

CONNECTING ARTS
AND HOMELESSNESS WORLDWIDE

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE**





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INTRODUCTION

According to Shelter, in 2018 approximately 320,000 people in Britain were or had been homeless. There is a crisis that needs to be addressed and if various organisations supported each other, even in a modest way, it would help to mitigate the concern. It has been highlighted by some of the most vulnerable people in society that they are not always made to feel welcome, purely because of their circumstances. Everyone has the same right towards the world; so why shouldn't everyone have the right to feel included?

To help tackle the issue, numerous institutions and charities are working together to help support and provide a voice for the people who are or who have been homeless; due to the fact that cultural spaces are already open to the public. In addition to this, they have been a great help towards strengthening the provision of the arts for people who are or have been homeless, through the implementation of good practice and policy making. These could include any space in a community that possesses ethnological values and various meanings towards their inhabitants.

With One Voice, the international arts and homelessness movement has been working with cultural spaces around the world who want to respond to increasing homelessness by being as welcoming, accessible and inclusive as possible. At the same time, more and more cultural spaces want to fulfil a deeper civic duty.

In order to understand the context and to spread effective practice, WOV commissioned arts consultant Phyllida Shaw to write a Review of Cultural Spaces Responses to Homelessness. The review which will be published in late spring 2019, draws on 30 case studies of museums, galleries, arts centres and libraries around the world who have responded to homelessness. This Review will result in a set of ideas, resources and a training package for cultural spaces wanting to deepen access to homeless people. All of these ideas and practices are about behaviours, culture and programme ideas. Manchester Museum is one of the case studies and one of two flagship organisations (alongside Tate) to test some of the recommendations coming out of the Review.

The MSA Project

While the Cultural Spaces' Responses to Homelessness Review focusses on behaviours, programme and culture, Manchester School of Architecture and Laing O'Rourke approached WOV to look into buildings themselves – the design of existing and new cultural spaces in order to enable these buildings to be as physically welcoming, accessible and inclusive as possible. The aim of this guide is to promote inclusive design practices that would further the admittance of all members of the public, regardless of the personal circumstance. Such techniques could include:

- Design decisions taken prior, during and after development of a scheme.
- Adequate consultations between the various consultants and the end user of the spaces.
- Increase awareness towards the people who are or have been homeless.
- Influence of policies at all levels.
- Adequate training for employees for people who work in cultural spaces.

This booklet is also available for use by any type of consultant, for instance: architects, policy makers, charities and members of cultural spaces themselves.

CONSULTATION

When we started this design guide, looking into cultural spaces being inclusive for everyone, we found that it would not be possible to give accurate design solutions without consulting with organisations that work in the homeless sector and with groups of those who are or have been homeless. We had consultation meetings with the groups to discuss and figure out together what they found the possibilities or challenges of cultural spaces to be for those who are or have been homeless.

OUR CONSULTATION GROUP

During the two week event undertaken by the Manchester School of Architecture students, consultation was implemented throughout the duration of the two weeks as it was felt that to carry out the correct research, that consultation with such groups was vital. We were fortunate to be able to speak to Matt, Fee, Cookie and Gareth from With One Voice, John with Laing O'Rourke and Simon, John and Norman from Manchester Street Poem.



We discussed with them about both theirs and our experiences of cultural spaces, speaking of how such spaces could present barriers upon entering, be too grand and intimidating or create a friendly atmosphere through their staff and facilities.

We were also able to talk through the journey you would take upon entering a cultural building. We split into groups that spoke about the sequence of the entering the approach, the threshold and lastly the foyer space.

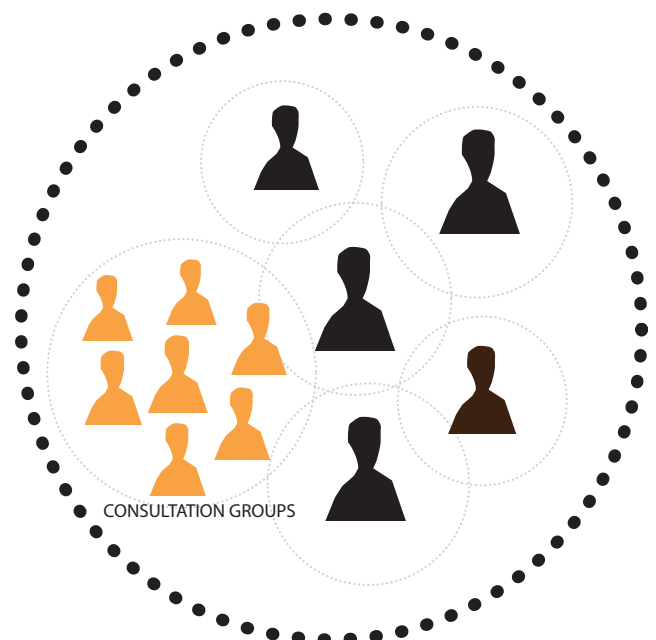
They were able to give us invaluable knowledge about what they find challenging with the journey they take entering cultural spaces which we later applied to our guide.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATION

The relevance of our participation with the consultation groups throughout the two week creates the first key point of this design guide which is the importance of consultation within the multidisciplinary team. Manchester is one of the centres of innovation in homelessness and homelessness services are being co-produced. We took inspiration from this approach and made sure our ideas for the Design Handbook were co-produced.

Having a multidisciplinary team for any cultural space design is vital, making sure all disciplines such as architects, landscape architects, engineers, lighting are included throughout the design process is important but what is of relevance to this discussion is the additional importance of including consultation groups such as groups of those who are or have been homeless within this process.







MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY

When you approach the library there are two entrances; if you enter through the glass extension you will quickly find yourself in the café, where you can relax and look through library archives. If you choose to enter through the portico, you will find multiple paths you can choose to take, these will take you to various collection and study zones. Much of the building is transparent, so as you make your way around it you know what to expect from each area.



PEOPLE'S HISTORY MUSEUM



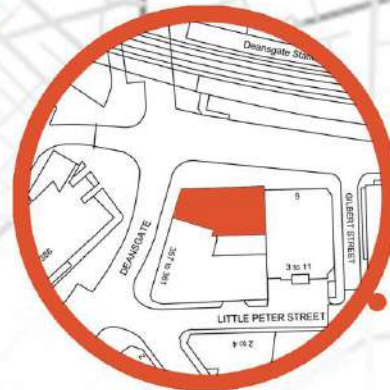
SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY MUSEUM



JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

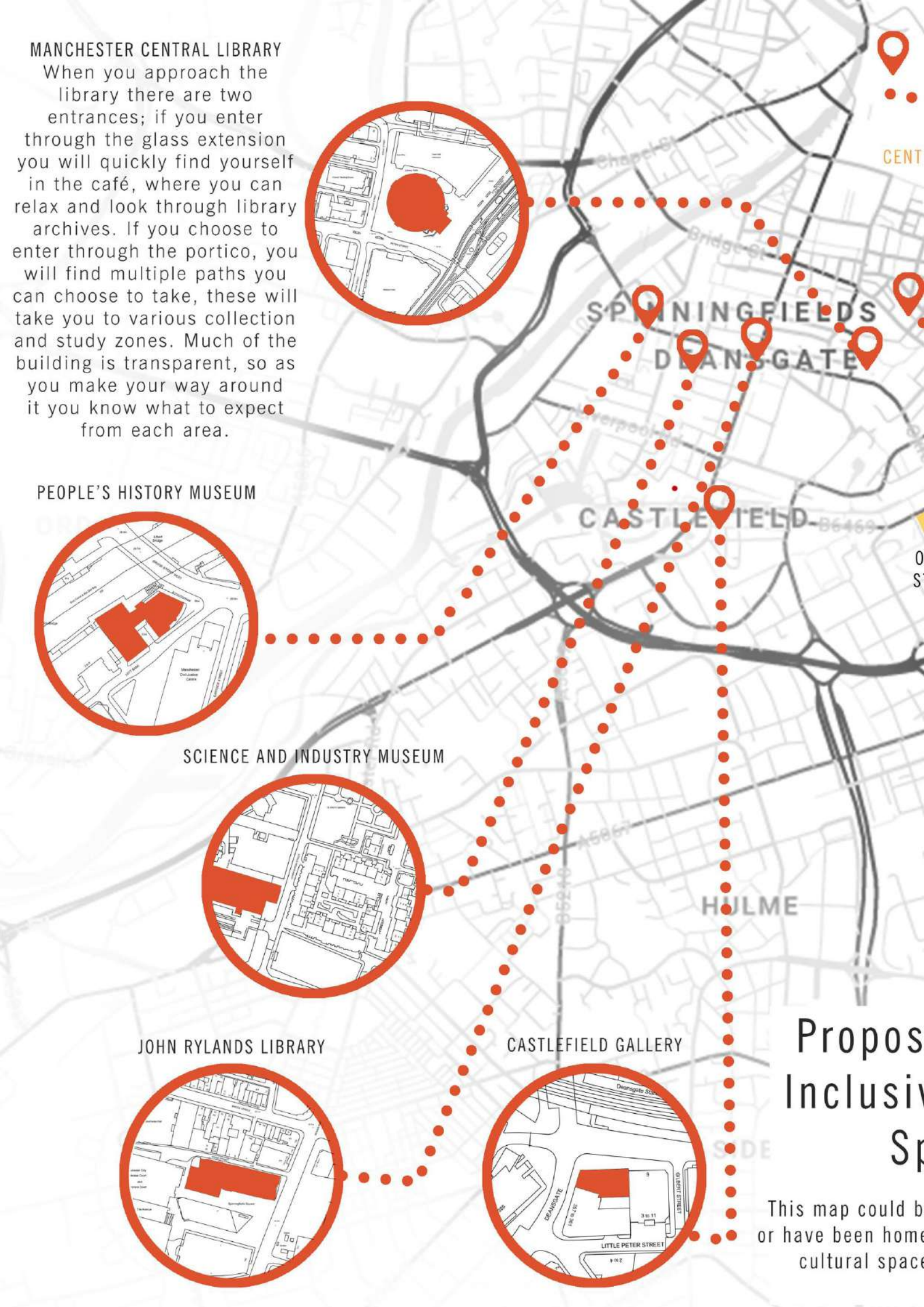


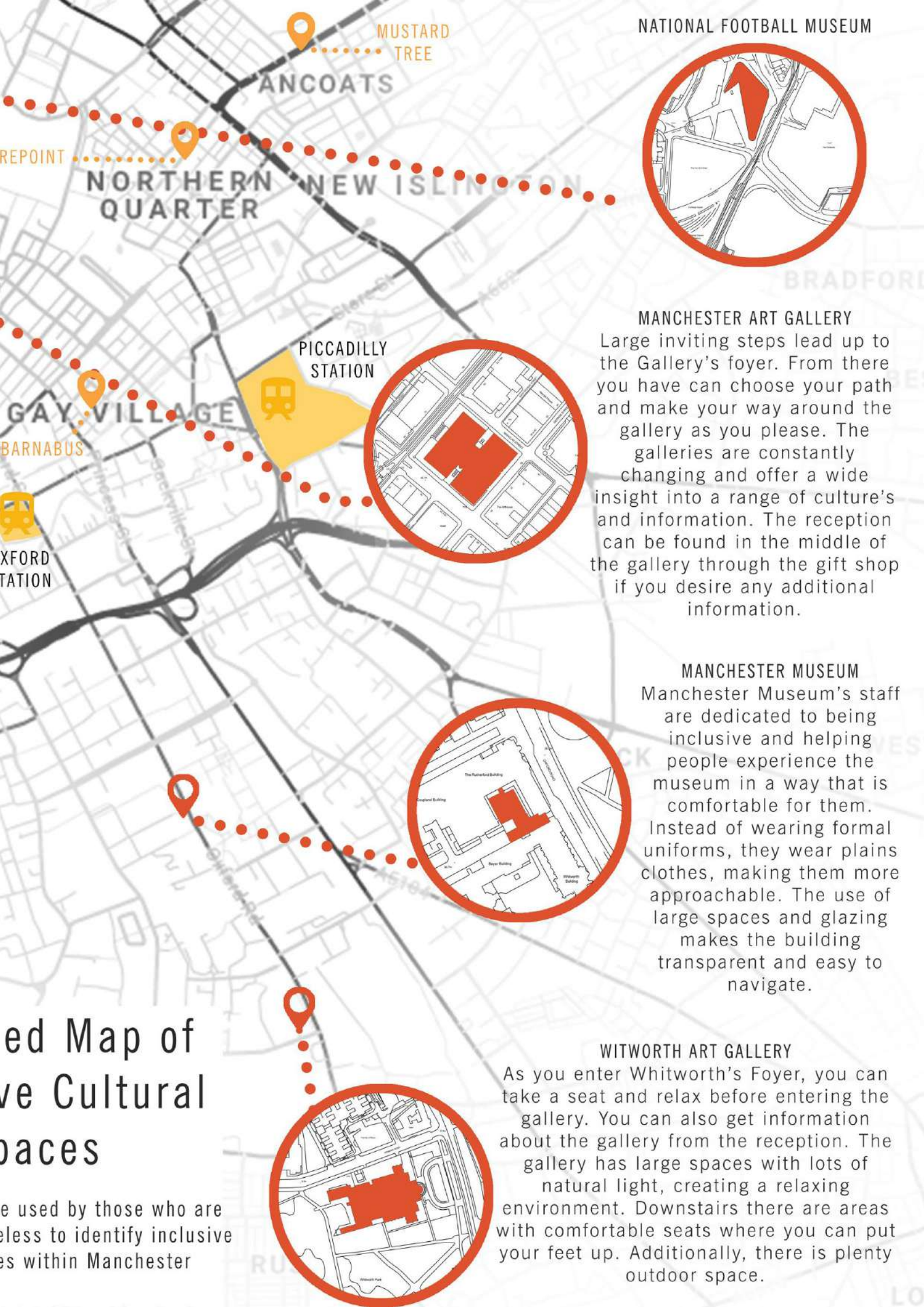
CASTLEFIELD GALLERY



Proposed Inclusive Space

This map could be
or have been home
cultural space





NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM



MANCHESTER ART GALLERY

Large inviting steps lead up to the Gallery's foyer. From there you have can choose your path and make your way around the gallery as you please. The galleries are constantly changing and offer a wide insight into a range of culture's and information. The reception can be found in the middle of the gallery through the gift shop if you desire any additional information.



MANCHESTER MUSEUM

Manchester Museum's staff are dedicated to being inclusive and helping people experience the museum in a way that is comfortable for them. Instead of wearing formal uniforms, they wear plains clothes, making them more approachable. The use of large spaces and glazing makes the building transparent and easy to navigate.



WITWORTH ART GALLERY

As you enter Whitworth's Foyer, you can take a seat and relax before entering the gallery. You can also get information about the gallery from the reception. The gallery has large spaces with lots of natural light, creating a relaxing environment. Downstairs there are areas with comfortable seats where you can put your feet up. Additionally, there is plenty outdoor space.

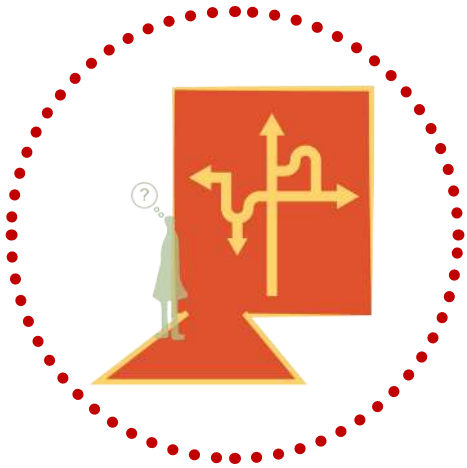


ed Map of ve Cultural aces

used by those who are
less to identify inclusive
es within Manchester

WAY-FINDING

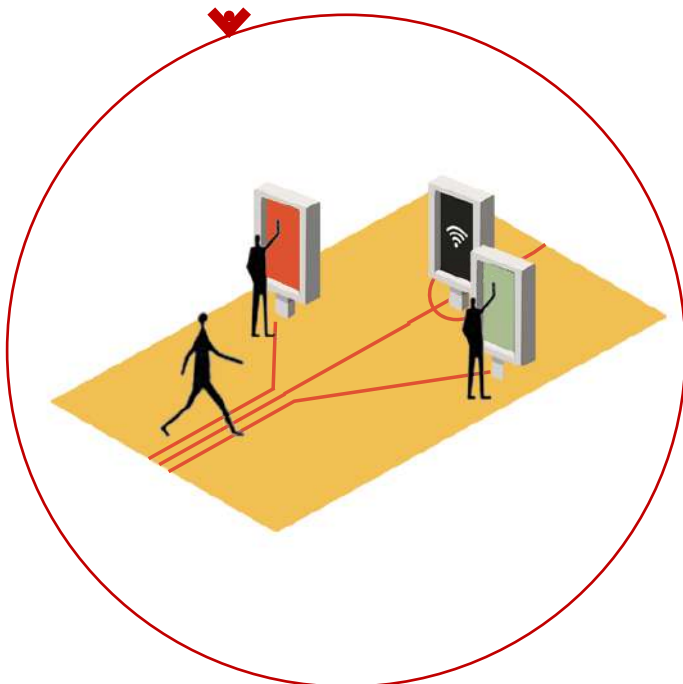
Legibility is necessary to help people find out where they are and identify where they're going. Creating different routes and experiences towards and into the building can create a welcoming atmosphere. Subtle signage with creative alternatives to physical signs can be used such as variations in paving, plants, lighting, etc. Although larger spaces may want to adopt colour coded zones as a way for categorizing the spaces within the buildings, cultural spaces should refrain from using luminous neon signage as these can have a disorientating effect on users with invisible disabilities.



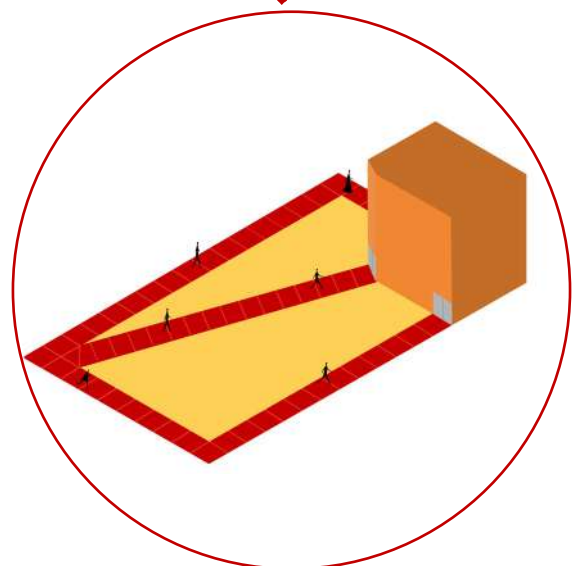
AVOID TOO MUCH SIGNAGE



ALTERNATIVE SIGNAGE



INTERACTIVE WAY FINDING

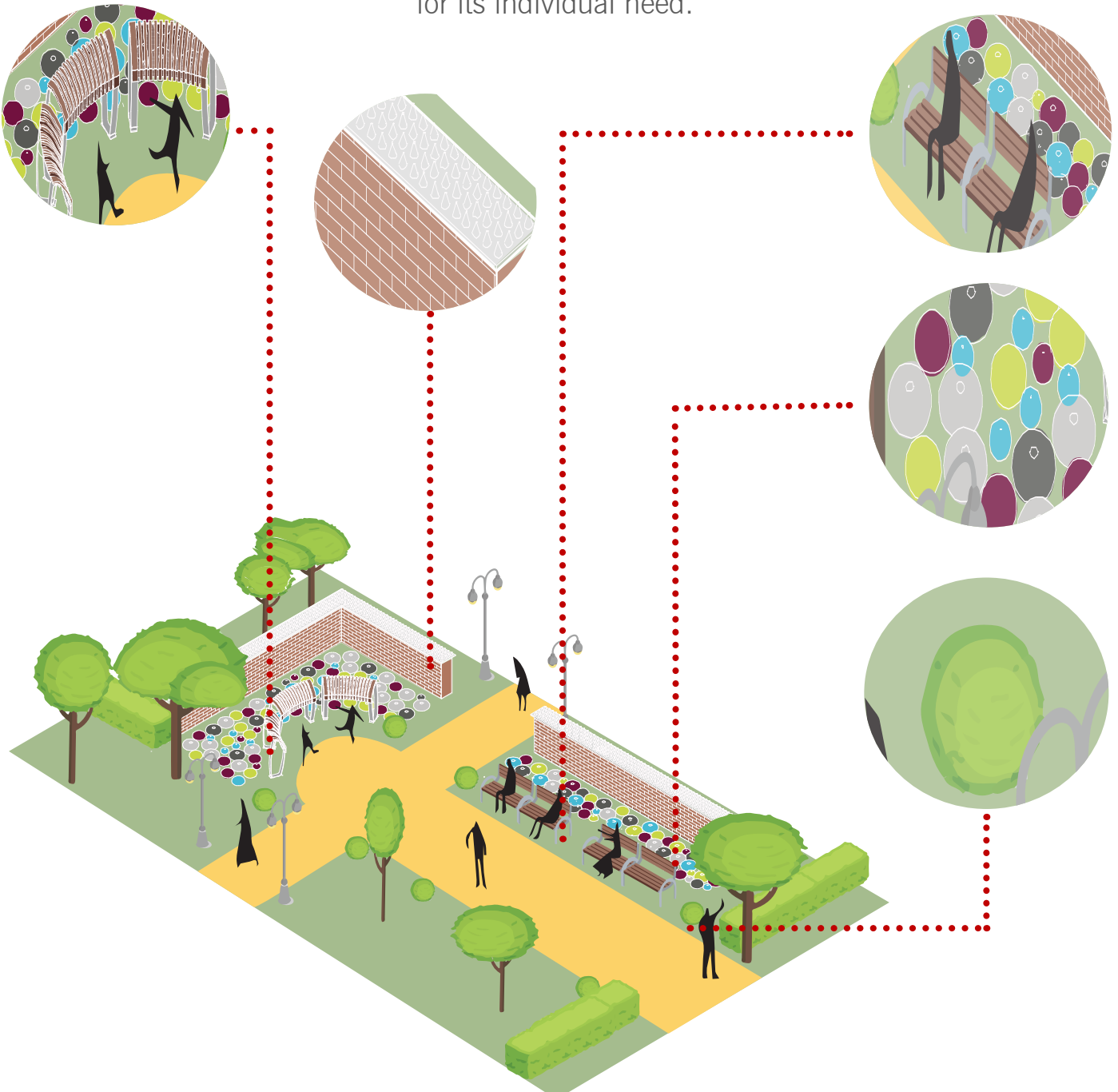
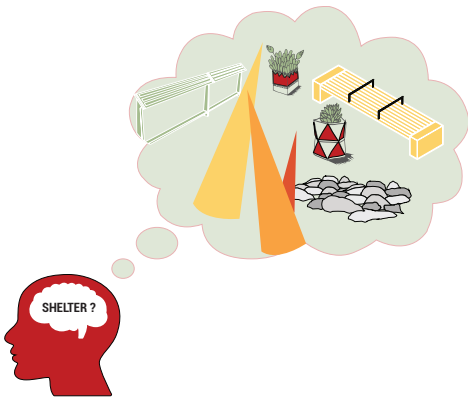


CLEAR AND DIRECT PATHWAYS



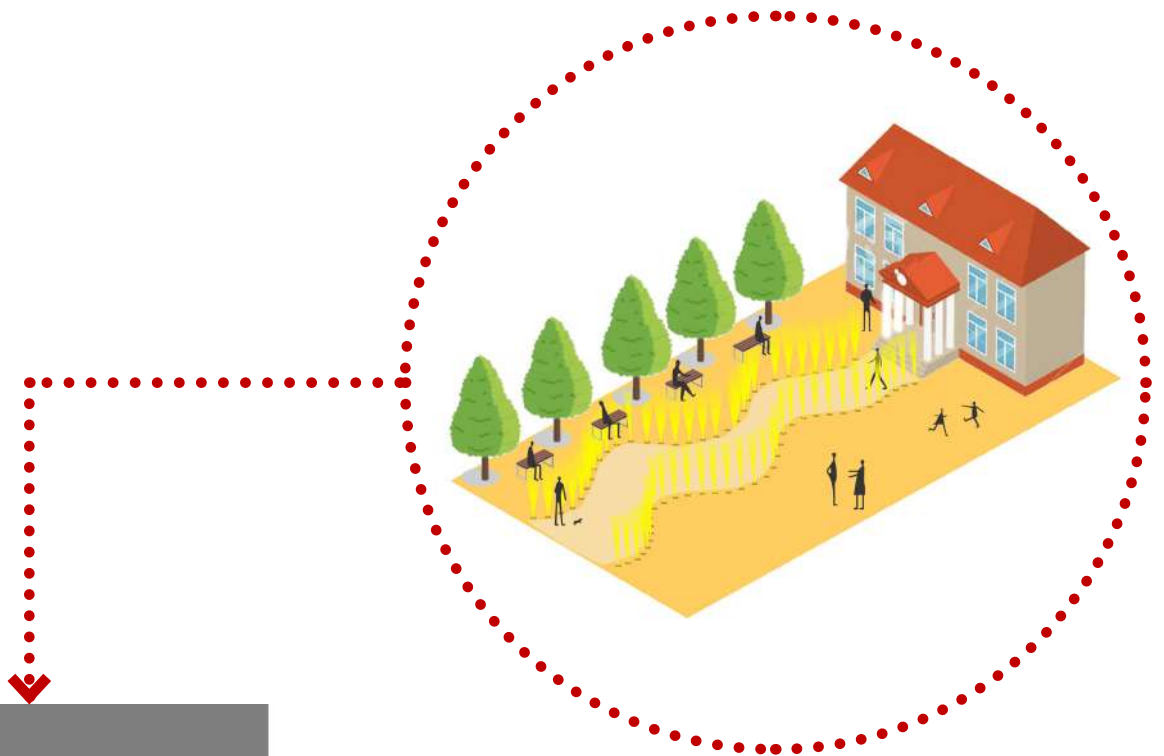
HOSTILE ARCHITECTURE

'Hostile architecture' or 'defensive design' are specific features created to deter people who are homeless from finding shelter. Examples include: segmented, curved or slanted benches, armrests on benches, rocky pavements, spiked window sills, street spikes, awning gaps, barred corners, street dividers, raised grate covers, tiered seating, fenced grates, retractable spikes and boulders under bridges. While it is vital to have a design that is inclusive without exceptions, every cultural space will have its own security requirements and a 'one size fits all' solution may not be the most suitable. Hence each cultural building/location will need to be assessed to incorporate design and security features that work best for its individual need.



LIGHTING

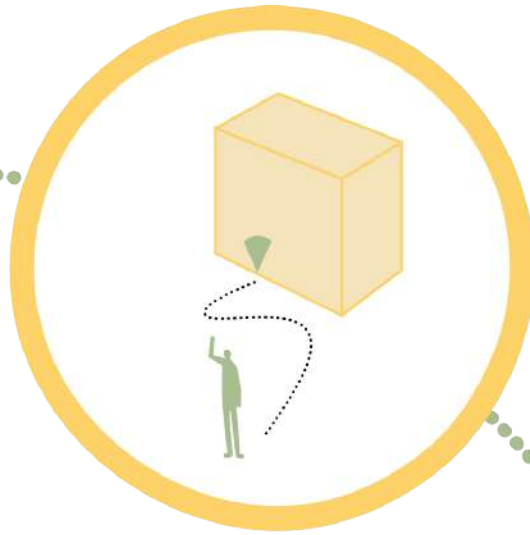
Lighting can be used in a different ways in cultural spaces for different functions. Illuminated pavements can be an alternative to conventional signage leading to the building. Well-lit displays visible from the outside offer a glimpse of the inside and the interior lighting can be modified through the day, varying from natural light in the mornings and artificial lighting in the evenings. The internal programme will also create pockets of brightly and softly lit spaces.



PAVEMENT LIGHTING



VARIATION IN LIGHTING
THROUGH THE DAY

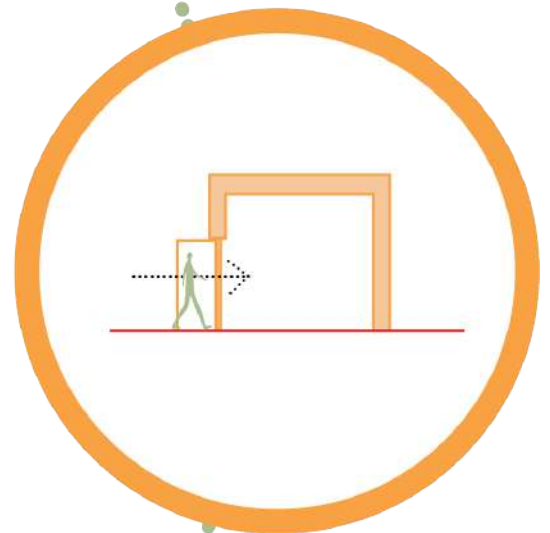


APPROACH

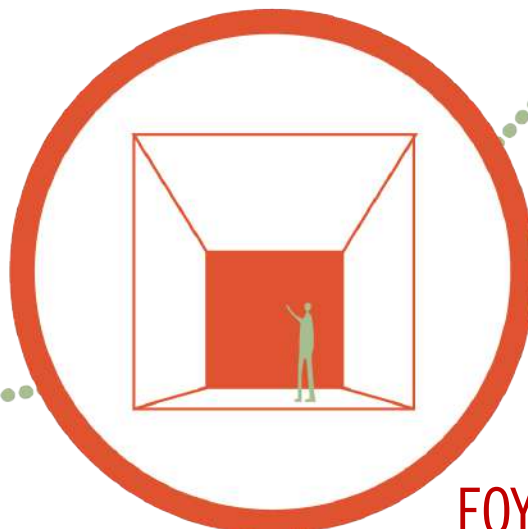
THE JOURNEY INTO THE BUILDING

Getting people into the space is one of the most challenging aspects for cultural buildings as the entrance, threshold and foyer are the first impressions you take of the building upon entering. They can be the main reason for entering or deciding not to. They can create a welcoming atmosphere or do quite the opposite.

This document will explore aspects of the three elements to see how they can be improved and designed to create a smooth and inviting journey into the building for everyone.



THRESHOLD



FOYER

APPROACH

The approach of a building is crucial in determining whether an individual chooses to enter the space or not. This is especially relevant in the case of people who are or have been homeless, to make their journey towards the building seamless. Even if one thing goes wrong during this transition, it can discourage people from going inside.

The approach is the first phase of circulation in a building. It needs to be addressed at the point when the building is first visible and directions towards it.



OF STRANGERS



OUTDOOR PROGRAMME



The programme of the space around the building can be designed to function, if required, independently. Such activity is bound to draw attention, increasing the building's footfall in the process.

The working hours of the outside can extend beyond those of the cultural spaces themselves, serving as modes of public entertainment. A music venue, theatre stage and movie screenings are the just a few among the various activities that can be organised to promote the work of local artists. The Booth Centre is an organisation that runs such programmes.



Interactive activities outside (such as playgrounds and pavilions) make cultural spaces seem more inviting. They not only maximise the use of space, but also encourage the community to socialise.

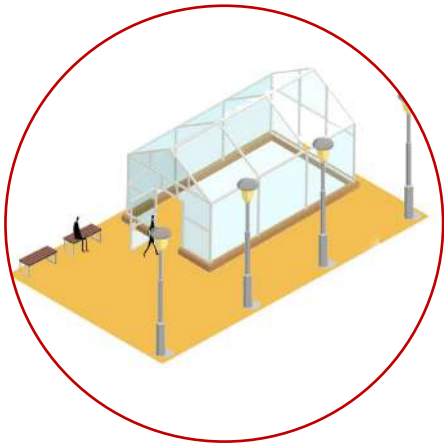


Greenery around a building maintains a cohesive relationship between the building and the surroundings and increases the scope for public interaction.

LANDSCAPING

Greenery has a great impact in making a space appear more welcome, acting a break from the urbanisation we live in today. Being connected with nature also been associated with betterment of mental health.

Instead of simply landscaping the front of a building, horticultural management schemes can be implemented alongside. Such schemes promote community involvement and the food grown in the process can be distributed to homeless shelters..



HORTICULTURE ALL-YEAR ROUND



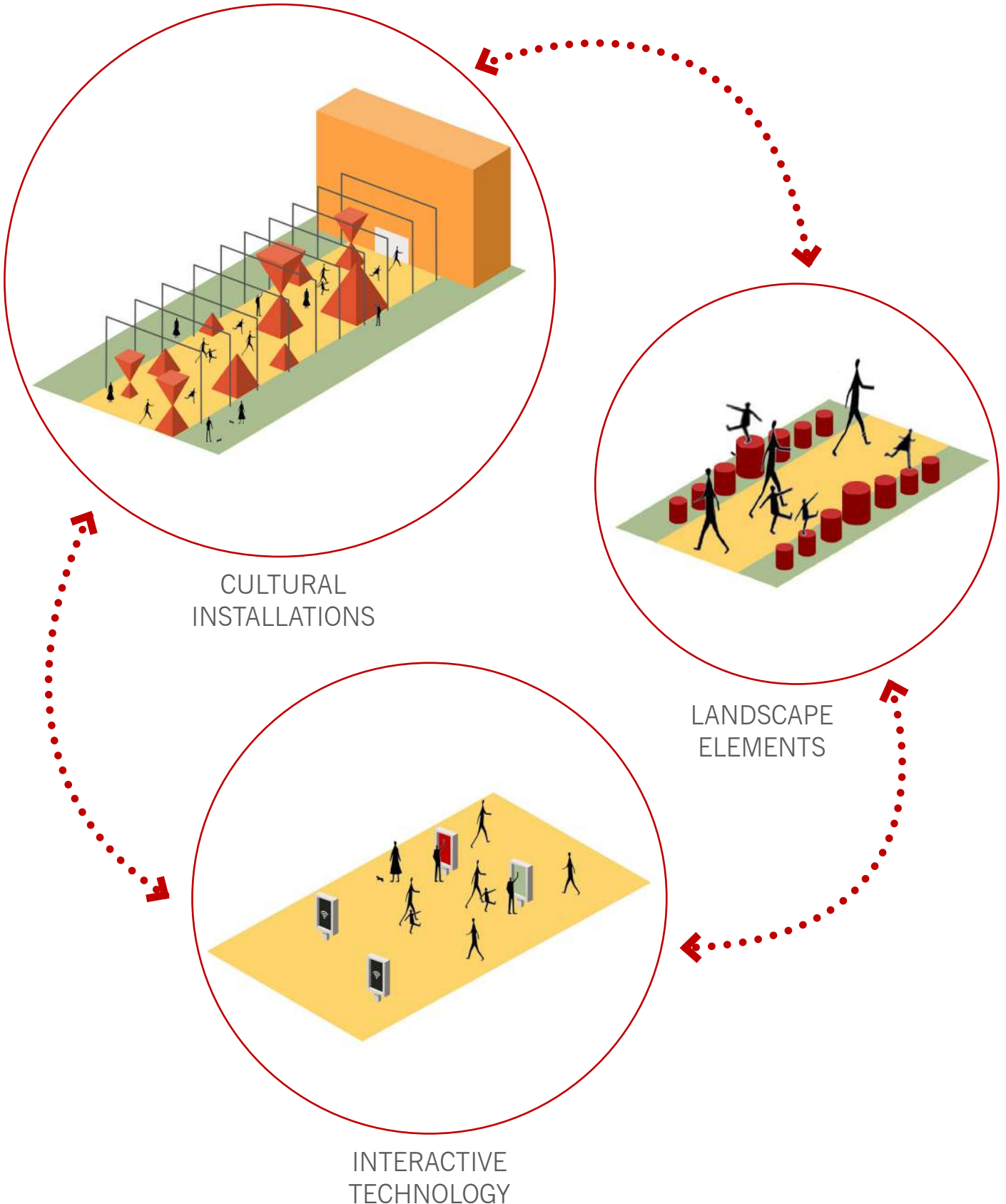
COMMUNITY ALLOTMENTS



INTERACTIVE GREEN WALLS

INTERACTIVITY

Interactive spaces allow people to engage in activities rather than just look at exhibits. This communication between the art and people can be in the form of immersive installations, stalls, screens displays, etc. that make visitors feel like they are a part of the space.



THRESHOLD

Similar to the approach of a building, the threshold of a building acts one of the first encounters with the physical fabric of a building. In our discussion with the consultation groups, the threshold and facade makeup of a building is a contributing factor to the decision to enter a cultural building. The points made in the upcoming section on threshold deals with issues of materiality, transparency, the scale of an entrance and the types of doors used at an entrance. Key points to consider include: softening the edges of the building by bringing the programme to the outside of the building where possible, the positioning of doorways and the scale and materiality of the facade



ENTRANCE

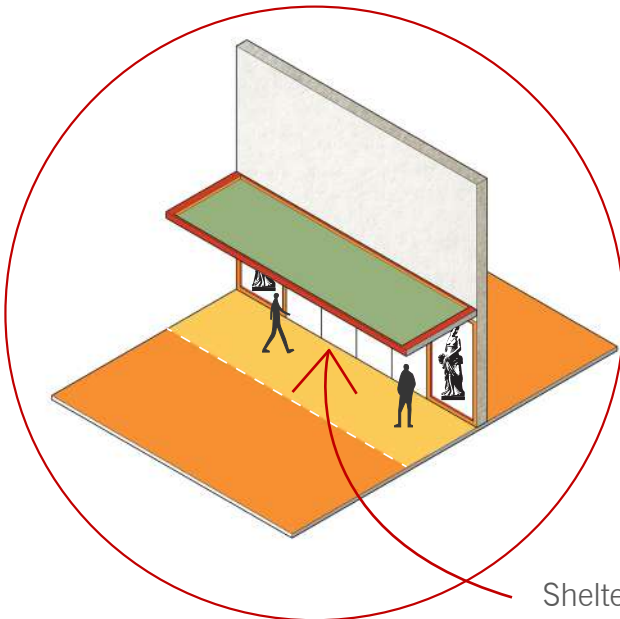
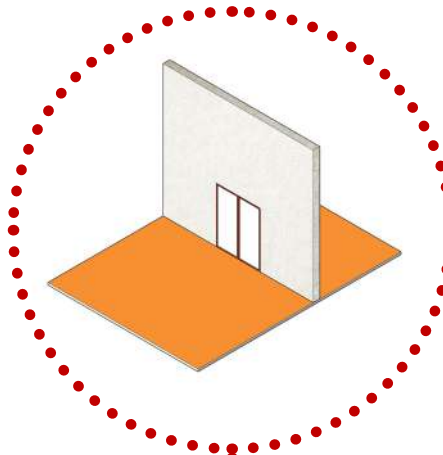
REGLAMENTO

AUTOMATIC DOOR

ENTRANCE

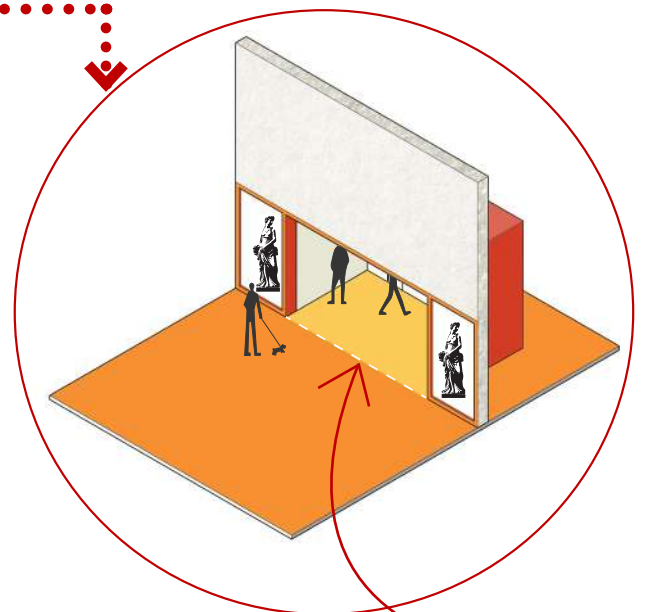
DOORWAYS

The doors are one of the first things a person experiences on their visit to a cultural space. This experience can be improved with the use of transparency in the form of glass doors and windows which give visitors the chance to see their destination as well as the interior programmes from the outside. Blurring the boundary between inside and outside can be achieved by recessing or extruding the entrance, this also forms shelter for users and provides a space to decide whether to go inside. Doors should also be wider than they are tall to accommodate numbers of people moving at various speeds.



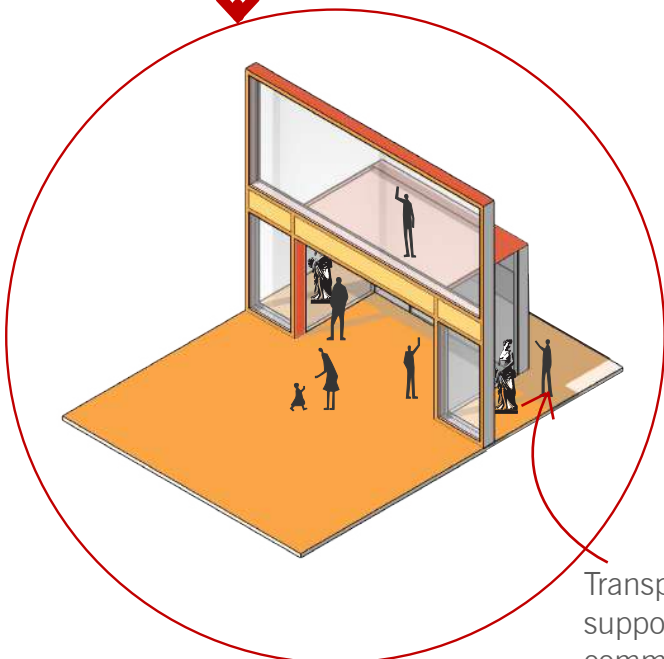
Sheltered area extends beyond doors

SHELTER-OUTREACH



Sheltered area created by recessed doors

SHELTER - RECESS

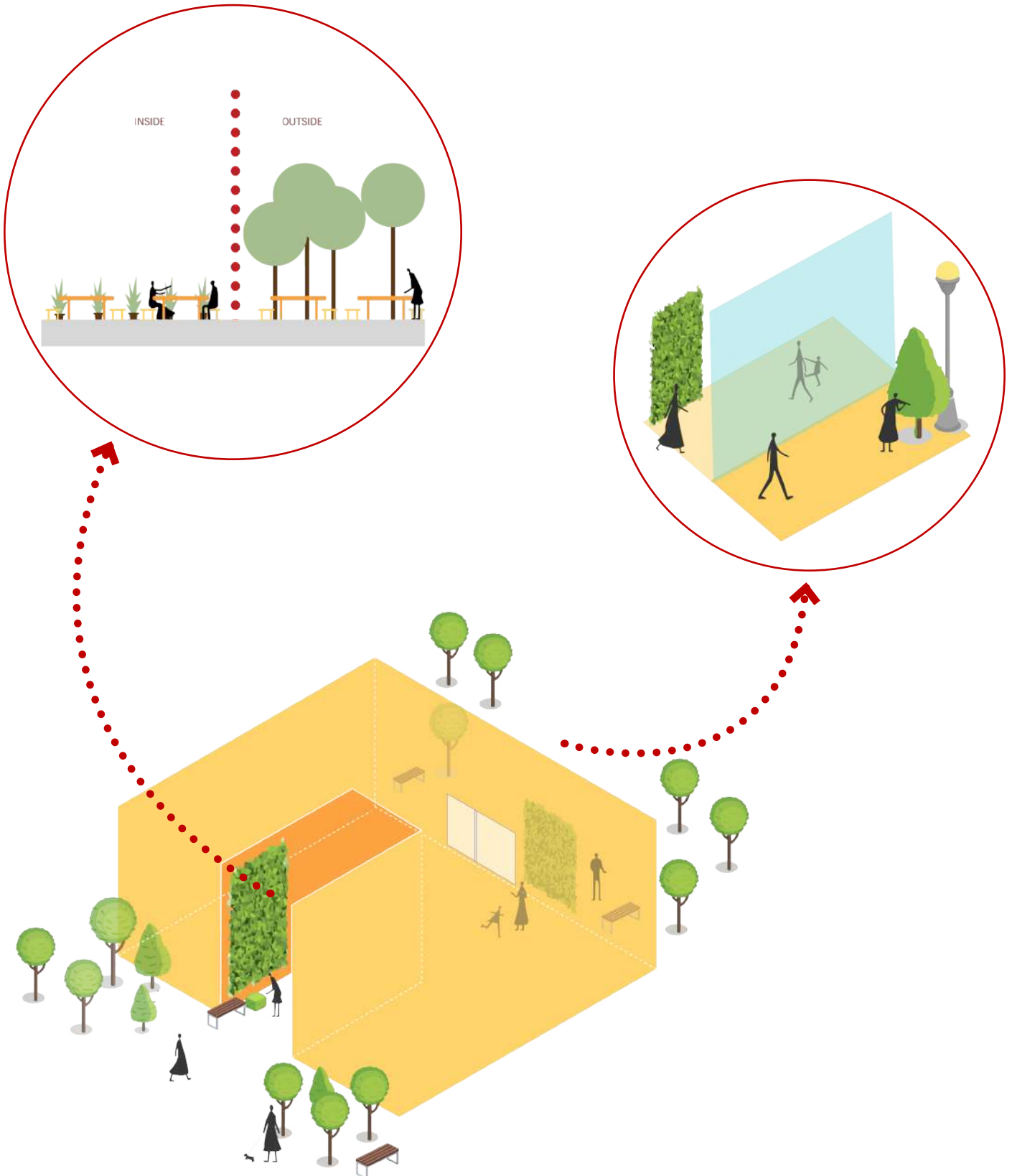


Transparency supports communication

TRANSPARENCY

BLURRING BOUNDARIES

In order to encourage circulation, the transition between open space and enclosed space should connect seamlessly. A soft dynamic transition is welcoming. The line between indoor and outdoor is blurred and the threshold supports continuity. Greenery that flows from the outside to the inside allows the indoor area to feel more like a breakout space.







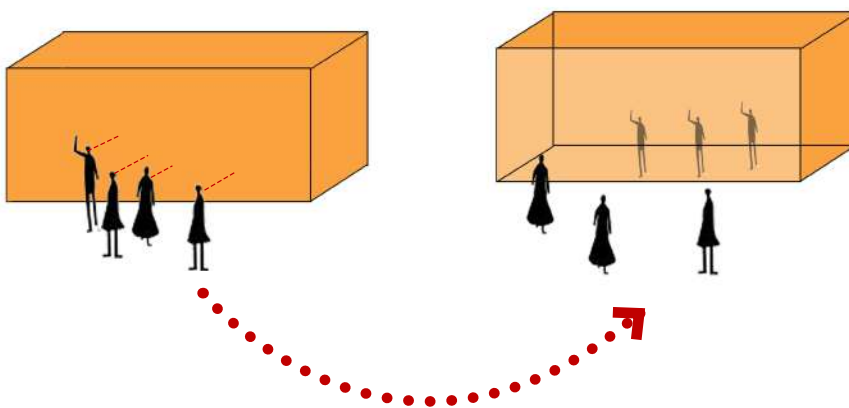
KEY POINTS

FLEXIBILITY



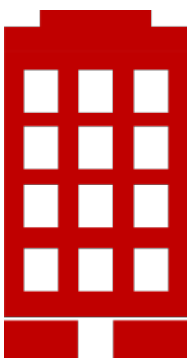
While the inclusion of outdoor spaces is vital in the design of cultural buildings, it is also important to ensure that they are suitable to host a range of activities that encourage public participation. Flexibility is the key in enabling people to personalise these spaces and use them as they wish.

TRANSPARENCY



The transparency of the building is important, making sure that it is possible to see into the building, to create anticipation but also certainty of what is inside the building and that it is as welcoming inside as it is outside.

FACADE



The attraction of the modern city is the blend of old and new. While monumental entrances can be perceived as grandeur and uninviting to some, finding ways to retain and reuse old structures despite structural and planning challenges and diversified conservation guidelines, is therefore an integral part of today's architecture world and an important consideration for cultural spaces.

FOYER

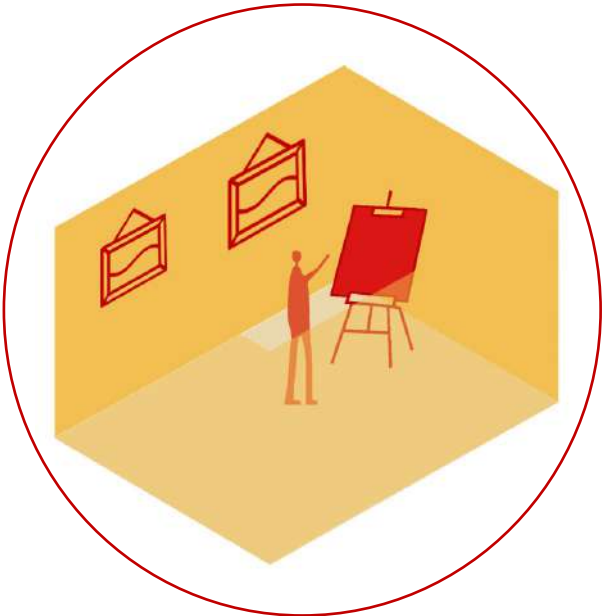
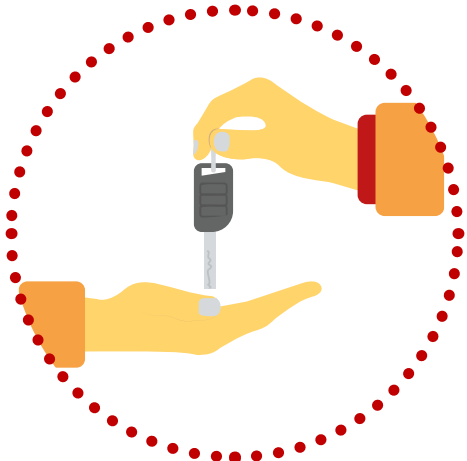
It is necessary that the design of a foyer space is inclusive as it usually serves as the primary circulation space. The design of the foyer area gives an individual the time and space needed to orientate themselves prior to engaging with any activities within a cultural space. Foyer spaces need to have the appropriate amount of space needed to be inclusive for people with physical disabilities. In addition, the foyer space needs to accommodate foot traffic expected within the space and have good visual signage.



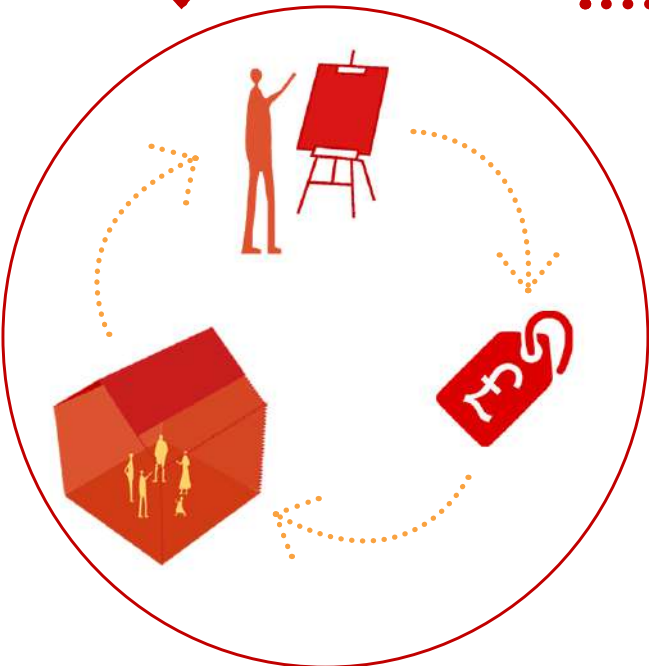


OWNERSHIP OF SPACE

When a cultural space is open to all, including signage saying this is 'your' space or 'your' collection allows the community to take ownership of some areas of the building and can make people feel more included. Schemes and programmes to create involvement, inclusion and ownership are featured in the Cultural Space's Responses to Homelessness Review



ARTIST IN RESIDENT SCHEME



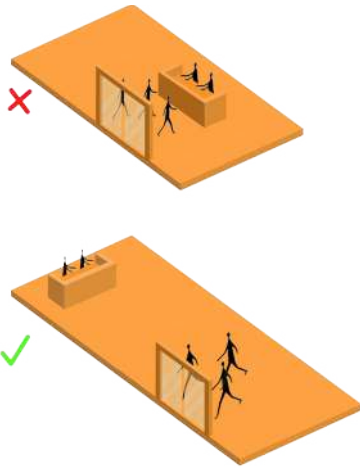
ECONOMIC MODEL

Local artists and creators making and creating in order to raise money to put back into the community



COMMUNITY HUBS

FLEXIBLE SPACES



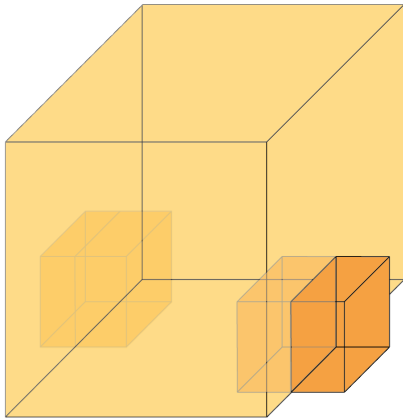
Flexible and multi purpose spaces within the foyer can be useful to all groups, having the option to have open and public spaces or smaller private areas allows for comfortable areas and inclusivity for all. The spaces could allow for alternative breakout areas for groups to use. This includes providing facilities for everyone within the entrance of the building that is clearly marked as accessible to all.

Any front of house communication should be placed out of the way of the first thing you see. This can be quite intimidating.



KEY POINTS

SCALE



The scale of the building can, in some instances, become quite intimidating and imposing to certain groups. Hence it could be thought of in an alternative matter, by breaking it up or creating smaller scaled rooms for those to use.

RESOURCE



Enabling the spaces to be used not just for their cultural use but benefits for all groups to make use of. These can include for example, computer access, wi-fi access as well as obvious access to free water. Having lockers or similar storage spaces away from the foyer is another resource that would be much appreciated by those who move around with all their belongings.

DONATION BOXES



Transparent charity boxes are usually placed around cultural spaces for visitors to contribute. These make people who are or have been homeless uncomfortable. 'Free but donations' signs give mixed messages about whether a space is free or not and this can be off-putting. The alternative to this is to have opaque boxes and move them to less conspicuous locations.

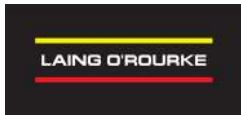




CONTRIBUTORS



Matt Peacock
David Tovey
Fee Plumley
Cookie



John Edwards
Reece Singleton

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Olivia Marshall
Purva Bhende
Simisola Abidakun
Chelsea Bland
Celeste Abayomi
El Hadi Boudouch
Cameron Mayo
Mohammed Sesay
Arian Reyhanian
Thanh David Long
Anna Kloos
Matthew Paul Foulerton
Eleanor Moselle
Hadif Syazani bin Taharen
Jia Jia Teo
Joseph Makhoul

Consultation



Simon Leroux
John Organ
Norman Walsh



Kal Gill-Faci

