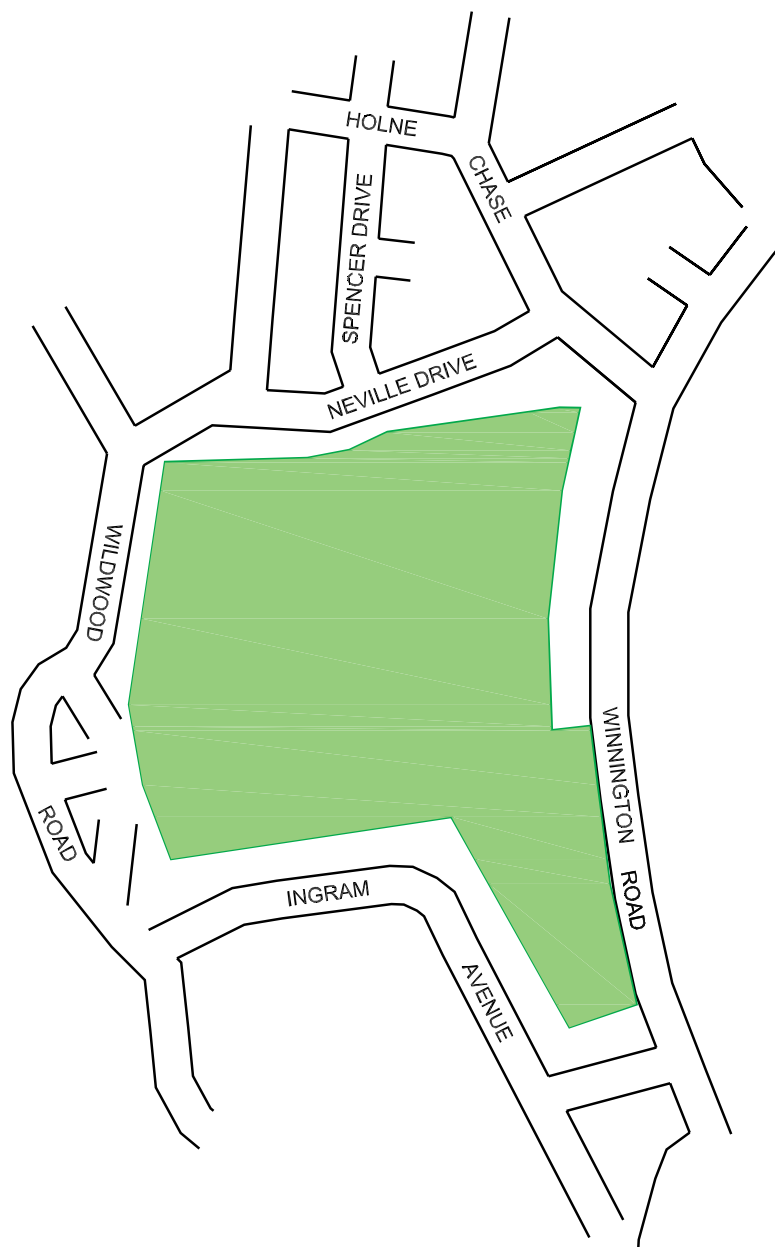


Hampstead Garden Suburb

Hampstead Golf Course – Area E

Character Appraisal



BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH

HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST

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Character appraisal

Section 1 Background historical and architectural information

1.1 Location and topography

The closest golf club to the centre of London, the course is classic parkland ([Photograph 1](#)) and was designed by Tom Dunn. Situated on the eastern side of the suburb, it lies between what was originally Turner's Wood and Bishop's Wood.



With some elevated greens and tees, which provide views down slopes to the north ([Photograph 2](#)) and west, it provides golf for a variety of levels of player.

1.2 History

Founded in 1893, Hampstead Golf Course is one of the few 9-hole golf courses in North London. A private member's club, it is open to both men and women. The land was leased from the Ecclesiastical Commission to George Metcalfe but, in 1894, 38 acres were leased to the Hampstead Golf Club, Mr Metcalfe retaining a lease on 71 acres including 21 acres on the adjoining Manor Farm. So the Golf Club was established and, by 1907, its area had risen to 44 acres and in 1930 the freehold was purchased. A further 50 acres had been offered to the Golf Club, by the Commission but, for reasons unknown, the offer was not taken up.

On the 2nd August 1929 a major fire at the Club House destroyed all the Club's historic records and all that was left "when the fire had been subdued were two brick chimney stacks and a mass of twisted iron and charred timbers.". The club immediately purchased two army surplus huts and paid out over £200 in compensation. While it is known that extra Members would have been needed to make the acquisition of land financially viable, there is no information as to whether new Members were recruited. Given the popularity of the sport, it would have been surprising if the Club had failed to attract players.

Following extensive negotiations with the Commission it was decided that the club would buy the freehold of the course, with an attached condition of an extra payment should it choose to give up the

land as a golf course. In order to raise the necessary funds, the committee proposed the creation of a Company. However, this arrangement was to give rise to tax problems, which despite appeals to the Inland Revenue were destined to fail.



However by 1958, the club had managed to pay off its mortgage and now owned its own land and buildings. By 1960, the general shape of the course had been determined and although minor adjustments were made to bunkers and rules, the following years were to be less eventful. The clubhouse was extended in 1985 (Photograph 3).

1.3 Status and management

The site is an area of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The consolidated London Plan makes it clear that MOL is afforded the same protection as Green Belt. The MOL designation is unique to London and protects strategically important open spaces within the built environment. Although MOL may vary in size and primary function in different parts of London, it should be of strategic significance, for example by serving a wide catchment area or drawing visitors from several boroughs. MOL is the same as the green belt in terms of protection from development and serves a similar purpose. It performs three valuable functions:

- protecting open space to provide a clear break in the urban fabric and contributing to the green character of London
- protecting open space to serve the needs of Londoners outside their local area
- protecting open space that contains a feature or landscape of national or regional significance.

MOL will be protected as a permanent feature and afforded the same level of protection as the green belt. Appropriate development should minimise any adverse impact on the open character of MOL through sensitive design and siting and be limited to small scale structures to support outdoor open space uses. The boundary of MOL should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and should be undertaken through the DPD process in consultation with the Mayor. Development that involves the loss of MOL in return for the creation of new open space elsewhere will not be considered appropriate.



The management and day-to-day running of the course is the responsibility of the Hampstead Golf Club. They are responsible for the maintenance of trees, fairways and greens ([Photograph 4](#)) as well as the buildings, including the clubhouse.

Although the club is a private members club, non-members are allowed to play the course, for a fee, on certain days, provided that they make an advance booking and there are no club activities going on. There is currently a membership of approximately 500, made up of 400 men and 100 women.

Section 2 Character of the area

The pattern of hedgerows and trees remain largely undisturbed although the Golf Club has more vestigial remains and more recent planting. While the layout of the Golf Course clearly follows the old field pattern to the west of the former Spaniard Farm, housing along Winnington Road has eaten into the layout. The Golf Course was laid out by Tom Dunn, one of the first designers of modern links, in an era when courses moved from seaside locations to more convenient sandy farm and heath land nearer to built up areas.

Currently, there are no listed or locally listed buildings. However, the club house is an attractive, timber framed, Neo-Tudor, two-storey building with a later extension to the west, adding character to the area and worthy of being locally listed. There are also several ancillary buildings housing the pro shop (Photograph 5) and members changing rooms.



The course itself is a haven of wildlife, contrasted with the many hardstanding frontages to houses along Winnington Road. The clubhouse sits comfortably in the south most corner, looking out over the 1st tee and the 9th green, and contributes to the rural setting of the area. Trees line the edges of the course (Photograph 6) and fairways are well kept and greens manicured.



7. Around the course are dotted small copses of trees (Photograph 7), which number among them oak and evoke traditional English woodland.



8.



9.

Poplars line the north-east side ([Photograph 8](#)) and looking down holes 8, 7 and 6, views are provided of distant suburbs of London ([Photograph 9](#)).



10.

Yet the impression, even in autumn, is of an army of trees, with little buildings dotted amongst them or peeping through the trees ([Photograph 10](#)). By virtue of its positioning in the suburb and the lack of general public access, the area is an oasis of tranquillity and calm, and the few sounds you can hear are the occasional thwack of a golf ball, or the roar of the mower as it goes about its daily chores.

