

## STONEY WOOD QUARTER

# Ecology

---

---

|                    |                                                                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project</b>     | Stoney Wood Quarter                                                                   |
| <b>Site</b>        | Land at Stoney Wood Quarter, The Fairway, London NW7 3HJ                              |
| <b>Purpose</b>     | Note responding to ecology and protected species matters (bats, badgers and reptiles) |
| <b>Prepared by</b> | London Placemaking in consultation with Phlorum                                       |
| <b>Date</b>        | July 2026                                                                             |

## **1. Introduction**

This note has been prepared in response to the ecology and arboriculture feedback from the GLA on the Stoney Wood Quarter proposals (Ref. 25/2743/FUL). It sets out the ecological technical work and mitigation measures that are ongoing and proposed in respect of protected species, in particular bats, badgers and reptiles, together with the assessment of trees for potential bat roost features. Green infrastructure, BNG, UGF, arboricultural and CAVAT matters are addressed in the separate Green Infrastructure Note, to which this note should be read alongside.

## 2. Bat Roost Potential in Trees

Further assessment has been commissioned through Phlorum to examine trees T1 and T2, together with all other trees identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) within the small wooded area as having potential to support roosting bats. This has included the ivy-clad trees in the western woodland, where dense ivy can conceal cracks, cavities and splits that may constitute potential roost features. The ecologist has confirmed that all of the trees flagged in the PEA within the small wooded area, including trees T1 and T2, have been assessed.

The assessment has found no active bat roosts. Of the six Potential Roost Features (PRFs) recorded on the tree previously categorised as moderate (PRF-M), four have been downgraded to low (PRF-L) following inspection. An enquiry has been raised with the ecologist as to whether any further investigation of the remaining features is required. It is anticipated that planning conditions securing a dark corridor and sensitive working practices will mitigate any residual risk associated with the remaining PRF-M features.

The survey work is currently being concluded and Phlorum will provide a full report on completion. Should any feature be reassessed as having increased roost potential, or a roost be confirmed, further survey — aerial climbing inspection and/or dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys in the appropriate season — and, if necessary, a licence would be secured before any works affecting that feature proceed.

| Possible outcome                                           | Response                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No Potential Roost Feature identified                      | No further bat survey or licence is likely to be required.                                                                          |
| Potential Roost Feature identified, but no roost confirmed | Further survey, aerial inspection or precautionary working may be required, depending on the level of potential and proposed works. |
| Roost confirmed                                            | Mitigation and any necessary licence will be secured before works affecting the roost proceed.                                      |

### 3. Badger Settle Closure and Artificial Settle Strategy

The development will require closure of the existing badger settle and creation of a replacement artificial settle outside the 30m disturbance zone. The replacement settle is proposed to be located on suitable land within the wider badger territory, with Mill Hill Golf Club land identified as the preferred location, subject to ecological confirmation, detailed design and Natural England licensing.

The strategy is based on ensuring that badgers are not excluded from the existing settle without suitable replacement provision. The artificial settle will therefore be created in advance of closure of the existing settle, outside the 30m disturbance zone, and in a location that maintains ecological connectivity to existing foraging routes and habitat.

#### 3.1 Legal and licensing position

Badgers and their settles are protected by law. A licence is required where development would interfere with a settle, including by excluding badgers, damaging or destroying a settle, obstructing access, or disturbing badgers occupying a settle. The licensing strategy needs to demonstrate that avoidance has been considered and that settle closure is necessary, proportionate and supported by suitable mitigation.

For development-related settle closure, the relevant Natural England licence / approval or site registration route, as applicable, will be confirmed by the project ecologist (Phlorum). The programme will assume that the licence application will be supported by a clear method statement, plans, mitigation design, artificial settle design, evidence of the need for closure, timing controls and post-closure monitoring arrangements.

#### 3.2 Core principles

The badger mitigation strategy will be based on the following principles:

- The existing settle will not be closed until a replacement artificial settle has been created outside the 30m disturbance zone
- The artificial settle will be located in an area suitable for long-term badger use taking into account all factors including flood risk
- The artificial settle will be created sufficiently in advance to allow badgers to locate and begin using it
- The existing settle will only be closed under licence and under the supervision of an appropriately qualified ecologist
- Closure will be undertaken during the appropriate licensed period - 1 July to 30 November, unless otherwise confirmed by Natural England
- The process will use exclusion rather than capture / translocation
- Post-closure monitoring will be undertaken to confirm that the existing settle has been successfully closed and that replacement provision remains available.

#### 3.3 Artificial settle location

The artificial settle needs to be located outside the 30m zone of construction disturbance. Its location will be selected by the ecologist having regard to evidence of existing badger paths and territorial use, proximity to foraging habitat, connection to woodland, scrub and grassland, avoidance of future construction operations, avoidance of direct artificial lighting, avoidance of flood-prone or waterlogged ground, and the ability to secure long-term protection and management.

Mill Hill Golf Club land is highly suitable because it is close to the existing ecological network and provides an opportunity to locate the settle outside the development disturbance zone while remaining within the broader badger territory. The final location will need to be confirmed by the ecologist.

### 3.4 Artificial sett design

The artificial sett will be designed by the ecologist and constructed to replicate the functional characteristics of a natural sett. The detailed design will include multiple entrances, interconnecting tunnel sections, nesting chambers, free-draining construction, suitable soil cover, stable construction materials, natural spoil mounds around entrances, vegetative screening, entrance orientation away from disturbance, and connection to existing badger paths or newly created covered routes.

The artificial sett will not be located in an exposed or overly managed amenity area. It will be placed within or adjacent to cover so that badgers can approach it without crossing exposed, lit or heavily trafficked ground.

### 3.5 Timing of artificial sett creation

The artificial sett will be constructed in advance of closing the existing sett. As a minimum, the replacement sett must be in place before any exclusion work commences.

The recommended programme assumption should therefore be: artificial sett detailed design as soon as the final off-site location is confirmed; artificial sett construction in spring / early summer 2026, before any licensed exclusion works commence; badger acclimatisation / discovery period after construction and before exclusion; existing sett closure under licence once the required planning status and Natural England licence / approval or site registration, as applicable, is in place and within the 1 July to 30 November licensed period; and post-closure monitoring during enabling works and early construction.

### 3.6 Encouraging badgers to move

Badgers should not be captured and relocated as part of development mitigation. Instead, the strategy is to create a suitable replacement sett, encourage badgers to discover and use it, and then exclude the existing sett under licence once the replacement sett is available and the licensing requirements are met.

Measures to encourage discovery and use of the artificial sett may include locating the sett close to existing badger paths, creating covered access routes using scrub or hedgerow planting, using natural spoil and locally appropriate materials around entrances, ensuring the sett is dark, quiet and undisturbed, avoiding lighting, providing natural screening, using bedding material or dry vegetation where advised by the ecologist, and using short-term food trails only where ecologist-led and appropriate.

Any such measure should be carefully controlled by the ecologist to avoid creating dependency, nuisance or attraction to inappropriate areas.

### 3.7 Licence application and approval programme

The licence application will normally follow planning permission and be submitted once the required planning status is in place.

The licence application or site registration will be prepared in good time, with the programme allowing sufficient time for final mitigation design, preparation of plans and method statements, Natural England submission, determination, approval or site registration, as applicable, artificial sett construction, acclimatisation, licensed exclusion works, monitoring and closure.

### 3.8 Exclusion of the existing sett

Once the artificial sett has been created, badgers have had an opportunity to discover it, the licensed closure period has commenced, and Natural England licence / approval or site registration, as applicable, is in place, exclusion of the existing sett can proceed.

The typical process is for the ecologist to check the existing sett and confirm entrances, install one-way gates on active entrances, secure other entrances in accordance with the licence, allow badgers to leave the sett while preventing re-entry, monitor the sett for evidence of continued use, and then confirm when the sett is inactive. If badgers breach the exclusion measures, the exclusion period may need to restart.

### 3.9 Closure / destruction of the existing sett

The existing sett will only be closed or destroyed once the ecologist is satisfied, in accordance with the licence, that badgers have been excluded and the sett is no longer occupied. Closure needs to be undertaken under ecological supervision. Excavation will proceed carefully and progressively, opening tunnels and chambers in a controlled manner. If evidence of continued occupation is found, works will stop and the ecologist will determine the appropriate next step.

The closed sett area will then be made unsuitable for reoccupation, for example through backfilling, compaction or other measures agreed in the licence and method statement.

### 3.10 Post-closure monitoring

Post-closure monitoring will continue through enabling works and early construction. Monitoring will check that the existing sett has not been reopened, that badgers have not created a new sett within the construction zone, that the artificial sett remains available and undisturbed, that access routes remain open, that site fencing does not block badger movement, and that lighting does not affect the replacement sett or commuting routes.

The artificial sett and associated habitat will then be secured through the LEMP / HMMP or other management mechanism, with long-term access and protection agreed with the landowner.

### 3.11 Indicative badger mitigation programme

| Stage                                                                         | Indicative timing / requirement                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Confirm artificial sett location outside 30m zone                             | As early as possible, with ecologist and landowner agreement.            |
| Secure landowner agreement                                                    | Before licence submission and construction.                              |
| Detailed artificial sett design                                               | Immediately after location is confirmed.                                 |
| Construct artificial sett                                                     | Spring / early summer 2026 before any licensed exclusion works commence. |
| Allow discovery / acclimatisation period                                      | After construction and before exclusion of the existing sett.            |
| Prepare Natural England licence / site registration                           | In advance of the intended closure window.                               |
| Obtain Natural England licence / approval or site registration, as applicable | Before any interference with the existing sett.                          |
| Install one-way gates and exclude badgers                                     | Normally within the 1 July to 30 November licensed period.               |
| Monitor exclusion                                                             | As required by licence and ecologist.                                    |
| Close / destroy existing sett                                                 | Only after the sett is confirmed inactive.                               |
| Post-closure monitoring                                                       | During enabling works and early construction.                            |
| Long-term protection of artificial sett                                       | Through LEMP / HMMP and land agreement.                                  |

## 4. Reptile Surveys and Mitigation Strategy

Reptile surveys are being undertaken to determine presence and, if reptiles are found, to enable a population assessment to be made. The survey methodology includes the placement of refugia across suitable habitat, a bedding-in period before checks commence, and a series of survey visits on non-consecutive days during suitable weather conditions within the reptile active season.

The reptile survey is currently ongoing and has, to date, revealed the presence of reptiles on site. A planning condition will therefore be required to remove reptiles from the areas in which they are present prior to works commencing in those areas. A full report setting out the mitigation strategy will be provided once the on-site survey works have concluded, and the final mitigation approach will be confirmed at that stage.

The survey has been commissioned through Phlorum and the survey team is currently attending site, with survey work ongoing.

## 5. Summary of Commitments

1. Trees T1 and T2, and all other trees flagged in the PEA within the small wooded area, have been assessed for bat roost potential. The current findings are that no active roosts have been uncovered and that, of the six Potential Roost Features on the tree previously categorised as PRF-M, four have been downgraded to PRF-I. It is anticipated that planning conditions to create a dark corridor and to employ sensitive working practices will mitigate any residual risk from the remaining PRF-M features. The full report is to follow.
2. The existing badger sett will be closed under licence and replaced by a new artificial sett outside the 30m disturbance zone. The artificial sett will be created in advance of sett closure and located on suitable land within the wider badger territory, with Mill Hill Golf Club land identified as the preferred location.
3. The artificial sett will be constructed before the intended closure window in time to allow badgers to find and use it. Existing sett closure will be programmed within the normal licensed period, anticipated to be 1 July to 30 November unless otherwise confirmed by Natural England.
4. Reptile surveys are ongoing and have, to date, revealed the presence of reptiles. A planning condition will be required to remove reptiles prior to works commencing in the affected areas, with a full mitigation strategy to be provided once the survey works have concluded.

Overall, the approach is to continue reducing ecological and arboricultural impact where practicable, protect retained trees and woodland, provide robust protected species mitigation, and secure long-term management so that the ecological and landscape value of the scheme is maintained after occupation.