

Site:	Caversham, Reading
Client:	Planning Issues Ltd
Job Number:	784-B073665
Survey Type:	Badger Survey Report
Date of Survey:	10.12.2025
File Location:	Z:\Projects\784-B073665_Caversham__Reading\60_Output\63_Published

1.0 INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Tetra Tech was commissioned by Planning Issues Ltd in June 2025 to undertake a badger survey of the site known as Caversham, Reading (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). This survey is required to inform a planning application to redevelop the site for residential housing.

This report has been prepared by Consultant Ecologist Georgie Atkinson BSc (Hons) and the conditions pertinent to it are provided in Appendix A.

SITE LOCATION

The site is located south and west of Knighton Close, Reading, RG4 7SZ (Figure 1) and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 71240 75205. The site lies in Caversham, near the centre of the city of Reading. The site consists of a primary school and nursery and includes grassland, buildings, hardstanding, ornamental planting and woodland. The site lies within an urban location, bounded by existing residential development in all directions. The nearest green spaces are Balmore Walk located approximately 75m to the east and Caversham Cemetery (Victoria Road), a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), approximately 200m to the north. The site also lies approximately 600m to the north of the River Thames.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The proposal comprises the redevelopment of the site for retirement apartments with associated infrastructure, parking and open space. The proposed site plan (10137CS PA00) illustrates the redline boundary used to inform this assessment. Please refer to Appendix B.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- Seek to determine the presence or likely absence of badgers within the site and 50m from the site red line boundary;
- Identify if any additional surveys are required to inform this assessment;

- Determine if there is any additional evidence to what has already been recorded on site; and
- Outline the relevant legislative protections afforded to badgers and review the potential effects of the works on badgers within and immediately adjacent to the site.

The details of this report will remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the survey (CIEEM, 2019)¹ (until 10th December 2026). However, badgers are highly mobile and as such, it is recommended that the survey is updated three months prior to any works, to confirm the continued absence of badger, this is in accordance with best practice guidance from the Badger Trust². The recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the red line boundary or development proposals which this report was based.

¹ CIEEM, (2019), Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys, [online] Available at: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf.net>), Accessed March 2025

² Badger Trust, 2023. Badger Protection: Best Practice Guidance for Developers, Ecologists and Planners (England).

2.0 PREVIOUS REPORTS

At the time of writing this report, Tetra Tech was aware of the following previous survey work:

- Caversham, Reading. Due Diligence Report (Tetra Tech, 2025)
- Caversham, Reading. Preliminary Appraisal Report (Tetra Tech, 2026a)
- Caversham, Reading. Bat Report (Tetra Tech, 2026b)
- Caversham, Reading. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Tetra Tech 2026c)

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3.0 METHODOLOGY

A badger walkover of the site was completed by Principal Ecologist Alex Coggins BSc (Hons) on the 10th December 2025 to look for evidence of badger setts or other badger activity such as mammal paths, latrines or signs of foraging within the site. The survey was undertaken in 20% cloud cover, light breeze, with no precipitation in 12 degrees. The following signs of badgers were searched for:

- Dung pits and latrines
- Paths
- Footprints; and
- Setts.

Dung Pits and Latrines

Badgers generally defecate into a shallow ‘scrape’ in the soil called a dung pit. These may be solitary or grouped together in one area (usually between 5 and 10 dung pits), in which case they are termed a latrine. Latrines are often situated in the far corner of a clan territory or on the border with another clan’s territory. Solitary dung pits may also be located on clan boundary lines, or closer to the sett.

Paths and hairs

Badger hair (from the back of the animal) is much coarser than rabbit hair and generally much darker in colour. During the site survey where potential badger pathways were noted, low hanging branches and fences were searched for signs of badger hair. The presence of badger hair can be used to confirm use of a particular path by badgers.

Footprints

During the site survey all muddy and silty areas were checked for signs of badger footprints. Where these were found, the number and relative size of the prints was noted.

Setts

The classification of holes as active, partially used, or disused, follows Harris, Cresswell & Jefferies (1989)³. Active setts are clear of any debris or vegetation, and will have some of the following features: well-worn paths, spoil mounds, footprints, fresh bedding outside the entrance and / or footprints leading in. Partially used holes are considered to not show signs of current use (e.g., have vegetation growing across the entrance), but could easily be reused if required. Disused setts are partially or completely blocked, with substantial excavation required to allow reoccupation.

³ Harris, Cresswell & Jefferies (1989). The badger (*Meles meles*) in Britain: present status and future population changes

Any setts identified during a survey, regardless of current condition are recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) to accurately pinpoint their location.

- **Main setts** are considered to be the most important sett within the territory of a badger group, where breeding takes place. They tend to be large, with five or more entrances and large spoil heaps and to be used throughout the year.
- **Annexe setts** also have many well used entrances and tend to be 50-150m from the main sett, connected by well-worn paths, but may not be used all year round.
- **Subsidiary setts** are not usually connected the main sett by obvious paths and may have any number of entrances.
- **Outlier setts** tend to have only one or two holes and are used occasionally. There may be no obvious path to the main sett.

3.1 HABITAT BASED ASSESSMENT

A habitat-based assessment (HBA) was carried out, comprising a walkover of the survey area (as shown on Figure 1) and the use of aerial imagery to determine whether badger habitat preferences were supported. This included an assessment of habitats onsite and connecting habitats within the wider landscape. These were given a suitability of negligible-high to support foraging badger and setts. Badgers are omnivorous, feeding on a wide variety of food from invertebrates, small mammals and birds to plant foods such as fruit, nuts and crops. The density of these key food resources within the territory determines the number of animals within each social group (Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH, now NatureScot), 2009)⁴. Within many habitats within the UK, earthworms are likely to feature predominantly within badger diet; however, this may differ according to geographic location, territory size and food availability. The below information (SNH 2009) should therefore be used in this context and may change according to local conditions.

Foraging habitat of primary importance may include:

- Field margins;
- Gardens or allotments;
- Arable fields;
- Short grazed or mown grassland i.e. improved grassland;
- Amenity grassland/golf courses;

⁴ Rainey, E., Butler, A., Bierman, S. and Roberts, A.M.I. (2009) Scottish Badger Distribution Survey 2006 – 2009: estimating the distribution and density of badger main setts in Scotland. Report prepared by Scottish Badgers and Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland.

- Broadleaved woodland; and
- Other habitat of local importance e.g. orchards.

Foraging habitat of secondary importance may include:

- Mixed/coniferous woodland;
- Set aside or rough grassland (not frequently grazed by livestock);
- Scrub;
- Wet woodland;
- Riparian habitats;
- Heathland; and
- Mire.

3.2 DETERMINING TERRITORIES

The location of setts and latrines are used to identify the boundaries of the territory and the badgers' foraging areas. The extent of the territory depends on the value of the foraging ground for example: a badger group in a poor-quality ground may occupy up to 183ha, and one in good foraging as little as 15ha (information sourced from www.badgers.org.uk).

Territories which are in current use tend to have tracks running around the boundaries. The location of such features along with all the other collected information was used to help determine the extent of badger clan boundaries within the site.

All sett entrances and associated signs of badger activity (e.g., footprints, latrines and snuffle holes) identified during the survey are recorded using geographic mapping software, Survey123™.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

Access was possible to all areas of the site. It was not possible to extend the survey area to 50m outside of the red line boundary to search for signs of badgers and their setts due to the site's proximity to busy roads and residential areas to the north, south and west, therefore a precautionary approach for assessing the sites suitability for badger was taken. It is noted that there is a possibility that badger setts may be present within these un-surveyed areas, however, the lack of general evidence of badgers including signs up to the boundaries suggests they are not prominent.

The survey area was mapped along with the location and quantity of the above field signs. Note: the absence of signs does not necessarily preclude badger from the area. All field signs were mapped using ArcGIS Survey 123 mobile phone software with built in handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) location technology (accurate to 3-7m). GPS accuracy experienced during the survey

varied depending on the density of vegetation, i.e. dense vegetation reduced the signal from satellites and the accuracy of the grid reference readings. Therefore, grid references provided should only be used as a guideline rather than as an absolute position.

Given the above, the lack of access is not considered to represent a significant limitation.

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4.0 RESULTS

4.1 PREVIOUS SURVEY RESULTS

The due diligence report by Tetra Tech including walkover survey recorded several mammal burrows/holes and foxes were recorded on site. At the time of the survey a thorough walkover could not be conducted due to the dense seasonal vegetation in May. It was therefore recommended a badger survey was to be undertaken within autumn / winter months.

During other PEA and bat surveys conducted by Tetra Tech (Tetra Tech, 2026a, Tetra Tech 2026b) there has been evidence of foxes. Surveyors noted a dead fox on site near a mammal hole, sightings of individual foxes within the woodland and former tennis court, and signs of foraging by foxes. In addition, individual foxes were observed entering the woodland mammal hole. The smell of foxes was present throughout the woodland area near the mammal holes.

4.2 SURVEY RESULTS

4.2.1 Habitat Assessment

The site hosts short grassland and broadleaved woodland which are both noted as foraging habitat of primary importance for badgers. The woodland on site and directly adjacent to the site offers good potential for the creation of setts. In addition, the woodland both on site and directly adjacent provides connectivity for badgers.

The nearest waterbody is approximately 0.5km away with a low flood risk so any sett chambers are unlikely to experience flooding. The nearest evidence of badgers was an outlier sett located approximately 0.28km southwest of the site found in 2024. Taking this into consideration the site was also assessed as optimal for sett building.

4.2.2 Badger Evidence

Multiple disused badger setts were recorded during the survey within the survey area (Please refer to Table 1) The size and shape of the mammal holes were consistent with badger, except for Target note 1 and 6. Tetra Tech have been informed by the groundsman (personal communication, 2025) that badgers used the site historically and there was an active sett in the woodland approximately a decade ago. Badgers ceased using the site and foxes have since stated using the disused sett. This is consistent with the field survey as all of the mammal holes recorded on site had a strong smell of fox and the presence of fox droppings in close proximity.

No other evidence other of badgers, including footprints, paths or latrines, were found within the survey area.

The survey concluded the mammal holes (Target note 2, 4, 5 and 7) that had characteristics of badger, were historic, disused and now occupied by foxes.

Each mammal sign is detailed in Table 1 below and evidenced in Figure 2 with associated target notes.

Table 1. Descriptions of all large mammal signs found on site.

Target note	Description and photograph	Photograph
1	Fox - Mammal hole British National Grid (m): 471186E, 175248N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.4717°N, -0.9765°E	
2	Fox - Mammal hole, presumably formerly badger now likely used by foxes. Smell of fox in area. No evidence of badger digging. British National Grid (m): 471172E, 175261N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.4718°N, -0.9767°E	
3	Fox - Very strong smell of foxes in northern extent of woodland. British National Grid (m): 471170E, 175274N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.472°N, -0.9767°E	
4	Unknown - Mammal hole. Disused but strong smell of foxes in vicinity. British National Grid (m): 471192E, 175267N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.4719°N, -0.9764°E	
5	Unknown - Mammal holes under building. Disused. Possibly used by foxes now as strong smell in area but appears disused. British National Grid (m): 471199E, 175246N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.4717°N, -0.9763°E	
6	Fox - Mammal holes. Active hole as it is not covered in leaf litter or any obstructions. The overall shape is not characteristic of the shape of badger setts. There is a strong smell of foxes. No fresh digging associated with badger behaviour.	

	British National Grid (m): 471186E, 175240N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.4717°N, -0.9765°E	
7	Unknown - Mammal hole. Disused as covered in ivy and leaf litter. Still strong smell of foxes in vicinity. British National Grid (m): 471203E, 175216N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.4714°N, -0.9762°E	
8	Fox – Droppings British National Grid (m): 471214E, 175198N WGS84 (Lat/Long): 51.4713°N, -0.9761°E	

4.2.3 Anecdotal Evidence

Upon conducting the badger survey, the ecologist was informed by the groundsman (personal communication, 2025) that badgers excavated holes under the building (see Target Note 5 in Table 1) a decade ago. The groundsmen also stated and that badgers are no longer present on site and are foxes now using these disused setts.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY & LEGISLATION

5.1 PROTECTION OF BADGERS ACT 1992

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992⁵, which makes it illegal for any person to kill, injure or take a badger. It is also an offence to destroy, damage or obstruct an entrance to a badger's sett, or to disturb animals whilst within a sett.

A person is guilty of an offence if, except as permitted by or under this Act, they interfere with a badger sett by doing any of the following things:

- (a)damaging a badger sett or any part of it;
- (b)destroying a badger sett;
- (c)obstructing access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett;
- (d)causing a dog to enter a badger sett; or
- (e)disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett, intending to do any of those things or being reckless as to whether his actions would have any of those consequences.

5.2 WILD MAMMALS PROTECTION ACT (1996)

Foxes are protected from acts such as crushing and asphyxiation under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996).

5.3 ODPM CIRCULAR 06/2005

The likelihood of disturbing a badger sett, or adversely affecting badgers' foraging territory, or links between them, or significantly increasing the likelihood of road or rail casualties amongst badger populations, are capable of being material considerations in planning decisions.

5.4 NATURAL ENGLAND

Works in close proximity to a sett entrance have the potential to affect a sett^{6,7}. Works which would otherwise cause an offence under current legislation may in some cases be permitted under licence from the relevant statutory authority, which in this case is Natural England (NE).

⁵ HMSO (1992) Protection of Badger Act available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents>

⁷ Natural England (2007). Badgers & Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing. Natural England, York, UK.

⁸ Natural England (2009). Interpretation of 'Disturbance' in relation to badgers occupying a sett. Natural England, York, UK.

Development activities within 30m (and for some activities such as piling up to 100m)⁸ of a known badger sett are considered likely to cause potential damage to the sett or disturbance to the badgers if occupying the sett. It is recommended that every effort is made to reduce the likelihood of damaging a badger sett, for example by using fencing to demarcate a protection zone around the sett. If a suitable protection zone cannot be established to protect the sett during construction it may be necessary to close the sett.

The development manager / contractor will be responsible for ensuring good working practices are implemented during the construction stage. Site contractors are to be made aware during site inductions of the possible presence of badgers onsite, including what restrictions there are when working near known badger setts and what action is to be taken if a badger or a new badger sett is found during construction works

Licences are usually only valid between July and November of any year inclusive, and full planning permission will be required if a badger sett is to be closed. Natural England requires 30 working days to process a licence application (if required) and sett exclusion will take a minimum of three weeks, from gate installation. Daily 21 day monitoring of the sett being closed is recommended to ensure that no badgers are left trapped within the sett, that the gates remain free-swinging, and to ensure that badgers are not digging back in around the sett.

⁸ There is no formal guidance in relation to potential damage and / or disturbance to badgers or badger setts resulting from development activities. The precedent for the buffer zones stated are based on those issued by Natural England under licence.

6.0 DISCUSSION

Following the badger walkover survey of the site, the only evidence of badgers were a disused sett within the survey area which are now likely used by foxes. The survey also noted additional fox earths created around the site. No direct evidence of badgers including paths, latrines, hairs or snuffle holes were found within the site or within all accessible areas within 50m of the site. As such, badgers are considered likely to be absent from the site at the time of the survey.

The proposals comprise of the redevelopment of the site for retirement apartments with associated infrastructure, parking and open space. As no evidence of badger was recorded during the survey, no impacts on badgers are anticipated as a result of the proposals. However, given the known historic presence of badgers on site, along with known records in close proximity, a precautionary approach must be in place to ensure no badgers are impacted by the development.

6.1 RECOMENDATIONS

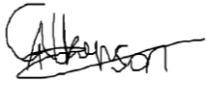
Recommendations for the site include:

- As badgers are a highly mobile and can excavate new setts in a short period of time, an update survey for badgers is recommended to take place no more than three months prior to works commencing, to confirm their likely continued absence.
- A pre-works check must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist within 48 hours prior to works commencing as badgers are mobile animal and always expanding territories. This will also check for any active or new fox earth within the works area to prevent an offence under the Mammal Act; and
- All trenches and holes dug on site must either be covered, or a suitable ramp be provided within them for any stretch of time workers are not on site. This will allow any mammals which happen to fall in to escape.

7.0 CONCLUSION

In line with the results of this survey where badgers have been confirmed as likely absent and following recommendations outlined within this report, the works on site can be carried out, following an all-clear update survey and pre-works check, in line with best practice guidelines.

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Document Control			
Revision:	V1	Status:	Final
Date:	29/01/2026		
Prepared by: Georgie Atkinson BSc (Hons) Consultant Ecologist 		Checked By: Ben Cooke BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM Senior Ecologist 	Approved By: John Simper BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM Principal Ecologist 

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Badger Survey Results



Site Location Plan

Caversham, Reading



Planning Issues Ltd

Legend

- Red line boundary
- Ownership boundary

Notes:

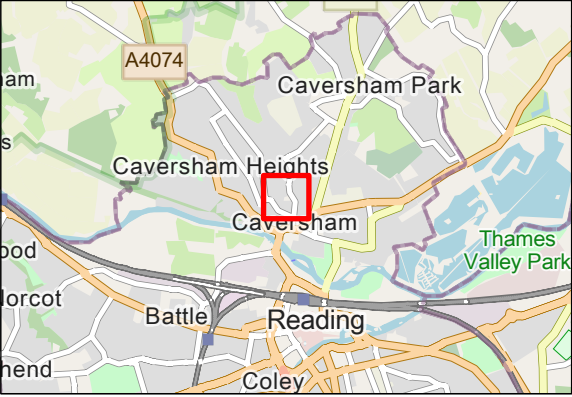
Drawn by: CHRIS.DAWE
Checked by: Alex Coggins

Figure No. 1
Revision No. B
29 January 2026

0 20 40 60 80 Meters
Scale 1:2,000 @A3

British National Grid
NGR: 471262E 175218N

Microsoft, Vantor, Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Google, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri




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Badger Survey Results Activity Evidence

Caversham, Reading

Planning Issues Ltd

Legend

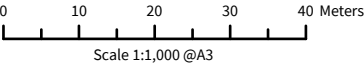
- Site boundary
- Ownership boundary
- Other species - Droppings
- Other species - Other



Notes:

Drawn by: CHRIS.DAWE
Checked by: Alex Coggins

Figure No. 2
Revision No. B
29 January 2026



British National Grid
NGR: 471262E 175218N

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APPENDIX A: REPORT CONDITIONS

This Report has been prepared using reasonable skill and care for the sole benefit of Planning Issues Ltd (“the Client”) for the proposed uses stated in the report by Tetra Tech Limited (“Tetra Tech”). Tetra Tech exclude all liability for any other uses and to any other party. The report must not be relied on or reproduced in whole or in part by any other party without the copyright holder’s permission.

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The report refers, within the limitations stated, to the environment of the site in the context of the surrounding area at the time of the inspections. Environmental conditions can vary and no warranty is given as to the possibility of changes in the environment of the site and surrounding area at differing times. No investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or not fully representative information. Any monitoring or survey work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations, including for example timescale, seasonal and weather-related conditions. Actual environmental conditions are typically more complex and variable than the investigative, predictive and modelling approaches indicate in practice, and the output of such approaches cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive or accurate indicator of future conditions. The “shelf life” of the Report will be determined by a number of factors including; its original purpose, the Client’s instructions, passage of time, advances in technology and techniques, changes in legislation etc. and therefore may require future re-assessment.

The whole of the report must be read as other sections of the report may contain information which puts into context the findings in any executive summary.

The performance of environmental protection measures and of buildings and other structures in relation to acoustics, vibration, noise mitigation and other environmental issues is influenced to a large extent by the degree to which the relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the final design and specifications and the quality of workmanship and compliance with the specifications on site during construction. Tetra Tech accept no liability for issues with performance arising from such factors.

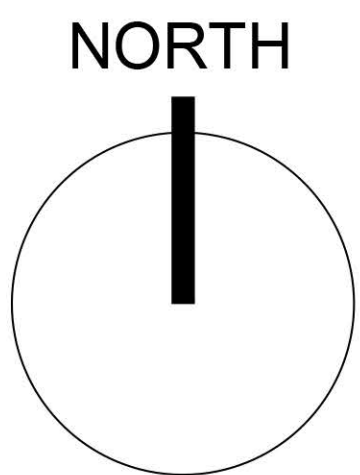
APPENDIX B: PROPOSED SITE PLAN (10137CS PA00)

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REVISIONS		
Rev.	Date	By



- * Proposed Lodge conversion to 1no. cottage
 - ** Proposed School House conversion to 10no. open market flats
 - *** Existing Music building to be retained
 - Existing mature trees, some indicated with TPOs
 - Mature trees to be removed
 - Proposed retaining wall with banking
 - +40.5m Assumed site level
- Existing & proposed levels based on Topographical Survey by cube surveys

Client


Churchill Living
Your lifestyle • Your choice

PROPOSED RETIREMENT APARTMENTS
FORMER HEMDEAN HOUSE SCHOOL
HEMDEAN ROAD, CAVERSHAM
RG4 7SD

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

PLANNING APPLICATION

Scale	1:400 @ A1	Date	JAN. 2026
Drawn	KLS	Checked	RJ
Drawing No.	10137CS PA00	Rev.	


TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

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Former Hemdean House School, Hemdean Road - Proposed Retirement Housing - Proposed Site Plan (with Retirement Ground Floor Plan)

Scale 1:400