

MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE

CONNECTED COMMUNITY



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MSA
LIVE 21

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Partners

Community Led Action and Savings Support (CLASS) is a small, registered charity which provides professional support to savings groups affiliated to Greater Manchester Savers and their associated networks. CLASS also supports affiliated savings groups in other towns and cities as these emerge through community exchange and mobilisation. CLASS also encourages and supports women to take on leadership positions within savings groups and in their communities.

The partner is working in conjunction with Hopton Hopefuls who are a group of older social housing tenants who live in Hopton Court tower block. Hopton Hopefuls came together because they needed change in their community. The gentrification of Hulme and the expanding city centre along with an increase in student accommodation have left older Hulme residents without access to social spaces. This has increased isolation which has impacted on residents' physical and mental health. Services in the Hulme area like GPs and dentists, are stretched with the student influx. Most of the residents have lived in Hulme for many years and despite all of this they wish to stay. Hulme has always been a mix of cultures and communities: it is creative, political, change-making and it's always felt inclusive, until now. They feel forgotten as their neighbours are forced into care homes away from family and friends as there is no supported accommodation for older people in the area.

Agenda

Connected Community

We have run a concept design competition to design a community centre to connect the residents of Hopton Court to one another and the greater community. Throughout the MSA Live Connected Community we engaged with the clients taking on board their needs and coming up with sketch scheme designs. These designs have been presented to the client and with the view to feed into a real-life future scheme at Hopton Court.

Connected Community has worked with GM Savers to provide a community centre for Hopton Hopefuls, the residents of Hopton Court. Hopton Hopefuls have been engaged throughout the design process, reflecting the community-focused ethos of the project. Hopton Court is a social housing block. The design has been made sympathetic to the aging population, ensuring it is fully accessible to those with age-related mobility issues.

Community cohesion is key to the project, with the community centre acting as a driver for social interaction. The space will be for residents to meet, host social activities and attend to care needs; the space will be key to improving the resident's physical and mental health. Overall, the project aims to improve the general social wellbeing of the residents.

RIBA Stage 01

Preparation and Brief

Connected Community sought to introduce students to RIBA stages, running the project as close to an in-practice project as possible. Week One of the project focussed on RIBA Stage 01, preparation and brief.

Sophie King, our collaborator, gave us a talk on the background of CLASS and Hopton Court; Craig Stott from Project Office at Leeds Beckett University gave a talk on his work at 'New Wortley Community Centre' about how they included the community in the design process and worked to a tight budget; and Glass-House, a charity devoted to connecting people with the design of their places, introduced us to the community projects that they are involved in and set up an interactive activity for us to understand methods of community engagement. These talks, paired with research on Lifetime Homes Standards, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities and accessible design precedents, prepared us to form a brief from the Hopton resident's needs and wishes.

Hopton residents kindly provided us with letters expressing what they wanted from the community centre. Using what we had learnt from the talks and research we formed these into a brief through brainstorming of ideas. We recognised the importance of the need for a flexible social and events space, this was integral to promoting sociability between tenants. The other key spaces included a kitchenette, decking area, one to one room and a hygiene room, all assisting in making the area fit for an aging population. From this, students developed these ideas, thinking about spatial requirement, accessibility and natural light to produce adjacency diagrams.

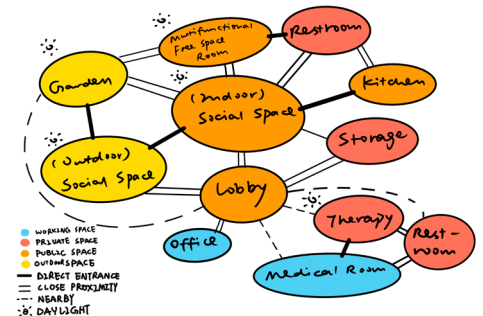
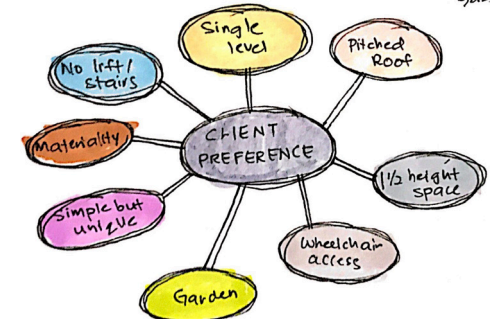
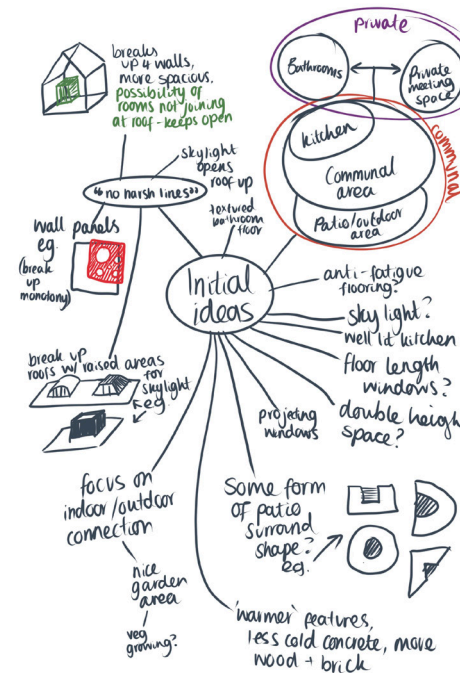
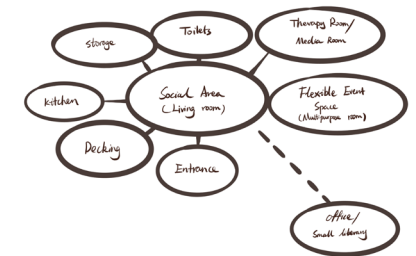
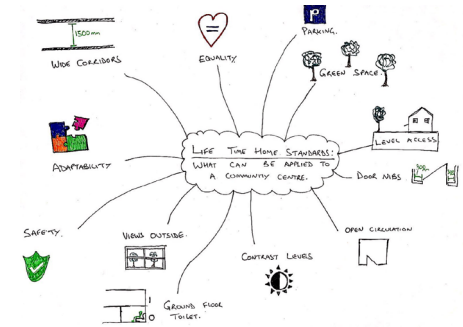
As part of RIBA Stage 01, we would expect a few site visits, however due to COVID 19 restrictions we had to work around this. Before the launch of MSA Live, the MARCH students had a socially distanced visit to the site and created a video montage of the site, which enabled everyone to virtually "visit" the site. The video and existing resources allowed for students to conduct site analysis to figure the most appropriate location, orientation and materiality for the community centre. From this we were able to lay out the adjacency diagrams on the site and move onto RIBA stage 02 of the project, transforming the brief and diagrams into workable floor plans.

April 8th 2021
Jim Keating
Committee member/resident

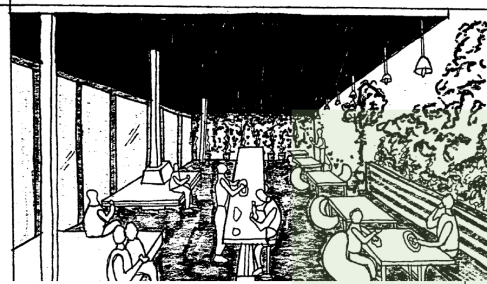
Ref: Pavilion/out building

Suggestions for your considerations:

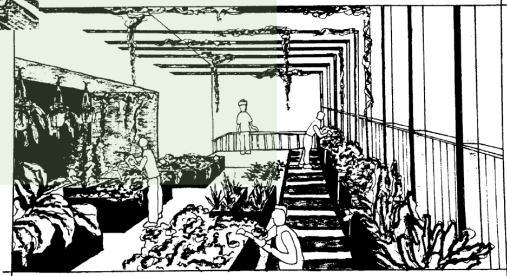
1. Outer decking area to accommodate tables and chairs
2. In house toilet facilities including washroom sink etc.
3. In house hot and cold running water
4. In house electricity for heating/lighting
5. Medium to large. Counter/bar capable to serve refreshments in tea, coffee and sandwiches
6. In built kitchen to house basic white goods. I.e. fridge/freezer, kettle and microwave
7. Concertina doors - possibly generic if space does not allow
8. live tv point to accommodate summer events be it tennis, football, cricket or chelsea flower show.
9. Possible indoor seating area to socialise
10. Roll down security shutter to ensure safety of the building and its contents



RIBA Stage 02



• Indoor main social space leading to semi-outdoor café/relaxing/green/gathering space



• Rooftop terrace/garden
• Outdoor green spaces



Concept Design

With an understanding of the site and the Hopton resident's needs, we were able to move onto RIBA stage 02, concept design. Before diving straight into the drawing package outputs, we visualised the atmosphere of the project through photomontages. Avoiding a clinical feel, creating a sense of home and maximising natural light and views were critical to the resident's desires, therefore before we got into the technicalities it was important to visualise the sensory elements of the building. The photomontages were also useful for understanding how furnishings and colours can aid or hinder age-sensitive design. These were then used to guide the designs with a more holistic approach, considering the implications of design ideas on aging well in place throughout.

Moving on, students produced initial sketch schemes, visualising ideas through floor plans, internal sketches and external visualisations. Visualisations and sketches were key to selling the schemes to the residents, showing how nature could be brought into the building and how materials could be used to create a homely feel. Regarding the sketch floorplans, it was important to continuously reference Lifetime Homes standards and Part M in building regulations to ensure the spaces were accessible for an aging population with decreasing mobility.



College - Office



The visualisations and drawings were then presented to the Hopton Hopefuls and the collaborators. It was important to engage the residents in the process but also useful for us as a team to get experience in understanding clients. The feedback was incredibly useful and the main point that came from it was to reduce the schemes and simplify the geometry in some of the schemes. The Hopton Hopefuls wanted the scheme to be bold, unique and stand out in the surroundings as they felt this represented the uniqueness of their community but also did not want the scheme to be too modernist.



Week Two saw the team taking on board the client feedback to strengthen their designs. The week started with a group discussion and brainstorming what could be improved. From this, initial concepts were reworked, and designs became more detailed. Sketch floorplans incorporated more context, furniture and detail were added to fully visualise the design.



Through individual work and group discussion, all students produced a drawing pack and visualisations of their schemes. We wanted to provide the residents with as many schemes and options as possible as it would be more constructive for their own discussions and future use as ideas could be selected from various schemes.

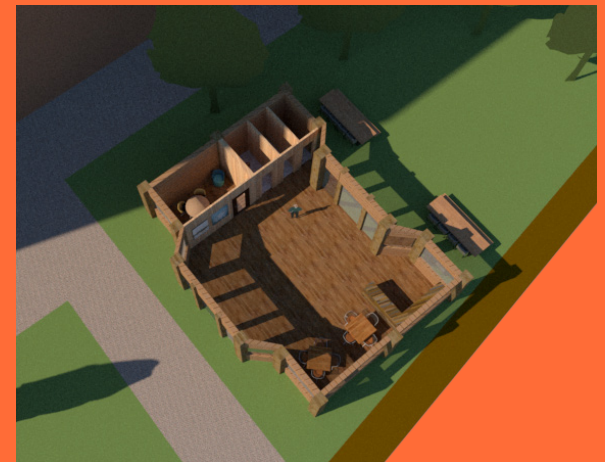
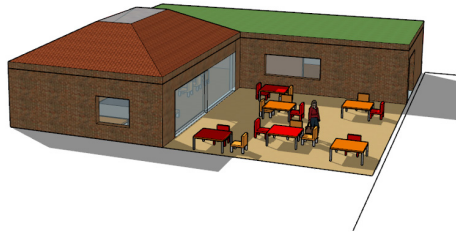
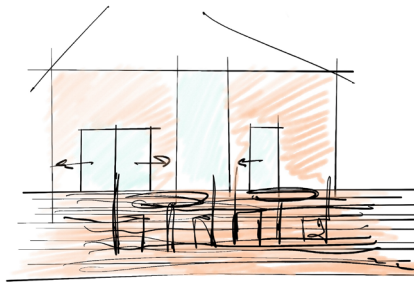
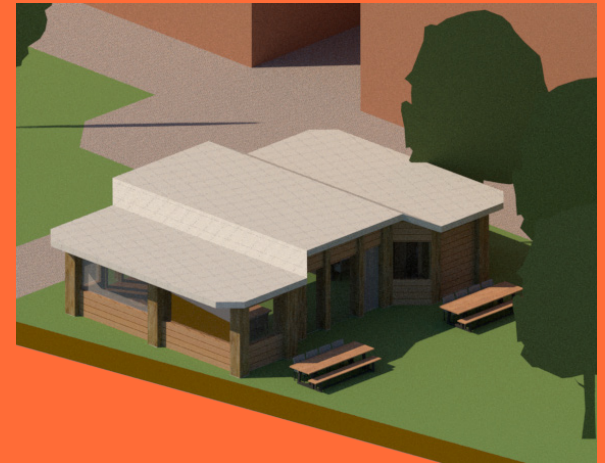




We continued to develop and strengthen designs in preparation for the second Hopton feedback session. The second feedback session was a success, it was clear the first set of feedback had been taken on board well and the Hopton Hopefuls were happy and excited by the designs. Students presented floor plans, sketches, visuals, elevations and sections which sold their schemes.



After the final feedback session, we made final tweaks, finishing anything that may have been slightly unfinished. The final drawings and visuals were put onto a document which then could be printed, and hard copies were given to the Hopton Hopefuls for future use. The designs and concepts will be used in future planning applications.



ABOUT

Each year the MSA Live (formerly Events) programme unites M Arch. year 01 with B Arch. year 01 and 02 and M Land. Arch 01 in mixed-year teams to undertake live projects with external partners to create social impact.

LIVE PROJECTS

All MSA Live projects are live. A live project is where an educational organisation and an external partner develop a brief, timescale, and outcome for their mutual benefit.

SOCIAL IMPACT

All MSA Live projects have social impact. Social impact is the effect an organization's actions have on the well-being of a community. Our agendas are set by our external collaborators.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

MSA LIVE projects work with many organisations: charities, community groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, researchers, practitioners and educators.

STUDENT-LED

Our MSA masters students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. Other cohorts join for an eventful 2 weeks of activities at the end of the academic year.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Working in teams within and across year groups and courses; MSA students participate in peer to peer learning. In addition, collaborators, participants and students engage in the transfer of tangible and intellectual property, expertise, learning and skills.

LARGE SCALE

This year approximately 600 students from 4 cohorts in MSA will work on 42 projects with partners.

QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA Live 21 contact MSA Live Lead: Becky Sobell:
b.sobell@mmu.ac.uk

BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2021

SOCIAL

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WEBSITE

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