

# Notley High School – Janet Smart Memorial Garden Project

## GCSE Coursework Unit

(Number in brackets refer to Details for the GCSE requirements in section B)

### A. THE PROJECT

The idea for a garden design project was initially prompted by the desire amongst the school community for a lasting memorial to a member of staff - the garden to be constructed in an internal courtyard area within the school. The project was undertaken by Year 11 pupils during a period of 12 weeks in the autumn term. Activities were co-ordinated by Head of Art, Kate Stubbs and garden designer Bella D'Arcy. Pupils worked during timetabled lessons in the Art department and had 3 days workshop input from Bella. They began their work with a range of sketchbook (1) tasks, initially during the summer holidays and then as classwork

An important support in the development of the designs was research into garden designers, artist's gardens and environmental art (2) Pupils were given a presentation, illustrating contemporary and historical approaches to garden design by Bella D'Arcy demonstrating design techniques, and the importance of combinations and contrasts of shape and colour. They were also able to research using books (2) and the internet.

Bella explained what a survey was and why it is necessary, comprising measurements and observation. (3) Pupils surveyed the courtyard site and produced scale plans showing the existing area. Working in small groups, each with a designated task, they considered issues such as access, view points, health & safety, lighting conditions and other issues which would potentially restrict or enhance the eventual designs. These working groups then reported their findings, and produced large scale diagrams, enabling all pupils to access the information.



*The Site*

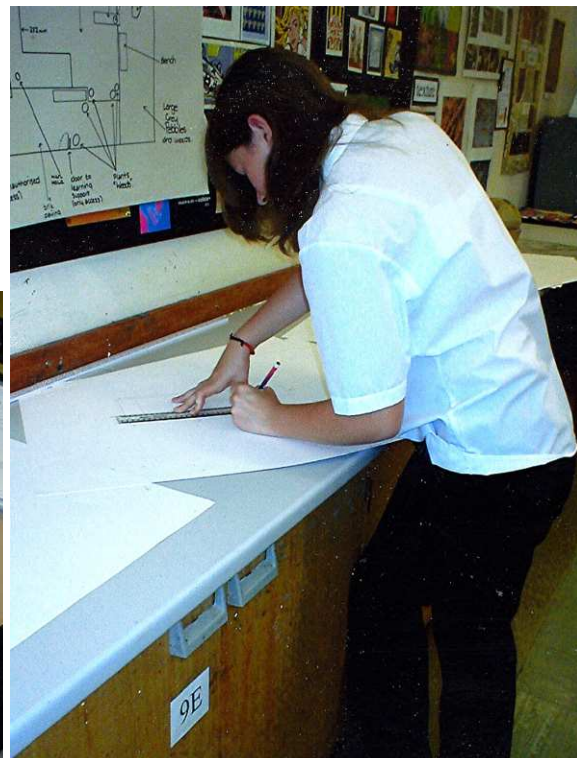


*Class*

**gardens and people:** garden and exile  
Kate Stubbs and bella D'Arcy 2005

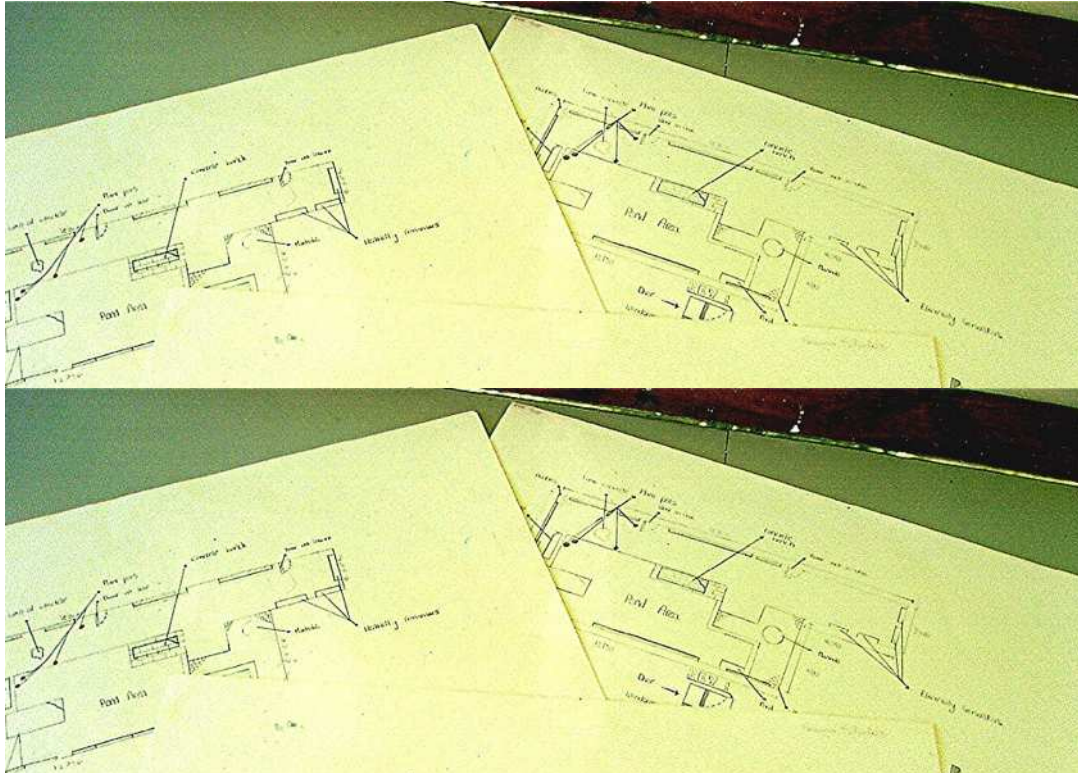
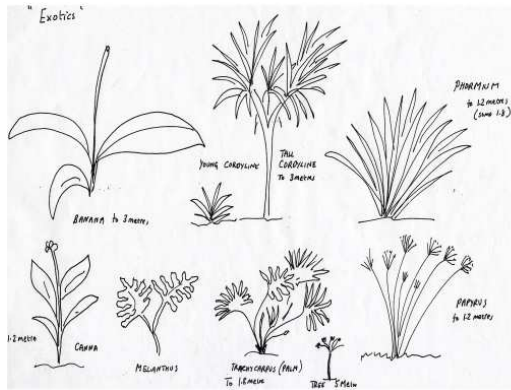
Study was made, from first hand observation, of a variety of plant materials. (4). Bella D'Arcy facilitated pupils in gaining an understanding of the impact of planting groups in terms of the structures, textures, colours and shapes.

Pupils were able to use their sketchbook research in supporting the development of concepts for the garden design. Initially mind maps and spidergrams were used to help pupils condense and analyse a range of different design possibilities. Miss Smart's personality and interests were discussed from the results of a questionnaire which had been given to members of staff. These formed a starting point leading pupils to consider which of the shapes, colours, materials and themes they had explored were the most appropriate. Bella showed how to develop a concept from a single idea (5)



*Sketchbook and design drawing*

Pupils were shown the layout and content of professional concept plans for several garden designs by Bella to guide them in the presentation of their work. Working over the initial scale drawings of the site, first aerial, then axonometric designs were produced. (6) Thumb-nail sketches provided more detailed illustrations of elements of the designs and pupils also produced a written explanation of their design ideas. Presentation of designs and written concept paragraphs were discussed and a presentation sheet left with the class to prepare their work for exhibition. The final design ideas were exhibited and the school community and parents voted for the design of their choice.



The work formed GCSE course work submissions in 2005

Pictures of the winning designs follow Section B

## B. DETAILS:

1) Sketchbook work included things such as:

- Drawings and aerial views of pupil's own gardens and local parks
- Collages of rubbings, found materials and photographic images of plants and gardens
- Observational drawing of natural and manmade forms found in a garden
- Experimentation with media and techniques to recreate the different surfaces and textures found in plant materials and materials for garden construction
- Pattern making using elements of observational/collage work

**gardens and people:** garden and exile  
Kate Stubbs and bella D'Arcy 2005

- Use of scanner and computer (Paintshop Pro) to manipulate selected images
- 2) Artists researched: Richard Long, Anthony Goldsworthy, Antoni Gaudi (Parc Guell), Derek Jarman (Prospect Cottage, Dungeness, Kent), Ian Hamilton Finlay (Little Sparta, Lothian), Barbara Hepworth (Trewyn Studio) and Mark Quinn (Frozen Flower Garden).

Designers included: Fernando Caruncho, Kathryn Gustafson, Christopher Bradley-Hole, Paul Cooper, Diamuid Gavin, Charles Jencks, Dan Pearson and hundreds of contemporary gardens in a file collected by D'Arcy over the years.

- 3) The survey: three/four groups with long tape measures were given separate parts of the site to measure. The designer moved between these to give help and to ensure accuracy. The measurements are recorded in millimetres for garden design work. Other groups were asked to observe and record the aspects of the site (where was North), considering where the shadows will fall throughout the day, what the views from the site were but more importantly here where there is no public access, the views into the site from the lower and upper corridors. The objects within the site were recorded including which were to be discarded (old pots/rubbish) which might be kept (pebbles for re-use). Another group was asked to observe and record any health and safety issues
- 4) Plants: The nature of the site here is very hot in summer and there is no earth at ground level which suggested planters only. The plants brought in were drought-resistant; architectural plants with good leaf and whole shape, colour and largely evergreen. Plants such as cannas, bananas, melianthus, box, yew, fatsia, palms. Worksheets of plant outlines were distributed.
- 5) Concept: the teacher liked Germany so the colours of the German flag could be used.  
The shape caused by a flag waving could become an abstract curve which is repeated throughout the design. Chocolate wrappers might be used in shape and colour or crinkled silver paper could suggest another abstract idea. Travel could be translated into paths round obstacles or to objects.
- 6) 3D Work: pupils were used to the idea of perspective drawings and making thumbnail sketches. The technique of axonometric was introduced: turning the plan at 45 degrees below a sheet of tracing paper: uprights are drawn at 90 degrees and shrubs and trees drawn at an oblique angle – the bird's eye view. Pupils learned how quickly the basis of an axonometric can be done and give their artistic skills full scope in the drawing of the objects and trees. The only tricky thing in axonometric is turning circles to ellipses – practise is needed here!

## **THE SCHEME OF WORK FOLLOWED THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE AQA GCSE SYLLABUS:**

### **AO1 Record observations, experiences and ideas in forms that are appropriate to intentions**

**gardens and people:** garden and exile  
Kate Stubbs and bella D'Arcy 2005

*Pupils used the initial stages of researching, experimenting and recording in their sketchbooks to help them to develop their ideas.*

Activities included: Observational drawing from primary/secondary sources  
Taking photographs & collecting visual images  
Mind maps/spidergrams  
Researching in books, magazines and on the internet  
Collecting and organizing a range of materials in a sketchbook

## **AO2 Analyze and evaluate images, objects and artefacts showing an understanding of context**

*Pupils were introduced to a range of contemporary and historical garden designs. They worked with an established garden designer to give them an understanding of working processes and insight into the work of a professional designer.*

Activities included: Working with a visiting practitioner (garden designer)  
Looking at and evaluating other artists' work  
Researching in books, magazines & on the internet  
Using analysis and evaluation of own work to develop

new ideas

Using Paintshop Pro to manipulate scanned images  
Analysing the shapes, structures, colours, patterns and textures in existing garden designs

## **AO3 Develop and explore ideas using media, processes and resources – reviewing, modifying and refining work as it progresses**

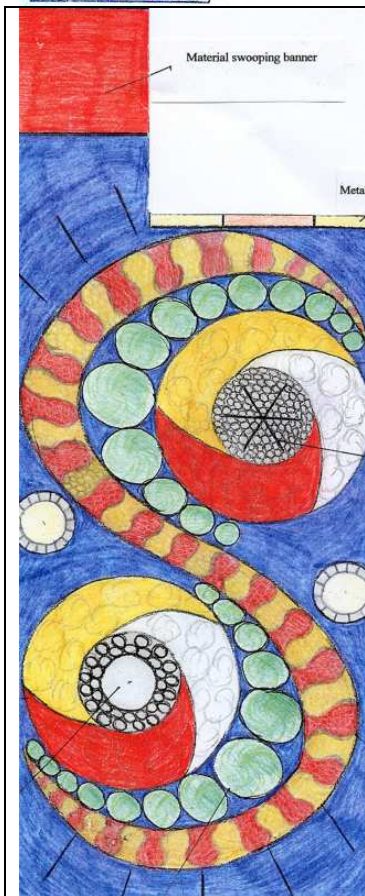
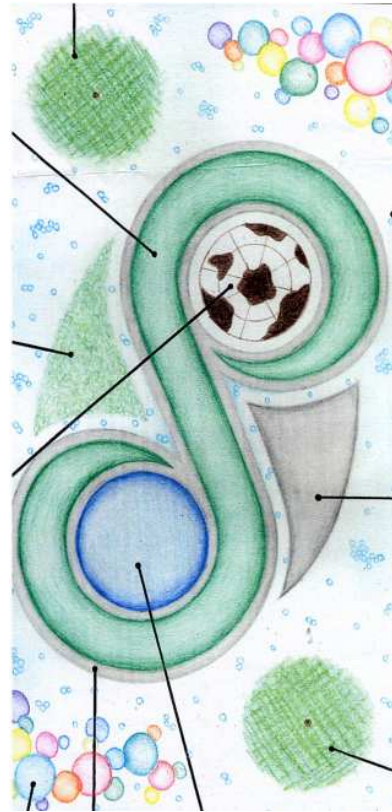
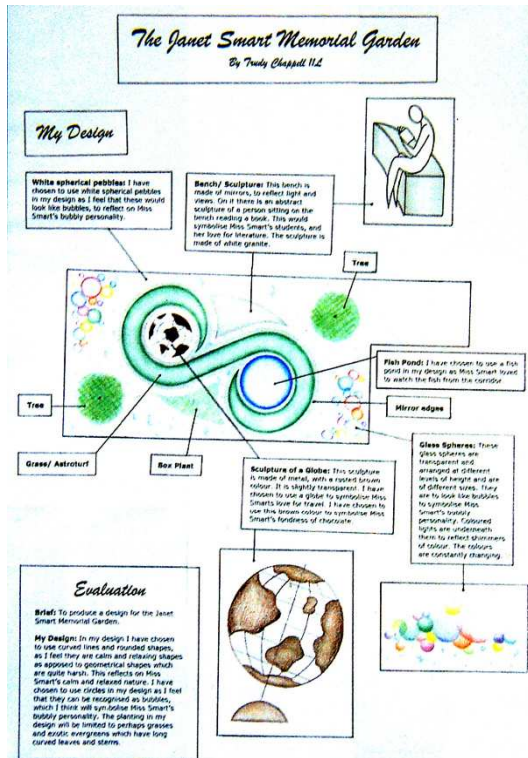
*Pupils reviewed their work in class discussion and individually with the members of staff. They developed their ideas further by considering the different qualities of plant and hard landscaping materials and experimenting with different media and techniques.*

Activities included: Evaluating their own work as it progressed  
Using own work to develop new ideas  
Experimenting with materials and processes  
Using computer & scanner to further develop images

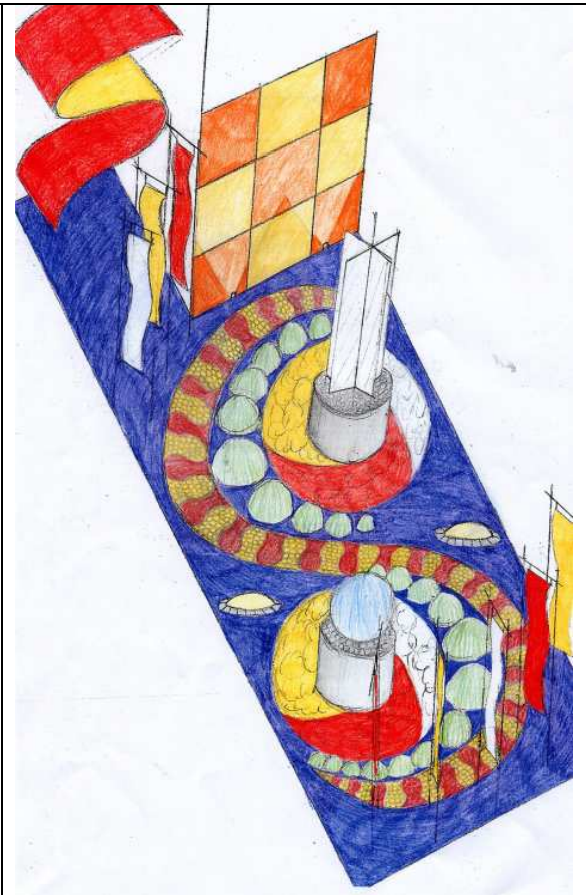
## **AO4 Present a personal response, realizing intentions and making informed connections with the work of others**

*Pupils evaluated and analyzed their sketchbook research to support them in making decisions about their final designs. They produced high quality colour illustrations of their design outcomes in aerial and axonometric formats and made additional visual and written explanations.*

## The winning design



The Most Innovative Design



© Kate Stubbs/Bella D'Arcy December 2004

*Please respect the copyright of the photographers and the writers. If you wish to use them anywhere except for purely educational purposes you must ask permission by e-mailing [permissions@gardensandpeople.co.uk](mailto:permissions@gardensandpeople.co.uk)*