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Revision History

Issue number	Date	Authors	Revisions
01	June 2020	GiGL	Initial version
02	April 2021	GiGL (TD)	Revised and restructured. Additional typology information added in appendices
02.1	May 2021	GiGL (TD)	Minor corrections –typos, formatting

GiGL Open Space Survey Standards

Contents

Introduction

As the capital's environmental records centre GiGL mobilises, curates and shares data that underpin our knowledge of London's natural environment. GiGL core datasets cover London's open spaces, habitats, species, and SINCs, as well as urban greening features such as green roofs and street trees. GiGL also uses network analysis to generate datasets on Areas of Deficiency (AoD) to a range of environmental features with AoD in access to public open space and nature two of the products our partners receive regularly.

The GiGL open space dataset is the most comprehensive record of London's open spaces available. The dataset maintains information on the characteristics and boundaries of open land in Greater London including green spaces and other open spaces such as paved civic squares – but excluding domestic private gardens. The dataset indicates if spaces are protected under statutory designations and/or according to London Plan policy. It also includes information on a site's non-statutory and landscape designations, location, ownership, management, public accessibility, primary and other uses, features and facilities.

GiGL can provide support to organisations undertaking (or commissioning consultants to conduct) open space surveys. This document provides guidance to ensure that any open space data collected meets best practice standards for environmental data so that it can be integrated into the London datasets, thus maximising its value for informing policy and practice now and in the future. Guidance for other GiGL datasets is available on request. Please see GiGL Site Survey Guidance for more information about the resources we provide to support site surveys.
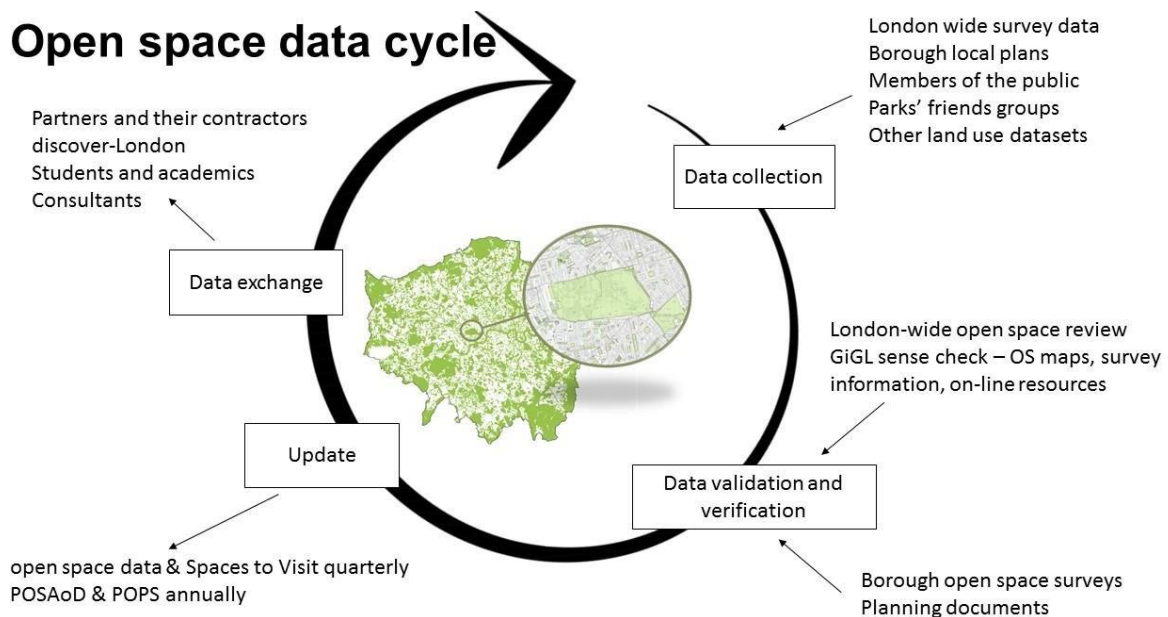

Figure 1. Open space data life cycle at GiGL.

Recommended survey standards

This document sets out the data collection and management standards that are recommended by GiGL for open space survey design and outputs. Observing these standards will help to ensure that the data you and your contractors collect meets best practice and will enable GiGL to incorporate local results into the London dataset. This will maximise the value of your investment, by ensuring the data are preserved in a format that supports efficient processing and valid analysis that will inform your current and future projects. Please notify surveyors prior to any survey of the available guidance and encourage them to follow the agreed data standards, as outlined in this document.

Please see GiGL Site Survey Guidance for best practice standards for recording wildlife observations, habitat data and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) data. GiGL also has a SINC specific data standard guide which is available on request. Any species data that is generated through the survey can also be shared with us to be included in the London wide species database.

Data content and format

File format

Boundaries of whole sites, mapped as GIS polygons with associated attributes (tab or shape file). Coordinate system: British National Grid [EPSG: 27700].

Sites

A 'site' is an open space which has a consistent name and access conditions across the whole of the space. Ideally, other attributes such as ownership should also be consistent, but these are not as fundamental as name and access.

Mixed use sites that are primarily freely accessible, but where some parts of the site might have restricted access (e.g. a public park with a tennis court that requires booking) should be mapped as a single freely accessible site [the tennis court should be listed as a facility]. Whereas a park with an adjoining recreation ground where the space is not accessible unless booked should be mapped as two separate sites.

Sites can be multi-part polygons in cases where a site consists of several separate parts.

Attributes

Available information, in particular site name, open space typology (i.e. land use category)and any designations. Open space typologies following the London Survey Method can beeasily incorporated into the London dataset.

Please follow the attributes format below. If you have been provided with GiGL shape or tab file templates you may use those to populate attributes.

More information on accepted attribute categories can be found in the Appendices as indicated in thetable below.

Table 1. Attribute table for open space data
The table below lists all the attributes that are contained within the GiGL open space data.
Shaded attributes show priority information that should be collected for all sites. Unshaded categories are optional, but informative if available.

Field	Description and typology standard where applicable	Example
SiteID	Unique identifying reference code for the site polygon. *Please always use the GiGL SiteID if provided*	OS_Wa_0025
SiteName	Name of site	Battersea Park
PPG17	Broad land use typology from historic Planning Policy 17 list, see Appendix I	Parks and Gardens(see Appendix I)
PrimaryUse	Primary land use typology from London Phase 1 Survey Method, see Appendix I	Park (see Appendix I)
OtherUses	Other land use types from London Phase 1Survey Method, see Appendix I	nature reserve; playing fields
OwnerType	Type of ownership, see Appendix II	Local Authority
Owner	Name of site owner	London Borough of Wandsworth
Manager	Name of site manager	
Access	Accessibility of the site to the general public, see Appendix III	Free
Restricted	Details of access restrictions, if applicable	e.g. only open Wednesdays
OpenTimes	Site open times, if applicable	e.g. Dawn till dusk, 9.00-2.00
SiteDesc	Short description of the site	A large, popular Victorian park, with a range of facilities and events.

Website	Web page of the site, if applicable	www.batterseapark.org
FriendsGrp	Name of any site Friends Groups	Friends of Battersea Park
SurveyName	Name of survey/project	Habitat Survey of LB Wandsworth
Contractor	Name of contractor organisation responsible for the mapped data	
SurveyDate	Date of survey	18/08/2019
StatDes	List of statutory site designations	e.g. SSSI, LNR, SPA, SAC, Ramsar
NonStatDes	List of non-statutory site designations. Priority information only if site is POS	e.g. SINC, POS (Metropolitan Park)
LandscDes	List of other landscape designations	e.g. MOL, Green Flag Award (2011, 2012), SINC
Features	List of facilities and features at the site, see Appendix IV	Car park; fishing; golf course; tennis courts; toilets; play area; bandstand
Borough	London borough(s) containing the site	Wandsworth
Postcode	Nearest postcode to the site	SW11 4NJ
AreaHa	Area of polygon given in hectares. Measured from GIS	80.6936
Easting	X coordinate of site centroid (central point), determined from GIS. British National Grid coordinate system	528,048
Northing	Y coordinate of site centroid (central point), determined from GIS. British National Grid coordinate system	177,197

Qualifier	Qualifier for Easting and Northing location	Centroid
GridRef	Ten-figure grid reference of parcel centre point, determined from GIS British National Grid coordinate system. Determined from GIS or https://gridreferencefinder.com	TQ2804877197

Access points

Please map access points, i.e. gates and entry points that are open to the public, as a GIS points' layer (Tab or shape file), with one GIS point per access point, and the site that each point gives access to indicated in their attributes. This is particularly important for designated Public Open Spaces, because the access points are needed to model Areas of Deficiency in access to Public Open Space. For open-sided sites, represent this by adding access points at 10m intervals along the open edges.

Metadata

Always provide appropriate metadata with the dataset, so that the dataset can be accurately interpreted and used. Metadata should include information on what each attribute (column or variable) means and the category or typology used.

The dataset provided should include the following metadata
- A name or code for each field (attribute)
- A description of each attribute
- The categories or typology used for each attribute

Note: if strictly using GiGL attributes and typologies as described in this document it is only necessary to indicate that these are the standards being used.

In addition, each dataset should be accompanied by a document ('read me' file) listing
- The date of the survey
- The scope of the survey e.g. borough wide, play spaces only, a specific area of the borough
- The organisation undertaking the survey
- A lead contact at the organisation who is able to answer questions about the surveydata if they arise
- The name and version number of the software package the data are provided in.

Mapping and data capture – general guidance

Open space site boundaries are mapped as GIS polygons with associated attributes. This section provides key pointers for ensuring high quality outputs that can be processed efficiently.

GIS boundaries

- Map projection: use British National Grid (EPSG: 27700).
- Digitally map one site per GIS feature (multi-part polygons are acceptable, where one site has several parts).
- Use consistent geometry and provide an indication of the geometry used (e.g. Cartesian or Spherical).
- In the case of partial survey, please provide a full site polygon including the revised boundaries for the surveyed part of the sites. Providing part of the polygon can lead to confusion about the existence of the rest of the site.
- If two sites share a boundary, the boundaries should not overlap and there should be no slivers or gaps between the polygons.
- Overlapping polygons should also be avoided in cases where site boundaries extend across rivers, wildlife corridors or other linear features that are mapped as separate sites.
- Use Ordnance Survey MasterMap as a base map for digitisation. If the site boundary follows an OS master map feature, such as a road, "snap" the boundaries to master map where applicable. All London Boroughs have access to OS MasterMap under a Public Sector Mapping Agreement, and can share relevant areas with contractors for specific projects, provided that the contractors sign an appropriate End Use Licence first. There is further information about this on the OS website, and the GiGL team can provide advice and support on OS licensing and data sharing.
- Be consistent with polygon formats.
- To avoid common mapping errors please check for:
  - spikes,
  - self-intersections,
  - unintended holes in polygons,
  - slivers,
  - inaccuracy caused by inconsistent formatting or projection when combining or translating datasets,
  - attribute rows with no map object and vice versa.

Attributes

- Be consistent with the attributes, categories and formatting (e.g. text, date formats, symbols, attribute definitions).
- Do not include carriage returns in attribute text.
- Avoid duplicates.
- Keep the site references that already exist. If using GiGL data ensure GiGL SiteIDs are preserved at all times. When adding a new site, do not re-use references from sites that no longer exist, use an identifiable format to denote new sites for example OS_TH_Z1 which follows the GiGL format (OS to denote an open space site, TH as the borough indicator for Tower Hamlets), but then adds Z1 to denote the first new site (the second site would be Z2 etc.).
- Indicate any measurement units used.
- When transferring data between parties, be careful not to lose any information (such as site references).

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Appendix I: Land Use Typologies

The main site typologies are based upon previous *Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation* categories, and the more detailed typologies on the Greater London Open Space and Habitat Survey specification.

PPG17	Space Typologies	Description
Parks and Gardens	**Park**	This refers to traditional public open spaces laid out formally for leisure and recreation. They usually include a mixture of lakes, ponds, lidos, woodland, flower beds, shrubs, ornamental trees, play spaces, formal and informal pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts, golf pitch & put, footpaths, bandstands, toilets, cafes and car parks -but not necessarily all of these. Parts of some parks might be managed as so-called natural areas. Examples of parks include the Royal Parks, municipal parks such as Battersea and Victoria, and wilder places such as Hampstead Heath which, although having distinctly informal qualities, are maintained predominantly for the same purpose, and include the usual swings and roundabouts and playing pitches. Many parks are enclosed by walls or railings, although some parks that began as common land may not be enclosed.
	Formal garden	This refers to spaces with well-defined boundaries that display high standards of horticulture with intricate and detailed landscaping. It includes the London squares common to central London, which are typically square areas of grass with some shrub borders, bounded byrailings, and surrounded by buildings. Examples include Belgrave Square and Soho Square.
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace	**Common**	This is a formal designation. They are publicly accessible open spaces with few if any 'facilities'. They will typically be mainly open rough grassland (not mown playing field or recreation ground type grass) and/or woodland. Commons are much less formal than parks or parkland. Examples include Wimbledon Common and Clapham Common.
	Country Parks	These are large areas set aside for informal countryside recreation near or within towns and cities. A list of sites that call themselves Country Parks is available on the Natural England website.
	Private woodland	This refers to woodland which is not accessible for recreational use, nor managed for nature conservation.
	Public woodland	This refers to woodland which is accessible for recreational use, but not managed for nature conservation.
	Nature reserve	This is a category reserved for an open space that is managed primarily for nature conservation.
Green Corridors	**River**	This should only be used for rivers and streams that do not form part of another land use, such as park, common or nature reserve.
	Canal	This implies an artificial waterway which is navigable. Docks are included in this category.

	Railway cutting and railway embankment	
	Disused railway trackbed	This is usually obvious, with some traces of its former use. Where disused trackbeds are specifically managed for nature conservation record as nature reserve.
	Road island/verge	
	Walking/cycling route	
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Recreation ground	This is an area of mown grass used primarily for informal, unorganised ball games and similar activities (including dog walking).Not to be confused with playing fields, below.
	Playing field	This is a site comprising playing pitches, usually for football, but alsofor rugby and hockey and, in the summer, for cricket. They often have changing rooms and pavilions. Almost always, playing fields consist only of pitches; but they will sometimes have other bits of open land around the edges. Pitches are often to be found in parks and commons, but the type here is concerned with sites that are exclusively or predominantly reserved for organised team sports.
	Golf course	
	Other recreational	This is used for sites that are used exclusively or predominantly for other organised sports such as bowls or tennis.
Amenity	Amenity green space	This is an expanse of grass used for information recreation. There will be few, if any, facilities.
	Village green	This is a formal designation. It is usually an expanse of grass in the centre of old villages, often used in the summer for cricket.
	Hospital	This includes the grounds of any clinic or health centre.
	Educational	This refers to school or college grounds and field study centres where school education is the primary function.
	Landscaping around premises	This includes communal amenity space around housing estates and community centres, and also landscaping around industrial premises.
	Reservoir	This includes covered reservoirs unless these form part of a park.
Children and Teenagers	Play space	This is a site set aside mainly for children. It will contain the usual paraphernalia of swings, slides and roundabouts.
	Adventure playground	This is a defined play area for children in a supervised environment. Boundaries and entrances are secure.
	Youth area	This is a defined area for teenagers including skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops and other more informal areas such as 'hanging out' areas and teenage shelters.
Allotments, Community gardens and	Allotments	
	Community garden	This includes an area that is generally managed and maintained by the local population as a garden and/or for food growing and are normally restricted in their access. For examples Phoenix Garden in Holborn.

		City farm	This includes areas that are generally managed and maintained as asmall farm by the local population. They contain livestock and planting and are normally restricted in their access. For example Freightliners Farm in Islington.
Cemeteries and Churchyards		**Cemetery/churchyard**	This includes burial grounds, graveyards, crematorium grounds and memorial gardens, and gardens or grounds of non-Christian places of worship.
Other Urban Fringe		**Equestrian centre**	This includes any land used for intensive horse keeping and riding, but not extensive horse grazing, which should be recorded as agriculture.
		Agriculture	This includes arable and grazing land, including horse grazing, and market gardening (such as vegetables, often grown under cloches, etc.).
		Nursery/horticulture	This does not include commercial retail nurseries (although these might legitimately form a part of a park or common, etc.). Horticulture includes areas of permanent glasshouses.
Civic Spaces		**Civic/market square**	This includes tarmac areas or paved open spaces, which may or maynot include planting. They do not necessarily have seats and may just be a plaza area. They often provide a setting for civic buildings and opportunities for open air markets, demonstrations and civic events. Examples include the area in front of the jubilee line station at Canary Wharf, and the plaza in front of Westminster Cathedral.
		Other hard surfaced areas	This includes other areas designed for pedestrians. These typically are used as 'sitting out' areas, where workers can enjoy the sun and eat their sandwiches, and as such usually have seats or benches. For example, Emma Cons Gardens opposite the Old Vic Theatre. This category excludes pedestrianised streets, car parks, servicing areas to buildings, and housing amenity space such as communal courtyards.
Other		**Sewage/water works**	This includes extensive sludge drying areas, filter beds, etc.
		Disused quarry/gravel pit	This may be water-filled, but is not necessarily so.
		Vacant land	This is land with no formal land use. This includes many "urban commons" which are used by people for informal recreation and which may be very valuable for nature conservation. If sites have formalised access and management for nature conservation, record as commons or nature reserves as appropriate.
		Land reclamation	This is land recently decontaminated or reclaimed from disuse, which has not yet been redeveloped.
		Other	This could be anything that does not fit any of the above categories, such as airfields.

Appendix II: Ownership attribute categories

Ownership categories are based on the Greater London Open Space and Habitat Survey specification.

Owner type	Additional information
Charity	
Education	All land owned by educational institutions should be recorded under this category, whether the institutions are public sector, private or church schools.
Electric Company	
Gas Company	
Government/Crown	Government/crown land includes land managed by the Royal Parks Agency and MOD land, as well as English Heritage, Countryside Commission and similar quangos.
Health	All land owned by health institutions should be recorded under this category whether owned by trusts or NHS.
Local Authority	Local authority ownership is any land owned by a borough council or the Corporation of London, except for education land. It should be noted that land owned by health and education institutions, usually playing fields, should be recorded in those boxes rather than in the local authority box, since it is often difficult to distinguish between hospitals which are run by the NHS and those which are run by trusts, or to know whether schools are in the public sector or not.
London Regional Transport	
Other Private	
Rail Company	
Religious	Religious ownership includes the Church Commissioners and all other religions and Christian denominations. Note which religion or denomination if possible. Note that while churchyards may be managed by a local authority, they will almost always be under church ownership; cemeteries, however, aremore likely to be in local authority or private ownership, although non-Christian cemeteries are often under religious ownership.
Voluntary Organisation	
Water Company	

Appendix III: Access attribute categories

Access typologies are based on Greater London Open Space and Habitat Survey specification, with descriptions developed by GiGL for increased clarity.

Note: for sites with restricted access always record restriction details e.g. 'closed on Sundays' or 'generally only accessible to key holders except for public open days'.

Category	Proposed definition
Free	Sites that are explicitly provided as spaces for use by all members of the public, every day, at all times of the year, for no fee. This includes: Mixed use sites that are primarily freely accessible, but where some parts of the site might have restricted access e.g. a tennis court in a public park that requires booking [note the tennis court would be listed as a facility] Sites that are closed overnight, but otherwise open all day all year around e.g. local authority parks A privately owned or managed site where there is a public right of way to the whole space e.g. a pay to play golf course where the public have access rights to the whole space even during play This does not include: Sites that are only open for part of a day Sites that are not open every day of the week. Sites that are open seasonally e.g. closed in winter
De facto	Sites that while not explicitly provided for public use, are nonetheless readily accessible and clearly used by the public. This does include: Amenity green spaces that do not contain any facilities, but are used by residents of surrounding residences for recreation e.g. kickabouts This does not include: Enclosed spaces that are accessed by a limited number of people e.g. where a few children squeeze in through a small hole in the fence. Sites that could theoretically be accessed, but are not 'clearly used by the public' e.g. road islands Note: Hospital grounds will default to 'de facto' access when no other access information is available
Restricted	Sites that are explicitly accessible, but not to all members of the public, for free, at all times. This does include: Restricted time: sites that only open for a part of the day, some days of the weak, or some seasons of the year Restricted groups: sites that are restricted to certain people according to age, or membership, or place of residence Restricted fee: sites that charge a fee for access, whether an entrance fee, or a membership charge Restricted space: sites that are only partially accessible, for example where there is public right of way to a part of the site, or a footpath running through it, or sites that are theoretically, but not practically, accessible, for example overgrown spaces, or islands in the middle of busy roads This does not include:

	Sites that are only closed overnight Sites that are not accessible to people with reduced mobility
None	Sites that are not accessible to the general public.Does include: Private land Sites restricted to residents that are not accessible or visible to the general public e.g. communal gardens that are only accessible through residents' houses (sites that are visible to the general public should be classified as *Restricted*). Note thistype of site would usually be classified as a private garden, and as such not included in the open space database, however in some cases these spaces havea formal land designation e.g. POS and are therefore included. - School grounds that can only be accessed by staff, pupils, and guardiansDoes not include: Sites that can be accessed by appointment, payment, or membership School grounds that allow public access at specific times, for example to sportspitches outside school hours, or farmers markets at the weekend

Appendix IV: POS and other landscape designations

Record information about any statutory and non-statutory designations applied to the site, most importantly if the site is designated as Public Open Space (POS).

Public Open Spaces and Areas of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Space

Local authorities designate POS with reference to the London Plan[1] and local circumstances in order to address requirements regarding access standards and to inform local development plans. GiGL collates these policy data for the whole of Greater London to create a single dataset to show where open space is protected for the public.

GiGL also uses data on POS to model Areas of Deficiency in access to public open space (POSAoD). The table below shows the London Plan recommendations for the maximum desirable distance which London residents should travel in order to access public open spaces. Areas outside of these maximum distances are calculated via Network Analysis using the Ordnance Survey's Integrated Transport Network, and mapped as POSAoD. By using this methodology GiGL is able to map areas of deficiency accurately based on actual walking distances along roads and paths from open space access points.

Public Open Spaces are categorised according to a site hierarchy documented in *The London Plan 2021* (Table 8.1).

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[1] Public Open Spaces are categorised according to a site hierarchy documented in The London Plan (Table 8.1) reproduced in Appendix IV below. For more information on POS and POSAoD see https://www.gigl.org.uk/open-spaces/public-open-space-categories/ and http://www.gigl.org.uk/knowles-knows-areas-of-deficiency/

Public Open Space Category	Description	Size guideline	Distances from homes
Regional Parks	Large areas, corridors or networks of open space, the majority of which will bepublicly accessible and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. Offer a combination of facilities and features that are unique within London, are readily accessible by public transportand are managed to meet best practice quality standards.	400 hectares	3.2 to 8 km
Metropolitan Parks	Large areas of open space that provide a similar range of benefits to Regional Parks and offer a combination of facilitiesat a sub-regional level, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.	60 hectares	3.2 km
District Parks	Large areas of open space that provide a landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups and informal recreation pursuits.	20 hectares	1.2 km
Local Parks andOpen Spaces	Providing for court games, children's play, sitting out areas and natureconservation areas.	2 hectares	400 m
Small Open Spaces	Gardens, sitting out areas, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.	Under 2hectares	Less than 400m
Pocket Parks	Small areas of open space that provide natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play and passive recreation that sometimes have seating and play equipment.	Under 0.4 hectares	Less than 400m
Linear Open Spaces	Open spaces and towpaths alongside the Thames, canals and other waterways; paths, disused railways; nature conservation areas; and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.	Variable	Wherever feasible

Other Landscape Designations

The table below provide a list of examples of landscape designations that might be appliedto open spaces in London. Note this list is not exhaustive, and other designations exist.

Designation	Acronym	Type	Sources
Local Nature Reserve	LNR	Statutory	Defra Magic Map
National Nature Reserve	NNR	Statutory	Defra Magic Map
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI	Statutory	Defra Magic Map
Special Protection Area	SPA	Statutory	Defra Magic Map
Special Area of Conservation	SAC	Statutory	Defra Magic Map
Ramsar		Statutory	Defra Magic Map
Green Belt		Non-statutory	Defra Magic Map
Community Forest		Non-statutory	Defra Magic Map
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation	SINC	Non-statutory	Defined by Borough Local Plans
Metropolitan Open Land	MOL	Landscape	Defined by Borough Local Plans
London Common/Village Green		Landscape	Register of Common Land and Village Greens managed by Borough
English Heritage Registered Park and Gardens		Landscape	Historic England List
Conservation Area		Landscape	GLA
Green Flag Award		Landscape	Green Flag Winners

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