



Badger Survey

Land off Cote Lane, Thurgoland

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Report Title:	Badger Survey Land off Cote Lane, Thurgoland
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Summary Statement

No evidence of current use of the Site by Badgers has been found. Works can proceed with little risk of affecting badgers or contravening wildlife legislation.

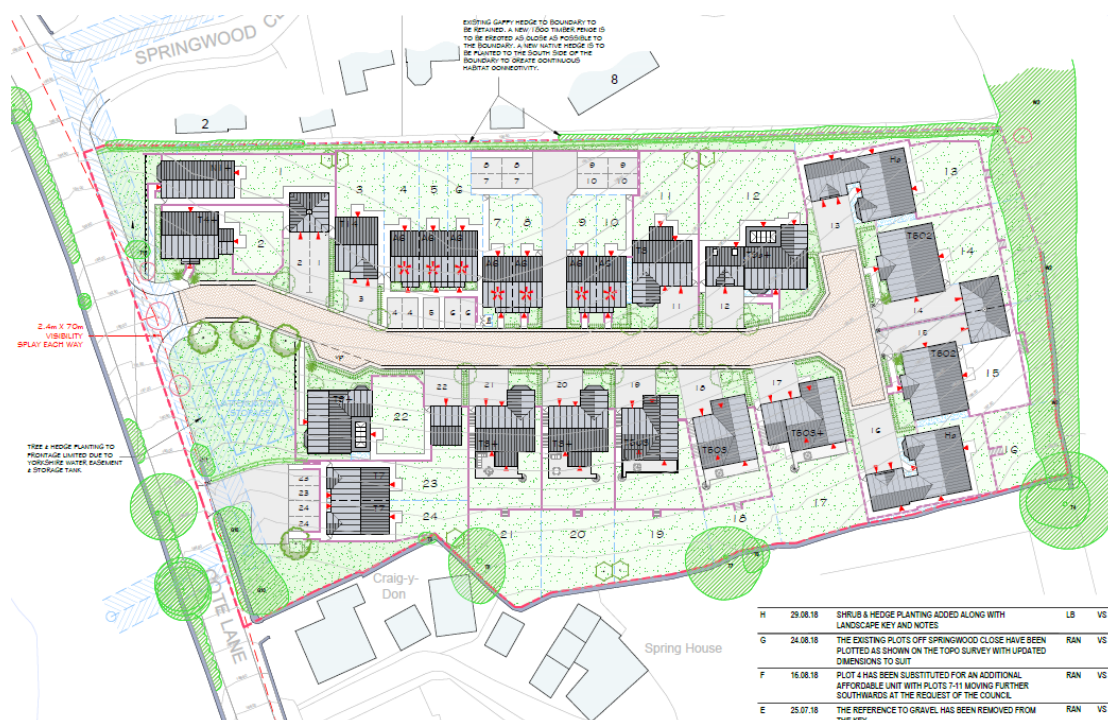
Introduction

1. Subsequent to recommendations made in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (R-2524-01), Brooks Ecological was commissioned by Berkeley DeVeer to carry out a Badger Survey of land off Cote Lane, Thurgoland, South Yorkshire Grid ref: SE 29196 00607.

Purpose of the survey

2. The survey was carried out to determine if the layout shown in figure 1 below is likely to result in the damage or destruction of badger setts.

Figure 1 Proposed layout



3. Survey was recommended as a precaution, due primarily to the presence of high value badger habitat (woodland) being found adjacent to the Site, and the presence of numerous badger records within 2km.

Legal background

4. Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which makes it illegal to kill, injure or take badgers or to interfere with a badger sett. Interference with a sett includes blocking tunnels or damaging the sett in any way. The Act is intended to protect badgers against persecution and deals with badger welfare rather than conservation status.

Method

5. Survey was undertaken over two Site visits, carried out on the 23rd August and 18th October 2018 by an experienced ecologist with significant experience of badger survey and mitigation who is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
6. Survey encompassed all land within the Site as well as the woodland to the east, extending up to the line of the water course. The area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger activity by looking for the following signs:
 - Badger setts;
 - Badger latrines or dung pits;
 - Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging;
 - Badger paths;
 - Badger prints in areas of soft mud; and,
 - Badger hairs caught on fencing.
7. Badger setts are assessed and classified according to the level of use and the number of entrance holes see box 1.

Box 1 Badger setts

Badgers live in social groups called clans and are territorial. Each clan territory can vary considerably in size, from 0.2 sq. km to 1.5 sq. km. The average number of badgers in a clan has been calculated to be six but this number can vary between two and twenty badgers.

In areas with a significant badger population there will be contiguous clans and a well-defined boundary between clan territories will exist with the badgers scent marking their boundary with areas of dung pits, called latrines. In areas with relatively low badger populations there will be less competition for territory and the amount of territorial markings will be low or even non-existent.

Setts are classified into four ancillary types; main, annexe, subsidiary and outlying, as follows:

Main sett: These are large, well-established setts, normally in continuous use. Each group will use only one main sett and it will form the most likely location for the raising of cubs.

Annexe sett: These setts are usually found in close association with the main sett, and will often be linked to it by a well-worn path. Where a second litter of cubs is born they will be raised in the annexe sett.

Subsidiary sett: Subsidiary setts will usually have five or more holes, although not all of these will be in continuous use.

Outlying sett: These setts are used on an occasional basis and will usually consist of only one to three holes. Soil heaps will generally be smaller than those found associated with the other sett types, indicating a smaller underground structure.

The entrance holes to setts can provide an indication as to the level of use of the sett. Entrance holes can be classified as follows:

Well used: These holes are in regular use and therefore free of debris. They may have been recently excavated.

Partially used: Debris, including leaves, twigs and other vegetation clutter the entrance to these holes, indicating they are not in regular use. The holes can be used after a minimum of clearance.

Disused: A considerable amount of clearance is needed before these holes can be used. The holes may become so blocked that only a depression in the ground is visible where the hole used to be.

Habitat description

8. The Site is occupied principally by open grassland and is partially surrounded by hedgerows. Survey of the pasture was unrestricted, while a good view of all hedge bottoms was also afforded.
9. For the most part, ground flora within the adjacent woodland is sparse. Occasional areas of dense bramble scrub are present though these are limited in scale thus allowing thorough survey. In some areas, the steep topography of the woodland prevented direct survey, though sufficient observations could be made of from other parts of the Site.



Figure 2a

Showing open nature of the Site



Figure 2b

Characteristic view of woodland

Survey Results

10. No recent or historic evidence of badger activity was found anywhere on-Site, or within the adjacent woodland habitat.
11. Occasional mammal tracks were noted in the woodland, but no supporting evidence (setts, footprints, hairs, latrines) could be found to suggest these were created by badger.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. Survey has been able to demonstrate the current likely absence of badgers from Site, and the risk of development impacting upon setts or contravening the legislation which protects badgers, is considered to be very low.
13. However, as setts are known to be present in the wider area, standard precautions are recommended during construction. To prevent badgers becoming trapped on Site, any excavations left open overnight should either be covered at the end of the day, or else fitted with a ramp or board - so as to provide a means of escape.

References

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