



(HERS)FORTH:

EMPOWERING MOTHERS THROUGH INTEGRATED WELLNESS

SITE INFORMATION

Location: Hall Ln, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5JE

Time of construction: The Horsforth Hall Park officially created in 1932 while the original Hall was constructed between 1699 and 1707 before demolished in 1950s.

Listed status: The Stable Block is a grade II listed building.

Original use: The Grade II listed stable block in Horsforth Hall Park was originally built as the private stables and coach house for the Horsforth Hall estate. Dating from the late 18th century, it served the Stanhope family, who resided in the nearby mansion, and was subsequently used as workshops for the local council after the hall was donated and later demolished.

Quality of Build: The Stable Block is a late-18th-century structure that is known for its durable, traditional construction that has survived over 200 years, featuring solid stone masonry and a datestone of 1707.

PROJECT BRIEF

Since being gifted to the people of Horsforth Hall Park in 1932, the park has served as an important community space. Over the years, the stable block and surrounding buildings have become progressively occupied by machinery and storage which limits their accessibility and functionality to contribute more towards the wider community.

(Hers)forth proposes a transformative redesign of a dedicated section of stable block and the surrounding outbuildings into a permanent, inclusive, women-only exercise space. By integrating professional-grade fitness facilities with an on-site, permanent nursery, the project removes the primary barrier to exercise for women which is childcare accessibility. This hub will serve as a safe space for physical training, community building, and empowerment. The redesign will provide a welcoming environment where women with any backgrounds can comfortably participate in the exercise and community activities.

Lean To



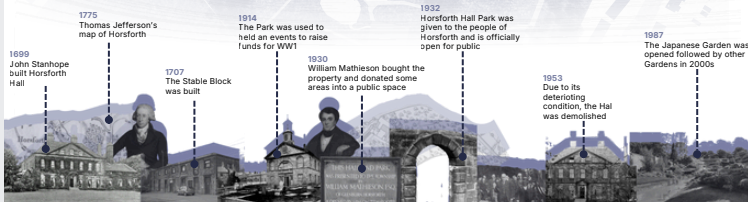
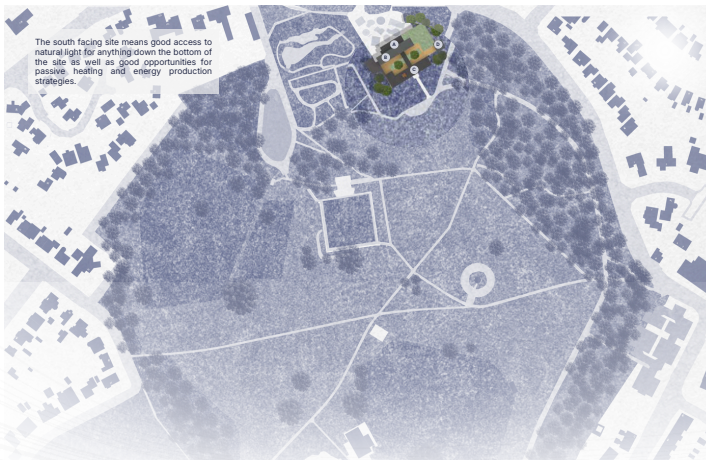
The Stables



Long Shed



Coach House



1775
Thomas Jefferson's map of Horsforth

1699
John Stanhope built Horsforth Hall

1707
The Stable Block was built

1914
The Park was used to hold an events to raise funds for WW1

1930
William Mathieson bought the property and donated some areas into a public space

1932
Horsforth Hall Park was given to the people of Horsforth and is officially open for public

1953
Due to its deteriorating condition, the Hall was demolished

1987
The Japanese Garden was opened followed by other Gardens in 2000s

SPATIAL EQUALITY

Concentrate on the social spaces that are produced by and for women.

According to (Smith, 1995; McMurray, 1999), mothers are often left with little time to attend to their own health needs and have few opportunities for self improvement. Lack of exercise, leisure and recreation have been found to be to the detriment of women's mental, social and physical health (Currie & Devellin, 1999; Wimbush, 1986). The reasons for mothers experiencing high levels of stress or anxiety are many; however they are often related to the ethic of care associated with good mothering (Wearing, 1984). The ethic of care is one of the main barriers to women gaining access to sufficient physical activity and leisure (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Brown et al. 2000; Henderson et al. 1989).

By integrating a permanent nursery space on the Stables that linked with the surrounding exercise spaces on Longshed, this design enables mothers to do self-care without feeling like they are neglecting their duties. This also provides the immediate access to exercise and leisure necessary to reduce their anxiety and reverse the mental, social, and physical health declines highlighted in the research.

POPULATION STATISTICS 2021



High female population requires inclusive public spaces.

MOTHER'S AND PRIVATE EXERCISE SPACE

Safe exercise spaces encourage women's participation.

IMPORTANCE OF HORSFORTH HALL PARK

A key destination for community and family activities.



BARRIERS

Limited Accessibility



Safety Concerns



Lack of Supportive Facilities



Social and Cultural Constraints



PROGRAM DIAGRAM

STAFF ROOM
RECEPTION

NURSERY

EXERCISE
SPACE

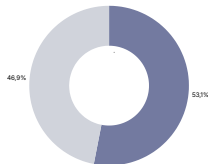
MULTIFUNCTIONAL
SPACE

TOILETS
CHANGING
ROOMS

STORAGE

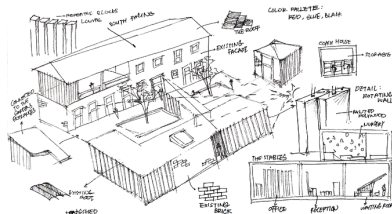
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES LEVELS REFLECT THE ACTIVITY LEVELS OF THEIR MOTHERS

The study from the Medical Research Council Units and the Universities of Southampton and Cambridge, showed that mothers' activity levels differed depending on her level of education, number of children and weekly working hours. It also showed that many mothers were not meeting the government's recommended amount of physical activity per week.



Results showed that on average, mothers engaged in about the same amounts of sedentary and light physical activity each day, with only 53 per cent of mothers meeting the recommended 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity on one or more days a week.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENTS

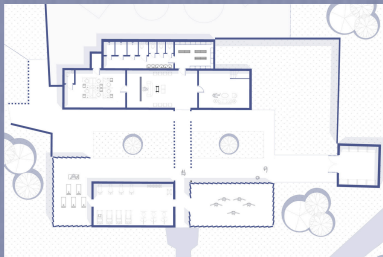


INTERVIEWS

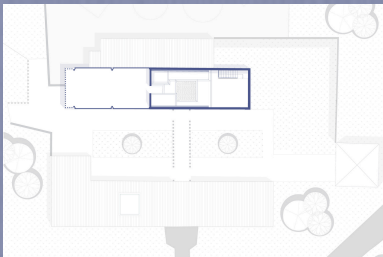
An interview conducted in 2 February 2026 with a regular visitor of Horsforth Hall Park and coach of Wheelie Fit Mums Community, Wheelie Fit Mums Community is a fitness class for mums in Horsforth that has been around for about 15 years. They held a routine exercise twice a week and spent approximately 1-2 hours at the park. The fitness activity includes stretching, gymnastics, and jogging. Most of the participants bring their children to the park and they agree that the park has a friendly and welcoming environment. Additionally, they highlighted the needs of toilets, the importance of keeping the green space, and maintaining the peacefulness of the park.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The spatial program reflects the site's transformation from a private estate to a public community space. Administrative functions are housed in The Stables, while the fitness facilities occupy the Long Shed. Pivoting walls create a flexible connection between the historic landscape and private exercise spaces.



GROUND FLOORPLAN



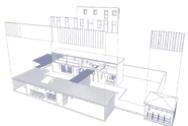
FIRST FLOORPLAN

KEY DESIGN DECISION



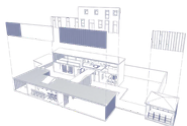
TERRACE AND DOORMAN WINDOW

Glass balustrades connect the nursery and gym visually, while the south-facing orientation and dormer windows improve natural light and ventilation.



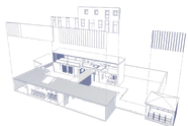
DESIGNATED PATHWAY

Two main pathways connect all facilities within the complex and link them to the wider park, including the Japanese and Community Gardens.



PIVOTING WALLS

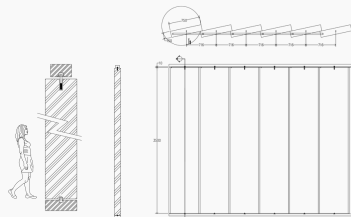
The south wall is transformed into the main façade, while pivoting walls create flexible exercise spaces that can be opened for connectivity or closed to provide privacy and comfort.



LOUVRES

Repetitive patterns of louvre remain consistent throughout the spaces as the main architectural languages.

USER EXPERIENCE



The design responds to concerns of privacy and 'gymtimidation' by providing users with greater control over their environment. Adjustable louvres enable exercise spaces to shift between open and enclosed settings, supporting varying levels of comfort, privacy, and social interaction.

Pivot walls as a visual control that blocks direct line of sight from the outside. (Passerby not able to see the space clearly unless if the walls is rotated to certain angle)

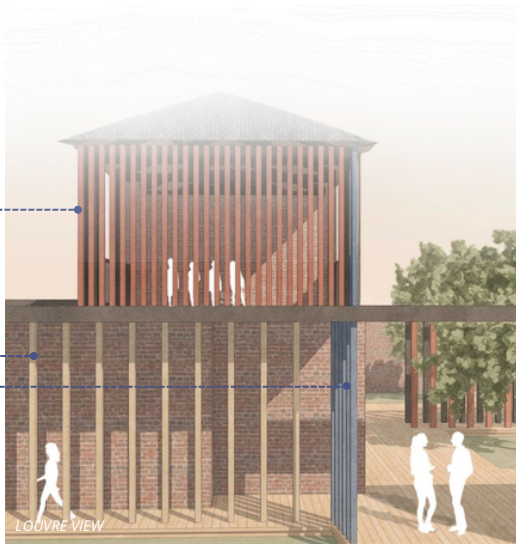
The Social Logic of Space, Hillier B., and Hawan J (1984)

Additional acoustic comfort to dampen the gym noises and creating a speech privacy on gym classes. A natural ventilation and odour control (circulation)

Act as a physical mark that define a zone for different type of exercise that prevent crowding and isolation (not isolating the space from the rest of the park)

DECONSTRUCTING STEREOTYPES

"Beyond Pink" Breaking narrow association of femininity with pink. Shifting stereotypes into spaces that reflects strength and diversity. It is not about rejecting pink but expanding choices as design should empower, not limit.



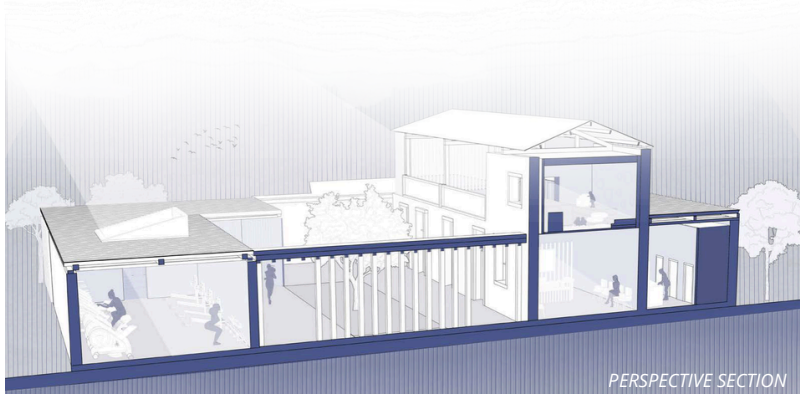
DETAIL MODEL 1:10



ETHICAL POSITIONING

Inspired by Bauhaus principles, the design prioritizes function, inclusivity, and spatial equality. Bold primary colors and industrial materials challenge conventional gender stereotypes, creating a multifunctional space that emphasizes empowerment, activity, and community engagement.

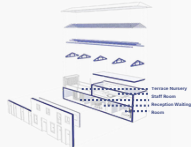
S PATIAL PROGRAM



PERSPECTIVE SECTION

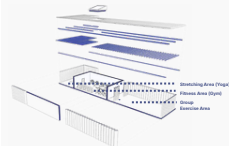


SECTION



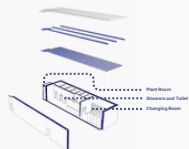
THE STABLES

The Stables accommodates the primary administrative functions, while the nursery is strategically placed on the first floor to provide a secure and private environment.



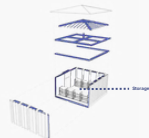
LONG SHED

The Long Shed serves as the site's primary fitness hub. Located at the front of the site, it features the main entrance and accommodates dedicated spaces for stretching, fitness training, and group activities.



LEAN TOO

Positioned in a secluded area of the site, the Lean-To provides key amenities such as showers, changing rooms, and accessible toilets.



COACH HOUSE

All of the exercise equipment will be kept at Coach House, which will be a restricted-access facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAYOUT



FRONT ELEVATION

Responding to the site's microclimate, the south-facing design uses louvred elements to enhance daylight, passive heating, and natural ventilation, creating a comfortable and energy-efficient fitness environment.



COURTYARD VIEW

"What's happening upstairs? I can hear children playing."
"That's the nursery, it's linked to the main exercise spaces, so mothers can stay close while participating in activities."
"I like that, it feels reassuring knowing childcare is integrated rather than separated."
"Notice how the open courtyard allows visual connections between different parts of the building. You're never completely isolated."

THE ETHIC OF CARE AS SPATIAL BARRIER



NURSERY VIEW

The design promotes inclusion by integrating a nursery with the exercise space, reducing barriers for mothers. Overlapping pivoting panels provide visual privacy, creating a comfortable and accessible environment that accommodates cultural, religious, and personal needs.

SITE MODEL 1:200

