



NEAP & LAP - PG1 Area

DESIGN STATEMENT

July 2024

Finchwood Park
Land at Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead



Prepared by
CSA Environmental

On behalf of:
CALA Homes Ltd

Report No: CSA/6689/04
Revision: C



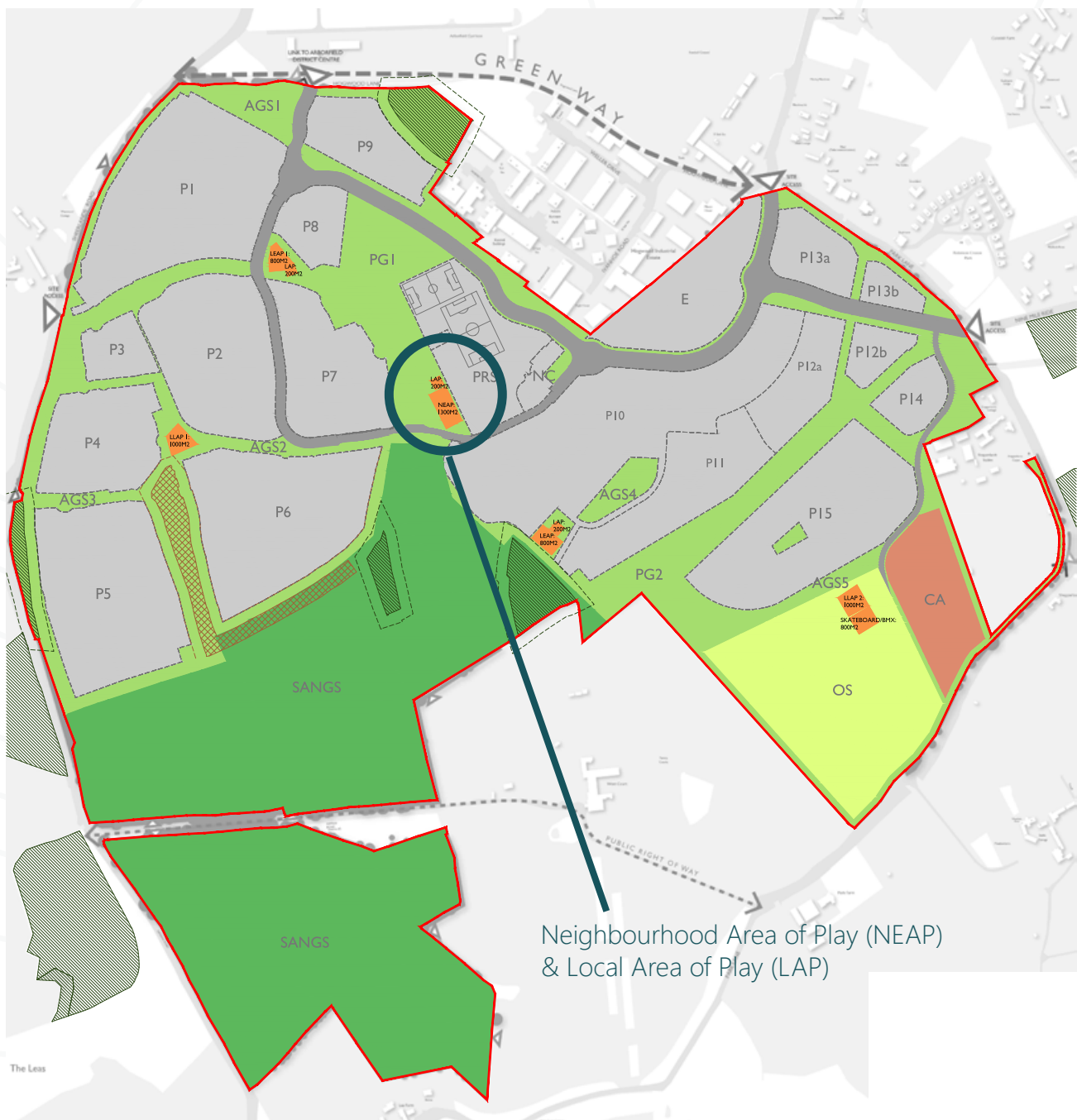
masterplanning | ecology | landscape | heritage

1.0 Introduction

This Design Statement has been produced CSA Environmental, on behalf of CALA Homes Ltd. The report outlines a potential alternative approach to the design of the Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) and Local Area of Play (LAP) located in the PG1 open space area at the Hogwood Farm development, Finchampstead, known locally as 'Finchwood Park'.

The play space in question lies adjacent to Parcel 7 (P7), alongside the Primary School Site, the location of which is outlined below on the approved parameter plan.

As the largest play space on the whole of the Finchwood Park development, lying at the heart of the scheme, PG1 has the potential to deliver a keynote 'destination playspace' for the whole community to enjoy.



Extract from Landscape and Open Space Parameter Plan rev M

2.0 Existing scheme appraisal

An initial design for the play space in PG1 was submitted as part of the Reserved Matters application (ref:213645) associated with Parcels 2 and 3. Following discussions with Officers at the Local Planning Authority (LPA) it was agreed that the design of the play area and the final specification of the proposed equipment would benefit from further discussion between the parties. Accordingly, Condition 12 of the Reserved Matters approval requires details of the layout and specification of the play areas within PG1 to be submitted to and approved by the LPA to accommodate these discussions. This application supports the discharge of that condition.



Extract from emerging PG1 play area scheme (RPS Landscape)

KEY POINTS

- Revised proposals which provide a clear theme with engaging equipment to encourage play and role play
- Reduction in the amount of hard landscaping to improve the relationship with the surrounding landscaped edges
- Improved relationship between the proposals and the adjacent Listed Building through the introduction of a community orchard
- Increased landscaping on eastern edge to respond to future Primary School use

3.0 Play Area Theme - 'The Lookout'

Themed play spaces have the benefit of allowing children to participate in role play and on a large development site, such as Finchwood Park, helps families to way-find and signpost specific play spaces due to their distinct identity.

For the play space in PG1, we have explored the theme of a woodland 'Lookout.' The concept can be further expanded to include additional complementary themes such as 'tree houses', the 'outpost' and watch towers. The theme engages well with young children, allowing them to potential interact more strongly with the retained tree lines and woodland areas, providing a unique opportunity to get up into, and pass through, the canopy of the retained trees.

Incorporating a central lookout tower or treehouse, allows a strong central focus to be incorporated into the scheme that can be visually engaging to children, whilst acting as a strong signpost from surrounding pathways. CSA and Miracle Play have explored the conceptual imagery portrayed by woodland lookouts and treehouses, along with other elements associated with such elevated walkways and viewing decks.

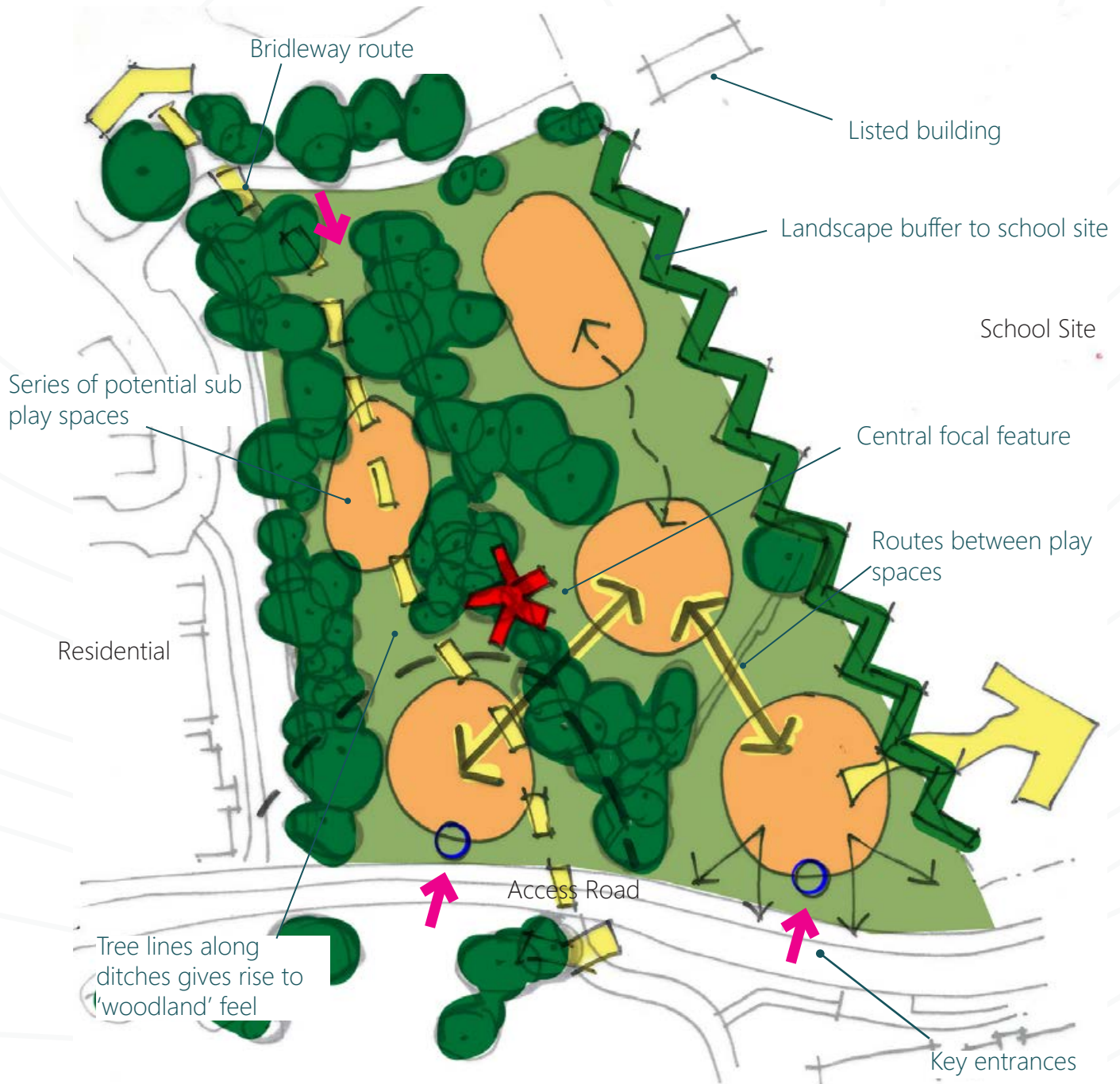


Mood board for Lookout / Treehouse theme

4.0 Concept Framework

Prior to the selection of equipment and the detail re-design of the play space, a conceptual 'framework' was established to guide the design.

The concept framework includes for a series of smaller sub play spaces to develop, each with its own distinct use / age group, with varying character and equipment, linked by pathways that interface back and forth with the retained lines of trees along the existing ditch network. The re-design seeks to relocate the main play spaces away from the listed building to the north-east to protect future amenity and allow for a quiet, passive play zone or community space, while better addressing the potentially blank school boundary to the east.



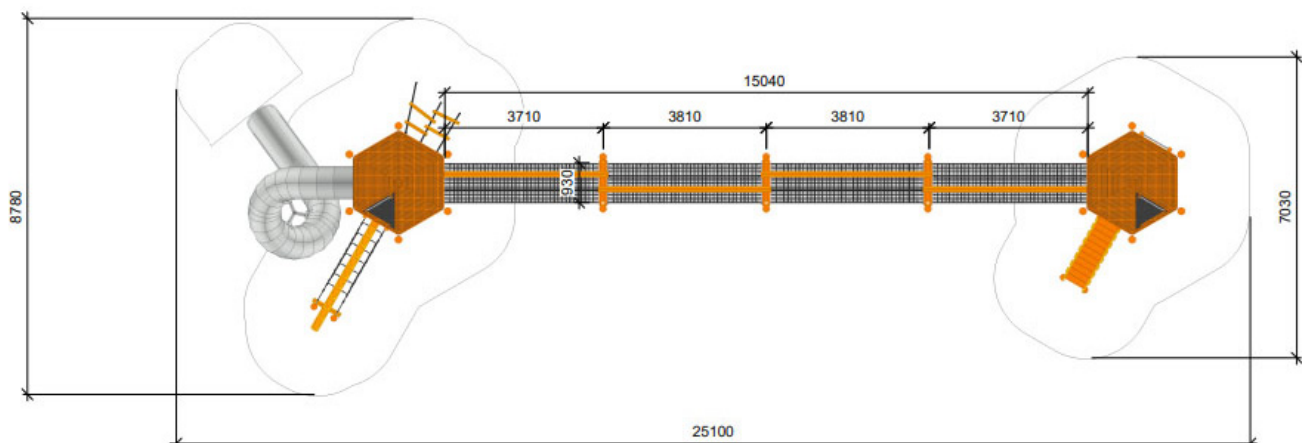
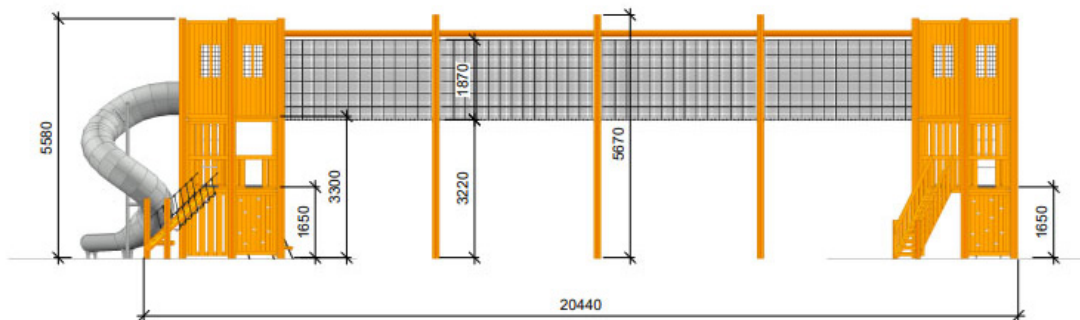
Concept Framework Diagram

5.0 The Proposed Layout



Southern PG1 Layout including NEAP, LAP & Trim Trail

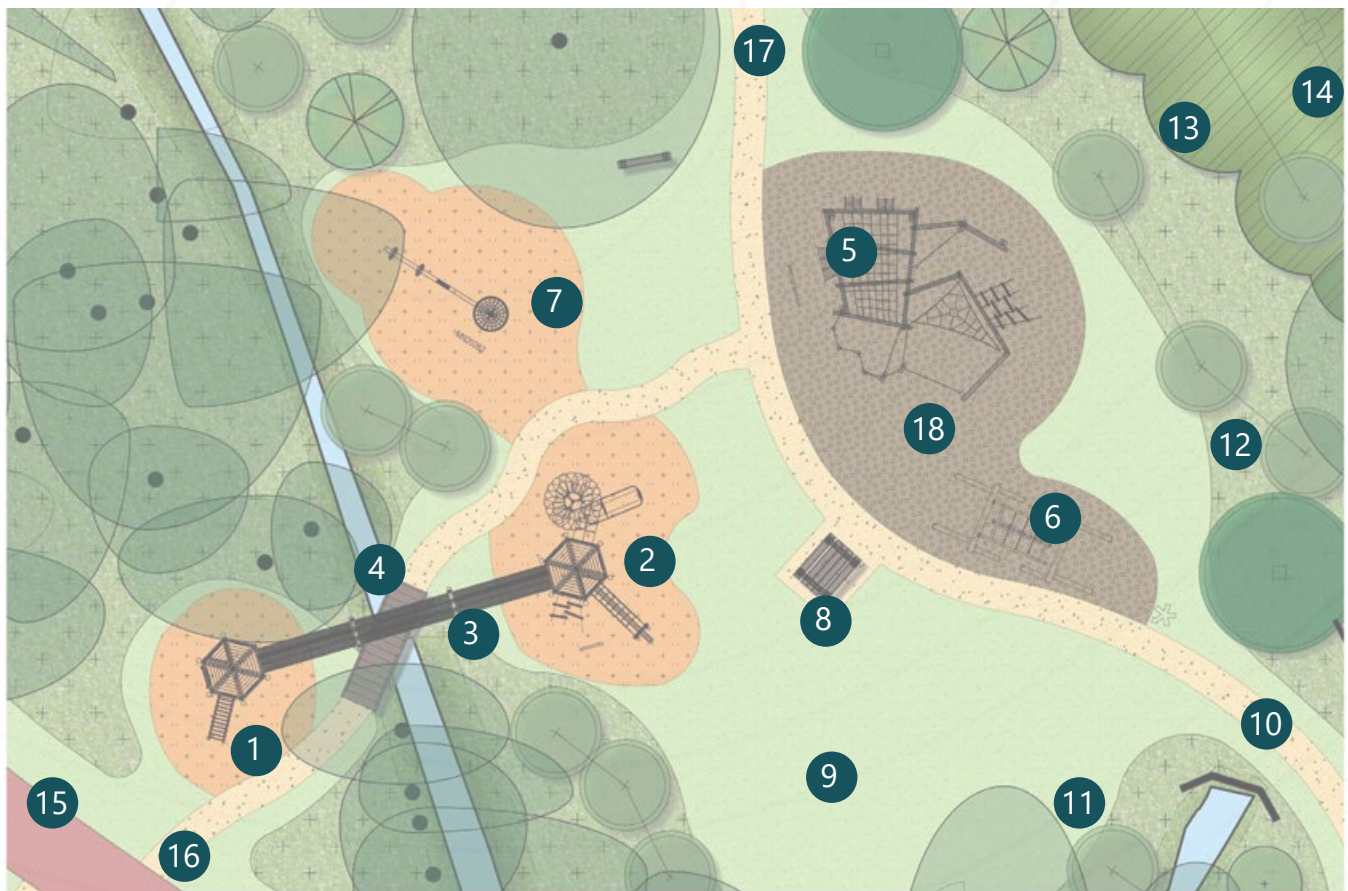
5.0 The Proposed Layout - Focal Feature 'The Lookout'



6.0 Design Explanation - NEAP Zone

The NEAP contains the main focal point of the play space, the Lookout tower. A series of tall towers or treehouses, linked by a suspended rope bridge that allows children to traverse between play zones up at canopy level. The towers include an array of challenging ascent and descents, with platforms 3.5m off the ground providing commanding views across the rest of the play space. The western tower is seen from the LAP space and the main access road, enticing children to climb and explore the journey into the NEAP area beyond.

The NEAP itself contains a range of challenge communal swinging equipment for older children, to encourage group play and the clamber stack provides a challenging climbing structure, suitable for practicing techniques like Parkour etc.

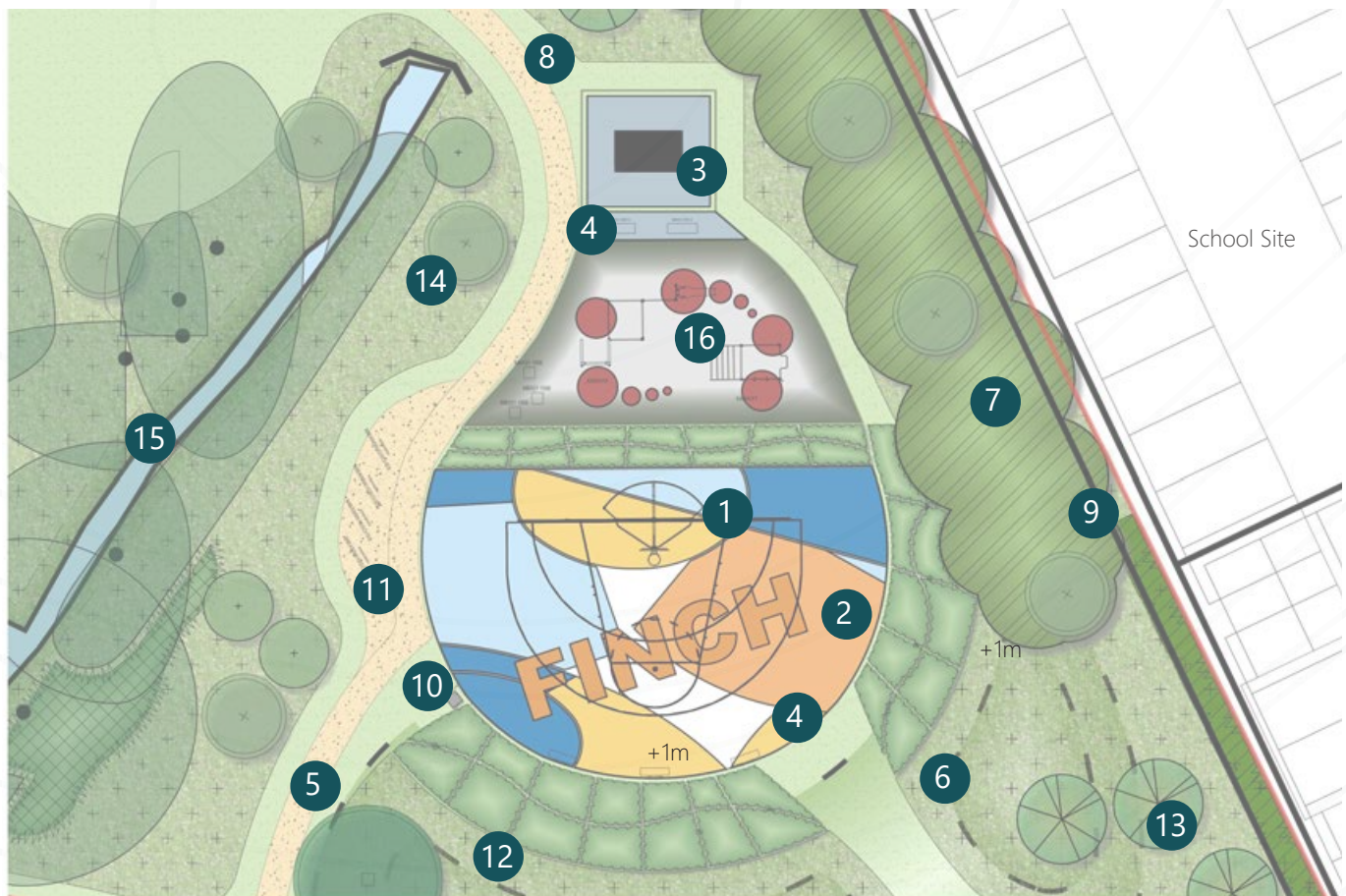


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|---|---|
| 1 Western entrance to the Lookout tower | 10 Ditch culvert crossing linking to MUGA area |
| 2 Main tower unit of the Lookout with tubular slide | 11 Supplementary tree planting to bolster existing |
| 3 Rope bridge crossing between tree canopies | 12 Species rich grassland meadow |
| 4 Ditch culvert with pathway below net | 13 New landscape buffer planting to school boundary |
| 5 Large log stack and net play sculpture | 14 Post and rail fence to protect new planting |
| 6 Group rope swing | 15 Bridleway |
| 7 Cantilevered basket swing | 16 Path linking to LAP area |
| 8 Timber benches | 17 Meandering hoggin path; timber edgings |
| 9 Clearing in trees for informal run-around games | 18 Bound rubber mulch |

6.0 Design Explanation - MUGA Zone

The MUGA zone is seen as a natural extension of the NEAP and fulfils the hard court requirement of this type of play space. Conceived as an open, welcoming facility for children of all genders and ages, it contains a steel goal end and basketball net, set within a large area of macadam painted with a colourful acyclic coating. Its location next to the main access road, allows for strong passive surveillance and a great relationship with the adjoining school site, whilst the orientation ensures that balls will be contained within the play space. This is further controlled by introducing a series of low mounds to the south to provide a landscaped transition from the road into the play space, with low gabions enclosing the ball court area to act as informal seating.

North of the ball court a further macadam area contains a set of calisthenic workout equipment which represents the trim trail element for the southern PG1 area and creates a place for people of all ages to work out in a sociable space. A table tennis table and seating to the north further enhance the play and sports value of this space.



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| 1 | Goal end with basketball hoop | 9 | Post and rail fence to protect new planting |
| 2 | Acrylic coated MUGA surface | 10 | Litter bin |
| 3 | Table tennis area with seating | 11 | Cycle stands |
| 4 | Seating for socialising | 12 | Mounds to contain balls |
| 5 | Main path route into playspace from access road | 13 | Continuation of access road street trees |
| 6 | Informal route through mounds | 14 | Verdant planting |
| 7 | New landscape buffer planting to school boundary | 15 | Retained ditch |
| 8 | Meandering hoggin path; timber edgings | 16 | Calisthenic equipment |

6.0 Design Explanation - LAP Zone

The LAP zone has been designed to provide a fully catered for toddler zone, separated away from the main NEAP area, making best use of its position close to the access road and thus a destination for parents with young children on the way to the school. Conceptually imagined as an 'encampment' formed close to the main lookout or watch tower, the play equipment has been selected to subtly reference the theme, with a small timber play house, wooden fencing and sheep springer.

The inclusion of an accessible roundabout on rubber mulch allows for greater disabled use of the space. Again, further low mounding helps to screen and separate the play space from the access road to the south.



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| 1 Accessible roundabout | 10 Bridlemway route |
| 2 Embankment slide | 11 Rubber mats to protect from fall height |
| 3 Access to slide via challenging ascents | 12 Bound rubber mulch |
| 4 Toddler cradle swing unit | 13 Picnic table and feature tree |
| 5 Rocking springer | 14 Litter bin |
| 6 Playhouse for role play | |
| 7 Self closing gate; painted yellow | |
| 8 Timber fencing to enclose LAP | |
| 9 Low mounding | |

6.0 Design Explanation - Community Orchard

The final space at the north-eastern end of the site provides an opportunity to create a quieter, more relaxed space that respects the character and amenity of the nearby listed building and allows for the incorporation of a small community orchard and picnic space.

Entered via a meandering pathway, with a small timber bridge over the existing ditch, this route takes people away from the residential access into the listed building and provides an alternative journey into the main NEAP space from the north.



- 1 Orchard trees set within long grass
- 2 Picnic benches
- 3 Meandering path through space
- 4 Supplementary tree planting to woodland area
- 5 Timber bridge crossing over ditch
- 6 Species rich meadow grassland
- 7 Retained ditch
- 8 Access road to listed building
- 9 New woodland planting to school boundary
- 10 Timber post and rail fence to protect new planting

7.0 Play Equipment Specification - NEAP



A Lookout Tower Unit - MN56030



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B Clamber Stack / Parkour Unit - MN102-049-001



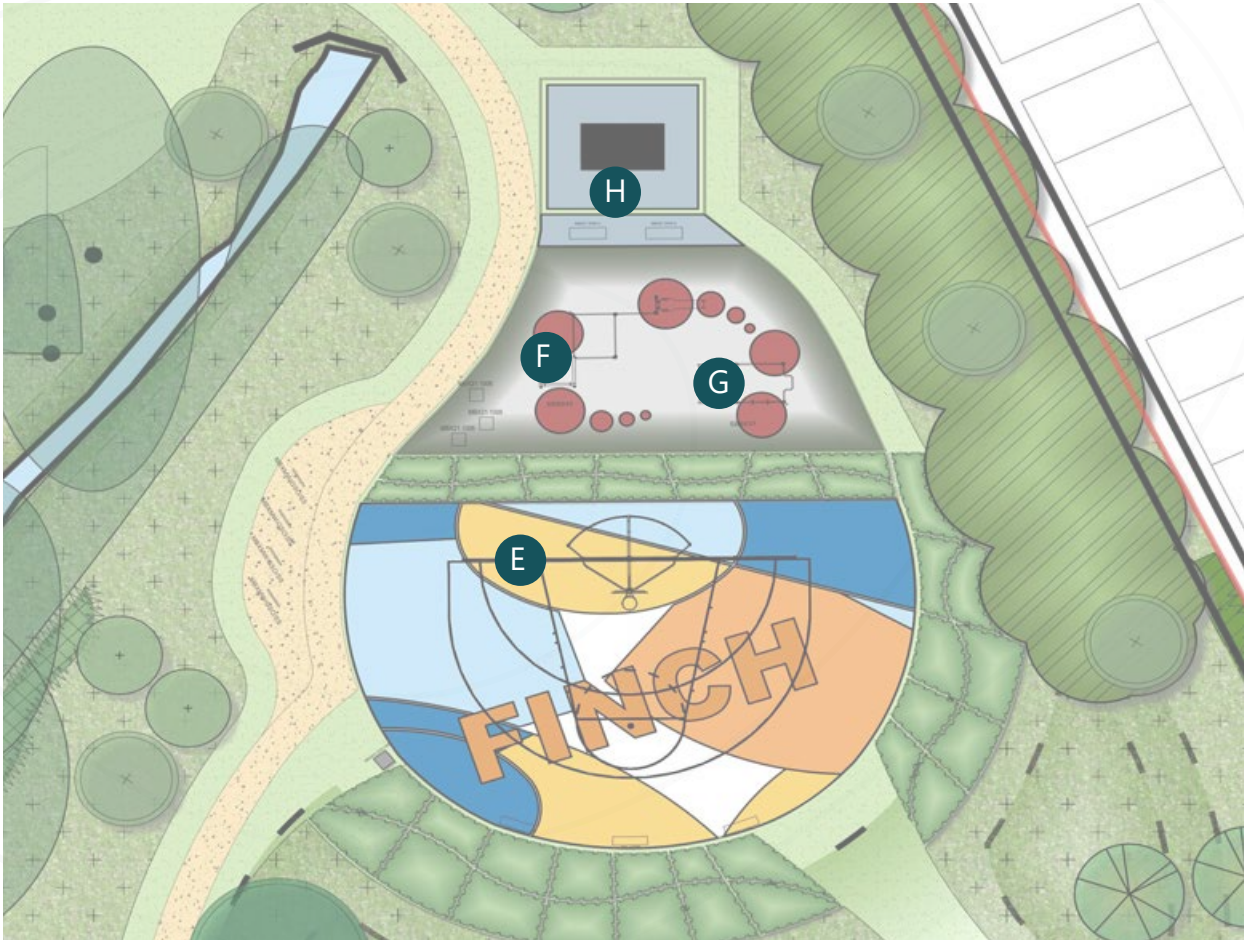
C Cantilever Basket Swing - MN20262



D Communal Rope Swing - TBR7168



7.0 Play Equipment Specification - MUGA & Trim Trail



- E** ARENA goal end with basketball net



F Gym Equipment- SB6645



G Gym Equipment- SB6637



H Concrete table tennis table



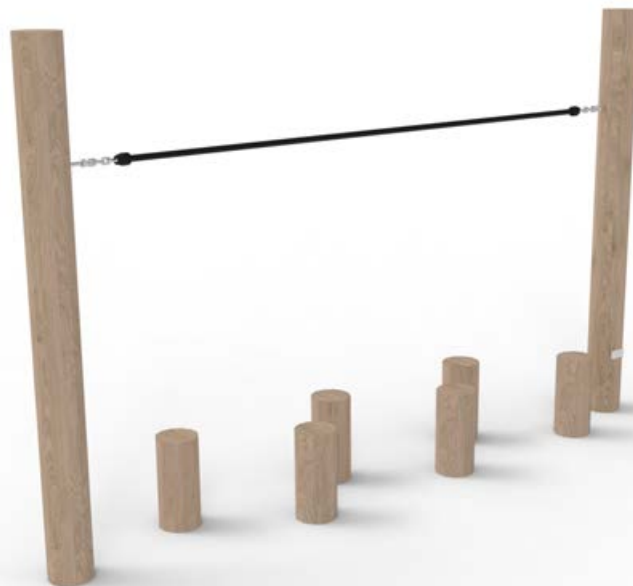
7.0 Play Equipment Specification - LAP



I Accessible roundabout - SB3110



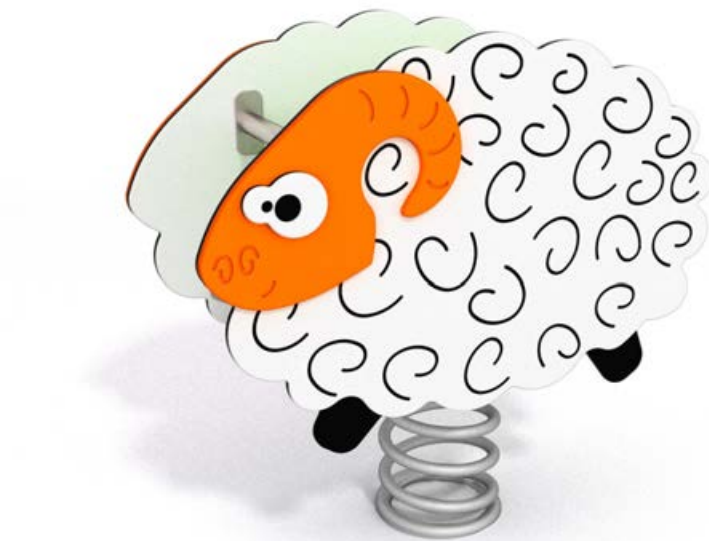
J Embankment slide and access trail - MN21086



K Cradle swing set - MN2021OU



L Sheep springer - SB4055



M Toddler Playhouse



10.0 Play England Checklist

Play England have produced a guide entitled 'Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces' and the following checklist sets the 10 principles for designing successful play spaces;



PLAY PRINCIPLE	DESIGN RESPONSE	
are 'bespoke'	The proposed design is based on a theme and has been designed as a unique response that fits the site parameters. Contains bespoke tower unit.	✓
are well located	The play space is located in a well-overlooked location, with good passive surveillance, along a main access road, connected with numerous pathways. The play area sits against a backdrop of mature trees, providing a verdant setting.	✓
make use of natural elements	The design incorporates a range of natural play features and uses planting to enhance the play experience	✓
provide a wide range of play experiences	The proposed play equipment provides for a wide range of age groups and abilities from young toddler play to challenging climbing structures for older children	✓
are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children	The site is fully accessible and access is well considered. The equipment provided includes a range of inclusive play and disabled access equipment.	✓
meet community needs	The play space provides a focus for the community with a range of play experiences and areas for social gathering and interaction	✓
allow children of different ages to play together	Play equipment allows for multi-age play and interaction, with progression through the equipment as children grow in confidence.	✓
build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge	Tall tower unit and challenging climbing experiences provide opportunities for children to experience risky play	✓
are sustainable and appropriately maintained	The play area will be maintained by the Local Planning Authority following adoption.	✓
allow for change and evolution	The space maintains the flexibility to be added to in the future and to evolve as equipment is replaced	✓

5.0 Planting Approach

The planting approach for the southern PG1 Play area and community orchard site is predominantly influenced by the existing woodland structure of the space, utilising the established, native trees concentrated along the linear field drains that cross the space. To develop the feeling of a public park, more ornamental highlight trees with distinctive bark or seasonal colour have been sited in prominent locations. Semi mature feature trees line the south of the site to welcome people approaching from the south and further native species planting is used to create a buffer to the school site to the east.

Across the southern PG1 space, wildflower meadow planting softens the edges of spaces, while mown areas of amenity grass within the wildflower meadow add to the feeling of a parkland setting. Formal shrub planting is utilised around the LAP and MUGA to elevate the setting of these play areas, while the NEAP leans in to its woodland setting.



Southern PG1 Layout including NEAP, LAP & Trim Trail

- A Multi-stem trees fill-out the understorey, creating visual barriers between spaces. The use of native silver birch is good ecologically, but also provides visual interest due to the striking white bark.



- B Species-rich grassland and wildflower meadow margins to the open spaces across the park soften the transition to the tree planting at the boundaries of the park and add biodiversity value and seasonal visual interest.



- C** Feature parkland trees placed in prominent locations highlight key features and spaces within the park, including the play areas and transitions between spaces. These trees have been selected for their bold colouring as well as their size and form. An informal line of *Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King' act as a visual gateway from the south of the site and visually connect to the avenue trees along the main road.



- D** An open corridor has been maintained around the already delivered bat barn in the west of the parkland. This ensures bats a clear access route to the barn. The retention of established trees nearby maintains opportunity to roost, while the implementation of species rich grassland around the barn and along the corridor will encourage insects and other invertebrates for food.



- E** A formal orchard will be planted in the north east corner of the park. This is intended as a productive space, but also a space for socialising and as a space for reflection, away from the noise of the play areas to the south. A variety of reliable cropping fruit trees is proposed to provide fruit crops as well as the seasonal visual interest they inherently bring.



- F** Native woodland planting interspersed with standard trees of native species will be planted along the eastern boundary with the adjacent school site. This reinforces the sylvan quality of the park, but will also provide sound and visual screening between the park and the school.



- E** Formal shrub planting is used around the LAP and MUGA areas to define and contain the spaces and to add visual interest and elevate the spaces within the park. Robust shrubs which provide interest through form and colour have been selected to create vibrant planting to connect to the play themes in these spaces.



5.0 Changes Post Pre-Application

Following a pre-application meeting with Wokingham Borough Council, the design team has refined the proposals for the PG1 play area and taken on board feedback from the LPA. The main material change to the proposals has been the omission of the woodland obstacle course trim trail to the west of the space, replaced instead with an equipped calisthenics workout area, which has been integrated with the MUGA.





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