



GRAISWOLD, SANDHURST ROAD, FINCHAMPSTEAD, RG40 3JQ

Great Crested Newt (GCN) Assessment and Mitigation Plan

Risk Assessment

Following an evaluation of the site, it is considered that there is a low likelihood of great crested newts (GCNs) being present. This conclusion is based on the following factors:

1. **Physical Barriers:** Existing buildings and driveways act as obstacles, limiting potential movement from nearby dense woodland or aquatic habitats.
2. **Site Context:** The construction site lacks features typically favourable for great crested newts, such as ponds or undisturbed dense vegetation.

While the risk is low, measures will be implemented to further reduce the already minimal likelihood of harm to great crested newts.

Mitigation Measures

To ensure the safety of any GCNs that may unexpectedly be present, the following avoidance strategies will be employed:

1. **Vegetation Management:**
 - Vegetation within the construction zone will be regularly maintained and kept closely mown to discourage newts from entering the area.
 - Mowing will be conducted gradually and incrementally, reducing the height over a period of time to allow any wildlife to vacate the area naturally.
2. **Excavations and Trenches:**
 - Any open excavations or trenches will be either:
 - Backfilled before nightfall to eliminate the risk of trapping newts, or
 - Equipped with escape ramps (e.g., wooden planks or similar materials with a rough surface for grip) set at an angle not exceeding 30 degrees to allow safe egress.
 - Trenches will be inspected at the start of each working day for any trapped wildlife.
3. **Material Storage:**
 - Building materials (e.g., bricks, tiles, timber) will be stored off the ground using pallets or placed on existing hard-standing areas to prevent them from offering shelter for newts.
 - Temporary storage areas will be inspected daily to ensure no animals are using them as refuge.



4. Worker Training and Awareness:

- All personnel on-site will be briefed on the potential presence of GCNs and trained to recognize them.
- An environmental risk protocol will be integrated into the daily workflow.

Discovery Protocol

In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is discovered during construction activities:

1. **Cease Operations:** All construction work in the immediate vicinity will halt immediately.
2. **Contact an Ecologist:** A licensed ecologist will be contacted without delay to assess the situation.
3. **Guidance and Documentation:**
 - The ecologist will provide advice to ensure compliance with legal requirements and that the newt is not harmed.
 - Work will resume only after receiving written guidance and confirmation from the ecologist or relevant environmental authorities.

Additional Considerations

1. **Seasonal Timing:**
 - Construction activities should avoid the main active period for great crested newts (March to October), where possible, to further reduce risks.
2. **Site Monitoring:**
 - Periodic ecological inspections by a qualified professional during construction could provide an added layer of assurance and compliance.
3. **Compliance with Legislation:**
 - All actions will be conducted in strict accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and any local planning authority requirements.