

THE GROOM'S HOUSE HOPE FARM, BILLINGSHURST,

Updated Preliminary Roost Appraisal Report

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Report Control Sheet

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

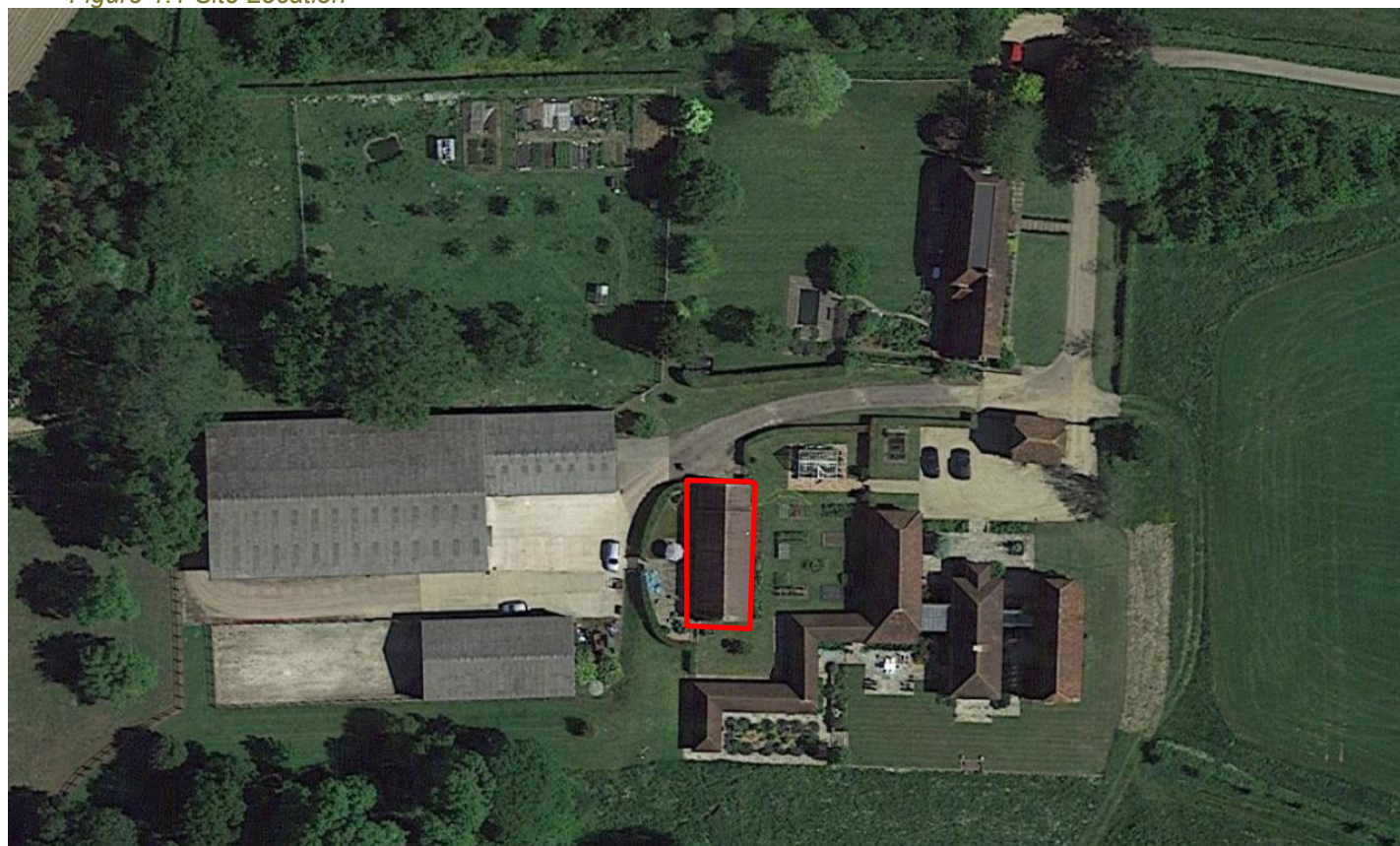
1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Millie Gardiner to update a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) on the Groom's house located within the site at Hope Farm, Billingshurst, RH14 9BP. This report has been produced to inform an upcoming planning application for works to the building.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Jon Hayter Technical bat lead and Senior Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Jon holds a level 2 bat license (2019-CL18- 39842-CLS-CLS) and is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning permission. Furthermore, Jon has overseen work on the site over the last three years, including holding two EPSL licenses across projects too other buildings, leading to a detailed understanding of the wider site, its species assemblage and any likely constraints.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the approximate building location. The site is located within a rural area of Billingshurst, a village and civil parish in the Horsham District of West Sussex. It is surrounded by agricultural fields and woodland areas on all aspects. Grid reference: TQ 07236 29059.

Figure 1.1 Site Location



1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the PRA are as follows:

- Identify any areas of bat roosting potential within the building
- Assess the value of the building for roosting bats
- Search for signs of bats
- Provide recommendations on any further surveys or mitigation required for bats

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

- 2.1.1. A previous PRA survey of the entire site including the groom's house, was undertaken on 26th August 2022 by Katie Bird, who holds a Level 2 Class Licence (2020-48950-CLS-CLS), an overview of the findings of the 2022 survey is included in section 3 below.
- 2.1.2. An updated PRA visit was undertaken by Jon Hayter on the 16th of September 2025, following work on site to undertake Ecological Clerk of Works supervision for an EPSL license associated with the nearby Farmhouse located within the wider site boundary.
- 2.1.3. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2024). This includes undertaking a detailed internal and external inspection of any features to compile information on potential roosting features (PRFs) and potential access points. A search for field signs of bats (i.e. droppings, urine stains and feeding remains) was also completed. The use of binoculars, torches and endoscope assisted with the survey. The building was assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.1 Collins (2024) and reproduced in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

Bat Roosting Potential	Description
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitats to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and for longer periods of time.

2.2. NOCTURNAL BAT SURVEY

- 2.2.1. Two original nocturnal surveys were undertaken following the initial PRA findings, as a dusk survey on the 30th of August and a dawn survey on the 15th of September 2022.
- 2.2.2. One further survey was undertaken as a dusk survey on the 13th of June 2023 to update the information, however, delays and changes in site priorities led to a delay in the planned works. Full details of all the surveys can be found in the accompanying nocturnal bat report CW20-516-RPT002.3, however, a brief overview of the findings is included in section 4 below for context.

2.3. HIBERNATION POTENTIAL

- 2.3.1. No evidence of bats was encountered during either PRA, as the building has continually been occupied with consistently high temperatures and disturbance levels, the building was rated as holding Negligible hibernation potential, with only the external timber cladding offering low suitability potential for hibernating bats.

2.4. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 2.4.1. There were no limitations encountered during the updated PRA inspection.

3 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT RESULTS

3.1.1. The conditions on site were found to be contemporary and relatively unchanged between the initial site visit in 2022, through to the updated site inspection in 2025, with the Grooms house being rated as holding Moderate potential initially.

3.1.2. The subsequent completion of three emergence surveys through 2022 and 2023 identified roosting bats within the building, therefore it is deemed as a known bat roost, and this is considered during the updated PRA visit.

3.1.3. A desk study undertaken in 2022 and updated in 2025, identified the following European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within 5km of the site. This is based on information detailed within magic.gov.uk.

3.1.4. Two additional recent EPSL licenses, regarding other buildings located on site, related to the following roosts and species.

- Two common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) day roosts within 50m of the building found in 2024 during ECoW work under EPSL license 2024-68660-EPS-MIT.
- 3 common pipistrelle day roosts, 5 soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) day roosts, 1 serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*) day roost, 1 natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*) day roost and multiple brown long eared (*Plecotus auritus*) day roosts located 70m to the east in the farmhouse, located during surveys and ECoW work in 2025 under EPSL 2025-71658-EPS-MIT.

3.1.5. Table 3.1 below outlines the historic EPSL licenses as obtained from magic.gov.uk.

Case reference of granted application	Species on the licence*	Distance from site (km)	Direction from Site	Licence Start Date	Licence End Date	Permissions under licence				
						Impact on a breeding site	Damage of breeding site	Damage of a resting place	Destruction of breeding site	Destruction of a resting place
EPSM-2010-2491-MIT	C-PIP, BLE, MYO NAT	ON SITE	-	2012	2015	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
EPSM-2018-33753-EPS-MIT	S-PIP	0.7	NW	2019	2019	N	N	Y	N	Y
EPSM-2013-6710-EPS-MIT	C-PIP, BLE	3.9	NW	2014	2016	N	N	Y	N	Y
EPSM-2016-24415-EPS-MIT	C-PIP, S-PIP, MYO WHISK	4.2	S	2016	2021	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
EPSM-2017-28899-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	4.4	W	2017	2018	N	N	Y	N	Y
EPSM-2017-32088-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	4.5	N	2017	2019	N	N	Y	N	Y
EPSM-2010-2682-EPS-MIT	C-PIP, BLE	4.6	W	2012	2016	N	N	Y	N	Y
EPSM-2017-29072-EPS-MIT	BLE	4.9	NE	2017	2023	N	N	Y	N	Y
EPSM-2015-15850-EPS-MIT	BLE, C-PIP	5	W	2015	2020	N	N	Y	N	Y
Species code*		Common name				Binomial nomenclature				
C-PIP		Common pipistrelle bat				<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>				
S-PIP		Soprano pipistrelle bat				<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>				
MYO NAT		Natterer's bat				<i>Myotis nattereri</i>				
MYO WHISK		Whiskered bat				<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>				
BLE		Brown long-eared bat				<i>Plecotus auritus</i>				

3.1.6. The findings of the desk study indicate that there are six species of bat known within site and locally, including several breeding sites, with one record on site and another within 5km. The record for the 2010 breeding site located within the Hope Farm complex was not available for reference, but the details and subsequent historic and recent findings from the completed EPSL ECoW work suggest that the roost could still exist in close proximity to the groom's house.

3.1.7. Please refer to Table 3.1 for the summary of the original and updated PRA with associated photographs.

Table 3.1 PRA findings

Feature	Photograph
<u>Excerpt from original PRA undertaken on 26/08/2022- Referred to as Building 3, due to original survey encompassing entirety of the hope farm site buildings.</u> <i>Single storey building which was used as a residential dwelling. The foundations were bare brick which were generally in good condition. Wooden cladding timbers were present on all aspects of the building, with multiple gaps present, where it has lifted and provide cavities for roosting bats.</i> <i>The roof was pitched with clay roof tiles and overhanging eaves where guttering was present. The tiles were generally in good condition, with no slipped or broken tiles observed. Gaps were present between the roof structure and brick work which may provide internal access to the building.</i> <i>An internal inspection was completed, and the loft was large, with an approximate height of 2.2m. It was one large void, with exposed breathable membrane liner and wooden beams supporting the roof. Light gaps were observed in relation to the wall plate and eaves union. The walls on the northern and southern aspect were constructed of breeze block with no PRFs observed.</i> <i>PRFs were present in relation to the wooden timber beams, and between the tiles and roofing felt which had holes in some parts due to rodents. No field signs of roosting bats were observed internally.</i> <i>Due to the wooden cladding and access points to the loft, the building was assessed as having Moderate bat roosting potential.</i>	

17th September 2025 PRA update.

The conditions on site had changed little since the original survey and the building was found to be in near identical condition to the original site visit.

Internal.

The occupier has been using the internal space for storage and there is now artificial lighting within the open plan loft space. No evidence of droppings, urine staining or live bats was encountered and the presence of only rat and mouse droppings and extensive damage to the breathable membrane indicates that there is still a rodent population within the loft and offers external to internal access.

The northern end is heavily covered in cobwebs and has no boarding over the exposed insulation, whereas the central area including the loft hatch and the southern end are fully boarded meaning a detailed inspection and full access was possible to all parts of the loft void.

The external access previously noted was visible with natural light spill observed between the roof eaves and wall plate, this offers void dwelling species known to be present on site such as Brown long eared bats potential internal access.

External

The external facades have not altered since the original visit, and the garden has matured with shrubs and some vegetation now obscuring the timber cladding.

Multiple lifted and warped timbers were observed, and these correspond to the original findings. The roof covering of clay tiles remains in good condition with only minimal slipped and lifted tiles.

An inspection with a high-powered torch under the timber cladding in the known roost locations failed to positively identify any live bats.

Due to the existing survey data confirming that there are multiple roosts within the timber cladding **the building is classed as a known roost, therefore it is rated as holding High bat roosting potential.**





4 NOCTURNAL BAT SURVEY RESULTS

4.1. DUSK SURVEY (30/08/22)

- 4.1.1. Bat activity was recorded consistently throughout the survey, with common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and serotine bat observed foraging or commuting in proximity to the groom's house.
- 4.1.2. Seven common pipistrelle bats were recorded emerging from the groom's house between 20:00pm (approximately 10 minutes after sunset) and 20:09pm. Six bats emerged from the timber cladding on the southern aspect referenced as R1, and one bat emergence from the underside of the roof between the soffit, eaves and fascia near the guttering referenced as R2. (see figure 4.1 below)
- 4.1.3. It is anticipated that due to the low numbers and timing of the survey, that both roosts are day roosts for low numbers of common pipistrelle bats.

4.2. DAWN SURVEY (15/09/22)

- 4.2.1. Bat activity was recorded minimally throughout the survey, with common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat recorded during the survey in proximity of the groom's house.
- 4.2.2. Two roost locations were observed throughout the survey; a single brown long eared bat was observed re-entering the soffit and fascia area around R2 at 06:11am this is referred to as R3 due to it involving a separate species. One common pipistrelle bat was observed re-entering the timber cladding on the eastern elevation at 06:14am referred to as R4 (see figure 4.1 below)
- 4.2.3. The results of this survey indicate that the known summer roosts at the southern end of the building are still in use into the late summer and transitional period but have decreased considerably in peak numbers since the August survey. The presence of brown long eared bats would suggest use of the soffit area and fascia over the internal roof void (due to no evidence of usage internally) and given that it is in the transitional period, the roost could be attributed to an occasional roost for the species.

4.3. DAWN SURVEY (13/06/23)

- 4.3.1. Bat activity was recorded consistently throughout the survey, with common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, myotis species and noctule recorded during the survey.
- 4.3.2. Two roost locations were observed during the survey; one soprano pipistrelle was observed re-entering the timber cladding at the southwestern verge to fascia union at 03:47am referred to as R5. Two soprano pipistrelles were observed re-entering under the wooden cladding at 04:06am and 04:16am on the southeast verge and fascia referred to as R6. (see figure 4.1 below)
- 4.3.3. The results of the 2023 updated survey indicates that a second species is present within the southern gable end cladding, bringing the total known species within the building to three, these being common pipistrelle, brown long eared and soprano pipistrelle. Again, these confirmed roosts are for low numbers of bats, and as the 2023 survey was conducted during peak maternity period, it is confidently assessed that the building holds day roosts only for these species and not maternity site.

Figure 4.1- Roost locations.



4.4. ASSESSMENT

4.4.1. The results of the updated PRA confirmed that the conditions both internally and externally on the groom's house had not changed significantly since 2022 and 2023. Therefore, the known roosts are still considered to be present and will require further investigation to gain updated survey information. Any development or renovation to the building is likely to disturb or destroy these roosts.

4.4.2. Six bat roosts were located within the groom's house, observed during the surveys in 2022 and 2023. See Table 4.2 for a summary of the bat roost recorded on each survey.

Table 4.2 Summary of Bat Roosts

Roost No.	Peak count of bats	Species	Date(s)	Roost location
R1	6	Common pipistrelle	30.08.22	From the timber cladding on the southern gable end aspect of the building.
R2	1	Common pipistrelle	30.08.22	From the soffit and fascia area on the southeastern corner aspect of the southern gable end of the building.
R3	1	Brown long-eared bat	15.09.22	Into the soffit and fascia area on the southeastern corner aspect of the southern gable end of the building.
R4	1	Common pipistrelle	15.09.22	Into the timber cladding on the southeastern corner of the eastern elevation where the cladding meets the brickwork
R5	1	Soprano pipistrelle	13.06.23	Into the timber cladding at fascia timber union on the southwestern verge of the southern gable end of the building.
R6	2	Soprano pipistrelle	13.06.23	Into the timber cladding at fascia timber union on the southeastern verge of the southern gable end of the building.

4.4.3. The groom's house was found to support multiple roosts for three species of common and widespread bats, multiple common and soprano pipistrelle day roosts, and a Brown long eared day roost. The roosts comprise a peak count of six bats in R1, and two bats in R6 with the remainder all being for individual bats. As the updated 2023 survey was completed across the maternity season in mid-June, it can be confidently concluded that all the roosts are classified as day roosts

- 4.4.4. Given the known species assemblage on site and the cumulative effect of the recent EPSL licenses and disturbance to other buildings it is likely that the undisturbed nature of the groom's house may have led to further uptake by bats and it is recommended that at least two emergence surveys are undertaken in the summer of 2026 to fully assess the buildings current usage by bats. At least one of these surveys is to occur in peak maternity season (June) to fully discount a maternity site within the building given that 3 years will have elapsed since the previous survey effort in 2023 (as detailed above).
- 4.4.5. It is deemed that although the building has been classed as holding high potential, given the existing data, three surveys are deemed excessive should the results be comparable with the historic data. Should the results differ greatly then it is recommended that additional survey effort will be necessary in order to apply for any EPSL license.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

5.1. FURTHER SURVEYS

NOCTURNAL BAT and HIBERNATION SURVEYS

- 5.1.1. As discussed in Section 4, the categorisation of the roosts identified are based on the data set obtained from 2022 and 2023. The building was found to support a range of day roosts, mainly relating to common and soprano pipistrelle, and brown long-eared bats. The survey timings confidently determine that the building did not support a maternity roost at this time, however given recent work across the wider site it is recommended that a minimum of two further surveys are conducted on the building between May and the end of June 2026 to update and inform relevant mitigation for the required EPSL license.
- 5.1.2. No Hibernation surveys are required due to the buildings low suitability to support this type of roost.

5.2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.2.1. Based on the current data, a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required to allow the proposed development to proceed in a lawful manner. Please refer to Table 5.1 for the summary impact assessment. This may change once final proposal details have been provided to determine levels of disturbance and following the updated survey effort.
- 5.2.2. Given that the species are common and widespread and of least concern (JNCC May 2025 population studies) with stable population demographics the proposed renovations and alterations to the groom's house are considered to have a low impact on all three species at a site and local level, and negligible impact at a regional level.
- 5.2.3. Given the recent continual development of the site and disturbance of other known roosts under license, it is suggested that a cumulative effect has occurred on site and mitigation should be focussed on retention and enhancement of the roosts wherever possible, over full destruction and bat box provisions, which are already prevalent on site.

Table 5.1 Summary of Impact Assessment

Building Proposals	Roost Potentially Impacted	Licence Required?
- Renovation and alterations of the groom's house building.	There is a high probability of injuring and/or killing bats and destruction and/or disturbance of six known bat roosts as a result of the proposed works, without mitigation.	Yes – minimum two further survey in 2026 are required to confirm any change in status of the roosts already present from 2022 and 2023 surveys.

5.3. EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES LICENCE

- 5.3.1. A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required to allow the lawful destruction of the roosts and minimise risk of killing/injuring individual bats prior/during the proposed works. The licence application comprises of five elements:
- Application Form
 - Method Statement
 - Work Schedule
 - Associated Figures
 - Reasoned Statement
- 5.3.2. A Method Statement is to be produced to outline the required mitigation and compensation for roost and habitat loss for the relevant planning application. Once full planning permission and all wildlife conditions have been discharged the licence can be submitted to Natural England.
- 5.3.3. The data collected in 2022/23 will not be suitable for the submission of an EPSL application at this current juncture, due to Natural England requiring data from the most up to date survey season, therefore the updated

survey effort is required for spring/summer 2026.

5.4. BAT ROOST COMPENSATION

- 5.4.1. Development should not result in overall loss of bat roosting provisions; therefore, a replacement roost site will be required for each species and roost affected. The extent of roosting provision will be determined based on the final survey data obtained from 2026. The following is a general recommendation for roosting compensation and may alter depending on the results of the further surveys.
- 5.4.2. For roosts which comprise single and/or low numbers of common and widespread species (i.e. common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared), bat boxes and bat bricks are deemed to suffice only as a temporary measure during the works in this instance.
- 5.4.3. These boxes should be located within the retained mature broadleaved trees to the boundaries of the site, sheltered from strong winds but will be exposed to sun for parts of the day. The licenced bat ecologist will need to agree the location and positioning of the boxes, and they will need to be installed prior to the demolition works so any bats rescued will be placed within them. The boxes which are in proximity to one another, are to be positioned in different directions, to increase probability of being used, whilst providing a range of temperature conditions.
- 5.4.4. Wherever possible all roosts should be reinstated in a like for like position and be of similar construction using identical materials to facilitate re-use of as many roosts as possible upon completion, the southern gable end holds the majority of the roosts previously identified, so it is preferred that this aspect is utilised to replicate roosting provisions. Inbuilt bat boxes and bat bricks should be utilised where the horizontal cladding (a preferred finish) is not possible.
- 5.4.5. Additional roost features within any retained loft spaces, should be installed, including crevice features made of timber batten and sarking timber affixed to the ridge beam, in addition bat access tiles should be used for void dwelling species such as brown long eared bat, if the existing eaves access cannot be retained. It is preferred that artificial lighting be isolated from these enhanced areas if possible and the use of bitumen F1 felt should be prioritised given the presence of bats, due to the breathable membranes propensity to release fibres which the bats can ingest during grooming.

5.5. TIMESCALES

- 5.5.1. The timescales for the licenced activities to be completed, will depend on the results of the further surveys, although it is anticipated that due to the existing day roosts recorded during the 2022/23 season, no significant restraints will be imposed on timings due to the low importance of the roosts and species recorded.
- 5.5.2. Due to the lack of suitability for use during the hibernation period there is deemed no constraint to this period. However, best practice guidance suggests that maternity and hibernation periods should be avoided wherever possible.

5.6. METHOD STATEMENT

- 5.6.1. The buildings will be refurbished under supervision of the licensed bat ecologist. Features with bat roosting potential will be removed by hand under direct supervision of a bat licensed ecologist, the known roosts may need to be accessed via cherry picker, scaffolding or alternative lifting platform. The extent of supervision will be determined depending on the final survey results.

5.7. LIGHTING

- 5.7.1. All bats have some degree of aversion to artificial lighting, however, brown long eared bats are known to be particularly sensitive to changes in lighting around roost sites, it is recommended that consideration be given to the proposals effect on illumination levels associated with any refurbishment, especially to the southern end of the building.
- 5.7.2. It is noted that the site already utilises dark corridors and has a detailed lighting plan associated with the previous applications, so provided that no additional lighting is anticipated the levels of disturbance levels are deemed

negligible given the buildings location within the centre of the site complex.

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