

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

ACCESS ALL AREAS

Agenda

The Carlton Club is a long running social club that welcomes a diverse range of members and aims to improve the lives of their local community through the variety of activities available. From live music and art exhibitions to gardening and exercise classes, the club has something to offer for everyone. However, the club also has considerable accessibility issues, due to the age of the building, the different floor levels and the underutilised first floor.

In collaboration with our student-led team, this project will explore potential design options for new community spaces on the first floor and disabled lift access solutions for the ground and first floors. We will be working closely with the members of The Carlton Club to gain feedback based on user opinions and experiences, which will help us to develop our design proposals into an output that can be used by the club for future contractor quotes and funding bids.

Team

Megan Hague
Diana Cernooka
Hongxi Yu
Yixuan Yang

Skills

Throughout the workshop, students have developed their skills in physical and digital model making, teamwork, iterative sketching, Adobe softwares, as well as client presentations and planning application drawings. Join us in accessing all areas of The Carlton Club!

For more information please visit:
<https://www.carltonclub.org.uk/>



Visit msa.ac.uk for more information

Team

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Anna Thomas (BA1)

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Jorin Bench (BA2)

Nadia O'Neill (BA2)

Ruolan Wang (MLA1)



Partners

"It is where good people meet and where friendships old and new are formed over a drink, music & social shindigs"

- The Carlton Club

Our partners for this project were The Carlton Club (Carlton Social and Bowling Club CIC), a long running social club in Whalley Range that hosts a wide range of activities. Established in 1913, the club currently has around 800 hundred diverse members from the neighbourhood. As a recently registered Community Interest Company, they aim to enrich their local community and the lives of all those who spend their time making the most of what is on offer.

In order to maximise the unused spaces, increase profit potential, and more importantly, improve inclusivity measures, our partners were looking to develop their disabled access solutions. The Carlton Club are also exploring a partnership with the Great Places Housing Group, to gain support in upgrading the accessibility of the site.

Throughout the course of this project, we have been fortunate to have close communication with the clubs' board members. We would like to extend our sincere thanks for their valuable engagement and feedback throughout.

Introduction

Access All Areas

We are 'Access All Areas', a student-led team working in collaboration with The Carlton Club. As a vital space for the local community, the club offers many activities throughout the week. Their regular timetable includes award winning chippy teas served every Friday by The Hip Hop Chip Shop, a biweekly gardening club, drink and draw sessions, and pilates classes. They also have a fully licensed bar within their main room – a generous space with a stage that often holds live music events, film viewings and comedy nights.

However, owing to the age of the building and the complex arrangement of floor levels, the accessibility of The Carlton Club is severely limited. The disintegration of the first floor has rapidly increased over the years, leading to it becoming a completely unusable space for the public. Currently, the only public entrance point consists of an aging set of stairs leading up to a significantly raised ground floor which poses a concern for those who have mobility issues. To secure further revenue, the club requires improved access solutions that allow all members of the community to physically access all spaces with ease.

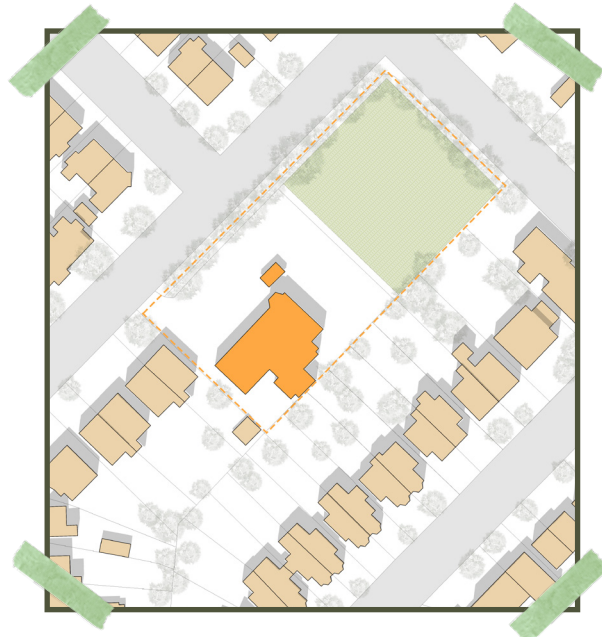
These considerable access problems form the basis for our brief. The Carlton Club tasked us primarily with designing disabled access solutions that respond to the needs of the community, while also being sympathetic to the style and conservation of the building for future planning applications.

For our outputs, the focus was to use our collective skills and knowledge to develop three access proposals – ground floor platform lift access, ground floor ramp access and first floor lift access. The work created serves to inform The Carlton Club of their design options to further their accessibility and inclusivity, allowing everyone to access all areas.

Client Introduction

The Carlton Club occupies Rowan Lodge - a former grand home built in the 1850's with a side extension later added in the 1950's. It is situated within the 'beating heart' of Whalley Range - a predominantly residential area that was Manchester's first suburb - and boasts an extensive garden within its grounds. On the approach to the building, the characterful elevation really makes an impression with its contrasting features.

Inside, the ground floor consists of the main room, equipped with a bar, stage and snug area, the 'Green Room' which allows for a quieter reflective environment, and other ancillary spaces. However, the accessibility issues soon become evident. As the finished ground floor level is 1.55m above the external space, the front steps act as the main entrance. Due to the age of the building, these steps are disintegrating and becoming too unstable for everyday use.

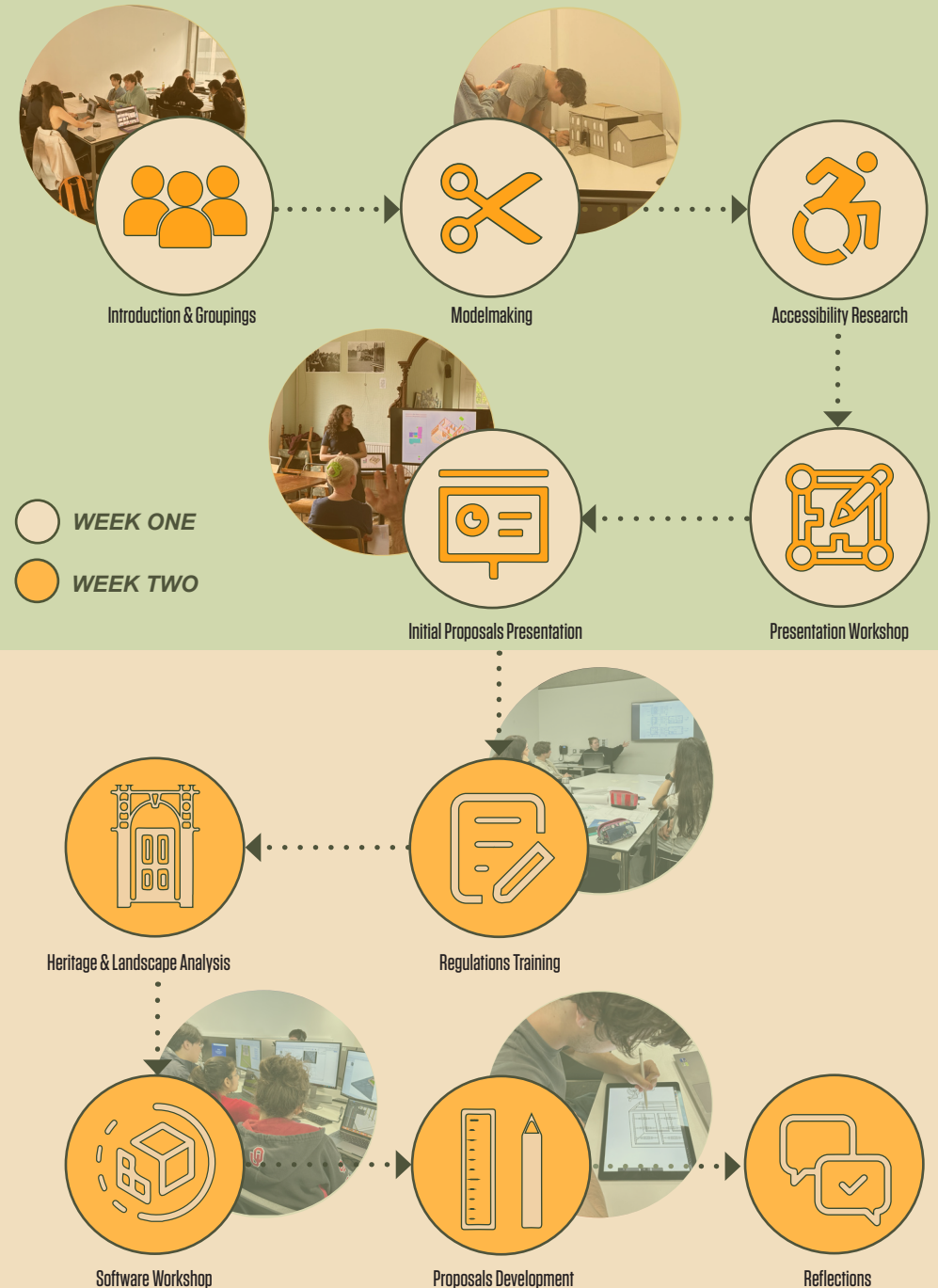


We first met with our collaborator in December and began introductions between ourselves and the board members. The Carlton Clubs' need for both ground floor and first floor accessibility solutions were discussed, and it was decided what we should focus our efforts on going forward. There was also the suggestion that we create accessible masterplan proposals for the first floor, to revitalise the space and increase profit potential. This would allow the club to operate more efficiently as it would encourage a wider range of users, and in turn reinvest any increased earnings back into its members, building and activities.

The team then visited the club for a site visit in January, followed by a trip to one of their monthly record fairs.



Action Plan



Site Visit



On Friday 10th May we had our first group visit to The Carlton Club. The students used their pre-existing knowledge to interrogate the site and determine the best course of action for their access proposals. This was a great opportunity to see how The Carlton Club operates, witnessing how integral the space is to the local community and gaining an understanding into the day-to-day realities of their users. We had a tour of the unused spaces of The Carlton Club, including the first floor and basement, and had informative discussions with club members such as former MSA professor Colin Pugh.

The undergraduate students also presented their ideas to the clubs' board and members. During week one, our design approach involved a series of group projects – we initially worked in two teams to produce working site models and then reorganised into three groups to develop a range of accessibility strategies and masterplans. Approaching the design within different changeable teams allowed for a variety of ideas and skills to be shared amongst the students.

During our site visit, these three groups showcased their development work and received valuable feedback.

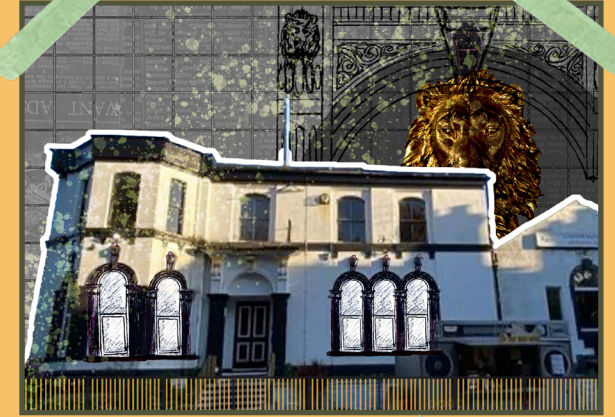


Heritage & Landscape Analysis

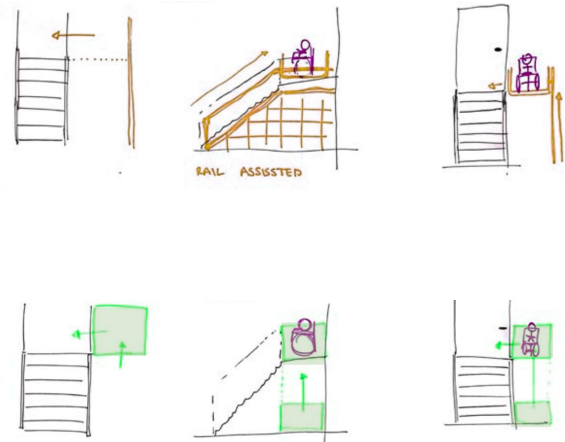
Throughout our collaboration with The Carlton Club, it became clear that preserving the heritage of the building was essential. On a regulatory level, this is due to the building being within the Whalley Range Conservation Area. The distinct elevation and original features that appear throughout the building also add to the much-loved character of the club, so integrating these heritage elements into our accessibility proposals was considered during the design process. Additionally, the large garden is a vital space for the community - hosting many gardening clubs, BBQs and social drinks.

The undergraduate students were tasked with a heritage and landscape analysis, looking at precedents and coming to conclusions about how we could integrate both the surrounding landscape and the buildings visual assets into our accessibility solutions.

During the first week of the project, the MArch students called upon experience in practice and used this to discuss how to find, interpret and apply relevant building regulations to design proposals, particularly in relation to existing buildings.

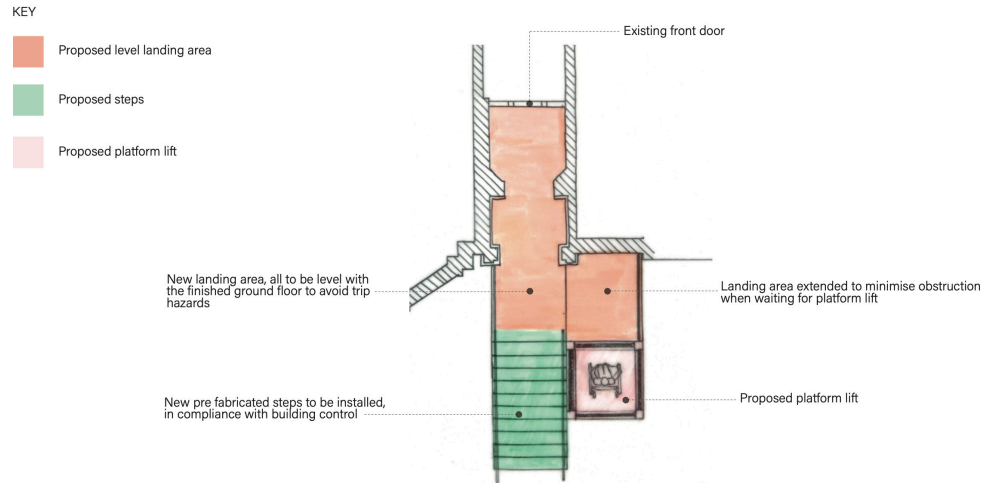


Group 1 - Platform Lift Access

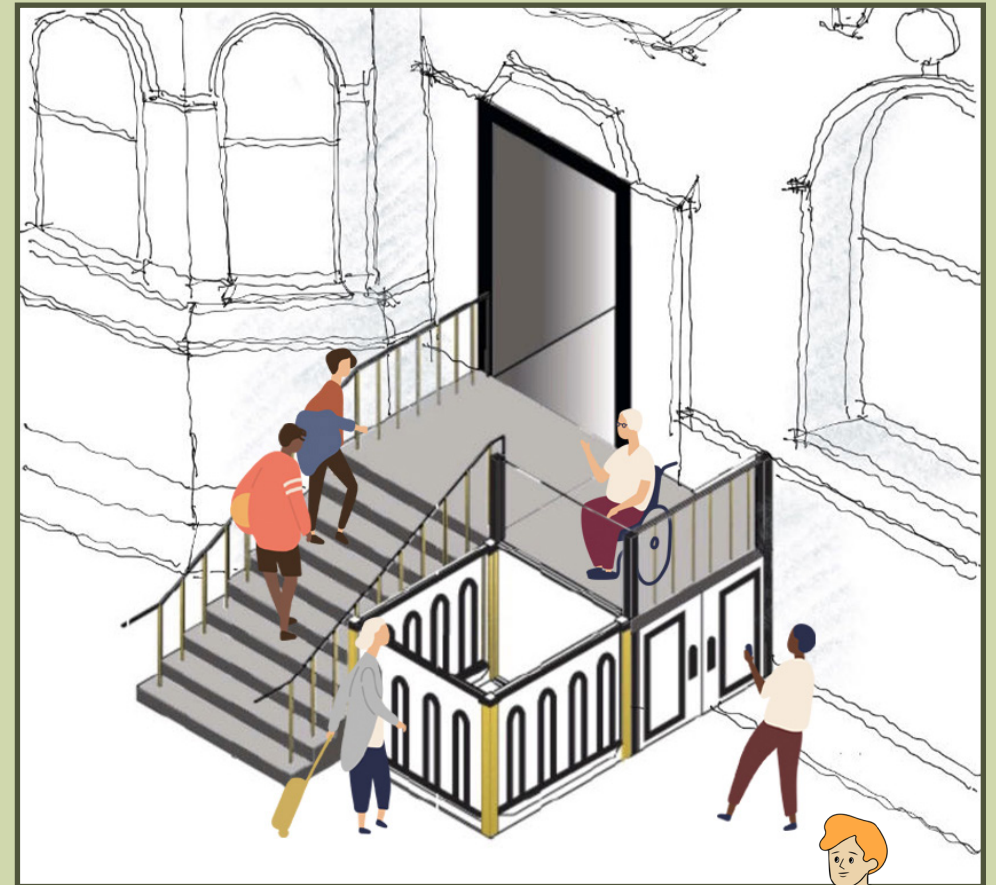


A leading priority for The Carlton Club was the installation of a platform lift at the front door. As the club is open daily, and relies on their daily earnings, it was important that any changes to the front entrance was done in an efficient way to minimise closure of the business.

We explored the possibility of a new prefabricated external staircase, ensuring compliance with building regulations and the Equality Act, alongside a suitable platform lift.

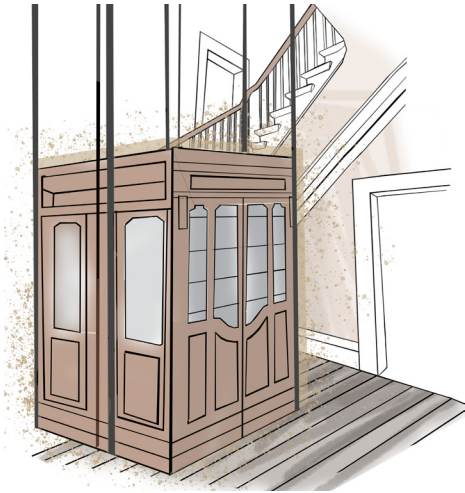


Group 1's approach to the design of the lift emphasises accessibility and efficiency, and the proposal serves to provide a comfortable entry point for individuals using wheelchairs or experiencing other physical disabilities. We also extended the existing landing to create a comfortable pathway for individuals using the lift. The design of the lift was developed to fit in with the building's façade, considering the buildings heritage.



This exercise was a great opportunity to produce outputs that have the potential for genuine social impact, as these proposals were used in a meeting by The Carlton Club and Great Places to discuss feasibility of this community funded project.

Group 2 - Internal Lift Access

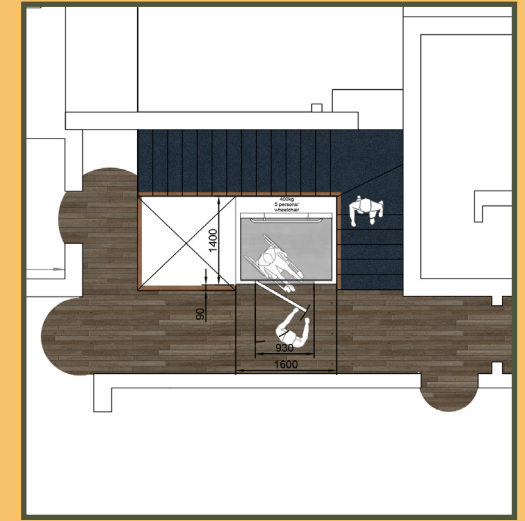
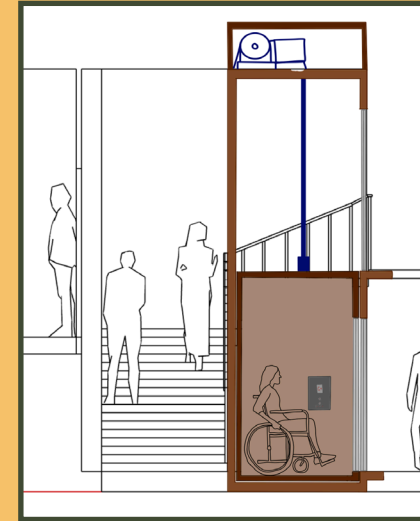
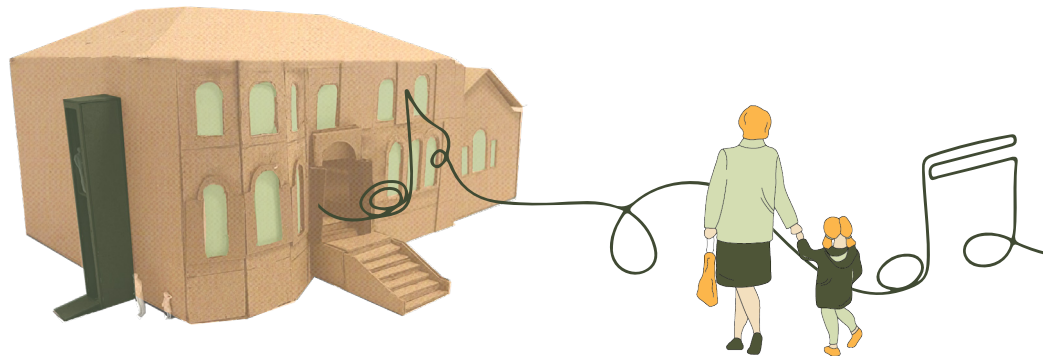


Group 2 focused on making the upper floor accessible for wheelchair users. Initially, they explored various placements, with the two main ideas being an exterior/interior lift and a central internal lift in the stair void. A key design driver was to make the lift's construction as non-disruptive to the club's activities as possible. As a result, the exterior lift was eliminated due to the extra exterior work required for its installation. Another key driver was to blend the heritage of the club with the utility of the lift, which could be achieved easier and to a better degree with the internal lift.

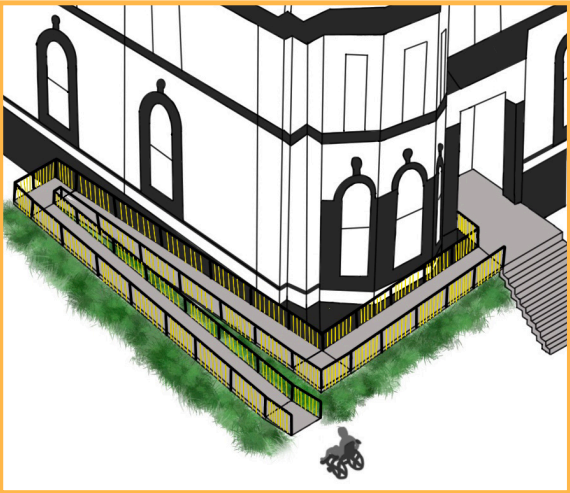


"During this project I have enjoyed thinking about accessibility and heritage preservation and having them as the main drivers for design decisions. I have learnt the importance of accessible design and the basics on how to start to incorporate it in my future designs"

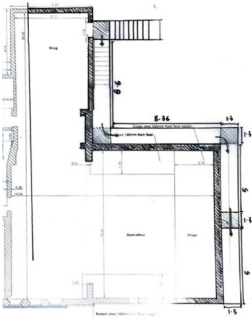
- Anna Thomas, BA1



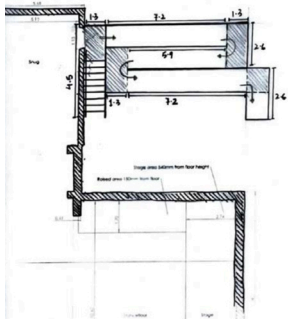
Group 3 - Ramp Access



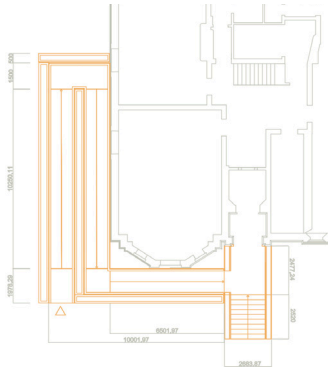
Located in the Carlton Club's northeast section, the presented ramp strategy merges landscaping and accessible routes. The incorporation of planters in between and around the ramps offers the opportunity not only for mobility-restricted users to have safe and pleasurable access to the building but, overall, all users will enjoy the view of the greenery.



Option 1

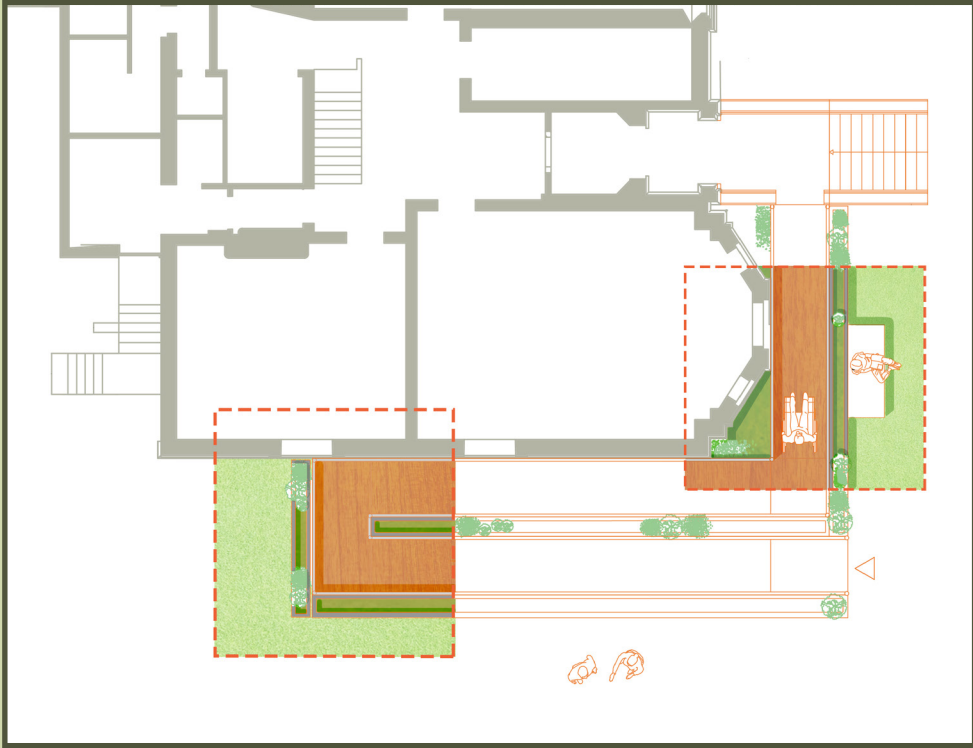


Option 2



Option 3

The proposal was developed looking closely at Part M and Manchester's Design for Access documents to ensure future usability of the drawings. It uses removable ramps and planters to comply with heritage concerns and will enable future changes to the structure if needed. The ramps garden maintenance can become a community activity to be done periodically. This way, the proposed accessible infrastructure becomes a community asset, promoting integration and community building.



Reflections and Final Outputs

During this two-week MSA LIVE project, we have adopted and developed both technical and practical skills – from learning how to utilise interactive PDFs to demonstrating effective communication. This has been a useful opportunity to advance our experience in client facing projects and learn first-hand that often plans must adapt.

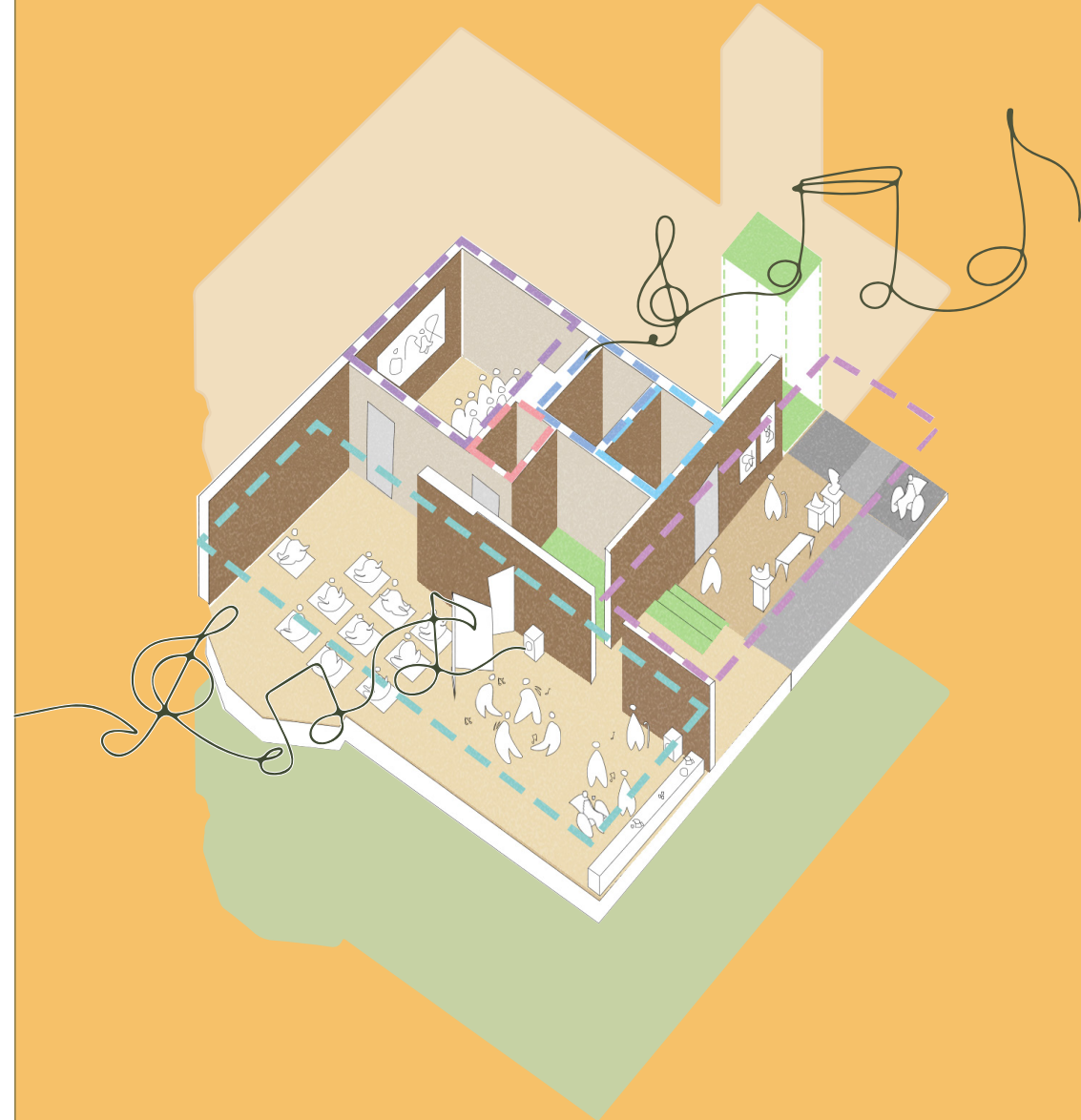
We found the Action Plan to be crucial throughout the process, keeping it on hand each day and changing the plan to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. For example, due to the overlapping deadlines that the undergraduates were trying to manage, we had to become more flexible with our timescales. As the weeks went on, we continually introduced new presentations and tasks based upon feedback, such as a secondary building regulation discussion, to help with the final outputs.

Our MSA LIVE project produced three final proposals that we hope will be used by The Carlton Club when considering their accessibility solutions. Not only has this project allowed the undergraduate students to hone their creative skills, but it has also given us the change to make a potential social impact by designing safe and accessible interventions for an important community space.



“MSA Live has been a fun way to get involved with real-life projects, getting to meet real-life users and the places they hold dear and helping them to improve these spaces has been a nice reminder of the very real impact that architecture has on people”

- Jocelyn Maite Martos Castillo, BA2



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.

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 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.

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 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:

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BLOG

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