

01-PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Dreamscapes: Play Area, located at The Resonant, is a kids play area that is situated on the ground and first floor of the right half of the existing Knight & Lee building Southsea. The space is desired to bring the young generations of the community together in order to inspire and pave the way for the future. Despite typically being an area for just children, the space has been designed also to attract adults and parents to interact with each other and be immersed in a dream-like surrounding. The design is full of geometric and colourful shapes that provide the building blocks for imaginative play. The goal of the space is to help develop the minds of children to become engaged, curious and confident creators. The importance of cognitive development is critical in a young child's life.

In a world where the education system is oriented towards and quantified in a way that measures children in relation to STEM subjects, the need for a space that pushes exploration and encourages children to learn in unquantifiable ways is extremely necessary. The Dreamscapes: Play Area is a space that allows children to grow in ways that traditional schooling does not.

"According to figures from the Cultural Learning Alliance, there has been a 10 per cent decline in pupils taking arts subjects at GCSE between 2017 and 2018, and since 2010 numbers are down 35 per cent. There has also been a continuing decline in uptake of arts A levels in England - down 24 per cent since 2010."

"Access to the visual arts in this country must not depend on social and economic advantage. Private schools place a premium on a rich cultural education for their pupils while many state schools are starved of the resources to support access to culture and creativity for their pupils." (Maria Balshaw, director of Tate, 2020)

"The curriculum needs to be big enough to include all subjects and be for all children. Art and creativity are so important to science, to maths, or to any other academic venture. Cutting arts education means you cut off inventiveness which impacts on being creative. We have many great artists, great thinkers and inventors in the UK and this has come through a sense of possibility. Arts education gives that sense of possibility." (Maria Balshaw, director of Tate, 2020)



02 - CONCEPT

Within this project, the theoretical context behind memory within children, as well as how colours, materials, and shapes can affect the development of memory, was at the forefront of design decisions. The project also explored the importance and benefits of creating imaginative and sensory kids play areas within a wider spectrum.

After a lot of research I grouped my theory into three key categories:

COLOUR

According to research studies, "colour carries critical importance in the development of the cognitive and motor skills of the children". New born babies have monochrome vision and are unable to distinguish the difference between colours up until the age of around eight months. Around this time, colours slowly begin to differentiate themselves and become stimulating factors in everyday life. A recent study showed that exposure to different colours during the early learning process can help with memory-related problems. "Colour is one of the most important characteristics that can help us assess, estimate and define an object" (Renk Etkisi, 2017). Exposing a baby to different shades of the same colour can help them make important colour connections early on in life rather than surrounding them with the same primary colours.

MEMORY

Memory is central to cognition and cognitive development. Although not fully developed in infancy, the early years period, usually between birth through to age 8 is the most important time in the building and development of memory. In order for imaginative play to occur, children need to have these memories and information stored. The use of repetitive shapes, colours, and materials can spark connections to both past memories and be used to form newly imagined ideas.

SENSORY

The most effective kid's play areas should be engaging and stimulating for the mind and senses, whilst being a safe space for exploration. The use of different textures, materials, and colours within the interior, 'stimulates their sense of balance (vestibular) and increases their awareness of their emotions, body, and surroundings (proprioception)'. These features help children broaden their development skills and gain a sense of independence.

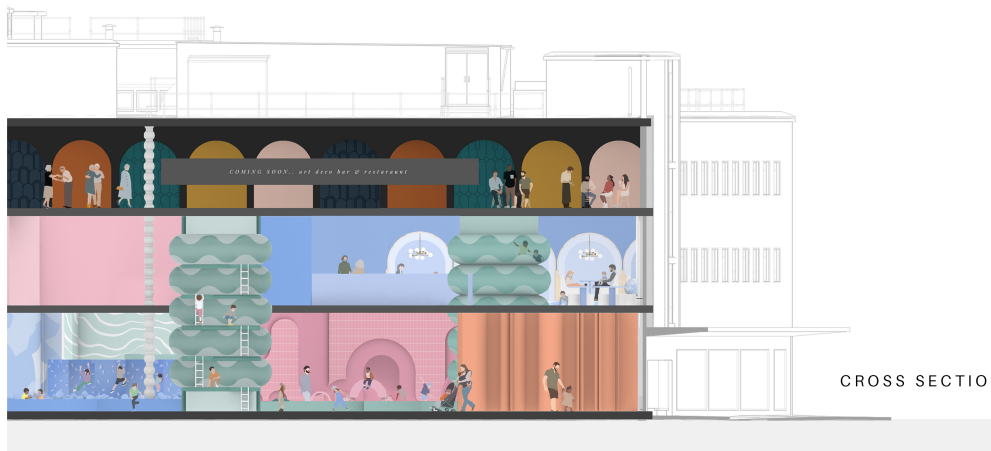


03-DESIGN

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



As you can see more clearly within the floorplans and sections, the design scheme features the use of a monochromatic colour story using four key colours. The use of the monochromatic interior creates boundaries and areas that contain themselves without having to be physically squared off. This was a vital aspect within the scheme in order to zone specific areas and create an immersive and dream-like surrounding.

At the forefront of this project are children and the desire to create a community play area that discounts age, sex, gender, race and other characteristics.

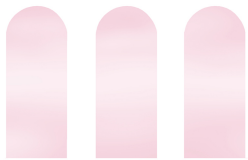
Having an inclusive and non-discriminatory space that encourages all of the local community to engage, play and learn within one place outside of the school setting creates a hub where families, friends and strangers can come to grow and immerse themselves.

The play area is open plan with limited enclosed spaces which not only allows for ease when moving through the area but also means that parents can more easily keep an eye on their child. The first floor is made up of bridge like balconies due to the open void space within the central part of the volume.

03-DESIGN



LONG SECTION

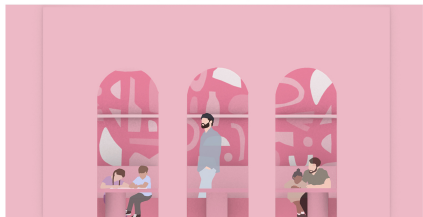


SENSORY ROOM

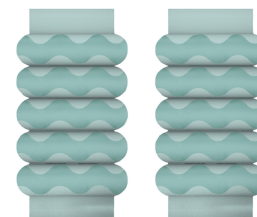
The Sensory room will be a quiet and calming space, designed to develop children's senses, through special lighting, music, and objects. The colour is blue is known to be a soothing and therefore a great colour choice for the space.

SLIDES & BALL PIT

The slides are built into two arches, which are a repeated shape throughout my design. The area will be varying shades of orange which helps to further build the children's colour connections as well as zone off the space.



CRAFT ROOM

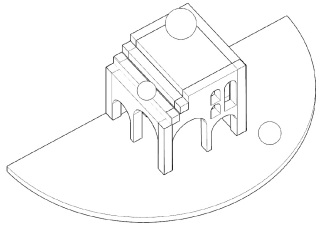


CLIMBING TOWERS

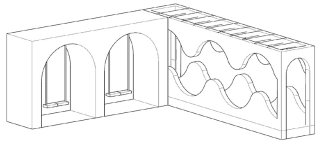
The climbing towers are bulbous forms that span across the ground and first floor. Children will travel up the space vertically by climbing ladders up through the multiple platforms. Partially transparent windows will be wrapped around each segment in a wave-like form serving as vantage points for the children to look out around them. To enter the tower there will be a arch away gap at the base.

03 - DESIGN

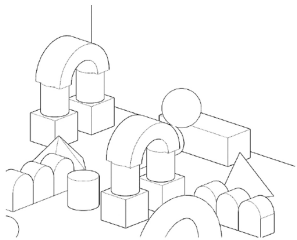
Each play space within the Dreamscape Play Area was designed in order to test all stages of a child's development. Many of the play structures and objects have nostalgic and traditional roots but have been reimagined into a futuristic form in order to represent the idea of children being the future. An example of this would be building blocks, which are a familiar item used throughout most people's early stages of life despite the time of which they were brought up. A key tool for play is the use of the familiar. Building blocks also enable a child to test their own imagination and create something from scratch as well as something that is completely made up in a child's own head. These key spaces throughout the play area combine to create an environment that is dynamic and testing while also being comfortable for expression and fun.



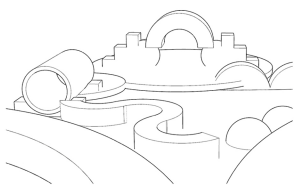
Using arches for doorways and windows, the space still feels open whilst being a contained unit. I decided to add the spheres, particularly those on top of the structure because it added an element of defying gravity and that anything is possible when using your imagination.



The L-shaped swing set and monkey bars were designed in order to represent the distinct interior of the Dreamscapes: Play Area. The monkey bars are slightly closed off to the outside giving it a greater sense of adventure and separateness to the swings.



The placement not only shows the possibilities for play but also highlights the way in which the space can be explored. The arrangement also echoes the Dreamscapes: Play Area as a whole in terms of the arches, circles, and other frequently used shapes.



This area engages children's ability to navigate themselves through a space, testing their climbing, crawling, balancing and other skills. It is also an environment where parents can motivate and encourage their child to push themselves to try obstacles that may test them physically and mentally.



BUILDING BLOCKS

SOFT PLAY

SENSORY ROOM

RECEPTION

PLAYHOUSE

SWING SET & MONKEY BARS

