

Pinehurst Pocket Park Art Component. Sara Johani, artist

There are three art components of this park. The largest (34' X 24') is a play oval for children. It incorporates various known games and is designed to inspire invention of new games also. Two of the traditional games are Ta Gali Gali (Nigerian hopscotch), similar to what we play only the squares are round. Hopscotch is played around the world. In Nigeria they jump in depressions in the ground; here they are pavers, cast in cement, utilizing oxidized minerals to permanently color the cement. The colors are coordinated with the rest of the plaza, creating a weaving of color and shape with intent to engage the imagination and the physical movement - the lines are flowing, sliding into ever-changing shapes of color. The cement for the plaza was mixed and troweled entirely by hand so it is charmingly "hand-made". You can feel its undulations under your feet, a little like walking on earth rather than on an artificial surface.

Surrounding the hopscotch rounds is a "Four Square" ball game boundary. Again, it is oval rather than square and the required expansion joint actually forms the boundary, setting the play plaza theme, organic shapes and organic colors, as preferred by the neighborhood committee.

Among the endless possibilities for making their own new games, children are also encouraged to learn local lore. Incorporated in the sixteen pavers distributed throughout are designs of four categories of reptiles, birds, mammals and plants with four representatives in each category. They represent the local natural world; examples are crow, pine, coyote and slug. Each category can be grouped to evolve patterns of discernment. Example: One predator species, three non-predator; three conifers, one deciduous etc. The designs incorporate an inlay technique, playing variations in color against other variegated colors, surrounded by yet more color. The plaza moves from the macro to the micro - the details hope to entice the smallest among us ...

Here and there one might find an embedded jewel, a focal point of imagination, something to key on. These are high quality tesserae, randomly seated.

The second component is a "replica" of the historic Pinehurst steam tractor that was famous among neighborhood children to ride around the neighborhood. It was owned by M.L. Beerbower and kept in a garage quite close to the location of the present park. Of course, it can't be a replica, too unsafe, but the small climbing tractor - or bench - is a compressed form representing the historic tractor. It is sculpted of ferro-cement in similar tones to the plaza.

The two entrances to the park form the third artful component of Pinehurst Park. They are columnar basalt mini columns, naturally shapely with the nicks and artistic "dents" they have gathered in their journey. They will be embellished with images, petroglyphic in appearance, on the pine theme - cones, branches and winged seeds of the pine tree, for which the area is named.