



Manorfield Primary School

Landscape Institute Playground Project

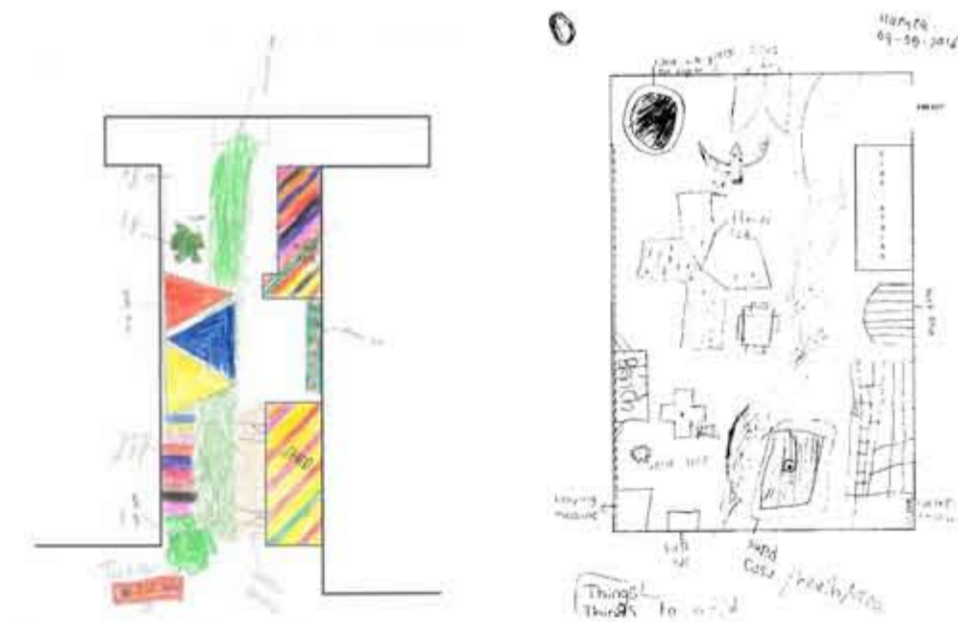
The Brief

Manorfield School wanted to rejuvenate an area of their playground, having conducted a walking tour of the outside spaces within the school grounds and discussions with the artist in residence. A space that connected the school hall to the larger playground area was selected as it posed a variety of issues to an area that was seen as purely functional.

During the first session with the children the format of how we would tackle these issues was discussed and the Survey, Analysis & Design process was chosen as the appropriate system to follow. Each of these topic areas would form the basis of the following three classroom sessions with the children.

Survey

The children and I undertook a survey of the space which included measuring the site in order that an accurate base plan could be created, we also looked at how people use the space and how this changes at differing times of the day. An audit of the space was undertaken and the main areas for change were indicated, these included the need to screen the adjacent staff car park, improve the view from neighbouring classrooms and remove some of the unwanted items from the space.



Examples of pupils analysis and design for the school space



(Below) Crossrail Place Garden

Analysis

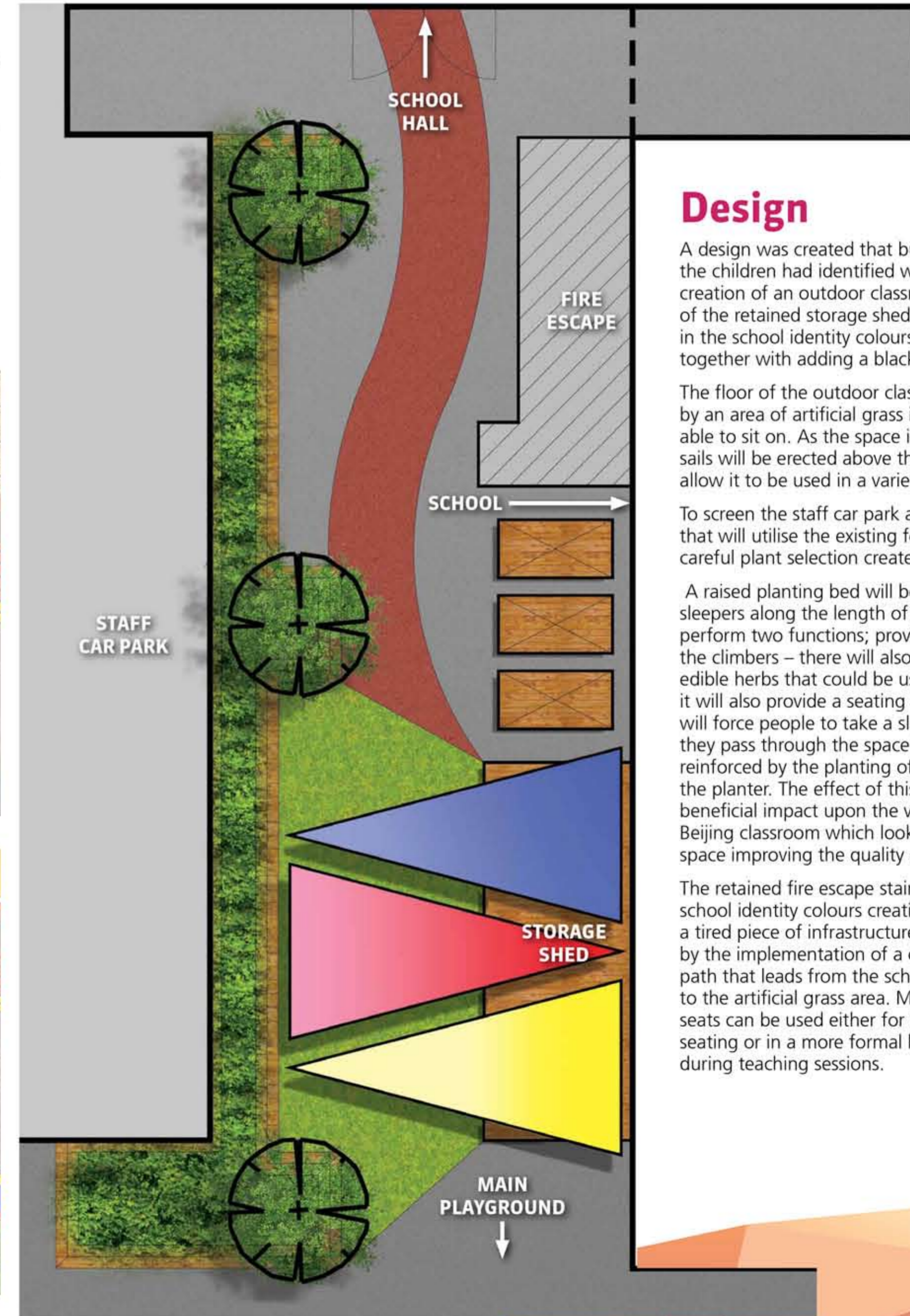
Following on from the survey exercise we discussed what methods we could employ to resolve the issues that we had discovered, during this exercise we discussed other projects that have responded to similar issues. Following a recent trip to the gardens at Crossrail Place I showcased this scheme to the class and discussed how the different paths provide a different appreciation of the gardens, by slowing pedestrians down it encourages a greater appreciation of the adjacent landscape. We also looked at the types of 'feelings' that we would like to create within the space, the current space is used as an outdoor corridor that is used to for pupils to get from the school (dinner) hall out into the playground. The children's idea was to introduce elements into the space that would slow people down and allow for a greater enjoyment as they passed through.



Proposed view of outdoor teaching area



Proposed view of the green wall



Design

A design was created that built on the themes that the children had identified which resulted in the creation of an outdoor classroom area that makes use of the retained storage shed which will be painted in the school identity colours of red, yellow and blue together with adding a blackboard.

The floor of the outdoor classroom will be marked out by an area of artificial grass in which the pupils will be able to sit on. As the space is south west facing shade sails will be erected above the class room space to allow it to be used in a variety of outdoor conditions.

To screen the staff car park a green wall is proposed that will utilise the existing fencing and through careful plant selection create an effective screen.

A raised planting bed will be created out of timber sleepers along the length of the fence, this will perform two functions; provide a planting zone for the climbers – there will also be space for growing edible herbs that could be used by school cooks and it will also provide a seating unit the layout of which will force people to take a slightly different route as they pass through the space. This planting will be reinforced by the planting of three fruit trees within the planter. The effect of this planting will have a beneficial impact upon the views from the adjacent Beijing classroom which looks directly out into the space improving the quality of its environment.

The retained fire escape stairs will be repainted in the school identity colours creating a bright treatment to a tired piece of infrastructure. The space is completed by the implementation of a curved soft pour surface path that leads from the school hall doors through to the artificial grass area. Movable timber seats can be used either for informal seating or in a more formal layout during teaching sessions.