

EXTENDED PHASE I HABITAT SURVEY

Former Walton Hospital
Rice Lane
Liverpool
L9 1AE

Prepared for: Mulbury Homes



MULBURY HOMES

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E3P

Heliport Business Park, Liverpool Road, Eccles, Manchester, M30 7RU

Tel: +00 (0) 161 707 9612 http://www.e3p.co.uk

Registered in England No.: 807255262

QUALITY ASSURANCE

REMARKS	Revision 1
DATE	April 2015
PREPARED BY	R. Hacking
SIGNATURE	tous pp
CHECKED BY	S. Towers
QUALIFICATIONS	BSc, FGS, AIEMA, AMI EnvSc
SIGNATURE	Store
AUTHORISED BY	M Dyer
QUALIFICATIONS	BSc, FGS, AIEMA, MIEnvSc, CEnv
SIGNATURE	HL O.D-
PROJECT NUMBER	10-216

Executive Summary				
Site Address	Former Walton Hospital, Rice Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside, L9 1AE			
Grid Reference	E335784, N395412			
Site Area	5.12Ha			
	This Phase I Habitat Survey presents the ecological, biodiversity and nature conservation status of the former Walton Hospital in Liverpool in relation to the redevelopment of the site for low rise housing and a retail foodstore.			
Report Objectives	This report details the results of a desktop study and extended Phase I Habitat Survey undertaken in February 2015. The scope of the survey undertaken is appropriate to enable the identification of any potential ecological constraints, the remit of the mitigation required and opportunities associated with the proposed development proposals.			
Current Site Use	The site is currently split into three vacant parcels known as Site A, B and C. At the time of the Survey, parcels A & B were vacant and Parcel C was periodically being utilised for NHS visitor parking.			
	Areas surrounding these parcels are currently occupied by the NHS associated with surrounding hospital buildings.			
Proposed Development	Mulbury Homes intend to construct a low rise residential development comprising 195 No. residential units, including apartments, with associated garden and landscaped areas, estate roads and infrastructure. Furthermore, it is intended to construct a new Aldi foodstore in the south eastern sector of the red line development site.			
Habitats	The boundary trees and shrubs within the site are of local value as they provide structural diversity and are suitable for nesting and foraging bird species. No habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation (UK BAP Priority Habitats) are present within the site. The habitats within the site are composed of common widespread plant species and are species-poor in character.			
Invasive Plant Species	Japanese Knotweed, an invasive species as listed on Schedule 9 of the <i>Wildlife</i> and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is present in dense swaths in the northern and southern sectors of the site. It is an offence to cause the spread of this species in the wild. Guidance on the control and management of this species is described in the report.			
Protected Species	The trees, shrubs and scrub within the site are suitable for use by nesting birds. All native bird species are protected whilst they are nesting. Recommendations for the protection of nesting birds are provided within the report.			
Conclusions	This ecological appraisal has demonstrated that, in principle, a residential and retail development on all parcels of land is feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework.			
	Development at the site will provide an opportunity to secure ecological enhancement for fauna typically associated with residential areas.			

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Drawing No 10-216r2-002 - Phase I Habitat Survey Plan



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

E3P Ltd have been commissioned by Mulbury Homes to undertake an extended Phase I Habitat Survey at the former Walton Hospital on Rice Lane in Liverpool.

1.2 Proposed Development

Mulbury Homes intends to construct a low rise residential development comprising 144 No. residential dwellings and two apartment blocks consisting of 51 apartments in total, with associated garden and landscaped areas, estate roads and infrastructure. A new Aldi store is also proposed within the red line planning boundary of the site in the south eastern sector.

For the purpose of this report, the site has been split into three parcels of land as follows:

- Parcel A Ai and Aii
- Parcel B Aiii to Avi
- Parcel C Avii

The proposed development layout is included in Appendix III as Drawing 13-160-P02 and an excerpt is shown overleaf in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Snapshot of Proposed Layout





1.3 Scope of Survey

The scope of the ecological survey undertaken in February 2015 comprised:

- Desktop study for known ecological information at the site and surrounding areas;
- An Extended Phase I Habitat Survey and assessment;
- Survey and assessment of all habitats for statutorily protected species and other wildlife including Badger, Barn Owl, Great Crested Newt, Water Vole, bird species and invertebrates;
- An assessment of the ecological value of the habitats within the site with the use of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and the Ratcliffe criteria (A Nature Conservation Review 1977);
- The identification of any potential ecological constraints on the proposals and the specification of the scope of mitigation and ecological enhancement required in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy guidance and other relevant guidance; and.
- The identification of any further surveys or precautionary actions that may be required prior to the commencement of any development activities.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desktop Study

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted for information:

- MAgiC A web based interactive mapping system, on which geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations are collaborated, including details of statutory conservation sites;
- Liverpool Records Office; and,
- North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.2 Vegetation and Habitats

An Extended Phase I Habitat Survey of all parcels of land at the proposed development site was undertaken by Rachel Hacking (Principal Ecologist) and Andy Harmer on 26th February 2015. The weather was dry, cool and sunny. February is outside of the optimum time of year for a botanical assessment, however given the type of habitats present on site, a full assessment was able to be made.

A vegetation and habitat plan has been produced for the proposed development site and the immediate surrounding area (Drawing 10-216r2-001, Appendix II). The mapping is based on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Phase I Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC 2010) with minor adjustments to illustrate and examine the habitats with a greater precision.

The plant species within the site boundary were determined with estimates of the distribution, ground cover, abundance and constancy of the individual species.

All stands of vegetation and habitats were described and evaluated using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). The NVC provides a systematic and comprehensive analysis of British Vegetation and provides a reliable framework for nature conservation and land-use planning.

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed a protected in the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (1991).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).



2.3 Animal Life

2.3.1 Badger

A thorough inspection of the site was undertaken in relation to Badger (*Meles meles*). The survey area covered the site and accessible land within a radius of 50 metres from the site boundaries.

The following signs of Badger activity were searched for:

- 'D' shaped sett entrances at least 0.25m wide and wider than they are high with large spoil mounds;
- Discarded bedding at sett entrances (this includes grass and leaves);
- Scratching posts on shrubs and trees close to a sett entrance;
- The presence of Badger hairs which are coarse, up to 0.1m long with a long black section and a white tip;
- Dung pit latrines and footprints; and,
- Trampled pathways through vegetation and beneath fences.

All habitats within and surrounding the site were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by foraging and sheltering Badger.

2.3.2 Bat Species

Survey Personnel

The trees and shrubs within the site were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats by Rachel Hacking who holds a valid Natural England Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2).

The surveyor's qualifications and experience meet the criteria as defined in *Technical Guidance Series Competencies for Species Survey: Bats*, prepared by the CIEEM (April 2013). The surveys were carried in accordance with standard methodology including the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (2004), the *Bat Workers Manual (2004)* and *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines*, 2nd *Edition* (Hundt, 2012).

Trees were assessed for their suitability for use by roosting bats (ie, presence of crevices, cracks, woodpecker holes, dense ivy cover and splits in the trunks and branches that could be accessed by bats). The tree criteria are detailed in Table 2.1 overleaf:



Table 2.1 Tree Category Definitions

TREE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	
Known or Confirmed Roost	Tree has a known roost or roost is determined by further survey.	
Category 1*	Trees with multiple, highly suitable features capable of supporting larger roosts.	
Category 1	Trees with low numbers of features suitable for supporting roosting bats; or with multiple features suitable for low numbers of bats.	
Category 2	Trees with no obvious features suitable for roosting bats, although the tree is of a size and age that elevated surveys may result in cracks or crevices being found; or, tree supports a low number of features suitable for low numbers of roosting bats.	
Category 3	Trees with no features suitable for roosting bats.	

2.3.3 Bird Species

Bird species observed and heard during the walkover survey were recorded.

Habitats throughout the site and immediate surrounding area were assessed for their value for roosting, feeding and nesting birds, as indicated by the amount of shelter, feeding value, woody vegetation structure and species diversity of tree and shrub species in the site.

2.3.4 Great Crested Newt

In accordance with the current Natural England guidance all ponds within an unobstructed 500m of the site should be considered for their suitability to support Great Crested Newts and the potential of the proposed development to impact upon any Great Crested Newt Populations within 500m of that proposed development.

The sites are entirely surrounded by buildings and existing developments. There are no ponds within an unobstructed 500m radius from the site boundaries. No further surveys for amphibian species are necessary.

2.3.5 Reptile Species

The site was assessed in terms of suitability for use by reptile species using the important characteristics for reptiles outlined in the draft document *'Reptile Mitigation Guidelines'* (Natural England, September 2011), and reproduced in Table 2.2 (below):

Table 2.2 Tree Category Definitions

1. Location	7. Connectivity to nearby good quality habitat
2. Vegetation Structure	8. Prey abundance
3. Insolation	9. Refuge opportunity
4. Aspect	10. Hibernation habitat potential
5. Topography	11. Disturbance regime
6. Surface Geology	12. Egg-laying site potential



2.3.6 Water Vole and Other Riparian Fauna

There are no watercourses of other water bodies within the site or in close proximity to the site. The proposed residential development will not impact upon any riparian fauna.

2.4 Survey Limitations

The survey was conducted at a time of year where some plant species would be less identifiable. The entire site was accessible at the time of the survey.

2.5 Evaluation Methodology

The habitats, vegetation and animal life were evaluated with reference to standard nature conservation criteria as described by Ratcliffe (1977) and the Joint Nature Conservancy Council (2013). These are size (extent), diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility, typicality, recorded history, position in an ecological or geographical unit, potential value and intrinsic appeal.

Government advice on wildlife, as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012) as associated government circulars has been taken into consideration. The UK and North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan have also been considered during the evaluation of the proposed development site.



3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desktop Study

Site Designations and Allocations

The site does not form part of a statutory designated site (such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, or SSSI) or non-statutory designated site, such as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI).

The only record identified of site designation are Priority Habitat Inventory in Deciduous Woodland and National Inventory of Woodland and Trees located circa 20m north of the site on the opposite side of the railway line. The proposed development will not impact upon any non-statutory designated areas.

Protected and Notable Species

There are no records of protected or notable species for the site. There are records of Lapwing across the site and surrounding area, although it is considered the proposed development will not impact this species.

3.2 Vegetation and Habitats

The site is located within a suburban area of Liverpool, with roads, housing and a new hospital surrounding the site.

Following a site walkover of the proposed development areas, the following land uses have been identified:

Site A – Cleared to ground level with building slabs and foundations in the western sector and paved car-parking in the eastern areas.

Site B – The site appears to have been cleared of all above ground structures, however scarring at the near surface suggest the presence of relict foundations and buried infrastructure.

Site C – Aerial photography suggests that the site was occupied by a church in 1908 and associated car parking, however the topographical survey suggests this has now been demolished.

The vegetation and habitats present at the site has been described separately below. Habitat descriptions are included on Drawing 10-216r2-001 (Appendix II).

3.2.1 Neutral Grassland

Neutral grassland occurs throughout the site and is rank and unmanaged (Plate 1 and 2 below). The majority of the grassed areas are accessed by the general public for dog-walking. This habitat has encroached across disturbed land and previous hardstanding. It is probable that when the hospital was in use, most of this habitat was mown.



The habitat is species-poor and includes grasses such as Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. Herbaceous species include Red Bartsia *Odontites vernus*, Common Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, Black Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*. Target Notes 1 (Appendix I) provides a description for this habitat.



Plate 1: Showing the grassland within the southern sector of the site



Plate 2: Showing the grassland within the northern sector of the site

3.2.2 Tall, Ruderal Herb

The site supports small areas of tall, rank vegetation, mapped as tall, ruderal herb. The species include Rosebay Willowherd *Chamerion angustifolium*, Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* and Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*.

3.2.3 Continuous Scrub

Continuous scrub occurs in pockets throughout the site in the form of dense stands of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, occurring on spoil mounds, on banks and on the edges of the site (Plate 3 below). Within the northern sector of the site, stands of European Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Broom *Cytisus scoparius* occur (Plate 4). Along the southern boundary of the site, Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and Elder *Sambucus nigra* bushes occur alongside saplings of Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Willow *Salix* sp. These habitats are also mapped as continuous scrub.



Plate 3: Showing the Bramble scrub on a bank within the south of the site



Plate 4: Showing the Gorse scrub

3.2.4 Existing Building

One small structure is present on the site in the form of a dilapidated substation (Plate 5 below). The substation is a brick built structure, with corrugated metal panels placed where the brickwork has collapsed.



Plate 5: Dilapidated Substation



3.2.5 Trees

A number of mature trees are present on the site scattered throughout the northern and southern sectors (Plates 6 and 7). Species include Poplar *Popular* var., Ornamental Cherry *Prunus* var., Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula* and conifers such as Leyland Cypress *Cupressocyparis x leylandii*.



Plate 6: Showing mature trees in the northern sector of the site.



Plate 7: Showing a mature Poplar and Birch at the entrance to the site.



3.2.6 Scattered Scrub

Scattered scrub occurs throughout the site within the grassland and on the edges of the hardstanding (Plate 8 below). The scrub comprises immature, regenerating shrubs and trees such as Broom *Cytisus scoparius*, Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea* and Butterfly-bush *Buddleja davidii*.



Plate 8: Showing scattered scrub over grassland.

3.2.7 Bare Ground

Existing hardstanding is mapped as bare ground. This occurs within the old car parks, access drives, tracks and pavements throughout the site (Plate 9). In places, moss species are establishing over the tarmac and concrete.





Plate 9: Showing hardstanding in the southern part of the site.

3.3 Invasive Species

3.3.1 Japanese Knotweed

Dense swathes of Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* occur on the site (Drawing 10-216r2-001, Appendix II). Most of the identified Japanese Knotweed occurs on the boundaries of the site (Plate 10 and 11), and also appears to be present on neighbouring land in addition to being on site. It is encroaching across the grassland in places.

Japanese Knotweed is listed on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act* 1981 (as amended). The act makes it an offence to cause Japanese Knotweed to grown in the wild. Japanese Knotweed is classed as 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991.

It is likely a regulatory authority approved invasive plant species management methodology will be required to agree management, treatment and eradication of the Japanese Knotweed in relation to the proposed development.





Plate 10: Showing a stand of Japanese Knotweed in the southern sector of the site.



Plate 11: Showing a stand of Japanese Knotweed along the northern boundary of the site.

3.4 Protected Species

3.4.1 Great Crested Newt

Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the *Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994*. This is implemented in the UK through the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations* 2010 and the species is fully protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

No ponds exist on the site and the nearest waterbody is approximately 450m east of the development site, within Walton Hall Park. The site is isolated from the waterbody by roads and residential development.

Terrestrial Great Crested Newt habitat is represented on the site by the tall grassland and scrub habitats.

3.4.2 Bats

All bat species are European Protected Species under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006). It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost.

Only one structure exists on the site in the form of a dilapidated substation (Plate 5). This building offers no roosting opportunities for bats.

The mature trees on site were inspected for features which could be used by bats, such as cavities or peeling bark, as described in Section 2.3.2. No such features were observed within any of the trees, therefore it is considered these provide no roosting potential for bats.

3.4.3 Badger

Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* and *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.

No Badger sett could be located on site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity could be located during the survey.

3.4.4 Nesting Birds

All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The mature trees and dense scrub all provide suitable bird nesting habitat.



4. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 Vegetation and Habitats

The site contains only common and widespread plant species. No species-rich or semi-natural habitats are present within the site boundary. No UK BAP Priority Habitats are present within either site. The semi-mature trees and shrubs are of local value as they add structural diversity and are suitable for use by breeding birds.

None of the habitats within the site are of significant interest in terms of their plant species composition. None of the habitats present are representative of semi-natural habitat. The NVC communities present are typical of the geographical area and conditions present.

Recommendations for the eradication of the invasive Japanese Knotweed, present in several areas on the site, are presented below in Section 5.3.

4.2 Protected Species and Other Wildlife

The trees, shrubs and scrub are suitable for use by foraging and nesting birds, including House Sparrow, Starling and Dunnock, all UK BAP Priority Species. Consideration of birds (including the protection of breeding birds and recommended enhancements for UK BAP Species) are present in Section 5.2 of this report.

No other protected species were detected within the site. The site does not support suitable habitats for use by protected of UK BAP Priority Species, other than the bird species listed above.

4.3 Assessment of Impacts

This assessment of impacts has been conducted in accordance with Eden Building Design Plan '*Proposed Housing Scheme at Walton Hospital Site, Liverpool*', Ref: 13-160-P02, dated 25th March 2015.

The proposed site layout shows that the site will developed for low rise housing and apartments in addition to a new Aldi store. The scattered trees and shrubs, suitable for use by nesting and foraging birds, will be lost.

The recommendations in Section 5.0 aim to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with all wildlife legislation, Natural England guidance, the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local planning policy and best practice.

Where possible, opportunities to enhance the ecological interest and habitat connectivity and seek biodiversity gain through appropriate landscape planting and habitat creation have been identified and recommended in Section 5.0 (in accordance with the principles of the NPPF and associated documents).



5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Protection of Existing Vegetation

It any trees or shrubs within the site are to be retained by the proposed development then, during the construction phase, temporary protective demarcation fencing will be used to protect the trees and shrubs that are being retained. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until all plots have been developed to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase.

The fencing will be in accordance with BS5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.*

5.2 Birds

5.2.1 Protection of Breeding Birds

All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) while they are breeding. It is mandatory that the trees, shrubs and scrub which are to be removed as part of the proposals are only removed outside the bird breeding season. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.

If any vegetation is scheduled for removal in the bird breeding season it is advised that advice from an ecologist is sought. It may be necessary to carry out a walkover survey to demonstrate satisfactorily that no breeding birds, active nests, eggs or fledglings are present in the area to be cleared.

It breeding birds are detected the ecologist will issue guidance in relation to the protection of the nesting birds in conjunction with the scheduled works. This may involve cordoning off an area of the site until the young birds have fledged.

5.2.2 Enhancing Habitats for Nesting Birds

House Sparrows, Starling and Dunnock, all UK BAP Species, are associated with suburban areas. The installation of four House Sparrow terrace nest boxes and four Starling nest boxes is generally recommended at the proposed residential development (avoiding areas such as directly above any windows or doors), creating further suitable habitat for nesting birds at the site. RSPB advice states that boxes should ideally be sited facing north to east, to avoid exposure to direct sunlight, which may cause overheating of chicks in the nest.

5.3 Invasive Species

Japanese Knotweed occurs throughout the site (Drawing 10-216r2-001, Appendix II). This species will have to be removed from the site prior to development commencing. This may also require the removal of Japanese Knotweed from the neighbouring land to reduce the chances of reinfestation to the proposed development site.

Japanese Knotweed is classed as a 'controlled waste'. Soil containing rhizomes is regarded as contaminated and, if taken off site, must be disposed of at a suitably licensed landfill site (The Environmental Protection Act 1990) and buried to a depth of at least 5m. Japanese



Knotweed plant material and / or contaminated soils which is discarded or intended to be discarded is likely to be classified as controlled waste.

A detailed Japanese Knotweed management plan will be required and implemented to manage, treat and eradicate the identified invasive plant species. This will involve accurately mapping the Japanese Knotweed on the site and producing maps showing potential underground rhizome spread.

5.4 Landscape Planting

It is recommended that the landscape planting is composed from native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife.

It is recommended that trees which support blossom and fruit which will attract insects are incorporated into the landscaped planting.

5.5 Conclusion

This ecological appraisal has demonstrated that, in principle, a residential and retail development at the sites is feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Development at the site will provide an opportunity to secure ecological enhancement for fauna typically associated with residential areas.

END OF REPORT



APPENDIX I TARGET NOTES



Target Note 1 - Neutral Grassland

This Target Note lists the species recorded throughout the site within the neutral grassland habitat. The DAFOR scale represents the abundance of each species on the site (D = dominant, A = abundant, F = frequent, O = occasional and R = rare). L' = Distributed locally within a habitat.

Scientific name	Vernacular name	DAFOR
Arrhenatherum elatius	False Oat-grass	LA
Festuca rubra	Red Fescue	LA
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire Fog	LA
Agrostis stolonifera	Creeping Bent	LA
Lotus corniculatus	Bird's-foot Trefoil	LF
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot	LF
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain	LF
Lolium perenne	Perennial Rye-grass	LF
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse-ear	LF
Senecio jacobaea	Common Ragwort	LF
Odontites vernus	Red Bartsia	0
Centaurea nigra	Black Knapweed	0
<i>Vicia</i> sp.	Vetch	0
Tussilago farfara	Colt's-foot	0
Poa trivialis	Rough Meadow-grass	0
Alopecurus pratensis	Meadow Foxtail	R
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel	R
Sonchus oleraceus	Smooth Sow-thistle	R
Poa annua	Annual Meadow-grass	R
Phalaris arundinacea	Reed Canary-grass	R
Trifolium repens	White Clover	R
Medicago lupulina	Black Medick	R
Picris echioides	Bristly Ox-tongue	R



APPENDIX II DRAWINGS



