

MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE



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THE
ORCHARD
PROJECT

PROFORMA

MSA
LIVE 23

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Partners

Chi Emecheta ,Co-director of PROFORMA. is an emerging artist and creative producer with an interest in interdisciplinary practices.As new co-director of PROFORMA, Chi is committed to supporting artists and creatives in making and presenting work in both gallery and non-gallery spaces, focusing on performance and visual art.

Chris Bailkoski, the creative director of PROFORMA and also curator with extensive experience of developing collaborative practices to create dynamic exhibitions and events in both galleries and non-gallery spaces, predominantly focusing on grassroots visual artists and musicians in the North-West region.

About PROFORMA: PROFORMA is a non-profit visual art, performance and curating platform in Greater Manchester supporting artists and curators by commissioning new work and providing artist exchange opportunities while offering an essential programme for artists' development including mentoring and peer-led talks.

Founded by creative director Chris Bailkoski, exhibitions have so far included showcasing mid-career artists at The Dancehouse Theatre, Manchester, The Manchester Contemporary, SET Space, Dalston, Abingdon Studios, Blackpool, Begehungen festival Chemnitz and Corte Supernova during Venice Biennale 2019.

Agenda



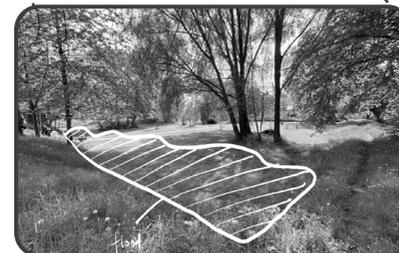
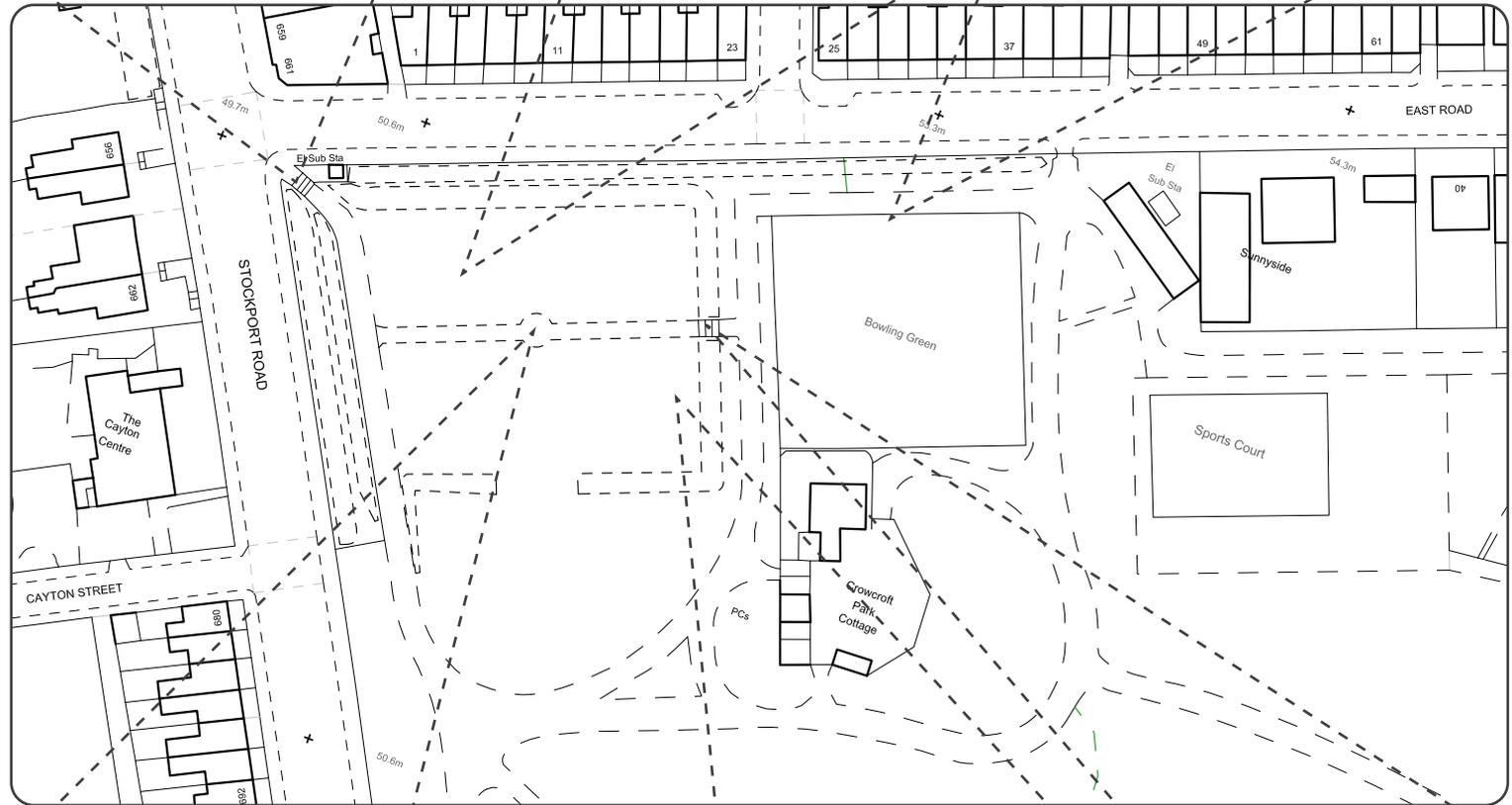
The Wellness Garden

In this live project we will partner up with Chris Bailkoski and Chi Emecheta from PROFORMA ,LongSight Art Space The project entails mapping the Crowcroft Park, working with the local community to revitalise the green space, and proposing ideas to improve the region's fragile environment by introducing orchards. Activities for the initiative will involve modelling the chosen portion of the park as well as community organisation meetings and workshops. The project would conclude with an interactive session and an exhibition at the Longsight Art Space. In addition to providing an opportunity to develop mapping and surveying abilities, the project would be a great way to engage with the neighbourhood.

Site

Crowcroft Park in Longsight is bordered by Stockport Road on the west and Northmoor Road on the east. The park is frequented by locals who have a strong sense of community and are deeply invested in Longsight. In order to develop a wellness orchard in Crowcroft Park, The Longsight Art Space aims to collaborate with the locals of Longsight. The park includes bowling greens, and the design proposal is specific to a certain region of the park, including a Lower Bowling Green area and an Upper Bowling Green.

A level difference of 1.3 to 1.5 meters separates the Lower Bowling Green from the Upper Bowling Green. As a result, the Lower Bowling Green frequently floods. The project calls for the planting of a Wellness Garden in the form of a forest orchard within the Upper Bowling Green. A metal fence encloses the Upper Bowling Green which will make sure that fruit plants can be cared for, accessible to everyone, and are resilient against some local challenges, such as vandalism. Currently, the green area within the fence has two entrances, and an abandoned home is located adjacent to it. This area contains a few benches, but the entrances are normally closed making it inaccessible to park visitors.

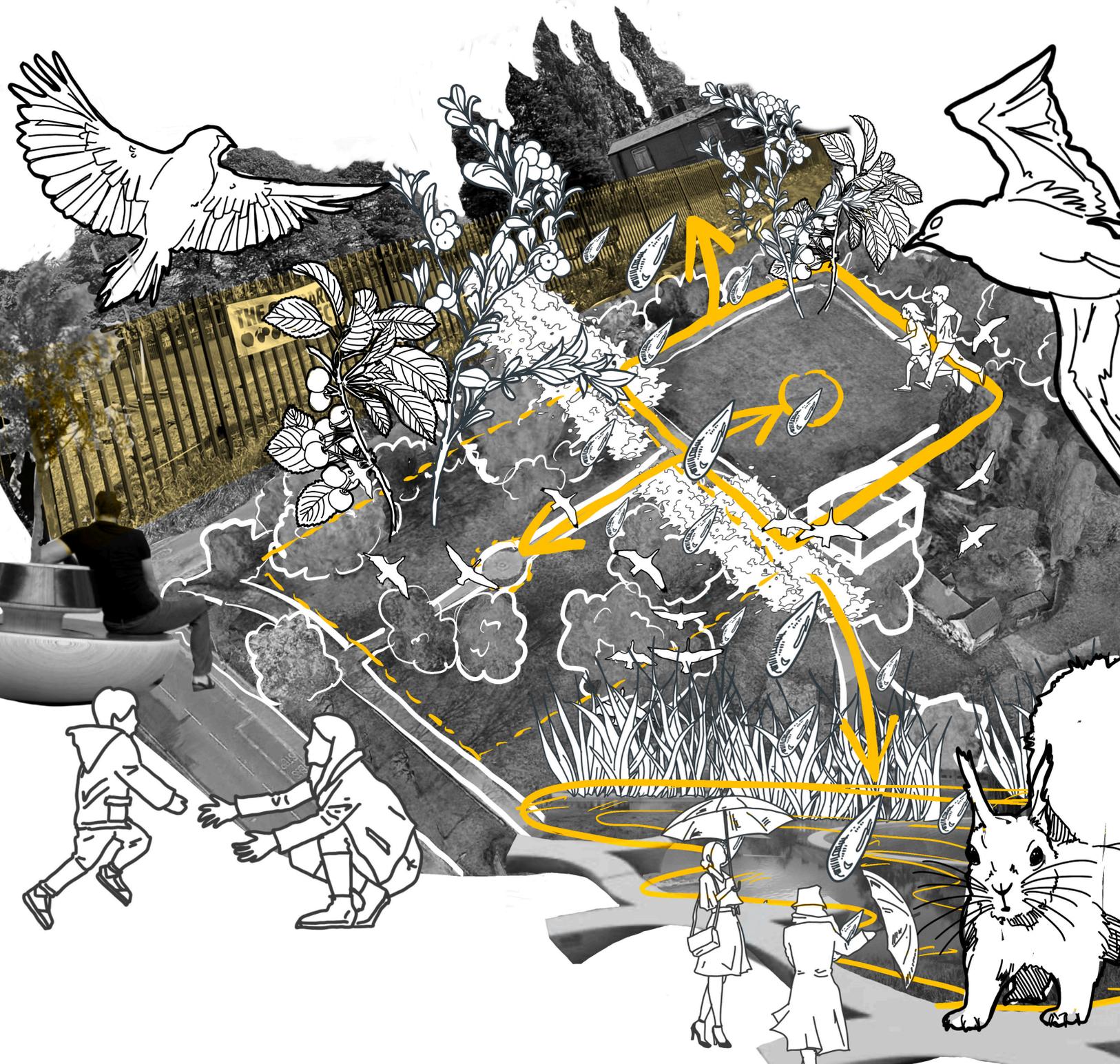


Manifesto

The Longsight Art Space intends to collaborate with the locals of Longsight to develop a Wellness Garden in Crowcroft Park that will include a variety of fruit trees, flowers, herbs, and shrubs. Since the garden is meant for the public and must adhere to minimal upkeep requirements, it needs to be designed in a forest orchard manner after consultation with the community in and around Northmoor Road, Longsight.

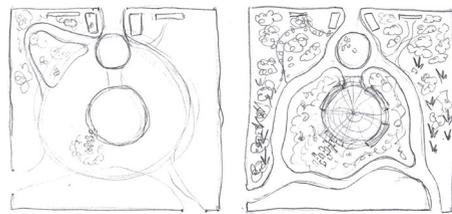
The metal fence around the Upper Bowling Green area, which cannot be removed due to the high cost of dismantling (40,000£), is a significant issue that has to be addressed. The fence also needs to have as many gaps as possible to ensure that a clear visual path is established. The gaps would allow a clear view of the entire area which would help people feel at ease and enable them to use the space more safely, as well as prevent wrongdoings within this region. Additionally, although the fence has two openings that are usually locked, a third entry from the Lower Bowling Green would make it easier for visitors to enter it, enhance pedestrian circulation, and connect the two Bowling Green areas. Though suggesting the third entry would improve the connection between the regions, it would also necessitate cutting the metal barrier and providing additional support.

Further issues include a lack of public seating in the park and flooding of the Lower Bowling Green, which can be fixed by incorporating a water body within the flood-prone area, that would not only be visually appealing but would also improve the biodiversity of the area. However, this would be a significant safety concern because children frequently visit the park. Another design constraint is the abandoned house next to the Upper Bowling Green fence is owned by the local council and cannot be altered. Thus, the Wellness Garden's layout needs to be developed so that the house's view does not interfere with the garden's green space.



Proposal 1: THE CIRCLE GARDEN

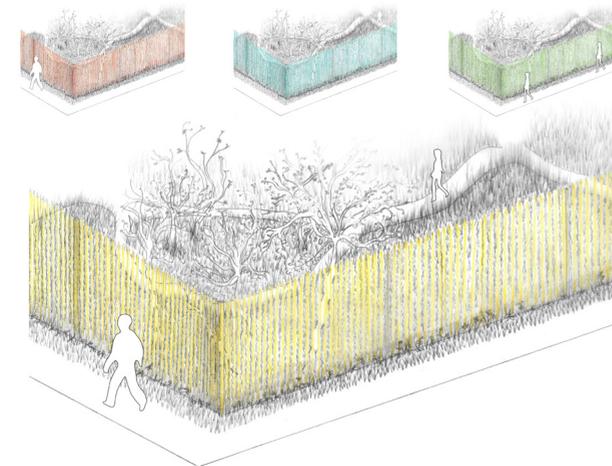
Our proposal centres around the Circle. Humans are naturally drawn to circles, studies show babies show a preference for round shapes early on in development, and this continues throughout our lives. This is because, for some reason, circles and roundness are intrinsically associated with safety, and softness. It is unfortunate, then, that we have developed cities to be so angular and sharp. In Longsight, typical to many British industrial neighbourhoods, streets are repetitive and boxy, and there isn't much space for softness and roundness. And so we invite it in with this Garden. The curved paths lined with aromatic herbs, and native wildflowers, and the sheltered seating in the centre all encourage the explorer to relax, to embrace the softness and to escape from the city that surrounds them. Crucially, the garden is designed to exist with as little human intervention as possible, as it encourages growth outside of the lines, with nothing caging the plants in. There is a play area from children, naturally sheltered by long grass, and well connected to the seating area, to ensure relaxation both for children and parents alike. We believe it is our responsibility to not only consider human impact, but the impact on flora also. All plants grown are local to the area, and so the garden would be entirely non-invasive. We believe all development should be this way, leaving as little impact on the existing wildlife and site as humanly possible. All materials used for construction will either be grown on site (bamboo structures), or recycled and sourced from the existing orchard, or from other construction waste sites around Manchester.



- ① Existing Benches
- ② Blackberry Bushes
- ③ Bamboo Seating Shelters ("pods")
- ④ Centre Mosaic
- ⑤ Play Area
- ⑥ Second Mosaic/Centre Piece
- ⑦ Raised Beds
- ⑧ Orchard
- ⑨ Existing Orchard

Rewilding

We want our design to concentrate on the non-human; on how we can encourage the rewilding of the site whilst incorporating human elements to make it a functional site for its users by including a play area, covered seating, an orchard & blackberry bushes (both to provide for human consumption, and provide nutrition for local wildlife) and a new entrance on the South-West side: connecting the existing orchard - which will house extra seating-giving the site an increase integration with its surroundings. Rewilding the space remains the primary concept however - thin winding paths should strike a balance between retaining the maximum green Earth & providing human access.



Bamboo
Used for the sheltered seating and entrance arch by bending & weaving.



Stone
Used for the paving; irregular shapes are fine as the edges should blend into the garden.



Reclaimed Bricks & Mortar
Could alternatively be used depending on the client's views & budget. Very accessible in Manchester.



Timber
Used for the raised beds & simple bench design to reduce cost.

The Fence

The fence will be painted since the existing coat is showing significant wear. We thought that, since the fence is permanent, we should paint it a fun colour to both make the 12m steel structure less intimidating & promote a good atmosphere. We thought yellow would be a good colour however the choice can and should be discussed with the client & can be changed in future years.

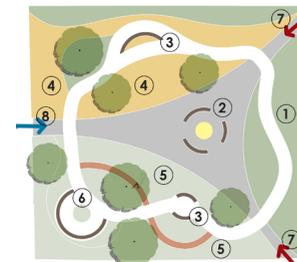
Proposal 2 : WELLNESS GARDEN

The development of The Orchid garden was presented to us a clean canvas full of opportunity. Our group developed two proposals exploring the space through different designs.

The Orchid garden envisions having multiple uses with spaces for a Mosaic, Seating, a clear walking route, a shelter and various spaces for planting with the plan in mind of inviting the community to occupy this space harmoniously.

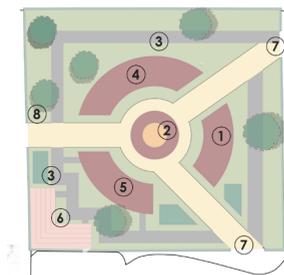
In this proposal the garden is broken down through linear division expanding from the mosaic and using the newly proposed entrance and the existing exits as guidelines. Exploring the garden this way created more individual pockets of spaces which could maximise the opportunity for more functions to take place within the garden.

The garden was then divided into 3 main areas that cater to different types of herbs, fruits vegetables and flowering plants which have therapeutic properties. Pathways connecting the 3 access points merge onto a central space that houses the mosaic floor which is intersected by an organic pathway the manoeuvres through the garden along which seating and pavilion have been designed



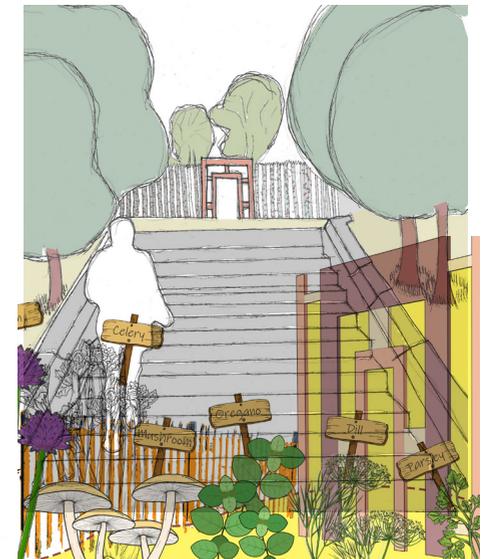
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- Legend**
- 1. Herbs
 - 2. Mosaic floor
 - 3. Seating area
 - 4. Flower beds
 - 5. Vegetables
 - 6. Pavilion
 - 7. Existing entry
 - 8. Proposed entry



This iteration follows a linear pattern that merges into a central space showcasing the mosaic floor. The covered pavilion hides the building in the backdrop and provides an interactive space. Pathways are designed to enhance user experience through the different spaces within the garden. The proposed entrance to the garden is designed using reclaimed metal bars used in the existing fence.

- Legend**
- 1. Herbs
 - 2. Mosaic floor
 - 3. Seating area
 - 4. Flower beds
 - 5. Vegetables
 - 6. Pavilion
 - 7. Existing entry
 - 8. Proposed entry



Proposal 3 : SEASONAL GARDEN

The design aims to increase the sense of belonging for the community. By actively involving locals in the improvement of the garden, this inclusive approach strengthens the community's connection to the park. Overall, our approach to this project combines aesthetics, functionality, and community engagement, resulting in a Garden which encourages biodiversity and facilitates human-nature interaction.

Our approach to this project is to design the Garden with a focus on vegetation and human activities. We have collaborated to create a seasonal wellness garden, incorporating a similar material and colour palette to visually connect it to the larger context of the park.

We integrate various types of vegetation to provide year-round interest and colour to the park. This diverse range of plants also caters to different human activities. To promote biodiversity, we have included berries and wildflowers that attract animals, providing an opportunity for locals to directly engage with nature. Additionally, we have incorporated a vegetated swale to improve the flooding situation and minimize safety hazards. The greater the diversity of vegetation planted, the more water can be absorbed.

Our proposal includes a seating area and a shelter in the corner of the park, offering visitors a place to rest and immerse themselves in a natural environment. Furthermore, we envision a design-based element—a laser-cutting backboard positioned behind the seating area. This feature allows local artists or creators to participate in the artistic creation of the garden.

By actively involving locals in the garden's improvement, our design aims to increase the community's sense of belonging. This inclusive approach strengthens their connection to the park. Overall, our project combines aesthetics, functionality, and community engagement, resulting in a garden that encourages biodiversity and facilitates human-nature interaction.



Spring flowers will reveal the start of the season with the return of green and spring flowers. The spring section will become the focus of the garden in spring.



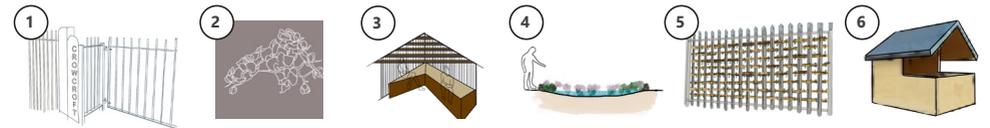
More wildflowers will appear in summer and provide different colours. Grasses and foliage will increase the comfort in summer time.



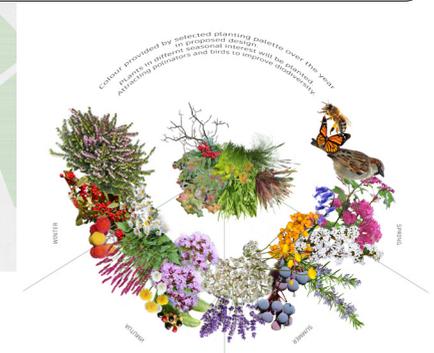
More golden-yellow and red colours can be found in the garden in autumn. More berries will start to appear to attract birds.



Leaves will fall off but evergreen and winter flowers will maintain the variation of colour. More berries will provide more human interaction opportunities.



- 1 The sketch shows the main gate of the park. By using the same design, a connection could be provided to the rest of the park.
- 2 Illustration showing the story about the community can be shown by laser-cutting panel. It could be installed at the back of the sets or on the fences.
- 3 A wooden seating area with a shelter is created at the corner of the garden, providing shade but still allowing sunlight to penetrate. Climbing plants can easily grow on to the shelter structure. The size and amount of climbing plants will tell the age of the garden over time.
- 4 A vegetated swale will be a slope full of different vegetation and can be a shallow water channel in water event. It can temporarily store and absorb more water.
- 5 By weaving strips of plants and soft material, the impression of the fence could be softened. It allows local residents to participate by providing material and actually working on it. The material could be changed or modified to celebrate events.
- 6 Bird house created by the community could be added to provide a stopping spot for birds. It increases the attraction to bird and increase biodiversity. The locals also earn an opportunity to interact with animals.



Model & Exhibition



1.The winning digimap file is split and then cut out using laser cutting. And a cork sheet was chosen to represent the surrounding green space.



2.Assemble the cut out parts and use the iron mesh to express the balustrade.



3.For the model tree, we chose a foam material used for packaging as the main body, reflecting the green concept of recycling.



4.To make the grass in the garden more vivid and realistic, we chose to use simulated grass cutting. And a cork sheet was chosen to represent the surrounding green space.



5.For a more detailed representation of the model, we have created new saplings that have been planted, including the fence.

The whole process of making the model is exploratory and you need to discuss with the group what materials you need to use to express the different elements of the site. This gives a more intuitive sense of the relationship between the wellness garden and its surroundings, and makes it easier to think about the kind of activities that can be held in the venue, providing a basis for subsequent design. This allows us to better understand how people behave and relate to each other in real spaces, so that we can identify design problems, improve design solutions and anticipate challenges that may arise during the actual construction process. The physical models also have the effect of drawing more attention to the people, thus increasing their involvement. We and our collaborators are very happy with the final model and are very grateful for the valuable input we received from them, as it was through their collaboration that we were able to produce this unique result.



6.Finally, the whole model is attached to the base so that the model will be above the table, making it easier to carry and see the model.

Since the project was for the community, it was crucial to consult with those involved in the design of the Wellness Garden. This was accomplished by organising an exhibition at the Longsight Art Space on the final day of the MSA Live project. The exhibition displayed the numerous design variations produced over the project. Additionally, the site model was also displayed to aid in subsequent discussions and to assist visitors visualise the park area.

The exhibition was visited by the Longsight community people and local council members, who reviewed the designs and provided feedback. The project team attempted to create a Wellness Garden that could be beneficial and comply with the Longsight community's aims by actively involving the public and incorporating their feedback.



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:

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BLOG

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SOCIAL

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