

REFERENCE

PROJECT

BRANCH HILL HOUSE

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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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1.1 The Site



INTRODUCTION

The site is located to the south of the Hampstead Heath and west of Hampstead town centre in the London Borough of Camden. The site is defined to the north by a private property and its grounds, and to the east by Branch Hill road. Allotments border the site to the south and the architecturally acclaimed Spedan Estate is located to the west.

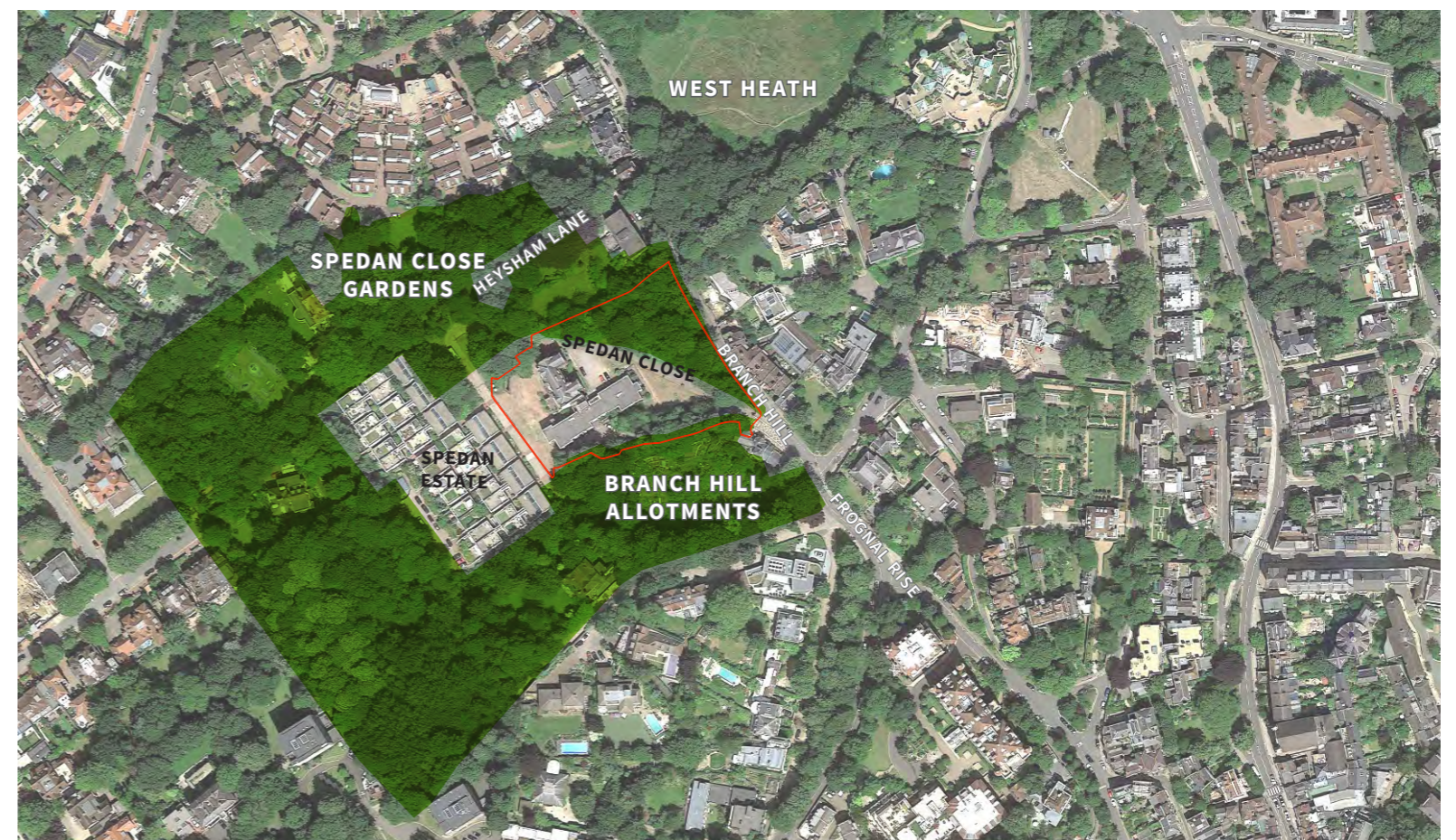
The local area is made up of similar density residential dwellings including large historic houses with a mixture of tenures. Branch Hill House is recognised as making a positive contribution to the Hampstead Conservation Area in which the site sits.

Open space provision in the local area has a variety of publicly accessible spaces including West Heath, leading to Hampstead Heath and Spedan Close Gardens with play park.

The majority of public space within the site is enclosed and dense in vegetation benefiting from being set within a now mature landscape and a sense of sitting on an escarpment to the surrounding lower areas. Branch Hill allotments are designated as open space and are also locally listed.

A Site Of Important Nature Conservation (SINC) surrounds much of the site with a triangular area of woodland located to its north boundary. The SINC affords protection to the trees within it as well as its natural sense of character. This sensitive area has been taken into consideration within the landscape design proposals.

 BRANCH HILL SINC BOUNDARY WITHIN AND BEYOND SITE BOUNDARY



1.2 Site Photographs

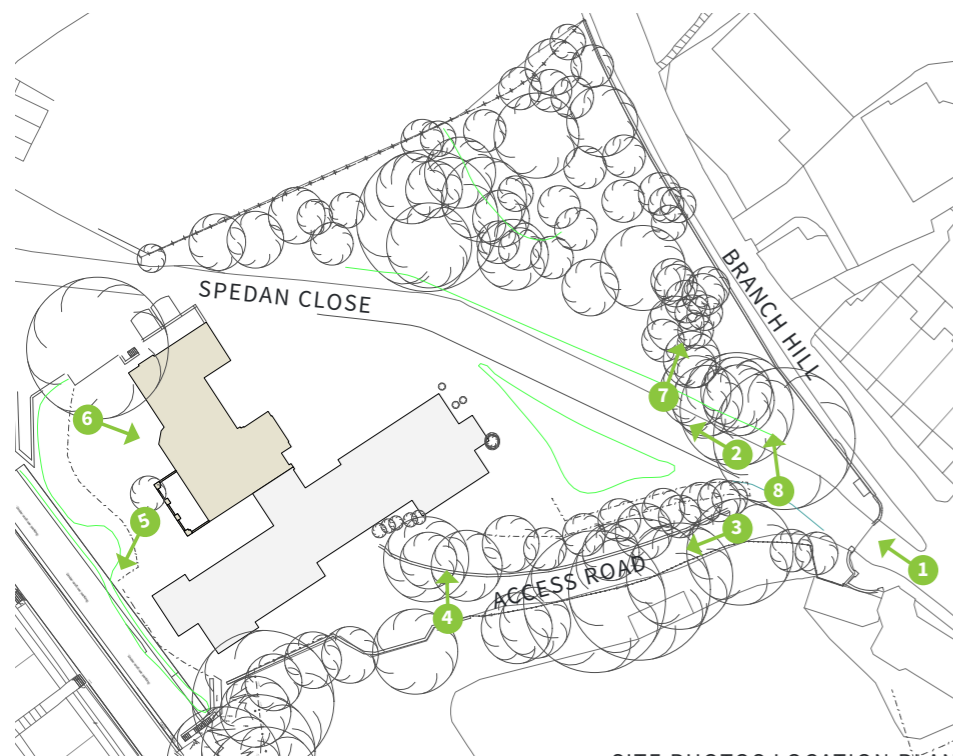
SITE RECORD PHOTOGRAPHY

The site is currently vacant but was previously used as a care home, closed in 2015. As a result, much of the existing open space is unmanaged with non-native / invasive plant species left to spread.

The main access into the site is via Spedan Close off of Branch Hill Road. Spedan Close is the primary route leading up to the former care home and wraps around Branch Hill House to the north joining Heysham Lane.

From the site entrance at Branch Hill the site appears to feel dense and enclosed with mature trees within the SINC lining Spedan Close. Moving into the site towards Branch Hill House the space opens up to a view of the built form including the 1960's extension. Grassy banks line Spedan Close and much of the green space is either unstimulating or inaccessible.

The access road along the south of the site is lined by mature trees both on and off site. A pedestrian route runs along this road and drops down steep steps through to the Spedan Close Estate.



SITE PHOTOS LOCATION PLAN



1 SPEDAN CLOSE ROAD ENTRANCE



2 SPEDAN CLOSE WITHIN SITE



3 ACCESS ROAD TO THE SOUTH



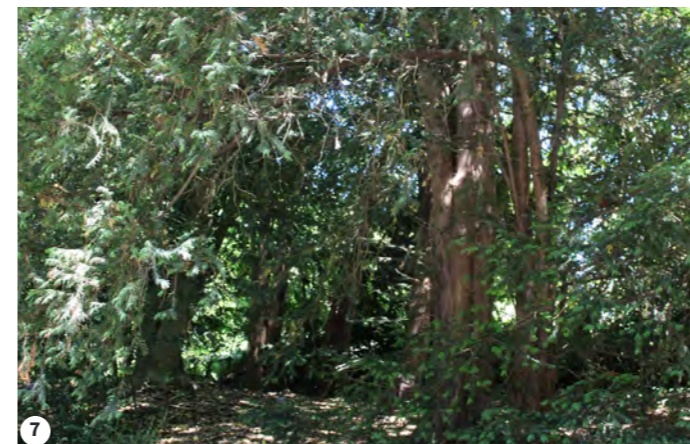
4 EXISTING RETAINING WALL TO SOUTH ACCESS ROAD



5 GARDENS OVERLOOKING SPEDAN ESTATE



6 GARDENS TO EDGE OF EXISTING BUILDING



7 WITHIN SITE OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINC)



8 TOWARDS SITE OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINC)

1.3 Site Analysis

CIRCULATION



1. Limited access to the SINC.
2. Spedan Close and Southern Access Road allow for both pedestrian and vehicular movement on one surface.
3. Designations for 6 car parking spaces, 1 ambulance parking space and 1 disabled parking space located in front of Branch Hill House.
4. Southern Access Road allows for access to the Spedan Estate

EXISTING VEGETATION



1. Much of the existing open space is poorly managed with non-native / invasive plant species left to spread.
2. The Site is surrounded by a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) Approximately 1/4 of the site is located within the SINC.
3. A tree to the north West of Branch Hill House has a Tree Protection Order placed upon it and the SINC designation protects the trees within it in planning.
4. Mature tree planting of varying quality and character.

SUN PATH AND ASPECT



1. A shady and enclosed character that opens up at the centre of the site.
2. Tree planting along the southern access road casts shade over the southern edge of the site.
3. Dense woodland in the SINC creates a shady environment.

1.4 Design Principles

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS



1. Retain shared surface nature of Spedan Close and the Access Road
2. Retain Access to Spedan Estate.
3. Clear and direct access to key building entrances.
4. Coherent desire lines from existing routes to create shorter routes for residents to building entrances.
5. Building entrances fully accessible for all user groups.
6. New woodland path to help engagement with the SINC.

GREENING THE ENVIRONMENT



1. Creating a landscape scheme with a verdant and green heart.
2. Create areas of open space which are important for physical exercise, relaxation and stress relief.
3. Manage the existing trees leaving those of high quality.
4. Where possible existing vegetation will be retained and maintained.
5. Thin out the dense canopy layer of the woodland for re-establishment of understorey structure.
6. New vegetation to include tree planting, ornamental planting, woodland understorey and amenity grass for visual amenity and biodiversity.

UTILISE SUNLIGHT



1. South facing terraces utilise sunlight with southern aspect
2. Social and community activities concentrated in the at the heart of the development
3. Within the courtyards, consideration with planting strategy to utilise and respond to sunnier and shadier spaces



2.1 The Landscape Masterplan

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

A primary aim of the proposals is to enhance and showcase the natural assets that already exist on site. The site itself is relatively enclosed by tree planting apart from along the western boundary where the site overlooks the Spedan Estate.

There is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) to the northern corner of the site which will be protected, conserved and enhanced by management. Whilst only a proportion of the SINC will be accessible via footpath, the area as a whole will provide visual amenity for residents and visitors and enhance the site's biodiversity and ecological value.

Trees will be retained as far as possible within the woodland and a large number of new diverse trees will be planted across the site to provide an impression of a building sitting within a wooded environment.

Communal spaces including the play space, SINC access and the arrival gardens give opportunities for social interactions between residents.

The development is community facing as the two roads on site provide access to the Spedan Estate. The proposals enhance this journey to the Estate and provide visual amenity in the planting and engagement with the play areas and seating.

- ① Arrival Gardens
- ② Spedan Close
- ③ Residential Play
- ④ Private Residential Gardens
- ⑤ South Terraces
- ⑥ The Woodland Trail & SINC
- ⑦ Feature Sculpture





3.1 Arrival Gardens



The Arrival Garden are inspired by British horticulturist and garden designer Gertrude Jekyll, providing a formal setting to Branch Hill House. Jekyll is widely acknowledged for her extensive design work, alone and in partnership with Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect. Topiary and ornamental plants provide an enclosed dwell space at the heart of the development. Ornamental features such as a sculpture and Lutyens benches add to the formal nature of the space and provides visual amenity for residents and a sense of arrival to the heart of the development.



3.2 Private Residential Gardens



VIEW TO THE SINC WOODLAND

3.3 Residential Play Area



A tactile space defined by formal planting with prescribed play space at the heart of the development for doorstep play (under 5 years). This area includes formal play and is located within the arrival gardens with soft play surfacing and passive surveillance from flats. Play elements are made of tactile and natural materials and will encourage movement and activity.

