



Dormouse Survey Report

**Land at Bird in Eye Farm,
Framfield Road, TN22 5HA**

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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

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Croudace Homes to undertake an update assessment of dormice on land at Bird in Eye Farm, Bird in Eye Hill, Framfield Road, Uckfield, TN22 5HA, hereafter referred to as 'site'.
- 1.2 Previous surveys were conducted in 2019 by CSA Environmental, with monthly checks between May to September 2019, with an additional check November 2019. The surveys in 2019 identified an occupied dormouse nest in the north-western corner of the site, and an unoccupied dormouse nest in the south-western corner on the woodland edge.
- 1.3 The Ecology Partnership undertook an updated PEA in July 2024. As the habitats onsite have not materially changed and known populations are present within the ancient woodland, it was considered dormice are still present on the suitable habitats on site and adjacent to site. Therefore, an update dormouse survey was recommended.
- 1.4 This report presents the results of the surveys on site which specifically aim to determine the likely presence or absence of dormice on site.
- 1.5 This report comprises:
- Introduction, including site context and proposed development (Section 1);
 - Assessment methodology (Section 2);
 - Results of 2019 and 2024 dormouse surveys (Sections 3 and 4);
 - Discussion and recommendations (Section 4);
 - Conclusions (Section 5).

Site Context and Status

- 1.6 The site is c20.08 ha with the central grid reference TQ48402075. The site is located to the east of Uckfield town centre, south of the B2102. The site is largely managed grassland habitats with the associated Bird in Eye Farm buildings at the centre of the site. Ancient woodland is located to the south and west of the site. Further west is Uckfield, with new development around Uckfield Hospital. To the north, east and south, arable landscape is

present in the form of fields, woodlands and hedgerows. The approximately red line boundary is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Approximate location of the site, indicated by the red line boundary.

Description of Proposed Development

- 1.7 The proposals are for an outline planning application for the erection of up to 190 dwellings, with associated works, parking, landscaping, publicly accessible open space and SANG provision, with access from the B2102. Proposed works are displayed in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Current illustrative proposals for the site.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 Dormouse nest tubes were established across the woodland edge and within the woodland adjacent to site on 29th May 2024. A total of 59 dormouse tubes were established, approximate survey area displayed in Figure 3. Each dormouse tube was established as per Natural England guidelines, attached to the underside of a suitable branch.

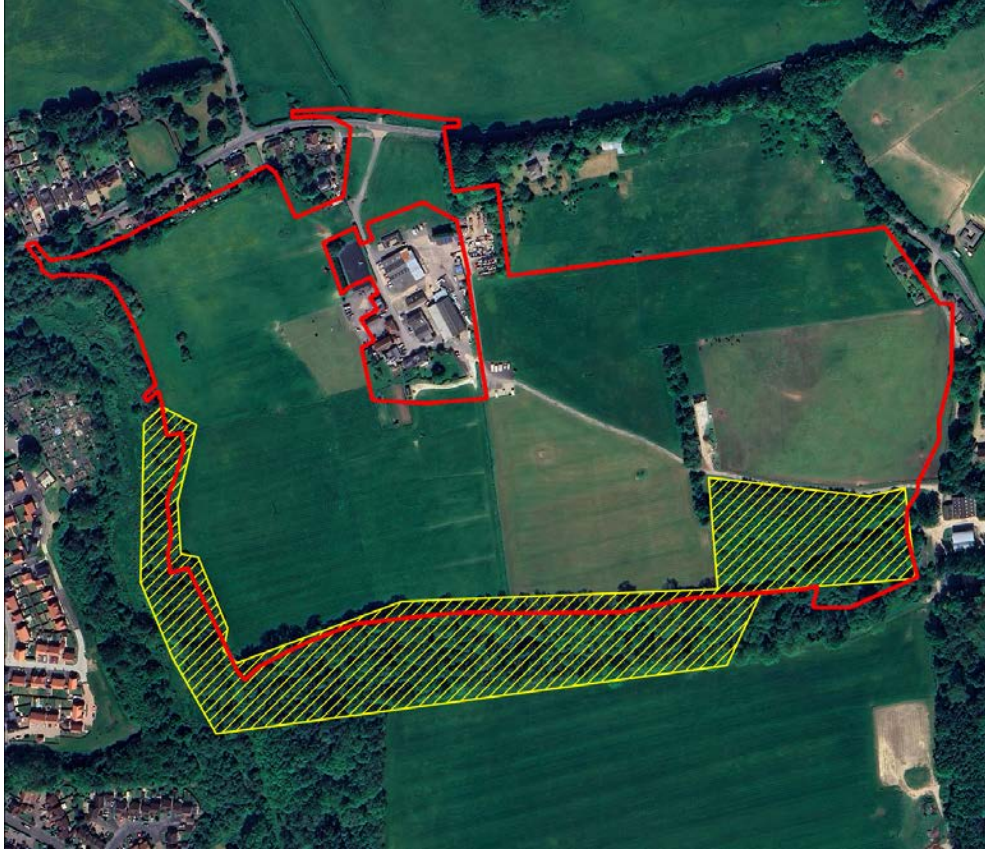


Figure 3: Approximate survey area (hashed yellow) in relation to the red line boundary.

2.2 Surveys were undertaken once a month in June to November 2024. This is required to meet the minimum the Index of Probability score of 20 which is considered necessary in order to detect presence/likely absence of dormice.

3.0 2019 Results

3.1 Initial dormouse surveys were undertaken by CSA Environmental from May to September 2019, with a further check completed in November 2019.

3.2 In the September check, an adult female dormouse was found in a tube within the north-western corner of the site along with four eyes-closed juveniles. In November, an unoccupied dormouse nest was found within the south-western corner of the site on the edge of the woodland. Locations are shown in Figure 4 below.

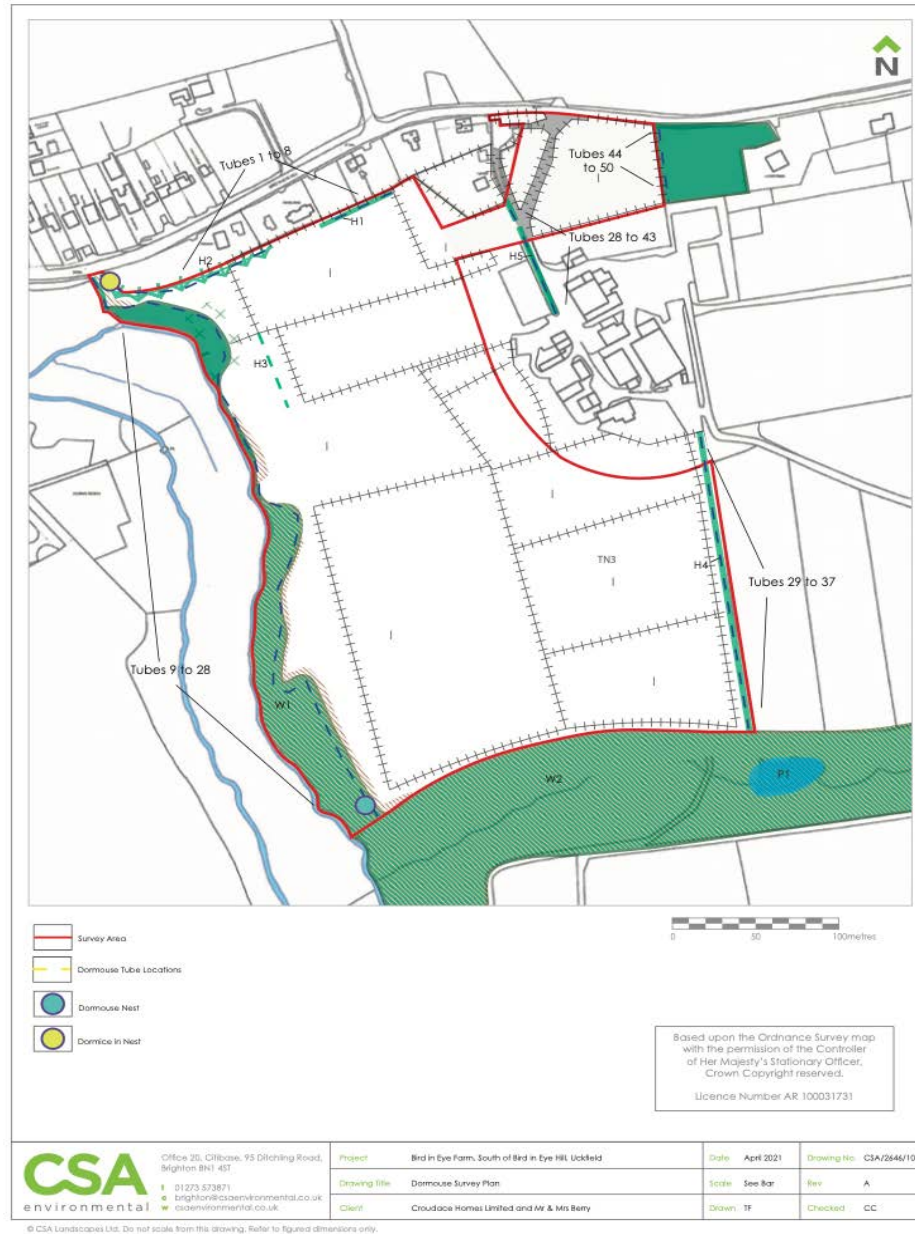


Figure 4: Location of the dormouse and nest location

4.0 2024 Results

4.1 Surveys conducted from June to September 2024 did not record any dormice using the dormouse tubes. On the final check on 7th November 2024, two dormouse nests were identified, displayed in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5: Dormouse nests located 07/11/2024. Individual nests are labelled 1 and 2.

- 4.2 Both nests identified were unoccupied, however the structure and composition of the nests indicate the presence of dormice. The first nest displayed in Figure 5 looked to have been constructed better than the latter, as the structure was tight and woven. Although the second's woven structure was not as tight, the composition was indicative of a dormouse nest, this nest was possibly newer or abandoned. The nests identified were located in the ancient woodland south of the site, locations displayed in Figure 6 below.

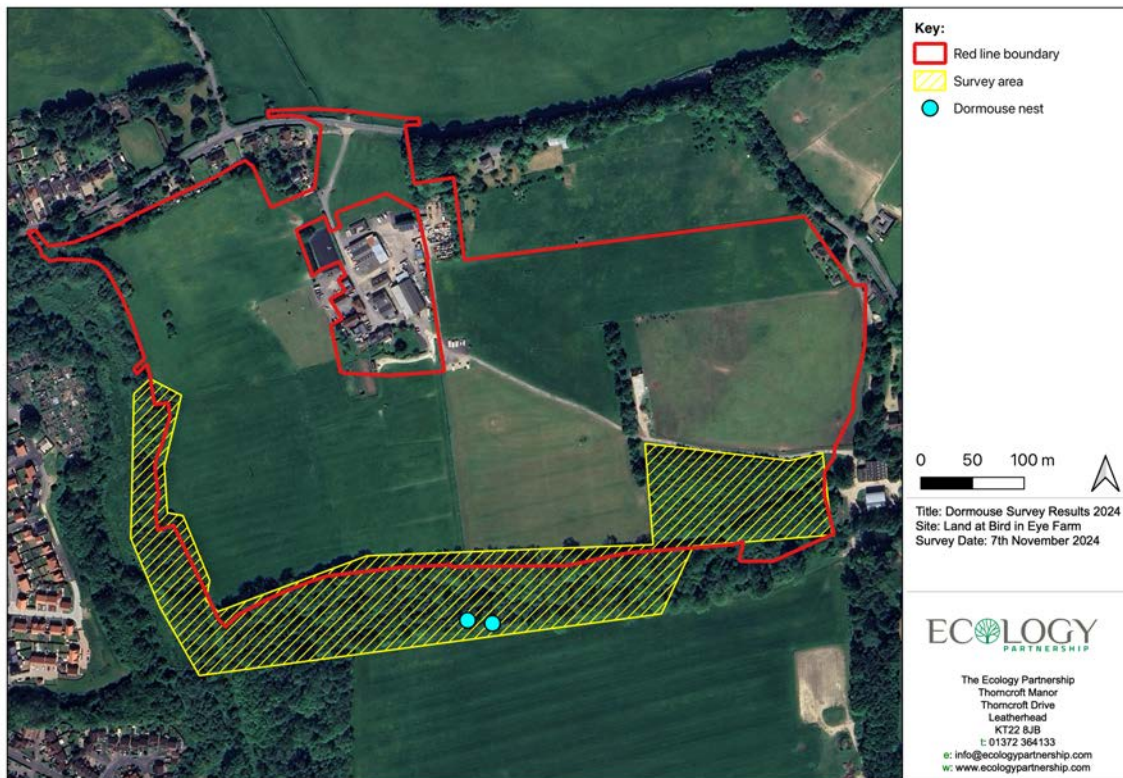


Figure 6: Location of dormouse nests identified on 07/11/2024.

4.3 As 59 tubes were established a total survey effort of 23.6 has been achieved, with the minimum requirement of 20 needed to predict likely presence or absence.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 The site supports suitable dormouse habitat, and there are known populations present within the ancient woodland adjacent to the site.

5.2 Dormice surveys were conducted by CSA Environmental in May to September 2019, and November 2019, one dormice nest containing dormice and one unoccupied dormice nest was identified onsite. These were located in the north-western and south-western corners of the site, respectively. Following an update preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) of the site in 2024, update surveys were recommended to confirm dormice presence on and around site.

- 5.3 Update dormouse surveys were conducted by the Ecology Partnership once a month from June to November 2024. Two unoccupied dormouse nests were identified, located within the ancient woodland to the South of the site.
- 5.4 Current proposals include the construction of up to 190 dwellings, with associated works, parking, and landscaping. The boundary features on site are due to be largely retained during development, including the adjacent woodland. The final extent of suitable dormice habitat removal is not known and will be dependent on the setting out of the site, including the footpath to access the B2102. As such, small sections of sub optimal habitat would be able to be removed under Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for dormice. Any significant areas of dormouse habitat removal will require a licence.
- 5.5 The retention of the woodland, hedgerows and treelines along the site boundaries ensure potential commuting routes for dormice are maintained across the site. Additional planting along the woodland edges will also provide additional resources for dormice.
- 5.6 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*)
 - Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
 - Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
 - Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
 - Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
 - Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
 - Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)
- 5.7 Optimal habitat for dormice consists of habitat with a diverse species and age-class makeup, and a multi-storied canopy with links between the different levels of understorey and canopy and sunlight being able to penetrate to the floor.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

- 5.8 The woodland and boundary habitats are largely to be retained during development. However, some small sections of sub optimal habitat would be able to be removed under Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) detailed below.
- 5.9 In order to avoid any potential impacts, this habitat will be cleared to ground level using hand tools under the supervision of the ECoW. This will be carried out in October/ November (in suitable weather conditions) or March / April/ May (in suitable weather conditions) which falls outside both the maternity and hibernation seasons for both dormice (as well as nesting bird season). The sensitive clearance practices will comprise:
- Clearance will be undertaken by starting at one end of the section to be cleared, and working in one direction only towards areas of retained habitat. This method ensures that in the unlikely event of dormice being present in the areas they can move away from the works through the retained habitat.
 - All areas of trees and scrub will be finger tipped searched by the ECoW prior to clearance.
 - All clearance must be with hand tools and under ecological supervision. No large tracked vehicles should be used, or heavy machinery. Trees and scrub should be moved by hand to the chippers or trailers, with some wood to remain on site.
 - Any natural refugia found during clearance will be dismantled by hand or using sensitive machine work under close supervision of the ecologist.
 - All arisings must be hand dragged to a pre-agreed works area, unless otherwise stated by the ECoW.
 - Once the above is complete any necessary stump grinding can also take place if deemed appropriate by the ECoW.
- 5.10 If a dormouse or dormouse nest is identified on site during works, then the following procedure must be followed;
- If a dormouse is discovered at the site all works must cease immediately and Natural England and/or a licenced ecologist must be contacted immediately to provide further advice.

- A licence might be required before works can recommence. If so, procedures will be followed to obtain a Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML).

5.11 It is considered that if these methods are used on site, then it is considered that no individual dormouse would be harmed as a result of the proposals.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The habitats on site, including the tree lines, hedgerows, and adjacent ancient woodland were considered to provide suitable habitat for dormice. In 2019, dormice surveys identified one occupied dormouse nest in the north-west corner of site, and one empty nest in the south-west corner. The updated PEA conducted in 2024, confirmed the continual presence of these features and their potential for dormice.

6.2 A total of 59 dormice nest tubes were established in suitable habitat around the site in June to November 2024. Two dormice nests were identified on the 7th of November 2024, within the ancient woodland south of the site.

6.3 Current proposals for the site involve the construction of new residential dwellings, associated access and landscaping, leaving the majority of the boundary hedgerows/treelines intact. However, the final extent of suitable dormice habitat removal is not known, therefore RAMs for dormice have been recommended for any potential removal of small sections of sub optimal habitat. Any significant areas of dormouse habitat removal will require a licence.

6.4 Enhancements and mitigation measures have been outlined to protect habitats on site and to improve connectivity to the wider landscape. Planting has also been recommended for the master plan using a range of native species of value to wildlife.

7.0 References

Bright, P., Morris, P. & Mitchell-Jones, T. (2006) *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Second edition)*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Bright, P. & MacPherson, D. (2002) *Hedgerow management, dormice and biodiversity (Report number 454)*. English Nature, Peterborough.

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