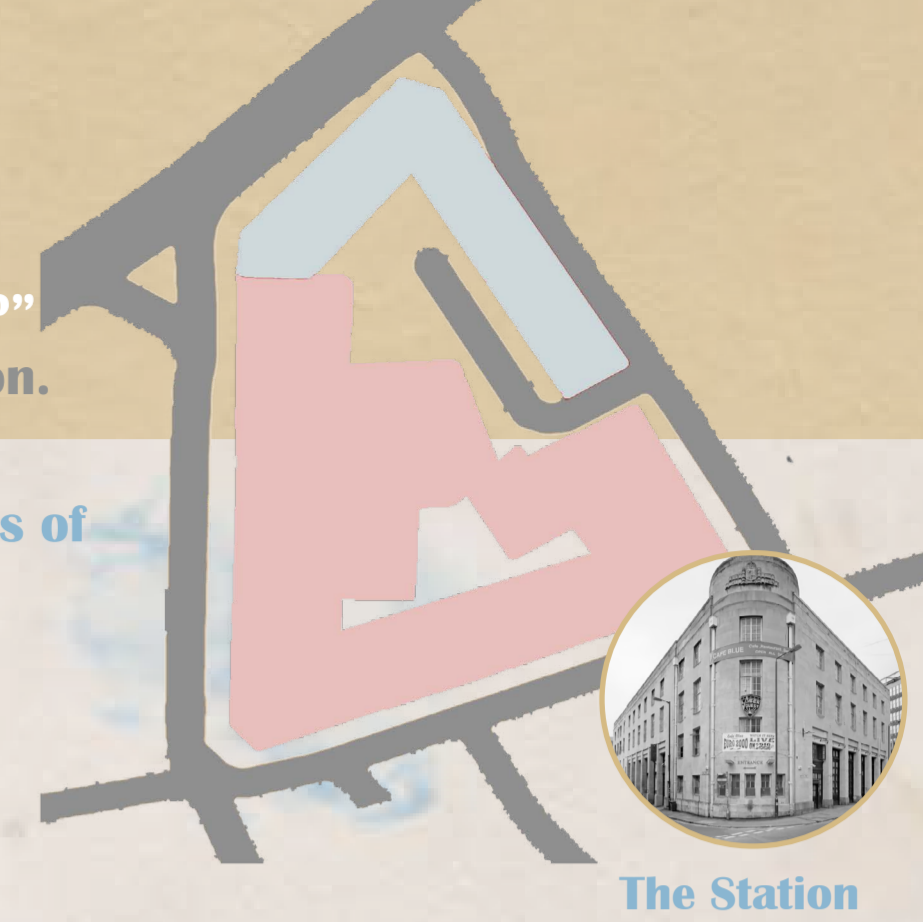




“Paws”- Daycare, play and canine care’

‘Pause’ - Holistics, mindfulness and bonding’

“What happens to interior design when the occupant cannot appreciate the image of the space?”
An interior designed largely for canine sensory experience rather than just visual representation.



The Station

Brief

Located in the centre of Bristol, this premium dog daycare challenges traditional human-centred approaches to interior design by imagining space through the **sensory experience** of a **canine occupant**. Rather than prioritising visual aesthetics alone, the project explores how **instinct, behaviour, movement, scent,** and emotional security can inform the creation of an interior. Through spaces for **play, rest, enrichment,** and social interaction, the design responds to canine **wellbeing** while encouraging shared **experiences** between dogs and their owners. The daycare becomes more than a place of temporary care; it proposes an alternative way of understanding interiors as spaces shaped through companionship, trust, and the relationship between human and canine occupants.

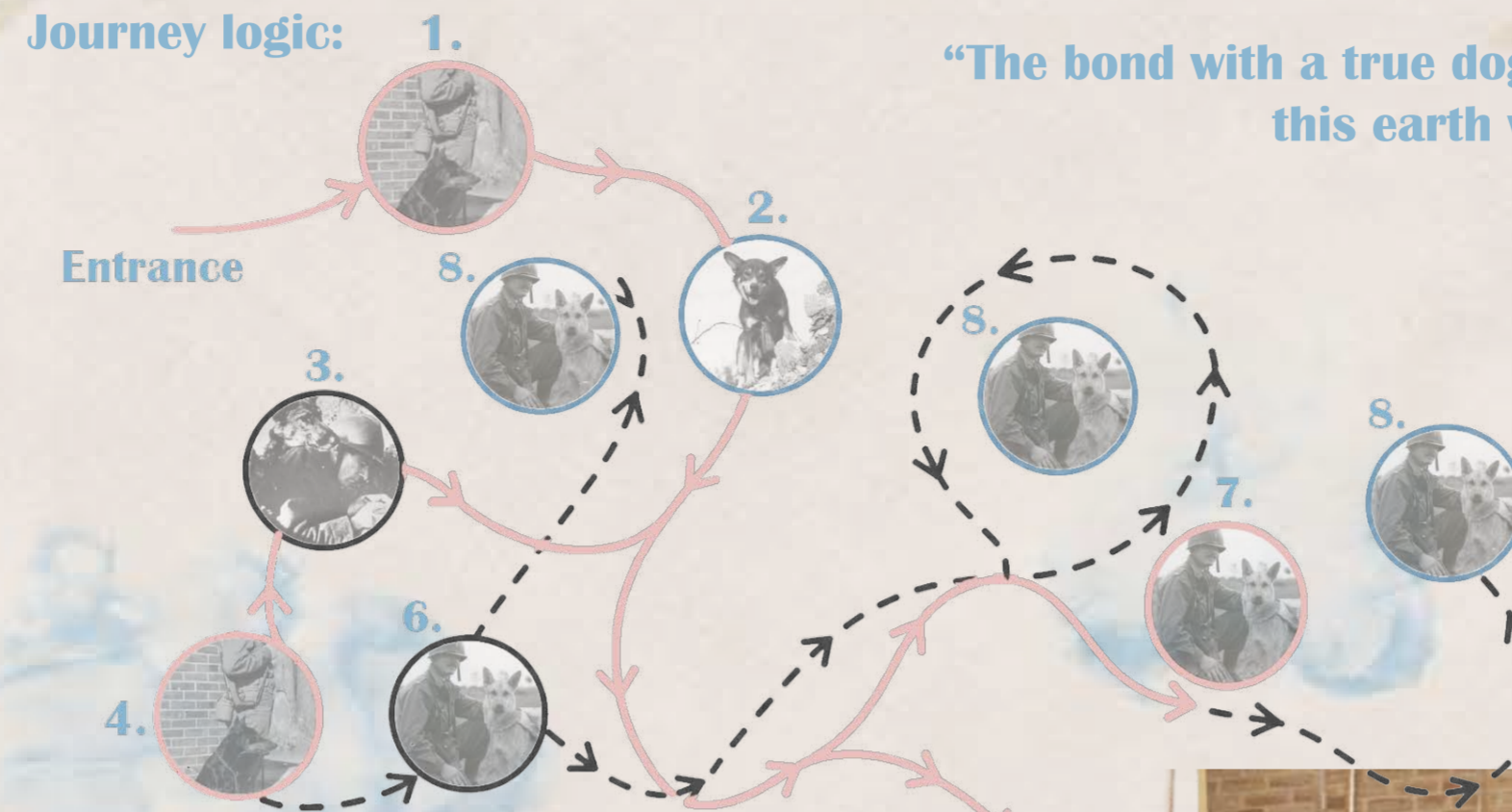
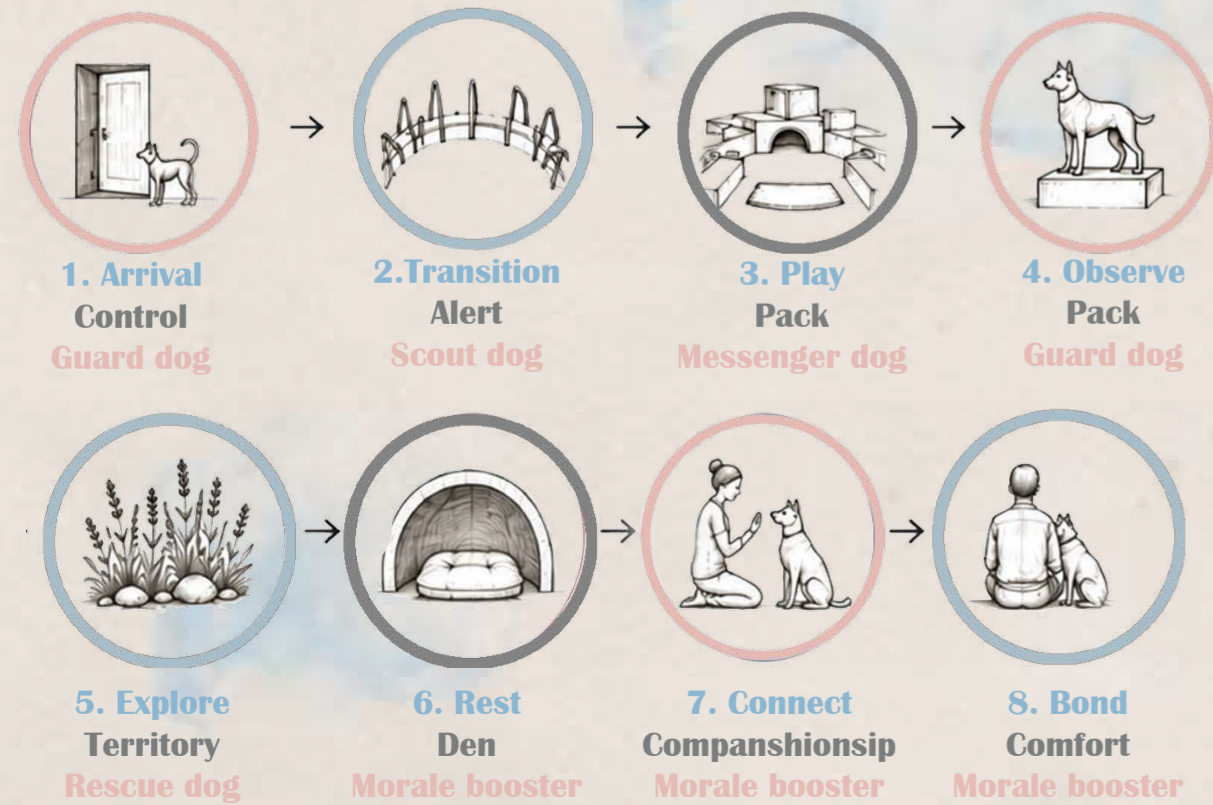
Inspiration



This project traces evolving forms of protection, from the structured defence of a World War II Bristol fire station to dogs’ instinctive protective behaviours, culminating in a biomimetic spatial strategy inspired by canine behaviour and nature’s regeneration of post-Blitz ruins.

Spatial Journey

This project reinterprets dogs’ protective and companionship roles in World War II through biomimicry, using canine-inspired behaviors to shape a day-care journey that fosters comfort, play, rest, and human–dog connection. Each space within the dogs journey is inspired by a dogs role from WW2 and then that space explores that instinct of the dog.



“The bond with a true dog is as lasting as the ties of this earth will ever be.”

1. Arrival - Control

This instinct informs the arrival space as a controlled threshold between outside and inside environments. The structured entry sequence creates a feeling of safety, routine, and order while allowing dogs to calmly transition into the daycare. This reflects the protective and controlled behaviour of wartime guard dogs while reinterpreting it with a welcoming contemporary setting.

Key

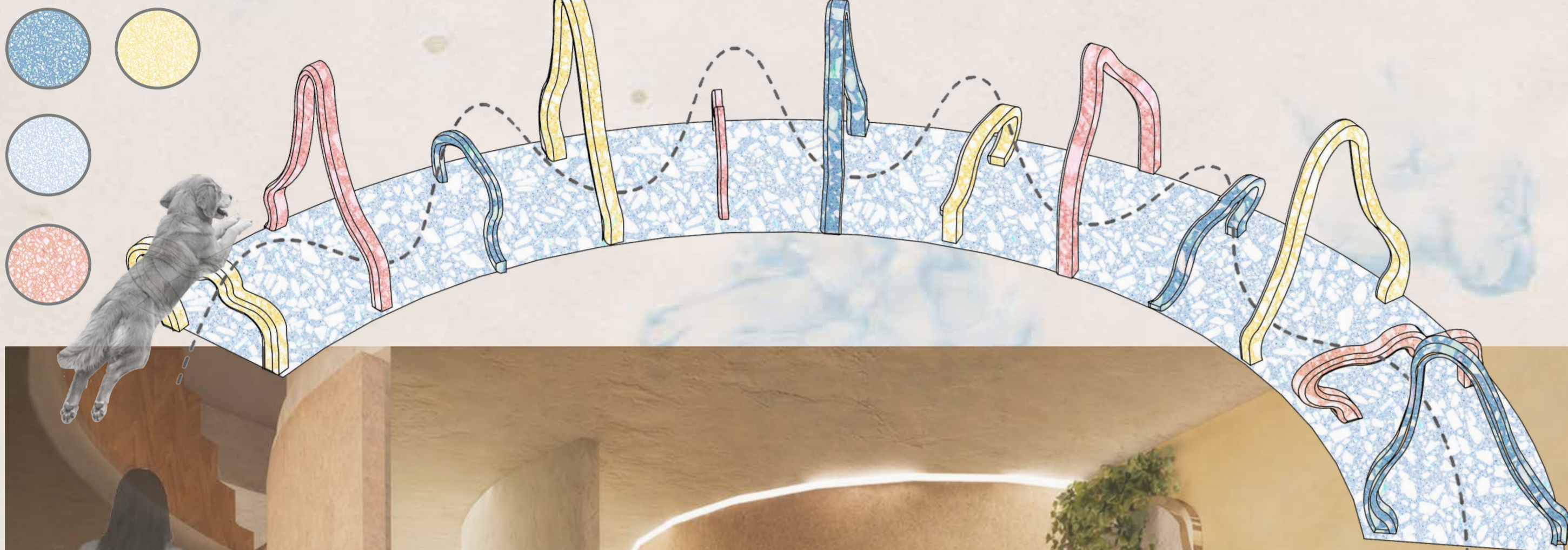
- Dogs Journey Ground Floor
- - - Dogs Journey First Floor



Drop off/Reunion space

2. Transition - Alert

This instinct is translated into a transitional space of the daycare through a curved pathway that encourage sensory engagement and attentiveness. The changes in enclosure, texture, and circulation stimulate curiosity and awareness, reflecting the cautious movement and perceptive behaviour of WW2 scout dogs moving between environments. This space focuses on canine sensory experience, using scent, movement, and spatial design to help dogs transition into a calmer mindset before entering daycare. The curved pathway, obstacles, and rewards reduce overstimulation, encourage natural behaviours, and create a controlled, engaging journey that supports emotional regulation.



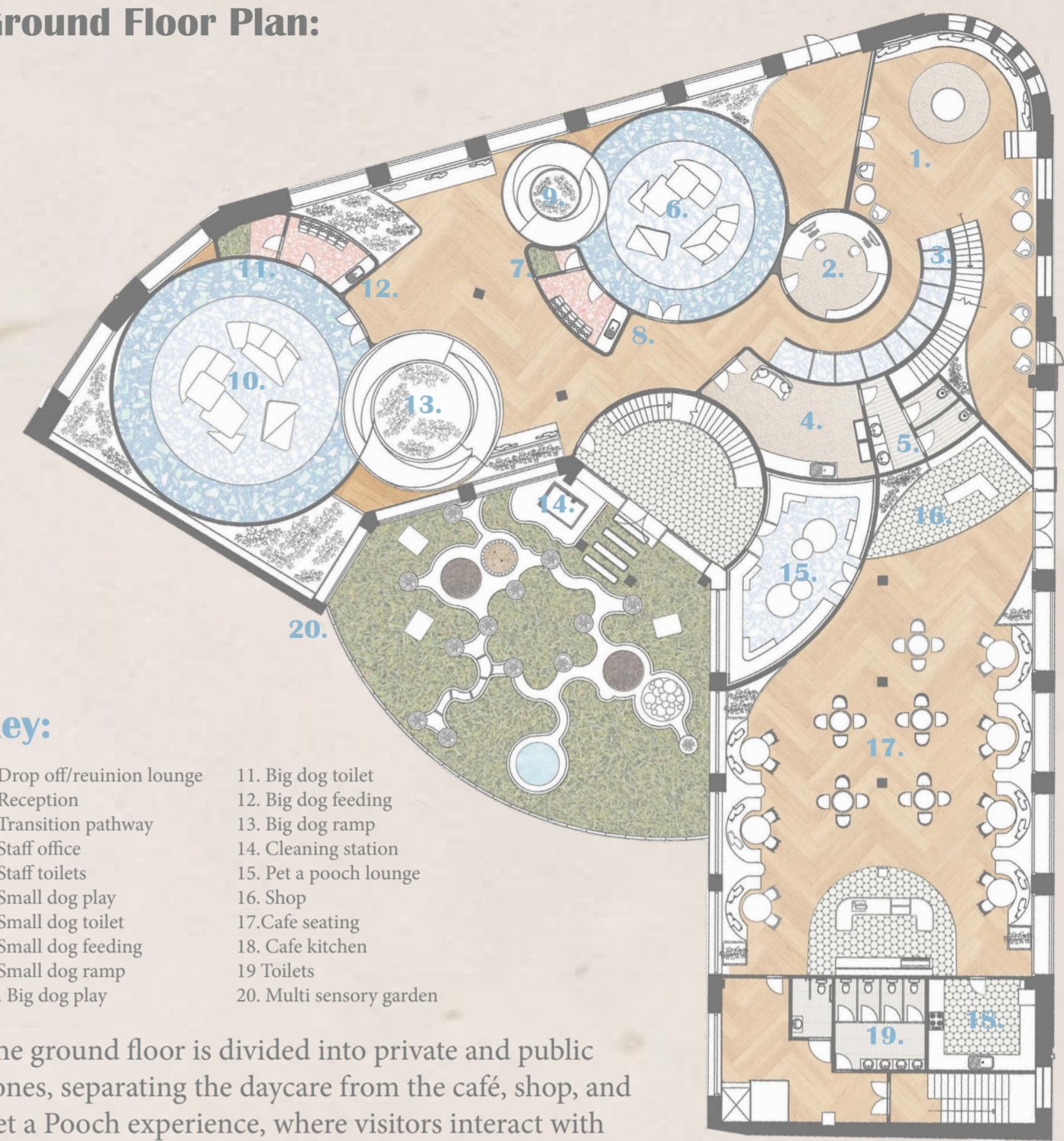
Transition space

Dog - human leg study:

The dog-human leg study inspired a design focused on shared experiences that strengthen trust, companionship, and emotional connection. By encouraging calm, synchronised interactions, the space becomes animal-centred by supporting dogs' emotional needs, security, and wellbeing.



Ground Floor Plan:

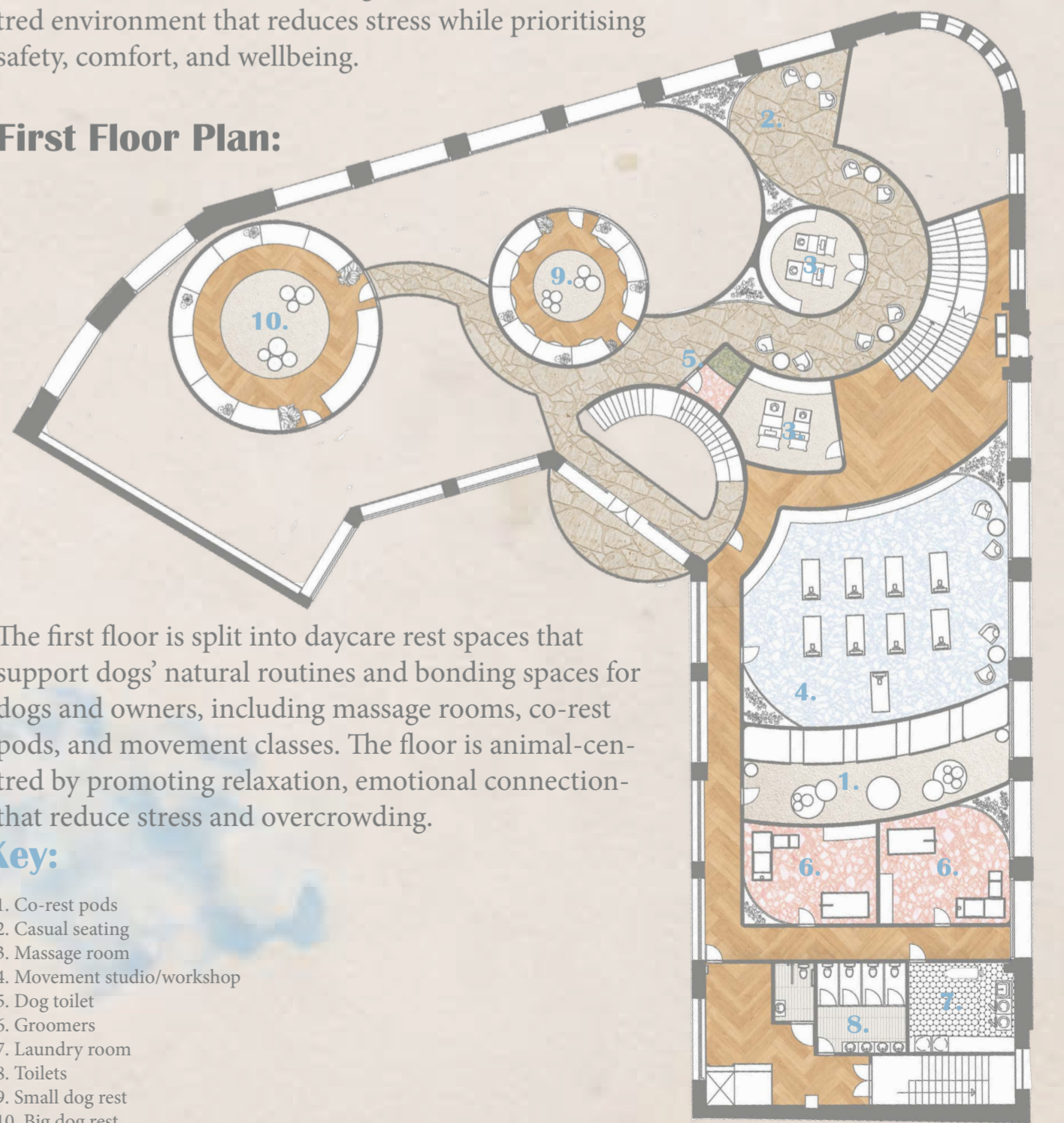


Key:

- 1. Drop off/reunion lounge
- 2. Reception
- 3. Transition pathway
- 4. Staff office
- 5. Staff toilets
- 6. Small dog play
- 7. Small dog toilet
- 8. Small dog feeding
- 9. Small dog ramp
- 10. Big dog play
- 11. Big dog toilet
- 12. Big dog feeding
- 13. Big dog ramp
- 14. Cleaning station
- 15. Pet a pooch lounge
- 16. Shop
- 17. Cafe seating
- 18. Cafe kitchen
- 19. Toilets
- 20. Multi sensory garden

The ground floor is divided into private and public zones, separating the daycare from the café, shop, and Pet a Pooch experience, where visitors interact with dogs under supervision. Controlled circulation, separate entrances, and clear zoning create an animal-centred environment that reduces stress while prioritising safety, comfort, and wellbeing.

First Floor Plan:



Key:

- 1. Co-rest pods
- 2. Casual seating
- 3. Massage room
- 4. Movement studio/workshop
- 5. Dog toilet
- 6. Groomers
- 7. Laundry room
- 8. Toilets
- 9. Small dog rest
- 10. Big dog rest



Play Space



Dog circling behaviour spatial sequence study



A study of my dog's natural circling behaviour before resting has been translated into a spatial sequence that responds to canine instinct, comfort, and wellbeing. This instinctive movement allows dogs to assess their surroundings, create familiarity, and establish a sense of safety

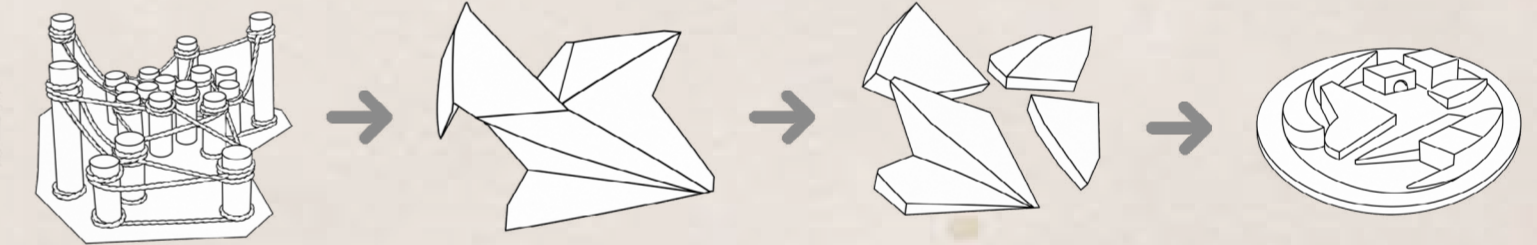
before settling. Utilising the double-height space of the existing site, the design transforms the three stages of this behaviour into three connected levels: active play and socialisation, a regulation zone for sensory adjustment and calming, and an enclosed rest area that provides comfort and security. Through this approach, the interior is shaped by canine behaviour and experience rather than traditional human-centred design principles.

3. Play - Pack

The instinctive communication and cooperation of messenger dogs is reinterpreted within the play space, creating an environment centred around social interaction, movement, and connection. Open communal areas encourage dogs to explore, engage, and build relationships, transforming historic ideas of teamwork and companionship into a contemporary space that supports canine social wellbeing and collective play.

The play structure transforms the fragmented forms and voids identified within my bomb map study, which mapped World War II fire locations where the Bristol fire station would have responded during the Blitz. Inspired by Brutalist playgrounds, these traces of destruction are reimagined into a softer, safer landscape for canine exploration, shifting a narrative of damage and protection into one of play, enrichment, and wellbeing. Designed around canine perception, the space is experienced through movement, scent, touch, and social interaction rather than visual appearance alone. The contrasting rubber structure creates a distinct sensory zone, while varied levels, circulation routes, and enclosed moments encourage dogs to climb, investigate, hide, and observe — creating an interior shaped by instinctive behaviour rather than a human viewpoint.

Model iteration:



6. Rest - Den

Designed as a sheltered, den-like environment, the rest space responds to a dog's instinctive need for retreat, safety, and emotional regulation. Enclosed forms and softer sensory conditions create a calming atmosphere that supports relaxation and recovery, reinterpreting the comforting role of WW2 morale booster dogs into a contemporary space centred on canine wellbeing and security.



Exploring biomimicry through fabric manipulation, this study investigates the texture and sensory qualities of dog fur. The soft folds and clustered forms imitate the way fur gathers and shifts through touch, reflecting comfort, affection, and the emotional connection between humans and dogs. Translated into the sleep space through textured wall surfaces and enclosed den-like forms, the design prioritises touch, scent, security, and emotional comfort over visual aesthetics. By responding to a dog's instinctive need for retreat and protection, the space redefines comfort through canine perception rather than human judgement. Sound-absorbing linen and cork materials reduce sensory overstimulation, creating a calmer and more comfortable environment for dogs.

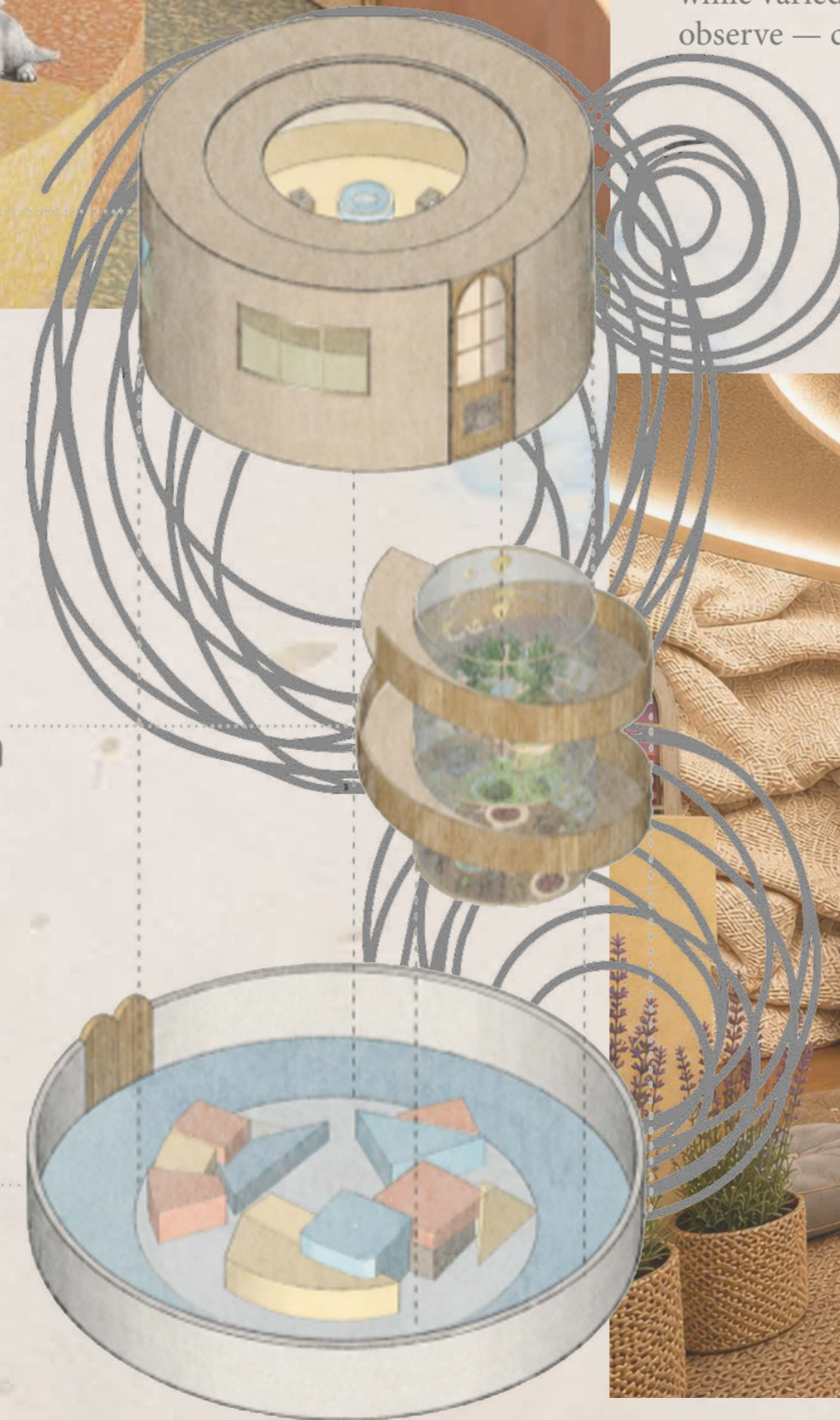
Soft

Materials Transition

Ramp Regulation

Active

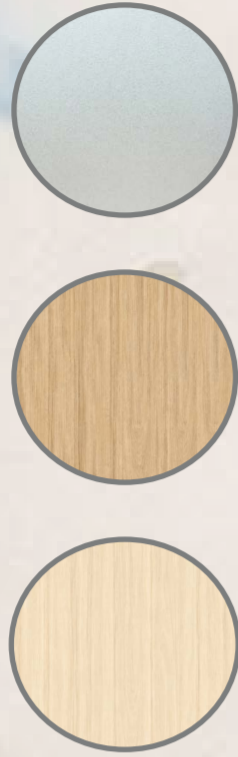
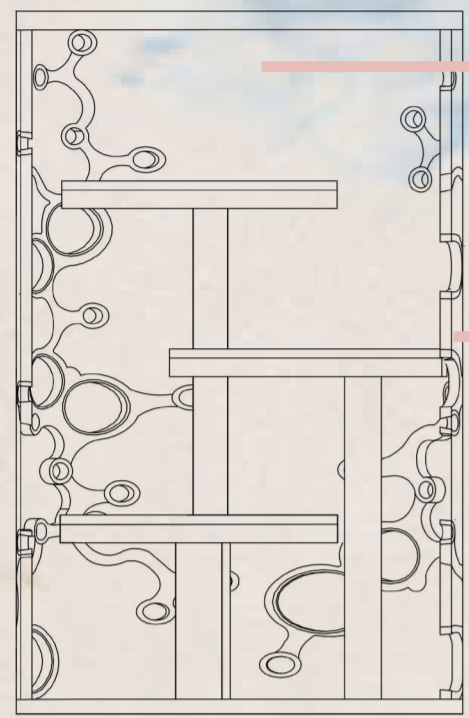
Hard



Sleep Space

4. Observe - Surveillance

In this space this behaviour is reinterpreted within the observation space through an elevated platform and open sight-lines that respond to a dog's instinctive need to monitor their surroundings and feel secure within their environment. The space encourages pause, awareness, and choice, reflecting the surveillance role of WW2 guard dogs while creating a calm area where comfort is measured through canine behaviour rather than human visual experience.



The regulation ramp acts as a sensory transition between the active play space and enclosed rest area, allowing dogs to gradually adjust before settling. Integrated herb planters within the central column encourage scent exploration through sniffing, using dog-friendly plants such as lavender, lemon balm, and chamomile to support relaxation. As dogs move through the space, the ramp encourages regulation, observation, and environmental awareness. By prioritising scent, movement, and instinctive behaviour over visual aesthetics, the design challenges human-centred interiors and explores how spaces can be imagined through the sensory experience of a canine occupant.

5. Explore - Territory

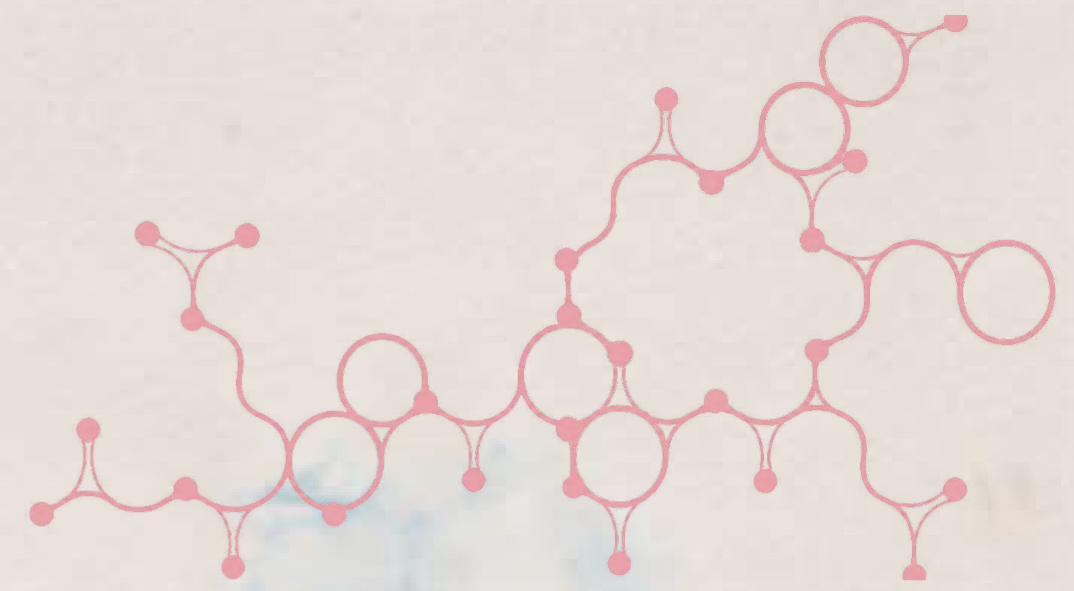
In this space this instinct shapes the exploration for the dogs through sensory planting, varied textures, and open circulation paths that encourage movement and investigation. The space allows dogs to engage naturally with scent and territory while referencing the searching and navigational abilities of wartime rescue dogs.

The multi-sensory garden is designed through the perspective of the canine occupant, exploring how an environment can be experienced beyond visual appearance. Prioritising scent, touch, movement, and instinctive behaviour, the space responds to the way dogs naturally understand and navigate their surroundings. Dog-safe sensory planting encourages scent exploration, while varied surfaces including grass, gravel, bark, and smooth paving create different textures and physical experiences underfoot. Rather than designing a landscape to be viewed, the garden becomes an interactive environment shaped by canine perception, supporting exploration and play.



Oxytocin study:

Oxytocin is a hormone linked to social bonding, attachment, and emotional regulation. In humans and dogs, positive interactions such as eye contact and touch release oxytocin, strengthening the emotional bond between both species. Inspired by the biological connection created through oxytocin, I adapted the molecular diagram to align with my biomimicry concept. The original hexagonal structure felt too rigid, so I transformed it into softer circular forms that reflect dogs' natural curved movement pathways. This creates a more organic, approachable design language, reinforcing comfort, trust, and connection. The oxytocin study informed the development of the regulating ramp and multi-sensory garden spaces.



Regulation ramp



Multisensory garden

Pet a pooch space



7. Connect - Companionship

In this space this instinct is reflected through the encouragement of interaction and companionship between dogs and non dog owners. The environment promotes calm, meaningful engagement, strengthening trust, emotional bonds, and the lasting connection shared between humans and dogs. This behaviour relates to the WW2 dog behaviour of a morale booster dog.

Pet-a-Pooch explores the shared emotional experience between humans and dogs, creating an interior shaped by companionship, trust, and behavioural connection. Low-level seating, open circulation, and calm interaction zones respond to canine perception by allowing dogs to choose how they engage, retreat, and communicate within the space. Rather than prioritising human visual experience, the design measures comfort through canine behaviour, transforming the interior into a shared environment shaped by mutual understanding and the human-dog bond.

8. Bond - Comfort



Co-rest space



The first floor explores the shared interior experience between dogs and humans through spaces designed for connection, trust, and emotional wellbeing. Co rest pods, dog-human massage rooms, and a shared movement studio encourage slower forms of interaction where both occupants can experience comfort, relaxation, and companionship. Designed for urban professionals and their dogs, these spaces create moments of pause from daily routines while strengthening the emotional bond formed through touch, movement, and presence.

Representing the final stage of the daycare journey, these spaces reimagine the evolving role of dogs, shifting from their historical wartime responsibilities of service and protection towards contemporary relationships centred on mutual care, recovery, and companionship. Rather than designing solely around human experience, the interior becomes a shared environment shaped by the emotional and behavioural needs of both species.

Materials:

The material palette responds to dogs' sensory needs, creating an environment experienced through touch, scent, sound, and movement. Durable materials such as rubber, vinyl, and sealed wood provide grip, comfort, and resistance to active use, while softer finishes like canvas and cork reduce noise and create calming rest areas. Natural textures, planting, and varied surfaces offer sensory cues throughout the daycare, shifting the focus from human-centred aesthetics to canine comfort, behaviour, and wellbeing.

Lavander



Regulation

Lemon Balm



Cammomile



Dog-human massage space

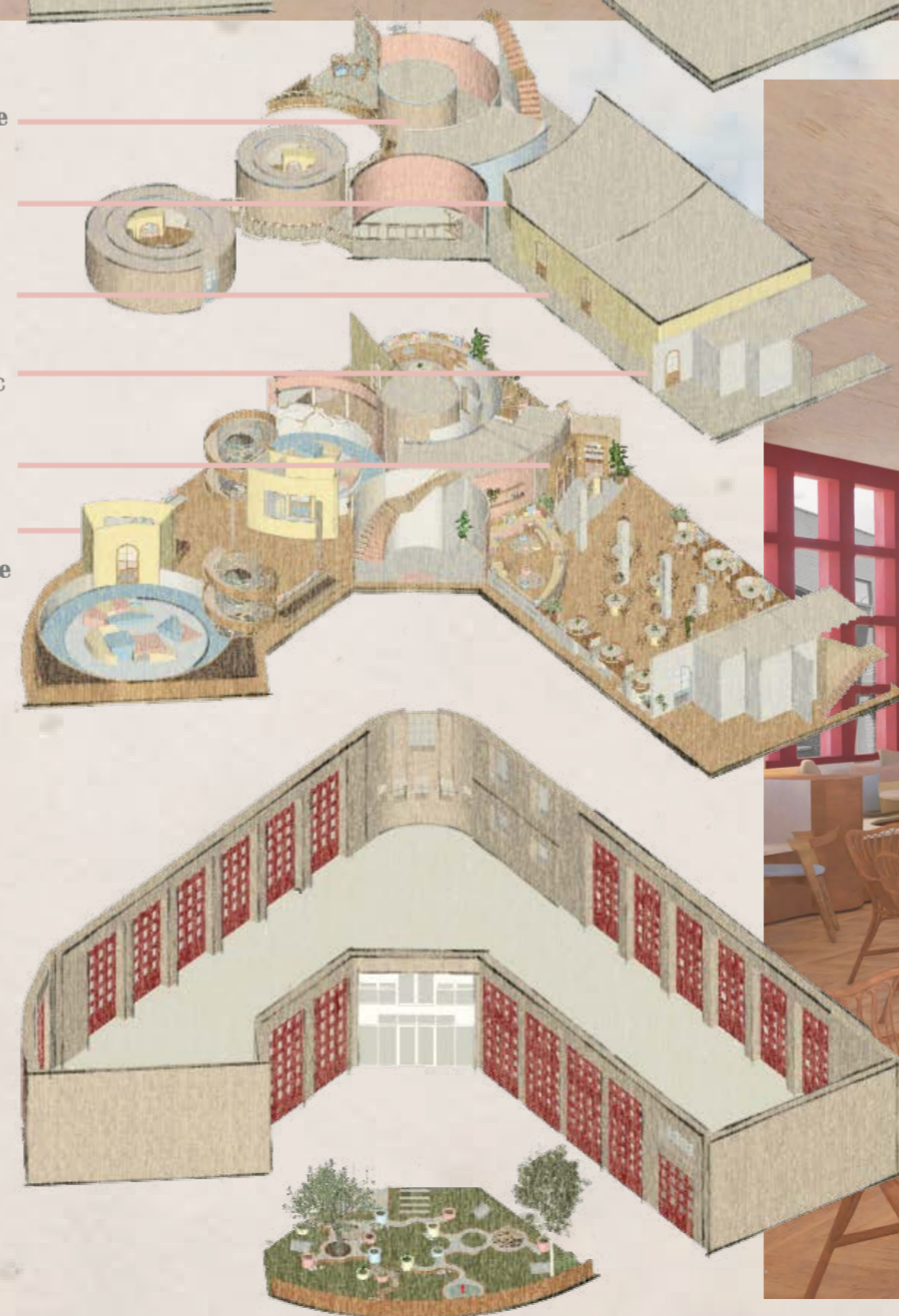
Dog-human yoga space

Dog-human co-rest space

Dog grooming/clinic space

Shop

Dog feeding and indoor dog toilet space



Cafe space