

Badger Monitoring Report



Amethyst Lane, Reading, Berkshire

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Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

This work has been undertaken in accordance with the quality management system of RSK ADAS Ltd.

Revision History

ADAS Ref (Revision number)	Date	Amendment
1051939 -(1)	12/05/2023	INITIAL REPORT

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Summary

ADAS was commissioned by Gleeds Cost Management Ltd, on behalf of the client, Reading Borough Council to undertake monitoring of two Badger setts located on site located at Amethyst Lane, Reading, Berkshire (OS Grid Ref. SU 69488 72676). The setts were first identified during a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) of the site and possible signs of active use by Badgers were discovered during a pre-works check in January 2023.

Further monitoring was carried out between 23 March 2023 and 24 April 2023 using two camera traps. Over the course of the survey, no Badgers were seen entering or exiting either of the setts, although Badgers were confirmed to be active on site. As such it was determined the setts were not in active use by Badgers, but due to the risk of them being reoccupied, an additional pre-works check should be undertaken. If the setts show signs of active use, then no works using heavy machinery or that have a risk of disturbing or damaging the setts can take place within 20 m unless a license from Natural England is granted.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Survey Objectives

ADAS was commissioned by Gleeds Cost Management Ltd, on behalf of the client, Reading Borough Council to undertake monitoring of Badger (*Meles meles*) setts located on site located at Amethyst Lane, Reading, Berkshire (OS Grid Ref. SU 69488 72676).

A preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) survey carried out on 08 October 2022 (ADAS, 2022) identified a two entrance Badger sett located in the northeast corner of the site. At the time of the survey no evidence of current use was found, and it was recommended that a pre-works check take place to ensure no new activity had occurred in the intervening period between survey and commencement of works. This check was carried out on 29 January 2023, which found new signs of activity, including a new sett entrance approximately 8 m of the original sett, with Badger hairs noted around all entrances. Newly used mammal runs were also noted running from the entrances (ADAS, 2023).

As such, further monitoring of the setts was recommended using camera traps to record activity to determine how often the setts are used and how many Badgers use them.

1.2 Site Description

The site is located within West Reading, Berkshire and was approximately 0.48 ha. The site consisted of one red brick, two-storey building in poor condition (Building 1) and two larger brick and mortar, one-storey buildings in good condition (Buildings 2 and 3) with accompanying car parking. Around the borders of the site were areas of amenity grassland and scrub. The wider landscape consisted of a residential area on all sides and a large area of parkland to the west.



Figure 1. Site location and wider landscape (site indicated by red line boundary)

Imagery taken from ADAS Mapping Tool. October 2022.

1.3 Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development includes the construction of 2-3 bed homes to the north of the site with the southern part of the site being a respite centre (adult care) with associated garden, amenity space, visitor access and parking.

The current plans will involve the demolition of all existing buildings on site and will require clearance of the overgrown vegetation on site. The current works are anticipated to begin in August 2023.

2 Legislation

The Protection of Badgers Act (1992) (as amended) affords protection to Badgers and their setts. This legislation, as well as outlawing the persecution of Badgers, also makes it an offence, amongst others, to disturb Badgers whilst they are using a sett or to damage or block a sett.

3 Methodology

Two camera traps (referred to as Camera A and Camera B) were deployed on site to have a clear view of the sett entrances and mammal runs. These cameras detected any movement in front of the cameras which triggered them to take photos and videos. The camera traps were set up on 23 March 2023 and removed 24 April 2023. The camera traps were checked every week, which allowed their batteries to be changed and to ensure they had not been disturbed. The position of the cameras and setts can be seen in Appendix 1.

3.1 Constraints

During the duration of the survey, an error with Camera A meant it was only able to record photos and not video clips. Although this limited the information gathered, it is still considered suitable for determining the use of setts and mammal paths. Between 19 April and 24 April, Camera A had another error which meant it recorded no data over this period. Due to the lack of other fresh field signs noted by the surveyors during this period, and lack of activity noted with this camera over the rest of the survey, it is considered that the results of the survey are still valid.

4 Results and Discussion

Over the course of the survey, no Badgers were noted entering the setts on site, as such it is considered that they still show no signs of active use. However, Badgers were seen commuting through the area on Camera B, showing they are still active within the area, and therefore could reoccupy the setts at any given time. No fresh evidence of Badgers (hairs, footprints, fresh spoil or latrines) were noted by surveyors when checking the cameras. Other mammal species such as Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Muntjac Deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*) and Domestic Cat (*Felis catus*) were also noted around the sett entrances. Select images from the camera traps can be noted in Appendix 2.

As such it is recommended that the setts are checked immediately prior to the works to ensure that they still show no signs of active use before the works can go forwards. If the setts do show signs of activity, then a Natural England licence will be required for any works that could potentially damage the setts (such as heavy machinery) to proceed.

5 Conclusion

The survey found that the setts on site showed no signs of active current use by Badgers, although there was still Badger activity within the site. As such, the setts are not currently a constraint to the planned works. Immediately prior to the works the setts should be checked for signs of activity to ensure they are still not in use. If signs of activity are found, then certain works that could disturb the setts should not take place within 20 m of the setts and a licence may be required.

6 References

ADAS, (2022). *Amethyst Lane: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*

ADAS, (2023). *Amethyst Lane: Pre-works Badger Check*

Appendix 1: Camera and Sett Locations



Appendix 2: Camera Trap Photographs



Photograph 1: Image of Badger captured by Camera B.



Photograph 2: Domestic Cat captured by Camera B.



Photograph 3: Red Fox captured by Camera B.



Photograph 4: Muntjac captured by Camera B.