

18 Nottingham Street Recreation Ground



Introduction

Nottingham Street Recreation Ground is a small urban park. It was originally laid out in the late 19th century but has recently undergone a major redevelopment. Approximately a third of the site is surfaced with asphalt. The rest consists of species-poor amenity grassland with scattered trees and beds of shrubs. The trees have been planted at various stages in the site's history and include a few mature specimens. Most of the trees and shrubs are non-indigenous and/or ornamental. From an ecological perspective, the most interesting features are the dense beds of ornamental shrubs around the northern end of the site, which provide nesting cover and food for birds.

Site details

Site name

Nottingham Street Recreation Ground.

Location

The grid reference for the site is SK356888.

Map 1 shows the location of Nottingham Street Recreation Ground within the Burngreave district.

Land owner

Sheffield City Council

Nearest road/street

The northeastern edge of the site adjoins Nottingham Street. The site can also be entered from Gray Street to the south and Nottingham Cliff / Andover Street to the west.

Adjacent land use

Roads, housing, private gardens and school grounds.

Size

The site covers approximately 1.6 hectares, including the area adjacent to the Nottingham Cliff flats.

Present management

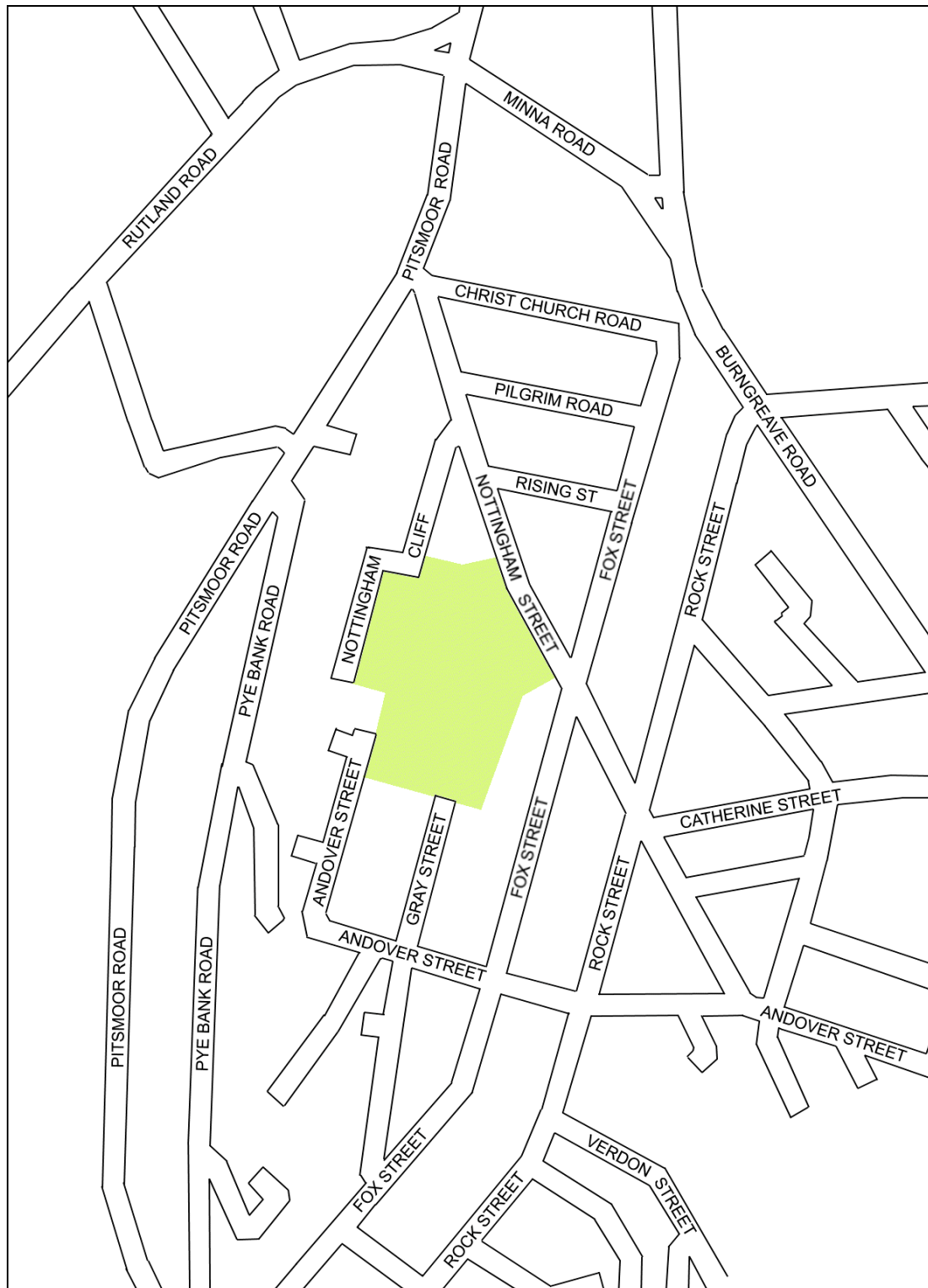
The site is currently managed as a public park by Sheffield City Council. The grass is mown every three or four weeks from April to September. Herbicide is applied to control growth where the mower cannot reach (e.g. along the edges of the paths, around the base of the trees and beneath the railings).

Maintenance work undertaken recently includes repairing and painting the benches.

UDP designations

The site was designated as an Open Space Area in the 1998 edition of the Unitary Development Plan.

Location map



Map 1: The location of Nottingham Street Recreation Ground within the Burngreave district.

Ecology

Phase 1 habitat survey

Site description

Nottingham Street Recreation Ground is a small urban park that was originally laid out in the late 19th century. Within the past four years the site has undergone a major redevelopment, which included the installation of two basketball courts, various items of play equipment (with safety fencing) and numerous seats.

Approximately a third of the site is surfaced with asphalt. The rest consists of species-poor amenity grassland (J1.2) with scattered broad-leaved trees (A3.1) and beds of ornamental shrubs (J1.4). The trees have been planted at various stages in the site's history and include a few mature specimens. Most of the trees and shrubs are non-indigenous and/or ornamental. There are a few self-sown saplings of native species (e.g. pedunculate oak, *Quercus robur*) in the shrub beds along Nottingham Street.

The amenity grassland is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), with a few herbaceous species such as daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and autumn hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*). There is a small area of grassland near the Nottingham Cliff flats that holds more herbaceous plants, especially ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). More herbs survive as weeds in the shrub beds, the most notable species being bush vetch (*Vicia sepium*) and hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*).

Habitats of interest

No habitats of nature conservation importance were found within the site.

The most interesting features are the dense beds of ornamental shrubs around the northern end of the site, which offer excellent nesting cover for birds. Some of the shrubs (e.g. *Buddleja davidii*) have flowers that attract nectar-feeding insects; others (e.g. *Cotoneaster* spp.) provide food for birds in the form of berries and seeds.

Species of interest

No species of nature conservation importance were found within the site.

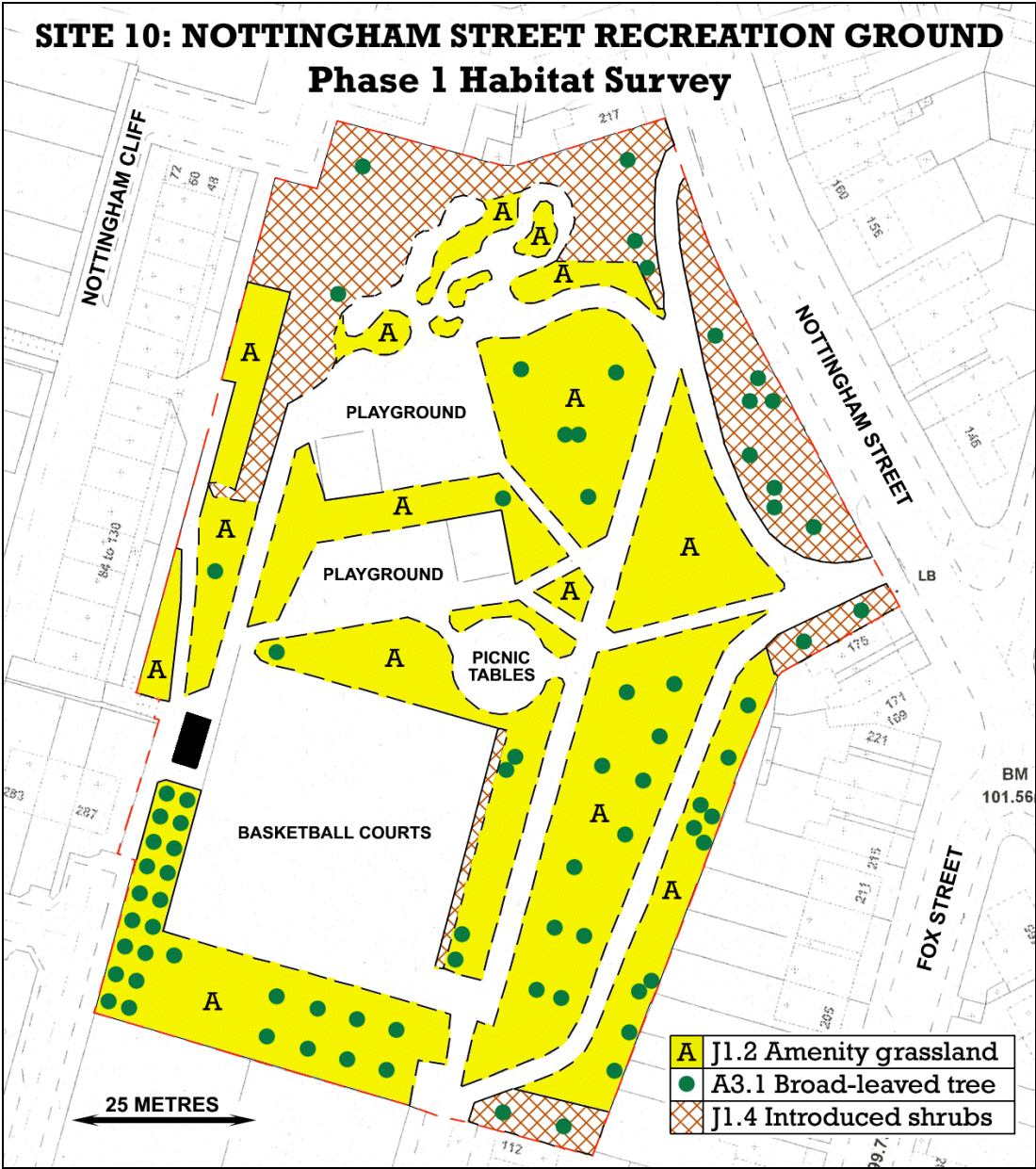
The beds of shrubs hold a very diverse range of species. Most of them are non-indigenous, but there are a few native species (e.g. hazel, *Corylus avellana*).

Many of the trees are commonplace ornamental species (e.g. Japanese flowering cherry, *Prunus serrulata* 'Kanzan'). There are a few native species, including hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*). The more unusual non-native species include Turkish hazel (*Corylus colurna*) and willow-leaved pear (*Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula'). There are

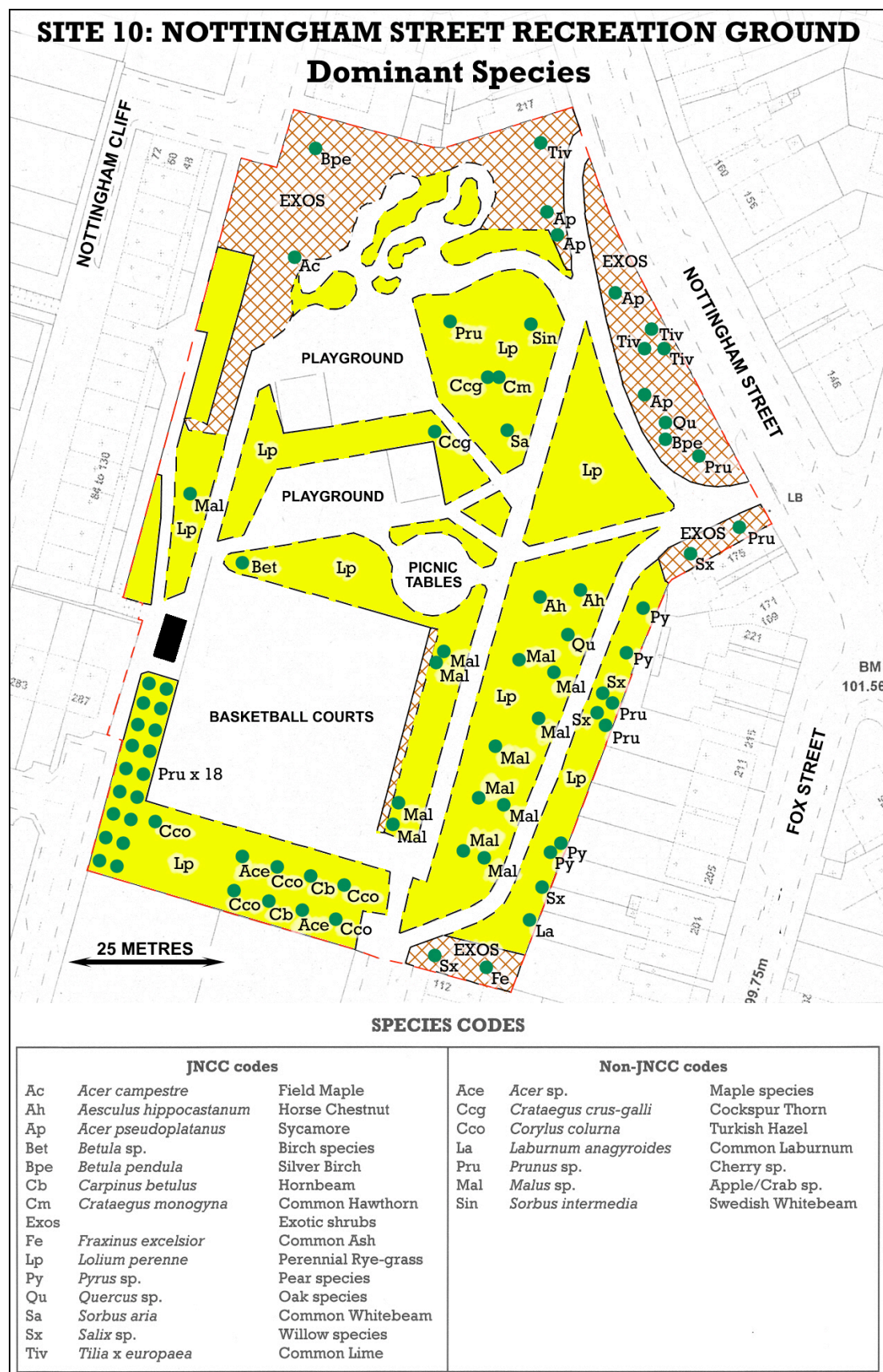
several mature specimens of weeping willow (*Salix* 'Chrysocoma'), which look particularly attractive in spring. A group of apple trees (*Malus* sp.) has been planted to the east of the basketball courts. These appear to bear two different varieties of fruit, but they are in urgent need of pruning.

The pale flowered form of lesser burdock (*Arctium minus*) was found growing as a weed under some of the benches. Other herbaceous species were found as weeds in the shrub beds, including wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), bush vetch (*Vicia sepium*) and hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*).

Habitat maps



Map 2: Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Nottingham Street Recreation Ground (see Map 3 for dominant species codes). Due to the relatively small size of the site, it has been possible to mark the approximate position of each tree (see Map 3 for species).



Map 3: The dominant species at Nottingham St Recreation Ground (see 3.1.2 and 3.1.3).

Invertebrates

A systematic survey of the invertebrates was not undertaken. Just two species of butterfly were recorded: large white (*Pieris brassicae*) and small white (*P. rapae*). The lack of butterflies is probably due to the shortage of larval foodplants, such as stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

Birds

Despite offering some good nesting cover, Nottingham Street Recreation Ground has surprisingly few birds. Just 12 species were noted during 8 site visits. On several visits only 1 or 2 species were evident. Blackbird is the only species for which breeding was confirmed.

SPECIES RECORDED ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION BETWEEN 14/04/03 & 22/08/03	<u>POSSIBLE</u> <u>BREEDING</u> SPECIES ¹	<u>PROBABLE</u> <u>BREEDING</u> SPECIES ²	<u>CONFIRMED</u> <u>BREEDING</u> SPECIES ³	NUMBER OF TERRITORIES HELD BY SELECTED SPECIES
Feral pigeon	Mistle thrush	Wren ⁵	Blackbird	Wren ⁵ 1
Wood pigeon		Dunnock ⁵		Dunnock ⁵ 1
Collared dove		Blue tit ⁵		Blackbird 2
Wren ⁵		Magpie		Blue tit ⁵ 1
Dunnock ⁵		Greenfinch ⁵		
Blackbird				
Mistle thrush				
Blue tit ⁵				
Magpie				
Starling ⁶				
House sparrow ⁶				
Greenfinch ⁵				

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.

⁵ Species of Conservation Concern in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

⁶ UK Red List species

The scarcity of birds can be attributed to a number of factors:

- the site is relatively small;
- about a third of the site is surfaced with asphalt;
- the site has limited range of habitats;
- many of the trees and shrubs are non-native;
- the surrounding housing is mostly terraced, with small gardens;
- as with many other sites in Burngreave, there is no permanent source of water.

The birds recorded during the survey include two species that are on the UK Red list: house sparrow and starling. Nationally these species are described as being of high conservation concern. However, neither species nests within the boundaries of the site. House sparrows were seen collecting food in the shrubbery at the northwestern tip of the site; starlings were seen foraging amongst the grass cuttings.

Evaluation

Nottingham Street Recreation Ground is of limited ecological interest, mainly due to its small size and the non-indigenous origin of much of its vegetation. Other limiting factors are listed in section 3.3 (page 6).

However, the site does have a few features of ecological interest. There several mature trees, including a large ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) near the southeastern corner. Although the dense shrubberies at the northern end are composed mainly of non-native species, they offer nesting cover and food for birds.

The amenity grassland is species poor and dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), so there is little scope for introducing a “meadow” mowing regime.

There is a shortage of natural herbaceous vegetation that might provide habitats for invertebrates. There are occasional clumps of tall herbs surviving as weeds in the shrubberies, under the benches and along the southern boundary wall. However, these are not sufficiently extensive to support many invertebrates. There is also a lack of dead plant material, such as leaf mould, which could be remedied by applying mulch to the shrubberies.

As with many of the open spaces in Burngreave, there is no permanent source of water. This undoubtedly limits the fauna that the site 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
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple
<i>Acer platanoides</i> ‘Globosum’	Norway maple (cultivar)
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horse chestnut
<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Spotted laurel
<i>Berberis darwinii</i>	Darwin’s barberry
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i> ‘Atropurpurea nana’	Crimson pygmy Japanese barberry
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i> ‘Aurea’	Golden Japanese barberry
<i>Berberis _ stenophylla</i>	Hybrid barberry
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch
<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch (unidentified species)
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	Butterfly-bush
<i>Buddleja globosa</i>	Orange-ball-tree
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam
<i>Cornus alba</i> ‘Spaethii’	Golden variegated dogwood
<i>Cornus</i> sp.	Dogwood (unidentified species)
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Corylus colurna</i>	Turkish hazel
<i>Corylus maxima</i> ‘Purpurea’	Purple-leaved filbert
<i>Cotoneaster dammeri</i>	Bearberry cotoneaster
<i>Cotoneaster franchetii</i>	Franchet’s cotoneaster
<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>	Wall cotoneaster
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Common hawthorn
<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>	Quince
<i>Escallonia</i> sp.	Escallonia
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i> ‘Emerald ‘n’ Gold’	Evergreen bittersweet
<i>Forsythia _ intermedia</i>	Forsythia
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Common ash
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Hedera</i> sp.	Ivy (cultivar)
<i>Hypericum calycinum</i>	Rose of Sharon
<i>Kerria japonica</i> ‘Pleniflora’	Jew’s mallow (double-flowered)
<i>Kerria japonica</i> ‘Variegata’	Jew’s mallow (variegated)
<i>Laburnum anagyroides</i>	Laburnum
<i>Lonicera nitida</i> ‘Baggesen's Gold’	Golden boxleaf honeysuckle
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	Oregon grape
<i>Malus domestica</i>	Cultivated apple
<i>Malus</i> sp.	Flowering crab
<i>Olearia _ haastii</i>	Daisy bush
<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>	Mock orange
<i>Philadelphus</i> ‘Virginal’	Mock orange

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME
<i>Prunus avium</i> *	Wild cherry*
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry laurel
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> 'Otto Luyken'	Dwarf cherry laurel
<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	Portugal laurel
<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Amanogawa'	Japanese flowering cherry
<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Kanzan'	Japanese flowering cherry
<i>Pyrus communis</i>	Cultivated pear
<i>Pyrus salicifolia</i> 'Pendula'	Willow-leaved pear
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate oak
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Red oak
<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	Flowering currant
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog rose
<i>Rosa glauca</i>	Shrub rose (pink flowers, dark red hips)
<i>Rosa hugonis</i>	Shrub rose (yellow flowers, black hips)
<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	Japanese rose
<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Shrub rose (unidentified species)
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Salix</i> 'Chrysocoma'	Weeping willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Skimmia japonica</i>	Skimmia
<i>Solanum crispum</i> 'Glasnevin'	Chilean potato tree
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam
<i>Sorbus intermedia</i>	Swedish whitebeam
<i>Spiraea salicifolia</i>	Bridewort
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snowberry
<i>Tilia _ europaea</i>	Common lime
<i>Weigela florida</i> 'Variegata'	Weigelia
<i>Weigela</i> sp.	Weigelia

* possibly a cultivar of this species.

Forbs

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley
<i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i>	Thale cress
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser burdock (pale flowered form)
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort
<i>Atriplex patula</i>	Common orache
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	Hairy bitter-cress
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common mouse-ear
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear thistle
<i>Crocsmia pottsii _ aurea</i>	Montbretia
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great willowherb
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved willowherb
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese knotweed
<i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>	Red hemp-nettle

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Geranium</i> sp.	Crane's-bill (unidentified species)
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood avens (herb bennet)
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	Prickly lettuce
<i>Lamium album</i>	White dead-nettle
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort
<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	Autumn hawkbit
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common mallow
<i>Narcissus</i> sp.	Cultivated daffodil
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater plantain
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled dock
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved dock
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common ragwort
<i>Senecio squalidus</i>	Oxford ragwort
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	Hedge mustard
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge woundwort
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common chickweed
<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	Feverfew
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion
<i>Thlaspi arvense</i>	Field penny-cress
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging nettle
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	Wall speedwell
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander speedwell
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush vetch

Grasses, sedges, rushes, etc

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME
<i>Alopercurus pratensis</i>	Meadow foxtail
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oat-grass
<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	Barren brome
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall barley
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye -grass
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual meadow-grass

Ferns

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME
None recorded	

Fungi

BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	NOTES
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BOTANICAL NAME	ENGLISH NAME	NOTES
<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	Sulphur tuft	on stump

Species/habitats of nature conservation importance

Local red data book species

None

UK BAP Priority Habitats

None

UK BAP Priority species

None

UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern

Blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

UK Red List birds

House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)*

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)*

* not breeding within the site

UK Amber List birds

Mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Previous surveys

AUTHOR/RECORDER	DATE	COVERAGE	LOCATION
John Fox	Sept 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 12B16.

History and Geology

Geological survey

The solid geology of the site lies within the Lower Coal Measures of the Upper Carboniferous period and is characterised by flaggy sandstone

Archaeological survey

No archaeological or historical features were identified within Nottingham Street Recreation Ground in the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service SMR, the English Heritage NMR or on historic Ordnance Survey maps.

Historical survey

Nottingham Street Recreation Ground is first shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (1905). The site of the recreation ground is previously shown as agricultural land on Harrison's map of Southall Soake (1637). It was acquired for the purposes of creating much needed recreational facilities and presented to the city of Sheffield by the Duke of Norfolk in 1887 [14]. Nottingham Cliffe Recreation Ground, as it was originally known, was damaged during the course of two air raids on the Burngreave area in 1916

Recommendations

Nottingham Street Recreation Ground is of limited archaeological or historical significance. No features were identified within the limits of the site. Although the recreation ground represents an historic designed landscape, it has little or no interpretative potential in its own right.

Community

Nottingham St Rec is a popular playground with a modern, varied and interesting playground. It also boasts a well maintained, functional multi sports court, grassy tree areas and picnic sites shaded areas from the sun. Although the playground the best in Burngreave it being sited directly on and around a major through fare used by both dog walkers and residents as a short-cut. This has identified itself as a major concern with many visitors.

User Survey Results

The user survey showed that the most popular activity taking place on the site was taking a short-cut and playing and visiting the playground. Other activities included dog walking, cycling, playing basketball, having a picnic, sitting and resting, and walking. Tuesday was the busiest day with the daily AM surveys showing that most visitors were adults children and teenagers. The MD surveys showed that children and adults were the most frequent with some teenagers. The PM survey shows again high numbers of adults, children and teenagers visiting the site. There were low levels of elderly visitors and lower levels of infants.

Site Problems

Safety

The high number of people passing directly through the playground is a concern of the parents that visit the site.

The site also feels unsafe to visit in the evenings as people congregate in the park particularly in the playground.

There is a feeling of being exposed and vulnerable playing directly in the path of so many people passing through.

Litter and Vandalism

There is a lot of broken glass on the site especially around the seating area.

There is some litter but it is mainly found in and around the bushes and by the road.

There are a number of benches that are burnt and / or have parts missing making them unusable.

People are unhappy with the litter that gets blown into the park and left by visitors.

Dogs

People walk their dogs on the site often letting them off their leads and they can access the playground.

There is also a problem with dog mess even though there is a dog bin on the site. There are a few stray dogs coming onto the site particularly some very large ones from nearby housing. They freely roam the whole site including

the playground and cause worry to parents and children .It is likely that it is these stray dogs fouling the site .

Facilities

The playground is very satisfactory but is let down by the lack of functional fencing and gates which are missing in parts and allow dogs to enter.

There are too many benches clustered together at the top of the playground, some of which are burnt and unusable.

They provide a place for gangs to congregate at night.

Landscape and access

There are a number of overgrown areas surrounding the bench area at the top of the playground and their dense growth collects litter in their branches.

The site has difficult access for prams and pushchairs yet cars and motorbikes have managed to get on site in the past.

Some footpaths are uneven adding to difficult access.

Site Solutions

- Create a definite boundary between the playground and the footpath to make separate, defined areas.
- Create more secure fences and gates and encourage people to use them. This will help stop stray dogs getting onto the site and in particular stop dogs off their leads getting in the playground.
- Ensure entranceways and footpaths are easily accessible for pushchairs but impossible for quad and motorbike access.
- Car access should be securely locked at all times and reserved for maintenance vehicles only.
- Improve seating lay out and introduce more sustainable benches.
- Cut back and maintain overgrown areas.
- Clear litter and broken glass regularly from the site.
- Install lighting

Community Suggestions

From the options provided within the questionnaire the most popular suggestions to improve Nottingham St Rec were;

- Low colourful planting
- Toddlers play equipment
- Sculpture and art
- Stopping dog mess
- Litter control

Community suggestions for changes to improve the site focused mainly on extending the facilities to make the playground even better. The most popular suggestions were;

- Change the seating layout
- Cut back the hedges
- Better access for prams
- Tidy up the site
- Toilets on site
- Install a water pipe / drinking fountain
- More soft surfaces
- Less vandalism
- More bins
- More general maintenance
- More puzzles / games in the playground

Question 7 provided an insight as to what people would ideally like to be able to do at Nottingham St Rec. There general response was to create an enjoyable children's environment. The following suggestions were made.

Create art works

Get local schools involved with creating murals, sculptures and paintings on the site.

Enjoy shady areas

Create a sun / rain shelter to use in the playground.

Feel safe

Visit the park feeling safe and secure.

Come to more events

Visit the park and take part in activities, organised sports and games.

Play on more equipment

Expand the playground to include more for toddlers and older children.

A paddling pool

A seasonal, maintained shallow paddling pool for children to use.

Stop people cutting through the playground

Create a definite boundary between the footpath and the playground, they should be two separate areas

Fence off the play area

Make the playground safer by having more fencing and gates that work to access it.

Footfall survey

Summary of the number of visitors in the week

	Elderly	Adult	Teenager	Child	Baby	Total
Day 1	2	14	6	13	1	36
Day 2	4	20	15	19	0	58
Day 3	1	10	8	12	1	32
Day 4	1	13	4	12	1	31
Total	8	57	33	56	3	157

Conclusion

- This is the second most popular space after Abbeyfield park.
- It has got lots of sport and playground facilities which attract children and teenagers mainly, however adults also are regular users of the park.

Observed uses

The most popular use was that of cutting and playing. Others included:

- Dog walking
- Cycling
- Walking
- Picnic
- Sitting
- Basketball

Suggestions from the BGEP Roadshow

Comments/ Suggestions	Number
Do it up	1
Picnic area	1
Problem: Drug taking	1
Recycling facility	1