

# LONELINESS IN RESONANCE

## THE SPACE THAT LISTENS

### LONELINESS IN RESONANCE: THE SPACE THAT LISTENS

proposes a new People's Museum woven within and around St Mary's Church.

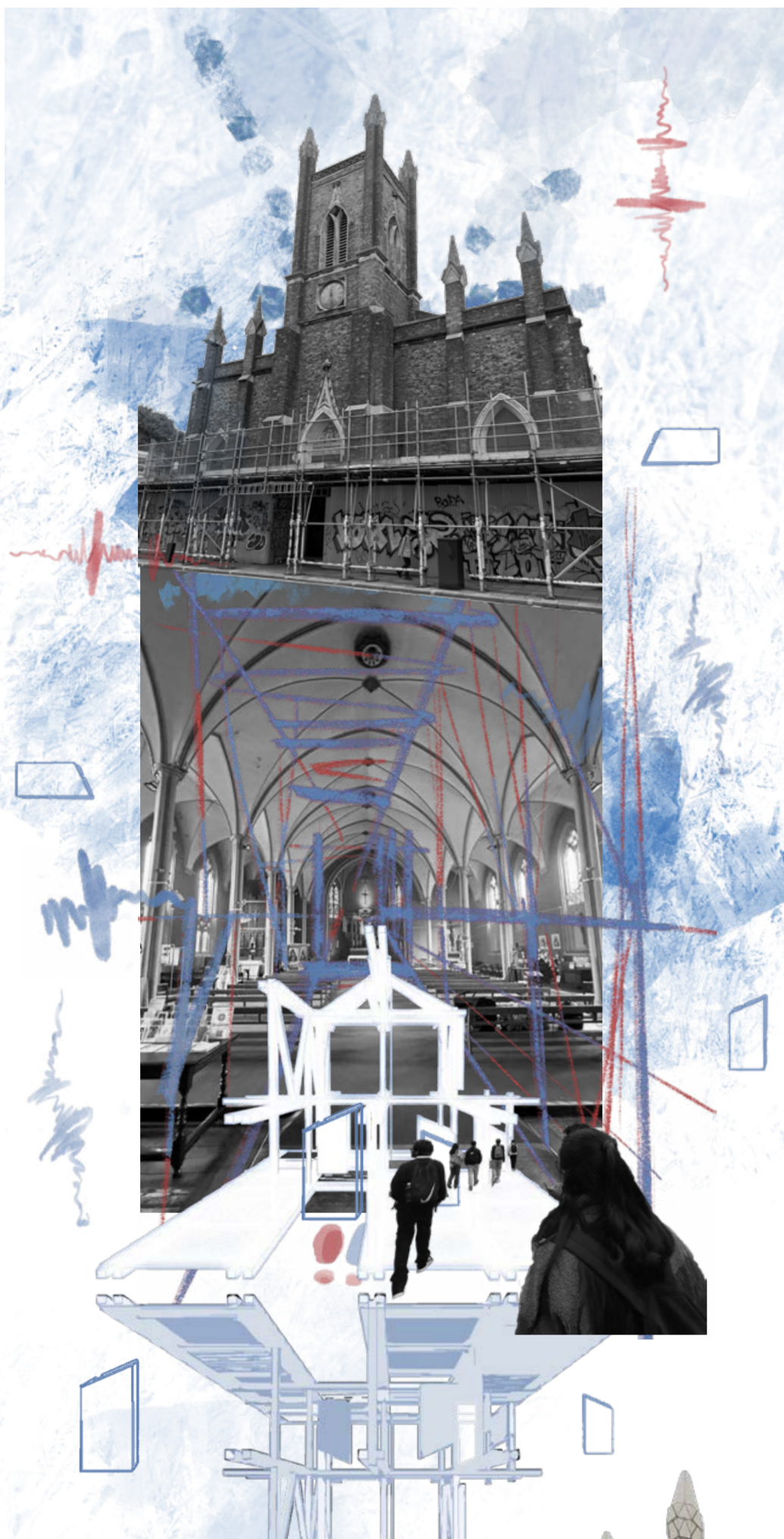
Developed through spatial mapping, experiential sequencing and material experimentation, the project reimagines the church as a multisensory landscape where loneliness: distance, quietness and longing can gradually shift toward resonance through sound, light and shared traces.

An adaptive fabric system, developed through iterative material testing, uses stretched and loosened partitions within a lightweight timber framework to tune the interior between brightness and stillness. These layers create spaces where voices, memories and traces can be recorded, discovered and shared.

Visitors move through a spatial journey from *Alone* → *In-Between* → *Together* → *Return*, encountering the traces of others and forming gentle connections without the pressure of interaction.

This hybrid museum-church environment supports both the needs of St Mary's congregation and the collective memory work of the People's Museum. It becomes a place where loneliness is acknowledged, silence is given space, and fragments of life can meet again in resonance.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### RESONANCE MANIFESTO

These manifesto fragments establish the spatial principles and experimental intentions that guide the project. They act as anchors for an iterative architectural language developed through mapping, testing and material exploration.



### USER FRAMEWORK

#### The Lost

Individuals who arrive with loneliness, displacement, grief, or quiet introspection. They seek stillness, presence and space for expression.

Elderly locals, widowed residents, migrants, international students, people navigating change or homesickness.



#### The Finders

Those who listen, wander and discover traces left by others. They seek resonance through encounters, stories and sensory experiences.

Young parents, reflective visitors, church members, passersby drawn into the space.



#### The Keepers

Individuals or groups who sustain the living archive through care, organisation and facilitation. They help maintain continuity.

Volunteers, community helpers, People's Museum collaborators, church assistants.



### MAPPING LONELINESS THROUGH SPATIAL ANALYSIS

#### Site Context

St Mary's Church occupies a corner plot along Eversholt Street, surrounded by 3-6 storey residential blocks, shops, and community facilities. Its Gothic Revival form, influenced by Greek classical precedents, rises as a quiet landmark within a dense urban fabric. Although still active as a parish church, it sits on the Heritage at Risk Register, with visible roof damage, dampness, and decaying stonework.

The surrounding environment is shaped by traffic noise, railway vibrations, limited green space and intermittent sun exposure. Yet the church remains a stabilising social presence, hosting Mass, outreach programmes, winter shelters and community gatherings.

#### Mapping Loneliness

In Somers Town, loneliness is both emotional and spatial. The church sits between noise-heavy edges, quiet residential pockets, and transient pedestrian flows: conditions that mirror the distance, fragmentation, and gentle forms of togetherness experienced by its users. The mapping reveals zones of compression and release, sheltered corners and exposed thresholds, and paths where people pass without meeting. **These observations informed the experiential sequence of the proposal:** spaces of stillness positioned along quieter edges, transitional corridors aligned with existing desire lines, and communal resonance placed at the centre. **The site itself becomes a map of how the Lost, the Finders, and the Keepers move through and inhabit loneliness.**



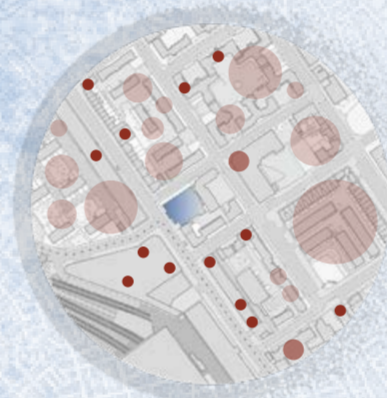
The site's fragmented pathways become the foundation for the spatial journey: *Alone* → *In-Between* → *Together* → *Return*.

Moments of stillness and noise traced across the site reveal how solitude forms spatially.

### SITE CONDITIONS AS DESIGN DRIVERS

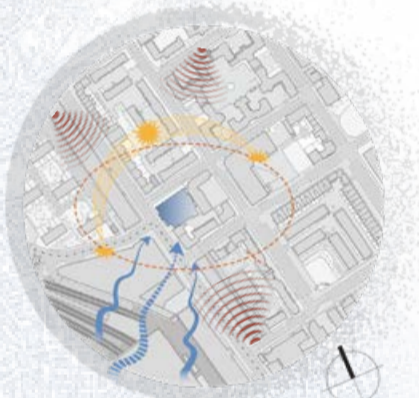
#### BUILDING USES

- Residential
- Education
- Services, Commercial, Food



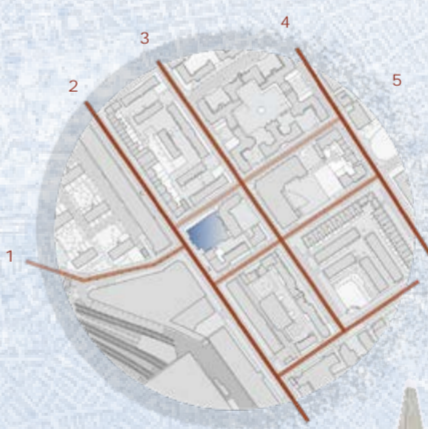
#### ENVIRONMENTAL LAYERS

- Sunpath
- Wind Direction
- Road Noise

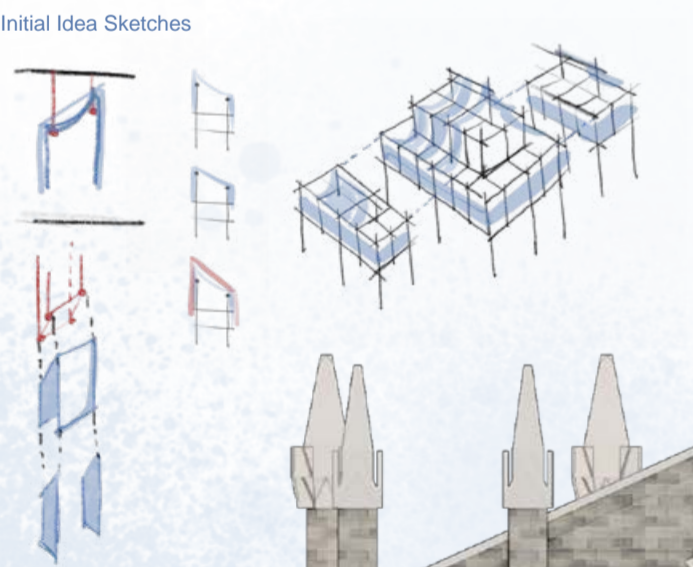
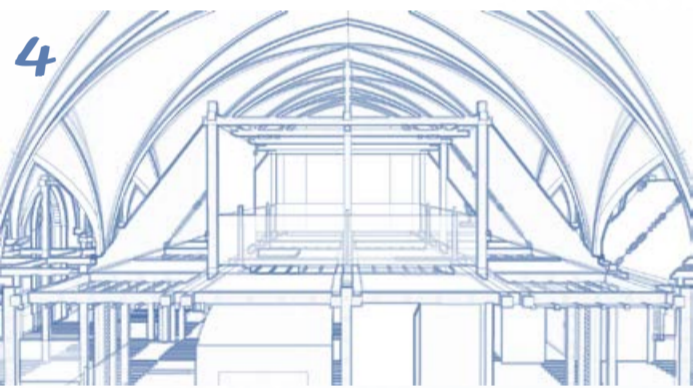
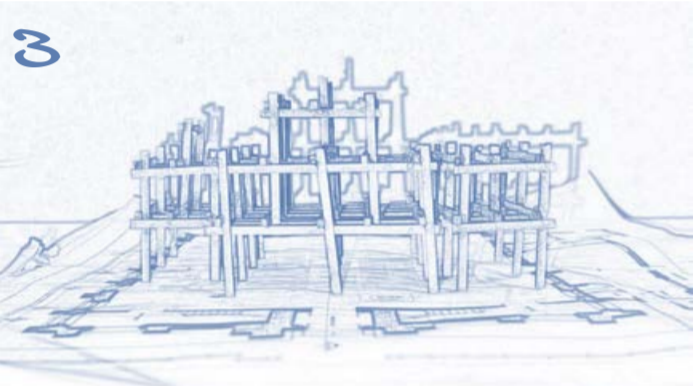
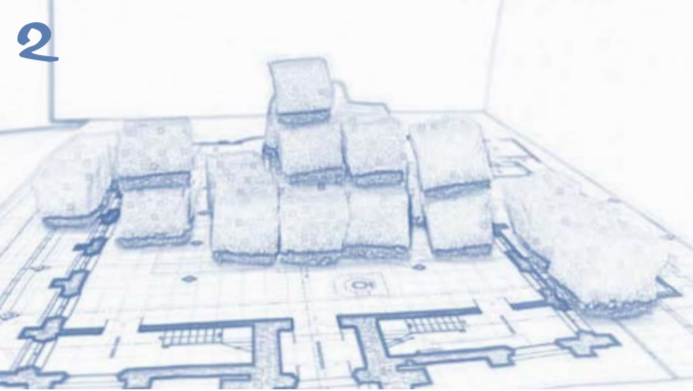


#### CONNECTION

- Barnby Street
- Eversholt Street
- Werrington Street
- Chalton Street
- Aldenhurst Street
- Polygon Road
- Phoenix Road



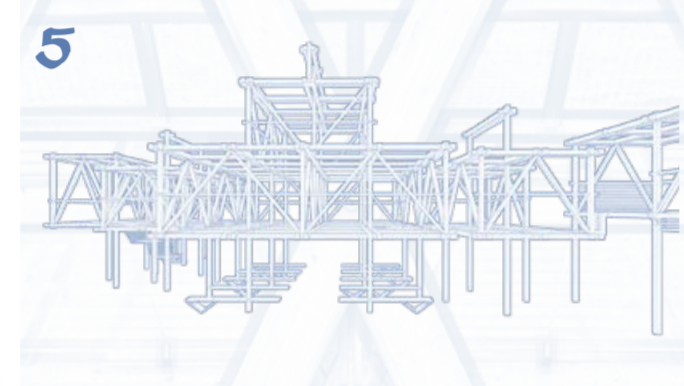
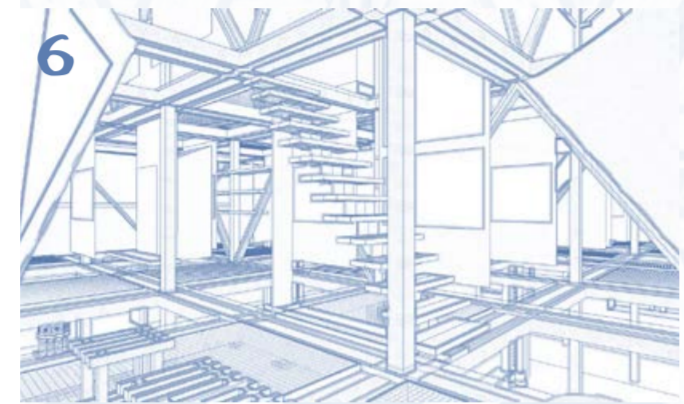
## ITERATIVE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



The project developed through an iterative process of spatial testing, model making and digital exploration.

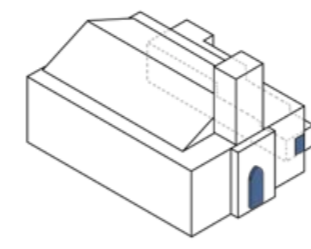
1. Initial grid studies examined how the emotional sequence could be embedded within the existing nave, identifying alignments, thresholds and moments of compression. 2. Foam maquettes then tested volume and spatial rhythm, while 3. timber models explored structural possibilities. 4. Digital studies revealed issues of visual weight and enclosure, prompting further refinement. 5. Through successive iterations, the framework evolved into 6. a lighter truss system that supports adaptable fabric environments while maintaining openness within the church.

A process of mapping, prototyping and testing informed each stage of development.

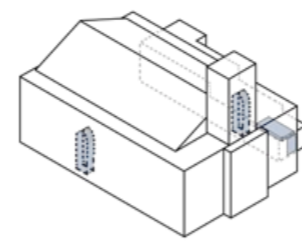


The structural framework evolved through iterative testing of scale, weight and visibility. A sequence of timber trusses stabilises the intervention while reducing the need for ground supports. The resulting framework supports adjustable fabric panels and detachable shelving, enabling the space to shift between exhibition, reflection and communal use.

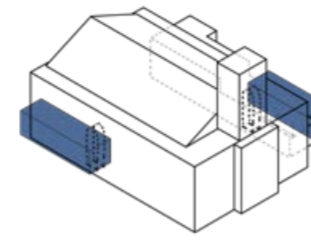
## SEQUENCE DIAGRAM



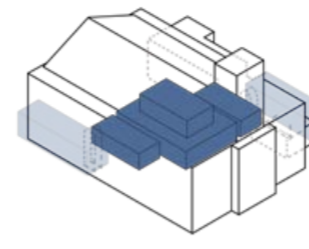
1. EXISTING



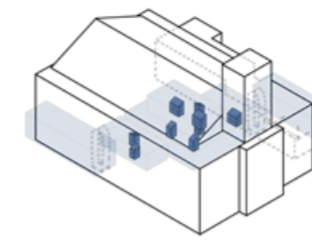
2. DEMOLITION



3. NEW ENTRANCE

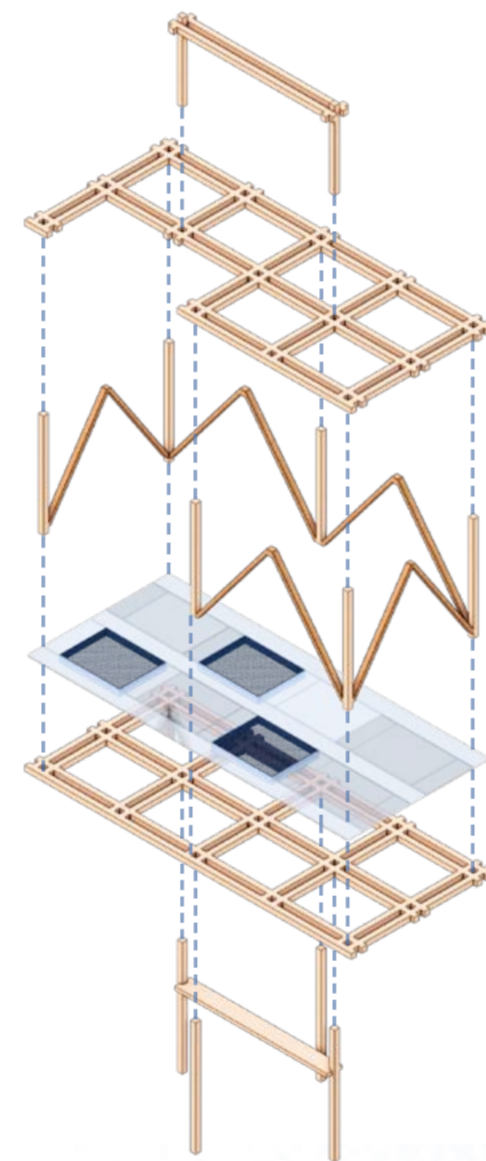


4. CONNECTION WITHIN BUILDING



5. ALONE SPACES

## STRUCTURAL SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT



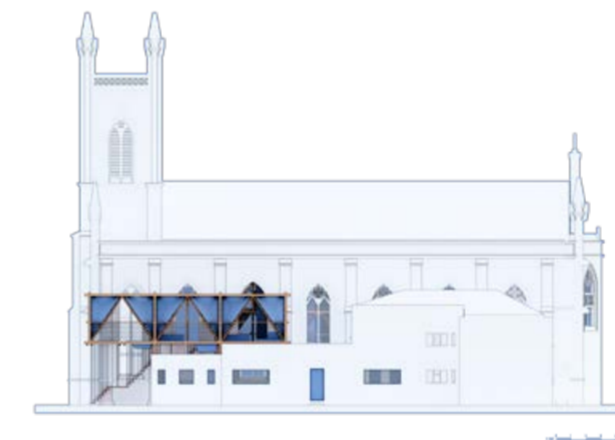
Circulation and Movement Strategy

Design iterations informed how movement is choreographed throughout the church. Two new entrances establish a clear route through the timber framework, guiding visitors through the sequence of *Alone*, *In Between*, *Together* and *Return*. Each transition was tested to reinforce the project's experiential narrative from arrival to departure.

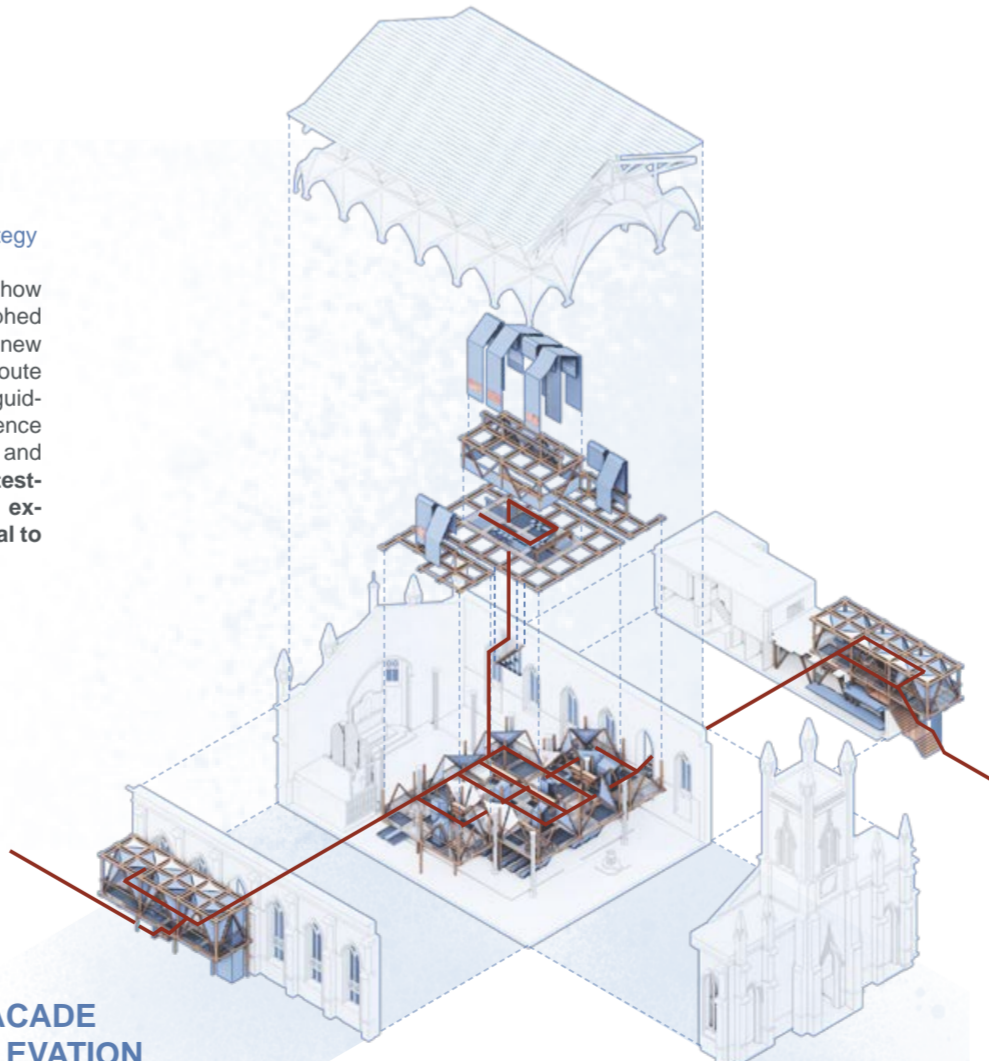
## NEW ENTRANCE



## NEW EXIT



## EXPERIENTIAL MOVEMENT STRATEGY



FACADE ELEVATION

## Spatial Typologies and Fabric Behaviour

The spatial categories of *Alone*, *In Between* and *Together* emerged through material testing of fabric behaviour. Variations in tension influence acoustics, visibility and enclosure, informing how each space balances privacy, openness and atmosphere.



i.



ii.

1:1 Material Prototypes

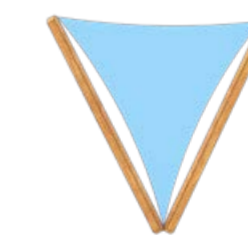
These 1:1 prototypes investigate fabric as structure, atmosphere and communication, demonstrating how material behaviour informed the spatial framework.

Prototype A: Triangular Fabric Module

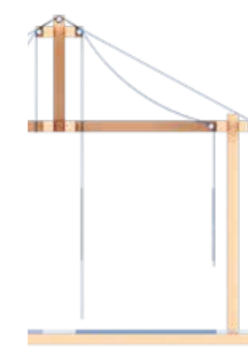
A triangular fabric prototype stretches across a V shaped timber truss, translating the construction logic of the proposal into a physical model. Sublimation printed drawings transform the fabric into a communicative surface, demonstrating how material tension influences acoustics, visibility and spatial atmosphere.



iii.



iv.



v.

Fabric Hook Diagrams (i. stretched and ii. unstretched)

Diagram i shows how tensioned fabric anchors onto a hook to create a taut surface that supports resonance and clarity. Diagram ii shows how a relaxed hook position allows the fabric to fall more softly, creating absorptive conditions that support stillness and introspection.

## Material Behaviour across Spatial Types

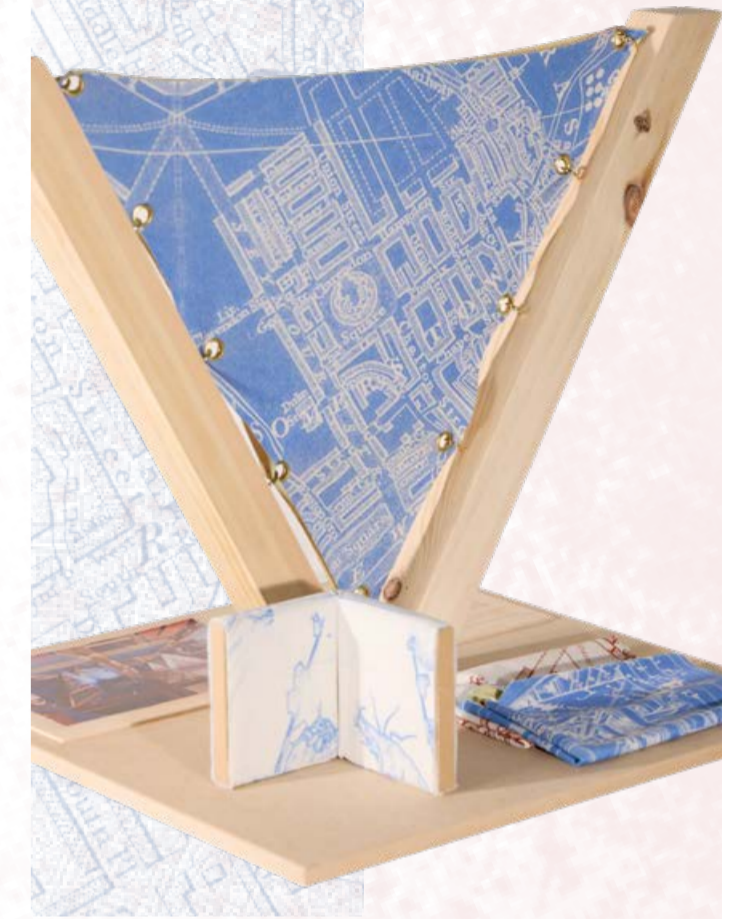
i. *Alone* space uses fabric stretched across a metal frame with a roller, creating clarity and controlled reflection. ii. *Alone* space also uses relaxed fabric across the same frame, introducing privacy and acoustic absorption. iii. *In Between* spaces use stretched fabric along the timber truss to guide movement and maintain lightness. iv. *In Between* spaces also use relaxed fabric to create subtle ambiguity and shifts in atmosphere. v. *Together* space uses stretched and loosened fabric to tune the atmosphere, shifting between resonance and intimacy so the room can adapt to different communal activities.



## FABRIC AS AN ADAPTIVE SPATIAL SYSTEM

Fabric became the project's primary design instrument through an iterative process of prototyping and material testing.

Variations in tension influence acoustics, light and enclosure, allowing the material to operate across structural, atmospheric and communicative scales. Rather than acting as a surface finish, fabric functions as an adaptive system that shapes how the space is experienced, occupied and remembered.



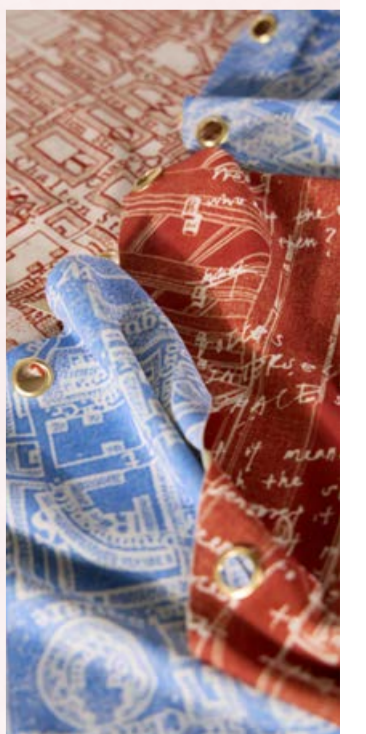
Side Piece: Structural Fabric Prototype

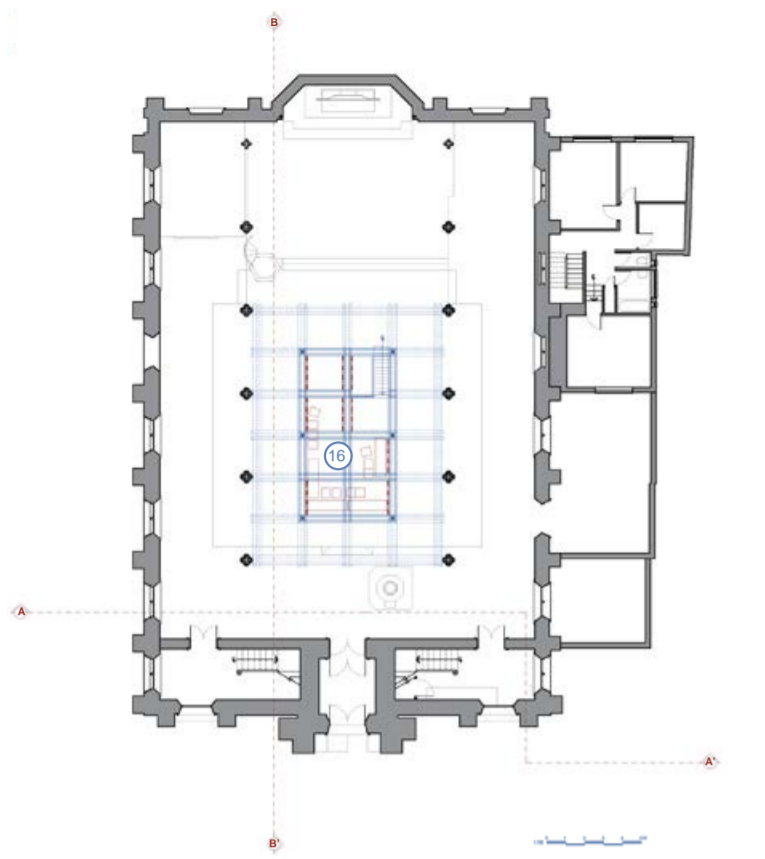
This prototype investigates how felt fabric can operate as a quasi structural element. Wrapped around an MDF spine, the material gains stability while maintaining softness, demonstrating its potential to shape privacy, acoustics and spatial definition.

Together, these samples show how fabric operates across structural, acoustic and narrative scales, becoming an instrument through which loneliness finds resonance.

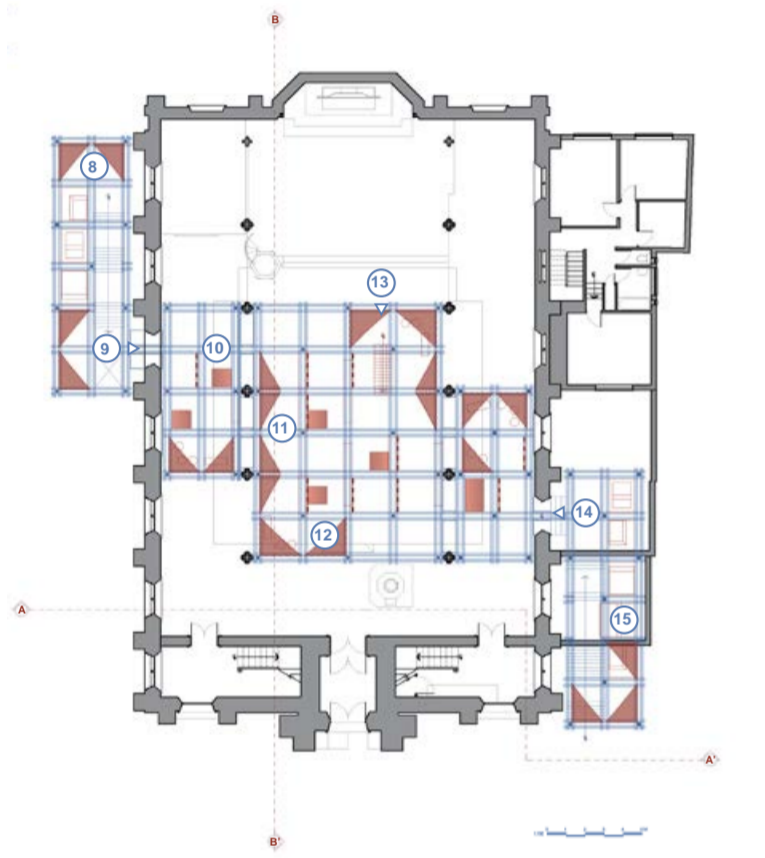
Fabric as a Communicative Surface

Fabric operates as a communicative surface through print, projection and personal inscription. Information, stories and memories can be embedded within the material, enabling subtle exchanges between visitors.

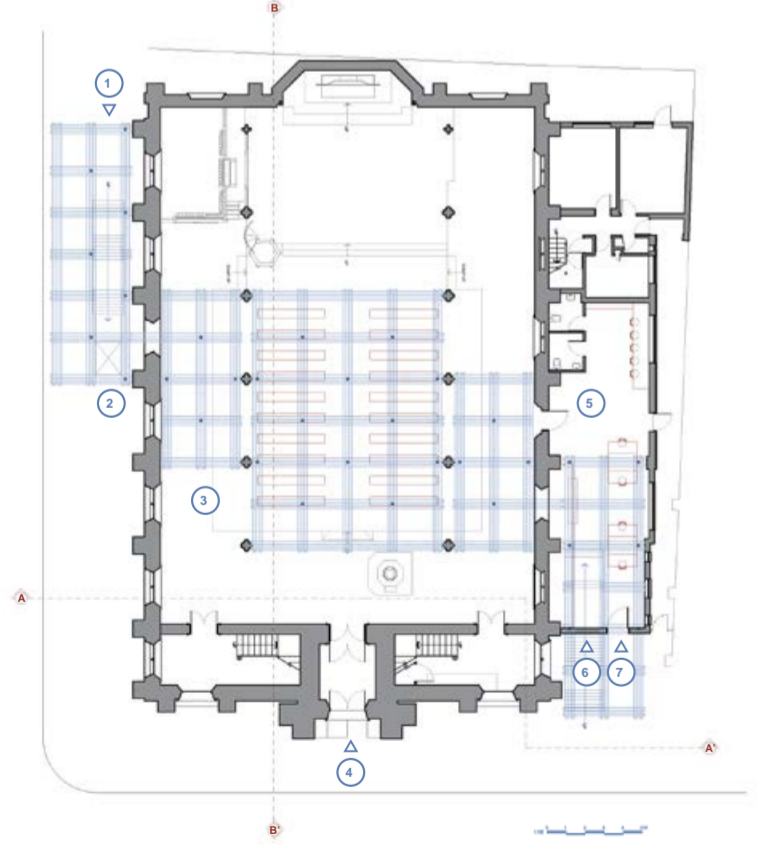




SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

LEGEND

1. New Entrance's Staircase	6. Alone / Return space
2. Lift	9. New Entrance
3. Existing Church Space	10. Alone space
4. Existing Main Entrance	11. In-Between Spaces
5. Together Workshop Space	12. In-Between Pocket Spaces
7. Together Workshop Space's Entrance	13. Staircase to 2nd Floor
	14. 2nd New Entrance
	15. Return / Alone space
	16. Together Exhibition, Event, Gathering Space

EXPERIENTIAL STORY BOARD

**1**

**ALONE SPACES**  
"Stillness"

**2a**

**IN BETWEEN SPACES**  
"Encounter"

**2b**

**IN BETWEEN POCKETS**  
"Exchange"

**3**

**TOGETHER SPACES**  
"Resonance"

**1**

**2a**

**2b**

**3**

**4**

**RETURN SPACES**  
"Release"

1. A quiet pod where fabric controls light and sound, holding a moment of inward attention.

2b. A semi open pocket where conversations form gently at the edges of the journey.

2a. A corridor shaped by layered fabric panels, revealing traces and guiding movement.

3. A suspended hall shaped by trusses and fabric, gathering people into shared resonance.

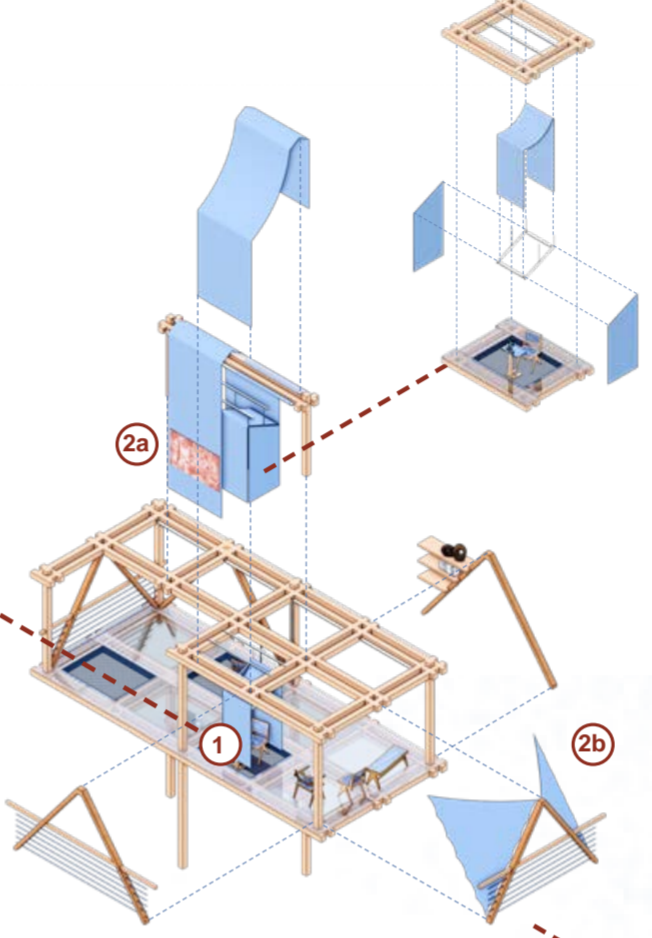
3. A workshop space framed by timber trusses and fabric panels, designed for stitching, textile exploration and gentle communal making.

4. A softened threshold where visitors pause before re-entering the city.

EXPERIENTIAL ZONING STRATEGY

The zoning of *The Space That Listens* is organised through the timber grid, which structures the emotional sequence across the church.

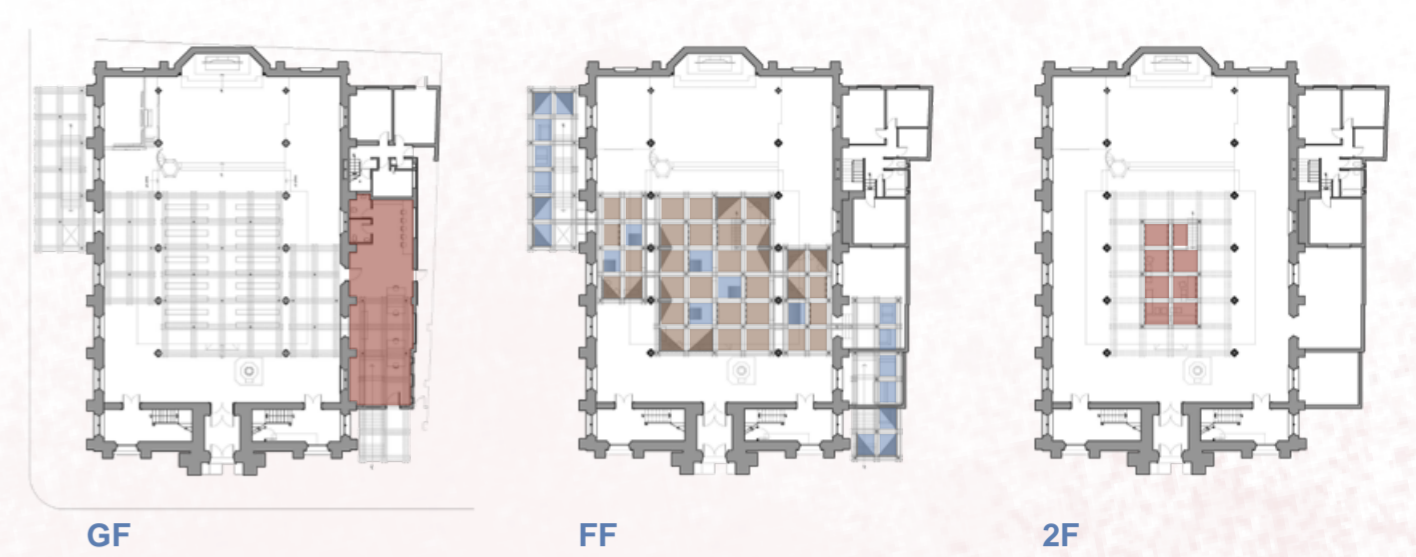
Each zone is positioned according to privacy, openness and connection to existing site conditions. The ground floor remains dedicated to the active parish church, while the first floor holds *Alone* and *In Between* spaces that open or close through the adjustable fabric system. The second floor becomes the *Together* space for exhibitions, events and small workshops. A workshop area in the Magdalen Centre supports larger making activities without disrupting the quietness of the church interior.



SPATIAL SEQUENCING

- 1. Alone → Stillness**  
Visitors begin in intimate fabric enclosed pods that support writing, recording, working or quiet pause. Soft acoustics and lowered light create a held atmosphere where solitude can settle safely.
- 2a. In Between → Encounter**  
Layered fabric corridors guide visitors through shifting sound and light. Projected videos, whispered recordings, handwritten notes and small objects introduce gentle encounters, allowing visitors to sense others without direct interaction.
- 2b. In Between Pockets → Exchange**  
Semi open pockets shaped by fabric invite shared noticing. They support small conversations, collective reflection and quiet exchange, softening the transition between solitude and resonance.
- 3. Together → Resonance**  
A flexible central hall gathers people for workshops, storytelling, exhibitions and communal activities. Suspended fabric tunes acoustics and light, creating a shared sense of presence where voices begin to overlap.
- 4. Return → Release**  
Along the church edges, lighter fabric canopies guide visitors into a slower rhythm. These thresholds allow them to pause before leaving, carrying the resonance of the experience back into Somers Town.

SPATIAL SYSTEM DIAGRAM

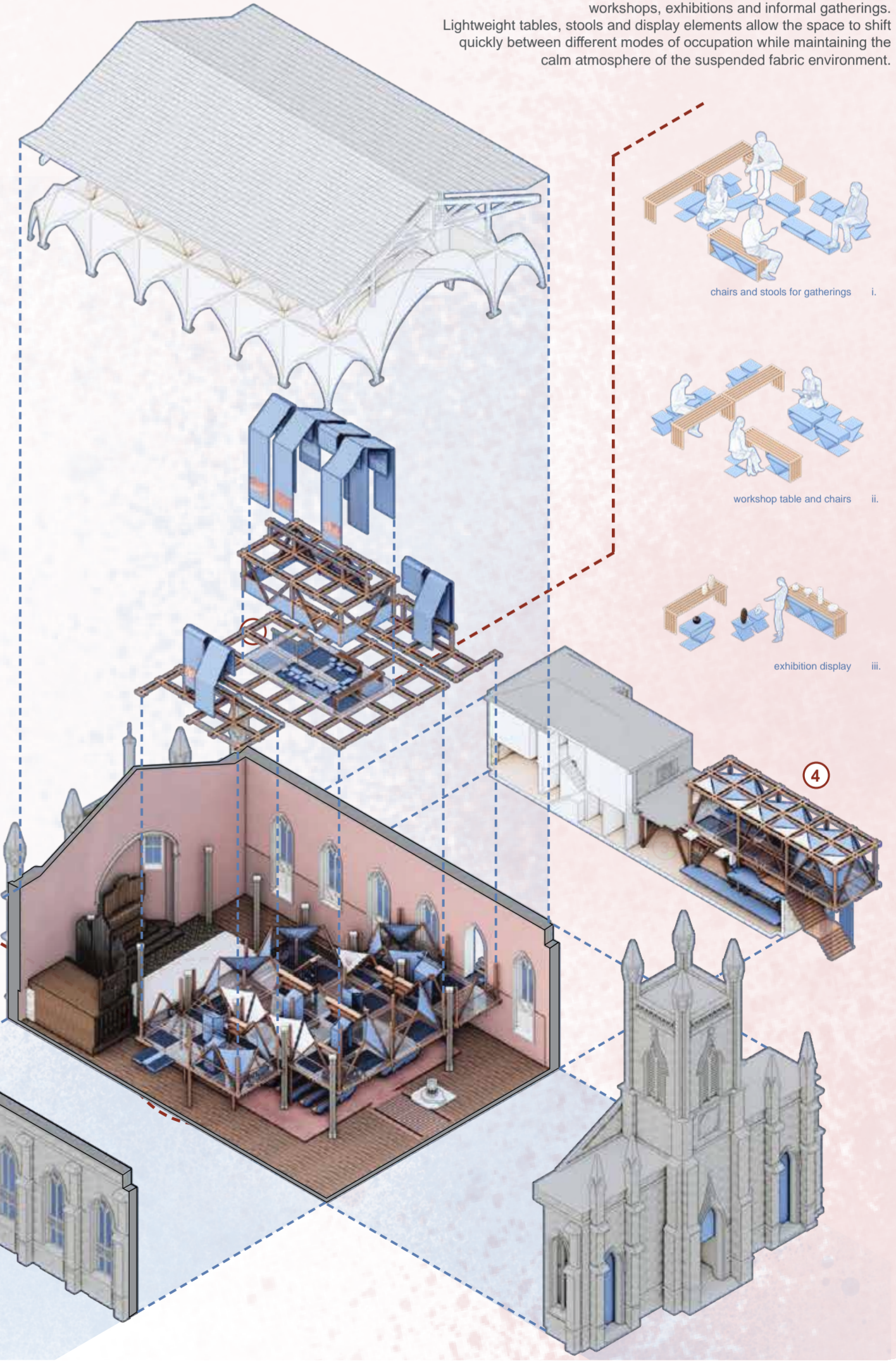


ZONING

- Alone
- Return Spaces
- In-between Spaces
- Together Spaces

Adaptive Furniture System

The *Together* space uses adaptive furniture that can be rearranged for workshops, exhibitions and informal gatherings. Lightweight tables, stools and display elements allow the space to shift quickly between different modes of occupation while maintaining the calm atmosphere of the suspended fabric environment.



i. chairs and stools for gatherings

ii. workshop table and chairs

iii. exhibition display



NEW ENTRANCE



GROUND FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR ENTRANCE



HERO SECTION A-A'

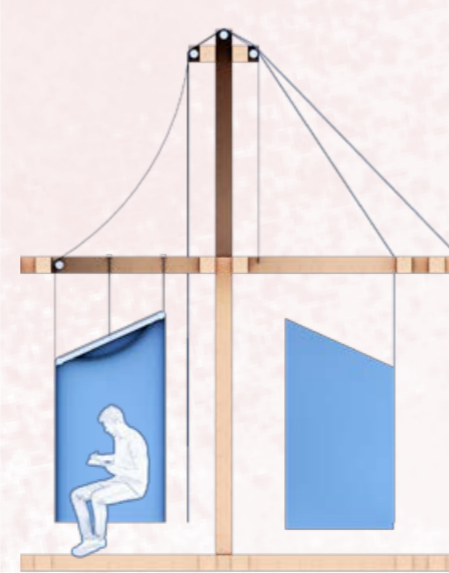
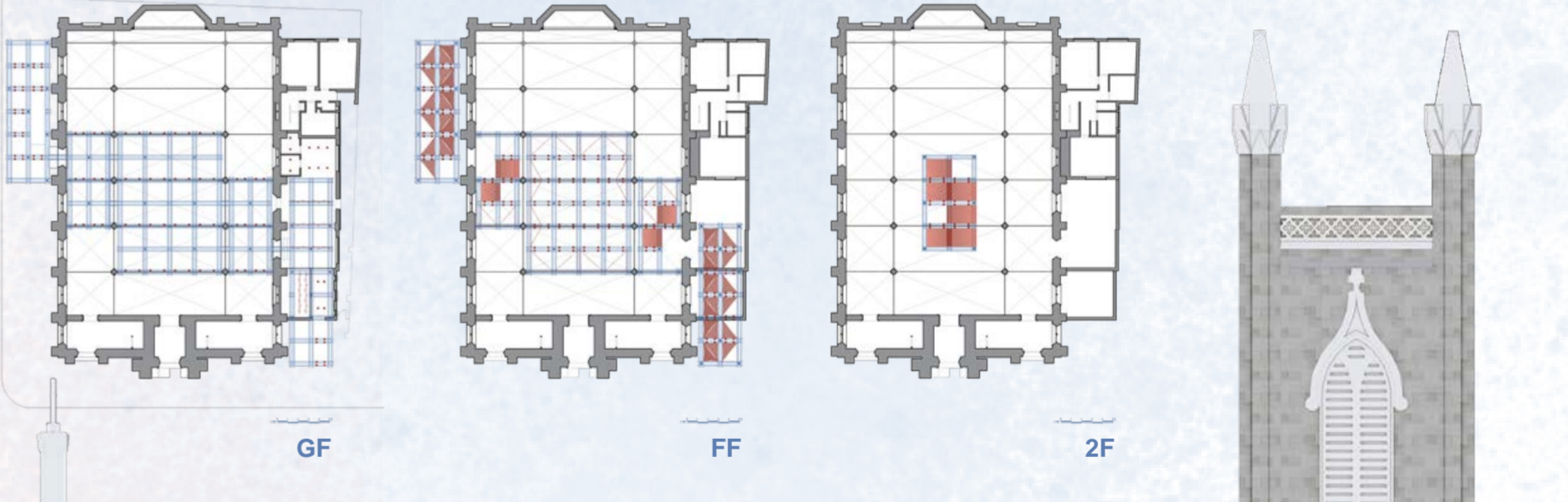
The sections reveal how the spatial framework balances openness and enclosure. A sequence of enclosed *Alone* spaces is inserted within the larger volume of the church, allowing visitors to move between moments of solitude and collective presence. The timber grid guides movement through elevated pathways, encouraging exploration while maintaining visual connection across the interior. In contrast, the second floor is shaped by a suspended fabric layer that modulates acoustics and atmosphere, creating a more immersive environment for exhibitions, gatherings and quiet reflection.

A restrained palette of blue distinguishes the new intervention from the existing church fabric. Associated with solitude and introspection, the colour softens the transition between old and new while reinforcing the project's exploration of loneliness and resonance.

The spatial framework translates iterative material testing into an inhabitable architectural system.

**REFLECTED CEILING PLAN**

The reflected ceiling plan demonstrates how fabric shapes the acoustic character of the intervention. Suspended panels define conditions of enclosure, openness and visual connection, while layered insulation supports sound control throughout the space.



Stretched fabric defines the *Alone* space, creating a controlled environment of reduced light and sound. The lightweight enclosure appears suspended within the church volume, maintaining openness while supporting privacy, reflection and focused occupation.

SECTION B-B'

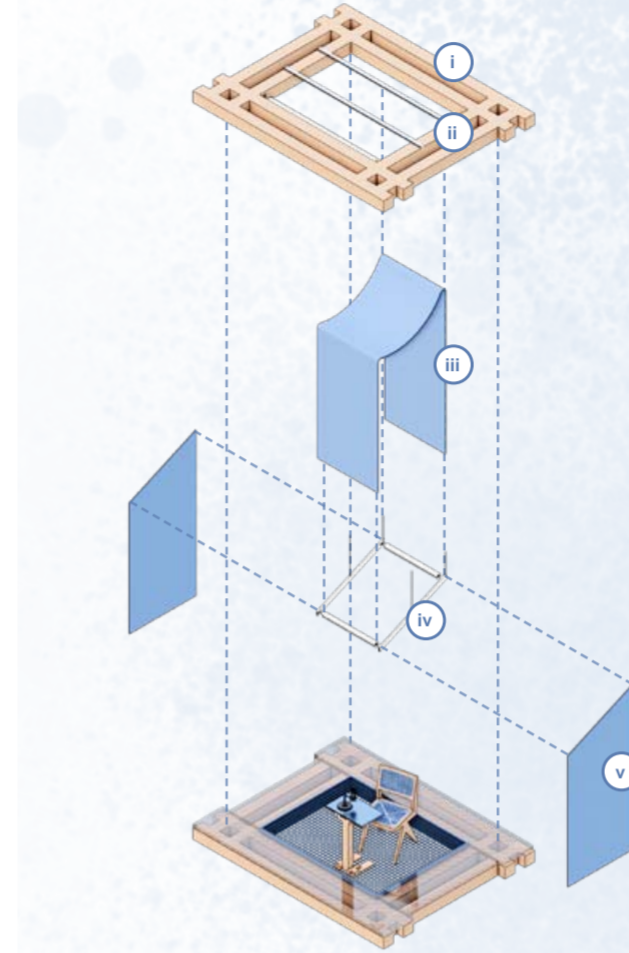




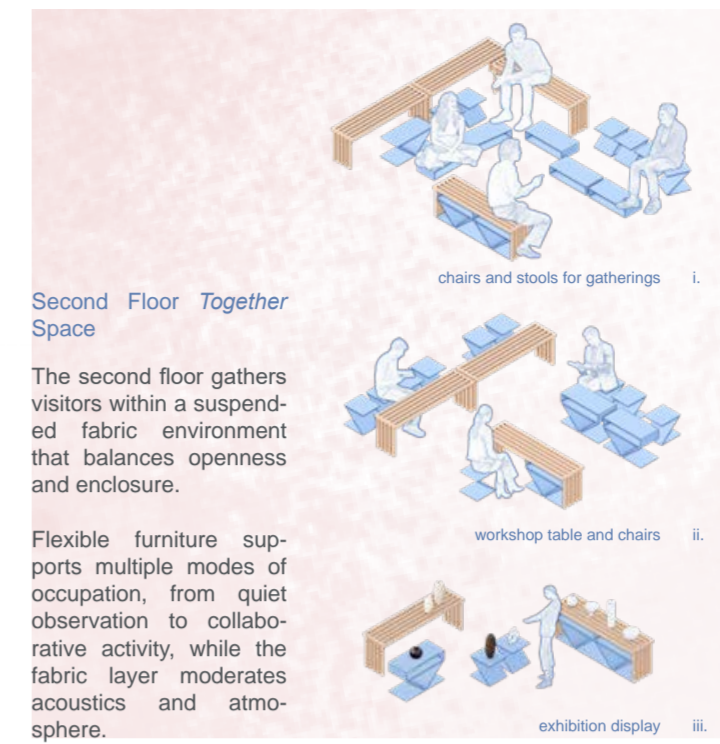
FIRST FLOOR: ALONE + IN BETWEEN SPACES

**ADAPTIVE ALONE SPACE DETAIL**

The *Alone* space detail demonstrates how the adaptive fabric system creates adjustable conditions of enclosure. By altering fabric tension, visitors can shape levels of privacy, light and acoustic separation. The lightweight structure supports individual reflection while maintaining visual connection to the wider spatial framework.



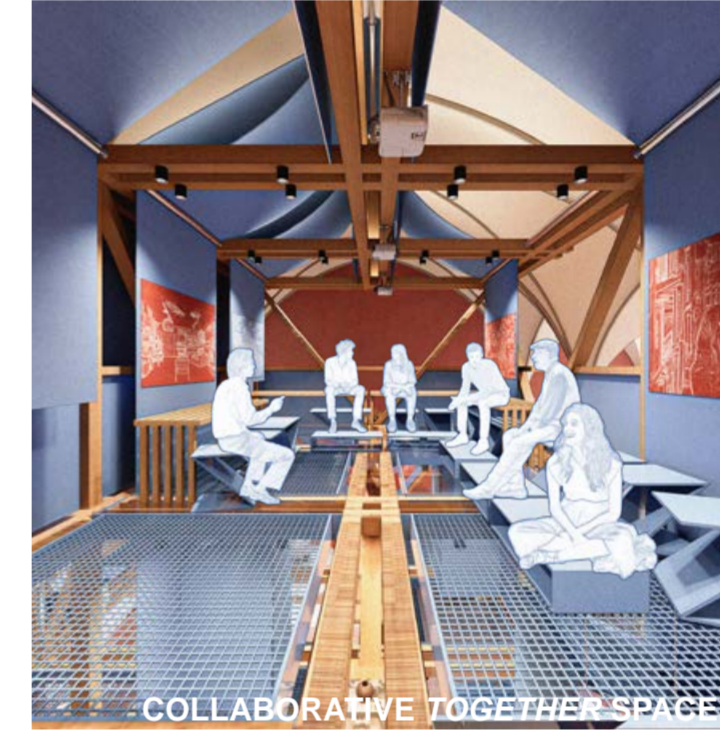
- i. Timber suspension frame
- ii. Metal hanging frame
- iii. Tensionable fabric panel with spine
- iv. Roller frame for fabric adjustment
- v. Felt enclosure panel with spine



**Second Floor Together Space**

The second floor gathers visitors within a suspended fabric environment that balances openness and enclosure.

Flexible furniture supports multiple modes of occupation, from quiet observation to collaborative activity, while the fabric layer moderates acoustics and atmosphere.



COLLABORATIVE TOGETHER SPACE



SECOND FLOOR



IN BETWEEN SPACES

**First Floor Close-Up (Alone + In Between)**

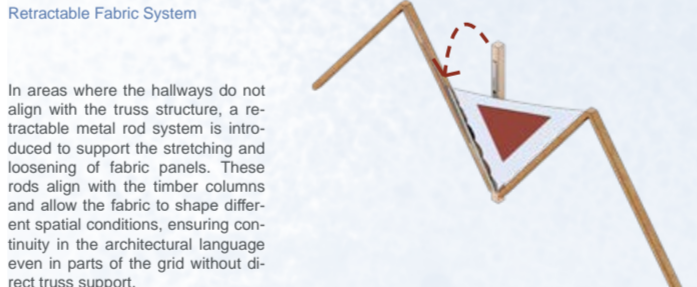
The first floor arranges the *Alone* spaces within and between the timber framework, allowing visitors to move between solitude and shared presence.

Transparent and translucent fabric layers create varying levels of privacy, supporting a gradual transition between reflection and connection.

Transparent and translucent fabric layers create varying levels of privacy, supporting a gradual transition between reflection and connection.

**Fabric supports multiple forms of communication within The Space That Listens.** It becomes a surface where visitors can leave written traces, a medium that carries printed images of memories or past events, and a textile that holds stitched information which adds texture and narrative weight. Fabric also acts as a projection surface for videos, allowing moving stories and recorded voices to settle into the space. Together, these functions allow fabric to operate as an adaptive communicative system, supporting exchange, storytelling and collective memory. This flexible use of fabric also aligns with the needs of the People's Museum by providing adaptable surfaces for storytelling, participation and collective memory work

- i. Fabric as message board
- ii. Fabric as printed image surface
- iii. Fabric with stitched information
- iv+v. Fabric as video projection surface



STAIRCASE UP TO 2ND FLOOR



TOGETHER WORKSHOP SPACE

**Together Workshop in the Magdalen Centre**

The workshop space extends the project's participatory approach beyond the church interior. Visitors can contribute personal messages, learn textile stitching techniques and take part in collective making activities. The lightweight framework supports flexible occupation while maintaining a calm connection to the atmosphere of the church.

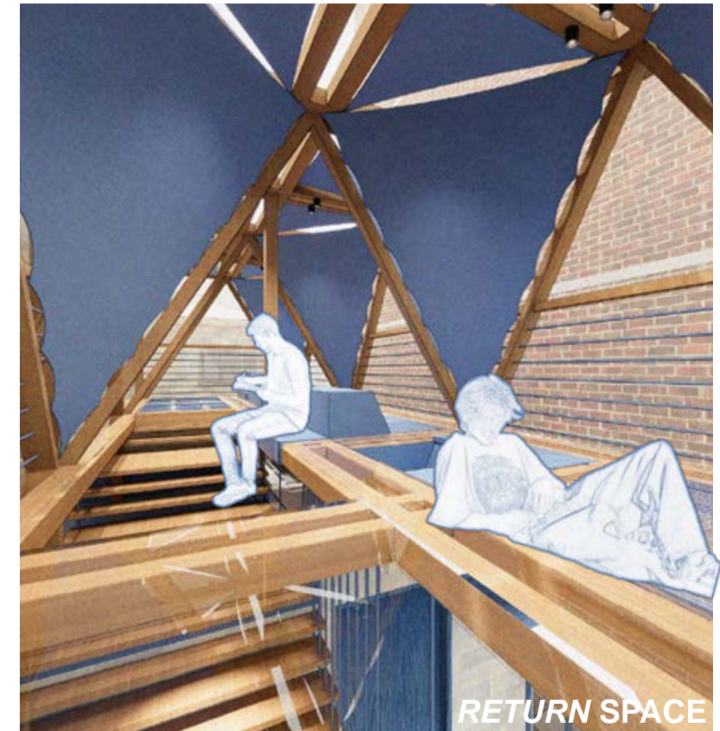


**Returning in Resonance**

The *Return* space offers a moment of stillness at the edge of the journey, where lighter fabric canopies soften the sound and filter the light, allowing visitors to settle before stepping back into the city. This atmosphere invites a quiet pause, creating a gentle threshold that supports reflection and release. In this space, the experience of loneliness is not dismissed or corrected but allowed to rest in resonance, acknowledging that feeling alone can coexist with a sense of connection and calm.

**LONELINESS IN RESONANCE: THE SPACE THAT LISTENS**

As the final point in the sequence, the *Return* space reflects the broader intention of the project, which listens to the emotional conditions of loneliness and gives them architectural form. Across the three floors and the workshop space in the Magdalen Centre, the design explores how fabric, structure and light can hold traces of presence, support moments of inward focus and create opportunities for gentle encounter. The project closes with the understanding that architecture cannot remove loneliness, but it can shape a place where it becomes recognisable, shareable and softened, leaving visitors with a quieter sense of themselves as they depart.



RETURN SPACE



NEW ENTRANCE