



# The Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan September 2011

## Minister's Foreward

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The Phoenix Park is a historic landscape of international importance and one of the largest designed landscapes in any European city. It was originally established as a Royal deer park nearly 350 years ago and its historic continuity, together with its vast scale, urban setting and tranquillity, are the attributes that define it. The Park has over twenty-five kilometres of roads, seventeen kilometres of cycle lanes, twenty-seven kilometres of surfaced footpaths and eleven kilometres of perimeter wall. The Park caters for an average of nine million car journeys per year, the majority of which are merely passing through.

The Office of Public Works has been responsible for The Phoenix Park since 1860. It is Ireland's premier National Historic Park. It is the OPW's responsibility to protect and preserve the Park on behalf of all the people of Ireland.

This Conservation Management Plan confirms the Office of Public Works aims of conserving and enhancing the Park's unique environments with creative policies to encourage access and opportunities for enjoyment, education and healthy recreation.

I would like to thank the public for their valued inputs into the formulation of the plan. Likewise, the advice and suggestions from all public bodies has been invaluable. The expertise of the Conservation Management Plan Advisory Committee in providing the framework, guidance and formulation of the Plan has been immense. This plan supersedes the previous management plan, which has guided the management of The Phoenix Park since its publication in 1986.

I am confident that the management and staff of this great organisation through their dedication and ongoing commitment to public service will achieve the vision and strategic objectives guiding the conservation and management of The Phoenix Park for the 21st Century.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Brian Hayes T.D.**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM  
AND THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS**

September 2011

## Chairman's Preface

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Today, The Phoenix Park extends to over 700 hectares and represents a unique natural and cultural landscape that is both a historic park and a city park. It provides a setting for a range of activities and amenities and acts as a location for a number of important public institutions and residences.

The purpose of this Conservation Management Plan is to provide guidelines, together with a set of specific actions, for the management of The Phoenix Park for future generations while addressing the needs of the current generation within the context of a National Historic Park. The plan aims to balance the responsibilities to protect, conserve and enhance the unique landscape, environment, ecology, wildlife, built heritage and view of The Phoenix Park with active and creative policies to facilitate wider access and to increase opportunities for enjoyment, information, education and recreation for now and into the future.

Baseline scientific studies were commissioned on a wide range of subjects relating to the Park giving a whole new dimension to the plan. Research has shown that Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Man had long associations with the lands that now form The Phoenix Park. Fifty percent of all mammal species found in Ireland occur within the Park and over forty percent of all bird species are to be found in the Park. There are twenty-five different habitats and 6 different types of woodland. Almost all the semi-natural grassland in Dublin is found in The Phoenix Park. These studies give a comprehensive survey of the Park as it stands at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty first century and will serve management well in the years to come.

The plan is strategic in nature, setting out the vision for the Park with thirteen strategic objectives, for the longer-term (50 years) conservation and management of The Phoenix Park. It also identifies a range of more detailed specific objectives and actions - steps that can be taken in the short term - to secure the longer-term objectives. In particular, the plan identifies over one hundred specific actions to be undertaken over the next ten years.

The Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan is available on disc and may be downloaded from [www.phoenixpark.ie](http://www.phoenixpark.ie) and [www.opw.ie](http://www.opw.ie). I hope everyone will assist us in achieving the objectives set out in the plan and I would like to thank all those who assisted with its formulation and publication.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare McGrath'.

**CLARE MC GRATH**

**CHAIRMAN, OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS**

September 2011



**The Phoenix Park**

# The Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan

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Technical, editing and layout assistance provided by Brady Shipman Martin.

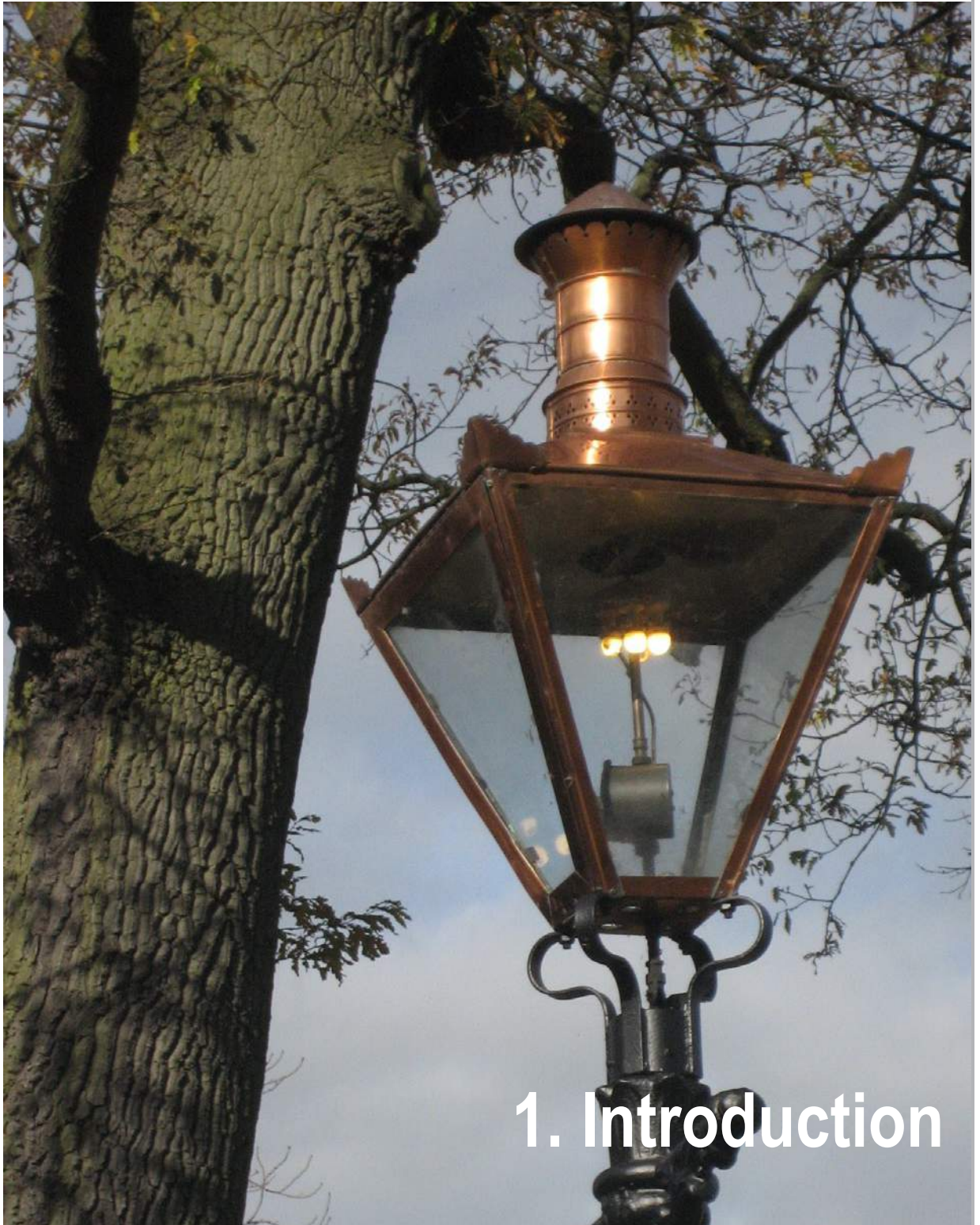
The Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan has been printed on chain of custody paper which means it is from sustainable sources and thus kind to the environment.

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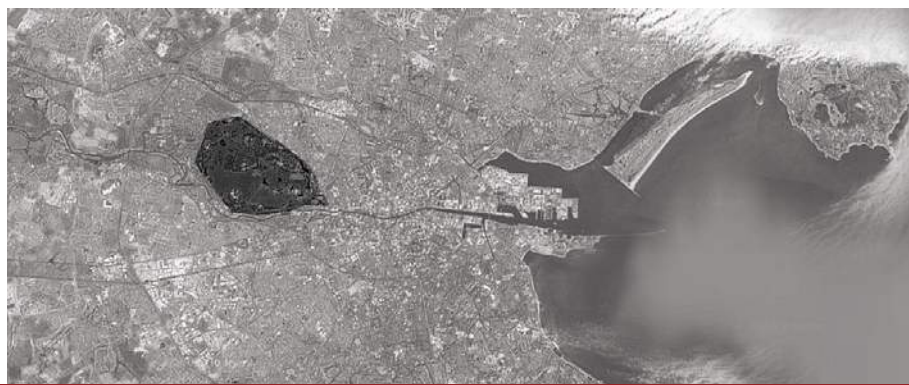




# 1



## 1. Introduction



## 1.1 Preamble

The Phoenix Park is a historic landscape of international importance and one of the largest designed landscapes in any European city. It was originally established as a Royal deer park in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was substantially re-modelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Decimus Burton and has largely maintained its character since that time.

Its historic continuity, together with its vast scale, urban setting and tranquillity, are the attributes that define The Phoenix Park and give it a unique appeal and integrity that compares favourably with other large historic city parks. Today the Park extends to over 700 hectares and represents a unique natural and cultural landscape that is both a historic park and a city park and which provides a setting for a range of activities and amenities and acts as a location for a number of important public institutions and residences. As a natural and built historic park, enclosed over 300 years ago by a demesne wall, The Phoenix Park is unique in Ireland. The location, size and use of The Phoenix Park can be compared to similar large urban parks in other cities, including Regent's Park in London, the Bois de Boulogne in Paris and Central Park in New York.

The Park is a complex place comprising many components that serve a variety of functions. It is used by large numbers of people and is also a heavily trafficked route between the centre of the city and outlying suburbs. In recent decades, the growth of Dublin has significantly altered the position and use of The Phoenix Park and affected its role and potential. Moreover, growing environmental challenges represent both an opportunity and a threat.

Management of such a vast and complex park, of great historical and cultural importance, must be both conservative and progressive. The essence of managing historic parks and gardens is continuity. That is, management must strive to maintain, for the benefit of the public, the valuable inheritance of the past, but must also address challenges and opportunities arising from the inevitability of change.

## 1.2 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Conservation Management Plan is to provide guidelines, together with a set of specific actions, for the management of The Phoenix Park for future generations while addressing the needs of the current generation within the context of a National Historic Park. This Conservation Management Plan supersedes and replaces The Phoenix Park Management Plan of 1986. It aims to balance the responsibility to protect, conserve and enhance the unique landscape, environment, ecology, wildlife, built heritage and views of The Phoenix Park with active and creative policies to facilitate wider access and to increase opportunities for enjoyment, information, education and recreation for now and into the future.

The Phoenix Park is renowned for its sense of tranquillity and indeed is considered to be 'natural' by most of the public. It is hoped that the plan will foster a better understanding of the designed landscape of the Park, where passing generations have laid down successive patterns of buildings, gardens, parkland, enclosures, avenues and plantations.

The Plan is strategic in nature, setting out the vision for the Park with broad objectives, for the longer-term (50 years) conservation and management of The Phoenix Park, covering all of the Park including its demesnes and enclosures. It also identifies a range of more detailed objectives and actions – steps that can be taken in the short-term – to secure the longer-term objectives. In particular, the Plan identifies specific actions to be undertaken over the next ten years.



The Plan thus provides a framework for the sustainable management of The Phoenix Park, including:

- Fostering a better understanding of the Park, including its unique designed landscape value.
- Consulting with stakeholders and members of the public about the conservation of The Phoenix Park.
- Guiding present and future managers and ensuring consistent management practices over time by providing a basis for detailed actions.
- Providing priorities for managing multiple uses and potentially conflicting interests within the Park.

The Conservation Management Plan is based on a comprehensive range of baseline studies, including Birds, Bats, Fish, Mammals, Trees, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, Water Quality, Recreation, Planning Context Study, Transportation (listed in Appendix 1) and analysis, together with a series of facilitated consultations with stakeholders (listed in Appendix 2) and submissions received from interested parties and the public (listed in Appendix 3).

Preparation of the Plan was guided by the **Conservation Management Plan Advisory Committee**, comprising a team of experts in relevant disciplines. The members of the Committee are listed in Appendix 4. In preparing the Plan, the physical and administrative context of The Phoenix Park itself, as well as external factors affecting the Park, have been taken into account.

The appendices contain a wide range of additional information, including technical data. The Conservation Management Plan and the baseline studies that are referred to in it are all available in PDF format on the OPW websites [www.opw.ie](http://www.opw.ie) and [www.phoenixpark.ie](http://www.phoenixpark.ie)

### 1.3 1986 Phoenix Park Management Plan

The 1986 Phoenix Park Management Plan was the first Management Plan published by the OPW for historic parks and gardens under its control. That plan set down the management objectives together with steps to achieve those objectives, while preserving the Park for future generations.

### 1.4 Improvements Implemented Since the 1986 Plan

Since the publication of the 1986 Plan, a large number of improvements have taken place to enhance and conserve the Park, including:

#### Built Heritage

- The gate piers at the Parkgate Street entrance, which were dismantled for the 1932 Eucharistic Congress, have been re-erected along with the adjoining link walls.
- The Castleknock, Ashtown, North Circular Road, Cabra, White's Gate and Chapelizod vehicular and pedestrian entrance gates and railings have been repaired and reinstated, and protective bollards and road calming measures are ongoing. The programme of gate and railing restoration will continue.
- The Park's gas lighting has been refurbished and its density increased, particularly along Chesterfield Avenue, and to highlight Park junctions. Additional lights have been provided as an integral part of the upgrading of the main entrance to Áras an Uachtaráin.



- The Phoenix Column has been relocated to its 1840s focal point position on Chesterfield Avenue and encircled with a floodlit cobbled roundabout.
- Considerable lengths of Victorian handrail have been dismantled and re-erected in their original location along Chesterfield Avenue.
- An architectural survey of all gate and internal Park lodges has been undertaken, in order to establish necessary restoration and conservation works on these protected structures and to prepare a works programme for the coming years. Many of the Park lodges have already been substantially improved and a number of adjoining gardens reduced to their original size. The lodges restored include:
  - Bessboro Lodge West, Ashtown Gate;
  - Buggy's Gate Lodge at back avenue entrance to Áras an Uachtaráin;
  - Concrete Lodge, North Road;
  - Nunciature Gate Lodge at entrance to Phoenix Park Visitor Centre;
  - Islandbridge Gate Lodge;
  - Laundry Lodge at back entrance to Áras an Uachtaráin.
- Considerable repairs and improvements have been undertaken in the area of drainage, especially in relation to the restoration of sunken fences around the various demesnes and enclosures. The water supply network has been upgraded and repaired, with the installation of water meters to assist with water conservation.
- An important precedent was set when Dublin Corporation ceded circa 50 square metres to the Park as a result of a road-widening project on Blackhorse Avenue. As part of this project the opportunity was taken to remove long lengths of iron railing which replaced the boundary wall as part of an earlier roads scheme in the 1940s and to rebuild the wall with small additions of Burton-designed railings on either side of the original turnstile.
- A survey of the boundary wall was undertaken to identify areas requiring repair and report on its overall stability. A programme of repairs is ongoing.
- Improvement works to Áras an Uachtaráin and other historic complexes were subsequently carried out.

## Landscape Improvements and Natural Heritage

- An estimated 10,000 broadleaf deciduous trees have been planted and considerable tree surgery has been undertaken to prolong existing mature trees and to promote safety. Woodland restoration has been an integral part of the work programme.
- Considerable landscape works have been undertaken in the People's Gardens including the provision of a new playground in 1990, which was renewed in 2004. The lakes have been dredged and their original boundaries defined. New flowerbeds and plantings have also been formed. Considerable research work has been undertaken on the history of the gardens but much remains to be accomplished.
- Significant upgrading and improved maintenance of playing fields has taken place. In addition a considerable amount of unsightly boundary fencing has been removed.



- The maintenance of Park grasslands has proved most successful both from a managerial and an aesthetic viewpoint. It encourages the growth of wild flowers as well as conserving a species-rich pasture. Trinity College Dublin (TCD) has undertaken research into the Park's old pastureland.
- The Park's fallow deer herd is considered one of Europe's healthiest and is the subject of considerable research by the Zoology Department, University College Dublin (UCD). A programme of management is in place to maximize the overall wellbeing of the herd.
- Surveys of the natural environment including flora, fauna and habitat mapping have been undertaken in the preparation of a biodiversity plan for the Park.

## Visitor Services and Education

- The establishment of The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, incorporating Ashtown Castle and the Victorian Walled Kitchen Garden with associated café, coach and car parking. A guide service, interpretative material and exhibitions on the Park have also been developed. A new universal access playground opened in 2008 has proved a huge success for the younger visitors to the Park.
- A self-guiding heritage trail has been established along Chesterfield Avenue and around the perimeter of the Park.
- The Victorian Kiosk at the Band Hollow has been restored and successfully functions as tea rooms.
- An artist in residence facility has been provided at the Knockmaroon Information Centre.
- An imaginative educational programme of activities and guided tours including open days are now operating for children and adult visitors including local residents.
- A range of publications has been developed, including an abbreviated version of The Phoenix Park byelaws translated into 16 languages to meet the needs of the wider community.



# 1

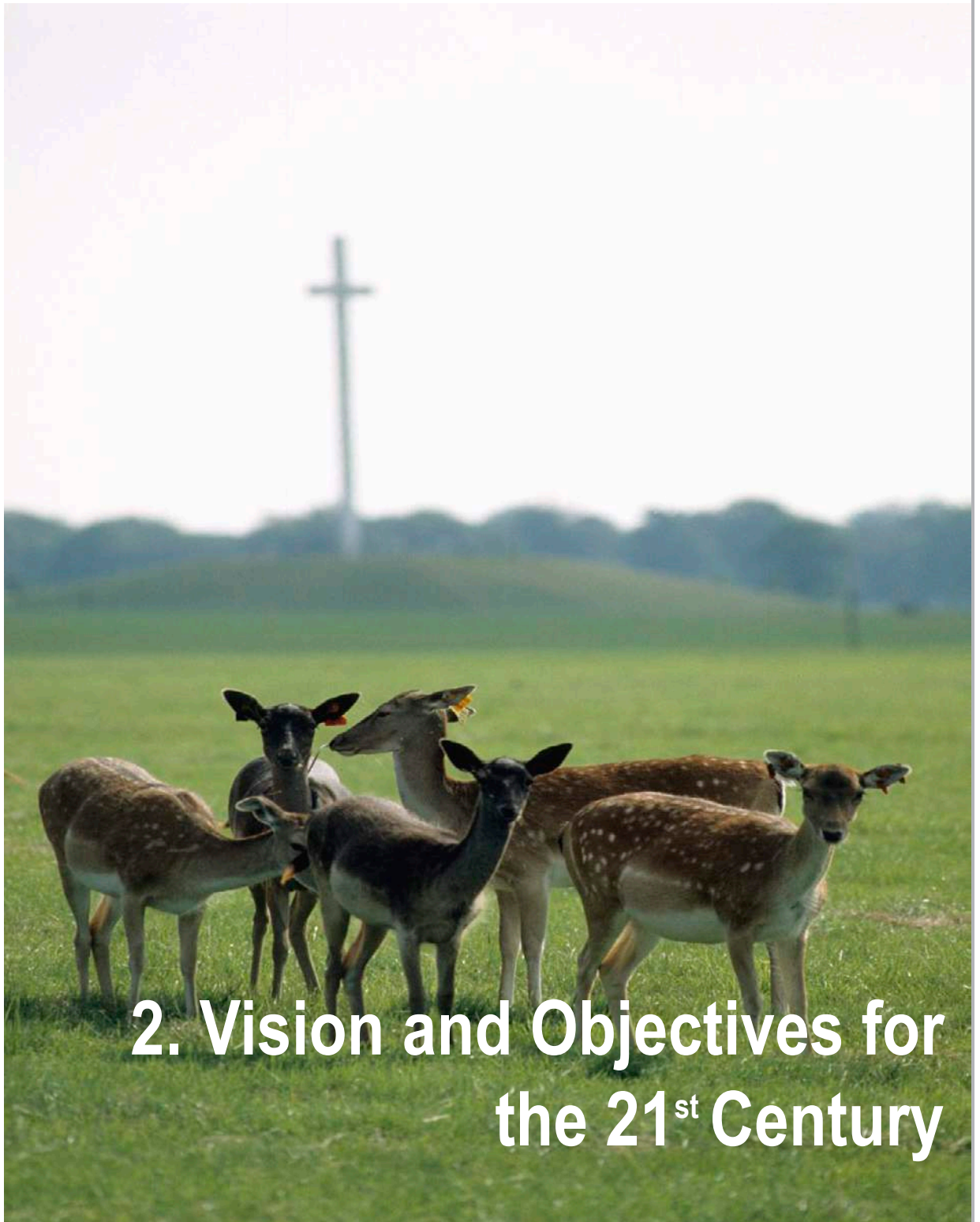


## Transportation

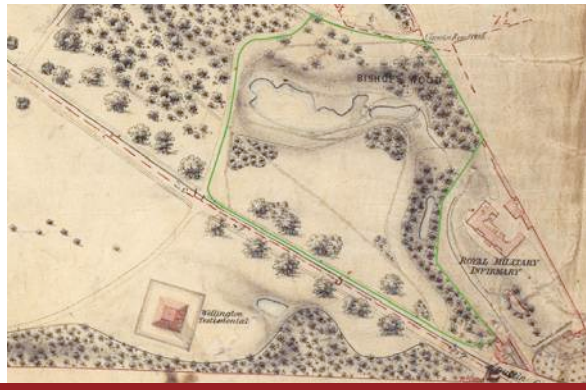
- Ten internal Park roads and a vehicular gate have been closed to through traffic, which has resulted in a significant reduction in road accidents and a more tranquil and safer Park environment.
- A new roundabout has been established at the Gough junction at the lower end of the Park where the Gough statue once stood. A further temporary roundabout, to be replaced with a permanent structure, has been installed at Mountjoy Cross. The permanent roundabout is now in place.
- A new one way system has been introduced at Chapelizod Gate (entry only) and Islandbridge Gate (exit only), which has improved safety.
- Two new major tree lined pedestrian paths have been unobtrusively laid out along Chesterfield Avenue. Other new footpaths have been provided along the Ordnance Survey Road via Upper Glen Road to Chapelizod and the entrance road to Farmleigh. A considerable number of footpaths have also been upgraded. All vehicle roadways now have adjacent footpaths.
- Three new car parks have been provided at strategic locations around the Park and some existing car parks upgraded where necessary. These service both general visitors and those participating in sport and other specific Park activities.
- A network of cycle trails has been provided to cater for both leisure and commuter cycling. A bike hire service now operates at the Parkgate Street entrance.
- A public transport Shuttle Bus service was introduced to improve access to all areas of the Park for employees and the general public in 2008. This service operated from close to Heuston Station and served all the major attractions in the Park, and included an on-board commentary. This service is now suspended.



# 2



## 2. Vision and Objectives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



## 2.1 Vision

The long-term vision for The Phoenix Park combines its protection, conservation and where appropriate, restoration as an important and unique historic landscape with the facilitation of appropriate access and use through the accommodation of change in a planned, rational manner.

The achievement of this vision requires a greater awareness and appreciation of the key qualities of the Park, especially its historic landscape character, together with the provision of adequate resources. Given the international significance of The Phoenix Park, the goal should be to realise this vision at a standard comparable to the best in the world.

For the residents of Dublin, and visitors to the city, The Phoenix Park will continue to be an extremely valuable recreational amenity and an area of tranquillity close to a busy city centre, as well as an educational and research resource. The Park will therefore continue to be a place where people go to experience heritage, culture and nature.

The Park's importance for nature, including flora, fauna and biodiversity will also be conserved, as will the significance of its built heritage.

In the light of the above, the overall **Vision** of this Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan is:

***“To protect and conserve the historic landscape character of The Phoenix Park and its archaeological, architectural and natural heritage whilst facilitating visitor access, education and interpretation, facilitating the sustainable use of the Park’s resources for recreation and other appropriate activities, encouraging research and maintaining its sense of peace and tranquillity.”***

Given the over-riding importance of the historic, designed landscape of The Phoenix Park, priority must be accorded to the conservation of the landscape, even where this restricts or limits the achievement of other objectives relating to the Park.

The attainment of this overall objective will require:

- The formulation of clear policies that can be reasonably implemented.
- An appropriate legislative base.
- Structures to ensure the effective participation of all stakeholders and organisations.
- The provision of adequate management resources.





## 2.2 Strategic Objectives

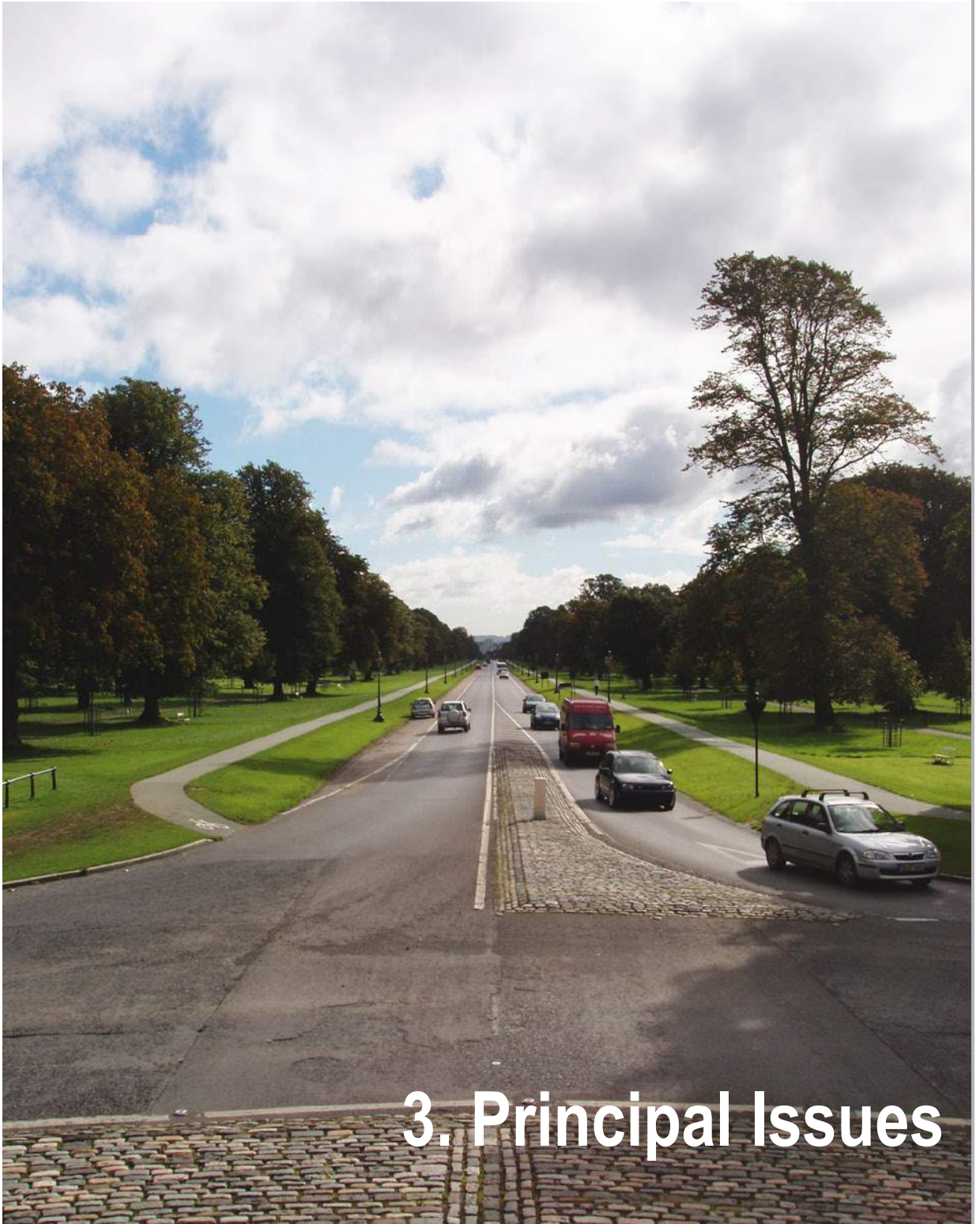
The following are the strategic objectives guiding the conservation and management of The Phoenix Park for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The policies and measures outlined in the later chapters of the Conservation Management Plan expand on these objectives and detail how they will be achieved, with particular regard to the coming five to ten year period.

1. To protect and conserve the historic landscape character of The Phoenix Park.
2. To protect the historic setting and conserve the archaeological and architectural heritage of The Phoenix Park.
3. To conserve The Phoenix Park's natural plant and animal species along with their habitats while improving biodiversity.
4. To preserve the peace and tranquillity of The Phoenix Park.
5. To promote an increased understanding and acceptance of the landscape, architectural, cultural, archaeological and biodiversity importance of The Phoenix Park, its extent and significance.
6. To seek appropriate international and national designation status and to seek the enforcement of existing legislative controls.
7. To facilitate an appropriate mix of recreational use and public appreciation that maximises visitor enjoyment and protects the landscape and infrastructure of The Phoenix Park.
8. To manage the levels of traffic within The Phoenix Park and reduce through traffic.
9. To facilitate public access and sustainable use of The Phoenix Park's resources.
10. To respect the established patterns of recreational use in The Phoenix Park.
11. To facilitate the use of The Phoenix Park as an educational and research resource and to promote appropriate interpretation.
12. To liaise and consult with interested and relevant parties and organizations in the achievement of the above objectives.
13. To secure the necessary resources to implement the policies and actions of this Conservation Management Plan.





# 3



## 3. Principal Issues



### 3.1 Significance

The Phoenix Park is one of the best-known and most attractive features of the Dublin area and is of national and international importance. The significance of the Park arises from a combination of attributes that include its

- scale and location;
- designed landscape and historical associations;
- architectural, archaeological and cultural importance;
- natural and biodiversity importance;
- role as a major recreational, educational, amenity and social resource;
- role in providing a setting for important public buildings and major State events; and
- peace and tranquillity.

However, its over-riding importance lies in its landscape. The essential character of The Phoenix Park is as a designed landscape, derived from a 17<sup>th</sup> century deer park and altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, largely through the work of the famous landscape architect, Decimus Burton. This essential character remains substantially intact and, combined with the scale of the Park and its proximity to a major city centre, renders The Phoenix Park unique. It is in this regard, in particular, that the Park has an important international standing.

The growth and development of Dublin has significantly increased pressures on The Phoenix Park, both for new development and through increased levels of use. If The Phoenix Park is to retain its essential character, it is imperative that the Conservation Management Plan establishes clear and unambiguous policies for the ongoing conservation of the Park, whilst continuing to facilitate appropriate use of this valuable resource.

The Phoenix Park also represents a valuable technical and scientific resource, as well as a resource for the people of Dublin who, together with visitors to the city, use it for a variety of recreational, cultural and sporting activities. The Park is characterised by a high level of public interest and appreciation.

### 3.2 Pressures and Threats on the Park

The essence of managing historic parks and gardens is continuity in accordance with established principles. The fundamental challenge is to maintain the historic integrity of The Phoenix Park in the face of increasing pressures arising from the growth and expansion of the city, the increasing demand for recreational space and facilities and the threats posed by inappropriate developments or activities and to balance these conflicting demands.

#### Scale

The sheer scale of the Park conveys the false impression that it can absorb significant levels of development, whether functional or for amenity, without altering its essential character. This, however, is not the case. The Phoenix Park is a finite resource, the integrity of which is dependent on maintaining its historic character and its openness.



## Location

The Phoenix Park, which was once at the edge of the built-up area of Dublin, is now surrounded by urban development. As a consequence, the relative value of its land for potential development has increased. In this light, a key concern is the threat of further erosion of the present extent of the Park through new or extended built development. The ownership of The Phoenix Park by the State should ensure that the threat of development is low. However, the availability of large tracts of land within easy reach of the city centre has in the past and could in the future make the Park vulnerable to further State development, similar to the Criminal Courts complex close to the Parkgate Street Gate. Also the erection, without the necessity of resorting to normal planning procedures, of two major developments in St. Mary's Hospital illustrates the vulnerability of The Phoenix Park to internal development, which impacts significantly on the essential character of the Park and erodes its unique value as a historic designed landscape.

## City Development

The development of the city around the Park has also brought pressures on the Park from outside. These pressures include visual intrusion from adjoining developments, together with an increasing perception that the Park is primarily an urban open space, larger but no different in character to other parks throughout the Dublin area. Again, these developments and perceptions pose a threat to the historic integrity of The Phoenix Park.

## Planning Issues

Without appropriate planning designation, there is a risk that development can take place which is not in line with the co-ordinated vision of this Plan.

Related issues that pose similar potential risks include the possibility of uncoordinated building and construction activity among the varied institutions and residences of the Park, and the current condition of certain historic buildings such as the Magazine Fort, the farm buildings below St. Mary's Hospital and Mountjoy House in the Ordnance Survey complex. The risk here is that the buildings will either fall into a condition that cannot be easily remedied, will be altered or replaced in an unsuitable manner or that alternative uses will be imposed on them that are inappropriate to the building or the Park. Moreover, smaller structures, such as kiosks and sports pavilions, can have a significant visual impact.

## Park Features

A number of statues and other features have been lost over the years, including for example the statues of Gough and Carlisle. The cumulative effect of such loss could lead to a significant change in the character of the Park, as could the erection of inappropriate new monuments and similar features.

## Public Transport and Access

Whilst public transport serves the eastern end of the Park well, overall accessibility by public transport to and within the Park is inadequate, although this has improved with the recent introduction of The Phoenix Park shuttle bus service, which is a pilot study subject to review. Existing car-parking facilities are compromised by increased commuter parking in the eastern portion of the Park in the vicinity of Dublin Zoo, An Garda Síochána Headquarters, Wellington Road and Chesterfield Avenue. To remedy this, the provision of better public transport to provide access to the Park, of an appropriate character and scale, is desirable.

# 3



## Traffic

Notwithstanding recent traffic management measures, the Park continues to be used as a primary means of access to the city from the west and the large volumes of traffic (10 million car journeys per year) significantly diminish the character of the Park as a historic landscape and reduce the enjoyment of other Park users. This issue arises from shortcomings in the strategic transportation network for Dublin and is emphasised in the 2006 Phoenix Park Transportation Study in which three areas of concern were highlighted:

- General traffic levels which are such as to cause extreme pressure in various areas of the Park.
- The need for a comprehensive parking policy, which would restrict commuter parking, and provide for visitor needs.
- The need to increase public transport access to the Park.

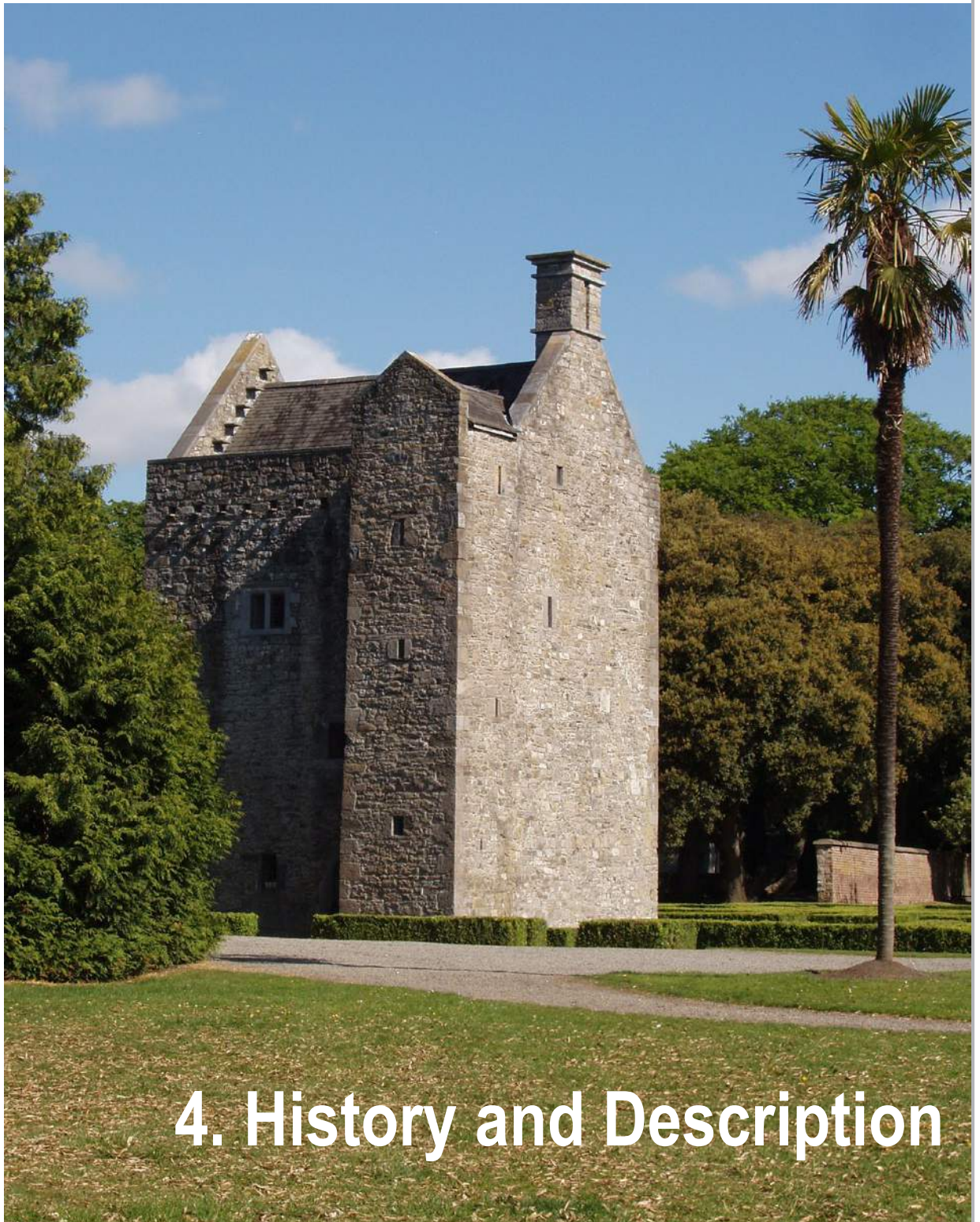
## 3.3 Policy Issues and Legal Status

There are fundamental policy issues that need to be addressed and there is a need for greater clarity in respect of the official status and role of the Park, arising from:

- the lack of adequate legislative protection and regulation;
- uncertainty about future State development within the Park;
- complex tenancy arrangements for various users within the Park;
- potentially conflicting roles of the Office of Public Works as a multi-functional agency of the State;
- general development and social pressures arising from the urban context of the Park; and
- imprecision as to the authority and responsibilities of the various bodies, agencies and stakeholders within the Park.

The level of statutory protection for The Phoenix Park is a primary concern. The Phoenix Park Act 1925 is outdated and is in urgent need of amendment to afford adequate protection to the Park in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its status as a National Historic Park raises awareness of its significance but it is not supported by any internationally recognised designation. While many of the buildings and other structures are protected, this status does not extend to all of the structures throughout the Park. However, the Deer Park is listed as an archaeological complex under the National Monuments Acts. The question of appropriate designation and protection therefore remains an important issue.

# 4



## 4. History and Description

# 4



## 4.1 Historic Context

### Early History and Habitation

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Man had long associations with the lands that now form The Phoenix Park. About five and a half thousand years ago man was attracted to the narrow strip of land along the southern edge of the Park between Knockmaroon and Islandbridge. This land had a commanding view over the River Liffey and offered unrestricted views across the valley to the Dublin Mountains.

### Early Christian Period

Aerial photographs of the Fifteen Acres in The Phoenix Park show a series of earthworks and it has been suggested that the smaller enclosures may represent ring forts or enclosed farmsteads which were constructed in the Early Christian Period between 500 and 1,100 AD.

### Viking Period

More than forty Viking graves were excavated at various times on the south bank of the River Liffey at Kilmainham and Islandbridge during the 1840s and 1850s and again in the 1930s with the construction of the National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, thus making it the largest Viking cemetery outside Scandinavia. One of these graves, located in The Phoenix Park, was found, when excavated, to contain the remains of a woman with jewellery of the period.

### Norman and post-Norman Periods

The nucleus of the lands which were eventually to form The Phoenix Park consisted of lands attached to Phoenix Manor. These were part of the lands of Kilmainham which were located on both sides of the River Liffey. In 1174, a few years after arriving in Ireland with his Norman colleagues, Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, granted the Kilmainham lands to the Knights Templar. When these were suppressed by King Edward II in 1312 the lands became the property of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem. In 1542 these lands reverted to the Crown when they were confiscated by King Henry VIII only to be restored to the Knights by Queen Mary in 1557 and then to revert to the Crown the following year when Queen Elizabeth I succeeded to the throne.

In 1611 a new grant of land was made to Sir Edward Fisher, which consisted of all lands north of the River Liffey extending from Oxmantown Green to Chapelizod and to the River Liffey which also included 330 acres of the Kilmainham demesne and sixty acres known as Kilmainham Wood. Fisher relinquished his portion of lands and house to the King in 1618 for a sum of £2,500 which subsequently became known as 'His Majesty's House at the Kilmainham called the Phoenix'. The Phoenix House continued to be used as viceregal seat until 1665 when Chapelizod became the preferred location for the viceroys.

### The Formation of the Park

The Phoenix Park was established from 1662 onwards by one of Ireland's most illustrious viceroys, James Butler, Duke of Ormond, on behalf of Charles II. Conceived as a Royal deer park, it originally included the demesne of Kilmainham Priory south of the River Liffey, but with the building of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, which commenced in 1680, the Park was reduced to its present size, all of which is now north of the river. The 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Park's establishment as a Royal deer park will be celebrated in 2012.





Shortly after the Park's acquisition it was enclosed with a stone wall, which was initially poorly constructed. Subsequent wall repair and new build were necessary as the Park's size and boundaries were adjusted and realigned. In 1668, Marcus Trevor, Viscount Dungannon, was appointed Ranger who, with two other keepers, was responsible for the deer, managing the Park's enclosures and newly formed plantations.

## The 18<sup>th</sup> Century and the Chesterfield Era

The fourth Earl of Chesterfield was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in January 1745 and is credited with initiating a series of landscape works, many of which were probably not completed until after his short tenure, he having been recalled to London more than a year later. These included considerable replanting of the Park as well as planting of trees on either side of the main avenue and the erection of the Phoenix Column in 1747. He is also credited with opening the Park to the public.

The dominant 18<sup>th</sup> century managerial and infrastructural characteristics of The Phoenix Park were reflected in the extensive use of the Park by the military and the number of lodges used by government officers and other lesser officials involved in Park management. Apart from the use of the Park for military manoeuvres and practices, there were also a number of military institutions which included the Royal Hibernian Military School (1766) for children who were orphaned or whose father was on active military service abroad. The Magazine Fort, constructed in 1736 with additions in 1756, was a major military institution from which small arms, munitions and gunpowder were distributed to other military barracks in the Dublin area. Mountjoy Cavalry Barracks (formerly the home of Luke Gardiner, one of the Keepers of the Park) and the Royal Military Infirmary were two further buildings constructed during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in 1725 and 1786 respectively. The role of the Salute Battery (for firing cannon on Royal and other special occasions), situated in the environs of the Wellington Testimonial, was discontinued and the lands it occupied within the Park subsequently became known as the Wellington Fields on which the Wellington Testimonial was erected.





All the important lodges and accompanying demesnes, which were originally occupied by Park Rangers or Keepers, were purchased for Government use as private dwellings for the chief officers of state. These included the Viceregal Lodge for the Lord Lieutenant (now Áras an Uachtaráin), the Chief Secretary's Residence (now the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland) and the Under-Secretary's Residence (subsequently the Papal Nunciature and now The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre).

## The 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the Decimus Burton Era

The beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the Park in a much-neglected state with poor drainage, the roads in bad order and most of the trees very old and/or in a state of decay. However with the Commissioners of Woods and Forests taking over the management of the public areas of the Park and the employment of the renowned architect/landscape architect, Decimus Burton, all this was about to change. Burton produced a master plan for the Park which included the building of new gate lodges, the removal and levelling of old hedgerows and shooting butts, tree planting in strategic locations, drainage, the restoration of the boundary wall and creation and realignment of the Park roads, which included Chesterfield Avenue. This latter project involved the relocation of the Phoenix Column on the main avenue. Burton's involvement for nearly two decades represents the greatest period of landscape change since the Park's creation by the Duke of Ormond.

Further improvements were undertaken following the transfer of management of The Phoenix Park to the Office of Public Works in 1860, the first of which included the completion of the outstanding works associated with the Wellington Testimonial which was commenced in 1818. Two further memorials of considerable artistic merit were unveiled – one in 1870 commemorating the Lord Lieutenancy of the Earl of Carlisle and the other an equestrian statue commemorating Field Marshal Viscount Gough which was unveiled in 1880 – both of which were sculpted by John Henry Foley.

From the 1830s and particularly after the 1860s, sporting and recreational activities became prominent. The Royal Dublin Zoological Society opened Dublin Zoo in 1830. The Promenade Grounds opened in 1840 (later to be known as the People's Gardens) and were considerably improved in the 1860s with the addition of a Head Gardener's House, rock gardens and horticultural facilities to allow for flower production for planting in the Gardens. Between the People's Gardens and Dublin Zoo, a bandstand and tearooms were built in the final decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the military dominated in the Park's institutions and Park use in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, their influence was lessened somewhat in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (though Mountjoy Barracks became the Irish headquarters of the Ordnance Survey in 1825). The presence of the police became more prominent, as illustrated by the construction in 1842 of the Royal Irish Constabulary depot near the North Circular Road entrance to the Park and two police barracks – one at Ashtown Gate and the other at Parkgate Street Gate. In 1848 the Commissioners of Woods and Forests further met their social obligations by providing for the educational needs of the Park's children by building a school house and teacher's residence to the designs of Decimus Burton.

## The 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The history and landscape management of The Phoenix Park in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is characterised primarily by replanting of trees and shrubs that took place in the first decade, due to the great storm in 1903 which was responsible for the demise of nearly 3,000 trees. Another 10,000 trees were planted as part of the 1986 management plan and considerable arboricultural works were carried out on the mature tree population in the latter quarter of the century.



The erection of the Papal Cross in 1979, the relocation of the Phoenix Column and the re-erection of the entrance gate piers and linking walls at Parkgate Street were also significant projects that were undertaken towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Phoenix Park was also the location for a number of major national and international events during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

These events, which were of a religious, cultural, sporting and charitable nature, commenced in 1903 with motor racing and a major international motor racing event in 1929. In the same year, the centenary of Catholic Emancipation took place, followed in 1932 with the 31<sup>st</sup> Eucharistic Congress. The template for the latter event was used to host the Papal visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979 when more than one million people attended the celebrations. Other notable gatherings included Bob Geldoff's 'Live Aid' walk in 1986 and the finish of the first stage of the Tour de France, which was held for the first time in Ireland in 1997. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Park has been used for a large range of day to day sporting and recreational activities.

The Commissioners of Public Works, acting as agents for the Minister for Finance, continue to be responsible for day-to-day management and current funding of The Phoenix Park. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is responsible for overall policy and capital funding.

## 4.2 Description of Principal Areas and Land Use

**Demesne:** Term used to describe the grounds, including farmlands, belonging to a large house / residence, which were traditionally retained for private use. The three larger demesnes are:

- Áras an Uachtaráin and Ratra House (formerly the Viceregal Lodge and Private Secretary's Lodge)
- The U.S. Ambassador's residence (formerly the Chief Secretary's Lodge) and
- The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre (formerly the Under-Secretary's Lodge).

**Enclosure:** A traditional term used to describe areas within the Park, which are enclosed, usually by a ha-ha (sunken) fence, but also by various types of fences, railings, walls and hedgerows. This term was also used interchangeably with the term Demesne. These include:

- St. Mary's Hospital and the Cara Cheshire Home (formerly the Royal Hibernian Military School);
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland (formerly The Mountjoy House and Barracks);
- Magazine Fort;
- Dublin Zoo;
- An Garda Síochána Headquarters (formerly the RIC Barracks);
- Department of Defence (formerly the Royal Infirmary);
- Phoenix Park Special School; and
- a number of Park lodges including The Whitefields (Superintendent's Lodge, Park offices and depot) and the Deerkeeper's Lodge.

# 4



The distribution of uses within The Phoenix Park is clearly defined and some strong patterns can be recognised. Much of the land is publicly accessible, but there are places and areas set aside for specific use. The most important factor in the distribution of uses is the presence of the three main demesnes, with other Park enclosures, as referred to above.

The second factor is the proximity of the Park to the historical urban core of Dublin to the east, which has acted to draw the more intensive public uses towards the main eastern gate at Parkgate Street.

The third factor is the topography, which is predominantly flat, but with some dramatic variation, including a sharp slope on the southern edge of the Park, and steep-sided valleys, which are incised into the plateau. Some of these valleys now contain artificial lakes and the longest, at the eastern end of the Park, serves as an ornamental public landscape.

## Areas within the Park

The principal areas are shown on Maps 1 and 2 and are outlined below. Areas allocated to specific uses and activities are shown on Map 3.

Each area is managed in order to sustain the character of the landscape and ensure it is appropriate for the activities carried out there. The character and use are described in Appendix 5 which provides a short description of each area including past and current use, the intensity of use, facilities available, the character of the landscape and the status of the land. Management, for example mowing or grazing of grass, individual or group planting of trees, painting of metal features, is carried out at appropriate intervals. The result of these important activities is that areas, such as the 'Fifteen Acres', Áras an Uachtaráin, US Ambassador's residence, The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, or the People's Gardens, are recognisably different and can retain the special historic character that has been derived from long established use.

## Park Demesnes

These designed landscapes are laid out around a principal building and have strong physical boundaries in the form of a ha-ha or a fence. Each has a location that has come about for historical reasons. Those along Chesterfield Avenue have served as residences of government officials since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and include:

**A.** Áras an Uachtaráin and Ratra House, (formerly **the Viceregal Lodge and Private Secretary's Lodge**). The official residence of the President is surrounded by a ha-ha (sunken) fence and tree planting now encloses the house and gardens in an effective screen. A single southward view out to the Park is provided in the form of a narrow controlled vista southwards across Chesterfield Avenue and the Fifteen Acres. The backdrop is a wide view of the Dublin Hills. A view from Chesterfield Avenue of the front façade of the house is also offered. The Guard Houses and gate ensemble located close to the Phoenix Monument are also prominent features, but are only visible from Chesterfield Avenue.

**B.** US Ambassador's Residence (formerly **the Chief Secretary's Residence**). This is surrounded by a 'ha-ha' and by dense belts of tree planting. A view southwards from the demesne and across the Fifteen Acres to the Dublin Hills is provided by a wide opening in the enclosing mature plantations. There is also a view of the residence from the Fifteen Acres. The main entrance close to the Phoenix Column, dating from the 1840s, is another prominent feature along Chesterfield Avenue.

**C.** Ashtown Demesne (formerly **the Under-Secretary's Residence** and which now contains The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, and Ashtown Castle). This was formerly the residence of the Papal Nuncio and is partially enclosed by a belt of evergreen oak, deciduous trees and a ha-ha. Views in and out of this area are quite random and reflect landscape changes which now make designed views less obvious.



## Enclosures

Some enclosures have a military origin and include:

**D.** The former **Royal Hibernian Military School**, now the site of St. Mary's Hospital, the Cheshire Home and associated uses. This is enclosed on the north, east and west sides by a belt of trees, but an open frontage on the elevated south side of the demesne, ensures that the wide front façade of the main building is prominently visible from the Chapelizod Gate area and from south of the River Liffey. This terrace must also provide wide views southwards out of the Park.

**E.** The former **Mountjoy Barracks**, now occupied by Ordnance Survey Ireland. This is surrounded by a ha-ha (sunken) fence and a wide and dense belt of plantation. Partial views are currently available, although Decimus Burton intended a more open appearance with a southerly view out from the main façade of the building. A picture of the barracks from 1828 shows the south front completely open and flanked by mature trees.

**F.** The former **Royal Infirmary**, currently the Department of Defence. It is dramatically placed atop a steep bank to the north-east of the People's Gardens. The Infirmary was once within the Park. Although the building is managed separately, it is still a particularly prominent feature of views from the gardens and is also visible from the eastern part of Chesterfield Avenue. The building was designed to have views into the Park and towards the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham.

**G.** The **Magazine Fort** is a fortification which, with its angular defensive walls and aggressive intent, is a mild intrusion into the surrounding undulating landscape. However, placed into a slight hill it commands the surrounding area and its presence sitting above the Military Road and the Khyber Pass is an important feature of this part of the Park. Clearly the intention of the Fort builders was to give clear views out to the surrounding landscape for reasons of security so, while views of the Fort are likely to be incidental, they are often revealed in a surprising and therefore challenging manner.

**H.** **The Whitefields**, now the Superintendents Lodge (formerly known as the Bailiff's Lodge) and Park Depot.

## Other Important Recreational, Landscape and Institutional Features

**I.** **The People's Gardens**, located close to the main gates at the eastern end of the Park, are readily accessible to the urban population of Dublin. Laid out in 1840 as the Promenade Grounds and re-worked in the 1860s, the gardens have intensively maintained lawns with flowerbeds, winding paths, rock gardens, playground, shelter and an ornamental lake. They are designed at a scale for pedestrian enjoyment. Views into the gardens are controlled and framed by trees, shrubs and landform and tend to entice the visitor into the gardens. The gardens offer only limited views out to the Park or to the city.

**J.** **Dublin Zoo**, formerly the Zoological Gardens, is one of the oldest zoos in Europe. Having been first suggested by the Earl of Longford, it opened in 1831. The original entrance lodge still stands. The layout of the gardens was designed by Decimus Burton. The Zoo was extended in the 1990s to its current size.

**K.** **Sports Grounds**, have been a feature of the Park since the 1830s.

- The Phoenix Cricket Club was established in 1830 making it the oldest cricket club in Ireland and the second oldest in the world. In April 1863 the Civil Service Cricket Club was formed and played their first game on the front lawn of Áras an Uachtaráin.

# 4



- The All Ireland Polo club was founded in 1873 which makes it the oldest Polo Club in Europe. Polo matches are played on the dedicated nine acres adjacent to Chesterfield Avenue and the Zoological grounds. Historically, Bicycle Polo has been played on these grounds.
  - There are twenty five playing fields allocated to Gaelic Football, Soccer, Hurling and Camogie.
- L. Garda Headquarters** formerly known as the Constabulary Depot, was completed in 1842 (with later additions) for police training. With the establishment of the Free State it became and remains the headquarters of An Garda Síochána.
- M. Wellington Testimonial:** The foundation stone of this 205 ft. high obelisk was laid in 1817. It is set in a wide lawn to the south of Chesterfield Avenue close to the main entrance to the Park. This prominent obelisk is visible from many parts of the Park, although there are no internal vistas aligned to it. The monument is carefully set back from Chesterfield Avenue to dominate a dramatic open space, with a steep drop to Chapelizod Road creating an enhanced sense of drama. This position allows it to feature in views from the city and the surrounding areas and is directly in line with North Circular Road which extends in a north-easterly direction from the Park gate of that name.
- N. The Phoenix Monument:** This Corinthian column of Portland stone with Phoenix aloft was erected in 1747, mid-way along Chesterfield Avenue between the Parkgate Street entrance and Castleknock Gate. This monument forms an important focal point where the entrances from the three most important demesnes converge. The feature is visible along much of Chesterfield Avenue and the immediate surrounding areas.
- O. The Papal Cross:** The Papal Cross erected in 1979 forms a prominent focal point for views from much of the Park to the south of Chesterfield Avenue and in particular from the Fifteen Acres. This part of the Park is a particularly open and flat landscape and the Papal Cross provides a sense of shape and scale and enhances the identity of the Fifteen Acres. There are also excellent views of the high ground south of the River Liffey to the Dublin Mountains.
- P. Park Lodges:** There are over 40 Park Lodges located inside the Park wall at the demesne gates and elsewhere. Some of the lodges such as Knockmary Lodge, the Bailiff's Residence, the Deer Keeper's Lodge, the Timekeeper's Lodge and the Head Gardener's Lodge in the People's Gardens have been designed to be on public view and to serve as features within the Park. Some lodges remain locally prominent, but others are screened to give a degree of privacy.
- Q. Phoenix Park School:** Erected to the designs of Decimus Burton in 1847 to serve as a school for the children of the employees of the Park at that time. It was built of local limestone from Coyle's Quarry on the southern perimeter of the Park.
- R. Gough Junction:** This recently re-established area on the brow of Chesterfield Avenue has been constructed with a view to re-erecting the famous equestrian Gough monument there. First unveiled in 1880, it was removed in 1957 after it was damaged.

## Water Features

- S. Lakes and Pools** are present, though not extensive, and are locally important in defining the character of their immediate landscape setting.



- Three lakes occupy a central position in Dublin Zoo and the People’s Gardens. These lakes are naturalistic in appearance with sinuous edges set among sweeping lawns and meandering paths and mature trees.
- **Furry Glen Lake:** a small secluded waterbody, formed by damming the stream, set between steep valley sides and enclosed by trees. It can only be experienced from paths that pass close to its margins. The soft silted banks, developing marginal vegetation and the informality of the paths give it a more natural character. This feature was formed as part of Burtons landscape proposals in the 1830s and 1840s.
- **Citadel Pond:** lies shaded among trees beside Chesterfield Avenue adjacent to the Park’s cricket clubs. The mature tree cover around the pool separates it from adjacent open areas but means that it is seen only when viewed from close by. This pond was formed in the remains of a moat that once enclosed a large star-shaped fort. The fort was removed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the hollow remained as a water feature.
- **Quarry Pond:** is a large pool with an island surrounded by trees close to Ordnance Survey Ireland. At one stage it was the source of water for many of the Park’s residences. The pool can only be seen from close by.
- **Machine Pond:** This deep hollow formed by quarrying near the Mountjoy Cross is enclosed by a narrow band of trees and ornamental railings. The pool is visible from the local environs.
- **Áras Pond:** This pond is small with a boat house and once formed part of a larger lake now enclosed within Dublin Zoo.

**Farmleigh** is an estate of 78 acres situated immediately adjacent to The Phoenix Park. It was purchased by the Government from the Guinness family in 1999 and refurbished by the Office of Public Works as the premier accommodation for visiting dignitaries and guests of the nation, for high level government meetings, and for public enjoyment. Farmleigh does not form part of The Phoenix Park, however its close physical proximity to the Park enhances its setting and attractiveness and in the public mind the two are closely related, particularly as public access to Farmleigh is via the Park.

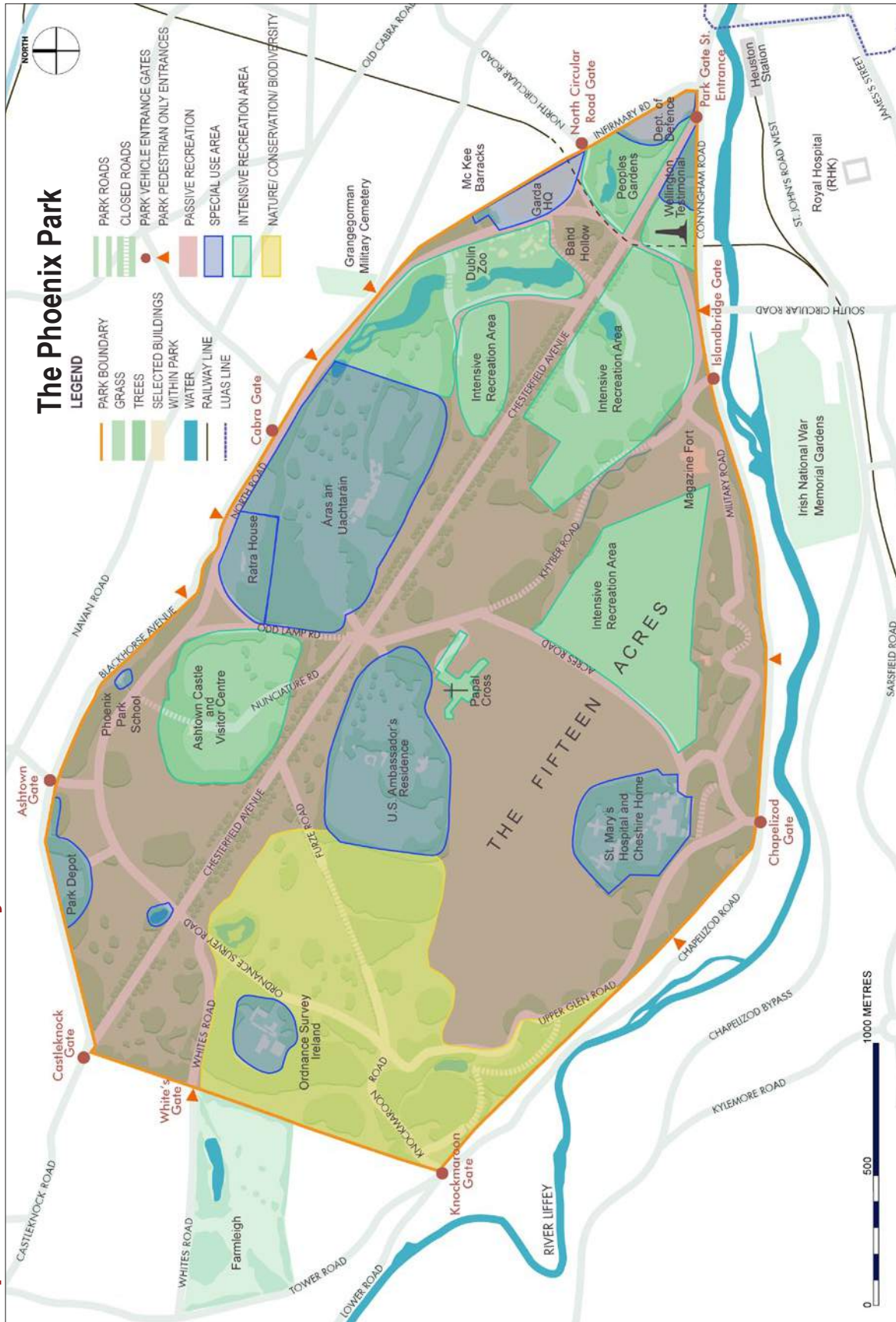




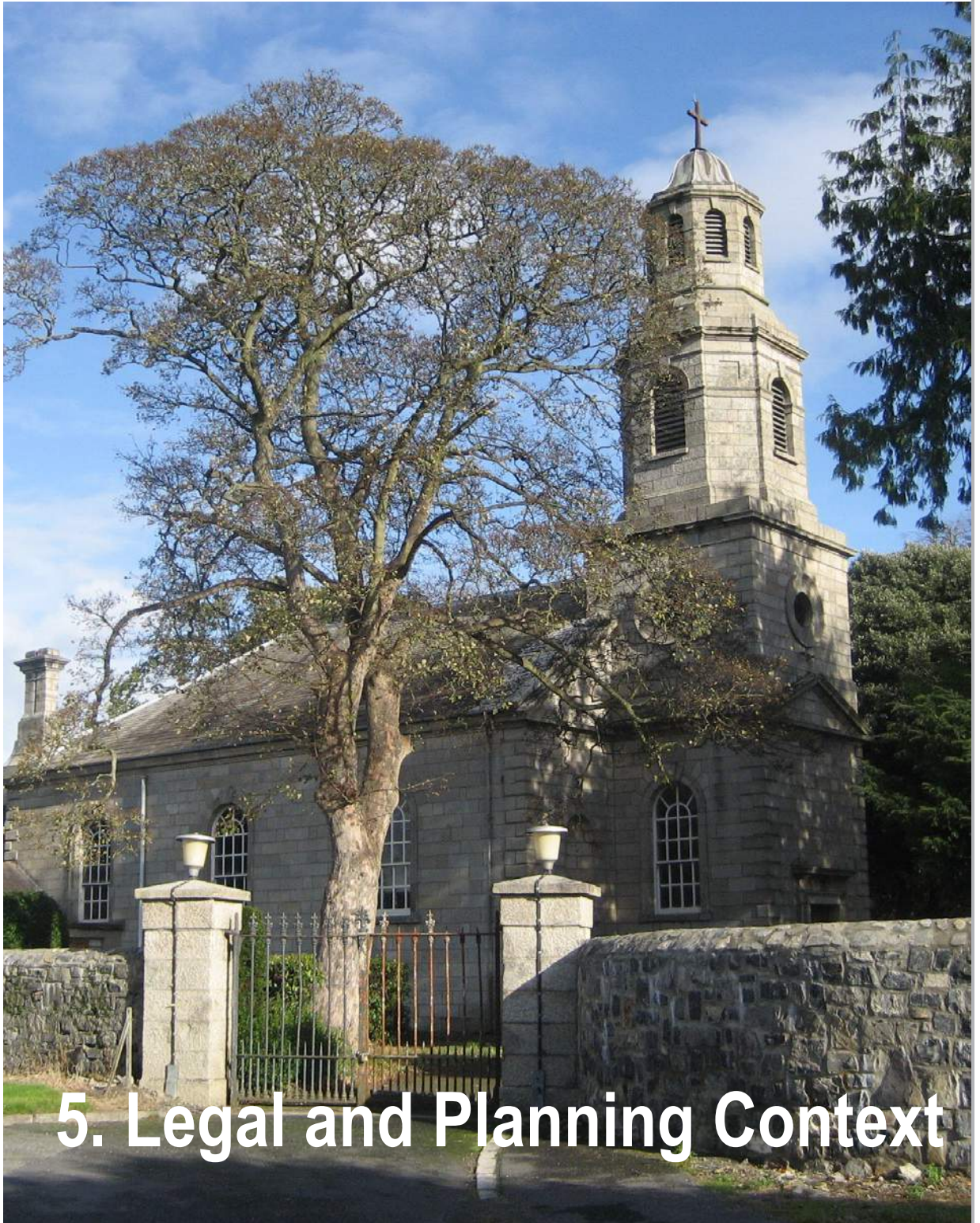




### Map 3: Land Use and Activity Areas



# 5



## 5. Legal and Planning Context



## 5.1 Introduction

The legislation for the maintenance and regulation of The Phoenix Park as a public park is set out in The Phoenix Park Act 1925. However, development within the Park is also controlled by other legislation, particularly that relating to planning, nature conservation and conservation of the built environment. The management of the Park must also accord with the full range of relevant legislation including that governing building control, health and safety and disability.

## 5.2 Current Governance

Overall responsibility for The Phoenix Park is at present shared between the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Minister for Finance is responsible for operational policy and manages the Park through the Commissioners of Public Works, whilst the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is responsible for heritage policy, for the implementation of the National Monuments and Wildlife Acts and is a prescribed body under planning legislation for developments affecting the architectural, archaeological and natural heritage.

### Phoenix Park Act 1925

The Phoenix Park Act of 1925 is an Act ‘to make provision for continuing the maintenance and regulation of The Phoenix Park, Dublin, as a public park, and the preservation of order therein, and for other purposes connected therewith’.

Under this Act, the management of the Park is vested in the Commissioners of Public Works. The Act imposes a general duty that “the Commissioners shall maintain the Park as a public park for the general purpose of the recreation and enjoyment of the public”. The Act also provides powers for the making of bye-laws, subject to the approval of the Minister for Finance. The current bye-laws date from 1926 (See Appendix 6).

### National Historic Park

The Phoenix Park has been managed as a National Historic Park since it was designated in 1986. This designation was given to highlight the historic elements of the Park but does not confer any legal protection.

### National Monuments Acts 1930 - 2004

The whole of The Phoenix Park is protected under the National Monuments Acts. The Phoenix Park was included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) of County Dublin in the National Monuments Amendment Act of 1994. The entire Park, up to and including the boundary walls, is included in the RMP under the umbrella term Archaeological Complex. Individual archaeological monuments and sites in the Park such as the cemetery mound, star-shaped fort, etc. are identified as elements within the archaeological complex (Appendix 7).

The inclusion of The Phoenix Park within the RMP has important implications for its protection and conservation.

Under the National Monuments Acts, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht must be given at least 2 months notice in writing of all proposed development within The Phoenix Park regardless of whether or



not the development is considered exempted development under planning legislation, or is subject to the provisions of either Part 9 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 or the Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006 or any other legislation.

Planning Authorities are obliged to refer all proposed developments which occur in proximity to monuments included in the RMP to a range of statutory heritage consultees for their views. These views inform the responses to individual planning applications by the planning authorities and into the protections for the Park referred to in all relevant Local Authority Development Plans. The interplay between the National Monuments Acts and the Planning Acts has an important role in the protection of the historic character of the Park in minimising developments which could detract from its heritage.

## Planning and Development Legislation

Development in and around the Phoenix Park is subject to the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2010. Under these Acts, planning permission must be sought from the relevant planning authority (in the case of The Phoenix Park from Dublin City Council and, for some areas adjoining the Park, from Fingal County Council) and any proposed development will be assessed against the objectives and policies of the relevant authority's statutory Development Plan. The planning authority's decision can be appealed to An Bord Pleanála by a first party or by any third party who has made a valid submission during the planning process.

In making a Development Plan, planning authorities have extensive powers to designate lands for specific objectives and policies, such as Special Amenity Area Orders, Architectural Conservation Areas, Landscape Conservation Areas, and Tree Preservation Orders in addition to powers for the statutory protection of certain structures and monuments.

Where a proposed development would impact upon the built heritage, the planning authority is obliged to notify a number of prescribed bodies including the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Heritage Council, An Taisce, the Arts Council and Fáilte Ireland. In relation to natural heritage, the prescribed bodies are the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, The Heritage Council, and An Taisce.

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 deals with architectural heritage. Statutory guidance on the application of Part IV has been published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 'Architectural Heritage Protection – guidelines for planning authorities' (2004).

## Dublin City Development Plan 2005-11

The Dublin City Development Plan 2005-11 places a land-use zoning objective on the Park as Zone Z9, "to preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space". It also designates the entire Phoenix Park as a Conservation Area. The plan states:

*"The special value of conservation areas lies in the architectural design and scale of these areas and is of sufficient importance to require special care in dealing with development proposals and works by the private and public sector alike. Dublin City Council will thus seek to ensure that development proposals within all conservation areas complement the character of the area, including the setting of protected structures, and comply with development standards." (Section 10.2.)*

It will be noted that this designation, which is applied to a number of areas within the city, is intended to conserve the architectural heritage. The need for additional protection for The Phoenix Park, such as 'Landscape Conservation Area', has been discussed with Dublin City Council. The need is recognised in



the Development Plan, which contains an objective to investigate a number of areas, including The Phoenix Park, “with a view to determining their suitability for designation as Landscape Conservation Areas” (Section 10.6.4).

In addition, the plan includes over 40 protected structures, including the “complete perimeter enclosing stone wall of Park”. Protection extends to the protected structure itself and all structures within its curtilage. A list of the protected structures is given in Appendix 7.

## Development by State Authorities (or Part 9 Development)

Under Part XI of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part 9 of the Planning and Development Regulations, certain classes of development carried out by state authorities are not subject to the normal requirements of planning permission. The classes of development specified in Part 9 are excluded from the normal planning process for reasons of public safety or order, the administration of justice, national security or defence. These include developments associated with Áras an Uachtaráin, An Garda Síochána, the Defence Forces, the Courts Service, the Department of Defence and Department of Justice and Equality, all of which are present within and adjacent to the Park.

Part 9 requires the state authority to give notice of the proposed development, asking for observations, which it must take into account in deciding whether or not to modify or carry out the development. The Regulations specify that the consultation procedures must be followed in cases where the proposed works are to a building that is a protected structure or a proposed protected structure, even where it would not otherwise be required. Where the development includes works to a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or a building in an architectural conservation area, the state authority must send notice to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

If a proposed development by a state authority under Part 9 is likely to have significant effects on the environment, then the proposal is required to be assessed by An Bord Pleanála and an Environmental Impact Assessment carried out. Where development relates to national defence, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence may grant an exemption from this requirement.

Section 181(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act provides the Commissioners and Ministers of Government with the power to authorise development where required by “*reason of an accident or emergency*” by way of an order and this process is not subject to Part 9 and public consultation. However, the provisions of the National Monuments Acts regarding notification to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht still apply (see above).

## Strategic Infrastructure

The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 provides An Bord Pleanála with ‘fast-track’ powers to grant permission for certain infrastructure developments, such as railways and electricity related development, which the Bord deems to be of “*strategic national importance*”.



### 5.3 Wildlife Acts 1976-2010

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, through the National Parks and Wildlife Service, is responsible for the designation of natural heritage conservation sites in Ireland. The following areas are afforded statutory protection:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
- Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs).
- Statutory Nature Reserves.

There are no statutory nature conservation designations in The Phoenix Park, although the Liffey Valley NHA runs close to the boundary of the Park near the Furry Glen Pond and Knockmaroon Hill. Other NHAs located close to the Park are the Royal Canal and the Grand Canal.

### Protected Flora and Fauna

Certain species of flora and fauna are strictly protected under international and national law. Within The Phoenix Park, three species of wild plants are protected under the Wildlife Act, 1976 as amended by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. This Act also gives protection to badgers and their setts, birds and their nests and bats and their roosts. (See Chapter 7 below).

### 5.4 Disability Legislation

Under Section 29 of the Disability Act 2005, the Office of Public Works, as caretakers of The Phoenix Park, must:

*“As far as practicable, ensure that the whole or a part of a heritage site in its ownership, management or control to which the public has access is accessible to persons with disabilities and can be visited by them with ease and dignity.”*





This policy must be complied with unless doing so would:

- (i) *“have a significant adverse effect on the conservation status of a species or habitat or the integrity of a heritage site, or”*
- (ii) *“compromise the characteristics of the site”.*

The definition of heritage sites, under S.29, include protected structures, proposed protected structures, architectural conservation areas and monuments protected under the National Monuments Acts. In addition to the Disability Act, the need to provide access is implied by the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

## 5.5 Designations, Charters and Conventions

In addition to the above legislation, there are international charters, conventions, etc, which are of relevance to the cultural heritage of The Phoenix Park. Although these do not have any legal effect, it is considered good conservation practice to have regard to the principles contained within them.

International conservation designations that are of relevance to The Phoenix Park include:

- UNESCO ‘Recommendation concerning safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscape and Sites’ - 1962;
- 1985 Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, of which Ireland is a signatory;
- ICOMOS Charters and Conventions, of which the following are the more pertinent:
  - The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments (1931).
  - The Venice Charter (1964).
  - Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972).
  - The Burra Charter (1979, revised 1999).
  - Historic Gardens-The Florence Charter (1981).
  - Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage- The Valetta Convention (1990).
  - Principles for the Recording of Monuments, Groups of Buildings and Sites (1996).
  - International Cultural Tourism Charter (1999).

## 5.6 Specific Objectives

The overall objective in respect of The Phoenix Park and its historic landscape setting is to ensure its continuing protection and conservation by means of appropriate legislative support.





Specific objectives include:

- SO 5.1:** To seek statutory designation and to apply for World Heritage Site designation to reflect the cultural, biodiversity and landscape significance of the Park, and to protect the Park from damage, inappropriate development or neglect. The designation should confirm the overriding physical characteristics as a collection of enclosed demesnes within a historic Royal deer park.
- SO 5.2:** To ensure appropriate legislation is enacted to facilitate updating of The Phoenix Park Act to meet ongoing and future management needs and facilitate the periodic reviewing of relevant Bye-Laws.
- SO 5.3:** To protect The Phoenix Park from inappropriate development in its vicinity.
- SO 5.4:** To review the current statutory protection of the archaeological and architectural heritage of The Phoenix Park and, if appropriate, initiate steps to strengthen this.

## 5.7 Short-to-Medium Term Actions

The following are identified as actions to be commenced in the short-to-medium term (5 to 10 years). Some measures will continue to be implemented as long-term actions.

- Action 5.1:** Ensure that the statutory designations:
- Describe the nature and extent of each enclosure within the Park in terms of landscape, architectural, historical, archaeological, biodiversity and functional characteristics; and
  - Ensure that any proposed development within these enclosures is assessed with regard to the impact such development might have on its own integrity and coherence and that of the wider Phoenix Park.

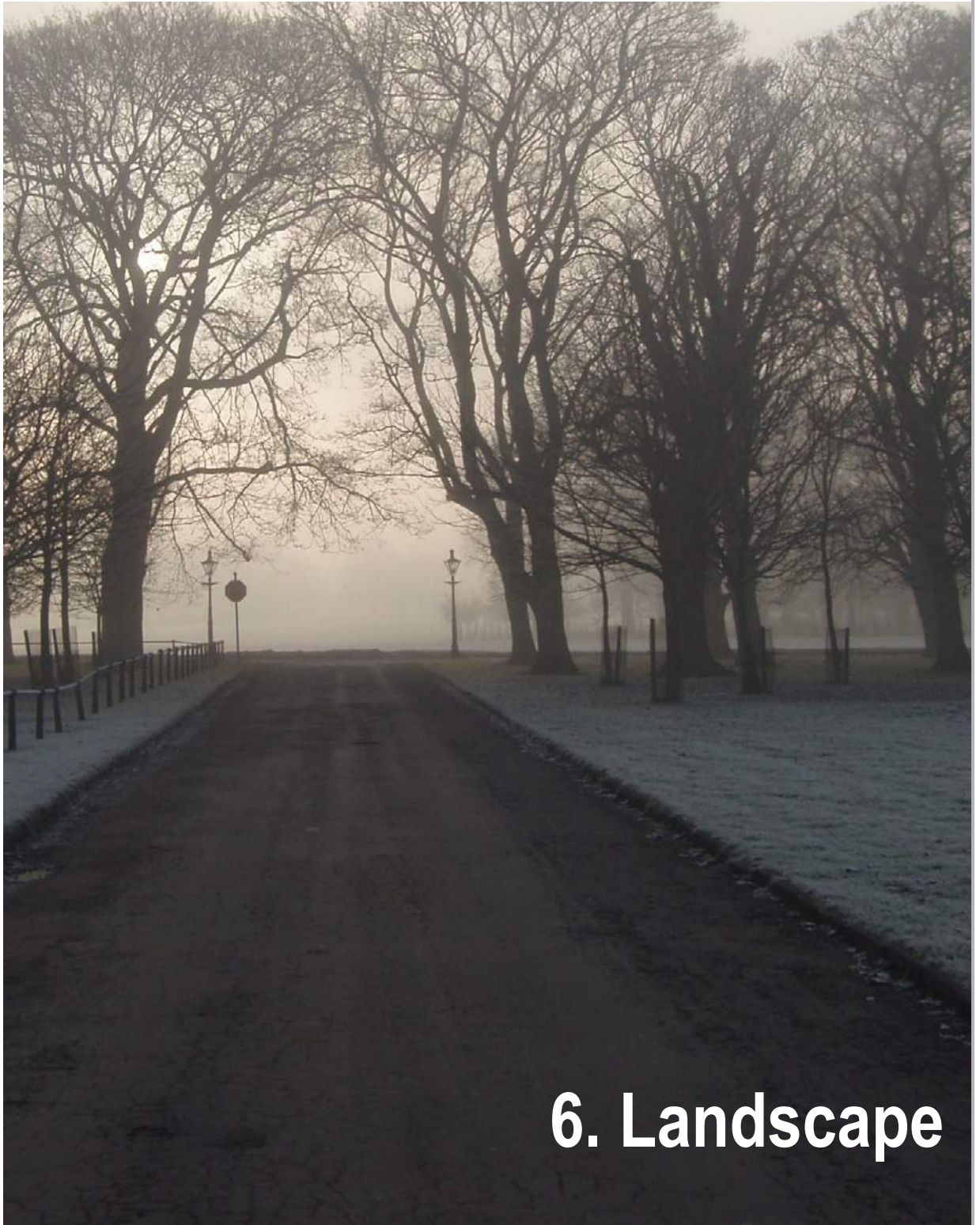


# 5



- Action 5.2:** Liaise with the local authorities in the designation of The Phoenix Park as a ‘Landscape Conservation Area’ and to review with Dublin City Council the statutory designation of the Park within the Development Plan framework.
- Action 5.3:** Review with Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council the record of protected structures within and adjacent to The Phoenix Park with a view to the inclusion of additional structures.
- Action 5.4:** Commission a study on the precise boundaries and leasing arrangements of The Phoenix Park institutions and residences.
- Action 5.5:** Provide a draft update of The Phoenix Park Act to assist in the preparation of legislative change.
- Action 5.6:** Seek to ensure that The Phoenix Park management are consulted on all State and other developments in the vicinity of the Park.
- Action 5.7:** Monitor and, where appropriate, make submissions in respect of development proposals in the vicinity of the Park that could affect its setting and/or amenity.
- Action 5.8:** Carry out preliminary scoping study towards inclusion of The Phoenix Park on Ireland’s tentative list of World Heritage Sites. The study should explore and describe the unique outstanding and universal value of The Phoenix Park as required to be successfully inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

# 6



## 6. Landscape



## 6.1 Introduction

The Phoenix Park is an extensive historic designed landscape of plantations and grassland lying between 12 and 56 metres above sea level on the north bank of the River Liffey. The expansion of Dublin City has encompassed the Park, virtually isolating it from its former rural setting, but valuable views southward across the River Liffey to the distant Wicklow Mountains still provide important links with the countryside and views towards the Quays provide a link with the historic city centre.

First appearing as a Royal deer park in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the identity of The Phoenix Park as a special landscape was enhanced by enclosure within a stone wall. Since then the Park has been used extensively for military activity and for several hundred years has contained the official residences of important political figures.

The Phoenix Park is the only example of a Royal Hunting Park remaining in Ireland.

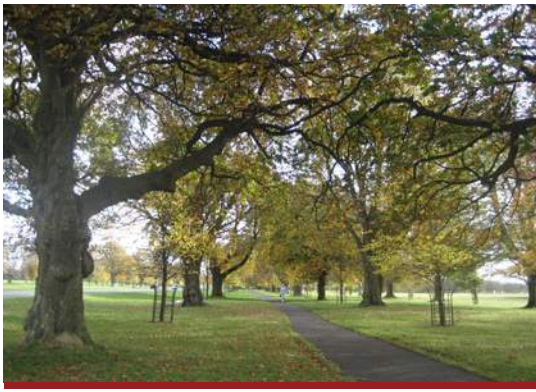
## 6.2 Geodiversity

The concept of geodiversity describes the variation of geological environments, of bedrock, soils and landscape features.

The modern landscape of the Park begins at the end of the last Ice Age and is completed by human intervention over the following 12,000 years. The landform of The Phoenix Park was formed by glaciation during periodic Ice Ages. A deep layer of boulder clay was deposited by the last ice sheet over the underlying 'Calp' Limestone. Substantial streams of melt water from the ice sheet flowed southwards over the surface of the area now occupied by The Phoenix Park towards the River Liffey. These streams eroded the surface of the boulder clay to form deeply incised channels, which today are visible as the eastern valley occupied by the People's Gardens and Dublin Zoo, the southern valley known as the Khyber Pass and the western Furry Glen valley area. The enlarged River Liffey carved itself a deep channel, depositing terraces of sand and gravel along the steeply-sloping southern fringes of the Park.

Significant features of geodiversity interest are located in The Phoenix Park. While not rare, they are of educational interest and include:

- Outcropping limestone in Quarry Lake.
- Unusual example of a mainly natural landscape within the confines of the City which was formed through postglacial processes; the movement of meltwater and deposition of till.
- The northern portion of the Park has limestone nearer the surface. It shows a crag-and-tail landscape form, with much of its central portion being comprised of low, almost indistinguishable glacial flutes.
- The geometry of the deglacial drainage system and its meltwater channels explains much of the Park's hydrology and the position of many of the big ponds (dammed streams in channels).
- The terraces formed of sand and gravel at the south side of the Park are associated with shallow, alkaline soils and high plant diversity.
- Soil characteristics (wetness or dryness) are linked to land uses and biodiversity potential.
- The solid geology of The Phoenix Park is linked to the architectural history, as local materials were used to build many of the residences and, in particular, it is likely that much of the material in the boundary wall came from Park quarries.



## 6.3 Vegetation

The Phoenix Park was formed by the enclosure of productive medieval agricultural countryside. The pattern of this former agricultural landscape would have remained visible once the Park wall was built to retain the deer. But gradually, as the centuries passed, the pattern of open grassland and woodland changed and features of the previous landscape faded away. The vegetation that we see today, 350 years after the Park was formed, is almost entirely the result of grazing deer, human activity and design.

Most of the trees in The Phoenix Park are planted and have to be nurtured and guarded, to protect them from the grazing deer. On many trees the absence of branches up to 2 metres above the ground is evidence of deer grazing. This is known as the browsing line and represents the maximum height that deer can reach.

Once a plantation is established, the trees within it will grow over a period of between 100 and 300 years and then die. Young trees can then be used to renew the plantation either under the existing trees or replacing them. Trees in a plantation tend to grow at a similar rate and so the canopy they form is more even with none of the irregularities seen in natural woodlands. The characteristic even canopy can be observed in many of the plantations in the Park, although generally a mix of species gives some variation in height and appearance.

Decimus Burton recognised the complexity of the Park layout and set about the task of improving the Park with extensive tree planting to give structure and to enhance the character of the landscape. He did this without compromising the established functions, while allowing space to introduce features such as Dublin Zoo and the Promenade Grounds later known as the People's Gardens.

Most of the plantations in The Phoenix Park date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were planted to the design of Decimus Burton using predominantly Ash, Oak, Lime, Beech, Hawthorn, Sycamore and Horse Chestnut. We are fortunate to see them in their maturity, much as Decimus Burton might have envisaged them. Some later plantations and replanting that took place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries included many evergreen oaks, which now provide a solid and unchanging quality to some parts of the Park particularly around Ashtown Demesne.

The Park is enclosed by a virtually continuous ring of plantations, which follow the inside of the high encircling walls. In places, the ring of trees broadens out to form a deep plantation and limits views out to the surrounding landscape. On the northern edge are plantations and lines of trees, which are given a more formal character by the presence of evergreen Oak. On the south side of the Park, the perimeter plantations are formed of numerous large clumps of deciduous trees placed on the steep slope associated with the river terraces. These clumps are placed to frame important southerly views out of the Park.

The Phoenix Park contains within its walls a complex pattern of uses and facilities which have been slowly accrued over 300 years. Chesterfield Avenue, a straight alignment running roughly east to west through the centre of the Park, is treble lined with mature Lime, Beech and Horse Chestnut trees. The avenue is the 'spine' of the Park with the more prominent demesnes, clustered centrally around the Phoenix Monument (see Map 1). Each demesne is orientated with the principal views aligned south towards the Dublin Mountains.

To the south of the avenue, the Park was historically dominated by military uses. The military influence has created a large scale and boldly composed landscape of plantations and grassland that is managed to allow some semi-natural pockets to develop such as the Furry Glen in the south west corner of the Park.



To the north of Chesterfield Avenue, parts of the Park remain dedicated to state government functions including Áras an Uachtaráin and Ashtown Castle and Visitor Centre. The landscape tends to be smaller in scale with intimate domestic areas of parkland and gardens formed within each demesne. The more popular public facilities including Dublin Zoo and the People's Gardens, at the eastern end of the Avenue and nearest to the city, also provide more intimate spaces to reflect their function as pleasure and recreation grounds. The southern orientation of all the prominent demesnes place the areas once occupied by military facilities and functions in the main view, perhaps with the intention of underlining the strength of 19th century government backed by military might.

## 6.4 Views and Prospects

The Phoenix Park is a designed landscape laid out on a monumental scale with wide sweeping views of the landscape and long vistas to important architectural features. Views are important in the Park landscape. They provide integrity to the layout, enhance landscape character, give a sense of space and scale and assist in creating visual interest. While the Park seems generally to be a flat plateau, the land actually falls gradually from north to south. As a consequence, the Park has a generally southerly aspect and views. The most elevated locations offer the best views across the plateau and south to the mountains. The river terraces along the southern edge, which fall steeply from the plateau to the river, offer some of the most dramatic views that in some cases include local features such as the River Liffey and the Irish National War Memorial Gardens. The Park wall and recent urban development have ensured that views to the north and west are thoroughly blocked and views eastwards are available only from a few areas close to the main gates on Parkgate Street.

Decimus Burton made landscape improvements to open up, frame and enhance views with new features and focal points. These are now woven into the mature fabric of the Park giving it character, interest and structure. Burton's design assumed that the Park would be seen from the elevated height of horseback or carriage. By these means visitors would move around the Park at the moderate pace of a horse or a carriage and the landscape would be revealed as a rolling sequence of views.

To facilitate enjoyment of the Park, Burton designed a network of drives that provided easy access by horse drawn vehicle. These also provided views that would sustain the interest of the viewer. The drives, which still provide the designed sequences of views, are arranged in a simple hierarchy:

1. Chesterfield Avenue: the most direct east - west route, designed to demonstrate power and control and to provide impressive views of the three main demesnes and the Park landscape set against distant mountains. Along its route are the principal monuments including the Phoenix Monument midway along the avenue and an equestrian statue of Field Marshal Hugh Gough which once stood a short distance into the Park from Parkgate Street and the Wellington Testimonial.
2. Looped drives provide a route around the outer fringes of the Park and links to Chesterfield Avenue that pass the three demesnes, the various ornamented lodges, Dublin Zoo and several important viewpoints. Some of these routes also pass through important 'improved' landforms such as the Khyber Pass, Furry Glen and Oldtown Wood. These routes are laid out to provide a pleasant drive, on gentle gradients offering the most important landscape views around the Park and south to the mountains.
3. Paths within areas such as Dublin Zoo and the People's Gardens, and drives within the demesnes, generally provide inward views of features within the area concerned, but sometimes allow outward views into the Park.



There are many key locations that provide important views around or out of the Park and help to create the character of the landscape that are worthy of specific mention. The following are examples (see Map 4):

- **Whitefields:** with views southwards from this elevated area of open grassland over the tops of plantations to the Wicklow Mountains.
- **Oldtown Wood:** vista south-southeast through woods along a straight ride towards the Wicklow Mountains.
- **Áras an Uachtaráin:** an important framed vista south from the residence over the Park to the mountains. A reverse view is offered from Chesterfield Avenue to Áras an Uachtaráin.
- **Military Road:** a drive that gives a sequence of near and far views. A viewpoint on the south side of the road, below the Magazine Fort offers some of the best views out from the Park. From this small-elevated promontory wide views include prominent buildings in the city of Dublin, the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, the Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, the Dublin Mountains in the background and of course to the river. This viewpoint lies close to the point where the main north-south axis of the War Memorial Gardens extends to meet the north bank of the river Liffey.
- **Magazine Fort:** the ramparts of this structure provide elevated viewpoints for 360 degrees and unobstructed views west over the Fifteen Acres and southwards out of the Park towards Kilmainham, south and west Dublin and the Wicklow Hills. The lack of public access to the ramparts to enjoy these views is a lost opportunity.
- **Papal Cross:** this recent addition provides a wide view south-southwest to the Wicklow Hills and to much of the southern portions of the Park.

## Views into The Phoenix Park

The Phoenix Park features in views from the surroundings and makes a considerable contribution to the character of adjacent areas, particularly to the south. Close views are important in stitching together the Park and other designed landscapes and prominent buildings. These include the former Clancy Barracks site and the Royal Hospital that face across the River Liffey. Particularly important views are north from the Royal Hospital and the formal gardens at Kilmainham and from the Irish National War Memorial Gardens. Views are also available from the Liffey Valley Park, Chapelizod Bypass, Con Colbert Road, North Circular Road and Parkgate Street.

## Lost Views of The Phoenix Park

Views have been lost from several locations around the Park, some as a result of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century development and some as a consequence of the growth of plantations. One of the most important of these is the long view west to the Park down the quays with the Wellington Testimonial as the focal point. The gradual erosion of this view has reduced the visual links between the Park and the city centre. An example of this is the gradual disappearance of the Wellington Testimonial as viewed from the quays.

## The Effects of Recent Development

Certain developments in and around the Park boundaries have been detrimental to its character and to views, some within Park enclosures. Current or proposed development in prominent sites such as St. James's Gate Brewery, Clancy Barracks, around Heuston Station and along the banks of the River Liffey could further erode the quality of views and the setting of the Park.

# 6



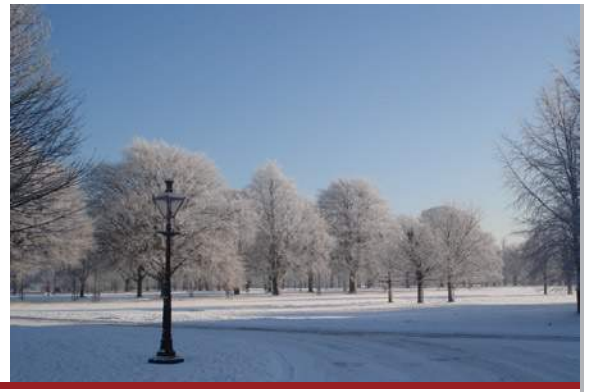
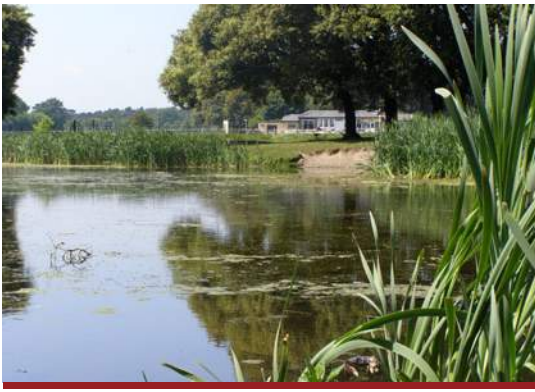
## 6.5 Specific Objectives

The overall objective in respect of the landscape of The Phoenix Park and its important landscape setting is to ensure its continuing protection and conservation and as appropriate, its restoration and enhancement as a place for public recreation and appreciation of designed landscape and historic gardens.

Specific objectives include:

- SO 6.1:** To protect and enhance the unity of the historic Park so that it continues to reflect the scale and definition of space, the broad outlines of plantations, the sweeping views and the historic landscape character that arises from the design and vision of Decimus Burton.
- SO 6.2:** To protect existing views around The Phoenix Park from obstruction, to reinstate lost and obstructed views and to screen intrusive new development.
- SO 6.3:** To protect the alignment of drives so that they can continue to provide designed views and to maintain the existing widths to minimise the adverse visual impact of road surfacing, earthworks, road signs and traffic on the landscape.
- SO 6.4:** To encourage the planning authorities and neighbouring land owners to protect, enhance and have regard to the landscape setting of the Park so that important views and visual links are sustained or reinstated.
- SO 6.5:** To ensure that trees and plantations continue to thrive in the Park, using species that are appropriate to the setting and soil conditions. Such features are fundamental in creating the landscape character by defining spaces and in directing views within the Park. Sustaining the current balance between open space and plantations is essential to the landscape character. The form, structure and species diversity and character of plantations will be conserved and new plantations established by sensitive management including felling, remedial work and appropriate replanting.
- SO 6.6:** To conserve the existing topography of the Park which is integral to the character and quality of the designed landscape and to ensure that if changes to landform are required these reflect and enhance the historic landscape.
- SO 6.7:** To seek the restoration and development of the drainage system to provide treatment of surface waters and to examine the potential to obtain energy from groundwater.
- SO 6.8:** To conserve and enhance buildings, structures and works of art that form focal points for views in the Park and give a special sense of place and, where appropriate to the setting, to reinstate those that have been removed.
- SO 6.9:** To ensure that, where any new features, services and amenities in the Park are required, it is essential that they are appropriate and sensitive to the historic character of the Park.
- SO 6.10:** To continue to develop educational materials on the historical and designed landscape of the Park.





## 6.6 Short-to-Medium Term Actions

The following are identified as actions to be commenced in the short-to-medium term (5 to 10 years). Some measures will continue to be implemented as long-term actions.

### Designation

**Action 6.1:** Develop a landscape plan to be used as a basis for the above. The plan should show:

- The extent and character of sequential changes and improvements associated with Decimus Burton and other earlier or later designers and contributors to the Park;
- The important landforms and water features, archaeological, historical and cultural features and locations that characterise the Park; and
- The pattern of open space, enclosure, views and vistas that define the character of the Park.

### Design and Conservation

**Action 6.2:** Any designs for new buildings, structures and other installations must take account of Objective SO 6.9 above. The minimum requirement for any new development proposal is to include landscape, archaeology, architecture, mobility and biodiversity impact assessments, pre-planning notification and consultation with the Chief Park Superintendent.

**Action 6.3:** New buildings within the Park should be kept to a minimum and generally within areas of the Park which already have buildings.

**Action 6.4:** Implement proposals to link the Irish National War Memorial Gardens with the Park, using a bridge design by Sir Edwin Lutyens as its basis.

**Action 6.5:** Prepare and implement proposals to conserve the Magazine Fort and to bring its buildings back into sustainable use.

**Action 6.6:** Prepare proposals for the sustainable use of the Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) complex, formerly Mountjoy House.

**Action 6.7:** A programme of improvements to the various sports pavilions and grounds will be considered and where the need arises the existing buildings will be demolished.

### Landscape

**Action 6.8:** A comprehensive database or inventory will be created using the proposed Phoenix Park Geographical Information System (see Action 11.12) to record the details and management requirements of all known man-made and natural features in the Park. This database should include:

- Existing and lost important views both internal and external.
- Specific requirements to improve, manage or open up views.
- A register of 'Veteran Trees' and recorded locations. Record condition and prepare individual management plans for each.

# 6



- Documents and other material relevant to the history and development of the Park.
- The database will be continuously developed to take account of changes and should be accessible to the public via The Phoenix Park website.

**Action 6.9:** In addition to continuing to protect and manage existing important views (panoramic views and vistas), significant lost views within the Park that have become obstructed will continue to be restored. Of particular importance are :

- Views to and from the Irish National War Memorial Gardens;
- Views to and from the Royal Hospital and formal gardens at Kilmainham;
- General views south to the Dublin Mountains;
- Views of the Wellington Testimonial from the North Circular Road;
- Views to the churches of Chapelizod, from the Glen Road.

**Action 6.10:** Where appropriate, plantations will be extended to protect the Park's landscape character and quality, by new planting or other measures to improve views to intrusive features within the Park or outside the boundaries.

## Horticulture and Arboriculture

**Action 6.11:** Conserve the overall arboreal character of the Park to reflect the historical design intentions.

**Action 6.12:** Develop a Tree Strategy and register of 'Veteran Trees'. Develop Veteran Tree Management Plans.

**Action 6.13:** Undertake detailed woodland management plans.

**Action 6.14:** When considered appropriate for the protection of trees and woodlands, for public safety, and to protect biodiversity, measures to exclude the public and Park animals from areas of the Park will be implemented by Park management on a temporary or permanent basis.

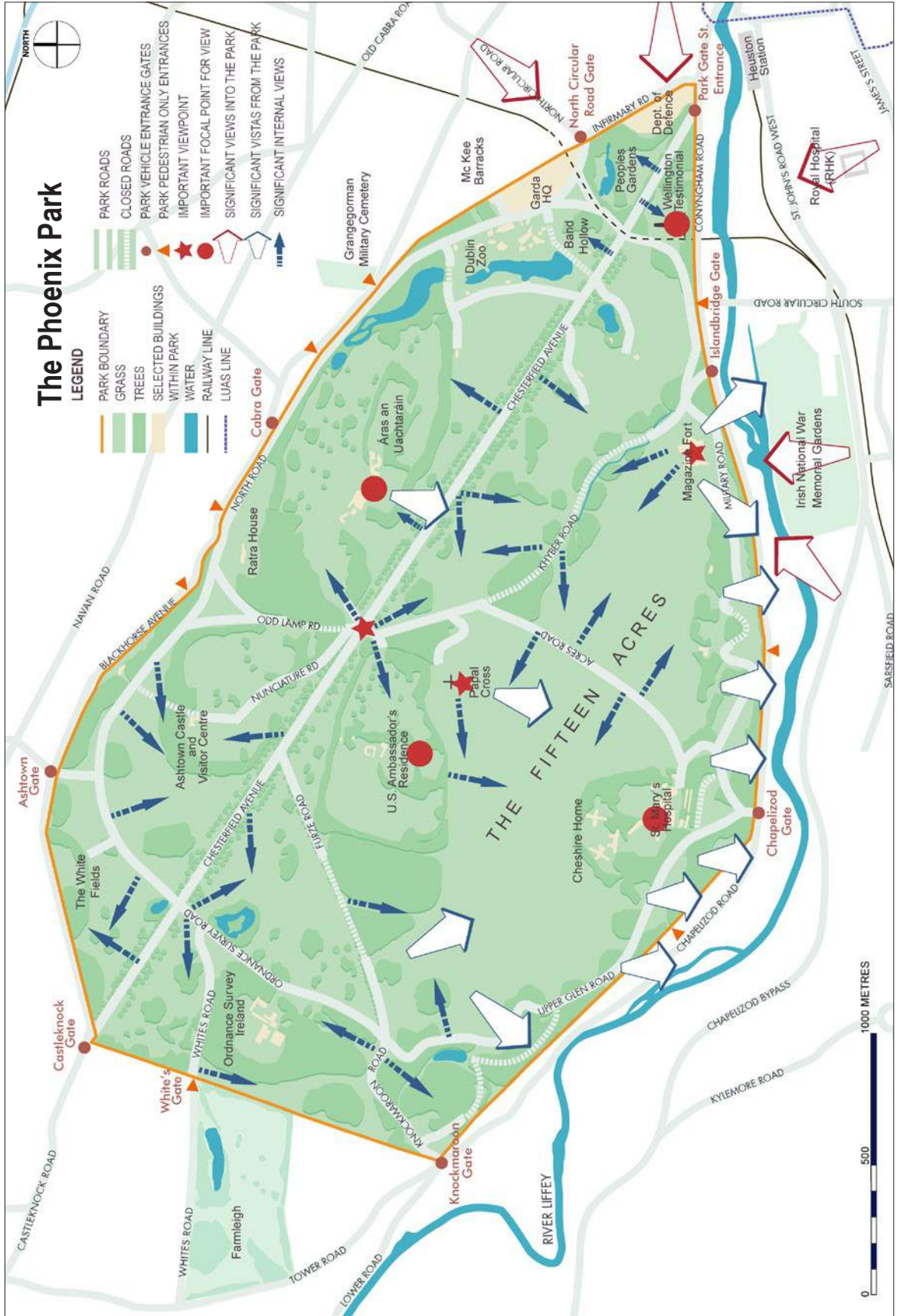
**Action 6.15:** Identify areas where veteran trees and deadwood can be retained for aesthetic and biodiversity value.

**Action 6.16:** Inappropriate tree species already established in plantations will be removed through a programme of gradual felling and appropriate replacement.

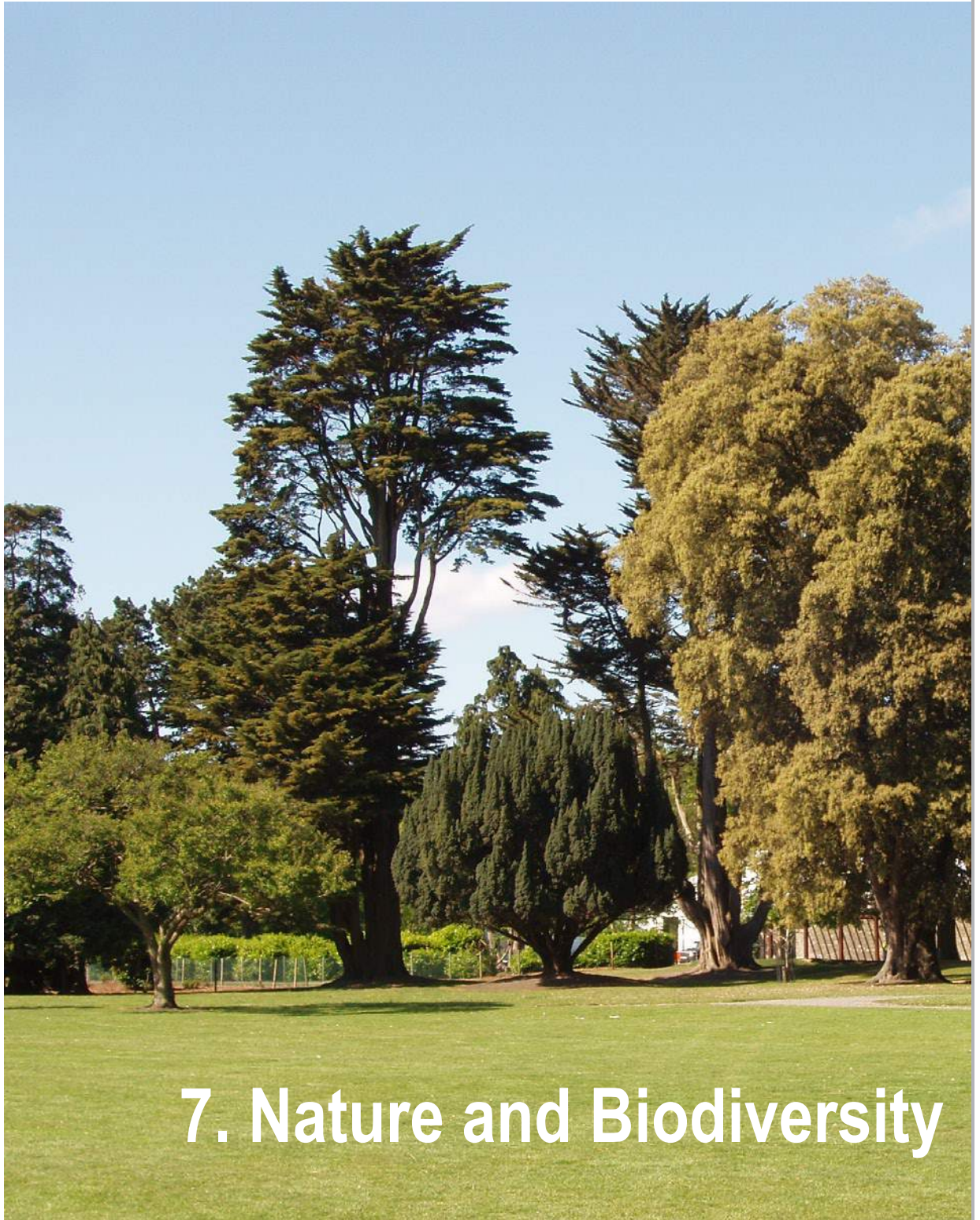
**Action 6.17:** Occurrences of plant diseases will be contained and eradicated in line with best practice guidelines and suitable replacements made.

**Action 6.18:** To restore, where appropriate, the 19<sup>th</sup> century planting layouts, including the People's Gardens.

Map 4: Views and Prospects







# 7. Nature and Biodiversity

# 7



## 7.1 Introduction

The Phoenix Park is a highly important site for biodiversity in Dublin City and is an extremely valuable resource for the people of Dublin and its visitors. It supports 50% of the mammal species found in Ireland and about 35% of bird species. Among the 351 different plant species to be found in the Park there are three that are rare and protected. The Park has retained almost all of its old grasslands and woodlands and also has rare examples of wetlands. In addition, The Phoenix Park is the location of Dublin Zoo, which interprets aspects of biodiversity to over 900,000 people each year.

One animal in particular, the fallow deer, was directly responsible for the development of The Phoenix Park and almost three hundred and fifty years later there still remains a very successful herd in existence.

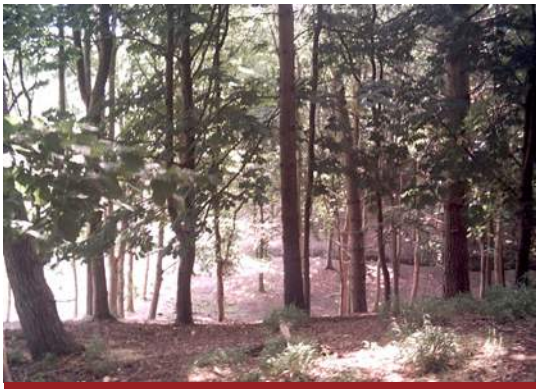
## 7.2 Biodiversity

Biodiversity can be defined as the variability among living organisms, from tiny insects to tall trees, from all sources including, among other things, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

When evaluating biodiversity particular value is given to native species and natural habitats (i.e. species and habitats which can be shown to be present in Ireland or in The Phoenix Park for a very long period). This approach considers more recent arrivals (plants and animals) as being of low interest.

The Phoenix Park has ongoing management measures that are sensitive to biodiversity. Such measures include wildlife sensitive grass management, allowing trees to die naturally within conservation zones and the minimal use of chemicals and fertilizers. Further measures will continue to be introduced in line with the proposals in this Conservation Management Plan and best practice.





## 7.3 Flora

### Habitats

Buildings and roads cover 45% of Dublin City. In The Phoenix Park they cover only 7%. Almost the entire Park consists of green areas which are excellent for wild plants and wildlife. There are twenty four different habitats (places where wild plants and animals live). Woodlands and tree-dominated areas cover 31% or 220 ha and grasslands cover 56% or 398 ha. Habitats include six types of woodland, five types of grassland, as well as hedgerows, scrub, ponds, streams and wet ditches.

Most of the grasslands in the Park were grazed and topped until the 1970s. Since then, with the removal of hay, the diversity of these grasslands has been improving. Extensive open areas of grassland such as the “Fifteen Acres” provide nesting sites for skylark. Grasslands, which are remote from the main thoroughfares, are not cut and thus provide food and shelter for invertebrates and cover for small animals. A rare type of grassland is found on the steep terraces on the south side of the Park. It has numerous colourful wild herbs including the rare and protected plant, Hairy Violet. Small areas of wet grassland, indicated by the presence of rushes, are found particularly near the Oldtown Wood. In one of these is found another rare and protected plant, the grass Meadow Barley.

Important features of habitat biodiversity within The Phoenix Park include:

- High cover of “wood pasture”. This is a type of woodland not well described in Ireland. It is associated with the use of the Park by deer. Its quality depends on age of trees and presence of rare invertebrates.
- Semi-natural habitats, which are rare in Ireland. As well as wood pasture they include:
  - Species-rich calcareous grassland along sand and gravel terraces in the south of the Park, the flora of which includes Hairy Violet, a protected species.
  - Wet grassland, particularly south of the Quarry Lake where the flora contains another protected plant, the grass Meadow Barley.
  - Semi-natural woodland (0.5 ha) dominated by Ash near the Furry Glen.
  - Fringing wetland vegetation around the Fish Pond (now in the Dublin Zoo).
- Presence of semi-natural habitats, which are rare in Dublin. These include almost all the other remaining habitats in The Phoenix Park, wetlands, other woodlands, and grasslands with the exception of buildings, built surfaces and amenity grassland.

### Plants

Important features of native floristic diversity within The Phoenix Park include the Hairy St. John’s Wort, on the edge of cleared woodland in the grounds of Áras an Uachtaráin; Hairy Violet, on the sand and gravel terraces at the south of the Park and the grass Meadow Barley in the wet grassland near the outfall from the Quarry Lake. The former was not seen in the Park since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hairy Violet has been seen in previous decades and is in decline, but no previous record has been made for the grass.



## 7.4 Fauna

### Birds

The Phoenix Park is the most important site for birds in Dublin City. The expanses of semi-natural habitat offer cover, abundant food supplies and nesting sites. Recent surveys recorded seventy two species in the Park throughout the year, of which forty seven are breeding. The Park supports twenty eight species of conservation concern in Ireland including four which are red listed (see Appendix 8). The total number of species found comprises 35% of the total number of species found in Ireland. The greatest density of birds was found in Dublin Zoo where the wild birds share in the food provided to its permanent residents. The lowest density was recorded along Chesterfield Avenue where noise and disturbance makes the area unattractive for birds.

Important features of bird biodiversity in The Phoenix Park include:

- Presence of fourteen species of conservation concern in Europe.
- Presence of four species of bird under threat in Ireland. These are the Shoveller, Golden Plover, Black Headed Gull, and Herring Gull.
- Presence of seventeen Amber listed species of medium conservation concern in Ireland. They include Tufted Duck, Coot, Stock Dove, Skylark and Swallow.
- Breeding Kestrel and breeding Skylark. It is remarkable to find Skylark so near the city centre.
- Presence of Jay and Stock Dove associated with woodlands. These species are an indicator of good old woodlands.

### Mammals

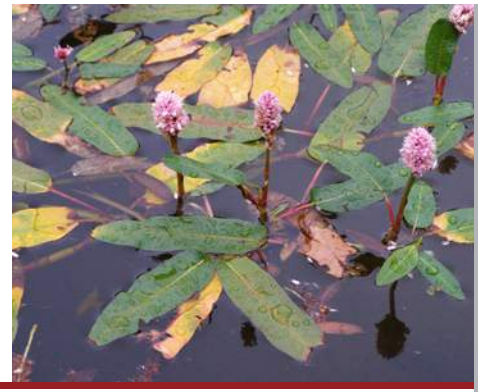
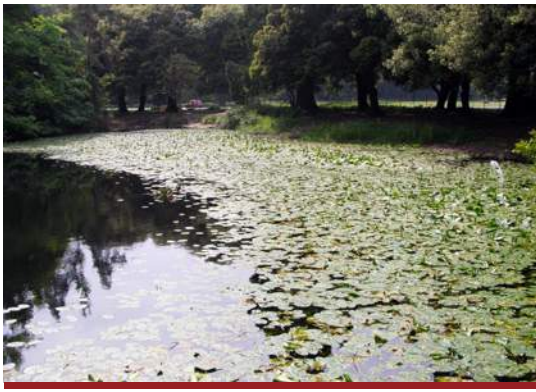
Half of all species of terrestrial mammals found in Ireland can also be found in The Phoenix Park. They are principally found at the western end which is bounded by Farmleigh House and Mount Sackville Secondary School. Hares and red squirrel were present in the recent past but the former were disturbed by dogs and the latter have disappeared through competition with the grey squirrel.

Important features of mammal biodiversity in The Phoenix Park include:

- The established herd of 400-450 fallow deer which descend from the original herd introduced in the 1660s. These numbers are maintained at that level by an annual supervised cull to minimise conflict with vehicles and damage to Park trees and woodlands.
- The presence of over 20 badger setts which are occupied by at least six social groups. They are concentrated around the edges of the Park. Badgers forage in grasslands and signs of digging for earthworms provide evidence of their presence.
- Other animals abundantly present in the Park include foxes, hedgehogs, rabbits, pygmy shrew, house mice, wood mice and brown rats.

A long established tradition is the use of the Park to support research on mammals and particularly deer. As a result staff, residents and visitors are very aware of mammals and there is considerable baseline data on the status of this group of animals.





The Phoenix Park is an important site for bats in Dublin as its lakes, ponds, woodlands and grasslands support significant numbers of insects on which they feed, whilst buildings and old trees provide numerous roosting sites. At dusk, bats can be easily seen foraging over the lakes and ponds or along the tree lines or woodland rides within the Park. The greatest amount of bat activity is associated with Dublin Zoo.

Important features of bat biodiversity within The Phoenix Park include:

- Six of the ten bat species found in Ireland are present in the Park including species of Pipistrelle not previously recorded in Dublin City. Natterers' and Whiskered Bats are also present.
- Evidence for large roosts at several locations (chimney in St. Mary's Hospital Complex, Ordnance Survey Ireland; west of Dublin Zoo).
- Minor roosts in The Cooley Chapel in St. Mary's Hospital Complex, The Park Superintendent's Lodge and Magazine Fort.

## 7.5 Wetlands

The wetlands of The Phoenix Park (lakes, ponds, streams and drainage ditches) are of particular value for biodiversity as wetlands are rare in Dublin and they thus provide habitats for species which are rare elsewhere in the city. Dublin Zoo contains the largest areas of wetland. The lake in the African Plains section of the Zoo, which covers 2.8 ha, is the largest lake in Dublin City.

Water quality in ponds and watercourses is typical of urban streams and their origin means they have limited capacity to flush out pollutants. Water quality in the lower lake of Dublin Zoo is poor due to the concentration of animals. It contains specimen size eels due to the vast amount of food available. The presence of eels proves the ability of this species to travel through culverts from the Liffey. Water quality from the lake improves as it flows through the pond in the People's Gardens. The pond in Áras an Uachtaráin has good water quality and supports stoneworts and invertebrates associated with clean water such as Mayfly, Three Cased Caddisfly, Dragonfly and Damselfly. The pond in the People's Gardens is fringed by a mature reedbed.

Coarse fish such as common Rudd, Perch, Tench or Roach are found in all ponds. The small native fish Three Spined Stickleback is also found. Ponds provide a home for unwanted goldfish. Another exotic species is the North American Shrimp. It was first recorded in Ireland from a pond in the Park and is now present in all ponds. The original native shrimp is present only in the Khyber stream. Emergent vegetation on the margins of wetlands is important for the resident breeding Mallard, Coot and Moorhen. Wetlands are also used by spawning frogs. The most important spawning sites include wet ditches at the base of ha-ha's. Each spring, from late January onwards, masses of frog spawn may be seen in these locations.

Within the Park, important features of wetland biodiversity include:

- The emergent wetland vegetation around Glen Lake and the Fish Pond in Dublin Zoo, which is important for birds, plants and aesthetically.
- Presence of charophytes indicating relatively good water quality.
- Presence of Rudd and Tench with potential to improve fishery interest in all ponds.



## 7.6 Specific Objectives

The overall objective is to secure and sustain the biodiversity value of The Phoenix Park into the future, to protect key habitats and species, enhance their status, recreate valuable wildlife habitats and introduce appropriate species to increase the biodiversity value of the Park and its habitats.

Specific objectives for biodiversity include:

- SO 7.1:** To continue to adopt management measures sensitive to biodiversity, to identify areas where such measures would have precedence and to develop action plans to maximise biodiversity.
- SO 7.2:** To raise awareness of biodiversity and produce guidelines on biodiversity management in co-operation with all stakeholders, institutions and residents.
- SO 7.3:** To protect and enhance the condition of rare and important species of flora and fauna.
- SO 7.4:** To continue research and development and monitoring on all aspects of biodiversity, in order to support the decision making process in management practices for the overall enhancement of biodiversity.

## 7.7 Short-to-Medium Term Actions

The following are identified as actions to be commenced in the short-to-medium term (5 to 10 years). Some measures will continue to be implemented as long-term actions.

### Habitat and Species Diversity

- Action 7.1** Develop management measures that are sensitive to biodiversity, including the identification of sanctuary areas in which such measures would take precedence.
- Action 7.2:** Develop management prescriptions to ensure survival and propagation of rare plants - Hairy St. John's Wort, Hairy Violet and Meadow Barley.
- Action 7.3:** Consider planting native woodlands in grasslands that are becoming rank where this does not conflict with the objective to protect and enhance the historic landscape.
- Action 7.4:** Adopt a long-term land use/landscaping strategy, which will aim to maintain and improve connectivity between similar habitats and encourage suitable species back into the Park.
- Action 7.5:** Improve the cover of habitats, which would support greater diversity such as native woodlands, shrubberies and wetlands.

### Grassland Management

- Action 7.6:** Adopt the principles (given suitable climatic and ground conditions), of cutting the grass as late as possible within the season, extending hay making to the optimum area possible and minimising mulching in species rich grassland, to maximise floristic diversity (reduce fertility) and to provide food and nesting sites for birds.



**Action 7.7:** Vary cutting regimes in grassland areas near other habitats to increase diversity.

**Action 7.8:** In the medium term, encourage restoration of grazing in the various enclosures, or the planting of spring cereals to provide food for birds, small mammals (eaten by owls). Grassland relevés, previously surveyed should be resurveyed to discover changes in species and cover in high value areas .

**Action 7.9:** Continue removal of undesirable species of plants such as Ragwort through manual and organic means.

## Woodland Management

**Action 7.10:** Undertake a woodland ecological survey.

**Action 7.11:** In anticipation of Action 7.10, and as preliminary guidelines only:

- Fence off rare semi-natural woodland (Ash dominated in the Furry Glen) and nearby rabbit warren.
- Fence off other recently established planted woodlands with potential in the Park.
- Assess and manage demesne woodlands to the appropriate requirements, planting natives where possible. Establish more native woodlands where possible, in keeping with the historic landscape.
- Leave trees to die naturally, leave deadwood on site (in selected areas) where there is no danger to Park users.
- Leave ivy on trees unless this impacts on the safety of the tree.
- Identify blocks to be felled, fenced off, linked or supplemented with native trees and shrubs.
- Consider planting sacrificial species (bramble) to lessen the browsing impact of deer on trees.
- Increase area of semi-natural woodland to maximise connectivity and by expanding adjacent to existing old woodland.

**Action 7.12:** Initiate research in 'lowland wood pasture' and invertebrates associated with old trees.

**Action 7.13:** Control vermin such as the grey squirrel (which damage newly planted trees).





## Wetlands

- Action 7.14:** Examine water courses and water bodies to identify opportunities for enhancement of landscape quality and biodiversity by:
- Reinstating open, naturalistic channels.
  - Dredging heavily silted water bodies to restore open water and form naturalistic margins.
  - Thinning or removing overly dense tree canopies at the Glen Pond to remove trees on eastern side to promote increased growth of emergent vegetation.
  - Undertake the feasibility of re-profiling work in the Citadel Pond (too shallow) and around the Machine Pond and Quarry Lake to create more semi-wetland habitat.
- Action 7.15:** Apply SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) principles to improve the management of run off from hard surfaces.
- Action 7.16:** Consider the feasibility of constructed wetland systems, to improve water quality, taking into account the historic landscape setting.
- Action 7.17:** Develop fishery potential of ponds.
- Action 7.18:** Examine local aquifer in terms of volume and quality and map depth to bedrock and location of water table with a view to developing an independent water supply.
- Action 7.19:** Re-open culverts to improve visual amenity and increase the extent of wetland habitat.

## Mammals and Birds

- Action 7.20:** Maintain the optimum deer population for sustainability, nature and landscape conservation and continue to monitor and manage the deer population.
- Action 7.21:** Map all badger setts and provide guidelines for works in their vicinity.
- Action 7.22:** Identify breeding areas for ground nesting birds in grasslands through a further stage of survey work.
- Action 7.23:** Secure appropriate mowing regimes in areas identified as having significance for mammals and birds.
- Action 7.24:** Seek to increase areas of natural shrubberies, bramble and nettles.
- Action 7.25:** When reconstructing buildings consider the installation of platforms, bird nest boxes and bat boxes.
- Action 7.26:** Continue survey of potential bat roost sites and adopt best practice in construction, building restoration and tree felling to protect bats.



## Research, Monitoring and Education

- Action 7.27:** Research sources of water for all ponds and establish condition of water before entering the Park and when it leaves.
- Action 7.28:** Research feasibility of re-introducing certain mammal and bird species such as red squirrel and owl to the Park.
- Action 7.29:** Monitor biodiversity on a regular basis using results of surveys carried out previously as a baseline and including the development of indicators to record change in the biodiversity value of the Park.
- Action 7.30:** Continue research on the biodiversity of Park woodlands, veteran trees and shrubs.
- Action 7.31:** Record and monitor the effects on biodiversity of any new management initiatives.
- Action 7.32:** Establish a liaison with the National Biodiversity Records Centre.
- Action 7.33:** Produce guidelines on biodiversity management for Park enclosures and continue to develop biodiversity training for all relevant personnel.
- Action 7.34:** Develop links with biodiversity and management specialists in NGOs, local authorities, state agencies and research institutions and managers of similar parks worldwide to promote awareness, provide access to research and allow exchange of experience.



Map 5: Habitats

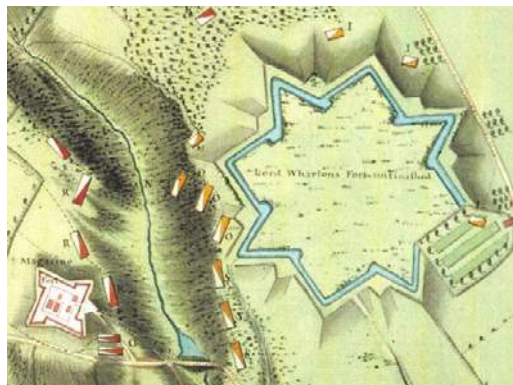


# 8



## 8. Archaeology, Architecture and the Built Heritage

8



## 8.1 Archaeology

### Archaeological Significance

The unique archaeological significance of The Phoenix Park is that its landscape has remained in continuous pasture for so long. As broad swathes of the Park have been retained as open pasture, previously unrecorded monuments, or the vestigial remains of identified monuments, may survive to be rediscovered just under the sod.

The Park is home to several monuments of archaeological importance including cemetery mounds, enclosures, dwelling sites, wells, tower house, star shaped fortifications, magazine fort, etc. It is rare indeed that the remains of a prehistoric monument several thousands of years old, such as the cemetery mound at St. Mary's Hospital, would survive so close to the heart of a modern city.

### Prehistory

Prior to its enclosure as a deerpark, The Phoenix Park was an occupied landscape. People lived there, worked there, moved through and across the Park, died and were buried there.

From the Neolithic period onwards, from about 5,500 years ago, signs of human activity are notable on the narrow, high strip of land which forms the southern edge to The Phoenix Park between Knockmaroon and Islandbridge. Ancient peoples may have been drawn to the commanding position of lands overlooking the river Liffey and to the panoramic views across the river valley to the Dublin mountains. Evidence for Neolithic and Bronze Age populations is illustrated by the construction and usage of a cemetery mound (RMP No. DU018-00711) known as "Knockmary", deriving its name from "Cnoc-Maraidhe" meaning the hill of the mariners. This mound was located in Chapelizod townland, to the west of St. Mary's Hospital. Originally it measured 40 m in overall width and was up to 3 m in height. Excavation of the mound revealed a central cist comprising five upright stones supporting a large capstone. The cist is the only element of the mound which survives today. It contained at least three individual inhumations (unburnt burial), all male, one of which was incomplete. The grave goods buried with these men include a shell necklace, a bone toggle and a flint blade.

A later phase of burials is illustrated by four small sepulchral vase style pots containing the ashes of burnt individuals. These cremations date from the Early Bronze Age or just over four thousand years old.

Another monument, which may be prehistoric in origin, has been recorded on all Ordnance Survey maps, lying a couple of hundred metres to the south-east of Ashtown Castle. It is marked as a mounded rise in the pasture and is recorded as RMP No. DU018-00703.

### Early Medieval Period

Aerial photography in the area of the "Fifteen Acres" reveals circular and linear earthworks. These may reflect Early Medieval settlements or farmsteads known as ringforts. These settlements commonly date from 500 to 1100 AD. Alternatively these earthworks may be the result of intensive use of the Park for military exercises.

### The Viking Period

Evidence for the Viking period is notable in the area of The Phoenix Park. Gravel excavations into the banks of the Liffey at Kilmainham and Islandbridge in the 1840s and 1850s, and again in the 1930s, revealed 40





graves. This is the largest Viking cemetery found outside Scandinavia. One of these graves, an outlier to the cemetery proper, is recorded as being within The Phoenix Park. The grave contained the remains of a woman with a pair of bronze oval Scandinavian brooches, one of which was attached to a gilt bronze mount. The brooches are datable to the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century. The decoration on the mount has been interpreted as dating to the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This burial was found near the Wellington Testimonial in 1876 but the archaeological context of these finds was not fully recorded.

## Medieval to Post-Medieval

In 1177, Hugh Tyrell, Baron of Castleknock, granted lands at Kilmainham to the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitallers). The grant included a portion of the land that now makes up The Phoenix Park in addition to the lands to the south of the Liffey stretching to the present site of Kilmainham Goal.

At the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1542, the priory's lands and hospital were confiscated by King Henry VIII. South of the river the priory appears to have been used as a viceregal residence during the reigns of successive sovereigns.

Ashtown Castle (RMP No. DU018-00702) is the oldest building in the Park. It is a tower house or fortified dwelling which may date from as early as the 1430s as it is built to dimensions which conform to a grant for the construction of castles at that time. The tower is three stories high and is constructed of limestone rubble masonry. It has a square turret on the south-east side and a gable and is surmounted by a chimney at the east side. The window openings are simple and flat-headed and a blocked door opening is visible on the northern side of the building. Timbers within the roof have been dated to the early 1600s but this may represent a phase of rebuilding. Around 1760 the castle was incorporated into a larger Georgian house (Ashtown Lodge) which has since been demolished.

In 1609 Sir Richard Sutton was granted the castle at Kilmainham and surrounding lands and by 1611 he had assigned this land to Sir Edward Fisher. Fisher's lands included all lands north of the Liffey from Oxmantown to Chapelizod which comprised 330 acres of the Kilmainham castle demesne and 60 acres known as Kilmainham Wood.

Sir Edward erected a country house (DU018-00713) at Thomas's Hill believed to have once been known as Isolde's Hill. The house was named "Phoenix". In 1618 Fisher surrendered his lands to the King. The Crown purchased additional lands at Chapelizod, Grangegorman, Castleknock and Ashtown. These lands form the core of the Park. The "Phoenix" was used as a viceregal residence up to 1665. The house was demolished in 1734 to make way for the powder magazine or Magazine Fort (DU018-00719).

The buried remains of a star-shaped fortification (DU018-00712) may survive beneath the sod to be rediscovered by archaeological investigations. It was constructed in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century near to the Dublin Gate in the southeast end of the Park. During the 1830s and 1840s a number of improvements were made to the Park under the direction of Decimus Burton, including the levelling and in-filling of the star-shaped fort and underground drains which replaced open drains. The OS 1837 map shows part of this fort which is labelled as 'old star fort'. Currently there are sports grounds on the site.

The idea of forming a Royal deer park (DU018-00701) was first mooted about 1600 during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) but nothing appears to have happened at that time. It was further considered by Lord Falkland in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1623 a reference is made relating to a proposed Royal Park concerning an individual employed by:

*"Royal command in His Majesty's park which was to be enclosed near Dublin for game and breeding of deer"*



The Archaeological Survey of Ireland, which is part of the National Monuments Service maintains and updates an inventory of archaeological monuments. Full descriptions of the monuments recorded within the Park are available from the Sites and Monuments Archive of the National Monuments Service.

## 8.2 Architecture and the Built Environment

The architectural and artistic significance of The Phoenix Park, in an international context, is due partly to the landscape setting surrounding important buildings and monuments, partly to the current high standards of maintenance of the whole, and partly to the international renown of architects and artists whose work survives. These include Decimus Burton, Thomas Cooley, Bartholomew Cramillion, John Henry Foley (whose statues of Gough and Carlisle survive, but elsewhere), James Gandon, Francis Johnston, Edwin Lutyens (recognising the impact of the Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge on views from within the Park), Raymond McGrath, Ninian Niven, Andrew O'Connor, Edward Lovett Pearce (whose name is tentatively associated with Mountjoy Barracks), Scott Tallon Walker, Robert Smirke, Richard Turner and John Wood the elder.

In the relatively small compass of a single park, this is an extraordinary assembly. It is joined by names of importance in a more limited national context such as William D. Butler, John Ensor, Thomas Farrell, Harold Leask, Jacob Owen, J. Howard Pentland, Michael Stapleton, Robert Woodgate and others.

Much of the work associated with the above artists and architects is of a conventionally monumental nature (e.g. McGrath's shelter in the People's Gardens and O'Connor's Abraham Lincoln). Other significant work, including the boundary wall, is more anonymous. Demesne walls are a characteristic feature of the Irish countryside but no other demesne wall in the country, of equal age and extent, has been documented and studied to the same degree.

Other features of the Park landscape such as railings, gates, lamp posts, modern notices, footpaths, etc., while of varying historical value and with varying conservation requirements, all have a significant impact on the artistic and architectural value of the whole.

A proper understanding of the architectural and artistic significance of the Park will emerge principally from continued historical investigation of its development since its creation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

A recent description of the built environment of the Park is provided in the publication *'Dublin, the City within the Grand and Royal Canals and the Circular Road with the Phoenix Park'* by Dr. Christine Casey. This, taken together with *'An Illustrated History of the Phoenix Park, Landscape and Management to 1880'* by Dr. John McCullen, provides an authoritative account of the principal buildings, monuments, and landscape features of the Park. These studies, however, do not aim to provide exhaustive inventories of artefacts in the Park. Important details such as railings, bollards, gates, lamp standards, etc., many of which are of significance, need to be studied historically and individually listed and recorded.

The historic buildings and building complexes which are considered to be 'at risk' due to their poor condition, current dereliction or under-use, or a future uncertainty over use, are an important part of the cultural heritage of the Park and their future protection through sustainable re-use and appropriate repair, restoration and/or adaptation is necessary.

### Lighting

The Phoenix Park is one of the few remaining public areas in Europe that still relies on gas for public lighting. The decision to preserve this unique system was made to support the conservation of the historic fabric of the



Park and to retain low levels of light pollution so that the Park can remain one of the few locations in Dublin where star gazing is possible. Gas was first introduced into the Park in 1859 by the Hibernian Gas Company and is a major visual element in the Park's landscape. The Turner foundry produced some of the cast iron light standards used. The Phoenix entrance to Áras an Uachtaráin has recently been floodlit and is complemented by the illumination of the Phoenix column and the entrance to the U.S. Ambassador's Residence nearby.

### 8.3 Specific Objectives

The overall objective in respect of the architectural and archaeological heritage of The Phoenix Park is to ensure its on-going protection and conservation and, as appropriate, its restoration or adaptation, accepting the principle that management must be progressive as well as conservative.

Specific objectives include the following:

- SO 8.1:** To record a comprehensive inventory/audit, with periodic reviews, of the full extent of the archaeological, architectural, engineering and artistic heritage of The Phoenix Park, including buildings, monuments, other structures and artefacts, details such as ironwork, gardens, forecourts approaches, the spaces between buildings, etc.
- SO 8.2:** To assess the significance of the items recorded in the inventory both as individual structures, as collections or groups and as spaces, to identify potential threats and to seek appropriate designation status.
- SO 8.3:** To identify infrastructure and artefacts (including street furniture, fences, railings, etc.) that are inappropriate to the setting of The Phoenix Park and to seek for replacement with more appropriate forms.
- SO 8.4:** To encourage and facilitate further studies of the archaeological, architectural, cultural and artistic heritage (including excavations, where appropriate) and to promote a better understanding of the importance and significance of this heritage.
- SO 8.5:** To monitor the condition and use (or lack of use) of the built heritage of The Phoenix Park and to take measures to ensure that all uses are appropriate.
- SO 8.6:** To identify and seek to resolve potential conflicts between uses, such as those that might arise between architectural conservation and biodiversity.
- SO 8.7:** To promote and facilitate high standards of conservation, architectural design, construction and craftsmanship in all developments within the Park.
- SO 8.8:** To ensure that the DoEHLG Guidelines for Protection of Architectural Heritage be adopted as best practice for all works in the Park.
- SO 8.9:** To maintain the current lighting levels within the Park so as to minimise levels of light pollution.



## 8.4 Short-to-Medium Term Actions

The following are identified as actions to be undertaken in the short-to-medium term (5 to 10 years). Some measures will continue to be implemented as long-term actions.

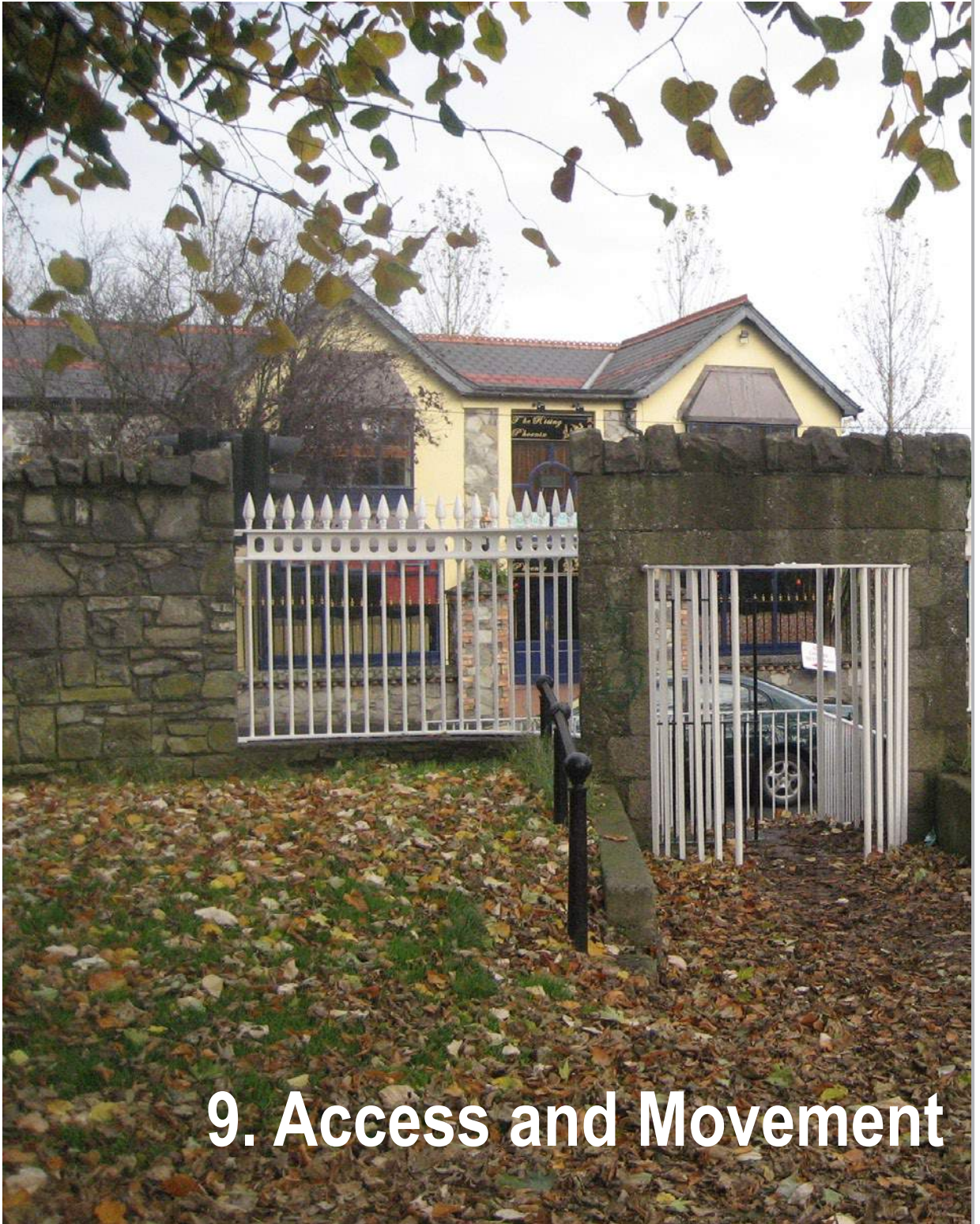
- Action 8.1:** Adopt principles for managing conservation and development of the architectural heritage, which include respect for items such as existing materials and structures, surviving examples of craftwork, original use of buildings and remaining evidence of subsequent history and sustainability. These principles would also attend to the desirability of interventions being reversible, and would allow (where necessary) for the possibility of modern extensions, being in other than historically replicative styles. These principles should be reviewed as acceptable theory is improved upon.
- Action 8.2:** Undertake, as a matter of priority, studies of key buildings and groups of buildings to identify and assess their condition and to consider appropriate new or alternative uses. Such buildings will include the Magazine Fort, the Ordnance Survey complex, Garda terrace and St. Mary's Hospital. These studies should set out structure specific proposals and principles, including strategies for repair, replacement, adaptation, extension and new build. Works should be prioritised in terms of urgency of works, condition, significance of structure, available resources, etc., with proposals for temporary works, as necessary.
- Action 8.3:** Conserve the Francis Johnston farm buildings below St. Mary's Hospital, and the later Francis Johnston additions to the Magazine Fort, having first commissioned feasibility studies for the reuse of the Fort and of other buildings in the Park, likely to be faced with a change of use.
- Action 8.4:** Commission a comprehensive and prioritised inventory and assessment of the full extent of the archaeological, architectural and artistic heritage of The Phoenix Park. As part of this inventory, identify artefacts (such as railings, lamp posts, etc.) that are of inappropriate design or quality and seek to have these replaced. All inventories to be reviewed periodically and should be recorded in the GIS Database. These inventories should include outline assessment of condition and significance.
- Action 8.5** Establish and implement a preventative maintenance programme for the historic buildings and complexes within the Park. Seek the agreement of all property owners within the Park to implement the preventative maintenance programme.
- Action 8.6** Seek the replacement of poorly designed and constructed buildings within the Park with more sensitively designed buildings, for example, some of the modern sports pavilions.
- Action 8.7** Implement more efficient energy sustainable design solutions in line with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht guidance for all building works. In doing so, due regard should be given to solutions, specifications and methodologies appropriate to the particular building.



- Action 8.8:** Undertake the design and construction of a bridge linking the Irish National War Memorial Gardens with The Phoenix Park in line with Sir Edwin Lutyens original intention. This would form part of a Military Heritage Trail linking Dublin Castle, the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Kilmainham Jail, the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, the Magazine Fort and Collins Barracks Museum, as well as part of a broader Heritage Trail for Dublin City.
- Action 8.9:** Actively seek the restoration of the statues of Gough and Carlisle.
- Action 8.10:** Publish '*An Illustrated History of the Phoenix Park, Landscape and Management to 1880*' by Dr. John McCullen.
- Action 8.11:** Reinstate the Jacob Owen designed Victorian glasshouse (1850s) in the walled garden at Ashtown Demesne.
- Action 8.12:** Improve The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre complex to cater for increasing numbers with appropriate facilities to include a shop, education centre, a children's education resource laboratory, interactive interpretation material and display in keeping with a heritage park of this scale and importance.
- Action 8.13:** Continue the programme of restoration of Park lodges in keeping with best practice and develop a policy for occupation and usage of same.
- Action 8.14:** Commission an examination of all available aerial photography of the Park in order to fully identify and inventorise earthwork monuments visible from aerial photographs.
- Action 8.15:** Carry out geophysical analysis and, if required, targeted test trenching in advance of any ground disturbance associated with planting, landscaping or development works within The Phoenix Park to mitigate the impacts on any buried archaeological features.
- Action 8.16:** Carry out geophysical analysis in the environs of identified archaeological monuments within the Park in order to identify the full extent and nature of these monuments.
- Action 8.17:** Notify the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht of any newly identified monuments of archaeological significance within the Park.
- Action 8.18** Develop and implement a co-ordinated design strategy for the proposed new public realm infrastructure arising from specific objectives and actions set out elsewhere in this Plan. These include new signage, street furniture (benches, seats, bins, etc.), lighting, etc., which should be designed with regard to the existing historic public realm infrastructure as well as accessibility, legibility, impact on natural heritage, etc.



# 9



## 9. Access and Movement



## 9.1 Introduction

The Phoenix Park occupies a strategic position within the Greater Dublin Area. In particular, it lies between the city centre and the major developments of the Blanchardstown area. This has led to a high demand for road traffic through the Park. Furthermore, increased development and traffic congestion throughout the surrounding areas has led to an increased pattern of north-south orbital vehicle traffic through the Park via the side gates. As a result, The Phoenix Park at present caters for an average 25,000 vehicles per day, the majority of which are merely passing through. This leads to significant levels of conflict with dedicated users of the Park's facilities, including car users, public transport users, cyclists, and pedestrians. The extent of through traffic has a negative impact on the overall amenity value of the Park.

The Park caters for millions of casual visitors each year, and there are approximately 2000 employees working in the various institutions, and a further 100 residents who access the Park on a daily basis.

## 9.2 Description

Physical access into the Park is through eight vehicular and pedestrian entrances, and a further eight pedestrian-only entrances. Until recently, there was no public transport access into the Park, although a number of bus routes provide access to perimeter gates, and the transport hub at Heuston is close by. Because of the size of the Park, this presents problems for users of public transport, and further encourages the growth of private car access into the Park. In 2008 a pilot year-round Phoenix Park Shuttle Bus Service was established to provide an alternative option for people wishing to access The Phoenix Park. This pilot project terminated in 2010 and following a review of usage patterns, a similar type of service should be considered for the future.

Internally, within the Park, there is a variety of roads, walkways, trails and cycle lanes, all with varying degrees of accessibility. The level of accessibility for these various features has still to be classified and in turn publicised. There are also a number of institutions within the Park, which have restricted access due to the nature of the Institution; e.g. Deerfield House (the US Ambassador's residence) is not open to the public. Áras an Uachtaráin has limited opening periods for public viewing.

The Phoenix Park has over 25 kilometres of roadways (3 km of which are closed to through traffic), 17 kilometres of cycle lanes and 27 kilometres of surfaced footpaths. These trails and footpaths complement a range of closed and semi-closed roads with low traffic volumes, which are ideal for cycling and touring. Pedestrian trails are on designated footpaths and also off-path through woodlands and grasslands. These are used extensively for recreational purposes and together comprise approximately 50 kilometres of available routes.

A bike hire facility was introduced in 2007 at the Parkgate Street entrance and has been hugely successful to date. It has facilitated local people, tourists and schools in gaining a greater understanding and appreciation of the important setting of the Park. This sustainable mode of transport gives added value to The Phoenix Park.

## 9.3 Issues

Unregulated vehicular traffic and indiscriminate parking poses one of the greatest threats to the Park in terms not only of its management, conservation and presentation as a very special historic landscape, but also because of the dangers posed to users wishing to enjoy the recreational and amenity facility. Over recent





years and decades the private vehicle, and its perceived needs, has assumed ever greater dominance and sway in the Park.

At times of heavy traffic, particular safety issues arise for pedestrians crossing Chesterfield Avenue and also on the North or Back Road. Cyclists are often forced out into heavy traffic at these times, creating unacceptable levels of conflict.

The greatest problems in relation to access and movement within The Phoenix Park are:

- The continuing high level of through traffic, including unauthorised heavy goods and commercial vehicles and their impact on the amenities of the Park, the roads and all the Park users.
- The unacceptably high levels of commuter parking, restricting access for Park users and having a negative impact on the visual amenities within the Park.
- The dearth of good public transport options for members of the public.
- The lack of an overall defined access and mobility policy in line with current legislation, government policy and Park requirements.

The Commissioners of Public Works and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht have responsibility for the overall management of The Phoenix Park. This includes general traffic policy and management. The Phoenix Park is also a public place within the meaning of the Road Traffic Acts. As such, An Garda Síochána has a key role in enforcing traffic regulations and in the preservation of order within the Park.

A number of permanent road closures have been made in the recent past, which have had a positive effect on general road safety within the Park and helped to restrict traffic growth. At the same time, Park management continues to implement temporary road and gate closures where required, to facilitate various events throughout the Park. This is necessary for The Phoenix Park to function more effectively as a heritage park and a major urban recreational space and this also has its own limiting effect on through traffic.

The introduction of The Phoenix Park Bus Shuttle service as a pilot project in 2008 provided residents and employees within the Park, as well as the general public, with a viable public transport option and greater mobility during daylight hours. The level of demand for use of the facilities of The Phoenix Park, and the increasing traffic levels both of Park users and through traffic, has generated increased safety problems, particularly in areas of high activity. This in turn has created a growing demand for dedicated parking areas. A new car park was built in 2008 to help cater for this demand and to remove some car parking from the existing roads.

Specific measures need to be taken to redress the balance to ensure that the general public can enjoy the Park as primarily a place of historic serene beauty, where passive recreational activities open to all enjoy the greatest possible priority. The achievement and realisation of this core objective must have central focus in all management policies. The cooperation of all stakeholders, including the Local Authorities in their traffic management and planning roles, must be canvassed and harnessed. Items, which would arise for consideration in this regard, might include:

- Prohibition of free public parking in one continuous period of more than 3-4 hours.
- Prohibition or restriction of north-south through traffic.
- Closure of most roads to vehicular traffic at evenings and weekends.



- Encouragement of visitors to the Zoo to park outside the Park - by providing shuttle transport from an external car park to the Zoo.

Having regard to the reality of traffic volumes, particularly from Castleknock to Parkgate Street, and the need to maintain the road to a reasonable and safe level, Chesterfield Avenue should be reconstructed and maintained to an appropriate standard for continued medium to long term use by current levels of vehicular traffic.

## 9.4 Specific Objectives

The completion of the Phoenix Park Transportation Study in 2006, which set down an agreed strategy, and a series of objectives, crystallised most of the major issues in relation to access and movement within The Phoenix Park. A number of initiatives proposed within this strategy have already been implemented.

Specific objectives relating to access and movement include the following:

- SO 9.1 To reduce the environmental impact of traffic travelling through The Phoenix Park.
- SO 9.2 To improve access to the Park for recreational use, taking into account the requirements of connectivity between different areas within the Park, the relationship between the Park and the surrounding catchment, and general movement through the Park for non-car users.
- SO 9.3 To manage parking provision within the Park, primarily to serve those intending to use the Phoenix Park, and not to be compromised by commuters or other non-Park users.
- SO 9.4 To improve safety for all Park users such that active reductions in accidents can be expected.

## 9.5 Short-to-Medium Term Actions

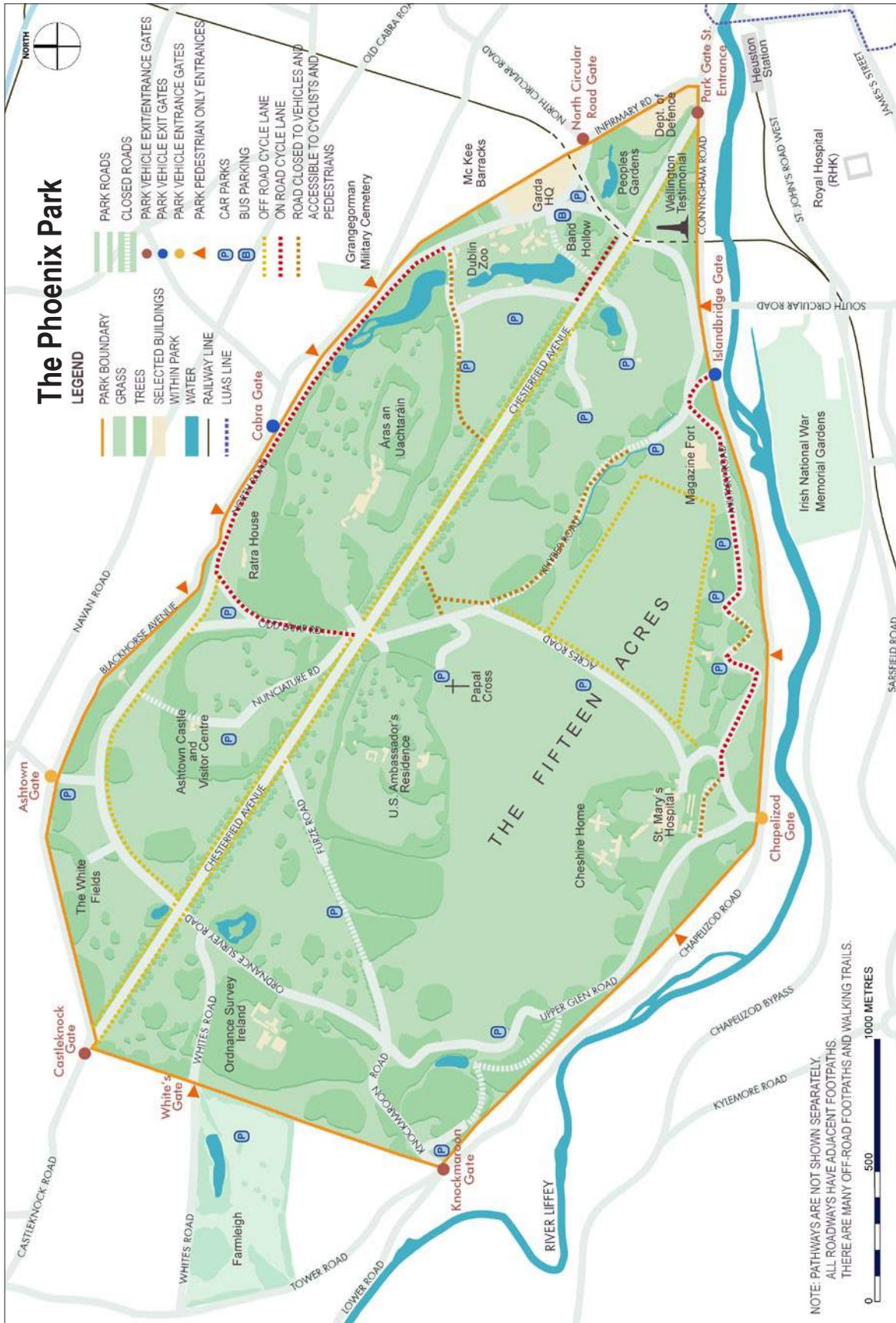
The following are identified as actions to be undertaken in the short-to-medium term (5 to 10 years). Some measures will continue to be implemented as long-term actions.

- Action 9.1 Develop a universal access and mobility policy for the Park, together with ancillary maps and publications, which would enable critical areas to be identified and monitored. It would also help to define ultimate capacity levels for particular areas of the Park, where in the future, due to continued visitor growth, it may be necessary to restrict access at particular times.
- Action 9.2 Consider restricting unnecessary traffic from the Park, but in so doing to take account of the function of certain vehicular routes through The Phoenix Park, as well as addressing the impact of closure on any particular route on the surrounding area. Restriction of unnecessary and or through traffic at the weekends and off-peak hours will also be implemented.
- Action 9.3 Seek legislation to facilitate the active enforcement of regulations in respect of speeding, unauthorised parking and the implementation of the rules of the road, in liaison with An Garda Síochána.

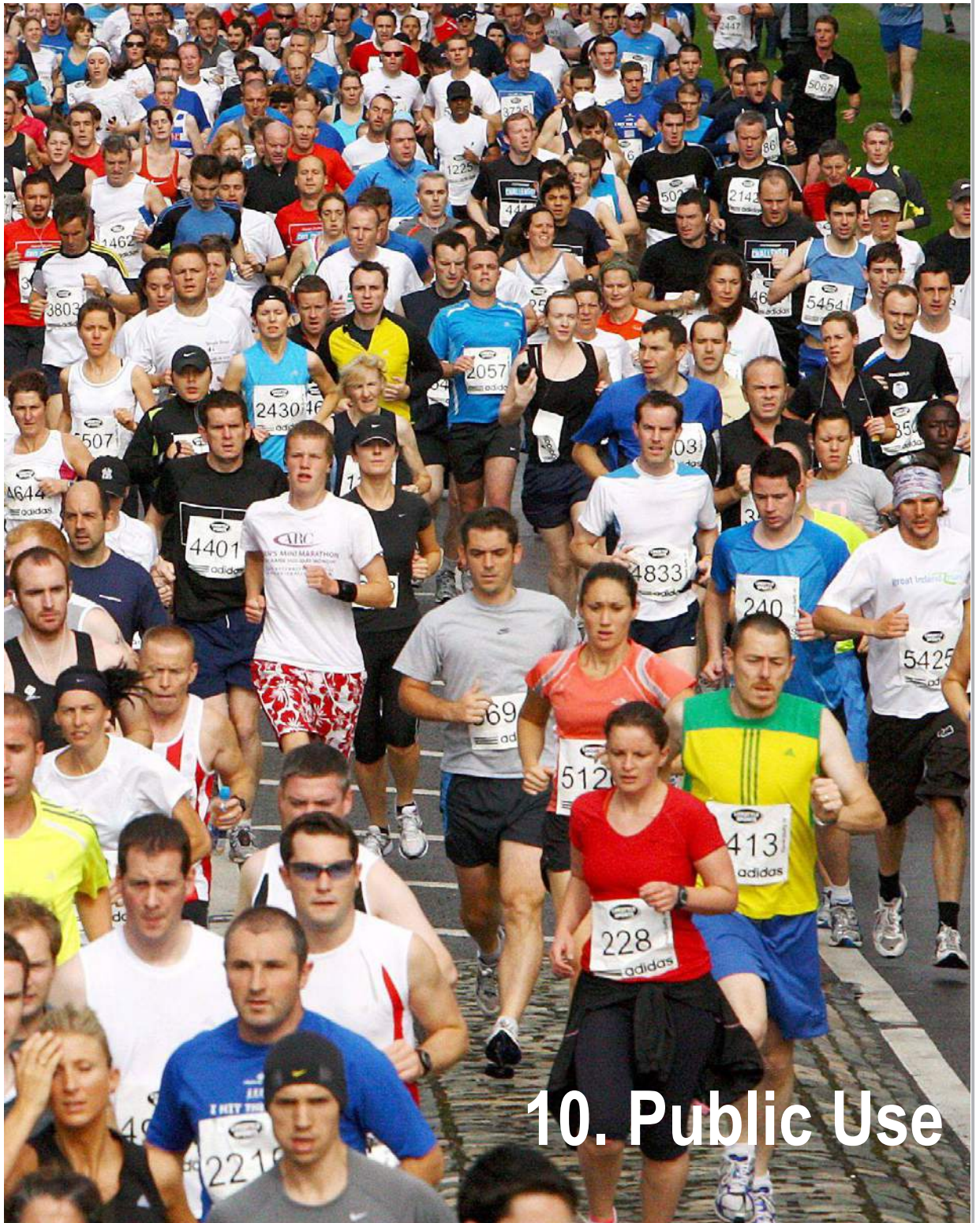


- Action 9.4** Review the Transportation Study recommendations on a regular basis, and monitor the effect of implemented recommendations on overall access, mobility and safety in the Park. This review should encompass liaison with Park Institutions, adjacent Local Authorities, An Garda Síochána, the National Roads Authority and the National Transport Authority, a full accident review and updating of recommendations in relation to transportation issues, and should be publicly available.
- Action 9.5** Develop coordinated management tools, such as a Geographic Information System (GIS), to support ongoing maintenance and inform strategic management decisions in relation to transportation and overall Park management.
- Action 9.6** Limit through traffic at weekends and off-peak hours to facilitate increased recreational use of the Park.
- Action 9.7** Monitor visitor numbers and profiles to provide a basis for access and mobility policy and general long term planning, and out of this, develop a range of visitor aids, such as maps, leaflets and E-information to improve access and knowledge of the Park.
- Action 9.8** Complete a full circuit of cycle trails and footpaths to allow families and young people in particular to cycle and walk safely throughout the Park. A particular feature of this should be linkages to external cycle routes and leisure trails. Provide appropriate bicycle parking at key locations throughout the Park.
- Action 9.9** Develop a policy on substantially reducing the parking of vehicles by commuter and other non-park users within the Park, while facilitating the public users of the Park, through the consideration of various actions such as paid parking or clamping.
- Action 9.10** Continue improvement works in relation to car parking, and general road conditions, in particular the upgrading of Chesterfield Avenue. This will also encompass regular and appropriate maintenance of all pathway, cycle track, and roadway surfaces.
- Action 9.11** Actively discourage off-road parking on footpaths, verges, open areas and plantations and encourage the use of particular routes for recreational activity, walking and cycling.
- Action 9.12** Introduce more stringent implementation of the regulations in relation to commercial vehicles in the Park.

**Map 6: Access**



# 10



## 10. Public Use



## 10.1 Introduction

The Phoenix Park consists of 709 ha (1752 acres), the majority of which is directly accessible to the public for general active and passive recreation. The Park offers a wide variety of visitor experiences including landscape, social and cultural history, archaeology, architecture, nature and biodiversity as outlined in previous chapters. Outlined below are the main visitor facilities within the Park.

## 10.2 Visitor Facilities

The principal focal point for Park visitors is The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, located in the grounds of Ashtown Demesne. It consists of an interpretive centre, theatre, exhibition space, Ashtown Castle, walled gardens, playground, award winning cafe, as well as ornamental grounds, parkland and perimeter woodland walks. A car and bus park adjoins the complex. The Centre has provided a much-needed focal point for the Park since it was restored and additional buildings added in 1990. The visitor centre complex has become a major attraction with over 400,000 visitors per annum and the interpretive centre alone attracting 85,000 visitors in 2009. The restoration of the two and a half acre walled garden, which commenced in 2007 is to include a Victorian Vinery with exotic Victorian interior plants, formal box parterre, fruit, vegetable and cut flower displays with espalier fruit trained on the walls.

The universal access playground located west of the walled garden at The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre was opened in early 2008 and has proved such a huge success that numbers have to be limited at peak periods. The policy is to restrict playgrounds to areas where there is supervision and access to facilities so as not to intrude on the 'natural' landscape.

Áras an Uachtaráin, the residence of the President of Ireland, has been open to visitors since 1998 on dedicated dates, providing a unique visitor experience including a guided tour of the house, grounds and an interpretive centre.

Dublin Zoo, managed by the Zoological Society of Ireland, is the 3rd oldest Zoo in Europe and Ireland's top visitor attraction with visitor numbers in excess of 950,000 in 2008. A major programme of building conservation and infrastructural renewal has taken place in recent years. A very successful educational programme has also been implemented.

The Papal Cross, located on the fringe of the Fifteen Acres, is a significant feature within the landscape of the Park providing attractive views south to the Dublin Mountains.

The Victorian People's Gardens and playground continue to host increasing visitor numbers. The ongoing restoration of the ornamental grounds, including the historic ribbon border and Victorian bedding schemes, are major attractions.

The historic Tearoom Kiosk close to the band hollow and Dublin Zoo is a popular attraction at the lower end of the Park. Summer performances in the Bandstand continue to attract the public. Dedicated picnic areas are located throughout the Park.

A cycle hire facility has been established at the old DMP Barracks at the Parkgate Street entrance to the Park. This franchise, which has been in operation since 2007, has proved very popular with the public. Guided bicycle tours of the Park are available on request. An extensive network of cycle trails exists throughout the Park. Segway guided tours are available on request and operate from The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre.



### 10.3 Events and Recreation

The Phoenix Park, being the largest urban park in Dublin, is recognised as a green lung for the city and recent research highlights the major benefits to public health and well being arising from the wealth of opportunities that a facility like the Park has to offer.

Over two and half thousand sporting and recreational events take place annually in the Park. With its setting close to the city centre of Dublin, it has been host to a number of major events because of its scale. The Papal visit, soccer team homecomings and large-scale concerts are examples of such events. The finish of the Tour de France's Irish stage was also held in The Phoenix Park. The 'Bloom' horticultural shows are held at The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre.

There are twenty-seven dedicated sports grounds (gaelic football, camogie, hurling, soccer, cricket, polo) in the eastern portion of the Park, many of which are associated with a pavilion. Over 2,500 games take place there annually. The central area of the Fifteen Acres includes areas set aside for a schools cross-country circuit and for model aeroplanes.

Maps 7 and 8 show walking routes within the Park and areas and facilities given over to sport and recreation. Map 3 (Chapter 4) illustrates the areas within The Phoenix Park dedicated to specific uses and activities. Policy is that all activities and events must, in general, correspond to these areas.

Organised sporting events are an important feature of the Park. These include national and international running, duathlons, triathlons, cross-country events, cycling events and community sports days. The Park contains arguably the best natural facilities for distance running training in this country, since it has a continuous natural trail of some 16 km. (See Appendix 9). Motor racing has also been a traditional event in the sporting calendar of The Phoenix Park. The historical precedents for this were the speed trials of 1903 and the international motor races in 1929 and subsequent years.

Many community groups avail of the Park and hold various sports day and community days.

A number of dedicated traditional horse trekking trails exist in the Park. The use of these is subject to permission being granted and favourable ground conditions. Traditionally racehorse training has been permitted on the gallops on the Fifteen Acres. These are the only equestrian activities permitted in the Park.

The increased focus is on promoting a range of passive rather than active recreational pursuits that broaden interest in the Park and are in keeping with the peaceful ambiance of the Park. No intensification of the active recreational area is proposed. There are extensive walking trails throughout the Park. Deer and bird watching are also favourite pastimes.

Permission is required for all events and where relevant, an Event Safety Management Plan is sought. Events with over five thousand participants also require planning permission from the local regulatory authority. Appropriate film, television, and photo shoots are allowed under permit.

The Park is a finite resource. The number and scale of events needs to be appropriate to the wildlife sensitivities, the sense of peace and tranquillity, the carrying capacity, and wear and tear to the Park infrastructure. Any pressure for an increase in the number or size of events must be assessed in this context. In the event of it being agreed that there will be a music concert or event in the Park, a maximum capacity of 40,000 on a single day will only be considered and the location of the event will be confined to an area where risk of damage to the Park's infrastructure is least.



A policy framework document has been developed relating to the use of The Phoenix Park for large-scale public cultural, musical and heritage events (see Appendix 10).

## 10.4 Education and Interpretation

The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre is a focal point for education and interpretation in the Park and provides a range of facilities and materials for understanding the Park's history and environment. These materials are being continually developed by Phoenix Park management to meet the educational and interpretation needs of the visitor. The development of a website for The Phoenix Park is one such example, which will be utilised to disseminate information to a wider national and international audience.

Key resources in informing the public are the Guide Service and Park Rangers who interact with the public on many aspects of the Park. The Visitor Centre displays, publications, event programmes, permanent and temporary information panels, expert speakers and demonstrations all assist with Park interpretation. The Visitor Centre is a valuable educational resource for schools and various specialist clubs and societies. Schools, both primary and secondary, frequently participate in educational trips to The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre and to other areas of the Park. Numerous school and third level projects on various aspects of the Park's history, geography, topography and natural history are undertaken on an ongoing basis. Many of these projects and specialist days such as National Tree Week and Tree Day include the strong involvement of other groups.

Appropriate interpretation of the Park and its facilities is crucial to assist the public in their understanding of the Park and also in the protection of this valuable resource.

There are a number of traditional cast iron finger signposts still extant in the Park and some of the newer signposts are based on these, both to convey a sense of historical continuity and uniformity. Temporary signs are also erected from time to time, for instance to indicate when playing fields are unplayable, that grassland is unfit for horse riding and for other specific reasons.

## 10.5 Public Safety

Public safety is a major concern for Park management. Other key concerns include the protection of the Park's infrastructure and residents, traffic control, visitor information and the protection of wildlife and other natural resources. To achieve the above, management and Park Rangers work in close liaison with the Gardaí. Measures for Park security are constantly under review. These include the control of vegetation in some locations and the night closure of car parks and other areas prone to antisocial behaviour.

## 10.6 Park Users

Users of the Park can be divided into a number of categories.

- Persons, often in cars, who simply use the Park as a through route, or a place to park their vehicle while at work in the city.
- Persons who visit the Park for a few hours at a time for passive recreation, jogging, walking, cycling, etc.





- Persons attending or participating in organised sporting events such as Gaelic, Soccer, Hurling, Cricket, Polo, Camogie, etc.
- Persons attending organised commercial events – such as concerts, festivals, etc.

Having regard to usage levels, future policy should be framed to provide greater opportunities for sustainable passive recreation by the greatest possible numbers of the public. This would mean that no new dedicated facilities or grounds would be provided or reserved for organised sports, sporting organisations or other activities.

The scope for commercially organised events in the Park is and must remain very limited. The primary objective must be the conservation of the grounds. Any large scale events, such as concerts or festivals, must be limited to at most a couple per year, with a maximum permitted total attendance of 40-50,000 people, and should be confined to areas of the Park where least damage can be done to plantings, structures and archaeological remains. At all times the Park's status as a free amenity for the general public must be to the forefront when proposals for large scale or commercial events are being considered.

## 10.7 Specific Objectives

The overall objective is to provide a world-class visitor experience within the setting of a national historic park.

- SO 10.1:** To facilitate an appropriate balance of recreational use and public appreciation that maximises visitor enjoyment and protects the landscape and infrastructure of the Park in a sustainable manner.
- SO 10.2:** To ensure that all events demonstrate that they will minimise their carbon footprint within the Park.
- SO 10.3:** To facilitate and encourage a greater public understanding of the national and international significance of the Park, through continued research, publications and use of technology such as the internet.
- SO 10.4:** To respect and conserve the layout and distribution of the designed features and facilities that serve uses which are compatible with the cultural significance of the Park and to manage the broad distribution of informal and formal recreation within the Park to reflect the historic associations and patterns of use.
- SO 10.5:** To promote the broad expanse of The Phoenix Park, including its infrastructure, natural amenities, landscape and wildlife as a unique active and passive recreational area for refreshment of body, mind and soul.
- SO 10.6:** To develop educational and tourist programmes facilitating the interpretation of the significance of the Park in a historic, landscape, natural and sociological context.
- SO 10.7:** To continue to implement high standards of security and policing of the Park.

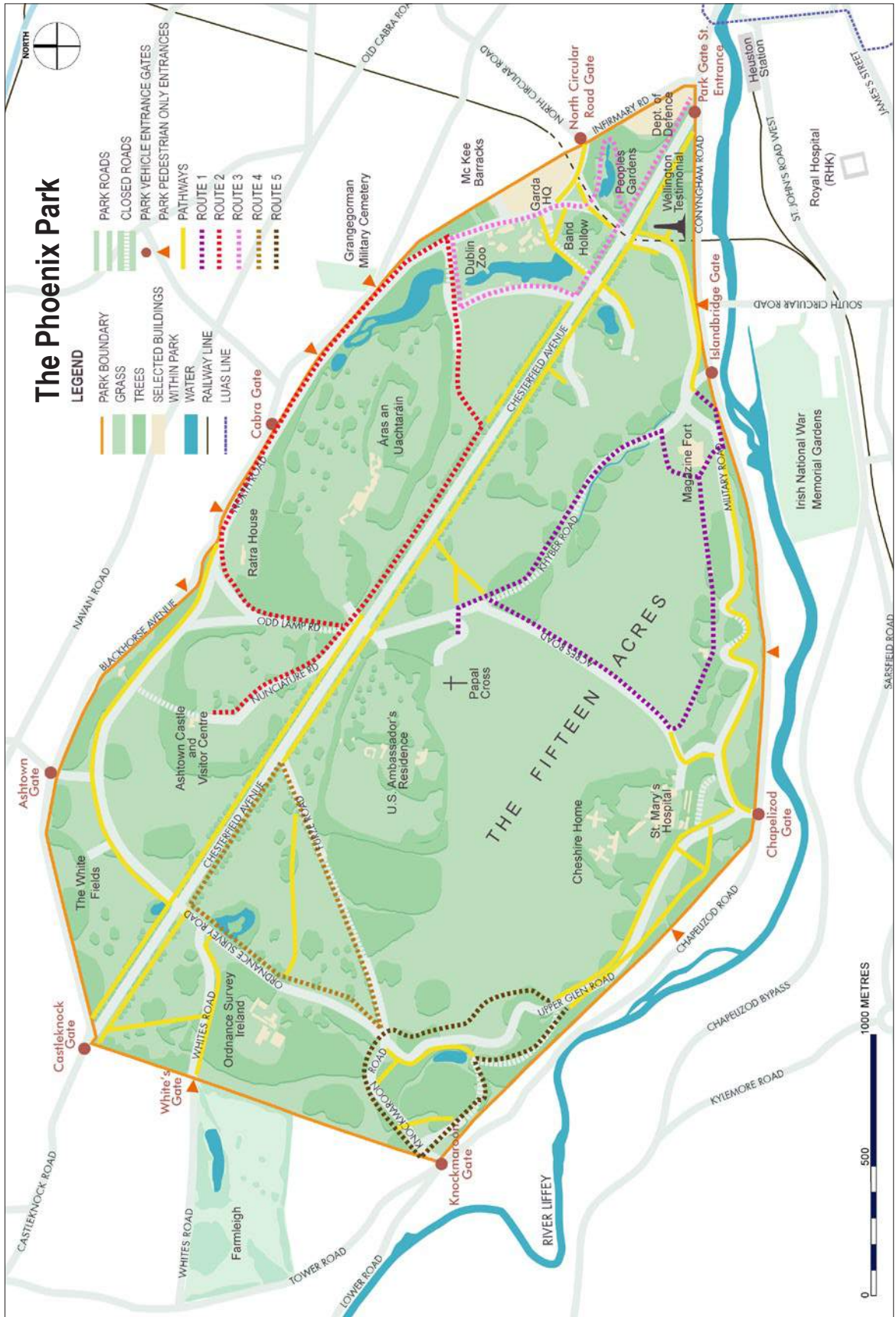


## 10.8 Short-to-Medium Term Actions

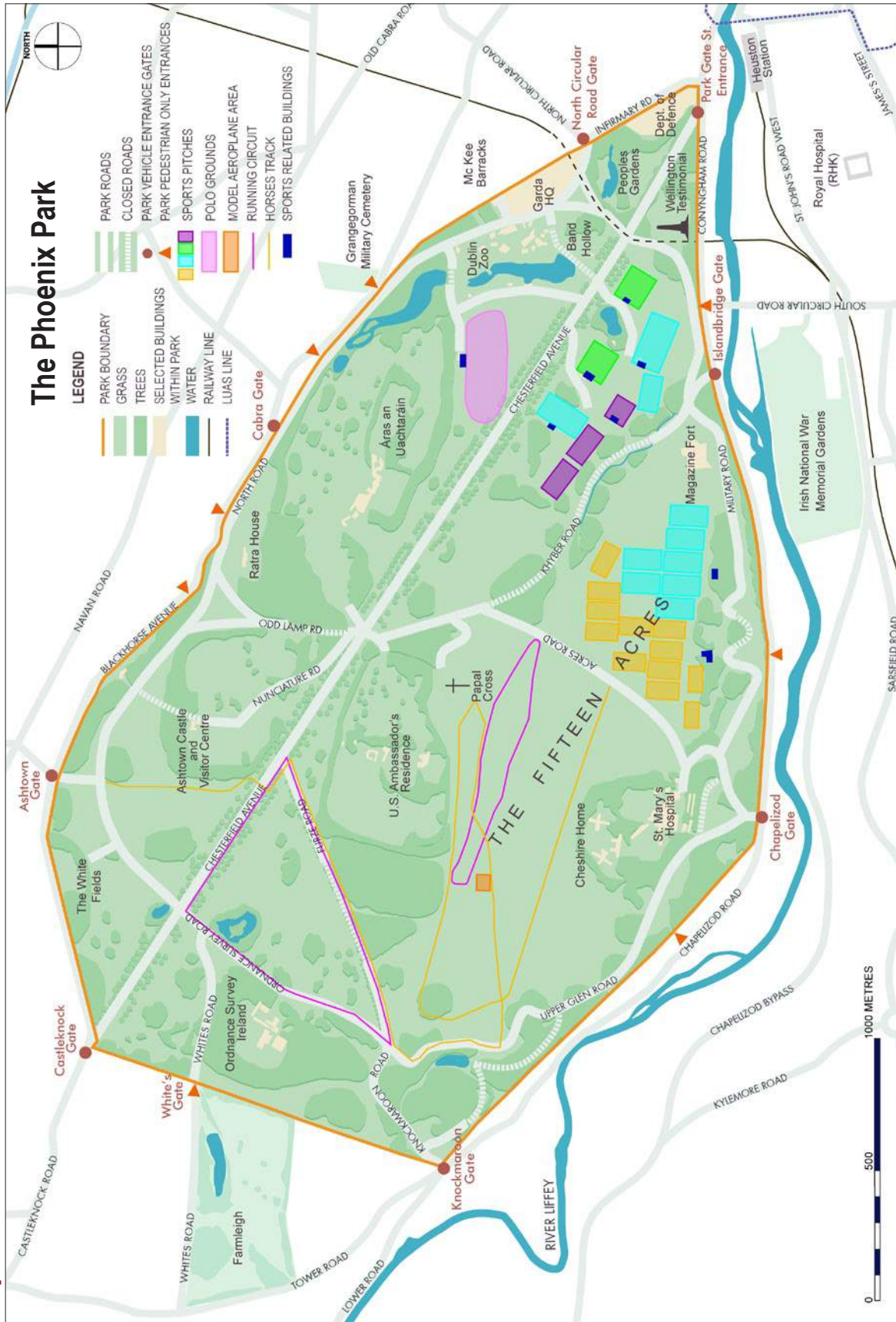
The following are identified as actions to be undertaken in the short-to-medium term (5 to 10 years). Some measures will be implemented as long-term actions.

- Action 10.1:** Formalise a recreation policy which maximises passive recreation and maintains the current level of active recreation, taking into account the environmental impact on the Park. The policy is to allow for annual invitation of expressions of interest for 'large or commercial type' of events and to conform to general policies for use and events in National Historic Properties. For example, appropriate concerts and large events will be confined to The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre area.
- Action 10.2:** Review and upgrade the visitor centre facilities in the context of increasing visitor numbers to include the provision of a quality Park retail shop.
- Action 10.3:** Continue to develop educational materials, awareness courses and a programme of events to include children's summer camp and primary school educational programmes and, in time, develop a secondary schools educational programme. These actions will be undertaken with the aim to increase public knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the Park in all its aspects.
- Action 10.4:** Develop a field based environmental education program targeting primary schools, to include the development of an indoor resource area and the provision of training courses for primary teachers.
- Action 10.5:** Investigate potential to install webcams in a series of bat and bird nest boxes, roosts, at a fox maternity den and within a badger sett. Also images of newborn fawns and the rut of the fallow deer could be shown on the website. This will bring many species that are either inaccessible or nocturnal to the attention of visitors and will develop the image of the Park as a key site for biodiversity within the city.
- Action 10.6:** Use the walled gardens as an educational tool to inspire and educate the public on the horticultural skill involved in the growing of fruit, vegetables and flowers using organic principles.
- Action 10.7:** Update and repair the heritage trail signs around the Park.
- Action 10.8:** Increase the number and location of picnic tables throughout the Park in areas of high usage. Design of these should follow the coordinated design strategy for public realm infrastructure and location should have regard to other objectives within this Plan, in particular protection of natural heritage and important views. In tandem with this, implement a waste management strategy allowing for separation of waste and regular collection.
- Action 10.9:** Provide information panels at strategic locations throughout the Park.
- Action 10.10:** Provide sufficient guides and an education officer to implement the above programme.
- Action 10.11:** Develop an outreach programme.

## Map 7: Walking Routes



Map 8: Recreation



# 11



## 11. Management

# 11



## 11.1 Introduction

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is responsible for overall policy and capital funding for the built heritage, including The Phoenix Park.

The Office of Public Works (OPW), acting as agent of the Department of Finance, is responsible for day-to-day management and current funding and for providing advice on policy and all matters pertaining to the Park.

A dedicated and experienced management team and workforce undertake this day-to-day management of The Phoenix Park. This resource has proved most adaptable in meeting the challenges of a changing work environment and providing greater customer service and higher standards.

## 11.2 Management Structure

The management structure, at time of publication, is composed of two strands:

- The Minister of State at the Department of Finance, the Chairman, Commissioners and Director of National Historic Properties form the Senior Management Structure of the Office of Public Works in relation to heritage issues.
- Local Park Management is headed by the Park Superintendent, who also manages a cluster of other heritage sites, (e.g. St. Stephen's Green, Iveagh Gardens, Irish National War Memorial Gardens, Arbour Hill, Grangegorman Military Cemetery). The Park Superintendent reports to the Chief Parks Superintendent and the central Administration Service. The Park Superintendent is responsible for day-to-day management and advises on policy and all matters pertaining to the Park.

See Appendix 11 for organisational chart.





### 11.3 Resources

Adequate financial, human and other resources are essential to sustain the on-going management of the Park and will also be needed to implement the objectives and actions of this Conservation Management Plan.

The complex nature and size of the Park, and the levels of management and general interaction with the public, present a particularly challenging management situation, requiring a wide range of skills. The Park Superintendent is supported at local level by the landscape and horticultural foreman, general and office foremen, craftspeople of various trades including gardening and arboricultural staff, Park Rangers, general operatives and a small office staff, including guide staff. The OPW Engineering and Architectural Services provide advisory professional services. OPW Building Maintenance Services, and Central Engineering Workshop provide direct support services. Other expert services are engaged as the need arises.

The Park depot at Whitefields is the main base of operations for the day to day management of the Park. Facilities include Park offices, staff facilities, workshops and storage and machinery facilities. There are a number of smaller satellite depots located throughout the Park.

### 11.4 Communications

Because of the local, national and international significance of the Park, the high number of visitors, and the particularly challenging management situation referred to above, a robust communications strategy is an essential prerequisite.

Communications occur on a number of different levels, including:

- Government and State Agencies (e.g. Local Authorities, An Garda Síochána) – particularly related to policy, funding and management.
- Park Institutions and residents - to ensure coordination of developments and activities pertaining to the management of The Phoenix Park.
- General Public including local communities - to facilitate a liaison in relation to Park issues and cultural activities.
- Research institutions and NGOs - to facilitate and disseminate information on the many facets of the Park.
- Within OPW itself - due to the range of activities and business units.

Some of the above are already formalised within the management context of the Park and others require to be developed further.

### 11.5 Health and Safety and Training

Under the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, the Park management is required to have a safety statement, risk assessments and safe operating procedures for all staff. These are in place for the Park and are regularly updated.



The Phoenix Park is responsible for a large number of employees, visitors, contractors and event management on a daily basis, in what is an enormous area of landscape requiring a great diversity of maintenance operations. As a result, health and safety policy for the Park is at the forefront of all management operational decisions. To assist in achieving this, a new safety management system (BS 8800), as well as a new Emmex computer system, is currently being implemented. This new standard will enable the Park to have an improved safety management system and records of all operations.

A structured programme of mentoring, on-the-job training and specialised training courses maximises the contribution of each staff member to the overall management of the Park in line with Park objectives.

## 11.6 Sustainability and Climate Change

In line with government policy, The Phoenix Park is committed to achieving the highest standards of environmental sustainable management. This includes efforts to minimise energy consumption such as the recent change to 'Airtricity' sustainable supply at The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre and to reduce waste through recycling practices, including composting and to pursue opportunities for re-use of water. A new policy introduced in 2006 requires all new horticultural tractors to be bio-fuel compatible and all new vehicles to have a minimum standard of 'euro 4' emissions. Further, the Park Ranger fleet was converted in the same year from two 4x4s to six bicycles, one hybrid eco vehicle and one 4x4 as part of the commitment to sustainability. Applications of chemicals will continue to be minimised or eliminated in compliance with good horticultural practice and the use of valuable water resources will be judicious.

The importance of The Phoenix Park in meeting wider sustainability objectives, for example in maintaining quality of life, will be considered in all aspects of Park management and further opportunities for connecting with the wider sustainability agenda will be considered.

The OPW will assess likely impacts through monitoring and assessment of observed changes and through anticipation of the projected impact of climate change on biodiversity and will develop specific actions in response. The Park will play a full role in mitigation of climate change by adopting environmentally sustainable practices and reducing the carbon footprint of the Park.

## 11.7 Research

Academic research is essential to achieve a deeper understanding of the Park, which will in turn be used as a tool to inform Park policy, necessary for its appropriate management. All research must be carried out with regard to the principles of sustainability. Considerable research on The Phoenix Park has been undertaken by academic institutions and experts to date and it is essential that this informative work is continued.

Strategic areas of research have been identified in previous chapters and must be driven by Park management. Monitoring the effects of research is fundamental for the successful use and implementation of this Conservation Management Plan. In order to undertake successful monitoring, the base information needs to be collated and readily available.

As part of any application for World Heritage Site designation it will be necessary to prepare a Research Framework Programme and to implement this on foot of designation.





## 11.8 Decision Making

This Conservation Management Plan identifies strategic objectives, specific objectives and actions to be implemented in the short to medium term and long term, which inform the decision making process of management. All of the above elements i.e. resources, communications, health and safety, training, sustainability and research play key roles in informing the decision making process.

## 11.9 Monitoring and Review

This Conservation Management Plan will form the basis of policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century but will be subject to on going monitoring. In addition, it will be formally reviewed on a five year basis to:

- assess progress and achievements;
- incorporate new information and research results;
- take account of statutory requirements;
- adapt to changing circumstances; and
- include results of monitoring.

## 11.10 Emergency Plan

An emergency plan needs to be developed in co-ordination with all key stakeholders and agencies which will also address preventative measures to secure the natural and cultural heritage (including buildings, furniture, art, etc.), in addition to health and safety of the public and employees.

## 11.11 Specific Objectives

The overall objective is to ensure the highest professional standards in the management and operation of The Phoenix Park.

The specific objectives include the following:





- SO 11.1:** To maintain and support a dedicated team responsible for management and conservation of The Phoenix Park, working to the objectives and actions as set out in this Conservation Management Plan.
- SO 11.2:** To encourage and promote academic research to achieve a deeper understanding of the Park necessary for its appropriate management.
- SO 11.3:** To develop a Communications Framework both internal and external to the Park.
- SO 11.4:** To strive for the highest standards of environmental sustainable management and ensure that the Park's impact on climate change will be minimised.
- SO 11.5:** To ensure sufficient resources are available for management of uses and activities, to avoid unsustainable damage to the sensitive historic fabric of the Park
- SO 11.6:** To establish The Phoenix Park as an Irish and International show case for landscape horticulture and arboriculture.

## 11.12 Short-to-Medium Term Actions

The following are identified as actions to be undertaken in the short-to-medium term (5 to 10 years). Some measures will be implemented as long-term actions.

- Action 11.1:** Implement, on a phased basis, the actions detailed in previous chapters. Identify priorities, responsible parties and resources required to implement these actions.
- Action 11.2:** Prepare regular 3 year Business Plans to ensure that advanced planning of resources and budgets can be more easily calculated and justified and adequate funding made available.
- Action 11.3:** Strive to ensure that the Park has an adequate professional management structure and that the required professional services are available to support Park management. Ideally, an assistant Park Superintendent position should be established within the Park.
- Action 11.4:** An OPW Park Management Review Group will be established to meet at least twice per year to review the changing context of The Phoenix Park, to discuss developments and proposed changes and to support the Park managers in the review and monitoring of this Conservation Management Plan.
- Action 11.5:** Establish a Communications Network internally within the Park to include representatives of all major institutions, sporting bodies and residents who will be invited for an exchange of information and to report on environmental issues, development proposals and planning applications that might affect the Park.
- Action 11.6:** Establish a Park Forum to meet on an annual basis, consisting of key stakeholders including local community groups and others.
- Action 11.7:** Hold regular meetings with the relevant local authorities on matters of mutual concern.



- Action 11.8:** Regularly audit and review the Park safety management system in accordance with legislative requirements, to ensure best practice is adhered to at all times and ensure this system includes provision for a Major Emergency Plan.
- Action 11.9:** Carry out a water conservation study and implement recommendations. This is to include the reuse and recycling of grey water in the Park.
- Action 11.10:** Review staff training requirements on an annual basis with particular emphasis on Health and Safety and environmental training and maintain existing high levels of excellence in all aspects of Park management and maintenance through strategic training and work programmes, in particular in the areas of horticulture and arboriculture.
- Action 11.11:** Carry out a feasibility study on the possibility of establishing a permanent centre for Irish landscape, demesne and garden history within The Phoenix Park.
- Action 11.12:** Develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) to record, store and analyse all data relevant to The Phoenix Park.
- Action 11.13:** Prepare a Research Framework Programme which identifies the gaps in existing knowledge and understanding of the Park and sets out a research programme to address these gaps.
- Action 11.14:** Continue the graduate Landscape Horticulture scheme within The Phoenix Park which provides opportunities for both the graduates and the Office of Public Works.
- Action 11.15:** Establish a research post, possibly similar to the ‘artist in residence’ scheme with on site facilities which would be part funded by OPW (provision of facilities, bursary and with a focus on the knowledge gaps which exist).
- Action 11.16:** Adopt environmentally sustainable practices such as harvesting of ‘grey’ water, sinking wells, recycling initiatives, with policies to reduce the carbon footprint of the Park through the promotion of alternative modes of travel, for example.
- Action 11.17:** Prepare an Emergency Plan for The Phoenix Park in co-ordination and consultation with all key stakeholders.





