

The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of a young child in a white shirt and dark shorts, climbing or playing in a bright yellow play structure. The child is in motion, and the background is out of focus, emphasizing the text in the foreground.

SPACES

East are an architectural practice who have over ten years experience in working on educational and community projects. We have worked as team leaders to design and deliver a range of schools, community buildings, play spaces, parks and nurseries, many of which have been highly commended and praised by those involved; including the Mayor of London.

PLAYING

Our particular skill and interest lies in understanding what the client needs and helping them to deliver it on time and budget through sustained dialogue and consultation and a transparent design process.

AND

recent changes in policy have increased the need for clients, parents, boroughs, communities, and local stakeholders to make the best use of resources available. East are experienced in working rapidly, flexibly, and

LEARNING

within the context of limited funds to help clients prioritise outcomes without losing sight of community aspirations. More often than not, constrained circumstances have helped us develop genuinely creative solutions together with clients to make project outcomes relevant and valuable. We see this process as key to helping define the value of our skill and motivation as designers

This booklet aims to highlight our experience in delivering the kind of product and process that those involved in procuring educational and community projects of all kinds may benefit from.



BEES, ACORNS AND OAKS

Continuous End User Involvement

Sussex Road School in Kent, £1.9m

When we went to visit Sussex Road School for the first time we were welcomed by a client team made up of ten pupils, aged six to eleven, all dressed in their yellow-brown uniform, adorned with oak leaves. These pupils, along with teachers, governors and school head have remained directly involved in the process of redevelopment of their school for the next six years.

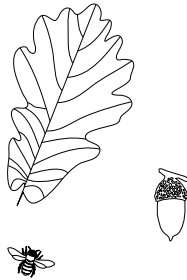
We designed, fundraised and built a new entrance space, as well as six classrooms and associated spaces. The plan of the new building responds to the spaces around its edges, giving each classroom special intimate views and direct access to external spaces. The elevations facing the residential streets are clad in clay hanging tiles, which the pupils and friends of the school purchased individually. At the southern elevation, where the classroom face the existing bank of Chestnuts and Oaks, timber cladding enhances the natural climate of the spaces created. This façade is also planted with fragrant climbers to attract diverse wildlife.





LEFT AND OPPOSITE PAGE
The facade materials of the new school were chosen to complement and enhance the different aspects and features of the school. The student client helped discuss and select clay hanging tiles against the existing bricks

RIGHT AND BELOW
The cladding for the entrance building was branded by year four, five and six students with the symbols of the school, bees and oaks. These reflect the real bees feeding from the new climbing plants and the oak leaves falling in autumn from the nearby trees





With the new footprint of the school we created distinct, yet connected outdoor playspaces for different age groups. The reception play area for example is on a large timber deck against the existing bank of trees



ABOVE

The outdoor classroom at the roof of the reception building gives a view on every child's home. It is used for geography and art lessons, as well as for special celebrations and receptions

RIGHT

Skirting boards rise up to children's shoulder height where areas are used more intensely



Upstairs classroom with an internal window into the double-height space of the lower foundation classroom

We placed a special emphasis on the connection between the different classrooms. The double reception room for example has direct access to the outdoor playspaces, as well as a high window looking at an old oak tree, and the hall and classrooms on the first floor



EXPANDED LEARNING

Reorganising Spaces for Increased Efficiency and Flexibility

Tufnell Park School and Nursery, London, £550k

Tufnell Park School was running out of space, with classrooms too small, the school expanding, as well as needing to find space for a nursery within their grounds. Our proposal was to make better use of the school boundaries, expanding rooms towards the edges of the site, creating a new face of the school announcing its presence to the street and the community.

The new nursery is located on the existing redundant service yard, to preserve valuable outside playspace and trees. It is a sequence of rooms organised under one big roof, sloping exactly parallel to the hill it sits on. The facades underneath this roof push out as far as possible, making full use of the available yard space, giving the school a street facade, and a new public face. The large reflected window out onto Dalmeny Road sits high to prevent direct views into the nursery, but is echoed in a mirror underneath the ceiling to allow children indirect views out into the street. We also designed 5 new classroom extensions constructed during the summer holidays.







LEFT

We extended five classrooms into the existing trees with timber lean-to conservatories, providing much needed light, ventilation and access to outdoor space. They act as glazed arbours, and colonnades to the classrooms depending on which doors are opened



LEFT AND RIGHT

The sand pit is sunk flush into the painted timber decking and is protected from rain by a canopy





ABOVE AND RIGHT
Inside the nursery space, a 1600mm tall birch plywood skirting board wraps around the main playspace, as a response to the physicality of the young children. The window to Dalmeny Road is set high for privacy, but a mirror in the ceiling above it allows children secret views of the street

A generous canopy
above the entrance
provides a meeting
space for waiting
parents



CLASSROOMS AND GARDENS

Phased Redevelopment of a North London School

Moreland Children's Centre and Community resource,
London £450k



The masterplan for the new school was designed as a snaking shape, to give shape and orientation to the play and classroom spaces, and to enable a distinct series of phases. Classrooms were each given ground floor gardens, providing many children with what they lacked at home. The buildings shown in pink were the first phases delivered

The brief for Moreland School was to develop a phased masterplan, rehousing an expanded school, community facilities and new housing on the occupied site, without having to relocate the school during construction. The new school was imagined in consultation with the staff, governors, and children as a long snake, winding its way through playground spaces and private classroom gardens. The first stages of the school redevelopment were the new Moreland Children's Centre and the Kings Square Community Nursery and Garden. The two new buildings consist of single storey extensions constructed of single skin clay block walls faced with lime based self-coloured render that allows the walls of the buildings to breathe. The clay blocks have excellent thermal properties, produce less CO² than their concrete equivalent and are quick to construct. Large stainless steel windows with coloured glass infill are fixed to the face of the buildings to provide atmospheric light conditions both internally and externally. The roofs are planted in sedum to be viewed as a garden from the flats above.



Windows to the gardens
are tinted green to
enhance perception of the
grass and the quince tree



LEFT

All windows are of a generous door size, sometimes with coloured glass, heightening and filtering the view of the outside world

BELOW

Moreland House used to be the caretaker's accommodation and workshop and is now the 'Stay and Play' base for children up to five years old. It is also used for community purposes such as courses for parents. The front garden has been removed to make space for the necessary extensions and an access ramp



RIGHT

The garden to the nursery has been planted with the help of parents and children, which are also involved in the maintenance of the plants. The ground cover is real grass, and artificial where hard wear is expected



FOREST ADVENTURES

Transformation of Existing Buildings and Spaces

Ore Valley Adventure Playground, Hastings, £750k

As part of the brief development in conjunction with the client group, we considered a range of key questions about health and safety, responsibility and risk: How to design a building which is safe, yet enables children to assess risks responsibly? How can you have an adventure while satisfying building regulations?

The playground is located in the previously dilapidated coachworks building in the south-western corner of the Ore Valley. Heavily insulated timber rooms are inserted in the refurbished shell, to house facilities such as a large kitchen, music and sensory rooms, toilets and changing rooms and a staff room. The outside area will continue to evolve with the community and children's participation, as a space that children own and are empowered to shape and design. The playground will offer a variety of inclusive play opportunities including places where children can build their own structures with storage containers full of tools and equipment, quiet areas, wild nature areas, food growing, water play, a fire pit, slides, zip line, places for digging and making dens.

In parallel to preparing drawings for planning application and construction, we organised on site den making sessions with the future users of the playground





A long timber ramp providing access for everyone between the upper and lower level playground. We asked the contractor to leave the long timber poles at the heights they remained after piling, to provide more opportunities for building and playing.



FAR LEFT
New timber rooms sit beneath the new roof structure



LEFT
We decided to keep the posts to the height the contractor supplied them to provide space for hanging buntings or building dens



RIGHT
The old coachworks building is given a new roof creating a generous entrance

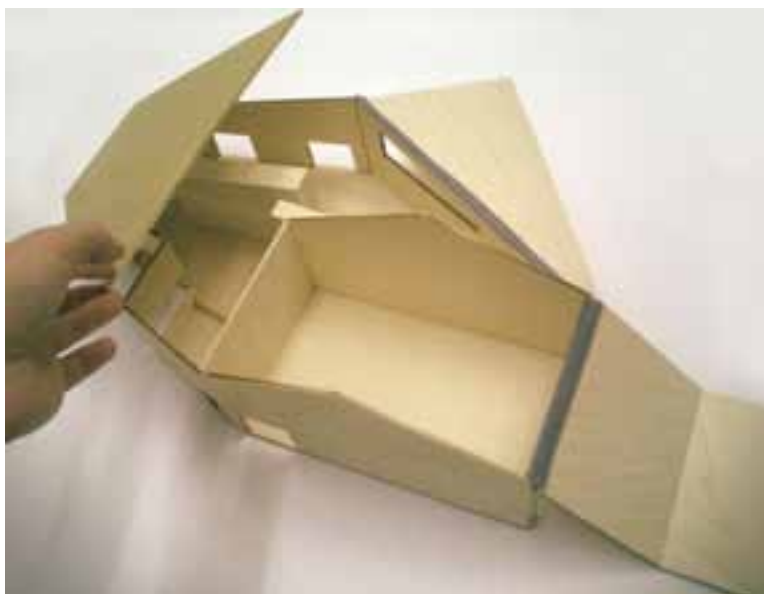
LEFT
Within the coach house, heavily insulated timber rooms provide a large kitchen for cooking and eating, a team room, a quiet space, toilets and storage



SEMI-PRECIOUS

New Communal Learning and Arts Facilities

Meads Community Centre, Kent, £1.2m



The streets around the new Meads community centre are called Emerald Crescent, Moonstone Square, Ruby Close. We decided to turn the community centre into a green jewel, sitting in a verdant garden. The building houses the brief for an emerging community, including nursery, sports hall, office, café, and flexible spaces for tea dances, tai-chi and other activities to be tested and developed in use over time. Each face of the building works hard to deliver a new localised context, face and space. All uses are set around a kitchen, and a hall space, each of which are special infrastructures for social opportunity.

ABOVE
A 'chocolate box' model of the new building, used as a tool in engaging the emerging community to think about what they would like to see happening

RIGHT
View of the entrance area, a space opening onto the nursery, kitchen and the large hall



BELOW
The different gardens
as seen from Emerald
Crescent: Topiary
hedging, chartreuse
flower garden, jade
glazed tiles and
meadow roof garden



FROM CHILD TO CITY

Fractal Architecture

Shortlisted competition entry, Primary School Bremervoerde,
Germany, £5.2m

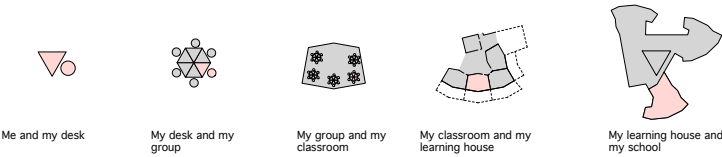
East were shortlisted to develop proposals for a primary school in northern Germany.

The school was very keen to develop a coherent and logical sequence of spaces and scales, a fractal architecture, from a triangular child's desks of 60cm side lengths to the group table of six children, to the classroom that can accommodate six of these group tables and a chair circle. Four classroom are clustered around a break out space and form one learning house. Three learning houses are grouped around the central school forum and together make up the school as part of the city. The building sits low in the landscape and is developed around the Passivhouse principles.

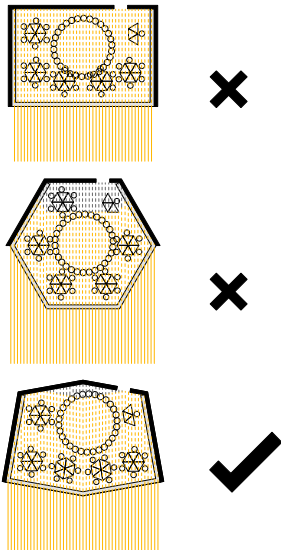




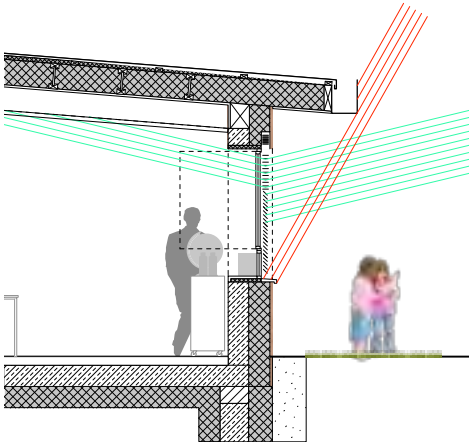
View of the central
forum

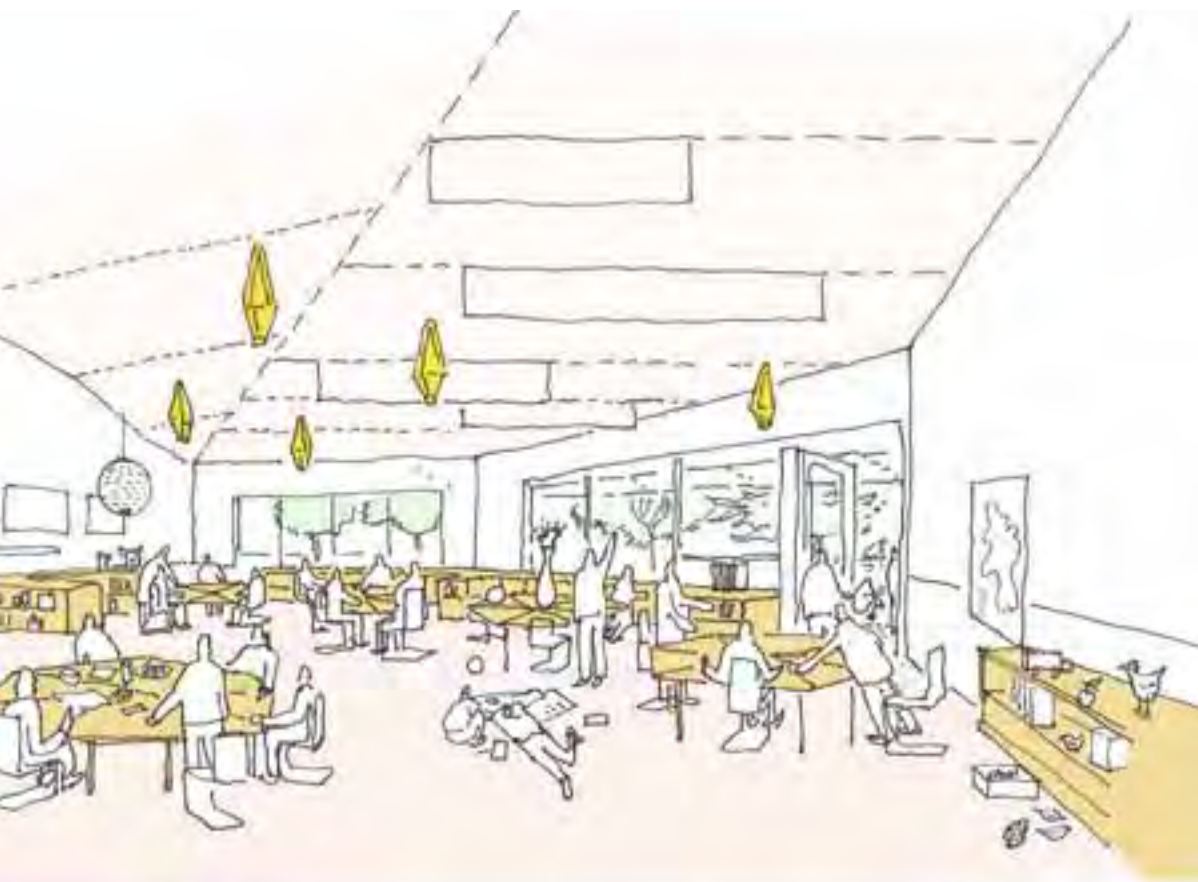


ABOVE
The fractal design leads from the space of the child to the shape of the overall classroom and school



LEFT
We optimised the shape of the classroom to allow for group activities as well as a chair circle , while maintaining ideal lightly conditions





ABOVE
View of the classroom

BELOW AND LEFT
Section and elevation
of the classroom
showing the passive
heating strategy



PLAYFUL MAKING

High Impact, Low Cost Play Facilities

Hastings and St Leonards Children's Centre,
Hastings, £30k



Whilst improvements were provided that were specific to client requirements, we also aimed at providing an outward looking urban approach to the site through the use of selective tactics including the provision of carefully directed viewing holes in the timber shelter aimed at key landmarks in the distance, cladding the fence with mirrors that enabled the space to become visually 'collaged' into the Cliffside housing opposite, and re-using the mundane emergency access road as a social play space in its own right. The various shelters, play territories, and boundary treatments work together as a collection of miniature environments for play which also bring new spatial relationships between these areas. The steel and timber shelters shape a new skyline visible from Morrisons, providing a new image of social interaction.

The shapes making up the play blankets and screens, made in collaboration with parents, were inspired by the childrens' play with cups and their compositional explorations





ABOVE
A cedar timber tent mediates between upper and lower levels of the garden, enabling views out towards distant coastal landmarks through angled drilled holes, with a red mirrored undercroft as an enticing shelter. A simple structure harnesses a wide range of play experiences



LEFT
Across the play area, washing lines were designed as a support structure for colourful blankets made to designs agreed through consultation with the children



LEFT
The nursery play space was designed to be rich in terms of texture, space and experience. Simple interventions in the existing garden include mirrored screens, a water play table bridging the sandpit, and coloured blankets able to be hung out in a few minutes to allow shade and shelter work together to make a changing, flexible play environment.

BELOW
A stainless steel play table was equipped with a water tap to act as a water bridge across the sand pit, with holes to allow water and light on to the sand



PICNIC SPACES

Providing Temporary School Accommodation for 150 Children
New North School, North London, £150k



New North School and Ecclesbourne School had to share their premises for a period of two years, during the construction of a new building elsewhere. During this time it was necessary for another 150 children to be accommodated within the same space. We understand that two years are a long time in the life of a primary school child, and we made careful and joyful insertions into the existing building to make a temporary situation something special and memorable. Key entrance doors were painted in a over scaled pink gingham pattern; domestic imagery used to promote friendliness and intimacy. Works had to be completed during the summer holidays.

Simple and playful canopies were placed where children and parents had to queue.

RIGHT AND BELOW

We combined simple and low cost options with moments of (inexpensive) luxury and generosity – hand painted oversized gingham patterns on the entrance doors, and new gold leaf on the infants signs above them. Plastic mirrors were fixed at low levels for interaction; below a display shelf, to enhance the liveliness and use of wall surfaces





East

Architecture, landscape, urban design

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'Working with East has to rate as one of the most exciting times in my professional life - designing a state of the art 21st century building with a committed team of architects who had the child's interest at the centre of their practice.'

Sarah Saxty, Head teacher

'East were outstanding in their level of commitment in engaging with their young client team and with the staff at the school, and this is reflected in a very successful and happy outcome.'

Lady Sorrell, The Sorrell Foundation

Sussex Road school was nominated Building Magazine's top project in "Three of the Best"

'The Governor's of The Federation of Greenways Schools wish to thank East Architects for a wonderful and exciting design, for working with the School to produce an excellent solution. The Governors are fully behind the design.'

Richard Matthew, Chair of Governors of The federation of Greenways Schools