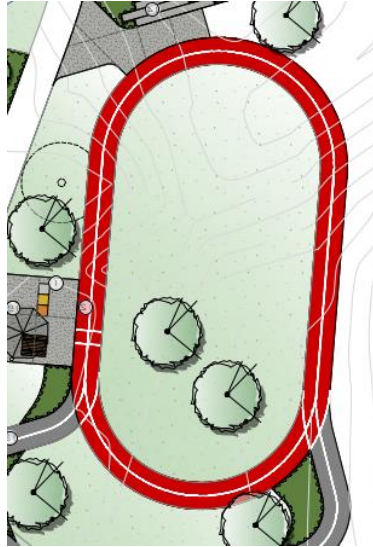
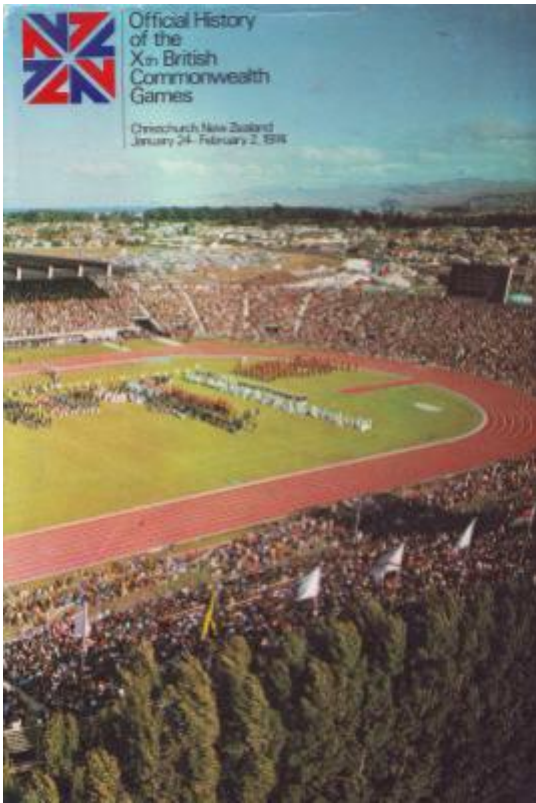


QEII Play Space – Concept Design Commentary.

The landscape strategy embeds the play space within QEII Park and its surrounding community, creating a vibrant, inclusive hub for all ages and abilities to explore, play, learn, and gather. The design reflects the park's rich history and cultural significance, particularly the legacy of the 1974 Commonwealth Games, while integrating seamlessly with the natural environment and broader park master plan. The design also acknowledges the cultural heritage of Ngāi Tūāhuriri, with planting and layout that respect the natural character of the area.

Historical and Cultural Integration



The 1974 Commonwealth Games are a very important part of the QEII and Ōtautahi story. The running track, terraced stadium seating and podium will feel very familiar to all those old enough and be the start of a story for those younger.

The 80m inner painted asphalt oval running track creates a flat short race for all ages, with the outer track allowing a longer multiuse race that weaves and mounds with undulating berms back to the start/finish straight. The oval track has been designed to follow a similar orientation to the original pre-earthquake athletics track, reinforcing the historical connection to the site.

Concrete stadium seating overlooks the running track and podium and gives the opportunity to tell the Commonwealth story through graphic and colour. The seating design takes inspiration from the staggered entrance of the new QEII centre, creating a visual link between past and present. The stadium seating, podium, and start/finish line of the track are intentionally aligned to create a cohesive and structured focal point within the play space.

Inclusive and Accessible Play

Seating and shade umbrellas give a place to meet and take a break away from the main play elements while providing a visual edge to the play spaces. A concrete path continues through the centre of the play space and connects all play areas young and old. This path also accommodates the required pedestrian and cycle network integration without intersecting the running track, maintaining safe and logical circulation. Wet pour surfacing covers the junior and accessible play areas to provide a durable and inclusive route to swings, an accessible

carousel, musical instruments, and a mounded slide. These elements ensure access for children of all abilities and meet NZS 5828:2015 playground safety standards.

While the accessible carousel was not included in the original budget, our overall budget has allowed us to include this item into the design. We feel this is an important part of inclusive play and allows all abilities to enjoy this new play space.



Play Equipment and Zones

The junior play space and sandpit are centred around the entrance and seating area, allowing children to be supervised or assisted easily. Reclaimed logs, rocks, and timber vertical steppers create the edge for the sandpit, allowing it to be sat on and subtly sit within the planting. The sandpit includes buried fossils cast into concrete blocks (approx. 400x300x200mm, 57kg) that sit at the bottom of the sandpit for children to dig around and discover.



Examples of the fossils that could be used in this space.

Signage at the entrance to the sandpit will invite children to 'find the fossils', encouraging exploration and imaginative play, like that shown opposite. The inclusion of horse-themed rockers reflects the park's sporting history, as required by the brief.

To the western side of the play space, larger play structures and nature play elements give much more challenging play to the older children. The swings are surrounded by and connected through vertical steppers, balance beam logs and rocks to allow much more informal play. These elements support a wide range of play types including climbing, swinging, balancing, and sliding, and are surfaced with soft fall bark to maintain a natural feel.



Furniture, Shade, and Social Spaces

Seating and shade umbrellas are placed at the entrances, creating a social hub for caregivers and visitors. These elements provide a comfortable resting area and visual boundary to the play space. The design includes at least four picnic tables and two umbrellas, in line with Council specifications and preferences.

Pathways and Circulation

A concrete path runs through the play space, connecting all areas without intersecting the running track. The design accommodates the new pedestrian/cycle path required by CCC's reassessment, ensuring it integrates with the existing network and respects the play space boundaries. This layout supports safe movement and accessibility for all users, including those with mobility aids.

Natural Integration and Safety

New tree and low-level shrub planting will help the play space nestle into the site. The removal of scrubby and weedy species along the southern edge of the site allows for much clearer sight lines and removes any opportunities to hide in the overgrown scrub, supporting CPTED principles and enhancing safety.

Compliance and Feasibility

All elements have been designed to be deliverable within the \$750,000 budget, using durable materials and efficient layout. The play space includes appropriate edging for maintenance, and all surfacing and equipment selections are made with long-term durability and accessibility in mind.

A comprehensive review of underground infrastructure was undertaken during the design phase. These services significantly influenced the placement of major structures such as the playground equipment and concrete features. The layout avoids interference with existing pipes and utilities, reducing the risk of service disruption and ensuring safe excavation and installation. Coordination with CCC asset maps and service locators was essential to confirm clear zones for construction.

The design reflects the intent of the QEII Park Master Plan and the project brief, while offering a cohesive, inclusive, and historically resonant community play space.