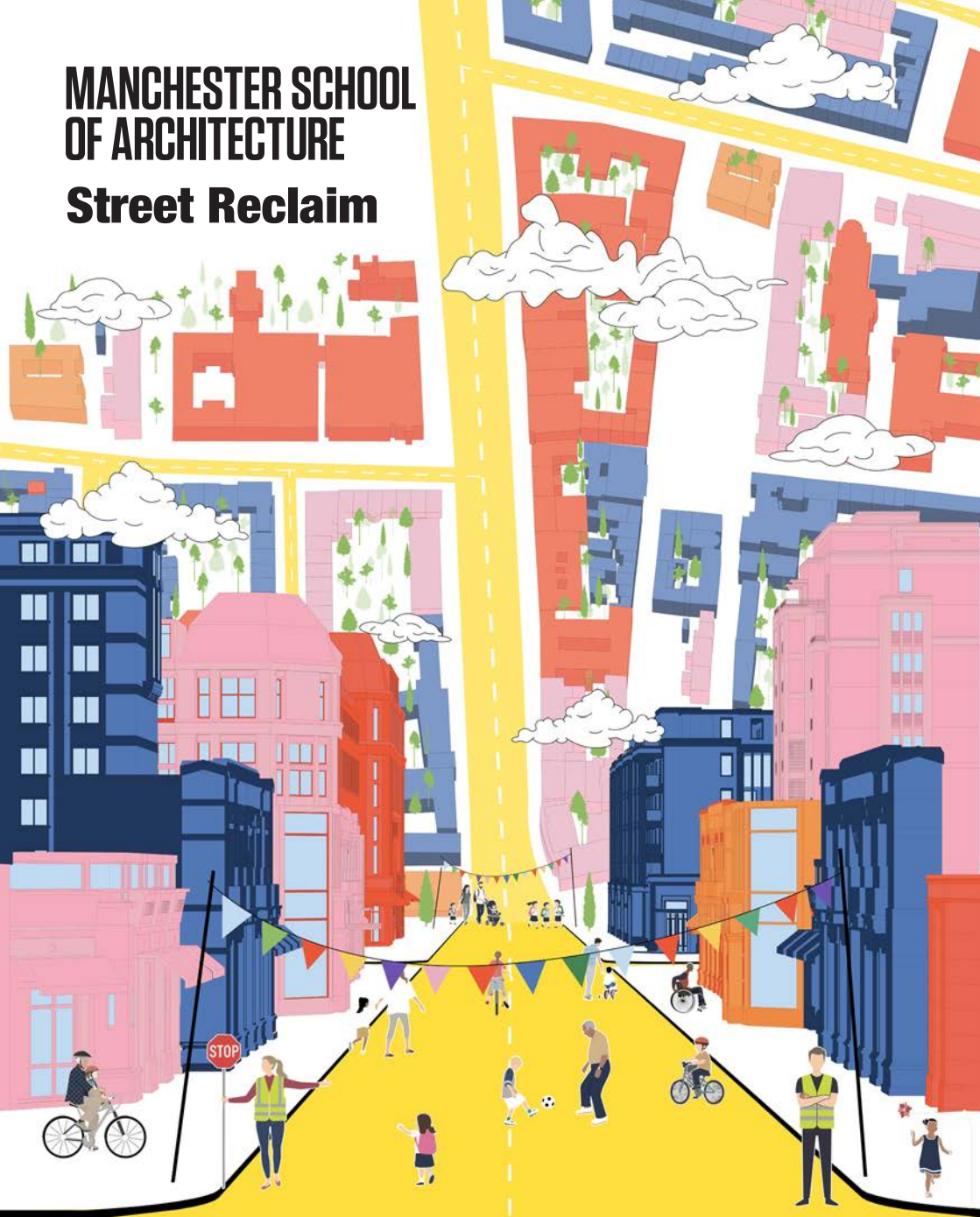


# MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

## Street Reclaim



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**School Streets**

**MSA  
LIVE 26**

## Team

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## Collaborators

We are excited to be collaborating with Manchester City Council, specifically the infrastructure and environment team. The team delivers essential public services, with a strong focus on inclusive growth within their core values: people, place and pride. The project will be managed by the Sustainable Transport team, who are vital in shaping relevant policy development and oversee the delivery of the Manchester Active Travel Strategy Investment Plan. The MATSIP aims to improve access to regional and district centres, ensuring safe access to schools, improving health through transport investment and reflecting diversity to address transport inequalities.

Alongside our clients, we are elated to be working alongside 3 schools within the area, these being Co-op Academy Medlock, St Luke's CofE Primary school / Dean Trust Ardwick, and Heald Place Primary school. Collaborating closely with these schools on the project, alongside Manchester City Council, will give an invaluable insight into the community's needs and ensure the output aligns with the Manchester City Council's core values. Additionally, we hope a successful collaboration will inspire other schools to implement the same.

## Introduction

### Street Reclaim

Manchester City Council developed the School Streets scheme to improve road safety around schools while encouraging children to take more active methods of travel. The initiative currently operates through temporary road closures during school drop-off and pick-up periods, creating safer pedestrian environments for pupils and their families. By limiting vehicular access at peak times, the scheme allows children to travel to school more independently and safely, while also promoting healthier lifestyles and improving air quality.

The School Streets initiative has continued to expand across Greater Manchester and currently includes 43 road closures across 45 schools. Beyond the immediate safety benefits, the scheme contributes to broader social and environmental objectives, including encouraging active travel, reducing congestion, and fostering stronger community interaction within neighbourhood spaces. The project demonstrates how small-scale urban interventions can positively influence everyday experiences and support more inclusive and liveable communities.

As part of this project, we were given the opportunity to work with three schools in Manchester to further develop the School Streets initiative. The brief provided by our collaborators outlined three key tasks. The first involved undertaking a detailed site appraisal for each school, assessing factors such as desire lines, pedestrian movement, waiting areas, accessibility, and existing traffic conditions. This stage required us to identify both the opportunities and constraints associated with each site, while defining the specific considerations that would inform future design proposals.

Alongside the site analysis, stakeholder engagement formed an important aspect of the project. We were encouraged to engage directly with schools and local communities in order to gain a deeper understanding of the social and spatial needs of each location. This process reinforced the importance of participatory design in creating interventions that respond to the lived experiences of pupils, parents, staff, and residents.

The final stage involved developing conceptual design options for each school and selecting a preferred proposal based on planning guidance, urban design principles, and site-specific needs. To manage the project effectively within the allocated timeframe, our larger group was divided into three smaller teams, each focusing on a single school site. Progress was regularly discussed and reviewed during the bi-weekly MSA Live sessions, ensuring collaboration and consistency across the wider project.

# Project Timeline

This week focused on research and analysis, collaborating in groups to focus on site analysis of the three schools. This gave us all excitement for the possibilities of what we can do to transform the spaces.

Week 2



Week 1



Today marked the first meeting with our team and collaborators. Speaking to the collaborators, we gained clarity on the aims of this project and the desired outputs. We all look forward to progressing this further!

Week 3



This session we presented our site analysis to our group and focused on precedents found that suited each location. We are all looking forward to speaking to our collaborator before next week to discuss community school engagements!

Week 4



After our meeting, this week was a big shift from analysis to design. Primarily focusing on community engagement with the school children, ensuring that our engagement is accessible and empowering. This gave us good insight into possibilities for our action week!

Week 5



This was the final session before the action week! We focused on planning our action week to ensure we were prepared to use the time effectively. We also got some positive news that we would be able to join a school streets event at Co-op Academy, and we look forward to seeing how this shapes our development!

Action Week



Finally onto the action week! For this project we were all looking forward to our community engagement activity in this week. We also focused on finalising our designs and visuals for each school proposal to present our work to our best ability.

# Proposed Project Phases

Early research revealed a key problem with the School Streets initiative in which significant delays between phases was causing volunteers to lose motivation, putting the scheme at risk of collapse. To address this, we propose a three-phase framework for all participating schools that can improve community engagement and keep the momentum of the project moving.

## Phase 1: Community Engagement

The first phase focuses on community engagement through events held during school street closures. Activities for children and adults help raise awareness of the initiative in an interactive way while encouraging participation from pupils, parents, staff, and residents. These events can also support school fundraising and promote the scheme to neighbouring schools. The temporary use of the street also helps communities experience the benefits of safer and less traffic-dominated spaces



## Phase 2: Modular Installations

The second phase introduces adaptable modular installations while planning permission for a permanent closure is being considered. Components can be rearranged to create seating, cycle storage, play areas, and social spaces. The installations can be packed away outside closure times, allowing the street to be flexibly adapted to community needs. This approach allows different layouts and activities to be tested before a permanent design is implemented.



## Phase 3: Landscaping Proposal

The final phase proposes a permanent road closure with a site-specific landscaping design for each school. Informed by feedback from the earlier phases, the design aims to encourage active travel to school while creating welcoming, community-focused spaces for residents and families. Permanent planting, seating, and play features would help transform the street into a safer and more enjoyable public environment.



# Engagement Activity

## Co-Op Academy Medlock Visit !!

To prepare for the engagement activity, we contacted the Deputy Headteacher at the Co-op Academy Medlock. Through discussions with the school and our collaborator, we decided to create a simple, low-budget, and accessible installation that encouraged active participation from the pupils. We chose to bring chalk to the site and allow the children to freely draw and express their ideas directly onto the street.



At the beginning of the day, we were nervous about the level of engagement we would receive from both pupils and parents. Many of us had little experience with public speaking, making us uncertain about how to begin the activity confidently. To make the process more manageable, we split into two groups: one group began drawing with chalk on the street encouraging participation, while the others spoke with parents and teachers to gather opinions on the school streets initiative. We also prepared a structured list of questions for parents, teachers, and pupils to help keep the conversations organised and focused.



# Results and Reflection



To our surprise and excitement, the children immediately engaged with the activity, enthusiastically covering the closed road with drawings and creative ideas. Many of the children drew obstacle courses or games that they could play with, while others chose to draw their favourite things all over the street. A few of the students told us personally how much fun it was to have the chalk out on the street and asked if we could put it out every day. The feedback received from parents was overwhelmingly positive, one parent noted that the activity was a **great use of the space** and that **they look forward to seeing what we do next**. Another few parents had told us what a difference having the road closed meant for the kids and that it makes sense to use the space for something for the school. Overall, we felt the day was a huge success and were delighted with the response and feedback we received on the day. We feel that this event can be the first example of many to come in utilising the school streets closures to promote the initiative and gain support for schools to have less vehicular dominated routes.



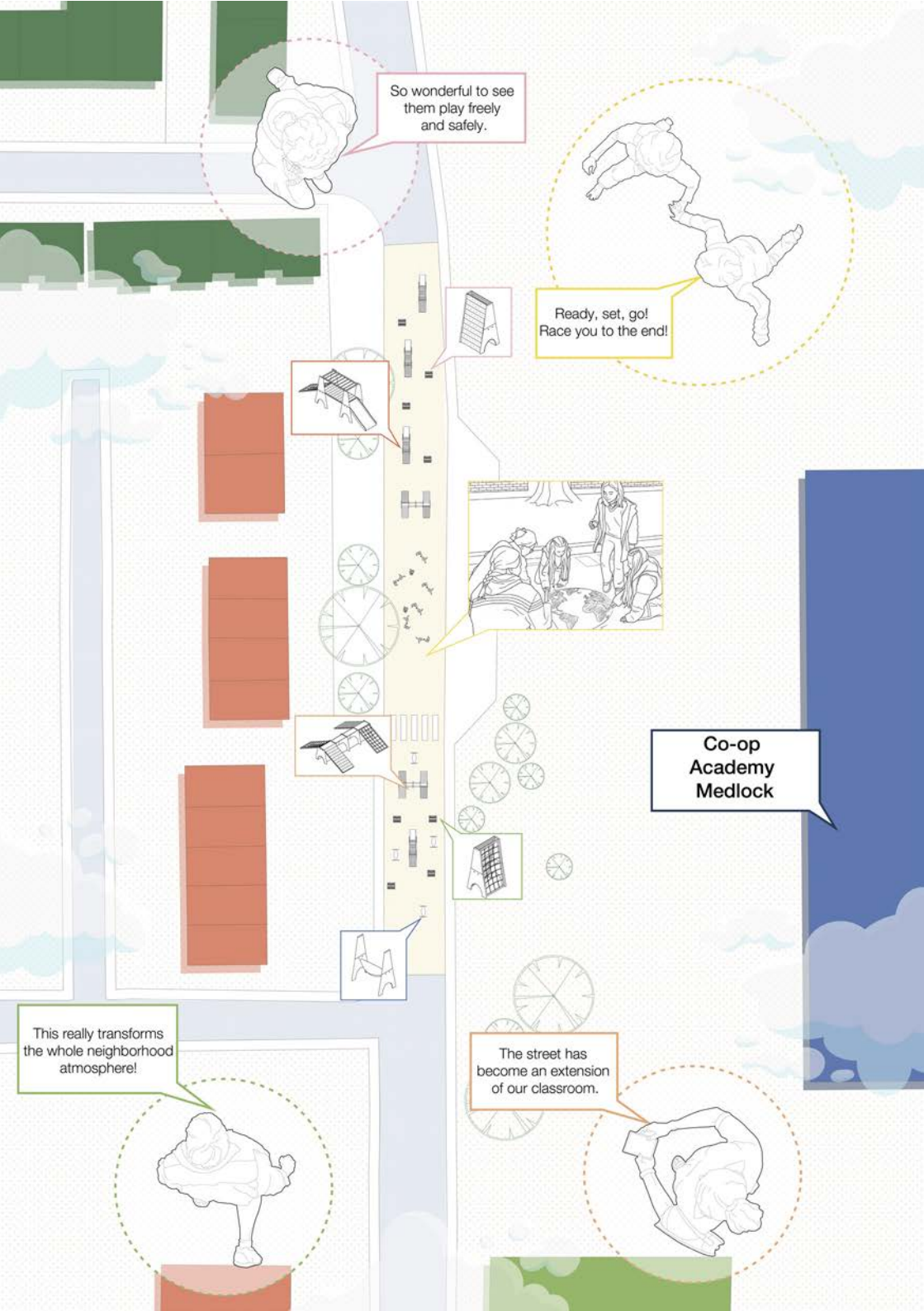
# Co-Op Academy Medlock

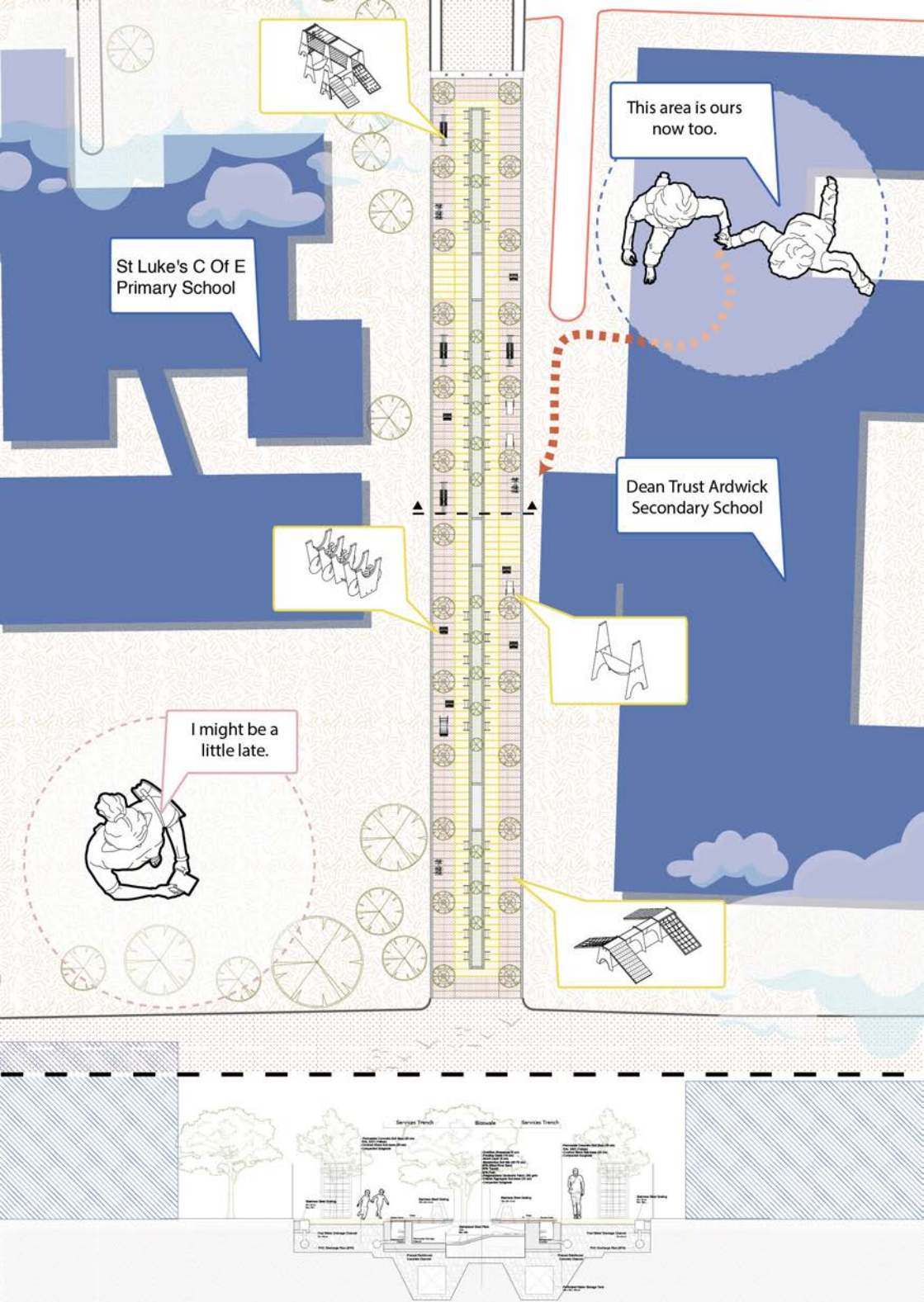
## Phase 1: Community Engagement Events

The initial phase of this proposal focuses on a series of community engagement events designed to transform School Street closures before plans for a permanent road closure. These small but impactful activities are an important part of the proposal, helping to maintain enthusiasm among volunteers while also raising awareness among parents, pupils, and local residents about the value of the School Streets initiative. By temporarily reclaiming the street for community use, the events encourage people to experience the benefits of safer and less traffic-dominated public spaces firsthand.

The events could include a wide range of activities. During our engagement day at the Co-op Academy Medlock, we gathered several ideas directly from parents, teachers, and pupils. Some teachers suggested using the street for sports day activities as an extension of the school playground, while another proposed hosting bake sales and community events that local residents could participate in. These activities could also provide valuable fundraising opportunities for the school and support future campaigns for a permanent road closure.

Based on our engagement activity, where we trialled an example of this phase, we recognised the importance of community engagement in fostering a stronger sense of connection between the school and its surrounding neighbourhood. The atmosphere throughout the day was extremely positive, and many participants expressed excitement about attending future events.

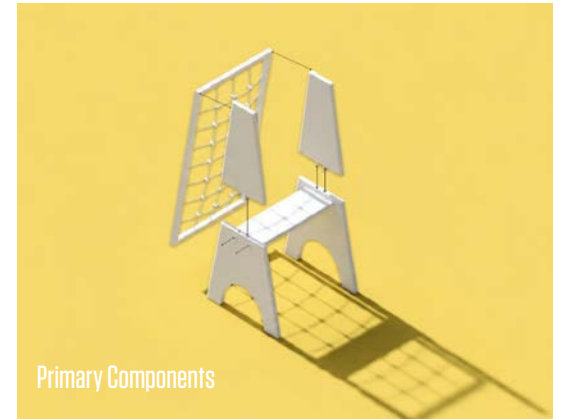




# Dean's Trust Ardwick and St Luke's C of E Primary School

## Phase 2: Temporary Modular Installations

This modular design is flexible, quick to assemble, and easy to disassemble. It is designed to suit both younger and older students through adaptable layouts and activities. The structure uses an A-frame system with timber rods that securely lock each unit in place for simple assembly. The modules can be integrated into the school street and later relocated for use elsewhere. Possible configurations include bike stations, football goals, tunnels, slides, climbing elements, and other play features.



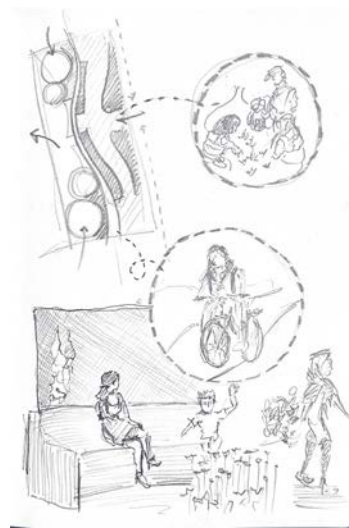
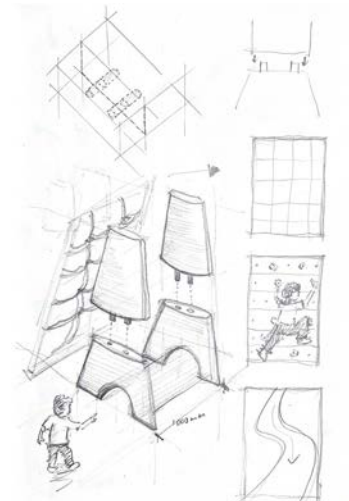


# Final Design Analysis

The final design proposals demonstrate how the School Streets Initiative can develop from temporary interventions into permanent, community-focused public spaces. Developed through a phased process of engagement, testing, and adaptation, the proposal responds directly to feedback gathered from pupils, parents, teachers, and local residents. The first and second proposed phases, of community engagement events and modular installations, allow the project to test how the street could be developed as a space focused on the pedestrians within the space rather than its only use as a vehicle route. The initial phases also amplify the sense of community in the sites while also building support and enthusiasm within the local community.

A key strength of the proposal is its adaptability and response to site specific constraints and needs. The engagement activities highlighted the importance of creating spaces that encourage interaction, creativity, and play. Simple interventions, such as chalk drawing activities, demonstrated how quickly children and adults adapted to using the street as a social and recreational space once traffic was removed. Observations from these events also revealed how parents were more likely to stop, interact, and spend time within the space when it felt safer and more welcoming.

Overall, the project demonstrates the potential for School Streets to become vibrant public spaces that prioritise safety, wellbeing, and community interaction over vehicular movement. Through gradual implementation and continuous engagement, the proposal presents a realistic and adaptable approach to creating healthier, safer and more people-centred streets around schools that encourage active travel routes to schools and emphasise the importance of community alongside this.



# Final Presentation



On the final day of the action week we were able to present to tutors, members of our cohort, and Mike Loughrey from the city council. The feedback received was positive with Mike discussing how he intends to move our proposals forward in the School Streets Initiative.

We feel the collaboration in this project has been incredibly beneficial for the members of our group. We are all incredibly proud of the work produced in this module and are extremely pleased with our outputs and teamwork within the group.

It has been an incredible experience to work with the School Streets Initiative and we look forward to seeing what they do next with the project. A big thank you to each member of the team in our MSA Live 26 group and again to the collaborators and members of the school community that helped us get the project to this point!

## 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:

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## BLOG

**[live.msa.ac.uk/2026](https://live.msa.ac.uk/2026)**

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