

## V&A Museum of Childhood Concept Statement

Winning the competition for the V&A Museum of Childhood was for us a thrilling opportunity to reimagine and celebrate one of East London's most iconic and beloved institutions. We have always championed and practiced co-design as a process for creating meaningful change. This has sat at the heart of our work from the start. This has involved identifying a wide range of user groups, including children, teachers and non-museum goers of different ages and backgrounds, who are working alongside us to shape the project's evolution. They will continue to do throughout the project, establishing a legacy of community participation, pride and ownership.

Our co-design approach to date has delivered three broad concepts:

**'In & Out'**, reconnects the museum with the street, improving physical access and importantly providing immediate engagement, stimulus and welcome from the moment of arrival. Under-developed land to the front of the museum will be re-landscaped to allow visitors two points of entry, both fully accessible. The new entrance will house a buggy park, lockers and WCs, enabling families and schools to better prepare themselves for their journey through the museum.

**'Up & Down'**, the Kaleidoscope is a dramatic new installation that draws visitors through the central hall and creates an interactive route to the upper levels, encouraging visitors to explore all areas of the museum. Conceived by local children through co-design workshops, and further inspired by the magic of the museum's collection of optical toys, it is enveloped by a spiralling staircase and new ramp, with a new café at its base. Over the next few months, co-design workshops with various user groups will explore the mesmerising potential of the 'Kaleidoscope'.

**'Around & About'**, sets out to reconnect all areas of the museum, bringing learning spaces and displays into direct dialogue. The current offices will become studios for all types of learning and events activities, with direct access to the museum's surrounding lawn and arched openings between the central hall and studios. The library and archive will move towards the front of the building, where visitors can access the museum's rich resources more easily, with staff working directly between this research material and new areas for object handling and exhibition preparation.

Our vision is to preserve and enhance the V&A Museum of Childhood as a Grade II\* heritage asset, treating new interventions as distinctly modern, carefully considered additions to complement the architectural aesthetic of the historic building. Functioning rooflights to the barrel-vaulted roofs will be reinstated and the central hall decluttered of additions made over the years, to give a clear view of the magnificent original volumes. By revealing and restoring the original fabric, and introducing bold new elements, the project will promote the entire 'Building

as a Teaching Tool', complementing the reimagined experience of the Museum of Childhood as a place for celebrating imagination and ingenuity.

### **About De Matos Ryan**

De Matos Ryan is headed by partners José Esteves de Matos and Angus Morrogh-Ryan, both graduates of Cambridge and Harvard University.

De Matos Ryan combines expertise in architecture, interiors and landscape to create imaginative and well detailed modern environments, producing work on a variety of scales.

Founded in 1999 the practice first gained recognition in 2002 with the multi award-winning Cowley Manor and has since established a strong reputation in delivering carefully detailed, thoughtful contemporary work within historic, complex and often culturally sensitive contexts.

De Matos Ryan believe in the social and public role that architecture plays in motivating a community and have implemented extremely successful co-design and co-participatory strategies with a number of clients, to ensure that resulting projects are accessible, resilient, and engaging for all users. The practice is particularly interested in observing the behaviours around cultural buildings, taking time to see how carefully considered interventions can enhance the foreground to these experiences and have both significant social and educational outcomes on the visitors and a positive financial impact on the sustainability of the organisation.

Recent projects include the refurbishment of Sadler's Wells London; the Members' Lounge and Conference Centre at the British Library, London; the refurbishment of York Mansion House and of York Theatre Royal, winner of the Civic, Culture & Transport category of the INSIDE World Festival of Interiors 2016; RIBA Yorkshire Award 2017 and RIBA Yorkshire Client of the Year 2017; and York Design Awards – Best Community/Public/Education and The Press People's Choice.

Current projects include: the redevelopment of St George's Hall, Bradford - the oldest purpose-built music hall in Britain; the redevelopment of west London's performing arts school, ArtsEd; and a masterplan for the redevelopment of Wyaside Arts Centre in Bulth Wells.