

Discharge of Ecology Condition 37 Henley Road, Caversham



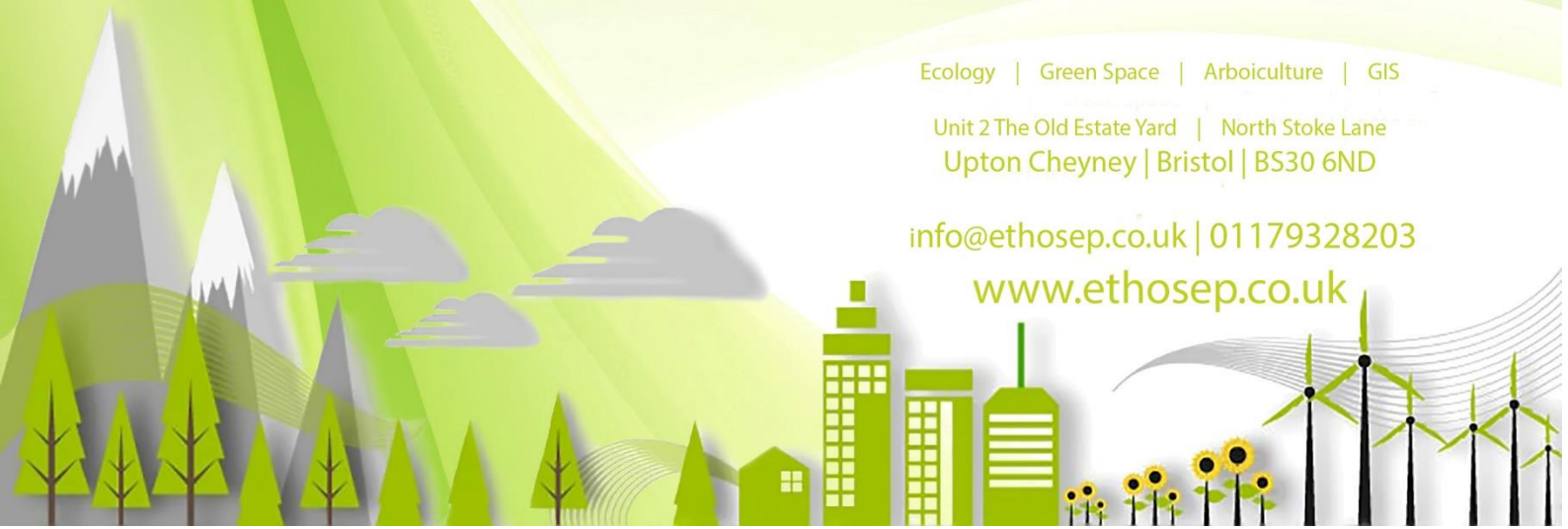
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Ecology | Green Space | Arboiculture | GIS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This discharge of conditions report has been prepared by Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos) in relation to a proposed development site at land rear of 199 – 203 Henley Road and land to the rear of 205 – 207 Henley Road, Caversham, RG4 6LJ, (central grid reference: SU 73014 75214) hereafter referred to as the 'Site' -Figure 1.

This report relates to the discharging of condition 37 regarding the Reading Borough Council granted outline planning for the scheme 190835, see below:

Condition 37: *No development hereby permitted, including any vegetation clearance, shall commence until a badger sett survey of the development site and immediately adjacent areas has been undertaken (survey to be undertaken within a 28 day period prior to the start of works on site) and a report detailing the results of the surveys has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If surveys show that a licence to disturb a badger sett is required a copy of a valid licence is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any licensable works.*

1.1 Background

The findings relating to badgers from the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA, 2019) and Ecological Assessment (EA, 2019) by Ethos Environmental Planning are displayed in figure 1 and described below.

1.1.1 Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Two mammal holes were recorded within the entire of the site at location 1. Camera trap monitoring was recommended to assess the status of the sett.

1.1.2 Ecological Assessment

Camera trap surveys in 2019 identified that the holes at location 1 were inactive with no badgers recorded during camera trapping.

An updated badger survey during the EA identified a fresh hole located along the southern site boundary at location 2. The hole was first observed to be active with signs of fresh digging on 4th September 2019. Camera trap surveys revealed that the sett was occasionally used with a maximum of one badger was recorded at any one time.

2.0 UPDATED BADGER SURVEY

An updated badger sett survey was undertaken by Kane Burchill (Ecologist) and Rachel Fayers (Principal Ecologist) on the 10th December 2019. This involved a search for evidence such as existing and new setts, foraging, mammal trails, latrines and smeuses.

The same three mammal holes were recorded during the survey, the two adjacent holes in the centre of the site (location 1) and one single hole at the southern boundary (location 2). No new mammal holes were found in any new locations at the site. The mammal holes did not show signs of recent use, however, there was fresh digging at the base of a rotten tree stump (Photo 3) adjacent to the holes at location 1. Therefore, updated monitoring was recommended to assess the use of the site y badgers; detailed within the following section.

Figure 1: Mammal Hole Map



2.1 Monitoring

The holes onsite were soft blocked and were subject to camera trap monitoring over a four-week period. The site was also visited 5th, 10th, 11th, 17th December 2019, and the 6th January 2020. Throughout the duration of the survey period no badgers were recorded on site and the mammal holes remained blocked. The monitoring concluded that the holes were not in current use by badgers.

2.2 Pre-works check

Vegetation clearance is due to start in mid-February (before the bird nesting season) and so Ethos were contracted to carry out the pre-works check required to discharge condition 37.

The pre-works check was undertaken on the 3rd February 2020 by Martin Smith (Ecologist) and included checking the status of the holes and pre-works check of the entire site for any fresh evidence of setts, foraging, mammal trails, latrines and smeuses. This check confirmed that the holes were still soft blocked, and no additional evidence of badgers was recorded during the site visit.

Photo 1 shows one of the inactive mammal holes at location 1 which were still soft blocked with no fresh evidence of badger around or adjacent to the hole. Photo 2 shows the hole at location 2 which had started to grow over with fresh vegetation and was still soft blocked. There was no fresh evidence of badgers around or adjacent to the hole such as paw prints or hair.

No further evidence was found during the search of the entire site for evidence of badgers.



Photo 1: Soft-blocked Mammal Hole, location 2



Photo 2: Inactive outlier, location 2



Photo 3: Digging in stump, unchanged since December 2019



Photo 4: Mammal Hole, location 1

3.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was concluded that the monitoring of the holes in December 2019 and January 2020 has confirmed that the holes within the centre of the site (location 1) are not used by badgers. The monitoring of the hole at location 2 also confirmed that badgers were not currently using the sett recorded as an outlier within the Ecological Assessment 2019. Therefore, it was assessed that there are no active badger setts located on site.

The pre-works check also confirmed that the holes were not in use and there was no fresh evidence of badgers onsite. It was assessed that a licence will not be required to close any badger setts and that works can begin on site within 28 days of this survey, dated 3rd February 2020.

If ground works have not begun on site by 2nd March 2020 another pre-works check will be required as stated in Condition 37.

It is concluded that this report discharges the condition 37 for the Reading Borough Council granted outline planning for the scheme application no. 190835.