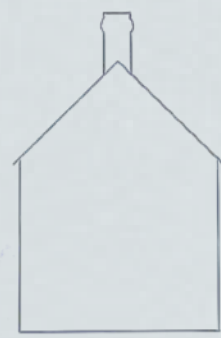
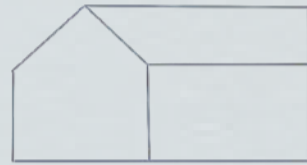


The Funk-tion



LIVE



DINE



DANCE

The Funktion reimagines Alzheimer's care through dance, creating an environment where movement helps people reconnect with memories and relationships, fostering dignity, purpose, and belonging. Designed for residents and their families, my project aims to strengthen connections with the wider Sidmouth community and challenges the isolation often associated with care homes by opening them to everyday life. Dance becomes a shared language that brings generations together, encouraging meaningful interaction between residents, loved ones, and local people. Warm, tactile, and personal interiors respond to emotional and sensory needs, creating spaces that feel familiar, welcoming, and full of life. Rather than separating individuals from their community, The Funktion helps residents remain part of the places, experiences, and relationships that have shaped who they are.



SIDMOUTH OLD RAILWAY STATION, DEVON

Sidmouth railway station is located ¼ miles from the coast, high above the town centre, resulting in low attention from tourists due to its 'far out' location for day trippers. The line was thought to be extended towards the coast to attract more passengers, but due to geographical attributes and uneven terrains this could not be possible, resulting in its closure in 1967.

The station consisted of one platform with a line running on either side, being able to cross over one another like many branch lines across the UK. The east line (towards Salisbury) could accommodate larger trains with 7 coaches, whereas the west (towards Exeter) could only accommodate 5.

I chose this site because the heritage spoke to me in many ways. In ways that our memories speak to us. Although the old station isn't a memory for me, for a lot of locals it is, and bringing it back to life was without a doubt going to help fuel the core aspect of my project, restoring purpose. And whilst i'm restoring the purpose of locals living with alzheimers disease im also helping a lost building find its life again and bringing life back into it, just like the community.



What if?

CARE HOMES WEREN'T A CLICHÉ

'Care Homes' are often cliché, offering their bare minimum for residents; A bed, food, a living area ect. Often unpleasant and uninviting to future clientele, these homes are for many elderly people who can no longer live independently.

441,000

People approximately, in the UK are in Care homes

Of those residents live with a form of Dementia or Alzheimers disease

70%

Care homes often have a bad reputation, especially for many who are going to reside with an early diagnosis and the families making the difficult decision to put a relative into care. This is due to many people seeing care homes as a 'last resort', representing a loss of independence and the last place they will be.

As well as this, it is always difficult to visit a loved one in care as they don't centre the perspective of families and the emotional torment it can cause. This is especially the case when care homes become overcrowded and can seem like a 'medical centre' due to residents living with many different diagnoses, all at different stages, which can make it more of a challenge to visit a place that doesn't reflect the users' or visitors' needs.

3



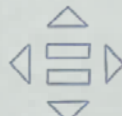
Good Health and Well-Being

9



Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

10



Reduced Inequalities

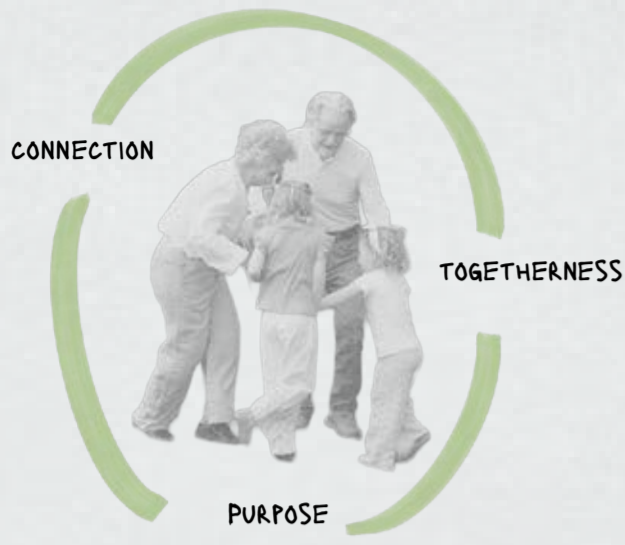
11



Sustainable cities and communities



How Can?



CARE HOMES SUPPORT RESIDENTS MORE

The brain and the heart share a deep memory connection through the nervous system. The heart-brain axis is what is known as the communication network linking the brain and heart, impacting our neural, hormonal, mechanical, and immune pathways.

Our nervous system, made up of our nerves, is essentially the body's control centre, coordinating our actions and senses through electrical signals via neurons, and once diagnosed with Alzheimers disease, these nerves slowly shut down over time.

The vagus nerve is our longest nerve, connecting the brain to our main organs, which supports their functionality, in this case, especially the heart, and is supported by the Sympathetic Cardiac Nerve; the hearts control centre. The vagus nerve impacts our heart rate.

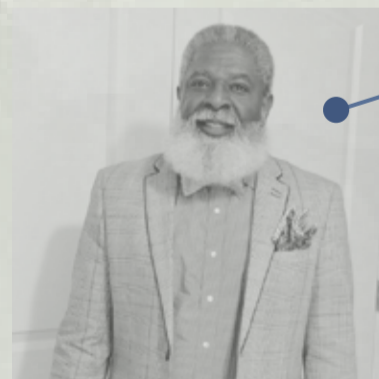
The properties of the Vagus Nerve slowly become affected by Alzheimers as the disease progresses, but the reason Alzheimers is a slow-moving, long-term disease is because of the functions of the nerve battling the diagnosis.

We can use the research behind this nerve to find ways to support residents to keep their cognitive brain functionality active, instead of just giving them a place to stay. One way of doing this is through music, which lies at the centre of my project.

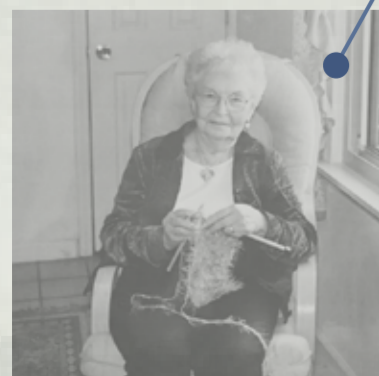


RESIDENTS SHARED NEEDS

Independence
Accessibility
Home Comforts



MONTY



SILVIE



LEN

The Users

The primary users are the residents, who live, dine, and dance daily while also taking part in activities that stimulate brain function. The home offers them the opportunity to spend the final stage of life with purpose, engaging in meaningful activities and connections with the local community that support their condition.

An important user group is the relatives of residents and their visiting experience. The space is designed to feel welcoming rather than clinical, ensuring comfort and meaningful time with loved ones. Creating an inviting environment, it encourages frequent visits and ongoing care of the site.

The space invites the local community to engage with and support the home. Schools can visit to read, local businesses can host discussions, and art groups can lead classes. These interactions enrich residents' lives while strengthening a shared sense of community across the town.

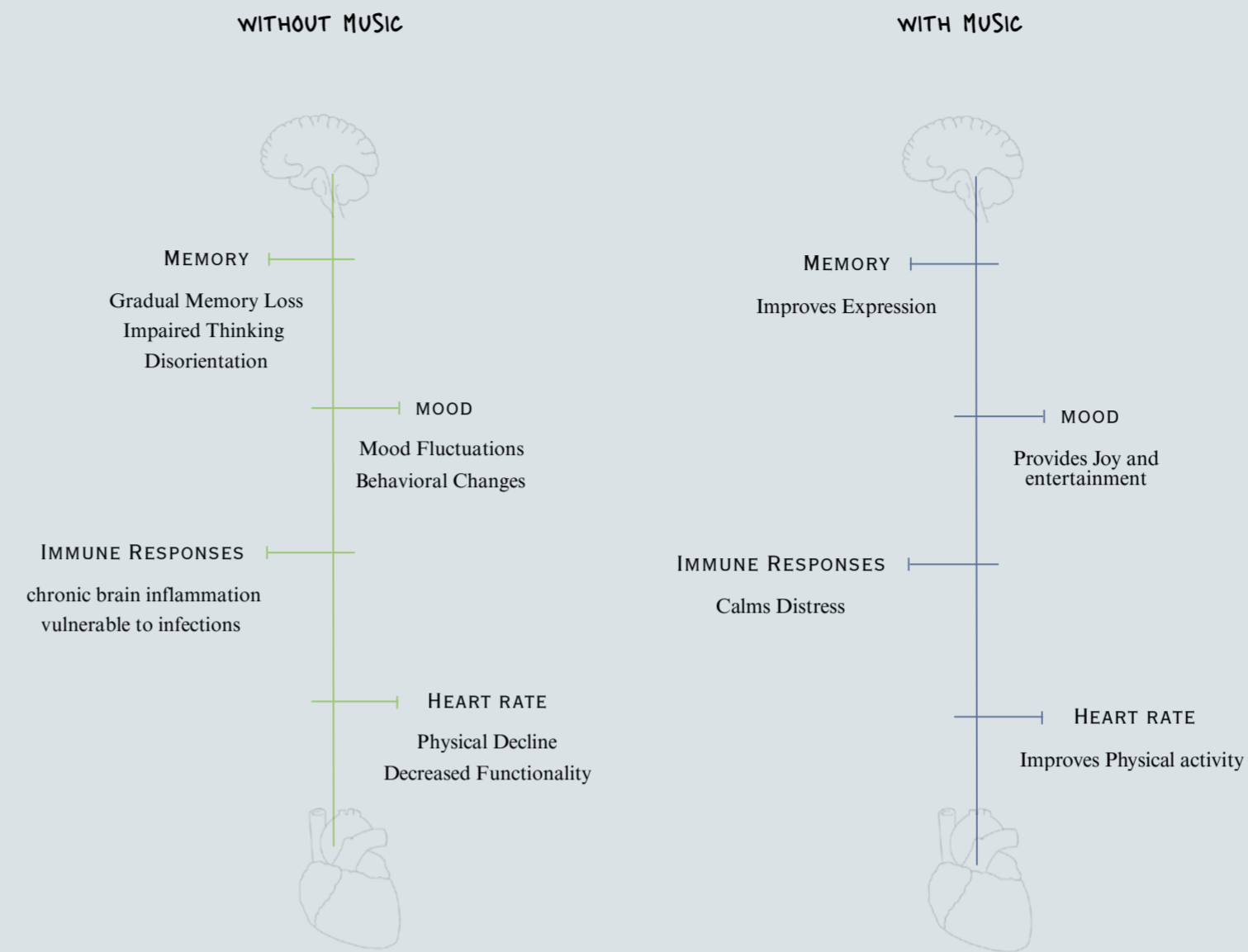


RESIDENTS

RELATIVES AND VISITORS

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

THE VAGUS NERVE



Dancing,

HAS BEEN PROVEN TO REDUCE ALZHEIMERS RISK BY

76%

Scientists followed 469 people for 21 years to see which activities best protect the brain with age. Among exercise, puzzles, reading, and sports, only dancing made a significant difference. Dancing uniquely challenges the brain with constant coordination and decision-making, and people tend to stick with it long-term.

Music recollection is stored differently than ordinary memories, and for an individual living with Alzheimer's disease, music can stimulate bodily reactions and responses such as humming, tapping, recognition, fostering social connection, and reducing anxiety.

This is due to music producing emotional recall, which accesses our emotions. This recalls key milestones linked to music memory, such as early lullabies, first dances, pivotal concerts, media, etc.

If patients have played an instrument in their lifetime, this impacts a great deal, as it's proven to have a key impact on the cognitive effects of the brain.



DAY	ACTIVITY
MONDAY	10am - 12pm Vision Group for Sidmouth Debate Club 3pm - 5pm Rainbows, Brownies or Guides Practice at the home
TUESDAY	10am - 1pm Exercise with Sidmouth Bowling Club
WEDNESDAY	1pm - 4pm Sidmouth Arts Society
THURSDAY	10am - 12pm Reading with 3 rd Age Book Club
FRIDAY	3pm - 4:30 pm Visit from the C of E Primary School Students • Reading • Writing • Singing
SATURDAY	3pm - 4:30pm Performance from SMT
SUNDAY	9am - 11am Walk and Talk with East Devon Ramblers

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE

ACTIVITY	TIME
DANCE	'Mind the tap'
DINE	'The Waiting Room'
LIVE	'The Funktion'
	8:30AM Breakfast
	10AM Social time and Activities <small>Potential Visit from local communities</small>
	12PM Lunch Time
	1PM Social time and Activities <small>Potential Visit from local communities</small>
	5PM 'The Waiting Room opens to the public Dining'
	7PM Mind the Tap Book Club Opens Dance
	10PM Bed Curfew

DAY TO DAY USER SCHEDULE

Visitors Stories

SELF CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS

A SON



Greg, aged 50 from Seaton in Devon, put his mum Ann into a care home in the mid stages of her Alzheimer's diagnosis.

He wanted her to have as normal a life as she could, somewhere that catered specifically for Alzheimer's, close to immediate family, felt homely, not clinical, and where guests could easily visit. It was important to understand how the home was managed and what services were provided.

Thornfield was an old building but felt very homely, with decorated zones that reminded residents of yesteryear. Greg visited 3 to 4 times a week to ensure his mum got settled in.

The staff and some of the other residents made it less painful. They were always very kind and accommodating. Though the home didn't do anything specific to stimulate brain activity, they kept Greg informed on how she was getting on, and the staff was good at spotting signs of deterioration. It was always clean and accommodating, with lots going on. He had the odd sandwich there. The food always looked good but quite plain, nothing too fancy.

Greg had no regrets putting his mum into care and thought it was the best possible experience she could have had.

A

GRANDSON



Sholto, aged 21 from Oxfordshire, held off putting his Grandmother in care due to his Grandfather struggling with the concept.

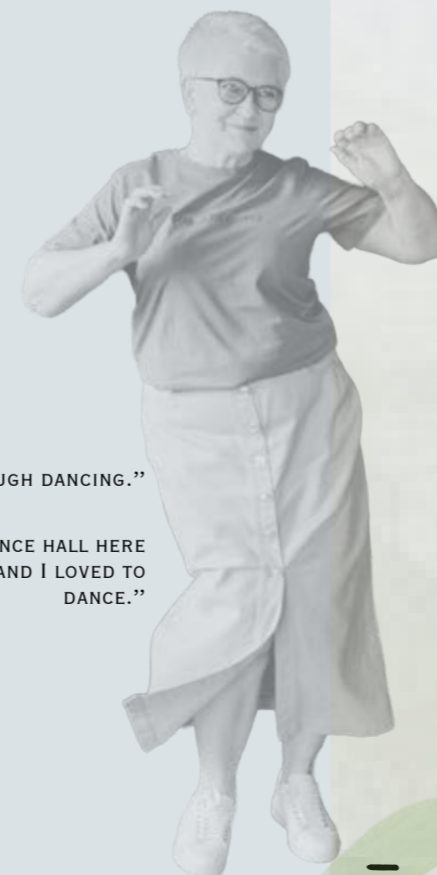
When choosing a home it being close to home was important due to his Grandad not being able to drive. They moved her to and from homes when costs rose, and the ideals of what they wanted for her got more expensive, but she is now settled in a cosy countryside home with unique scenery and surroundings.

Sholto visits the home as much as he can but describes it become difficult over time due to her decline and the home feeling sterile and lacking personality, leaving it feeling un-homely. The home is quite open planned in communal spaces, so he says he feels uncomfortable being surrounded by other residents you don't know.

The staff is all lovely and helpful, and they tend to give her more care as she declines, but says the home holds a lot of people, full of a mix of illnesses, not just Alzheimer's. Sholto has never eaten there but has been offered coffee and cake or biscuits.

The family has no regrets. She's looked after, and his Grandad is doing much better and is less stressed. Although she has declined rapidly from being in a home.

CORRINE



"I KNEW SIDMOUTH THROUGH DANCING."

"IT HAD A GREAT DANCE HALL HERE AND MY HUSBAND AND I LOVED TO DANCE."

SURVIVING

Thriving



SIDMOUTH

Sidmouth is a Victorian seaside town that sits on the Jurassic Coast of East Devon. Its population is just over 13,000 and is a compact, protected conservation area, not a major city, with a focus on tourism but also home to many locals.

Its regency charm, beautiful gardens, clean beaches, and local businesses attract all kinds of people, whether to move or just visit.

According to the BBC, 95% of residents describe themselves as in fair, good, or great health. Corinne, 95, originally from Yorkshire, but moved to Sidmouth when her husband died 11 years ago.

"I dance twice a week... and I exercise a lot – my cat thinks I've gone mad," she says.

Sidmouth's population has seen overall growth, particularly in its older demographics, with the East Devon area experiencing a 13.8% increase between 2011 and 2021.

The town stands out for its high proportion of older residents, with a significant number of people over 90, contributing to a "thriving" elderly community.

30%

of Sidmouth locals are aged

SIXTY FIVE OR OLDER

This statistic exceeds the 0.9% national average, with over 1,000 locals over 80.

Sidmouth has a significantly older population, often called Britain's "over-90s capital," with a high number of elderly residents, particularly those aged 90+, and a lower proportion of younger age groups compared to national averages, reflecting its status as a popular retirement destination.



PHOTOGRAPHS OF COMMUNITY IN SIDMOUTH

DENNIS



"IF I SMILE – PEOPLE SMILE BACK AT YOU. THAT'S WHAT'S SIDMOUTH'S GOOD FOR."

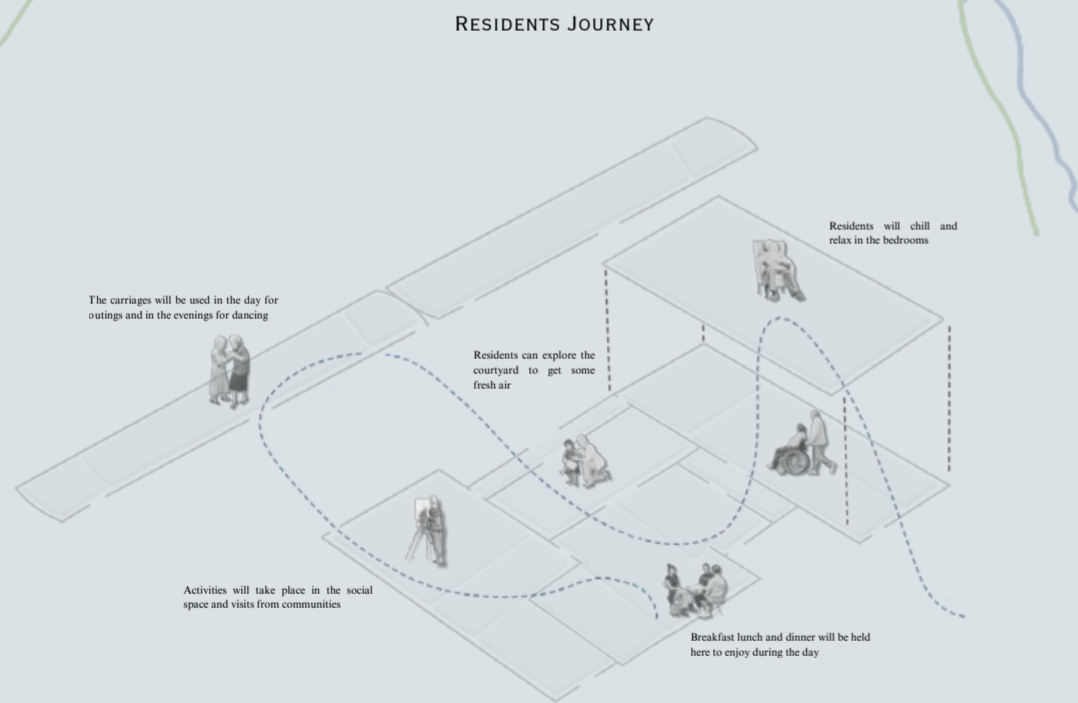


Diagram one shows how residents will flow through the space and what happens in each area they have access to. Activity within the space does not have an order, therefore its open to whatever residents need to do that day.

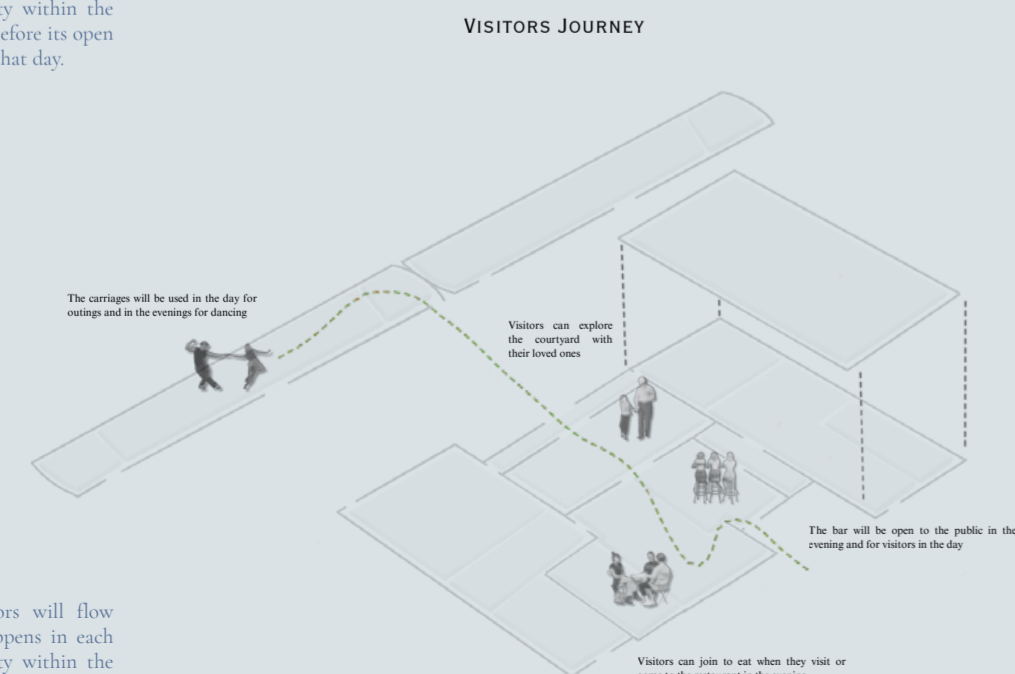


Diagram two shows how visitors will flow through the space and what happens in each area they have access to. Activity within the space does not have an order, therefore its open to whatever residents need to do that day and how visitors work with or around them.

For my entire design, but most importantly the living quarters, I have tailored my materials and colour palettes to the needs of my users.

Inspired by my dissertation on colour theory and how colours affect humans in spaces psychologically, I have meticulously picked calming and uplifting colours that are also warm to make residents feel at home. These colours follow through into each space of the site, keeping them familiar to residents and cohesive throughout, with a slight change of feel in each room.

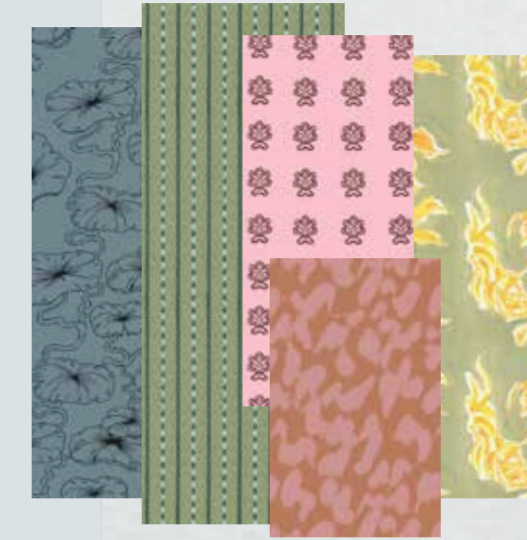
With respect to materiality, I needed comfortable yet durable materials, as this is a home for people who need care and will inevitably have accidents. So, because of this, I have chosen mainly tough and waterproof fabrics that have a good rub test and are still sustainable.

Primarily, in the living quarters, the furniture is mainly sourced from Facebook Marketplace to create a lived-in environment for the residents or could even be the residents' furniture from home. From a sustainability point of view, sourcing second-hand furniture keeps costs low and is a more ethical choice, but still keeps the design classy.



Materiality was a huge part of my design process, tailoring each individual look and feel of materials to fit the user's needs. Working with a textile designer, I created a collection of fabrics and wallpapers specifically for Funktion and its users. Sticking to my comforting colour palette, durable material studies, and the needs of the user, I used my research to help me design and create something meaningful that stands out.

Wallpaper Design Process



Farrow and Ball; Yellow Ground, Dead flat



Farrow and Ball; Porphyry Pink, Flat Eggshell



Farrow and Ball; Hazy in Flat Eggshell



Here are some images of the wallpaper design process of my 1:1 length of 'Where the otters swim'. And the pairing of the paints I used alongside my textile designs.

We screen printed and hand painted this wallpaper to get the homemade hand crafted and personal touch.



Dine

A welcoming hospitality space sits just beyond the living quarters, with easy access for residents. Designed for shared meals and meaningful moments with loved ones, it also opens to the wider community as a new dining destination in Sidmouth.



Live

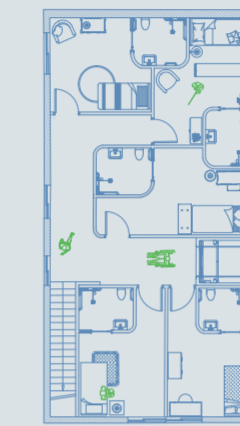
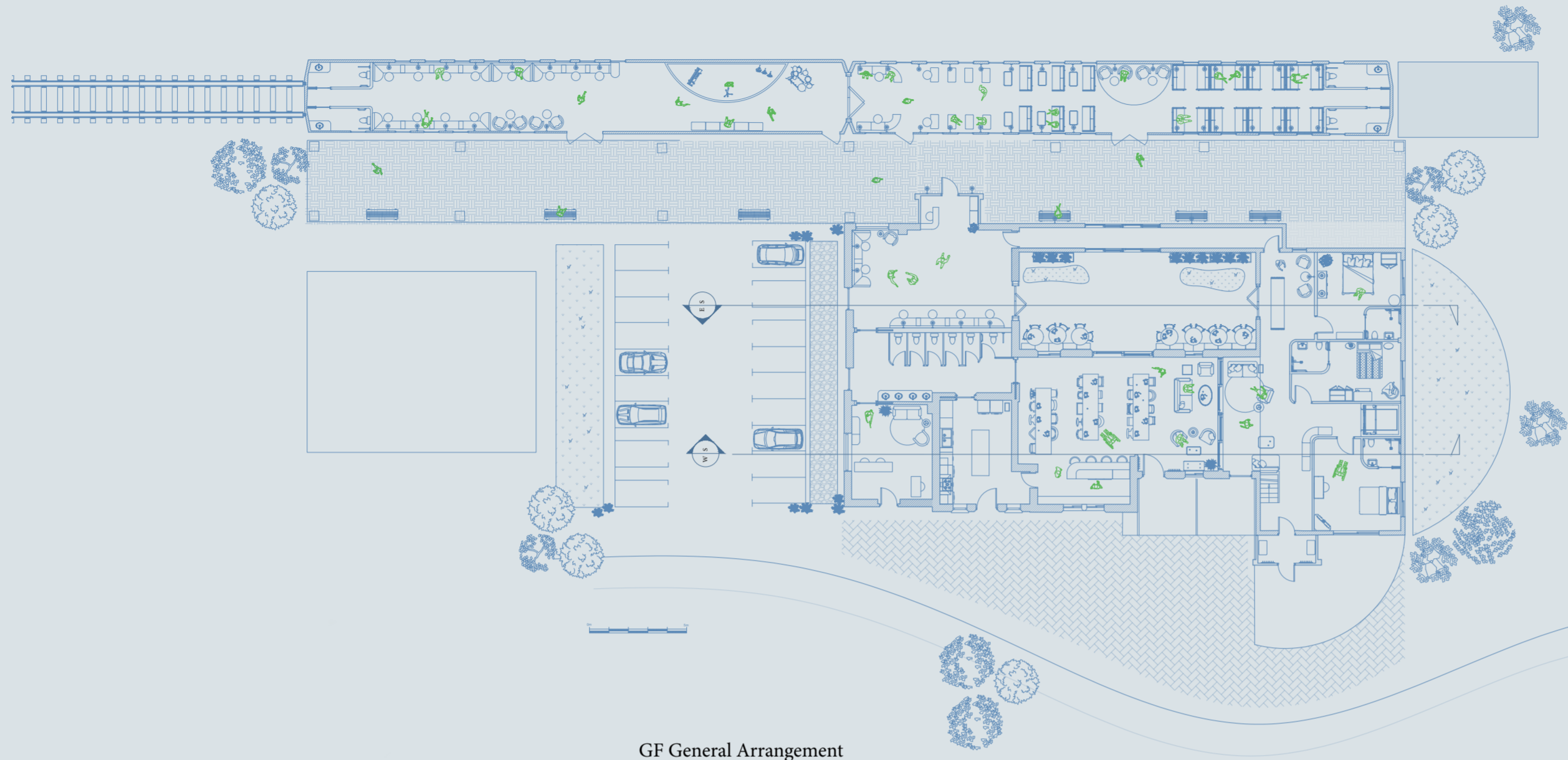
Private living quarters provide a calm, comfortable retreat, thoughtfully designed to support residents' wellbeing while shared spaces remain close at hand.



Dance

Formed from an old train carriage and accessed from the former platform, this space brings residents and the wider community together through music, with room for live bands, instruments, and dancing that encourage joy and connection.

“Your home should tell the story of who you are.” - Nate Berkus



Looking ahead, this project imagines a different future for Alzheimer's care, one that keeps people connected, active, and part of everyday life.

What begins as a single home could grow into a network along the Jurassic Coast, reusing the old train line to create places that share the same ethos of openness, movement, and community.

While we continue searching for a cure, this approach focuses on how we live now, supporting each person with dignity, purpose, and a continued sense of belonging.

So help support the change...

