

CHERRY TREE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Location: London Borough of Lambeth, UK

Client: Rosendale Primary School

Started on site: January 2014

Completed: January 2015

Size: 234sqm

Construction cost: £150,000

The Cherry Tree expansion project was a response to the need to provide more places for pre-school children in Lambeth. The work was funded as part of the Government policy to increase the offer for early years places for two year olds.

The layout of the rooms has been reorganised to provide a clear sequence, in order of the age of the child, to give a sense of progression.

Rooms have been increased in size and their layout remodelled to provide a clear open space for a variety of types of play for an additional 30 children.

The new connection with the garden, improved daylight and natural ventilation and upgraded building fabric means the retrofit will help to reduce energy use.

Context

Cullinan Studio was approached by Kate Atkins, Head of Rosendale School, to provide a strategy for providing additional places in the existing Children's Centre. We undertook a feasibility study to understand the organisation of the existing building.

All the rooms were small and had over-provision of circulation with two entrances, two coat areas and a convoluted route for the children to the toilets which suffered from a poor layout for supervision, lighting and ventilation. There was a conflict of uses in the rooms between the children's play areas and staff areas.



Above: We worked with an Artist in Residence to create the wall murals for the children. *Photo©Paul Raftery.*

Following page: Remodelled Butterfly Room for three to five year olds. *Photo©Paul Raftery.*





Above: Natural materials have been chosen for their beauty, but also robustness. *Photo©Paul Raftery.*



Above: The room layout has been adapted to create more clear open space for a variety of types of play. *Photo©Paul Raftery.*



Above: Remodelled Ladybird Room for two to three year olds. *Photo©Paul Raftery.*



Above: Detail of the colourful, textured wall mural in the Ladybird Room. *Photo©Paul Raftery.*

Creativity

From our analysis, we proposed the youngest children were relocated from the front of the building to the quieter area nearer the garden. This allowed the Community Room to be relocated to this large space adjacent to the entrance. Further to this we proposed there should be a clear sequence in the layout of rooms in order of the age of the child to give a sense of progression.

We rationalised the room layouts and provided a single generous entrance with coat area for the children and parents. The second entrance was remodelled for a dedicated staff area with adult WC and kitchen area separated from the play space.

The Ladybird Room (age 2-3) and Butterfly Room (age 3-5) were increased in size and the layout remodelled to provide places for an additional 30 children.

The remodelled rooms, with new generous sliding doors, allow better connection with the garden and improved natural light. The layout has been adapted to create more clear open space for the children to enjoy a variety of types of play.

Access to the toilets has been improved with an efficient layout and better visual connection for the staff from the main room. Natural materials such as wood finishes and rubber flooring have been chosen for their beauty, robustness and low maintenance.

Climate

A holistic approach has been taken to sustainability in the design of the project.

Firstly, improving natural light and reducing reliance on artificial light. This has been achieved by the remodelling of the existing layout, with a large sliding door to the garden. This creates a light and naturally, well-ventilated room for the children.

Secondly, by improving the fabric, with high insulation values in the new roof extension, the floor and sliding doors will help to reduce energy loss. We have replaced inefficient fluorescent strip lighting with low energy LED fittings.

Thirdly, in terms of health and wellbeing, the children can enjoy a better connection with nature in the garden and more space to explore and learn in the rooms.

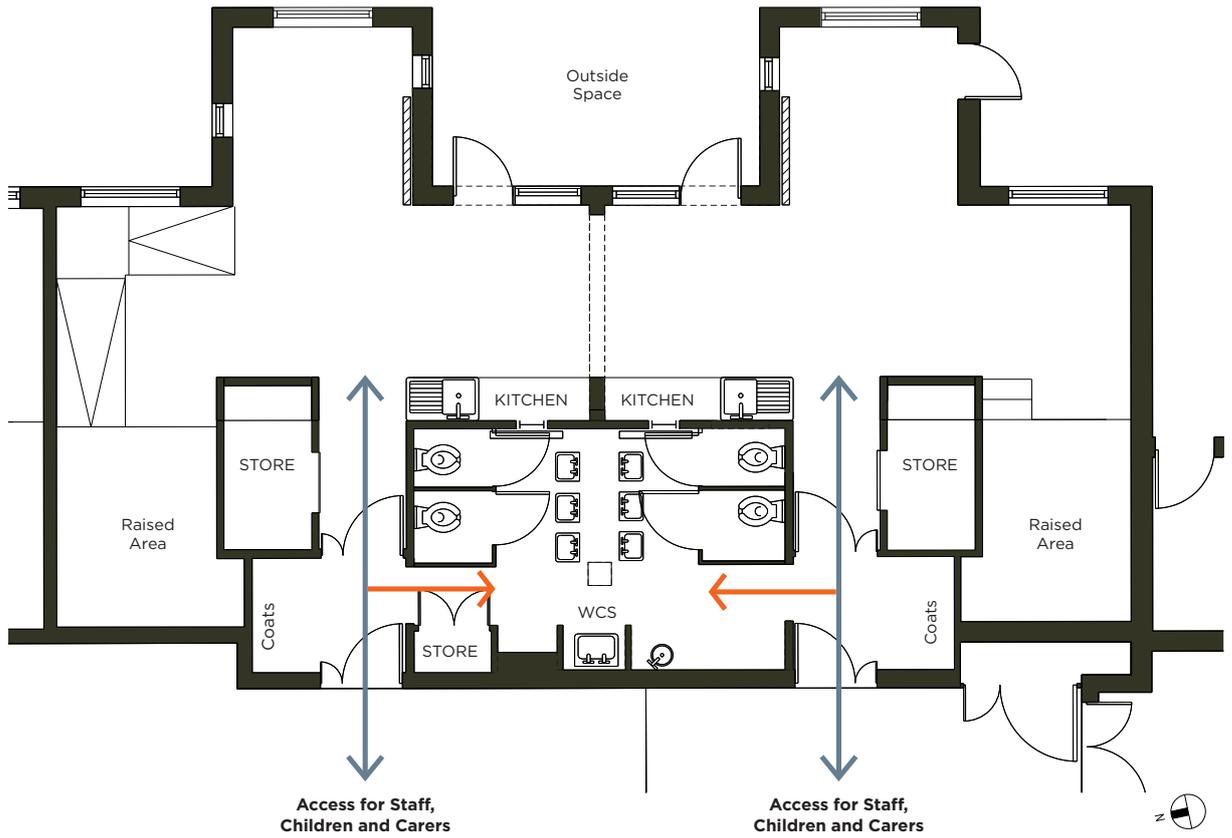
Collaboration

We worked closely with an Artist in Residence to create the beautiful wall murals of the ladybirds and butterflies to give each room a stronger sense of place.

The children really enjoyed watching the artist at work and each child has their favourite insect.

The use of metallic colours on the steel post is both a learning opportunity and fun. The painted grasses are colourful and have different textures applied which provide opportunities for sensory development for young children.

CLASSROOM LAYOUT: BEFORE



CLASSROOM LAYOUT: AFTER

