



The effects of the pandemic highlighted the harsh struggles the creative industries face yet the industry's ability to innovate in order to carry on has been inspiring.

The Storeys present 'Keepers -

The Mystery of Fannan Isles



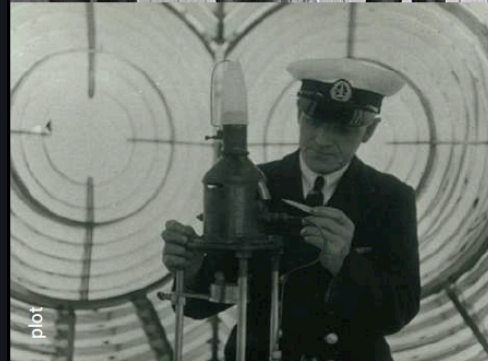
THE STOREYS is a permanent theatre, located on the upper levels of a multi storey car park overlooking the sea. It makes use of this rarely used space, due to the rise in online shopping and pandemic, whilst providing a home for experimental and site-based theatre.

The site will include multiple stage spaces that are suitable for various types of performance, a large bar space (also available for external bookings), suitable backstage areas for multiple shows at a time, ticket offices, cloakrooms and a seasonal rooftop bar with the intention of luring more audiences to a contemporary, unique theatre. During the daytime, the site caters for educational programmes and school visits from the local vicinity, encouraging children and teenagers to be inspired by theatre and to get involved with creative practices.

The space can also accommodate for Fringe/ travelling shows.

The site is located in Leith Docks, an area that has been continually under development with the opening of film studios and high rises in the past years.

The theatre will give back to the community by giving spotlight to local and Scottish stories, in addition the increase of visitors to the greater Leith area boosting income to local shops and restaurants. This promotes further activity and visitors to help form a new cultural hub in the city. Soon, the theatre will be easily accessible to audiences across the city with the extension of the tram line from the city centre to Ocean Drive.



Bottom image - A keeper tending to the lens sourced from National Museum of Scotland. Above, the keepers from the true story.

It was a white tower with black lantern and ochre trim. It most likely followed the construction method carried out on previous lighthouses of the century, using granite block and hydraulic lime concrete. The Chapel of St. Flannan ruins were found on the island, which fuelled superstition and rituals. It used a 3rd order clamshell Fresnel lens which emitted a strong concentrated beam whilst rotating.

The crew at the time of the disappearance included Thomas Marshall, Donald McArthur and James Ducat. McArthur and Ducat are believed to have had children; Ducat was the principal keeper whilst McArthur was the youngest and known to be a tough guy.

On boxing day 1900 the new rotational keeper arrived to the lighthouse door open. The light had been out since 15th December as later informed by a mooring boat in Leith docks. The flag was not flying, and the cargo and carts were not ready to be sent back to the mainland. The island appeared to have damage from big waves, which could have explained the light being out. All the clocks were stopped, 2 oil coats missing and a knocked over chair featured inside.



The idea of setting a show about lighthouse keepers came from the site's surrounding sea views as well as its the areas rich historical links to shipbuilding.

I wanted my show to be thrilling and enigmatic whilst having scope for some beautiful sets.

I came across the unsolved mystery about the disappearance of three lighthouse keepers in the North of Scotland and researched this further. I found multiple accounts and theories as well as films based on the story. These served as inspiration for me to develop and give my own twist to the story and what happened.

Located on Eilean Mor, the Flannan Isles Lighthouse was manned by three keepers, 1 who would be a rotational keeper. They would complete 6 weeks on 2 weeks off cycles; 1 person must always be at the lighthouse. The lighthouse itself was built in 1899 after 4 years of construction. It was the newest in the region and measured 25m in height, 100m above sea level. It was built by David Alan Stevenson and featured a cylindrical tower with balcony and lantern attached to a 1 storey keeper's house.



The film 'The Vanishing' is a close rendition of the story, attempting to solve what happened to the keepers. Filmed in NW Scotland, the film follows the idea of the men ganging up on each other as a result of the tasking job and effects on their well-being. The set design is appropriately bleak and fits the time era. It also includes a lot of religious themes, utilising the chapel. (dir. Kristoffer Nyholm. Production design, Jacqueline Abrahams)

'The Lighthouse' psychological thriller follows two keepers in America in the same era. It follows a power struggle between the two and the insanity felt being stranded there. There is a muddled sense of time, alcoholism, vivid dreams and sea creatures included in the plot creating a sense of confusion and madness. Superstition also appears in the film, with seagulls seen as good luck. The lens serves as a hypnotic God of sorts, bewitching the keepers. (dir. Robert Eggers, production design Craig Lathrop)

Superstition, mythology and witchcraft all feature in Scotland's history and storytelling.

Selkies are seals that would shed their skin when leaving water, becoming women. They would lure sailors into the sea to their death.

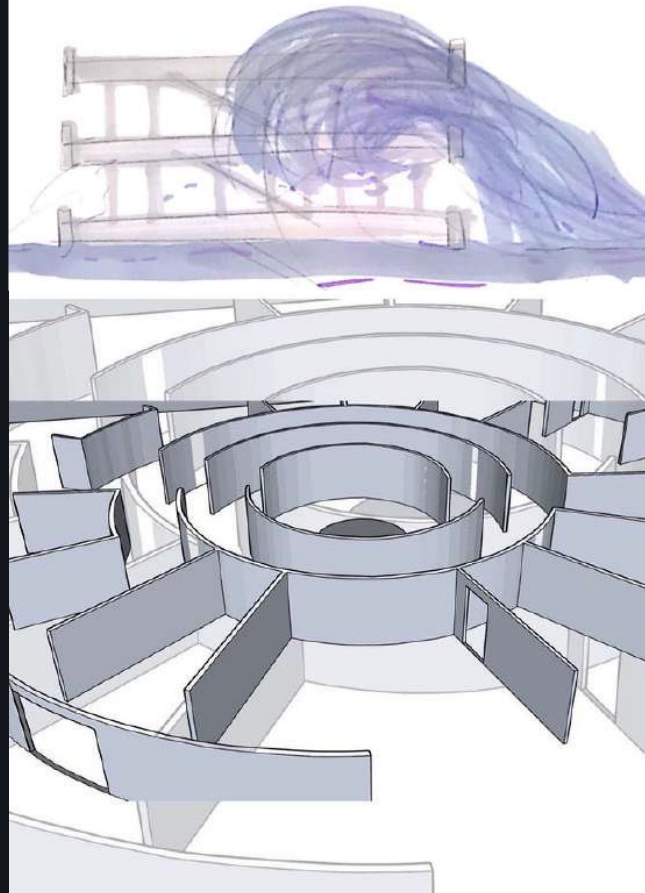
Concept sketches for the project.

The aim of these was to illustrate the shows theme of water as well as the structure and layout.

The top image is a sketch of the lighthouse with the lens beaming out from the centre. This is surrounded by waves.

The middle shows the site's exterior being engulfed by a large wave, it combines the brutalist, solid aesthetic of the site with the dramatic, fluid water.

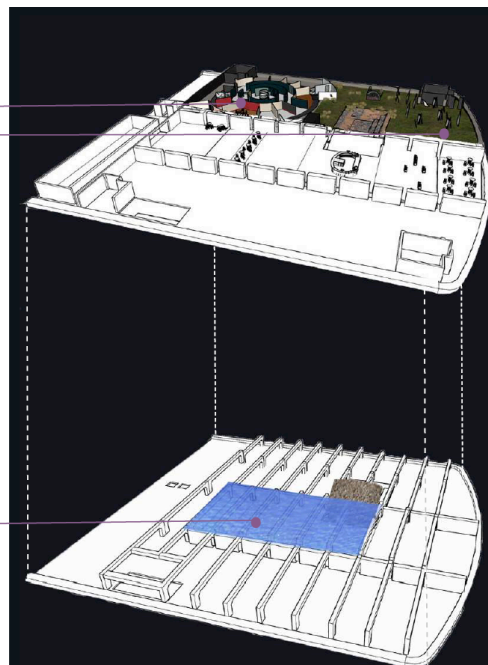
The bottom image is of a model exploring a maze layout and its potential for my set.



lighthouse interior
cliffside exterior

The sets location within the site. It spans two floors, using Auditoriums 2 and 3. The main zones within the set will be the lighthouse interior, surrounding cliffside exterior and an underwater area. Rooms and specific pieces will be taken from the storyboard and plot summary.

underwater area



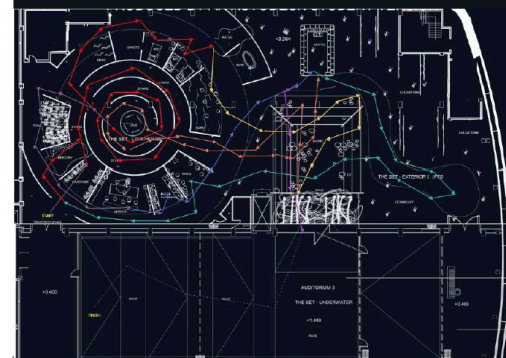
location in scheme

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How the show works:

The show will take place during evenings over a 6 month preliminary period, being THE STOREYS' first residency. It will work in a promenade and immersive theatre style with audiences following actors and lighting cues to the action in the different areas. Audiences are kept small (approximately 20 per show) to allow for freedom and the best possible viewing experience. They will be encouraged to move around and interact with the set as they wish, whilst gauging the story as they go. Lasting about 40 minutes the show involves actors moving from place to place as well as dancers and performers awaiting audiences as they go on their journey. Once the show is complete audiences are welcomed to explore the set further after the show for a period of time before enjoying a drink in THE STOREYS' bar. There will be approximately 3 shows per night, with more during weekends and summertime.

The audience's route through the space, ending on the floor below (dotted line).



The audience within the space in purple, denoting how they fit into spaces that look small on plan. This shows how they can see the actor.



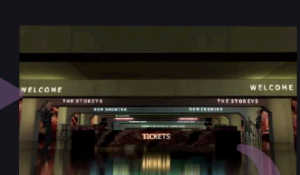
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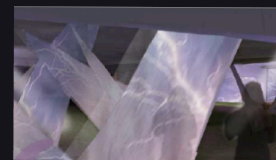
Arrive to THE STOREYS site, seeing the signage from below.



Take the lift up to the 5th floor.



Collect or buy tickets and store jackets in the cloakroom. Have a pre show drink or meet friends.



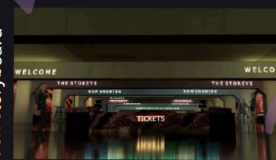
Have a chance to explore the set further after the performance.



End the show in the 'underwater' finale space.



Begin the show, opening in the 'wardrobe' room.



End the evening with a relaxed drink in the bar and discuss the show.



Meanwhile the set is restored for the next performance beginning.

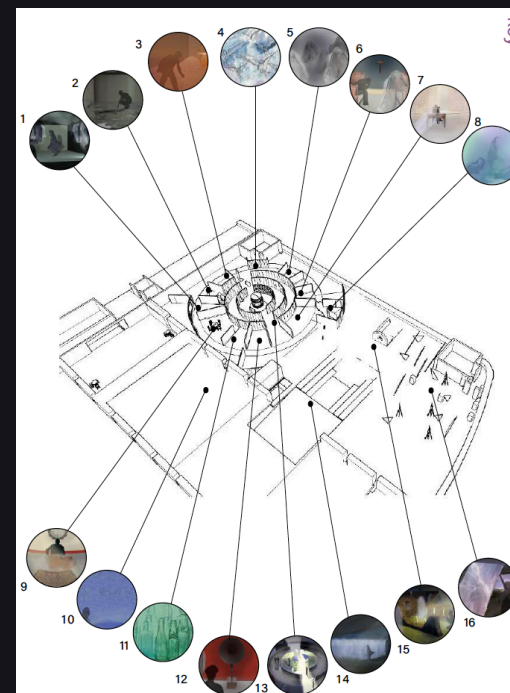


The next show with a new audience begins.

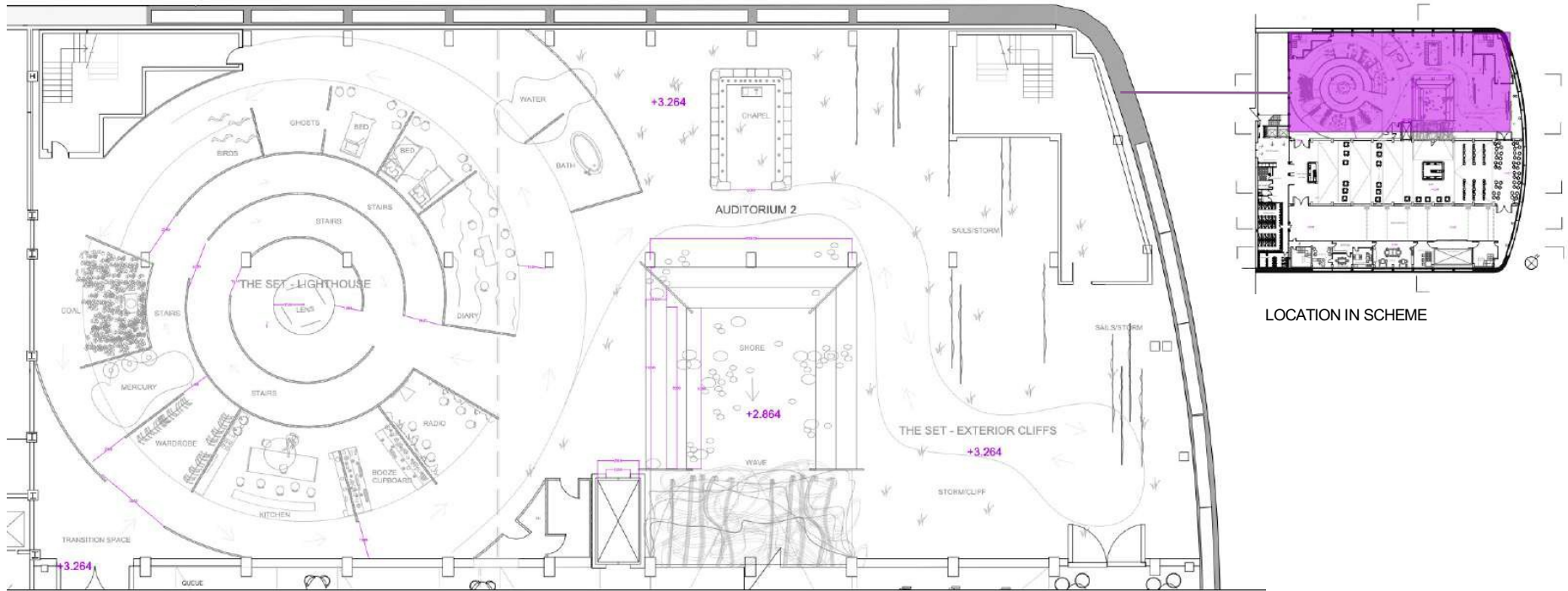
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The specific rooms and areas that feature within the set and their location:

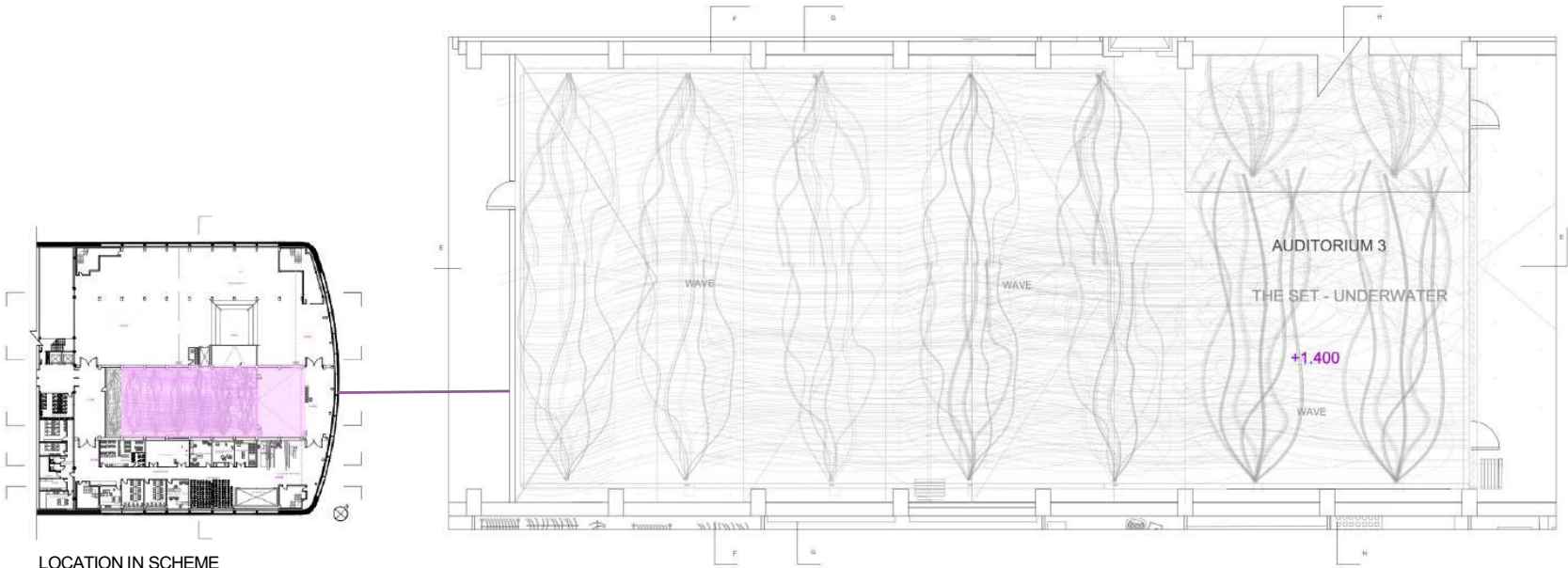
- 1 - Wardrobe
- 2 - Mercury
- 3 - Coal
- 4 - Birds
- 5 - Ghosts
- 6 - Bedrooms
- 7 - Diary
- 8 - Sea creatures
- 9 - Kitchen
- 10 - Underwater (level below)
- 11- Booze
- 12 - Radio
- 13 - Spiral stairs
- 14 - Wave



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MAIN SPACE PART 2 - SET
FLOOR PLAN



CEILING PLAN