

Tasha Hunter
Ecology Policy and Planning Manager
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44 York Street
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3/10/2023

Dear Tasha,

Walk-over surveys of Hampton Court Green and York House Gardens

Thank-you for inviting Salix Ecology to carry out a walk-over survey of the above sites. The purpose of these surveys was to make an initial assessment of the potential of these sites to meet the qualifying criteria for designation as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. A brief description of each site follows below with recommendations for further survey.

Hampton Court Green

The habitats at this site were primarily closely mown amenity grassland with patches of degraded lowland dry acid grassland. Perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* were the most abundant grasses with occasional cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. The most frequently occurring forbs were cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, autumn hawkbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and white clover *Trifolium repens*.

There was a line of trees around much of the site boundary. To the south and east, mature horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* was the dominant species. The western boundary adjacent to the car park was formed of a mix of tree species including field maple *Acer campestre*, horse chestnut, wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, wild cherry *Prunus avium*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and plum *Prunus domestica*. A line of scrub was recorded along the northern boundary with Hampton Court School. Here both English elm *Ulmus procera* and wych elm were frequent. Young sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Evergreen Oak *Quercus ilex* were occasional.

Although patches of grassland had the characteristics of acid grassland, the habitat cannot be described as being priority habitat. As a result, the site is not currently recommended for consideration for SINC designation. No further surveys are recommended. However, with a change in management and use, there is potential for habitat enhancement.

York House Gardens

The gardens include areas of planted shrubbery, non-native broadleaved woodland, amenity grassland, hedgerows and scattered trees. There were a number of mature trees of note including a mature cedar of Lebanon *Cedrus libani* and giant sequoia *Sequoiadendron giganteum*. There were also a number of artificial ponds which supported little floating, emergent or marginal vegetation.

The bulk of the vegetation at the site comprised non-native ornamental species. The habitats have relatively low intrinsic value and there are no priority habitats or regional or local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats supported. However, the dense shrubbery has the potential to support breeding birds and the mature trees, bat roosts. The site therefore may be considered for designation as a Site of Local Importance. A more in-depth assessment is recommended including an evaluation of historical biological records.

Yours sincerely



Paul Losse
Owner Salix Ecology