Art Deco

Ashley Elementary was built in 1929 and named for local business man and Denver School Board President Elz McMillen Ashley (1853-1929). The original buildings remain, though additions have been added as the neighborhood it serves grows. The design reflected architectural trends of its era, now known as Art Deco. This style exhibited different styles and movements of the early 20th century, including Cubism, Modernism, Art Nouveau, Constructivism, and Futurism celebrating the rise of technology. Elements of this may be seen at the main entry doors. Art Deco was a popular international art design movement from the 1920s until the 1940s, affecting the decorative arts of architecture, industrial design, and interior design, as well as the visual arts such as fashion, painting, graphic arts, and film. Although many design movements have political or philosophical roots or intentions, Art Deco was purely decorative. The structure of Art Deco is based on geometric shapes influenced by a variety of sources. Art Deco also drew on Machine Age technology, such as modern aviation, electric lighting, the radio, and ocean liners. Art Deco used elaborate designs to celebrate science and mathematics, new knowledge and discovery, and the multiple cultures which inspired creativity. All of these elements make Art Deco form an appropriate representative of education.

Organizational Forms

The radial is the first organizational form in creating an axis geometrically aligned with the building and creating points out in the school yard.

The circle pattern becomes a secondary form creating points of inflection. The edges and hollows shape the different areas in unique ways.

Design Parti

The overlaying of the two forms drive the placement and shape of the programmatic elements. Other Art Deco forms may be referred to inspire other components.

Learning Landscapes

Programmatic Elements

Playground Equipment:
- ECE playground area
- Primary playground area
- Intermediate playground area
Swings:
- 10 total
Hard Surface Play:
- Four Square
- Tether ball
- Basketball
- Hopscoth
Outdoor Classroom:
- 24-30 students
Plaza:
- Amphitheater seating
Interactive Areas:
- Boulder Hill
Walkways:
- Connecting play areas
Pavilion:
- Shade for open space
Gateways:
- Two to main major entrances
Multipurpose Field:
- 5 foot track
Gardens:
- School cultivated garden
- Community garden
Art:
- Game Tables
- Alphabet Walk
- Sculpture
- Banner Poles

Spatial Diagram

Priorities
- Gateway and second entrance to ease congestion
- Gardens readily accessible to community
- Outdoor classrooms away from street noise and near habitat and garden spaces
- Grass play field large enough for soccer field
- Preserve mature trees and find interior spaces for groves
- Focal point within open plaza
- Interactive play pits

First Plan

Response
- Move ECE play pit out of cold corner
- Strong diagonal walk works well
- Long walkway may be too far on cold days and may not be plowed first in snow
- Trike track for ECE with storage shed
- Gates and paths need minimum 10 ft for maintenance
- Keep one backstop for field
- Drop off area on South side of school
Schematic Design

Playground Elements

1 - Entrance and Gateway
2 - School and Community Gardens
3 - Outdoor Classroom
4 - Low Grow-Low Mow Natural Area
5 - Bio-Swale with Habitat Area
6 - Shade Structure and Plaza
7 - Hard Surface Play Area
8 - Intermediate Play Pit
9 - Primary Play Pit
10 - ECE Play Area
11 - Multipurpose Field with Track

At the time, Art Deco was seen as elegant, glamorous, functional, and modern. In a playground, it can be a fun way to express excitement for education.