

# Whitmore High School - Reptile Method Statement

<b>Project number</b> 60595491	<b>Client</b> Morgan Sindall	<b>Subject</b> Whitmore High School - Reptile Method Statement	<b>Date</b> 16 July 2019
<b>Issued by</b> AECOM	<b>Reason for issue</b> Reptile Method Statement for Removal of Hedgerow Sections	<b>Prepared by</b> AECOM	<b>Location</b> Cardiff

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## Introduction

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This File Note sets out a Reptile Method Statement for the removal of up to 14 m of hedgerow at Whitmore High School.

The Site is located on Port Road West, Barry, CF62 8ZJ.

The majority of the Site comprises intensively managed amenity grassland used as a sports pitch with hardstanding and school buildings. In addition, there are smaller areas of parkland with scattered trees, ornamental planting, rows of trees, intact species-poor hedgerows, fences and brick wall.

The Phase 1 Habitat map Figure 1 (AECOM, 2018) shows the extent and distribution of habitats on the Site.

The hedgerow sections to be removed are shown in Figure 2.

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## Background and Site Context

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The hedgerow is on the western school boundary. On the one side of the hedgerow is Port Road West A4226, this is a three-lane section approximately 10 m wide. West of the Port Road West is the commercial area of Tesco supermarket and Barry Emergency Service Station and then the residential estate of Colcot. To the east of the hedgerow is frequently managed amenity grassland and Whitmore High School staff car parking.

Habitats suitable for slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* typically include scrub/scrub edges, rough grassland, woodland edges, hedgerows and heath. This can include rough grassland and scattered scrub in sub-urban areas such as connected gardens and allotments. A habitat mosaic that provides shelter, foraging and basking is important in determining suitability for reptiles.

The amenity grassland on Site is intensively managed and has a sward of approx. 2 – 3 cm and less than 5 cm (Site Photographs included below). The amenity grassland lacks the structure and 'thatch' required to provide habitat/shelter for slow-worms. This thatch is typically present in uncut or less frequently cut 'rough' grassland habitats.

Based on a habitat suitability assessment and the local connectivity, AECOM assessed that reptiles are likely absent from the Whitmore High School Site. AECOM concluded that the proposed works at Whitmore High School will have no impact on local reptile populations or on individuals. AECOM concluded further surveys were not required. AECOM concluded that no significant impacts are predicted, and therefore mitigation was not required.

The County Ecologist accepts that the amenity grassland is of very low value, that further surveys are not required, and that the risk is very low, but feels the risk of slow-worm being present cannot be entirely ruled out without further survey. The County Ecologist agreed that the Site was not suitable for common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, adder *Vipera berus* or grass snake *Natrix Helvetica*. The County Ecologist concludes that if slow-worm are present on Site that the hedgerow along Port Road West is the only part of the Site they would be. This is based on local knowledge of reptile distribution in very heavily grazed/intensively managed improved grassland field margins within the Vale. The County Ecologist concludes that the hedgerow along Port Road West could have a low risk of a small number of slow-worms being present, and therefore mitigation to avoid killing/injury is required.

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# Reptile Method Statement

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## Ecological Supervision

The cutting and removal of hedgerow sections (shown in Figure 2) will be supervised by an experienced ecologist.

## Toll Box Talk

Contractors removing the hedgerow will be given a Tool Box Talk by the supervising ecologist, highlighting the reasons for ecological supervision, what to look out for and the proposed method for removing the hedgerow.

## Timing of Works

The hedgerow will be removed between 1 March and end October, avoiding winter when slow worms are inactive.

Outside of this period, if slow-worm are present, they will be hibernating underground near the roots of the hedgerow and the most at risk of injury or killing.

If the hedgerow is being removed between the 1 March and end August, during nesting bird season, then the hedgerow sections will also be checked for nesting birds.

## Process of Hedgerow Removal

Removal method will be as follows:

1. The ground around the hedgerow section will be checked by an ecologist;
2. If the hedgerow is being removed between the 1 March and end August, during nesting bird season, then the hedgerow sections will also be checked for nesting birds prior to works;
3. The hedgerow section will be cut to 100 mm above ground level by the contractor and arisings removed away from the hedgerow by hand;
4. The area around the hedgerow stems will be hand checked by an ecologist;
5. The roots of the hedgerow will be excavated (grubbed-out) using hand tools (or with a small excavator) under ecological supervision;
6. All plant material must be removed from Site. It must not be chipped on Site or brash piled on Site. Brash piles can attract nesting birds and reptiles, which would be counterproductive; and,
7. Any slow-worms found will be relocated further along the same hedgerow, shown in Figure 2.

The need for stage cutting of grassland is not required because the amenity grass below the hedgerow is already less than 100 mm in height.

## Site Photographs



Photograph 1: Whitmore High School. Intact species-poor Hedgerow and Amenity Grassland



Photograph 2: Whitmore High School. Intact species-poor Hedgerow and Amenity Grassland

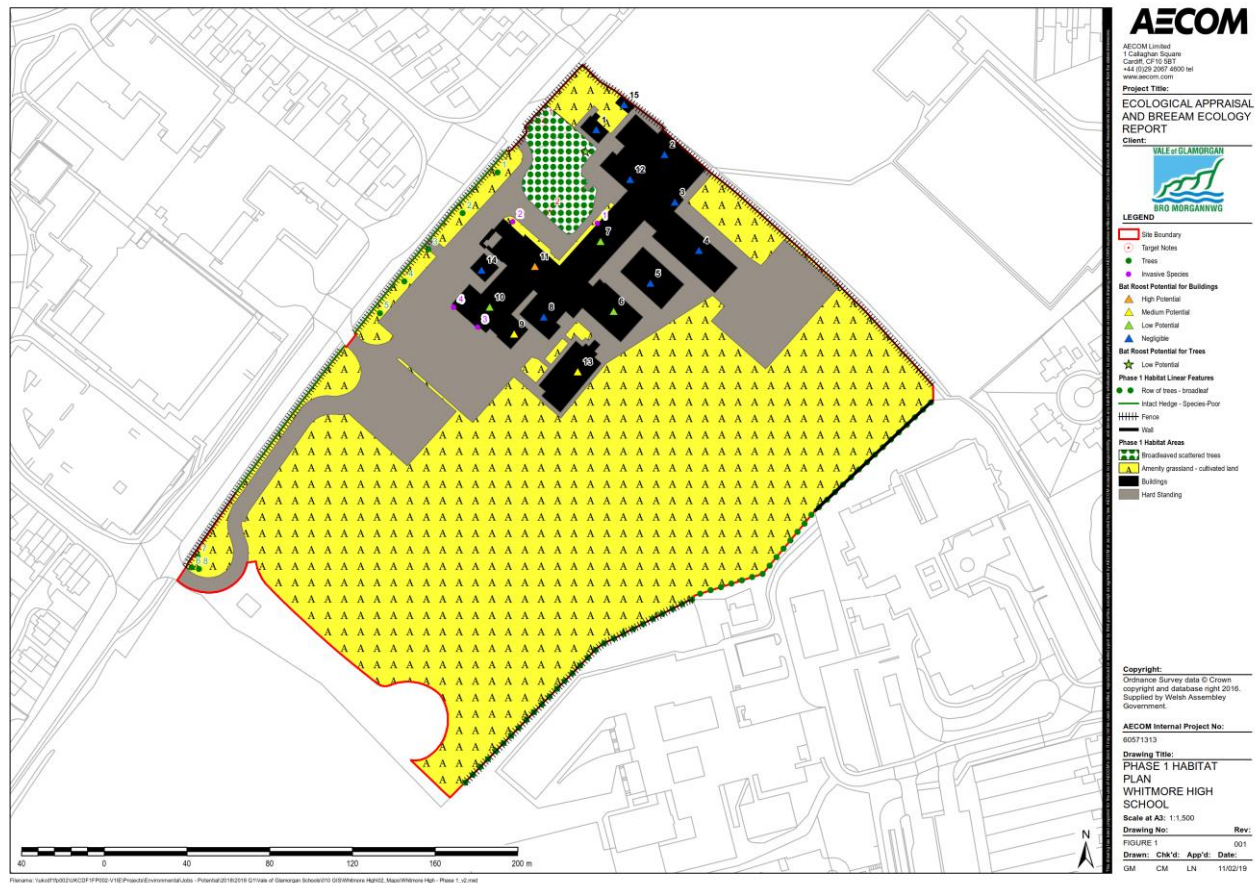


Photograph 3: Whitmore High School. Intact species-poor Hedgerow and Amenity Grassland



Photograph 4: Whitmore High School. Intact species-poor Hedgerow and Amenity Grassland

# Whitmore High School – Figure 1 - Phase 1 Habitat Map



## Whitmore High School – Phase 1 Habitat Map Target Notes

Target Note	Description
1	Brash piles with hedgehog potential.
2	Memorial garden with poppies and gravel.



# Whitmore High School – Figure 2 – Proposed Development – Hedgerow Removal



## KEY:

**Purple** = Hedgerow section being removed

**Blue** = Proposed reptile release location