



Appendix 13.5

Dormouse Survey Report

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Appendix 13.5: Dormouse Survey Report

Client

Bloor Homes & Pigeon

Project

**North Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire**

Date

November 2025

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-	Final	AC / 19.02.25	OGJ / 12.10.25

1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Report Scope and Methodology

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. were commissioned by Bloor Homes & Pigeon to undertake a series of dormouse surveys to provide a baseline for the Site and determine its importance for dormice.

The Site forms part of the proposed Hemel Garden Communities, a development scheme that will create sustainable new neighbourhoods and communities to the north and east of Hemel Hempstead. The Site itself is proposed for 1,500 new homes with associated access and infrastructure.

Dormouse surveys were conducted from May to November 2023.

Results

The survey area is dominated by arable land with boundary hedgerows and a small amount of scrub and species-poor grassland.

The closest EPS licence during the desk study was 10km SW of the Site on the south side of the A41.

No evidence of hazel dormice was recorded onsite during the surveys.

Discussion

Hazel dormice are not considered to pose a constraint to the proposals, based on the likely absence of this species on the Site.

The proposals of woodland and scrub creation in the SANG will provide more suitable habitat for dormice should this species colonise the Site in the future.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The following Dormouse Survey Report has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. on behalf of Bloor Homes & Pigeon, for the Site at North Hemel Hempstead (central OS Grid Reference TL 08444 11097), hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.
- 2.2 A suite of ecological surveys has been undertaken on the Site to inform the Biodiversity Chapter of an Environmental Statement (ES) which has been prepared to support the application. This reptile report has been prepared to support this ES, and it should therefore be read in conjunction with the Biodiversity Chapter (*Chapter 13*).
- 2.3 When planning the survey program surveying the Site, it was split into two separate parcels, divided by Little Revel End Lane. As a result, surveys on these two areas sometimes occurred at different times and different dates. Where relevant, these two areas of land will be referred to as the "southern parcel" and "northern parcel".

Site Location & Context

- 2.4 The Site is located to the north and east of Hemel Hempstead. It comprises a series of agricultural field compartments that are generally large and open. Where they are present, field boundaries comprise hedgerows or woodland. Other habitats onsite comprise species-poor grassland in the south-east of the Site, a pond and small areas of scrub.
- 2.5 The surrounding landscape to the north, east and west is composed largely of agricultural and pastoral land with small pockets of woodland interspersed throughout. The M1 motorway lies approximately 0.5km east of the Site, with the village of Redbourn beyond. To the south and west of the Site, the landscape comprises the urban environs of Woodhall farm in the north-east of Hemel Hempstead.

Report Aims and Objectives

- 2.6 The report has been prepared to achieve the following objectives:
- Summarise the survey and assessment methodologies employed in order to assess the importance of the Site for hazel dormice
 - Provide the desk study records of dormice within a 1km radius of the Site
 - Provide the results of dormouse surveys undertaken
 - Assess the likelihood of dormice being present onsite; and
 - Provide recommendations for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement to mitigate impacts of the proposals on dormice where relevant.

3.0 LEGISLATION

3.1 The hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* is legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). In summary, it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice
- Intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb dormice in such a way as to significantly affect their ability to survive, breed, rear/nurture their young or significantly affect their local distribution or abundance
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to places used by dormice for shelter and protection (whether occupied or not)
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse whilst occupying a place of shelter or protection
- Damage or destroy a dormouse breeding site or resting place
- Possess or transport a dormouse (or any part thereof) unless under licence
- Sell or exchange dormice

3.2 The hazel dormouse is also a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

3.3 Proposals that could lead to any of the above offences would require a mitigation licence from Natural England, alongside appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures.

3.4 The impact that the above legislation has on the planning system is outlined in ODPM 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System. This states:

"The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Local authorities should consult English Nature [now Natural England] before granting planning permission. They should consider attaching appropriate planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would take steps to secure the long-term protection of the species. They should also advise developers that they must comply with any statutory species' protection provisions affecting the site concerned."

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

- 4.1 To compile existing baseline information, relevant ecological information was gathered from:
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)¹
 - Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC)
- 4.2 When handling data, species records were filtered to those within the last 20 years and within 2km of the Site, unless considered relevant to the site assessment.
- 4.3 Inspection of colour 1:25,000 OS base maps (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) and aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk) was undertaken to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.

Presence/Likely Absence Surveys

- 4.4 Dormouse surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidance by suitably qualified ecologists. Surveys involved placing standard dormouse nest tubes every 20m in suitable habitat, approx. 1.5m above ground. A total of 385 tubes were installed within the southern parcel on 11th April 2023 and 100 tubes were installed on the southern parcel on 24th May 2023 (*Figure 1*). Surveys were completed between May and November, the dates of which can be seen in *Table 1* below.

Table 1: Survey dates at each site

Parcel	Date tubes installed	Survey dates					
Northern parcel	11.04.23	19.05.23	19.06.23	17.08.23	21.09.23	Cancelled	08.11.23
Southern parcel	24.05.23	19.06.23	24.07.23	17.08.23	25.09.23	10.10.23	08.11.23

- 4.5 The Dormouse Conservation Handbook² provides an index of probability, which indicates the likelihood of finding dormice during the survey period (*Table 2*). The final survey score is calculated by multiplying the sum of the months that tubes were checked by the number of tubes used, based on 50 tubes as standard (i.e. 50=1). Fewer tubes reduce the score (i.e. 25 tubes = 0.5) and more tubes increase it (i.e. 100 tubes = 2). A survey effort score of 20 or above is required to provide confidence in the survey results.

Table 2: Index of probability for nest tube surveys

Month	Index of Probability
April	1

¹ MAGIC - <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² Dormouse Conservation Handbook, Second Edition. Available at: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Dormouse-Conservation-Handbook.pdf> [Accessed 17/10/2024]

Month	Index of Probability
May	4
June	2
July	2
August	5
September	7
October	2
November	2

- 4.6 Based on the surveys carried out on the northern parcel, calculations show that the survey score is 162, providing confidence in the survey results presented in this report (see calculation below).

$$[385 \text{ tubes} = 7.7 * (5 + 2 + 5 + 7 + 2) = 7.7 * 20 = 154]$$

- 4.7 Based on the surveys carried out on the southern parcel, calculations show that the survey score is 40, providing confidence in the survey results presented in this report (see calculation below).

$$[100 \text{ tubes} = 2 * (2 + 2 + 5 + 7 + 2 + 2) = 2 * 20 = 40]$$

Limitations

- 4.8 The survey scheduled for the month of October on the land north of Little Revel End Lane had to be cancelled due to unsuitable weather conditions. This will not pose a constraint to the survey results as the Site gained a sufficient survey score with the surveys being carried out on the other five months.

5.0 RESULTS

Desk Study

- 5.1 No records of dormice were returned within 2km of the Site by HERC within the last 20 years. The most recent dormouse record was feeding remains found 2km north of the Site in 2004, with the five other records all pre-dating 1995.
- 5.2 The closest EPS Licence for dormice was located 10km SW of the Site. The record is considered sufficiently distant from the Site, with physical barriers including the A41 preventing the dispersal of animals towards the Site.

Habitat Suitability

- 5.3 The suitable habitat onsite is limited to the small areas of woodland, scrub and hedgerows across the site. Due to the Site being dominated by arable fields, it is considered at present to be largely unsuitable for dormice.

Presence/Likely Absence Surveys

- 5.4 No evidence of hazel dormice was observed during the presence/absence surveys. Therefore, hazel dormice are considered to be likely absent from the Site.
- 5.5 Two edible dormice *Glis glis* were recorded within the Site boundary. These are a non-native species and can compete for the same resources and habitats as hazel dormice. The population of edible dormice on the Site may be why hazel dormice are not present.
- 5.6 Two records of Edible Dormice were found on site as shown in *Figure 1*.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Hazel dormice are considered to be likely absent from the Site, and therefore hazel dormice are not considered to pose a constraint to the development.
- 6.2 Proposed areas of scrub and woodland planting within the SANG will provide additional habitats for dormice should they colonise the Site in the future.

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Legend

-  Redline Boundary
-  Nest Tube
-  Edible dormouse

North hemel Hempstead / Figure 1 - Dormouse Survey Plan

0 0.1 0.2 km



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