

# WHAT?

## FUNCTION

Cirque Du Hulme is an inclusive entertainment centre located within Hulme Hippodrome and Floral Hall, designed using CABE's 5 inclusive principles to meet the diverse needs of the d/Deaf community- a marginalised group representing 20% of the global population. The term d/Deaf encompasses both individuals with medical hearing loss (lowercase 'd') and those who identify with Deaf culture (uppercase 'D'). Set in 2050, in response to the projected rise in hearing loss among young people and the growing older population, the space futureproofs entertainment through fully accessible, sensory-led experiences that prioritise d/Deaf needs and enjoyment. The design concept focuses on community, education and arts through the traditional visual storytelling of circus, fostering intergenerational connection, empowerment and creative collaboration.



## AUTHENTIC ARTISTRY

Circus arts offer d/Deaf individuals a creative outlet to express their identities and personal narratives, weaving authentic experiences into the storytelling of visual performance art.

## EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

By providing power through knowledge, the space actively fosters awareness while advocating for Deaf culture and the diverse needs of the d/Deaf community.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Built on community and belonging, the space promotes meaningful support by prioritising accessibility, visual communication and lived experiences.



## HULME COMMUNITY

### LOCAL CREATIVES

Visionaries are the main creatives, designing and leading the entertainment experiences within the space. Through collaboration with the spectators, they respond to their preferences for visual storytelling.

### VISIONARIES PROTAGONISTS SPECTATORS

D/DEAF (ARTS) STUDENTS (16-25)

### MAIN AUDIENCE

Designed for older adults with hearing impairments, this inclusive entertainment space promotes Deaf culture's visual storytelling and community connection. It encourages shared experiences, fosters belonging, and combats loneliness.

HULME'S AGEING POPULATION (65+)

## D/DEAF COMMUNITY

# 1 IN 3

ADULTS IN UK ARE DEAF, EXPERIENCE HEARING LOSS OR HAVE TINNITUS

(RNID, 2024)

# OVER 50%

AGED 55+ EXPERIENCE HEARING LOSS

(RNID, 2024)



By creating a shared space for these protagonists to shape their entertainment experiences, this ensures intergenerational needs are met. Ultimately, fostering a collective vision of design that values every voice.

# WHO?

# WHY?

# 1 PER 60

1500 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS FOR 87,000 DEAF BSL USERS IN UK

(RNID, 2024)

# 85%

OF DEAF PROFESSIONALS IN THE UK REPORT EXPERIENCING WORKPLACE EXCLUSION

(WIRED, 2025)

# 1/10

SAID THEY WOULD ACTIVELY AVOID SOMEONE WHO IS DEAF OR HAD HEARING LOSS

(RNID, 2023b)

## MARGINALISATION



## EXCLUSION FROM ENTERTAINMENT

# 0%

SUBTITLES ON SOME PLATFORMS BY ALL4 AND ITV HUB

(RNID, 2023a)

# 4%

OF FILM ROLES ARE HELD BY DEAF + DISABLED PEOPLE

(BFI, 2020)

The d/Deaf community is often excluded from mainstream entertainment, as it is designed for hearing audiences. Films, TV and live events frequently lack captions or sign language. This marginalises d/Deaf audiences, as a lack of diversity in the design process dismisses their needs and perspectives.

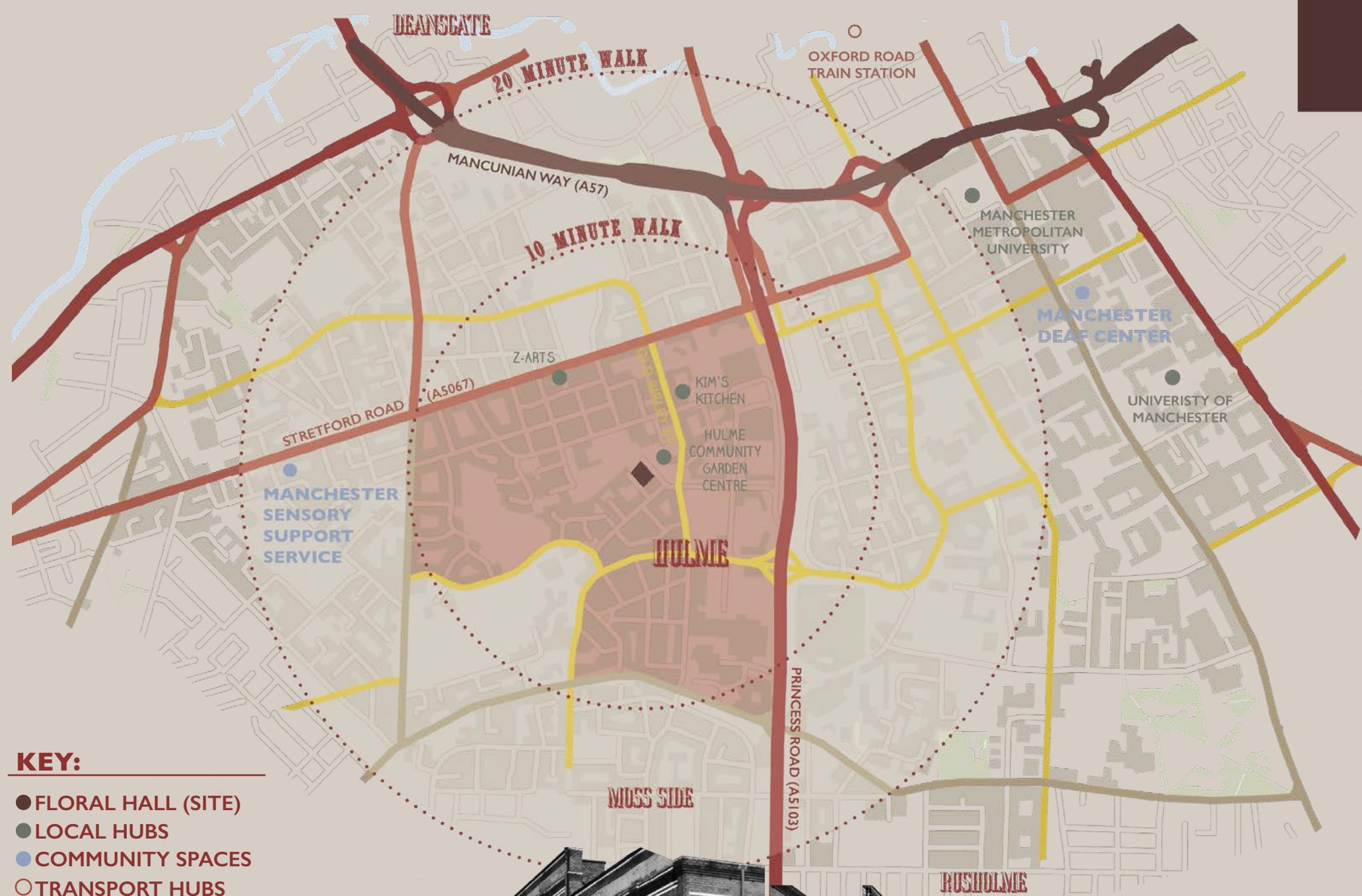


# WHERE?

## LOCATION

Hulme Hippodrome and Floral Hall is a Grade II listed building located a mile south of Manchester City Center. Situated within Hulme's diverse community, it is well connected to local residential, business and student hubs and serves as an ideal spot for an inclusive arts and entertainment centre.

## SITE ANALYSIS



- KEY:**
- FLORAL HALL (SITE)
  - LOCAL HUBS
  - COMMUNITY SPACES
  - TRANSPORT HUBS

## SITE HISTORY



- 1901**  
OPENED AS GRAND JUNCTION THEATRE
- 1910**  
STAN LAUREL (COMIC ACTOR) UNDERSTUDY FOR CHARLIE CHAPLIN BEFORE THE DEBUT OF 'LAUREL+HARDY'
- 1920's**  
THE HIPPODROME THRIVED AS A CENTER FOR VARIETY THEATRE
- 1935**  
MIRROR BAR OPENED, OFFERING AUDIENCES A PLACE TO DRINK AND SOCIALISE
- 1940's**  
HIPPODROME HOSTED ENSA PERFORMERS + WAR CHARITY SHOWS DURING WWII
- 1950's**  
VENUE WAS HIRED BY THE BBC FOR RADIO AND EARLY TV BROADCASTS
- 1960's**  
DUE TO THE SHIFT TO CINEMA AND TELEVISION, HULME HIPPODROME'S THEATRE CLOSED
- 1970's**  
NEGLECTED DUE TO THE OPERATORS PRIORITISING PROFIT OVER PRESERVATION
- 1986**  
PERMANENTLY CLOSED DUE TO NEGLECT AND DETERIORATION

## CURRENT PROBLEM



2025

# WHEN?

## FUTURE FORECASTING

By 2050, it is predicted that over 1 billion young people could experience hearing loss due to unsafe listening habits, highlighting the urgent need to address the rising demand for Deaf-accessible entertainment. This involves removing barriers that place the burden on individuals to adapt, by reimagining experiences that proactively consider their needs through inclusive design.



## MANCHESTER HEARING LOSS PREDICTIONS

2020		2040
	SOME HEARING LOSS	
56,637	➔	70,675
	SEVERE HEARING LOSS	
5,528	➔	7,091



**OVER 60 POPULATION**  
OVER 6% OF HULME



**HULME POPULATION**  
19,487 (2021)

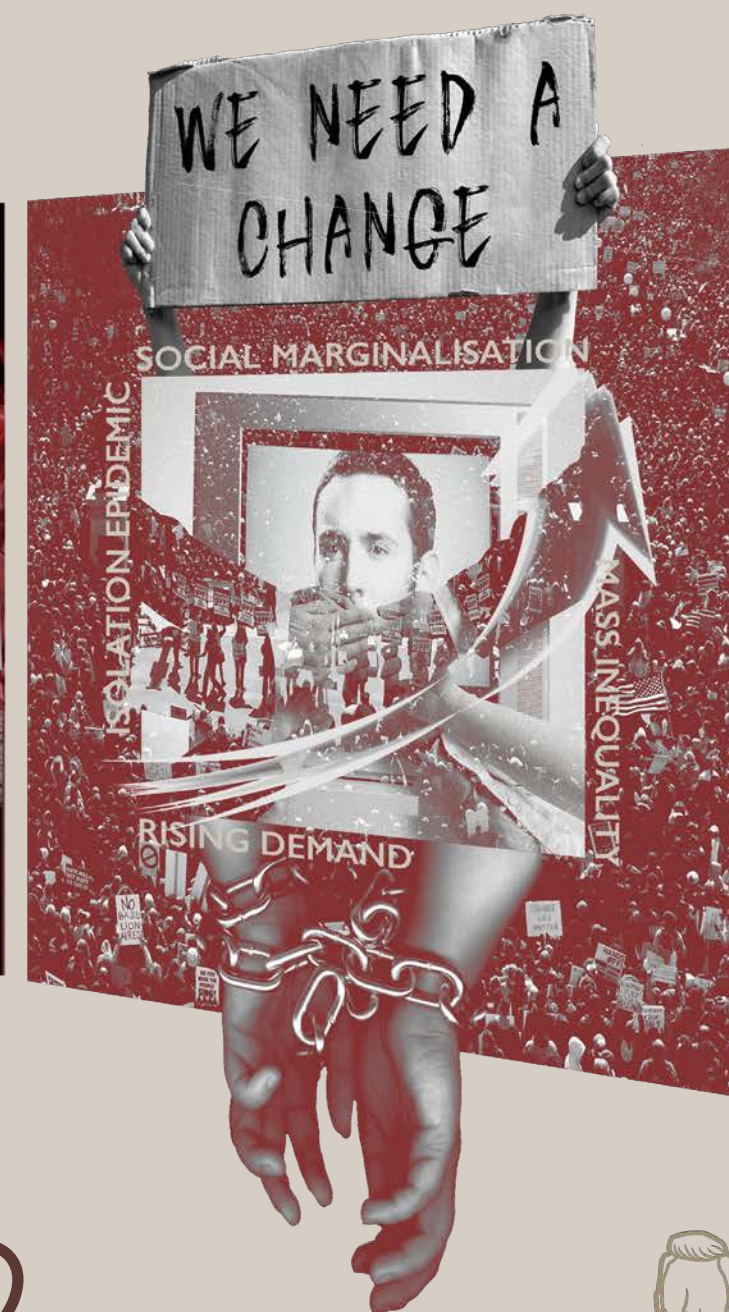


**STUDENT POPULATION**  
OVER 30% OF HULME

## DEMOGRAPHICS

2050

## FUTURE PROBLEM



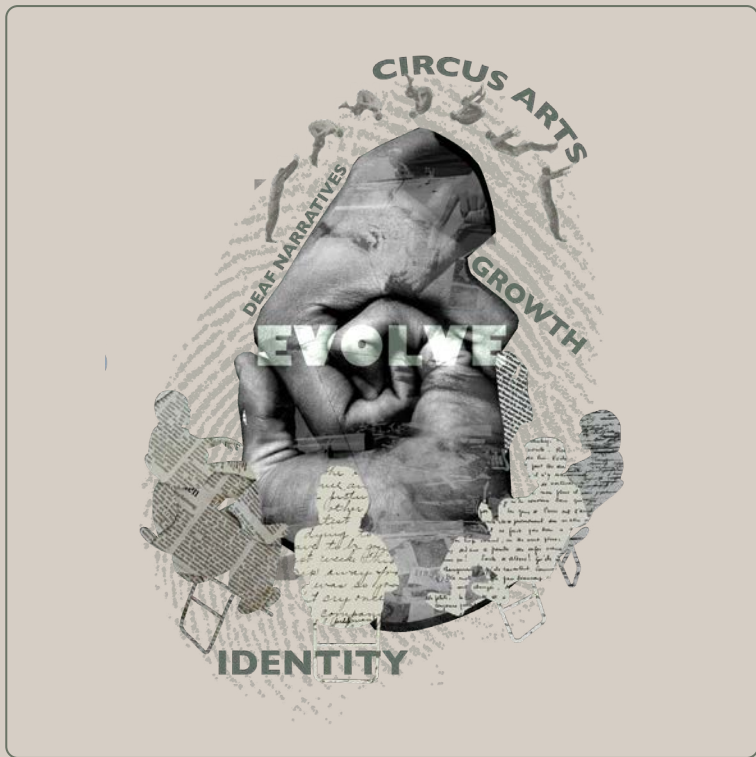




**INVOLVE:** Focused on community, connection and support, prioritising visual communication and shared experiences

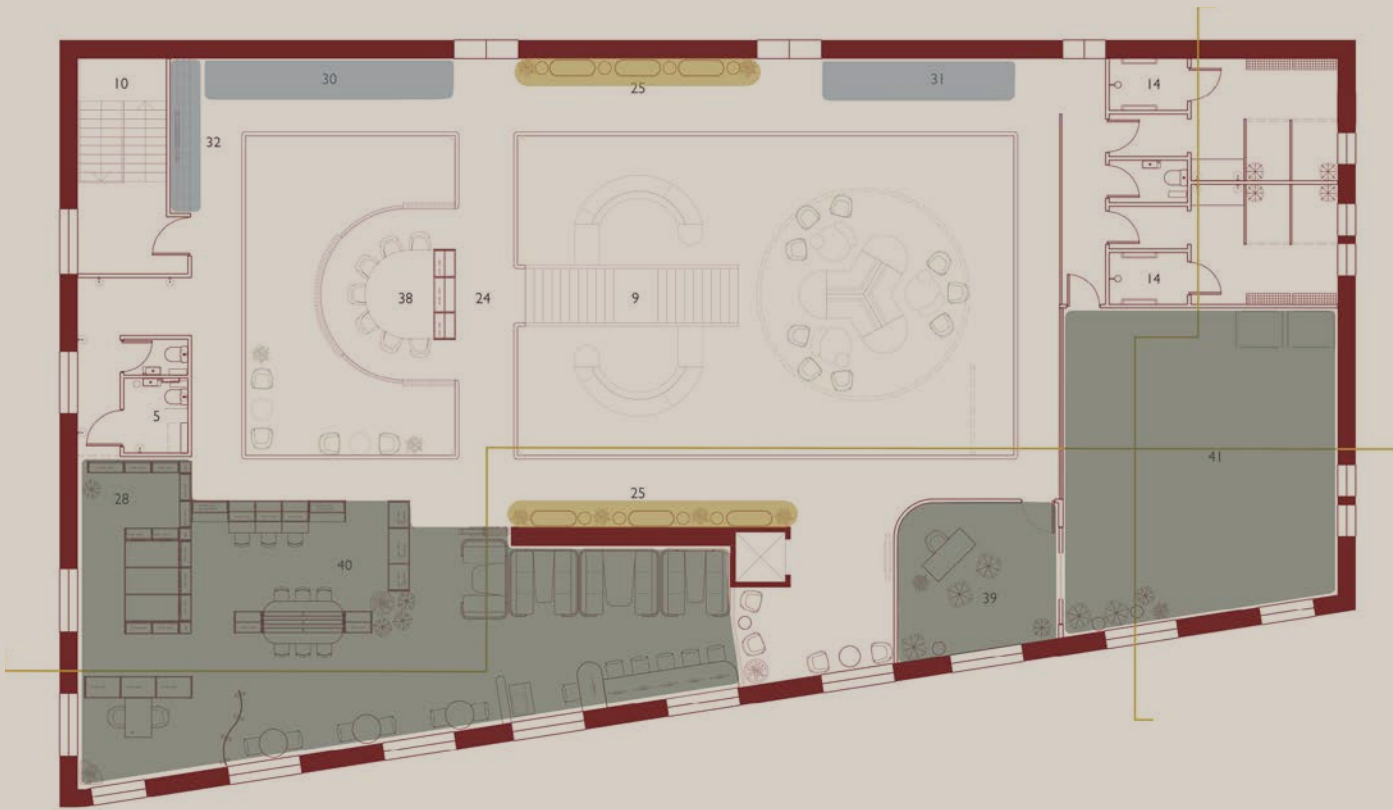


**REVOLVE:** Empowers through awareness and advocacy for Deaf needs and culture



**EVOLVE:** Utilises creativity and collaboration to ensure all voices have a hand in contributing to the storytelling

FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



SCHEMATIC PLANS

**PUBLIC SPACES**

1. GRAND OPENING
2. LIFT
3. BOX OFFICE
4. UNISEX TOILET
5. ACCESSIBLE TOILET
6. CONCESSION + MERCH
7. CIRCUS RING ENTRANCE
8. CIRCUS RING EXIT
9. FEATURE STAIRS
10. FIRE STAIRS

**PRIVATE SPACES**

11. CREW QUARTERS
12. CREW KITCHEN
13. CLOAKROOM
14. ACCESSIBLE SHOWER
15. WARDROBE + PROP TENT
16. CLEAN STORE
17. STORAGE TENT

**EVOLVE CENTER REVOLVE CENTER INVOLVE CENTER**

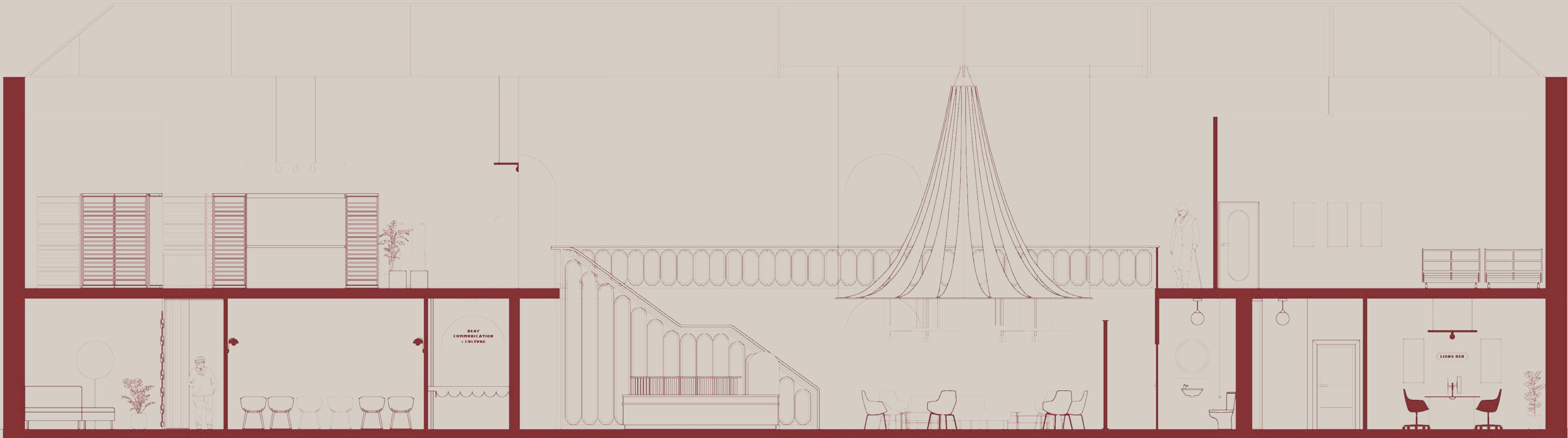
18. MENAGERIE LOUNGE
19. THE MIDWAY
20. SOUND OF SILENCE
21. SIGN LANGUAGE SIDESHOW
22. LULL LOUNGE
23. SNAPSHOT SPECTACLE
24. INVOLVE BRIDGE
25. REFLECTION ROW
26. WHAT IS D/DEAF IDENTITY?
27. DEAF CULTURE AND COMMUNITY
28. CIRCUS ARCHIVES
29. HISTORY OF CIRCUS
30. HISTORY OF D/DEAF ENTERTAINMENT
31. ACCESSIBILITY + INCLUSION IN CIRCUS
32. UNSAFE LISTENING PRACTICES
33. THE RINGLET
34. COMMUNITY CREATIVE CIRCLE
35. LIONS DEN
36. THE CHRYSALIS
37. GREEN ROOM
38. COMMUNITY CREATIVE STUDIO
39. CONTORTIONISTS CORNER
40. BIG-TOP STUDIO
41. SKILLS STUDIO

SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

# HOW?

The design concept is structured around three symbolic hubs; Involve, Revolve, Evolve. These concept centers form the foundation of the space's primary functions, uniting its protagonists through community, empowerment and artistry.

Circus is used as a form of visual storytelling, using movement and spectacle to convey emotion without words or sound, making it inclusive for d/Deaf audiences. Tactile and visual elements like lighting, vibrations, colors, and textures enhance the multisensory experience.



LONG SECTION





## INVOLVE SPACE VISUAL

### SOUND OF SILENCE

Explore how silence enhances sight and touch, creating space to connect, reflect and share experiences

## REVOLVE SPACE VISUAL

### THE RINGLET

A dynamic hub for displaying circus skills and educational performance workshops that amplify deaf narratives



## EVOLVE SPACE VISUAL

### COMMUNITY CREATIVE STUDIO

An ever-evolving studio where creativity thrives through collaboration, giving every voice the power to guide the performance

# FINAL DESIGN

Cirque Du Hulme is a fully immersive, visually-led environment shaped by the needs and experiences of the d/Deaf community. By considering inclusive design principles from the outset, the space prioritises sightlines, open circulation, and a blend of visual and tactile wayfinding. Materials were carefully chosen for their acoustic, tactile and visual comfort properties, ensuring optimal clarity for visual communication, reduced auditory distractions and enhanced sensory engagement. Intergenerational community involvement informed the circulation, ensuring the movement through the space is intuitive and responsive to diverse needs. Most importantly, the space has been designed to celebrate Deaf identity and experiences, resulting in a space that fosters a sense of community and belonging.