

HOUSE OF SOUL



SOUL

EMOTIONAL OR INTELLECTUAL ENERGY OR INTENSITY, ESPECIALLY AS REVEALED IN A WORK OF ART OR AN ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE.

COMMUNITY

THE CONDITION OF SHARING OR HAVING CERTAIN ATTITUDES AND INTERESTS IN COMMON.

AGENDA

The aim of my project is to create a **community centre in Camden Town, London** - that can bring together different groups of residents in the area that somehow can feel disconnected and displaced. To give these **people a platform** where they can **make connections**, contribute back to their community and each other and most importantly, feel like they have a **voice in their own community** - to feel heard and tell their stories through the form of performance, collaboration and skills exchange.



BRIEF

The focus in our final year of study was to investigate and explore the various precursors to our current predicament, to understand meta-narratives of waste and its connection to climate crisis tackling themes such as consumption and the internal logic of capitalism as an economic and political system. Complex relationship with buildings, objects and things, considering their meaning and purpose.

With the world going through the crisis and waste being an international problem, it is clear that we all must adapt new strategies of consumption, waste management and conscious design and building.

Through my initial research into the problem, I chose human-centred direction to understand how are people looked at and treated as waste in certain communities and what are the spaces and needs of their inhabitation. This led me to write my writing portfolio about displacements and how do displaced people live and their lives affected by it.

Through my further research into the site and our focus on Camden Town area in London - I recognised the need to celebrate the diversity of its residents and focus on strengthening its community by designing a community centre that unites people and is a space of expression, collaboration and unity for its people, whatever their background.

THE CLIENT

My main client is Camden council, who have asked to adapt the building at 35 Kentish Town road. They are looking to create more space for the councils residents to have a place to go and engage in community activities, specifically looking to house 3 local businesses and charities: The Etcetera theatre company, Routes of the Streets charity and North London cares charity.

Each group works intensively with specific groups of people in the area and giving more platform for their work will be an incredible opportunity for community strengthening programs and activities.

Camden council recognises the need of extra support specially for the vulnerable residents and believe that combining theatre, compassion, new opportunities and acceptance for those in need - gives them the voice to feel heard and valued within its multi-cultural community.

The main goal of the adaptive reuse is to adapt the existing building into a platform to give people a 'voice'



THE SITE

Elephant house was a former bottle store, cooper's building and associated boundary walls date back from 1900-1 by William Bradford for the Camden Brewery.

The building dates from the early 20th Century and is of limited archaeological interest due to its relatively recent age. Artistic interest is confined to the external ornament, principally the sandstone elephant head.

Camden Highline is a stretch of disused railway arches that cut across the borough between Camden market and Kings Cross in North London.

The idea for the Highline comes from New York's successful Highline project - an above street level parkland space utilising a disused railway through the centre of Manhattan.

The intention is to replicate the benefits of this scheme in London, whilst also building upon London's own parkland heritage. In keeping with the theme of this year's brief, the site is itself waste space - leftover, abandoned pockets of interstitial space waiting to be recovered for use.

The site for my final major project is only a minute away from Camden Highline - other side of the canal that separates both.

East side of the building, there is a bridge on the main road that leads straight through under the Highline.



ADAPTIVE REUSE APPROACH

CONCEPT

COMMUNITY CENTRE THAT GIVES PEOPLE A VOICE

ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

CREATING VERTICAL OPENINGS

(by cutting away some parts of the floor to create spaces for vertical insertion of volumes and making the spaces porous)

CONNECTING SPACES

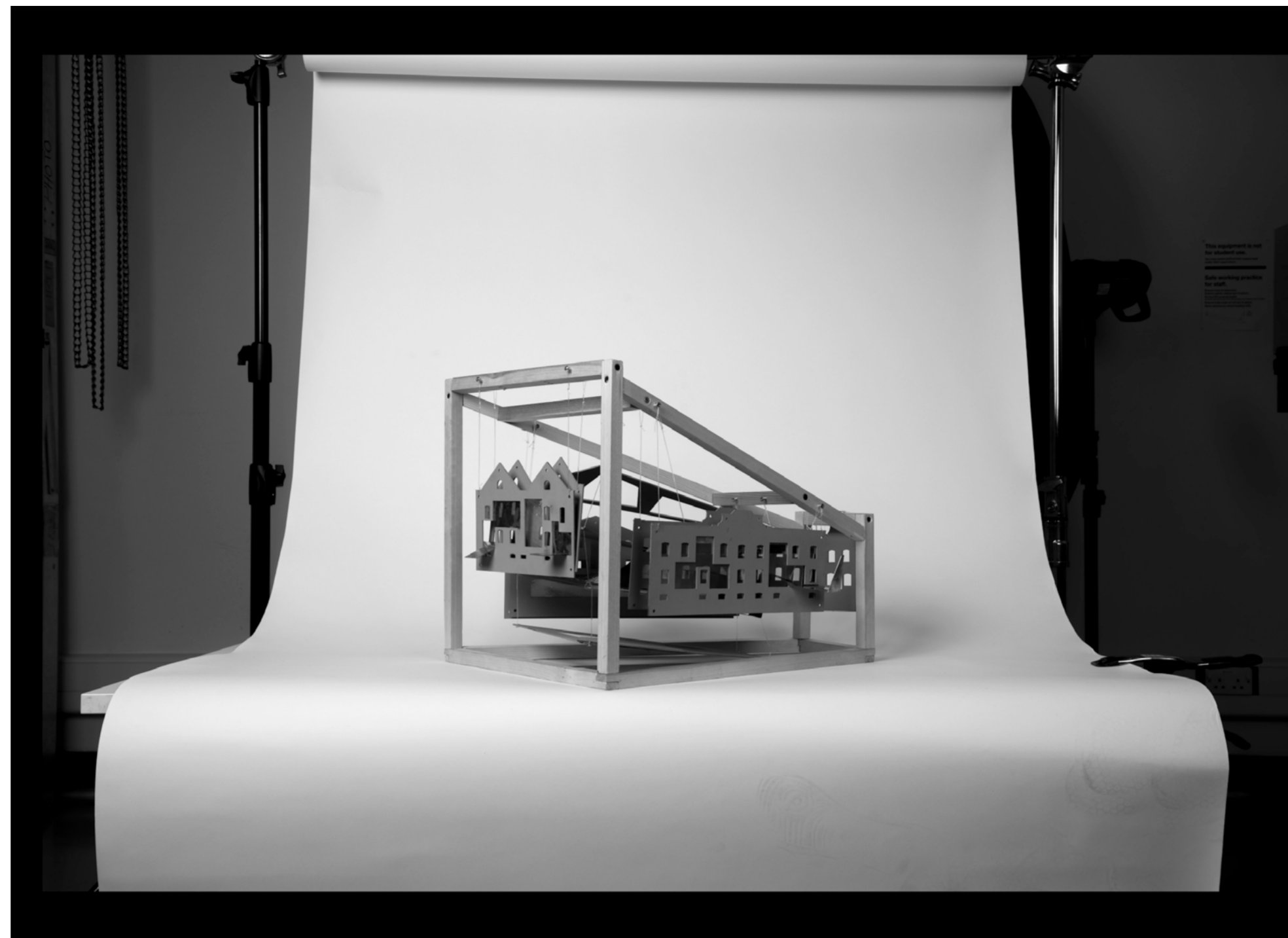
(by connecting spaces, connecting people too)

TACTICS

- CREATING FRAMED VIEWS
- EVERY CONNECTING SPACE IS A MEETING PLACE
- EVERY SPACE AS A STAGE

DEVICES

- CURTAINS/ TRANSLUCENT MATERIALS/ SCREENS
- STAIRS/ PLATFORMS/ WALKWAYS THROUGH
- DEBATE THEATRE/ STAGES/ ELEVATED FLOORS

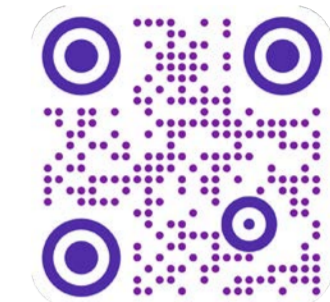


CONCEPT MODEL MAKING/ MAKING BUILDING A PUBLIC DEBATE STRUCTURE

One of my adaptive reuse proposals was breaking the barrier between public and private and making building fully public, one of the possible strategies was thinking of an 'inside' of the building as a separate inserted volume, that can be carved and cut through, including its façades becoming porous and accessible from many different points.

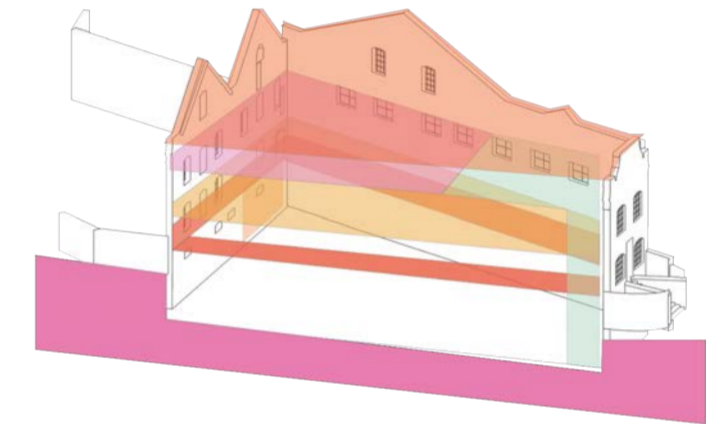
In these models I have explored this idea of how to make a building more public, per-formative and porous.

By scanning an QR code, you can find the video of this concept model:

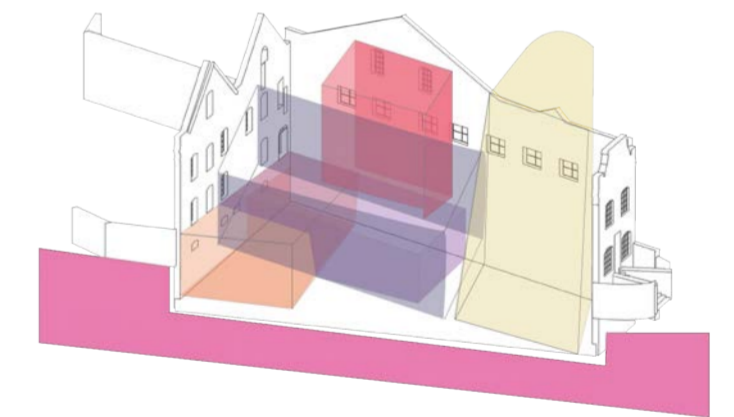


SPACIAL DIMENSIONALITY

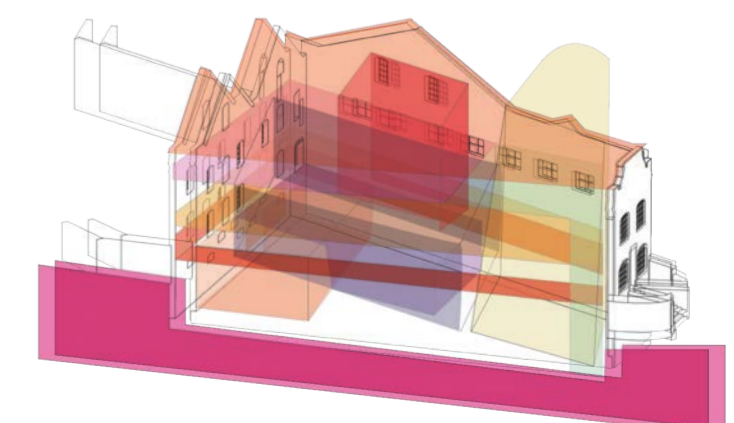
in these diagrams I am exploring what ways I can approach internal space of a whole building



making design decisions based on existing floor levels and structure



making design decisions based on insertion of new volumes - thinking of spaces as separate dimensional volumes and shapes



merging both alternatives together

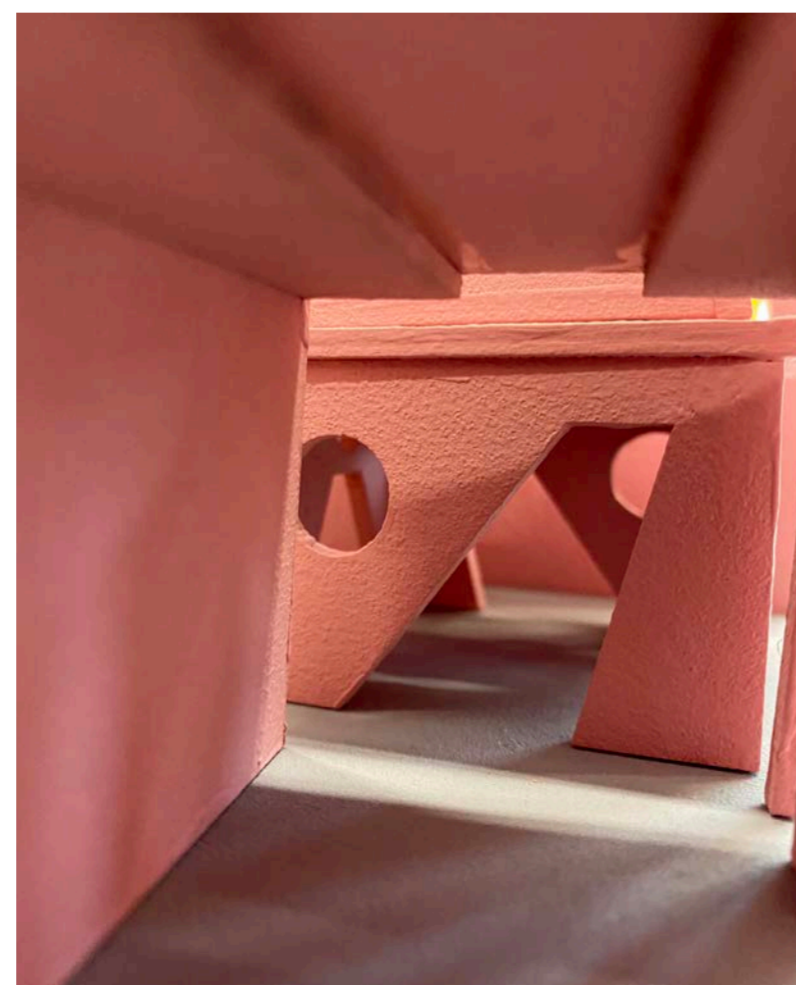
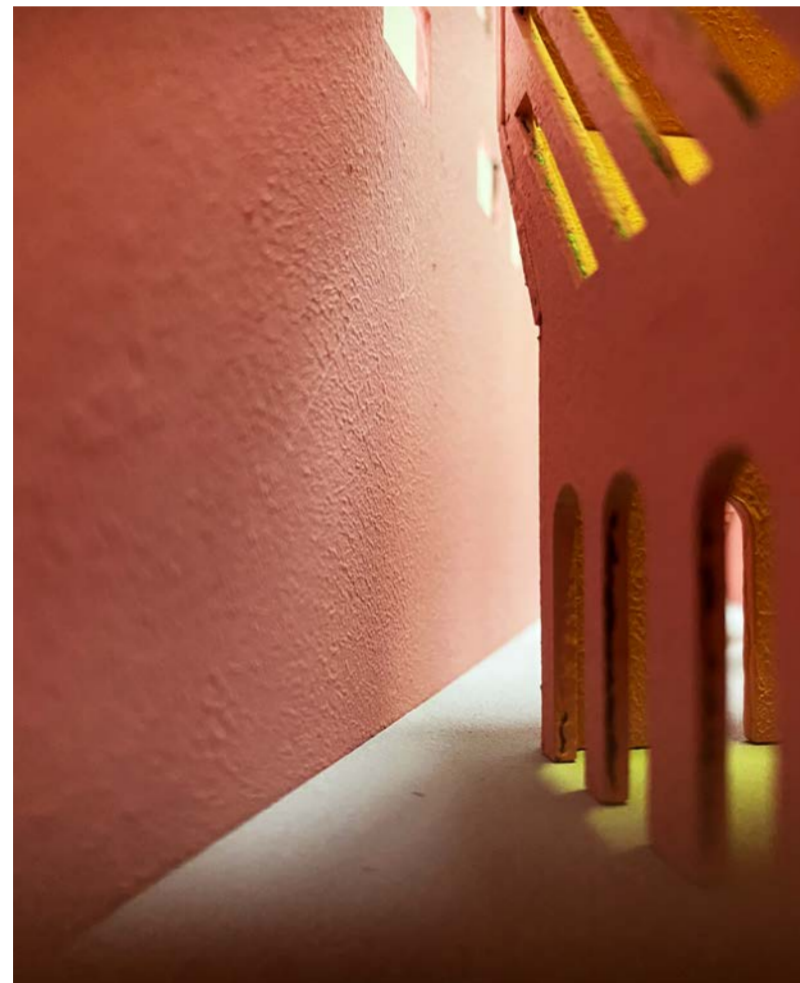


EXPLORING ATMOSPHERES

FURTHER MODEL MAKING

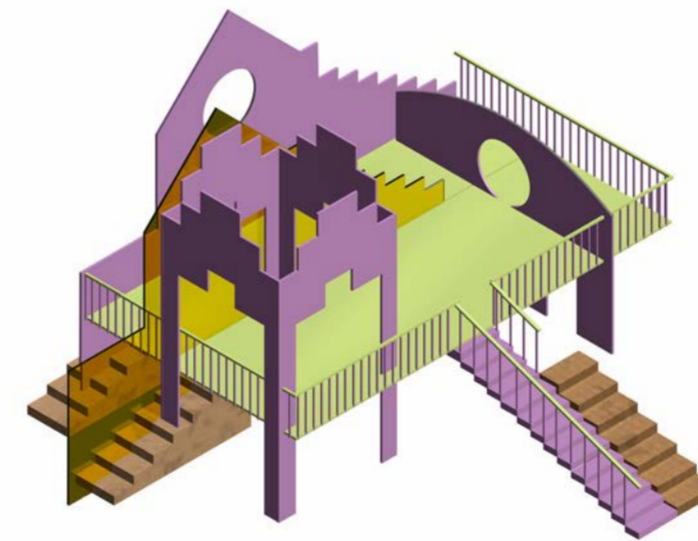
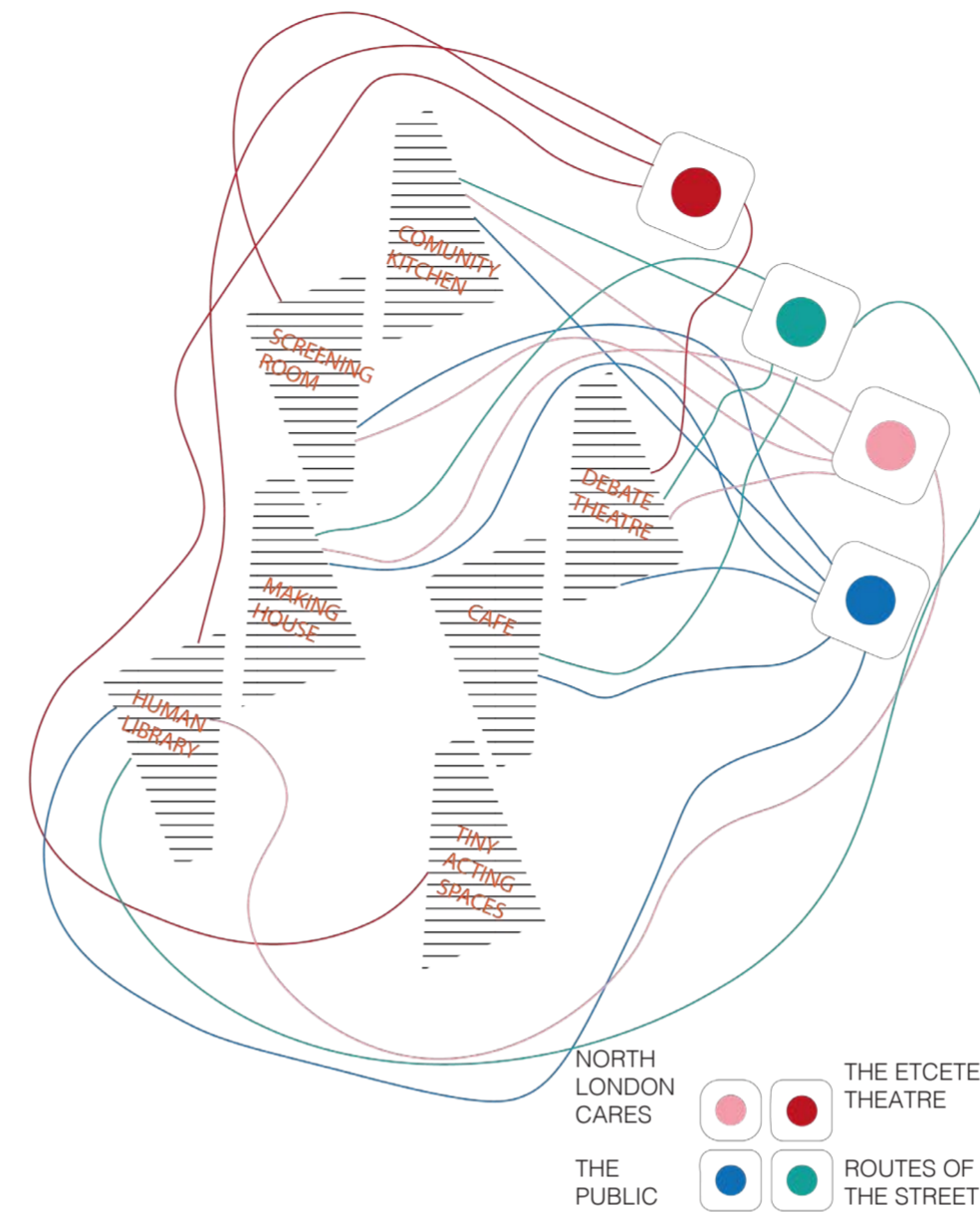
In this design proposal I was exploring all my strategies and tactics in one, finding possibilities in a form and its function.

To make building per-formative and all places like stages and with their own character and function, but together creating a unified language and nourishing if souls through its characteristic qualities.



SPACIAL PROGRAM

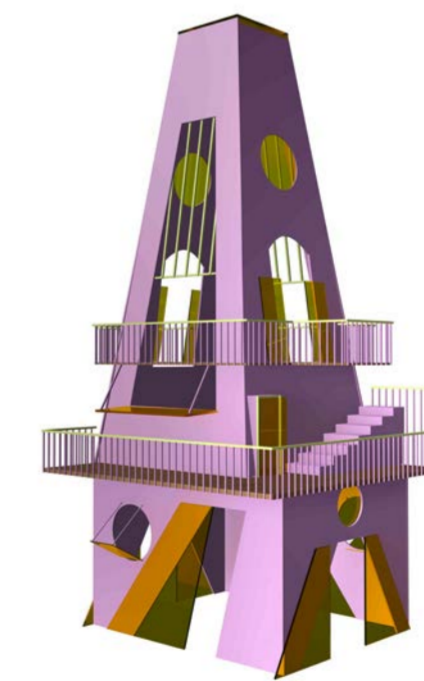
this diagram explores what spaces I needed to designing and how these spaces links to my client. This helped me make decisions of what hierarchy of spaces should lead the design decisions.



**BAKEHOUSE OF SENSES
(COMMUNITY KITCHEN)**

All amusing, still warm smells of freshly baked bread, travels through copper pipes like magic. Baked with all seeing hands, they tell story, not one, maybe hundreds, for open minds and hearts - everyone waits for their chance to have a bite. To try and taste all the incredible dishes and smell their aroma, it is like a blessing when one soul feeds another. These people rarely eat with spoons from other houses, but this is different, this feels like home.

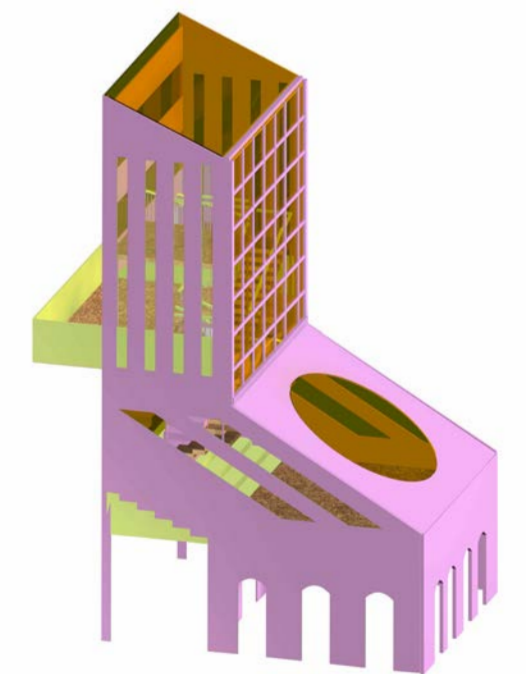
A labyrinth of stairs and platforms at Sensory Bakehouse are recipes for good conversations and unexpected glimpse of others. The tables that fill hungry with kindness and community spirit, proudly standing and waiting to secretly hear more extraordinary stories of others.



**IMAGINATION CHAMBER
(MAKING HOUSE)**

Tiny early morning triplets of sunshine travels lightly to the bottom of dark chamber - waking each brick and sleepy rested pine structures, to the morning glory. Still smells like forest, those who visit Imagination Chamber, remembers that sweet freedom infused nature smell whenever they visit or think of it.

Each handshake and stitches and giggles and sounds of hammering, softly echoes between its misty orange atmosphere, leaves marks of heated temperature and hopes in its translucent compassionate walls. Those who are lost, feels moments of arrival, that morning glory through making and crafting turns into the dustiest evening pinks, and so the time feels like it is lost and found - like it doesn't exist here.



HUMAN LIBRARY

A stream of tears flows down the crystal valley, all tears chimney it sparkles when met with the tiny kisses of sunlight. The story echoes like it's never going to echo again and then surrender if it was falling and catching on safety nets. So sensitive and fragile, people tell their stories with open hearts, to be understood, to be challenged and to be felt like their accepted. The wondering sounds of echoing voices keep bouncing on brass staircases, keep meeting in peachy pallets and barely visible worries. Then people surrender and weep of the beauty of storytelling and beauty of shimmering chimney.

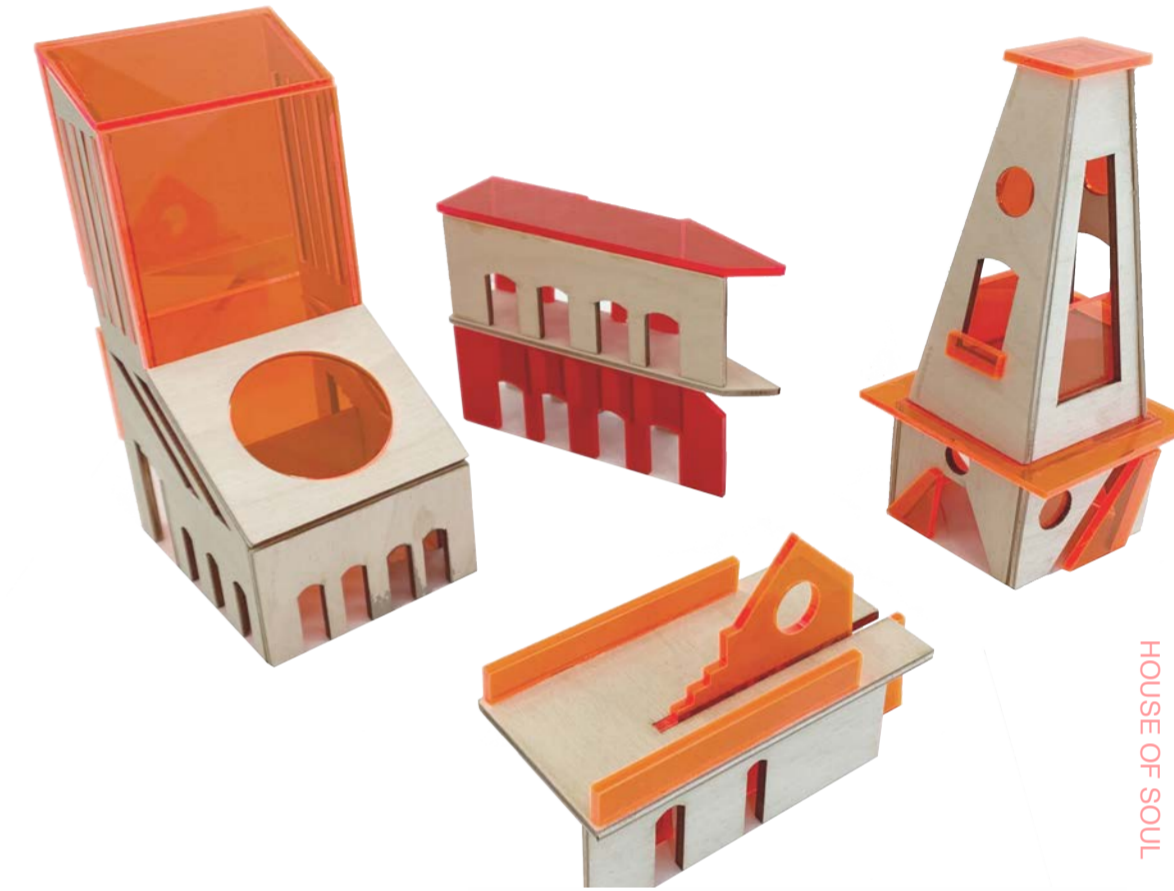
IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

storytelling is about connection and communication. Each of us has a story to tell, and when we hear other's stories, we tend to understand and empathise with them. It is truly an ancient craft that nourishes the souls.

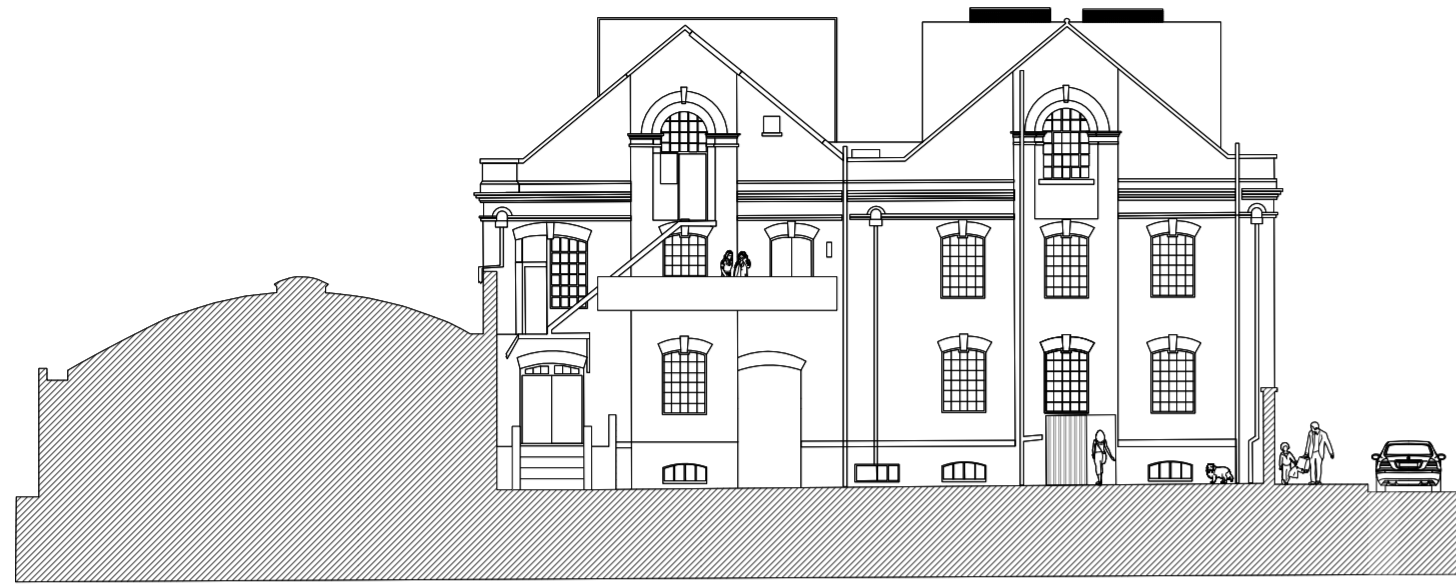
As my project focuses on community and its people, I felt that it is important to think of spaces themselves as a story telling functioning devices. Spaces are created for people as a core focus in my design decisions and there was an important need for them to become spaces of comfort, joy and invitation of collaboration.

I further designed each imagined space from the programme with digital software and wrote its own personal poems to reflect the atmospheres and feelings inside them.

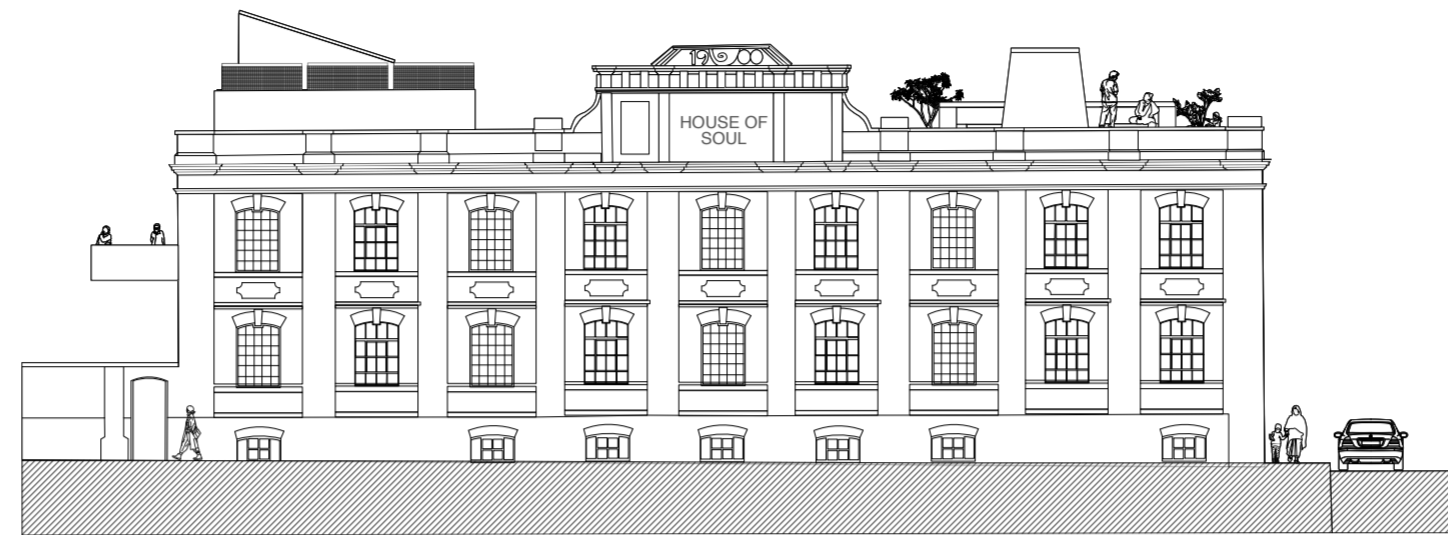
Bellow you can see the same imagined spaces then made into 3D hand-made models.



HOUSE OF SOUL



West elevation



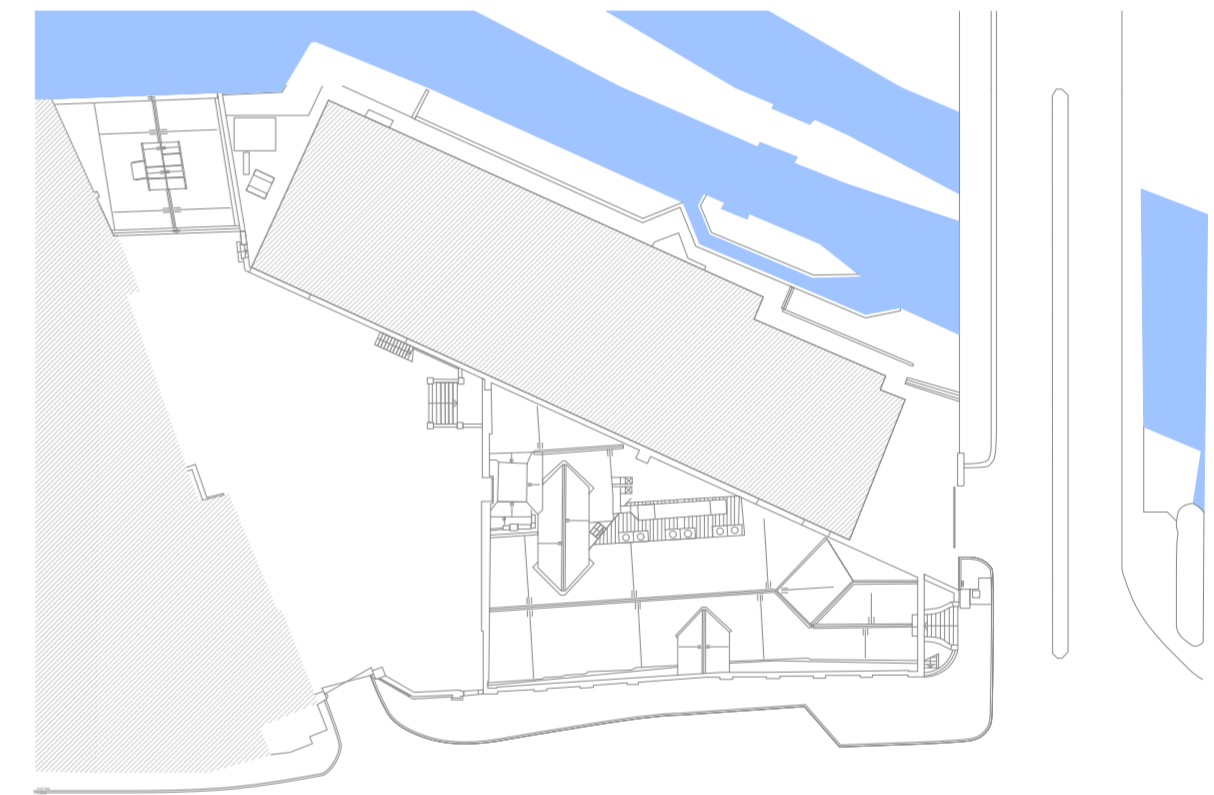
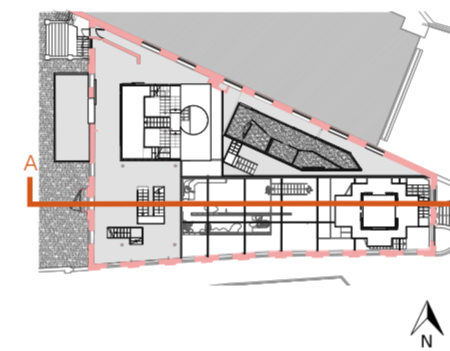
South elevation



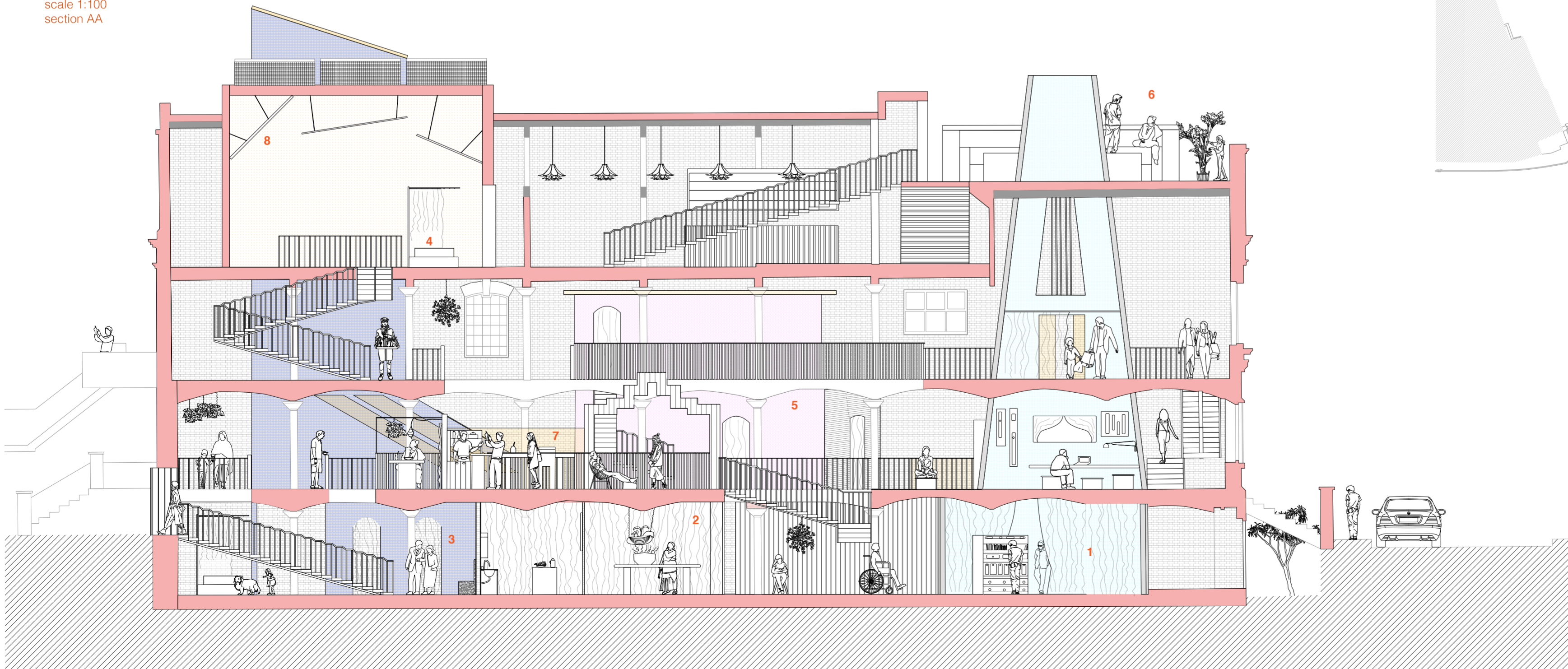
East elevation

- 1. IMAGINATION CHAMBER (MAKING HOUSE)
- 2. BAKEHOUSE OF SENSES (COMMUNITY KITCHEN)
- 3. HUMAN LIBRARY (LIBRARY)
- 4. TINY ACTING SPACES
- 5. SOUL GAZING ROOMS (CINEMA/ SCREENING/ WRITING)
- 6. HILL OF DEBATE (OUTDOOR DEBATE THEATRE)
- 7. BAR/ COMMUNITY TABLES
- 8. SOUL REFLECTING STAGE (MIRRORS ROOM)

scale 1:100
section AA



site layout plan





the users connect through the stories that are created and told in the centre. As the visitor leave the making house, they walk into a new way of telling stories through community kitchen activities. Each space tells its own story, connected by the people that move through them.



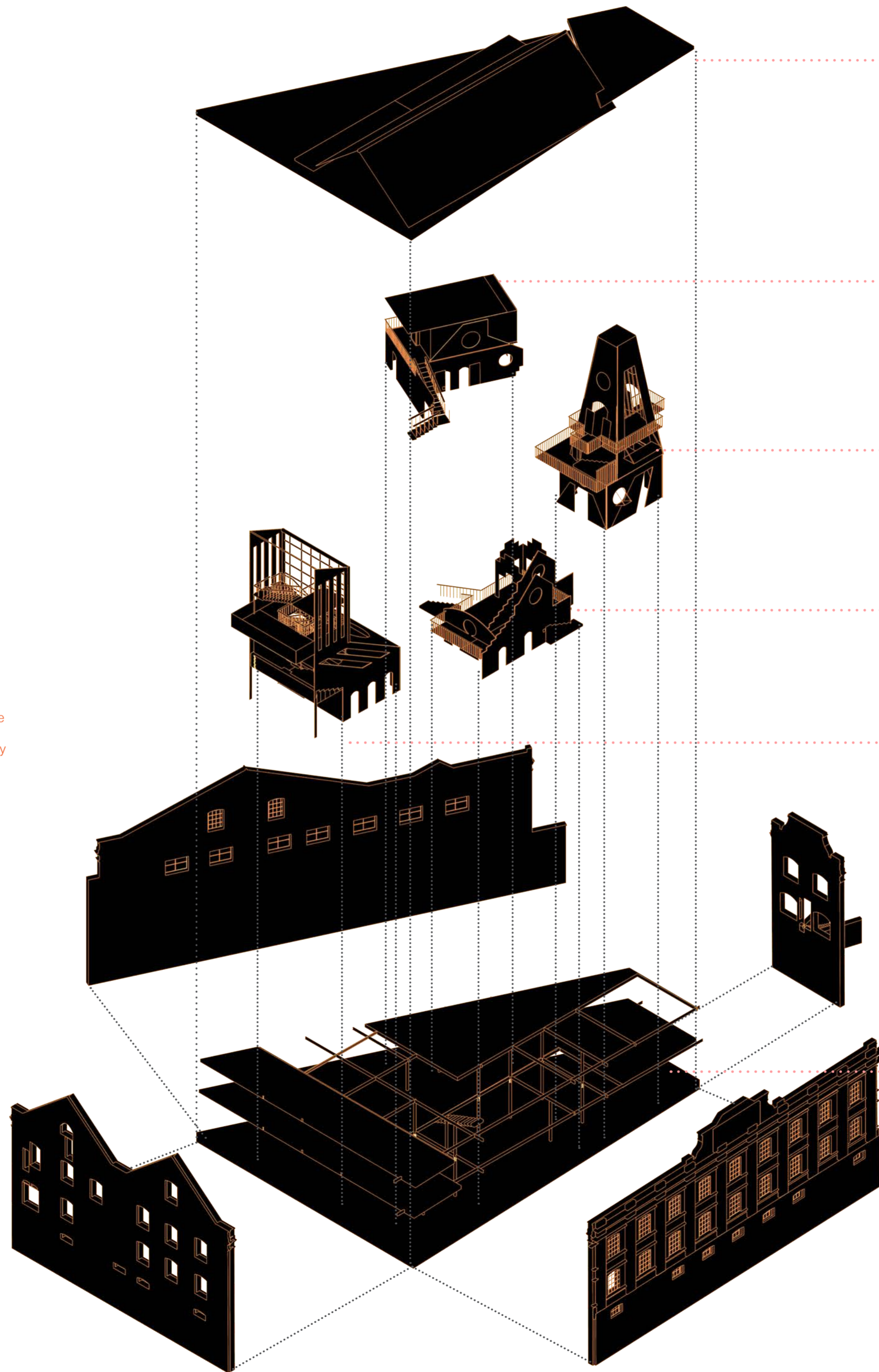
the inhabitant is crafting in his wheelchair in the making house first floor level - you can see the screening rooms behind him, where people just left after seeing a local documentary being screened about Camden



the stairs create connections between the spaces and the people. As the visitor walks up the stairs they will have views of the activities in the spaces around them, giving them a visual story before they enter a space.



from the making house top floor, the users can look down through the void into the space below and as they experience the human stories in the space they get vistas to the wider space around them. Further in the space you can see the Human Library - with its transparent light sunset coloured glass it creates atmospheric qualities as it is own unique building - story telling device.



ROOF & DEBATE THEATRE GATHERING SPACE - used by inhabitants of community centre to discuss ideas, enjoy views of Camden and make decisions. together.

SOUL GLAZING ROOMS - CINEMA/SCREENING/ WRITING - The Etcetera Theatre are main users, together with creative public members who want to screen their art/ films and work. They can collaborate together to put up films at day or night screenings. People from North London Cares can also participate or simply have a place to come and watch free films. This space should also have a little writing studio facilities, for those who want to brainstorm or write something for a new project together.

IMAGINATION CHAMBER - MAKING HOUSE - members of Routes of The Street can learn some making skills, that helps their confidence and re-integration to society. Members of North London Cares can actively participate in spending their time making something, while tackling loneliness at the same time. Other Camden residents can also come and learn new things, collaborate or use facilities to use tools or make. They can sign up online through the House Of Soul website. Things that can be made there - crafts for selling at community markets (maybe a regular stall in Camden market), fix clothes for homeless, make toys for kids, etc.

BAKEHOUSE OF SENSES - COMMUNITY KITCHEN - skills exchange through making food, members of Routes of the Street and North London Cares, making and learning together - once again tackling loneliness and helping to re-integrate within society. Public can contribute and organise special supper evenings, where people get together to cook and eat.

HUMAN LIBRARY - a place with a program of a type of library where people learn new stories, from real people, not books. This can be confidential, with people reading other people's stories, or stories told through curtains or translucent materials, so they are left anonymous. Routes of The Street, The Etcetera theatre and North London Cares, are all open to participate - as story tellers, or those who listen. Public is invited to do the same - this connecting people, provoking conversations and helping them to change their mind of their set believe systems. This space becoming non-judgemental exchange of knowledge and experiences and also therapeutic. Helping people within the community to share and accept each other.

HOUSE OF SOUL STRUCTURE - adapted structure to my adaptive reuse strategies, some floor parts are removed and steel beams structure exposed.

This axonometric diagram of my digital drawing is showing the idea that has developed from conceptual thinking and iterative model making. Each space is as separate mini building - respectfully adapting the volume of the space and 'slotting' inside