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Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:
Sneckyeat Farm, Hensingham, Whitehaven, Copeland, Cumbria, CA28 8XZ

Client:
Emma Graham

Survey date:
6th May 2025

Project:
This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Cumberland Council. The proposal is described as:
The conversion of the existing barn into a residential dwelling.

Validity statement:
The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.

The site survey was undertaken by Sally Hall BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist, (accredited agent on Natural England Class 2 Bat Licence for Level 1 activities [2024-12491-CL18-BAT]).					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
06/05/2025	22	60	>5%	20	None

PRA Survey Factor	Detailed using desk study and site survey. Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Summary	• B1 has moderate suitability for roosting bats and will require a minimum of two emergence/re-entry surveys to determine presence or absence of bats on site, prior to commencement of works. Light pollution mitigation is outlined below for bats. • Precautionary working methods for nesting birds are outlined below. • Enhancements are outlined in the relevant tables below.
Limitations	It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood.

	A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.
See PRA plan in Appendix 1, location plan in Appendix 2, proposed plans in Appendix 3 and photos in Appendix 4.	

Background and Site Location	
Summary of site and desk Study	**Site context** The site is centred on NX 99621 16057 and has an area of 0.016ha. The site consists of a disused barn (B1) and associated hardstanding to the south and east of the building. The site is located to the northwest of the small rural village of Galemire, with the coastal town of Whitehaven to the northwest. The site is surrounded by arable fields and pasture lined with sparsely vegetated hedgerows and scattered trees, and is neighbouring several farmsteads along the country road. There are a few small pockets of deciduous woodland in the nearby landscape, most of which are located to the southeast, and the Nor Beck is located 1.7km east from the site. **On site designations** The site itself is not subject to any designation. **Statutory designated sites (within 2km)** There are no statutory sites with bat qualifying interests or sites with suitable bat habitat within a 2km radius of the site.

Priority habitat deciduous woodland is located within 2km radius of the site, with the closest pocket being located 210m southeast from the site, which could support foraging, commuting and potentially roosting bats.

Non-statutory designated sites and local records

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre.

To date, Arbtech has not been commissioned to obtain the data about non-designated sites. These records can be acquired at a later date if required.

European Protected Species License (EPSL) data

A search of the Magic database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. One EPSL for bats was returned within a 2km radius of the site and is described below:

EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence
EPSM2013-6035	Whiskered bat, Brandts' bat, Natterer's bat	1,200m east	Destruction of a resting place

Field Survey Results – Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

Overview

B1 is a two-storey disused barn with a pitched and gabled roof, all clad in slate roof tiles and clay ridge tiles, with a single-storey mono-pitch roof extension to the southwest, all clad in corrugated cement fibre sheeting. The soffits are constructed of wood. There are stone structures along the gable ends. The walls are constructed of stone, mortar and rendering. The doors and window frames are constructed of wood.

	B1 - Description *Exterior* The roof is constructed of slate roof tiles and clay ridge tiles that mostly appear in poor condition, due to the number of gaps and lifts present. This is likely due to the age of the building, as the roof appears to be mostly original. As the internal roof is not lined, the gaps under the tiles are only likely to support individual crevice dwelling bats. The soffits on the northern and southern elevations are constructed of wood and appear mostly in poor condition as there are large gaps under the soffits where crevice dwelling bats could enter and roost along the wall tops, or crawl between wall cavities if present. There are numerous pipes laid in the walls, presumably for ventilation when used as a barn which are located all along every elevation where bats could enter and roost. The pipes are large enough for void dwelling bats to enter and roost, though none were seen during the site visit. There are several cracks in the rendering that could support small numbers of crevice dwelling bats to roost, in particular on the eastern and western elevations. The door frames appear in mostly poor condition as there are gaps around the door frames where bats could enter the interior. The window frames appear in fair condition with no visible gaps for bats to roost in, although there is a broken window on the western elevation where bats could enter the interior. There are gaps along the corrugated sections of the mono-pitch roof where crevice dwelling bats could enter and roost. This section of B1 appears to be single-skinned with no gaps for bats to roost in, however some of the rendering has cracked where individual crevice dwelling bats could roost. *Interior*

	B1 has a vaulted ceiling with no loft void. The roof is constructed of original timber beams and is not lined, exposing the underside of the external slate roof tiles. The approximate internal dimensions of the interior are: 15m (L) x 8.5m (W) x 3.5m (H) [Height is measured from floor to the highest point of the roof]. The beams appear in good condition with no cracks present, although there are gaps around the beams where they connect to the walls, where crevice dwelling bats could roost. There are dense cobwebs present along the ridge beam and internal roof which could indicate a lack of bat activity inside the building. Daylight enters the interior through the pipes on all elevations and around the doors on the southern and western elevations, although the first floor of B1 was noticeably very dark and would be suitable for day roosts. The ground floor was considerably brighter, although no roosting features were noted on the ground floor, as the beams and walls appeared well sealed. The pipes could be used as access points for void dwelling bats such as horseshoe sp. or brown long-eared bats to enter the interior, although no bats were seen during the survey. Several butterfly wings were seen on the ground and first floors, which could indicate bats are foraging within the building. No other evidence of bats such as droppings was seen internally or externally during the survey. **Foraging and commuting bats** The site is located within a small rural area of Cumbria, where the site is mostly surrounded by arable fields that have sparsely vegetated hedgerows and scattered trees nearby. The site is located in a high elevation area where the winds are quite high, both of which could limit the likelihood of larger numbers of bats or roosts such as maternity or hibernation roosts being present. The limited connected foraging habitat would reduce the likelihood of larger numbers of bats using the building to roost, and is more likely to be smaller numbers if present. The pockets of woodland located 210m southeast could support foraging and commuting bats in the wider landscape, and the Nor Beck is located 1.7km east which could also be used by foraging and commuting bats. Bats are well known to utilise

	linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites, and are likely to commute along the hedgerows, river and scattered trees to forage and commute. The site is located within a rural area, and therefore light pollution is unlikely to cause significant disturbance to bats within the local area. **B1 – suitability assessment** B1 is deemed moderate suitability for roosting bats, due to the features present such as the numerous gaps under the soffits, the cracks in the walls and the gaps through the pipes to enter the interior could support crevice and void dwelling bats to roost. Due to the rural surroundings bats are likely to be within the area, however the foraging and commuting habitat around the site is fragmented which could limit the suitability for larger numbers of bats and maternity roosts to reach the site. The building is unlikely to support hibernating bats due to the immediate surroundings being regularly disturbed by neighbours.
Foreseen Impacts	**Roosting bats** The proposed development will result in the removal of the roof and wall rendering to repair any damage, and the internal conversion of B1 into a residential dwelling. The development could result in the destruction of any bat roosts if present, as it will destroy features such as gaps under the roof and ridge tiles, entry points via the pipes, cracks in the walls and gaps under the soffits. This could cause disturbance, death or injury to bats if present. **Foraging and commuting bats** The proposed development is unlikely to result in the removal of any foraging and commuting habitat as the development includes the conversion of the existing building, which is likely to be inconsequential to local foraging or commuting bats.

	Artificial lighting The proposed development will lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting without mitigation which may disturb commuting bats.
Recommendations	**Roosting bats** Two bat emergence/re-entry surveys are required on B1 during the active bat season (May – September) to confirm presence or absence of bats roosting in or on the building, before any works can go ahead. The survey visits should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August inclusive and should be at least three weeks apart. One of the surveys could be completed within the sub-optimal period (early May or September) depending on weather. One of the surveys could be a dawn re-entry survey, or all surveys can be at dusk if supported by night vision aids (NVA). If bats are present within the building, one further dusk survey must be conducted for a total of three surveys, as per the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines. Two surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the building's elevations to look for emerging/re-entering bats. An infrared camera should also be employed as part of the survey to see where any specific roost locations are located. Lighting mitigation may be required based on the outcome of the night bat surveys. If bats are found to be roosting within the building, a European Protected Species License (EPSL) application will be required to Natural England. The EPSL application requires that all surveys have been undertaken within the most

	recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission. The application to Natural England is applied for with the help of a class 2 licensed bat ecologist after planning permission is granted, but before commencement of works. **Foraging and commuting habitat** No further surveys are required. **Artificial lighting** A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** Enhancements are dependent on the outcome of further surveys.

Field Survey Results – Nesting Birds	
Summary of Survey Findings	Three disused birds' nests were seen inside of B1, two on the beams on the first floor and one on the ground floor, all of which appear to be constructed by swallows or house martins, due to the shape and construction of the nests. Additionally, house sparrows were seen using a gap under the soffits on the southern elevation, however it is undetermined if a nest is present here, or if the bird was searching for a new area to nest or to perch. There are no access points for owls to enter B1 to perch, nest or shelter, and is therefore B1 is unsuitable for owls.

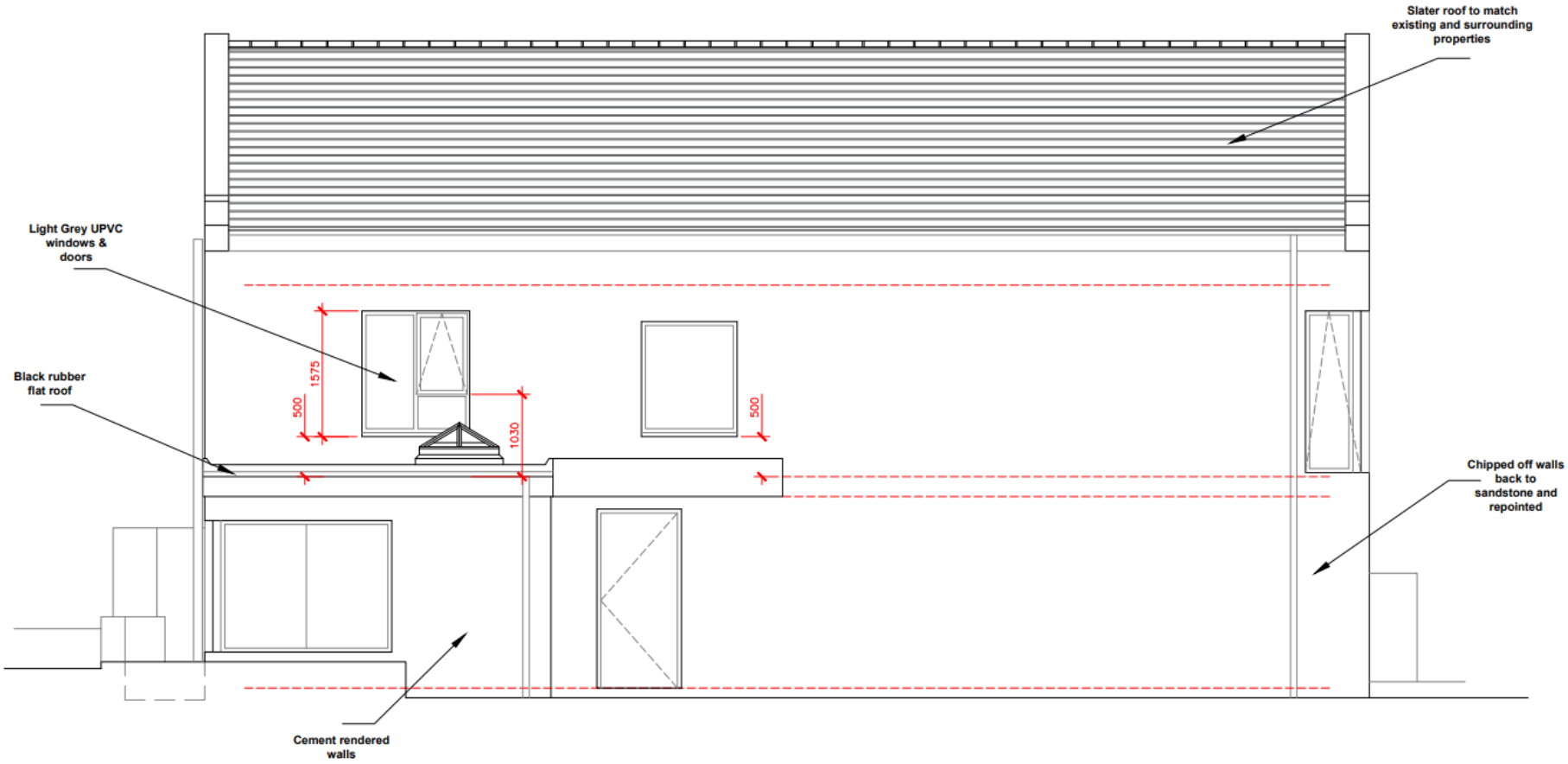
Foreseen Impacts	The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests, as three disused birds' nests were seen inside of B1, and house sparrows were actively seen using the building. The conversion of B1 would disturb birds nesting inside of B1.
Recommendations	Any building work should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged. **Enhancements** The installation of two bird boxes at the site will provide additional nesting habitat for birds. The bird boxes will be installed on the building once development has been completed, using brands such as: • Vivara Pro Estella House Sparrow Nest Box (buildings) • Vivara Pro Madrid Swift Nest Box (buildings) • Woodstone Nest Box (buildings or trees) Or a similar alternative brand. General purpose bird boxes should be positioned 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight.

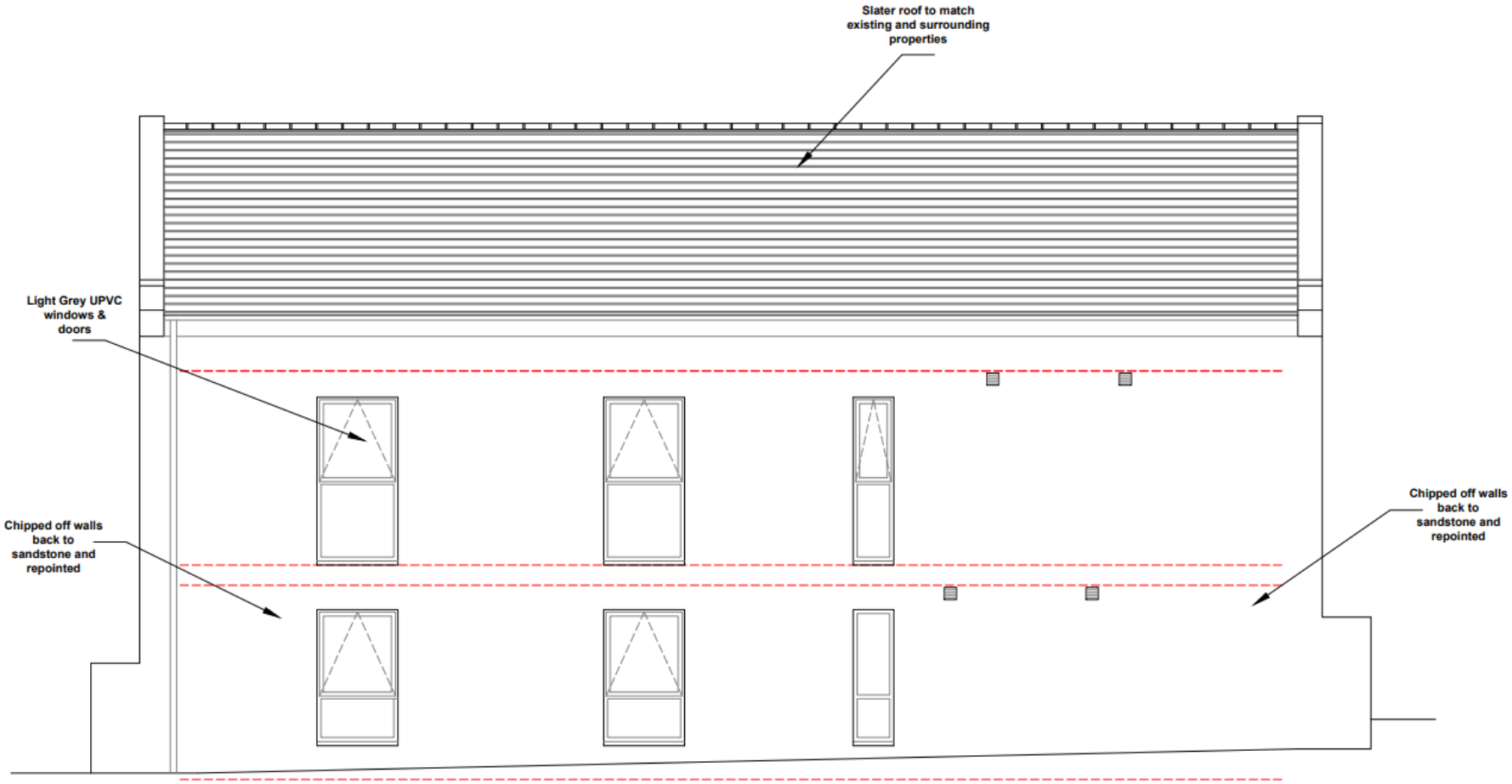
	Swift boxes should be positioned close together (0.6-1.0m between boxes) as swifts prefer to nest gregariously. The boxes should be placed at least 5m above ground level under the eaves of a building, on a north or east elevation, where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. To be suitable for swifts, the boxes require an open aspect with no trees or large shrubs potentially obstructing the birds' flight path up to 5m from the box.

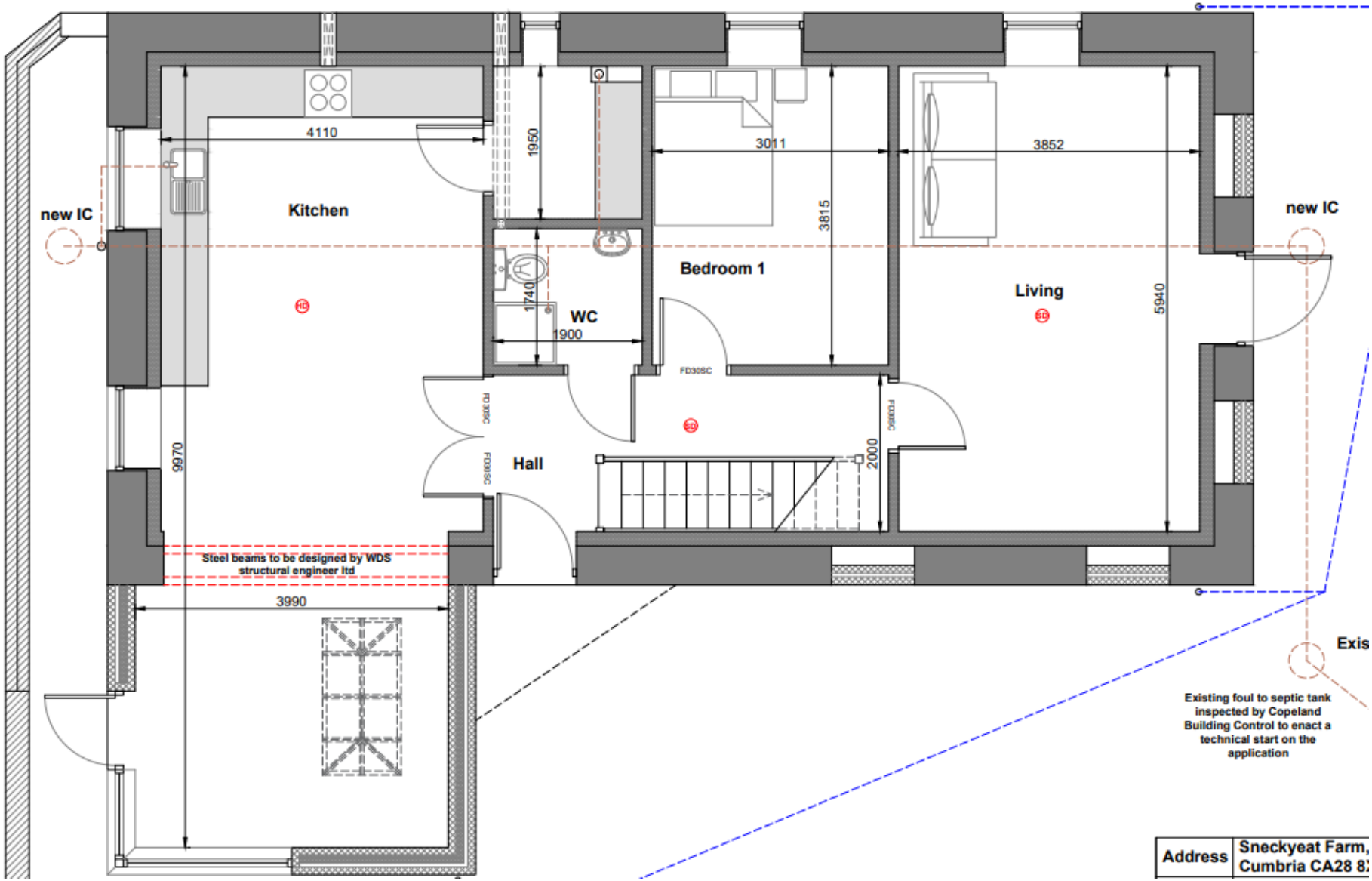
Appendix 1: PRA and BERS plan

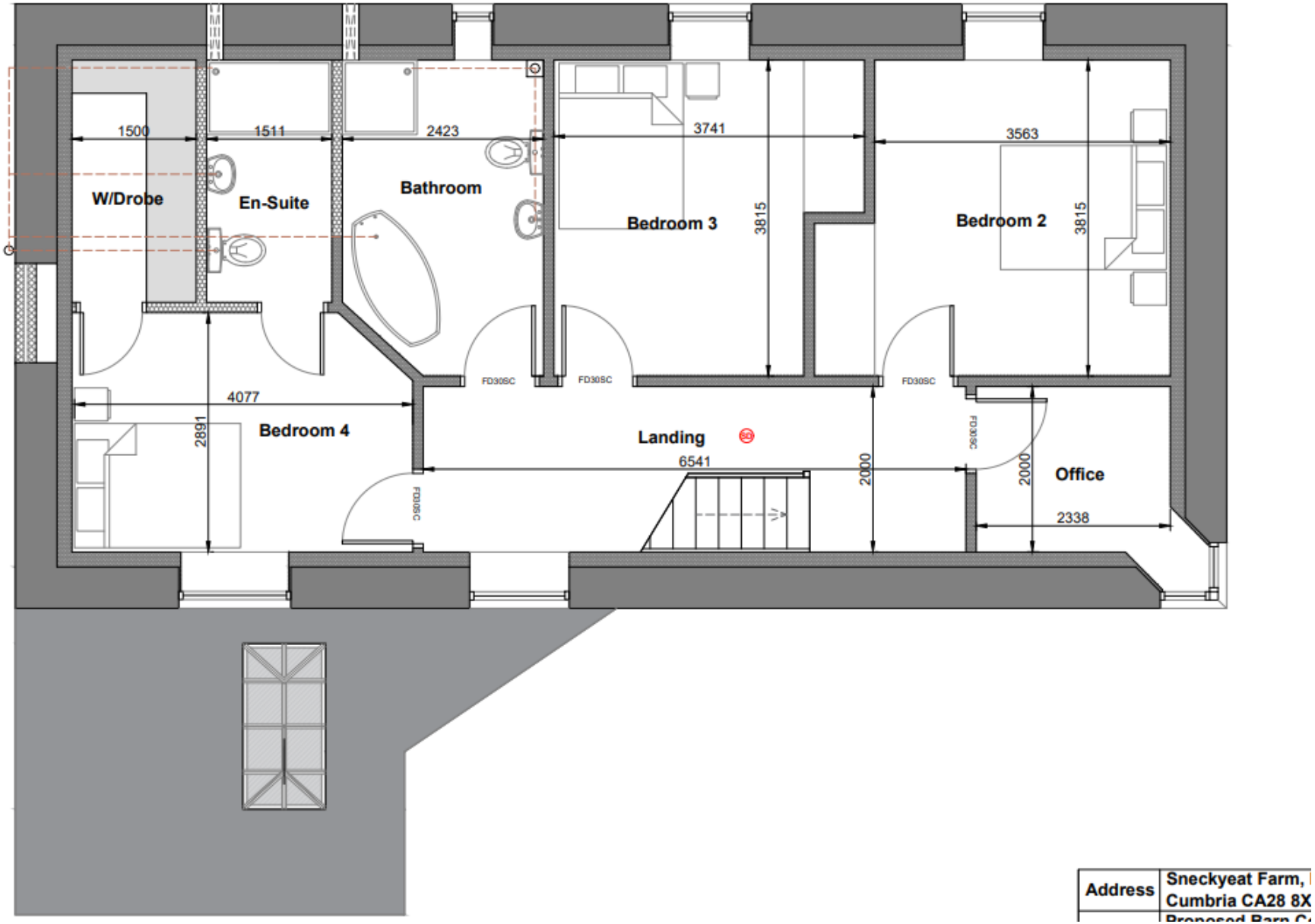
Appendix 2: Location map

Appendix 3: Proposed plan




Slater roof to match existing and surrounding properties
Light Grey UPVC windows & doors
Chipped off walls back to sandstone and repointed
Chipped off walls back to sandstone and repointed


new IC
Kitchen
4110
9970
1950
3011
3815
Bedroom 1
1740
WC
1900
Hall
2000
3852
Living
5940
new IC
Steel beams to be designed by WDS structural engineer ltd
3990
Existing foul to septic tank inspected by Copeland Building Control to enact a technical start on the application
Address
Sneckyeat Farm,
Cumbria CA28 8


1500
1511
2423
3741
3563
W/Drobe
En-Suite
Bathroom
Bedroom 3
Bedroom 2
3815
3815
FD30SC
FD30SC
FD30SC
4077
2891
Bedroom 4
Landing
6541
2000
2000
Office
2338
FD30SC
FD30SC
Address
Sneckyeat Farm,
Cumbria CA28 8X

Appendix 4: Photos

Figure 1 – southern elevation of B1.

Figure 2 – gaps under soffits and pipes leading into interior on southern elevation of B1.

Figure 3 – eastern elevation of B1.

Figure 4 – crack in rendering on eastern elevation of B1.

Figure 5 – northern and western elevations of B1.

Figure 6 – crack in rendering on western elevations of B1.

Figure 7 – southern and western elevations of B1.

Figure 8 – crack in rendering on mono-pitch section on southern elevation of B1.

Figure 9 – interior of B1.

Figure 10 – disused birds' nests inside of B1.

Figure 11 – butterfly wings inside of B1.

Figure 12 – inside of ground floor of B1.

Figure 13 – butterfly wings on ground floor of B1.

Figure 14 – disused birds' nest on ground floor of B1.

Figure 15 – inside of mono-pitch section of B1.

Figure 16 – wider landscape to the south.

Figure 17 – wider landscape to the northwest.

Version control			
Status	**Issue**	**Name**	**Date**
Final	1	Sally Hall BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist	16/05/2025

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