

GREAT CRESTED NEWT LOW IMPACT CLASS LICENCE (LICL): MITIGATION & COMPENSATION MEASURES

SEED FARMHOUSE, CRADLEY,
HEREFORDSHIRE, WR13 5JX

APPLICANT: MR DENIS NIFONTOV

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CONTROL SHEET

Applicant: Mr Denis Nifontov

Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire, WR13 5JX

Great Crested Newt LICL: Mitigation & Compensation Measures

	Name	Position
Author	Chloe King	Ecologist
Check by	Fern Fellowes-Day (Registered Consultant)	Director

Contract No.	Project Contact	Revision No.	Date of Issue
3018	Chloe King	1	18 April 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT FAILURE BY THE CLIENT OR ANYONE WORKING UNDER THE CLIENT'S DIRECTION TO FOLLOW THIS METHOD STATEMENT OR TERMS OF THE LICL SITE REGISTRATION MAY RESULT IN A BREACH OF THE LAW AND LEAVE THE CLIENT OR OTHERS OPEN TO PROSECUTION.

IMPORTANT NOTE: THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS METHOD STATEMENT ARE DESIGNED TO BE ENFORCEABLE UNDER A GREAT CRESTED NEWT LOW IMPACT CLASS LICENCE (LICL) AND MUST BE IMPLEMENTED AS STATED. ALL RELEVANT CONTRACTORS COMMISSIONED TO UNDERTAKE WORKS AFFECTED BY THIS METHOD STATEMENT MUST READ AND UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS BEFORE STARTING ON SITE.

1.1 Scheme Background

Focus Environmental Consultants have been commissioned by Mr Denis Nifontov ('the Client') to produce a Great Crested Newt Method Statement & Enhancement Strategy for Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire, WR13 5JX ('the Site'). The development proposals include the restoration and refurbishment of the 'Barn Range', a dilapidated barn at the Seed Farmhouse.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this Great Crested Newt Method Statement & Enhancement Strategy are:

- to produce a concise working document, including great crested newt-specific method statement, to ensure future development of the site is carried out in full compliance with wildlife law and recognised best practice and all reasonable precautions have and will be undertaken to avoid killing or injuring or wildlife during the development.
- to provide a great crested newt compensation and enhancement strategy appropriate for the project and to support the planning submission.
- To provide a supporting document to the future Natural England great crested newt low impact class licence (GCN LICL) application for the site.

1.3 Site Description & Location

The Site is approximately 0.95ha and is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SO 704475 located in Cradley, Herefordshire. The site comprises several buildings, including a residential property (Seed Farmhouse), garage, 'Barn Range', a moat, scattered trees, hedgerows, woodland and amenity areas.

1.4 Background Great Crested Newt Data

A site walkover was undertaken by an ecological consultant from Sharpe Ecology Ltd on 25 March 2024. The aim of the site visit was to assess the site for its suitability to support amphibian and reptile species. Sharpe Ecology Ltd confirmed the presence of great crested newts in the moat via the presence of eggs on aquatic vegetation in the waterbody.

An update visit to the site was undertaken by the Registered Consultant (F. Fellowes-Day) from Focus Environmental Consultants on 11 April 2024. The aim of the site visit was to review the habitats to be impacted by the development proposal and to collect data for this document and for a future Natural England great crested newt low impact class licence (GCN LICL) application.

Barn Range is located c.45m (at the closest point) from the moat which has been confirmed as a great crested newt breeding pond. The discrete refugia (such as small piles of stonework, bricks and logs) within the Barn Range provide suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. However, the impact on great crested newts is deemed to be very low, and adequate compensation and enhancement measures can be provided on site.

1.5 GCN LICL

The great crested newt low impact class licence (GCN LICL) is intended to facilitate development activities and similar works which are judged to have a low-level impact on great crested newt populations.

This project is deemed to meet the strict criteria of the Natural England GCN LICL scheme as this project involves the '*removal of discrete refugia only*' from the interior of Barn Range with negligible habitat loss. NOTE: Natural England only require

presence/absence data to support a GCN LICL application. Therefore, as presence of great crested newts has been established and the result of the proposed development activity is very low, no additional great crested newt survey information is required or considered proportionate in this circumstance.

Once all required permissions have been obtained, this document will be updated (as required) and form part of the GCN LICL application submission to Natural England.

1.6 Contact Details

1.6.1 Applicant Contact Details

Mr Denis Nifontov
Seed Farmhouse
Cradley
Herefordshire
WR13 5JX

1.6.2 Primary Registered Consultant

Fern Fellowes-Day (GCN1RC0023)
Focus Environmental Consultants
Email: Fern@focus-enviro.com
Tel. 01905 780700

1.6.3 Other Contacts

Project Lead & Level 1 Assistant:
Chloe King
Focus Environmental Consultants
Email: Chloe@focus-enviro.com
Tel. 01905 780700

2. MITIGATION STRATEGY

The following statement has been produced to provide a robust procedure for the works to be carried out at the site. When enforced as intended, this document will ensure that site contractors complete works in full compliance with the wildlife legislation affecting great crested newts and other vulnerable species (e.g. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)).

Works must only be undertaken once confirmation has been received from Natural England that the site (Seed Farmhouse) has been Registered under the LICL scheme.

- All licenced activities detailed in this document must be completed within 12 months. If licenced activities are not completed within 12 months¹, the Primary Registered Consultant may need to apply for an extension from Natural England.
- This document covers the procedure for removing discrete refugia (such as bricks, logs and rubble) within the area of the development footprint (Barn Range) covered by the LICL (please refer to Map 1 in Section 5).
- Prior to works commencing a tool-box talk will be provided by the Primary Registered Consultant. This talk will indicate an appropriate procedure for working within this area to minimise disturbance on site and the risk of inadvertently harming great crested newts. All contractors will be made aware of what a great crested newt looks like and what to do in the event that a great crested newt is found.
- The Primary Registered Consultant (with assistance from Level 1 Assistants as necessary) will directly supervise (or undertake) the following:

¹ Or the exact timeframe detailed in the GCN LICL application.

- A finger-tip search of the interior of the Barn Range will be undertaken to look for great crested newts (and other vulnerable species). This will include turning over and removing any miscellaneous items, objects or debris within the area.
- Any log, brick or stone piles will be dismantled and checked carefully for the presence of any great crested newts.
- All items will be removed from the interior of Barn Range once they have been checked.
- Any great crested newts (other vulnerable fauna) found will be placed in a moss/grass-lined bucket and relocated to suitable, safe habitat close to the moat. Fauna will be kept in the bucket for a maximum of 1 hour.

3. COMPENSATION & ENHANCEMENT

3.1 Hibernacula & Log piles

One hibernaculum and one log pile will be created to provide compensation for the loss of potential great crested newt terrestrial habitat (discrete refugia) within the development footprint. The hibernaculum and log pile will be located within the wooded area to the south of the moat (c. 85m from Barn Range).

The hibernaculum will be constructed from materials such as inert gravel, rubble, rocks, logs and bricks loosely layered with topsoil and turf. Permanent rough grassland and scrub will be allowed to develop naturally over the feature to provide additional insulation and cover for newts. Please refer to Figure 1, below for an example hibernacula design.

Construction of the hibernacula must be completed within the 12-month period detailed within the GCN L1CL (following confirmation of site registration under the L1CL scheme).

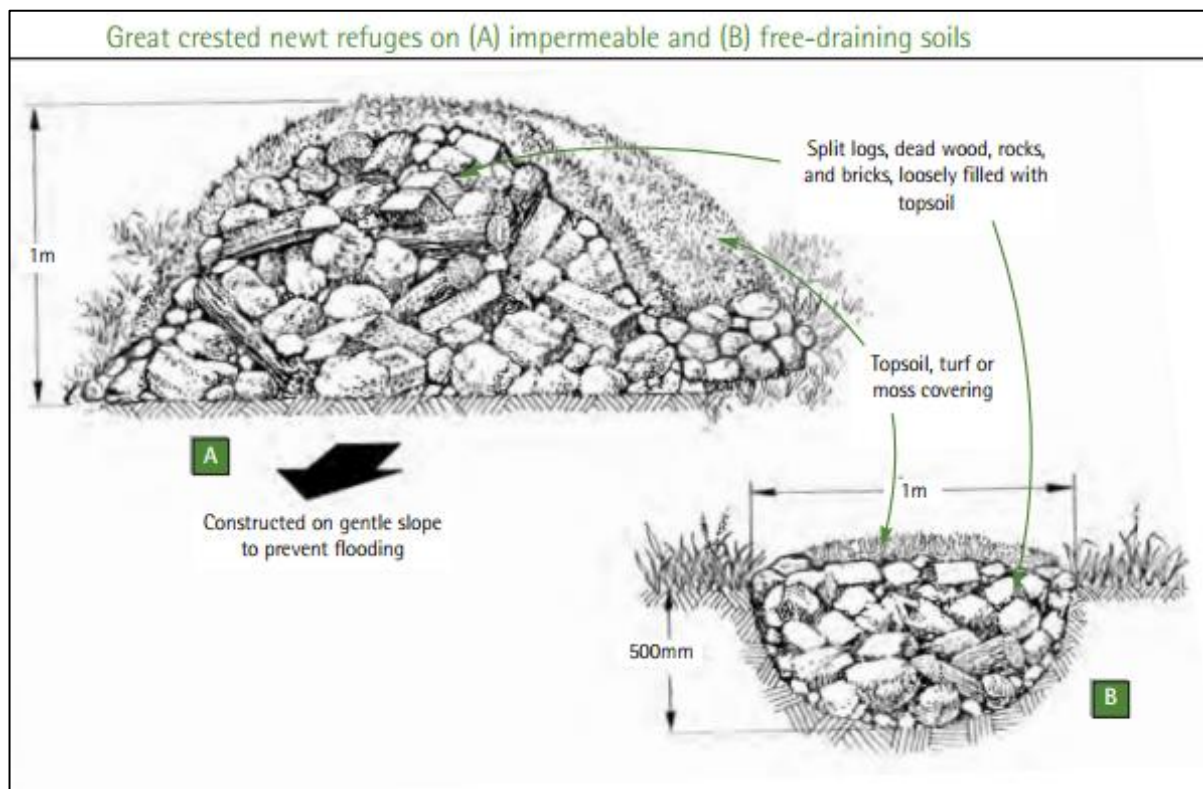


Figure 1. A great crested newt hibernacula (From p.31 of English Nature, 2001)

4. DECLARATION

4.1 Applicant

All mitigation and compensation (as detailed in this document) will be completed as set out in the authorised site registration form, as agreed with the Primary Registered Consultant, and within the timescales stated.

☐ Yes, I confirm

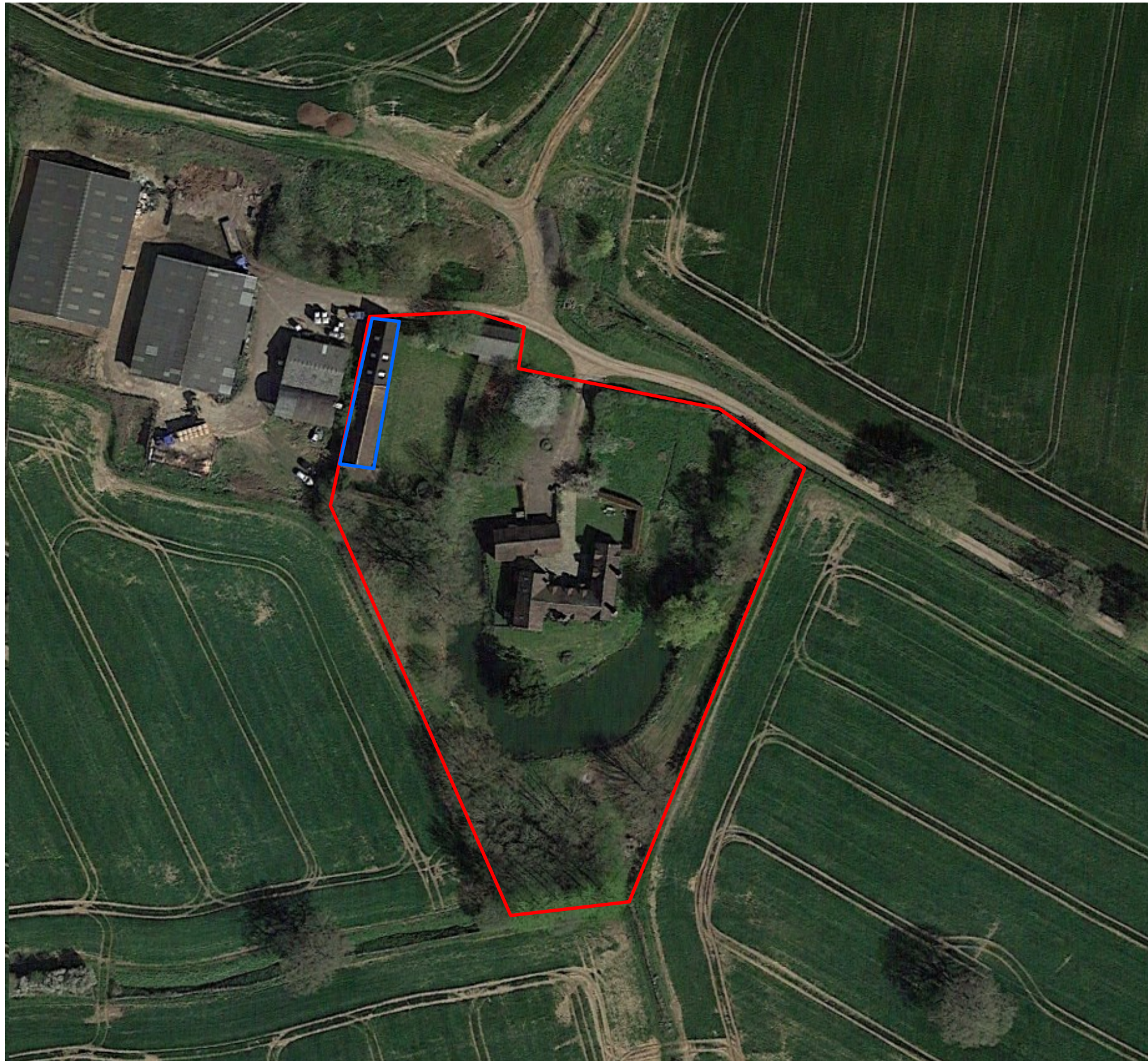
Name: Mr Denis Nifontov

Date:

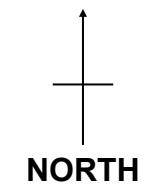
5. PLANS

Below is a copy of Map 1 to be submitted as part of the LICL site registration application to Natural England. Map 1 illustrates the area of the development site covered by the LICL scheme.

MAP 1 - Site Location



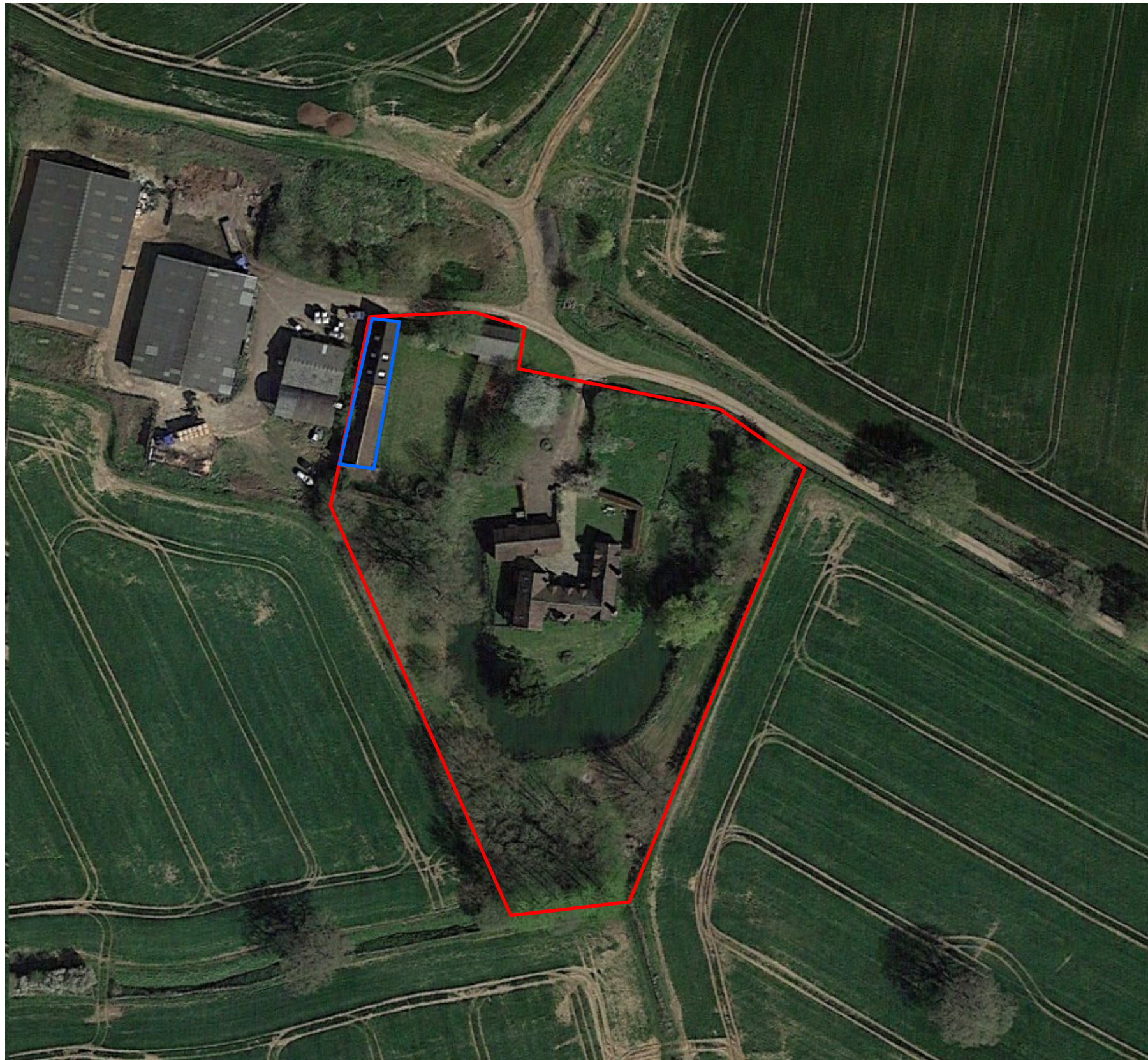
- Landownership boundary
- Land subject to GCN LICL



Client: Mr Denis Nifontov
Site: Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire,
WR13 5JX
Title: Map 1 - Site Location
Contract: 3018
Date: April 2024

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MAP 1 - Terrestrial Habitats on Site

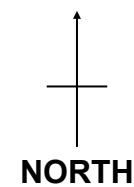


- Landownership boundary
- Land subject to GCN LICL

The planning proposals include the restoration and refurbishment of the existing dilapidated barn (Barn Range).

Habitats that will be impacted upon include:

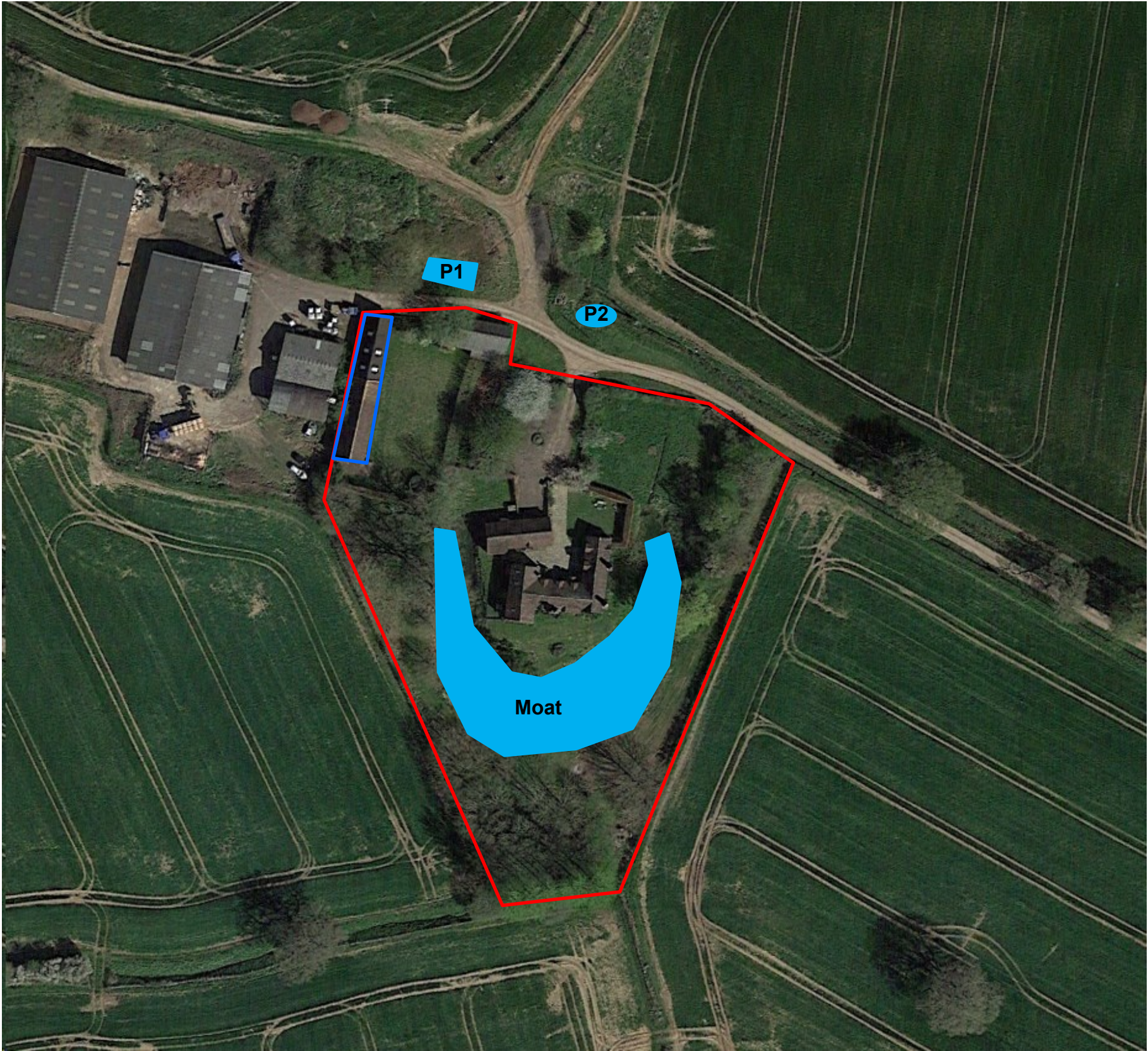
- Discrete piles / refugia (bricks, logs, stonework, misc. items). No habitat loss.



NORTH

Client: Mr Denis Nifontov
Site: Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire, WR13 5JX
Title: Map 1 - Terrestrial Habitats on Site
Contract: 3018
Date: April 2024

MAP 1 - Survey Information & Pond Locations



- Landownership boundary
- Land subject to GCN LICL

Survey Information:
Moat: c. 43m south-west of the development footprint. Confirmed GCN breeding pond, via presence of GCN eggs on 25.03.2024.

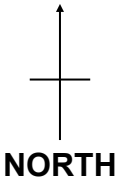
Other ponds in area:
P1: c.12m north-east of the development footprint. Access was not permitted to this pond. Pond not visible from publicly accessible areas.

P2: c.45m north-east of the development footprint. Smooth newt eggs present in pond on 25.03.2024; no GCN eggs were observed,. Pond suitable for GCN.

No other waterbodies are located within 250m of the site.

Barn Range: Juvenile smooth newts were observed within the interior of the barn during the 25.03.2024.

All survey work was undertaken by a suitably licensed ecologist from Sharpe Ecology Ltd



Client: Mr Denis Nifontov
Site: Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire, WR13 5JX
Title: Map 1 - Survey Information & Pond Locations
Contract: 3018
Date: April 2024

MAP 1 - Photographs



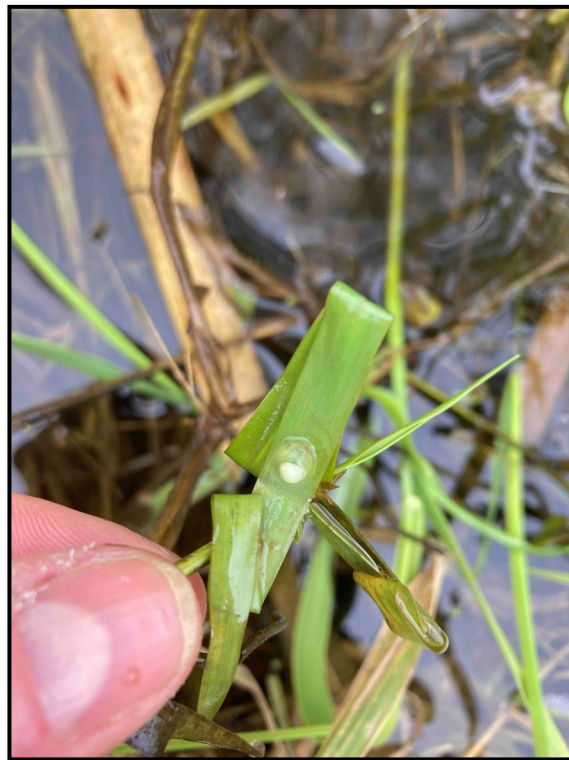
The moat on site, confirmed to support breeding great crested newts.



Discrete refugia observed within the Barn Range.



Discrete refugia observed within the Barn Range.



GCN egg observed in the moat on site.



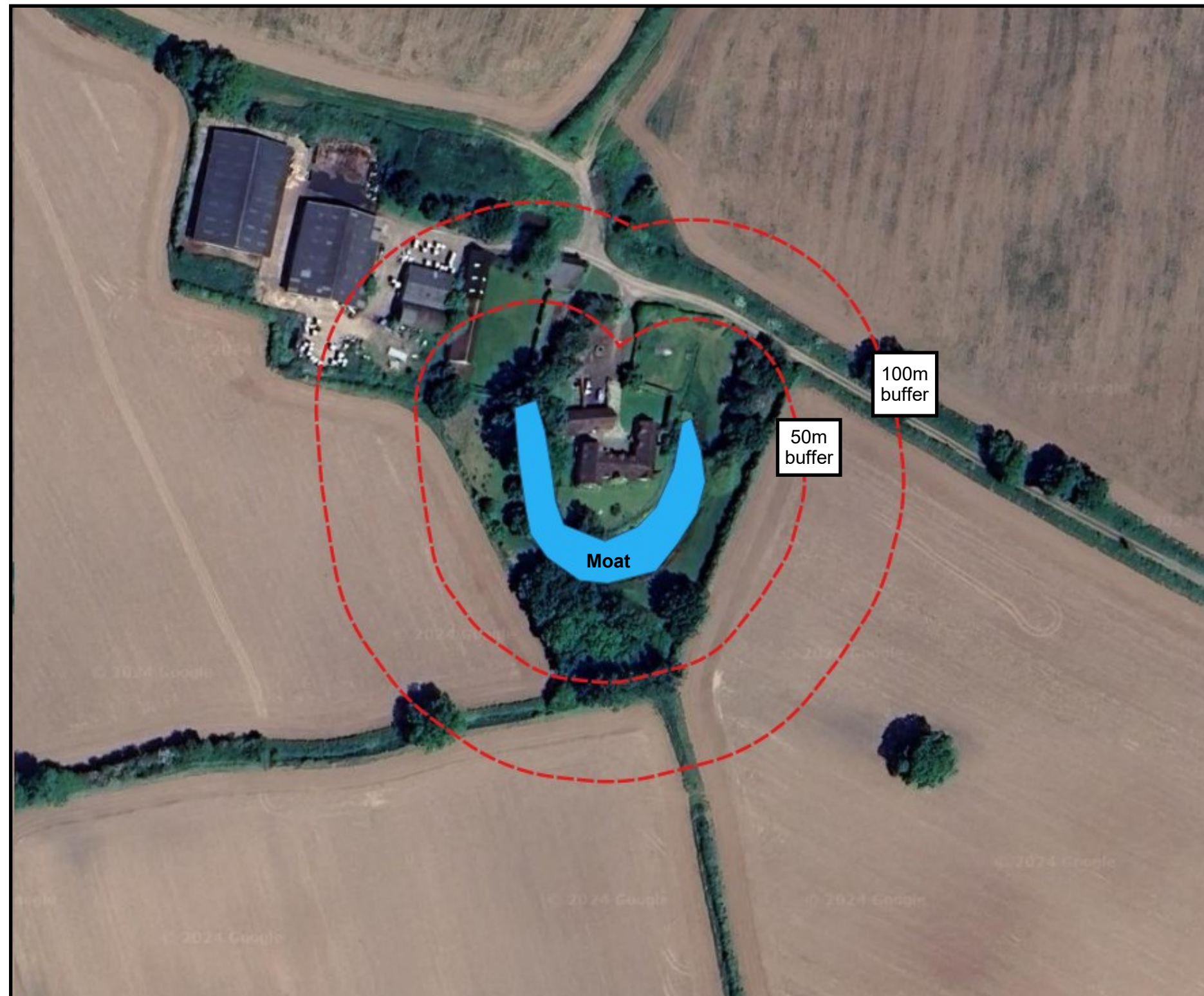
Juvenile smooth newt observed within the Barn Range.



Interior of the Barn Range.

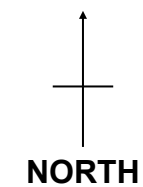
Client: Mr Denis Nifontov
Site: Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire, WR13 5JX
Title: Map 1 - Photographs
Contract: 3018
Date: April 2024

MAP 1 - 50m & 100m Buffers of the GCN Breeding pond



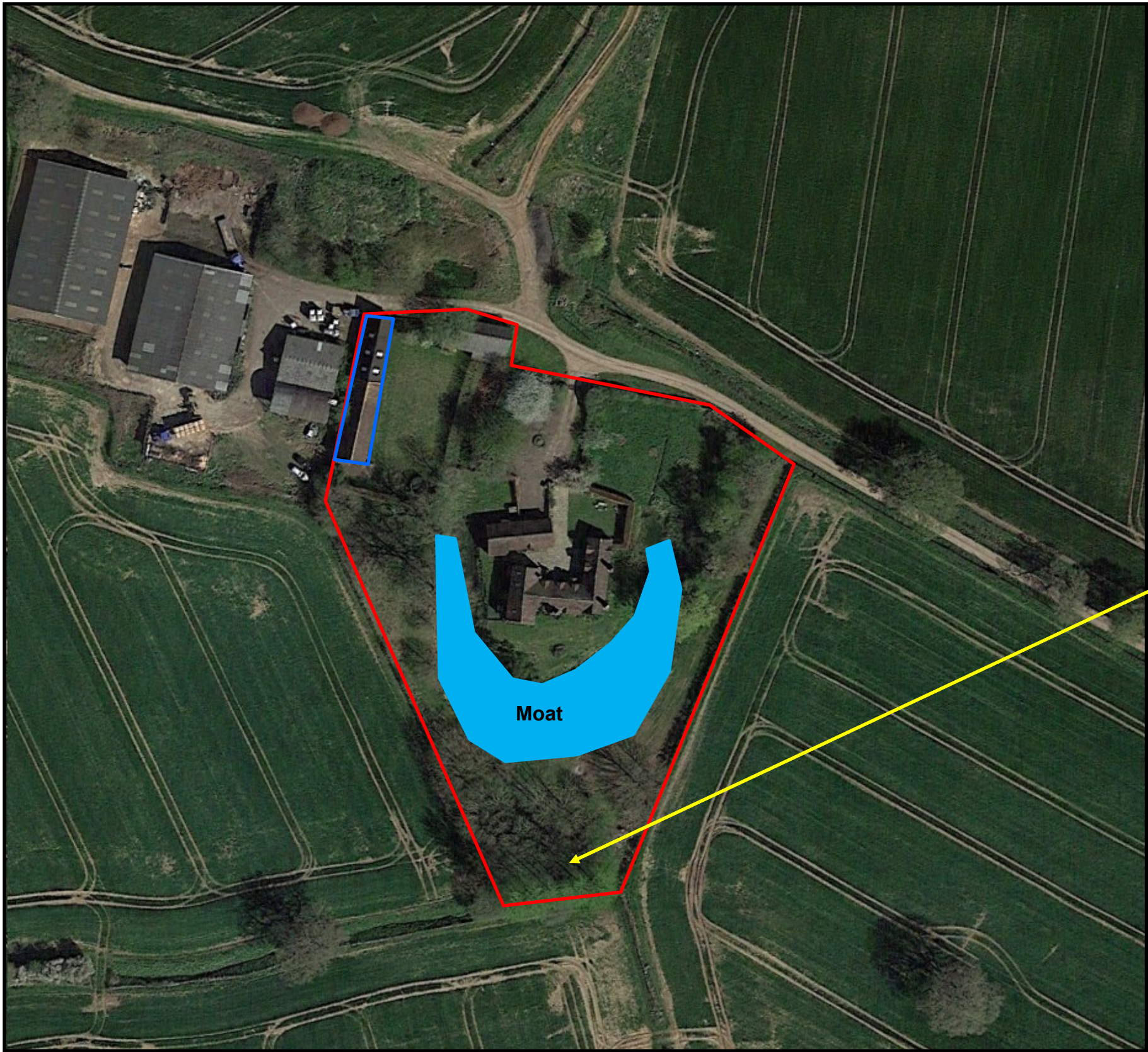
- Landownership boundary
- Land subject to GCN LICL

The moat on site has been confirmed to support breeding great crested newts. The 50m and 100m buffers are shown around the moat, to show where great crested newts are expected to be discovered.



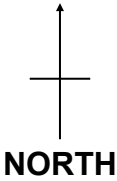
Client: Mr Denis Nifontov
Site: Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire, WR13 5JX
Title: Map 1 - 50m & 100m Buffers
Contract: 3018
Date: April 2024

MAP 1 - Location of Compensation Features



- Landownership boundary
- Land subject to GCN LICL

Approximate location of compensation (to include one hibernaculum and one log pile).



Client: Mr Denis Nifontov
Site: Seed Farmhouse, Cradley, Herefordshire, WR13 5JX
Title: Map 1 - Location of Compensation Features
Contract: 3018
Date: April 2024

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6. REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Her Majesty's Stationary Office (2019). *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, UK.

Jehle, R., Thiesmeier, B. and Foster, J. (2011). *The Crested Newt- A dwindling pond-dweller*. Laurenti-Verlag, Bielefeld, Germany.

Langton, TES, Beckett, CL and Foster, JP (2001). *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*. Froglife, Halesworth, UK.

7. GREAT CRESTED NEWT LEGISLATION

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (Laurenti, 1758), is a “European Protected Species” (EPS) and listed on Annex II and Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive. The Directive is transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, thus making it illegal to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill;
- deliberately disturb with the significant likelihood to affect population survival, breeding, local distribution or abundance;
- deliberately take or destroy eggs;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place;
- possess, control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any great crested newt or any part of a great crested newt or anything derived from one.

The above applies to all life stages.

Great crested newts are also afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes intentional or reckless damage of, disturbance to, or obstruction of access to, their places of shelter specifically prohibited. This applies to both aquatic and terrestrial habitat.

8. QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Focus Environmental Consultants® has the expertise to provide sure-fire environmental solutions to a wide range of projects. The company ethos forges the highest standards of professional scientific practice with a best value approach for our clients. Our core area of expertise is in the production of specialist environmental reports and advice to support planning applications. Our comprehensive services include Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and fulfilling protected species surveys, licensing and mitigation requirements. Focus Environmental Consultants is a CIEEM Registered Practice, with all ecological staff being members of this professional body. Our flexible approach, range of skills and broad project experience from major infrastructure contracts to small private developments allows us to adapt to your individual requirements. As well as offering a full suite of ecological services, Focus Environmental Consultants can provide expert arboricultural advice and reports and is building an enviable reputation for innovative habitat creation and management solutions. Focus Environmental Consultants is situated in Worcestershire, providing a convenient and central UK location.

Fern Fellowes-Day BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB

Fern has over nineteen years of professional experience in the ecological consultancy field. She holds BSc (Hons) in Zoology from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and MSc in Habitat Creation and Management from Staffordshire University. Fern has considerable experience in conducting Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA). Fern's particular expertise is with protected species surveys. As a Registered User of the CL35 Badger Class Licence she has extensive knowledge in dealing with the badgers, with practical experience in artificial sett design and creation and has held numerous Natural England licences to close or disturb badger setts. In addition, Fern holds survey licences for great crested newts, bats and white-clawed crayfish. Fern has held Natural England Mitigation (development) licences for great crested newts (including being a Registered Consultant for the new great crested newt Low Impact Class Licence (LICL)) and Conservation licences for white-clawed crayfish. She is particularly experienced in dealing with newt issues affecting the quarrying, mineral extraction and landfill industry.

Chloe King BSc (Hons)

Chloe is a Consultant Ecologist with over five years of professional experience working within the ecology sector. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Zoology with Conservation from Bangor University. Chloe is experienced in undertaking Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Preliminary Roost Assessments, Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and completing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessments and UK Habitat Classification condition assessments. She is also a proficient surveyor of protected species, including bats, great crested newts, reptiles, hazel dormice, riparian mammals and badgers. Chloe holds Natural England survey licences (Class 1) for bats and great crested newts.