

Badger Scoping Survey

Site Address: Alma Park Primary School, Errwood Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 2PF

Client Name: Daniel Markwart

Reference: Badger Scoping Survey

Date: 23rd May 2024

Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Daniel Markwart to undertake a Badger Scoping Survey at Alma Park Primary School, Errwood Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 2PF (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to provide additional information to inform a planning application for the creation of three MUGA pitches (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author’s knowledge, by any other consultancy.

The aim of the survey was to assess the habitats on site as well as the surrounding area for suitability of badgers and look for any evidence of the presence of badgers using the site.

Site Location and Landscape Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 87375 93811 and has an area of approximately 0.1ha comprising of neutral grassland and woodland. It lies within the city of Manchester and is directly surrounded by urban infrastructure such as roads, residential dwellings and gardens, and commercial premises. A railway track runs directly east of the site. The immediate landscape is extremely built up, although contains suitable commuting greenspaces connected by alleyways and gaps within boundary fences. The nearest green area is Highfield Country Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR), an open public space located ~580m east. The site has direct connectivity to the LNR, likely to contain excellent resources for local badger populations.

Priority habitats in the nearby vicinity include scattered deciduous woodland ~200m south and surrounding in all other directions. No impacts are anticipated on these habitats as a result of the development.

A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

Survey Methodology

The survey was undertaken in light rain conditions with temperatures of around 12°C on 23rd May 2024 by Nicholas Smith, Ecological Surveyor.

A walkover of the site and surrounding land was undertaken to assess badger potential within the site.

Results

The site was found to contain evidence of two separate setts, ~10-15m away from the development site boundary. Each sett contained multiple entrances. The setts appeared to be disused with no evidence of recent badger activity (e.g., latrines, footprints, fur). Sett 1 was covered by a wooden pallet. One sett was located on the eastern site boundary adjacent to the railway track and on the other located on the southern site boundary. A mammal path was present in the southeastern corner of the site underneath the boundary fencing leading to the railway track.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposed development will include the creation of MUGA pitches within 10m of sett 1 and within 15m of sett 2. Therefore, this could result in the damage/disturbance/destruction of the badger setts on the site and could kill or injure any badgers present in the vicinity, at the time of the works.

If the plans remain as they are currently, then badger surveys will be required to characterise the sett types present and the usage of the site by badgers. This will comprise the deployment of wildlife cameras over a period of 3-4 weeks and such surveys can be undertaken throughout the year, in accordance with current survey guidelines (Harris et al, 1989). These surveys will be required to inform a badger development licence in order to legally be permitted to disturb, damage or destroy a sett.

The surveys are likely to be required before planning permission can be granted.

However, if the following measures are abided by and the setts can be retained on site, and plans updated outside of 30m of the setts, with no tree felling/pruning within 15m, further badger surveys may not be necessary. Altering the proposals to retain the setts and avoid damage, disturbance or destruction will ensure a licence is not required.

To abide by current legislation relating to badgers and their setts:

- No heavy machinery will be used within 30m of the sett entrances.
- Only light machinery will be used within 20m of the sett entrances (i.e., chainsaws/trimmers).
- Trees felled within 15-30m should be undertaken by a climber with ropes in order to ensure that felled or pruned trees are removed in sections and lowered to the ground away from setts.
- No works will be undertaken within 10m of the sett entrances.

Author

Nicholas Smith, Ecological Surveyor

Reviewer

Katy Perry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, Senior Consultant

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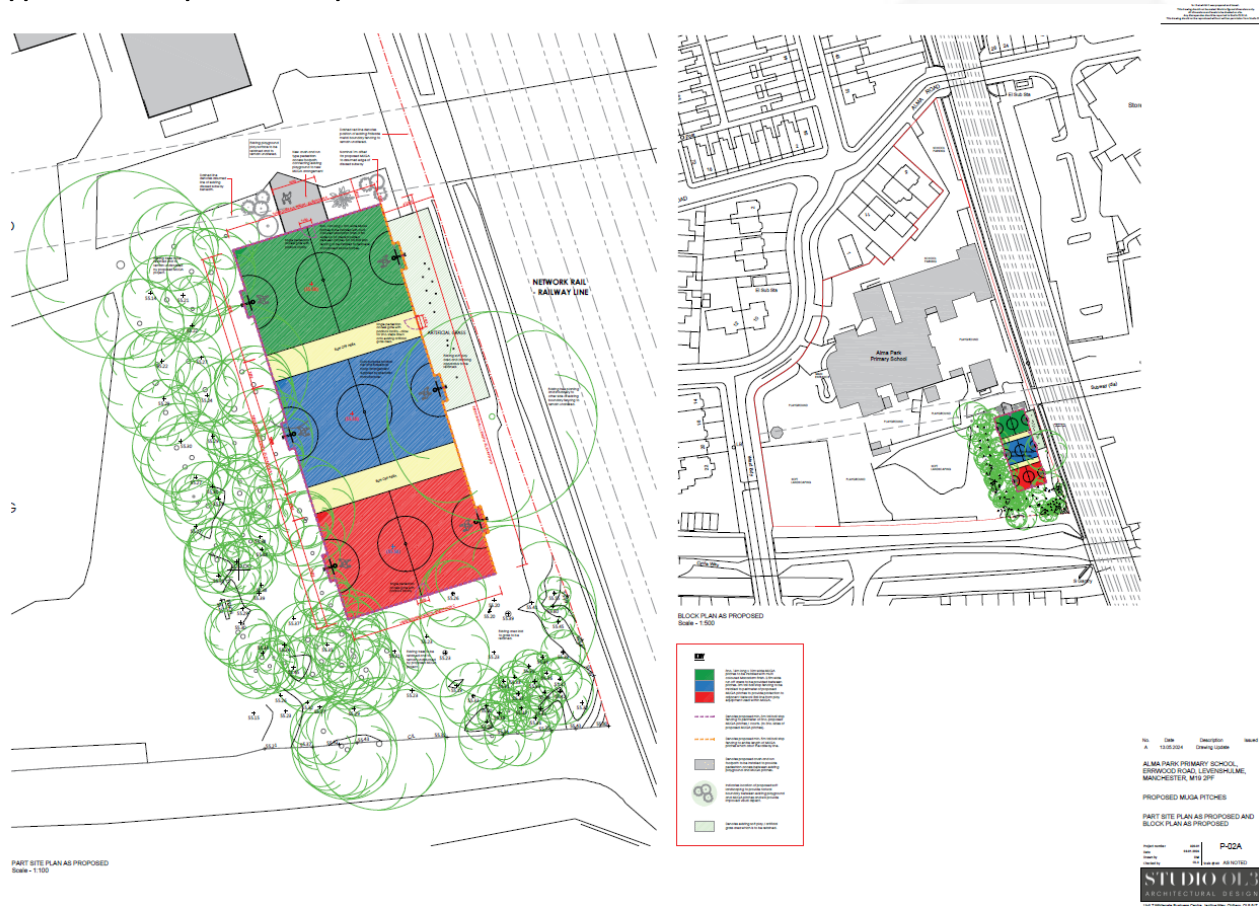
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Appendix 1 – Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2 – Site Location Plan



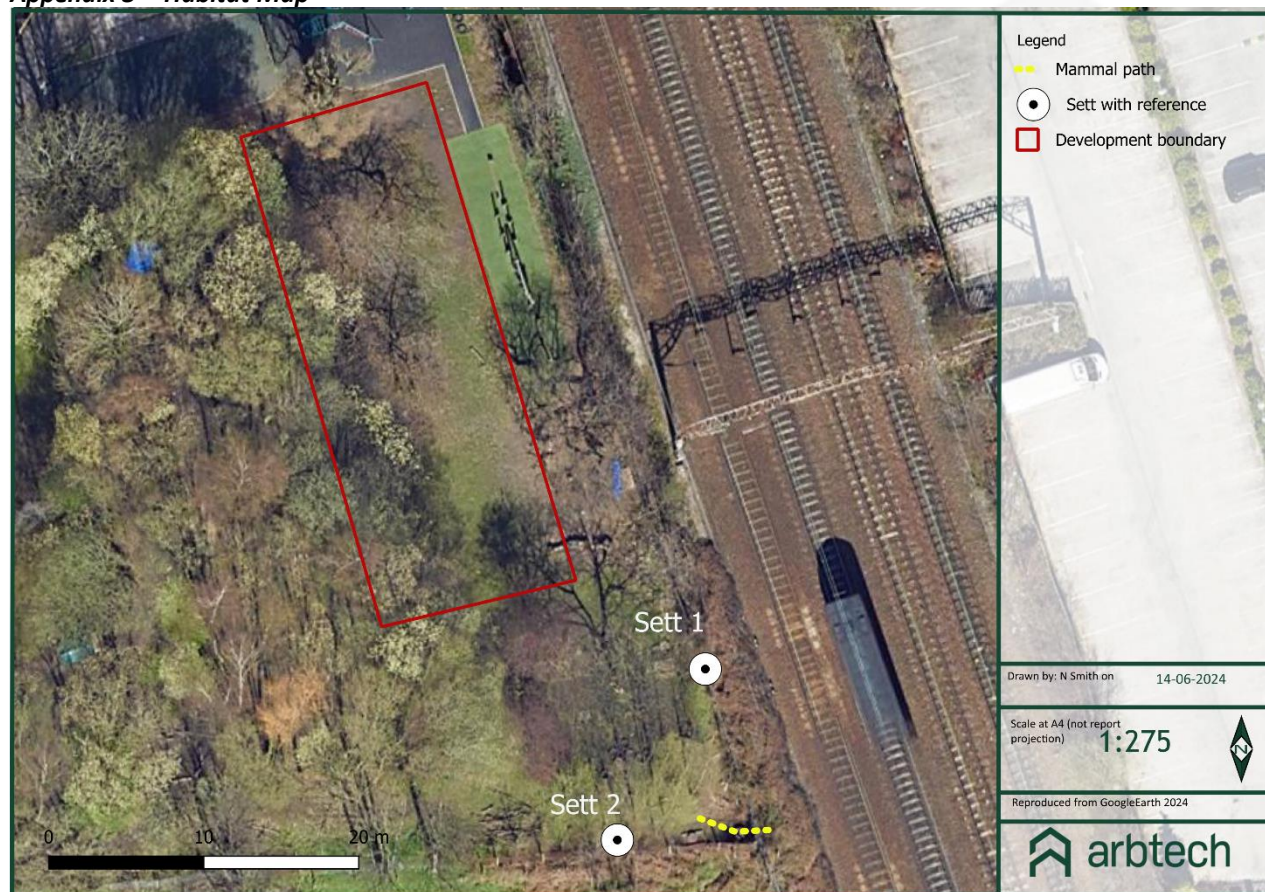




Figure 1: Development site, (railway left, woodland right)



Figure 2: Mammal path route under boundary fencing on the southeastern boundary



Figure 3: Pallet covering badger sett 1 on the eastern boundary



Figure 4: Badger sett 1 entrances under the wooden pallet

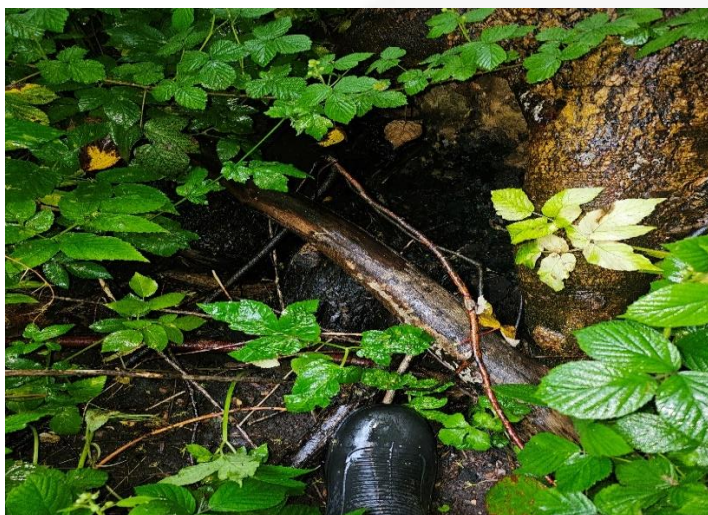


Figure 6: Badger sett 2 present on the southern border