Preliminary Roost Assessment

Former Red Lion
44 Main Street
Egremont
CA22 2AD

Prepared for: Cumberland Council
Date: August 2025
Reference: J117

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DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Report Number:	J117/PRA/DW/12.08.25
Client:	Cumberland Council
Project Name:	Former Red Lion, Egremont
Project Number:	J117
Report Type:	Preliminary Roost Assessment
Status:	Final
Date of Issue:	20 October 2025

CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Executive Summary		
Background		In July 2025 Natural Ecology were instructed to undertake a preliminary roost assessment of Former Red Lion, 44 Main Street, Egremont, CA22 2AD (central grid reference NY 01110 10642, What3Words:///stunner.messy.iron).
Site Description		The site comprises of a two-storey industrial style building, with a single storey annexe attached on the eastern aspect. The roofs of both buildings are flat. An adjoined property, forming a continuation of the property, is attached to the west. Fallow ground left to grow with various colonising species is located on the southern aspect of the building.
Development Proposal		Development proposals include Council-led renovations.
Purpose		The purpose of the survey was to: • Identify Potential Roosting Features on structures at the Site to be affected by the proposals; • Assess the potential value of those features for bats following the best practice guidelines; • Assess the potential of the surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting bats; • Recommend further surveys, if necessary; and • Recommend mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures.
Results		**The findings confirm the building to have negligible suitability for bats.**
Recommendations		No further surveys are required with regards to bats and their roosts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 Natural Ecology were commissioned by Cumberland Council to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey of Former Red Lion, 44 Main Street, Egremont, CA22 2AD (central grid reference NY 01110 10642, What3Words:///stunner.messy.iron) in July 2025 (hereafter referred to as the 'Building/Site').

1.2 The survey was carried out by David Watson, accredited agent under the licence of Lucinda Spencer, a Class 2 Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

Survey Objectives

1.3 The purpose of the survey was to:

- Identify Potential Roosting Features on structures at the Site to be affected by the proposals;
- Assess the potential value of those features for bats following the best practice guidelines;
- Assess the potential of the surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting bats;
- Recommend further surveys, if necessary; and
- Recommend mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures.

1.4 The following assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust's publication Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed) 2023).

2. METHODS

Desk Study

2.1 To create a baseline of the ecological conditions in the area, we reviewed and included relevant ecological information surrounding a 2km radius. This included:

- Landscape structure using Ordnance Survey base maps (www.bing.com) and aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk).
- Designated sites, habitat and granted European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) records held on http://magic.defra.gov.uk/.

Site Survey

2.2 Natural Ecology visited the site on 14th July 2025 to determine the presence of bats through an inspection survey. The survey was undertaken by David Watson, accredited agent under the licence of Lucinda Spencer – a Class 2 Natural England licensed bat ecologist. An internal and external inspection was carried out as part of this survey.

2.3 The survey was conducted in accordance with Bat Conservation Trusts 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists'. The rationale behind the values assigned to the suitability of a feature to support bats is shown in Table 1 on the following page.

External Inspection of Buildings

2.4 A visual inspection of the buildings was undertaken to identify the suitability of the building to provide potential roost space for bats. In particular, potential access points and evidence of bats were searched for. This was carried out in full day light with the aid of binoculars, endoscope, torch and ladders (where needed) to identify the following features:

- Age and structure of the building;
- Condition of the roof noting any missing, dislodged or lifted tiles that would provide entry;
- Condition of the walls, doors and windows that may also provide entry;
- Windowsills, walls and sheltered areas are searched for bat droppings; and
- Grease marks, scratch marks and urine staining around possible entry points.

Internal Inspection of Buildings

2.5 This section of the survey focuses on identifying features or areas which provide the correct environmental conditions for roosting bats and the evidence of bat activity. These include:

- Identifying dark, warm, undisturbed areas normally in the roof space such as joins in traditional roof joists and beams, behind the ridge beam or roofing felt and any cracks or crevices in the bricks or stonework that could be utilised as a roost site; and
- The walls, floor and any flat areas such as on top of beams were examined for bat droppings, feeding remains and bat corpses.

Table 1: Assessing the Potential Suitability of a Development Site for Bats (Taken from Collins, 2023)

Potential Suitability	Description of roosting habitats	Description of commuting and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site 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[a]	No obvious habitat features on site 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 flightpaths 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 individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions[b] 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[c]). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flightpaths 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[b] 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 flightpaths 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 larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions[b] and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flightpaths 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.

a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering; insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

Limitations

2.6 There were no significant constraints to the walkover survey; weather conditions were good for the survey.

Legislation

2.7 Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. In summary, this makes it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for breeding and shelter, disturb a bat, or kill, injure, or take a bat. Seven bat species including noctule *Nyctalus noctula* (but not common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) are listed at Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

2.8 The ODPM Circular 06/05 makes the presence of a protected species a material consideration within the planning process. It states that it is essential for the presence of protected species and the extent they may be affected by proposed development be established through appropriate surveys before the planning permission is granted and encourages the use of planning conditions to secure the long-term protection of the species.

2.9 The NERC Act, as amended, puts an obligation on public bodies to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Under the terms of the Act, conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing populations and/or habitats. The local planning authority (LPA) or other determining authority must therefore consider the effects of planning applications upon biodiversity and how it can be mitigated for or enhances.

2.10 Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required that 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment' and that 'opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

3. Results – Walkover Survey

Site Description

3.1 The proposed site is located toward the eastern side of Egremont, and surrounded for the most part, by other industrial style buildings. The exception is the land to the south, forming part of the curtilage of the property.

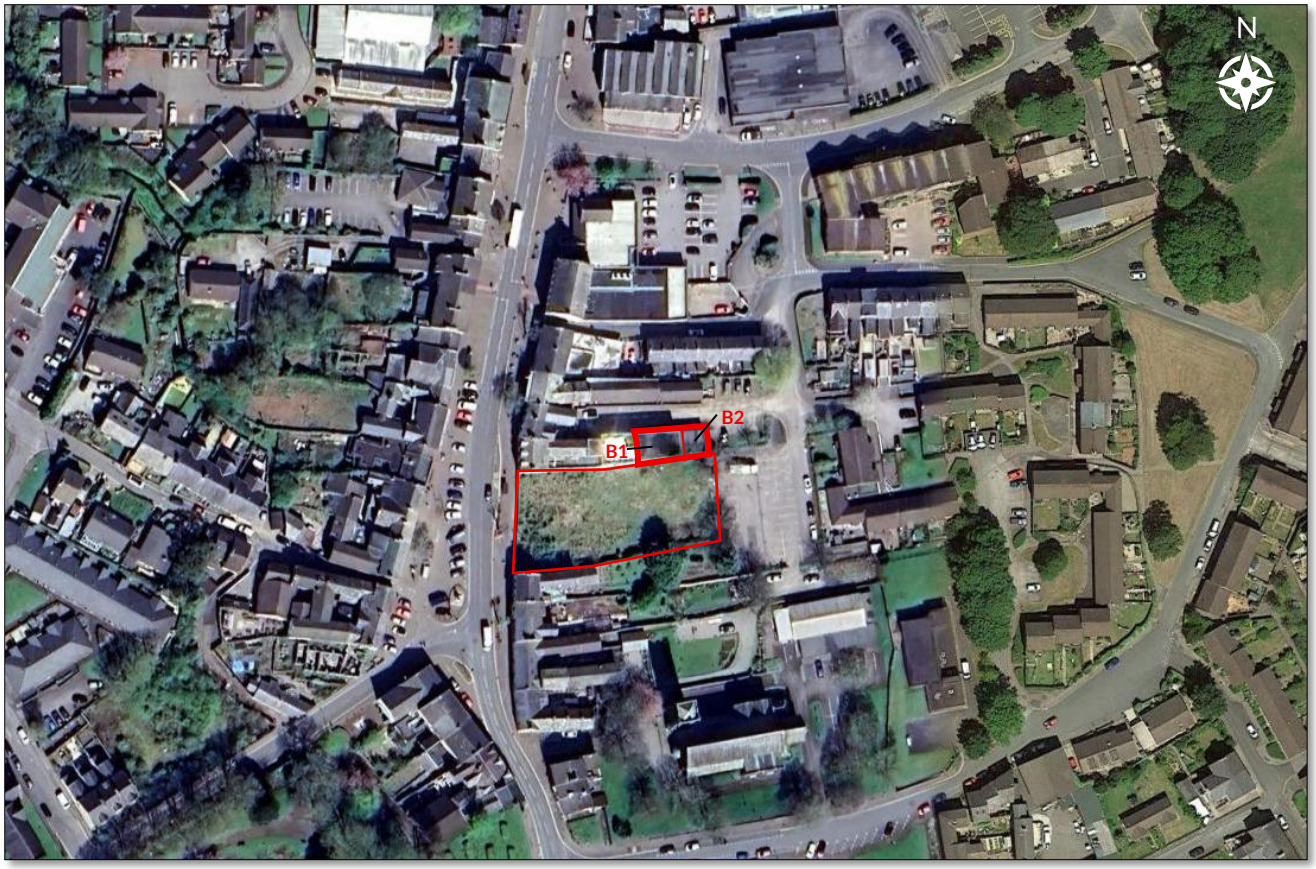
3.2 The immediate surrounding landscape comprises of a plot of open land to the south, which has been left neglected for a number of years and now colonising species has grown over the road planning/gravel type surface below. Adjoined to the west is further buildings, and to the north and east, urban concrete and associated buildings.

3.3 Beyond the curtilage of the site the surrounding area is typical of a town, with a mix of buildings and infrastructure, combined with gardens, open green spaces to the east, and a minimal amount of tree canopy cover.

3.4 The River Eden swings in an ox-bow from east to south of the site, approximately 300m away. The Egremont bypass, bordered by trees and open land, is slightly further east than the River Eden, at approximately 320m. The remaining landscape, to the north, south and west comprises of Egremont itself.

3.5 It is proposed to initially renovate the building and bring it back into functionality.

Figure 1: Former Red Lion and associated land, highlighted in red.



Desk Study

3.6 One bat EPSM record from 2012 was found within 2km of the proposed development, approximately in the location of the West Lakes Academy. The EPSM was for the disturbance of a roost site of common and soprano pipistrelle.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Building Description

3.8 The site comprises of a two-storey industrial style building (B1), with a single storey annexe (B2) attached on the eastern aspect. The annexe is adjoined in an open plan style, and forms part of the ground floor open space. There is no loft space in either building, being constructed with flat roofs.

3.9 There is a continuation of the building to the west, which is under different ownership and does not form part of this survey effort.

3.10 See Appendix C for a plan showing building locations and roost potential.

3.11 The walls appear to be constructed in layers, with a concrete pebble dash render covering red brick. Internally the walls are lined with breeze block, and have been smooth rendered and painted white along the external sections in the past. The upper floor walls have also been smooth rendered and painted an off white. Ground floor internal divisions are constructed of breeze block, and for the most part, painted white as well.

3.12 On the upper floor, there is a bare breeze block wall creating a division between the internal space of the site and the adjacent property.

3.13 The roofs on both sections of the building (annexe and main) are flat and bitumen felt covered. No water ingress is notable internally, suggesting the roof to be in a water-tight condition. The roof and upper floor are supported by boxed in steel I-beams, only discovered due to two small sections of plaster board covering having falling away from the steel beams.

3.14 The lower floor has been used excessively by nesting birds, mostly pigeon, and bird droppings and pigeon carcasses are covering the majority of flooring. Large gaps along all lower windows have recently been covered to remove the issue related to pigeons gaining access.

3.15 The upper floor is clean and well-sealed, with no evidence of having been used by any mammal or bird. One exception is the infiltration of ivy in one corner, which appears to have found/exploited an access point around one window, and now grows in corner of the upper floor. Access to the upper floor was via a single doorway, well-sealed due to the effort required to open and close it, and requiring the use of a ladder for access as the previous fire escape stairwell was condemned and removed.

3.16 No features were evident externally or internally that could provide suitability for use by roosting bats, and no evidence of use by bats was found internally.

3.17 Select photos of the buildings are provided in Appendix 1.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 No features were found to be suitable for use by roosting bats.

4.2 Externally, B1 and B2 are clean and sealed, with no features noted that would provide suitable roosting space.

4.3 No evidence of use by roosting bats was found internally, and no suitable feature are present. Access internally to the upper floor is non-existent, with well-sealed windows, walls and door – with the exception of encroaching ivy around a window gap, which it has now blocked.

4.4 The surrounding landscape and connectivity are poor, leading to the conclusion that there would be minimal usage by foraging bats in the area – any bats present are likely to be pipistrelle, which have a disregard for general convention where commuting and foraging are concerned.

4.5 Following the inspection survey, it can be concluded that the buildings B1 and B2 have negligible potential for roosting bats, and no further surveys are required. Recommendations with regard to likely impacts have been given where possible based on the proposals provided.

Potential Impacts

Building Reference	Likelihood of Presence on Site	Potential Impacts
B1 & B2	**External** – No roosting opportunities for bats evident, with no suitable gaps or crevices. No access to internal spaces noted. **Internal** – No suitable roosting opportunities for bats evident.	**Negligible** – Disturbance of roosting bats if present, and destruction or damage to potential roost features during residential lead redevelopment unlikely.

4.6 B1 and B2 are classified as having negligible potential for roosting bats.

4.7 Following the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines, no further surveys are required.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Final recommendations are as follow:

- No further surveys are required, and work can progress to renovate the building.

General recommendations

- External lighting should be kept to a minimum and, where necessary, should be low wattage and should include measures to reduce reflective rebound into the surrounding sky.

- Site lighting will be kept to a minimum during construction and operational phases. If lighting is necessary, there are a number of ways to minimise the effect of lighting on bats. Information can be taken from the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (2018). If further clarification is required, the ecologist should be consulted.

6. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

COLLINS, J. (ED.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2023/09/bat-surveys-for--ecologists-good-practice-guidelines-4th-edition-launched

Bat Ability (2019) Assessing Sites for Hibernation Potential. A Practical Approach, including Proposed Method and Supporting Notes

Bat Conservation Trust (2018) Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004), Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature, Peterborough

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para. 99

Grid Reference Finder (2023): GRF, online http://www.gridreferencefinder.com, accessed at report date.

Magic (2023): Magic Maps, NEPS licences and designated sites, online http://www.magic.gov.uk, accessed at report date.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Photographs

Photo 1: B2 and B1, northern aspect

Photo 2: B2, attached annexe

Photo 3: B1 upper floor access door and wall example

Photo 4: B2 southern aspect

Photo 5: B1, southern aspect and boarded windows

Photo 6: aerial view

Photo 7: B2 roof

Photo 8: B1 roof

Photo 9: aerial view, northern aspect

Photo 10: roof from east of site

Photo 11: B1, sealed flat roof holding water

Photo 12: B2 from annexe entrance

Photo 13: B1 ground floor interior

Photo 14: B1 upper floor, looking south-west to internal division

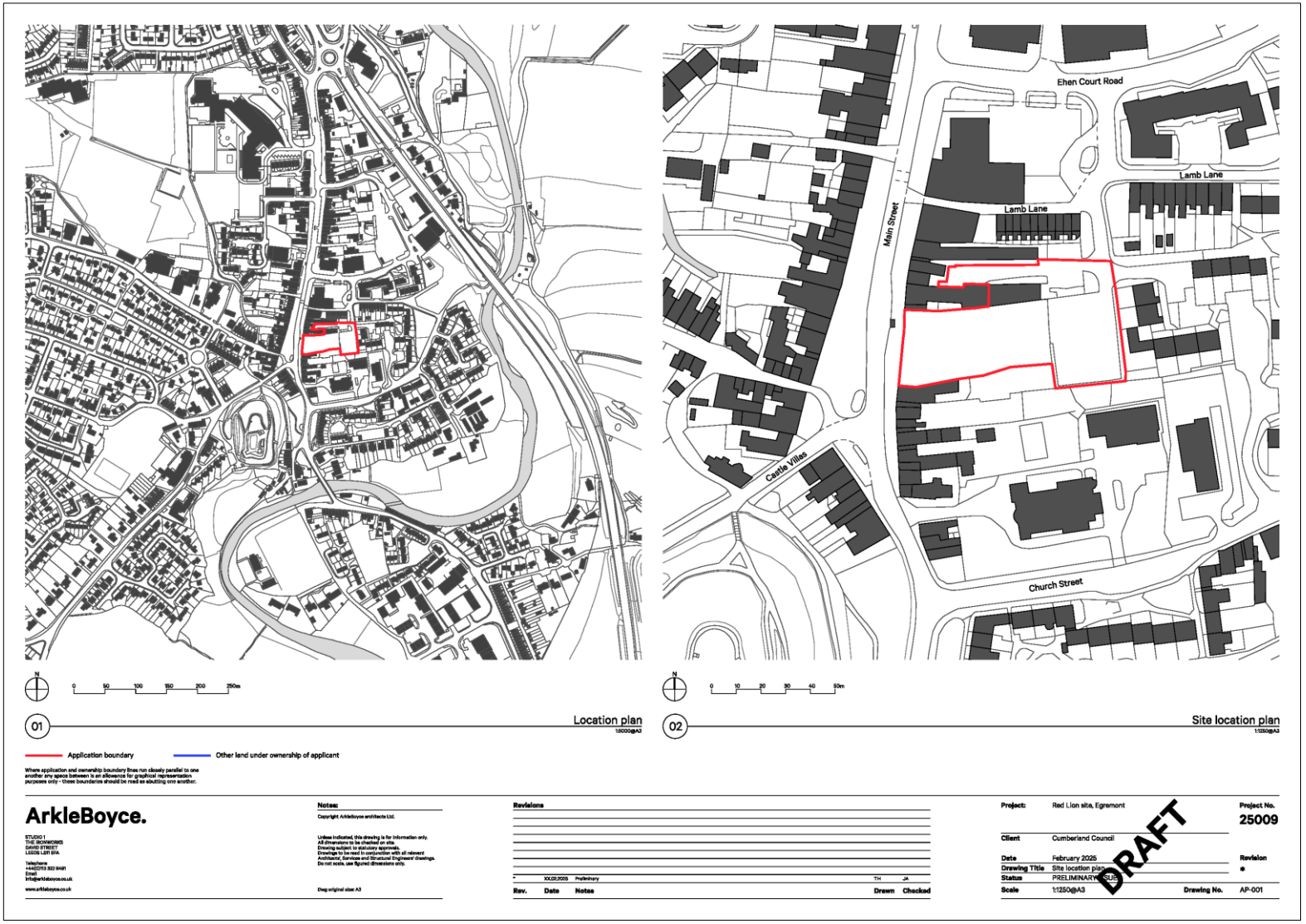
Photo 15: B1 upper floor, looking east

Photo 16: B1 ivy encroachment

Photo 17: B1, upper floor entrance

Photo 18: B1, upper floor norther wall

Appendix B: Existing Location Plan



Appendix C: Building Potential Plan

Key to building potential for bat roosts

- High Potential
- Moderate Potential
- Low Potential
- Negligible/No Potential

N

Title	Building Potential Plan
Drawing No.	01
Site	Former Red Lion, Egremont
Date	August 2025
Produced By	D. Watson