Playgrounds that Communicate Heritage

Applying museological practices to playgrounds

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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU

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Abstract:

Since the communication of an area's local heritage to children not only offers intangible benefits to children, but also ensures the continued preservation of the heritage itself, it is important to develop ways in which such communication can be undertaken. Through taking inspiration from current museological practices, this paper discusses how playgrounds can be developed as a tool to communicate an area's local heritage to children. After a theoretical foundation regarding heritage, children, place, play, and museology is laid out, this paper presents a design project meant to exemplify how a heritage based playground could be designed. To conclude, this paper highlights three potential ways in which current museological practices can be implemented into the design of playgrounds in order to communicate cultural heritage to children.

Keywords: landscape architecture, heritage, new heritage, play, playgrounds, museology, sense of place, children and heritage

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1. INTRODUCTION

Museums and museology practices as a whole have charted a new course over the last couple decades (Forrest 2013:201). Recently, curators have put substantially greater emphasis on both the atmospheric qualities found in museums (Forrest 2013:201), as well as on the creation of hands-on activities for children and young people (Farné 2005:171). This new atmospheric focus (Forrest 2013:201), along with the connections museums have made between play and pedagogy (Farné 2005:171), and the fact that museums are a significant pillar in the realm of informal pedagogy, academic literature on museology has the potential to inform and aid the creation of playgrounds that can help communicate heritage and an overall sense of place.

Children are seen as the "future stakeholders of the culture" (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:142). With such an important role, it is seen as crucial that children are able to relate towards and make connections with their local environment (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:142). Encountering and learning about their local environment also changes how children understand and relate to their city, area, and neighborhood (Ploner & Jones 2019:280). Chawla explains that children go from being rooted to a place to acquiring a sense of place through pedagogy (Chawla 1992:83). Since play has the capacity to help children to encounter and learn about the environment (Chermayeff et al. 2010:48), play has the potential to help children grow deeper connections to their local environments (Chawla 1992:83).

1.1 Objective

The objective of this paper is to examine how current museological practices have the potential to aid the design of playgrounds in evoking an area's sense of place and heritage for its users. The aim is to, through a design proposal, exemplify how playgrounds can be designed with a greater sensitivity towards an area's local heritage.

Through reviewing the current state of academic literature regarding topics pertaining to current museology practices, heritage and new heritage, as well as children relationship to place, this paper will make an argument for the utilization of heritage as a conceptual basis for playground design. The paper will then go on to discuss how all of these topics come together with regards to playground design.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Literature study

This paper will make its argument for the utilization of heritage as a conceptual basis for playground design through discussing academic literature related to the aforementioned topics above. Once this argument is laid out, this paper will then proceed to discuss this argument in regards to specifically play and playground design. After this theoretical foundation is laid out, a design project will be introduced and discussed in order to exemplify to the reader how a heritage based playgrounds could be designed, as well as how practices found in museology could be used to communicate local heritage. This example design project is not meant to be a complete guide as to how one designs a heritage based playground but instead offers readers an example of how one could potentially be undertaken.

2.2 Design process

The design process itself will follow a simplified version of von Seggern's "designing as an intuitive process" model, where intuitive and rational thought crosses paths at each stage of the design process, while also affording a degree of further exploration (Von Seggern 2019:16-17). Using what von Seggern calls "*nosing around*" (Von Seggern 2019:19), an exploration and understanding of the site will be undertaken through sketches, pictures, observations, and background research throughout the design process. The design of the playground will look towards academic literature relating to current play and playground theories as a guide, while also incorporating lessons learnt from museology for the communication of heritage and sense of place for its users.

2.3 Design case

The proposed playground would be situated in between two museums, and would be integrated into an area known as Fiskehoddorna. Fiskehoddorna is a collection of old fishing huts that were relocated by Malmö Museum in the 1950s since they were going to be demolished in their previous location. Through relocating these huts, Malmö Museum was able to preserve the huts as well as the fishermans way of life. Today, although some huts lay abandoned, some fishman still operate their fishing operations out of these huts and sell fish to residents of the city. Through this design proposal, this paper hopes to exemplify how playgrounds can and should be designed with a greater sensitivity towards and embracing of an area's local heritage.

3. LITERATURE STUDY

3.1 Museology

Through taking a further look into the field of contemporary museology, this section will ask, what lesson can be learned from museum exhibition design in relation to the communication of heritage through playgrounds?

With regards to lessons that can be learnt from museums and museological practices, there are two topics in particular discussed in contemporary museological literature that can aid designers in communicating heritage through playgrounds. These topics are the embracing of hands-on learning for children in museums (Farné 2005:171), and the overall atmospheric leaning shift undergone by museums in the last few years (Forrest 2013:201)..

In terms of museums and pedagogy, Griffin describes learning in museums as being,

> *"non-directed, exploratory, voluntary and personal, and proceed through curiosity, observation, activity, a sense of wonder, speculation and theory testing"* (Griffin 1998:656).

One way museums are able to afford such learning is through hands-on learning. Hands-on learning is a way in which children can be instructed through being "*encouraged to watch, to touch, to make and to do things*" (Farné 2005:171). Used in both science museums (Chermayeff et al. 2010:49) and children's museums (Farné 2005:171), curators at these types of museums attempt to use interaction and play as a way to communicate and educate about different topics (Farné 2005:171).

This method of hands-on learning has even made its way outside of the exhibition space, with the creation of science playgrounds (Chermayeff et al. 2010:49). Through taking these hands on exhibits out of the exhibition hall and into a more free and informal setting, playground designers are able to afford children, as Chermayeff et al describes, "*a degree of movement, noise, and full-body experiences often not possible or appropriate inside a museum*" (Chermayeff et al. 2010:49)

The notion of hands-on learning present within both science museums and science playgrounds (Chermayeff et al. 2010:49) as well as in children's museums (Farné 2005:171) has the potential to aid in the communication of heritage to children and young people. With this being said, there are of course stark differences between communicating scientific principles and cultural heritage to children. It is crucial for playground designers to take these differences into account when attempting to communicate cultural heritage through hands-on playground features.

The second topic discussed in contemporary museology that could aid designers in successfully communicating heritage through playgrounds is the overall atmospheric leaning shift undergone by museums (Forrest 2013:201). Academic literature on this atmospheric shift of museum exhibitions has discussed transformative experiences (Henning 2005:112; Bjerregaard 2015:80), the role of materiality and presence (Bjerregaard 2015:77), and atmosphere as a whole (Forrest 2013:211).

In terms of transformative experiences, Soren explains that,

> *"Transformational experiences seem to happen if we discard old ways of thinking and provide new opportunities for individuals to invent personal knowledge and explore new ideas and concepts"* (Soren 2009:234).

Garner et al. explains transformative experiences in a similar way, asserting that in a transformative experience "*individuals actively apply concepts in their everyday lives and use them to see aspects of the world in meaningful, new ways*" (Garner et al. 2016:343) From a transformative experience, the individual is able to "*re-see*", reflecting on object or experience, relating it to themselves, and subsequently looking at the different aspects of the world in a new way (Garner et al. 2016:346). Evoking transformative experiences is seen as an important aspect of contemporary museum exhibition design (Henning 2005:112; Soren 2009:235). This newfound drive focuses less on communicating facts about the objects, and instead focuses on affording the visitor the ability to make their own connections to the object, reflect upon them, subsequently altering how they perceive the world and themselves (Soren 2009:234-235).

Presence, materiality, and atmosphere all play a role in helping to evoke transformative experiences in museum visitors (Bjerregaard 2015:80). Some academics in contemporary museology point out the significance of the artifact and it's materiality in the museum experience (Bjerregaard 2015:80; Dudley 2018:426). Dudley expresses the need for museums to allow the materiality of an artifact to take center stage, enabling visitors to engage with the artifact on a deeper level (Dudley 2018:426). Other authors add to this idea of engagement with an artifacts materiality, explaining that the materiality of an artifact is able to go beyond the artifact itself and "*radiates into space*" (Bjerregaard 2015:76) This extension of the artifact into space can also be helped along by the presence of the artifact (Bjerregaard 2015:76). The presence of an object or artifact is more than just the item's materiality bleeding into space, but is also affected by how the object or artifact is displayed, lit, positioned, and seen (Bjerregaard 2015:77). Within current museological practices, atmosphere is seen a tool that can help to mitigate the distance separating the artifact and the visitor (Dorrian 2014:197). Through altering how an object is seen, the object is able to go beyond its normal material qualities, enabling the viewer to perceive and understand it differently (Bjerregaard 2015:80).

Related to both presence and the materiality of artifacts and objects, the overall atmosphere of museum exhibitions also plays a role in evoking transformative experiences (Bjerregaard 2015:80). Bjerregaard explains the significance of atmosphere in relation to museums, stating that,

> *"the capacity of the museum to generate a kind of embracing experience, wrapping the visitor in an atmosphere, which seems to have a much more lasting effect than the information accounted for"* (Bjerregaard 2015:75).

Forest also reflects on the important role atmosphere plays in museums, explaining that visitors' overall perceptions of a museum is in part affected by the atmosphere found within the exhibitions (Forrest 2013: 203)

Overall, these two aforementioned topics discussed in contemporary museology focus learning through experience and interaction. A playground is not a suitable space to present delicate artifacts along with notations on where they came from and the year it was founded. A playground affords kids a place to play, to be free, to experience the affordances offered to them by the environment. In fact, the heritage that would be communicated through a playgrounds would not necessarily be focused on the artifact at all. Rather, the focus would be on the landscape and the characteristic buildings that represent the local heritage and evoke memories and stories from the past. The implementation of hands-on learning in outdoor spaces has already been put into practice with the development of science playgrounds. As long as these methods are developed further so they can be utilized for the communication of cultural heritage, hands-on learning can be a viable direction for heritage based playgrounds.

The overall atmospheric leaning shift, transformative experiences, as well as the integration of museology's ideas on materiality, presence, and atmosphere, offer another way of communicating cultural heritage. Although the overall atmosphere of a space is more difficult to control in an outdoor setting than it is in an exhibition hall, playground designers should be sensitive towards what atmospheric qualities are already present and how their designs embrace and enhance them, as well as form new atmospheric qualities. One powerful method playground designers have to help evoke transformative experiences in playground users is through the implementation of real objects, as well as embracing the use of relevant materiality in the project. Such implementation of these features in a playground can help to engage children with these objects on a deeper level, potentially even more then within an exhibition hall as they get to not just look at the artifact, but touch, climb on, and play with it.

3.2 Heritage

Through taking a brief look into academic literature regarding heritage and new heritage, this section offers an overview of heritage, children's relationship to heritage, how it can be communicated, and the significance of why it should be communicated.

3.2.1 An Overview on Heritage

Overall, heritage is seen as an immensely valuable resource for different communities and societies (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:141). Heritage plays a major role in not only the preservation of historical and cultural values, but is also fundamental in the communication of these historical and cultural values to the wider public and posterity (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:141).

Authors broadly define heritage as objects, buildings, or areas that have some sort of intrinsic value steaming from the object's or place's historical and/or cultural significance. (Harrison 2010:9; Cerisola 2018:24) Although this definition focuses on physical elements that is in turn considered cultural heritage, the authors, Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo, explain that "*cultural heritage is conceptually divided into tangible and intangible heritage"* (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:142). Other authors diminish the importance of this division, taking the standpoint that intangible heritage can be, and is, often derived from tangible heritage, such as objects, buildings, areas, and landscapes. (Cerisola 2018:24)

Moving away from traditional heritage practices, some academics in the field of heritage conservation have put forth a new type of heritage, aptly named 'New Heritage' (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:198). The Faro Convention (2005), which in large part helped to kickstart the movement of New Heritage (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:201), defines cultural heritage as

> *" a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time"* (Council of Europe 2005:2)

This new type of heritage is primarily centered around people, their values, and change over time (Council of Europe 2005:2), with the focus being on people's relationships to objects, places, and landscapes, rather than on the objects, places, and landscapes themselves (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:198).

This greater human centric focus towards heritage preservation enables more creative opportunities for the preservation of heritage (Kolen & Renes 2015:23). New heritage recognises the importance of change, be it places, meanings, values, or lived experiences (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:202). Holtorf & Fairclough, discuss the idea of a "*living heritage*", in which as local communities' lived experiences, values, and collective memories shift over time, so does the weight in which they regard different physical aspects of heritage (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:202). This notion of evolution and change goes beyond solely just meaning and values, but also refers to physical environments and the management of preservation (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:201; Kolen et al. 2016:121). Kolen et al explains that,

> *"'heritage' has now developed into a concept that incorporates a continuously evolving environment, thereby referring to traces of change, dynamic reservoirs of memory and place-bound stories"* (Kolen et al. 2016:121).

It is through allowing change, instead of the strict preservation of all objects, places, and landscapes, that physical heritage is able to relate to the area's "*living heritage*" (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:202). With this idea of allowing for change being necessary for new heritage (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:199; Kolen et al. 2016:121), new heritage scholars emphasize the fact that heritage management is "*the management of change*" (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:201).

New heritage's greater human centric focus has also enabled aspects such as values, meaning, and identity to come to the forefront of heritage discussions (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:200-201; Sooväli-Sepping 2015:424). The author, Sooväli-Sepping explains that "*value and meaning*" are fundamental drivers to modern heritage practices (Sooväli-Sepping 2015:424). As discussed above, the preservation of specific monuments, buildings, and places should not be the main focus of heritage preservation, instead that focus should be placed on the aforementioned meanings and values derived from these places, including the local communities' collective memories and lived experiences (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:200-201). This shift towards the significance of values and meanings for new heritage is explained best by Holtorf & Fairclough, who assert,

> *"Rather than heritage being served by society, now heritage must serve society"* (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:198).

Who decides what needs to be preserved as well as what meanings and values are important is also a significant aspect of new heritage (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:200-201). Traditionally, heritage preservation was primarily taken from a top-down approach (Kolen & Renes 2015:41). This approach saw authorities and academics dictate what objects, buildings, and places actually contained heritage value and were worth preserving, without any input from local communities

or broader society (Kolen & Renes 2015:41). Discussing the issues with this traditional top down approach, Sooväli-Sepping explains

> *"A top-down approach eliminates the understandings of lay people towards heritage"* (Sooväli-Sepping 2015:434).

Input from local communities, particularly in regards to the local populations' lived experiences, sense of identity, and stories from the past, is seen as a fundamental aspect of new heritage (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:200-201). Holtorf & Fairclough explain,

> *"The memories and stories about the past associated with a place are valued by the local community before, and irrespective of, its designated status"* (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:201).

Relating these ideas of new heritage back to heritage based playgrounds, new heritage offers designers a strong conceptual foundation when designing heritage based playgrounds. The human centric focus taken by new heritage enables designers to look differently at how heritage can be preserved and presented. New heritage allows for and promotes changes to the urban environment. It allows for greater input from local communities to ensure they are involved and invested in the process. New heritage also ensures that the meanings and values in which the local community holds dear are able to take center stage in the process. In order to successfully communicate local heritage to children and young people through a heritage based playground, a new heritage approach is crucial.

3.2.2 Children and Heritage

With regards to children and young people and their relationship to heritage, Ploner & Jones found that, overall, local heritage and history gave children as well as teenagers a sense of pride in their community and surroundings (Ploner & Jones 2019:275). Overall, communicating and educating young people about heritage in order to aid their continual preservation is seen as an important aspect of tackling heritage preservation (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:142). Other authors agree with this thought, explaining that education on heritage is key for its future protection (Hegediš et al. 2023:1966).

With the communication and education of cultural heritage being seen as crucial by scholars (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:142; Hegediš et al. 2023:1966), how do children and young people interact with and learn about cultural heritage? Broadly speaking, children and young people are able to interact with and learn about cultural heritage in both formal

(Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:142; Hegediš et al. 2023:1966), and informal settings (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:143; Ploner & Jones 2019:278; Hegediš et al. 2023:1967).

Cultural heritage is typically taught to children from a young age inside of the classroom (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:142; Hegediš et al. 2023:1966). According to Hegediš et al.

> *"Teaching cultural heritage content should aim to give students as active a role as possible"* (Hegediš et al. 2023:1966).

One way to potentially give students an active role is brought up by Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo, who suggest utilizing art education and creativity for heritage education (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:145).

Beyond the classroom proper, but still on the school grounds, connections between schools and the local community are seen to be beneficial for teaching students about heritage (Ploner & Jones 2019:278; Hegediš et al. 2023:1967). Ploner & Jones found, in relation to a study done in Hull, that primary schools themselves were immensely beneficial spaces for teaching about place and heritage due to schools already being social pillars in the community (Ploner & Jones 2019:278). The local community is seen as an important tool and resource when it comes to school's pedagogical activities relating to heritage (Hegediš et al. 2023:1967). Hegediš et al. assert that "*intergenerational networking*", particularly at schools, can be used to promote cultural heritage and allow "*its transmission to the next generations to preserve it*" (Hegediš et al. 2023:1974).

This communication of heritage to children from older generations can be seen taking place outside of schools as well. Ploner & Jones found, based on this aforementioned study in Hull, that one way children had been exposed to the area's local heritage is through stories about the local area and its past from their family members (Ploner & Jones 2019:274).

Another more informal way of communicating or presenting cultural heritage is through physical and visual aspects of the local environment (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:143; Hegediš et al. 2023:1967). Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo explain,

> *"Young children are exposed to the cultural heritages by the possibility of immediate observations, meetings and experiences of the environmental graphics and art works from their surroundings"* (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:143).

Through children seeing, touching, interacting with heritage in their day to day lives, be it in the form of objects or the landscape itself, children are able to feel closer to the area's local heritage (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:143). No longer feeling stuck in their far away past, elements of heritage in children's everyday spaces are able to bring heritage into the here and now (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:143).

Exposing children to cultural heritage in their day to day lives, be it through interactions with their wider community or features in the environment, children are afforded the possibility to learn about their area's local heritage (Hegediš et al. 2023:1967). Seen as such a powerful tool for communicating heritage, some authors go as far as suggesting the incorporation of heritage based motifs in the urban environment in order to enable children this greater interaction and closeness to cultural heritage (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:143).

The aforementioned ways in which children interact and engage with heritage offers a number of opportunities for designers to be able to successfully communicate cultural heritage through heritage based playgrounds. Although unstructured compared to the classroom, heritage based playgrounds can offer children the opportunity to engage with cultural heritage in a creative way through play. Playgrounds also have the potential to act as social hubs (Jansson & Lerstrup 2021:198; Winder 2023:2), allowing for as Ploner & Jones puts it "*intergenerational encounters*" (Ploner & Jones 2019:278), between children and adults. The incorporation of physical aspects that evoke an area's local heritage into a playground's design enables children to physically experience and interact with their local heritage on a daily basis. Overall, due to children's relationships to and interactions with cultural heritage, heritage based playgrounds have the potential to act as a vessel for the communication of cultural heritage.

3.3 Play, Communication, and Co Benefits

Now that heritage and children's relationship to heritage has been briefly discussed, this next section is going to look into two topics: the coupling of play and pedagogy, and the potential benefits children receive from learning about their local heritage.

3.3.1 Play and Communication Through Play

To adequately discuss the coupling of play and pedagogy, a brief theoretical foundation regarding play must be laid out. Play is defined by the author Rogers as, "*an activity that is spontaneous, child led and intrinsically motivated.*" (Rogers 2010:6) Other authors expand on this thought, explaining that, "*play is characterized by intrinsic motivation, active engagement, attention to means rather than ends, non-literal behavior, and freedom from external rules*" (Chermayeff et al. 2010:47). Putting these two definitions together, this paper defines play as a pursuit of a child's own choice rooted in the child's inherent desire to do so with emphasis on the action itself rather than the end result of said actions.

With regards to the categorization of types of play, there are a number of competing theories that attempt to organize types of play into different categories. Some examples of such theories include Piaget's Theory explaining the different types of play children partake in as they age (Reifel & Yeatman 1993:348), and Parten's theory which also looks at the developmental stages of play but through a social lens rather than a cognitive one (Reifel & Yeatman 1993:349). Subsequent theories, studies, and academic discourse have questioned these two aforementioned theories for their overall validity (Rubin 1977:16).

Figure 1: Illustration presenting four different examples of types of play.

The types of play discussed in academic literature are equally all over the place. Some of the categories of play are either mentioned by multiple authors, mentioned under different names with potentially slightly different meanings, or are just left out by some authors but mentioned by others. In order to save time and lots of headache, these different categories of play will be better explained and defined as they appear further on in this paper. In relation to the importance of some types of play over others, Mishra et al explains "*children need opportunities that will encourage all types of play*" (Mishra et al. 2021:60). Taking into account this aforementioned importance of allowing children to partake in different types of play, the assortment of play features in this proposed heritage based playground will strive to afford a variety of types of play.

Now that a theoretical foundation regarding play has been laid out, what does academic literature say about linking play with pedagogy? The coupling of play and pedagogy is highly present within relevant fields of academic discourse (Rogers 2010:10). The authors Parker et al. discuss the concept of "*learning through play*", explaining that "*learning through play*" involves "*meaningful, actively engaging, joyful, iterative, and socially interactive*" experiences for children (Parker et al 2022:2). Other authors assert that play and traditional pedagogical activities can facilitate different learning outcomes for children (Rogers 2010:9). One benefit that play helps provide for children in terms of learning is deeper learning, which is described "*as learning that was meaningful, through making connections with prior knowledge*" (Parker et al 2022:3). The author Guirguis asserts that play in children's classrooms benefits children's literacy, self regulation, and social development (Guirguis 2018:45-47)

Despite these aforementioned potential benefits of using play as a tool for pedagogy, some authors warn against aspects of this coupling (Rogers 2010:5). The author Rogers discusses the current movement for the "*pedogogisation of play*", explaining,

> *"that play has increasingly become an instrument for learning future competencies; emphasising social realism rather than the transformative, mimetic and life-enhancing qualities of play"* (Rogers 2010:5).

Other scholars take a different approach in their critique of the coupling play and pedagogy, with Rousseau asserting that less is more in terms of play and pedagogy (Rousseau 1979 see Farné 2005:173). For Rousseau, what is truly instructive and pedagogical for children in regards to play is providing children a free space with natural characteristics and affordances instead of a more structured and ordered environment with explicit instructions (Rousseau 1979 see Farné 2005:173)

Relating this theoretical foundation on play and pedagogy back to heritage based playgrounds, learning through play can act as a viable path for the communication of heritage to children. By learning through play, children are able to be more involved in the subject at hand, relating their

experience to already learnt information and growing upon it. Just like the science playgrounds discussed earlier on in this paper, purposefully designed playgrounds have the potential to offer children different learning opportunities than what can be found in the classroom. However, these aforementioned critiques regarding play and pedagogy should be taken into account, when designing a heritage based playground. Designers of heritage based playgrounds should keep in mind what degree of freedom in choices can be afforded to children and what the overall learning outcomes of the play should be. The learning outcomes achieved from these heritage based playgrounds could subsequently help evolve and grow the area's "*living heritage*" (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:202).

3.3.2 Why the Need for Communication?

Stemming from the theoretical foundation laid out above regarding museological practices, heritage, and the coupling of play and pedagogy, it can be argued that heritage based playgrounds have the potential to communicate heritage to children and young people. As mentioned before, educating children about heritage is crucial for the continued preservation of heritage (Hegediš et al. 2023:1966). This fact alone is a strong enough argument for the communication of heritage to children. however the question arises: what benefits do children receive from learning about their local heritage? This section is going to discuss the potential benefits children receive from learning about heritage and their relation to said benefits.

Overall, heritage offers a number of potential benefits for children and adults alike (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:208; Vong 2015:353; Kolen et al. 2016:121; Cerisola 2018:23-24). These benefits can be subdivided into two categories, tangible and intangible benefits (Cerisola 2018:23-24). The tangible benefits, or as the author Cerisola calls "*market (use) value*", relate to any monetary profits from tourism (Cerisola 2018:23-24). Although an argument can be made that these tangible benefits do somewhere down the line affect children, they are out of the scope of this paper. Intangible benefits, or "*non-market (non-use) value*", refers to any non monetary value, including but not limited to "*religious, historical, social, aesthetic, emotional, or identity value*" (Cerisola 2018:23-24) This next section is going to discuss some of the main intangible benefits children receive from heritage.

3.3.2.1 Sense of Place

One intangible benefit of heritage is its potential to evoke a greater sense of place amongst children (Vong 2015:345). Sense of place is defined by the author Ellis as "*a personal connection with place, built up over years of residence and involvement in the community*" (Ellis 2005:59). Other authors expand on this point, adding that a sense of place also includes an "*understanding of everyday activities and symbols associated to it*" (Hashemnezhad et al 2013:7). Putting these two thoughts together, a sense of place can be understood as a place based sense of

belonging that is grown through long lasting relationships to a community, one's everyday lived experiences (Ellis 2005:59), and an overall grasp of the local environment and the cultural meanings associated with it (Hashemnezhad et al 2013:7).

With regards to the physical aspect of sense of place, the author Lewicka discusses the concept of "*urban reminders*" (Lewicka 2008:214). These physical elements in landscapes and urban landscape are able to evoke ideas of the past for local communities (Lewicka 2008:214). This concept of "*urban reminders*", discussed by Lewicka (Lewicka 2008:214), is extremely reminiscent of the idea of the "*semiotic landscape*", where these physical elements or "*urban reminders*" act as symbols in the landscape evoking the past to local inhabitants (Bole et al. 2022:3). Just like in semiotics, these physical elements evoke the past to people through the meanings and values that people thrust upon them (Bole et al. 2022:2). Generally speaking, establishing a greater sense of place can be related to an increased understanding or sense of the history related to the place (Cerisola 2018:22). In terms of authorship, these physical elements acting as reference points to local history and stories can be created by both everyday people, as well as governmental bodies (Lewicka 2008:214).

One of the more intangible aspects of sense of place is relationships and bonds with a community (Ellis 2005:59). A component of these bonds with a community is forming both local knowledge as well as collective memories, also sometimes called social memories (Lewicka 2008:213), pertaining to the community. On this point, Sooväli-Sepping explains,

> *"local knowledge consists of a mix of historical facts, historical narratives (anecdotes, legends, folk tales), images, and meanings associated with certain individuals or groups"* (Sooväli-Sepping 2015:425).

It is through these local stories and meanings in which communities are able relate to these physical manifestations of the past (Bole et al. 2022:2).

Children, however, do not necessarily relate to place the same way as adults (Wood 2021:165). The different relationships adults and children have towards place is summed up well by the author Wood, who explains that,

> *"Children interact with their environments in a variety of ways, and while sometimes their place-based experiences may be similar to (some) adults, we cannot accurately make that assumption"* (Wood 2021:165).

Overall, children put greater importance on their immediate surroundings (Wood 2021:165). As children grow older, they begin to adventure out into their surroundings before eventually returning back to safety and security of their home (Chawla 1992:79). Overtime, children begin to adventure further and further from home, as they feel more comfortable exploring

their local area (Chawla 1992:66). A child's local area is seen as significant for children with Wood explaining that "*children are particularly sensitive to their local neighbourhoods*" and they "*value the social connections and opportunities in their immediate surroundings*." (Wood 2021:165) The significance of a child's immediate surroundings is also seen in relation to children's favorite places, with a study finding that most of children's favorite places are located within walking distance from their homes (Prakoso 2018:7). Such preferences can be potentially affected and limited by different barriers, "*either social (parents' restrictions) or physical (traffic)*" (Korpela 2002:366). Overall, places that sit within a child's local area, which are easily accessible, and afford the possibility for interactions with other children are seen as significant places for children.

With regards to children's favorite places, Prakoso explains that,

> *"Favorite places are supportive urban spaces conceived, perceived, and lived through the meaning and symbolic use of the place according to each child"* (Prakoso 2018:8).

Children become attached to favorite places due to their overall environmental characteristics and their ability to fulfill what a child both needs and wants (Prakoso 2018:1). Generally speaking, favorite places have been found to be places where children are able to feel in control, feel secure, have the possibility to be alone, and contain a number of stimuli (Prakoso 2018:11).

A sense of freedom is also seen as important with regards to children's places, with Chawla explaining that "*if designers want to make childhood places more memorable, they need to enhance access to the outdoors, to nature, and to freedom in the environment*" (Chawla 1992:76). Such freedom could refer to either freedom from adults supervision (Korpela 2002:369), or the freedom to "*explore and express creativity*" (Prakoso 2018:9). Overall preferences for children's favorite places are said to be dependent on physical attributes of a space, including aspects related to what the space affords, and how easy it is to get to (Prakoso 2018:1-2), as well as different facets related to the child personally, including "*age, gender, social status, [and] environmental conditions*" (Prakoso 2018:1).

Relating this all back to children's sense of place, some authors point to play and socialization as a way to deepen a child's sense of place (Prakoso 2018:2). This idea is also discussed by Jansson, who explains that "*Places that children use frequently and can interact with or manipulate may also be important for their experience and sense of place*" (Jansson 2010:65). Other authors assert a sense of place in children and youth can be developed through cultural activities (Ploner & Jones 2019:271) as well as through exposure to history and heritage in their surroundings (Vong 2015:345).

Overall, learning about and being engaged with one's local area and community is seen as important and beneficial for children (Chawla 1992:83; Comber 2011:343; Ploner & Jones 2019:278). Although overall a sense of place is not inherently positive (Hashemnezhad et al 2013:11), forming a greater sense of place is typically seen in a positive light (Ploner & Jones 2019:275), with some scholars asserting that a greater sense of place helps people to become more involved in their community (Hay 1988 cited in Ellis 2005:59). The author Ellis explains that a sense of place aids "*the establishment of both a sense of self and a sense of community*" (Ellis 2005:59). Through communicating local heritage, and subsequently a greater sense of place to its users, heritage based playgrounds have the potential to help connect communities, and remind them of past memories.

3.3.2.2 Identity

Another intangible benefit that heritage offers to children is its capacity to strengthen identity (Vong 2015:353; Cerisola 2018:22). Identity is seen as a significant aspect for both people and places, with the author Cerisola explaining that,

> *"The importance of culture, history, religion, and identity in the potential of any territory to develop is now generally accepted"* (Cerisola 2018:21).

In order to adequately discuss concepts relating to identity, children, and heritage, this section will take a closer look into how identity and place relate to one another as well as discuss how identity and place identity can be seen as being significant for children and people in general.

Broadly speaking, how place and identity relate to one another is typically discussed by authors in two different ways (Ellis 2005:58; Lewicka 2008:211; Vong 2015:345). One way place and identity is discussed is through the idea of the "*identity of a place*" (Ellis 2005:58), also sometimes referred to as "*Genius Loci*" (Lewicka 2008:211). The "*identity of a place*" (Ellis 2005:58) is created through the aforementioned "*urban reminders*" (Lewicka 2008:214) of a place, allowing people to draw meanings related to the past and the place from them (Ellis 2005:58). Lewicka does however point out that "*places have their own unique identity, independent of any single group of inhabitants*" (Lewicka 2008:213). Taking these points together, the "*identity of a place*" (Ellis 2005:58) can be seen as being formed through both physical qualities of the space itself (Lewicka 2008:213) as well as from the stories and memories in which people draw from the place (Ellis 2005:58).

The other way place and identity is typically discussed is in terms of how place affects identity (Vong 2015:345) This concept, called place identity, is defined by Lewicka as "*self-categorization in terms of place*" (Lewicka 2008:212). In this definition, Lewicka distinctly points out that the focus of identity is on the person instead of the place (Lewicka 2008:211).

This means that place identity is not the identity of a place, but instead the identity that someone creates for themselves from their relationship to a place (Lewicka 2008:211) Other scholars add to this perspective on place identity, with Proshansky & Fabian explaining that,

> *"place identity is conceived of as a substructure of the person's self-identity that is comprised of cognitions about the physical environment that also serve to define who the person is"* (Proshansky & Fabian 1987:22)

This paper will define place identity as an aspect of one's self definition formed in relation to a physical place and the subsequent bonds said individual has to that place.

In terms of children and identity, as children become older and their spatial ranges grow increasingly farther, how and through what children self identify also changes (Chawla 1992:67). According to Chawla, children in early childhood start to formulate a "*Sense of self*" (Chawla 1992:67). This sense of self then grows into formation of self identity characterized by activity and social connections in middle childhood (Chawla 1992:67). As children reach adolescence their self identity shifts as they navigate "*between childhood & adult roles & places*" (Chawla 1992:67). In adolescence, young people become a lot more invested and proud of their city (Ploner & Jones 2019:278), and also begin to identify with "*one's region and country*" (Chawla 1992:72).

Regarding place identity and children, children's experience of and relationship to place plays a fundamental role in the formation of their place identity, not just as a child, but also well into adulthood (Proshansky & Fabian 1987:24). Proshansky & Fabian explain that

> *"The development of place identity requires not only that children learn to recognize objects, places, and spaces and to share them with other people but also that they know how to use them"* (Proshansky & Fabian 1987:29).

It is through learning both socially and physically, at home and other everyday places that children grow a foundation of identity and place identity (Proshansky & Fabian 1987:26).

Overall, the strengthening of identity and place identity is beneficial for people (Korpela 2002:370). Since heritage has the potential to strengthen identity (Vong 2015:353; Cerisola 2018:22), heritage based playgrounds can be used as a tool to these ends. Apart from solely using heritage as a means to strengthen identity, heritage based playgrounds also offer the unique opportunity to strengthen identity in earlier stages of childhood by also acting as a place for activity and social connections. Through communicating local heritage, and subsequently aiding in identity formation, heritage based playgrounds have the potential to provide children and communities with these aforementioned benefits of identity and place identity.

3.3.2.3 Sense of Community

Heritage also offers intangible benefits to communities, through strengthening aspects such as a sense of social cohesion (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:208; Cerisola 2018:22), a sense of community identity (Vong 2015:354; Cerisola 2018:23) and a sense of belonging in a community (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:208; Cerisola 2018:22). With all of these aforementioned benefits communities receive through heritage, a further look into aspects such as community attachment, community identity, social cohesion, and sense of belonging in a community seem warranted. Through this discussion on these aforementioned topics regarding communities, this section will help to offer a greater understanding as to how heritage can help strengthen communities.

Community attachment is defined as "*emotional ties to the local area*" (Hummon 1992:260). The author Vong explains that an individual's length of stay in a community correlates to the extent in which they are attached to said community (Vong 2015:353). These emotional ties which act as the basis for one's attachment to the community are described by Hummon as being formed mainly through relationships to the community rather than the physical environment itself (Hummon 1992:258). Although it does not play a large role in terms of community attachment, the physical environment does aid in the formation of community identity (Hummon 1992:262), along with these aforementioned ties to the local community.

Overall, community is seen as an important factor that helps to formulate identity, where collective meanings and values are transmitted through engagement and relationships to people in the local surroundings (Sampson & Goodrich 2009:904) This point is also mentioned by Hummon who explains that collective meanings help form "*distinct cultural identities*" (Hummon 1992:259). Relating this idea of community identity back to the individual, a community's identity, along with its shared meanings transmitted through relationships and affective bonds, in part helps to formulate aspects of an individual's identity (Sampson & Goodrich 2009:913) In this way, communities, their culture, and their associated identities act as a strong foundation for individual identity (Sampson & Goodrich 2009:913).

Relating these ideas back to the importance of the communication of heritage, Hummon explains that physical characteristics, similar to the concept of "*urban reminders*" discussed earlier (Lewicka 2008:214), are able to evoke both collective and individual memories onto the local inhabitants, which intern aids the formation of community identity (Hummon 1992:258). The importance of allowing local heritage to come to light is also discussed by Vong, who explains that,

> *"communities can actually leverage their cultural heritage to boost community identity as well as strengthening community cohesion"* (Vong 2015:354).

Otherways heritage can help strengthen social cohesion is through "*the very process of caring for the heritage*" (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:204). Sense of belonging can also be enhanced by heritage through people's participation in heritage activities (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:204; Ploner & Jones 2019:271).

Communicating to young people about an area's past helps to both preserve local memories as well as grow a sense of community identity (Comber 2011:343) and enhance social cohesion (Vong 2015:354). Overall, heritage has a way of bringing together communities, both culturally and socially. Through incorporating heritage into playgrounds, designers can potentially help to grow stronger and more culturally distinct communities.

3.4 Play, Place, and Heritage: Creativity and Education

So far this paper has discussed topics pertaining to current museological practices, heritage, how children relate to heritage, and the co benefits children receive from heritage. With this foundation of knowledge now laid out, this section is going to explore how development, creatively, academically, and cognitively, can be aided through incorporating different aspects relating to play, place and heritage into a playground.

With regards to creativity, overall, cultural heritage "*significantly affects (inspires) local artistic creativity through its aesthetical and emotional value*" (Cerisola 2018:46). Heritage is seen by scholars as something that has the ability to inspire people both personally (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:202), and creatively (Cerisola 2018:47). Similar to heritage, play also has the capacity to benefit creativity (Rogers 2010:16). As discussed previously, creative activities can also be used as a vessel to help communicate cultural heritage to children (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:145). One way play can offer such a creative activity is through affording dramatic play (Mozaffar 2021:15). Dramatic play can be afforded in a playground by incorporating loose and natural materials, allowing children a way to "*build a story by using these materials and then engage in dramatic play*" (Mozaffar 2021:15). Putting this all together, through affording dramatic play on a heritage based playground, children can use this creative activity as a way to learn more about their area's local heritage. On top of this, through learning about heritage and partaking in play, children can become more creative.

In addition to helping children become more creative, heritage also has the capacity to help children improve academically (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:198; Ploner & Jones 2019:270). This improvement academically, can also be seen as a result of children being in, and being attached to their favorite spaces (Prakoso 2018:1). Apart from academic growth, partaking in play, being in favorite places, and learning about heritage also aid children's overall cognitive development

(Prakoso 2018:1; Mishra et al. 2021:55) and critical thinking skills (Cerisola 2018:46; Mishra et al. 2021:41).

With heritage, play, and place all having the potential to aid children both academically and creatively, it is fundamental that heritage based playgrounds are designed to afford such benefits.

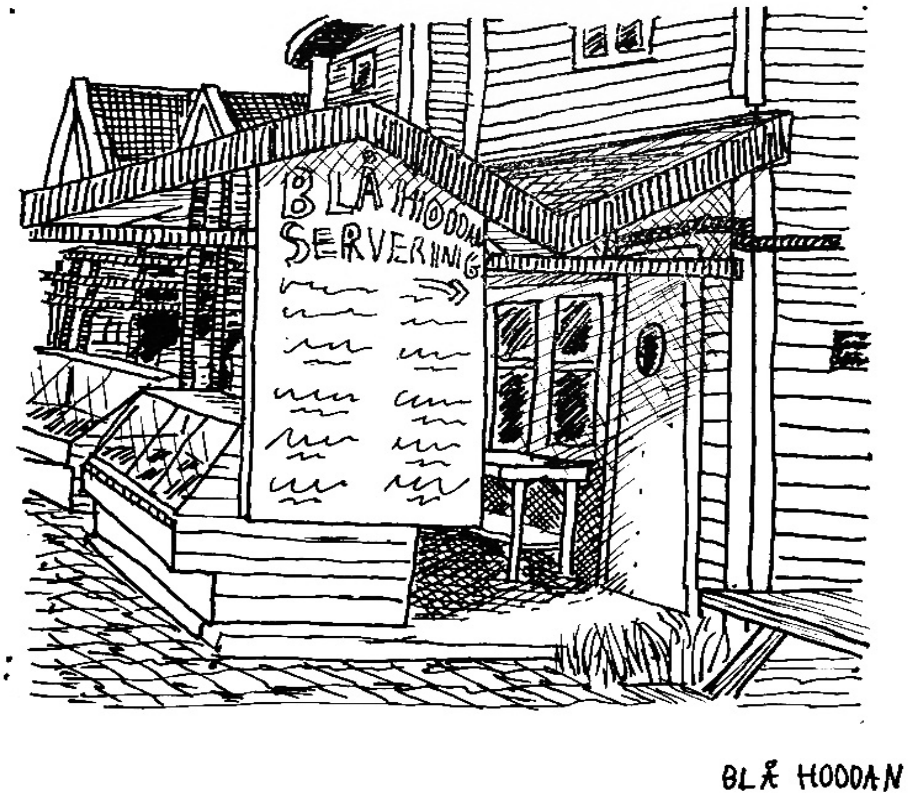


Figure 2: Sketch of a historic fish seller's stand at Fiskehoddorna in Malmö, Sweden

In both cases, the successful communication of cultural heritage is able to support these benefits from a heritage point of view. With regards to play and favorite places however, it is important for designers to take greater care in ensuring that children are afforded these benefits to creativity and education.

To afford greater creativity, heritage based playgrounds should incorporate loose materials, allowing for the potential of dramatic play (Mozaffar 2021:15). In order to afford greater cognitive development, playground designers should try to include spaces that support the aforementioned qualities found to be overall present in children's favorite places. Attributes of such spaces include freedom, security, and the ability to be hidden, as well as a range of affordances (Prakoso 2018:11). These attributes are quite similar to Kyttä's idea of a "*field of free action*" (Kyttä 2004 see Wood 2021:168), a concept which will be discussed at length further on in this paper. Overall, designers of heritage based should take steps to promote growth creatively, academically, and cognitively for children.

4. CASE STUDY: DESIGN PROPOSAL OF A HERITAGE BASED PLAYGROUND

As has been argued for in the sections above, heritage based playgrounds offer a unique opportunity to communicate heritage to children and young people. Through incorporating concepts used in current museological practices, heritage based playgrounds have the potential to act as outdoor exhibition spaces, shedding light on an area's local heritage, and providing children with a deeper sense of place. With this argument for the development of heritage based playgrounds thoroughly laid out, what could these playgrounds look like? How can designers evoke notions of the past and communicate heritage while simultaneously creating an engaging playground?

This section will put forward a design proposal for a heritage based playground situated in Malmö, Sweden. The aim of this section is not to present the perfect design proposal of a heritage based playground by any means, but rather, this section will put forward a design proposal that will attempt to exemplify what a heritage based playground could be. After a brief introduction into the site and the area's local heritage, this section will discuss the

Figure 3: Images of Fiskehoddorna and surrounding area

design choices made in this project. These design choices will primarily be based on both the foundation of knowledge laid out above, as well as on current academic literature regarding play and playgrounds. Through relating this aforementioned foundation of knowledge to academic literature on play and playgrounds, this design case hopes to offer an example as to how a heritage based playground could be designed.

4.1 Site, Context, and Local Heritage

This proposed heritage based playground would sit in close proximity to two museums at the edge of a city park in Malmö Sweden. The further away museum, Malmo Museum, is situated partially in an old citadel constructed between the 15th and 16th centuries by the Danish (Malmö Stad 2023c). Later renovations turned the citadel into a museum in the 20th century (Malmö Stad 2023c). Nowadays Malmö Museum offers a range of different exhibitions relating to history, culture, art, and natural sciences. The closer museum, situated directly next to the site for the proposed heritage based playground, is Teknikens och Sjöfartens Hus, which translated to English is The house of Technology and Shipping. This museum, opened in 1960, offers exhibits related to science, maritime history, and transportation (Malmö Stad 2023e). Both of these museums are owned and operated by the same organization, and are both available to enter if you purchase a ticket at either museum.

The site in which the proposed heritage based playground would sit is located on some fairly disused land at the back of Teknikens och Sjöfartens Hus. Although situated on their land, the proposed playground would be free to the public and would be able to be accessed from both the entrance hall of Teknikens och Sjöfartens Hus as well as from the adjacent street Banérskajen. Notable features of the site include the presence of a large submarine to the west of the site, which is an exhibition that can be entered from inside of Teknikens och Sjöfartens Hus, as well as a number of old fishing huts, in swedish called Fiskehoddorna, situated on the eastern part of the site. Also located to the east of the site is the ticket office for the Malmö Museum Tramway. The small tram line, which has a small depot to the north of the site, is operated by Malmö museum during the summer months. This tram line is mainly just for leisure purposes as it does not leave the park the museums are situated within.

The site itself, Fiskehoddorna, and the two aforementioned museums are situated at the edge of a large park called Slottsparken, which fuses quite seamlessly to the neighboring park of Kungsparken, sitting to it's west. To the north of the site, sits Citadellsvägen, a street which along with Neptunigatan has seen a fair amount of development over the last couple of decades. New residential housing and office spaces have either already been constructed or planned to be developed in the coming years (Malmö Stad 2021). The development of new housing to the north of the site has the potential to help to activate this side of the park and warrant the need for a playground for families moving to the area.

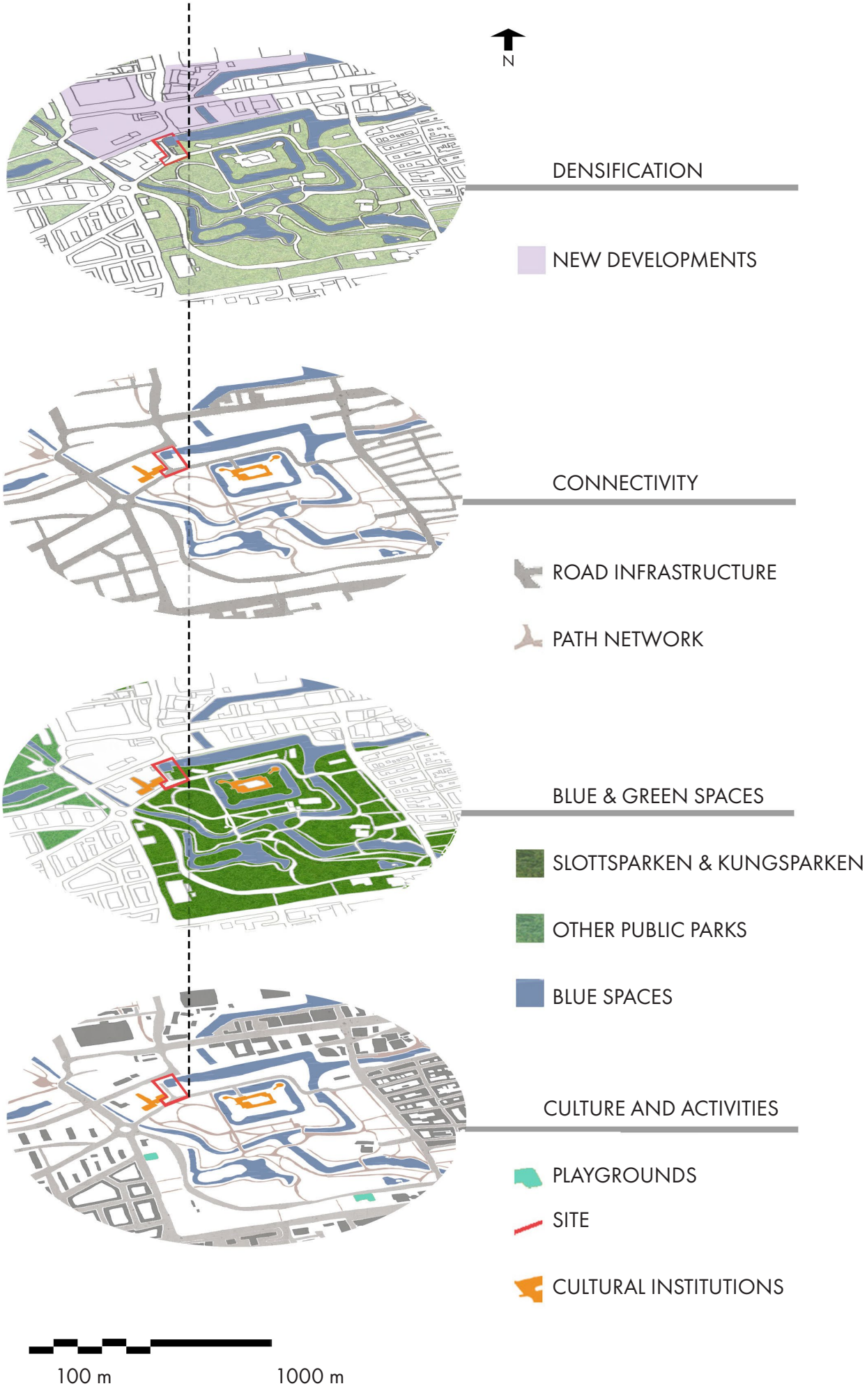


Figure 4: Labeled maps of overall area

On both sides of the street called Banérskajen, that sits to the east of the site, sits a number of fishing huts. This collection of fishing huts is called Fiskehoddorna. These fishing huts were moved by Malmö Museum to their present location from their previous location on Citadellkajen in the 1950s (Malmö Stad 2023b). When Malmö Museum originally moved the huts back in the 1950s, the museum allowed the huts to continue to be occupied and used by the fisherman who had used them at the time (Malmö Stad 2023a). Although a lot of the huts have fallen into disuse over the years, some of the huts still operate with their originally intended purpose. Behind the huts that line the street sits an open green space with a few other huts scattered throughout. The small harbor, named Citadellhamnen, that sits adjacent to both huts and the street Banérskajen, is still actively used by the fishermen today, as well as also acting as a small marina for private vessels. Today a number of different fish sellers occupy huts, with the huts selling fish either caught locally or caught farther up the coast (Malmö Stad 2023b). The continued commercial use of this open green space behind Fiskehoddorna and its connections to the very much still active harbor is why this space was not chosen as the site for the proposed heritage based playground.

Malmö, and this part of Skåne in general, has had a long history of fishing and maritime activities (Malmö Stad 2023a). The fishing huts seen at Fiskehoddorna today are just one of the more recent representations of Malmös long lasting maritime tradition and are currently designated as protected cultural monuments. (Malmö Stad 2023b) With such a strong and significant source of cultural heritage situated directly adjacent to the proposed heritage based playground, these huts and the harbor area will act as prominent sources of inspiration for the

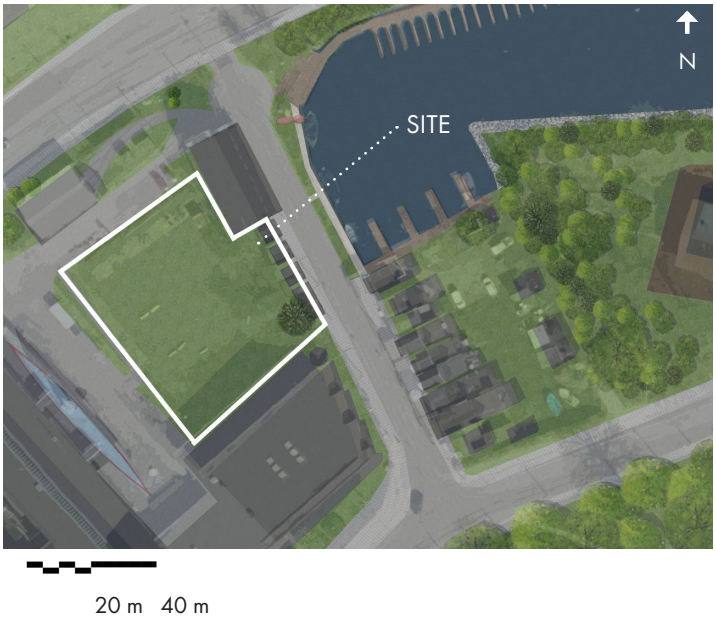


Figure 5: Plan showing proposed site of heritage based playground

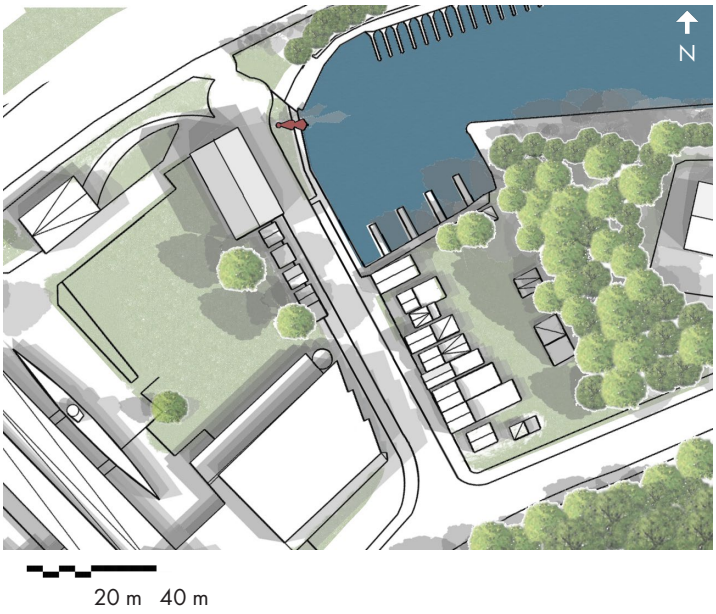


Figure 6: Plan showing a shadow analysis of area around the proposed site

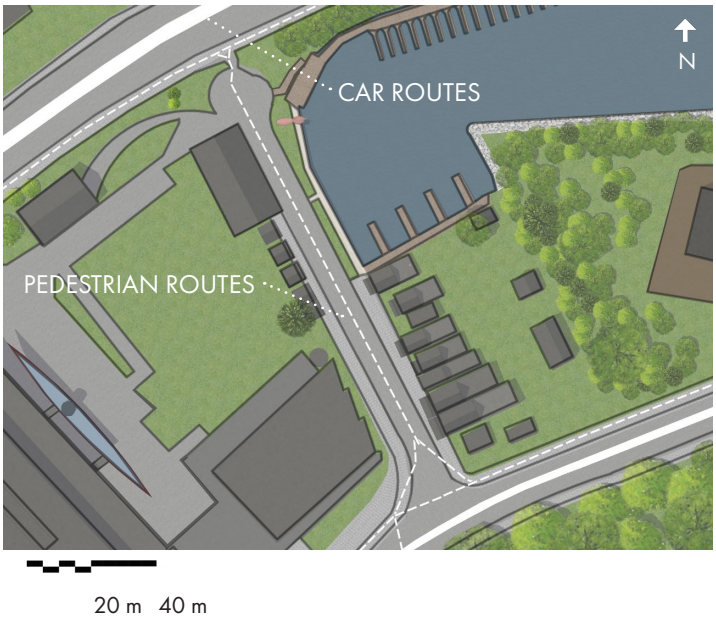


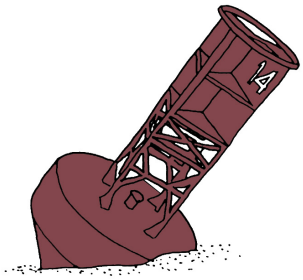
Figure 7: Plan showing overall pedestrian and car routes around the proposed site

design of the project. This proposed heritage based playground will attempt to communicate to children through play, engagement, and experience, the legacy of fishing and other maritime activities found in Malmö.

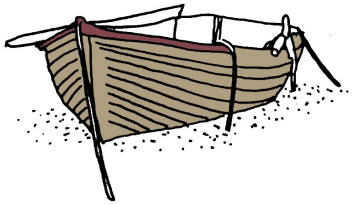
4.2 Concept for the Overall Playground

The overall concept for this heritage based playground is to create a playground that helps to shed light on Malmö's long history of fishing and maritime activities. Using the nearby fishing huts found at Fiskehoddorna as a starting point for inspiration, the playground will give children access to their 'own' fishing huts and harbor area. This playground will allow children to pretend as though they are one of the fishermen and enable them to freely explore and experience a similar space as the one seen over at Fiskehoddorna. Broadly speaking, the play features designed for this playground should allow children to be able to take part in a range of different types of play, and be offered a range of varying affordances. The introduction of decommissioned objects, natural elements, and raw materiality all play a pivotal role in the overall design.

NATURAL ELEMENTS



DECOMMISSIONED OBJECTS



RAW MATERIALIALITY

Figure 8: Illustrations of important aspects related to the concept for the heritage based playground

The materiality for this playground will also draw inspiration from Fiskehoddorna as well as from other fishing communities along the west coast of Sweden. Other objects relating to the maritime culture in Sweden, such as boats, buoys, and fishing nets will also be incorporated into design. Nature and natural features as well as differences in terrain will also play a strong role in the design of the play area. Although all fairly integrated together the playground can be broadly separated into three distinct sections. These three different sections are: The Harbor, The Huts, and The Brush.

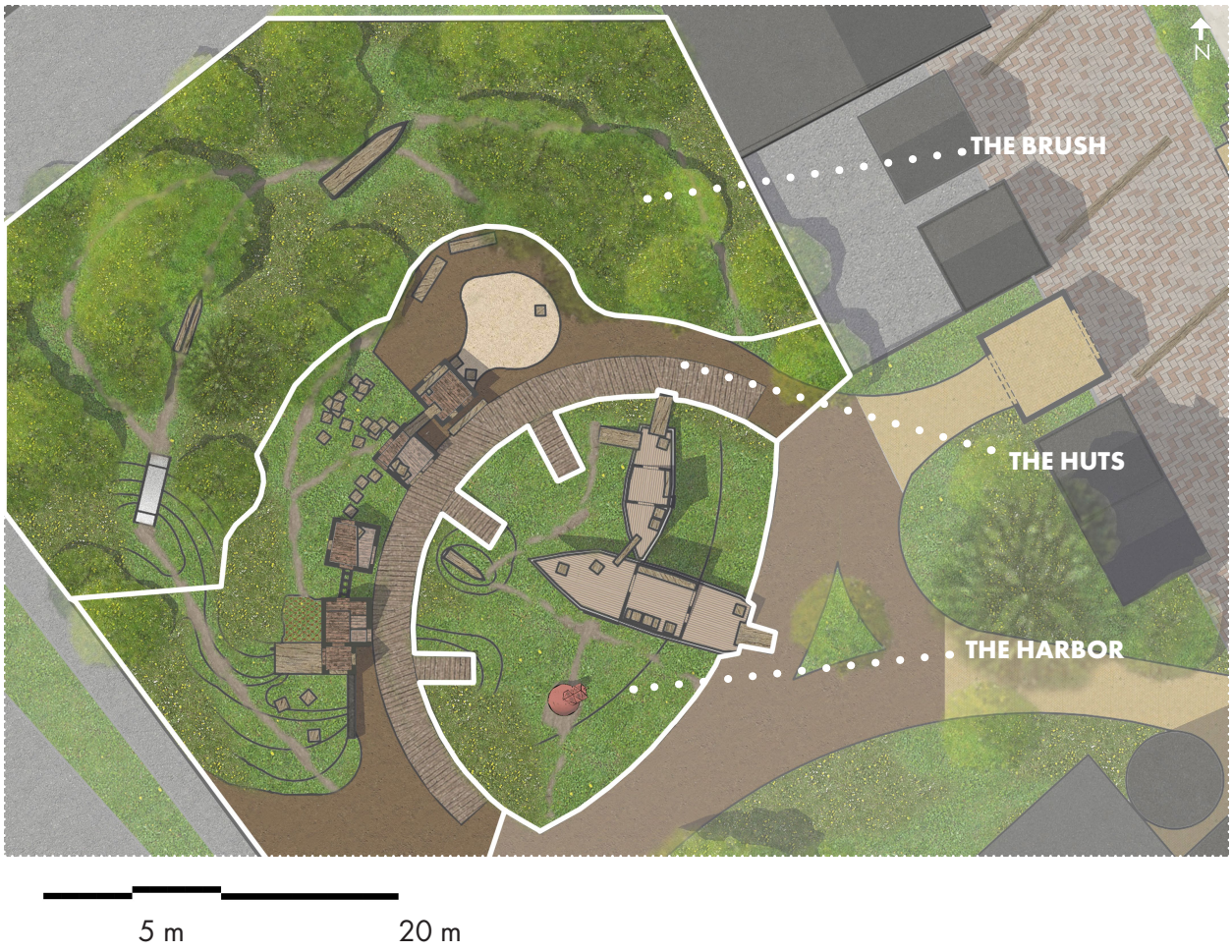


Figure 9: Plan showing the three subdivided areas of the proposed heritage based playground

Figure 10: Plan of the proposed heritage based playground and the surrounding site

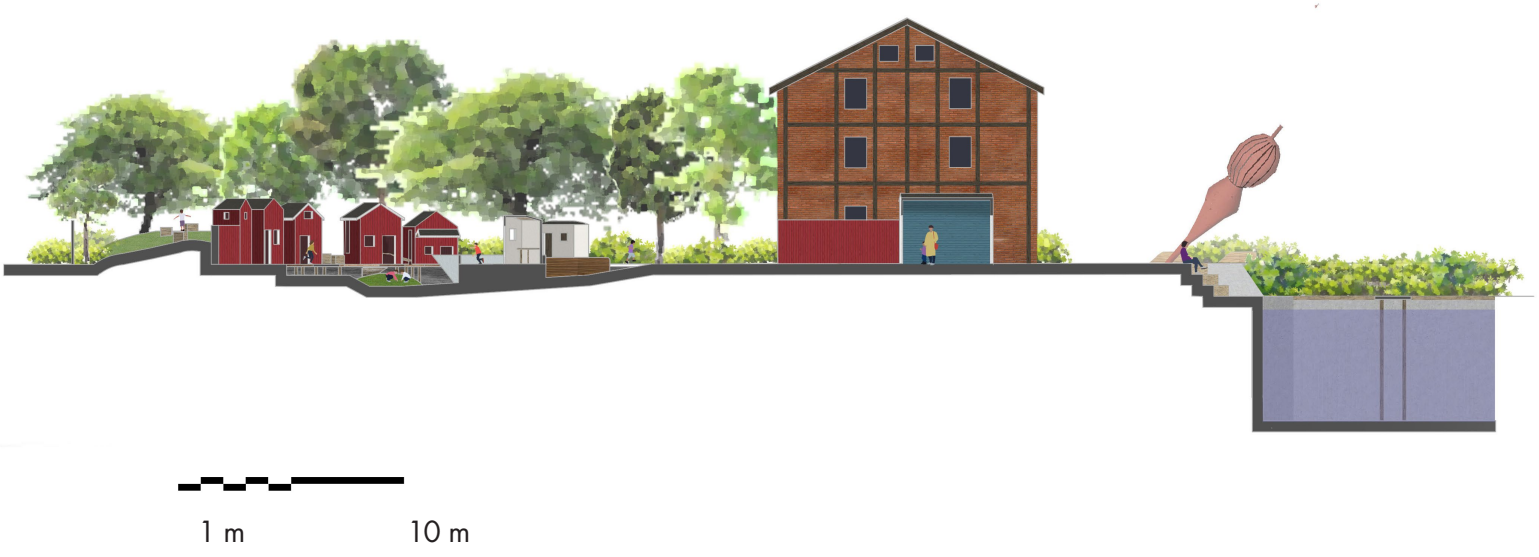


Figure 11: Section A:A showing heritage based playground and it's connection to harbor area

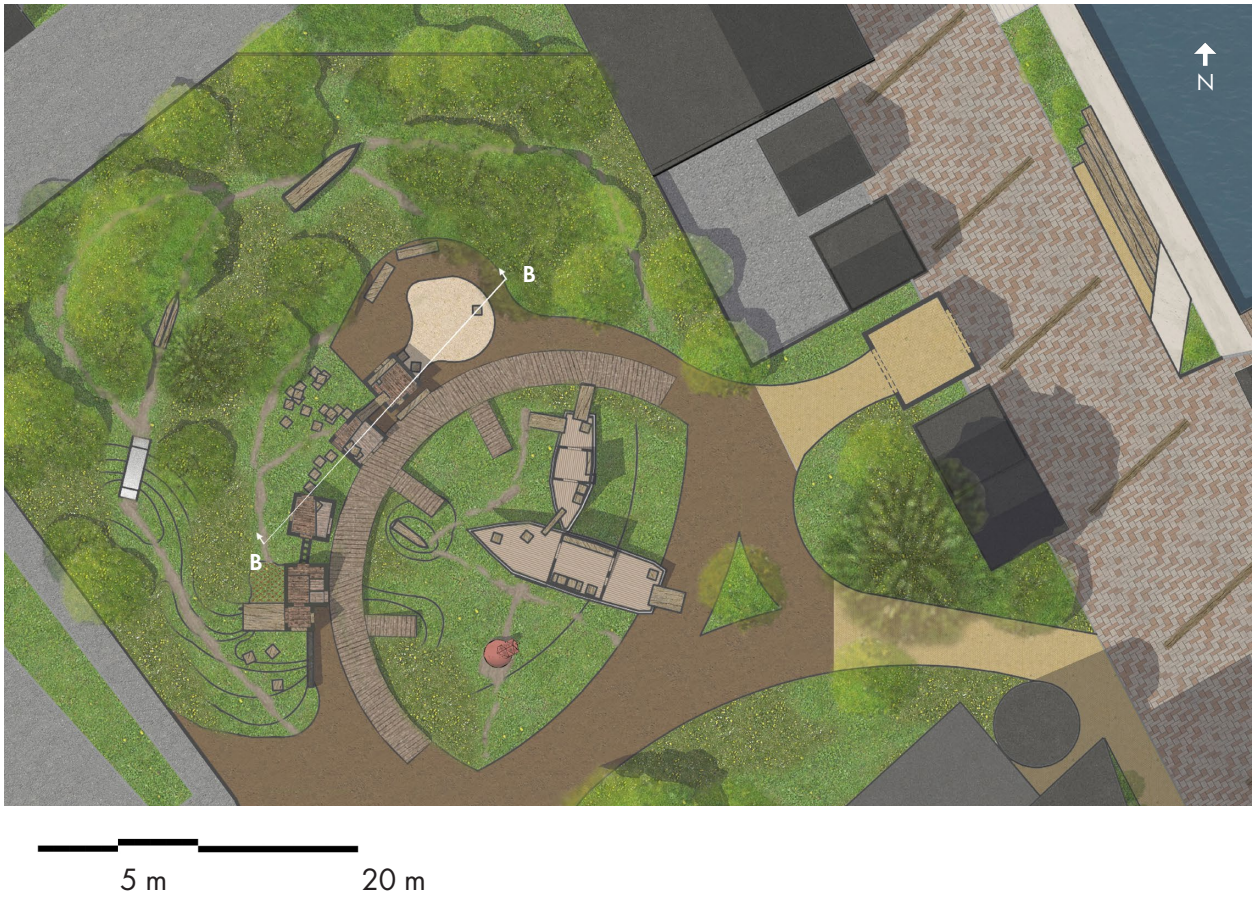


Figure 12: Zoomed in plan of heritage based playground

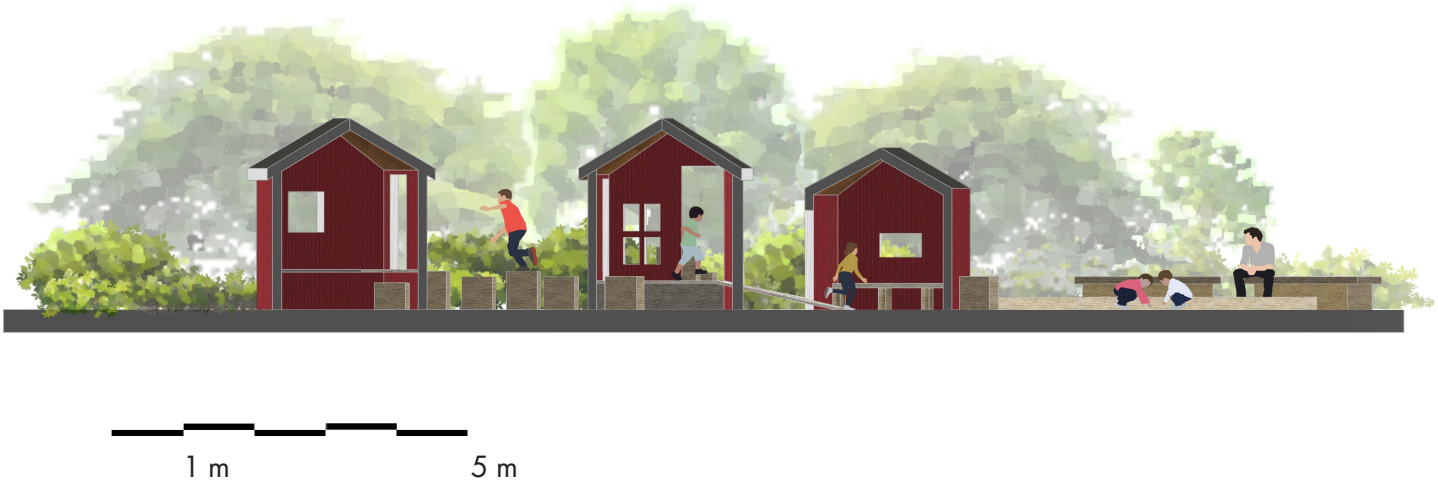


Figure 13: Section B:B of heritage based playground

4.3 The Overall Playground

Before the play features and how they communicate heritage are discussed, a brief look into the playground as a whole seems warranted. Not necessarily sitting within the realm of play features or able to be easily discussed as part of a particular area, two broader aspects regarding playgrounds should be brought up. This section will take a look into ideas regarding the separation of children from public spaces, and how playgrounds can act as nodes for socialization.

4.3.1 A Place for Children

From the initial development of playgrounds in the twentieth century (Jansson 2010:63), a playground has been seen as a "*children's space*" (Murnaghan 2019:7). Jansson explains that playgrounds created a place that afforded children a space for "*recreation and development*" as well as a space that kept "*children away from less suitable places, such as busy streets, and from undesired influences, such as juvenile delinquency*" (Jansson 2010:63). These initial ideas of child safety and separating children from adult places are still very present in our modern attitude towards playgrounds (Pitsikali & Parnell 2019:723). Pitsikali & Parnell explain that,

> *"Separation and supervision are the two main attributes of 'proper' places for children's play"* (Pitsikali & Parnell 2019:723).

Although there are arguments against this separation of adult and children spaces (Jansson 2010:65; Pitsikali & Parnell 2019:719; Winder 2023:2;), a space specifically for children to play is still seen as important (Kylin & Bodelius 2015:101). The importance of spaces for children is not lost on Pitsikali & Parnell, who argue that a play space should not necessarily be taken away but instead it should blend seamlessly with the surrounding urban context, becoming "*part of the public realm*" (Pitsikali & Parnell 2019:727).

Relating these ideas back to the proposed heritage based playground, the layout and positioning of the playground tries to allow for both the creation of 'child spaces' and overall integration into the surrounding area. Although the hard boundaries surrounding most of the site causes some issues in terms of integrating it into the wider urban fabric, where possible, the playground attempts to merge with its surroundings. On the eastern side of the playground, the row of now unoccupied fishing huts act as both a threshold to the 'child space' as well as a way to continue Fiskehoddorna thematically into the playground. The smaller fishing huts on the playground stand only meters away from the historic ones, evoking the sense that you are still in Fiskehoddorna.

Other nearby places surrounding Fiskehoddorna were also considered for the site of the proposed heritage based playground. One area in particular that allows for better integration into urban fabric is the green space directly south of the harbor, situated behind most of the Fiskehoddorna. Although using this space would allow for better integration into the urban fabric and enable the playground to successfully merge with public life, two issues made this option untenable. Most crucially, this area is currently used by the fish sellers and fisherman, thus taking over the space would negatively affect some of the cultural heritage the playground is trying to communicate. The other issues with this location is that it's use by the fisherman and fish sellers, however affected, still prevents the playground from ever truly being a child's place.

4.3.2 Node for Socialisation

Playgrounds act not only as spaces for children to play, but also as places to meet and interact with people from the local area (Jansson & Lerstrup 2021:198; Winder 2023:2). The role playgrounds play as a meeting place is best explained by Hole, who describes the playground as almost acting as a local pub with regards to socialization and sense of community. (Hole 1966 cited in Winder 2023:2) Playgrounds act as hubs for social activity, not only for children, but also for adults (Jansson 2010:77). Jansson explains that playgrounds are frequented more often by both children and adults when the potential of meeting other children and adults is higher (Jansson 2010:77). Although referring to playable art insulations in urban areas and not specifically playground per say, Ploner & Jones lists, amongst other benefits for these playable spaces, the possibility of "*intergenerational encounters*" (Ploner & Jones 2019:278). Playgrounds can act as meeting places for children (Larsson 2013:117), for adults (Jansson

Figure 14: Illustration of potential social encounters at heritage based playground

2010:77), as well as potentially between children and adults (Ploner & Jones 2019:278). Although they can act as meeting places, where and how the playground is situated can affect the extent it can be used as such a place (Jansson 2010:78).

Heritage based playgrounds should help to afford social interactions, be it between children, between adults, or between adults and children. Most crucially here for the sake of communicating heritage, is designing the playground so it affords the possibility of "*intergenerational networking*" (Hegediš et al. 2023:1974). As discussed previously in this paper, such interactions between children and adults can help to promote cultural heritage (Hegediš et al. 2023:1974). To promote such interactions at this proposed heritage based playground, benches are situated fairly close to play areas to allow for children, their parents, and other adults to all interact together. Through situating the playground in close proximity to new and proposed housing as well as to the fish market and museums, the proposed heritage based playground and the surrounding area has the opportunity to act as a meeting place for the local community.

4.4 Reasoning Behind Play Features

This section is going to discuss some of the design choices made regarding the physical features of this proposed heritage based playground. Each group of features will be briefly described and then discussed in relation to theories concerning playgrounds and what potential types of play that the features afford. After this, the features will be discussed in terms of what degree they have the potential to help communicate cultural heritage to children. It should be noted that some physical features discussed in this section do not communicate cultural heritage in their own right, but instead add to the overall value of the playground. Being unable to communicate cultural heritage does not necessarily mean that these features have failed, but instead helps to create a better experience for children and support the features that do in fact help to communicate cultural heritage. The aim of this section is not to offer a perfect design solution, but instead through evaluating the design of the physical features, this section hopes to offer an example as to how one might create a heritage based playground.

4.4.1 The Brush

Figure 15: Plan demarcating the The Brush area

The first area and its features that will be discussed is The Brush. This area, located on the northern side of the playground, contains a number of different types of flora, such as small trees, bushes, and long grass. This area is meant to be less maintained then other areas of the playground and offers a series of winding paths, only suggested to the user through the planting scheme of the flora. Found in the periphery of this area is a small mound with a slide built into it. Hidden in the heart of this area are a few smaller fishing boats sitting almost seemingly forgotten in the brush.

This fairly unkept and less maintained area compared to the rest of the playground is meant to act as an area almost outside of the playground itself. The significance of the surrounding area of a playground is discussed by Pitsikali & Parnell, who assert that the affordances found around a play area has a way of stretching the limits of said play area (Pitsikali & Parnell 2019:727). This appropriation of areas surrounding playgrounds for the purpose of play was also found by the author Jansson during a study on attractive playgrounds (Jansson 2010:78). Jansson explains in

relation to these places that "*use is repeated, creativity and control can be expressed and secrets and activities are protected from harm*" (Jansson 2010:78)

The Brush, sitting almost outside of the playground itself, is meant to be reminiscent of a "*field of free action*" (Kyttä 2004 see Wood 2021:168). "*Field of free action*" is one of the three types of fields of action discussed in the author Kyttä's Field of Action Theory (Kyttä 2004 see Wood 2021:168). The author Wood describes a "*field of free action*" as an area "*in which a child freely chooses their activities*" and that children are able to "*experience the actualised affordances of a given environment*" (Wood 2021:168). The ability to freely experience and act on what is afforded to them in these natural areas surrounding playgrounds potentially changes how children relate to these spaces (Jansson 2010:78). These spaces have the capacity to morph into "*children's places*" instead of only remaining just "*places for children*" (Jansson 2010:78). The open and free nature of this space with less obvious affordances is meant to allow children to appropriate this space and make it their own, free from the watchful eyes of adults.

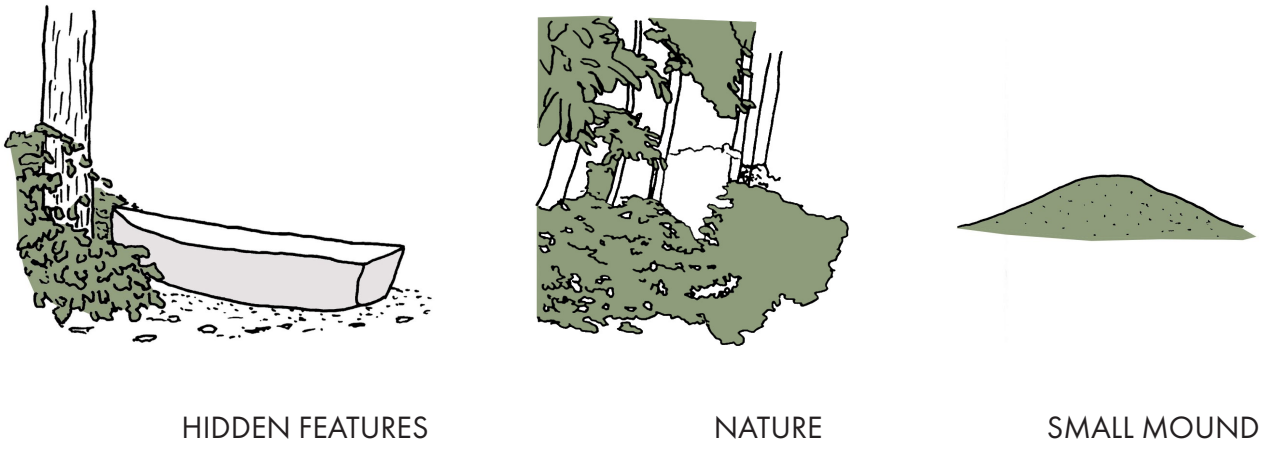


Figure 16: Illustrations of features and conceptual elements of The Brush area

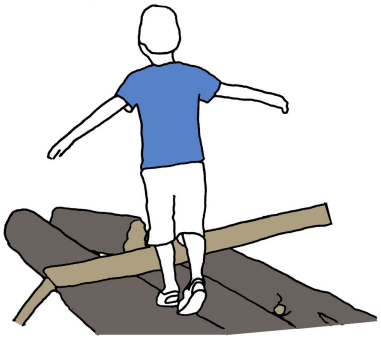


Figure 17: Illustration of child interacting with affordances found in nature

Through incorporating large amounts of nature and natural elements into The Brush, the area offers a number of benefits for children (Jansson & Lerstrup 2021:195; Wood 2021:174; Mishra et al. 2021:41). Playing in nature and natural environments is seen as being beneficial for children's health (Jansson & Lerstrup 2021:195; Wood 2021:174), their "*cognitive and physical development*" as well as their mental health (Jansson 2010:67), and has the capacity to enable more exercise amongst children (Mishra et al. 2021:41). Referring to the concept of playscapes, which is described by Fjørtoft as "*a landscape that affords children the ability to play*" (Fjørtoft 2004:24), the authors Mishra et al asserts that,

> *"The playscape concept claims, with supporting evidence, that children playing in natural environments gain more benefits than from any other play environments"* (Mishra et al. 2021:43).

This idea is backed up by Fjørtoft, who explains that natural environments act as playgrounds for children that are demanding, energizing, and ever changing (Fjørtoft 2004:36).

Another aspect that the natural elements in The Brush offers is the possibility for children to take part in loose parts play (Jansson 2010:76). Loose parts play is where children move, rearrange, build and destroy, both natural and man made objects as a form of play (Mozaffar 2021:15). Loose parts play enables children to partake in "*constructive play*" and "*role play*" (Mishra et al. 2021:55), as well as "*dramatic play*" (Mozaffar 2021:15). The author Mozaffar asserts that loose parts enable "*creative play*", going on to explain in relation to study done on loose parts play in a schoolyard that "*The elements did not have a specific function in the play setting, so they were flexible, which resulted in flexibility in play*" (Mozaffar 2021:25) Jansson explains the ability to manipulate objects is an "*important characteristics, affecting play value and children's sense of place*" (Jansson 2010:67). The authors Jansson & Lerstrup expand on this significance, asserting that through manipulation of objects children are able to "*perform meaningful actions, such as constructing, affecting and creating their own places*" (Jansson & Lerstrup 2021:194-195).

Overall, the design of The Brush is meant to allow children to explore, appropriate, build, and destroy in a space more or less free from adult supervision. The loose parts found in The Brush offer children the opportunity to partake in "*constructive play*" and "*role play*" (Mishra et al. 2021:55), as well as "*creative play*" (Mozaffar 2021:25). The unstructured nature of The Brush also has the potential to afford children the possibility to partake in "*adventurous play*" which involves "*imagination and even an element of risk*" (Mishra et al. 2021:54), as well as "*active play*" which "*encourages enjoyment, creativity, and autonomy in a non-judgemental environment*" (De Rossi 2021:77).

With regards to how the features in this area could help to communicate local heritage to children, The Bush tries to evoke a transformative experience through the use of presence. The small fishing boats sitting seemingly abandoned in the brush, potentially have the capacity to evoke feelings of history and place within the children who come across them. The twisting and turning path through these areas of denser vegetation allow these small fishing boats to reveal themselves to children exploring the area. Through potentially encountering these objects unexpectedly in a setting they are not normally seen, that being an area of dense vegetation, these objects and their materiality have the potential to evoke a transformative experience amongst the children happening upon them. The vegetated area also offers unique atmospheric qualities different from the ones found elsewhere in the playground. The materiality of the objects and the presence they have in such an irregular setting, as well as the overall atmosphere of the space has the potential to evoke a transformative experience amongst children, allowing the children to reflect upon themselves and the knowledge they have potentially learnt about the local heritage of the area.

Figure 18: Illustration of children encountering a small boat in The Brush area

4.4.2 The Huts

Figure 19: Plan demarcating the The Huts area

The second area and its features that will be discussed is The Huts. Situated in between The Brush and The Harbor, The Huts area contains four smaller than life sized fishing huts that are positioned by a dock. Running in between the four huts are a number of ramps and climbing obstacles, such as climbing bars and a series of crates, which enable children to move in between the huts without touching the ground. As a child follows this path between the fishing huts from west to east, they slowly gain in elevation until the final fishing hut leads them out onto a small mound with additional crates to climb on. Attached to this final fishing hut, sits a pole for children to slide down as well as a climbing net made to look like a fishing net. To the west of the huts sits a sandbox along with a seating area for adults and children alike. Behind the fishing huts, are a number crates for children to climb on, some of which are stacked. In front of the most easterly fishing hut there is a smaller version of the fish seller's stand that can be seen only about 40 meters away at Fiskehoddorna. This space would also include small moveable crates with individual blocks of wood shaped like herring.

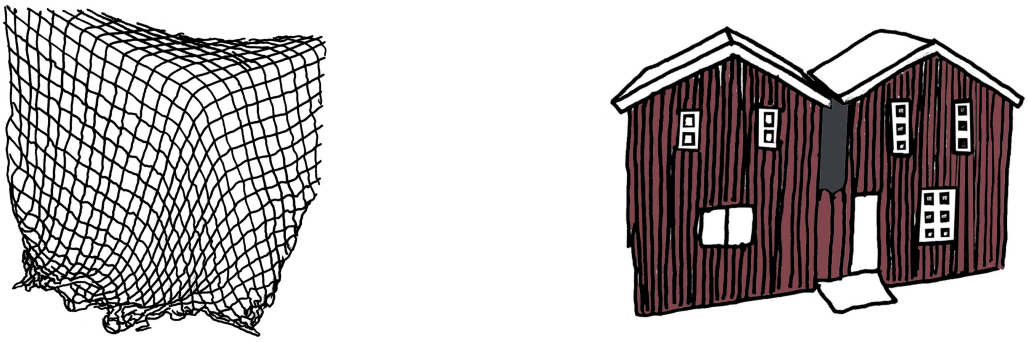


Figure 20: Illustrations of conceptual elements in The Huts area

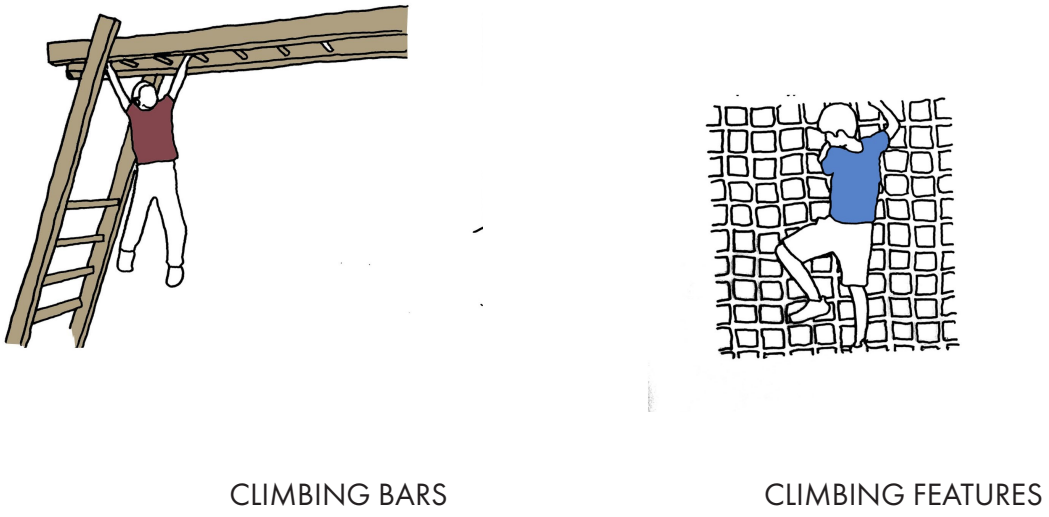


Figure 21: Illustrations of play features in The Huts area

Although also providing opportunities for movement and activity, this section of the playground is primarily meant to enable children the possibility to partake in "*role play*" (Mishra et al. 2021:55), also sometimes called "*dramatic play*" (Refshauge et al. 2013:41). The smaller fishing huts that dominate this space as well as the fish seller's stand are meant to reference back to Fiskehoddorna, creating essentially a child's version of Fiskehoddorna, where children can cast themselves in the role of fishermen and fish sellers. The movable wooden crates, herring shaped blocks of wood, and fish sellers stand, as well as the assortment of loose parts that can be found in the adjacent vegetated area have the potential to all act as resources for such role play.

Of course if and how a child decides to partake in such role play is up to the child. A study, undertaken by Refshauge et al, found that in order to promote dramatic play, although natural environments and loose parts are helpful for the play itself, an element or feature in the environment should help provide a spark that ignites this creativity (Refshauge et al. 2013:41) These fishing huts, fish seller stand, movable crates, and wooden fish, along with overall closeness to Fiskehoddorna itself, are all meant to help act as the spark that ignites creativity and dramatic play. With this being said, the author Mozaffar explains in relation to study done on loose parts play in a schoolyard that "*manufactured play equipment is less supportive of creative play behaviour*" due to them having "*pre-existing functions that guide children on how to use them, and thus provide fewer constructive and dramatic play opportunities*" (Maxwell et al. 2008 see Mozaffar 2021:25). Although the fish sellers stand and the small wooden fish have the potential to limit creativity, the small moveable crates have the capacity to afford and enable the movement and stacking of different natural materials or sand, along with the wooden blocks shaped like fish.

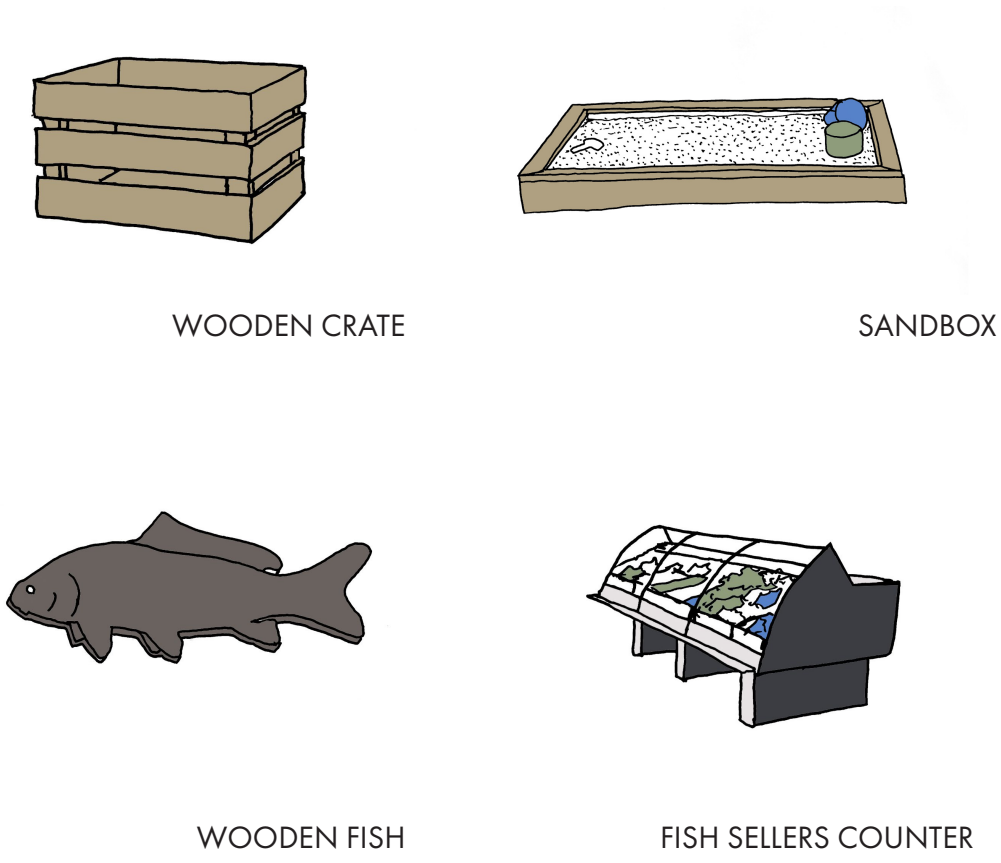


Figure 22: Illustrations of play features which facilitate loose parts play in The Huts area

With the play features and potential types of play afforded in this area explained, which features can potentially help in the communication of cultural heritage to children? One feature that could help in this communication is the fishing huts. Designed to mimic the architectural style and overall materiality of the fishing huts found nearby at Fiskehoddorna, the fishing huts on the playground allow children the possibility for closer interactions with these objects of cultural heritage than they will be able to get from the real fishing huts at Fiskehoddorna. By situating these huts in a child space, children are able to use, touch, climb, and experience these objects of cultural heritage, allowing them to form a greater sense of closeness to these objects, and subsequently the cultural heritage itself. As discussed earlier on this paper, such interactions with cultural heritage allows for closer connections to heritage (Goodarzparvari & Bueno Camejo 2018:143), as well as learning opportunities about heritage (Hegediš et al. 2023:1967).

Another way these fishing huts have the potential to communicate cultural heritage to children is through interaction and experience. As discussed previously, curators in science and children museums use interaction and play as a way to communicate and educate children (Farné 2005:171). Through incorporating features, such as the fish sellers stand, crates, wooden fish, and huts themselves, that can potentially provoke role play, children are able to play and interact with cultural heritage. Since this is in fact a playground, and not an exhibition space, children are able to be more playful and rambunctious than they would otherwise be able to be inside (Chermayeff et al. 2010:49). Of course the degree in which this role play, and play in general, is able to communicate cultural heritage in this way is still a bit up in the air. Although science museums and science playgrounds are able to successfully teach and instruct children about scientific principles through this method (Chermayeff et al. 2010:49), further research should be undertaken in order to accurately shed light on how this method can be used for the communication of cultural heritage to children.

4.4.3 The Harbor

Figure 23: Plan demarcating the The Harbor area

The last area that will be discussed in relation to its features is The Harbor. The Harbor is situated directly south of The Huts and is bordered on three sides by a wooden wharf, with the fourth side consisting of a gentle grass slope. This gentle grass slope starts at the edge of The Harbor and descends down about half a meter to the base of the wharf. Sticking out into this depression from the wharf is a number of piers, with ladders and other climbing elements to help children climb onto the piers and wharf from the slope. Three old decommissioned fishing boats of varying sizes are also situated in The Harbor along with an old decommissioned buoy. The two larger boats have ramps which allow children to easily walk into them from the grassy slope. These two larger boats also has a plank resting in between their decks to allow for easy access from one boat to another. All three decommissioned boats, as well as the buoy, will not be altered very much from their original form. The main changes that will be made include grinding down sharp edges, adding metal or wood bars that enable easier access from the grassy slope, and the addition of these aforementioned wooden ramps and planks.

The Harbor primarily offers children the ability to partake in active play and creative play, although other types of play, such as dramatic play, can of course also be afforded. Relating to active play, De Rossi explains that,

> *"Through experiences of active play, children and adolescents can interact with the affordances of the environment"* (Gibson 1979 see De Rossi 2021:85).

The large boats situated in The Harbor have no specifically designed play functions, apart from maybe a ladder or another climbable obstacle to help children get onto the boats. This lack of clear functionality can potentially lead children to play with these features in a large variety of ways. (Mozaffar 2021:27) Related to this idea of not designing specific affordances, the author Mozaffar explains

> *"Many environmental designers and child carers think of the most straightforward ways of designing and providing play contexts for children by installing structured and manufactured play equipment. Although these do provide play opportunities for children, they are not the best option for nurturing creativity"* (Mozaffar 2021:27).

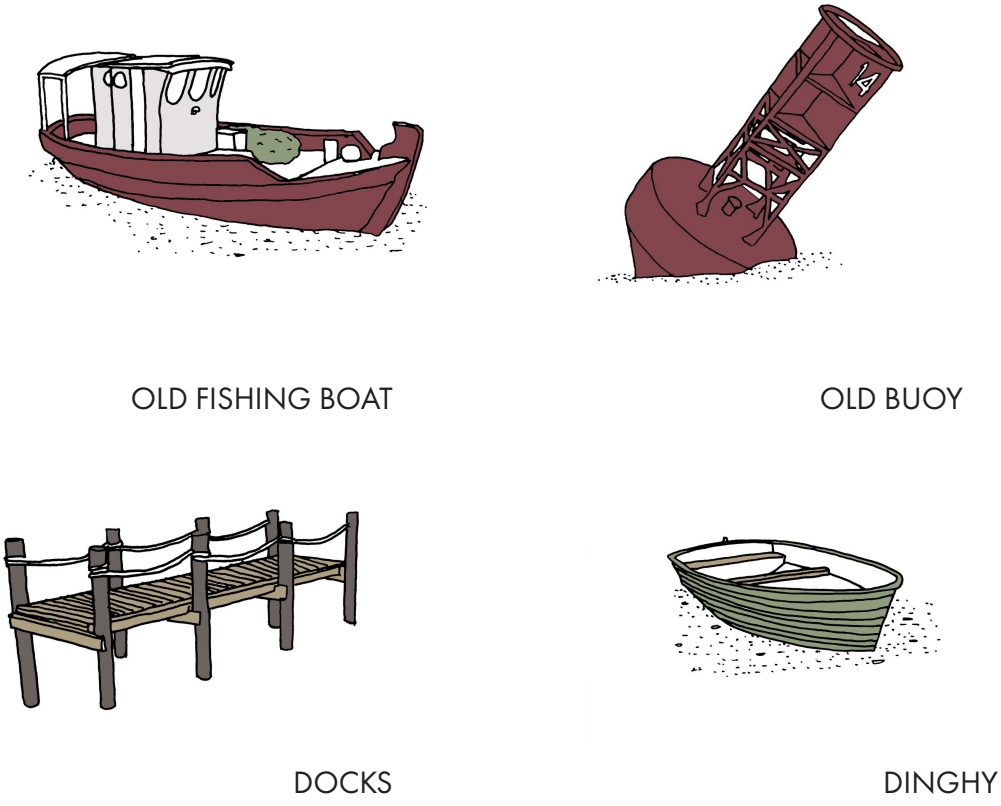


Figure 24: Illustrations of conceptual elements in The Harbor area

The unclear play affordance offered by the old decommissioned fishing boats and buoy enable children the opportunity to be creative in how they interact and use these objects.

With The Harbor's physical features and the types of play they can afford laid out, in what ways can this area potentially communicate cultural heritage to children? Looking back again to current museological practices, the implementation of decommissioned boats and a buoy in the area have the potential to help evoke transformative experience amongst the children playing in the space. Due to the boats and buoy being left primarily unchanged from their original state, the raw materiality of these decommissioned objects have the potential to act in the same way that artifacts can act in a museum. The author Dudley explains in relation to museum artifacts, that

> *"we need to recognise that the experiential possibilities of objects are important and objects can often 'speak' to us, even when we know nothing about them at all"* (Dudley 2018:424).

Through facilitating close interactions with the object's materiality, the object has the potential to evoke a transformative experience (Dudley 2018:424), enabling the visitor, or in this case a child at a playground, to connect with the object and reflect upon themselves, potentially enabling them to see the world in a different light (Garner et al. 2016:346). Playground features like this have the ability to facilitate these intimate interactions better than museum artifacts, since, unlike most museum artifacts, the fishing boats and buoy does not need to be protected by a glass case, but instead can and should be touched, climbed on, and interacted with.

Figure 25: Illustration of children playing in The Huts and The Harbor areas

5. Heritage Based Playgrounds: A Conclusion

Meant to exemplify potential features that a heritage based playground could be designed with, the case study found a number of ways in which designed play elements and the incorporation of current museological practices can communicate cultural heritage to children and young people. The Brush manages to offer children a "*field of free action*" (Kyttä cited in Wood 2021:168) for children to appropriate, as well as natural elements for loose parts play. With regards to communication cultural heritage, the winding paths and thick vegetation enables the small fishing boats situated in the area the potential to evoke a transformative experience through their presence.

The Huts have the capacity to afford children the possibility to partake in role play. Through creating a version of Fiskehoddorna for children, children are able to use, play, create, and pretend in the space, allowing them to form closer connections to the cultural heritage found at Fiskehoddorna. Although comparisons can be made between children partaking in hands-on learning in this area, and how children can learn about scientific principles through hands-on learning in science playgrounds, further research should be undertaken to gain a clearer understanding as to how to best implement this method.

The Harbor's use of decommissioned boats and a buoy not only enables children to be more creative in how they play due to the lack of clear affordances, but also can help to evoke a transformative experience within children. Through facilitating close interactions with the unaltered materiality of these objects, these objects have the capacity to "'*speak' to us*" (Dudley 2018:424), probably even more so then is generally available within a museum context.

The case study above has exemplified three ways in which current museological practices can be implemented into a heritage based playground. Overall, current museological practices have the ability to help inform designers about different methods in which local heritage can be communicated to children through playgrounds. With this being said, the degree in which these different methods can be successfully implemented by playground designers can vary. The use of materiality to evoke a transformative experience seems to be one of the easiest to implement since atmosphere and presence is a lot harder to control in an outdoor setting.

Although harder to implement in an outdoor setting than in an exhibition space, the case study exemplified one way in which presence could be implemented in a playground. Since the utilization of different methods of lighting is out of the question in an outdoor space meant to be used during the day, altering how an object is viewed and is come across by children is the most viable way to evoke a sense of presence in heritage based playgrounds.

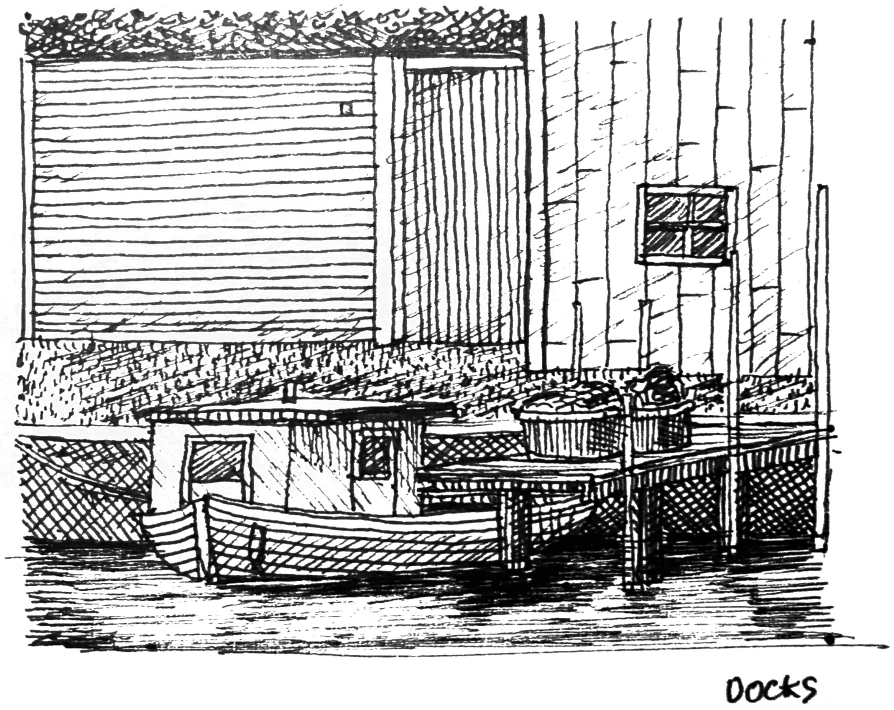


Figure 26 Sketch of boat docked at Citadellhamnen

The case study above also exemplified a way that hands-on learning could be implemented in a heritage based playground. Through implementing hands-on learning, similar to how its implemented in science playgrounds, designers have another potential way in which they can communicate cultural heritage to children. However, methods to successfully do so must be further developed. History museums which incorporate some degree of hands-on learning in their exhibitions would be a strong starting point for such further research.

Through implementing similar strategies as the ones currently used in museums, heritage based playgrounds have the capacity to communicate cultural heritage to children and young people. With new heritage as a strong conceptual foundation, designers of heritage based playgrounds are able to transmit meanings and values held by local communities to future generations. This transmission of heritage to younger generations not only aids the continued preservation of local heritage, but also offers children a number of co benefits such as aiding identity formation, strengthening their sense of place, and strengthening their sense of community. Through gaining a better understanding of their local area and it's heritage, as well as through partaking in play, children are able to improve academically and creatively (Cerisola 2018:47; Ploner & Jones 2019:270).

6. FIGURE LIST:

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