

"ART ACTION ATTITUDE"

TAKEOVER



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Partners

We are excited to collaborate with Bradford Council on this project during a pivotal moment in the city's cultural journey. As we explored ideas for celebrating Bradford's identity and future, we engaged in rich dialogue with local stakeholders and aligned our creative proposals with the city's long-term vision.

Our key collaborator, Jade Ibegbuna, is the Head of Cultural Partnerships at Bradford Council and a 2025 Clore Fellow. Jade plays a central role in supporting cultural and community-led initiatives across the district and has been instrumental in helping projects like ours amplify the Bradford story through imaginative design.

A proud Bradfordian and passionate changemaker, Jade brings insight, energy, and a deep commitment to inclusive cultural development. Her support has been greatly appreciated throughout this collaboration. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Jade, and we look forward to sharing the outcomes of this work as part of Bradford 2025 – UK City of Culture.

Introduction

Bradford Takeover

In celebration of Bradford's rich history and its designation as 'City of Culture', our project presents an exciting opportunity to reintroduce the city's remarkable heritage buildings to the wider public. Inspired by the vibrant spirit of the 'Bradford Takeover Festival', we aim to break down barriers between the 30 diverse wards that make up the district. Through creative wayfinding interventions scattered throughout the urban landscape, we invite residents and visitors alike to embark on an engaging journey that highlights the city's fascinating past and architectural beauty.

During the Action Weeks, we have developed a self-guided, interactive trail that leads participants through some of Bradford's most significant heritage buildings. Each participant will receive a specially designed map, which they will complete by visiting all five featured locations. At each building, visitors will encounter unique, interactive experiences—puzzles and challenges thoughtfully crafted to honour the heritage value and architectural details of each site.

By collaborating closely with local communities, our vision is to open up the boundaries of these historic spaces, encouraging everyone to explore, interact, and learn about Bradford through playful, game-like activities. The trail is designed to be accessible, socially engaging, and inclusive, allowing people from all backgrounds to connect with the city's shared history.

In order to motivate the public to participate, upon completing all five challenges, participants will be rewarded with a special prize, which can be collected from the Bradford 2025 reception. More than just a treasure hunt, this project seeks to foster a sense of unity and curiosity, inviting people to rediscover Bradford's urban fabric and reimagine its future through the lens of its cultural heritage.



Action Weeks



Key Buildings & Activities

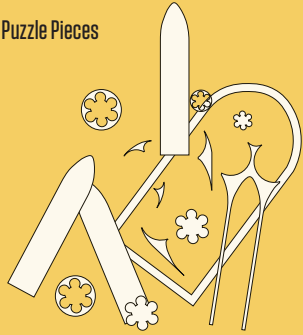
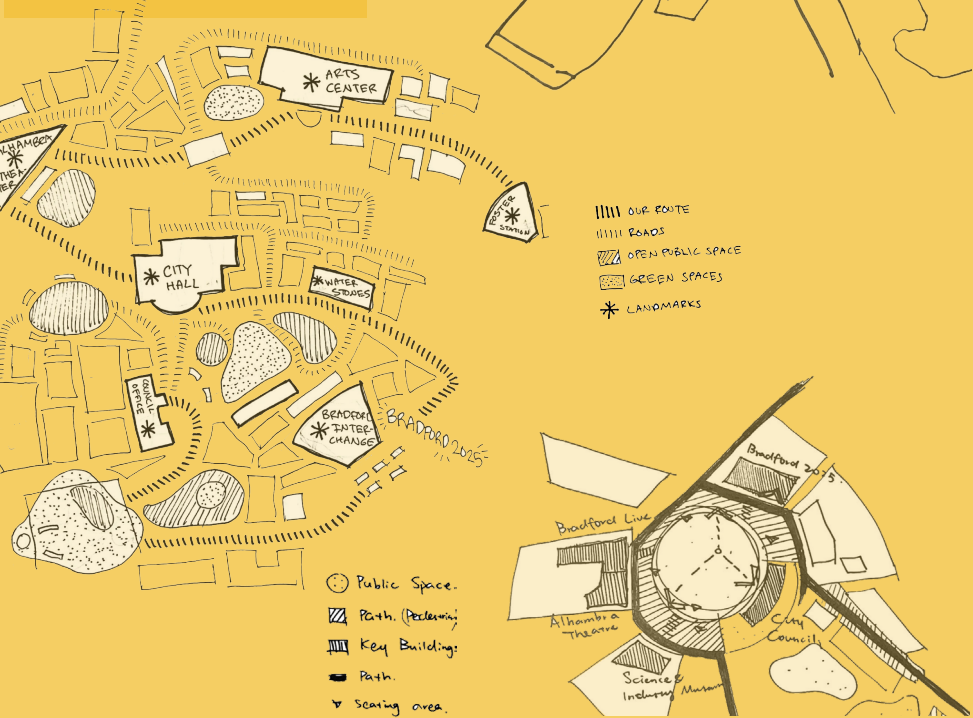


Site Mapping

Bradford City Centre

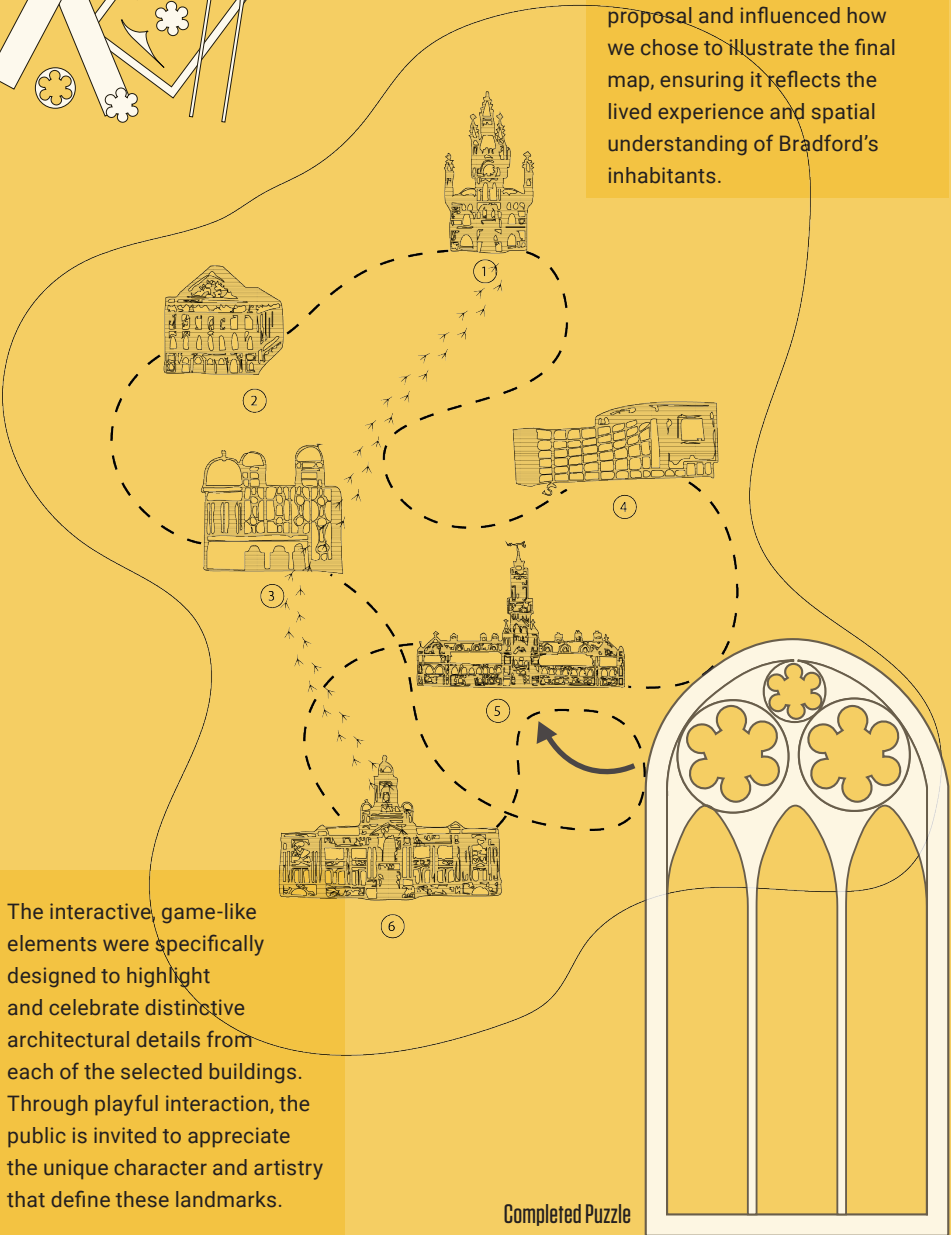
Kevin Lynch Maps:

The Kevin Lynch maps we asked students to draw after their site visit played a crucial role in helping us understand how people experience Bradford. By capturing the mental images and perceptions of the city's paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks, these maps revealed which buildings and features are most memorable and significant to visitors



Key Buildings

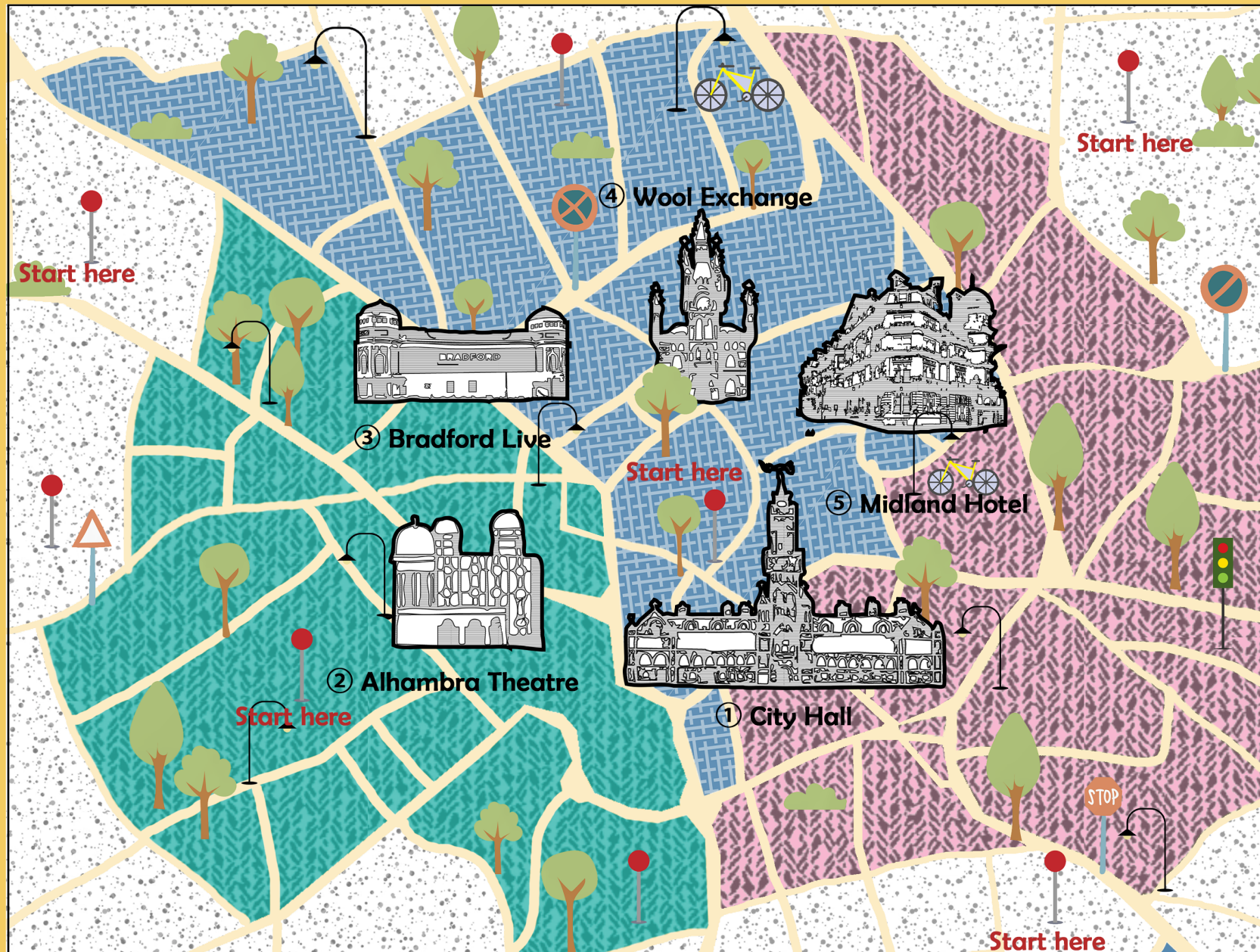
This insight directly informed our decisions about which buildings to include in our proposal and influenced how we chose to illustrate the final map, ensuring it reflects the lived experience and spatial understanding of Bradford's inhabitants.



The interactive, game-like elements were specifically designed to highlight and celebrate distinctive architectural details from each of the selected buildings. Through playful interaction, the public is invited to appreciate the unique character and artistry that define these landmarks.

Completed Puzzle

Start Your Own Trip in Bradford!



Buildings on the map

- ① City Hall
- ② Alhambra Theatre
- ③ Bradford Live
- ④ Wool Exchange
- ⑤ Midland hotel
- ⑥ somewhere you stopped
- ⑦ You decide
- ⑧ You visit
- ⑨ You like

Make sure to visit **all** the buildings indicated on the map, where an heritage interactive experience is waiting for you.

Start here!
Start at your feet!

Complete your own map based on your journey!

In order to finish the trail and unlock a prize at the end, make sure to document yourself completing all the challenges set out for you!

Week 2 Outputs

Activity 1 - Moulding Match

Location: Bradford Live

Bradford Live first opened in 1930 as the New Victoria and was the largest picture palace in England outside London. It was renamed the Gaumont in 1950 and has hosted legendary artists such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and Tom Jones. The building was saved from demolition in 2002 and is now Grade II listed. In 2021, a £50 million restoration project began, led by Tim Ronalds Architects. As part of this restoration, the original plaster mouldings, many of which had perished after years of dereliction, were carefully catalogued and recreated.



Our tangram-like puzzle game invites players to fit pieces of plaster moulding into a box to recreate the original design. This interactive experience honours the arts and crafts that went into the building's creation and encourages the public to notice and appreciate



Activity 2 - Bradford Legacy Match

Location: Bradford City Hall

Situated at the heart of Centenary Square, Bradford's City Hall showcases the city's prosperity and growing prominence on the world stage at the height for its textile industry. More than just the seat for council meetings, this Grade I listed building serves as a social and cultural hub, hosting various community events, commemoration of important dates and serving as the backdrop to major productions such as *Peaky Blinders* and *Coronation Street*.



This is an interactive matching game designed for tourists visiting Bradford City Hall. The goal is to engage visitors with the building's architecture and history by having them match visual patterns to locations on a 2D façade model, while also discerning whether the text on the card is a truth or rumour about the site.

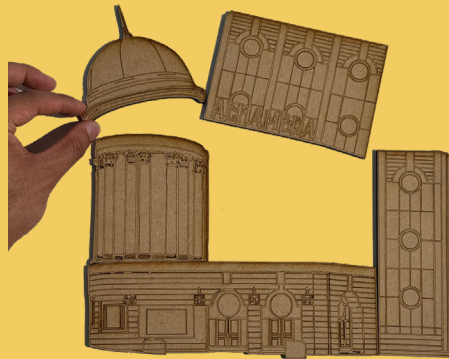


Activity 3 - Reviving the Place

Location: Alhambra Theatre

The Alhambra Theatre in Bradford, UK, is a historic and iconic theatre known for its grand Edwardian architecture and its role as one of the premier venues for live performance in Northern England. Opened in 1914, it was designed by architect W.G.R. Sprague and named after the famous Alhambra palace in Spain.

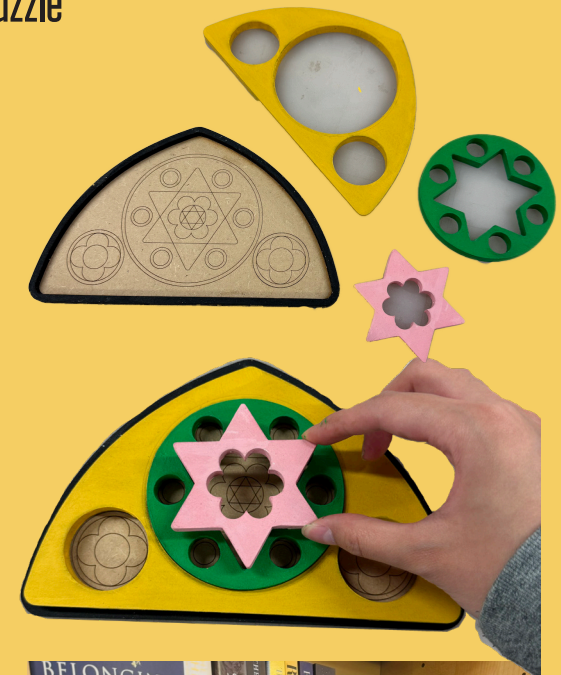
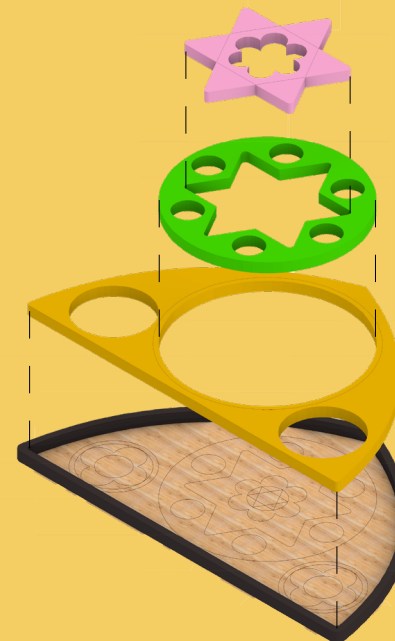
Alhambra's interactive element is a spinning wheel that depicts the glamorous ceiling detail within the theatre. This interaction allows individuals to focus on the intricate details of the elements and appreciate their beauty. Secondly, the other puzzle is to complete the facade of the Alhambra Theatre through the wooden pieces. Each intricate, laser-cut piece reveals a section of the theatre's iconic facade, challenging players to reconstruct the landmark carefully, perfect for architecture lovers and puzzle enthusiasts alike. After completing these two puzzles, individuals would take a selfie to move on to the next activity!



Activity 4 - Treasure Hunting Puzzle

Location: The Wool Exchange
(Waterstone)

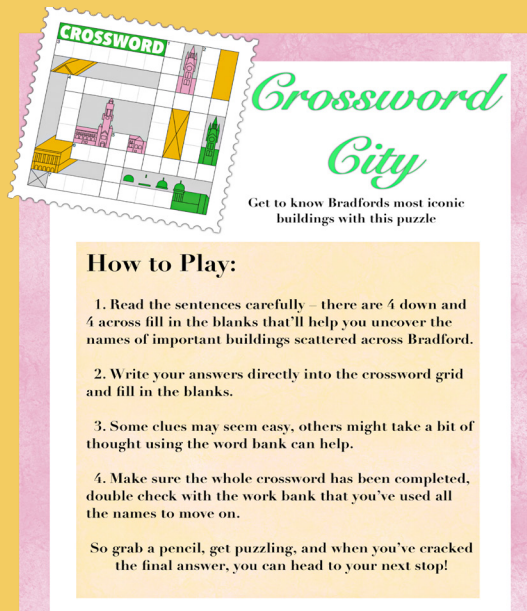
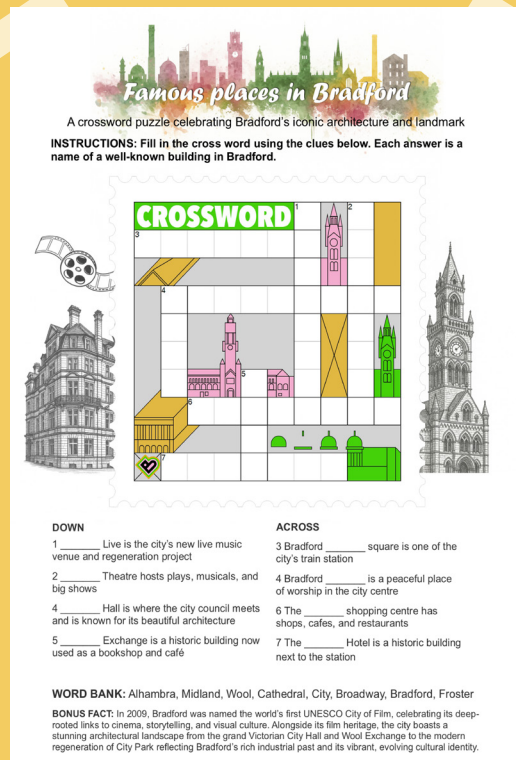
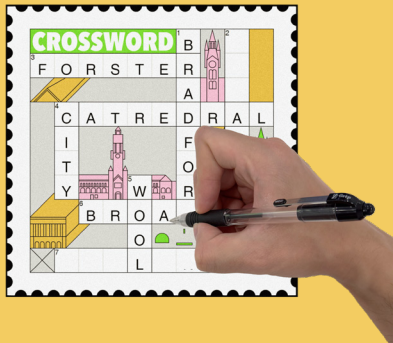
Set within the historic Bradford Wool Exchange (now Waterstones), this game transforms the stunning architectural setting into an interactive treasure hunt. Participants begin at the reception desk, where they collect a puzzle frame and guide. Using visual and written clues, they search for three puzzle pieces carefully hidden among the bookshelves—each piece part of a simplified stained glass window found in the building. The hunt is designed to be accessible for all ages, encouraging players to engage with the space. Once the puzzle is complete, participants return it to the desk to unlock a new clue, continuing their cultural adventure across Bradford.



Game 5 - Place the city in the crossword

Location: Midland Hotel

The Midland Hotel is one of Bradford's most historic and elegant landmarks. Opened in 1890, it was originally built by the Midland Railway Company as a show piece hotel to impress visitors arriving at the nearby Forster Square Station. Designed by Charles Hubshaw, the hotel reflects the Victorian grandeur of the railway age, with ornate stonework, high ceilings, and elegant interior details. It became a symbol of Bradford's prosperity during the height of its wool trade and industrial success.



Reflections

Working on this project has been an invaluable learning experience, offering us a deeper understanding of both the opportunities and challenges involved in bringing creative ideas to life within a real-world context. While our vision was ambitious, aiming to unite Bradford's diverse communities and reimagine the city's heritage through interactive wayfinding, we quickly discovered that translating such concepts into reality comes with a lot of practical limitations, including a limited budget, a tight timeframe and accessibility issues.

One of our initial aspirations was to develop a dedicated app to accompany the wayfinding trail, enhancing the user experience with digital interactivity and real-time feedback. However, as we delved into the technical and logistical requirements, it became clear that developing and launching an app within our timeframe and resource constraints was not feasible. This realization underscored the importance of adaptability and creative problem-solving when working on public engagement projects.

Despite these challenges, we remain confident in the potential of our project to transform the way Bradford is perceived by both residents and visitors. The core idea (using playful, interactive experiences to connect people with the city's history) has universal appeal and could be adapted for use in any urban context. We hope that our work will inspire similar initiatives elsewhere, helping to foster a greater sense of community and appreciation for local heritage.

Looking ahead, our commitment to the project does not end with the conclusion of the Action Weeks. We are determined to see our vision realized and enjoyed by the people of Bradford. To this end, we will continue to work closely with our collaborators at Bradford City Council, ensuring that the trail can be implemented and sustained beyond the initial event. Our hope is that, with ongoing support and community involvement, the project will become a lasting and meaningful part of Bradford's cultural landscape.

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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