

Design through self-reflective, liminal space lenses:
musing the future of female centric identity reconstruction

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Preface

The work for this project has grown and developed through my personal journey which began from writing my dissertation. Having grown up as a Third Culture Kid, my sense of personal identity had been rooted in the identities of my peers. I often adapted my persona in relation to what I believed to be expected by my peers, in an attempt to 'fit in'. I learnt through the dissertation process that this only creates an illusion of an identity, and that a true, well rounded identity is formed through the analysis of personal values and beliefs rather than the consideration of other's expectations.

When I wrote my dissertation, I believed that I had managed to form a full sense of my personal identity. However, in the months since, I have realised that this wasn't the case. Instead, I found myself living out the process explored in my dissertation. The dissertation process inadvertently set me on a path in which I existed in a liminal space. I began dissecting my past and present and began to see the truth of myself. I realised that I had taken the expectations placed upon me, and absorbed them into expectations I placed on myself, creating this illusion of 'identity achievement'.

This project started with the desire to work on something that didn't involve a cathartic process, the initial idea being 'the future of a writer's retreat'. However, with how my life began to unfold directly after submitting the two self reflective modules, my mind became infatuated with the process I was undergoing. I could see the potential importance of the project to others, I forged links to my first semester work, witnessing the project to build itself at times. I realised that, in society, many women would have built their identities in a similar fashion to me and would have a stunted sense of identity, forged to be able to navigate in the world rather than for themselves. So the project was born; a centre for women to reform their identities per their personal values and passions. The decisions and justifications for them came from my personal experiences during the development of the project, some from how I've developed, the activities that have helped me reach deeper into myself, and what environments that could aid my experience on the journey for myself.

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Proposition

Statement

Odyssey to Enlightenment

The monument was designed to facilitate the exploration of female identity, in the context of the spiritual journey. Women were invited to use the monument to reflect upon themselves and begin to consider who they were in the context of the world. The staircase symbolised the plight of feminists, and illustrated the uphill battle that they have, and continue to face, and was intended to spark deeper, self reflective thoughts. It provided a space for women to attempt to understand their personal values to be able to forge an identity external to patriarchal expectations.

Term 2 Proposition

To enhance the experiences of the space there would need to be some yoga instructors, who, like monks, have dedicated themselves to the art of yoga for the freeing of societies 'shackles'. They would live at the site, and maintain the grounds etc. It's intended for all feminine identifying people of any age, who are dedicated to rebuilding their identities outside of the societal expectations placed upon them. They can come into the space, and find the style of yoga they enjoy and use this to help them to explore the values that are important for their identities. The programme will act as a cocoon from the outside world, in which there are no attachments to expectations etc. and users can freely and fully experience themselves, and grow into who they want to be.

I imagined that this would develop into a programme that further allows this self inquiry process to take place, in the form of self expression. The programme I initially conceptualised was a new age yoga studio. Yoga provides a process for the practice self reflection and self development through and meditation. The idea was to incorporating natural elements found in the monument's environment to form the yoga studio, building on the user experience in the monument. The visible beauty in the flow of yogic practices, is something I had wanted to highlight in the spatial experience.

I would need a site with a large enough space to access or create a natural, live environment. Ideally one with a big garden/green space that can be used, to create an easily adaptable, sheltered space. I would want a site in which I can strip back the building to the **key features and structure**, so I can provide myself with as much of the base structure to freely redesign the programme into it. A slightly larger building with a large garden, like one of the **houses near the park** would be suitable for this. The most important aspect to this design is its link to nature, because it exists in a very built up site.

Site Location



Requirements for site selection:

Monument must be visible from "host"

Dense garden space

Large enough to provide accommodation for users



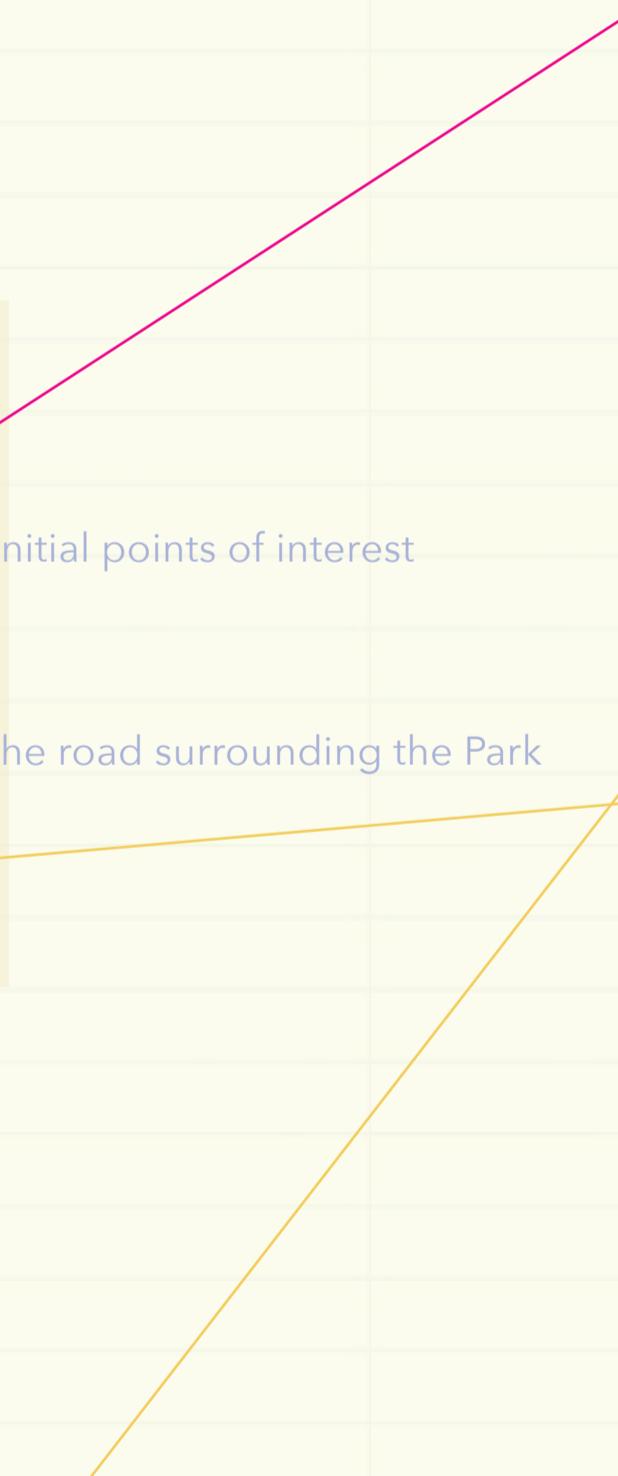
Initial points of interest

The Attree Villa

The houses on the road surrounding the Park

12 East Drive

Host building





The process of selecting the host began by exploring 6 notable sites, with a base level research being conducted specifically into 1 building.

12 East Drive is a 2 storey semi detached house.

It is reminiscent of the 30's semi detached style of architectural design, featuring bay windows, and a recessed porch. The houses next to it belong to the Edwardian style of architecture. The style of architecture dates to around 1918-1939, it's proposed that number 12 would have been built between 1926-27, a fact corroborated by the style of architecture. It's not registered as a listed building on English Heritage.

The dwelling sits with a direct view of the clock tower. It's located within the Queen's Park Conservation Area.

The house has undergone 3 approved renovations and extensions. The first, approved in 2007, for a rear extension, and loft and garage conversion into accommodation. Followed by an addition of a dormer to the rear roof slope, in 2018. Most recently, in 2019, a 2 storey extension was proposed to go on top of the flat roof, incorporating the prior alterations made over the years.

The QPCA Character Statement details the development of the residences around the park,

"Street trees and the trees within the park provide significant greening to East Drive. As with West Drive, it was not until the late 19th century that dwellings started to be constructed. An OS map dating to 1899 OS shows only two buildings present, these are considered to be the pairs 13-14 and 15-16. These dwellings are earlier than those to West Drive but clearly Edwardian in style and exhibit the same details as those to West Drive. The semi-detached and detached dwellings numbered 1-21 and 22-31 followed. No. 32 has been demolished to make way for Windermere Court."

"Dating from the inter-war period, the two pairs of semi-detached dwellings at Nos. 9 -10 and 11-12 have stepped ridge lines with a corbel between. The dwellings were designed with integral garages and a porch that also acts as a balcony. The integral garages retain their original doors, fanlights and large brackets. All of these properties have been altered to some extent - changes to roof materials and the introduction of rooflights, windows, doors, and balustrading to the balcony."

Host building

The buildings visited held a lot of potential, with noted interest in 17 East Drive and the Tennis Pavilion, however, they didn't meet all of the desired requirements for my initial proposal concept.

During the journey back, 25 and 26 West Drive, a pair of semidetached Edwardian era houses jumped out. Located to the west of the park, it sits overlooking the dog park and bowling green, the site that's home to the Odyssey to Empowerment. In 2016 it was renovated with some internal alterations and the additions of roof lights.

The building style of West Drive is "the Edwardian semi-detached dwelling and represents a time when speculative builders were paying attention to the designs of the Arts and Crafts revival. Designs were taken from pattern books and although there is uniformity in appearance, variations are noticeable to windows, doors, balconies and gable treatments."

"constructed with Sussex red facing bricks laid in a Flemish bond with expressed brick quoins to the corners on the front elevations. Side elevations tend to be of lighter multi stock bricks, with red brick used around openings, or painted render over brick. Roofs are hipped to the ends with small side gable encasing the stepped chimney stack. Terracotta crested ridge tiles and finials are evident"

"The width of the plots and position of the dwellings allowed for the incorporation of vehicular access from the outset. However as front garden depths reduced, the ability for front gardens to accommodate driveways was reduced and can be evidenced by changes to the position of piers, to widen the access, and in some cases by the removal of the boundary wall." **this isn't the case for the host, they dont have**

driveways!!

"Porches and balconies with timber railings and fretwork patterns and heavy supporting bracket are a distinctive features of the Edwardian dwellings"

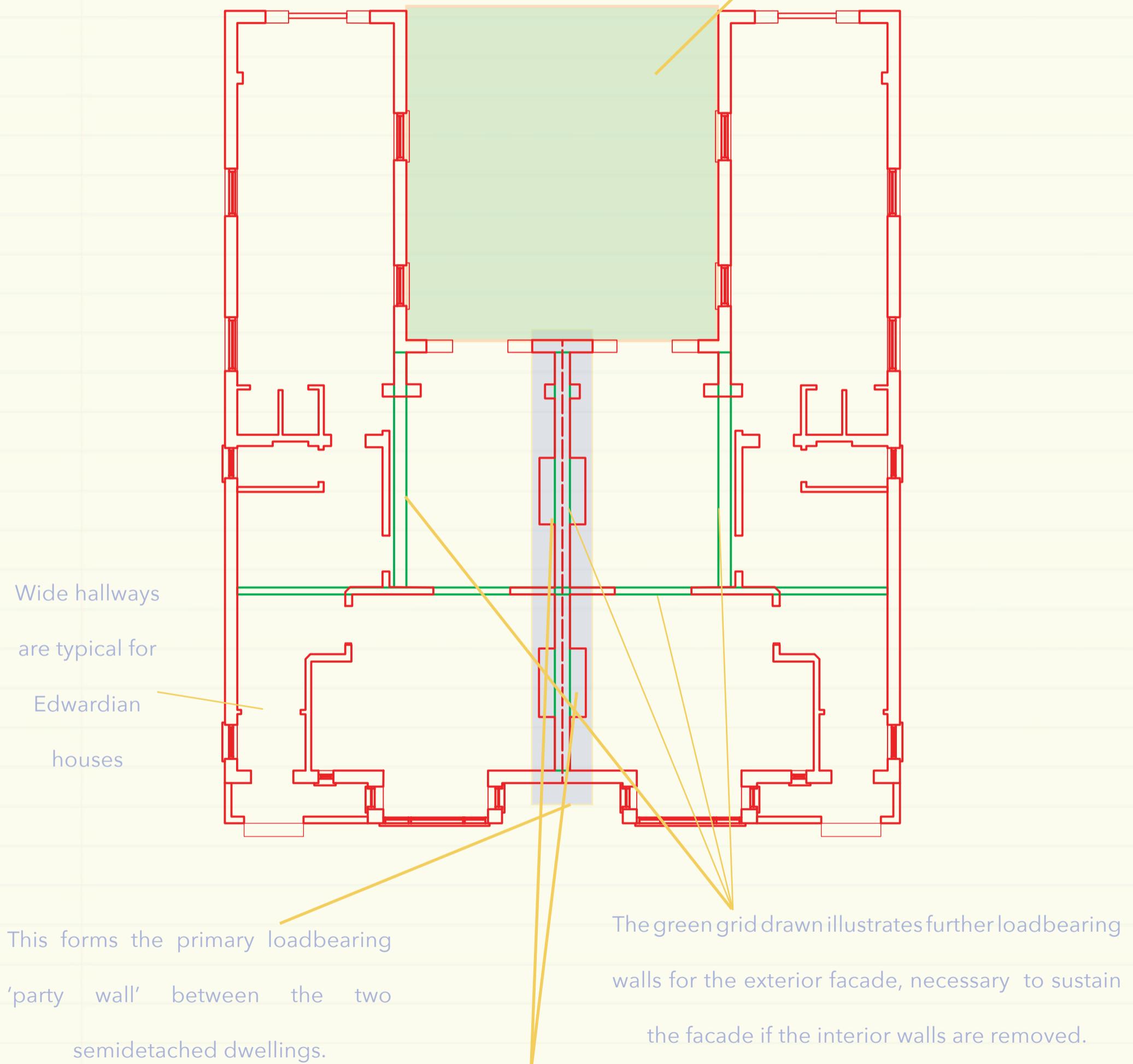
"Two storey gabled bay windows with tripartite windows arranged as six-over-one sashes"



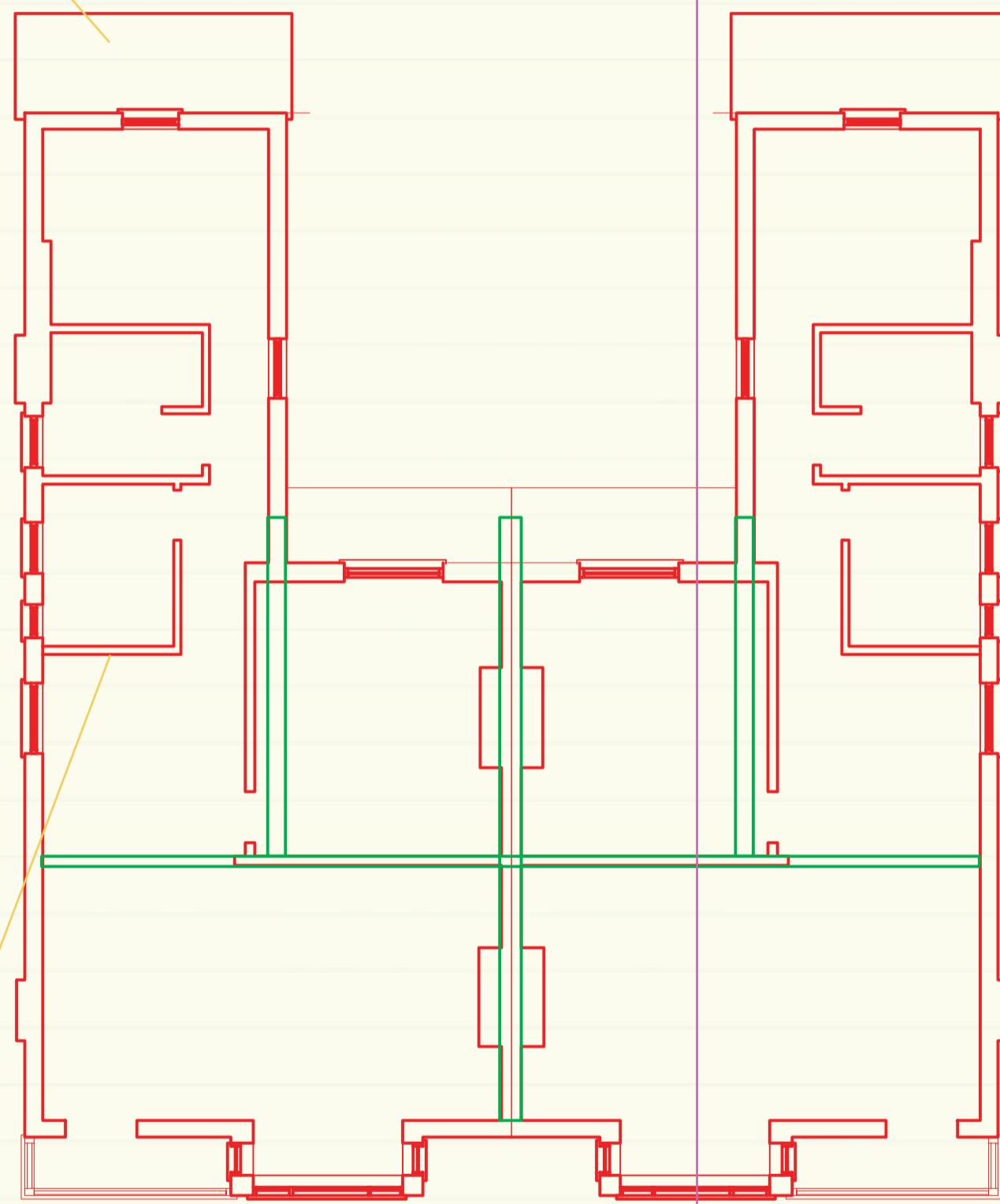
Host analysis

Plan of ground floor, this shows the existing interior walls, but removes all 'traditional' house features like the stairs and doorways to help understand the base structure.

The 'wings' of the two houses form a central garden space in the middle of the host, which further open into two large gardens, merged into one for the proposal. This provides a large green space for programmatic use



A plan of the first floor, with internal walls present, has a similar base layout to the floor below, but incorporates a roof overhang where the floorplan below extends out.



"First floor walls were
built off timber floor
joists"

Section A

Front elevation

As typical for an Edwardian house,

the dwellings feature



arches over front entrances

Bay windows, which
help carry the load of
the walls and roof above

Porch with wooden frames

Mock-Tudor cladding and timbers at
the top of the house

Red brickwork, not
yet illustrated

Back elevation



Multiple access points to the back garden

Shared back chimney

<https://www.samconveyancing.co.uk/news/house-survey/edwardian-properties-3898>

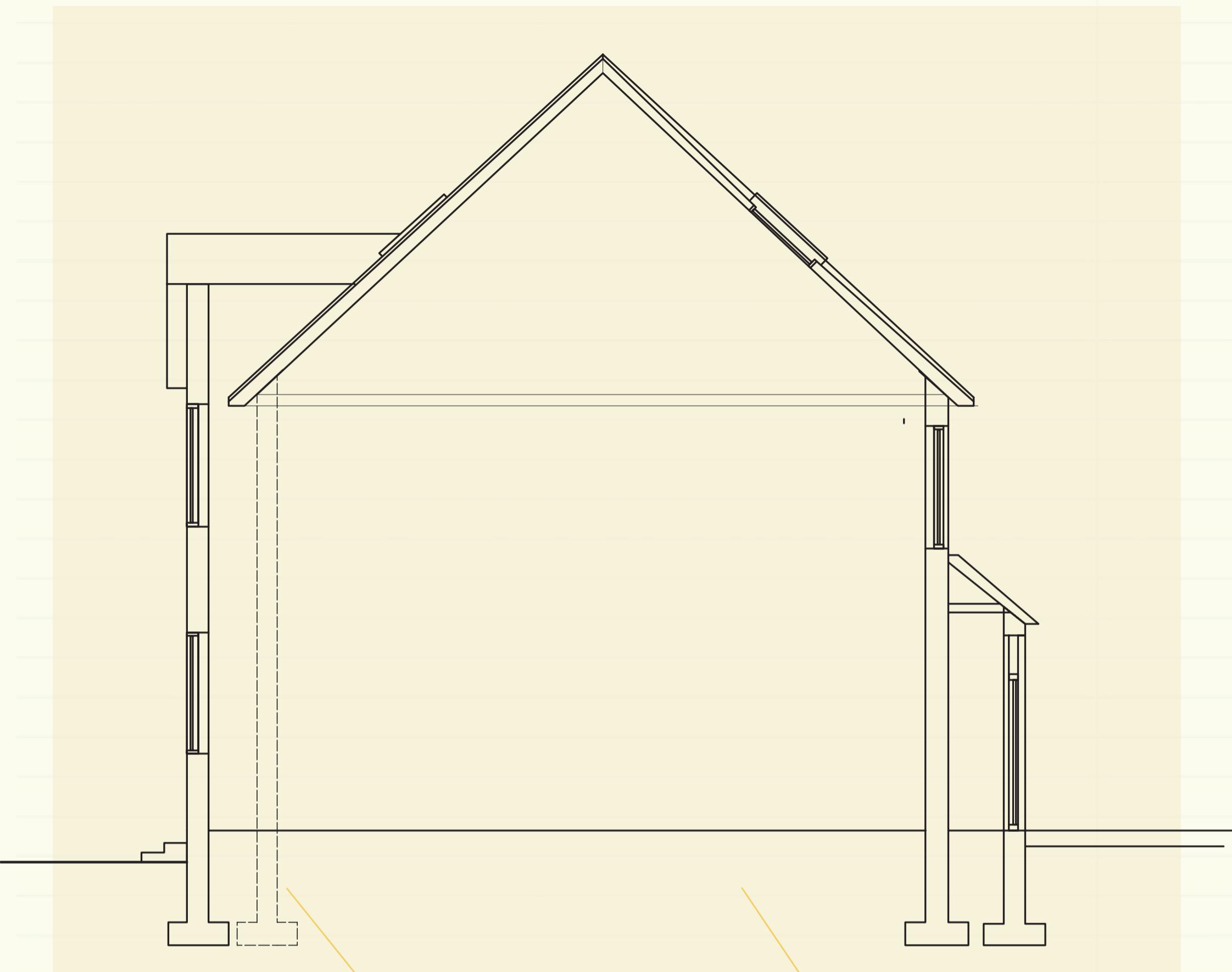
Side elevation



Slate or clay roof tiles, if original

Concrete tiles to replace broken or
missing ones

Section through A



Shallow foundations

Suspended above
ground, likely with a
concrete oversite per
the year of construction

From initial analysis, the beauty of an Edwardian house lies in the features of the facade. The host has an exquisite symmetry that incorporates a vast number of windows to draw light into the property. This is ideal for a project based in the notion of self-reflection and analysis, as it's a practice that intends on drawing a person from the inner sensation of darkness, into the light.

Research also suggests that the houses are prone to damp and weathering decay from outdated original construction methods.

An example of this is the timber joists supporting the first floor walls because "ground floor and first floor walls do not match up perfectly as builders in this period generally constructed larger kitchens with a higher ceiling compared to the rooms in the floor above, so first floor walls were built off timber floor joists".

If the host is poorly maintained and isn't restored, the building could crumble in the future, from dampness, sagging walls, etc. This means that to maintain the beauty of the present host in the future, when the programme is set, the removal, replacement and restoration of these features would be wise. The visible heritage of the building lies in the facade; the redbricks, symmetry, bay windows, chimneys etc. These are all features that should live on proudly in future use of the space!

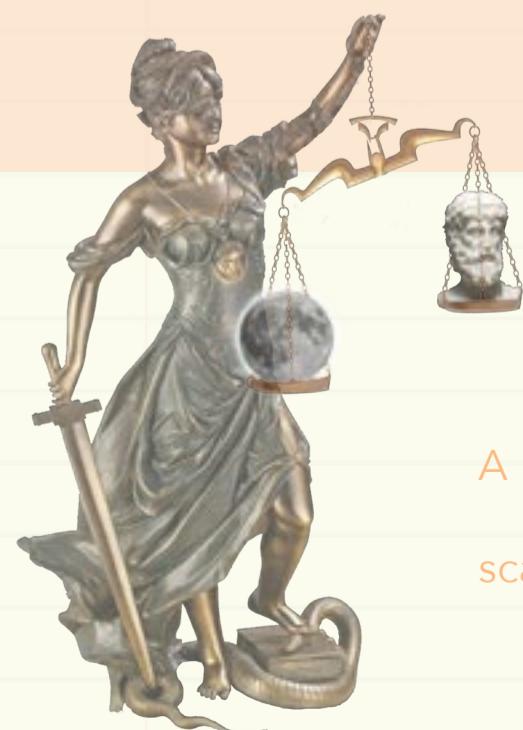
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Programme

Research

Modern Female Identity

The monument in the first semester was designed to provide women with a safe space to undergo self reflection, in the midst of all the bombarding and sometimes overwhelming messages of feminism in modern society. We live in a society in which there is a minimal existence of the female voice in the historical fabric that curated the ways in which we exist. Our lives are guided by the hands of men, who dictate our roles, laws, and lives. Dating as far back as Ancient Greece, feminism has slowly bubbled into the loud, and provocative voice that it has now, in 3rd wave feminism; teetering on the edge of entering a new wave. The problem with this is that women have been unknowingly forced to mould their identities in a 'man's world'. From birth we're assigned genders, and with that a box in which our roles exist, we believe we must fit into it. We get given colour and gender specific toys; girls get pink; toys to cook, baby dolls to nurse, exposed to the concept of a damsel in distress who needs a 'knight in shining armour' to come rescue her. The evolution of feminism fought against these confines, slowly creating space for us to develop our own identities and find our voices.



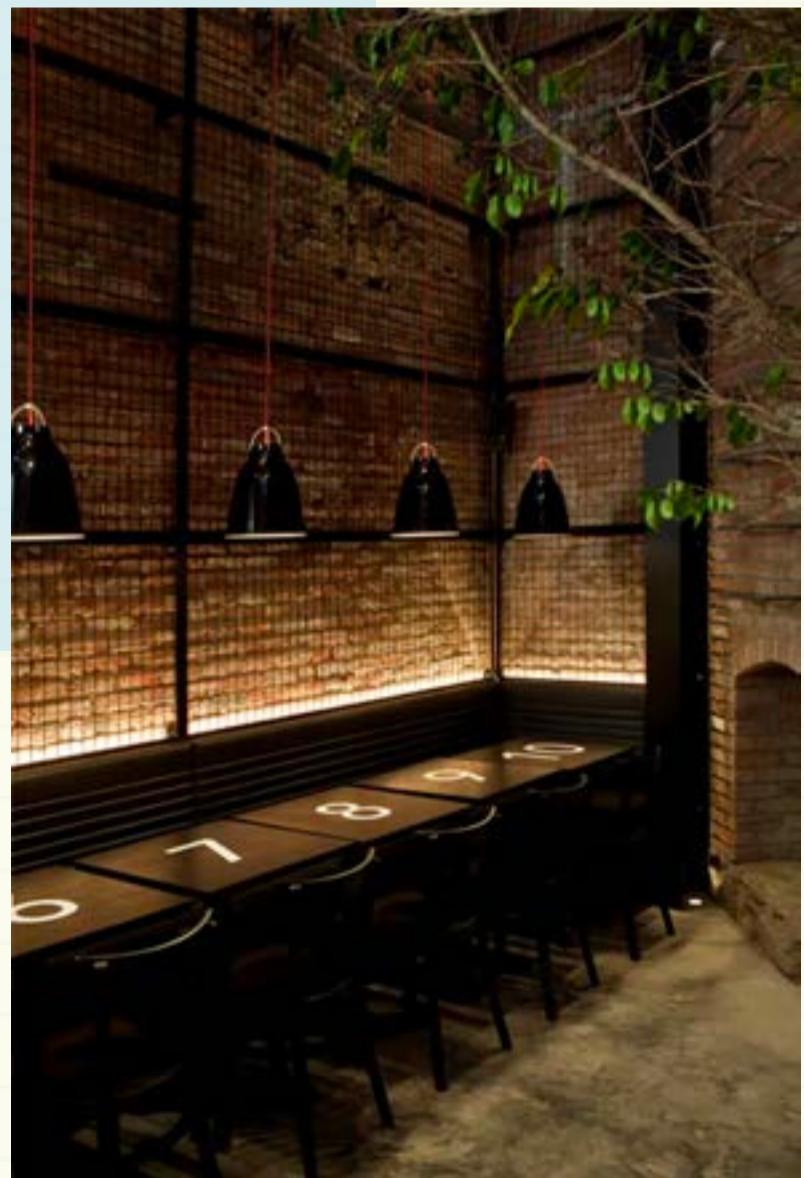
A collage titled 'Thetis' ruling', representing that the scales of justice should tip in favour of the feminine energy, represented by the moon, in the future

"forced to mould their identities in a 'man's world'"



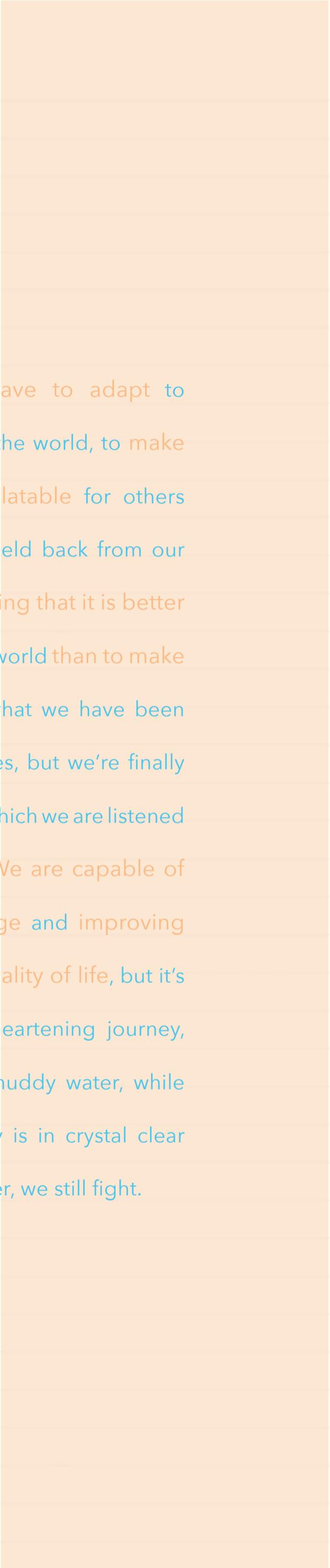
Phare Shoes by Christopher Elliot, who describes the design as a "feminine but powerful space".

This is an image that came up when 'feminine architecture' was searched. The design of this is basic, with simple geometries that creates a beautiful aesthetic. However, it's a design motif that's used in other forms of architecture too, so what makes this "feminine"? The phallic forms that could be representative of lipsticks? The overuse of pink? The soft forms, that imply the generalised assumption that women are soft? The designer describes it as 'feminine BUT powerful', implying that the two don't naturally pair well together.



Comparatively, Tartinery Nolita by Lightyears is what comes up for 'masculine' architecture. The design includes neutral and darker tones and material choices. Featuring hard, straight lines, and a structured, controlled layout. These two examples illustrates the disparities in the stereotypes of gender labelling. So how are women supposed to feel comfortable and safe to develop identity? Against the backdrop of gender stereotypes, it is worth noting that my own experiences seem to point to an identity formation process that requires individual experiences rather than categories or stereotypes tacitly imposed upon me.

However, this still happens in a world that has been heavily influenced by men's identities. Caroline Criado Perez writes about how we literally live in a world designed by and for men, developing on statements made by Simone de Beauvoir. Statistics show that offices "are five degrees too cold for women, because the formula to determine their temperature was developed in the 1960s based on the metabolic resting rate of a 40-year-old, 70kg man; women's metabolisms are slower. Women in Britain are 50% more likely to be misdiagnosed following a heart attack: heart failure trials generally use male participants. Cars are designed around the body of "Reference Man", so although men are more likely to crash, women involved in collisions are nearly 50% more likely to be seriously hurt." Yet, women expected to comfortably and safely develop their personal and communal identities in a world governed by men, whilst simultaneously dealing with the pushback of harassment, abuse, bullying, manipulation, etc inflicted by men, constantly feeling unsafe. We see Harvey Weinstein on charged for assault charges because he, a prominent male in his industry, abused his power and took advantage of vulnerable, innocent women, as they attempted to enter the industry, claiming that 'that's how things work'. It's a scary, destabilising landscape that we are expected to weave our way through.



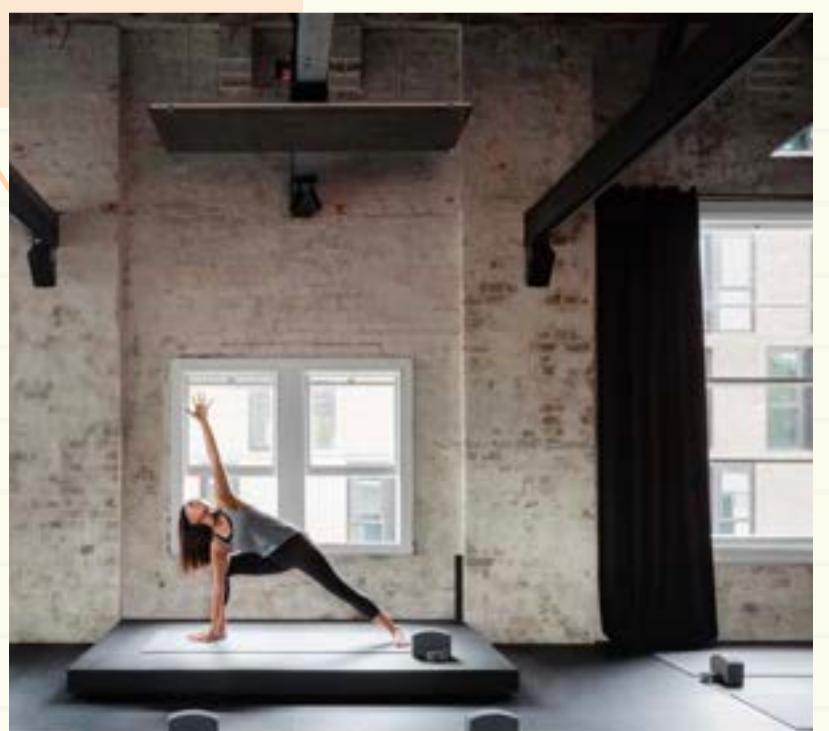
We constantly have to adapt to navigate through the world, to make our identities palatable for others to avoid getting held back from our aspirations, believing that it is better to be quiet in the world than to make a noise. That is what we have been taught for centuries, but we're finally seeing a world in which we are listened to and believed. We are capable of influencing change and improving the communal quality of life, but it's a slow, often disheartening journey, wading through muddy water, while the rest of society is in crystal clear water. However, we still fight.

The Programme

The programme is for the women who feel overwhelmed by the constant need to fight for their rights, and consistently underwhelmed with the results. If women are able to develop a strong personal sense of self, they will be able to join together as a stronger community. With the project set in 2045, following on from the trends of modern and past feminism, I propose that future feminism will evolve to become more centred around the sense of self and less around the fight for communal rights. Allowing the community to come together to fight when necessary and be able to fight on a firmer as they too will have formed a communal identity for themselves, rather than around that of their adversaries, thus making it a more equal fight. The hope is that it will also decrease the need to fight because the world will have to slowly learn to adjust around them to harmoniously coexist in time.



I wanted to base my programme around writing having experienced how beneficial writing is to the introspection process involved in identity reformation. I developed from the work done on my dissertation, which explored the ways in which one can cope with change to develop an identity in a liminal space, through the understanding of the liminal space experience that constant migration creates. My conclusions were that a person requires conscious creative outlets, in which they can sift through their experiences and piece them together to form identity. In my experiences, as one of the case studies, I have developed my identity through narrative based self expression, that has evolved over the years and is now exploring the value of writing as a process of exploration, as well as the use of yoga as a practice of subconscious self reflection. I drew inspiration from my 'Odyssey to Enlightenment' work, using the existence of the imbalance and uncertainty women feel in the patriarchal society that we live in, which is why it became an easy to develop programme, because of how important it could be in the future to assist the work that past and present feminists to bring about societal change in the future.

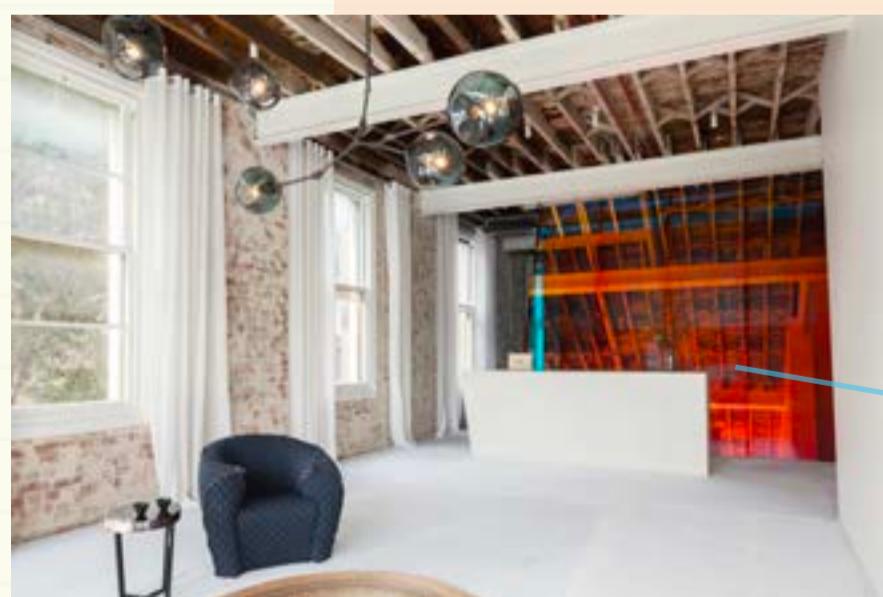
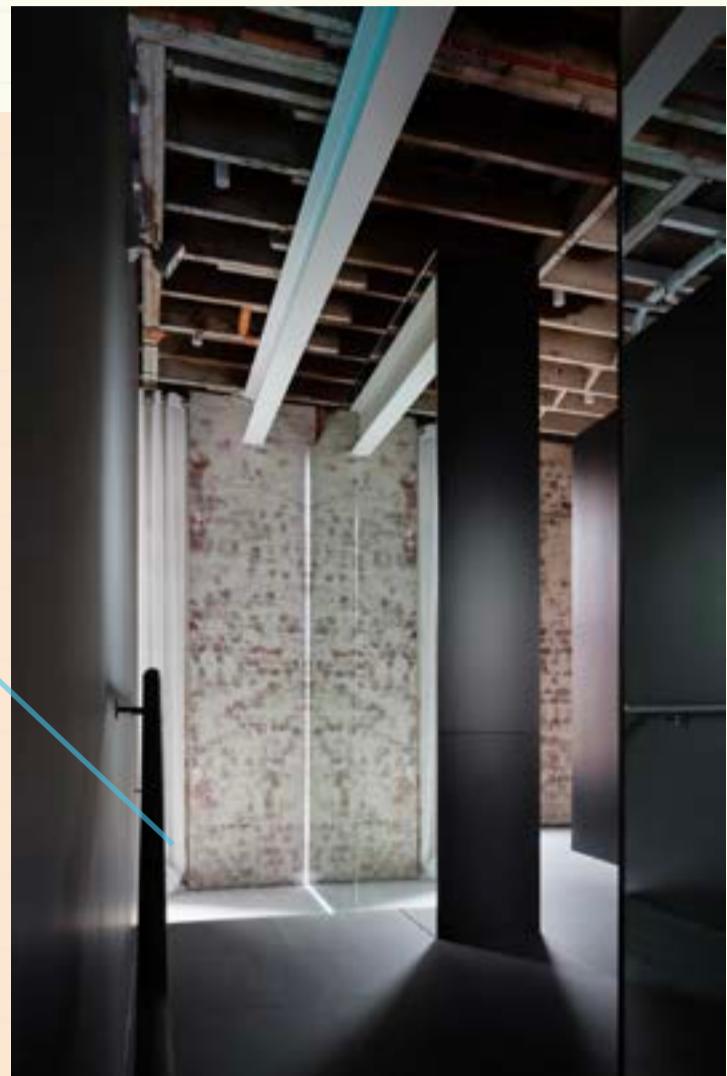


The Humming Puppy

// Karen Abernathy

The yoga studio is located within a converted warehouse. The exterior structure was left untouched, with the renovations made inside, with minimal adaption to the existing.

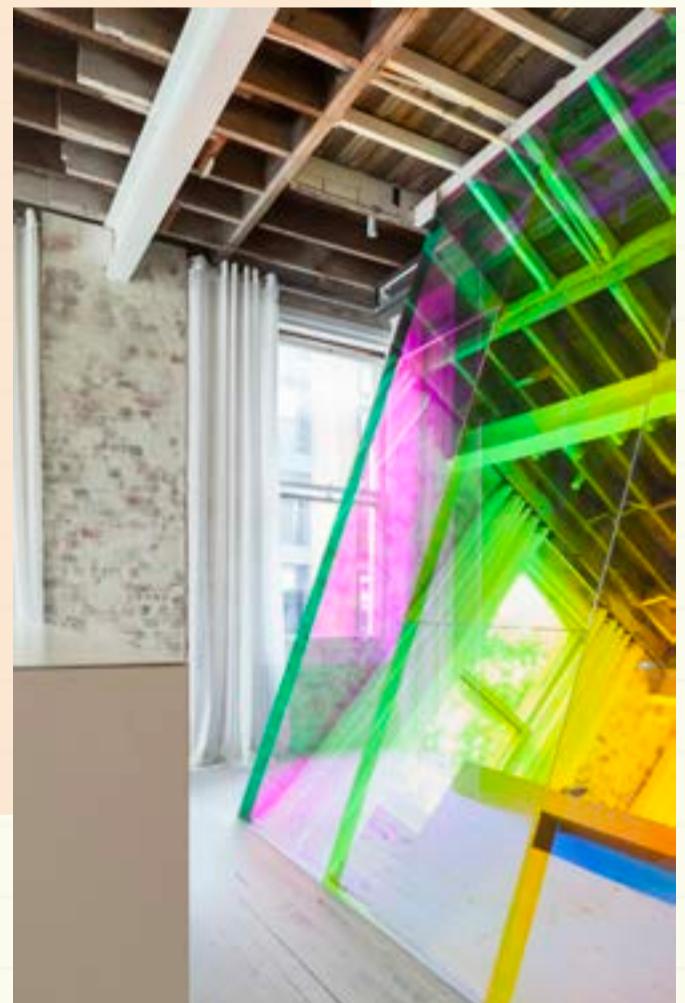
The anonymity from the street is intentional, so that the first step you take within the space has an immersive effect. On arrival, visitors step into a stairwell that is deliberately neutral to allow a moment of calm and separation before they enter the building. They then move on into the main space, which includes a changing room with lockers and a lounge area. Both these zones are separated by an angled screen that is lined with a dichroic filter, which appears to shimmer and changes colour as a visitor moves around it.

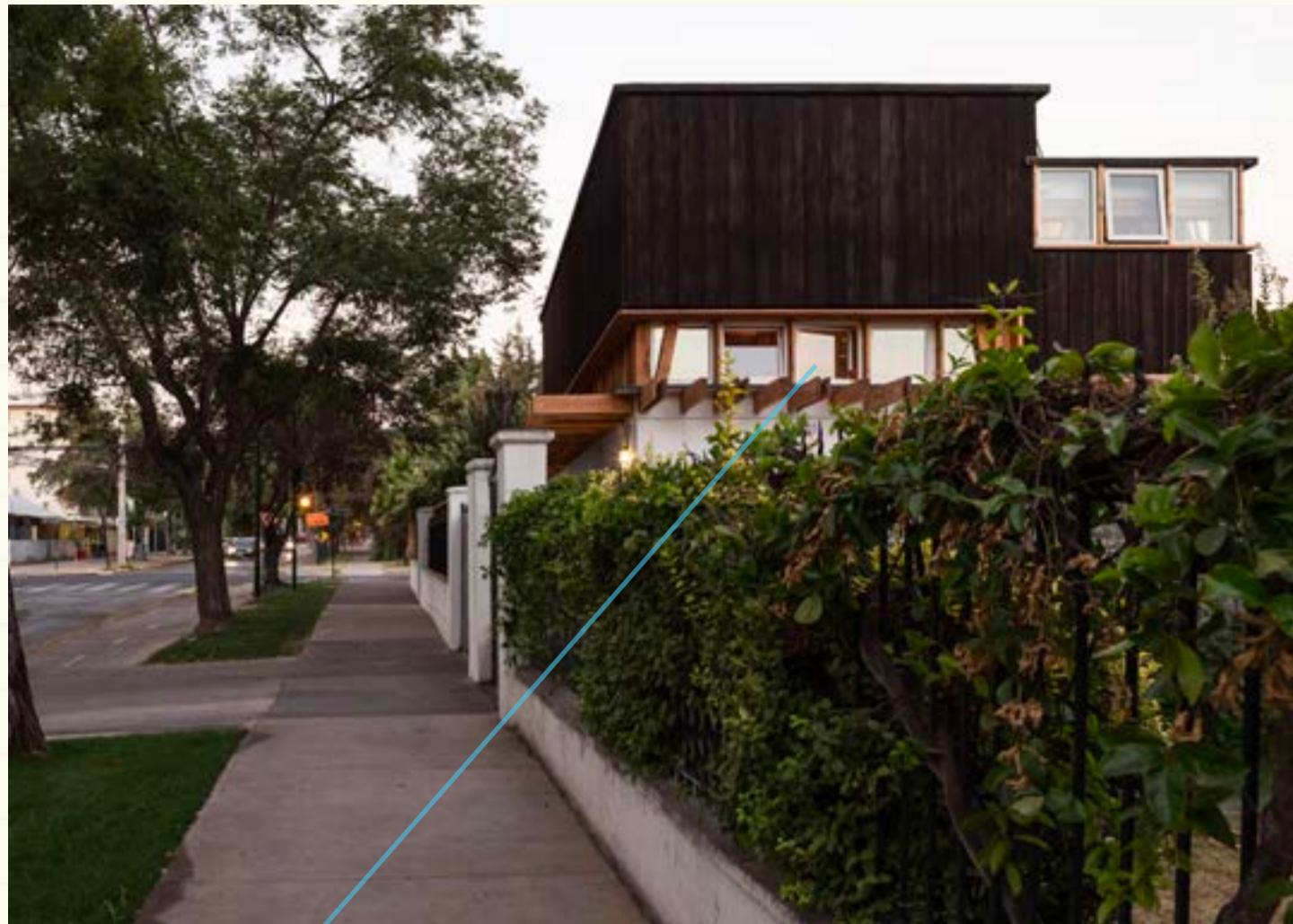


The architect chose to allow the existing building to become the primary focus of the design, allowing the studio to be designed around the 'concept of light and reflection', where design features reflect the beauty of the exposed forms.



Here you see a design in which the users get to see the interrelationship of what was, and what can be. Using this concept in my design will allow the users of the center to merge the concept that you don't need to recreate yourself to be better, you simply need to merge what once was with what can be to become who you need to be within a changing landscape. The user can experience going from what looks like an ordinary building into a completely transformed space within, feeling the potential for change within that will occur during their yoga practice. The bright expansive spaces allow for the immersive and reflective experiences through use of natural light and unobstructed views of the space, having ceilings and full walls would make one feel confined. This is exacerbated by the inclusion of reflective surfaces, which paired with the bright light that leaks through the windows, provide a 'heavenly' or 'otherworldly' experience. This mirrors the feeling you feel after a yoga class. While many yoga studios focus on what one can see, to ensure the experience of openness, this one enhances the sensory experience, using a variety of forms and textures which play off and complement each other to draw the user in. While this palette would be overwhelming in other projects, it is balanced here, ensuring the user wouldn't feel overwhelmed.



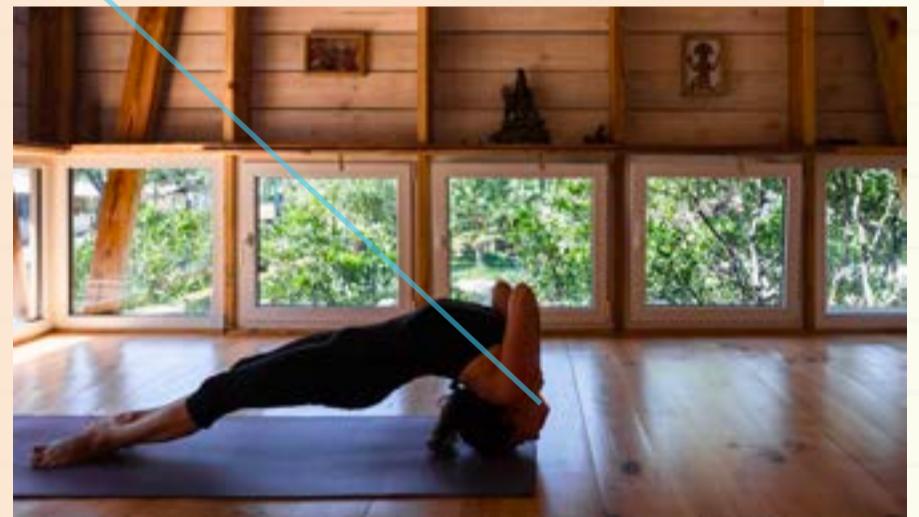


Ashtanga Yoga Chile

// DX Arquitectos

"It needed to satisfy all the conditions for the comfortable practice of yoga - good ventilation, good acoustic and thermal insulation, and a spiritual atmosphere"

The studio sits like a treehouse above the director's house. It's lined with a narrow series of windows along the base, at eye level for the users on a mat. The plain upper walls provides a base with minimal distraction for the mind, assisting users in focusing with balancing poses.





"The exposed structure also relates to the structure of the human body, and an understanding of yoga as the practice of 'body art.'" Exposed forms illustrate the message that a space doesn't need decoration and fancy features to provide what one needs, in the same way that a person doesn't need anything but the connection within to be happy in their lives.

The choice of pine where the grain is visible creates a variation in material, which play off each other to provide a nurturing, warm space. The pockets of light above open the space up, making it feel less confining, whilst exaggerating the tonal palette. You can feel the warmth, airiness, and nurturing environment within the space. The typical design motif for zen based practices is to incorporate views out into nature, to allow one to see and hear the connection to the world around them. This is necessary because it's a practice about opening oneself up to the world, which is contradictory if the space is shut off from the world.

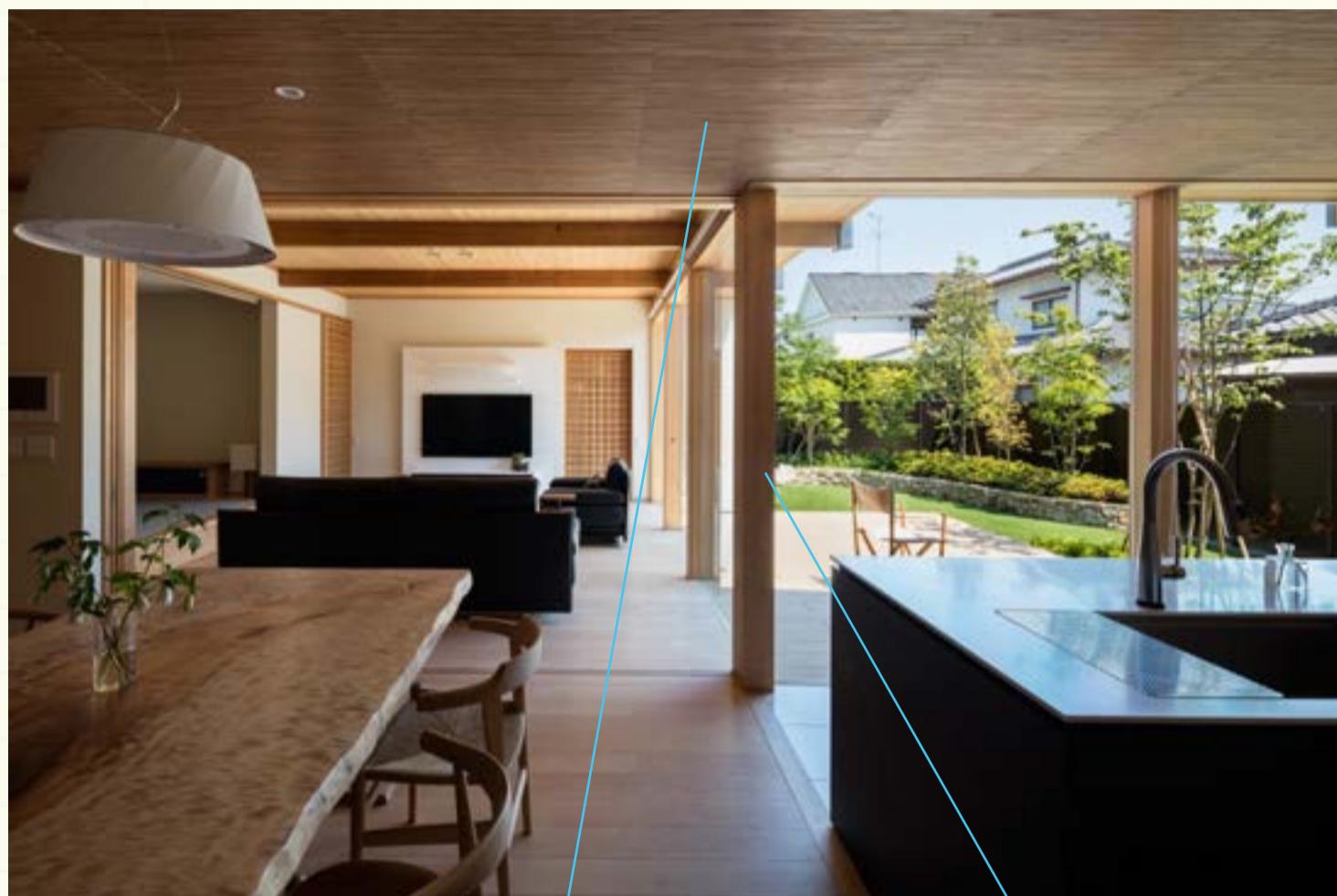


The programme is a centre for identity reformation, in isolation of the expectations placed upon an individual. The centre would be open to all women, and those that resonate with the plight of women, such as non-gendered etc individuals. This would be important because the users would need to feel safe with these strangers for a period of time to be able to undergo this process without fear of their surroundings due to the potential sensitive nature of the process. If I were to undergo this journey around men following my upbringing and experiences, it would've severely altered the experience of my journey, as I would have felt more cautious going through this. Their surroundings and companions need to be nurturing and comforting influences on them for enhanced supportive experiences. It would also go against the point of the centre to have it open to all genders in this manner, as there may be conflicting ideals placed between the users, which hinders the experience.

surroundings and companions need to be nurturing and have a comforting influence

A Nurturing Family Home

// Takashi Okuno & Associates



The low ceilings are successfully balanced out by the open planned views to the rest of the house and out into the garden. Having the communal, living areas centered around the views of the garden massively increases the nurturing nature of the house.

"The living area is an open and dynamic space with decorative beams, whereas the natural reed cladding on the dining area and kitchen ceilings creates a calming effect". This open planned dwelling successfully encompasses a feeling of calm and restorativeness within.



The structural columns provide a sense of security, whilst maintaining a consistent material palette throughout. They create a usable grid for the house to be designed around. I think the use of the black countertop creates a harsh contrast against the aesthetic created in the rest of the house, however, the reflective surface enhances the openness of the room successfully.

Identity, as explored in the dissertation, is developed through the process of analysis of ones personal values and beliefs. It is a deeply personal experience, one that cannot be influenced or guided by an external party because that creates a breeding ground for ones identity to develop in accordance to another's journey. James Marcia, a developmental psychologist proposed that there are 4 'statuses' that a person experiences in their lifetime. He proposed that all individuals develop a sense of their identities, however the degree of formation differs.

The 4 'stages'

"Identity Diffusion, where the adolescent lacks the willingness to commit to any choices for their lives.

Identity Foreclosure sees the adolescent with a desire to commit to their future. The desire often arises from conformation into the roles or values expected by their peers. People during this 'status' likely haven't explored any personal options.

Identity Moratorium, sees the exploration of various choices, but no commitment to any of them.

Identity Achievement, is the final status. Following an identity crisis, the adolescent has made a commitment to their choices and values. This creates a full concept of their personal identity."

All people would have reached one of these stages, however, I believe the reason that what many women struggle with in society is that they're forming identities around the ideals placed upon them.

These ideals tend to be a lot more significant than those placed upon their counterparts. The centre provides a safe space that's isolated from the expectations of the "mans world" that exists on the other side of the doors, so the users don't feel the pressures of having to conform, which many women find easier to do. The programme is aimed at the women who have conformed to what is expected of them, both explicitly and implicitly.



Polycarbonate sheets filter light into the 'box'

Interior walls: sheets of aluminium and stainless steel

Exterior walls: perforated steel, enable ventilation and future plant growth



Lightbox, Restroom for Women

/ Rohan Chavan

These public toilets were designed, beyond the obvious use, "to provide women an exclusive social space" a rarity in India. It gives a safe space for women to commune and interact, with additional safety measures of CCTV, policing to ensure safe use, and phone charging booths, and a panic alarm system. It's a bright, easily visible space which enhances the feelings of safety, using hot pink polyurethane to make it stand out in its location. The architect designed it around a tree which simultaneously provides shade, but also symbolic protection and the notion of being grounded, safe. The use of metals; aluminium, stainless, and perforated steel seems to have the same symbolic intentions, strength and stability from external dangers.

The work for the monument began in the exploration of spirituality, and one's spiritual identity, which transcends the physical realm. Spirituality, if put simply, is 'a way of life in which a person seeks to connect to their 'true nature''. The spiritual journey is deeply personal, and follows its own course based on individual needs throughout. There are therefore, many types of spiritual pathways, which are often used interchangeably throughout one's journey. All of these are rooted in self exploration and analysis processes, some using external sources of information and acts to aid their explorations, and others using internal, occasionally subconscious contemplation processes to guide them. These processes include; mindfulness, meditation, yoga, Tai Chi, and other repetition based practices, and acts like understanding astrology, having personal rituals, using crystal practices, etc, all of these feed a deeper part of one's soul. However, there are countless acts which are rooted in the same principles but aren't considered to be 'traditional' spiritual practices. It is these processes that aid the self-analysis process of identity formation.

As interpreted from a talk delivered by

Rabbi Jacobson, any activity which results

in an inner response of resonance

is a spiritual activity. The simple acts

of listening to music, or playing an

instrument, creating art, or going for a

run, are all spiritual activities. To know if

something is a spiritual activity, one must

be able to recognise an almost physical,

freeing response deep within the depths

of themselves. Some experience it as a

feeling in the pits of their stomachs, or

a warm glow from their hearts, or even the

feeling of floating in water. Any activity

that creates this feeling is a spiritual

activity.

Mill Valley Cabins

// Feldman Architecture

A dwelling constructed for an artist and

yogi/gardener couple, to provide them

with a family home in which they could

bask in their hobbies and creativity.





Mill Valley Cabins

// Feldman Architecture

The cabins are located in dense forestry, providing the artist and yogi with immersive views into nature. "The artist studio, which was placed higher up, looks out over tree canopies". The roof of the yoga studio features a multicoloured garden within the eyeline of the artist.

The yoga building is located below, it is embedded in the views out into the forest, enhancing the tranquil experience within the space.



This project is entirely immersed in greenery and woodland. The architects didn't need to use wood tones within the spaces to enhance the natural experience. The white walls provide a clean, blank canvas for the occupants, something necessary for the artist, specifically. The walls contrast the sensory experience, creating a balance, rather than overwhelming the senses with overuse of woodland tones. I realise the importance of this, especially paired with the red tones of my host building - i need to ensure that there's a material balance alongside the complimentary tones and textures. This also enabled the architects to densely populate the pathways and surrounds of the cabins with plant life, providing the yogi with ample gardening opportunities. The cabins have a mystical feel to them, due to the link to nature. Considering the host has a large garden, playing up this feature using the structured layout of plantlife simultaneously provides a canvas of inspiration for creativity, as well as a location for contemplation through gardening for the users. This project marries the two key concepts of mine.

During these activities, one's mind is taken to a higher place, a liminal space, in which they are free of the confines of the material world. I theorised in my dissertation, that it is during these activities that identity is developed too. Identity and spirituality are thus closely interlinked. There are many that won't recognise the link because their personal spiritual journey doesn't involve 'typical' spiritual practices.

Writing is one of these processes which isn't typically linked with being spiritual.

However, it is the clearest example of using a self reflective process, which likely resonates within, to cope and understand oneself. Henri Nouwen explained that 'writing is a spiritual habit':

"Writing can be a true spiritual discipline. Writing can help us to concentrate, to get in touch with the deeper stirrings of our hearts, to clarify our minds, to process confusing emotions, to reflect on our experiences, to give artistic expression to what we are living, and to store significant events in our memories. Writing can also be good for others who might read what we write.

Quite often a difficult, painful, or frustrating day can be "redeemed" by writing about it. By writing we can claim what we have lived and thus integrate it more fully into our journeys. Then writing can become lifesaving for us and sometimes for others too."

Ryan J Pelton explains that in modern society, 'writing has become utilitarian.' 'A pragmatic exercise only necessary for getting published or making money'. He states that writing has become targeted around an audience, and moved away from the 'spiritual discipline and habit that is necessary for dealing with pain, sorrow, and the confusing world in which we live'. I found, through writing my previous two modules, the dissertation and future practice, how deeply important it is to use writing as a means to explore, understand, and heal myself. Obama used letter writing, which evolved to writing for himself, as a means to explore his values.



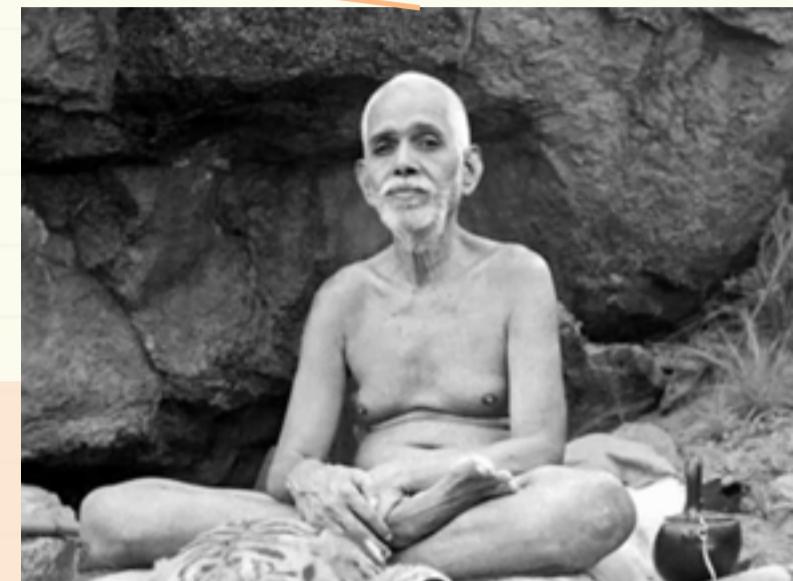
Writer's Studio

// Eric J Smith

The studio was designed for a retired banker turned poet. He required an 'off the grid', 'deeply meditative' work space, achieved through the use of hidden cables in the design, and the vast, unobstructed window wall facing the woods. The project illustrates how important the link to nature is to the creative process, as well as the benefit of detachment from the external world. The use of rough stone work, and ambient lighting that emphasises the feature creates an immersive environment for the user to work and feel inspired within. The choice of materials are also grounding, steel, wood, and stone creates the feeling of security and stability, a bubble of protection from the world and nature. This is necessary to be aware of and incorporate into the design process.

Writing can be used to analyse ones thoughts, the process of writing becomes meditative and evolves into being used to examine the subconscious links the mind makes. Following through the meditation of the act, and then reflecting back on ones thoughts to understand and analyse the origins of some of the negative patterns one might begin to expose, can help a person to heal themselves. From personal experience, when I started the process, writing became an outlet to understand the overwhelming thoughts I had. It's since evolved to dissect some of the glaring events that occur in a day, such as if I've noticed a negative behaviour pattern, I'll write about it to try and figure out where it began and why it's become a part of me. Coming face to face with these realisations have allowed me to connect with the positives of them and part with the toxic aspects to feel more content within myself.

This act of self-inquiry allows you to separate from the mind and reconnect with the true 'self' that resides within. This concept evolved from the teachings of Ramana Maharshi, who taught that a person should consistently question themselves, analysing the 'I' in ones behaviours and thoughts. For example, asking 'who am I' or 'why do I do' something. This questioning process connects the person with the awareness of 'self', disconnecting from the 'I' in the behaviours. This is a complex theory, but put simply, it's the act of detaching from ones 'ego', which here describes the illusion that a person is connected to the tangible world. The 'ego' holds a person back from their true nature, as it focuses on an existence outside of oneself. This 'ego' is what, subconsciously, feeds the belief that one needs to conform to exist in the world.



Los Terrenos

// Tatiana Bilbao



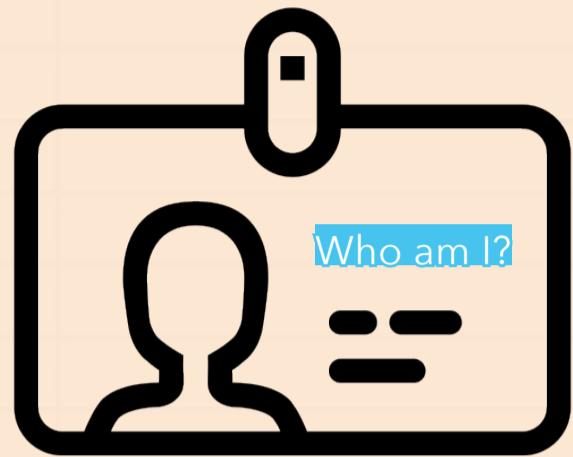
A reflective house in Mexico, by female architect Tatiana Bilbao. The house immerses itself in nature, reflecting back the site through use of mirrored glass on the exterior walls. This can be symbolic of the self reflective process if used in my design, but also symbolises the need to conform, where women adapt to reflect the values of their peers to fit in with society.

However, there are many people, women specifically, who have fought against this idea of conformity. They, I believe, have connected with a sense of self and have used this connection to build themselves to guide themselves through life. For many, the detachment from the I comes from an identity crisis in some form. A notable example of this is Gloria Allred, she studied to become a teacher. Following a traumatic sexual assault after which she fell pregnant, she had an abortion, which was illegal at the time. This event, I believe, caused her to reassess her sense of self in light of her modern society, and decided to study to become a lawyer, and an advocate for women's rights. She has since become a strong willed, notoriously ruthless attorney, a role unexpected, and notably disliked in women. There have been articles and tv shows that turn her into the butt of a joke, like the Simpsons and Saturday Night Live, because it's so unusual to see this in today's society.



The programme is to provide a safe space for women to come, either after having this crisis of self, or because they recognise the imbalance - which in itself is a crisis of self - and allow them to safely undergo the scary and at times painful journey into becoming who they're destined to be. This centre will hopefully prevent them from having to experience pain and trauma like Gloria Allred and I have had to before beginning this journey. Building up from the monument, the journey will allow those who feel notably changed within from the self reflective practices intended by the use of the monument to develop upon their experiences and grow into themselves.

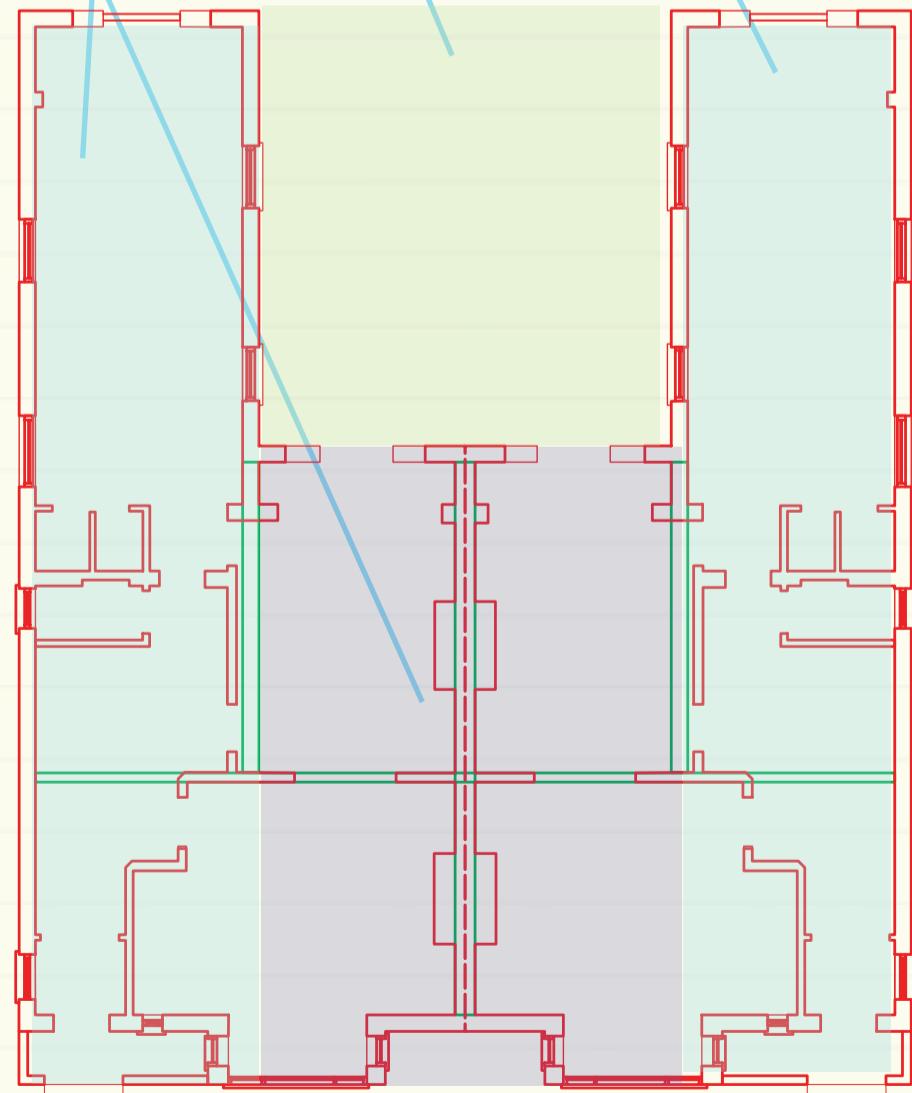
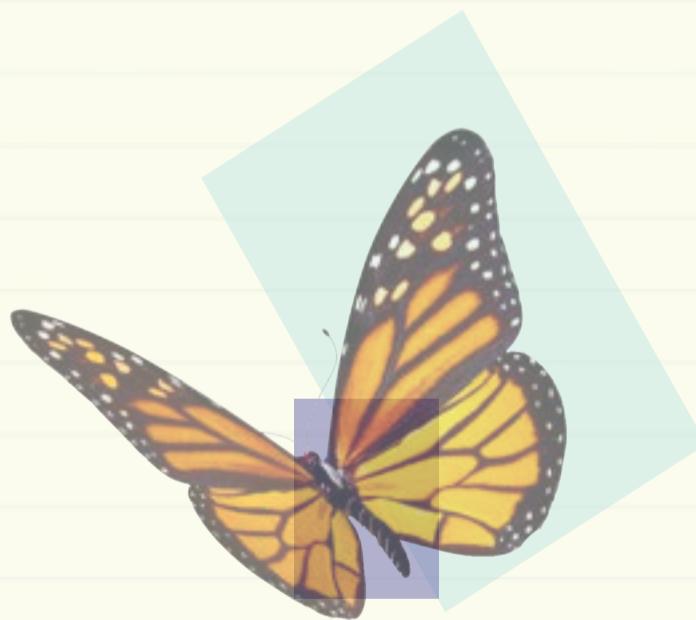
The Liminal Space



The crux of the programme is developed from the dissertation, which concludes that for Identity Achievement, a person needs to undergo the analysis process in a liminal space. In a liminal space, "all things are subject to change". The physical space exists having lost all sense of previous purpose, in essence it is a shell of what it once was, like an empty school or abandoned building. An opportunity to transform the space, to give it a new purpose, now presents itself.

I propose to take what once was two family homes and recreate it into a new programme for identity reformation. Using the base concept from he dissertation of how a "caterpillar goes through its transformation within the safety of its cocoon", the base layout of the intervention will be representative of a butterfly.

The two houses have 'wings' in which the 'liminal spaces' will be constructed, with the communal experience spaces located in the middle - the body or heart - of the house, which symbolically represents the user's experiences of learning to soar as they heal. The host's layout provides a central garden - which by its very nature is subject to change, the space will provide additional meditative activities and aid users in learning to care for both themselves through the activity of tending to the garden, symbolically ridding it of the weeds and decay to enable it to healthily grow and evolve.



The liminal space originally was used to describe the transition experiences during rites of passage events. I propose a programme based around the rights of passage of an identity formation. Women in society must complete this rite as a way of finding the true personal identity away from societal influences and confines. They must go in here to dissolve their preconceived perceptions of their lives and unlearn behaviours and coping mechanisms. "The way you react has been repeated thousands of times and it has become routine for you. You are conditioned to be a certain way, and that is the challenge: to change your normal reactions, to change your routine, to take a risk, and make different choices" to find yourself.



walking down the aisle is considered a liminal space

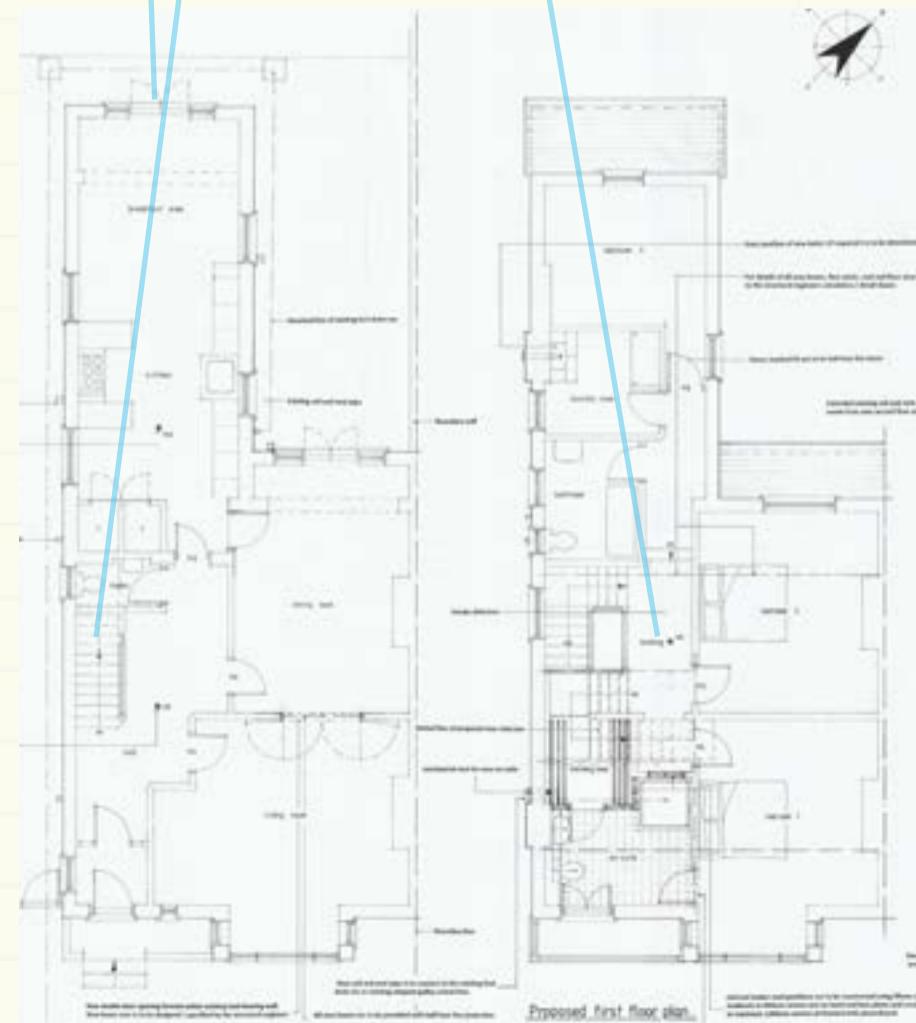


a Tamil puberty ceremony, marking the passage into womanhood following getting their first periods



a Quinceanera.

In architecture, the liminal space is used to describe the transition spaces, or thresholds in designs, such as the door ways, corridors, the connecting design aspects. These are typically designed as a secondary addition to connect the primary 'rooms' to each other. In the host, they connect the bedrooms, bathrooms, and living spaces to each other. In the intervention, the focus of design will be on liminal spaces, as they will be the base for the primary activities to take place. They will form walkways around the house - honouring the original architectural definition of the spaces, however, they will now be adaptable for various activities - with spaces to sit comfortably etc.





Using the concept of a cocoon, the design will go from using hard, fixed forms of 'cold' materials like concrete, and slowly incorporate warmer tones of wood, and warm tone metals as you move towards the centre of the house, where the central garden, and communal spaces are situated. It will go from private space, which will foster healing and self reflection through choice of materials and design interventions, into cosy, warm, fluid forms of the communal spaces. This, like the cocoon acts as a protective layer from the outside, in the space where the users need it the most because their private spaces are likely the spaces in which they're most vulnerable in their self reflective experiences. The communal spaces foster supportive experiences between users, so the forms and tones are comforting and "homey" and will look out into the garden.



Treetop Walkway

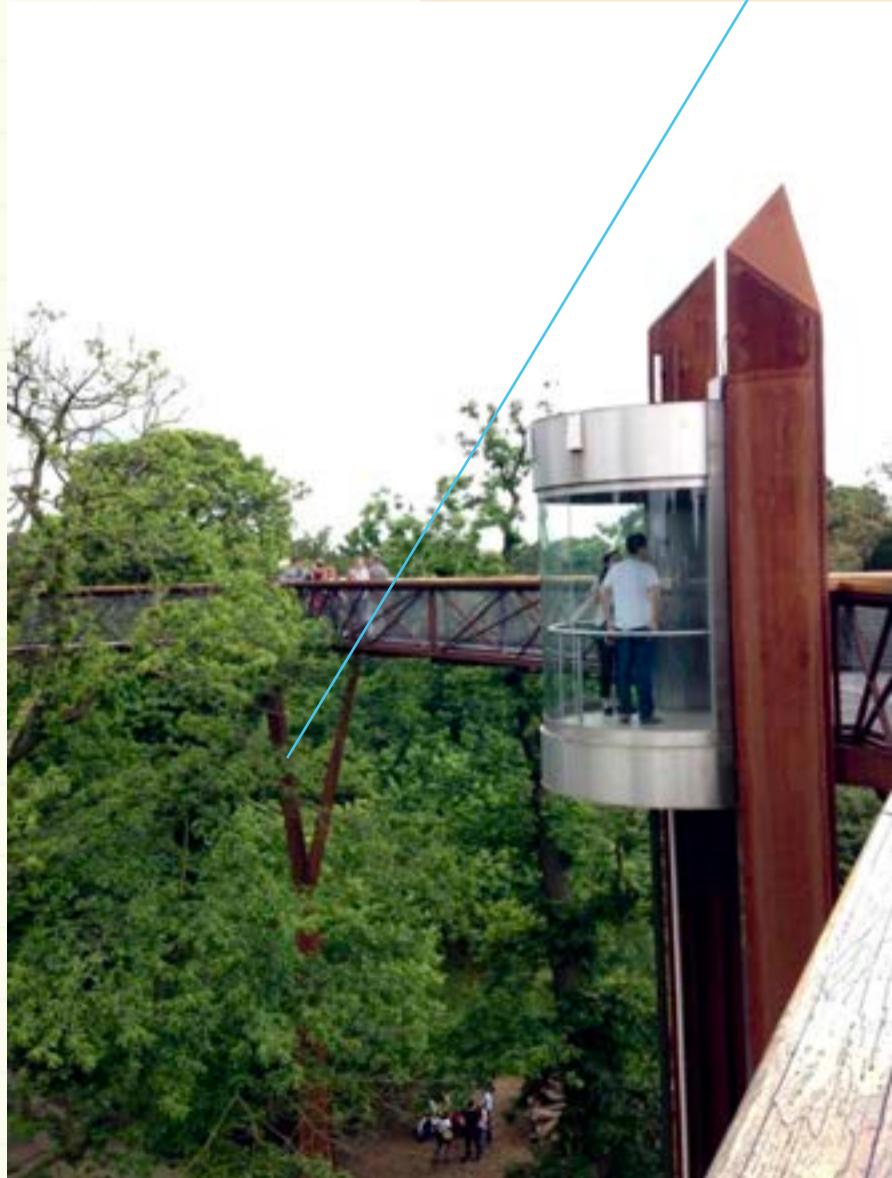
// Marks Barfield Architects

This project is centered around circulation spaces. The framework is constructed with steel that was treated to develop a weathered look to match the surrounding trees. I selected this project for it's programmatic 'inbetween' feel. The walkways provide users with a sensation of being suspended above what was - the stable footing on the floor - to see what could be, the transitional space in which they see a new perspective of the world. This experience is what the users should experience, where they are offered up a different perspective of their lives. The project also provides a structural precedent to develop from. The walkways would be suspended above the standard levels, to develop upon the notion of 'floating' for the users, from participating in creative self reflection as a spiritual activity.





The tree like supports enhance the feeling of being in nature, which would reconnects users with the feeling of being in the monument at the park. It also builds upon the central garden motif created by the shape of the host buildings. The structure of the Treetop Walkways is visually simple, steel beams and supports are joined together to provide a strong and stable base for the walkways to be constructed upon. If I were to hollow out the interior of the host, the facade would need a support structure of some sort, which could extend out to support the walkways for the liminal space activities to occur.



Monasteries

The brief is for the "next|original - i.e. it should not be something that exists currently. It could be a 'twist' on an existing and recognisable activity/function or it could be something completely new and innovative". The programme and design needs to be something that's familiar, but adapted for future use that relates to the intentions of the monument.

A monastic life is developed when a person chooses to shed the desires of past and future and focus on the present, the desire to exist in the present, where all things are subject to change, a liminal space of sorts. This concept is the perfect foundation to design the centre around, a minimal environment in which the users live in accordance with communal rules, and tend to have minimal to no personal property. The ways that they live vary between religions, some completely isolate from the external world, whilst others choose to participate. In buddhism, the members of the monastery reside in their communities and aid the world through meditation, seeking enlightenment - not for themselves but for the greater community that they live near. Their lives draw parallels to the programmatic intentions, for users to detach from their egos and reconnect with themselves to be able to better help their peers to be able to grow into themselves without the struggles that they faced. Thus, a buddhist monastery became the basis for the development of the design of the space.



Karla Caves

// 2nd Century Buddhist Monastery

The Great Chaitya is the main prayer hall, featuring pillars carved into the caves to form the sacred structure, it is the largest rock cut hall in South Asia at 45m long by 14m tall.

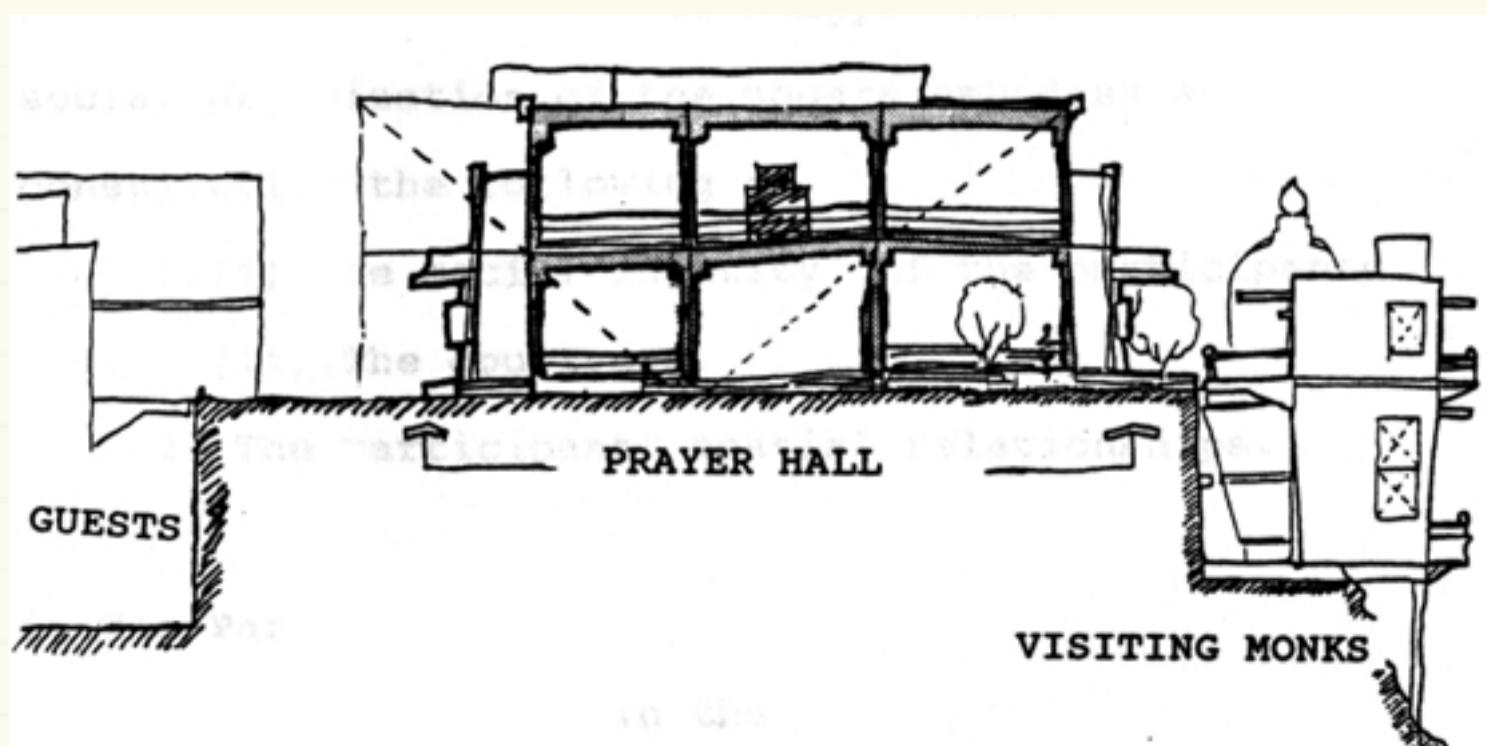
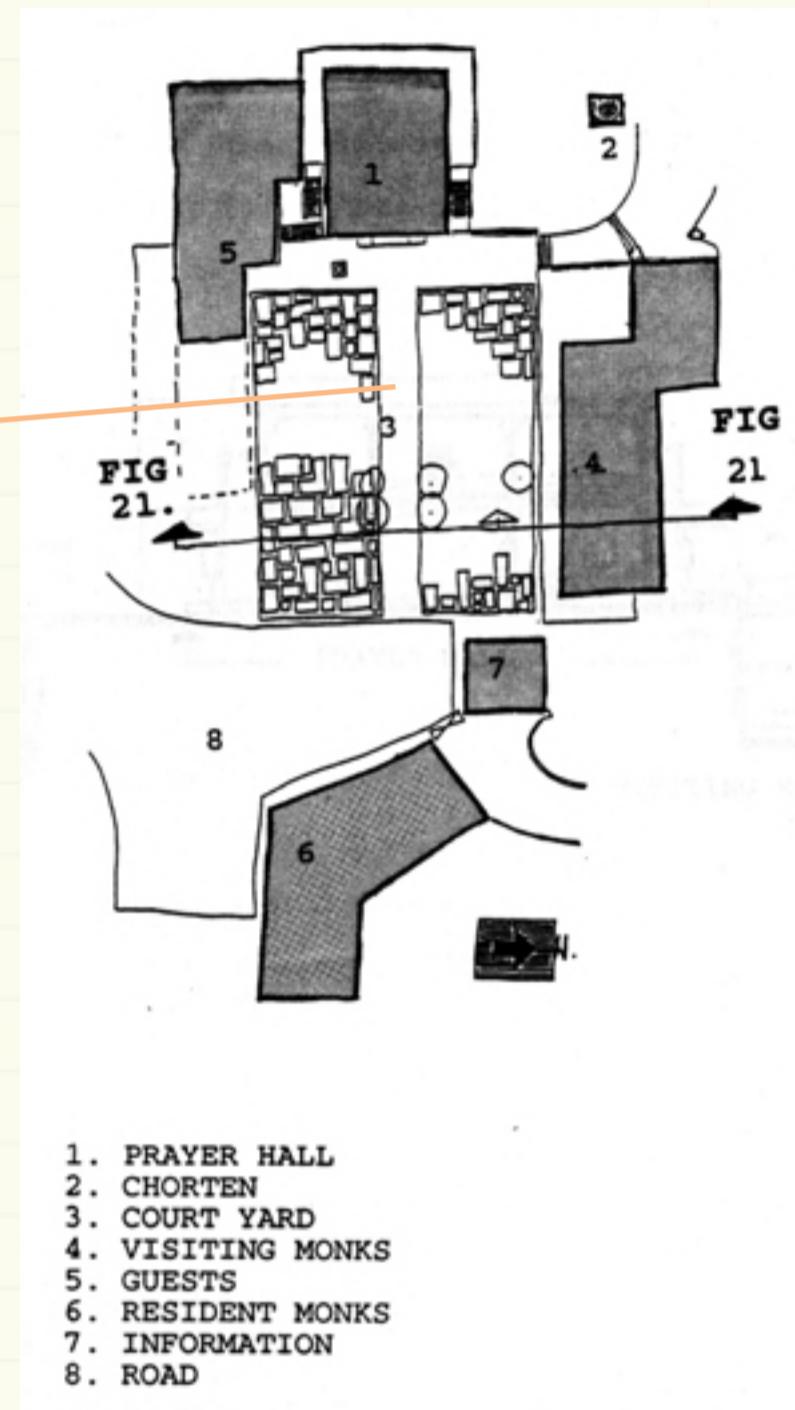
The formation creates a series of columns and archways down the hall, featuring carvings. This innate structure provides a repetition of forms that mirrors the repetition based practice of meditation and self inquiry. This provides a basis with which to design from.

"The typical architectural style of the Buddhist monastery is a courtyard style, and generally the Newār family residence is a multistory building. In the old city area, many blocks were formed by multistory buildings that were built surrounding courtyard(s). The courtyards are connected either by a narrow street or a narrow passage through the first floor of the building in a courtyard to access the adjacent courtyards"

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2475-8876.12027>

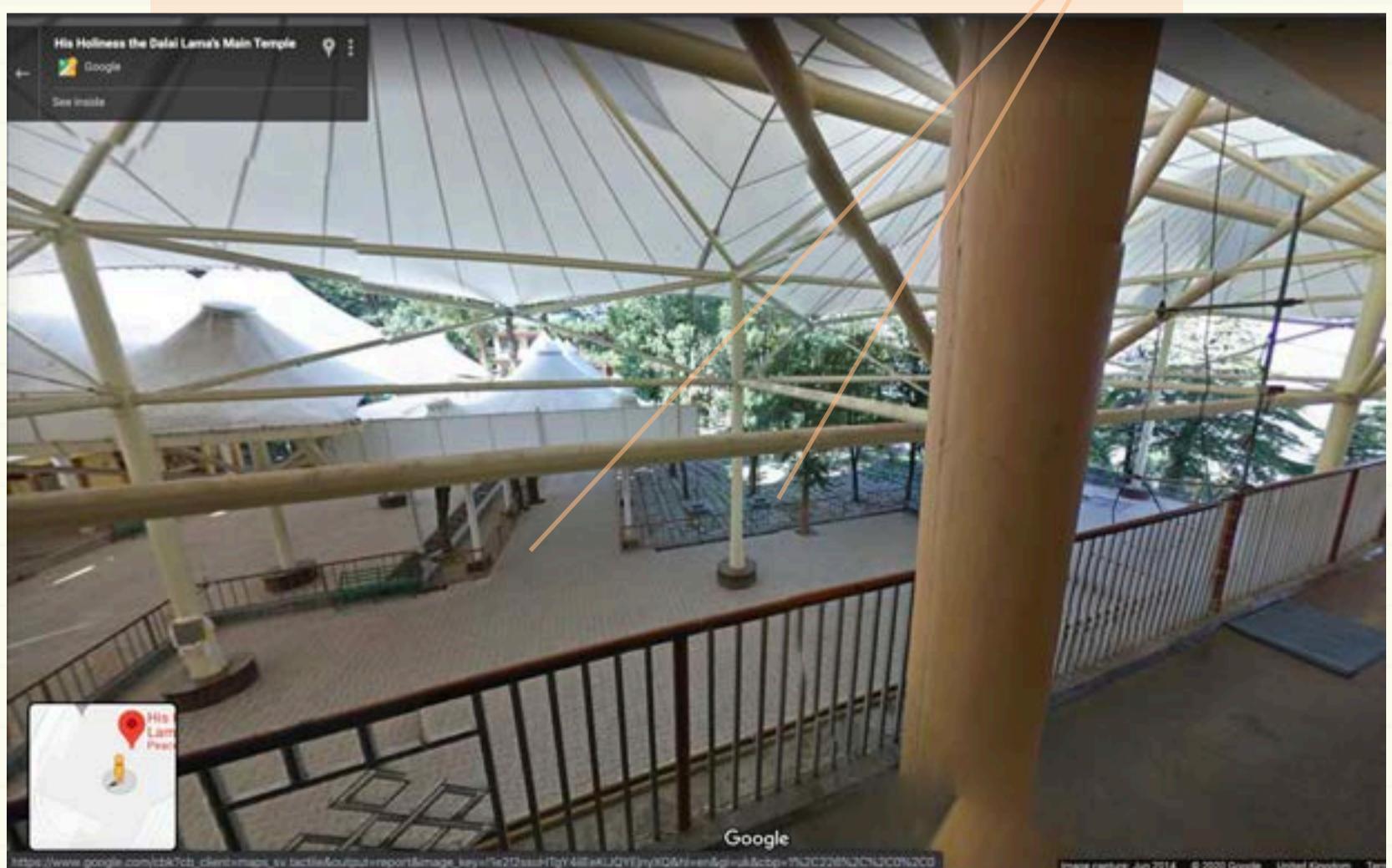
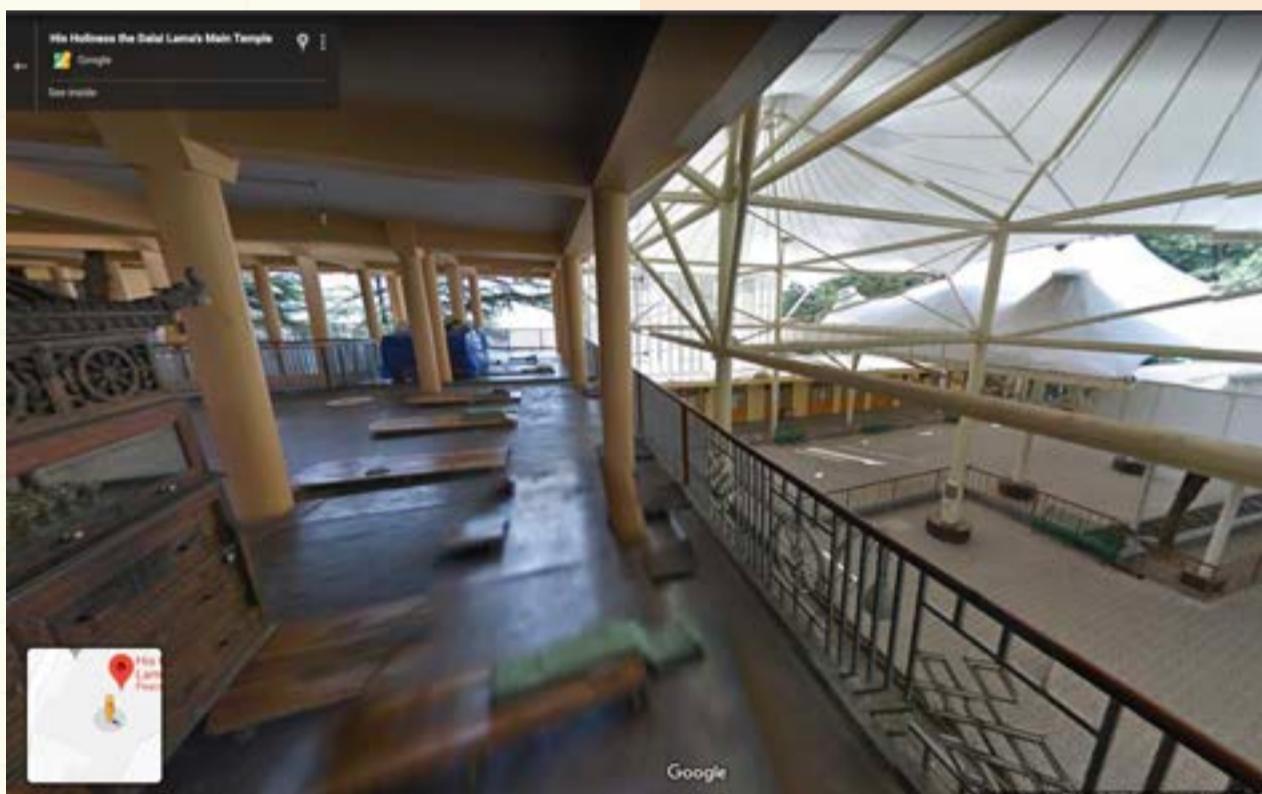
This is a plan of the Buddhist monastery in Dharamshala. It shows that all buildings in the compound are connected by a central courtyard.

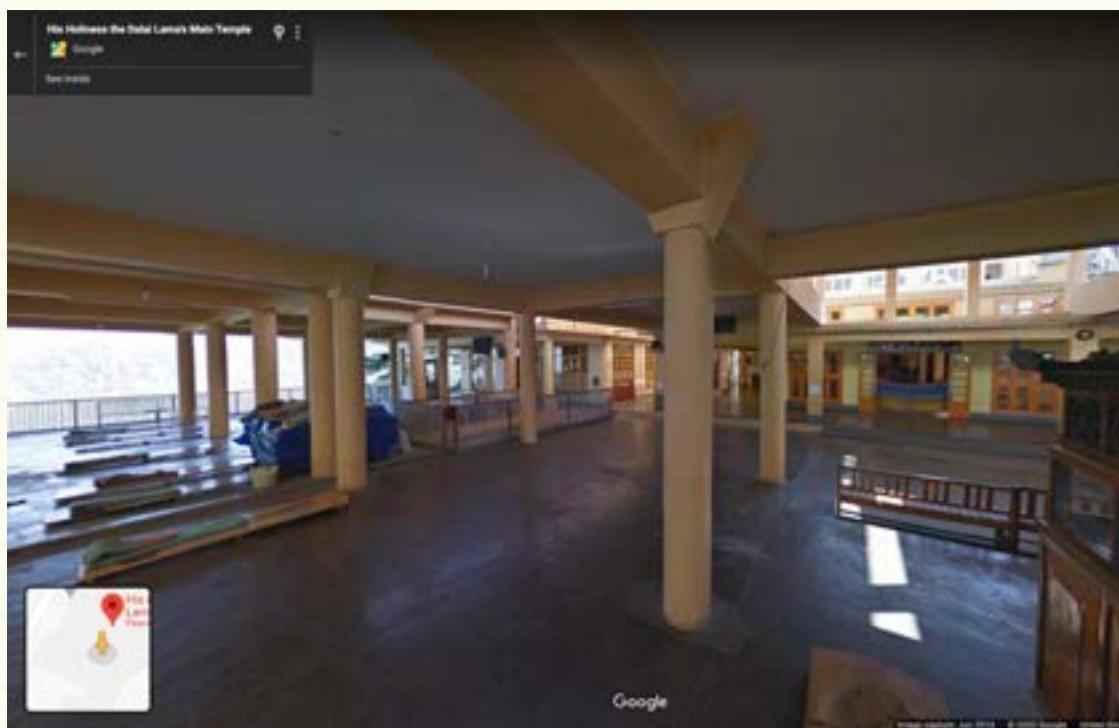
The section through the courtyard illustrates, the multistory layout, the main prayer hall is elevated above the other buildings in the monastery, and is planned according to a grid like layout.



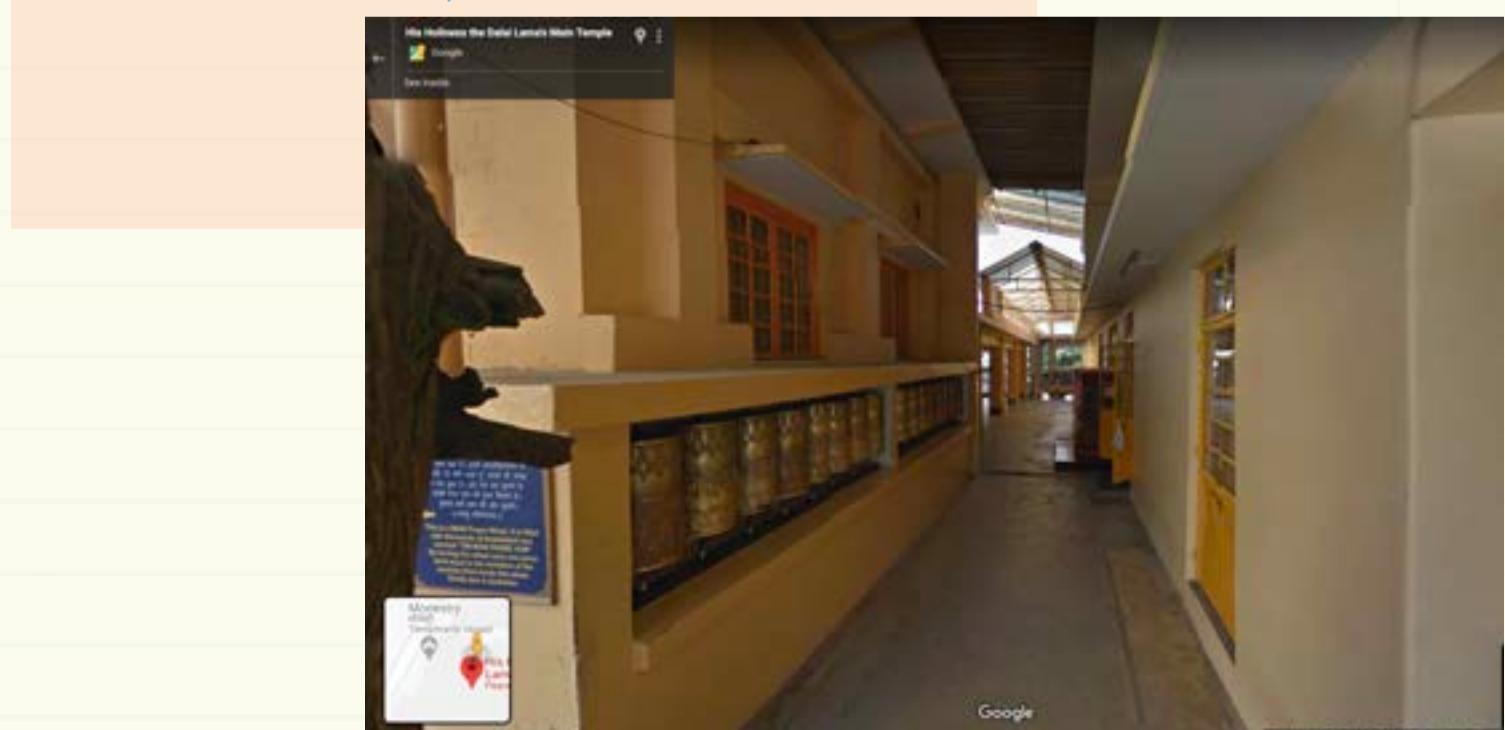


This image shows the centre of the section on the previous page. It illustrates how the building is constructed with the courtyard, where all spaces on the first/ground floor interconnect through a series of walkways to transport the user to the primary spaces of the monastery.





These images illustrate the simplicity of monastery design. The layout is interconnected through a series of walkways that transport users and occupants between the primary buildings. These buildings reside around a central courtyard, which seem to aid in the tranquil experience of the space, enhancing acts of contemplation and the practice of being present. The monastery is constructed according to a series of multilevel buildings, constructed along a grid, comprised of columns and horizontal supports, making the space feel vast and open to the inhabitants. It's formed with a basic concrete framework, with a simple repetitive form that creates a never ending illusion. The rooms within the framework are spacially laid out, which allows users to walk through a series of pathways, of which they can take countless routes, to get to their desired locations. This is reminiscent of the liminal pathways I propose designing into my monastery. I will develop upon these spaces from a traditional monastery to incorporate spaces for the contemplative activities to take place, but learning from this precedent, I will allow the interconnecting features to be present in the pathways, providing access to a variety of spatial experiences, so users can get the illusion of being within a new spatial experience on different days, weathers and atmospheric conditions.



A buddhist monk leads a simple life, the complexity comes from the dedication and difficulties that come from living in this manner. The lifestyle is pure, they teach to love all creatures and beings equally, everyone and everything is afforded the same dignity. There is no judgement in a buddhist community, everyone is on an individual journey, they have each arrived from different backgrounds and this is not to be judged either. This is an important notion to maintain in this future monastery, that no two people are the same, and therefore no one shall be judged for how they cope with their journey. For this, it is important that users are exposed to the different stages of the journey that they may encounter. The 'newbies' need to have support and guidance from users that have been there for longer, to help them feel less alone in what is already a scary situation. With the journey I have been on, I've had my mum, who encountered a similar journey when I was a child. Her guidance has helped me acknowledge and understand some of the experiences and emotions that have arisen; there have been times where I've felt grief or anger for no reason, and she's helped me to comprehend where they've come from, she's helped me to develop the practice of self inquiry for myself. So the programme needs to be open to people at all stages, to come and stay for as long as required. However, it will need a limit to avoid having some users remaining out of fear of leaving, in this instance, should they feel the need to return, they can. The limit should be 9 months, 9 because it is the number 'associated with spiritual enlightenment' which is another way to refer to the complete connection with one's 'self'. It also aligns with the gestational period of a pregnancy, and thus is symbolic of rebirth



Monks dedicate portions of their days to sitting and meditating. This is the painful part of their existence, as they typically practice the art of non thinking, per 'the instruction of Dogen Zenji, from the 13th Century'. This is the practice of neither consciously thinking nor consciously not thinking. Its a difficult practice to do, as the 'ego' desires to think and distract the mind, once one accepts the way in which the ego manifests, the self begins to acknowledge its reality. This, as Mia Hannson, a woman who spent a year at a monastery, describes can be overwhelming and painful, but that is where the healing comes from. The same happens during the practice of yoga, a form of meditation. You undergo the motions of moving through the poses, focusing on your breath, gradually connecting within. Some poses will illicit an inexplicable sense of grief or pain, others will bring about anger. This is because the body stores emotions physically, and moving or loosening these parts of the body also releases the stored emotions.



Yin yoga, for example, has developed from Tao principles and Chinese philosophies, which believe that the practice releases blockages along the Qi pathways - the Qi is a form of energy, also known as the life force. The practice requires you to hold poses for as long as 5 minutes, poses that focus on your spine, hips, etc. Targeting the deep connective tissues, its slow meditative process allows you to draw focus to your mind and the physical sensations, drawing attention to them and instructing you to breathe into the pain. This in turn, sees the mind focusing on your thoughts, and with nothing else to do, you begin to try to understand them, allowing you to find peace in yourself through understanding the thoughts that arise. This practice will be incorporated into the design of the space, with allocated spaces for users to practice daily and be able to reconnect within before allowing them to go practice creative self reflection with the intention of self inquiry. The daily practice of yoga would allow users to disconnect from their conscious mind and let the subconscious be on the forefront of their creative decisions, because it will more honestly indicate their personal values, beliefs, traumas or pain, and dreams, without ego's influence. This in turn can be analysed to aid the user in understanding themselves, a form of art therapy, I know how beneficial this can be from personal experience.

The colours I'm drawn to, and how I use them can be very indicative of my mental state.



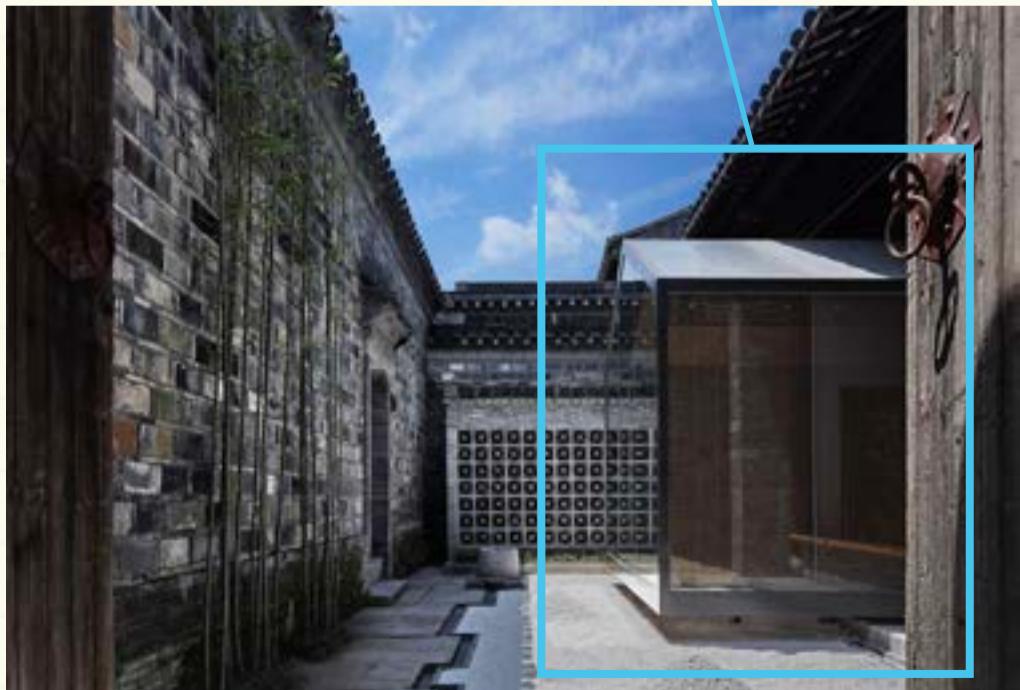


LAI Yard

// Ming Gu Design

The practice designed a meditation room that 'sits at the centre of a heritage listed house.' The intervention protrudes out and overhangs the base of the existing structure of the house, creating a visible separation between old and new interventions.

The meditation room was designed with wall to ceiling glass, which "allows for light to move across the house throughout the day, casting linear patterns across the central space, in contrast to the darker spaces of the older building". The openness of this space allows for the detachment from their surroundings for the contemplative practice of meditation.





This project encompasses the programmatic concepts, the meditation area is connected to larger communal spaces on either side of the courtyard. The types of seating vary between spaces to allow for socialisation and contemplative experiences.



The traditional and contemporary coexist, but don't converge and blend. Respective identities remain but functionally integrate for the seamless use of the users.

This is a relationship of harmonious intervention, done beautifully, which is the aspiration for my project.

"The layout of this house is full of surprising details - contrary elements, such as the old alongside the new; the interior and exterior; the light and the dark; the conventional and the contemporary, are found to meet here and merge into a harmonious existence".

To further develop this, the liminal pathways that are the predominant design features will have different textural and tonal incorporations, some will be more textural and feature a more comforting colour palette, users that choose to work in these spaces would likely be requiring the comfort provided by the texture dense environment - craving a cosier, more nourishing space if they're experiencing a bit of grief or pain from their explorations. Comparatively, work spaces closer to the back wings of the house will have a brighter, more subdued palette, with more views out into the garden - aimed at users who are feeling happier and more peaceful with their experiences. They would likely feel more comfortable feeling connected with the outside, and can gather inspiration from the exposure.

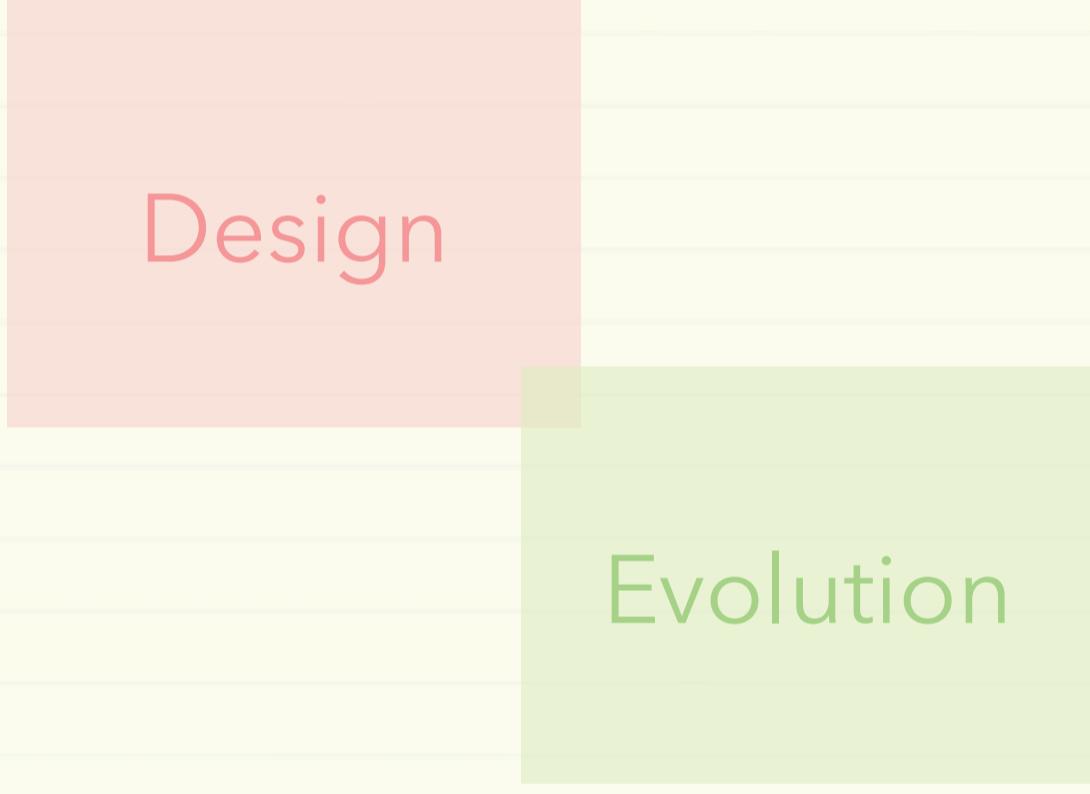
Having these spaces incorporated into the design will allow users to keep track of both individual and communal experiences.

This enables them to notice trends in themselves to further the self inquiry process of understanding why they might be using a specific space more, and if there are any connections between any of their activities and creations that help them to delve deeper into their explorations. It will also assist in the users providing support for other users who may be struggling more, as some may not be willing to talk about it. If they can watch and see how users are using the spaces, they can subtly communicate and provide extra emotional support to the ones who, like myself, pull into themselves when they are struggling.

The buddhist monks live by the philosophy of 'own only what you need' for owning more is the ego desiring more, in other words it is greed.

This concept would be reimaged in the future monastery through the provision of food, in this instance it would be 'take only what you need to survive'. Users will have access to the communal garden for some ingredients, taking only what they need for their daily meals. They will cook a communal meal, to share with other users, 8 users means 2 users can prepare a meal a day - breakfast, lunch, snacks, and dinner, with the rest assisting with getting ingredients, setting the table, clearing up etc.

The users would alternate between these activities. A communal dining table would sit in the dining area, circular to take away the notion of a hierarchy, and a central serving 'station' for users to dish up what they need and leave the rest for other users.



Design

Evolution

Bedrooms

8 total, 1 per user

Large single bed with en suite bathrooms, with a small work station in each room. Open plan with glass ceilings, and plants incorporated into the design of each room, with the intention of upkeep by users to ensure they're in the routine of looking after both themselves and the plants, and to bring the outside comfort of nature inside. Smooth and fixed surfaces, concrete and exposed wood structural elements to counterbalance from the existing, with steel reinforcement

Central garden

An outdoor and indoor garden to be maintained by the users during their stay. Indoor will provide an integrated experience in all seasons and climates, whilst outdoor adapts and changes. (Note for almanac, this is representative of the personal journey of change during identity refinement, the person always remains who they are, they just become a more grounded person regardless of the world experience around them). Bright and airy, herbs grown in the garden will be used in the food so must be located close to the dining area.

Visible from all "rooms".

Bathrooms

Either 1 per user or 1 per two users

Fluid, smooth and easy to maintain surfaces and materiality, a bathtub that can double as a shower but not generic. Copper detailing for pipes and metals visible. Views to the garden provided but in a manner that doesn't invade privacy somehow - carefully placed windows or selected material.

Dining area

Communal dining experience of cooking and eating together. Located next to the garden with access to it for fresh herbs to be used in the cooking. Exposed wood structural beams, and steel reinforcing

8 users maximum, 4 max cooking at a time

"Liminal spaces"

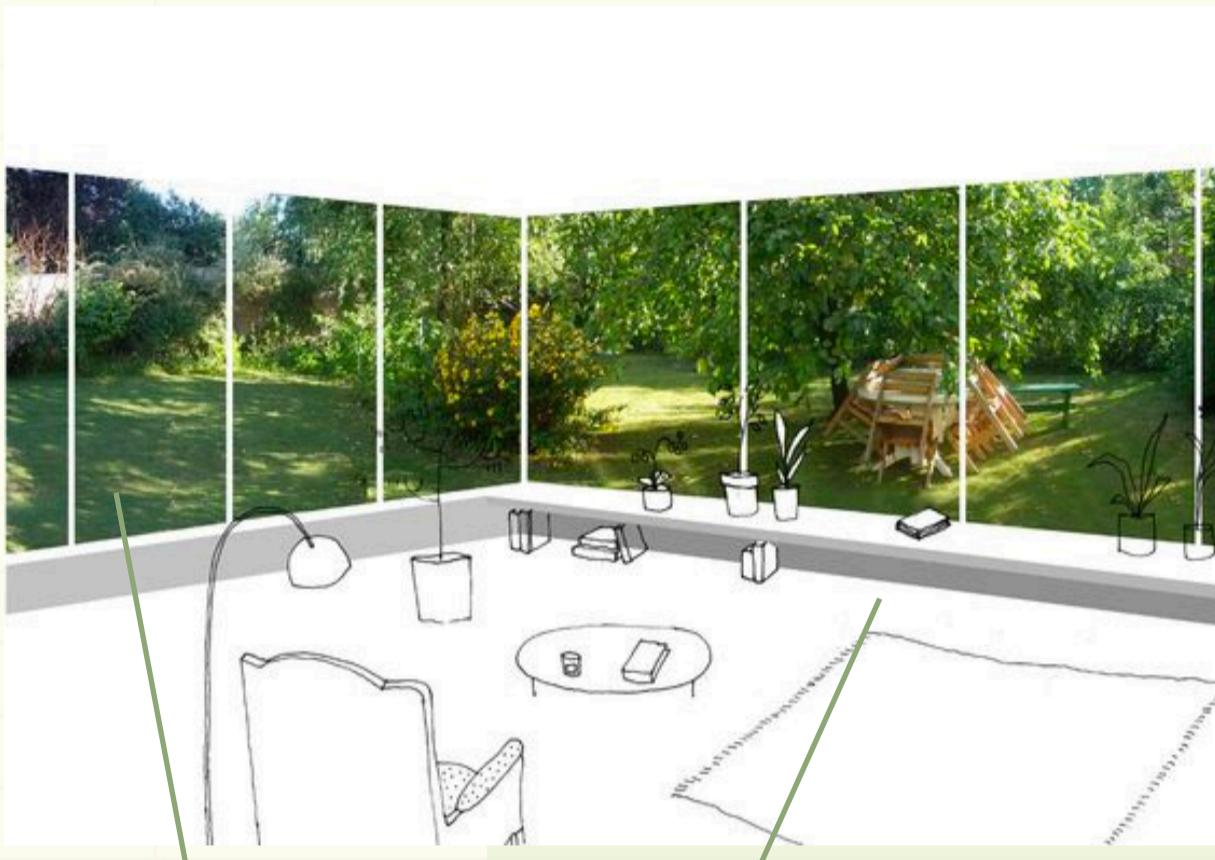
Narrow, intended for single person use at a time, dimly lit, contrasting the bright and airy "rooms". intended for focused self reflection, similar aesthetic to Therme Vals in materiality and spatial experience. Will incorporate, potentially transformative, 'introspection stations', for individual use and preference for writing and creative self expression. They will follow and lead to the "rooms".

The schedule of accommodation was developed from the key spaces in a monastery. The monks and nuns have cells, which form their bedrooms. They commune to share in the dining experience, sharing the food that they make, and their lives are built around the courtyard feature.

I developed upon this and incorporated private bathrooms for the users, as well as the conceptual liminal activity space, which would be formed around pathways that travel through and around the host, with pathways to all the key spaces, accessible from the main liminal space pathway.

This is to ensure that users are primarily engaging with the pathways upon entering the centre.

The visual sequence needed to successfully illustrate the conceptual user experiences. The schedule of accommodation provided an idea of size, scale, and special requirements with which we had to create a 'user journey' experience.



The image of the user's view from this room provides sufficient insight in how they would experience the space. A room immersed in the outdoors, where the view is the primary focus

I don't like the full image of the garden, for the type of image I need to create, this is too developed as I don't know what the garden does or would look like, so it needs to be more conceptual and collage-y

This image gives insight into the material palette of the space, but it's too simple and underdeveloped to successfully indicate what the user experience will be in the space. More context, inhabitation, or furnishings might have improved this.

To begin with, I selected some precedents to gather inspiration from.

I liked the sketchy line work aspects of these precedents. They illustrate that it's early in the design process, so have conscious decision making, with minimal design features.



These images are more developed.

They provide insight to a more contextual layout of the design for the viewer to understand.



This image, however, lacks inhabitation and any easy to comprehend design features to assist the viewers in comprehending the scale of the project

Comparatively, this image is more developed and includes multiple figures, each different to also suggest what the programme of the project is. The subdued spatial experience palette suggests that it's still early in its design development, but illustrates the importance of the garden for users.





These images use various collaged images to develop the understanding of user experience. They too, are built from a linework drawing.

This image is simple, with a developed collage illustrating how users move through the space shown. The inhabitation shows the scale, and the variation in transparency alludes to what's going on behind what would be visible to the girl walking, which I think is very

interesting feature to include.

While I like this image, the drawing is too busy at this scale to successfully illustrate its intent. There are too many features for the viewer to be able to quickly comprehend the programmatic intentions



This image provides a lot of contextual information; how many floors are in the building, the type of climate it's situated in, and how a user might experience the space. While this allows for the viewer to comprehend a lot of information, it's missing vital inhabitation to illustrate how the space is used and what the scale is.

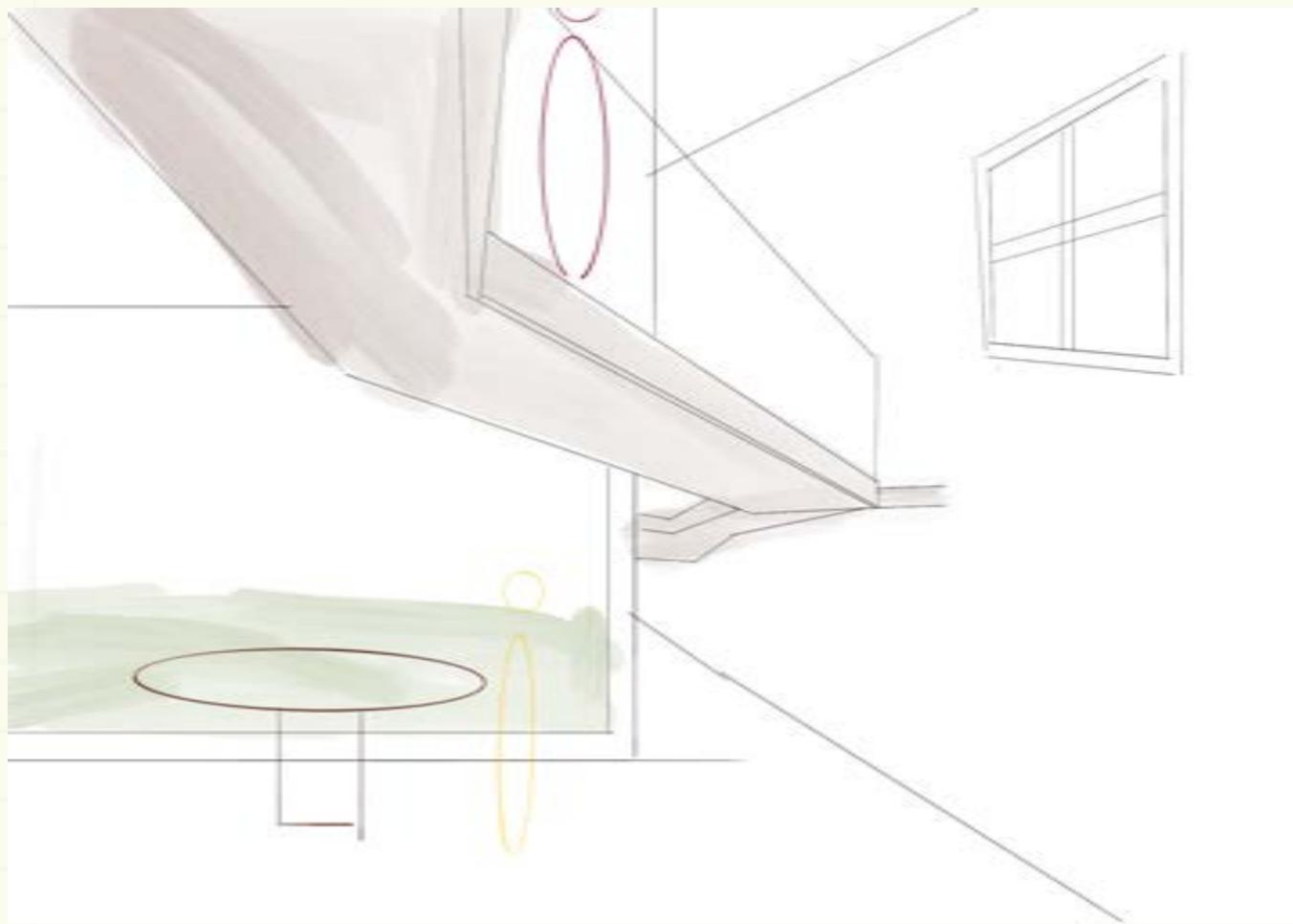
Visual Sequence



Number 1: Journey to the host

This collage was created from the ideas processed from the precedent study, it was the easiest to do because it was the easiest to conceptualise. The later 3 were less developed and had less of an overall impression because they were harder to conceptualise without a better understanding of the programme through research and analysis, however, I created impressions of what I believed to be the key features of the spaces.

Liminal pathways visualisation



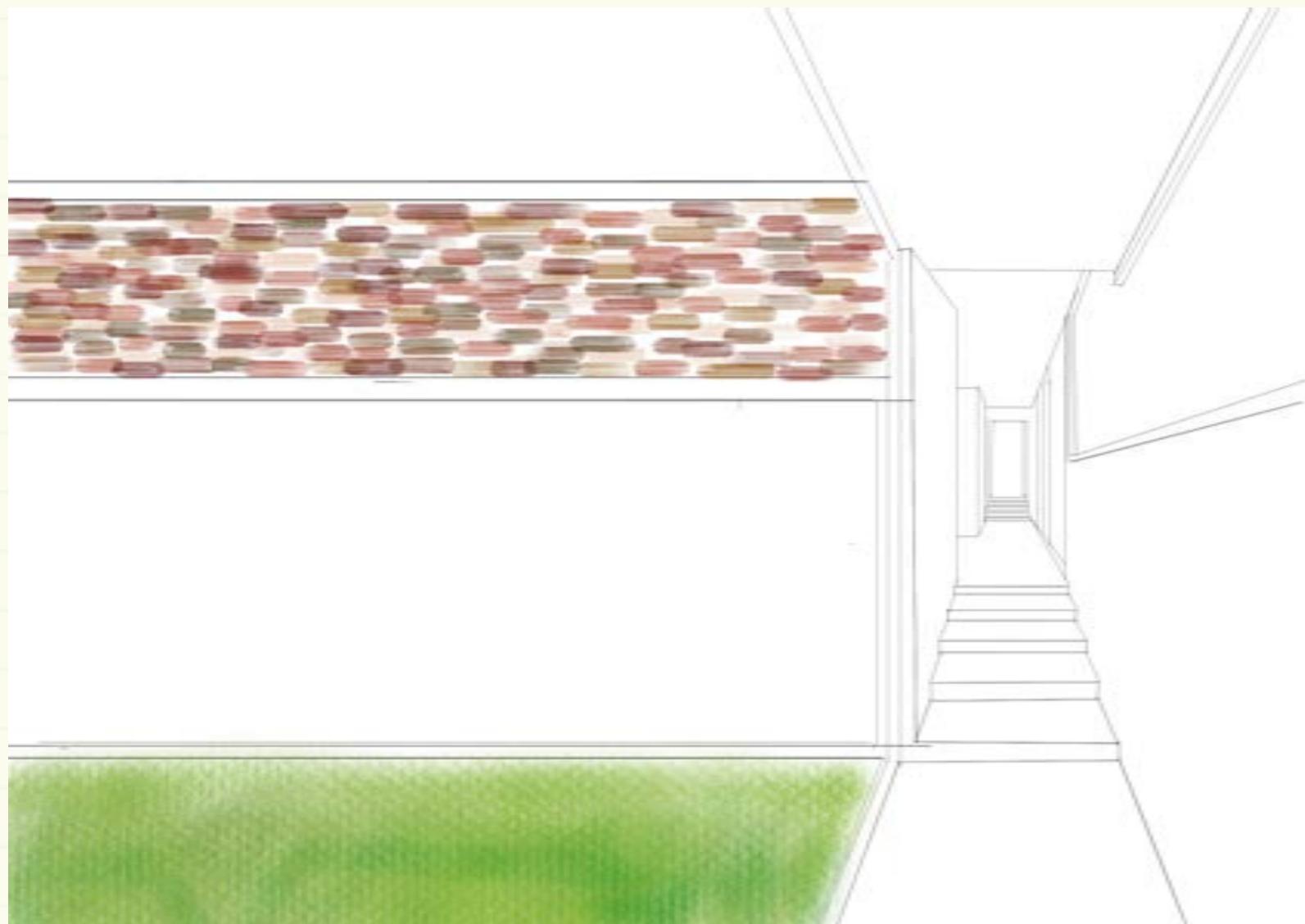
This was the concept sketch for the sequence, I used the linework to create an initial collage.

This collage was unsuccessful because there was a lot going on in the image that deterred attention away from the pathways above. However, it successfully illustrated the lower level dining experience in front of the central garden.



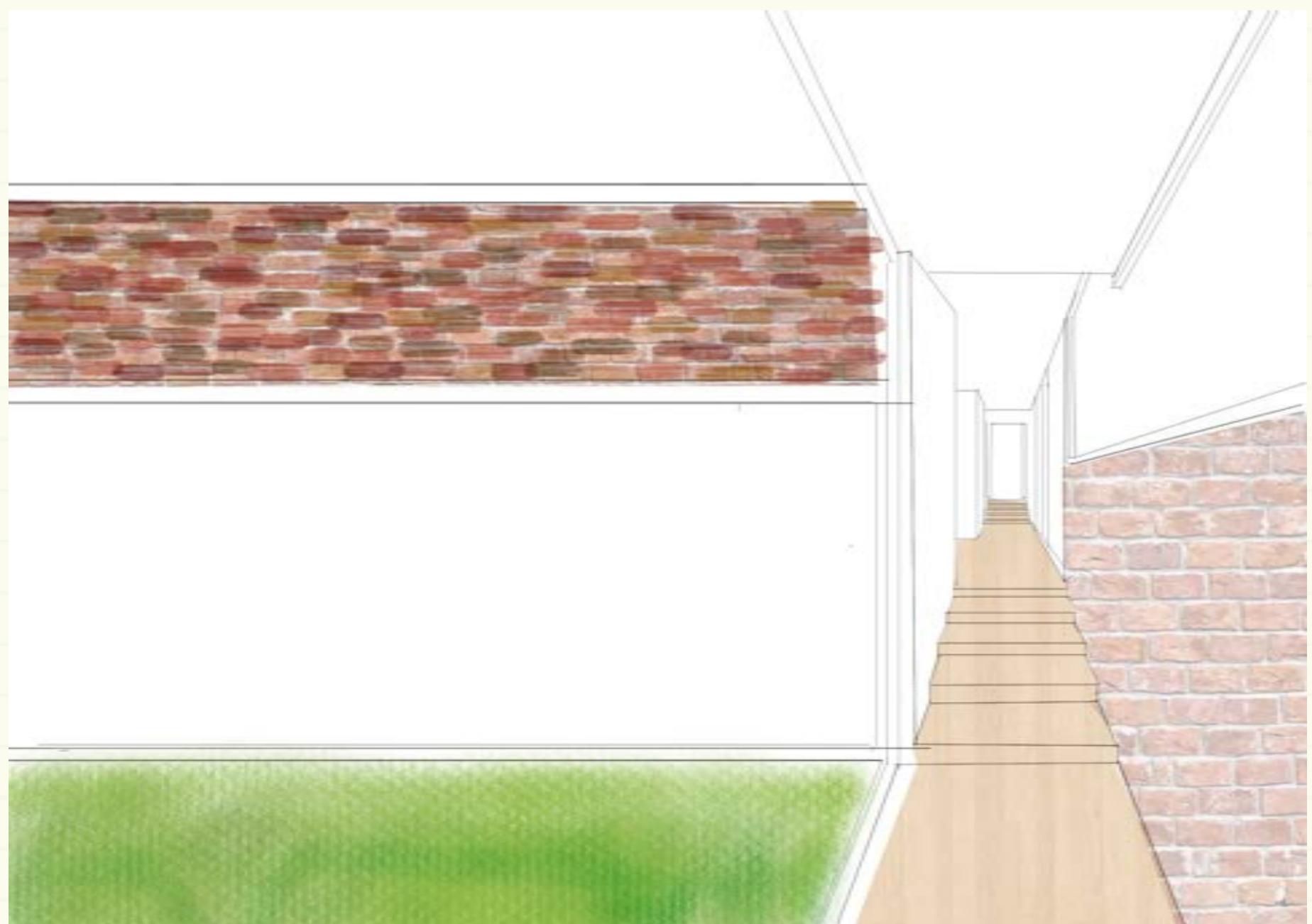


This was the next iteration, it's
still underwhelming, and needs
additional development, but
it illustrates the basic spatial
experience of the space with
the pathways above.



The wing, looking to the

central garden

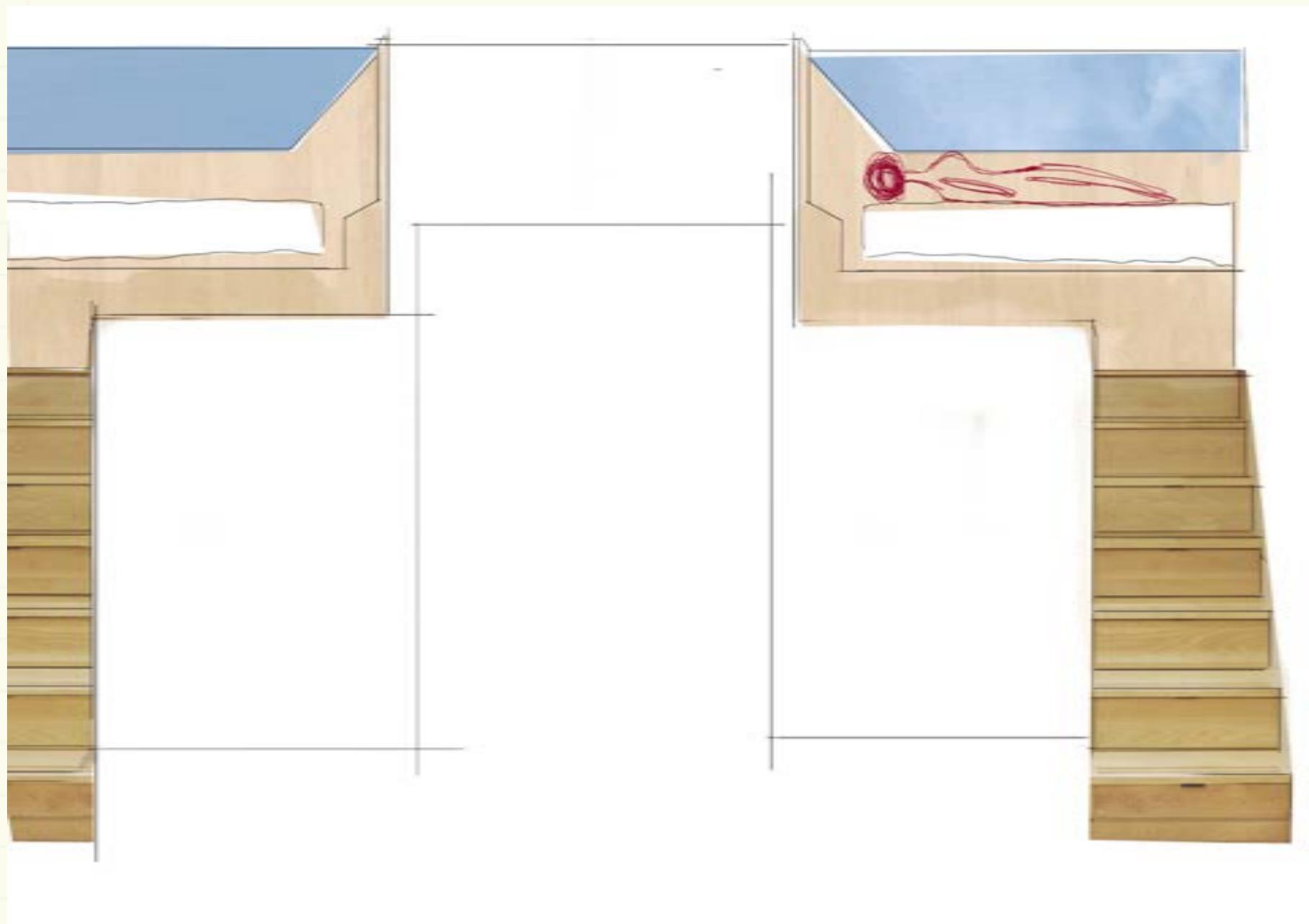




Cell/Bedroom visual

This collage illustrates materiality well, but it lacks depth and inhabitation, with this it's difficult to see what the space is to be used for. I would have incorporated more developed collaging features into it to adequately portray what I wanted





This attempt included a simple inhabitation feature and removed the elements that didn't focus on the 'bedroom' space. The sequence now illustrates the simplicity of the bedroom space, which is important because it requires minimal design elements for the rooms.

Designing for this programme requires working with an existing building, which will be adapted for reuse in the future. For this, it's important to analyse the ways other designers have done this, and figure out the methods and features I would like to use for my design.



Apple Store, Carnegie Library / Foster + Partners

The existing exterior structure and facade was restored during the refurbishment into an Apple store.

There are subtle interventions worked into the restoration to adapt the old building to its new use. The old and new harmoniously interlink, maintaining the historic beauty that exists, without overpowering it by unnecessary new interventions. The image below beautifully illustrates this relationship.





The designers kept the original features, because the existing building allowed for minimal adaptations to be made. However, in refurbishing it, they were able to develop a design aesthetic for the store that enhanced the beauty of the original site. The use of marble from the original building, was balanced out by the addition of wooden furnishings and new marble additions - like the plaque with the logo. This is something I appreciated in this design, and want to incorporate into my design.



Bathhouse

// Verona Carpenter Architects

The bathhouse is located in what was a 1930's soda factory. The architects worked on remodelling it into a 'subterranean spa', which takes inspiration from a selection of cultural spa facilities and experiences. They maintained the original brickwork, using the atmosphere it created, and adding intervention features to enhance the cosy, otherworldly experience of a spa. The way they incorporated the exposed brickwork varied between the spatial experiences, but it holds a clear and consistent visual narrative - which successfully illustrates the age of the building. The exposed pipe work, ventilation shafts, and structural elements simultaneously adds to the atmosphere whilst alluding to the building's historic use. The new programme is successfully incorporated into the old building, allowing the two to balance each other out, rather than erasing its past completely.

Spatially, the interrelationship between old and new creates an immersive experience that draws one further into a reflective mindset. The spa experience exists to help calm the body and mind by aiding users in centering themselves. The space in which this occurs is just as important as the activities they experience, for example, getting a massage in a brightly lit space would contradict the calming restorative experience. The 'ritual room' below shows a single illuminated bathtub in which a user would have a treatment. The darker toned walls and materials are counterbalanced by the white of the tub, that's illuminated by the light leaking in from above. This creates a spotlight type illusion, allowing the user to feel like the primary focus during the treatment, which is necessary for this self-care act.

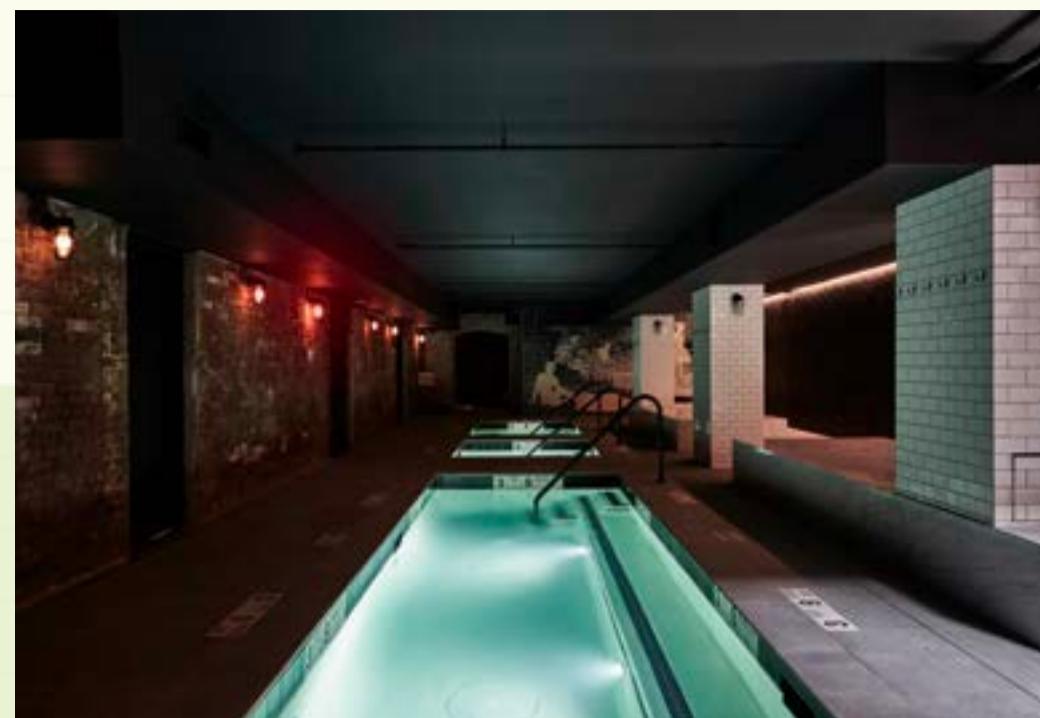
"In the women's locker area is a "ritual room" with a single cast iron bathtub that sits underneath a preserved 30-metre-tall brick smokestack that's been illuminated"



The designers varied the use of textures, materials, and lighting to provide different atmospheres in each of the rooms in the spa, maintaining a common language, but altering spatial experiences successfully. This is necessary for my project because there is a variety of activities and 'zones' for users to use that require different spatial experiences



The exposed brick is the most beautiful aspect of this redesign. It tells a story of the site's heritage, the weathering and decaying of the brick illustrates the age. The designers brought this beauty to the forefront of the design. My site's heritage is best illustrated in the red Edwardian brickwork. This is often hidden under layers of paint and plaster on a house's interior. For my design I want to develop upon the beauty seen in this example to show the true beauty of exposed red brick, because as illustrated here, the red brick also creates a homey and nourishing environment required for a spa - and in turn for the programme that I'm designing.



Overall, this project illustrates the importance of balance in design. Not only the balance of new with existing, and how it enhances experience, but also the use of light and materiality to subliminally communicate experience. I chose this project because it relates to the notion of nourishment for users. The project further taught me about how small contemporary interventions can be added to intensify the user experience, and enable them to feel like the focus of the project.



Wuyuan Skywells hotel

// Anyscale Architecture Design

This hotel is located in a 300 year old building in China. The original building was used as an inn for merchants and refugee soldiers, but decayed over the years since to a 'state of almost total disrepair. Due to this, it lacked sufficient existing structure to show the heritage off, as with the previous examples. Resulting in what feels like an imbalance between ancient and contemporary. The design lacks a cohesive language, focus either on the ancient features in excess; the wooden materials, and decaying walls. Or it focused on the contemporary, with almost sterile looking

interventions.





What was missing in this project was the harmonious use of both palettes. In the more

aged spaces, the contemporary interventions are incorporated subtly and beautifully.

However, the contemporary spaces required a more obvious use of the heritage features to balance out the visual aesthetic. The images on each page could almost be from two separate projects. Overall, it's a beautiful design, with an exquisite and welcoming aesthetic, but it lacks the heart throughout the design from the lack of the weathered features from the age of it.

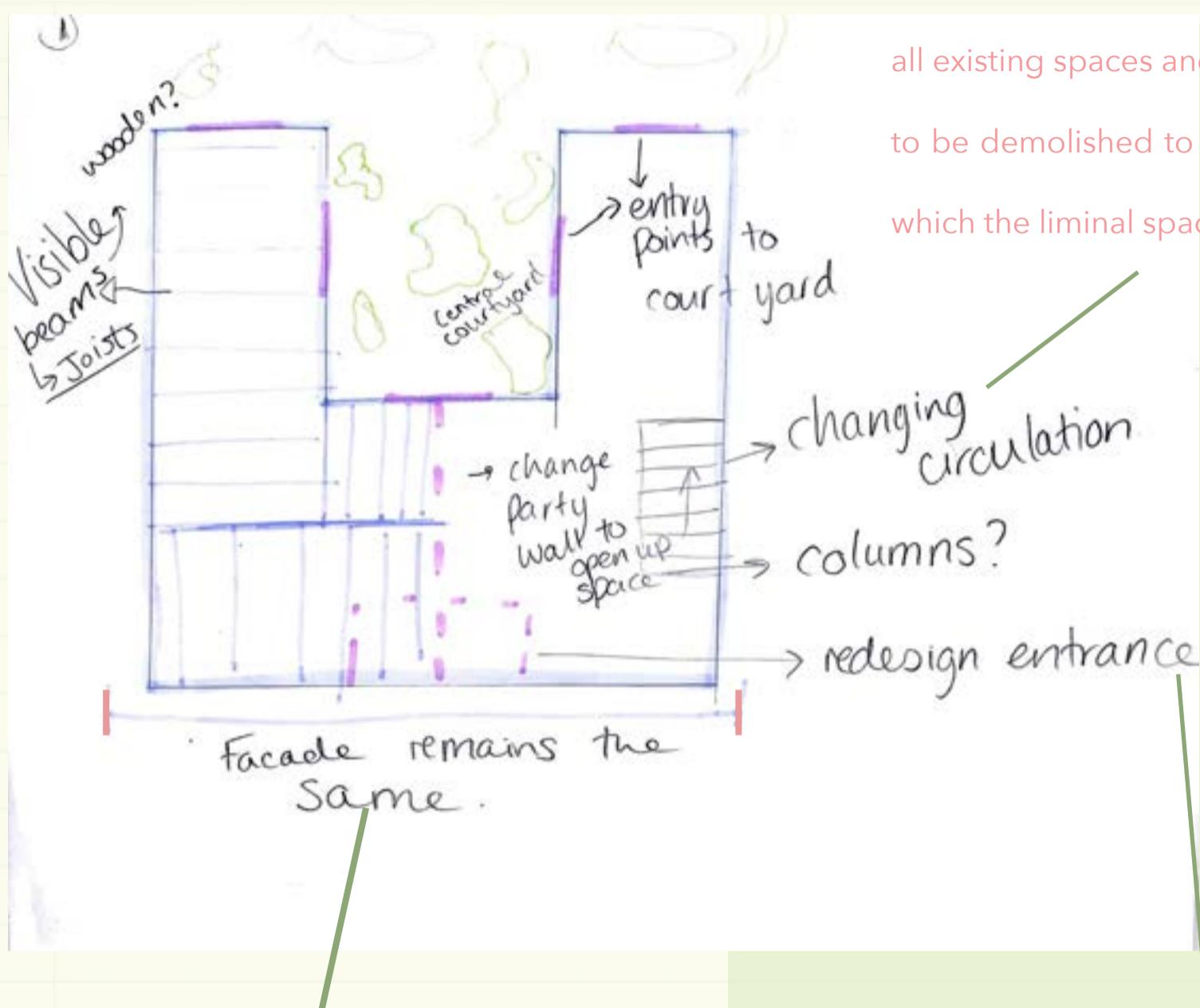
For adaptive reuse, the old and new need to balance each other out, which unfortunately wasn't clear in this project.

This project was selected for its zen architectural motif.

The use of wood is typically a very restorative material to use, however, the imbalance of its use between spaces here create a more overwhelming experience than comforting one. The overall project feels more like users are in a completely new hotel, rather than one with heritage because of the lack of weathered or more aged looking materials. For my project, I would need to ensure that all the materials are balanced between spaces for the required experiences in the spaces.

5 Keys Research

Key: Architectural Moves

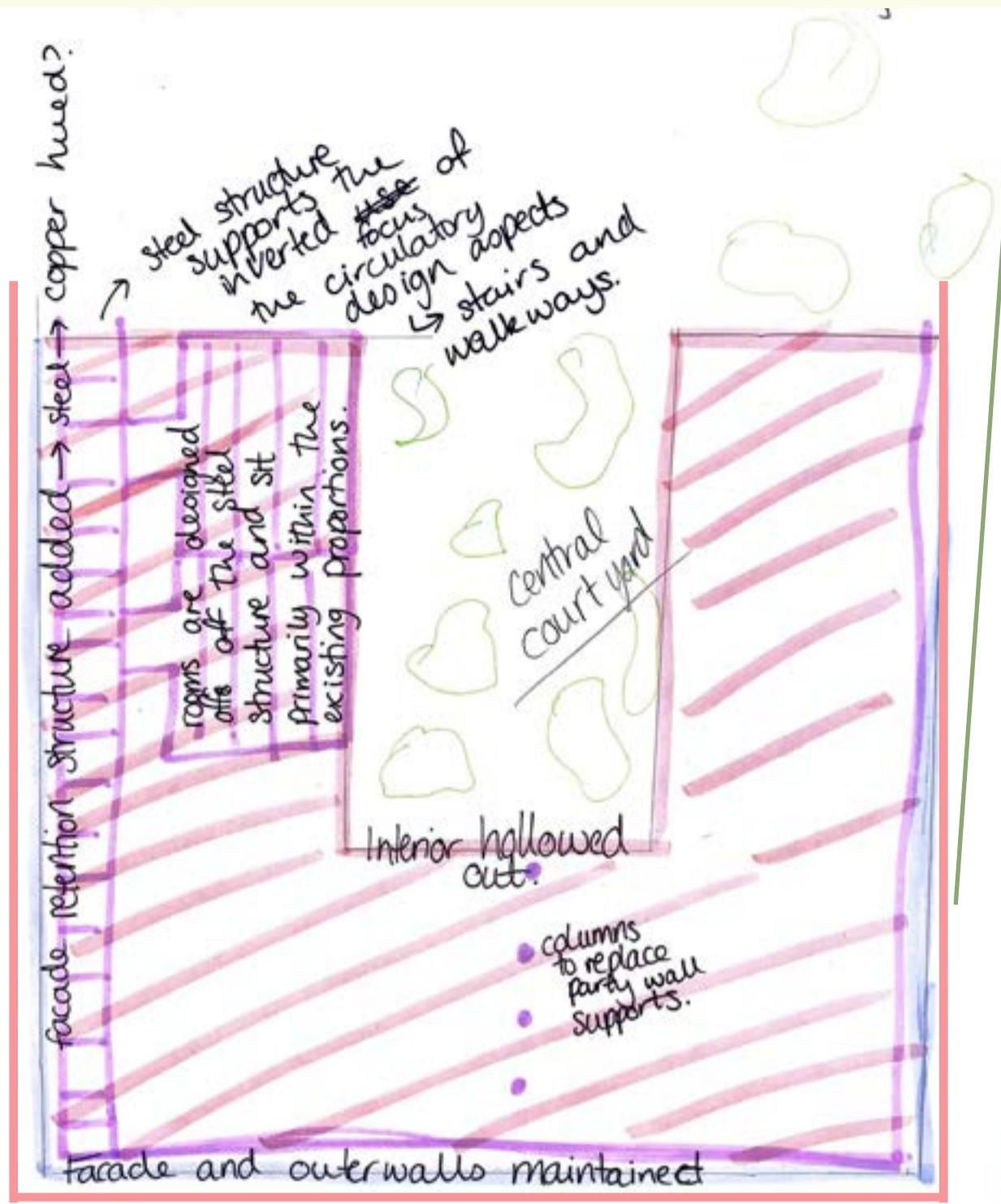


The key move for this project is maintaining the existing Edwardian facade, to allow the interior to be hollowed out for the intervention to be designed into. The existing facade is too beautiful to demolish or change. Refurbishing the existing facade makes the center look unassuming to onlookers, which simultaneously deters uninvited guests from coming to the center, and adds to the user experience. Users will walk up to the property and have a preconceived expectation of the interior, and have a neutral experience of the space. Once they enter, they'll be transported into this new, unknown space, forcing them to park all expectations and conventions at the door, literally and symbolically before beginning the programmatic process.

The liminal space design intention requires building circulation to be the primary feature, so all existing spaces and circulation would need to be demolished to provide a blank page in which the liminal spaces can be designed into

I decided against this move to enhance the contrasting exterior and interior experiences, altering the original entrances would adapt the intended user experience of maintaining the existing facade

Key: Sysmat Principles



The key principle needed is to support the external facade. The sketch illustrates this intent, with the structure being capable of also providing support for the intervention schemes. A way to do this would be to develop upon facade retention systems used in construction

Types of retention for construction purposes

- "Scaffolding, suitable for low level facades between 3 and 4 storeys, with sufficient space at their base for installation.

- Proprietary retention, involving props, ties and bracing suitable for higher facades as the general quantity of components are reduced.

Fabricated steelwork, used when cost of hiring proprietary equipment over long periods of time outweigh the cost of fabricating a structure

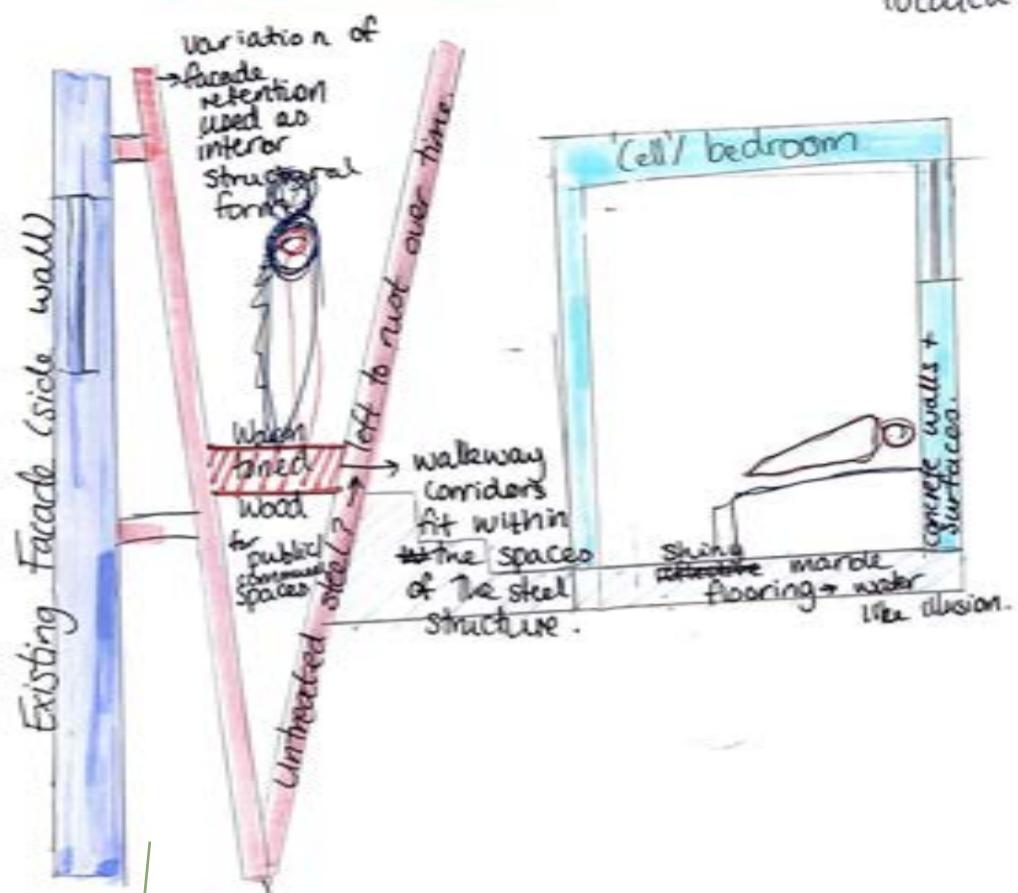
- Combinations of fabricated and proprietary retention systems."



From discussions with Ben, my sysmat tutor, the ideal system would be fabricated steelwork. This is required because the framework would be a permanent and primary system, so it needs to be durable and strong enough to support the scheme for the required activities and interventions

- Small palette of materials
 - ↳ concrete
 - marble
 - wood
 - copper / (tinned metal) ^{unpainted} → ~~copper~~ Steel
 - ↳ warm)

- cold / harder materials on outside → to private spaces located around the external interior
- warm / soft materials for communal spaces located within the interior



- facade retention to act as basis of structural process → allows for focus on the 'overlooked' spaces (corridors + stairs) in designing with rooms and spaces designed around these spaces rather than the other way around.



This early sketch illustrates the early concept of the design,

where the rooms were going to be located in the wings.

Following further research into the programme, I moved

away from this design. Having the main communal activities

located in the middle of the building, was to enhance the

supportive nature of the programme and user interaction.

Although the rooms are private and intended for personal

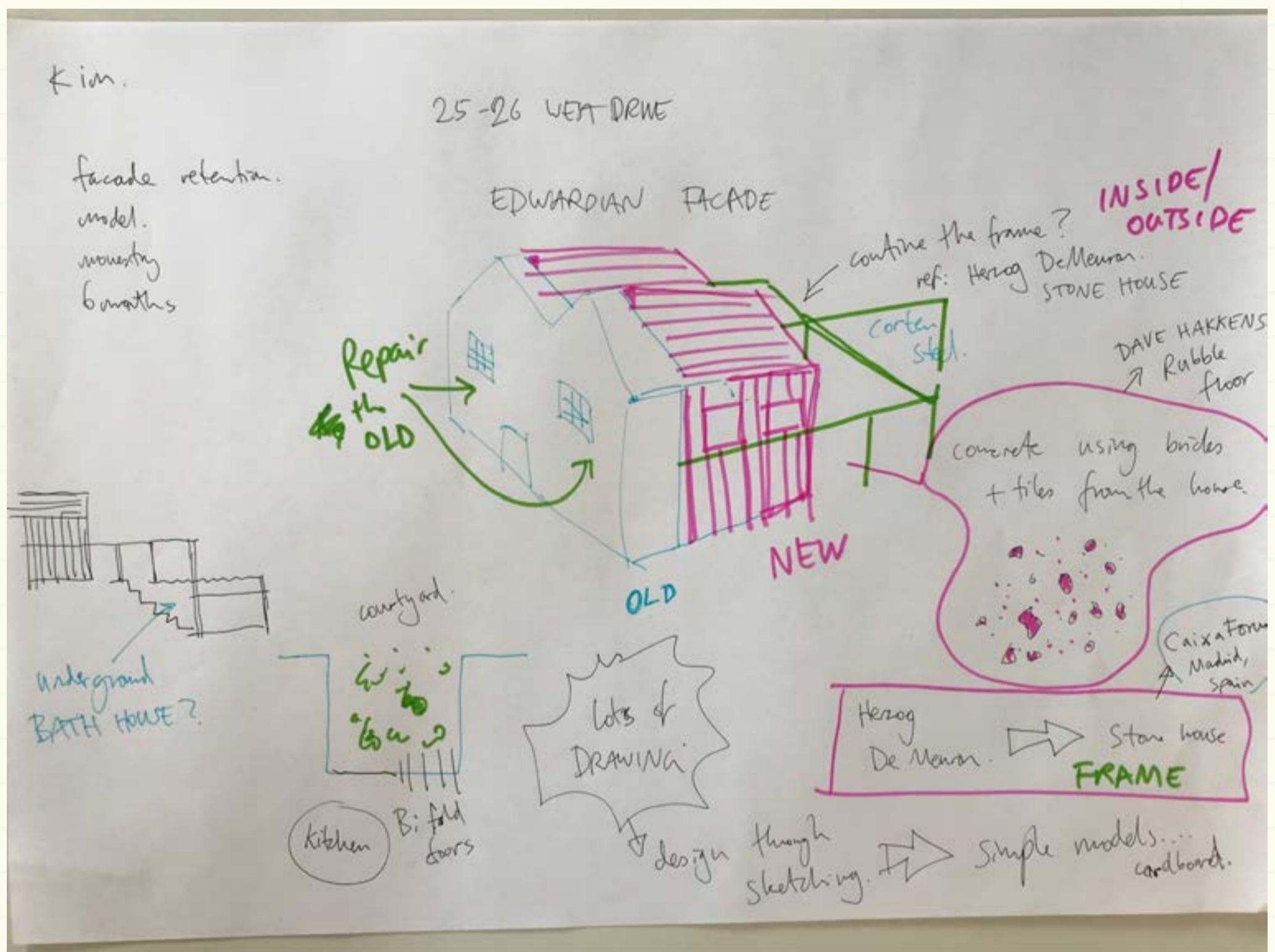
experience, sleeping is when one is most vulnerable, so

it made more sense to have the rooms or cells located

above the communal spaces to ensure the users felt safe

and protected by each other's presence, and by the spaces

that foster this supportive and nurturing environment.



This was initial feedback from Ben, some of which I researched

into to provide sysmat principles to take forward into designing. All of which became intergral parts of the design.

I chose to move away from the underground bath house concept, as it gave users an additional experience that would distract from the reasons they were there, the bathrooms would instead be located under the bed structure in each room, for ease of cleaning in privacy.

Key: System

There are 2 main systems that arose from the facade retention principle. The first is the reinforcing structure. The contrasting material framework against a brickwork base is a starking contrast. The horizontal brick work is balanced by the vertical reinforcements which creates an eyecatching aesthetic., while simultaeneously enhancing the structural capabilities. It also enhances the illusion of stability and grounding within the space, which is necessary for the programme. The straight forms beautifully compliment each other, and depending on how the steel is treated, it adds a depth of character to the building, matching the aspects I admired in earlier precedents.





Casa Ortega

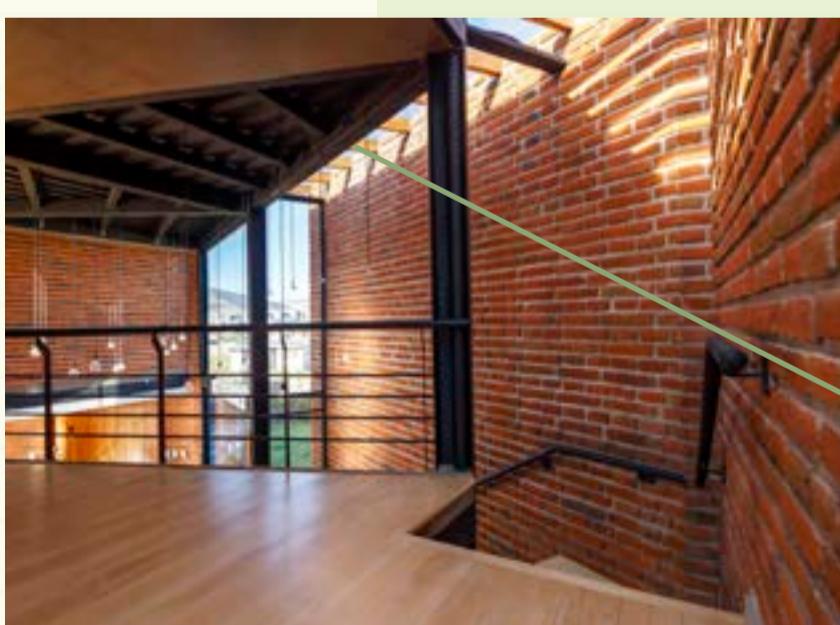
// Estudio A0

However, the glass windows are too prominent. While they help to add a new level of contrast, they overwhelm the beauty of the design, especially paired with the wooden screens

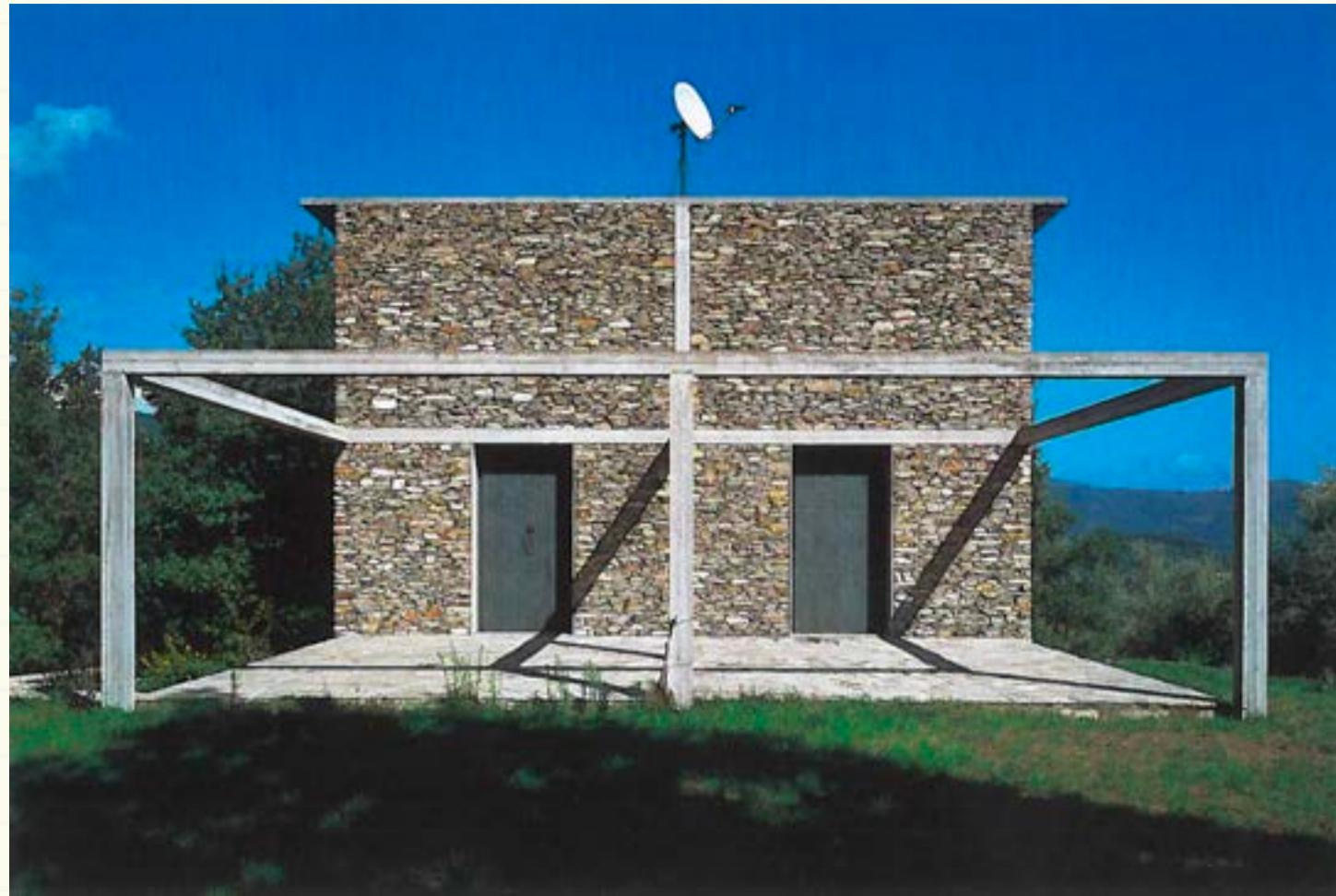
This precedent illustrates the beauty of a steel and brick relationship. The black steel beautifully contrasts the forms and textures created by the brick.



The use of glass here works better because it's equally balanced by the brickwork above. This is less successful on the front and side elevations because there's too many design features for the eye to process at once.



I really like the exposed steel structure of the ceiling here, it's artistically balanced by the pockets of light that create a different visual geometry on the brick wall. There's a cohesive language present here.



Stone House // Herzog & de Meuron

From conversations with Ben, this example was provided. Stone house 'engages part of a former stone terrace', using a concrete framework to support the house. The framework creates a visible cross against the stonework. The designers were inspired by the 'fusion of plan, section, and elevation'.



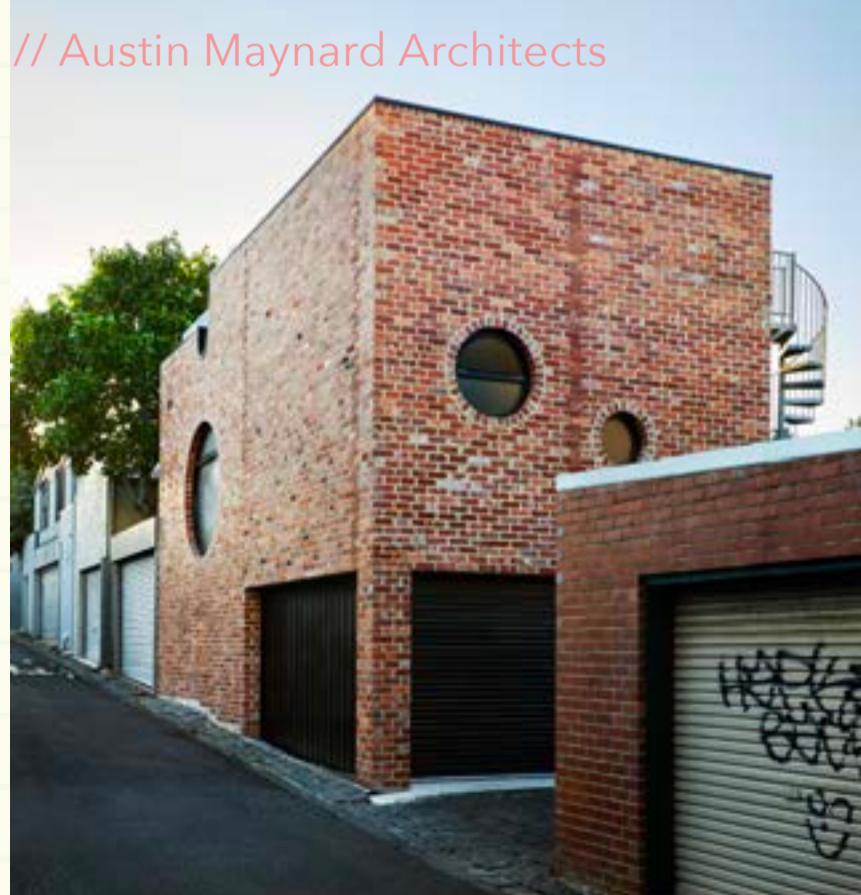
The inclusion of concrete as an infill for the stonework greatly improved the structural support, a feature that's necessary for my project

The issue I face is that I can't infill the brickwork to increase the structural supports. The facade requires minimal visible intervention, so it needs a material and form that can securely hold it in place once the loadbearing walls and floors are removed. The concept of this design can assist with that, but steel seems to be a more viable material option to support the host's facade.

The second being the reuse of demolished building materials. Ben specialises in recycling materials in his projects, when I told him that I would be demolishing the interior structure, and adapting the back facade he suggested repurposing the materials to create concrete for the intervention.

This became a key system for me. On a symbolic note, it would be hypocritical to overlook valuable resources already present in the host by bringing in new materials, especially as concrete was one of my key material choices. This is because the programme is intended for women who are often unnecessarily overlooked in society to be able to reform themselves into people that refuse to be overlooked, as they're already so valuable in society.

Brickface



// Austin Maynard Architects



This project was created using recycled bricks in Australia, you can see how beautiful it is compared to the brickwork garage next to it. This illustrates that reusing materials can be a lot more beautiful than completely disregarding them in a manner that implies it's not pretty or good enough to be used.

Key: Materials

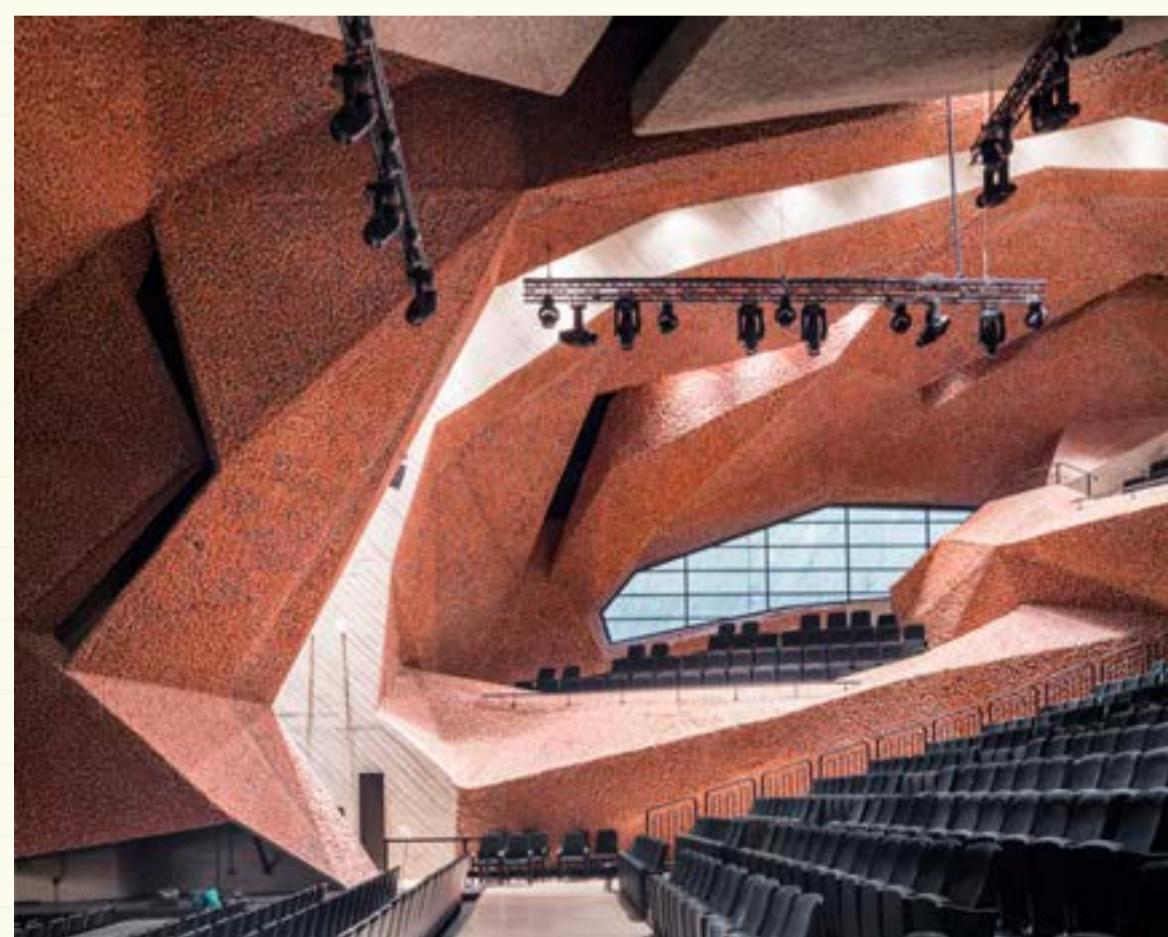
Akin to the 9 month stay, the red of the bricks is symbolic of the lifeblood that aligns with the nutrient feed of the umbilical cord during the gestational process and rebirth.



CKK Jordanki Concert Hall

// Fernando Menis

"Fernando Menis mixed concrete and broken red brick - a technique he calls *picado*". This project is a key example of this system. You can see the forms of the crushed brick, alluding to their original use, mixed in with the tones and forms of the grey concrete which balances out the look of the final form - ensuring it's not overwhelming to the senses. When light hits it, the grey tones act as a frame for the brick, allowing them to be the primary focus. This is suitable for the programmatic intentions in two ways; it illustrates the fact that liminal spaces have always been a secondary feature in design, and the concept of "behind every successful man is a woman".



How is concrete made?

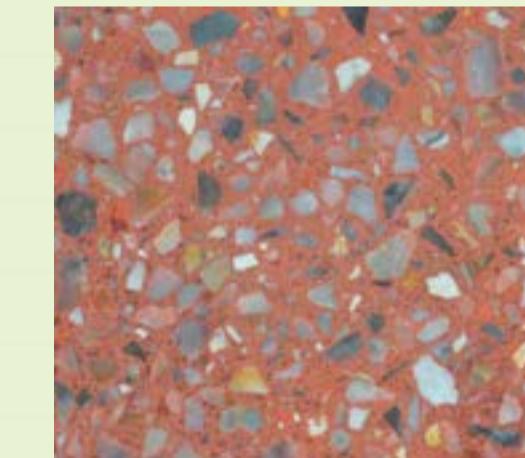
Concrete is made by combining 1 part of cement, 2 parts of sand, and 3 parts of an aggregate, gravel, stones, etc, then mixed with water.



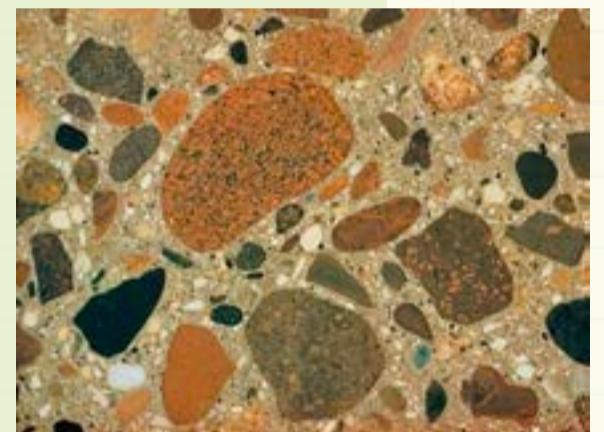
The size of the aggregate can vary to give a variety of textures and aesthetics.



This shows aggregate dense concrete that's left with a rougher texture. This would be ideal for the exterior cell walls, acting as a protective shield for the users inside.



Comparatively, this uses larger pieces of aggregate, and has a smooth surface, this would be ideal for use in the secluded comforting liminal spaces, where users require softer textures and aesthetics but still require visual incorporations to assist with focusing their minds during their reflective activities



This example uses large aggregate forms. I like this example, but I don't like the combination of the small and medium aggregate from the previous examples, as it's too overwhelming to the senses. I think it would be suitable for the exposed areas of the design. The graduation in size can be further indicative of a user's 'wholeness through the journey, going from lots of small bits, to fewer large bits, as they complete their journey.'

KEY: Materials.

Public communal spaces. (kitchen, garden, liminal spaces).

Wood

Bamboo cladding
to line walls → differing lengths to allow for natural looking openings,
windows.

Metals

- Copper detailing (shower, pipes etc)
~~treated~~ maintained for colour
- Untreated steel beams for structural elements.

Private spaces

Marble

- Flooring panels
- Flat, horizontal surfaces

Concrete

- Concrete cast fabric for walls and cladding.
- Concrete facilities? bath etc

The key material for this is the crushed brick concrete.

However, from the start the programme needed two classifications of materials: public and private. Initially, the public spaces were looking to more softer and warm toned materials, like wood and copper or untreated steel, that could rust over time. The private spaces were going to have 'harder' materials, but also with a warmer tonality, like marble and concrete.

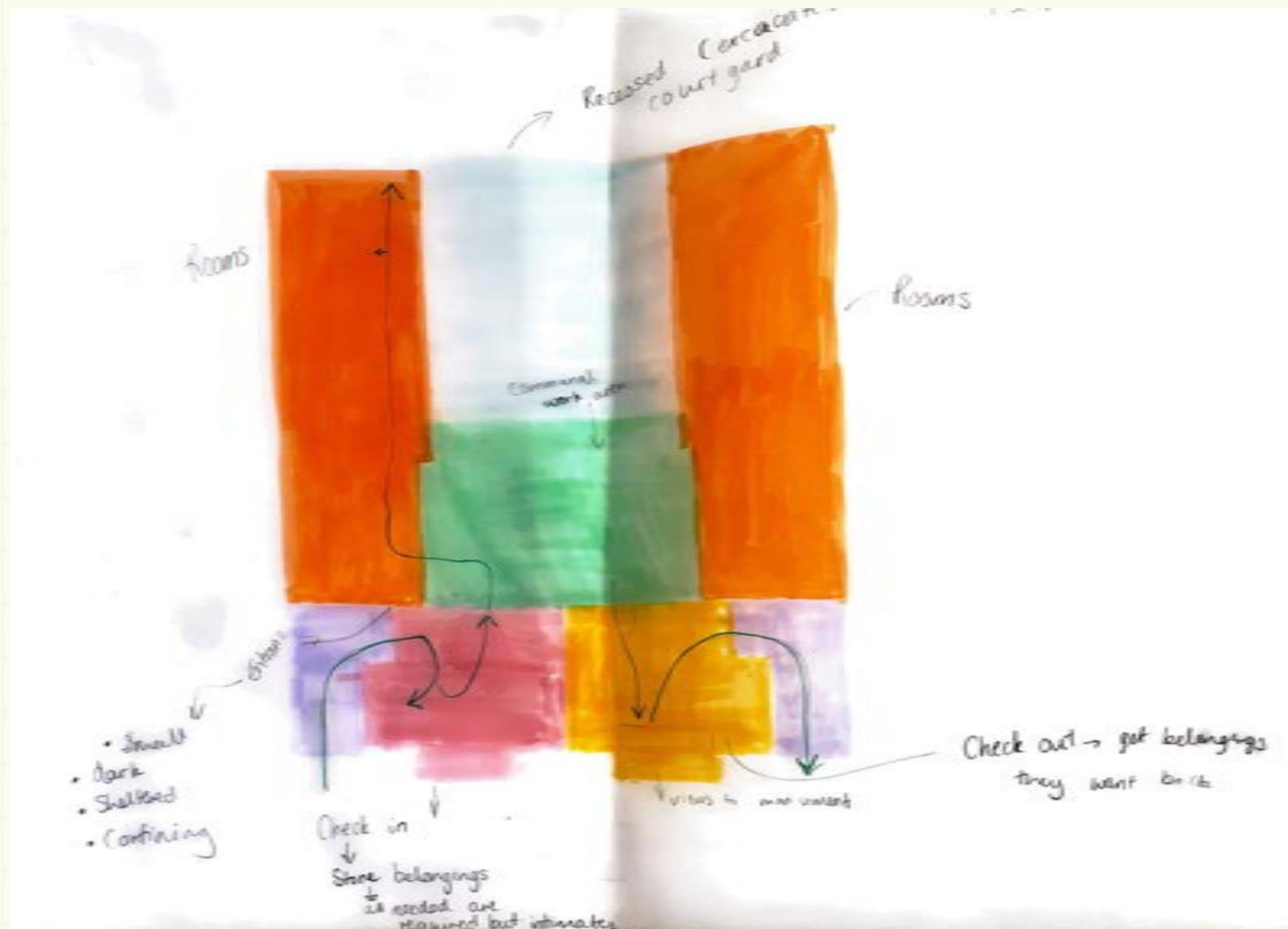
This evolved, however, from the analysis various precedents. The key elements that I liked in them was the cohesive and harmonious design inclusions, where there was a consistent visual language throughout. So, my materials developed to be used all through the intervention, this time altering the forms, textures, and tones through the intervention - as shown with the concrete.

The material palette now consists of:

Steel: for the structural supports

Crushed red brick concrete: for cell walls and pathway floors. Rough concrete will be used in spaces that require a protective look. Whilst smooth, reflective concrete will be used for pathways, for the reasonings explained before.

Wood: will be used to balance out the harder materials, as the railings, stairways, countertops, and other furnishing like elements. This is to act as a soft, yet grounding material to pull everything together, both within the design and relating to the use of bamboo in the monument. Wood also tells a story within, which can be used as a source of inspiration for users; I used to create stories from forms I picked up in wood, or stone detailing



When the project began, I used my schedule

of accommodation to zone out the spatial

experience, to develop my visual sequence.

Initially the programme was going to be a bit

more like a hotel experience, so the users had

roomier 'living' quarters, and the liminal spaces

formed the rooms around the house.

This evolved when the liminal spaces were

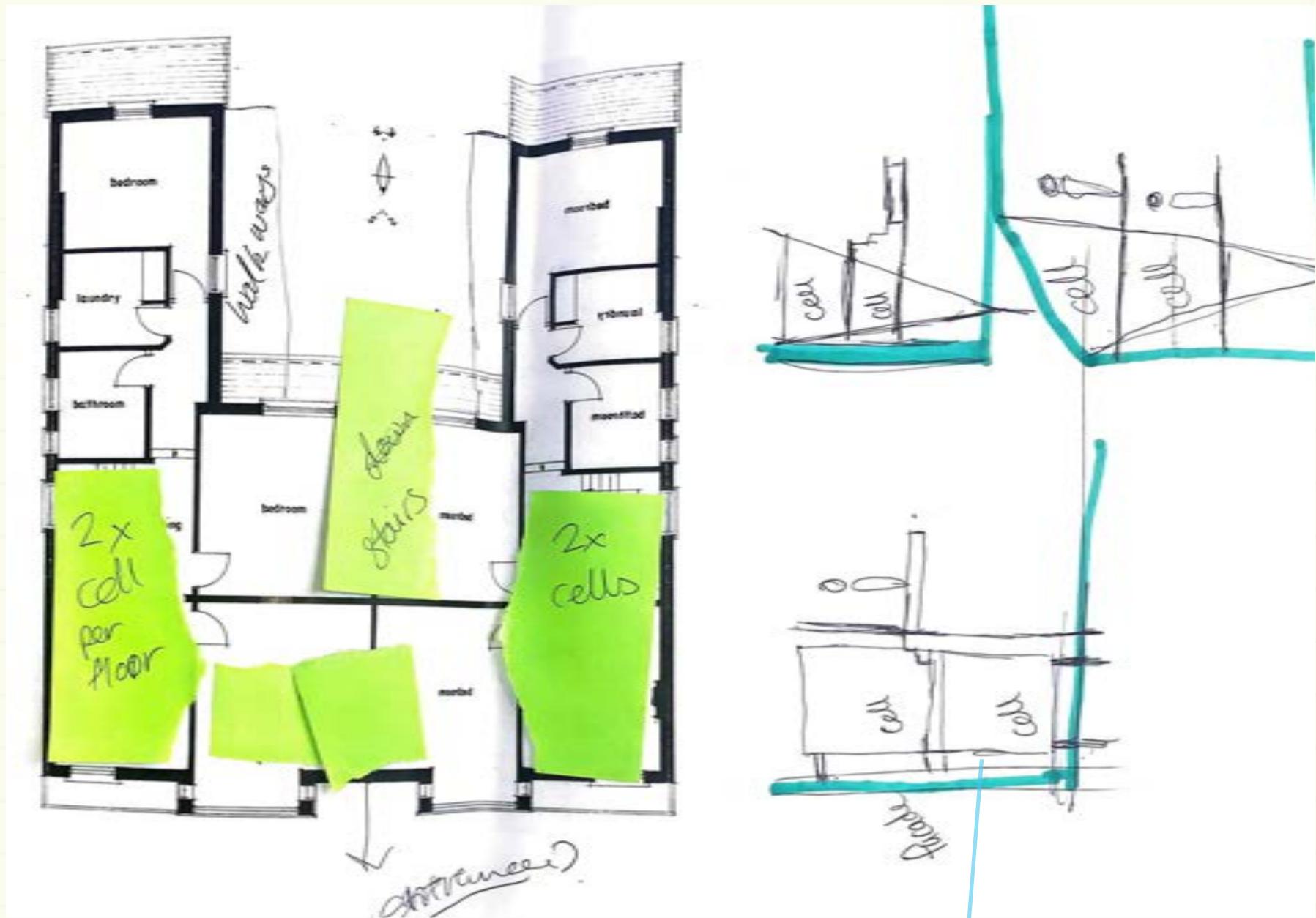
to be used as walkways, to honour their

architectural definition of circulation spaces,

rather than turning them into rooms. This

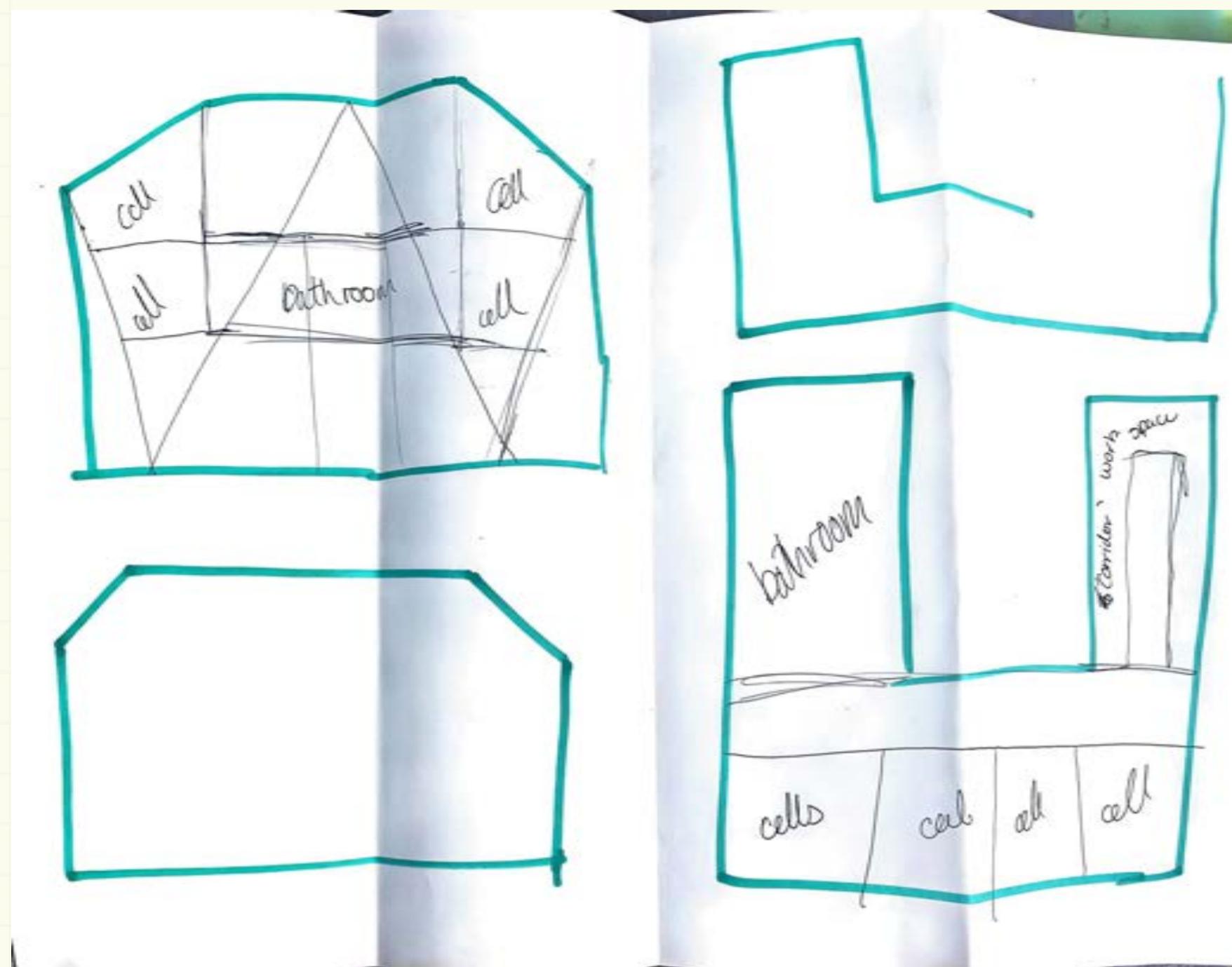
further developed with the decision to have a

facade retention system.



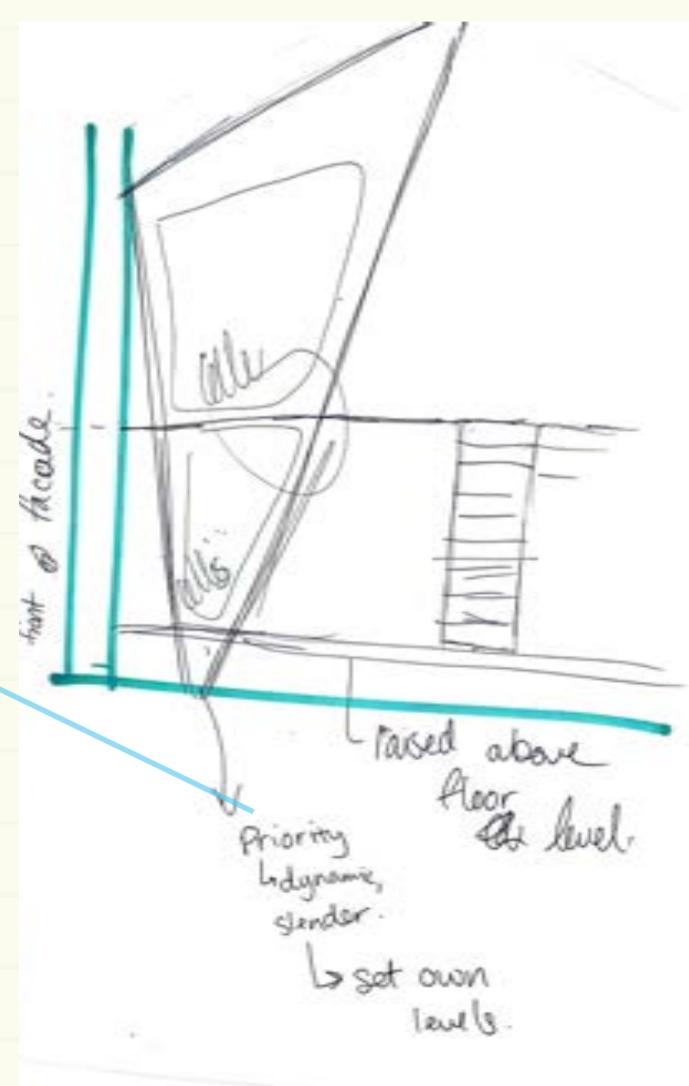
Once I had decided to use the facade retention system, I began sketching out the layout and the spaces, using my schedule of accommodation. I quickly realised that I struggled with focusing on the 'liminal spaces' without an idea of the 'room' or 'zone' layout. This goes against the primary goal of the project

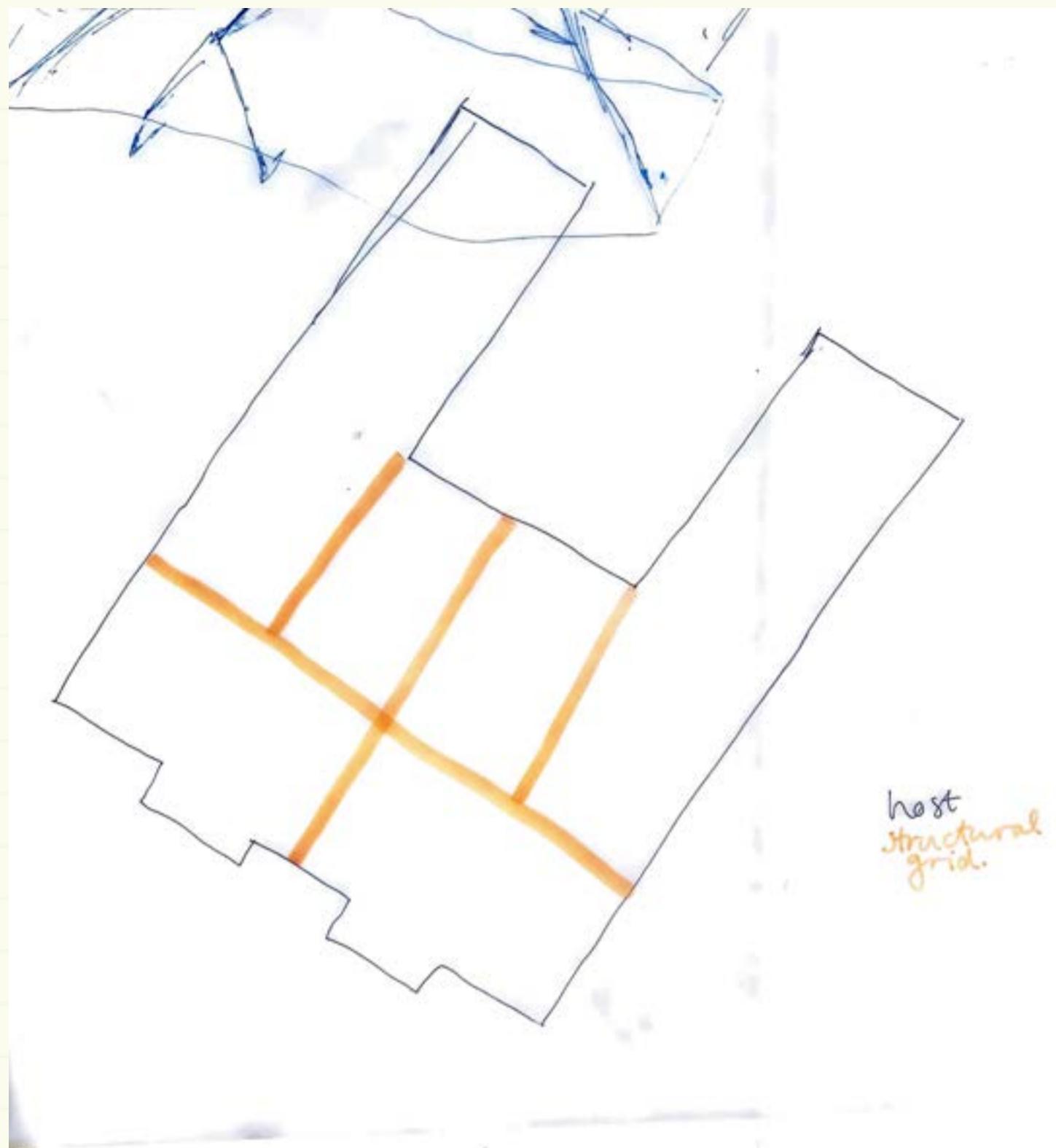
So, I got rid of the existing plan I had been using and started by imagining the structure of the supports. Using these, I experimented with shape and form, and figuring out how the spaces could fit in to allow the liminal walkways to extend off. In this I was allowing myself to use the cells to create additional structural support to provide minimal intervention for the walkways to exist on from this, and provide the illusion of floating.



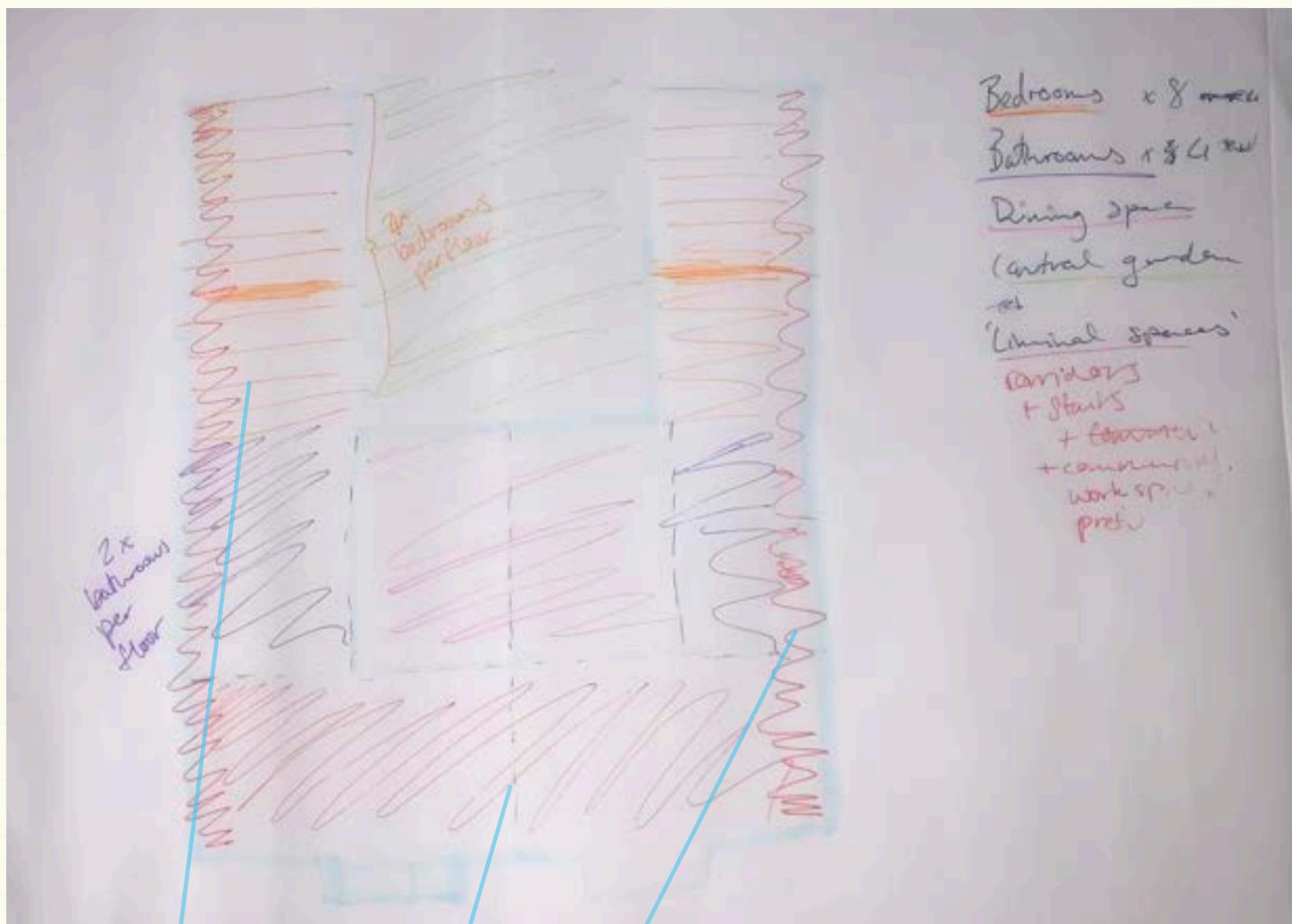
However, I realised that I still couldn't separate from the notion of 'rooms' and 'spaces', further realising that I also couldn't detach from the traditional concept of levels in a building

This information, paired with research into monasteries, and the form of the house and butterfly provided me with a stable footing to begin iterating.



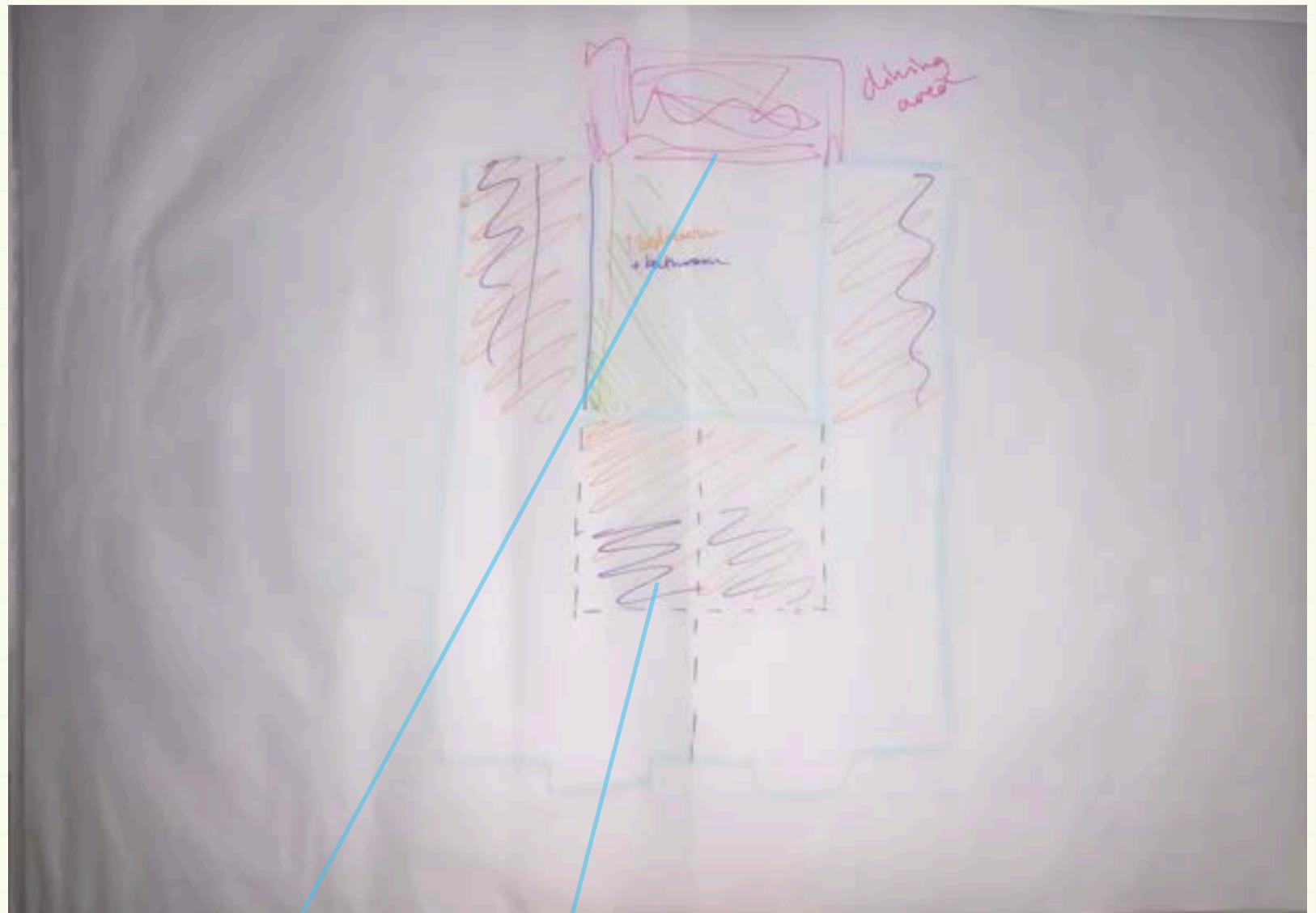


As noted in the host analysis, the load bearing walls create a structural grid, I realised following my Sysmat tutorial with Johanna this would provide a basis to develop the structural supports, and provides a plan layout of how to zone the spaces out in the host. This was used to develop a series of zoning diagrams which were iterated upon to provide the next stage of design development

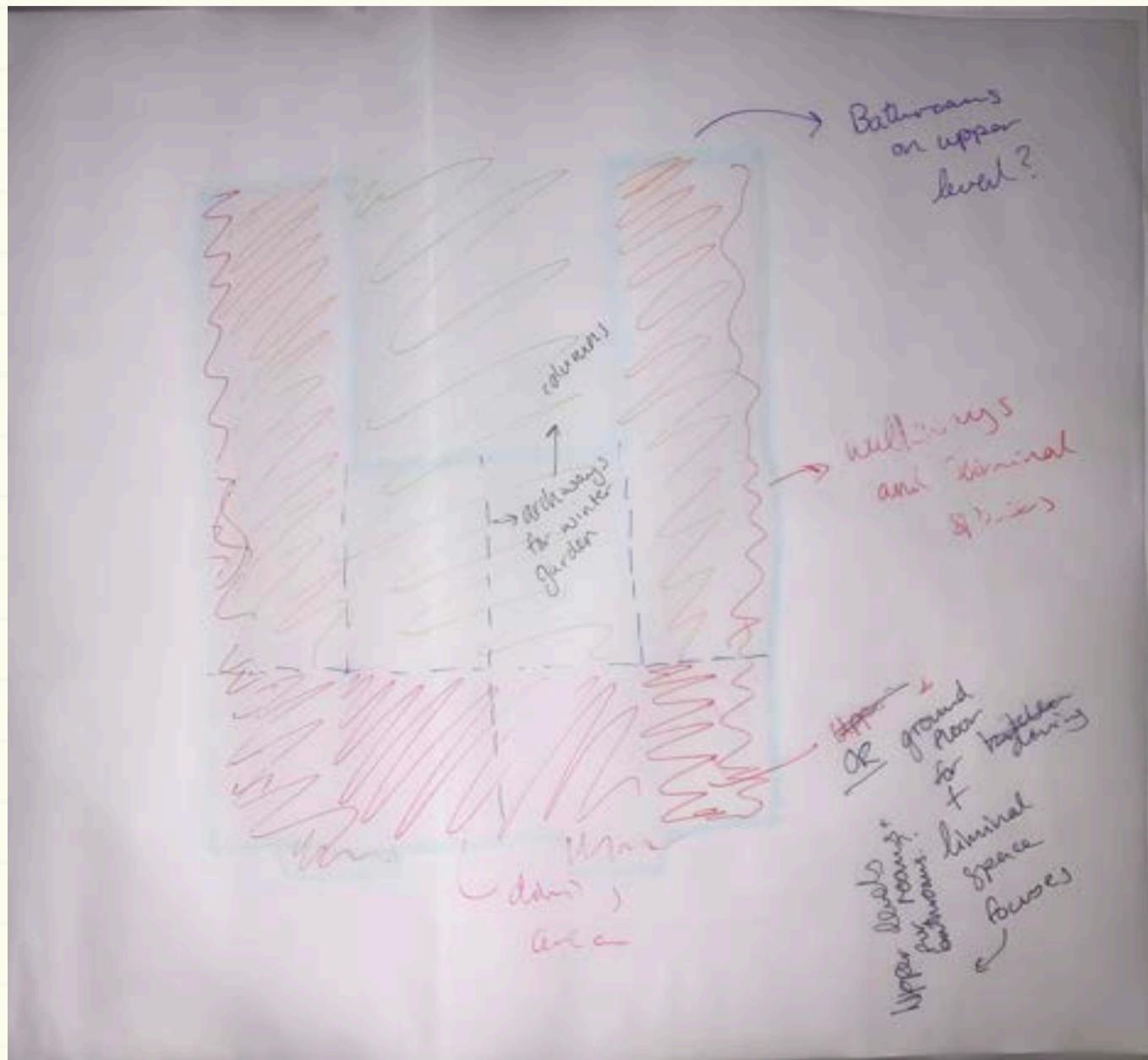


These zoning diagrams
 were created on a single
 level, so everything was
 confined to one floor.

For the 'rooms' and bathrooms, I wanted to have them facing the garden, so they could exist above each other comfortably, leaving the rest of the house void for the liminal spaces.



I thought that the dining area and separate bathroom spaces were taking up too much internal space in the house, that could have been used for the liminal spaces. These drawings illustrate that I was still focused on creating rooms rather than liminal experiences.



In this diagram, I thought that extending the garden would provide me the best of both worlds, with walkways to the rooms, and the liminal spaces sitting above, existing in the rest of the house

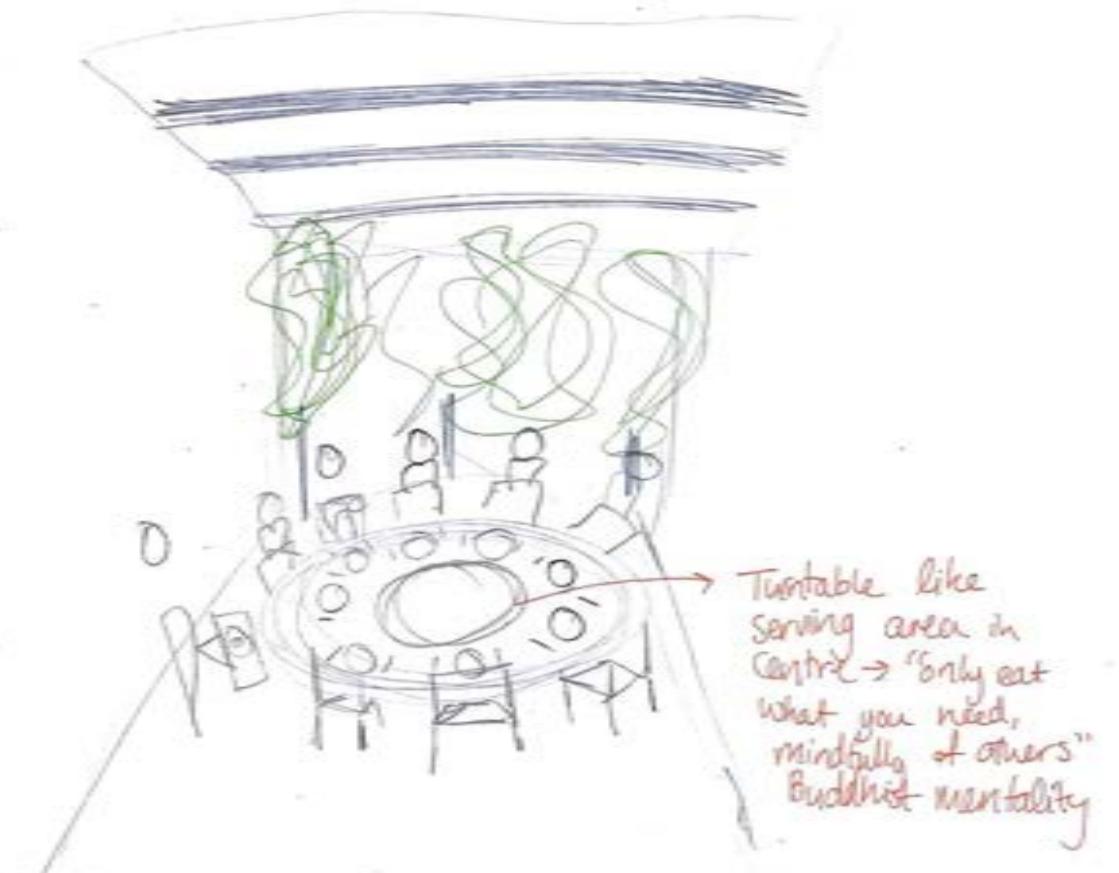
However, I realised that the issue was that these all would have given users a comfortable space to live, which might deter them from accessing the liminal spaces for their activities. So, I wanted to flip this after this process.

I created a basic cell layout, and placed these at the centre of the house, where the communal kitchen would be, confining all communal based experiences to the 'body' of the house. This focused these spaces on self introspection and allowed the liminal spaces to exist looking out to all of the house to take in the views from wherever situated.

This initial sketch provided insight into how the dining room would look, using principles discussed in a tutorial. I used it to create a visual of the spatial experience with the kitchen.

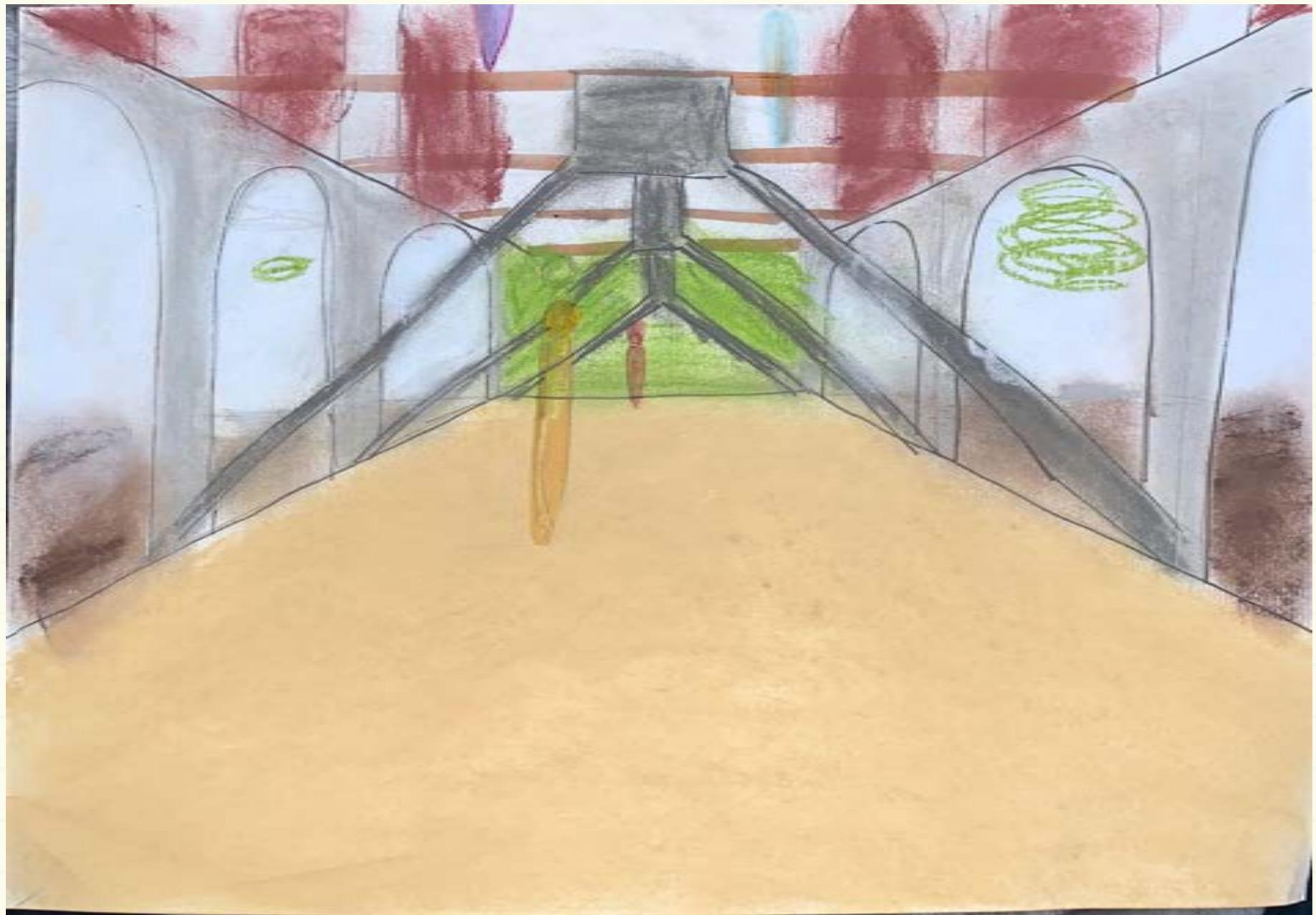


This is an initial concept sketch of the communal dining experience, where the kitchen and dining room sit parallel to the window to the central courtyard.



The archways are drafted behind to illustrate the initial concept.

The communal dining table would be circular to detach from the notion of a hierarchy. It also shows the shared serving station, for users to 'take what they need'



The initial concept of the archways which support the cells above is drafted here.

In this first iteration, the cells were offset so that users would access their rooms through a central walkway, which could be viewed from above. I moved away from this notion, so that all the users would be close to each other, only separated by walls. This is similar to how some monasteries lay out their sleeping quarters, where there's a shared room with just beds inside, but it grants users privacy.



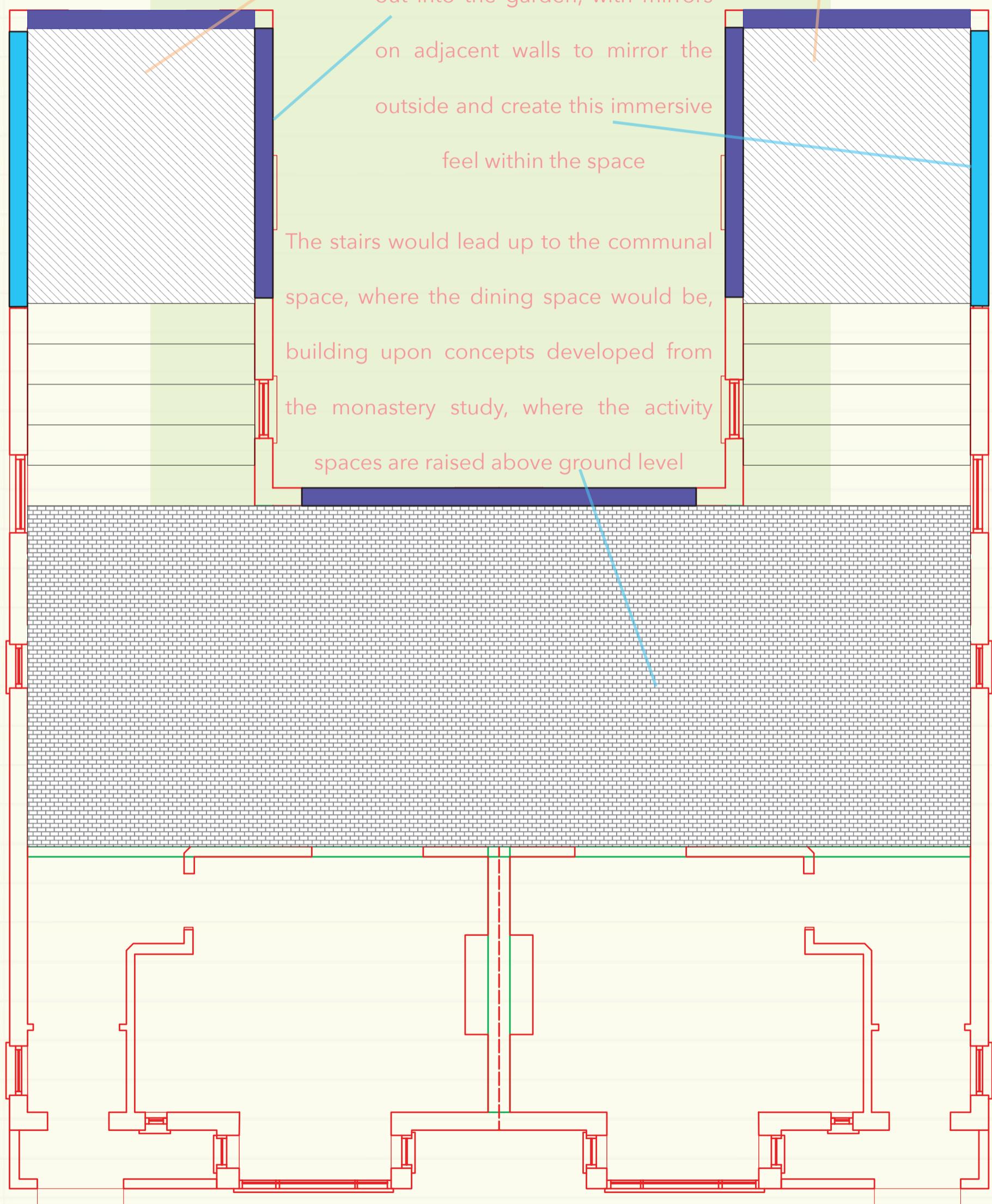
This was a sketch of a cell, it shows
the materiality, and bed layout
intent.

It was to have concrete walls, paired
with a wooden floor, and ambient
feature lighting, whilst only being
suitable for single occupancy.

It's evolved into a much taller bed, underneath which a bathroom space could exist for each user.
The stairs would be designed to provide storage for clothing, to keep the visible space of the
rooms clean and minimal, to ensure the mind doesn't get distracted by belongings everywhere, an
act of sabotage against healing

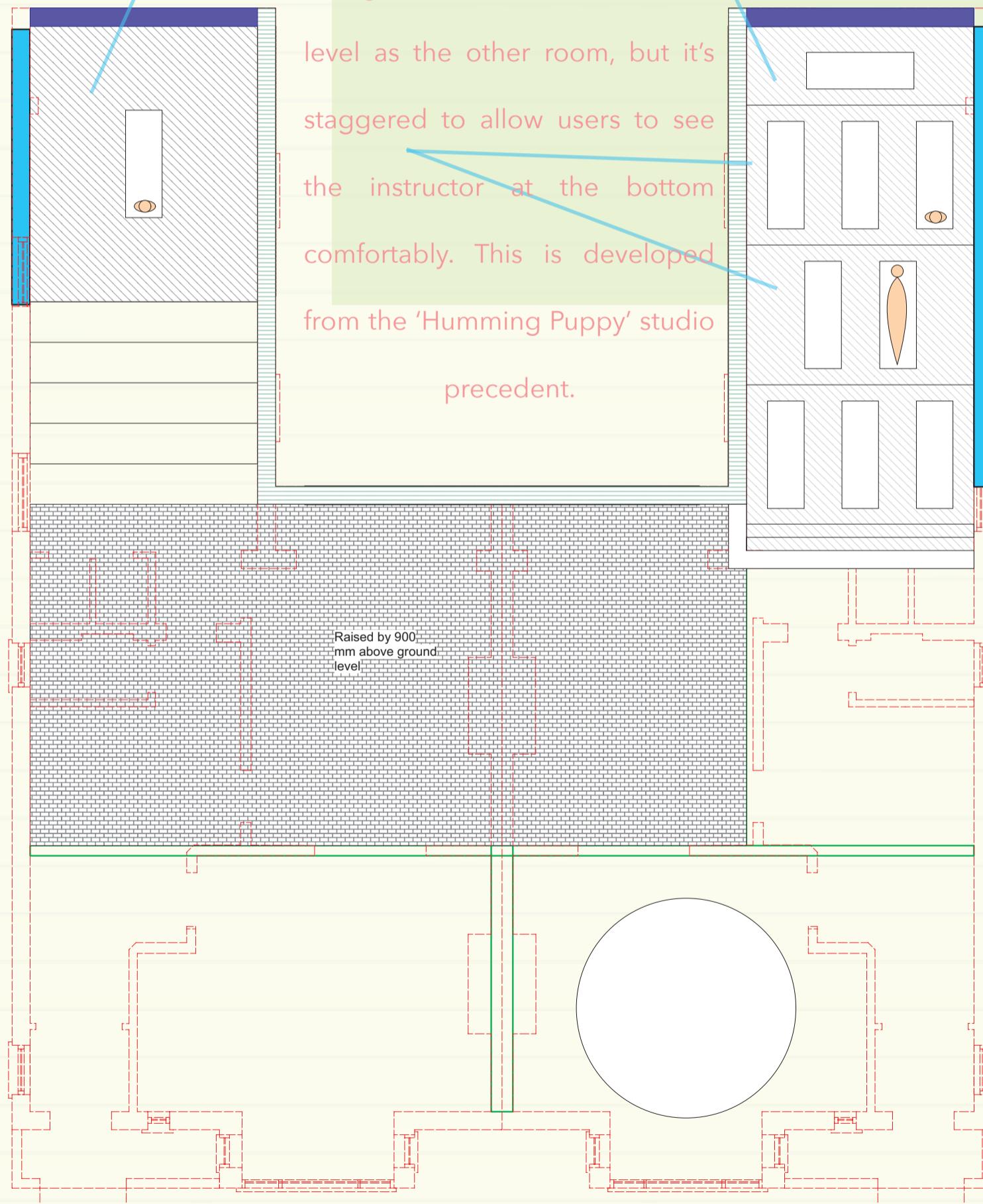
I used features from my visual sequence and early sketches to mark up my plans and begin to 'zone' the spaces for each activity.

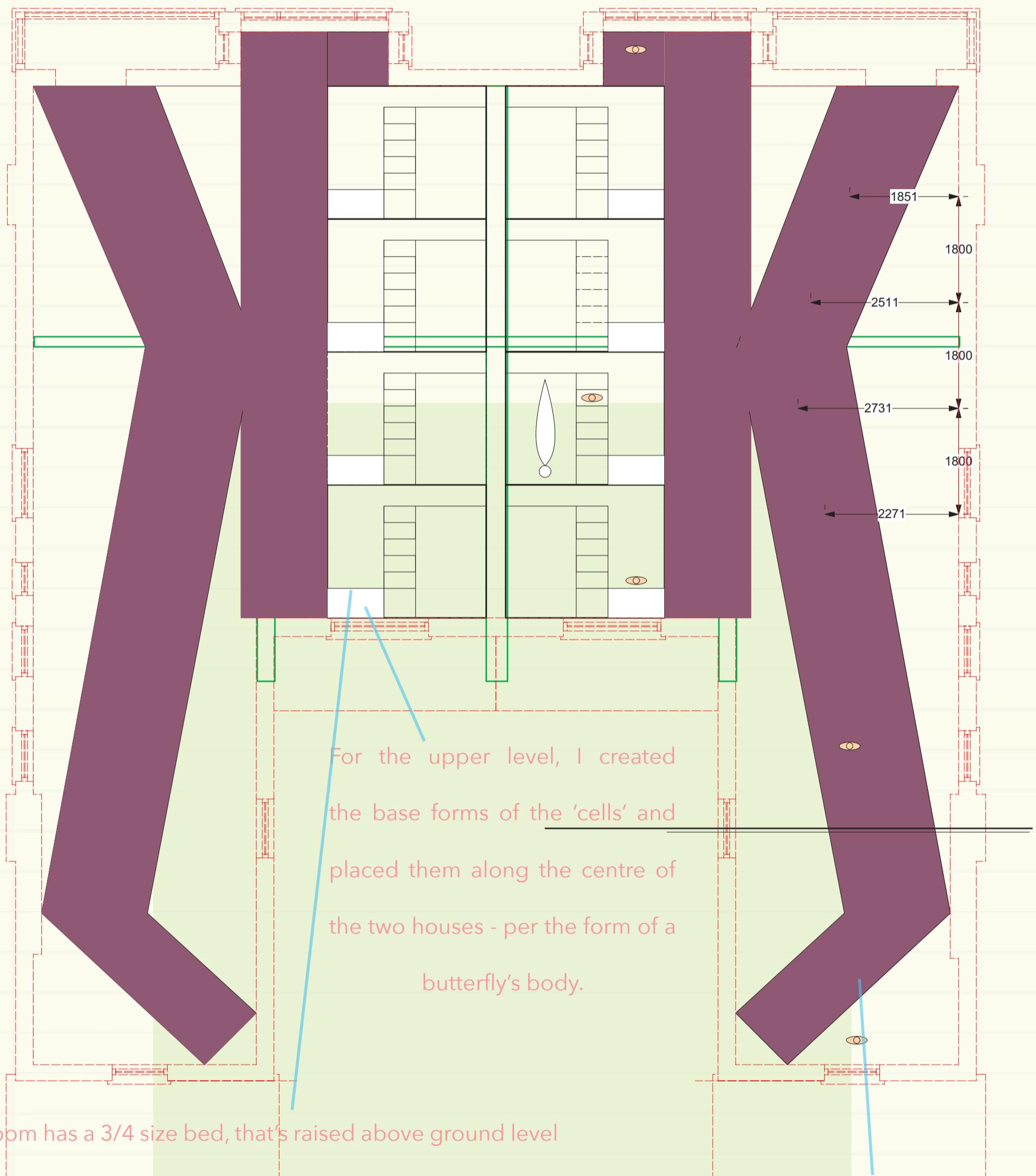
This floor would sit level with the garden level, to remove the hierarchy between inside and outside, building on the Buddhist concept that all things are to be equal.



I further developed these concepts, adding inhabitation to help me figure out the user experience. The recessed levels created a perfect location for yoga to take place. From personal understanding of yoga, I know that it's beneficial to have access to a communal and private yoga experience, especially when first getting into yoga, as it can be an overwhelming journey alone. So i created a private yoga studio, and a communal one for all users.

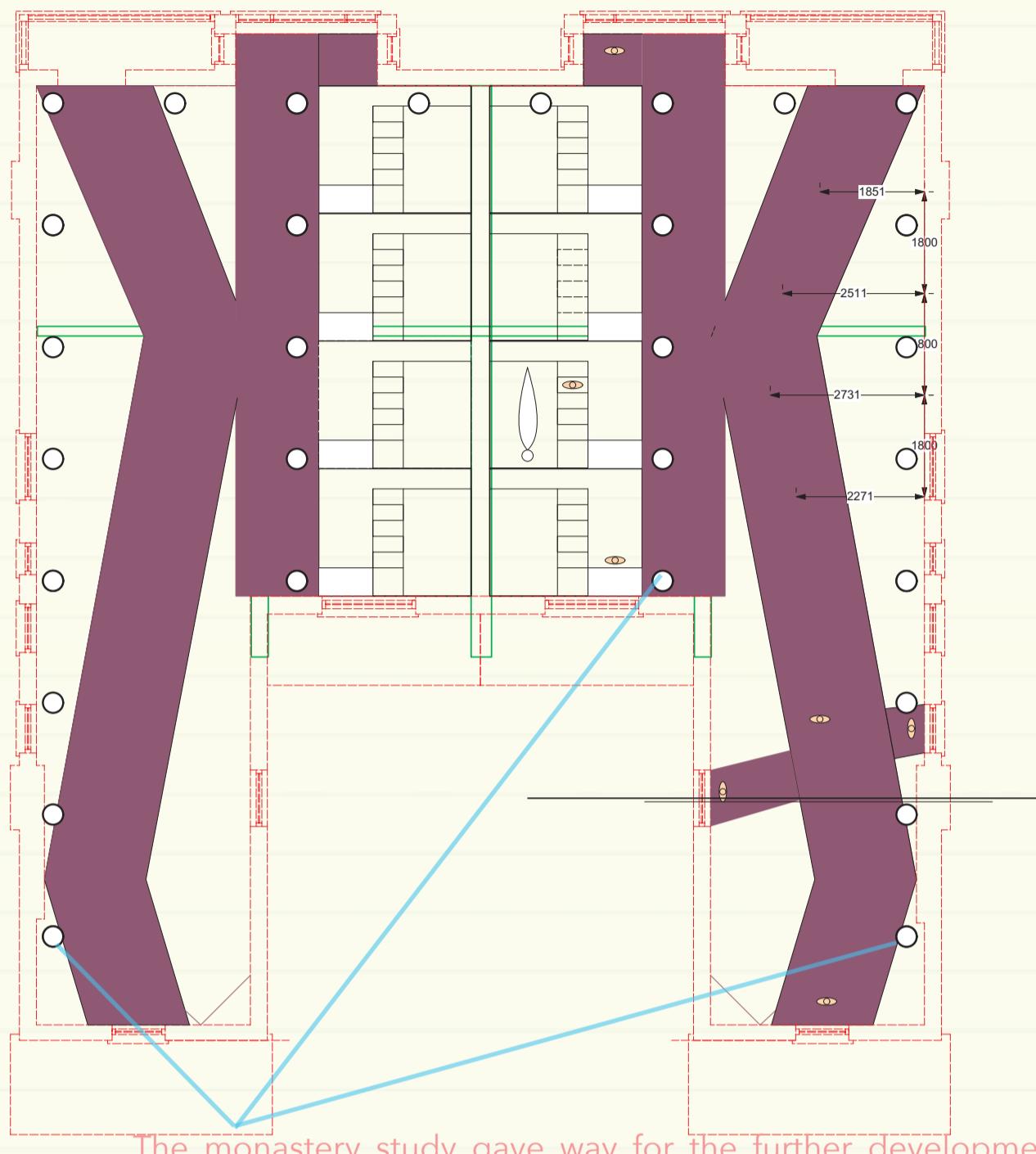
The ground level is at the same level as the other room, but it's staggered to allow users to see the instructor at the bottom comfortably. This is developed from the 'Humming Puppy' studio precedent.





Each room has a 3/4 size bed, that's raised above ground level with use of the stairs. This is to create the illusion of leaving the experiences of each day behind before going to sleep, so they wake up with a blank slate, ready for the next day's experiences. There's also a private work station in each room for private contemplation should they feel the need to feel safer.

I drafted a walkway from this to figure out the placement of everything, this will be further developed upon to give a more interlinked experience throughout the house, following findings about monasteries.



The monastery study gave way for the further development of

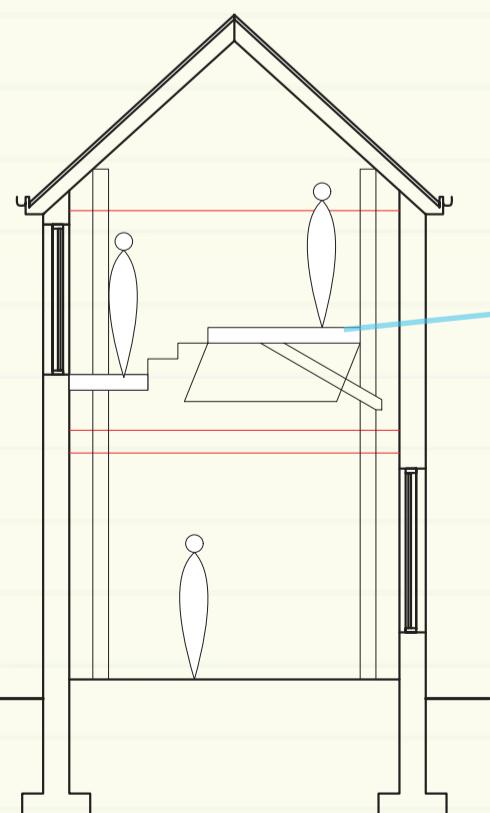
the facade retention structure. A series of columns line the facade

of the building and the base of the cells develop the support

of the walkways from, which is intended to create an archway

like experience below, mirroring that of the traditional Chaitya

formations



I used the layout to create a sectional draft of how the wing would look. The

walkways would have a variation in level, and with it, spatial experience, like the

Bathhouse Spa. These would vary in material and spatial quality, as discussed in

the material principles, to help users dealing with different traumatic, grieving,

or emotional experiences. This is because trauma causes heightened or blocked

sensory experiences, the sense of sound is heightened, whilst scent, and touch

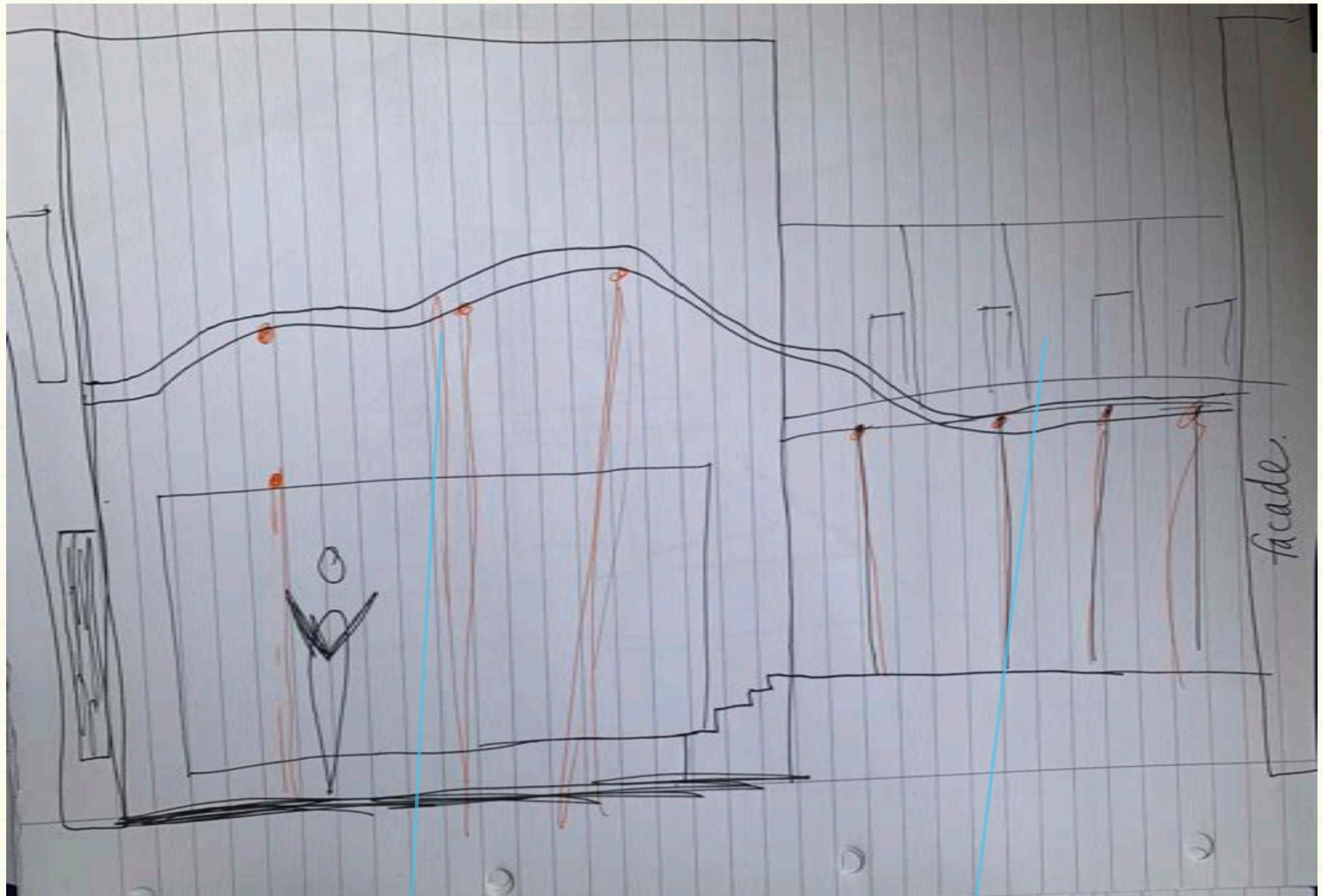
could be hindered. This varies between people, so it's important to balance out

the feeling of sensory overload.



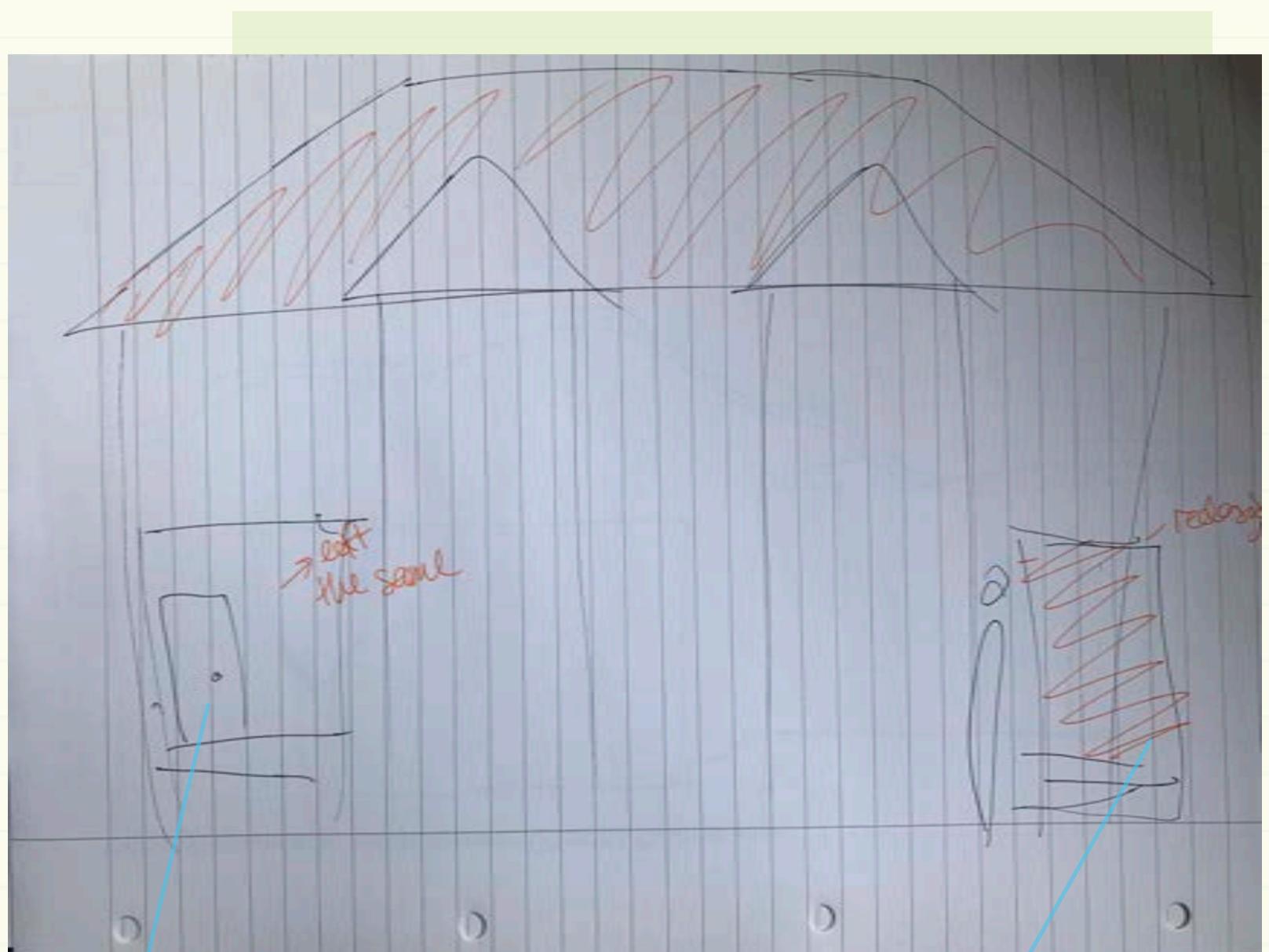
This sketch loosely illustrates the visualisation of the communal yoga studio with the facade structure
that creates the archway above, developed from the earlier layouts.

This would be the mirror feature mirroring
the communal garden view outside



This side sectional sketch illustrates the multilevel walkway intent, that sits above the private yoga studio.

In the back the elevation of the cells can be seen. If this were seen in a render, the walls would show the rougher aggregate concrete lining the walls.



Much like 'The Humming Puppy' studio, the facade would be left untouched, however, because there are two entrances to the house, it's important for users to be able to enter through the space that would enable a moment of neutrality before getting immersed in the space. This sketch illustrates that the left door would remain the same as it currently is, whilst the right door would be adapted in some way to allow an immersive user experience upon entering

Bibliography & Original Research Sources

A lot of the information in the document has been researched and evaluated before being placed into the document. I used the information I found to support my experiences and knowledge, as such it is primarily, my own words and work, featuring small phrases or quotes from the research authors. Thus it's laid out at the end rather than as footnotes, as there are few places for direct referencing.

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Site and Host History:

Document

- Conservation Area, The. *Queen's Park Conservation Area Character Statement (Draft)*, March 2018, Page 44,45, 46, 47, 48

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