

Land at Park Farm

BADGER SURVEY

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Highwood Group Ltd

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contents	Summary
Site Location	The site is located to the south of Eastleigh in Hampshire and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 43872 17503.
Proposals	Creation of continuing care retirement community (C2) including erection of buildings, works to and conversion of existing coach house and granary buildings, creation of roads, car parking, footpaths, landscaping, drainage works and associated infrastructure, following demolition of existing buildings.
Scope of this Survey(s)	The purpose of this survey is to discharge Condition 18 of the planning consent (ref: F/19/86946). The scope of works comprises; • Identification of any badger setts on / or adjacent to the site; and • Identification of any signs consistent with badger activity on the site.
Results	No evidence of badger setts and no signs of foraging and commuting badger activity were identified.

GLOSSARY

Badger Act	Protection of Badgers Act 1992
CEnv	Chartered Environmentalist
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
GPS	Global Positioning System
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
NE	Natural England
MCIEEM	Member of Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tetra Tech was commissioned by Highwood Group Ltd in March 2022 to complete a badger walkover survey of the site known as Land at Park Farm.

This report has been prepared by Project Ecologist Ben Cooke and the conditions pertinent to it are provided in Appendix A.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located to the south of Eastleigh in Hampshire and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 43872 17503.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Creation of continuing care retirement community (C2) including erection of buildings, works to and conversion of existing coach house and granary buildings, creation of roads, car parking, footpaths, landscaping, drainage works and associated infrastructure, following demolition of existing buildings.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this survey is to discharge Condition 18 of the planning consent (ref: F/19/86946) which states:

“Prior to the commencement of development, a badger survey will be undertaken, the details of which, including mitigation measures if badgers are found on site, will be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development must accord with these details.

Reason: To ensure no disturbance to badger setts.”

The survey will provide a record of badger activity within the survey area and the immediate surrounding area, so as to identify potential ecological constraints to the development and to make recommendations regarding further work, mitigation and enhancement if required.

The scope of work comprised:

- Identification of any badger setts on or adjacent to the site; and
- Identification of any signs consistent with badger activity on the site.

The information contained within this letter aims to:

- Assist the client to operate within the law;
- Ensure that the required level of survey work is conducted to apply for a licence, should one be necessary; and
- Provide preliminary advice on mitigation strategies against any adverse effects on the local badger population which may arise as a result of the proposed development.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 FIELD SURVEY

A badger survey was conducted within the predicted zone of influence¹ on 3rd March 2022. All areas of the site were investigated, including those parts that are not expected to be affected directly by the works but may be indirectly impacted upon. As recommended by English Nature's Badgers and Development (English Nature, 2002), a minimum of a 50 m buffer to either side of the proposed works was investigated for evidence of badger activity where access allowed.

The site was surveyed for evidence of badger setts or other badger activity such as paths, latrines, footprints or signs of foraging. Methodologies used and any setts recorded were classified according to the published criteria (Harris, Cresswell & Jefferies, 1989).

2.1.1 Evidence of Badger

The following signs of badgers were searched for:

- Setts;
- Footprints;
- Paths; and
- Dung pits and latrines

2.1.1.1 Setts

The classification of holes as active, partially used, or disused, follows Harris, Cresswell & Jefferies (1989). Active setts are clear of any debris or vegetation, and will have some of the following features: well-worn paths, spoil mounds, footprints, fresh bedding outside the entrance and / or footprints leading in. Partially used holes are considered to not show signs of current use (e.g., have vegetation growing across the entrance), but could easily be reused if required. Disused setts are partially or completely blocked, with substantial excavation required to allow reoccupation. All setts regardless of current condition were also recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) to accurately pinpoint their location.

Main setts are considered to be the most important sett within the territory of a badger group, where breeding takes place. They tend to be large, with five or more entrances and large spoil heaps and to be used throughout the year.

Annexe setts also have many well used entrances and tend to be 50-150m from the main sett, connected by well-worn paths, but may not be used all year round.

Subsidiary setts are not usually connected the main sett by obvious paths and may have any number of entrances.

Outlier setts tend to have only one or two holes and are used occasionally. There may be no obvious path to the main sett.

2.1.1.2 Footprints

During the site survey all muddy and silty areas were checked for signs of badger footprints. Where these were found, the number and relative size of the prints was noted.

¹ Zone of influence: the area that may be affected by the biophysical changes caused by the activities associated with the proposed works.

2.1.1.3 Paths and hairs

Badger hair (from the back of the animal) is much coarser than rabbit hair and generally much darker in colour. During the site survey where potential badger pathways were noted, low hanging branches and fences were searched for signs of badger hair. The presence of badger hair can be used to confirm use of a particular path by badgers.

2.1.1.4 Dung Pits and Latrines

Badgers generally defecate into a shallow 'scrape' in the soil called a dung pit. These may be solitary or grouped together in one area (usually between 5 and 10 dung pits), in which case they are termed a latrine. Latrines are often situated in the far corner of a clan territory or on the border with another clan's territory. Solitary dung pits may also be located on clan boundary lines, or closer to the sett.

2.1.2 Determining Territories

The location of setts and latrines are used to identify the boundaries of the territory and the badgers' foraging areas. The extent of the territory depends on the value of the foraging ground for example: a badger group in a poor-quality ground may occupy up to 183 ha, and one in good foraging as little as 15 ha (information sourced from www.badgers.org.uk).

Territories which are in current use tend to have tracks running around the boundaries. The location of such features along with all the other collected information was used to help determine the extent of badger clan boundaries within the site.

2.2 LIMITATIONS

The area surveyed included, where possible, a buffer around the application boundary of 50 m to ensure that any development activities comply with guidance from Natural England (2009) and legal requirements under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. A 50 m buffer was surveyed along all boundaries of the site where suitable habitat was present. If a badger sett is discovered during the proposed works, all works must stop and the ecologist notified.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 SURVEY RESULTS

No signs of badger activity within or around the site boundary were recorded during the survey.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY & LEGISLATION

4.1 PROTECTION OF BADGERS ACT 1992

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which makes it illegal for any person to kill, injure or take a badger. It is also an offence to destroy damage or obstruct an entrance to a badger's sett, or to disturb animals whilst within a sett.

4.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

In addition, the likelihood of disturbing a badger sett, adversely affecting badgers' foraging territory or links between them, or significantly increasing the likelihood of road casualties amongst badger populations, are capable of being material considerations in planning decisions.

4.3 NATURAL ENGLAND

Works in proximity to a sett entrance have the potential to affect a sett (Natural England, 2007 and 2009). Works which would otherwise cause an offence under current legislation may in some cases be permitted under licence from the relevant statutory authority, which in this case is Natural England (NE). Licences are usually only valid between July and November of any year inclusive, and full planning permission will be required if a badger sett is to be closed.

Natural England requires 30 working days to process a licence application (if required) and sett exclusion will take a minimum of three weeks, from gate installation. Daily monitoring of the sett being closed is recommended to ensure that no badgers are left trapped within the sett, that the gates remain free-swinging, and to ensure that badgers are not digging back in around the sett.

5.0 SUMMARY

No evidence of badger setts and no signs of foraging or commuting badger activity were recorded during the badger walkover survey. As such, there are considered to be no ecological constraints or impacts from the proposed development relating to badgers and no further recommendations are made.

6.0 REFERENCES

- English Nature (2002). *Badgers and Development*. English Nature, Peterborough, UK.
- Harris, S., Cresswell, P. and Jefferies, D., (1989), *Surveying badgers. An occasional publication of the mammal society – No. 9.*, Mammal Society: London.
- Natural England (2007). *Badgers & Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing*. Natural England, York, UK.
- Natural England (2009). *Interpretation of 'Disturbance' in relation to badgers occupying a sett*. Natural England, York, UK.

APPENDIX A – REPORT CONDITIONS

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The report refers, within the limitations stated, to the environment of the site in the context of the surrounding area at the time of the inspections’. Environmental conditions can vary and no warranty is given as to the possibility of changes in the environment of the site and surrounding area at differing times. No investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or not fully representative information. Any monitoring or survey work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations, including for example timescale, seasonal and weather-related conditions. Actual environmental conditions are typically more complex and variable than the investigative, predictive and modelling approaches indicate in practice, and the output of such approaches cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive or accurate indicator of future conditions. The “shelf life” of the Report will be determined by a number of factors including; its original purpose, the Client’s instructions, passage of time, advances in technology and techniques, changes in legislation etc. and therefore may require future re-assessment.

The whole of the report must be read as other sections of the report may contain information which puts into context the findings in any executive summary.

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