



**Phase 2 Reptile Survey Report
of
The Old Vicarage, Homington Road, Coombe Bissett,
Wiltshire, SP5 4LR**

On behalf of:

David and Fiona Walker

May 2026

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Kingfisher Ecology Ltd (company number: 10646936),
Office: 45 Moot Lane, Downton, Wiltshire. SP5 3JR.
Email: info@kingfisherecology.co.uk Website: www.kingfisherecology.co.uk
Phone: 01725 513 999

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Prepared By:	Katie Sell MSci (Hons) Zoology	Assistant Ecologist		Date
				14/05/2026
Reviewed By:	Hannah Cockburn, MBiol (Hons) Zoology ACIEEM MRSB	Ecologist		Date
				15/05/2026
Approved By:	Adam Lewins BSc (Hons) Ecology CEnv MISEP PTI MArborA AIFM	Director / Principal Consultant		Date
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This report has been produced by Kingfisher Ecology Limited within the terms of the contract with the client and taking account of the resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. This report details the findings at the time of survey, together with an assessment of how the proposed development could be expected to impact on the habitats and species that exist at the site and suggests mitigation designed to reduce those impacts. It is vital that the applicant agrees with those recommendations and that they are taken up within the site design before the application is submitted to the LPA. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

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Executive Summary

Kingfisher Ecology Ltd have been commissioned by David and Fiona Walker to conduct a Phase 2 Reptile Survey at The Old Vicarage.

This report contains the methodology, results and recommendations given for protected reptile species that may be present on site.

Artificial refugia comprised of roofing felt mats were placed in suitable reptile habitats at density of at least 5-10/ha. The refugia were left in situ for two weeks prior to the survey commencing, allowing any reptiles present to familiarize themselves with the additional refugia. A total of 7 separate surveys were done over a 3-week period, starting on 01/05/2026 and ending on 14/05/2026.

Six individual slow worms and one viviparous lizard were found throughout the presence/absence survey, indicating that a small reptile population is present on the site. It is recommended that a herptile exclusion fence is to be installed across the garden to create a reptile receptor area in the southeast corner of the garden. A Precautionary Working Method (PWM) will be needed to mitigate harm to any reptiles on site, including removal of any materials within the working area that could be considered potential refuge for reptiles (e.g brash and log piles). Vegetation clearance within the working area will follow a Phased Habitat Manipulation (PHM) following a thorough fingertip search to create less suitable habitat for reptiles, encouraging present reptiles to leave the working area. Topsoil removal will then need to be supervised under an Ecological Watching Brief (EWB) by a suitably qualified ecologist.

It is recommended that the garden is managed for wildlife, with the creation of hibernacula in the southeast corner to support the local reptile population.

This report will be valid for 12 months from the date of the final site visit, after which a site conditions assessment will need to be conducted in order to determine if ecological conditions of the site have changed, as recommended by CIEEM (2019b).

1. Introduction

Kingfisher Ecology Ltd have been commissioned by David and Fiona Walker to conduct a Phase 2 Reptile Survey at The Old Vicarage.

This report contains the methodology, results and recommendations given for protected reptile species that may be present on site. This report is to be read in conjunction with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Old Vicarage, Document ref: TOV-20220111 and the Site Ecological Conditions update Letter, doc ref: TOV-20240523-Rev B.

The UK has seven native reptiles including viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), eastern grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), barred grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), adder (*Vipera berus*), and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*). All reptiles across the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 and the Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, making it illegal to kill or injure a reptile. Where a development project might affect any of the forementioned species a survey should be undertaken by an experienced and licenced ecologist. Surveys are usually conducted during the months of April through to September/October depending on temperatures continually remaining above 7°C.

In the data search conducted in 2022 by the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC), slow worms had been recorded within 2km of site.

1.1 Site Location

The site is located at The Old Vicarage, Homington Road, Coombe Bissett, Wiltshire, SP5 4LR. Grid reference: SU11067 26254. What3Words: ///solve.customers.swaps This land is herein referred to in this report as 'the site'. See figures below for aerial maps.

Figure 1. Aerial view of site location

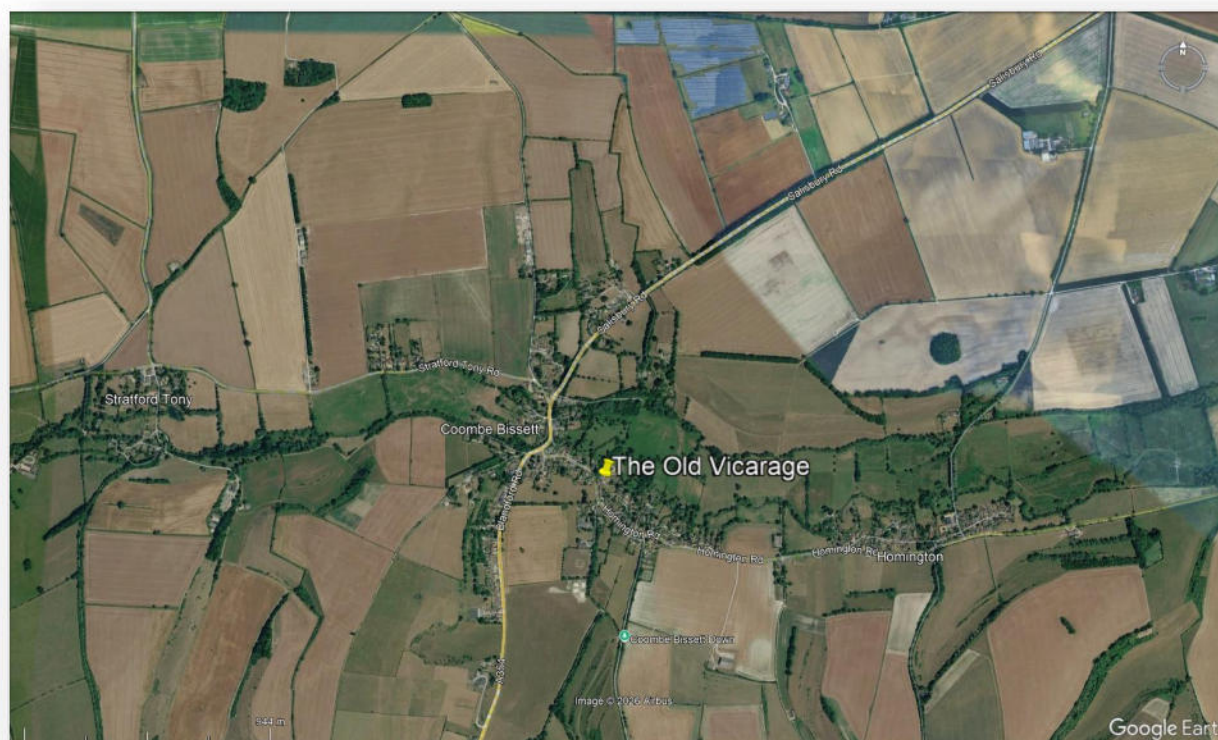


Figure 2. Close up aerial view of site location and red line boundary



1.2 Site Description

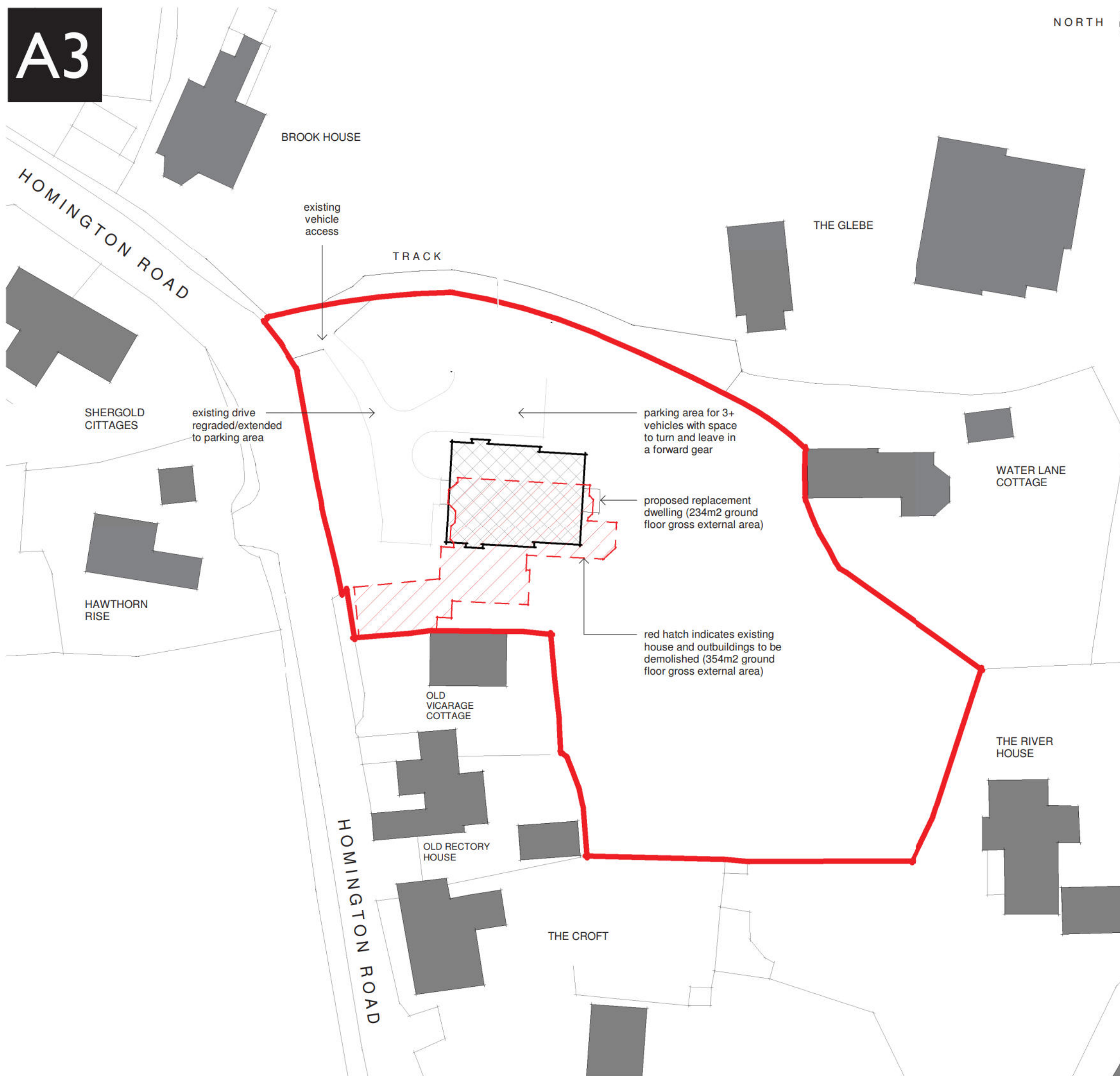
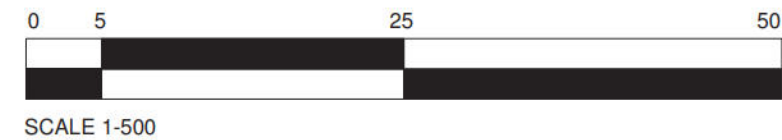
The site consists of a large house and gardens, with tussocky improved grassland, unsealed gravel driveways which have grown over with moss and pioneer weed species, paving and ornamental planting, scattered trees, ornamental shrubs, and bramble scrub. There is a derelict swimming pool on site within the gardens, which is dry and contains rubble and is partly overgrown. The site is bounded on all sides by low walls or close board fencing. There are three buildings on site: the main building with an adjoining annex, a double garage, and a summer house. There are also two sheds in the south-west corner of the site, which have been overgrown with scrub and are in disrepair.

The site is situated in Coombe Bissett, a village and civil parish in the River Ebbles Valley. Agricultural fields bounded by hedges and lines of trees are connected to the site to the north, east, west and south-west by lines of trees. Small broadleaf woodlands are present to the north and east of the site, and The River Ebbles flows 45 metres north of the site.

1.3 Proposed Works

It is proposed that the existing house and outbuildings will be demolished and a replacement dwelling built. The current drive will be regraded and extended, and a new parking area created. See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Proposed development (next page)



C	Update to client comments	22.09.24
B	Update to client comments	22.06.24
A	First Issue	07.04.24

Rev	Description	Date
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Client
Dr & Dr Walker

Project
The Old Vicarage, Homington Road,
Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, SP5 4LR

Drawing
Block plan

WHITEROK
architecture

07787304795 info@whiterok.co.uk www.whiterok.co.uk

Scale @ A2
1 : 500

Date
April '23

Project No
672

Drawing No
P02

Rev
C

2. Methodology

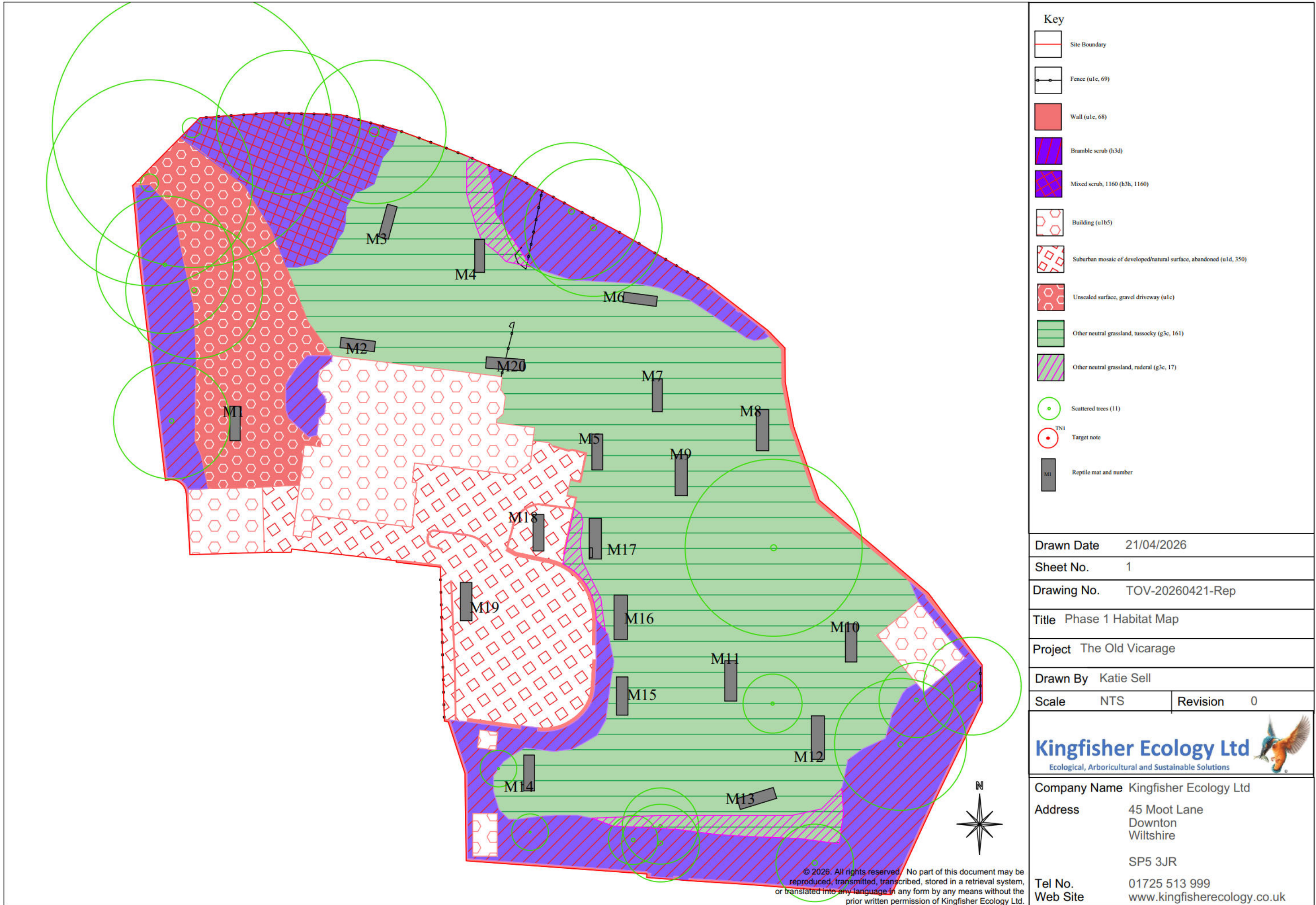
In order to establish presence or absence, a minimum of seven visits were undertaken during the optimum survey season, and under suitable weather conditions, during April and May 2026. Methodology conformed to the standards outlines in the *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual* (Gent & Gibson, 2003) and more specific guidelines in *Froglife Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey* (Froglife, 1999) and Natural England Technical Information Note TIN102 – *Reptile mitigation guidelines*.

All site visits were during periods of weather that are suitable for surveying reptiles with continual temperatures above 7°C, low wind and dry or light rain. Surveys were undertaken by principal ecologist Adam Lewins, experienced ecologist Hannah Cockburn, experienced surveyor Sam Hobbs, and assistant ecologists Alex Mitchell and Katie Sell.

In order to establish presence or absence, the following method was used:

- Artificial refugia comprised of roofing felt mats (1000 mm x 500 mm) were positioned in habitats that are suitable for reptiles.
- In accordance with Gent & Gibson (2003) refugia should be deployed at a density of at least 5-10/ha. The site is approximately 4.19 hectares in area, although only 3.25 hectares is classed as suitable habitat for reptiles.
- Twenty mats were placed in sunny areas of tall ruderal, long grass with open areas that allow light ingress to ground level and marginal scrub across the garden.
- The refugia were left in situ for two weeks prior to the survey commencing, allowing any reptiles present to familiarize themselves with the additional refugia.
- A total of 7 separate surveys were done over a 3-week period.

Figure 4. Map of the artificial refugia locations across the site (next page)



3. Survey Results

During the survey, slow worms were found during five out of seven surveys, with a total of six different individual slow worms identified. A viviparous lizard was also observed running away on approach to refugia 1 on 08/05/2026.

The following table illustrates the reptile catch rate during the presence/absence survey conducted in 2026.

Table 1. Table showing the reptile catch rate during the presence/absence survey in 2026

Date	Start Time	Species	Sex	Age	SV length (mm)	VT length (mm)	Refugia no.	Av temp (Celsius)	Weather	Wind (direction and Beaufort Scale)
01.05.2026	14:00	Slow worm	F	Sub-adult	80	80	18	19	Dry, 100% Cloud cover (CC)	1-2SW
01.05.2026	14:00	Slow worm	F	Sub-adult	100	100	11	19	Dry, 100% CC	1-2SW
05.05.2026	19:00	No reptiles found	-	-	-	-	-	13	Dry, 100% CC	0-1SW
06.05.2026	09:19	Slow worm	F	Sub-adult	90	50	7	11	Dry, 90%CC	1N
08.05.2026	12:15	Viviparous lizard	Ran away on approach			-	1	17	Dry, 50%CC	1-2NE
08.05.2026	12:20	Slow worm	F	Sub-adult	90	90	7	17	Dry, 50%CC	1-2NE
08.05.2026	12:34	Slow worm	U	Juvenile	-	-	5	17	Dry, 50%CC	1-2NE
11.05.2026	16:30	Slow worm	F	Sub-adult	100	110	7	14	Dry, 30%CC	0
11.05.2026	17:01	Slow worm	F	Juvenile	60	70	19	14	Dry, 30%CC	0
13.05.2026	12:15	No reptiles found	-	-	-	-	-	12	Dry, 50%CC	2-3SW
14.05.2026	13:43	Slow worm	F	Sub-adult	100	120	7	11	Dry, 50%CC	1N
14.05.2026	13:55	Slow worm	F	A	-	-	5	11	Dry, 50%CC	1N

Figure 5. Chart to illustrate slow worms encountered during the presence/absence survey in 2026

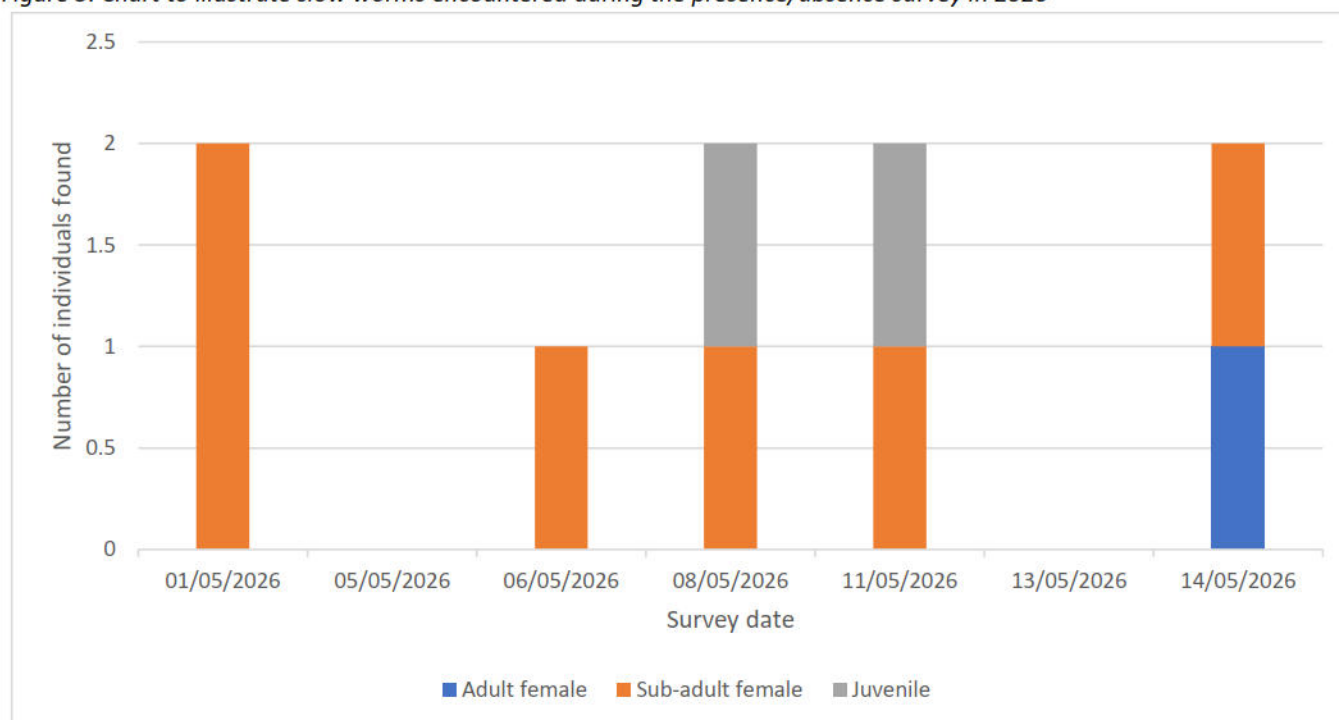


Table 2. Images of different individual reptiles found during the presence/absence survey in 2026

Date of survey	Description	Species
01/05/2026	Two sub adult female slow worms.	
06/05/2026	Image of a sub-adult female.	

11/05/2026	Image of juvenile slow worm.	
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4. Evaluation and Recommendations

The reptile presence/absence survey resulted in a count of six individual slow worms and one viviparous lizard.

The determination of reptile population size is difficult and usually requires several years of data and a robust method of marking (Gent & Gibson, 2003).

The population size for the site has been calculated as low using a combination of known species range, quality of habitats present on the site and the number of individuals recorded over the survey period. Photographs of chin patterns and the individuals themselves were taken to identify key characteristics and gain an accurate assessment of the number of individuals present for each species. The slow worm and viviparous lizard population at this site is considered a small population.

The development will cause high loss of broad habitat, and the residential development will contribute a high negative decline factor to this specific population without appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancements for reptiles on the site.

The development will cause high loss of broad habitat and will contribute a significant decline factor to this specific population without appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancements for reptiles on the site, thus a translocation is required.

4.1 Mitigation

It is recommended that a Precautionary Working Method (PWM) is followed to mitigate harm to any reptiles on site, including removal of any materials within the working area that could be considered potential refuge for reptiles (e.g. brash and log piles). It is recommended that a herptile exclusion fence is installed across the garden to create a reptile receptor area in the southeast corner of the garden. A two-phase vegetation cut will then be required as a persuasive technique that will allow any reptiles present to naturally disperse away from the construction area. The two-phase vegetation cut is also known as a Phased Habitat Manipulation (PHM). Once the PHM has been complete, only then can topsoil stripping commence. Topsoil removal will then need to be supervised under an Ecological Watching Brief (EWB) by a suitably qualified ecologist.

More details on the recommended method of works are described below:

Method

- To prevent the ingress of reptiles into the working area during the construction phase a herptile exclusion fence will be installed across the garden, with the southeast of the garden to act as a refuge/ receptor area for reptiles. A fence such as the one illustrated in Figure 7 below will prevent the ingress of herptiles to the site where harm could occur by construction activity. A map of the exclusion fencing mitigation can be seen in Figure 6. The reptile receptor area will be left unmanaged to enhance then habitat for reptiles.
- Vegetation clearance should be done by mechanical hand tools such as strimmers/brush cutters, or by a rotary mower where the cutting deck is able to be raised to a minimum of 12-20cm from the ground. Hedges can be reduced using hedge cutters and chainsaws.
- A careful fingertip search conducted by an Ecologist will precede any vegetation cutting to check for the presence of reptiles and other protected species. Any reptiles discovered will be carefully translocated by the Ecologist to the designated receptor site for the project.
- The first phase is an initial cut to approximately 12-15cm. The area should then be left for three days to allow any reptile to move away from the construction area.

- A careful fingertip search will again be conducted by the Ecologist to check the area for any remaining reptiles. Any reptiles discovered will be carefully translocated by the Ecologist to the designated receptor site.
- Once the area has been robustly checked then the short cutting can commence.
- All spoil and brash heaps must be carefully dismantled under ecological supervision to ensure any reptiles present are safely captured and translocated to the designated receptor site.
- Topsoil will be stripped by machines with a wide bucket with long tines. A grading bucket is only acceptable when there are overriding safety concerns from underground services.
- All topsoil stripping within sensitive areas must be done under strict ecological supervision.
- The upper layer of topsoil (15 cm minimum although the full depth of the topsoil is preferable) will be stripped by machines to minimise potential injury to reptiles.
- Where a grading bucket is required for overriding safety concerns from underground services, the bucket must have its blade positioned at a 90° angle to the ground and be carefully pulled back to allow the substrate to crumble and allow any animals to disburse.
- The pace of clearance will be guided by the Ecologist and must be slow enough to prevent injury to reptiles and allow sufficient time for any buried animals to be uncovered.
- Any uncovered reptiles will be captured by hand by the Ecologist and translocated to the designated receptor site.
- At the end of each day, the topsoil bund must be checked for reptiles by the Ecologist and compacted or removed from site to make that area inhabitable for reptiles.
- Once the works are completed, the herptile exclusion fence will be removed to allow free movement of reptiles.

Figure 6. Map of the site with the location of reptile exclusion fencing and designated receptor area. The receptor area is indicated in yellow, with the reptile exclusion fencing indicated in blue.

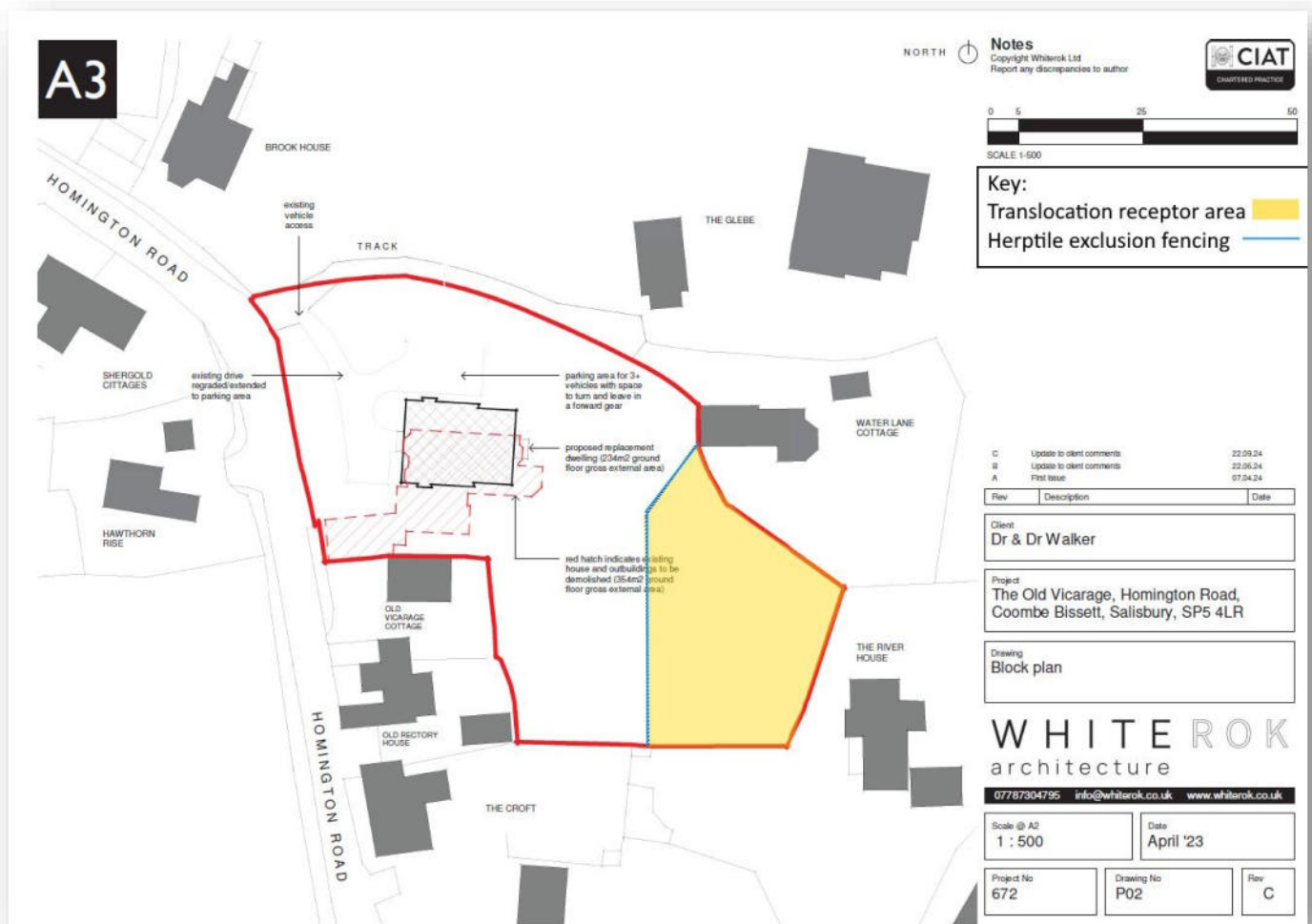


Figure 7. Diagrams of the installation of reptile exclusion fencing.

Figure 7a. Diagram of how the reptile exclusion fencing is installed – trenched.

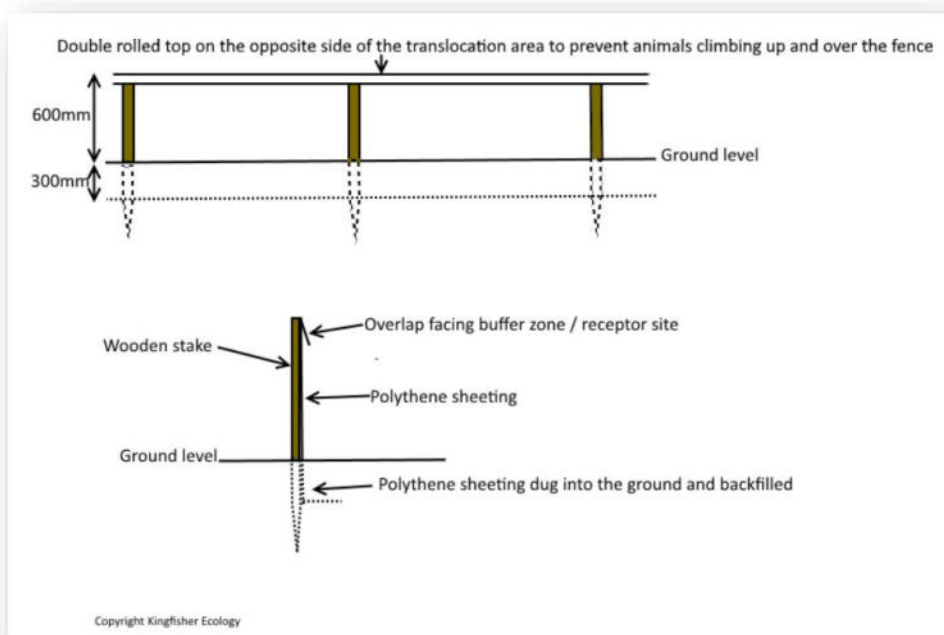


Figure 7b. Diagram of how the reptile exclusion fencing is installed – gate system.

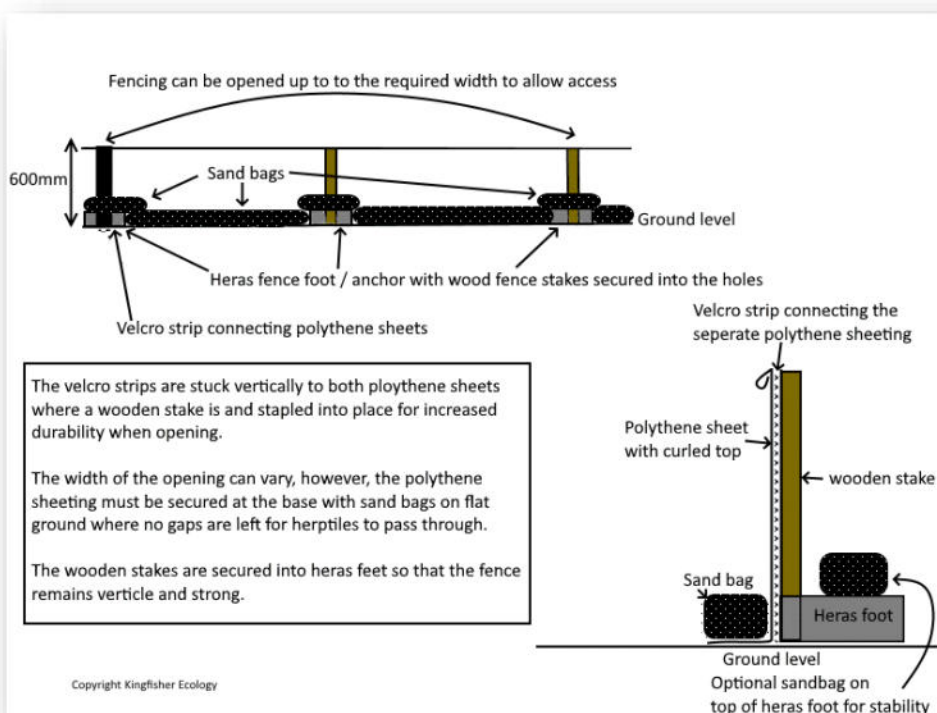
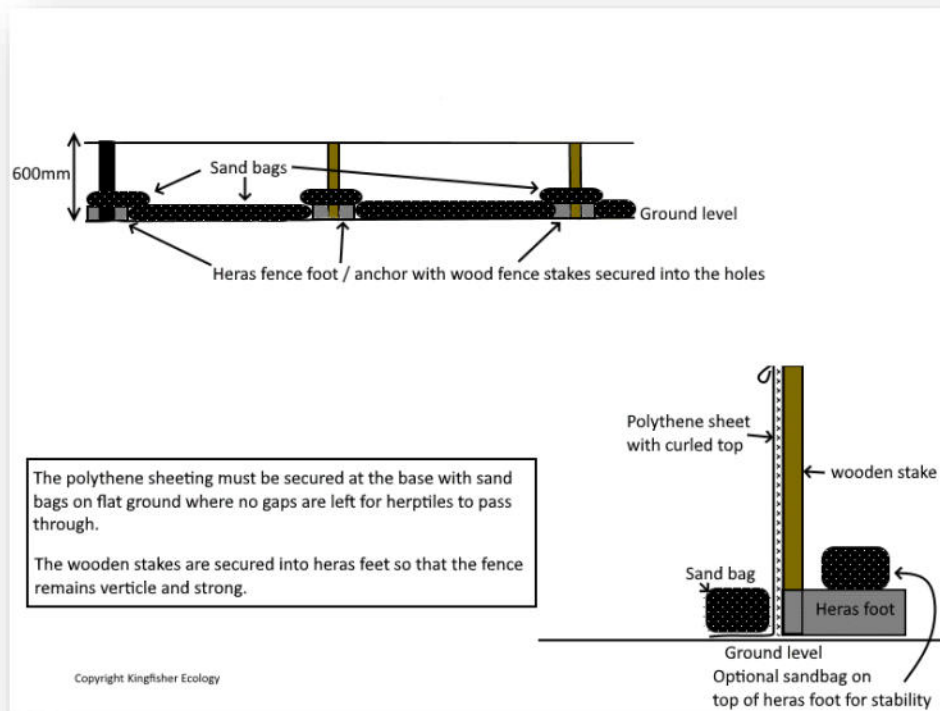


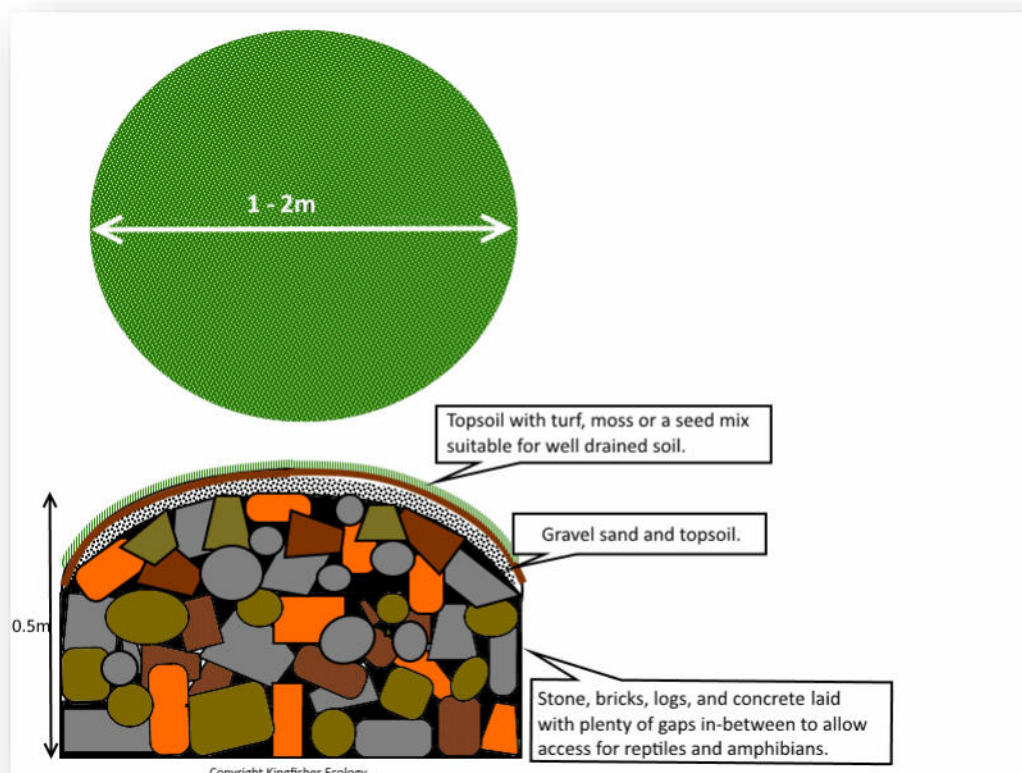
Figure 7c. Diagram of how the reptile exclusion fencing is installed – trenchless.



4.2 Enhancements

It is essential that an enhancement strategy to benefit reptiles is incorporated into the scheme including a suitable habitat planting strategy. Recommended enhancements include the installation of hibernacula within the southeast of the garden. The construction of the hibernacula is illustrated below in Figure 8. The construction of hibernacula will encourage greater abundance and diversity of reptiles on site. It is recommended that an area of the garden around the hibernacula is left alone and will receive a single autumn cut each year to provide good habitat for reptiles.

Figure 8. Illustration showing the construction method for the reptile hibernacula



5. Conclusions

Six individual slow worms and one viviparous lizard were found throughout the presence/absence survey, indicating a low population is present on the site. It is recommended that a herptile exclusion fence is to be installed across the garden to create a reptile receptor area in the southeast corner of the garden. A Precautionary Working Method (PWM) is to be followed during the works, with vegetation clearance following a Phased Habitat Manipulation (PHM) that is preceded by a thorough fingertip search conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any material that could potentially be of refuge to reptiles (such as brash piles) will be dismantled by hand under ecological supervision and removed from the working area. Topsoil removal will then be supervised under an Ecological Watching Brief (EWB) by a suitably qualified ecologist.

It is recommended that the garden is managed for wildlife, with the creation of hibernacula to support the local reptile population. An area around the hibernacula will be left to grow until a single autumn cut is completed each year to create a good habitat for reptiles.

This report will be valid for 12 months from the date of the final site visit, after which a site conditions assessment will need to be conducted in order to determine if ecological conditions of the site have changed, as recommended by CIEEM (2019b).

6. References

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). *Technical Guidance series. Guidelines for Ecological report Writing.*

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Froglife (1999). *Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey.*

Kingfisher Ecology Ltd (2022). *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of The Old Vicarage, Homington Road, Coombe Bissett, Wiltshire, SP5 4LR.* Document reference: TOV-20220111

Kingfisher Ecology Ltd (2025). *Site Ecological Conditions Update Letter for The Old Vicarage, Homington Road, Coombe Bissett, Wiltshire, SP5 4LR.* Document reference: TOV-20240523-Rev B.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (Gent & Gibson, 2003). *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual.* ISBN 1 86107 450 6.

Natural England (2011). *Natural England Technical Information Note TIN102 – Reptile Mitigation Guidelines.*

The British Standards Institute (2013). *BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development.* ISBN 978 0 580 77917 6.

Appendix A Legislation and Species Information

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Habitats Regulations 2017

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 form the cornerstone for species and habitat protection in England and Wales.

All native bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Taken together, these instruments make it illegal to:

- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Deliberately (or recklessly in Scotland) disturb a bat in a way that would (significantly in Scotland) affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young (or hibernate or migrate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or (significantly in England, Wales and Scotland) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- Damage or destroy a roost [this is an 'absolute' offence and need not be deliberate or intentional].
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

All bat species and their roosts (whether occupied or not) are afforded strict legal protection. Any activities likely to result in damage or disturbance to bat roosts can only be undertaken under derogation from the Conservation Regulations. In England, this mechanism is administered by Natural England, who is able to issue European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences to allow activities impacting bats and their roosts. EPSM licences will only be granted under the proviso that mitigation is implemented that will minimise any impacts on the conservation status of the species.

The protection of animals listed on WACA Schedule 5 from intentional killing, injury and taking, possession and sale. Places used for shelter and protection are also protected against intentional disturbance, obstruction, damage and destruction. Species on Schedule 5 include:

- Bats (all species)
- Dormice
- Water Vole
- Great Crested Newt
- Otter
- All UK reptile species
- Common amphibians
- Certain invertebrates including Stag Beetle
- The protection of plants listed on Schedule 8

Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The NERC Act firmly places a duty on Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity. The Act required the publication of a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity: the Section 41 List. The conservation of species on this list forms part of the duty of Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity. Species on the list include:

- All species of UK bat
- All species of UK reptile
- All species of UK amphibian
- Otter, dormice, water vole and hedgehog
- Birds including Skylark, Cirl Bunting and Yellowhammer
- Invertebrates including the butterflies Wall, Dingy Skipper and Brown Hairstreak.