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14th November 2024
Our Ref: 24/E2242/01

Dear Mr Griffiths,

**BARN ACRE, LODDON DRIVE, WARGRAVE, RG10 8HN
GREAT CRESTED NEWT STATEMENT**

Further to your instruction on 12th November 2024, please find below our Great Crested Newt statement for Barn Acre, Wargrave.

Background

A planning application has recently been submitted for extensions to north and south of the existing dwelling at Barn Acre, Wargrave. Wokingham Borough Council have requested the following information prior to validation:

"1. The site is located with a red or amber risk zone modelled for the protected species 'Great Crested Newt' as identified on the Wokingham Planning Constraints map. It is important that the local planning authority considers the potential risk to the this species as a result of the proposal. Please supply a site specific 'Great Crested Newt Statement' to consider this risk and whether mitigation measures or a protected species licence would be required. It may help to seek specialist advice through an Ecological Consultant."

Methodology

This great crested newt statement is based on an analysis of the site and surrounding area from aerial mapping, in combination with information on the proposed works and design provided by Finline Architects.

Site and Development Context

The site is mapped within an Amber Zone for great crested newts by Naturespace.

The nearest pond to the site (which we will henceforth refer to as 'pond A') is approximately 70m away from the development area to the west. It is separated from the site by a stream (Marsh Stream) (which is understood from correspondence with you to be fast flowing). Looking at maps from different time periods on Google Earth shows that this pond did not exist in 2018, so must have been created relatively recently.

The next nearest pond to the site (which we will henceforth refer to as 'pond B') is approximately 425m away from the development area, also to the west. Like pond A, it is separated from the site by a stream.

Pond B is approximately 380m away from pond A. To get from pond B to pond A it would be necessary for a newt to travel along a fairly narrow strip of ruderal habitat between two arable fields.

The only other pond mapped within a 500m radius of the site (which we will henceforth refer to as 'pond C') is situated approximately 430m to the south-west of the site and also separated from it by a stream (and approximately 350m south-east of pond A). It is situated in the middle of a field which aerial mapping shows to be cattle grazed.

Two other points are also noted for context. Firstly, the site is within an area of land which is entirely surrounded by streams, and there are no ponds within this 'stream loop'. Secondly, historic mapping shows that the surrounding area is prone to flooding over winter.

In terms of the proposed development, it is noted that the two areas to be extended, considered in combination, have an area of 19sqm at ground level. They will also be built entirely over existing hardstanding. The expectation is that the access and laydown areas will also be entirely confined to areas of existing hardstanding.

Great Crested Newt Assessment

Firstly, consideration is given to whether or not pond A is likely to have been colonised by great crested newts since its creation (since 2018). In the context that it is 350m away from pond C, and 380m away from pond B (along a fairly narrow strip of ruderal habitat between two arable fields), within an area prone to winter flooding, it is considered on balance of evidence unlikely that this new pond would have become colonised by great crested newts since its fairly recent creation (even if ponds B and C support great crested newts, which is not known, but is assumed based on Naturespace's Amber Zone mapping).

Secondly, consideration is given as to the likelihood or otherwise of newts from pond B reaching the proposed development site (if pond B is assumed to contain great crested newts). Given that pond B is approximately 425m away from the proposed development site, and separated from it by a fairly narrow strip of ruderal habitat between two arable fields, and by a fast flowing stream (likely to at least inhibit newt movement), it is assessed on balance of evidence to be very unlikely that any newts from pond B would be present within the proposed development site.

Thirdly, consideration is given as to the likelihood or otherwise of newts from pond C reaching the proposed development site (if pond C is assumed to contain great crested newts). Given that pond C is approximately 430m away from the proposed development site, and separated from it by a fast flowing stream (likely to at least inhibit newt movement), it is assessed on balance of evidence to be unlikely that any newts from pond C would be present within the proposed development site.

Lastly, consideration is given as to the likelihood or otherwise of newts from pond A reaching the proposed development site. As noted above, it is considered unlikely that pond A would have been colonised by great crested newts since its creation (since 2018). It is also separated from the proposed development site by a distance of approximately 70m, and a fast flowing stream (likely to at least inhibit newt movement). On balance of evidence it is assessed to be unlikely that the proposed development site would contain any terrestrial-phase newts from pond A.

It is also noted that both ponds A and B are surrounded by suitable habitat for terrestrial-phase great crested newts, making it less likely that they would travel into the proposed development site. Pond C has much closer available suitable terrestrial habitat than the proposed development site.

Overall, it is assessed as unlikely that any great crested newts would be present within the development site.

In addition to this, it is noted that the development is not anticipated to impact on any suitable habitat for terrestrial-phase great crested newts (being restricted entirely to existing hardstanding).

Lastly, and crucially, the proposed development has a footprint of 19sqm. With reference to the calculator within Natural England's Great Crested Newt licence method statement, the loss of less than 0.01 hectare of land (equivalent to 100sqm) within 100m of any breeding pond returns a result of 'Green: Offence Highly Unlikely'. Substantially less than 100sqm of land will be affected (19sqm), and as noted above it will be entirely restricted to existing hardstanding (and it is assessed as unlikely that pond A would have been colonised by great crested newts since its creation in any case).

Conclusion

In light of the assessment above, our conclusion on balance of evidence is that ***the proposed development is not anticipated to harm great crested newts***, despite its inclusion within a Naturespace Amber Zone.

I hope the above assessment is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF BIOSCAN (UK) LTD



Geoff Moxon
Principal Ecologist