

1st February 2023
Our Ref: P.1717.22

Westchurch Homes
Westchurch Homes Ltd
Kennedy House
31 Stamford St
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA14 1ES

Re: Badger Activity Report for Louisa Street, Openshaw

Ascerta has been instructed by Westchurch Homes to carry out an extended badger activity survey at the site Louisa Street Works, Openshaw.

The survey relates to the area marked on drawing *P.11717.22.03 Badger Activity Survey* in Appendix 1.

Survey and Conditions

The site was attended by Lizzie Atkinson MSc CIEEM (ecologist with over 2 years' experience of ecology surveys including badger survey), Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons) (ecologist with over 7 years' experience of ecology surveys including badger survey) and assisted by Jack Kay MSc (ecologist with 1 year experience of ecology surveys including badger surveys) on 1st February 2023. Weather conditions were mild (9 °C) dry, overcast (8/8 cloud cover) with a light breeze (F2 Beaufort scale) at the start of the survey.

Badger are still active over the winter period, although activity may be irregular depending on the weather conditions. The weather conditions were suitable for assessing badger activity during the site visit.

The weather conditions and time of year that the survey was carried out are not considered a limit to the conclusions of the letter report.

Badger Survey Methods

The survey area was searched for setts and badger field signs including foraging areas, latrines and tracks. Attention was paid to the presence of the following field signs:

- Setts: single holes or a series of holes likely to be interconnected underground;
- Latrines: badgers usually deposit faeces in excavated pits;
- Paths and footprints;
- Scratching posts: at the base of trees;
- Snuffle holes: areas where badgers have searched for insects;
- Day nest: bundles of vegetation where badgers may sleep above ground; and
- Traces of hair.

An extended walkover survey of habitats within 50m of the development site was conducted to record badger activity. The search radius has been plotted on a plan (*P.11717.22.03 Badger Activity Survey* in Appendix 1).

The site is predominately concrete hardstanding with scattered scrub and tall ruderal, making for unsuitable sett building habitat for badger. The site is also securely fenced on all boundaries, restricting access onto site for any foraging or commuting badger.

Badger Activity Results

During the survey, no signs of badger activity (setts, paths, footprints, snuffle holes and latrines) were found within 50m of the site. The search radius has been plotted on a plan (*P.11717.22.03 Badger Activity Survey* in Appendix 1).

The scrub habitat that borders the southern and western site boundaries as well the park to the south, is used by dog walkers, for recreational use by member of the public and is prone to regular human disturbance evident through the large amount of fly tipping and litter distributed throughout the park. The evidence of human disturbance, as well as habitats within the site, can be viewed in photographs 1-4 below.

Photographs



Photograph 1: Litter and fly tipping present in Louisa Park



Photograph 2: Fly tipping and litter immediately south of the site



Photograph 3: Concrete hardstanding that comprises the majority of the onsite habitats



Photograph 4: Fencing that surrounds the site

Other Species

During the survey a domestic cat and dogs were identified within the park directly south of the site.

Recommendations and Conclusion

No signs of badger activity (setts, paths, footprints, snuffle holes and latrines) were identified during the survey. The site is unsuitable sett building habitat for badger as the site is predominately concrete hardstanding with scattered scrub and tall ruderal. The site is also securely fenced on all boundaries, restricting access onto the site for foraging and commuting badger. It is considered that badgers are unlikely to be using the habitats within the site.

A record for an outlier sett (TN1 on plan P.1717.22.03, Appendix 1) was returned approximately 5m south-east of the site in 2021. This outlier sett was not identified during the badger activity survey. The scrub habitat that borders the southern site boundary as well as the park to the south, is frequented by dog walkers and is prone to regular human disturbance evident through the large amount of fly tipping and litter distributed throughout the park. It is possible that this outlier sett has

since been disturbed and covered due to amount of human disturbance and high volume of fly tipping and litter.

As badger are active within the wider area and a sett have been recorded within 30m of the site, it is recommended that Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) will be implemented during site works in order to avoid harm to any potential badger. These will include:

1. Installing Heras fencing, secured to wooden stakes, around the perimeter of the working area. This fencing will exclude badger from the construction zone;
2. Immediately prior to installation of the temporary fencing, an update badger check of the construction zone, together with all habitats within 30m of the zone, will be undertaken. This is because badger are active in the area and can dig new setts at any time;
3. Following the update badger check, a toolbox talk will be given to the main contractors, so they are aware badger are active in the area and are fully informed of the measures to be taken to avoid harm to badger as detailed below;
4. Appointing a contractor to check the fence each morning prior to construction commencing to check for signs of attempted entry by badger (hole digging). If any holes have been dug under the fence, or if the fence has been knocked down, Ascerta will be contacted for further advice prior to works commencing;
5. Flattening soil mounds or ensuring all soil mounds are within the Heras fenced area to avoid habitation of the soil mounds by badger;
6. Covering trenches and holes overnight or providing ramps to prevent badger getting stuck;
7. Covering large pipes to prevent badger access and risk of badger getting stuck; and
8. Reporting any signs of badger activity within the fenced area including prints, latrines or evidence of digging to a suitably qualified ecologist who will be able to provide advice on how works can continue without risk of harm to badger.

As badgers are active in the area, and the site is directly connected through Stockport Canal Branch to a main badger sett recorded approximately 600m north of the site, it is recommended that an updated survey for badger, including all habitats within 30m of the site, is undertaken prior to the start of works as badger can dig new setts at any time.

If during any vegetation clearing a newly formed active sett is found, work within 30m of the sett is to stop to prevent disturbance of the sett. A suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted to determine if works need to continue under licence from Natural England or advise on a safe way forward that would not disturb badger.

Yours sincerely,

Lizzie Atkinson



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Appendix 1



- Site boundary
- Approximate 50m buffer
- Outlier badger sett record

DO NOT SCALE.
ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID.
LOCATED TO NG BY BEST FIT TO DETAIL.
EXTRACTED FROM OS DIGITAL DATA.

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CLIENT:
Westchurch Homes

PROJECT:
Louisa Street Works

DRAWING TITLE:
Badger Activity Survey

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