

Badger Scoping Survey

Site Address: Market Bosworth School, Station Road, Near Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV13 0JT

Client Name: David Hemstock

Reference: Badger Scoping Survey

Date: 14TH September 2024

Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by David Hemstock to undertake a PEA at Market Bosworth School, Station Road, Near Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV13 0JT (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to provide additional information to inform a planning application for the construction of astroturf, MUGA and pitch renovation with associated parking (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1. A PEA was conducted in May 2024 in which a BRD indicated the presence of a badger sett within 5m of the site boundary. A badger scoping survey was required to assess the habitats on site as well as the surrounding area for suitability of badgers.

Site Location and Landscape Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SK40400313 and has an area of 2.6ha. The development site is made up of an area of amenity lawn used as a sports field within a school ground with a line of trees on the southern boundary and an earth bank on the east of the development area. The site is bordered by metal fencing on all perimeters. A woodland is present adjacent to the site existing behind the fencing on the northern boundary. The geology of the site is predominantly mudstone with the soil composition consisting of base-rich loamy and clayey soils. The drainage of the site consists of slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acidic soils. The landscape surrounding the site consists of Market Bosworth town to the south and east with pasture, arable land and intervening pockets of woodland to the north and west.

Priority habitats located within 2km of the site consist of lowland fens (located ~760m northeast), wood pasture and parkland BAP (located ~400m east) and deciduous woodland (located ~130m northwest). Designations located within 2km of the site comprise Ashby Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (located 1,800m northwest).

There is one pond located within 500m of the site, approximately 160m west. There is poor connectivity to the pond due to intensely managed agricultural fields located between the site and pond and the site being fenced on all perimeters.

The nearest Important Plant Area is located 35km west of the site and is named Midland Meres and Mosses Important Plant Area. This is unlikely to be contextually relevant to the site due to the distance between the sites. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

Survey Methodology

The survey was undertaken in dry conditions with temperatures of 23°C on 14th September 2024 by Carly Preen BSc (Hons) MSc, Assistant ecologist [Licenced agent on Natural England licence number 2024-12326-CL17-BAT].

A walkover of the sports fields and surrounding land was undertaken to assess badger potential within the neighbouring property and assess connectivity to the site. The area up to 30m from the development perimeter was surveyed.

Results

BRD data identified a sett on the northeast boundary of the site, last surveyed in 2017. The area in which the sett was identified is impenetrable due to thick ground foliage and the presence of both a wooden and barbed wire fence line. A large mammal trail was found through the bramble in this region as well as damaged barbed wire fencing with small amounts of badger hair on. Upon observation of the trail, scatt could be seen within the woodland, which had properties associated with badger droppings, containing seeds, berries, and purple in colour. Badger droppings were also found ~5m east of this point situated on the grass verge bordering the dirt track. Further large mammal trails were found pushing through the wire field boundary to the north. The woodland as it extends further to the west is accessible and there is indication of badger use scattered throughout, with the presence of snuffle pits and droppings. There are also areas along the perimeter, particularly as the woodland reaches the school fields where the fence would be permeable to mammals as it does not reach the ground. There is some indication here that a mammal has buried underneath the fence line, and indication of foraging activity on the field, however there was no strong evidence here to identify the species.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There does not appear to be heavy badger activity in the area, and given the nearby woodland to the north, there may be an outlier sett in this vicinity. There is however indication that badgers are using the woodland that runs along the northern perimeter of the site, and evidence that there may still be an active sett in the small region of inaccessible woodland.

Badgers are fully protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, by Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. A person is guilty of an offence if, except as permitted by or under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, 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.

[e] Disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett, intending to do any of those things or being reckless as to whether their actions would have any of those consequences.

As such it is recommended that an ecologist attend the site to supervise the clearance of an amount of light ground vegetation as needed to access and assess the sett identified by the BRD. Vegetation clearance must be done by hand using hand tools only. No groundworks are permitted. Further, it is also recommended that three cameras be deployed (As identified in Appendix 4) to establish badger presence and usage. The cameras should be deployed for a minimum of 21 days

The video analysis can determine badger presence and usage to support a badger disturbance license from Natural England in order to lawfully proceed, if required.

Author

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Reviewer

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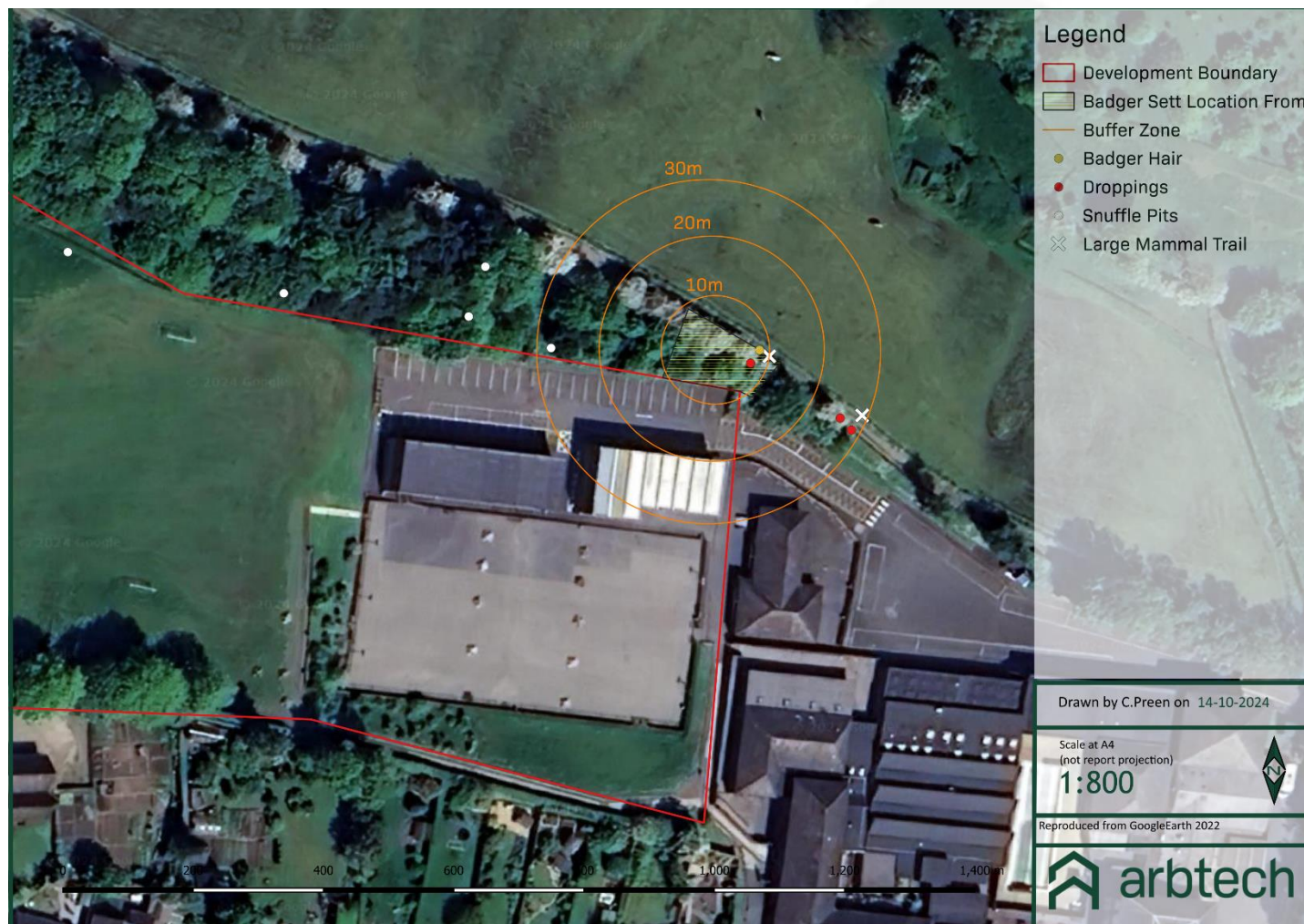
Appendix 1 – Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2 – Site Location Plan



Appendix 3 – Habitat Map



Appendix 5- Proposed Camera Locations



Appendix 5- Photos



Figure 1: Development site, Northern boundary



Figure 2: Private land and surrounding woodlands - Looking northwest



Figure 3: Bent fencing and mammal trail leading north-to-south from track to private land.



Figure 4: Large mammal trail into inaccessible woodland.



Figure 5: Inside gap from figure 4. Broken barbed wire fencing and point of badger hair collection.



Figure 6: Example of areas where perimeter fencing is permeable.



Figure 7: Examples of snuffle pits found immediately north of the development boundary.



Figure 8: Example of droppings found immediately north of the development boundary.