

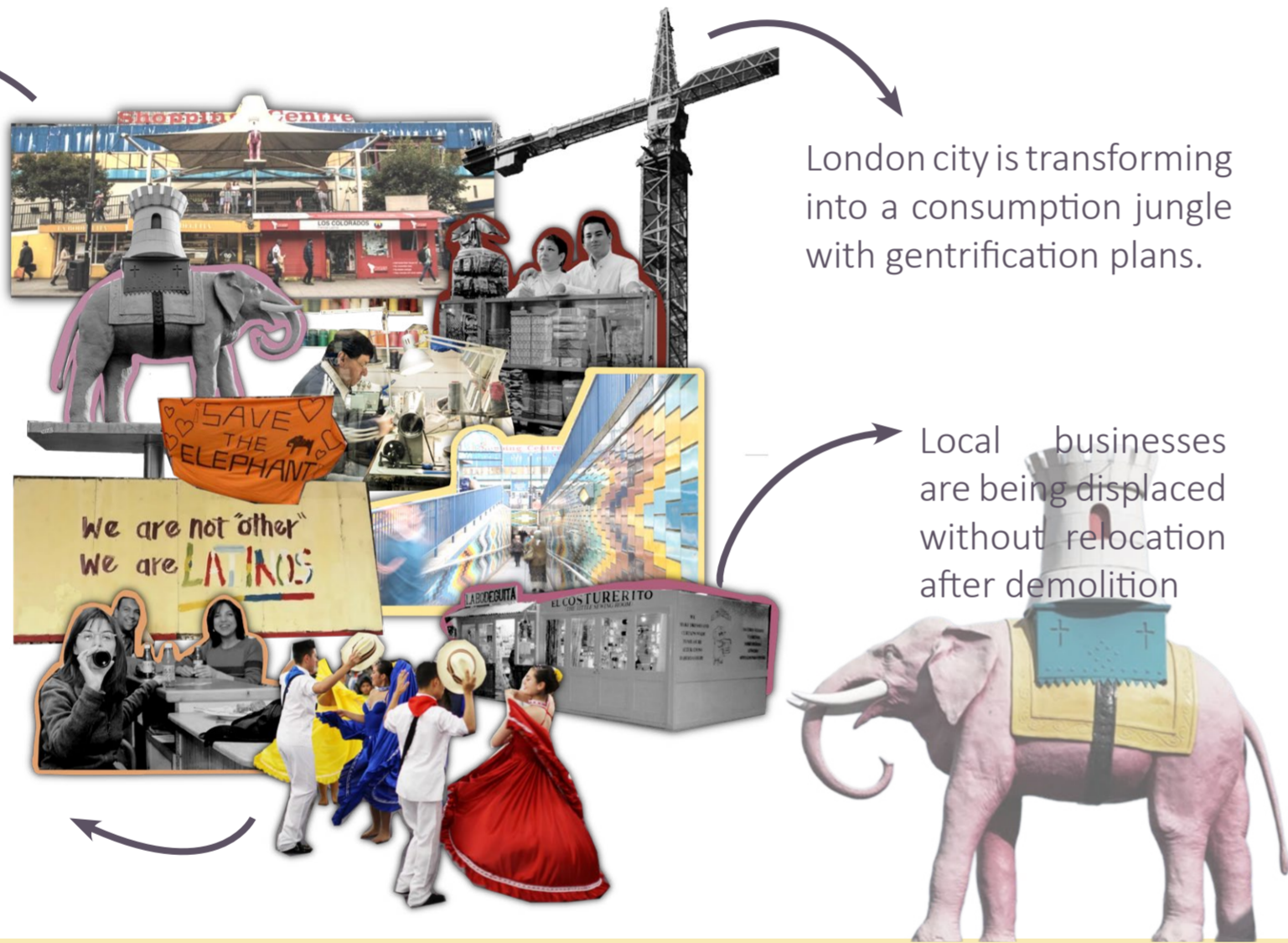
Latino Corner

Community Hub

Latino Corner is a community hub and residential project that seeks to integrate and represent the Latin American community in Elephant and Castle. Responding to the current issues of gentrification and the urgency to support the community, the design brief is to design a hub to support the affected businesses and to locate Latino American organisations where families and individuals of the community can find help and support, as well as any British Latino who would like to connect with their roots and any other person interested in Latino culture.

Elephant and Castle has been the place where Latinos go for support for years. The shopping centre worked as a networking space to find jobs or get help with immigration and accommodation, all this done by the locals and unofficially. With the demolition of the centre, this support has vanished.

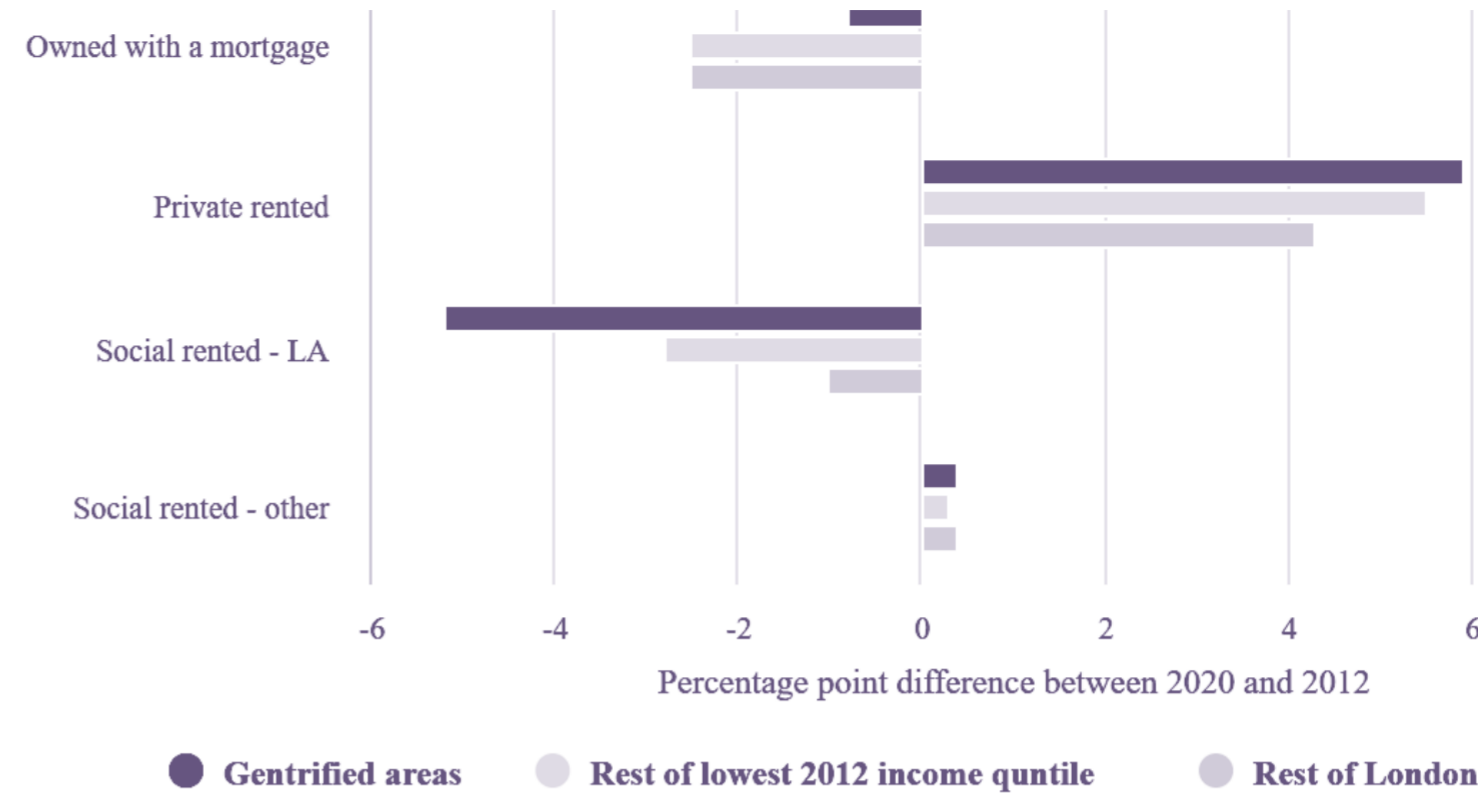
Elephant and Castle is still known as a cultural hub for the Latin community



London city is transforming into a consumption jungle with gentrification plans.

Local businesses are being displaced without relocation after demolition

Did you know?



Elephant and Castle has been home to a large Latin American community since the

1970s

(Alvarez, 2024)

Gentrified neighbourhoods have seen their average incomes rise by

11%

(Trust for London, 2024)

The proportion of households in gentrified areas living in social rented council housing dropped by significantly more than in the rest of London.

5%

(Trust for London, 2024)

Latinos in London

The article "Latin American identity and belonging in a gentrifying London" by CLAUKE reflects on how Latino Americans feel and experience the culture in London, many of them expressing concern about how unaware the government and local councils are about the community, this causing lots of damage, like economic displacement and, most importantly, gentrification and lack of support. The Latin American community is one of the fastest-growing communities in London, but to this day, it is not officially part of the UK census, which leads to an inaccurate count of the population, resulting in individuals being categorised under the "others" box and remaining invisible.

Other issues they faced in the city

Identity crisis

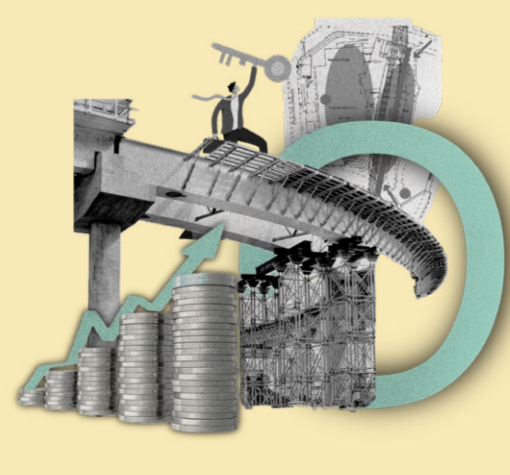
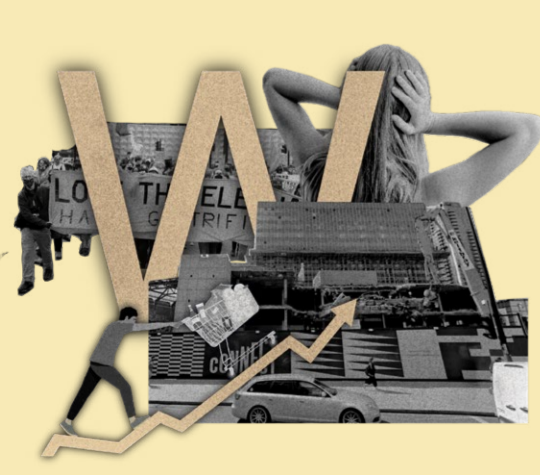
Areas affected by gentrification

Seasonal depression

Feeling isolated

Hard to connect with their roots

Elephant and Castle SWOT



- Cultural Hub
- Located in Central London
- Great transport Connectivity

- Increased cost of living
- Gentrification
- Noise Pollution

- Business opportunities
- Further Development
- Economic Growth

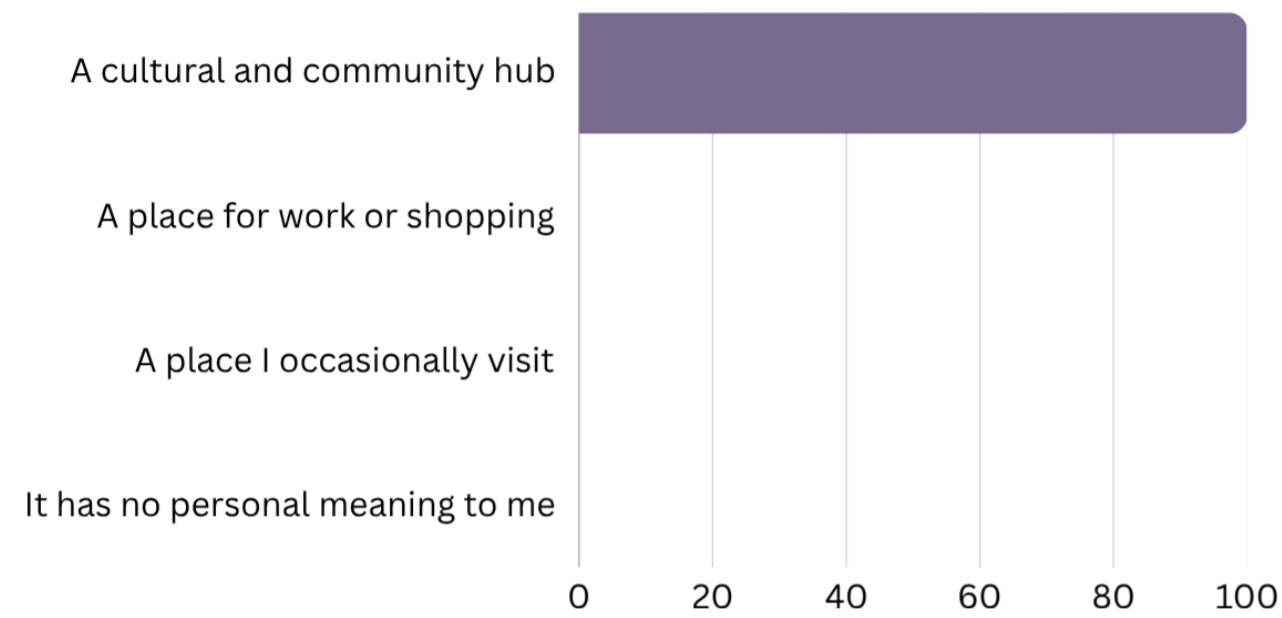
- Economic Displacement
- Loss of community
- Social Inequality



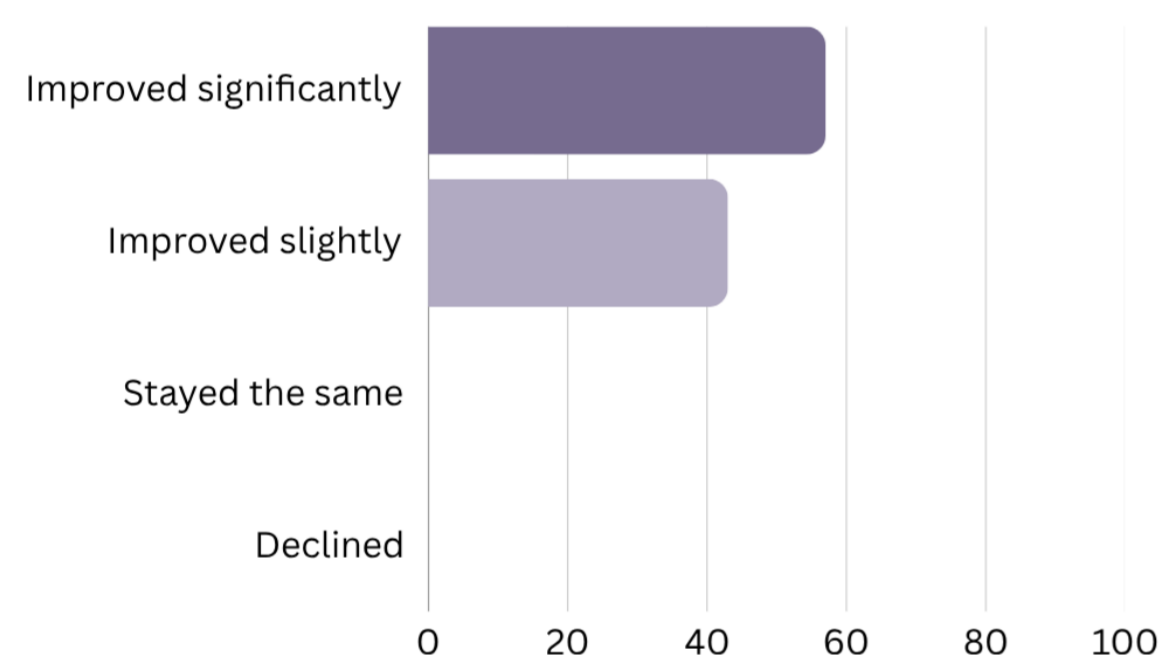
Latin American Voices

To gain a better understanding of the design purpose and objectives, I decided to conduct a questionnaire, asking Latino Americans in London about their feelings as part of the community and to gain a deeper understanding of what they wish for the area of Elephant and Castle. Some of the questions and answers that helped me during my design process are the following:

What best describes Elephant and Castle for you?



How has Elephant and Castle changed in recent years?



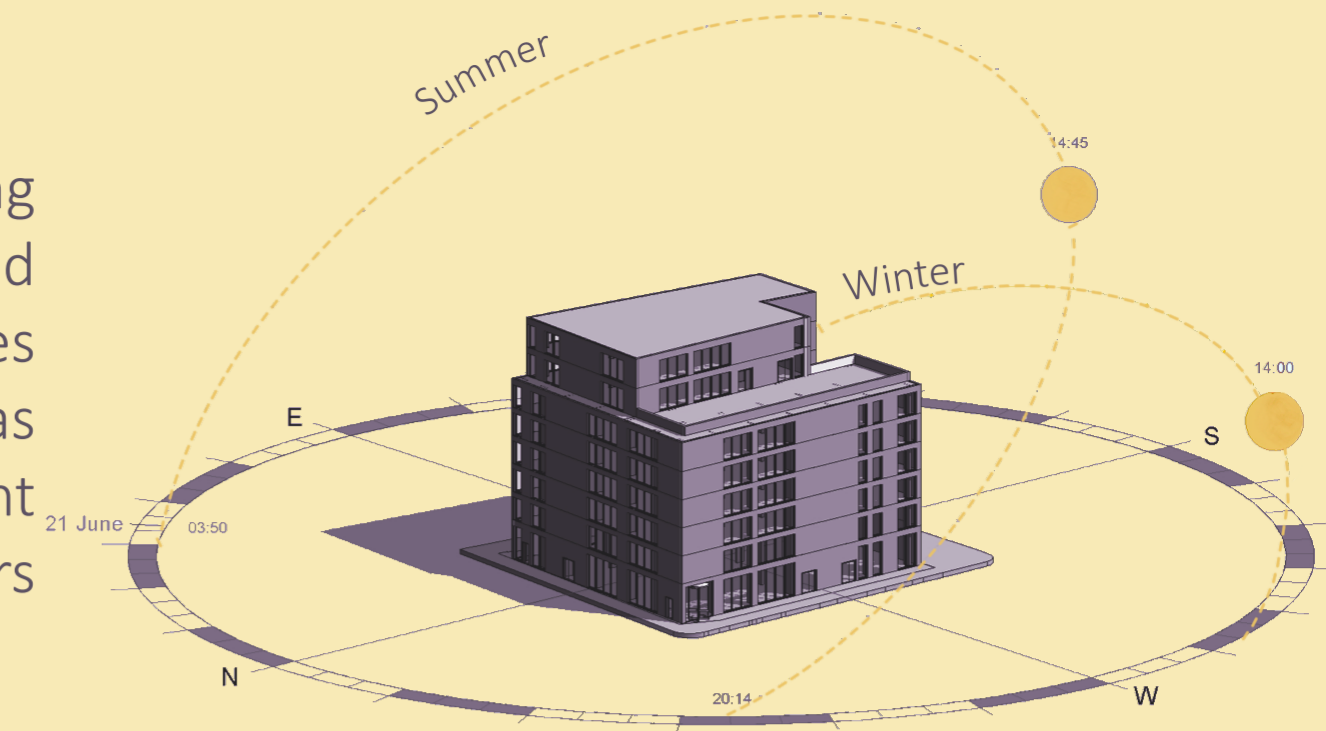
Could you share why you chose your previous answer?

- Answer 1: "In certain way, I can say that there has been an increase of new buildings around the area"

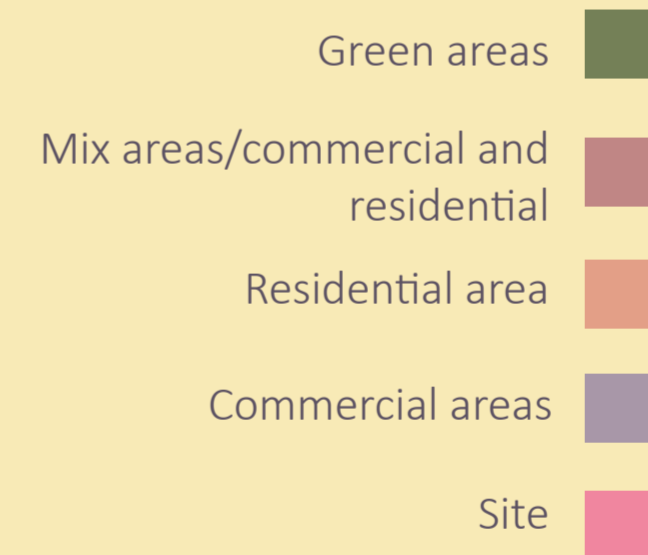
-Answer 2: "It has improved immensely but at a great cost to the latin American community. Elephant and Castle as a whole now feels a lot safer, a lot less imposing. The Aylesbury estate was notorious for gang violence so knocking that down had a great effect on the area, as has knocking down the shopping centre which, in my opinion was mostly vacant and misused space. However, the counter effect of this is that it also raised rent prices making it unaffordable to live or rent a space there in effect ousting the Latin American community from one of the only real "hubs" it has in London and this raising prices within the few shops that did stay."

Site Analysis

Sun analysis shows how the building receives light during summer and winter. Some of my design features require a good amount of sunlight, as well as determining the placement of certain areas, as some users experience seasonal depression.



The site is not far from the underground, with a 10min walking distance. It is surrounded by lots of Latin American restaurants/places and other commercial spaces. It is also close to residential areas, making the site reachable by the community living in the area. Elephant and Castle is also a National Railway station, making it easier for other Latinos around the UK to visit.



Users Profile



families in vulnerable situations



couples and individuals that require support



curious people that would like to learn more about the culture



traders that lost their business



Office workers and staff

Concept: Feels Like Home

Responding to the current changes to improve the area with contemporary architecture, and the cultural importance of the area for the Latin American community. The concept aims to integrate these two contrasting perspectives with the understanding of the area, traditions, and lifestyle of Latin Americans. For this reason, the site 31 Amelia Street, London SE17 3PY has been chosen as it fits the council vision of making the area more contemporary and modern. The interior design would be based and inspired by how things are back home, the informality, how colours are used, architecture, interior styles and most importantly, the warmth and beauty of the culture.



Vertical zoning



- Class Rooms
- Food court/market
- Vertical Patio
- Offices
- Residential areas
- Rooms for hire
- Visually Connected
- Vertical Circulation

The building is designed to work as a multifunctional space, simulating what happens in Latin American cities, where formal and informal spaces cohabit in one place. There would still be a division between places, some allowing visual connection with glass curtain walls and others completely separated with walls or different circulation routes. For this design, three different circulation routes would be added together with three separate entrances, each one corresponding to residential areas (private), offices and classrooms (semi-private) and market, food court and vertical patio (public).

Informality as a way of living and growing

Buenos Aires, Argentina



(Gehl, 2024)

Lima, Peru



(Ghisleni, 2026)

Sao Paulo, Brazil



(Ghisleni, 2026)

Caracas, Venezuela



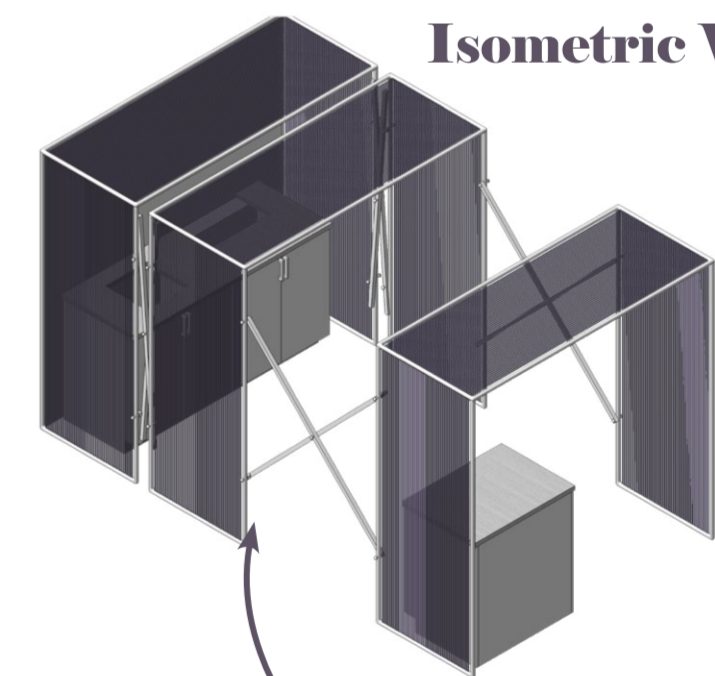
(Ghisleni, 2026)

In Latin America, it is common to see informal urbanism happening in many countries. On the commercial aspect, the formal and informal places coexist with street vendors and markets.

(Hernández, 2017)

Because of gentrification and the economic impact it had on the community, the design aims for an accessible and supportive environment, allowing businesses to start again with lower rent and a place to grow similar to what happens in informal settings. To achieve this, I designed food court units made from steel and wicker PE rattan. These units would not only be used as dividers between food businesses but also for other activities, some with added storage, tables and chairs. This idea is inspired by the cohabitation of activities in one place. As they are used for multiple things, they are adaptable and extendable to the desired length and placement in the floor plan.

Cabinet Details: All furniture and appliances are movable and portable to help reduce operational and rental costs, making the units more affordable for businesses. Their flexibility also allows the spaces to be easily adapted for different activities when needed.



Isometric View

Inspired in the metal frame and PE wicker chairs from Latin America.

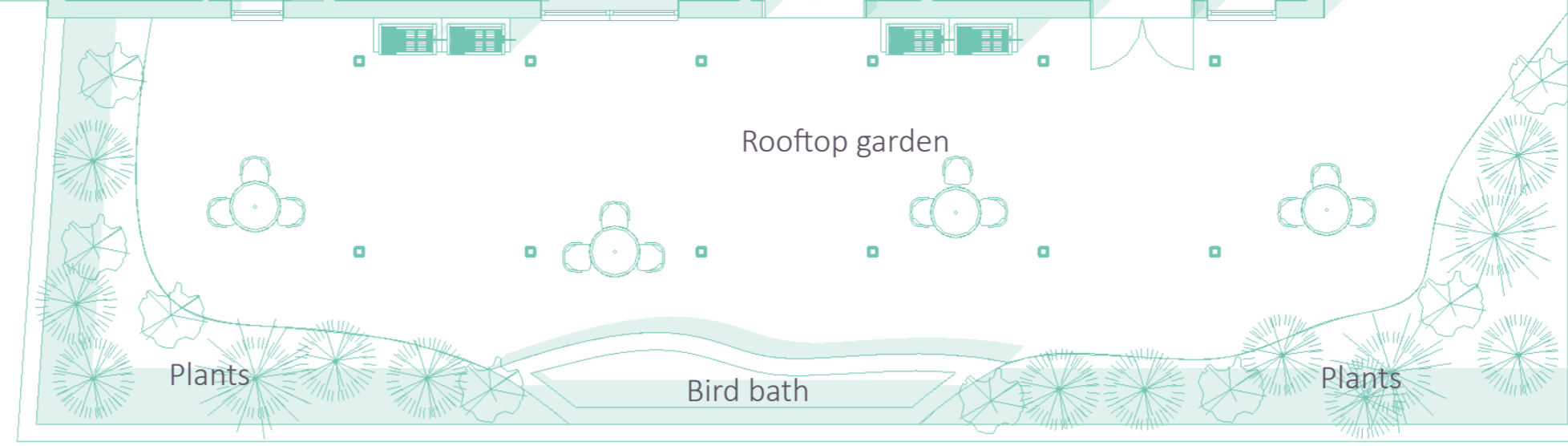


Food Court view



Design that responds

The Latin American community has been affected by decisions made without considering what the people of the area want. The design is driven by the community opinions and necessities with respect for the area, its heritage and diverse legacy.



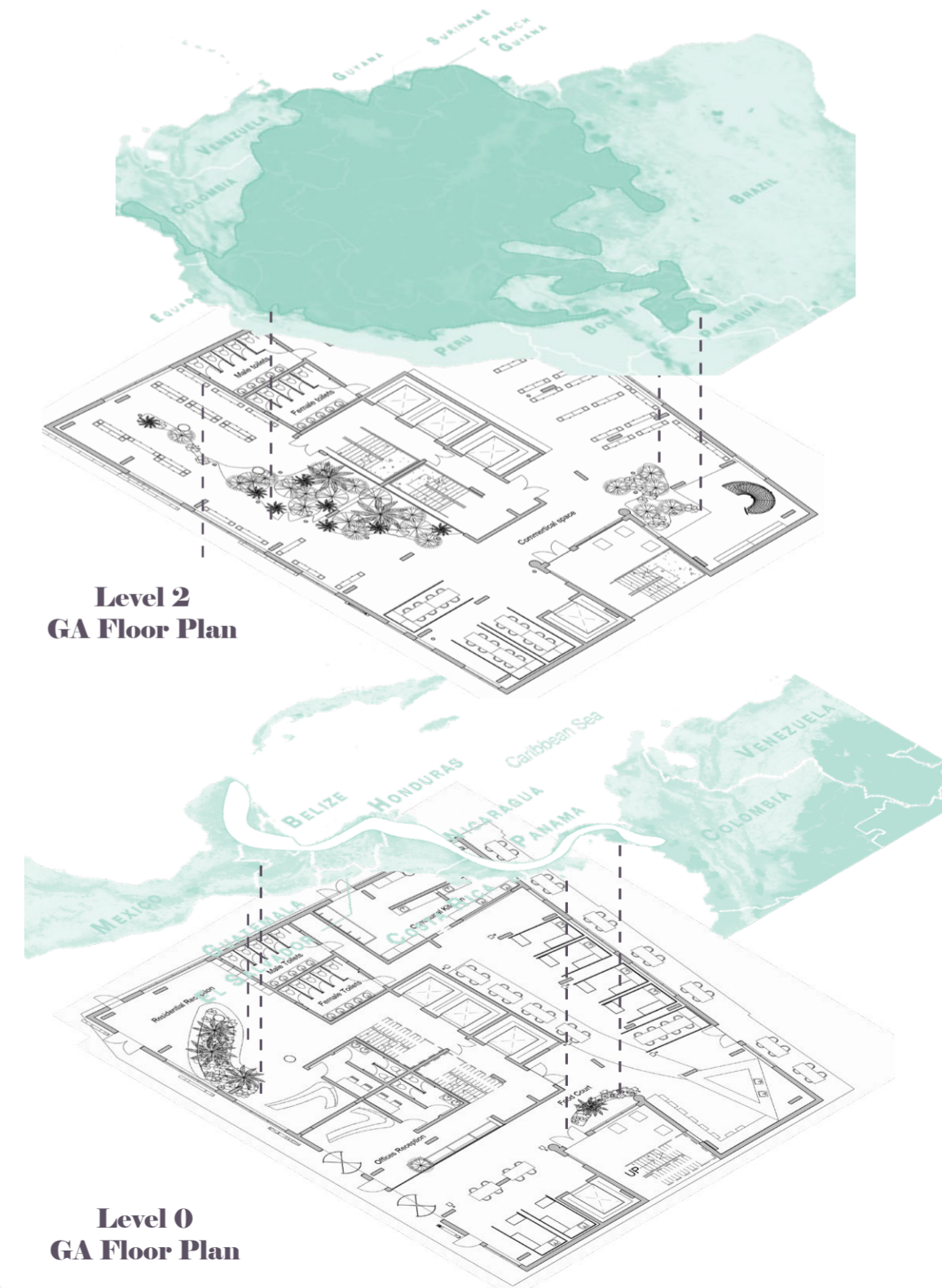
David Attenborough's Wild London documentary, was a huge inspiration for integrating this feature to the design. "Making space for nature is one of the biggest challenges we face" we need to "secure a brighter future for both animals and us too". (Wild London. 2026)

London and Birds

Outdoor and nature connection is important for the Latin American community. The rooftop extends beyond supporting the community by promoting social exchange and contributing positively to the neighbourhood. London is known for being one of the greenest cities in the world, with a considerable number of parks and gardens. The biodiversity of London is truly important for the city, and for this design, the rooftop would act as a home for birds around Elephant and Castle.

Indoor Green areas

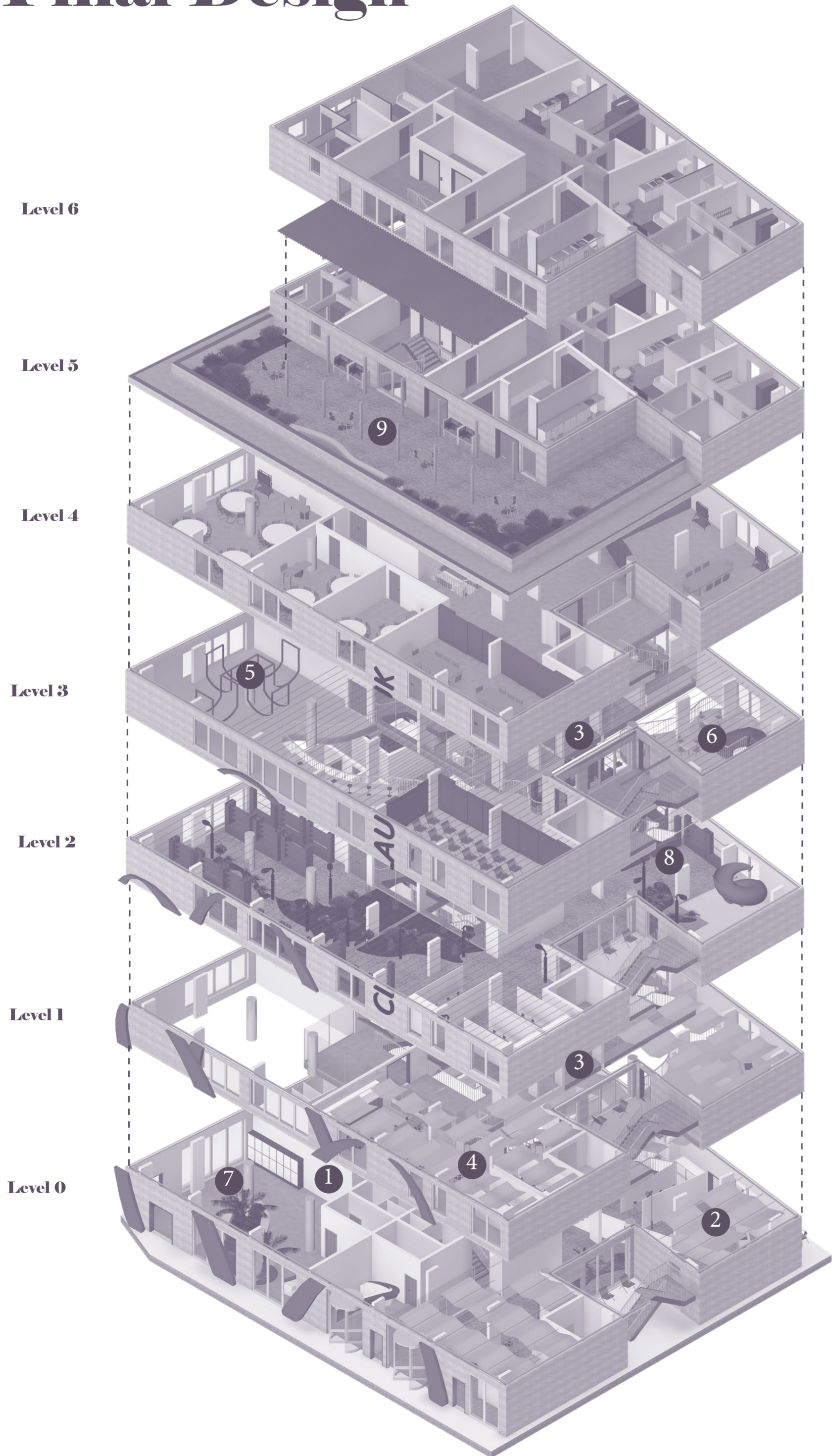
The tropical forest is one of the defining elements that unites Latin America. Incorporating indoor green spaces reflects the Latin American way of living, where the boundary between indoors and outdoors is often blurry. Introducing greenery into the space also helps address symptoms of seasonal depression, which many members of the community experience when adjusting to a colder climate.



Level 2
GA Floor Plan

Level 0
GA Floor Plan

Final Design



Communal Kitchen

1 For businesses to prepare food, a place with kitchen appliances and storage for ingredients and products.



Bar

2 A bar to generate income for the community hub and support the community.



Offices

3 Offices to host Latin American organisations and bring support to the community.



Communal Area

4 Areas for recreation and social interaction between the users.



Communal Area

5 Communal areas for social interaction and relaxation with hammocks, common furniture piece found in latin houses.



Kid's Area

6 Kid's area with a slide, designed for kids and adults, brings unique circulation route and interaction across generations.



Reception

7 Residents would have their own entrance with a reception to guarantee support.



Market

8 Other flexible units to host different types of businesses.



Rooftop Garden

9 A place for social interaction and London's biodiversity with plants and birds bath.