



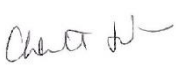
# Pre-Commencement Badger Survey Report

Turing House School, Hospital Bridge Road, Hounslow

Presented to **Bowmer & Kirkland**

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## 1.0 Context and Purpose

Delta-Simons was instructed by Bowmer & Kirkland ('the Client') to undertake a pre-commencement badger survey of land off Hospital Road, Hounslow ('the Site') on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The survey was conducted to facilitate the discharge of draft planning condition NS21 (planning reference 18/3561/FUL. It is understood development works for a new school at the Site are due to commence in March 2020.

## 2.0 Legislation

### Badgers

Badgers and their setts are protected under the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act. Under this Act it is an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat badgers, or to attempt to do so. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct access to any part of a sett, or to disturb an occupied sett, either by intent or negligence. When interpreting the Act, Natural England defines a sett as any structure within an area used by badgers that shows signs of having been occupied by badgers within the last 12 months.

### Foxes

Destroying, blocking, or filling up a fox earth that contains live foxes is an offence under The Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996).

## 3.0 Methodology

A suitably experienced ecologist undertook a systematic search of suitable habitat on the Site and within 30 m of the Site boundary, where appropriate, for evidence of badger activity on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Sett entrances and other signs of badger activity were searched for, including spoil heaps, bedding material, runs, footprints, hairs, scratching posts and feeding signs.

The number of disused, partially used and well-used sett entrance holes was recorded. Whether or not the sett was classified as 'active' or 'disused' was determined in accordance with the latest guidance on 'Current Use' in the definition of a badger sett (Natural England, 2009b and 2009c), as described below:

- ▲ *Active*: Entrances clear of leaf litter, debris and vegetation, or in obvious regular use;

- ▲ *Partially used*: Entrances not in regular use and have debris in the entrance, but could be in use after minimal clearance; and
- ▲ *Disused*: Entrances not used for extended period of time and are partially or completely blocked. Cannot be used without considerable clearance.

## 4.0 Results and Conclusions

Whilst mammal excavations were identified within the large spoil pile in the south-eastern area of the Site, these were not indicative of badger activity due to the size of the tunnels, rather they were identified as rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* burrows and potential fox *Vulpes Vulpes* earths. No evidence of recent badger activity, such as latrines or snuffle holes, was recorded at the Site or within accessible land within 30 m of the Site boundary during the survey. The previously identified badger sett entrance remained disused.

## 5.0 Limitations of the Survey

No access was available to the neighbouring residential properties, however, it is considered unlikely that a badger sett would occur and this was, therefore, not considered to be a constraint to the survey conclusions.

## 6.0 Recommendations

Given the presence of previously identified potential fox earths and the mammal activity identified within the spoil pile within the south-eastern area of the Site, a strategy is required to be put in place to safely exclude fox from it (assuming no cubs are present):

- ▲ Remote cameras will be set up outside the possible den entrances to monitor any associated activity;
- ▲ The remote camera traps will be checked after one week, and assuming that there is no evidence of cubs present, one way gates will be fitted upon the den entrances to ensure that any foxes present can exit but not re-enter the den; and
- ▲ After the gates have been in situ for a minimum of one week, the ecologist will supervise the destruction of the spoil pile.
- ▲ If badger do occur within the local area there is still the potential for them to occupy the Site prior to works commencing, particularly given the suitability of the spoil pile for sett excavation. The remote camera monitoring will also, therefore, allow for a check for badger activity closer to the commencement of works, and therefore, confidence that the works will not disturb any active badger setts, or appropriate mitigation to be applied.

## 7.0 References

The Protection of Badgers Act (1992). Chapter 51. HMSO.

Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996)