Many iterations of diagrams aided in the process of laying out a plan that is both functional, aesthetically intriguing, and displays appropriate relationships between spaces, circulation, access points, and play and learning features.

Early sketches of ideas for spaces and amenities aided in the development of details that support the overall design intent, the theme, and began to specify materiality and human experience of the site.

Process, Understanding, and Envisioning

Process drawings begin to show how detailed relationships form between spaces, functions, and users. These sketches show early details exploring spatial relationships, educational components, and materiality of important components in the site.
Enlargements

Shade Structure

Entry Feature

Outdoor Classroom

Plan enlargements provide us with an opportunity to see detail in site features not recognizable from larger scales. For instance, you can notice the materials in the shade structure match that of the entry feature to create a cohesive feeling between site features. These matching details in materiality also draw users through the site, and signify areas of importance. Additionally, plant species, rock types and boulders have been carefully selected to represent the specific Colorado landform each area is representing.

The outdoor classroom provides a quiet and secluded sector for users to escape from the chaos of the playground, as it lies nestled between two wings of the school. That is, however, until it is time for music class, when the cove provides a perfect place for children to create somemusic in an outdoor acoustic setting without disturbing the neighbors.

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McKinley/Thrall Elementary is located at the intersection of Logan Street and E. Louisiana Avenue just south of Interstate 25. The school has a property of approximately 4 acres in total, with just less than 3 acres of developable area, excluding the building and existing parking lot.

Currently, the site has a greenway landscaped within the last 3-years front entrance, which is located at the right of way and open to public use. There is an open area between the major arteries of the community. Currently, most users access the site from either Logan Street or Louisiana Avenue, through any of the two secondary gates around the perimeter of the existing playground.

Current conditions on the site include a less than ideal ECE play area that is not entirely fenced in, which can be accessed by the child classroom located at the west end of the school. The ECE area enjoys a comfortable, approximately 5,000 sf play area, and outsized play equipment, with the exception of a newer climbing wall.

Just south of the playing patch of ECE hard surface play area/basketball with a beautiful ball field and the ball field seating area/landscaping, there is an intermediate/primary play area, which feels confining and exposed to the sun. Adjacent to the large play area is an approximately 1 acre grass playing field, followed further down by 17,000 sf of rolling asphalt and a dirt ball field.

Finally, looking at the area at the back of the school reveals a 10.5 acre baseball player arranged by a timber and concrete amphitheater and a thick row of unique hedges that separate the hill from the playing field.

While overall the site is generally comfortable for an older site, it is evident that opportunities for the site are abundant and that improvements are certainly in order.
McKinley Ranch Elementary’s design theme is the exploration of the school’s campus which has an emphasis on Environmental Science. The school is nestled in a gap between two distinct ecosystems which ‘touch deep into nature and give an understanding of everything below.’

From the three key themes, the developed theme of Elementary Landforms, which includes key natural elements such as the sandstone hills, the grasslands, and the riverine floodplain. The design series consists of modular models, each with key attributes: a Tennessee State Park wetland, a high desert stream, and an alpine meadow. Each student can get a deeper understanding of the ecozone, geology, and earth’s forces that shape the earth, and how the earth has changed 

Theme Confluence Detail

Musical Rods

Contrabase Chimes

Banner Poles

High Rockies Seating Wall

Children’s Gardens

ECE Garden Plots

GRASSLANDS

Four Square Themes

Path Measurements

Shade Structure

Einstein Quote

PIEDMONT

Piedmont Seating Wall

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