

GREAT CRESTED NEWT STATEMENT

Site Address: 27 Elm Drive, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4FD

1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared in response to the validation requirement identified by Wokingham Borough Council in relation to the potential presence of Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) within the vicinity of the application site.

The Council's Planning Constraints Map identifies the site as being within a modelled red/amber Great Crested Newt risk zone. The potential ecological implications of the proposed development have therefore been considered in accordance with the Council's validation requirements and relevant protected species legislation.

2. Existing Site and Proposed Development

The application relates to development within the existing residential property and its associated domestic garden at 27 Elm Drive, Woodley.

The site is already substantially developed and is located within an established residential area. The proposed works are principally associated with the existing residential property and its domestic curtilage.

The development does not propose the creation or infilling of any pond, watercourse or other identified aquatic habitat.

The works will not result in the direct loss of any known pond or other aquatic breeding habitat for Great Crested Newts.

3. Great Crested Newt Risk

Great Crested Newts are a protected species and can use terrestrial habitats surrounding breeding ponds for foraging, shelter and seasonal movement.

The Council's constraints mapping identifies the application site within a modelled Great Crested Newt risk area. However, the presence of a modelled risk zone does not in itself establish the presence of Great Crested Newts on the application site.

The site comprises an established residential garden associated with an existing dwelling. The proposed works are limited in extent and are predominantly within an already developed domestic environment.

There is no proposal to directly affect a pond or other known breeding habitat.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the development, the existing residential character of the site and the absence of any proposed works to a pond or waterbody, it is considered that the likelihood of significant adverse effects upon Great Crested Newts is low.

4. Avoidance and Precautionary Measures

As a precaution, the following measures will be implemented during construction:

1. Existing vegetation and garden areas outside the approved construction area will be retained wherever practicable.
2. Construction materials, spoil and waste will not be stored in areas of dense vegetation or other potentially suitable terrestrial refuge habitat.
3. Any excavations left open overnight will either be covered securely or provided with a suitable means of escape for amphibians and other small animals.
4. Excavations will be checked at the start of each working day before construction works recommence.
5. Site operatives will be made aware of the potential presence of protected amphibian species.
6. No Great Crested Newt or other amphibian will be deliberately captured, injured, killed or moved from the site.
7. If a Great Crested Newt or evidence of Great Crested Newts is identified during the works, works in the immediate area will cease and an appropriately qualified ecologist will be contacted for advice before works recommence.

5. Licensing

Based on the information currently available, there is no evidence to demonstrate that a Natural England protected species licence is required for the proposed works.

The proposed development does not involve the destruction or direct alteration of a known Great Crested Newt breeding pond.

The requirement for a licence would arise if the works were subsequently found to have the potential to result in an offence involving Great Crested Newts or their protected habitats.

If further ecological information establishes that licensable impacts cannot reasonably be avoided, the applicant will obtain the appropriate advice from a suitably qualified ecologist and, where necessary, pursue the appropriate Natural England licence or Wokingham Borough Council/NatureSpace District Licensing route.

Wokingham Borough Council confirms that development within its Great Crested Newt risk zones can potentially be dealt with through its District Licensing Scheme, subject to the relevant assessment and requirements.

6. Conclusion

The site is located within a modelled Great Crested Newt risk area identified on Wokingham Borough Council's Planning Constraints Map. However, the proposed development is of a limited nature within an established residential property and does not directly affect any known pond, watercourse or other aquatic breeding habitat.

The proposal is therefore considered unlikely to result in significant harm to Great Crested Newts, subject to the precautionary measures set out within this statement.

Should a Great Crested Newt or evidence of the species be encountered during construction, works will cease in the relevant area and advice will be obtained from a suitably qualified ecologist before proceeding.

On this basis, it is considered that the potential risk to Great Crested Newts has been appropriately assessed and that the proposed development can proceed without significant adverse impact upon the species.