

# MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

## MERSEY GREEN



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Heaton Mersey Village  
Conservation Group

MSA  
LIVE 24

## Team

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## Partners

The Heaton Mersey Village Conservation Group (HMVCG) is a community-driven organisation committed to preserving and enhancing Heaton Mersey Park, a beloved public space in Stockport, England. Comprising local residents and volunteers, HMVCG is dedicated to maintaining the park's natural beauty, organising community events, and fostering a sense of unity among neighbours.

Their ethos centres on sustainability, community engagement, and inclusivity. HMVCG works tirelessly to create a welcoming environment where people can connect with nature and each other. This is evident in their diverse initiatives, such as bat walks, history trails, and conservation workshops, all designed to educate and inspire. They recently launched a unique sculpture trail made from recycled motorcycle parts, demonstrating their commitment to sustainability and creativity.

HMVCG's goals are twofold: to preserve the park's ecological integrity and to create a vibrant community hub where visitors and volunteers can gather. They aim to make Heaton Mersey Park a place where everyone can enjoy the outdoors, learn new skills, and contribute to environmental stewardship. By focusing on both conservation and community-building, HMVCG seeks to improve the quality of life for local residents and promote a greater sense of connection within the neighbourhood. Through fundraising, volunteering, and collaboration with local authorities, HMVCG continues to work towards their vision of a thriving, sustainable park that benefits everyone.

# Introduction

## MERSEY GREEN BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE

The Heaton Mersey Village Conservation Group (HMVCG) is transforming Heaton Mersey Park into a vibrant community hub, with a focus on reducing social isolation, enhancing mental well-being, and fostering a sense of community through engagement with nature. This project has a considerable social impact, as it provides a welcoming space for residents to connect, learn, and participate in various activities, encouraging a sense of belonging and motivating active involvement in environmental conservation.

The project agenda emphasizes inclusivity, sustainability, and education. HMVCG intends to refurbish the park's pavilion, creating versatile spaces for community gatherings, workshops, art events, and educational programs. This transformation aims to support social interaction while preserving the park's natural beauty. Infrastructure enhancements such as tool storage, toilets, and a café will facilitate hands-on conservation work and promote a collective sense of responsibility.

A new park map is also part of the project, aimed at improving communication about the park's layout and enhancing awareness of its size and features. The map will guide visitors, making the park a destination and encouraging exploration. By offering this clearer sense of direction, HMVCG hopes to draw more people to the park and inspire a journey through its varied landscapes.

The project's ultimate goal is to build a thriving, interconnected community where people of all backgrounds can enjoy the outdoors and contribute to the park's care. HMVCG is adopting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and tracking volunteer well-being through the "5 Ways to Wellbeing" to ensure that the project meets both social and environmental objectives. Through this effort, HMVCG aims to create a lasting legacy that benefits the community and the environment.



# Site Visits

## Heaton Mersey Park (Day 1)

On the first day, we met with collaborators on site, joined by BA1, BA2, and MLA students. Before the scheduled meeting, students explored independently, discovering the park's larger-than-expected size, highlighting the need for improved signage. During discussions with Jo and Susan, our collaborators, they outlined requirements for the park and pavilion to BA and MLA students. As an icebreaker, we had a picnic in the park, enjoying the sunny weather.



Sketches:  
Drawn by the students during the visit of Heaton Mersey Park

Image Top Half:  
Visit to Heaton Mersey Park with the collaborators.

Image Bottom Half:  
Visit of Fletcher Moss Park as a precedent study.



# Survey



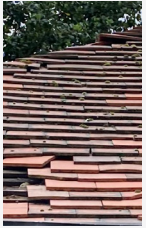
During our site visits, we noticed the building often fell victim to vandalism, likely due to its secluded location caused by overgrown vegetation and the absence of regular monitoring.

Situated within Stockport City Council's conservation area, we arranged a seminar with Paul Hartley, a conservation officer, to address this issue. The seminar provided valuable insights for both the project and BA students, enhancing their understanding of planning requirements within conservation areas.

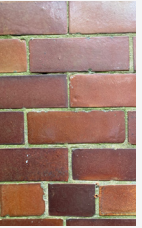
Paul Hartley offered suggestions for the building's design, emphasizing the importance of respecting its materials, layout, and historical significance while considering potential functions within conservation constraints. This interaction with Paul enriched our project and provided practical knowledge for navigating heritage conservation in architectural design.



Cast iron



Clay tiles



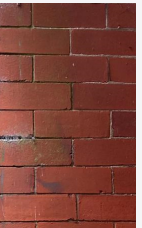
Polished bricks



Metal sheet in front of windows



Stone lintel



Engineered bricks

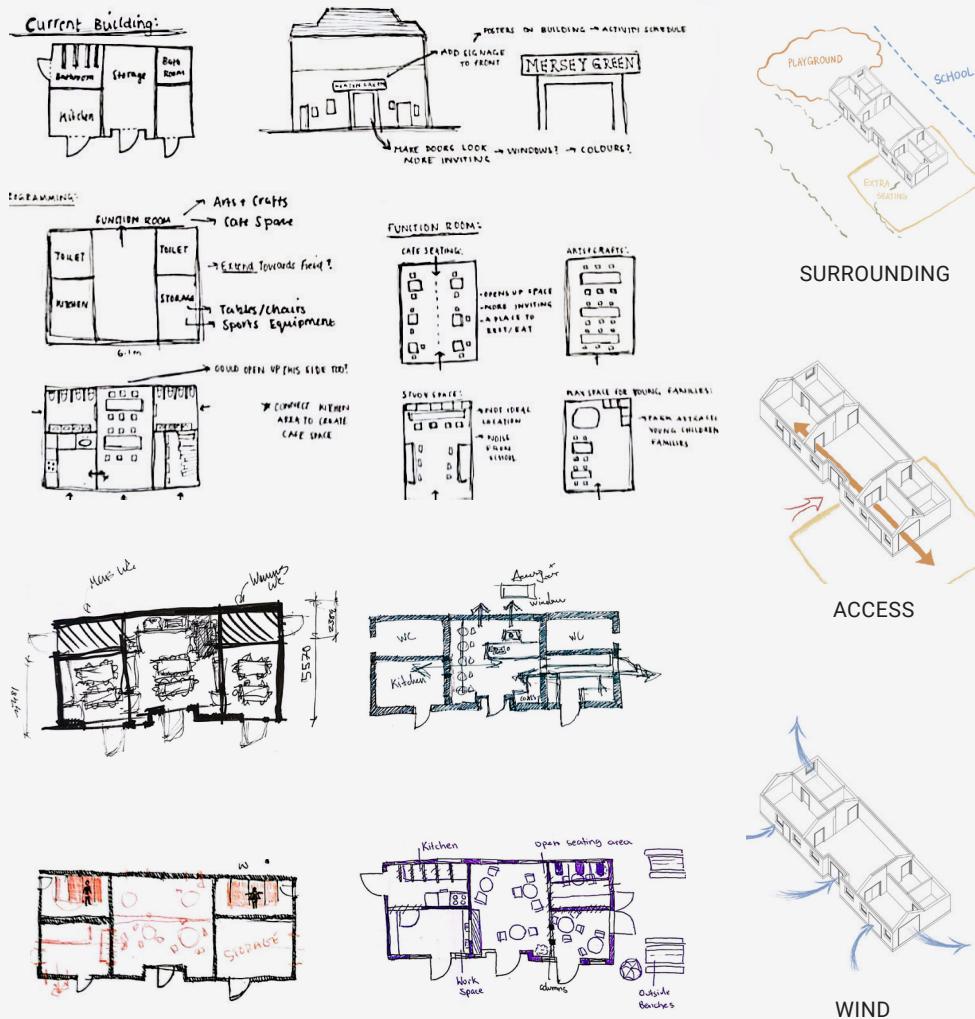
Hello everyone, I am Paul Hartley, a conservation officer from Stockport Council



# Concept Development (Group 1)

The project has been divided into two teams: Group 1 focusing on the building proposal, and Group 2 working on the park map.

Group 1 began brainstorming ideas for the building's programming and potential functions, considering how it could integrate with its surroundings, such as the playground. After developing a concept, we sought approval from the collaborators and incorporated their feedback into the design, making necessary alterations.



# Concept Development (Group 2)

We've identified essential features in the park, such as bus stops, the pavilion, and trails. Our objective is to supply HMVCG with upgraded maps and a fresh handout to enhance park orientation. Through improved signage, our aim is to simplify navigation and raise awareness of the park's size and attractions. This initiative aligns with the collaborators' vision of establishing the park as a prominent destination. Ultimately, these updated maps will not only make navigation easier but also serve as promotional tools, encouraging more visitors to explore and enjoy the park's offerings.



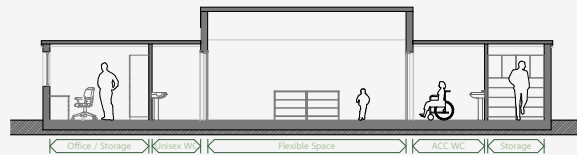
## Sketch of Map



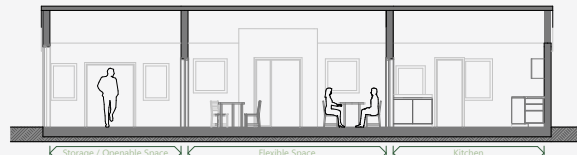
# Building Proposal

The design proposal presents a simple yet responsive solution to the collaborators' needs, featuring a flexible space accommodating activities like yoga and art classes, as well as a café and restoration area. The concept was collaboratively developed to ensure a suitable outcome that is financially viable. Following discussions with Paul, an art exhibition space (temporary structure) has been installed on the back elevation, serving as a resource for community activities and initiatives.

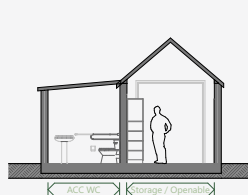
## Proposed Sections



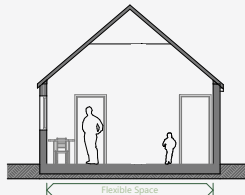
Section 01  
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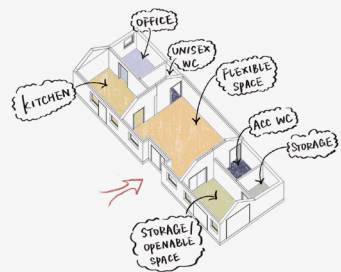
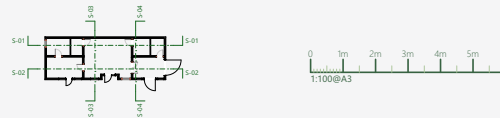
Section 02  
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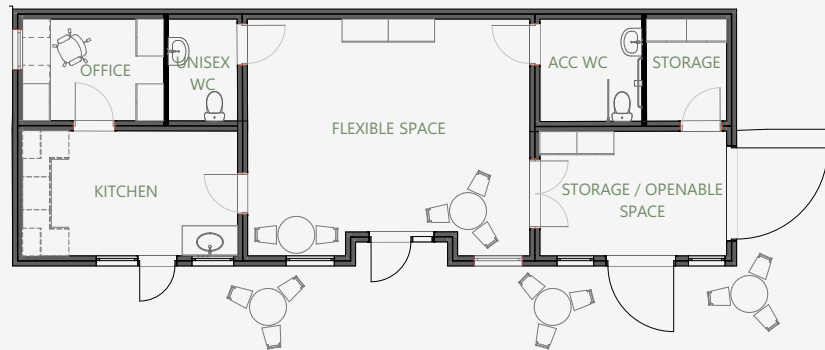
Section 04  
1:100@A3



Section 03  
1:100@A3



## Floor Plan



# Renders



# Map Proposal

We devised a proposal for the map, consisting of two versions: a full-scale depiction covering the entire park and a close-up focusing on Vale Close Park. These maps, printed in A2 format, will be displayed on the notice board and have been distributed to the collaborators. Additionally, we provided HMVCG with a template for an updated handout, allowing them to continue to update it with the proposed routes, and adds more landmarks, such as the ongoing sculpture trails project.



## Reflection

We've had to adjust our action plan as we realised that we had overestimated the time allocated to certain activities. This enabled us to allocate more time to producing outputs for the collaborators. Managing our collaborators' expectations to meet deadlines has been challenging, but they have been understanding of our time frame.

The group work with the BA and MLA students has also been successful, indicating that our organisation was effective.

## HEATON MERSEY VALLEY



## HEATON MERSEY PARK





## 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:

**[msalive@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:msalive@mmu.ac.uk)**

## BLOG

**[live.msa.ac.uk/2024](https://live.msa.ac.uk/2024)**

## SOCIAL

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## WEBSITE

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