

Contents

Scope of Plan	2
Status of Site	3
Site Description - Overview	4
Figure 1 - Fairy Dell, Middlesbrough	5
Site Description - Area One	6
Figure 2 - Current distribution of habitats in Area One	7
Site Description - Area Two	8
Figure 3 - Current distribution of habitats in Area Two	9
Site Description - Area Three	10
Figure 4 - Current distribution of habitats in Area Three	11
Site Description - Area Four	12
Figure 5 - Current distribution of habitats in Area Four	13
Brief Land Use and Management History of Fairy Dell	14
Figure 6 - Old editions of Ordnance Survey maps showing Fairy Dell	15
Summary of Management Prescriptions	16
Appendix 1 - Implementation Schedule for Area One	20
Appendix 2 - Implementation Schedule for Area Two	25
Appendix 3 - Implementation Schedule for Area Three	31
Appendix 4 - Implementation Schedule for Area Four	37
Appendix 5 - Mowing Regime for Fairy Dell	41
Appendix 6 - Japanese Knotweed Information Sheet	43

Scope of Plan

This management plan for Fairy Dell will fulfil two roles: firstly, it will establish an effective maintenance routine to benefit and improve the nature conservation value of Fairy Dell, making recommendations for the future management of the site to improve its biodiversity value; secondly, it will ensure that the site fulfils its role as an attractive and maintained area for informal recreation, as well as providing opportunities for environmental education.

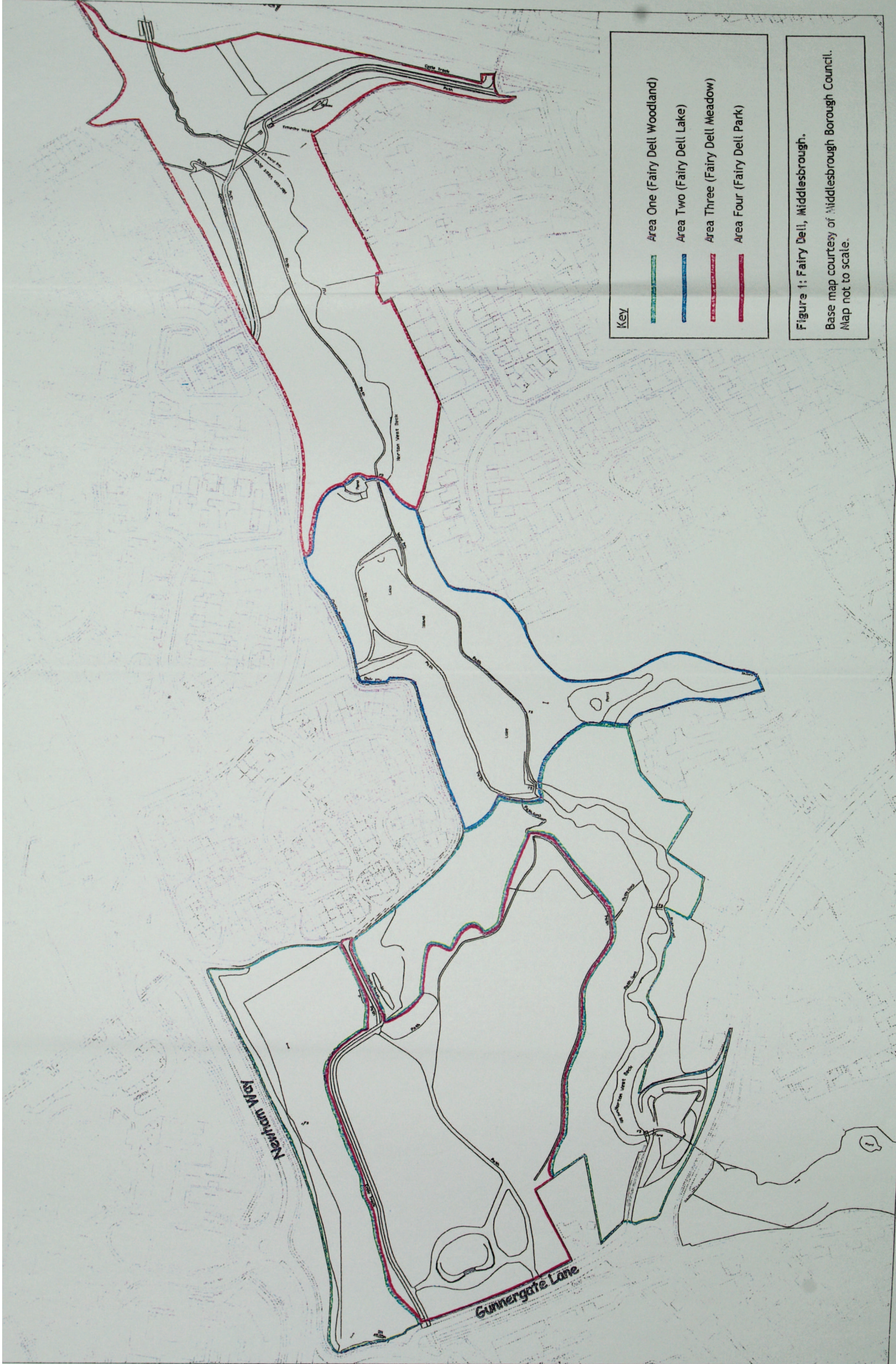
The implementation of this management plan will allow the surrounding community to continue to benefit from this urban greenspace, as well as ensuring its continued existence as an important wildlife haven and corridor, and maintaining its designation as a Local Wildlife Site (formerly known as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance).

Status of Site

Name:	Fairy Dell
Location:	Coulby Newham, South Middlesbrough
Grid Reference:	NZ513147 (upstream) to NZ508154 (downstream)
Local Planning Authority:	Middlesbrough Borough Council
Site Ownership:	Middlesbrough Borough Council
Area:	Approximately 17.2 Ha
Status:	Fairy Dell is included in the Marton West Beck Complex, which was designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) in Middlesbrough in 2006
Access:	The site has free, open access throughout, with numerous pedestrian access points from the surrounding housing areas. Vehicles can access the western bank of Fairy Dell Lake from West Beck Way, and there is very limited vehicle access to Fairy Dell Woodland along the old route of Gunnergate Lane. There is currently no designated parking for Fairy Dell, though spaces are available next to St. Augustine's school on Gunnergate Lane.

Site Description - Overview

Fairy Dell is part of the Marton West Beck Complex, an important wildlife corridor in the form of a long, beck valley with a variety of semi-natural habitats including woodland, scrub, grassland, open water and the beck, extending from the rural area south of Middlesbrough into the heart of urban Middlesbrough. The site within this wildlife corridor known as Fairy Dell can be split into four areas: Area One (Fairy Dell Woodland), Area Two (Fairy Dell Lake, also known as Gunnergate Wetlands), Area Three (Fairy Dell Meadow), and Area Four (Fairy Dell Park). Figure 1 shows the location of these areas within Fairy Dell.



Key

- Area One (Fairy Dell Woodland)
- Area Two (Fairy Dell Lake)
- Area Three (Fairy Dell Meadow)
- Area Four (Fairy Dell Park)

Figure 1: Fairy Dell, Middlesbrough.

Base map courtesy of Middlesbrough Borough Council.
Map not to scale.

Site Description - Area One (Fairy Dell Woodland)

Area One is an area of predominantly deciduous, planted woodland along the banks of Marton West Beck, running from Gunnergate Lane (upstream) to Fairy Dell Lake (downstream), and along its tributary (see Figure 2). The woodland comprises mature trees (predominantly Ash, Oak and Sycamore), with an intermittent understory of Hazel, Wych Elm and Elder. There is some natural regeneration (including Sycamore, Ash and Wych Elm), whilst supplementary planting has occurred in the last 10 to 15 years (including Alder trees that were planted alongside the beck in the 1990s, and Willow whips that were planted in various places in winter 2007-2008). There is some naturally-occurring woodland ground flora (including Dog's Mercury, Bugle and Ferns), and additional woodland plants, including Bluebells and Primroses, have been planted in some areas during the 'Restoration of Fairy Dell' project. The ground is often dominated by encroaching Bramble. There are numerous rotting tree trunks (and smaller pieces of dead wood) scattered throughout the woodland, which provide a good habitat for many invertebrates and fungi.

The old route of Gunnergate Lane (the route of which can be seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1857) is clearly visible leading down into Fairy Dell Woodland from the gateway on Gunnergate Lane (see Figure 2). However, once it crosses Marton West Beck at the ford, it becomes obscured by a lot of overgrown vegetation.

There are four entrance points to Fairy Dell Woodland (see Figure 2). Entrance Point 1 is from Gunnergate Lane and comprises both a set of steps and a gentle-sloping lane descending from the current Gunnergate Lane. Entrance Point 2 is from the area around Fairy Dell Lake (Area Two) and is a continuation of the pathways around the lake. Entrance Point 3 is from Fairy Dell Park, where steps descend the bank of the woodland to the footbridge at the south end of Fairy Dell Lake. Entrance Point 4 is an informal entrance from Fairy Dell Park, which joins the western path through Fairy Dell Woodland approximately halfway along the woodland.

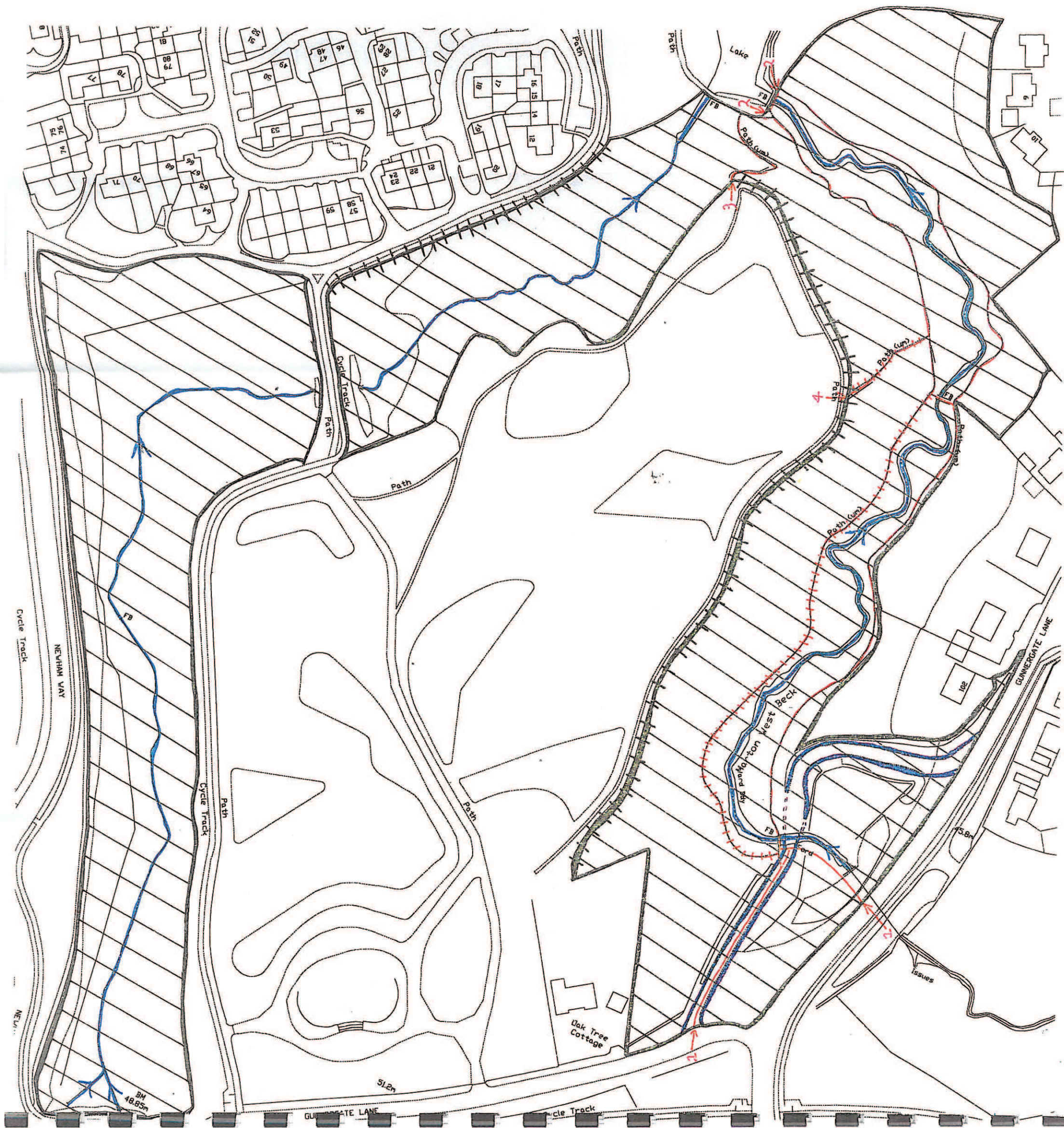


Figure 2: Current distribution of habitats in Area One.

Base map courtesy of Middlesbrough Borough Council.
Map not to scale.

Site Description - Area Two (Fairy Dell Lake)

Area Two surrounds Fairy Dell Lake and comprises several habitats, including an extension of the woodland from Area One, areas of scrub and amenity grassland, and three areas of open water (Fairy Dell Lake, the old Boating Lake, and a small pool; see Figure 3). Fairy Dell Lake, situated in the bottom of the Marton West Beck valley, is on-line to Marton West Beck. The old Boating Lake is situated above Fairy Dell Lake and feeds into it via a short, cascading waterfall that has been reinforced by Middlesbrough Borough Council in recent years to prevent slippage and erosion. Fairy Dell Lake and the small pool are an integral part of the flood relief plan in Middlesbrough, and Fairy Dell Lake is to be subjected to its own programme of works in the near future in order to maintain its role as a local reservoir. Consequently, for Area Two, this management plan shall consider only the area lying outside of the circular path surrounding the lake.

The woodland surrounding Fairy Dell Lake is more open than that in Area One and is predominantly Sycamore on the east side of the lake and Beech and Oak on the west side. The ground is often dominated by Bramble, though there is naturally-occurring Dog's Mercury growing in parts. There is an area of scrub to the west side of Fairy Dell Lake which includes Hazel, Elder, and Hawthorn, and which has been under-planted with Primroses as part of the 'Restoration of Fairy Dell' project. The area north of Fairy Dell Lake is an artificial earth mound (under which flows Marton West Beck) that is currently mown amenity grassland, and into which were planted Cowslips in 2007.

It is thought that much of the area around Fairy Dell Lake once belonged to Gunnergate Hall and it is possible that some features within Area Two were instated by one (or several) of its owners. For example, the foundations of an old boat shed can be seen on the western edge of the old Boating Lake, and to the south of the waterfall is what could be the remains of an artificial rockery.

There are four entrance points to Fairy Dell Lake (see Figure 3). Entrance Point 5 is from Fairy Dell Woodland (Area One) and is a continuation of the pathways through the woodland. Entrance Point 6 is from Dell Close, adjacent to the old Boating Lake, and comprises a set of steps followed by a sloping path descending to the top of the lake. An informal 'scramble' path descends from this entrance alongside the waterfall to join the path around the lake mid-way along the lake's eastern bank. Entrance Point 7 is from West Beck Way and is a sloping path that meets the path around the lake mid-way along the lake's western bank (this path will be the route of vehicular access for works to the lake). Entrance Point 8 is from Fairy Dell Meadow (Area Three).

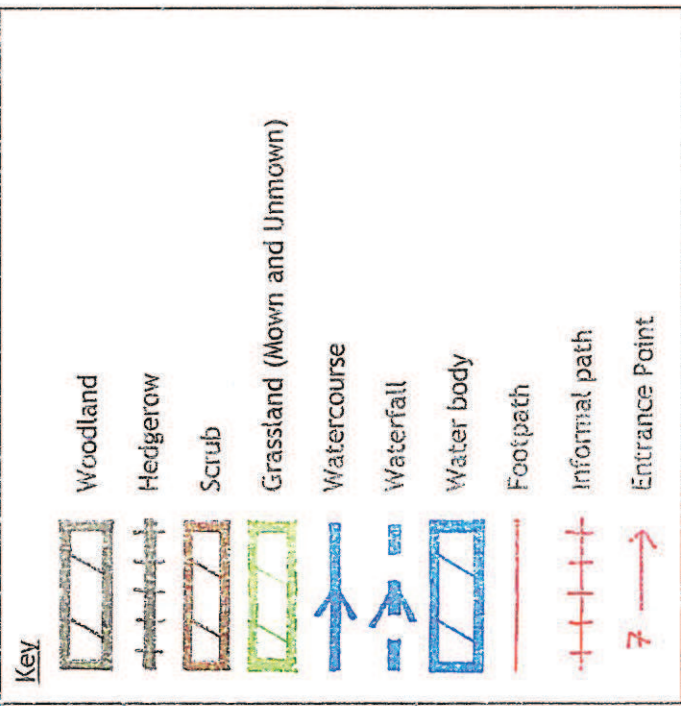
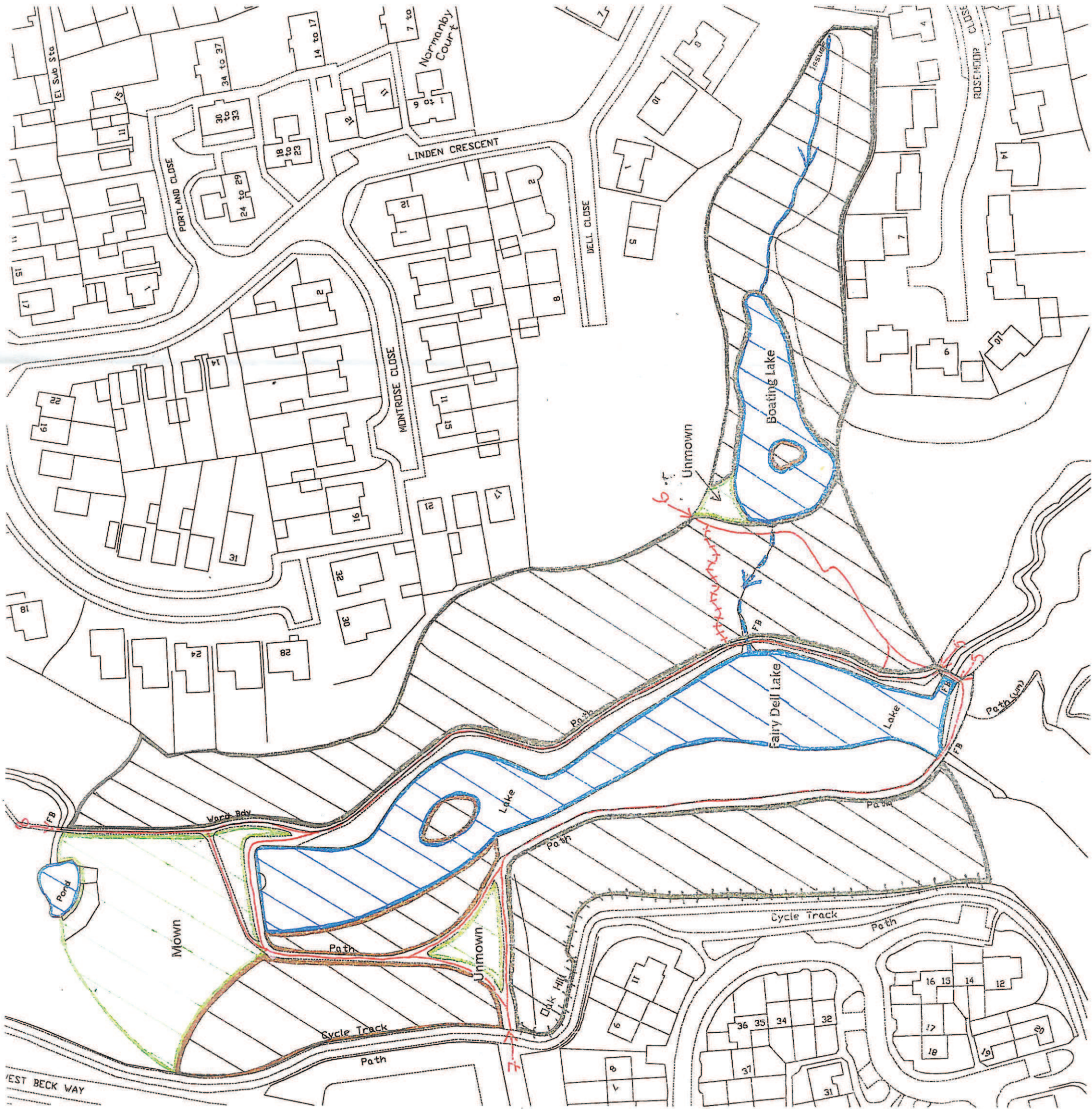


Figure 3: Current distribution of habitats in Area Two.

Base map courtesy of Middlesbrough Borough Council.
Map not to scale.

Site Description - Area Three (Fairy Dell Meadow)

Area Three is a mosaic of habitats along the banks of Marton West Beck, running from the north end of Area Two to the point at which the beck passes underneath the A174 Parkway (see Figure 4). The area comprises woodland on the east bank of Marton West Beck and open grassland with some scrub and woodland on the west bank. The woodland on the east bank is predominantly Sycamore plantation of similarly-aged mature trees, with limited ground cover, whilst the small area of woodland on the west bank is more diverse, with a canopy including Ash, Oak, Beech and Sycamore. The grassland is predominantly tall, rough grasses, with Meadowsweet and Hogweed, and is suffering encroachment from both scrub and Bramble. Mature Hazel coppices and the occasional mature Ash tree grow along the banks of Marton West Beck throughout Area Three.

There are four entrance points to Fairy Dell Meadow (see Figure 4). Entrance Point 9 is from Fairy Dell Lake (Area Two), over the footbridge that crosses Marton West Beck immediately after it leaves the small pool. Entrance Points 10 and 11 are from Tollesby Bridge, along the cycle path and down a set of steps through the woodland respectively. Entrance Point 12 is along the cycle path from Hammond Close.

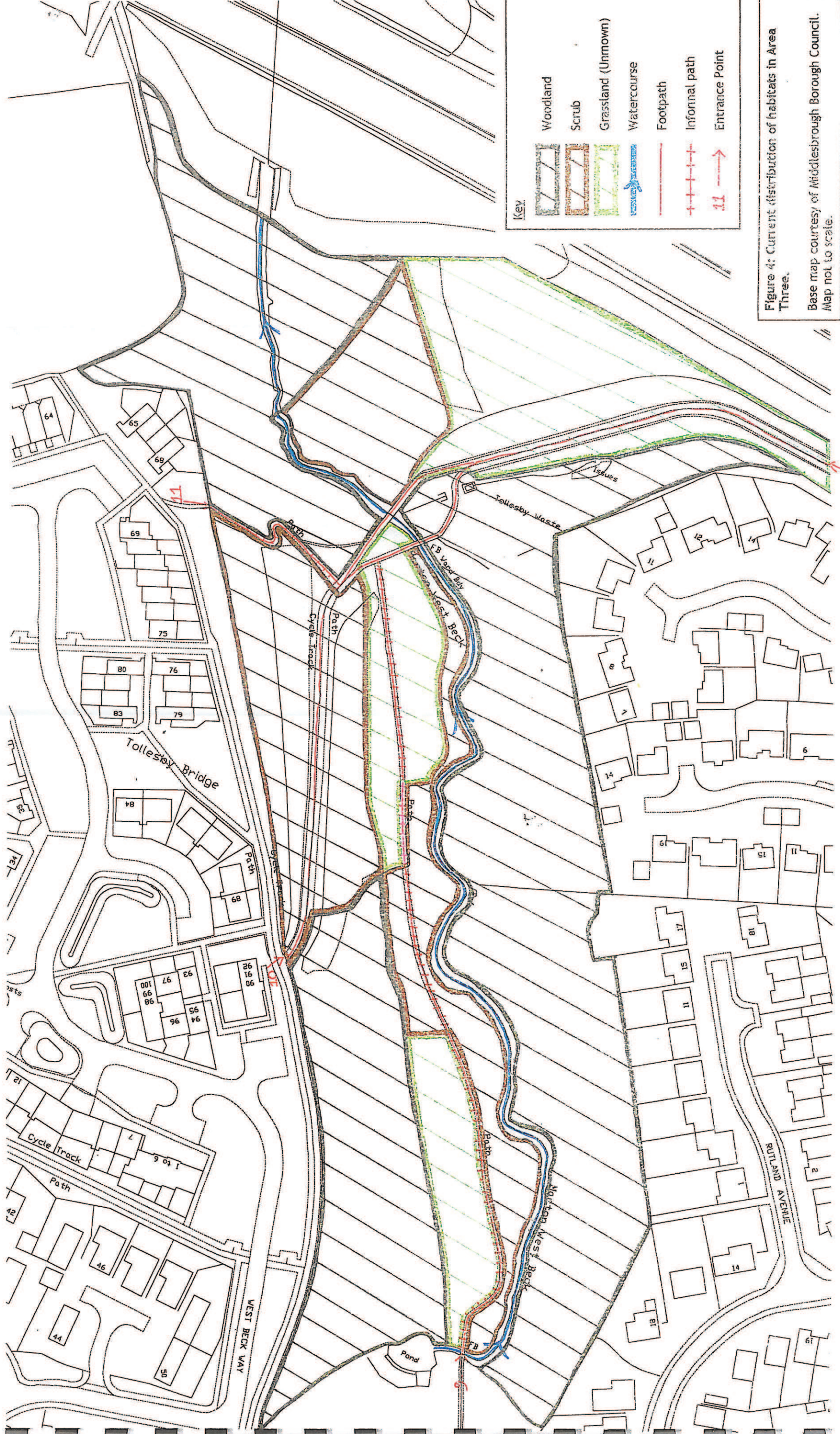


Figure 4: Current distribution of habitats in Area Three.
 Base map courtesy of Middlesbrough Borough Council.
 Map not to scale.

Site Description - Area Four (Fairy Dell Park)

Area Four is a formal park area situated at the top of the Marton West Beck valley, to the north of Gunnergate Lane (see Figure 5). The area comprises amenity grassland, areas of planted ornamental shrubbery, and areas of planted copses of trees. There is also a formal circular area of grassland enclosed by a hard, landscape edge close to Gunnergate Lane. Parts of the amenity grassland are more diverse than elsewhere in the park, containing species such as Bulbous Buttercup, Meadow Buttercup, Selfheal, Common Sorrel, Lesser Stitchwort, and Cuckooflower.

There are four entrance points to Fairy Dell Park (see Figure 5). Entrance Point 13 is the formal entrance to the park from Gunnergate Lane, and Entrance Point 14 is along the cycle path from Oak Hill. Entrance Points 15 and 16 are from Fairy Dell Woodland (Area One), 15 from the steps climbing out of the woodland at the north end of the park, and 16 through the informal entrance which enters the park approximately halfway along the woodland edge.

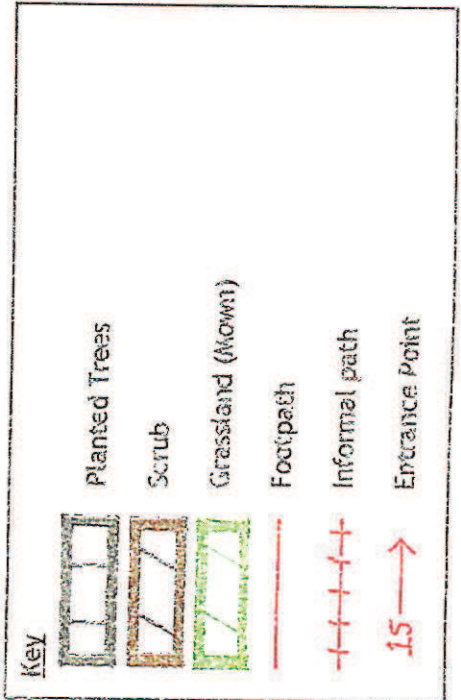


Figure 5: Current distribution of habitats in Area Four.
Base map courtesy of Middlesbrough Borough Council.
Map not to scale.

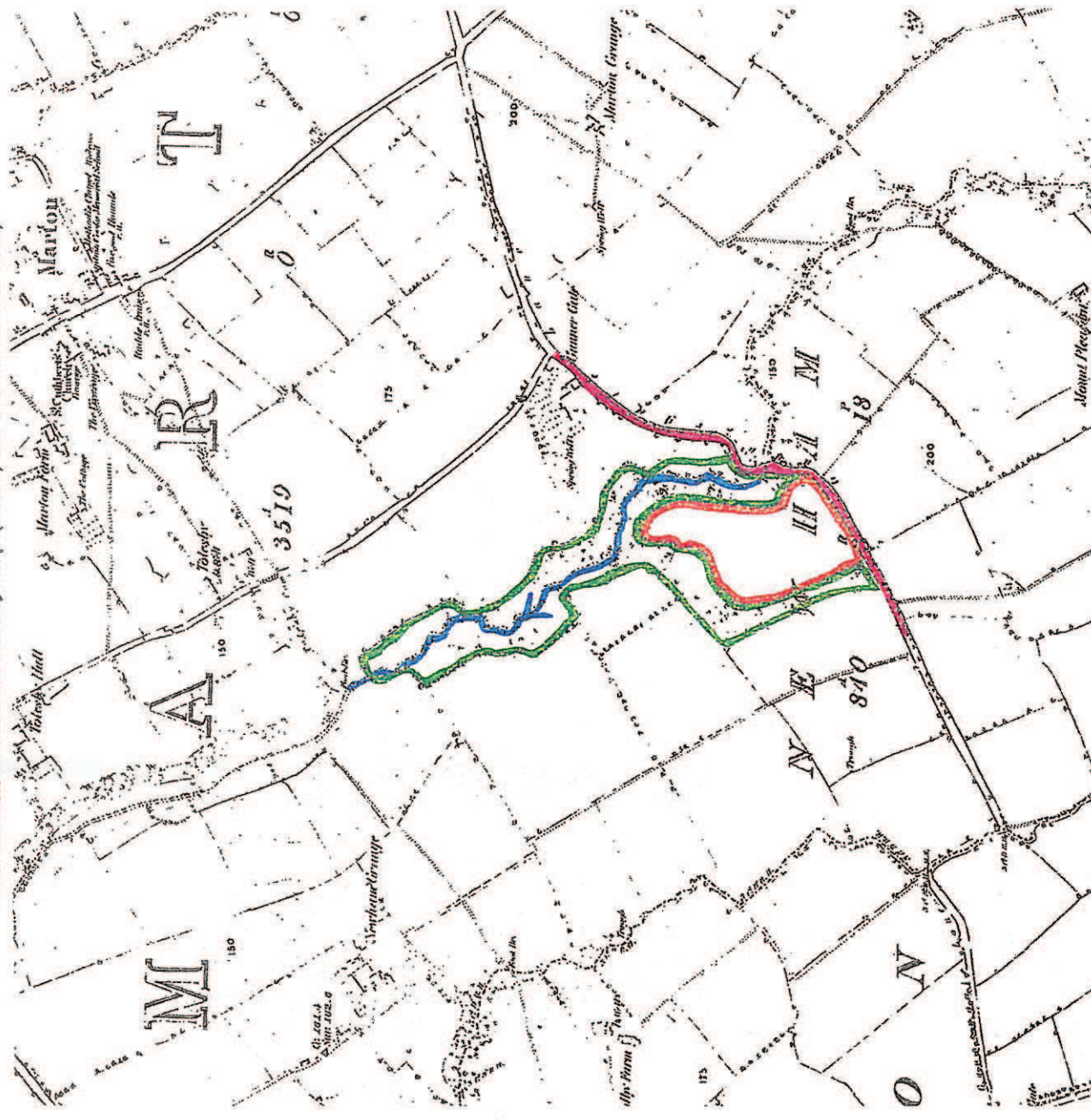
Brief Land Use and Management History of Fairy Dell

Fairy Dell appears on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1857 (see Figure 6) as a beck valley surrounded by farmland and the grounds of neighbouring estates. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1895 (see Figure 6) suggests that some areas within Fairy Dell were once part of the grounds of Gunnergate Hall, and it is thought that Fairy Dell was used by the Hall's various owners as a pleasure garden. Consequently, there are features within Fairy Dell, such as the old Boating Lake, that may date to the late 1800s.

At present, the principle use of Fairy Dell is as an urban greenspace, providing a large and varied valuable open area amongst dense housing in south Middlesbrough. It is also an important refuge for wildlife in this densely built-up area.

Middlesbrough Borough Council own Fairy Dell and have been managing the site since the mid-1980s. The first management plan for Fairy Dell was written in 1985, with an updated plan written in 1994. Implementation of the latter plan has been carried out through the late 1990s and early 2000s by Middlesbrough Borough Council, including small-scale planting, selected tree removal (of Sycamore and dead Wych Elm) and improvement of the ground flora in the wooded sections, and the erection of interpretation boards around the site to inform the public of items of interest within Fairy Dell.

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1857; six inches to the mile)



Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1895; 1:10,560)

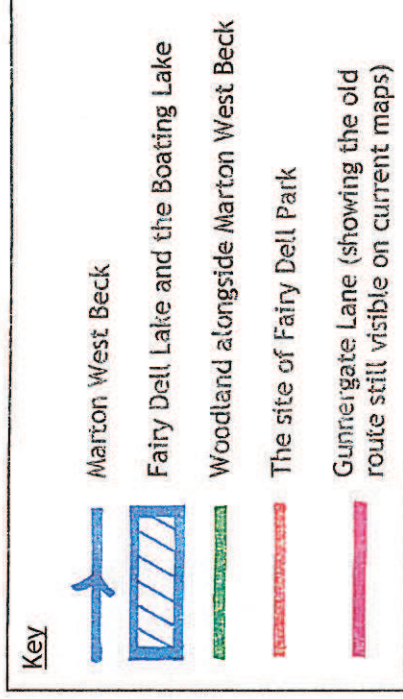
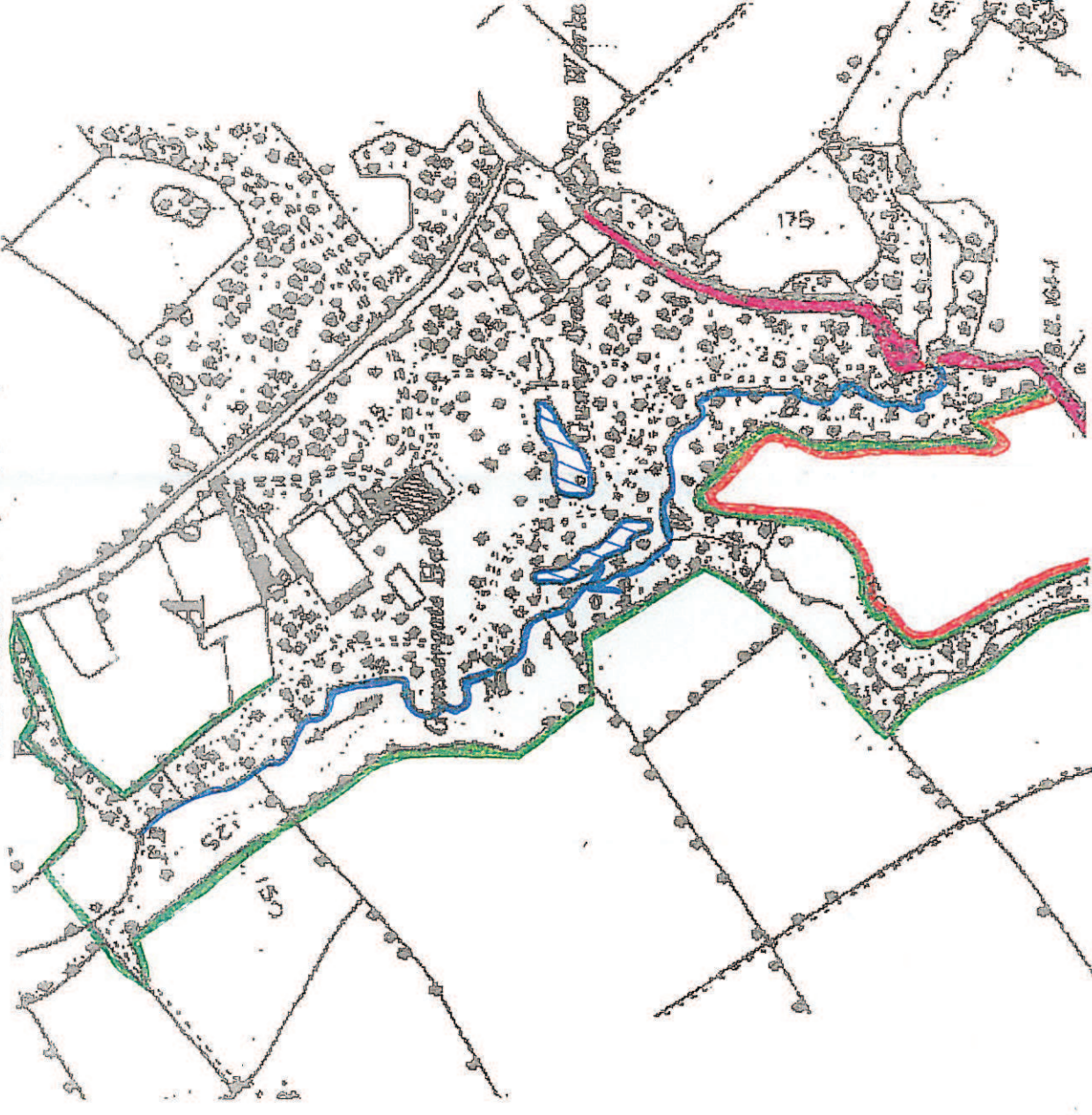


Figure 6: Old editions of Ordnance Survey maps showing Fairy Dell.

Maps courtesy of Ordnance Survey.