

Date: 29 September 2025
Application: 251912



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Ecology Newts

Development Management &
Compliance

P.O. Box 157

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Berkshire, RG40 1BN

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Dear WBC Ecology Newts,

Full Planning Approval Consultation

Application Number: 251912

Applicant: Mr Jinder Rahi

Site Address: Silver Birches, Heath Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3QJ

Parish: Finchampstead

Grid Reference: Easting - 480869, Northing - 164660

Type of Development: Minor Dwellings (1-9)

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with 2 no. carports, front wall and entrance gates and associated landscaping, following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.

Case Officer: Claire Moore

Development Management has received the above application, and we require your comments on the proposal using the recommended memorandum below. The documents associated with this are available to view in NEC DM using the application number 251912. Alternatively, public documents are available to view on the Council's planning application search page: [Wokingham Borough Council Online Planning](#).

Please index your response into NEC DM against the application. If you are recommending conditions, you should give a reason with reference to relevant policies. A list of standard conditions can be requested from the case officer.

Your observations are required in respect of this application by **20 October 2025**.

Yours sincerely,
Development Management & Compliance

MEMORANDUM

From:	NatureSpace District Licensing Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology Newts	App No:	251912
Address:	Silver Birches, Heath Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3QJ.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with 2 no. carports, front wall and entrance gates and associated landscaping, following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
Site Visit Made:	No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
☒ No objection
☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

The application falls within a red impact risk zone for great crested newts, indicating an area with highly suitable habitat and increased risk of impacts from development. There are five ponds within 500m of the proposed development, though only one is within 250m, approximately 90m east. The application site is connected to ponds in the landscape via suitable habitats including residential gardens, though features such as buildings and impermeable fencing may inhibit newt dispersal.

The applicant has provided an ecology report (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Dr Jonty Denton, dated July 2025) which concludes that the site comprises hardstanding and recently cleared bare ground, so great crested newt and their habitats will not be impacted. No surveys of nearby ponds have been carried out or recommended.

Overall, I am satisfied that impacts to great crested newts are unlikely and further surveys should not be required. However, for the following reasons, I recommend the below informative is appended to the decision notice if you are minded to approve the application:

- Suitable features are present on site which great crested newts could use for shelter, such as rubble piles.
- The ground within the site had recently been cleared at the time of the ecology survey in July 2025. Depending on extent of site management,

habitats could become more suitable before development commences as the bare ground is naturally recolonised by plant and animal species.

- Great crested newts are able to traverse areas of unsuitable habitat when moving through the landscape. Therefore, there is a low risk of impacts even when habitats are unsuitable. For example, newts may be harmed by becoming trapped within excavations or sheltering within building materials.

INFORMATIVE:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; deliberately obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning approval for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under these acts. Should great crested newts be found at any stages of the development works, then all works should cease, and Natural England should be contacted for advice. The following measures are recommended to reduce risk of an offence:

- Any excavations left overnight should be covered or provided with ramps to prevent great crested newts from becoming trapped, then checked for great crested newts in the morning.
- Building materials should be stored on pallets to prevent great crested newts from using them as shelter.
- Demolition materials should be stored in skips or similar containers rather than in piles on the ground to prevent great crested newts from using them as shelter.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Date:	20/10/2025	Signed:	NatureSpace
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