

MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE

Hidden Threads

Agenda.

Through historical research, creative mapping and architectural storytelling, we are collaborating with [Islington Mill Arts Club](#) and [BB Heritage Studio](#) to create an interactive digital resource for the community to celebrate and engage with Islington Mill's social history and Salford's Arts & LGBTQ+ legacy.

Come along as we weave the Hidden Threads...

The Team.

Anisa Begum
Eleanor Nurse
Letong Huang
Marwa Dulaimi
Xionghe Shi

Skills.

Mixed Media
Creative Mapping
Storytelling
Historical Research
Digital Media
Hand Drawing

Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

Islington
Mill



MSA
LIVE 22

Team

Anisa Begum (M Arch 01)
Eleanor Nurse (M Arch 01)
Marwa Dulaimi (M Arch 01)
Lefong Huang (M Arch 01)
Xiongze Shi (M Arch 01)

Ananya Reddy (BA 01)
Jann Farooq-Haynes (BA 01)
Mahirah Khan (BA 01)
Nihad Sharief (BA 01)
Tarralyn Odamtten (BA 01)
Arshya Susheel Mittal (BA 02)
Chennan Yang (BA 02)
Ka May Faythe Chow (BA 02)
Ronnie Frank McTaggart (BA 02)
Weng Chon Cheong (BA 02)

Special Thanks

We appreciate the valuable support and expertise of Eve Elliot and Pascal Nichols of 7 Spot Pottery, Ian Miller, Dominic Sagar, Greg Thorpe and Steve Taylor in our research and understanding of the Islington Mill community.

We also extend our thanks to the MSA team as well as the on-site Team at the Islington Mill construction site for facilitatory support.

Partners

We had the pleasure of working in collaboration with our partners **Islington Mill Arts Club** and **BB Heritage Studio** to engage with and celebrate the rich social history of Islington Mill (IM) in Salford.

Islington Mill's core mission revolves around establishing a centre for arts education and bringing artists and the public together, providing support and opportunities for development. Overseen and managed by **Stef Wyke**, the IM Arts Club development and support programmes are designed and run by artists, giving opportunities for employment, upskilling, and sharing their work. Communities outside the Mill, in Salford and beyond, are invited to experience the artists' work so that more people benefit from the experience of contemporary art. (Islington Mill, 2022)

The Conservation Architect and Heritage Consultant, **Bernadette Bone** from BB Heritage Studio, specialises in guiding heritage-led projects to ensure that historic places can continue to tell the stories of their communities through all the stages. (BB Heritage Studio, 2022)

Islington Mill



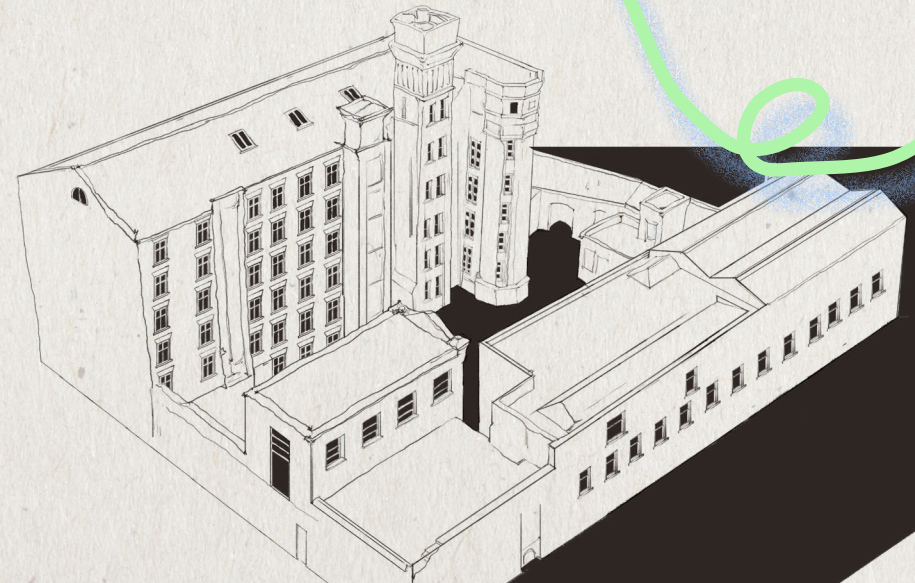
scan for final output:

Agenda

Hidden Threads

Hidden Threads creatively maps the heritage of Islington Mill, exploring the entanglement of Manchester & Salford's cotton industry with art and queer culture. Forming a digital resource, the aim is to make its story accessible to all, allowing heritage and other historic knowledge to be creative, fun and engaging. This led us to adopting an interdisciplinary approach, creatively exploring the areas of overlap between society, architecture, history, art and community. Beginning with a series of mapping exercises, we have interrogated what a map is and does - and how a map doesn't have to be a flat plan purely demonstrating geographical location - but can illustrate other forms of information in other ways. We also took the ethos that heritage does not have to simply mean ancient, 'valuable' history, but that recent heritage is also of value - specifically, Islington Mill's journey as a music and arts centre in the last 26 years.

Working in three teams, each group focused upon exploring a specific topic of interest: material heritage, architectural development and artist & queer spaces in Salford, allowing us to illustrate the rich heritage, character and value of Islington Mill as well as its significance in Salford and the wider area. The implementation of interactivity on the web-based platform allows for a much more accessible exploration and mapping of Islington Mill's heritage and current vibrant life than the use of more typical, traditional forms of archival research.



Who, What, Where, Why?

Islington Mill Arts Club (IMAC) is an arts centre and community hub in Salford, providing artist studios and hosting small businesses set in a Grade II Listed Georgian Mill. Originally built as a cotton mill in 1823, it has evolved massively over the last 200 years and recently has been undergoing extensive renovation after being granted funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Working with Bernadette Bone from BB Heritage Studio and Stef Wyke, the General Manager of IMAC, we created a digital resource compiling creative assets that will engage the public and wider Salford community with the fascinating heritage and journey of Islington Mill. Many mills in Manchester and Salford became involved in the resurgence of the creative scene and found a new life in the 1980s and 1990s as music and arts centres; but in the 21st century, many were redeveloped as luxury apartments. As a result, Islington Mill is unique in its retention as an arts community. *Hidden Threads* celebrates its historic, architectural, social, creative and queer past, present and future.

Social Value

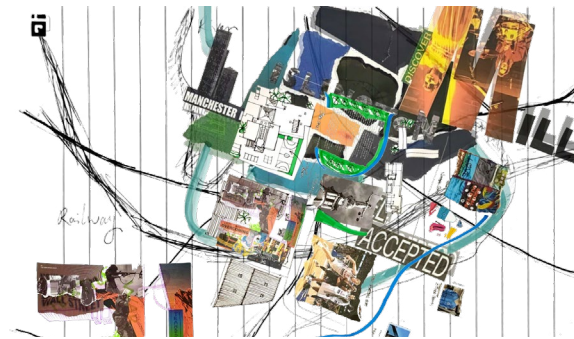
The resource serves as a digital space where the community can engage with the **heritage** and **conservation** of Salford in a creative, enticing way. We focused on creating a foundation for its social history that can be built upon and shared by others, an educational resource that demonstrates the vitality that heritage projects can bring to communities.

We recognise **equality** as a fundamental human right and will look to shine a light on voices that have been overlooked.

"Islington Mill as you know it is a product of Queer Love" – IMAC founder, Bill Campbell

We investigated LGBTQ+ safe spaces in Salford as well as LGBTQ+ history, providing a resource that supports and celebrates the community, its visibility and its history with Islington Mill.

We believe that this is an act in celebrating the re-use of buildings for the community. The digital resource supplements the **regeneration** work of Islington Mill and ensures that the Mill remains a vital creative hub for artists and the wider community, preventing the gentrification and loss of creative space.



introduction to architectural mapping: the craft of visualising (meaningful) data. Icebreaker activity, day one.



Alternative Archival Research

psychogeographic mapping and methodologies



expert knowledge



art and archive visit: Salford Art Museum & Gallery

ethnographic research



site visit: internal insight



Guest speakers

We were joined online by a guest speaker, Steve Taylor, a PhD Candidate at MMU. We learnt about his research topic and progress: how music and arts venues work within contemporary cities and how architectural typologies can affect the way they operate. We also received some valuable tips on employing creative methodologies to conduct research as well as some great case studies which we incorporated into our mapping exercises.

MArch Reflections

During the two weeks, we learned to be flexible and accommodate extenuating and unexpected circumstances, which led to some variation to the session plan. At first, we initially allocated sessions to be conducted online to allow for **asynchronous learning**. This was to provide the freedom to explore and take advantage of utilities - e.g. visiting different archives around Salford and Manchester - as well as the opportunity for students who were isolating or abroad to participate with their colleagues.

What changed?

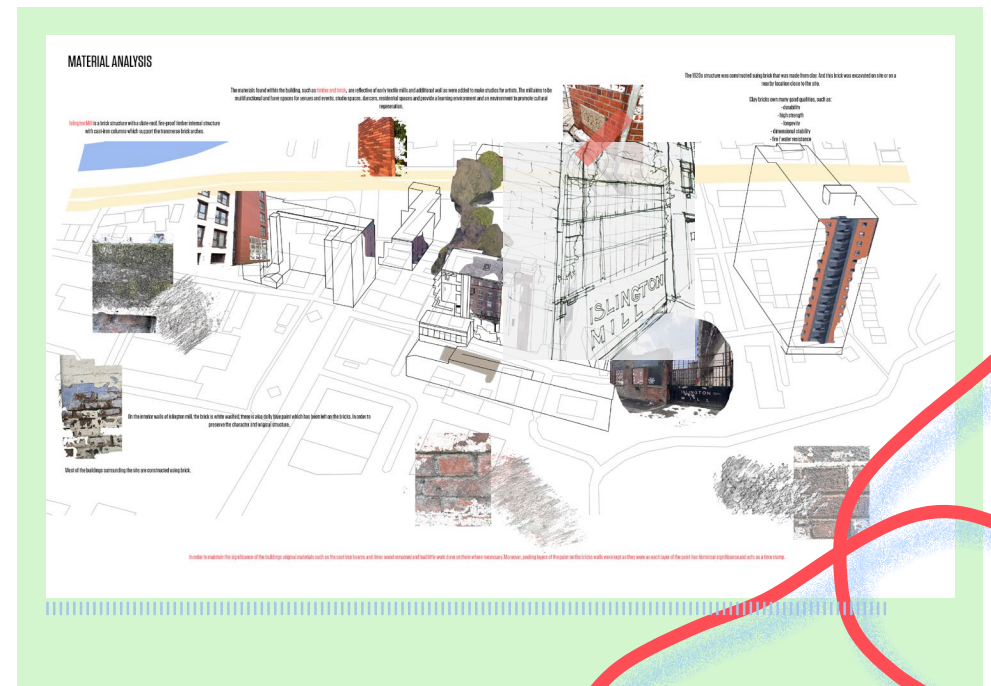
However, due to both overlapping module deadlines and the complexity of what mapping actually is (as it was a new concept to them), the undergraduate students provided feedback; in response, we reinstated all sessions to be in person to provide immediate support and insight. We also implemented **short Pecha-Kucha style presentations** during the second action week as an opportunity for the students to present their work and receive **informal feedback** from their peers as well as the MArch team. These rapid-fire tutorials allowed the students to develop their work at a more efficient rate than previously.

We also made adjustments due to weather and speaker availability. The initial site visit was scheduled on the first day as dictated in the session plan; however, we postponed it to the following morning as it was raining heavily and would have been less productive for the students. Instead, we brought forward the prepared *introduction to mapping* seminar and followed with an ice-breaker exercise to familiarise ourselves with each other and the concept of mapping.

As the lead archaeologist and the Heritage Management Director in Salford, we had originally scheduled a call with Ian Miller for his knowledge, but instead opted for Steve's process-oriented input.

Group 1: Materiality

Through visiting and responding creatively to the site, it became apparent that the materiality tells a story about its history, geology and place. For example, Islington Mill is primarily constructed from bricks yet the bricks themselves are different and vary depending on date of production. This was explored through taking rubbings on site and hence mapping the passing of time through texture and material heritage. We also found the bricked-up windows on the site fascinating, they demonstrated the changing uses at Islington Mill and how the owners/businesses have adapted the building fabric to suit their needs. Today, we can see an interesting effect of fly-posting on the bricked-up windows – demonstrating its current use as an arts centre.



1890:
the new
engine house
& boiler house

currently
filled
with
artist
studios

[illegible][illegible]

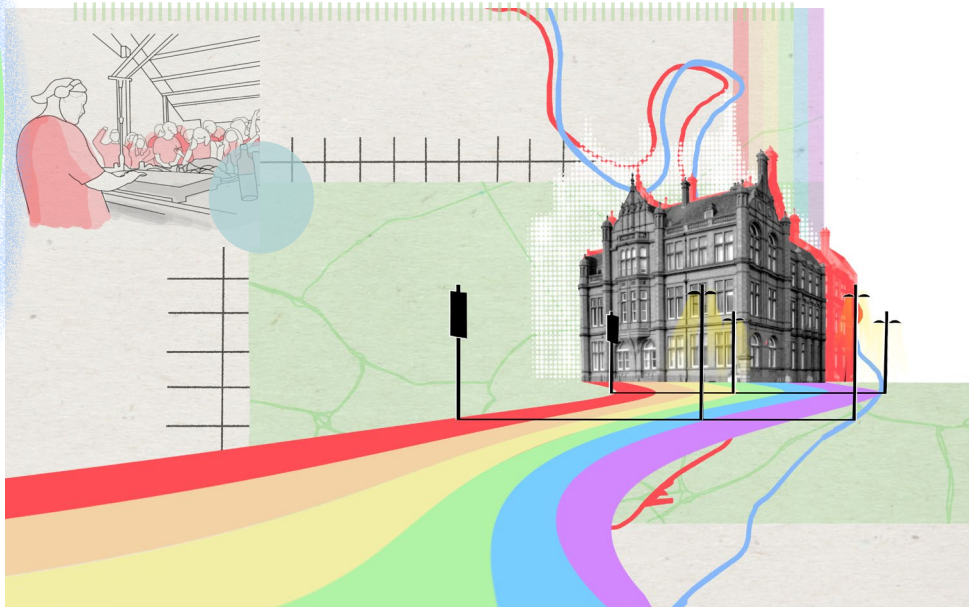
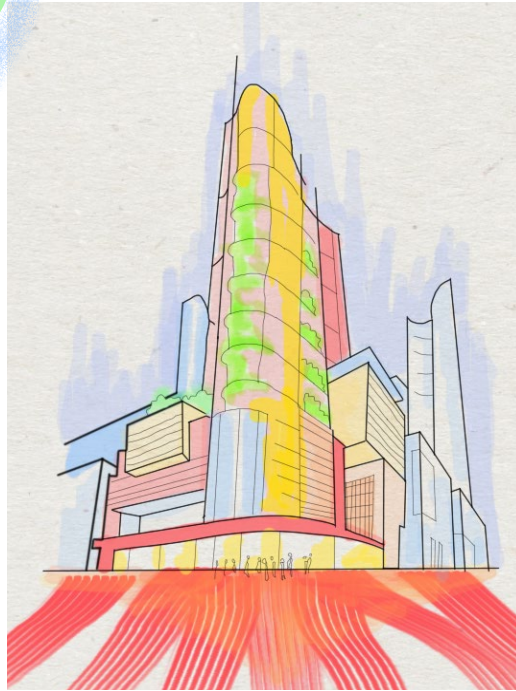
Hand-drawn architectural sketches illustrating roof trusses and structural details. The sketches are labeled with handwritten notes:

- Top Left:** A perspective view of a roof truss structure. Handwritten notes include: "new construction of roof construction during early 19th century when spans great".
- Top Right:** A cross-section view of a roof truss, showing the internal structure and the roof slope. Handwritten notes include: "C. BEAM" and "Roof slope and its purpose".
- Bottom Left:** A perspective view of a roof truss structure, showing the internal structure and the roof slope. Handwritten notes include: "Roof slope and its purpose" and "x/c".
- Bottom Right:** A perspective view of a roof truss structure, showing the internal structure and the roof slope. Handwritten notes include: "x/c" and "x/c".

1823-1850: original boiler + engine house & the new south range mill

Group 3: The Creative Scene

We worked on mapping Islington Mill's relationship with the Arts and LGBTQ+ community in Salford and Manchester. We created a Figma interactive map with the aim that Islington Mill Arts Club can further expand and add resources.



Access to Platform:

<https://pitchdeck.hypermatic.com/slides/>

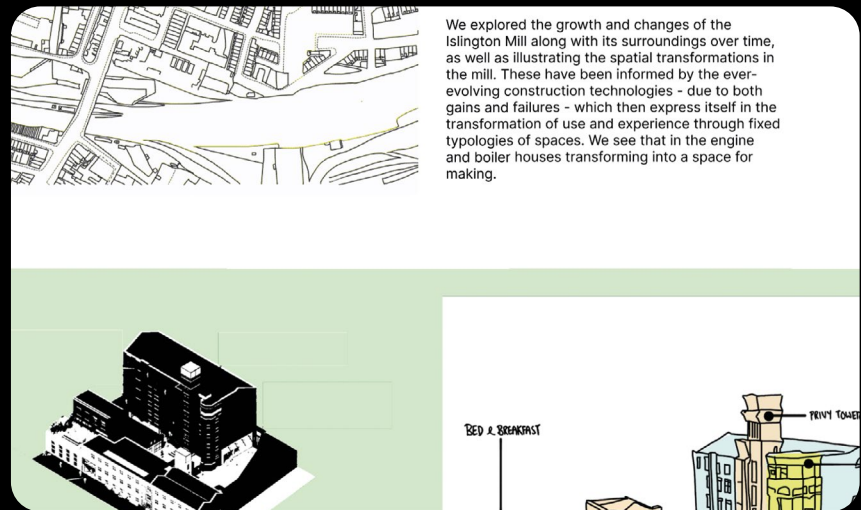
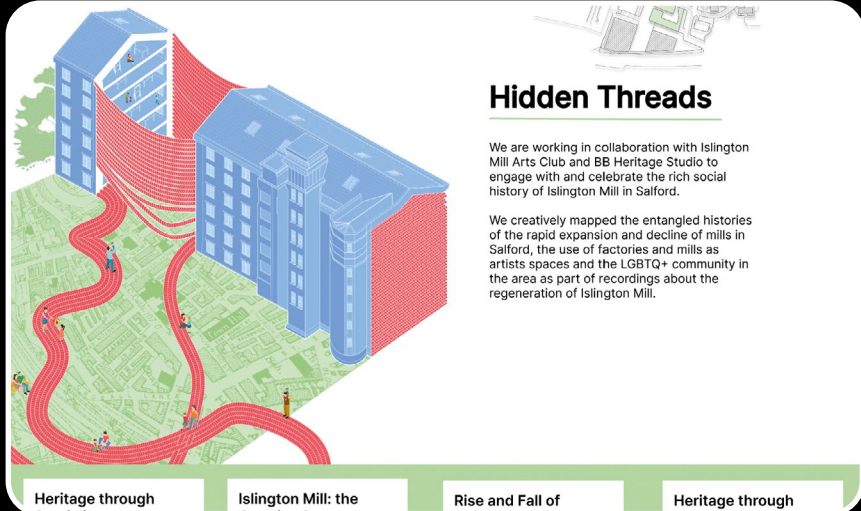
I3w2s8c16316?token=VmlJXy1CXmtf02V7clc%3D

Final Output: Digital Platform

The project culminates as an integrated digital online platform, where all the investigative mappings are shared together.



Access to Platform: <https://www.figma.com/proto/0tDWS9GSFWfLOGiwQYsz4j/Untitled?node-id=0%3A3&scaling=min-zoom&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=0%3A3> and <https://pitchdeck.hypermatic.com/slides/I3w2s8c16316?token=VmlJXy1CXmtf02V7clc%3D>



ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE 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 joined 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 550 students from 4 cohorts in MSA have worked on 35 projects with partners.

QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA LIVE please contact the MSA LIVE team:

msalive@mmu.ac.uk

BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2022

SOCIAL

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WEBSITE

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