

# Voices Break Barriers

Leeds is a city filled with activism. From the corn price riot in 1735 to the 2021 Reclaim the night marches, Leeds is the stomping ground for the right to protest. However, along with the citizens of Leeds strong familiarity to protest is the reason they chose to do so. Leeds is West Yorkshire's highest rated crime area with the city centre accumulating 70% of violent and sexual crimes against women. There is no help for those victimised by this statistic and this is what needs to change. Leeds has a lack of police presence for those subject to sexual assault and violent domestic crimes through no fault of their own but due to a lack of government funding. Through the creation of a space, dedicated to the support and wellness of survivors of sexual assault and ultimately will provide prosecution where possible. Located on the main protest route in Leeds lies 2 Great George Street. Once an institution of education now to be repurposed for educating and helping those wanting to practice their right to free speech. The building will act as a protective shield for those inside. A new beginning in Leeds both through a celebration of the right to protest and a police HQ.

Isobel Jones

In today's climate, protest and the freedom it provides is powerful. Leeds is an epicentre for activism but at a cost. Occurrences of violent sexual crimes are rapidly rising within city. An underfunded police force can't give each victim enough time to not only help but to support. Given the sites extensive history within the protest community along with it's naturally central position in the city centre it provides a perfect place for a Leeds protest community and also a police HQ.

The statistics found show that violent sexual attacks are the most reported crime in Leeds and West Yorkshire, with Leeds counting for 48% of West Yorkshire's Sexual assault cases. As well as being the most reported crime in Leeds it also statistically has the least convictions following prosecution.

The protest space will allow for the meeting, organising and the physical reality of the protest. It will act as a meeting point and as a space for solidarity. Leeds has a powerful history within the protest arena and has been home to some of the most significant protests in the City, such as the 'Reclaim The Night' marches. The spaces will include planning rooms, a workshop to create signs, an education centre and a meeting point used before the marches start as well as a protest space itself. The second program will be a police HQ, which will also consist of a majority female staff who specialise in the reporting of sexual assault cases. This will provide a consistent work force to assist Leeds with the fundamental and substantial problem of sexual assault whilst allowing for survivors of sexual assault to feel heard and not unseen by an underfunded police force. The space will consist of reporting rooms, therapy and well-being areas, evidence clinics and communal spaces for survivors to come back and use whenever needed.



Site Protest Routes



Protest Routes in Leeds



High Crime Areas in Leeds

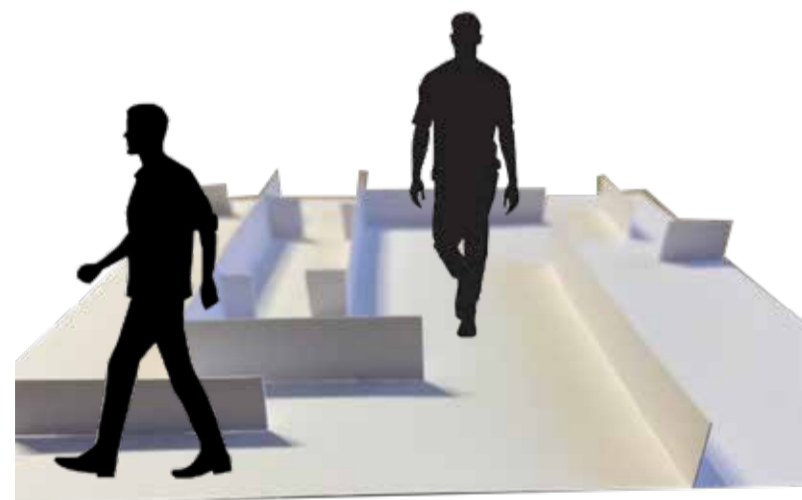
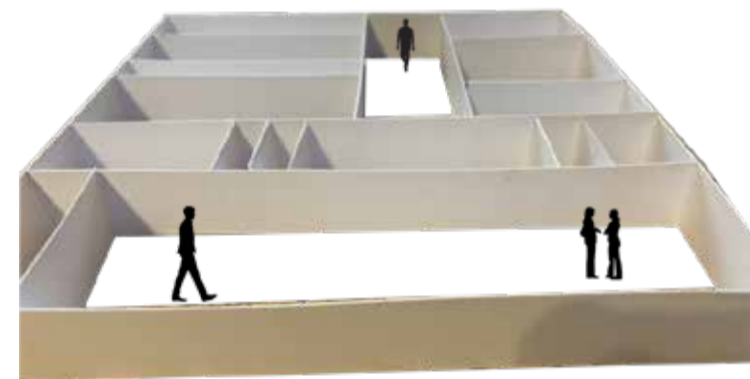


Meeting Points

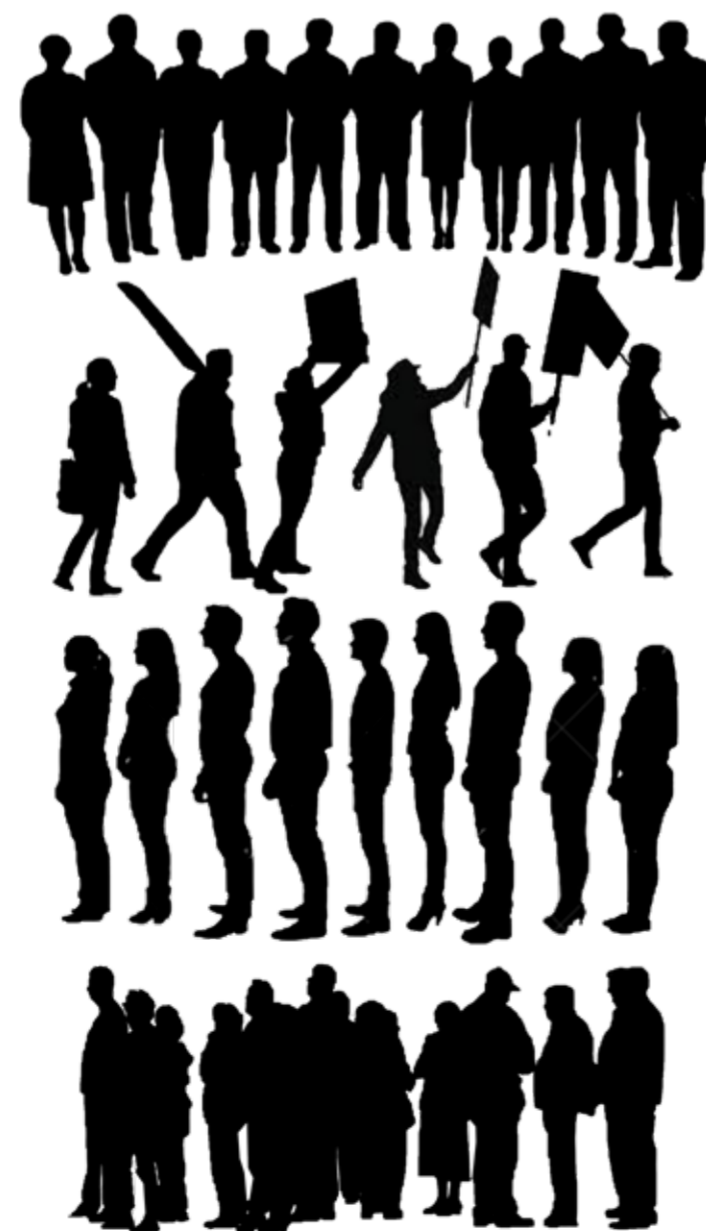
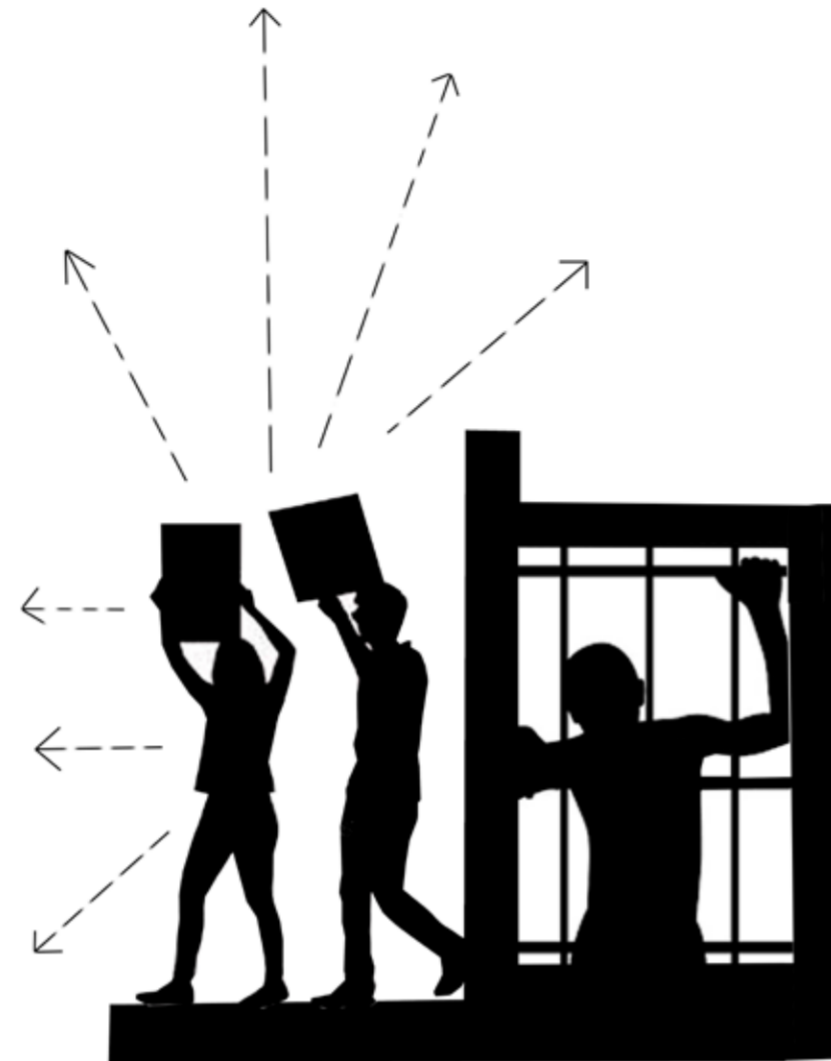
# Concept

These concepts will show a clear juxtaposition between spaces whilst still showing the cohesive element of protection throughout. The idea of 'walls', or lack of, will be used to portray the protection through the building and it will play a key part as the concepts ask the question "Are walls needed to create a safe place or do they create unnecessary obstructions?". However, this concept differs to the traditional idea of 'open-plan' due to the design sense of spacial boundaries remaining relevant.

As mentioned in the development process the primary motivation for the removal of walls is to acknowledge that protesters often see walls as barriers and obstructions and so they chose outside to conduct their protests, where there is less obstruction, and this is ultimately where they feel more protected. This concept design brings the "protest urbanism" inside.



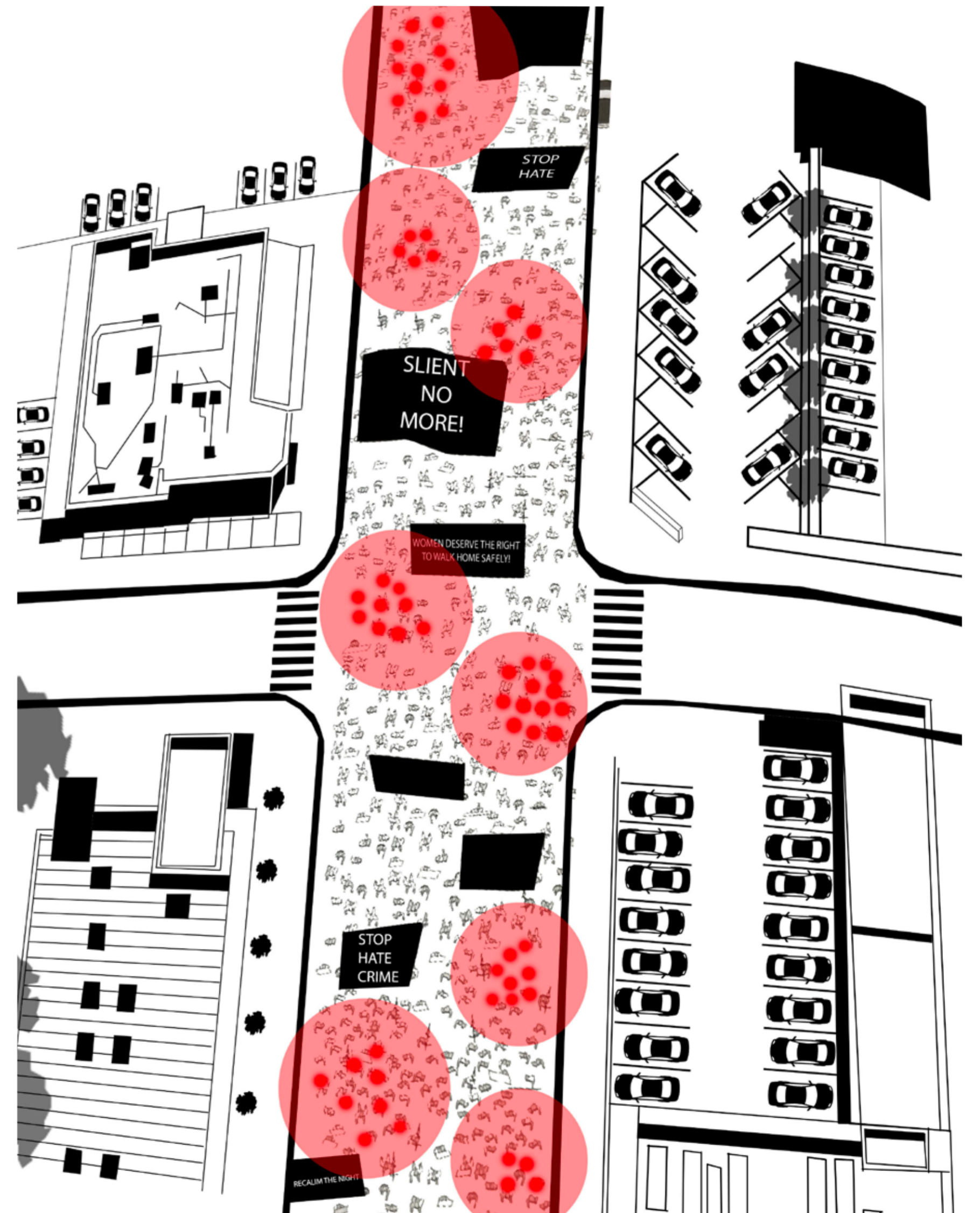
The removal of obstructions- Model Series



'Human Barriers'- Concept Image

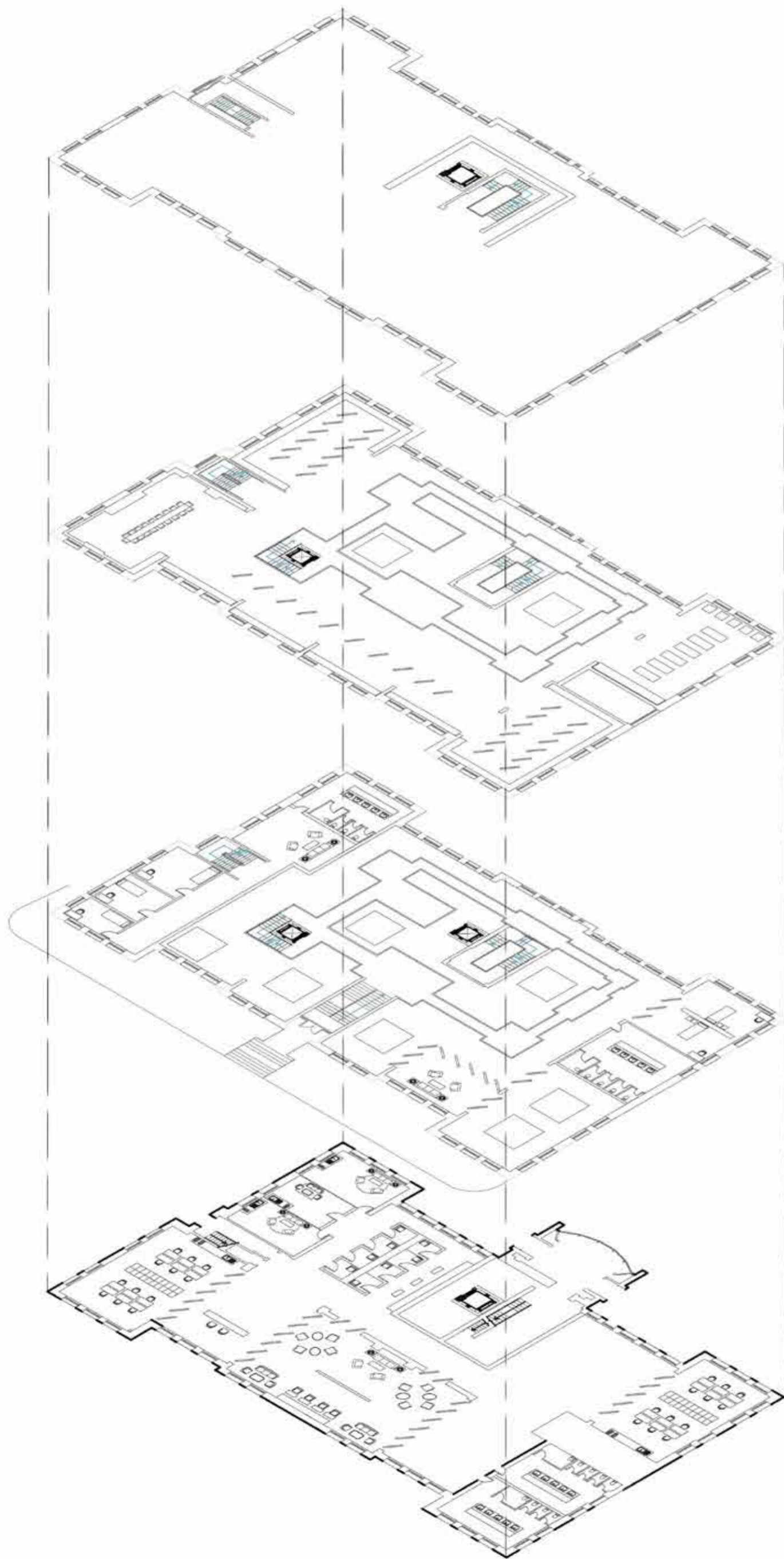


'Breaking out the box'- Concept image



Protest Hotspots - Bring the hotspot spaces inside to create spaces without obstructions.

# Spaces



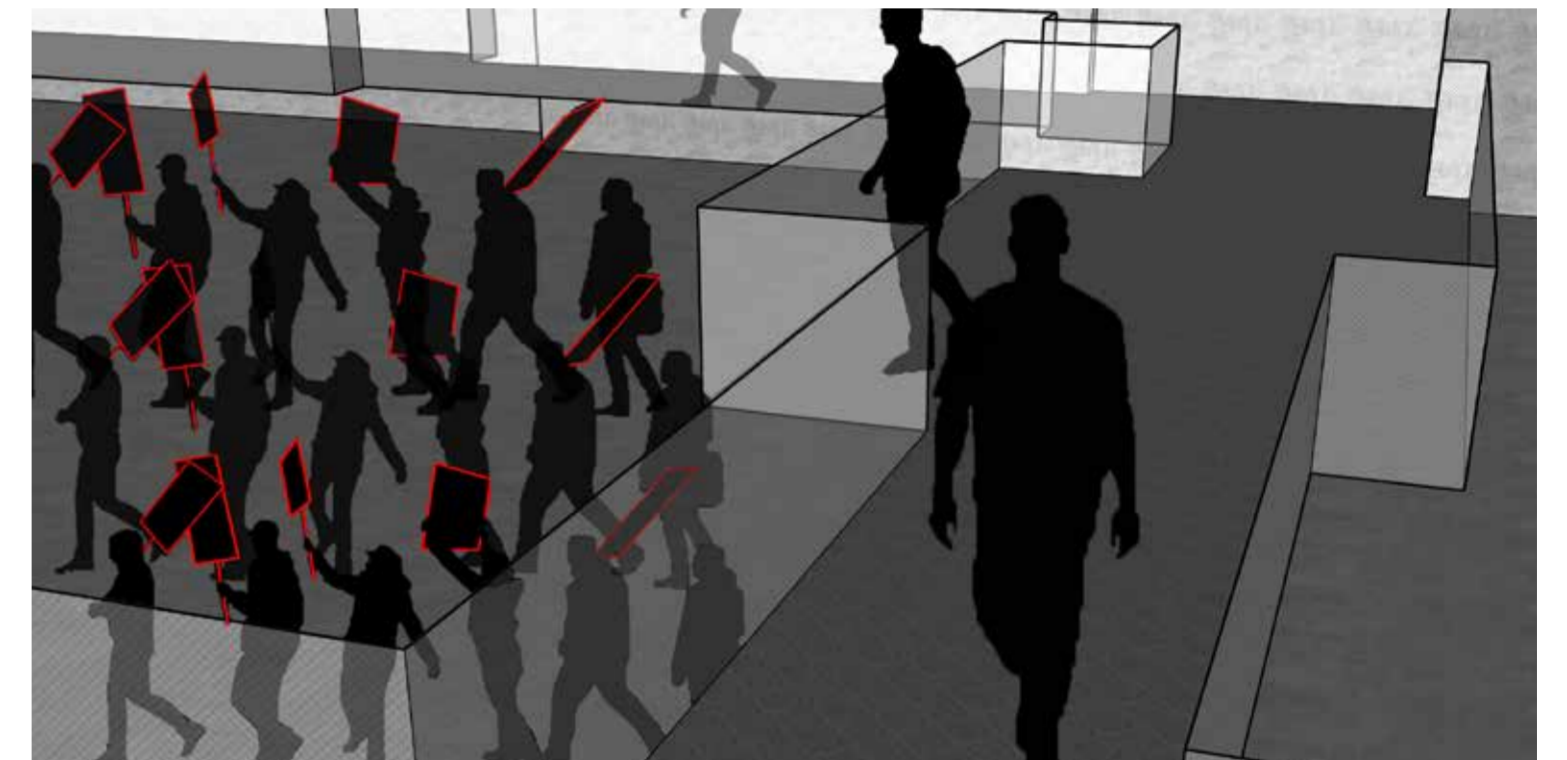
Exhibition Spaces- Projection onto slats



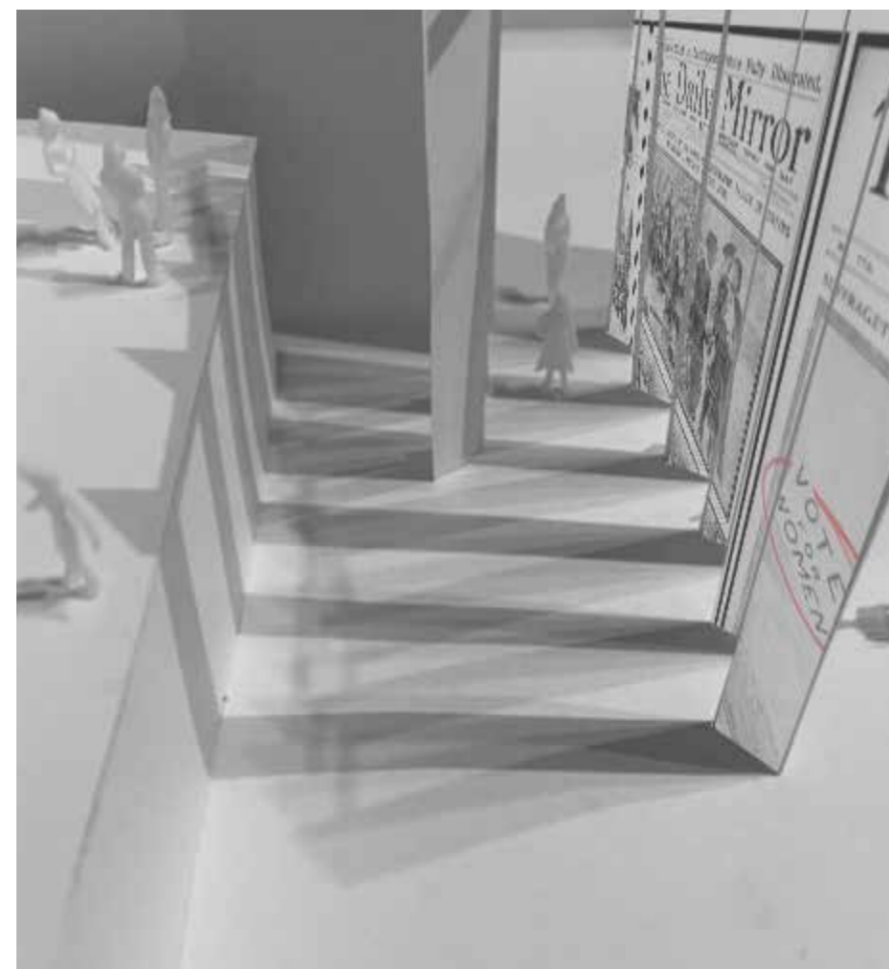
Exhibition Spaces- Projection onto slats



Exhibition Spaces- Projection onto slats



Leeds 2023 City of Culture Walkway



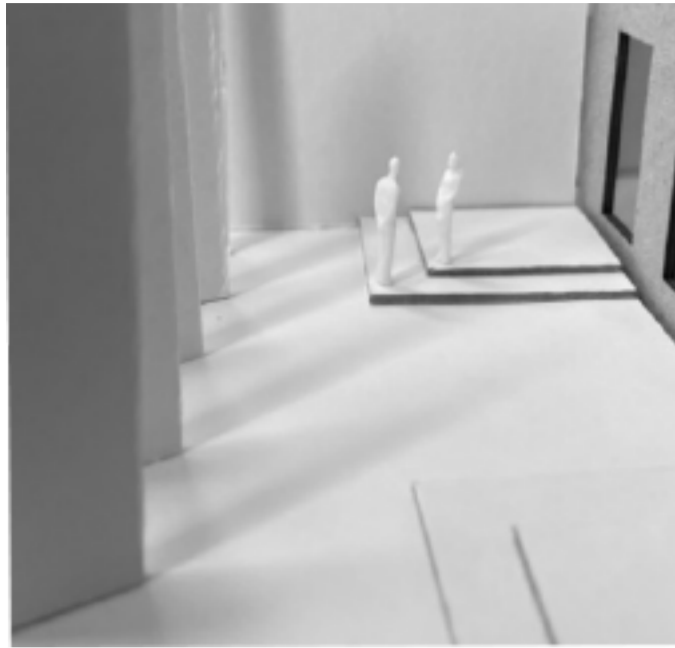
Exhibition Spaces- Projection onto slats



Protest space

# Spaces

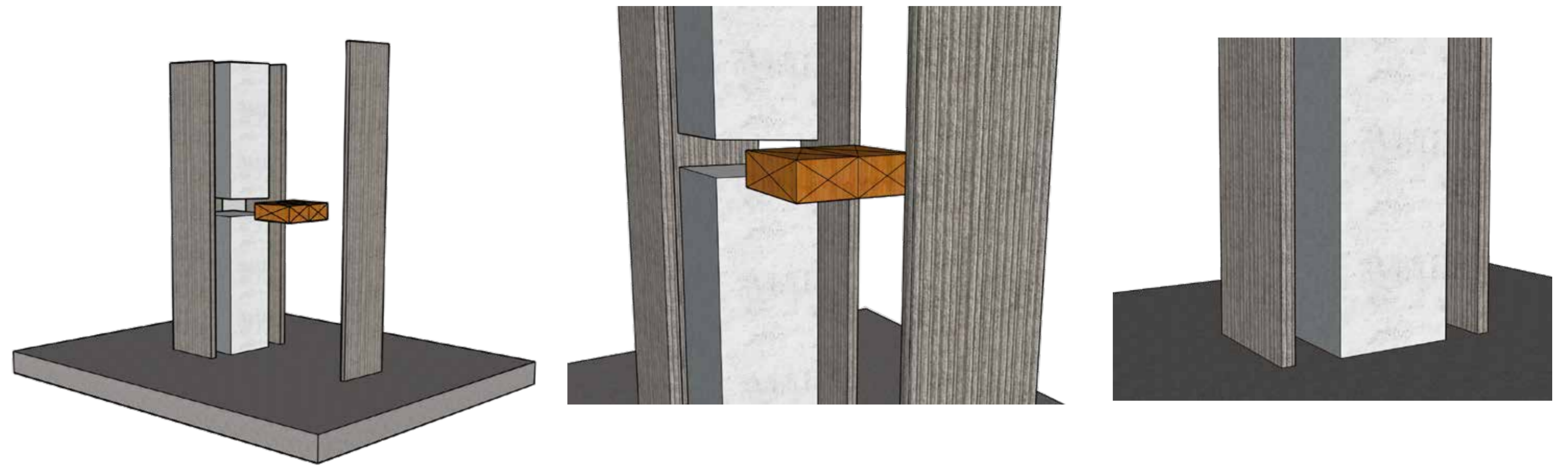
The spaces include-



# Detailing

This detail is of one of the concrete slats found on the first and second floors of the building. The materials used will be a concrete covered in a finish to allow for the projection on. The slatted concrete will span from floor to ceiling and be spaced approximately one metre apart allowing passage through easily without a sense of a physical wall.

This detail was chosen to portray the project. The purposely designed obstruction facilitates the design regime of creating space without obstructions. The detail allows an individual being able to traverse walls. It allows for the respite needed in a large space without compromising the initial design concept.



# Materials

The materials chosen were done so to allow for a natural, minimalistic space. This fits all communities. For the protesters it helps mimic an outdoor feel allowing for a more natural flowing protest and for the police community and no interruptions. The less busy space allows for better healing.

## Existing Materials

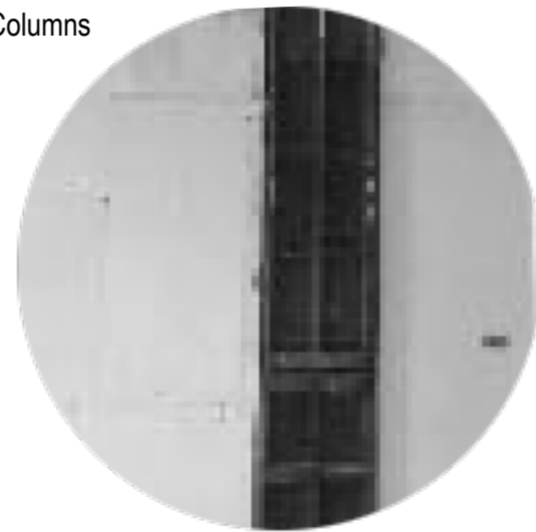
Steel columns



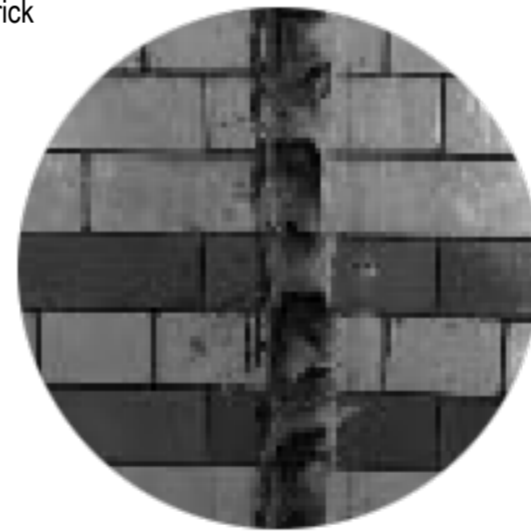
Concrete



Iron Columns



Brick



## New Materials

Concrete



Glass



Timber



Textured Concrete

