

With our project we wish to actively stimulate the children's democratic ethos by working with construction, gardening and play. We believe this approach can create a framework for an active and sustainable outdoor life.

NATURAL MATERIALS

Landscape architect Carl Th. Sørensen's aim in creating Skrammellegepladsen was to offer urban children the same possibilities they would have had growing up in the countryside.

The lack of materials for urban children to experiment with was addressed by bringing in what was considered waste: cut off branches, used planks, cardboard boxes etc. Keeping in spirit with this wish, we propose bringing in green waste from municipal parks – especially waste from the pruning of trees and bushes, quantities of which are produced by all municipal parks. Our proposal is to divert some of this resource stream en route to the municipal composting facility and simply offload it, as a valued resource, at Skrammellegepladsen. All these branches would be used for building shelters and the augmented amount of decomposing plant materials would have a positive effect on local biodiversity. If it were possible to chip wood on site, this could furthermore provide a self-sustaining supply of wood chips for paths and compost, further adding to a more naturalistic environment where the sub-strata would, over time, resemble a forest more than a highly urban site.

WATER & HILLS

Skrammellegepladsen has always been slightly hidden away, by design. When the site was first established it was considered that the untidy activity going on inside it should not have to be seen by those living around it.

There might have been thoughts about protecting the children from outside views, but we have not been able to find proof of this thought in the literature. In our new version we see an inherent quality in creating spaces where children can be left on their own, without a constantly monitoring adult gaze. In a large natural surrounding (which was the ideal of landscape architect Carl Th. Sørensen) it would be easy enough for a child to hide away, if desired. This place, however, is rather small and we are therefore using topography and vegetation as means to create hidden places. Most of the area is surrounded by an earthenwork (part of the original design) starting a few meters inside the fencing, thus creating a space in the "forested" area that works well for this purpose.

The topography is also used to collect rain water in an L-shaped basin centrally placed in the new design. This will create a retaining pond that varies in size depending on precipitation – a common feature in contemporary design in the Copenhagen area to mitigate floods. The pond will also open up many new possibilities for outdoors activities at Skrammellegepladsen and will reinforce the original intention of the place – to mimic the possibilities available in a larger landscape setting. Usage of aquatic plants and a pump helping with circulation of the pond will also introduce a variety of biodiversity gains, again with a double function for pedagogical possibilities.

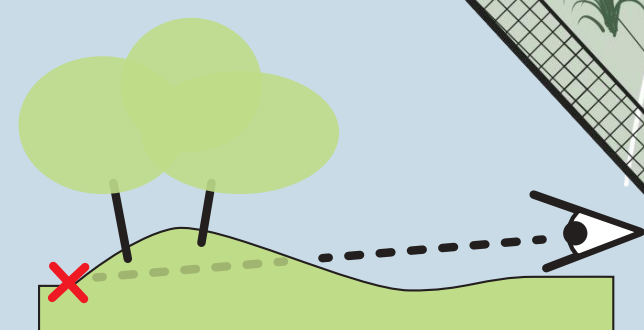


Figure 2 - Hidden places

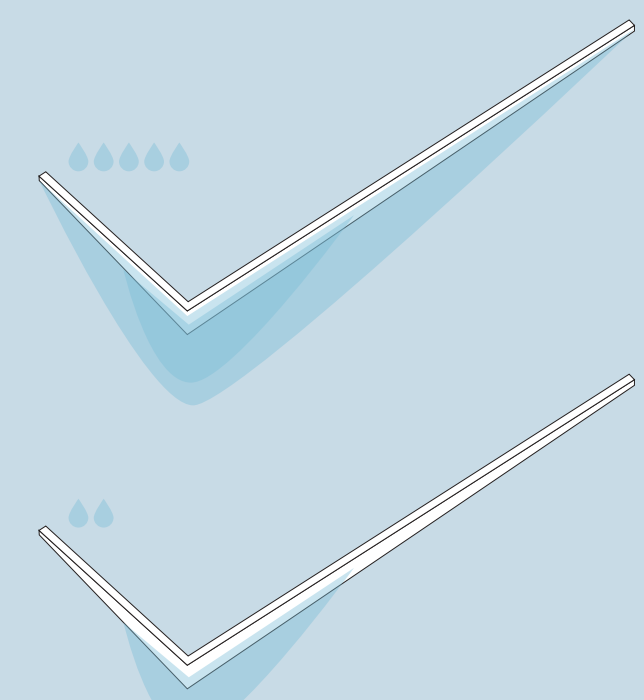


Figure 3 - Rain water basin changing with levels of precipitation

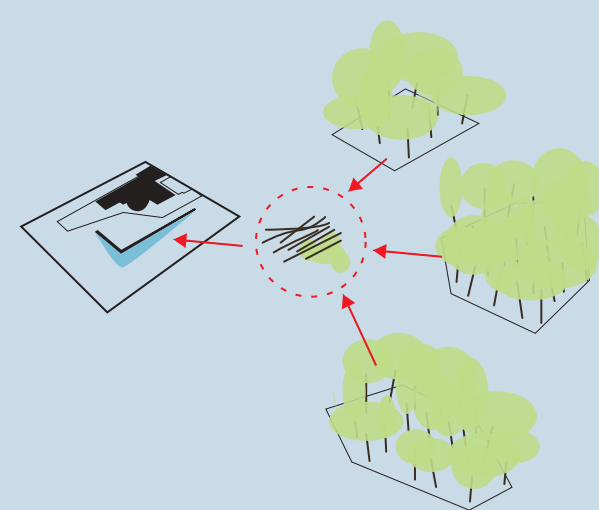


Figure 1 - Natural materials from public parks

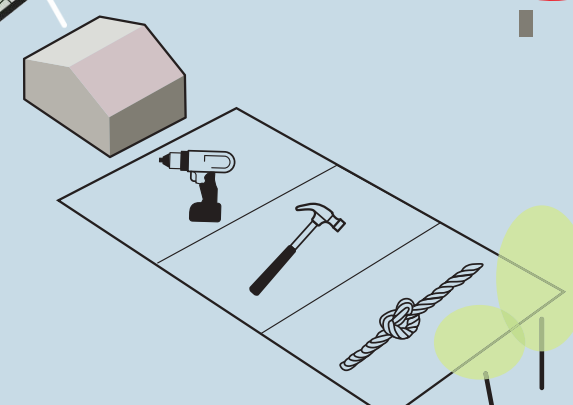
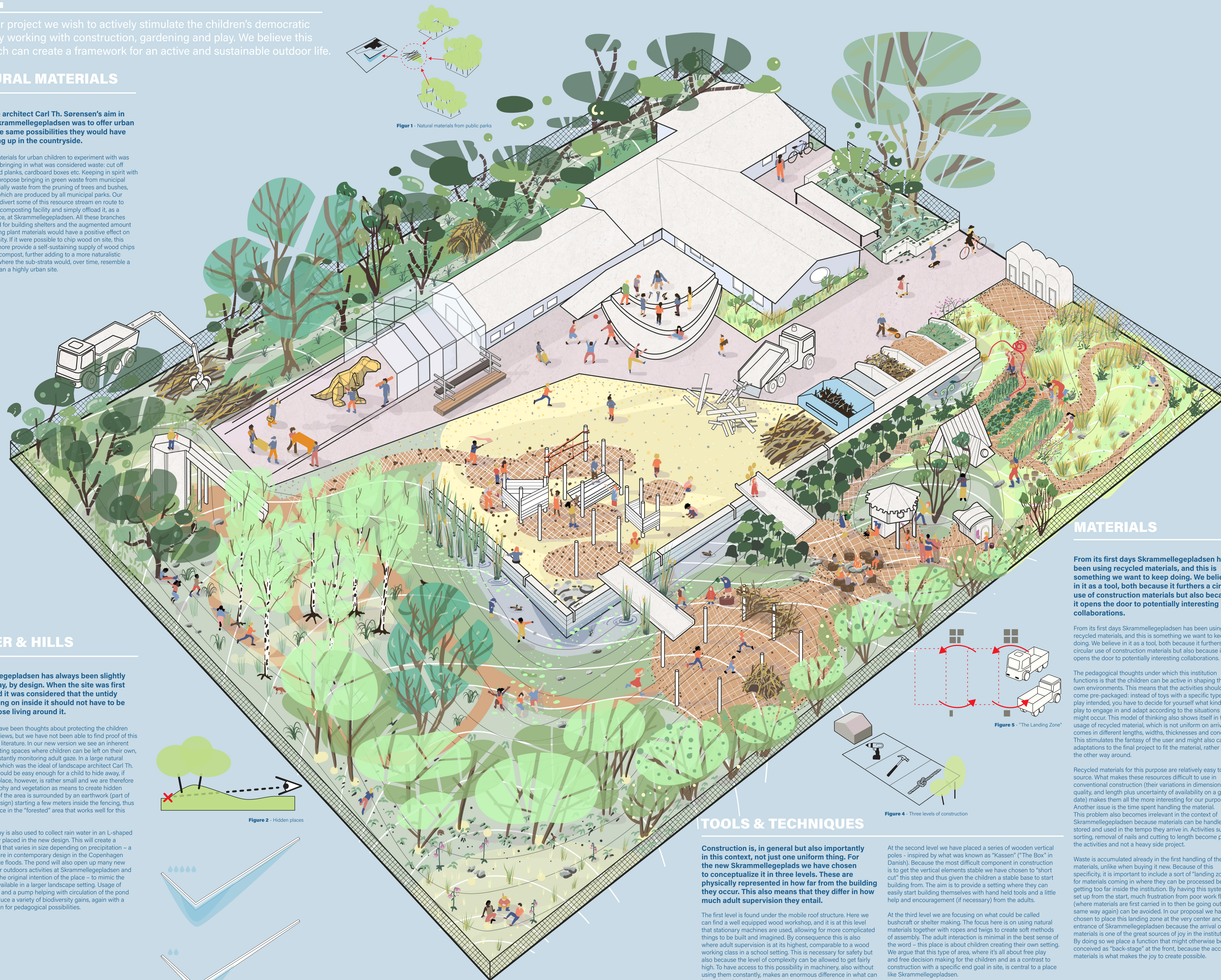


Figure 4 - Three levels of construction

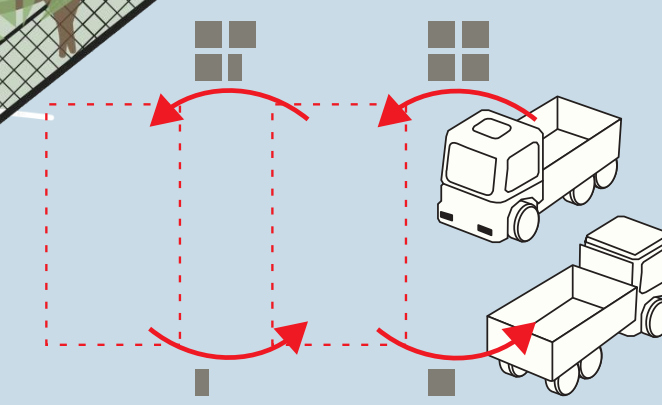


Figure 5 - "The Landing Zone"

TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Construction is, in general but also importantly in this context, not just one uniform thing. For the new Skrammellegeplads we have chosen to conceptualize it in three levels. These are physically represented in how far from the building they occur. This also means that they differ in how much adult supervision they entail.

The first level is found under the mobile roof structure. Here we can find a well equipped wood workshop, and it is at this level that stationary machines are used, allowing for more complicated things to be built and imagined. By consequence this is also where adult supervision is at its highest, comparable to a wood working class in a school setting. This is necessary for safety but also because the level of complexity can be allowed to get fairly high. To have access to this possibility in machinery, also without using them constantly, makes an enormous difference in what can be achieved on site.

At the second level we have placed a series of wooden vertical poles - inspired by what was known as "Kassen" ("The Box" in Danish). Because the most difficult component in construction is to get the vertical elements stable we have chosen to "short cut" this step and thus given the children a stable base to start building from. The aim is to provide a setting where they can easily start building themselves with hand held tools and a little help and encouragement (if necessary) from the adults.

At the third level we are focusing on what could be called bushcraft or shelter making. The focus here is on using natural materials together with ropes and twigs to create soft methods of assembly. The adult interaction is minimal in the best sense of the word – this place is about children creating their own setting. We argue that this type of area, where it's all about free play and free decision making for the children and as a contrast to construction with a specific end goal in site, is central to a place like Skrammellegepladsen.

MATERIALS

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The pedagogical thoughts under which this institution functions is that the children can be active in shaping their own environments. This means that the activities should not come pre-packaged: instead of toys with a specific type of play intended, you have to decide for yourself what kind of play to engage in and adapt according to the situations that might occur. This model of thinking also shows itself in the usage of recycled material, which is not uniform on arrival: it comes in different lengths, widths, thicknesses and conditions. This stimulates the fantasy of the user and might also call for adaptations to the final project to fit the material, rather than the other way around.

Recycled materials for this purpose are relatively easy to source. What makes these resources difficult to use in conventional construction (their variations in dimensions, quality, and length plus uncertainty of availability on a given date) makes them all the more interesting for our purposes. Another issue is the time spent handling the material. This problem also becomes irrelevant in the context of Skrammellegepladsen because materials can be handled, stored and used in the tempo they arrive in. Activities such as sorting, removal of nails and cutting to length become part of the activities and not a heavy side project.

Waste is accumulated already in the first handling of the materials, unlike when buying it new. Because of this specificity, it is important to include a sort of "landing zone" for materials coming in where they can be processed before getting too far inside the institution. By having this system set up from the start, much frustration from poor work flow (where materials are first carried in to then be going out the same way again) can be avoided. In our proposal we have chosen to place this landing zone at the very center and entrance of Skrammellegepladsen because the arrival of new materials is one of the great sources of joy in the institution. By doing so we place a function that might otherwise be conceived as "back-stage" at the front, because the access to materials is what makes the joy to create possible.

SKRAMMEL 2.0

A project by
BY RUM SKOLE

INTRO

The junk playground Skrammellegepladsen in Endrup is historically interesting, as it has set the direction for how we have created frameworks for children and young people's free play in outdoor urban areas throughout Denmark since the 1940s. The place and the pedagogy have inspired educators and municipal urban planners, landscape architects and institutional architects worldwide. This folder gives an idea of how it can be done to inform the successful creation and management of similar playgrounds now and in the future.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

As research for this folder, a literature study has been done and interviews have been conducted with stakeholders at Skrammellegepladsen in Endrup. In this work, we look at how pedagogy interacts with the outdoor areas. The focus is on the adults' views - it is their thoughts, ideas and wishes that are described. We treat the children's ideas, views and wishes in a different way, and our aim has been to merge the two.

While working on this publication we have drawn experience from our previous project BY RUM LABORATORIET and others, with more than 4.000 children and young people participating since 2020. BY RUM SKOLE asks questions that are important for leisure time on junk playgrounds today and provides a suggestion on how, today and in the future, work can be done to give children and young people a sanctuary for outdoor play, construction and working with plants.

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LIST OF LITERATURE

The following literature has served as a knowledge base for the project:

Adventure Playgrounds: an introduction - Harry Shier (1984)
Skrammellegepladsen - Ole Schultze Henriksen (2006)
Børn af Skrammel - Tania Maria Lüders Rusbjerg (2013)
Stadens leg - Elisabeth Lockert Lange (2019)
Bag enhver legeplads er der en idé - Tine Maria Winther (2020)
Den demokratiske Skrammellegeplads - Mathias Poulsen (2021)
Skrammellegepladsen - Ning De Cornick Smith (2022)
The City in the Sandbox - Kristian Bygskov og Margareta del Carmen (2022)
Legepladsen afspejler historiens barneleg - Ning De Cornick Smith (2022)
Play-based intrapreneurship: Challenging innovation processes and underlying cultural understanding - Sune Gudkisen m.fl. (2023)
BY RUM LABORATORIET - BY RUM SKOLE (2023)
Børn og unges Sciencekapital - VIVE (2024)

Photos from "Børn af Skrammel" - Tania Maria Lüders Rusbjerg (2013) and <https://cronoskole.com>

THANK YOU

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