

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE**

ASHTON ROAD
MARKET STREET
MARKET STREET
TRAM STOP

Market Street ReFresh

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The University of Manchester

**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

Tameside
Metropolitan Borough

**MSA
LIVE 25**

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Partners

We partnered with Tameside Council on the Market Street Refresh project, part of the MSA Live 2024 initiative. This programme brings students and local partners together to tackle real-world urban challenges through design. The project focused on transforming a neglected car park in central Droylsden into a vibrant, inclusive green space that supports public health, social connection, and environmental wellbeing.

Guided by community input and on-site observations, we developed a series of design responses aimed at creating a more welcoming and functional public space. Our proposals included modular seating, accessible pathways, planted buffers, and flexible community areas. Each element was designed to encourage interaction, relaxation, and a greater sense of place.

During Action Week, we produced concept layouts, hand sketches, 3D models, and visualisations to communicate our ideas and gather further feedback. These materials helped bring the project to life and foster dialogue with local stakeholders, ensuring the final proposal reflected a shared vision for Droylsden's future.

The project demonstrated how small, human-centred design moves can lead to meaningful community impact. What was once an underused car park was reimagined as a green, social hub in the heart of the town.

Working with Tameside Council provided valuable experience in collaborative urban regeneration. It also highlighted the importance of designing with communities, not just for them. Together, we explored how thoughtful, inclusive design can revitalise public spaces and support healthier, more connected neighbourhoods.

Introduction



Location: Droylsden, Tameside. Greater Manchester

Client: Tameside Council

Brief: The Market Street Refresh project aims to reimagine a dull, underwhelming car park in central Droylsden as a vibrant, accessible green space that promotes public health, social connection and environmental wellbeing. Using on-site observations and feedback from local people, the team will develop a series of design iterations that respond directly to community needs. These will culminate in a final design proposal that captures a greener, more inclusive future for Droylsden. Throughout Action Week, we will produce concept layouts, sketches, 3D models and visualisations, all grounded in small-scale, high-impact design thinking.

The Site

The Vision & The Brief



Site Visit Group Images



After an initial introduction, the two-week project commenced with site exploration and preliminary analysis. This was followed by a group visit to the site in Droylsden, located just a 20-minute tram ride from Manchester. The visit gave all team members the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the site's context and further explore its surroundings.

Located in the heart of Droylsden, the site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial properties. To the west lies Market Street, a busy main road lined with shops and takeaways, and characterised by heavy traffic. The site itself consists primarily of a car park and areas of dense vegetation, including overgrown grass, shrubs, and mature trees, particularly along the northern and southern boundaries. On the eastern side, a former beer garden once connected the car park to an adjacent pub, but it has since been demolished.



Site Analysis

Lisa
30 Years Old
Local Business Employee

"I work just across from the site. Right now, it's mostly just a car park, not the nicest place to look at from our window all day. I do think part of it should stay for parking, because people still need to pop in and out for work or deliveries.

But honestly, I'd love to have a spot where I could sit during my break, somewhere with a bit of greenery, maybe a bench or some shade. If it was done well, it could really brighten up the view from our shop and give us somewhere peaceful to recharge during the day."

Dave
40 Years Old
Local Business Owner

"I've run the launderette down the road for over 10 years, so I've seen Market Street change a lot. Right now, it doesn't invite people to stay, they come, do their errands, and leave.

While it's important to keep some parking for customers who need to load laundry, I'd really like to see it become more of a destination. Somewhere clean and pleasant where people can wait while their washing's on, maybe sit outside with a coffee, or just have a proper place to relax. If the space looked better and felt safer, I'm sure it would bring more people to the area and help all the nearby shops too."

Lewis & Susan
80-85 Years Old
Local Residents

"We live just off Ashton Road and walk through Market Street most days. Right now it feels bleak, there's nothing inviting about it. I'd love to see more greenery and spaces where we can sit and watch the world go by. Somewhere peaceful but active too. It could be a real heart of the community if done right."



Site Interviews Feedback

Program

Design Iterations & Concept Collages



Following the site visit, we continued our analysis by examining the site in greater detail, including its connections to the surrounding area and its historical context. This allowed us to identify key opportunities and constraints that would shape our design approach moving forward. As part of this process, our MLA1 student, Amy, carried out an assessment of the existing plant life on the site. Special attention was given to the location of mature trees, which we intend to preserve and incorporate into the new proposal to maintain and enhance the site's environmental value.



Group Mapping Exercise



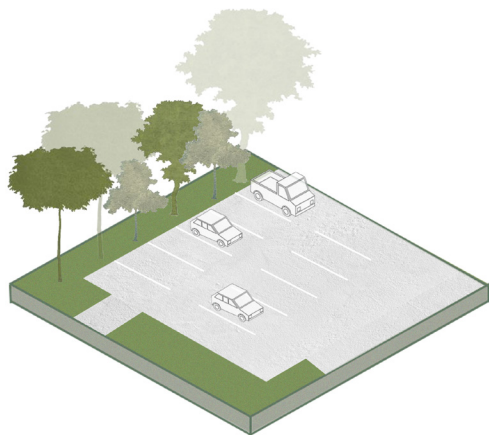
After a group feedback session reflecting on the site visit and our initial findings, we began considering potential uses for the site. Each team member individually mapped out concept ideas based on their vision for the space. These ideas were then presented and discussed, allowing for constructive feedback and dialogue. Through this collaborative process, the group developed a unified proposal that combined key elements from various individual concepts. Concept collages were used to visually communicate these ideas, helping to bring the collective vision to life and enabling us to better understand and discuss our ideas with one another.



BA1 & 2 Collage Outputs

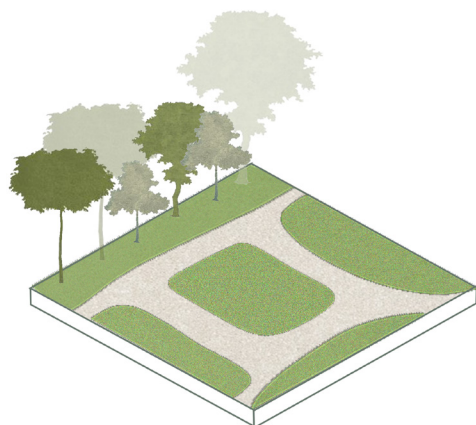
Design Development

Finalised Concept Development



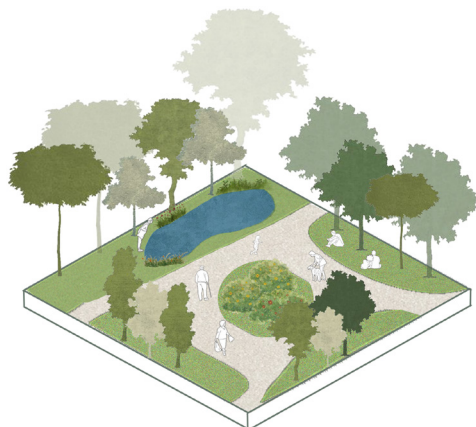
1. Existing

The current state of the site, primarily functioning as a paved parking area. Minimal vegetation surrounds the hard scape, with limited ecological or recreational value. The existing mass lacks spatial diversity and community engagement potential.



2. New Layout

Transitional phase, the parking area is removed and replaced with soft landscaping and a curvilinear pathway layout. The design introduces green space and defines circulation routes, establishing a foundation for future enhancements while promoting walkability and visual openness.



3. Activated Mass

A fully transformed space where the introduction of a naturalistic layout, increased vegetation, and community-centred elements has redefined the site's identity. The space encourages community interaction, ecological regeneration, and passive recreation, transforming the former parking lot into a vibrant, multi-functional green oasis.



Concept Arrangement

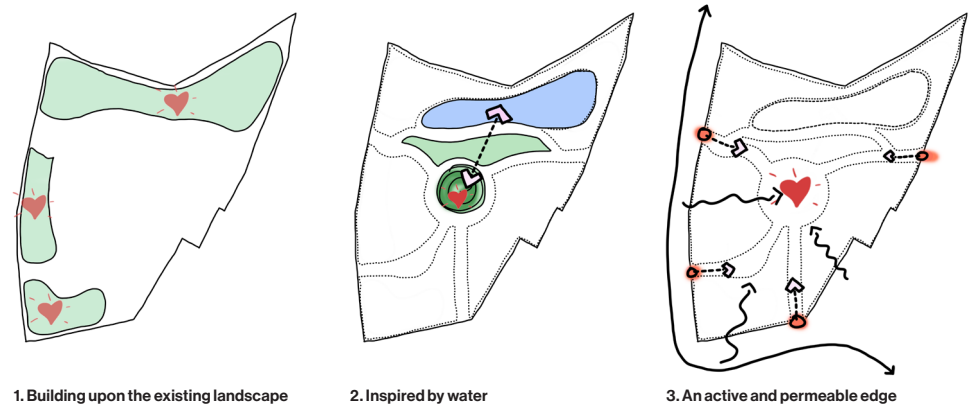
After conducting software tutorials for the undergraduate students - which aimed to provide insight into tools that enhance design presentation - we finalised our site layout, enabling us to progress to the technical design phase.



Final Design Outcome

Plans, Sections & Design Intent Sketches

The final park design includes several distinct areas: a community garden, seating, landscaping, bike storage, and circulation paths. The master plan illustrates the spatial layout, highlighting connections and access points that facilitate easy movement both within the site and from the surrounding areas. Additionally, lighting strategies are incorporated along the paths to ensure safe and inviting night-time use.



Section AA (NTS)



Section BB (NTS)



Ground Floor Plan

1:200 @ A1



Technical Design

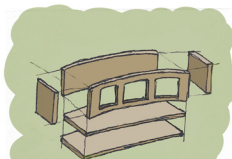
Community Garden, Pond, Bike Store & Seating Design

We focused on exploring different elements of our proposal in detail, including the community garden, pond, seating area, and bike storage, to create an engaging and thoughtful design.

Community Garden:

We designed bespoke planters for the community garden in the centre of the proposal, aiming to create a space where residents can actively contribute to the town's landscape and foster a sense of community spirit. These planters incorporate built-in storage for gardening tools, enhancing the design's functionality and efficiency. Additionally, they serve as key features that guide users as they move through the space.

Initially, our action plan did not include creating a physical model, but we decided it would be valuable for visualising the concept. Building the model helped us identify where openings might be too narrow and highlighted areas that required extension, resulting in a more refined and effective design.



Sketch Functions

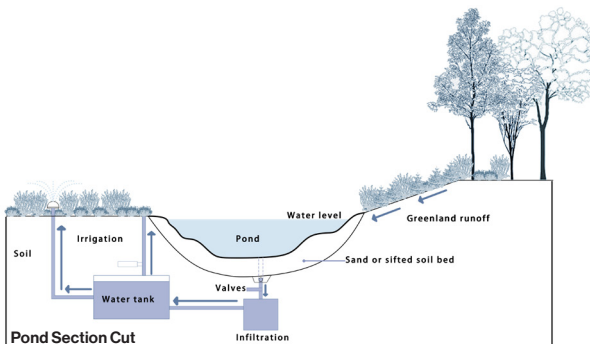


Physical Model



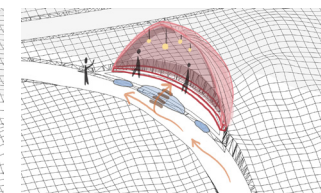
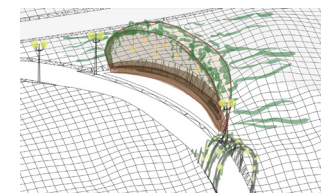
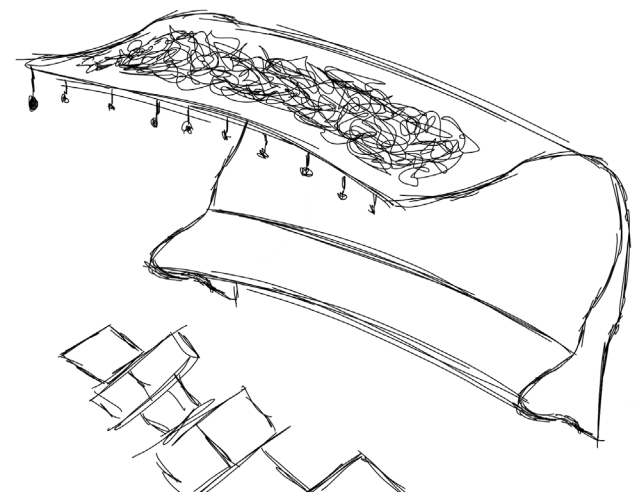
Pond:

The pond features a concrete base with an infiltration system beneath it, which channels water to a storage tank. This tank then feeds a sprinkler system integrated within the planting, ensuring efficient irrigation using recycled pond water even during dry spells.

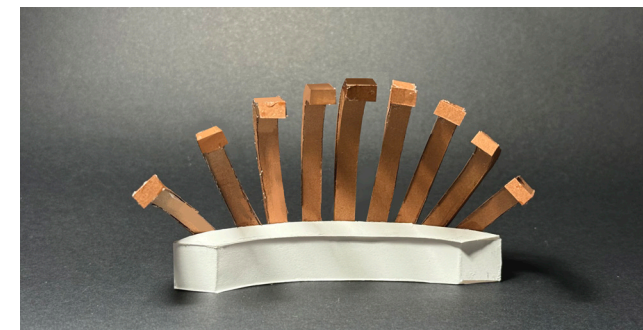


Seating Area:

Each group member individually developed different design iterations for the seating area. After feedback and collaboration, we settled on a design featuring an overhanging canopy that provides shelter from the elements and a comfortable resting place for passers-by. The seating area is set back from the path, positioned opposite a small play area to allow caregivers to easily watch their children at play. Once we refined the design, we created a model of the final proposal to better visualise and refine the concept.



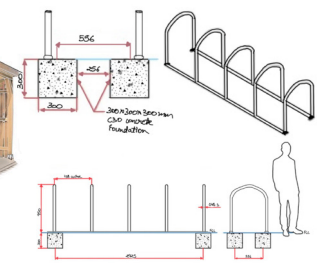
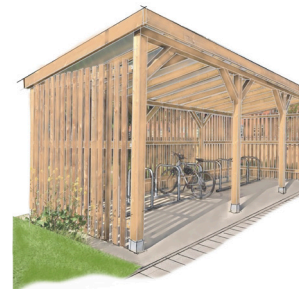
Bench Sketch Concepts



Bench Model

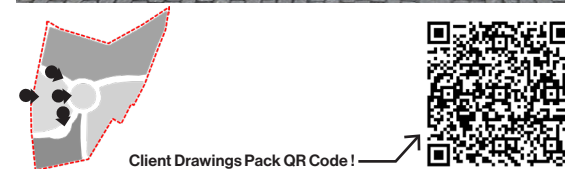
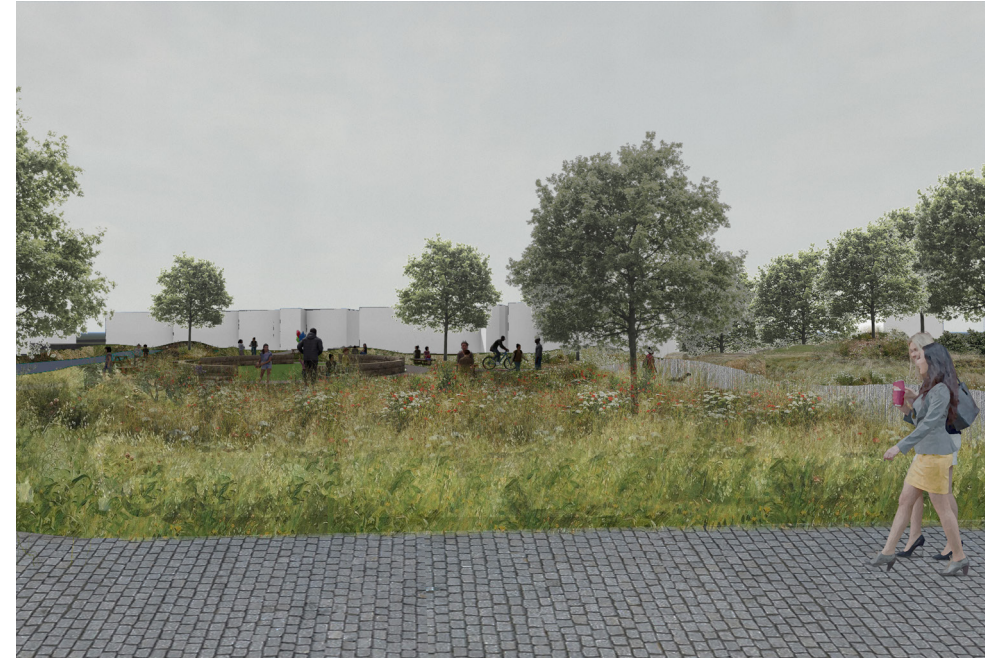
Bike Storage Development:

We designed a timber-framed bike storage in the northeast corner of the site for easy access from Market Street and proximity to the tram station. The covered facility protects bikes from the elements and promotes cycling as a sustainable transport option.



Visuals & Client Meeting

Collage Visuals and Client Workshop



Client Drawings Pack QR Code !



Client Meeting:

We had our client meeting with Lena, Carol and Nigel on Teams, where we shared what we had been working on during action week. We received positive feedback on our scheme and a few things that could've been further developed with more time. We created a 20-page meeting document showing the design process and more finalised work. We have attached a QR code to the document!

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MSA LIVE
Market Re:Fresh

Client Drawings Pack Cover



ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 and Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Reuse 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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SOCIAL

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