

Stretton Point, Hinckley, Leicestershire

## Ground Level Tree Assessment

2025



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|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Client            | Welcome Break                    |
| Project Title     | Stretton Point, Hinckley         |
| Project Reference | RHE.3882                         |
| Project Leader    | Lucia Ruiz Mut                   |
| Contact Details   | lucia@rachelhackingecology.co.uk |

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|          |                   |                     |            |
|----------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
|          | Name              | Position            | Date       |
| Author   | Joel Crossthwaite | Ecologist           | 29/10/2025 |
| Reviewer | Dr Rachel Hacking | Principal Ecologist | 30/10/2025 |
| Revision |                   |                     |            |



RACHEL  
HACKING  
ECOLOGY

Manchester

0161 465 8971

The Stables, Paradise Wharf, Ducie  
Street, Manchester. M1 2JN

[manchester@rachelhackingecology.co.uk](mailto:manchester@rachelhackingecology.co.uk)

West Devon

01822 752 054

PO Box 255, Tavistock, Devon.  
PL19 1FU

[devon@rachelhackingecology.co.uk](mailto:devon@rachelhackingecology.co.uk)

East Midlands

0115 678 1830

[eastmidlands@rachelhackingecology.co.uk](mailto:eastmidlands@rachelhackingecology.co.uk)



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# Executive Summary

## Development Details

The client is proposing commercial development at Stretton Point, Hinckley, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of a ground level tree assessment conducted to evaluate the presence or absence of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) within trees impacted by the development. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

## Ecological Interest

The trees across the site form a network that provides suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

## Outcomes

No PRFs were found during the survey. No further survey work is required.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2025 by Welcome Break to carry out a Ground Level Tree Assessment of a number of trees at Stretton Point, Hinckley, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SP 43150 91050 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site (red line) and the line of trees assessed (green line).

### Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site received full planning permission from Rugby Borough Council and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council in 2025 for the construction of a Motorway Service Area comprising vehicular and pedestrian access from the A5, petrol filling station for domestic vehicles, HGV filling station, Main Petrol Filling Station/Services building, drive thru unit, EV charging spaces, customer parking spaces including HGV, coach and caravan provision, landscaping including picnic and dog walking areas, electric substations and retaining walls at south/western boundary fronting the M69 (planning references: R23/1047 & 23/01023/HYB).
- 1.1.3 During the discharge of planning condition stage, it was decided that the construction access for the development would be off Wolvey Road, with an entrance to the site formed via gaps within a line of

trees. An AIA and AMS were produced for the proposals (BWB Consulting) and minimal crown lifting/cutting back will be required along Wolvey Road to accommodate site vehicles.

- 1.1.4 This report aims to address any concerns relating to the disturbance of potential bat roosts within the trees proposed for cutting back.

## 1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to undertake a ground-level assessment of trees lining Wolvey Road.

## 1.3 Aims of the Survey

- 1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to:
- Assess the roosting potential of the trees along Wolvey Road;
  - Identify the requirement for any further detailed surveys.
  - Inform impact assessment and mitigation requirements.



## 2. Methods

- 2.1.1 The trees on the site were given a ground-level assessment using binoculars and a high-powered torch, searching for Potential Roosting Features (PRF's), such as flaking bark, woodpecker holes, knot holes and limb splits.
- 2.1.2 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on the tree or ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.
- 2.1.3 Trees containing PRFs were subsequently recorded and subjected to aerial inspection.

### 2.2 Assessment Criteria

- 2.2.1 Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance<sup>1,2</sup>. Trees were categorised in accordance with the criteria shown in the tables below.

**Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.**

| Suitability | Description                                                              |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NONE        | Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any                  |
| FAR         | Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree |
| PRF         | A tree with at least one PRF present                                     |

**Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.**

| Suitability | Description                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRF-I       | PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats. |
| PRF-M       | PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.                                                  |

Figure 2 showing classification system for trees and PRF's courtesy of Collins, J. (ed.) (2023)

<sup>1</sup> Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

<sup>2</sup> Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield..

## 2.3 Site Visit Information

### Survey Details

- 2.3.1 The survey was undertaken by Joel Crossthwaite (Ecologist) on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025. Joel has several years' professional experience.

### Site Conditions

- 2.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was overcast, with an average temperature of 12°C. The site conditions were appropriate for a full assessment to be undertaken.



## 3. Results

### 3.1 Survey Constraints

- 3.1.1 Dense Ivy *Hedera helix* restricted visibility of the main stem and branches of T8. However, the tree is set back from the road and located along a section of road currently used for farm access; therefore, it is unlikely that any cutting back or alteration of this tree will be required to maintain access. No further constraints were encountered during the survey.

### 3.2 Interpretation of Results

- 3.2.1 The results of the GLTA are presented in Table 1, with supporting photographs provided in Appendix 3. For consistency, tree reference numbers correspond with the Arboricultural Survey Report<sup>3</sup> of the site and for clarity, a tree map from this report is provided Appendix 2.

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<sup>3</sup> BWB Consulting (2025) Arboricultural Survey Report, SCH-BWB-ZZ-XX-RP-LE-0001\_Arboricultural Survey\_S2-P02 Issue 20250116



| Table 1. Ground Level Tree Assessment |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tree Number(s)                        | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Ground Level Assessment Result |
| T8                                    | A mature Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> with dense Ivy coverage present along the entire stem and many of the branches. This restricted the view of much of the tree.                                                                                                                                                            | NONE                           |
| T7                                    | A mature Sycamore with Ivy located along the mid-section of the main stem. Many of the larger branches that would have overhung the road, appear to have been removed previously. As this tree is located along the section of road currently in use, this appears to have been a management practice to maintain access to the farm. | NONE                           |
| T6                                    | A multi stemmed Sycamore tree lacking an mature features to support PRFs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | NONE                           |
| T5                                    | A semi-mature Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> offering no PRFs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | NONE                           |
| T4                                    | A mature Oak <i>Quercus</i> sp. Featuring breakoffs within the canopy, however, the gaps and cracks located are upward facing and exposed to the elements.                                                                                                                                                                            | NONE                           |
| G8                                    | Two large Ash trees. One featuring Ivy growth up the lower and mid-sections of the main stem.<br><br>The more southerly tree features a large breakaway from the main stem, exposing gaps and cracks. All are vertically positioned, exposing them to the elements.                                                                   | NONE                           |
| G9, G10, G11, G12 and G13             | Many of the trees within these groups are small and immature, lacking the mature structural features characteristic of PRFs. None of the trees were found to support any PRFs.                                                                                                                                                        | NONE                           |

## 4. Assessment

- 4.1.1 The trees were found not to provide suitable PRFs and were subsequently classified as 'NONE'.
- 4.1.2 No field evidence indicative of bat use was observed at the time of survey.

### 4.2 Potential Impacts

- 4.2.1 It is considered that no bat roosts will be affected by the proposals, following the results of the survey.  
The proposed works will result in impacts to trees at site level importance only.
- 4.2.2 The trees that will be cut back form part of a woodland feature that offering suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats. The trees across the wider site form a network that provides suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats. In the absence of mitigation, foraging habitat may be impacted.



## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 No further surveys are required at this time.

### 5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 It is not always possible to prove absence of roosting bats. Bats can roost in suitable features opportunistically and are not always identified during surveys. It is recommended that trees are pruned and felled with due caution. Should a bat/bats be identified at any time, work should stop in that area and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted to attend site and advise how to proceed.
- 5.2.2 To enhance roosting opportunities for bats across the site, it is recommended that a series of bat boxes be installed throughout the woodland area. The installation should include a variety of box types to accommodate different species and roosting preferences.
- 5.2.3 All installation should be supervised or undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and recorded via a site plan for ongoing monitoring and maintenance.
- 5.2.4 A sensitive lighting scheme must be adopted for the retained trees, to prevent impacts to foraging and commuting bat habitat.
- 5.2.5 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.



# Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

## National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 187 and 193, shown below:

- 187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
  - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
  - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
  - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
  - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;



- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons<sup>70</sup> and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

### Legislation

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make it an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

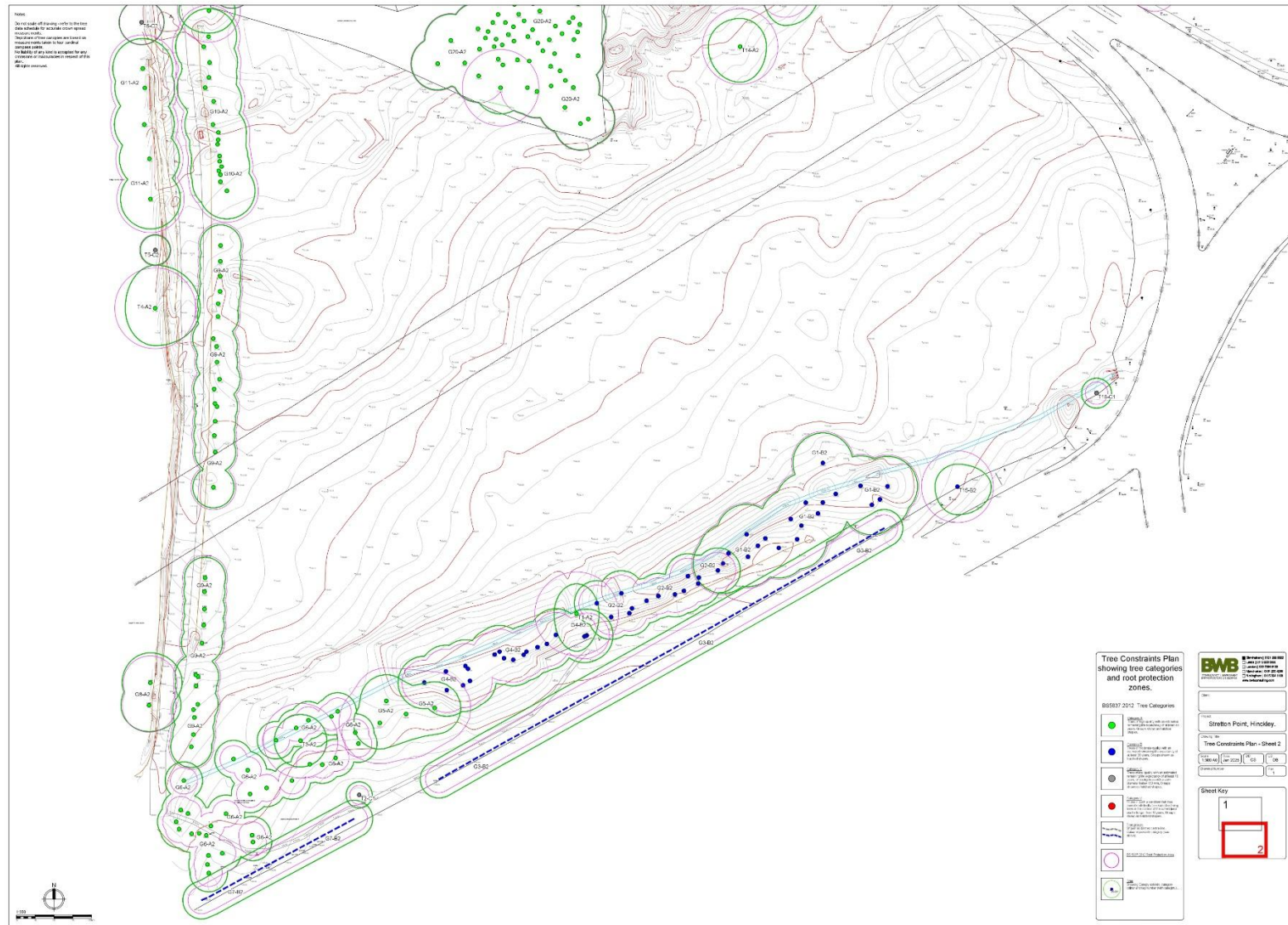
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.



## Appendix 2: Tree Map





## Appendix 3: Ground Level Tree Assessment

| Tree Number | Potential Roosting Features                                                       |                                                                                    |                                                                                     |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T8          |  |  |  |

T7



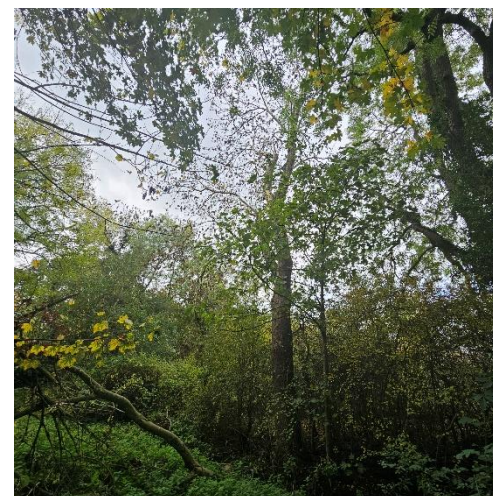
T6



T4



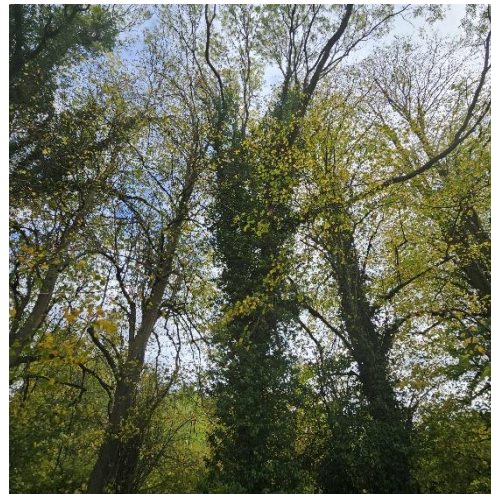
G8



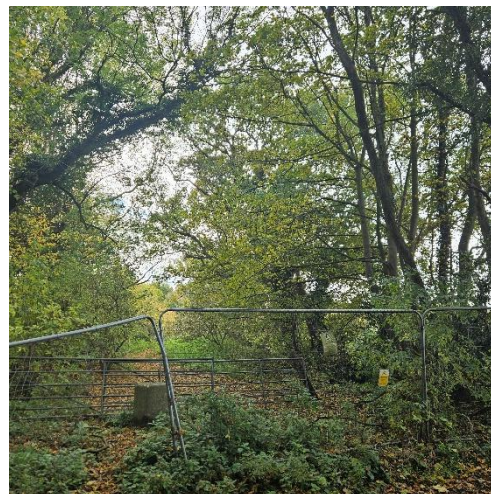
G9



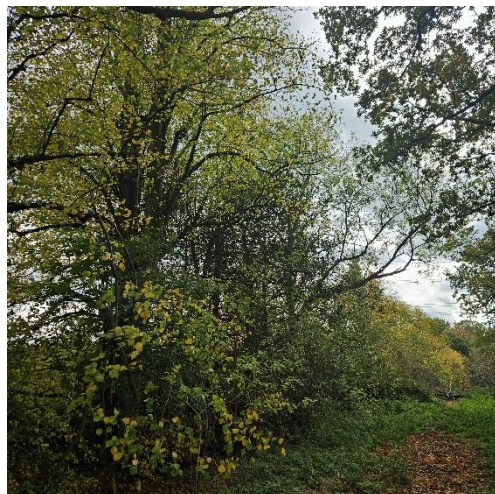
G10



G11



G12



G13

