

Old Moor Family Meadow Zone

The current site and future vision

The existing play area feels tired and run down and is surrounded by a dense thicket which prevents any views into the wider reserve. On the other side of this woodland fringe, is a rough meadow with little current play value—which stretches to the path and on to the pond dipping area. Our vision is to create a link from the existing play area to the wider reserve and target this part of Old Moor for families with younger children. The grassland shall be managed to become an attractive meadow area for picnics. In addition we shall install a natural looking sand pool with a tree trunk for clambering on.

Play elements

Play element 1: Connect formal play area to meadow

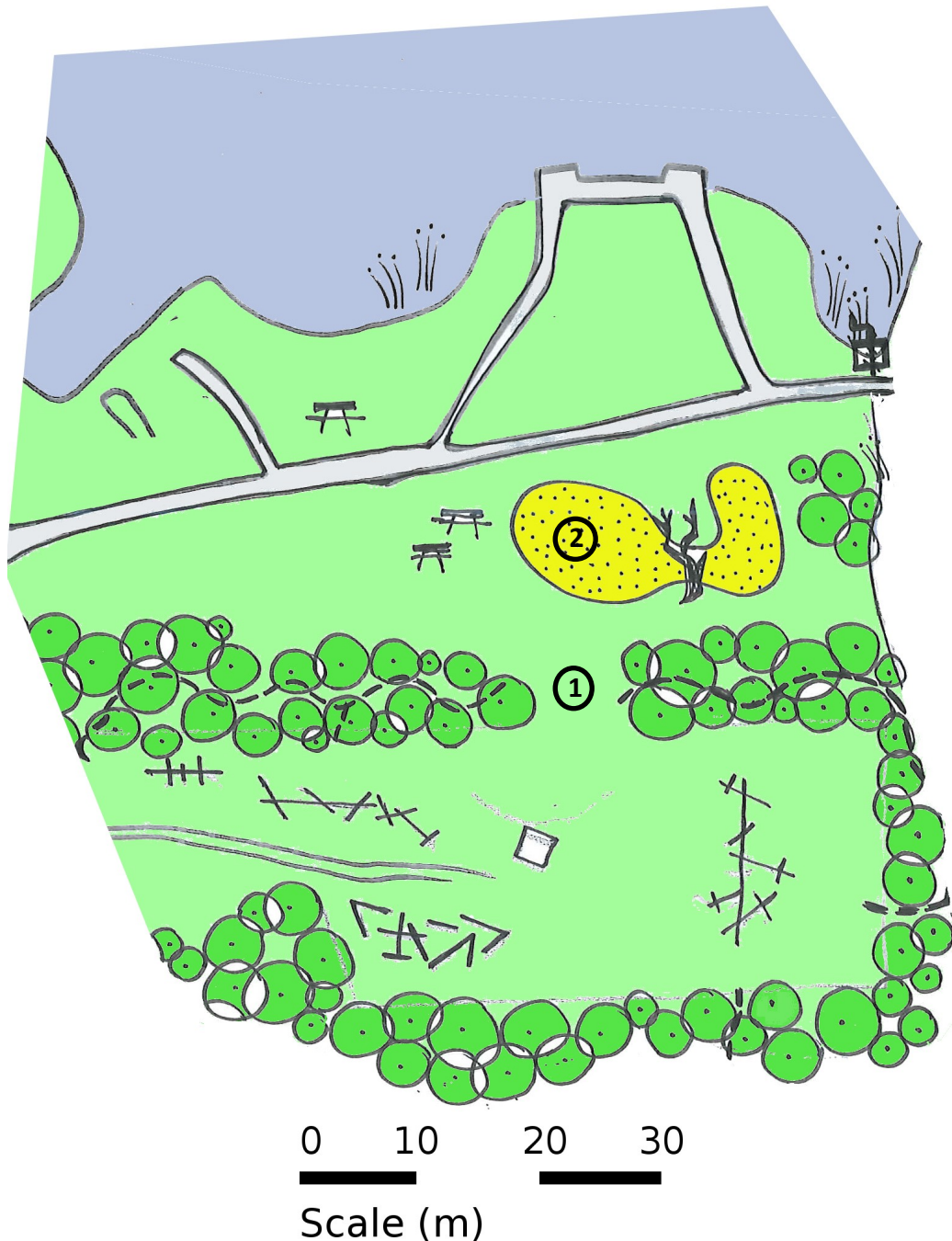
Play element 2: Sand pool with tree trunk log

Construction overview

Adjust/remove some of the items in the existing play area. Rangers and volunteer team to repaint existing structures and in some areas add planting across play area, giving the impression that the structures arise from the undergrowth whilst preserving a safe fall area. Link existing play area to meadow area and dipping platforms and lake beyond by removing a 4-5m wide section of trees that create the border between. Clear child-sized paths routes through the thicket. Build large sand pool, mounds and fingers (approx 9x6m) with tree trunk logs to play on. Mow the meadow on both sides of path, create areas for sitting and picnicking.

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Play element 1: connecting formal play area to meadow

Concept

It feels vital to the overall flow of the Discovery Zone to make a clear link between the existing formal play area and the new Family Meadow. Trees and understorey shall therefore be removed from the woodland verge, to create a 5 metre opening to allow views from the play area to the wider reserve. In addition we shall create ribbons of child-sized paths running lengthways through the thicket adjacent to the play area. As well as opening up this woodland for playing within, these paths shall also lead into the Secret Water zone.

Construction

Remove saplings and young trees where required to form a narrow (approx 0.8m wide) pathway through the thicket. Trim back overhanging branches at a height of approx 1.5m. Pathway surface to be compacted and tamped manually where trees have been removed, the intent is for the path to be formed naturally by footfall rather than laying artificial surface. Create a 5m opening by removing mature tree to allow views and access to the Family Meadow and reserve beyond. Trees removed shall be used on site to form tree trunk bridges and clambering logs.

Play value

Woodland 'litter' provides the materials for imaginative shops and cafes. The changing foliage helps children to explore colours and textures. Their rich eco-systems allow children direct access wildlife. Fallen logs and branches stimulate jumping, clambering, running – all essential in the development of gross motor skills. In these wooded areas children will be able to play hide and seek, find quiet places to be alone, and wild areas in which to build dens. Views to the reserve will encourage exploration and an appreciation of the USP of Old Moor.

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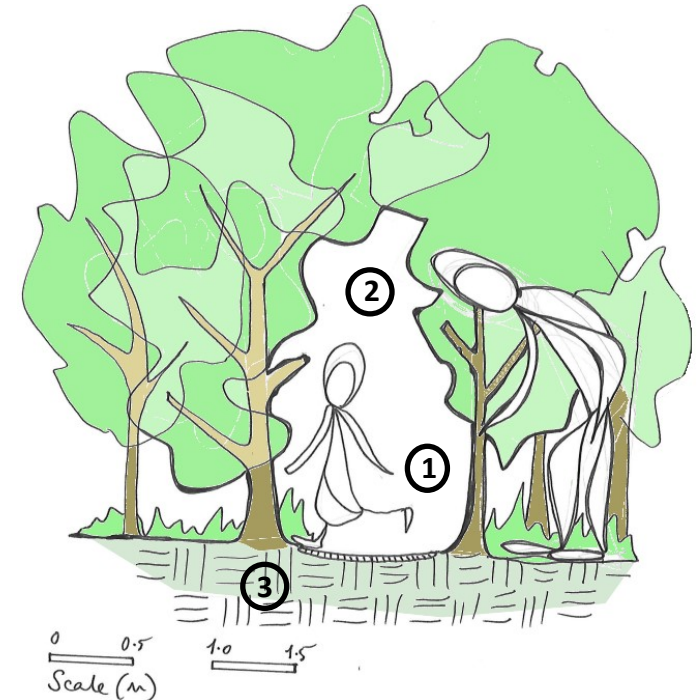
Play element 1: connecting formal play area to meadow

Construction notes for clearings and pathways:

Item	Material	Workmanship/Assembly	Quantity / notes
1.	Pathways through thickets	Remove saplings and young trees where required to form a narrow (approx 0.8m wide) pathway through the thickets. Trim back overhanging branches at a height of approx 1.5m.	
2.	Clearing 5m opening to create views	Remove trees and saplings from an area behind the Owl play structure 5m wide.	
3.	Pathways surface	Pathway surface to be compacted and tamped manually where trees have been removed	

Management and maintenance notes for clearings and pathways:

Item	Description	Method/Frequency	Quantity/notes
A.	Clear pathway	Clear pathways manually of new growth, overhanging branches, litter, newly grown trip hazards. Monthly	
B.	Clear opening	Clear opening manually of new growth, overhanging branches, litter, newly grown trip hazards. Monthly.	



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Play element 2: sand pool and clamber log

Concept

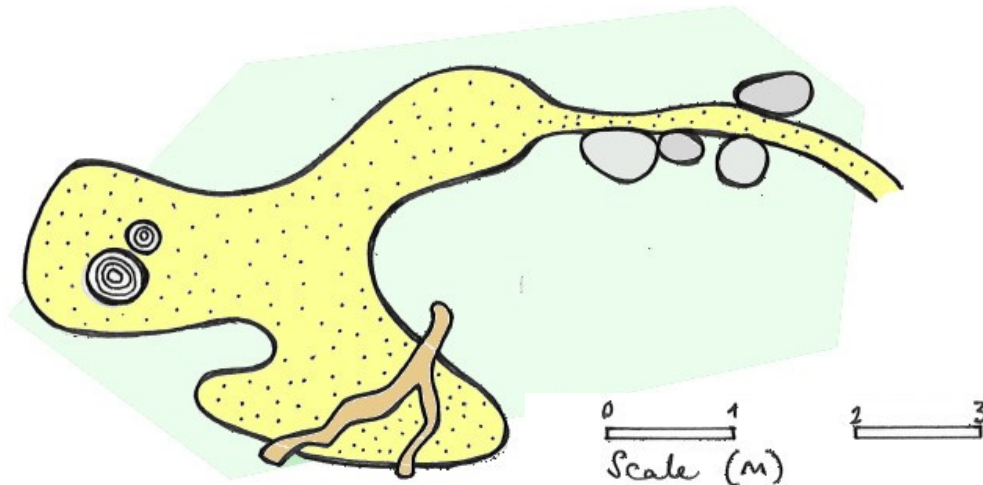
Aimed at young children and their families, we will create a sand pool in the meadow. This will help families dwell in this area—slowing them to absorb the quiet beauty of the reeds, the huge skies and the birdlife. The sand pool will be organic in shape, blending into the landscape, hedged in with grass covered mounds. Nearby mown areas of grass and a tree trunk will create places for parents to base themselves – enabling them to watch children as they explore and play.

Construction

Build large sand pool, mounds and fingers (approx 9x6m) with tree trunk logs to play on. Mow the meadow on both sides of path, create grassy areas for sitting and picnicking. The outline of the sand pool bed will be formed and compacted by excavator. Fill material produced will be used to create adjacent mounding. The base of the sand pool will be covered with a layer of geotextile. Onto this a 100mm deep draining layer of graded (no fines) aggregate will be installed and covered with a second layer of geotextile. Onto this will be installed 300mm deep washed beach sand. Fallen tree trunk to be added for extra play value. The sand pools perimeter will be reseeded where required.

Play value

For small children these sand pools will be a key stepping stone to independent play. Loose parts allow children influence over their environment and are the basic components of deepening play. Sand can become the basis of building sites, landscapes, potion making. Sand works well across a large age range – testimony to why beach holidays are so popular to families.



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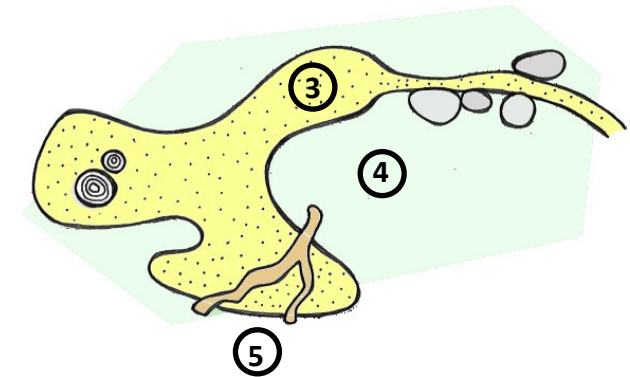
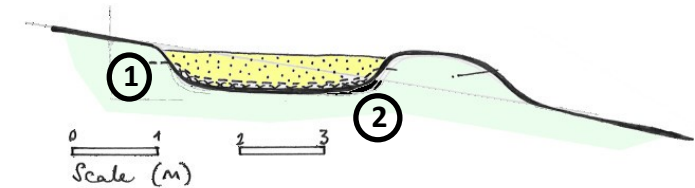
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Play element 2: sand pool and clamber log

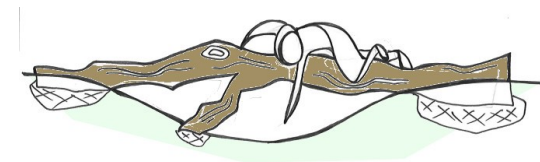
Construction notes for sand pool:

Item	Material	Workmanship/Assembly	Quantities
1.	Geotextile (e.g. Terram 2000)	Installed across formation of feature. Secured by 150mm downturn into subgrade around perimeter of feature and over stone drainage layer	Geotex 15m2
2.	Clean run stone drainage	Installed between layers of geotextile in 100mm deep layer	1.5m3
3.	Washed beach sand	Installed into feature to 300mm depth across areas shown.	4.5m3
4.	Grass seed: Emorsgate EM1 general wildflower grassland mix (sown at recommended)	Used for 'patching in' areas between perimeter turfing and existing turf. To be installed onto prepared bed, profiled to running levels . https://wildseed.co.uk/mixtures/view/2	80m2 (for whole site)
5.	Fallen play log	Ensure side branches below 100mm in diameter are removed. All branch ends should be cut square and the cut edges chamfered. When the tree trunk has been set in final location/ position ensure that any upward pointing branches are cut off at the trunk.	1



Management and maintenance notes for sand pool:

Item	Description	Method/ Frequency	Quantity / notes
A.	Check sand/ other surfaces to check for foreign objects	Visual check daily and rake across surface, remove all litter and organic matter daily in summer, Weekly at other times at beginning of day	
B.	Top-up sand pool as required	Annually.	If required. 1 tonne washed beach play sand.
D.	Check tree trunk features	Check stable / firmly fixed / free of rot. Remove if substantially degraded. Bi-annual	Replace as required and budget allows.



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