

**“THERE IS NO POWER FOR
CHANGE GREATER THAN A
COMMUNITY DISCOVERING
WHAT IT CARES ABOUT”**

Margaret J. Wheatley



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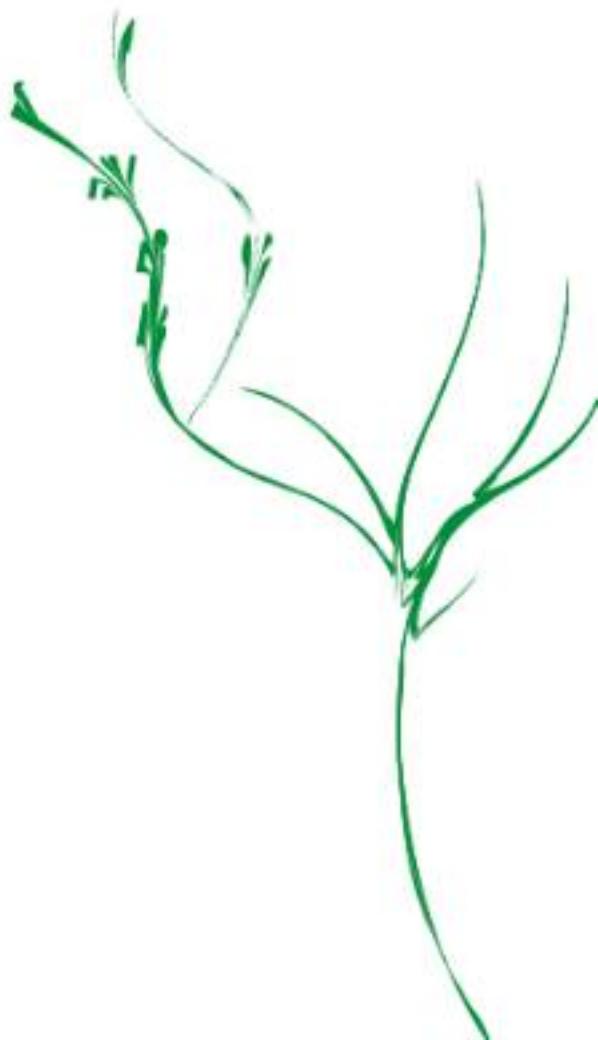
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3 SITE

4 DEVELOPMENT

5 RESOLUTION



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INTRODUCTION

01 ABOUT ME

02 EXISTING SITUATION

03 PROJECT LOCATION

04 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

05 UN GOALS



ABOUT ME



Having studied Interior Design at the renowned Edinburgh College of Art from 2021-25 I have absorbed the culture of community in a historic city, enhancing personal skills acquired from my childhood in England and my Indian ancestry. Studying on exchange in Finland has also provided me with new perspectives from studying different course content, cultural surroundings and encountering diverse teaching. My passion for interior design stems from its immersive nature: you don't just use it, you exist within it.

This book follows my final graduate project, on a design topic and site I have selected and responded to through rigorous site analysis and extensive theme research leading to a developed and functional design solution.

EXISTING SITUATION

Having lived in Edinburgh for over three years, I've witnessed the harsh reality of homelessness, a sobering contrast to my hometown of Watford. Edinburgh's homelessness rate is amongst the highest in Scotland, with a 23% rise in applications from 2022 to 2023—far exceeding the national average of 9%.

In January 2024, I experienced housing insecurity firsthand when I was evicted, deepening my understanding of the crisis. As a designer, I feel an ethical duty to address the challenges faced by the unhoused focussing on social integration and reducing stigma.

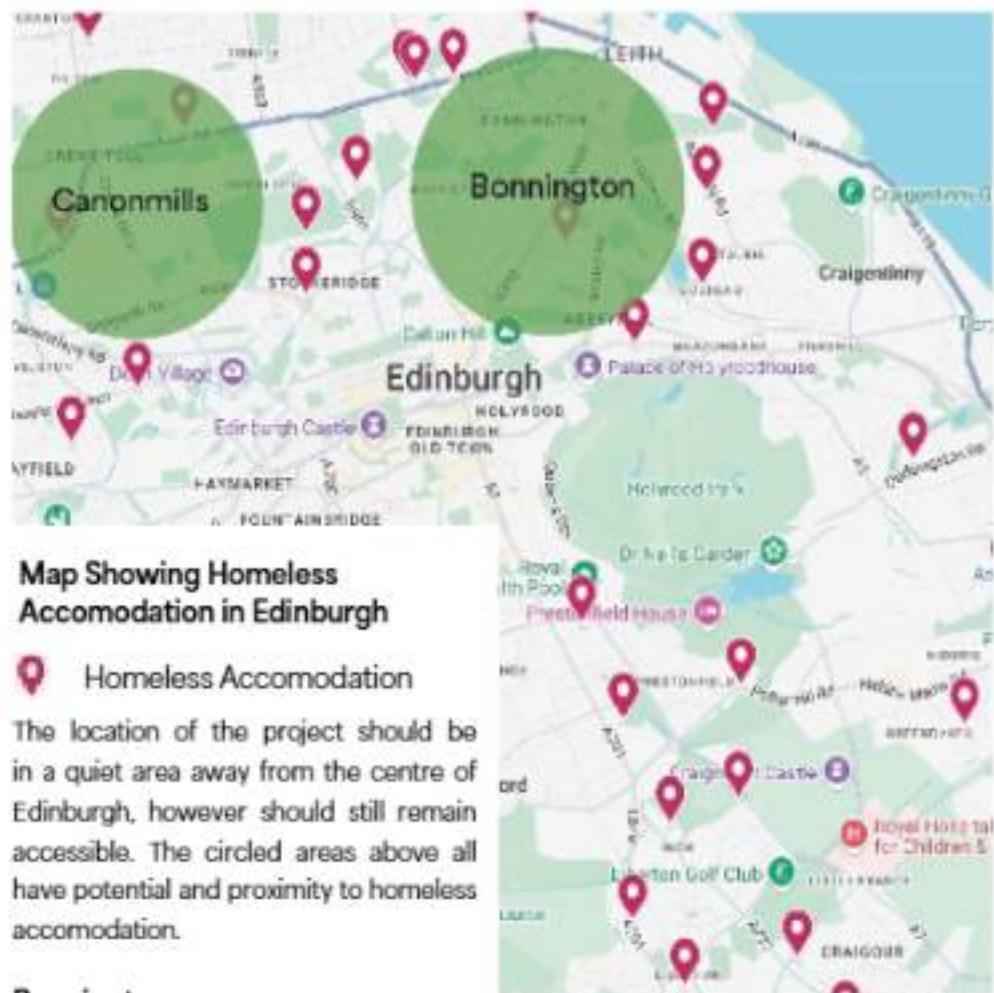
I intend to explore how community centers foster well-being with the rationale that thoughtful design spaces that offer **dignity, security, and beauty** are crucial for emotional stability and self-worth.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.



Front Cover of the Scotsman, 2024

PROJECT LOCATION



The location of the project should be in a quiet area away from the centre of Edinburgh, however should still remain accessible. The circled areas above all have potential and proximity to homeless accommodation.

Bonnington



Care homes residents: 44 within 5 miles



Residential neighbourhood, flats for both elderly and young adults

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

PROJECT AIMS

BRIEF

To design a community centre, that provides day-time spaces to unite those alienated in society.

Creating **shared spaces** that combat feelings of alienation and discomfort in public spaces such as opticians, libraries and hospitals, instead facilitating for the unhoused to be able to play a more central role in society.

The users would primarily be the unhoused, with a particular focus on the youth as well as workers in the third sector and volunteers. Involved in running the centre.



Effective Social Cohesion



Intergenerational Contact



Reduce Stigmas

UN GOALS



Example of the Redevelopment of Brownfield Sites in Edinburgh

It is clear that significant underinvestment in social housing in areas such as Leith over recent decades has had severe consequences. As rising rents and stagnant wages has pushed more people into homelessness, there are fewer temporary housing options or equivalent spaces available to support them.

As such, this project seeks to respond to the UN's 11th Sustainable Development Goal for Sustainable Cities and Communities. Specifically making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable..

The project also involves the redevelopment of a brownfield site part of promoting the value of existing buildings in the urban districts to the North-East of the city. A key objective of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2017) is retrofitting interiors, especially for public and commercial spaces, community centres can contribute to this.

The aim of the community centre is to also connect communities, encourage resilient living solutions and create a richer living environment.

2

USER

01 TRENDS

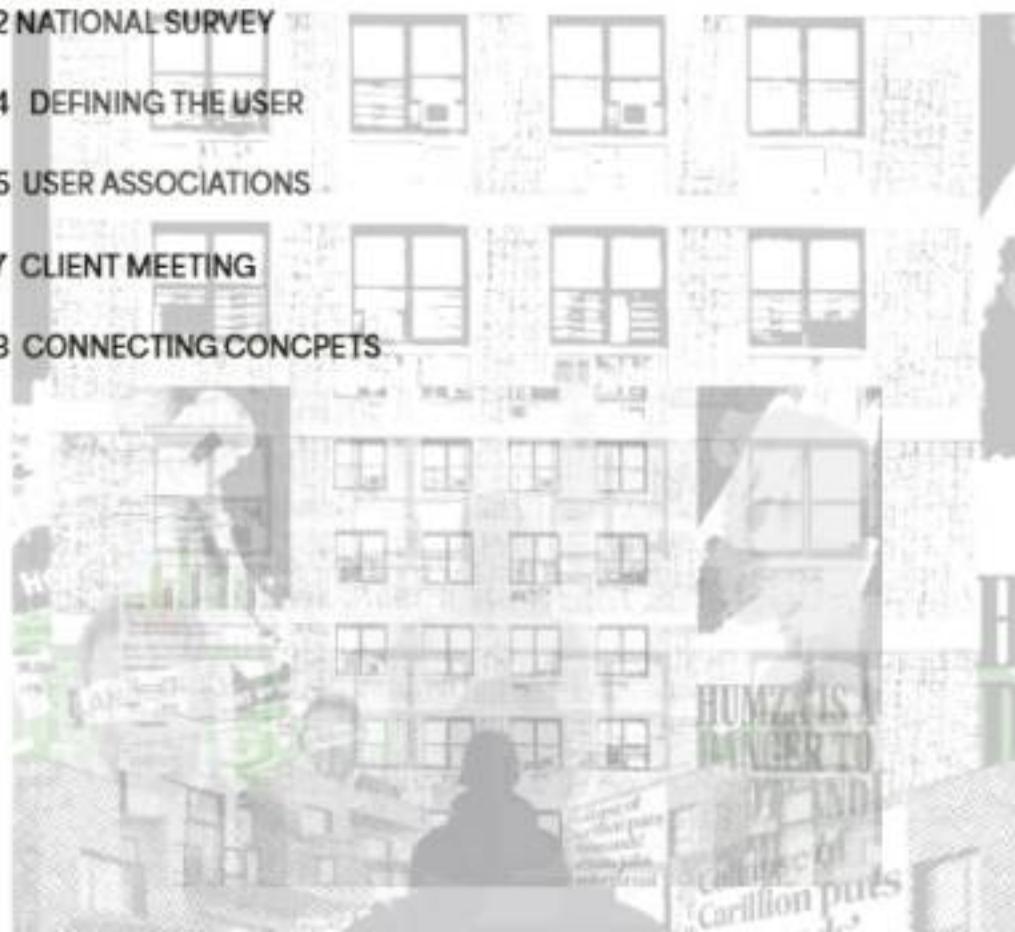
02 NATIONAL SURVEY

04 DEFINING THE USER

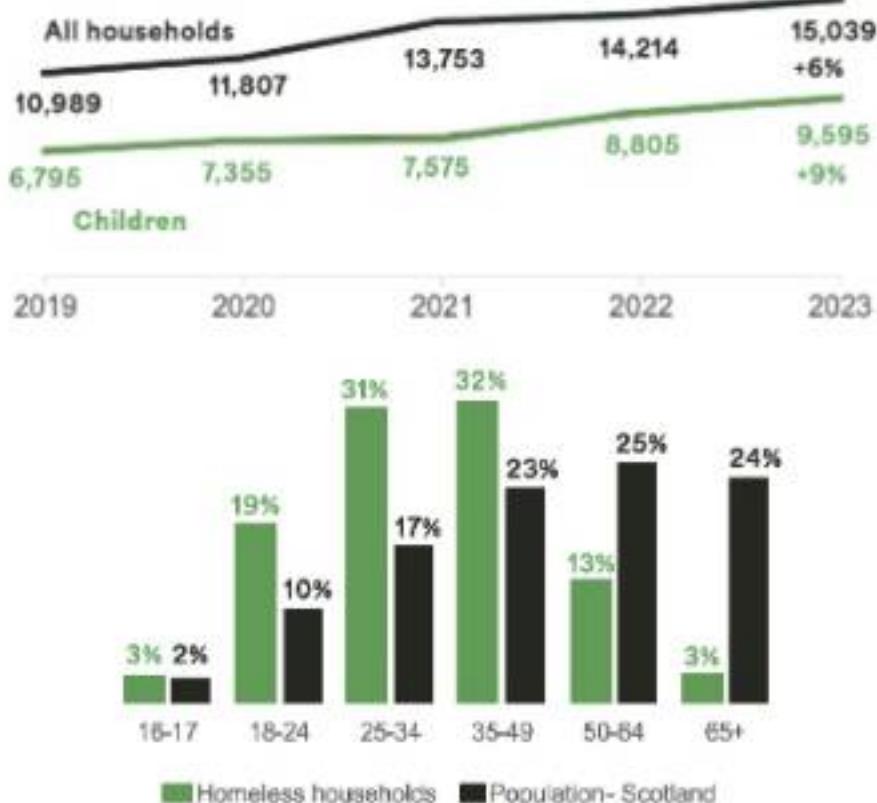
06 USER ASSOCIATIONS

07 CLIENT MEETING

08 CONNECTING CONCPETS



TRENDS



Graph Showing the Increase of Children in Temporary Accommodation in Scotland Over the Last Four Years

Scot.gov.uk

Nationally the unhoused are getting younger, there are currently 10,000 in temporary accommodation in Scotland (Shelter Scotland, 2024). As a result my project can focus on 16 - 35 year olds with this demographic arguably having less purpose built centres for social interaction, also helping with the disengagement of community centres this age group has. Aimed at those sleeping rough or staying in unsuitable temporary accommodation (this could be from 4 months - 10 years) and those who may have experienced trauma.

NATIONAL SURVEY

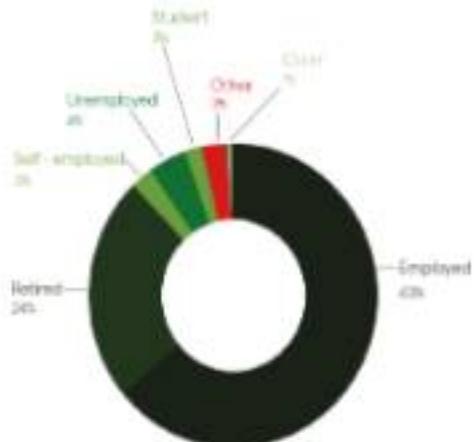
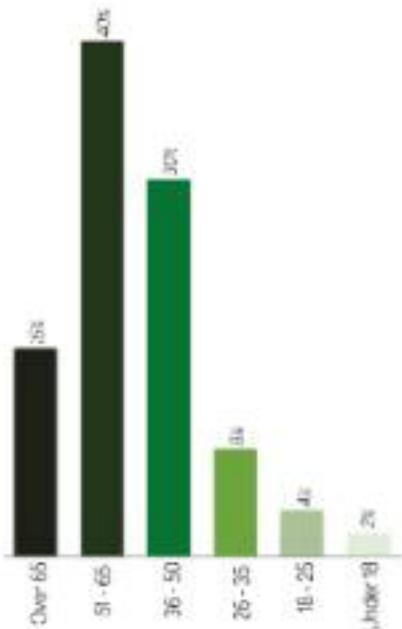
Time Period: 28/08/2024 - 16/10/2024

Responses: 166

I carried out an online survey to help me understand local community needs to create a user-centred and effective environment for social integration. The link for the survey was shared amongst several online media forums and facebook groups to obtain as many respondents as possible.



Location of Respondents

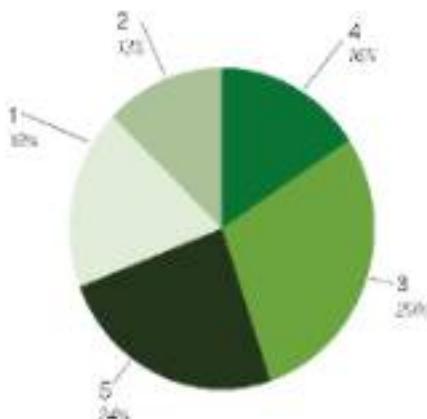
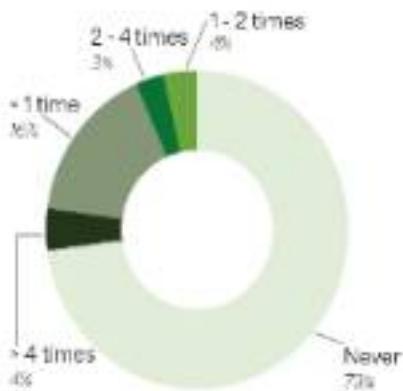


Age

Occupation



NATIONAL SURVEY



Use of Local Centre Per Month

Community Healthcare Clinic
As an Incentive to Visit /5

What features could your local community centre have for you to visit it more?

Responses of the unemployed:

- Rooms to hire for community groups
- Singers, comedians and entertainers.
- Book club.
- Evening and weekend activities
- Garden spaces, cooking spaces
- Social groups, support groups, children's groups
- Coffee/tea mornings, book clubs, clubs for local youth/teens, games such as pool, craft hobbies like knitting, support groups for people with ADHD or ASD or suffering from mental health issues, homeless shelters
- A well woman group



DEFINING THE USER

UNHOUSED
YOUTH



Incentives

Day time centre, social hub & access healthcare checks

3RD SECTOR
VOLUNTEERS



Considerations

Durability & maintenance

STAFF
MEMBERS



Considerations

Safety & protection

The incentives will also include: a place of rest, of confidentiality, their own secure place for their valuables as they may not feel comfortable leaving these in their current living arrangements. My space would not include accommodation but instead provide a centre that adds a sense of routine to help establish a sense of place and territoriality.



Design Solution Concept Collage



USER ASSOCIATIONS



It is important to maintain a user-centred approach so all visitors can feel safe and secure, though there are different perceptions of principles for different people. This is evident when comparing the associations of the unhoused and social workers. In an exercise by Kearney and Kaplan (1997) both sets of participants describe their associations with the principles established on the previous page. Above shows the most common association for each group, it is vital to consider as many users as possible.



CLIENT MEETING

Date: 23/10/2024

I held a meeting with Paul Stevenson, the Director of Homelessness Prevention at the Bethany Christian Trust (BCT) based in Edinburgh on the specific considerations, functions and long - term initiatives of an effective centre to inform my eventual design choices, these are the findings:



Avoid

- Creating a feeling of security (barriers, lanyards, keys, uniforms etc).
- Heavy use of signage (reminiscent of a doctors).
- A grand facade, crosses/stained glasses may be triggering and should be as neutral as possible.
- Being overly accessible can lead to anti-social loitering space, too public leads to issues such as drug use in the toilet, so an element of privacy is required.
- Large windows that display visibly into the site to avoid passer-bys to be peering in.

Consider

- Side entrances that are accessible and discrete for entering & rear/fire exits.
- The Grassmarket Community Project is a good example of a building that unites both housed and unhoused communities.
- A historical building provides a connection and social history the users may register with, Using perspex rather than glass for security
- Big open spaces are invaluable (varied-use) as well as smaller confidential areas (1-to-1, small group sessions/ counselling). Foyer
- Sliding doors can be used to create smaller separate spaces (not as intimidating).
- Clean neutral walls
- User customisation of spaces in the building
- Bike/dog storage
- Lockable rooms, lockers for those without an address.
- Other facilities: Laundry machines, showers, toilets, staff/volunteer offices typically placed at the rear.

CONNECTING CONCEPTS

COMMUNITY

COLLABORATION

BEAUTY

DIGNITY

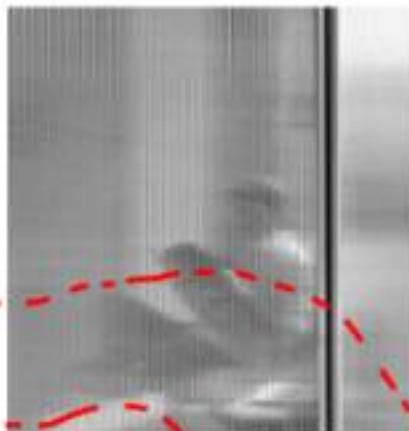
TRUST



The above key words represent the main guiding principles of **public** and **private** design, it is important to balance this and find harmony in wayfinding for the relevant transitional spaces.

Public Principles

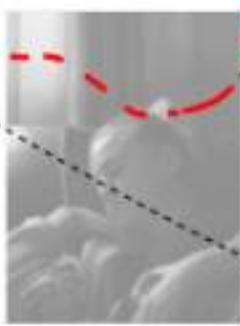
Private Principles



PRIVACY

SECURITY

INTERACTION



3

SITE

01 CHOSEN SITE

02 SITE HISTORY

04 SITE LOCATION

06 GROUND FLOOR

07 FIRST FLOOR

08 SITE DRAWINGS

07 SITE MODEL



CHOSEN SITE

Name: Former Leith Methodist Church

Location: 1 Junction Place, EH6 5JA

Date built: 1868

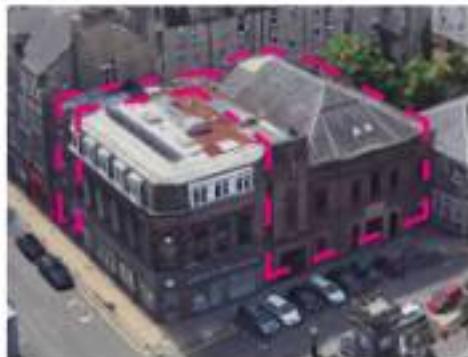
Gross Internal Floor Area: 1,077 m²

The chosen site is the former Leith Methodist Church, since 1868 it has been rebuilt in 1932 following the creation of the Methodist Union.

It was further refurbished in 1986 and ceased to be a church in 2008 when it was combined with into another site on Nicolson St and used a community hub by the YMCA.



Site Main Entrance



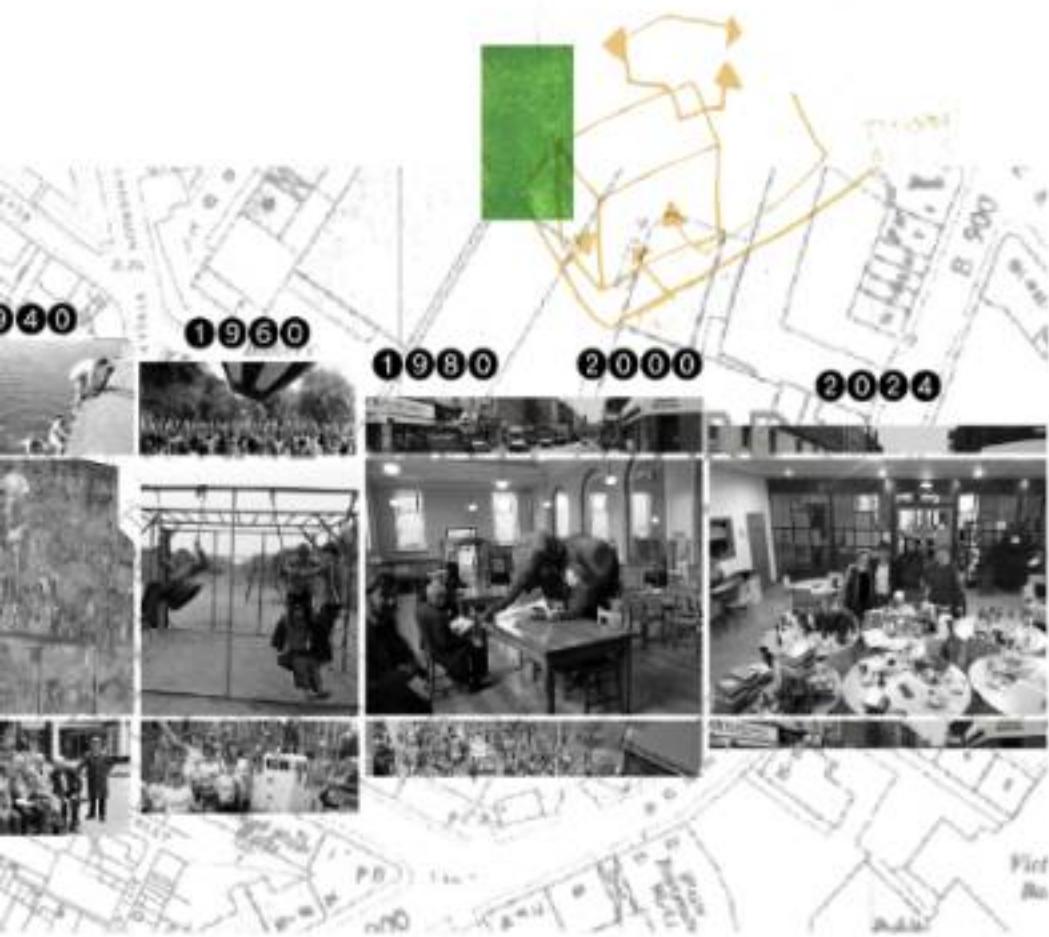
Site Building



SITE HISTORY

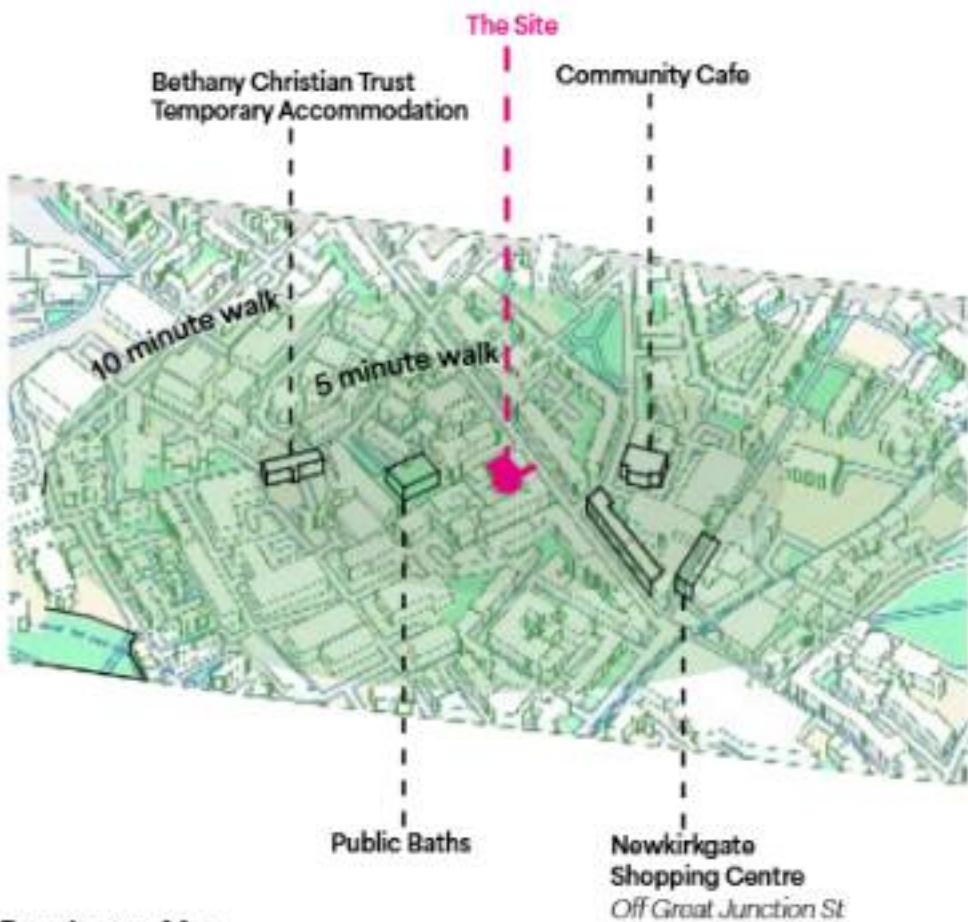


The site was built in 1862 for the purpose of prayer and worship - with a small chapel at the front. Following this time period, in the 1880s, Leith was still an independent town and was a vital maritime hub. Being a Port area its location was crucial for Edinburgh's shipping trade, revolving around coal, timber and grain. However it still remained a place of significant poverty and poor working conditions - due to significant overcrowding and lack of sufficient housing. Great Junction Street in particular was the main thoroughfare that linked the Leith docks to Edinburgh.



In 2008, the site experienced a change of use, the building was no longer used as a church as this function moved to the other Methodist Church in Nicolson Square, in more central Edinburgh. The property was taken over by YMCA Edinburgh SCIO to be used as a community centre. Hosting childrens parties and local community events such as Christmas socials. This organisation is part of a global movement with the aims to: "Empower young people, children and their families in Leith" from ymcaedinburgh.com.

SITE LOCATION



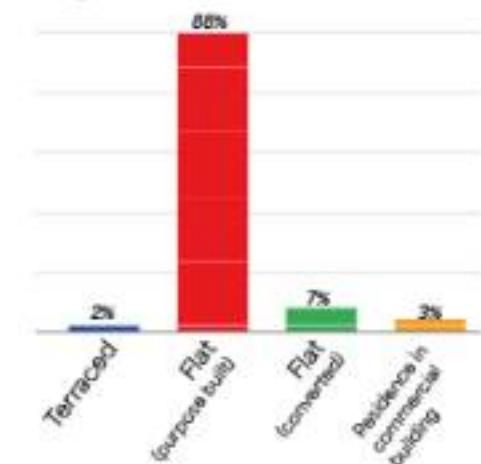
Bonnington Map

The site is situated in Bonnington, part of the Leith Conservation Area, a 1.5 mile long boundary in the North - East of Edinburgh that is an area with uniquely complex historic and architectural qualities. Symbolic for connecting the Water of Leith and Leith Links. The building itself is situated on 1 Junction Street and is the second building of Great Junction Street: a busy road for accessing businesses/schools/centres etc.

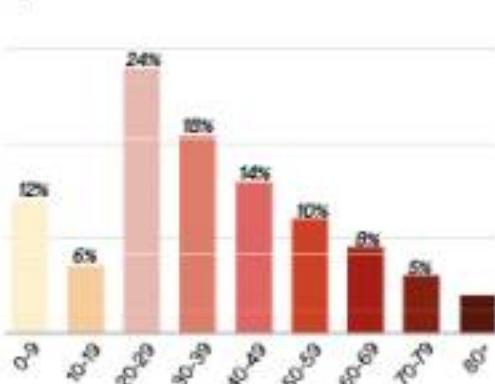
SITE CONTEXT

Bonnington Residents Characteristics

Housing Situation

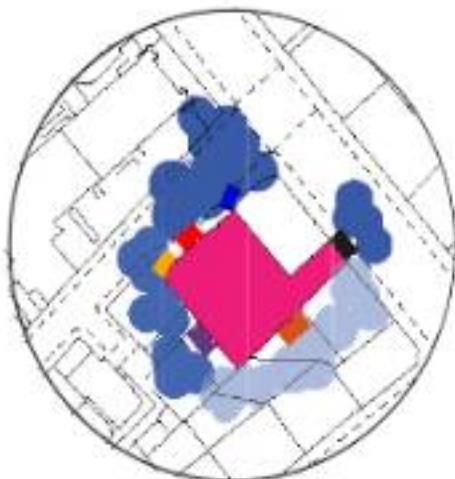


Age



Sound Map

40 dB 50 dB 60 dB 70 dB



Map Solar Path

Summer Solstice



GROUND FLOOR

The building has multiple entrances, including a side entrance to the neighbouring street shown on the ground floor plan. 

* F.E - Fire Escape



① Entrance



② Entrance



③ F.E Stairwell



④ Foyer



⑤ Kitchen



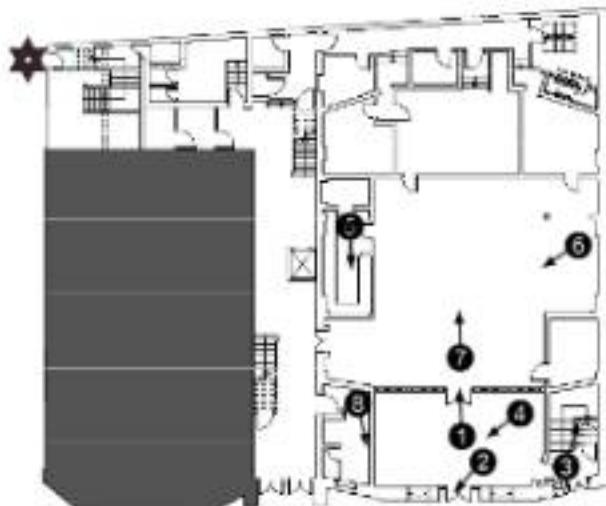
⑥ Cafe



⑦ Cafe



⑧ Male WC



FIRST FLOOR



1 Front Stairwell



2 F.E. Door



3 Balcony



4 Hall



5 Hall



6 Hall



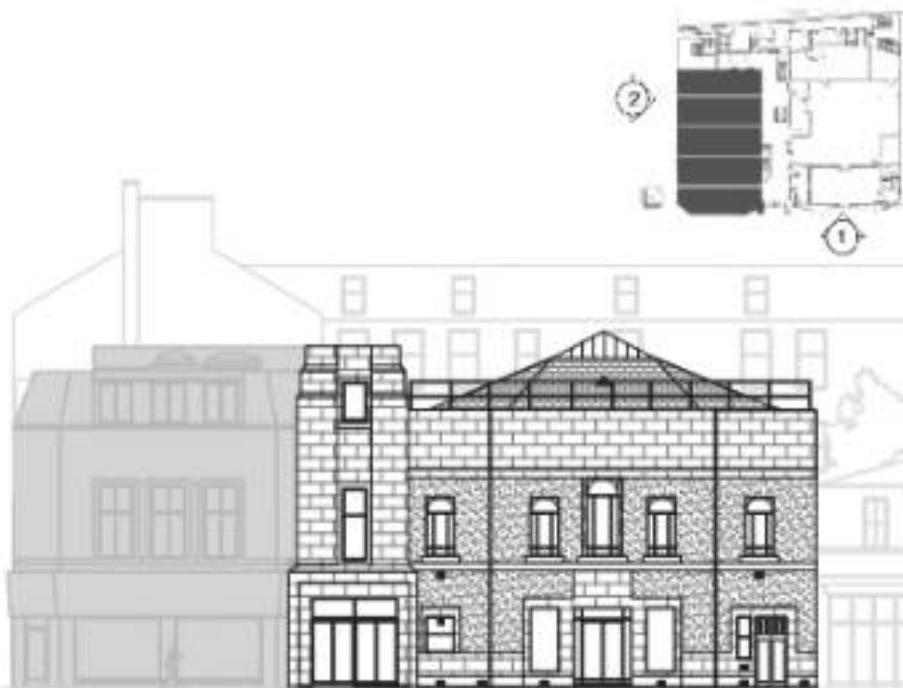
7 Rear Stairwell



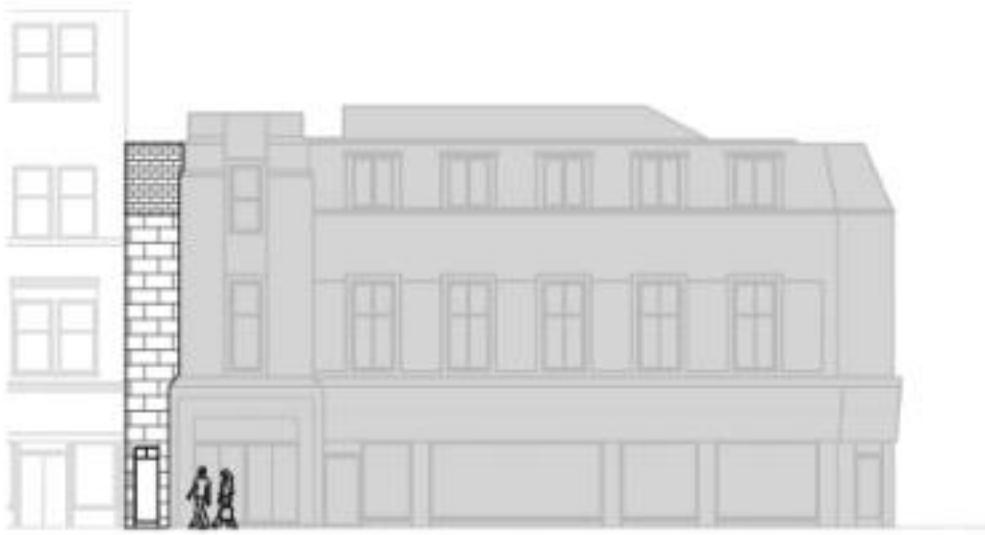
8 Rear Stairwell



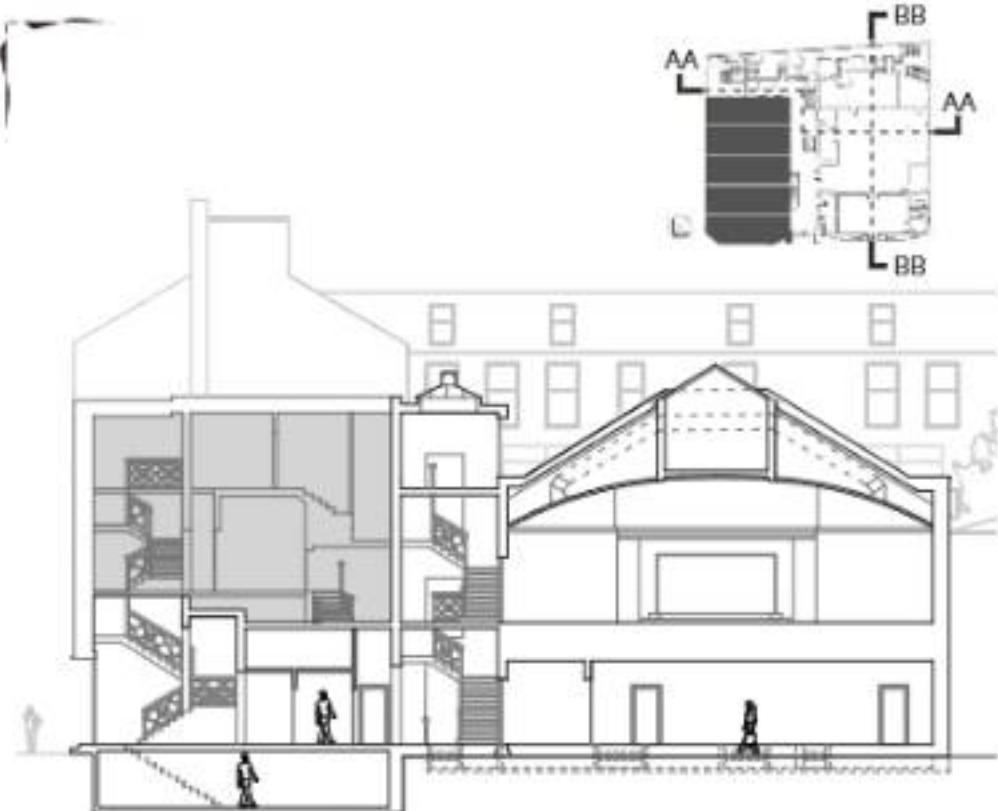
SITE DRAWINGS



Facade - 1



Facade - 2

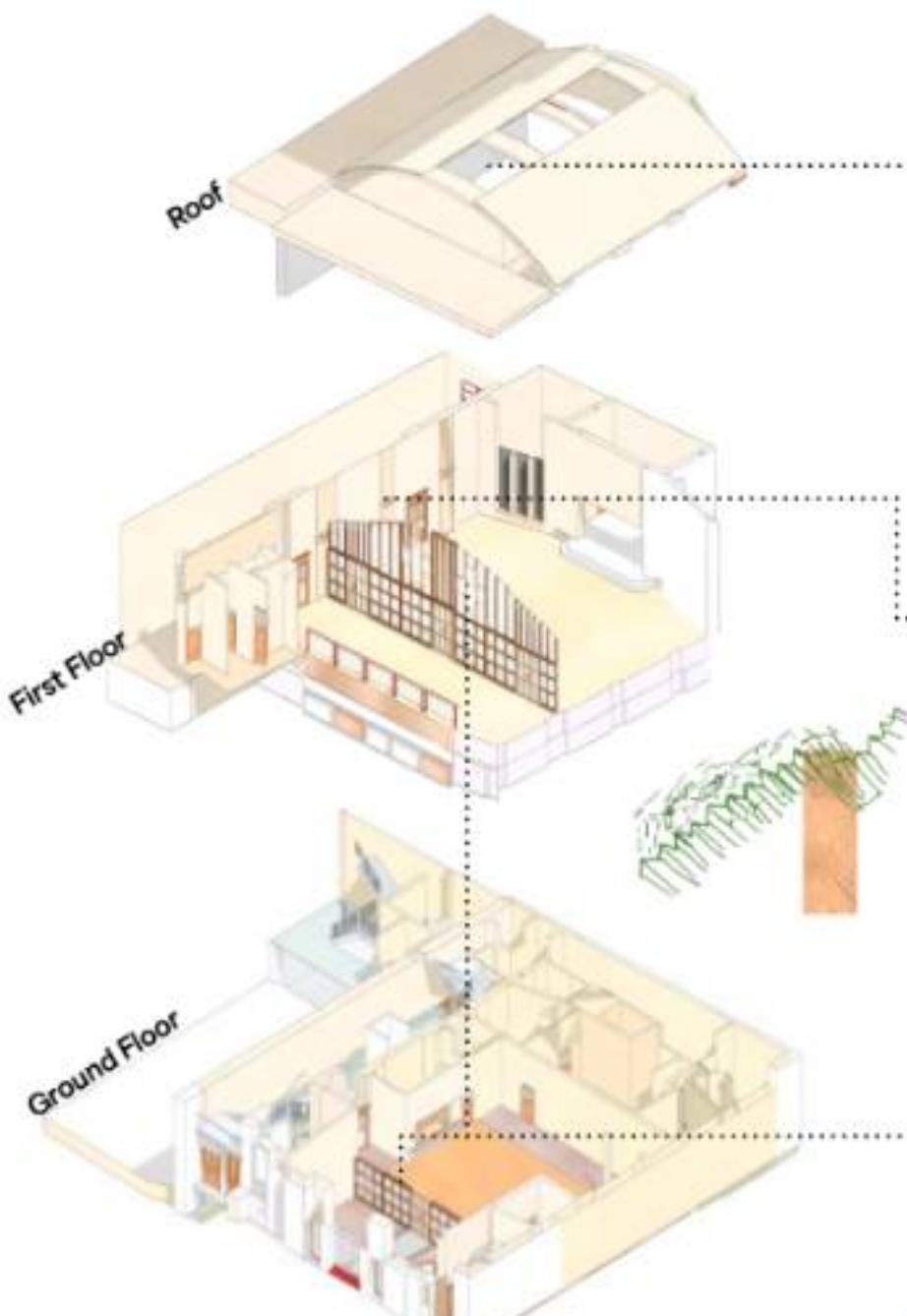


Section - AA



Section - BB

SITE MODEL



Site Exploded Isometric Interior Model

Skylight



The large skylight has three openings that help the sight receive natural light

Decorative Vaulted Ceiling



Ornate detailed cornicing embellish the gorgeous curved ceiling.

Stained Glass



Stained glass is commonly associated with churches and are often present in important historical buildings in the United Kingdom.



4

DEVELOPMENT

01 DESIGN CONCEPTS

02 INTERNAL THRESHOLDS

03 ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

04 BUBBLE DIAGRAMS

06 MODELLING CONCEPTS

07 MATERIAL EXPLORATION

08 DRAFT VISUALISATIONS



DESIGN CONCEPTS

My design project will lie between the threshold of public (in order to be a successful community centre that embraces the local members of community and surroundings) and private (part of creating a personal and discrete environment to help improve mental well-being for individuals through one-to-one and group sessions) interventions.

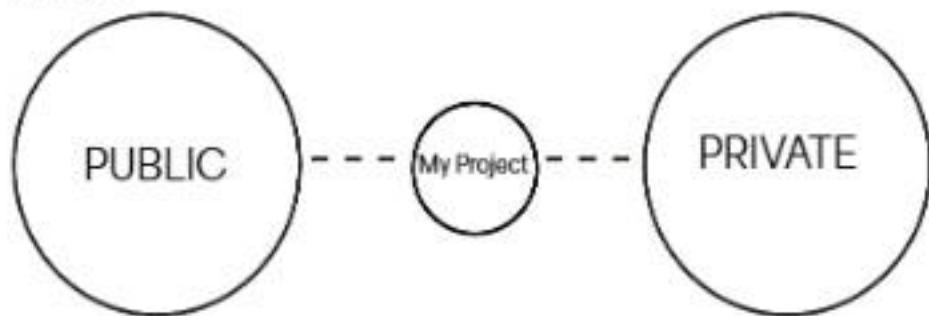


Ancient Scottish Roundhouse



Islesburgh Community Centre

My Project



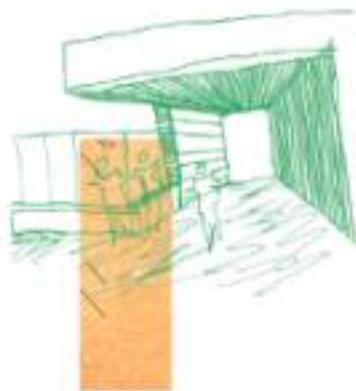
INTERNAL THRESHOLDS



Foyer
Pass -
through
space



Lounge
Network
Circulation



Refuge Space
Grid
Circulation

ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Reception

W.C

Disabled W.C

Social Cafe/Lounge

Breakfast & Drinks Servery

Kitchen

Yoga Room

Book Club Room

Crafts Room

Library

Staff Offices

Lockers

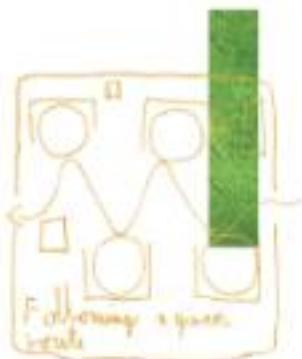
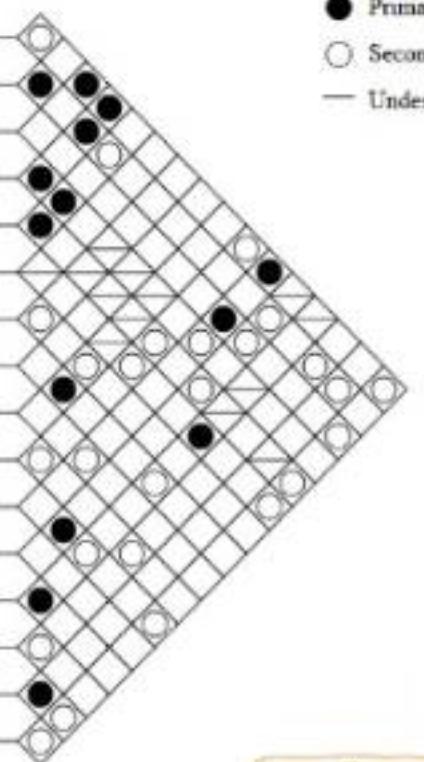
Group Counselling Rooms

Individual Confidential Rooms

Changing Room

Washing Facilities

Storage

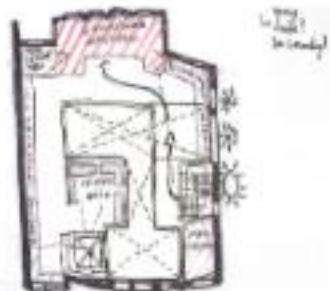


BUBBLE DIAGRAMS

1.

In this layout, I have marked out four individual quiet rooms at the rear of the site and have society rooms with varying dimensions.

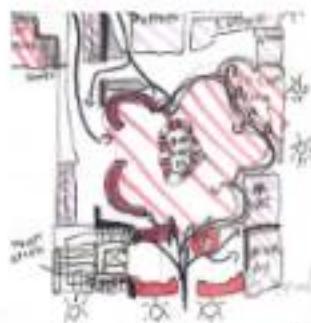
1.



2.

In this iteration there is a *pass-through* circulation strategy, with a corridor on the ground floor that opens up to the social lounge.

2.



3.

Here, a more *radial* approach is used as staff offices and auxiliary rooms are spaced around a central point, that is mimicked via a first floor void.

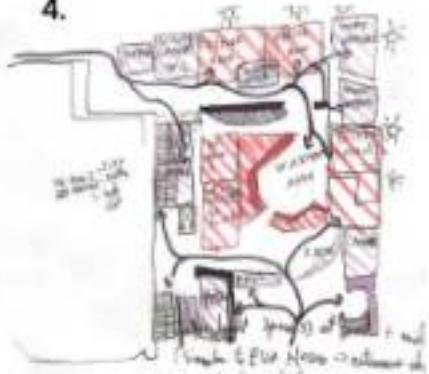
3.



4.

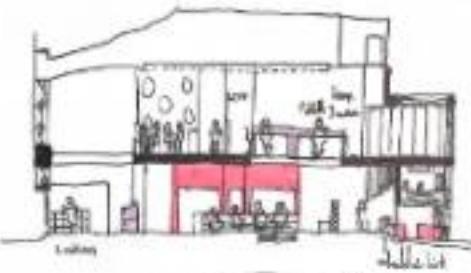
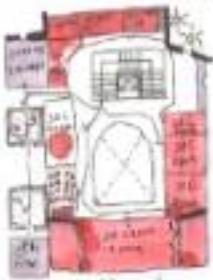
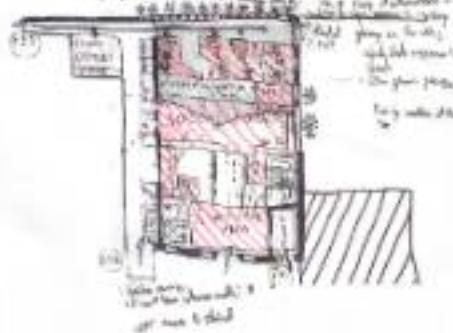
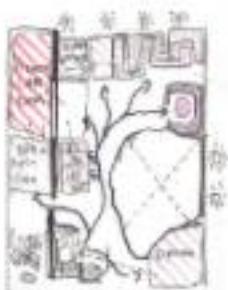
In this layout, the primary stairwell is placed towards the left of the building and a lift only reaches to the second floor, in order to carry out roof maintenance. While the ground floor waiting area is also for the upstairs communal eating space. The entrance features a double-height space, as is existing.

4.

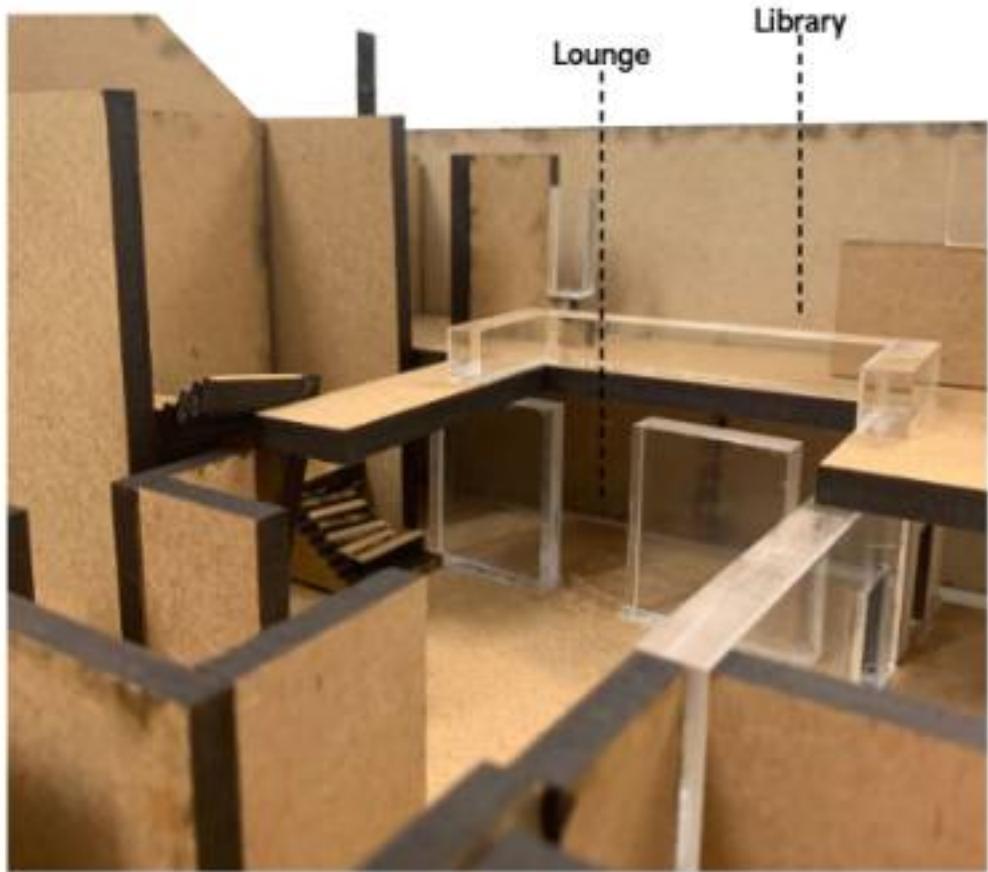


5.

In layout 5 ceiling baffles are used as a decorative feature above the louder social area, to muffle them from noise spreading to the first floor (where the confidential spaces are). These can also be used as a form of wayfinding as their colours could signify the social lounge and 'working zones' on the first floor.



MODELING CONCEPTS

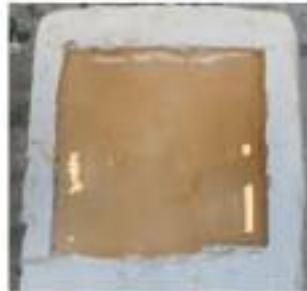


1:100 Model of Design



MATERIAL EXPLORATION

Part of the process of creating samples I had melted down dyed wax glass with different amounts of colouring to test its opacity - and consequent success as a private divider.



DRAFT VISUALISATIONS

A drop-in space during the day that is an “extension of a living room”



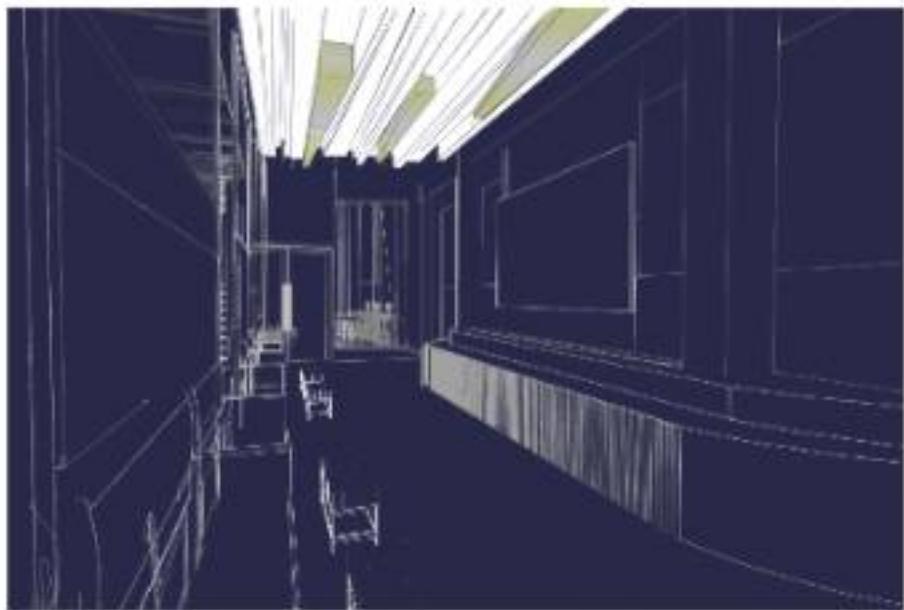
Cafe



Waiting Room



Group Consultation Room



Lounge

Draft Lighting Visual



Crafts Room

5

RESOLUTION

01 ISOMETRIC MODEL

02 FLOORPLANS

04 SECTIONS

06 RECEPTION

08 CAFE

10 SOCIAL LOUNGE

12 SOCIAL LOUNGE DETAIL

14 LIBRARY

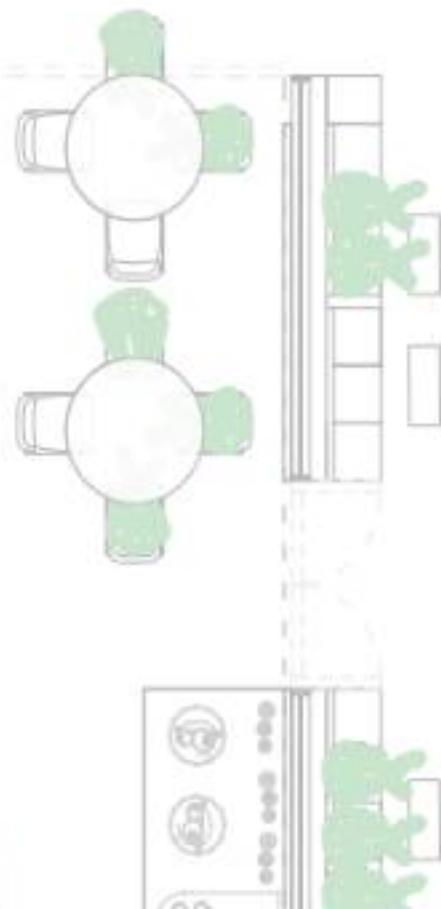
16 LIBRARY ELEVATIONS

18 LIBRARY SEATING

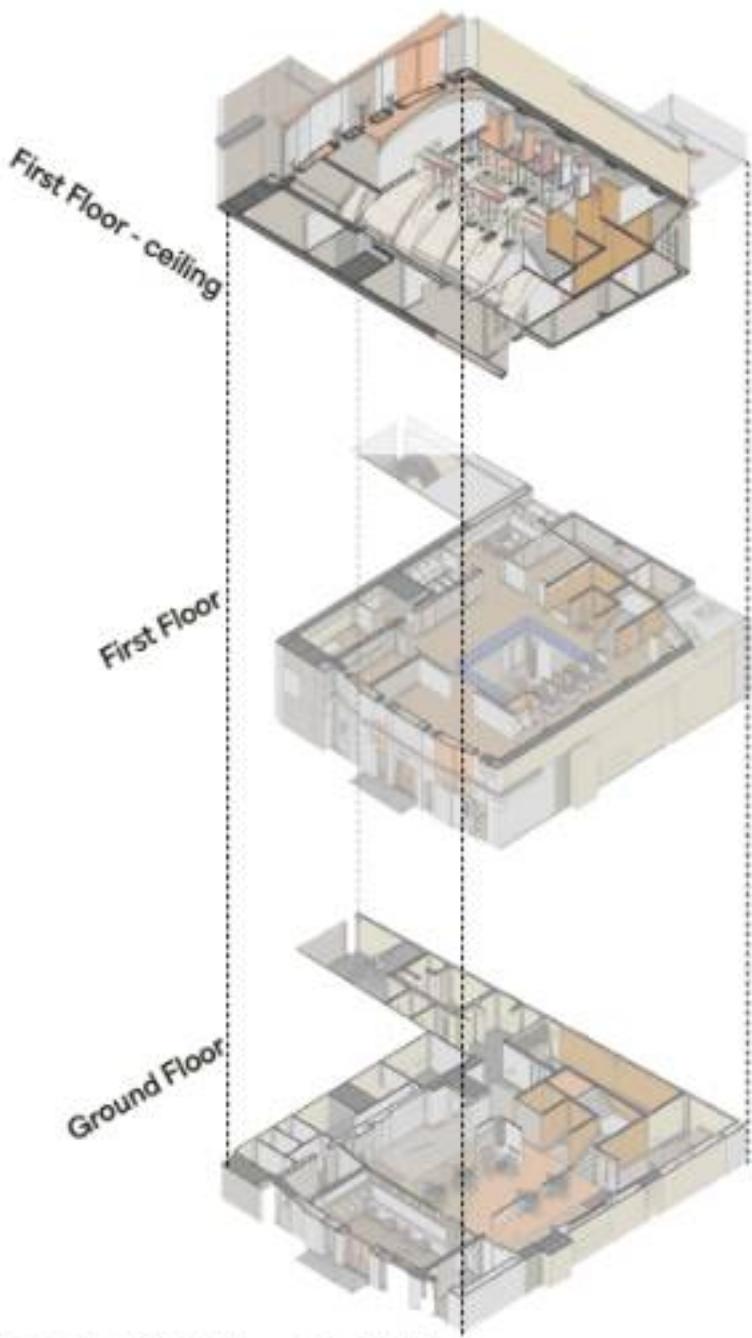
20 LIBRARY DETAIL

22 EAST - WEST SECTION

24 PERSPECTIVE SECTION



ISOMETRIC MODEL



Exploded Digital Isometric Model

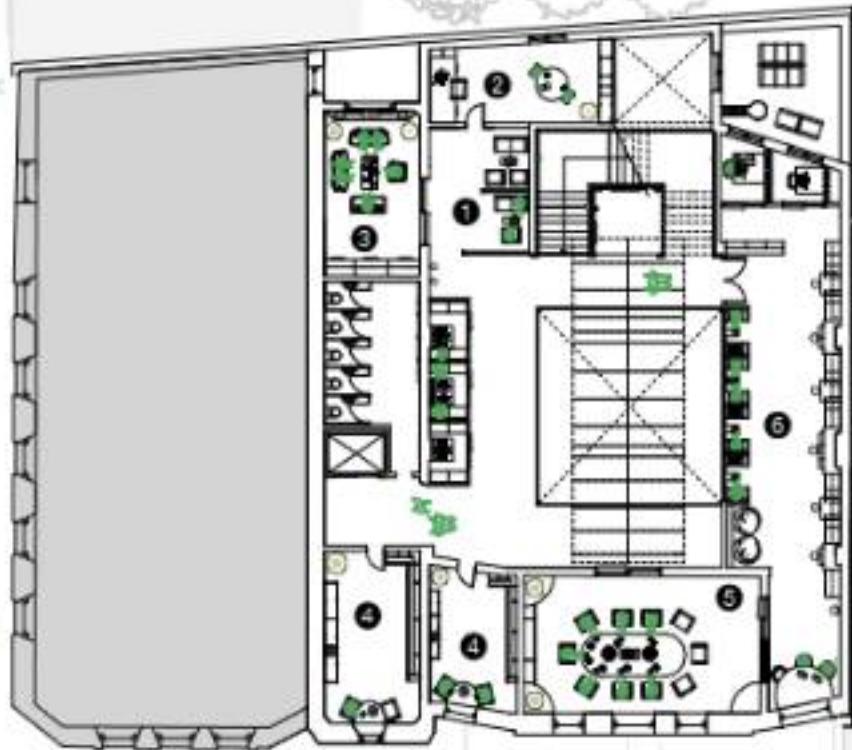
FLOORPLANS



Ground Floor Plan

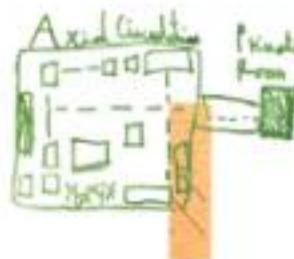
- 1 Van
Mobile food stand that delivers medical products to those immobile.
- 2 Reception
4m²
- 3 Access Shower
8m²
- 4 Laundry
15m²
- 5 Storage
14m²

- 6 Kitchen
19m²
- 7 Cafe
54m²
- 8 Social Lounge
39m²
- 9 Crafts Society
34m²
- 10 Yoga Society
40m²

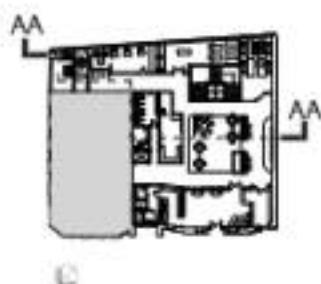


First Floor Plan

- ① Waiting Room 8m^2
- ② Individual Consult. 2m^2
- ③ Group Consult. 2m^2
- ④ Reading Nook $2\text{m}^2, 1\text{m}^2$
- ⑤ Book Club 4m^2
- ⑥ Library 16m^2

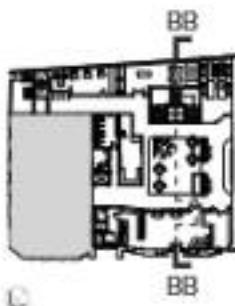


SECTIONS



Section - AA

East - West Section

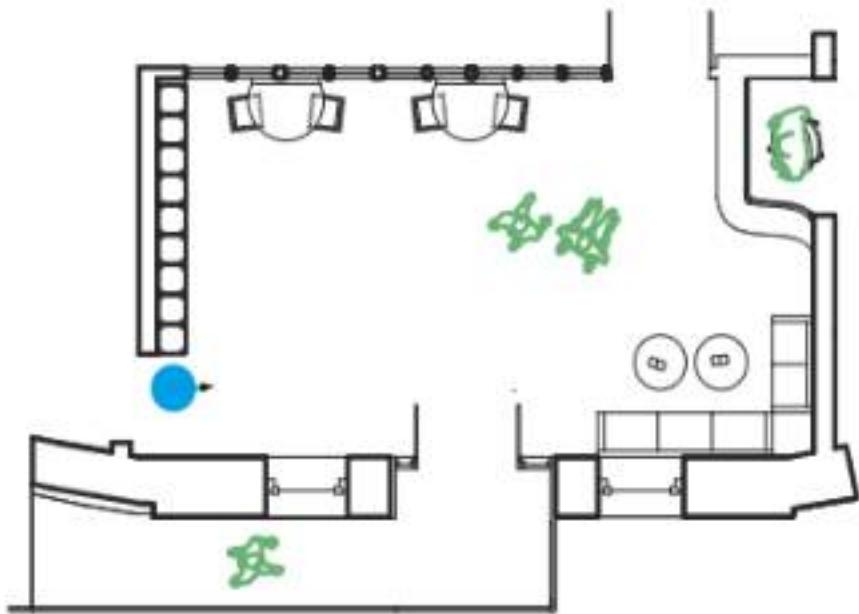


Section - BB

North - South Section

RECEPTION

The centre will be a day-time space, running from 7am - 11pm, the reception desk has a phoneline between these hours allowing people to collect their prescribed medicines.



Floor Plan Reference

14th Janurary

07:42



Interior Perspective



CAFE

Seating is lightweight with furniture that is with covered fabrics that can be swapped out to be cleaned/replaced, with high martindale qualities.



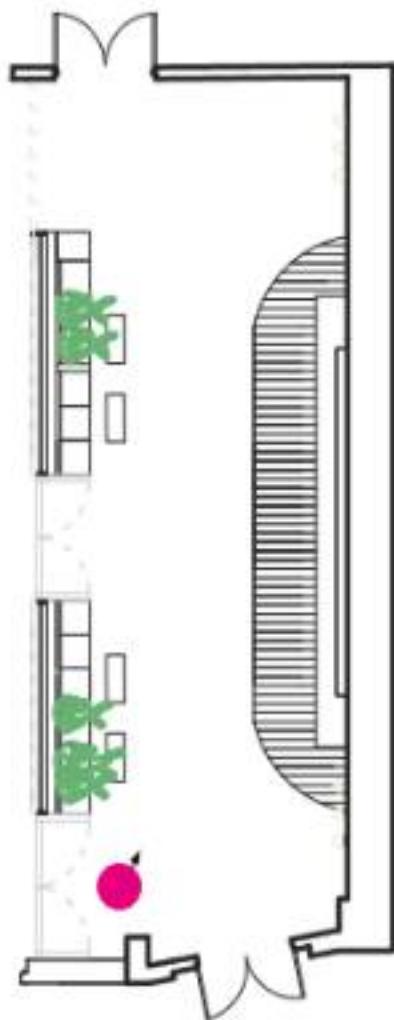
20th December

12:28



SOCIAL LOUNGE

This area will be home to group screenings of films for different societies/events for people who use the centre, in place of a living room of their own.



Floor Plan Reference

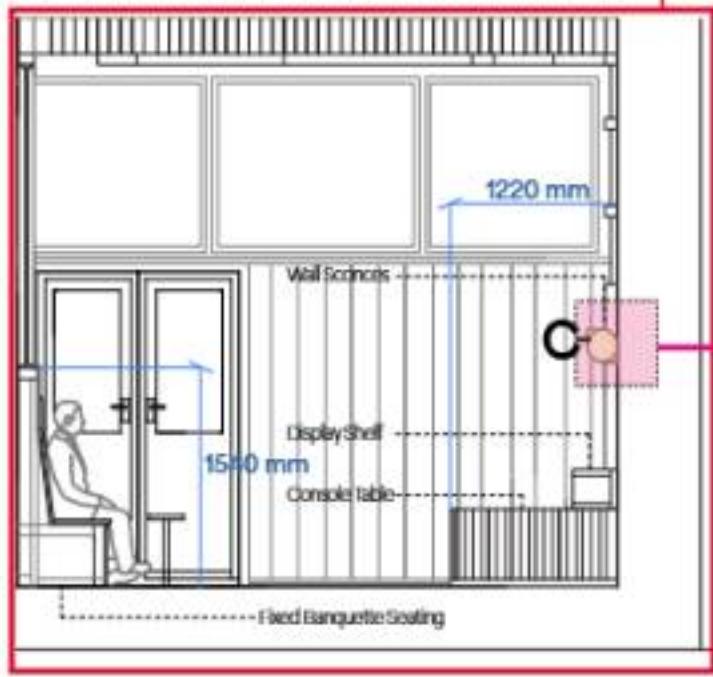
8th September

18:17

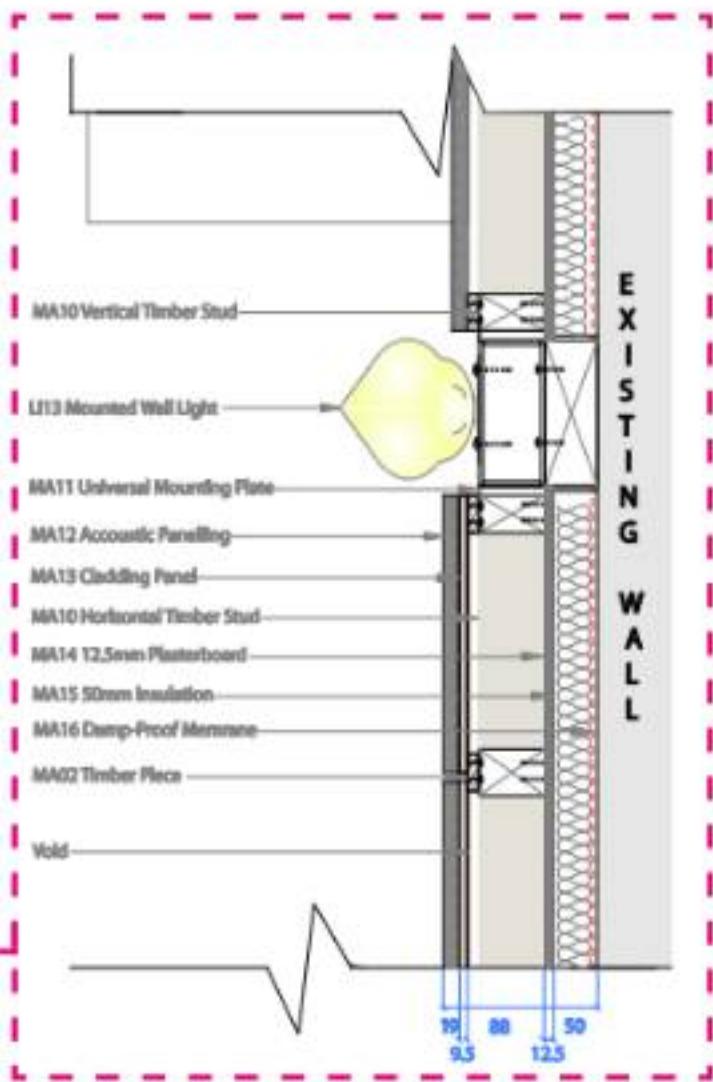


● Interior Perspective

SOCIAL LOUNGE DETAIL

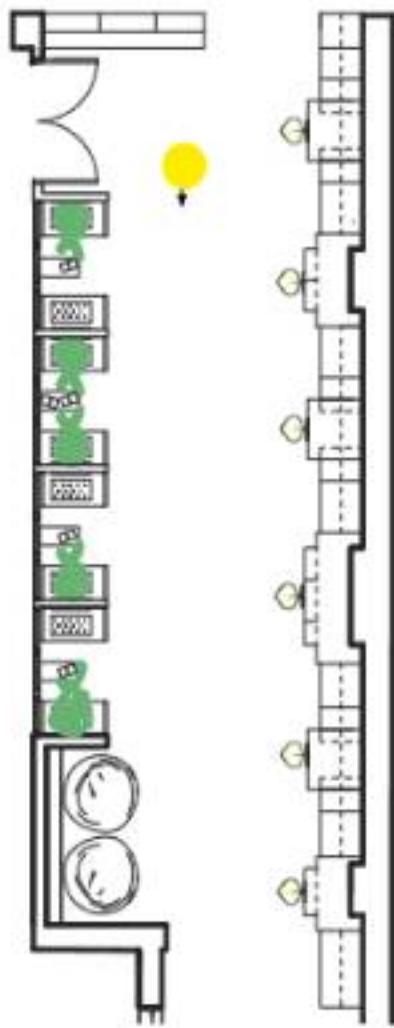


Detail Call-Out: C



LIBRARY

Located on the first floor, this is a more secluded environment, however still remains a public library for citizens of Edinburgh.



Floor Plan Reference

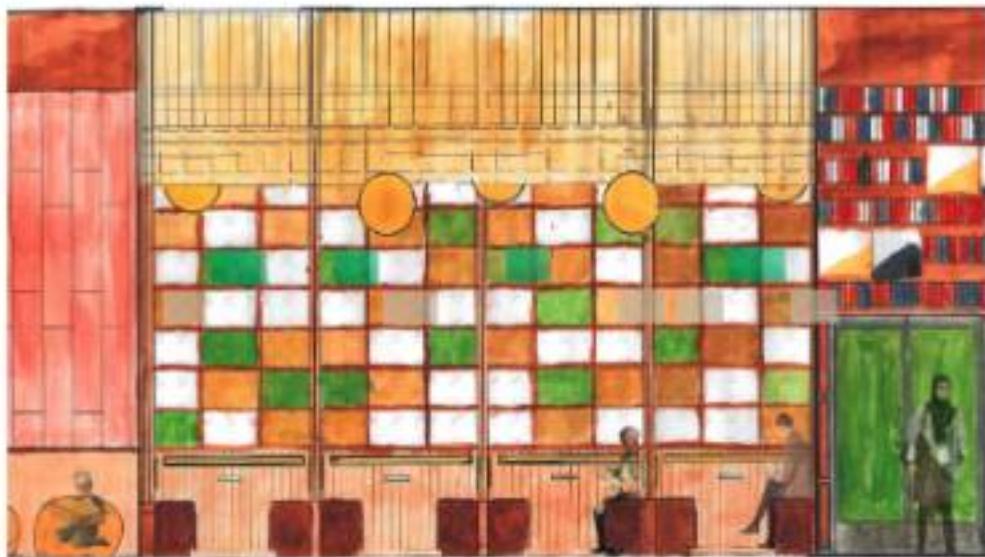
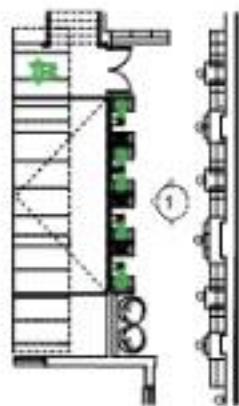
3rd April

17:11

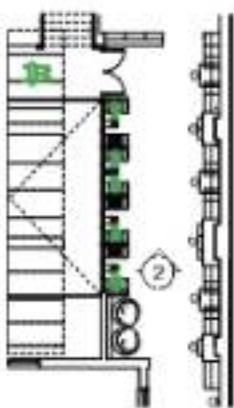


Interior Perspective

LIBRARY ELEVATIONS

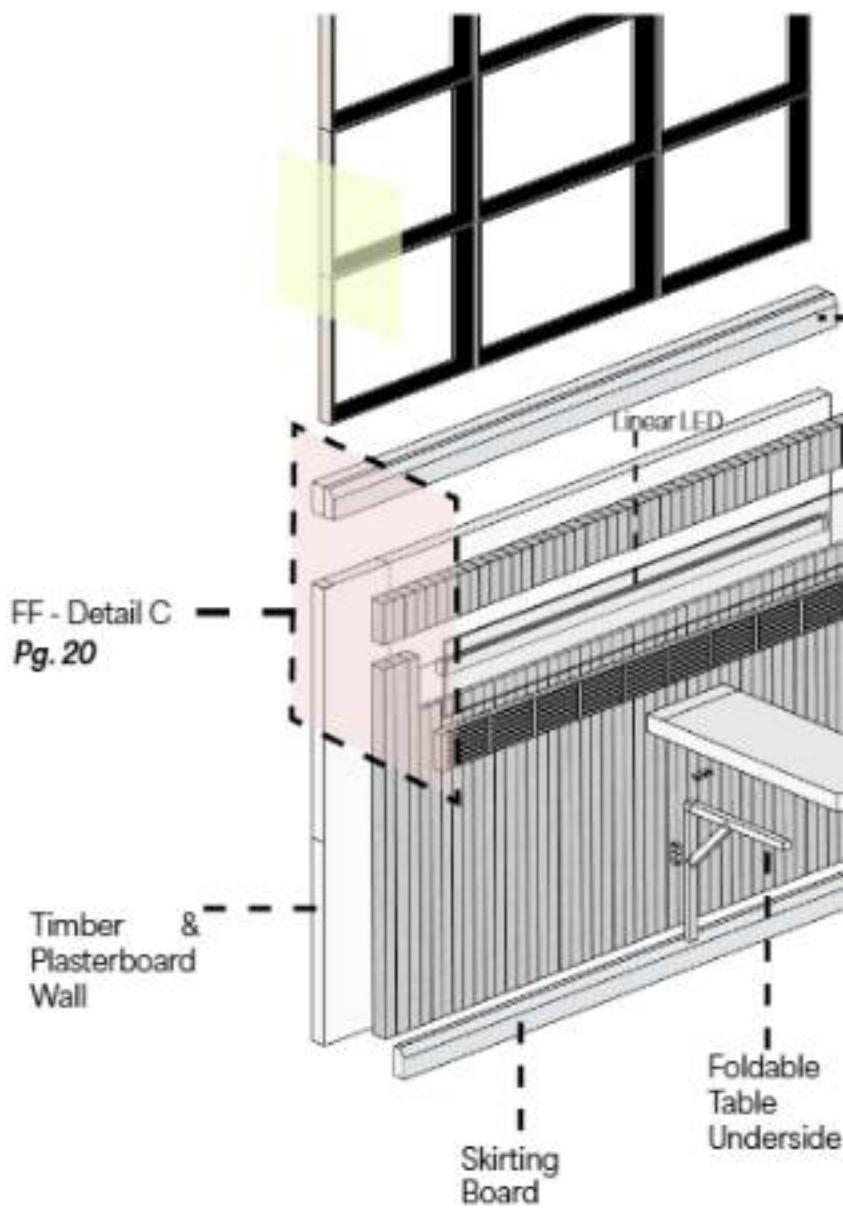


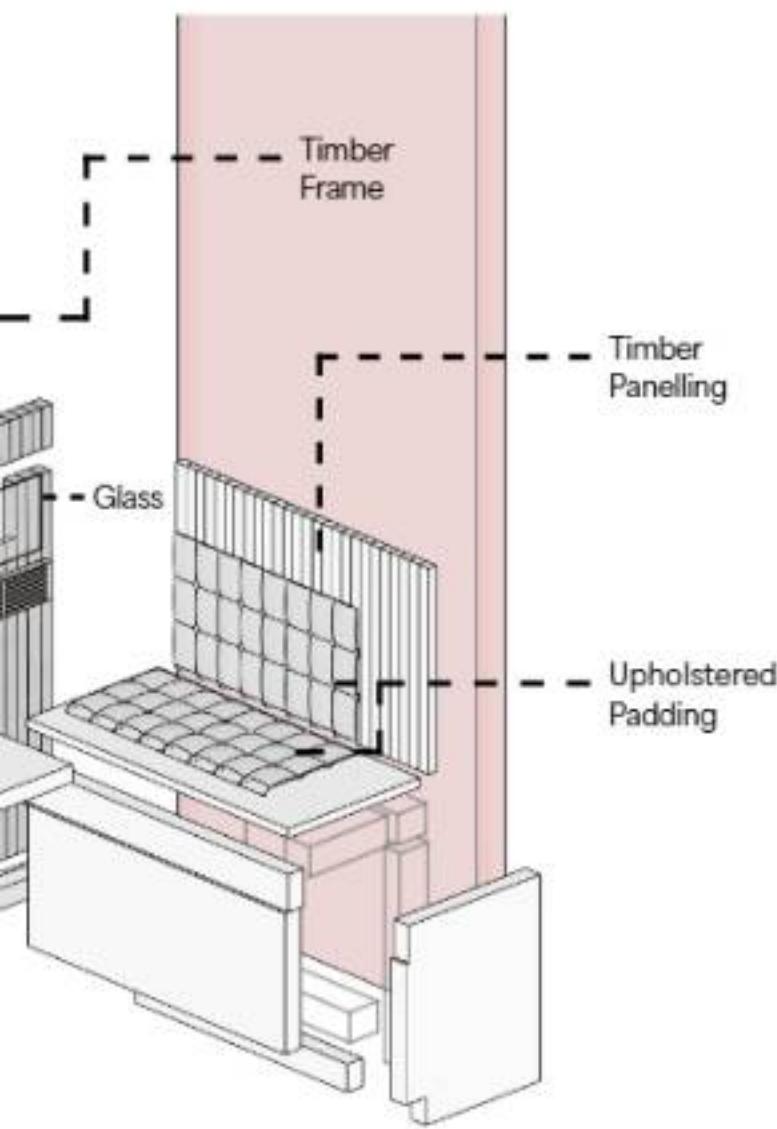
Elevation - 1



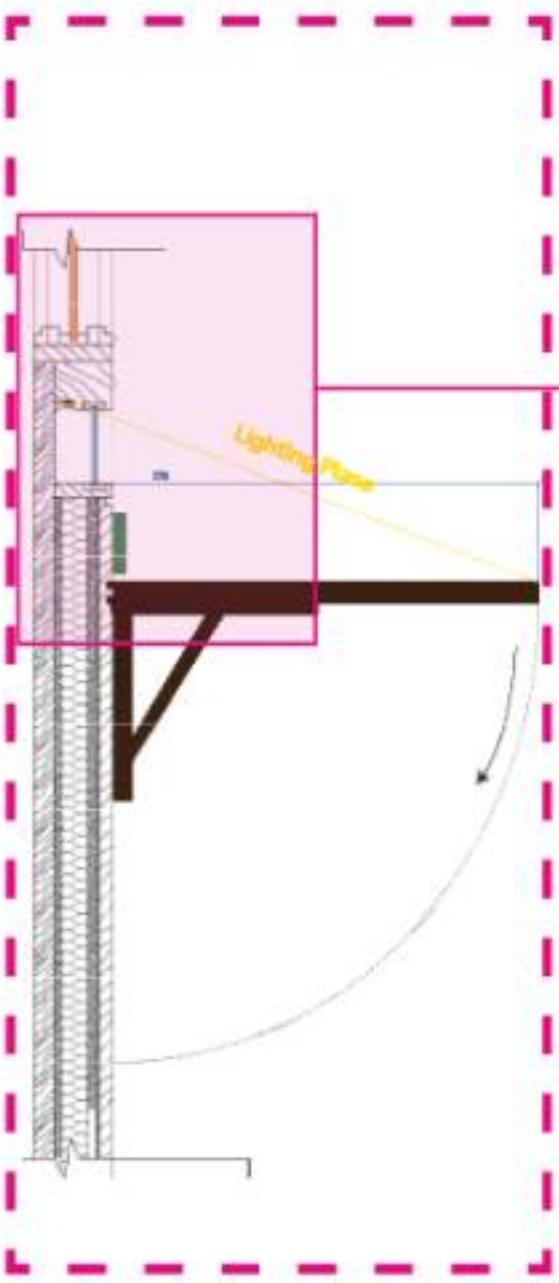
Elevation - 2

LIBRARY SEATING

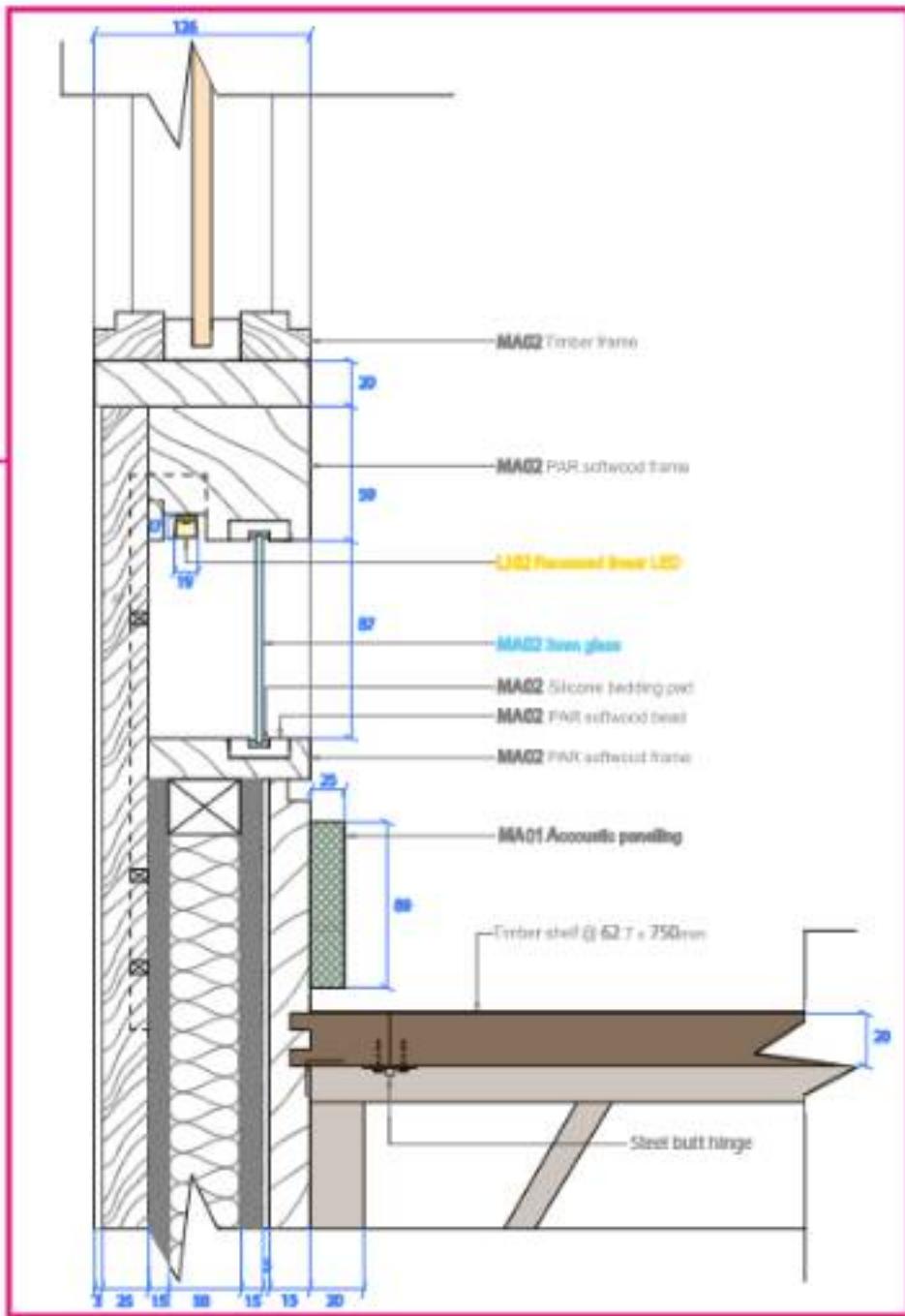




LIBRARY DETAIL



1:10 Plan Detail C
NTS



1:5 Plan Detail C NTS

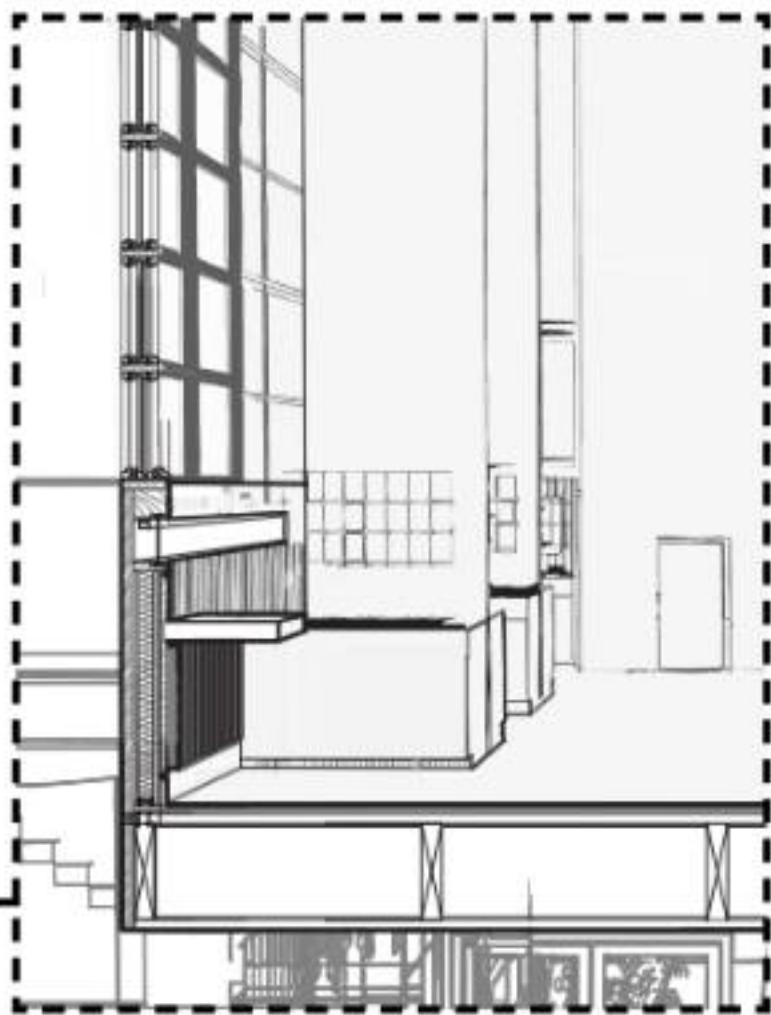
EAST - WEST SECTION



Reference Plan

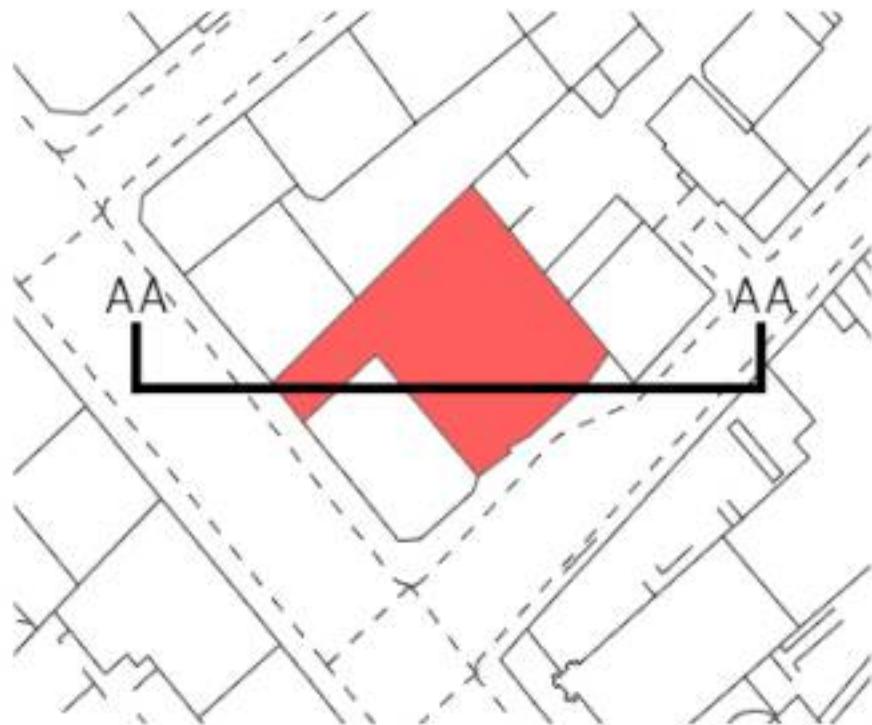


East - West Perspective Section

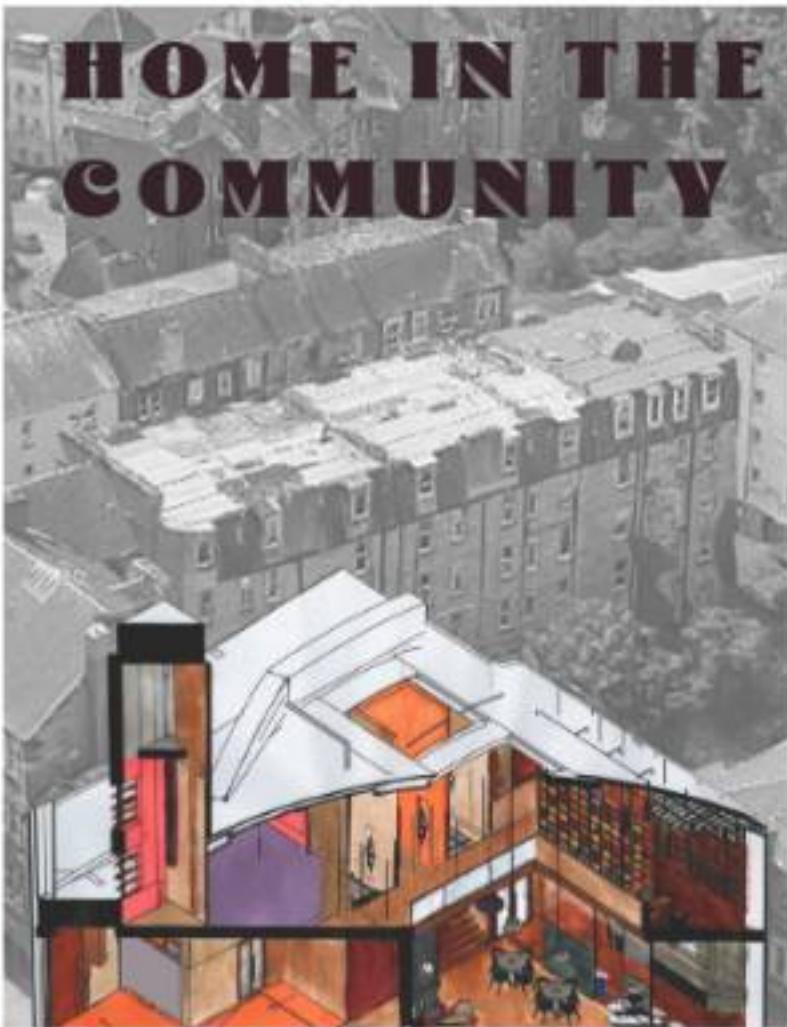


Library Fixed Seating Perspective Detailing

PERSPECTIVE SECTION



REFERENCE PLAN



HOME IN THE COMMUNITY