WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE
IN MIND

a documentation of and reflections on a design
process of new school environment in
manchester uk

MED BARN OCH
UNGDOMAR I ÅTANKE

en dokumentation av och reflektioner kring en
design process av en ny skolmiljö i
manchester uk

This is a thesis for a
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0.1.0 ABSTRACT

This master's thesis is about the process of developing young people's educational environments. By keeping a weekly diary, I have followed three months of a Manchester UK secondary school ground development. The diary has been written with focus on young people and the design development.

By having the diary as a tool, I aimed to develop an understanding of the design process and to be able to reflect upon important, child-related issues that were being addressed during the course of the design development. With this method I wanted to target the main difficulties in the process of designing a school ground with the best interest of young people.

Through the diary writing I found two subjects which I believe are central in English school ground developments. The first issue is about making the pupils' voices acknowledged in the design process. The second is how the external design evolves around an idea of security and how the design is compromised by a feeling of fear.

I have penetrated these issues in two independent articles. I use theorists such Maria Kylin, Mats Lieberg, Sofia Cele, Zygmunt Bauman and Peter Blatchford amongst other ones.

One of the main conclusions derived from the process of writing the article about pupil engagement, is to first of all question myself as a landscape architect -to whose interest am I designing ?-. Is it important to have my design appreciated by my peers or by the pupils? In order to answer that question appropriately, one has to acknowledge the differences there are in spatial and environmental appreciation and perception between young people (which equals the pupils) and adults (which equals the people involved in the design team).

It is also essential to acknowledge that pupil participation as a vital part of a school ground design development. The pupils have right to be part of the planning of their everyday environment, which also is stated in UN's Convention of the Rights of the Child from 1989. It is necessary to develop a sustainable strategy where the pupils can be engaged in the design of the school grounds, but also is a strategy that works within a typical tight design programme.

From the process of writing the second article about how ideas of security informs the school ground design, I came to realise the complexity of fear, both in a historic perspective and in our contemporary period. The subject is tied in to the previous article and the differences in perception of and usage of space. The young people wish to find free zones in the public realm and the adults respond to this need by applying restrictions and other measures of control. These restrictions, such as security fencing a school ground have not only an impact on the pupils' experiences in the school environment, but also an impact on the members in the community.

The real users' needs ought to be understood and addressed in a school ground design process in order to plan a sustainable development.

0.1.0 SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

Det här examensarbetet handlar om processen att rita barn- och ungdomars skolgårds miljöer. Under tre månader har jag följt utvecklingen av en skolgård för elever mellan 11-16 år i Manchester UK, genom att föra veckovisa dagboksanteckningar. Dagboken har skrivits med fokus på barn och ungdomar, och på design processen.

Dagboken har varit ett verktyg för att utveckla förståelse för design processen och möjliggjort reflektion kring viktiga barnrelaterade frågor som kommit upp till diskussion under utvecklingen av projektet. Med denna metod har jag velat påvisa svårigheterna vid planering av skolgårdsmiljöer när man samtidigt fokuserar på barn och ungdomar och försöker sätta dem och deras intressen i centrum av designprocessen.

Genom mitt dagboks skrivande har jag funnit två ämnen som jag upplever som centrala för engelska skolgårds projekt. Det första handlar om att göra elevernas röster och upplevelser uppmärksammade i planerings processen. Det andra handlar om hur utvecklingen av en skolgårds miljö och barnens bästa intresse kompromissas av ideer om säkerhet och rädsla.

Jag har penetrerat dessa ämnen i två självständiga artiklar. Jag har använt mig av teoretiker som Maria Kylin, Mats Lieberg, Sofia Cele, Zygmunt Bauman och Peter Blatchford bland flera andra.

En av de främsta slutsatserna man kan dra efter att ha skrivit artikeln om elev medverkan är att ransaka sig själv som landskaps arkitekt och fråga sig - *för vems intresse designar jag?*
Vill jag bli uppskattad av mina kollegor eller uppskattad av eleverna? För att kunna ge ett lämpligt svar, måste man först inse vilka skillnader i perception av miljö och rum som existerar mellan barn och ungdomar, och vuxna.

Det är också viktigt att förstå att elev medverkan och medbestämande borde vara en vital del i utvecklingen av en skolgård. Elever har rätt att ta del i utvecklingen av sina vardags miljöer, vilket också är statuerat i FN:s Barn konvention från 1989.
Det är nödvandigt att utveckla en hållbar strategi för att planera skolgårdar där barn och ungdomar är engagerade i processen, men också en strategi som fungerar inom en vanlig tidsbegränsad design process.

Genom att ha skrivit den andra artikeln om hur ideer kring säkerhet präglar utvecklingen av skolgårdar, har jag kommit att inse hur komplex känslan av rädsla är, både i ett historiskt perspektiv och i vår samtid. Ämnet är nära relaterat till den förra artikeln om skillnader i perception och i använding av miljöer.
Ungdomar önskar finna fri-zoner i staden, och vuxna reagerar mot deras behov genom att införa restriktioner och kontroll. Restriktioner såsom att ha höga stängsel runt skolgården påverkar inte bara barnenes upplevelser av sin skola men också människorna som bor i grannskapet där skolan ligger.

Det är således viktigt att de verkliga användarnas behov är förstådda för att kunna planera en hållbar skolgårds miljö.

PART I INTRODUCTION
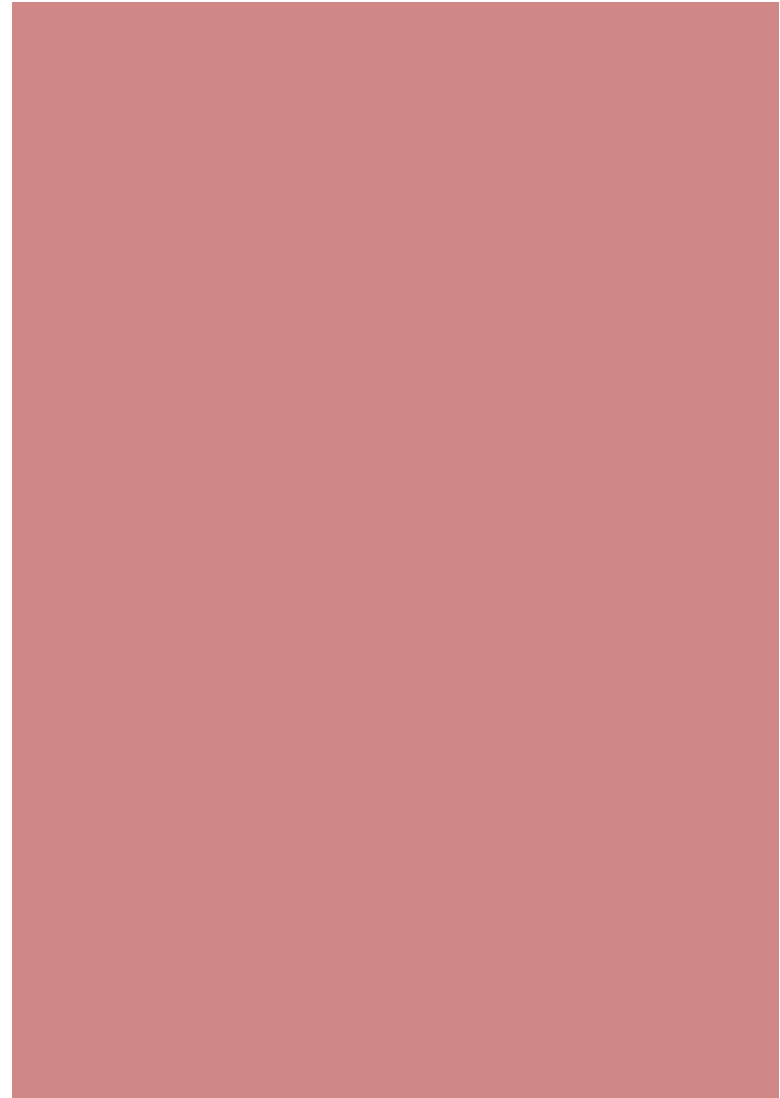
1.0.0 INTRODUCTION

This master's thesis is about the process of developing children's and adolescents' educational environments. I started to develop an interest in the topic at University attending a course about environmental psychology. The course included a lecture by Professor AgrDr and landscape architect Patrik Grahn who presented research about children's physical and emotional wellbeing in relation to the quality of the outdoor environment in primary schools (Grahn 1997). The course made me curious of what impact the external environment can have upon children, and what opportunities there are for landscape architects to contribute to children's development and well being through designing physical environments.

In 2005, after finishing my courses at University I worked for a year at a London based landscape architecture practice in the UK. I was assisting on a number of educational projects and enjoyed working with environments that involved a specific user group: children and adolescents. The knowledge I gained from the course at University made me question the process of designing these schools. The schemes were developed as they would be in any general public realm project. I felt that the child and the child's perspective -which should be central- partially or completely, disappeared in the process. Aesthetics and graphics became instead the focus, which I question as a sustainable strategy in developing children's environments. My interest in children and their educational environments made me want to continue working in this field to develop more knowledge and a better understanding of the design process.

In the beginning of 2006 I took position at Plincke landscape, a practice which specialises in educational projects as one of their core sectors.

Plincke landscape is involved in educational projects such as the Governments Academy schemes as well as the Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF). BSF is a government funded strategy to target schools with the greatest needs in every local authority (LA) in England to help improve and renew the school environment. Rather than focus on developing one individual school, this programme aims to develop a strategy for one local area. Fourteen local education authorities have been asked to take part in the Government's first wave of the BSF programme in 2005 and 2006.

Plincke landscape has been selected to develop all the schools in the Manchester LA with two different contractors. I was assigned to work on these projects.

While working for this practice on the design development of the BSF schools, I wanted to take the opportunity to follow the first three months of one secondary school as part of my master's thesis. By doing this, I hoped to develop an understanding of the actual design process and to be able to reflect upon important, child-related issues that were being addressed. I wanted to target the main difficulties in the process of designing a school ground in order to develop a successful approach for working with future educational projects.

This master's thesis is structured into two parts:

(i) the first part includes an introduction and a document of the process of designing a particular school environment. It includes a diary, relevant drawings and graphics.

(ii) the second part includes discussions about topics that have been addressed in the diary as particular important. It also includes a final conclusion

I found this working method to be useful as a method to document and structure a design process. Writing a diary, documenting and reflecting on the process, was a starting point to catch and pinpoint the central issues that, in my experience through the design process, are critical and central for a successful school ground development.

The diary(i) has been written in a spontaneous way. It includes thoughts on my way home from work or sessions early on a Saturday morning. I have tried to constrain myself and stay focused discussing the process of developing a new school, and the problems and difficulties that might occur in relation to maintaining the best interests of the child. I wanted the child's perspective to be present in my mind while keeping the diary, so I decided to have a weekly reminder where I questioned myself, 'How has the child been part of the design?'

In part (ii) two critical and central topics found during the diary writing are penetrated and reflected upon through theories and work derived from a varied scientific fields. In part (i), the diary, I have made references to the topics in part (ii) with the symbol shown

below. These references are made in direct connection to where my associations and thoughts can be traced to a topic considered in part (ii)

REFERENCE

Through the diary writing I found many interesting thoughts and ideas that I would like to penetrate but I have purposely cut lots of things out in order to fit this work within the scope of this paper. For example, I have not discussed children's environments/playgrounds in general, such as "what is a good playground". I have not focused on discussing the design of this project's school playground in any depth either. The Building Bulletin 1998 is also a topic that easily could become a thesis of its own. I have stayed focus upon the process behind the design of the school ground. I leave the remaining topics to another essay.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Grahn, Patrik et al. (1997) Ute pa dagis. Stad och Land nr 145:197

INTERNET REFERENCES:

Building Schools for the Future website:
http://www.bsf.gov.uk

Plincke landscape ltd website:
http://www.plincke.co.uk

PART II THE DIARY

The diary is not included in this publication on epsilon.
Lina 2007.07.15

2.12.0 REFLECTIONS FROM KEEPING THE DIARY

It has been an interesting process, writing the diary. I started off completely open minded, with no expectations what so ever about how the project would develop.

I was happily surprised that there were attempts to engage the pupils in the project. It was new to me, since the children have not been involved at all in the playground developments I previously have worked on. I was also really encouraged by the 'Manchester BSF sense of team'. There is a genuine focus on trying to work together with all the collected knowledge there are between the different disciplines to get the best out of the government investment. The pupils and the community are the central focus in the BSF programme. The process of how to achieve the pupils' and community's best interest is a subject for discussion though. For example, I was not particularly happy about the how the participation was carried out. Still though, the attempts existed, which is encouraging.

It was interesting to note what impact security had on the development of the school environment. Supervising is another issue that has a great impact on the design of the play spaces, which is also relating to the idea of security. The child is secure and supervised. It really feels like the child gets forgotten in this obsession with security.

Working in England, with a Swedish background, has been a real eye opening experience. I remember at my first job in England. I was working on developing a planting strategy for a new secondary school in Leicester. I was not allowed -I think it was by the client, the school- to

use any plants that easily could flame since the teachers claimed that the children would put them on fire. I was chocked by that restriction. I appreciate that there is a different level of crime in England than there is in Sweden, but that can't make up the whole difference.

The school I went to in Sweden as a child from age of 7 to 12 had a low fence on one side of the building and a high ball stop fence on the other side. We were told by the teachers that we should stay inside the school boundary during break times. Some pupils disappeared to the nearby corner shop during the lunch times to buy sweets, but most of us stayed and played. We had a lunch time lady who was walking around the grounds, supervising, talking to us and holding our hands if we were unhappy. I never experienced a feeling of being trapped in the school environment, instead the very contrary. We sometime came back to the grounds after school and used the play equipments or the pitches. There were no gates to enter and no one was supervising us.

The schools which I went to from the age of 13 to 19 did not have any fences at all. We were free to stroll wherever we liked during break times. I could go home if I fancied. The idea that I could, made me want to stay in the nearby area, because I felt that it was my choice to stay and no one forced me. The school playground was poor, mainly containing sport pitches, so most of us went to the nearby park and relaxed. We felt like grown ups and trusted by the teachers. It was good to have that feeling as a thirteen year old.

It's sad to see how school children in our time are 'caged up' and constantly are under surveillance in their school environments. I wonder how and where these pupils develop a sense of independency and how they become people with their own rights. Where do they learn to deal with conflicts with the peers if conflicts are not allowed to happen? The more young people are being viewed as 'the others' and too different for the society to accept, the more aggressive they will become and the more the society will fear them.

From the age of 13-19, I and my friends always hang out on the streets. We didn't do much, just chilled out and talked, hoping to meet other groups that were doing just the same. Socialising is one of the most important activities among young people. This activity should be able to take place without any interference with the adults.

One Christmas in the area where I live in London -a rather wealthy southern suburbia- the young people were not allowed to be on the streets without parents after a certain hour. The reasons for this restriction, was to make sure that all the rest of the inhabitants in the area could go out and conduct their shopping without being intimidated by young people. Keeping groups of people out of the public realm, due to the reason of being of a certain age, feels foreign to me and a strange way of dealing with the problem. I am surprised that this doesn't result in any revolts and protests by the young people.

Coming back to the diary, it was more difficult to keep a diary than I had expected. I struggled in the beginning of writing in a personal way.

It was so easy to just describe the week without any of my own views or opinions. When I got to grips with writing with a more personal touch, I tended to feel naïve in my thoughts. But at the same time, it has been a lot of new issues for me to deal with. And looking back on my diary, I don't see my views as particular naïve. It has been really good to keep the diary, to be forced to think about what you are working on. It is so easy to just get on with things, do them without any greater reflections. The time pressure, of getting drawings and information ready for various submissions, will always be apart of a landscape architects working environment. I have realised from this process the importance of reflecting on what you are working on. I should probably be keeping a diary on every project from now on…

PART III ARTICLES
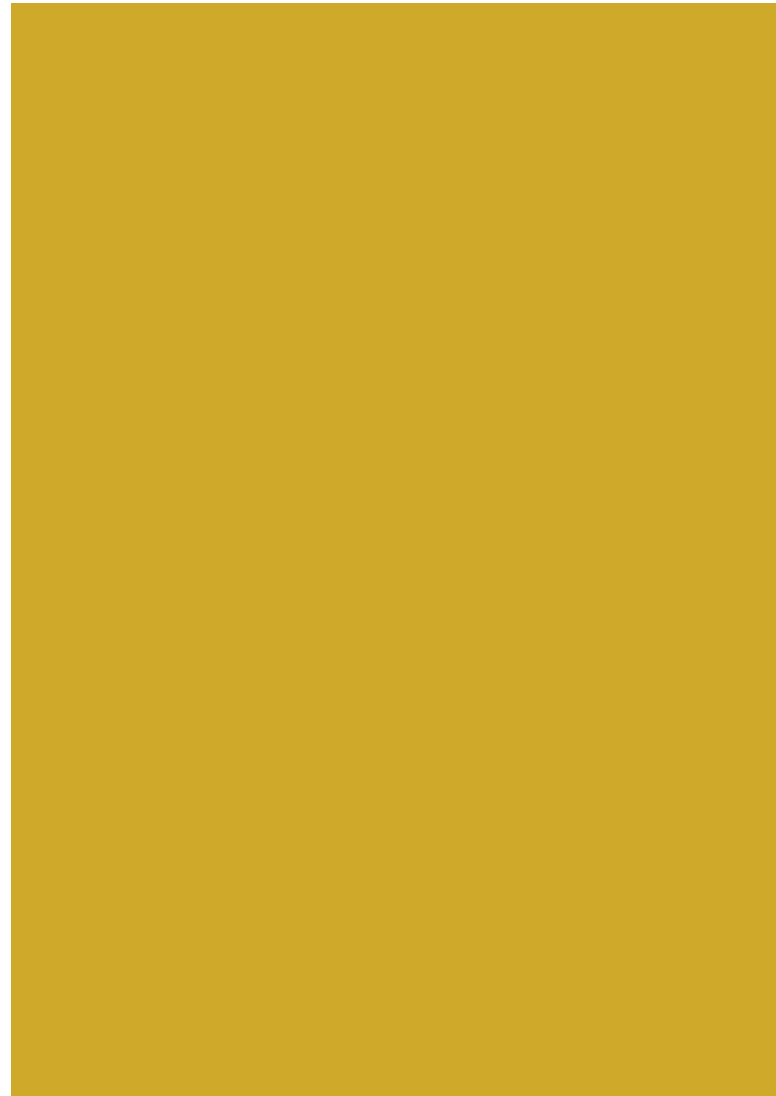
3.0.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTICLES

From having written the diary, I became aware of two topics which I believed are central in an English school ground design process.

The first issue is about making the pupils' voices acknowledged in the design process.

The second is how the external design evolves around an idea of security and how the design is compromised by a feeling of fear.

I am of the opinion that these matters have the greatest impact on the design outcome and that the issues really needs to be addressed and made aware of.

In the following two articles **(3.1.0** and **3.2.0)** these issues will be discussed and reflected upon. The conclusion **(3.3.0)** summaries the two articles with additional thoughts and reflections.

The essays are written in such way that they can be read as independent articles.

3.1.0 HOW CAN THE PUPIL'S VOICES BE HEARD AND ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE DESIGN OF THEIR SCHOOL ENVIROMENT

The Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989 stated amongst other things that children should have the right to influence decisions that have an effect upon them, such as planning their everyday environment. Agenda 21 also stresses the importance of creating sustainable development and involving everyone in the decision making process. (Cele 2006)

'A child's View of School' reported that students often felt that a school council gave a surface appearance of involvement rather than genuinely reflecting an institutional interest in students'
Burke (2003:5)

In the design development of one secondary BSF school in Manchester, pupil participation was supposed to be carried out and integrated into the design. The term 'pupil participation' implies that the children should have active involvement in the physical development of their environment (Cele 2006).

Having taken part, as a landscape architect, in the design process of this particular school, it was clear that the design team *was not* carrying out any pupil participation work.

There were a number of workshops held with a selected group of students. The workshops were facilitated by a specific organisation; Creative Partnerships. The results from the workshops were presented to the design team by the facilitators as design proposals, or 'add-ons'. The aim was to integrate these elements into the architects' and land-

scape architects' proposals.

The problem with this strategy was that these ideas were presented to us quite late in the process and were therefore hard to implement. Furthermore, the way in which this pupil engagement was carried out meant that the pupils were not involved in the decision making process at all.

All of this made me question what pupil participation really involves and how a landscape architect can best approach the topic?

It seemed to me that everyone, from the client to the design team, wanted the children to be present in the process. At the same time, it would be almost impossible to fully engage the students and let them be part of the decision making process within the programme's time constraints.

It feels like the term 'pupil participation' was being used misleadingly in this particular project. It was more of a case of 'pupil consultation', but I would question even that.

Cele (2006) recognises that in order to engage the children one has to understand how the children can best participate and communicate their experiences. The children are too often interpreted by 'others'. The head teacher interprets the pupils by observing their behaviour at school. The pupils either behave or misbehave. The head teacher doesn't make any further analysis of why pupils are behaving

in a certain way. The artists, the facilitators of the workshops, make interpretations of the pupils' artwork and present it to the design team. Where is the boundary between their interpretations and that of the children's? What happens when the artists can't separate their own sense of artistic worth from the pupils' thoughts and ideas? I believe that the pupils are too easily disappearing in the design process as they are filtered through so many different interpreters.

Involving young people in the design process of their environments is something which is well appreciated by everyone in our time. Pupil participation has become a trend, and it is desirable to establish it in every child related project. Unfortunately, the reality of pupil participation is that it can easily be a shallow process, where the child engagement is not fully established. The pupils are part of the process in the beginning of the bidding stage and thereafter are left to be abandoned. The work with the students can easily be separated and disconnected from the project. I do appreciate that we are incorporating two design elements from the artists in to the new Newall Green High School. I just wonder what these coloured lines of the elevation of the building mean to the children, or the LED lights in the courtyard. Maybe these are the most important issues addressed by the children? I don't know and the fact that I don't, is wrong.

In this essay I aim to develop an understanding of the process of working with young people and of including them in the design development.

Engaging adults and active community groups is a well appreciated working method of developing successful projects, especially regeneration projects. A typical *adult* community participation process would include experiences such as (`Sanoff 2000`):

(i) Raising awareness. (What are the realities of the environment? Make the people aware of the physical environment.)

(ii) Perception. (Develop an understanding of the context of the development, and the physical, social, cultural and economical ramifications, so the objectives and expectations are shared between everyone.)

(iii) Decision making

(iv) Implementation

The above mentioned stages of a participation process would hopefully result in a consensus and an appreciated development that meets the needs of the community. Where is designing with young people different from designing with adult members of the community? Sociologist Roger Hart has constructed a ladder of young people's participation. (`Image 3.1.1`)

This ladder describes different levels of children's participation. Hart acknowledges that the first three steps don't represent any participation at all (`Cele 2006`). Young people are either used by the adults to convey a message or used as reasons to support ideas or projects, pretending that the causes are inspired by young people.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Rung 3: Young people tokenized*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are *non-participation*

Created by The Freechild Project - http://freechild.org

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship.* Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
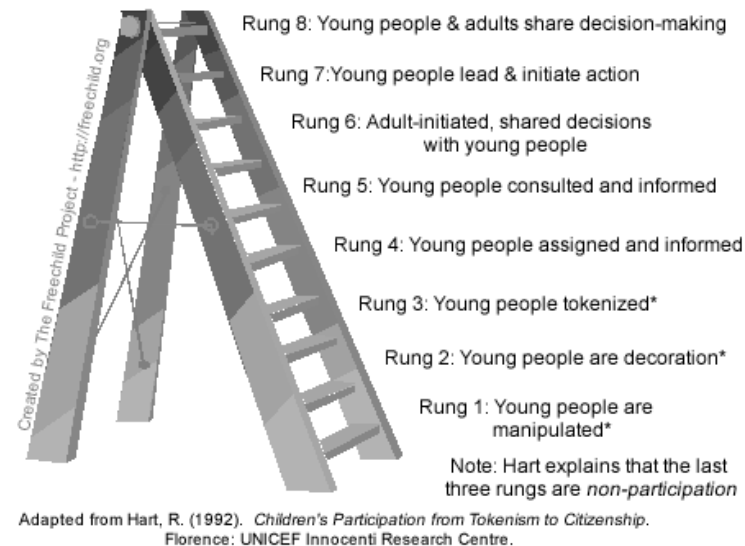
image 3.1.1 Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Partcipation © The free child project

The children appear to be given a voice, but in reality they are not listened to. The remaining five steps of the ladder represent increasing degrees of participation. The ladder illustrates how easily children's participation can be misused.

There is a difference between adults and children in the perception of the environment. This can cause difficulties in participation processes, if it has not been fully appreciated (Kylin 2004).

'I was struck by the large amount of time children spend modifying the landscape in order to make places for themselves and for their play.'
(Hart, R (1979) cited in Kylin (2004) Article: Children's Dens)

Kylin (2004) describes the differences between adult professionals in the planning industry and the children. The adults tend to read the environment as something that can be visualised in a *drawing or plan* whereas the children's focuses are more on their *bodily activities* that they are occupied with in the environment. Children let their bodies explore place in order to understand it, they touch, smell, swing, balance etc. The professionals are also using a terminology that doesn't relate to the actual spaces the children are experiencing. They use function based terms or labels that fix places into categories such as "*Nature*" or "*Playground*". This terminology contradicts the children's perceptions of space. (Cele 2006) The children instead describe spaces through the actual activities they relate the place with, such as "place for hanging out" or "place for football". (Kylin 2004)

'If by planning one means designed and structured areas where every shrub and pavement stone has a designated place, planning leaves little room for a child's own creativity, which is often seen as disturbing and messy.'
Kylin (2004) Article: Children's Dens

Research by Pennartz and Elsenga (1990) also shows evidence of the differences in perceiving the environment between architects, and adolescents. The adolescents, as opposed to the architects, perceive the natural elements, colour and light as important qualities in the outdoor environment. They also consider the possibility of socialising as important aspects of the environment. The architects are instead appreciating the environment through the spatial qualities, such as spatial coherance, scale and visual diversity among other arguments. Cele (2006) recognises that just realising the differences in perception is not enough, realising *what* the differences are and *how* to bridge them in order to create mutual understanding is what actually matters. Kylin (2005) makes the point, that with this difference in perception between adults and children, the focus on consultations with the children shouldn't be of asking them what features they want in their playground or how they want the environment to look, but to ask them *what they want to do*. How the activivty is going to be transformed into a physical reality, that is the professionals' responsibility.

'[C]hildren's ability to influence and participate in a process is not only dependant on adults' willingness to listen but also how adults interpret what children communicate.
Cele (2006:31)

Areas that commonly are considered as no-man's lands and experienced by adults as boring and filthy have different meanings for the young people where they create meaning into the space by the activities that they are engaged in (Kylin 2004). If I would as a landscape architect propose an area which would have no visual quality in a traditional architectural sense, one would unfortunately not get it through planning and in the end not get it built. The space might be of the greatest use for the children but it won't be acknowledged by architects or central authorities despite that research makes it evident over and over again. Why is that?

The architect profession is based upon a craftsman tradition as opposed to an academic profession where research and science commonly will be discussed and put into recognition. The architects learn through experience where the main task is 'to get it built', and therefore can find it difficult to relate to abstract theories about children and perception of space. Also, the theorists don't make an effort to relate to the practicality the architects work in. (Kylin 2004) There is obviously a communication gap between the *users* of the research and the *researchers*.

There are different recognised methods in engaging children in design projects. Since involving children through a participation process has increased quite rapidly, a number of different methods have been developed with different perceptions of how a child/adolescent can best be involved. Francis and Lorenzo (2002) discuss seven realms of young people's participation;

Romantic	Planning *by* the children
Advocacy	Planning *for* the children by needs advocated by the adults
Needs	Planning based upon *research that addresses* the children's *needs*
Learning	Participation based upon *environmental education and learning*.
Rights	*Theory* 'Children have right that needs to be protected'.
Institutionalization	*Children as adults*.
Proactive	Planning *proactively* with children.

Francis and Lorenzo (2002) claim that each realm can be traced as a product of a political and cultural context.

The realm that they refer to as the 'romantic' has its origin in the 1960s, when many people believed that the kids themselves would be the best designers of their own environment. In Hart's ladder (image 3.1.1), this method would be in the top.

The 'advocacy' realm arises from that the planners' realisation that they need to advocate the needs of the poor and powerless, which includes children. Criticism to this approach is that the children are not directly involved in the design process, they are only acknowledged as an important user group. The children are not part of any participation work at all, in other words, they are at the bottom of Hart's ladder

(`image 3.1.1`).

The `'needs'` realm is based upon environmental psychology relating to the specific needs children have, which should be considered in designing their environment. Research shows, for example, evidence of the importance of having access to nature and differences in growing up in rural and urban areas. The children are not part of any participation work at all, in other words, they are at the bottom of Hart's ladder (`image 3.1.1`).

`'The learning'` realm focuses on learning as a central point in the participation process. The children should receive an environmental training and recognition through the participation experience, which is the major outcome from this process. Criticism of this process is similar that of the `'advocacy'` realm, in that the children are not really involved in the decision making process and the environments for the children have not really changed by using this method.

`'The rights'` realm stresses that the children are equal to any adult, having the same voice and rights, and therefore should be heard in the design process. Criticism to this realm is that it's more focused upon the children's rights rather than their environment. This realm doesn't take into account how children perceive the environment differently and how that affects the participation process.

`'Institutionalisation'` describes how children's participation process should be carried out in the same way as it is for adults. The children are expected to have the same knowledge and power in the process as adults. Similar criticism to the `'rights'` realm, the fact that the children experience the environment differently from the adults is not acknowledged.

`'The proactive'` realm aims to combine research, participation and action to engage children and adults in planning and design. Children are active participants in the process but designers/planners still play an important role. This realm fits into the top sections of Hart's ladder (`image 3.1.1`).

Francis and Lorenzo (2002) are practicing the proactive approach and possibly therefore discuss the proactive way of engaging children more positively, but that approach does however seem the most interesting. From all the above mentioned way of engaging students, it's only the proactive method that has a holistic approach in designing with children.

Burke (2005) concludes that research *on* children's subjects has a long history but the research *with* the children is a quite recent phenomenon. She also favourable describes a proactive approach, 'a mosaic approach', developed by Allison Clark and Peter Moss. This is a technique based upon a flexible way of working with the children, a combination of tours and maps with talking and observing in order to gain deeper understanding of the children's perspectives. Burke continues to discuss how one can use the children as active informants on their perception of the environment to understand the interface between the

formal and informal spaces that children respond to and reconstruct, the play spaces which are invisible to the adult's eye.

Kylin (2004) and Cele(2006) also discuss indirectly the proactive approach, by favouring walks, map exercises and photography. Kylin goes even further and says that it is imperative that dialogues with the kids are held informally in their own places. This enables the designers to bring back memories to their own childhoods, which makes it possible to forget about quantity, aesthetics and functionality for a while.

Cele(2006) describes three methods: walking(i), photography(ii) and drawings(iii). These methods generate different types of information, so depending on what you want to achieve from the consultation, a method or a combined method can be used. No matter what method chosen, conversations with the children should always take place. In regards to engaging children in the planning process, walks (i) are advised as the most suitable method.

Cele describes two dimensions which the walk includes: (1) It makes it possible to observe how children use places and also to ask questions regarding the setting. It generates an understanding of how children encounter objects and places. (2) The researcher needs to use his or her own mind in order to understand the subjective and abstract dimensions of the children's experience of place. The walk includes an interaction between the child, the planner and the place.
'If planners were given time to actively experience and create their own place-bound knowledge and experiences of the places that they plan, many

mistakes would have be avoided, and the social and cultural life of the city would become more prominent during planning.
Cele (2006:212)

My experience with engaging the pupils in the design process of one secondary school has been frustrated since it has not been I that has been involved in the engagement process. I was presented proposals by the team that carried out the workshops with the pupils. The proposals were also presented to us quite late on in the process and seemed to me as separate pieces of work. It didn't make any sense at all to me to incorporate the proposed work into the landscape proposals. I wanted to know what the pupils felt about their school, what activities they were engaged in and so on.

What I now realise is what Kylin (2004) discusses. I as a landscape architect should have informally met up with the students in their own environment, observed what they do, where and how they meet in order to understand their reality. I am about to reconstruct their world and give it a new meaning, which is a major change in the children's reality. Having a separate company that is supposed to function as a bridge between the architects and the pupils won't work. The artists are introduced to the world of the students, but the architects still work in the dark. Even though the artists come up with ideas, it is the landscape architect and the architect who take the major decisions on the development on the new school environment. It is the architects that need to meet the pupils to revitalise their perception of space in order to create sensible environments for the children. (Kylin 2004)

The main difficulty is to incorporate this as an acknowledged phase in the design programme. The architects have an acknowledged consultation process with the school where they discuss everything from room layouts to furniture layouts. This is a recognised phase in the design programme and there are time allowances for the consultation. Incorporating a 'pupil participation' phase in the design programme should be just as important and should be a vital part of the process.

The starting point when designing a secondary school ground in England is to discuss the Building Bulletin 1998 (BB98). BB98 is a guideline that recommends minimum areas of typical useful spaces for the pupils. Typical areas are soft play, hard play, science gardens, sports pitches etc. The guideline describes how a good school ground should be laid out in principal. The design team needs to meet these requirements. The landscape architect would be put in a difficult position where they would have little space to address different needs and approaches that quite possibly would come out in a participation process. The guideline would inhibit the design process rather than facilitate it. For example, if the ground is limited in space and I together with the pupils come to a conclusion that we want the area to be 60% soft, it probably won't happen since the guideline says that we need to provide a certain percentage hard landscape and a certain percentage of sports fields.

I understand the reasons for having guidelines, especially if you see the existing poor school grounds in England. It is a way to make sure that the new grounds will be built with more meaning built into it than a tarmac desert includes. Maybe the guidelines should instead consider

how the pupils can be engaged in the process *to avoid* a tarmac desert, rather than making sure we cover a certain square meters of soft or hard space. Designing by numbers makes it difficult to develop a new school ground based on a pupil participation process. If a participation process is desired as part of a school ground development, the governmental guidelines have to be flexible to this involvement.

'Joined up design for schools' is a project funded by the charity organisation, The Sorrell Foundation, which aimed to explore how good design can improve the quality of life in schools by listening to the voice of the pupils. The project puts the children in the chairs of clients, giving them control and responsibilities of the design of their new school environment. The document of the process of the project was exhibited in a major gallery in London in 2005 and received a lot of positive responses among governors and professionals. I would categorise the described process as a proactive method and as a good example of an inspirational resource for professionals working with educational projects. There is always an issue with having inspirational projects such as 'Joined up designs for schools', in the respect that it represents an extreme example of pupil participation. This approach can't realistically be applied in a typical school development setting such as the BSF programme, where budget and time constraints are somewhat different.

*"[P]articipatory design can increase a designer's workload by 20 to 40%...
If such designers are to continue to be involved in school design work, a reliable form of funding is essential…"*
(Sheat and Beer 1994:93)

Pupil participation should play an important part in new school developments. The children have a right to be part of the desicion making process in the development of their environment.

Engaging the student will also result in schools to which the students feel a sense of ownership. Establishing a pupil participation process is more relevant now than ever when so many new government funded schools are being built across the country. (BSF programme and the Academy projects.) It would be terrible to look back on all these school with a feeling of regret and disappointment due to not recognising the importance of this.

'To see the problems about school you have to see through the appearance and into what even be depression of the children experiencing school. They know the problems. The adults need to listen to them and not dismiss their opinions.'
James, 12, Looughborough (Burke, 2003:7)

It is therefore essential to first of all acknowledge pupil participation as a vital part of the design process. When accepted, there is a need to develop a strategy of engaging pupils that function within a typical design programme. There are too many of the unachievable inspirational kinds and too many of surface appearance of pupil engagements! It is imperative to develop an inspirational and proactive pupil participation method, which is easy to apply from a child's perspective (easy and meaningful to use), a school's perspective (possible to integrate into the curriculum), and from a planner's and designer's perspective (relevant for spatial planning and easy to use). (Berglund and Nordin (2005) in Cele (2006))

This is the key challenge for making better schools for the future.

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3.2.0 HOW DOES THE EXTERNAL DESIGN AFFECT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SECURITY, SAFETY AND CONTROL?

Following the design process of one secondary school in Manchester, creating a Security Strategy is one of the first exercises to do before any other major design work begins. The security strategy includes a concept of how the site will be secured by different types of fencing, gates and possible CCTV surveillance. In other words, how the school ground can be excluded, separated and secured from the community. Such a strategy is developed by the School, the Police and the Design Team. This strategy is intended to be developed with the best interest of the child in mind.

The current governmental Guidance initiated by the Police 'Secured by Design – Schools' (SBD), outlines how good design can contribute to both the prevention of crime and the reduction of the fear of crime. The crimes discussed include anti social behaviour, dog fouling, graffiti and bullying as well as unfortunate shooting incidents, which all generate different types of fear. SBD acknowledges that security and safety can't be compromised because it can threaten the physical and mental well being of pupils and staff, as well as cause damage to property. The tool SBD gives you -to deal with reducing crime and fear- is simply a list of how the site should be fenced, how the layout of the buildings should be, and the usage of CCTV. Fences are thus the recommended tool to prevent fear.

"Traditionally, this [issue of security] has been solved by enclosing certain areas… and the children are kept within fences…. [T]he environments of children are not necessarily the environments for children. Children's use of space is so much more complex since their playful exploration of place is a continuous action that cannot be restricted by fences."
Cele (2006:40)

I do agree with SBD that security cannot be compromised by any means, however I disagree with their approach to achieving a secure environment. The exercise of creating a School Security Strategy is carried out as part of Manchester's overall strategy for tackling crime as part of creating sustainable communities (Manchester Community Strategy 2002-2012).

'Reducing crime is one of the key factors leading to sustainable communities. Acute problems of anti-social behaviour and intimidation can directly contribute to the abandonment of areas. Action to control crime and anti-social behaviour is often required as a forerunner to the regeneration of local areas and the full engagement of communities. Improving the quality of housing and the physical environment will be to no avail, without action to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and to support good neighbours.'
Manchester Community Strategy (2002-2012:47)

To tackle crimes and anti social behaviour is complex and such attempts might affect people in a different way than intended.

'Security and freedom are two equally precious and coveted values which could be better or worse balanced, but hardly ever fully reconciled and without friction.'
Bauman (2000:4)

Making the school grounds safe by fencing is a big part of designing school grounds. The fences also take up a large proportion of the external work's budget, which could be better spent on other features of the school ground. I believe it is appropriate and necessary to raise questions such as:

What is the fear based upon?
Who is being controlled and why?
Is fencing really the best measure?
What does one mean by a secure and safe school environment?
What impact might a fenced school have on its community?

In this essay I aim to get an understanding of what fears come from and why control over the pupils is considered so important. I will also try to develop an understanding of what effect fencing a school has on its community.

FEAR

Fear is a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined, the feeling or condition of being afraid.
Or
Fear is to be afraid.

`(Search: "fear" www.Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.0.1) Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006)`

There is an unmentioned fear among the people involved in designing school grounds: the uncertainty of being prosecuted for not having prevented all possible crimes or unfortunate accidental incidents within the boundary of the school. Cele (2006) acknowledges that the social fears regarding children's welfare are increasing in Europe. These tendencies are strongest in United Kingdom. It has reached the point where parents are keeping the children at home and prefer to drive them wherever they need to go. The children are not longer allowed to play on the streets. The schools have now become fortresses with high fences and gates.

"[T]he fear of these crimes is much larger than the probability of becoming a victim of any of them."
`Cele (2006:45)`

The feeling of fear is complex and loaded with presumptions and

myths. Being afraid and to feel fear has been a feature of town building ever since the first town was created. Protection from invaders was the main reason for creating cities; the borders were defined by surrounding walls to keep them out. Since then, cities have become more associated with danger than with safety, and the boundary wall has been replaced by dividing fences and walls within the city boundary. `(Ellin 1997) (Bauman 1998)`

The history of fear, according to Ellin (`1997`), starts with the French Revolution in 1789. The French Revolution was a period of significant social change and new power structures which also generated new ways of perceiving the world. In that time of upheaval, new sources of fear emerged. The new relationships between the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy, the peasants and the emerging working class, forced the bourgeoisie to establish a clear identity for itself. They wanted to secure their ancient social position by claiming superiority, and as a result; obsession with control, discipline and rationality. The bourgeoisie criticised the peasantry and the working class for being "unable to bring up their children in a spirit of discipline" as well as for lacking control of bodily functions (`Ellin, 1997`). This generated an idea of the peasantry and the working class as dangerous classes not to be trusted.

"[T]he 'higher classes' put themselves in loco parentis of the poor and the indolent, who, as they believed, could no be trusted with the precious (and so threatened if put in the wrong hands) toy of freedom."
`Bauman (2000:32)`

The visual townscape transitions that resulted from these social changes can partly be seen in the redesign of Paris from 1853-72 by Haussmann. The principal of the change was to give Paris a sense of order through standardised housing and a good urban circulatory system with wide boulevards. The boulevards functioned as roads for movement, but they also had a social function: to keep the working class under control. By having a direct route from the military barracks to working class districts, revolts could be more easily prevented. New separate districts were also created for the middle class, to protect them from the threat posed by the working class (Ellin, 1997).

The nature of fear continued to change during the early part of the twentieth century as a result of industrialisation and urbanisation. The landscape changed along with the movement to accommodate the new railroads, factories, warehouses, working class districts, middle class suburbs, cars and highways. It became easier to travel and move both regionally and globally. Industrialisation also generated a new wage-earning working class. In order for the investors and factory owners to make sure the masses did the monotonous jobs, the factories introduced 'panoptical' power, discipline through continuous surveillance. The principal of 'panopticon' is the belief of being constantly under observation. The workers never departed from their routine since they feared the consequences and they were:

'Never sure whether the supervisors are watching them, whether their attention is diverted to other wings, whether they are asleep, resting or otherwise engaged, the inmates [i.e. the workers] must at all times behave '
Bauman (1998:34)

'By the early part of twentieth century, there was a shift from merely organising the masses of people, knowledge, and objects (in prisons, libraries, museums, maps) to a more concerted effort to understand and control them.'
Ellin (1997:21)

The new constellation of fear in the modern, urbanised era is about having control or being controlled. The cityscape during this time was being rationalised by zoning the city in to different categories, such as the types of buildings and related activities taking place. Instead of combining production, consumption, social interaction and living space, the city and its public spaces became during this time more singular in their function.

Architects tried to find modernist, idealistic, universal, and purely functional solutions to the new urbanised cityscape. Their intentions was that these solutions could be applied to any site, rather than creating individual solutions to specific locations. Much of what was built during the time after the World Wars were tower blocks and mass produced individual houses. The modern architectural movement has been accused of destroying neighbourhoods and communities and ruining their western heritage. It has also been accused of increased

social segregation and the loss of public realm (Ellin 1997).

The globalisation, specialisation and an increased geographic mobility in the late 1960s, generated new types of insecurities where the fear factor grew stronger. It became common to lock house and car doors and to have security systems built into your home. Gated or secure communities became a new way of living and the surveillance of public spaces increased.

'This late twentieth-century version added an infatuation with mass culture and its imagery in yet another effort to find meaning and security in world that appeared increasingly meaningless and scary.'
Ellin (1997:26)

The reactions against the modern architectural movement and the modern time in general promoted a return to traditional values and symbols of architecture. Post-modern and neo-traditional architects wanted cityscapes that were familiar and legible, with the pre-industrial townscape as a model, in which everyone could seek meaning into and have a nostalgic relation to. Despite this, gated communities have become more and more popular, maybe because within its boundary the communities benefit from post-modern signs and attributes. The public spaces continue to decline for the benefit of private spaces, secured by gates or fences. Activities that once took place in a public setting, are now taking place in private realms which are being strictly controlled by sophisticated security systems that regulate who enters and the activities taking place. Contemporary urban fears focus

on the enemy inside the city or even inside a community. People are protecting themselves from these perceived dangers through fortification and isolation.

The privatisation of public spaces can generate a segregation and separation between communities and engenders ignorance amongst people with social differences. This encourages myths and stereotypes of people who are not familiar with one another to take place (Ellin, 1997).

'The meeting places were also the sites in which norms were created- so that justice could be done, and apportioned horizontally, thus re-forging the conversationalists into a community, set apart and integrated by the shared criteria of evaluation. Hence a territory stripped of public spaces provides little chance for norms being debated, for values to be confronted, to clash and be negotiated.'
Bauman (1998:25)

The tendency to use fences as a way of securing one's property and making sure people are safe inside the boundary, is becoming increasingly popular. America is more advanced than England in this respect and has a long history of 'gated communities', where Los Angeles is a primary case. England is increasingly adapting the ideas of gated communities by providing 'secure housing', CCTV surveillance and generally accepting the fencing and privatisation of public spaces. As this tendency is becoming more common, it is worth discussing what impact a fenced school will have on the children in its community.

The school I have studied is located in Wythenshawe, a suburbia south of Manchester, mainly developed in the 1930-40s. The area is characterised by modern functionalist planning, where each space has one dedicated function which also dictates who uses it. All the different housing and commercial units are connected through a road system, which is not developed as streets with pedestrian qualities that make people interact, but for transportation between the units. The roads don't go through the community centres, but by them. This makes less spontaneous encounters to happen between people. There is a lack of social control. Police and other paid forces are responsible for the public order. Wythenshawe is recognised as a district with high criminal rates, including that for 'youth nuisance'. This is where local teenagers form their lives.

'Adolescents are in one way a powerless group. They are subordinated to the adult's world. Their relationships take place in the same context that the adults characterise with their intentions and restrictions.'
Lieberg (1992:108) [my translation]

The children are generally categorised in to two groups. They are either (i) 'anti-social' and too uncontrolled for taking part in the public realm, or (ii) they need to be protected from the crimes of the streets (Cele 2006). The children are considered not to fit into the adult definition of public space and are not included as positive users of any development. They are not welcome anywhere where they aren't controlled. They are considered too different from the white normality and will be acknowledged as the 'others'. Anti-social behaviour or

youth nuisance is described in 'Manchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005–08':

'Youth nuisance, while not actually a crime, is recorded as part of the crime and disorder agenda. Youth nuisance covers a range of behaviours that people find annoying or intimidating such as riding a motorcycle through a park or groups of young people hanging around on the streets.'

To tackle the problem with youth nuisance, Manchester City Council wants to increase supervision and parental support (Manchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008). This method doesn't take into recognition the reasons why the children are hanging out in the streets. In the suburbia where the children live, under stimulation characterises the social lives (Lieberg 1992). The preventive measures to activate the suburban children and adolescents are to bring them into sports. Community centres with fields and sport halls are typical measures. By providing young people with activity spaces, control can be maintained over them. The premises that the adults want the youths to use can be described in terms of power and control. It is the adults who control the space and dictate how and when to use it. Adolescents, traditionally, want to get away from parental control and find their own zones of privacy. (Lieberg 1992) If the city increases the supervision and control over the youths, the children will still try to escape. Cele (2006) found in her research that many English school children felt that the fences had a negative impact upon them and that it made want to escape.

'It's rubbish because it's like we're caged up in a school, with all the fences.'
Quote from a school child in (Cele 2006:160)

The real preventive measure would be to include and recognise young people as real users in a regeneration process, a participation process where their needs are acknowledged and understood
(Refer to section 3.1.0 How can the pupils' voices be heard and acknowledged in the design of their school environment?)

The school ground is of importance for teenagers as it might be the only place which is dedicated to them, where they could communicate and socialise without being interfered by adults. When a school ground is developed on 'panopticon' values, it won't meet the children's needs and it will result in the pupils trying to escape the adults' eyes. It is when the children escape the adults' eyes when the adults feel that they have a lack of control. If the children are not in control, they are a danger to the society. ('panopticon' - refer to Bauman 2001)

Among the teachers, the dominant view of the pupils' behaviour in the school playground during lunchtimes is negative. The teachers claim that unacceptable behaviours are occurring during this time (Blatchford, 1998). Blatchford recognises in his research that a common way to prevent bad behaviour in English secondary schools has been to reduce time at break. Break times are important parts of a school day when the children have the chance to develop informal but important social skills. The break times are also opportunities for the children to relax in between classes. Reducing break times will have a

negative effect on the children overall experience of school. Another typical measure to prevent bad behaviour would be to increase the number of supervising staff.

Blatchford (Blatchford et al.1994) recognises that a holistic approach of developing new school grounds could contribute to a positive change in playground behaviour. Increasing supervising staff is only one measure. A holistic approach also includes:
-enhancing opportunities for play/activities
-improving the environment
-involving the pupils in decision making

Bad behaviour and aggressions among the children can be caused by under stimulation and not knowing what to do or how to engage in different activities. By listening to the pupils and improving the environment according to their needs, it is possible to reduce these kinds of feelings and thus help to prevent bad behaviour at break times. The focus on the improvement has to be beyond control and providing easily supervised areas; the focus has to be around the children.

The new school is a community centre; it provides space for organised community usage. But it is fenced and closed for uncontrolled usage, it is a norm zone as oppose to a free zone. Young people experience places as free zones when they can use spaces without interference with adults (Lieberg, 1992). It is the free zones young people desire and which adult want to transform into norm zones. The Head teacher of the secondary school I have studied mentioned that they

had to open up the All Weather Pitch to the community in order to prevent it from being vandalised. This exemplifies how youths want to be in control and create free zones where they can escape adult and parental control. (Refer to diary section 2.3.0 week 3)

Since the borders of the private and public are unclear in modern suburban developments, fences have become the solution to recreate the missing spatial order. In an urban context, the building informs the separation between the public and private, and creates a natural spatial order of how to use the space. Introducing fences to reinforce the spatial division sends ambiguous messages. It emphasises the premises, at the same time that it fortifies it. The new school can easily be experienced as foreign by the residents of the deprived communities they are located in, if it will be gated and separated from the community. The school resembles more of a defensive fortress than a positive community centre. This new fancy building and its external facilities -which could be the pride, the heart of the community- could just as well become a threat to the residents and as such might generate even more crimes, 'anti-social behaviour' and fear in the area. It will glow of luxury and modern technology which the residents are being excluded and separated from.

'[T]he condition of staying put, being unable to move at one's heart desire and being barred access to greener pastures, exudes the acrid odour of defeat, signals incomplete humanity and implies being cheated in the division of splendours life has to offer.'
Bauman (1998:23)

The school grounds will be fenced and gated to the public out of fear of vandalism and intruders. It also fenced to keep the pupils in a safe environment, separated from the surrounding 'others'. Fencing is thus a separation within the community and reduces the number of public spaces which all can share. This results in contacts between groups of all social backgrounds being less likely to happen. There will always be something on the other side of the fence which people visually notice but cannot take part of, and which will be dedicated for use by someone else more "worthy" than themselves. It results in a feeling of being distrusted and a desire to get back at the system that allows this inequality to take place.

'As our sense of control over our world has diminished , our fear of the unknown and unpredictable "other" has grown, leading to distrust, paranoia, and the proliferation of racism, hate crimes, neo-Nazism, and other xenophobias.'
Ellin (1997:36)

The fear the school feels is based upon distrust of the members in the community. Fear is thus associated with and inseparable from social and economical deprivation. This is becoming a general association in our time. (Listerborn, 2002) Well situated people feel fear of the unknown others and fear of loosing their superior position. (Sutton 1997) Even though the schools are located in the deprived areas where the pupils live, the teachers, members from the Council and the design team, who all are involved in the decision making process, don't necessarily live where they work. The fear of 'the others' will have an

impact upon the everyday life of the people living in the area. Fear informs the design.

How can one tackle fear? Trying to reduce fear by short term investments, such as installing fences will only result in more fences. It will be safe on one side, but unpleasant on the other. Fences generate more fear.

I believe a full pupil/parents participation process is of importance to stress the real users' and residents' needs. The youths need to be addressed as important and real users of the urban space. We can't let fear inform the design of the school.

'[S]ecurity sacrificed in the name of freedom tends to be other people's security; and freedom sacrificed in the name of security tends to be other people's freedom.'
Bauman (2001:20)

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3.3.0 CONCLUSION

Having gone through a process of keeping a diary of a school ground project, reading related research and literature, writing and summarising the issues, and in the end formulating my views on these issues, has been a very instructive and enlightening process. I feel that I now can see the issues in a context and better understand their complexities. At the same time, through this process, a whole new world of thoughts and ideas has opened up to me, which I wish to continue studying.

There is a complexity of young people's perception of the environment, as opposed to the adults', and how the young people wish to find free zones in the public realm. This raises an important discussion about the way adult's respond to young people's instincts with measures of control and restrictions. The topic is especially relevant in a time when social fears are informing the way the cityscape is being developed, including the extensive developments of new school environment.

It is important to stress and understand the differences there are between young people and adults in the perception of space and the environment. What adults appreciate in an environment is very different from what children and adolescents experience as positive. The understanding of these issues should play an important part of school ground developments.

These tendencies of social fears in England are today developed to an extent where youth culture - if not under control- is not accepted or
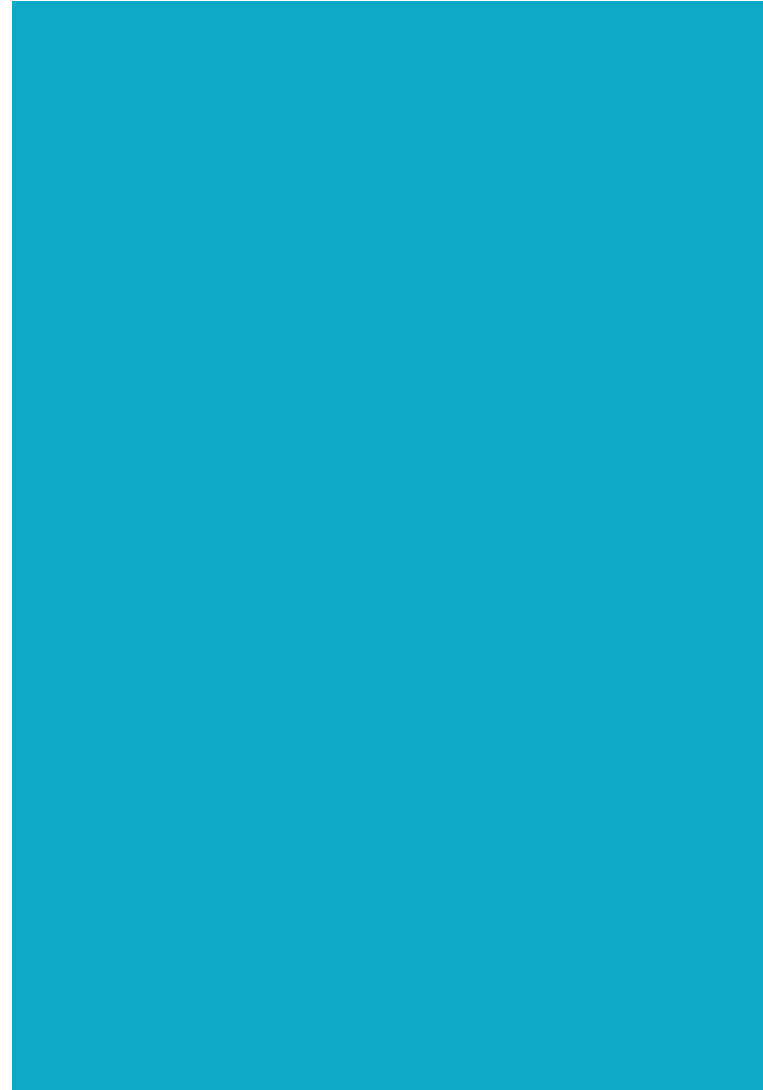
appreciated as part of the society. Instead, the typical teenager's behaviour is now being associated with criminal disorders, with negative terms such as 'anti-social behaviour' or 'youth nuisance'. These tendencies seem to be particularly notable in England currently as opposed to other European countries.

It is difficult to transform the notion of fear when it has become so ingrained in the English society of today. When I bring this topic up for a discussion with English people, there is a tendency to accept the fact that fear exists and that the best measure to deal with anti social behaviour among young people is control. There is hardly any questioning of these views. These responses to fear will result in cities of fortresses with restrictions for any behaviour considered threatening to the acceptable norms. When a country is addressing feelings of fear by erecting fences and introducing CCTV and other restrictions, it is crucial to raise the question of whether such a future is part of a sustainable life that we would wish to live.

'Creating sustainable communities' is a popular expression in England and in the rest of the world (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development - Agenda 21). Every council includes this concept in their strategy reports. The term 'sustainability' refers to providing the best outcomes for now and into the indefinite future, by planning with a long term perspective. Having a long term perspective on communities would be something different than what is currently being established.

By a short term approach, which both fencing and other restrictions are, the outcome can have an immediate effect, but the problems won't simply disappear. For example, if young people are not allowed to hang out on the school ground after school hours without adult supervision, and fences are erected to prevent that from happening, the children will force the fences to enter or they will move to another setting which to take over and make their own. As a result, more fences are erected and the story continues.

A long term strategy, on the other hand, should appreciate that young people have needs that extend beyond sport and other controlled activities. It is important to integrate young people as equal members of the community and in the society. In this way it is possible to make their needs a part of the regeneration of the communities.

A good example of a long term strategy is exemplified by the school I studied itself. When the school acknowledged the problems with vandalism and the fencing of the all weather pitch, they decided to open it up to the community. By doing this, the members of the community were able to take ownership of the pitch and no incidents have occurred since.

It is interesting for me to look back on the project now after having gone through a similar process of two additional Manchester BSF schools. The school I have studied is the most positive school environment in terms of security out of the three. At the same time though, what was decided as a security strategy for the school was something

I felt very alienated to. It is worrying to recognise how easily one gets used to these restrictions and starts to accept the English approach. 'At least it's better than….'

As landscape architects, we have an opportunity to contribute to a positive school experience for the children. The development of the outdoor environment is restricted by different local strategies and ideas expressed by the school. It is important that the strategies support the development of a positive environment rather than inhibit it. The strategies, such as the reduction of crime strategy, need to be better linked to other disciplines such as sociology and cultural geography, in order to accomplish a long term improvement and a sustainable development.

Also, the school needs to be ready for a transformation of the educational environment. The new school will be developed with a new, modern approach to education and the existing educational culture would need to change with that new development. This change can be difficult for existing school staff to adapt to if they are not prepared and educated for it. From my experience, the staff can easily hinder the educational transformation process and even stand in the way of this once in a century government investment.

I overheard a discussion between people involved in the BSF in Manchester. Someone was saying that on another school project in England, all of the school staff had to reapply for their jobs at the newly transformed school. They would only be hired if they were ready to adapt and take on board the new educational culture and the different approach to teaching in this new school environment. This may appear to be a very drastic way of dealing with this issue, but at least the problem was being dealt with and the new educational environment could be completely transformed without any staff fears of changes interfering with the process.

Currently, there is no culture whatsoever in using the external grounds as part of the curriculum on the existing Manchester secondary schools. There is no support from the school in developing the landscape in any challenging ways. BSF wants on a national level to encourage extensive usage of the external grounds. This approach needs to be taken on at an individual school level so that the teachers support improved external environment, rather than only promoting easily supervised, open and hard surfaced areas. It doesn't matter what we as landscape architects propose if the ideas are not taken on board by the staff.

Through BSF, the English government wants to enable every local authority in England to transform their secondary school estates. The time scale for this project is 15 years. This means that within a period of 15 years, every secondary school in England will be transformed. If this major investment is being done without any self reflection and without appreciating the consequences of the strategies which the local authorities are supporting, it can generate poorly received new school environments in the communities.

It is interesting to relate this BSF investment to the Swedish 'Million Programme' [miljonprogrammet] that was carried out in the 1960s and 1970s. The Swedish government set a target of building one million new dwellings within ten years time, at the same time that large parts of old buildings were being demolished. The programme is quite similar in that respect to the BSF plan, where parts of the existing school buildings are either being demolished or refurbished and a significant amount of new school buildings are being constructed. This 'Million Programme' government investment was greatly supported in the early days, but criticised quite rapidly after the establishment of the new million homes across Sweden. The government had one ambition: to provide better homes for the Swedish population. That was the most important target to meet. How this was achieved and what effect the process had on the end result was not recognised.

The programme did not appreciate the people who were going to live in these developments. It was carried out without any interactions with future residents. The dwellings were modern and glowing of new technology, but lacked the touch of human scale. This great government investment was carried out too quickly without any reflections on the strategy. Even today, we are still trying to correct the things that went wrong. This is being done by listening to the residents needs and making these areas more people friendly, which has become a very expensive exercise.

Having this in mind when working on the BSF programme, it feels utterly important to reflect upon the BSF process while it still is in progress so the same mistakes won't happen. It is important to realise how the BSF strategy relates to the individual authorities' different local strategies and what impact that will have on the outcome of the new school environment. The school cannot be, and should not be separated from the rest of the community.

One also has to understand the close links between the idea of security and pupil and parental engagements. By making the pupils' and the members of the community's voices acknowledged and listened to, this will enable them to develop a sense of ownership of the new school and support and welcome it as part of their community. It is also important to stress the holistic change in culture that needs to take place, among the staff and pupils, in order for the BSF strategy to achieve its great aspirations. To quote the BSF motto:

'Working together to create world-class, 21st-century schools - environments which will inspire learning for decades to come and provide exceptional assets for the whole community' (http://www.bsf.gov.uk)

The timescale for the BSF programme is extremely tight and I question whether all these issues can be resolved within this period of time. The design of one school building happens within a period of less than three months. We might not be transforming the entire English secondary school environment for the better, but rather for the worse, if this process is not carried out **WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN MIND**.

All of us working on the BSF programme still have the opportunity to make this investment into something which will 'inspire learning for decade' and to be 'assets for the whole community'. We just need to dare to raise and address the difficult questions about what might hinder this from happening.

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