

# MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

# GREEN HAVEN

Join us in transforming a historic space into a vibrant community hub!  
This project aims to support Gorton's diverse community, including older people, those with disabilities, refugees, LGBTQ+ individuals etc. By redesigning the historic site with accessible paths, a revamped patio and pergola, growing spaces, and a reflective area, our aim is to create a safe and inclusive space. The project will promote physical and mental well-being, reduce loneliness, and provide educational and volunteering opportunities that may lead to employment—all while connecting people with nature and preserving the site's unique history.



Visit [msa.ac.uk](http://msa.ac.uk) for more information

**MANCHESTER**  
1824  
The University of Manchester

**Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University**

**heathyma  
healthy communities**

**Team**  
Charlotte Clegg  
Liam Pownier  
Zhou Hongli

Jiang Wei  
Tanishi Sharma

**Skills**  
Sustainable Design  
Architectural Drawings  
Digital Software

**MSA  
LIVE 25**

## Team

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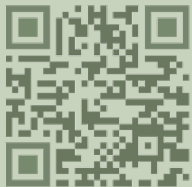
**Eloise Jenigar** (BA2)

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check out our **blog!**

## Partners

Healthy Me Healthy Communities (HMHC) is a pivotal force in transforming the historic Gorton Community Centre in Manchester. Originally a derelict paint factory, this pre-loved community asset is being revitalized into a modern hub for learning, growth, and community wealth building. With its rich history of conversion from an industrial site to a thriving community space, the centre now offers a blend of valued services, reaching beyond its immediate neighbourhood to address food insecurity, co-production, and partnership working.

HMHC's vision for the community centre has been supported by crucial partnerships with local organizations and authorities. Growing Manchester, Groundwork Manchester, and Manchester City Council contribute their respective expertise in sustainable urban agriculture, community landscaping, and infrastructure support. These collaborations are enhancing the community garden and developing an outdoor learning space, creating inclusive and accessible spaces for a diverse population.

With recent support from national funding and local investments, HMHC continues to lead the centre into a future where it remains a cornerstone of community life, fostering inclusive and sustainable practices that benefit a diverse demographic. HMHC is particularly committed to expanding the community garden, recognizing the profound impact that growing food can have on community health and cohesion. This emphasis on gardening enriches the community centre's role as a space for nurturing both people and nature, making it a pivotal element in HMHC's vision for a thriving community.

## Introduction



In this upcoming live project, we will collaborate with Amanda Aitken from Healthy Me Healthy Communities. The project involves transforming a historic space into a vibrant community hub! This project aims to support Gorton's diverse community, including older people, those with disabilities, refugees, LGBTQ+ individuals etc. By redesigning the historic site with accessible paths, a revamped patio and pergola, growing spaces, and a reflective area, our aim is to create a safe and inclusive space. The project will promote physical and mental well-being, reduce loneliness, and provide educational and volunteering opportunities that may lead to employment—all while connecting people with nature and preserving the site's unique history.



# Timeline



PHOTO DIARY



# Site

Nestled in the heart of Gorton and Abbey Hey, East Manchester, Gorton Central serves as a vital community centre focused on fostering better health outcomes and social engagement in a highly deprived area. The centre boasts an award-winning community garden, currently under utilised and primarily accessed by a few locals for personal cultivation of fruits and vegetables. Plans are underway to transform this enclosed space into a more accessible and vibrant oasis of calm, enhancing its use for a wider array of community well-being activities.





# Concept Design

Group 1 developed the design for the pergola. The client wanted to keep the existing pergola in the same location and at the same scale. The concept design focused on how to best add greenery and vegetation to the pergola. The existing roof was retained on half of the design, and the other half is open, using vegetation to create shading. Different patterns and plants were experimented with through model making.

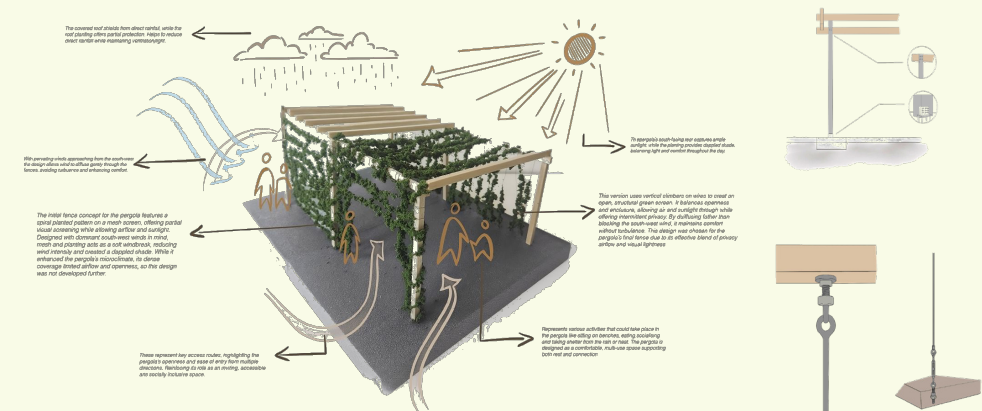
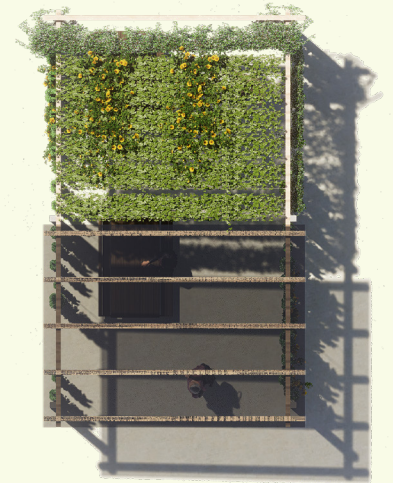
Group 3 developed the overall masterplan including the landscaping. The client wanted to retain the circular green space at the centre of the site, as well as the 70 planters. The landscaping design involves redesigning the layout of these planters to create seating spaces for the users. Water features and the hexagon shaped planters further incorporate nature to the garden.

Group 2 developed the design for the outdoor learning space classroom. The client wanted this space to be flexible for all people to use and for the space to be adaptable depending on the event or activity. The client wanted the classroom in close proximity to the existing building and so the location was agreed to be where the existing polytunnel is. This meant incorporating a green house into the classroom design.



# Pergola

For our pergola design, we aimed to create a comfortable and inviting space that could be used throughout the year, regardless of the weather. To achieve this, we focused on providing ample shade during sunny days while also reducing wind exposure. We incorporated a green wall and a green roof by using low-maintenance climbing plants that can grow along the pergola structure. These plants not only offer natural shade but also act as a windbreak, making the area more sheltered and encouraging people to sit and use the space in a variety of weather conditions.





# Landscape

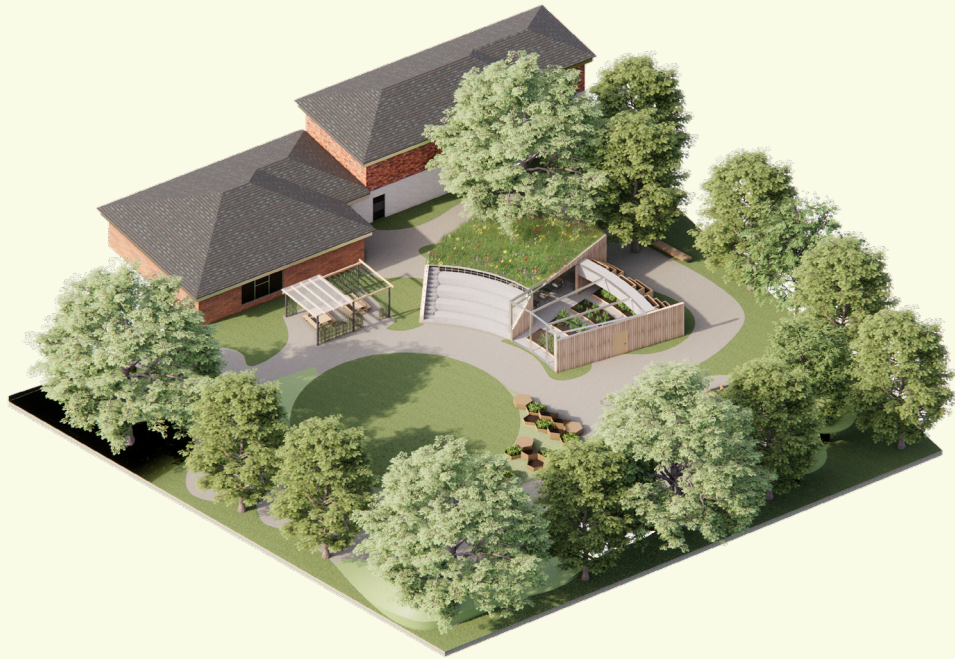


The main entrance creates an immediate sense of grandeur, inviting visitors into the garden through a series of unfolding spaces that preserve an air of mystery. As you move through the site, sightlines from both the classroom amphitheatre and the pergola are carefully orchestrated to draw the eye toward the farthest point, where a dramatic waterfall emerges from a lush cascade of rock and vegetation. At the heart of the garden, the central circular lawn remains a tranquil focal point, while the surrounding allotments are thoughtfully dispersed across the site. These allotments are now formed from interlocking hexagonal vessels, evoking the structure of a beehive—a tribute to Manchester's iconic mascot and connecting the garden with nature. Fragrant climbers such as honeysuckle and jasmine also fill the air with sweet scents, while vibrant flowering plants like lavender and daisies provide visual delight and seasonal color.





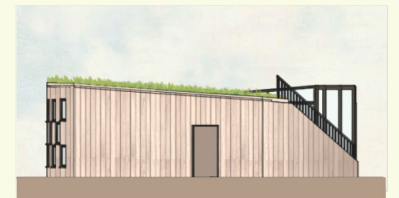
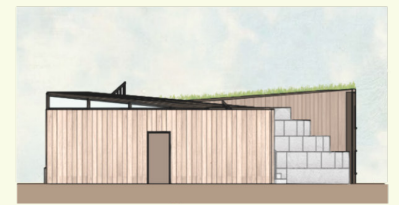
# Classroom



The client requested that the outdoor classroom was to be located as close to the existing community centre building, as possible. This meant locating it where the existing polytunnel currently is. To make sure vegetation and planting spaces were not compromised, the outdoor learning space includes a green house within the design. The materials considered were timber cladding for the walls, as this connects the building to nature, and a green roof, which will allow for flowers and more planting space.

The design also incorporates a set of stepped seating, that curve around the central grass area. This means that the users can use this seating area when events take place or flower competitions. The design also includes steps on the rear side, which contain a set of planters at different levels, this further incorporates more planting spaces into the proposed building.

Different colours of glass were incorporated into the building to bring lots of colour into the design. This is to link a connection to the history of the community centre, as it once was a paint factory. Adding colour this way, means that the materials and colour scheme of the building can remain classy and neutral.



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# Visuals





## 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:  
**[msalive@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:msalive@mmu.ac.uk)**

## BLOG

**[live.msa.ac.uk/2025](http://live.msa.ac.uk/2025)**

## SOCIAL

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**@MLA\_TheMSArch**

## WEBSITE

**[www.msa.ac.uk](http://www.msa.ac.uk)**