

Local Green Space: Branch Hill

The area proposed as the Branch Hill Local Green Space (LGS) is on the western slopes of Hampstead. It consists of the area of the Branch Hill Grade I Borough level Site of Importance for Nature (SINC) CaB104 and two additional areas.

Branch Hill SINC consists of several individual blocks of woodland, interposed with small areas of open grassland, allotments, gardens around a local authority housing estate and private gardens.

Geologically the LGS lies on Bagshot Sands and the spring line between the Bagshot Sands and the Claygate Beds. The northern part is a valley formed from the original stream flowing from the site of Branch Hill Pond (a spring near the junction of Branch Hill and West Heath Road, but now dried up most of the year since 1900). Its course, now underground and mainly but not all in pipes, is west south west before it turns south to join the Canon Stream at the western end of Redington Gardens and down Heath Drive to cross Finchley Road. Another arises from springs in Oak Wood, separated from the eastern branch of the Westbourne that arises from the Whitestone area and above Admiral's Walk by a higher ridge. The Branch Hill area streams flow into the more western river Kylburne that eventually runs into the eastern Westbourne and thence to the Thames.

Special Policy Area:

Area of Special Character: Hampstead & Highgate Ridge. Grade 1 Borough SINC.

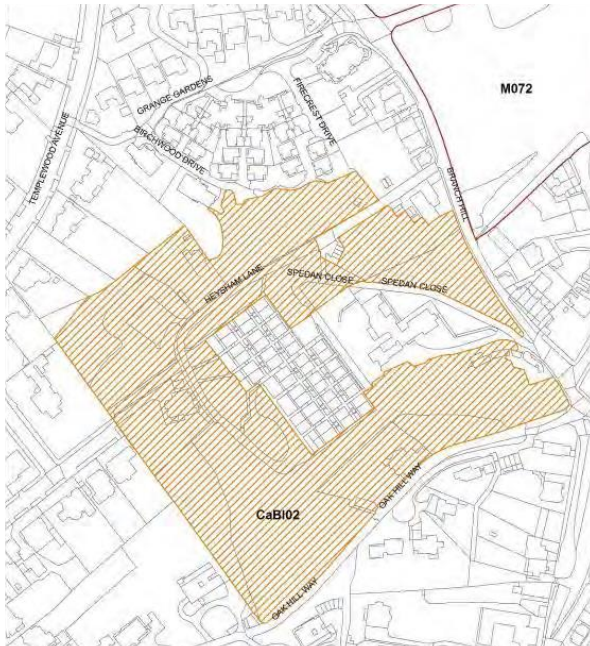
Other LA designation:

Public Open Space (Small Local), nos 145, 146, 147, 148, 269 in Camden's Schedule of Open Spaces.

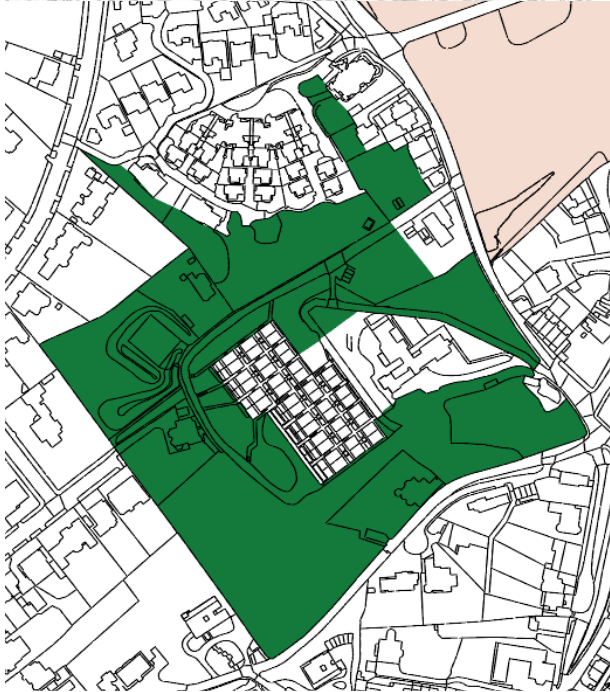
Hampstead Conservation Area.

Supports Local Plan Policies:

SP13 (open space and biodiversity) 'protect and enhance and when and where possible extend the existing boundaries of the borough's green belt, designated open land, designated open spaces, green chains, allotments, river corridors and other open spaces from inappropriate development'; 'protect and improve sites of biodiversity and nature conservation'; 'protection, management and enhancement of existing trees'.



Current extent of Branch Hill SINC CaB102
Green Space
areas



Proposed boundaries of Branch Hill Local
showing the 2 additional

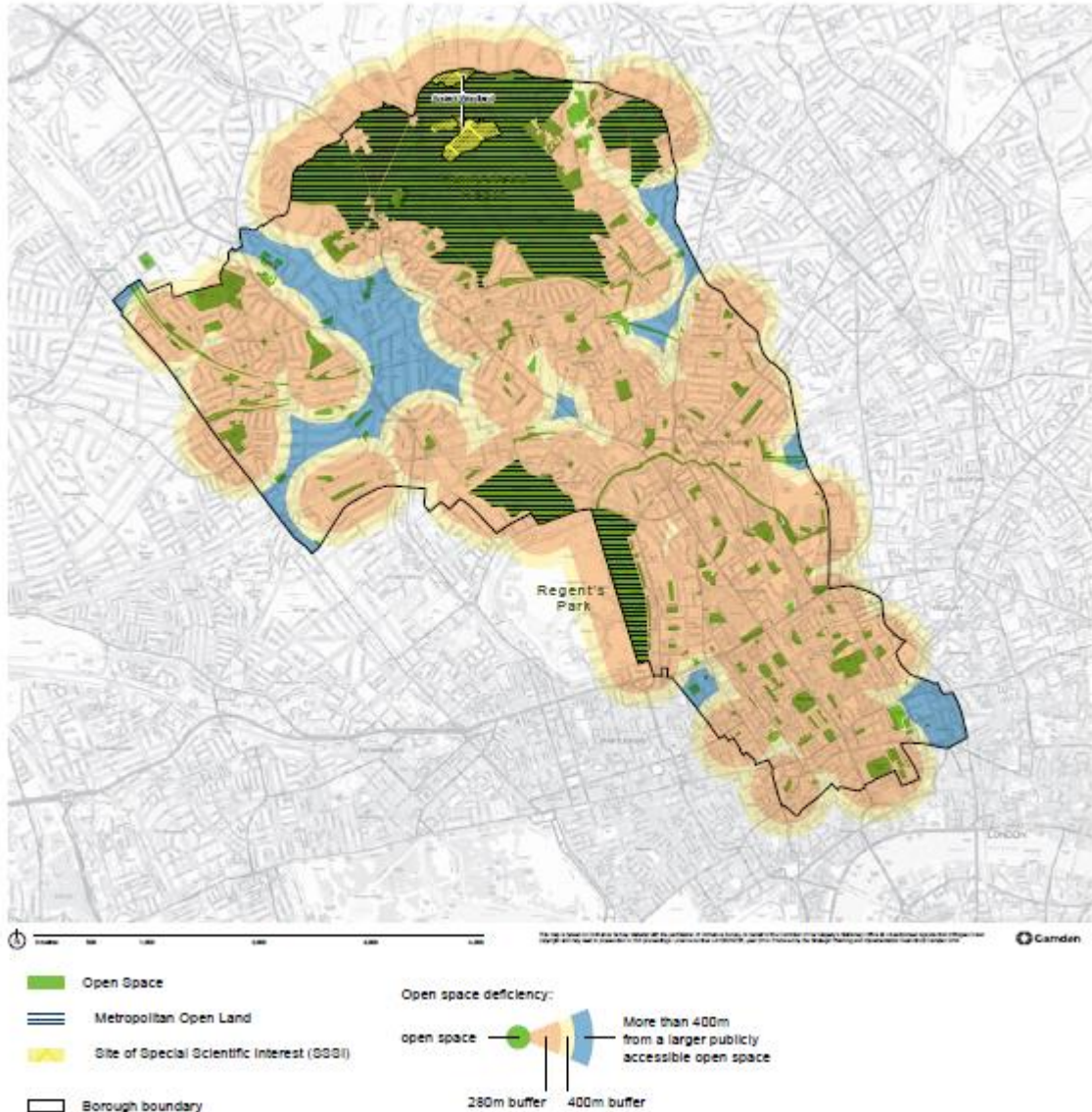


Sections of Branch Hill SINC with their Camden Open Spaces schedule numbers



Houses associated with LGS Branch Hill and its neighbouring LGS Oak Hill Park

Hampstead ward has 1.1 hectares of Total Public Open Space Area per 1,000 population, but Frognal and Fitzjohns has 0.6 and the map of 'Locations deficient in natural greenspace' in the Camden draft Local Plan show the importance of the Branch Hill Local Green Space to our neighbouring ward as well as to Hampstead.



Camden Local Plan Map 3: Locations deficient in natural greenspace

Branch Hill House Gardens

History

On the site of Branch Hill House there have been several houses since the first built on a piece of 'waste' (that is demesne heathland) near to Northwood well in the early 1700s. The second house built on this site in 1745 by the architect Henry Flitcroft (1697-1769) was enlarged by Thomas Neave who, to his 4 acres of copyhold land added 9 acres of demesne freehold purchased in 1807 and 1815, and 21½ acres of demesne that he leased from 1808. It is said the house was re-built by Teulon in the 1860s but this too was replaced by the present exterior in 1901, and converted and unsympathetically extended in 1965 by Camden Council to become an old people's home.

Richness of Wildlife:

The gardens, though reduced from their Edwardian extent, include some areas of woodland (the area bounded by the roads Branch Hill, Spedan Close and Heysham Lane has a

Woodland TPO), lawns and flower beds with some specimen trees and some individually TPOed trees. There is also an upright monolith and a stump. These veteran oak tree remains are still immensely important habitat for beetles and other invertebrates and fungi exclusive to veteran trees and dead wood.



Branch Hill Allotments

Adjacent to Frogal Rise and Oak Hill Way are the well-used Branch Hill Allotments that were formed from the gardens of Branch Hill House, probably including a kitchen garden for which part of a wall remains. In the 1980s the neglected gardens were taken on by enterprising gardeners who informally maintained them by growing vegetables here. Their endeavours had the support of local residents and The Heath & Hampstead Society, and resulted in Camden Council earmarking the land for community use as allotments.

Use by Local Community:

The Branch Hill Allotments Association is currently taking over management of the area

from LB Camden. There are 32 plots here, although a number are divided in two, and some 40 allotment-holders belong to the Association. Probably half as many again (friends of holders) garden there and visiting schoolchildren are pleased to assist. It is a regular and active part of the annual Open Garden Squares weekend. The Association aims to allow wildness while developing cultivation in this area once frequented by poets such as John Keats and Gerard Manley Hopkins, and artists such as John Constable and George Romney.





One of the two main ponds and part of the wildlife strip



Winter time

There is de facto access to most of the site and it is an extremely popular recreational resource for many local people.

Richness of Wildlife:

It has a wide nature strip along its Oak Hill Way boundary, is surrounded by trees along and just inside all boundaries, and supports several bee hives and ponds.

Plot holders report that a good number of birds regularly visit the site including jay, great spotted woodpecker, tawny owl, nuthatch, goldcrest, long-tailed tit, kestrel, heron and stone chat as well as the more common robins, blackbirds, pigeons and parakeets. Bats are seen in summer at dusk, stag beetles and their larvae are found in some piles of logs kept protected in the wild strip, and frogspawn, tadpoles, newts and many varieties of insects such as water boatmen and dragon flies have self-colonised the ponds for many years.

Support of Local Plan Policies by Branch Hill Allotments:

The Development Policies document CPG6 recognises the important function of allotments in achieving **Camden's Plan** Policy DP31 that **supports** 'Provision of, and improvements to open space and outdoor sport and recreation facilities' and sets out the need to conserve and improve open space provision with the Borough. Camden identifies allotments and community garden space as the Council's priority for on-site provision, due to the very high demand and limited scope for additional provision.

Given the limited number of allotment sites in the Borough, the majority of residential areas (except those in the immediate vicinity of an allotment site) have poor access to allotment provision. Residents can consider themselves fortunate that they have 2 allotment sites within the Plan area - one (Branch Hill allotments) Camden owned, one community managed (by South End Green Mansfield Allotment Association) - despite there being no allotments actually within Hampstead Ward. Waiting lists for all 4 Camden-owned allotments are now closed with the Branch Hill wait now approaching 20 years.

Designation of Branch Hill Allotments as part of a Local Green Space would support **Camden's Local Plan Policy A2 'Open Space': c, f and h; A3 'Biodiversity': a, c, e, f and h. Through its provision of facilities for allotment holders and their helpers,** it is consistent with Local Plan Policy C1 'Health and well-being': a, and Policy C2 'Community facilities'.

Spedan Close

Below Branch Hill House is a low-rise tiered housing scheme built unobtrusively in the midst of the woods on a site purchased by Camden Council in 1965. The estate was designed in 1974-78 by Gordon Benson and Alan Forsyth. The houses have gardens that also form the roof of the house below, thus blending into the surrounding green space.

Wildlife and Use by Local Community:

The woodland around Spedan Close and Oak Tree House contains numerous mature trees including hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), yew (*Taxus baccata*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), oak (*Quercus* sp.) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Amongst the understorey species are holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) ('Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the London Borough of Camden', 2014). Sections near Spedan Close houses and Heysham Lane roadway and pathways have been landscaped in a way that blends in well with the surrounding woodland and is maintained by Camden with the help of 'Green Gym'.

Oak Hill Wood

Richness of Wildlife:

The area of Oak Hill Wood is particularly known for its native bluebells. This is the largest individual block of woodland in the Branch Hill area. It is secondary woodland which includes sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), oak (*Quercus* sp.), white poplar (*Populus alba*), common lime (*Tilia x europaea*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). Other species have colonised, including silver birch (*Betula pendula*), downy birch (*B. pubescens*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*) ('Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the London Borough of Camden', 2014). Many of its taller trees have veteran characteristics and are therefore important sources of insects and fungi associated with such trees, as well as harbouring birds and bats that nest within their hollows and holes.

After rainfall its sloping areas run with water rivulets and there are permanently boggy areas at their base, even in periods of drought. The local streams merge into the eastern arm of the Canon Stream which can be heard under a manhole cover in Redington Gardens outside Oak Tree House. The gardens of private houses Coombe Edge and Oak Hill House are also included in this section.

It is of immense importance as a biodiversity corridor into the village, particularly for bats and owls and for the link between the veteran hedgerow trees on Hampstead Heath and the veteran hedgerow trees in the Redington Froggnal area that still exist in some gardens.

Spedan Close Play Area

Connected to Oak Hill Wood by wide wooded avenues of common lime, poplar (*Populus* sp.) and yew (*Taxus baccata*), the grounds of Oak Hill House (mostly composed of sycamore and oak), and of Heysham House, is a smaller area of woodland and scrub in the north-west corner of the site. It is dominated by sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with an understorey in which holly is abundant and accompanied by a small number of species including hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), elder, cherry laurel and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) ('Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the London Borough of Camden', 2014).



Spedan Close Play Area

Use by Local Community:

Spedan Close Play Area is set in a wooded enclosure in this north-west area and provides a valuable play facility for the local community. It caters for children from 4-12 years old.

Evidence for Particular Importance

As well as containing the largest area deficient in natural greenspace in Camden, our neighbouring Frognal and Fitzjohns ward has zero public parks, the only ward in Camden to have none.

From Camden's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in 'Camden Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study Final Report June 2014':

The proposed standard for children's play should follow the GLA recommended standard of 10 sq.m per child (0.15 ha per 1000 population), but with the inclusion of an element of provision of formal children's play which it is recommended should be 0.65 sq.m per child (0.01 ha per 1000 population). The following play space access standards are recommended: *All residents within the Borough should have access to a formal children's play provision within 400 m from home, and all residents within the Borough should have access to a GLA designated Site of Borough Importance or Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation within 1 km from home.*

From Camden's Map of 'Locations deficient in natural greenspace' (see above) it can be seen that this proposed Local Green Space is very close to the largest area of greenspace deficiency in Camden. This shows the importance of Oak Hill Wood and the public Play Area to our neighbouring ward. It is thus very precious and warrants the strongest statutory protection which the status of 'Site of Importance for Nature Conservation' - being non-statutory - does not give it.

Wooded bank south of Firecrest

This is a private wooded area aside Firecrest Drive, that is the grounds of this modern and sensitively built series of blocks of flats. It has a high density of mature trees, carefully retained fallen trees with their deadwood habitat, and a significant veteran (previously hedgerow) tree. This is fenced off from but is otherwise connected with the woods of the north-western section and play area, and is chiefly composed of sycamore, oak, yew and lime. This area passes along the valley formed by the stream that runs from the spring at the site of the original Branch Hill pond. This river valley and its wooded bank along with 'additional area 2' is an immensely important bridge between the wildlife and veteran trees of Hampstead Heath and those of gardens in the Redington Froggnal Neighbourhood Area. Birds have been recorded for some years by a resident of Firecrest (see the report 'Heysham Lane & Firecrest Woodland Bird Sightings & Nests').

Use by Local Community:

The Firecrest community comprises approximately 48 households many of which are families with children or regularly visiting grandchildren who use the gardens for leisure. Only ten of the households are houses with their own garden space so this area is of great value to the majority who live in the flats. While private, this is an area of recreation not only for the Firecrest community, but also for the many users of Heysham Lane, who either live on the similarly wooded Spedan estate, or walk through to access the Heath or the children's playground there.

All these facilities are integral with or contiguous to the Firecrest trees & gardens, thus the recreational use & benefits to wildlife and the natural Heath land surroundings are far more widespread than just for the Firecrest residents; the widespread value & benefit of the space cannot be separated by apparent boundaries.



The particularly rich habitat associated with the wooded bank and sensitively managed gardens of Firecrest



Veteran oak: a lapsed hedgerow pollard
Firecrest

Fallen trees & deadwood in the grounds of
Firecrest

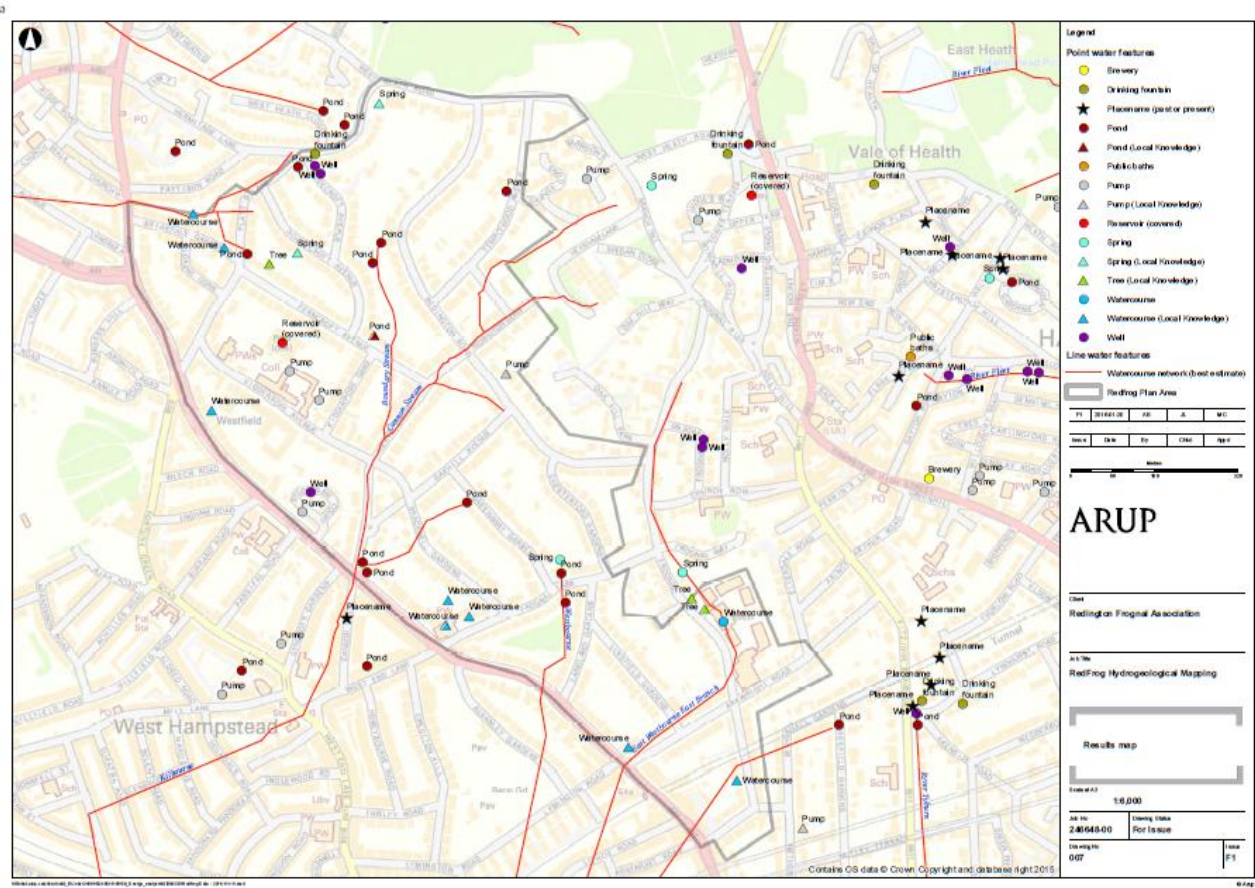
Additional Areas

All the woodland and gardens mentioned above are within the Branch Hill SINC. Two additional areas are proposed to be included within this Local Green Space.

1) The additional area of woodland garden to the west of Birchwood Drive is important as it joins Branch Hill SINC to the proposed Biodiversity Corridor within the Redington Frognal Neighbourhood Forum area. This corridor runs from Hampstead Heath towards Finchley Road along the valley of the

western arm of the Canon stream and thence to the course of the river Kyleburne. It provides cover for birds and bats and a route for non-flying invertebrates and fungi.

2) The area of trees and garden along the east of Firecrest Drive provides more continuity with Hampstead Heath than the Branch Hill SINC can give alone, assisting the physical connections between veteran trees on the Heath, within Branch Hill SINC and along Hampstead and Redington Frognal NFs' biodiversity corridors.



Local Green Space: **Oak Hill Park**

History

Oak Hill Park Estate was formed from the demesne land to the west of Frognal, originally part of the Anglo-Saxon North Wood though latterly fields and farmland: demesne land leased from the Lord of the Manor.

Oak Hill Park Estate: The builder, Thomas Clowser built 10 houses in the 1870s in what he called Oak Hill Park estate after the new road running from Frognal to Oak Hill House and Lodge was built. Florence Nightingale was a frequent visitor to Oak Hill Park, where Manley Hopkins, an authority on maritime law, lived in the 1850s with his family, including Gerard, the future poet.

The Oak Hill Park development was built in 1961-65 by Michael Lyell Associates, with landscaped grounds. Oak Hill Park is a private estate managed by Dawlin, Oak Hill Park's freehold management company.

Oak Hill Lodge and Oak Hill House Thomas Neave sold Branch Hill Lodge and built two houses to the west on former demesne land: Oak Hill Lodge where he was living by 1840, and Oak Hill House. George Smith (1824- 1901), founder of the Dictionary of National Biography, lived from 1863 to 1872 in Oak Hill Lodge, where he entertained leading writers and artists. Oak Hill Lodge became part of the new Oak Hill Estate, the house was demolished and the present block of flats was built in the 1960s, now managed by the estate's property management company Dawlin.

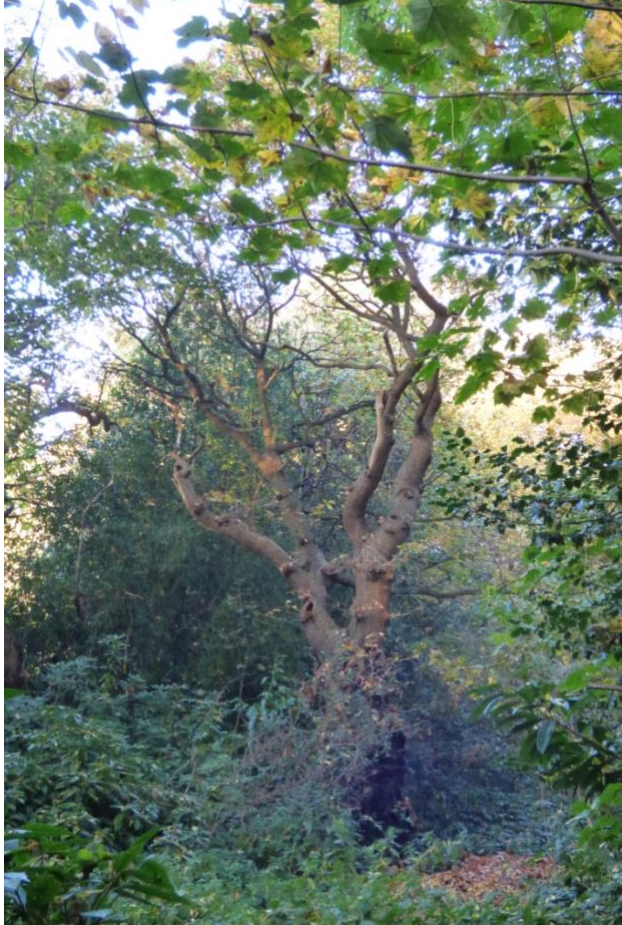
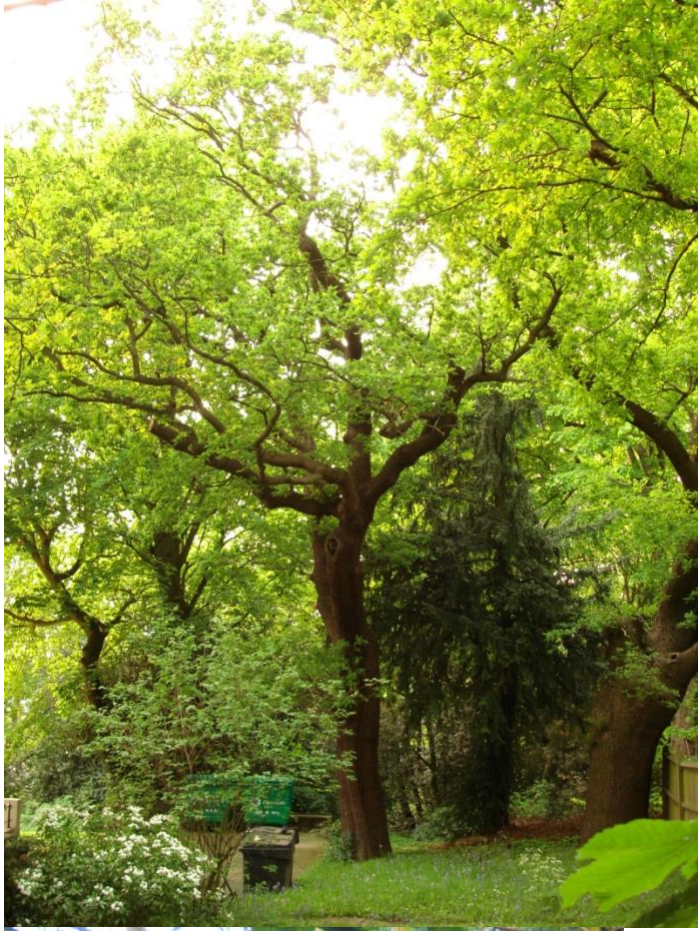
Oak Hill House is still privately owned and separate from the Oak Hill Park Estate management. Part of its rear garden was sold in the 1960s to extend the rear garden of 28 Redington Road (this part of the garden is now within Redington Frognal Neighbourhood Forum area) and several other houses have been built within its garden: Weeping Ash and the Garden House.

Richness of Wildlife

The Oak Hill Park Local Green Space area contains some areas of woodland and a range of trees, both indigenous and non-indigenous, and importantly a wide range of tree ages. Being surrounded by dense woodland on two sides it is also an important area of habitat for nesting owls, other bird species, bees and bats. The range of flowering shrubs, planted flowers and wilder areas means that this is a rich habitat for invertebrates, and hence the birds and bats that feed on them.

Veteran trees

Oak Hill Park Estate and Oak Hill House contain a number of veteran trees of 250 or more years old, and quite a number with veteran features. One of the veteran trees in Oak Hill House grounds contains a wild bees nest within a hole in the trunk. These veteran trees are of immense importance to the other veteran trees and the wildlife specific to this special habitat in the area, being part of a bridge between these local veteran trees and those on Hampstead Heath, and also the veteran trees of the future.



**Veteran oak by fence on the right with wild bees nest Another oak with veteran features:
good habitat**



Wild bees nest within the trunk of the veteran oak tree above

Owners

All residents of Oak Hill Park Estate are members of Dawlin, the freehold management company for Oak Hill Park. The board of Dawlin declined to support the proposal to make Oak Hill Park a Local Green Space due to their concern that it is a private, not public open estate.

Management

Dawlin manages the green areas of Oak Hill Park, clearly with a mind to protecting wildlife and looking after the many trees of which there are upwards of 140, some part of group TPOs Hampstead 5 and 11.

Special Policy Area:

Area of Special Character: Hampstead & Highgate Ridge.

Other LA designation:

Hampstead Conservation Area.

Supports Local Plan Policies:

Designation of Oak Hill Park as a Local Green Space would support **Camden's Local Plan Policy A2 'Open Space': c and e** (bearing in mind that Oak Hill Park Estate is not open space: it is a large private estate open to all its residents); **A3 'Biodiversity': c, e and j. By**

providing informal play space for its residents children, and a tennis court as well as a restful and beautiful private space for all its adult residents it is consistent with Local Plan Policy C1 'Health and well-being': a, and Policy C2 'Community facilities', while recognising that the community is limited to that of the Oak Hill Park Estate which consists of about 80 residences.

Links to other Green Space in the Hampstead Local Plan area

Oak Hill Park Estate sits between Local Green Space and SINC Branch Hill and the Plan's Biodiversity Corridors G (North-western Frogna) and K (Western Frogna rear gardens from south Redington Road to HNF boundary). As such it is in a key position to link Hampstead Heath with significant parts of the Plan Area, but also Redington Frogna Neighbourhood Forum, and Church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Forum with its Borough level SINC CaBI08 Hampstead Parish Churchyard. A particularly important role here is the link it provides, along with Branch Hill Local Green Space, between the veteran trees on Hampstead Heath with veteran trees and trees with veteran features within the Plan Area, and also those in the Redington Frogna Neighbouring Forum and to the south west of the Plan Area.

Local Green Space: **South End Green and Mansfield Allotments**

The allotments of the South End Green and Mansfield Allotments Association (SEGMA) are on the northern side of Gospel Oak Rail Sides. This proposed Local Green Space lies between the Plan area's boundary on Hampstead Heath and Hampstead Heath Station. SEGMA rents this land from the owners Network Rail. The allotments are on a steep slope down towards the rail line so are terraced. Access is through a gateway at the Hampstead Heath end just by the Savernake Road footbridge to which all allotment holders have keys, and via the gardens of a short section of Parliament Hill and the southern part of Nassington Road.



**Extent of SEGMA allotments, up to rear gardens of
Nassington Road**



Special Policy Area:

Gospel Oak Rail Sides is part of the strategic green corridor 'North London Line railway corridor'. This railway corridor is a narrow corridor across the Borough and although in places is of limited value for wildlife, the areas of greenspace are valuable 'stepping stones' for wildlife movement. The corridor extends from the tunnel at Hampstead Heath station eastwards to Gospel Oak and beyond into Holloway in the Borough of Islington but also southwards from Gospel Oak through Kentish Town and Camden Town before turning eastwards north of Kings Cross and into Islington to Barnsbury and Highbury. From Camden Town the corridor also links westwards to Chalk Farm. This corridor encompasses the Camden SINCs of CaBI04 Kentish Town City Farm, Gospel Oak Railsides and Mortimer Terrace Nature Reserve, CaBI05 Chalk Farm Embankment & Adelaide Nature Reserve and CaBI06 North London Line at York Way.

It therefore has recognised links to the strategic Hampstead Ridge corridor (a hilly ridge that bisects Camden and runs through from the neighbouring boroughs of Barnet and Haringey) and the Nash Ramblas Link corridor (a link corridor running up from Parliament Square and the Thames, through the Royal Parks and Primrose Hill to Parliament Hill and Hampstead Heath)¹.

There is no specific national planning policy relating to allotments. However, allotments can play a critical role in meeting the wider planning objectives of delivering sustainable

¹ Mayor of London's 'Green Infrastructure and Open Environments: The All London Green Grid' Supplementary Planning Guidance March 2012

development which are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework by enhancing the natural environment and improving biodiversity, as well as supporting healthy and more self sufficient communities.

Allotments are identified in the Mayor's 'All London Green Grid' SPD as part of London's multifunctional green infrastructure which maximises the quality of life, supports sustainable food production and helps implement a number of policies within the London Plan and is applicable to the London Borough of Camden. The 'All London Green Grid' acknowledges that currently, only 30,000 Londoners use allotments to grow their own vegetables and fruit. There is a demonstrated lack of provision of statutory allotments in parts of central London, compared to the outer boroughs, partly because central London is excluded from legislation governing allotments (London Plan: Policy 7.22 'Land for food'). Policy 7.22 'Land for food' encourages the use of land for growing food within urban areas and requires Boroughs to protect existing allotments and identify other spaces that could be used for commercial growing of communal gardening.

Other LA designation:

The South End Green and Mansfield Allotments site is part of the Gospel Oak Rail Sides Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) CaB104, a Borough level grade 1 SINC. It is in the South Hill Park Estate Conservation Area.

Supports Local Plan Policies:

The Development Policies document CPG6 recognises the important function of allotments in achieving **Camden's Plan** Policy DP31 that **supports** 'Provision of, and improvements to open space and outdoor sport and recreation facilities' and sets out the need to conserve and improve open space provision with the Borough. Camden identifies allotments and community garden space as the Council's priority for on-site provision, due to the very high demand and limited scope for additional provision.

However Camden's 4 allotment sites contain only a total of 194 plots with a total area of 1.6ha. South End Green and Mansfield Allotments contain 60 plots in an area of 1.1 hectares, illustrating their local importance.

Camden residents' survey (2013) by Atkins² revealed that only 23% and 39% of allotment users are within a 5-minute or 10 minute journey of these spaces, whilst 46% and 92% of allotment users are within a 15 minute or 30 minute journey of these spaces. In Camden's Open Spaces Study the highest car use identified was amongst respondents who visit cemeteries and allotments; 31% of both of these groups usually go by car, and 41% and 39% walk, respectively. By limiting the catchment area the South End Green and Mansfield Allotments contribute to reducing car use for this purpose.

Given the limited number of allotment sites in the Borough, the majority of residential areas (except those in the immediate vicinity of an allotment site) have poor access to allotment provision. Residents can consider themselves fortunate that they have 2 allotment sites within the Plan area - one (Branch Hill allotments) Camden owned, one community managed (by SEGMA) on the Network Rail-owned land - despite there being no allotments

² Atkins: Camden Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study

actually within Hampstead Ward. Waiting lists for all 4 Camden-owned allotments are now closed with the Branch Hill wait now approaching 20 years. This demonstrates the importance of South End Green and Mansfield Allotments, which has a waiting list of around 12 years long and the SEGMA committee keeps a close eye on members' allotment use.

Designation of South End Green and Mansfield Allotments as a Local Green Space would support **Camden's Local Plan Policy A2 'Open Space': c, f and h; A3 'Biodiversity': a, c, e, f and h. Through its provision of facilities for allotment holders and their helpers,** it is consistent with Local Plan Policy C1 'Health and well-being': a, and Policy C2 'Community facilities'.





Use by Local Community:

The railway embankment has 60 plots and SEGMA operates a waiting list. The plots are only available to residents living within the catchment area, part of which is in the Plan Area: Highgate Road (East), Rosslyn Hill/Haverstock Hill (West), Prince of Wales Road (South), Gayton Road/Well Walk (North).





Richness of Wildlife:

The railsides of this section of the North London line between the Forum area's boundary on Hampstead Heath and Hampstead Heath Station are varied and support a variety of habitats including blocks of secondary woodland dominated by sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and silver birch (*Betula pendula*). These are interspersed with areas of scrub, grassland and tall herbs. The habitats present are closely linked to railside management, with vegetation clearance setting back succession ('Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the London Borough of Camden', 2014).



There are a number of ponds across the site that encourage associated wildlife. The allotments are terraced, and between allotments, as well as along the rail line fence, blackberry 'hedges' can be found that are kept in check but not too neat and tidy. As a consequence the allotment area produces not only probably the best blackberries in Hampstead, but also encourage a range of wildlife: wild flowers, nettle beds, insects and birds.

The South End Green and Mansfield Allotments site sits between Hampstead Heath and other proposed Local Green Spaces - the World Peace Garden and Heath Hurst Road - whilst receiving and giving links to Biodiversity Corridors E (South Hill Park) and F (Hampstead Hill Gardens) in the Plan area.

It is thus precious and warrants stronger statutory protection which the status of 'Site of Importance for Nature Conservation' - being non-statutory - does not give it.

Local Green Space: **World Peace Garden**

The World Peace Garden is an elongated triangular portion of land on a steep slope above the north platform of Hampstead Heath overground rail station, between the station and the block of flats Parliament Court.



Special Policy Area:

The World Peace Garden is part of the strategic biodiversity corridor 'North London Line railway corridor'. This railway corridor is a narrow corridor across the Borough and although in places is of limited value for wildlife, the areas of greenspace are valuable 'stepping stones' for wildlife movement. The corridor extends from the tunnel at Hampstead Heath station eastwards to Gospel Oak and beyond into Holloway in the Borough of Islington but also southwards from Gospel Oak through Kentish Town and Camden Town before turning eastwards north of Kings Cross and into Islington to Barnsbury and Highbury. From Camden Town the corridor also links westwards to Chalk Farm. This corridor encompasses the Camden SINCs of CaBI04 Kentish Town City Farm, Gospel Oak Railsides and Mortimer Terrace Nature Reserve, CaBI05 Chalk Farm Embankment & Adelaide Nature Reserve and CaBI06 North London Line at York Way.

It therefore has recognised links to the strategic Hampstead Ridge corridor (a hilly ridge that bisects Camden and runs through from the neighbouring boroughs of Barnet and Haringey) and the Nash Ramblas Link corridor (a link corridor running up from Parliament Square and

the Thames, through the Royal Parks and Primrose Hill to Parliament Hill and Hampstead Heath)³.

Other LA designation:

The World Peace Garden is at the far western extent of the Gospel Oak Rail Sides Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) CaB104, a Borough level grade 1 SINC. It is in the South Hill Park Estate Conservation Area.

Supports Local Plan Policies:

Designation of World Peace Garden Camden as a Local Green Space supports **Camden's Local Plan Policy A2 'Open Space': c, f and h; A3 'Biodiversity': a, c, e, f and h. Through its provision of facilities** it is consistent with Local Plan Policy C1 'Health and well-being': a, and Policy C2 'Community Facilities'.

Camden's Development Policy DP31 supports 'Provision of, and improvements to open space and outdoor sport and recreation facilities' and sets out the need to conserve and improve open space provision with the Borough. It is consistent with Local Plan policies for sustainable development:

Policy C1 Improving and promoting Camden's health and well-being;

Policy C2 Community facilities, culture and leisure.

Links to other Green Space in the Hampstead Local Plan area

The World Peace Garden Camden is a link in a local chain. It links the most southerly part of Hampstead Heath, along the rail sides with the South End Green and Mansfield Allotments (also part of the SINC CaB104), then on to Hampstead Local Plan Biodiversity Corridors F (the rear gardens of Hampstead Hill Gardens, Heath Hurst Road and Keats Grove) which is an historical tree line and hedgerow, Biodiversity corridor D (an historical tree line between Downshire Hill and Pilgims Lane) and thence on to Biodiversity corridor J along Shepherds Walk, Spring Walk and Spring Path.

History of the Site

On the railway embankment above Hampstead Heath Railway Station, this was a neglected area of waste land that had been a dumping area for rubbish for about a 100 years since the construction of the railway. Beginning in 2004, initially with the help of volunteers including Heath Hands to clear the land, this area was eventually purchased by local traders Chhaganbhai Mistry and Trustee Jonathan Bergman. Together with local residents and other voluntary and inter faith groups donating their time & energy, over the years this area has been transformed into an unusual & inspiring World Peace Garden for the community. The designers who helped create this undulating woodland garden were landscape gardener Tony Panayiotou, furniture designer and civil engineer Michael Wardle, and trustee and founder Jonathan Bergman.

Use by local community

³ Mayor of London's 'Green Infrastructure and Open Environments: The All London Green Grid' Supplementary Planning Guidance March 2012

The World Peace Garden has peaceful picnic areas, a secluded bench area, a stage/platform suitable for assembly group meetings and performance, and includes an auditorium seating area using natural logs. It has in excess of 25,000 visitors per year.

It is frequented by many local residents and families, Royal Free Hospital staff and patients, Hampstead Heath rail commuters and passersby. It is also used by meditation groups, Chi Gong classes, Camden Careers meetings, Chess Championships, Poetry Groups, Schools Visualization groups, Community Planting, Art Schools, Music Concerts and Children's Shows. An after-school and Sunday puppet project are scheduled for summer 2017.

For five consecutive years it has participated in Open Garden Squares Weekend, and it is featured in Silent Spaces. In 2017 the Open Garden Squares Weekend at the World Peace Garden is principally an event for children. It will offer little ones the chance to tie a tag to the Tree of Hope on the theme of 'what I want the world to be like when I grow up', and take part in music, story-telling and art classes.

It's value has also been recognised by winning the Time Out 'Love London Awards' 2016 for Local Culture in Hampstead, an award supported by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and the Mayor's Office.

Richness of Wildlife

The garden contains several varieties of exotic trees including:

- monkey puzzle,
- cedar of Lebanon,
- Bird of Paradise,
- magnolia,
- cypress,
- pinups,
- azaleas,
- rhododendrons,
- olive,
- bamboo,
- tree of Heaven.

There are various fruiting trees with several varieties of:

- apple,
- pear,
- peach.

However the garden also has a number of indigenous trees which have an important role in this Local Green Space providing fruit and seed for birds and nectar for insects:

- sycamore,
- crab apple,
- cherry,
- bay,
- hawthorn,
- yew,

holly.

It also contains various shrubs and flowers including wild flowers, herbs and:

- climbing roses,
- camelias,
- mahonia,
- pyrocanthas,
- a range of bulbs.

There are 2 pond areas with natural log seating within this semi-wild area. While not as valuable for wildlife as parts of Hampstead Heath, nevertheless this oasis for humans is also used by wildlife. The trees, shrubs and flowers encourage a profuse number of insects and bees to visit. Each year birds are seen to nest within the trees and frogs to spawn in the ponds.



Autumn frog October 2016

Frogspawn April 2017



Tadpole time May 2017



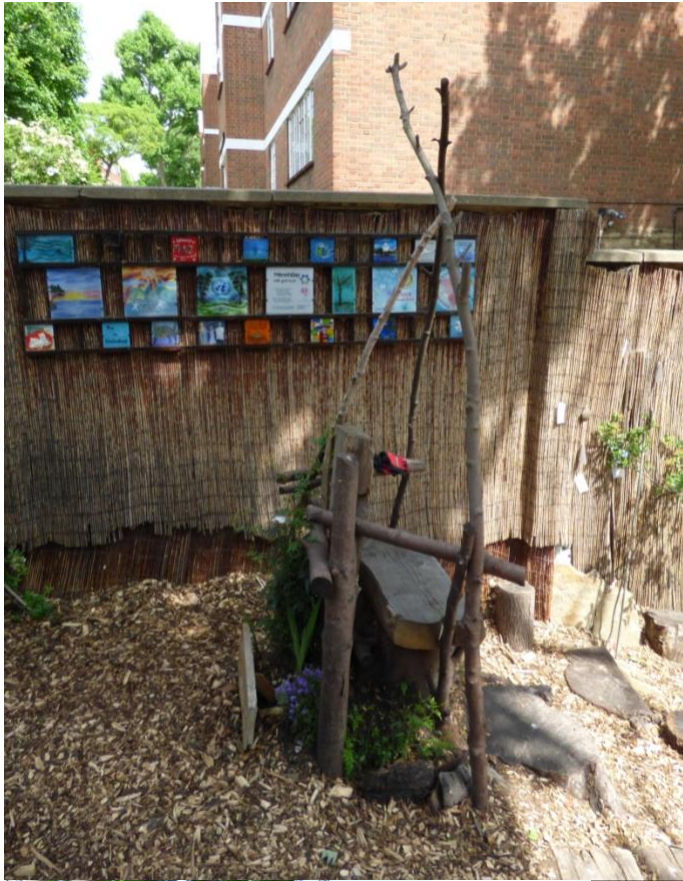
Birds nesting March

2017

Beauty and Tranquility

This strip of community garden is designed to encourage inner peace and harmony within the community.

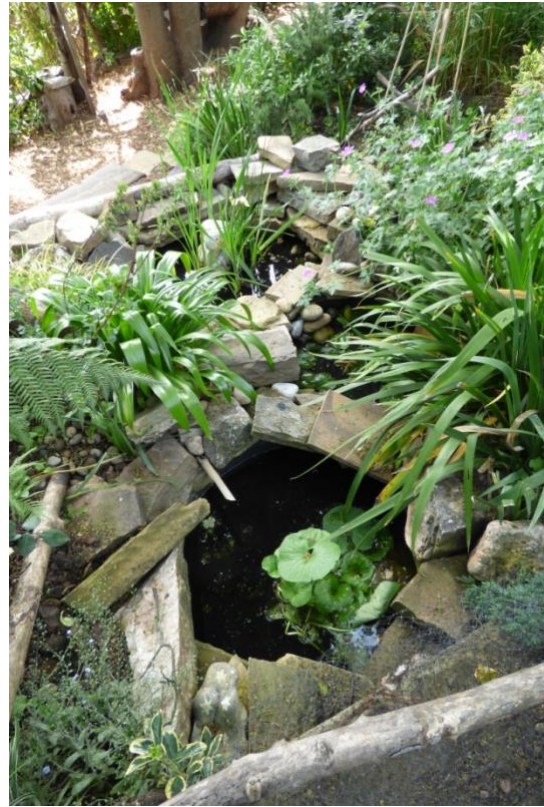
Peace Tiles were created by Glass Designer resident Melissa Fairbanks and line one of the entrance walls. These Peace Tiles were sponsored by community groups and individuals wishing to contribute with inspiring messages promoting inner peace and awareness.

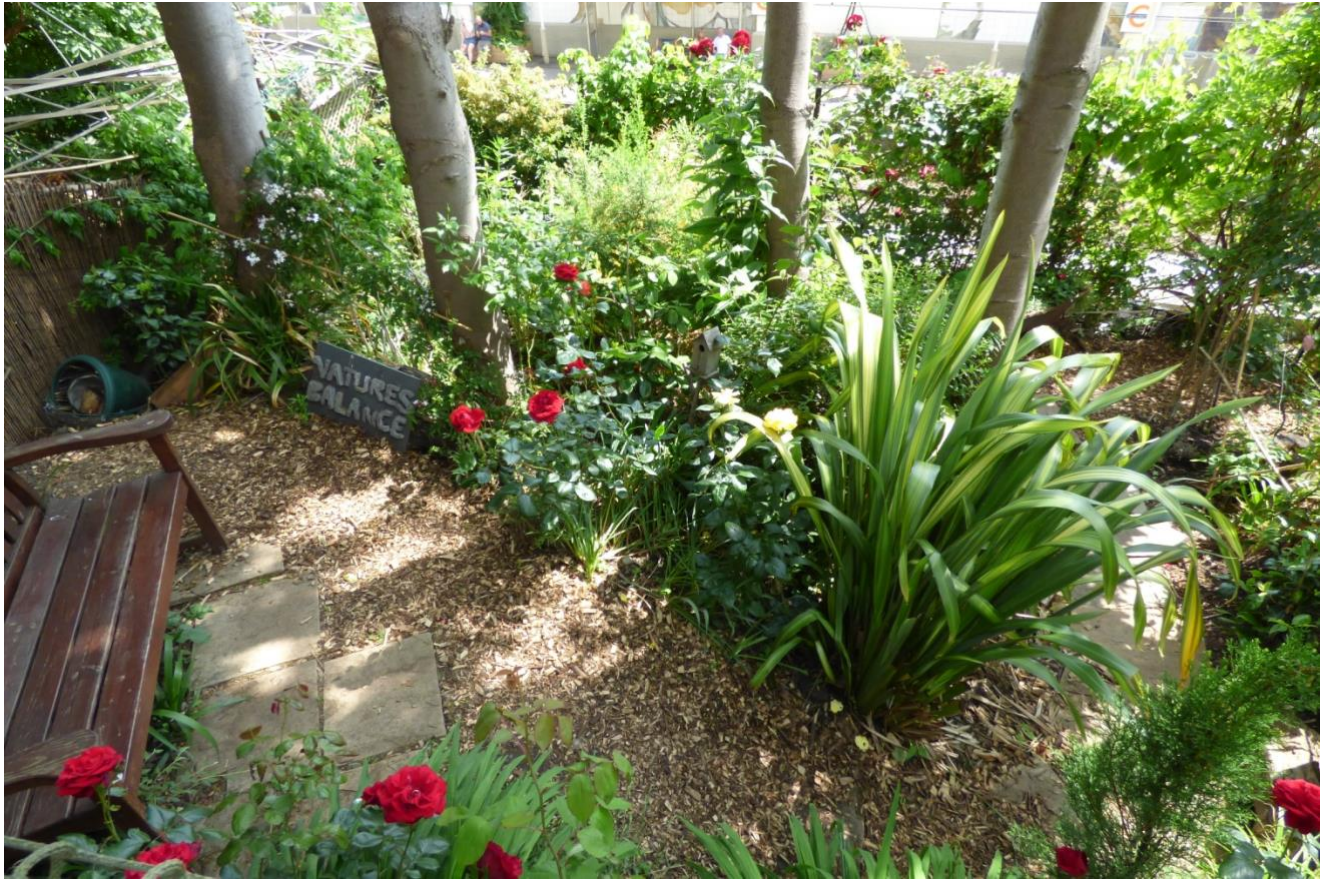




How will the green space be managed in the future?

Local residents and school voluntary groups will continue to practically work in and look after the garden, while Trustee Jonathan Bergman, civil engineer/designer Michael Wardle & Garden designer Tony Panayiotou plan to continue to provide the management lead and are all fully behind the proposal to make this a Local Green Space.





Owners of the land

The World Peace Garden Camden, which is a registered Charity number 1120264, lease the land from Network Rail.

Local Green Space: Oriel Place Garden

On the north side a small urban 'garden' with crazy paving and small flower beds; in the middle a vast spreading plane tree, its branches overhanging the garden; around its base an old iron seat into which the trunk of the tree has grown and become embedded.

Evidence for particular importance to and use by the Local Community:

This area has remained locked for many years. Camden's decision to keep it locked following requests from the residents of Oriel Court has been frequently challenged since, indicating the importance of this small garden to local people. Recently this was brought up again during consultation for the Hampstead Local Plan. It was a popular theme within 'Trees and Open Spaces' at the Neighbourhood Forum's 2014 AGM and subsequently. It was also proposed by local people that CIL money be spent on opening up and improving this area; the 4th most popular project obtaining 63.47% of support. Following investigation, this is currently being actively pursued.

Local Significance: Historical

In 1762 there was a crowded area of courtyards and alleys built on the customary tenement of Popes and possibly, in its northern reaches, on the wide green that had formed an extension of the heath in 1680. The alley later called Oriel Court after Oriel House (itself not yet built) existed then, and was a builder's yard. Most of the slum dwellers were rehoused in Wells Buildings, erected in 1876 by the Wells Charity Trust, later renamed Wells Court."

Oriel Place came about as part of a 'Town Improvement' scheme in 1888 that swept away many small alleys and courts where narrow twisted roads and overcrowded courts blocked access to High Street and Heath Street. The High Street was widened, Fitzjohn's Avenue (then Greenhill Road) was extended to meet Heath Street, and soon afterwards Crockett's Court, Bradley's Buildings, and other slums, including Oriel House and other tenemented houses, were replaced by Oriel Place, shops, and tenement blocks. Oriel Place garden was set aside with seating and flower beds.







It can be seen on the 1866 Ordnance Survey Map that the majestic plane tree, expected by many on first seeing the tree to be hundreds of years old, did not exist then. It may have been planted at the same time that Wells (Buildings) Court was developed, for its shade and greenery and with a cast iron bench placed around its trunk. However Camden Tree Officers consider it is about 80 years old so it may well have been planted later. The 1866 OS map shows the warren of little streets in the area that is now between Heath Street and the High Street. The High Street in the 15th century was known as Kingswell Street and in later years Hampstead Street and Hampstead Hill.

Special Policy Area:

Area of Special Character: Hampstead & Highgate Ridge.

Other LA designation:

in the Hampstead Conservation Area.

Supports Local Plan Policies:

Designation of Oriel Place gardens as a Local Green Space would support **Camden's Local Plan Policy A2 'Open Space': c, f and h; A3 'Biodiversity': c and j. Through its provision of an open space for local people, it is consistent with Local Plan Policy C2 'Community facilities'.**

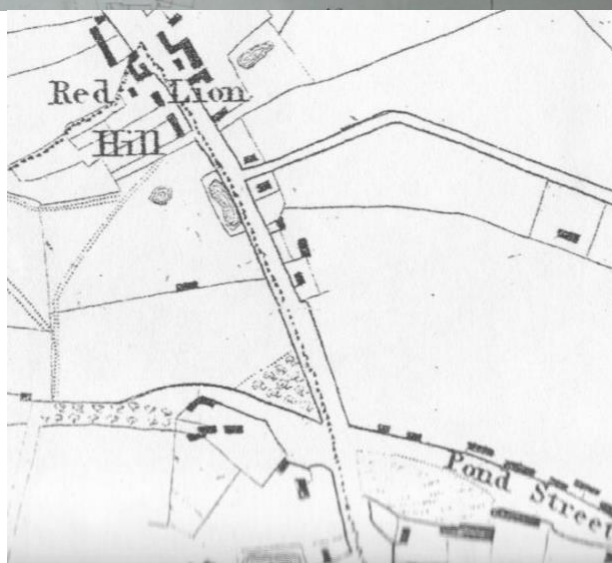
Hampstead Local Plan:

Important trees

Local Green Space: **Hampstead Green**

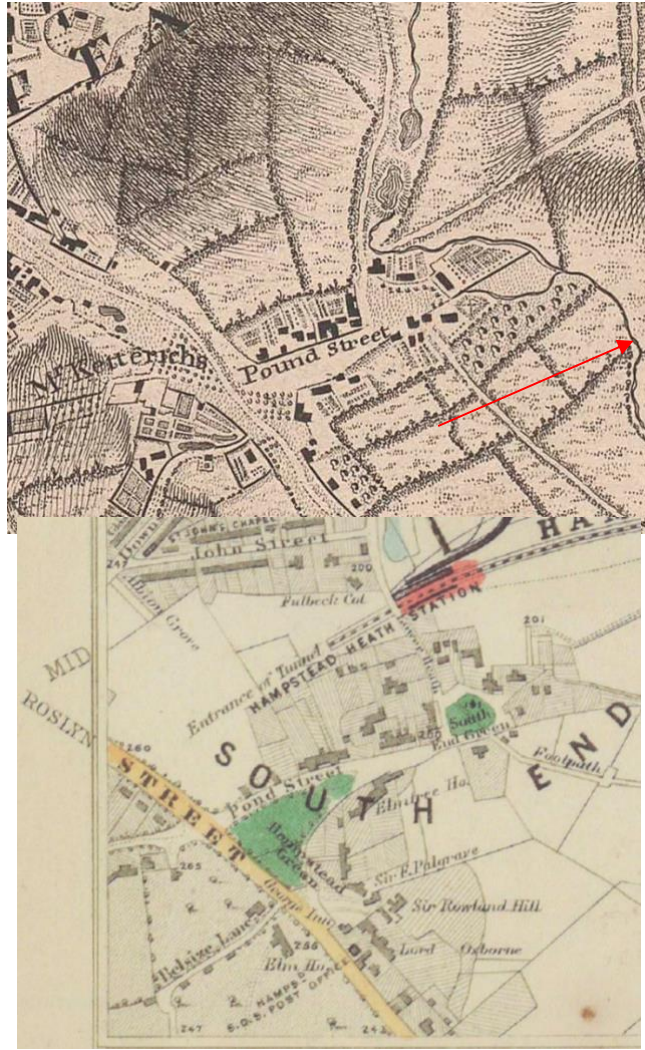
History

Hampstead Green is the remains of what was once a much larger area of manorial waste. On the John Rocque map (1746) and the Survey Map of Hampstead Manor (1762) it is shown as an open space with an avenue of 2 rows of trees flanking it's eastern side, surrounded by a few buildings; in the 1830s it was described as 'a grassy playground for children with a fine double row of trees'; in 1862 it appears that the common waste had by now been enclosed as Stanford's map shows 'Hampstead Green' divided into four enclosures. Part of the green was taken when St Stephen's Church was built in 1869-75, gifted by Lord of the Manor Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson. The site then came into the ownership of the church who also had responsibility for its maintenance. By 1915 the OS map shows the remaining 2 areas as one, in 1928 it was referred to as Pond Street Enclosure, a 'small grass plot planted with shrubs and trees', soon to be protected under the London Squares Act of 1931.



Manorial map 1762

Rocque's map, 1746



Newton's map, 1814

Stanford's Library map 1862

Red arrows point to Hampstead Green area, south east of corner of Pond Street and Rosslyn Hill



Richness of Wildlife:

Hampstead Green has remained an undisturbed wild flower meadow for hundreds of years. It was neglected for many years and became overgrown until the local community cleared the area and transformed it into a natural open space. The railed triangular site is now grass and wild flowers with around nine trees remaining, species including cherry, red oak, sycamore and poplar.

The area is owned by the LB Camden and is managed for nature conservation with bird boxes, large log piles for insects and an insect hotel. Hampstead Green is not generally open for public access and is left as a site for wildlife, principally as a wild flower meadow to encourage butterflies; a small haven for wildlife, particularly insects, in this busy built up area. In spring it is a blaze of colour: full of crocuses and primroses, followed by daffodils

and bluebells. This attractive site can be easily viewed from paths which run around most of its perimeter.





Use by Local Community:

Hampstead Green is within Hampstead, near its south border. It is owned by Camden, but subject to a covenant that restricts its use to “an enclosed open space”. It is between St Stephen's church and the Royal Free Hospital, and is fairly close to South End Green area.

In 2009 local volunteers formed 'Friends of Hampstead Green' and worked to clear some trees and invasive plants, returning it to a butterfly-friendly meadow. Green Gym also took part in this joint venture. The Friends of Hampstead Green have continued and are a group of local people who

... care about preserving the meadow, this precious, unspoilt natural space, and preventing it being turned into just another ordinary 'park'.



Hampstead Green (Google Earth) prior to selective tree & sapling removal (2003) and after (2015)



The Friends of Hampstead Green have now linked up with the local volunteer group *Heath Hands*. Both groups contribute regular maintenance, and concern and support for its future protection.



Special Policy Area:

Area of Special Character: Hampstead & Highgate Ridge.

Hampstead Green has recently been made a Local Site of Importance for Nature Conservation: CaL17. Its site description is as follows:

Hampstead Green is a small triangular grassland area, surrounded by roads and pedestrian paths. The grassland is dominated by Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*),

common bent (*agrostis cappilaris*) meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and rough meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*). It is managed as a wildflower meadow and supports a variety of herbs, such as bluebells (*Hyacinthus* sp.), red and white campion (*Silene dioica* and *S. latifolia*), common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), common vetch (*Vicia sativa*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and oxeye-daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*). Mature oak trees stand around the perimeter of grassland.

Other LA designation:

Hampstead Green is listed as Public Open Space 49 in the LB Camden Unitary Development Plans Schedule of Open Spaces. Hampstead Green is in the Hampstead Conservation Area.

Hampstead Local Plan:

Hampstead Green lies close to Biodiversity Corridor F (Hampstead Hill Gardens) and Local Green Space Heath Hurst Gardens in the Plan Area.

It is thus precious and warrants stronger statutory protection which the status of 'Site of Importance for Nature Conservation' - being non-statutory - does not give it.

Supports Local Plan Policies:

Designation of Hampstead Green as a Local Green Space would support **Camden's Local Plan Policy A2 'Open Space': c, f and h; A3 'Biodiversity': a, c, e, f, h and i. Through its provision of a beautiful space for local people to nurture and to admire and of interest to children, it is consistent with Local Plan Policy C1 'Health and well-being': a, and Policy C2 'Community facilities'.**



Local Green Space: **Keats House Garden**

Local Significance: (Historical and Beauty)

The house, originally called Wentworth Place, was built between 1814-6 by William Woods for Charles Wentworth Dilke and Charles Armitage Brown, as a pair of semi-detached houses sharing a common garden. The land was enclosed from Hampstead Heath, and Dilke and Brown were among the first to build here. There were stables to the south-west and a kitchen garden to the north-west of house; the stables were later converted to house a collection relating to Keats and branch library, and what was the kitchen garden became the approach path to the library. John Keats (1795- 1821) lived here with Charles Brown for 17 months from 1818-1820 at which time the house was known as Lawn Bank, and from April 1819 his next door neighbour was Mrs Brawne and her three children, who had taken Wentworth Place when the Dilkes went to Westminster. Keats and the eldest daughter Fanny met and fell in love. The earliest references to the garden appear in the letters of Keats himself from his time living here in the years 1819-20. He recounts walking in the garden, seeking inspiration there and gazing at the outside world from his parlour when consumption had rendered him weak.

The garden in Keats' day was a woodland garden and a second entrance used to exist to the north; Keats referred to a 'grass plot' in front of the windows. An ancient plum tree that stood near the front of the house has been replaced and a plaque beneath it relates how the 'Ode to a Nightingale' was written there.



In 1920-21 the house was threatened with destruction, but was saved by money raised by

public subscription and it was vested in Hampstead Borough Council to be maintained in perpetuity in Keats' memory. It was opened to the public on 25 May 1925.

In 1974-5 LB Camden, who succeeded Hampstead Borough Council, restored the house with funding from the Historic Buildings Council. The garden was replanted in the late 1970s with advice from Peter Goodchild and included flowering shrubs within a north fenced boundary, with mature trees including plane and lime. The approach path to the house was flanked by lavender hedges and had a mixed border along the east boundary. Ash, beech, sycamore were planted along the south boundary.

In 1998 City of London took over responsibility for the house, which was managed by London Metropolitan Archives and some restoration was undertaken. Although formerly on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, Keats House was removed in 2003.





In 2007, Keats House was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £424,000 to undertake substantial restoration and it re-opened in 2009. In tandem with the refurbishment of the house, the garden was also redesigned. In October 2008 and with the assistance of the volunteer group *Heath Hands*, a new hedge was planted around the border of the garden and new fruit trees, plants and shrubs, all in keeping with the Regency period, were put in place. Each border of the garden reflects an aspect of Keats's poetry: Melancholy, Autumn and Nightingale. A group of volunteers from *Heath Hands* have continued to take part in weekly Wednesday maintenance sessions.





Use by the Local Community:

Keats House and Garden are open all year round Wednesday to Saturday and Good Friday and Bank Holiday Mondays 11am to 5pm. While there is a fee for entry to the house, entry to the garden is free. The toilets in the garden are also wheelchair accessible.



The gardens have supported and been a part of Open Garden Squares weekend for many year where they are described as

"providing a moment of calm in bustling Hampstead. Mere steps away from the Heath, our beautifully tended garden allows you the opportunity to walk in the steps of one of the most well-loved of the Romantic poets – John Keats. aiming to highlight the inspiration and dedication behind the tranquillity of our garden, as well as the hard work carried out by the volunteers and skilled horticulturists who tend the garden."

Families are welcome to picnic or play in the garden during their visit; the garden makes a lovely setting for a picnic when the weather is fine. **Family Days are also organised and advertised locally such as the 'Minibeast Safari':**

"Pick up a wildlife spotter sheet and see what birds and beasties you can spy. You can also make a miniature bug hotel to encourage minibeasts into your own gardens and outdoor spaces.

Free, just drop in."

School visits include interactive sessions investigating insects, flowers and trees in the garden. They support National Curriculum requirements for Science Key Stage 2: Life Processes and Living Things - Green Plants and Living Things in Their Environment.

Free guided tours of the Keats House garden are regularly organised, exploring elements of Keats's poetry and how it inspired the existing planting schemes. **Minibeast Safaris are also run for children, and some evenings in the summer the garden remains open until late for experiencing dusk in the garden.**

Special Policy Area: Area of Special Character: Hampstead & Highgate Ridge

Other LA designation: Public Open Space (Small Local)

English Heritage Grade I listing [not Garden, though this importantly forms the setting of the Grade I listed house]

Supports Local Plan Policies:

Designation of Keat's House Gardens as a Local Green Space would support **Camden's Local Plan Policy A2 'Open Space': c, e, f and h; A3 'Biodiversity': a, c, e, f, h and i. Through its provision of a restful and beautiful space with facilities for local people and children,** it is consistent with Local Plan Policy C1 'Health and well-being': a, and Policy C2 'Community facilities'.

Hampstead Local Plan:

Heath Fringes, Biodiversity Corridors

Links to other Green Spaces in the Hampstead Local Plan area

Keat's House Gardens is very near to the southern part of the Heath and is in line with the strategic biodiversity corridor 'North London Line railway corridor'. It is close to Local Green Spaces 'Heath Hurst Gardens' and 'World Peace Garden', close to Private Open Space 'Keats & Downshire Gardens', and lies between the Plan's biodiversity corridors E (South Hill Park and South Hill Park Gardens including Heath Edge Gardens and Parliament Hill) and F (Hampstead Hill Gardens).