



ARBOR VITAE

ECOLOGY • FORESTRY • LAND USE

GREAT CRESTED NEWT

REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES

METHOD STATEMENT

Project name: Althrey Woodhouse

Species: Great Crested Newt

Planning Reference: P/2019/0703

Grid Reference: SJ38224398

Date: 17/02/2020

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Requested by: Moss Co Architects

Background

Planning permission has been granted for the part demolition, extension and alteration to a dwelling at Althrey Woodhouse. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out in August 2019. This took into account the possible presence of bats, breeding birds and great crested newts.

The survey revealed that there was only one nearby pond which had potential to support great crested newts. An HSI assessment resulted in a score of 0.877 which indicated that the pond had 'excellent' suitability for GCN.

However, the Natural England Risk Assessment indicates that the proposed works are 'highly unlikely' to cause an offence and do not constitute a risk to this species. This assumes that no harm will be caused to individual GCN and this can be achieved through adoption of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (see below).

The footprint of the proposed extension largely occupies an area of flower beds. These areas are isolated from possible migration of GCN by a large tarmac yard and mown lawn. These features (flower beds, tarmac, lawn or gravel drive) do not represent optimal terrestrial habitat for GCN.

A response to this assessment has since been received from NRW who have requested that Reasonable Avoidance Measures relating to GCN should be implemented in line with an appropriate Method Statement. This has been enshrined in Condition 5 of the Planning Consent.

The Reasonable Avoidance Measures are outlined in a Method Statement below.

METHOD STATEMENT RELATING TO GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

Legislation

Great Crested Newts (GCN) are a European Protected Species (EPS) and they and their habitats are fully protected under national (Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and European law (The Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)). The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure a great crested newt;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter and protection including resting and breeding places, whether occupied or not;
- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt when in a place of shelter;
- possess a great crested newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully;
- sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

Status of GCN at Althrey Woodhouse

No GCN have been recorded at this site and indeed none within one kilometre. However, a pond exists 53 metres from the development site and an HSI assessment indicated that this has excellent potential to support GCN. However, the risk to this species is considered minimal due to the small area of disturbed ground and the low quality of the terrestrial habitat affected.

In order to ensure that the risk to GCN is reduced to 'negligible'. It is recommended that the following Reasonable Avoidance Measures are adhered to.

Induction of contractors

- A toolbox talk will be given to all site personnel in order to make them aware of the possible presence of GCN, how to identify this species and the avoidance measures to be used on site. A paper copy of the avoidance measures will be retained on site together with the contact details of the GCN licensed ecologist.
- If GCN are found at any point during the development or activities outlined below, works must stop and an appropriately qualified ecologist should be contacted for advice, as well as Natural Resources Wales.
- **Contractors are prohibited from handling GCN.**

Timing & duration

- Any ground works/excavations will only be undertaken between March and October when night time temperatures are above 5°C in order to avoid disturbing hibernating amphibians.
- Any work which will not disturb potential hibernation habitat (tree roots, old walls, mammal burrows, rubble piles) may be carried out during the winter period, when GCN are rarely active above ground.
- All works should take place during daylight hours when GCN are unlikely to be moving around the area.

Site clearance

- Any shrubs, herbaceous plants or garden objects such as urns/pots etc should be removed from the site to reduce concealment/refuge sites.
- A fingertip search should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to and during the removal of plants or objects from flower beds or other hard-standing areas near the house.

Site compound

- The site compound should be situated on an area of hard-standing to avoid creating GCN resting places beneath stored materials etc.
- All site materials should be stored on pallets or other raised objects to avoid creating resting places/refuges for GCN.
- Any toxic or poisonous materials should be safely stored within a locked container.

Construction methods and special precautions

- All excavations on site will be covered at night or ramps will be provided to allow amphibians to exit excavations. All excavations will be checked for amphibians each morning prior to the re-commencement of works.
- All exposed new pipework and drains will be capped at night so as to avoid trapping amphibians.
- All excavated materials/waste will be stored in skips or similar and not on the ground where it could be used as a refuge/resting area by amphibians. Alternatively, all waste will be removed from site daily.
- All stored building materials that might be used as temporary resting places by amphibians will be stored off the ground on pallets or similar.

Procedure if GCN are found

- If GCN are found at any point during the development or activities outlined below, works must stop and an appropriately qualified ecologist should be contacted for advice, as well as Natural Resources Wales.

