

# MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

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## AGENDA:

Levenshulme Old Library, a symbol of community protest, is a vibrant community space in perpetual flux, adapting and unfolding to embrace diverse cultural and facilitate creative communities. As architecture students we will envision the future of the Old Library, actively shaping it by exploring the essence of the Library in contemporary society. Immersing ourselves in the community through creative workshops we will consider the future of the library from a child's perspective, we aim to capture its essence and present our innovative proposals to the client, crafting exhibition pieces that reflect our journey and vision for the library's dynamic future.

Visit [msa.ac.uk](http://msa.ac.uk) for more information

## Team

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## Partners



**Laura Dean** (Programming Manager)

**Richard Hirst** (General Manager)



# Introduction

## UNFOLDING L.O.L

Levenshulme Old Library is a vibrant community space, continuously evolving to embrace diverse cultures and foster creativity. Our project aimed to envision its future by exploring the modern role of 'the library' through workshops and community engagement. We produced exhibition pieces that capture our vision for the library's dynamic future. The current layout presented challenges, including congestion and security concerns. Our redesign improved the accessibility and functionality of various spaces, creating a more secure and welcoming environment. This included reconfiguring areas to alleviate congestion and enhance overall usability. During our site visit, we observed that the ornamental forms of the window openings on the facade were compromised by the glare from the temporarily installed PVC. To emphasize and celebrate the library's heritage, I propose installing stained glass designs in the windows. This installation will also create a more ambient atmosphere in the main space. The proposed stained-glass design draws inspiration from the mosaic tiles in the entrance and the dark green truss in the main area, fostering a cohesive architectural language. Additionally, this project could involve local artisans and artists, enhancing its cultural significance.

The space of the old library needed changes in order to restore the vitality and vibration that it had during the time it functioned as a library, but now this building, instead of serving as a space to borrow books, will serve as a multifunctional space that people could borrow space for their dirty activities. After communicating with our collaborators and after visiting the space several times, and studying the old library's social media where people expressed their opinions. Our group that consists of four master's students and eleven BA1 and BA2 students, proposal for this building was the addition of an adaptable theatrical/activities space with tiered seating to host cultural events such as theatrical performances and live music. Positioned in one of the two volumes that combine the main space of the building, creating a more private space for activities, while in the central space there can be more fluid activities. This dedicated performance area is equipped with proper lighting and sound facilities, making it adaptable for various events. Another decision was to adapt the service spaces (kitchen and toilets) in order to function better with the new distribution of flows in the building.

The project transformed the library into a multifunctional hub, blending historical significance with contemporary needs. Flexible spaces for activities, vibrant aesthetics, and creative design elements were introduced to inspire productivity and engagement. During MSA Live Action Week, we reflected on the future of 'The Library' and created exhibition pieces shared with the community. These pieces illustrate our innovative ideas and vision for the library's ongoing evolution.



# Collaborator



RICHARD. H

LAURA. D



LOL-LEVENSHULME OLD LIBRARY

Levenshulme Old Library, a historic symbol of community resilience, stands as a testament to the power of collective action. Originally saved from closure by the community, it now serves as a vibrant cultural hub, constantly evolving to meet the needs of a diverse population and fostering creativity among its users. As architecture students, our task is to envision and actively shape the future of this cherished space. We will delve into the contemporary significance of Levenshulme Old Library considering how it can continue to serve and facilitate the creative and diverse communities.

Our exploration will be comprehensive and insightful. By immersing ourselves in the community, we will observe and analyse the library's current role and potential future from various perspectives, especially focusing on its importance to children and their unique ways of engaging with the space.

Our journey will culminate in innovative proposals that reflect the heritage and the creative spirit of Levenshulme Old Library. These proposals will be presented to the collaborator and exhibited as pieces that embody our creative process and vision. Through this project, we aim to honour the library's rich history while reimagining it as a dynamic, inclusive space that continues to inspire and serve the community for years to come.

# Timeline

1904-1905



An endowment from Scottish philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and crowd funding from local residents built the Levenshulme Library a one of many Carnegie Free Libraries. It has served as the community's local library for over a century. The protests resulted in Manchester City Council allowing the library to stay in service while Arcadia Leisure Centre, a new facility was built.

2013



It was announced that the library and its parallel bath house would be closed immediately, resulting in the community coming together in protest for "Levolution". It told a story of community resilience and unity to protect a heritage landmark.

2024

The centre is now widely relied on within local communities, providing a range of services for all ages. What can be done architecturally to help it accommodate more people and activities?



2016

The building fell into dis-use and remained empty for 2 years until LOLCIO re-opened it as a multi-use arts and culture centre

# Action Plan



Meeting with the group of students nearby the site involving a dynamic approach to learning, integrating exploration, analysis, and discussion. We also get to know each other better by doing some ice-breaking activities, sketching each other.

DAY 1

Meeting the Group & Site Visit



DAY 2

Redesigning Concepts Ideas

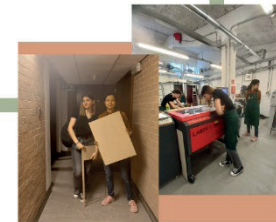
The students were engaged in a hands-on exercise in reimagining the library space. Analysing it from different perspectives can lead to creative solutions and fresh ideas for its transformation. They come up with particularly interesting and innovative suggestions.



DAY 3

Physical Model

At the B15 workshop, we translated the plan of the Levenshulme Old Library into a base on a physical model. This facilitated a clearer understanding and presentation of proposed designs within the existing context.



DAY 4

Analysis of the Internal Space



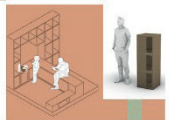
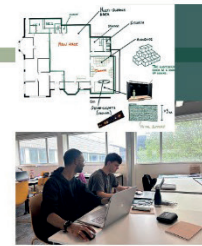
On the fourth day of their active week, the students engaged in a focused effort to adapt the internal spaces of the old library. The interior space was carefully divided into three distinct areas, each identified for improvement based on feedback from one of the collaborators involved in the project. To express their ideas and opinions effectively, the students utilized sketches and zoning techniques. Through these visual aids, they were able to articulate their vision for transforming the interior spaces of the library.



DAY 6

Develop the Concepts and Proposals

Today, the team focused on refining their proposals. Both BA1 and BA2 students collaborated to interpret their ideas, sketches, and collages using various 2D and 3D software tools, with guidance from master students.



DAY 7

Final Exhibition Proposals

During today's day the students worked on their proposals for the exhibition, on the different alterations that the old library space can undergo and some furniture ideas that can be used to reevaluate the space. The students produced an illustration exploring a temporary structure for the 'theatre' space and did alterations in the plan of the old library.



DAY 5

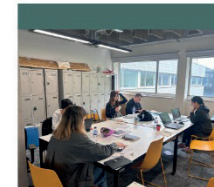
Develop the Concepts and Proposals

The students delved deeper into analysing the interior layout of the old library through collages. Among the collaborators outputs emerged a proposal to transform a section of the building into a theater, dedicated for children attending theater classes to showcase their performances

DAY 8

Composition of the Final Project

Brief summary of the key findings. Reinforce the importance of the project and its contributions. Concluding remarks.



DAY 9

The final Presentation / Exhibition

# Site Analysis

## Demographics:

Gender: 49.4% Female, 50.6% Male

Age Groups: 0-17 years 28.1%, 18-64 years 64.4%, 65+ years 7.5%

Ethnic Groups: 37.6% White, 45.1% Middle Eastern & Asian, 6% Black, 11.3% Others

Religion: 51.4% Muslim, 23.9% No Religion, 23% Christian, 1.7% Others



Community Spaces  
1-2 min



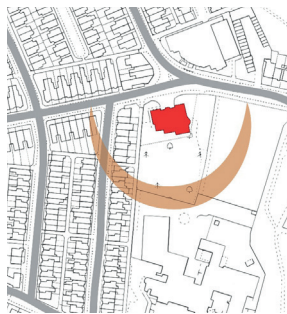
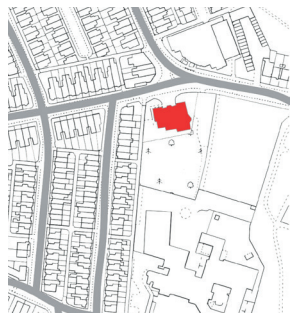
High Street  
3 min



Green Space  
1 min



# Diagrams



# Street Views



# Existing Plans

1. Main Entrance

2. Hall

3. Radio Station

4. Main Space

5. Office

6. Theater Space

7. Kitchenette

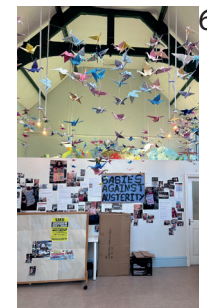
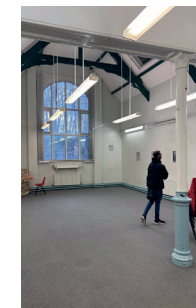
8. Toilets

● Circulation space

● Utilities

● Public workspace

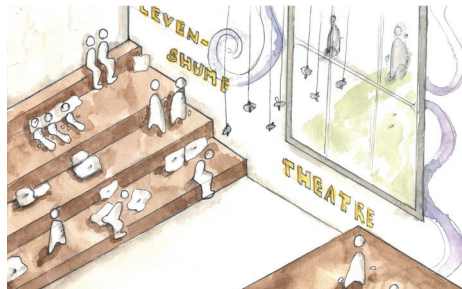
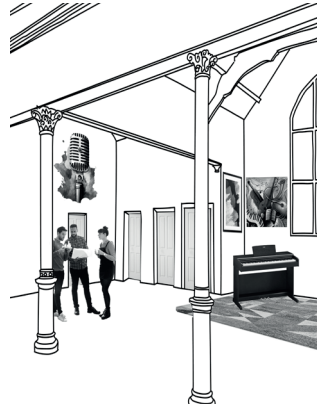
● Private workspace



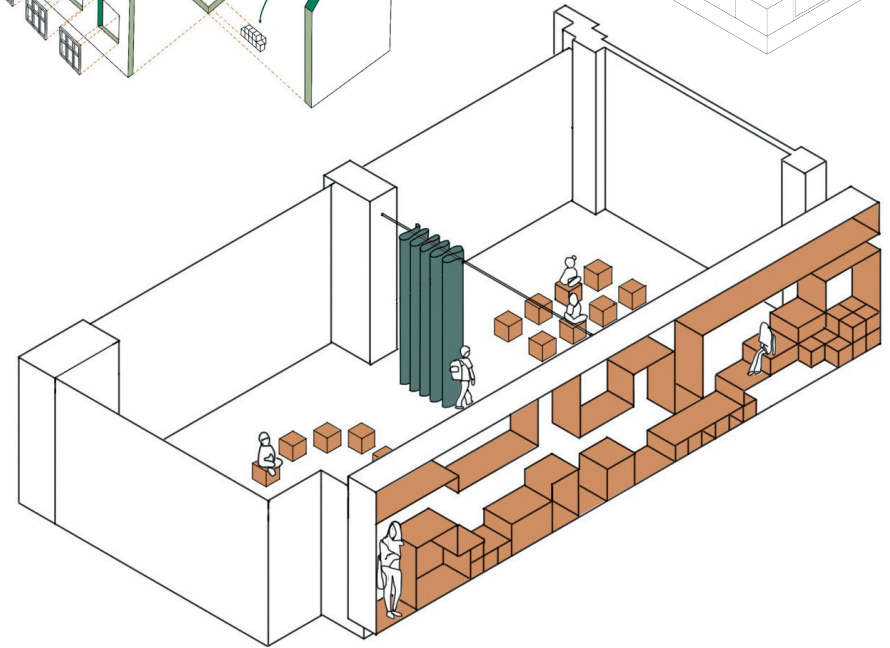
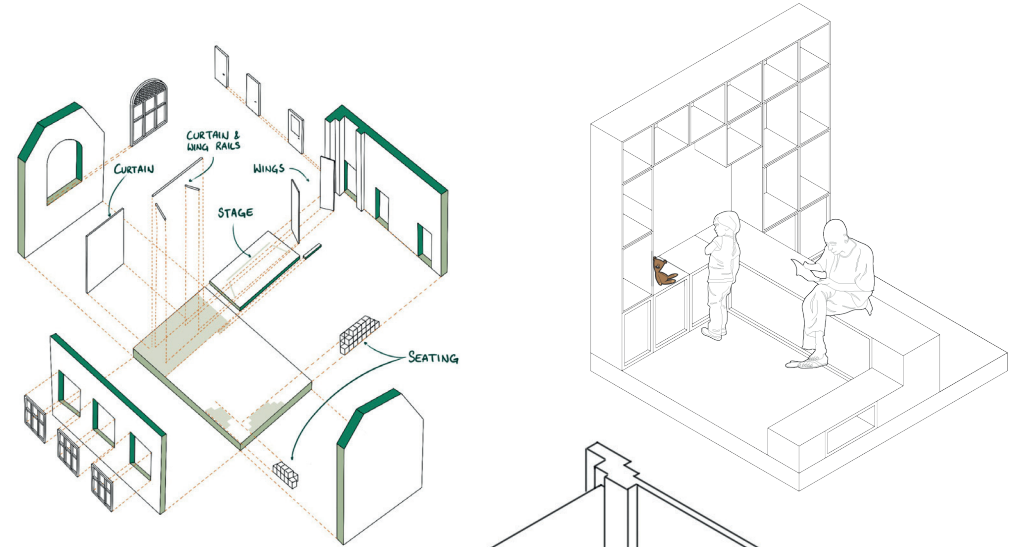
# Reimagining the Space



These collages show how the Levenshume Old Library has been repurposed, resulting in a vibrant community hub nestled in a peaceful residential neighbourhood. It highlights the wide range of activities that occur in this one location; there have been efforts to create a network, by building the New Arcadia Library, ensuring that Levenshume still has this amenity available. Analysing the space from different perspectives can lead to creative solutions and fresh ideas for its transformation. They come up with particularly interesting and innovative suggestions.



# Reimagining the Space



## Iteration 1



ST = STORAGE  
 KITCH = KITCHEN  
 TH = THEATRE  
 M.S. = MAIN SPACE  
 F.S. = RADIO STATION  
 BA = BATHROOM

A small amphitheatre is created in the theatre space, along with a pantry provision in the storage space that is within the theatre space. The existing pantry is converted into a wheelchair-accessible toilet. The existing toilet space is worked out to accommodate both gentlemen and ladies toilets, allowing ample provision for storage.

## Iteration 2



KEY :  
 1. STORAGE SPACE  
 2. PERFORMANCE PLATFORM  
 3. DESK SPACE  
 4. LIBRARY SPACE  
 5. AUDITORIUM SEATS

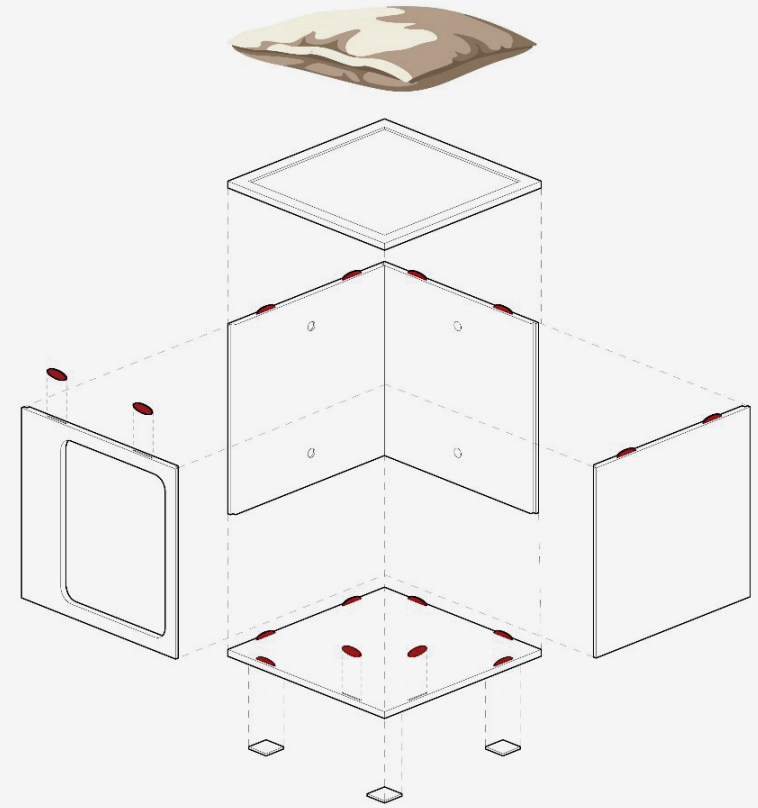
This intervention uses modular cubs to increase the efficiency of space usage. The existing toilet area is provided with a corridor that connects the Gentlemen, Ladies, and the Disabled Accessible Toilet instead of having three separate entries for the toilets.

## Iteration 3

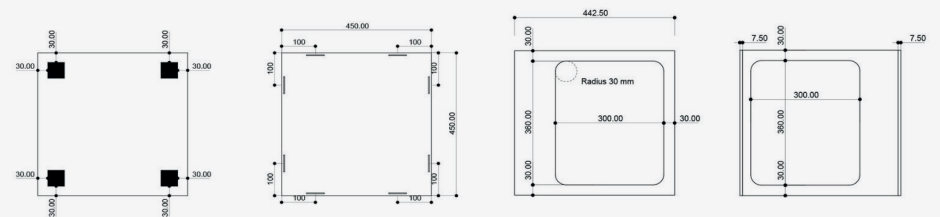


Three entrances lead to the theater space, with access to the kitchen and storage areas through a corridor. Views overlook the car park and the front of the building. To minimize disruption, the three entrances are consolidated into a double door. The wall separating the theater space from the storage area is replaced with a translucent or semi-permeable screen. The hallway is accessible through an opening, and the existing kitchen is transformed into an accessible toilet with a baby changing facility. One room serves as a walk-in storage area, while another is designated for equipment storage. The kitchen is expanded with two entry points. The storage area and main theater space are merged into a single open area. A separate entrance leads to the hallway, and the kitchen and food storage areas are separated.

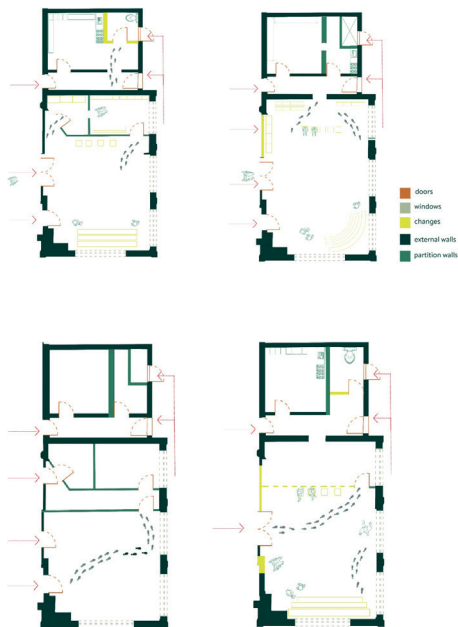
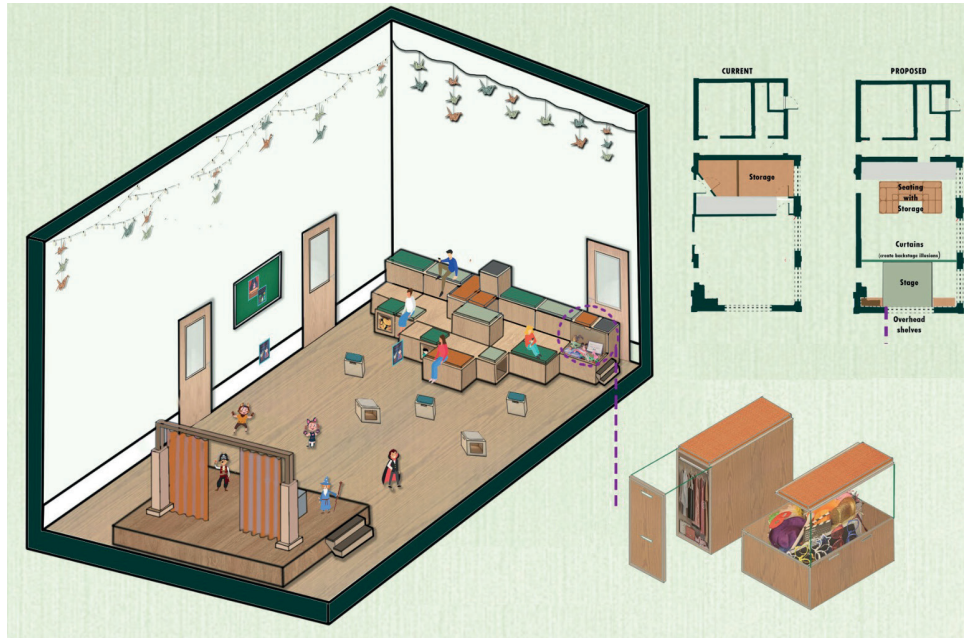
## Furniture Details



## Construction Manual



## Reenvisioning the Space



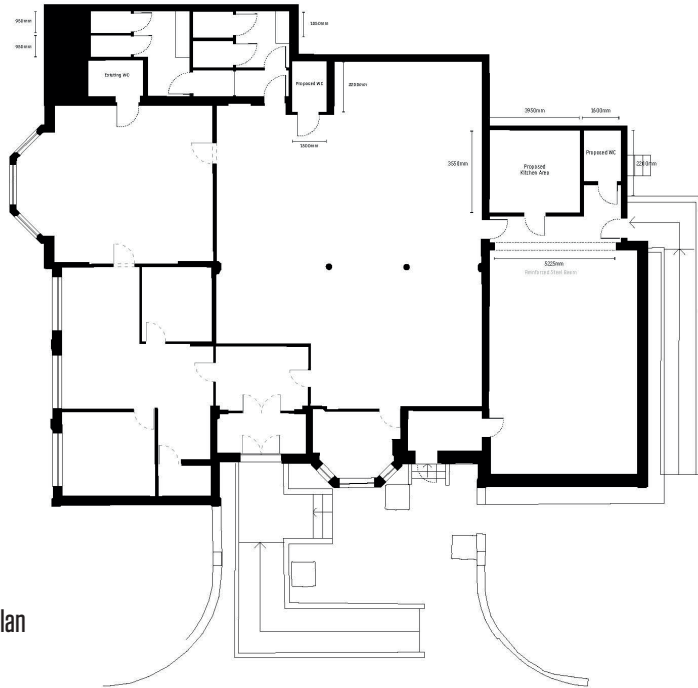
Three entrances into theatre space and entrance into kitchen and storage spaces via the corridor. Views out to carpark and front of the building. The three entrances are combined into one double door to reduce unnecessary disruption. The wall between the theatre space and the storage area is replaced with a translucent or semi-permeable screen. There is access into the hallway via an opening and the existing kitchen is converted into an accessible toilet with a baby change facility.

The existing storage space is maintained one room used as a walk in storage area and then another used as a storage space for equipment. The kitchen space is extended and has two entries. The storage space and main theatre space are combined into one open space. There is an opening entering into the hallway and the kitchen and food storage spaces are separated. The WC is locked off.

## Team Collaboration

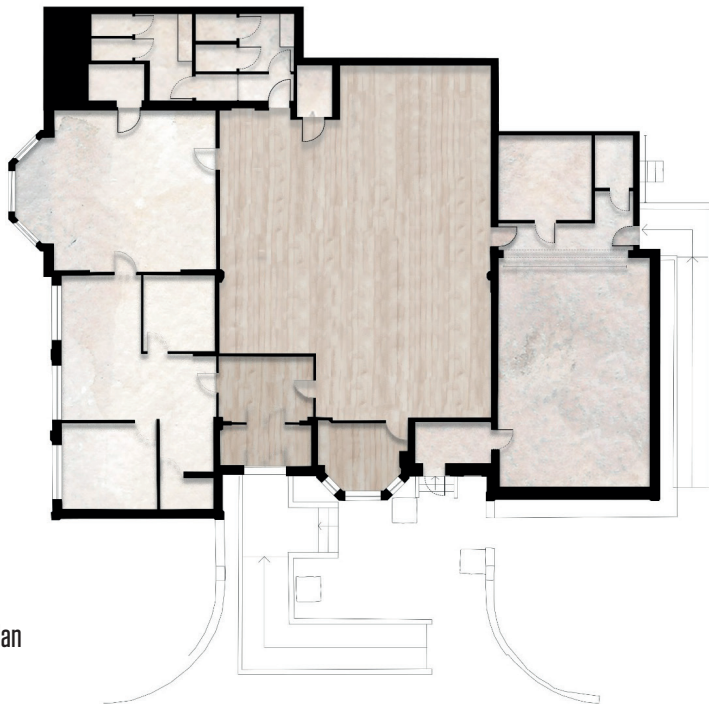


## Final Drawings



Technical Drawing of Floor Plan

- Wood Floorboard
- Carpet
- Tiles



Proposed Textures on Floor Plan

## Axonomic Illustration



## Reflection

To conclude the Action Weeks, we reflected on our relationship with the collaborators and L.O.L. as a group. As a team we were present and attentive, however, we were deeply frustrated that we couldn't engage more actively with the collaborators and community. As aspiring architects, we came to understand the importance of MSA Live as it highlighted the communities and people that need the most input and support. These communities and actors often find themselves disconnected and unable to accept assistance due to insufficient resources.



## ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 and Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Reuse students with those in BA foundation, 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 are for community benefit or 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 600 students from 6 cohorts in MSA have worked on 40 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/2024](https://live.msa.ac.uk/2024)

## SOCIAL

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## WEBSITE

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