

What are Heritage Crafts?

Historically, heritage crafts have been a cornerstone of trade within the creative industry. However, in recent years, these traditional practices in the UK have come under significant threat, as a new report from the UK charity Heritage Crafts shows 20 new additions to its Red List of Endangered Crafts with 12 now classed as critically endangered and at serious risk of disappearing within the next generation.

A Heritage Craft can be defined as a traditional design practice with enough skilled craftspeople to pass on its knowledge and techniques from one generation to the next

Case Study – Kate Brett

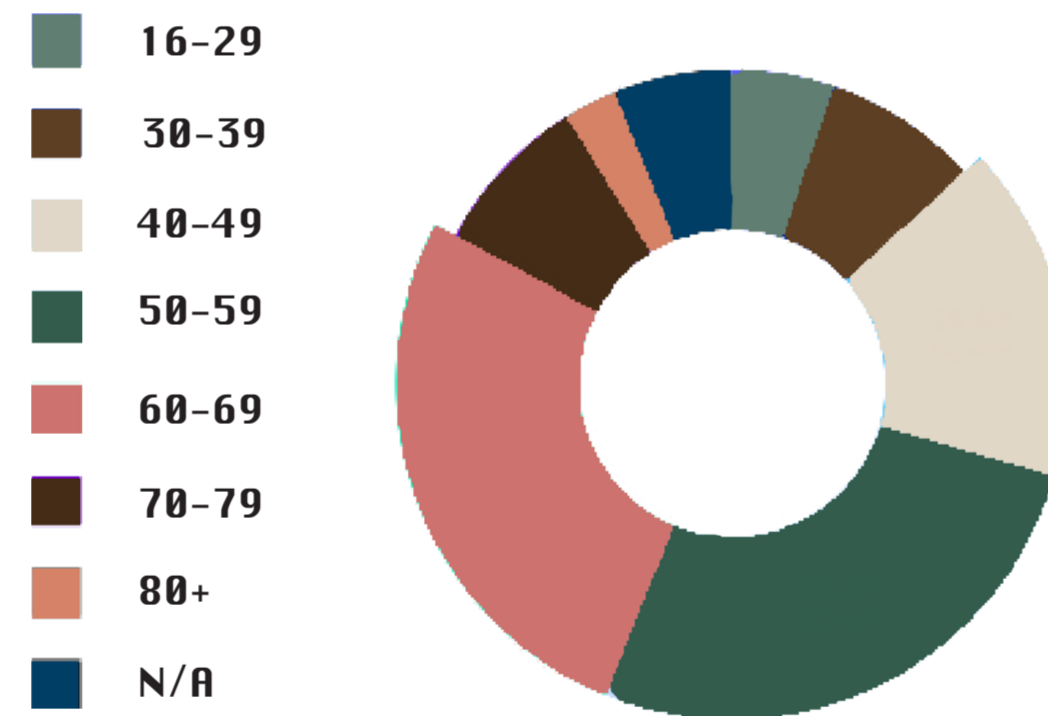
Heritage Crafts' Endangered Craft Week raises awareness of at-risk skills by profiling makers featured on the Red List. One example is Kate Brett of Payhembury Papers, who has produced traditional hand-marbled papers since 1982. Although marbling remains classified as an endangered craft, Brett notes that interest has grown through social media and a renewed appreciation for authentic handmade techniques over digital reproductions (Heritage Crafts, 2022). This shows how digital platforms can help revitalise traditional crafts and connect them with new audiences.



What happens when Traditional skills disappear?

The decline of traditional craftsmanship is becoming an increasing problem with a new report of the UK charity Heritage Crafts 'Red List of Endangered Crafts' featuring 20 new additions, with 12 of these been added to the critically endangered category, meaning they are at serious risk of dying out in the next generation.

Makers Survey Report – Age



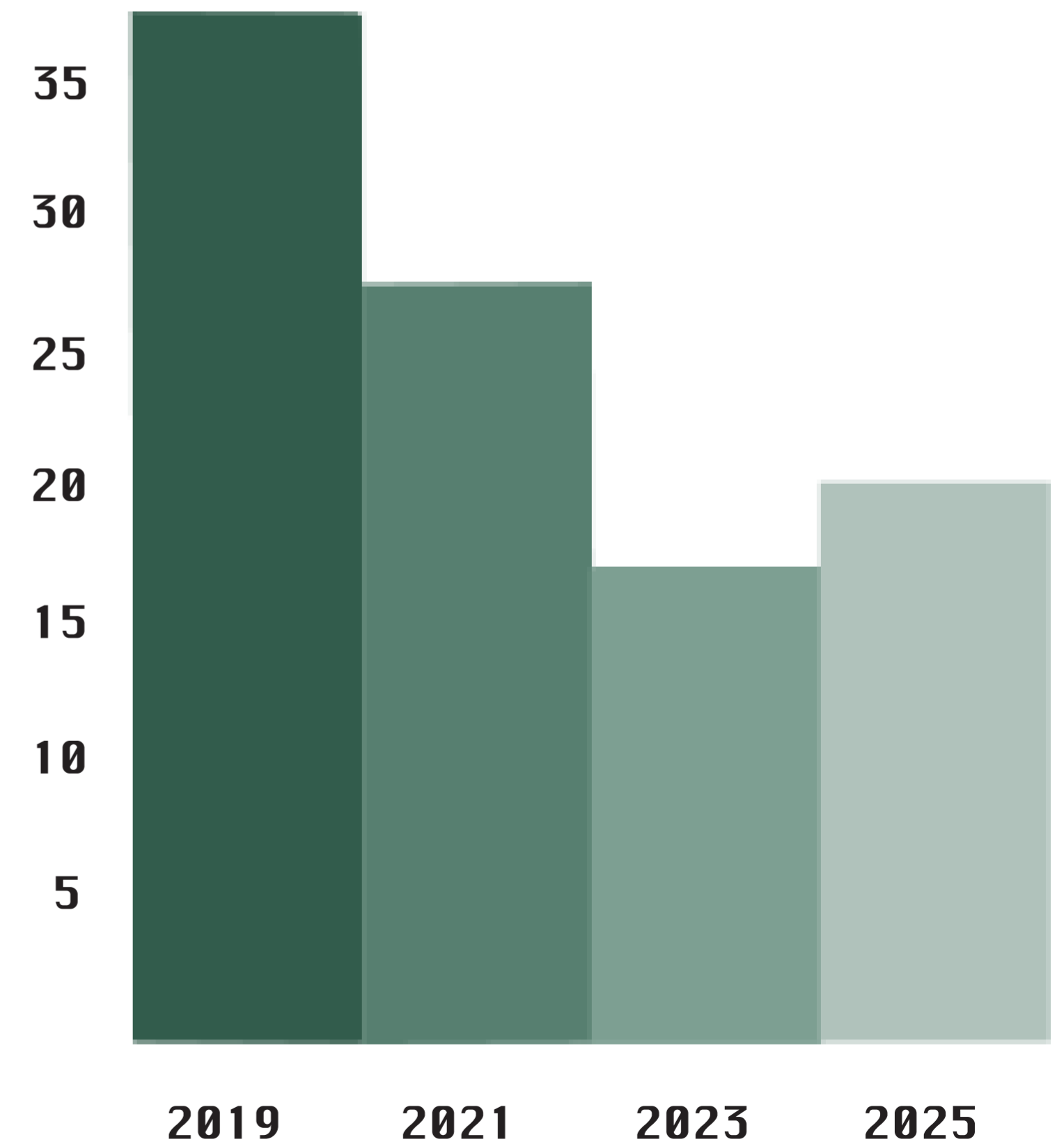
The number on the "critically endangered" list has risen from **62 to 72** in the last two years, while the "endangered" list has gone from **84 to 93**

For in, **2023** the heritage crafts sub-sector represented only a small proportion of the UK creative industries. As according to statistics published by DCMS, it contributed approximately in **Gross Value Added (GVA)** to the **UK economy 0.02%** of the GVA of the Whole UK Economy.

~ Beck, 2025

This limited economic footprint highlights the vulnerability of heritage crafts within a market that evolves around large scale, efficient and speed-driven mass-production...

Heritage Crafts Added to Red List of 'Endangered' Crafts per Edition – Infographics made by Primary Research



What is Createch?

At the same time, in recent years the UK has experienced a substantial growth in the CreaTech sector which refers to the convergence of creative arts and technology to enhance creative industries without displacing human skill or cultural value (Creative Industries Council, 2024). When used correctly, the likes of AI and new digital craftsmanship methods to avoid the timely and unnecessary parts of creating bespoke pieces of art. This can be supported by examples such as digital fabrication methods including 3D Printing, CNC Milling, Laser Cutting and CAD that visualizes and refine complex designs, helping to avoiding material waste. This expanding sector offers traditional craftspeople hope that, rather than replacing their practices, new technologies can support and sustain them. It can directly address the cultural, social, and economic challenges heritage crafts face in a rapidly digitising society.

Protagonists

David, 53

David, a third-generation furniture maker from Ancoats, runs a small workshop using traditional techniques passed down from his father. His pieces are known for their craftsmanship and durability, but he struggles to compete with mass-produced furniture and online retailers. David is open to collaboration with younger creatives and eager to learn how technology can complement his handcraft, not replace it.

Amira, 22

Amira, a recent Manchester School of Art graduate in ceramics and textiles, struggles to find affordable studio space and access to modern tools like laser cutters, digital looms, and 3D printers. Caught between traditional craft and techlabs, she can't scale her practice or connect with like-minded creatives. She needs CreaTech to advance her career, and FutureCraft is her ideal opportunity to excell.

'CreaTech' is a term which refers to the **intersection** of **Creative and Digital sectors** ~ Shillito, 2024

In the article **"The Reimagining of Craft in a Technological Age"** by **Neil Cunningham**

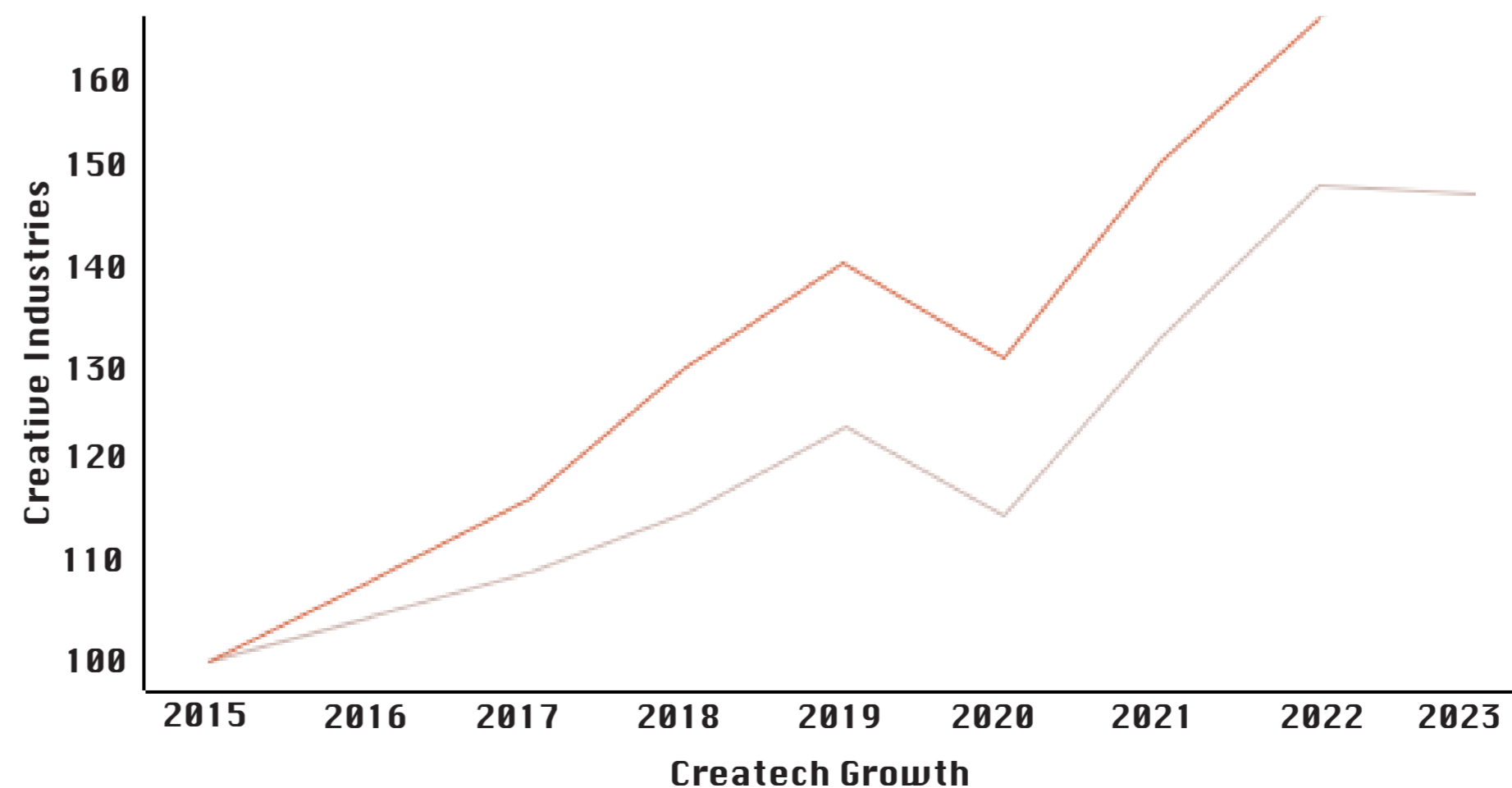
highlights that traditional craftsmanship and machine-made production are often seen in tension, but this divide is blurring. It claims that there are now being new definitions of craft where technological advances are reshaping what 'craft' means such as in jewellery, lab-grown pearls and diamonds challenge the nostalgia attached to traditional and rare methods.

"embrace it, harness it and learn what it can do for us", AI "will be a story-telling"
~ House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The report **'Artificial intelligence and new Technology in Creative Industries'** by **UK parliament POST**

examples of emerging creative technology integration in the UK arts sector,

"shows such as ABBA Voyage that feature four digital representations of each ABBA member as the band appeared in the 1970s"
~ Jeary and Gajjar, 2024



For the UK's creative and digital sectors are economic growth areas, contributing by **£124.6 billion** and **£158.3 billion** respectively in **2022** ~ Jeary and Gajjar,



There are approximately **14,000** creative businesses actively leveraging emerging technologies, alongside around **350,000** professionals working in CreaTech-related
~ The Royal Anniversary Trust

Precedant – Stockroom, Manchester



Stockroom is a town centre library, a children’s creative learning space, a café bar and Stockport’s historical archives. Young people can learn new skills and benefit from cutting-edge learning and IT facilities. It has been developed with and for local people and the creative community to build an exceptional communal resource for entertainment and learning.

Precedant – Building BLOQs, Manchester



Building BLOQ’s social mission is to support the creative industry, democratizing access to high-quality tools and space with affordable resources to help people make a living from their crafts. It offers pay-as-you-go access to equipment and facilities for woodworking, metalworking, 3D printing, sewing, and more, alongside business support, training, and a community atmosphere.

Materiality

Diespeker & Co Tiles TE113			K BriQ Brick Kenotea
G.F Smith Colourplan Marrs Green		Fallen & Felled Tables Brixton Yew	YesColours Paint Mellow Orange
HavWoods Ceiling Ebony Frescato M5T05		Karta Floors Mitchell Wide Plank Cool Natural French Oak	Silverstone XM Concrete Seaport Suede

Site Analysis



80.7%
of all usual residents in Hulme live in a household, amounting to **15,726** residents

- Student Accomodation
- University Building
- Art Centres
- Family Residents

The Junction Pub

Site Model 1:100 @ A3



Site Disit

Pros

- Student and family location
- The assymetrical shape is more in-spiring
- Flexible and less structured floor plans
- The open exterior area, visualising the concept visuals of a potential seating area or entrance space

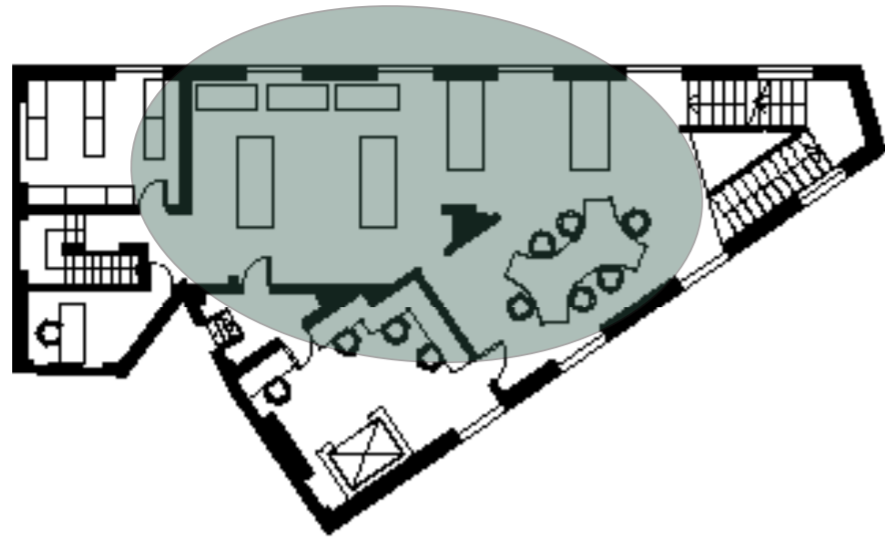
Cons

- Not in the city centre however it has very good transport links
- Lack of retail or other instituions surrounding to increase footfall



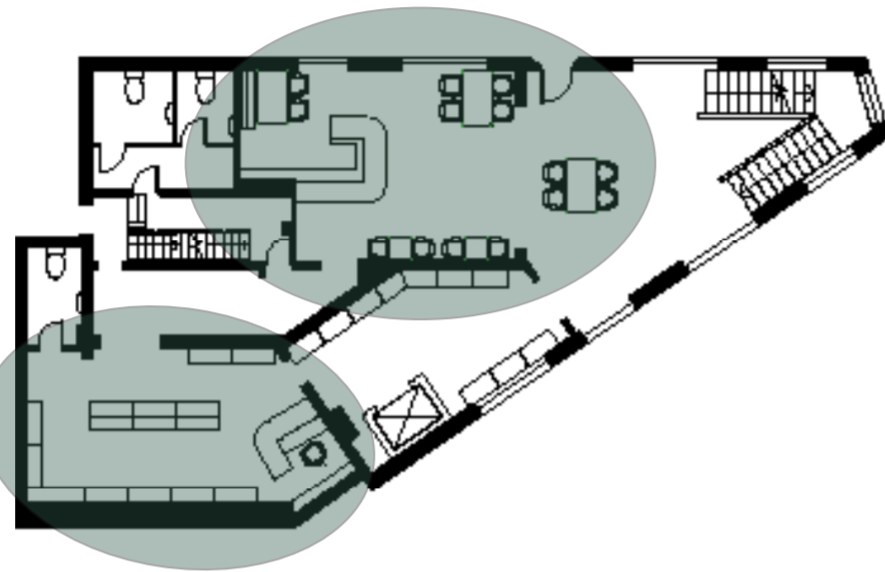
1. Hybrid Maker Lab

Semi-enclosed area with hybrid craft and tech workstations, 3D printer and VR corner. An environment which encourages experimentation with open-access, pay-as-you-go industrial grade machinery.



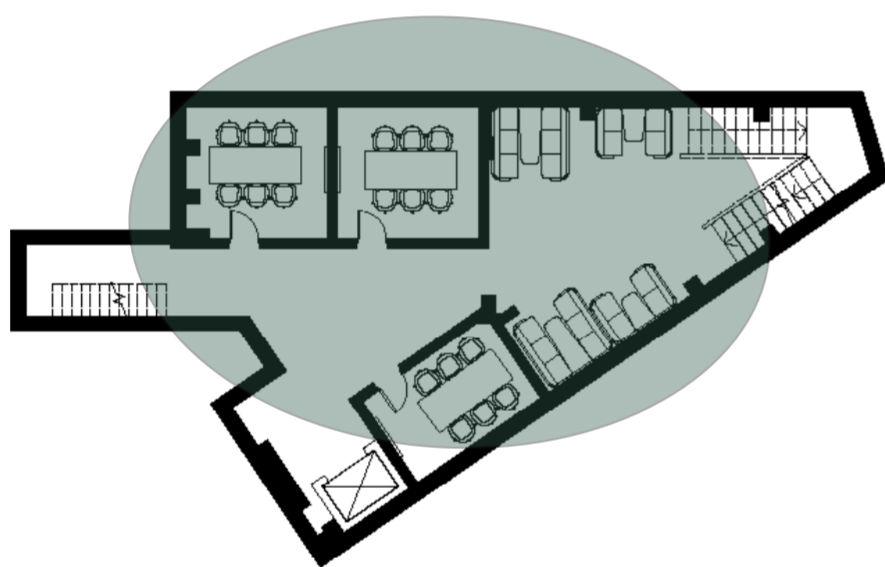
2. Tech Cafe

The social core that retains bar function with upgraded finishes and integrated plug-in stations. Features custom digital screens within tables to order food as well as displaying community art or live creative feeds.



3. Showcase Gallery/Shop

A flexible display wall for students and maker's physical and digital art to be celebrated and advertised. This would include adjustable lighting and interactive projections.



4. Workshop Studios/Study Area

Skills exchange for innovation and collaboration, including workshops of woodworking, metal working, 3D printing, computer skills and business support and training.



Purpose

The primary purpose of Future Craft is to address two key issues: lowering the rates of heritage craft additions per year and diminishing age segregation. This is achieved by creating a collaborative space where individuals will teach and learn from one another across generations. The implementation of this model relies on the integration of Createch (creative technology) alongside industry-level equipment, with a core focus on instructing participants in the digital tools required to start a business, ultimately enabling this cross-generational skill transfer and entrepreneurial enablement.



1. Backstory: David, a bespoke furniture maker, faces a crisis as sales of his handcrafted wooden stools decline rapidly, unable to compete with the surge in online, mass-market retail.



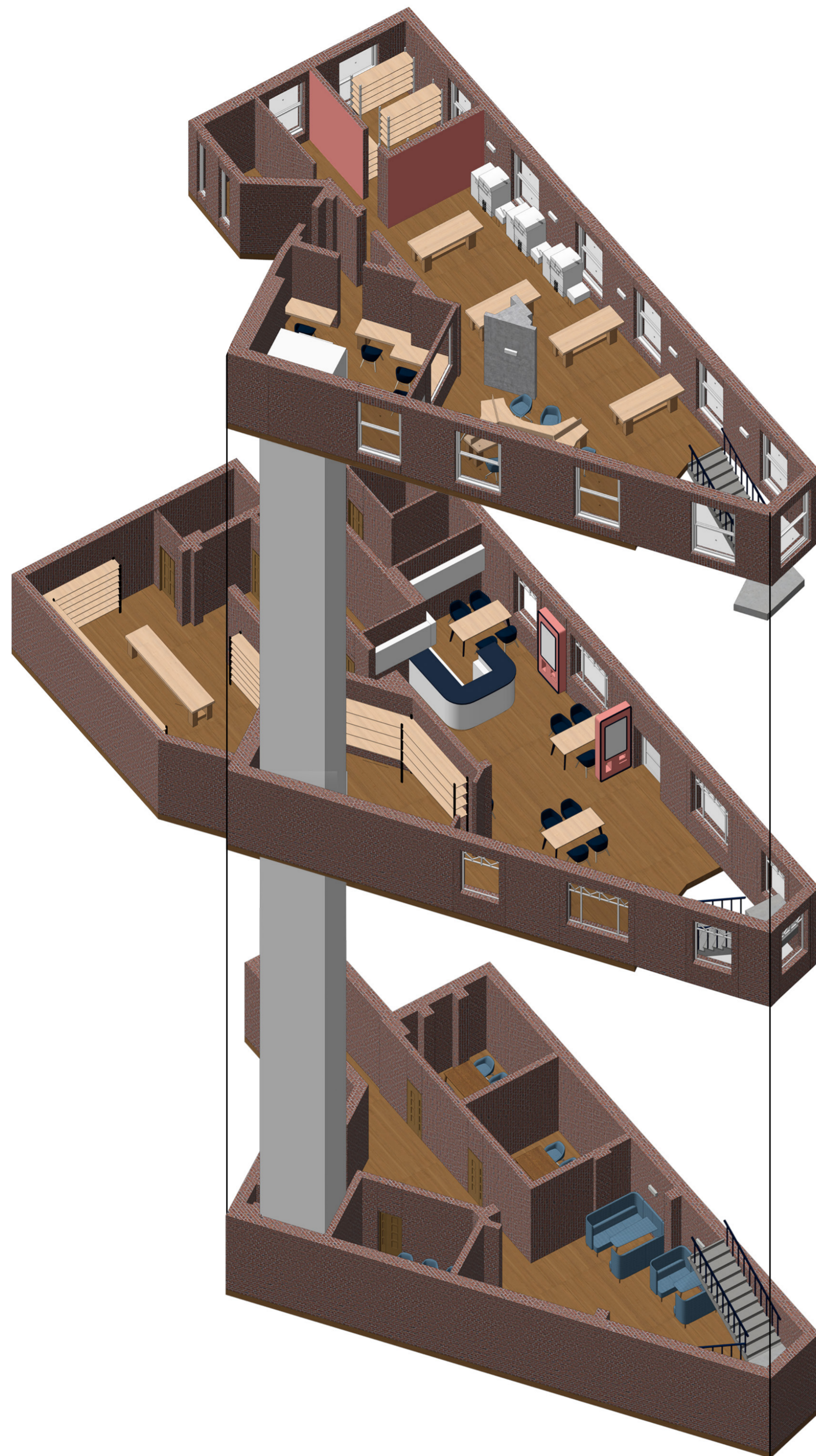
2. Seeking Intervention: Recognizing the urgent need to adapt to the digital age to save his traditional craft, David visits the FutureCraft center, where he is seen looking perplexed and overwhelmed while trying to navigate his phone in the cafe area.



3. Cross-Generational Mentorship: Amira encourages David to attend the basement social media classes. Following a session, she guides him in setting up his first Instagram presence to digitally showcase his unique craftsmanship



4. Revitalization and Success: With the younger generation's digital assistance, David's online visibility soars, leading to a sudden and significant increase in his sales, thereby securing the future of his traditional woodworking business.

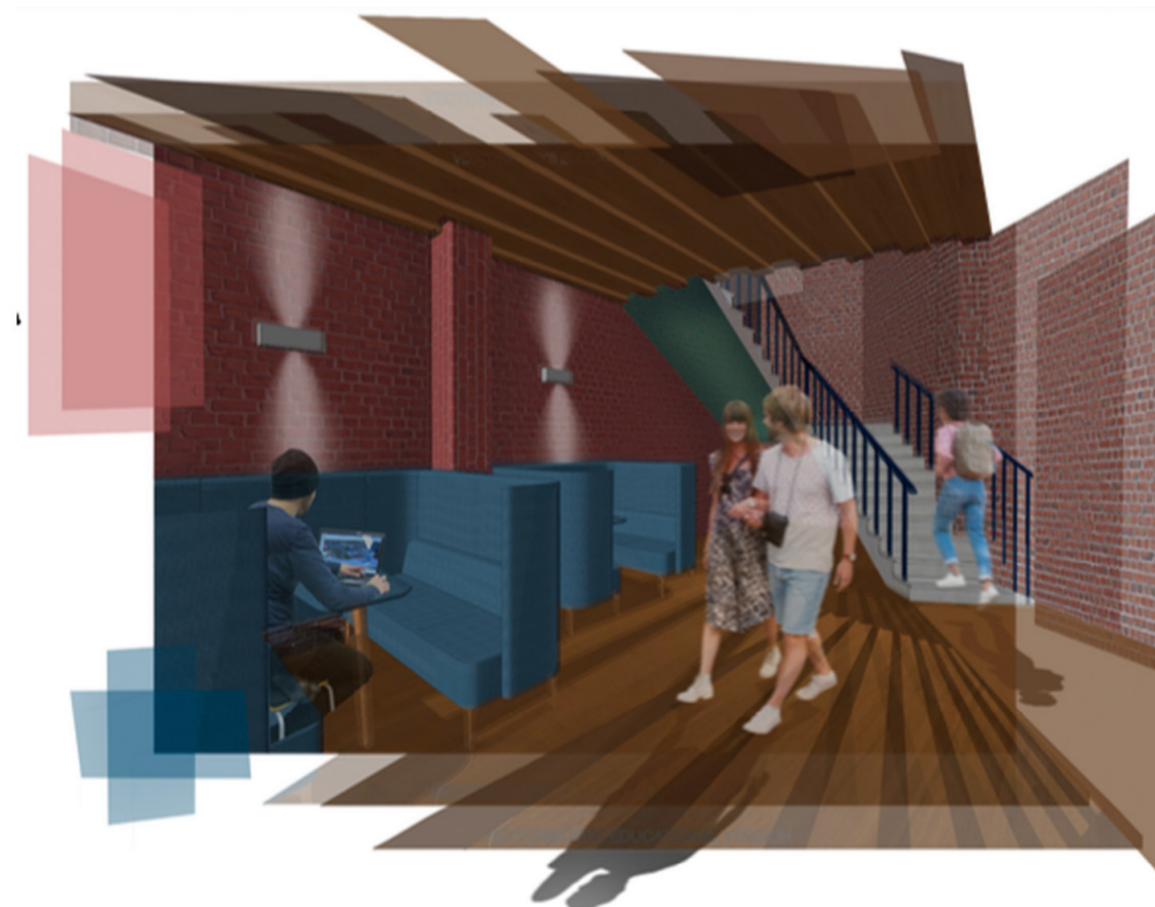


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