

THE CONVALESCENT

By MICHAEL GARNER

The Brief

This project has asked to create homeless shelters using under utilised space at Euston Station; providing accommodation that will better their lives and help them on their path of reintegrating back into society.

My Goal

I will then thoroughly research the occupant's backgrounds to find warming and familiar features of their past in search to form designs that are comfortable, and accommodating. The importance of this project is to find understanding of any issues they might be facing in their lives such as mental health and social anxiety to ensure these needs are catered for; there cannot be anything overwhelming. I'm using the art of Interior design to form a route back into society - Creating social change.

Network Rail's Design Values

"Places for the People"



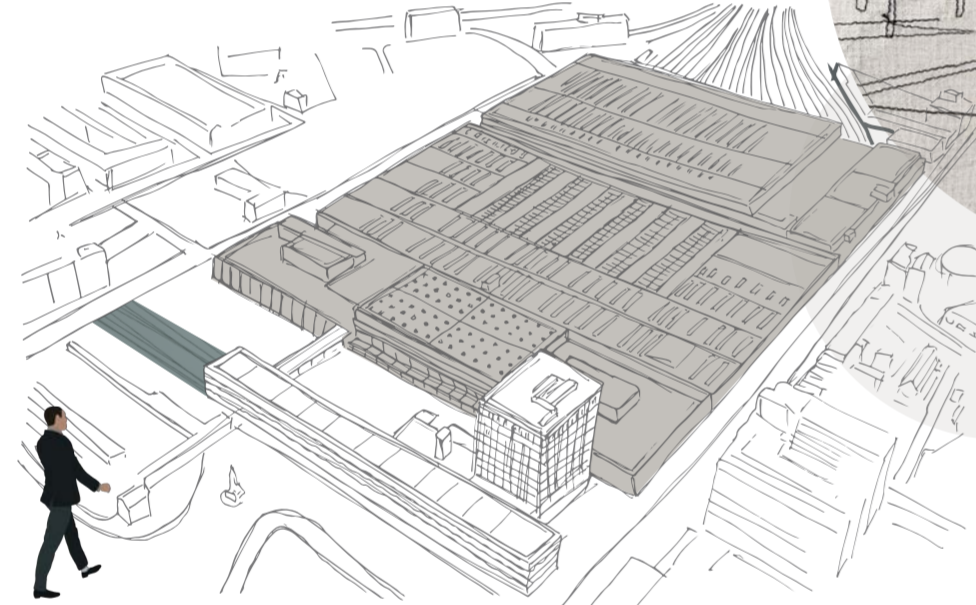
Frank Anatole
Principal Architect at Network Rail

"What you see, touch, smell as you go through a station has an impact on the passengers' satisfaction... It does have a real human impact"

His aim is to deliver more considered spaces that communities can be proud of.



The Site - Euston Station



The station's floor-plan, from 1835, coursed many restrictions to the train links which resulted in it no longer working efficiently; leading to the demolition of the station. The only remaining features are the LNWR War Memorial and a statue of Robert Stephenson. Euston Station was completed in, designed in an International Modernist Style with a total of 18 platforms. The station today has not changed much since the development in 1960. However, on the side of building their building, a new addition called the HS2. HS2 is a new high-speed train that emits less carbon than other forms of transport. It will also better connect the UK's 30 biggest cities and plans to help connect over 30 million people each year.

Showing Appreciation to Veterans and Homeless



War Memorial

One of the remaining structures from the original L&RD building is a War Memorial. It was built, by the station, to show appreciation of 3719 men who died at war between 1914-1919 - Displaying their devotions to those who fought for the country.



Christmas Day Rail Meal

In 2017 Euston Station demonstrated its awareness to those homeless when forming a 'Christmas Day Rail.' This initiative turned the Station into a shelter for over 200 people - offering them a Christmas Banquet. This event not only proved the value of the space but showcases their support for those less fortunate.

Researching the Occupants

- The financial impact of homelessness
- £1.1 billion given to local authorities
- £845 Million goes on temporary accommodation
- £638 Million spent on Housing Benefits
- 80% Suffer from Mental Health Issues
- A Life Expectancy of 50 Years old
- 219,000 People Registered as Homeless
- In 2019 there was over 4200 people sleeping rough on the streets in the UK. 6% of which, have a military background.

Focusing on Homeless Veterans



Interview
Richard

Aged 55 years old, Richard has been out of service for 14 years. He suffered from late PTSD, which coursed him to spiral out of control; Richard lost his job, relationship and accommodation within 6 weeks. Now, he is sleeping rough on the streets of London.

Richard's PTSD was coursed by him traumatically seeing his friend, Dave Walker, dying in front of him after the pair had a grenade thrown at them. When talking through his experience, he broke down in tears. Richard appeared to also suffer survivals guilt as a result of his friend's death. He has ensured his friend, Dave Walker, will live on through his storytelling.



In honour of Dave Walker, Richard got a tattoo across his knuckles wording 'hold fast'. He got emotional when he explained that "those were words he always said". It was his way of facing what happened - This is something that can be considered when designing; can there be a place people can script those they lost at war - giving them a place to go to when they are upset or miss them; a memorial of their own.

A study by King's College London shows PTSD in veterans has risen over the years. With numbers going from 4% in 2005 to 6% in 2016. The probable course being the loss of support and treatment emitted when leaving the army.

Leaving the Armed Forces

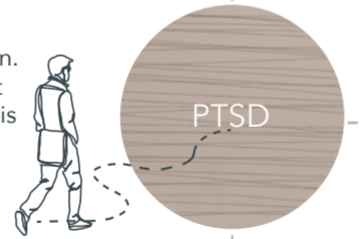
When leaving the army, there are systems in place to help prevent people from becoming homeless; Citizens Advice suggest contacting Joint Service Housing Advice Office. The JSHAO can help you join 'Armed Forces Housing' and guide them to find a 'Civilian home'.

Fight or Flight

However, losing their accommodation can happen overnight. Those who have suffered from war settings are often in 'fight or flight' mode; when things become too overwhelming they will run away from everything (including their homes). To get new housing can take months, ultimately leaving them homeless.

12.7% of the Armed Forces population seek mental Health support; a large contributor to this is PTSD.

Understanding Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



The Course

PTSD happens when your nervous system becomes stuck. Our nervous systems respond in one of two ways; Mobilisation or immobilisation.

Mobilisation happens when you need to defend your body in any given situation; it makes your heart beat faster, raises blood pressure, tightens muscles and increases the strength and speed of reactions. Once the incident is over we return back to a normal balance.

Immobilisation occurs when you experience too much stress. Your senses and blood pressure rises but it unable to return back to the 'normal balance'. This creates a feeling of being stuck and doesn't allow you to move on from the incident; PTSD.

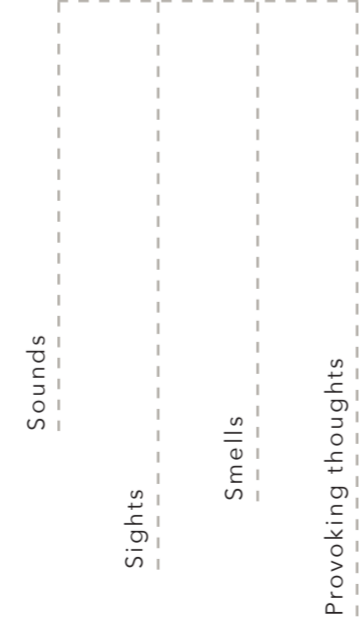
The Symptoms

- Persistent **intrusive reminders** of a traumatic event.
- Intense **avoidance** of things that send reminders of the event.
- Negative moods.**
- Having your guard up all of the time, being on edge and **emotionally reactive**; showing extreme emotions.
- Difficulty to sleep - **Insomnia.**

The Misconception

A misconception of the illness is that it is a sign of weakness. However, it is not. The response the brain has to PTSD is not voluntary; it is our brain's natural reaction to protect the person from threat or danger.

Things that can trigger PTSD episodes



PTSD Treatment Methods

- Medication**: The only medication that can help aid PTSD is antidepressants. It might help boost moods but it doesn't battle the underlying courses of uncertainty.
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy**: CBT is a psycho-social intervention; it aims to challenge cognitive (mental action) disturbances to help emotional regulations. This particular therapy is a branch off of CBT that solely focuses on issues such as PTSD, where the person is in a constant space of uncertainty and feeling of being unsafe.
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy**: The more exposure they have in certain situations, the less dangerous they start to feel, this can simply be through visiting more crowded restaurants. PET treatment is not designed to help people forget the trauma that has happened but to make it more of a memory than a situation they're currently in.
- Eye Movement Desensitisation and Processing**: This uses elements of CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) through eye movements, hand taps and sounds. These can help your nervous system become unstuck and move on. EMDR can be done at home, by yourself by focusing on breathing and strategically tapping your hands.
- Family Therapy**: These forms of therapy can help create strong connections between people suffering from similar issues - creating a feeling of being less alone.
- Group Therapy**: These are evidence-based practices; they have been proven to be more effective, more often, than other types of therapy. They statistically help resolve the issue within three months.

THE CONVALESCENT | OCCUPANTS BACKGROUND + NEEDS



There are three main divisions in the British Armed Forces; Royal Navy, British Army and the Royal Air Force.



Within these three, there are different regiments such as mechanical, guard or light infantry regiment; all will carry out varied tasks within similarly structured days - their accommodation is also standardised.

During Training you get most weekends off and 6 weeks paid leave per year.

Without this structure after a long period of having it, they will ultimately feel lost and find it hard to get simple tasks done.

Without being too literal, these colourings and textures will be integrated into Interior design - working with exposure therapy to help settle PTSD triggers.

10.9% Soldiers are Female



Multi-Terrain Pattern The Multi-Terrain Pattern is the current design used on soldiers uniforms. It was designed to blend into a range of environments like jungles, woodlands, crops, compounds, and stone and grassland. The particular fabric used for this is a type of Cotton Twill.



What's Taken to War?

- Personal Role Radio
- Anti-microbial Underpants (designed to be worn for multiple days)
- Flame resistant clothing
- Sleeping Systems
- Load carrying equipment
- Osprey body armour

- ### A Day in The British Armed Forces
- 7:00 AM - Preparing The Day**
 - Wake up, giving yourself enough time to wash, shave and have breakfast.
 - 7:20 AM - Cleaning**
 - During this time, some units are ordered to clean the communal areas - Failure to do this could lead to disciplinary action.
 - 8:00 AM - Physical Exercise**
 - 'Start of the day' - You go over to company offices in your congregate and wait for your PTI (Physical Training Corps).
 - The PTI will then start conducting physical training; from a steady state run around camp to an 8 mile loaded march.
 - 9:30 AM - Short Break**
 - Shower and change into combats
 - 10:00 PM - Given Tasks**
 - Go back over to company offices to start conducting the next part of the day. This segment can vary but usually consists of things such as going to the range for shooting practice, learn different drills or how to do maintenance on equipment.
 - 12:00 PM - Lunch Time**
 - A break for Lunch either in your own quarters or the communal areas.
 - 1:30 PM - Carrying Out Tasks**
 - Meet back up in a designated location and commence with other tasks for the remainder of the day. These tasks could be carrying on from either previous ones or given something completely different.
 - 5:00 PM - Work Day Finished**
 - You will be told you're ready to finish and can go back to your quarters
 - The rest of the day can consist of whatever they choose; some go and do some more gym exercise, whilst others play video games and/or socialise.
 - From here they can choose when they'd like to sleep, but have to consider that they need to be up and ready the next day without any issues.

'Detail' Sheet

- Towards the end of the day they're given a 'detail', this runs through what you will be doing throughout the day; setting specific times and what uniform you will be required to wear, it will also tell you if you have any medical appointments of briefings. In doing this they have no excuse but to be prepared for every start of the day



Typical Living Quarters

To construct an appropriate floor-plan for my design, I studied soldiers current living conditions and how regimented it was. I found it significant to understand what they find to be important to their everyday lives so that it can be added.

Characteristics

- Reliable
- Discipline
- Fearless
- Consistency
- Courage
- Motivated
- Skilled

To train to be a soldier you first need to prove all of these attributes - it's important for them to be serious about their job; they urge people to be systematically tidy and ready for war at all times



Step by Step - How Beds are Made in the Military

1. Put a cover on Duvet - Ensure matching corners. No buttons or poppers.
2. Pillows into Cases - fold edges.
3. Place sheet on the middle of the bed, neatly unfold leaving 6inches to hang over each side. Do 'hospital corners' on all points and fold under excess.
4. Fold any access fabric on pillows - make sure the ironed crease is facing towards the door.
5. Place duvet on bed - fold any access fabric evenly under the mattress.

'Down To the Bedding'

- Two Thin Pillows
- 3.5 Tog Duvet
- Flat Sheets
- Spring Mattress

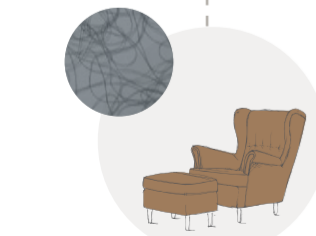
Soldier's Wardrobe
Further studying wardrobe organisation; How much room do they like to have? Clothes, within their wardrobe, are strategically placed, and all have to face the same way - guided by symmetry. Within my final design, I will ensure that this is mirrored to create a sense of similarity and belonging - something they're used to.



Liam Brown
Member of the British Royal Army

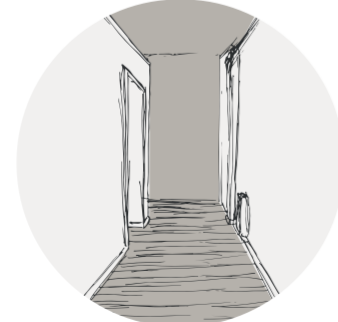
This was Browns's unit accommodation. He found it important for himself to have an easily accessible way to cook and store food so added a bridge to the room and an awkwardly placed microwave - this needs to be satisfied in the final homeless shelter design.

Design Features Specified from Ex-Armed Force Members



Vivid Colours

Research presented that ex-veterans appreciated vivid colouring within their homes. Colours with long wavelengths such as reds, oranges and yellows prove to be stimulating, whilst short-wavelength colours; green, blue and purple are soothing. A mixture of the two could fulfil vivid colouring without causing too much disturbance.



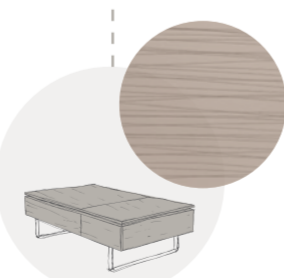
Open Plan and Large Hallways

Slim, enclosed, hallways can also create high levels of stress through the reduction in mobility; the final design need to space-sufficient to maximise the number of shelters provided, so this factor needs to be considered in proportion.1



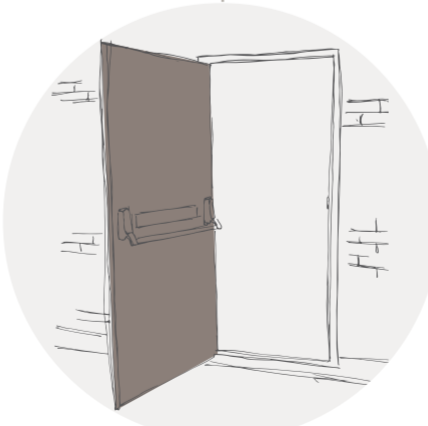
Green Spaces

Plants are proven to influence our daily functions. By simply being around biophilic elements (vegetation to wooden floors), our productivity can improve by 15% and can also reduce stress and overall moods. Through furthermore having the responsibility of watering and tending to plants can bring fulfillment.



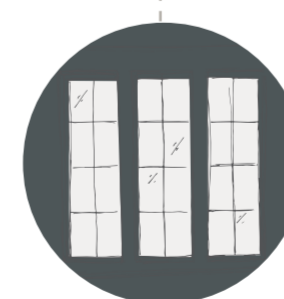
Minimal Furniture

Research showed ex-military professions who suffer from mental illness request less, minimal furniture within their accommodation. However, this needs to be balanced - lack of storage systems can create disorganisation can cause further stress and anxiety.



Visible Exits

Having visible exits is very important to those suffering from PTSD; specifically war-related trauma. It is important to have multiple exits for them to 'escape'. This will be a feature of the final shelter's design to help reduce their levels of stress and anxiety.



Large Windows

Large windows within rooms create more natural light emission - This increases the amount of serotonin in our bodies, resulting in a more focused and calm feeling. More light also makes the ambience of the room less confining.

Design Elements Professional Therapy Settings Use

- Damage resistant furniture
- Noise control and air conditioning - Reduces the chance of external stress
- Use of art that displays realistic social engagement - Promotes positive thinking
- Good temperature control
- Direct Sunlight
- Avoidance of possible harmful objects
- Recommended high ceilings to reduce suicidal anchor points



Nora Gudev
Psychotherapist from Providence Row Charity

"You can't give them impossible tasks"
"You should put them in charge of their accommodation"

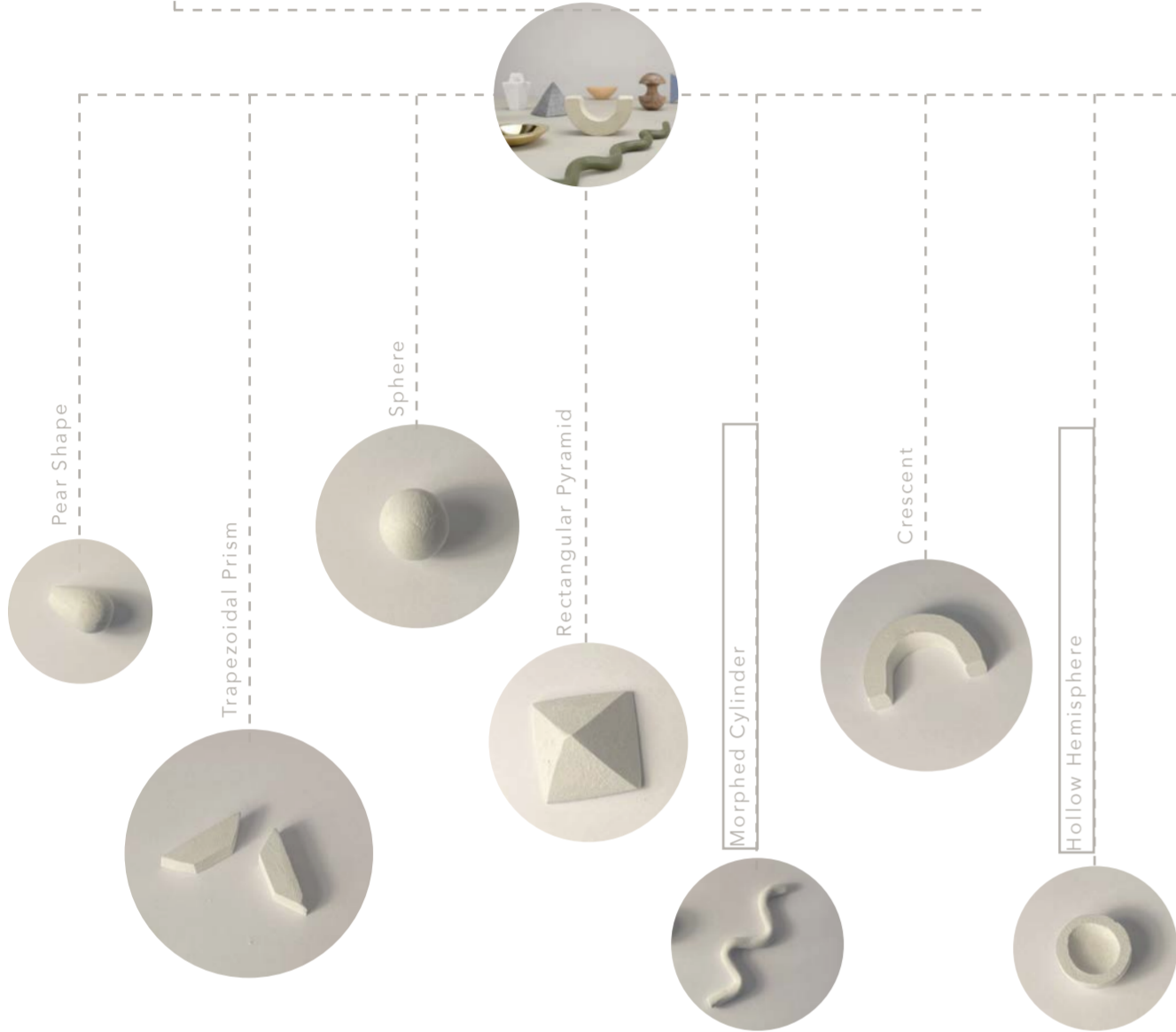


Reconnection

Nora urged the benefits for those who have lost touch with their families to reconnect; this is where she found them to find pure joy; this was something she too discovered with great satisfaction.

The Effects of Shapes

These various forms were previously crafted by Nicolette Bodwese to promote communication when in therapy sessions - Bodwese used various materials, shapes and textures. To take these further, I have created simplified versions; fully studying the forms. The uniqueness of the shapes is what has set them apart - you subconsciously connect these shapes to what you know. Taking this ideology forward, throughout the hut there will be various shapes and forms shown, some obvious, others discreet - The aim is to encourage thought and conversation to help them work through what is troubling their PTSD.



The Value of Touch

I furthermore went on to study different textures and what effects they might have. Prolonged Exposure Therapy is a technique used to ease symptoms of PTSD. The process exposes them to triggering features such as socialisation to dampen the extreme effects. Taking this into materiality, I looked into my own experiences to help understand what the consequences that touch might have - considering my own childhood when playing with Lego - If blindfolded and given a Lego piece, I would immediately know what it is just through touching it; replaying my experiences with the fun Lego people and the little houses I'd make - This is how powerful our sense of touch can be; expose to materials they're familiar with when at war can help dampen their connections or provide encouragement to talk their issues.



Material Concept

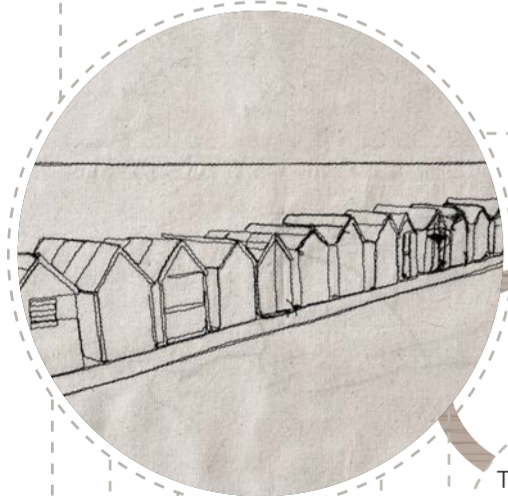
A lot of those with ex-military backgrounds often suffer from PTSD. Using elements of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), I have studied and chosen materials and shapes that feel familiar to the occupants in aim to help with course-controlled exposure- helping towards comforting their 'triggers'.

The colourings within the premise have furthermore been kept neutral and natural - green, stone and raw woods. When at war they were constantly coloured with suits that blended into nature; I took this concept forth into the design, not only in these colours but with the use of raw vegetation.

Finally, I took influence from CBT therapy tools; these shapes were there to help influence discussion and interactivity between them and the therapist; I, however, wanted to use them to promote discussion between themselves and visitors they have. Human connection and thought processing were big factors in recovering from PTSD. With this in mind, there were implements of unique shapes such as the 'tear' drop tiles and the hexagonal - these forms furthermore found themselves in the furniture designs such as the table legs and wall details.

Exterior Form - Beach Hut

Beach Huts are quintessentially British; they are found along some of England most loved beaches, such as Bournemouth and Southwold. They're things not many tourists get to experience; why not take beach huts to a new realm and plot them into the middle of the city?



The aim is to create a place that encourages a sense of comfort, relaxation and community.

Waiting lists of up to 10 years

These small spaces are often past down through generations and, despite their size, can sell for over £70,000.

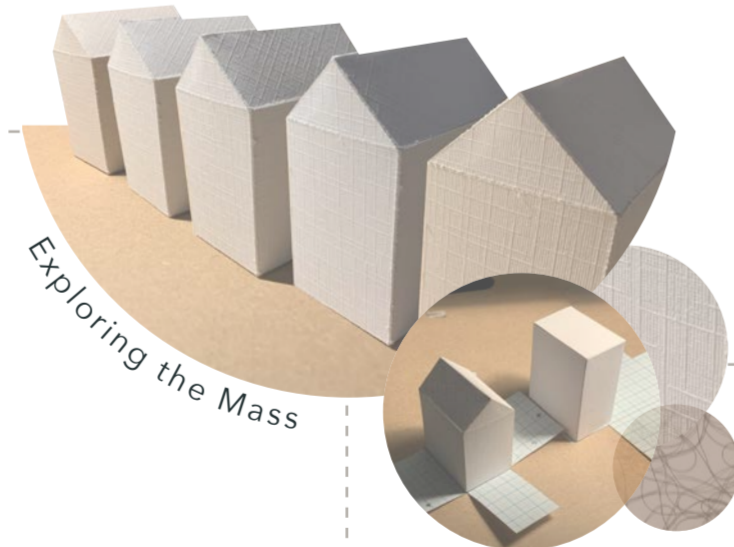
Estimated to be 20,000 huts across the UK

- Community
- Independence
- Relaxation
- Ownership
- Familiarity
- Individuality

Why a Beach Hut?

Beach huts have a very familiar shape; lots of us remember them from our childhoods; they're almost like little houses. With them comes a lot of charm and a great likeability - a positive addition to most places.

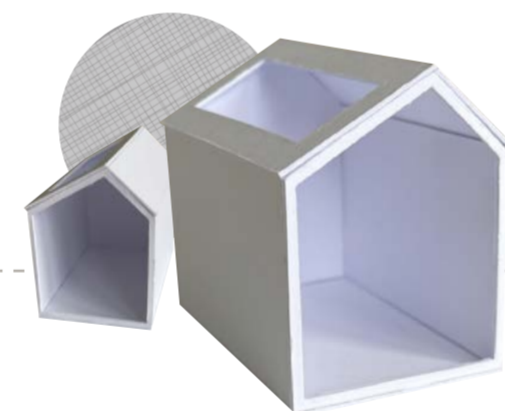
These Huts are small (which homeless shelters need to be), yet create a sense of belonging, ownership and community.



Stripping back materiality to one textured card - I explored the effects that the overall hut shape had; was it still likeable without it's details?

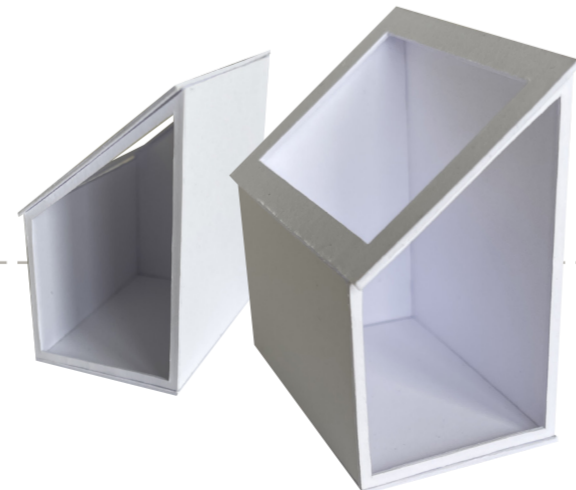
Standing alone the hut shape felt familiar and coursed interest however, when put in a row it formed a neighbourhood; a feeling a simple rectangle didn't create.

1:50 Scaled Models



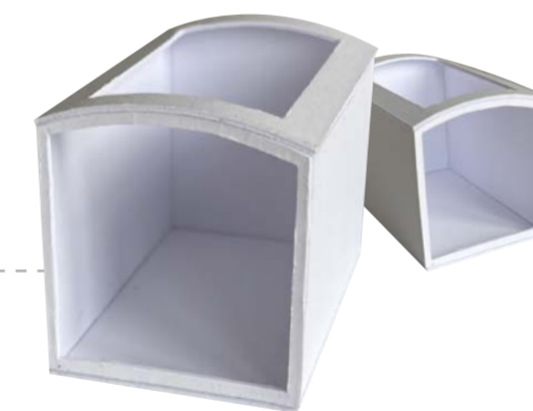
Asymmetrical Roof

An asymmetrical impression of the hut shape; followed a more contemporary approach. Gave great directional light if placed statistically. The shape is very specific; the uniform feeling is missing.



Slanted Roof

An extremely slanted roof didn't have any calming features and felt specific. However, I did enjoy the directional lighting mood it created.



Curved Roof

This shape offered a great, uniform, skylight from every direction. Though, the curved shape didn't spike interest and felt less desirable.



Traditional Shape

With the original shape, I sculpted fine details to further study its form. The most important features to it were the porch - an inside/outside space; an area of protection (inside) with an element of social (outside).



The Final Developed Shape

The hut size is a constraint. However, it creates a desirable comfort that hadn't translated in the alternative shapes. The porch was also found to be an important feature that was carried through to the final design.



The size of huts was a constraint, through studying over 20 versions, I finalised with this form; it was large enough to be a practical living space whilst kept the values of the hut.



A Space for One

The 'Space for One' was designed to be a quite area with a view of the outdoors without the exposure large windows bring. A place for PTSD sufferers to go and work through probable issues, read a book and relax.



Space For One

Uniform Connection

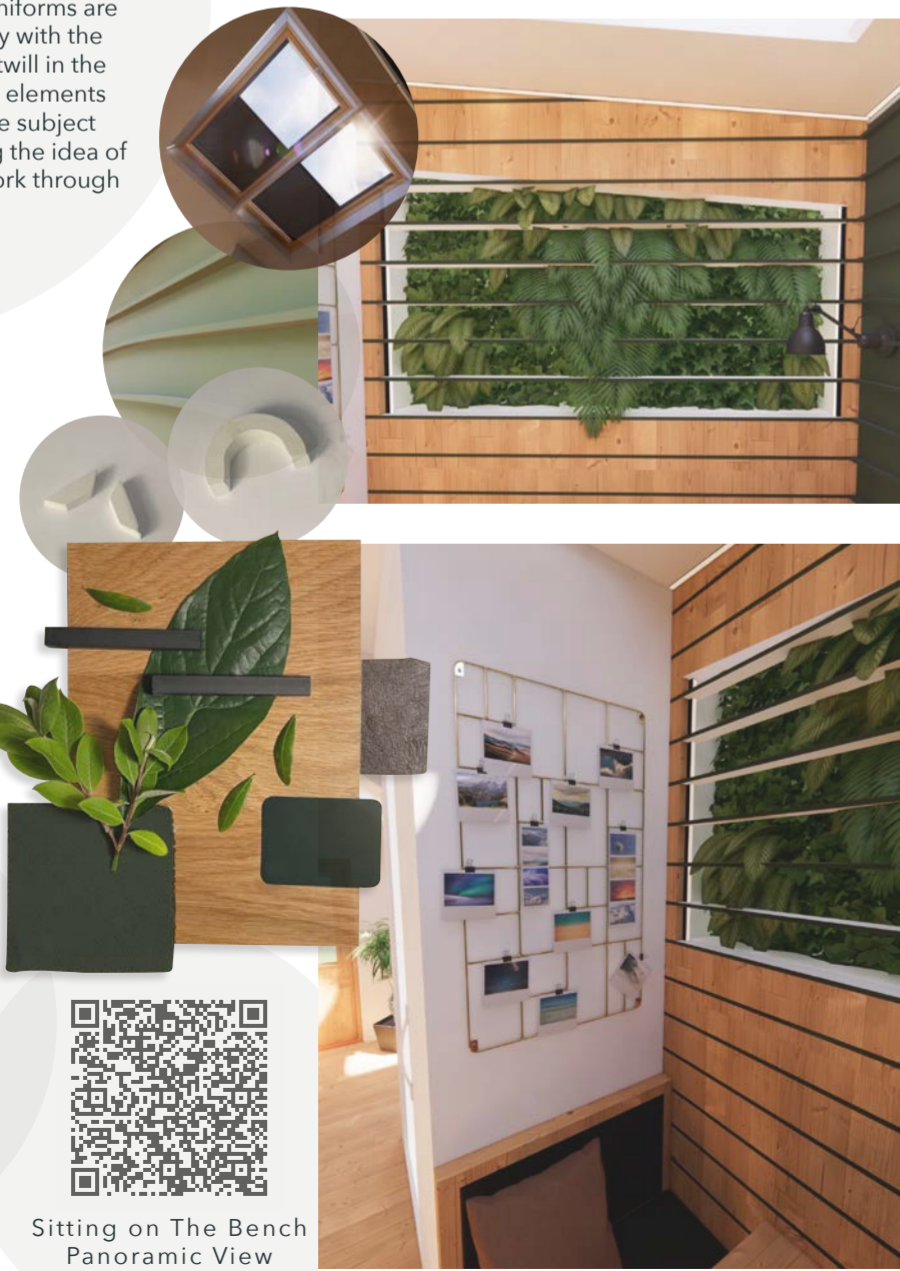
The natural biophilic values throughout the spaces have been extremely considered and introduced to help not only create visual interest and aid in filtering of air, but to have a connection to their uniforms at war which are scientifically designed and coloured to mirror nature. Their uniforms are further mirrored in the materiality with the use of high performance cotton twill in the upholstery. These inconspicuous elements will help provoke thought on the subject without directly portraying it; using the idea of exposure therapy to help them work through their probable issues.

Routine

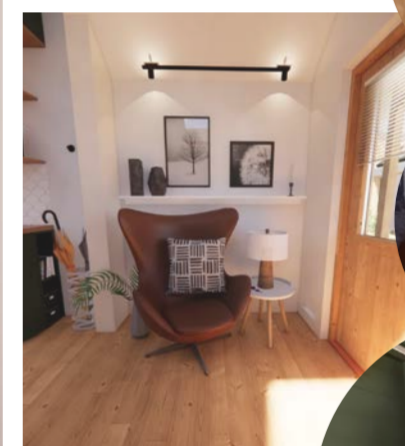
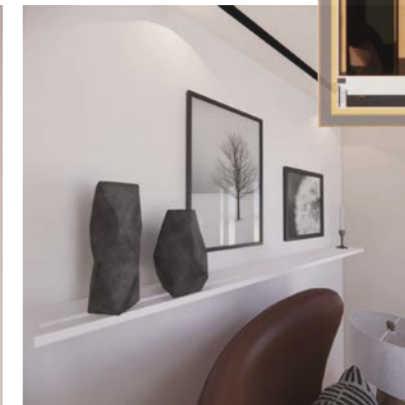
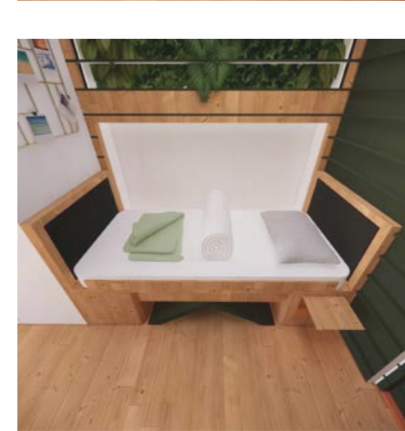
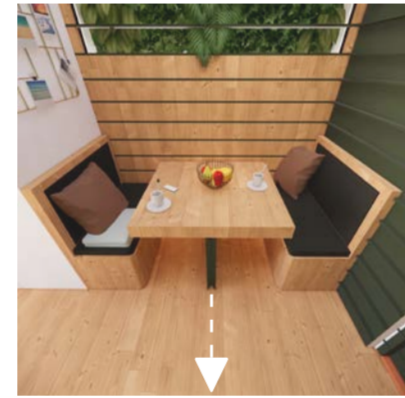
Those with an armed forces background are accustomed to having a routine. To create this within the space I formed a multifunctional bed/seating area - giving them a morning routine of making their bed and forming their table; promoting their daily tasks and helping them find purpose and an old/new normal.

Multiple Exits

A huge design feature worked around was having multiple routes of escape and no blind spots; these features can cause discomfort and result them going into 'fight or flight' mode. The floor-plan was thoroughly studied to effectively meet this need.



Sitting on The Bench
Panoramic View



Sitting In the Armchair
Panoramic View

Visual Growth

The large window allows the ex-armed force members to look out and enjoy their self planted patch of vegetation; watch it all grow and flourish whilst they're on their way to rehabilitation; something they can be proud of and appreciate



Familiar Features

The Kitchen was designed to create focus with the use of colouring. The surrounding storage systems have specifically been designed for those with an armed forces background; mirroring what they would be accustomed to when training - ensuring it meets their needs whilst also creating a hidden familiarity and comfort



Standing At Kitchen
Panoramic View

Unique Features

Throughout the space I have injected new and interesting shapes such as the tear drop tiles, the stripes on the walls and the table legs. These features work similarly to the tools for therapy; they're speaking points and conversations starters, either between themselves or visitors. A large form of recovering from PTSD is talking through your problems to help desensitise them; these elements aid in this.



Multifunctional Bed/Seating

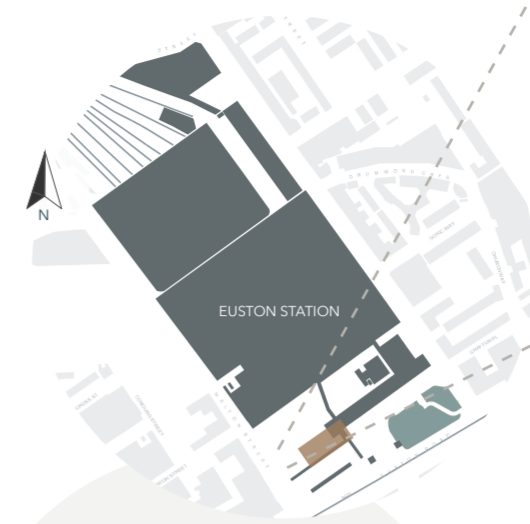


Kitchen + Storage



Residents Walkway

The huts have two exits; one leads them onto a resident walkway - this exit allows the occupants to leave without forcing them to have interactions which could be overwhelming; layering another element of comfort. The walkway has multiple points to leave from, onto the high streets as oppose to the community area.



Numbering Sign

On every hut there is a numbering system which merges elements of all three armed forces symbols. The proposal for this is to be painted by the inhabitant as they so wish and an inspiring or meaningful quote at the bottom - Giving them personalisation to be proud of and an initiative to go through the front door.



Green Mound

This exterior space brings a feeling of a community. This idea has been reinforced using design elements like the large green mound placed in the middle; it encourages those living in the 'huts' to walk all the way around the path - encouraging them to bump into their neighbours and start talking.



Relaxation Area

In one corner there a small pond with trees and benches; a space to loose yourself in thought. This quiet area was designed to be a safe 'happy space' where they can always return to later once they have moved on past this project. To help prevent them from falling backwards.

Euston Station

Euston Station has a foot-fall of over 70 million people each year. This community space is opposite. The green space naturally encourages those more adventurous to go and discover this space, this will allow the inhabitants to constantly meet new, confident, people from all over the world; allowing the, to make connections and a feeling of belonging.



Exterior Community



Curved Path

The curved path and seating is designed to have a more natural feeling - this never ending route promotes contemplation; letting them work through any troubling thoughts.



Curved Path



Relaxation Area



Exterior Panoramic View