



AHEC Europe  
Unit 20.1,  
20-22 Vestry St  
London, N1 7RE

[americanhardwood.org](http://americanhardwood.org)

PRESS RELEASE  
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## ASIF KHAN ARCHITECTS DESIGN ELEVATED PLAYGROUND FOR EAST LONDON SCHOOL IN THERMALLY MODIFIED HARDWOOD

Asif Khan has designed an elevated playground for Chisenhale Primary School in Bow, East London, which has just completed construction and is the first part of the school's long-term masterplan.

Khan, who has two children at the school, approached the American Hardwood Export Council and AKT II structural engineers to collaborate with him on the project while the active parent body at the school raised funds through fetes and other events held throughout the year.

The challenging brief required an increase in the play area of this inner city primary school to match the expanded pupil population, without reducing the space required by the P.E curriculum.

The design adds a double-layered play space to the edge of the existing playground, a soft landscape beneath 2.2 metre elevated deck, connected by a hill and two slides.

Asif Khan says: "We designed an inside and outside space where the kids can invent their own play. This terrain is composed of two elements – a soft rubber landscape culminating in a steep hill and an elevated semi-enclosed timber space. The slides and rope nets bridge the vertical. The plan stimulates the kids to move, but also creates quiet spaces where they can rest. In this simple structure we've seen so much variety of play created by the children."

The children at Chisenhale were consulted on the design of the space over a six-month period and had specific ideas they communicated to the architects. The kids wanted places to run and climb, places to hide and somewhere to rest and chat to friends.

Asif Khan says: "We were keen on using timber to provide a friendly layer of texture. The structure is designed to be adaptable and will grow and evolve over time."

Head Teacher Helen James says: "This is such an exciting place to be for the children. In terms of material the wood fits in so much with what we do at the school with education about being environmentally responsible."

The structure is built from thermally modified tulipwood slatted panels with a deck structure of thermally modified ash. It will go through a cradle-to-grave Life Cycle Assessment, as do most of AHEC's projects, and this will be used as a learning opportunity as part of the school's curriculum.

David Venables, European Director of AHEC says: "We are thrilled to be supporting a project that will educate children about good design, architecture and the environmentally friendly woods that are used for building. We see this as an opportunity for kids to learn about sustainable materials grown in nature that can be used to improve their lives. The thermally modified ash and tulipwoods are incredibly durable for outdoor use so it's a perfect material for Asif Khan to be using for this project."

This project was made possible with the generous donation of expertise, materials and time from:

Asif Khan  
AHEC  
AKT II Structural Engineers  
The Worshipful Company of Weavers  
Chisenhale Parent Teachers Association



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All the Pupils, Parents and Teachers of Chisenhale Primary School

## ENDS

### NOTES TO EDITOR

#### ABOUT ASIF KHAN

Asif Khan's London-based architecture practice was founded in 2007. They work internationally on projects ranging from cultural buildings to houses, temporary pavilions, exhibitions and installations.

Notable projects include the 'MegaFaces' pavilion at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, Coca-Cola Beatbox pavilion at London 2012 Olympics, and most recently was a finalist in the competition for the Helsinki Guggenheim Museum and the British Pavilion at Milan Expo 2015.

He is the recipient of numerous awards including a Red Dot award for Design, Cannes Lion Grand Prix for Innovation, a D&AD award, Young Architect Programme 2011 MAXXI + MoMA/PS1, Design Miami Designer of the Future in 2011, and Design Museum Designer in Residence 2010. Khan lectures globally on his work, sits on the board of Trustees of the Design Museum and teaches MA Architecture at the Royal College of Art.  
Twitter: @asif\_can

#### ABOUT AHEC

For over 20 years the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has been at the forefront of wood promotion in Europe, successfully building a distinctive and creative brand for U.S. hardwoods. AHEC's support for creative design projects such as The Wish List for The London Design Festival, AHEC's fourth and most ambitious collaboration with Wallpaper\* Handmade, helps demonstrate the performance potential of these sustainable materials and provides valuable inspiration.  
[www.americanhardwood.org](http://www.americanhardwood.org)  
Twitter: @ahec\_europe

#### ABOUT THE ENGINEERS, AKT II

AKT II is a progressive design-led firm of Civil and Structural Engineers with an established reputation for delivering quality and innovation that stretches over nearly two decades and which is reflected in the 200 plus design awards that their projects have received.  
Twitter: @akt\_ii

#### ABOUT THE BUILDERS, ALDWORTH JAMES AND BOND

Aldworth James & Bond is a multidisciplinary group of architects, designers, project managers, tradespeople and makers. They are skilled in creative architecture, design, joinery, metalwork and finishes. We work all over the world on a range of diverse and exciting projects and installations driven by true enthusiasm for creative builds. Creativity, expertise and quality in the detail are of the utmost importance. Making informs design, achieved by constant dialogue between our workshop and studio. Aldworth James & Bond have collaborated on numerous projects with Asif Khan over the last 7 years since inception. They are a dedicated group of young and happy people who love doing what they do. Twitter: @\_ajandb

#### ABOUT CHISENHALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chisenhale is a community primary school in the East End of London, in Tower Hamlets borough. It boasts a rich social and ethnic mix of pupils and families are encouraged to become an important part of school life. The school has a committed and hard-working team of teachers who encourage children to enjoy learning through a range of interesting experiences.

The school's vision is Learning Together for a Better Future and in order to achieve this vision Chisenhale aims for all children to be successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The school has a strong ethos of inspiring children to enjoy learning. It celebrates the rich diversity within its community and nurtures children's individuality.



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