

Mulberry Farm, Stoke Golding

BADGER SURVEY REPORT

Issue Date: 28 June 2025

Report No. 241212.Badger.v1

Site Details

Report	Badger Survey Report
Site Address	Mulberry Farm, Stoke Golding, Leicestershire, CV13 6HA
Central OS Grid Reference	SP 39715 97425
Client	Stronghold Homes

Document Control

Author	Reviewed By	Comments	Report Version	Issue Date
Emma Bruce	Anna Scott-Swift	First issue	V1	28/06/2025

Contact details:

T: 07914 928532

E: anna@croftecology.co.uk**Disclosure:**

The information provided within this report has been prepared and provided as true and in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. It is intended solely for the Client and their agents as per the agreement under which we provided our services. Unauthorised sharing, reproduction, or use of this report by any other party is strictly prohibited. We do not provide any warranty, express or implied, regarding the advice presented in this report or any other service provided by Croft Ecology. Please note that this report was prepared by an ecological specialist and should not be considered legal advice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Croft Ecology was commissioned by Stronghold Homes to undertake an updated badger survey for Mulberry Farm, Stoke Golding, Leicestershire, CV13 6HA, in relation to a consented development for the *“Demolition of the existing Mulberry Farm buildings, retention of Mulberry Farmhouse and proposed erection of 25no. residential units with associated parking facilities, amenity space, landscaping, village green, drainage and paddock”*.
- An update badger survey was undertaken on 20 January 2025 by Croft Ecology to determine if the status of badger on Site had changed since the original survey. This survey identified five badger setts / potential setts, including one active sett (ID 13), one inactive sett (ID 15) and three potential setts (ID 3, 4, and 17).
- Following this survey, it was recommended that trail camera monitoring was undertaken of setts / potential setts ID 3, 4, 13 and 17 to update the status of badger using these potential setts; this was undertaken between 17th and 28th May 2025. ID 15 was not monitored due to its inactivity and distance of over 30m away from the proposed works.
- Monitoring confirmed regular badger presence in ID 13, which is likely to be part of a main sett, infrequent use of the building at ID 4, and no badger presence at ID 3 or 17. It is considered unlikely that a sett entrance is present at ID 4, due to the infrequent use, but that badgers use it for foraging or passing through only.
- The proposed development will result in the loss of the buildings in the south of the Site, where ID 3, 4, and 17 are located, but the northern field, where ID 13 and ID 15 are located, will be retained and enhanced.
- Mitigation requirements include installing a clear 30m buffer around setts ID 13 and 15 to prevent any accidental construction-related damage, and carefully dismantling the buildings where ID 3, 4, and 17 are located during their removal. If at any point a possible badger sett or evidence of badger is recorded, works should stop immediately and an ecologist contacted for advice.
- Additional recommendations are made regarding open excavations, lighting schemes and planting opportunities at the Site.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Aims.....	4
1.2	Site Location.....	4
1.3	Baseline information	5
1.4	Planning and Legislative Context	6
2	Methodology.....	8
2.1	Personnel	8
2.2	Data Search	8
2.3	Badger Survey and Monitoring	8
2.4	Survey Limitations.....	12
3	Results	13
3.1	Desk study	13
3.2	Badger Survey	13
4	Discussion and Recommendations	22
4.1	Proposed Development	22
4.2	Assessment of Impacts	22
4.3	Summary of Further Surveys Required.....	23
4.4	Mitigation Requirements.....	23
5	References	25
6	Appendices.....	26
	APPENDIX A – Badger Activity Map	26

1 INTRODUCTION

Croft Ecology was commissioned by Stronghold Homes to undertake an updated badger survey for Mulberry Farm, Stoke Golding, Leicestershire, CV13 6HA (central grid reference: SP 39715 97425) in relation to a consented development for the *“Demolition of the existing Mulberry Farm buildings, retention of Mulberry Farmhouse and proposed erection of 25no. residential units with associated parking facilities, amenity space, landscaping, village green, drainage and paddock”*.

1.1 Aims

The aims of this report are to:

- identify the presence / likely absence of badgers within the Site;
- identify any mitigation measures likely required for badgers.

The scope of this document is provided by the wording in Condition 4 of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council planning committee report 22/00661/FUL (November 2024):

“4. No development shall take place (including ground works or vegetation clearance) until an updated badger survey has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. This survey is to be carried out within 3 months of the likely commencement of works on site. It is to include details on mitigation measures for badgers if necessary (such as badger gates).”

REASON: In order to protect the protected wildlife species and their habitats that are known to exist on site to accord with Policy DM6 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016 and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

This report addresses this condition and details the results of the updated badger survey, and any necessary mitigation, for the proposed development.

1.2 Site Location

The land within the red line boundary of Figure 1 below is hereafter referred to as the ‘Site’.

The Site was located to the west of High Street in the village of Stoke Golding, Leicestershire. The Site comprised a series of agricultural and previously residential buildings, a sheep grazed grassland field bounded by hedgerows and areas of tall ruderal vegetation and scattered scrub.

The immediate land to the north and west comprised further pasture fields dissected by hedgerows and bounded by the Ashby de la Zouch Canal. To the south and east were residential properties and businesses within Stoke Golding. The wider environment was dominated by fields dissected by further hedgerows and two solar panel farms.

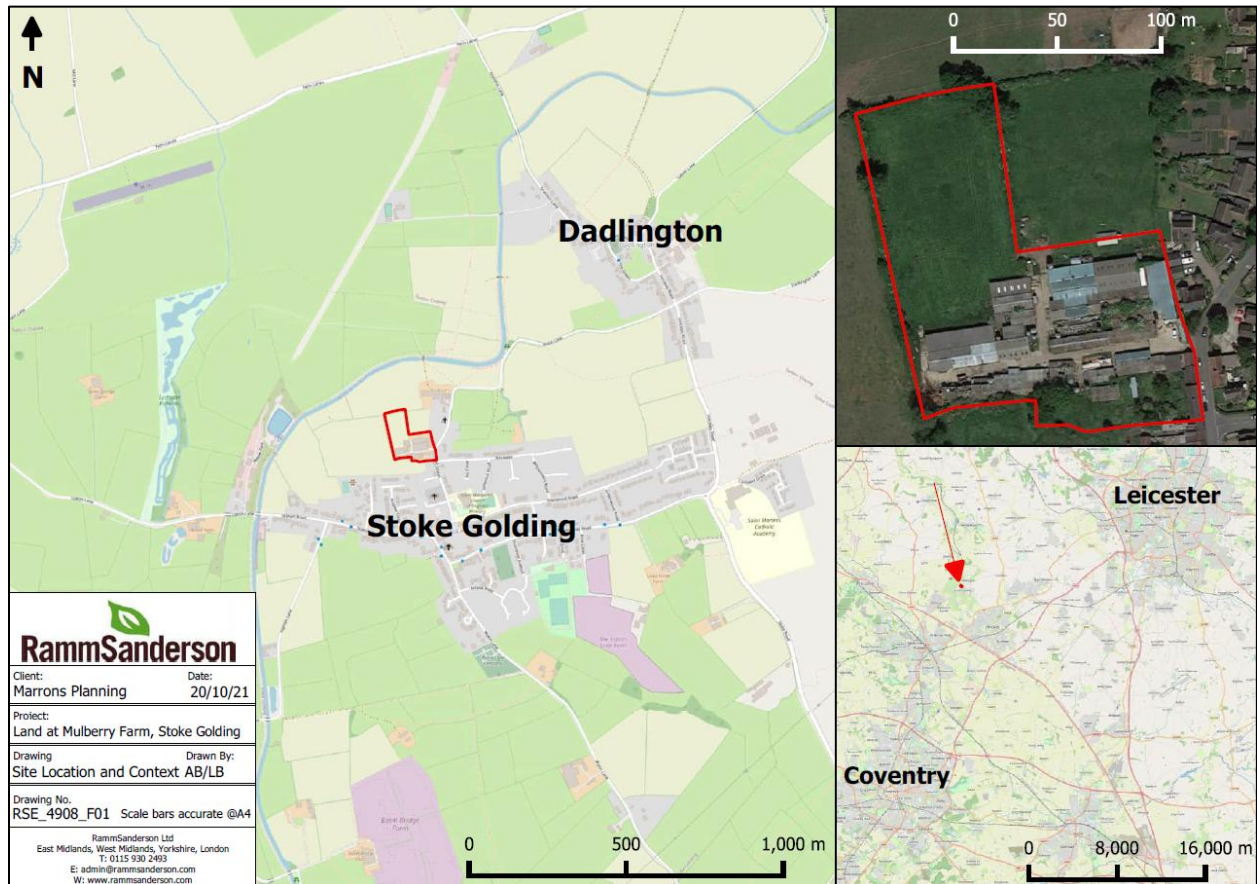


Figure 1. Site boundary (source – Ecological Impact Assessment Report, RammSanderson Ecology Ltd, 2024)

1.3 Baseline information

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken of the Site in 2021 by RammSanderson Ecology Ltd; an update habitat survey was undertaken in January 2025 by Croft Ecology to determine if the habitats on Site had changed since the initial suite of ecology surveys. The January 2025 survey indicated no changes at all to the habitats present on Site including their type, extent or condition.

Protected species surveys for great crested newt (eDNA survey), roosting bats (nocturnal emergence surveys), and badger were also undertaken in 2021 by RammSanderson Ecology Ltd.

The results of the initial suite of ecology surveys are reported in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report prepared by RammSanderson Ecology Ltd (2024).

Additionally, the following information sources have also been reviewed in detail:

- Planning Committee Report 19th November 2024 for 22/00661/FUL
- Site Layout – Revised Scheme (Hayward Architects Ltd, November 2024, drawing ref: 21/39 40K – P)

An update badger survey was undertaken on 20 January 2025 by Croft Ecology to determine if the status of badger on Site had changed since the original survey. This survey identified that Ramm Sanderson Sett 2 (Croft Ecology ID 13) along the western boundary was still active but Ramm Sanderson Sett 1 (Croft Ecology ID 15) in the ash tree was not currently active.

Additionally, a possible sett was identified in the south of the Site under a collapsed building (ID 4) along with other potential sett entrances into a former chicken shed (ID 17) and a shed (ID 3) and new mammal pathways.

Following this survey, it was therefore recommended that trail camera monitoring was undertaken of ID 3, 4, 13 and 17 to update the status of badger using these potential setts. Refer to the badger activity map in Appendix A for locations of the potential setts and mammal pathways.

1.4 Planning and Legislative Context

In the UK badgers and their setts (places of rest) are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, making it an offence to intentionally capture, kill or injure a badger or interfere with a sett (including disturbing a badger in a sett, damaging, destroying or blocking up of a sett and digging or allowing dogs to enter a sett). A licence is required for any works impacting on a badger sett.

The ODPM Circular 06/05 makes the presence of a protected species a material consideration within the planning process. It states that it is essential for the presence of protected species and the extent they may be affected by proposed development be established through appropriate surveys before the planning permission is granted and encourages the use of planning conditions to secure the long-term protection of the species.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) section 15 outlines how applications need to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Paragraphs 174 to 177 state that sites with biodiversity value should be protected and enhanced, minimising impacts on biodiversity and establishing ecological connectivity. Furthermore, the protection of priority sites and species through developments is outlined and states where significant harm is unavoidable through alternatives or mitigation, planning permission should be refused. Finally, this section concludes that developments with aims to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported and any improvement around developments should be encouraged to achieve net gains for biodiversity.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Personnel

The survey and assessment were undertaken by Anna Scott-Swift MCIEEM, Director of Ecology at Croft Ecology. Anna has over 20 years of experience working in ecology and has undertaken and reviewed dozens of Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and Ecological Impact Assessments including badger surveys, trailcam monitoring as well as badger sett closure under licence. Anna also holds protected species survey licences for bats (2015-12592-CLS-CLS), great crested newts (2015-17871-CLS-CLS), and barn owls (CL29/00392).

The report was prepared by Emma Bruce ACIEEM. Emma has worked in ecological consultancy for 8 years and has prepared many reports during this time including protected species survey reports, mitigation strategies and method statements, PEAs and ECIAAs. Emma also holds protected species licences for bats (licence no. 2022-10318-CL17-BAT) and great crested newts (licence no. 2018-38167-CLS-CLS).

2.2 Data Search

Biological records, including badger records, and information on protected sites from within a 2km radius of the Site were provided by Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) to inform the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by RammSanderson Ecology Ltd in 2024. This information was used in the production of this report.

Additionally, aerial photography was viewed to assess habitat connectivity around the Site's locale, which may be important to ecological features present on Site and for the consideration of suitable ecological enhancements.

2.3 Badger Survey and Monitoring

A walkover of the Site was undertaken by suitably qualified ecologist Anna Scott-Swift MCIEEM on 20th January 2025, with monitoring of the setts, via camera traps, undertaken between the 17th and 28th May 2025.

The initial survey methodology comprised two main elements: a thorough search for any evidence of badger setts, and a detailed search for any other signs of badger activity. The Site

was searched for areas that might be used for foraging and sett building. Incidental foraging signs, tree scratching, paths, latrines and setts were also recorded if found (Harris et al., 1989).

Information recorded during this survey included a count of any setts located within the survey boundary, with a note made as to any well-used or very active entrances, and a note of any obvious badger activity, such as well-worn paths and run-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, dung pits, latrines and foraging signs. This information gathered would aim to assist in compiling a comprehensive picture of how badgers are using the Site and inform any licence application relating to the Site, if necessary.

Following the initial Site visit and identification of a number of possible setts within the Site boundary, monitoring visits were undertaken. These included placement of camera traps at key locations including the sett entrances identified. These cameras were left in place for a minimum of five days before the cameras were checked for footage and their positions altered as deemed necessary. A total of 12 days of monitoring were undertaken between 17th and 28th May 2025.

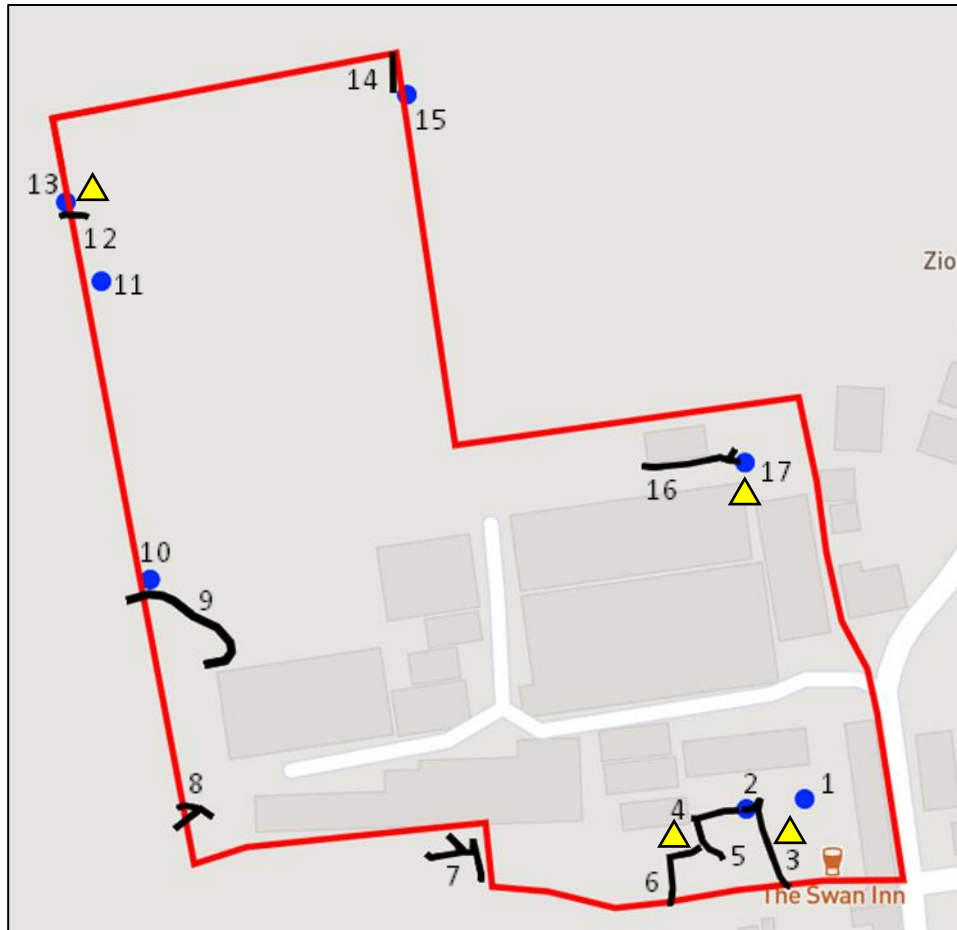


Figure 2. Locations of trail cameras (yellow triangles) placed within the Site.



Photos 1 & 2. Location of trail cameras at ID 3 (left) and ID 4 (right).

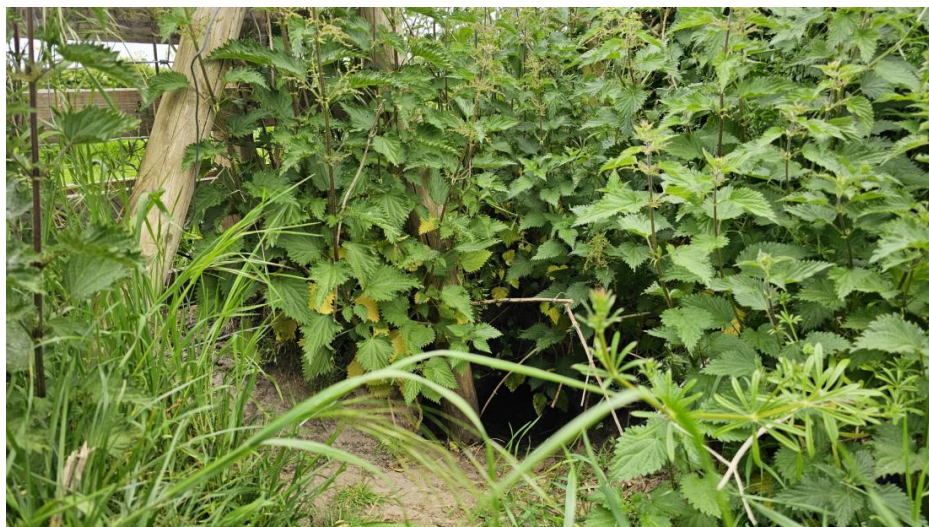


Photo 3. Location of trail camera at ID 13.



Photo 4. Location of trail camera at ID 17.

2.4 Survey Limitations

It was not possible for the surveyor to access all the buildings where mammal paths led into, to check for sett entrances, due to their dilapidated nature. However, trail camera monitoring was undertaken at these locations to assess the presence / likely absence of badger, therefore this was not considered to be a significant limitation.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk study

The LRERC data search returned five records of badger within 2km of the Site; the specific locations of these were not detailed within the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by RammSanderson Ecology Ltd in 2024.

The Site has connectivity to the surrounding landscape through field hedgerows extending north and west of the Site. These led to the Ashby de la Zouch Canal and a series of fishing lakes which provide opportunities for foraging and commuting for a variety of species including badgers. Aside from these, there are limited large waterbodies in the wider environment and no large woodland blocks.

3.2 Badger Survey

Five possible badger setts, including one active sett, one inactive sett and three potential setts, were recorded during the update badger survey in January 2025. The active sett (ID 13) was located along the western boundary of the northern field (previously identified as Sett 1 an active subsidiary sett by Ramm Sanderson) and the inactive sett (ID 15) was located along the eastern boundary under an ash tree (previously identified as Sett 2 an inactive outlier sett by Ramm Sanderson). Two potential setts (ID 3, 4) related to mammal paths that led into a shed (ID 3; Photo 1) and a collapsed building (ID 4; Photo 2) where it was not possible to find a sett entrance, whilst ID 17 (Photo 5) had a hole in the base of the former chicken shed (the wooden floor had long since rotted) that could not be fully inspected.



Photo 5. Potential badger hole in base of former chicken shed at ID 17.

Additionally, numerous mammal paths were present throughout the Site, including leading into buildings, dense scrub, through fences, and into some of the sett entrances. Latrines and foraging pits were also recorded.

The badger activity map in Appendix A shows the locations and range of the badger evidence identified within the bounds of the Site. Monitoring of setts / potential setts ID 3, 4, 13, and 17 was carried out between the 17th and 28th May 2025 to establish the levels of activity present. Monitoring was not undertaken of the inactive outlier sett at the base of the ash tree (ID 15) due to its inactivity and distance of over 30m from the proposed developed. The results of the January 2025 site walkover and May 2025 monitoring are included in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Details of badger evidence identified within Mulberry Farm

Evidence ID number	Additional monitoring (Y/N)	Description
1	N	Forage pits under a tree.
2	N	Forage pits near a building.
3	Y	Mammal path led into the building then disappeared. Monitoring identified that only cats used this mammal path and passed under stored materials before leaving again. Badgers were observed passing the building a couple of times but did not enter the building. See photos 6 and 7 below.
4	Y	Mammal path led into the collapsed building. Monitoring identified that a single badger went in and out very infrequently during the monitoring period (17-28 May 2025) emerging from under the collapsed building at 00:18 on 18 May 2025 and at 00:23 on 20 May 2025 and later entering and emerging that same day at 22:40. A further inspection was undertaken on 17 th June with a torch and endoscope to look under the collapsed building and concluded that no sett was present as there was no digging evidence, no bedding present, insufficient shelter (Photos 8 and 9) and only infrequent use on the trailcam. It is considered likely that the building is used occasionally for foraging or passing through. See photos 10 and 11 below.
5	N	Mammal path into a greenhouse in January 2025; not present during May 2025 when setting the trailcams.

6	N	Mammal path leading to the outside of the southern boundary.
7	N	Dense scrub outside the Site boundary with mammal paths leading into it.
8	N	Mammal path through fence by large manure heap.
9	N	Mammal path along then through western hedge
10	N	Latrine by fenced section, with a hole under the fence.
11	N	Forage pits.
12	N	Foraging under a mature tree and a mammal path under the fence to the active sett in the hedge bank behind.
13	Y	1x active hole in the hedge bank. This was monitored and found that badgers (only one seen at any given time) emerged from the sett on 18 May 2025 with no confirmed emergence or entry on any other given days but with several passes on 20/21/23/25 May whereby an individual checked the entrance and passed by regularly (though not nightly) throughout the monitoring period. Given the levels of activity and possibility of further holes in the hedge bank it is considered most likely that this is a subsidiary sett, but it is possible that it could be a main sett. See photos 12 and 13 below.
14	N	Foraging and mammal path in the field corner.

15	N	1x badger hole in the base of an ash tree along the eastern boundary of the northern field. This hole appeared inactive and wasn't monitored as it is over 30m away from the proposed works. Given its distance from the active sett at ID 13, and it being a single hole, it is considered most likely that this is an outlier sett that is used/active infrequently.
16	N	Path leading into a chicken house.
17	Y	Possible mammal hole within the former chicken hut. This was monitored and found to only be used by a mouse every night with no badger activity. See photo 14 below.



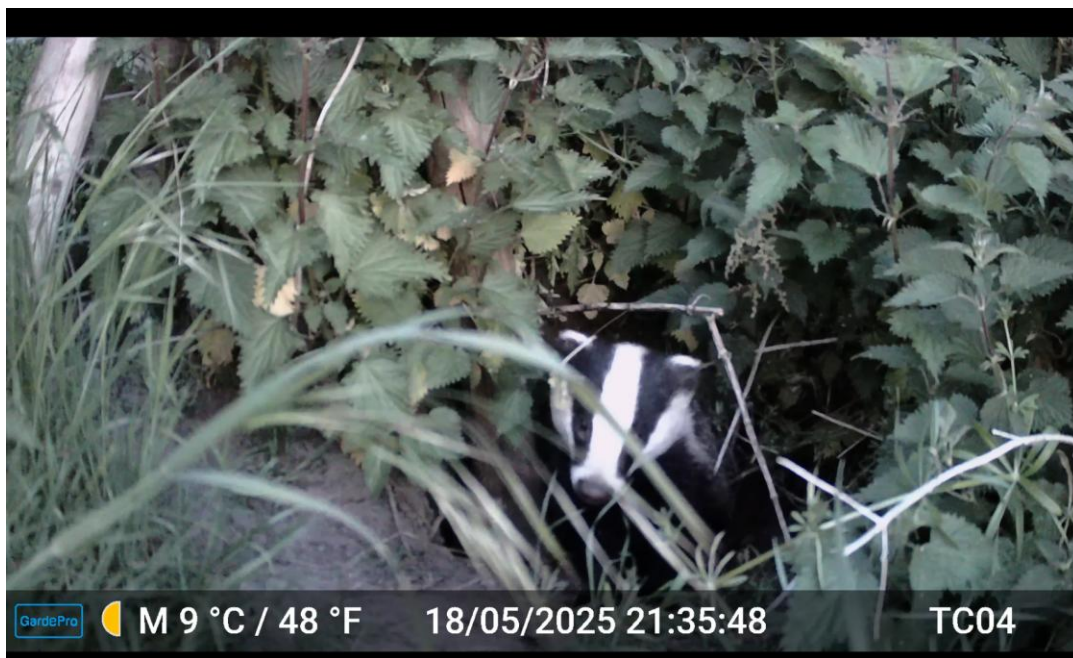
Photos 6 & 7. Mammal path at ID 3 (left) and badger passing the building but not entering (right).



Photos 8 & 9. Mammal path at ID 4 (left) and badger exiting the collapsed building (right).



Photos 10 & 11. Lack of digging or sufficient shelter at ID 4 following additional inspection with an endoscope in June 2025



Photos 12 & 13. Mammal path at ID 13 (top) and badger emerging from the sett (bottom).



Photos 14 and 15. Mammal path at ID 17 leading into the chicken hut with possible hole.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the *“Demolition of the existing Mulberry Farm buildings, retention of Mulberry Farmhouse and proposed erection of 25no. residential units with associated parking facilities, amenity space, landscaping, village green, drainage and paddock”*.

In order to facilitate the development, there will be a loss of scattered scrub, some of the scattered trees, some modified grassland, tall ruderal vegetation, the buildings, bare ground, and hardstanding. Additionally, a small section of the defunct species-poor hedgerow will require removal.

4.2 Assessment of Impacts

The January 2025 update badger survey identified five possible badger setts, including one active subsidiary sett (ID 13), one inactive outlier sett (ID 15) and three potential setts (ID 3, 4, and 17). Monitoring of the setts / potential setts through the use of trail cameras was undertaken to establish the presence / absence of badgers using the setts and the level of badger activity present on Site. ID 15 was not monitored due to its inactivity and distance of over 30m away from the proposed works.

The monitoring identified the following:

- ID 3 was only used by cats and no badgers entered/emerged from the building;
- ID 4 was used very infrequently by badgers for foraging or passing through, but no sett entrance is likely to be present;
- ID 13 was used regularly by badgers, with at least 1x badger emerging from the sett, checking the entrance, and passing by regularly throughout the monitoring period;
- ID 17 was used by a mouse every night with no badger activity.

The proposed development will result in the loss of the buildings in the south of the Site, where ID 3, 4, and 17 are located, but the northern field, where ID 13 and ID 15 are located, will be retained and enhanced.

4.3 Summary of Further Surveys Required

No further surveys are required.

4.4 Mitigation Requirements

Evidence of badgers was recorded on Site during the surveys and, as such, appropriate mitigation will be needed to ensure that the proposed development works safeguard this species, including the following:

- Although setts ID 13 and ID 15 are both over 30m from the proposed construction works, a clear 30m buffer will need to be installed around each sett to prevent any accidental construction-related damage. This can be installed using heras fencing, or similar, with appropriate signage.
- It is considered unlikely that there are badger setts within the building at ID 4; however, the building materials at ID4 will need to be dismantled carefully and systematically during their removal in the presence of an experienced ecologist. If at any point a possible badger sett or evidence of badger is recorded, works should stop immediately, and an ecologist contacted for advice.
- It is considered unlikely that there are badger setts within the buildings at ID 3 and 17; however, the building materials will need to be dismantled carefully and systematically during their removal. If at any point a possible badger sett or evidence of badger is recorded, works should stop immediately, and an ecologist contacted for advice.
- Lighting within and adjacent to the 30m protective buffer zones and the retained setts should be restricted both during and post development works with the aim of reducing disturbance level to resident badgers.
- Any deep excavations which will be left open overnight will need to be covered over or have sloping wooden boards placed in them to provide exit ramps for animals to escape should they become trapped.
- The planting scheme for the proposed development already takes account of the badger activity on the Site and includes the planting of fruit trees and scrub in the retained northern field where the confirmed setts are located. This would provide long-term

foraging and sett-building opportunities for badgers. Further details are available in the Mulberry Farm BEMP (Croft Ecology, June 2025 – Appendices A and B).

- Foraging and commuting routes should be maintained / enhanced throughout the Site by retaining existing hedgerows and creating new ones, as well as creating other areas of open space throughout the development. This is illustrated in the Mulberry Farm BEMP (Croft Ecology, June 2025 – Appendix B).

5 REFERENCES

British Standard (2013). *BS 42020:2013: Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development.*

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, 2nd Edition.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Circular 06/2005 *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*

Croft Ecology (2025) *Mulberry Farm BEMP.* Report Ref: 241212.BEMP.v1

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023). *National Planning Policy Framework.* Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, London.

Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989) *Surveying Badgers.* Mammal Society.

Hayward Architects Ltd (2024) *Site Layout – Revised Scheme (drawing ref: 21/39 40K – P).* On behalf of Stronghold Homes.

Hill D, Fasham M, Tucker G, Shewry M & Shaw P (2005) *Handbook of Biodiversity Methods: Survey, Evaluation and Monitoring.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Planning Committee Report 19th November 2024 for 22/00661/FUL

RammSanderson Ecology Ltd (2024) *Mulberry Farm, Stoke Golding; Ecological Impact Assessment.* Report Ref: RSE_4908_R2_V3.

6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Badger Activity Map (January and May 2025)

