

MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE



REGENERATION WITHOUT
DISPLACEMENT

BARE CREATIVES



A SAFE SPACE
OWNED BY THE
COMMUNITY,
KEEPING
MONEY IN THE
TOWN



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MSA
LIVE 23

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Partners

Our collaborators, Rebecca Ainsworth, Claire Weetman, and Grace Collins, who together form Platform Arts are situated in Platform Studios, located above St Mary's Market in St Helens. Platform Arts is an artistic collective dedicated to exploring the concept of live/work spaces for local artists amidst the ongoing redevelopment of the town center.

Having actively engaged with the local artistic community, Platform Arts has witnessed a significant demand for suitable workspaces within Platform Studios. Their recent involvement in the Art in Empty Shops project, which involved collaborating with over 50 local artists, has provided firsthand insight into the pressing need for dedicated artistic workspaces in the area.

Furthermore, Platform Arts recognizes the scarcity of appropriate living accommodations in St Helens for single professionals, as the majority of residential properties primarily cater to families. Consequently, they are embarking on an initiative to address both of these challenges by envisioning a live/work space specifically tailored for artists. In addition, they are exploring the viability of a community land trust model, which aims to counteract the influence landlords wield over the long-term sustainability of artistic spaces.

Through their commitment to fostering a supportive environment for artists and their innovative approach to tackling housing and workspace limitations, Platform Arts stands poised to make a meaningful and lasting impact within the local artistic community.

Agenda

Bare Creatives



Our project aims to address the needs of local artists in St Helens by creating an affordable live/work space that supports their creative endeavors. We recognise the lack of suitable spaces for artists in the area and the challenges they face in finding affordable accommodations. By reimagining the artists' studios, we aim to meet the needs of artists who require both a workspace and a place to live.

Our project also seeks to promote the reuse and revitalization of St Mary's Market, a significant location in St Helens. By reimagining the potential of this space, we can contribute to the overall development and transformation of the market area. This aligns with our goal of promoting sustainable and creative urban planning, where existing structures are repurposed and transformed into vibrant and functional spaces for artists.

To engage the local community and showcase our ideas, we organised a public consultation at St Mary's Market. This exhibition will feature visualizations that aim to involve the community in our project and raise awareness about the potential of artists in the area. By highlighting the hidden opportunities and talents within the community, we hope to inspire dialogue and create a sense of pride and excitement about the creative potential of St Helens.

Our vision extends beyond the physical space. We aspire to create an artist-led initiative that is sustainable and reflective of the needs and aspirations of local artists. By empowering artists to take an active role in shaping their creative environment, we aim to foster a sense of ownership and belonging. We believe that investing in the creative potential of St Helens can have far-reaching social impacts, contributing to community engagement, cultural enrichment, and the overall livability and vibrancy of the town.

Our project's timing coincides with Liverpool's Borough of Culture in 2023, presenting an opportunity to leverage the momentum and attention on the region's cultural development. By actively investing in the creative sector and providing support to local artists, we aim to harness the transformative power of art and culture to inspire a new vision for the future of St Helens. By investing in the creative sector and fostering a supportive environment, we envision a future where St Helens thrives as a hub for artists, creativity, and community-driven innovation.

Site Visit

We commenced our project by organizing a site visit to St Helen's with our students. During the visit, we had the opportunity to visit the artist studios situated within St Mary's Market, gaining insight into the existing creative spaces available in the area.

Additionally, our collaborators guided the students on a tour around St Helens, offering them a deeper understanding of the local community and its residents. This tour not only familiarized the students with the demographics of the town but also shed light on the potential impact of ongoing regeneration efforts, which may lead to gentrification in St Helens.

Furthermore, the students had the privilege of engaging in meaningful conversations with the resident artists themselves. These interactions allowed them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the artists' aspirations, desires, and specific requirements for their creative workspaces. By actively listening to their perspectives and needs, the students were able to develop a more empathetic and user-centric approach in their subsequent design processes.



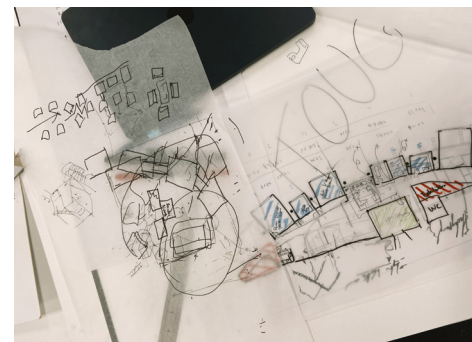
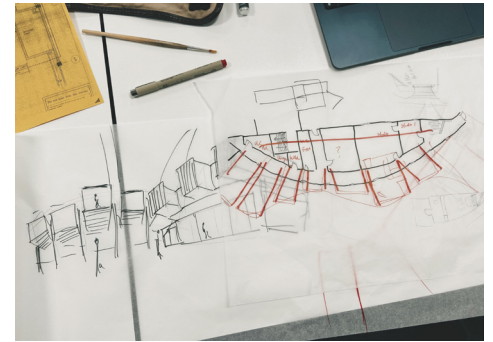
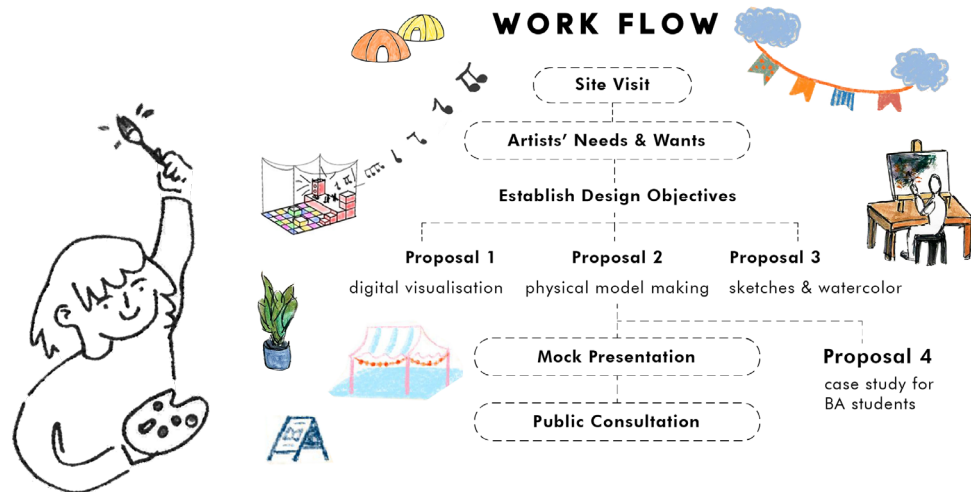
Collaborative Design

Cultivating a Dynamic Collaborative Environment in Design Exploration

During our ice-breaking activity, it became evident that each of our students possessed their own distinct sets of skills and strengths. This realization prompted us to adopt a more flexible and free-flowing approach to collaboration, tailored to harness the individual talents and expertise of our students.

To enable effective collaboration, we organized the students into small groups with consideration of their diverse skills and interests. Within these groups, students were encouraged to leverage their preferred skills and design approaches to create proposals for the artist studios. Some students might have excelled in digital art, while others might have had a knack for model making or hand sketching with watercolours.

Embracing the unique skills and strengths of our students, we adopted a flexible and collaborative approach to design. This student-centric approach fostered a sense of ownership, confidence, and collective achievement, resulting in a dynamic and productive collaboration that explored diverse design possibilities for the artist studios.



Design Process

Studying Artist's Wants and Needs Board

Sarah - 'reasonably sized space'	Space to sit/stand/hang work - white wall	2 desk spaces	Useable wall space - to be able to hang things up	Space to clean up - sinks etc	bathroom	We don't want the drags of buildings!
preparation space/workshop space/messy working space	exhibition room/gallery space for in and out of studio	kitchen space for lunches (clean)	ventilation	good light, not direct sunlight	Use in private/semi-private	Church/Absence model - site space as culture community space!
Cafe - open space at end where people can sit and eat - creating a social space at the end of the day	Private event - Community is this linked to the thing space? Maybe somebody that creates community	Something to provide an extra space with program making connections	Systems that connect people, studios are often shared/hidden things that make that harder to everyone!	Big desk - kitchen table space Lighting natural light, power	Wifi	
storage space for artwork/materials	Location - near to public transport and just off the main street	opening hours - 24/7 access Or later opening for events at least	Joram - need to connect with people to make work happen	Living space with access to studio	Warm dry	
Space to scale up outside of personal studio space - CW	Communal area - lounge space to take time out when the work is frustrating.	Good transport - free walk space as it's not just a 10 min walk, it's a 10 min walk to the bus stop, etc.	Angie - photography studio space - empty area, ability to suspend things	6 month artist residency rate/studios	outdoor space - for time out and for messy working.	



Wants and Needs board provided by the collaborator : Artist-led in St Helens

Principle Design Objectives

Develop a scheme that can facilitate the artists needs.

Engage undergraduate students with real clients to develop skills.

Establish a connection between client and community by engaging the public.

Create a positive social impact for St Helen's community and artists.

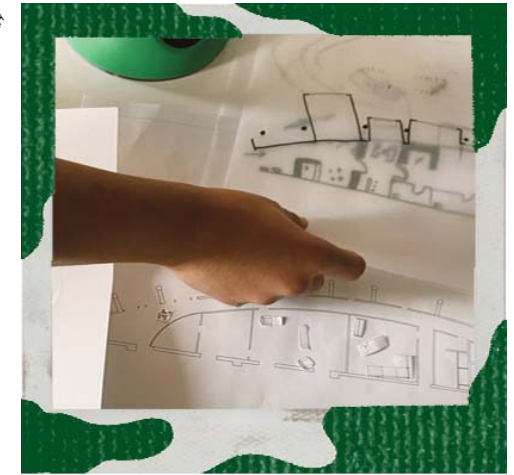
Developing The Design Concept

Based on the site visits and analysis of the artists' needs and wants, the students identified a key design objective: to create a space that effectively responds to those needs. Throughout the design process, the students received feedback and participated in workshops that provided guidance and refined their ideas. The proposals aim to spark discussions between the artists and the public during the consultation phase, facilitating a dynamic exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Workshop



During our workshop session, we engaged the students in a hands-on exercise using 1:100 scale figures and furniture. This interactive activity provided a tangible and visual representation of the space, allowing the students to better understand how the furniture would fit and how people would interact within the environment. By physically experimenting with different configurations and placements, the students gained valuable insights into the functionality and aesthetics of their designs.



Model Making



Engaging in physical model making allows students to gain a deeper understanding of scale and brings their ideas to life in three-dimensional form. It provides them with a tangible and visual representation of their design concepts, allowing for a more immersive and comprehensive exploration of spatial relationships, proportions, and aesthetics.



Mock Presentation



To ensure the students are well-prepared for the upcoming public consultation, we conducted a mock presentation today. This exercise enables the students to showcase their design proposals and receive constructive feedback. Each student had the chance to present their work, explaining their design concepts, highlighting key features, and articulating their vision for the artist's studios.



Proposal 1

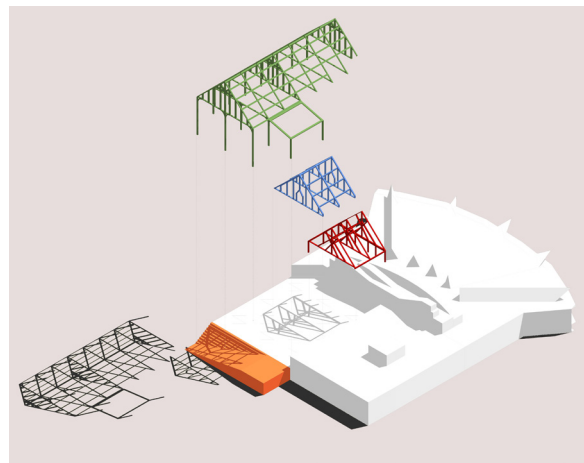
"When looking to expand upon the art studio space in St Mary's market, we intend to pay homage to the heritage of the market, while complementing the contemporary setting.

The prominent use of glass and wrought iron in this design is reminiscent of Victorian-era architecture, with decorative motifs and ornamentation present throughout the design. The traditional metal frameworks hold large glass panes that create a pleasant light-filled studio and multi-use space below.

The extension will provide a comfortable amount of space for the artists of St Helen's and the outdoor multi-use space will draw in a wider audience, creating a bustling scene and restoring the buzz to the market. At the rear of the building, we have introduced a set of stairs and a ramp, making the building accessible for all.

This proposal re-imagines St Mary's Market as a vibrant center of creative thought for all, with a flexibility of outdoor use that caters to a wide variety of users, whether they are an artist themselves, or curious about the arts and looking to learn more."

By Finbar and Leticia

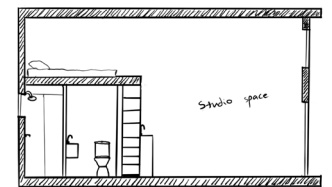
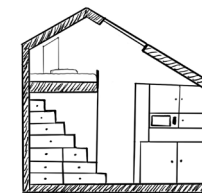
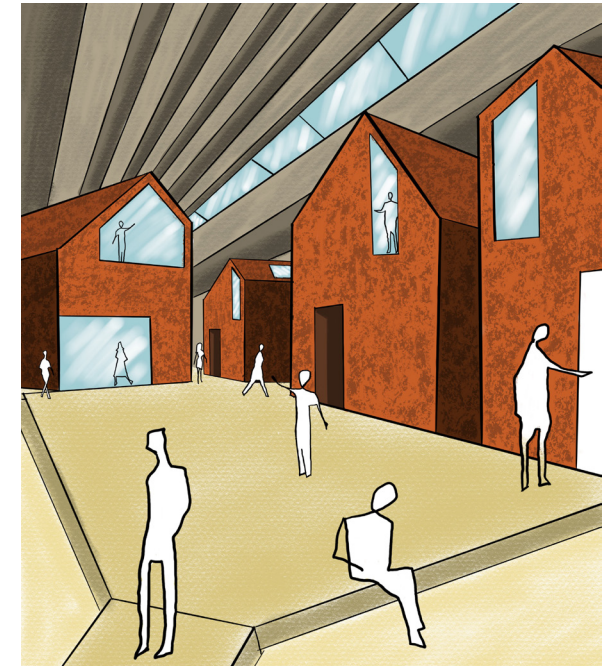
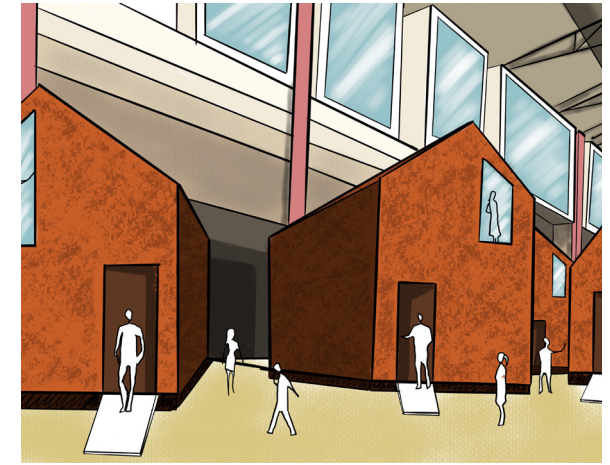
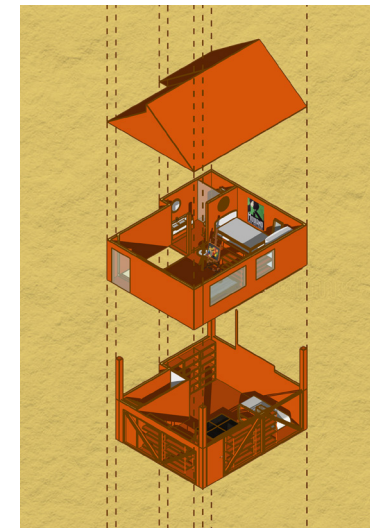


Proposal 2

"The aim of this proposal is to connect the growing art community with the wider community by transforming St Helens marketplace into a cosy home for art, culture and the community.

Our modular approach aims to create a flexible work/live environment where artists can live, create and exhibit their art by having hybrid spaces where art can be created collectively or individually in personal pods on the ground floor, along with plenty of space for exhibiting and showcasing art."

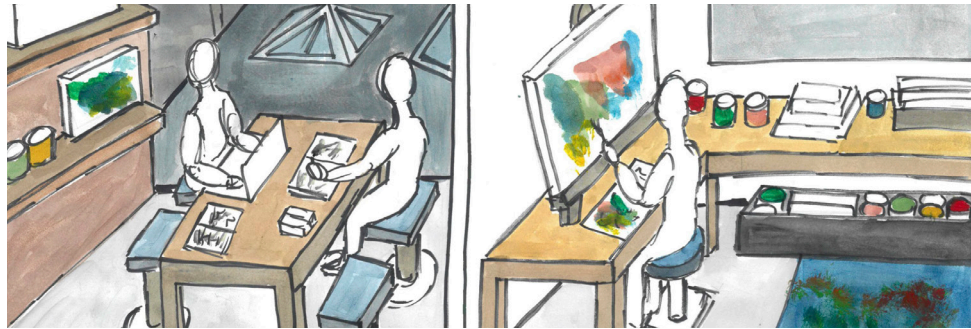
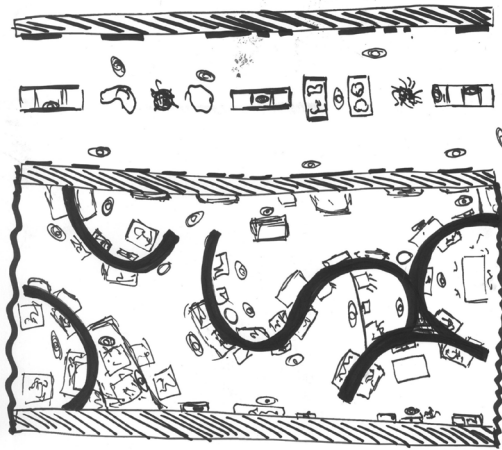
By Landar, Mohammed and Remon



Proposal 3

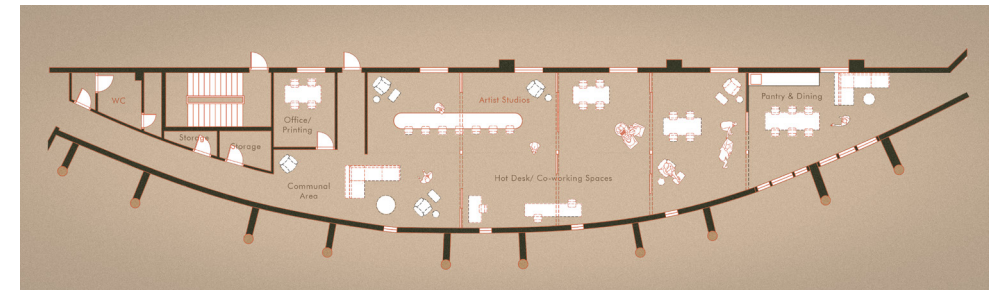
"For the initial design ideas we decided to add an artistic element to the space to encourage more young artist to the area. We wanted to utilise the large empty space on the ground floor by adding more open studios to make the space more collaborative and engaging and adding life back to area."

By Amani and Kikki



Proposal 4

Our scheme features flexible and adaptable elements such as movable panels. These panels serve as versatile partitions, allowing artists to customize and reconfigure their workspace according to their specific needs. Whether it's creating separate studio areas, collaborative spaces, or temporary exhibition areas, our design provides the flexibility to accommodate a wide range of artistic practices.



OUTCOMES & REFLECTION

To make a strong impression during the public consultation, we printed the design proposals on A1 boards, showcasing the creativity and attention to detail in each design. Alongside the boards, we distributed mini-sized postcards as tangible reminders of the artist studio proposals, ensuring the community of St Helens could engage with and remember the innovative ideas presented.

Public engagement was a crucial part of our project, allowing us to raise awareness about the challenges faced by artists in St Helens and gather valuable insights from the community.

The positive response from the public, including the presence of the St Helens council at the consultation, showcased a shared enthusiasm for the revitalization of the arts scene. This engagement emphasized the transformative power of art and reinforced the importance of involving the community in shaping the future of the artist studios.



“St Helen’s is tired, and desperately needs art.”

- Community Member of St Helens

VISUALISATIONS



POSTCARDS



PHYSICAL MODEL



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

BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2023

SOCIAL

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