

Date: 4 December 2024
Application: 242977



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Ecology Newts

Development Management &
Compliance

P.O. Box 157

Shute End, Wokingham

Berkshire, RG40 1BN

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

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Dear WBC Ecology Newts,

Full Planning Approval Consultation

Application Number: 242977

Applicant: Mr and Mr Thomas Roberts (Senior and Junior)

Site Address: 22a and 22b Barkham Ride, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4EU

Parish: Barkham

Grid Reference: Easting - 478931, Northing - 165736

Type of Development: Minor Dwellings (1-9)

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 2 no. dwellings with car ports following demolition of the existing 2 no. dwellings and removal of storage yard, plus relocation of the site access and associated landscaping.

Case Officer: Connie Davis

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 242977. 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 found on the Z Drive at: [Z:\Standard Planning Conditions](#).

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **10 working days** of the above date or **15 working days** if the development type is classed as a major development.

Yours sincerely,
Development Management & Compliance

MEMORANDUM

From:	NatureSpace District Licensing Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology Newts	App No:	242977
Address:	22a and 22b Barkham Ride, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4EU.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 2 no. dwellings with car ports following demolition of the existing 2 no. dwellings and removal of storage yard, plus relocation of the site access and associated landscaping.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/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 applicant has provided an ecological report (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 22a and 22b Barkham Ride Finchampstead, AAEnvironmental Ltd, November 2024). This report states that there are no ponds within the application site which also *“does not provide optimal terrestrial habitat”* for great crested newts, concluding that this species will not be a constraint to the proposed development.

However, based on site photographs and the habitats plan within the report, terrestrial habitats within the site do appear suitable for great crested newts. Suitable habitats on site include areas of bramble scrub, hedgerow, and tall ruderal vegetation. There are multiple potential refugia/hibernacula, including spoil heaps, overgrown rubbish heaps, piles of bricks and rubble, and various apparently discarded debris. As such, great crested newts could be a constraint to the development if they are breeding in nearby ponds and using the site in their terrestrial phase. The supplied ecological report is not in accordance with Natural England’s [Standing Advice](#) as it did not provide information on ponds within up to 500m of the development boundary.

Using OS mapping, I identify three ponds and a wet ditch within 500m of the application site. The closest two ponds are located approximately 130m north-east and 230m north of the application site, and likely absence of great crested newts from these ponds was confirmed in 2023 through eDNA surveys undertaken for a nearby planning application (ref: 241667). The final pond and wet ditch are both over

300m away (approximately 330m and 350m, respectively) and given the scale and likely impacts of the proposed development, and considering the distribution of habitats and limitations to newt dispersal in the landscape, a survey of these waterbodies is not considered necessary in this case.

As the site falls within a red Impact Risk Zone for great crested newts and terrestrial habitats within the site are suitable for this species, I recommend the following informative is supplied if the council is minded to approve the application:

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; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning approval for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. Should great crested newts be found at any stages of the development works, then all works should cease, and a professional and/or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (or Natural England) should be contacted for advice on any special precautions before continuing, including the need for a licence.”

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Conditions & Reasons (if required)

None.

Date:	16/12/2024	Signed:	NatureSpace
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