

Friends of Onchan Park are very concerned that the sale of the land including the old bowling green, pavilion, tennis court and football pitch for redevelopment into housing will badly affect the local community in many ways. Here we consider the effect of the loss of up to 45 trees, 360m hedges and flower borders.

Flooding risk to the surrounding houses may increase. The air quality may be reduced if the trees are cut down.

The loss of green space and trees which are used directly by many families and children every day and are visible from Oakdale road by passing cars and pedestrians will result in a reduction in mental health and wellbeing and will reduce the opportunity for physical exercise for local residents. (See references).

When the park was first created in the 1950s, the planting was considered carefully and many species of tree and shrub were included. This makes the park attractive all year round for people and animals, with berries and evergreens in the winter, flowering trees in the spring, shade and shelter provision during the summer and colourful displays of leaves and fruits in the autumn.

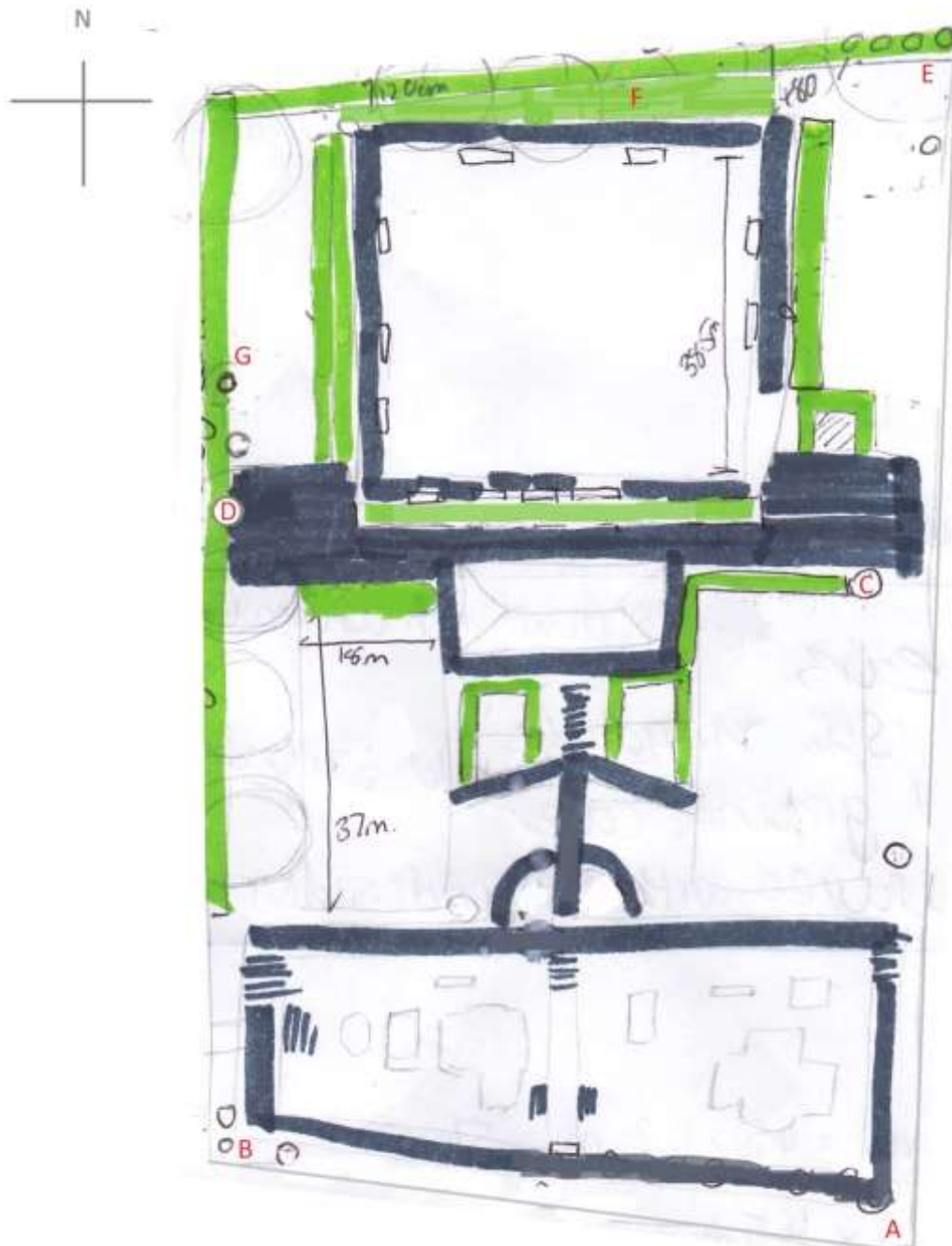
Trees catch rainwater and allow it to evaporate or flow to the soil or into drains, this reduces stormwater run-off. Trees remove air pollution and store carbon. Trees reduce the effects of extreme temperatures, reducing the need for cooling in summer and heating in winter.

Friends of Onchan Park hope to put forward an alternative option which will allow the trees and hedges to remain so that the community can continue to enjoy and benefit from this tangible asset.

An initial survey of trees and hedges was carried out in March 2016 by Maria Robinson.

This will be completed in April 2016. Early results and references are shown below.

Location	Number	Tree Species and girth
In and around the playground	21	Small ornamental fruiting/flowering trees (girth between 70 and 110cm) including Rowan, Whitebeam, Pear, Cherry, Crab apple, Holly (102cm girth A) 2 large lime trees (155cm girth and 200cm girth- double trunk, measured at height of 1m from the ground B)
Surrounding the courts and pavilion	11	Small ornamental trees similar to above. 4 large blossom trees (largest girth 215cm C) and a very tall conifer (girth 250cm) near to the gated entrance to the pavilion road
In lawns and hedges surrounding the Bowling Green	34	9 very young trees in the lawns to the east of the bowling green (planted since 2010?) 12 small ornamental fruit trees similar to above. 4 large lime trees in the corner nearest to the Elwes Arms (largest girth 150cm E) ~4 specimen trees in the northern boundary hedge (largest girth 105cm F) Silver Birch (girth 70cm G) and other trees inc. conifers



The age of a tree can be estimated from its girth. This is not an exact science as trees grow more when they are younger and less as they age. However, the usual method is to divide the girth in cm by 2.5 for solitary trees or 1.25 for woodland trees. (leics.gov.uk/ageing_trees-2.doc) This would age the lime trees at 60-80 years old.

Flower borders

Location	Length	Plants in the border
Northern edge of bowling green	135m ² shrubs and perennials border	Yew, Holly, Buddleia
West Edge of Bowling Green	38m length	Small shrubs
Southern Edge of Bowling Green	38m length	Bergenia (Elephant's ears), bluebells, tulips, space for annuals
South of the pavilion building	A split semi-circle of planting	rose bushes framed by low hebe shrubs

Hedges 360m total

Location	Length	Shrub species in the hedge
Northern Boundary	75m	Yew, holly, buddleia, senecio, forsythia
Western Hedge Boundary	93m	Forsythia, buddleia, cotoneaster, rose, Mixed hedge, berries, evergreen
West Edge of Bowling Green	38m	Conifers, trimmed
East Edge of Bowling Green	38m	Laurel Hedge
Around north end of tennis pitch	40m total	Conifers (tall)
Around north end of football pitch	40m total	Forsythia, holly
South of the pavilion building	36m total(2 x 18m)	Evergreen shrubs

References

"Green spaces deliver lasting mental health benefits -Green space in towns and cities could lead to significant and sustained improvements in mental health, finds a new study published in the journal of Environmental Science & Technology." exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_349054_en.html

"Trees influence both the physical and mental health of local communities. The use of trees to remove air pollutants can be part of a wider strategy to curb respiratory illnesses, as exemplified by Birmingham's Natural Health Improvement Zones initiative. Trees also contribute to creating attractive street and park settings for walking, cycling and running thus facilitating wider adoption of more active lifestyles. Access to trees and green spaces has been found to aid patient recovery and accelerate healing times in hospitals. The creation of a 'health park' as part of the recent extension to Alder Hey children's hospital in Liverpool is a good example of how health professionals are increasingly seeking to manage and design their grounds for the therapeutic value they can provide. Trees can also help create environments that reduce stress, alleviate mental health problems and improve interpersonal dynamics. An extensive survey was conducted by William Sullivan and Frances Kuo in a large Chicago social housing estate with two nearly identical sets of apartment buildings that differed only in the amount of trees and grass growing around them. The study found that residents living in buildings surrounded with trees used more constructive, less violent methods to deal with conflict." Trees in the Townscape- A Guide for Decision makers, treeconomics.co.uk/resources

Wildlife and biodiversity. "Most species of tree are of significant value to wildlife." The value of different tree and shrub species to wildlife, K Alexander, J Butler and T Green, British Wildlife, Oct 2006.