

# To Preserve: Through the therapeutic benefits of Biophilic design and meaningful making

This project transforms **Greyfriars Chapel** into a **wellness centre and bird sanctuary**, developed **in response to the historically under-acknowledged crisis of men's mental health**.

Framed by **centuries of silence and stigma**, men's emotional wellbeing remains a **subject too often avoided**.

This project seeks to challenge that narrative.

Recognising that **traditional talk-based therapies may not suit everyone**, particularly men, who **prefer practical engagement over verbal expression**. This design offers **alternative routes to support**. Through **hands-on making, animal care, and immersive interaction with nature**, it provides users with **structure, purpose, and space for reflection**.

Rather than clinical intervention, it offers **calm, tactile environments grounded in routine, responsibility, and care**. In doing so, it proposes a new kind of sanctuary: **one where restoration is found not through words, but through action, connection, and daily practice**.

It is a space that may not only support lives, but may help save them.

## The Greyfriars Chapel: Bird sanctuary and Wellness Facility For Men

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### The Pigeon Loft

The inclusion of a **pigeon loft** offers users **meaningful tasks** that can bring **routine into their daily lives**. Looking after birds **creates a sense of responsibility and purpose**. Whilst **hearing and observing** them can have **calming benefits**.

There are studies to suggest there is something grounding about birds the movement sounds and presence.



### The Workshop

The **workshop** is designed to offer men a **purposeful, hands-on space** for **meaningful making**. By engaging with **hand tools** and **accessible machinery**, participants create **practical, community-focused objects**: such as walking sticks for the elderly, birdhouses for the grounds, and percussion instruments for local schools.



### The Indoor Garden

The **indoor garden** draws **inspiration** from the Japanese practice **shinrin-yoku**, also known as **forest bathing**. The garden gives users a **calm, nature connected space to pause and reflect all year round**.

The importance of having an indoor feature is a practical response to the **unpredictable British climate**. It allows users to **enjoy the benefits of being immersed in nature** regardless of the weather

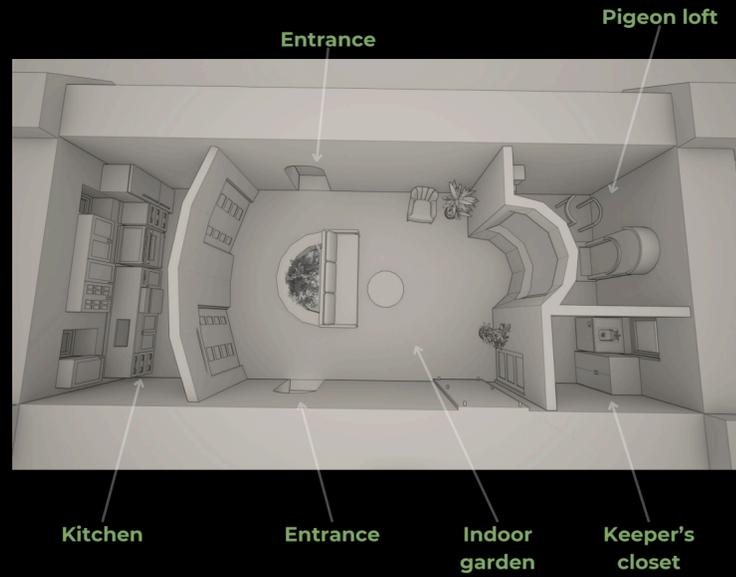


### The Exhibition Space

Many **bird enthusiasts** also **share a passion for creative practices** such as **art bird photography** and **woodworking**. As part of the design I've included a space where group members can **invite friends and family** to view their work whether that's **handmade objects or captured moments** this offers the **opportunity** for friends and family to **celebrate their creativity** but also **build a sense of community connection and support**. Sharing these works with friends and family and enhances **confidence and reinforces positive identity**.

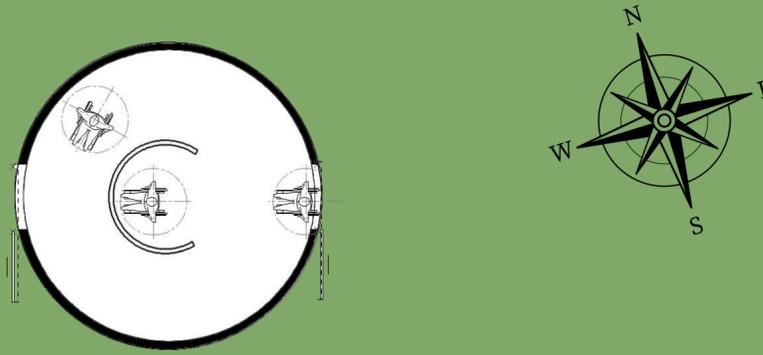
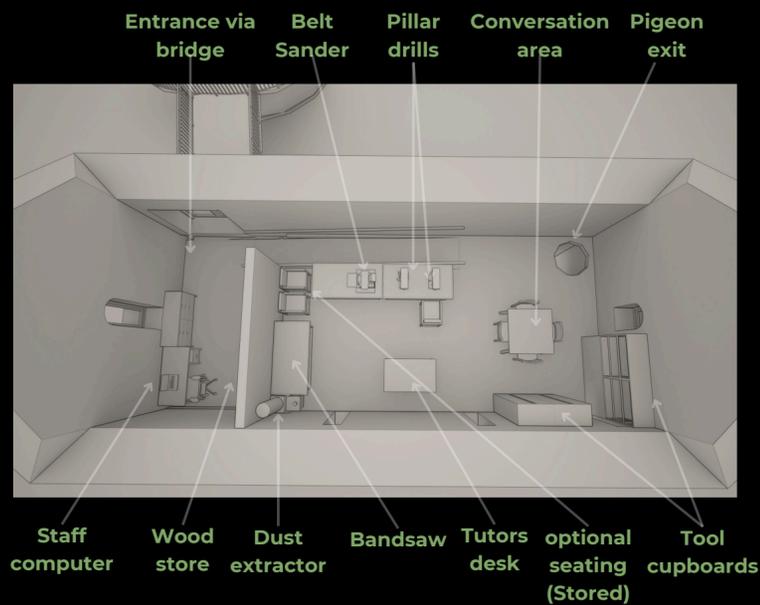
## Ground floor

The ground floor layout features two entrances; one at the front to maintain the original access and a new rear entrance added for accessibility. Together they create a natural flow through the space which is expected to experience traffic. Place along the main circulation route are curved walls and curved flower bed containing tall foliage to not only act as a calming visual centrepiece but also offer a buffer reducing noise and creating a more immersive experience within the garden.

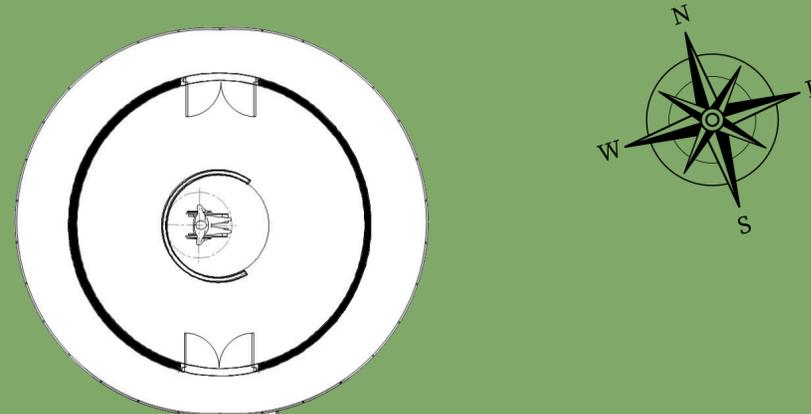
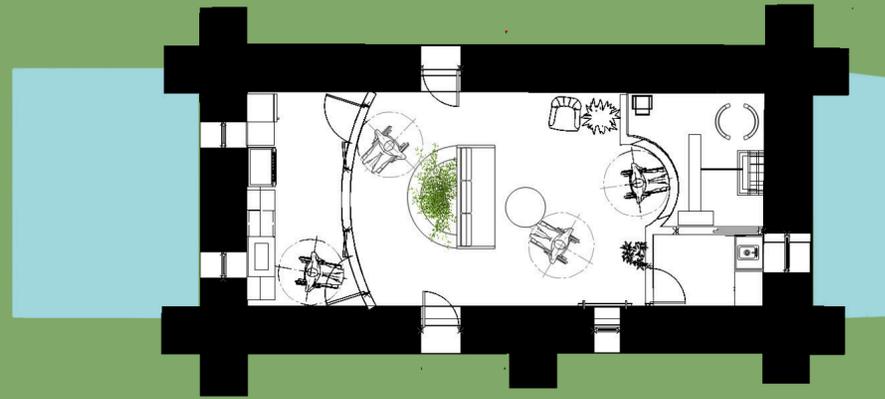


## First floor

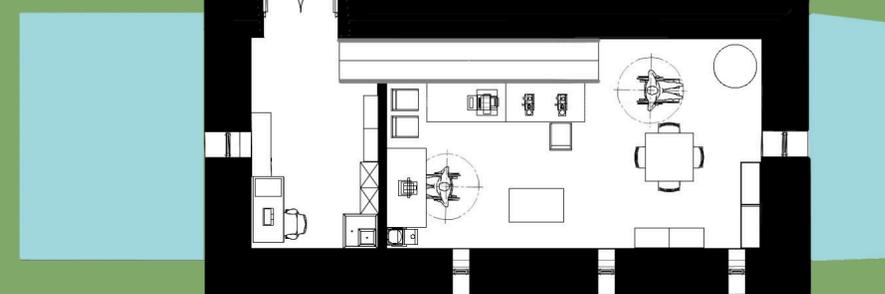
The workshop is laid out for optimal flow comfort and safety. Noise mitigation has been addressed by positioning all heavy machinery away from the integrated pigeon loft whilst utilising the conversation area and tool cupboards as an acoustic buffer zone. Furniture placement has been arranged to ensure optimal access to natural daylight reaches working zones, while generously cleared pathways ensure safe efficient movement between workstations and full wheelchair accessibility.



F0  
Scale: 1:100  
Ground Floor



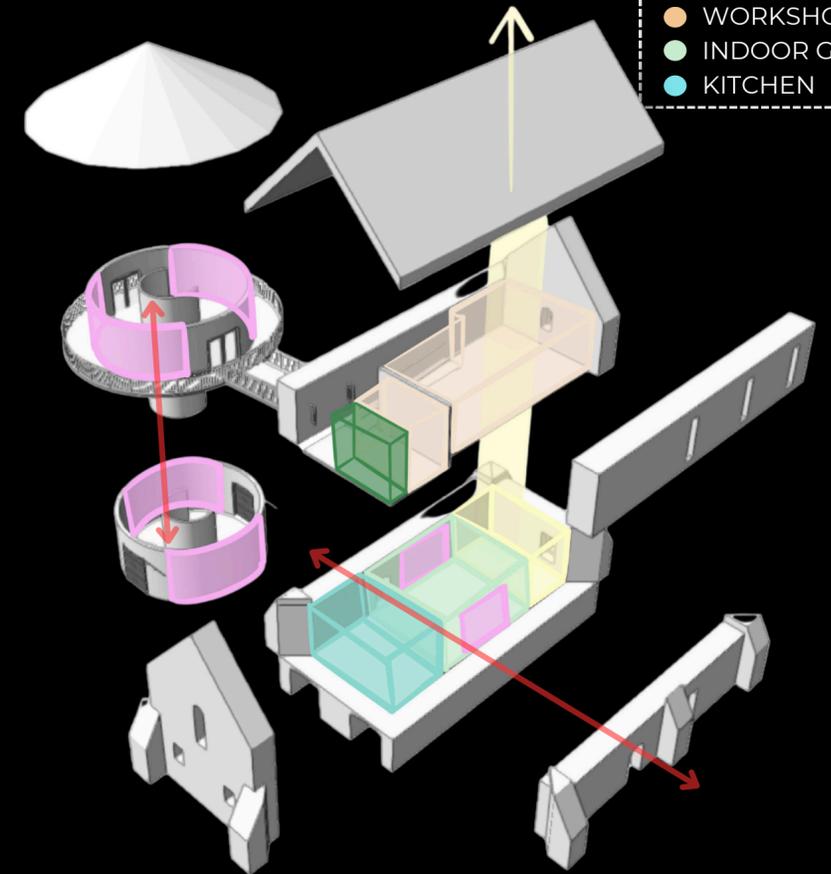
F1  
Scale: 1:100  
First floor



### Functional Zoning

KEY

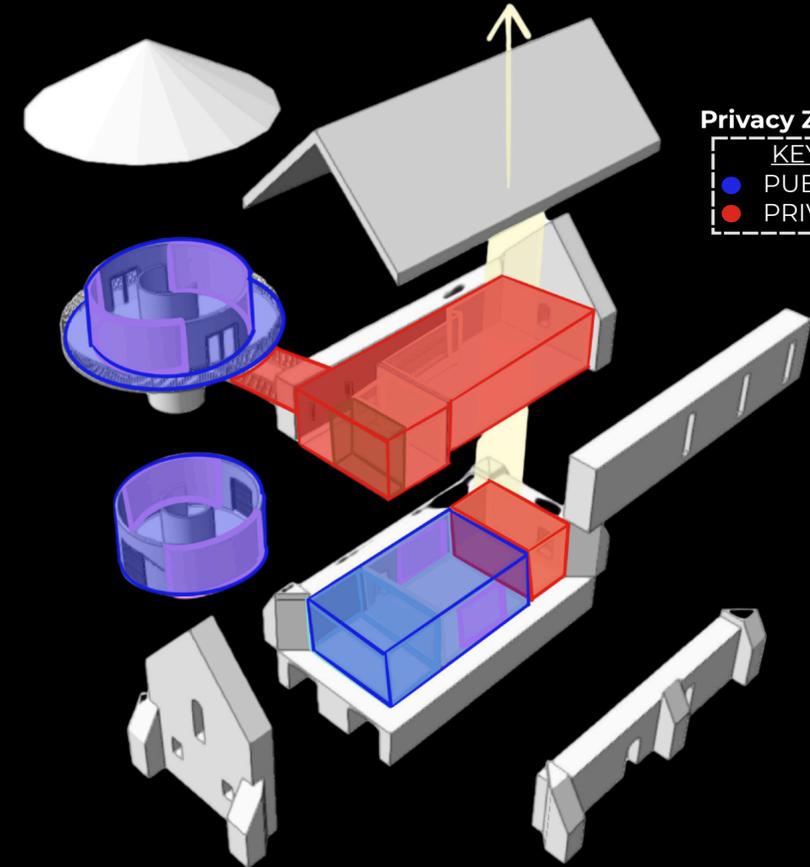
- ENTRANCE
- STAFF ROOM
- EXHIBITION
- PIGEONS
- WORKSHOP
- INDOOR GARDEN
- KITCHEN

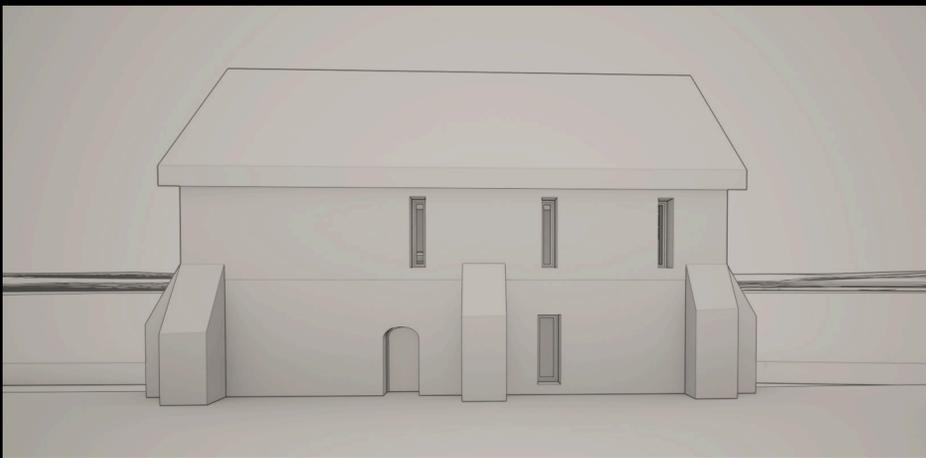


### Privacy Zoning

KEY

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE





Front view



Left side view



Right isometric

The building's historic character will be preserved by **maintaining the primary façade**. All **modifications and structural interventions** have been intentionally **located at the rear of the chapel**, ensuring that the exterior **remains visually consistent with its original form**.

**From the front**, the building will **appear untouched**, carefully preserved to respect its heritage. However, **new additions** at the rear **subtly incorporate curved forms inspired by the chapel's prominent arched entrances**, establishing a **cohesive dialogue** between old and new. These contemporary enhancements are designed to complement, rather than compete with, the existing structure.

Due to the **original staircase no longer meeting current accessibility and safety regulations**, a rear intervention was introduced as a considered design solution, one that **improves usability** while **maintaining the architectural integrity of the chapel's outward appearance**.



Rendered section viewed from rear



Front view



View of pigeon exit from observation deck



Exhibition space inside the observation tower

# The Greyfriars Chapel Bird sanctuary and Wellness Facility



1:50 Scale model