

Trust Times

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YOUR HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB TRUST NEWSLETTER

Challenges Facing Our Green Suburb

It's not just the built environment of Hampstead Garden Suburb that the Trust is here to protect.

Our green Suburb is under increasing threat from alterations to trees and landscaping which can fundamentally change the character of the area.

Mature trees

The Suburb is more than a hundred years old in places. Many of its trees are far older. They provide immense value to our green Suburb today and were instrumental in Raymond Unwin and Henrietta Barnett's initial plans for their new community. As well as their historical value, these trees are a vital part of the Suburb ecosystem, they provide food and habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, they are major carbon absorbers, and they provide local cooling and shade – an important consideration in our increasingly warm summers.

Houses and nearby mature trees can exist in a symbiotic equilibrium for many decades, but it is when sudden changes are made that problems can become apparent. The removal of mature trees – often done to prevent subsidence or other building movement – can lead to heave, a related but reverse issue which can itself lead to buildings suffering from further movement damage.

Careful management of the Suburb's green estate is therefore a crucial element in the preservation of the built environment. Consent to prune or remove trees must be obtained from the Trust, as well as from the London Borough of Barnet. We provide free arboricultural advice to residents, and site visits can be made by calling the Trust Office.

Where claims are made by insurance companies on behalf of property owners, we will always closely review any evidence provided and combine this with our detailed knowledge of the



Suburb's trees and green estate before coming to any decision to give or withhold consent for proposed works. This is particularly the case where there is a viable alternative to felling – a root barrier for example.

Artificial grass

We have written before about the Trust's position on artificial grass: it is not part of the ethos of Hampstead Garden Suburb, it is an environmental disaster, and we strongly discourage its use as a substitute for natural lawns.

Artificial grass has so many negative impacts on the environment, not just in terms of aesthetics but also the warming of the land and air directly above it, releasing toxins and microplastics into the atmosphere, and destroying the habitats of birds, animals and insects which together form a delicate eco-system which provides so much.

Following the banning last year by the Royal Horticultural Society of 'fake grass' at the Chelsea Flower Show, we are putting our full support behind the latest campaign from the Society of Garden Designers, RHS and Landscape Institute. To learn more about the campaign, including positive alternatives to artificial grass and the environmental damage it causes, visit www.sgd.org.uk/news/say_no_to_plastic_grass_plants.aspx

And it's not just us. The campaign against artificial grass in gardens continues to grow. Gardener's World presenter Monty Don recently wrote in a Times article: "Artificial grass is an aberration – there is not a good word to be said for it. If I were king, I would outlaw plastic grass. It's the opposite of gardening, it cuts us off from the natural world."

We are a **Garden** Suburb. Help us stay that way by keeping your lawn – and your garden – natural.

The 'Lost' Suburb

Unbuilt, modified, or destroyed – what can we learn from the Suburb we cannot see?

It might be easy to assume that somewhere like Hampstead Garden Suburb was built to one specific design, and built entirely as planned. But of course the reality is that what we see today is the result of a series of modified designs, and buildings which have come and gone.

One of the best ways to compare the Suburb as it was dreamt up, and the one which exists today, is to overlay maps on one another. Thankfully there are a number of landmarks which exist across multiple versions of these plans that help us align them, and the differences quickly reveal themselves.

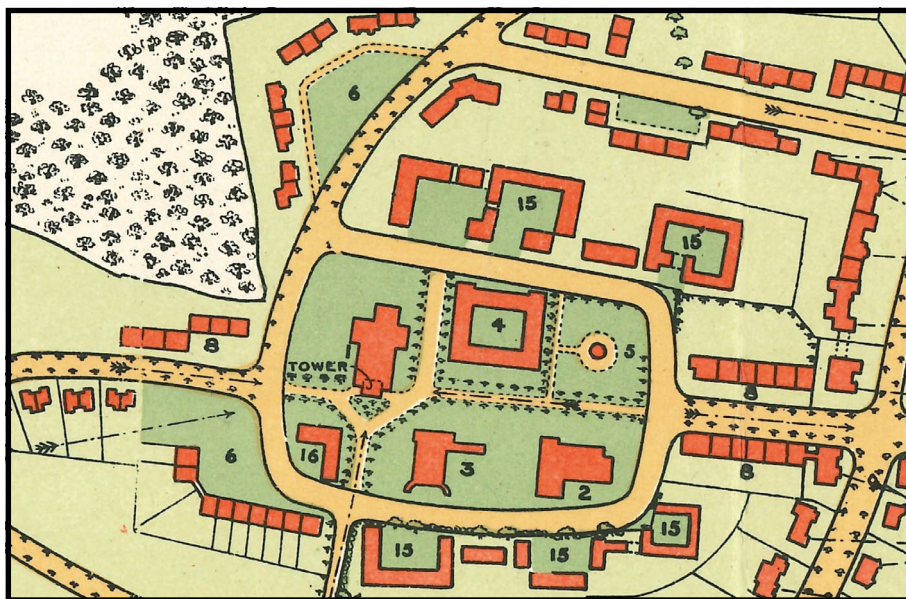
Raymond Unwin's 1905 plan for the 'Proposed Garden Suburb' is the first recognisable plan layout. We can see the Heath Extension, and a number of boundaries including Finchley Road, as well as Big Wood and Little Wood. Within these identifiable points is a road layout which is rather different to what we have today.

Central Square

The most obvious difference is Unwin's treatment of Central Square, the heart of the early Suburb: here we see a much softer layout, with curved roads quite in contrast to the later 1911 plan with its straighter roads and sharp corners.

There is also a legend on the 1905 plan which sets out a number of public buildings intended for this space: a church and chapel are familiar to us today, as is the Institute – which is what is now the school. But elsewhere we see plans for a public hall and bandstand, as well as a "library, picture gallery and museum". And in one corner, opposite a parade of shops, is an L-shaped building which was to be a Club – of which more later.

The Central Square of this 1905 plan has a very different feel to what ended up being built. One major reason was the appointment of Edwin Lutyens, who was familiar with the Trust's first chairmen, and who was brought on board to design the layout and principal buildings at this central area: the school and the two churches. Lutyens' more classical background brought a more formal arrangement, harder edges and straighter lines.



Unwin's original 1905 plan for a curvier Central Square layout

Even this later, more recognisable version includes unbuilt features: Lutyens intended for a long rectangular pair of reflecting pools between the two churches, features which would later be realised at the Rajpath at New Delhi.

The Orchard

The original scheme for The Orchard, built in 1909 and designed by Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, was for fifty seven flats for pensioners, each with a kitchenette, and access to shared bathrooms and toilets.

In his book on the Suburb, Dr. Mervyn Miller described the design as 'masterly'. It featured open balconies left plain and wooden to showcase their construction, multi-gabled roofs, and attractive wooden panels of weather boarding on the larger gables.

The Orchard remained tenanted throughout the first half of the 20th century, however, it sustained some bomb damage from the Blitz raids, which impacted a number of buildings around the Artisans Quarter, and the wider Suburb. With fixed rents and increasing maintenance costs, the development



The opening of The Orchard

© Suburb Archives

gradually fell into disrepair, and had to be demolished in the early 1970s.

A replacement facility was necessary, and a new development providing fifty-one flats was designed by Michael Darke reflecting the period in which it was built, rather than trying to mimic its predecessor, though it was at least up to date with modern standards of living for the tenants, the majority of whom were transferred from the old facility to the new one.

The Club House

A “club and institute” can be seen labelled on Unwin’s 1905 plan, but the Suburb’s Club House was built at Willifield Green rather than Central Square.

This large facility, with its landmark tower – a nod to the architecture of medieval German towns like Rothenburg which had inspired Raymond Unwin – had a variety of uses, and served as a social hub to the early residents. The tower, with a glazed gallery at the top, offered views over the expanding Suburb.

The building was detailed by Unwin’s assistant Charles Paget Wade, an imaginative and detailed draughtsman also responsible for work on The Great Wall, much of Asmunds Place, and a handful of other Suburb projects.

Wade’s fascinations went beyond that of architecture, and his love of intricate and beautiful objects led him to purchase a manor house at Snowhill in the Cotswolds, which is now a National Trust property.

The gardens at Snowhill contain a direct descendant of Wade’s work on the Suburb – not a full-size building, but an elaborate model village, and one which started its life in the back garden of 9 Temple Fortune Hill, where he rented a room for a decade.

The Suburb’s Club House offered many attractions across its variety of facilities and rooms: a gymnasium, smoking lounge, reading room and library, a dance hall and various meeting rooms that could be hired out. Many clubs and societies met, including the Horticultural Society, which still exists, and the Golders

Green Radio Society met here for the first time in January 1924.

During the First World War, the building was taken over as an auxiliary military hospital, one of thousands of such facilities around the country tasked with providing care to injured soldiers returning from the front. Facilities included an operating theatre and recreational spaces for less urgent care and recuperation.

The Second World War had a much more significant impact on the Club House: a German blitz raid in late September 1940 caused damage to a number of houses in the Artisans Quarter, but inflicted terminal damage on the Club House itself.

The building had to be demolished, and its replacement was not built until nearly

twenty years later when funds could be allocated and post-war austerity eased. This would be another Michael Darke building – and just like The Orchard, it is of its time, rather than attempting to be a like-for-like replacement.

At Willifield Green, the single storey Fellowship House now takes the place of the old Club House, alongside a free-standing house to its left, which also occupies the old site footprint, highlighting even further the difference in scale.

A surviving sibling of the Suburb’s Club House designed by George Lister Sutcliffe can be seen at nearby Brentham Garden Suburb in Ealing. Sutcliffe had also worked on Hampstead Garden Suburb, and the Brentham Club House bears a resemblance to our own.



© From the Raymond Lowe Collection, HGS Heritage

The Club House



© Suburb Archives

Bomb damaged Club House

Stop Press!

Proms Heritage Walks

This year’s Proms Heritage Walks will begin on Monday 26 June. This year Joe Mathieson leads the ‘Suburb Radicals’ walk, Simon Henderson will be talking about ‘Unwin’s Oaks’, and Paul Capewell explores ‘The Suburb on TV and in the Cinema’ Details can be found at www.promsatstjudes.org.uk/2023-walks

FAQs

What Doesn't The Trust Do?

We like to tell you about what the Trust does, but sometimes it's helpful to explain what we *don't* do.

For example, we often get calls about the condition of pavements around the Suburb. Aside from one or two private roads, the responsibility for the pavements is that of the London Borough of Barnet.

It's the same with the street trees you'll see lining the roads – Barnet are the people responsible for maintaining them, and any issues with one should be reported to Barnet. In fact, while the Trust must give consent for tree works in your garden within the Suburb, street trees are exempt from this consent, so we cannot get involved in Barnet's decisions to prune or even remove a street tree.

Issues with bin collections, potholes and street lighting – these are all things to talk to Barnet about. They're simply beyond the remit of the Trust, and although we can help point you in the right direction of someone to speak to, we won't be able to assist further.

We offer a lot of advice on the maintenance of trees and hedges, but one thing we can't do is tell you where a boundary is, or who is the owner of a particular tree. This is normally down to the affected parties to agree between themselves, or a surveyor may be able to help.

We don't charge for Trust Membership – it's free to all residents – but we do sometimes receive payments of £15 which were meant to go to the HGS Residents Association for their annual membership. We always try to refund or pass this on to the RA, but please take care when transferring money online to ensure it is sent to the correct recipient.

AGM: Save the Date!

This year's Trust AGM will be held on **Wednesday 20 September** at 8pm. Trust Members will be sent notice of this, along with the full agenda and the venue, in August. The AGM is an opportunity to hear from

the Trust on the past year, and to ask questions. If an election is triggered by a contested post for a place on Trust Council, this will also be the time to hear from candidates ahead of the postal ballot.

Membership

There's never a bad time to check whether or not you're a current Member of the Trust. Membership is open to all adult Suburb residents, regardless of property ownership. It's not automatic, though – paying your management charge, or buying a property, does not automatically make you a Trust Member. And neither does being a member of the HGS Residents Association.

To check your Trust Membership status, send us an email. And if you're not currently a member, you can join online today! It's free of charge, and ensures you will receive all the Trust's regular communications, as well as an invitation to our winter lecture.

Visit www.hgstrust.org/membership to become a member today.

And Finally...

We are looking for new volunteer members of the Grants & Amenities Committee to help us decide who should receive our annual grants. These grants go to organisations with charitable objectives and who act for the benefit of residents of the Suburb. Interested? Email Simon Henderson via mail@hgstrust.org

HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST

Residents are welcome to contact the Chief Executive, Simon Henderson, on any aspect of the Trust's work.

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