



**The Citizen Ship:  
Private / Civic + Common Space in the  
City**

With many traditional retailers demise accelerated by the pandemic and multinationals reducing their presence in our city centres, the High Street, like many others, is left with significant levels of vacant property.

The site was the empty Debenhams, in the heart of the city. Students were asked to explore the challenges associated with radical retrofit, reuse, preservation, restoration, alteration and/or even the obliteration of the existing building(s). Possibly flying over the top of, building onto, and implanting inside of.

The Citizen Ship was intended to be an autonomous space within the City centre that was free of traditional forms of governance. It was to embrace the spirit of an agenda/cause (either: social, political, environmental economic, or ethical). It was a space for cultivating collective intelligence for the social good, that should have provided the long-standing local community with a space where ideas could be debated, discussed, and formed. A potential site of opposition and protest, that would enable the 'members' to influence and shape the cities they live in. Challenging the embedded cultural and social codes that exclude. At its heart was a library, a repository of books, magazines and other forms of print. With the aim of developing a more permanent means of civic enrichment.