

Appendix III

Habitat characteristics and descriptions from the ecological site visit referred to in Section 3.1.5 and Figure 3.6 (replicated below) of this assessment. These habitat types were identified and categorised following the Fossitt (2000)¹ classification system for Ireland. Given the extent of the park, lack of habitat diversity / dominance of one habitat type (parkland / amenity grassland), these habitat types are given a brief description, and supported by the habitat map.

Habitat types within the project boundary

Scattered trees and parkland (WD5) / amenity grassland (GA2)

These two habitat types are the dominant type in the park, occurring throughout the site, and comprising at least half of all habitat types in the park. The blend into each other often within this large park, and thus are discussed together here. The grassland in the amenity grassland (GA2) or grassland of the parkland habitat type (WD5), is low diversity; where the dominant species are mostly blue grass (*Poa annua*) or perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), with abundant white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and occasional ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), dandelion (*Taraxacum vulgaria*). In some small patches creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) or self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) were abundant also, but the sward was still dominated by blue grass or perennial ryegrass. Scattered trees in the parkland areas consisted mainly of elm, oak, maple and ash, with horticultural species planted also. Most of these trees are semi-mature.

Broadleaf woodland (WD1)

There are substantial patches of broadleaf woodland in the park – although they are highly fragmented and isolated from each other. The dominant species in all patches of woodland are downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). There is occasional sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), lime (*Tilia cordata*), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and poplar (*Populus tremula*). The understory is dominant ivy (*Hedera helix*) in all woodland patches – indicating a lack of maintenance/grazing - with occasional hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) and dog wood (*Cornus sanguinea*).

Hedgerows (WL1)

There are hedgerows present in the site which vary in maturity, height and density. Hedgerow habitat is not as abundant as would be expected in such an expansive park. They are mostly present in the centre of the site (i.e., around the ponds and central buildings), and around the north west corner of the site. Species composition is mostly hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and willow (*Salix spp.*), with occasional elder (*Sambucus nigra*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) blackthorn, dog wood (*Cornus sanguinea*), and holly. Occasional mature trees such as ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) or sycamore/maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) also occur within the hedgerows of Corkagh Park. The understory of the hedgerows is composed of a dominance of ivy (*Hedera helix*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), with occasional hedge bind weed (*Calystegia sepium*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), willow herb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), thistles (*Asteraceae Spp.*), and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*).

Treelines (WL2)

The treeline habitats of Corkagh Park vary from sparsely planted young broadleaf lines, such as sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) and wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), mostly immature – to thicker treelines of semi-mature to mature ash, beech, alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), sycamore/maple, birch and occasional hawthorn and holly, with a dominance of ivy growing on trunks of many of the trees. There are stands of snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) in the understory of some treelines, but the majority of the vegetation in the understory is of low diversity characteristic of a lack of maintenance/grazing, dominant in common ivy (*Hedera helix*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*).

Other artificial lakes and ponds (FL8)

The ponds of Corkagh Park support a variety of bird life but are not noted to carry fish stocks. In terms of vegetation white water-lily was observed on all ponds, while common reed (*Phragmites australis*), club rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) and bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and occasional horsetail (*Equisetum*

¹ Fossitt, J.A., 2000. *A guide to habitats in Ireland*. Heritage.

fluviatile) are observed on the banks of all ponds. Habitat types bordering the ponds are mostly amenity grassland, but occasionally they are bordered also by hedgerows, treelines, or reed bed.

Depositing lowland river (FW2)

The Camac River section which passes through Corkagh shows signs of modification of its route, banks (i.e. reinforced with stone), and depth - over time. This was probably to facilitate historical water services to the locality/ alleviate flooding and develop feature ponds. Within the park the river is bordered by treelines and hedgerow habitats which afford it some level of protection from human interference and disturbance. The water is of moderate flow and supports communities of white-clawed crayfish. The river has also recorded of invasive species, notably Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

Drainage ditches (FW4)

Several actively flowing and maintained drainage ditches exist within the park boundary – constructed presumably to facilitate the supply to the freshwater ponds from the Camac River. Thus, the ditches present are connections between the Camac and freshwater ponds in various locations and taking various routes. They are typically 2m in depth, of slow to moderate flow, and are bordered by dominant cover of ivy, with occasional male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), hart's tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).

Reed and large sedge swamps (FS1)

There is just one area where this habitat type occurs; next to the northern artificial ponds. This habitat forming is probably a result of the previous existence of a pond in its location that had been drained, or its water sources interrupted or rerouted. Thus, several species characteristic of reed swamps have colonised the area, such as: common reed (*Phragmites australis*), club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*), fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), greater tussock-sedge (*Carex paniculata*), bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), and horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*).

Horticultural land (BC2)

There are three main horticultural areas of Corkagh Park: the allotments, consisting of bare soil and planted tubers and legumes; the walled garden, which contains remnants of historical walled gardens but is not maintained at present, is overgrown, and not open to the public; and the rose garden, which is in the centre of the park, managed and consists mainly of various rose breeds. Horticultural land in proportion to other habitat types of the park make up a small percentage and are overall low ecological value. However, due to it being neglected, the walled garden has potential to have a higher ecological value in its current state.

Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)

The site contains several types of artificial surface including car parks, playing courts, domestic housing, a leisure centre, park maintenance and historical estate buildings, running tracks, playgrounds, and typical park pathways. These built and artificial surfaces are dispersed throughout the park, and do but do not hold a significant proportion of the park.

Habitat types outside of the project boundary

Habitat types surrounding Corkagh Park were viewed at the landscape scale using satellite imagery due to the expanse and sub-urban context of the site. The majority of the habitat is built and artificial surfaces, consisting of housing developments and business parks, roadways and quarries. There are also several amenity habitat types such as baseball and cricket grounds, and golf courses. There are some patches of agricultural land in between the aforementioned habitat types, but these are in a minority. The Camac River (a lowland depositing river) enters the park from the southwest corner and exits the park from the northwest corner to continue towards to Liffey River. These surrounding habitats do not provide much direct ecological connectivity for Corkagh Park in terms of vegetation, but the Camac River is valuable for connectivity of the parks freshwater habitats, and onwards from the park to the River Liffey. The habitat types are typical of parks on the outskirts of Dublin City centre and this context, illustrates the importance of parks such as Corkagh as ecological refugia in a highly modified and developed landscape.



- Habitat types**
- BC2 - Horticultural land
 - BL3 - Buildings and artificial surfaces
 - FL8 - Other artificial lakes and ponds
 - GA2 - Amenity grassland (improved)
 - GS4 - Wet grassland
 - WD1 - (Mixed) broadleaved woodland
 - WD5 - Scattered trees and parkland
 - WL1 - Hedgerows
 - WL2 - Treelines
 - WS1 - Scrub



Spatial Reference
 Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse
 Mercator
 PCS: IRENET95 Irish Transverse
 Mercator
 GCS: GCS IRENET95
 Datum: IRENET95