

6 Devon Gardens



Introduction

Devon Gardens is a small suburban park comprised of amenity grassland with shrubs and mature trees. The grassland is botanically quite diverse, containing a range of grasses and wildflowers. Many of the trees and shrubs are non-indigenous and/or ornamental. The site provides food sources for several species of birds, but offers a limited range of nest sites.

Site details

Site name

The official name of the site is Devon Gardens. It is also known as “Nanny’s Park” by some local residents.

Location

The grid reference for the site is SK363898.

Land owner

Sheffield City Council.

Nearest road/street

The site lies between Abbeyfield Road, Stair Road and Osgathorpe Crescent.

Adjacent land use

Roads, housing and private gardens.

Size

0.35 hectares

Present management

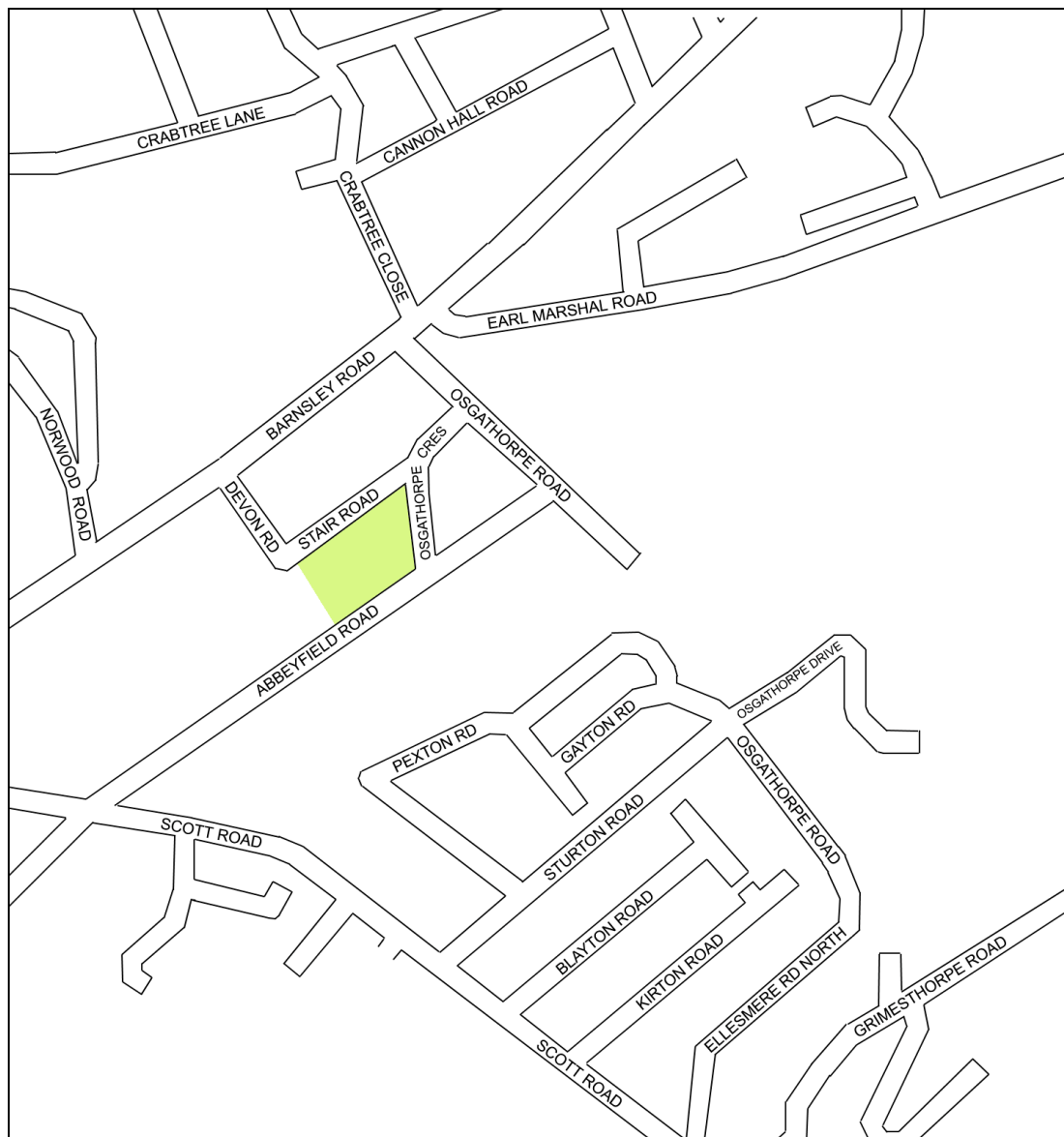
The site is currently managed as a public park by Sheffield City Council. The grass is mown less than once per month (i.e. less frequently than more heavily used areas of amenity grassland, such as Osgathorpe Park). Herbicide is applied annually to control growth where the mower cannot reach (i.e. along the edges of the paths, around the base of the trees and beneath the boundary railings).

The trees were pruned in February 2003. The boundary railings have been painted recently, probably within the past twelve months. Other recent work includes the planting of two beds of low-growing ornamental shrubs plus some crocus and daffodil bulbs.

UDP designations

The site is too small to be designated as an Open Space Area in the 1998 edition of the Unitary Development Plan. Instead, it is shown as part of the surrounding Housing Area. Only sites larger than 0.4 hectare were designated as Open Space Areas.

Location map



Ecology

Phase I ecological survey

Site description

The site is a small suburban park of Edwardian origin. It comprises a roughly rectangular, gently sloping area of amenity grassland (J1.2) with mature broad-leaved trees (A3.1) around its margins. There are two small beds of low-growing ornamental shrubs (J1.4) near the centre of the site, plus a belt of taller shrubs along its southwestern edge (J1.4). Access is provided by two gates and a network of crumbling asphalt paths.

Habitats of interest

The amenity grassland is botanically quite diverse. It is not mown very frequently, allowing a variety of grasses and herbaceous plants to flower. Although perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) is abundant, it is only dominant in relatively small patches (possibly indicating worn areas that have been re-seeded). The grassland has some of the species associated with unimproved or semi-improved neutral grassland.

The tall shrubs along the southwestern edge comprise a rather lacklustre collection of ornamental species, including mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*). They may, however, provide some nesting cover for birds.

The two beds of low-growing ornamental shrubs contain some species that are potentially attractive to nectar-feeding insects (e.g. *Ceanothus*, *Hebe* and *Spirea*).

Species of interest

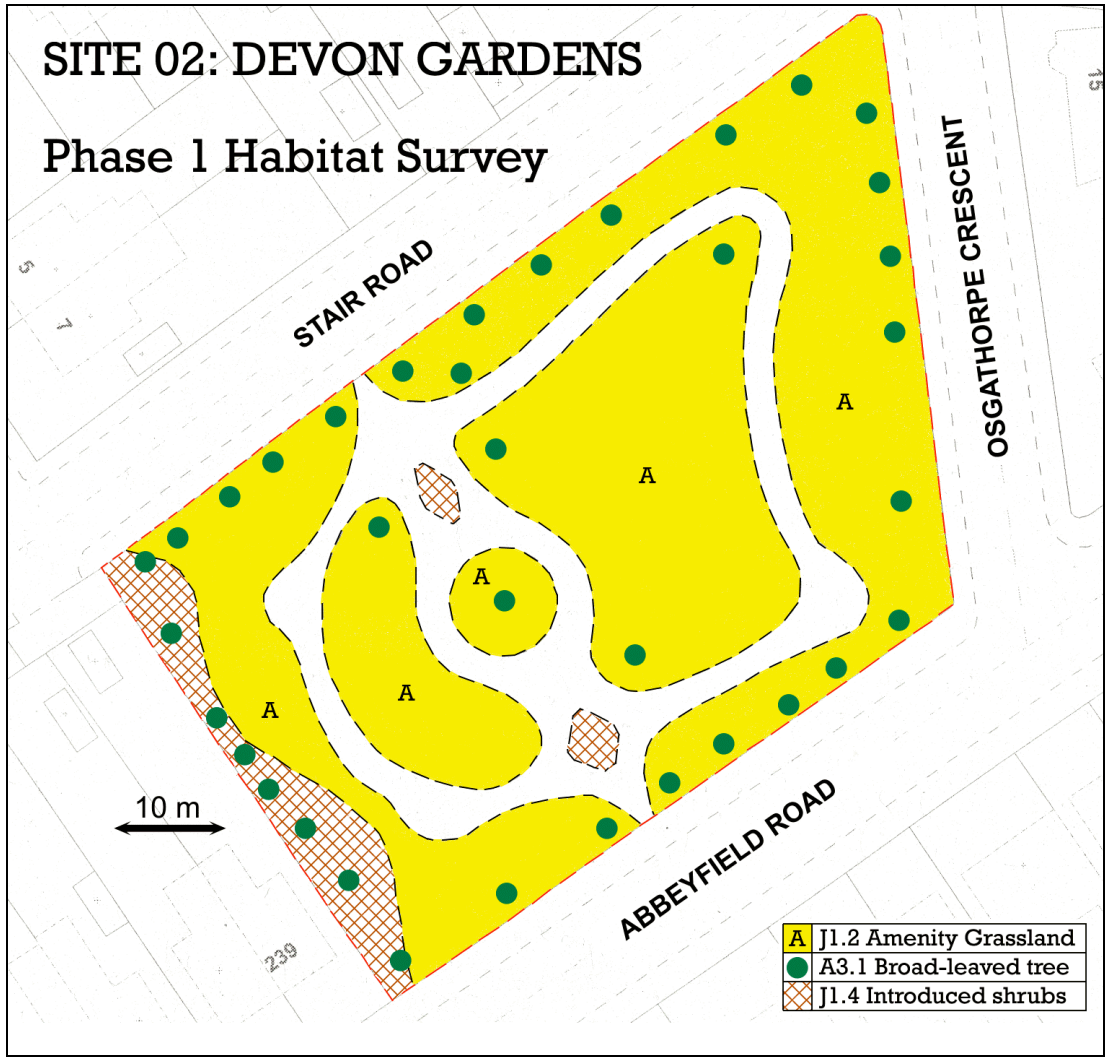
The amenity grassland holds a number of wildflowers, most notably lady's smock (*Cardamine pratensis*). No single species of grass dominates the sward, but meadow foxtail (*Alopercurus pratensis*) and rough meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*) are both abundant in places. A fine crop of St George's mushrooms (*Calocybe gambosa*) could be seen in late April and early May.

The mature trees are a typical range of urban species, including London plane (*Platanus occidentalis* _ *orientalis*) and hybrid black-poplar (*Populus* _ *canadensis*). There are some native species, including a large specimen of wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) that has survived the onslaught of Dutch elm disease. The most abundant tree is birch (probably *Betula pendula* _ *pubescens*).

Most of the shrubs along the southwestern edge are commonplace ornamental species. However, hidden towards the back are single specimens of bladder nut (*Staphylea pinnata*) and variegated elder (*Sambucus nigra* 'Albovariegata').

A variety of plants have sown themselves into the cracks in the asphalt paths. Most of these are fairly common ruderal species (e.g. shepherd’s-purse, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*) but several seedlings of laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) and Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) were also noted.

Phase 1 Habitat Map



Invertebrate survey

A systematic survey of the invertebrates was not undertaken. The most noteworthy species recorded was the orange-tip butterfly (*Anthocharis cardamines*), which was probably attracted by the presence of lady's smock (one of its larval foodplants).

Speckled wood (*Pararge aegeria*) was recorded on one occasion. Although this butterfly is listed as a Local Red Data Book species in the Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy (1991), it has expanded its range considerably over the past decade. It is now widespread within the Sheffield area.

Bird survey

Due to its small size and limited range of habitats, the site does not support many birds. Just 11 species were noted during 5 site visits. Breeding was not confirmed for any of these species.

Devon Gardens is used as a foraging habitat by birds that nest elsewhere. Mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) and starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) were both seen collecting food, then carrying it to nests outside the boundaries of the site. The mistle thrush appeared to be nesting in the woodland behind the Environmental Services depot on Gayton Road (Site 29 in the Burngreave Green Audit).

Some potential nesting cover is offered by the belt of shrubs along the southwestern boundary. Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) and song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) were all seen in the vicinity of these shrubs, but could have been nesting in the gardens of the adjacent houses.

The birds recorded during the survey include two species that are on the UK Red list: song thrush and starling. Nationally these species are described as being of high conservation concern.

SPECIES RECORDED ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION BETWEEN 08/04/03 & 02/07/03	<u>POSSIBLE</u> BREEDING SPECIES ¹	<u>PROBABLE</u> BREEDING SPECIES ²	<u>CONFIRMED</u> BREEDING SPECIES ³	NUMBER OF TERRITORIES HELD BY SELECTED SPECIES
Feral Pigeon Wren ⁵ Robin Blackbird Song Thrush ⁴ Mistle Thrush Blue Tit ⁵ Magpie Starling ⁶ Greenfinch ⁵ Goldfinch ⁵	Wren ⁵ Robin Goldfinch ⁵	Wren ⁵ Robin Goldfinch ⁵		Wren ⁵ 1 Robin 1
¹ Evidence: present on more than one occasion in suitable breeding habitat. ² Evidence: singing/displaying male in suitable breeding habitat on more than one occasion; pair in suitable habitat showing courtship or territorial behaviour; bird visiting probable nest site; nest building; anxiety calls; recently used nest. ³ Evidence: Adult carrying food or faecal sac; adult sitting on nest; nest with eggs/young; egg shells found away from nest; recently fledged young. ⁴ Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.				

Evaluation

Devon Gardens is of limited ecological interest, mainly due to the site's small size and the non-indigenous origin of much of its vegetation. Although a number of species of nature conservation importance were recorded (see 5.3 below), the site cannot be described as being a significant habitat for any of them.

However, Devon Gardens does have some features of ecological interest. The grassland holds a number of species of grasses and wildflowers. Parts of the site could potentially be managed as "mini-meadows", mown once or twice per year. Many of the existing species are associated with improved or semi-improved neutral grassland. Additional species could be introduced to complement the existing mixture.

There is a shortage of suitable nesting habitat within the site. For some species, this could be remedied by thickening up the belt of shrubs with prickly sub-shrubs, such as bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). Other species could be accommodated in nest-boxes attached to the trees.

There is scope to plant some beds of shrubs and herbaceous perennials that would be attractive both people and wildlife (particularly nectar-feeding insects). The two existing beds of shrubs have potential, but need regular care and maintenance.

Like many of the open spaces in Burngreave, the site has no permanent source of water. This undoubtedly limits the fauna that it can support. Whilst there are understandable safety concerns about the construction of new ponds in parks, it should be possible to introduce child-safe water features. Even a birdbath is better than nothing!

Species found

Vascular plants

Trees, shrubs, woody climbers and sub-shrubs

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	RELATIVE ABUNDANCE
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	occasional
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horse chestnut	rare (seedlings)
<i>Berberis darwinii</i>	Darwin's barberry	rare
<i>Betula pendula</i> _ <i>pubescens</i>	Hybrid birch	frequent
<i>Ceanothus</i> sp.	Californian lilac	rare
<i>Deutzia scabra</i> 'Candidissima'	Deutzia	rare
<i>Escallonia</i> 'Rosy Red'	Escallonia	rare
<i>Euonymus japonica</i>	Evergreen spindle	rare
Fraxinus excelsior	Common ash	occasional
<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>	Kapuka (New Zealand privet)	rare

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	RELATIVE ABUNDANCE
<i>Hebe sp.</i>	Hebe (unidentified variety)	rare
<i>Hebe sutherlandii</i>	Hebe	rare
<i>Hebe venastula</i>	Hebe	rare
<i>Hebe 'Wiri Cloud'</i>	Hebe	rare
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	rare
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly (hybrid?)	rare
<i>Laburnum anagyroides</i>	Laburnum	rare (seedlings)
<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>	Oval-leaved privet	occasional
<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>	Mock orange	rare
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i> – <i>orientalis</i>	London plane	occasional
<i>Populus</i> – <i>canadensis</i>	Hybrid black-poplar	rare
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> 'Otto Luyken'	Dwarf cherry laurel	rare
<i>Quercus cerris</i>	Turkey oak	rare (seedlings)
<i>Quercus petraea</i> – <i>robur</i>	Hybrid oak	rare (seedlings)
<i>Salix 'Chrysocoma'</i>	Weeping willow	rare
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	rare
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> 'Albovariegata'	Variegated elder	elder
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	rare (seedlings)
<i>Spirea japonica</i> 'Goldflame'	Golden-leaved Spirea	rare
<i>Spirea sp.</i>	Spirea (unidentified variety)	rare
<i>Staphylea pinnata</i>	Bladder nut	rare
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snowberry	rare
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych elm	rare

Flowering herbs

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	RELATIVE ABUNDANCE
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	locally abundant
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley	occasional
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	frequent
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse	rare
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	Hairy bitter-cress	rare
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckoo-flower (Lady's Smock)	frequent
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	occasional
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay willowherb	locally abundant
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle	occasional
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear thistle	rare
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth hawksbeard	rare
<i>Crocus sp.</i>	Crocus	locally abundant
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great willowherb	rare
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved willowherb,	occasional

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	RELATIVE ABUNDANCE
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers (Goose-grass)	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Avens, Wood (Herb Bennet)	<i>locally abundant</i>
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	<i>rare</i>
<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear	<i>rare</i>
<i>Narcissus</i> sp.	Cultivated daffodil	<i>locally abundant</i>
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater plantain	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup	<i>rare</i>
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser celandine	<i>locally abundant</i>
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common sorrel	<i>rare</i>
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved dock	<i>frequent</i>
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Ragwort, Common	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly sow-thistle	<i>rare</i>
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion	<i>abundant</i>
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover	<i>locally abundant</i>
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging nettle	<i>locally abundant</i>
<i>Veronica filiformis</i>	Slender speedwell	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved speedwell	<i>rare</i>

Grasses, sedges, rushes, etc

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	RELATIVE ABUNDANCE
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common bent	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Alopercurus pratensis</i>	Meadow foxtail	<i>locally abundant</i>
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oat-grass	<i>rare</i>
<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	Barren brome	<i>rare</i>
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	<i>frequent</i>
<i>Elymus repens</i>	Common couch	<i>rare?</i>
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red fescue	<i>locally abundant</i>
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye -grass,	<i>locally dominant</i>
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual meadow-grass,	<i>frequent</i>
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Smooth meadow-grass,	<i>occasional</i>
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough meadow-grass,	<i>frequent</i>

Ferns

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	RELATIVE ABUNDANCE
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male fern	<i>rare</i>

Fungi

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	NOTES
<i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>	Jew's-ear	on fallen branch
<i>Calocybe gambosa</i>	St George's mushroom	in grassland
<i>Polyporus squamosus</i>	Dryad's saddle	on log under shrubs
<i>Coprinus micaceus</i>	Glistening ink-cap	on stump

Habitats / species of nature conservation importance

UK BAP Priority Habitats

None

Sheffield LBAP Priority Habitats

None

UK BAP Priority Species

Song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Sheffield LBAP Priority Species

None

UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern

Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)

Blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

UK Red List Birds

Song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

UK Amber List Birds

Mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Local Red Data Book Species

Lepidoptera Grade A Species

Speckled wood (*Pararge aegeria*)

Previous surveys

AUTHOR/RECORDER	DATE	COVERAGE	LOCATION
John Fox	July 1987	Brief assessment using Shimwell urban habitat codes. No data on fauna.	Filed at Ecology Unit under Sheffield Habitat Survey (Inner City) Phase I. Reference 8E40.

History and Geology

Geological survey

All the sites covered by the Burngreave Green Audit are underlain by sedimentary rocks from the Lower Coal Measures series, deposited during the Upper Carboniferous period. According to the 1:50,000 geological map, Devon Gardens is situated on the band of shale that separates the Grenoside Sandstone from the Penistone Flags. These rocks do not outcrop within the boundaries of the site.

Archaeological survey

No archaeological or historical features were identified within Devon Gardens in the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service SMR, English Heritage National Monuments Record or on historic Ordnance Survey maps.

Historical survey

Devon Gardens are first shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (1905). The site of the gardens is previously shown as agricultural land and corresponds to part of a much larger plot of land on Harrison's map of Southall Soake (1637). This plot was divided into two separate plots. The boundary between these plots bisects the site from north north-west to south south-east and is shown on Fairbank's map of the Parish of Sheffield (1795). Devon Gardens were presented to Sheffield City Council by the Earl Fitzwilliam in 1913 and covered an area of 3 roods and 15 poles [14].

Recommendations

Devon Gardens are of limited archaeological or historical significance. No features were identified within the limits of the site. Although Devon Gardens represent an historic designed landscape, they have little or no interpretative potential in their own right.

Community

Footfall survey

Summary of the total number of visitors in the week

	Elderly	Adult	Teenager	Child	Baby	Total
Day1	1	3	0	0	0	4
Day2	2	9	0	2	0	13
Day3	0	1	2	1	0	4
Day4	2	3	1	0	0	6
Total	5	16	3	3	0	27

Conclusion

- The adults are the main visitors of Devon garden
- There was very low number of visitor as the gardens despite being in the middle of a residential area.

Observed uses

- The most popular use of the garden was cutting through
- Other use was walking