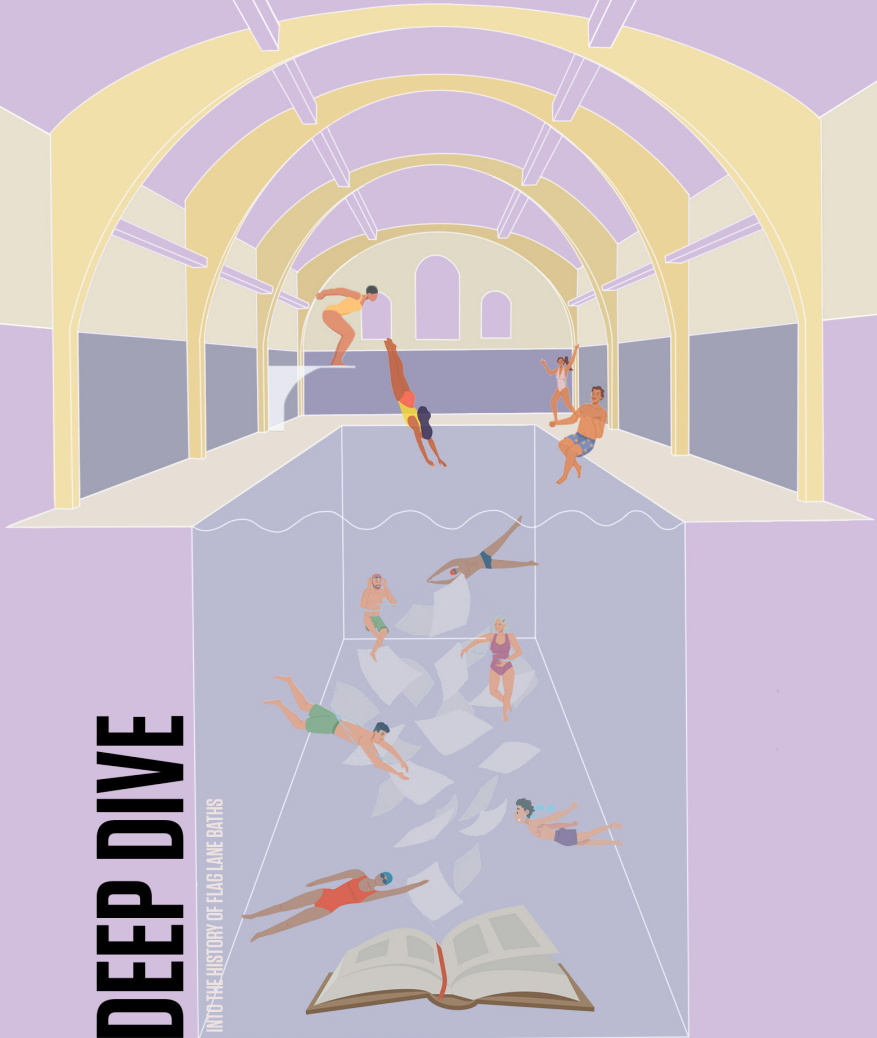


MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE



DEEP DIVE

INTO THE HISTORY OF FLAG LANE BATHS

Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



MSA LIVE 24

Team

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Oliver Barrett (BA2)

Shing Chi Lam (BA2)

Yuri Kozhevnikov (BA2)

Zhifan Wei (BA2)

Partners

Always Ahead Charity was founded to revitalise the former Crewe Public Swimming Baths, also known as Flag Lane Baths. With planning permission secured, the project is now in progress, becoming a prominent regeneration effort in Crewe, supported by both public and private funds. Research, storytelling, engagement with the community and design work are important aspects for the project's success, as part of the collaboration for MSA Live, to create a proposal for the local history gallery.

The friendly faces representing our collaborators, are Alex and Robert.

Alex is an alumni of the Manchester School of Architecture who founded 'Home Studio Architects' in 2022. Alongside, Alex manages 'Home Coffee & Studio', a coffee shop in Alsager. With 15+ years of experience in esteemed architecture and design firms in the North West, Alex envisions opening more spaces for community events and arts workshops.

Robert is a member of 'Always Ahead,' a charity dedicated to enhancing the economic, social, and environmental welfare of Crewe residents'. In addition to his involvement with 'Always Ahead,' Robert is a specialist in Naturalistic Garden Design and runs his own company.

To find more information on the project you can follow the link here: <https://flaglanebaths.co.uk/index.html>

Project Agenda

Deep Dive: Into the History of Flag Lane Baths

Flag Lane Baths, located at a prominent spot in Crewe, was closed down a few years ago despite its rich historical significance and longstanding service to the community. Inaugurated in 1937, the building rapidly became the heart of the town due to its central location and programme. Many locals visited the building on a regular basis and created numerous memories, from learning how to swim to other personal habits.

However, ever since its closure in 2016, the condition of the building has deteriorated significantly. Left abandoned, it was subject to vandalism and anti-social behavior. The 'Always ahead' charity thus got their hands on the baths and planned on turning it into a community hub. Cafés, gathering spaces, playgrounds, the ongoing project for the Flag Lane Baths is set to bring the community of Crewe back together in a place they grew attached to over the years.

One collaborator from the charity and another architect from Crewe hence requested insight from students to work on the design of the gallery space planned in the underground part of the original building. A resulting exhibition, designed for this prospect, should dive into the history of the baths and its community. Therefore, the proposed project aims to breathe new life into this iconic building, by adapting it for reuse, envisioning a public space with area for this gallery of the history of the Crewe baths. The primary objective is to generate initial concepts for the gallery and provide the client with immersive 3D visualizations. Engaging with the building's history and the local community will be integral to the process. This ensures a thoughtful and community-centric re-purposing of this valuable asset for the benefit of Crewe's residents in the coming years.

For that matter, the teams are separated into a design and research group that work together to create both a narrative and resulting visuals. With the help of insights from the locals and their memories, as well as archive research and museum design principles, the goal is to generate a walk-through sequence that engages both the regulars and the intrigued visitors. Mixing memories, re-imagined character and new additions, the project for the exhibition space will speak to visitors on a personal level and arouse curiosity.

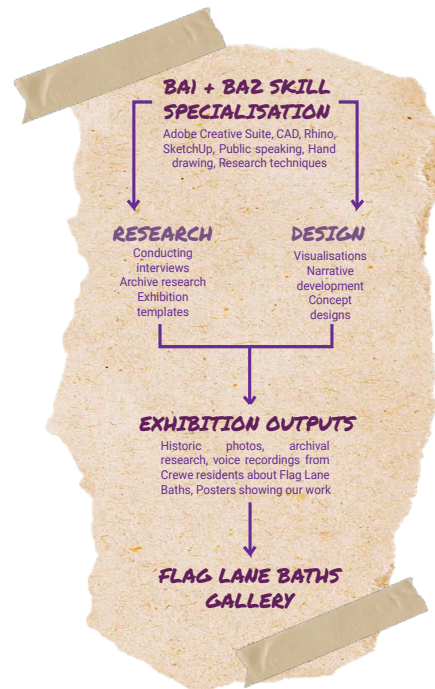
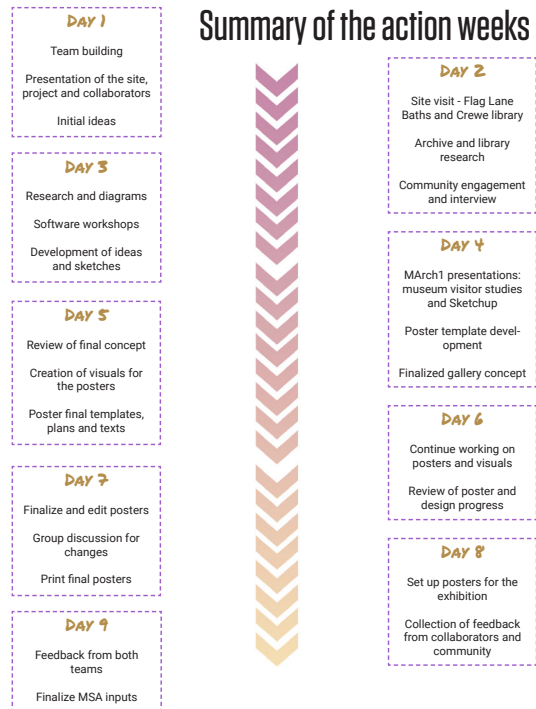
Action planning for MSA Live

The right diagram shows a timeline of the actions weeks for MSA Live.

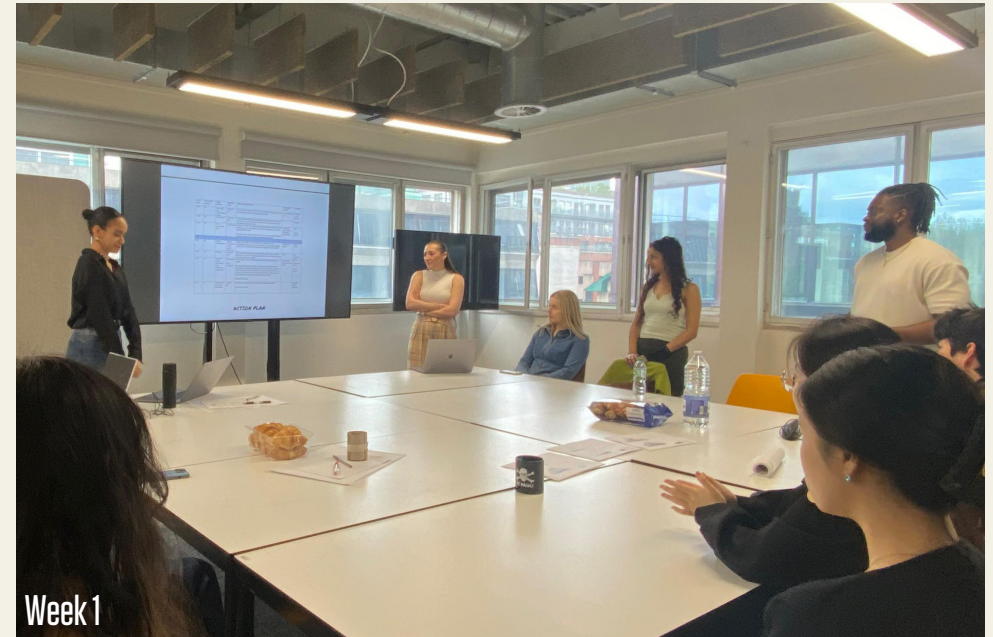
This, along with our more detailed action plan allowed for a clear roadmap for the project progression, helped team members coordinate their efforts accordingly and created a structure to ensure accountability for the team to track progress and allocate time, based on importance and urgency of certain tasks. We also found that referring to this throughout MSA Live created a sense of momentum for the project, as knowing there are deadlines to meet motivated team members to stay focused and committed to achieving our goals.

This diagram depicts the breakdown of two teams; Design and Research, which were utilised informally across MSA Live.

A benefit of this use of sub-teams during MSA Live was task specialisation for the BA1 and BA2 students as they could use these to place themselves where they had particular skills, resulting in high efficiency across the two weeks. Smaller groups also allowed for a sharper focus on specific tasks and an increased ability to concentrate on specific objectives and deliverables and make meaningful impact to parts of the project.



Introducing the project



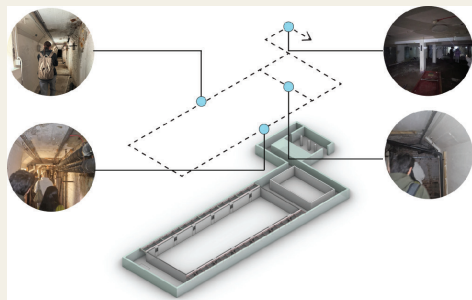
Day 1 of MSA Live started with group introductions and presentations about the project. We then carried out a few ice breakers to get to know one another better before splitting off into smaller groups to complete initial research tasks and design ideas for the project.



Site visit to Crewe and Flag Lane Baths



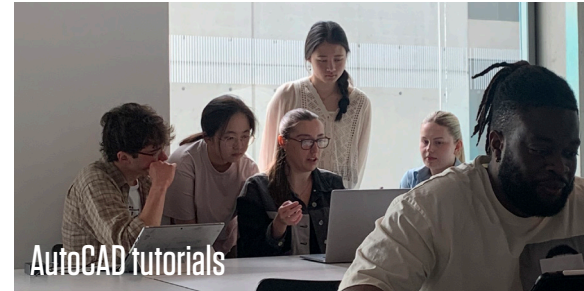
Exploring the site



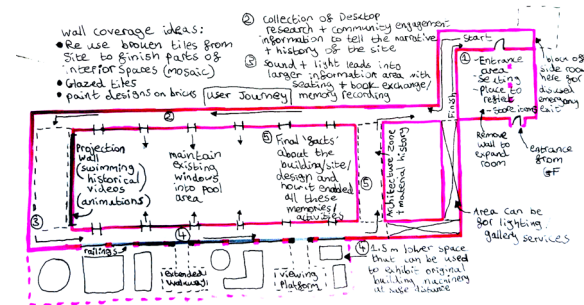
Community engagement activities

Day 2 saw the Deep Dive team take on Crewe for a site visit. After walking Flag Lane Baths we split into smaller groups where half did hands on research at Crewe library and the other half carried out in person interviews and gave out flyers with a QR code linking to a digital form for members of the public to fill out regarding their memories of Flag Lane Baths.

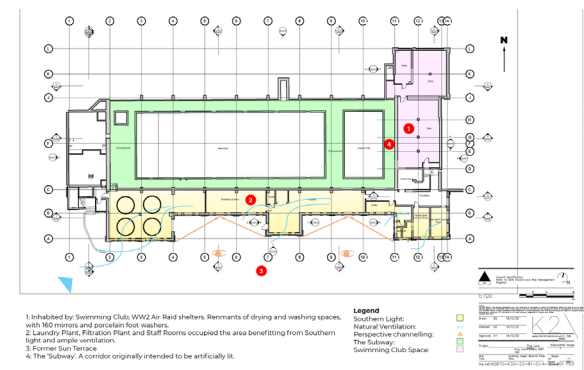
Reflections from site and design development



AutoCAD tutorials



Feedback sessions



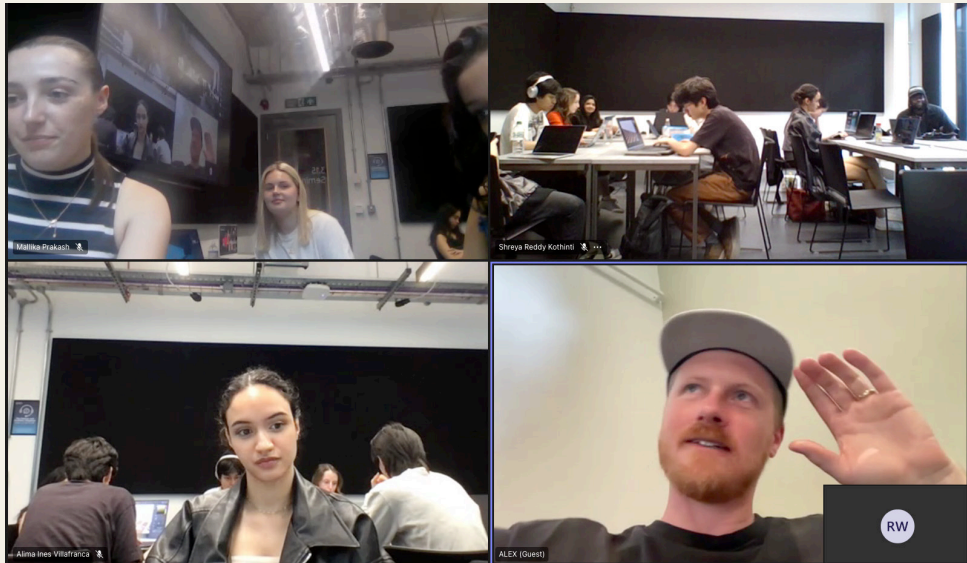
On Day 3 of the first week we took a deep dive into creating proposals and started to consolidate our findings from site the previous day.

On the Design Team side, tutorials on CAD were used to show the BArch students how you can use information from site to correct or better understand the existing drawings we were given by the client. We also collectively started to work on some programming of the space and potential ideas for how we wanted users to feel when experiencing the gallery.

The Research Team extracted relevant information from the audio recordings taken with interviews of members of the public to inform areas of more in-depth desktop research to complete the research portion of this project. After an informal presentation to the Design Team to explain what they had concluded, the Research Team was ready to move on to creating diagrams that will be used to illustrate our findings in the exhibition at the end of Week 2 of MSA Live.

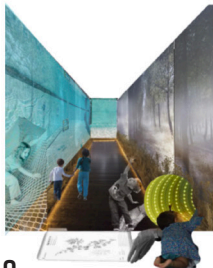
Feedback session with the client

We were also fortunate to be able to catch up with one of the collaborators at the beginning of Week 2 to share a presentation of our progression and plans for the remainder of MSA Live.



Day 3/4 - Research and Design Development

Sensory Installations



Week 2

Historical Exhibition



Conversation/knowledge sharing area



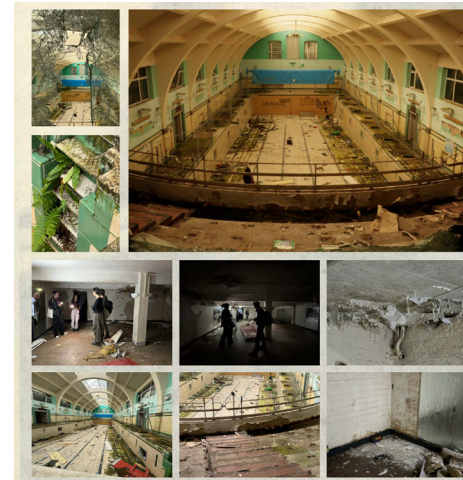
This meeting proved very valuable for the final few days of MSA Live as we were able to ensure that the collaborators vision and expectations still aligned with the progress of the design, whilst also giving them the opportunity to provide feedback on the work done so far. For the BA1 and BA2 students in our group, this stage was rewarding for them to see how their engagement and work so far had been very positively received and commended.

Refining the posters for the exhibition

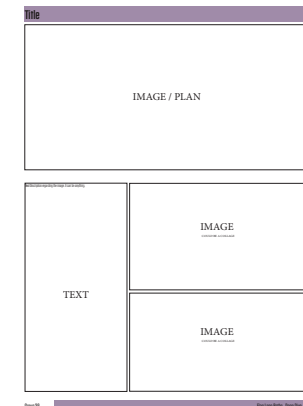


The next few days were used to produce visuals and diagrams for the exhibition posters. Each student of the research team was in charge of a theme assigned to each poster, from history to the current architectural state and community analysis.

The Research Team based themselves on existing plan drawings, research made during the site visit and interviews to direct their area of research. Some dived into the community surrounding the old building, thus bringing up the different clubs, services and events that took place there and showing its importance to the locals. We mostly learned about the presence of The Seahorse Club which was widely supported by the local community and organised large events and swimming lessons for the disabled. This also helped recognise how the building was used and why the spaces are distributed the way they are.



Other students researched the architectural details and style of the baths, mostly bringing up its Art Deco inspiration and the various materials used for its construction and interiors. Hence understanding the original aspect of the building, it gave an historical insight while also contrasting with a board referencing its current, abandoned state. Considering that the interviews highlighted that the residents had not been able to see the baths like this, documenting the details of decaying conditions, broken glass and fading colours before the renovation could be interesting for the exhibition.

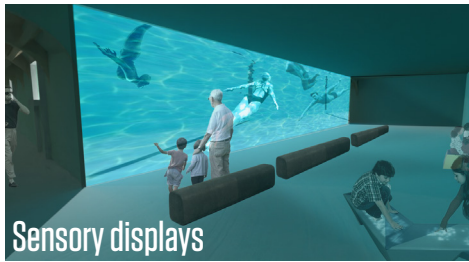


Example template for the exhibition

Examples of some final outputs



Interaction with the past: baths and machines



Sensory displays



Historical walkthrough



Conversation area in the welcome space

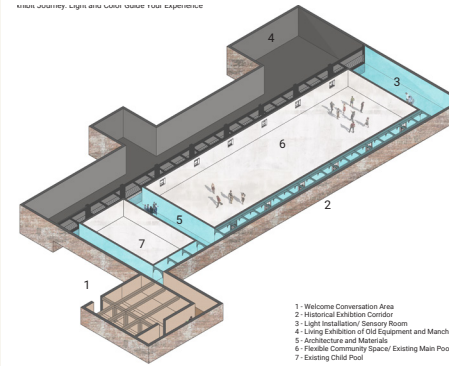
Day 6 had the design team work on the final visuals for the gallery space and passageways based on the storyboards developed earlier in the process. They show how the passageways are used to peak into the past history of the building, mainly reflected through old machines and the original bath area. The overall colours, lighting, and sensory displays are set to immerse visitors into an underwater environment.

These visuals were also used for discussion with the client, MArch 1 students, and the research team for refinements. The main outcome was to change the colour scheme of the sitting areas to warmer colours for more contrast and a calmer atmosphere.

Examples of some final outputs



WITH LIGHT, LIGHT AND LIGHT UNDER THE EXPERIENCE



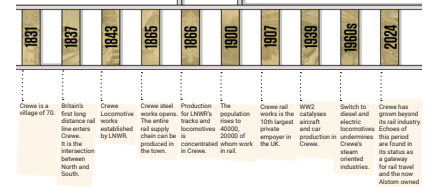
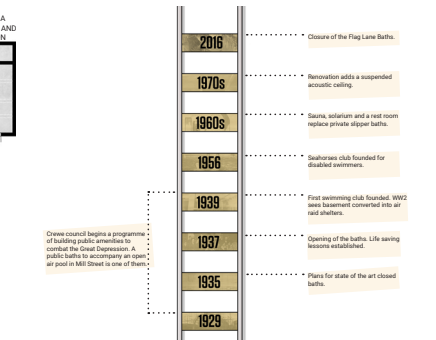
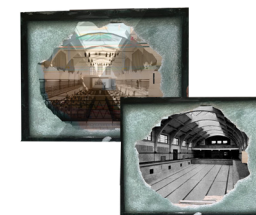
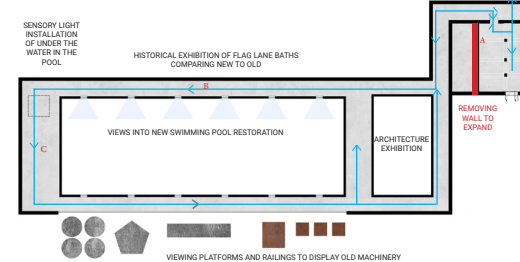
- 1 - Welcome Conversation Area
- 2 - Historical Exhibition Corridor
- 3 - Light Installation/Sensory Room
- 4 - Living Exhibition of Old Equipment and Machinery
- 5 - Architecture and Materials
- 6 - Flexible Community Space/ Existing Main Pool
- 7 - Existing Child Pool



Internal render of the welcome space

The final few days of MSA Live were spent collating all our efforts across the weeks to produce the final posters for the exhibition. These images highlighted the range of outputs that we showcased.

Programme of the proposed space

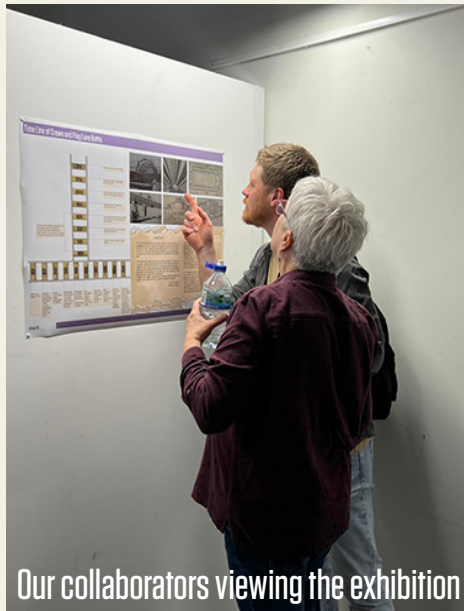


Timeline of collected research

Final exhibition photos



Installation



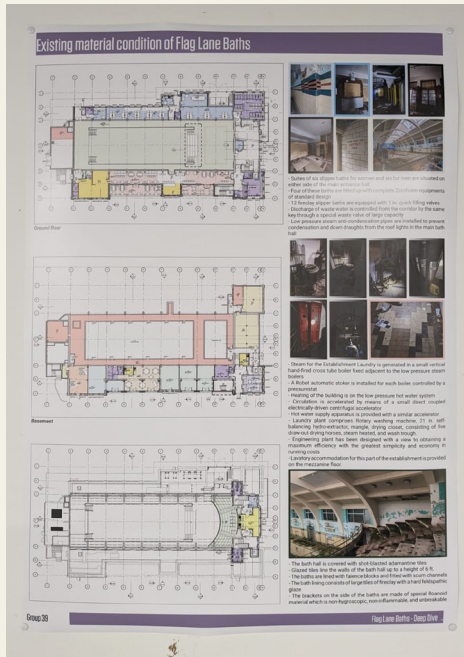
Our collaborators viewing the exhibition



Printing process



Close-up of a poster



Research Team poster example

Team reflections of MSA Live

Overall, MSA Live has been a rewarding experience for both the BA1, BA2, MArch1 students involved with the Flag Lane Baths project.

Visiting the site, engaging with the community and collaborating across the Design and Research Teams, within our group, has made for a dynamic process across the two action weeks. The use of our action plan and dedicated Design and Research Teams created a sense of momentum for the project, as knowing there were deadlines to meet motivated team members to stay focused and committed to achieving our goals.

We also went through the experience of managing a group of students for the first time. Although the early stages were a little confusing, we soon realised the importance of separating and structuring the tasks. Hence, we all managed to find a position we were most comfortable in based on our character and skills, from museum design to team leadership. Having found that dynamic, the whole group became very efficient and was able to go through the project smoothly.

We are looking forward to seeing how the project develops.



Exhibition day team photo

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:

msalive@mmu.ac.uk

BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2024

SOCIAL

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