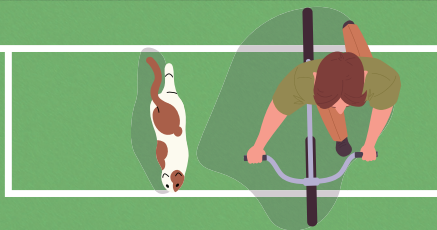


MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE



HALF-TIME HUB



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MANCHESTER
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GORGEOUS
GORSE HILL

MSA
LIVE 25

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Partners

The Gorgeous Gorse Hill is a group of local residents of the Gorse Hill suburb in Manchester, committed to enhancing the neighbourhood for the benefit for all who live, work and visit. Their mission is simple – to make Gorse Hill a beautiful, welcoming, connected and a 'gorgeous' place.

Comprising around 8000 residents, the neighbourhood also comprises the Manchester United Football ground and the Lancashire County's Cricket Club. Through art and gardening, they aim to improve the appearance of the local area and build the community through public events.

The project currently focuses on enhancing and re-using an existing toilet block site that sits locked and unused for over ten years. Taking the ethos of the Gorgeous Gorse Hill, we aim to develop it into a hub that caters to the community's innovative interventions.

Introduction

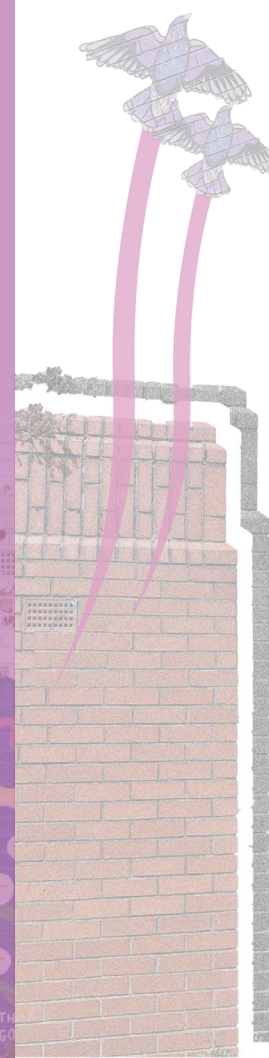
Half-Time Hub

The Half Time Hub is a project that proposes sensitive intervention strategies to transform a disused toilet block in Gorse Hill into a thriving community hub that is owned by, designed for, and gives back to its residents and the community at large. The site sits close to the Old Trafford Stadium and hence experiences a varied amount of footfall – from locals to tourists to fans.

It was important for a project of this type to have a unique design approach rooted in the values of the Gorgeous Gorse Hill Community. Our team engaged in meetings with the collaborators, locals and initiated rigorous site research to understand the context properly. This was aided by Ruth Hannan, our amazing collaborator from Gorgeous Gorse Hill who was very kind to show us the various projects undertaken by the community in the area. What followed in the days ahead was the development of numerous design iterations with unique characteristics that catered to the needs of the clients.

This project centres around four key ambitions: Community, Aesthetics, Economics, and Flexibility. Along with the needs of the community, we also considered how the aesthetics of the design responds to the local artwork on-site, the use of low-cost and recycled materials, and how the site can adapt to match days and non-match days. Based on the feedback received after the first presentations, these aspects were extracted to reach a design solution that responds to the needs and values that the community held, of-course keeping in mind the fluctuating footfall from the stadium beside it along with other factors.

The final design was presented to our collaborators and the Gorse Hill community in the local-favourite Bishop Blaize pub, and received quite a positive response. This publication aims to express the process of how the design was made, and how we grew together as a team, which we are all proud of today.



Timeline



Site Visit

Engaging with the site and the local community was essential for the success of our project. Prior to the Action Weeks, we organized several online meetings with members of the Gorgeous Gorse Hill community to gather their perspectives on the existing toilet block, identify what was lacking in the area, and understand their aspirations for the space. These conversations were invaluable in shaping our approach and ensuring our proposals would be relevant and responsive to community needs.

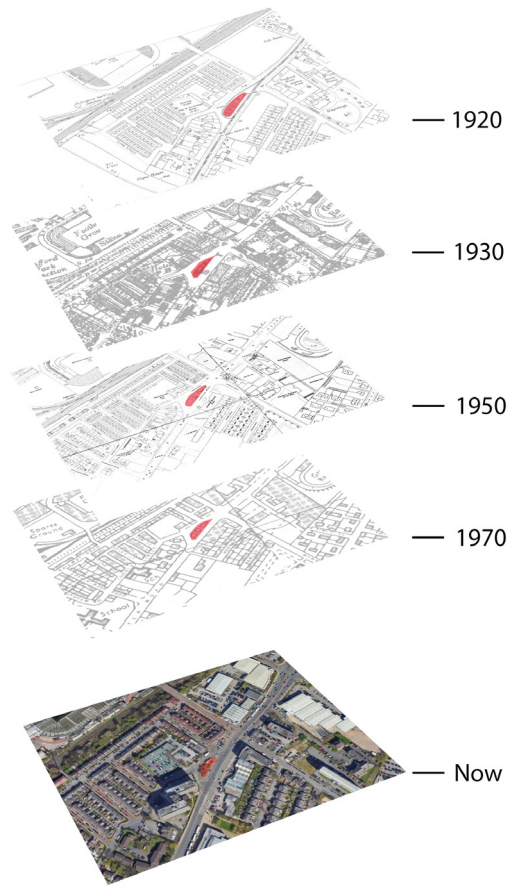
The first day of the MSA Live Weeks began with introductions—not only among team members but also to the site itself and the wider community. Our initial visit extended beyond the immediate project site to include a tour of various community-led initiatives and projects within the Gorse Hill suburb. This broader exploration helped us appreciate the context, ongoing efforts, and the spirit of collaboration that defines the area. During our site visit, we carefully observed and assessed existing conditions, noting both opportunities and constraints.

These insights allowed us to identify key areas for intervention and informed the direction of our design process, ensuring that our proposals would be grounded in a thorough understanding of both the physical site and the community's ambitions.



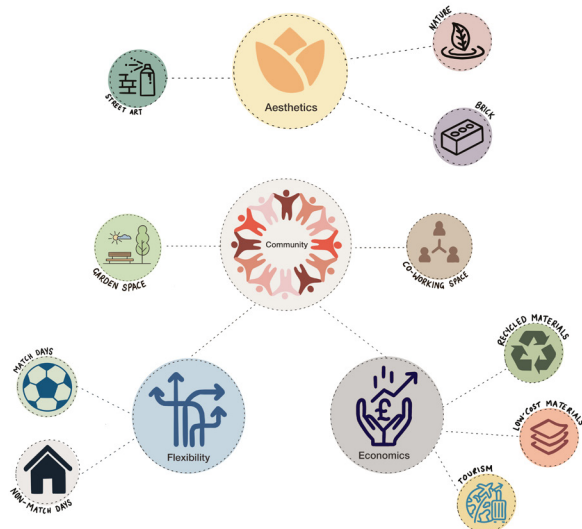
Site Research

Following an amazing start to the action weeks, the team was ready to dig in and research the site. The rigorous analysis involved in-depth research of the site from an urban perspective, which was done through the exercise called 'Urban Acupuncture'. With this exercise, the team identified key typologies, pedestrian and vehicle routes, access points and places of importance around the site which helped us understand the way it interacts with people. This interaction often defines the future use of the project and how it can evolve over time.



Concept Ideation & Manifesto Collage

A collective brainstorming session was conducted during the day following the rigorous site research. Based on the empathic approach, we realised the importance of the points that connected the community to the site and expanded the concepts around them. This activity enables designers to convert crucial challenges into possible solutions. Hence, the manifesto collage was a pot of ideas- which paved the way for the team to develop multiple design iterations for the site.



Workshops

introduction

After paving the way for the design (pun intended), the team divided itself into smaller groups and worked on different possible design solutions. This was done in order to further explore how opportunities can be developed based on one single challenge and/or requirement and how, in comparison, can respond to other design challenges. But before that, we also wanted to imbibe the importance of not just thinking, but also technical skills to the junior members of our team, who were curious about the latest methods of architectural inquiry. Hence, a series of mini-workshops were conducted by the team to aid the process of design development.

AI Workshop

AI – In the contemporary day, AI is everywhere and one must know how to ethically use it for enhancing our ideas into visual infographics. We conducted the workshop to show ways in which the team can use AI to show their ideas visually, and aid them in design development by saving time. Contrary to popular belief, AI doesn't mean that the android takes over, but rather it gives an extra hand and assists the human mind by providing the mediums to expand on what it thinks. This workshop was very helpful in the development of design iterations.

Adaptive Reuse Workshop

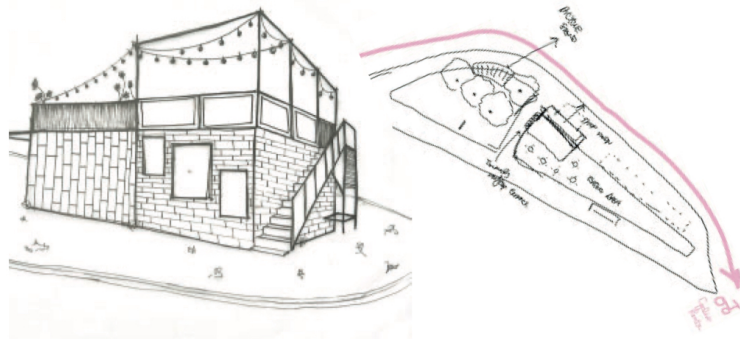
Adaptive Re-Use – The lifestyle of today cannot be compared to that of 10 years ago. We 'adapt' in the present, and so does architecture. In the times when sustainability is crucial, architecture plays a role in practising it by 'adapting' older, unused buildings for different functions and purposes. There are several strategies that help in this adaptive re-use of buildings which often results in an eclectic yet balanced design, and it was all explained to our team when the workshop was conducted. The toilet block is a useful piece that is built, and several methods could be applied for its adaptive reuse, which were explored in the design iterations.

Critique session

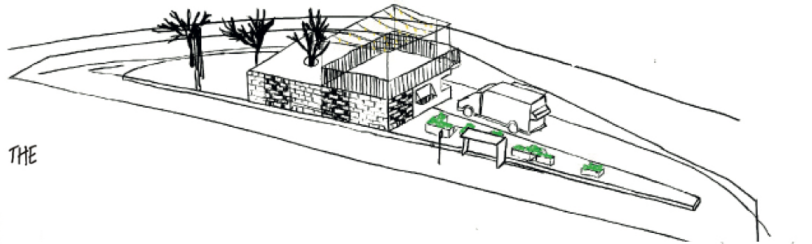
The workshops aided in the process of design development and four iterations for the designs were developed. They revolved around retaining, expanding, dividing and opening the block. Precedents, case studies, reference images, design sketches helped in developing these options. This was followed by a session of critiques, which involved interactive and constructive criticism and design defence. Afterall, design is a 'collaborative' process that builds confidence and the core idea behind this project.

Design Iterations

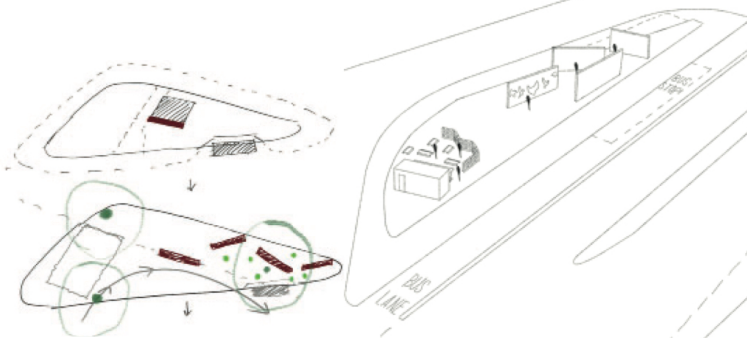
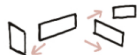
① RETAINING THE BLOCK



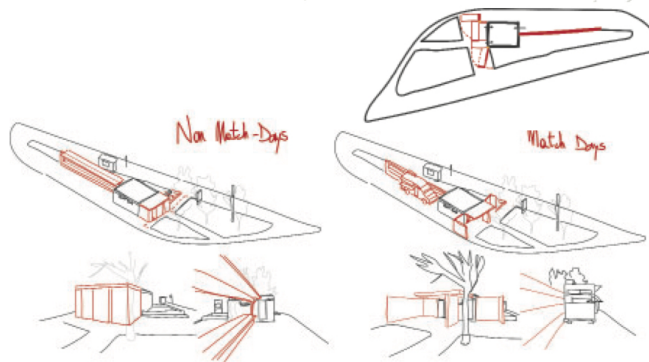
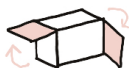
② EXPANDING THE BLOCK



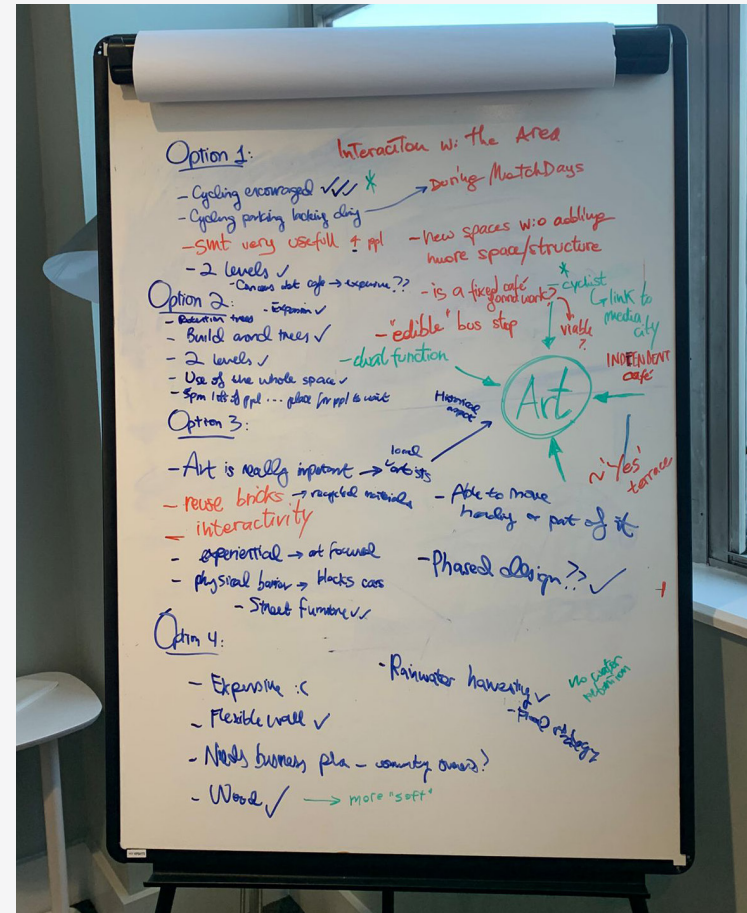
③ DIVIDING THE BLOCK



④ OPENING UP THE BLOCK



The first presentation day was filled with excitement as we prepared to share our ideas with collaborators after days of creative and strategic thinking. This milestone was crucial for understanding the community's response to our design concepts. We held the meeting near the project site to help everyone visualize the proposals in context, which encouraged community members to join and provide feedback.



The session was recorded on Teams, allowing us to debrief group members who couldn't attend. We thoroughly documented the discussions, capturing holistic feedback on each design proposal, which helped guide our next steps toward the technical proposal.

We presented four design proposals, each with features that collaborators appreciated. The meeting included BA students, giving them a chance to present their ideas. Collaborators emphasized the importance of "ART" and particularly liked our suggestion to involve local artists from the community. They also valued our adaptive reuse strategies, noting that all proposals were mindful of the project's budget. Ultimately, elements from each proposal were discussed and combined, leading to the creation of our final design proposal for "The Half Time Hub".

Design Resolution

Final discussions, plans, visuals, Physical Modelmaking, VR, Sections/ Elevations, Renders, Diagrams...

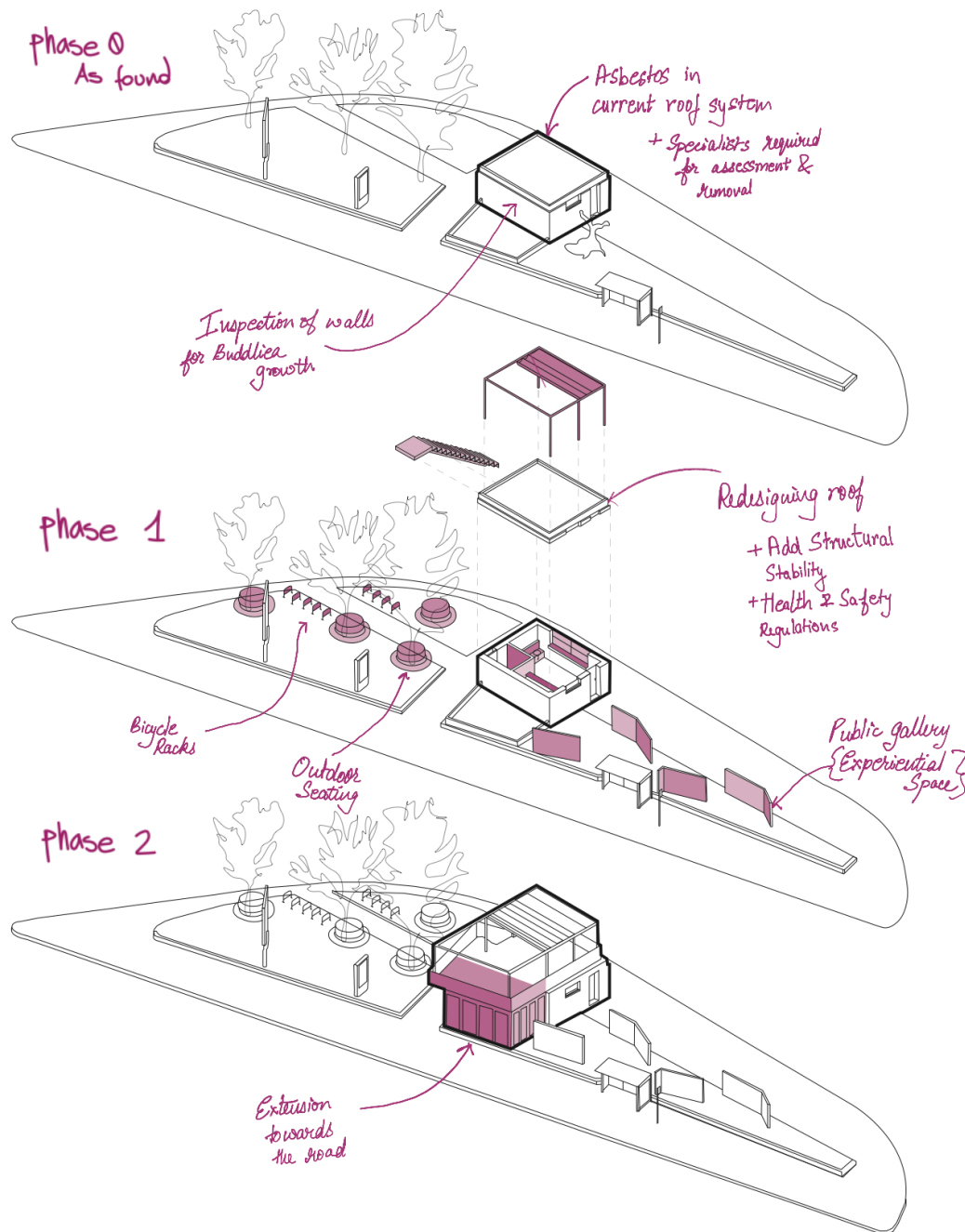
Wow! What a success week one was! Not only did the design receive a positive response from the collaborators, but also the community. The team was ready and excited to proceed with the final design development. By taking into consideration the feedbacks received, we started putting the pieces of the puzzle together. An insightful design discussion occupied the day, which resulted in a beautifully curated design – every aspect responding to the needs of the community and representing the ideology of the team. It is important to note that every element represented the main core concepts of the project - *bubble diagrams*.

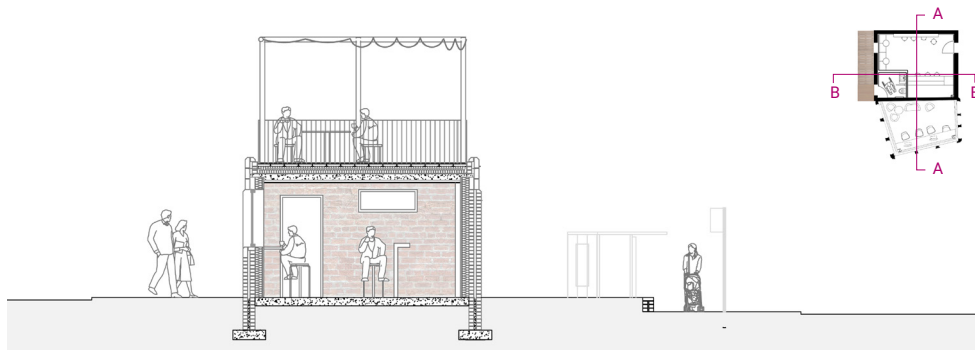
Based on the discussions with the clients, the final design was divided into 4 phases to accommodate flexibility in terms of functions and design. While the space caters to the community, it is also designed to invite the fans that come in this area during match days, making it holistic.

Phase 0 The existing land : This phase comprises the current conditions and uses of the site. Even though the toilet block is disused, the plot acts as a breakout space for commuters with a bus stop right beside it. The greenery and the artworks on the brick walls adds to the overall aesthetics of the space. These functions were important to define the future functional adjustments.

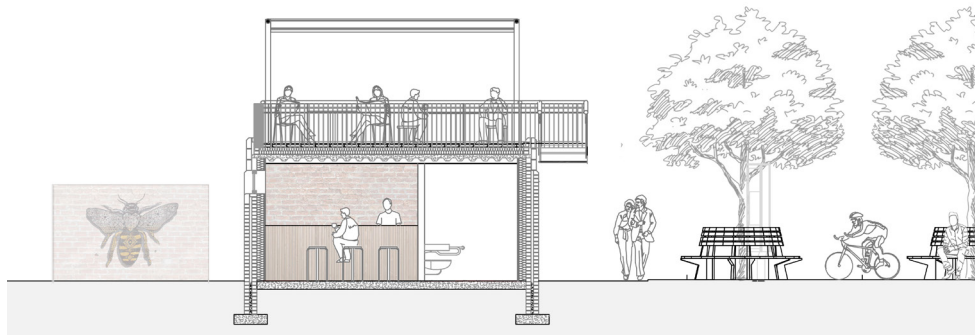
Phase 1 The ecosystem : This phase takes the existing site and transforms it into a hub. The toilet block is proposed to be a self-sustaining unit working as a cafe to invite users inside. This is supported by redesigning the ceiling to add structural integrity and also make the roof accessible for people. The areas around the block support this unit with the additions of bicycle racks, sustainable benches and a system of walls organised to make an experiential impact on the users as they walk around.

Phase 2 : This phase comprises extending the ecosystem with different functions - co-working space. This function is accommodated with an extension to the toilet block towards the main road, which also increases space on the terrace. This extension proves that the space can be flexible for future changes and uses.





Section AA



Section BB



North Elevation

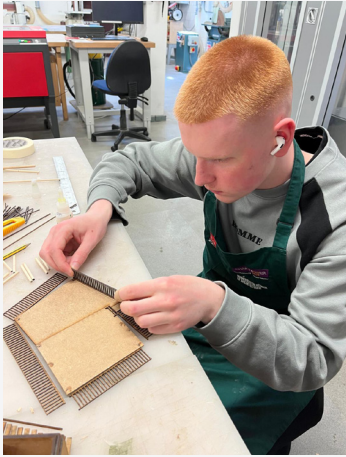


East Elevation



Render Post-processed during AI-workshop | VISOID

physical model



digital model



Reflection

Although MSA Live officially spanned just two Action Weeks, our journey began much earlier in December, when we first met our collaborator, Ruth Hannan. Meeting new people and exploring unfamiliar contexts, we quickly bonded over shared ideas and aspirations for the Gorgeous Gorse Hill community. Through site visits, discussions with council members, and collaborative planning sessions, our connection to both the place and each other deepened. As Manchester's skies cleared, so did our vision—to make a meaningful contribution to the community

The Action Weeks progressed smoothly, with our design evolving through continuous feedback from collaborators and team members. This iterative process was exactly what we hoped to experience, and by following our schedule closely, we produced a well-developed final outcome.

The module concluded with a joyful presentation at Bishop Blaize, where we showcased the site's potential using digital visuals and a phased construction plan, offering flexible investment opportunities. A celebratory meal marked the unity and growth of our team.

We are deeply grateful to Ruth Hannan, the Gorgeous Gorse Hill community, Julie Fitzpatrick, Emily Crompton, and our dedicated team for their invaluable support throughout this journey.



ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 and Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Resuse 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 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 650 students from 5 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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