

# BETTER ESTATE PLAY

A Theories Landscapes social housing play environment case study

Peckwater Estate, London Borough of Camden £50k 2009/10

Building upon a strong local reputation for producing individual and distinctive play environments, and following a comprehensive selection process, Theories Landscapes Ltd were commissioned by LB Camden to design and build a new natural Playscape on existing open grassed areas in the centre of the estate.



The old landscape

...as blank a canvas as it gets...

*"Theories really listened to what our community wanted. They were great with the children and we knew from the start that the funds which we had fought so hard to secure with the help of Cllr N Russell, would be put to good use"*

*Jimmy Ray Peckwater Estate TRA chair.*

Good play opportunities on London's Housing estates are still sadly a rarity. At Peckwater, the central open grassed areas were largely the domain of dogs and scenes of inter-estate rivalries.

Workshops with the local community explored the idea of re-moulding the landscape to create mounds, bridges and gullies to run through connecting active play features, hiding areas and planting oases with seating. There's even a grove of trees.

Support for this untraditional solution was given after the design was mocked up to enable the children to experience the spatial play opportunities and a hint of the final solution.



The new playscape

...to this and more...

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The secret garden

...the result is that play has a central place within the local community...

It was important to provide a play area that was accessible, attractive and usable to a range of age groups and that could be played with imaginatively. And so not only were some traditional play features included but also small quiet(er) areas with seating and surrounded by plants where children could just sit and talk or spend time on their own.

Theories were chosen not only for their innovative play design reputation but our capacity to always deliver on time and on budget. Funding for this project came from Play Pathfinder

Theories were able to handle the entire project comprehensively from beginning to end, from consultation and design to building and aftercare. A Design/Build solution has once again demonstrated real value for money as well as it's capacity to create extraordinary play environments and great play experiences.



Balance and climbing

*"As a Landscape Architect who focuses on children's engagement in making changes to their own outdoor play and learning environment, I am happy to work with Theories because their bespoke approach to design and build has the advantage that children's innovative ideas can be reflected more effectively in the physical realisation of a project. Their construction team also brings additional innovation and new ideas during the implementation phase, responding cost effectively to site and needs rather than simply installing "off the peg" products. In this way children can really see where they have influenced the successful finished scheme, and can be proud of their achievement."*

Felicity Robinson [Play Pathfinder Steering Group]



Exciting swing

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