



# **1 The Street, Brome, Eye Great Crested Newt Method Statement**

**On Behalf of Mr S shales via Ashley  
Largent Associates Ltd**

**This Method Statement is in relation to great crested newts. Refer to additional documents in support of this application for information with regards to other protected species. This document forms part of the works package for the site and should be issued and adhered to by all contractors and site personnel. Deviation from the methods and control measures as set out in this document could result in a breach of wildlife legislation and violation of planning policy.**

## Document Control

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by
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01	14th June 2022	V1	A. Pino-Blanco MSc	Alex Jessop MSc

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**Contents**

**Document Control..... 2**

**1. Preface ..... 4**

1.1 Project Background ..... 4

1.2 The Site..... 4

1.3 Proposals..... 4

**2. Background Information .....Error! Bookmark not defined.**

2.1 Habitat Assessment..... 5

2.2 Legislation ..... 6

2.3 Great Crested Newt Ecology ..... 7

2.5 Rationale as to why a Method Statement is appropriate..... 7

**3. Method Statement..... 11**

**4. Timings of Works: .....Error! Bookmark not defined.**

**Appendix 1- Great Crested Newt Identification Sheet..... 14**

**Appendix 2 - Record of Attendance..... 15**

## 1. Preface

### 1.1 Project Background

Practical Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Mr S Shales to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)<sup>1</sup> of 1 The Street, Brome, Eye 2021. The PEA identified the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be onsite.

The PEA identified 22 ponds within 500 m of the site. Partial barriers were present from Ponds 10 to 22. A data search, conducted as part of the PEA, found two records of great crested newts within 1 km of the site from the last 10 years.

The PEA recommended that a method statement be produced to negate the low residual risk to great crested newts created by the works. This Method Statement would provide information on great crested newts as well as set out a precautionary method of works to mitigate for any low residual risk to this European Protected Species during the site clearance and the throughout the construction phase of the development.

### 1.2 The Site

The Site is approximately 0.1ha (central OS grid reference TM 15365 76608, postcode IP23 8AE) and is located in Brome, Suffolk, c.4 km southeast of the town of Diss. The Site comprises of a residential property with two outbuildings and an associated vegetated garden and gravel access track and parking. The Site is surrounded by the other residential properties and gardens, a minor road, and on the east and south by a parcel of woodland.

## Proposals

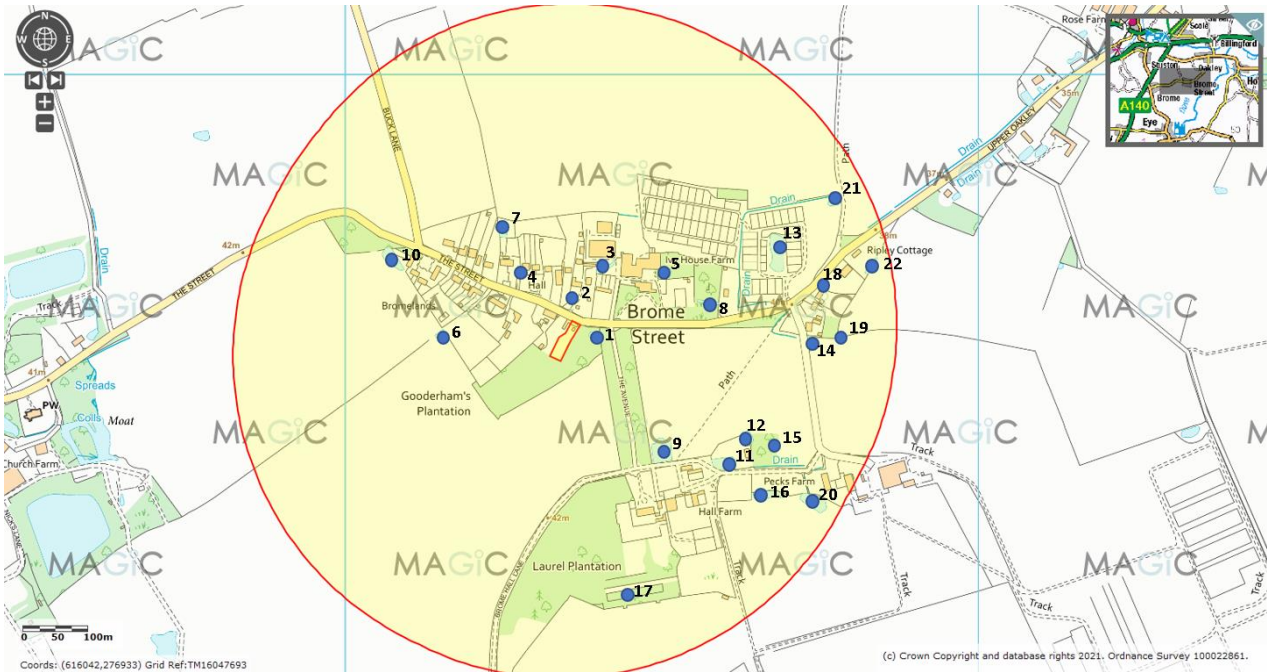
The proposals include a ground floor extension linking to an existing outbuilding which is to be converted. (ALG Ltd, 2021, GO28 003 0).

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<sup>1</sup> 1 The Street, Brome, Eye. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, on behalf of Mr S Shales via Ashley Largent Associates Ltd V1, 2021

## 2.1 Habitat Assessment

By using Ordnance Survey maps and aerial images of the site and surrounding land, 22 ponds within 500 m were identified. The location of the ponds in relation to the site are illustrated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Ponds within 500m of the Proposed Development Site**

The site was visited in October 2021. All water bodies within 500 m are listed in Table 1 overleaf.

The low number of records for great crested newts in the area does not necessarily confirm lack of presence, as the species is frequently under recorded. While habitats within the development footprint of the Site are of negligible value for great crested newts, potential refugia habitat is present as a small log pile onsite and in areas adjacent to the Site, and there are three ponds are within 100 m where there is potential for great crested newts to be present.

Great crested newts can use suitable terrestrial habitat up to 500 m from a breeding pond, although newts are likely to travel no more than 250 m when suitable habitats for foraging and hibernation exist within this radius of their pond<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Cresswell and Rhiannon Whitworth (2004) Number 576, An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. English Nature

**Table 1: Ponds within 500m of the site**

Pond #	Distance (m)	Direction	Visited	HSI Score	Dispersal Barriers to the Site
1	20m	E	Yes	0.47/Poor	A small woodland pond with a lack of management, heavily choked and under total shade. The pond likely dries regularly.
2	35m	N	No		Viewed from road. Fence indicates possibly either a high fish or waterfowl population. No dispersal barriers to Site.
3	85m	N	No		None
4	115m	NW	No		None
5	150m	NE	No		None
6	175m	W	No		None
7	175m	NW	No		None
8	190m	E	No		None
9	210m	SE	No		None
10	270m	W	No		Distance is a partial barrier
11	295m	SE	No		Distance is a partial barrier. Great crested newts confirmed in 2019.
12	315m	SE	No		Distance is a partial barrier
13	320m	E	No		Distance is a partial barrier
14	365m	E	No		Distance is a partial barrier
15	360m	SE	No		Distance is a partial barrier
16	375m	SE	No		Distance is a partial barrier
17	390m	S	No		Distance is a partial barrier
18	390m	E	No		Distance is a partial barrier
19	410m	E	No		Distance is a partial barrier
20	440m	SE	No		Distance is a partial barrier
21	445m	NE	No		Distance is a partial barrier
22	470m	E	No		Distance is a partial barrier

## 2.2 Legislation

Great crested newts are primarily protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt;
- Deliberately disturb great crested newts (affecting their ability to survive, breed or rear young) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young;

- Deliberately disturb great crested newts impairing their ability to hibernate or affecting their local distribution and abundance; and
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt.

## 2.3 Great Crested Newt Ecology

Great crested newts breed in still water bodies such as ponds and ditches during spring and early summer. Newts spend a large proportion of their lives on land; adults leave breeding ponds from late May and return February-March while juveniles spend their first two to four years on land.

While on land great crested newts require refuge and foraging opportunities. Areas of woodland, hedgerows, scrub and rough (especially tussock rich) grassland provide suitable habitats. Newts also require places in which to hibernate such as underground crevices or tree and hedge roots and may hibernate from October to February.

Great crested newts will disperse through suitable terrestrial habitats in search of suitable breeding ponds. Generally, the terrestrial habitat of great crested newts can extend to include habitats up to 500m from a breeding pond (Natural England, 2001<sup>3</sup>). However, if suitable terrestrial habitat is present, great crested newts are more likely to stay within 250m of their breeding pond (Cresswell & Whitworth, 2004<sup>4</sup>).

## 2.4 Rationale as to why a Method Statement is appropriate

Natural England's Guidance Note: European Protected Species and the Planning Process ((WML-G24(01/11) Natural England's Application of the Three 'Tests' to Licence Applications) states that "Licence applications for a development should be regarded as the last available option where all other reasonable alternative ways of avoiding or minimising impacts on the protected species have been discounted and the action is nonetheless likely to result in an offence or offences under the species protection provisions of the Regulations."

Additionally, as per the supporting text in Natural England's Method Statement template for great crested newt mitigation licenses, "Natural England is concerned about the trend for increasingly risk-averse mitigation".

For this project there is no risk of offences through development, so long as the proportional and reasonable mitigation as detailed in this document is properly undertaken. As such there is no legal need, and little benefit to great crested newt conservation, in undertaking works under a development license.

Natural England also state that "Even where there technically is an offence, such as the destruction of a small, distant area of resting place or habitat, it is arguable that impacts beyond the core area often have little or no tangible impact on the viability of populations. Mitigation in such circumstances is of questionable value in conservation terms".

Given the minimal number of records and evidence of great crested newts within the site and surrounding 500 m, the presence of the species on site is unlikely, but possible given the species ecology and history of being under recorded.

<sup>3</sup> Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, 2001

<sup>4</sup> Cresswell & Whitworth (2004) English Nature Research Report Number 576, An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. English Nature

Natural England's Rapid Risk Assessment Tool<sup>5</sup> has been used to ascertain the potential impacts and likelihood of an offence being committed and provide further guidance on appropriate proportionate mitigation. Given the removal of discrete refuge habitat, a small log pile, and impacts upon <0.01 ha an offence is considered unlikely to occur.

The Site supports a discrete refuge habitat, a small log pile,

As the site currently supports potential refuge habitat in the form of a small log piles, there is a low risk of additional offences such as capture or killing/injuring but, during development, arisings from clearance and imported material for construction could also provide artificial refuge. The unmitigated risks have been factored into the site-specific risk assessment provided in Table 2, overleaf.

As recommended by Natural England the exact location of the development in relation to resting places, dispersal areas and barriers have been critically examined and a detailed site-specific risk assessment is provided below.

Table 2 (below) provides a summary of the potential offences and the non-licenced avoidance measures to be employed.

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<sup>5</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/879595/gcn-method-statement.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879595/gcn-method-statement.xlsx)



**Table 2: Site Specific Risk Assessment**

Offences	Site Specific Risks	Risk (without mitigation)	Non-licenced Avoidance Measure	Residual Risk
<p><b>Deliberately or recklessly capture a great crested newt</b></p>	<p><b>If there are newts on site, there is a risk that they would become entrapped in excavations during clearance.</b></p> <p><b>Justification:</b></p> <p>The Site has no water bodies within the boundary, and the nearest is 20 m away. Pond 1 HSI was 'Poor'. Pond 2 was 35 m away from Site but was assess as possibly having a high fish or waterfowl population. Ponds 3-9 are further away but don present any partial barriers to the Site. All other ponds have distance as a partial barrier.</p> <p>It is therefore unlikely that great crested newts would reach the construction site, though not impossible.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of Project Ecologist</li> <li>• Hand searches of the site by ecologist</li> </ul>	<p>Highly unlikely</p>
<p><b>Disturbance</b> including that which impairs the ability to survive, breed or reproduce, rear or nurture their young, hibernate or migrate or affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species.</p>	<p><b>If there are newts utilising the site, clearance of the site and in particular the refugia presents a risk of disturbance.</b></p> <p><b>Justification:</b></p> <p>As given in the argument above, there is a low residual risk of great crested newts utilising the site for foraging.</p> <p>There is one small suitable refugia on site in the form of a small log pile on the eastern boundary. This could be used by great crested newts for hibernation or rest whilst travelling through the landscape or foraging.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a Project Ecologist</li> <li>• Hand searches of the site by ecologist</li> <li>• Supervised and seasonal clearance of refugia</li> </ul>	<p>Highly unlikely</p>

Offences	Site Specific Risks	Risk (without mitigation)	Non-licenced Avoidance Measure	Residual Risk
<p><b>Damage to or destroying a breeding site or resting place</b></p>	<p><b>If there are newts utilising the site, clearance of the refugia presents a risk destroying newt resting places.</b></p> <p><b>Justification:</b></p> <p>As given in the argument above, there is a low residual risk of great crested newts utilising the site.</p> <p>There are suitable refugia on site. These could be used by great crested newts for rest whilst travelling through the landscape or foraging.</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a Project Ecologist</li> <li>• Hand searches of the site by ecologist</li> <li>• Supervised and seasonal clearance of refugia</li> </ul>	<p>Highly unlikely</p>

### 3 Method Statement

Non-licensed control measures detailed within Table 3 are to be implemented in full and signed off by an appropriately authorised person. The method statement is specifically designed to ensure the safety of great crested newts and reptiles during the construction and post development phases.

**Table 3: Non-licensed Control Measures for Works Affecting Great Crested Newts at The Tree House Project, Great Barton**

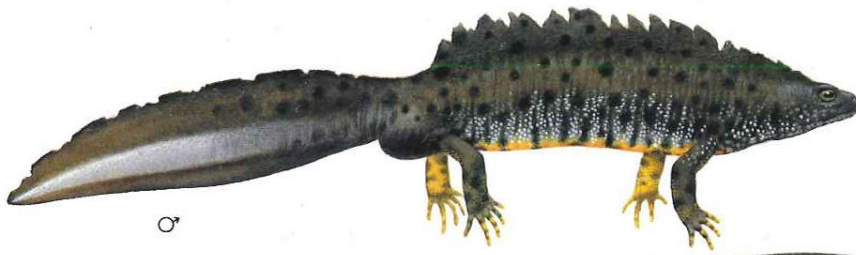
	Area or feature targeted	Item number	Details of control measures	Signed off (Give name and date)- To be completed after successful implementation of control measures
Pre-construction Phase	Possible refugia	1	<p>Any possible refugia such as plant pots or other stored materials on site that could be used by great crested newts to be carefully lifted and removed from site at any time prior to commencement of works.</p> <p>If at any point a great crested newt is identified during the removal of any possible refugia, then works will cease and Practical Ecology is to be notified immediately.</p>	
Construction Phase	Site preparation works	2	<p>Any open excavations should be left with an exit ramp and checked the following morning for wildlife that may have fallen in.</p> <p>All rubble generated is to be put into skips and removed off site as it is generated.</p>	

	Area or feature targeted	Item number	Details of control measures	Signed off (Give name and date)- To be completed after successful implementation of control measures
Construction Phase	Materials	3	<p>On site storage of materials to be kept to a minimum. If materials are to be stored on site they should be stored on unsuitable habitats (e.g. bare ground, boards or pallets) to ensure they do not provide suitable refuge for newts.</p> <p>Any unused building materials to be exported offsite ASAP (preferably the same day), to avoid creating suitable newt refuge habitat.</p>	

## 4 Timing of works

Proposed Activity	Comments	2020												2021											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Key Works – timings permissible with regards to Great Crested Newts and reptiles																									
<b>Method Statement Timings</b>																									
<b>Pre-construction</b>																									
Removal of possible refugia removal																									
<b>Construction Phase</b>																									
Construction	Throughout construction																								
Material storage	Throughout construction																								

## Appendix 1- Great Crested Newt Identification Sheet

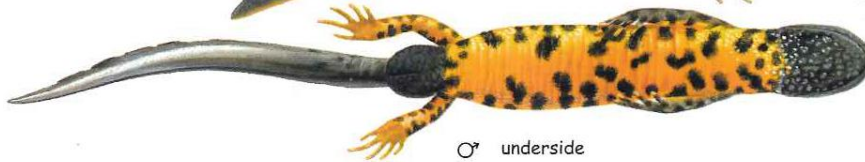


♂

Great crested newt  
*Triturus cristatus*



♀



♂ underside



♀



♂



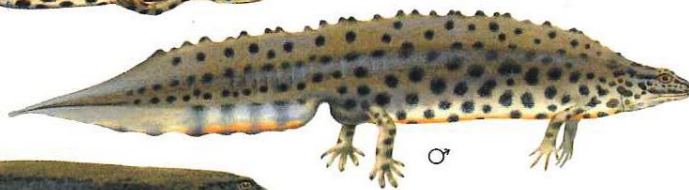
♂ underside

Palmate newt  
*Triturus helveticus*



♂ underside

Smooth newt  
*Triturus vulgaris*



♂



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## Appendix 2 - Record of Attendance

### Record of Attendance

To be signed by all staff to confirm they have read the Method Statement with regards to great crested newts

Name	Date	Signature
