

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

BOWLS to BLOOMS

MONTON UNITARIAN CHURCH



Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



MSA
LIVE 25

Team

Jonatan Mueller (MArch1)

Yukun Liu (MArch1)

Nicole Durrell (MArch1)

Niloufar Kalhori (MA AR)

Patrick Moores (MArch1)

Cheuk Lam Julian Lp (BA1)

Grace O'Donoghue (BA1)

Justin Ashley (BA1)

Matiss Erdmanis (BA1)

Patrycja Koziel (BA1)

Anish Shah (BA2)

Ellie Mckiernan (BA2)

Jiya Phull (BA2)

Kaiyi Zhang (BA2)

Yike Li (BA2)

Partners

MSA Students

Anna Jarvis (Monton Unitarian Church)

In the MSA Live project 'Bowls to Blooms', we worked alongside members of the Monton Unitarian Church to create a new space for the community on the former Boddan Lodge site. Our proposal was led by a community consultation at the church, where we established our goal of transforming the bowls green into a flourishing garden for growing food, enhancing biodiversity, and bringing all members of the community together.

The ethos of the church, which welcomes members from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, fosters inclusivity and progressive values by encouraging involvement through a diverse variety of community-led activities in and around the church. Through the design and construction of 10 accessible planters and benches, we are seeking to create a new space where this community vision can continue to grow and thrive.

Introduction

Bowls to Blooms

Our project was a collaboration with Monton Unitarian Church, to provide a community garden in the heart of Monton on the old Borden Lodge bowling green. Community involvement has been at the heart of the project, with their involvement at every point of decision making.

The green is a large open grass space and holds the hard standing where the lodge used to stand, but is sadly underused by the community. Initially, to develop the green into a space for the entire community, Reverend Anna came to us with the idea of designing and building raised vegetable planters and a pagoda to provide a covered area for the green and planters to be used even when raining. Upon discussion, we determined this was a longer term plan, dependant on funding and employing professionals to ensure the pagoda would be safe. Therefore, we focused on designing and building the raised planters.

We designed the layout of the eight raised planters and two benches to form three distinct spaces for community uses, promoting a sustainable and biodiverse future of the green. Throughout our design process, we focused on key approaches to minimise carbon impact, such as sourcing sustainable materials from local suppliers and using modular design to allow for future reconfiguration and extension. Another key aspect we considered within our design process was accessibility, due to the nature of Unitarianism welcoming everyone. We located three of the planters alongside the existing path and made them raised at a comfortable height for wheelchair users. Following our detailed design for the construction, taking sustainability and reduced waste into consideration, we researched suppliers for the materials. With the importance of cost and lead times as the forefront of our minds, we helped Reverend Anna order the materials.

Once delivered, we spent the second week constructing the raised planters and we're lucky enough to finish them and open them with a community party on the last day. We are excited to see what the community decide to grow!

Site Visit

Site Description

Location: Monton Green-Manchester, M30 8AP

Client: Monton Unitarian Church

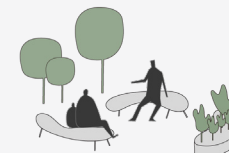
Our site is a disused bowling green located within the heart of Monton, situated adjacent to the east side of a 17th-century Church. The green is approximately 40m x 60m in length and width, flanked on the west by a 17th-century Grade II listed wall and metal fencing on the remaining 3 sides. The disused bowling green is made up of a central grass area with paved walkways that have existing benches on its north, east and south sides. The north and east fringes of the site are made up of parades of trees and to the south is the remnant hardstanding of where the original Bodden Lodge was once positioned.



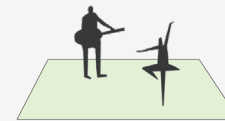
Community's Vision

Our project focused on community-led design throughout and underwent two key consultation phases to ensure that it was serving the needs, aspirations, and values of the local community. Our initial ideas for the green, a series of planters and a pagoda, were established in consultation with the reverend in February.

Following our public consultation at the Church in March, we gained a better understanding of the long-term aspirations for the space and re-established our project as a symbol for change, as opposed to a sitewide regenerative proposal. To achieve this, we decided to scale down our design aspirations to focus on just planters. We therefore split our action weeks into designing, sourcing and building our proposal to ensure we provide a meaningful physical contribution beyond a set of drawings. We hope hard work and it's physical output has assisted the reverend's aim of creating interest in the site and boosted inspiration for future investment.



Multi-Purpose



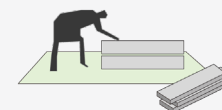
Event-Ready



Family-Friendly



Pet-Friendly



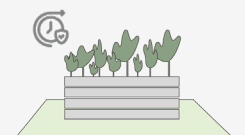
Easy-Setup



Accessible



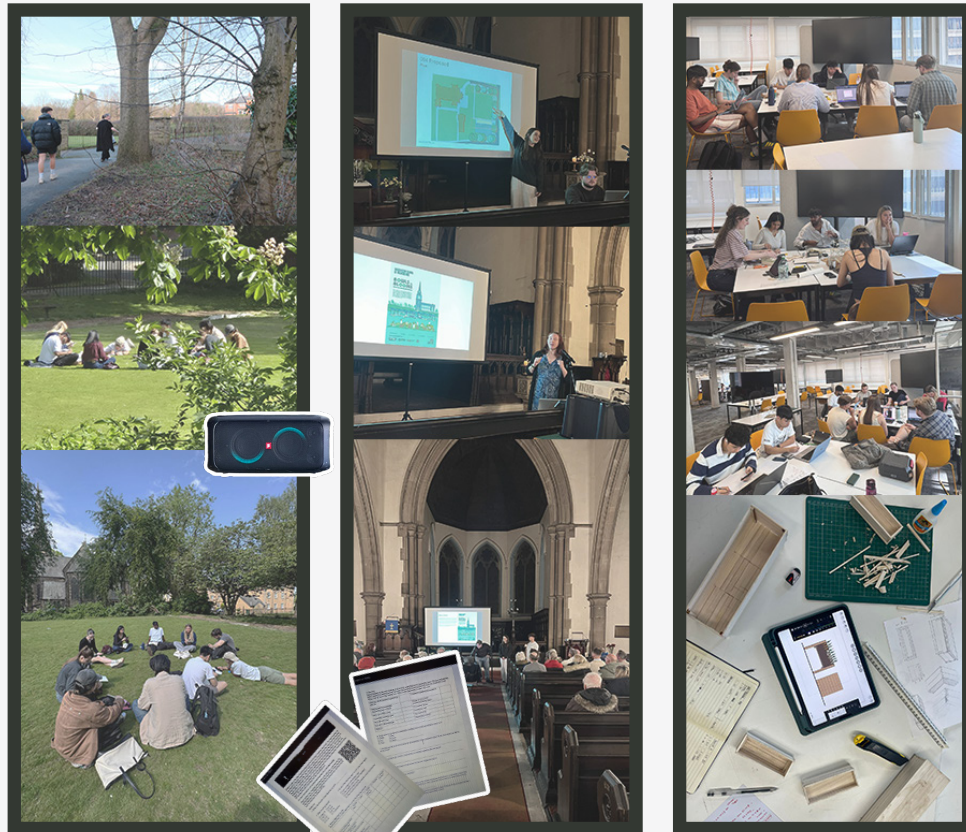
Wind/Rain-Proof



Long-term Product

Activities Time Schedule

Design Stage



Site Visit

29 Jan + 12 May

Consultation

25 Mar

Intensive Design

13 May-15 May

We began with a site visit to gather inspiration and form ideas and design our initial ideas for a community consultation in March. We used the feedback from this to design the planters and garden in the first week, sourcing material suppliers ready for the second week.

Construction Stage



Site Cleaning

16 May

Actual Work

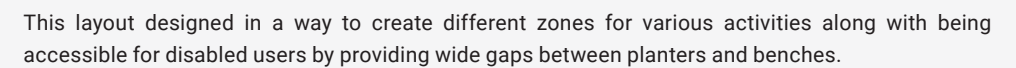
19 May-23 May

Opening Party

23 May

We began with site clearance on the first Friday and began building after deliveries on the following Monday. We worked tirelessly for the next three days to complete the planters and benches, filling them with soil on Thursday, ready for their opening at community party on Friday.

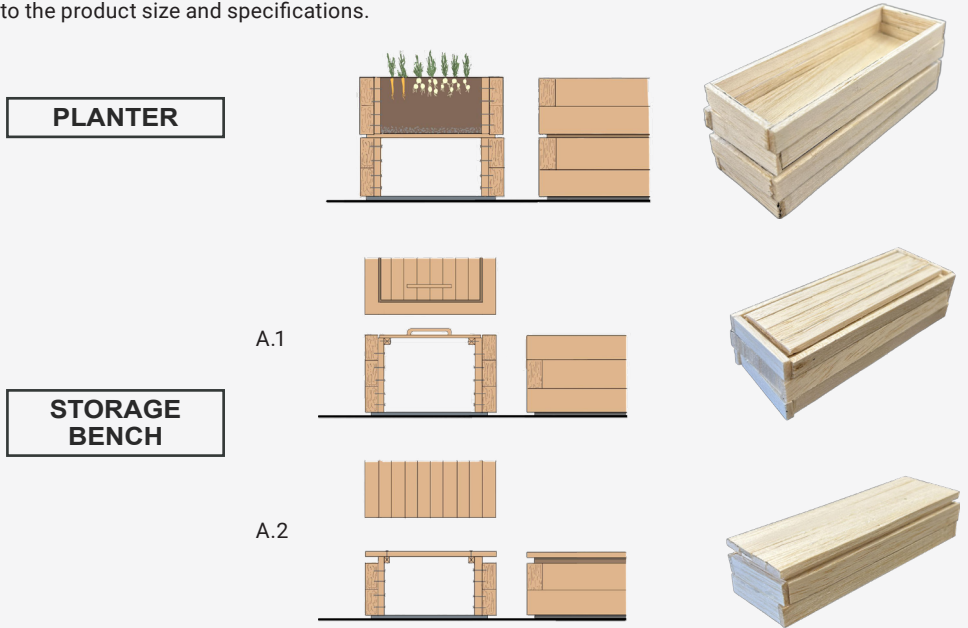
General Layout Options



Construction Design

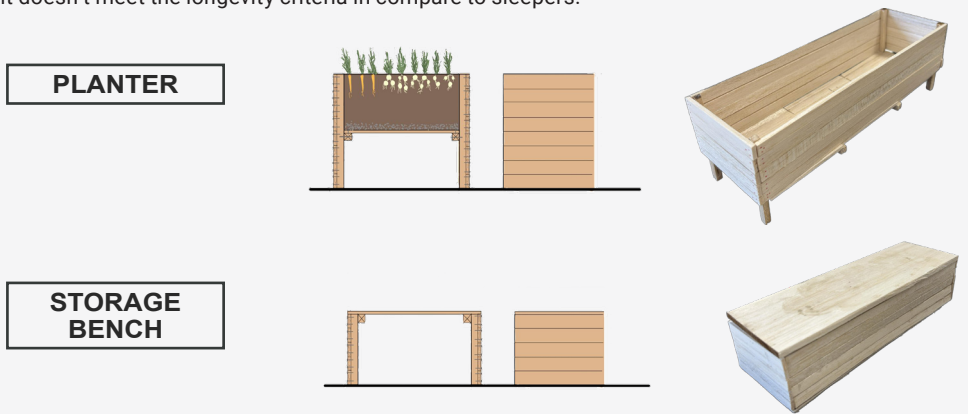
Option A_ Sleeper (£285.50 PER UNIT)

This option considered Untreated/Treated wooden sleepers provide more strength and durability due to the product size and specifications.



Option B_ Framed / Slat (£266.40 Per Unit)

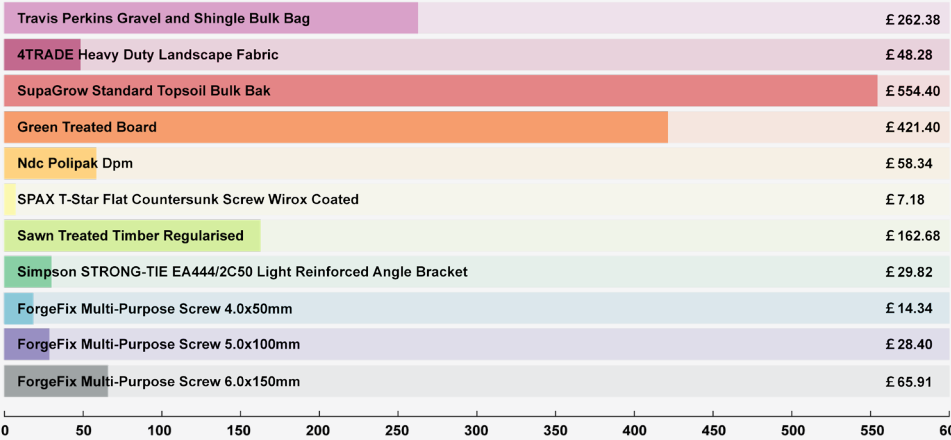
This option considered treated Timber framing which has more flexibility in terms of design, however it doesn't meet the longevity criteria in compare to sleepers.



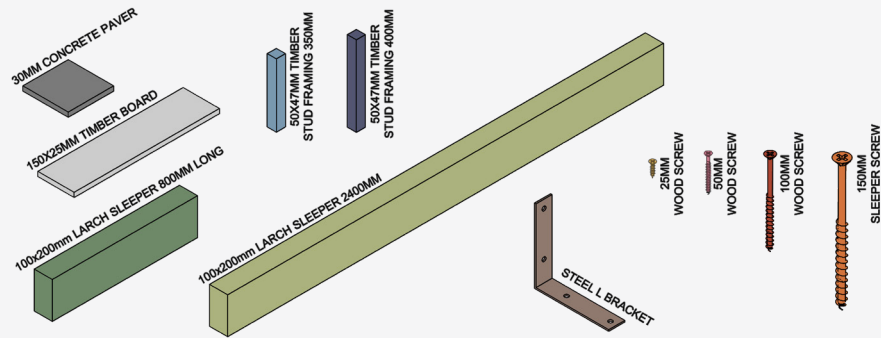
Construction Cost

Product Cost (£1,653.13 in total)

	Item	Item Dimensions	Quantity	Individual Cost	Total Cost
Travis Perkins	Green Treated Board	22mm x 200mm x 4.8m	28	£15.05	£421.40
	SPAX T-Star Flat Countersunk Screw Wirox Coated	2 x 25mm (200 Pack)	1	£7.18	£7.18
	ForgeFix Multi-Purpose Screw	4.0 x 50mm (200 Pack)	3	£4.78	£14.34
	ForgeFix Multi-Purpose Screw	5.0 x 100mm	4	£7.10	£28.40
	Simpson STRONG-TIE EA444/2C50 Light Reinforced Angle Bracket	-	42	£0.71	£29.82
	Ndc Polipak Dpm	4m x 25m 250mu	1	£58.34	£58.34
	4TRADE Heavy Duty Landscape Fabric	1m x 20m	1	£48.28	£48.28
	SupaGrow Standard Topsoil Bulk Bak	600L		£79.20	£554.40
	Travis Perkins Gravel and Shingle Bulk Bag	20mm	3	£87.46	£262.38
	Sawn Treated Timber Regularised	47mm x 50mm x 4.8m	14	£11.62	£162.68
	ForgeFix Multi-Purpose Screw	6.0 x 150mm (100 Pack)	3	£21.97	£65.91

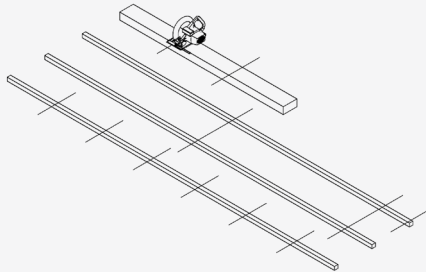


Construction Process



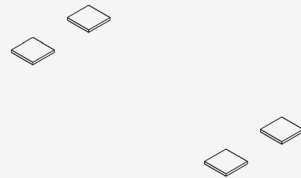
STEP 1. CUT PIECES

Saw wood into sizes, according to grouping sheets.



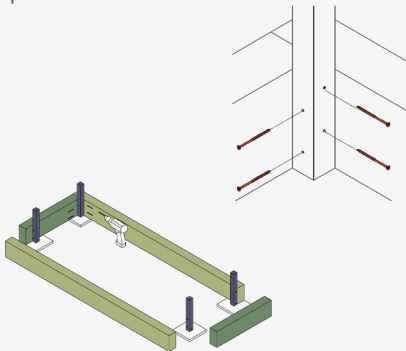
STEP 2. MAKE PLACEMENT

Use string to measure out position of planters then place pavers at four corners.



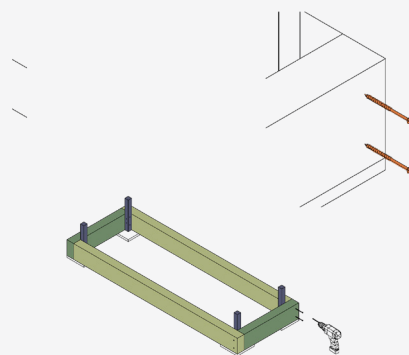
STEP 3. SCREW CORNERS

Use 50mm screws to attach bracket to corner post and base planks.



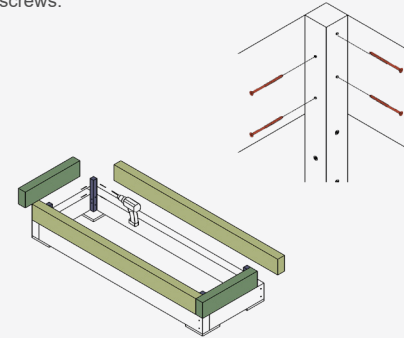
STEP 4. LARGE CORNER BOLTS

Roll out DPM and staple to base and sides.



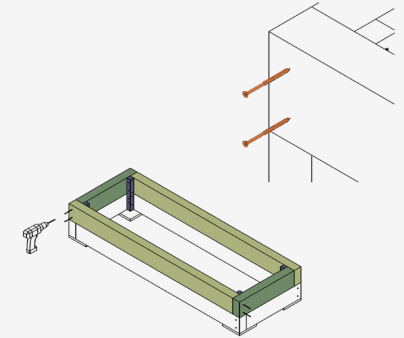
STEP 5. ADD SECOND LAYER

Screw corner 50*50's into sleepers using 100mm screws.



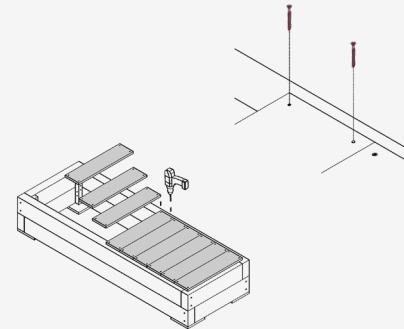
STEP 6. LARGE CORNER BOLTS

Screw in 150mm in sleeper corners.



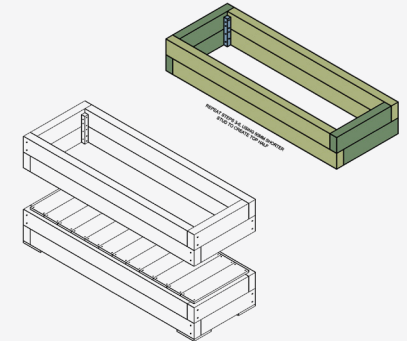
STEP 7. MAKE FALSE BOTTOM

Use 50mm screws to attach planks to base.



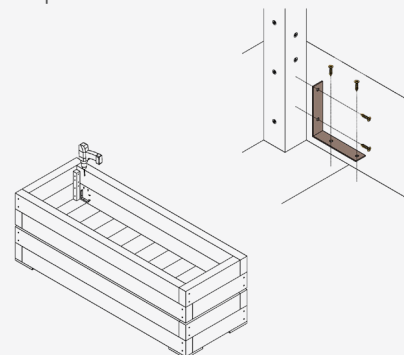
STEP 8. ADD TOP SECTION

Lift on top of existing base.



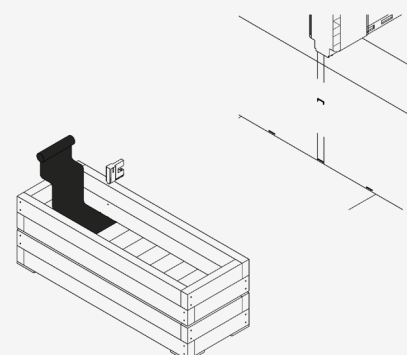
STEP 9. ADD BRACKETS

Use 50mm screws to attach bracket to corner post and base planks.



STEP 10. STAPLE DPM

Roll out DPM and staple to base and sides.



The Final Proposal

Visualization



Real Output



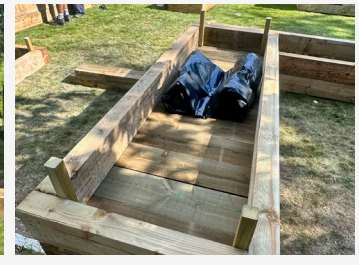
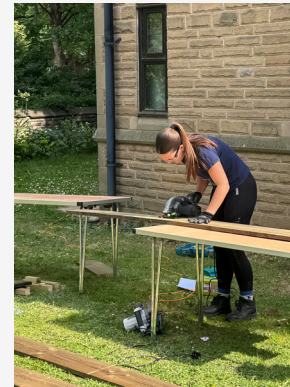
Reflections

Throughout the process and varying stages of our MSA live project, Bowls to Blooms, there have been many opportunities for us to grown and learn from as a group. For many of us, it was our first time taking full responsibility and control of the entire design process, from the initial briefing with our client, through to project completion with the construction of our designed raised planter beds and accompanying storage benches.

Participating in this project provided a unique experience where we acted as designers, quantity surveyors, as well as builders, allowing us insight into all stages of a design project and caused us to face key challenges these roles would typically encounter, such as managing client expectations and adapting the scale of the project throughout its development, the process of costing and procuring materials that adhered to both our clients budget as well as our design proposal and finally learning key skills to construct our proposal in a real world context.

Overall, this project has been challenging, encountering real world issues like site discoveries and material delivery delays within a tight programme but throughout we worked to each other's strengths, collaborating effectively as a team and adapting efficiently to achieve an ambitious, high-quality final output not only met our client's brief but will positively impact the local community.

Participation



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:

msalive@mmu.ac.uk

BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2025

SOCIAL

#MSALive25

@msa.live.25

@TheMSArch

@MLA_TheMSArch

WEBSITE

www.msa.ac.uk