



BLUE FOREST
THE TREEHOUSE PEOPLE

CHILDREN'S PLAYHOUSE

Design & Access Statement

835
MAY 2020

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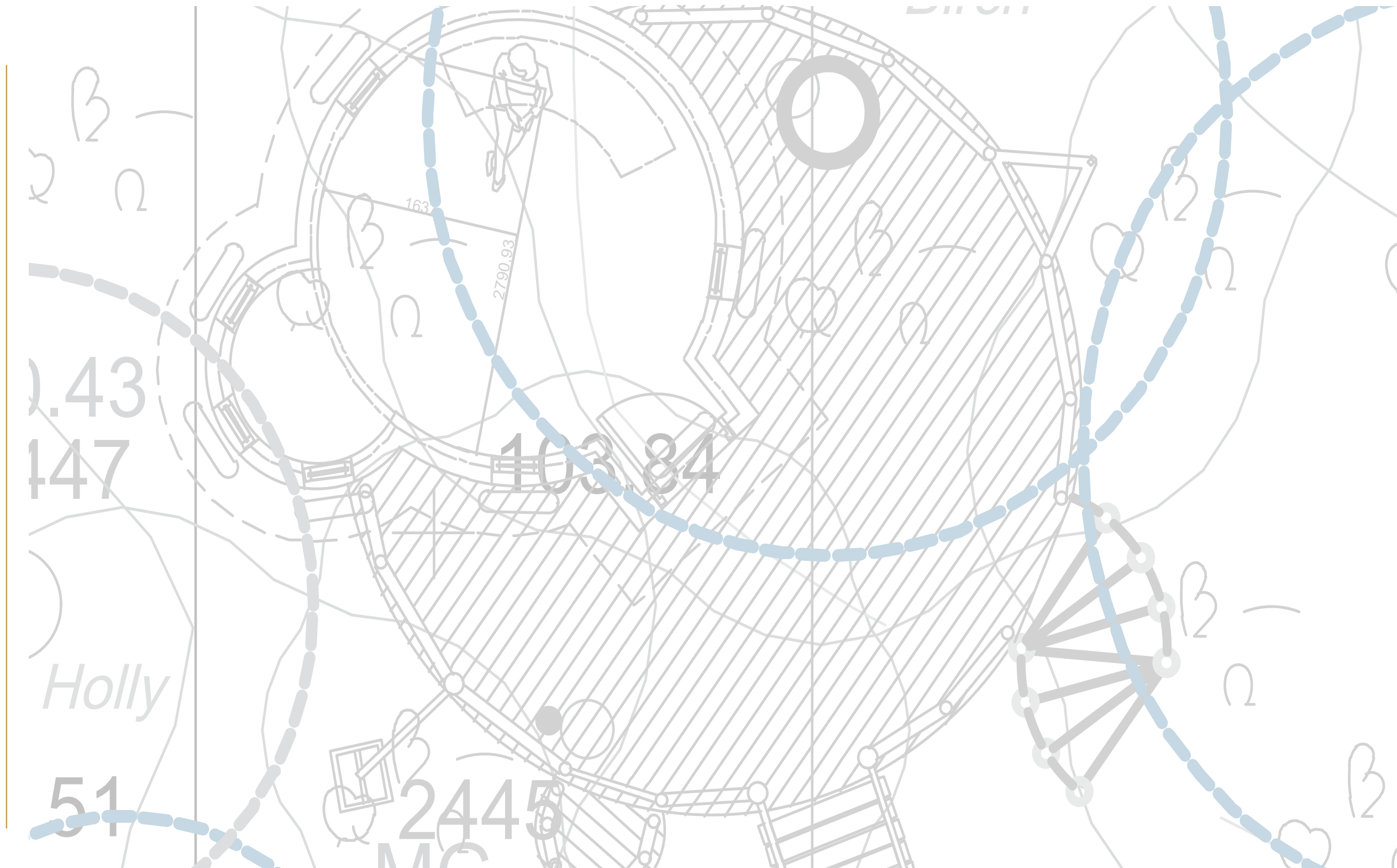
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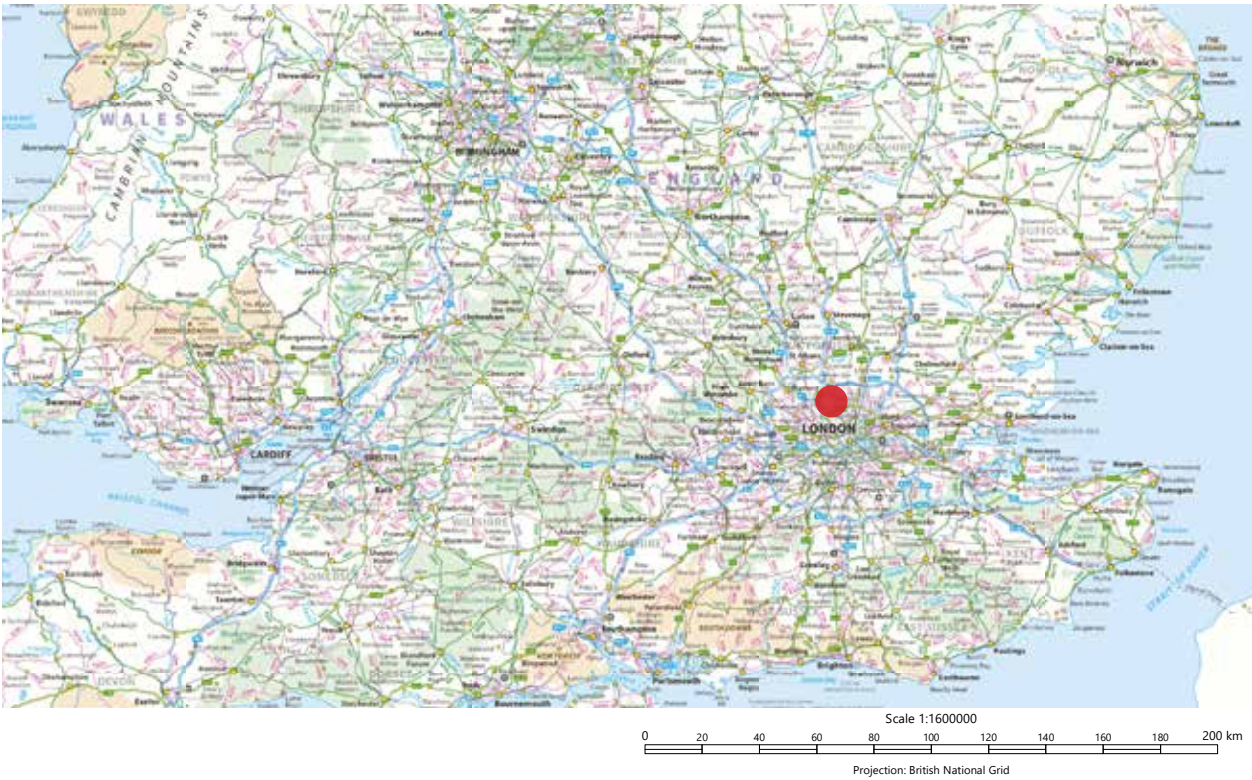
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1.1 Site Location Plan



● Site



Athlone House
Hampstead Lane
London
N6 4RU

Site Location

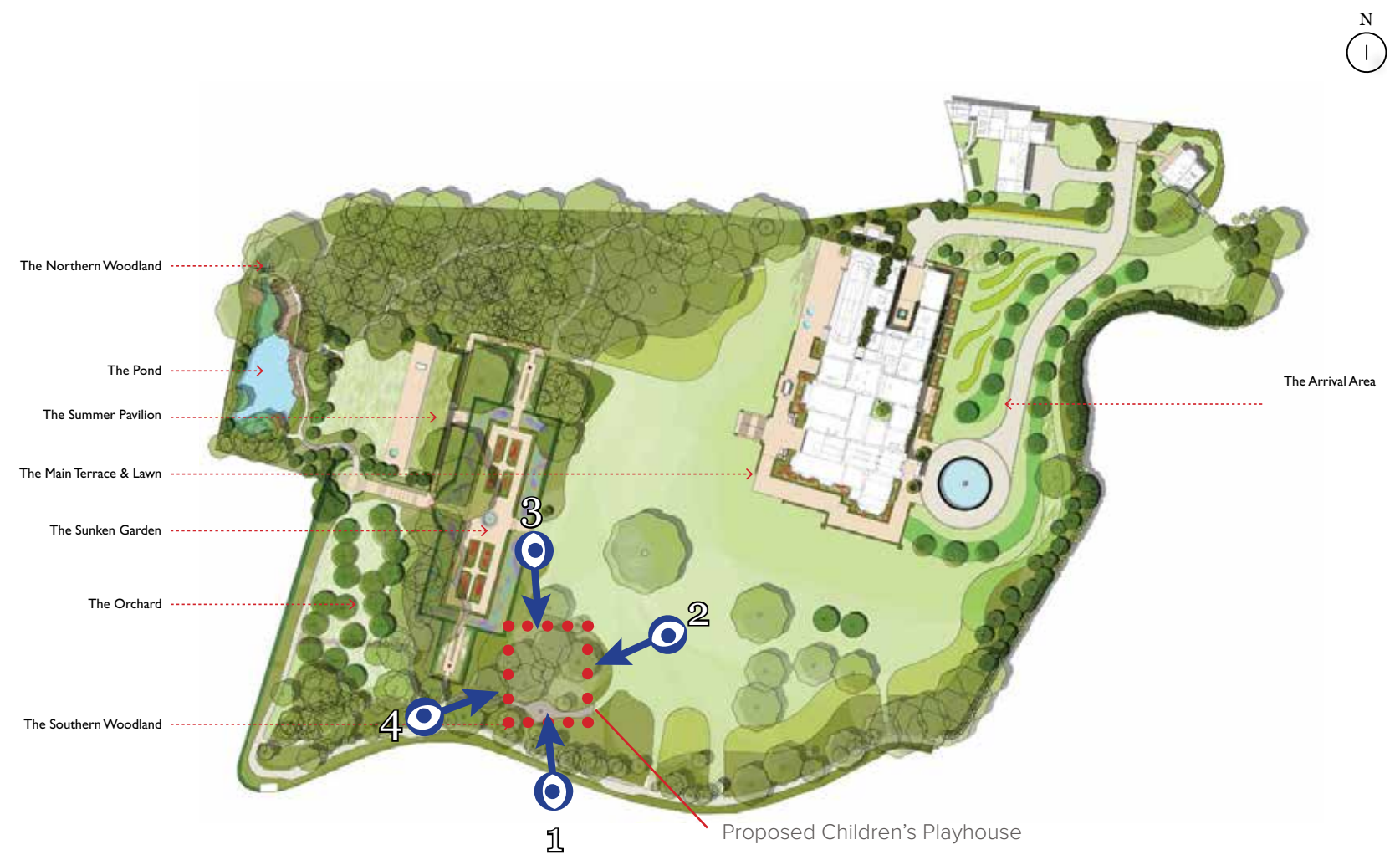


1.2 Site Views



Proposed Playhouse Site

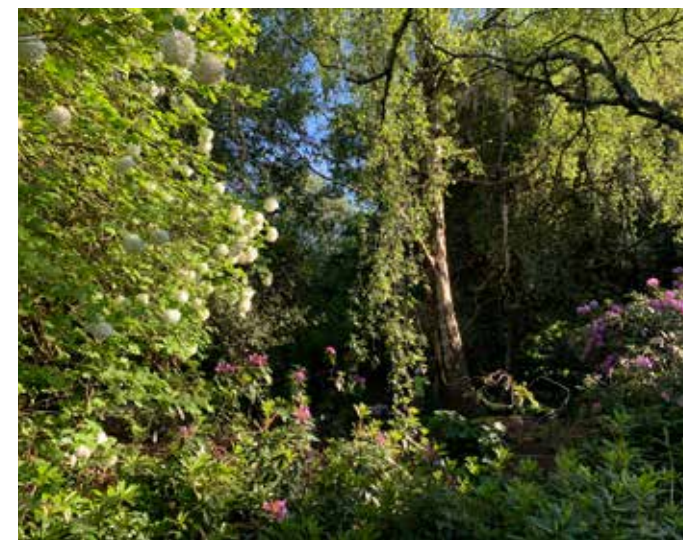
1. North View Towards Playhouse
2. East View Towards Playhouse
3. South View Towards Playhouse
4. West View Towards Playhouse



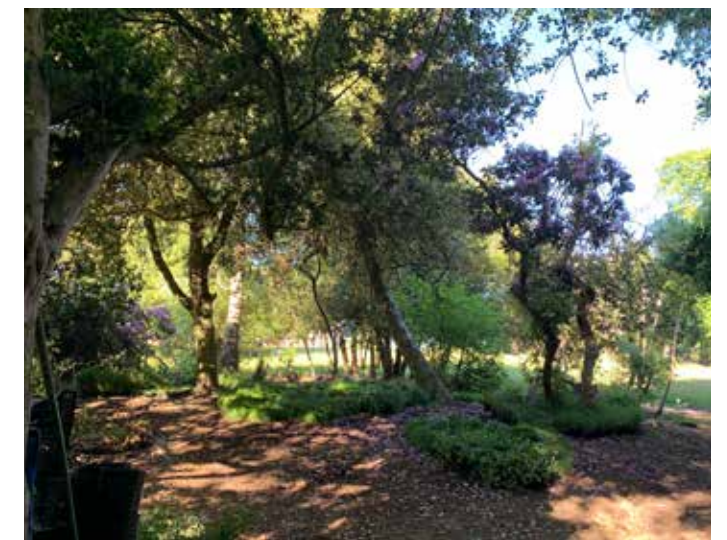
1. North View



2. East View



3. South View



4. West View



1.3 Design Proposal

DESIGN BRIEF

One wooden children's playhouse with raised platofrms to be erected within the curtilage of Athlone House. Key considerations and design parameters include:

- To design a unique wooden children's playhouse for the recreational use of the residents of Athlone House.
- To create an unimposing structure that will be appropriate for the appearance and nature of the wider estate and garden.

THE PROCESS

The playhouse has been located and designed to limit the visual and ecological impact the proposed structure will have within the landscape. Natural timber materials have been carefully selected to help the playhouse to blend in to the character and appearance of the surrounding environment.

To ensure that the construction of the playhouse has little or no negative impact upon the surrounding trees, we have chosen to support the playhouse structure on ground screws, meaning no digging will take place in the construction of the playhouse.

The structure will have a deck and platform accessed from ground level by a spiral staircase. As the landscape drops away the deck will reach a height of approximately 1.5m from ground level. The structure will not be fixed to the surrounding trees in any way. The peak of the roof will reach a height of c 5.5m above ground level at the base of tree 2443 (Birch).

USE

The proposed Playhouse will be used purely for the enjoyment of the residents living at Athlone House.

AREA

The total internal floor space of the playhouse is approximately 9.6m2.

The construction area is c. 220m2 (shown with a red line on planning drawings).

LAYOUT

Our experience in designing playhouses has a big role in the structures we now build. We have acquired a good understanding of what makes an attractive, safe yet fun and adventurous space. This experience helps us to understand all the critical success factors that are associated with each of our playhouse designs. The layout of the playhouse and deck are predominantly determined by the location of the trees and the surrounding vegetation. In this case, the main playhouse structure is free-standing, with no dependence on the surrounding trees for support.



Image: Visual Impact Image (View from North West)

SCALE

The structure is of a size and scale that are appropriate to the wider property, whilst allowing for the use of the whole family (e.g. both adults and children). The playhouse will be finished in timber, and will not be painted so the timber can weather to a silver-grey tone naturally and blend in with the surrounding trees and shrubs. The structure is largely screened from views from the wider landscape by the surrounding trees and shrubs (see visual impact image above).

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE SURROUNDING TREES

The following tree works will be taken before construction begins;

- Holly Tree (2444) : Raised Crown by 1m to allow walking access beneath canopy
- Holly Tree (2446) : Deadwood variegated Holly
- Mulch area beneath playhouse and surrounding trees to a min depth of c. 50mm
- Local planting to area south of existing pathway to provide ecological enhancements along the southern boundary.

Please refer to the accompanying Construction Method Statement for details of the construction sequencing and measures taken to ensure the well-being of the trees and habitat. (All Mitigation measures have been written in conjunction with local ecology, tree and historic landscape report.)



2.1 Construction Statement

CONSTRUCTION

The playhouse is entirely supported using solid timber posts, which will be individually secured into the ground using hand augured ground screws. This method of support requires no digging or concrete and provides secure installation in all soil types and can be installed in and around the existing tree roots without causing damage.

The playhouse platform wraps around the trunk of trees 2443 / 2445 / 2443a. A gap of c. 70mm will be left between the framework and decking and the edge of the tree trunk to allow for tree growth. There will be no fixings to the tree. Blue Forest offer all of our clients an annual maintenance service at which point regular adjustments are made to the deck to allow for further tree growth if required.

APPEARANCE

There is no significant visual impact on view from the historic landscape (see visual impact image P.5).

The structure has been designed to provide an enchanting woodland den. The playhouse will be clad in a combination of vertical Cedar boards and Cedar shingles. The surrounding deck and support structure will be stained dark brown, a colour we have chosen as it blends in discreetly and beautifully with the natural surroundings. Over time the cladding will weather and 'silver' down to a natural tone. Combined with Blue Forest's innovative craftsmanship, this will produce a high quality finish in keeping with the garden and local tree species.

ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY

The following enhancements will be undertaken following the construction of the playhouse:

- Top up mulch to area beneath playhouse and surrounding trees to a min depth of c. 50mm
- Additional planting in area south of existing natural pathway contributing to net biodiversity gain
- Creation of natural log-piles within woodland area

SUSTAINABILITY

Blue Forest will ensure that the timber in the proposed playhouse will be sustainably harvested and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or the Programme for the Endorsement of



Images 1 & 2: Playhouse precedents supported using solid timber

CONSTRUCTION & SPECIFICATION:



1. Cedar Roof Shingles



2. Soft Wood Rafters With Cedar Sarking Boards



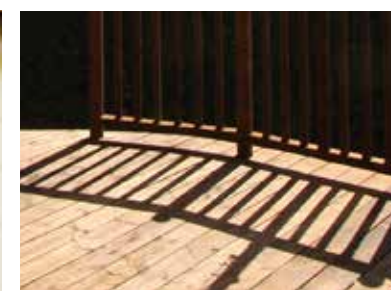
3. Detail of Internal Junction



4. Spiral Staircase



5. Handmade Windows



6. FSC Decking



7. Softwood Substructure



8. Support Platform



3.1 Site Plan

ACCESS

The playhouse is located in the south western part of the grounds forming Athlone House. Access will be by way of existing surfaced paths from the Sunk Garden and an existing unsurfaced path off the acid grassland that would divide the site from the main length of the southern tree/shrub belt to the south. No ongoing vehicular access is associated with this development.

CONCLUSION

We have worked hard to develop processes that reflect best practice in our sector. Our approach to the design and construction of our playhouse, above all, takes into consideration the well being of the neighbouring trees, the safety of our structures and the sustainable means in which each of them is built.

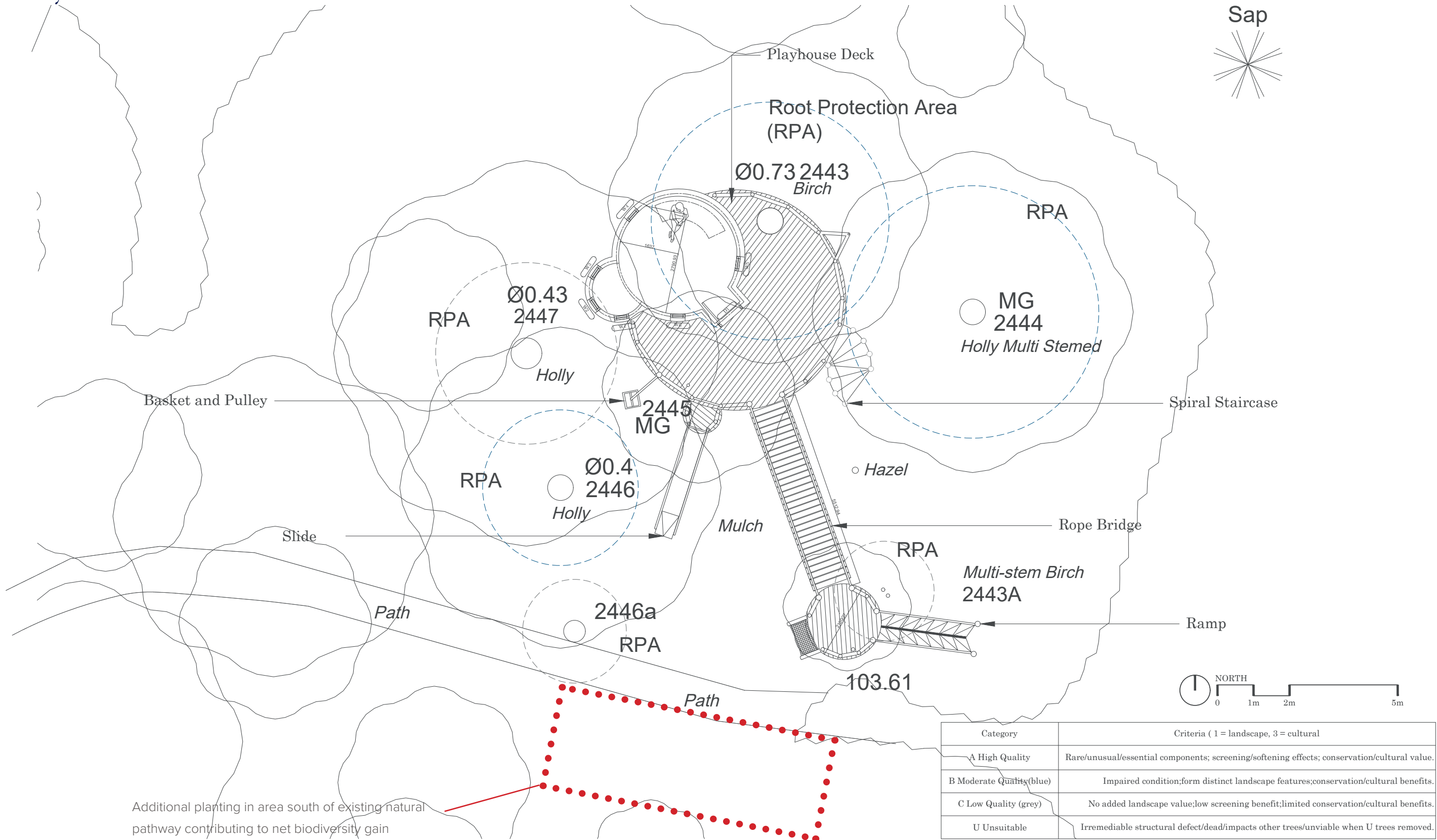
- The playhouse will be limited to the private use of the residents of Athlone House
- The chosen site is unlikely to form critical habitat for protected species and it is unlikely that there will be indirect effects to protected species recorded in the grounds.
- There will be minimal implications to existing vegetation with minimal loss of habitat or structure. The adjacent area of acid grassland will be avoided.
- There would be minimal implications to either the Highgate Conservation Area or the local heritage asset or the historic landscape structure.

If further information is required as part of this application we would be happy to provide it.

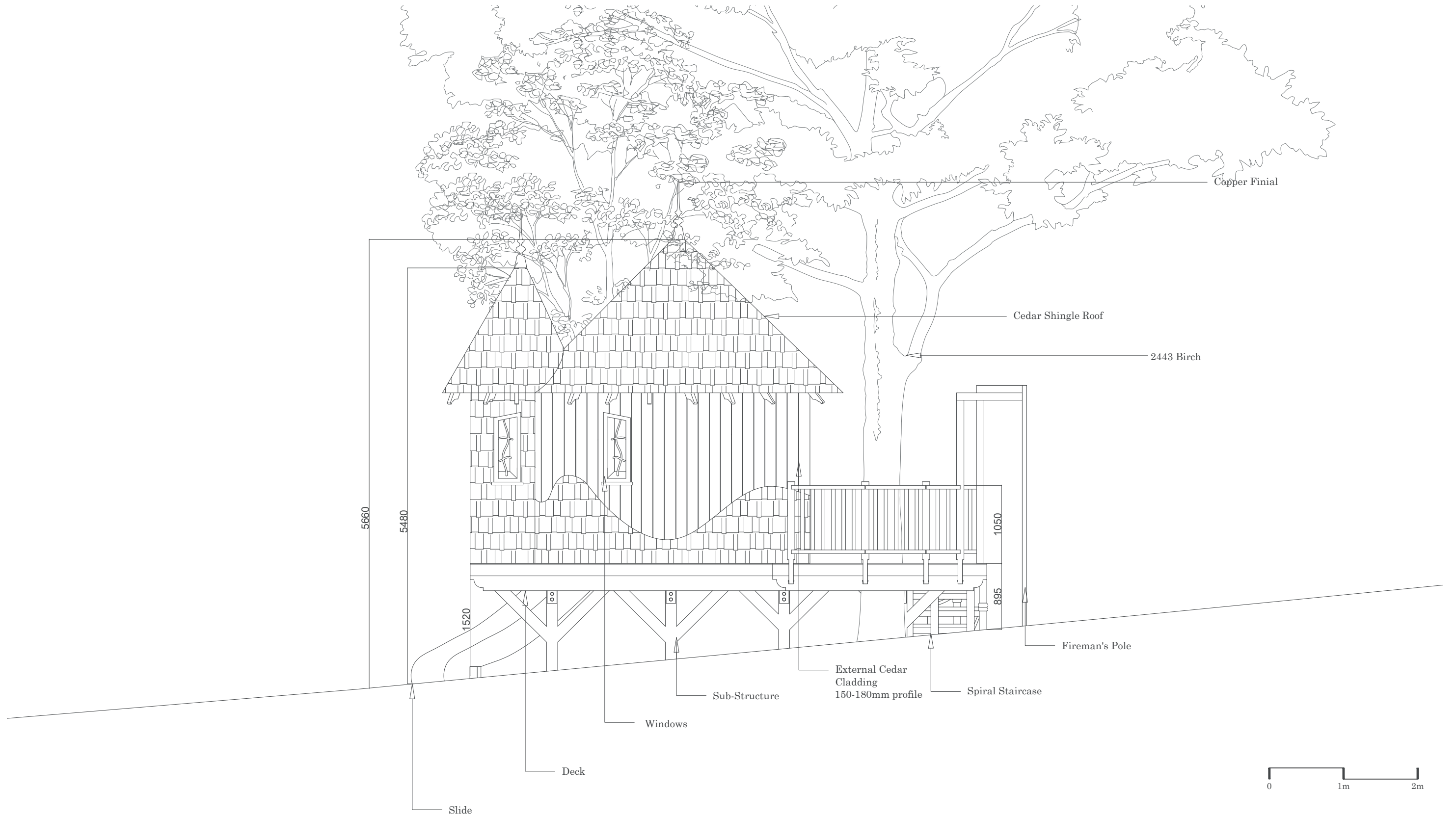
Please contact Simon Payne on 01892 750090 or e-mail: simon@blueforest.com



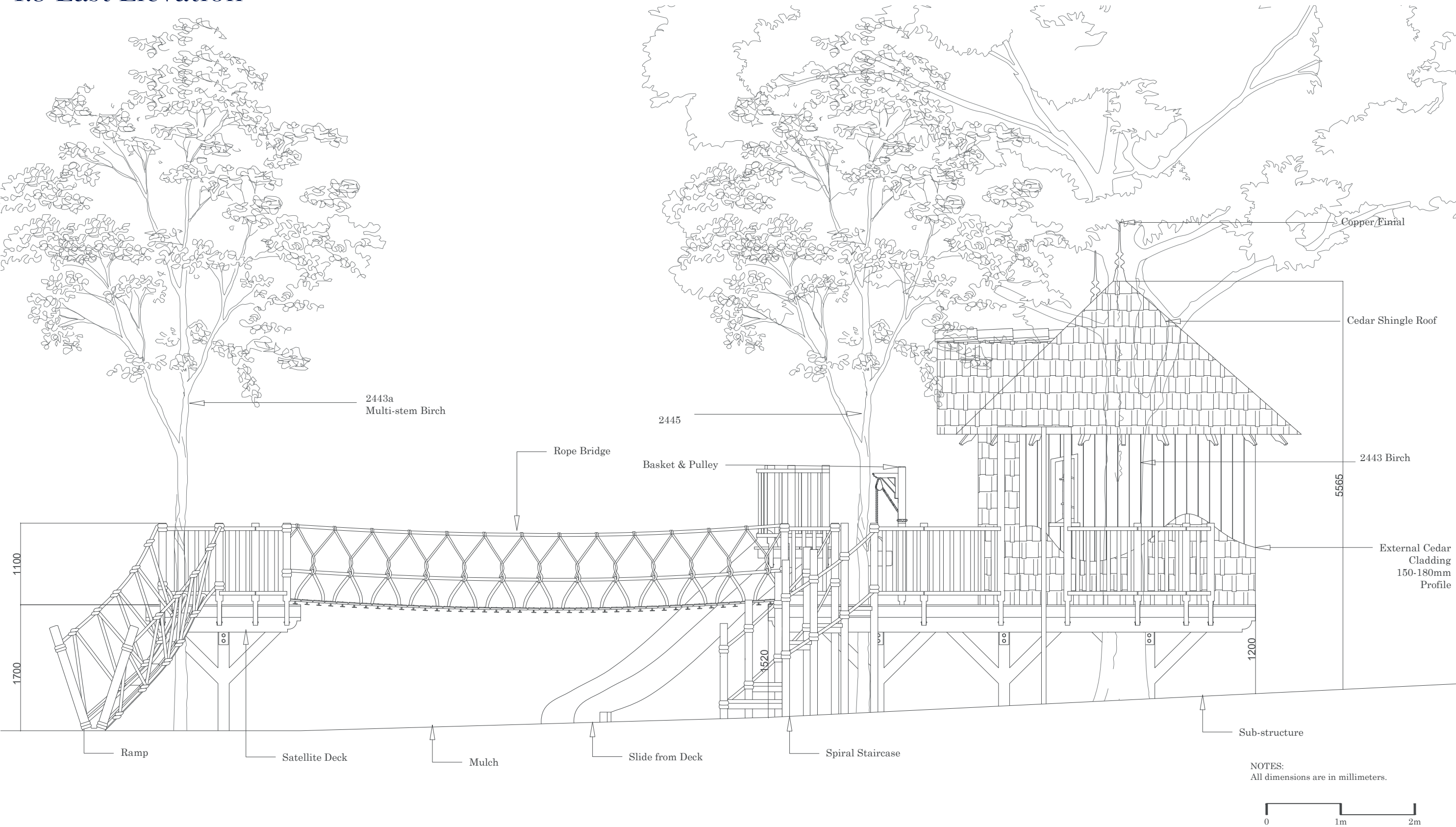
4.1 Playhouse Plan



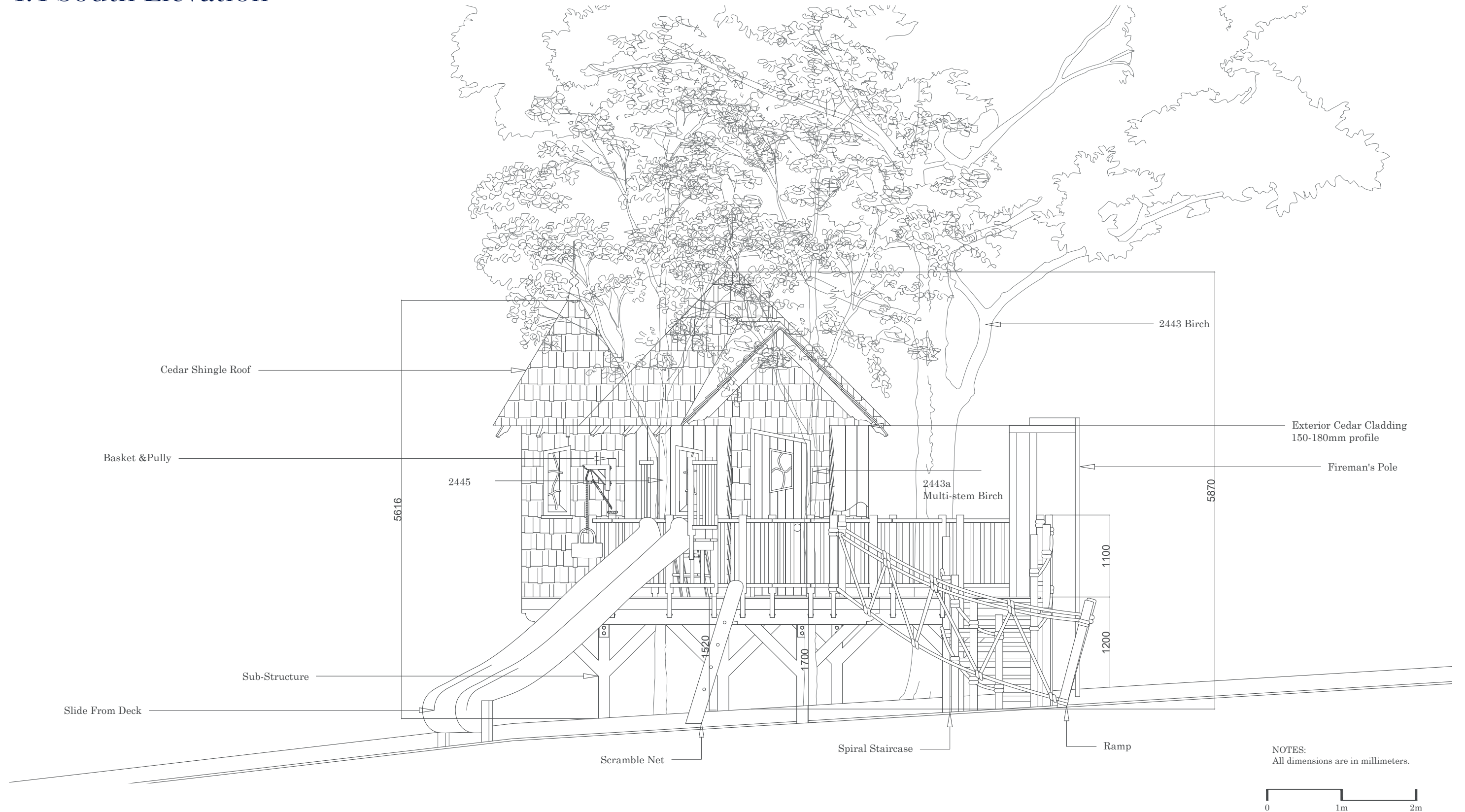
4.2 North Elevation



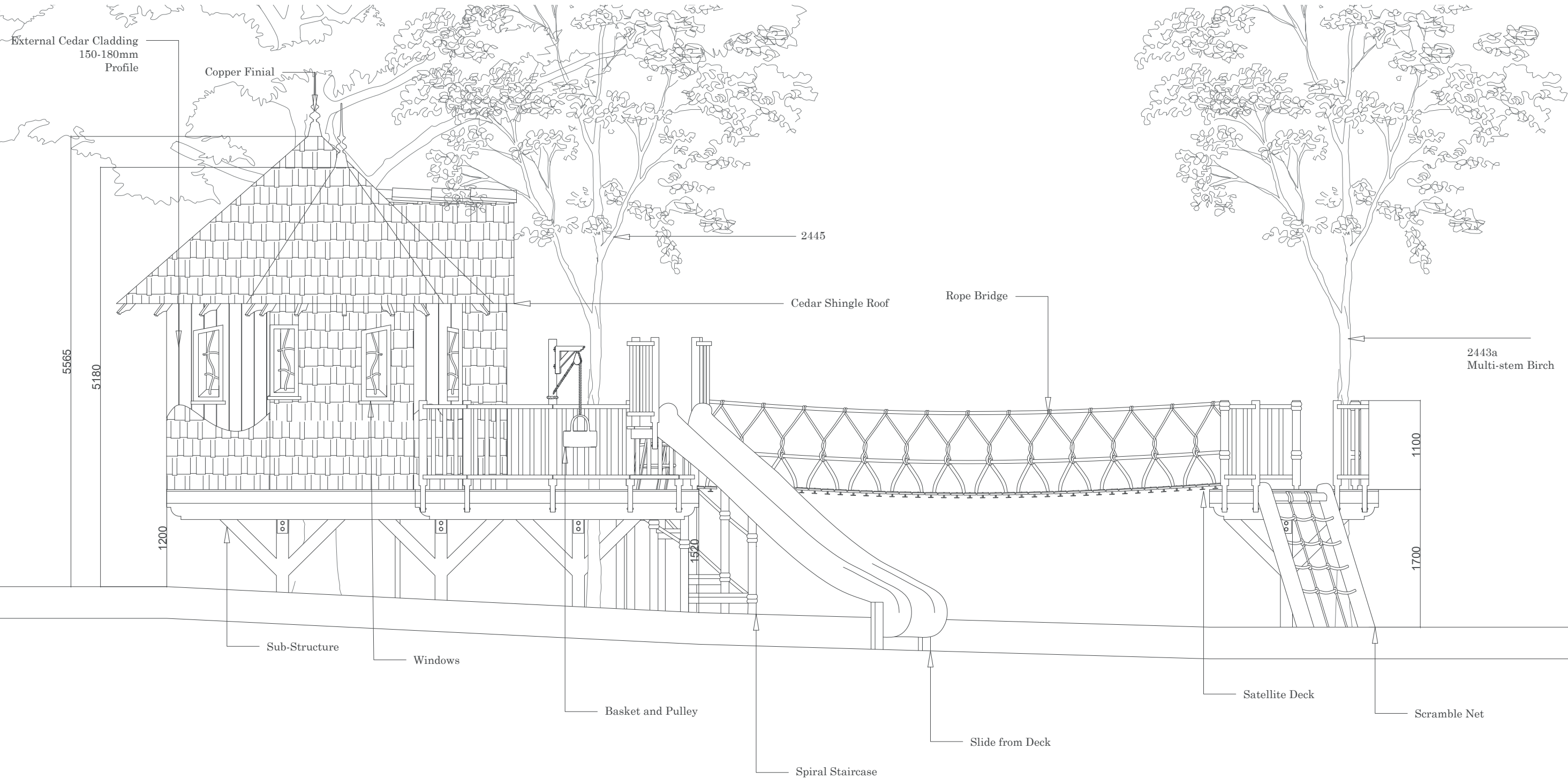
4.3 East Elevation



4.4 South Elevation



4.5 West Elevation



NOTES:
All dimensions are in millimeters.

0 1m 2m



5.1 About Blue Forest

Blue Forest is an award winning company. We have taken a pioneering approach in the design and construction of sustainable and environmentally friendly buildings and have developed a reputation as the world's leading luxury playhouse builder.

The Blue Forest team, which includes directors Andy Payne, Simon Payne and Ben Lutyens (shown below), are passionate about the well-being of the environment and are keen to promote sustainable principles and ethics throughout the design and construction process. The majority of the timber used in our buildings is FSC / PEFC certified or sourced from sustainably managed forests where there is an active strategy of replanting and habitat regeneration.

Blue Forest's passion for the environment has led to the design and implementation of many revolutionary green technology solutions for our clients.

Our uniquely tailored service provides a turnkey solution, where everything from design and planning to construction and commissioning comes in an easy, reliable and professional package.



ANDY SIMON BEN



Image: Precedent image - not proposed playhouse





CALL US
+44 (0) 1892 75 00 90

EMAIL US
info@blueforest.com

VISIT US
www.blueforest.com

Blue Forest (UK) Ltd, The Studio, Bensfield Farm, Beech Hill, Wadhurst, East Sussex, TN5 6JR