

MUSICIANS PLAYGROUND

St Cuthbert Chambers

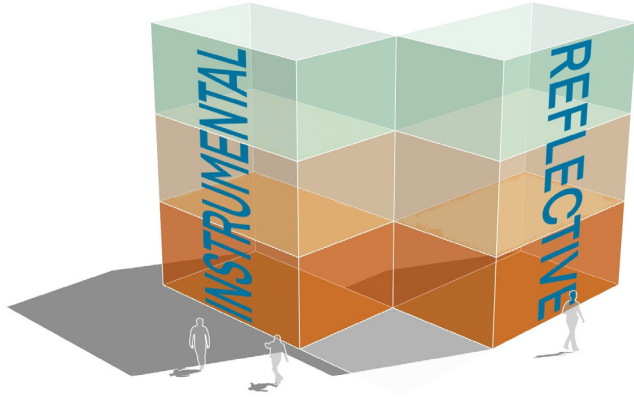
The proposed transformation of St. Cuthbert Chambers into a vibrant musical and creative hub represents a visionary approach to adaptive reuse, revitalizing a derelict Grade II listed building while respecting and celebrating its historical integrity. Located within the heart of Newcastle, adjacent to the iconic Grainger Market, this project seeks to merge heritage preservation with innovative functionality. The design adopts a “skeletal concept,” emphasizing the retention and enhancement of the building’s existing architectural features while introducing a subtle, contemporary framework that supports its new purpose. This approach maintains the authenticity of the site’s historic fabric, using it as a foundation to anchor new interventions that prioritize flexibility, cultural engagement, and community collaboration. The skeletal framework metaphorically and literally introduces a supportive structure that integrates seamlessly with the building’s original design, accommodating new spatial arrangements for performances, workshops, and collaborative workspaces. By celebrating the past while fostering innovation, the project not only enriches the immediate site but also contributes to Newcastle’s broader urban and cultural fabric, creating a dynamic environment that enhances well-being and inspires creativity.



Concept Model

Dedicated space in Newcastle that supports often overlooked and underrepresented demographics—particularly musicians and buskers. This space will serve not only as a platform for creative expression but also as a nurturing environment for artistic growth, education, and community building.

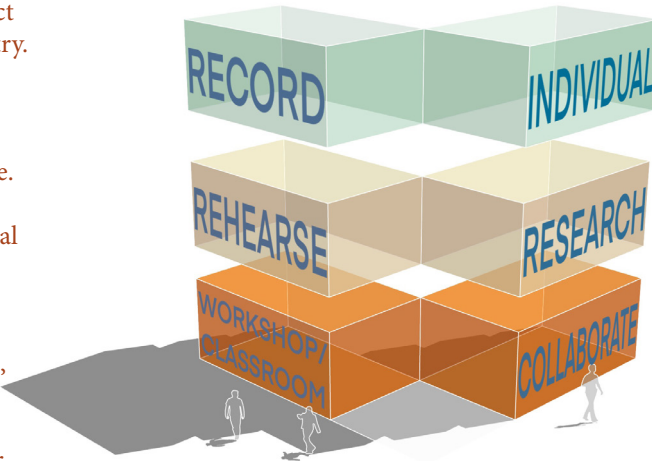
More than just a venue, this initiative is about cultivating a vibrant, inclusive community that encourages individual development, fosters collaboration, and contributes to the cultural richness of Newcastle. It’s a space where talent is nurtured, voices are amplified, and personal and artistic growth is not just supported, but celebrated.



The building is organized into two distinct yet interconnected zones, divided laterally to reflect the dual nature of music as both art and industry.

The left wing is dedicated to the instrumental and creative side of music—housing spaces for practice, rehearsal, recording, and performance. This zone supports the full arc of musical creation, from individual exploration to professional production.

The right wing focuses on the collaborative and business side of music, with research areas, shared workspaces, and hubs for education, management, and industry growth—fostering knowledge exchange and creative entrepreneurship.



The building’s spatial arrangement reflects a vertical journey through learning, collaboration, and creation.

On the instrumental side, users move from practice spaces at the base, to rehearsal rooms, and ultimately to recording studios—marking a clear progression from skill-building to professional output.

On the reflective side, the layout shifts from open, collaborative areas to more focused research spaces, and finally to individual pods for reflection and therapy—supporting both collective growth and personal development. This vertical zoning reinforces a journey of growth—whether through artistic mastery or professional engagement.

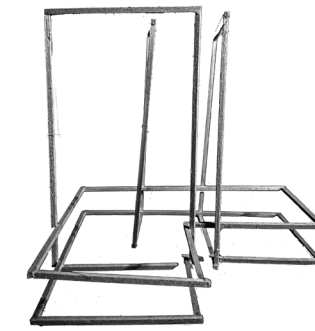
Age Groups



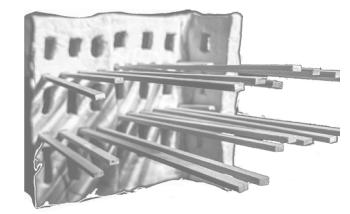
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

St Cuthbert Chambers

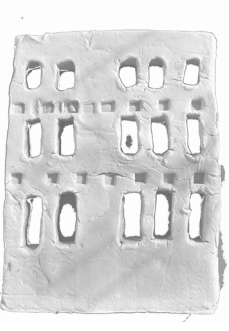
The design honours and reveals the building's structural and material fragments—treating the architecture as a living body. The skeleton, expressed through the exposed structural frame, unifies the building as a whole. The bones, represented by joists, beams, and columns, provide rhythm and order—visibly supporting the spatial flow. The skin, formed by the external walls and enclosures, is deliberately left exposed or minimally finished to showcase the building's raw character.



SKELETON



BONES



SKIN



The third floor marks the culmination of the creative process—merging production, personal reflection, and well-being.

At its center, a public greenhouse serves as a calming retreat, offering a green, light-filled space for users to relax, recharge, or prepare for performance at any point during the day.

To the left, the recording studios represent the final stage in the creative sequence—transitioning from practice and rehearsal to full production.

On the right, the reflective wing hosts a series of private pods, designed for quiet contemplation, therapy, or personal restoration. These adaptable spaces support the emotional and mental well-being of artists and visitors.

The second floor is conceived as a transitional layer, at its heart, the central core features a communal kitchen and informal gathering space.

To the left of the core, a series of acoustically optimized rehearsal studios support ensemble work, evolving naturally from the individual practice spaces below. Adjacent to these are a set of modular work units.

On the right-hand side, the research wing is oriented toward focused, individual inquiry.

At its core, a central atrium creates a dynamic vertical connection with the levels above and below. Suspended swings and informal seating animate this void, offering playful, community-oriented spaces open to the public.

To the left of the central core, the instrumental wing houses a series of workshop and classroom spaces dedicated to music-making, instrument building, and technical exploration.

On the right side, the reflective wing supports research based, collaborative learning environments with an open space and seminar rooms designed for ideation, discussion, and creative exchange.

The main entrance opens onto an elevated balcony level, offering a panoramic view of the performance space below. This initial vantage point serves as both an arrival moment and a visual invitation—drawing visitors into the experience. Adjacent to the balcony, an information hub provides context about the site, upcoming performances, and the venue's mission to support local talent.

The open-plan design creates visual permeability from the exterior, allowing passersby to see directly into the performance space. Framed views and transparent materials—such as glazed façades or perforated screens—blur the boundary between inside and out, drawing interest and encouraging spontaneous entry.

A vibrant performance space designed for local musicians and buskers, centered around a small stage for both scheduled sets and impromptu performances.

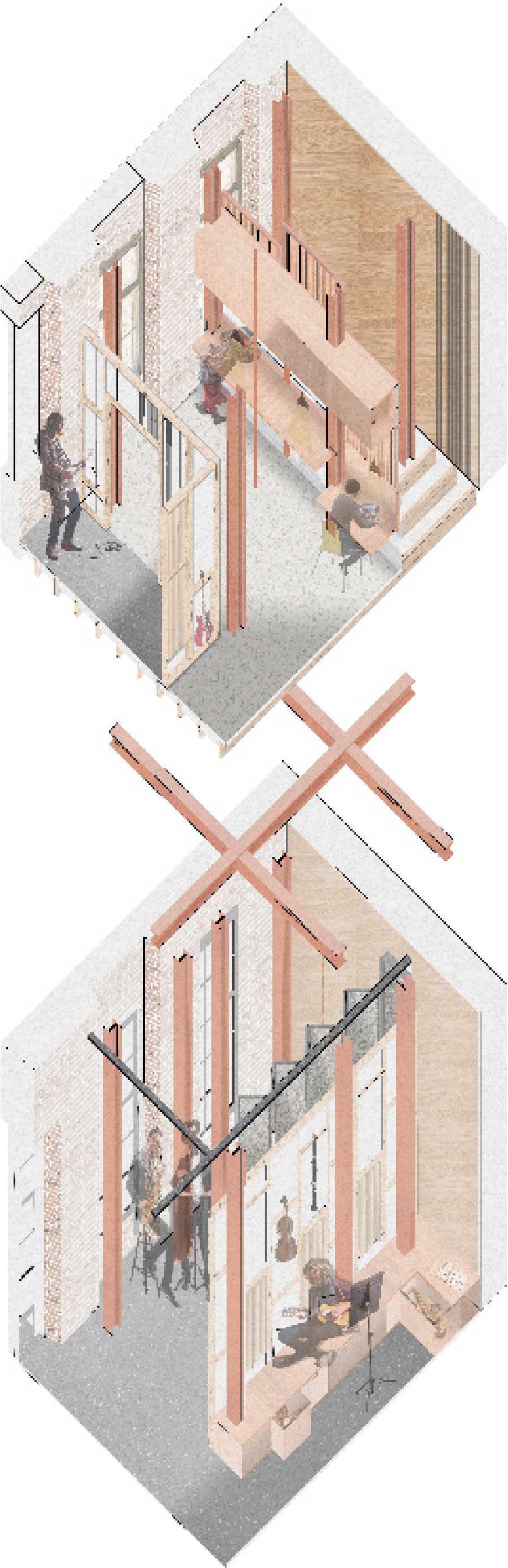
Stepped, amphitheater-style seating invites visitors to relax and enjoy the music, creating a casual, community-focused atmosphere. The wide steps also serve as social spaces for small groups.

Tucked beneath the seating is a cozy bar, offering local drinks, coffee, and light bites. Openings between levels maintain a visual and acoustic connection between the bar and stage, blending the experience.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

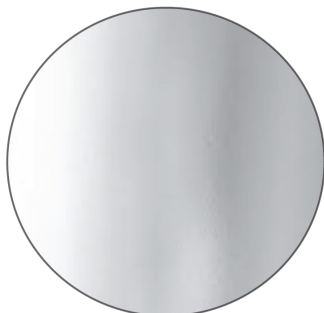
St Cuthbert Chambers



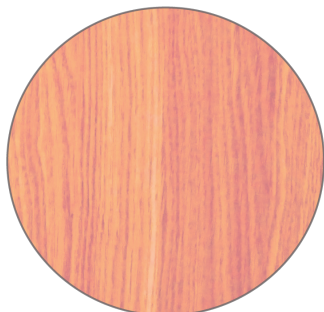
MATERIALS



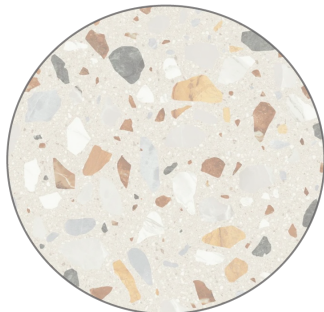
NATURAL OAK ACOUSTIC PANELS



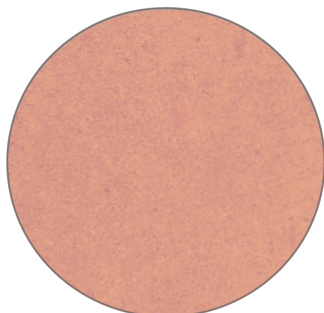
ALUMINIUM BALLUSTRADE



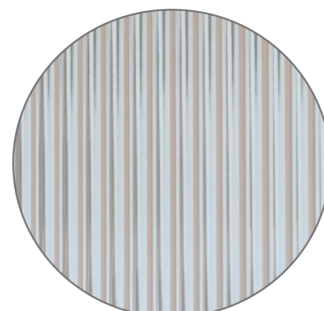
MAPLE WOOD, ORANGE SATIN LAC-
QUER STAIN



TERRAZZO BEIGE TILE



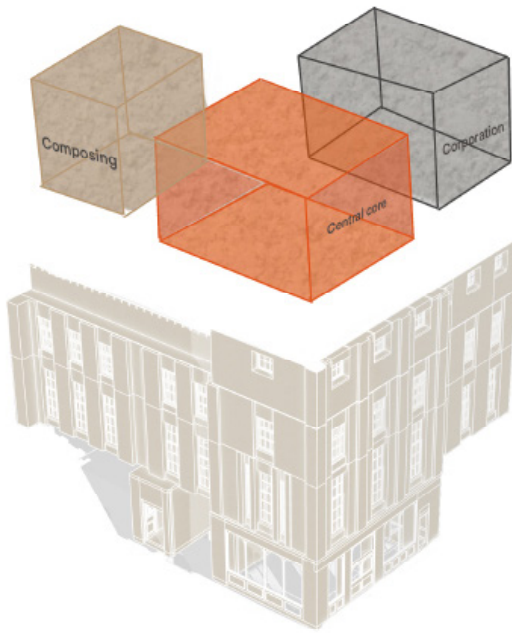
PREWEATHERED CORTEN STEEL



FROSTED FLUTED GLASS



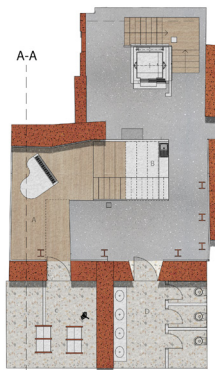
EXISTING BRICK



This project reimagines a once-abandoned structure as a vibrant and inclusive space for musical exploration. Musicians are invited to inhabit the building freely—where sound, movement, and energy flow seamlessly through its open and connected volumes. The architecture is intentionally porous and flexible, allowing music to travel across spaces, fostering moments of spontaneous collaboration and mutual inspiration. It becomes more than a venue; it is a musical playground, where practice, performance, and reflection coexist.

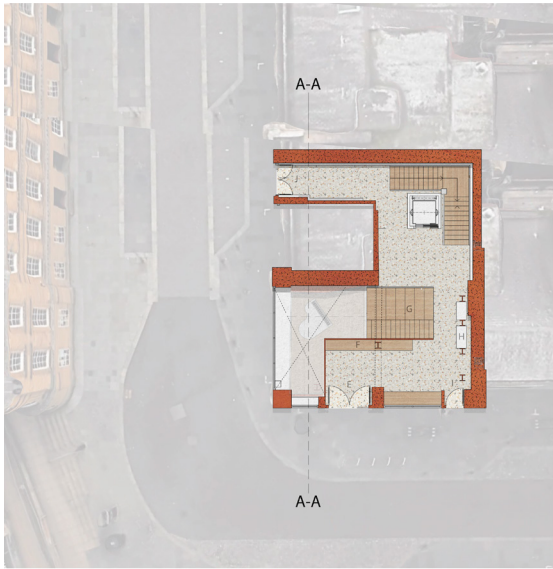
The intervention respects the character of the original structure while introducing a new architectural framework that is light, modular, and fully demountable. This system revitalizes the derelict shell without erasing its history—making it possible to adapt, relocate, or dismantle the framework as needed. The exposed bones of the building—its structure, materials, and surfaces—are celebrated rather than concealed, grounding the experience in honesty and craft.

Together, the old and new create a dialogue between permanence and impermanence, offering a space where creativity is both supported and unbounded.



BASEMENT

- A) PERFORMANCE SPACE
- B) BAR
- C) STORAGE
- D) TOILETS



GROUND

- E) MAIN PUBLIC ENTRANCE
- F) BESPOKE PLYWOOD SEATING
- G) GATHERING STAIRCASE SEATING
- H) BESPOKE TIMBER INFORMATION DESK
- I) ENTRANCE/EXIT
- J) MEMBER ENTRANCE/EXIT



At the heart of the building, the central core becomes an unexpected zone of release and interaction, animated by suspended swings that double as informal breakout spaces. Inspired by Raskl's Quayside Playground, these elements introduce a sense of play, lightness, and movement into the architectural rhythm—offering a counterbalance to the more structured program areas.



FIRST

- K) PLAYFUL SWING SEATING
- L) MUSIC RETAIL SHOP
- M) COLLABORATIVE WORKSPACE
- N) SMALL CONFERENCE SPACE
- O) HANGING BESPOKE MDF SHELVING
- P) MUSIC CLASSROOM



SECOND

- R) KITCHEN
- S) COMPUTER SUITE / ARCHIVE
- T) BESPOKE MDF WORKING UNIT
- U) REHEARSAL PODS



THIRD

- V) GREENHOUSE / RELAXING SPACE
- Y) 1-1 THERAPY PODS / INDIVIDUAL
- X) TOILETS
- Y) CONTROL ROOM
- Z) RECORDING SPACE



The research zone is designed as a focused yet flexible environment that supports a wide spectrum of academic and industry-based exploration within music and the creative arts. This space integrates modular work units, computer suites, and physical resources such as books, journals, and archival material—catering to both digital and tactile modes of research.

The layout encourages both individual concentration and collaborative inquiry. Open-plan desk clusters allow for casual interaction and group discussion, while enclosed study booths and sound-dampened rooms offer quiet areas for deep focus. The presence of computer suites with industry-standard software enables technical research, production analysis, and data-driven music studies.

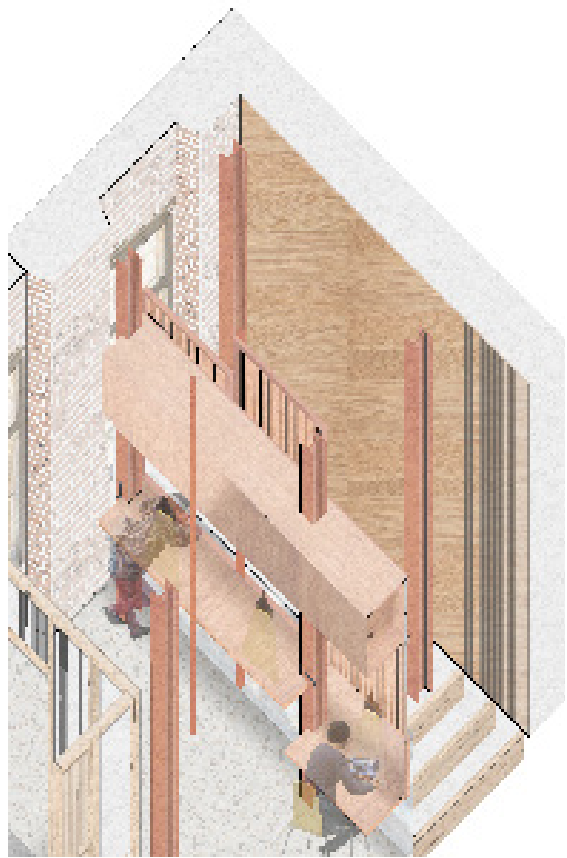


A dedicated performance space offers a platform for local musicians and buskers to share their craft with the wider community. Designed as an open and inviting environment, it allows sound to filter naturally through the building, drawing in passersby and creating a continuous auditory presence.

Strategic visual connections ensure that performances are visible from multiple levels and vantage points, encouraging spontaneous engagement. This space not only celebrates grassroots talent but also reinforces the building's identity as a hub of creativity, openness, and shared cultural experience.

DETAILED DESIGN - Bespoke Furniture

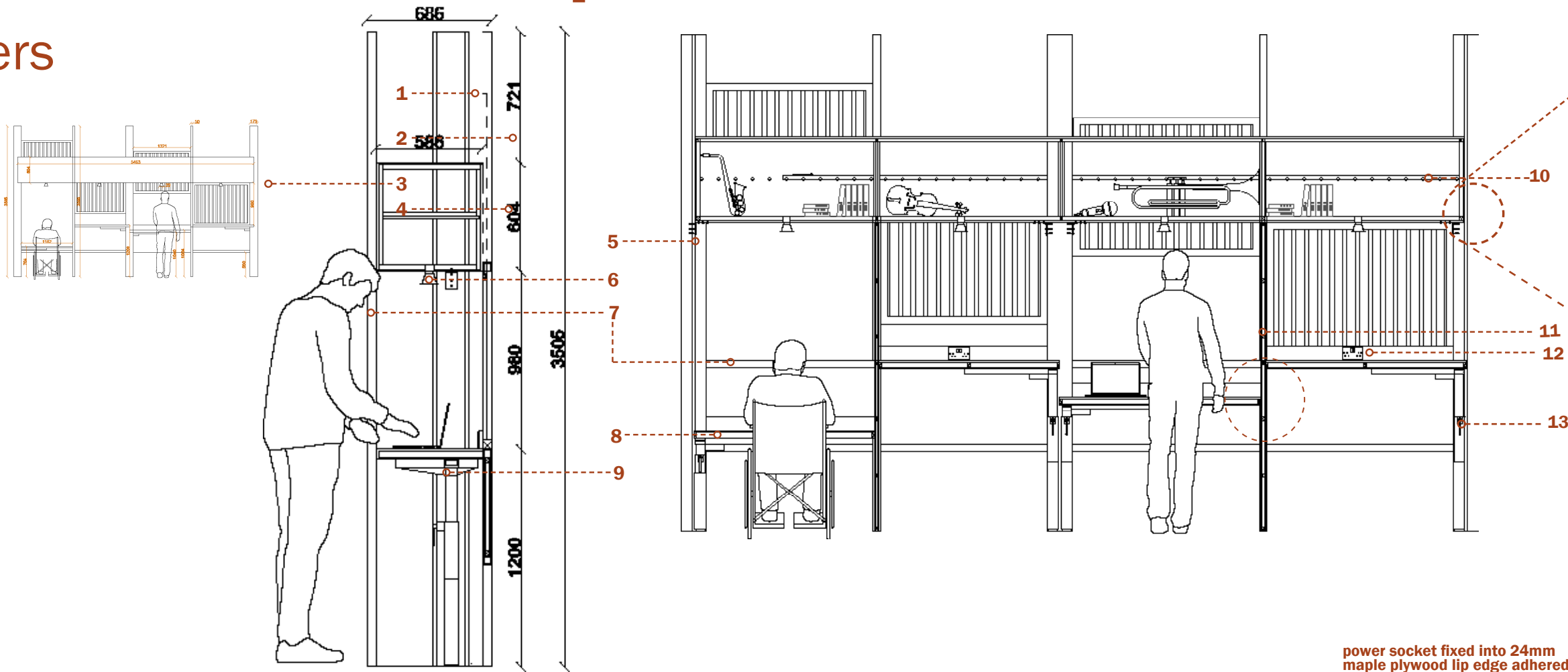
St Cuthbert Chambers



WORKING UNIT

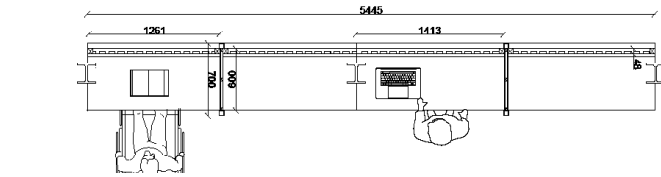
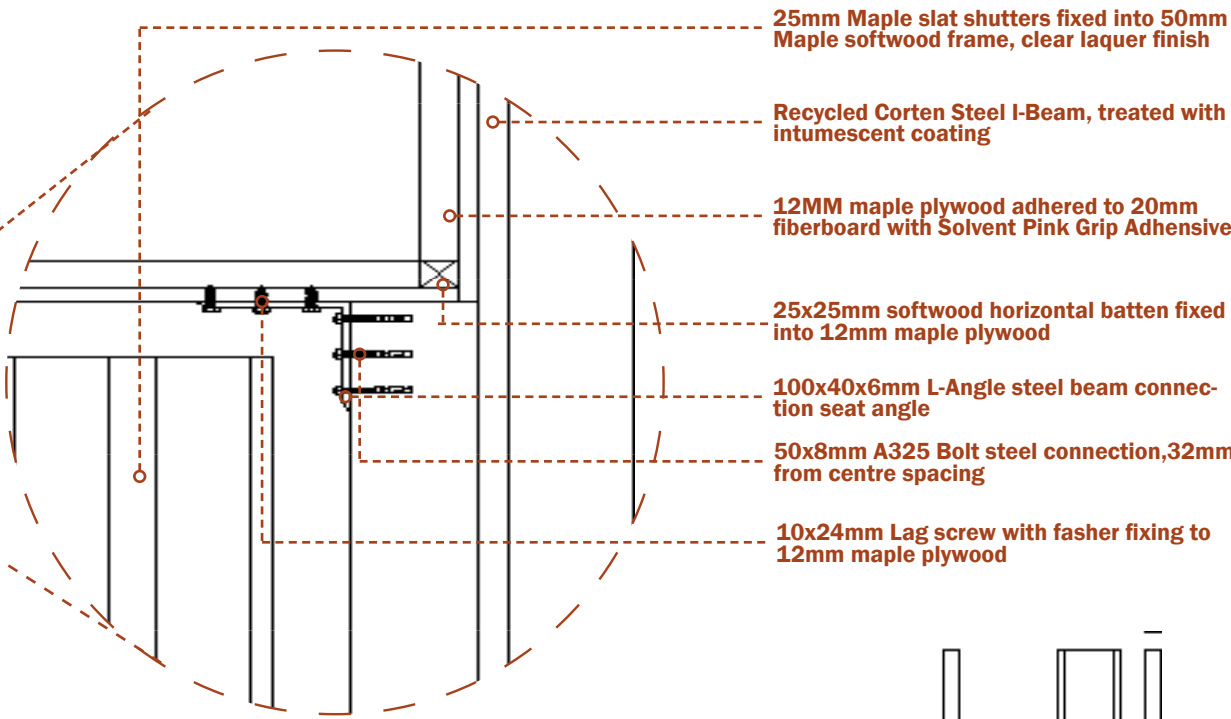
Adjustable tables & maple

A bespoke working unit (1317 x 600 x 610-1200mm), features an adjustable-height table designed to improve user well being and inclusivity. The design accommodates both standing and seated work boosting ergonomic flexibility and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Constructed primarily from maple plywood, the unit is finished with a durable satin polyurethane coating for a refined appearance and lasting protection. Acoustically constructed integrated maple slat shutters allow users to modulate sound levels, whether it's listening to the ambient music being played down below from the classrooms or using the shutters to create a quieter working environment. The unit is supported by a structural system of Corten steel I-beams and SHS.

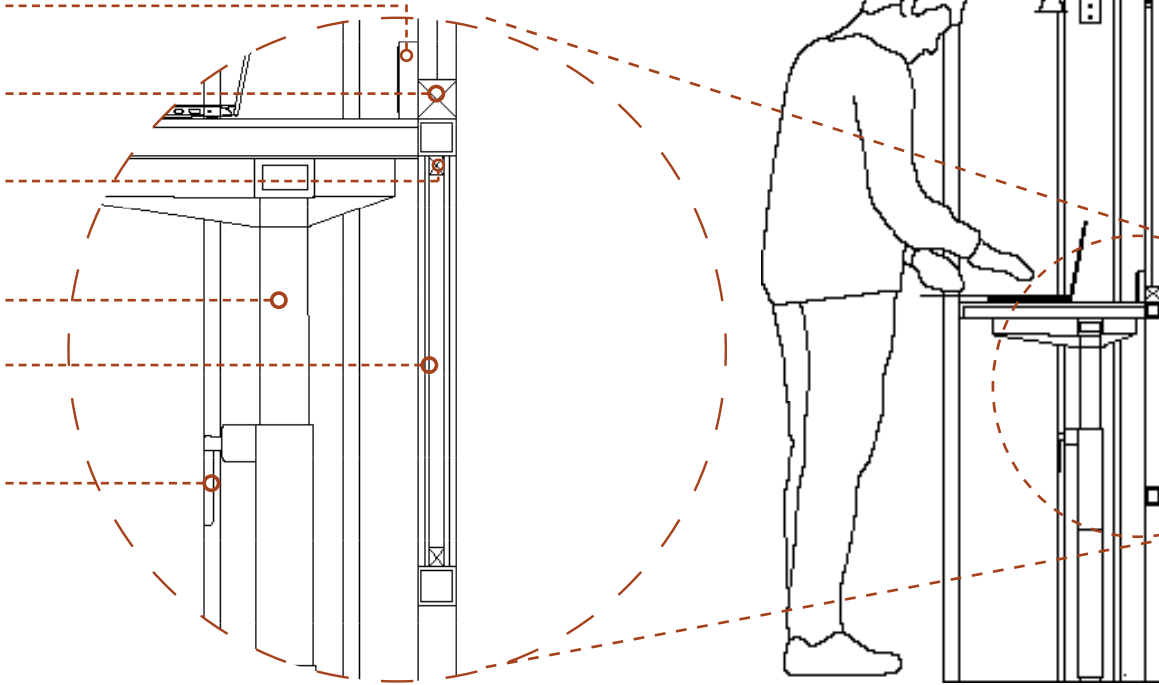


1. 180x 197x 3505mm recycled Corten steel I-beam, treated with intumescent coating for enhanced fire protection.
2. 1181x50x980mm maple plywood slat shutters, clear lacquer finish , fitted with precision fitted concealed hinges
3. 20mm fiberboard box joint, clad with 12mm maple plywood top flush edges
4. Solid beech wooden pegs
5. L angle steel beam connection to steel I beam and 12mm plywood
6. pewter single pendant light, Matt black painted metal rolled edge shade, filament LED E27 LED
7. 50x50x5mm SHS Corten steel frame
8. 12mm maple plywood adhered to 20mm fiberboard with solvent pink grip adhesive and softwood batten
9. E7 pro height adjustable motor frame
10. 24mm maple plywood shelf, on 18mm wooden pegs, shelving will be in various lengths
11. 20x25mm softwood horizontal battened fixed between 6mm maple laminated plywood
12. Power socket fixed into 24mm raised maple plywood
13. Table pivot lever

- 12mm maple plywood adhered to 20mm fiberboard with solvent pink grip adhesive and 38x19mm softwood batten
- 50x50x5mm SHS Corten steel frame
- 20x25mm softwood horizontal batten fixed between 6mm maple laminated plywood



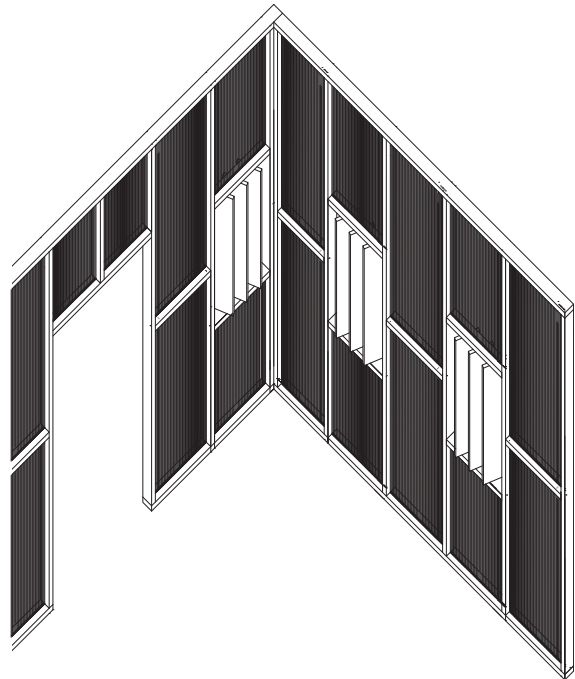
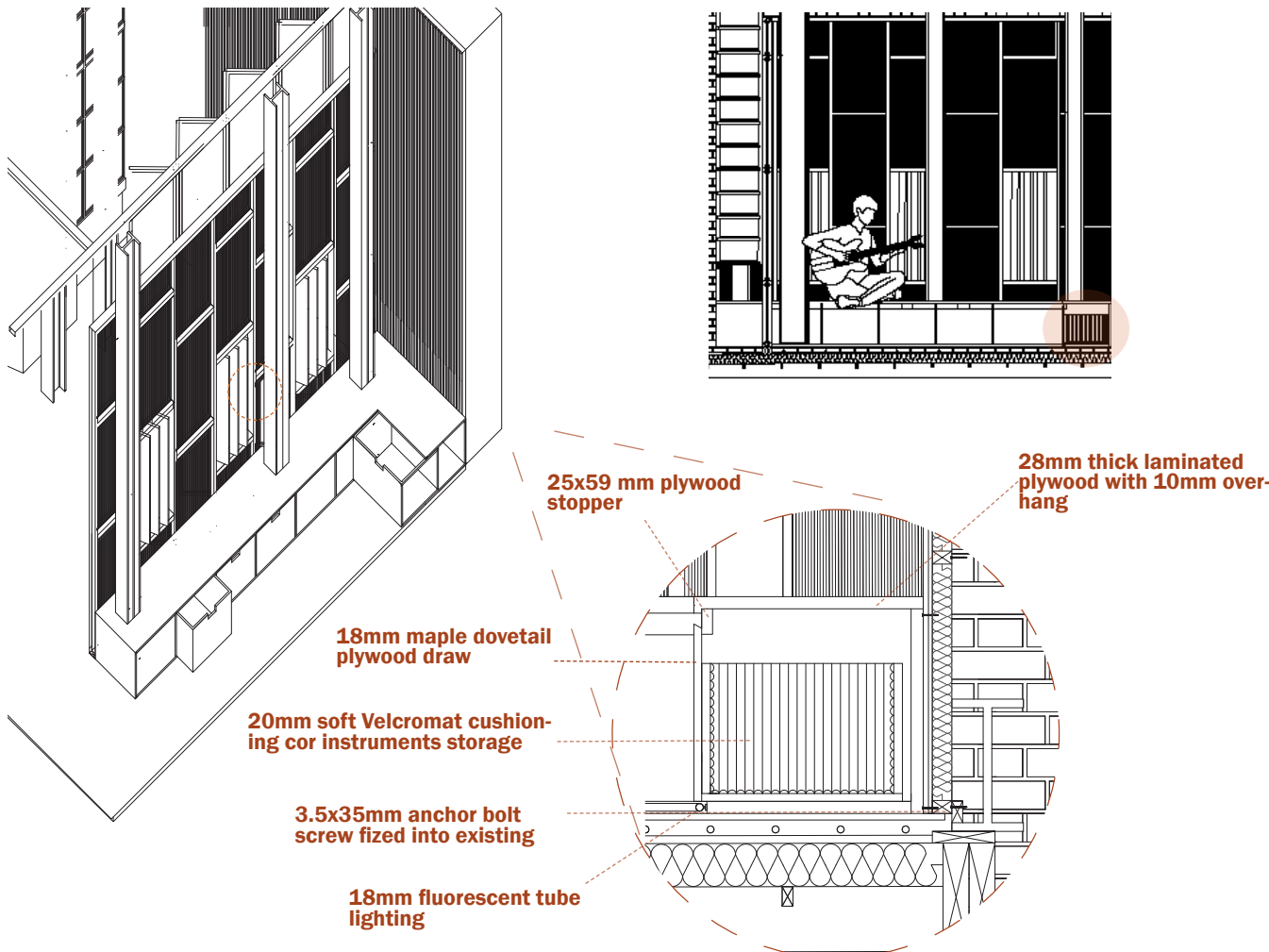
- power socket fixed into 24mm maple plywood lip edge adhered to 12mm maple plywood top
- 50x50mm softwood horizontal batten adhered to maple plywood slat shutters, clear lacquer finish
- 50x50x5mm SHS Corten steel frame
- E7 pro height adjustable motor frame
- 20x25mm softwood horizontal batten fixed between 6mm maple laminated plywood
- Table pivot lever



CLASSROOM SEATING

Maple Plywood seating

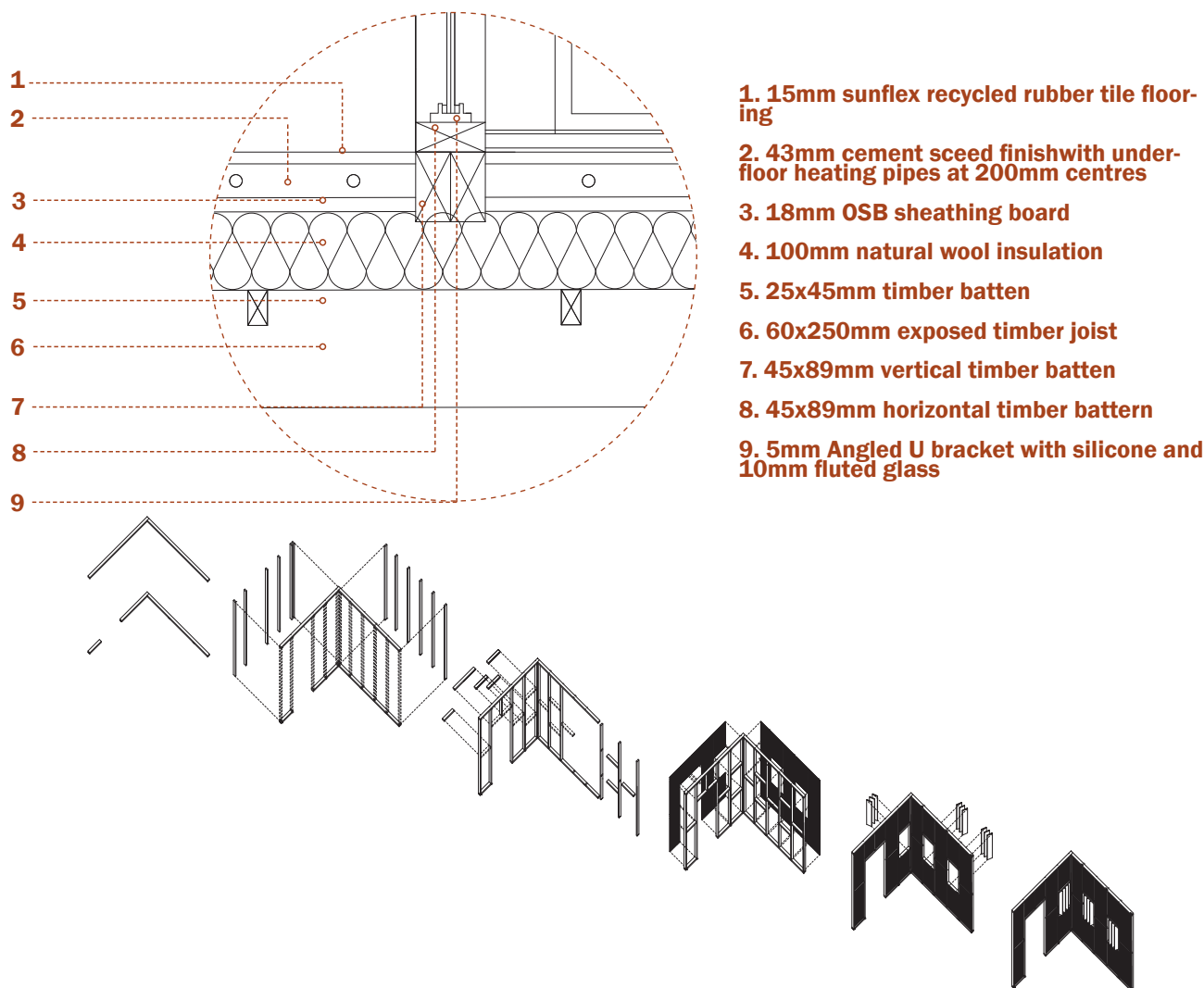
This Working Space primarily built from maple plywood features a box frame seating area with instruments storage draws underneath. Seating engages collaboration with others through an open seat layout. plywood chosen for a soft finish. easy to dismantle and reconstruct.



STUD PARTITION CONNECTION TO FLOOR

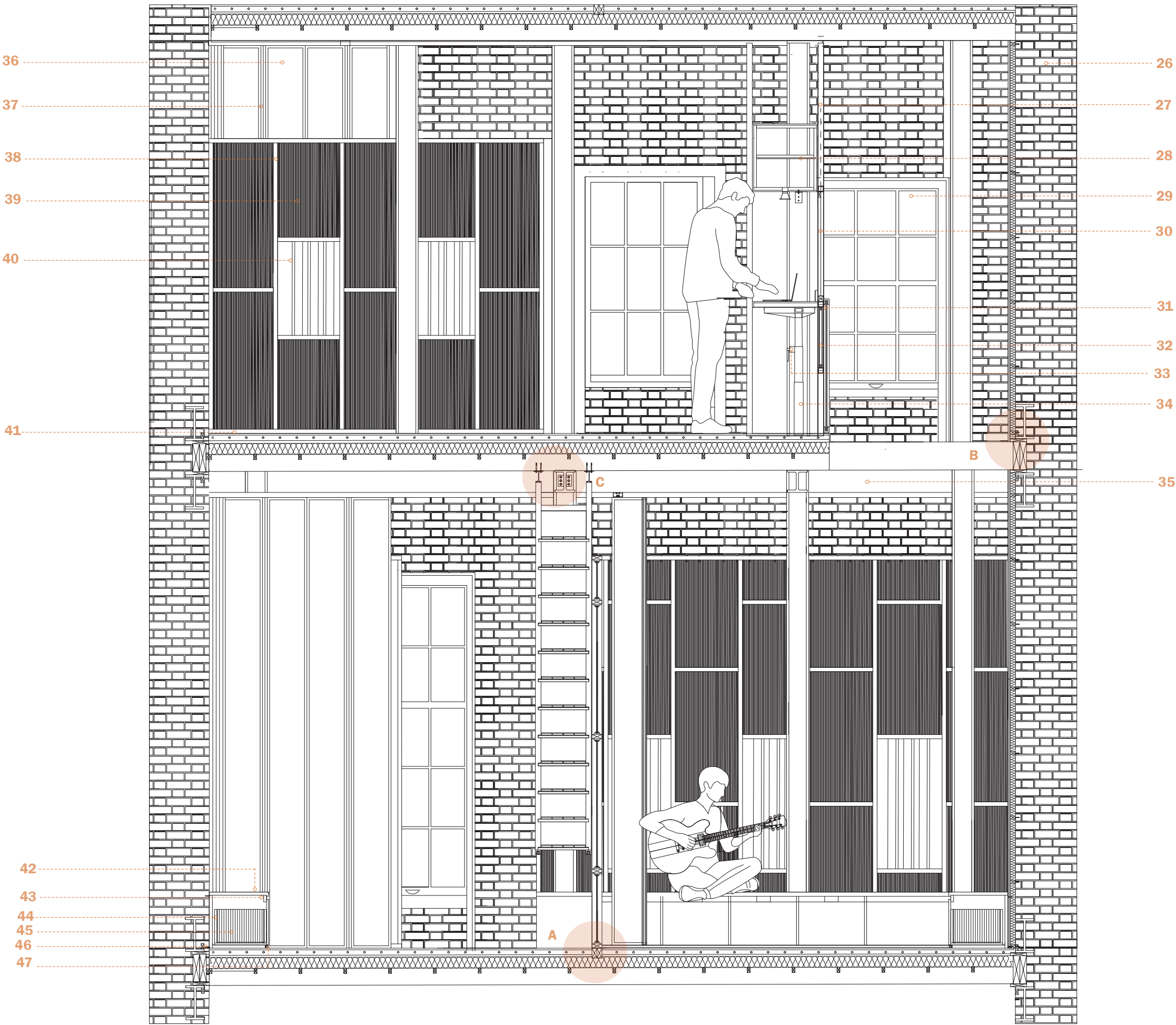
RECLAIMED TIMBER STUD WALL
Timber partition wall, fluted glass and timber shutters

The classroom as well as other spaces around st cuthbert feature these bespoke walls that have been made to mimic original partition walls however making the space feel mor elike n open plan layout.



TECHNICAL DESIGN

St Cuthbert Chambers



- 1. 15mm sunflex recycled rubber tile flooring
- 2. 43mm cement sceed finishwith underfloor heating pipes at 200mm centres
- 3. 18mm OSB sheathing board
- 4. 100mm natural wool insulation
- 5. 25x45mm timber batten
- 6. 60x250mm exposed timber joist
- 7. 45x89mm vertical timber batten
- 8. 45x89mm horizontal timber battren
- 9. 5mm Angled U bracket with sillcone and 10mm fluted glass
- 10. 305x165x54mm universal I beam
- 11. 45mm rockwool insulation to achieve class A sound absorption
- 12. 9x600x2400mm Acoustic pet recycled felt for slat wall
- 13. 13x600x2400mm high quality natural oak wood veneer with mdf core acoustic slat wall ,oiled finish, adhered with pink grip solvent
- 14. 30x45mm timber batten
- 15. 25x50 timber batten
- 16. 3.5x35mm anchor bolt (15 screws per panel, 3 rows 575 centre)
- 17. 27mmx 145mm batten fixed to vertical timber batten
- 18. 60x250mm timber joist engraved in exiting brick for lateral sup- port of floors
- 19. 12.5x81mm M6 Anchor pin
- 20. 5mm brass plate bolted into exitsng timber joist
- 21. 3mmx9mm brass plate screw into wooden frame shelving
- 22. 49mm oak Plywood shelving
- 23. 180x197x3505 Recycled vertical corten steel I beam treated with intumescent coating
- 24. L PLATE 40x100mm seat angle
- 25. 20mm anchor bolt into steel I beam
- 26. 215x102.5x65 Existing brick
- 27. 50x50x5mm SHS corten steel frame
- 28. 24mm maple plywood shelf on 18mm wooden pegs, shelving will be adjustable lengths
- 29. Existing sash windows with double glazing
- 30. 50mm maple plywood slat shutters, clear lacquer finish
- 31. 12mm silver aluminium U Chanel, with 7mm structural silicone and 12mm tempered glass
- 32. 20x25mm softwood horizontal battren fixed between 6mm maple laminated plywood
- 33. Table pivot Lever
- 34. E7 pro height adjustable motor frame
- 35. horizontal corten I beam
- 36. Troldekt acoustic fabric in natural grey
- 37. 500x30x3990 movable acoustic panel steel aluminium frame
- 38. 89mm Reclaimed timber partition wall mounted with concealed steel bracket
- 39. 535x10x1150mm fluted frosted glass panels secured in alumin- ium Channels using silicone sealant
- 40. 189x24x1150mm vertical timber shutters, satin polyurethane finish in natural oak tone equipped with stainless steel pivot hinges
- 41. 15mm Terrazzo beige tiles
- 42. 28mm thick laminated plywood with 10mm overhang
- 43. 25x59 mm plywood stopper
- 44. 18mm maple dovetail plywood draw
- 45. 20mm soft Velcomat cushioning cor instruments storage
- 46. 3.5x35mm anchor bolt screw fized into existing wall and ply- wood storage
- 47. 18mm fluorescent tube lighting

