

MANCHESTER SCHOOL  
OF ARCHITECTURE

# St Serving John's Centre Joy



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MSA  
LIVE 23

## Team

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## Partners

St. John's Centre is a cherished community centre in Old Trafford. It provides a plethora of activities and services for the members of the community from fitness classes, IT sessions and ESOL lessons for adult learning. The centre also provides counselling for finances, and relief for families in need. St. John's doors are open to all, across different backgrounds and ethnicities. The centre also boasts a wonderful hall that hosts memorable events and activities like weddings, birthdays, and holiday parties. With help from volunteers and full-time staff, St. John's has thrived and built a trustful reputation within the community for over forty years. Our collaborator, Emma, has provided many insightful stories about the centre, and it has evidently been a solid aid throughout the pandemic and cost of living crises.

# Agenda

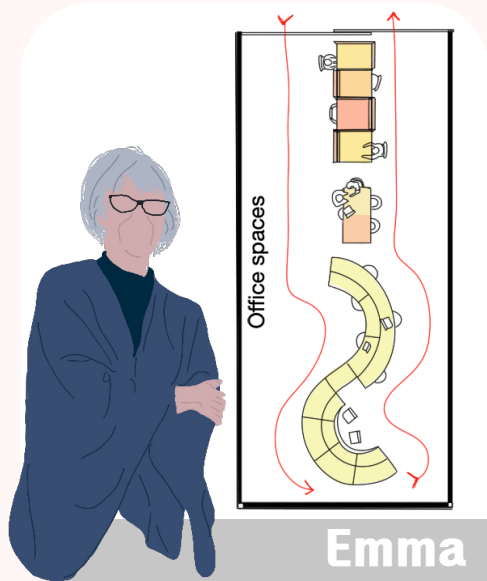
## Serving Joy

St John's centre has been in operation for over forty years and is an independent community-based voluntary organisation located in Old Trafford. The centre is a hub that provides a range of activities and services to the wider community and is most cherished by them. St John's accommodates uniquely diverse members of the community from different ethnicities, religions, ages, genders etc. The centre champions the advancement of education, and it also provides facilities for improving social welfare for recreation and leisure. The primary aim of St. John's centre, moreover, is to enrich the lives of people living in Old Trafford – especially those within marginalised and underprivileged groups.

Our team worked collaboratively with members of St John's centre to develop alternative spatial layouts for the community building. Our main goal was to understand the user experience and needs by identifying key weaknesses and strengths within the original design. Through engagement with the community members and staff, we were able to generate optimum spatial solutions that will cater to their needs and allow them to get the very best out of their community centre. Our output for the client was to produce a set of plan that explored possible spatial layouts.



# Meet Our Clients

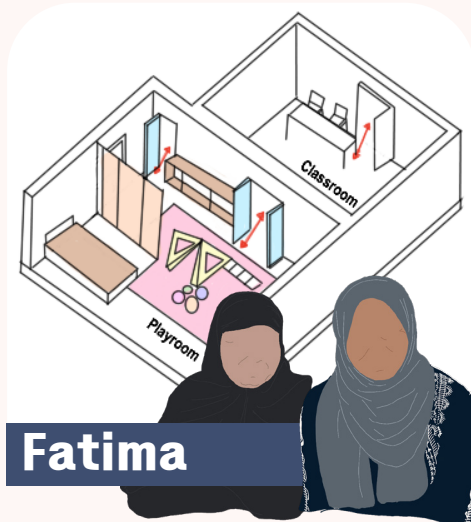


Emma

Emma plays a pivotal role as a valued collaborator and Learning Coordinator at the St John's Centre. Alongside coordinating with the local council to secure funds for the hall, she efficiently manages administrative tasks and supervises everyone involved.

As the Learning Coordinator, she organizes educational programs and workshops and ensures the smooth functioning of the administrative tasks within the centre, managing budgets, coordinating schedules, and maintaining effective communication with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders and juggles between different workspaces.

Given the multitude of responsibilities she shoulders, it would greatly benefit Emma to have a dedicated office space where people can easily reach out to her. Recognizing the importance of a welcoming reception area, she has suggested improvements to enhance the flow and create a more open and inviting environment for visitors.



Fatima

Fatima, a 30-year-old woman from Pakistan, is a dedicated mother and homemaker. Being a mother, she has the responsibilities of caring for her two children. She drops off her older child to school and focuses her attention on the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) along with her younger child.

Fatima maximizes the center's resources, attending English classes three times a week, improving her language skills. She finds joy in fitness classes in the evenings. On weekends, she brings her children to the center to play and interact with others, and partake in engaging recreational activities organized by the center.

She feels that a dedicated enclosed classroom would greatly enhance the learning experience. The current open hall lacks the necessary acoustic properties required for an optimal learning environment. Additionally, having a separate Creche room where her children can be safely cared for would allow her to focus on her studies without interruptions or distractions.



Claire

Claire, a vital member of the community center, plays an indispensable role as a dedicated volunteer, contributing her time and efforts to support and assist with various activities hosted within the center for the past three years.

Claire's involvement in the community center is multifaceted, as she takes charge of organizing the community hall for diverse activities. From arranging tables and teaching ESOL classes to assisting with administrative tasks and lending a hand in the kitchen, she actively contributes to the center's smooth operation.

The lack of a dedicated waiting area was a pressing concern, as an active user of the community hall. Additionally, she emphasized the need for a convenient pantry slab equipped with a coffee machine and snacks for both visitors and staff, eliminating the need to go to the kitchen.



Atu

Atu, an elderly retired Jamaican gentleman who has been residing in Old Trafford for three decades, called the place his home. Despite recently experiencing a stroke, he finds solace in the accessibility of the nearby community centre, which is just a ten-minute walk away. The centre's strong community provides him with valuable engagement and support during his recovery journey.

Atu actively participates in the center's weekly fitness classes, nurturing his physical well-being. Additionally, he occasionally utilizes the IT Suite, further expanding his knowledge. Atu cherishes the spaces as they enable him to connect with fellow community members and foster meaningful relationships.

Recognizing the potential for improvement, Atu proposed expanding the IT suite and adding more seating in the waiting area. He suggested optimizing the underutilized stage and increasing natural light in the main hall. As a senior member, he also expressed concern about the limited accessibility to the upper level, which houses valuable classroom spaces.



# About the Site

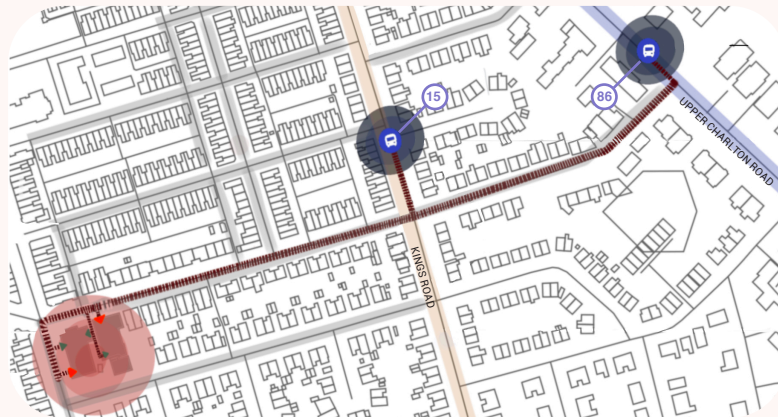
## building use

- St. John's Centre
- St. John's Church
- Residential
- Commercial
- Church



## accessibility

- Main road
- Main road
- Secondary streets
- Main access point
- Secondary access point



## Strengths

**Location:** Well-connected and easily accessible to public transportation, making it convenient to reach the centre.

**Size:** The centre offers ample space like classrooms and multi-functional hall for various activities.

**Infrastructure:** The existing infrastructure along with a new extension gives additional space to reorganise utilities and amenities.

**Community Support:** The community provides a strong foundation for programming and volunteer's involvement.

## Weaknesses

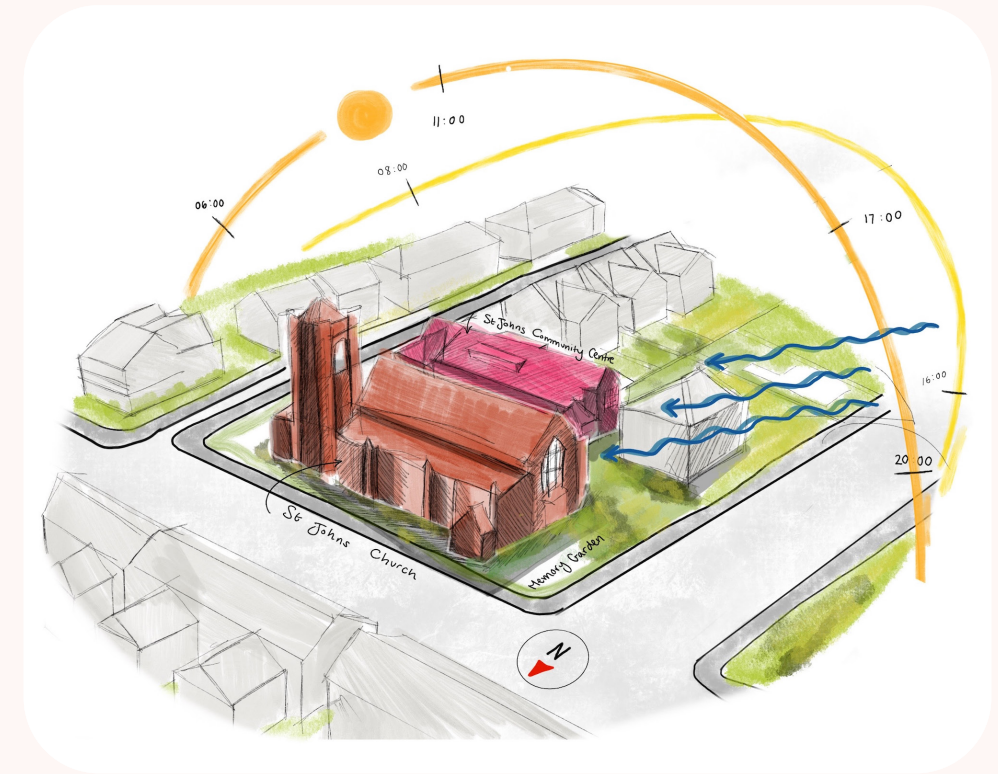
**Accessibility:** Insufficient parking space and lack of accessibility features pose challenges for individuals with disabilities or those relying on private vehicles.

**Limited Expansion:** Limited room for future expansion restricts the ability to adapt to changing community needs.

**Aging Infrastructure:** The old building requires significant renovations to meet the needs of the community.

**Zoning and Permits:** Regulatory challenges may hinder the development of the centre.

## environmental analysis



## Opportunity

**Space Optimization:** Reorganisation of layout maximizes the use of available space.

**Multi-functionality:** The hall is a flexible space that can be easily adapted to serve different purposes.

**Natural Lighting and Ventilation:** Optimize the use of windows for natural light and ventilation for a pleasant and sustainable environment.

**Acoustics and Soundproofing:** Paying attention to acoustics to ensure optimal sound quality within the hall.

## Threats

**Structural Constraints:** The existing structure may limit the reorganization of the hall.

**Budgetary Limitations:** Limited funding sources or unforeseen budget constraints may impact the development of the centre.

**Historic or Cultural Preservation:** The hall has historical and cultural significance which the design alterations must respect and preserve.

**Disruption to Activities:** The renovation would disrupt the ongoing activities inconveniencing regular users.

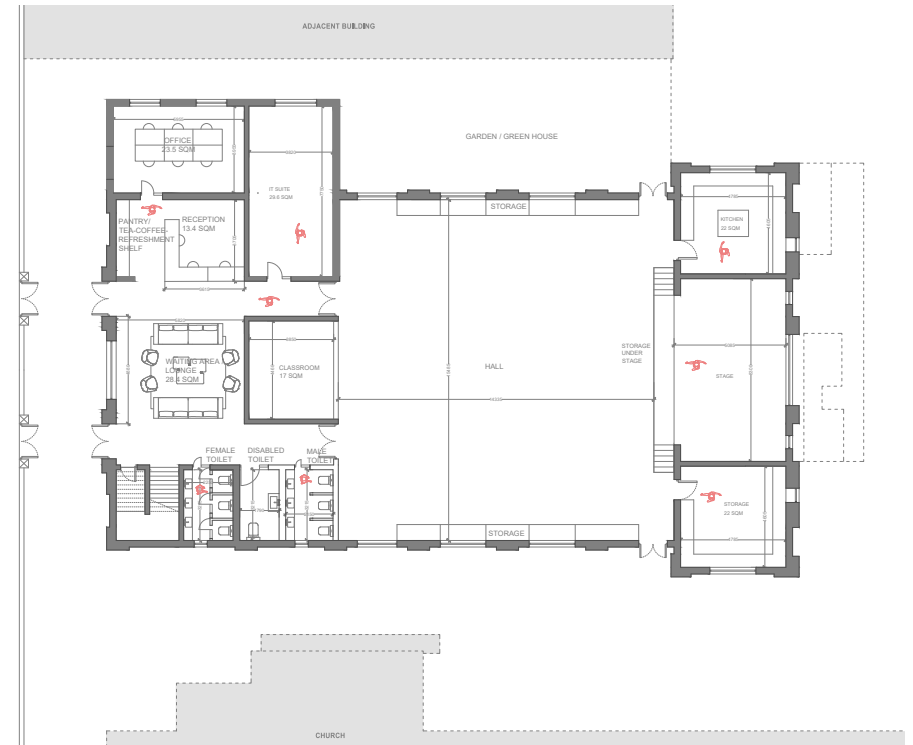
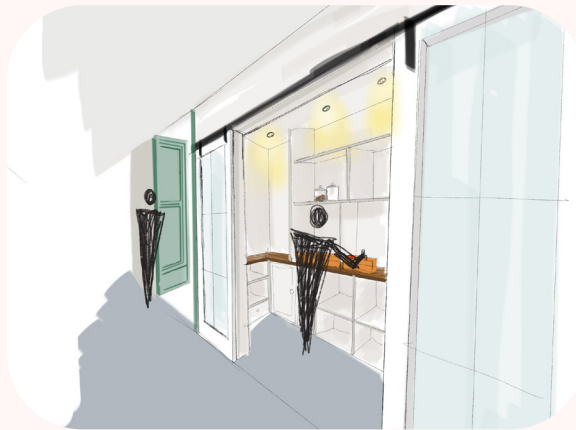
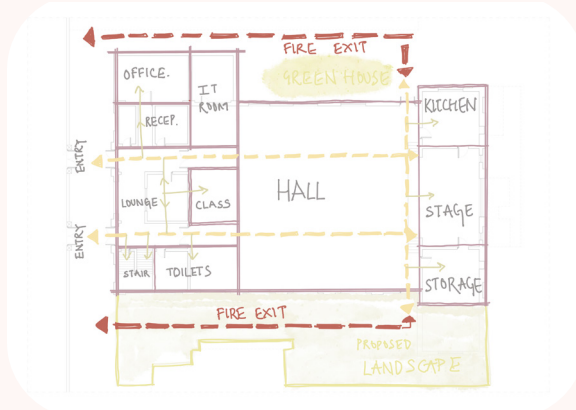




# Design Process | Proposal 1

## minimum interventions

Building on the feedback from our client Emma, the team developed more iterations, in groups, with a focus on the reception area. The aim was to create an open-plan space to accommodate better circulation and seating. The clients expressed a need for a pantry that was accessible but also a bit out of the way of public view. Additionally, the clients requested that the toilets be clustered together towards the northern side of the plan, including a disabled toilet. Furthermore, our team developed different creative solutions for storage within the hall. Lastly, an extension was explored towards the north side as well, as suggested by the clients, to accommodate more classrooms.



ground floor

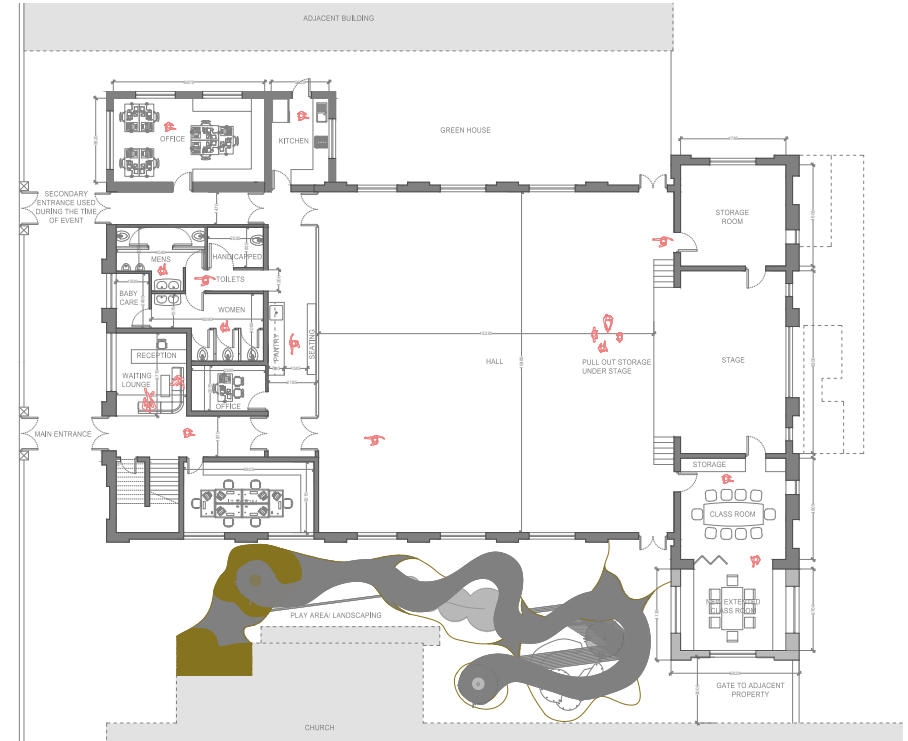
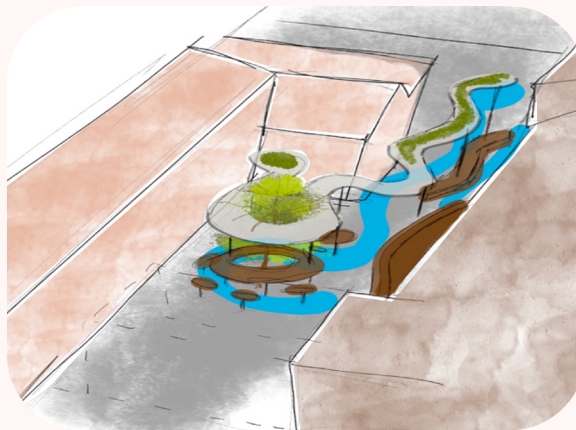
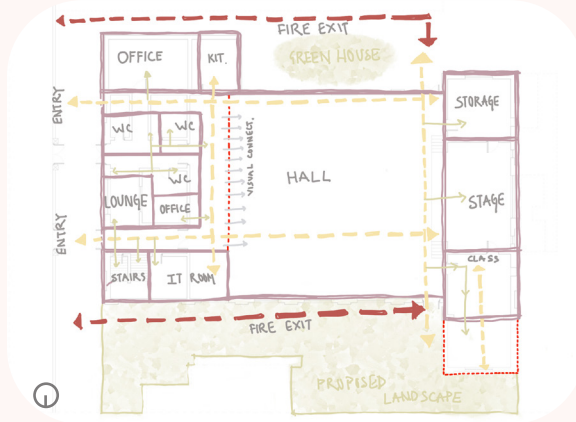




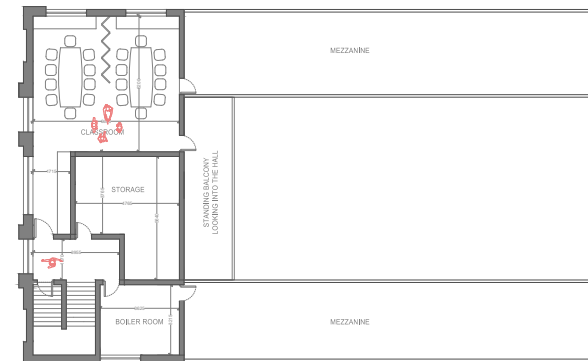
# Design Process | Proposal 2

## adding extension

This layout focuses on the extension of the community hall towards the north. According to the collaborator they had less space for classroom and they wanted more private space for conducting classes. The entrance space leads to lounge and reception which then leads to the main hall via passage. The first floor opens up to an enclosed balcony which acts as a visual connection between the first floor and the hall. The proposed landscape acts as a connection in between the community hall and the church and it has multiple seating areas and kids play area.



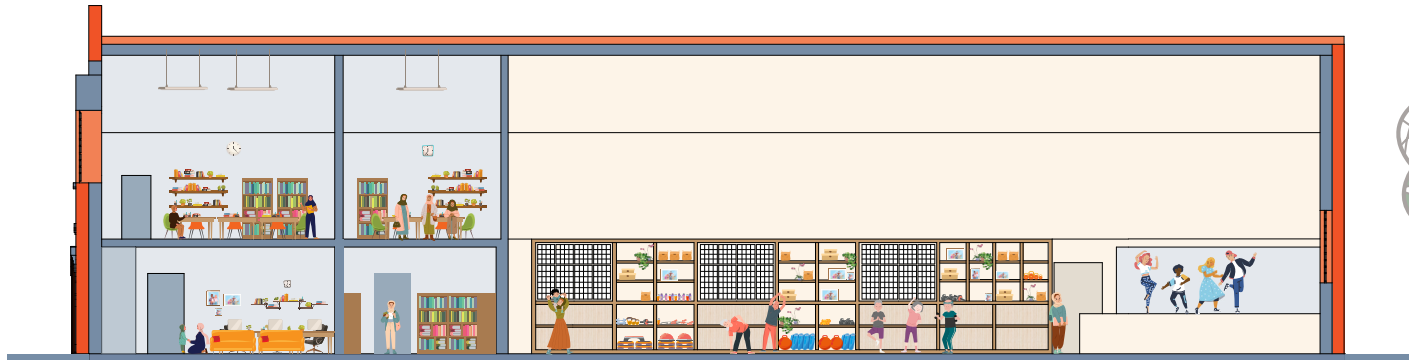
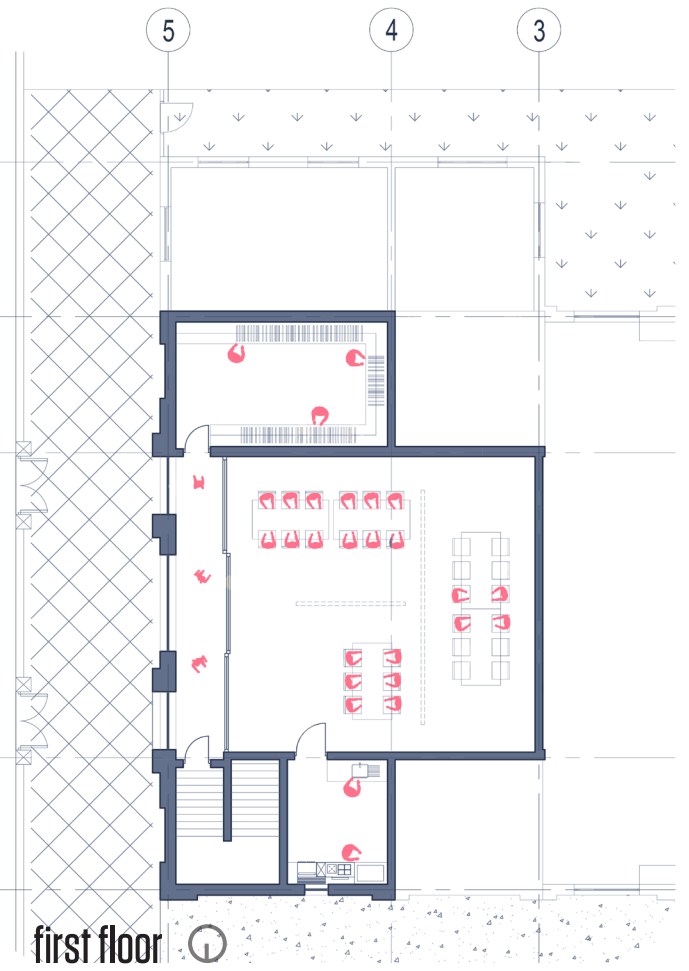
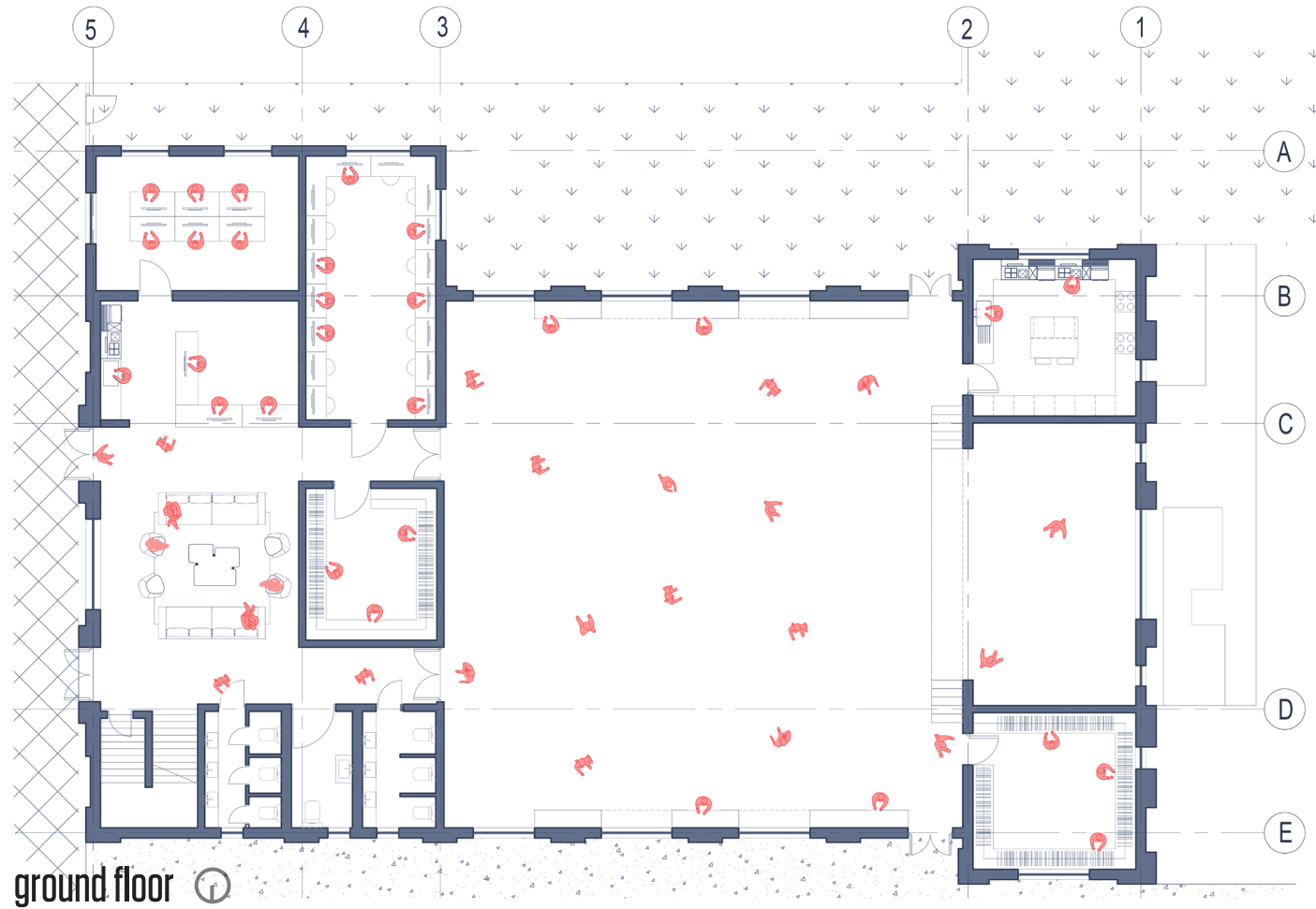
ground floor



first floor



# Final Proposal



## ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 students with those in BA year 1 and year 2 and Masters Landscape Architecture 1 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 650 students from 4 cohorts in MSA have worked on 42 projects with partners.

## QUESTIONS

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

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

## BLOG

**[live.msa.ac.uk/2023](http://live.msa.ac.uk/2023)**

## SOCIAL

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