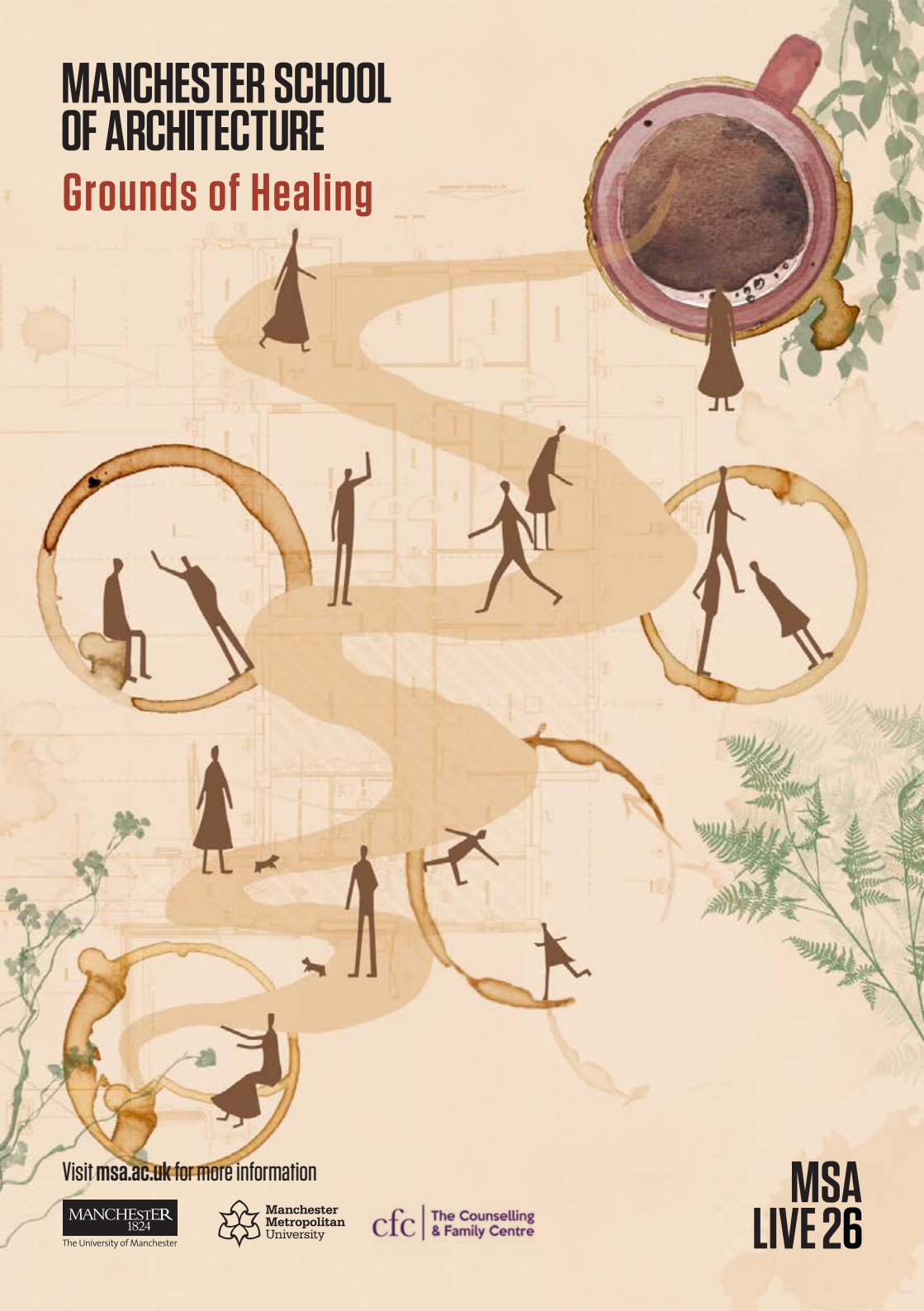
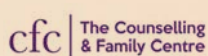


MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Grounds of Healing



Visit msa.ac.uk for more information



**MSA
LIVE 26**

Team

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Libby Drake (BA1)

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Taecho Shim (BA1)

Collaborators

cfc | The Counselling
& Family Centre



I joined The Counselling & Family Centre as Head of Operations after spending many years in the corporate world working in facilities management. Moving into the charity sector has been incredibly rewarding, although it can also be challenging, particularly in the current economic climate where we often have to carefully balance ambition with affordability.

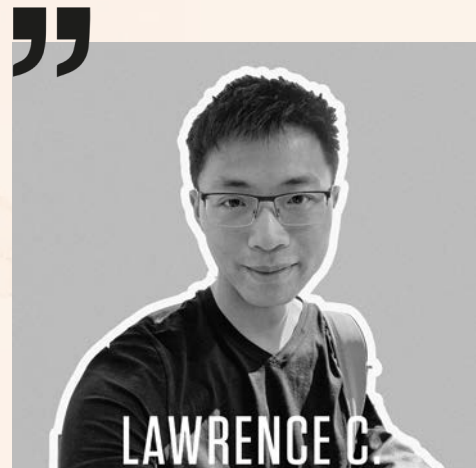
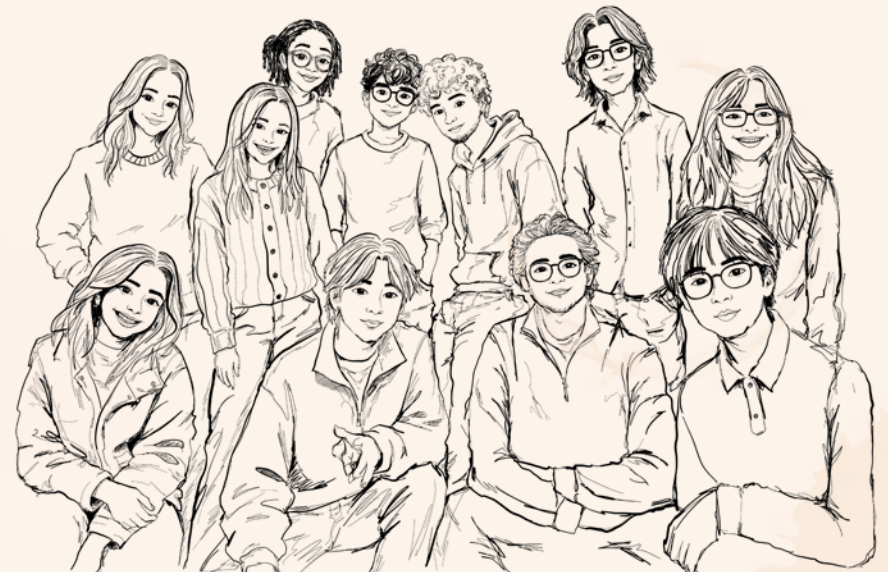
For me, CFC is about helping people's mental health and being there for individuals when they need support most. Sometimes that support happens in a counselling room, but just as importantly it can come from creating welcoming community spaces where people feel included, connected, and comfortable.

Introduction

GROUNDS OF HEALING

The Grounds of Healing MSA Live project involves redesigning the section of the CFC's Altrincham building to the right of the reception, including the dedicated wellbeing and activities room, the cafe, the kitchen, and the toilets, as well as the outdoor area adjacent to these spaces. Our aim was to put forward a proposal to produce a versatile and inclusive space, which would address its current flaws and work for everyone. A better CFC would lead to a healthier community as a result. Working with our collaborators Mark and Lawrence, our group of masters and undergraduate students came up with a design proposal to reimagine the space.

The site can be found adjacent to Stamford Park at 40 Mayors Road in Altrincham, a suburb of Manchester, 8 miles from the city centre. The brick building, a former nursery, is single-storey with a large floor plan and was likely built around the 1970s. After an early site visit around February and a community engagement activity in April, where we gathered valuable insights from the CFC's users on what worked and what didn't, we were able to identify several problems with the current design and its function. There were many repeated complaints - that the rooms were too cramped and crowded; that the white walls and decor were bland and needed reimagining; that there was a lack of storage, and so on. During the intensive week we split our tasks according to each group member's ability. We were able to produce a series of outputs, including collages, iterative floor plans, a site analysis and drawings and renders of the final proposal, among many other things. You can find all of this and more in the following pages of this publication. We hope you enjoy looking through it!



I am Lawrence and I am an administrator at The Counselling & Family Centre. Design has not always been my strong suit so having been able to work with the team and coordinating with them on the day activity to gather different opinions about reinventing our cafe space has been a great learning experience.

Site Visit

The group visited the site in Altrincham and met with our collaborator, Mark, at the Counselling and Family Centre. During the visit, we were introduced to the values and community role of the centre, toured the building, and spoke with staff members to better understand how the space is currently used and what makes it meaningful to its users.

The discussion then focused on the community area, which became the primary focus of the design project. Conversations explored the needs of the collaborator, the limitations of the existing layout, and opportunities for improving the space through better facilities, accessibility, and community engagement. As a group, we began developing initial ideas for the redesign, including the production of plans and visualisations that could support the centre moving forward. We also discussed the possibility of organising workshops to engage directly with the different user groups within the community.

Following the meeting, initial site measurements were carried out to support the next stages of the project. The visit provided a clearer understanding of the building, its users, and the wider ambitions of the redesign proposal.



Action Plan

01 Introduction

we began by meeting, getting to know each other and reaching out to the collaborator



02 Site Visit

we visited site, getting a feel for it, taking measurements, meeting the collaborator in person and beginning to gauge what the space was missing



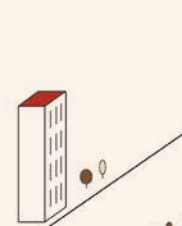
03 Submissions Day

we produced the project poster and submitted the ethics application, budget proposal and risk assessment



04 Engagement Activity

we asked users of the building what they liked and disliked about it and what they would improve, gave them the chance to choose their favourite interior colour palette, and allowed them to design their preferred room arrangement by making their own floor plans using colourful pieces of card



05 Design Process

we produced and discussed design iterations, settling on a final design



06 Intensive Week

we produced a series of drawings, renders, and models, as well as a site analysis, collages and more



07 Presentation

we presented our finalised work. We then handed in our publication and concluded the project



Site Analysis

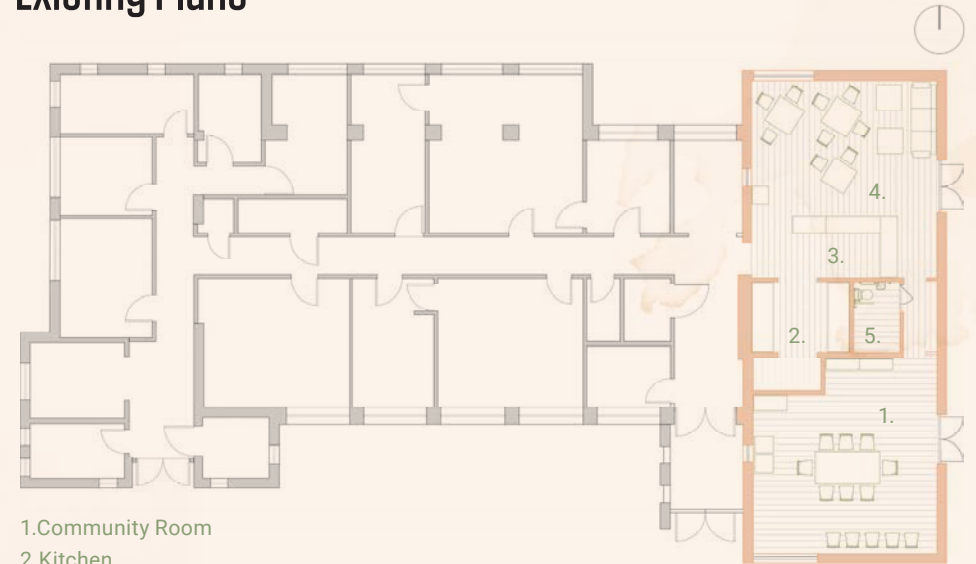


Key:

- site
- residential buildings
- green space
- sun path
- vehicle routes
- pedestrian routes

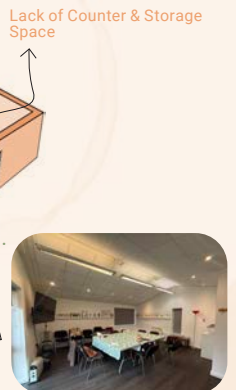
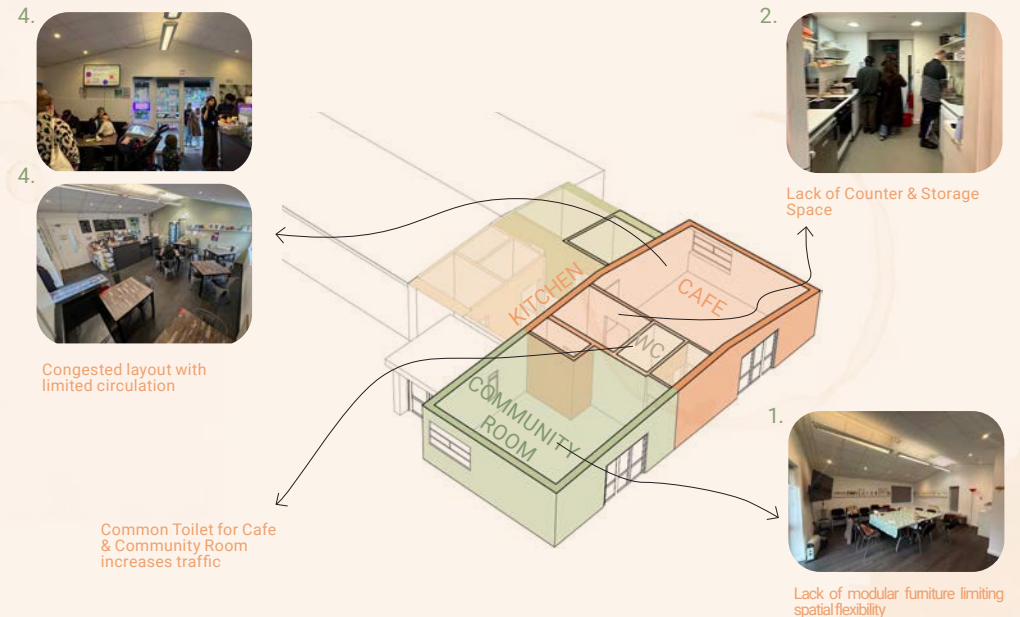
Following the site visit, a detailed analysis of the site was carried out to better understand its environmental and contextual conditions. Focus was placed on studying the site's sun path and the surrounding green spaces, as the outdoor landscape forms an important part of the project and its community use. The analysis also considered accessibility and connectivity, with the site benefiting from close proximity to the tram station as well as clear pedestrian and vehicular access routes, making it easily reachable by public transport, car, and walking connections.

Existing Plans

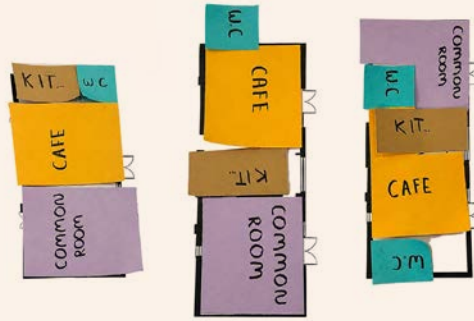


1. Community Room
2. Kitchen
3. Servery
4. Cafe
5. Accessible WC

Current Spatial Arrangement



Community Feedback



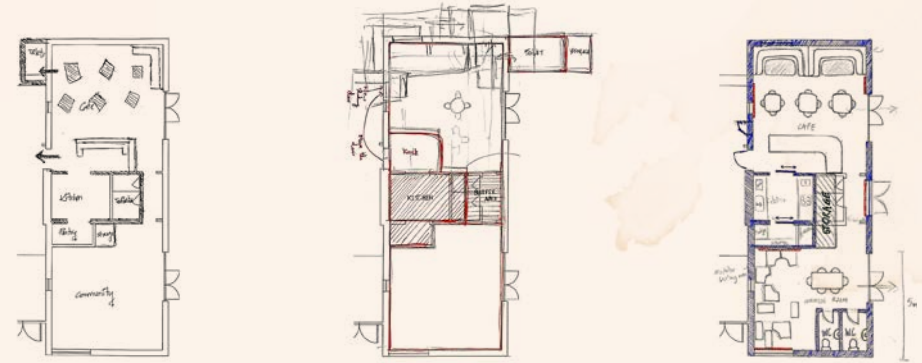
Users were given the opportunity to explore how they wanted the internal layout.

Primarily used for painting activities by elderly users, the common room should be adapted to better support creative and social use

Capturing the Community Engagement Activity



Floor Plan Iterations



Iteration 1

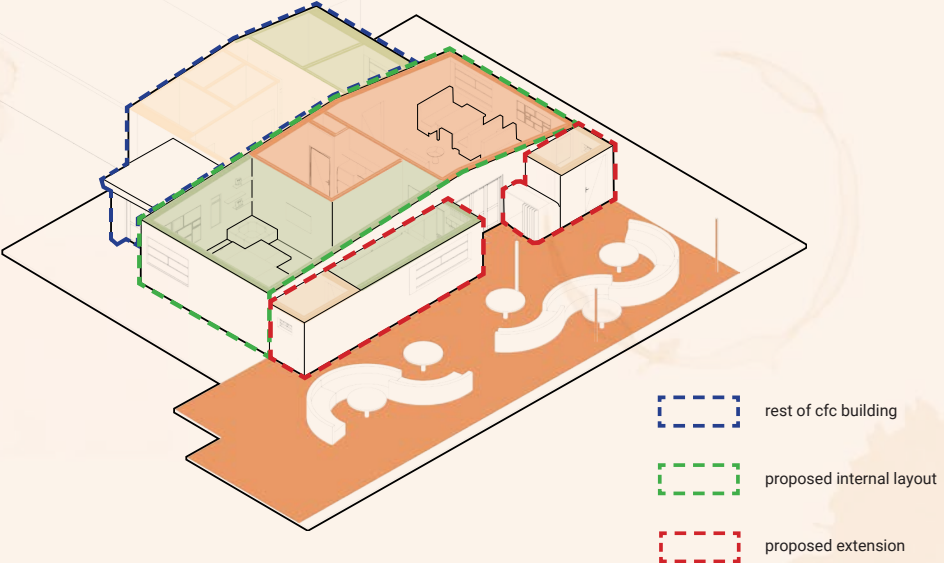
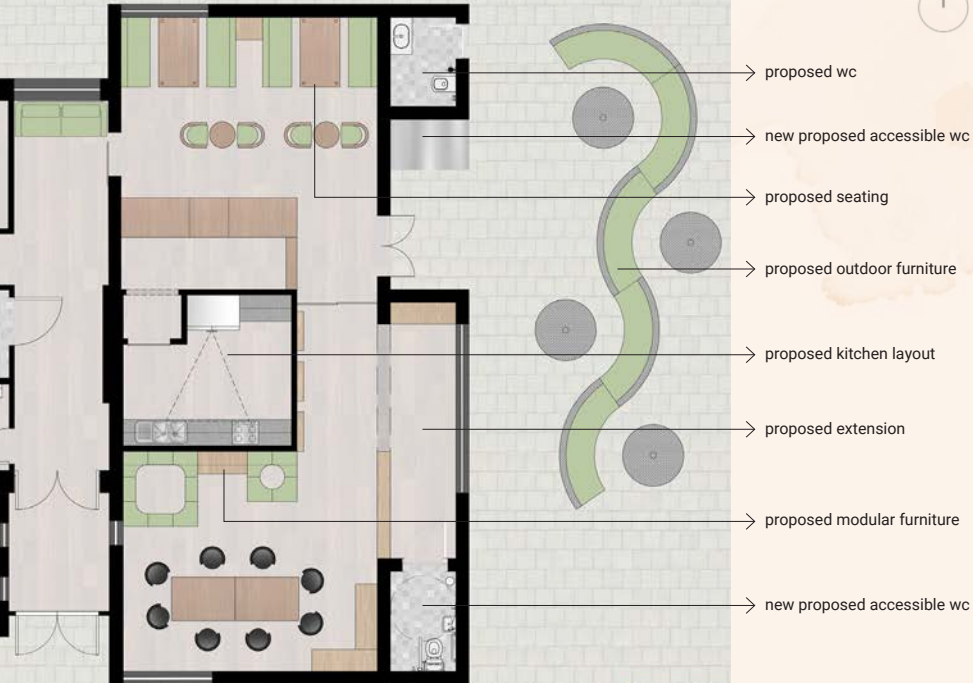
Iteration 2

Iteration 3

Chosen Iteration



Proposed Plan



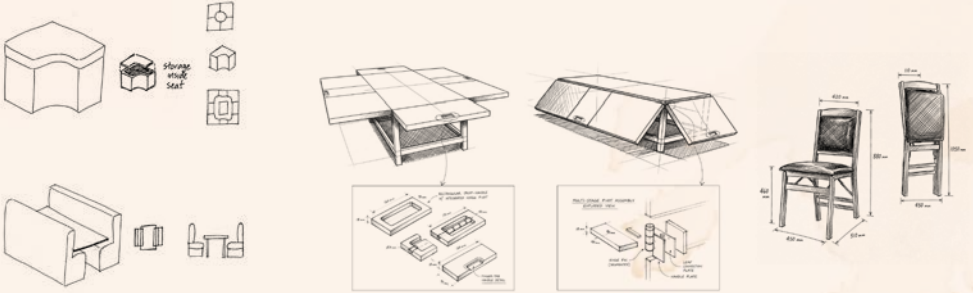
Spatial Arrangement - Outdoor & Indoor Cafe Space



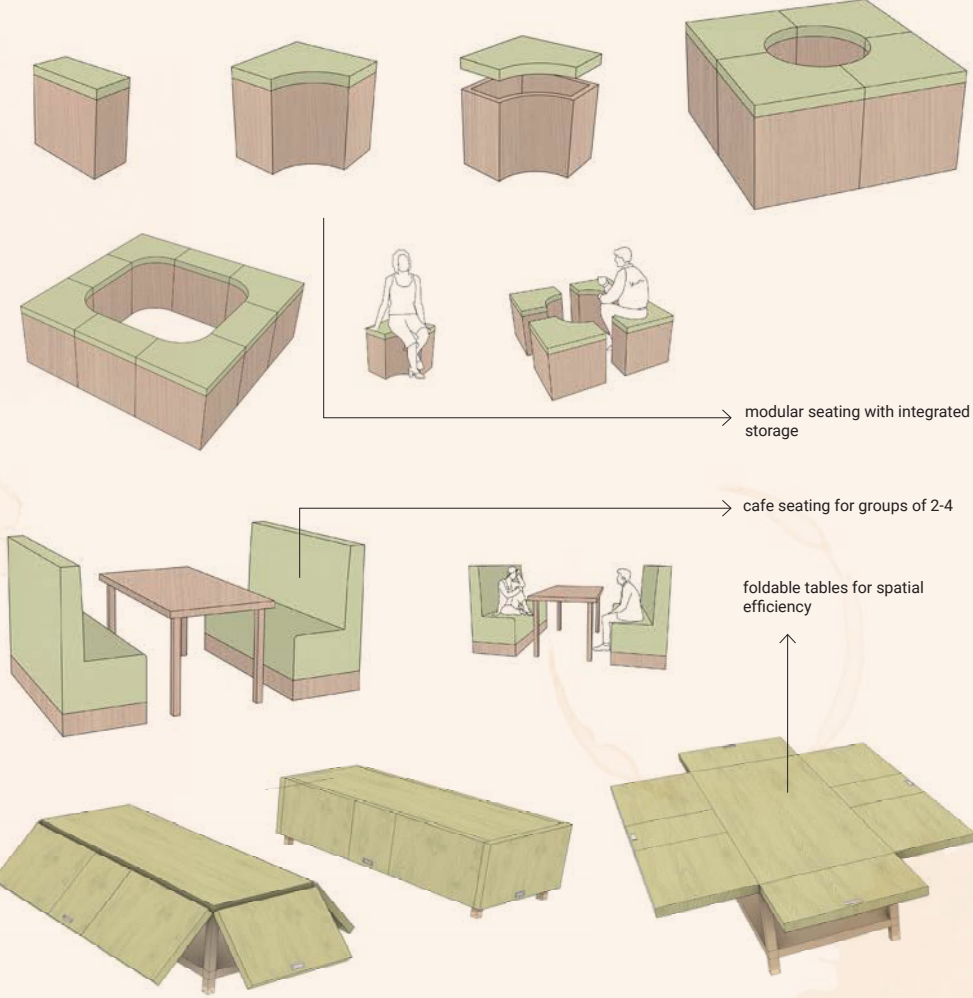
Spatial Arrangement - Community Space



Furniture Design



Community Space



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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