

KOMPAN Design Rationale – Shaw Lane, Carlton Play Area

The proposed play area at Shaw Lane, Carlton has been designed to provide a balanced, welcoming and inclusive play environment that supports a wide range of ages, abilities and play preferences. The layout combines dynamic play, social play, sensory play, accessible play opportunities and supporting site furniture to create a space that is not only functional and compliant, but also encourages repeat use by children, families and the wider community.

At the heart of the design is the principle of inclusive play. The equipment mix has been selected to offer opportunities for children with different physical, sensory and social needs to play alongside one another, rather than in separate zones. This is supported by a combination of accessible products, appropriate surfacing choices and inclusive seating and site furniture.

The **Inclusive, Flat & Cradle Swing (KSW903_20493050)** provides an important multi-user experience for children aged 2+. The inclusion of the inclusive, flat and cradle swing seats broadens accessibility and allows younger children and those needing additional support to enjoy a classic, high-value movement activity. Swinging delivers vestibular stimulation, rhythm and cause-and-effect play, while also being a familiar and socially valued item for carers and siblings to use together. The inclusive swing seat is suitable for children up to the age of 12 and the one-hand operated harness offers comfortable grips and security.

The **Two Tower Unit (KPW201501_20494236)** introduces a more challenging play offer for children aged 5+. This unit adds climbing, traversal and elevated play, supporting the development of balance, coordination, spatial awareness and confidence. It acts as the main physical challenge piece within the scheme, ensuring the play area caters not only to early years users but also to older children seeking more adventurous play. This helps broaden the site's appeal and extends dwell time for families with children of different ages.

A key inclusive feature within the layout is the **Wheelchair Carousel (PCM157)** for ages 2+. This item is particularly important in establishing the space as a genuinely accessible destination. It enables children who use wheelchairs, as well as ambulant users, to participate in shared spinning play. The social nature of the carousel encourages interaction, cooperative play and visible inclusion, allowing children to play together around a common experience rather than from the margins of the space.

The **Butterfly Seesaw (NRO108)** adds another inclusive, social movement experience for children aged 3+. Seesaw play promotes cooperation, turn-taking and body awareness, while the form of the product encourages face-to-face interaction. This makes it especially

valuable in neighbourhood play settings, where play equipment should support social connection as much as physical activity.

Sensory and imaginative play are supported through the inclusion of the **Rain Wheel** and **Sensory Play Panel**. These items are accessible and low-threshold in use, making them important for very young children, children with sensory processing needs and those who may not wish to engage with more physically demanding equipment. The Rain Wheel encourages tactile and visual exploration, while the Sensory Play Panel provides a calm, engaging point of interaction that can support fine motor development, curiosity and shared play between children and carers. Both items are located on or near accessible surfacing ensuring wheelchair users can engage with the products.

The five **Glacial Boulders 120cm** create an informal natural-style play element within the space. These provide opportunities for balancing, stepping, climbing and route-making, supporting agility, coordination and confidence in movement. Their arrangement can encourage imaginative interpretation and more open-ended play, offering children the chance to move through the space in less prescribed ways. This helps create a richer play landscape rather than a series of isolated items. The items may also be used for parents and carers to sit in a location closer to their young children using the facilities, or for teenagers as a natural hang-out spot.

The design is also strengthened by the inclusion of supporting **street furniture**, which helps the play space function well for families and the wider community. The **Anita Picnic Inclusion table** provides an accessible social gathering point, supporting inclusive use by children, parents, carers and wheelchair users. This is an important feature in making the space comfortable and usable for longer visits, and in reinforcing the play area as a shared neighbourhood destination rather than simply a collection of equipment.

The **Chatter Bench with Backrest and Armrest** contributes additional comfort and passive supervision opportunities. Seating with back and arm support is particularly beneficial for older users, carers and anyone who may need greater ease when sitting or standing. This improves the overall accessibility of the site and supports longer, more comfortable supervision of children at play.

Practical site use is further supported by the inclusion of **two 90 litre steel litter bins** and **three Sheffield cycle stands**. The bins help maintain the cleanliness and attractiveness of the play environment, while the cycle stands encourage active travel and make the site more convenient for local families arriving by bike or scooter. Together, these elements improve the usability, sustainability and day-to-day management of the space.

A mix of timber and steel equipment has been carefully selected to create a natural, welcoming and robust play setting for the community. Surfacing has been carefully considered to support both safety and accessibility. The design includes **wetpour surfacing in Beige & Black Fleck** to the principal equipment zones, laid to the required depths in accordance with the fall heights of the specified equipment. Wetpour provides a durable, even and accessible surface that supports movement through the play area for a broad range of users, including wheelchair users, pushchairs and those with reduced mobility. Its continuous, level finish also assists with legibility of routes and reduces barriers between play items. The colour chosen provides a grainy natural feel, in keeping with the wider space. **Grass mats** have been utilised in other areas of the site which again allows for a natural feel as the mats embed within the grass creating a more organic safety surface.

Overall, the proposed play area has been designed as a well-rounded neighbourhood destination. It combines inclusive movement play, sensory play, social play, physical challenge and supportive site furniture to ensure the space can be used by children of different ages and abilities, as well as by parents, carers and the wider community. The result is a play setting that promotes participation, accessibility and everyday social value, while remaining practical, durable and appropriate for a residential development.