

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL  
OF ARCHITECTURE**

**SIDE BY SIDE**



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**MSA  
LIVE 22**

## Team

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## Partners

### Images&Co

Images&Co is an innovation consultancy and design practice. Their focus is on culture, identity and place. The work carried out by the multidisciplinary teams in the transformation of cities and spaces was created to understand the complex narratives within the city's design. In the areas of work, promoting innovation with arts organisations, local communities and developers to reimagine parks, public spaces and local facilities. Alongside their stakeholders, the compelling communication and interaction are coherent at the heart of usability with an essential focus to ensure that technology and digital transformation work for people.

Kasper de Graaf is a director of Design Manchester and CEO of Images&Co, a design and innovation consultancy specialising in culture and identity, with a track record of innovation in cities. Within Design Manchester, Kasper is developing a series of collaborations with cities around the world, including Nairobi on food and climate change, Medellín on social urbanism, Shenzhen on child-friendly cities, Kitwe on creative skills and filmmaking, Puebla on marginalised cultures and communities, Aarhus on liveable cities and Barcelona on sustainable fashion.

### Design Manchester

Design Manchester is a partnership organisation who work with local, national and international partners.

Design Manchester was created to provide the voice of design in and connected with Manchester.

# Agenda

## Our Place: Side by Side

We are Side by Side, a student led MSA team working collaboratively with Design Manchester. During the 2-week project, we curated a pavilion design to promote the inclusion of cultures and the exchange of ideas through an interactive mural pavilion from the child's perspective. Supporting Manchester's Year of the Child, the theme encourages the rejuvenation of Manchester into a child friendly built environment encouraging Children to co-design artwork between the two cities of Manchester and Shenzhen for the pavilion.

We were fortunate to also collaborate with Fringe Art Centre in Shenzhen and Barlow Moor Community Association in Chorlton during the initial design process of the Pavilion. Organising interactive workshops for the students to participate in with our collaborators explored "what our city means to our children and their experiences of those spaces". Working with children encouraged the students to be mindful of the social values of cultural and artistic development through interactive communication platforms, whether it was in person or carried out over Zoom. These activities complemented community interaction, encompassing further design discussions to take forward the ideas for the main proposal with a key focus on what reminds the children of Manchester/ Shenzhen and how a child interprets these ideas in a drawing.

Collaborating across year groups, students have had a chance to develop and learn skills in 3D computer modelling and presentations during the methods of the organised workshop to best present the design and ideas for the client and skills to prepare themselves for post-academic experiences. Whilst we created this pavilion, the formation offered valuable insight to students on pragmatic engagement and its importance to voice ideas and opinions during group discussions and design sessions.

We initially explored a freestanding structure which can be easily assembled and disassembled. Open on all sides ensures shelter is provided from the sun, wind, and rain. The simple structure has been split into three pods, a single-roofed structure with multiple levels, distinguishing their own identities for children to explore. The pavilion structures can be found in a variety of settings, from public parks and gardens to private yards and estates encompassing the involvement of the community.

# Our Process

Our process is simple and straightforward taking it from start to finish and ensuring that every detail is accounted for. First, the process begins with working closely as a team to understand the specific needs and requirements the pavilion must hold in order to meet the interpretations of a child's perspective. We have developed a system that allows us to create a solution to implement development through ongoing support and precedent studies during group discussions.

As a group, we were able to utilise our imagination to express our design and put together a proposal outlining the key features and elements we want to achieve in the course of actions. We all added our own interventions taking care not to overlap with someone else drawing whilst creating our own ideas. This was a really great team effort which we feel has had a really successful output. Once we have approved the initial proposal, we began to work on the developed designs.

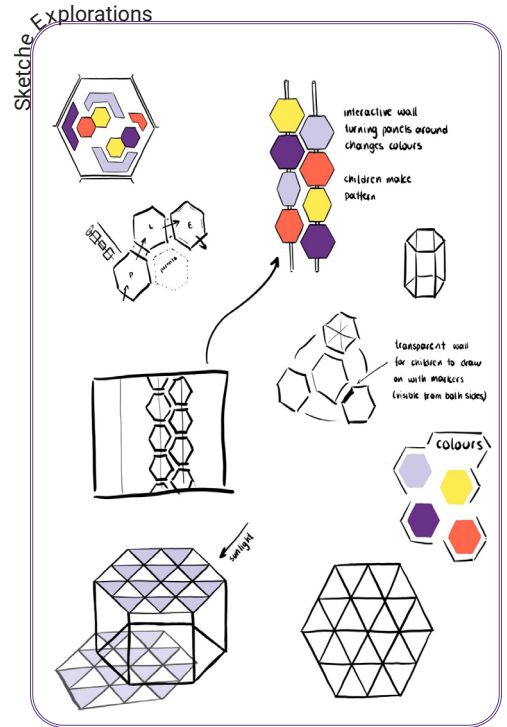
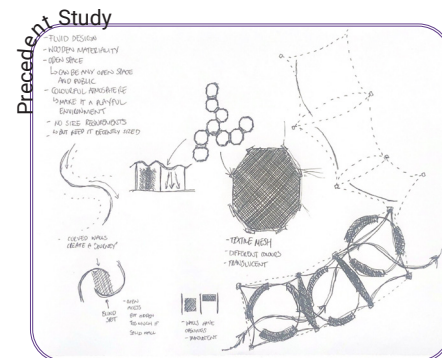
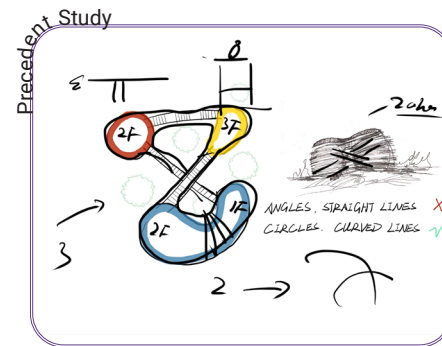
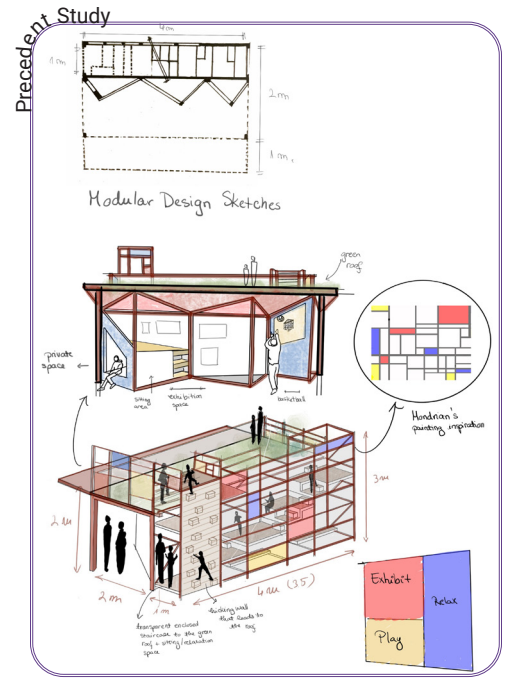
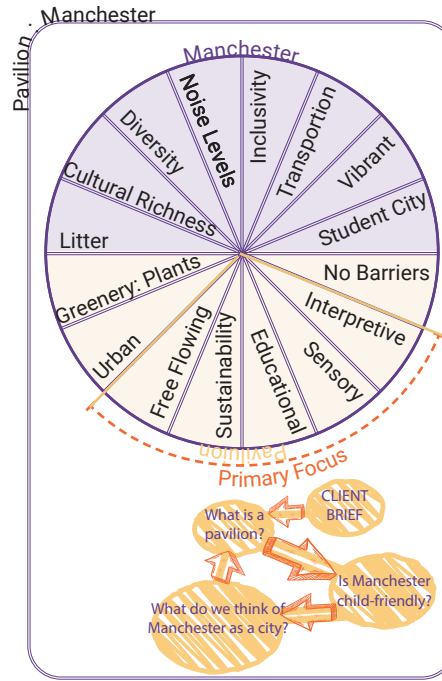
During the design phases, we kept with the ethos to design for the children and the community to inspire the design. We analysed the opportunities by putting ourselves in a place of a child, designing what we would have liked to experience as a child when engaging with a space; identifying three units one for playing, one for relaxing, and one for exhibiting the children's work. Fortunately, we were able to engage with children from both Manchester and Shenzhen interactively to explore children's thoughts. This gave both the students and children to express their understanding and speak with children, taking quantitative information first-hand.

The team formed into two groups during this process, 3D Modelling Team and Portfolio Development, with the designs developed through an initial sketch following the interaction with the children. The children's expressive drawings of the city's meaning and the experiences they have were then integrated into the initial design process. This also allowed the team to discuss a collective understanding of the two cities based on observation and interaction.

The review of the produced drawings helped differentiate the differences and similarities and how these can be highlighted in the design, entailing the bridge for the cities.

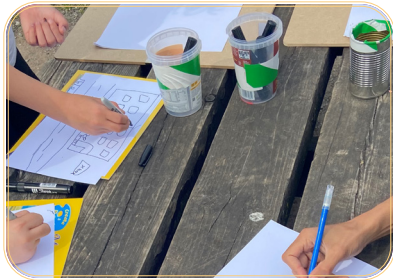
We further developed the design using 3D software, assisting with tutorials and giving them an insight into the different possibilities when it comes to design, yet giving them a chance for further exploration. We reunited as a team to produce the rendered visualisations for the three units to communicate the spatial interactions the children will have.

The experience in the designing process of developing our initial ideas, ending with the hexagons as a unit incorporating the play with the tonalities was inspired by the children's drawings creating a hands-on experience when dealing with direct interactions with the children. The success of the project worked well as a team, working alongside everyone in the planning and organisation of producing great outputs.





# Collaborative Drawings



During the first week, to assist with the initial design, we were fortunate to have the involvement of children from Manchester alongside our collaborator John from Design Manchester. Whilst at Barlow Moor Community Association, we wanted to engage and explore with the children what their city means and their experiences. As a result of the Covid and lockdown, we asked the children what were their favourite things at home and what they enjoyed doing outside of their homes; from this experience, the children were able to express their thoughts through their drawings and interactive discussions. This provided everyone with the first-hand experience to interact and ask questions to the children to explain their drawings with the reassurance they felt involved and the pavilion was under the influence of their drawings ensuring it was designed for them.

## The activities for the kids from Manchester involved:

- What colours remind you of Manchester?
- What do you like to do outside of school in Manchester, can you draw it?
- What animal do they think represents Manchester?
- What is their favourite place in Manchester?



## Fringe Art Center, Shenzhen

The Homework activities for the children from Shenzhen involved:

- Draw where you live, could be garden, home, balcony?
- Draw one thing from your home?
- Draw your favourite activity in your home during Covid?
- Draw your favourite place in Shenzhen?

Similarly, to the experience at Barlow Moor Community Association, we were able to have the involvement of children from Fringe Art Centre in Shenzhen wanting to continue the engagements and explorations of what their city means and their experiences. This was carried out over Zoom, even though the experience varied and we experienced technical difficulties, the children were able to express their thoughts through their drawings and have a 'show and tell' at the end of their design sessions. This provided everyone with the experience to adapt to the planned session with it being held online and also the differences in languages, yet the drawings become the universal medium for interpretation and understanding of the children's thoughts.



# Initial Ideas

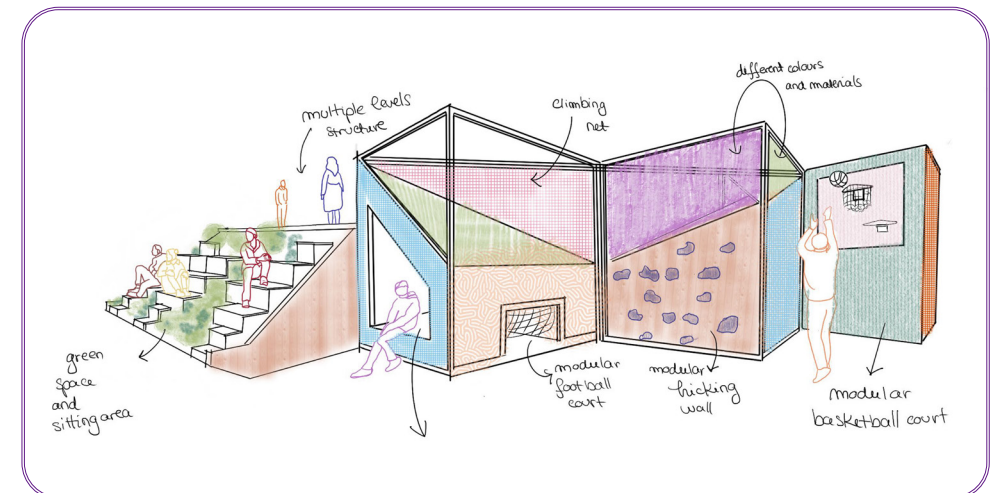
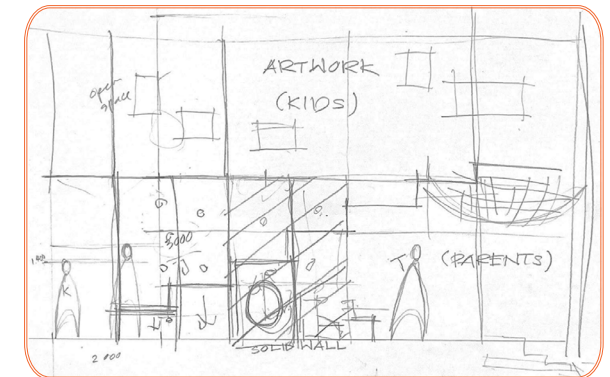
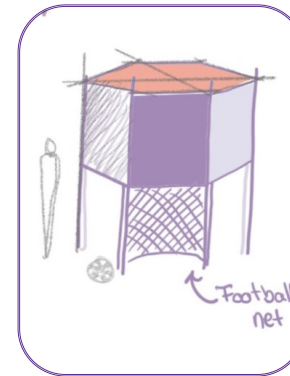
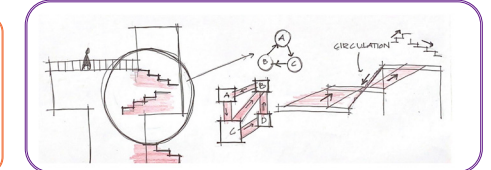
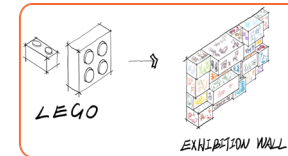
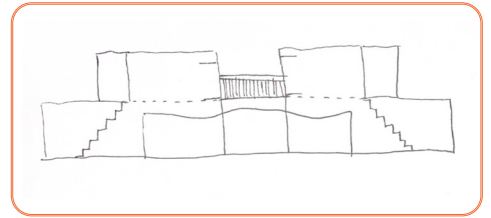
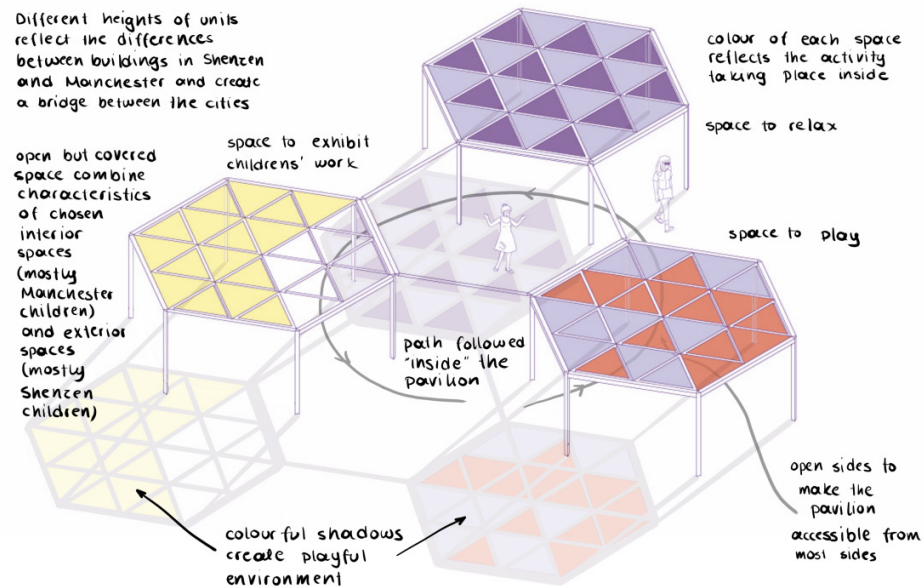
The initial design days involved team discussions to understand the strategies for the children's pavilion. Working on finding precedents and understanding the ideas that would be interactive and child friendly.

Precedents gathered in the initial stages reflect the various ideas such as the different levels which depict the different heights of the buildings in Shenzhen and Manchester, the exhibition space which displays the different works of children from all around the world for it to be displayed and allow the children to add their artwork to the wall as well, the idea was to make the wall more approachable for everyone so the inclusion of a transparent wall for it to be more hands on was added.

The students approached these ideas in groups of five and curated the initial design ideas which involved the concepts and the colour scheme to be used for the designing of the pavilion. The use of hexagons is derived from the bees as the city of Manchester symbolises the worker bee from the industrial era. The colour scheme used depicts the colours of the cities these pavilions are based on that is yellow and purple for Manchester and red for Shenzhen.

## Connecting Manchester and Shenzhen

Different heights of units reflect the differences between buildings in Shenzhen and Manchester and create a bridge between the cities

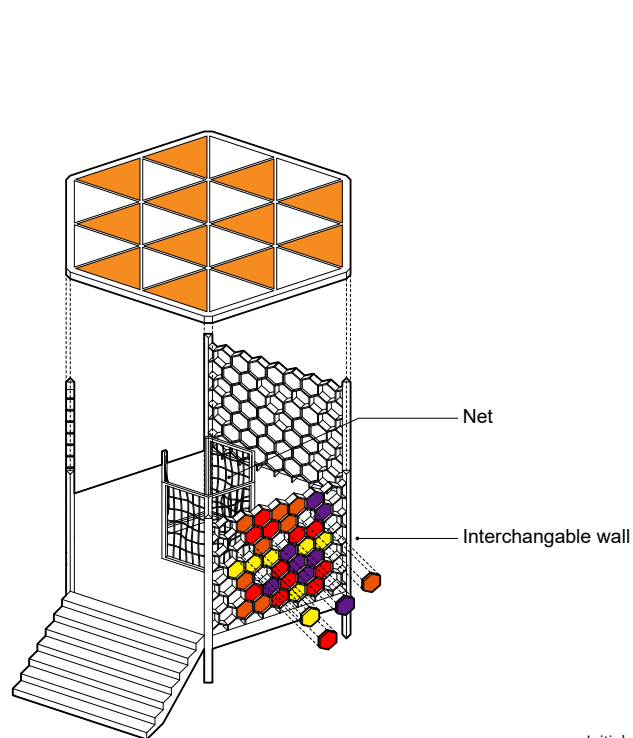




# Design Development

## Play space

We try to get BA students to summarize children's behavior by children's works. Therefore, we experimented with different ways the children could access the play space unit, for example some stepping stones, crawling and climbing from underneath or climbing up the steps. In the central space, they are encouraged to be creative by moving about the wall panels to form different shapes and colours. Another idea to explore would be to have colour/shape challenges at the side that the children need to have a go at forming using the wall. Overall the space is like a mini playground that will encourage creativity and exploration. BA students used SketchUp to build a draft model, and we taught them to use Rhino to develop the digital model. Finally, it is expressed by exploded diagram that the unit of the wall is movable, and a hole in the middle. It shows the rich play space of this pavilion.



Play space explosion diagram

Initial sketch

# Design Development

## Exhibit space

The purpose of the gallery area is for the children visiting the pavilion to exhibit their drawings and view the work of their peers. When designing this space, several ideas were considered. A side of the unit will be used for putting up drawings and another will be transparent for drawing directly on it with markers. We also decided to add seating in this unit, for anyone wanting to see the exhibition. According to children's drawings, it is not difficult to discover their passion for Lego. To make it more playful, a pattern of hexagons was designed, with blocks of different heights for the children to sit on. Our goal was to make this space equal in importance to the other two units, by making it fun and interactive. By instructing BA students to draw exploded diagrams, they can better express their strategies, such as highlighting the interactive walls.

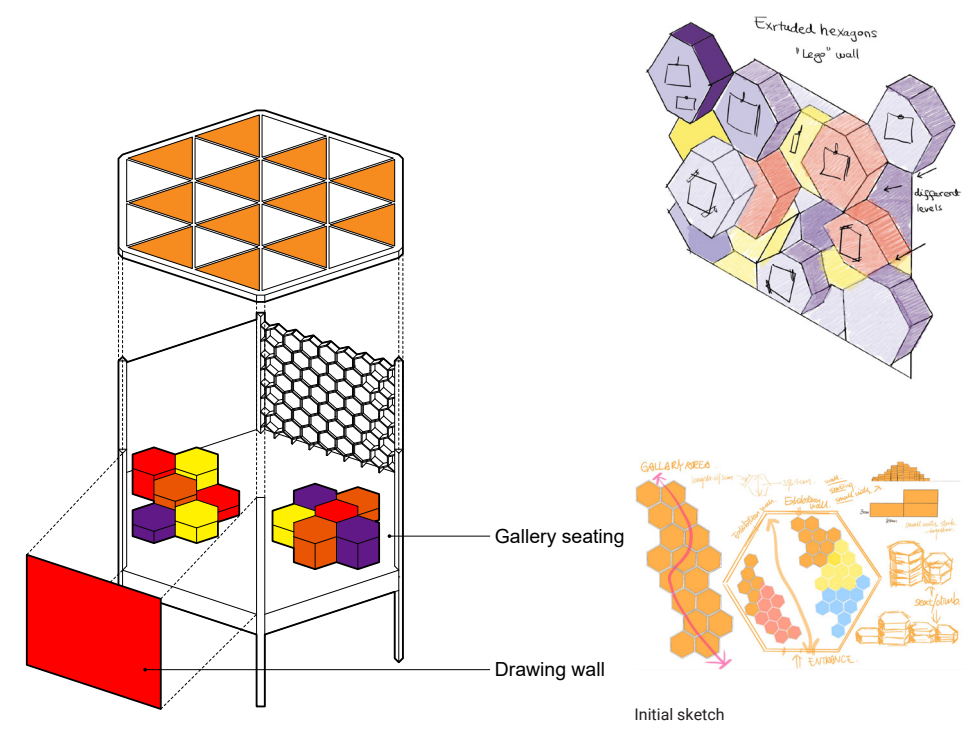


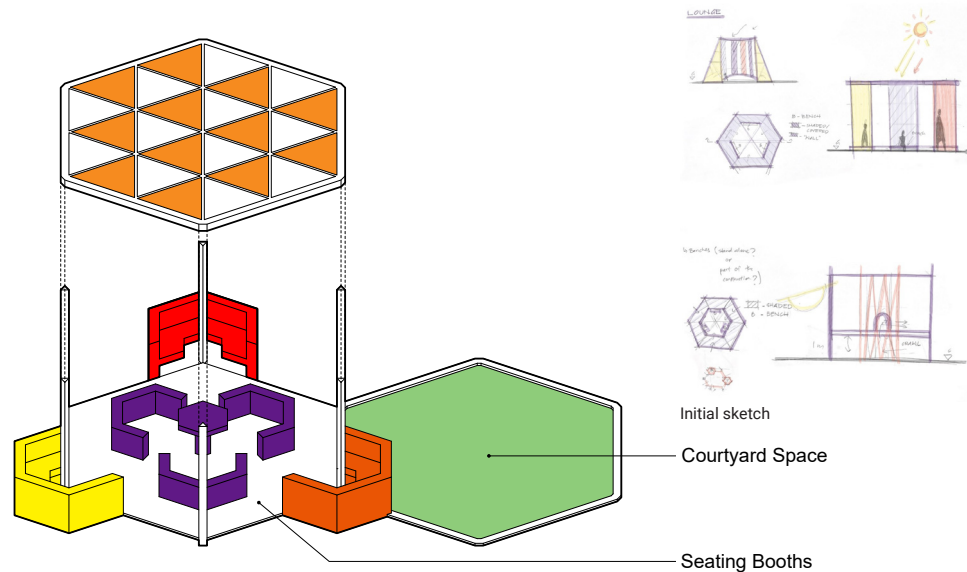
Exhibit space explosion diagram

Initial sketch

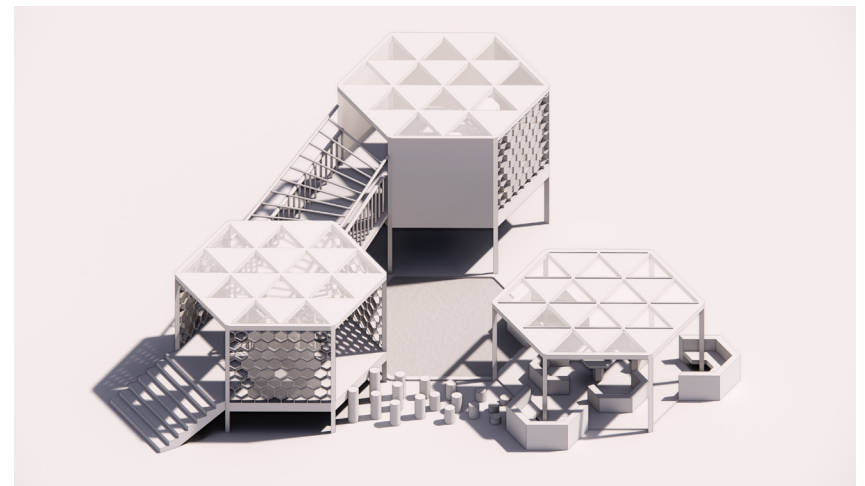
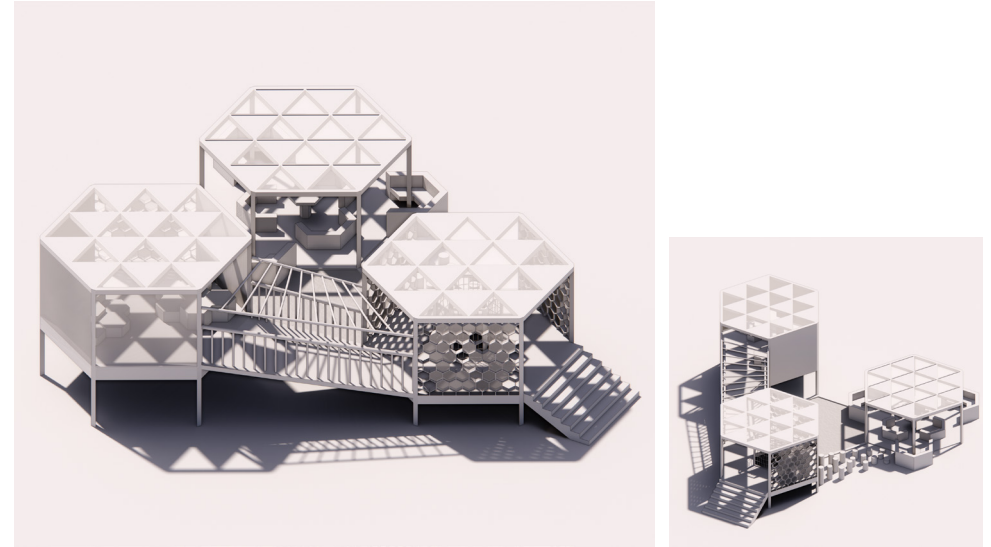
# Design Development

## Relax Space

It was important for us to design a relaxation space that incorporated the needs of the children and their parents. For the children, the space can be used during a lesson or food break, and for the parents it can be used to sit and keep an eye on their kids. The hexagonal shape of the seating has been taken from the main design concept, so the seating is encompassed within the design. The booths create a sense of permanence and containment - while the space is open, a boundary is formed, with all the seating facing inwards to encourage social interaction. This pavilion mainly expresses a concept of openness and freedom, but also expresses that our entire design is equal and fair, corresponding to our child-friendly theme. In the exploded diagram, we highlight the seats and courtyard, reflecting that the main function of this pavilion is to rest and socialize.



# Design Proposal





# Rendered Visuals





## 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.

## BLOG

[live.msa.ac.uk/2022](http://live.msa.ac.uk/2022)

## SOCIAL

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## WEBSITE

[www.msa.ac.uk](http://www.msa.ac.uk)

## QUESTIONS

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

[msalive@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:msalive@mmu.ac.uk)