

Site of Borough Grade I Importance for Nature Conservation

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| Site Reference: | CaBI09 (provisional) |
| Site Name: | Belsize Wood Local Nature Reserve |
| Summary: | A reserve of two halves, with better wildlife habitat in the southern half, which is open on Wednesdays and some Sundays. |
| Grid ref: | TQ 274 853 |
| Area (ha): | 0.7 |
| Borough(s): | Camden |
| Habitat(s): | Ancient Woodland, Pond/Lake, Scattered trees, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Tall herbs |
| Access: | Free public access (part of site) |
| Ownership: | London Borough of Camden |

Site Description:

This site is divided into three fenced off areas. The central section allows public access and is thus (because of trampling) poorly vegetated at ground level with ivy dominating. The northern area was once publicly accessible but this is no longer the case but is opened occasionally. The southern part is a statutory Local Nature Reserve.

Trees of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and common lime (*Tilia europaea*) are the most common canopy trees in the north and central areas with a large Swedish whitebeam (*Sorbus intermedia*) prominent in the central area. The understorey of the north is chiefly tall specimens of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with regenerating ash, field maple (*Acer campestre*) and wild cherry. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) dominates the ground flora in the northern area with herbs of greater willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) and bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*).

There is an amazing difference in the southern part of the reserve where access is limited. The area is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and relatively species rich with canopy trees of wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and an understorey of hazel (*Corylus avellana*), English elm (*Ulmus procera*) and dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*). The ground flora of tall herbs is diverse with shade-tolerant species such as wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), enchanter's nightshade, cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*), with species of more open habitat including greater stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), red campion (*Silene dioica*) and sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*). A small pond supports yellow iris (*Iris pseudoacorus*), and marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) on the margins, with the floating aquatic species lesser duckweed (*Lemna minor*) and water-starwort (*Callitriche* sp.).

The site regularly hosts numbers of birds such as great tit, blue tit, long-tailed tit, wren, robin, great spotted woodpecker, blackbird and the song thrush which has dramatically declined in London.

Site first notified: 01/01/1993 **Boundary last changed:** 01/01/1993

Citation last edited: 23/06/2014 **Mayor Agreed:**

Defunct: N

Last Updated: 24/01/2006

Summary of Changes

Site reference and name: CaBI09 Belsize Wood Local Nature Reserve

Status Change:

Proposed upgrade to Borough Grade I Status. Woodland has undergone canopy work to encourage ground flora to flourish. This is now occurring. The presence of two Ancient woodland indicator species is of particular note. Site is possibly one of the most important woodlands in LB Camden.

Boundary change:

None

Citation change:

Extensive re-writing of text in site description to incorporate the recent changes to access, habitats and species composition. Also update to summary and addition of habitats. Make clear that only the southern section is a designated Local Nature Reserve.

Other observations and recommendations:

None

