

Admiralty Park: Singapore's Most Playful Park

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Location Admiralty Road, Singapore
Client National Parks Board
Owner National Parks Board
Redevelopment Completion Dates
Urban Park: 28 October 2017 /
Nature Park: 11 March 2018
Architect Tan + Tsakonas Architects
Landscape Architect Ortus Design Pte.
Ltd. Mechanical & Electrical Engineer
Unipac Consulting Engineers LLP
Civil & Structural Engineer Executive
Decisions Inc. LLP Site Area 27 ha
GFA 2023.7sqm





Admiralty Park may now be one of Singapore's most playful park. While previously a quiet park located at the northern part of Singapore, the re-developed Admiralty Park now boasts the largest collection of slides in Singapore with 26 different slide experiences. The revamp hopes to draw more visitors from across the country. To understand what people valued and wanted for the new Destination Park, the National Parks Board (NParks) sought public feedback prior to the park's redevelopment. There was resounding desire by residents to create more opportunities for family bonding through improving the park's recreational space while maintaining its existing tranquillity, nature, and greenery.

With these ideals together with the area's natural steep and hilly topography, the idea of an adventure playground in an urban park filled with slides was conceived. Moreover, having slides as an iconic statement for the newly re-developed space would benefit the park in terms of attractiveness and higher visitorship. Keeping to the park's theme of exploration, adventure, and nature, the play experience of the adventure playground follows a narrative and engages children and families in biophilic nature play. Besides play, however, the 27-hectares park also has an environmental role and message for its visitors, with 20-hectares of the park's north side conserved as a nature area for its existing biodiversity and natural habitats.

Wetland Themed Landscape

Nestled within Admiralty Park are several existing habitats such as the secondary forest habitat,

estuarine mangrove habitat, open grassland habitat, and a freshwater riverine habitat. It also houses a natural stream, known as Sungei Cina, which cuts through the middle of the park and outflows to the Straits of Johor Sea. To protect the mangrove and riverine habitats within the park, re-development works were carried out sensitively, together with freshwater mangrove restoration, to enhance the area's existing biodiversity. This nature refuge provides the distinct urban-rural gradient of spatial heterogeneity from its urbanized surrounding of industrial, residential and institutional zones.

Nature Play with Thematic Playgrounds

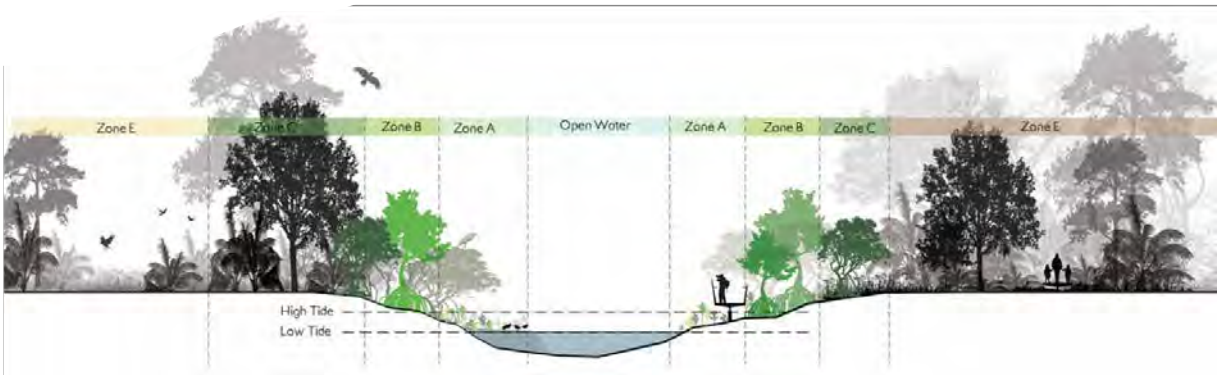
Keeping to its mangrove-themed concept, the park's 7-hectares playscape offers an attractive range of wetland designed play equipment. The park visitor will also realise that the playscape has a uniquely undulating terrain, as it adopts the design principles of a biophilic play space. The existing landform is therefore respected and kept to its original state as close as possible. In some areas, such as the terracing platform which houses the various play equipment, the cut-and-fill method was adopted to minimise waste and mitigate adverse impact made to the environment. The park's southern end has three different areas, they are the: Family Terracing Play area, Adventure Play area and Junior Play area.

The Family Terracing Play area engages children (aged between five to 12 years old) in a range of play experiences. Different sliding structures have been integrated with the existing landform, creating interesting play elements

1. The Family Terracing Play area encourages experiential play for the young and the young-at-heart.



Proposed Overall Layout and Circulation Diagram.

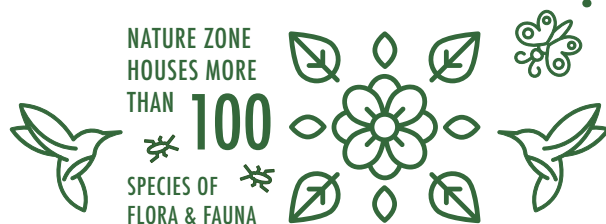


A cross sectional diagram illustrating the makeup of the natural ecosystem within the park.

2. Aerial view of the park's nature zone with Sungei Cina cutting through the park. Photo credit: Semec Enterprise Pte. Ltd.
3. The elevated boardwalk allows for an immersive nature experience in the estuarine mangrove habitat and secondary forest.
4. The mangrove-themed Junior Play area allows for play exploration and a great family bonding time in an outdoor environment. Photo credit: Siti Nor Arifah binte Idris.







varying from the long and gentle rolling slides meandering through the landscape to adrenaline fast ones. Interestingly, the play experience is not only limited to sliding down as its design considers the upwards climb after each slide, thus creating a well-integrated play experience. For example, special climbing surfaces and features, such as rope climb and the net climb amongst others, seek to challenge the visitor with different levels of difficulty. Interactive play structures have also been incorporated to include the supervising adults in the children's play. Located at the peak of the terrace area is the Vantage Viewing Deck which offers park visitors a picturesque panoramic view of the landscape.

The Adventure Play area is another play haven for younger teens (up to 16 years old). Here, the multiple and long challenging slides bring the users from the higher Vantage Viewing Deck to the Junior Play area. The signature racing slides are definitely a key attraction of Admiralty Park, with slides built side by side for a mini race. Adding a new dimension to the play experience are interactive lightings integrated with the play features. The LED lights for the High Adventure Roller Slides respond to motion, movement or sound and change in colour and intensity through or motion sensors. Some of these lights are also connected and respond to changes in colour or intensity with adjacent lights. With these, the Admiralty Park would make a unique destination for night-time visitors.

The key play elements at the Junior Play area are miniaturised for children from the age of two to five. Climbing mounds set in loose sand bed allow children to climb and slide, while playing and walking on sand allow for immersive experiential play. The Universally Designed park also has inclusive play equipment. The Expression Swing, which allows parents and toddlers to swing together, is strategically placed at zones closer to existing walkway and along barrier-free circulation path to increase accessibility for physically-

challenged visitors. Also, the Family Slide allows parents and kids to slide together, with its gentle gradient designed for a safe and gradual slide down.

Nature Zone Enhancement Works

The park also serves as an important ecological connector, connecting the urban area to the freshwater riverine, estuarine mangrove, and the coastal habitat downstream of the Straits of Johor. With the adjacent secondary forest habitat and open grassland habitat, the nature zone houses more than 100 species of flora and fauna. They include rare and endangered native species such as the Arthur's Midget Damselfly (*Mortonagrion arthuri*), Blue Dasher Dragonfly (*Brachydiplax chalybea*), and Hedgehog Rattan (*Calamus erinaceus*). Observational studies on its various ecological parameters were also conducted to better understand its natural ecosystem. With this, selective enhancement works made sure to balance protecting the area's biodiversity through sensitive planting of suitable native species while allowing access to nature to foster a better appreciation of nature amongst park users. For example, the mangrove boardwalk connects visitors to the swamp, bringing them closer to nature and serves as an excellent wildlife viewing platform while conserving the existing habitat.

Conclusion

The redevelopment of Admiralty Park is an effort to re-interpret the park space with the site's original character. It makes use of the area's steep and hilly topography and celebrates the original wetland landscape through the playful integration of a mangrove-themed playscape. Through its iconic play slides and features, the park aspires to be part of a memorable childhood play space for many families. Moreover, with the completion of the North Coast Innovation Corridor Belt and the transport node between Singapore and Johor Bahru, it will be a much needed recreational space for residents in the near future. 

5. These long rolling slides which meander through the landscape are equipped with colourful interactive LED lights which light up from 7pm to 11pm. Photo credit: Low Kok Seong

6. Mother and child having fun on the Expression Swing.

7. The handicap-enabled swing is incorporated along the barrier-free circulation path as part of inclusive-play in the Universal Design approach of the park's redevelopment. Photo credit: National Parks Board.