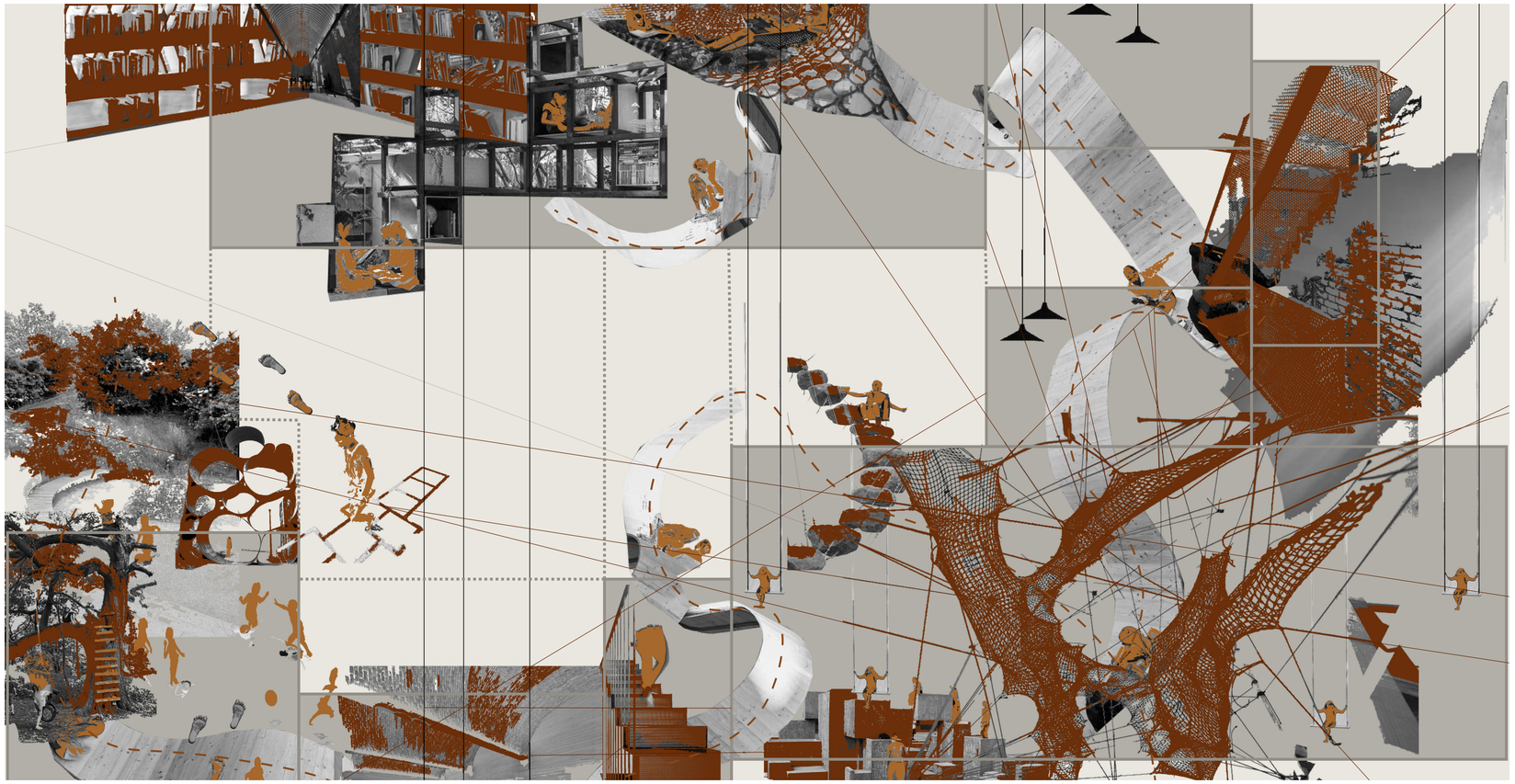
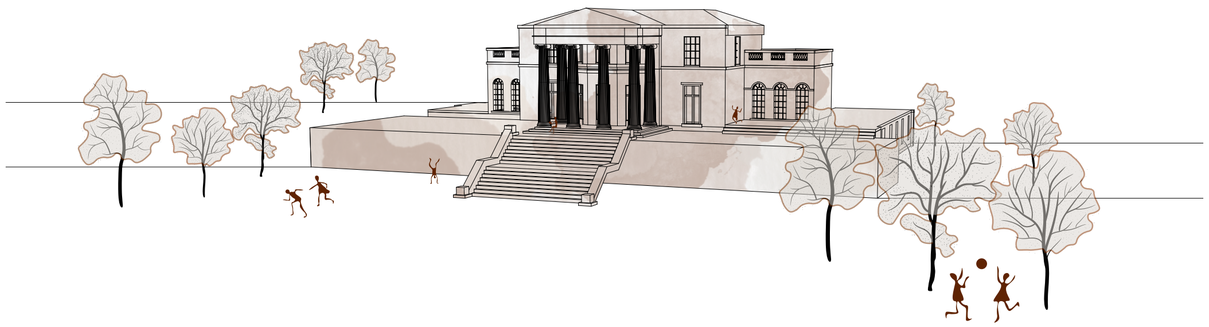


Concept collage showing the three types of play

Centre of Attention

In order to integrate the 200 years old Armley House into its residential and green neighbourhood it is proposed to reread its purpose and transform it into a place where the children of armley are the centre of attention, and where they will learn how to cope with their emotions through different activities that children already do. The property will be divided into three main rooms: Free Play Room (A), Calm Play Room (B) and Challenging Play Room (C). There will also be a gathering space in the basement where parents can spend the time (D).

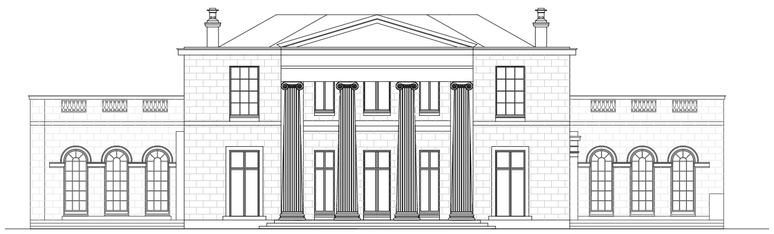
The flow of sustainable timber (CLT) throughout the building, so children can be in contact with more natural elements, represents the manifesto of adapting the building to the contemporary user, and making more changes than the Heritage Authorised Discourse allows us, which also becomes the contrast between the old and the new.
A really contentious aspect of the Heritage Authorised Discourse is that it constructs the heritage as something that is engaged with passively, where the audience will uncritically consume the message of heritage constructed by heritage experts and think about it as something distant, perfect and unteachable. Instead of only quietly learning about what they have to say and remaining passive, heritage should also be an active critical engagement on the part of non-expert users, the community whose heritage it is, and what is created should be seen as a real and accepted way of learning and using heritage places for the people involved. The AHD also stresses the significance of the national identity created by heritage, but again it is only a constitutive discourse of the ideology of nationalism. Heritage indeed provides meaning to human existence, it fosters the feelings of belonging and continuity but the question now is, how is it part of our identity if we cannot interact with it and live with it. If we leave such important aspects of our history untouched we risk forgetting about them and not thinking of them as truly ours but as something that was once and that we have no connection to. These buildings may not represent everything the experts claim but they truly are one thing, and that is sustainable. Instead of creating more waste by demolishing them we can just adapt them to our new life. There has to be an element of change for the better while acknowledging the past and letting it breathe in our modern society.



Existing building drawings

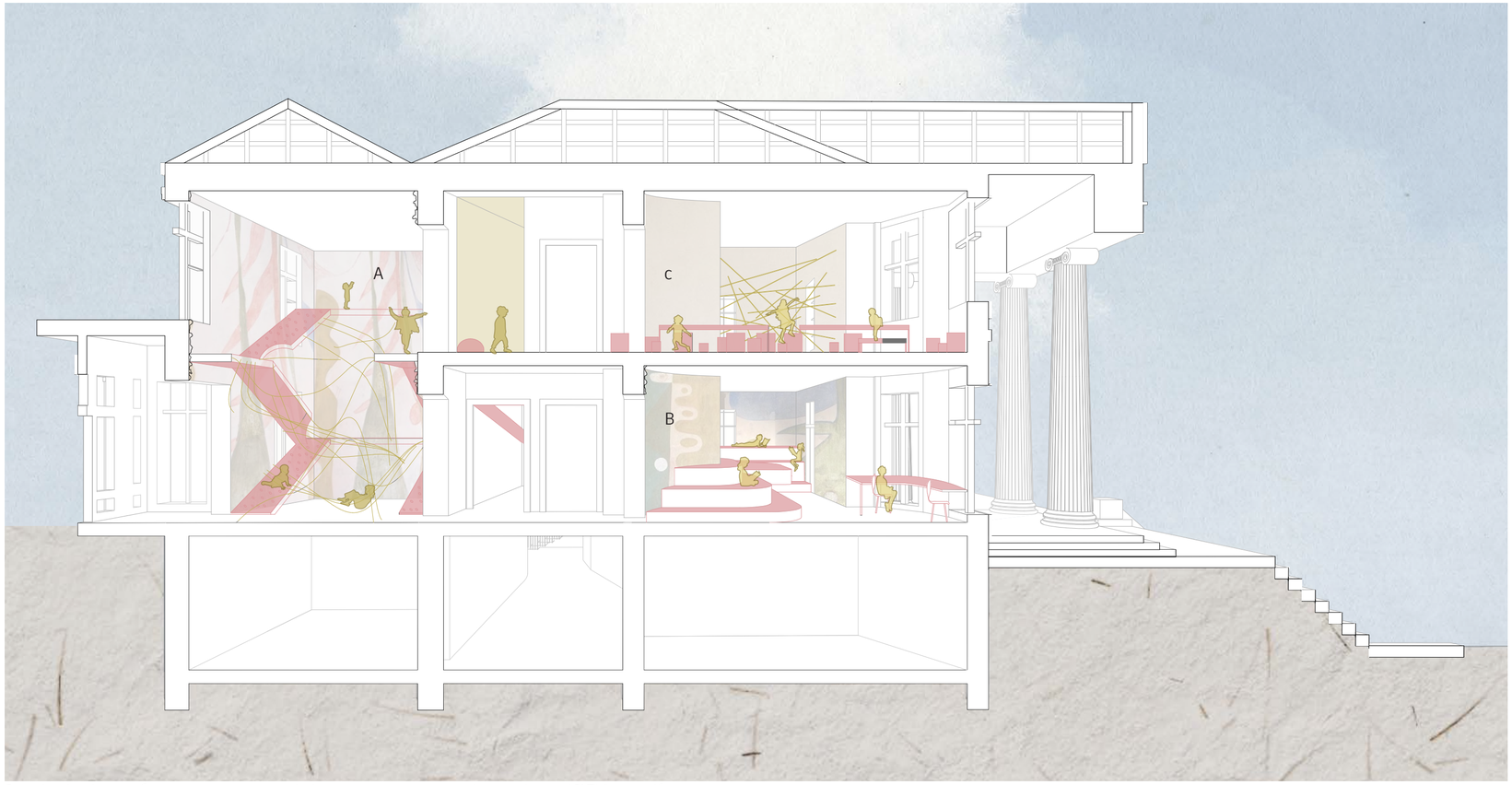
East elevation

Armley House is a grade II listed building situated in Gott's Park at 3km west of the centre of Leeds. It is a Georgian villa remodelled in a Greek Revival style by Sir. Robert Smirke and the landscape around was laid out by landscape architect Humphry Repton. The mansion belonged to Benjamin Gott, a textile merchant that build the largest woollen factory in West Yorkshire in the 18th century. Gott was known as a person of culture, always seeking to educate his children, a fact that influenced the decision for the new design brief.



West elevation

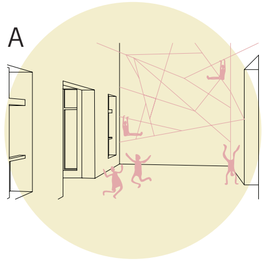
In 1903 it was rented by the Leeds Association for the Prevention and Cure of Tuberculosis and in 1904 the house opened and was named The Leeds Hospital for Consumptives. It was used as a TB hospital during the First World War. In the early 1930s a municipal golf course was constructed in the Park and currently the villa became home to Gott's Park Golf Club, a community interest company.



Showing in pink the flow throughout the building created by cross laminated timber (CLT) in real life.

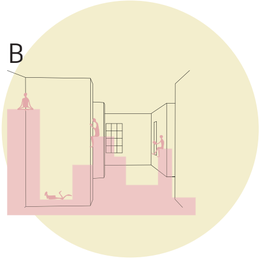
Children activities

A



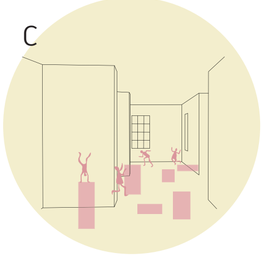
Playing around freely without any guidance to develop critical thinking and to encourage team work.
Suitable for children between the ages of 0-15.

B



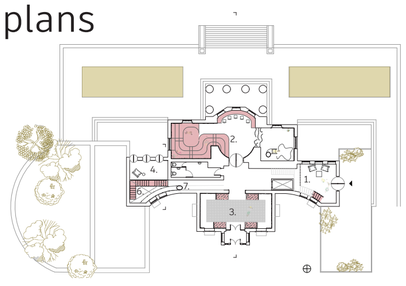
Reading to develop imagination, performing to overcome fear of public or meditating to encourage a peaceful mindset.
Suitable for children between the ages of 4-11.

C



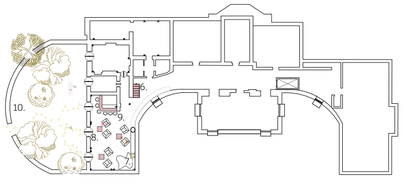
Jumping to face a fear or hiding to develop independence. The installation has to be safe but with an element of risk.
Suitable for children between the ages of 4-11.

Proposed plans



Ground floor plan

First floor plan

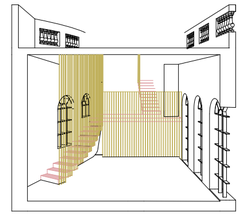


Basement floor plan

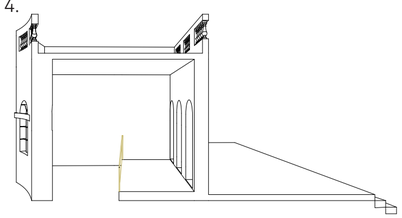
Spatial strategies

The main interventions on the GF are: new entrance into the building, showing extended balusters from stairs, that can be moved, by sliding them, to create more space for going forward into the building. Designed to stop the children from running away from their parents when they first enter the villa (1); tacking advantage of the calming views towards Armley Park from the living room on GF and that it is separated from the noisy Free Play Room to place there the Calm Play Room (2); using the double height in the Free Play Room and adding climbing ramps to access the windows from the FF so that they can provide better ventilation (3); to improve the unused space by the stairs, an interior balcony that opens into the new double height of the wing and that will be accessed from the outside is proposed (4).

1.



4.

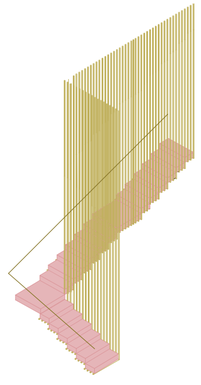


The main interventions on the FF are: placing the Challenging Play Room in the upstairs living room to have a better and more fun connection with the Free Play Room. It was inspired by he construction toy, a series of different levelled surfaces that will encourage and challenge the body movement and also improve the child's imagination (5); the cantilevered stainless steel balusters come from the wall, go underneath the steps and then curve all the way into the ceiling for more strength.

5. C

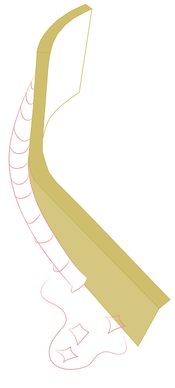
The new staircase design was inspired by the existing industrial cast iron staircase, in order to preserve a part of the villa's history. The stairs into the basement were completely changed because they did not comply with modern safety guides and they are accompanied by a running light into the basement to make people feel more welcome to go downstairs, and the stairs up where changed to fit into the new design approach (6).

6.



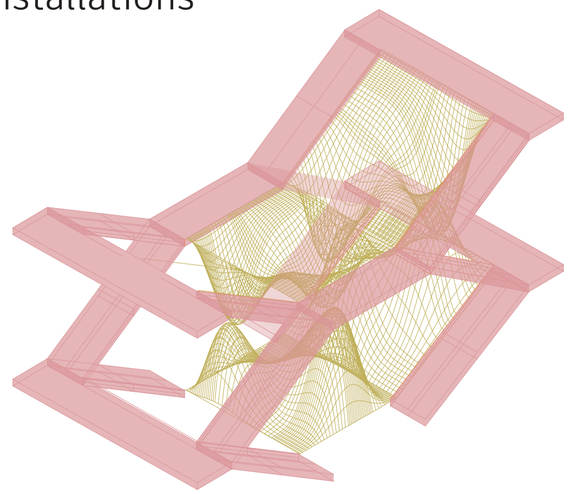
The main interventions on the BF are: in order to take advantage of the big corridor on the GF and FF a slide is proposed that will connect the first floor with the basement. The slide is placed into the wall with stainless steel support to match the stair's cantilevered balusters (7); opening up the exterior wall with big rotating doors with central glass for more natural light and better ventilation (8); opening up the basement cellar area because of its unique connection to the outside, the beautiful vaulted ceilings and in order to celebrate the spaces that in the past were used only by the servants. This space will be used as a gathering place for parents (9); the kitchen extension is creating a sacred space with the outside and almost a heterotopia, perfect for disconnecting with the outside busy city, and will be used as an extension of the Free Play Room (10).

7.



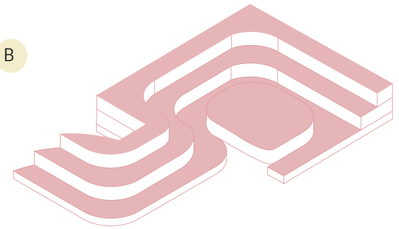
Installations

A



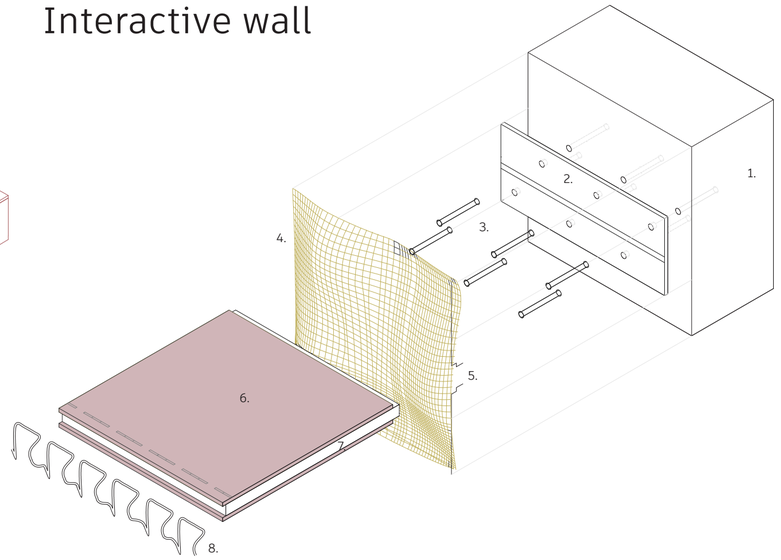
Since the Calm Play Room is going to be used for drawing, reading, making craft and relaxing a piece of furniture that is shelving, sitting and a table all in one is proposed.
It has a stepped pyramid shape to make it easier for children to climb on it.

B

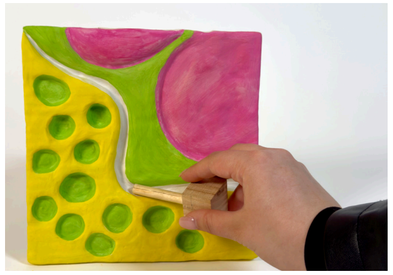


To make good use of the double height room and to access the upper windows for better ventilation it has been decided to create a structure of connected climbing ramps with 6 landings and a central mesh where children can relax and play freely. Adjacent to the structure we have the interactive wall that children can play with it by standing on the structure's landings.

Interactive wall

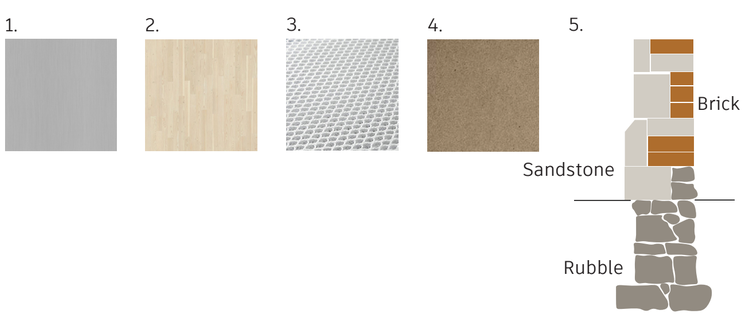


1. Existing wall
2. Steel stringer
3. M20 fixing studs
4. Interactive wall
5. Lines showing how the wall is cut to meet the CLT panel
6. CLT panel
7. Steel support
8. Mesh rope woven into the CLT panels and the steel suport



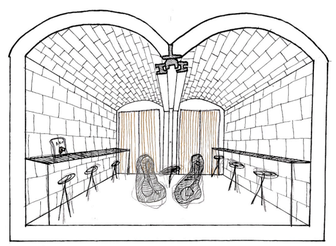
A wall with 3D organic and colourful shapes was proposed so that children can play with it by following the shapes with their bare hands or using the timber toys, improving this way their fine motor skills and their imagination.
The fully circular material for the interactive wall is going to be made out of fibres, water and enzymes mixed together, pressed with heat and then shaped with a robotic arm to produce the organic 3D shapes.

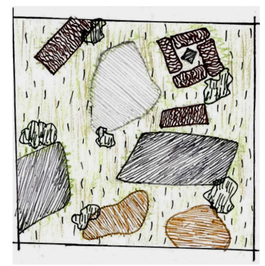
Material samples



1. Stainless steel for the stair's balusters and the slide supports.
2. Light CLT for the stair's cladding and the installation throughout the building.
3. Knot-less nylon net as mesh in the Free Play Room.
4. High-end building material made from recycled cellulose waste for the interactive walls
5. Showing composition of the existing walls in the basement.

Scale model 1:50





After cleaning the old plaster we are left with the existing raw brick, a combination of red brick and sandstone in the walls and also in the vaulted ceilings. This area became the gathering space for parents, it is also a cafe and the rest of the basement is dedicated to storage.
The enclosed outside space holds a path in the ground created by different types of stones to make it more fun for children to follow.