



Reinventing Borde Hill

Borde Hill Garden

Design Amendment Document

November 2025

Contacts

Client

Borde Hill Garden
www.bordehill.co.uk

Jay Goddard
e. Jay@bordehill.co.uk

Lead Consultant

Erect Architecture
www.erectarchitecture.co.uk

Susanne Tutsch
e. st@erectarchitecture.co.uk

Landscape Architect

Hortus Collective
www.hortuscollective.co.uk

Mark Rogers
e. mark@hortuscollective.co.uk

Structural Engineer

Allt Environmental Structural Engineers
www.alltenvironmental.com

Toby Maclean
e.toby@alltenvironmental.com

Sustainability and Services Engineer

BTP Consultants
www.btpconsultancy.com

John Grazebrook
e. johngrazebrook@btpconsultancy.com

Interpretation Consultant

Outside Studios
www.outsidestudios.co.uk

Catherine Halcrow
e.catherinehalcrow@outsidestudios.co.uk

Access & Inclusion Consultant

Earnscliffe
www.earnscliffe.co.uk

Jayne Earnscliffe
e.jayne@earnscliffe.co.uk

Planning Consultant

Whaleback Planning & Design
www.whaleback.co.uk

Gareth Giles
e. gareth@whaleback.co.uk

Revision	Date	Description
X	20/11/25	Issued for S73 submission

Erect Architecture
22b Regent Studios
8 Andrews Road London E8 4QN
T: 020 7254 6336
E: mail@erectarchitecture.co.uk
W: www.erectarchitecture.co.uk

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

2 Proposed Design Amendments + Heritage impact

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning

2.2 Eco Lodge at Robertsmere Lake

2.3 South Park Landscape

3 Document List

Introduction

1.1 Summary

The following document has been prepared by Erect Architecture to summarise design changes proposed to the development for 'Reinventing Borde Hill'. These include changes to:

- ① **Outdoor play and learning area** - relocation of the play from the ancient woodland to the open parkland.
- ② **Landscape interventions to the South Park Landscape** - minor changes to the layout and specification of the path network.
- ③ **Eco Lodge at Robertsmere Lake**- minor changes to fenestration and doors in response to the reduction in decking during the planning process.

The amendments have been led by design development; responding to the ecology officer's comments to the location of the play area and responding to technical development of the Eco Lodge through its reduction of scale. The changes have been developed with Borde Hill's long term vision at the heart, and sensitively respond to the challenges faced. Amendments have been summarised and justified in the following document, however proposals should be read in conjunction with Borde Hill's wider vision for the site which is outlined in the DAS which accompanies the approved application DM/24/0433

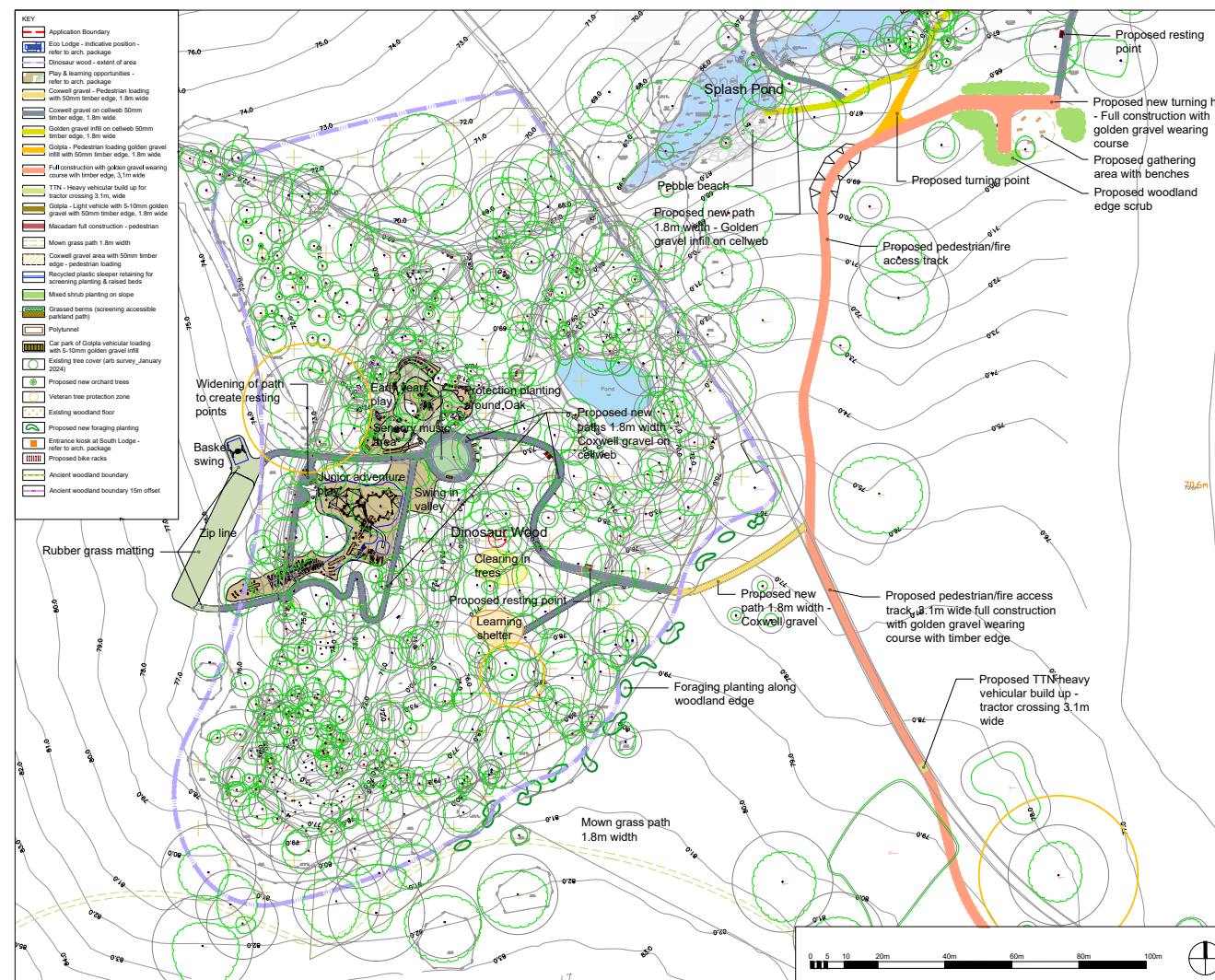


Proposed site plan

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning - Location review

A key pillar of Reinventing Borde Hill is outdoor learning and play. Following feedback from the ecology officers, we have reviewed the proposed location of the play, to ensure there is no ecological impact to the site

- 1 Previous Location
- 2 Relocation of the play



Previously proposed location of play site plan



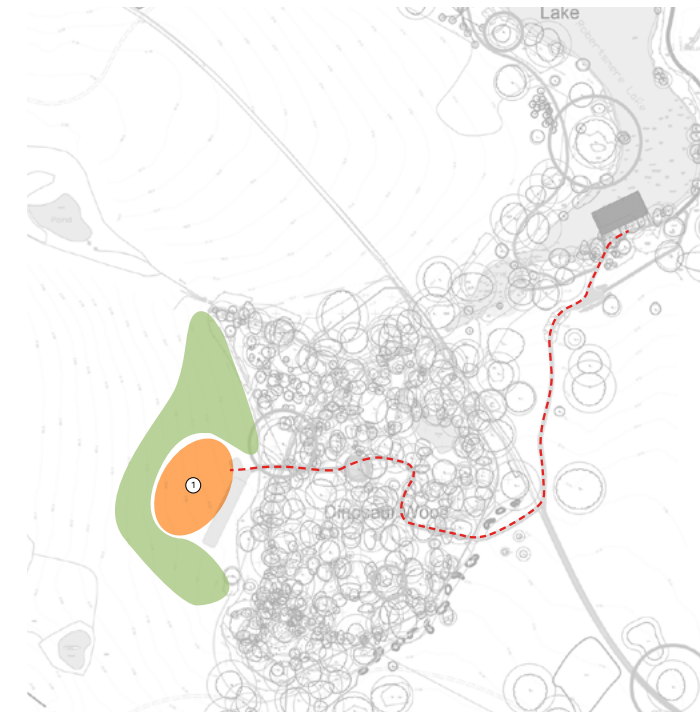
Proposed site plan illustrating previously proposed (1) and currently proposed (2) play

Proposed Design Amendments

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning - Location review cont.

The location of the play area has been altered due to the complexity of the mature trees and ecology in Dinosaur Wood.

Now situated outside of the ancient woodland and the 15m buffer, the new proposed location ensures no impact to the ecology of Dinosaur wood. The exercise also considered the existing topography and landscape features and their inherent play value.



Play Area Location Option 1

Located north of Dinosaur Wood
Distance from new Eco-Lodge - 400m

Pros:

- Visually obscured by existing woodland.
- Potential to extend woodland to wrap play space.
- Connects with proposed zip line with planning approval.
- Noise of children playing not heard from Eco-Lodge.
- No existing trees to work around.

Cons:

- Too long a distance from new Eco-Lodge for comfort breaks.
- Not connected directly to proposed splash area.
- Potential accessibility issues due to distance of travel required, surfaces through woodland and gradients of pathways.
- Site is steeply banked and would require grading to provide accessible play spaces.



Play Area Location Option 2

Located north of Dinosaur Wood
Distance from new Eco-Lodge - 200m

Pros:

- Potential to extend woodland to wrap play space.
- Noise of children playing not heard from Eco-Lodge.
- Site is gently banked and requires less grading to provide accessible play spaces.
- Accessible route from Eco-lodge is easily achieved.
- No existing trees to work around.

Cons:

- Potential views from listed house need to be explored with requirement for new planting to screen.
- Fairly long distance from new Eco-Lodge for comfort breaks.
- Not connected directly to proposed splash area.

Proposed location



Play Area Location Option 3

Located north east of the new Eco-Lodge
Distance from new Eco-Lodge - 150m

Pros:

- Reasonably close to Eco-Lodge for comfort breaks.
- Potential to extend woodland to wrap play space to opposite bank from Eco-Lodge.
- Site is gently banked and requires less grading to provide accessible play spaces.
- Accessible route from Eco-lodge is easily achieved.
- Directly linked to proposed splash area through 'play route'.
- No existing trees to work around.

Cons:

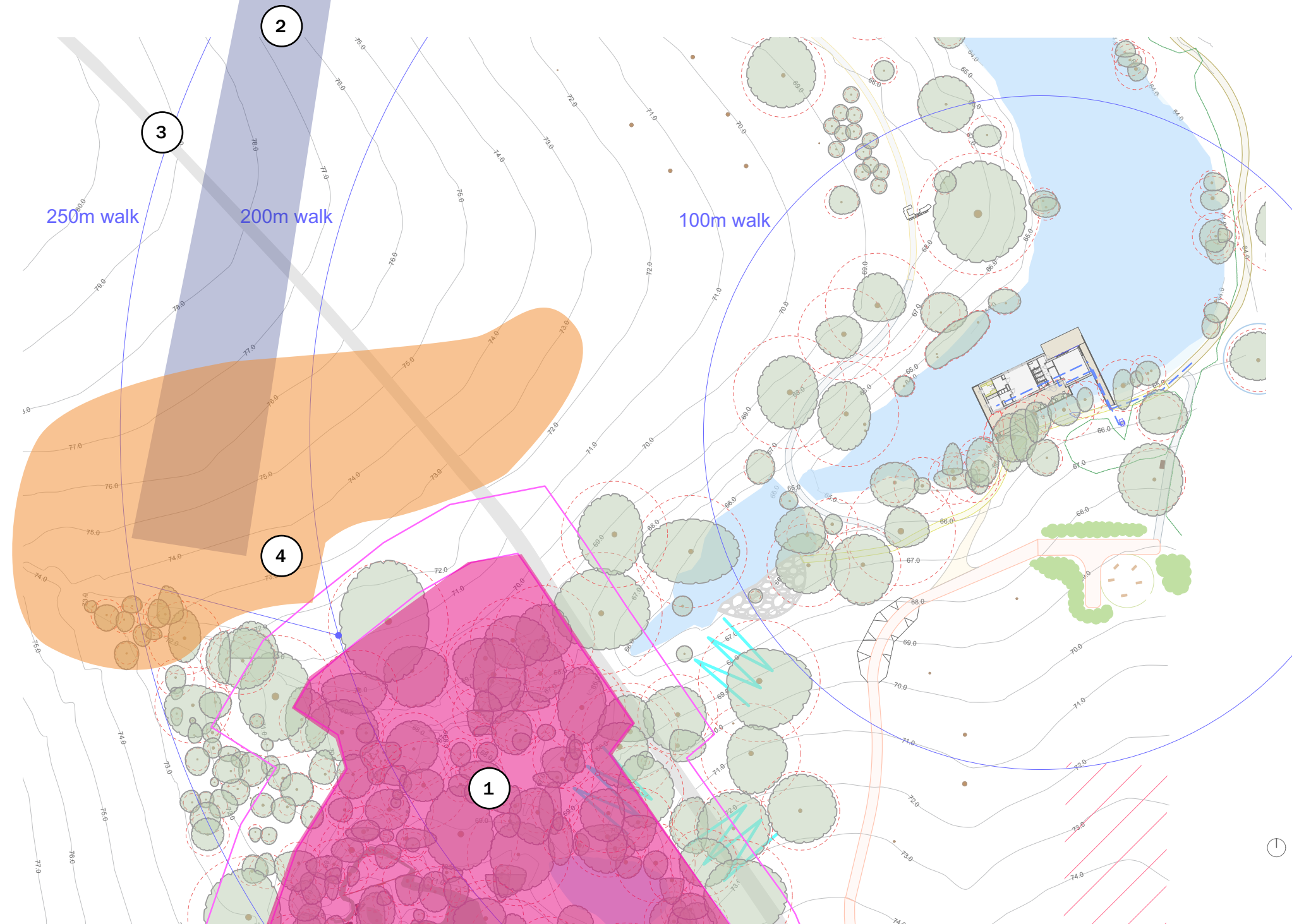
- Potential views from listed house need to be explored with requirement for new planting to screen.
- Requires switchback path to allow for accessibility, though workable.
- Noise of children playing maybe heard from Eco-Lodge.

Proposed Design Amendments

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning - Location review cont.

The chosen site has good proximity to the Eco Lodge whilst minimal impact to the heritage landscape. Situated now out of the ancient woodland and boundary and therefore its impact to the ecology of Dinowsaur wood is none.

- 1 Ancient Woodland Boundary + Ecology**
The chosen site is located outside of the ancient woodland boundary and at points within the buffer zone. It is noted that planting and access is permitted within this zone and the playground boundary treatment will be used to protect this boundary.
- 2 View of the play features from Borde Hill House**
The site is partially screened to Borde Hill House by the existing topography and headland trees. The play heights have been limited to a maximum of 6m to reduce any impact and views from the house. Planting to extend the woodland and wrap the play will act as a further screen
- 3 Walking distance from Eco Lodge and access to WC**
The chosen site is 200-250m away from the Eco Lodge, and therefore around a 5 minutes' adult walk.
- 4 Play Safety and landscape features**
The site features include a ghyll and scrub landscape as well as a small stream. ROSPA have been consulted initially on the safety principles of incorporating these features within the play offer.



Proposed site plan illustrating constraints of the site

Proposed Design Amendments

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning - Location review cont.

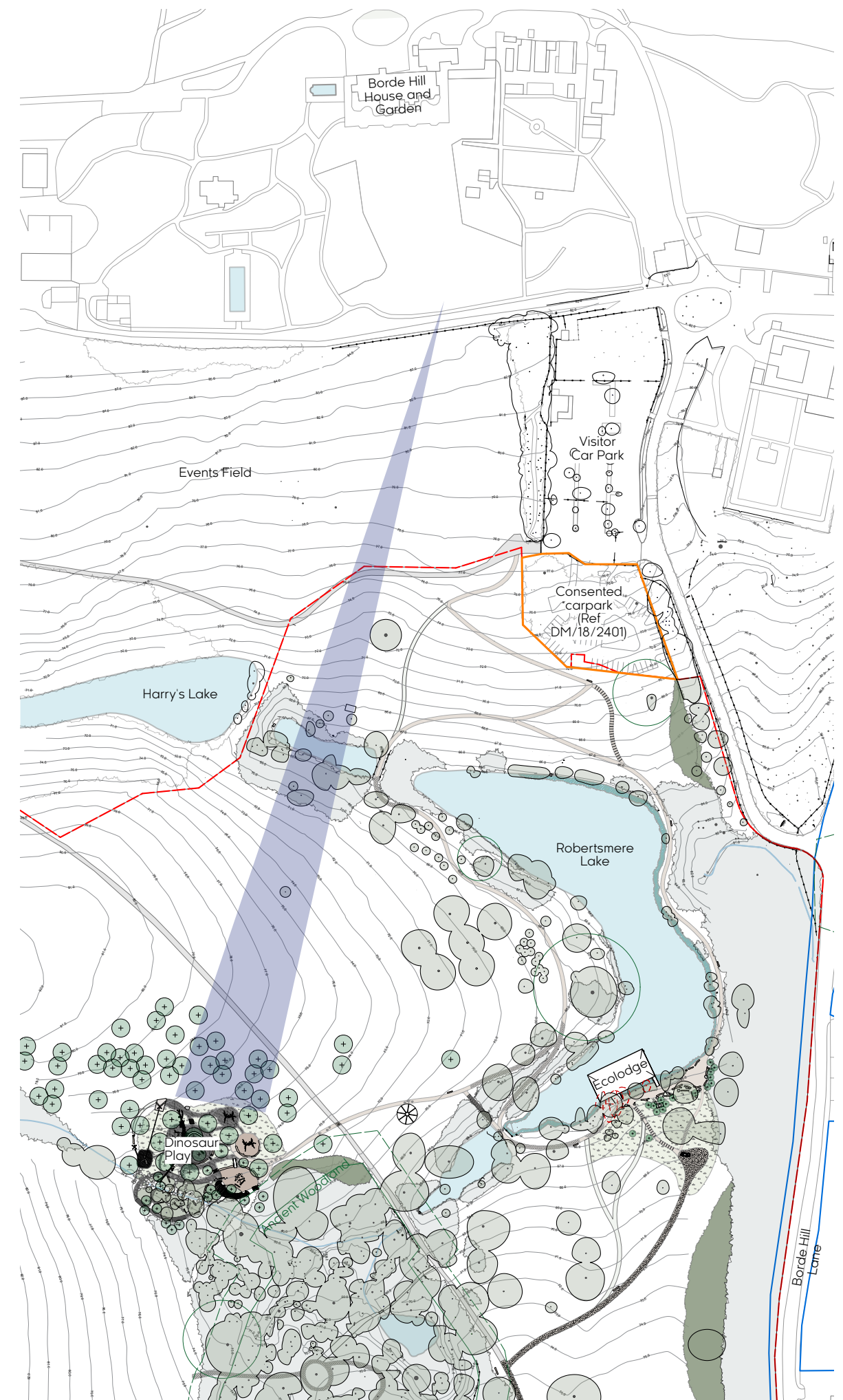


Photograph taken from Borde Hill House towards the proposed play area

South park is a designed landscape of woodland pasture and parkland which also includes many nationally important tree specimens as a result of Col. Stephenson R Clarke's plant collections. This 'select arboretum' of trees and the qualities of the parkland character is of national significance by virtue of its designation as a Grade II* Historic Park and Garden, and location within the High Weald National Landscape. The South Park is characterised by a pattern of open pasture ridges and wooded 'ghylls' which offer a varied range of long, intermediate and short views from the Grade II listed house.

The new design for the natural play has considered the importance of the parkland trees and setting of the Borde Hill House and Garden which are to the north of the park. The following strategies have been considered in order to protect South Park:

- The siting of the play space is outside of the ancient woodlands and sits on the lee side of a rise in the open parkland topography.
- Significant views from the heritage assets are protected by the addition of new parkland tree groups and a linear parkland tree belt, which are characteristic of the South Park woodland pasture and the 18th century parkland style.
- The play structure's heights have been limited to a maximum of 6m to reduce impact.
- The play features are to be constructed from site won timber, which will be allowed to age naturally and sit well against the Parkland trees.



Site plan illustrating viewing cone from Borde Hill House to the proposed play area

Proposed Design Amendments

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning- Design

The design principles of nature-led play which is focused on using natural materials of wood and rope continue to be reflected in the new designs, but with the new site, the zoning and play features have been revised to reflect this change in landscape character. Before the site was within clusters of pine trees in a woodland setting, this site is now a parkland landscape with a woodland edge and a scrub/ghyll border.

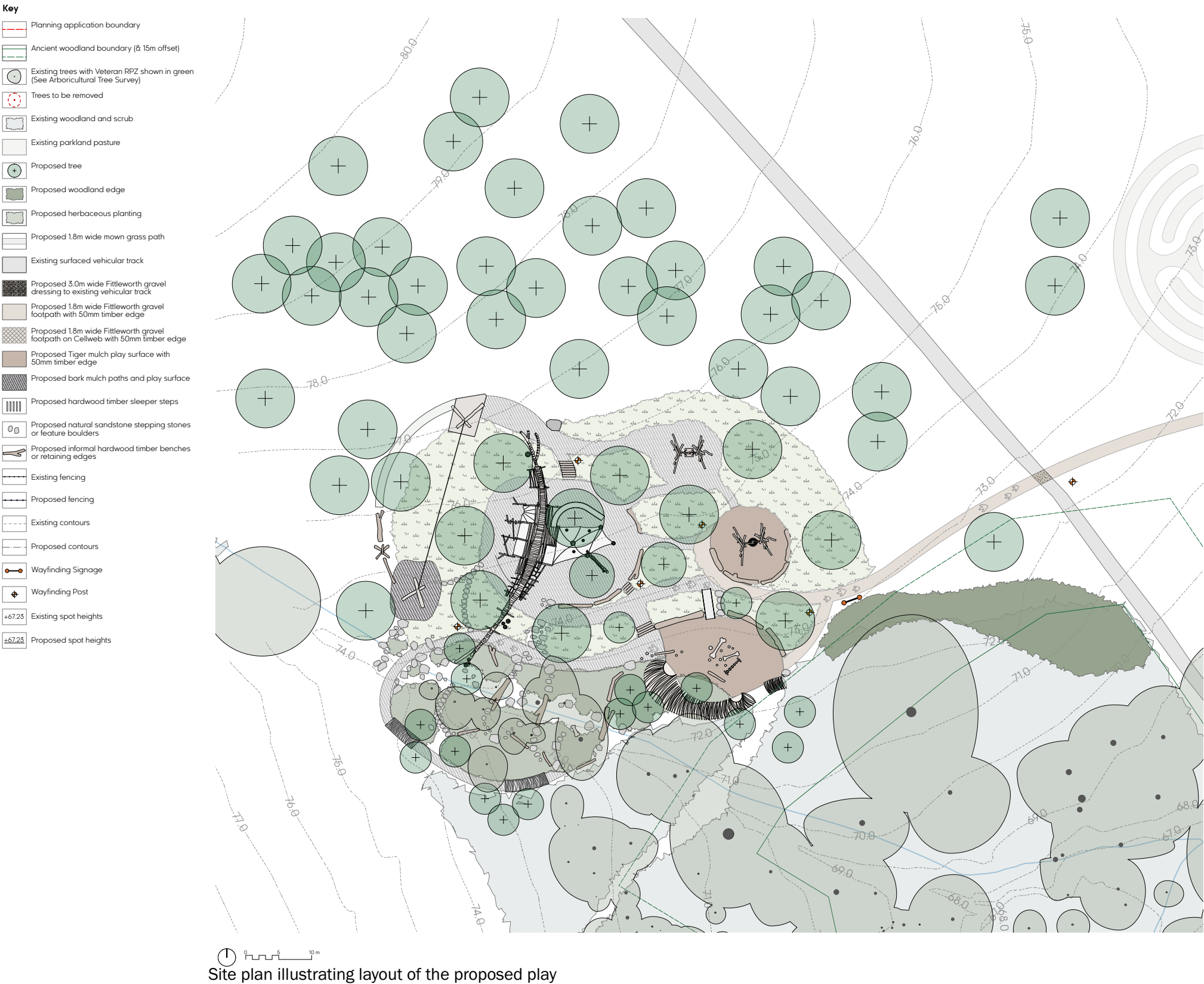
The design of the new outdoor learning and play space is focused on a sleeping dinosaur resting in the landscape, where children walk up and along its spine and interact with play elements along the way.



Artwork and activities during playground workshop

As part of the design process, the team ran a workshop with local 8-12 year olds to explore themes related to the design of the playground (Formerly Dinosaur Woods Play).

The intention of the workshop was to draw on the key themes of the design brief and allow the children to explore these in real life: scale, texture, movement, imagining a lost time.



Proposed Design Amendments

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning- Design cont.



Example of the timber construction for the 'dinosaur tail'



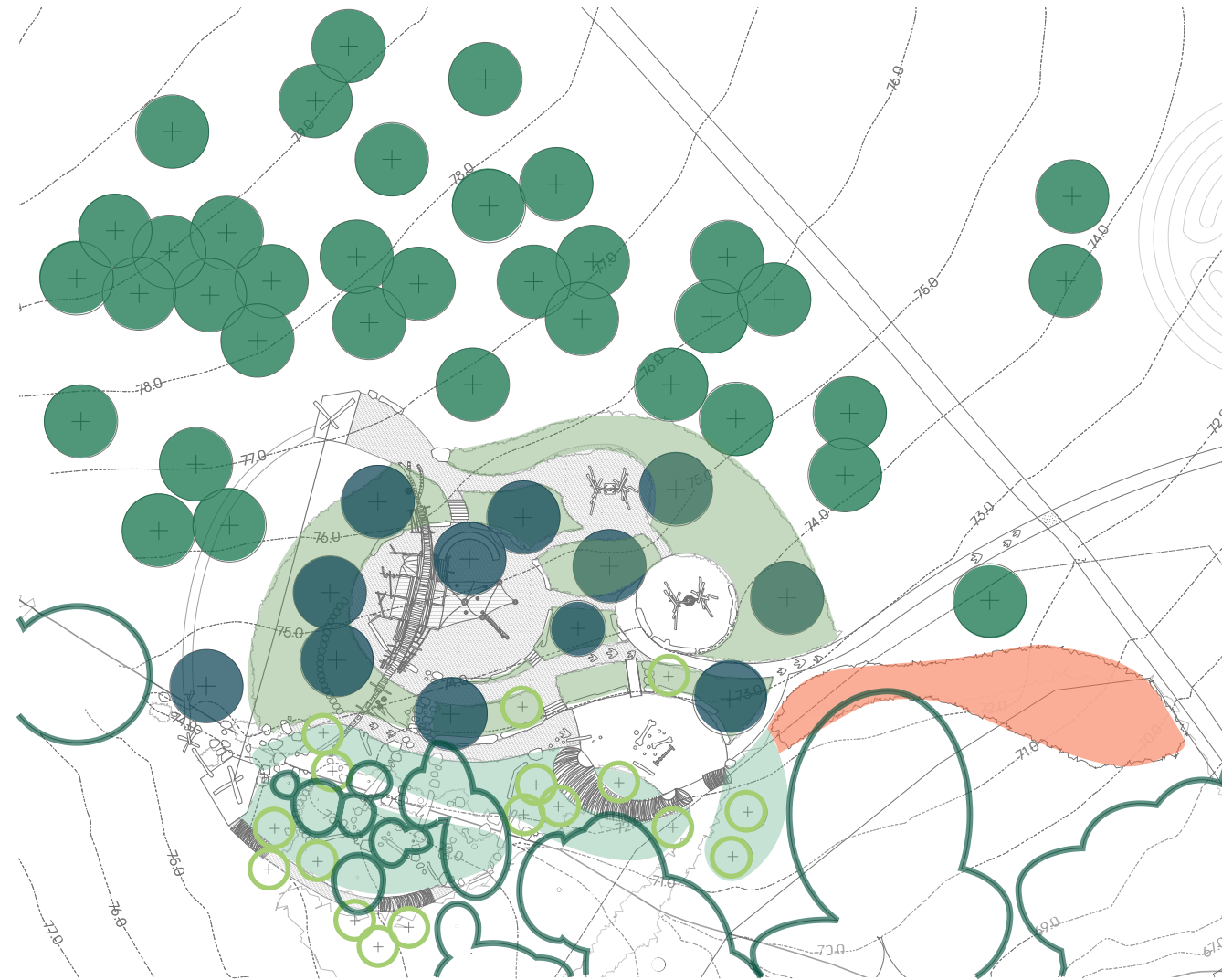
Proposed sketch view of the play



Proposed elevation of the 'dinosaur tail' play structure

Proposed Design Amendments

2.1 Outdoor Play and Learning- Planting Strategy



The planting strategy for the new outdoor play seeks to:

- Strengthen the existing parkland character and species composition.
- Improve ecological connectivity and plant succession through new tree and woodland planting.
- Enhance biodiversity through a layered planting of trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and grasses.
- Provide foraging opportunities for people and nature.
- Offer future resilience for a changing climate

- Existing Trees to be retained.
- Proposed Parkland Woodland Shaw
- Proposed Parkland Play Trees (Cretaceous era)
- Proposed Ghyll Play Coppice Trees
- Proposed meadow
- Proposed additional coppice planting and groundcover enhancement
- Proposed woodland edge planting

Parkland Woodland Shaw



Enhancing the character of the South Park wooded ridges and open woodland pasture a new linear tree shaw is proposed to integrate the play area and enhance biodiversity.

Woodland Edge Planting



As part of the scheme the design seeks to improve biodiversity and foraging opportunities through new woodland edge habitat within the South Park.

Adventure Play Wildflower meadow



Planting around the main play space will need to transition seamlessly with the parkland landscape and High Weald character. As such a combination of specimen prehistoric trees (gymnosperms and early angiosperms) will provide the visual link to the Dinosaur narrative while the groundcover will be a seeded High Weald meadow planting which is robust enough for a play space and livestock grazing.

Ghyll Play - Coppice woodland



Planting around the ghyll play will strengthen the existing hazel and willow providing opportunities for playful journeys through the coppice. An understory of native ferns and plants with prehistoric qualities in texture and form will sit under the trees and provide a visual link to the qualities of the Mesozoic Era.