

The Care Exchange:

A Community-Led Social Infrastructure for Postnatal Care, Inclusion, and Collective Wellbeing



Character

My project is for **postnatal mothers, caregivers, families, healthcare professionals, and local residents** whose daily lives are shaped by care, work, and community responsibilities. It recognises that wellbeing is shaped through social support, belonging, accessibility, and collective care, responding to the diverse lived experiences of families and caregivers.

Desire

To create an inclusive community hub where care becomes part of everyday life. A place for rest, healthcare, learning, and social connection, allowing people to access support while building meaningful relationships with others.

Conflict

Postnatal care is often fragmented and isolated from wider community support. Existing healthcare environments prioritise efficiency and clinical function, leaving limited space for social interaction, peer support, and emotional recovery. As a result, many mothers and caregivers experience isolation during a critical stage of life.

Transformation

The Care Exchange reimagines postnatal care as a shared social infrastructure embedded within the community. Bringing together healthcare, education, social spaces, and intergenerational activities, it creates an accessible and culturally responsive environment that supports both individual recovery and collective wellbeing.

Through partnerships with local organisations and spaces designed for connection, learning, and rest, the project promotes care equity, social inclusion, and community resilience. Rather than treating care as an isolated service, it positions care as a collective social practice that strengthens belonging and community support.

POLITICAL POSTER AND SUSTAINABILITY

The project supports **SDGs 3, 10, 11, and 12** by **improving access to postnatal care** and creating an inclusive environment for mothers and caregivers. Through circular material strategies and adaptive construction, it promotes both **social and environmental sustainability**.

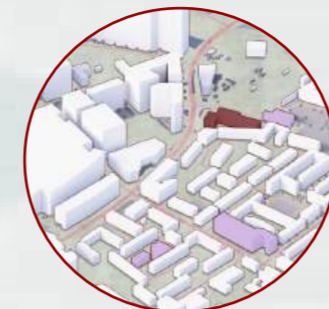
Care Exchange
MAKING SPACE FOR CARE

CARE CRISIS
UNDERFUNDED SYSTEM
PUBLIC HEALTH INEQUALITY

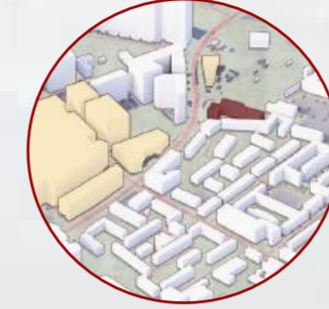
- 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
- 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
- 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
- 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



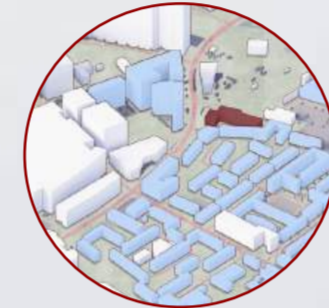
SITE: 176-178 YORK WAY



01 CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

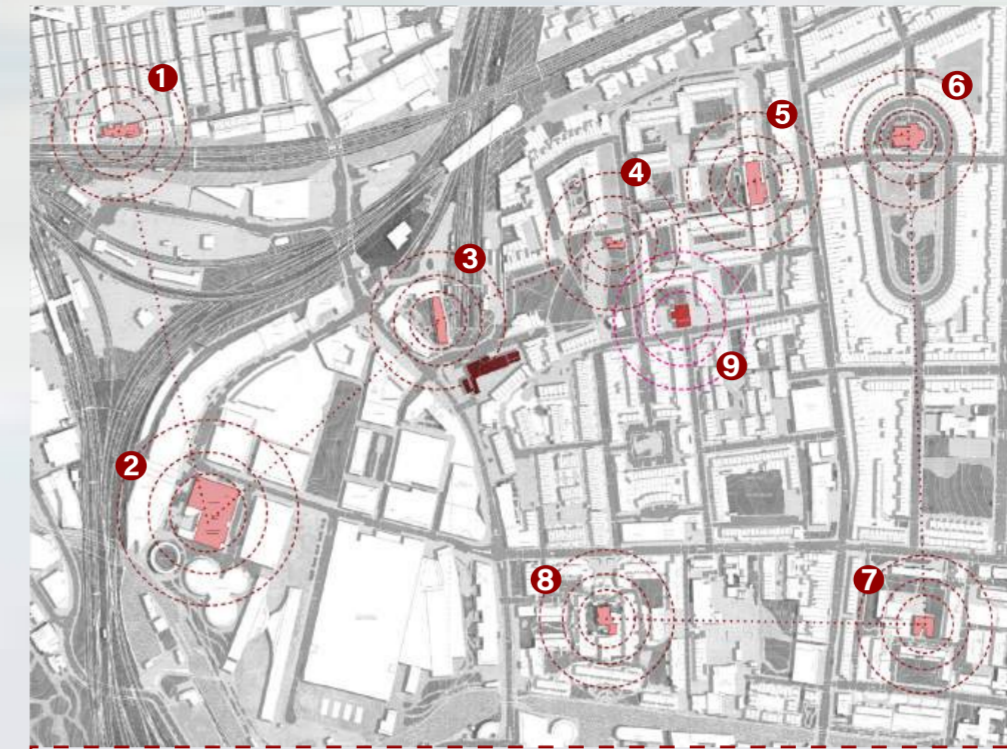


02 COMMERCIAL/ OFFICES



03 RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

SITE ANALYSIS: SPATIAL CARE INEQUALITY



Care Infrastructures for Children:



For Parents:



- 1 Maiden Lane Community Nursery
- 2 King's Cross Academy
- 3 MePlace Nursery
- 4 Islington Play Association
- 5 Bemerton Children's Centre
- 6 St Andrew's Montessori
- 7 Angel Nursery
- 8 Kids in Motion Nursery
- 9 Islington Breastfeeding Support

Project Client



Project Partnership



A local organisation supporting children and families through play services, activities, and community programmes.

Role: Activates child-focused spaces within the hub, encouraging play, interaction, and intergenerational engagement.



A volunteer-led group offering guidance and peer support for breastfeeding mothers.

Role: Provides workshops, drop-in sessions, and everyday postnatal support within the hub.

COMMUNITY & LIVED EXPERIENCE

The Care Exchange is shaped by the lived experiences of mothers, caregivers, families, healthcare professionals, and local residents. By supporting everyday interaction, shared learning, and mutual care, the hub strengthens community resilience and creates a more inclusive and connected neighbourhood.



Caregiver/ Grandparents

The space enables them to participate in daily care routines, share knowledge, and connect with others, reinforcing intergenerational relationships and community support systems.

Mothers

Central to the project, with access to midwifery support, breastfeeding guidance, rest, and opportunities to connect with others in similar stages of care.

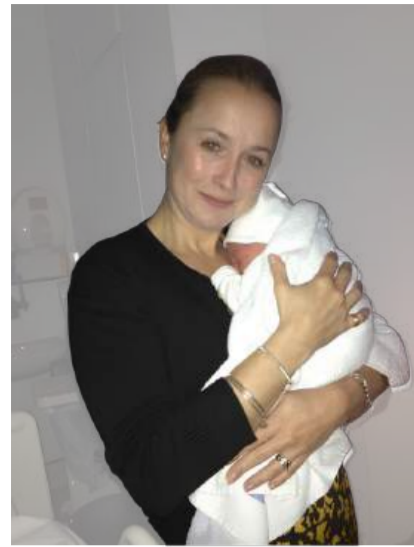
Fathers

Encouraged to take an active role in caregiving through shared spaces, workshops, and everyday participation in family life.

Children

Children use the space as a safe and welcoming environment for play, interaction, and early development. Through shared areas and intergenerational spaces, they are able to engage with others while remaining close to their caregivers, supporting both social and emotional growth.

INTERVIEWS



CAROLINE & LAUREN
New Mother & NHS Worker, Coal Drops Yard

"Returning to everyday life after childbirth can feel overwhelming without a support network around you."



KATE
Mother of 4 Children
NHS Worker, Islington Breastfeeding Support

"Support often happens through conversation, shared experiences, and knowing you're not alone."



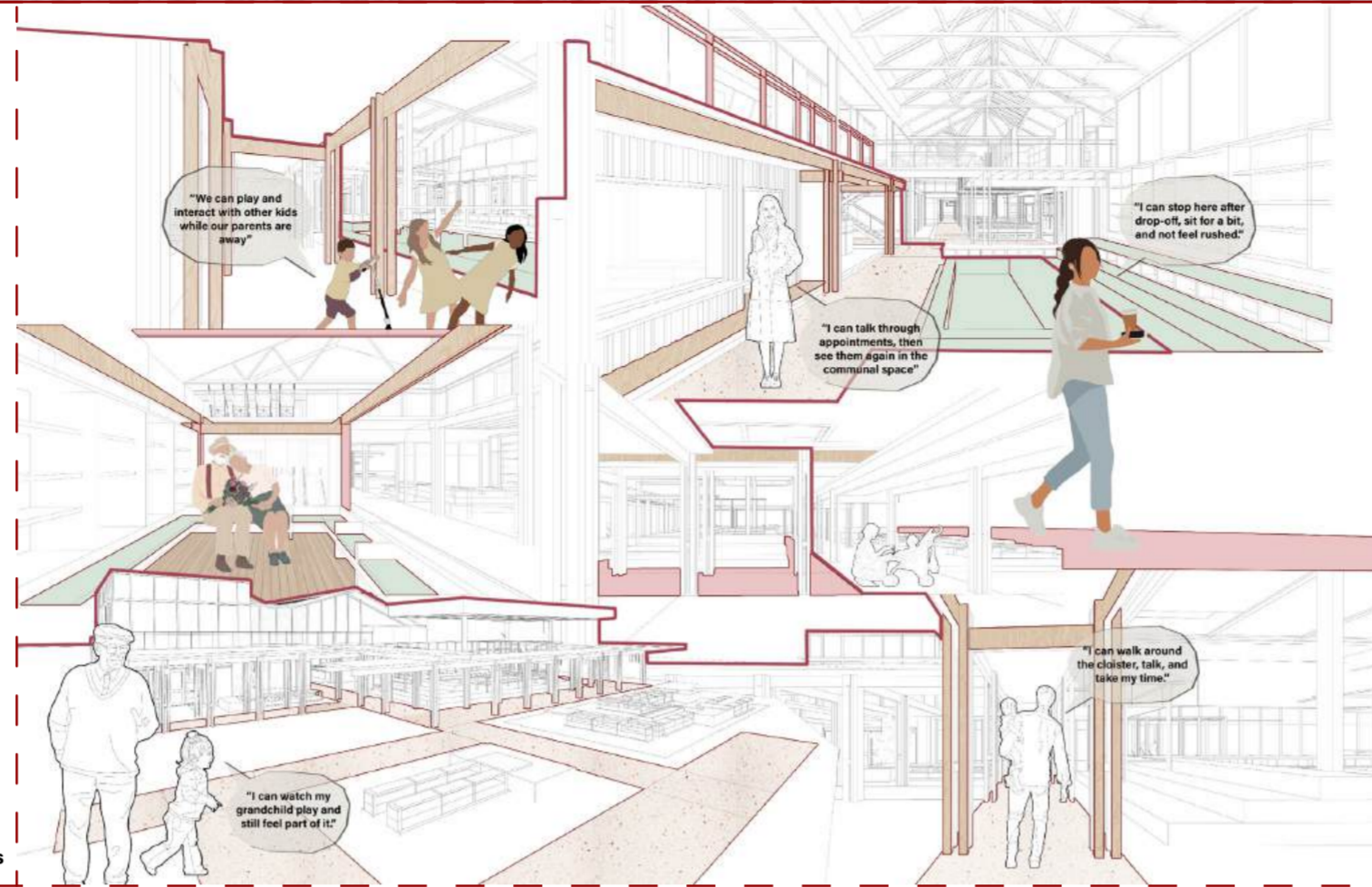
*Interviewee photographs have been omitted to respect privacy preferences

JO KILLINGLEY MADDICK
University Midwifery Programme Leader

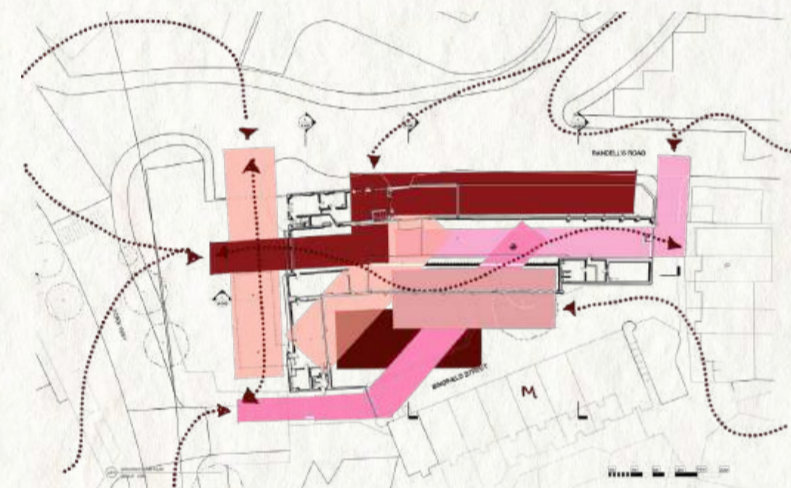
"Women need opportunities to access professional support while connecting with other parents and caregivers."

STORYBOARD

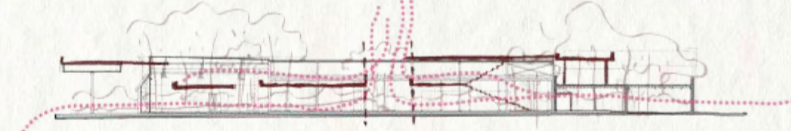
"Architecture is not just about space, but about the sequence of experiences." — Bernard Tschumi



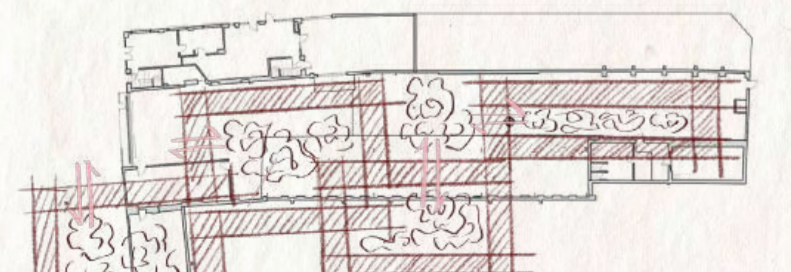
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



ITERATION 01: Responded to site movement through linear forms, improving circulation but becoming too corridor-driven, lacking spaces for pause and care.

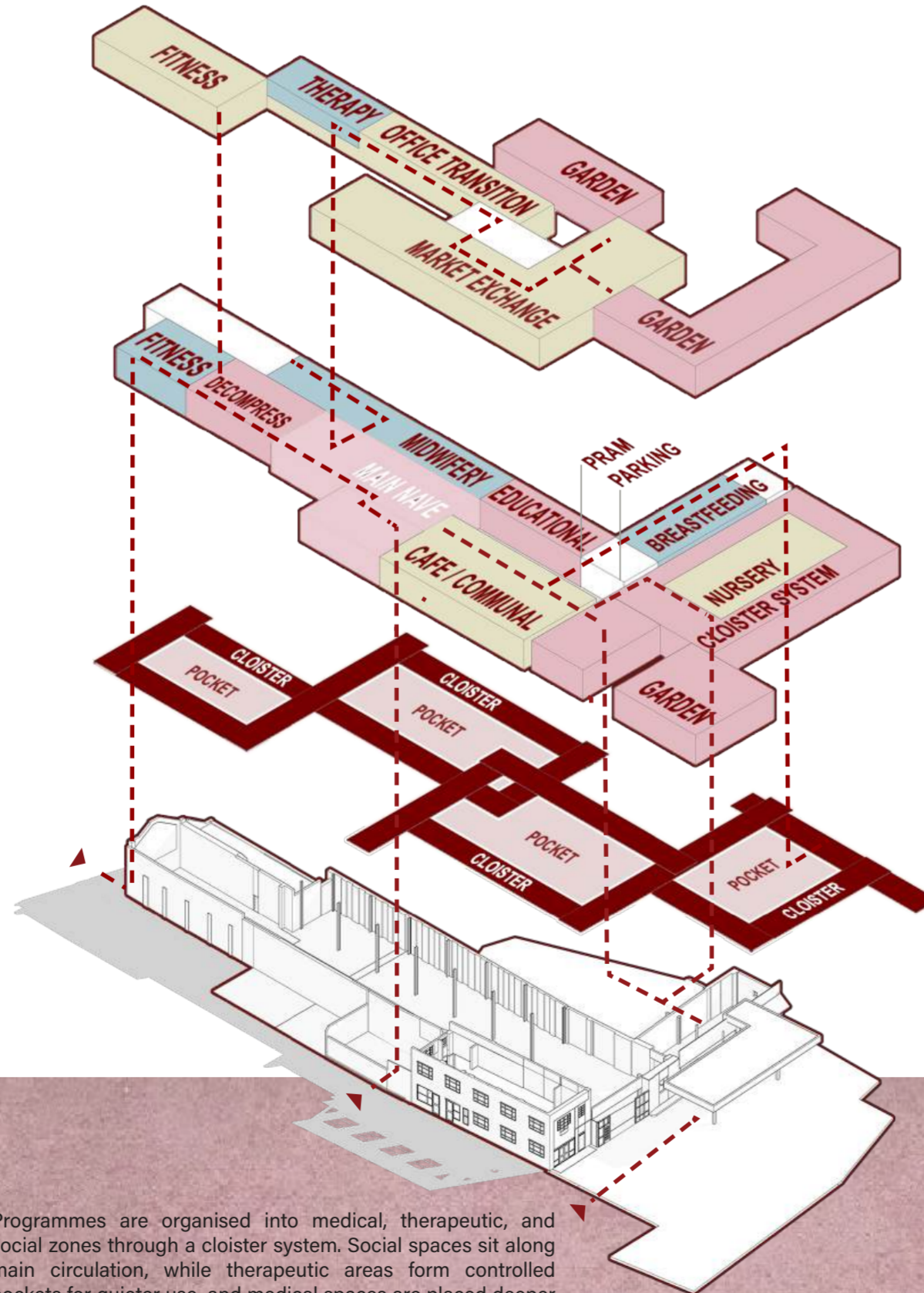


ITERATION 02: Shifts from linear insertion to distributed pockets of space, introducing smaller rooms and nodes of activity that create moments of pause within circulation.



ITERATION 03: Introduces a cloister framework that organises space around a central core, creating a clear gradient from public to private and supporting more controlled, layered care environments.

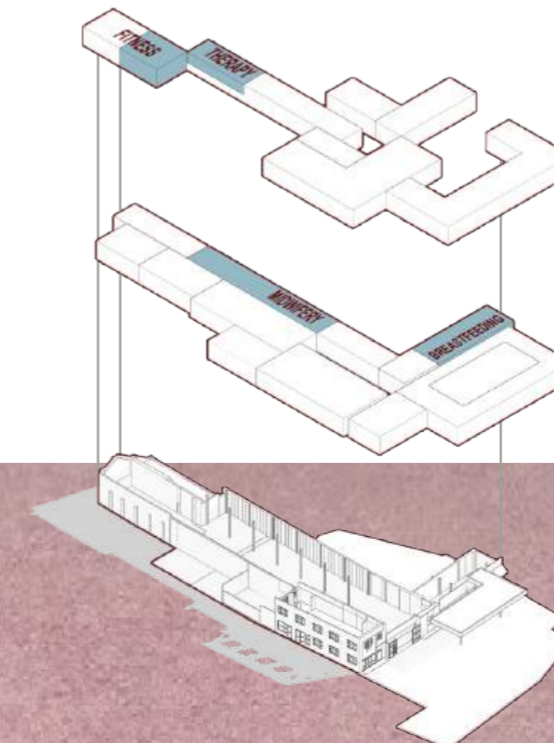
SEQUENTIAL & CIRCULATION DIAGRAM



Programmes are organised into medical, therapeutic, and social zones through a cloister system. Social spaces sit along main circulation, while therapeutic areas form controlled pockets for quieter use, and medical spaces are placed deeper for privacy. The cloister guides movement, creating a gradual shift from open to more enclosed spaces.

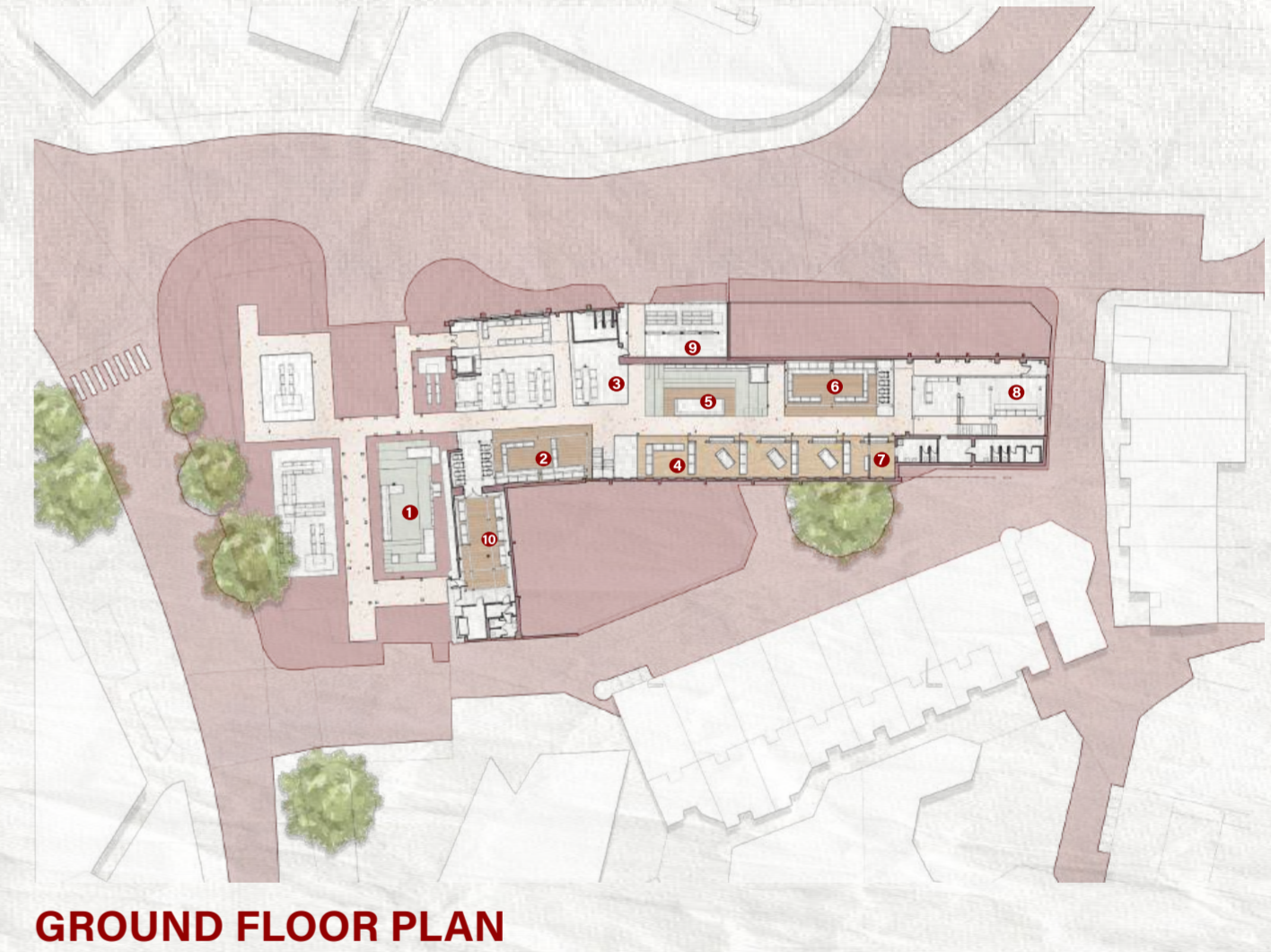
SPATIAL PROGRAMME

- 01 ISLINGTON PLAY ASSOCIATION
- 02 EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP
- 03 COMMUNAL CAFE
- 04 MIDWIFERY DEPARTMENT
- 05 INTERGENERATIVE AREA
- 06 POSTNATAL DECOMPRESSION
- 07 NHS PANTRY ZONE
- 08 PHYSIOTHERAPY ROOM
- 09 HEALING GARDEN
- 10 BREASTFEEDING ROOM
- 11 MARKET EXCHANGE
- 12 SEMI-OUTDOOR SEATING
- 13 OFFICE TRANSITION ZONE
- 14 POSTPARTUM THERAPY ROOM
- 15 FITNESS ROOM

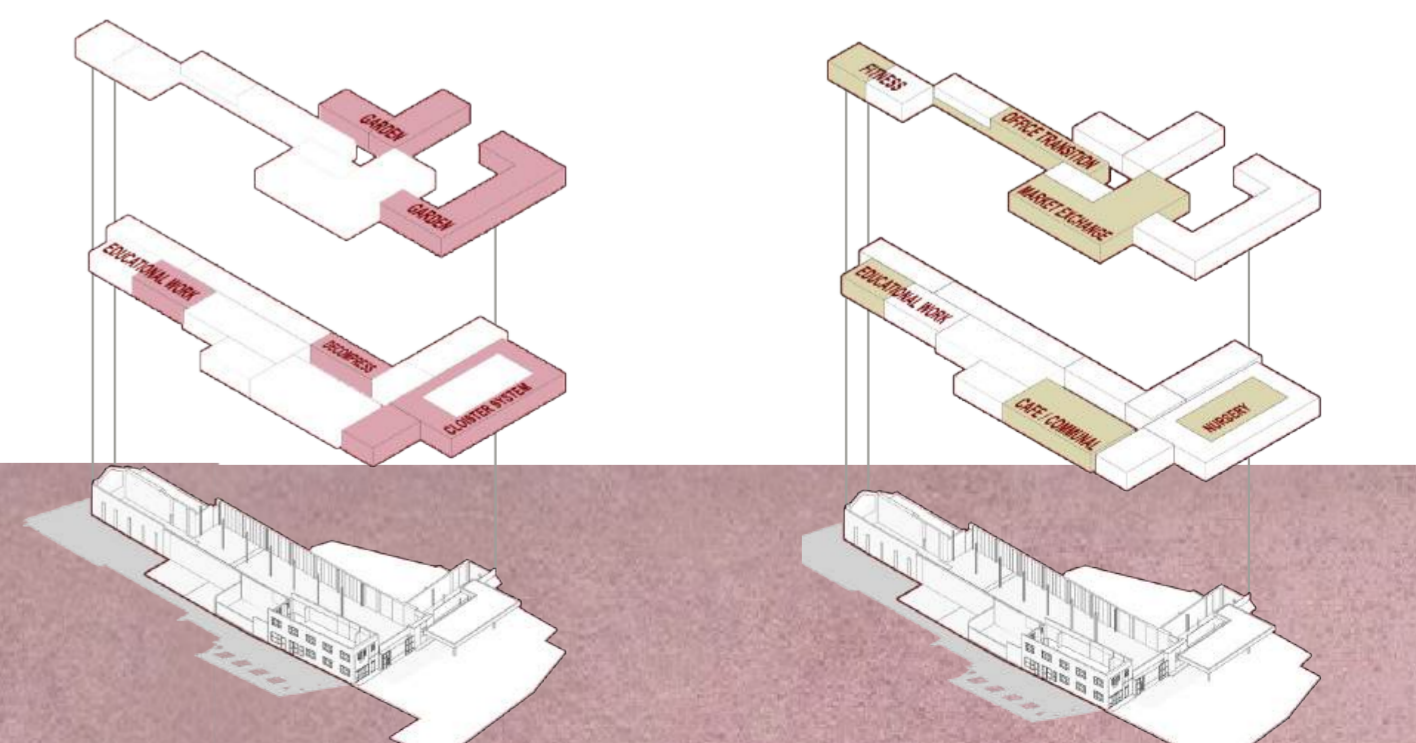


MEDICAL

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

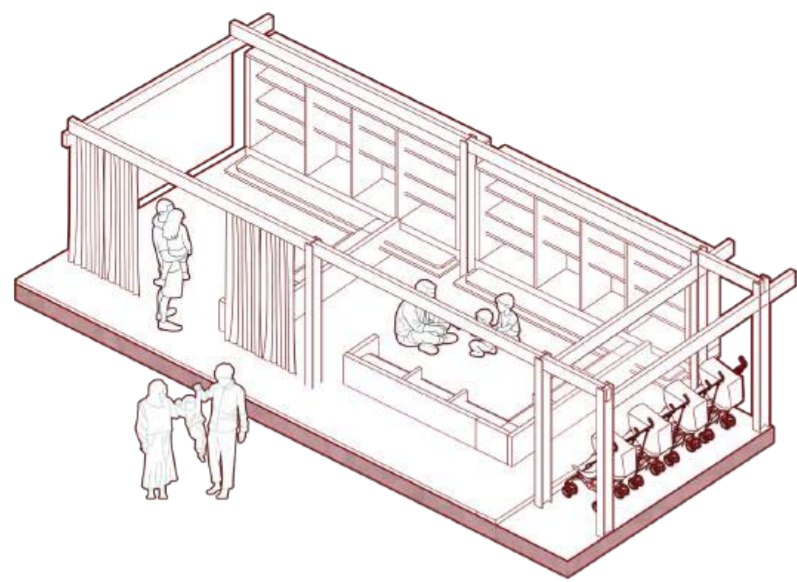


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



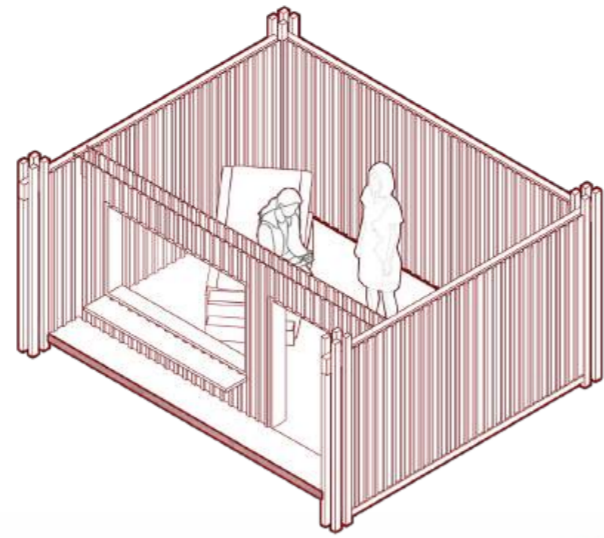
THERAPEUTIC

SOCIAL



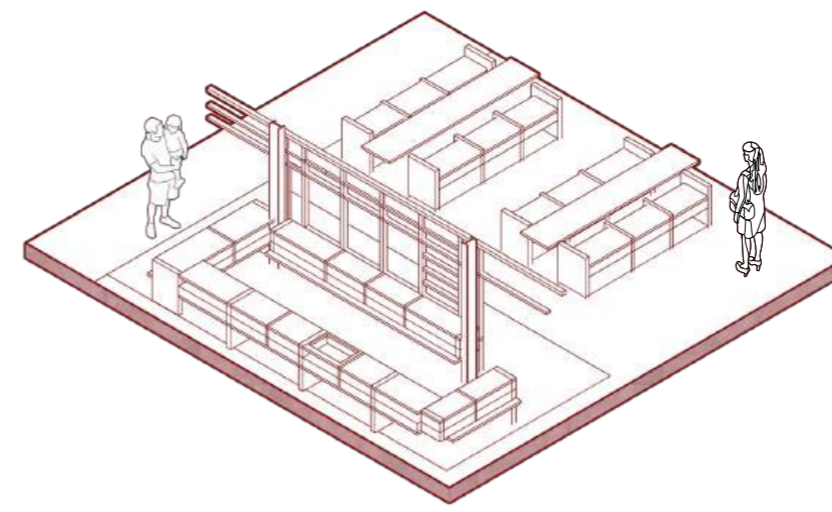
2 EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP

ROLE:
Provides a setting for midwifery-led sessions where parents can learn about postnatal health, infant care, and wellbeing, while also encouraging peer-to-peer exchange.



3 MIDWIFERY DEPARTMENT

ROLE:
Delivers professional midwifery support, including health checks, guidance, and one-to-one consultations, forming the core of clinical care within the hub.
PARTNER:
NHS Midwifery Department

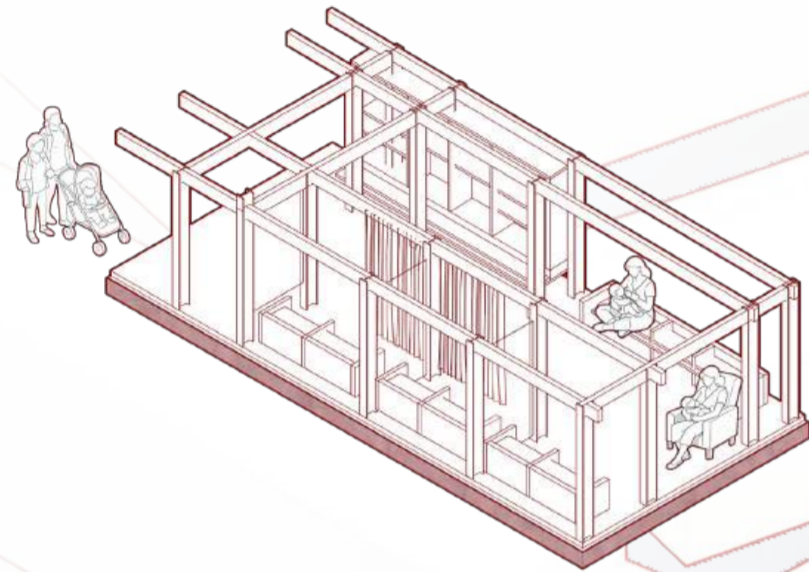


4 COMMUNAL CAFE

ROLE:
Acts as both a place for rest and social interaction, and a setting for nutrition-based workshops and discussions, supporting parents through everyday routines and shared learning.

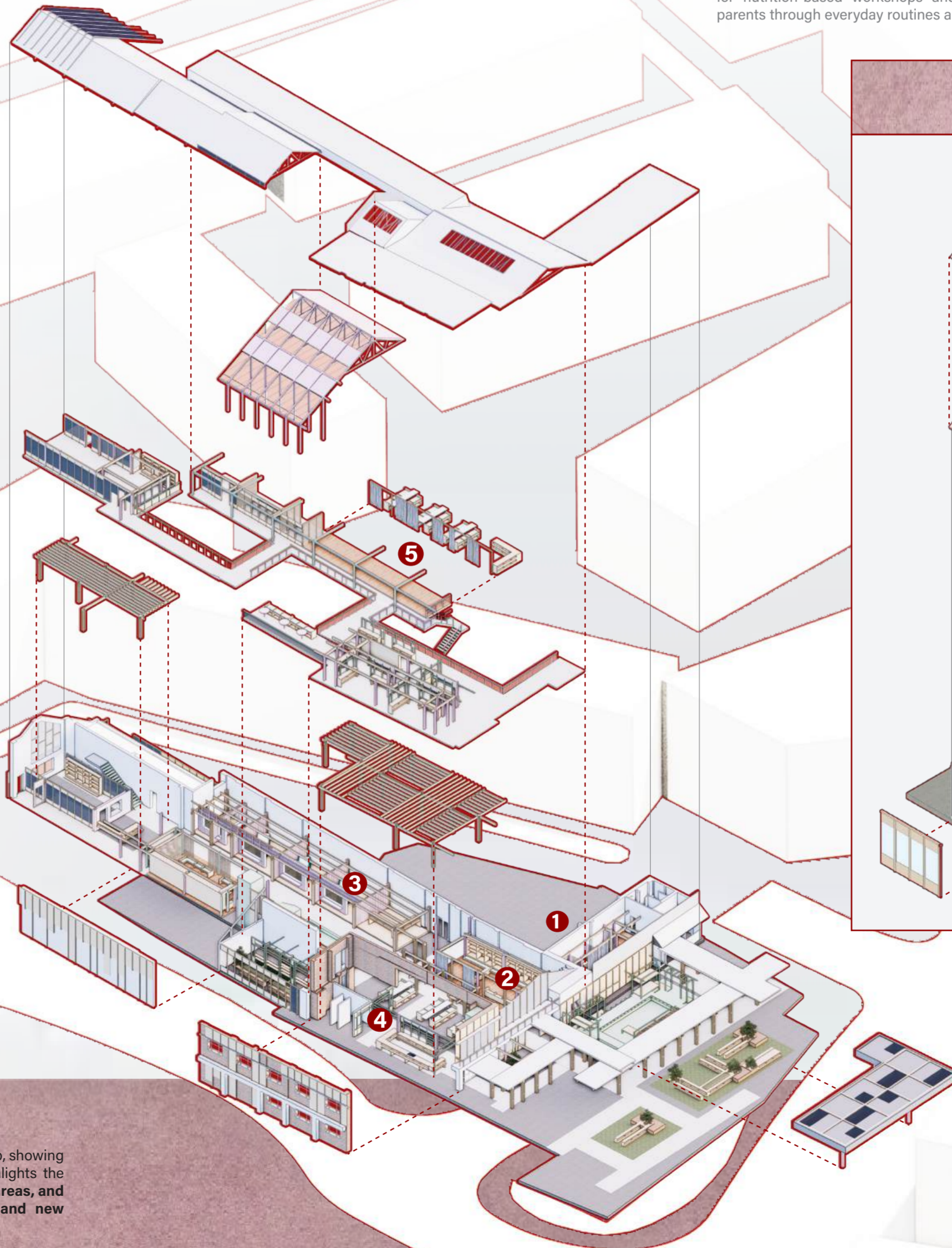
5 OFFICE TRANSITION AREA

ROLE:
Supports parents, particularly postnatal mothers, in returning to work by providing a space to pause, adjust, or work informally, easing the shift between caregiving and professional life.



1 BREASTFEEDING ROOM

ROLE:
Offers a dedicated environment for mothers to feed, rest, and receive support, balancing privacy with proximity to wider communal spaces.
PARTNER:
Islington Breastfeeding Support

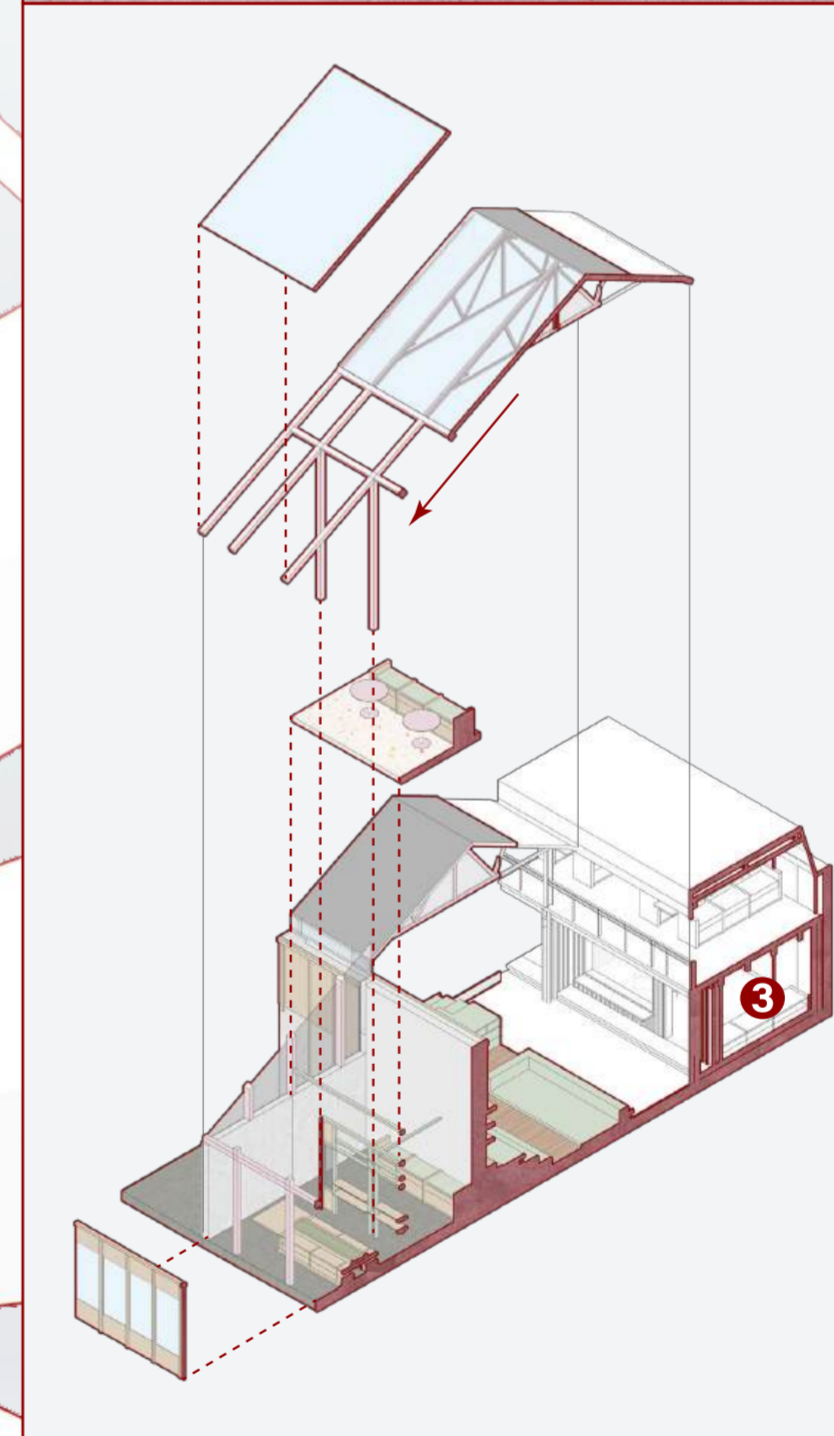


DEMOLITION DIAGRAM

AXONOMETRIC DIAGRAM

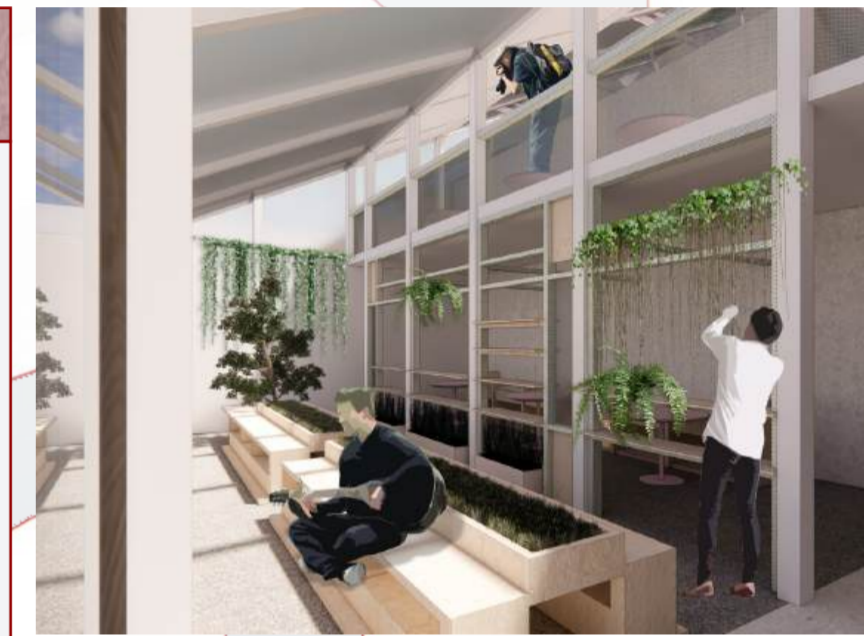
The axonometric illustrates the overall organisation of the Care Exchange Hub, showing how the cloister structure wraps around a central communal core. It highlights the relationship between key programmes, including midwifery spaces, social areas, and shared environments, as well as the connection between existing and new interventions such as the greenhouse extension.

DETAIL DEVICE



This detail device explores the extension of the existing roof structure to form a lightweight greenhouse, creating a sheltered environment for growing medicinal herbs. The intervention builds directly from the existing framework, using a metal extension and translucent polycarbonate to introduce light, warmth, and enclosure.

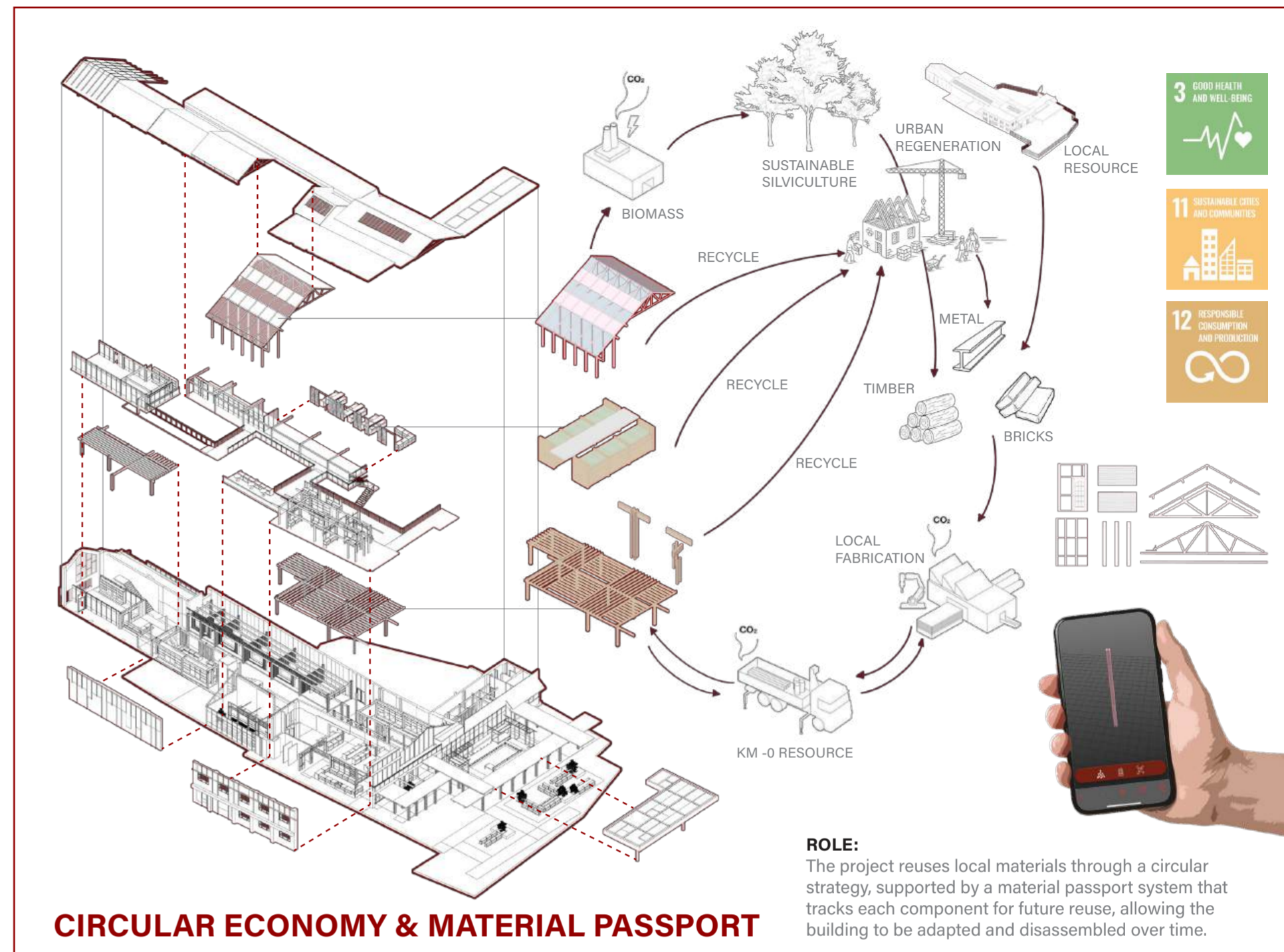
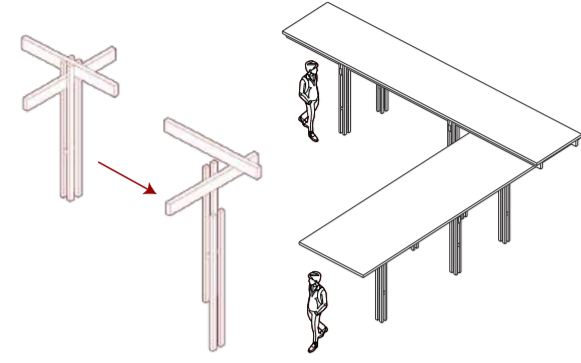
ROLE:
The greenhouse supports a shared space for rest and interaction, while also enabling the cultivation of herbs associated with postnatal care. It brings together environmental conditions and community use, allowing the space to function as both a place of healing and everyday gathering.



1:50 SCALE MODEL

STRUCTURE & SKIN | CLOISTER SYSTEM

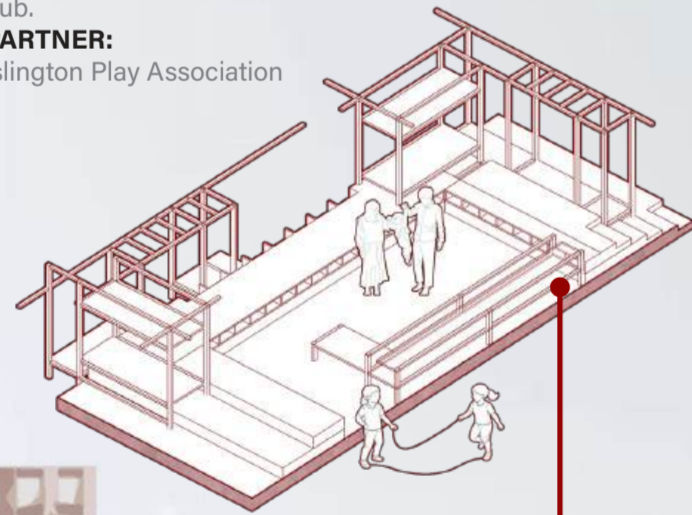
Description:
A continuous circulation route wrapping around a central communal space, connecting different programmes while framing movement and interaction.



OUTDOOR NURSERY

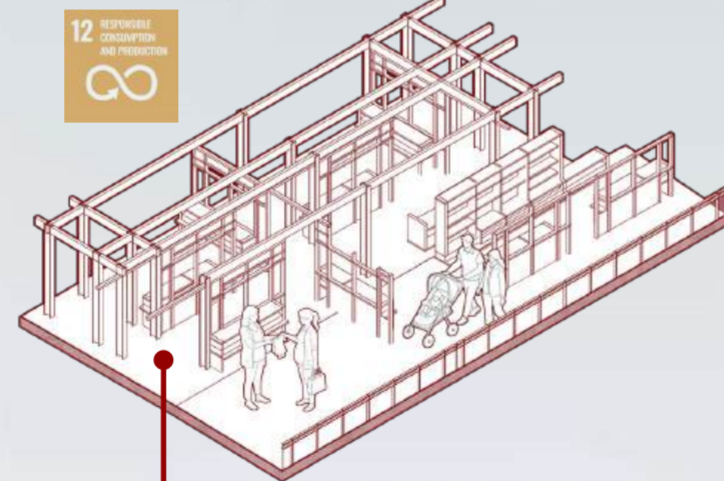
ROLE:
Supports children's development through play, exploration, and sensory engagement, while allowing caregivers to remain nearby and connected to other spaces within the hub.

PARTNER:
Islington Play Association



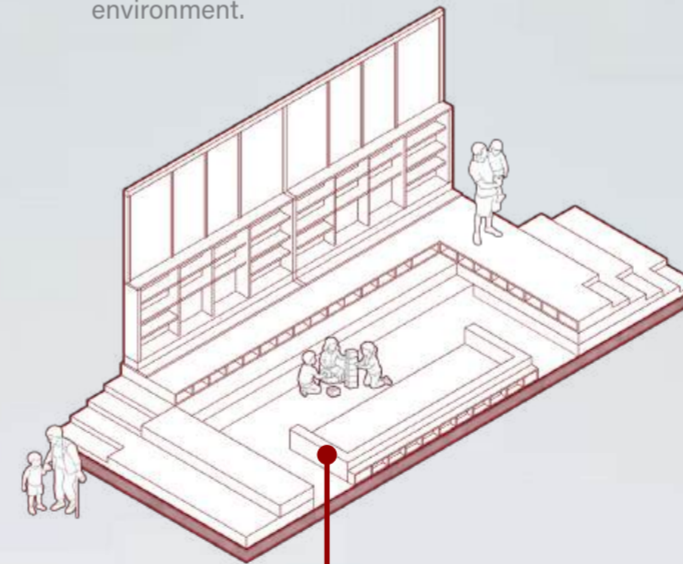
MARKET EXCHANGE

ROLE:
Encourages the reuse and circulation of baby clothes and maternal wear, allowing parents to share resources as children grow. The space supports everyday exchange, reducing waste while creating opportunities for conversation, support, and connection between families.



INTERGENERATIONAL AREA

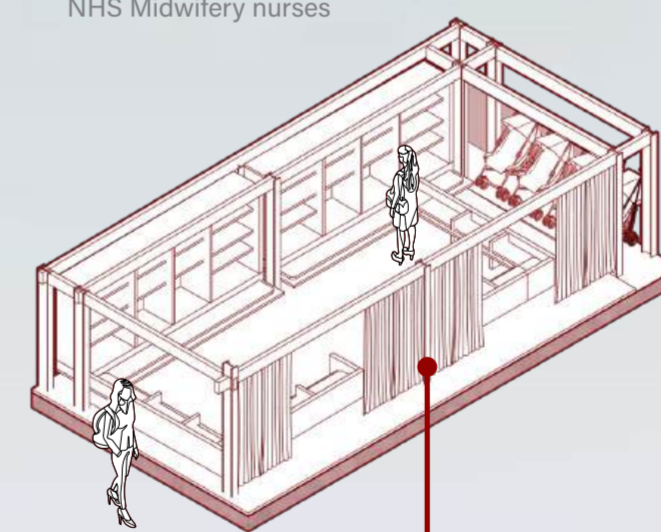
ROLE:
Brings together children, parents, and caregivers, encouraging intergenerational connection through conversation, play, and shared activities within a relaxed environment.



DECOMPRESSION ZONE

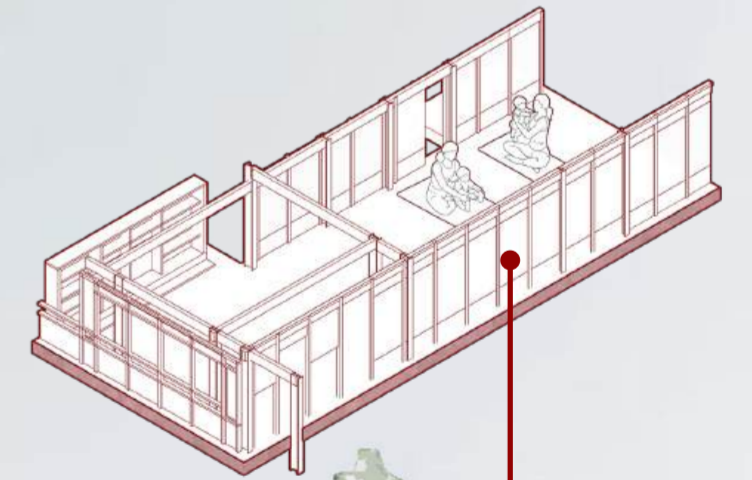
ROLE:
Provides mothers with a place to pause, regulate, and recover both physically and emotionally, supporting moments of solitude within a wider network of care.

PARTNER:
NHS Midwifery nurses

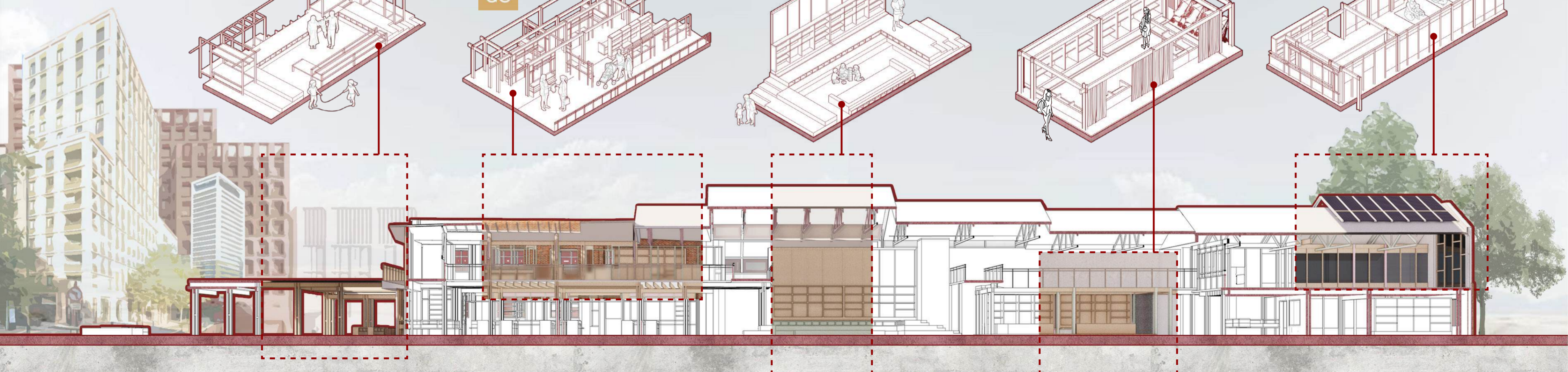


FITNESS / PHYSIOTHERAPY

ROLE:
Provides a setting for physiotherapy sessions, guided exercise, and activities such as baby yoga, helping mothers rebuild strength and confidence after birth.



LONG SECTION





COMMUNAL CAFE

A social space for postnatal recovery, offering rest, nourishment, and opportunities for connection to reduce isolation and support everyday routines



PHYSIOTHERAPY / FITNESS

A supportive space for postnatal recovery by combining physio, guided exercise, and baby yoga to help mothers rebuild strength and confidence.

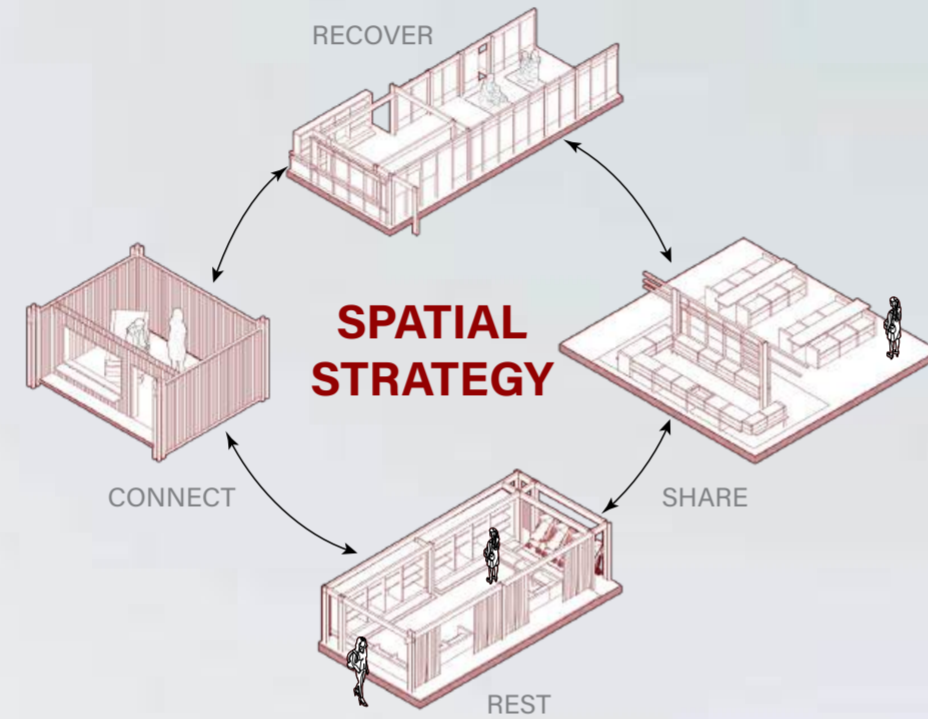


NHS MIDWIFERY DEPARTMENT & INTERGENERATIONAL AREA

A shared space integrating midwifery care with intergenerational activity, supporting pre- and postnatal guidance while fostering connection, knowledge exchange, and collective care



PRIVATE MOMENTS



MATERIAL STRATEGY



MARKET EXCHANGE

A community-focused space for sharing skills, resources, and experiences, fostering networks of mutual support and local engagement



MARKET EXCHANGE

CLOISTER

HERO SECTION

COMMUNAL CAFE

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP



DECOMPRESSION ZONE

A calm, low-stimulation environment for postnatal recovery, allowing rest, privacy, and emotional reset away from busier communal areas