

BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY REPORT

Gill House Farm, Egremont

**Preliminary Roost Assessment and Presence / Likely Absence
Surveys for Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds**

Client: Samantha Clarke

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If in doubt, stop work and seek further professional advice.

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This report provides the results of a suite of surveys for Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds at Gill House Farm, Egremont.

The report considers two buildings – a stone built agricultural barn (Building 1) to be converted to residential accommodation, and a smaller attached agricultural building (Building 2) to be demolished.

Building 1 is assessed as being of moderate potential for gaps in stone walls and beneath roof coverings to be used by roosting bats. Building 2 is of negligible potential for use by bats.

Daytime inspections were undertaken on the 3rd June 2026 and 9th July 2026. These involved a close inspection of the buildings for signs of use by bats both internally and externally.

In line with Good Practice Guidance, 2no, dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on the 9th and 30th July 2026 using Night Vision Aids. The surveys recorded no evidence of use of the buildings by bats.

Additional assessments, such as analysis of the surrounding habitats were undertaken to ensure the reasonable probable use of the site by bats could be determined.

The habitat around the site offers a low foraging potential being predominantly open and exposed agricultural land in an elevated position.

The proposed work will not affect any roost sites for bats and the continued ecological functionality of the site will be maintained. No further survey work is recommended.

On the basis of the survey work carried out, under guidance provided in respect of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and considering the plans for the site, it is considered that a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence for bats will not be required prior to works being carried out.

If roosting bats are seen or suspected works should pause and a bat licenced ecologist contacted for advice. Best practice working methods are proposed and should be adhered to.

The stone barn (Building 1) shows evidence of historic use by roosting Barn Owls. A replacement nest box is proposed to be installed in a retained building elsewhere on the site to provide compensation for the loss of roosting opportunities. There are no Occupied Nest Sites in the buildings.

Contractors should be made aware of the potential for nesting birds in the building. Demolition and construction works should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (March – September) where possible. Any works within the breeding season should be conducted with care and following the recommendations of this report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Duddon Ecology were commissioned by the Samantha Clarke to undertake Bat, Barn Owl and Nesting Bird surveys at Gill House Farm, Egremont, Cumbria. It is proposed that an outbuilding is demolished and a replacement building erected on the same footprint, and an agricultural barn is converted to provide domestic accommodation.

1.2 Survey Objectives

The purpose of the survey was to ensure that the proposed development does not affect any bat species which are listed under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 2017 and/or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). To achieve this the study will;

- Identify past and/or current use of the site by Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds;
- Assess the value of habitats on and off site for their potential as bat foraging and commuting habitat;
- Assess the likely impact of the proposed development on these species;
- Provide recommendations regarding appropriate avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures, as required.

1.3 Site Description

The surveyed buildings comprise a large red sandstone built agricultural barn (Building 1) connected to a farmhouse to the South and a red brick built single-storey building under a pitched cement fibre corrugated roof (Building 2), which adjoins the barn to the North. The farmhouse and other outbuildings within the farm complex are not considered in this report unless their inclusion is considered materially relevant.

The site is in a rural location area at NX 99212 09208, Figure 1 and 2.



Figure 1 Ordnance Survey map of site location (circled red)



Figure 2 Aerial photograph of the site

1.4 Proposed Works

It is proposed that the hayloft of the stone barn (Building 1) is converted to provide additional domestic accommodation. Works will comprise significant internal alterations, replacement of the roof coverings with concrete tiles to match the adjoining farmhouse, and repointing of external walls where necessary.

Building 2 is to be demolished to enable erection of a new building over the same footprint.

Proposed plans are shown in Figure 3.

The timing of works is not currently known.

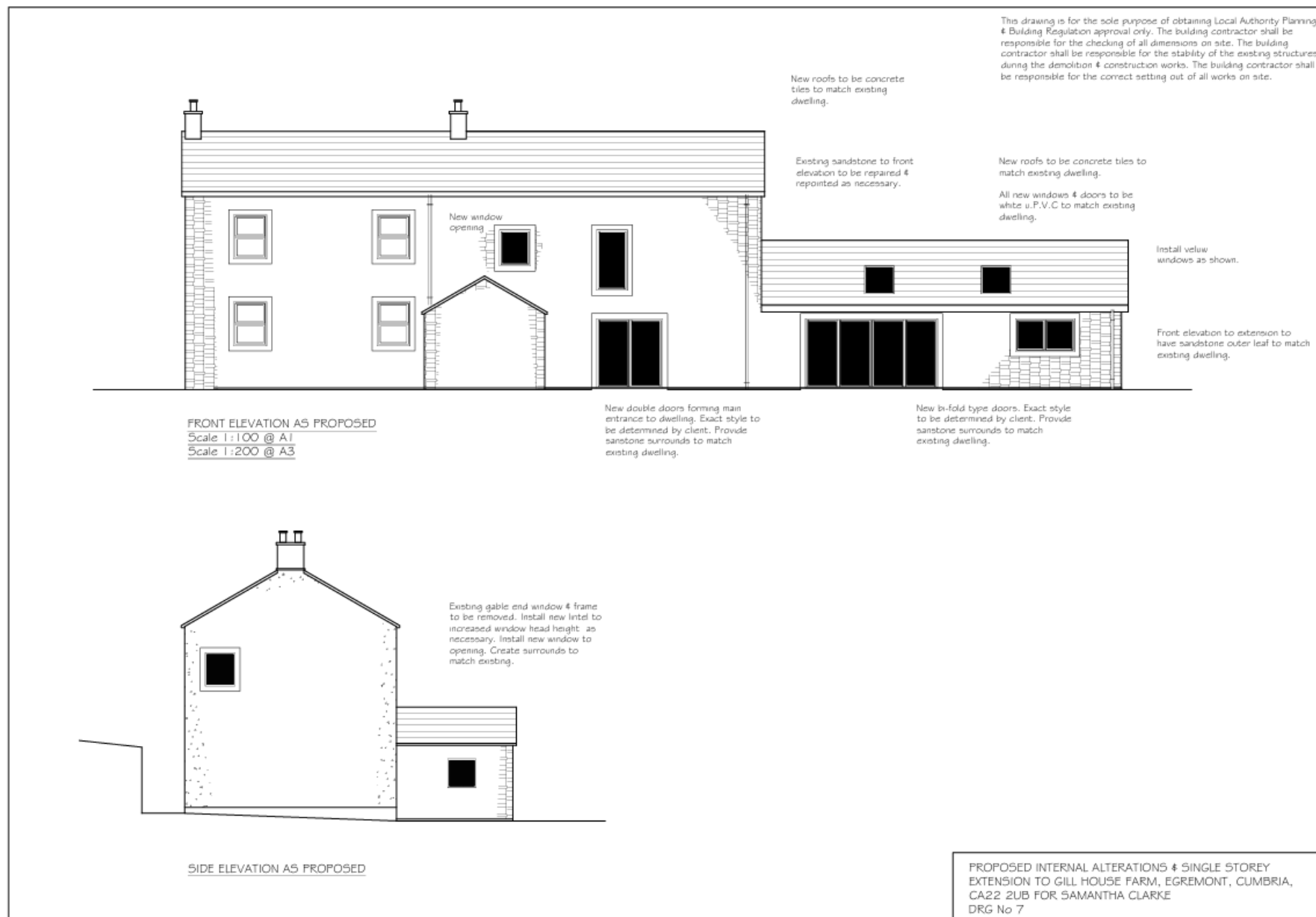


Figure 3 Proposed Plans

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

A search was made on MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) - DEFRA's interactive, web-based database for information on any European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence applications relating to bats that have been granted within 2km radius from site.

The desk study also included a review of any previous ecological reports or other information available for the site.

The 'Cumbria Mammal Atlas', Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre and Cumbria Mammal Group (2017), was reviewed to identify bat species recorded within the relevant hectad.

A species data search from the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre was not commissioned and was considered not necessary to inform the report evaluation as the current survey is considered to be sufficient to provide an assessment based on the field evidence and knowledge of the author who lives locally.

The habitat at and adjacent to the site was assessed from satellite imagery which was then confirmed during the site visit and by the surveyor's knowledge of the area.

2.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The methods used comply with those described in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition), Collins, J (ed) (2023), hereafter referred to as Collins, J (ed) (2023).

Potential bat roosting and feeding sites on and adjacent to the site were identified from aerial photography. This allows identification of habitat connectivity and potential foraging areas at a landscape level. Identification of bat species which may occur locally allows for additional field-based surveys to be correctly targeted.

A thorough inspection of the walls and eaves was undertaken using a torch and short focus binoculars to locate potential bat roosts. Gaps and cracks in the walls or under the eaves and soffits may provide access to the building by bats. Where possible all gaps and cracks judged to be of a suitable size for bats to take entry to the building were inspected either from the ground or from a ladder. Where appropriate an endoscope was used to fully inspect these gaps internally.

A thorough inspection of the roof was undertaken using a torch and short focus binoculars to locate potential bat roosts. Gaps under the roof coverings, ridge lines and flashing may provide suitable roost sites for bats. All gaps and cracks judged to be of a suitable size for bats to take entry to the building were inspected from the ground using short focus binoculars and a torch to illuminate any gaps underneath. Where possible to do so, gaps beneath slates were inspected with an endoscope from a ladder.

A thorough inspection of the interior and exterior of the building to look for signs of bats such as grease or scratch marks, bat droppings, and feeding remains was made. Windows and/or other items in and around the site were inspected for urine staining.

A thorough search for debris associated with bat feeding perches and roosts was undertaken. These roosts are usually in roof voids, under eaves, and open buildings.

Internal voids and rooms were assessed where it was considered bats may be able to take access. Indications of use such as grease and scratch marks, urine staining, droppings, desiccated young bats, dead bats in water tanks, and cobweb free areas under the roof and roof supports were all assessed.

The potential suitability of the building and the surrounding habitat for bats was assessed in line with relevant guidelines and allocated to one of the categories detailed in Table 4.1 'Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape', Chapter 4, Page 44, Collins, J (ed) (2023). Categories and rationale are shown in Table 1.

Suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures	Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e., no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition (for example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.) and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e., not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by large numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g., maternity, or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Table 1 Bat Roost and Habitat Suitability Categories (Collins, J (ed) (2023))

2.3 Emergence Surveys

Following Collins, J (ed) (2023), the number of bat emergence / activity surveys required to demonstrate presence or likely absence of bats is commensurate with the suitability of the structures and habitat to be surveyed. Where presence is confirmed in fewer surveys than stipulated in Collins, J (ed) (2023), additional surveys are not necessary unless additional information is required to determine species or characterise roost types present.

Potential roost locations were identified during the initial survey and were all covered during the emergence surveys. Due to the complexity of the buildings, the site was surveyed on consecutive nights with two visits constituting a single survey. This ensured that all aspects of the building could be adequately surveyed, with care taken to avoid 'double counting' bats. This approach accords with Collins, J (ed) (2023).

Bat commuting routes and activity in and around the site were observed and noted. Where appropriate, recordings of bat calls were made for later analysis.

Surveyors used full spectrum bat detectors which record all calls. Night Vision Aids (NVAs) comprising Near Infra-Red (NIR) and Thermal Imaging (TI) cameras were used to film high potential areas of the buildings, in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (2026) Bat Emergence Surveys using Night Vision Aids – A Technical Guide for Professional Ecologists. The Bat Conservation Trust, London. Each NVA was paired with a full spectrum bat detector to record calls, either held by surveyors or in a fixed position at an appropriate location to be synced with the camera. Unmanned positions were checked periodically by surveyors to ensure cameras remained in focus and supplementary lighting (for NIR cameras) was adjusted as necessary. Details of equipment used are shown in Table 2. Recordings were analysed post-survey to look for emerging or entering bats or confirm emergence/re-entry locations.

Equipment	Type	Attributes
Anabat Walkabout	Active Bat Detector	Full spectrum recording
Anabat Scout	Active Bat Detector	Full spectrum recording
Anabat Express	Passive Bat Detector	Full spectrum recording
Pixfra Arc A613	Thermal Imaging Scope	Thermal imaging recording capability 640x512 12 µm sensor
Pulsar Axion 2 XG35	Thermal Imaging Scope	Thermal imaging recording capability 640x480 12 µm sensor
Canon XA11	Video Camera	Infra-red recording capability at Full HD 1920 x 1080 resolution, 50fps
Nightfox ARC	NIR Lighting	20w 850NM additional illumination for Canon XA11
Nightfox XB5 Flashlight	NIR Lighting	5w 850NM additional illumination for Canon XA11
Teslong TD500	Endoscope	Articulating head
Anabat Insight	Analysis Software	Professional analysis tool

Table 2 Equipment used

A passive full spectrum bat detector was deployed inside Building 1 to monitor bat activity internally. Surveyors checked inside the hayloft of the building periodically throughout and prior to the end of the survey.

The emergence surveys started at least 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued for at least 1.5 hours after sunset. Details of timings and personnel are shown in Table 2.

The survey buildings were considered to have been sufficiently visually covered during the peak bat survey season, with the use of NVAs and supplementary lighting where necessary. Photographs / screenshots from NVAs taken at the termination of each survey are provided in Appendix 2.

2.4 Data Analysis

Footage recorded on NVAs was replayed the morning after the surveys to confirm the findings of surveyors and identify any additional activity that was not observed,

Sonograms from bat calls were analysed using Titley Scientific's Anabat Insight software.

2.5 Barn Owls

Following the methodology proposed by Shawyer, C. R. (2011). Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessment: Developing Best Practice in Survey and Reporting. IEEM, Winchester, the Barn Owl survey was divided into four parts as follows.

Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken to determine the status and likely presence of Barn Owls in the surrounding area.

Stage 1 – On-Site Scoping Survey

The Site was inspected to identify Potential Nest Sites (PNS), Active Roost Sites (ARS), Temporary Roost Sites (TRS) and Potential Foraging or Commuting Habitat (PFH). The locations of these features and descriptions were recorded, including the requirements for further survey. The surveyors undertook a careful search for evidence of Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) occupation including searches for splashing, pellets on external features, or the call of young, before undertaking any detailed inspection within buildings.

Stage 2 – Investigative Field Survey

Where suitable features were identified, an investigative survey was undertaken searching for field signs indicating barn owl activity at suitable PNS, ART and TRS locations. It was undertaken with the use of a telescopic ladder, high powered torch, endoscope and binoculars as necessary. Crepuscular vantage points surveys for Barn Owls was undertaken concurrently with dusk emergence surveys for bats.

This stage involved a search for evidence of Barn Owl activity such as:

- The presence of roosting or nesting Barn Owl including observations of individuals or hearing the call of young.
- Droppings (white vertical streaks on roof beams and large white splashes on floors 'white wash').
- Pellets – Barn Owls generally swallow their prey whole and regurgitate the indigestible parts (bones, fur etc.) as pellets. The colour and condition of pellets can give an indication of age and thus when a site was last used by barn owls.
- Feathers – Barn Owl nestlings begin their initial moult at 11 months. Adult Barn Owls tend to shed their largest and most noticeable feathers (wing feathers) in the summer.
- Nest debris – Barn Owls do not build nests but nesting areas may contain substantial amounts of trodden pellet debris, though this may be absent from nest sites.

Stage 3 – Nest Site Verification Survey

A nest site verification survey is undertaken in mid to late summer and aims to confirm which of the PNS identified in previous surveys are actively used by Barn Owls for breeding. It can be undertaken in conjunction with earlier visits where timings coincide, but the survey is timing specific to the Barn Owl breeding season to ascertain the presence of an Occupied Breeding Site (OBS). Avoiding the early breeding season reduces the risk of causing breeding pairs to abandon eggs and small chicks from disturbance.

2.6 Nesting Birds

Buildings were surveyed for evidence of current or past use by nesting birds using binoculars, torches and endoscopes, where appropriate.

2.7 Survey Timings and Personnel

Survey No.		1*	2	3
Date		03/06/2026	09/07/2026	30/07/2026
Site Inspection		1hr	1hr	10min
Emergence Survey	Sunset Time.	N/A	21:46	21:18
	Start Time	N/A	21:30	21:00
	End Time	N/A	23:18	22:50
	Start Temp.	14°C	18°C	15°C
	End Temp.	12°C	15°C	14°C
	Weather	Light wind, overcast	Negligible wind, clear skies	Negligible wind, broken cloud
Surveyors		CA	CA, FD	CA, FD

Table 3 Survey dates and times. *Building 2 only.

Surveyors

1. Mr Chris Arthur (CA) BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM
Natural England Bat CL18 Class Licence (Level 2)
Natural England Barn Owl CL29 Class Licence
14 years' experience as a professional ecologist undertaking bat surveys
2. Miss Francesca Dearden (FD)
Unlicensed surveyor with experience in assisting on bat surveys

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

A search on Natural England MAGIC portal showed no Statutory Designated Sites with bats as qualifying interest, and no granted EPSM licences for bats within 2km of the site.

No preexisting survey data for the site was available.

The Cumbria Mammal Atlas (2017) shows no bat species recorded within hectad NX90, though adjacent hectads contain records for *Pipistrellus* spp, *Myotis nattereri*, *M. daubentonii*, *M. brandtii*, *M. mystacinus*, *Plecotus auritus* and *Nyctalus noctula*. The lack of records is attributed to low survey effort in the area, rather than a true reflection of distribution.

From a review of aerial photography, a field assessment of the area adjacent to the site and the experience of the surveyor, bat species which may occur in the vicinity of the site (~2km) are detailed in Table 3, along with their 'rarity' category taken from the 'UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats', Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025).

This assessment focuses purely on the foraging potential of the area, not the roosting potential of the site itself, which is considered later in the report.

Species		Rarity (taken from Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025))
Common pipistrelle	(<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	Widespread all geographies
Soprano pipistrelle	(<i>P. pygmaeus</i>)	Widespread all geographies
Nathusius' pipistrelle	(<i>P. nathusii</i>)	Rarer or restricted distribution
Brown long-eared bat	(<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)	Widespread all geographies
Whiskered bat	(<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>)	Widespread in many geographies, but not as abundant in all
Brandt's bat	(<i>M. brandtii</i>)	Widespread in many geographies, but not as abundant in all
Natterer's bat	(<i>M. nattereri</i>)	Widespread in many geographies, but not as abundant in all
Daubenton's bat	(<i>M. daubentonii</i>)	Widespread in many geographies, but not as abundant in all
Noctule	(<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	Widespread in many geographies, but not as abundant in all

Table 4 Bat species likely to occur in the vicinity of the Site

The site is in an elevated and exposed location amongst open agricultural fields and in close proximity to the West Cumbrian coast. The surrounding landscape is a mosaic of pastoral and arable fields and whilst there are small hedgerows and scattered trees offering limited potential, there are no high quality foraging habitats or strong linear features



Figure 4 *Habitat on and adjacent to the site*

3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.2.1 Habitat Description

The habitat on and adjacent to the site identified from satellite images was ground-truthed. Details of the habitats found on and adjacent to the site are detailed in Figure 4.

The site is in an elevated position amongst open agricultural land which offers very little foraging habitat for bats. A small residential garden to the South which adjoins a low hedgerow provides a potential commuting route for bats and a fragment of potential foraging habitat.

The habitats on and adjacent to the site are assessed as being of low suitability for foraging and commuting bats, though there are areas of moderate suitability habitat in the wider area.

3.2.2 Building 1

3.2.2.1 General description

Building 1 is an agricultural barn constructed of red sandstone under a pitched slate roof. The ridgeline is orientated approximately North-South. The building adjoins a farmhouse to the South which is not subject to alteration under the proposals. The walls of the farmhouse are rendered and the roof is constructed of concrete tiles which are very tightly fitted. Whilst the farmhouse was not surveyed comprehensively, it does not appear to offer significant roosting potential for bats. To the North, Building 1 adjoins a single storey agricultural building, Building 2, which is considered in the subsequent section.



3.2.2.2 External walls/ Eaves

The building is built from red sandstone and is unrendered. The lime pointing is missing or recessed in numerous places to leave crevices of varying size, some of which would be suitable for crevice dwelling bats. There are also several large cracks in the North-facing gable end which

would provide further potential roosting locations. Inspection with a high powered torch found no internal or external indications of use, such as droppings or staining.



The roof verge to the North is well mortared and offers no potential for roosting bats. The barn does not have a South-facing elevation as it is contiguous with the adjoining farmhouse. There are several ventilation holes on each elevation which would allow access to the interior space, and the hayloft doors to the West are degraded and poorly fitted, providing another potential means of ingress. Above the doorway, the voussoirs of the arch are tightly fitted and do not offer spaces between which could be used by bats.

The wall tops to the East and West are open and accessible to bats, but the resulting gaps are large and exposed making them of low suitability as potential roost sites.

3.2.2.3 Roof

The roof of the building is pitched and made from slate. The roof is in poor condition with numerous raised or missing slates which create small gaps beneath that could accommodate individual or low numbers of crevice-dwelling bat species.



There are also several gaps beneath ridge tiles where the mortar is missing. The West-facing pitch could be comprehensively inspected using a high powered torch and binoculars due to the topography of the adjacent field. No bats or indications of their presence could be found,



3.2.2.4 Roof Voids/ Roof structure

There are no enclosed voids within the building though there is a large hayloft accessed through a doorway to the West. The roof structure is exposed throughout and the timbers are seen to be in good condition with no rot.



A low number of cracks and holes were noted within some of the timbers, but these could be inspected using a torch and binoculars and showed no evidence of use by bats.

The underside of the slates are torched with lime mortar which is largely intact. The North, a section of the East-facing roof pitch is lined with traditional bitumen felt. The felt is in good condition and free from rips or tears which would create 'pockets' that could be used by bats.

The floor of the hayloft was thoroughly searched and a very small number (<5) of old bat droppings were noted. These were scattered throughout and not associated with any particular features, suggesting occasional exploratory foraging behaviour rather than indicating the presence of a roost.



An active Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nest was noted on one of the roof timbers. A low number of old Barn Owl pellets were also found; [this is discussed in a subsequent section](#).

3.2.2.5 Internal walls

The internal walls are well pointed for the most part, though occasional small gaps are present. These were found to be cobwebbed, indicating prolonged lack of disturbance, and torch and endoscope inspection found no evidence of use.

3.2.2.6 Summary

The building contains numerous gaps and crevices beneath the roof coverings and in the stone walls which would be suitable for use by individual or low numbers of roosting bats, though no evidence of such use was found. The hayloft of the barn is open and exposed due to ventilation holes and the degraded condition of the roof coverings and doors. A very low numbers of old droppings suggests an individual has foraged within the building previously, but no evidence of roosting by bats could be found.

Building 1 is assessed as being of Moderate suitability for roosting bats.

3.2.3 Building 2

3.2.3.1 General description

A single storey agricultural building formerly used as a milking shed. The building is constructed of red brick, under a pitched, corrugated cement fibre roof. Building 2 abuts Building 1 to the South.



3.2.3.2 External walls/ Eaves

The building is built from red brick and is well pointed. Ventilation bricks are present low on the East facing elevation; these are obstructed and offer

neither access points nor roosting opportunities.
To the South, the building adjoins a larger red-sandstone barn.



The roof verge on the North facing gable end has a low number of large gaps around the purlins. These are too open and exposed to be used by crevice dwelling bats but would allow access to the building interior. No droppings or other indications of the presence of bats were found in these areas.



There are loosely fitted fascia boards at the eaves to the East and West, on which the gutters are mounted. The gaps between the fascias and the brickwork is c.750mm and too spacious to be suitable for use by bats. Due to the low height of the eaves, these areas could be thoroughly inspected which found no evidence of use.



3.2.3.3 Roof

The roof of the building is pitched and made cement-fibre corrugated sheeting with corrugated plastic skylights. The corrugated sheets are fitted tightly and do not offer roosting potential. The sheets are fixed flush to the sarking in the furrows and the peaks sit too proud of the boards to provide suitable potential roost sites.



Large ventilation holes are present along the ridgeline. Whilst these would be potential access points, they are too large and exposed to be used as roost sites.



3.2.3.4 Roof Voids/ Roof structure

There are no enclosed voids in the building but the roof structure is exposed internally. There are wooden sarking boards beneath the corrugate sheets which is in good condition and free from rot or gaps which could be exploited by bats.

There roof timbers are also in good condition and do not contain any cracks, gaps or other features suitable for use by bats.





The internal space is open, exposed, and well illuminated by natural light. It is not considered likely that this space would be used by bats, though a low number of old Barn Swallow nests were noted. These did not show signs of recent use.



3.2.3.5 Summary

The construction, condition and location of the building offer no potentially suitable roosting opportunities and no evidence to indicate any level of use by bats could be found.

The building is assessed as being of negligible suitability for roosting bats.

3.3 Emergence Surveys

Locations of surveyors and NVAs are shown in Figure 5, along with flight lines of any bats recorded emerging from the buildings. Surveyor and NVA positions were the same for both surveys. Photographs / screenshots from NVAs taken at the termination of each survey are provided in Appendix 2. NVAs were focused on Building 1 only, though surveyors were positioned such that any bat activity around Building 2 or the farmhouse adjoining Building 1 would be detected.

3.3.1 Survey 1

No bats were seen to emerge from the buildings during the survey and periodic internal inspection of the hayloft of Building 1 recorded no bat activity.

Bat activity at the site was very low, with low numbers of Common Pipistrelle recorded entering the site from the south at c.22:30 and foraging within the farmyard for a short period, and sporadically thereafter. A single Soprano Pipistrelle bat was detected passing in the vicinity of the buildings, again believed to have commuted from the South, at 22:56 and a single pass from a Noctule was recorded at 22:44. No other bat species were recorded using the site.

3.3.2 Survey 2

The results from Survey 2 were consistent with Survey 1. No bats were seen to emerge from the buildings during the survey and periodic internal inspection of the hayloft of Building 1 recorded no bat activity.

The first bat call recorded was a Soprano Pipistrelle at 21:39, c.21 minutes after sunset. Subsequently, there was a consistent low-level of Common Pipistrelle foraging activity within the farmyard, likely an individual bat. A very low number of Soprano Pipistrelle passes were infrequently recorded, along with a Noctule flying overhead at 22.06.

3.3.3 Summary

Both surveys recorded comparable results. Low numbers of common species of Bat, Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, commuted through the site from the South and foraged within the farmyard. Occasional passes by Noctule constituted the only other Bat activity at the site.

No Bats emerged from the buildings on either occasion, and no Bat activity was recorded within Building 1 from either the static detector deployed inside or periodic checks via the surveyors.



3.4 Barn Owl Survey

3.4.1 Desk Study

A review of habitats around the site found the dominant habitat to be permanent pasture on which grazing has lapsed due to the absence of stock. The wider area is a mixture of open arable and pasture fields. This was ground-truthed during the subsequent stages.

The surrounding habitats are assessed as being predominantly Type 2 and Type 3 habitats which offer intermediate and low value to Barn Owls, respectively.

The site owners reported seeing Barn Owls on the Site previously, though not in recent months.

3.4.2 On-Site Scoping Survey

The stone barn (Building 1) was scoped into the survey as providing potential for use by Barn Owls. The forming milking shed (Building 2) and farmhouse were scoped out of further surveys at this point as they do not provide features potentially suitable for use by Barn Owls.

3.4.3 Investigative Field Survey

3.4.3.1 Building 1 – Stone Barn

There are numerous ventilation holes on each elevation of the building and poorly fitted doors to the West which would allow ingress for Barn Owls. Internally, the wall tops create small elevated platforms which would potentially provide Potential Nest Sites. There were no accumulations of pellets, feathers, 'whitewash' or other indications of such use in these locations found during the survey.

Beneath two of the rafters were small accumulations (<10) of pellets which were judged to be over a year old, along with small amounts of 'whitewash' on the beams and floor beneath. These are assessed as being inactive Temporary Roost Sites.



Surveyors were on site at dusk, and until 90 minutes after sunset enabling crepuscular vantage point surveys to be conducted whilst undertaking bat emergence surveys. No Barn Owls were observed in the vicinity of the buildings or in the wider landscape during these times.

3.4.4 Nest Site Verification Survey

No Barn owls, their moulted feathers, eggs, egg shells, chicks or down were found in any of the surveyed buildings, indicating that there are no Occupied Breeding Sites present.

4 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

4.1 Limitations

No significant constraints were encountered during the course of the surveys.

Full access to all buildings was possible. The East facing roof pitch could not be thoroughly inspected from the ground during the Preliminary Roost Assessment, but this area was adequately covered by an NVA and surveyor during dusk emergence surveys.

Emergence surveys were undertaken during the peak bat activity season and in suitable weather conditions, and with a level of effort in accordance with Good Practice Guidance.

Stage 3 Barn Owl surveys were undertaken at the optimum time of the year and included crepuscular vantage point surveys undertaken concurrently with bat emergence surveys.

All building elevations were surveyed by suitably experienced personnel using NVAs and appropriate levels of IR illumination, where necessary.

No equipment failures were encountered; all NVAs and acoustic detectors functioned correctly for the duration of the surveys.

In line with the CIEEM Guidance (CIEEM, 2019) the data contained within this report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of the survey after which the validity of this document should be reviewed to establish if any updates are required.

4.2 Presence / absence and Roost Characterisation

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the surveys. A very low number of old droppings inside Building 1 are indicative of exploratory / foraging behaviour and were likely deposited in flight.

4.3 Site Status Assessment

The site is in an exposed and elevated position, surrounded by low value foraging habitat. Only a low level of bat activity was recorded during the surveys. Following Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2025), the site is assessed as being of, at most, Site value for bats.

4.4 Barn Owls

The Stage 2 survey identified PNS on the wall plates of Building 1, though Stage 3 survey confirmed the absence of OBS. No PNS were recorded in the other buildings on the site.

Building 1 contains inactive TRS on the wooden beams, with evidence suggesting transient, historic use.

4.5 Nesting Birds

Barn swallow nests were noted inside both buildings, and there is likely use of external wall crevices by small passerines.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Bats

5.1.1 Pre and Mid Activity Impacts

No active bat roosts have been identified in the buildings at Gill House Farm and therefore no impacts to roosting bats are anticipated.

5.1.2 Long-term Impacts

In the absence of mitigation, post-construction there would be negligible negative impact at the Site level due to the loss of unconfirmed, potential day roost sites.

5.1.3 Residual Impacts (Post-mitigation)

There will be negligible adverse impacts to bats in pre, mid and post activity phases.

The provision of bat boxes suitable for the species present locally - Pipistrelle spp. - would replace any low level loss of roost potential (this is a recommendation only).

No habitats will be affected by the works so there will be no impacts on foraging or commuting bats.

An outline mitigation and compensation strategy is given in Section 6.2 Mitigation and Compensation.

5.2 Barn Owls

In the absence of mitigation, post-construction there would be minor negative impact at the Site level for Barn Owls due to the loss of historic TRS within Building 1. There are likely to be abundant roosting and nesting opportunities for this species in the pastoral landscape of West Cumbria.

5.3 Nesting Birds

In the absence of mitigation, post-construction there would be minor negative impact at the Site level due to the loss of nest sites for Barn Swallow and small passerines. There are abundant opportunities for these species in other buildings on the site, and in the wider landscape.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

6.1 Further Survey

We consider that the risk to Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds in the buildings has been adequately determined in-line with best practice guidance, and will remain constant. No additional survey work is required prior to the determination of planning consent for the proposed works or their commencement.

6.2 Bats - Mitigation and Compensation

The surrounding habitat is used by low numbers of bats and there are gaps in the stonework and beneath roof coverings that individual bats could opportunistically roost in between the survey and the commence of works.

The following good working practices should be adhered to;

- Those undertaking the work will be provided with the contact details of a bat licenced ecologist who can provide advice in relation to bats at any time during work. If bats are found during work, unless the action has already been cleared by a suitably qualified individual, **all work will cease** and the ecologist for this project - Mr. Chris Arthur (07525 761897) – must be contacted.
- Those undertaking the work will be observant during work for bats which may use the building if new areas of the roof are exposed and left open overnight. Bats are opportunistic and may make use of gaps opened up during work overnight even during the winter.
- Roof coverings on Building 1 should be stripped by hand and checked to ensure no bats are present beneath, or under the underside of slates.
- If it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves should be worn. It should be carefully caught in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until it can be moved to an undisturbed part of the building, with outside access, and placed in a location safe from predators.
- Bats are particularly vulnerable whilst hibernating / torpid and deep crevices in stonework can be used by torpid bats - if possible the works should commence in milder conditions.
- If the client wishes to provide enhancements for bats, an artificial box suitable for crevice dwelling species could be installed on South or West facing elevations of a building within the farm complex. The crevice bat boxes from [Greenwood Ecohabitats](#) are recommended, though numerous other options exist. This is a suggestion only and does not form part of recommended mitigation.

6.3 Lighting

All external lighting on site should be kept to a minimum, sited low on walls and directed downward; adhering the following:

- If any external lighting is required it should be set within walls, at ground floor level only and directed downwards only so as not to result in any light spillage.
- Low-pressure sodium lamps or high-pressure sodium lamps should be used instead of

mercury or metal halide lamps.

6.4 Barn Owls

Prior to works commencing, a Barn Owl nest box should be installed inside one of the portal-framed barns on the site, at a minimum height of 3m and with suitable provision to access the building (e.g. a hole c.130mm x 130mm). Barn Owls boxes can be brought pre-fabricated or built to the [specifications provided by the Barn Owl Trust](#). Recommendations for positioning of boxes can be found via the same link.

If evidence of recent use by Barn Owls is found prior to, or during works, all work should must cease and further advice should be sought from a Barn Owl licenced ecologist (Mr Chris Arthur – 07525 761897).

6.5 Nesting Birds

Works must consider the presence of breeding birds, all of which are protected when nesting.

The works should avoid commencement in the breeding bird season which is considered to be March - September (inclusive).

If works are required to commence during the bird nesting season then this must only be done after a thorough inspection. Contractors must be vigilant for signs of any active nests and pause works if active nests are seen or suspected.

If the client wishes to provide enhancements for nesting birds, nest boxes for Swift (*Apus apus*) could be installed on the East or North facing external walls beneath the wall tops. There are a large number of suitable products available to suit different aesthetics, but woodstone type materials are recommended for longevity. Two suitable examples are [Woodstone® Swift façade nest box | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#) and [No. 16 Schwegler Swift Box | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#).

Nest boxes for other species, such as House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) could also be included, for example [1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#).

7 SUMMARY

This report provides the results of a suite of surveys for Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds at Gill House Farm, Egremont.

The report considers two buildings – a stone built agricultural barn (Building 1) to be converted to residential accommodation, and a smaller attached agricultural building (Building 2) to be demolished.

Building 1 is assessed as being of moderate potential for gaps in stone walls and beneath roof coverings to be used by roosting bats. Building 2 is of negligible potential for use by bats.

Daytime inspections were undertaken on the 3rd June 2026 and 9th July 2026. These involved a close inspection of the buildings for signs of use by bats both internally and externally.

In line with Good Practice Guidance, 2no, dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on the 9th and 30th July 2026 using Night Vision Aids. The surveys recorded no evidence of use of the buildings by bats.

Additional assessments, such as analysis of the surrounding habitats were undertaken to ensure the reasonable probable use of the site by bats could be determined.

The habitat around the site offers a low foraging potential being predominantly open and exposed agricultural land in an elevated position.

The proposed work will not affect any roost sites for bats and the continued ecological functionality of the site will be maintained. No further survey work is recommended.

On the basis of the survey work carried out, under guidance provided in respect of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and considering the plans for the site, it is considered that a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence for bats will not be required prior to works being carried out.

If roosting bats are seen or suspected works should pause and a bat licenced ecologist contacted for advice. Best practice working methods are proposed and should be adhered to.

The stone barn (Building 1) shows evidence of historic use by roosting Barn Owls. A replacement nest box is proposed to be installed in a retained building elsewhere on the site to provide compensation for the loss of roosting opportunities. There are no Occupied Nest Sites in the buildings.

Contractors should be made aware of the potential for nesting birds in the building. Demolition and construction works should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (March – September) where possible. Any works within the breeding season should be conducted with care and following the recommendations of this report.

8 REFERENCES

Information from the following sources has been used in preparing the survey report.

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APPENDIX 1 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

All British bat species are given special protection within England by their inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

As a result, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat's roosting place (even if bats are not occupying a roost at the time);
- Possess or advertise, sell or exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat; and
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

With specific reference to the offence of disturbance, Regulation 41(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) states that a person commits an offence if they:

"...deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species [i.e. a European Protected Species] in such a way as to be likely significantly to affect:

- (i) the ability of any significant group of animals of that species to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young; or
- (ii) the local distribution or abundance of that species".

The legislation applies to bat roosts even when they are not occupied and penalties are punishable with unlimited fines per offence and/or up to 6 months' imprisonment. Actions affecting multiple animals may be construed as separate offences and therefore there is potential for penalties to be applied per animal impacted.

Where development will result in damage to, or obstruct access to, any bat roost (whether occupied or not) or risks harming or significantly disturbing bats, a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) is required from Natural England to allow the development to proceed. Such a licence will only be issued if appropriate mitigation and compensation can be demonstrated to ensure that the favourable conservation status of the species can be maintained.

Bats are also afforded more general protection in England (and Wales) within the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006. This imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "...to have due regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity" [Section 40 (1)].

It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat" [Section 40 (3)].

Barn owls are protected under by UK law under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as Amended): Schedules 1-4 and in some cases 9.

As a result, it is an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take birds
- intentionally take, damage or destroy a nest while it is being used or built
- intentionally take or destroy a bird's egg/s
- possess, control or transport live or dead bird, or parts of them, or their eggs

- sell birds or put them on display for sale
- use prohibited methods to kill or take birds

Barn Owls are listed as a schedule 1 bird and are provided further protection. Additionally, it is an offence to:

- disturb them while they are nesting, building a nest, in or near a nest that contains their young
- disturb their dependent young

All nesting birds, their nests (whilst being built or in use), eggs and dependent young, are protected from disturbance by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

APPENDIX 2 NVA IMAGES AT END OF SURVEYS

Survey Number / Date	NVA Type	Image
1 - 09/07/2026	Canon XA11 NIR	 A black and white NIR photograph showing the corner of a stone building. The stone is light-colored, and a dark vertical pipe runs down the side. A tiled roof is visible on the right.
1 - 09/07/2026	Pixfra Arc A613	 A black and white NIR photograph of a stone building with a gabled roof and a large arched doorway. The Pixfra logo and timestamp '2026-07-09 23:17' are visible at the bottom.
1 - 09/07/2026	Pulsar Axion 2 XG35	 A black and white NIR photograph of a stone building with two chimneys. The image has a video player overlay at the bottom showing 'REC 3:39', 'SA', '2.5x', '23:16', and a battery icon.

2 - 30/07/2026	Canon XA11 NIR	
2 - 30/07/2026	Pixfra Arc A613	
2 - 30/07/2026	Pulsar Axion 2 XG35	