Dormouse Appraisal and Non-licenced Method Statement

Bayley Paddock, Mill Lane, Partridge Green, W. Sussex, RH13 8JU



22nd October 2025

Report for Delcraven Ltd

Prepared by
Gareth Matthes BSc MSc MIEEM

GPM ECOLOGY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Wayne Bayley of Delcraven Ltd. commissioned GPM Ecology on 30th September 2025 to conduct an appraisal to assess dormice habitat quality on a proposed application site (at TQ 1905 2021), consisting a three-phased residential development of three-detached properties, with associated infrastructure, access and landscaping. The application site is about 1.15ha in total area. The site supports maintained modified grassland, a young copse and is bounded by several native hedgerows.

1.2 Dormice are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and are priority Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species. Dormice are further protected under the Habitats (EU Exit Amendment) Regulations 2019 as amended. As European Protected Species (EPS) they have the highest level of protection with their habitats (both breeding and areas of rest and shelter), as well as individual animals protected from *harm*. In essence this legislation prohibits:

- *intentional disturbance or harm,*
- *reckless damage to a breeding site or resting place or a place used for shelter and protection*
- *intentionally obstructing a place used as shelter*

1.3 Dormice are nocturnal and live at very low population densities. They are arboreal, generally associated with densely structured woodland, requiring intense survey effort to determine their presence and therefore where they are likely to be present are monitored over an extended spring or summer survey period (April to September). Dormice tubes and/or footprint traps and nest boxes can be set out where there is potential woodland habitat nearby, that could support this species. Before a detailed survey is conducted a site is assessed to determine its potential to support a species.

1.4 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment conducted by EASL 2024[1] (p17), noted in relation to dormice the following: '*There are no records of hazel dormice within 1km of the site, however there are significant areas of land (comprising ancient and deciduous woodland within 1km of the site) considered likely to offer suitable habitat for this species.*
The boundary features present throughout Plots 1 – 3 comprising hedging, scrub and scattered trees may offer some (limited) suitable habitat for Hazel Dormice. These features are to be retained and protected under the current proposals. The proposed development of the Plots, which resembles the surrounding land use, is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on hazel dormice or their habitat. No further recommendations are given in this case.' As the site was noted to have limited potential for dormice and the impacts are low (i.e. very limited hedgerow removal), no further specific recommendations are considered necessary for dormice.

1.5 A Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision (dated 21/07/25) states, under Condition 3, '*No development shall commence until a Non-Licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include, but not be limited to, a presence/absence survey and assessment, mitigation measures, and enhancement measures where necessary. The approved details shall be implemented before first occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall be maintained thereafter.*'

[1] Environmental Assessment Services Ltd. (EASL 2024), DELCRAVEN LTD, BAYLEY PADDOCK, MILL LANE, LITTLEWORTH, HORSHAM RH13 8JU, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, March 2024.

2.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Aims and Objectives

2.1 The objectives of this appraisal are to confirm if the site supports suitable dormice habitat, to the current assessment guidelines, determine likely impacts and develop an appropriate Non-licenced Precautionary Method Statement.

Dormouse Appraisal Methodology

2.2 As noted by EASL[1] (2024) there are no dormice records held by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre within 1km of the site, although the wider area of the Weald is known to support dormice. It is therefore important to understand the habitat characteristics of the site and the immediate landscape surrounding the site. The suitability of the wider area around the site was assessed, partly through direct observation and desk-study information.

2.3 An appraisal of the site was conducted by ecologist Gareth Matthes BSc MSc MCIEEM, with over 25 years of experience of conducting dormice surveys and having held a dormouse survey handling license (number: 2024-12031-CL10A-DOR) since this time. The current dormouse survey and mitigation guidelines (Wells et al 2025[2], p26) provides guidance on determining the quality of the habitats present on a site, according to several characteristics in relation to hedgerows, woodland and scrub.

3.0 RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Background Information and Habitats in wider Landscape

3.1 The site is within a block of land about 55ha in area, bordered by Mill Lane to the north, Littleworth Lane to the east, Partridge Green High Street to the south and Jolesfield-Church Road to the west. Very few mature over-hanging trees connect across these roads, with only three to four canopies of mature trees (https://www.google.com/maps/place/Littleworth+Horsham/) providing an aerial route across these four roads, indicating that this area of land maybe relatively isolated from the surrounding landscape. In addition, there are no blocks of broadleaf deciduous woods noted on www.magic.gov.uk, within this 55ha landscape bounded by these four roads and the closest Ancient Woodland is just under 1km, west of the site. Early Edition OS Maps (https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/) further indicates that this 55ha block around the site was within an open, grazed area, with no woods indicated as present between 1888 and 1915.

3.2 This 55ha block bordered by the four roads can be split into three smaller areas each of a similar size, described as follows:

1. The northern section which includes the application site, supports suburban gardens (about 9ha in area) within Littleworth village to the north-east. Several small fields, a recreation ground, allotments (about 8ha), occupy the north-west side of the block, including a small 0.4ha copse in the middle (not accessed).

[2] Wells, D., Chanin, P. & Gubert, L. (2025) Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook. The Mammal Society

2. The central section supports mature hedgerows, arable and pasture around Jolesfield Farm, totalling about 20ha of farmland located between the villages of Littleworth and Partridge Green village. This block of land is under a five-year Countryside Stewardship (Middle Tier, reference 1646408), farmed by Mr M J & Ms S J Staples (as indicated by www.magic.gov.uk).

3. Suburban gardens dominate the southern end of the 55ha block, within the village of Partridge Green, comprising about 18ha.

3.3 The immediate landscape described above appears to support habitat of generally low value to dormice, with the largest block of wood-scrub being 0.4ha in area, which is considered to be generally fairly isolated from the wider countryside by four roads. The gardens within the suburban area of Littleworth (9ha coverage) appeared to be largely dominated by non-native hedgerows or close-board fencing, with maintained gardens and considered generally of negligable to low quality habitat for dormice.

Dormice Appraisal Results and Impact Assessment

3.4 The habitat suitability for dormice within Plots 2 and 3 of this application site have been assessed as follows (see **Figure 1**):

Hedge 1: Located on the east side of Plot 2, is 50m in length, supporting six native woody species: rose *Rosa* spp., bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* (see **Cover Photo**). About 40% of the hedge was 1-2m wide and 60% was 3m wide, though the wider section is bulked-out by an adjoining cypress-hedge. In terms of species-richness it is considered 'medium' and the complexity 'high', which provides a 'good' habitat score for dormice according to the (Wells et al 2025[2]) habitat quality matrix (p26). However, this hedge is being retained and therefore will suffer low impact due to development and landscaping, in the absence of mitigation.

Hedge 2: Located on the west and southern sides of Plot 2 is a single species, (1-2m wide) narrow hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* hedge, about 65m in length with a 5m gap at a driveway access point. This hedge has a 'low' species diversity and structural complexity and therefore is considered a 'poor' quality habitat for dormice, as are most of the hedges around garden within this 9ha block of Littleworth village. This hedge will also be retained and therefore suffer low impact in the absence of mitigation.

Hedge 3: Located along the southern side of Plot 2 and part of the northern boundary with Plot 3, this hedge is about 55m in length, supporting six native species (birch *Betula* sp., bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, willow *Salix* sp. and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, see **Photo 1**). This hedge has 'medium' species-richness, but a 'low' structural complexity (with gaps and less than 0.5m in width along 25-50% of its length), providing a 'poor' habitat score. Part of this hedge maybe impacted during development of Plot 3 and suffer a medium impact due to development and landscaping, in the absence of mitigation.

Scrub: Located along part of the southern side of Plot 2 and part of the northern boundary with Plot 3, this area of scrub is about 350m^2, supporting five native species

(rose *Rosa* sp., bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, willow *Salix* sp. and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, see **Photo 2**). This wood-scrub feature has 'medium' species-richness and 'medium' structural complexity, providing a 'good' quality habitat score. Most of this area of scrub maybe impacted during development of Plot 3 and suffer a high impact in the absence of mitigation, due to development and landscaping. The southern side of Plot 3 supports fencing and scattered trees (including a TPO Oak), with a fence and gappy-garden hedge to the eastern side of Plot 3 (**Photo 2**).

3.5 Although Hedge 1 in Plot 2 is considered 'good' quality for dormice, it is in a landscape generally considered of low value for dormice and the development will not directly impact this hedge. The area of scrub is considered potentially 'good' quality for dormice, but it is very small in area (0.035ha) and both Hedge 1 and the scrub supported a limited number fruit/nut bearing trees (oak, hawthorn, rose and bramble), with no hazel observed within the application site. It is therefore considered that the works to construct Plot 2 will not impact dormice, due to the house being built within a field, with no hedge-woodland clearance required. The clearance works for Plot 3 (scrub and a small amount of hedge removal) are also unlikely to significantly impact dormice due to the general low to negligible habitat quality of the immediate landscape.

Limitations of the Dormouse Assessment

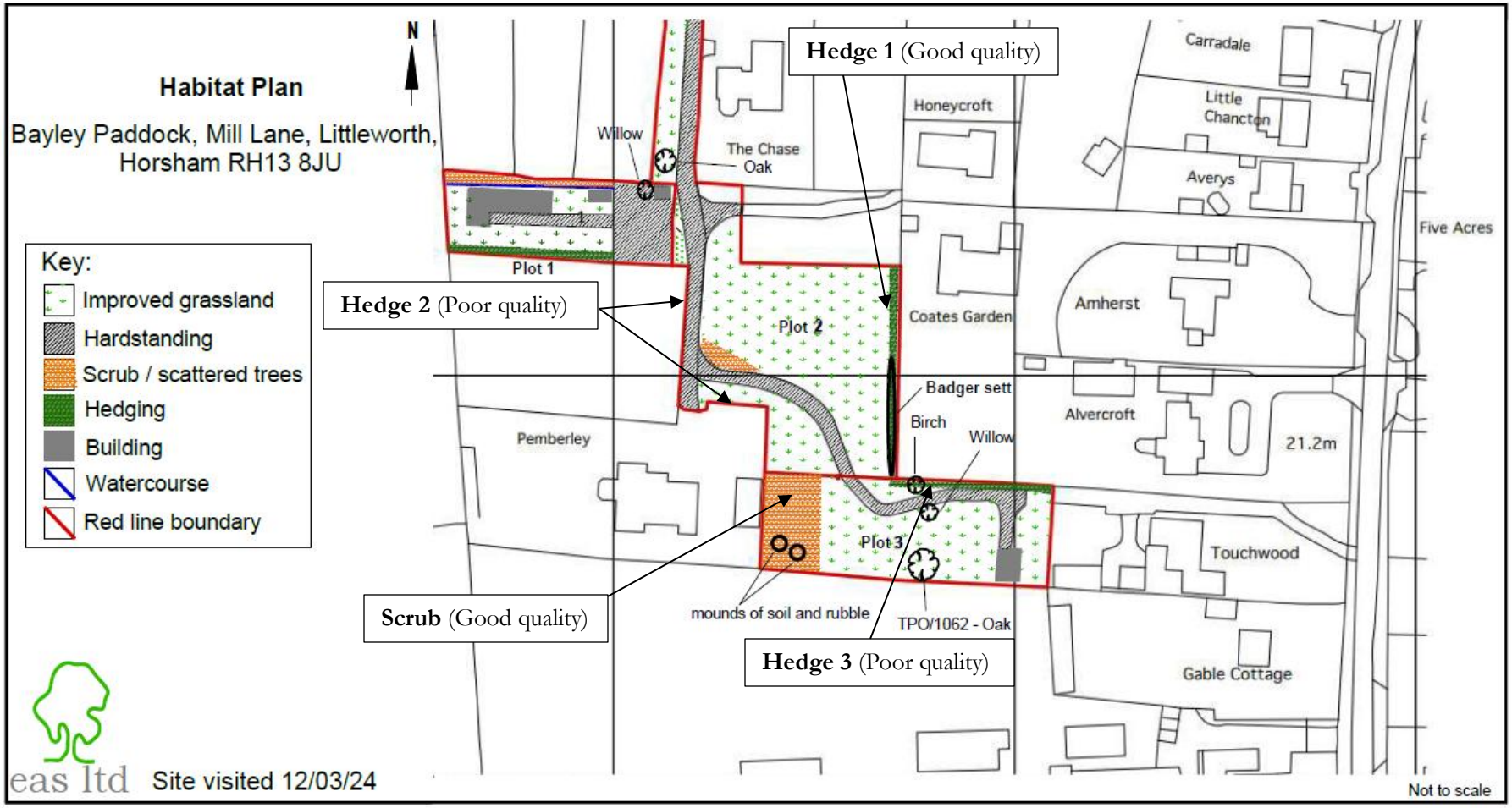
3.6 Although EASL (2024[1]) note that, '*A lack of records may be a result of under recording within the area rather than absence of the species*', having reviewed the habitats in the vicinity of the site, it is considered unlikely that dormice are present within this part of Littleworth village. As there were no hazel trees it was not possible to confirm their presence or likely absence by conducting a dormice-gnawed hazel nut survey. Wells et al (2025[2], p14) note, '*Dormouse surveys should always be carried out if there is the possibility of their presence on a site, i.e. it is within the known distribution of dormice in Britain, the habitat is suitable, and there are no recent records'*. Although habitat quality assessments are subjective, this assessment has been conducted by a dormouse surveyor, with over 25 years-experience and therefore this level of assessment is considered appropriate for this small development, corroborating the general findings of the EASL (2024[1]) report that the habitat on and around the site is generally not suitable for dormice.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND NON-LICENCED METHOD STATEMENT

4.1 As dormice are considered very unlikely to be present in the vicinity of the site, the following non-licenced precautionary mitigation will be implemented (see **Figure 2**):

1. Tool-box talk to be provided by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist to contractors prior to work commencing, providing descriptions of the species and mitigation required.
2. Heras fencing to be installed to protect Hedge 1, prior to construction of Plot 2 commencing. The fence will be located about 2m from, or at the canopy extent of this hedge-line, whichever is closest to the works area.
3. Landscaping will include mixed-native species hedgerow and scrub planting within Plot 2, to mitigate for the loss of scrub in Plot 3.

Figure 1: Dormice Habitat Assessment
Bayley Paddock, Littleworth
GPM Ecology, October 2025



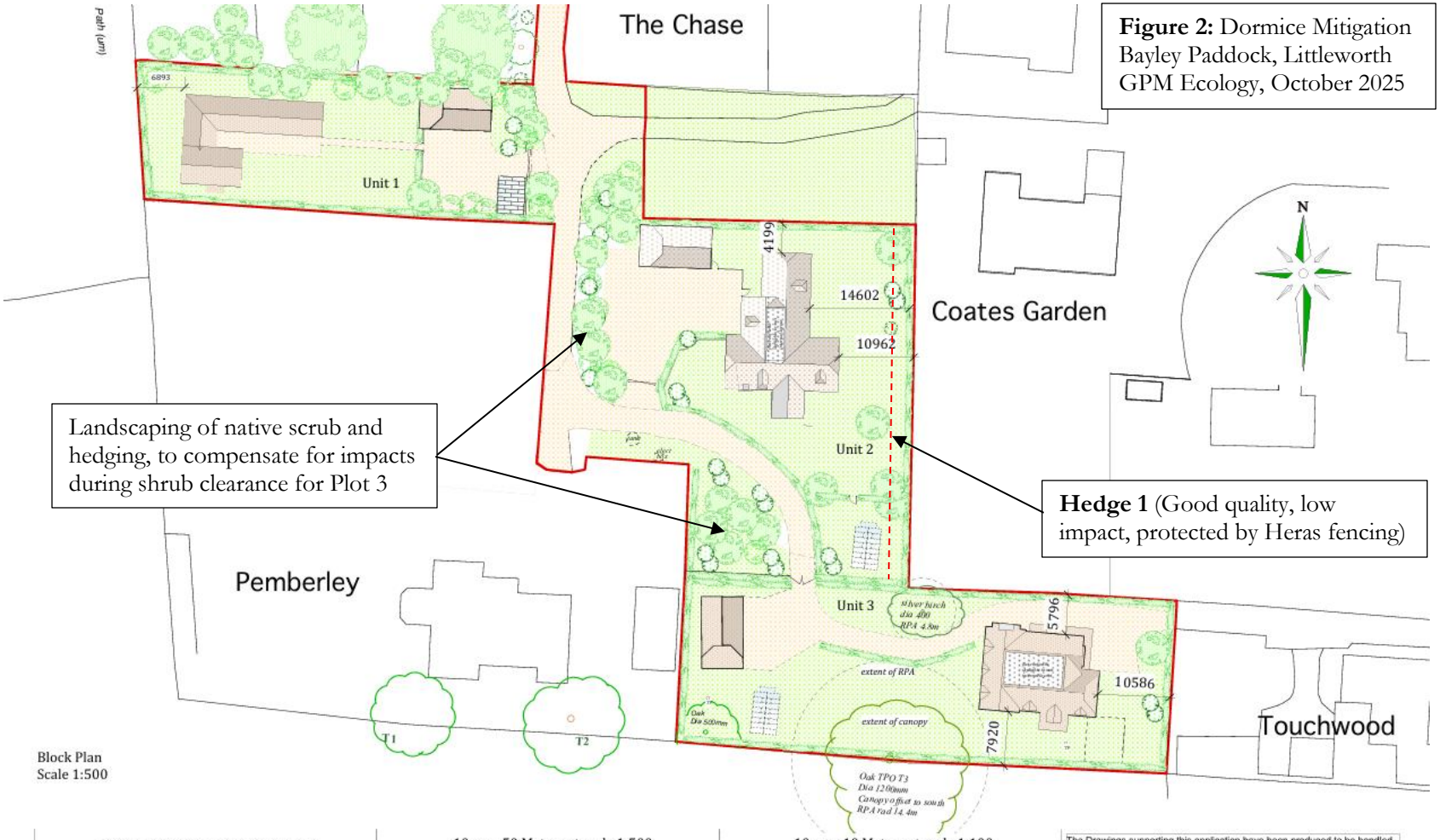


Figure 2: Dormice Mitigation
Bayley Paddock, Littleworth
GPM Ecology, October 2025

10cm = 250 Metres at scale 1:2500
10cm = 125 Metres at scale 1:1250

10cm = 50 Metres at scale 1:500
10cm = 25 Metres at scale 1:250

10cm = 10 Metres at scale 1:100
10cm = 5 Metres at scale 1:50

The Drawings supporting this application have been produced to be handled and viewed electronically and are best viewed on screen to see fine detail that may not appear on printed versions depending on the type of printer used and the size of print etc, for which Brett Incorporated Ltd accepts no liability.

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Planning and Development Services
LIMITED

18 Seal Road, Selsey, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 0HW
TEL: 01403 258800 MOBILE: 07710 624420 E-MAIL: office@brettinc.co.uk
MANAGING DIRECTOR SIMON BRETT M.R.T.P.I
REGD OFFICE: 18 SEAL ROAD, SELSEY, CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX, PO20 0HW
REGD IN THE UK No. 4869163 VAT REG No. 823 5238 44
www.brettinc.co.uk

Client:	Delcraven Ltd		
Project:	Alterations to stables to form a dwelling and erection of two new dwellings on land south of Mill Lane, Littleworth	Drg No: 0939.80/02	Date: May 2023
Drawing:	Block Plan	Scales: 1:500 **Original Plan Size A3**	Drawn:Gonzo

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Photos: Bayley Paddock (October 2025)



Photo 1: Remanent area of hedge-bramble-scrub south of Plot 2, fence-garden hedge east of Plot 3



Photo 2: Small 350m^2 area of woodland within Plot 3, south of Plot 2