



Dormouse Monitoring Report 2023

Land South-East of Chalcroft Business Park

West End, Hampshire

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living creatures are capable of migration and whilst protected species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

The views and opinions contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Strutt & Parker to undertake a dormouse survey of land south-east of Chalcroft Business Park, Hampshire.
- 1.2 A preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) was undertaken by the Ecology Partnership on 16th March 2023. This found that the onsite hedgerows and scrub habitats were suitable to support dormice and had connectivity to offsite blocks of suitable dormouse habitat within the surrounding area. The hedgerows on site supported plant species known to be of value to dormice such as hawthorn, blackthorn and hazel. It was therefore recommended that further surveys for dormice were conducted.

Site Context and Status

- 1.3 The site (SU 48750 15962) is located south-east of Chalcroft Business Park and consists primarily of areas of grassland with some scattered trees. The wider area consists of woodland to the north and west, grassland fields to all aspects, railway tracks to the south and the town of Hedge End to the south-east. The red line boundary of the site is shown below (Figure 1).

Description of Proposed Development

- 1.4 The proposed development is for an outline application for up to development of up to 3,410m² of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E(g)(ii), E(g)(iii) and B8) to include farm shop (Use Class E(a)) of up to 325m², parking and yard areas (including accessible spaces), landscape buffers and acoustic mitigation. Formation of vehicular and pedestrian access to Estate road (access not a reserved matter).



Figure 1: Approximate red line boundary of the site.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 A total of 50 dormouse tubes were installed within the site boundary features (hedgerows, hedgerows with trees and scrub) on 20th April 2023 (Figure 3). Each dormouse tube was installed as per Natural England guidelines, attached to the underside of a suitable branch with metal wire.
- 2.2 Survey checks were undertaken between May – September 2023 on the following dates: 31st May, 29th June, 26th July, 16th August and 14th September. This enabled an effort score of 20 to be achieved across the site, in accordance with the Index of Probability in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook.
- 2.3 A hazelnut search was also carried out on the 16th of August 2023 to assess if there was any evidence of dormouse feeding activity on site. This was used to compliment the presence/absence tube surveys.

3.0 Results

- 3.1 None of the surveys found any evidence of dormice using any of the nest tubes within the site. Only wood mouse / yellow-necked mouse evidence was found within the tubes and tunnels over the survey period with a total of four nests in July, August and September (See Figure 2).
- 3.2 The hazelnut search carried out in August found no evidence of dormouse feeding on site. All the investigated nuts were attributed to either wood mouse or yellow-necked mouse, or squirrel.
- 3.3 The difference between evidence of wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and yellow-necked mouse (*Apodemus flavicollis*) in terms of nests and feeding signs is indiscernible. Even the mice themselves cannot be accurately separated without handling. Given the aim of this report, it is considered proportionate to refer to any evidence of these species as '*Apodemus spp.*' to suggest the evidence could be from either species. This reference is used for the remainder of this report.



Figure 2: Location of potential *Apodemus* spp. nest (yellow circles).

- 3.4 Using the Index of Probability outlined in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright *et al.*, 2006), a score of 20 has been achieved for the site after the September check. This achieves the recommended score deemed necessary to detect presence/likely absence of dormice.

4.0 Discussion and recommendations

- 4.1 The site was considered to support suitable dormice habitat within the network of hedgerows and scrub which contained species suitable to support a population, as well as the connectivity to allow dispersal within the wider area.
- 4.2 The 2km desk study obtained from Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) undertaken as part of the preliminary ecological appraisal did not find any dormouse records in the local area, and the nearest dormice EPS licences located over 2.3km to the south-east of the site.
- 4.3 Dormice surveys were conducted from May to September 2023. During these surveys, no dormice or evidence of dormice, such as nests or feeding remains, was identified anywhere on site. This level of survey effort meets the minimum requirement to confirm presence/likely absence. As such, it is considered that dormice are likely absent from the site, and no further survey or mitigation is required.

Habitat retention/enhancement

- 4.4 Development plans also involve supplementary planting along the southern and western site boundaries. This will help to ensure habitat connectivity across the site is maintained, both for hazel dormice and other protected species.
- 4.5 Recommended species to be incorporated into the planting scheme will include species of value to dormice and other wildlife and include:
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
 - Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
 - Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
 - Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

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- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
 - Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
 - Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
 - Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
 - Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
 - Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)
- 4.6 Planting native species will ensure a robust network of wildlife corridors is retained and enhanced on site to support a vast range of native species present both on site and within the wider landscape.
- 5.0 Conclusions**
- 5.1 The site was identified as having potential to support dormice due to the suitable habitat of hedgerows, and scrub around the boundary of the site, although no records of this species are present in the wider surrounding area.
- 5.2 No dormice or evidence of dormice were identified anywhere on site between the survey months of May to September inclusive 2023. A total of 50 nest tubes were installed on site in April and a total effort score of 20 was considered to be undertaken across the site.
- 5.3 A number of tubes provided evidence of wood mice and/or yellow-necked mice including nests, and food caches. Density of these species was greatest within the northern hedgerow. No evidence of other species using the tubes were identified at any point.
- 5.4 Given all the evidence gathered throughout the survey season, dormice are likely to be absent from the site, and an EPSM licence will not be required.
- 5.5 Hedgerows and other edge habitats on site will be largely retained and enhanced as far as possible as per the site development plans. Native woody species planting across the site, particularly along the southern and western site boundary will ensure a robust wildlife corridor network persists and improves post-development.

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