

# ReConnect:

## A Sanctuary for the Mind

### PROJECT STATEMENT

This project explores the intersection of mental health, sensory stimulation, and social enrichment, offering a serene space where individuals can pause, reconnect, and meaningfully engage with their surroundings. In a fast-paced world that often prioritises busyness, this space provides a calming refuge where sight and touch combine to create a meditative and reassuring environment.

Drawing inspiration from water's dynamic nature and fluidity, this project emphasises the sensory experience of water and light as tools for evoking tranquillity and emotional comfort. With its movement and reflective qualities, water's ever-changing nature serves as a metaphor for mental health, symbolising both stillness and turbulence and capturing the delicate balance of emotional states.

The forms within the space reflect a soft, playful materiality, creating a sense of security and warmth. Working with the building's existing structure, particularly the columns, a gridding system was developed to enhance flow and placement, integrating the space's limitations into the design. This careful planning offers an optimised layout that ensures accessibility and functionality.

The space serves as a multifaceted environment for individuals and families, providing a supportive setting for private consultations with mental health professionals and a vibrant area for sensory play and enrichment. Additionally, it includes an event and workshop space designed for art therapy sessions, group classes for expecting parents, and various community-building activities.

In this context, water becomes a metaphor for mental health's fluid and fragile nature—its stillness representing a peaceful state of mind. At the same time, even the slightest ripple reflects the subtle shifts in emotional well-being. This space creates harmony between stillness and movement, offering a comforting and adaptable environment where individuals can find peace, seek support, and engage in personal growth.

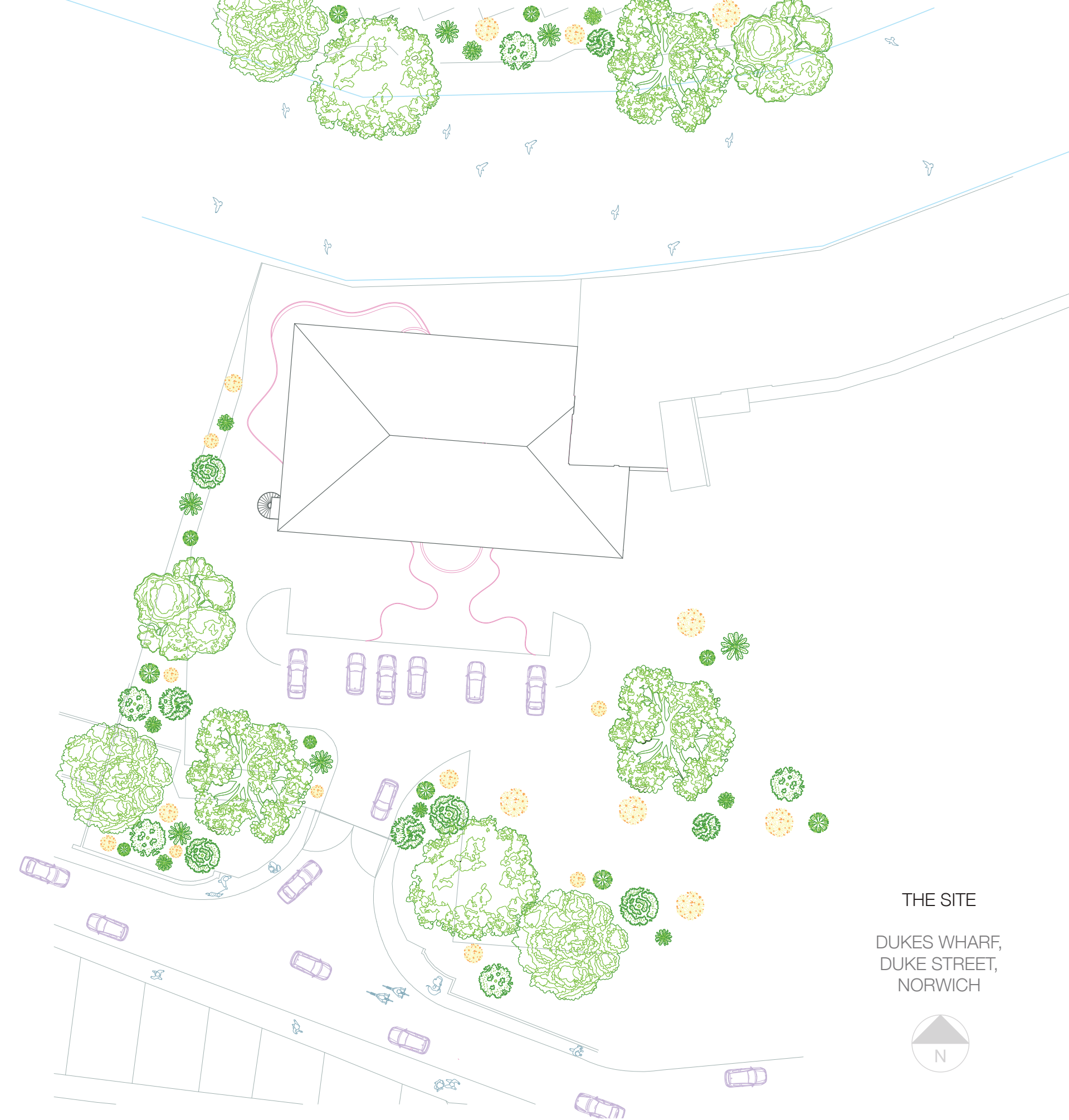


A significant number of parents struggle with loneliness and isolation, with some studies indicating that up to 80% of mothers and 58% of parents overall report feeling lonely.

Social engagement generally has positive effects on mental and physical health, particularly for older adults. Higher social engagement is associated with lower risk of mortality, improved mental health



Play is crucial for children's development across cognitive, social, and emotional domains, supported by research and anecdotal evidence. Statistics show that play enhances skills, improves well-being, and fosters healthy development.



THE SITE  
DUKES WHARF,  
DUKE STREET,  
NORWICH



USER GROUP

SOCIAL

CONNECT

COMMUNITY

PLAY





# SPACIAL JOURNEY

REFRESH

RELAX

STEP  
AND  
SLIDE

FACILITIES

CREATE

READ

KITCHEN

First floor

STIMULATE

EXPLORE

STEP  
AND  
SLIDE

FACILITIES

PLAY

WELCOME

REST

ENTRANCE

Ground floor

Sustainability is woven into every part of this sanctuary space, supporting environmental responsibility and emotional well-being. Recycled plastic is used to create playful, light-reflective features, celebrating the project's inspiration from water and its dynamic refractions while reducing landfill waste. Sustainable vinyl provides a durable, low-emission finish ideal for a vibrant, family-centred environment.

Low-VOC paints ensure a healthy, breathable, safe atmosphere for children and parents alike. Natural and responsibly sourced fabrics add sensory comfort through soft textures and calming tones, reinforcing the nurturing atmosphere. Bamboo wood brings a grounding, biophilic connection to nature, enhancing warmth and tactility throughout the space.

Additionally, soy oil-based foam is used in the soft play areas and seating, providing a safe, cushioned environment for play and rest while actively diverting waste from landfills.

These material choices collectively create a low-impact, health-conscious space for connection, play, and emotional restoration.

VIEWING POINT  
SEATING  
CREATE AND MAKE  
TAKE A SEAT  
READING NOOK  
KITCHEN

WOVEN CURTAINS  
RECYCLED REFRIGERATORS  
AND SINGLE USE CUTLERY  
30% RECYCLED ACRYLIC  
BAMBOO WOOD

First floor at 1:200

SENSORY SOFT PLAY 1  
SLIDE AND STAIRS  
SENSORY SOFT PLAY 2  
WELCOME DESK  
ENTRANCE  
WALKWAY

RECYCLED CD CASES  
30% RECYCLED ACRYLIC  
SOY BASED POLYOL AND  
MINERVA CORE RANGE  
GLOSSY PVC VINYL  
FABRIC  
SAFETY GLASS

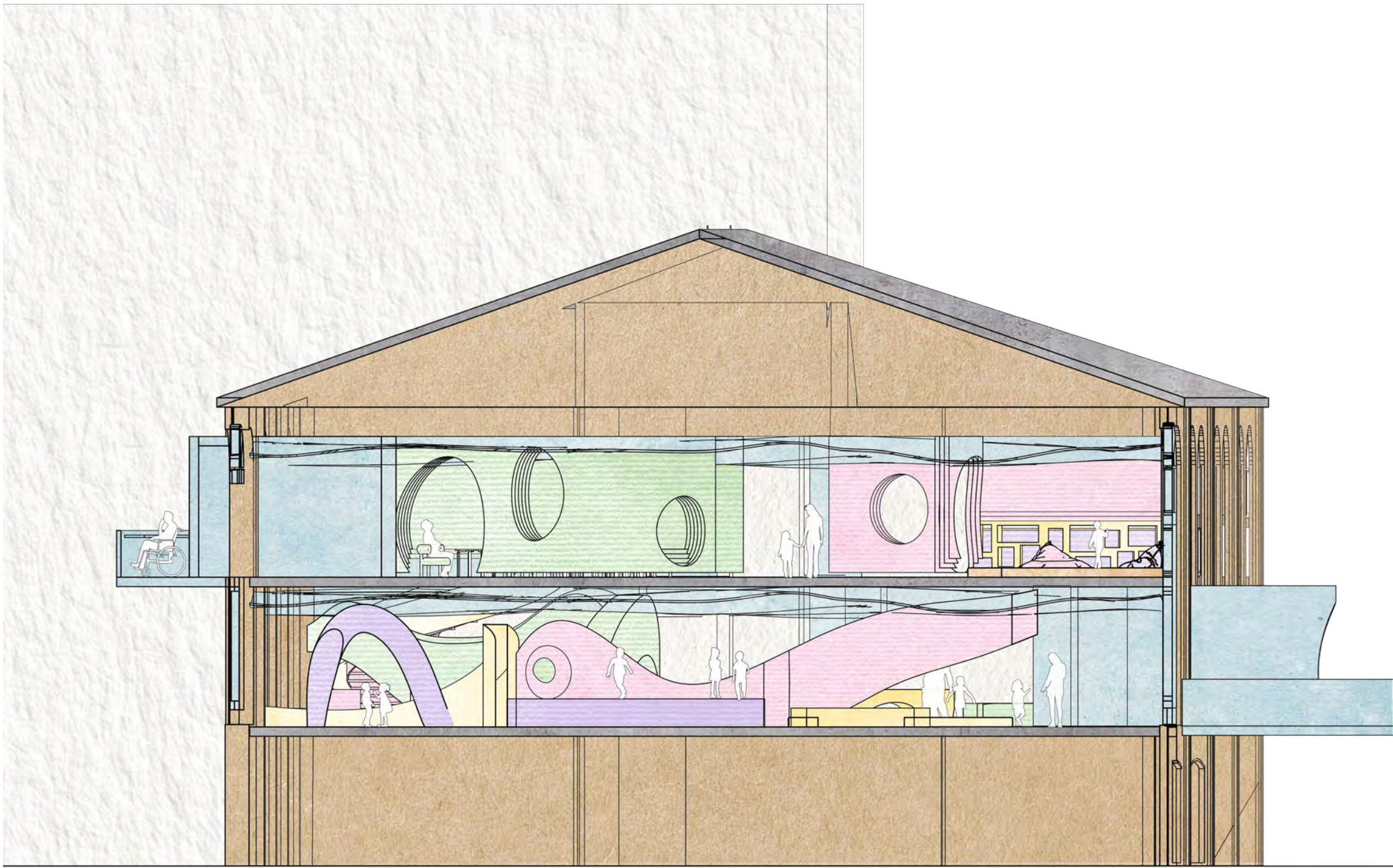
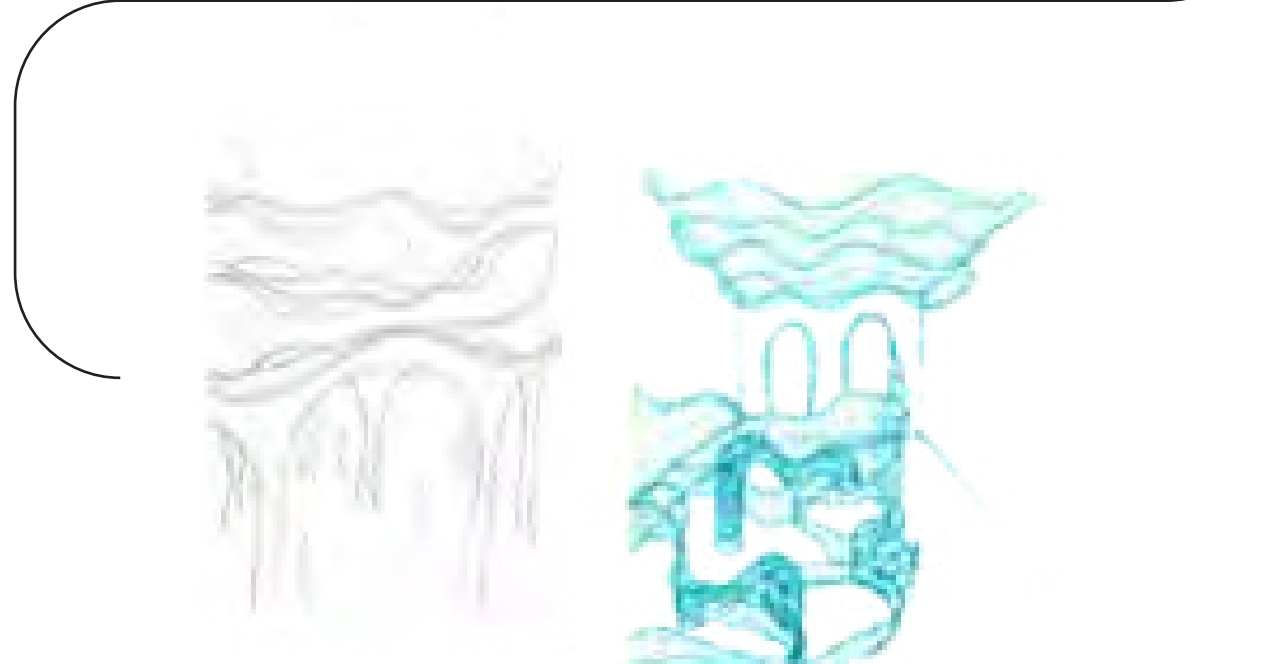
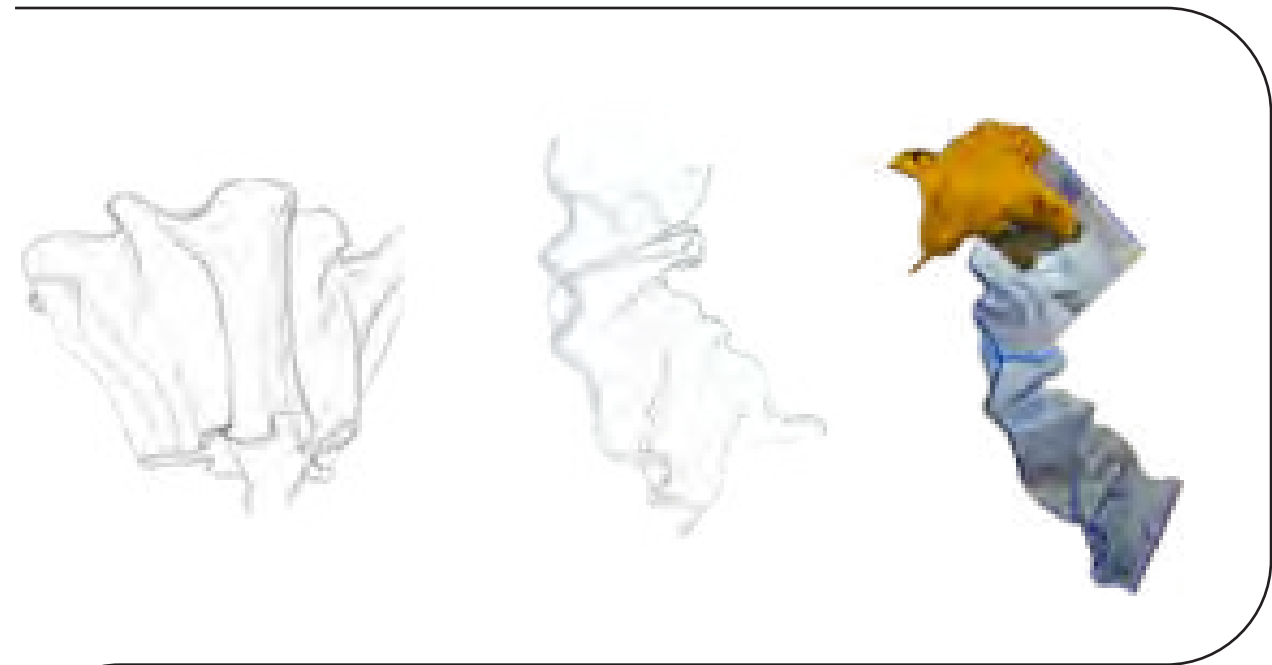
Ground floor at 1:200



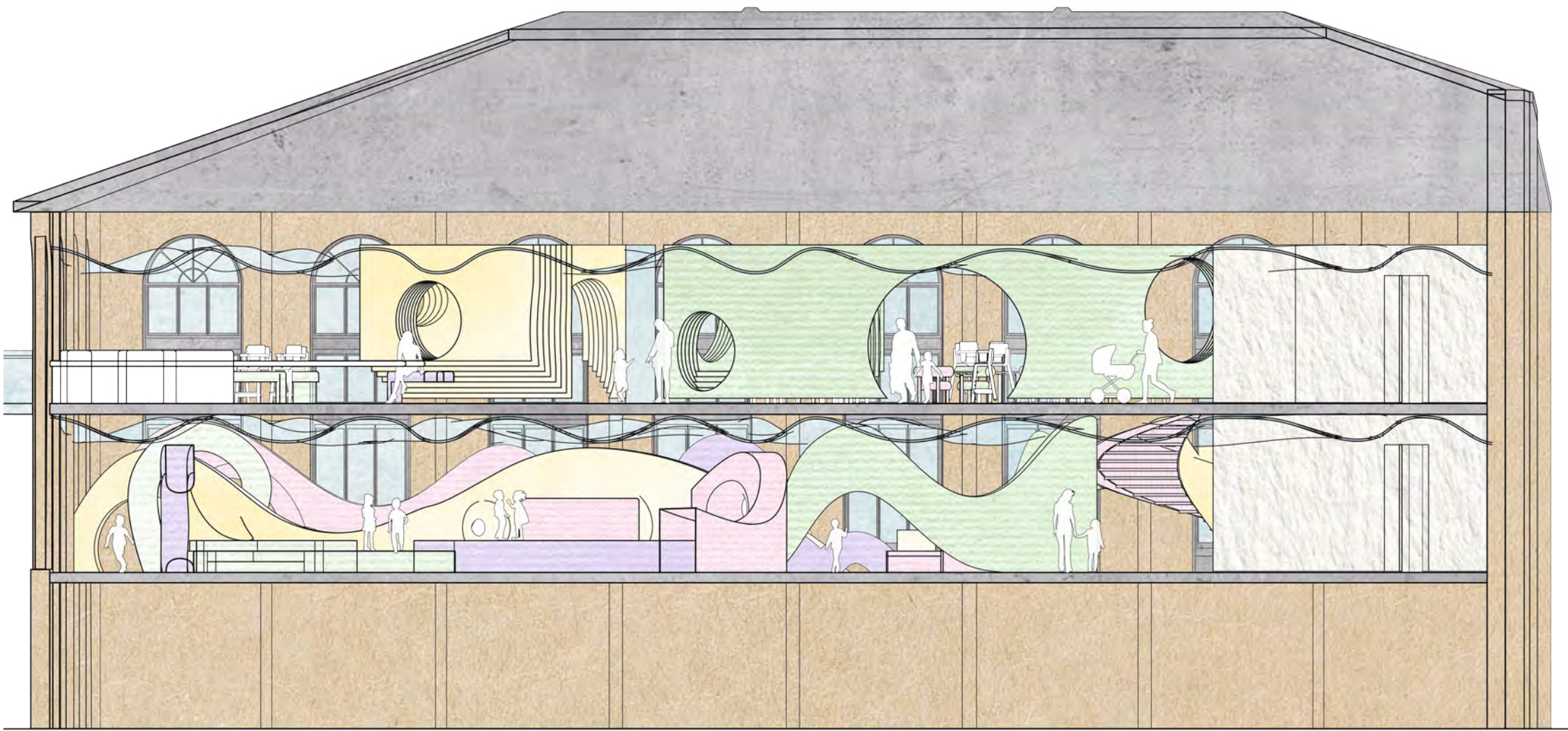
# THE DEVELOPED CONCEPT

My design concept originated from the principles of biophilia, specifically exploring the relationship between water, light, and human well-being. Inspired by the fluidity of water and the captivating refractions created when light passes through it, I began by developing a series of abstract forms that embody these natural phenomena. As the project evolved, so did the purpose of these forms, shifting from purely aesthetic exploration to a more meaningful engagement with mental health and emotional support.

The organic shapes I developed became the foundation for envisioning a sanctuary-like structure. This space evokes serenity and reflection and promotes human connection and joy. This led to a deeper exploration of how such forms could foster social interaction, emotional comfort, and play. The concept ultimately grew into a community-oriented space designed for parents and children. In this welcoming environment, they can connect, socialise, and play together in a calming and uplifting setting. The design celebrates the initial inspirations of water and light, now re-imagined through the lens of wellness, purpose, and shared experience.



SECTION AA at 1:100, exploration of the playful environment of the soft play, relaxation in the seating zones, a moment to take in the view of the river, and a chance to read and learn stories.



SECTION BB at 1:100, adventuring through the sensory environment, time to be creative and experiment with art, and to explore this wonderful sanctuary.

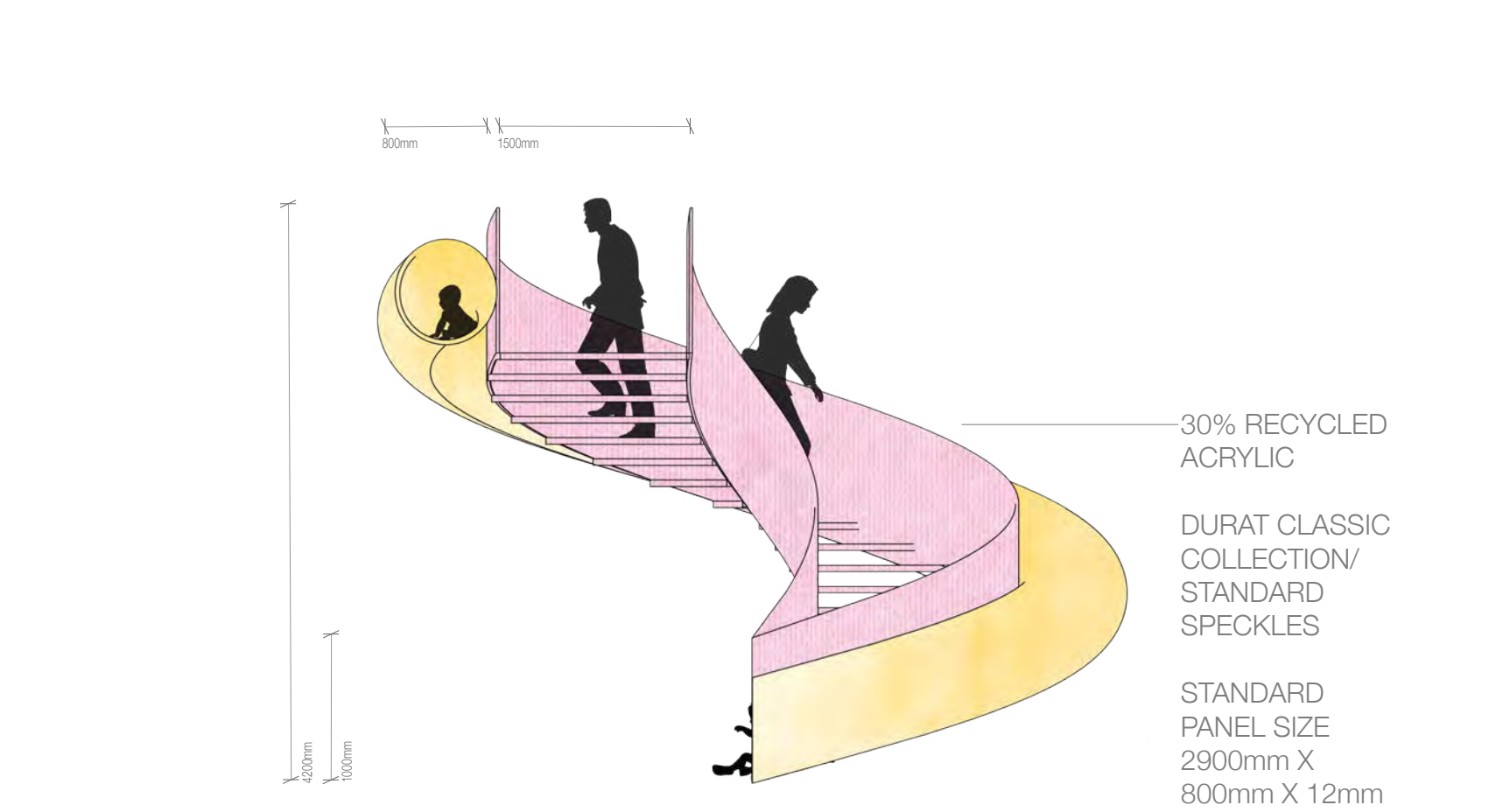




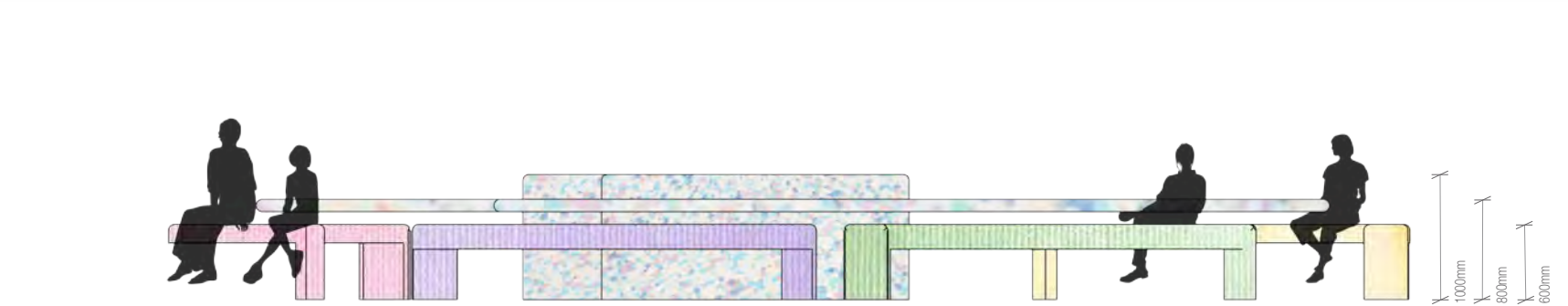
READING NOOK, A quiet zone to take a moment to grab a book and sit in a comfy bean bag, and choose a book to read from the selection provided.



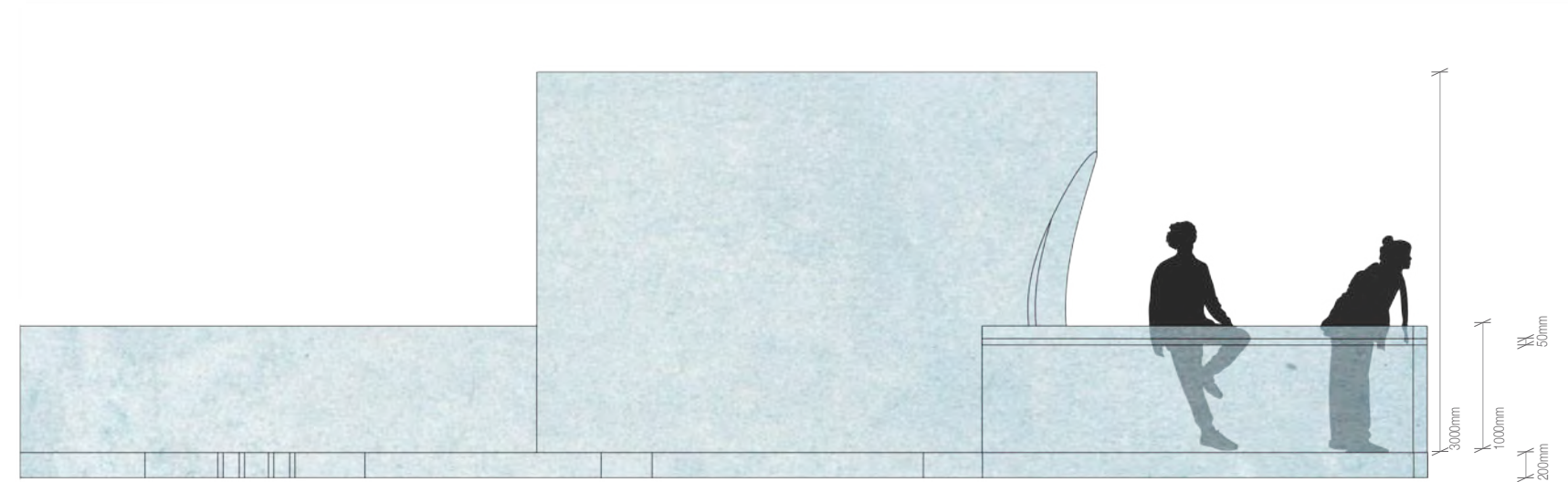
SENSORY SOFT PLAY 1, A space to climb and explore the fun pastel and organic shapes in this part of the soft play area.



STEP AND SLIDE at 1:50

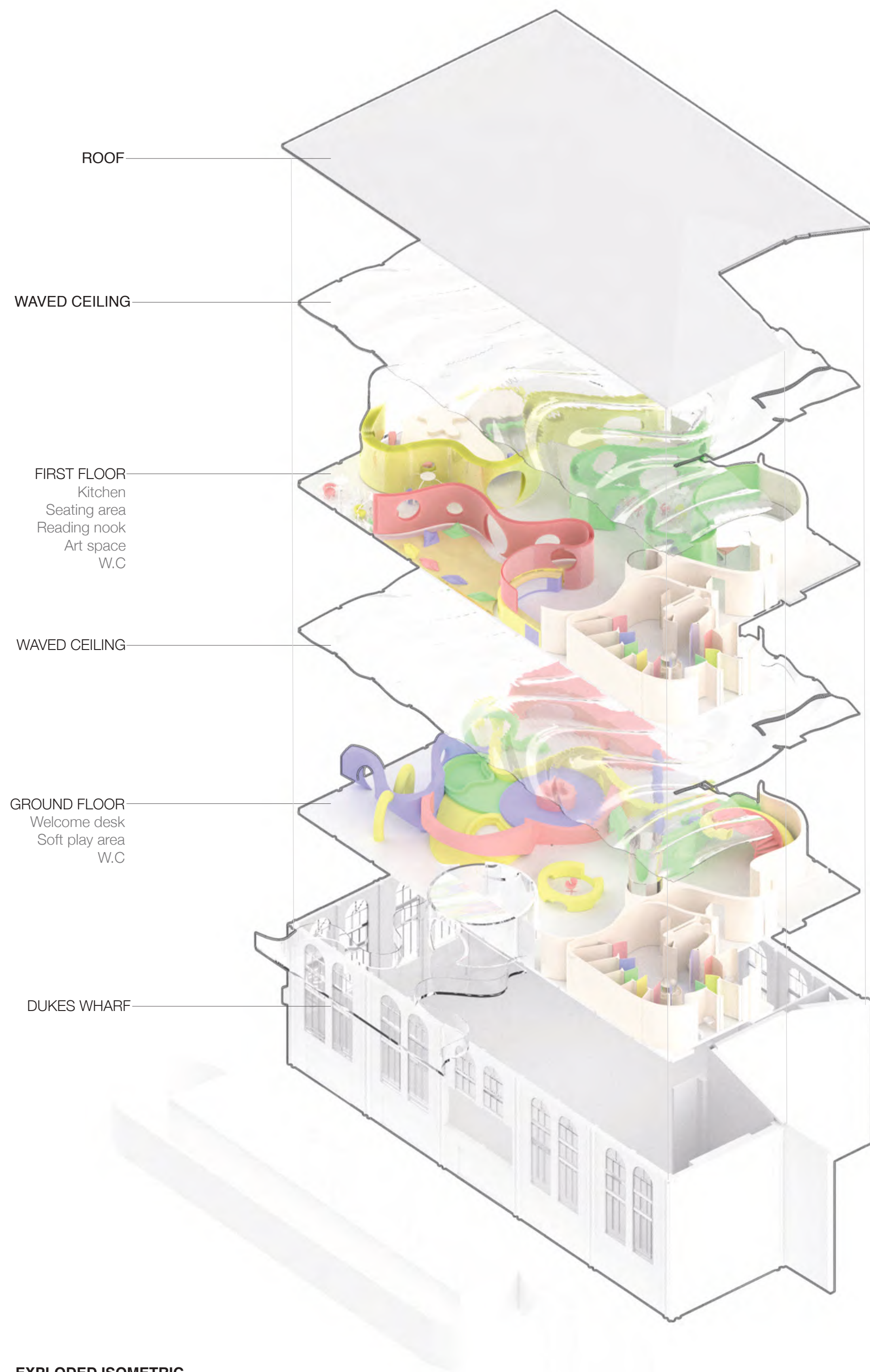


CREATE AND MAKE at 1:50

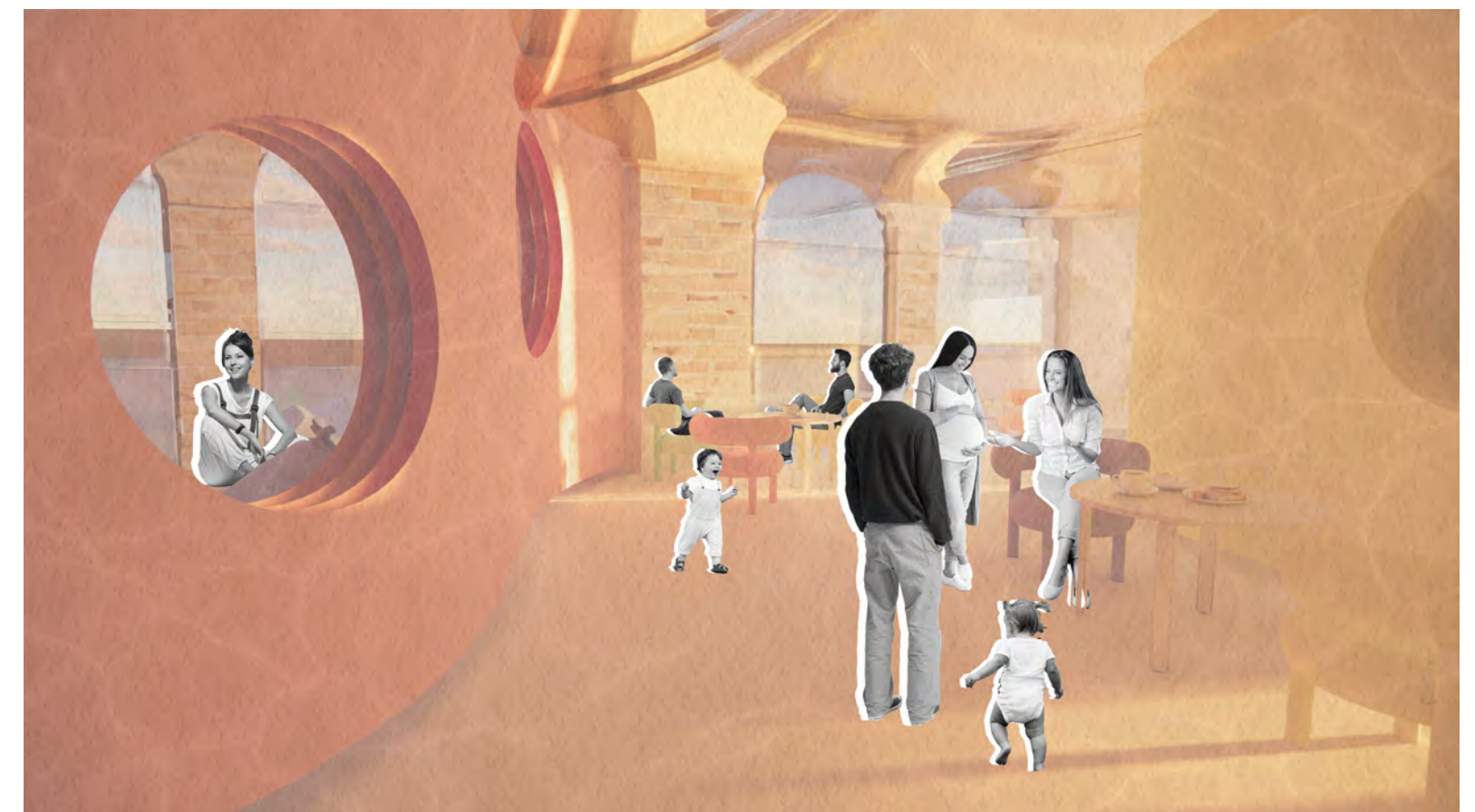


VIEWING POINT at 1:50





CREATE AND MAKE, a creative zone where you can be free to express your artistic side for all ages.



TAKE A SEAT, an area to have a moment to relax to chat with friends and family or to have a bite to eat and drink.



SENSORY SOFT PLAY 2, a space to step through the different levels, adventure through ball pits, exploring the pastel tones and sensory lights.