
Kronospan Engineering Stores

on behalf of Kronospan Ltd.

Badger Licence Method Statement – May 2023



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FIGURES

Figure 1: Badger Survey Plan

Figure 2: Proposed Development Layout

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This application for a badger licence is made in respect to the development of an engineering store and apprentice workshop (the 'Development') on land at the Kronospan wood product manufacturing plant in Chirk, Wrexham, LL14 5NT (the 'Site') as shown on **Figure 1**.
- 1.1.2 Planning permission for the Development was granted by Wrexham County Borough council on 7th November 2022, Planning Ref: CHI P/2022/0615.

1.2 Development Site

- 1.2.1 The Development is situated within the current Kronospan wood product manufacturing plant. The existing area within the Site predominately comprises an area of bare ground used for equipment storage. A line of conifer trees is present to the north of the Site, with a grassed earth bank present along the southern boundary, extended around the western boundary where it becomes covered in scrub.
- 1.2.2 In the wider area, the village of Chirk lies to the east and south, with the Llangollen canal and Chirk Castle parkland to the west. The surrounding landscape is dominated by habitats typical of the rural landscape such as agricultural land and pockets of woodland.

2 LEGISLATION

- 2.1.1 Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to interfere with a badger sett by damaging a sett or any part thereof, or to wilfully destroy a sett, obstruct access to a sett or disturb a badger while occupying a sett. Works which may damage an active sett or disturb a badger while occupying a sett are illegal without having obtained a licence from the appropriate licencing authority to do so. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are the licencing authority for the Development.

3 SURVEY INFORMATION

3.1 Surveys to Inform Planning Application (2019)

- 3.1.1 Avian Ecology Limited (AEL) undertook an extended habitat survey of the Site on the 13th January 2022 and provided an Ecological Assessment to inform the planning application for the Development.
- 3.1.2 No setts were identified within or immediately adjacent to the Site at the time of the extended habitat survey, however badgers were considered likely to be present in the locality, as confirmed by recent records provided by Cofnod. Due to suitable habitats within the Site, particularly earth banks, a pre-construction check for badger was recommended and subsequently conditioned.

3.2 Pre-Construction Survey (March 2023)

- 3.2.1 In order to comply with condition 9 of the granted planning permission, a pre-construction badger survey of the Site was undertaken by AEL on the 16th March 2023. This was to confirm that no badger setts had been created within the Development area and surrounding habitats, prior to the commencement of development/vegetation clearance works.

- 3.2.2 The pre-construction survey found one badger sett not previously recorded. The identified sett consisted of a single hole with no confirmatory signs of badger. Despite an absence of confirmatory signs of badger, evidence of badger activity including latrines and foraging signs were located nearby, and the sett entrance was clear of vegetation. While no accompanying main sett has been located, it is considered likely that the sett found is an outlier sett used sporadically.

3.3 Camera Monitoring Survey (April 2023)

- 3.3.1 To confirm badger usage and confirm activity levels at the Sett, a camera monitoring survey was undertaken between 28th March and 24th April (27 nights). A camera was placed at the entrance to the sett. Additionally, sticks were gently placed across the entrance in such a way they could be easily moved should badger need to enter or exit from the sett (i.e., 'soft blocked'). Sticks were fitted with tape to collect hairs from any mammals using the entrance.
- 3.3.2 A single recording of badger was made over the monitoring period, in which the badger investigated the sett entrance but did not make an attempt to enter the sett. Additionally, the soft block remained in place for the duration of monitoring, further indicating no mammals had entered or exited the sett.

3.4 Conclusions on Sett Use

- 3.4.1 Given the above survey information, it is concluded that the sett consists of a single hole outlier sett.
- 3.4.2 Given the absence of any conclusive use by badger during the monitoring period, it is considered that while the sett remains active, it is likely to be used only sporadically (e.g., only at certain times of year or wider ranging foraging excursions).
- 3.4.3 No other setts are present within the Site or immediately surrounding area.

4 IMPACTS

4.1 Direct Impacts on Sett

- 4.1.1 The existing earth bund in which the sett is located is required to be levelled, and therefore the sett would be permanently destroyed as a result of the Development. A licence will be required to exclude badger and permanently close the Sett prior to commencement of construction works for the Development.

4.2 Indirect Impacts & Impacts on Habitats

- 4.2.1 The Site is currently used for the storage of engineering materials, and therefore is subject to regular vehicle and personnel movements and activity, however during the construction period the frequency and magnitude of potentially disturbing activities may increase relative to the current baseline. Under mitigation proposals, badger would be excluded from the sett by this point, and therefore this is not considered to impact badger.
- 4.2.2 During operation of the Development, it is anticipated that disturbance would not be significantly above baseline levels. As evidenced by the current use of the sett, badger will tolerate moderate levels of noise and activity in the vicinity of a sett without being disturbed, and therefore the operation is unlikely to disturb badgers.
- 4.2.3 Beyond the above, no further indirect impacts are anticipated to badger or their habitats. The Site already provides limited suitable foraging habitat and the Development will not cause fragmentation or severance of foraging habitat or commuting routes.

5 MITIGATION

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 It is proposed to permanently close the badger sett between the months of July and November inclusive, subject to the grant of a licence from NRW. Badgers would be excluded from the sett, with the sett to be destroyed under a watching brief as soon as practicable.
- 5.1.2 A further badger survey will be undertaken prior to the sett closure but it is considered unlikely that the sett is regularly used and therefore its closure would have minimal influence on the resident badger clan.
- 5.1.3 Until a licence is issued by NRW or, it is considered that the sett is no longer active and works are non-licensable, no works affecting the earth bund in which the sett is located will be undertaken.

5.2 Pre-commencement

- 5.2.1 The Site Manager (and site workers as required) will be informed and made aware of the badger sett location and the mitigation measures to be implemented to safeguard badgers and their setts. An emergency procedure will be in place and implemented, if a potential active badger sett (not previously identified) or badgers are encountered by site workers during construction.
- 5.2.2 The area will continue to be used in its current use, provided noise generated does not exceed baseline levels. This will include the ongoing storage and movement and machinery. No earthworks would be permitted until the grant of a licence from NRW.

5.3 Licensed Mitigation

Sett Closure

- 5.3.1 Upon receipt of a licence from NRW, the sett will be permanently closed prior to the levelling of the earth bund within which it has been constructed. Sett closures will be undertaken between July and November inclusive. The entrance will be fitted with a one-way badger gate and then monitored by the appointed ecologist (or accredited agents) at least every three days to check that the badgers have left and not re-entered the sett, for a minimum period of twenty-one days following the last signs of activity.
- 5.3.2 Summary of procedures as follows:
 - 1. A purpose-built badger gate will be built into the entrance(s) of the sett to be excluded. Each gate will be firmly positioned leaving no openings or gaps that badgers could extend. Wire mesh will be positioned and fixed around sett entrance(s) to help deter badgers digging back into the sett.
 - 2. The gates will be locked so the gate will open outwards only, allowing the badgers to leave but not re-enter the sett. This will continue for a minimum period of twenty-one days during which the gates will be checked at least every three 3 days to ensure that:
 - they are working freely; and,
 - they have not been dislodged or the hole enlarged to bypass it (if this occurs, more gates and / or mesh will be installed, and the exclusion process will start again).
 - 3. In the unlikely event that badgers remain inside the sett/s for a longer period, the gate/s will remain in position until the ecologist is satisfied that badgers are no longer using the sett.

4. Once the appointed ecologist is satisfied that badgers are no longer using the sett, the one-way gate will be removed from the entrance and the sett immediately dug out in the presence of the ecologist to prevent the badgers re-opening or re-occupying the sett. The extent of digging will be marked up and agreed on the ground and excavation of the sett will be completed by tracked excavator or similar, commencing at approximately 30m from the sett entrance and working towards the centre of the sett, cutting in 0.5m increments with regular checks by the appointed ecologist during this process and exposed tunnels checked for recent badger activity. The sett will be excavated and in-filled the same day with the soil backfilled and compressed to prevent animals excavating further holes. In the unlikely event that at any time a badger is found during this process, all works will be made safe and cease and the appointed ecologist will advise on the next steps in the exclusion process.

- 5.3.3 A suitable cage or similar equipment will be available at the site to retain any injured badgers for veterinary attention. Any uninjured badger found will be allowed to escape unless it is a dependent cub and there is good reason to believe that it will not survive. Provision will be made to ensure the welfare of any such cub.

5.4 General Mitigation Measures

- 5.4.1 The following general mitigation measures will be adopted throughout the construction phase of the Development:

- All site staff to be made aware of the potential for badger within the Site, including the identification of the sett;
- The orange barrier fencing excluding ground works from within 30m of the sett will be installed and retained until a licence is issued by NRW and the sett is closed;
- Any areas of soil to be stored for any period of time should be fenced to deter use by badgers and/or checked daily by site staff to ensure no attempted creation of new setts by badgers (soil bunds hold potential for sett creation). The appointed ecologist will be contacted to undertake an assessment, if necessary;
- Trenches/excavations open overnight will be covered or have sloping escape ramps for badgers, which may be achieved by edge profiling of trenches/excavations or by using planks placed into them at the end of each working day;
- Chemicals will be stored safely away from the sett;
- Care and diligence will be used at all times as new holes could be opened in a short period of time. If any badger holes (or potential holes) are observed, works in that area should stop and further advice sought from the appointed ecologist;
- The above licensed works will only be undertaken in the presence an ecologist; and,
- Machinery will only be operated by a suitably trained and competent persons.

5.5 Habitat Creation and Enhancement

- 5.5.1 Due to the status of the sett as a single hole outlier sett, used sporadically no habitat creation (e.g., artificial sett) or enhancement is proposed.

5.6 Summary Work Schedule

5.6.1 The proposed work schedule is summarised in Table 5.1

Table 5.1 – Work Schedule

Activity	Timing	Comments
Pre-start Information (toolbox talk)	Immediately prior to start of sett exclusion / construction	The Site Manager and site workers as required, will be informed and made aware of the badger sett and the mitigation measures to be implemented to safeguard badgers.
Badger sett exclusion and permanent closure (min 21 days)	July to November 2023 Inclusive	Upon receipt of a licence from NRW
Gate(s) removed and destruction of sett under supervision.	July to November 2023 Inclusive	Only once badgers have been successfully excluded and the setts closed.
Construction period	Following successful sett closure	Anticipated construction period approximately 1 year

5.6.2 The above timings of operations are indicative and are subject to the granting of a development licence from NRW.

6 MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING

6.1 Setts Investigations

- 6.1.1 An update badger survey will be carried out prior to the gate installation to determine the level of activity at the sett and if any new setts and/ or entrances have been excavated.

6.2 During Mitigation

- 6.2.1 The badger gates and wire mesh will remain continuously in position for a minimum period of twenty-one (21) days following the last sign indicating possible access by badgers into the sett. During this period the sett will be visited at intervals of no more than three (3) days to inspect the gate to ensure that it opens and closes freely, and to check for signs of badgers having regained access to the sett.
- 6.2.2 Badger activity at the one-way badger gate will be monitored by the appointed ecologist (or accredited agent), for example, by placing small sticks in front of and/or behind the gate, tying a fine thread across the front of the gate, or smoothing the soil or sand in front of the gate in order to detect badger footprints. If sticks are used, care will be taken that they do not obstruct egress or prevent closure of the gate if disturbed. A remote camera will also be used to record activity around the setts during this period.

6.3 Construction

- 6.3.1 Badger gate(s) at the sett will be locked closed following exclusion. As soon as reasonably practicable following completion of sett exclusion, the gate(s) will be removed, and sett destroyed and bund will be levelled with the soil removed as appropriate under the direction of an ecologist.
- 6.3.2 A watch for any new badger activity will be kept during the construction period. NRW will be informed of any changes to the current situation in relation to badgers and the Development and if necessary, a subsequent licence application or amendment will be made.

Figure 1: Badger Survey Plan



Legend

Site

Badger Field Sign

Latrine

Sett

10m Sett Buffer

20m Sett Buffer

30m Sett Buffer

Rev	Date	Description	De	App
00	09/05/2023		KW	HD

This map contains data from the following sources:
Ordnance Survey (OS)
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**KRONOSPAN ENGINEERING
STORES**

CONFIDENTIAL BADGER PLAN

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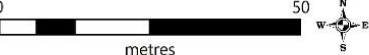
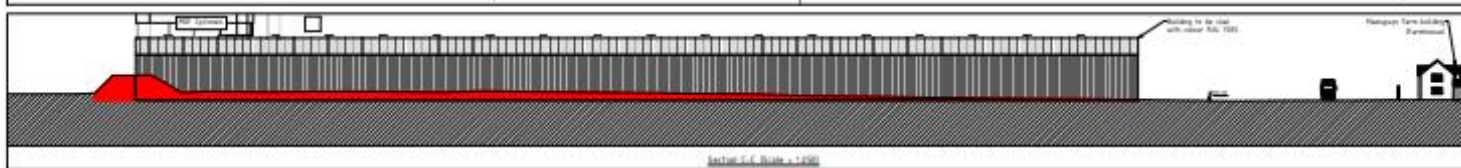
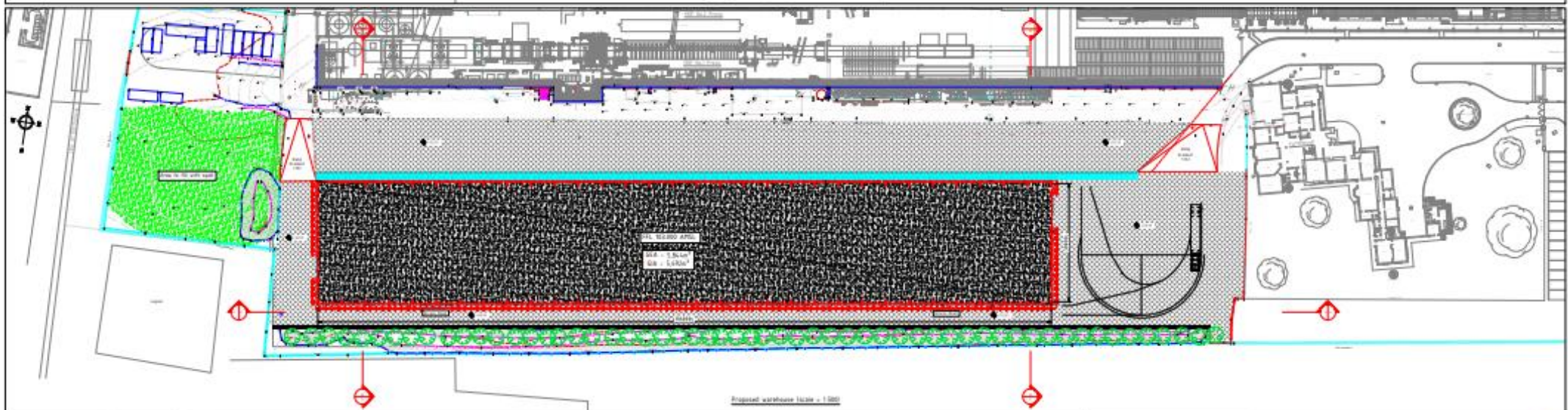
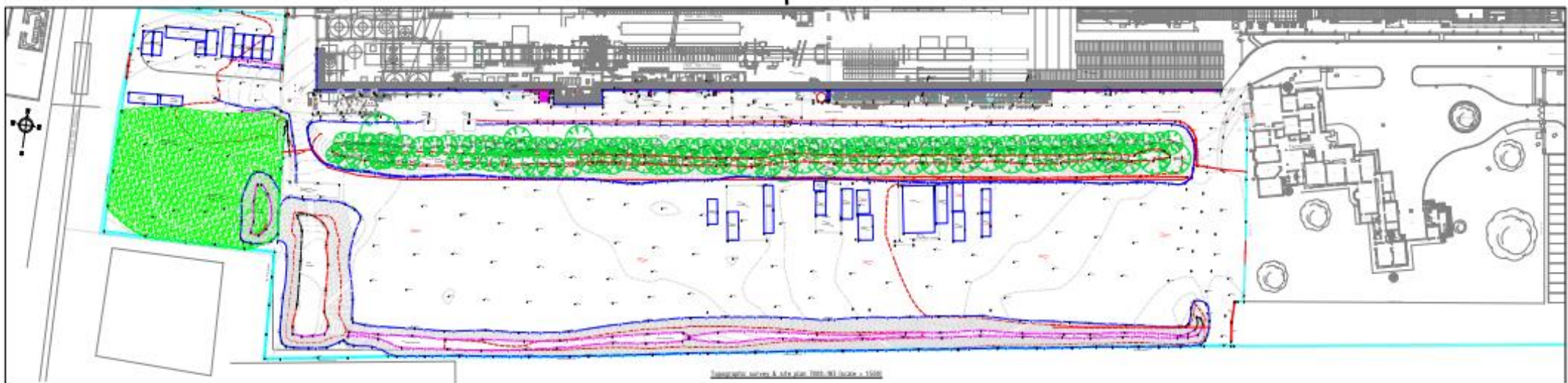
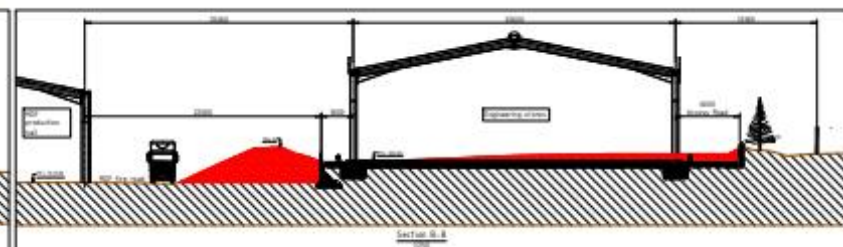
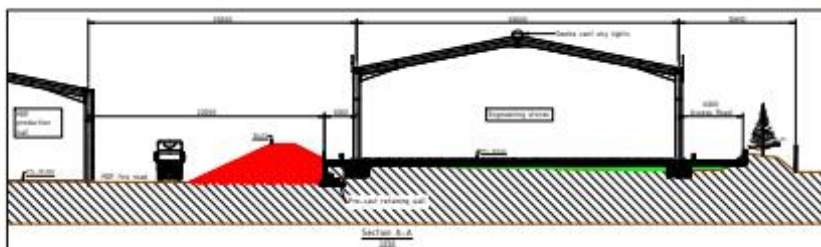


Figure 2: Proposed Development Layout



Legend:

- Red ground - specification to be confirmed @ 1:250
- Warehouse concrete slab @ 0.44m
- Warehouse floor finish @ 0.22m
- Top of finished @ 0.22m
- No



REVISIONS			
No.	Description	Date	By
1	Issue released	20.10.2020	AL
2	Revised wall location	20.10.2020	AL
3	Added new structural supports	20.10.2020	AL
4	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
5	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
6	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
7	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
8	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
9	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
10	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
11	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
12	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
13	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
14	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
15	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
16	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
17	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
18	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
19	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL
20	Revised floor finish	20.10.2020	AL

Engineering Stores			
Plan view and sections			
7000 598			
J 1/2			