

MANCHESTER SCHOOL  
OF ARCHITECTURE

# ROCHDALE REVIVAL



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MSA  
LIVE 21

## Team

**Theodore Mark Fisher** (M Arch 01)

**Sze Jin Lee** (M Arch 01)

**Yilin Zeng** (M Arch 01)

**Beena Nouri** (M Arch 01)

**Yifan He** (M Arch 01)

**Zichen Li** (M Arch 01)

**Isabella Mearns** (BA 01)

**Jay Hooper** (BA 01)

**Daud Ahmad** (BA 01)

**Isaac M Ndungu** (BA 01)

**Jack Frederick W Newey** (BA 01)

**Elena I Grozeva** (BA 02)

**Finlay Higgins** (BA 02)

**Ziyi Wang** (BA 02)

## Partners

Our team of students are responding to the aims of the brief set out between the MArch students, Laura Sanderson, Steven Leech and those over at St John the Baptist Church, Jack Youd from Rochdale Development Agency and Daisy Horsley from Historic England.

Laura Sanderson organised this MSA LIVE project and has previously worked with our collaborators for an Events project in previous years in Rochdale.

Steven Leech is the Project Manager for St John the Baptist Church who we have collaborated with for this project. Thanks to Steven we were also able to collaborate and speak with Christine Matthewson and Peter Galvin, volunteers at the Church who provided extra insight into the ongoing activities and needs of the local community within Rochdale.

Jack Youd is the Heritage Action Zone Project Officer at Rochdale Development Agency, a local authority controlled company of Rochdale Borough Council, dedicated to promoting Rochdale as a central investment location.

Daisy Horsley works for Historic England, the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, specifically providing training to teachers across Greater Manchester to improve access to local history in the school curriculum. Daisy has highlighted the importance of increasing public knowledge of the grand history of Rochdale, further proposing ways to engage with local communities.

# Agenda

## Rochdale Revival

Rochdale Revival aims to improve the visibility of the history, existing communities and culture within Rochdale, specifically improving the visibility of St John Baptist Church as a historical building that highlights the rich history of Rochdale. The project aims to make these elements more visible to the local communities from all faiths and backgrounds that live in Rochdale. Part of this project is about softening and removing the invisible barriers that have in the past stopped people from different faiths and cultural backgrounds from entering the Church. The developed proposals will support a funding bid for the National Lottery Community Fund and the team will provide the Rochdale Development Agency and the Church project manager with a specially designed document to support their application.

From consultations with our partners, we have understood that it is within their interest that the interventions proposed support community integration and the ongoing activities they hold. The proposals should encourage people to gather, meet new people and engage with the rich history, beauty of the Church and the activities happening inside. To add to this, the project aims to bring the elements that are hidden inside the Church outside so that people can engage with the beauty of the mosaic and rich history before they enter.

This project further addresses the visible and invisible barriers that prevent people from entering the Church, through creative and striking way-finding strategies that engage people passing by and directing them to the Church. The proposals are supportive of the aims of Rochdale Development Agency that aims to pedestrianize the local area by incorporating interesting installations that invite people to walk in and around the city centre. The students developed their proposals within three thematic focus groups: Community, Culture and History whereby each were respectively briefed to make their themes more visible in Rochdale. The students developed site strategies, diagrams and storyboards to visualise their initial proposals. They further iterated their designs through model making exercises which allowed them to think further about the form and materiality. To add to this, they explored the importance of sustainability, biodiversity and safety within their proposals developing on their materiality choices and the experiential qualities. Students concluded their ideas and proposals through abstract final images that capture the experiential qualities of their proposals and how they engage with the Church and local area.

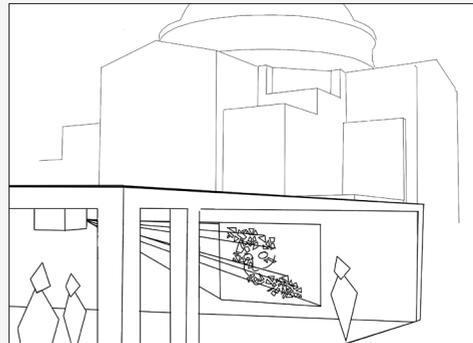
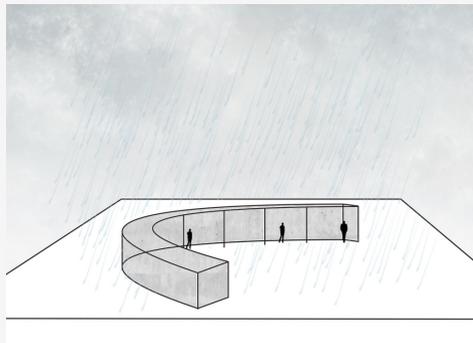


## Community

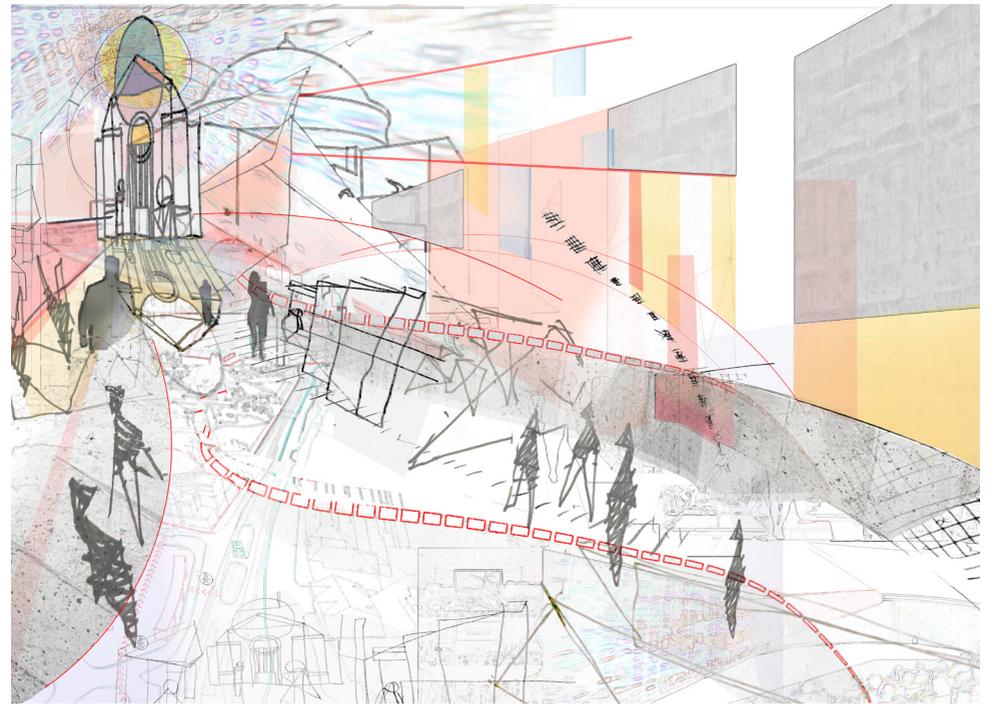
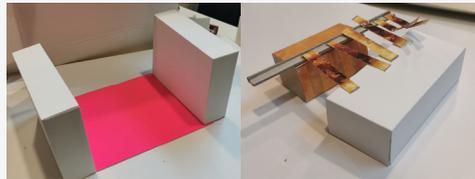
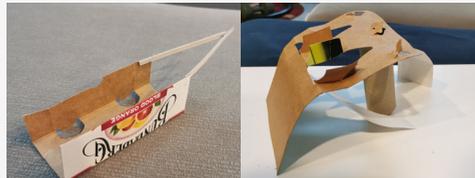
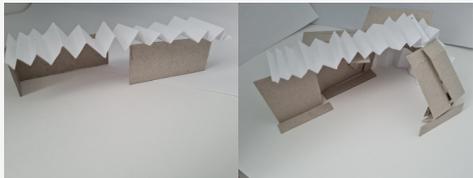
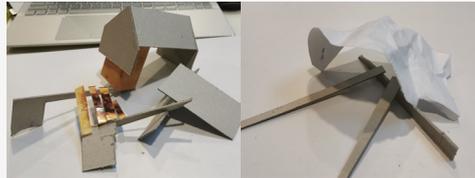
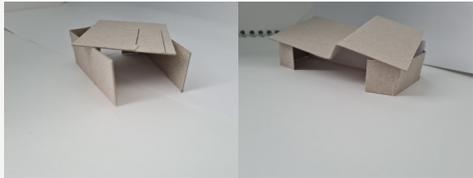
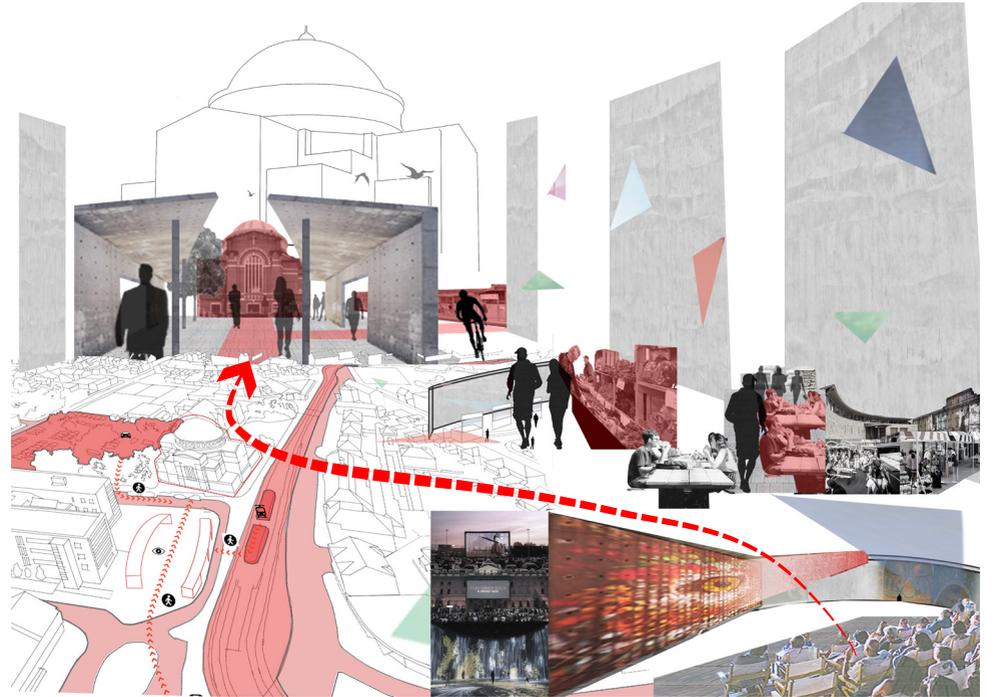
Ziyi and Daud's strategy for integrating the existing local communities with the Church involved designing a sheltered space that would perform as a place of gathering whilst sheltering from the rain. They intended the shelter to be dynamic in its purpose, allowing for activities during day and night. Their proposal considers the circulation axis to the Church and welcomes people arriving to the city via Tram. The symmetrical language established by the structure celebrates the Church as the focal point of the square.

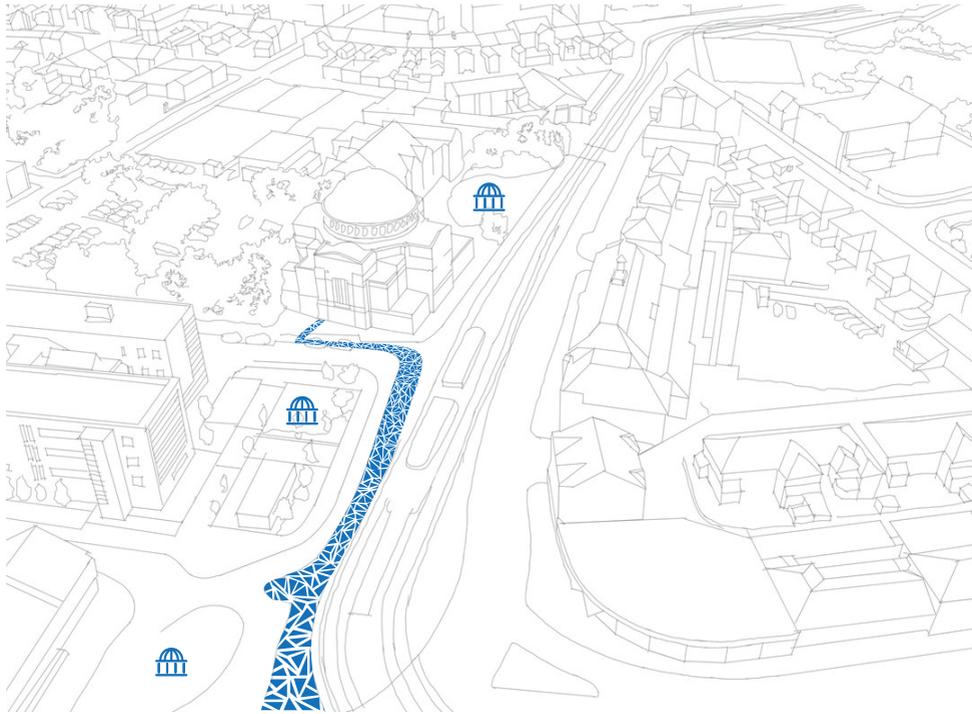


The storyboards on the right capture the open nature of the shelter and the potential activities that can be accommodated. By day it can be used as a market space to encourage local entrepreneurs. As the sun sets, the shelter is illuminated by projecting elements of the mosaic of the Church outside. The projector can also facilitate films and events that could showcase Bollywood movies as an example which may entice the Asian communities of Rochdale to gather, thus allowing the shelter to become a community hub.



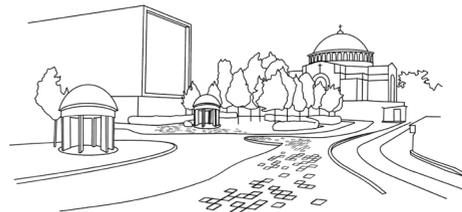
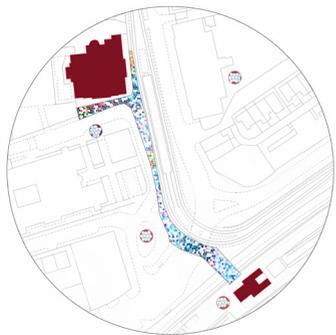
Their proposals were further refined through modelmaking which introduced tinted glass in the walls that added an exciting experiential element, inspired by the mosaic inside the Church. This is shown on the following pages which captures their ideas in visuals, diagrams and abstract drawings.



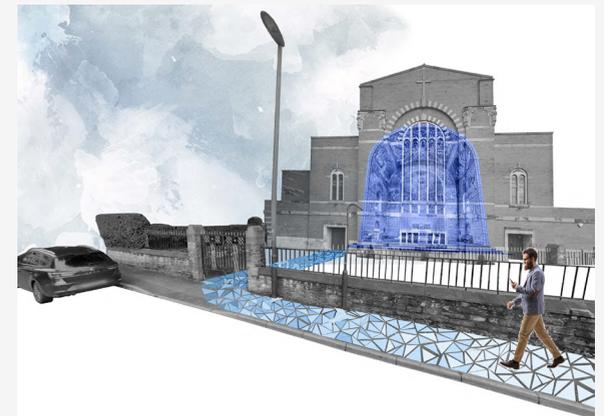


## Culture

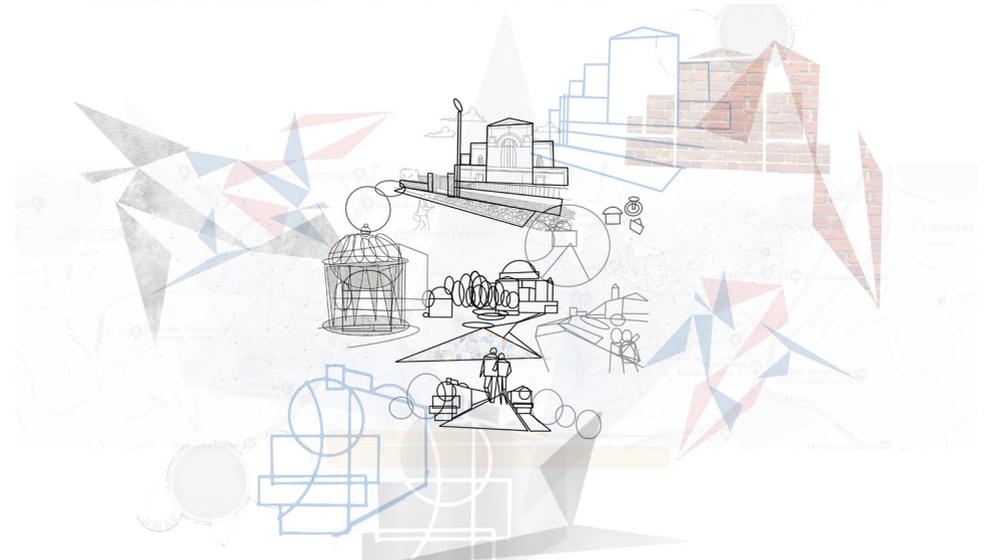
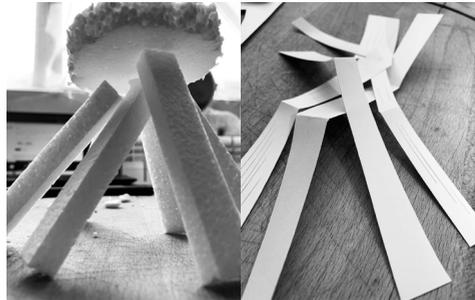
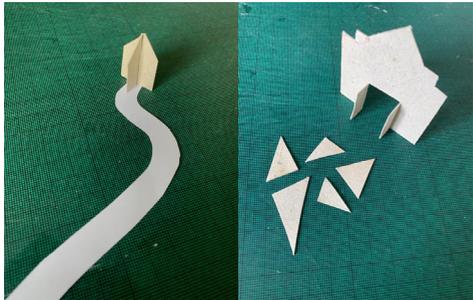
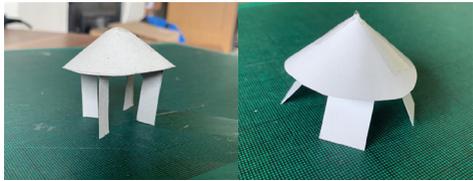
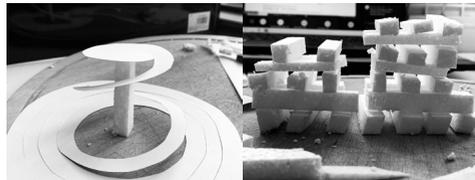
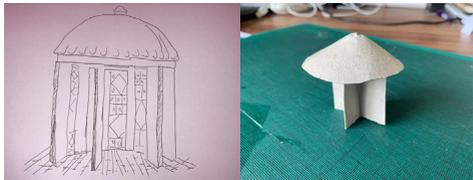
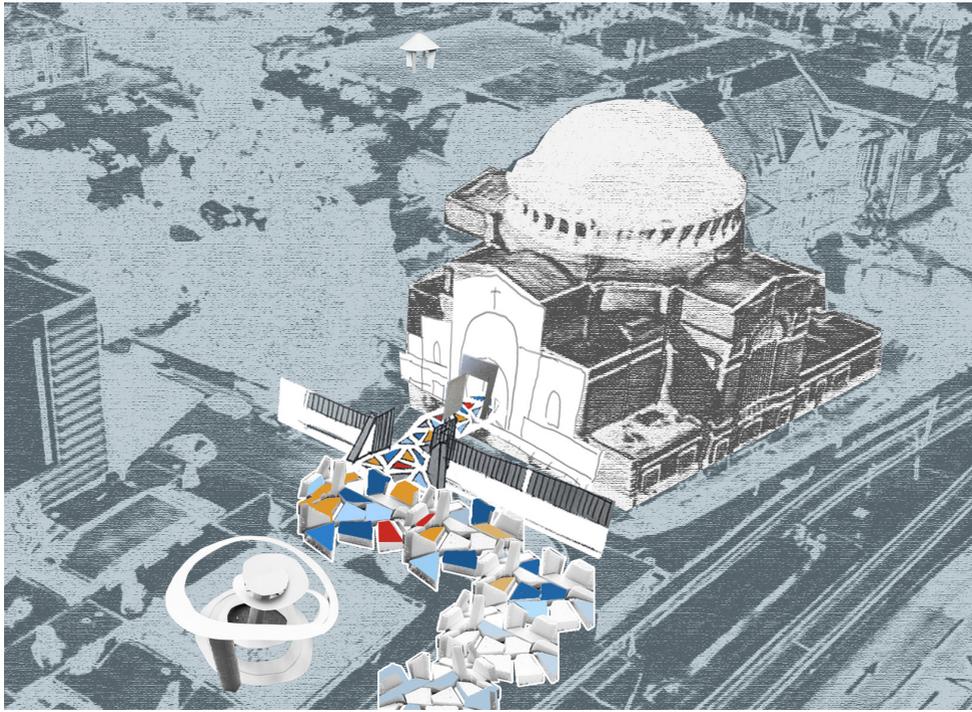
Isabella, Jay and Elena's strategies for cultural visibility consists of three points. They created a decorative pathway made up of colourful mosaic squares going from the main exit of the train station to the main entrance of St John the Baptist's Church. The colourful mosaic tiles on the pavement intrigues and leads visitors to the Church with the tiles becoming more colourful once getting closer to the Church. Furthermore, they also looked at adding simplistic dome installations around Rochdale to represent the Church and it's cultural significance in Rochdale. The group integrated QR codes on the installations which would allow tourists to learn about the cultural identity of the city through their mobile devices.

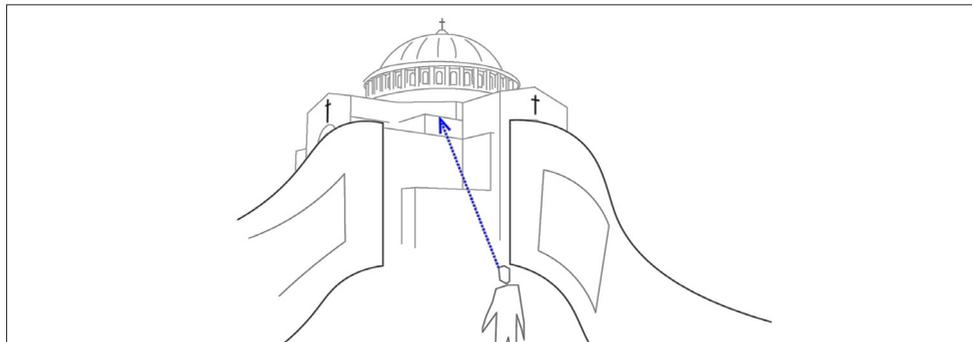
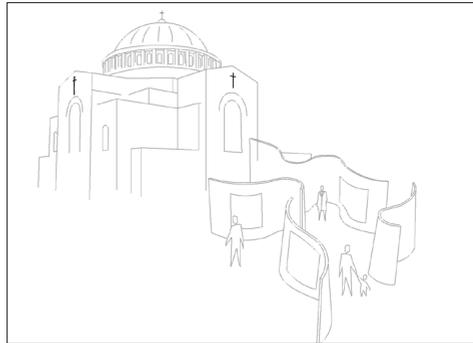
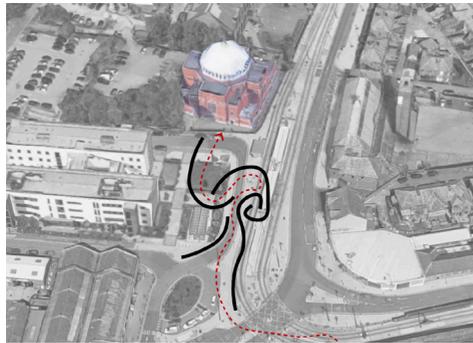
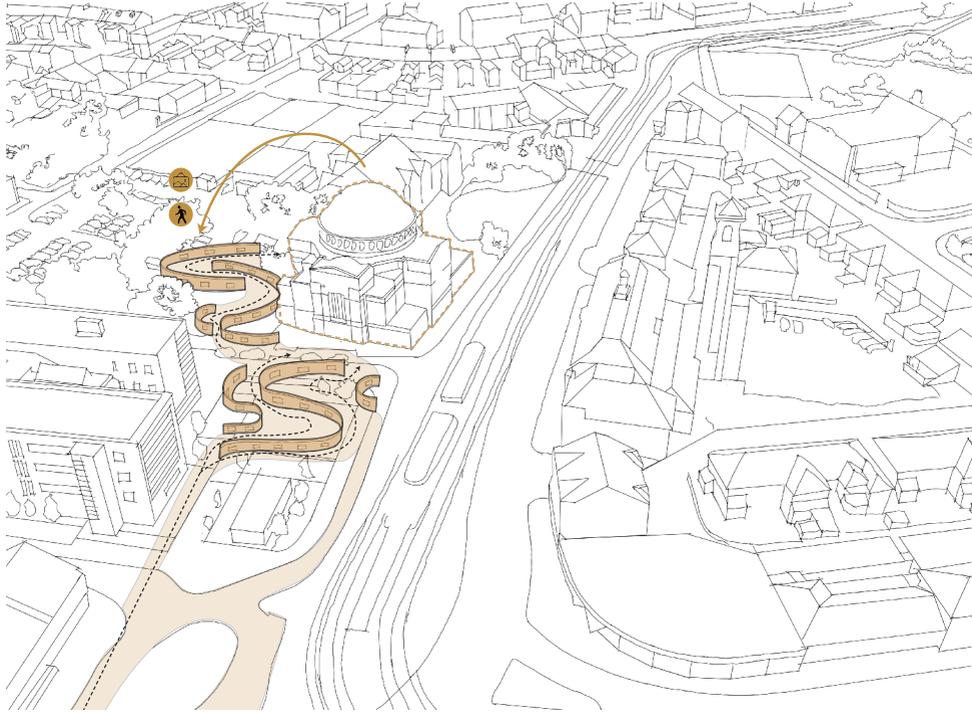


The three storyboards capture the proposal at different scales to illustrate how their intervention achieves cultural visibility, whilst capturing the journey towards the Church. . The dome's capture the beauty of the Church, intriguing and arousing further curiosity about the Church as a culturally and historically vibrant building. Their proposal aims to integrate digital infrastructure into the City to make learning about the history and culture of Rochdale accessible to everyone whether entering the Church or passing by a dome.



On the following pages, models and drawings are shown that express their ideas further.



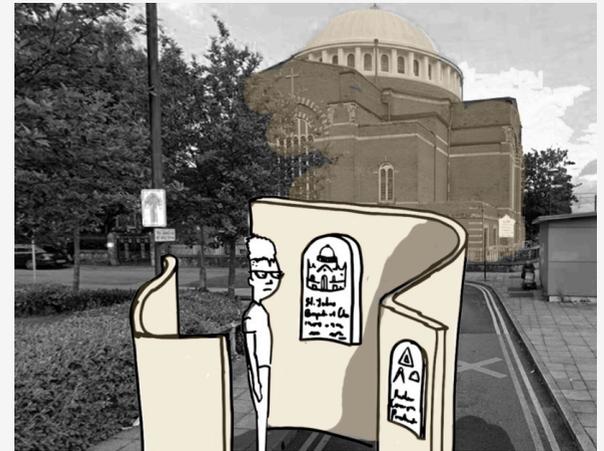


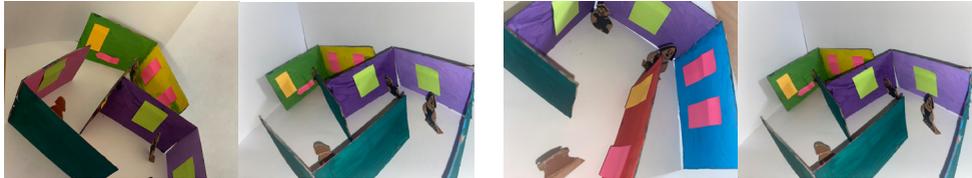
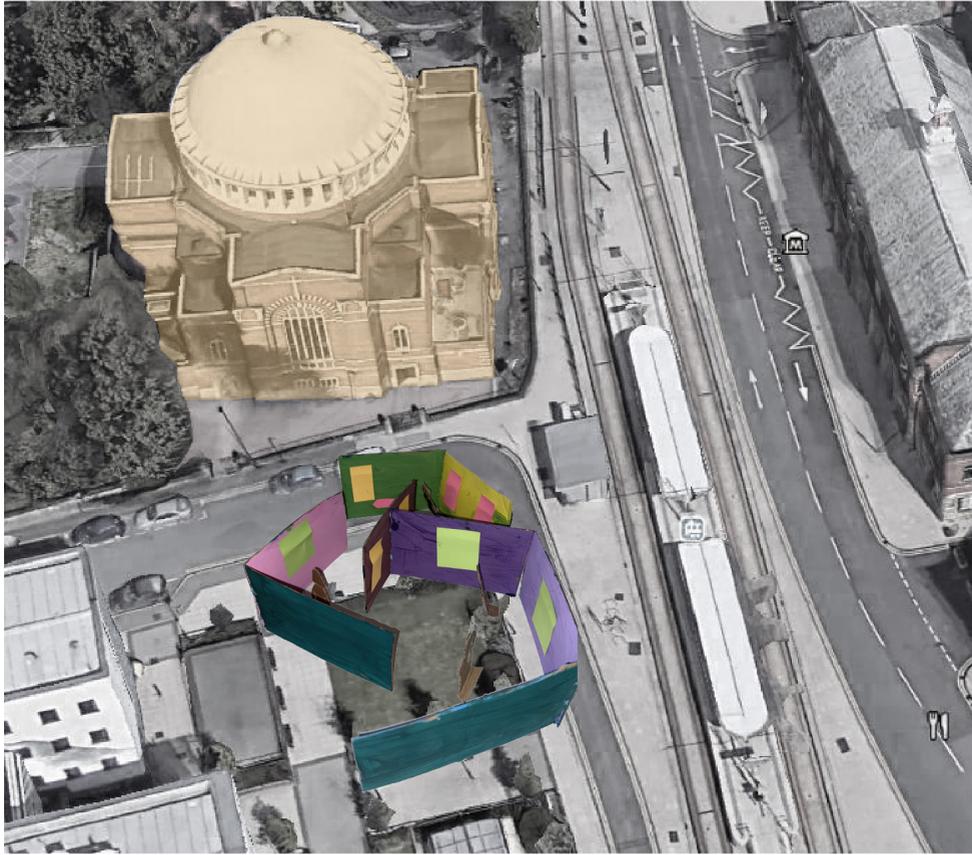
## History

The strategy from Finn, Isaac and Jack to increase the visibility of the Church involved creating a path leading towards the Church. The inspiration for the path was from a maze which symbolised the twisted historical development of Rochdale.

They intended to display readings that explain local history along this path for visitors to learn about the Church and Rochdale while waking to the Church. They situated their path at the front at the church to guide the visitors from the tram station. The storyboards shown on the right illustrate how the path itself could double down as an attraction but also could bring traffic to the Church. The historical reading to be displayed is collected from secondary material with information available in both hard and soft copy, in which way Finn, Isaac and Jack believed would attract intellectuals. On some of the surfaces along the path, living green walls were presented to add on some urban greenery. Visitors would be able to have a breath of fresh air while reading and learning the background of the church.

Their proposals were further developed through model making that introduced a range of vibrant colours on the walls that aimed to catch the eyes of visitors. The following pages with visuals, diagrams and abstract drawing further demonstrates their scheme in more detail.





## 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](mailto:b.sobell@mmu.ac.uk)**

## BLOG

[live.msa.ac.uk/2021](http://live.msa.ac.uk/2021)

## SOCIAL

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