EMILY PLACE
KINDERGARTEN

Adapting a suburban programme typology for a densifying urban context.
URBAN PLAYGROUND

Most kindergartens exist in suburban isolation, requiring a bus-trip to get to many of the places that are within a few minutes walk of the central city. Emily Place is a quiet, pedestrian-friendly niche, but it is close to museums, parks, galleries, the sea, workplaces, and many other learning opportunities.
EXISTING SITE
Split level between Emily Place and Anzac Ave

PROPOSED OFFICE DEVELOPMENT
Leaving open public space

KINDERGARTEN
Cuts through office building at 3rd Floor level

SHARED CIRCULATION
Allows access to office tenancies and kindergarten, and passage through site.

ELEVATED BLOCK
Kindergarten is elevated above Emily Place and space below is used for cycle parking

EXISTING FROM EMILY PLACE

EXISTING FROM ANZAC AVE
ACTIVE WALLS

A forest wall of irregularly spaced vertical timber fins create deep walls with niches for play, fold-down activity tables, sliding pinboards and blackboards. Gaps and louvres allow ventilation. Windows to the floor permit children unobstructed views down to street level.

by mum!

we're nice pirates and we try to get the hotness out of our school *

there's a rice ball ghost under the table *

everybody gonna eat me when i'm gonna be a strawberry *

can we put a table down so we can have a shed?
STORAGE TRENCHES

Trenches built into the floor allow for quick end-of-session pack up while providing open play indoor play areas. Playthings are unearthed from the playroom floor.

i don't want to lick tongues with you today because i don't want to throw up in your mouth *

i'm doing yoga on a hotdog floor *

is this the place where the fire comes out? *

i'm so over making these shoes *
i think there's a snake monster down here!

are those boy scissors? *
SPIRAL RAMP ATRIUM

The ramp provides an uninterrupted 100m path to the roof garden above. Play can become vertically organised, and children get exercise. A thin textile mesh lines the inner surface of the atrium preventing falling or dropping, and the outer surface is closed by rolling timber shutters which drop out of the ceiling cavity.

follow me! bring your laser blazer!

i have something to say about the clock*

if you don't have any bones you're like a bag of jelly *

this is a big shark that's going to open its Irish mouth *

when it rains we catch water in pots at the bottom of the spiral

race you up to the sky!
Looking down onto Emily Place, the roof garden houses an aviary, sandpit, vegetable garden, rabbit hutch, small trees, play area, swan plants, bird feeders, and a beehive. Children experience how different elements of the garden connect ecologically. There is a direct view to the large native trees in the nearby reserve.
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*i had an accident. I did it on purpose *

Auckland will densify, but Aucklanders are skeptical that quality of life can be maintained in a dense city. Proliferation of poor-quality city apartments has reinforced this skepticism. It is not enough to simply pack in more living quarters. For a viable, denser city, the whole range of urban and suburban programmes need to be reconsidered – the Ministry of Education, for example, has recently begun planning for an urban school in the central city.

Kindergartens in New Zealand are a suburban typology, typically following the domestic pattern of house, verandah, and yard.

Children learn to learn through play. Play is experimental and provisional engagement with other people, places, or things. Friedrich Fröbel, the instigator of the kindergarten movement, prescribed a series of tactile exercises aimed to help children develop spatial skills by slowing down perception.

Emily Place Kindergarten is not a passive territory to be explored, but a dynamic system in which children participate. It is a space that children can affect; a medium for their developing sense of the world and their place in it.

* text marked is from the collection curated by preschoolgems on twitter.com