

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE**

**STREET
ROOT**



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**MSA
LIVE 24**

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Partners

Our partners for the MSA Live 24 project are the Kingdom Life Church in Old Trafford in collaboration with architect Chris Russell from Still Design Ltd.

Kingdom Life Church was founded in 2021 as an online community in the midst of the COVID-19 lockdown. The church community grew as lockdown restrictions were being lifted, with meetings occurring in back gardens, homes and veterans' clubs. After merging with another local church, in 2023 the church officially became Kingdom Life Church as we know it today. Aside from being the lead pastor, Aaron Hornback has some fascinating multidisciplinary pursuits, which translate into the community-focused vision of the church. His passion for singing gave way to a recording studio that community members can use to make their own music. He is also a fitness trainer, preoccupied with health and wellbeing.

Still House Design Ltd is a private company in incorporated in 2022 by Chris and Judith Russell in Stockport, Cheshire, providing various architectural design services. Chris has been an incredible collaborator to our group, providing us with valuable feedback and support throughout the project.

Introduction

Street Root

Our project brief was to design a residential accommodation facility attached to the other facilities provided on-site by the Kingdom Life Church. The beneficiaries of the project are previously homeless people in Manchester who are transitioning from short-term accommodation provided by Embassy to further temporary accommodation provided by the church.

The project is a continuation of the MSA Live 23 New Space, New Song and closely linked to Group 12's project, also in collaboration with Kingdom Life Church, focused on the design of a Youth Community Centre. Our group was instructed to design an accommodation comprised of self-contained residential units, including a sleeping space, a kitchenette and an en-suite bathroom. Self-contained units (similar to studio flats) were decided on in favour of shared common areas due to the sensitive nature of the building users, who would also have the opportunity to regain their independence and self-sufficiency. The idea was to provide as many units as possible, working from minimum but still comfortable dimensions, to be able to provide support for more people in need.

Throughout the two-week project, our efforts generally relied on team work, as well as splitting tasks for efficiency. On the day we met the BA and MLA students, we asked them about their strengths and preferences, to ensure they would be working on parts of the project they liked and felt inspired to contribute to. Our collaboration was very fruitful, the younger students had the opportunity to learn from us and we had the opportunity to learn how to teach them! A fantastic win-win. The most important thing is we had a blast.

FIRST MEETING



SITE ANALYSIS
RESEARCH



SITE VISIT

The team visited the site and met with the client at Kingdom Life Church



CONCEPT DESIGN

INITIAL MASSING AND
SKETCH CONCEPTS

After developing each accommodation unit, massing exercises were used to test the possible configurations of the site proposal



FINAL PLANS AND
VIGNETTES

Two design options were further developed and brought to life with conceptual drawings, massing and spatial design

FINAL DESIGNS



FEASIBILITY
REPORT



EXHIBITION



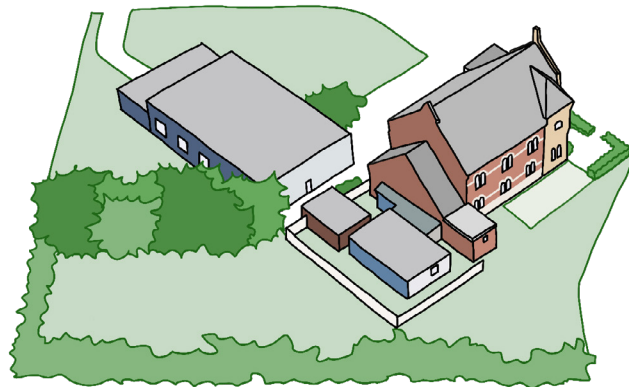
SITE VISIT

On the first day of the project, our group visited the Kingdom Life Church to maximize everyone's understanding of the brief. Our client gave us a tour rich in information about the site and their aspirations for it. The BA and MLA students had the opportunity to ask questions, then moved on to their own site response through sketching, diagramming and note-taking.



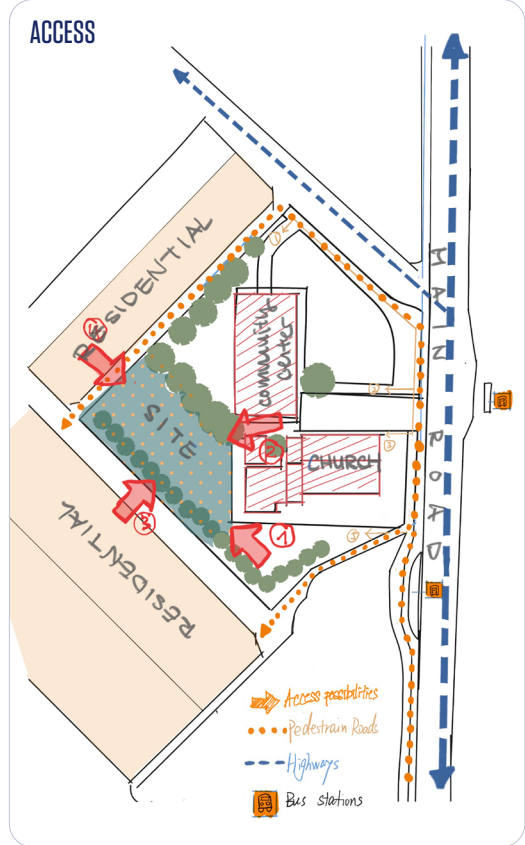
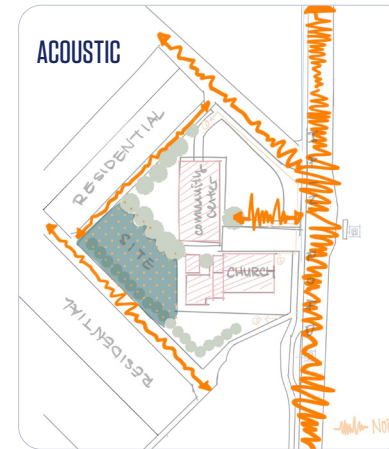
SITE BACKGROUND

The Kingdom Life Church was built in 1877 as a Welsh church in Old Trafford, an area with a predominantly Welsh population at that time. By the 1950's, the area surrounding the church was primarily residential, serving the spiritual needs of the local community. In the 1960's, local residents opted against the deconstruction of the church. The building still stands today, serving not only as a church, but as a community space, including a daycare, a music recording studio and a canteen.

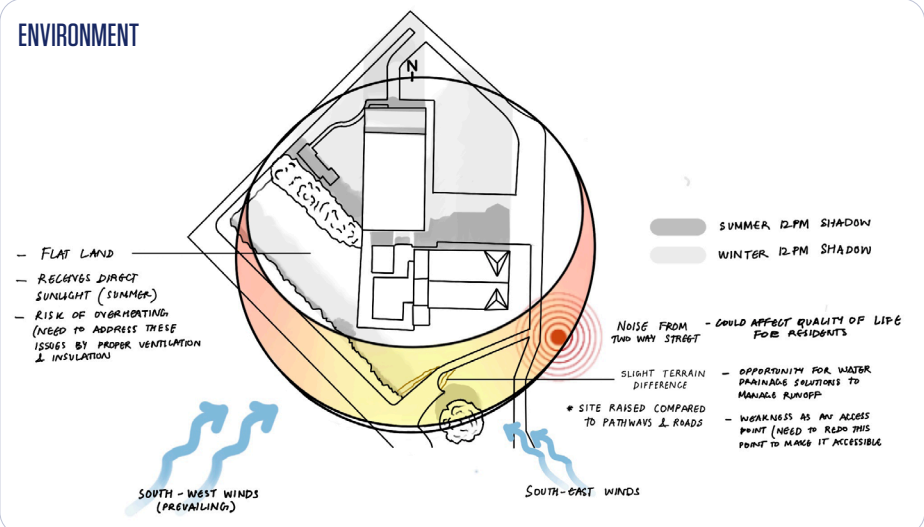


SITE ANALYSIS

We looked at the current site strategy, understanding the site boundaries, the surrounding residential buildings, existing access points, pedestrian routes and vegetation. The first design step was to note down all potential access points into the site for our proposal. The site response also consisted of an acoustic analysis, concluding that the site is secluded from the noise of the main road.



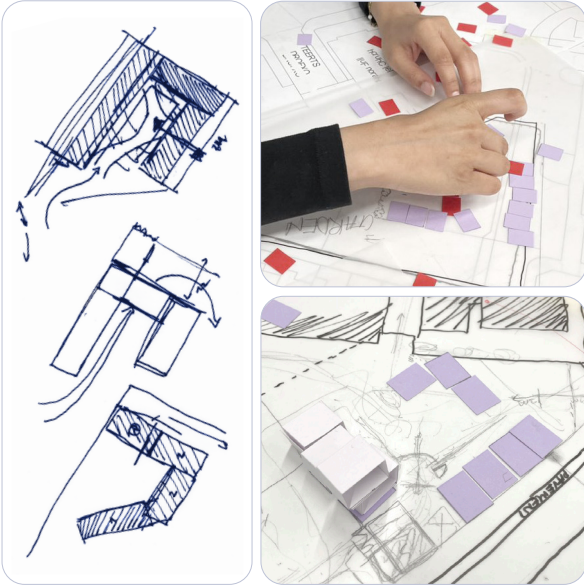
ENVIRONMENT



PROCESS

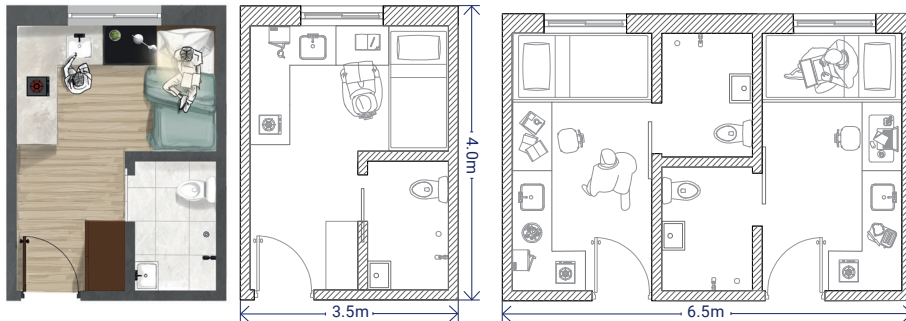
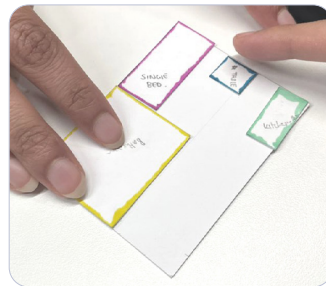
We started testing the arrangement of utilities within one residential unit to determine its overall size. Then, we tested out multiple massing options to achieve the optimal arrangement on the site and provide as many units as possible, based on the opportunities and constraints highlighted in the site analysis.

Taking into consideration site restrictions and dimensions-related regulations, we considered the access and circulation. Using tracing paper and cutouts of residential units, we moved them around, sketching different iterations until we reached two options.



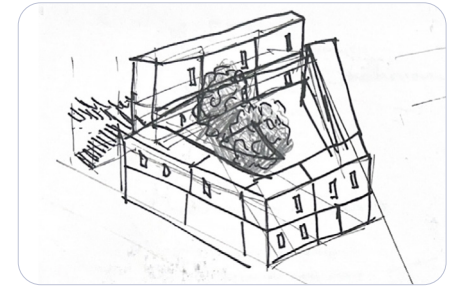
RESIDENTIAL UNIT 1:100

Using design guidance regarding minimum dimensions, we designed an optimized residential unit that includes a bedroom space with a kitchen area, as well as an en-suite bathroom, to provide a self-contained space for the resident to regain their independence. The units mirror each other in order to optimize the space use.



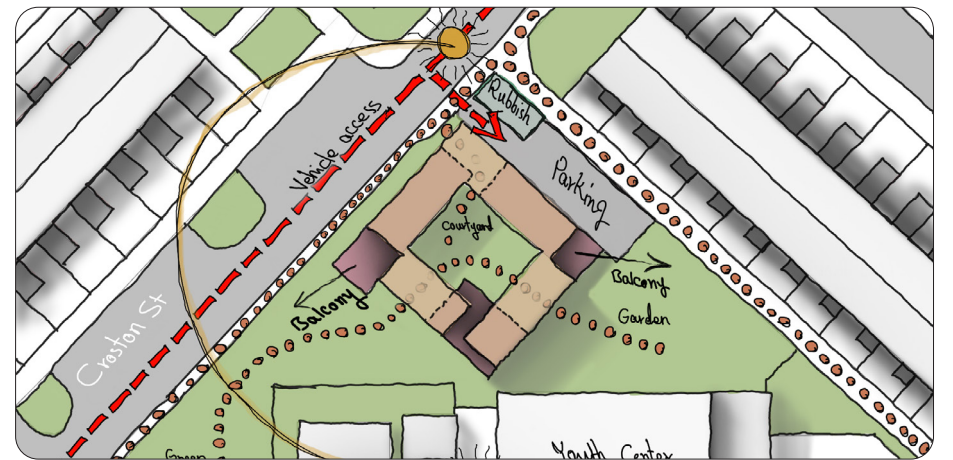
DESIGN STRATEGY: OPTION 1

Option 1 focuses on providing a central courtyard to create a secluded outdoor space for the residents. It also provides the opportunity for connection to the existing garden on the site. Drawing from the existing arches on the church windows, we created an external hallway with similar arches as a transition from public to private space.



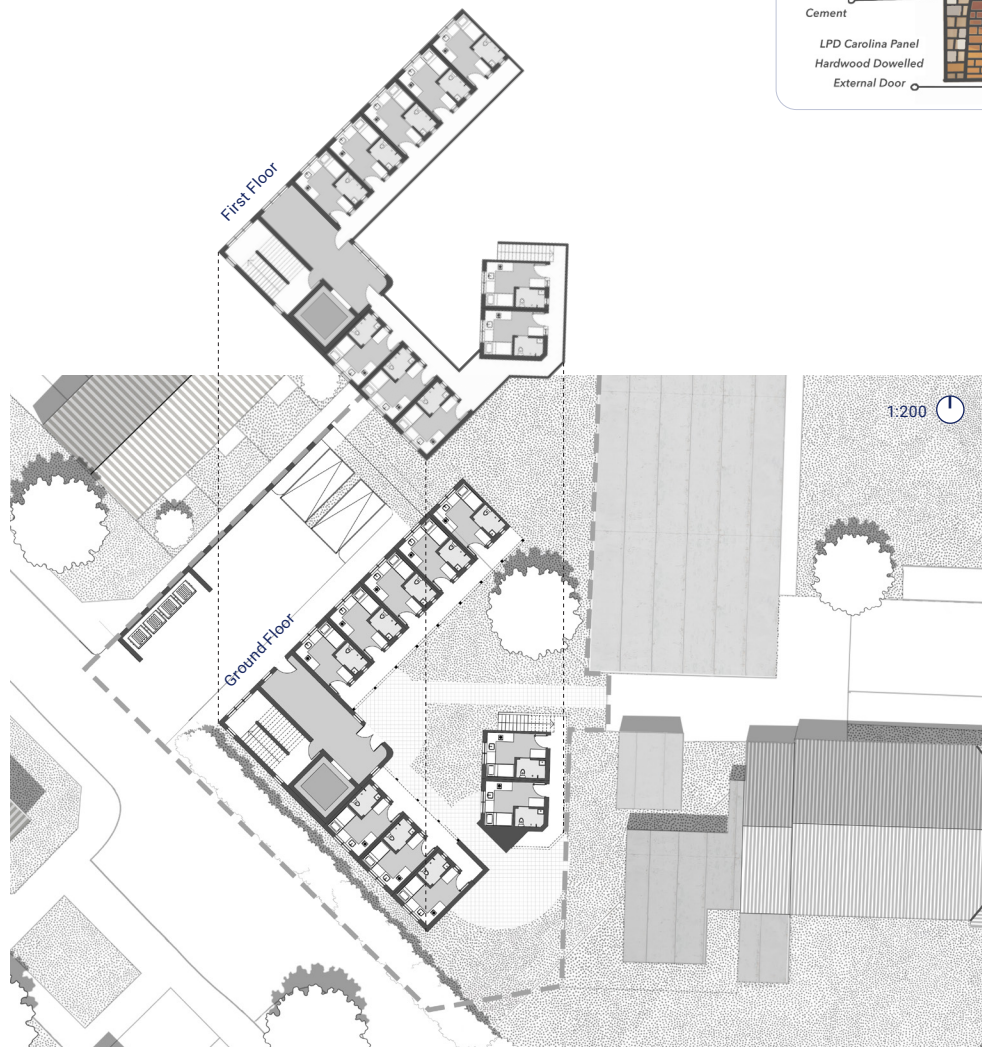
DESIGN STRATEGY: OPTION 2

The main idea behind option 2 is providing additional circulation outdoor space on the ground level, with a bigger volume on the upper level, supported by the structure underneath. This creates an opportunity for social interaction, with more privacy on the first floor.

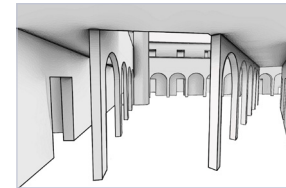
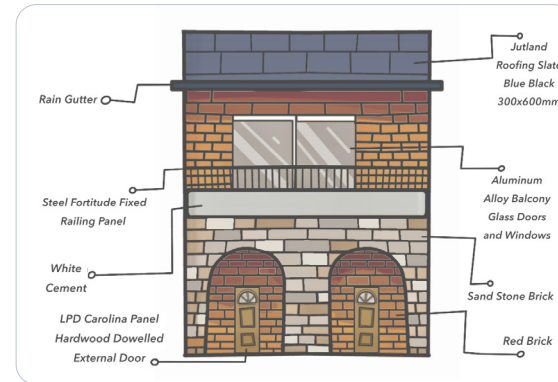


DESIGN OUTPUT: OPTION 1

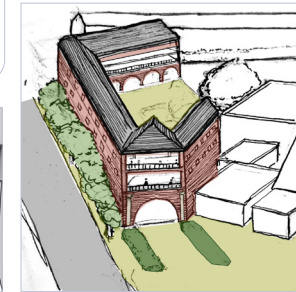
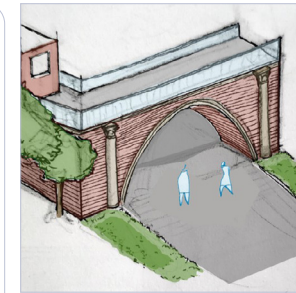
Option one reflects a semi-private arrangement, with the primary focus on a central courtyard. Two entrances connect the accommodation to the church and the public pathway, with the main entrance being framed with an arch, reminiscent of the church's existing vernacular. Exterior arcades create a boundary between the private and public realm, and external walkways on the first floor allow a opportunity for social connections between residents and those in the courtyard below.



MATERIALITY



MAIN ANTRANCE



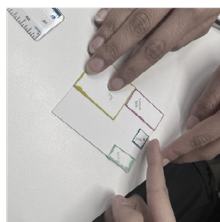
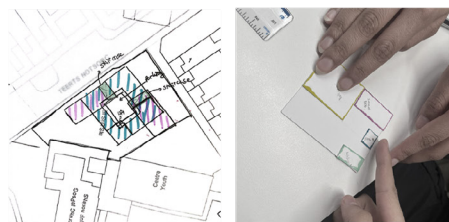
INTERIOR LANDSCAPE



DESIGN OUTPUT: OPTION 2

In Option 2, the ground floor blocks are broken up and unified on the first floor, featuring an open-air courtyard. This layout encourages plenty of ventilation and air circulation, and each unit receives ample sunlight from all sides. The first floor provides cover for the areas below and serves as an overbridge. The church, youth center, and accommodation buildings are all interlinked by the glazed reception block, which serves as the focal piece, enhancing the site's cohesiveness and inclusivity.





REFLECTION

Working on this project was a challenge, but a delightful one. In the initial stages of organising, we struggled a bit with thoroughly understanding the brief and what exactly it was asking of us. There was a bit of confusion regarding the building users; at first, there were conversations about having student accommodation in the same place as the temporary accommodation for people transitioning from homelessness. Having these two types of occupation simultaneously was a very challenging idea, considering the vulnerability of both parties. It is possible this was rather thought of as a design for adaptability, but it was not entirely clear. In hindsight, we should have asked for clarification earlier in the process, to get a better grasp of the project.

Our collaborators were incredible. Pastor Aaorn Hornbach's enthusiasm and passion for the project was contagious and truly inspirational. As architects-to-be, the client's enthusiasm can often be one of the main drivers and reminders that what we do matters and improves glimpses of the world, little by little. Architect Chris Russell was remarkably supportive throughout the project and provided assistance and feedback when necessary. The fruitful opportunity for us to collaborate with both the client and the architect was an interesting, informative process, enhancing our understanding of architectural practice and its many facets.

Working in a group with students across all years was a wonderful experience. It provided us the opportunity to play around with the concept of architectural teaching, which we otherwise don't learn too much about, other than by observing. Guiding the BA and MLA students strengthened our confidence in our architectural skills and knowledge - we found we were able to provide valuable feedback and guide the project with self-assurance. It was touching to give advice based on our experience, answer any questions and curiosities, and reassure them about this challenging but beautiful journey. The students were open about their experience as well, kickstarting some really interesting conversations. Our approach balanced grace with firmness; we were friendly, talkative, and showed empathy, but also set boundaries regarding engagement and contribution when necessary.

Overall, in our books this collaboration has been a success. We met some amazing people and had a blast designing together. It was a wonderfully refreshing project that closed the chapter of our MArch 1 on a really positive note.

ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 and Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Resuse 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:

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BLOG

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