

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

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Partners

Chorlton Vision was started by a small group of local organisations from around Chorlton, a lively neighbourhood in Manchester.

The organisations represented within the group include Beech Road Traders, Chorlton Community Land Trust, Chorlton Traders and others. The action they are taking is a jointly-owned initiative and it is executed in a collaborative spirit. The group is aware it cannot speak for all the residents and businesses in the area, but with their interest at heart, wants to engage with stakeholders to progress with making Chorlton a vibrant destination. The Chorlton Community Land Trust secured an initial grant from Manchester City Council on behalf of the Vision partnership to facilitate the process.

Our collaborator and main point of contact was Alan Williams, a keen representative of the Chorlton Traders Association. They are an independent body which supports a range of local businesses, from home-working freelancers to retail chains. The organisation acts as a wider forum for discussion, developing initiatives and problem solving, which benefits the local community. It represents the best interests of the local traders in discussions with the local government, other traders associations and local residents. As a collective they make long-term planning decisions regarding sustainability, upkeep and green initiatives in the neighbourhood. Both above-mentioned organisations aim to make Chorlton a better place to live and work, simultaneously creating a more appealing area for visitors.

Agenda

MEANWHILE...

Our MSA Live 2023 project brief was to research meanwhile use, explore precedents of successful implementation elsewhere, and use this to develop proposals which could make use of increasing numbers of vacant spaces in Chorlton. In the context of declining high streets, the social impact of this project is centred around rejuvenating the public spaces and exploring temporary and inventive solutions to increase footfall for existing businesses.

The idea of implementing meanwhile uses into unoccupied buildings and shop units was raised by our main collaborator, who is an active member of the Chorlton Traders Association and Chorlton Vision. We have progressed these initial observations by researching further into the opportunities and limitations of such interventions, exploring a wide range of precedents, and suggesting a timeline of implementation that colour codes interventions based on the approximate timescales it would take to resolve. We have then applied this research onto the context of Chorlton, using our precedent investigations to suggest interventions within vacant shop units along the high street.

This process began by undertaking a tour of the high street and surrounding area and mapping out the vacant spaces. We then selected one of these key locations to explore further. Our investigations into the Chorlton Cross Shopping Centre explored its connectivity with the surrounding urban grain and its relationship with the adjacent high street and analysed the user groups and their needs (by talking to very interested members of the public who approached us whilst surveying the space). As a collective we've then suggested a number of different proposal interventions, that are centred around using the shopping precinct as a catalyst to attract investment and further change. This is intended to increase the footfall, both along the high street and within the shopping precinct, and encourage access to the existing premises (alongside any meanwhile interventions).

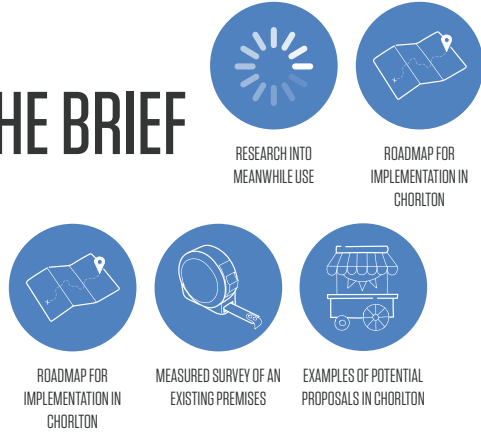
Our task was to address the brief provided by Alan on behalf of the Chorlton Traders Association, focusing on the concept of "Meanwhile Use." We conducted extensive research on successful examples of meanwhile use from various locations, allowing us to develop a comprehensive roadmap for implementing this approach in Chorlton. This roadmap provides a practical framework for effectively utilizing vacant spaces until they can be brought back into permanent use.

To gather design proposals and precedents, we studied similar projects and identified actionable ideas and inspiration for the utilization of vacant spaces in the area. We analysed the successes and limitations of these projects, extracting valuable insights for our own implementation plan.

To actively engage undergraduate students, we organized a two-week timetabled event where they implemented interventions in identified vacant sites. Through research, selection of precedents, and creation of sketches, the students contributed to effective planning and envisioning the transformation of these spaces.

Throughout the process, we utilized a collaborative Miro board, which played a crucial role in connecting and sharing ideas among the team. It facilitated brainstorming, visualizing concepts, and fostering a collaborative environment.

THE BRIEF



WHO ARE WE?

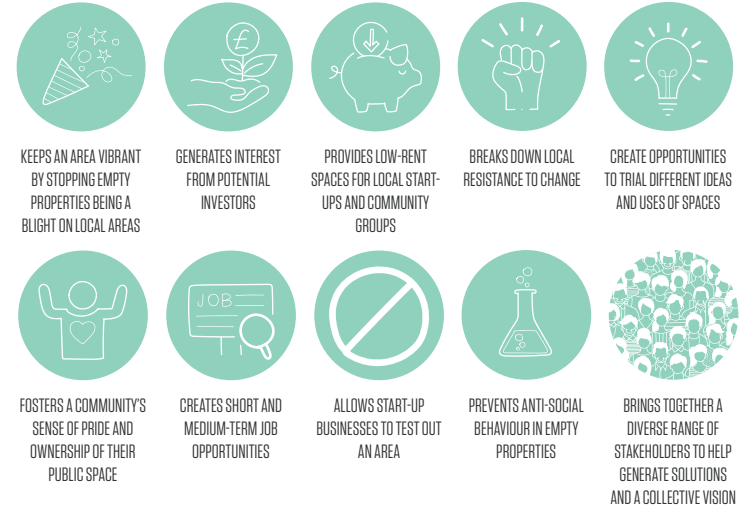


THE TWO WEEK PROJECT

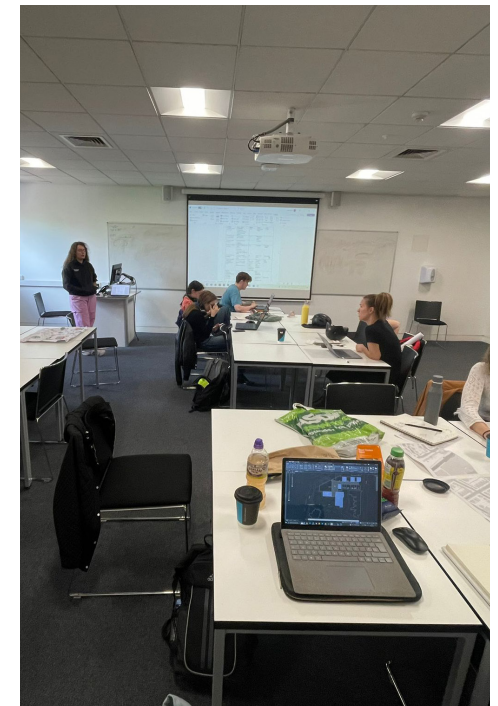


MEANWHILE USE RESEARCH

OPPORTUNITIES



LIMITATIONS



During a collaborative meeting and tour in Chorlton, we identified issues with vacant spaces, such as their unattractiveness, negative impressions, discouragement of visitors, and potential for antisocial behaviour.

OVERVIEW OF CHORLTON



CYCLING
INFRASTRUCTURE



BARS AND CAFE
CULTURE



FAMILIES, COMMUNITY
+ SCHOOLS



INDEPENDENT SHOPS AND
CREATIVE ARTISANS



ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES

To address these, we gathered inspiration from local artists and observed engaging shopfronts, Chorlton-themed art, and vibrant murals, this helped shape our meanwhile use proposals for revitalizing these spaces.)

LOCAL INSPIRATION

CHORLTON



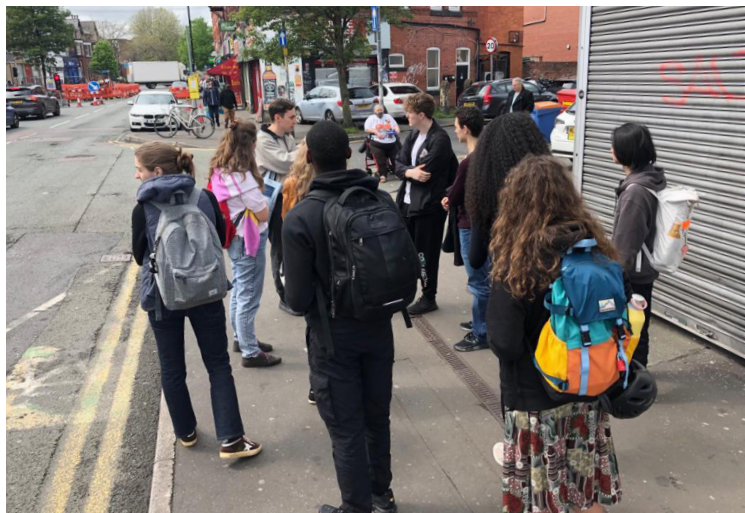
ENGAGING SHOPFRONTS
UNICORN GROCERY



CHORLTON THEMED ART
MARK WALLIS



CHARLOTTE WORTHINGTON MURAL
ALEKS YERP



ISSUES WITH VACANT SPACES



UNSIGHTLY AND
UNATTRACTIVE



CREATES BAD
IMPRESSIONS OF AN AREA



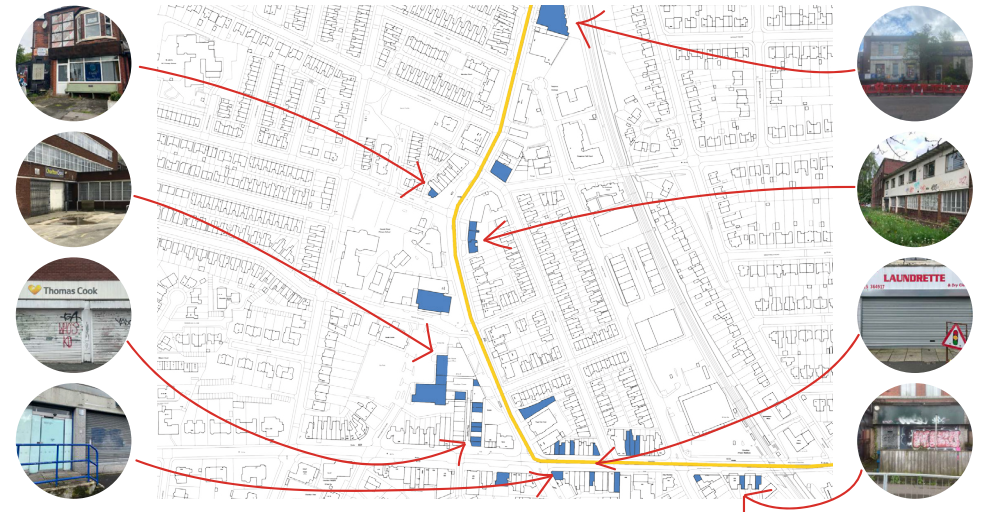
DISCOURAGES PEOPLE
FROM COMING TO AN
AREA



ATTRACTS ANTI-SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR



HINDERS INVESTMENT



Strengths

- Existing Murals
- Low cost shopping
- Different access point
- Local Businesses

Weaknesses

- Unightly environment
- Lack of continuity
- Main entrance hidden
- Time-bound services

Opportunities

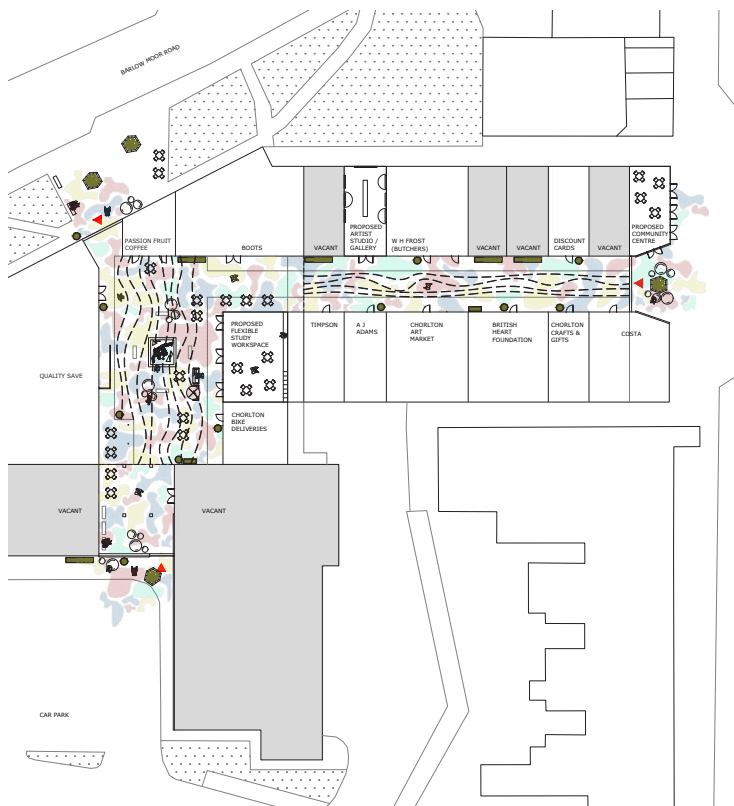
- Community-driven development
- Artistic community engagement
- Creative urban signage

Threats

- Balanced crowd management
- Inclusive economic sustainability
- Unobstructed flow

PRECEDENT EXPLORATION

PROPOSED PLAN OF PRECINCT



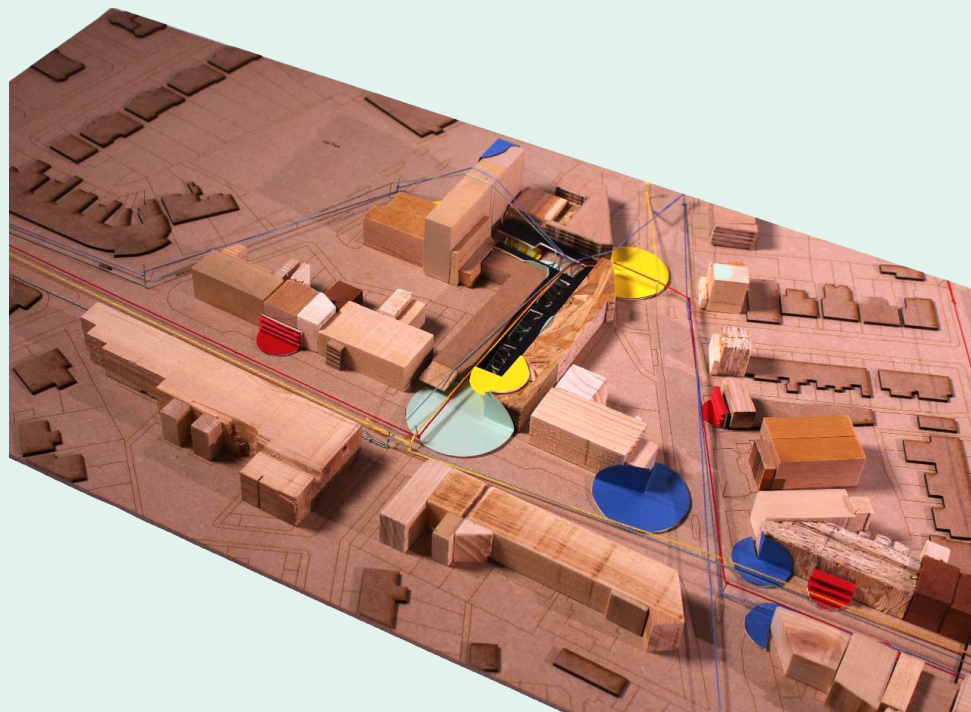
The interventions within the Shopping Precinct and around Chorlton highstreet were designed according to a framework timeline we have developed (see below). We have suggested the following timescales for implementing meanwhile interventions:

Immediate interventions (0 months):
Quick and low-cost actions.

Short-term interventions (1-6 months):
Swift implementation, minimal costs, planning required.

Medium-term interventions (6-12 months):
Transform vacant spaces easily, suitable for single shops and external changes.

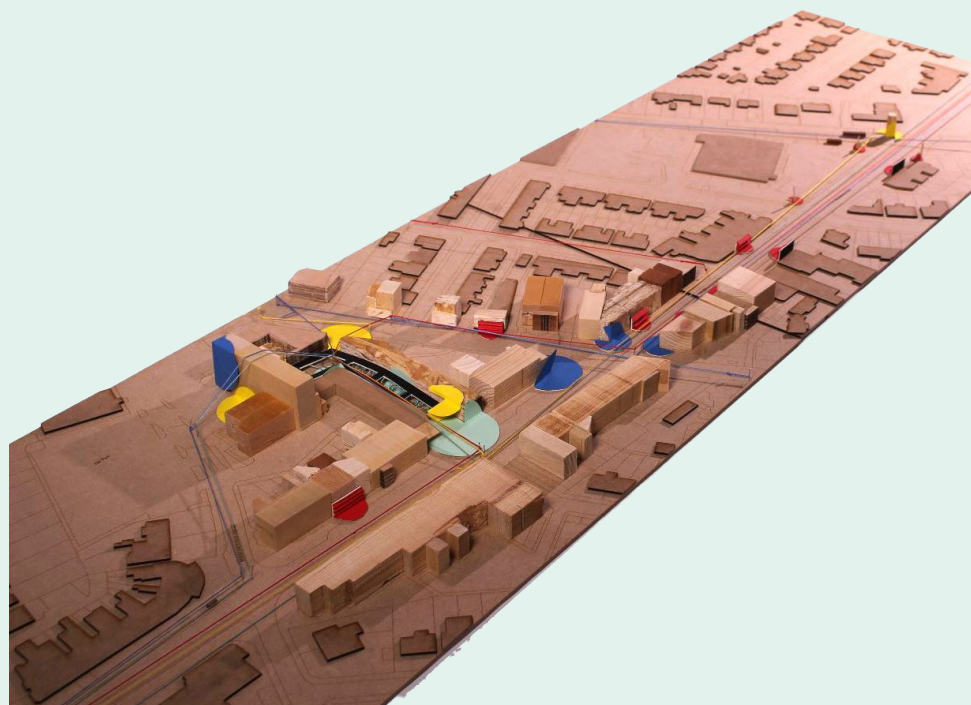
Long-term interventions (12+ months):
Temporary uses for larger developments, extensive planning and intervention needed

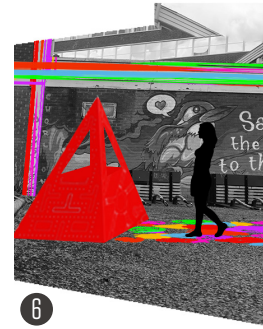


TIMELINE APPLIED TO CHORLTON



The colors of the circles (on the model) indicate the timescales in which interventions could be implemented according to our research timeline (see adjacent image). The strings represent the different pathways or routes through Chorlton that visitors can take to different interventions. The interventions are modelled as abstract, moveable objects so that the overall piece can be used as an engagement piece with the community in the future.





This page:

Image 6
Concept visual of Precinct entrance 2 by Alessandro

Image 7
Concept visual of Precinct entrance 2 by Alessandro

Image 8
Concept visual of Precinct entrance 1 by De-Winton

Image 9
Concept visual of Precinct entrance 3 by India

Image 10
Concept visual of Precinct entrance 3 by Jiacheng

Image 1 and 2

Concept visual of Thomas cook unit by Ellie

Image 3
Concept visual of Street furniture by Luana

Image 4
Concept visual of Tram stop lift shaft by Matt

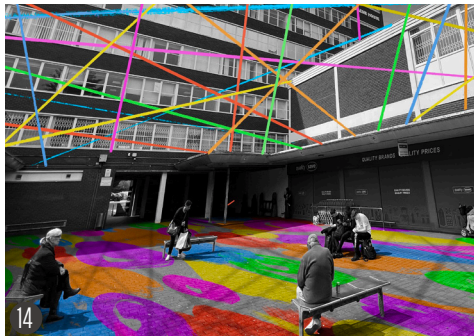
Image 5
Concept visual of Tram stop highstreet by Alessandro

Next page:

Image 11
Concept visual of Shop unit shutters by Jorin

Image 12
Concept visual of Four Banks by Yihuan

Image 13, 14 and 15
Concept visual of Precinct square by Luana



In reflection, we have achieved a lot of work over the two action weeks. We culminated the project by delivering an engaging explanation of our research and an interesting conversation around the model, made from salvaged material from the B.15 workshop, discussing our range of design proposals. Our collaborator was particularly impressed with the production of a tactile model, in which the design proposals are moveable, that can be repurposed as an engagement piece in the future.

Having said this, there were a couple of difficulties we overcame as a group. At the beginning of the two action weeks we made the decision to reduce our list of outputs, and adapt our action plan, to ensure everything could be completed to a high standard within our short timeframe. This decision was made in collaboration with the undergraduate students to ensure we covered all the skills they wanted to learn and improve on. Likewise, at the presentation meeting we had a couple of complex questions about topics outside of our brief and scope of research. The team handled answers to these well, explaining it was a short project and these are very valid observations that could be explored further if the project is expanded on.



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

live.msa.ac.uk/2023

SOCIAL

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