

Pewter House Farm, Balderstone

**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL &
BAT SURVEY REPORT**

June 2026



KNIGHT SKY ECOLOGY
PRACTICAL ECOLOGY SOLUTIONS

E: info@knightskyecology.co.uk

W: www.knightskyecology.co.uk

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KNIGHT SKY ECOLOGY LTD Email: info@knightskyecology.co.uk Web: www.knightskyecology.co.uk	



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction and Background

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and bat surveys of the barn at Pewter House Farm, Carr Lane, Balderstone, BB2 7LN.

These surveys were commissioned to inform the proposed development of the site, which includes the conversion of the barn to residential use and the creation of associated parking. The farmhouse is not subject to development and was therefore excluded from the survey scope.

The bat surveys included a preliminary roost assessment and dusk emergence surveys. The primary aim of these surveys was to determine the presence or absence of bat roosts at the property. This report presents the survey results, providing the necessary data, assessment, and guidance to meet relevant planning and conservation policy obligations and legislative requirements. Details of the legislation afforded to bats are provided in Appendix A for further context.

Although bats were identified as the principal ecological consideration for the site, all other potential ecological constraints relevant to the proposed development (e.g., nesting birds) were also assessed and are documented where applicable.

The development proposals are subject to the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) condition. BNG calculations and associated reporting will be submitted separately.

1.2 Site Description

The barn is attached to the farmhouse and is no longer used for agricultural purposes. The property lies at the very end of Carr Lane and is surrounded by an agricultural landscape comprising pasture fields, small holdings, and occasional rural dwellings. The wider area includes the villages of Osbaldeston, Mellor Brook and Balderstone, which form the nearest settlements within the surrounding landscape.

Figure 1.1 provides an aerial image illustrating the location of the property and its immediate context.



Figure 1.1. Site location





2 METHODS

2.1 Lancashire Environmental Records Network (LERN)

LERN was contacted to request records of bats within a 2km search radius.

2.2 Desk Study (General Ecology)

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping tool (Available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) was used to search for ecological information contained within the relevant datasets including:

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones - to determine whether the proposal poses a risk to the notified features of any SSSI located within the wider area.
- Priority habitats (as listed within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) within a 250m radius. This included certain priority habitats also referred to as 'irreplaceable'.
- Granted European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licenses for bats and great crested newts within a 1km radius.

Mapping information for locally designated sites (Biological Heritage Sites (BHS)) within a 500m radius was obtained from the Nature Recovery Interactive Map accessed via:

- <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d429aa6435b849838af1d2cef68de43b>

2.3 Survey Personnel

The preliminary bat roost assessment and dusk emergence surveys were led by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) for bats and has held this licence for over 13 years. Ryan has also acted as the 'named ecologist' on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England which covered several bat species and roost types including maternity, hibernation and day roosts. Ryan also holds a Level 1 licence for great crested newts (ref. 2015-16727-CLS-CLS).

All other personnel who were involved in the surveys have been trained by Ryan or hold Natural England licences and / or have several years of experience in bat surveys.

2.4 Overarching Guidance

The bat survey was primarily based on the methods described in '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*'. Bat Conservation Trust, London.' (Collins, J., (ed.) (2023). Any deviation from standard practice is justified where required.

2.5 Site Surveys

2.5.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A Preliminary Roost Assessment of the property was undertaken on 20th March 2026. The assessment involved a visual inspection of the property to search for bats and evidence of bats (e.g., droppings) and an appraisal of the extent and suitability of any potential bat roost features present. The assessment included the use of a torch, ladders and a digital endoscope.



Other considerations which would influence the suitability of the property for use by bats were also taken into account. This included the site location, expected night time lighting levels and the suitability of the surrounding habitats. This information was gathered from the site survey and web-based mapping sources (i.e., Google Earth).

Following the assessment, the buildings were assigned a bat roost suitability category of none, negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost based on the collated information.

2.5.2 Dusk Emergence Survey

Two dusk emergence bat surveys of the property were undertaken on 11 May and 8 June 2026 to gather further information on the presence or absence of a bat roost.

With respect to the bat roost suitability of the building, and considering the size, layout, and aspects of the structure, two survey positions were required to obtain clear sightlines of all potential roost features identified during the preliminary roost assessment. These positions enabled surveyors to record any bats emerging from the buildings, including species and numbers, should a roost be present.

All additional bat activity not associated with emergence was also recorded, including flight direction, type of activity, timing, and species. The survey commenced at least 15 minutes before sunset and continued for a minimum of 1 hour 30 minutes after sunset.

The dusk emergence survey comprised two surveyors equipped with full-spectrum bat detectors, supplemented by infra-red (IR) cameras with sufficient IR illumination and/or a thermal imaging monocular. These systems are collectively referred to as Night Vision Aids (NVAs).

All NVA footage was fully reviewed using desktop media-player software following completion of the survey. In addition, all recorded bat calls were downloaded and analysed using appropriate software (e.g. BatExplorer) to ensure that any notable bat activity not detected in real time was identified. Table 2.1 details the survey times, weather conditions, equipment used, and survey positions.

Table 2.1. Survey conditions and equipment

Date	11 May 2026	8 June 2026
Sunset	20:59	21:38
Survey duration	20:44 to 22:30	21:23 to 23:10
Weather conditions	• Dry throughout • 11°C at survey start • 9°C at survey end • 0% cloud cover • Wind 1 (Beaufort Scale) • No significant weather changes were encountered throughout the survey	• Dry throughout • 14°C at survey start • 11°C at survey end • 30% cloud cover • Wind 0-1 (Beaufort Scale) • No significant weather changes were encountered throughout the survey



Personnel & equipment	• Ryan Knight (RK) - Elekon Batlogger M2 Bat Detector (full spectrum) and 1no. Guide TK612 Gen2 Thermal Imaging Monocular with a viewing screen. • Catherine Wood (CW) (Level 2 Licence. 2016-24176-CLS-CLS) – Peersonic RPA3 (full spectrum) and 1no. Nightfox Nova IR binoculars with x1 Nightfox XC5 torch • RK - Elekon Batlogger M2 Bat Detector (full spectrum) and 1no. Guide TK612 Gen2 Thermal Imaging Monocular with a viewing screen. • CW – Peersonic RPA3 (full spectrum) and 1no. Nightfox Nova IR binoculars with x1 Nightfox XC5 torch
Survey positions (0)	 Image © 2026 Airbus

2.6 Assessment Comments

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

The initial preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken outside the main active season for bats (April to October) when signs of bat roosts are less evident. Overall, this constraint did not present a significant limitation to the recommendations made following the assessment. The main aim of the assessment was to evaluate the suitability of the buildings for use by bats.

Dusk Emergence Surveys

The surveys were undertaken within the main bat activity period during weather conditions deemed suitable to conduct bat surveys in accordance with the guidance (Collins, 2023). Overall, no significant constraints to the surveys were encountered.

General

The bat survey data within this report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of issue. An ecologist should be contacted for advice on the revalidation requirements of the report if planning permission is not obtained or works do not commence within this time period.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 LERN Data

Including the records obtained from South Lancashire Bat Group, LERN provided 38 records of bats from within the 2km search radius. The records included a mix of bat species and record types, as shown in Table 3.1. No records originated from the site or a 250m radius.

Table 3.1 LERN Bat Records

Common Name	Bat Casualty	Bat roost	Bat roost - day roost	Commuting	Field record	Not listed	Grand Total
Unidentified Bats					1	2	3
Brown Long-eared Bat						1	1
Common Pipistrelle			1	1		7	9
Myotis Bat species						2	2
Noctule						2	2
Pipistrelle		2			8	2	12
Soprano Pipistrelle						5	5
Whiskered Bat	2				2		4
Grand Total	2	2	1	1	11	21	38

3.1.2 European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses

No EPS mitigation licenses for bats were identified within a 1km radius.

3.1.3 Statutory Sites

The Impact Risk Zones for SSSI indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on any SSSI and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

3.1.4 Non-Statutory Sites

The nearest locally designated site comprises Mercyfield Wood, Sandiford Wood and Green Rid Wood BHS located 480m north. The BHS has been designated for its woodland and invertebrate interests.

3.1.5 Priority Habitats

A large area of deciduous woodland (Mercyfield Wood and Sandiford Wood) is located 480m north. These woodlands are also listed in the Ancient Woodland directory.

3.2 Bat Roost Assessment

3.2.1 Building Description and Potential Bat Roost Features

Photos of the property are provided in Appendix B for a general overview and Plates 1.1 to 1.6 provide illustrations of potential roost features identified during the assessment.

Barn & Extensions

The barn comprises the original red-brick structure with an upper-floor hay loft, together with a series of interconnected single-storey extensions surrounding the main barn. The extensions were former livestock pens. The majority of the roof is covered with stone slate tiles; however, a section has been re-roofed with concrete tiles and features newer timber rafters and an underlining. The external brickwork of the main barn was generally in good repair with no gaps noted. A small area of brickwork around an upper-floor window has been rendered.

Potential roost features on the external elevations of the main barn were limited to gaps beneath the verge tiles on the north gable and numerous small gaps beneath the stone slates, which is typical for this roof type. The surrounding extensions comprised a mix of stone- and brick-built structures with varied roof types, including corrugated sheeting and stone slates. A small extension on the front elevation has recently been removed. No notable gaps or crevices were observed on the external elevations of the extensions. The rear extension is partially built into the ground, with the external wall measuring less than 1.5 m in height.

Internally, the brickwork of the main barn was in good repair overall. Three localised areas of decayed or missing mortar and brickwork were present, forming suitably recessed crevices; all were fully inspected. The extensions comprised a mix of whitewashed and rendered brickwork. Potential roost features were identified in gaps between roof rafters and wall junctions, as well as a single gap within the stonework.

Attached Shelter

Attached to the eastern side of the barn is a steel framed, lean-to structure with a corrugated sheet roof. No potential roost features for bats were observed on this structure.

Plates 1.1 – 1.6. Potential roost features

Plate 1.1.

Gaps in roof verge on north gable.





Plate 1.2.

Numerous shallow gaps in roof.



Plate 1.3.

Recessed gaps in corner of barn.



Plate 1.4.

Gap above hay loft and stairs.





Plate 1.5.

Gap between rafter and wall.



Plate 1.6.

Gap in stone wall.





3.2.2 Habitat Description

The barn is situated adjacent to several large and small agricultural buildings, which provide sheltered foraging opportunities within the site itself. The wider landscape is rural in character and comprises a network of improved pasture fields. Many of these fields are bounded by mature trees and tree lines, offering connective habitat corridors to and from the site.

Large areas of deciduous woodland occur within 500 m of the property and provide habitats of high value for bats. The River Ribble is located approximately 1.25 km to the north, and the river corridor and associated riparian habitats represent an additional high-value foraging resource.

Taking account of the surrounding habitats and landscape structure, bat activity levels and species diversity were expected to be moderate prior to undertaking the dusk emergence surveys.

3.2.3 Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Suitability

No evidence of a bat roost was observed during the preliminary bat roost assessment. Potential roost features or roost access features (to internal areas) included:

- Access via gaps around the main barn door and via open windows.
- Gaps under the roof verges.
- Gaps between stone slates.
- Gaps within the internal walls.

With respect to the findings of the preliminary roost assessment, the barn was categorised as **moderate** in its suitability to support bats.

3.3 Dusk Emergence Survey

The results of the dusk emergence survey are summarised in Table 3.2. No evidence of a bat roost was recorded. The surveys recorded common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule bat, brown long-eared bat, and Myotis species. Most Myotis bat calls were attributed to Natterer's bat although the presence of other species (e.g. whiskered bat) cannot be discounted. The second survey recorded a higher level of activity. Two Natterer's bats were recorded entering a side extension later in the second survey and these bats were not recorded exiting. This behaviour was attributed to general foraging activity, as the room they entered does not contain any typical roost features.

Table 3.2. Summary of bat activity

11 May 2026 - RK: north-east elevations (sunset 20:59)
21:01: First bat (noctule bat) recorded. Commuting pass not seen.
21:30: Common pipistrelle pass.
21:37: Common pipistrelle – second commuting pass.
21:54: Soprano pipistrelle. Brief pass
22:00 to survey end: Intermittent foraging of common pipistrelle and noctule bat.
No roost emergence seen by surveyor or via NVA footage.



11 May 2026 – CW: south-west elevations

22:03: Common pipistrelle briefly foraging.

22:05 to survey end. Common pipistrelle foraging recorded intermittently.

- No roost emergence seen by surveyor or via NVA footage

8 June 2026 - RK: north-east elevations (sunset 21:38)

21:59: First bat (common pipistrelle) recorded. Commuting pass not seen.

22:00 to 22:08: Common pipistrelle commuting passes.

22:12: Myotis species – Pass around barn

22:15 to 22:30: Common pipistrelle x 2. Constant foraging.

22:22: Soprano pipistrelle. Foraging pass.

22:37: Brown long-eared bat pass.

22:38 & 22:50: Myotis bat passes

22:30 to survey end: Intermittent foraging of common pipistrelle.

- No roost emergence seen by surveyor or via NVA footage.

8 June 2026 – CW: south-west elevations

22:19: Common pipistrelle briefly foraging around barn.

22:35: Common pipistrelle (1 to 2) – constant activity.

22:37: Myotis bat x 2. Entered small lean-to room adjacent to main barn entrance. Did not re-emerge.

22:55: Soprano pipistrelle pass

22:05 to survey end. Common pipistrelle foraging recorded intermittently.

- No roost emergence seen by surveyor or via NVA footage

3.4 Nesting Birds

The barn was found to contain at least one active swallows' nest and it is highly likely that other bird species will nest within the building.

A single, very old barn owl pellet was identified on the hay loft; however, no other evidence of barn owl was observed. It is likely that barn owl has not been present for several years.

3.5 Other Potential Constraints

There are at least three ponds located within a 250m radius of the site. The closest pond to the site is located 105m east. Such ponds could support great crested newts. However, the site comprises hardstanding and buildings only and does not contain any refuge features associated with great crested newts.

No other potential constraints to the proposed development were encountered.



4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Bats

The main findings derived from the bat surveys are as follows:

- No evidence of a bat roost was identified during the preliminary roost assessment and two dusk emergence surveys.
- The surveys recorded moderate levels of bat activity and several bat species including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, brown long-eared bat and Myotis species which were primarily Natterer's bat.

The scope of bat surveys described in this report is considered sufficient to conclude that bat roosts are likely absent from the property.

Accordingly, bats do not present a potential ecological constraint to the development proposals. The works will not result in impacts to bats and will therefore remain compliant with the relevant legislation (Appendix A).

Bats utilise several roosts throughout the year. Given the nature of bats and the levels of activity recorded at the site, there will always be a low residual risk of encountering an individual bat during works. This risk can be effectively mitigated through standard good-practice measures to be adopted by contractors during construction. These measures are detailed in Section 5.

4.2 Nesting Birds

Evidence of nesting birds was observed. The development should therefore be aware of the legislation afforded to nesting birds:

- All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

Mitigation for potential impacts to nesting birds is provided in Section 5.

4.3 Other

Important ecological features such as statutory sites, non-statutory sites and priority habitats will not be affected by the proposed works. This is primarily due to the intervening distance and absence of connectivity between any such features and the site.

The risk of encountering great crested newts is considered very low and detailed mitigation measures are not considered to be required (also see Section 5).



5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats

5.1.1 Precautionary Mitigation

Whilst it can be confirmed that bat roosts are absent from the property, it should be noted that bats can utilise a number of structures throughout the course of the year; therefore, it is recommended that the construction adopts the following precautionary mitigation procedure:

- The contact details of a bat licensed surveyor should be retained by the appointed contractor throughout the duration of the development works. In the unexpected event that a bat is discovered, contractors will be advised to contact the licensed ecologist who will travel to site to assess the welfare of the bat. Contractors will be specifically forbidden from handling bats. Contractors will be advised that if it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves **MUST** be worn. It should be carefully placed in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until the licensed ecologist arrives on site.
- If the continuing works are, on balance, likely to result in contravention of the legislation afforded to bats (see Appendix A), the works would stop and a Natural England mitigation licence will be sought.

5.2 Nesting Birds

5.2.1 Precautionary Mitigation

The contractors must be made fully aware of the legislation afforded to birds (Section 4). In order to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, the development should be completed outside of March to September. If the roofing works are completed within this period, a nesting bird check should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to confirm that nests are absent / not in use. In the event that an active bird nest is discovered during the work, the contractor must stop immediately and leave the nest undisturbed and in-situ until all the young have fledged and the nest is no longer active. Swallows can use nests well into September. It will not be possible to provide compensatory nesting provision for swallows in the new development layout. There are several alternative nesting locations around the site.

5.3 Great Crested Newts

5.3.1 Precautionary Mitigation

In the unexpected event that great crested newts are discovered, contractors will be advised to contact a licensed ecologist who will travel to site to provide further advice.

5.4 Enhancements for Bats and Birds

The development presents a good opportunity to increase roosting provision for bats and birds via the fixing of boxes within the site. Details of the **1 bat box** and **1 bird box** recommended to be installed at the site are provided in Tables 5.1 and 5.2.



Table 5.1. Bat box

Locations and positioning	The box can be fitted on the wall at height of at least 3m from the ground (ideally just under the roof verge. Aspect is not important.		
Bat box models and purchasing	Bat box models along with the locations for purchasing are provided below. There can be a considerable waiting time for delivery for certain models, therefore, two options have been provided.		
	Greenwoods – two crevice bat box. For buildings.	 TWO CREVICE BAT BOX	Designed for small groups of crevice dwelling bat species, such as common and soprano pipistrelles. Available from https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/shop
	Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box		This bat box is also made entirely from WoodStone. The Beaumaris box has a single narrow cavity which makes it suitable for crevice roosting bats such as common pipistrelle. Available from: https://www.nhbs.com/
Maintenance	The models chosen do not require cleaning as bat droppings do not typically accumulate within these types of boxes to a level likely to cause problems for future habitation.		

Table 5.2. Bird box

Locations and positioning	The best place to put a bird box is 2–4 metres high on a wall facing between north and east to avoid direct sunlight and the wettest winds. Ensure it is tilted slightly forward to keep rain out, has a clear flight path, and is out of reach of cats.
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Bird box models and purchasing	Vivara Pro WoodStone® House Sparrow Nest Box (double chamber)		This house sparrow nest box is manufactured from woodstone® - a mix of concrete and FSC wood fibres. This material is strong and highly insulating, which helps to provide a thermally stable environment within the box. It also protects against damage from predators such as cats, woodpeckers and squirrels. It is available with one or two breeding chambers, which can be particularly suitable for house sparrows as they prefer to nest in colonies. Available from https://www.nhbs.com
Maintenance	Cleaning of the boxes should be undertaken from <u>October to January, outside of the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive)</u>. Rubber gloves must be worn. The old nesting material which accumulates after every breeding season and the droppings from earlier in the season should be removed along with any egg shells or unhatched eggs.		



APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION FOR BATS

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

All bat species in England are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 9 of the Act make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5. In addition, it is an offence to (intentionally or recklessly):

- Damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of bats.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Bats are listed within Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) as European Protected Species of animals. Part 3 (Protection of animals); Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- Deliberately take or destroys the eggs of such an animal; or
- Damages or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

For the purposes of the legislation, the disturbance of wild animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or to reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of European Protected Species.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. There are 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance, often referred to as priority habitats and priority species respectively, which were initially identified as requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. The Section 41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 “to have regard” to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions. Bat species listed under Section 41 and known to be present within the north of England comprise soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat and noctule bat.

An amendment to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) section 40 duty, provided for in the **Environment Act 2021**, extends the biodiversity duty on public authorities to include the enhancement of biodiversity alongside conservation by way of creating “the general biodiversity objective”.



APPENDIX B. PHOTOS AND SCREENSHOTS

Photos 1a & 1b

Front (east)
elevations of
barn.





Photo 2

North elevation.



Photo 3

North-west
elevations





Photo 4.

Rear elevations



Photos 5a – 5d

Internal views of
barn.



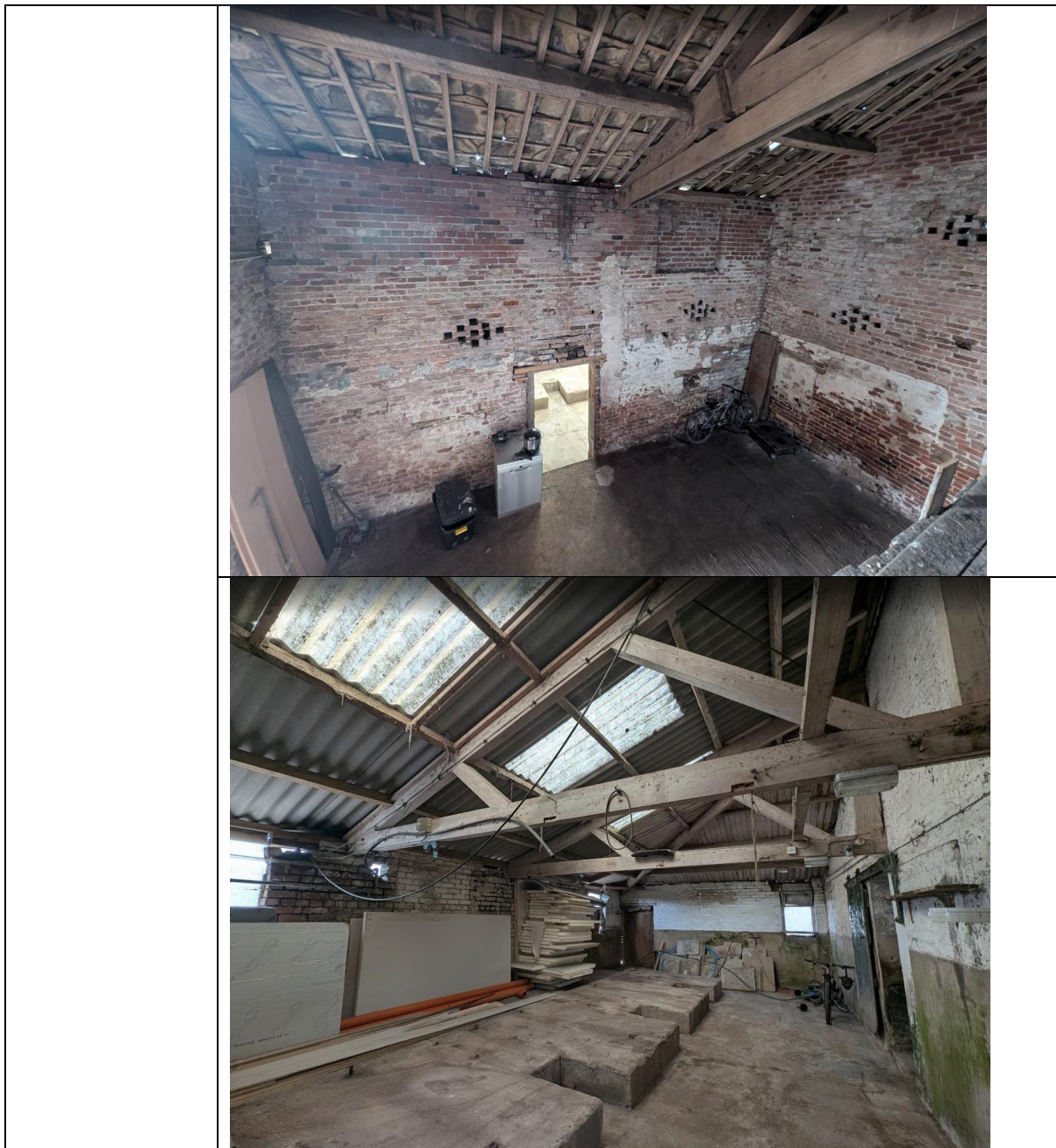




	
Photo 6. Very old barn owl pellet.	



NVA Screenshots



