

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

WHERE STILLNESS LIVES

A SPATIAL REFUGE DESIGNED FOR WOMEN SEEKING PROTECTED QUIET

AYSE NAZ K
BINHUI X
HALIMA S
HIN L
HONGKAI R
KAIXUAN S
KYLIAN P
MOHAMMED M
RUIQI Z
SHERRY I
YUEWEN L

GROUP 5
MSA live
2026

We aim to create protected quiet spaces for women, mothers, careworkers and daughters who rarely experience silence at home. The former bowling green site at Monton Unitarian Church will become a layered landscape that balances active community life with moments of personal stillness. Respecting the church and graveyard's existing atmosphere of calm, the proposal will introduce a clear spatial journey, moving from open public activity at the front of the site, to enclosed inward-facing pavilions deeper within.

A linear timber spine connects these spaces, gently slowing movement and preparing visitors for quiet. Three small, human-scaled rooms provide places for reflection, autonomy and mental rest - offering women the simple but powerful right to close a door. Alongside these quieter spaces, the site will also host flexible areas for community events, local markets, workshops and children's activities, ensuring to support both gathering and retreat.

Visit msa.ac.uk for more information

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MUD MANCHESTER
URBAN
DIGGERS

**MSA
LIVE 26**

Team

Luo Yuewen (MArch1)

Mohammed Meghraoua (MArch1)

Sherry Ingham (MArch1)

Xu Binhui (MArch1)

Ru Hongkai (MA AR)

Zhu Ruiqi (MA AR)

Name 1 (FDN)

Ayse Naz Kartal (BA1)

Hin Lee (BA1)

Kaixuan Sheng (BA1)

Kylian Parvin (BA1)

Liliana Blouin (MLA1)

Collaborators

During the first meeting with collaborators at the Manchester Technologies Centre, we met with Reverend Anna, who acted as our main liaison throughout most of the project. She introduced us to the site, explained where everything was situated, and outlined the current situation. She is a lively, outgoing, and positive person, which always made interactions with her enjoyable.

We had the opportunity to meet with her again during our site visit, where she provided feedback on our initial design. This allowed us to iterate further and develop a proposal that better responded to both the brief and the needs of Monton Unitarian Church. She also took the time to explain what Unitarianism is, the fundamentals of the religion, and how this translates into her day-to-day role as reverend of the church.

This gave us an excellent starting point and helped us better understand the direction the project needed to take.

Introduction

WHERE STILLNESS LIVES/ GROUP 05

Where stillness lives responds to the growing absence of quiet, protected space within everyday public life, particularly for women whose lives are often shaped by constant movement, emotional labour, care, and responsibility towards others. The project is designed for mothers, care-workers, daughters, partners, students, and women who rarely experience uninterrupted moments of stillness within domestic, social, or public environments.

In response, our proposal reclaims stillness not as isolation, but as a spatial right. Creating environments where pause, reflection, and mental rest can exist more visibly within the public community.

Located within the former bowling green of Monton Unitarian Church, our proposal responds directly to

Conversations and collaborative engagement with our client, Anna and Vicky. As we re-imagine the exposed open field as a more sheltered and supportive landscape centred around retreat, reflection, and collective dialogue.

Rather than designing a singular enclosed building, the project unfolds as a series of lightweight timber pavilions

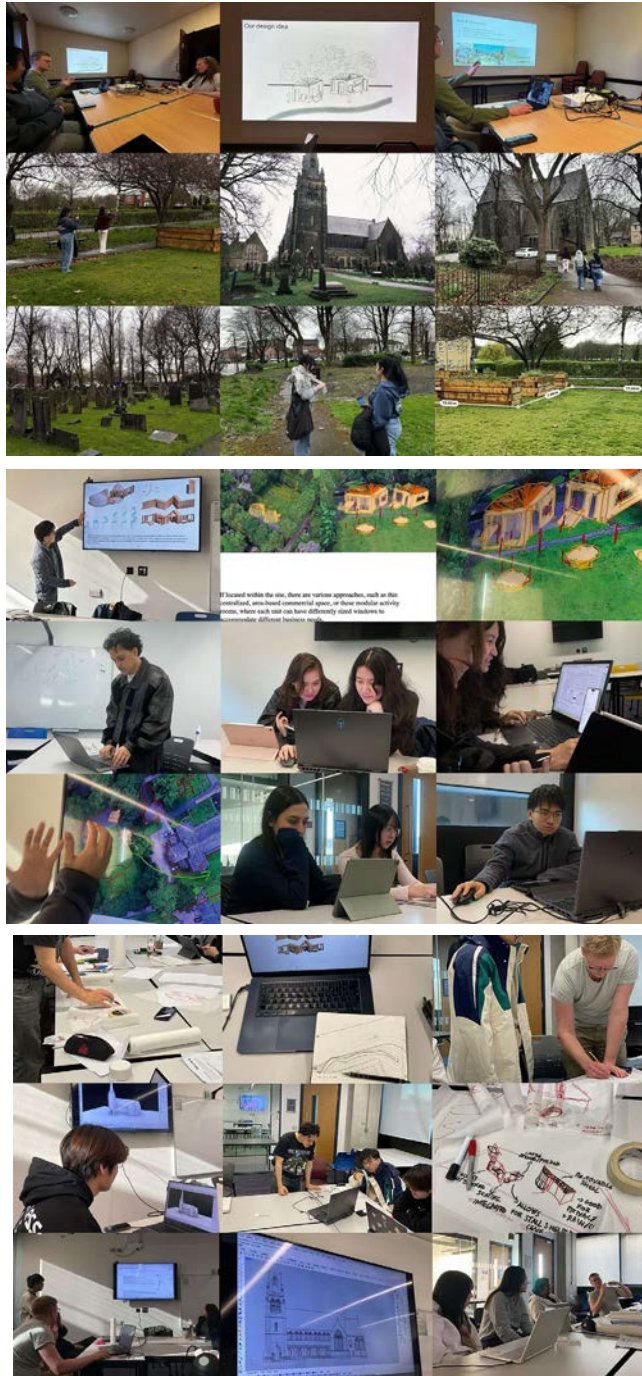
Structures that aim to establish gradual transitions between openness, gathering, privacy, and pause. A linear timber spine moves gently through the site, slowing circulation and guiding users from active communal edges towards quieter inward-facing spaces embedded deeper within the landscape. Repeated timber frames, movable pavilion elements, and adaptable canopy structures create a flexible architectural language capable of supporting exhibitions, markets, workshops, conversation, rest, and temporary retreat throughout different moments of occupation.

Alongside larger communal spaces, smaller human-scaled rooms will provide opportunities for protection, and mental stillness — offering women the simple but powerful ability to withdraw, pause, and close a door.

Developed collaboratively through community research, spatial testing, digital modelling, technical development, and environmental thinking, where stillness lives aims to become not a public installation, but a spatial refuge designed for women seeking protected quiet, collective care, and moments of stillness within everyday life.

Team Collaboration

For this stage of the project, we began by carefully studying the brief and meeting with our collaborator, Reverend Anna, to better understand the needs of the church and the wider community (top picture). We also met with her again during our site visit to gain interim feedback and ensure our ideas were responding appropriately to the project requirements (bottom picture). The site is a large green space adjacent to Monton Unitarian Church which is currently underused. The brief asked for a lightweight and weatherproof structure that could support occasional community events such as markets, gatherings and exhibitions. As there is a long-term plan for a permanent building on the site, the proposal needed to remain temporary and adaptable. The project also needed to encourage everyday community interaction, rather than only functioning during organised events. Due to the absence of a defined budget, the intervention had to remain small, practical and achievable.



This project reimagines community through a series of small, movable, and adaptable structures that encourage freedom, interaction, and play. Rather than defining a fixed function, the spaces are shaped by the users themselves – transforming into places for gathering, performance, selling, or social connection.

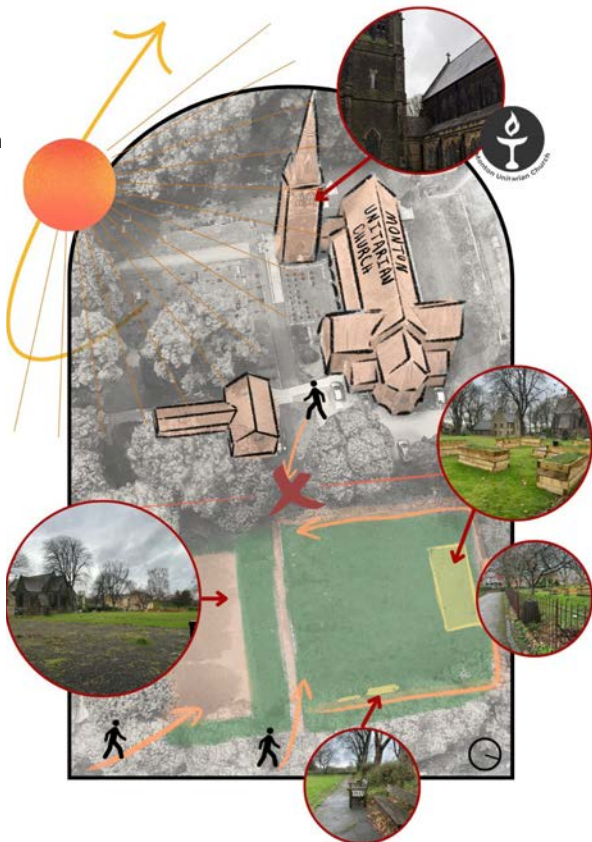
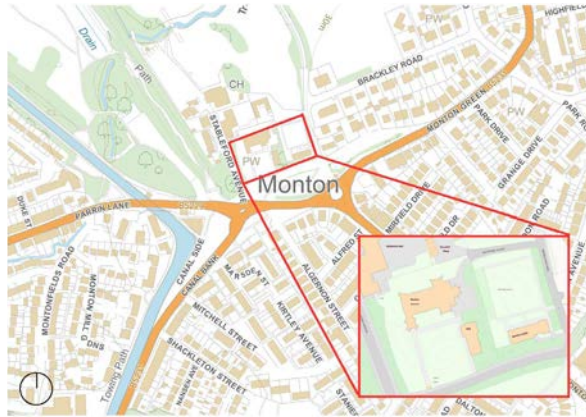
By creating a safe, inclusive, and joyful atmosphere, the project challenges rigid ideas of public space and instead promotes a community built through participation, accessibility, and shared experience.

SITE ANALYSIS

Boddan Lodge is located within the Monton Unitarian Church (est. 1875) property in Eccles. The Church harbors a message of inclusivity and community making. Surrounding the property are mainly residential neighborhoods with a golf course and club located to the north west.

Boddan Lodge was a bowling green and building which stood for 60 years before being demolished in 2024. The site now stands as an in-between space. The green space on site is provided with ample sunshine. Further, positioned in the green space, is a previous student-led community project, a series of plant beds that function as a meeting place. Between the site and the church sits a wall that has been marked for historical significance and cannot be removed, creating a physical barrier for accessibility. A path lines the green space and cuts through the middle, acting as an existing circulation route. Trees surround the site, enhancing a feeling of enclosure and calmness. There is evidence of the old foundation where new soil has been laid.

In Eccles, 51.3% of residents are in a level of deprivation of one or more (Office for National Statistics, 2021), and a primary part of the residents are 16 and older with a large percentage of single women.



Design Development



Public program ,Events, workshops, gatherings



Day-to-day program
Space to rest, take some quiet time, open to all



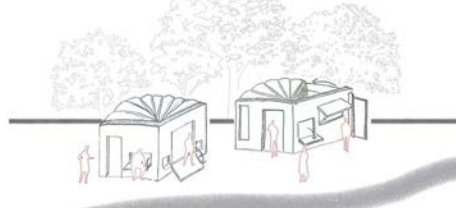
Design Development

19 Feb Exploration of initial plans

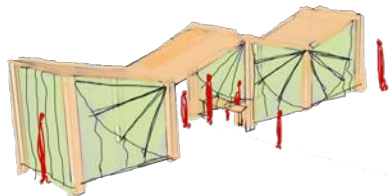


3 Mar. Get inspired by the emergency tent competition

25 Mar. Demonstrate the results of the multi-purpose device to clients



11 May Completed the design emphasizing movable multifunctionality with a permanent roof.



4.4 The client wishes to have a physical roof while maintaining its original multi-functional purpose, based on which new design proposals will be developed.

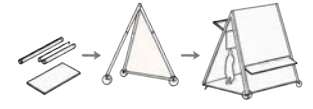
Community Analysis



1. Free multi-use



2. Family friendly



3. Easy setup & dismantling at end of life



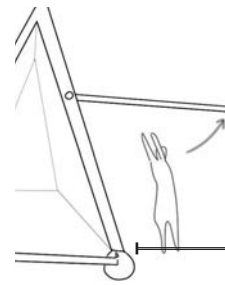
4. Weatherproof



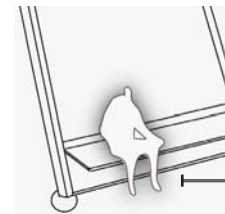
5. Longevity of materials



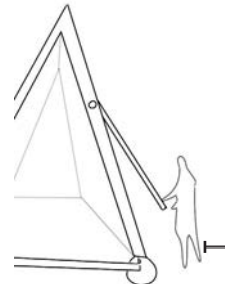
6. Accessible



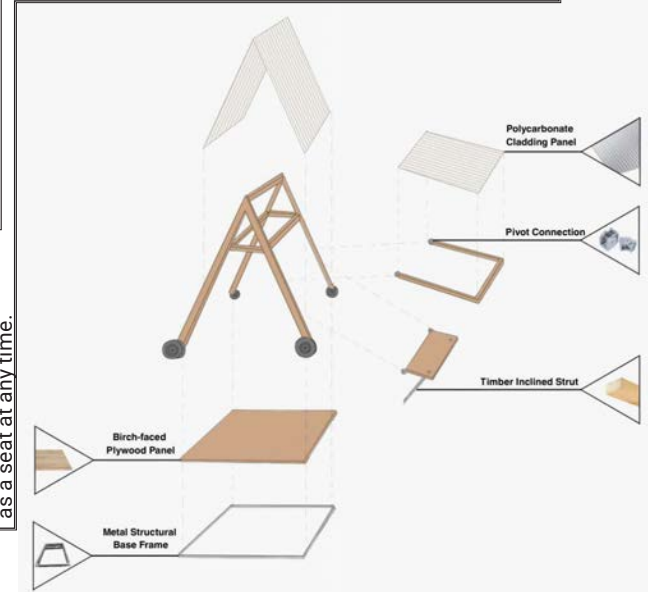
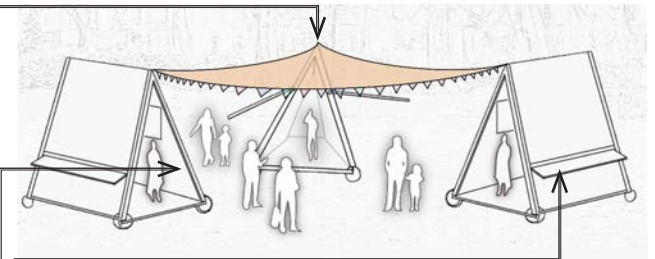
Open it up before the event to provide more weather-proof space.

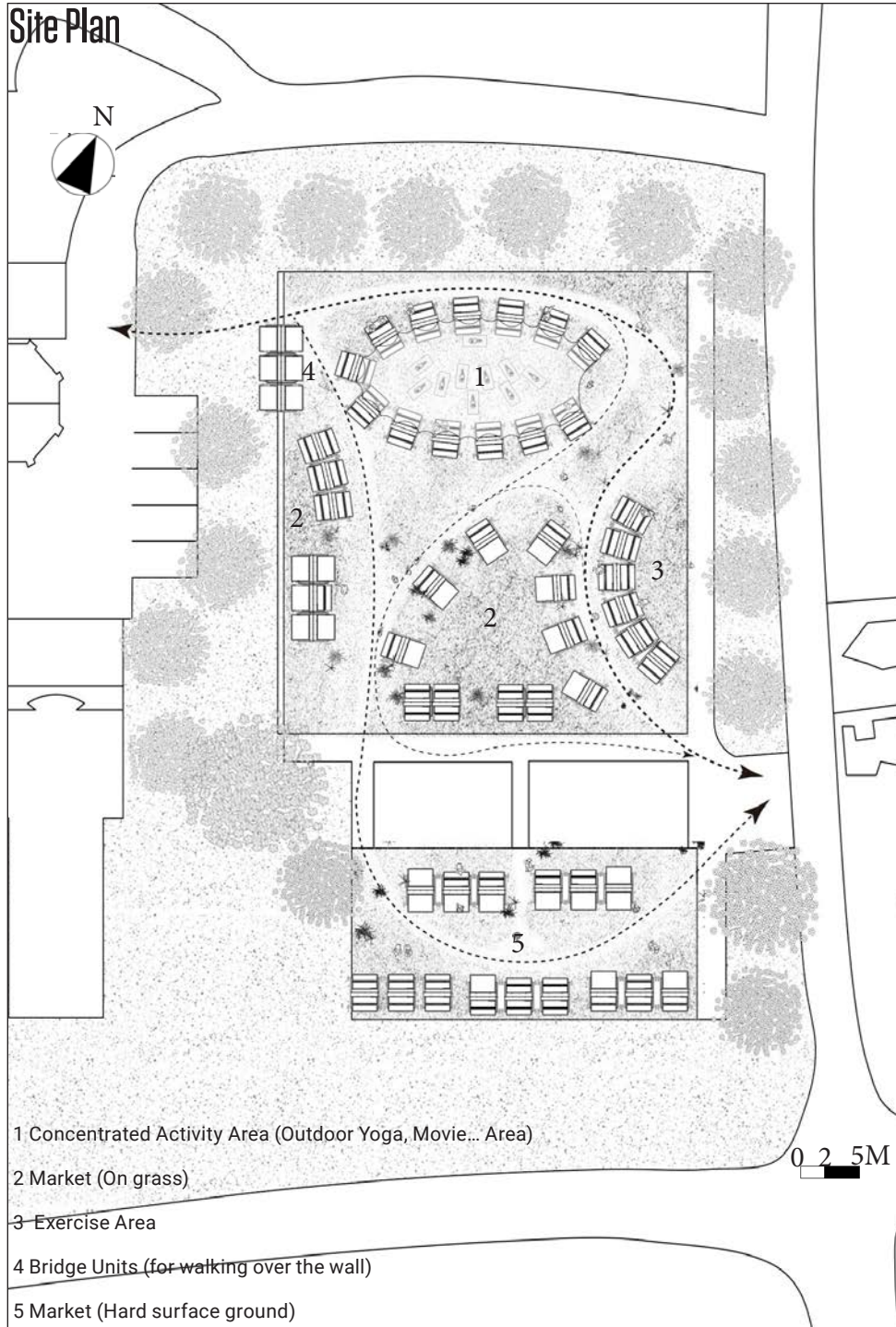


People can sit around the event and participate easily.



After the event, the unit should be turned off, but it can still be used as a seat at any time.





Development process suggestions

Item	Spicification	unit cost	total cost per unit
Primary Timber	75x75mm (3"x3") Sawn & Treated Softwood	£8/m	£180.00
Metal Structure	42.4mm Galvanised Steel Pipe + Key Clamp Fittings	£12/m	£280.00
poly-carbonate	10mm Clear Multiwall Polycarbonate (Lightweight)	£25.00/sqm	£190.00
Mobility	4x 125mm Heavy-Duty Braked Castors (400kg rated)	£35.00/unit	£160.00
Fixings & Seals	M10 Galvanised Bolts & Standard Weather Strips	-	£120.00
labor	-	-	£2,500.00

This is a plan for the zoning scheme.

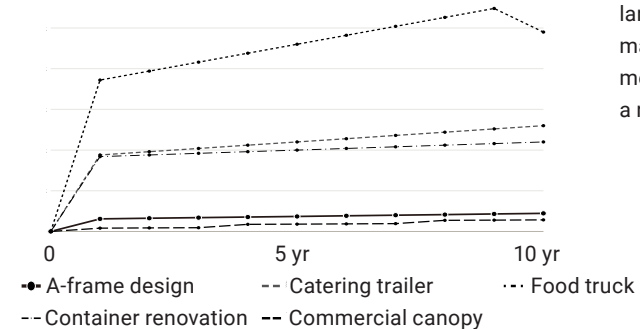
Our unit has multiple ways of use to meet the various needs of the entire site. However, this does not mean that all the construction needs to be completed at the very beginning. This is obviously a huge expense.

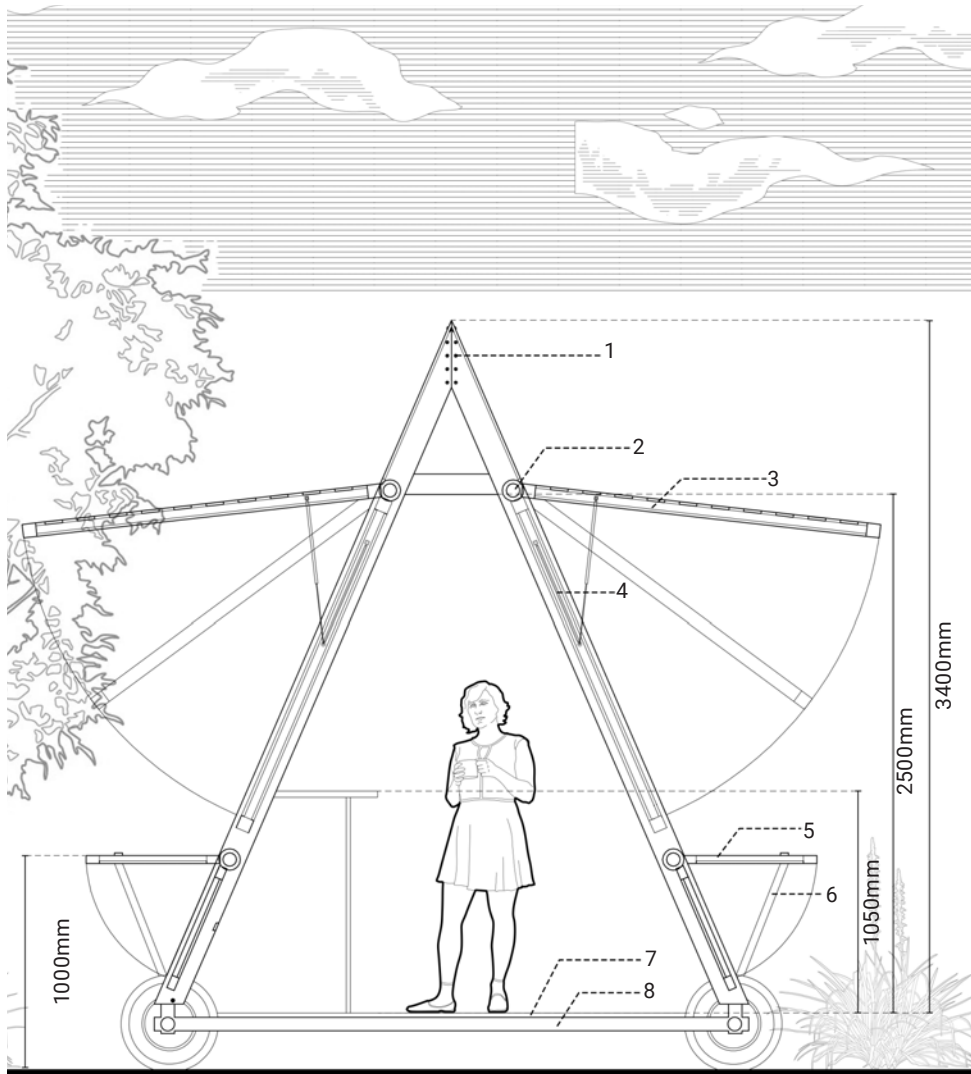
The unit can be arranged according to the actual functional requirements and the number of people, and additional units can be added later.

Firstly, generally speaking, the price of a simple metal canvas tent is 800 pounds, but its lifespan is usually only 1-2 years. In windy weather, it is prone to suffer unnecessary damages. Secondly, the traditional recommended tents have relatively limited functions, only providing a relatively small activity space. When providing a larger activity space, many unnecessary pillars will appear. Thirdly, when there is no selling activities, the simple metal tent must be moved away otherwise it will affect the normal use of the venue, causing inconvenience.

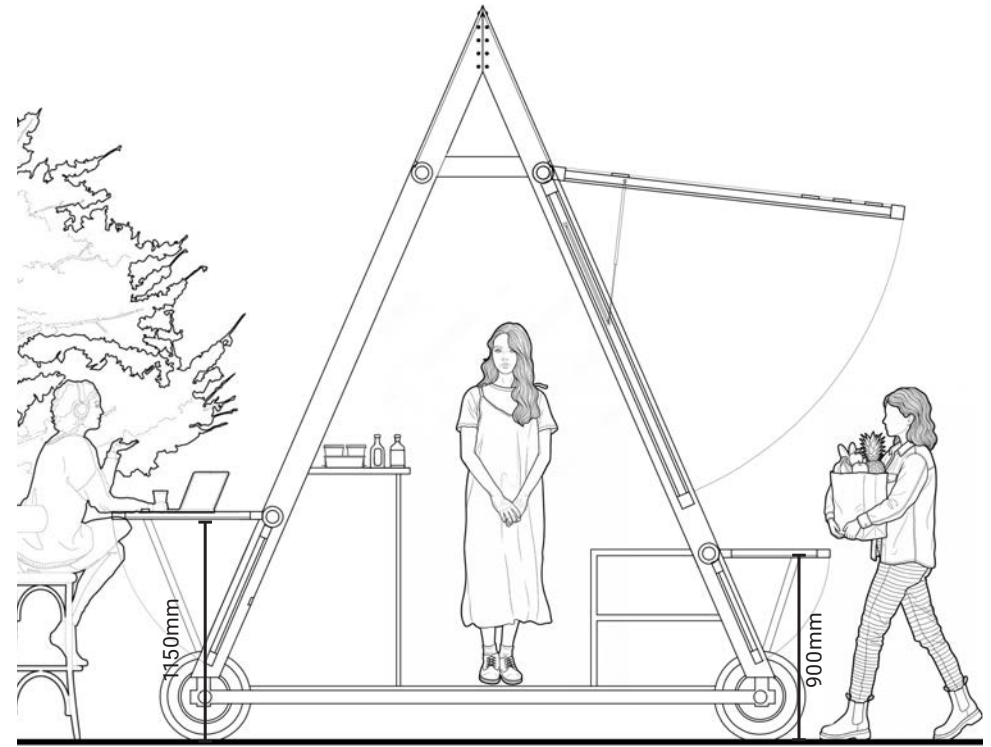
In the initial stage, 4 to 6 units can already accommodate the conversion between the centralized large event venue and the small market usage modes. It is possible to meet the functional requirements at a relatively low cost.

10-year lifecycle cost



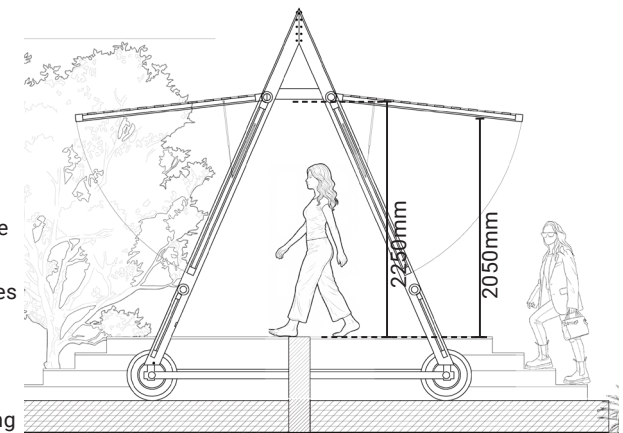


- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Bolt, M16 (10-25 Years) | 5. Fold-down Worktop, 25mm (10-15 Years) |
| 2. Pivot Connection, Steel Pin \varnothing 20mm (10-20 Years) | 6. GL Timber Inclined Strut, Glulam GL24h, 70x140mm (10-20 Years) |
| 3. Polycarbonate Cladding Panel (10-20 Years) | 7. Birch-faced Plywood Panel, 18mm (5-15 Years) |
| 4. Gas Strut, 200mm Stroke (5-10 Years) | 8. Metal Structural Base Frame, RHS 60x40mm (20-50 Years) |
- Stainless Steel Mill M12



This unit adapts easily to market stalls or bars. Its frame doubles as a hanging and display system; the base platform holds goods or drinks. Integrated wheels enable repositioning anywhere on-site—no fixed location required. Rather than a static pavilion, it's lightweight social infrastructure that fosters communication, visibility, and flexible use.

When placed at an entrance, it bridges a 900mm-high wall, serving as a movable ramp. The raised platform guides pedestrians and temporary activities directly into the site—turning barrier edges into open, accessible interfaces.





BITION



GET



This device can be used in three ways: the first is that when the upper and lower panels are closed, it can be used as a display medium for exhibition information or posters, or people can lean on the display board for a brief rest. The second type, when both the upper and lower panels are opened simultaneously, can be used as a marketplace or stall for people to sell items or engage in communication; The third type is when one side panel is open and the other side is closed, people can use it as a resting place.



In addition, when multiple devices are arranged or placed side by side, a hanging rope can be used to add a canopy and define the space for other purposes, such as a small market or theater

ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1, Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Resuse students, BA foundation and year 1 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 students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. The projects are celebrated in presentations 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 400 students from 5 cohorts in MSA have worked on 34 projects with partners.

QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA LIVE please contact the MSA LIVE team, Emily & Julie:

e.crompton@mmu.ac.uk and j.fitzpatrick@mmu.ac.uk

BLOG

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