

msap
yearbook

a little more content

2012

MSA projects is a post-graduate design research unit at the Manchester School of Architecture.

Introduction

Manchester School of Architecture Projects [MSAp]

In a 21st century experiencing increasingly urbanized and aged populations; climate change and sustainability; austerity and ‘big society’, the question of how architecture contributes to social progress remains a central concern of contemporary practice. However, the traditional and prevalent accounts of the relationship between architecture and the ‘real’ of society are polarized between a reduction to an autonomous formal production connected only through cultural consumption or; the deluded functionality of behavioural determinism. Rem Koolhaas has, for example, recently declared that we are yet to establish ‘a plausible relationship between architecture and the social’.

We begin our exploration into this relationship between architecture and the social in the most plausible way - by connecting architects and ‘society’ - but this simple principle is only part of a developing methodology for architectural research practice which does not represent social relations as either a reductive formalism, or a restrictive functionalism but explicitly constructs them in a living - creative - enterprise.

Over the past six years, in collaboration with Manchester City Council, third sector organizations, and Manchester residents, we have developed principles and practices for inclusive urban design which address this relationship between the discipline of architecture and the society which commissions its products. As part of this methodology we aim to engage directly with a wide range of people involved in the city’s development - residents, policy makers and social agencies - and make ourselves open to be affected by these unusual meetings and encounters, using these engagements to develop ideas, inspirations and projects.

GMOMG

KEM ROOMKAAS

MSAP

NOT Contest

Projects For
A Shared City

ICST
Masterplanning

Sewage Works
Psychology

Allotment,
Anarchists

Job Centre
Pioneers

The Kids Are
All Riot

BOOK



ISBN 978-1-905476-61-9



9781905476619

Sharing the City

Not Content: Projects for a Shared City

The year began with the release of our book: 'Not content: Projects for a shared city.' the book illustrates the approach to architecture taken by the Manchester School of Architecture projects unit. The content includes documents articles and examples of work produced by the students and tutors. The wide range of projects and examples of work are all linked by the theme of 'Sharing the City' and discuss our engagement with local communities.

The book was published alongside a month long exhibition at CUBE gallery, Manchester, and the space was used to show films and undertake community engagement events as part of launching the 3rd year of the Sharing the City programme which this book documents.

The Sharing the City workshop was held on 30th of September and served as the introduction to the unit for new students as well as the first chance to practice community engagement techniques and to discuss architecture with a wide range of members of the public. The aim of the workshop was to share our architectural abilities and advance our knowledge of local communities as an opportunity to develop interests and contacts which could grow into the students personal projects.

Activities were curated to encourage public involvement. A large scale interactive map ran down the wall and across the floor. Participants were encouraged to walk, write and draw all over it expressing feelings about places where they lived worked and played. People also annotated which places they liked and disliked , whilst discussing the urban environments in which they live. A 'cool wall' was set up where participants could write or draw what makes them happy or unhappy, as well as a speed meeting exercise where we shared experiences in the city. Images overleaf.







Berlin Field Trip

31st October - 7th November 2011

Buro Happold Workshop

The workshop with Buro Happold took place in 7 hours, over two days during our study trip to Berlin. The aim was to learn from Buro Happold's masterplanning experience and to try our hand at generating masterplan ideas, as well as sharing our experience of community engagement with a design practice who might be able to implement it.

The workshop took place at the 'Innoz Platform' - the Innovation Centre for Mobility and Social Change. Specifically our task was to address the macro, meso and micro scales of the redevelopment of the Karma Triad in Russia - an economic triangle consisting of the cities of Berezniki, Solikamsk and Usolye. These cities had been significant mining towns but due to the shift in infrastructure and economy, it was becoming increasingly urgent to address their sense of place as well as the quality of life of the inhabitants.

In three groups, MSAp students examined the problem at three different scales of masterplanning, all with the view to establishing a sense of ownership in the towns, with a wider view to creating buildings and spaces with long-term social and economic value.

Buro Happold and Christian Kohl Architects are using our work in the continuing development of their masterplan.



Berlin Field Trip

31st October - 7th November 2011

Marzhan Tour and Community Meeting

After the first day of masterplanning with Buro Happold we met Sussanne Schnorbusch, an architect working closely with a specific community in Marzhan to improve their East German post-communist neighbourhood. Her achievements in a relatively poor area were very similar to what we were hoping to achieve in Berezniki – creating value and feelings of ownership.

Following on from interviews and workshops with the residents, Sussanne had been able to establish what was most important to the residents - which in this case was their communal garden - and then set about designing architectural proposals for the landscape between the high rise blocks. She was also continually taking her designs to the residents for their input, ensuring that they really used the space and got value for money.

< Images from the Marzhan tour and community meeting with Sussanne Schnorbusch.



Methodology

The Methods of MSAp Students

"It is necessary to construct a plausible relationship between architecture and the social" Rem Koolhaas

The unit believes that architecture can contribute towards change and progress at a local and global level, but in order to do so we believe the role of the architect needs to shift away from typical top-down processes where the architect acts as a ‘hero’, but use more collaborative approaches, and act more as a mediator. We think there is a tendency amongst many architects, especially high profile starchitects and architecture schools, to distance themselves from real life political, social or environmental problems, and instead retreat into “playing contemplative games”, to quote Manfredo Tafuri.

In MSAp, we actively engage with our environment and the people who live in it, to explore ways in which we can influence the future of Manchester to be more accessible to people of all ages and occupations. With the construction of events and situations held around the city, our unit takes a theoretical position based around the concept of affect, affection which can described in two directions. Firstly, we open our projects up to be affected, thereby influencing our design decisions to affect our architecture. Secondly, we share our architectural ideas and propositions back to the people that affected us, thereby affecting them and influencing the inhabitants of Manchester and its policies.

Year 5

Bachelor of Architecture [Year 1/2]

Manchester School of Architecture Projects [MSAp] was set up in 2005 to develop architectural projects with a life outside of the school. Each year around 25 post-graduate [BArch] architecture students develop collaborative projects which examine the potential of architecture and urban design to affect issues of social equality. The BArch course lasts two years following a first, three year Degree in architecture [BA] and a year in practice. The students are therefore referred to as Year 5 and Year 6 and generally develop design methodologies and research in Year 5 and produce more resolved building proposals in Year 6.



Student Projects:

Jemie Ejekam

Revo-youth-tion | Scott Bearman
Sports, Technology + Art | Simon Bottomley
Art made Public | Hannah Dixon
Dyslexic Friendly City | Francesca Fernandes
Sensitive City | Sophie Heaford
LETS Grow Moss Side | Tiago Luxton
Something to Chew On | Emma Rayner
Skills Sharing | Hyo sik pyo
Visit Brunswick | Stephanos Spirakis
Spaces of Ownership | Rachael Wakeham



Hyosik Pyo



Scott Bearman



Simon Bottomley



Hannah Dixon



Francesca Fernandes



Sophie Heaford



Tiago Luxton



Emma Rayner



Stephanos Spirakis



Rachael Wakeham



Revo-youth-tion

Scott Bearman

The media is constantly portraying how ‘out of touch’ our government is with the general public and falling voting figures suggests that people are taking less of an interest in politics than ever before. Riots and protests in Manchester highlight the dissatisfaction of the people of Manchester but the participants are branded ‘disaffected youths.’ The growing gulf between MPs and the general public seems to be growing despite the rise of media technology which allows us to become more engaged with politics than ever before. In Manchester the voting turnouts for general elections is the lowest in the whole of the UK.

To address this problem, the younger generation has to be introduced to politics before they reach 18. Critically, they need to be listened to and their views taken into account which is one of the main drives behind the setting up of Manchester City’s Youth Council. The project centred around a masterplan of the Town Hall Quarter in Manchester which encouraged the public to become more engaged in the decision making in their city and open up the Council buildings. The focus of many of the elements of the masterplan is to draw people through the buildings and break down the barriers between councillors and the general public. A Youth Hub is proposed in order to give young people a place within the city centre and a positive face at the Town Hall. This is supplemented by the development of a Youth Council Headquarters giving young people a place to discuss issues affecting them and run campaigns.



Sports, Technology + Art

Simon Bottomley

In March 2011, the Council cut all funding for Youth Programs and clubs, with youth workers told to 'shut up shop' without informing any of their members. It is widely believed that the council did this in order to prevent any kind of petitioning or fight back. Subsequently the members of these clubs were forced onto the street with little to do within and around the city centre.

In August 2011, Manchester, as with London and other areas of England saw itself under a 'reign of terror' as the UK riots took hold for a fortnight. Although not directly linked with Youth Club closure, this highlighted the lack of activities and the rise of Gang Culture within the younger generations, particularly in more deprived areas of England.

Through analysis of critical texts surrounding the project, precedent analysis from other major cities around the UK and Europe, and talking with my target audience a brief was established to combat this lack of youth orientated programming within the city centre. Through these key research methodologies and community engagement, the brief for a Sport, Technology and Art based approach to solve this exclusion was created.

The Technological aspect of the proposal would act as a banner to advertise the youth orientated programmes available within the City Centre and its surrounding areas, with Smartphone applications and touch screen technology proposed. The non-places created alongside and under the Mancunian Way were proposed to be transformed into recreational areas for Sports such as Football, Tennis, Skateboarding and Rock Climbing, whilst an Arts Centre was designed for a site by Piccadilly Gardens.



OPEN

The 'entrance' to the exhibition is completely open, and with wide, tapering breaks in the walls invites people to come and wonder around.

PAINTINGS

The informal 'dotted' about of the 2D work allows for easy, leisurely viewing and breaks away entirely from the stuffy museum/gallery stereotype.

THE EXHIBITION

PERFORMANCE

The stage area will host local musicians through-out the day.

GRAFFITI WALL

People will be invited to contribute to the interactive graffiti wall. This may be installed a day or so earlier to allow time for people to add to it.

INSTALLATIONS

The installations will be experiential in nature, and will vary in terms of enclosure, lights, materials, etc according to each artist specification.

COURTYARD

Hanging an event area in the centre of the exhibition will provide space for activities and external installations and interaction.

MARKET AREA

There will be some stalls provided, and the exhibition is laid out to address the existing stalls creating a lively market atmosphere.

Art made Public

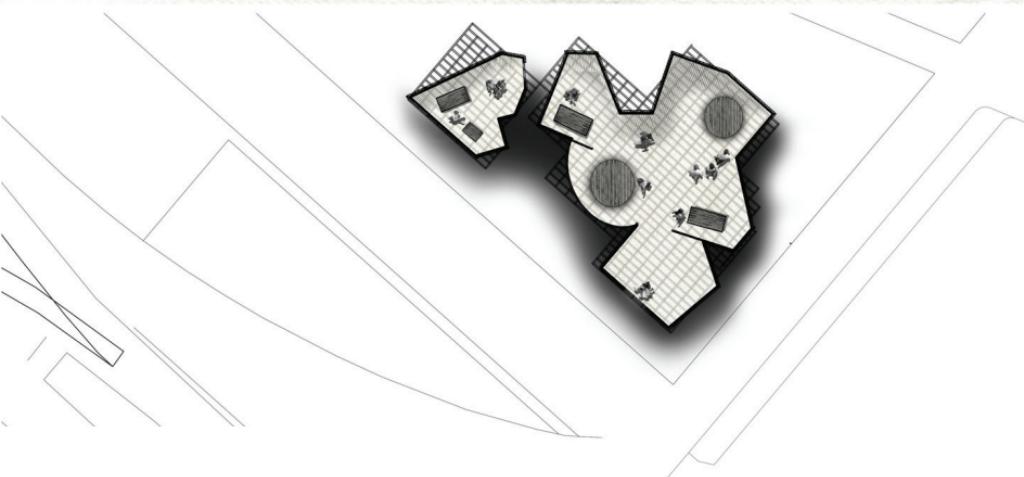
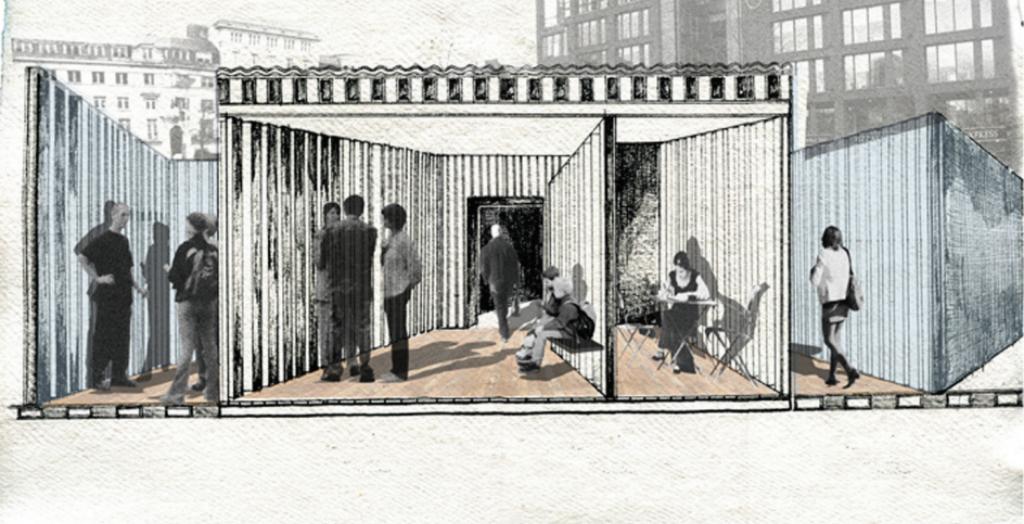
Hannah Dixon

Through conversations with local charity groups and residents it was suggested that Moss Side and Hulme exist as a ‘fractured community’, and that this could impact negatively on the inclusion and support awarded to young people in the area.

There are a wealth of existing vibrant community groups and buildings scattered about the area, but they are broken up by under-utilised buildings and disused sites marked for development. Reclaiming these spaces by introducing local ‘high streets’ will redirect attention from the parkway that divides the area at present and encourage a sense of local identity. This will create a plethora of public spaces, providing opportunity for informal interaction, breaking down barriers and promoting understanding and tolerance.

We aim to host an external art exhibition at the central point in the scheme, Hulme Market Place. The exhibition will hold two and three dimensional experiential artwork, which will be complimented by the sculptural structure in which it is housed. The activities will include market stalls, musicians and artists’ workshops, creating a lively atmosphere that is completely accessible.

Students, charities and local residents will all be invited to help assemble the structure, and the construction techniques will therefore be appropriately simple. The mixture of a variety of people from different backgrounds and organisations will help break down the barriers that can lead to prejudice and a fear of the unknown. After the event the structure will be disassembled and stored, ready for the next location. The scheme will become an asset of the community’s, who will then be able to take control of the subsequent events.

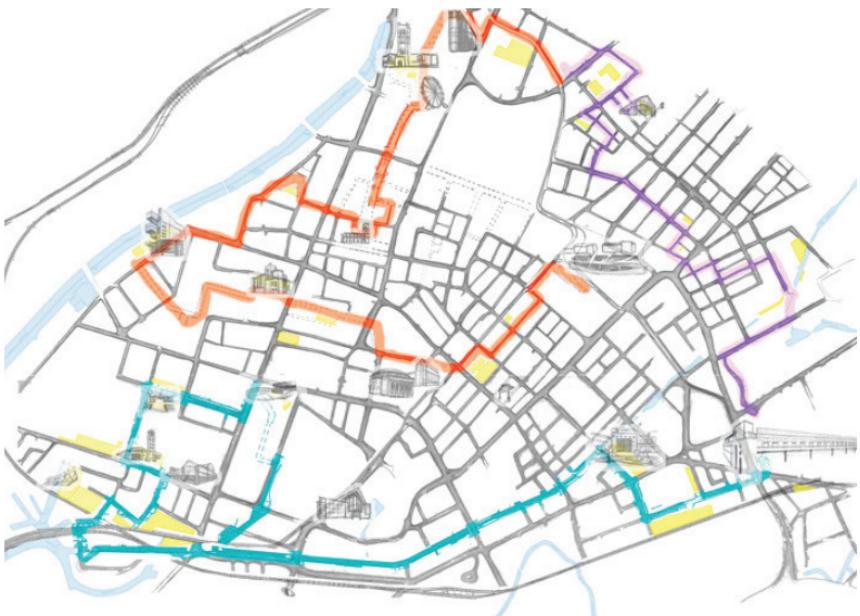


Dyslexic Friendly City

Francesca Fernandes

My project was called mymanchester.co.uk as I believe that through embodying MSA-P ethos we create a city that citizens feel is their own. Spurred on by a conversation with a dyslexic gentleman at the 'Sharing the city' workshop, the main aim of my project was transform Manchester into a 'Dyslexic Friendly City' but without making drastic changes to the urban fabric. I wanted to highlight the problems of confusion in the city for this group of society and pinpoint the real factors that create confusion and lead all kinds of citizens to get lost within the city centre. I also wanted to investigate a 'boundary' that may exist and seek to design implements and architectural interventions that would solve this 'problem'.

I looked into temporary and portable architecture to find interesting ways to engage the wider public with issues of dyslexia by creating an advertisement through the event of the portable unit being installed and used. I then went on to look at the idea of a 'kit of parts' and something changeable and easily transformed to create something unique that unskilled people could get involved in. During this process I went on to design a set of implements that would help the portable unit to be successful and most importantly be used by the subject group. I thought of creating implements that could be used in any city and would be detailed in a guide that I created to send out to councils nationwide. The final proposal is a combination of the two ideas and all the implements and the design of the portable 'ListenLAB' come together to create a 'Dyslexic Friendly City Kit of Parts'.



Sensitive City

Sophie Heaford

My project is about autism and the built environment. It is contextually specific to Manchester but the principles are pertinent to any city. The project explores the way in which a city can be adapted to increase accessibility for people who can be overwhelmed by the hectic, noisy environment.

The nature of autism requires spaces that are quieter with fewer people and controlled environmental conditions. Guidelines are currently being developed to improve educational institutes and I think it is important to expand these to a larger, urban scale. Every stage of this project was influenced by people who support or are related to people with autism. Their personal experiences and understanding greatly enhanced my research into the scientific aspects of the condition.

The outcome of the project was a guidebook to Manchester that created peaceful routes and injected spaces of calm into the city. The interventions for these spaces responded to different sensory experiences that affect the majority of people on the autistic spectrum.

The main sensory issue is often sound, but I also experimented with light, colour and texture. Inspirational precedents for these spaces included natural and spiritual spaces, as well as sensory rooms, which are used both to stimulate and calm. I hope to finalise the guidebook in response to feedback so it could be used by supporters, carers, family and people with autism.



LETS Grow Moss Side

Tiago Luxton

The matrix of various art forms inspired rhetoric of community activism sustainability and undoing unjust hierarchies of power within society. This ideological framework led me to research LETS, Local Exchange and Trading Schemes. As mutual-aid community currency systems they seek to re-organise economic relations within society, particularly useful in deprived and disillusioned urban communities as means of fighting uneven global market forces. Systems in the past have failed in underprivileged communities, mainly due to lack of support and technological limitations. Through this research, I realised that without a good source of local production, a particularly deprived urban locality such as Moss Side would not be able to sustain a closed-loop community currency, leading to 'currency-cycle malfunctions' (when a shop or service is introduced into the system, builds up credits too fast and cannot spend them fast enough), one of the pivotal factors in collapsing the once 600 strong Manchester LETS.

I started looking at the disused and neglected public spaces in Moss Side, which incited engagement with the Local Urban Gardening Group. We held a number of events and meetings regarding the Carnforth site. Time constraints due to working with the council and the local primary school, meant that I was only able to be involved (plans, model and an arboricultural study) in the initial stages of the on-going projects. Time-scale prompted me to propose a full Urban Agriculture Masterplan for Moss Side, consisting of 8 other sites. Depending on the size and location of the sites spaces were transformed into small-scale community gardens or larger urban farms. Forms where driven by readily available construction materials, such as recycled pallets and beer barrels from the local Hydes brewery that is closing down.



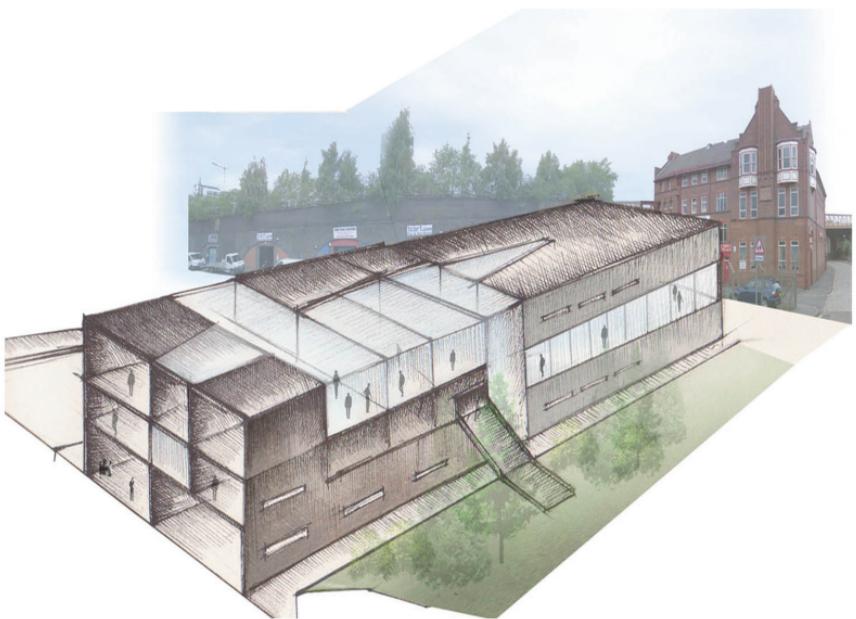
Something to Chew On

Emma Rayner

This project questions the relationship between Manchester United Football Club and the area of Old Trafford. Football clubs often represent specific places; usually being named after the local area within which they are situated. They can be of great personal and social significance and can even create a 'love of place' relationship. However, there is currently confusion about what football clubs are for and whose interests they serve. The days when a football club could convincingly claim to be at the heart of the local community are over.

Through consultation with a number of local residents and community groups, it became apparent that many local people felt a disconnection between MUFC and the community and that any impact the club had on them was principally negative. Old Trafford today is among the 4% most deprived areas in the country, characterised by high levels of unemployment, low incomes, poor health, poor education and high ethnic diversity.

Through interaction with various members of the community I gained an understanding of their needs and desires. The significance of food across cultures, its ability to bring people together and the potential for sharing knowledge between various groups became apparent. In talking to the community dietician, I also learnt that Old Trafford is considered an area of health inequality and has high rates of heart disease and diabetes - diet is an important risk factor. Working with the people of Old Trafford, the project looks at promoting healthy eating through the design of a space where local food can be distributed, processed, shared, celebrated and used as the basis for cookery classes.



Skills Sharing

Hyosik Pyo

The project was inspired by my critical reading of ‘Working Class Manchester’ by Friedrich Engels which led me to travel where the text described. Researching the Angel meadow area as well as employing community engagement, I realised that the Angel Meadow community was completely isolated from the adjacent communities due to physical and cultural boundaries. Through numerous engagements with small businesses and local residents around Strangeways, Collyhurst and Angel Meadow, I identified issues of isolated business and resident communities and I tried to propose a realistic solution through this year’s project.

There are Strangeways and Collyhurst employment areas, which have a prominent industrial character, forming their own community without frequent reach out to the public. Angel Meadow itself and the area to the North-West are transforming into a modern residential area with active regeneration projects in progress and the South part of Angel Meadow is gradually being incorporated into the city centre. I subsequently came up with the concept of community connection, using the original characteristics of locality such as the environment, people, place and culture. Once I realised the potential for mutual benefits and a strong community stemming from the concept of connecting businesses and students by creating space for education, I prepared a proposal of linking local businesses, students and local residents by facilitating learning opportunities for students who want to gain or improve new skills using the experience and knowledge of the local business experts. My final proposal is to create space where the diverse community groups from Strangeways, Collyhurst, Angel Meadow as well as the City Centre can interact with each other by sharing skills through using the benefits of existing environment.



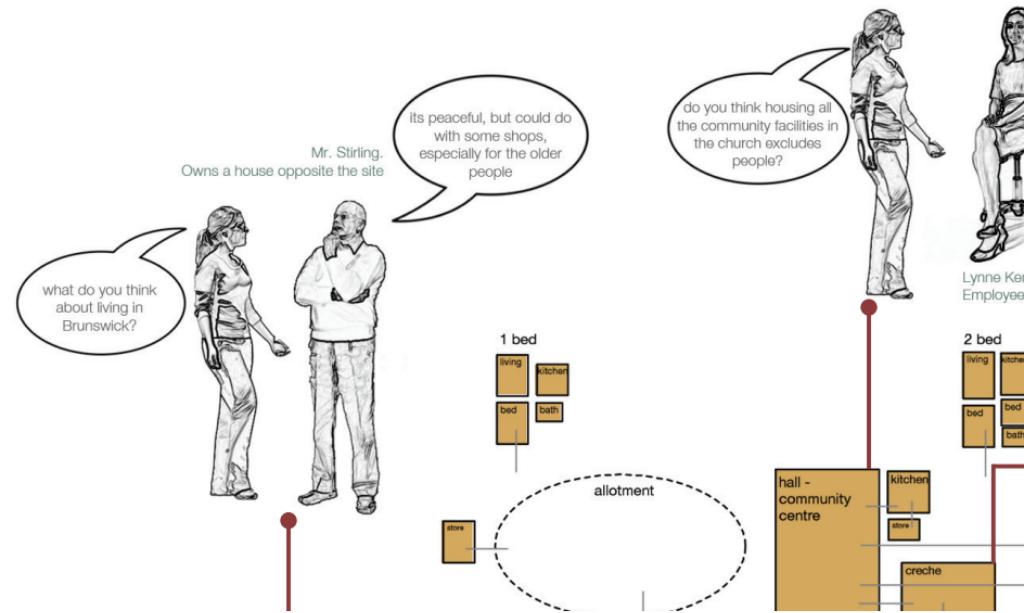
Visit Brunswick: Community Place Identity

Stephanos Spirakis

Brunswick Housing Estate is located directly South of Manchester's Gateway; Piccadilly Station. Characterised by the Radburn layout and the separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation, Brunswick suffers from underused, unsafe and unsanitary public space. In the wave of regeneration taking place in Manchester over the last two decades, Brunswick is next in facing drastic change, having been granted a private funding initiative for the improvement of the existing housing stock.

Shifting the focus towards public space, the Visit Brunswick project has been developed through a series of community engagement exercises carried out with the Tenants and Residents Association, The Friends of Gartside Gardens and the Parents of children attending Medlock Primary School. The proposal is a collection and consideration of how local residents have been affected by the space in which they live, their desires and aspirations about the future.

The Masterplan proposes a series of inclusive public spaces which encompass the amenities that will anchor the residents in an area of their choice such as the High Street, the Open Air Market and the Community Garden; whilst it identifies the opportunity to rediscover the estate's significant -yet forgotten- history by uncovering the remainders of Britain's First Dissenter's Burial Ground, just meters under the surface of Gartside Gardens. In so doing, Brunswick Estate reconnects with the city, acting as an extension of the Ardwick Heritage Trail and offering itself as a legible, safe and inviting environment for visitors and residents alike, encouraging healthy living, outdoor learning and intergenerational activity.



Creating Spaces of Ownership

Rachael Wakeham

The project focused around exploring and reducing physical and perceived barriers that exist within the city. I studied two areas affected by boundaries, but both with very different levels of social cohesion. By working in Hulme, an area with a strong sense of community I was able to transfer some of the ideas that made the place so socially strong to the part of the project located in Ardwick. Ardwick contains very few local amenities, such as shops, cafes, pubs and suffers from a transient population, causing social fracture.

The project discovered that barrier spaces were formed by places of non-ownership, usually abandoned spaces, of which no part of society feels belongs to them. The master plan created for Ardwick addressed this space of non-ownership, by creating the lacking local and social amenities within the area. It aimed to be a place that could feel owned by both the local population, the university and people from the city.

Throughout the project I looked into the concept of third space, the meeting spaces, such as bookshops, pubs, and cafes etc, which create and strengthen social groups. The Ardwick side of the project aimed to produce third space, whereas the Hulme side acted to use existing third spaces, such as the Zion Arts Centre, to create further local support systems. Within Hulme I worked with the Dyslexia foundation to promote a new support group, by participating in, and producing a film for a launch event, I was able to learn the value of the third space, as a place where any member of the community can come and feel welcome. There is a natural ownership between the community and the spaces they inhabit. This is what the project aimed to bring to Ardwick.

Year 6

Bachelor of Architecture [Year 2/2]

Student Projects:

Homes for Heroes | Rachel Bourne
Saving Levenshulme Baths | Ian Burnett
The Heathens' Centre | Hayley Chivers
The Birley Project | Edward Cutler
Evolution of Consciousness | Robert Glass
Chorlton for all Ages | Matthew Hargreaves
RegenExpo | Natalie Harris
The Transitions Centre | Emily Hale
Building the Big Society | Nadia Khalifeh
Sharing the Body | Anna Meredith
Sharing Culture | Grace Pang
The Travelling Society | Debora Stahlberg
Advice Centre for Women's Issues | Kathryn Timmins



Rachael Bourne



Robert Glass



Nadia Khalifeh



Anna Meredith



Ian Burnett



Hayley Chivers



Edward Cutler



Matthew Hargreaves



Natalie Harris



Emily Hale



Grace Pang



Debora Stahlberg



Kathryn Timmins



Homes for Heroes

Rachel Bourne

Housing and welfare support for ex-service personal vulnerable to homelessness. 80000 people sleep on the streets every night and 1 in 10 of these are ex-service personnel.

The project is based around a programme of deinstitutionalisation, enabling those leaving the armed forces to re-adapt back into 'normal life' upon leaving the armed forces. Providing accommodation, health and welfare support, education and re-skilling schemes leading to future employment and independent living.

Located in Barracks Park, a residential area of Hulme, in Manchester, an ideal location close to the City Centre and local amenities. The centre will operate as regional as well as local support center.

The process of design was achieved by developing a series of sketch models and emotive collages concentrating on how people will interact with the spaces, the atmosphere and emotion, public and private, materiality and use of light and shadow. These models were developed from concept stage and integrated into the final design of the building.

The final building is based around two main courtyards with the temporary accommodation central to the site overlooking both courtyards, with the public flexible areas located at the front of the building, and the ordered and functional activities, of the doctors and physiotherapy, based at the back of the site. The long stay accommodation block is situated behind the main building to provide separation and independence for the residents.



Saving Levenshulme Baths

Ian Burnett

In February 2011, Levenshulme Baths faced closure and demolition. At the fear of losing such a valuable local amenity, the community were forced to unite, organise and act in protest. As a result, Levenshulme Baths were spared by the council. The council later announced that Levenshulme would receive a new swimming facility; however it was likely to be a completely new building along Stockport Road. This would come at the expense and demolition of the existing building, a much treasured baths which was soon to celebrate its 80th birthday.

Working alongside the local community, I have designed an alternative solution. This option looks to conserve and reorganise as much of the existing building as possible, with an additional extension that encourages better use the local playing fields. The new build extension houses any spaces sacrificed in the reorganisation of the existing building, whilst offering extra facilities such as a modern sized swimming pool as well as a new gym, sauna and community space.

I have worked closely with The Levenshulme Community Association on this project. I have attended and presented at several meetings held every three months at the Library opposite the baths. These meetings have offered a platform from which I could present and try out my ideas to an engaging and well informed audience. The experience has connected me to a whole array of people and we were able to form a sub-group which met more regularly to discuss key design decisions.

The process concluded with an exhibition in Levenshulme where the design possibilities were presented back to the public. The focus of the exhibition was accessibility, not to enforce a design but present an insight into what could be achieved using the existing building. It provided local people with the opportunity to visualise and power to decide what they wanted from a swimming facility in their local area.



The Heathens' Centre

Hayley Chivers

Miles Platting and Newton Heath are two post-industrial towns in North East of Manchester whose residents suffer higher unemployment, shorter life expectancy and poorer quality of life than other Mancunians. Following extensive research into the inter-related and self-perpetuating causes of local deprivation – including consultation meetings with NHS officers, local councillors and active residents’ groups – my Heathens’ masterplan proposes a network of social care, health services and economic opportunity to encourage residents of both towns to better engage with the beneficial resources available to them, helping them to improve their own quality of existence.

At the centre of this masterplan is the Heathens’ Healthy Living Centre, which embodies and represents the aims of the wider regeneration. Although the centre appears externally to be several smaller buildings it is one whole; it uses this deception to shelter users from the scrutiny of others, allowing them to ‘disguise’ their approach and removing social stigmas which currently prevent people from accessing resources they desperately need.

The Heathens’ Centre confronts issues of territory in the ward by responding to the context either side of the site’s problematic infrastructure and forming a ‘bridge’ across, helping residents to engage with each other and the resources within. The Heathens’ Centre’s huge programme has been designed at a human scale – linking individual residents to wider authorities. The ceramic and concrete façade ties the building to the ward’s manufacturing past, creating a stronger sense of place and representing the best possible version of the existing environment.



The Birley Project

Edward Cutler

"We have to recognise that human flourishing, it's not a mechanical process; it's an organic process. And you cannot predict the outcome of human development. All you can do is (like a farmer) create the conditions under which they will begin to flourish." Sir Ken Robinson

Hulme and Moss Side have amongst the highest school attendance rates and academic attainment in Manchester. However, the area also has a high and growing number of 16-24 year old NEETs and subsequently elevated numbers of Job Seekers Allowance claimants. Coupled with local opposition to the imminent arrival MMU's new Birley Fields campus, there is seemingly a barrier to education and personal development beyond leaving school.

The Birley Project endeavours to break down this barrier, empowering all members of the community regardless of age or background, to feel pride in, and develop a sound foundation for, life-long learning. As a co-operative between The Workers' Educational Association, Children's University and Connexions Youth Services, the scheme provides a platform for intergenerational learning, personal support and new enterprise.

Large flexible spaces allow for a large range of informal learning groups to gather simultaneously, and cross-collaboration is actively encouraged throughout the shared space. Working gardens to the rear of the building not only provide edible plants to a training kitchen and aromatic plants to an essential oil extraction lab, but also an intergenerational learning and support opportunity between WEA learners and young people from Connexions. Informality, comfort and collaboration are key themes in this non-institutional building.



Evolution of Consciousness

Robert Glass

As technology is becoming increasingly advanced there is an opportunity to facilitate this into designing towards a more sensory driven nature. As DDA requirements depict how, say, thresholds should be modified with detection modules and succinct signage; there is nothing that suggests the actual design of a space. Through the use of light and sound, buildings can become much more exciting and personal in exploration. For disabled people having spaces that are visually stimulating can promote reaction and joy, this in turn will mean for able visitors the experience is much more exciting.

My fascination through this project has been towards the promotion of music towards people with sensory disadvantage. Taking the knowledge from collaborating with deaf communities and testing how sound can be felt or seen on a visual level has led me to certain design solutions.

The building itself, consists of two main areas; to the east are facilities for production of technological advancements in sensory design. The west side is a promoting tool for these developments. These two programmed spaces are surrounded by an enclosed concourse that connects each floor leading to a vast roof garden. Openness within the building provides a free flow of air which creates a gratified sense of freshness within, with large voids where circulation is creating a connection between technology and nature. The middle of the buildings is a large internal garden with sensory orchards creating a flow from programme to relation space throughout.



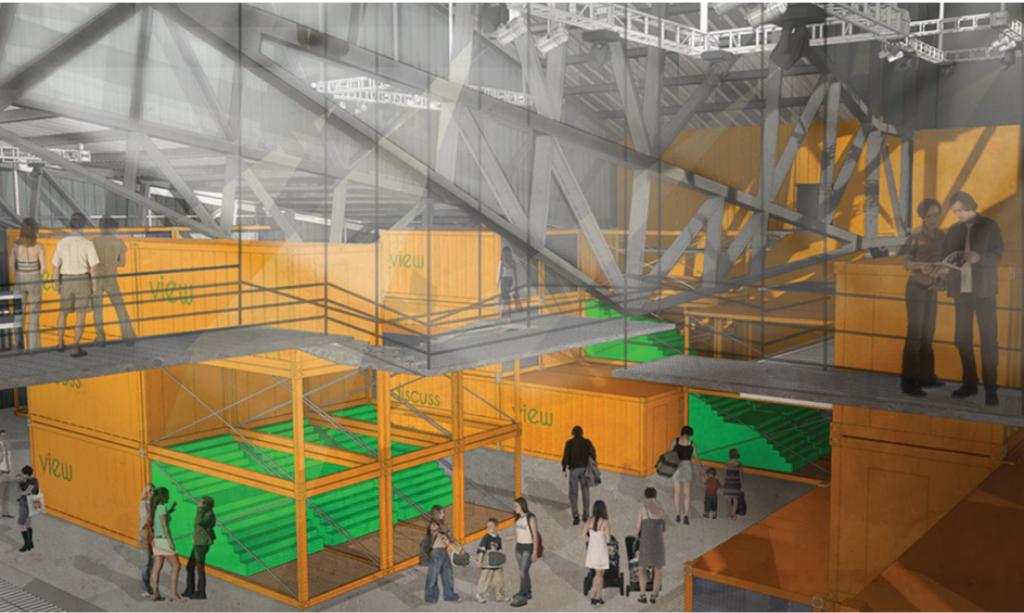
Chorlton for all Ages

Matthew Hargreaves

This project began from an initial meeting I had with Valuing Older People, a division of Manchester City Council, as in 2010 they were successful in their application for Manchester to be granted Age Friendly City status and wished to collaborate with local partners, including architecture students, to develop an understanding of what an Age Friendly Manchester actually means, with the Manchester ward of Chorlton being chosen to develop these ideas further.

This project has been to develop proposals for Chorlton District Centre focussing on the needs of age groups that are often excluded by design processes, i.e. older and younger people, to design a scheme that is as accessible as possible, with the aim of developing a better understanding of the Age-Friendly city concept for Manchester, and to help VOP in making a case for the Chorlton District Centre regeneration.

My design transforms the heart of Chorlton from an outdated 1970s shopping precinct and overbearing office block, into a vibrant mixed-use community function environment and public civic centre. Although the site still remains a predominantly retail environment, a number of additional buildings and spaces are provided in response to my initial site analysis and literature review to make it a more accessible environment for people of all ages. The interconnected nature of the internal and external spaces has been designed to promote the idea of Intergenerational Design, a concept that derives from analysis of my public consultation events, bringing generations together to create a more cohesive community.



RegenExpo

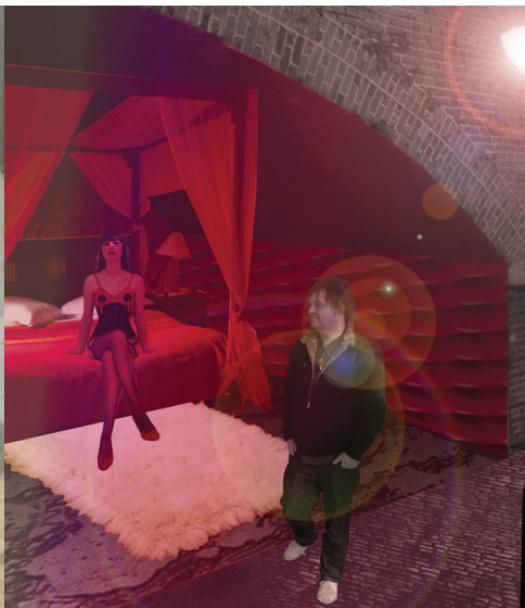
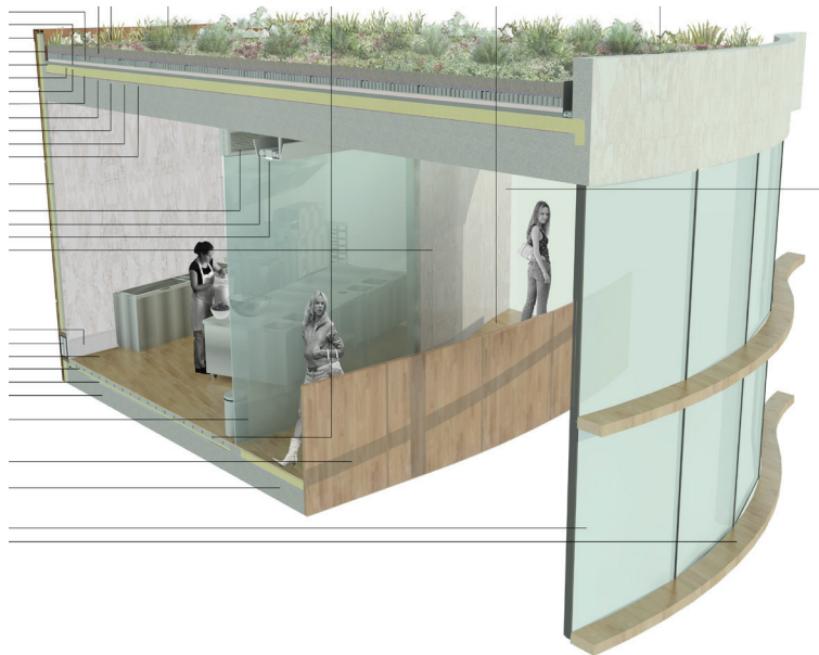
Natalie Harris

Regen Expo is a site that exemplifies, explores and questions the process of regeneration whilst acting locally as a regeneration tool within the Oldham Road and Ancoats Urban Village area of Manchester through providing a social knowledge base for the local community.

A series of “vision boxes” form the main exhibition allowing people to experience a range of regeneration projects, visualise the original brief, voice their opinion and track the status of the project . This creates a feedback loop that enables people to see and learn from both the successes and failures.

This exhibition space also provides facilities such as a lecture theatre, workshop space and in house studios to involve the local community and help promote a relationship between the public and professionals in this field of work. The programme also includes a local market and the reopening of the local pub – The Smith’s Arms as a way to provide facilities to the local residents as well as for visitors, promoting local businesses and products.

The site provides a perfect backdrop for learning and experiencing what Manchester has to offer. Surrounded by regeneration schemes such as New Islington and Miles Platting this site is in the centre of the action. It also promotes Manchester’s mill town heritage and gives an insight into Manchester’s industrial past – something Manchester should be proud of.



The Transitions Centre

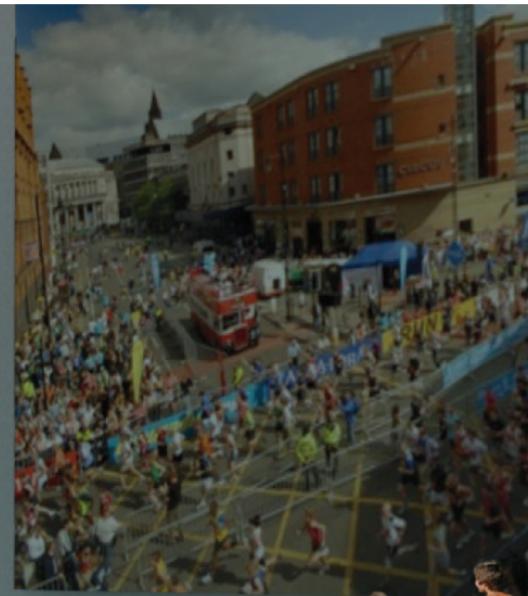
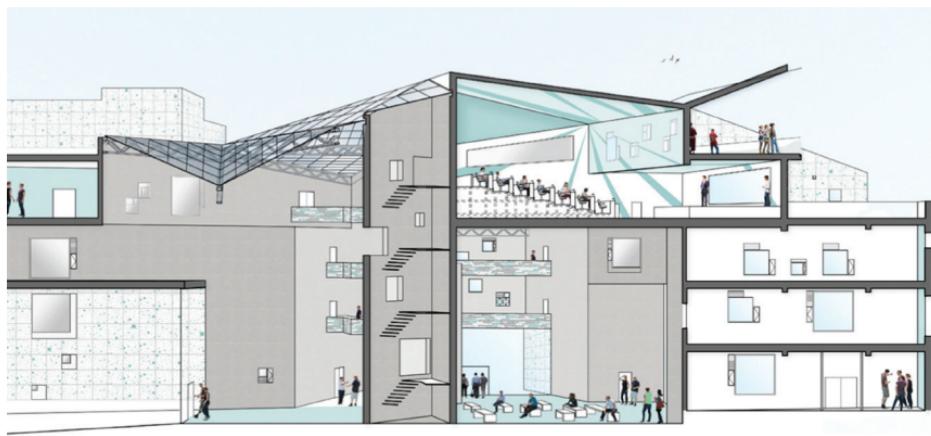
Emily Hale

My project responds to many of the complex and multiple needs of female street sex workers in Manchester. The project arose after learning that since the economic downturn, homelessness and street prostitution in the UK has drastically increased, with more chaotic and vulnerable women walking the streets than ever before to make ends meet.

The project primarily responds to issues and needs highlighted by Manchester Action on Street Health, as well as two major reports: 'Tackling street prostitution: Towards an holistic approach' by the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, and 'Off the streets: Tackling homelessness among female sex workers' by Shelter. The Transitions Centre provides a number of services to facilitate the transition of these women out of homelessness and street prostitution.

The Centre is based in Ardwick; one of Manchester's most deprived wards. Around 50% of the female sex workers that Manchester Action on Street Health see are homeless, and approximately 98% have addictions to alcohol and/or drugs. Along with other issues such as poor health, mental illness and low self-esteem, these women are most in need of help.

The Transitions Centre offers a safe sex workplace to these women, as I believe that should be a basic human right, and these women shouldn't be criminalised and forced onto the back streets, which is dangerous for the women and damaging to local communities. The Centre also offers food, medical and dental assistance, rehabilitation, therapy, education and job training, legal and social assistance, and, most importantly, short and long term accommodation to female sex workers, in a supportive community.



Building the Big Society

Nadia Khalifeh

The current economic crisis has brought about a range of government policy changes, these policy changes have resulted cuts, protests and riots. One of the key policy changes, the one that I chose to look more intensely at was the “Big Society Agenda” which is essentially using charity groups and community organisations to outsource responsibility and ultimately control. The 32 wards in Manchester have a very diverse range of people and a diverse range of third sector organisations.

There are 1590 charities within these wards of which only a small number are connected to each other. The Charity Hub, located on the edge of Albert Square aims to connect charities to each other providing a physical base to which they can be traced back to and be held accountable from. It offers a connection between the public and charities to fulfil a feedback loop and offers a base from which the government can outsource to charity, placing much needed money and security into the sector.

The building consists of five key spaces; offices for start-up and management, workshops to enable sharing of knowledge amongst the sector and lecture theatres to give larger talks and provide governance space for the third sector. Two of the other key spaces are public spaces; the Manchester Charity Map and the screening space, both of which enable a feedback loop, which is currently missing. The building aims to be a refreshing and dynamic space within the city centre with a façade generated from Charity statistics.

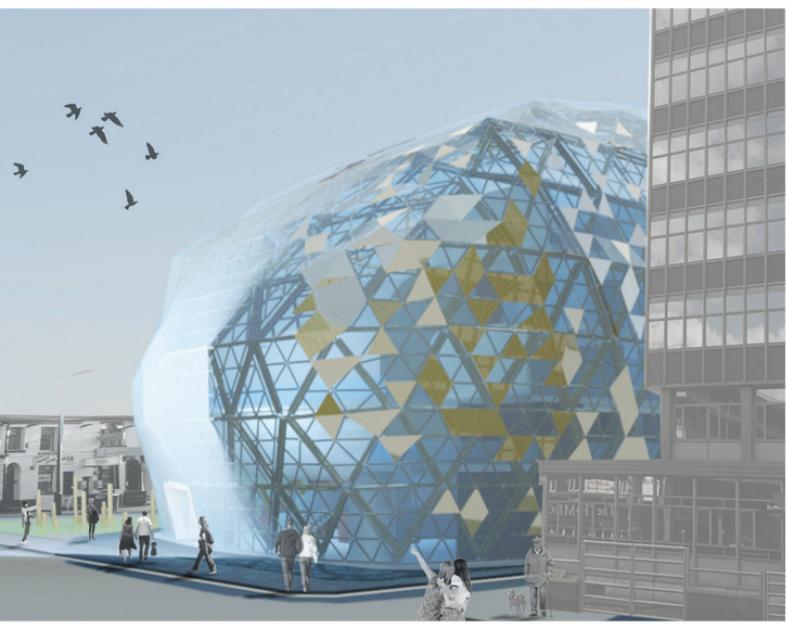


Sharing the Body

Anna Meredith

With shockingly low rates of organ, blood and bone marrow donation across the country, this project aims to encourage more people to become donors. Extensive research into the three types of donation identified three key questions; Is it known about? Is it thought about? Is it talked about? In response to this, the building provides space for education, space for consideration and spaces for discussion as well as the spaces for actual donation.

In order to recruit as many new donors as possible the building was located on the busy commuter route between Piccadilly train station and Manchester city centre, with a unique tiled rubber façade to attract the attention of passers-by. Inside the building, an atrium separates services from the key programme space, preventing an overall clinical feel. The atrium allows for natural light and ventilation, as well as providing strong visual links between floors, breaking visual and mental barriers of donation. These links are further emphasised by split floor heights creating a circulation spiral, which draws users further into the building and the process of donation. Forcing different user groups together highlights the various emotions attached to the issue, and this emotion will be used to encourage more donors. The blood donation space avoids clinical sterility, and provides a social activity space where donors can be playing video games or socializing whilst donating. Educating the population and taking away much of the associated negative stigma, my building aims to be a prototype for raising the rates of donation within Manchester.



Sharing Culture

Grace Pang

Although our society has progressed and modernized rapidly since the industrial period, one aspect of it has still to be matured, and that is the issue of racism. Racism is still embedded in our society, in forms such as segregation within the communities, work places or schools between the different races; verbal or physical abuse; or riots built up from tensions between the races. Architecture plays a big part in racism, as poorly planned urban spaces can encourage racism and segregation.

“...The spatial arrangements of our buildings and communities reflect and reinforce the nature of gender, race, and class relations in society. The uses of both language and space contribute to the power of some groups over others and the maintenance of human inequality.”

L. K. Weisman, 1994

This project looks at the relationships between the English and the Chinese population in Manchester, providing a space that will bridge the gap between the English and Chinese communities, helping the Chinese to integrate into the English communities, and educating the English about the beauty of Chinese culture, so that they can appreciate the Chinese who are integrating into their circles.

The site for this project is located between Chinatown and Canal Street, in the hope of creating a heart that is missing in Chinatown, just outside of Chinatown. The building is a symbol of integration, with its structures, form, materials and internal arrangement designed with the concept of “integration between the Chinese and English”. Gradients of opacity at façade level increase the porosity of the building, with the extended site design reaching into the local community to encourage interaction and engagement.



The Travelling Society

Debora Stahlberg

Gypsies and travellers in England have had increased media coverage over the years, despite their meagre population of approximately 300 000. The recent media coverage of the Dale Farm evictions in October 2011 and the 2009 Channel 4 Documentary *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* have placed these communities in the public eye.

However, there exists a level of hostility between members of the 'gypsy' and the 'settled' populations. The gypsy and traveller culture and traditionally nomadic lifestyle sets them apart from mainstream society, causing tension due to cultural differences.

Many of the social problems created between the 'gypsy' and 'settled' communities are due to preconceived ideas rather than from personal experience. Studies show that tolerance levels improve with increased contact. A national annual event, Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month aims to exhibit Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman history and culture to the public.

The site for architectural interventions to this social issue is on former industrial land adjacent to the Duchy Road Caravan Site in Salford. It is the largest legal gypsy and traveller caravan site in the northwest of England, and featured in the *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* documentary. New and existing buildings would house Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month events for the northwest region, whilst also operating all year round, encouraging interaction and education between the local gypsy and settled communities. Buildings on the site include a Gypsy Roma Traveller Cultural Events Centre, an Equestrian Centre, a Boxing Gym and a Metalwork Workshop.



Advice Centre for Women's Issues

Kathryn Timmins

"Just as language does not reduce to what you find in a dictionary or grammar book, a building is more than the lump of stuff that occupies its footprint..... it extends outwards into its physical surrounding which in turn reach back into it." MUF architects

The project explores exchanges within the city, and the effects that the modern structure of families and the permitted levels of interactions with the urban context, have had on these. Developed from a series of investigations, the study focuses primarily on these exchanges regarding advice and support for women's issues and the people affected by them – male and female. Women go through similar physical and emotional life experiences, such as pregnancy, menopause etc, and there is an opportunity for women to share and exchange their advice concerning these.

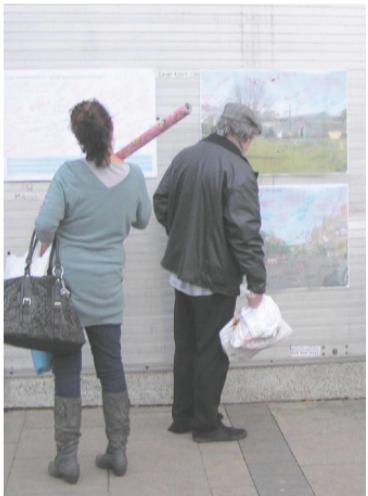
Located in the south Manchester ward of Whythenshawe, the final project therefore is a design for a community advice centre for women's issues that attempts to increase these levels of interaction between people and levels of engagement with the local urban context.

Large, adaptable spaces house the programme which aims to encourage these exchanges, such as the Big Sister space, Skills Exchange, Breast Milk Exchange, Bibliotherapy centre etc. Additionally, small, intimate, one-on-one spaces are key throughout the whole building, provided by the angular internal concrete core structure.

Gradients of opacity at façade level increase the porosity of the building, with the extended site design reaching into the local community to encourage interaction and engagement.

Case Study

Ian Burnett [Year 6]



Ever since that one community event in 2010, I have been working intensively in the same southern ward of Manchester. In that time have met and worked with many people who, over numerous meetings and events, I have grown to know well. Everyone that I have met up to this point has taught me a little something about the place where they live, every piece of local knowledge and experience shared has had a resultant impact on my project work. I first discovered the baths when wandering the streets of Levenshulme on my first visit.

In retrospect, the process of designing a new swimming facility for Levenshulme has been a fluid one. My fifth year event introduced me to a local radio station, which introduced me to Lydia Meryll, who as the secretary of The Community Association introduced me to a whole selection of people who live in the area. The Community Association meetings have offered a platform from which I could present and try out my ideas to an engaging and well-informed audience. In doing so, the experience has connected me to a whole array of people, all of whom possess different skills which have enhanced the project.

Case Study

Kathryn Timmins [Year 6]



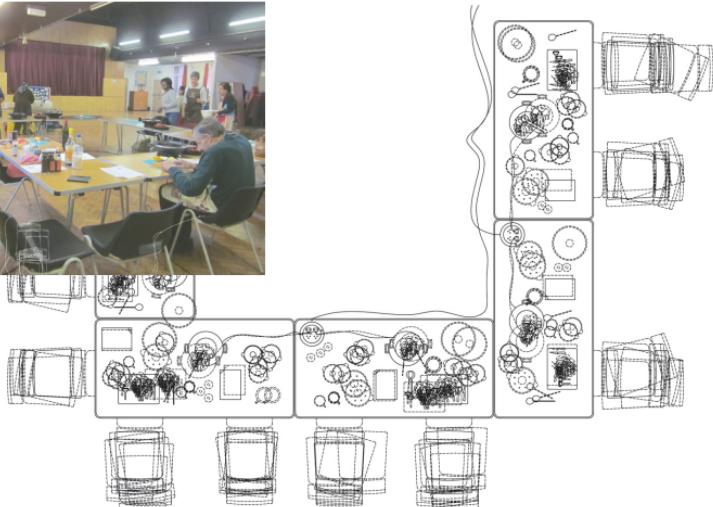
THE PANKETTES CHOIR!

Every Thursday the Pankhurst Centre, Manchester hosts a drop-in centre for any women to take part in activities, meet new people, discuss issues, seek help or just sit and watch. To understand what women's centres provide and why women go there I hosted a small event at one of the drop-in sessions to discuss this. After this initial first meeting, I continued to visit the centre every Thursday to speak with the women and volunteer with activities, eventually setting up and running a choir for the ladies attending.

Through creating the choir with them and teaching the women to have a voice through their singing has been the best experience, informing my design project and general design ethos hugely. I will continue to teach the choir each week long after the project is completed and the process has taught me many things. Meeting the women at the Pankhurst centre has been genuinely life-changing. Understanding the needs of a women's centre and the people who use it, from a real place, has substantially affected the design, creating a more informed, more appropriate and truer design response.

Case Study

Emma Rayner [Year 5]



Following the identification of health problems in Old Trafford and 'poor diet' as a significant risk factor, I decided that I needed to learn more about tackling the issue. Judith Williams (the community dietitian of Old Trafford) invited me to join a 7 week course called 'Good food, Good health'; a healthy eating cooking course based at the St John's Centre in Old Trafford. I joined the session on a number of occasions to talk to members of the group and to observe how the facilities were put to use. After each session I analysed how the space was used throughout the cooking sequence (store, wash, prepare, cook, serve, eat, clear, wash up). The time-space analysis of the cooking class was very successful in that I began to understand how the users adapted the space according to the use.

With the analysis and observations I made from joining these sessions, I made the judgement that my proposal should allow for a degree of flexibility whilst being fit for purpose in a way that the current arrangement is not.

Case Study

Francesca Fernandes [Year 5]



To gain a better understanding of dyslexic people I organised group meetings and discussions between different focus groups in Hulme at the Zion Community Centre. I became involved with Dyslexic Foundation and Dyslexic by Nature charity group, helping them organise events. Through this level of involvement I was able to investigate routes to the city plus feelings and emotions and respond to them eventually with design proposals.

The first large event was a city centre guided walk with Dyslexic by Nature group of dyslexics from Manchester. I provided them with the tools to draw personal cognitive maps of the route and explained to them what this involved. I could analyse perceptions through this exercise. The next event was held at a community hall in Hulme and it was to hold a launch for the 'Hulme and Moss Side Dyslexic Self Help Group'. The aim of this event was to create a network between parents of children in schools in this area so that they could meet monthly or weekly and discuss their problems or their solutions to their child's dyslexia and the impact it was having on that child.

Insert Project Here...

Manchester School of Architecture Projects [MSAp]

Each student has consulted or collaborated with particular stakeholders in the city's development - contacts they have developed as part of their research. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has offered their support and invite anyone interested in collaborating with us to get in touch.

The design research of the Unit has won funds from The Cabinet Office, the AHRC, MYRIAD and MICRA/Cities and is currently being used to develop a Manchester specific 'age-friendly city' urban design framework; an international network of inclusive urban design research; and urban design guidance for Southways Housing Trust as part of a consortium with Keele University and Leech Rhodes Walker. The work is supported by the World Health Organization and Age Europe. Our studies are predominantly focused on The City of Manchester, but we are currently collaborating in Berlin and Brussels and have undertaken workshops with our partners there as part of field studies over the last two years.

MSAp is taught by Helen Aston, James Robertson and Stefan White consulting with:

Glen Ombler, OI architects; Benjamin Aston, Austin Smith Lord; Jochen Rabe, Buro Happold Berlin, Sussanne Schnorbusch, CET-01; Meredith Dale, Berlin; Christoph kohl, Rob Krier Christoph Kohl architekten Berlin

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