



HOTEL HOPE PLAYSCAPE

A Collaboration of
The Albert and Tina Small
Center for Collaborative Design at
Tulane School of Architecture

And
Hotel Hope



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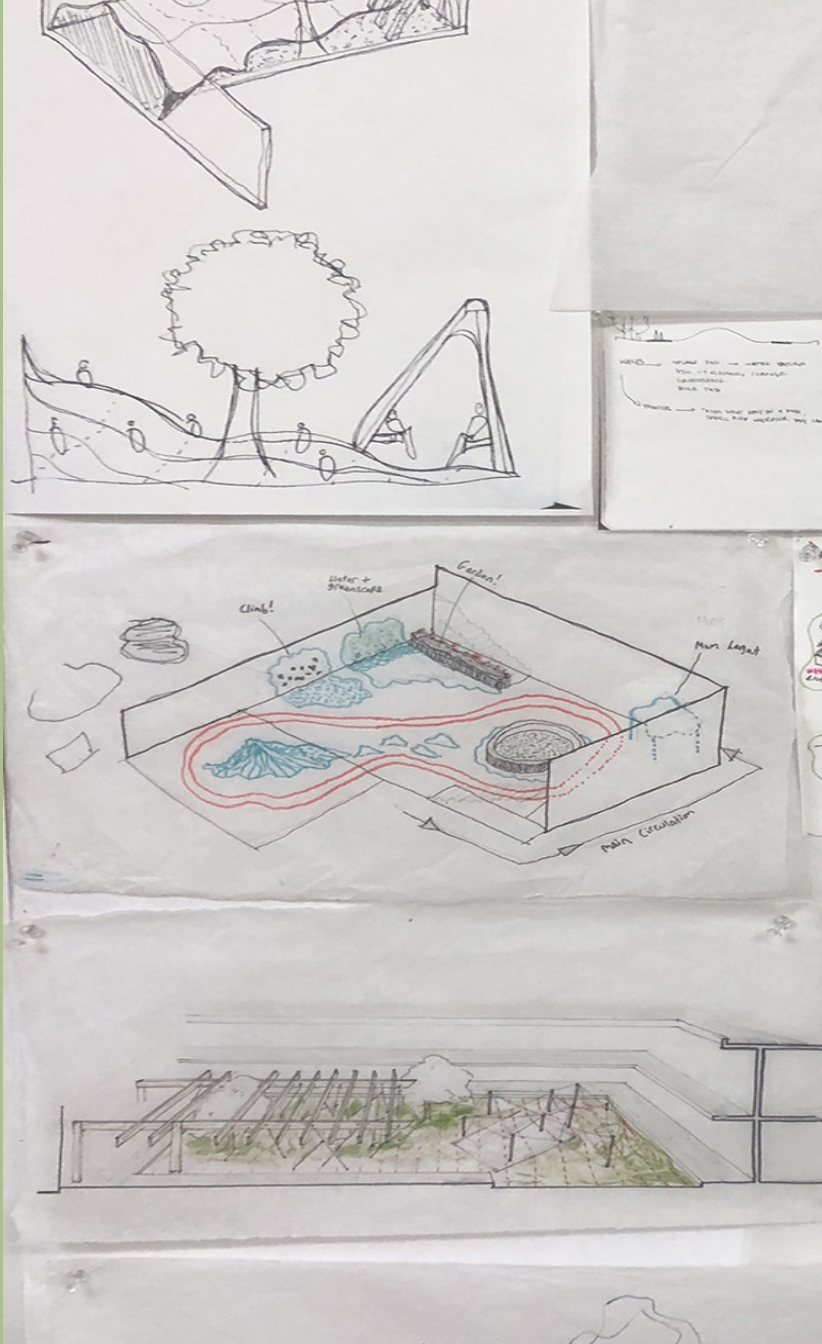
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BACKGROUND





ABOUT HOTEL HOPE

Hotel Hope is a non-profit organization that provides housing to women and their children in a safe and loving atmosphere while guiding them to self-sufficiency and self-empowerment through intensive case management.

Hotel Hope envisions the preservation of the family unit and the elimination of homelessness through systemic change.

Research shows that permanent housing is the most effective solution for long-term homeless families, but it can take up to six weeks to transition families into their permanent residences. Hotel Hope is committed to filling this gap.

CORE VALUES

Love / to welcome the guest with an open heart

Compassion / to extend empathy and respect during a time of need

Empowerment / to provide support that fosters self-empowerment



SITE & PROJECT

Hotel Hope operates an emergency shelter for women and children that is a converted mid-century modern motor hotel in New Orleans' Central City neighborhood. In this building, they provide the first of three steps toward self-sufficiency and housing stability. Residents live at Hotel Hope and work on an individual development plan for up to 45 days, after which Hotel Hope and their partners ensure that the families have permanent housing.

The historical motor hotel rooms encircle a central paved parking courtyard. A design/build intervention in collaboration with the Albert & Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design aimed to *transform the former parking lot into a playspace* to welcome new residents and embody the values of Hotel Hope.





SKILL BUILDING

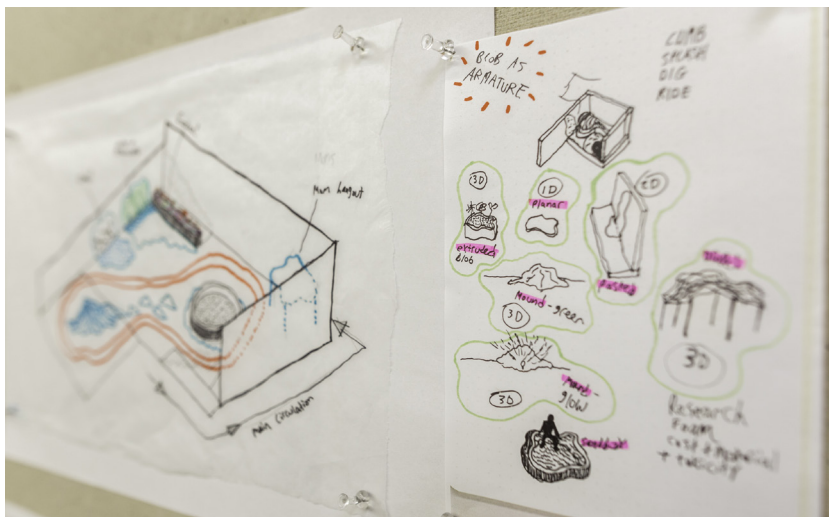
In order to undertake the design/build project, Tulane architecture students learned to use tools and to “think-through-making.” A series of shop tutorials provided skills and safety training, while hands-on design exercises allowed for a more thorough understanding of materials, connections, scale, durability, and the relationships between design concepts and implementation.



Small Center's design/build projects are grounded in deep research and collaboration. In addition to basic fabrication skills, the design team immersed themselves in readings regarding homelessness and how it impacts the city and residents of New Orleans. A preliminary collaboration with another non-profit partner, the Youth Empowerment Project, to build out an interior training space, served as a swift course in collaboration, communication, and fabrication.

PROCESS





ENGAGEMENT

The Small Center team worked with staff and residents of Hotel Hope to understand current uses and needs of the courtyard, which is meant to serve as a safe space for kids of all ages to play, bike, and congregate. Through a series of art activities and conversations with children and mothers staying at Hotel Hope, a clear set of needs and material/aesthetic goals emerged, including a desire for a lush oasis-like feel with warm yet durable materials and spaces where mothers and kids could connect around play.

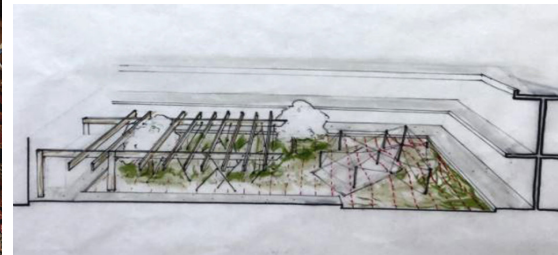
Throughout the design and fabrication process, students engaged with staff, board members, residents, and design critics using various methods including volunteering, observation, discussion, surveys, and direct design feedback. The engagement process maintained an open dialogue about the opportunities and approaches to creative space, which informed a series of design proposals and revisions that resulted in the final built project.

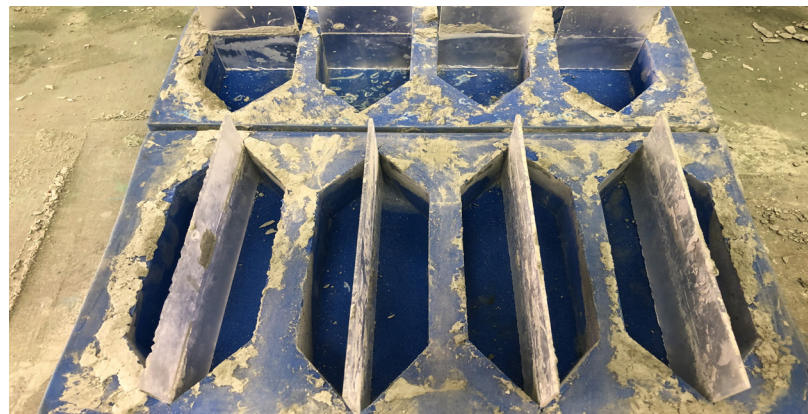




CONCEPT

Early design ideas explored how color, plantings, and shade could be used to transform the site. The design process involved several rounds of presentation and feedback. Ideas including sandboxes and canopy structures were discarded in favor of a small tunnel, slide, and interventions aimed at children of different ages.







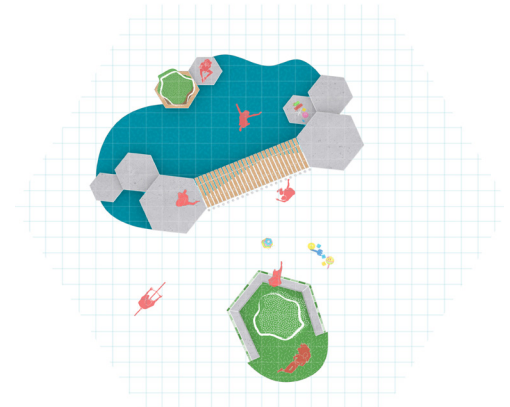
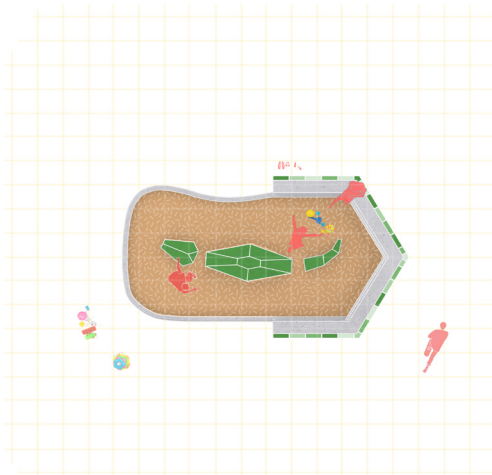




FINAL DESIGN

The final design scheme incorporated feedback from the engagement process into a complete strategy addressing the various needs of Hotel Hope and its residents.

A tunnel, slide, and hill are combined to create dynamic climbing and sensory play opportunities; an “alligator pit” provides a playful refuge for younger children; and landscaping and a custom mural provided additional visual improvements to the previously pavement-only courtyard.





IMPLEMENTATION







PROTOTYPING

The team perfected aspects of the tunnel design and other elements of the project by building and testing prototypes. These early experiments allowed students to study whether designs were appropriately sized for children, and how final construction could be improved. Finally, the frame and board formwork was completed, moved to site, and readied to receive the concrete pour.





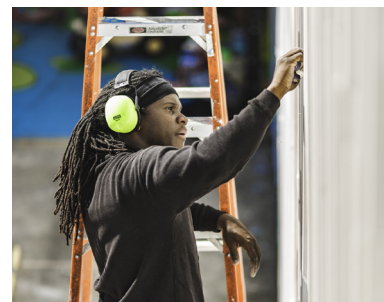
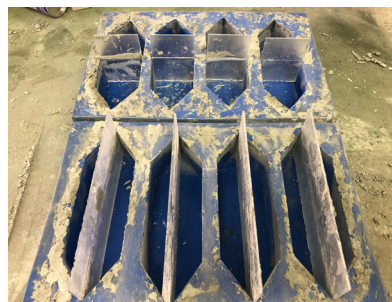
CONSTRUCTION

Fabrication occurred over an intense 7-week period including shop prefabrication, site preparation and significant concrete demolition, and final installation.

The project team fabricated custom shaped and dyed bricks to make playful seating walls, created peepholes in the tunnel to enhance play and allow sunlight to penetrate, crafted the alligator pit, and designed and painted a two-story mural to enliven the courtyard.

Landscaping, compacting soil to create a climbing hill, and installing a custom slide completed the installation.







COMPLETED PROJECT

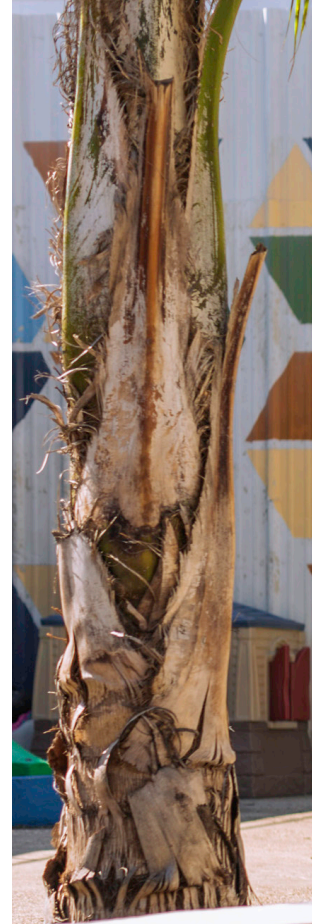
Since construction was completed, the project has continued to be shaped by its users, alongside the design team. Hotel Hope led painting projects on the alligator and tunnel, and Small Center replaced the hill's grass with turf upon observing the extreme wear-and-tear of many children climbing and jumping off of it on a daily basis. These assessments, adjustments, and lessons learned are a part of making any project sustainable over time.













CREDITS/

HOTEL HOPE

The mothers and children who reside at Hotel Hope
Sr. Mary Lou Specha, Sr. Julie Marsh, Maggie Connick,
Janice Landry May, Dondra Hills, Catherine Kinabrew

SMALL CENTER

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Nick Jenisch, Ann Yoachim, Rashidah Williams, and Donn Peabody

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Shanelle Reese, Ryan Shaaban, Jakob Surber, Brandon Surtain

SUPPORT

Johnson Controls, Inc.
Butterfield Concrete Color
CTS Cement Manufacturing Corporation
Travis Boost, Grow Dat Youth Farm

CRITICS

Julie Babin, Pat Franke, Doug Harmon, Tiffany Lin,
Liz McCormick, James Wheeler, Gaylan Williams, Glenn Wilcox



THE ALBERT AND TINA
**SMALL
CENTER**
FOR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

T Tulane
School of
Architecture