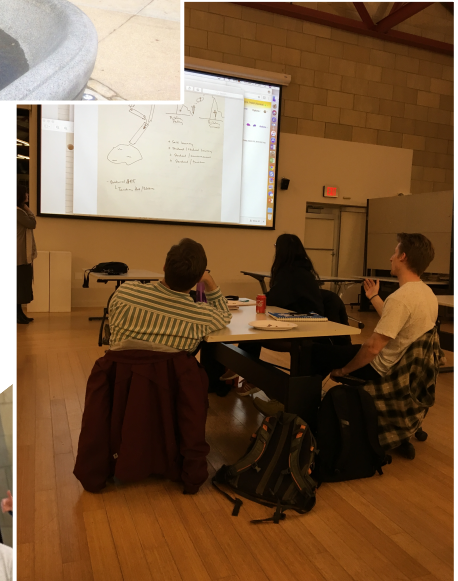


Spring Charrette

Guest experts

- Vicki Carr (School of Education, CECH, UC)
- Heidi Kloos (Psychology, A&S, UC)
- Chris Atchinson (School of Education, CECH, UC)
- Lucinda Lawson (Biology, A&S, UC)
- David Meyer (Geology, A&S, UC)

- Kelley Bagayoko (CANS Project Director, CPS)
- Rachel Robinson (Landscape Architect, Playscape designer)



PROJECT MISSION

VISION STATEMENT: Promote education and fun through a sustainable, accessible, and diverse nature playscape that benefits the community as a whole.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. The playscape should be accessible for all ages and abilities and promote community cohesion.
2. The playscape should function as an educational tool and development catalyst for the students of the new school.
3. The playscape should encourage sustainability through an aesthetic with a focus on ecological stewardship.
4. The playscape should allow children to play in diverse, creative ways that support imagination and independent learning.

NATURE + PLAY WORKSHOP

A Vacant Lots: Occupied Project

SITE INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Contour Intervals (2')
- Buildings
- Ravens Farmhouse 1
- Existing Onramp to Farmhouse 2
- CANS School Building 3
- Existing Parking Lot 4
- Existing Mature Trees X

3-D model of the existing site

View of the topography difference between the school building and the playground site.
View of the site from Clifton Ave. - Ravens Farm House - Improvement Office site.
View of the site looking from the Ravens Farm House - Improvement Office site.

MASTER PLAN

LEGEND

- 1 Communal Meeting Space
- 2 Fossil / Sand Play Area
- 3 Mural & Site Map
- 4 Stream & Riparian Zone
- 5 Grass Maze
- 6 Log + Stump Climbing Features
- 7 Elevated Tree House & Ramp
- 8 Mud Play Area
- 9 Wood Bridge
- 10 Restructured Driveway
- 11 Segmented Wood Fence (17x9)

SYMBOLS

- Existing Black Locust Tree
- Evergreen Barrier
- Grasses + Small Shrubs
- Small Tree
- Medium Tree
- Shrub Mass
- Ground Cover (Grass + Others)
- Permeable Stone Pavers

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

- 1 Slowly, the understorey will disappear and only large, mature trees will remain. This represents a climax forest ecosystem. Here an ADA accessible treestand will allow children to feel as though they are in the tree canopy as they view the surrounding forest.
- 2 Gradually, small and medium trees will appear with a shrub understorey, signifying mid-succession. An off-shoot of the main pathway will lead to several log climbing features under the canopy of trees. The climbing features will allow children to develop gross motor skills and add an element of risk and danger.
- 3 Nearby, the soft trickle of a stream will encourage children to explore a riparian zone while introducing the concept that water is essential to the formation of life on Earth. This further reinforces the succession metaphor of the playscape.
- 4 Finally, the path will enter a mud play area, representing what happens after a climax forest is cut down. Here children can play in the mud with various loose parts; this will help smaller children explore new textures and allow older children the ability to let loose.
- 5 Visitors to the playscape will enter the site near the entrance closest to Clifton Ave; greening them will be an environment sparsely vegetated and dominated by sand, pea gravel, + rock features. This environment mimics the beginning stage of ecological succession.
- 6 Following the pathway, visitors will come across a sand play area filled with fossils for discovery. This area supports natural science curriculum as well as creative play. Adjacent to this area will be a wooden fence and mural depicting the playscape as a whole, allowing children to develop way-finding skills.
- 7 Next, visitors will meander along the path as grasses and shrubs appear and conglomerate into hazy swaths of vegetation. Weaving off from the main path will be the entrance to a native grass maze. Here, children can learn to problem solve through exploration + way finding.

THE STORY OF ECOLOGICAL SUCCESSION

Ecological Succession: the process by which the structure of a biological community evolves over time.

The framework for the nature playscape is inspired by the concept of ecological succession. Following a meandering path, visitors will see the plant life progressively change from barren earth to grassland and eventually a climax forest.

Secondary Pathway
Primary Pathway
Succession Zone

- 1 Late Succession
- 2 Mid Succession
- 3 Early Succession

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PROJECT CONTEXT

The Nature Playscape is an intended educational + recreational play area for a new park through high school called the Clifton Area Neighborhood School (CANS). The new school will service three unique and distinct neighborhoods in Cincinnati, OH - Clifton, Spring Grove Village, and CLIF (location of Clifton Heights, University Heights, + Fairview). Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) saw the new school as an opportunity to create a dynamic new playscape that allows urban-dwelling students a chance to explore nature. CPS + CANS then reached out to students from DAAP at the University of Cincinnati to help with creating preliminary concepts for the new playscape during a 3-day intensive weekend charrette.

The diagram to the right is an example of some of the team's brainstorming sessions that went on during the week-end charrette. This diagram explores the relationships of the neighborhood, the site, and the possibilities of what the site could be in the long run. This kind of preliminary "mind mapping" was a useful tool for balancing the opportunities and constraints of this new playscape.

NEIGHBORHOOD + SCHOOL

- + diverse community
- + very walkable
- + community members are active + engaged
- + more presence than other areas in Cincinnati

POTENTIAL SITE USERS

- + CANS students + parents
- + community members
- + teenagers and children from other schools
- + the elderly
- + users with disabilities

OPPORTUNITIES OF THE SITE

- + meeting space for the community at large
- + could facilitate hands-on learning
- + encourage creative play
- + has a model of sustainability

The photos above were taken during the weekend charrette from which the project originated. Following a weekend of students and community stakeholders participated in discussions, site analysis, and collaborative brainstorming sessions.

CONCEPTS + INSPIRATION

LEGEND

- 1 Communal Meeting Space
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