

RedFrog Heritage and Conservation Review of 2023

Joint newsletter from the Chairs of:
Redington Froggnal Neighbourhood Forum, Cllr. Andrew Parkinson
Redington Froggnal Association, Kurt van den Eynden

As the year draws to a close, Redington Froggnal Association and Neighbourhood Forum would like to update residents on achievements and highlights over the past year or so.

Please note that, due to the holiday season, updated web links will be not be available until later in January. We'll circulate a note when they are ready.

Projects funded from Community Infrastructure Levies

1. Updated Redington Froggnal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

The new Redington Froggnal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan came into force at the end of 2022. It is frequently cited by Camden's planning officers and is proving of value in attempts to safeguard the character of the conservation area.

<https://www.redfrogassociation.org/conservation/>

2. Reinstatement of Branch Hill Pond

The reinstatement of Branch Hill Pond was completed during 2023.

Over summer water levels were being closely observed. The monitoring suggests that the pond is fed from groundwater, which is consistent with the pond as the source of the River Westbourne, rather than from rainwater.

Pond with raised water level and fencing on 3 November 2023



Credit: Richard Payne, Nature Conservation Officer, Hampstead Heath

Bat and bird boxes were put into the trees over the summer. A small deeper area was excavated in September, the blocked culvert beneath Branch Hill was cleared and construction of an extended brick overflow was completed. This has raised the height of the pond to become level with the surrounding grass to provide greater drought resilience, and it will almost double the surface area of the pond, making it appear much larger.

In November the surrounding bank and hillside were planted with over one thousand wildflower plugs and three thousand spring and summer flowering bulbs. Planting was undertaken during six Heath Hands volunteer sessions, contributing approximately one hundred and sixty hours of individual volunteer time to this project.

The results will be visible in spring 2024.

<https://www.redfrogassociation.org/branch-hill-pond-development/>

3. Cast iron heritage-style litter bins

Cast iron heritage-style litter bins were installed in October 2023. They are in replacement of the disposable black plastic bins and should provide many years of service.

Graffiti should be reported using the Love Clean Streets app: <https://lovecleanstreets.com/reports/home>

Replacement bin in Frognal



Other notable achievements

4. Greening of Croft Way and Bracknell Way

Planting gaps in these two woodland footpaths were attracting litter and fly tipping.

During April, the gaps were planted with native shrubs, climbers and wildflowers, aimed at providing habitat and food for birds and insects. Planting is in accordance with Redington Frognal Neighbourhood Plan guidance in Section 6.2 *Planting Guidance to Enhance Biodiversity and Conservation Area Character*.

Former litter-strewn gaps



Gaps planted and woodland ambience restored



5. Greening of the Cattle Trough Triangle at the junction of Platt's Lane and Hermitage Lane in Conjunction with LB Barnet

RedFrog began to develop ideas for greening the tarmac area at the junction of Platt's Lane, Rosecroft Avenue and Hermitage Lane in 2018. However, the proposal was not supported by Barnet Highways. Following the change of local government, the project has been taken forward by Cllr. Nigel Young and is now included in Barnet's programme of works for 2023-24.

6. Gated Car Parks in Redington Froggnal: appeal reference APP/X5210/D/21/3289001

Harm to the conservation area from gated car parks was reinforced by a planning appeal decision, which recognises low walls and hedges as front boundary treatments, with open entranceways to the front of the properties, as consistent with the prevailing character of the RedFrog area. By contrast, brick piers and railings cumulatively undermine the open character of the street scene and create a hostile public realm.

<https://www.redfrogassociation.org/planning/>

7. Article 4 Direction for Front Boundaries

Camden completed its consultation on an Article 4 direction to require planning permission for the removal of front garden boundaries. In September it began to prioritise work to adopt the direction, but adoption was still awaited at the end of 2023.

Disappointing news about the Landsec / Camden O2 development

RedFrog was a participant in the confederation of local groups opposing the Landsec / Camden proposal for a series of tightly packed tower blocks ranging in height from 12 to 15 storeys, with minimal green space. Steps taken by the confederation included commissioning an expert report by Tony Burton (the Examiner of the Redington Froggnal Neighbourhood Plan), advice from SAVE and legal advice from Harrison Grant Ring solicitors.

RedFrog Association additionally submitted a case for a call-in to the Planning Support Unit of the MHCLG. The RedFrog case was based on conflict with national policy; significant effects beyond the immediate locality and significant architectural and urban design issues. However, the Secretary of State decided not to call in application, leaving it to be determined by Camden and the Mayor of London.

In June 2023 the National Model Design Code was incorporated as Guidance into the new London Plan Guidance. Notwithstanding this, the Mayor of London agreed to permit Camden to grant consent.

<https://www.redfrogassociation.org/o2-site-development/>

Here are other initiatives planned for 2024

8. Lost River Westbourne trail

The Neighbourhood Forum first became interested in the area's hydrogeology in 2016, when it commissioned Arup to map the former underground rivers for the evidence base for Neighbourhood Plan policy UD 1.

The rivers were absorbed into the sewer system in the Victorian era and are no longer flowing freely through the area. The River Westbourne (also known as the Cannon) and its tributaries is the river which had flowed beneath the area, its source generally considered to have been from Branch Hill Pond.

The Forum plans to acknowledge this element of the area's heritage through a combination of cast bronze glyphs, lecterns and wooden bollards with QR codes linking to the Redington Frogal Association website and a walking trail.

The presence of springs and underground streams is due to the area's particular geology.

RedFrog geology presentation by Diana Clements, London Geodiversity Partnership:

<https://www.redfrogassociation.org/lost-river-westbourne/>

9. Cast iron heritage railings for Frogal Lane and Croft Way

Frogal Lane features some Victorian cast iron railings. These are rusting and falling into disrepair. They are due to be refurbished and repainted, while the galvanised steel railings will be replaced with cast iron railings to match the original.

10. Gardening wildlife booklets

It is hoped to circulate gardening wildlife booklets to all RedFrog addresses in spring 2024.