

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE**

**WIGAN
& LEIGH**
COMMUNITY CHARITY



**COMMON
GROUND**

Feb - May 26

Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



WIGAN & LEIGH
COMMUNITY CHARITY



**MSA
LIVE 26**

Team

Sam Walkington (MArch1)

Joyce Zengamambu (MArch1)

Tom Webster (MArch1)

Greta Giannoccaro (MArch1)

Li Siyi (MA AR)

Walaa Osman (MA AR)

Zhong Xinyu (MA AR)

Amanee Miah (BA1)

Elli-Rose Douglas (BA1)

HArriet Akers (BA1)

Jai Lall (BA1)

Collaborator

For our MSA live project we have been paired with the Wigan & Leigh community charity. They are an organisation that focuses on empowering the neighbourhoods and making a positive change.

They prioritise the people's wellbeing aiming to reduce isolation and provides great opportunities for families and local businesses. Recently the charity has raised thousands of pounds through fundraising events such as long-distance sponsored walks and charity golf days for Wigan and Leigh Hospice, The Brick, and Daffodils Dreams.

Throughout this project we have been working closely with David, who is the founder and chief executive of WLCC. He has been very keen on improving the community, and collaborating with him has expanded our knowledge on the charity and motivated us to provide an outcome that coincides with everything WLCC stands for.

We hope this project helps the charity whilst providing a safe, entertaining environment for young people to feel more welcomed in the community.



Introduction

'COMMON GROUND'

Common Ground is a community engagement project, focused on reimagining the role of the Plat Bridge Church as a more active and accessible hub for local youth people in the area, from children to young adults. As part of the MSA Live program, the project explores how existing community spaces can evolve to improve social connection, creativity and everyday activity.

Many young people in the area don't have a place that they can say is designated to them outside of schools and their homes. So by creating this youth centre, we aim to strengthen community ties to provide positive spaces for young people to connect through different engagements activities.

While the church already plays an important role within the community, the proposal aims to expand its use beyond occasional events and services by introducing a wider range of activities centred around sports, arts and music for young people of the area to interact with. The intention is to create a flexible and welcoming environment that encourages the younger generation to feel a sense of participating in the community as well as belonging to their area.

At its core, Common Ground is about building stronger relationships between people and their area. By enhancing the church's existing community role, and opening it up to new forms of engagement, the project demonstrates how architecture can build bonds between local collaboration within younger generations to bring a new life to local buildings.

MEETING THE COLLABORATOR

WIGAN & LEIGH
COMMUNITY CHARITY



David — Meeting Notes (Key Takeaways) · 03.02.26

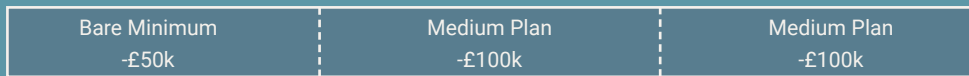
Neighbourhood Context



Three Potential Sites



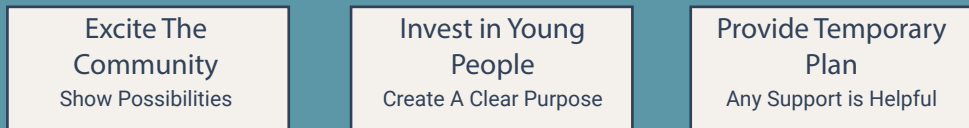
Budget Tiers



Proposed Uses



David's Expectations

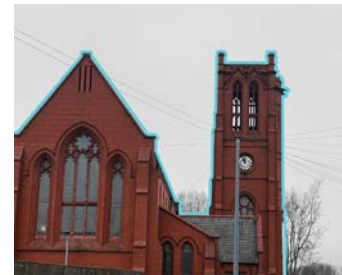


SITE VISIT TO PLATT-BRIDGE



St Nathaniel's Church - Site Visit

Meeting with David and church community member Lisa, the team explored the building's potential while confronting its realities, supervision challenges, safety concerns, and families facing complex social issues. The visit made clear that designing for young people demands as much understanding of safeguarding as it does architecture.

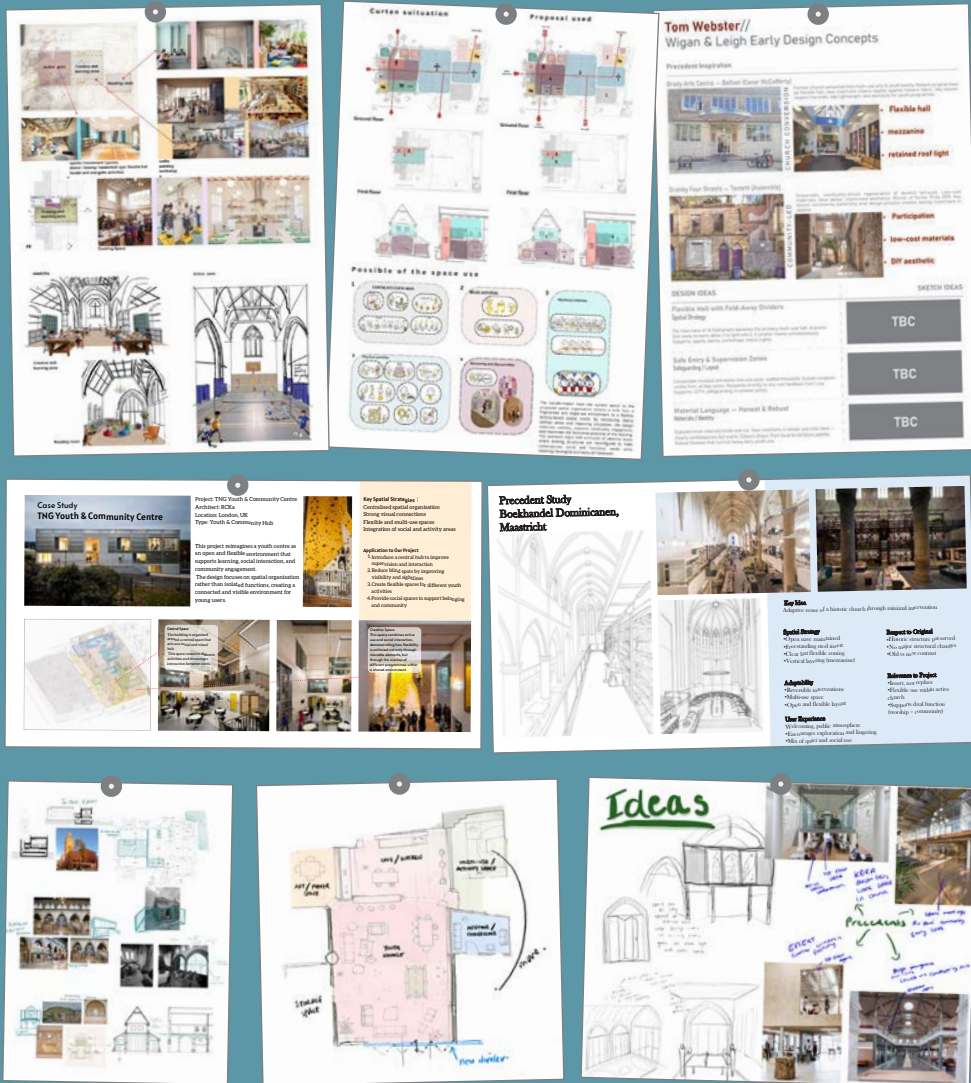


Platt Bridge Community School

After meeting deputy headteacher Carly, the group gathered to re imagine St Nathaniel's as a youth hub, ideas ranged from arts workshops and movie nights to intergenerational skills sessions. An online survey would follow to ground the design in what Wigan's young people actually want.

INITIAL DESIGN IDEAS

After our site visit to Platt Bridge, we each decided to create some initial idea pages that would then act as a leap-board into the intensive week. Early design thinking proved to be crucial when developing our later concepts



Following our visit to Platt Bridge, we decided that an online-survey would be extremely useful when gathering a stronger understanding of the community's need for youth-centered spaces.

SURVEY RESULTS -



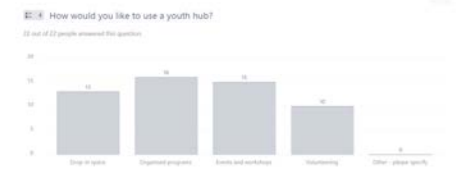
Activities Most Wanted At Youth Hub :

Sports, Music, Art



Times Most-Likely To Visit :

Weekdays After School



Preferred Way Of Use

Organised Programs / Workshops & Events



Age Groups Who Took Part :

Under 13



Food And Drink Provided?

Yes



Example Spaces Most Preferred

Below:

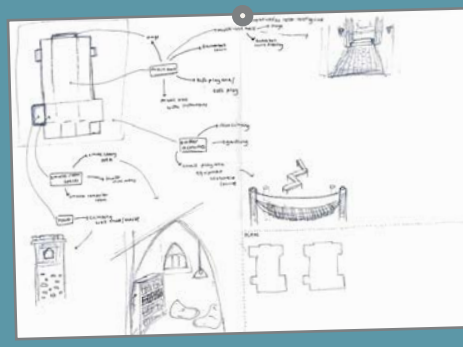
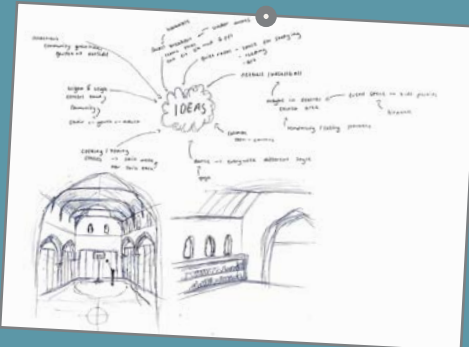
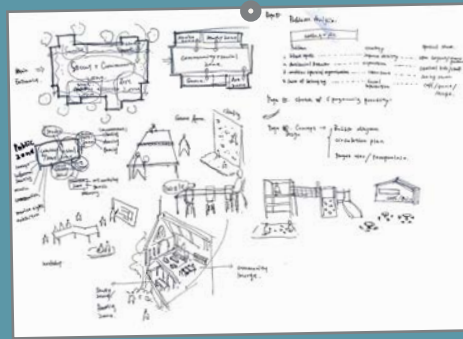
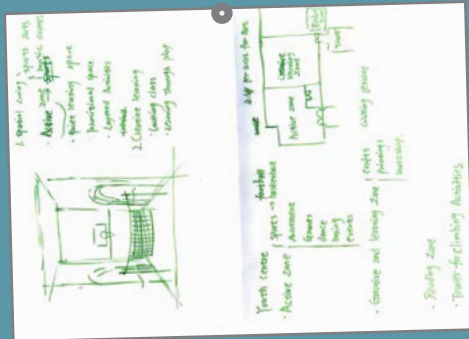
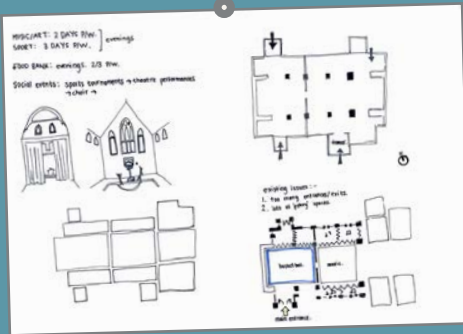


Parents / Guardians Answered



COLLABORATIVE DESIGN CONCEPTS

First day of our intensive week saw us create some of our initial ideas following the survey results. We started to consider some of the key aspects surrounding the timetable of the youth hub and the activities that would take place.

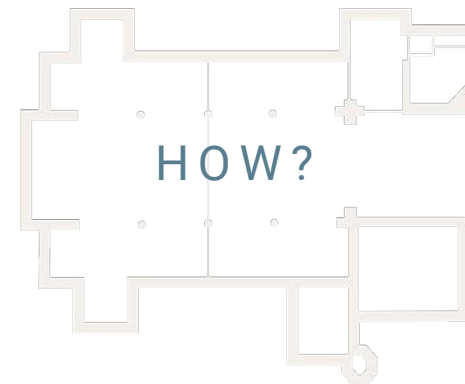


CREATING A TIMETABLE

Following this, we opted to create a more detailed timetable that would plan various activities across the week, whilst still maintaining some of the key functions of the space that are valuable to the community. Making sure that religious services and food pantries were maintained was crucial

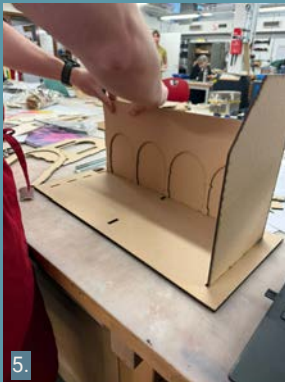
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Theme	Sports	Arts	Social	Sports	Arts	Sports	Religious Services
9:00				Food pantry			
9:30							
10:00							
10:30		Adults Art Class	Coffee Morning			Dance class	
11:00	Parent and Toddler Classes						
11:30							
12:00							
12:30							
1:00				Parent and Toddler Classes			
1:30						Netball/ Basketball (Age 10-15)	
2:00							
2:30							
3:00						Netball/ Basketball (Age 16-18)	
3:30		Drama Club/ Music			Arts and Crafts		
4:00	Table Tennis			Basketball (Age 10-15)			
4:30			Board Games Club		Climbing	Climbing	
5:00		Online Games club					
5:30	Kids Basketball			Basketball (Age 16-18)			
6:00							
6:30		Movie Night	Game and Community Night		Youth Club		
7:00	Adults Badminton			Adults Basketball		Church Setup For Sun	
7:30							
8:00							

Creating a more formulated timetable for the youth hub allowed us to move towards area design more swiftly. Understanding when and how the space would be used allowed us to create a logical proposal



CREATING A PROPOSAL

Intensive week saw us beginning to create a site model as well as a model that would aid our engagement activity. This was a great lesson in collaborative making. We furthered this with considerations into what parts of the building a used on different youth-hub days.

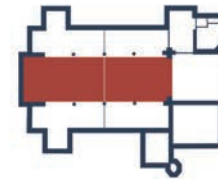


COLLABORATION / MODEL MAKING

1. We started by collating existing building drawings: plans and section drawings
2. Using a generated CAD file from the existing drawings, Greta digitally modelled the church to create a base for final visuals.
3. Together in B15 workshop, members of the team began to work on physical models
4. Joyce and Walaa began to assemble the site model at 1:200
5. Sam began to assemble the 1:50 spatial model to be used as part of the engagement workshop with Platt bridge community school
6. Process of the 1:200 site model church being 3D printed

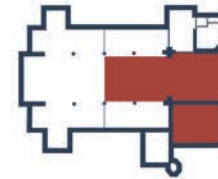
MONDAY

Sports



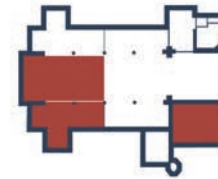
TUESDAY

Arts / Music



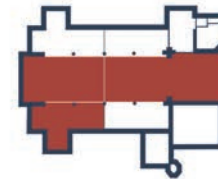
WEDNES-

Social / Events



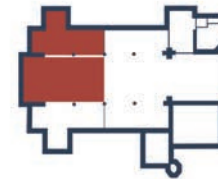
THURSDAY

Sports / Food Pantry



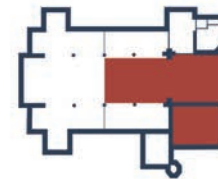
FRIDAY

Arts / Music



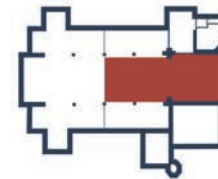
SATURDAY

Sports

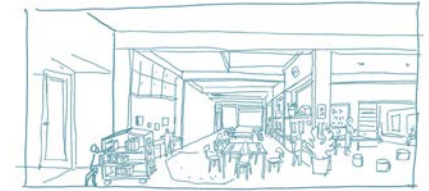


SUNDAY

Religious Service



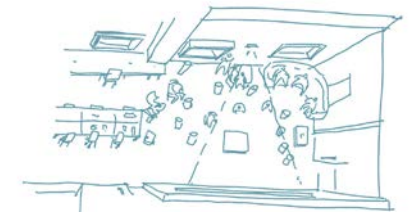
Early Concept Views :



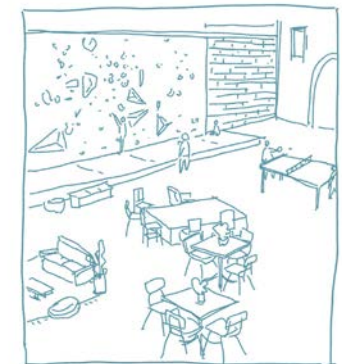
Art Workshop



Drama School



Movie Night



Climbing Wall

PLANNING ENGAGEMENT

Organizing our art workshop at Platt Bridge Primary School required significant coordination, securing permissions, liaising with staff, and ensuring safeguarding procedures were in place. Designed to give young people a direct voice in the process, the session translated their ideas and aspirations into outputs that could genuinely inform our design proposals.



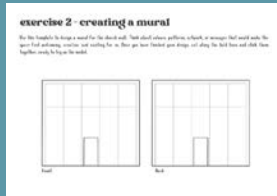
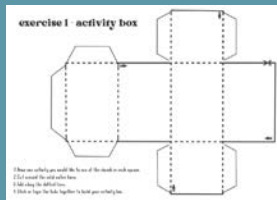
Ahead of this, Tom and Amanee prepared a short presentation for the children, to help explain who we were and why we were visiting the primary school

The aim was to insure the children felt their work meant something, with clear explanation and engagement throughout.

The Activities

Children took part in two hands-on exercises, first, a cut-and-stick cube activity where they drew and collaged the activities they'd most like to see in the youth centre.

Second, designing a mural to transform the existing partition wall inside St Nathaniel's Church. Both activities gave young people direct creative ownership over the space.



We Tested Both Activities Ourselves!



ENGAGEMENT

Our engagement event was a highlight of the week for everyone involved. From the arrival to the workshop to leaving, we all thoroughly enjoyed working with the children and were extremely pleased with the work they produced. Above all, the activities they worked on acted as a mountain of evidence that what we were proposing mattered.



ARRIVE / MEET TEACHERS

SHORT PRESENTATION

WORKSHOP STARTS



FINAL OUTPUTS

The Undergraduates in our group each took to create a visual concept on all our proposals for the youth centre, imagining what the space would look like during each day of the week.



Jai - Art Workshop



Harriet - Music / Dance Workshops



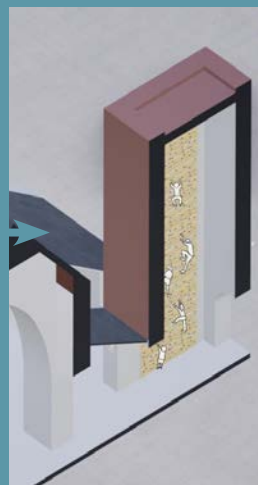
Amanee - Food Pantry



Elli - Adaptable Basketball



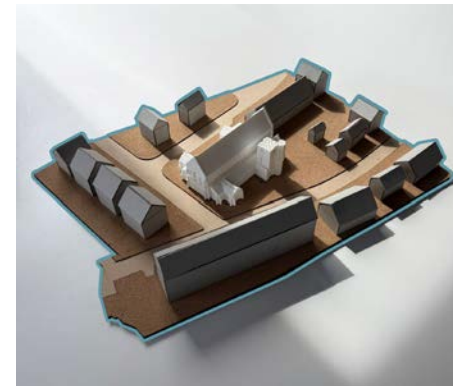
Sheri - Bell Tower Adapted to Climbing Wall



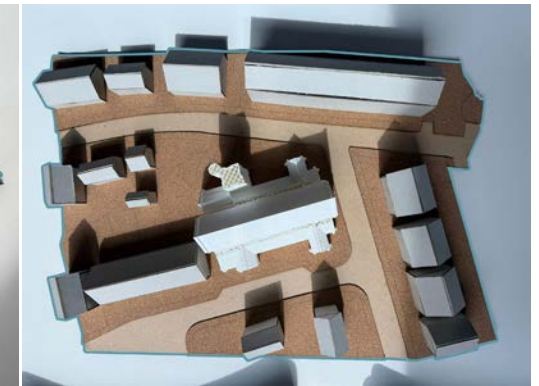
Design Proposal

Our approach centres on a minimally invasive adaptation of St Nathaniel's Church, heavy curtains hung between the existing interior archways create flexible, dividable spaces without permanent alteration, while integrated storage keeps the layout practical and multi-use. The main nave opens out into a basketball court, doubling as a canvas for community artwork. Finally, the existing disused bell tower has been re imagined as an interior climbing wall, activating a long-neglected part of the building and giving young people a truly unexpected feature at the heart of the hub.

FINAL MODEL / REFLECTION



AERIAL VIEW OF ST NATHANIEL'S



PLAN VIEW OF ST NATHANIEL'S

REFLECTION

REFLECTION Bi-weekly meetings- Our bi-weekly meeting was engaging events where the whole team contributed to that session's agenda, where regular discussions about plans and concepts influenced constant developments of the project. Each member's input was valued as a result of communication, coordination and problem solving.

Communication- dialogue between the team was strong, with March 1 & Adaptive Reuse students guiding BA 1 students through the process. Clear bi-weekly tasks were set with their respective deadlines; this was supported by a shared google drive that allowed all team members to submit their work for group review.

Site visit – The site visit gave the team great insight into real world projects and their respective clients and stakeholders. This was an invaluable experience for the BA1 students in their journey within the profession of Architecture.

Engagement- Our art workshop with Year 6 children at Platt Bridge was without doubt the highlight of the week, and arguably the entire project so far. Seeing the children throw themselves into the cube activity and mural designs with such enthusiasm reminded the whole team exactly why this project matters. It was a genuinely collaborative effort, with every member of the group playing their part to deliver a session the kids clearly loved. More than any meeting or survey, that afternoon brought the brief to life.

ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1, Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Reuse 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, time-scale, 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

live.msa.ac.uk/2026

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