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November 2026

GREAT CRESTED NEWT STATEMENT

7 Lanark Close, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4DF

Planning application: 262427

Applicant: Mr Edmond Duraku

Proposal: Change of use of amenity land to residential garden; new boundary fence; removal of existing garden wall

Statement of Preparation and Assessment

Ecological Information Statement

1. Purpose and limitations

This statement responds to item 3 of Wokingham Borough Council's notification of invalid application dated 14 October 2026, which identifies a red/amber Great Crested Newt (GCN) risk constraint and requests consideration of ecological effects, mitigation and any licensing implications. It takes into consideration identification on mapping of a waterbody near the River Loddon corridor.

The appraisal has been prepared by Pioneer Designs Ltd using supplied site photographs, mapping and the arboricultural report. It is not a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by a qualified ecologist, an amphibian survey, a pond suitability assessment or a licence determination. No verified 500 m pond inventory, species records search, measured waterbody distance or detailed field assessment of connectivity is available. Conclusions are therefore provisional.

2. Documents and evidence considered

In order to meet Wokingham Borough Council invalid-application notification (14 October 2026) inquiry item 3; the following information have been compiled to make necessary appraisals. Hedges Tree

Consultants Ltd, Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement (6 November 2026, reference PDL/7LC/26 v1.0), site and proposed-fence drawings, photographs and a local street-map showing existence of a waterbody within 500m tedious reproduced in Appendix A.

3. Site context and development operations

The land lies alongside the existing residential garden at 7 Lanark Close within an established housing area. Photographs show short vegetation in places together with shrubs, ivy, leaf litter, trees and more sheltered areas adjacent to the wall. Such features could potentially provide terrestrial refuge for amphibians, although their actual existence, suitability and occupation have not been observed and assessed on site.

The arboricultural report identifies removal of the existing boundary wall and associated foundations, installation of an approximately 2 m high fence, removal of dead Silver Birch T1 including stump treatment, limited pruning, and associated soft landscaping. Retained trees T2–T4 and hedge H5 are subject to arboricultural safeguards. Hand excavation is proposed for fence post positions near retained roots; major level changes are not anticipated. These measures reduce the extent of disturbance but do not exclude harm to sheltered wildlife. The fence material must be made consistent between the submitted drawings and arboricultural report before construction.

4. Mapped aquatic habitat within the wider area

The location map only shows a blue water feature along the River Loddon corridor to the southeast/east of Lanark Close. This has not been independently measured, and the map does not establish whether the feature is a standing pond, backwater, connected channel or another type of waterbody. Nor does it establish water permanence, fish presence or suitability for GCN breeding.

The feature should nonetheless be treated as a potential aquatic constraint pending verification. Other ponds or ditches within 500 m have not been identified.

5. Terrestrial connectivity and barriers

The map depicts intervening residential streets, including Redwood Avenue, Cypress Road and Colemans Moor Road, together with multiple rows of houses and garden boundaries between parts of the water corridor and Lanark Close. Roads, vehicle movements, built development and enclosed plots may impede or discourage direct amphibian dispersal and increase crossing risks. This provides a reasonable basis to assume whether functional connectivity is limited.

However, the number of intervening roads nor the presence of buildings suggests that GCN cannot reach the site. Gardens, verges, hedges, drainage features and the mapped green corridor extending toward Colemans Moor Road could offer alternative movement routes. The alignment and continuity of such routes, and any impermeable barriers, require site-level verification. Accordingly, connectivity is described as potentially restricted, not absent.

6. Potential effects of the works

The works are relatively small in footprint, but the relevant mechanisms of harm include disturbance or injury during vegetation removal, wall and foundation demolition, stump grinding, post-hole excavation and landscaping; loss of refuge beneath vegetation, roots or masonry; trapping in uncovered excavations; and disturbance from stored materials or machinery. The extent and timing of each operation, and whether it affects suitable refuges, will influence actual risk. A small scheme can still engage protected-species legislation where GCN are present.

7. Preliminary risk interpretation

The combination of a potentially relevant waterbody within the surrounding landscape, possible terrestrial refuges at the site and the Council's modelled red/amber risk constraint means GCN risk cannot presently be excluded. Conversely, the residential context, intervening roads and limited scale of groundworks are material factors supporting a proportionate rather than automatically extensive response.

The evidence does not support a definitive finding of GCN, negligible risk or no licence requirement.

8. Precautionary approach pending ecological advice

Before vegetation clearance or ground disturbance, follow appropriate ecological guidance and adopt the necessary approach in consultation with the Local Planning Authority. Keep works within the approved footprint and minimise removal of vegetation and potential refuges. Avoid unnecessary storage or trafficking on vegetated ground. If excavations are permitted, avoid leaving open holes overnight or provide suitable escape arrangements as advised by ecologist's guidance; inspect before backfilling. If an amphibian suspected to be a GCN is found, stop potentially harmful work locally, protect the animal from disturbance and seek specialist advice before resuming. These measures are preliminary safeguards and cannot replace a required survey or licence.

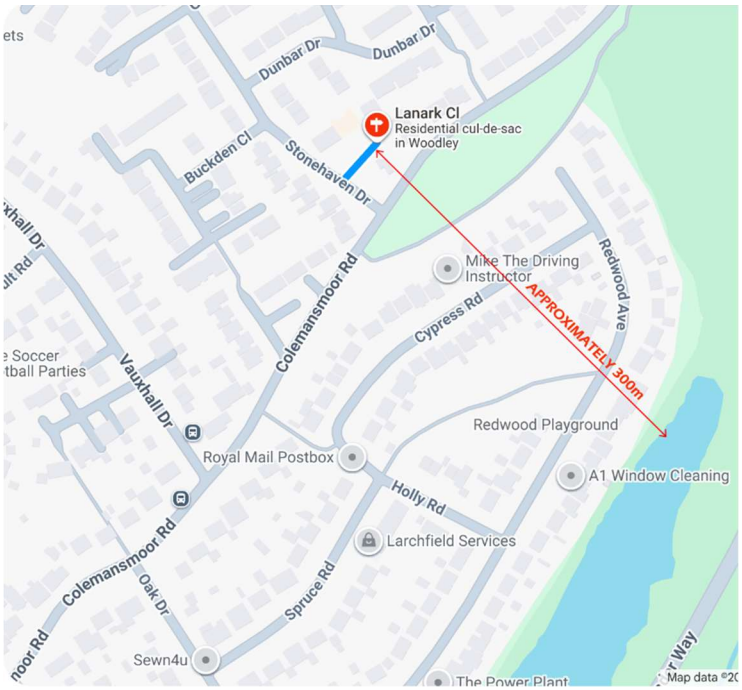
9. Conclusion and request to the Council

The area mapping identifies a water feature associated with the River Loddon corridor, estimated at approximately 300 m from 7 Lanark Close. Its identity and suitability for GCN breeding remain unverified. Roads, housing and boundary features may restrict direct movement to the site.

The proposed change of use, boundary wall removal and fence installation are limited in scale, with localised excavation anticipated under the arboricultural method statement. This is relevant to the proportionality of any further investigation but does not establish that the works are risk-free.

Pioneer Designs Ltd therefore requests that Wokingham Borough Council review this site-specific preliminary appraisal and advise whether additional survey or licensing advice is required to validate and determine application 262427. No assertion is made at this stage that GCN are present or that a protected-species licence is unnecessary.

Appendix A — Site photographs and illustrative proposal



Indicative local mapping

Screenshot (10 November 2026)

Illustrates the mapped water corridor and intervening urban fabric; not to scale and not a verified pond inventory. The marked Lanark Close label is not a surveyed boundary for No. 7.



Photograph A1. Leaf litter and vegetation adjacent to the existing boundary wall.



Photograph A2. Roadside verge, existing boundary wall and trees.



Illustration A3. Proposed boundary fence and replacement tree (illustrative; not an existing site photograph).