



*From
TALK
to
TEA*



SPATIAL EXPERIENCE & INTERIOR RESPONSE:

Stemming from the quiet tone of reading, libraries are associated as safe spaces for contemplation or study. They indirectly create refuge for people offering a communal stillness rare in public spaces. Museums similarly offer this moment of pondering, but are distinct from libraries with their 'no touching' principles. Libraries offer that tangible experience, making the spaces feel personal and engaging.

The proposal targets teenagers - groups of young individuals who often end up loitering in places due to boredom or lack of free indoor spaces. This library responds as a place for youths to breathe, slow down, contemplate and connect through sensory experiences and activities in an inviting tactile environment.

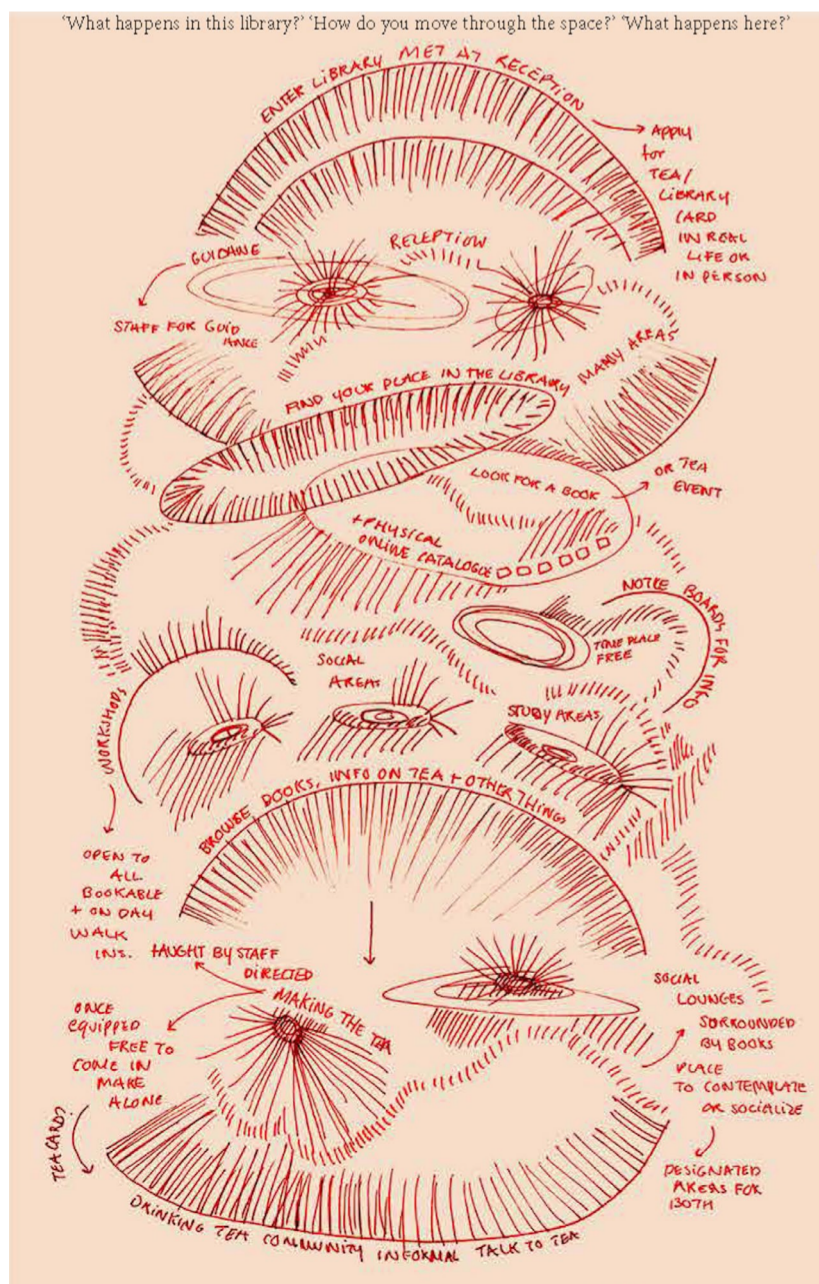
This library can be defined as a modern day tea house, promoting conversation within guided spaces that support creative thinking and activities. Tea is deployed as a tool to connect people, recognising the abilities it holds through associated rituals, to build social connection, encourage personal contemplation and forefront habitual grounding. A variety of social spaces are created where books go hand in hand with tea, complementing a thoughtful library collection of philosophy, creative arts and history. The strength of the interior is to create a series of atmospheric sensory spaces which create an aspirational setting; offering an alternative approach for teenagers to enjoy time out from external pressures.



The TALK of TEENAGERS

What does the local community want?
 The local community of Gracemount have shown a level of interest, taking part in engagement 'roadshows', online surveys, a suggestion box and interactive model. Local pupils from the high school filled out a survey for the 'Have Your Say' Gracemount Mansion Project. (Gracemount Mansion Development Trust, 2023. Pp.3-12) A peer student mentioned, on a second visit to the site she saw a cluster of teenagers sitting on the steps outside chatting. There is a strong desire and need especially young groups to have a community space at the Mansion site.

Yes Loitering is a research and design project, done in collaboration with teenagers ages 15-18 from the South Bronx. Often teenagers are targeted and criminalised in public spaces without justifiable reason. This project constructed group discussions, observations of local hangout spots, workshops and analysis on the criminal justice system in order to create ways to make teenagers feel welcome. (Travieso, C. 2017)



Tea bag Design:

'This subtle multitude of similarities and differences can show the global circulation of tea as well as a glimpse of its local nuances.' (UAL Research Online, 2023) Tea is understood internationally as a commodity for either relaxing or socializing. This body of research from UAL took many students accounts on subjects about connection, this one by David Gauntlett was Making Is Connecting, It shows crafting can fosters intrinsic satisfaction from creation and also enhances engagement with broader intellectual and communal thoughts. This engagement helps individuals perceive themselves as active contributors to a cultural community. In this framework, clay as a medium is presented as an exemplary craft material, valued for its versatility in the world of craft. (UAL Research Online, 2023. pg.151). This research and knowledge influenced the addition of the pottery studio in the library.

From TALK to TEA

Why tea?

On a recent visit to Istanbul, I was introduced to the faultless hospitality in Turkey. Being given tea before and after any meal was consistent in all eateries, it was on the house and would be topped up until you left. I noticed around that it was common to stay late after finishing a meal, drinking tea until the late evening. All customers were invited to stay as long as needed to avoid the cold outside. The act of drinking tea had opened up a free third space, a welcoming safe and informal environment all to enjoy.

Gracemount house is a B listed building in Liberton Parish, Edinburgh. It was built as a residential country villa in the 1790s. The earliest references to the Gracemount area are in the 16th century, when the area was known as 'Priesthill' referring to the priests that lived on the land. Masonry details on the exterior of the building pay homage to the St Catherines Chapel, the original structure on the site.

Previously the whole area of Gracemount reached an extensive area, including about 20 acres of land but when St Catherines was sold in 1913 it was reduced down to 9 acres. Current Condition: The existing building is in a dilapidated state with damage to both walls and ceilings, on our site visit we witnessed a significant amount of vandalism and dirt, water ingress, and a lack of daylight due to temporary hoardings over windows. Despite this, Gracemount mansion remains incredibly important to the residents within the local community. (Gracemount Mansion Development Trust, 2024).



Dark oak panelling around doors.

The carvings on Gracemount are incongruous to the decorative production of the 16th century and appear to be 18th century (or later) made to emulate earlier decorative carving from the 17th century. It is uncertain who the statues represent, but based on these dates it seems unlikely to be James IV or the Earl



Current stairs, of high heritage significance. Likely refurbished around the early 20th century.

Incredible detail on existing windows, in need of repair.

FROM RETAINED ROOM - TO TEA LOUNGE



SECTION CC 1:20@A3

During a design workshop we discussed the image of a group of monks chanting from a book. Reading alone was an unusual activity, as before the 18th century people didn't know how to read silently, so libraries would have been a loud space. Interestingly books from the 15th century are much larger because of how many people would gather around them. Reading together promoted me to design a large book-shaped display, that suggests people can read aloud in this tea lounge, encouraging teenagers to talk and socialize.

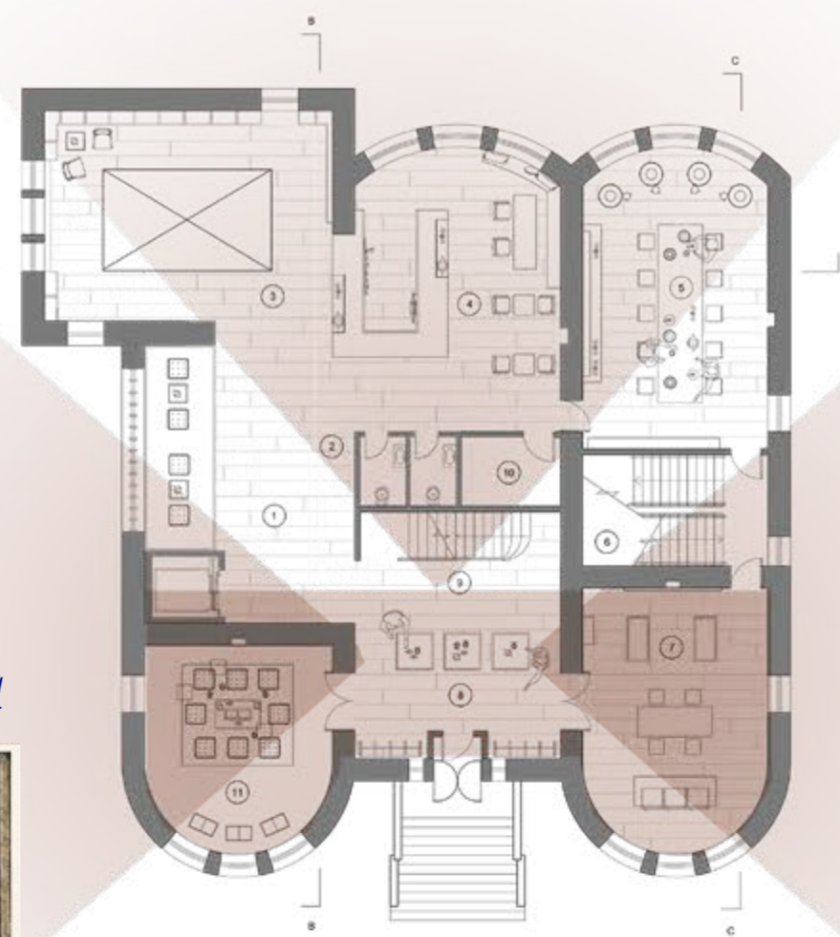
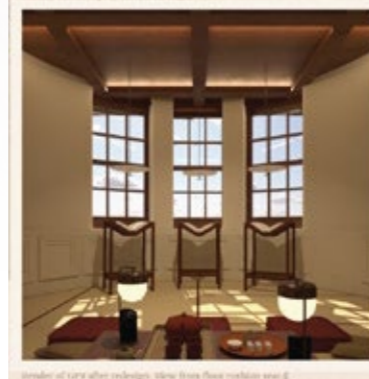
ORIGINAL ENTRANCE - TEA DISPLAY



TEA TABLE ORIGINAL ENTRANCE
View from original entrance, showing the tea tables and relationship between UGF2 and UGF9 (tea making and tea drinking)



A ROOM for READING



The relationship between the rooms at the North East of the building guides the user through each space and process. From the tea making room where you can dry your own leaves, through to the communal table, to roll the leaves out. The next stage is baking the leaves, so a selection of ovens have been placed facing the front windows in UGF2. From this making room, the tea is taken to the original entrance (UGF1), and placed on the arrangement of tables provided.

The adjacent feature, shown on plan view of this shows shelves hugging the original front door, where pottery made on site can be displayed. Visitors can select a mug for their tea and proceed to the new tea drinking space, which is situated in the 'retained room', a room of special historic interest where original features are retained and added to, to combine the old and new character.

TEA MAKING ROOM



<p>PAINTED SKY MURAL BY: Tamara Deane BY: Bobeballs COLOUR: Sky REASON: Inspired by James Turrell's skyspace in Kikilos. Clouds acting as a meditative mural, bringing the natural world inside a space. PLACEMENT: South West wall of Retained room</p>	<p>ACOUSTIC Baffles BY: Aneta Acoustics COLOUR: Black Walnut REASON: To add acoustic to my retained rooms, making the space quieter and more reading appropriate. Using the baffles option as beams on the ceiling. PLACEMENT: Retained Room ceiling</p>	<p>FABRIC CURTAIN BY: Tamara Deane COLOUR: Green and Brown REASON: To add a window between rooms UGF2 and UGF9. The pottery studio and the café to make the rooms feel open and inviting, this is a purely decorative feature to add texture and colour. PLACEMENT: Window between rooms UGF2 and UGF9</p>	<p>WALL PAINT BY: Farrow and Ball COLOUR: Pink Drab REASON: To update the existing ceiling without intruding on the heritage, fitting the theme of my library. PLACEMENT: Painted on the ceiling feature in the original entrance on the UGF</p>
<p>HEISSAN TEXTILE WALLS BY: Farrow CODE: SKV 012HEIG1835 COLOUR: Heissan REASON: Used as wall panels acoustics PLACEMENT: Scattered throughout the building behind the history of tea screens in the UGF reading area. On the right wall of the three story bookcase space and on the stairs to the LGF.</p>	<p>WALL PAINT BY: Farrow and Ball COLOUR: Smoked Tint REASON: Soft warm neutral colour PLACEMENT: Painted throughout the entire building</p>	<p>TATAMI MATS BY: Farrow Company COLOUR: Natural REASON: For my retained room promoting people to take off their shoes and sit comfortably on the ground. Typically used in tea rooms. PLACEMENT: Retained room floor</p>	<p>SANDSTONE Original Building COLOUR: Natural REASON: The existing building foundation</p>



SECTION AA 1:20@A1

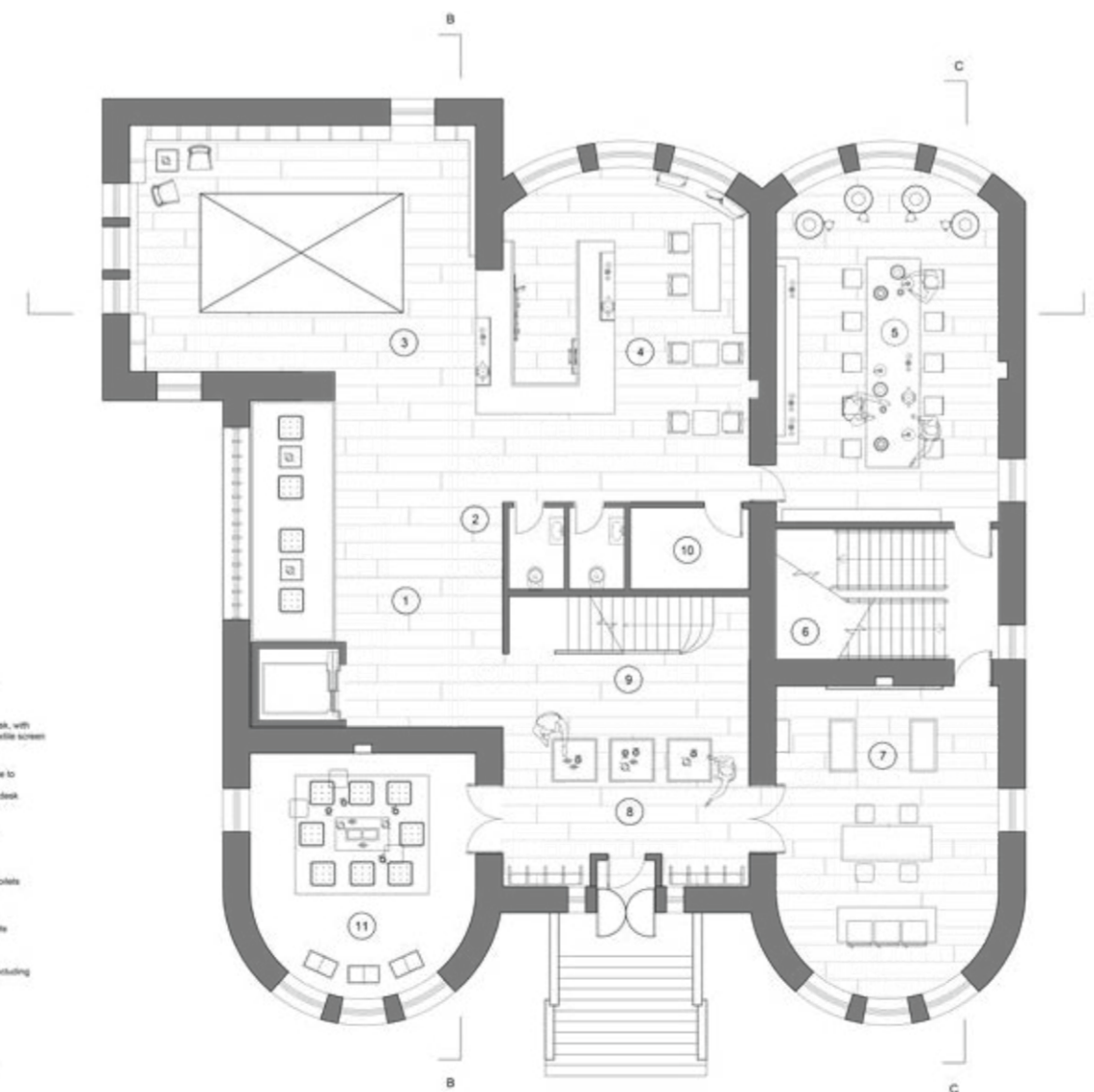


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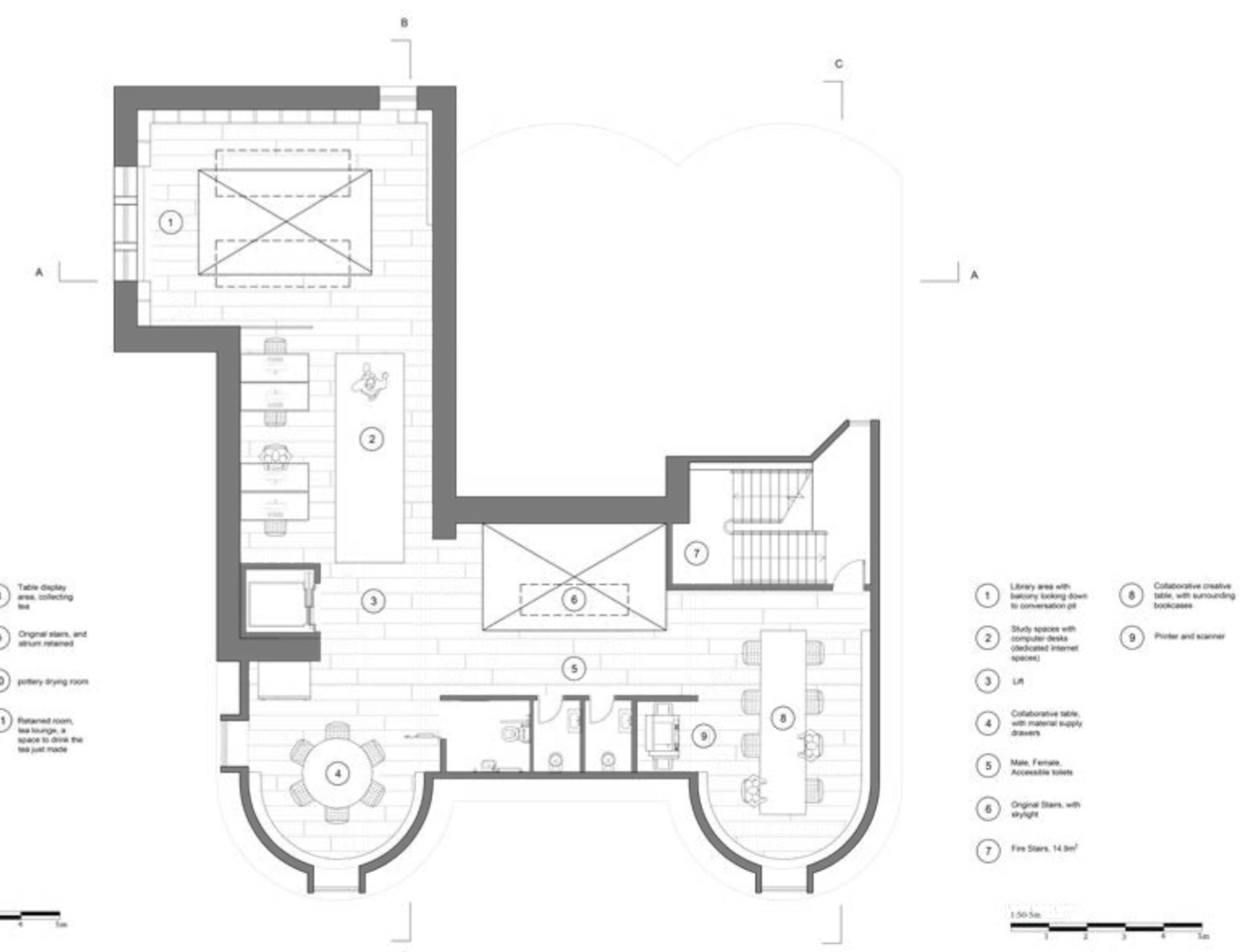
0.6 PLAN DRAWINGS



LOWER GROUND FLOOR 1:50@A1



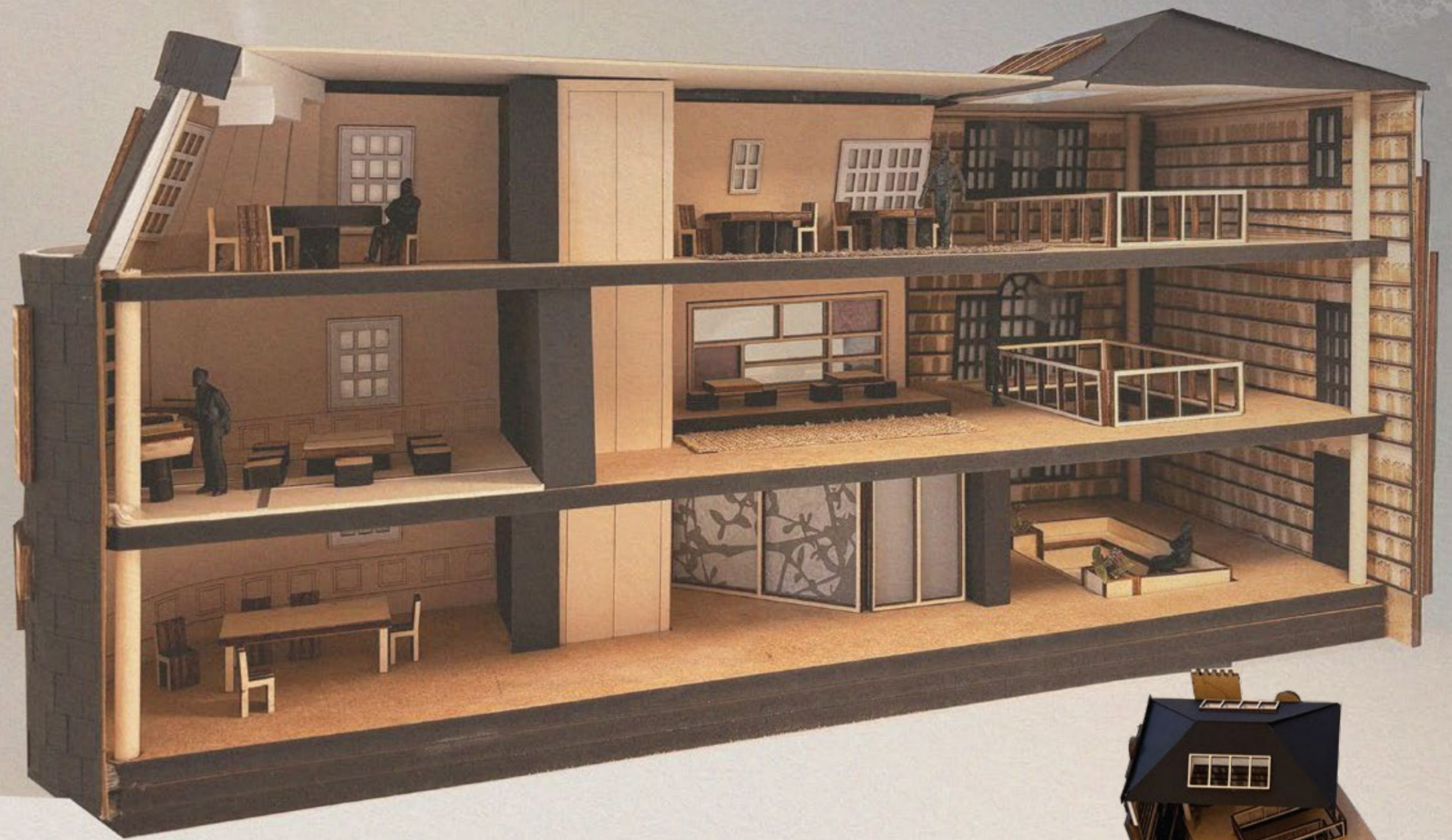
UPPER GROUND FLOOR 1:50@A1



FIRST FLOOR 1:50@A1



NEW ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE SYMBOLISES CHANGE



CONVERSATION PIT
View from entry to this area, showing the triple height bookcase area and sofa pit.



DIGITAL TECH AREA.

View from the lift on the first floor, the technology area with access to computers. Inspired by this dropped ceiling sketch I did. It enables me to add these more complex lighting features without damaging the original building.

