

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE



Agenda

Green Corridor Gateway are teaming up with Friends of Chapel Street Park in Levenshulme to design and build a masterplan for Bluebell Green. This shared neighbourhood garden is the gateway to Manchester's green corridor and needs our help to make it more welcoming and accessible to the community! Join us in studio for Week 1 as we design, draw and collage a masterplan to share with the neighbourhood, then bring your green thumbs in Week 2 as we create willow structures and moguls on site.

Skills

Week 1

Collaging, drawing, sketching, photoshop visuals, masterplanning

Week 2

Landscaping, coppicing, willow weaving, mogul making, community engagement, gardening

Team

Natalia Fijalkowska
Meijun Liu
Rachel Amy Price
Baoxin Yang

Green Corridor Gateway

Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



MSA LIVE 22

Team

Natalia Fijalkowska (M Arch 01)

Liu Meijun (M Arch 01)

Rachel Amy Price (M Arch 01)

Baoxin Yang (M Arch 01)

Florence Browse (BA 01)

Ching Tang (BA 01)

Lue Teoh (BA 01)

Rija Ahmed Akhtar (BA 01)

Vrinda Aggarwal (BA 01)

Eve Fleur Jennings (BA 02)

Jessica Jones (BA 02)

Joseph Daniel Marsden (BA 02)

Ke Han Oh (BA 02)

Silvia Ye (BA 02)

Danning He (MLA 01)

Partners

Friends of Chapel Street Park (FCSP)

The group came together in 2020 to rejuvenate the park and to make use of the abandoned bowling green which is now a community garden. The vision of the garden is:

'To create a wildlife friendly space for the whole community to enjoy that is educational, safe and welcoming'.

FCSP's values are:

- Kindness: We are empathetic, respectful and put local people at the heart of everything we do.
- Trust: We trust in each other and are all accountable and reliable to your local community park and community garden.
- Education: Provide a welcoming, positive and safe learning environment.
- Environment: Leading by example to bring back and support a rich biodiversity.
- Inclusion: We want everyone to feel safe and welcome.

The Friends have been inspiring collaborative partners during MSA Live and we have enjoyed sharing our creative ideas for unique play spaces for the kids and helping to enhance Bluebell Green with this lovely community!

WEEKLY EVENTS

Monday 9.30-11am- Little Moles, toddler and preschooler group with story, song, gardening, crafts and play.

Wednesday 9.30-12.30- Wee Wellie Wednesdays, come and play in our children's area, help look after the toddler gardening bed.

Friday 1.30-3pm- Little Book Worms, story at 2pm and activities.

Saturday 9.30-2pm- community and volunteer morning. Help develop the site and look after the growing beds, or just come and enjoy the space.

Agenda

Green Corridor Gateway

Green Corridor Gateway are teaming up with Friends of Chapel Street Park in Levenshulme to design and build a masterplan for Bluebell Green. This shared neighbourhood garden is the gateway to Manchester's green corridor and needs our help to make it more welcoming and accessible to the community!

Join us in studio for Week 1 as we draw and collage masterplans based on Friends of Chapel Street Parks aspirations for Bluebell Green; to present and share our inventions and explorations with the neighbourhood. Bring your green thumbs in Week 2 as we get hands on with creating fun interventions consisting of mud moguls, coppicing and weaving willow to create arched willow structures and tyre concepts to create a fun obstacle course for the children of Bluebell Green to enjoy.

We have devoted ourselves to creating and helping Bluebell Green to become a significantly more accessible and inclusive park that allows parents and children to come together to enjoy these new fun and exciting interventions that allow Bluebell Green to become a safe, educational and welcoming space.

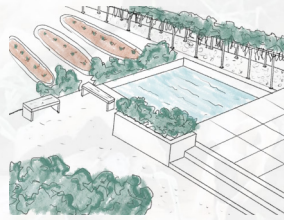
Icebreaker

During the first day of MSA live, none of the students were familiar with each other; we wanted everyone to feel comfortable thus wanted to do a little ice breaker to get to know one another. This consisted of learning everyone's names, where they perhaps came from and what a garden meant to them. In addition to this, we got everyone to complete a quick drawing/sketch of their individual gardens. It was quite interesting to hear and discuss the range of answers from students: some perceive their gardens as being a place for relaxation; some a peaceful place for reading, a place where they spend time with their dog, or even do some gardening work.

These little ice breaker exercises were significant in achieving helping students familiarise themselves with other students as they began to formulate a team: it definitely allowed students to feel more relaxed whilst simultaneously helped them to think about what a garden actually meant to them.

Although most students did complete drawings of their individual gardens, there was some students who were unable to do this as they either lived in a flat/apartment or just simply did not possess a garden, thus they sketched out what they would desire as their ideal garden to look like.

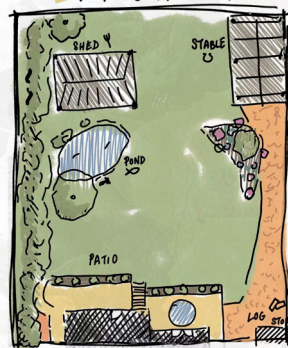
Additionally, it was quite interesting to do this exercise as it quite simply demonstrated how different everyone's gardens actually were and what students preferred having in their own gardens compared to others. For instance, some students who originally came from China owned gardens that looked completely different to the gardens students who lived in England had: we got to learn about unique gardening styles within other countries.



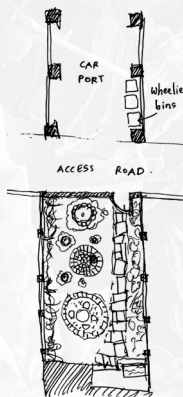
Liu Meijun



Jessica Jones



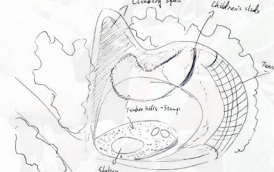
Florence Browse



Rachel Amy Price



Baoxin Yang



Danning He



Natalia Fijalkowska



Joseph Daniel Marsden

Exploring Chapel Street Park



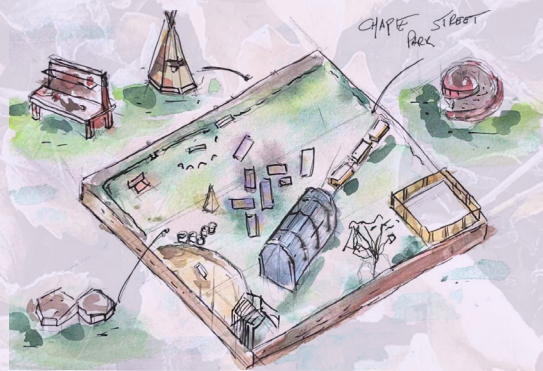
Site Sketches

During our initial site visit to the Bluebell green, we took the students to get a little tour of the site whilst simultaneously introduce them to our partners: Friends of Chapel Street Park. As we made our way around the site, Kate, one of our partners, discussed her plans and ideas for the park. She discussed imagining the site as 3 sections: the kids area, the plant space, and habitat for wildlife. Our partners' predominant desires comprised of creating an inclusive park; designing an accessible path that joins several points of the park together; getting rid of the giant mud mound near the entrance gate and transforming this into moguls; moving the tyres from the 'mud cafe' perhaps in line with the new accessible path; creating a fence around the mud cafe to separate this area.

This design stage corresponds to RIBA Stage 1: Preparation and Brief.



Silvia Ye

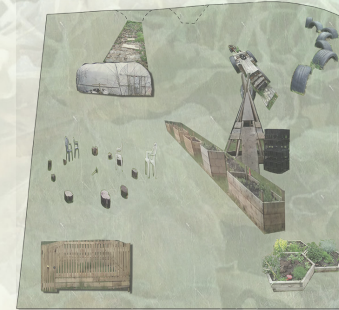


Joseph Daniel Marsden



Ke Han Oh

Concept Collages



Baoxin Yang



Joseph Daniel Marsden



Rachel Amy Price

On our second day we all explored our concept ideas through collage-making. We each created collages of Bluebell Green and included aspects that Friends of Chapel Street Park had asked for during our meetings. We included some of our own design ideas too which we presented to the community for their feedback later in the week.

This design stage corresponds to RIBA Stage 2: Concept Design.





Natalia Fijalkowska



Danning He



Florence Browse



Eve Fleur Jennings

Collaborative Masterplan

In pairs, we drew scaled masterplans of Bluebell Green (Figures 1-3) to reflect our collage concept ideas from the previous day. These masterplans had to consider a set of site constraints: our partners requested that we retain the locations of the pond, poly-tunnel, bug hotel, raised and low planting beds, shed, and orchard saplings; anything else could be re-located.

We presented our masterplans to one another and discussed which of the features we would utilise for the final masterplan. We then combined these developed design ideas into one collaborative masterplan (Figure 4) to present to Friends of Chapel Street Park.



Figure 1: 1:200@A2 Pair Masterplan



Figure 2: 1:200@A2 Pair Masterplan



Figure 3: 1:200@A2 Individual Masterplan



Figure 4: Collaborative Masterplan, 1:200@A2



Presentation

We presented a coloured version of our collaborative masterplan (Figure 5) to our partners to receive their feedback and comments regarding our developed design proposal. The presentation was a very useful method of obtaining the opinions of the community as they were able to directly respond to the different points made and using tracing paper, we were able to sketch these ideas onto the masterplan as they were discussing the site.

It was also a rewarding experience because discussing this masterplan with the partners made us acutely aware of how passionate this community is about their shared garden, Bluebell Green. This made us feel even more compassionate about improving the site for everyone who uses it because we were able to meet and interact with the people who use it. The parents with prams, their children, those with accessibility requirements, and those who enjoy a community gardening experience to connect with others living in the neighbourhood helped us to understand the importance of this project.

We then updated this masterplan from their comments (Figures 6 and 7). The main changes were the addition of organic shaped low beds to the south of the site, and a new location for the willow structures, second set of moguls, accessible WC and fire pit.

These design stages correspond to RIBA Stages 3: Design Development and 4: Technical Detail.



Figure 5: Masterplan Presented to FCSP

Final Masterplan

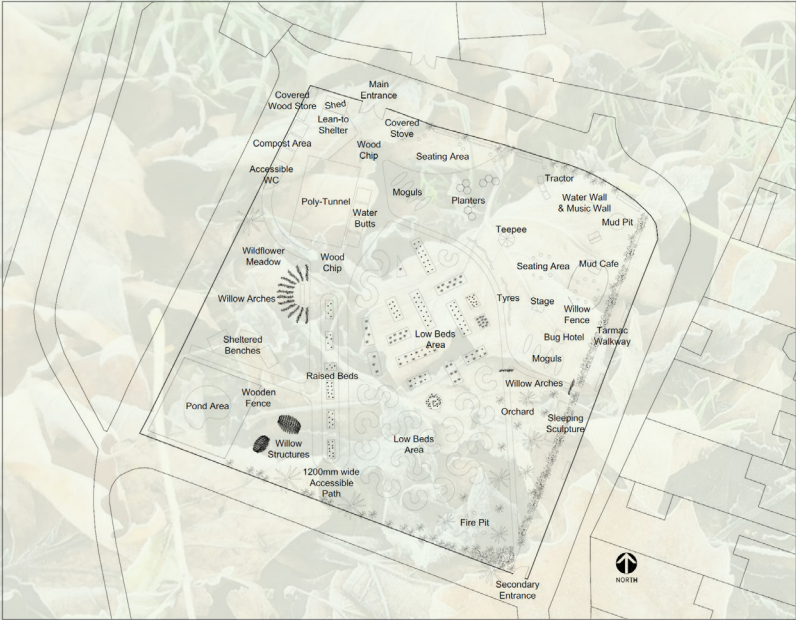


Figure 6: Labelled Line Drawing Masterplan



Figure 7: Coloured Masterplan

Monday Site Interventions

As per the masterplan, we shuffled the tyre obstacle course slightly to the west to create a barrier between the childrens' area and the vegetable growing beds. This was an issue raised by FCSP as the children would often run onto the beds because there was nothing to separate the two zones.

It was very tiring work getting the tyres out of the ground and making new holes for them but we worked as a team and shared the effort between us - we also had a lot of fun in the process despite the challenge! This activity also brought us closer as a group and we were able to get to know one another more. It was also a great opportunity for us to share experiences and advice relating to the course.

One of the biggest goals for the week was to dismantle the mound of earth near the entrance and next to the poly-tunnel which the kids really enjoy but the adults think is an eye-sore! Early on in our meetings with FCSP it was decided that the mound would be made into moguls so that the children could still enjoy it. This was physically challenging but we all worked together to shift the dirt and make some great looking moguls.

We can't wait for the children to see what we've done with their mound!

These interventions correspond to RIBA Stage 5: Construction.



Tuesday Site Interventions



The entire morning and afternoon of Tuesday consisted of continuing with trying to get rid of the mud mound and reshuffling as much as possible of this to other parts of the park. Furthermore, we chose to dig out the tyres again and put them in deeper as they were a little bit loose and wanted to avoid any accidents caused by this, thus ensured these were safe.

Although we finished with the set of moguls at the front of the site, we still had an immense amount of the mud mound left and wanted to get rid of this so the ground was flat near the moguls. We therefore decided to create another set of moguls behind the bug hotel, this addition helped to continue the obstacle course created by the initial set of moguls and tyres that were lined against the future accessible path whilst simultaneously 'fencing off' the kids area from the rest of the site.

These interventions correspond to RIBA Stage 5: Construction.

Wednesday Site Interventions

We began creating willow arches on site today! We began by using garden canes to mark out where each arch would go. We coppiced the willow from around the site (with permission from FCSP and the willow trees) and dug narrow holes to plant the branches into. We hammered stakes of thicker willow next to the branches to give them more support and tied the branches to the stakes. We then created the arches by wrapping the willow together at each end. To stabilise the arch structures, we braced them all with willow ties in an 'X' shape, with an additional '—' between them to ensure the arches remained rigid and held themselves upright.



The whole team created a sort of 'production line' to build the arches in a systematic manner. Some were in charge of digging the narrow holes, for others to implant the branches, some were in charge of hammering thicker willow stakes into the ground to support the branches, some cut the rope to bind the willow ties together, some tied to willow braces, and some went around doing quality control, checking that the ties were all holding. It was a very enjoyable activity!



These interventions correspond to RIBA Stage 5: Construction.



Thursday Site Interventions



During the day on Thursday, we continued with the willow arches and ensuring that they stayed upright thus stabilised them with further bracing. Additionally, Friends of Chapel Street Park from the start desired a small fence that that would essentially separate the mud cafe from the rest of the kids area. We had a lot of willow left thus wanted to make use of this and made a low willow fence made from small arches of willow, planted into the ground. It's a nice addition as it helps to separate different parts of the kids area whilst simultaenously still allowing parents to watch over their kids when playing in the mud cafe.



In the future, the willow will grow shoots to create a taller fence around this play area and can be woven together to make it more sturdy. This would create an interesting addition to the site as it could create a 'den' concept for the kids thus is something they would enjoy.

These interventions correspond to RIBA Stage 5: Construction.



Friday Grand Opening

Today we finished the site interventions and made final the touches. We also planted some wildflower seeds in the wildflower meadow area to surprise Friends of Chapel Street Park in a few weeks when they will begin to flower!

In the afternoon, the children's session began and we introduced them all to the new parts of the site. It was a joy to see their reactions and watch them play with the structures we had made.

This corresponds to RIBA Stage 6: Handover and 7: Use.



RIBA STAGE

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

MSA Live Reflections



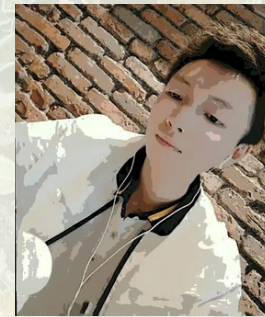
Rachel Amy Price - Some Kind of Nature

This project appealed to me due to its proximity to nature, its equity of design for all ages and abilities, and its community approach to designing green infrastructure. I enjoyed being a part of this community for a short time and feel proud to have helped them take a step closer to their goals. I also enjoyed working with our wonderful team of students; each helped me to learn more about leadership and collaboration in design processes. The biggest challenge was in constructing high quality interventions for the community to enjoy, appreciate and be proud of.



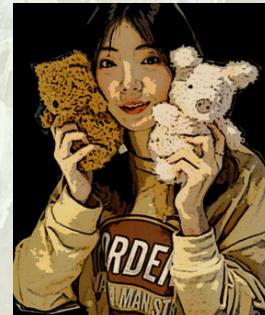
Natalia Fijalkowska - Flux

This project has definitely helped me gain confidence within other aspects of design, specifically in permitting me to take a break from my laptop and digital work for a couple of weeks and actually do some hands on work as this is something I did not feel comfortable with initially! I enjoyed getting to know the students and working as a team effectively whilst also being a part of the Friends of Chapel Street Park community! It's definitely fun creating interventions I would not usually do, for instance, willow arches, moguls, etc and getting to see the kid's reactions to these.



Baoxin Yang - Flux

I chose this project because through it I could strengthen my knowledge of landscape design, site design and accessibility design. Also, this project brings me a great sense of achievement because we keep creating! It's a process of starting from nothing and gradually adding new things to the site for the children! The biggest challenge for me in this process was thinking about how to make the facilities look more appealing to the children, such as the corridors made of willow branches and the set of high & low Moguls.



Liu Meijun - &rchitecture

Two weeks MSA live is coming to the end. I'm really happy to work with my friends from March, MLA, BAs and Friends of Chapel Street Park! From the ice-breaker of the first day we met, we learned each other through our gardens. We explored the Bluebell Green, did sketch and collage, designed the master plan, made the Moguls and willow structures. Nothing would be better than the smile on kids face while they running on the Moguls and playing hide and seek in the willow structure. Love this project! Love these guys!

ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites M Arch. year 01 with B Arch. year 01 and 02 and M Land. Arch 01 in mixed-year teams to undertake live projects with external partners to create social impact.

LIVE PROJECTS

All MSA LIVE projects are live. A live project is where an educational organisation and an external partner develop a brief, timescale, and outcome for their mutual benefit.

SOCIAL IMPACT

All MSA LIVE projects have social impact. Social impact is the effect an organization's actions have on the well-being of a community. Our agendas are set by our external collaborators.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

MSA LIVE projects work with many organisations: charities, community groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, researchers, practitioners and educators.

STUDENT-LED

Our MSA masters students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. Other cohorts joined for an eventful 2 weeks of activities at the end of the academic year.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Working in teams within and across year groups and courses; MSA students participate in peer to peer learning. In addition, collaborators, participants and students engage in the transfer of tangible and intellectual property, expertise, learning and skills.

LARGE SCALE

This year approximately 550 students from 4 cohorts in MSA have worked on 35 projects with partners.

QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA LIVE please contact the MSA LIVE team:

msalive@mmu.ac.uk

BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2022

SOCIAL

#MSALive22

@msa.live.22

@TheMSArch

@MLA_TheMSArch

WEBSITE

www.msa.ac.uk