

BECKETT PARK

A vision for the future, protecting the past.

Friends of Beckett Park – April 2018

FRIENDS OF BECKETT PARK



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Friends of Beckett Park was formed in 2014.

Working with the Council's Parks and Countryside officers, we aim to provide a community outdoor space with improved facilities for the residents and local park users, whilst retaining the historical features of Beckett Park.

At the time of our formation, funding was available to provide low-level fencing around the park, some benches, gym equipment, new bins and information boards.

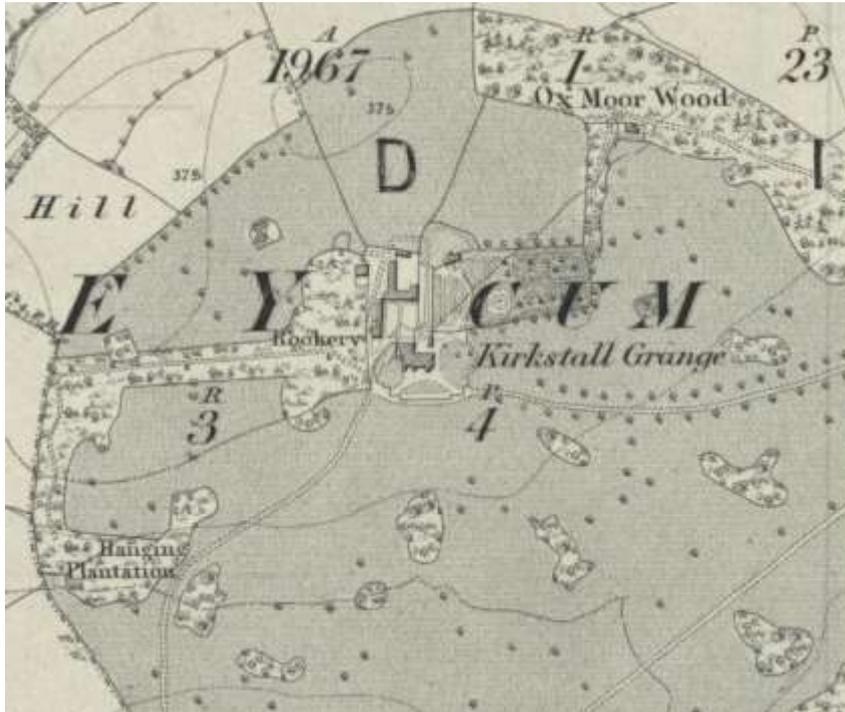
The Friends have agreed a staged plan for further developments to the park which incorporates refurbishing historical features and providing information to the public about its heritage.



Stage 1

New trees

In 2014 many trees were dying of old age or waterlogged and had to be felled. In 2016 the Friends Beckett Park [FoBP] were granted £8000 from the Tesco bags of Help Fund to purchase 45 standard trees to be planted in the park.



1850 OS Map



Volunteers planting trees

Old maps of the area were reviewed dating back to 1851 and were overlaid on aerial photos from the present day and it was noted that the layout of the parkland trees and copses were largely unchanged. The new trees have been planted [per map attached] and include specimens to reflect variety and colour. Labels have recently been added to each of the trees to identify the species.

In addition to this in 2016 and 2017 approximately 600 saplings obtained from the Woodland Trust have been planted in and around existing copses and wetland patches.



Stage 2

Restoration of the wrought iron railings and gates at the St Chads Drive entrance to the Park.

The existing gates and railings are damaged and corroded and one panel of railings is missing. The stone piers and railings are grade 11* listed. Before Beckett Park housing estate was built in the 1930's, they stood on Otley Road, next to the stone lodge (still there at the bottom of St Chads drive).



Gate Piers on Otley Road with Grange in background 1835



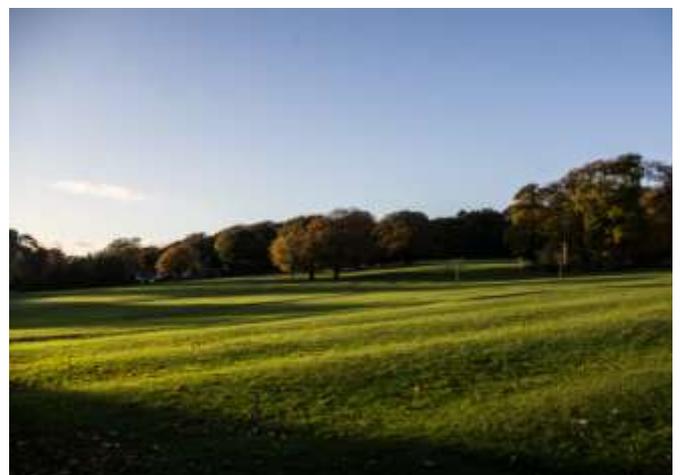
Railings in need of restoration

Stage 3

Provision of a history board within the park. To be located within view of the Grange, which is to detail the history of Beckett Park dating from its origins as a grange for Kirkstall Abbey (medieval ridge and furrow is still evident today), the Grange and its occupants from the Foxcrofts to the Wades who occupied the estate for some 200 years and latterly the Becketts, through to the story of the Victoria Arch, the 1912 development of the training college, it's conversion to a hospital in World War I and its evolution into the University of today.



Typical information board



Ridge and furrow

The University buildings are somewhat obscured by the laurel hedge and some mature trees which are not part of the designed landscape. We hope that the view could be restored by replacing these hedges with an estate type railing, in due course, which would enhance the view from the park to the University buildings and also improve that from the James Graham building back over the park and onto the city. Some trees may need to be felled to achieve this objective.



Grange from Park obscured by laurel hedge



Example of estate-type railings

Stage 4.

Improve park facilities

We look to further improve the facilities of the park with the provision of a goal end on one of the tennis courts which will provide cricket stumps, goalmouth, and basket/netball ring for activities for children and teenagers. We want to have the skate park resurfaced and the facilities improved.



Goalmouth facility for tennis court area

Stage 5.

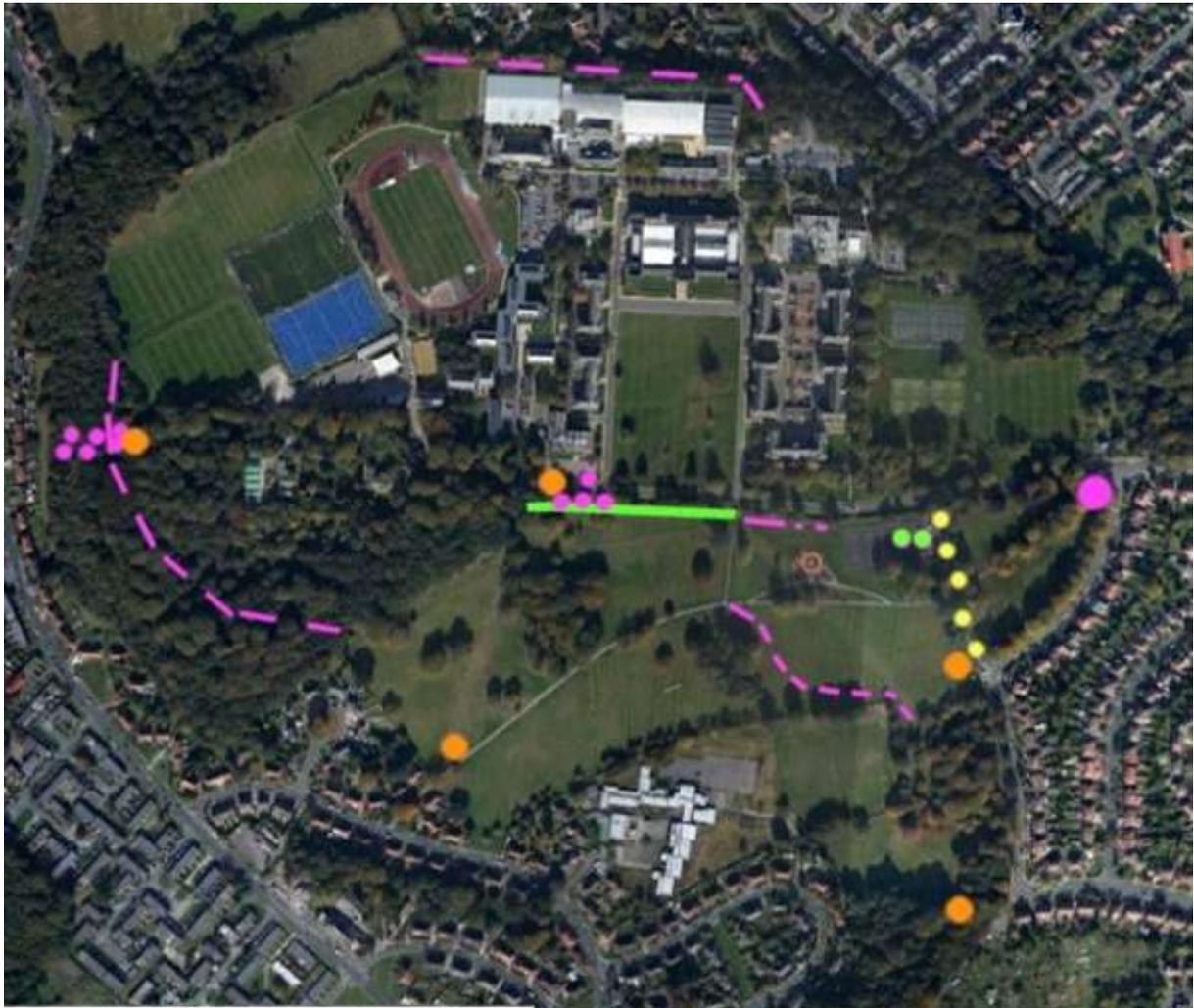
Café and toilets

A longer term aim is the provision of the building to have a café and meeting room and toilets. This will facilitate events being held in the park in future.

Stage 6.

Bring Vine playing fields back into the Park

The Queenswood Centre buildings and playing fields currently utilise an area of land which formerly was part of the Beckett Estate. This is occupied by the Vine. It is surrounded by a six foot fence, which provides security for the school and its users, but does not please the eye. It is hoped that the playing field can be returned to the park with perhaps a low level fence surrounding the pitches, which would continue to be available for community use.



BECKETT PARK STRATEGY 2018



Entrance gates restoration



Replacement of laurel hedge by metal estate railing



Interpretation boards



Possible footpath improvements



Selective tree felling to restore important views



Multi-purpose goal end structure and resurfacing of skate park



Possible path lighting

