to reptiles recently due to lack of maintenance. The areas of reptile suitable habitat are small overall and are separated by the onsite building reducing the potential for reptiles commuting across the site. The site is too small and isolated to support a self-sustaining population but may support reptiles on occasion or in small numbers”*.

3.1.2 As such, a reptile mitigation strategy was commissioned to ensure no reptiles are harmed or killed during works. Due to the small scale of the site and only isolated areas of reptile suitable habitat, a full translocation was not considered necessary.

#### **3.2 Constraints and Limitations**

3.2.1 No constraints were encountered during the initial site visit which would cast doubt on the need for a reptile mitigation strategy. Full access was available to all areas of the site.

3.2.2 Suitable potential reptile habitat was noted within the north and south of the site, isolated by the presence of the existing building in the centre of the site.

### **4.0 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 Impacts**

4.1.1 The northern and southern portions of the site contain isolated areas of reptile suitable habitat. Without some form of mitigation there is a risk that development could result in the killing or injury of a common reptile species, contrary to The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*). Potential causes of impacts include vegetation removal, vehicle movements, incorrect timing of works and inappropriate storage of chemicals.



## 4.2 Mitigation

### *Timing*

- 4.2.1 Works shall be undertaken during the active period for reptiles (March – October) with a suitably qualified ecologist present to ensure works are undertaken in a lawful and safe manner to protect any reptiles present.

### *Phased Clearance*

- 4.2.2 A phased clearance of vegetation within the site will be undertaken to ensure no reptiles are harmed during works.

- First, a log or brash pile should be made at the southern corner of the site.
- All vegetation within the construction zone shall be cut in a directional manner from north to south to a height no lower than 150mm. Works to remove the vegetation shall be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (avoid March to August inclusive) or following a nest check by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- Following the initial cut, tree stumps and roots should be removed outside the reptile hibernation season (e.g. avoiding November – February inclusive).
- A subsequent cut shall then reduce the vegetation to <50mm rendering it unsuitable for reptiles after a fingertip search of the area. All works except the initial cut to 150mm shall be supervised by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist.
- Directly following completion of the vegetation cut, a destructive search shall be completed whereby the top 100mm of soil is turned over, using a toothed bucket excavator to ensure that no reptiles remain within the construction zone.
- Vegetation within the site is to be kept short (<50mm) prior to and during work to prevent reptiles recolonising the area.

### *Protective Fencing*

4.2.4 Immediately on completion of the destructive search, reptile exclusion fencing will be installed around the construction zone boundary, leaving a gap for site access to the north where no reptiles are likely to be, due to the presence of an estate road. This will ensure that no reptiles move back into the construction zone and therefore no reptiles will come to harm. The recommended fencing specification is as follows:

- Temporary 1000-gauge solid panel exclusion fencing made from hard plastic; and
- Total height 1200mm, with 200-300mm buried into the ground; and
- Top curl on outside of fence of 90 degrees and 50mm; and
- Secured on timber posts to be on the inside of the fence.

4.2.5 Once the reptile fence has been installed, development works can proceed. The reptile exclusion fence will be maintained in good condition until project completion; it will be the responsibility of the site manager to ensure that the reptile fence remains in sound condition by completing daily checks and carrying out maintenance as soon as any damage is discovered, until the works are completed. On completion of all development works, the reptile exclusion fence should be carefully removed from site in the presence of a suitably qualified ecologist. This is anticipated to sufficiently mitigate potential impacts to a negligible likelihood.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 The site was assessed as having the potential to support reptiles infrequently or in small numbers. However, due to the small scale of the site and only isolated areas of reptile suitable habitat, a full translocation was not considered necessary.

5.2 The proposals involve the removal of the grassland, tall ruderal vegetation, dense scrub, introduced shrubs and scattered trees. The majority of suitable potential reptile habitat is to be removed. The implementation of phased vegetation removal followed by a destructive search shall ensure that no reptiles are harmed during the works. The installation of a log pile will mitigate against habitat loss and should be accompanied by appropriate signage to highlight its conservation value.

- 5.3 The implementation of the above mitigation measures will ensure that that no reptiles are harmed and the development proceeds in accordance with The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

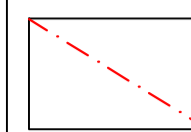
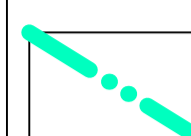
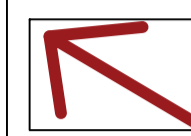
## 6.0 REFERENCES

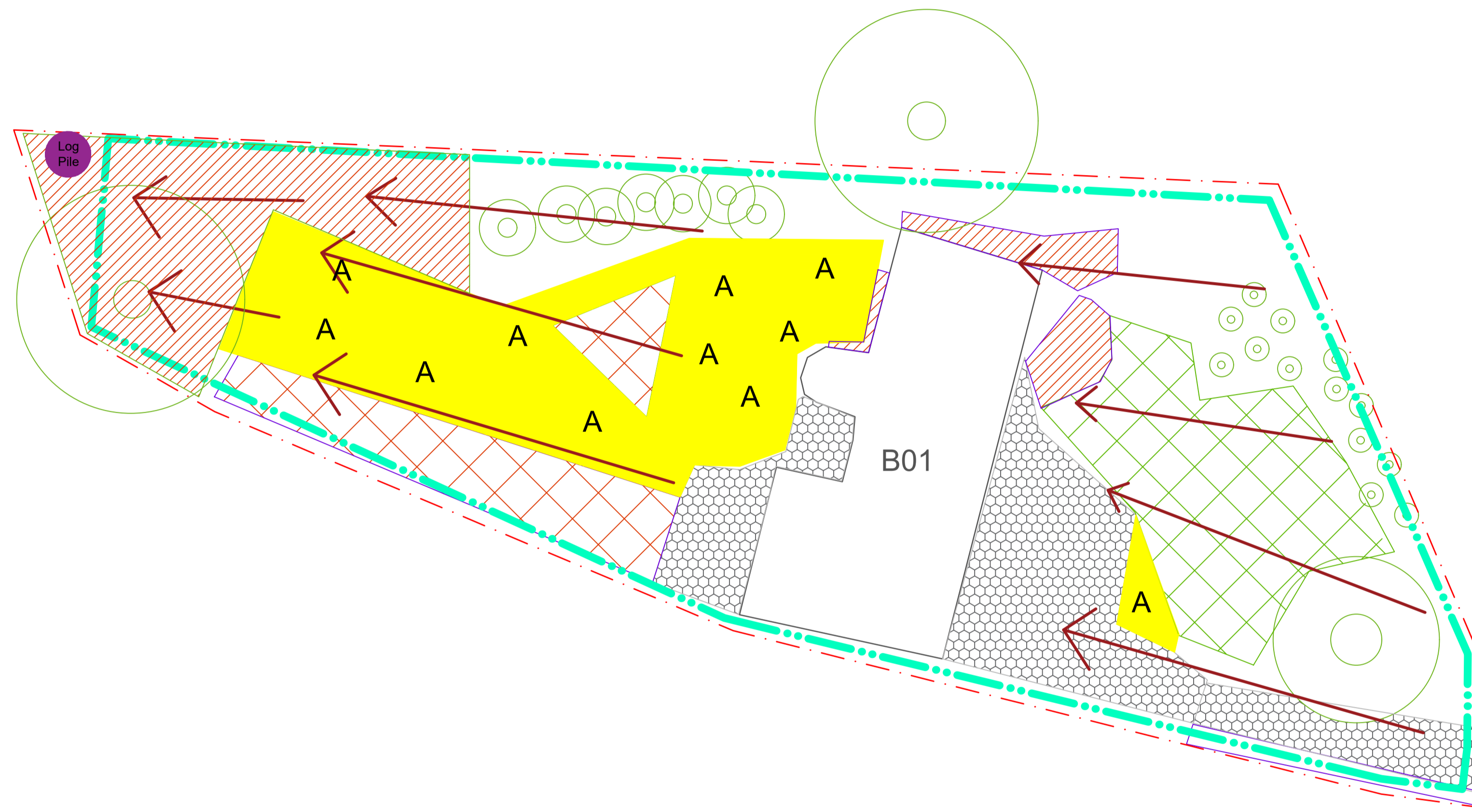
Froglife (1999) *Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice Sheet 10*. Froglife: Halesworth

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

# Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Location of Reptile Fencing
-  Direction of Vegetation Cut



**Notes:** The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.  
 Habitat areas are indicative and for information only - please do not scale from this drawing.

## Planning Issue

Rev	Description	Date	Initials
00	Planning Issue	30.01.24	SH



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<i>Client</i> Victus Homes			
<i>Project Title and Location</i> <b>Penlan</b> Kingfield Close, Woking			
<i>Drawing Title</i> <b>Figure No.1 - Reptile Mitigation Strategy</b>			
<i>Scale</i> 1:200 @ A1	<i>Drawn</i> SH	<i>Approved</i> LB	<i>Date</i> 30.01.24
<i>Drawing No</i> LLD3115-ECO-FIG-001	<i>Revision</i> 00		

**Figure No.1- Reptile Mitigation Strategy  
 Penlan, Kingfield Close, Woking**

