

THE BISCUIT TIN

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REASON FOR PROJECT

Although Edinburgh is considered a wealthy city, there are an estimated 80,000 citizens living in poverty and experiencing food insecurity. The food poverty crisis has particularly risen over the last two years of the pandemic, meaning more and more people are visiting food banks in need of support. In contrast with this, 27.1 tons of food is wasted and sent to landfill in the city every week, of which a large portion is still edible.

The idea for this project stemmed from the increasing food poverty crisis and incorporates this with reducing and recycling food waste. The project is centered around the community, and aims to integrate everyone, taking away the stigma associated with poverty.

BRIEF

Design a community centre focused on food, helping to alleviate poverty through function and design.

DEMOGRAPHIC

More than one in five of the UK population are in poverty which equates to around 14.5 million people. Of these, 8.1 million are working-age adults, 4.3 million are children and 2.1 million are pensioners. According to most recent data, poverty amongst children is increasingly the most rapidly of these groups.

Single-parent families are one of the highest groups that suffer from food insecurity, of which 90% are female. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled households are also more likely to experience poverty and food insecurity.

14.5 m

people living in poverty in the UK



poverty rates tend to be higher in female single parent families



a large portion of people experiencing food poverty are homeless men



COVID-19 increased the number of people experiencing food poverty including children using free school meal vouchers

More locally in Edinburgh, there is significant homeless community, of which the majority are single men. This group lack access to food, and the facilities to prepare healthy meals for themselves making them the group to suffer most from food insecurity.

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant more people in Edinburgh have found themselves in a situation where they struggle to afford food for themselves and their families. This is particularly prevalent in families with children who could no longer use free school meal vouchers due to the closure of schools, as well as those who have been impacted by the cuts to universal credit.

A CENTRE FOCUSED ON FOOD



The Biscuit Tin is a community centre based around the issue of poverty, which supports the community by offering a subsidised supermarket, allowing customers to 'pay what you can'. The supermarket works on a membership scheme, where users pay for the flour which they can afford, but every customer is entitled to the same flour. Membership fees are loaded onto a card which can be scanned at checkout, and used in the supermarket, cafe and clothes swap, taking away the monetary value of items, and therefore the stigma that is attached to poverty.

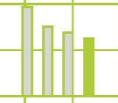
The kitchen is open for both public and commercial use, providing a facility to cook and store meals, which some users may not have at home. The kitchen also provides classes, teaching the community easy, healthy and affordable recipes.

The centre fully integrates the community, by offering jobs to the unemployed, as well as running training programmes within the kitchen for aspiring chefs. All membership fees and payments in the cafe and restaurant feed back into the centre, allowing it to provide the best items for all visitors. Other spaces included within the centre take into consideration the needs of the local community, and include a children's play area, a clothes swap shop, counselling and seminar rooms, as well as a co-working space.

FOOD POVERTY

Despite being the sixth richest country in the world, the UK's food poverty rate is amongst the highest in Europe. Food poverty encompasses both the affordability of food and its accessibility within local communities. Many experiencing food poverty rely on food banks, pantries, and free school meal vouchers to feed themselves and their families. Often it is the case that parents will skip meals simply to provide food for their children.

Although food poverty has been an issue in the UK for many years, it has significantly increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is estimated that 2.5 million 3-day emergency food supplies were distributed to those in need between April 2020 and March 2021.



the UK has the 4th highest poverty rate in Europe

2.5 m

3-day emergency food supplies distributed between April 2020 and March 2021

10%

of UK adults live with moderate to severe food poverty

24 years

the gap in life expectancy between wealthy and disadvantaged people



people experiencing poverty are more likely to suffer with anxiety and depression

3x

higher suicide rates in deprived areas

Poverty is damaging, not only to the people living in it, but also to families, society, education systems, taxes and the economy. Poverty's most notable impact is on health, both mental and physical. More often than not, unhealthy food is cheaper and more easily accessed than nutritious foods that form a balanced diet. This leads to widened health inequalities and gaps in life expectancy between wealthy and disadvantaged people in the UK.

One of the major impacts of poverty on mental health is the stigma associated with it. Poverty leads to low self-esteem, high levels of depression and anxiety and significantly impacts the cognitive, social and behavioural development of young people. Research shows that between 2011 and 2015 suicide rates were more than three times higher in deprived areas.

FOOD WASTE

More than a third of all the food produced in the world for human consumption gets lost in the supply chain or wasted at the consumer level, equalling around 2.5 billion tons. This equates to around 79 tons of food waste per second. It is estimated that only a quarter of the US, UK and Europe's food waste would be enough to feed the 1 billion people in the world that suffer from hunger.

Most people are unaware of where the food we waste goes, nor do they know about the consequences. Around 30% of food waste goes to landfill, and a further 26% is incinerated, both of which are harmful to the environment, and can cause health problems. Reducing food waste is thought to be the number one solution to solving the climate crisis.

1/3

of all food produced for human consumption gets lost



79 tonnes of food is wasted per second

25%

of the US, UK and Europe's food waste would be enough to feed all the people in hunger in the world

27.1

tons of food goes to waste in Edinburgh every week



FareShare are amongst some of the most important charities tackling food poverty and waste

In Edinburgh, 27.1 tons of food goes to waste every week - the equivalent of 54,000 food items unnecessarily thrown away.

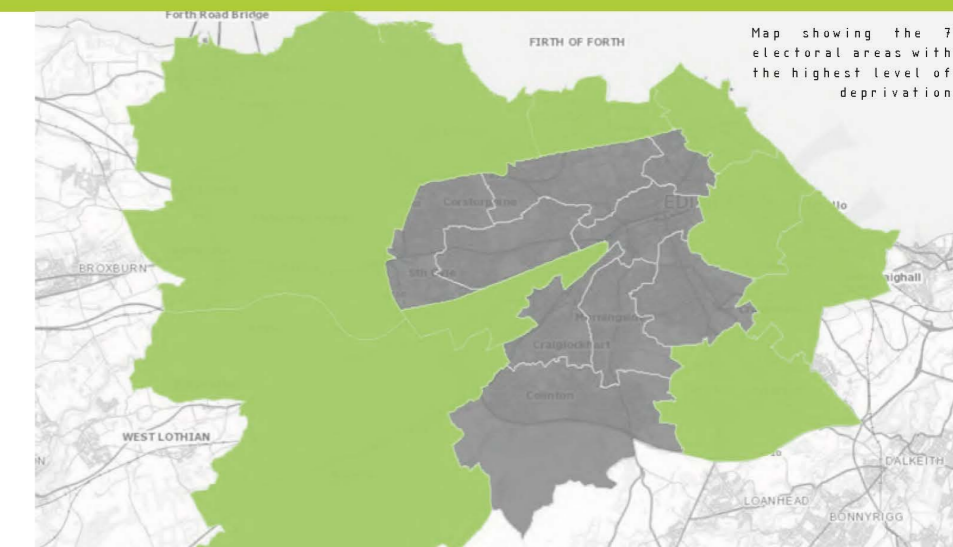
Initiatives such as Shrub Coop, who operate a Zero Waste Hub, are currently working to rescue edible food that is going to waste. The initiative saves an average of 1.63 tons of food per month, redistributing it from local businesses and grocery shops, directly to charity partners.

Nationally, there are charities such as FareShare and The Felix Project, which work with supermarkets and food banks to redistribute excess food and waste to those who need it most. This is one step towards a more positive future for food waste and hunger.

FOOD POVERTY IN EDINBURGH

Despite Edinburgh being an affluent city, there are an estimated 80,000 citizens, or 6.85% of the population living in poverty. This figure includes 1 in 5 children. Although the average income is £2,254.66, basic monthly costs average at £1,192.79, meaning the city has one of the highest costs of living in the UK. Around 13% of workers in Edinburgh earn wages at rates below the Living Wage Foundation's recommended rates, and 10% rely on non-permanent employment. This has led to around 9% of Edinburgh residents finding it "difficult to cope" on their income.

The rate of poverty varies considerably between different areas of the city, from as low as 5% in some areas, to 27% in others. Of the 17 electoral wards, 7 show poverty rates rising above 20%. These areas include: Forth, Craigmillar/Duddingston, Leith, Portobello/Craigmillar, Liberton/Gilmerton, Pentland Hills and Sighthill/Gorgie. Together, these 7 wards account for 50,400 of all people in poverty in the city, meaning that more than a third of all people in poverty live outside areas of high poverty concentration.



ACCESSING THE SITE

One of the key factors in choosing the site was its accessibility to the community, particularly those requiring subsidised food. It was important that the site could be accessed on foot from a large residential portion of Leith, as well as being easily accessed by bus and car.

The Biscuit Tin can be accessed easily by bus, with a range of services running to nearby bus stops Anderson Place, Elizafield, Gables Wynd and Steads Place, which are all within a 10 minute walk of the site.

The majority of Leith sits within a 1 mile radius of the site, which is the equivalent of approximately a 20 minute walk. Other areas that are within this 1 mile radius include Broughton, Trinity, and Newhaven.

The site also has also on street parking on the main road of Anderson Place, as well as limited parking places to the West side of the building, allowing visitors to drive to the site.



THE BISCUIT FACTORY



Ground Floor



First Floor



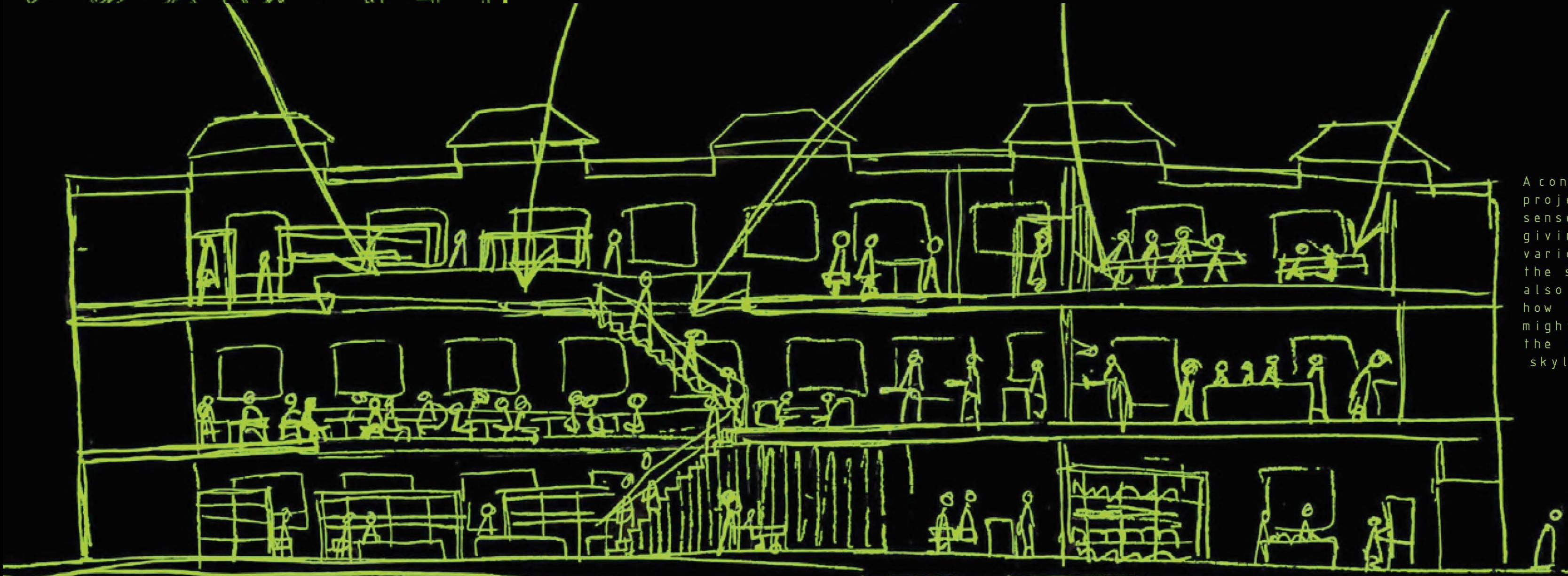
Second Floor

The Biscuit Factory was built in 1947 for Crawford's Biscuits, situated in the industrial area of Leith. The warehouse was home to the Crawford family business for 20 years, and still sits largely unchanged on Anderson Place. Crawford Biscuits was taken over by United Biscuits in 1962, and the Leith factory was later sold in 1970.

After being empty for around 40 years, it is now home to a collection of small businesses bringing together the community of Leith.

The building suits the project perfectly as it is a large space of around 2000m², with interesting historic architectural features relating to its previous use as a factory. The large windows and skylights provide the building with considerable natural light throughout the day. The building is unlisted, allowing the potential for significant architectural and structural changes.

Geographically, the Biscuit Factory is located in an area which is easily reachable by all of the community, either on foot or by public transport. The building sits in the centre of the large and varied community of Leith, meaning it is the ideal location for a centre to serve the community.

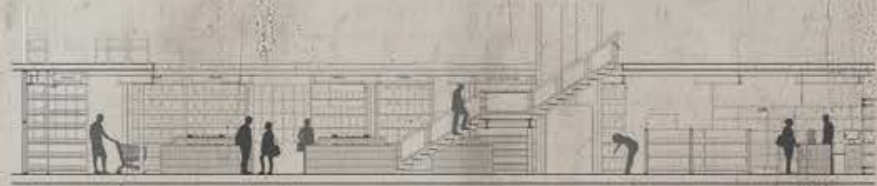


A concept drawing of the project, showing the sense of community and giving an idea of the various functions of the space. The drawing also shows the idea of how the natural light might come down into the space through the skylights and atrium.

MAIN SPACE

The supermarket space was the initial idea that the project stemmed from, and therefore is the main space. It is the first space that visitors to the centre see when they arrive, and the space which all other functions can be reached from.

As the centre is based around the idea of reducing poverty and the stigma associated with it, it was important that the supermarket was designed in a way that would achieve this goal. The project also aims to reduce food waste and promote healthy eating which were also influential in the design of the space. The strategy for designing the supermarket space began with planning the product placement, defining the display types, creating zones and plotting the customer journey.



PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Products can be split into two groups: attractors and line ups. Attractors are products that are attractive, often non-essential items. Line ups are the products that are often used daily, and are more essential. As this supermarket caters to those who experience food insecurity, line up and attractor products can be defined slightly differently. Typically in food banks and pantries fresh fruit and veg is an attractor as it isn't as available. This can also be said for fridges and freezer items.

The products in the supermarket have been arranged so that attractor products, such as fresh fruit and veg, snacks, fresh and to go items, are placed in the centre of the space, meaning that the customer has to journey past the line up products to reach them. Not only does this allow customers to see line up products as well as attractors, but also makes the attractors the focal point of the space. The placement of fruit and veg in the centre of the space is important to the project's ethos of promoting healthy eating.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY AND ZONES

To make the space inclusive and welcoming, it is important that the customer can move freely throughout. The customer journey has been determined from research into layout types, and has resulted in a combination of a free flow, bunk and star layout. These layouts don't prescribe a certain route that the customer has to take but allows them to choose how they want to navigate the space whilst seeing the different products on offer. The layout draws customers to the centre of the space where the attractor products are located, such as fruit and veg and snack items, whilst also leading them round the shop clockwise ending at the checkouts.

Transitional zones have also been considered in the design of the supermarket layout. These zones are located around entrances and exits and are unsuitable for placing products as customers are getting their bearings whilst in this zone.



Free Flow Layout



Bunk Layout



Star Layout



Main space plan showing customer journey and zones

MATERIAL PALETTE



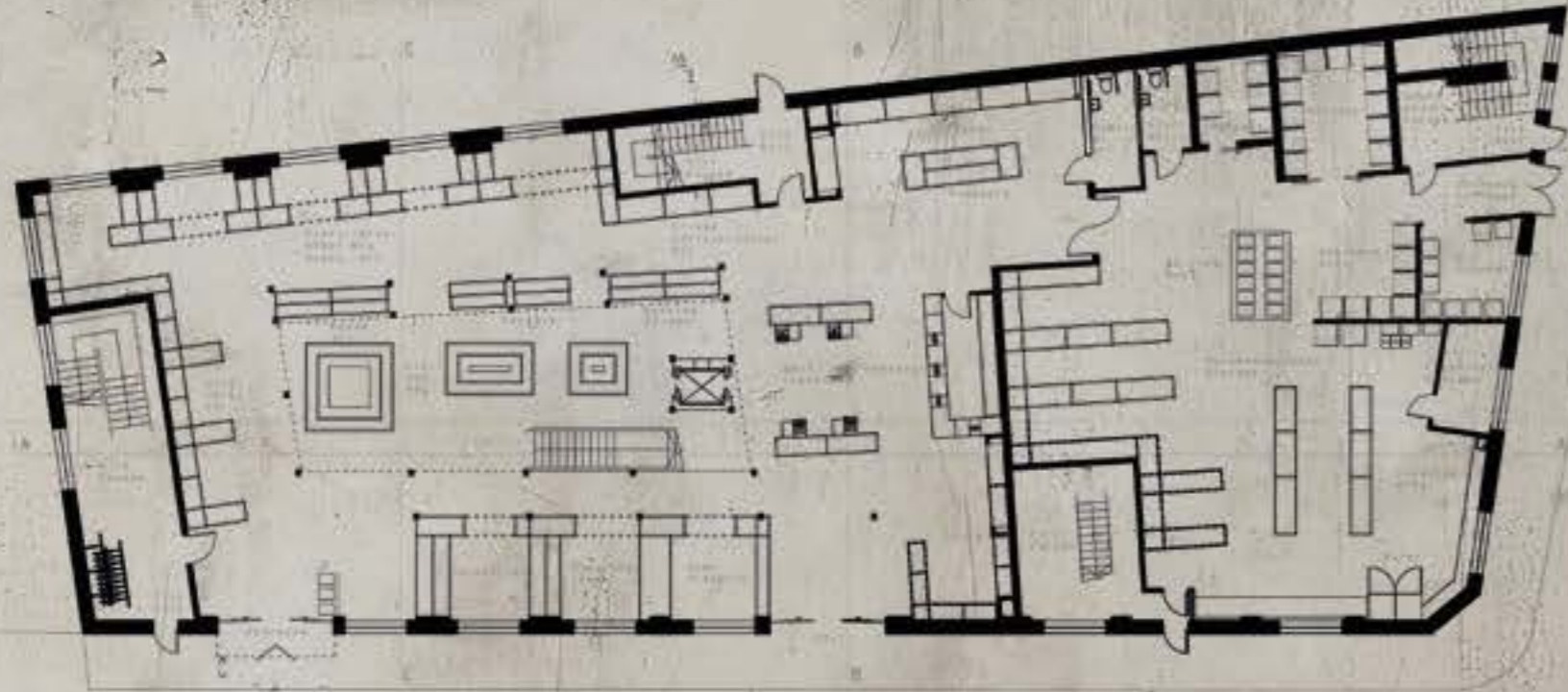
Material Moodboard

The material palette is inspired by the factory style of the building, as well as the goals and ethos of the project. Materials chosen have an intrinsically industrial feel and have been selected to be in keeping with the existing fabric of the building as well as the desired atmosphere. Key materials include mild steel, OSB, and brick, and specifications have been made with sustainability and waste in mind.

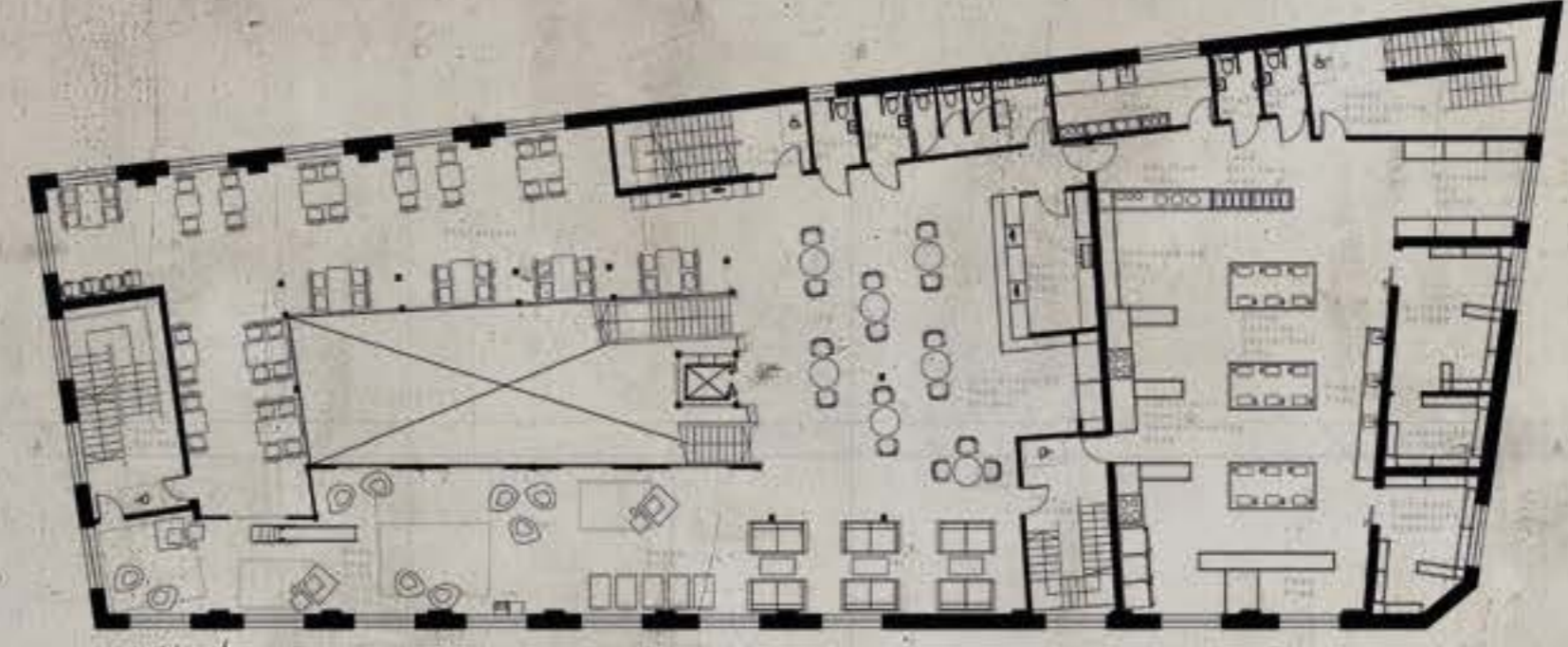
Early on in the design process, it was clear that a strong colour was needed to break up the typically monochrome palette of the other materials. Lime green was chosen not only for its striking contrast with the grey of the existing concrete and steel, but also due to its connotations with health, wellbeing and the environment, a nod to the ethos of the project.



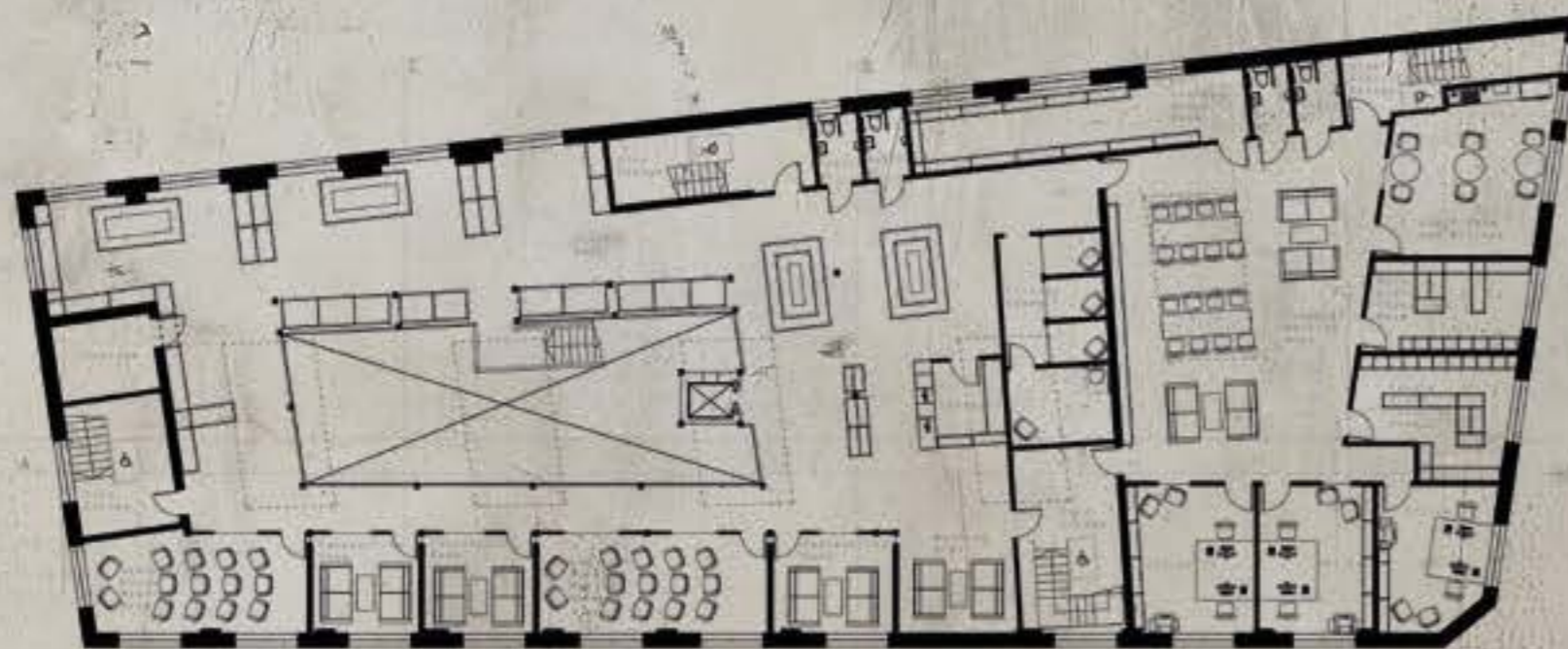
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



SECTION AA AND BB

