

2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2025  
LLD3629/ECO/ SH

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# LIZARD

Landscape Design and Ecology

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Dear Kasan

**Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology - Ecological Consultancy Services**  
**St Joseph's Convent of Mercy, Hillside Drive, Gravesend**  
**Investigation of a potential badger sett**

### Summary

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology (LLDE) was commissioned to undertake further survey of several mammal holes identified within the construction zone at St Joseph's Convent of Mercy (Located around central grid reference: TQ 65633 72863 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The initial site visit was carried out in July 2024 by Sam Hall (Consultant Ecologist, LLDE), with subsequent visits to deploy, check and collect wildlife cameras across two 21no. day periods in 2024 and 2025. Three cameras were deployed across the area to determine whether an active sett was present.

The footage collected from the cameras showed a number of mammals present in the area including foxes and hedgehogs, but no direct evidence of badger activity was identified and, therefore, a conclusion of likely absence reached.

It is recommended that care should be taken when working close to the holes so as not to cause injury or death of any mammals making use of the holes, but the proposed works may continue without the need to consult Natural England with regards the presence of badgers on site.

Foxes / hedgehogs etc... receive some limited protection under the Wild Mammals Act (1996) which protect them from unnecessary cruelty. Therefore, if it is not possible to avoid impacts to the holes, they should be dug out carefully under supervision of a suitable qualified ecologist to ensure that any mammals present therein have the opportunity to safely escape.

### Landscape Architecture

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### Ecology

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Site Context

The site encompasses a convent and gardens on Hillside Drive in Gravesend, Kent. The site is surrounded by residential houses and gardens.

Site vegetation is typical of a managed garden with most of the vegetated area taken up by actively managed modified grassland with scattered mature trees. An area of sycamore dominated woodland and tall forbs were also noted to the south of the site, where several mammal holes were identified.

The proposed development on site includes the conversion of the existing convent into private residential dwellings, and it is understood that repairs are required to the wall that lies along the southern site boundary.

Badger Sett Monitoring

Badgers receive protection under the *Protection of Badgers Act (1992)*.

An initial field survey was undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2024 by an experienced ecologist (Sam Hall, LLDE). The mammal holes and surrounding area was systematically searched for any evidence of badger, in line with best practice badger survey guidelines *Survey Badgers* (Badger Trust, 2023)<sup>1</sup> such as:

- Further mammal holes
- Latrines
- Snuffle holes
- Push-unders' through fencing
- Hair caught on fencing or around mammal holes
- Foot prints
- Mammal tracks

The potential sett was subject to two periods of continuous monitoring between 22<sup>nd</sup> of August and 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 and then between 23<sup>rd</sup> of October to 13<sup>th</sup> of November. Setts were monitored using three Spypoint LINK-LTE infrared cameras which captured still images and video recordings.

Initial assessment of the mammal holes indicated that they were of a size and shape that is typical of badger setts, and no other field signs were recorded. The camera evidence, however, did not reveal any photos or videos of badgers using the site. A number of other mammals were recorded including foxes, domestic cats and hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are a known prey animal of badgers and considered less likely to occupy areas where badgers are active (Young *et al*, 2006)<sup>2</sup>.

Conclusion

<sup>1</sup><https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/planning-development-and-badgers#planning-and-development-guides-form>

<sup>2</sup> <https://zslpublications.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1469-7998.2006.00078.x>

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The existing habitats on site of modified grassland and woodland represent suitable potential foraging and sett building opportunities for badgers. Several mammal holes were identified within a wooded area towards the southern boundary of the site. However, two periods of continuous camera surveillance did not provide any evidence of badgers using the site.

Given that badgers are likely absent, it is recommended that work on site may proceed. Care should be taken when working around the mammal holes and excavation adjacent to the hole limited to manual methods to avoid killing or injuring any other mammals present. Should any badgers be seen on site, work should cease immediately, and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. Please provide the badger tool box talk appended to the end of this letter to the site manager so that they can provide the information to any contractors working on the site.

Other common mammals receive some limited protection under the *Wild Mammals Act (1996)* which protect them from unnecessary cruelty. Therefore, if it is not possible to avoid impacts to the holes, they should be dug out carefully under supervision of a suitable qualified ecologist to ensure that any mammals present therein have the opportunity to safely escape.

Please contact me should you wish to discuss or review further

Yours sincerely,

**Sam Hall**  
**Consultant Ecologist**  
*BSc(Hons), MSc*

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**Landscape Architecture**

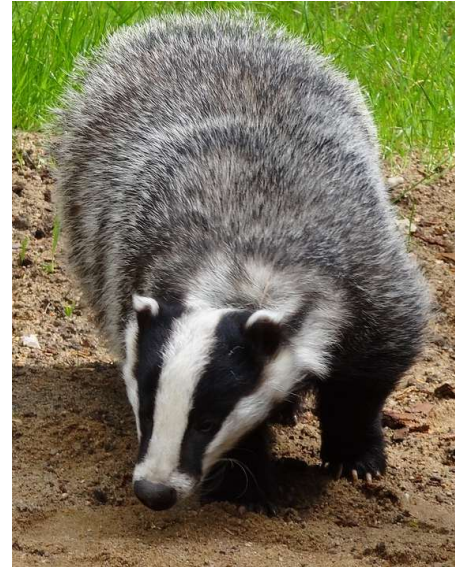
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### Badger Tool Box Talk

- Short, stout, nocturnal mammals up to 1.0m in length.
- Badgers live in underground burrows called setts.
- Woodland is optimal habitat for badgers but they are not uncommon in urban areas.



It is a criminal offence to:

- intentionally capture, kill or injure a badger,
- damage, destroy or block access to their setts,
- disturb badgers in setts,
- deliberately send or intentionally allow a dog into a sett,
- bait or dig for badgers.

During an initial ecological appraisal of the site, a number of mammal holes were identified along the bank at the south of the site. Two periods of 21 day camera monitoring did not provide any evidence of badgers making use of the site. In the unlikely event that a badger is seen on site by staff, all works should cease and advice sought from the project ecologist.

The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) shall be incorporated into the construction phase to safeguard badgers and hedgehogs:

- All trenches or excavations over 1.0m deep should be covered overnight or have a broad ramp installed at a shallow angle to prevent badgers or other mammals becoming trapped.
- All excavations and trenches should be checked daily for entrapped animals prior to works (re)commencing.
- Any exposed pipework greater than 200mm diameter should be blocked to prevent badgers gaining entry.
- Any loose material stockpiled on site for an extended period should be fenced to prevent badger access, as they readily build setts in loose, easy-to-excavate material.
- Short-term stockpiles should be checked daily for any signs of digging and fenced as appropriate.
- Avoid walking or tracking vehicles over the identified mammal holes.

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