

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

CLASS OF YOUR OWN



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MSA LIVE 24

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Partners

"Smart Village - Sabden" Class Of Your Own (COYO) is the rural social enterprise that provides the award-winning **'Design Engineer Construct!'** Learning Programme for schools, one of them being the Alder Grange School.

Throughout the project, our collaborators have been Alison Watson, the Founder and Chief Executive of Class of Your Own, and Vicki Irving, DEC Teaching Coordinator. Collaborating with Alison and Vicki has guided us in assisting Year 12 students in completing their portfolios. Furthermore, it has deepened our understanding of how to impart to these students a comprehensive understanding of the architectural design process within the context of a construction project.



[check out our blog!](#)

Introduction

Class of your own

Sabden Church, also known as the Church of St. Nicholas, was constructed in 1841 and was granted Grade II listing status in 1968. The church boasts a graveyard and is home to a rare Laycock organ and a mechanical clock installed in 1890. While the pews once spanned the entire length of the church, they have since been reduced in number. Serving as the village's focal point, the church holds significant cultural and historical importance.

Today, Sabden Church serves a population of around 1700, but with a dwindling congregation that often consists of around 30 parishioners. Recognising the opportunity to preserve local heritage while extending the reach of the church to a more diverse population, the project co-led by COYO and DEC Class 12 students collaborates with MSA students to repurpose the church to serve as a hub for community learning and sustainable practices, alongside the creation of a new 'Smart Village' curriculum.

During the 'Action Weeks' of May, we divided ourselves into two teams to hold our own one-week design competition to renovate the church and later present it to the students. Our goal was to empower these students to envision the architectural feasibility of adapting the church to meet the evolving needs of the community. This presented a fantastic opportunity to engage in a real-life project, creating diverse and exciting material for portfolios while enhancing our design skills through collaboration with students.

Social Impact

The Sabden Smart Village initiative is poised to generate significant social benefits, fostering community engagement, enhancing social cohesion, and embracing diversity.

It will equip residents for prospective roles in environmentally conscious professions, thus bolstering the development of a local green economy. By imparting sustainable living practices and advocating for local conservation efforts, the project will play a pivotal role in safeguarding the long-term environmental health of the area, ultimately diminishing the community's collective carbon footprint.



TIMELINE



WEEK 1

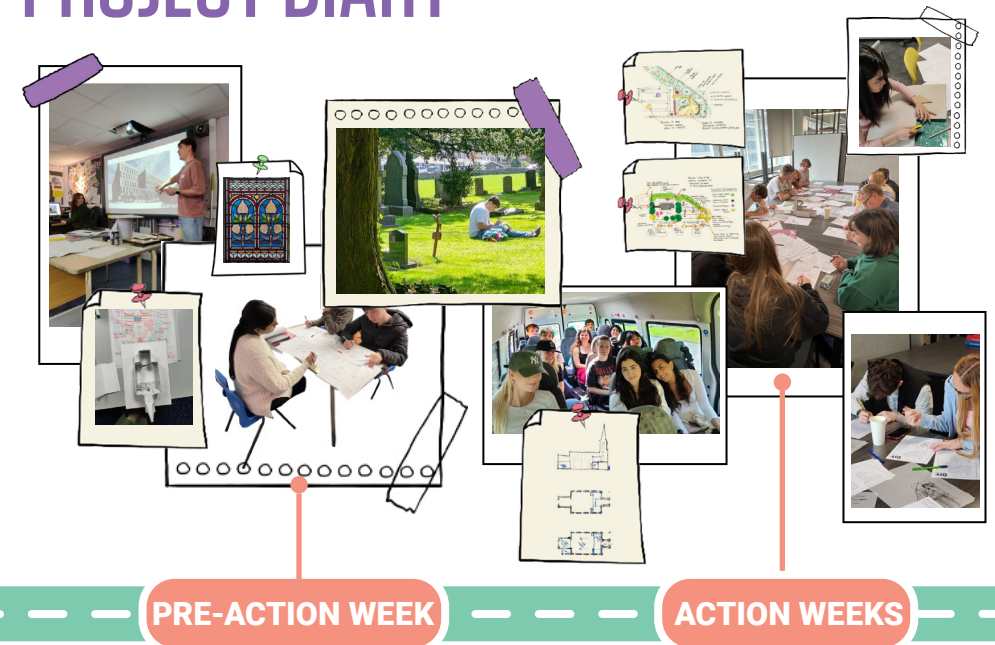
Throughout the first week, MSA students will divide into two groups. The two groups will work together to conduct the site survey, including the history and structure of the Church. Based on the research, each group will come up with its own design concept for the adaptation of the Church.

WEEK 2

In the second week, the two groups will present their different architectural design ideas to Year 12 students from Alder Grange School, showcasing a variety of approaches. Following this, we will organize a workshop where the students can provide critical feedback on our proposals. Based on this feedback, the students will then create their own designs through DIY activities.

In the subsequent days, we will refine our designs and prepare materials for a booklet and blog posts.

PROJECT DIARY



PRE-ACTION WEEK

ACTION WEEKS

PRE-ACTION WEEKS

FIRST SITE VISIT

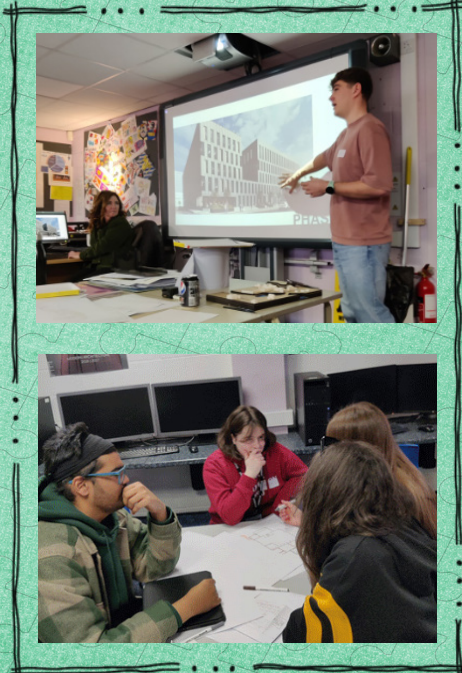
All M.Arch and MA AR students visited Sabden Church with Year 12 students from Alder Grange School. During our visit, we had the opportunity to meet Mr. Colin, the warden of the church, and Architect Zoe from HPA Architects.



FIRST SCHOOL VISIT

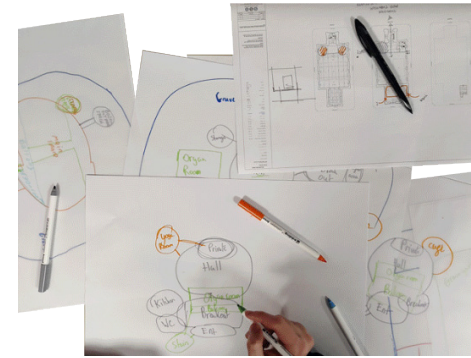
An ice-breaking meeting was held between MSA master's students and Year 12 students at Alder Grange School, where we had the chance to deliver a brief on our academic and professional projects. The aim was to give the Year 12 students an understanding of the architecture design process.

After our presentation, we enjoyed engaging activities with the Year 12 students. We assisted them in making bubble diagrams for a new program for the church



Based on the Year 12 students' sketches and our conversation, we developed our action plans for the two action weeks. During those weeks, we divided into two teams and came up with different architectural approaches. This aimed to increase the students' creativity when approaching an architectural project.

Year 12 students' sketches



PLAN FOR ACTION WEEKS



SITE VISIT

First site visit with all BA and MLA students



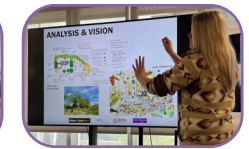
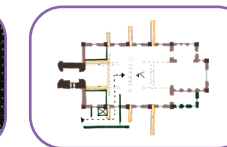
SITE SURVEY

Split into two teams for site survey
Team 1: History
Team 2: Form and Structure



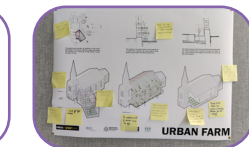
CONCEPT DESIGN

Split into two teams to develop two different concepts



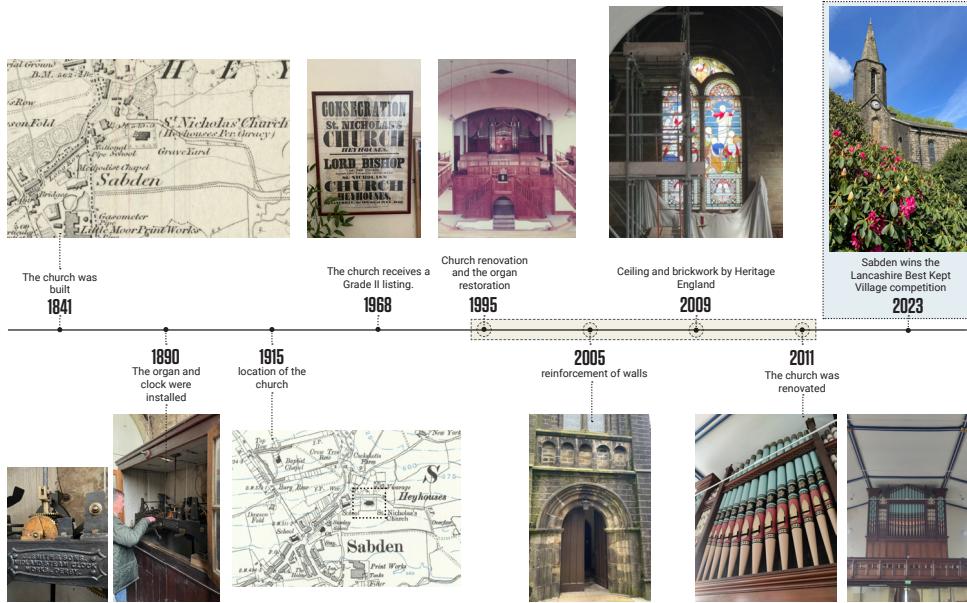
PRESENTATION

Presentation Day: Each team presents their design and receives feedback from Year 12 students.

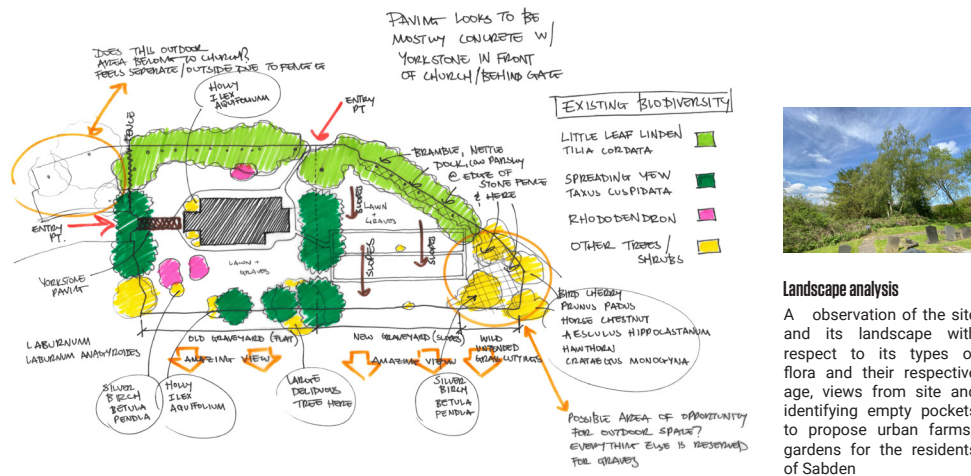


SURVEY

History

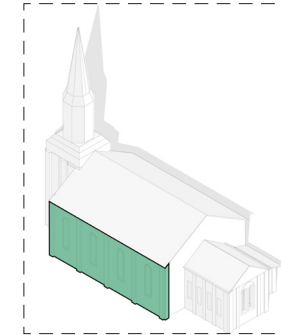


Landscape



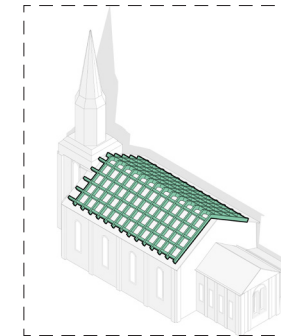
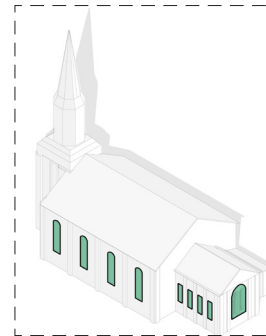
Structure

A thorough analysis of the existing grade-II listed structure of the church to identify its heritage elements, structural strengths and weaknesses such that they act as parameters for the adaptive reuse design proposals.



Walls

The walls of the building are in decent condition. Over the years, the walls have seen to be bulging outwards. Structural ties have been put in place to hold the wall intact. They present excellent heritage character and demand to be preserved over the years.

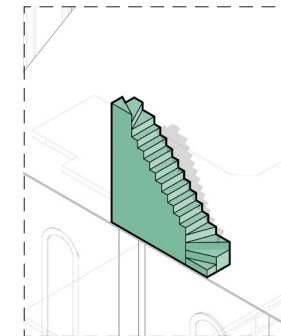
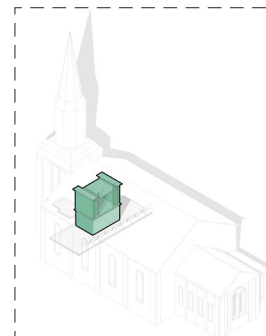


Windows

Windows are observed to be in a good condition. They are of high importance as they not only contribute to the history of the building but allow ample daylighting in the interiors.

Roof

The roof understructure is in a decent condition with issues such as dry rot and dampness visible in places. It requires repair works.



Organ

Installed in 1890, the organ is historically significant to the church. Restored in 1995 to its original condition, the organ currently is well preserved often played during masses.

Staircase

The existing staircase is quite old, narrow and steep with its risers being as high as 200mm. To serve older users of the church, the staircase needs to be reimaged.

Design

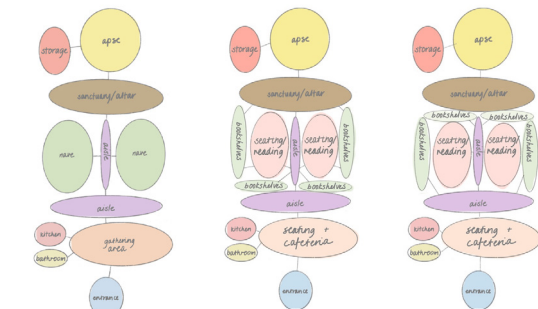
After the first few meetings the final brief from the collaborators was for us to demonstrate the kids of Alder Grange school, how we think about designing the church and the process so they can take forward these as case studies.

In the action weeks we divided ourselves into two groups. Each group had equal number of BA1,2 and M.Arch students. Then we decided to take 2 different approaches of design one being a constrained method and the other group decided to undertake more of a pragmatic design strategy.

Church as a Library

Group 1 started off with understanding the landscape in great detail along with few precedents and the data given by the locals of Sabden they decided to go make the church a library which acts as a learning center.

Then undergoing various iterations using bubble diagrams they came up with different plans for incorporating bookshelves into the existing fabric of the church.



Bubble diagrams for internal planning

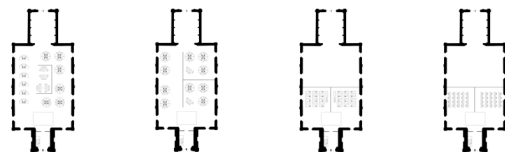
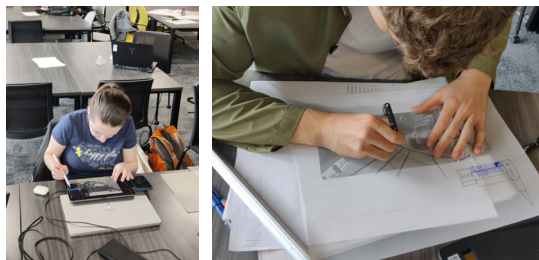


Image top:
Bubble planning diagram
Image bottom:
Different iteration layouts

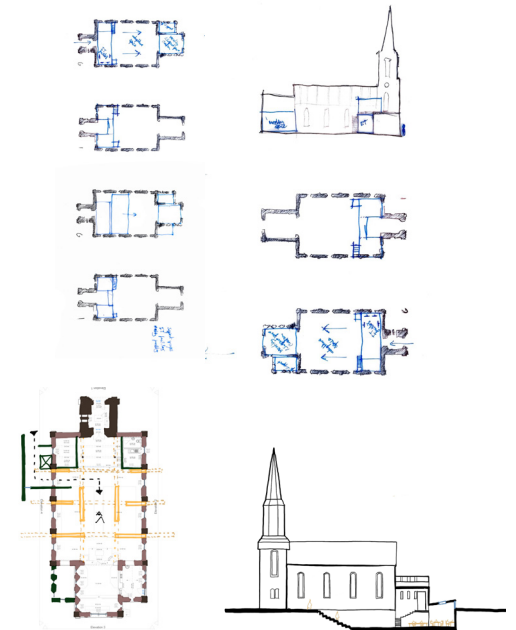


Church Catalogue

Group 2 looked at the idea of quantity in design. Rooftop catalogue by MVRDV was a big precedent the idea. By the survey data by Sabden town they came up with three main programs the church can be, a learning center, Offices and a center for sustainable urban farming.

Then this group designed various iterations for each of these programs, finally acting a catalogue of church designs.

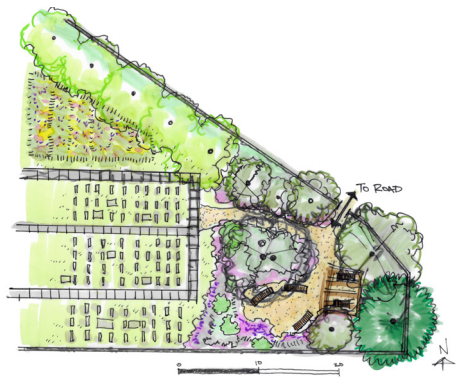
Image top:
Sketching for different programmes
Image bottom:
Identifying 3 major programmes



PRESENTATIONS

We then presented both the groups work to the collaborators and students of the Alder Grange school. These were also followed by a few excersises for them to engage with our design process.

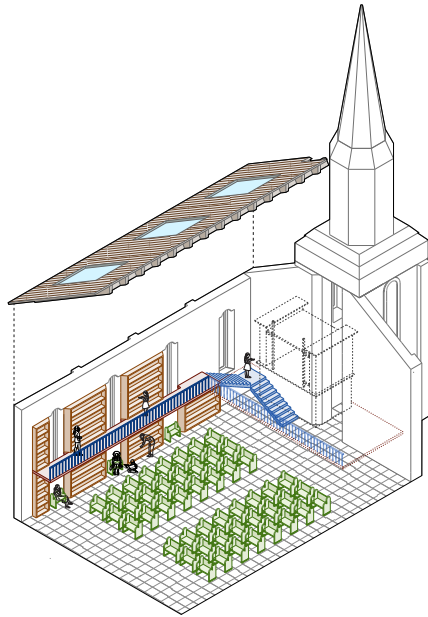
The liabrary becomes an addition to the walls of the church with chamfered shelves that promotes lights to come in through the window. The outer edge becomes a place for diffrent species of plants to grow and a space for the community to come together



Landscape final Planm



Landscape final design

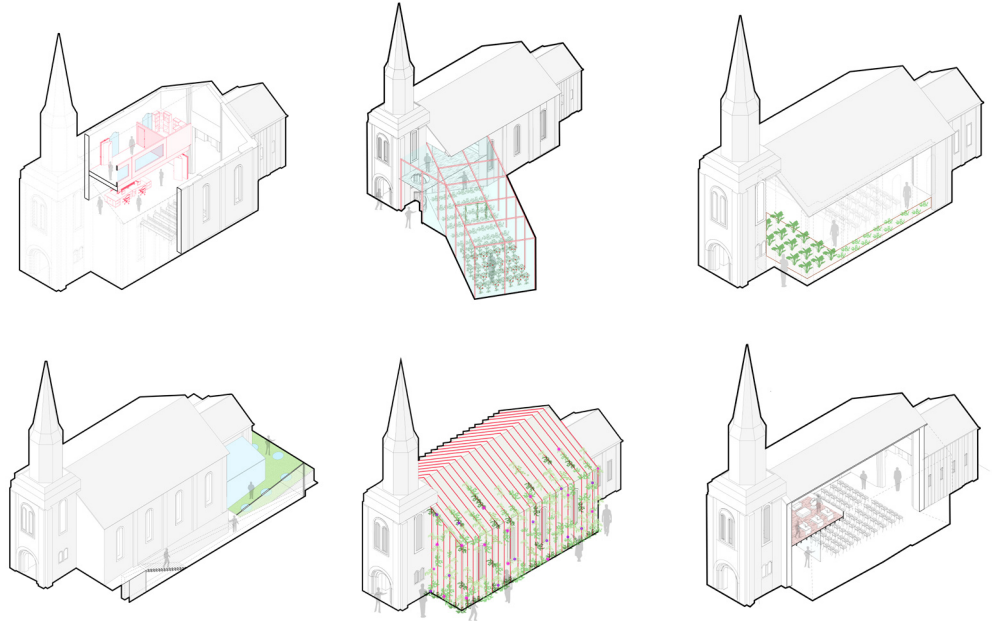
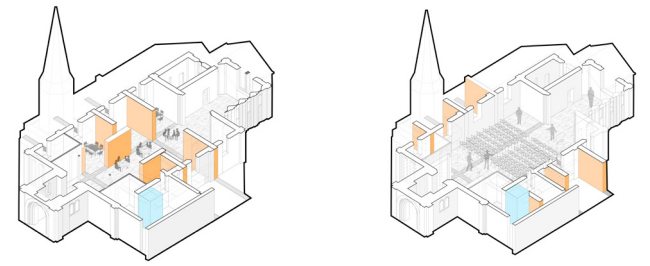


Church Isometric View



Church Interior View

The group wanted the church catalogue become a document of programes that any church can adapt and mould into, with st nicholas church being the base.



Church Isometric View

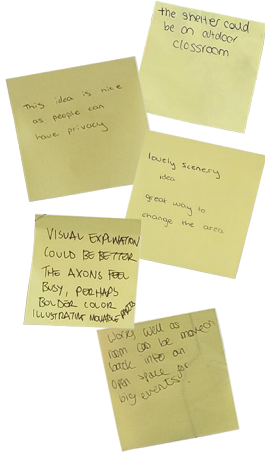
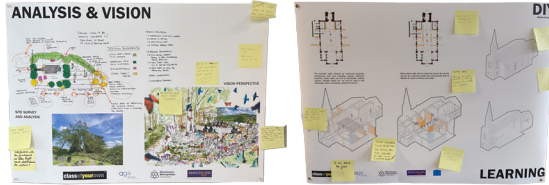
Final presentation to Alder Grange students



INTERACTIONS

Young critics

We were successful in starting a dialogue amongst the students of MSA and Alder Grange School. We gained insightful critiques on our proposals and appreciative comments on ideas, digital renders and representations from the students.

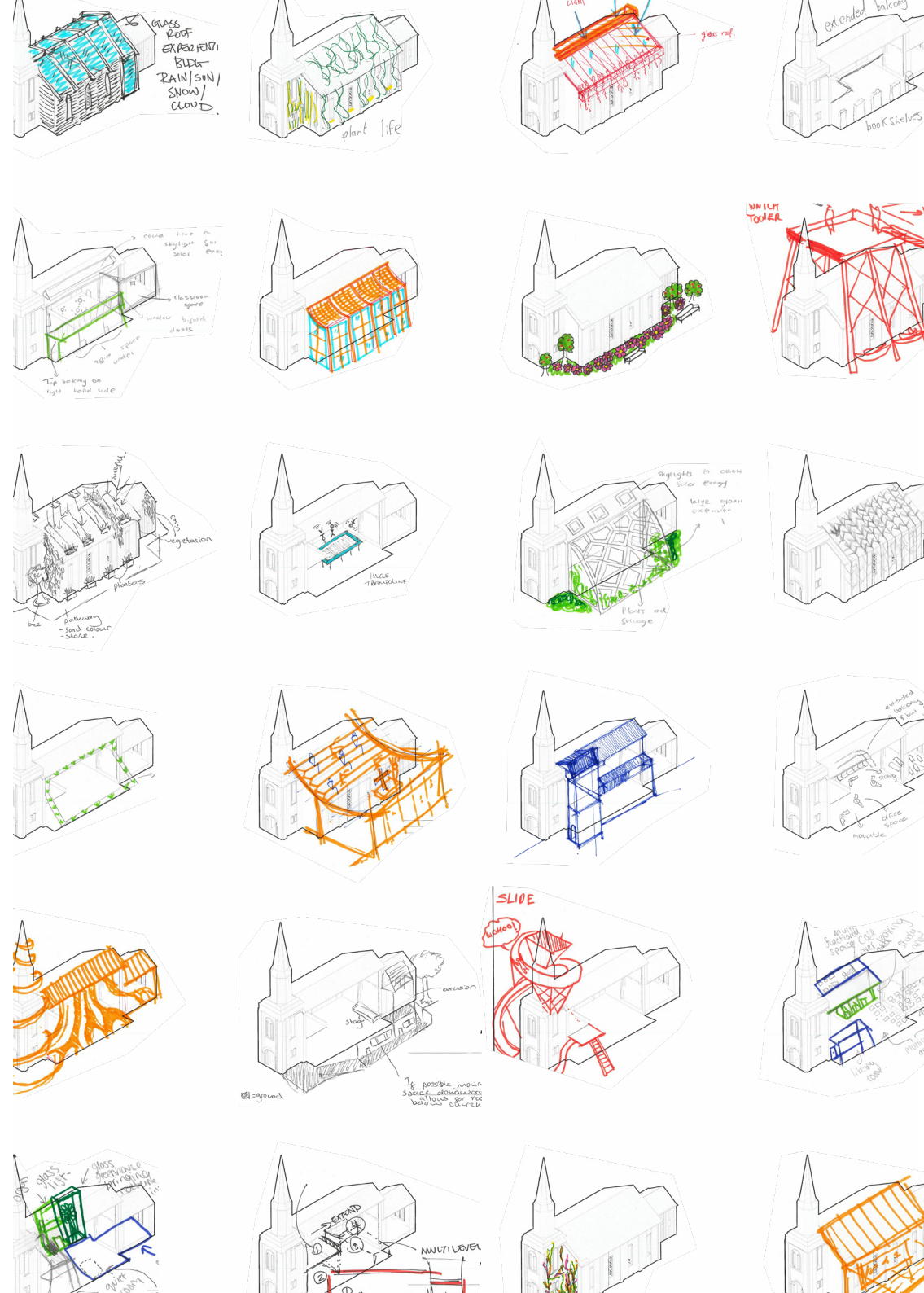


Draw It Yourself (DIY)

As a design exercise, the year 12 students were encouraged to get creative and sketch out ideas for repurposing the church, using an isometric template to map out their concepts. Here are all the quirky and unconventional ideas these inventive kids dreamed up for breathing new life into the old building.

Reflections

Now that MSA live has concluded, it is important to reflect on the project and what our group and the collaborators have achieved. As our project was all about the education of D.E.C. students, the final presentation and afternoon's workshops were the centre of our focus. Everyone in the group worked well to motivate undergraduate students to collaborate around their own deadlines resulting in some fantastic drawings, diagrams, and collages. The afternoon was well received by the college, from our own proposals for the Church, as well as the afternoon as a whole and what it offered to the Alder Grange students. They engaged in design critiques and creative exercises around the table bringing lots of energy to make it a successful project overall. We all thoroughly enjoyed working with the college and look forward to seeing their final schemes!





ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 and Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Resuse students with those in BA foundation, year 1 and year 2 and Masters Landscape Architecture 1 in mixed-year teams to undertake live projects with external partners to create social impact.

STUDENT-LED

Our MSA masters students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. Other cohorts joined for an eventful 2 weeks of activities at the end of the academic year.



BLOG

live.msa.ac.uk/2024

SOCIAL

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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.

WEBSITE

www.msa.ac.uk



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.



LARGE SCALE

This year approximately 600 students from 6 cohorts in MSA have worked on 40 projects with partners.

QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA LIVE please contact the MSA LIVE team:

msalive@mmu.ac.uk



EXTERNAL PARTNERS

MSA LIVE projects work with many organisations: charities, community groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, researchers, practitioners and educators.