

Ref: A080628

Date: 27 May 2014

By email only to: mark.carrington@lindenhomes.co.uk

Dear Mark,



Havant Retail Park: Pre-Commencement Badger Survey

1.0 Site location and description

Havant Retail Park is located near Bedhampton in Hampshire, centred about Ordnance Survey grid reference SU696 064. The site is approximately 2 hectares and currently comprises two large single storey commercial units with large areas of hardstanding. The boundary of the site is dominated by high chalk cliffs. The site is situated within an urban residential setting, bounded to the north by Portsdown Hill Road and the west by the A3(M).

2.0 Background

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was completed by WYG in March 2013. This highlighted the potential for badgers (*Meles meles*) to be using the site. A badger survey was conducted at the proposed development site on 31st May 2013 and again on the 5th June 2013 and 9th July 2013 by WYG Ecologist Isla Hoffmann. Two excavations were identified on site that had potential to be badger setts. One was located on the south eastern extent of the site (TN1) and another along the southern boundary of the site (TN2). See Figure 1 for TN1 & TN2 location.

Subsequent badger surveys were completed during May, June and July 2013. Twigs were placed over the sett entrance to monitor if they were in use. On returning to the sett on 5th June and 9th July 2013, none of the twigs had moved and cobwebs remained present at the sett entrance and as such it was not considered to be used by badgers and if it had previously been in the past, the sett was considered to be disused. No mammal paths or footprints were identified in this area. Small diggings were noted but these were considered to be from rabbit or squirrel.

As such, a pre-commencement badger survey was required as per condition 19 of the planning permission:

Immediately prior to the commencement of site clearance works, an updating Badger survey shall be undertaken and the results submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority. The applicant will undertake any necessary mitigation, compensation or enhancement measures resulting from the updating survey in accordance with an agreed timescale.

WYG Environment was commissioned by Linden Ltd. t/a Linden Homes Southern and Ankers and Rawlings Developments to complete a badger survey at the Havant Retail Park site on 22nd May 2013.

The scope of work comprised:

- Identification of any badger setts on or adjacent to the site and to determine the status of the two potential setts recorded during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey;
- Identification of any signs consistent with badger activity on the site;

The information contained within this report aims to:

- Assist the client to operate within the law;
- Ensure that the required level of survey work is conducted to apply for a licence, should one be necessary; and
- Provide preliminary advice on mitigation strategies against any adverse effects on the local badger population which may arise as a result of the proposed development.
- Discharge condition 19 subject to agreement by the Local Planning Authority.

3.0 Survey Methodology

An pre-commencement badger survey was completed by WYG ecologist Emily Hare on Tuesday 29th April 2014.

All areas of the site were investigated, including those parts that are not expected to be affected directly by the works but may be indirectly impacted upon. The site was surveyed for evidence of badger setts or other badger activity such as paths, latrines, footprints or signs of foraging. Methodologies used and any setts recorded were classified according to the published criteria (Harris *et al.*, 1989).

The following signs of badgers were searched for:

- Setts
- Footprints
- Paths and hairs
- Dung pits and Latrines

4.0 Results

During the update survey completed in April 2014 no additional badger activity was noted at the site. The excavation along the eastern extent of the southern boundary (TN2) appeared to be disused, as cobwebs and leaf litter were still present and branches were partially obscuring the entrance. The sett on the southern boundary of the site (TN1) within the cliff face was still obscured by low growing ivy and no mammal paths or other badger signs were noted on the site.

5.0 Limitations

Whilst every effort was made to fully inspect all areas of the site including a 30m buffer, the land surrounding the site of the proposed development is residential dwellings, the A3(M) corridor and Portsdown Hill Road. As a result the area surveyed did not include a buffer around the application boundary of 30m as outlined in the guidance from Natural England (2009a & b) and legal requirements under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

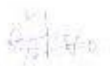
This is not considered to be a limitation as the surrounding land consists of small residential gardens. In this instance evidence of badger paths and footprints entering these areas, the A3(M) corridor area and Portsdown Hill Road were searched.

Badger activity at any given sett shows seasonal patterns over the course of a year. As a consequence, the evidence of activity recorded during this survey should be interpreted as a snapshot of activity at the time when the survey was conducted. Badgers are highly mobile creatures and can easily establish new setts over a short period of time or begin reusing setts previously considered to be abandoned.

6.0 Summary

The two disused sett entrances previously identified on site in 2013 were confirmed to still be disused on 29th April 2014. No mammal tracks were identified within the proposed development site during the 2014 update badger survey and it is considered unlikely that badgers are using the site. It is understood that construction is due to commence in July and given that no active signs of badgers have been confirmed on site from 2013 to present, no further works or mitigation are recommended in relation to badgers. If for any reason, works have not commenced within 3 months (by 29th July 2014), it is recommended that an update badger survey should be completed. In the event that any large holes are discovered during site clearance, works should cease while an ecologist is contacted for advice.

Yours sincerely,



Emily Hare
Assistant Ecologist

References

English Nature (2002). Badgers and Development, Peterborough

Harris, S., Creswell, P. & Jefferies, D. (1989). Surveying Badgers. The Mammal Society, London.

Natural England (2009a). Guidance on 'Current Use' in the definition of a Badger Set.

Natural England (2009b). Interpretation of 'Disturbance' in relation to badgers occupying a sett.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005). Planning Policy 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

WYG (2013) Havant Retail Park: Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

WYG (2013) Havant Retail Park: Badger Survey letter report