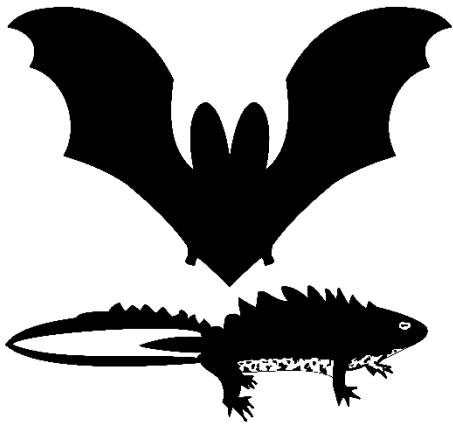




AEWC Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Great Crested Newt Method Statement

Land at Oaklands Barn

**Oaklands Barn
Coltstaple Lane
Horsham
Sussex
RH13 9BB**



**22-143
May 2023**

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Summary

- AEWC Ltd were commissioned by Alasdair Russell to produce a great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*, GCN) method statement for the proposed development at Land at Oaklands Barn, Coltstaple Lane, Horsham, Sussex, RH13 9BB at grid reference TQ 17008 27909 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- The site is approximately 0.18ha in size and comprises an existing barn with surrounding hardstanding which had been colonised by shallow-rooting grasses.
- The proposed development plan involves demolition of the existing barn and subsequent construction of two detached dwellings. This will involve the removal of the existing farm building as well as areas of hardstanding and shallow rooted grassland. The majority of the habitat area on site will be affected by these proposals.
- A Protected Species Walkover Survey was carried out by Emily Partridge on 27th October 2022 to assess the site for the potential presence of any protected species or species of conservation concern and identify habitats of conservation importance.
- A small amount of habitat suitable for terrestrial phase GCN is present on site and three ponds are present within 500m of the site boundary. A rapid risk assessment has been carried out which has shown an offence is highly unlikely if GCN are present within the offsite ponds.
- A precautionary method statement is detailed within section 3 of this report.

This report has been prepared by AEWC Limited, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Professional Guidance and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWC Ltd were commissioned by Alasdair Russell to produce a great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*, GCN) method statement for the proposed development at Land at Oaklands Barn, Coltstaple Lane, Horsham, Sussex, RH13 9BB to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 A Protected Species Walkover Survey was carried out by Emily Partridge on 27th October 2022 to assess the site for the potential presence of any protected species or species of conservation concern and identify habitats of conservation importance.
- 1.3 A small amount of habitat suitable for terrestrial phase GCN is present on site and three ponds are present within 500m of the site boundary. A rapid risk assessment has been carried out which has shown an offence is highly unlikely if GCN are present within the offsite ponds, therefore works can be undertaken under ecological method statement as detailed within this report.

Aims and Objectives

- 1.4 The objectives of this report are to:
 - Produce a method statement outlining recommendations for suitable mitigation and habitat improvement based on the findings of the October 2022 surveys and rapid risk assessment.

Site Location

- 1.5 The proposed development site is located at Land at Oaklands Barn, Coltstaple Lane, Horsham, Sussex, RH13 9BB at grid reference TQ 17008 27909. The site is located in a rural area within the southern outskirts of the town of Horsham. The site is immediately surrounded by Lovers Lane to the west, Oaklands Farm gardens to the north and east and ancient and semi-natural woodland to the south. The wider landscape largely comprises agricultural farmland and woodland with areas of residential and commercial development. The A24 lies approximately 600m west of the site. See associated AEWC PSWBA report dated November 2022.

Proposed Development

- 1.6 The proposed development plan involves the demolition of the existing barn and construction of two detached dwellings. This will involve the removal of the existing farm building as well as areas of hardstanding and shallow rooted grassland. The majority of the habitat area on site will be affected by these proposals. see Figure 1.

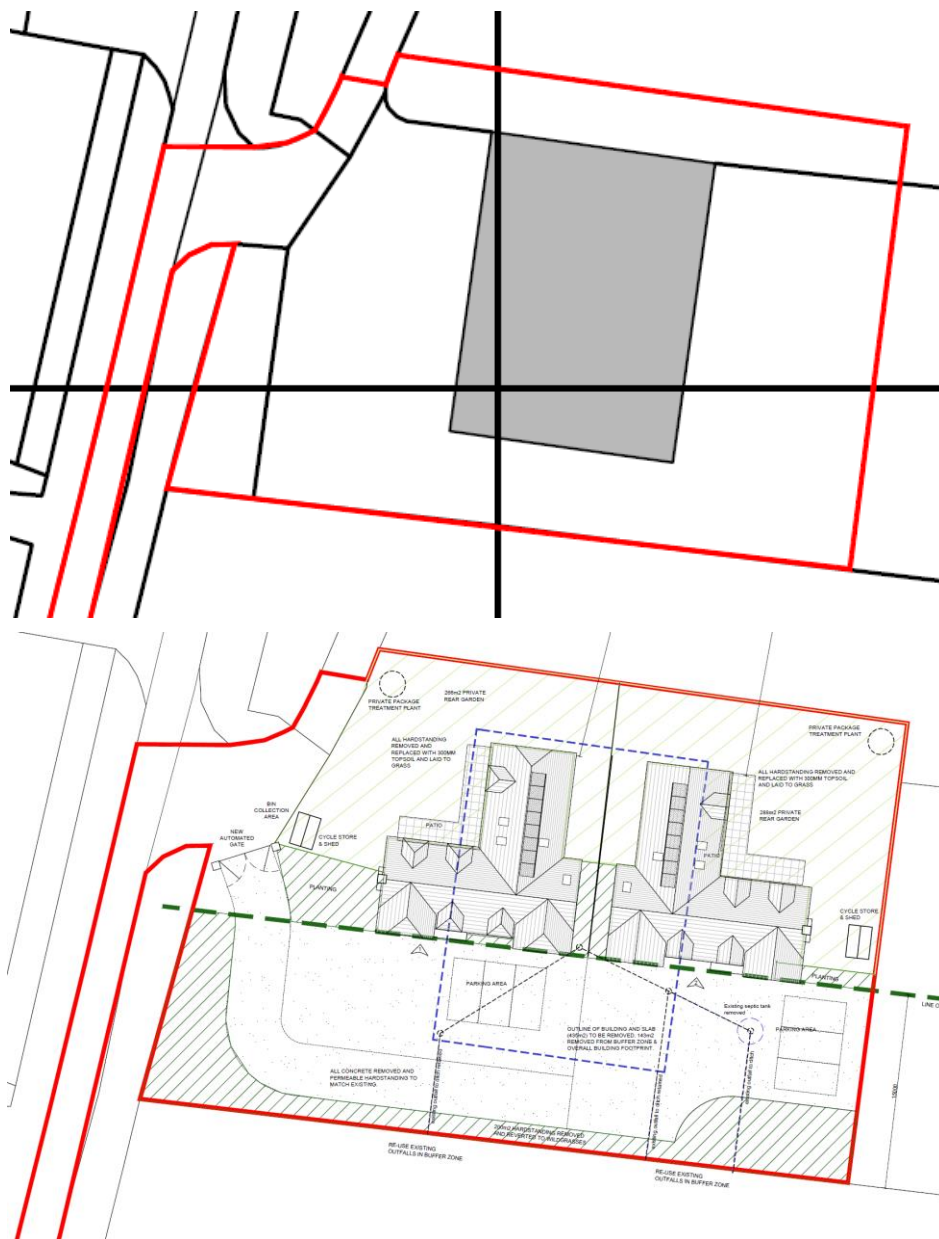


FIGURE 1: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Legislation

1.7 Natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*), northern pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*) and GCN are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them full protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and

- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.
- 1.8 Palmate newts (*Lissotriton helveticus*) and smooth newts (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) are also afforded protection against sale only under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*.
- 1.9 Natterjack toad, common toad (*Bufo bufo*), GCN and northern pool frog are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

2 Results

Site visit

- 2.1 The site was visited on 27th October 2022 by qualified ecologist Emily Partridge to assess its current suitability for GCN as part of a protected species walkover assessment.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 0.18ha and comprises an existing barn with surrounding hardstanding which had been colonised by shallow rooting grasses.
- 2.3 No ponds were recorded within the site boundary. The site was considered to have some potential to support terrestrial GCN, within the rubble piles and boundary scrub.
- 2.4 The Ordnance Survey map available via MAGIC was reviewed for ponds within the accepted dispersal distance of 500m that are not separated from the site by significant barriers to dispersal such as main roads. Three ponds were found occurring to the north and west of the site. The closest pond is located 120m to the north of the proposed development site. See Figure 3.
- 2.5 A rapid risk assessment calculation was carried out to identify the likelihood of offence in the absence of mitigation which indicated that an offence is highly unlikely from the proposed works. See Figure 2.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:		GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY

FIGURE 2: RAPID RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE SITE

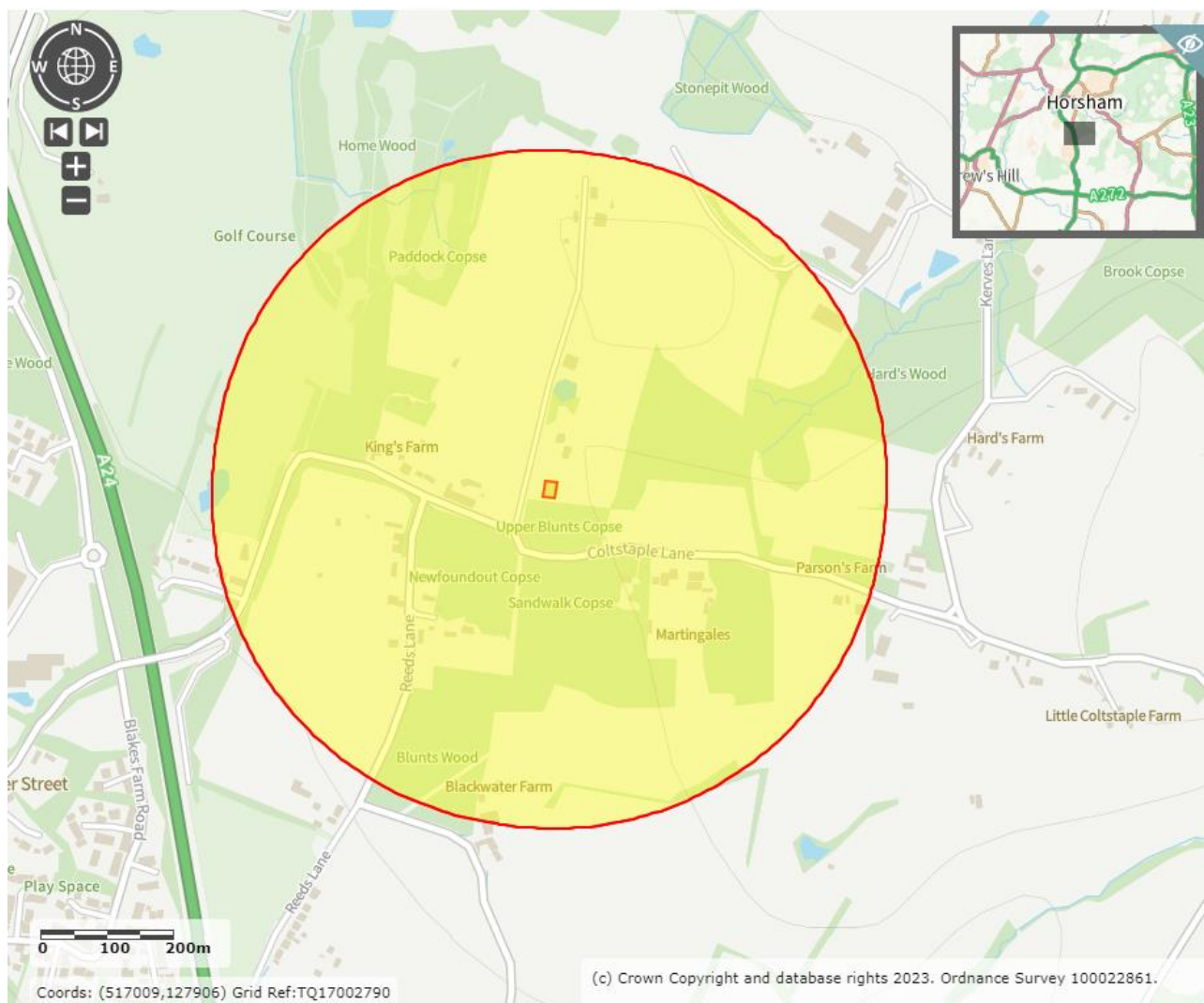


FIGURE 3: MAGIC MAP RESULTS SHOWING THREE PONDS WITHIN 500M OF THE SITE

3 Method Statement for GCN

3.1 A precautionary method statement is detailed below to safeguard GCN in the unlikely event they are present within the site:

- Workers on the site will be given a toolbox talk by a qualified ecologist to ensure they are aware of the potential presence of GCN and where to check for them so these can be identified if they are encountered on the site. Guidance will be kept on the site.
- Areas of grassland and scrub should be cleared sensitively, preferably by hand. Should any animals be found during the clearance of these, or any other habitats on site, the animal should be moved to a safe location away from the area of works.
- It is recommended that a hibernaculum be created within a discreet corner of the site to provide shelter for amphibians and reptiles.

- In the unlikely event GCN, or other protected species, should be found within the site works, must stop immediately and an ecologist must be contacted to provide further advice.

Enhancement

- 3.2 In order to enhance the site for reptiles and terrestrial phase amphibians, a hibernaculum could be created within a shady corner of the site, using materials such as logs, inert hardcore, bricks or building rubble to form the body of each hibernaculum, ensuring that materials likely to decompose are not placed beneath bricks or rubble to avoid collapse. Woodchips or soil may be incorporated to fill some of the larger cavities within the structure (see Figure 4).

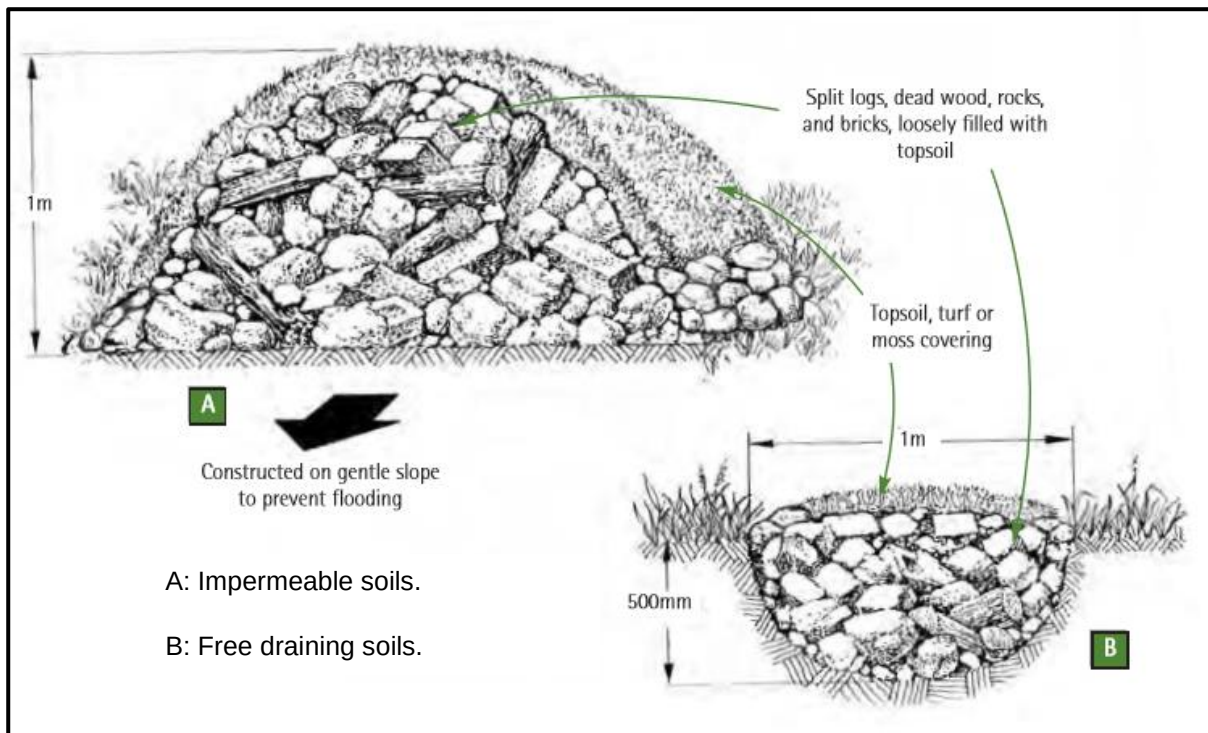


Image from Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook

FIGURE 4: GCN HIBERNACULA DESIGN

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