

A Play Equipment Project at Linksfield Academy, Aberdeen

John Rennie *Linksfield Academy*

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Linn Moor Occupational Centre is situated in its own grounds nine miles from Aberdeen and lies half a mile off the main Aberdeen-Banchory road. It is a Residential Special School for fifty severely mentally handicapped children. These children also have allied physical disabilities and have as a rule attended several other establishments but because of their adverse behaviour were referred to Linn Moor for a residential placement and are normally referred by their own Education or Social Work Department and come from all over Scotland.

The primary function of the School is obviously training in the various skills of social and formal education but the main emphasis is placed in their integration with their own families and society in general. In the School they are divided into small family groups of eight to nine children, under the care of three houseparents. At least one of these house parents is on duty at any given time so that the children, especially in times of need or stress can relate to their own individual adult. This gives much more individual attention and hopefully their progress is quicker and more pronounced. The children are encouraged to take part in normal community activities and some attend youth groups, Guides and Scouts.

The children are at the School because of their low concentration and hyperkinetic nature, require specialist toy and play equipment. A very large percentage of them also suffer from para, or hemi-plegic, spasticity and various other muscular disorders. Therefore, when a new piece of play equipment is required, it should be very durable, easily accessible, safe, and of use to all the children, despite their handicaps. As many children as possible should be able to play on it and ideally it should incorporate other therapeutic values, e.g. educational and physiotherapeutic.

There had been a growing need for some type of multi-play unit at Linn Moor and it was with this in mind that the Technical

Education Department of Linksfield Academy (Middle School Annexe) was approached to see if such a unit would be a viable proposition. A meeting was arranged, with the interested parties, the outcome of which was that the unit would be tackled as a project by the ROSLA group of boys in the coming session, beginning August 1974.

PROGRESS REPORT

1973 — May

Stewart Robertson, a social worker with the Aberdeen Social Services, Jim Murray, Superintendent at Linn Moor and John Rennie, Principal Teacher, Technical Education at Linksfield Academy met at Woodlands, home for the handicapped, to look at, and talk over the possibility of building a play unit, incorporating some of the features of the one at Woodlands.

Mr. Rennie thought the idea was feasible, and decided to attempt it as a project in the session beginning August 1973 — 1974.

August 20th

Mr. Rennie contacted Mr. Murray confirming that the project was on.

Details about money yet to be decided, as an estimate of the cost has to be worked out.

August 23rd

Preliminary drawings of A.P.U. began.

August 28th

Drawings almost complete. The preliminary estimate is around £100.

September 4th

Mr. Rennie discussed with Mr. Gordon and Mr. Barbour, the other two members of the technical staff who will be involved, various details of construction required for the A.P.U.

September 12th

Financial details were arranged with Mr. Murray. It was agreed to have a petty cash float for small items rather than wait for an official order.

October 11th

Material for A.P.U. ordered about a fortnight ago arrived today from Brownlee Timber Merchants.

October 17th

Arranged a visit to Woodlands and Linn Moor for the 30th October leaving school at 9.30 a.m.

October 23rd

Material for A.P.U. being cut and marked off.

October 30th

Pupils involved in the project visited Woodlands and Linn Moor, the idea being to foster interest in the project and to let pupils see the type of children who could benefit from the proposed project. Considerable interest was shown by the pupils and after coffee at Linn Moor the whole idea was discussed and the general opinion was favourable.

November 6th

Cutting out of main panels and cleaning off all sharp edges.

November 13th

Main panels are now being fitted together. Mr. Gordon is taking the Steps and Steel frame with the third year group ROSLA.

December 4th

The shute is now cut out and being fitted together. Steps are complete. Support boxes to Walkways started and are being glued up.

December 11th

Support boxes assembled and are being flushed off and sanded.

Christmas Vacation**January 8th**

Steel support frames to main unit are now welded and are being drilled and tapped to receive $\frac{1}{4}$ " diam. steel counter-sunk head set screws.

January 15th

Separate climbing unit is being cut out. Angle iron fixing pieces cut to length and being drilled and tapped.

January 22nd

Climbing bars being fitted to side rails. Supporting fillets for top and end panels for climbing unit glued and screwed in position.

February 5th

Assembling climbing bars, etc. Cleaning off sharp edges. Drilling holes in top and end panels.

February 12th

Ian Munro (Senior Technical Technician at Teachers Resources Centre) took colour slides of unit. Very little work accomplished today.

February 19th

Climbing unit assembled. Main panels and shute complete.

February 26th

Commenced internal varnishing.

March 5th

Varnishing.

March 12th

Still varnishing. Began applying premier coats to the various parts.

March 19th

Walkways cut out and being cleaned up. Varnishing completed.

March 26th

Gloss painting main panels, walkways, etc.

Easter Vacation

April 23rd

Gloss painting complete. Horizontal bar cut out, fitted and welded, etc.

April 30th

Fitting and assembling Walkways.

May 7th

Final assembly of completed panels, shute horizontal bar, steps, etc. A final photograph taken by Ian Munro.

May 9th

The A.P.U. was dismantled ready for transportation to Linn Moor on Tuesday.

May 14th

Linn Moor took delivery of the agility play unit.

May 15th

At Linn Moor to assemble the A.P.U. in its final position.

May 17th

The finishing touches were completed today.

PROPOSED AGILITY PLAY
UNIT for LINNMOOR
OCCUPATIONAL CENTRE,
ABERDEENSHIRE.

Drawing No.1

Scale 1:10

All sizes are in millimetres.

- Walkways to be 250 wide

For details of this unit
see drawing No.3

For details see
drawing No 4
Viewed in direction of
arrow "W"

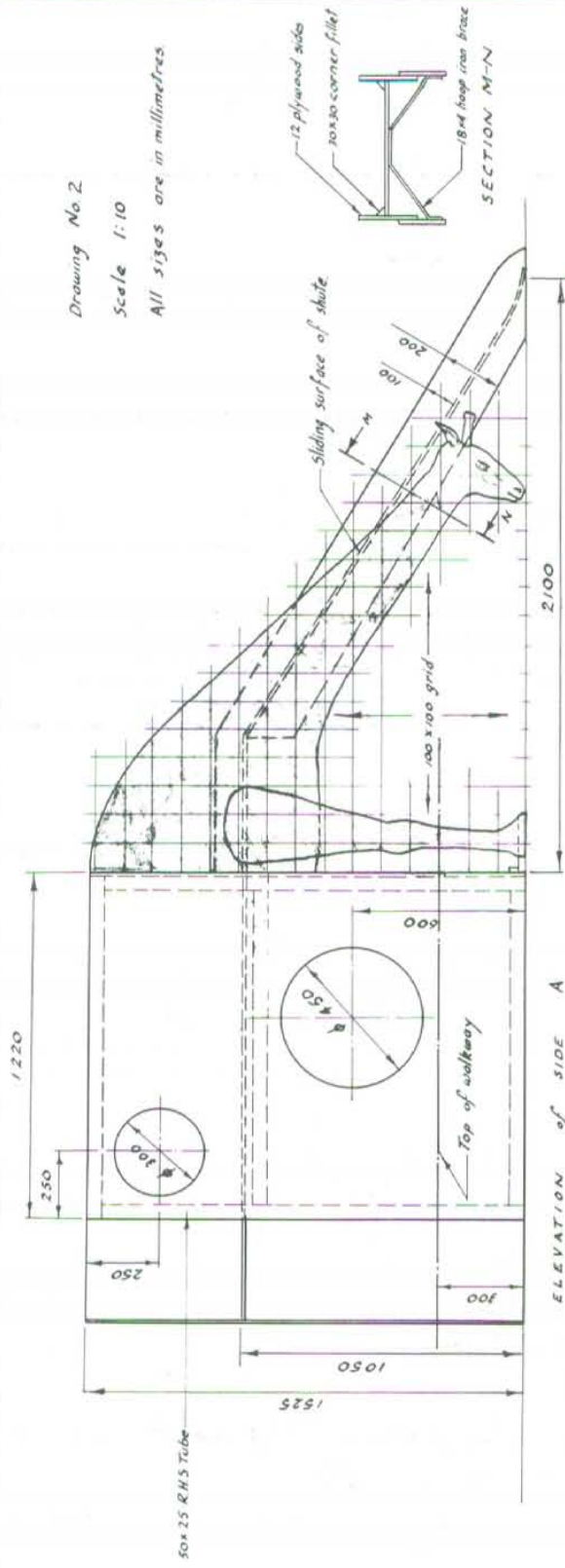
See Draw'g No 4 for specifications

PLAN : Showing relative positions of chute, steps, etc.

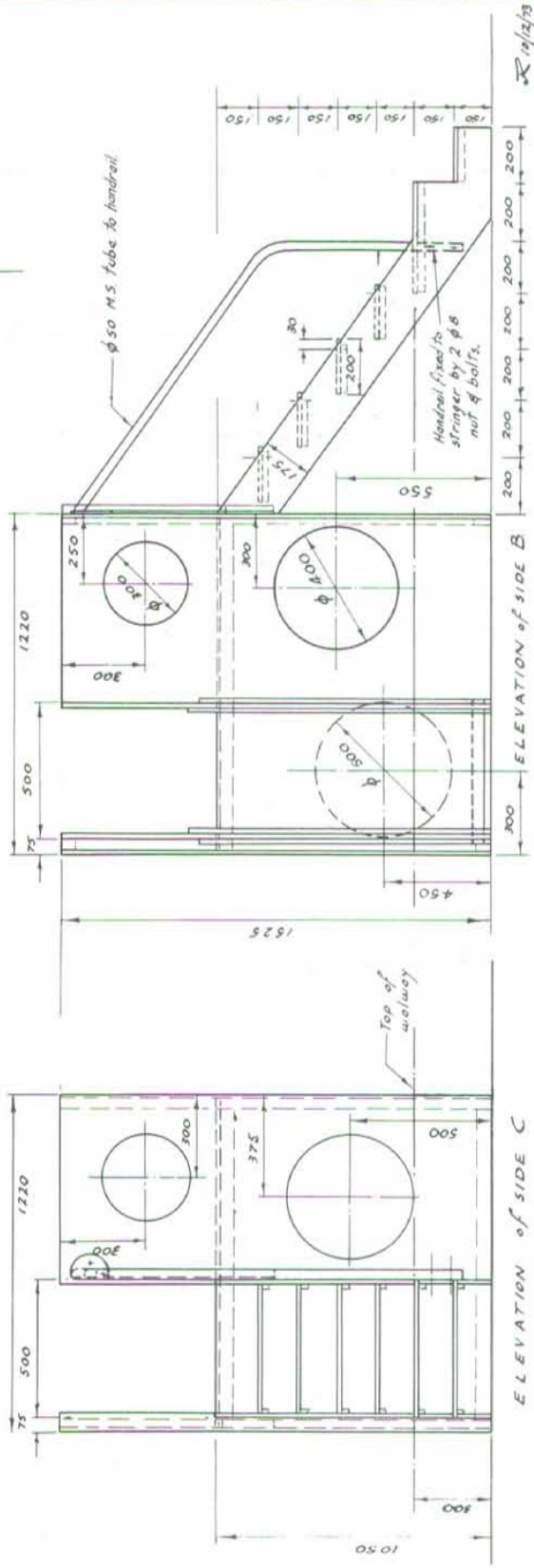
Drawing No.2

Scale 1:10

All sizes are in millimetres

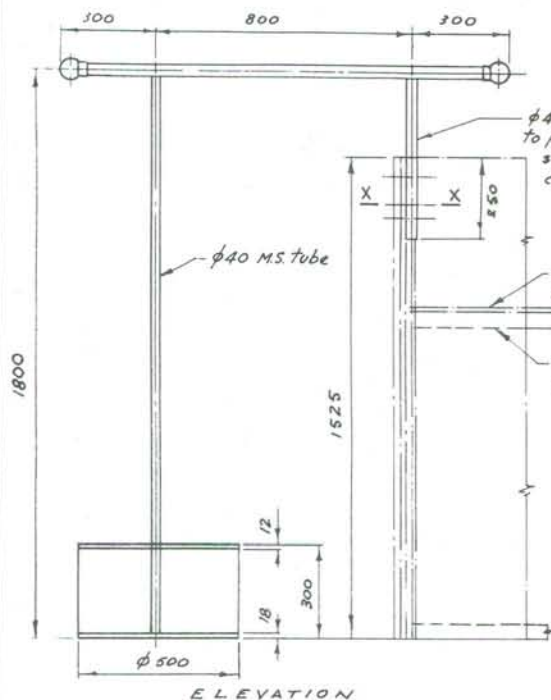


ELEVATION of SIDE A

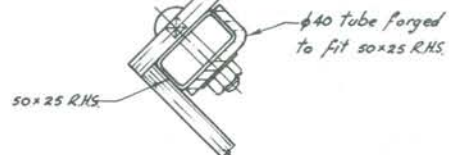


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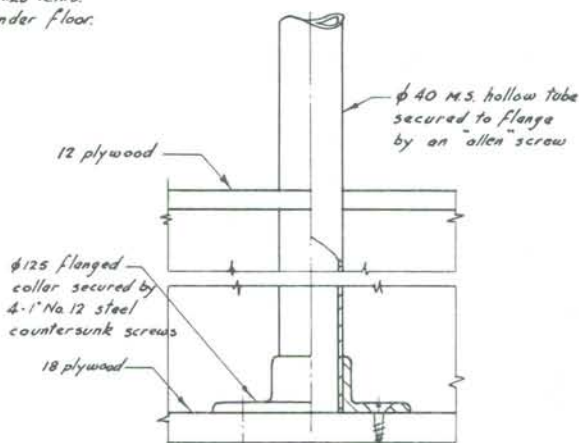




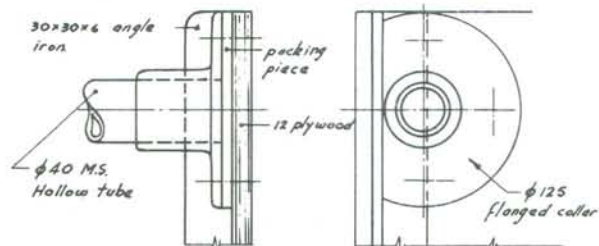
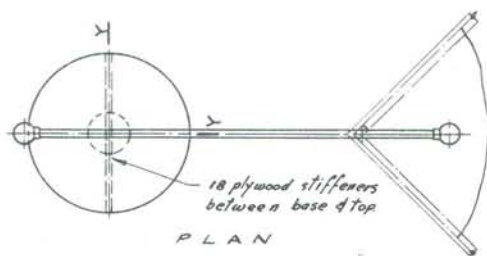
12 plywood exterior panels



SECTION X-X With a $\phi 10$ coach bolt position.



SECTION Y-Y



DETAIL of TOP of HANDRAIL

HORIZONTAL BAR DETAILS

Scale 1:10. Details 1:2 All sizes are in millimetres.

Drawing No 4.

PROPOSED AGILITY PLAY UNIT for LINNMOOR
OCCUPATIONAL CENTRE, ABERDEENSHIRE

Specification and Notes

The following parts to be from:

1. *50 x 25 Rectangular Hollow section mild steel tube.* Two support frames, each in four parts electric arc welded at the corners.
2. *12 m.m. Finnish Birch Plywood.*
Vertical panels A, B, C & D. Outline to giraffe steps. Shute. Vertical sides, top and end of climbing unit.
3. *18 m.m. Finnish Birch Plywood.*
Floor to main unit. Walkways. Circular base to horizontal bar.
4. *40 diameter Mild Steel Tube.*
Handrail to steps.
Horizontal bar and supports to same.
5. *30 x 30 x 6 m.m. M.S. angle iron.*
To secure the following parts:
Shute to panel B
Steps to panel C.
5 only fixing lugs 125 m.m. long for securing main unit to floor.
4 only fixing lugs 125 m.m. long for securing climbing unit to floor.
6. Plywood panels to be fixed to 50 x 25 RHS frames by O6 B.S.W. steel counter-sunk set screws at approx. 200 m.m. centres.
7. All 25 x 18 m.m. fillets supporting floor of main unit and at internal corners of climbing unit to be glued and screwed.
8. All vertical internal surfaces of main unit, sliding surface and sides of shute, interior of climbing unit:—
Three coats of polyurethane varnish.
All other surfaces:— three coats of paint i.e. primed: undercoated: glossed in

'Dulux', Poppy; Oxlip; Anshuca; Cornflower.

9. The complete unit should be made so that it can be easily dismantled and assembled in position.
10. To prevent movement of unit in location expanding Rawl Bolts through the fixing lugs into the floor should be used.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for all the advice and assistance, without which this project would not have been possible.

The boys of the R.O.S.L.A. group:
John Anderson, Duncan Clark, David Gray, Wilfred Platt, Gordon Robertson, Stanley Rennie, Melvyn Shepherd, Brian Stewart, George Strachan, James Taylor.
William Gordon — Technical Education Teacher.

Ian Munro — Senior Technician — Technical Education.

Alan Ritchie — Technician — Art.