

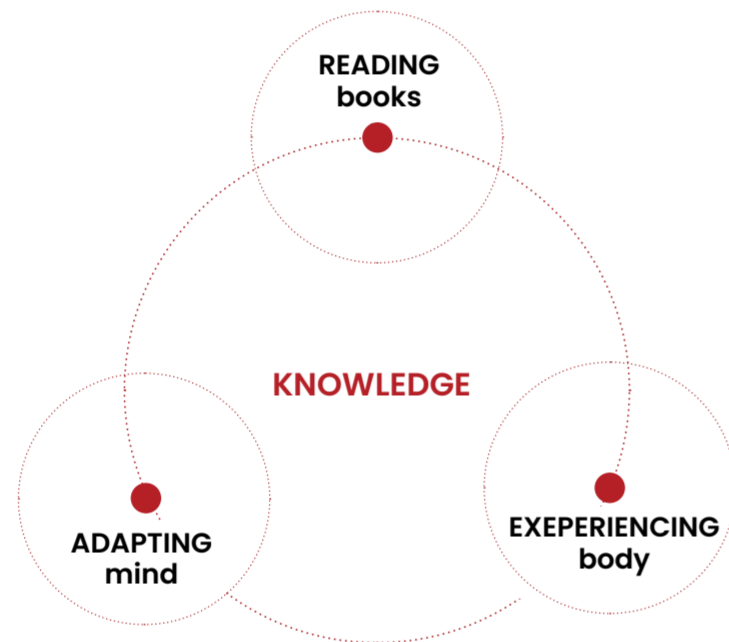
MIND IN MOTION

A children's library for active and reflective learning

The Body is the First Book we ever Read

Before words, before books, children learn through movement, touch, and physical interaction. Mind in Motion reimagines the children's library as a space where learning is embodied. Responding to the separation of physical and intellectual activity within contemporary education, the project creates a spatial sequence that guides children from collective engagement toward individual focus. Through inhabitable circulation, reading spaces, moments of pause, and activities, the architecture supports embodied learning and self-regulation. The library positions movement as a means of developing attention and awareness, creating a richer and more inclusive learning environment.

Books are treated as active tools. They provide instructions for movement, breath, play, and discipline, which are then tested through the physical application of the instructions and adapted through experience. Children can annotate the books to better understand and interpret them.



Rendered physical model - Reading room



Render - Outdoor library courtyard

The Restless Child

High energy - struggles with stillness and attention - needs movement to focus



The Reserved Child

Avoids and is intimidated by performance and judgement - comfortable in quiet environments

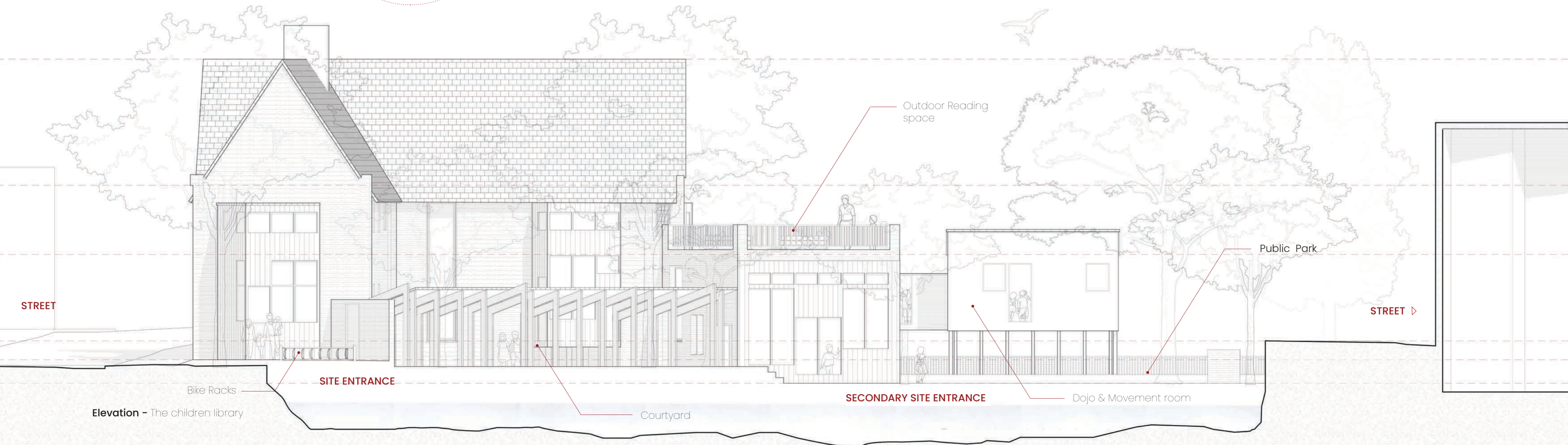


The Performative Child

Values performance and competition - less engaged with reflection, reading, or introspection



Each profile reveals an imbalance between body, social, and inner awareness, where one dimension dominates at the expense of the others. The library seeks to restore the balance, creating an environment to support one another.



Elevation - The children library



A Journey from Collective to Reflection

Situated on an island between two streams of the Oxford Canal, the library occupies a unique position surrounded by water, vegetation, and urban movement. The site forms part of a wider network, acting as an important link through the city. The journey begins in the public realm, where a playful and interactive landscape draws children into the library. Organised as a sequence rather than a collection of rooms, the project moves through courtyards and circulation spaces to learning environments, and places for reflection, each supporting a different mode of occupation. The book corridor acts as a connective spine between active and quieter programmes, while the social staircase provides a shared space for pause, reading, and encounter. As children move through the building, spaces gradually shift from collective and physical engagement toward more intimate environments for concentration and self-directed use, allowing each child to navigate the library according to their own needs.



First floor plan - Self spaces, connecting to the mind



Ground floor plan - Social and physical engagement



1. Public threshold - One entrance, blurring public boundaries into the library.



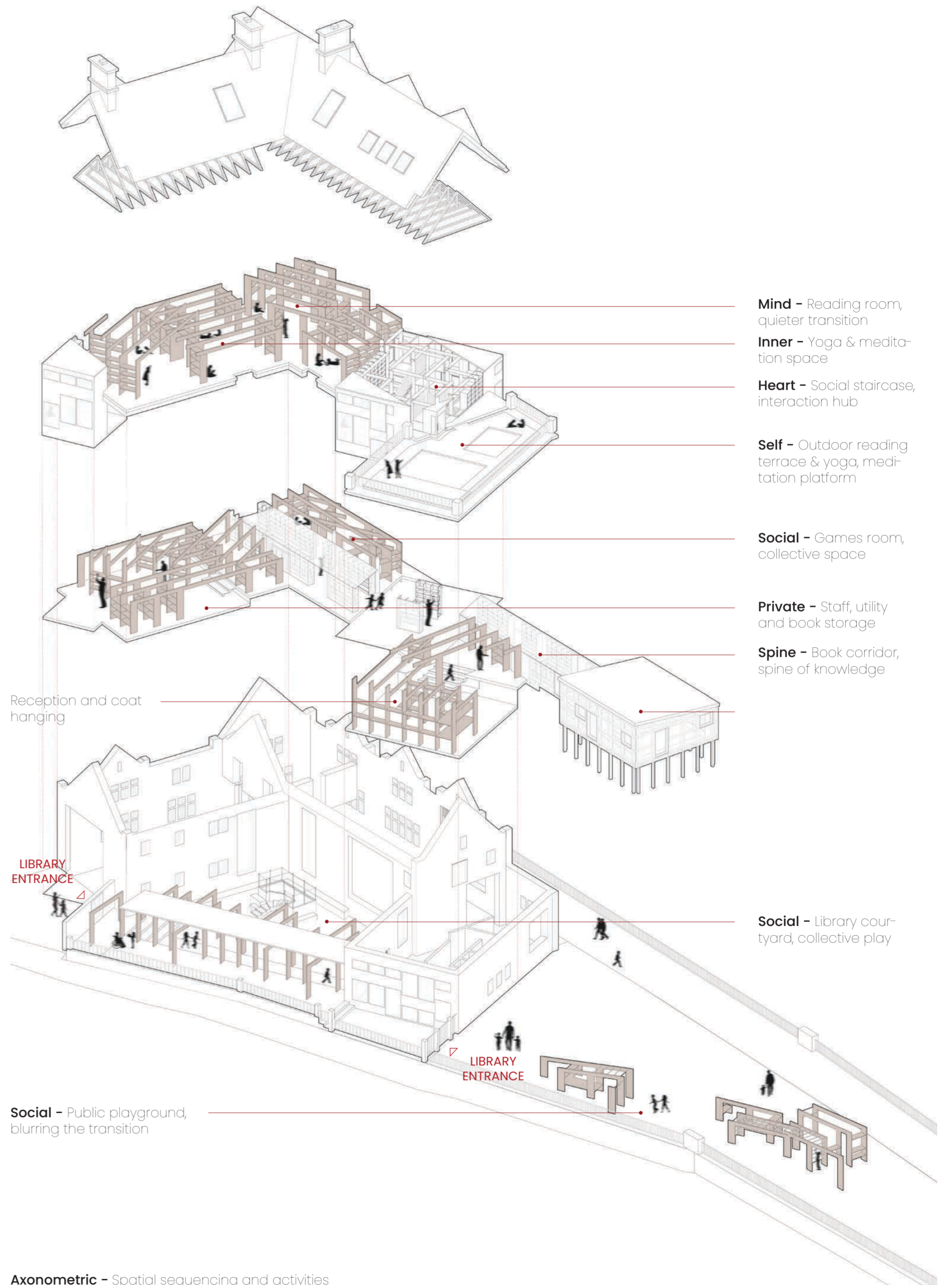
2. Blurring the transition - Crossing into private playful space, a seamless journey.



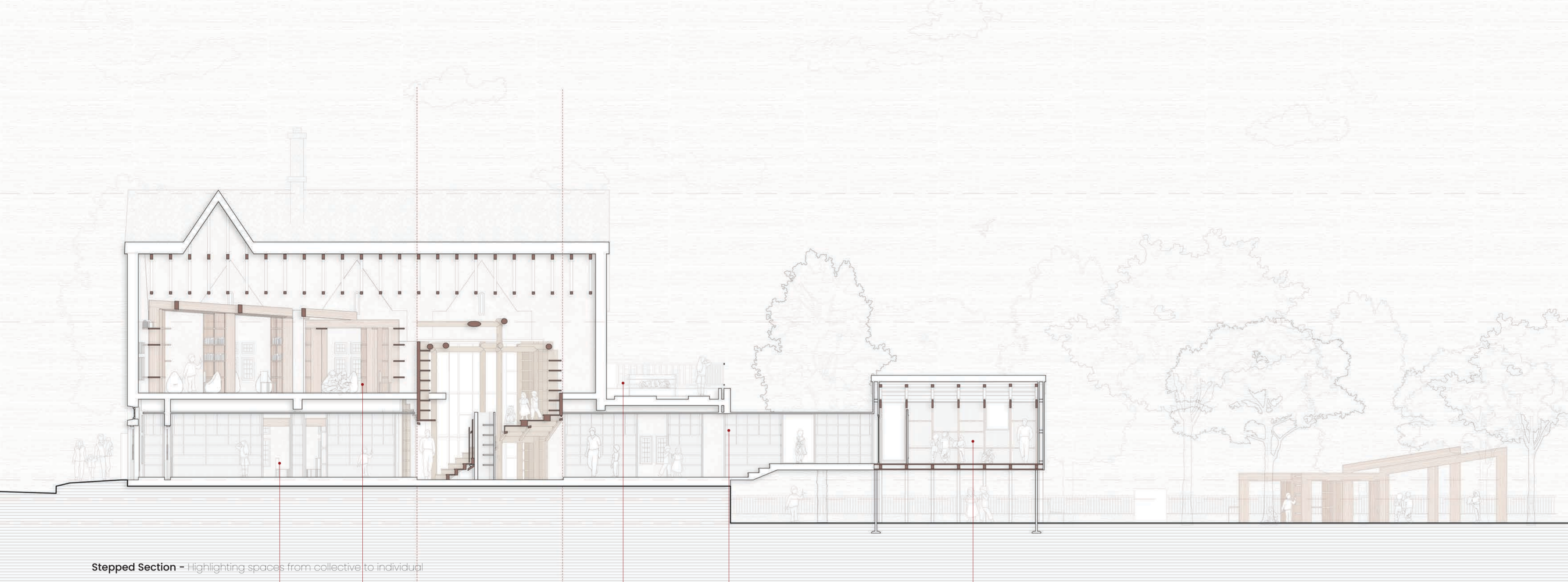
3. Settling - Entering the library reception with coat hanging, storage and WC.



4. Guiding to the library - Entering the library, guided by soft visual soffit lines.



Axonometric - Spatial sequencing and activities



Stepped Section - Highlighting spaces from collective to individual

3. Games Room 5. Reading

4. Terrace 1. Book Corridor

2. Dojo

Spine of the Library - The corridor links learning spaces through a continuous landscape of books. Filtered light (protects books) and framed views transform circulation into a place of discovery.

Learning through Movement - The dojo supports focus and self-awareness through movement, observation, and practice, either structured or self lead. Filtered light, tatami flooring, and warm timber create a calm and intimate environment.

Games room - Combining social interaction with patience, turn-taking, and strategic thinking through collective play. The space encourages engagement in a playful environment.

Outdoor terrace - A quieter space for outdoor reading, yoga, and rest, extending beyond the building. The terrace reconnects children with natural light, air, and views, reinforcing calm attention through awareness of the environment.

Reading room - The room supports focused individual engagement with books through reading and annotation. It encourages children to adapt texts to understanding, linking concentration, imagination, and critical thinking.





Pausing between States – The Social Staircase

The social staircase forms the heart of the library, anchoring the scheme within the existing building and linking the active ground floor to the spaces above with two sets of stairs. More than a circulation element, it activates the transition spaces, and functions as a place to read, gather, observe, and pause. Inhabitable steps and façade niches encourage occupation, softening transitions between activities and creating opportunities for both individual and collective use.

Reading – The stepped seating and integrated shelving encourage informal reading.

Viewing – Openings frame views while filtered facades maintain privacy.

Gathering – Landings and widened steps provide spaces for conversation.



Ground floor plan – Sectional model



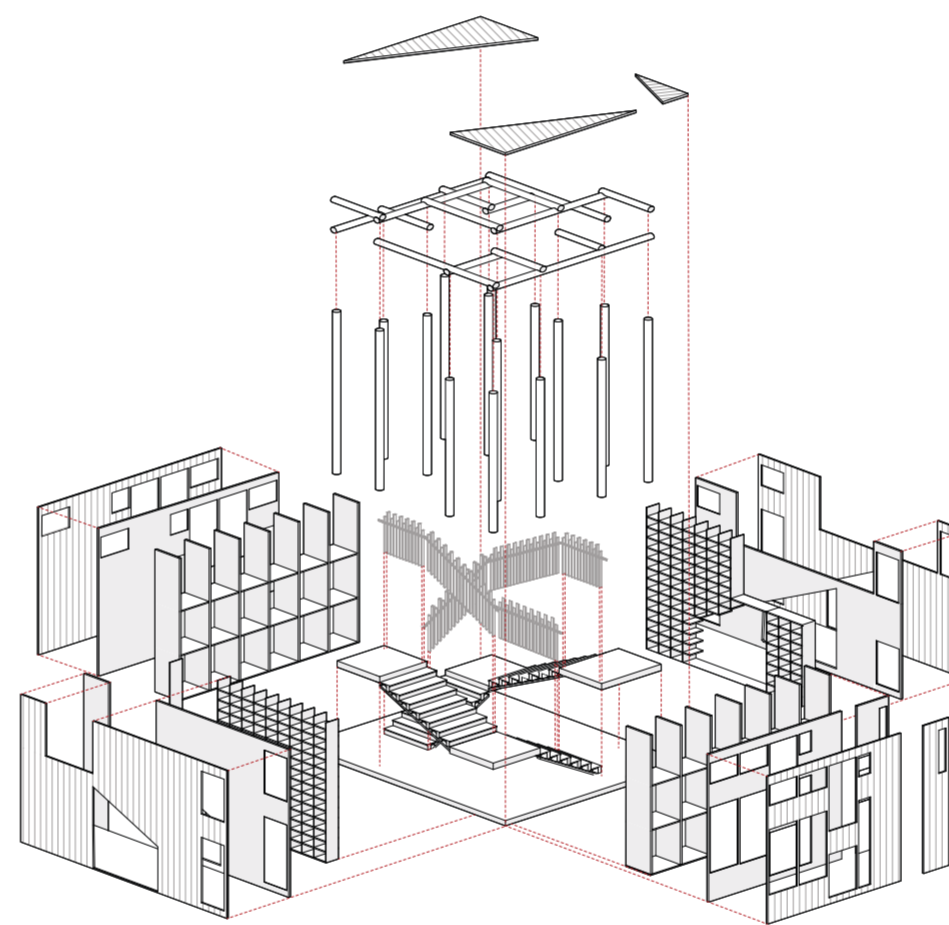
First floor plan – Inhabitation and views

Atmosphere

A layered façade of timber and glass balances light, privacy, and views across the surrounding landscape. Natural light enters through the full height of the space, while timber flooring and seating surfaces introduce warmth and encourage children to linger. The resulting atmosphere is both open and sheltered, strengthening connections between floors.



Interior Render – Occupying the staircase



Exploded Axonometric – Layers of the structure

1:20 model – Inserting the structure into the existig fabric with an aluminum shadow gap profile.

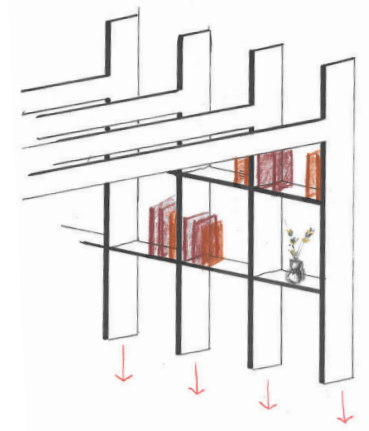


1:20 model – Cut overview showing structural elements in relation to their materials.



Elevation – Insertion within the existing building





Structural element



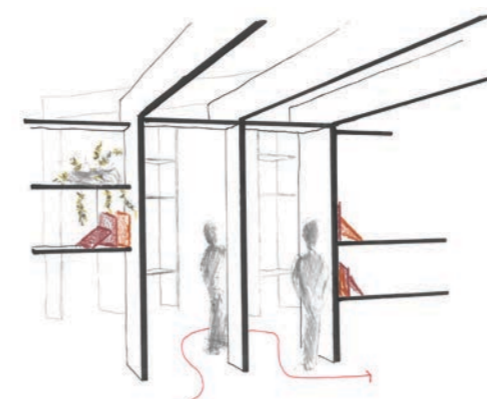
Table tops



Shelving and storage



Seating



Visual guide

Section - Highlighting the soffit system



The Soffit as Landscape - a Continuous Interior

The soffit is a continuous architectural element linking spaces and experiences. It descends to form shelving, seating, and tables, while openings create views and visually guide movement through the building. Rather than separating rooms, it creates gradients of enclosure. By adapting to the needs of each space, it transforms circulation into inhabitation, activating transition spaces and strengthening the relationship between the children and the architecture.



Interior Render - Games room



Exterior Render - Connecting the public realm



Exterior Render - Blurring the transition



Interior Render - Book storage and staff room

Materiality - Occupation

Constructed from laminated veneer lumber, the soffit is designed as a lightweight prefabricated system. Its modular construction allows it to adapt to different spatial requirements while maintaining a continuous architectural language throughout the library. The timber construction also introduces warmth and tactility, creating a more inviting environment for children to occupy.



Interior Render - Yoga & meditation quiet space