

Case study: Thursley Junction, A3 Surrey – an award-winning design.

- This project involved creation of a new slip road on the A3, partially within Thursley NNR, SPA and SAC.
- The project's land take included suitable reptile habitat, resulting in the possible displacement of common lizards, slow worms and adders.



Juvenile adder.

- Badger, bat, botanical and ornithological issues also existed at this site and were taken into consideration during the project.
- MKA Ecology was commissioned to devise the advance mitigation strategy for the project.
- The strategy incorporated retention of the most diverse heather banks of the A3. Reptiles were enclosed within this area during construction and released to re-colonise the site post-development.

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- Habitat was improved within retained areas through the construction of hibernacula, combined with vegetation management to improve habitat quality.
- The retention of valuable heathland habitat in the mitigation strategy resulted in MKA Ecology being awarded with the BALI Special Award for Nature Conservation in 2004.



Snake hibernaculum under construction at Thursley (Picture courtesy Goddards)

- A DEFRA development licence was required owing to presence of smooth snake on the verge of the A3.
- Monitoring of the site will be undertaken for a period of five years to ensure that habitat recreation targets are achieved.
- Further survey work was undertaken to establish the presence of protected mammal species within the development area.

- Badger surveys were conducted within the development footprint and surrounding area.
- Two occasionally used outlier setts were permanently excluded under English Nature licence.
- Mitigation for badgers involved, permanent exclusion fencing, provision of badger gates and a tunnel beneath the slip road to enable continued access to traditional foraging areas.
- Bat surveys were undertaken of all trees to be removed during construction.
- Trees with cavities suitable for supporting roosting bats were identified and felled in sections under the guidance of a licensed bat worker.



Oak branch being carefully lowered before inspection by bat worker

- Bat boxes were erected outside of the development area to mitigate for the loss of suitable roosting habitat within the development corridor.
- As a result of breeding bird surveys a kingfisher breeding box was incorporated into the design of a diverted culvert to help maintain the breeding population of this Schedule 1 breeding species.