



Land between  
Gondar  
House and  
South  
Mansions,  
Gondar  
Gardens,  
West  
Hampstead

## Desktop Ecological Appraisal Brief

September 2020

Ref: 20-7405



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Revision	-	
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## INDEX TO CLAUSES

QUALITY STANDARDS CONTROL .....	1
LIMITATIONS .....	2
INDEX TO CLAUSES.....	3
1 INTRODUCTION .....	4
2 RESULTS OF DESKTOP STUDY .....	4
3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ENHANCEMENTS.....	7

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Syntegra Group was commissioned by ANX Developments Limited, to undertake a desktop ecological appraisal in support of a planning application.

1.2. To meet the requirements of the Camden Council Planning Guidance, *'Surveys may be required on smaller developments where protected species or priority BAP species or habitat are likely to be present...'* and *'Developers are expected to carry out a protected species survey where desktop surveys show protected species in the vicinity; and suitable habitat to support them is present...'*

1.3. The proposed development is a new residential building with 4 units. The units will be placed within area to the rear of 1 Hillfield Road, with direct frontage to Gondar Gardens'.

1.4. Upon review of the information supplied by the agent and applicant, a desktop study was deemed appropriate.

1.5. The aims of this brief are to inform any potential constraints, advise on precautionary measures, and provide recommendations for the proposals to achieve net gain in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and Camden Local Plan.

## 2 RESULTS OF DESKTOP STUDY

2.1. The site is located with West Hampstead off Gondar Gardens, situated between South Mansions and Gondar House (Tikari Works, 2021).

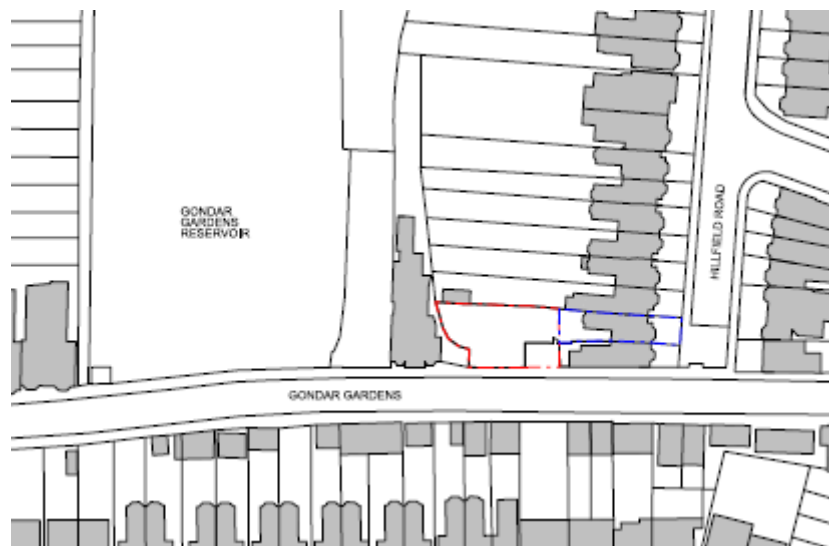


Figure 1: OS Map of the Site, Provided by Agent

2.2. The site is enclosed on the north, west, and south by a wooden panelled fence and on the eastern boundary, with 3 Hillfield Road, the boundary is a combination of brick wall and fencing. Photos provided to the ecologist, detail the site's habitats, and consist of areas of hard standing,

improved grassland, and garden typical with occasional trees. Photos 1-5, below, detail the site's habitats. The garden typical plants are mainly non-natives. The site show signs of regular management. The site has limited to negligible potential for use by reptiles, high potential for nesting birds, moderate potential for foraging and traversing bats, low to negligible potential for hedgehogs, and high potential for use by foraging invertebrates.



Photo 1: view of shared boundary with no 3, garden typical planting within site



Photo 2: high level view of the rear of the site





Photo 3: Example of boundary panel fencing within the boundaries of the site



Photo 4 and 5: Examples of well-maintained grounds onsite

2.3. The arboricultural report (Keen Consultants 2020) recommends removal of ‘low-quality trees within the rear of the site’. The report states that none of the trees on site are of exceptional merit that warrants their retention. One mature Lime tree has been recommended for retainment. The tree survey reports the following trees on site: Lime, Eucalyptus, Leylandii, Apple, and Elderberry. The report states that active birds’ nests were found within T1, a mature lime and within H1, a leylandii hedgerow. Recommendations of ivy clad removal are for the retained lime tree T2.

2.4. The Nature Conservation Officer has commented on the application informing the applicant that records of slow worms are located north of the site within the Reservoir. The Reservoir is a known Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), a non-statutory designated site. SINCs are recognised by The Greater London Authority and Councils as sites that are considered to hold

important features for wildlife and are categorised in the following ranking order: SINC of Metropolitan Importance, SINC of Borough Importance (I and II) and SINC of Local Importance.

### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ENHANCEMENTS

3.1 With the site bound by panel fencing, cement, and brick walls, on all elevations, it is unlikely that slow worms would be present on site due to restrictive movement onto the site itself. No further surveys are recommended, and it is considered low to negligible potential that established populations are within the proposed site. The grounds appear to have regular management. It is recommended that the panel fencing remains in place until works start. The grounds are recommended to have continued and regular management. The following precautionary measures are recommended: should any gaps, holes, lifts, or missing sections of the boundary panel fencing be found prior to works, the ecologist must be contacted immediately on how best to proceed.

3.2 As the site is within close proximity to a known SINC, it is recommended that pollution prevention measures from GOV.UK (2016) are in place during and post construction to prevent any potential indirect impacts from the site.

3.3 As evidence of nesting birds were noted during the tree survey, works to onsite vegetation are advised outside of the nest bird season (March to August inclusive), unless first checked and cleared by a suitably qualified ecologist.

3.4 As the site hosts, Buddleia, a category 3 species, under the London Invasive Species Initiative, removal of this species must be done in a responsible manner. The eradication of this species onsite would be an overall improvement as it will prevent future spread.

3.5 The design and access statement notes that the proposals will include a green roof. It is recommended that the green roof is biodiverse as sedum mats are of low ecological value and can often contain invasive stonecrop. The biodiverse green roof will offset the any loss of foraging habitats onsite and will provide future foraging grounds for local birds, bats, and invertebrates. Additional invertebrate boxes/towers erected within the green roof would provide additional shelter sites for local species such as solitary bees, lacewing, butterflies, and ladybirds. An example of a suitable box is noted below.



Insect tower best placed within the green roof in a sheltered location with access to sunlight



3.6. All future fencing along the northern boundary (shared with South Mansions) must incorporate hedgehog gates to foster future movement on and off site.

3.7. As the proposals will remove nesting sites by the loss of H1, the loss of these nesting sites must be compensated. It is recommended that the new building incorporates new nesting boxes into the design of the building walls. Installation of nest boxes especially suited for house sparrow, and black redstart are to be placed on eastern and south-eastern sides of new buildings away from windows, lights and 3-5 metres in height. Examples of boxes are noted below.

3.8. All future external lighting should be of a hooded design, direct, and of low light spill to avoid any direct or indirect impacts to local foraging and traversing bats.



Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box – 2 boxes, can be placed within close proximity to each other



WoodStone Build-in Open Nest Box – 4 boxes, redstart favour N and SE facing, these should be evenly spaced on the elevation

3.9. It is considered that any potential adverse impacts from the proposed development upon specific protected species will be able to be wholly mitigated through an ecologically lead design process. In addition, a sensitive landscape design will provide enhancements to the habitats on and adjacent to the site which in turn will benefit multiple species and biodiversity in general, in accordance with Section 15 of the NPPF (DfCLG, 2019), policy G6: Biodiversity and Access to Nature of The London Plan 2021, and policy A3 of The Camden Local Plan (2017). Proposed enhancements include:

- Nesting Boxes
- Wildlife-friendly planting scheme including biodiverse green roof

- Bug boxes/hotels
- Lighting plan that is direct and of low light spill

3.10. A summary of the recommend avoidance, mitigation, and enhancement is detailed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Potential Protected Species/Habitats on Site and Proposed Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement**

Species/Habitats	Impact	Avoidance/ Mitigation	Compensation
SINC located north of the site	Potential pollution damage during construction works.	Adherence of standard pollution prevention measures from GOV.UK; fuel kits to be kept on site and fuelling of all vehicles done off-site.	
Bats	Potential loss of foraging, and traversing grounds.	Minimal works to boundary trees wherever possible, lighting plan that is low lux, of hooded design, direct.	Planting of native and wildlife-friendly species, including green roofs.
Nesting birds	Potential loss of nesting sites within onsite vegetation.	Retention of trees where possible; works on site to be done outside nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) unless first checked by SQE; all vegetation clearance works to be supervised by an SQE.	Installation of nest boxes especially suited for house sparrow and black redstart placed on south-eastern, eastern and northern sides of new buildings; enhancement by new native trees (especially fruit bearing varieties) within site boundaries, use of biodiverse roof.
Local invertebrates	Potential loss of foraging sites, breeding site	Retention of boundary trees wherever possible	Use of native and wildlife planting on site, biodiverse green roofs, bug boxes/hotels placed within boundary vegetation and/or green roof
Reptiles and Hedgehogs	Limited potential shelter site	Retain fences up until works start, maintain management of site vegetation. Inform ecologist prior to works if any gaps, holes or missing panels in fencing.	Raised fencing or use of hedgehog gates, use of compost bins onsite, planting of boundary vegetation

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