

Annex 1

Clifton Park Grounds - Landscape and Nature Conservation Management Proposals.

In 1994, the NHS were granted an outline planning consent with regard to the re-development of the old Clifton Hospital site and entered into a Section 106 agreement. Since then, the site has been sold on and the development taken forward by a number of developers including Henry Boot, Persimmon's and Henry Lax Ltd. The individual development areas have now been sold but the remaining land; including the area to the south that comprised the old grounds and being the subject of this plan, is owned by the latter two companies, Henry Lax Ltd and Persimmon Homes. These also hold the management responsibility for the landscaped surroundings of the buildings.

The aim of this plan is to assess the progress with regard to the original Section 106, with particular reference to the implementation of management and landscape plans related to the grounds

Location

The site is on the northern side of York in the parish of Clifton Without on the western side of the A19 Shipton Rd.

The old Clifton Hospital site covers the grounds of the former Hospital on the southern side. It is set between the Shipton Rd to the east and the flood banks of the River Ouse and Clifton Ings to the west. To the north is the old hospital site, now offices and residential properties, and to the south is the York Rugby and Cricket club grounds and clubhouse.

In all the land covers 11.54 ha (28.5 acres).

Site Description

The area is predominantly species poor grassland divided into three blocks by an access road to Pavilion Cottages and the Cricket clubhouse and by an avenue of Scots Pine leading to the old sewage works. These divisions run north south. Within this grassland are set a number of semi-mature/mature trees, some being relicts of the old orchards often associated with old hospitals. Several of these old orchard trees have blown down in recent years, as have a number of trees.

This open setting with occasional trees gives the area a parkland character. This is enhanced by the mature/overmature trees and planting adjacent to the old hospital buildings on the northern side and the mature trees on the Shipton Rd. Within the western most grassland area is a remnant of old orchard adjacent to the conifer belt. Within the central block and alongside the track to the Cricket field are also a number of other very large old fruit trees, again part of an old orchard. This track is partly hedged on its western side with a row of small ornamental Apple, Cherry and Birch on its eastern side.

To the east (Shipton Rd) and west (Ouse flood banks), the land is bounded by species poor hawthorn hedges.

The grassland itself is old ridge and furrow on a southwest, northeast alignment. On the eastern field, the ridge and furrow is pronounced but on the central area it is much less prominent or hardly visible, suggesting that it has been ploughed out in the past.

There is no sign of ridge and furrow in the smaller western field although there are a number of irregularities within it. Also within it is a large balancing pond, built as part of the surface water drainage system for the hospital site. This pond has an inflow from the hospital but no outflow as it is simply a detention basin to allow water to percolate away naturally. It has naturally vegetated quite well and is surrounded by a

fairly extensive marshy area. Some enhancement planting of native wetland wildflower species was undertaken by City of York Council in 2008.

To the south of this is the old hospital sewage pumping station, now a rough derelict mound with an avenue of Lime trees on the eastern and south sides. This continues on from the Pine Avenue. Adjacent to this is a more recent brick pumping station.

A number of ditches have been excavated alongside the roads adjacent to the site to prevent encroachment by gypsies. The spoil from these ditches has been mounded to form a ditch and bank system. Finally there is a derelict area on which the sports changing rooms (demolished in 2004) had been sited, and the old bowling green/Tennis Courts adjacent to the Clifton Park retail site.

Site History

Clifton Hospital was closed in 1991 and outline consent was granted for redevelopment to its present uses in 1994. This consent included a Section 106 agreement. At the time the outline consent was concluded, the planning authority was Ryedale District Council, however, due to Government reorganization, the area was passed to City of York Council for determination of the detailed consents in 1996. This was granted in 1996. It was subsequently sold for development to a consortium made up of, amongst others, Persimmon's and Henry Lax Ltd. The consents granted were subject to the original Section 106 agreement and are binding on successors in title. The 106 included a number of conditions related to the land within this management plan area. These are outlined later.

Subsequent to this, the residential and office redevelopment was completed by 2002.

Within the development area, some landscaping has occurred. The rest of the land has not been developed. The southern block was kept as open land to retain the distinction between Rawcliffe and Clifton. This is the area that is the subject of this report. A small area to the north of the hospital, adjacent to the Shipton Rd., remains undeveloped.

Nature Conservation Interest

There is very little recorded information from within the site, although adjacent to it are the Rawcliffe Meadows and Clifton Ings. Both are of significant wildlife value and are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's).

Botanically the area is poor, for the most part being species poor improved grasslands. A brief species list is given in appendix 1. Likewise the hedges are species poor, being primarily Hawthorn with Ash and elder. The majority of trees within the site are relatively young although there are some exceptions to this. Overall, in 2005 there were some 131 trees within the site, excluding the perimeter trees. However, six trees have fallen or been removed since then. Of those, 47 (previously 52) are within the avenue (32 Scots Pine, 15 European Lime) leading up to the sewage pumping station and are mature, 15 are old but small orchard trees (4 Apple, 11 Plum) within the remnant orchard to the west of the avenue, 7 (previously 8) are large, old Pear trees and 3 are large apple trees. These latter are at various locations to the west of the Pavilion access road. These are again remnants of another orchard area. Of the remaining trees, 32 are mature trees set within the open grassland of the site, the rest are young or semi-mature trees. These are indicated in table 1.

Of all the mature trees present, only 5 have some dead wood present, although there are 4 dead Flowering Cherry and 1 dead Birch adjacent to the Pavilion access road.

Although largely species poor, the grasslands to the east of the Pavilion Cottages access road contain some species that are characteristic of older grasslands. These include Greater Burnet, Meadow Buttercup and Sorrel. Also, the ridge and furrow is largely intact. This suggests that they are probably derived from old grassland and have been improved through fertilizer application and management rather than from ploughing and reseeded, at least in the recent past. The grasslands to the west of the access road may also be derived in this way, although undoubtedly some ploughing has occurred at some time as the ridge and furrow is much less distinct. Here the grassland has only very limited numbers of indicative species such as Meadow Buttercup and, whilst still being of a coarser quality than the eastern sections of grassland, the extent of problem species such as False Oat Grass, Creeping thistle and Ragwort has been substantially reduced through the hay cropping and Ragwort control that has occurred over the last few years. On older maps, the northern part of this area is shown as playing field. The southern part is fenced off and fairly heavily grazed by gypsy horses.

The hedges and wooded areas also have a very limited flora, being relatively recent in origin. The hedges are well established and have been trimmed in the past but are becoming thin at the bottom and in need of thickening. At the northern end of the hedge by the old Chapel and adjacent to the flood bank, Ash has established. As for the woodlands, the ground flora is sparse and species poor. Within this hedge were several patches of Japanese Knotweed, a pernicious and persistent weed, however herbicide treatment undertaken by Persimmon's in recent years has more or less eradicated the problem.

Old orchards are often of significant wildlife interest, particularly for birds, bats etc because of the insects associated with them. Old trees are also of interest for invertebrates and the age range of trees within the site may be of some value, providing continuity of aging timber suitable for dead wood insects. There are no known records for invertebrates from this area.

There are though records for Bats. The site, with its remnant of old orchard trees, mature trees and grasslands close to the river is likely to be of some value as a feeding area and, although no bat roosts have been recorded, there are very likely to be roosts in some of the buildings or older trees around the old hospital itself.

Although fairly recent, the pond had vegetated fairly well, albeit with a relatively limited flora of Typha (Reedmace or Bullrush). The water level fluctuates to a degree so that the margins dry out in summer giving a typical inundation flora of Creeping buttercup, Creeping Bent and Juncus. Small fish, probably stickleback, are present. Some planting of aquatic species such as Phragmites, Kingcup, Marsh Woundwort, Ragged Robin, Purple Loosestrife, etc was undertaken in 2008 by City of York Council to enhance the site. No amphibian records are available although it is highly likely that at least Frog and Toad will occur. The dense Bullrush beds are important in winter for Reed Bunting, sometimes holding 50+ birds.

Archaeological Interest

A watching brief for any archaeological interest was maintained during the redevelopment of the site and little of archaeological significance was found. The Ridge and Furrow are some of the best preserved in the York area.

Recreational Interest

Although, the land is privately owned, it is crossed by a number of informal footpaths providing links to the Ouse riverside walk and cycleway and the area is generally used as an open space. No signs are present to contradict this and no section 31 order is yet extant on this area. These routes appear to be accepted and provision seems to have been made for access at one point in the western hedgerow onto the

flood bank although it is unknown who installed this. As such it is very well used by dog walkers and to provide access to the Ouse walk. One of these routes, the southernmost one adjacent to the cricket field, is the subject of a condition in the section 106 agreement and is proposed as a definitive footpath route. The work to establish this route has been undertaken although the formal creation is still awaited. Requests have also been made for this route to be upgraded to a cycle link to allow easier access to the Ouse cycleway and so to York's wider cycleway network.

Problems

When originally assessing the site in 2003, a number of problems were identified that needed to be addressed if the site was to be brought into an acceptable management condition. Some of these were considered a safety risk and required resolution as a matter of urgency.

The problems identified included: -

- i) Gypsy horse grazing.
- ii) Ragwort and thistle infestation.
- iii) The ditch and banks to prevent gypsy encampment are unsightly.
- iv) There was a large quantity of fly tipping, including tyres and asbestos etc, adjacent to the old sewage works site.
- v) Sewage was leaking from the old sewage station although this is supposed to have been decommissioned.
- vi) A number of metal tree guards have been allowed to grow into the tree stem.
- vii) Vandalism.
- viii) Hedges are in need of management.
- ix) Grassland needs management to control 'ii)' above as well as in its own right.
- x) Sticks and other debris in the grassland.
- xi) Fencing is in poor repair.
- xii) Excessive parking along Clifton Park Avenue.

The most urgent of these issues was the release of sewage from the old pumping station. This was resolved in 2007 when the old site was filled in and covered over. Since then no releases have occurred although there appears to have been a small release in July 2009 from a man hole cover in the field between the Cricket Club and Matron's Walk. This will need to be investigated but is probably due to flash flooding from thunderstorms.

Similarly, the site was cleared of flytipping, etc and is now regularly cleared to prevent build up of rubbish. In addition, the old tree guards were removed, fencing improved and the alignment of the proposed public right of way established.

Whilst not related to the management of the Clifton Hospital site itself, there has also been a recent and dramatic improvement (reduction) in parking along Clifton Park Avenue.

The majority of other issues were a matter of management and are covered below.

Present management

Previously (before 2005), no formal management had taken place for many years, although unofficially part of the land, notably the fenced field in the centre of the site between the access road and the old sewage works site, had been grazed by gypsy horses. The rest of the area had received no maintenance except the grassland was apparently cut in 2003 following concern over the ragwort and thistle problem.

Similarly, no hedgerow or tree management had been carried out for a number of years.

Since 2005, however, City of York Council has carried out management work on the site at the request of Persimmon's and such work was recharged to them.

This work has included:

- i) Ragwort control on an annual basis throughout the site by both chemical control and by pulling.
- ii) The regular cutting of the grass once per year.
- iii) Clearance of litter and flytipping from the site.

In addition, Persimmon's have undertaken some tree work and inspections to ensure trees are in a safe and reasonable condition. They have also undertaken some hedgerow management on the Cricket club access road (2007) although none has occurred on the boundary hedge adjacent to the flood bank.

This work relates to the draft management proposals produced by CYC in 2005 and is compatible with the implementation of the Section 106 agreement. Gypsy horse grazing continues but this is not incompatible with the aim of maintaining a rural parkland landscape provided numbers are not excessive and are well managed.

Appraisal

At the present time, the site provides an attractive area of open parkland contiguous with the adjacent Rawcliffe Meadows and Clifton Ings. It contains the development at the old hospital site and prevents its merger with the rest of the Clifton area to the south. It also prevents the narrowing of the Ouse corridor and provides an accessible open green space with a rural rather than formal character. As such it is akin to the Clifton Backies, Hob Moor and other Strays that are such an integral part of the character of York and its open space. These areas carry out an important and significant landscape and open space function, both in an historical and present day context and are of inestimable value when considering the enhanced quality of life they provide for local residents and for the city as a whole. They are also included in the Local Plan as 'green belt'

However, the site also suffers from a number of problems. Its location within an urban setting is both an asset in landscape terms and a problem in management terms. Past neglect had exacerbated this management problem, making its management, at least in the short term, more expensive.

Recreation

With regard to recreation, the area is well used on an informal basis, both in its own right and as a link to the wider footpath and cycleway network. At present the site is crossed by a number of informal grass paths that form a logical network to link the various local communities to the Clifton Ings path. Although used informally, there is no definitive right of access; the only official path is at present a permissive route that is awaiting formal creation as a right of way. This is the route along the southern boundary until it reaches the Pavilion access track. It then runs due west diagonally across the field to leave the site adjacent to the old sewage works. This aside, there may already be rights of way established because the area is not the subject of a section 31 order and routes have been used for many years.

It has been suggested that this route be upgraded to a cycleway and discussions have taken place with regard to this. The Ouse cycle route at the moment can be formally accessed by cycles only from the north and south and through a track to the north of the Clifton Hospital site, adjacent to the Rawcliffe Bar Park and Ride. There is also a very well used access that follows Clifton Park Rd and the access track to the sewage works. From there it takes a short cross field link to the flood bank boundary

where it leaves the site through the unofficial but well constructed access in the western boundary hedge. This route however is unofficial and there are no formal direct links either from the Shipton Rd or from the new residential development. Such a link would be of value, as evidenced by the use of the existing unofficial route. The suggestion to use the proposed footpath route is not considered to be the best one for a cycleway, particularly as the existing unofficial would require much less work to create. The main problem lies with the need to rise up onto the flood bank and restrict the number of breaches of the boundary hedge to a minimum.

At the present time, there are two main access points through western hedge, one at the southern tip of the site by the Pavilion Cottages, the other half way along the western boundary. This latter point is gated, the former one has a stile. Both have been maintained and improved although neither are formally designated. A further stile is set in the hedge adjacent to the old sewage works at the point where the permissive route leaves the site. To establish a link here would necessitate the removal of quite a wide section of hedge, the construction of two long ramps on either side of the flood bank and the construction of a very long section (nearly 500m) of surfaced cycleway through the existing grassland. This would not only be expensive but would create a third opening in the boundary, does not utilize the surfaced routes already present, is less accessible for residents of the Fylingdales Avenue development and would begin the formalisation of the area. Alternative routes would be to use Clifton Park Avenue and then either the Pavilion Cottages access road or the Pumping station access rd. Either of these would then make use of an existing access point onto the flood bank. One problem with this was the excessive parking along Clifton Park Avenue. This effectively restricted this to a single lane route, as well as causing damage to the verges. Recent improvements to the parking have resolved this issue.

Whichever route is considered appropriate, there would still be a need to construct a ramp up onto the bank and down onto the existing cycle route. No cutting into the bank would be permitted by the Environment Agency as this could affect the integrity of the structure as a flood barrier. The best location for this is the southern access point where the gradient on the Park side is much less acute and, because of the direction of the flood bank at this point, a graded route could be easily constructed down the bank on the Ings side to link straight onto the existing path. However, this would require the construction of approx. 140m of cycle track, whilst the other route utilizing the pumping station track and using the northern access point, would only require approx. 60m of surfaced path.

Either of the routes would be both feasible and acceptable but would require discussion with the landowner, as the proposal is not covered by any existing agreements. It would also require the consent of the Environment Agency as it affects a flood barrier.

There is the possibility of another route being established on the northern side of the Fylingdales Rd development. This runs through the woodland and links both to Shipton Rd and onto the flood bank at an easy gradient. This is present on the ground and is shown on old maps, although on a slightly different alignment. This has not though been further investigated as it is close to the existing cycle link and is outside the area of study. It could, however, be developed as a local link for the residential area, if this was thought appropriate and would form part of an attractive shorter circular walk if developed in conjunction with paths on the Clifton Park area. Ownership etc would though need to be investigated.

None of these proposals are, however, relevant at this time for this plan as their implementation would be as part of a wider CYC cycle strategy which has yet to be formalised.

With regard to other formal recreational uses, there is no particular obvious requirement. The need for formal play areas or additional playing fields has been mooted but its isolation from residential areas and the need to cross the Shipton Rd are not conducive for this and no formal requests have been made. There have been suggestions for the re-establishment of the bowls and tennis courts, however, there is no clear need for these and they would effectively need to be constructed as new facilities and whether this is viable is a moot point. There could be the possibility of establishing a BMX/skateboard type activity area but there does not appear to be any pressure for such a facility and it would require careful control and management if it were to be developed. As for the cycleway proposals, however, these are not relevant to the current management of the site.

With regard to informal recreation, the paths already provide an attractive and viable network and at the present time do not require any surfacing.

A small picnic area could be developed if it was considered to be necessary. This would be possible on the area proposed within the Section 106 to be handed over to the Council as Open Space. With limited landscaping this could be made into an attractive site even though it is separated from the river. Parking would though be restricted as vehicular access is limited, unless use of the parking area adjacent to the Pavilion Cottages could be negotiated. It would not though be intended for anything other than local use.

The mound of the sewage pumping station also makes an attractive focal point and could also provide a suitable location for a picnic area.

These areas are though isolated and a demand should be established before further consideration of this is made.

Nature Conservation

Although of limited wildlife value, the site is of some local interest and has considerable nature conservation potential. These open space areas can hold the key to the diversity of wildlife in an urban area. The grasslands, although species poor, are now being managed by haycropping to improve their botanical value, retaining and using the character of the ridge and furrow to increase the overall diversity of the area.

The informal grazing by gypsy ponies has, to some extent, been beneficial in helping maintain a grass sward and prevented it from becoming too rank. In places though, this has been detrimental, with some overgrazing creating a typical badly managed sward with the concomitant problems of thistle and Ragwort.

Ideally, these meadows are best managed, as now, by hay cropping, followed by some limited controlled aftermath grazing.

Because of the high number of dogs using the site, grazing is best done by cattle but could also be done by properly controlled horse grazing. This would though necessitate the division of the area by fencing. The costs involved are considerable and would need to be carefully considered and discussed with local residents as the perceived loss of access might also be considered unacceptable. The costs involved at the moment make this impractical but there may be opportunities in the future for grant aid and this will be investigated by CYC.

One of the problems with haycropping is also linked to its urban context. This is that the extensive use by people and dogs. Very often debris such as sticks thrown for dogs gets left in the grass and these can cause considerable damage to machinery. This has necessitated walking the fields several times a year to remove such debris.

With regard to the trees, these form a suitable habitat for many species and are particularly attractive for birds and for bats. Their invertebrate interest is unknown but may be of interest and they could provide suitable roost sites for bats. This element

could be enhanced through the provision of bat boxes etc and the retention of dead wood, where this is safe.

A programme of replacement would ensure that enough trees are always retained on the site despite any losses as trees age. It is important though that old trees are retained wherever possible. The avenue of Pine and Lime and the old orchard will need a similar programme if they are to be retained.

The old orchard trees are particularly interesting and potentially provide a valuable resource. Similarly the mature trees not only form a major element of the landscape but are also of considerable value for both birds and bats. However, some of the trees have suffered, notably the beech where the old metal guards had restricted the growth and grown into the stem. These were removed in 2006 but the trees have not thrived and some are deteriorating.

Likewise the pond, although well vegetated, could be enhanced to improve its value and attractiveness. Some work towards this has been carried out through planting of wildflower species and the botanical interest will be monitored. The re-establishment of some open water may also be of value and consideration will be given to some vegetation clearance, although not in the immediate future.

Landscape

The essential character of Clifton Park is its parkland setting. The maintenance of this, as for the nature conservation value, is necessary if this character is to be retained. Both of the main elements, the trees and the grassland, need to be managed on an annual basis. To date this management has not been fully addressed and as a result, the Clifton Park has suffered. This though is only a temporary setback and the robustness of the site is such that initiating a maintenance programme as occurred in 2005 has improved the site and will enable the Park to continue as a major landscape feature of the A19 corridor into York.

The majority of the trees in the Park are mature, with a reasonable age range. There do not appear to be any major defects in the trees within the Clifton Park area itself, except for the 4 constricted Beech. Whether these can be saved for the longer term will need to be assessed by a competent arboriculturalist but being central to the site are of great visual significance and replacement planting of large semi standards (these will either need to be very robust to withstand vandalism, or smaller but with secure park protectors around them) should be carried out to ensure that if these are lost in the medium term then others are present to take their place. These trees could be a mix of both ornamental and native species to provide both visual and nature conservation value.

With regard to the Pine avenue, although this no longer serves any particular function and is no longer used as a footpath to any great extent, it does have historical interest. The quality of the trees though is poor and as such there will be a need to monitor these and selectively fell if any become dangerous. A slight increase in spacing would retain the avenue aspect but open up the western area visually to the rest of the site.

The planting and hedgerow beside the Pavilion Cottages access track although relatively low does break up the continuity of the open space. The clearance of some of the dead trees and the reduction of the hedge height has however assisted with reducing this impact and no further action is at present thought necessary.

The Lime's on the other hand, adjacent to the old pumping station should be retained to maintain a copse and end to Matron's Walk. Some selective removal of dangerous trees has been carried out. This will require replacement planting carried out to create a copse.

Similarly, the mature trees on the fringe also need to be assessed and replacement planting to be put in place to ensure continuity of interest.

A particularly interesting feature of the site, both historically and visually, is the old Orchard on the western side. This is important to the local character of the site and as such should be maintained and enhanced. This would though require a programme of replacement planting and pruning and is a specialist proposal. As such it is outside the remit of the current management proposals but will be considered by the CYC Countryside Officer for further action.

With regard to the remnant orchard trees adjacent to the Pavilion access road. This is now so far gone that its reinstatement would essentially be creation and would interfere with the parkland character. Some of the suggested parkland trees though could though be fruit trees to mirror this aspect of the site history, thus enhancing both the parkland character and retaining the historical element of the orchards.

Summary

The Clifton Park is a significant rural landscape feature within Clifton Without and is of great value to the overall character of the area and to the quality of life it affords to residents.

In addition to its landscape quality, the land itself is of some interest for nature conservation. Although it does not contain any particularly uncommon flora and fauna or hold significant semi-natural habitat, it does provide an opportunity for some of the common and increasingly threatened species to remain within an urban context. There are though considerable opportunities to enhance this interest and increase its overall biodiversity value. In this instance both the landscape enhancement and nature conservation enhancement go hand in hand.

Its present open character makes it attractive to the travelling community, not only for grazing but also for pitching caravans. This has necessitated the construction of ditches and banks to prevent access.

Whilst the ditches may make it difficult for Gypsy vans to enter the site, this does not prevent the grazing of horses. Although often considered a problem, they have to some extent helped maintain the grassland character of the site. Grazing and management through normal means is likely to be difficult to achieve because of the location of the area. If it was felt necessary to remove the horses, this would best be achieved by removing all fencing making it necessary to have the animals tethered at all times. Any straying animals could then be impounded. Some grazing though is considered important in wildlife terms both to maintain the sward and provide manure, which is itself of value to many insects and thus as a food source to other animals. The absence of drugs often found in gypsy horses is of particular benefit.

In management terms, however, the essential need is for the grasscutting regime to be continued and for the development of a more formal aftermath grazing regime. In the interim, the gypsy horse grazing should be retained. With regard to the trees, they will continue to be monitored and any remedial H&S work carried out. A programme of replacement parkland trees planting will also be established. The refurbishment of the old orchard should be considered for future development in conjunction with the City of York Council.

Although the site is primarily of landscape and wildlife benefit, it is also an important local informal recreational resource. There are outstanding issues with regard to the formalisation of some of this interest through the implementation of the conditions of the Section 106 agreement. Other than this, however, no action is currently required.

Any consideration of the development of a cycle link will need considerable further discussion.

Potential of the site

In landscape terms, the character of the site as parkland is already established and does not need significant alteration. It could though be improved by additional tree planting both to increase tree density slightly and provide for future removal of unsafe trees. Some ornamental species within this planting would enhance the overall character of the parkland setting.

Within the context of the parkland, however, there are significant opportunities to enhance the nature conservation interest of the site both through sympathetic management and the active introduction of specific wildlife interest.

For the grassland, this would involve continuing the management of the majority of the area by hay cropping, followed by limited aftermath grazing. Some areas could be set aside for permanent grazing to allow stock to be present all year round. This would reduce the need for stock to be moved away. In addition some limited areas could be set aside each year to permit over wintering long grass suitable for invertebrate hibernation. Within the grassland some wildflower establishment could be added in to specific locations. This could be done either by seeding or by the planting of wildflower plugs.

For the trees, enhancement will be achieved by the additional planting and in particular through the planting primarily of native trees. However, certain species such as Oak and Willow are particularly valuable in diversity terms whilst certain other species, such as Sycamore and Lime, are particularly valuable in producing insect biomass. These are therefore, especially valuable as food source for insectivorous birds and bats. Such tree species would be favoured in the planting proposals for the Parkland.

Many of the existing trees though are not yet fully mature and have limited nesting sites, particularly for hole nesting species. Thus, bird boxes and owl boxes could be incorporated into some to provide this. Similarly the lack of extensive cavities will limit bat populations and the provision of bat boxes would probably be of value.

Whilst parkland is a valuable wildlife habitat, there are certain species, which have limited opportunities within it, notably some of the commoner bird species that prefer some low dense cover in which to nest. Here the hedgerows will be the primary interest and the management of these will be important. The management of the adjacent Lime copse would also benefit this interest. This could be thinned and underplanted with shrubs to encourage a more diverse structure.

In recreational terms there are few apparent requirements other than for informal access. These should remain along the existing line of site alignments maintained by cutting.

There are though opportunities for a number of other proposals should they be required, including a small picnic/barbecue area on the proposed open space area. This would be for local use involving only limited car parking. Should other uses be proposed, however, there are locations which may be suitable. These include the old changing room/bowls site which are suitable for more formal suggestions, the old pumping station site which may be suitable for limited parking and informal recreation and the proposed open space site, again for less formal use. Such matters will be considered on their merits as appropriate.

Draft Management Prescription

Aims

To maintain and enhance the parkland character of Clifton Park so as to optimise its value for nature conservation and informal recreation.

Objectives

- To extend and diversify the number of trees within the park.
- To enhance the quality of the parkland character.
- To diversify the wildlife interest of the Park.

Proposals

1. Manage grassland for hay. This will necessitate:
 - i) Walking the site to collect debris from the fields. - May
 - ii) Pull any Ragwort and thistle remaining in July
 - iii) Haycrop in mid/late July.
 - iv) Graze aftermath until September if practicable.
2. Establish an agreed grazing regime on specific parts of the Park in future.
3. Develop and implement a programme of replacement planting.
4. Maintain boundary fencing.
5. Create footpath along agreed line.

Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the area lies with the owner and, as a privately owned site, any proposals and management need to be inline with their aspirations. Such aspirations though will need to be within the framework of what is permissible and acceptable with regard to both national and local guidelines. Equally, any aspirations that either the Council or the local community have must be acceptable to the landowner and anything over and above what a landowner can be expected to carry out or provide will need to be negotiated and supported.

With regard to the work indicated in the Draft Management Prescription this is the responsibility of Persimmons and will be carried out on an annual basis.

Review

The proposals will be reviewed every three years although proposals may be brought forward at any time should the need and capacity arise.

The list below indicates work identified in 2005. Where this has been highlighted the work has been implemented.

Actions – Visual/recreational enhancement

1. **Repair kissing gate and adjacent fencing**
2. **Replace stile**
3. Repair wrought iron gate and **replace adjacent fencing**
4. **Replace stile with kissing gate**
5. **Install new kissing gate**
6. **Repair post and rail fence**
7. **Install kissing gate**
8. **Investigate leaks from old sewage works and repair –Persimmons**
9. Clean old sewage work site – **In Part**
10. **Remove flytipping**
11. **Remove old tree guards**
12. **Remove old fencing**
13. Tidy up ditch and banks

Actions – Vegetation Management

1. Lay hedge on phased basis over 9yrs
2. Gap up hedge (50m)
3. **Control Japanese Knotweed**
4. **Spot treat ragwort in spring. Go back in summer and pull remnants.**

5. Walk area in early spring to remove debris

- 6. Renovate/replant old orchard
- 7. Protect all trees with parkland guards
- 8. Plant new parkland trees

9. Manage existing trees

- 10. Mow footpaths

11. Hay crop

Actions – Nature Conservation Enhancement

12. Carry out aquatic planting.

- 13. Erect Owl, bird and bat boxes.
- 14. Carry out wildflower enrichment of grassland.

Actions – Site specific proposals

- 1. Develop a Tree planting scheme – **In Part**
- 2. Develop an orchard planting scheme
- 3. **Landscape reinstatement plan for old pumping station and Lime Avenue.**

Possible Grant Sources for future work

There may be a number of grant sources available for implementing various aspects of agreed enhancement work.

DEFRA Environmental Stewardship grants

Yorventure funding

Countryside Agency Community Greens

Ward Grants

City Council Nature Conservation grants

Highways Cycle improvement grant

Environment Agency Conservation Grants

English Nature conservation grants

This list is neither exhaustive nor researched and availability will be dependent on exactly what is proposed. It simply indicates what may be available.

Appendix 1

Vegetation Survey

1. Coarse rough grassland –

Dactylis glomerata -	Cocksfoot
Agrostis stolonifera -	Creeping bent
Arrhenatherum elatium-	Couch
Festuca species	
Cirsium arevense -	Creeping thistle
Rumex obtusifolia -	Broadleaved Dock
Ranunculus repens -	Creeping Buttercup
Trifolium arvense -	Clover

2. Improved species poor grassland

Senecio jacobea -	Ragwort
Ranunculus ficaria -	Celendine
Vicia sepium -	Bush vetch
Ranunculus pratense -	Meadow buttercup
Trifolium pratensis	Red Clover
Lathyrus pratense	Meadow vetch
Ranunculus repens -	Creeping Buttercup
Senecio jacobea -	Ragwort

Sanguisorba officinalis	Great Burnett
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse ear
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain
Rumex obtusifolia	Dock
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle
Alopecurus pratense -	Foxtail
Dactylis glomerata -	Cocksfoot
Agrostis species	
Festuca species	

3. Semi improved species poor grassland

Rumex acetosa -	Sorrell
Ranunculus pratense -	Meadow buttercup
Ranunculus repens -	Creeping Buttercup
Senecio jacobea -	Ragwort
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse ear
Vicia sativa	Common vetch
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain
Rumex obtusifolia	Dock
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle
Alopecurus pratense -	Foxtail
Dactylis glomerata -	Cocksfoot
Agrostis species	
Festuca species	

4 Semi improved species poor grassland

Rumex acetosa -	Sorrell
Rumex obtusifolia	Dock
Senecio jacobea -	Ragwort
Ranunculus pratense -	Meadow buttercup
Ranunculus ficaria -	Celandine
Ranunculus repens -	Creeping Buttercup
Taraxacum officinalis -	Dandelion
Plantago lanceolata -	Ribwort plantain
Stellaria graminea -	Lesser stitchwort
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley
Urtica dioica	Nettle
Veronica persica	Field Speedwell
Gallium aparine	Cleavers
Alopecurus pratense -	Foxtail
Dactylis glomerata	Cocksfoot
Agrostis species	
Festuca species	

5. Semi improved species poor grassland

Bellis perrenis	Daisy
Achelia millifolia	Yarrow

Ranunculus repens -	Creeping Buttercup
Senecio jacobea -	Ragwort
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain
Plantago major	
Rumex obtusifolia	Dock
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle
Alopercus pratense -	Foxtail
Dactylis glomerata -	Cocksfoot
Agrostis species	
Festuca species	

5. Pond

	Typha angustifolia -	Reedmace
	Veronica beccabunga -	Brooklime
	Filipendula ulmaria -	Meadowsweet
	Ranunculus scleratus	Celery lved buttercup
	Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup
	Lemna minor	Duckweed
	Alisima plantago-aquatica	Water plantain
	Juncus effusus	Soft rush
	Rumex obtusifolia	Dock
Planted in 2008	Phragmites	Reed
	Salicaria	Purple Loosestrife
		Marsh Marigold
		MarshWoundwort

Table 1

Tree	Size	Age	Number	Location
Scots Pine	Medium	Mature	32	Avenue
European Lime	Large	Mature	15	Avenue by Old Sewage Station.
Pear	Large	Mature	7	West of Pavilion Cottages access track.
Oak	Large	Mature	3	West of Pavilion Cottages access track.
Beech	Large	Mature	6	North and east boundaries
Walnut	Large	Mature	1	West side entrance to Pavilion Access track
Sycamore	Large	Mature	1	East side entrance to Pavilion Access track
Ash	Large	Mature	4	1 East of Pavilion access track, 3 on southern boundary.
Willow	Large	Mature	2	Old Sewage works site
Oak	Medium	Semi mature	4	3 East of Pavilion access track, 1 western hedge. 1 in poor condition.
Beech	Medium	Semi mature	5	East of Pavilion access track
Horse Chestnut	Medium	Semi mature	2	East of Pavilion access track
Birch	Medium	Semi mature	8	Access track and by old sewage works

Sycamore	Small	Semi mature	3	Western hedge
Apple	Small	Mature	7	West of Pavilion Cottages access track.
Plum	Small	Mature	11	Orchard, west of Pine avenue.
Willow	Small	Young	7	Around new pumping station
Beech	Small	Young	1	Eastern boundary
Ornamental Mallus/Prunus	Small	Mature	6	Pavilion access road
		TOTAL	131	
Dead			5	4 Flowering Cherry, 1 Birch