

Report : Great Crested Newt Assessment:
Proposed development at Park Farm,
The Fish, Hopesay, Craven Arms SY7 8HG

Reference : SA/2942/23.1

Date : 18 September 2023

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Proposed development : Construction of an extension on to part of the northwest elevation of the House

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**Great Crested Newt Assessment:
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1. Introduction

There is a proposal to construct a two-storey extension on to part of the northwest elevation of the House within the Park Farm property.

The House has an approximate footprint of 130m² (0.013 hectare) and stands at approximate National Grid Reference (NGR) 339730, 284095.

The proposed extension will be constructed onto the northeast part of the northwest elevation and will require the demolition (or alteration) of an existing single-storey 'lean-to' structure.

Full details of the proposed development may be obtained from Mr. N. Dummer RIBA of Spacescape Architects + Landscape Architects.

The total proposed development footprint is approximately 40m² (0.004 hectare). Roughly 50% (20m²/0.002 hectare) of the location of the proposed extension is either existing building or hardstanding. The remaining area of the proposed extension (approximately 20m²/0.002 hectare) is formed by a flowerbed of *Hypericum* (possibly *Hypericum patulum*) with some *Buddleja* (*Buddleja*).

There are two mapped ponds within 250m of the House:

- Pond 1: a large ornamental garden pond within the Park Farm property, situated at approximate NGR 339685, 284075; approximately 50m southwest of the House.
- Pond 2: an ornamental wetland within the Park Farm property, situated at approximate NGR 339718, 284033; approximately 65m south of the House.

Pond 1 is a man-made feature that has been formed by the diversion of a minor watercourse. The pond was created by (a) previous owner(s) of Park Farm.

Pond 2 is also a man-made feature, purposely created for the planting of wetland garden plants, and was created by (a) previous owner(s) of Park Farm.

On 1 September 2023, a Great Crested Newt Assessment was carried out to determine the likely impact of the proposed extension of the House having a negative impact on Great crested newt.

Dr. R. M. Jones, experienced field biologist, surveyor and Natural England licensed newt worker (Licence number 2016-19615-CLS-CLS) carried out the assessment.

2. Legislation

Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) legislation it is illegal to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a Great crested newt;
- deliberately disturb Great crested newt. This includes in particular, disturbance in a way any such which is likely to (i) impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; (ii) impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; or (iii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a Great crested newt;
- to be in possession or control, to keep, transport, to sell or exchange, or to offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead Great crested newt, or any part of, or anything derived from such a wild animal.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly disturb a Great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a Great crested newt uses for shelter or protection.

A European Protected Species (EPS) Development Licence from Natural England will be required for development works triggering Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) offences against Great crested newt.

3. Historical records of Great crested newt

A formal search of historical records of Great crested newt within the vicinity of the House at Park Farm was not commissioned. Considering the nature, scale and location of the proposed development; the constraint of not carrying out an historical biodiversity record search is considered negligible.

4. Terrestrial habitat

The proposed development site consists of an existing built structure, hardstanding and a flowerbed that is enclosed by a stone wall.

A photographic record of the proposed development site is contained in Appendix 1.

5. Pond 1

A photographic record of Pond 1 is contained in Appendix 1.

5.1 Habitat suitability

The likelihood of Great crested newt using Pond 1 for breeding purposes was assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)⁽¹⁾.

The HSI for Great crested newt is a measure of habitat suitability but is not a substitute for formal Great crested newt surveys.

In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support Great crested newts than those with low scores.

The National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Scheme HSI calculation method was used to calculate the HSI score for the Pond⁽²⁾.

The HSI Score for Pond 1 was calculated as follows:

HSI variable	Comment	Score
SI1 - Location	Zone A	1.00
SI2 - Pond area	Total mapped area \approx 150m ²	0.30
SI3 - Pond drying	Informed value: 'never dries'	0.90
SI4 - Water quality	Informed value: 'moderate'	0.67
SI4 - Shade	Informed value: \approx 50%	1.00
SI6 - Fowl	Informed value: 'minor'	0.67
SI7 - Fish	Informed value: 'absent'	1.00
SI8 - Nearby ponds	Mapped or known ponds within 1km \approx 3	0.60
SI9 - Terrestrial habitat	Informed value: 'moderate'	0.67
SI10 - Macrophytes	Assumed value: \approx 40%	0.70
HSI		0.71

The HSI score of Pond 1 is 0.71.

Pond 1 provides 'good' habitat for Great crested newt to use for breeding purposes.

5.2 Risk Assessment

Pond 1 is too far from the House to be of concern.

Research undertaken by Natural England (previously English Nature)⁽³⁾ indicates the distances from breeding ponds within which Great crested newts are most likely to be encountered.

In relation to the appropriate use of Great crested newt mitigation measures, Natural England⁽³⁾ determines:

"The most comprehensive mitigation, in relation to avoiding disturbance, killing or injury is appropriate within 50m of a breeding pond. It will also almost always be necessary to actively capture newts 50-100m away. However, at distances greater than 100m, there should be careful consideration as to whether attempts to capture newts are necessary or the most effective option to avoid incidental mortality.

At distances greater than 200-250m, capture operations will hardly ever be appropriate."

Natural England's valuation of habitats according to distance from Great crested newt breeding ponds has been adopted within the Natural England European Protected Species

Licence application form for Great crested newts and within their 'rapid risk assessment' tool (contained in Form 'WML-A14-2.xls')⁽⁴⁾.

Should Pond 1 be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes and assuming the proposed development is carried out in the absence of (Great crested newt) mitigation measures; the Natural England 'rapid risk assessment' tool shows the potential affect of the proposed development (i.e. a total 0.004 hectare area of land) on Great crested newt is: 'Green: Offence Highly Unlikely'.

Notional offence probability score 0.05.

6. Pond 2

A photographic record of part of the mapped location of Pond 2 is contained in Appendix 1.

Pond 2 is a mapped pond. However, the mapped area of Pond 2 is a wetland within the formal area of the Park Farm garden and is covered with a ornamental wetland plants.

Pond 2 is wholly unsuitable for Great crested newt to use for breeding purposes.

7. Conclusion

The proposed development will involve alteration to part of the existing footprint of the House and the additional removal of approximately 20m² of hardstanding and garden habitat.

There are two nearby ponds, Pond 1 and Pond 2.

The results of the assessment indicate that the closest pond to the House, Pond 1, is likely to be used by Great crested newt for breeding purposes.

However, considering the distance of Pond 1 from the House and the scale of the proposed development; should Pond 1 be used by Great crested newt, in the absence of mitigation measures; the proposed development is unlikely to have a negative impact on Great crested newt or trigger legal offences against Great crested newt.

The next closest pond, Pond 2, does not provide Great crested newt breeding habitat.

All matters considered:

- Great crested newt do not impose a constraint on the proposed development.
- it is not considered necessary that further Great crested newt-specific survey work be carried out to inform the proposed development.
- it is not necessary for a European Protected Species Licence for Great crested newt to be issued by Natural England to allow the proposed development to lawfully proceed.

8. **References**

- 1: Oldham, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S., and Jeffcote, M (2000). *Evaluating the Suitability of Habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal, Vol. 10, pp. 143-155.
- 2: Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom (2010). ARG UK Advice Note 5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index.
- 3: English Nature/Natural England (2006). An Assessment of the Efficiency of Capture Techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, Report Number 576.
- 4: Natural England (2020). European Protected Species Method Statement document. Form WML-A14-2.xls.

Appendix 1. Photographic record



Photograph 1.

View of the proposed development site.
Looking southeast from northwest.



Photograph 2.
View of Pond 1.
Looking north from south.



Photograph 3.
View of part of the mapped location of Pond 2.
Looking northeast from southwest.