



Dormouse Survey

Land South of Barrow Green
Road, Oxted, Surrey

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Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0	METHODOLOGY.....	5
3.0	RESULTS.....	6
4.0	DISCUSSION.....	6
5.0	ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY	7
6.0	CONCLUSIONS	7

LIABILITIES:

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

The recommendations 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 Croudace Homes to undertake a dormice survey at land south of Barrow Green Road, Oxted, Surrey.
- 1.2 The Preliminary Ecological Assessment identified hedgerow, scrub and woodland habitats that had potential to support dormouse, and records were present in the wider surrounding area.

Site Context

- 1.3 The site comprises an arable field with small areas of woodland at the northern and southern edges. The site is approximately 9.7ha and located on the north-western edge of Oxted, bound by Barrow Green Road and a railway corridor to the north, a cemetery to the east, residential housing and gardens to the south, ancient woodland to the south-west and a small ephemeral stream to the west (TQ 387 531). The wider surrounding area comprises residential areas to the north, east and south, with extensive woodland and private green space to the west.
- 1.4 The approximate red line boundary of the development is shown in figure 1.

Description of the Proposed Development

- 1.5 Outline application for a residential development of up to 190 dwellings (including affordable homes) (Use Class C3), an extra care facility with up to up 80 beds (Use Class C2), together with the formation of vehicular access, landscaping, parking, open space, green and blue infrastructure, and all other associated development works. All matters reserved except access.



Figure 1: Approximate red line boundary of the site.

Satellite imagery obtained from Google Earth Pro on 24/03/2022

Legislation

- 1.6 Dormice are a European protected species (EPS) and as such protected from deliberate killing, injury or disturbance and their breeding sites and resting places are absolutely protected with no requirement to show that their destruction was deliberate or reckless. The aim of this law is to protect the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of the species. Dormice are further protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This law provides protection to individual animals as well as breeding and resting places, making the deliberate killing or injuring of individual dormice unlawful.
- 1.7 Due to the laws providing protection to dormice, any disturbance or destruction of their nests is unlawful unless done under a licence from Natural England.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 A total of 54 dormouse tubes were established in the woodland, woodland edge, and treelines within the site on at the beginning of April 2022. Each dormouse tube was established as per Natural England guidelines and attached to the underside of a suitable branch. Some of the tubes were located less than 20m apart, due to the size of the site. Within the first two weeks, some of the dormouse tubes were moved by members of the public, the tubes were re-established mid-April 2022. In late June 2022 several tubes went missing or were lost in vegetation and were re-established in early July 2022.



Figure 2: approximate locations of the dormouse tubes on site

2.2 Checks were undertaken once a month between April and October 2022 excluding June due to missing/lost tubes.

2.3 Surveys have been undertaken by suitably experienced accredited agents under Alexia Tamblyn (dormouse survey licence CLS 138) under the Natural England Class Survey Licence WML CL10A.

2.4 Using the Index of Probability in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook, a score of 21 had been achieved between April and October, therefore no further surveys are considered necessary.

3.0 Results

3.1 During the survey period of April to October 2022, no dormice or evidence of dormice (such as nests) were recorded. Other than a single wood mouse nest in the northern woodland, no evidence of other species such as yellow necked mice were identified within the redline boundary of the site.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Although dormice are not considered to be present within the site, an enhancement strategy for the retained and existing habitat for has been recommended. This will be aimed at improving on site habitat for dormice and other species present within the landscape is outlined in detail below and may encourage dormouse onto the site in the future, should their population expand. Enhancements will also support biodiversity net gain ambitions.

5.0 Mitigation

5.1 The current proposals for a residential development and only small sections of hedgerow and linear scrub are to be lost to facilitate access in the north and south of the site..

5.2 If a dormouse or dormouse nest is recorded during any clearance of vegetation, all works will stop, and an ecologist will determine if a licence is required for the remaining clearance.

Enhancement Strategy

5.3 There are opportunities for enhanced planting around the edges of the site to make the boundaries more robust and buffer existing habitats from development. This has the potential to increase the habitat opportunities for dormice in the local area. Recommended species to be planted to create or enhance dormice habitats, should include berry bearing species and species of value to local wildlife. Species that may be planted include;

- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*),
- Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*),
- Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*),
- Wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*),
- Sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*),
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*),
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*),
- Yew (*Taxus bacata*),
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*),
- Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*),
- Dog rose (*Rosa canina*),
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

5.4 These species provide a variety of food sources for dormice around the year. It is recommended that pockets of bramble are allowed to grow, but not dominate, and that ivy should also be allowed to grow on some of the mature trees within the woodland habitat.

5.5 These enhancements are also considered to be of value for a range of wildlife, including for foraging and nesting birds and small mammals.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 A total of 54 dormice nest tubes were established on site, within the red line boundary in 2022. These surveys did not record any dormice or evidence of dormice within the site, confirming their likely absence.
- 6.2 The proposed development is largely limited to the centre of the site, and the site boundary will be largely retained and enhanced with the exception of two small section for access in the norther and south.
- 6.3 As dormice are not identified within the red line boundary the development is not considered to impact upon the favourable conservation status of dormice in the wider landscape. It is considered that the enhancements will provide a range of opportunities for wildlife in the site and create robust ecological networks within the landscape.

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