



**WHAT**  
*architecture*

WHAT WAS THE MOST  
PUBLISHED HACKNEY  
BUILDING IN 2006?

WHAT

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**THE ROOFTOP NURSERY  
WAS DELIVERED FOR JUST  
£315,000 (£1,170 / M<sup>2</sup>)**

**THE ROOFTOP NURSERY  
HAS SLIDING WALLS WHICH  
ALLOW THE FLOOR PLAN  
TO BE ORGANISED INTO VARIOUS  
LAYOUTS ACCORDING TO CHILD  
NUMBERS**

**THE ROOFTOP NURSERY  
WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A  
FORTHCOMING CHANNEL 4  
PROGRAMME ON MODERN  
CHILDCARE**

**THE ROOFTOP NURSERY  
FEATURES TECHNICAL  
INNOVATION WITH BRITAIN'S  
FIRST SAFETY PLAY ROOF**

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## THE ROOFTOP NURSERY WAS AWARDED:

- \_ 2006 BEST DESIGN LED REGENERATION AWARD  
[RUNNER UP]
- \_ 2006 HACKNEY DESIGN AWARD [FIRST PRIZE]
- \_ 2007 RIBA NATIONAL AWARD
- \_ 2007 PRIME MINISTERS' SHORT LIST

## THE ROOFTOP NURSERY WAS PUBLISHED IN:

- \_ NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE
- \_ THE TIMES -7 APRIL 2006
- \_ KULTUREFLASH 160- 14 APRIL 2006
- \_ ICON - JUNE 2006
- \_ BLUEPRINT -JUNE 2006
- \_ CHANGING LONDON SCHOOLS -JUNE 2006
- \_ ART4D [THAILAND]- JULY 2006
- \_ INTERIOR DESIGN [NEW YORK] -JULY 2006
- \_ RIBA EDUCATION SECTOR REVIEW - 2006
- \_ MARK [THE NETHERLANDS] - FALL 2006
- \_ PLAN [IRELAND] - OCTOBER 2006
- \_ DISENART [SPAIN] - OCTOBER 2006
- \_ MONUMENT [AUSTRALIA] - OCTOBER 2006
- \_ RIBA JOURNAL UK
- \_ FRAME [THE NETHERLANDS]
- \_ ARCHITECTS JOURNAL

# Regeneration Awards

This is to certify that

*The Rooftop Nursery, Hackney  
by W.H.A.T. architecture*

was highly commended in the category

*Best Design Led Regeneration Project*

Organised by



## The Awards 2006

The Hackney Design Awards 2006 was open to any schemes completed between July 2004 and August 2006. Anyone could nominate a scheme that demonstrated one or more of the following - quality, viability, innovation, sustainability.

A total of 96 schemes were nominated with a high representation of educational schemes and private residential projects. This clearly indicates good design is being embodied across all development regardless of size and budget!

The Judging Panel short-listed 17 schemes and visited each of these in November 2006. The panel has awarded seven winners, two commendations for Contribution to Conservation and one mention.



### Hackney Design Awards 2006

#### Winner

Scheme:: The Rooftop Nursery  
Architect:: WHAT architecture

**H**ackney

#### Winner The Rooftop Nursery

**Information:**  
Architect:  
Architects  
Client:  
The Rooftop Nursery

**The Project**

The Rooftop Nursery is part of a publicly funded nursery that aims to get children back to work by offering affordable childcare costs. Given the high cost of land, the design strategy from the outset was to minimise client requirements. This was achieved by placing the separate outdoor play space on the roof. The roof was a technical innovation as it was the UK's first貫nulated surface play roof. The interior play space is fluid and adaptable from the innovative covering of two moving architectural elements:

Hard walls - made from translucent acrylic translucent screens,

Soft walls - designed to move from cocooned (soft, velvety)

or silver thermal robes.

These two elements allow the play organisation to be configured

into or back to different layouts - of four, one per child.



**Panel Comments:**  
"Social and Economic Sustainability - think its rooftop...green!  
Nice design!"



Royal Institute of British Architects

## RIBA National Awards 200

Rooftop Nursery  
London, E5

Architect **WHAT\_architecture!**

Client **Rooftop Nursery**

Contractor **Sandwood Construction**

Structural engineer **Michael Hadi Associates**

Services engineer **WHAT\_architecture!**

a RIBA chartered  
practice?

WHAT\_architecture.

5



and best we

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# NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE



## NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW IN ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT IN LONDON

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## Rooftop Nursery

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Type: Education

Status: Completed

Architect(s): WHAT\_architecture

Borough: Hackney



The Rooftop Nursery is part of a publicly funded initiative that aims to get mothers back to work by offering affordable children care.

Given the high costs of land, the design strategy from the outset was to minimise plot requirements. This was achieved by placing the principle outdoor play space on the roof. This provides a secured area (one can only access the play roof via inside the building) for motor skills (tricycling, ball sports...) whilst simultaneously offering good relational views back to the colourful neighbourhood that the children come from. The play roof was a technical innovation as it was the UK's first granulated rubber play roof.

The interior play space is fluid and adaptable thanks to the innovative coupling of two moving architectural elements: hard walls (made from translucent acrylic honeycomb screens) and soft walls (curtained alcoves made from coloured plastic, velvet or silver thermo drape). These two elements allow the plan organisation to be configured into at least 50 different layouts – at least one per child! The children are thus cared for in an environment that can be reconfigured in terms of size, scale and materiality: rooms that are simultaneously big-small, open-closed, wet-dry, light-dark according to the dedicated activities within.

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## Rooftop Nursery

**Architect:** WHAT\_architecture!**Client:** Rooftop Nursery

This highly original rooftop nursery provides affordable child-care in the heart of London. This cheap, fun, inventive solution has been made possible by the dedication of the architects who not only designed the building but also found the site and helped get funding.

### RIBA National Award Winner 2007



RIBA National Award 2007 winner: Rooftop Nursery, London E5  
Photo: Ignacio Acosta

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last updated: 22 June 2007

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**THE TIMES**  
**7 APRIL 2006**

# BRICKS

Facts, figures and fantasies from the world of property 07 APRIL 2006



THE TIMES

FRIDAYS

# AND MORTAR



## HOW TO GET MUMS BACK TO WORK

TV PRESENTER SARAH BEENY SUGGESTS WAYS TO BALANCE YOUR BUILDING BUDGET 09

PLUS: WHY SHEFFIELD IS AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF REGENERATION

[www.thetimesonline.co.uk/property](http://www.thetimesonline.co.uk/property)

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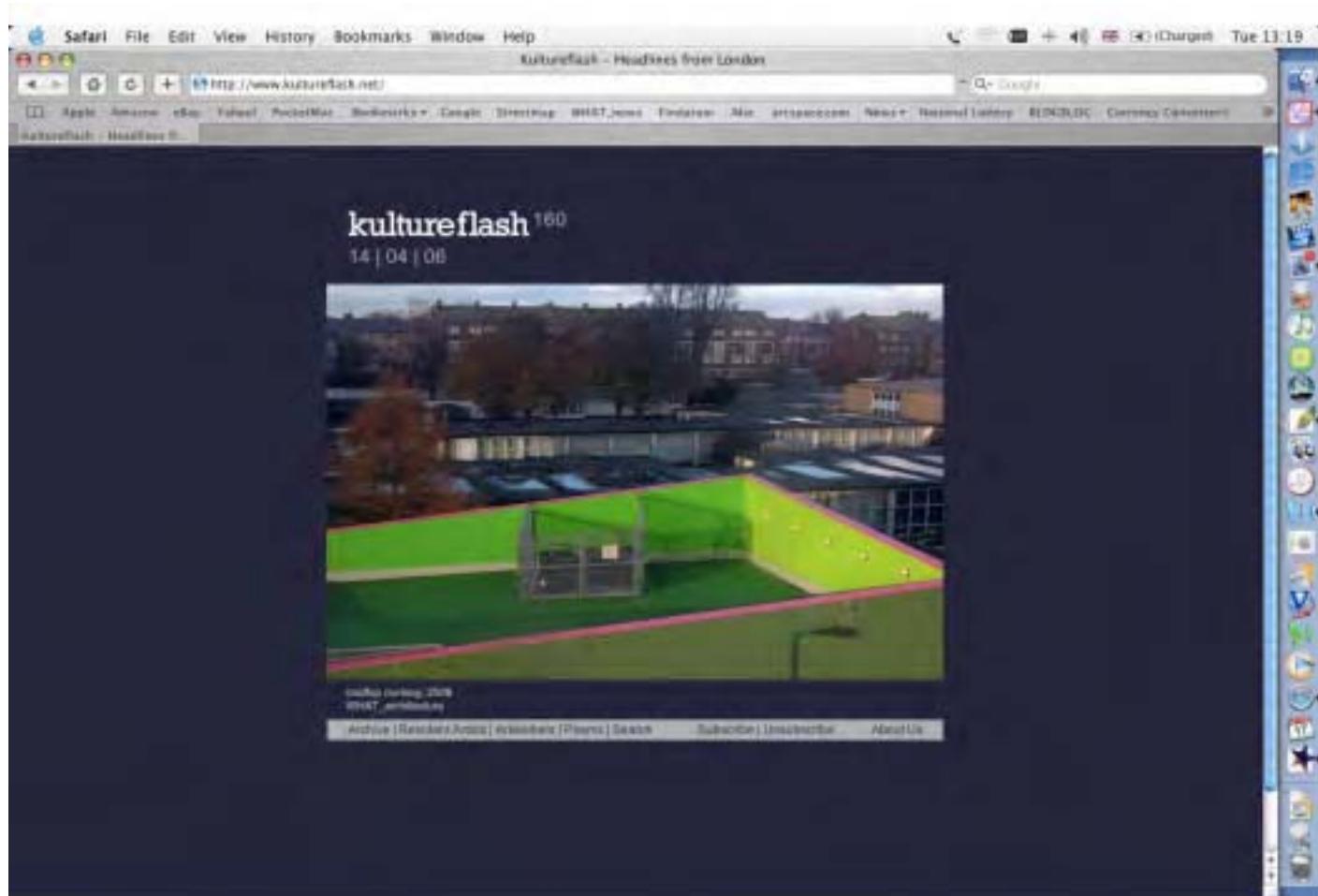
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# KULTUREFLASH 160

## 14 APRIL 2006



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**ICON  
JUNE 2006**



## a rooftop nursery

has been designed by London-based practice What Architecture. Built as part of the UK's Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative, the centre aims to provide affordable pre-school care for working mothers in the low-income neighbourhood of Clapton, east London.

To make the most of a confined



icon june 2006

**main picture** the rooftop play space doubles the recreation area  
**left** the roof is accessed via internal stairs  
**far left** plywood shelving in the open-plan interior

site, the architects turned the roof into a play space. And as the budget was also limited, they used the cheapest materials available: the structure is made of concrete breezeblocks and the kitchen is from Ikea.

A lack of fixed internal walls further reduced costs. Sliding partitions and floor-to-ceiling curtains divide the interior into 50 potential configurations. And instead of using expensive cladding, the architects simply painted the building. The bright colour-scheme was chosen by local residents and nursery staff, and then digitally sampled from local foliage. "Kids aren't

interested in white walls and shadow gaps," comments What Architecture's Anthony Hoete.

Clapton's impoverishment was underlined by the fact that the best point from which to survey the site was an adjacent six-storey crack den. "There were people passed out on the floor; you had to watch they didn't jump at you with needles," Hoete recalls. Despite this, the practice enjoyed the aesthetic freedom that the area provided. "Unlike Kensington, there weren't any heritage issues," Hoete says. "Instead, there was a genuine belief that design can improve social problems." Daniel West



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# **BLUEPRINT**

## **JUNE 2006**

**'HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS, AN OBSESSION WITH LAW SUITS, AND A HYSTERICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS PERSONAL FREEDOM FOR CHILDREN MEANS THE PARAMETERS IN WHICH THEY ARE ALLOWED TO ROAM FREE ARE DIMINISHING'**

PAUL SPURGEON, Report



## Contents

BLUEPRINT N.243

Area at work, Spurgeon is just a youth, climbing a fence or running in his office community? That would be bad, says interior designer Alan Harkay, explaining how his architecture firm's alternative status legal. "We can't suggest you run the business, but there's no rule that says you can't," he says. "Young gives a sense of freedom in the fabric of the city." An Harkay studio has faced LA's strict, the cladding panels on Frank Gehry's Disney Concert Hall, which he visited frequently in 1998, can finally be put on without fear of prosecution.

What will the future hold for the physical disciplines who could be compensated for £5 billion over 17 years? Incentives have been given to Richard Schirmer, 1996 from PDRB, engineer Paula Zelis, but valuable recognition has come in London Architecture Week, along with the formation of architects and landscape architects' organisations like PDRB and the Arca Council.

In a move that should appeal to Andrew House over at SHARP, architect, who moved to a large part of east London, House has already deployed unusual tactics in his work and set up three hubs. In the case of his remarkable social memory (page 54), his firm not only found the site, it turned itself into a contractor (page 199), undertaken to make it possible and

existing buildings, and break through Government red tape.

Harkay and House, making no bones about architecture in their happy, and this is also one of the expressions of the design culture featured in this issue. As creative partner for Kingdom Designers' competition Creating the Underpinning, we're pleased to document speeches by Fiona Armitt, RIBA president; Bevona von Haar, author of recent column, page 66 to 90;

What's clear from all this is that there is to "image now" sufficient. About are the days when critics looked after objectives you can mount multiple platforms, so one form of the logic. But before we get too carried away and start describing our jobs as exciting, and Endings by Clancy Connelly (page 10) points out the dangers in overstating the issue.

Finally, two dedicated to resilience not very deputy editor Tim Aldred, who recently moved to London from the Scottish architecture magazine Prospect. We're putting his sharp wit and down-to-earth perspective on design, but he's already threatened to jump on a train back to Glasgow after seeing the latest London design exhibition - Jasper Morrison's The City (page 99).

Holy blather, editor

## Editorial

# FREE SPIRITS

Jes Fernie visits a rooftop nursery in a deprived part of east London that required an unorthodox approach to find a site and beat local government bureaucracy

PHOTOGRAPHS DAVE COWLARD

**Finding shit on your doorstep is one thing**, but someone in a hoodie, high on drugs and wielding a gun is an entirely different matter. Anthony Hoete of WHAT\_architecture ignores the shit now, but when he was held up at gunpoint in his office in Hackney, London, a few months ago, even he was rattled.

Hoete's long-standing involvement in the building of a children's nursery in Clapton, Hackney, one of the UK's most deprived wards, means that he was already steeped in the grittier side of urban life when he received this surprise visit. Located next to a six-storey crackhouse on an estate where unemployment and poverty is rife, the context is hardly a shining example of New Labour's squeaky-clean ambitions. But the nursery is an extraordinary place that has been created out of the incredible commitment of the client (Hafiza Patel at the Rooftop Nursery), the facilitator (Bob Allen from The Learning Trust) and the architect.

Obstructive planning regulations and the scarcity of land in London means that most architects can

only dream of taking on a new-build, non-residential job in the city. Hoete took a characteristically bombastic approach to achieving this dream – he initiated a project himself. Driving past a run-down site on which there was a derelict house, he decided to contact Bob Allen and suggest that it might be a good place to build a nursery.

The unorthodox guerrilla tactics he adopted to ensure the place was built are now legendary among those involved. The tight time frame dictated by the Government meant that there wasn't long enough to carry out a conventional demolition. Refusing to be defeated at the first hurdle, WHAT\_architecture took on the role of contractor and decided to demolish the existing, asbestos-ridden building itself. In order to claim back the 17.5 per cent VAT on the build (a significant part of a staggeringly small budget of £315,000), WHAT\_architecture became an employee of the project (thus becoming VAT\_architecture). All this adds fuel to Hoete's belief that 'the preconditions



for architecture are often as important as the architecture itself'. Through working on this project and others, he is gaining a reputation for specialising in what he refers to as 'spatial economics' and finding ingenious ways to bypass the limiting, risk-adverse culture inherent in the working practices of many local authority officers.

The design of the Rooftop Nursery is simple, effective and vibrant. As you approach the building through an estate of flimsy Eighties' maisonettes – a crime against architecture of the highest order – you are greeted with a shock of colour that takes your breath away. It's essentially a box with a slanting roof which doubles as a play area for children who attend the nursery.

The building is made up of four interlocking elements – outdoor garden, canopy, interior space and roof. The high, south-facing wall catches the sun and blocks out noise and visual distractions from the neighbouring school (which has been a key partner in the project). Exposed breeze blocks have been

**AN INCREASINGLY HYSTERICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS PERSONAL FREEDOM FOR CHILDREN MEANS THE PARAMETERS IN WHICH THEY ARE ALLOWED TO ROAM FREE AND ENGAGE WITH PUBLIC SPACE ARE RAPIDLY DIMINISHING**



spruced up with various shades of highly expressive green and pink paint. The interior is flooded with light and colour, and can be divided into three separate areas according to the number of children in the nursery at any one time.

The feel of the fit-out tallies with the current fashion for using bog-standard IKEA fare to provide a backdrop to one or two carefully selected – and more expensive – items. The two ‘oooh’ elements here are the sliding doors, which divide the main space into three rooms, and a playful camouflaged kitchen counter. As with all the elements of the scheme, the architect played a key role in shopping around for the best deal (the screens were shipped from Italy and the counters from Germany), pulling the heart strings of hardened suppliers with tales of deprived children in inner-city areas.

The nursery is part of the Government’s Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative, which hopes to

persuade mothers to go back to work by providing them with affordable childcare (a debatable aim, but that’s another can of worms). However, the guidelines set out for the design of these nurseries are ludicrously restrictive. Health and safety regulations, an obsession with the threat of paedophilia and law suits, and an increasingly hysterical attitude towards personal freedom for children means that the parameters in which they are allowed to roam free, engage with public space and – possibly fall over and bruise their knees – are rapidly diminishing.

The design of schools, nurseries and play equipment reflects this obsession and is a constant source of bafflement to Hoete, who cites the case of toilet access as an example of a society gone mad. In order to keep costs down there are no separate toilets for staff and children at the Rooftop Nursery. Ofsted stipulated that a window be located in the wall between the play area and the toilets to enable



**WHAT\_architecture's design strategy for the nursery was to minimise spatial requirements and keep down costs by building a secure play area on the roof**

**OFSTED STIPULATED THAT A WINDOW BE LOCATED IN THE WALL BETWEEN THE PLAY AREA AND THE TOILETS TO ENABLE ALL BATHROOM ACTIVITY TO BE MONITORED. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY ABSURD, INVASIVE AND UNNECESSARY**



Below, exposed breeze blocks have been spruced up with bright green paint. Below left, partition screens were sourced from Italy and allow the main space to be divided into three areas, depending on the volume of children using it



all bathroom activity to be viewed from the main area. This is obviously absurd – the window will inevitably be covered in posters and drawings – but it is also invasive and unnecessary. Ofsted was equally worried that the ground-to-ceiling windows face directly on to the street, allowing views into the nursery. The newly planted trees will form a barrier of sorts and, of course, there are blinds for when the children are sleeping. But where is this culture of reduced risk taking us and, more importantly, what does it mean for the future of architecture?

Hoete has an impressive array of projects on his books, including West End refurbs (compare a £300,000/sq m budget to the nursery's £1,200/sq m and weep), a series of hotels in New Zealand (he is half Maori), and an artists' studio in Tower Hamlets where he recently managed to purchase airspace in order to extend the existing floorspan.

His process-based, iterative approach to architecture is evident in his working methodology – he works fast, making models soon after visiting a site or considering a brief. The scheme is quickly evaluated and fed into the next stage leading, six or seven steps later, to a final design. He says he wants to 'make the design process explicit because architecture isn't'. His beguiling pragmatism is a rare characteristic for someone who is interested in the theory of architecture – he has edited a book on the aesthetics of mobility, currently holds a teaching post at the American University in Beirut, and has taught at the Bartlett in London and the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands. By simply asking 'What?' everything becomes discourse **B**

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# **CHANGING LONDON SCHOOLS JUNE 2006**



Architecture Week



Media partner



### Changing London Schools Exhibition

17 - 25 June

Breakfast Debate 22 June 8.30 - 10am

BDP London Studio reception area

16 Brewhouse Yard, Clerkenwell, London EC1V 4LJ

An exhibition of exemplar educational projects in the inner London Boroughs at BDP's hub space in Clerkenwell will take place during the London Architecture Biennale.

The projects being exhibited were selected by The Architecture Foundation in a competition launched on the 13 April.

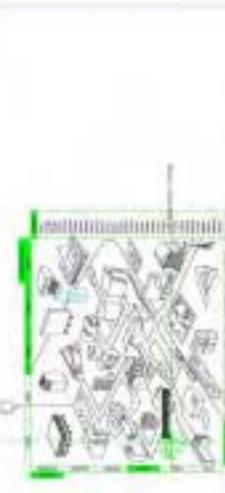
Open to UK and international architects, designers and design students with school projects either completed, in design or under construction since the millennium, in inner London. The Changing London Schools exhibition will be accompanied by workshops with school students as well as a debate on the role of architects and designers in the changing face of education and the learning experience for the next generation of school children.

Projects chosen exhibit innovative design thinking across a broad range of issues; educationally, spatially, socially, technologically and environmentally. The projects range in scale from inspiring classroom extensions, dynamic external spaces for schools to larger scale transformations of existing school buildings and new schools and academies. Many of the projects reflect current thinking within many of the major public programmes, including Building Schools for the Future, Private Finance Initiatives, City Academies and Community and faith Schools.



Image: What Architecture's proposal for a rooftop nursery in Hackney

# WHAT architecture CHANGING LONDON SCHOOLS



### WHAT\_architecture

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### WHAT\_architecture

### 012hil\_rooftop nursery / benthal school

6 Ottaway Street  
Hackney, London E5 8PX UK  
[www.whatarchitecture.com/012hil\\_rooftop\\_nursery.htm](http://www.whatarchitecture.com/012hil_rooftop_nursery.htm)

#### Clients:

- 1 Rooftop Nursery (service provider / operator): Manager Hafiza Patel
  - 2 The Learning Trust (Local Education Authority): Consultant Bob Allen
  - 3 Hackney Borough Council (owner)
- Project Completion: March 2006



### WHAT\_architecture

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## 012hil\_rooftop nursery / benthal school - "one stop educational drop"

The Rooftop Nursery is part of a publicly funded initiative that aims to get mothers back to work by offering affordable children care

The Nursery is sited in Hackney, a Borough:

- +where 1-6 residents receives Income Support
- +some 95 languages are spoken
- +there is no Underground station
- +all 19 wards are amongst the nations' 10% most deprived
- +with the UK's 3rd highest population density
- +with the UK's 6th greatest ethnic diversity

WHAT\_architecture found and procured the site for the RoofTop Nursery next to Benthal Infant and Junior schools realising it could provide a one-stop-educational-drop for parents and children. In keeping with its educational-child care use, the Nursery has been conceived of as a 're-playable' building by offering multiple yet interlocking educational play environments - three types of outdoor space and one reconfigurable indoor space. From Paro to Play-Doh, play is universally recognised as being vital to the welfare and development of children because it enhances social interactivity, spatial awareness and skills development.

### 1. Four Interlocking Play Environments

Given the high costs of land, the design strategy from the outset was to minimise plot requirements. This was achieved by placing the principle outdoor play space on the roof. This provides a secured area (one can only access the play roof via inside the building) for motor skills (recycling, ball sports...) whilst simultaneously offering good relational views back to the colourful neighbourhood that the children come from. The play roof was a technical innovation as it was the UK's first grant-aided rubber play roof. Recognising the value of outdoor play, a variety of exterior play spaces were formalised beyond the play roof. Ground-based play spaces include a partially enclosed canopy space that accommodates spill-over activities from the interior and the poetic economy of a 3-tree-4-seasons garden with mini-flower beds and over-scaled grass 'pillows' attended and maintained by the children. The canopy space is also a spatial economic; the exterior building circulation means no internal corridors and gives the building not one but three front doors! These play spaces interlock as volumes giving the entire site a game box quality.

### 2. Urban Form: Chip Off The Old Block

Brick is a quintessential London material, yet block was preferred for reasons of costs (most affordable construction) and aesthetics (its scale better expresses the notion of the Nursery as a building block). The distinctive form of the Nursery is generated by high walls adjacent to the school (limiting sound and sight disturbances to the classrooms) that slope down towards the street corner and the existing basketball court. From the play roof, young children visually connect and associate ball sports on the roof with those across the road. From the Nursery, one can re-play ball games. Block culture in the UK is polarised between General Application blocks (concealed) and the Architectural Range (revealed). The Nursery utilises the cheaper GA block to the building interior because the function (childcare) demands robust detailing, not the subtle sophistication of adult details, of shadow gaps and white walls. WHAT\_architecture recognised that children toys could be an implicit 'surface treatment' and are far more visually stimulating than any expensive wall cladding.

### 3. Fluid Interior: 50 ways to leave your loved one

The interior play space is fluid and adaptable thanks to the innovative coupling of two moving architectural elements: hard walls (made from translucent acrylic honeycomb screens) and soft walls (curtained alcoves made from coloured plastic, velvet or silver thermo drapes). These two elements allow the plan organisation to be reconfigured into at least 50 different layouts - at least one per child! The children are thus cared for in an environment that can be reconfigured in terms of size, scale and materiality: rooms that are simultaneously big-small, open-closed, wet-dry, light-dark according to the dedicated activities within.

### 4. Paint space

The Rooftop Nursery is a Technicolor dream coat of paint specifically conceived around the cheapest means of construction: that is painted block work. Low cost childcare demands low cost, building yet from the outset WHAT\_architecture rejected the idea that low build costs equate to low architecture. Due to its inherent thinness, paint does not hold the same status as other thicker materials and is not even considered as being a material. Paint is not thick; however, it is an intelligent material and its smart coatings offer fire protection, waterproofing, anti-graffiti resistance, anti-fungal penetration. Paint affords democratic choice: the manager, the school and local residents were consulted regarding the colour rendering of the Nursery. Green proved popular for its representation of nature and from this base colour, nine shades of green were digitally sampled from the adjacent wildlife garden to render the Nursery: Lime Zest, Tuscan Glade, Kiwi Burst, Willow Creek, Woodland Fern and Jungle Fever... Such variance means that according to the lighting conditions and ones viewpoint, the Nursery changes its appearance. In this sense the Nursery is polychromatically replayable!



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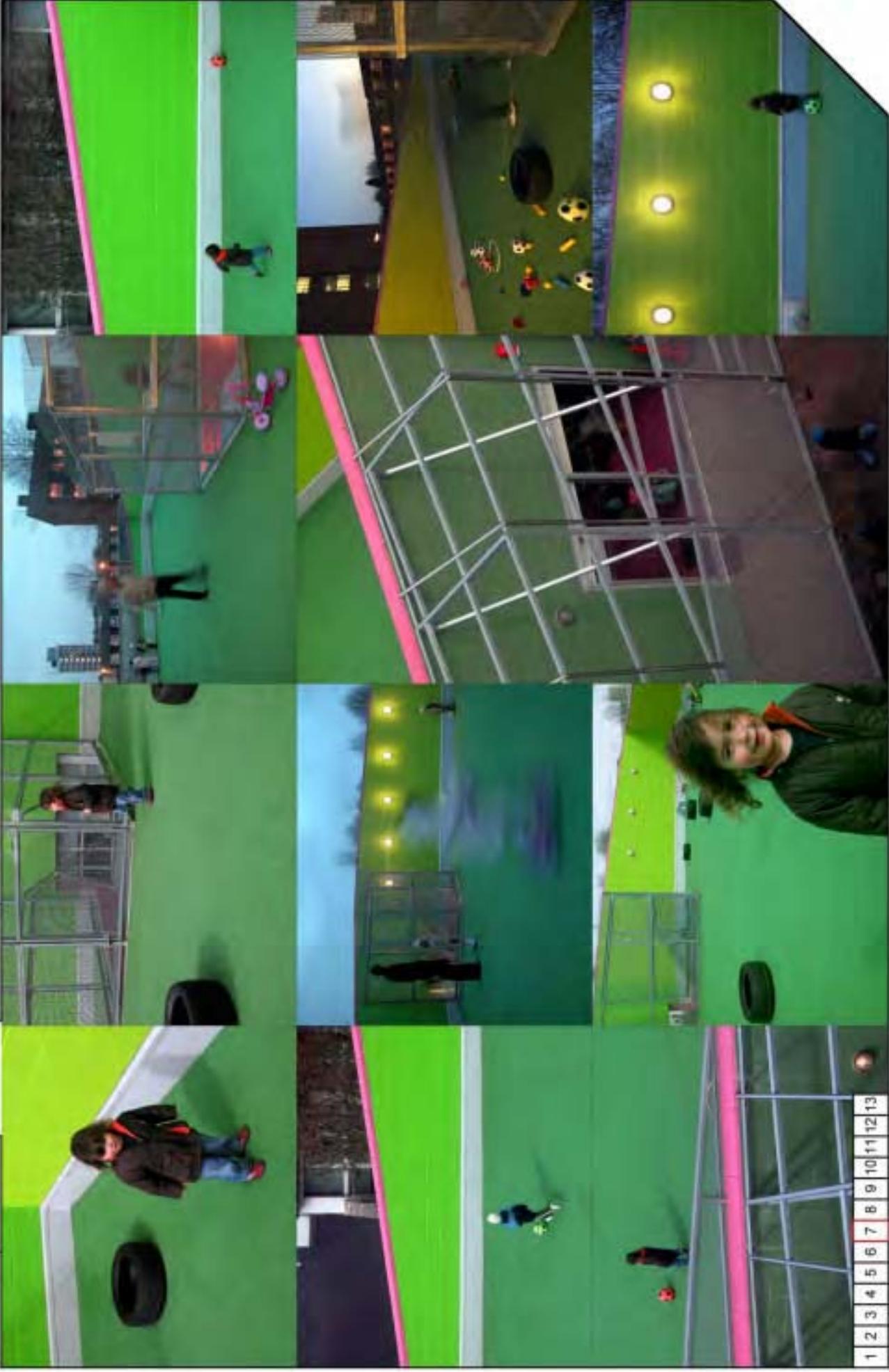
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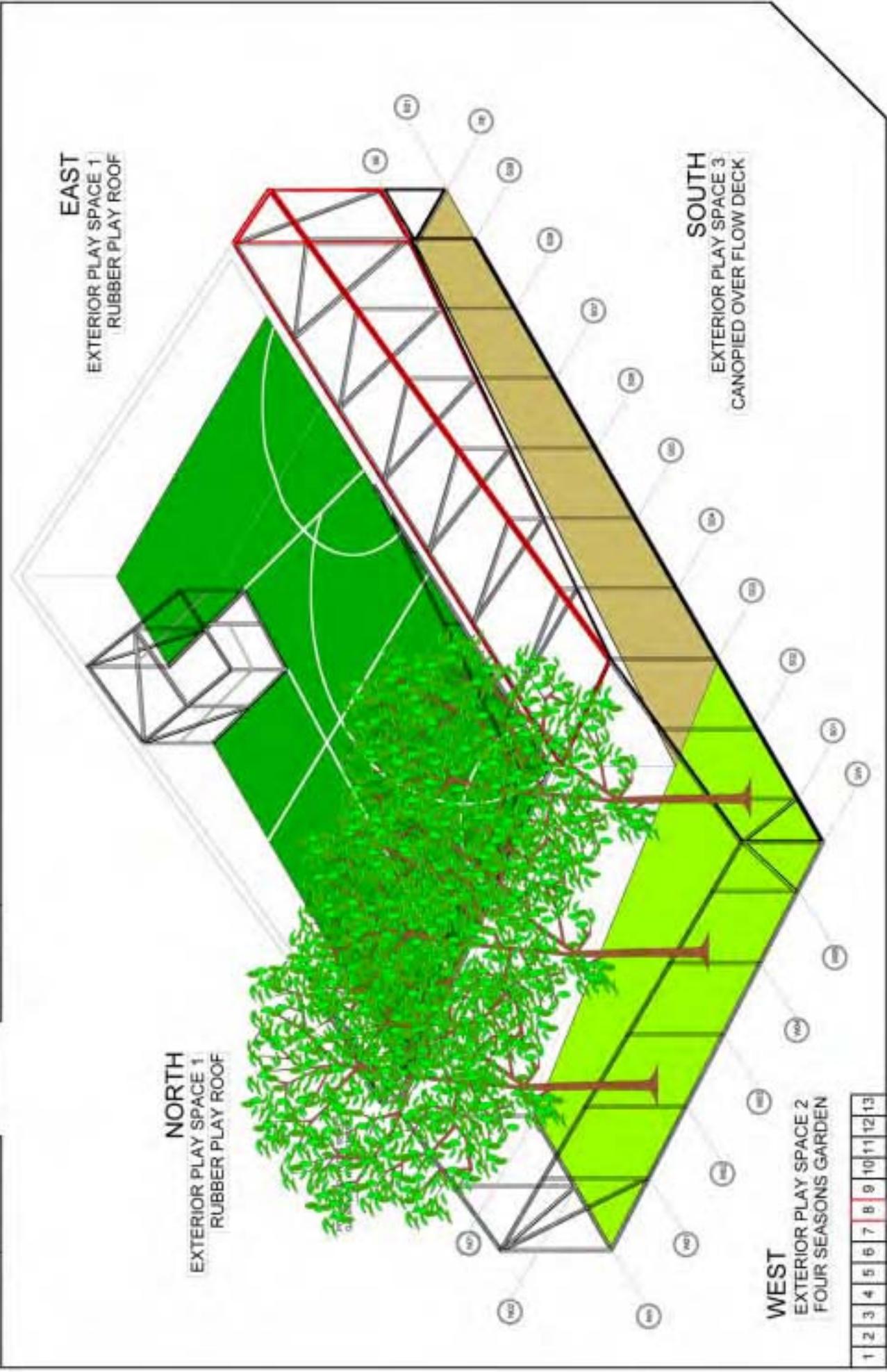
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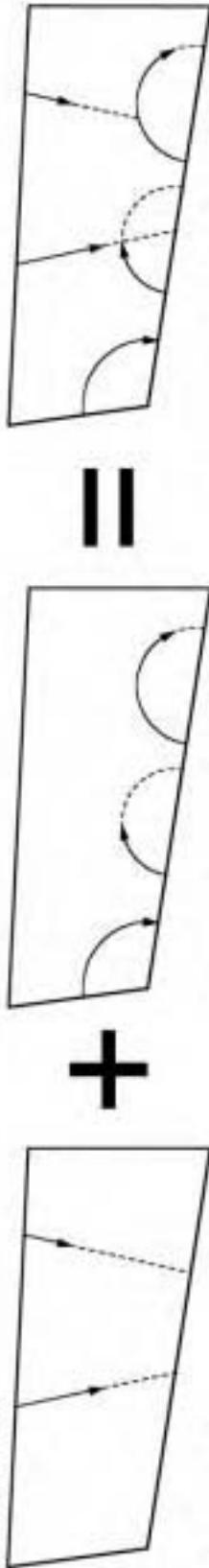
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## MULTIPLE EDUCATIONAL PLAY ENVIRONMENTS:

This proposal recognises the value of play in developing both social interaction and educational skills for children by offering a variety of play environments. Each environment is unique and promotes the idea of a 'playable building' so as enhance the child's spatial awareness.

## 1 FLUID INTERIOR PLAY SPACES: 50 WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR LOVED ONE!

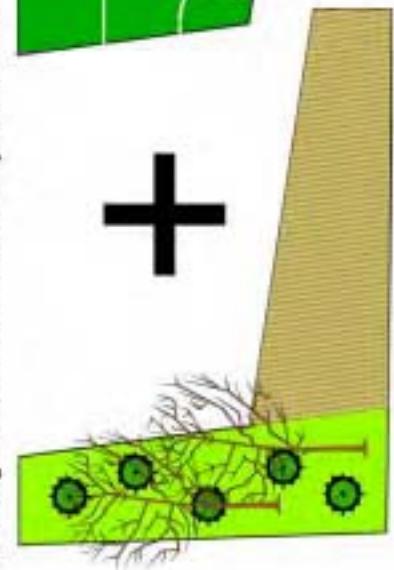
The environment of the interior play space is adaptable and fluid thanks to the innovative coupling of two architectural elements: sliding and 'soft walls' (curtained alcoves). These two elements allow the plan organisation to be configured into at least 50 different layouts! (Refer D-00C5B). The children are thus introduced and cared for in an environment which can be physically changed in terms of size, scale and materiality; rooms that are big-small, open-closed, wet-dry curtained alcoves (according to the dedicated play activities).



FLUID RECONFIGURABLE LAYOUT

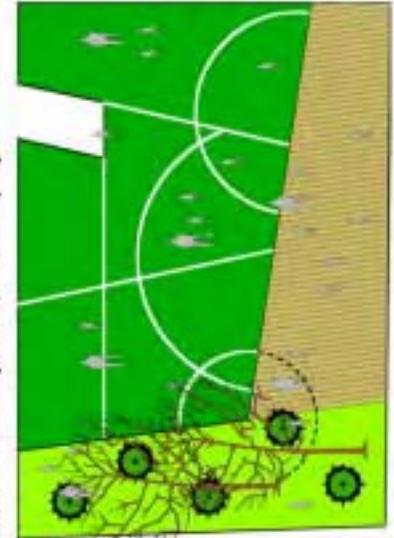
## 2 TWIN EXTERIOR PLAY SPACES: NATURE GARDEN OR MOTOR SKILLS PLAY ROOF

In contrast to the highly adaptable interior, the exterior play spaces are twinned and interlocked to offer two forms of outdoor play. A 'nature awakening' garden (featuring mini-flower beds nurtured and attended to by the children) and a 'motor skills' playroof for ballsports, tricycling and other hand-eye-body co-ordination activities. The Play Roof is designed to meet all British Safety Standards and is 100% safe and secure and gives the Nursery its architectural identity: safe, learned play!



SECURED AND SAFE  
NATURE GARDEN PLAYGROUND

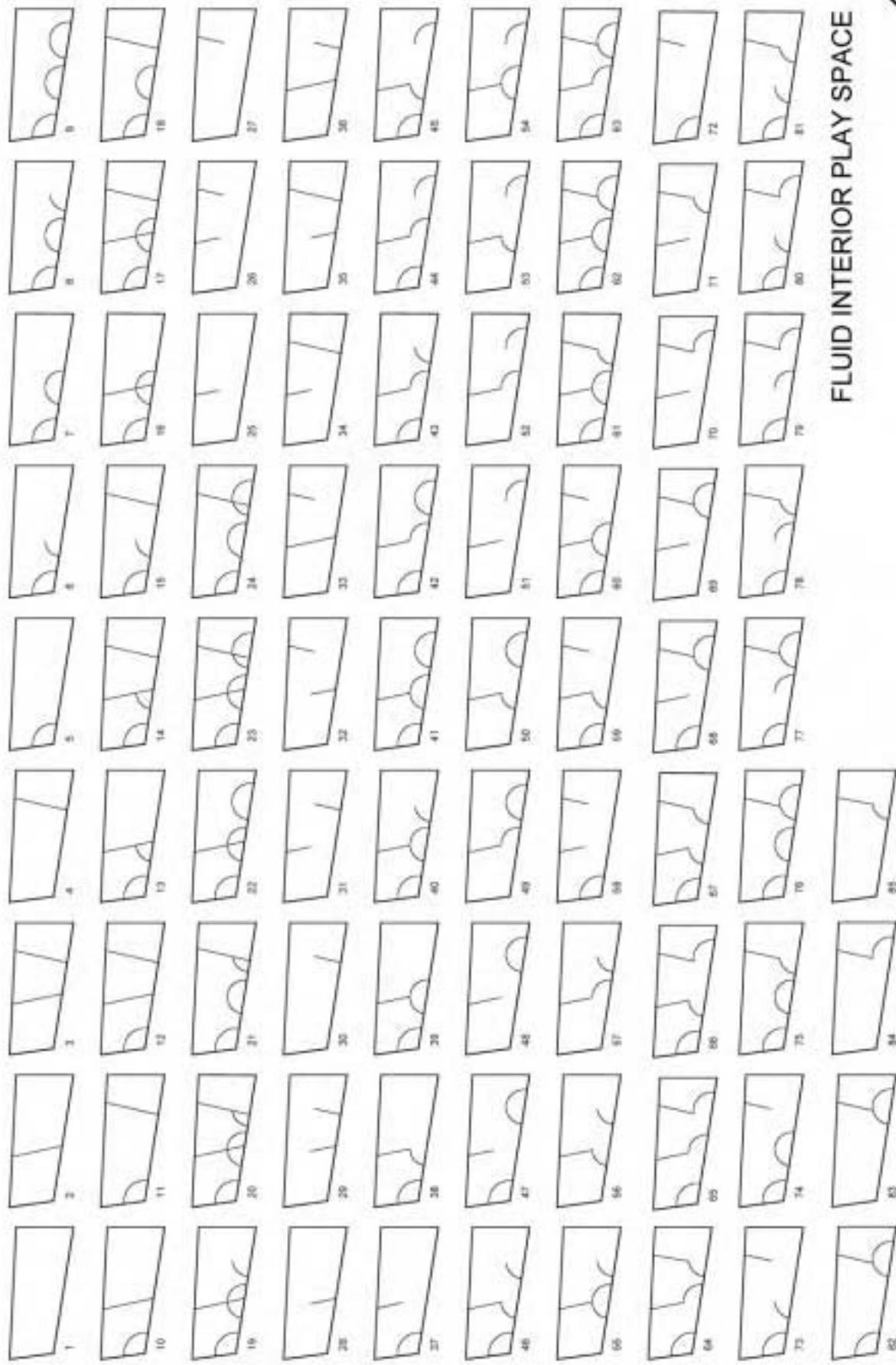
SECURED AND SAFE  
MOTOR SKILLS PLAYROOF



INTERLOCKING OUTDOOR  
PLAY ENVIRONMENT

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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REGISTRATION STATEMENT IMAGERY CONSULTATION



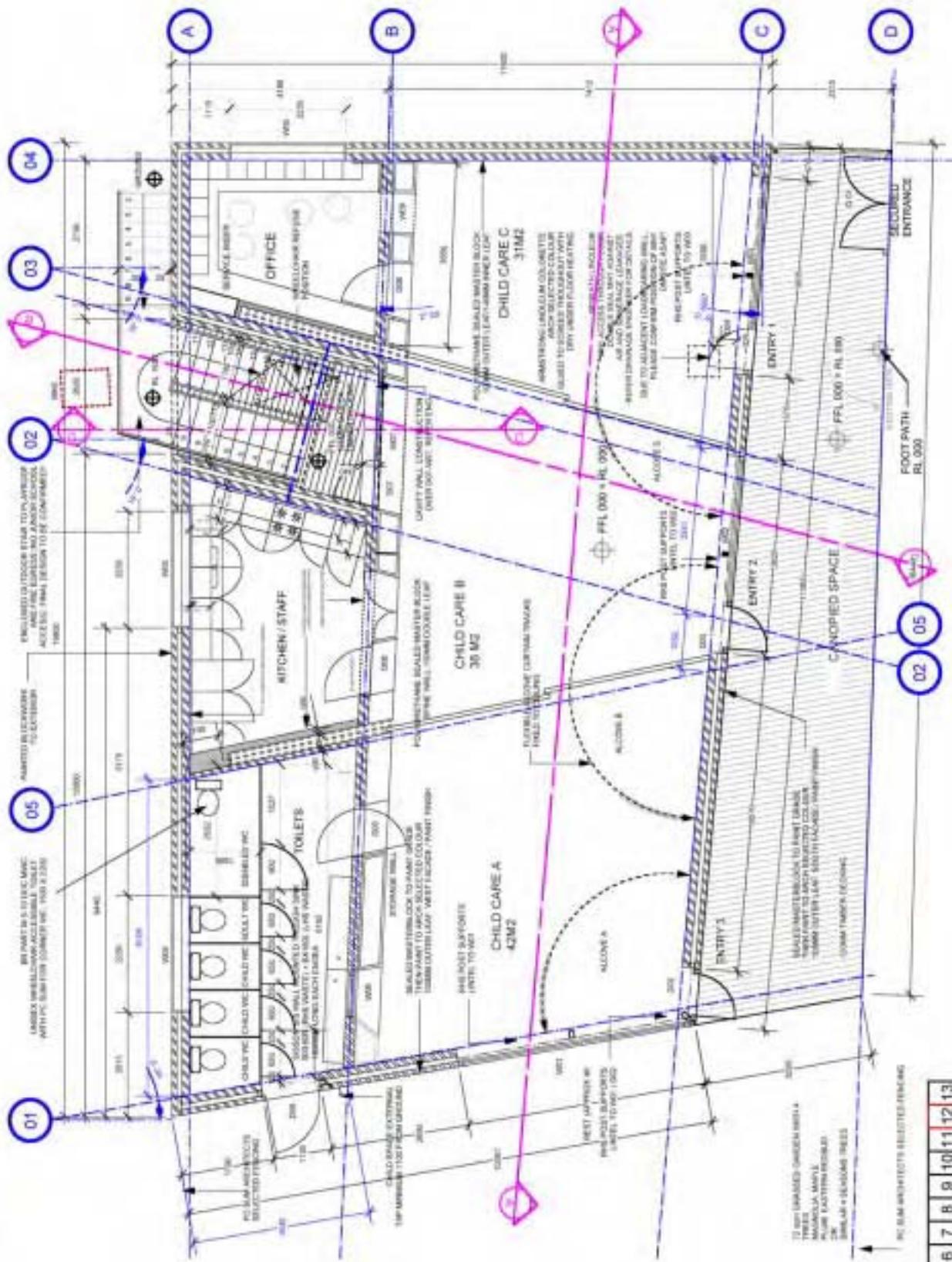
FLUID INTERIOR PLAY SPACE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

## 012hii 50 ways to leave your loved one

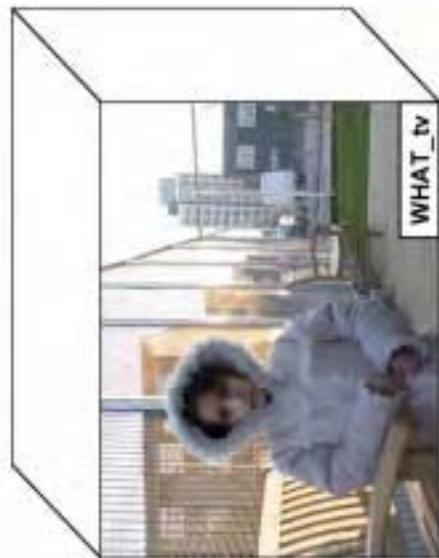
AYOUT	MODE	CHILD AGE	TIMETABLE
1	3-age play	baby + toddler + junior	08h30-18h00
2	Baby sleep	baby	10h30-11h30
3	Individual play (baby v toddler v junior))	baby / toddler / junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
4	toddler play	toddler	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
5	garden alcove	baby / toddler / junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
7	garden / street alcoves	baby / toddler / junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
9	garden, street and gate alcoves	baby / toddler + baby	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
10	garden alcove with garden room, toddler + baby play	baby / toddler + junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
11	garden alcove with garden room, toddler + junior play	baby / toddler + junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
12	garden alcove with garden room, individual play	baby / toddler / junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
18	garden / street alcoves, baby-toddler play, junior sleep	baby + toddler / junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
25	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 1	baby - toddler - junior	10h30-11h30
26	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 2: lunch A	baby - toddler - junior	12h30-13h30
27	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 3: parents meeting	baby - toddler - junior	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
28	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 4	baby - toddler - junior	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
29	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 5: lunch B	baby - toddler - junior	12h30-13h30
30	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 6: parents welcome	baby - toddler - junior	08h00-08h30
31	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 7: maximum A	baby - toddler - junior	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
32	Peek-a-boo: visual privacy 8: maximum B	baby - toddler - junior	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
33	garden room: open privacy A	junior / toddler - baby	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
34	gate room: open privacy A	baby / toddler - junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
35	gate room: open privacy B	toddler / baby - junior	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
36	garden room: open privacy B	any	08h30-10h30, 11h30-12h30, 14h30-16h30
43	garden room: street door	any	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
55	street alcove	any	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
64	street play: playroom door	any	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
65	street room: gate door	any	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30
67	street room: street alcove	any	08h00-08h30, 16h30-18h30

REGISTRATION	STATEMENT	IMAGERY	CONSULTATION
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

REGISTRATION	STATEMENT	IMAGERY	CONSULTATION
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1. CHILDREN  
Harissa, 16 Benthal St  
"I like my school to be **like** a Gruffalo: a green monster building that drives around Hackney"

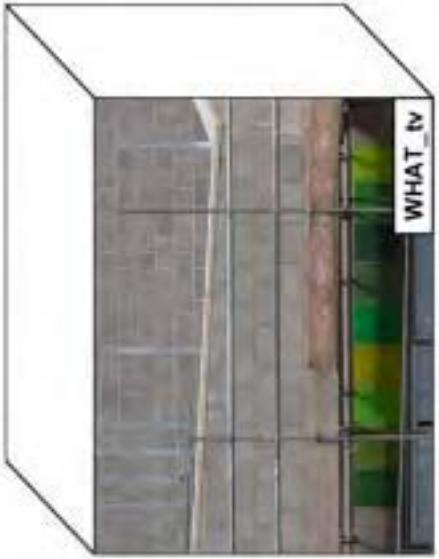


2. PARENTS  
Steve, 94 Nightingale St  
"Can we put a web cam on the roof so I can see Jimmy playing during my lunch break?"



3. TEACHERS  
Mason, Head Mistress: "We need to consider the Junior children won't be distracted by the Nursery children playing on the roof..."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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5. COMMUNITY  
Joana 07886078193 via SMS text:  
"I choose the 3rd and 9th greens from the left but hate the 1st, 6th and 7th"

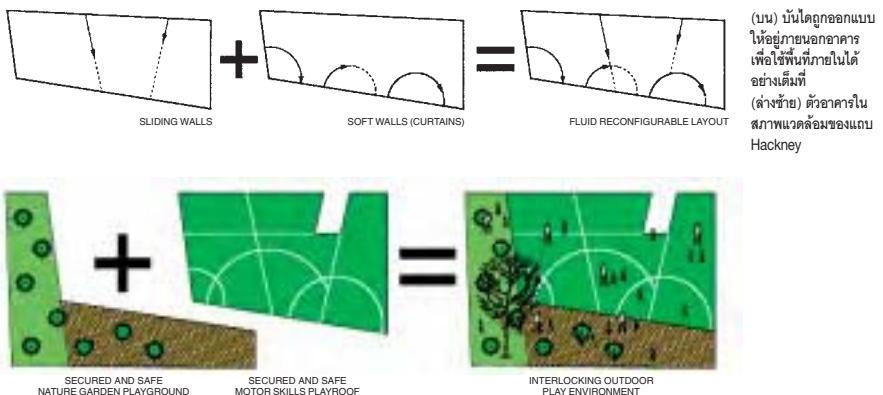
WHAT

STATEMENT

PUBLICATION

OFFICE

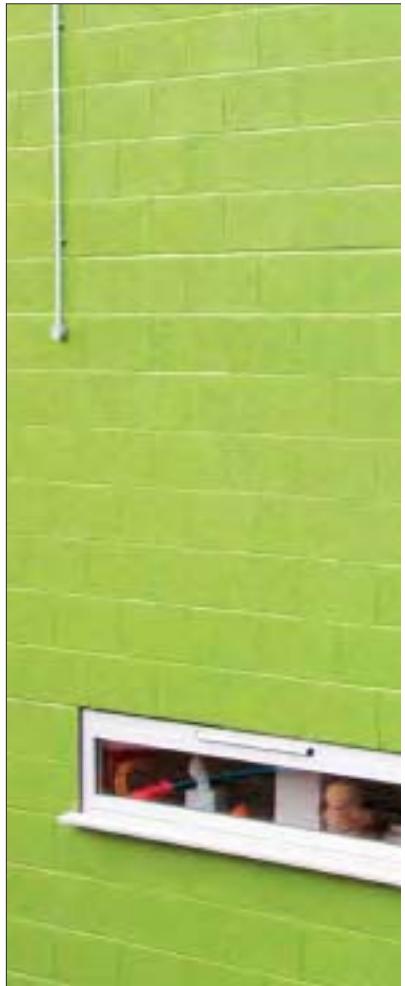
**ART4D  
THAILAND  
JULY 2006**

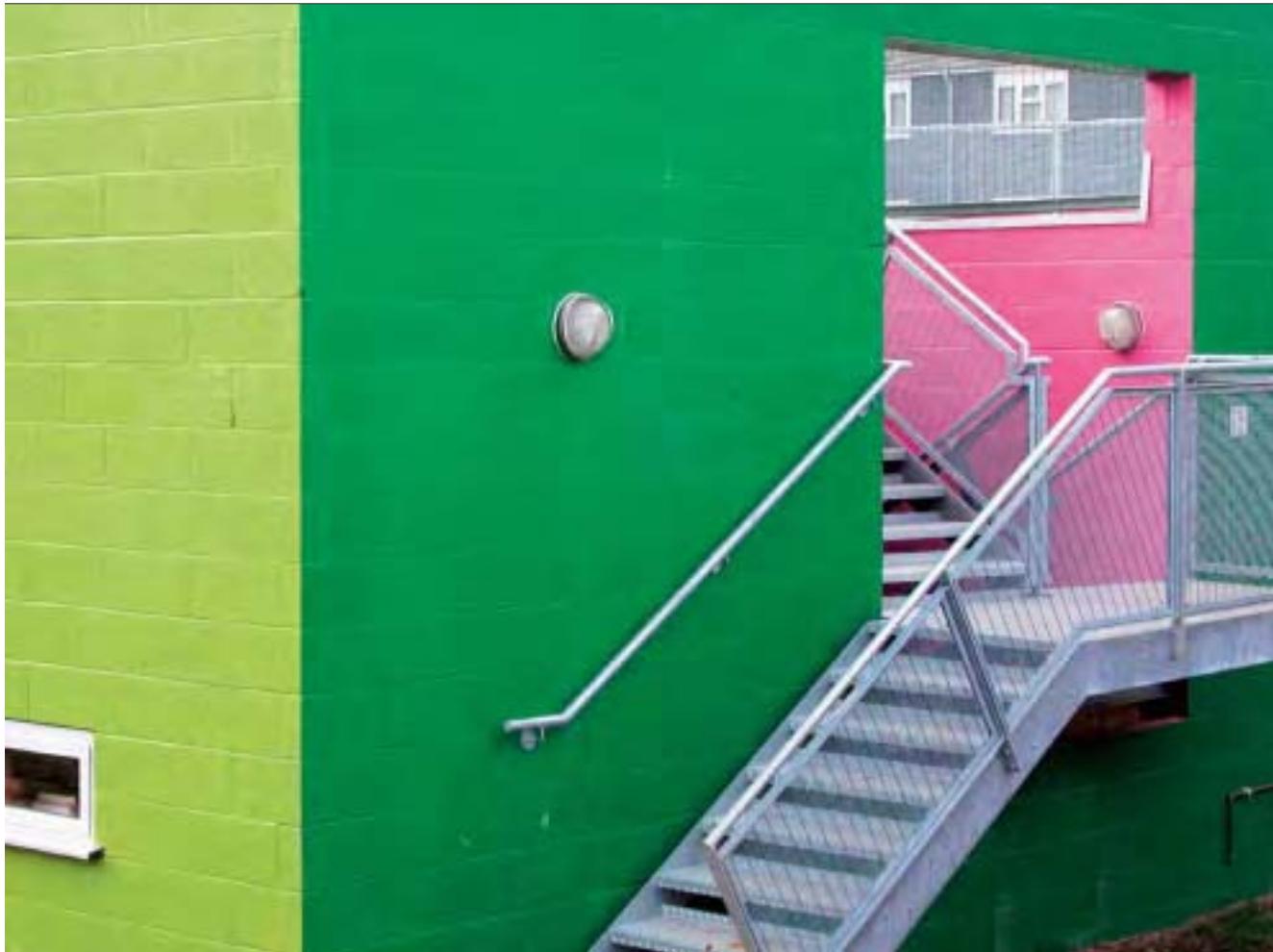


# What's on the roof

**WHAT**\_architecture designs an affordable pre-school care in East London to exemplify how design can improve social conditions. By Supithca Tovivich.

The Rooftop Nursery เป็นตัวอย่างที่ดี ราคาค่าเช่าที่ดินกันได้จนทำให้โครงการเก็บ





ต้องยุติไม่ Hoete จึงจัดสินใจขับรถตระเวนหาที่ดินกรุงรั�ว่างๆ ด้วยตัวเขาเอง เช่นบ้านไปเรือยอพยาของอาภาราชานเดลลิก์ ที่กู้ให้เป็นแหล่งอพยพของราษฎรในเมือง ประมวลมนต์บ้านพื้นที่ตั้งค่าล่วงเป็นเกิดเชิงรัฐบาล ทากอย่างจึงลงตัวและได้รับการสนับสนุนดีเยี่ยมต่อ (เริ่มต้น) ไปได้ โครงการเริ่มต้นด้วยการทากลายที่ตีเก้าที่ทุดโถมทั้ง WHAT\_architecture เน้นการท่องเที่ยวและเรื่องมีการตัดไม้เคลื่อนไหวคราฟท์ความเป็นไปได้ของภาระผู้คนและลักษณะธรรมชาติจางๆ จำนวนมาก ทำรากลับมาที่ แลงซึ่งสืบสานได้ ส่วนเสียง (Stakeholder) ขอโครงการอย่างใกล้ชิด (เก่าที่เป็นไปได้)

จำนวนเด็ก กิจกรรม และความต้องการใช้สอย  
ได้อย่างหลากหลายเกินกว่า 80 แบบ นอกจาก  
นี้แล้วความต้องการใช้พื้นที่ที่ห้องส่วนใหญ่  
ที่สุดจะมีการศึกษาจากการออกแบบเดิน  
ทางในบ้าน ห้องที่ถูกตั้งนัยหมายกล่าวถึง  
แจ้งถูกใช้เป็นร่วมเข้าพื้นที่ใช้สอยภายใน  
ตัวภายนอก The Rooftop Nursery จึงมี  
ประชาราชเข้าสู่สามทาง

ด้วยเหตุผลด้านนงประมาณที่จaggerให้พ้นที่เล่นอยู่เพิ่มภาระเครื่องหน้างานของเด็กไปอยู่ที่ห้องน้ำที่หลังคา โดยมีนั่นได้ที่ต้องดึงเด็กนั่นจากที่พื้นที่แล้วเด็กภาระในเรือนี้นั่นเอง ความคุณงามปลดภัย วัดพันธุ์ที่นี่ที่พ้นก่อนบันหลังเจ้าจากภาระสังเคราะห์ที่มีความบุ่มพีเคเชเพื่อผลดันตรายเมื่อเด็กล้มลูกคลุกคลาน ผ่านอาชารร่างจากอกนรภิศรีสือคลาส Hoete ดังใจให้ความธรรมด้าที่ไม่ธรรมชาติของภาระที่ซึ่งเป็นบทบาทนี้ก็ถูกหักห้ามเข้ามายังแม้จะให้ความคุณด้วย (อาจด้วยเหตุผลนี้ "why" เกินไป) Hoete มองว่าภาระสือเป็นวิธีการที่ง่าย มีประสิทธิภาพและลดเวลาเสีย ด้วยการภาระสือเพียงง่ายสมารถรอกให้เกิดประโยชน์มาก ไม่ว่าจะเป็นภาระภูมิที่ การป้องกันภัยความเสี่ยและภาระป้องกันเรื่อง เชื่อว่าภาระสือเป็นสถานเลี้ยงเด็กเล็ก Hoete ก่อตัวว่าสัสดุภันหยั่ห์ ระหว่างเด็กคงไม่สามารถเรียกว่าห้องความสนใจของเด็กไปในข้อเสนอของพวากษาได้อยู่ดี สืบทอดของ The Rooftop Nursery มีความสดใสดีเด่น สืบทอดสืบสืบสานอัญเชิญธรรมชาติเดินทางมาให้แก่สถาบันเด็ก DWHAT





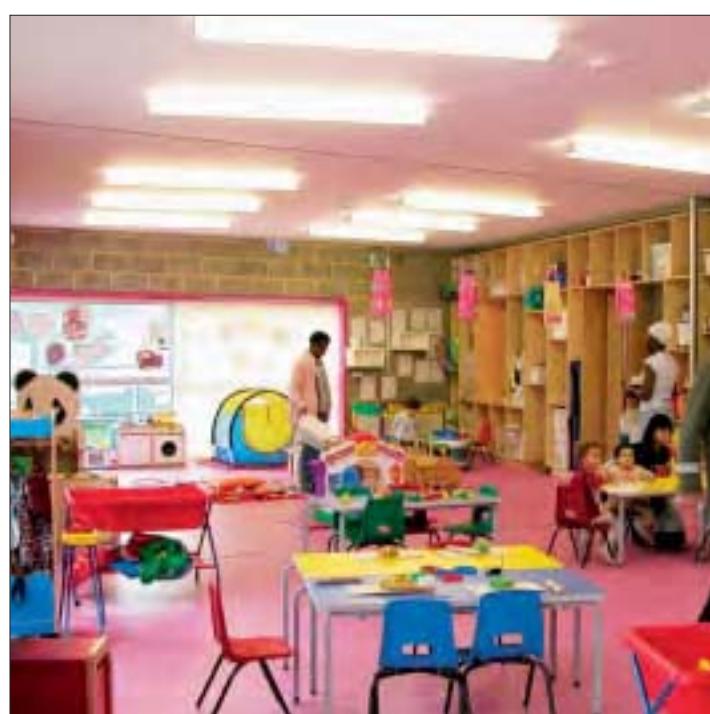
(ซ้ายล่าง) แนวคิด Fluid Interior Space ที่สามารถปรับเปลี่ยนได้ หลากหลายรูปแบบ (กลาง) พื้นที่ของจิตวิญญาณเด็ก เช่นเป็นยาทำให้พัฒนาพื้นที่ความปลดปล่อย  
ช่องเล็ก  
(ขวา) รายละเอียดของ การใช้รั้วสีคราฟท์เพื่อย ให้เกิดพื้นที่เด็กสนุก น่าสนใจ  
(ล่าง) ภายในห้องเลี้ยง เด็ก

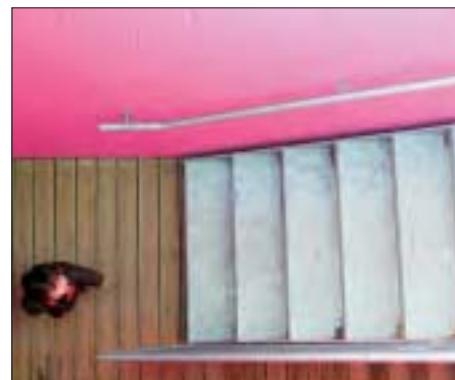


architecture มีวิธีการเลือกเฉลี่ยสีที่มีสันใจ เมื่องจากอาคารต้องเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชุมชน โดยรอบ ในช่วงของการก่อสร้าง WHAT\_architecture ได้รับข้อเสนอแนะแล้วว่า บ้านที่นั่น และทั้งหมดเลยให้ล้ำที่ไว้เพื่อให้ผู้คนในชุมชนโดยรอบสามารถส่ง SMS มาให้เวลาที่ต้องมอง ต่อการ "Hoete" เรียกวิธีการนี้ว่า 'SMS consultancy' จากผลโหวตดังนี้ได้โภนสีเขียว ที่น่าจะเลือกใช้ในส่วนใหญ่ของอาคาร นับว่า เป็นวิธีการที่น่ารักที่เดียว สำหรับโครงการที่ต้องการการสื่อสารร่วมจากผู้คนรอบข้างภายใต้ ระยะเวลาและบูรณาภรณ์นั่นจ้า ก็รวมถึงการใช้เทคโนโลยีในการสื่อสารยังไงให้เป็นประโยชน์ นอกจากนั้นผังสูงทางด้านทิศเหนือ ของพื้นที่ที่ลั่นบนลังจากความต้องการขอใบอนุญาตที่ยุติธรรม แม่ของทางโรงเรียน เกรยว่า เสียงดังตั้งรบกวนมายังส่วนของสถาน วัฒนธรรมเดิม ส่วนการตลาดอิฐของผู้คนเดิมจาก การประเมินของรัฐบาลว่าบ้านเดิมที่ตั้ง ต่างๆ ภัยการลดลงเท่าที่สูงที่สุด แต่ ให้เด็กได้ใช้เว็บสมุดเพื่อพิมพ์ ทั้งที่เล่นหากลุ่มน เกิดจากการประเมินประมวลระหว่างบังคับเพื่อ ความปลอดภัยต่างๆ มากกว่ากับความต้องการให้เด็กเรียนรู้จากการเล่นสนุก

WHAT\_architecture มุ่งข้อจำกัดของ งบประมาณ และข้อกำหนดเพื่อความไม่ชอบด้วย ต่างๆ ด้วยสัญญาที่สร้างสรรค์ The Rooftop Nursery เป็นโครงการที่แสดงให้เห็นอย่าง ชัดเจนว่าการที่มีงบประมาณจำกัดสามารถเป็น อาคารที่มีคุณภาพสูงได้ ลึกซึ้งมาจากการคิด

จุดนี้ของโครงการนี้ คือการออกแบบของ WHAT\_architecture ที่มีดีไซน์ง่ายไว้ให้รู้สึก ส้อยหรือผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียของอาคารมีส่วน ในการตัดสินใจในงานออกแบบสถาปัตยกรรม ไม่ว่าจะเป็นในเรื่องของการเลือกใช้สี หรือการ ปักปันให้ผังรูปแบบต่างๆ ผุดง่ายๆ คือสถาปนิก เลือกที่จะไม่ "ยัดเยียด" ความประณีตของ ตนเองในงานออกแบบ ถ้าขยันจะออกแบบแบบที่สถาปนิก "ปล่อย" ให้กิจกรรมและภาระ "ให้ส่องเกิดขึ้นอย่างธรรมชาติ" เป็นสีที่น่าสนใจ ค่าตามที่คือจดให้สำราญมีกิจกรรมท่องหยุดควบคุ้ม และปล่อยให้เด็กที่เด็กนั่งลง จุใจให้ไปปล่อย ไม่ได้ เพราะต้องปักป้องะงานเดินพื้น รวมถึงการ ออกแบบ "โครงสร้าง" แบบใดที่เอื้อให้ห้องรวม ต่างๆ ก็เช่นกันภายในอย่างอิสระมากที่สุด เพื่อ ให้ผู้ใช้สอยมีโอกาสที่จะได้ "เลือก" กับเข้าบ้าน





"What is architecture?" is an interesting question that can lead to many interesting discussions. And it is the initial point of the name of an architectural practice, **WHAT\_architecture**, who has designed "The Rooftop Nursery". From many practitioners point of view this kind of an abstract question is nonsense. While some architectural theorists spend their time reading, thinking and writing, until they have no time left to create anything, there are a number of practical architects who keep themselves busy solving problem on site and do not have any time left to evaluate what they have done. Last year, Bernard Tschumi said at RIBA Talks: "Speculation on Post-Globalisation", "What is it? may in fact not be as important as What it does!"

Tschumi's quote is interesting for its reflection on the wider frame of architectural consideration. Architecture should not evolve only construction techniques or some deep theories behind design, but the interaction between architecture and its surrounding context should be one of the factors to be considered in the design process. Certainly, this is not a new issue.

The Rooftop Nursery is a good example of design that tries to set the balance of interaction between architecture and its surrounding. It reflects the impact of architecture on the context, and the impact of the context on form, shape, colour, material as well as plan. In addition, the reflection also includes a compromise between the architect's thought, regulations of law, and other needs. Anthong Hoeft talked about The Rooftop Nursery, which

was initiated by the government to get mothers back to work by offering affordable childcare as part of a publicly funded initiative. The Borough of Hackney, where it is located, is London's third highest densely populated area consisting of a diversity of races. The project had many limitations regarding time and budget, factors that made it very difficult to design this small nursery.

In fact, given the high cost of land the project was almost stopped. But Hoete drove around the borough's wasteland and found a small leftover building in the neighbourhood. Fortunately, the building happened to belong to the government and so the project could go ahead.

WHAT\_architecture worked fast, from analysing the model to receiving advise from officers and stakeholders.

The Rooftop Nursery has an area of 178 square meter and can accommodate 50 children at a time. In terms of architecture, it consists of four co-operating spaces - outdoor garden, internal space, semi outdoor walkway in front, and a play space on the roof.

Various plants are grown in the garden for the children to study natural changes of seasons. The interior space is fluid and adaptive, two translucent doors along with three curtain partitions allow the plan organisation to be configured into more than 80 different layouts. The semi-outdoor walkway is used as the way to reach each functional space (via three entrances) in order to optimise the internal space.

As the budget was so limited, the architects decided to turn the roof into a play space. This provides a secure area as

การออกแบบรายละเอียด  
ภายในจากบูรณะน้ำ  
ที่จัดกับผู้คนในบ้าน  
พอย่างสร้างสรรค์มาก  
ที่สุดต้องใช้และเป็นใจกลาง  
ให้ได้ใช้ความรู้ส่วนตัว



one can only access the play roof from inside the building. The floor of the play roof is a technical innovation made of granulated rubber, and instead of using expensive cladding the architects simply painted the building. Hoete thought that kids aren't interested in expensive materials. Besides, the painting can also protect the building from fire, moisture and fungus. The bright colour scheme is based on green, a symbol of nature.

During the construction, WHAT\_architecture painted different shades of green on the wall along with their telephone number, asking local residents to send an SMS and vote for their favourite colours. Hoete calls this approach "SMS consultancy".

Given the limited time and budget, this is a lovely idea for a project that required participation of the local community. The high wall on the north of the play space was a request from the adjacent school to prevent noise filtering through from the nursery, and the sloping wall does both, provide noise protection and shadow reduction. The Rooftop's play space was designed following all safety regulations whilst keeping the children's learning and fun activities in mind.

WHAT\_architecture treated all limitations in a creative way. This project proves that low budget buildings can be of high quality. Most interestingly, the architects allowed the users and stakeholders to take part in choosing the colour and the layout. In other words, the architects did not force people with their good intentions.

But where is the meeting point between "free" and "control"?

The Rooftop Nursery shows that the architects' skill and creativity are significant in designing an effective work, whereas the context directly influences the decision of colour, material, form, and planning. It is neither for the users nor the architects.

The project is a compromise between both ends. "What is architecture" has been a question that architects ask other architects but forget to ask themselves. The mothers who send their children to The Rooftop Nursery are not interested in issues of incorporating spaces, versatility or democracy in creating architecture. But they will be pleased to have their children playing safe here. The children are interested in having fun with lots of space - to see, to touch, and to learn something new. The staff members are happy to be able to alter the space according to different activities. And the colours, they selected via SMS, should not annoy the local residents.

Finally, it is not the issue that The Rooftop Nursery can make Hackney a happy community or not. Social problems are too complicated for a single building to solve. Amongst the milieu of society, architects and architecture are just a small part and they cannot really change the world. But we should not desperately sit and wait, or dream of Utopia, about gaining a power that has never been in our hands. Rather, we can make small-scale architecture that is concerned with a wider social context, to create a practical building with easy, smart and effective functions. WHAT\_architecture has chosen to do so and have fun with it.



WHAT

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**INTERIOR DESIGN  
NEW YORK  
JULY 2006**

# walkthrough



## let the games begin

ANTHONY HOETE KNOWS A thing or two about the pressures on working parents. The founding partner of **WHAT\_Architecture** steps off the Eurostar in London, returning from a project in France—with his 2-year-old son, Maui, in tow. “His mother had meetings this week,” Hoete explains, while Maui, pacifier in mouth,

clings to his father. “The client said it would be all right to bring him along.”

Hoete thus approached the design of the **Rooftop Nursery**, a day-care center in East London, with a degree of commitment other architects might lack. The ground-up project, part of a government program to help mothers get back to work, was allotted a budget of about \$600,000, which also →

*Architect Anthony Hoete's son, Maui, explores the play area at the Rooftop Nursery in London; flooring is synthetic rubber.*

ANTHONY HOETE



had to cover the purchase of land. Even in an area where property prices are relatively low, the figure was, in Hoete's words, "ridiculously small"—especially compared to London's recent big-ticket educational projects by Alsop Design and Richard Rogers Partnership.

On a 2,900-square-foot plot, Hoete ingeniously maximized the use of space, with the nursery's sloping profile as one element in a harmonious landscape. The gap between the front of the

building and a security fence is sheltered by a glazed canopy. (Great for parking strollers.) At the side of the building, a patio garden will, in time, be shaded by vines growing on cables overhead.

Of course, as the nursery's name suggests, the most singular way in which Hoete saved space was to put a play area on the roof. Given tough safety requirements, he didn't stint on materials. Spongy green granulated EPDM synthetic rubber, for example, covers the roof

surface. When EPDM is used for ordinary playgrounds, water drains through, into the soil. To control drainage here, Hoete gave the roof a slight angle and installed an underlayer of the same geo-textile membrane that landscapers use, so water sluices off. The roof left little money for the nursery's interior. "We hit the phones and hustled like hell," Hoete says. It helped that, as he points out, a nursery ought to be no-nonsense: "Sophisticated detailing is

not appropriate in an environment where it has to take a beating." Interior walls are unpainted concrete block, and shelving is untreated plywood. For windows, he built frames of painted MDF.

Then there are the aesthetic arguments for simplicity. "Some toys architecture can't compete with," he says, picking up a colorful mini vacuum.

Bright accents provide just the right amount of pizzazz. The pink of the linoleum floor was sampled from a dress worn by

*Clockwise from top: Since this picture was taken, the galvanized-steel framework has been glazed to shelter the building's entry. Shelving in the main room is untreated plywood. Galvanized-steel stairs lead to the play roof. A square of pink acrylic neatly meets government requirements that a restroom shared by staff and children be open to view.*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVID COWARD; ANTHONY HOETE [2]; IGNACIO ACOSTA



*Clockwise from top: Around the roof's entry, a cage of anti-climb galvanized-steel mesh keeps kids in and undesirables out. The stair landing is waxed redwood. Staggered concrete blocks, used around the patio door, are a motif that turns up in several of Hoete's projects. Sliding panels of honeycomb plastic allow staff to partition the main room as needed.*

manager Hafiza Patel's daughter. As for the lively greens on the exterior and the play roof's walls, Hoete digitally matched a number of plants growing nearby, then asked staff to choose favorites.

U.K. government regulations require a specific amount of space per child, according to age. Thus requirements shift as children grow and class sizes change. Nimbly addressing this dilemma, Hoete came up with a system of sliding panels set at varying angles—separating

babies from older children or one activity from another. For the panel material, he splurged on translucent honeycomb plastic.

The Rooftop Nursery was Hoete's first educational job in the U.K., and it's inspired him to take the same ideas further. For an upcoming project sponsored by Lego, he plans to use the blocks in preliminary meetings to help parents and staffers express ideas about space. He even hopes to build the nursery from larger-than-life Lego

blocks. "The thing about nurseries is that you can have a lot of fun," he says. "Hopefully that will manifest itself in the building, so the kids have fun, too."

—Susan Welsh

FLOORING (ROOF): NOVA SPORT.  
FLASHING MATERIAL: SARNAFIL.  
WALL FIXTURES (ROOF), CEILING FIXTURES (MAIN ROOM): PHILIPS. SECURITY MESH (ROOF, PATIO): RIDGEWAY THROUGH TORNADO WIRE. FLOORING (MAIN ROOM): ARMSTRONG. STAIR (EXTERIOR): CORUS. SINKS (RESTROOM): SISSONS. DECKING (EXTERIOR): HOPPINGS SOFTWOOD PRODUCTS. PANEL MATERIAL (MAIN ROOM): BENCORE. CONCRETE BLOCKS: AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES. PAINT: DULUX. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: SANDWOOD DESIGN AND BUILD.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: ANTHONY HOETE (3); DAVID COWLARD



WHAT

STATEMENT

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# RIBA EDUCATION SECTOR REVIEW 2006

**WHAT\_architecture**

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Email: info@whatarchitecture.com www.whatarchitecture.com

## Rooftop Nursery, Hackney

The Rooftop Nursery is located in the east London borough of Hackney, within walking distance of Clapton's Murder Mile (the area with the highest UK homicide rate) and where one sixth of residents receives Income Support. Given this grimy context, the Rooftop Nursery aims to get mothers back to work by offering affordable children care. This could only be achieved by 'affordable' architecture conceived as being low cost yet high design. WHAT\_architecture procured the site for the Nursery next to Benthal Infant and Junior schools as it could provide a 'one-stop-educational-drop' for parents and their children.

In keeping with its educational-childcare use, the Rooftop Nursery has been conceived to as a re-playable building. From Plato to Play-Doh, play is universally recognised as being vital to the welfare and development of the child because it enhances social interactivity, spatial awareness and skills development. The Rooftop Nursery offers multiple yet interlocking educational play environments - three types of outdoor space and one reconfigurable indoor space - to promote the idea of a 'playable building' so as to enhance the child's spatial perception of the world they inhabit.

**Architect:**  
WHAT\_architecture  
**Client:**  
London Borough of Hackney  
**Main Contractor:**  
Sandwood Planning  
**Supervisors & Construction:**  
**Project Health & Safety Consultants:**  
Goddard Consulting Ltd  
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The Rooftop Nursery offers multiple yet interlocking educational play environments.



WHAT

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**MARK  
THE NETHERLANDS  
FALL 2006**

# DOING IT FOR THE KIDS

WHAT ARCHITECTURE

NURSERY  
LONDON



**AMID THE GHETTO GREY OF LONDON'S OUTSKIRTS, WHAT ARCHITECTURE'S ROOFTOP NURSERY POPS UP LIKE A PLAYFUL JACK-IN-THE-BOX.**

PERNILLE JENSEN PHOTO

TONY MONTANA / WHAT ARCHITECTURE

A UFO has landed in the new London borough of Hackney. At second glance, however, the bright green object turns out to be the area's new designer nursery, not a precursor to an alien invasion. London-based WHAT\_architecture, initiated by Anthony Hoole, designed the Rooftop Nursery as part of a publicly funded initiative aimed at getting mothers back to work by offering affordable child care. The

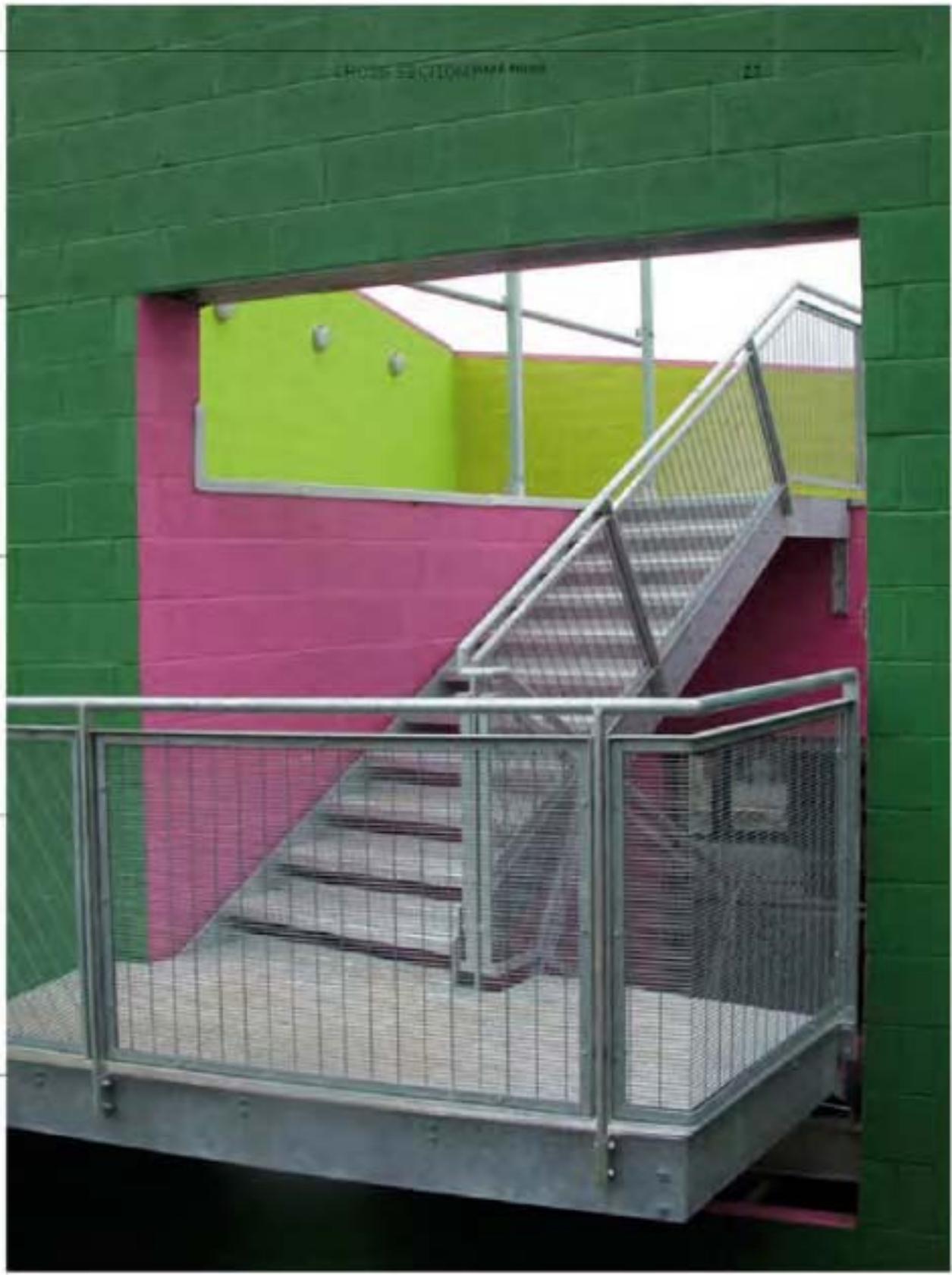
Technicolor dream was conceived around the cheapest means of construction, yet WHAT has always rejected the idea that a low budget equals low-quality architecture. 'Architecture is a luxury device, the "Wallpaper" preserve of the wealthy. The Nursery is liked because it confronts the neighbourhood without the middle-class subtleties of high detailing. It's paint, it's graphic, it's urban graffiti written in 3 dimensions,' says Hoole.

Strategically located next to an infant and junior school, the nursery provides a 'one-stop-educational-quik-drop' for parents and their kids. Given the high costs of land, the plan was to minimize plot requirements. This was achieved by placing the main outdoor play space on top of the granulated rubber play

roof, which can only be accessed internally, thus also providing a secure area.

The interior play space is 'fluid' and adaptable in terms of size, scale and materiality, thanks to the combination of two mobile elements: hard walls (made from translucent acrylic honeycomb screens) and soft walls (curtained alcoves made from coloured plastic, velvet or silver drapes). This allows at least 50 different layouts, adjustable to the activities within. The idea behind the 're-playable' building is to enhance children's spatial perception of the world they inhabit. Who knows, perhaps creating their own play areas will spark the little ones' architectural aspirations.





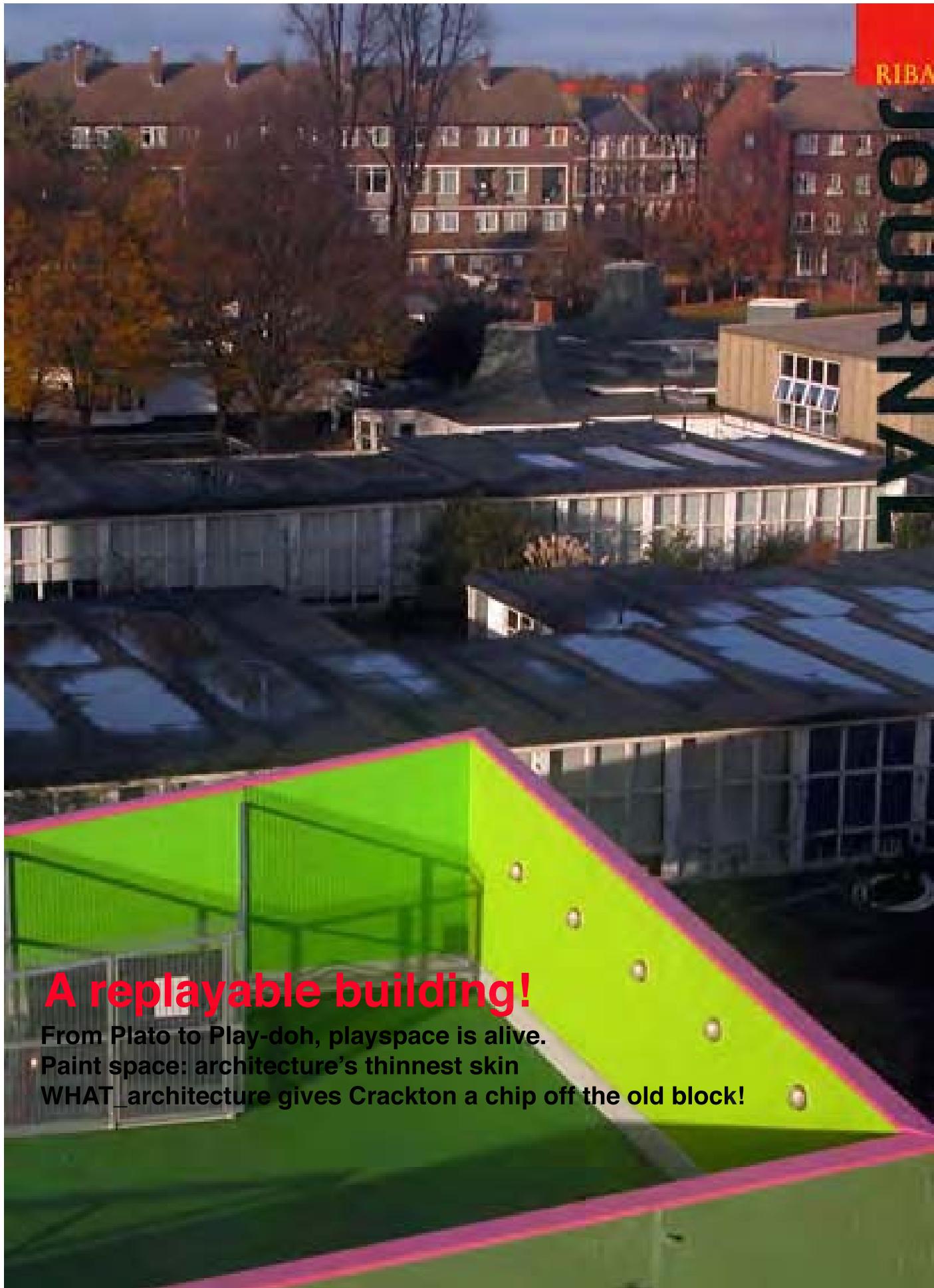
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# RIBA JOURNAL UK



## A replayable building!

From Plato to Play-doh, playspace is alive.

Paint space: architecture's thinnest skin

WHAT\_architecture gives Crackton a chip off the old block!

WHAT

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SPAIN  
ISSUE 10  
ISSUE 12**

**x 10**



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# ROOFTOP NURSERY GUARDERÍA EN LA AZOTEA. LONDRES



**ROOFTOP NURSERY, SITUADA EN LONDRES, ES PARTE DE UNA INICIATIVA PÚBLICA QUE PRETENDE CONSEGUIR QUE, DE VERDAD, LAS MADRES PUEDAN TRABAJAR Y DEJAR A SUS NIÑOS EN GUARDERÍAS A PRECIOS RAZONABLES.**

TEXTO: PIÀ MINCHOT. FOTOS: WHAT ARCHITECTURE.

**E**l escaso espacio edificable en las grandes ciudades y el elevado precio del suelo hacen que los arquitectos se vean obligados a explorar todas sus capacidades creativas para poder ofrecer soluciones valientes aunque, en ocasiones, arriesgadas. Con un grado de libertad poco habitual en este tipo de proyectos, Anthony Hoeter, socio fundador de

WHAT-Architecture, proyectó *Rooftop Nursery* ("Guardería en la Azotea"), jardín de infancia ubicado en el East Londinese, sufragado mediante fondos públicos por The Learning Trust Hackney Borough Council. Con un presupuesto total de 440.000 euros, incluía la compra del solar y la dirección, el encargo partió de un programa gubernamental dirigido a fomentar

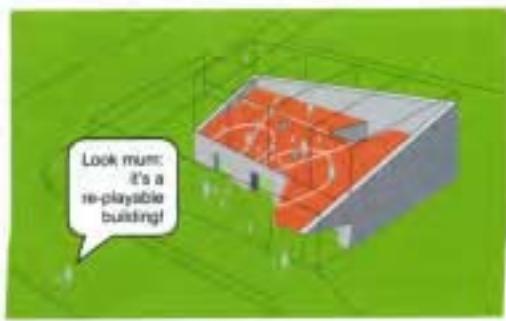


**El diseño de esta guardería, en el East londinense, está determinado por las restricciones de un esquema urbano limitado. Anthony Hoete, socio fundador de WHAT-Architecture, desahoga el área poniendo la zona de juegos y de deporte al aire libre en la azotea.**

incorporación de las madres al mercado laboral. El presupuesto destinado a la construcción de una guardería con capacidad para 45 niños resultaba, en palabras de Hoete, "ridículamente pequeño". Con la suma restante concibió la guardería, de 270 metros cuadrados de planta, en tres áreas: una zona cubierta, la guardería propiamente dicha y el patio de recreo en la azotea.



Las escaleras de acero galvanizado conducen a la azotea donde están ubicados el patio de recreo y las canchas deportivas. Una valla de seguridad rodea todo el edificio protegiendo a los niños.



Afortunadamente, los criterios de seguridad prescritos por la normativa gubernamental no ponían restricciones en cuanto a los materiales. Hoete procuró valerse de las diferentes posibilidades que ofrecen algunos materiales para dotar de personalidad, flexibilidad y estética a un proyecto a priori difícil de acometer. Así, cubrió la azotea con caucho granulado verde EPDM, un material

permeable, pero que Hoete, para controlar el drenaje, utilizó en ángulo sobre una capa inferior de la misma membrana geotextil que utilizan los paisajistas para evacuar el agua. En el interior, las paredes móviles deslizantes hechas con pantallas translúcidas y las paredes de plástico atercopelado colorido o termoplacado se combinan para obtener hasta cincuenta combinaciones distintas. \*

WHAT

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**PLAN  
IRELAND  
OCTOBER 2006**



# Plan

The Art of Architecture and Design

October 2006

## A REPLAYABLE BUILDING!

WHAT\_architecture designs an affordable pre-school care in East London

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# MONUMENT AUSTRALIA

# MONUMENT

civic special 2006



**WHAT\_architecture  
HOW TO GET  
SINGLE MUMS  
BACK TO WORK?**

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1999 AU\$12.15 - £5.92/US \$14.95 SNGS15.90 [INC GST] RMS21.00



PLAY  
BOX



PAGE 86 • MONUMENT 76

MONU

WHAT\_ARCHITECTURE "PLA"



In a disadvantaged London suburb WHAT Architecture's Rooftop Nursery promotes the notion of a playable building, with interlocking educational environments to stimulate the children's perception of the world they inhabit.

Review WILLIAM TOZIR  
Photography IGNACIO ACOSTA

## MENT

"Y BOX" AS SEEN IN ISSUE 76



**CLIENTS** Rooftop Nursery Service provider/operator: The Learning Trust (Local Education Authority); Hackney Borough Council (owner); **SERVICE PROVIDER/MANAGER** Habis Hotel; **OPERATOR** Rooftop Nursery LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY Bob Allen, The Learning Trust OPERATORS ADVISOR John Sharp

**DESIGN TEAM** Design leader/Architect/contact administrator: WHAT Architecture; ARCHITECTURAL TEAM Anthony Hoete (Project Architect), Etsuko Matsuda, May Moroder, Wan Sophonpanich, Tomoko Terasawa; **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER** Roger Smek, Michael Hall; **Associates** TECHNICAL CONSULTANCY Steve Dowsey; PLANNING CONSULTANTS Ted Godland; Godland Consulting; **BENTHAL SCHOOLS** Marion Whipp, Benthal Infant School; **CONTRACTOR** Richard Garland, Sandwood Construction; **SITE MANAGER** Jeremy Watt; **WHAT Architecture**



05



07

**WHAT** Architecture director Anthony Hoete is a New Zealander now based in London, and divides his time between practice, teaching and writing. The practice website presents their projects as a small city or village to an urban soundtrack, and explains that "WHAT Architecture produces designs, research and buildings in the fields of architecture, urbanism and landscape". The confusion between realised schemes and speculative projects and the slightly bewildering format of the website is in some ways a good analogy for Hoete's output, which generally sacrifices a degree of clarity for the sake of ensuring that the outcome remains immersed in its creative process.

This commitment to process is particularly evident in the Rooftop Nursery, where **WHAT** eschewed a traditional architectural appointment in favour of finding a site and proposing the project to a client, carrying out the demolition themselves, and becoming an employee of the project for tax purposes. The nursery is part of the Government's Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative, which aims to encourage mothers to return to work by providing affordable childcare. A low-cost project, it is located in economically disadvantaged Clapton Pond, nestled between a crack house, a school and low-quality social housing. Hoete is no stranger to tough environments and their abrasive adjacencies, having recently been injured in a drug-fuelled break-in to his east London studio.

The scheme is inspired by the notion of play, and an appreciation of its importance to the welfare and development of children. **WHAT** rationalise the scheme as an adaptable "game box" that "offers multiple yet interlocking educational play environments ... to promote the idea of a 'playable building' so as to enhance the child's perception of the world they inhabit". Hoete describes their working method as an iterative process of selecting and eliminating options,

variations and permutations. **WHAT** aims to make design more accessible to its clients and users, and in this vein the schedule of accommodation and activity for the nursery is light-heartedly renamed "50 ways to leave your loved one".

The building takes the form of a green box with a slanting profile and a pink or unfinished interior. The simplicity of the mass and its colour scheme lends the building an abstract or surreal quality in relation to the surrounding buildings, while in practical terms the high wall serves to provide a barrier to sound and noise pollution to and from the adjacent school. The pink paint finish to the angled parapet can be read as a section line through a notional rectilinear green volume, adding to the impression of the building as a plastic solid. The exposed grid structure of the canopied entry area is reminiscent of 1980s Peter Eisenman or late '70s Gehry, while the external 'window' framing a view of the neighbouring school is almost Corbusian.

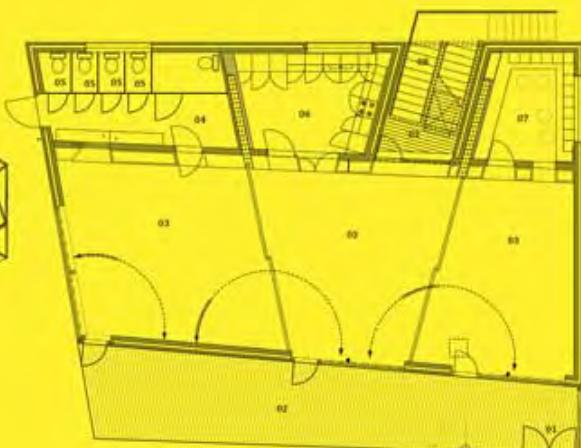
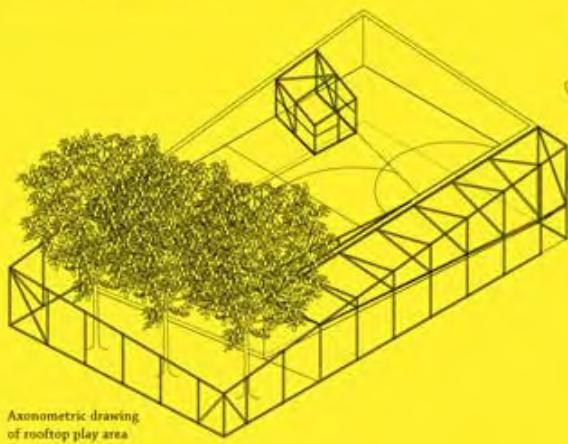
The use of the roof as outdoor space also recalls Le Corbusier, but could similarly be understood as a continuation of the Victorian tradition of rooftop school playgrounds. **WHAT** asserts that the space is an efficient use of the valuable site "whilst simultaneously offering good relational views back to the neighbourhood". Spatially the project consists of "three types of outdoor space and one reconfigurable indoor space". The outdoor spaces include the roof, the canopy and the garden, while the single interior space can be divided into three zones by sliding translucent walls and curtains.

The Rooftop Nursery has received high-level acclaim, including being short-listed for the Government's Better Building Award. **WHAT** Architecture is currently working on a selection of public and private projects, including an Eco-tourism hotel in New Zealand and housing in London. ■



01 The nursery is a low-cost project nestled between a crack house, a school and low-quality social housing 02 The exposed grid structure of the canopied entry area is reminiscent of 1980s Peter Eisenman or late-70s Gehry 03–04 Based on the notion of an adaptable ‘game box’ it offers multiple yet interlocking educational play environments 05 The

high wall provides a barrier to sound and noise pollution. 06-07 Three types of outdoor space and one reconfigurable indoor space encourage children's perception of the world they inhabit. 08-09 The simplicity of the mass and its colour scheme lends the building an abstract or surreal quality in relation to the surrounding buildings.



MENT

"Y BOX" AS SEEN IN ISSUE 76

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# FRAME THE NETHERLANDS

# FRAME

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN >



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bouroullec vs  
casa campana

nightlife: the  
clean, the bold  
and the trashy

fashion  
wonderland  
it's not about  
clothing

## WHAT archi tecture

a chip off the  
old block



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## Kid on a Hot Green Roof

The nursery that Anthony Hoete of WHAT\_architecture designed for one of London's grittier areas cost €440,000, not much for a facility with a capacity for 45 children. This meagre budget prompted Hoete to employ some unusual tactics. He not only scouted around to find the site – a former caretaker's house – but also demolished the 70-m<sup>2</sup>,

asbestos-riddled place himself. With the money left over, Hoete divided the nursery into three areas: a canopied zone where parents can wait for their children, a nursery that can be subdivided into three rooms by means of sliding partitions, and a rooftop playground. Having the playground on the roof had multiple benefits: it allowed Hoete to keep the footprint of the building small, to stay well within budget, and to add an extra layer of security to the nursery at a time when citizens of the UK (and elsewhere) appear to be obsessed with the threat posed by paedophiles and

Rooftop Retreat: Working on a tight budget, Anthony Hoete of WHAT\_architecture transformed an old caretaker's house into a nursery with a striking green rooftop playground.

kidnappers. After all, the only way to get to the playground is through the building itself. The architect took a somewhat different approach to the finishing touches. After the owners said they wanted to paint the playground green, Hoete showed members of the community 12 shades of green and asked for their preferences, thinking that involving the neighbourhood in the building project would make the nursery less likely to be vandalized. 'Would I do it all again?' Hoete wonders out loud. 'Yes, but not on a budget that small.'



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# ARCHITECTS JOURNAL UK

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## COMPANY PROFILE: WHAT\_architecture

*WHAT\_architecture* is a young RIBA chartered practice established in London by former Mecanoo associate director and TU Delft Ass. Professor Anthony Hoete after extensive office and teaching experience in the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Australia and New Zealand.

*WHAT\_architecture* uses an iterative process to design space that produces greater choice for clients, users and the community. By simply asking 'what?' anything can be turned into discourse. Options, variations and permutations install confidence and mitigate against risk as the design process is informed by selection and elimination.

*WHAT\_architecture* works on both public and private sector projects ranging from installations to masterplanning. The office was recently commissioned by the Province of Groningen to masterplan their roofscapes, has procured an airspace site from LBTH and is undertaking an audit of LB Hackney's property portfolio for better educational use. The Rooftop Nursery project has recently been extensively published both locally and internationally featured and was recognised by CABE and the DfES as "an exemplary educational project".

*WHAT\_architecture* continues to pursue its fascination with space and mobility described in the book ROAM: "the contemporary world is one characterised by the mobility of people, goods and information". Anthony Hoete is currently European correspondent to Monument Australia, Architectural Editor of Kultureflash, is a LEA Governor and sits on various other boards incl. The Showroom Art Gallery in East London. A position as an RIBA Client Advisor is currently pending.



ROAM (BDP, London 2003): the *WHAT\_architecture* manifesto

WHAT	STATEMENT	PUBLICATION	OFFICE
<b>PROJECT TEAM:</b>			
<b><u>STAKEHOLDERS:</u></b>			
<p><b>Location:</b> 6 Ottaway Street, Hackney, London E5 8PX UK</p> <p><b>Clients:</b> 1 Rooftop Nursery (service provider / operator) 2 The Learning Trust (Local Education Authority) 3 Hackney Borough Council (owner)</p> <p><b>Service Provider / Operator:</b> Manager: Hafiza Patel Rooftop Nursery tel: 0208-9862006</p> <p><b>Local Education Auth:</b> Bob Allen, The Learning Trust, TLC Building, 1 Reading Lane, London E8 1GQ. Tel: 020 8820 7000 Mob: 0795-8511351</p> <p><b>Operators Advisor:</b> John Sharp, Sharp Solutions Mob: 07986-047707</p>			
<b><u>DESIGN TEAM:</u></b>			
<p><b>Design Leader / Architect / Contract Administrator</b> WHAT_architecture 5 Ravenscroft Street London E2 7SH <a href="http://www.whatarchitecture.com">www.whatarchitecture.com</a> <a href="mailto:info@whatarchitecture.com">info@whatarchitecture.com</a> 0044-20-77397373</p> <p><b>Architectural Team:</b> Anthony Hoete (Project Architect) Eiichi Matsuda May Noradee Wan Sophonpanich Toshiko Terazono</p> <p><b>Structural Engineer:</b> Rutger Snoek, Michael Hadi Associates, 113-117 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3BX Tel: 020-78332828</p> <p><b>Technical Consultancy:</b> Steve Downey 19 Woodville Road, Leytonstone London E11 Mob: 07906 065960</p>			

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<b>Site Manager:</b>	Jeremy Watt (Watt Architecture)		