

Biodiversity Corridor A

Well Walk, Flask Walk and Gayton Road



A contemporary manuscript reports that in 1700 "A hundred fine young trees" were planted either side of Well Walk¹. The present day line of lime trees running from the East Heath Road end of Well Walk along the grass verge and distinct raised and broad pavement on the north-west side to Christchurch Hill, continues with a line of London Plane trees towards Flask Walk and along the frontage of Gertrude Jekyll's garden below Burgh

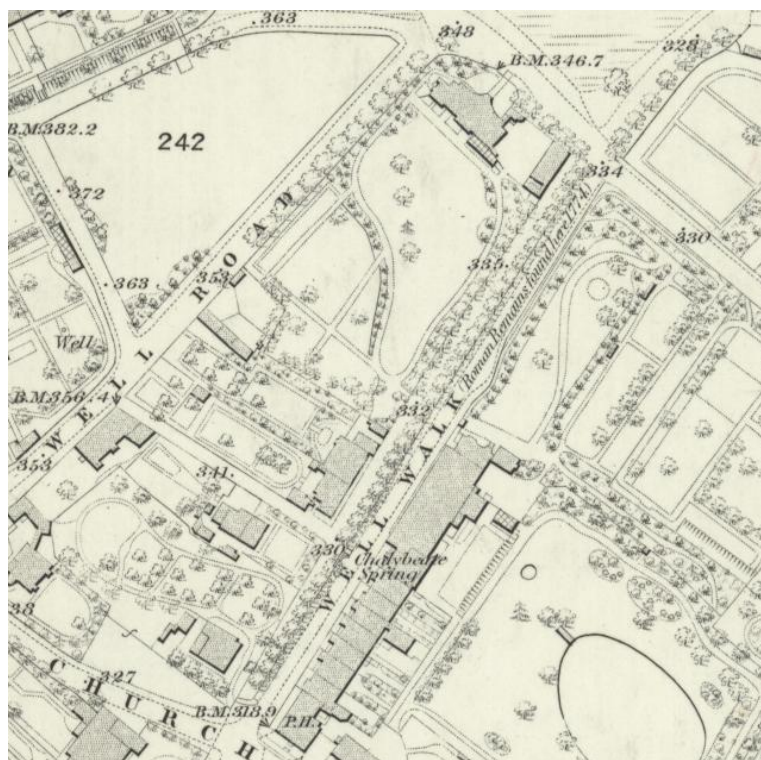
¹ TJ Barratt 'The Annals of Hampstead' vol i: p181

House and now part of Wells Court. This line of tall trees makes this an airy and verdant street leading from Hampstead Heath through the Heath fringes to the town, contributing to the important views towards and from the Heath, and increasing the rural effect.

Well Walk is just south of the spring line between the Bagshot Sands and the Claygate Beds, indicated by its name. An important function of the trees along this street therefore is to help reduce the impact of emerging groundwater, and it is clear they were originally planted to fulfil this function. Limes are tall forest-type high water demand trees and hence frequently planted in Hampstead by the Victorians and Edwardians as they are here along the northern side of Well Walk. Along the southern side of Well Walk there are also three lombardy poplars; tall extremely thirsty trees that make an important contribution to the corridor, keeping the gardens here less boggy, and somewhat reducing erosion of silt from the Claygate Beds by groundwater action.



This line of trees is historic, and is clearly present on the 1866 Ordnance Survey map too:



It can also be seen along Flask Walk and the first few trees along what is now Well Walk on the Manorial map of 1762:

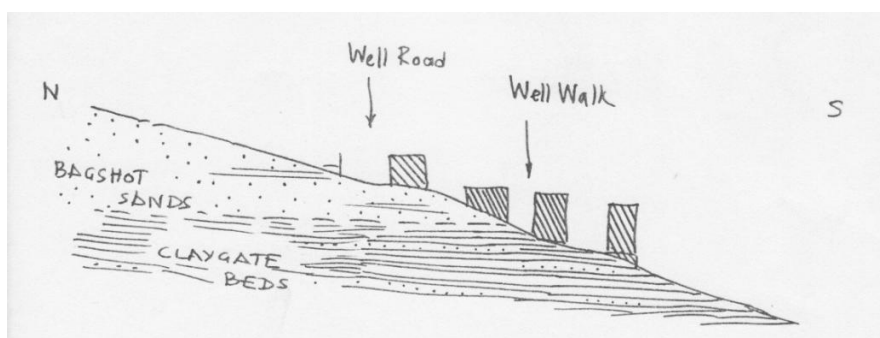


At New End Square the biodiversity corridor continues along Hampstead's former Village Green, now much reduced to a small grassy area with a few trees along it. The corridor then divides: a line of lime trees continues along Flask Walk as far as Back Lane, and the rear gardens of Gardnor Road and Gayton Road form the other fork.



Lime trees along the north side of Flask Walk

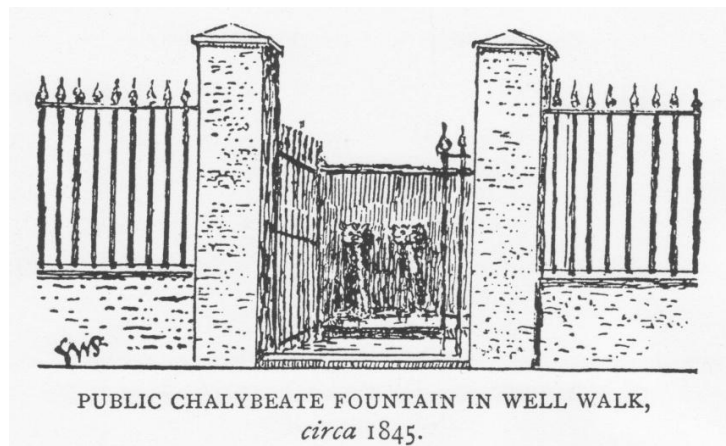
The verdant quality of the trees here is much due to the fact that the Spring line between the Bagshot Sands and the Claygate Beds runs just north of this biodiversity corridor.



Section through the underlying geology of Well Walk by Dr Eric Robinson, geologist University College London



Several underground streams run downhill across the area; many were contained within old conduits and are now in the Victorian sewer pipes.



This fountain mentioned in George Potter's book 'Hampstead Wells' published in 1904, was fed by the stream originally running along, later in a conduit under, the path between Well Road and Well Walk. It emerged from the head spring and pond ('Parish pond' on the Manorial map of 1762, that Thomas Barratt in his 'The Annals of Hampstead' (1912) reports was later named the 'Bath pond') 100 yards higher on the hill. George Potter as a young boy in 1840 recalled the fountain as being outside the house now replaced by 22-24 Well Walk. "The water issued from two bronze lions' heads in two fairly strong jets, and was received into a shallow square stone basin." It was replaced years later by the current public well on the other side of the road, here seen in an early postcard, as well as the row of lime trees on the north bank of Well Walk going towards the Heath



The importance of this line of trees to local people is demonstrated by their determination to retain it: funding to plant 8 new lime trees within gaps in this line was amongst the first CIL projects to be voted for in 2016. The Biodiversity Corridor is also the subject of many paintings and woodcuts by local artists:



Well Walk from New End Square 1930 by George Charlton



Lime trees up Flask Walk by Bette Greenhalf 1986



1855 Inspection East Middlesex Militia Well Walk, Hampstead

Biodiversity Corridor **B**

Rear gardens of 5-41 Christchurch Hill and Willow Road



Biodiversity
corridor **B**

The biodiversity corridor between lower Christchurch Hill and upper Willow Road, is a narrow triangle formed by the back gardens of the two rows of houses backing onto a small private access lane "Back Lane" for the residents: a tranquil green area, with a rural atmosphere. The corridor tapers at the southern end, where the lane has access onto Willow Road, and is appropriately marked by an exceptionally large London plane tree. The upper section of Back Lane belongs to Nos. 29-39 Christchurch Hill. The top of the biodiversity corridor is formed by the rear gardens of Well Walk.



Google Earth View of Biodiversity Corridor **B**

A number of very mature native trees are a defining feature of Back Lane: these include the plane which has been the nesting site for tawny owl and greater spotted woodpeckers, an ash (21 Christchurch Hill), an oak (50 Willow Road), two tall lime trees (14 and 18 Well Walk), and several hazels. In addition there are the remnants of a historically larger orchard planted when construction of the houses on this south aspect of Christchurch Hill was completed. Six apple and pear trees remain, opposite the backs of 29-31 Christchurch Hill and a large pear tree in the rear garden of 35 Christchurch Hill. Many fruit trees have been removed and some replaced in recent years.



Western end of the biodiversity corridor

Resident fauna include foxes and common frogs, which breed in a number of small garden ponds. Historically, common toads and smooth newts have been present, but not observed in the last c.10 years. Muntjac deer are regularly heard in Gainsborough Gardens (on the opposite side of Christchurch Hill), but have yet to be seen or heard in Back Lane, though the amount of ground cover and shrubs would make it a suitable habitat.

There is at least one (probably seasonal) bat roost, on the Christchurch Hill side, with what appear to be pipistrelle-sized bats. The largest of these was observed in late summer 2016 to have around 200 bats, but an emergence of this scale has only been observed once. However bats are regular in the Back Lane in the evenings and, as well as the most frequent small species, also include larger species.

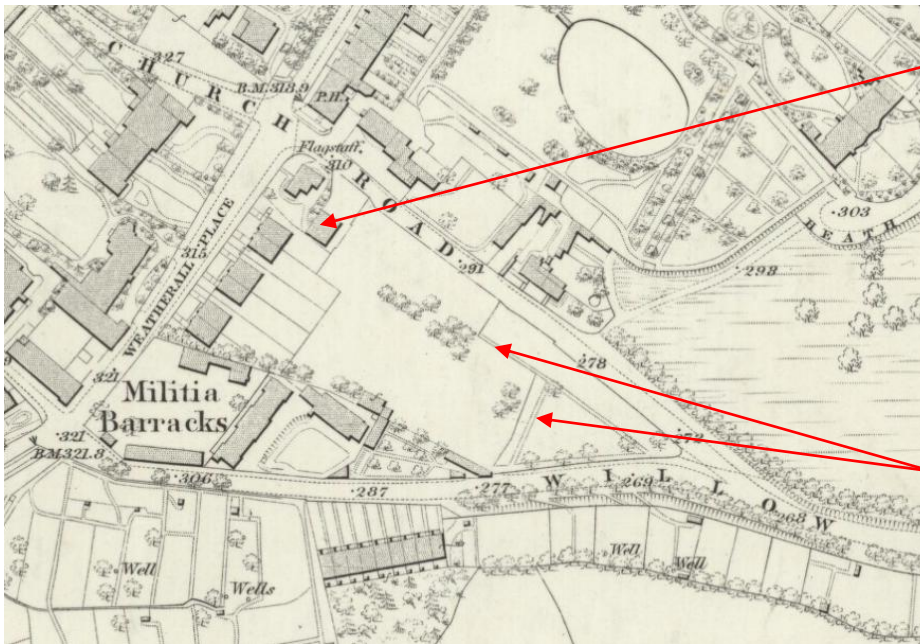
With a relatively high density of older trees, breeding birds include green and greater-spotted woodpeckers, coal and blue tits, greenfinch, blackcap and tawny owls. Wintering species include a wider range of tits, finches, goldcrest and treecreepers, as well as winter thrushes.

Houses at the top of Back Lane (on Well Walk) still have nesting swifts in June and July each year, but re-roofings and attic conversions in the last decades have caused the loss of swift nests on the Christchurch Hill side, which would otherwise be most suitable on account of their aspect, height and access. Several properties in Christchurch Hill have swift holes made into the soffit boards under the eaves so it is hoped that swifts will return here. A small colony of house martins, which nested at the Wells pub at the top of Christchurch Hill and fed frequently over Back Lane, was lost in around 2000.



Swift holes in soffit boards in Christchurch Hill

This is an important link between biodiversity corridors A (Well Walk) and B (between Willow and Denning Roads), and Hampstead Heath.



43 Christchurch Hill

1866 OS map showing the private access lane behind the rear gardens of Christchurch Hill, (previously Christchurch Road) to number 43 from where the builder Mr Bickles built what are now numbers 41-1 Christchurch Hill. On completion the area became an orchard.



Panoramic winter photograph from roof of 43 Christchurch Hill looking southwards

Rear of 41 Christchurch Hill

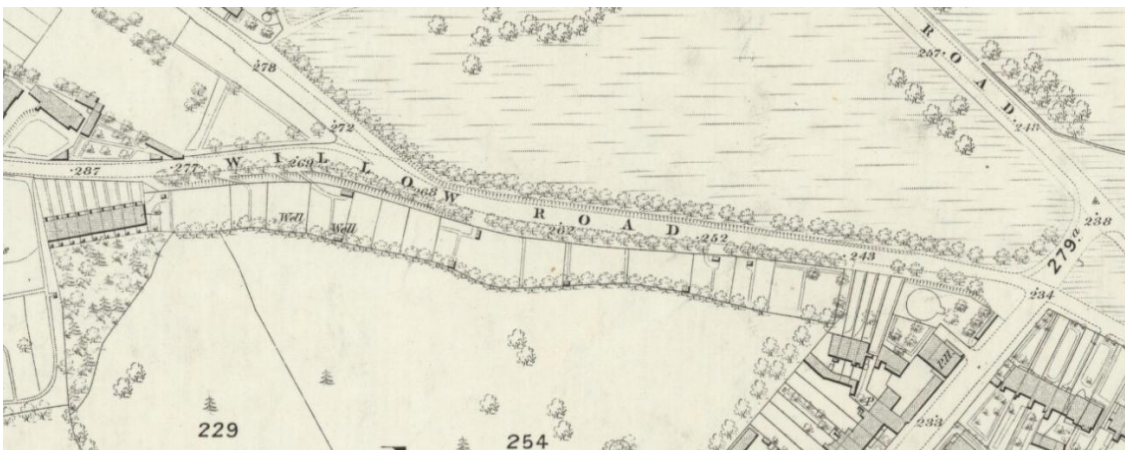
Rear of 26 Well Walk



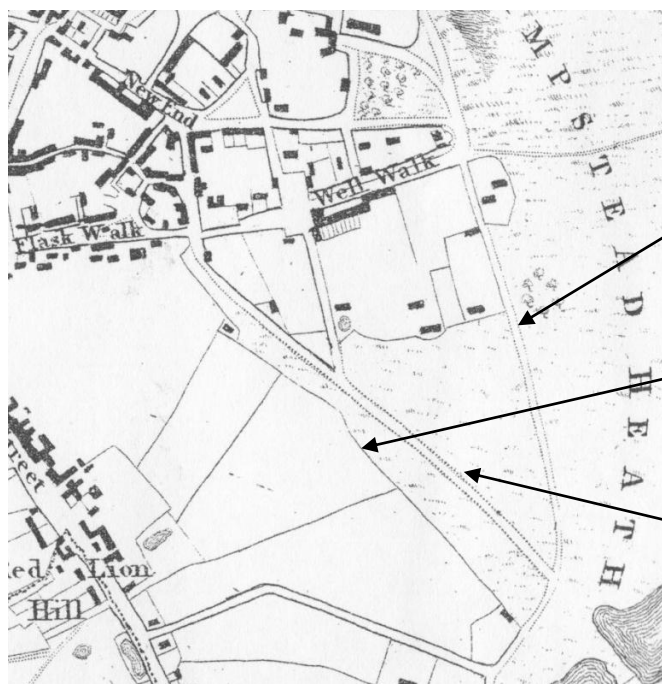
Sight lines of photograph above

Biodiversity Corridor C

Rear gardens between Willow Road and Denning Road: Historic tree line.



1866 OS map



Newton's 1814 map

East Heath Road

Field boundary line later to be boundary line of rear gardens of Willow Road and Denning Road

Willow Road

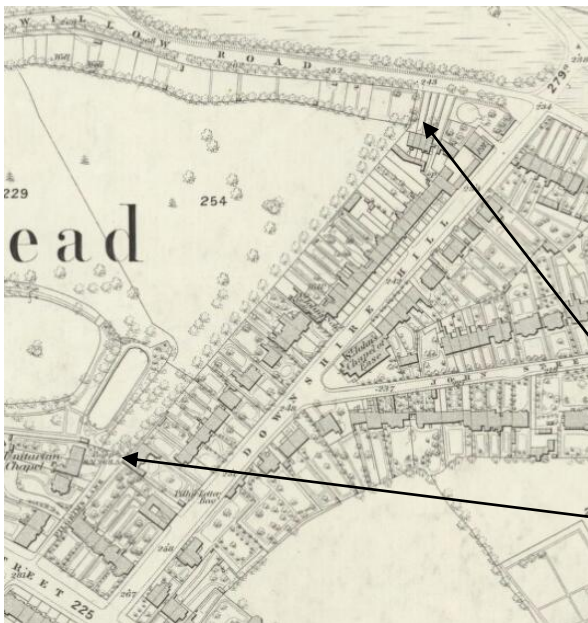
This is an historic hedgerow and field boundary; an important linking biodiversity corridor between biodiversity corridors B (Rear gardens SW Christchurch Hill) and D (Rear gardens Downshire Hill and Pilgrims Lane), and the Heath.

Biodiversity Corridor D

Rear gardens between Downshire Hill and Pilgrim's Lane: Historic tree line.

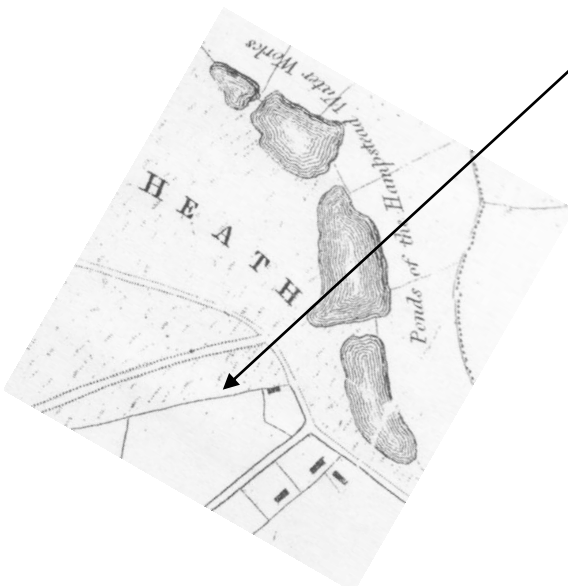


Google Earth 2016



1866 OS map

Biodiversity Corridor D: Historic hedgerow line



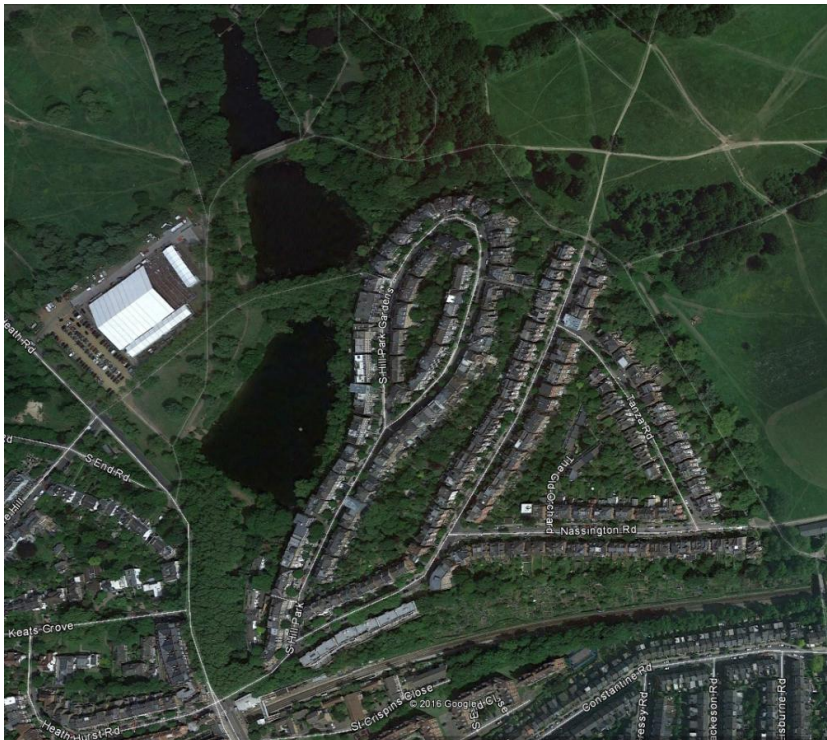
1814 Newton's map

While the actual trees on the 1866 OS map no longer exist, there is still a continuous line of tall canopied mature and over-mature trees along this boundary line between Downshire Hill and Pilgrim's Lane rear gardens. It is still fiercely protected by local people against over pruning or undermining by sub-garden basement applications. This gives a continuous tall tree canopy line from the Heath running towards the town that can still be used by its attendant invertebrates, birds, small mammals and bats.

Biodiversity Corridor E

South Hill Park and South Hill Park Gardens including Heath Edge Gardens and Parliament Hill (207 in Camden's schedule of Open Spaces).

This corridor follows ancient hedgerow and boundary lines, its distinctive shape and lines of trees easily recognisable on old maps. At the top of South Hill Park it still contains two veteran trees and the whole corridor is a continuous line of tall forest-type tree canopies. These link the wild life associated with mature and veteran trees to the western end of the SINC CaB104 and on towards Biodiversity Corridor F via Open Spaces South End Green and Keats and Downshire Gardens, and Local Green Spaces Heath Hurst Gardens and Keat's House Gardens. Its close proximity on one edge to the Hampstead ponds is important for transferring wild life associated with these ponds to other smaller ponds within Hampstead's gardens and Open Spaces.

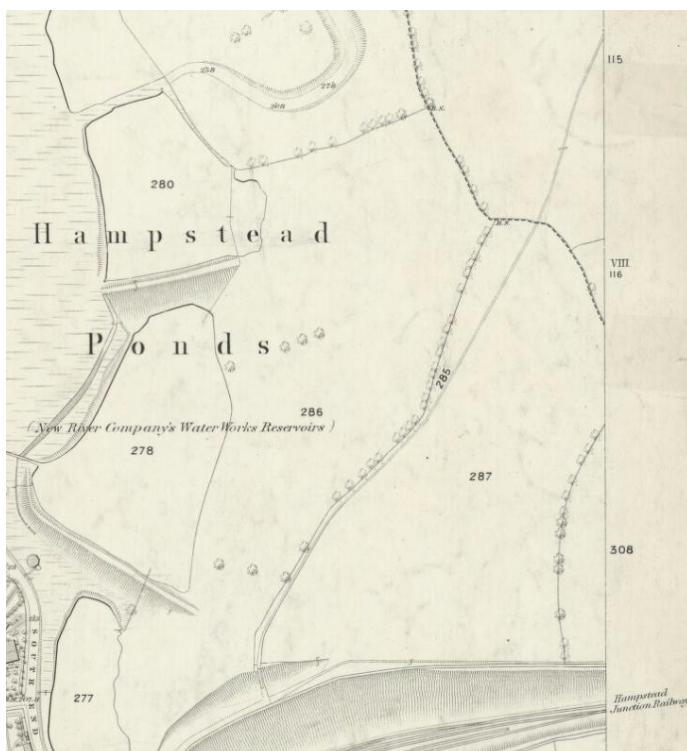


● Oak with veteran features

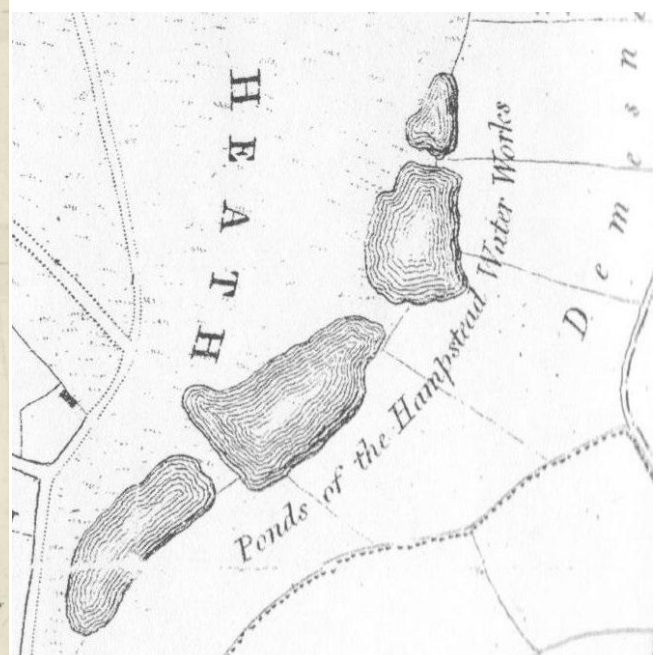
2 veteran trees associated with Biodiversity Corridor E; linked to other veterans on the Heath



from: 'Hampstead Heath Veteran Tree Survey'



1866 OS map



Newton's 1814 map



Manorial map 1762



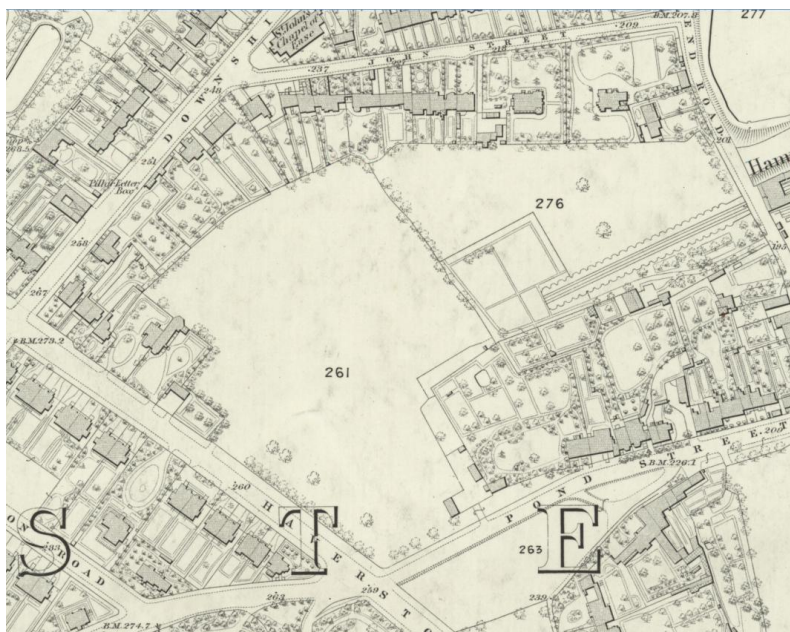
1746 John Rocques map

Biodiversity Corridor F

Rear gardens Hampstead Hill Gardens

This corridor is an historic tree line following ancient hedgerow and boundary lines, its distinctive shape and lines of trees easily recognisable on the 1866 OS map and John Roque's map of 1746. It is closely related to Biodiversity Corridor D 'Rear gardens between Downshire Hill and Pilgrims Lane', and to Biodiversity Corridor J 'Spring Walk/Thurlow Road to Fitzjohns/Daleham via Lyndhurst Terrace'. Through its close association with proposed Local Green Spaces 'Hampstead Green', 'Heath Hurst Gardens', and 'Keats' House Gardens', and with Open Spaces 'Keats & Downshire Gardens', and hence to 'South End Triangle', it is a wildlife corridor with important links to the Heath.

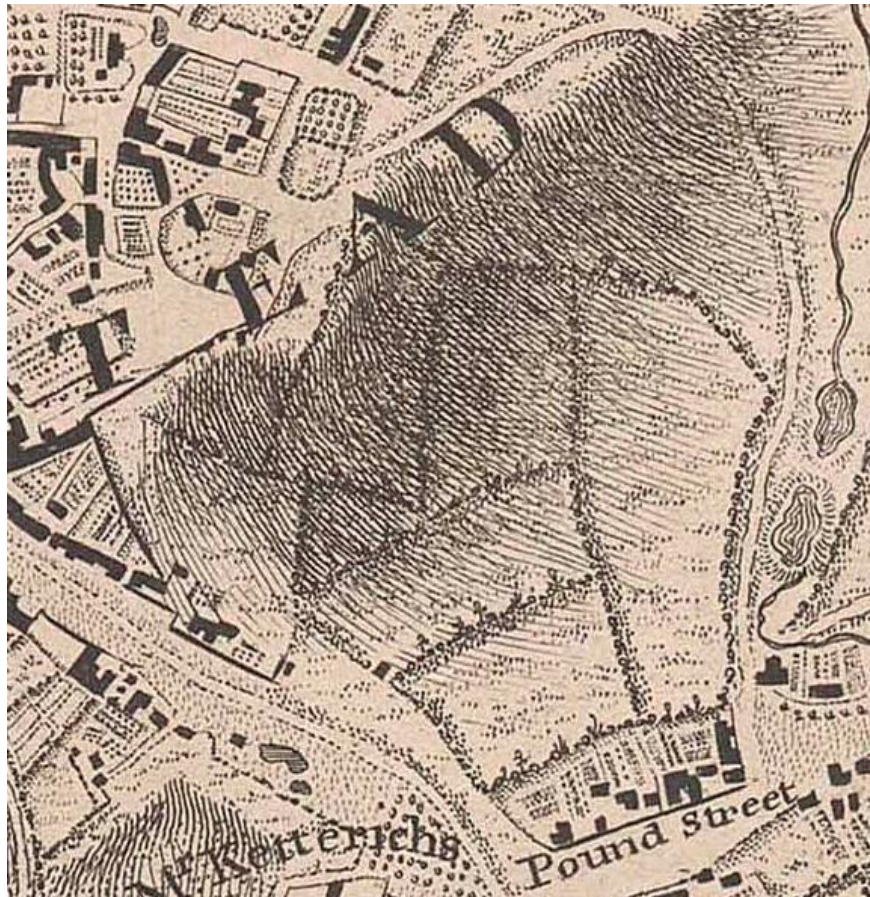
There are a number of mature lime trees along its length, particularly at its High Street end, which may help to explain the reported presence of bats in the rear gardens here, so close to the High Street.



1866 OS map (Keats Grove was then called John Street)



Newton's 1814 map showing northern extent of fields marked 261 & 276 on the 1866 OS map



John Rocque's map of 1746 showing the familiar outline of this historic hedgerow corner above 'Pound' (now Pond) Street.

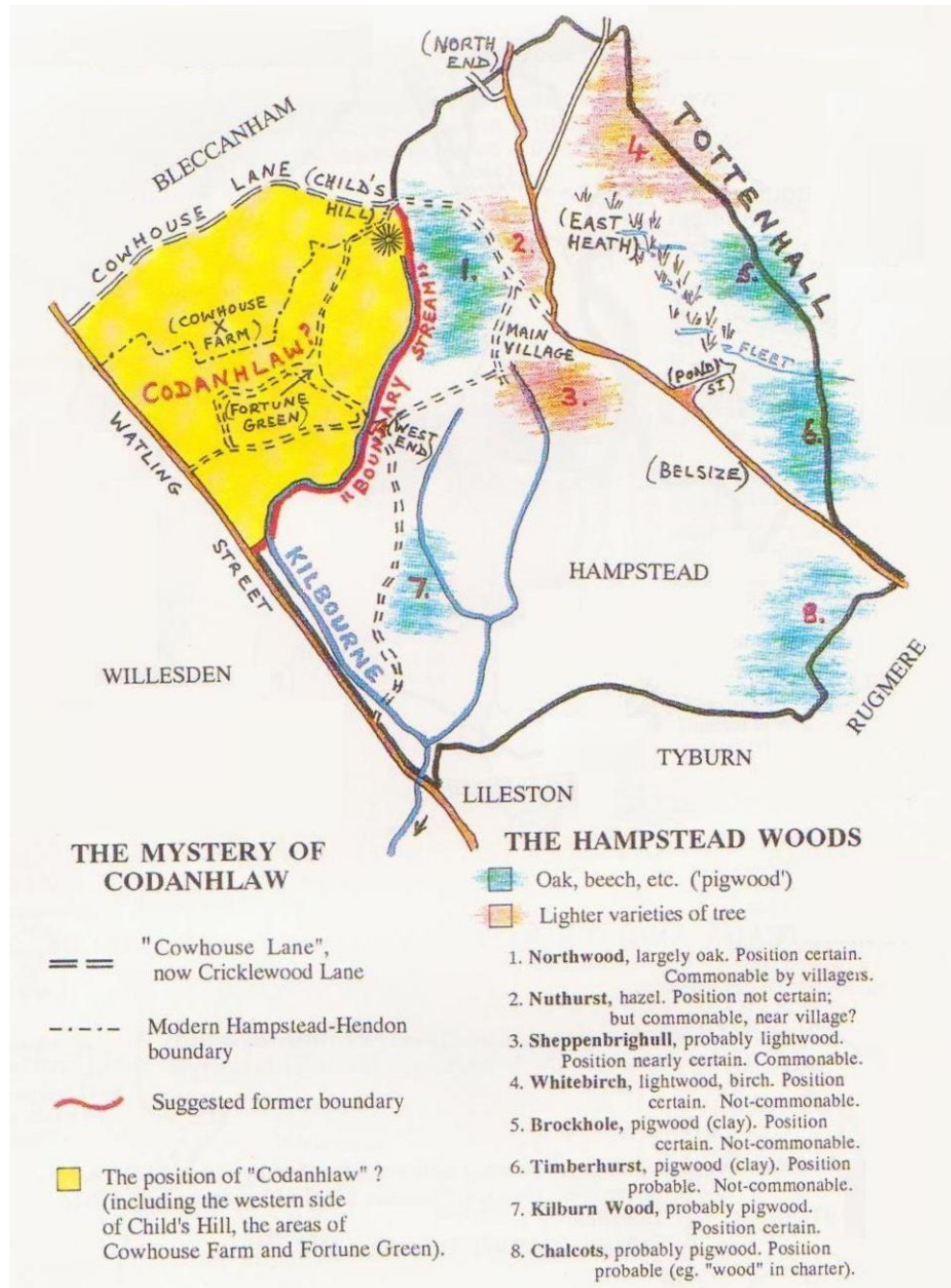
Biodiversity Corridor G

North-Western Frogna

This biodiversity corridor runs along the private 'shrubbery' on the western side of Frogna Nos 115- 99, and continues down the western side of Frogna to join to Oak Hill Park Local Green Space.

History

A large oak wood 'Northwood' grew on the Bagshot bed in the Frogna-Childs Hill area in the 15th century and probably for centuries before (from David Sullivan's *The Westminster Corridor*, 1994):



Frogna was mentioned in the early 15th century as a customary tenement, the "house called Frogna", which lay on the west side of the road, probably on the site later occupied by Frogna House, now 99 Frogna.

By the 17th century there were several cottages and houses at Frogna; the name probably indicating the road leading from the church and manor farm northward to the heath. On the west side of Frogna only the estate associated with Frogna House was ancient copyhold. The rest was either ancient demesne to the south or waste (heath) to the north. In 1740 Frogna field was the eastern abutment of Northfield, part of the demesne.

In 1741 the architect Henry Flitcroft (1697-1769) acquired from Thomas Watson-Wentworth, earl of Malton, a house dating from 1700 or earlier on what was then heath, a coach house and stable and another cottage, and himself obtained further grants of adjoining waste, including the lime walk illustrated by William Collins in his painting 'As happy as a King' (1836) - see Biodiversity Corridor J. He probably built Frogna (later Montagu) Grove on the site (now nos. 105 and 107 Frogna; no. 109 and 111 Frogna were formed from the stabling).

In 1811 Frogna was a 'hamlet of handsome residences', surrounded by groves and gardens 'of an extent begrudged by builders in these modern days'. (Abraham, quoted in *Images of Hampstead S Jenkins & J Ditchburn*, 56.)

Nowadays, the 'Shrubbery' opposite 103 to 115 Frogna is owned in sections by each house, ensuring that this area of green that shields these houses from the road and its traffic can never be built over. The biodiversity corridor also includes the large gardens of 90, 99 & 99a (Sisters of St Dorothy Convent) Frogna.

Green Links

This corridor is an important link to Biodiversity Corridor K and to Oak Hill Park Local Green Space, both of which contain veteran oak trees. While these trees are probably not old enough to be remnants of the old Northwood, nevertheless the continuity of oak trees and other tall forest-type trees such as limes and their links to each other are important for them and for the wildlife associated with them. This corridor is an eastern link between the SINC of Branch Hill and St John's churchyard and the Local Green Space of Oak Hill Park.

Biodiversity Corridor **H**

Hampstead Grove, Admirals Walk, Upper and Lower Terrace

This biodiversity corridor includes the Upper Terrace Reservoir, the gardens of Upper Terrace House, Admiral's House, Grove Lodge, Netley Cottage, Fenton House, and Grove End, as well as the three small public open spaces of Windmill Hill Enclosures in Upper Terrace, with the late-mature sweet chestnut with veteran features on the green triangle on Upper Terrace near to Judges Walk.



Sweet chestnut on Green Triangle of the 'Windmill Enclosures': winter and summer

The tall lime trees of this biodiversity corridor are an important feature of this area of Hampstead. The 'Victoria County History' states that Hampstead has a history of planting lines or groves of trees. The area in and around this biodiversity corridor particularly does: it could easily be re-named 'Groveland'. Hampstead Grove - the road previously named 'The Grove' but changed to distinguish it from the road with the same name in Highgate - has several buildings with the name Grove close by, including: 'Grove Lodge', 'Grove End', 'Old Grove House' and 'The Grove' (the previous name for Admiral's House) while 'Frognal Grove' (an 18th century house famous for its impressive avenue of lime trees leading up to the entrance of the house and later named 'Montagu Grove' was converted into 105-111 Frognal) and the more modern 'Highgrove Point' are just south of here within Biodiversity Corridor G 'Frognal', and the road Grove Place is to the east.



Frognal Grove, engraving by Maria Catherine Prestel (1747-94)

The lime walk planted up to Froggnal Grove has featured in many old Hampstead pictures, notably in 'As Happy as a King' (1836) by William Collins at the Tate Gallery:



Indeed William Hone in his *Table Book of 1827* called Hampstead 'the place of groves'. There are still enough fine old lime trees along Hampstead Grove, Admirals Walk and Upper Terrace to justify its name.



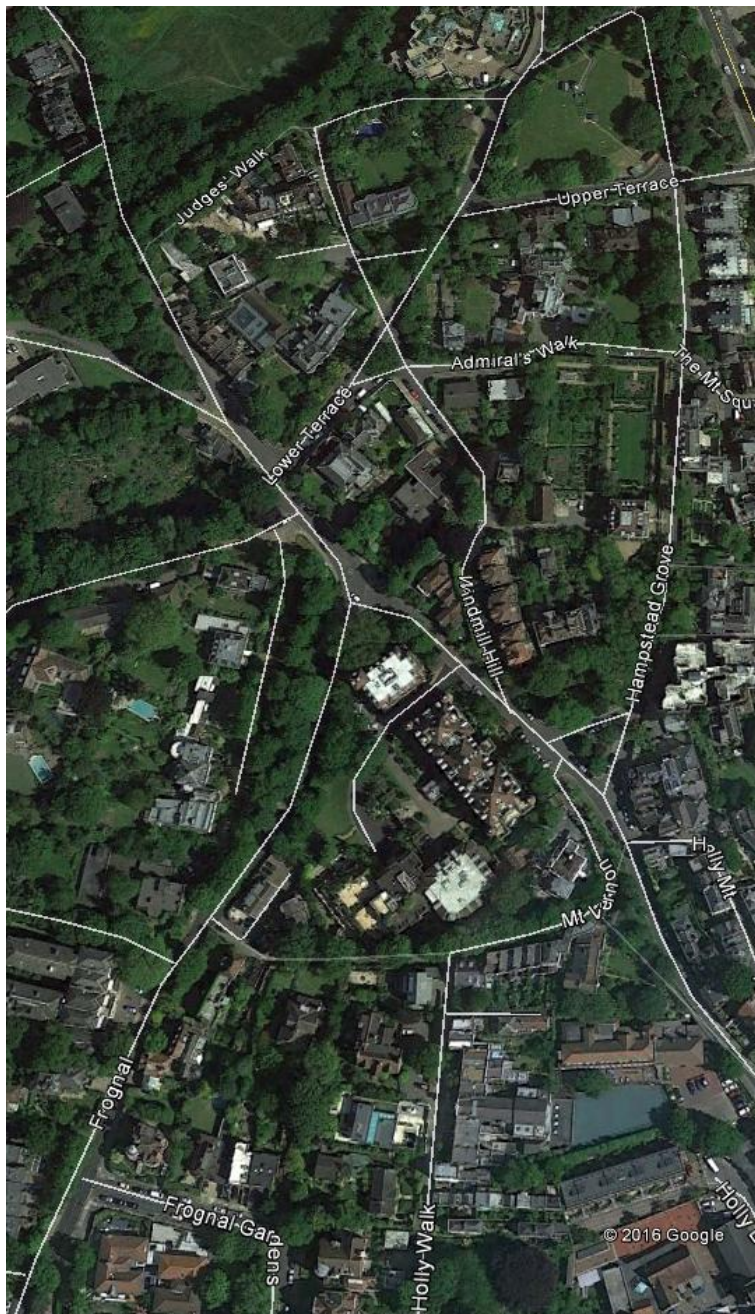
Row of Admirals Walk lime trees (on left), winter



Row of lime trees by Grove House, Admirals Walk, winter



Lines of lime trees in Admirals Walk - and along Hampstead Grove in summer



Historic lime trees by Netley Cottage,
Lower Terrace in winter



Historic lime trees in summer



Recently pollarded lime trees along
south west section Lower Terrace
in winter and in summer

The presence of these tall water-loving forest trees reflect the many springs and tributaries of the Westbourne river that flow through this area and can be seen at the bottom of the many wells present here e.g. one within Admiral's House and three alone within the grounds of Fenton House.

There was previously a triangular pond known as Clock House Pond (west of Clock House, the previous name for Fenton House) or Crockett's Pond just below Admiral's House and bounded by Admiral's Walk, Windmill Hill and the public footpath running between the two and immediately west of Fenton House's west wall. This was painted by John Constable during the time that he rented 2 Lower Terrace nearby in the summers of 1821 and 1822:



The many 18th and 19th century paintings of this area include lime, poplar, willow and oak trees (large water-loving trees for keeping gardens, roadways and paths drier) show these trees to be an important historic feature of this area and have practical water-balancing value in this area of wells and ponds, with groundwater that to this day can erode silt from the soil and is a local cause of building subsidence.

Biodiversity Corridor I

Holly Hill to Church Row & Perrins Walk NF boundary, via Frognal Gardens.

This biodiversity corridor continues on from Biodiversity Corridor H, extending down via Frognal Gardens to meet St John's Churchyard in neighbouring Church Row & Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Forum, an important Borough level grade I Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. These two biodiversity corridors connect this SINC with Hampstead Heath.

The main gardens in BC I are those of 'Mount Vernon House', 'Pavilion Court' (a wonderful woodland garden of great biodiversity value behind the northern wall of Holly Walk before it turns south) and 'Frognal End' (18 Frognal Gardens, built 1892). Biodiversity Corridor I runs south along the front gardens of 1-9 Frognal Gardens.





John Constable's 'Trees at Hampstead: The path to church' 1821

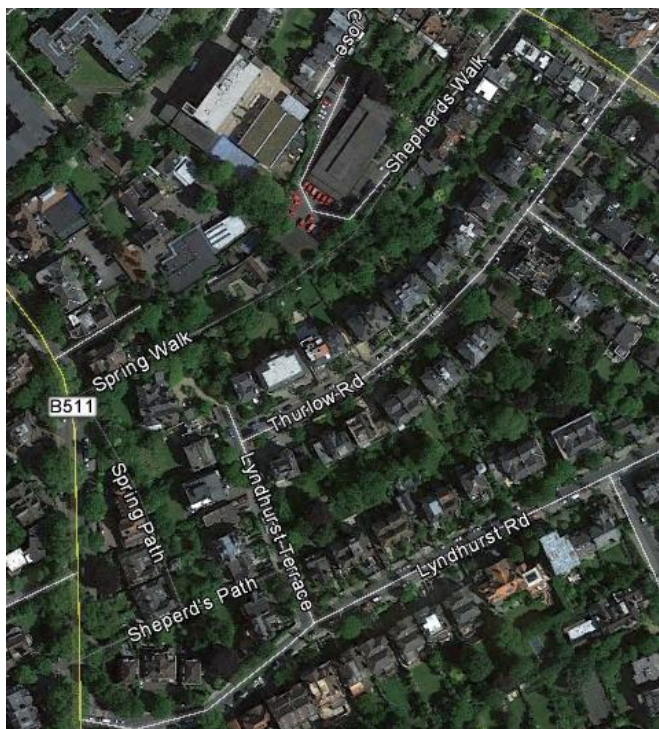
Constable painted the oil 'Trees at Hampstead: The path to church' in 1821 when he was living at 2, Lower Terrace. On September 20 1821, when he was painting it, he wrote to his friend John Fisher: "I have done some studies ... particularly a natural (but highly Elegant) group of trees, Ashes, Elms, and Oaks etc which will be of quite as much service to me as if I had bought the feild [sic] and Hedge Row, which contains them, and perhaps one time or another will fetch as much for my children."

In fact his children retained this work, now in the V&A, perhaps from sentiment, because it depicts the way to Hampstead Parish church (just visible at the extreme left hand side of the painting) where Constable and his wife lay buried.)

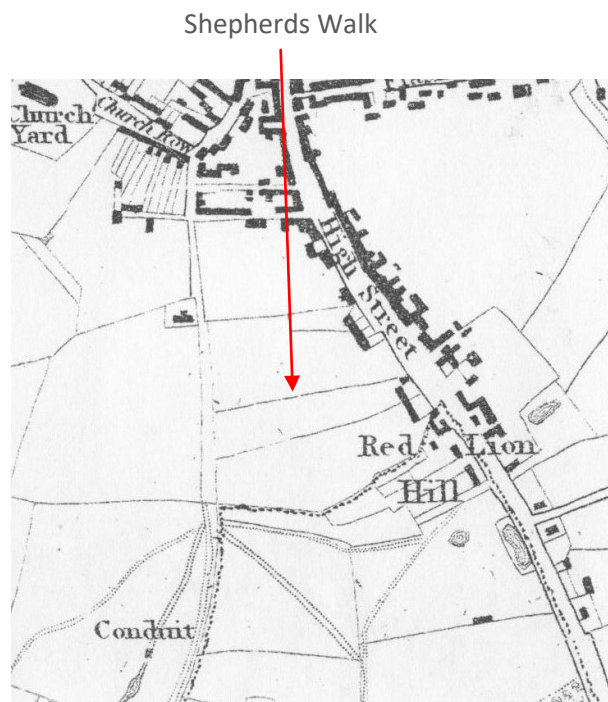
It is difficult to judge exactly where it was painted but this line of trees is likely to be along the line of this biodiversity corridor as the most direct route to St John's church from 2 Lower Terrace: paths on the western side of field 138 on the 1866 OS map. Other possible routes he could have painted with a line of trees on the left hand side of a path when walking down to the church would have been well off any route he is likely to have taken.

Biodiversity Corridor J

Shepherds Walk, Spring Walk and Spring Path



Google Earth



1814 Newton's map

This biodiversity corridor BC J is a long established line of trees and gardens that runs south west along the rear gardens of the length of north west Thurlow Road, just south of Shepherd Walk which later becomes Spring Walk. It then continues south down the western gardens of Lyndhurst Terrace and part of the course of the Shepherd stream, then between the rear gardens of Daleham Gardens and Fitzjohns Avenue to the edge of the HNF boundary.

BC J includes the garden of Elm Bank: a large mid-Victorian detached villa built in the 1860s with a large garden on three sides.



Elm Bank

1866 OS map



Stanford's Library map 1862

As it follows the original course of the Shepherd stream between the rear gardens of Fitzjohns Avenue and Daleham Gardens, the garden boundary here contains several black poplars, water-loving trees that were planted to help keep the gardens less waterlogged. These are not always being replaced with black poplars now they are coming towards the ends of their lives or are removed for development, so many gardens are now reported as much wetter and other trees as suffering from more outbreaks of honey fungus. Nevertheless bats and tawny owls have been observed in these gardens.

Biodiversity Corridor **K**

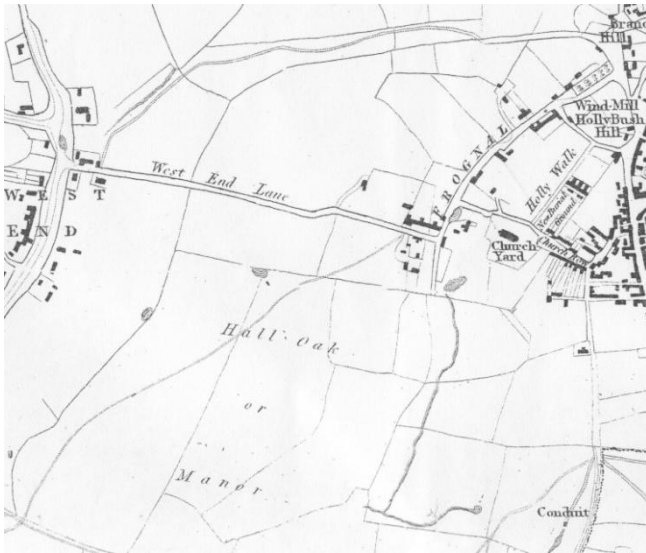
Western Frognal rear gardens from south Redington Road to HNF boundary.

This biodiversity corridor runs south from the rear gardens of 1-19 Redington Road, 67-61 Frognal and 23 Frognal Lane, across the front gardens of 21 and 19 Frognal Lane, crosses Frognal Lane then runs along the western gardens of Frognal and the east side of Langland Gardens to the edge of Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum boundary. Here it links with Redington Frognal Neighbourhood Forum's biodiversity corridor.

This biodiversity corridor has good historical credentials as it contained the Hampstead Estate manor-house where the Courts Lees were held. The section north of Frognal Lane was ancient demesne land (land that the lord of a manor, in feudal times, kept for himself rather than letting out): part of Manor Farm. Later it became the eastern side of Frognal Park, an area between Old Frognal Court (now 23 Frognal Lane) and the house called Frognal Park. The old manor-house which stood at the north-east corner of West End Lane (now called Frognal Lane) was a long, low farmhouse building. This was demolished and a brick house built on the site (Old Frognal Court now 23 Frognal Lane), another further west (Maryon Hall), later split into two houses: Maryon Hall (no. 19) and Maryon House (no. 21) Frognal Lane.

In the 1800s Frognal Park had grounds of 23 acres, and Manor Cottage (south of Frognal Lane and now number 40) had grounds of 5 acres, with the grounds of Frognal Priory continuing south. A grand veteran oak tree now in the garden of 65 Frognal 'Old Oak Place' would have been a mature tree then. With the development of Frognal down to Frognal Lane during the 1880s, most but not all signs of farm life disappeared. The gardens of these houses now form a section of the proposed biodiversity corridor with fine tall trees including holm oaks where tawny owls and woodpeckers were previously seen to roost and still fly to.





from Newton's 1814 map

Froggnal Park



Existing veteran oak tree

Site of old Manor House

Old Froggnal Court

Maryon House

Maryon Hall

Manor Cottage

Existing veteran oak tree

This biodiversity corridor is an important link for another veteran tree associated with 27 Lindfield Gardens and a large area of rear gardens with tall trees and springs: part of Redington Froggnal Neighbourhood Forum which will be proposed as a Biodiversity Corridor itself.