

KAFKA ON THE SHORE - a set design project

Statement about my work

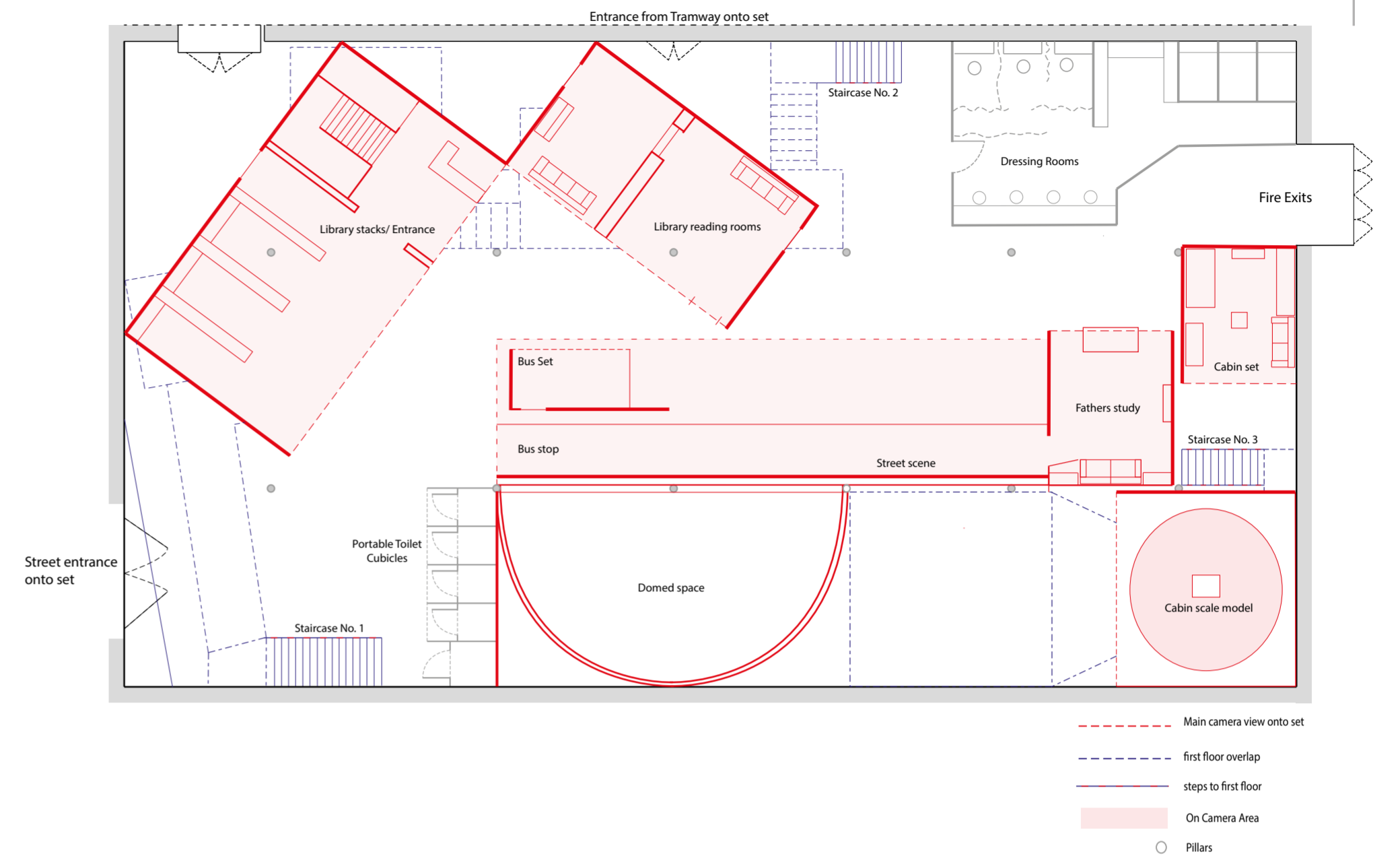
My Project focuses primarily on set design, translating the novel Kafka on the shore by Haruki Murakami into a series of sets for a film production of the book.

Working on this project in an interior design context I had to consider both what makes a functional and successful film production but also how each set blends together and appears within my site as a visually appealing interior installation.

Basing my project around set design created a lot of new opportunities for me in how I was able to present my designs, allowing me to create more conceptual and atmospheric spaces, which I enjoy most in my work. It also created a series of new challenges for me which were both interesting and difficult to overcome. For example, how cameras operate on site and cast and crew move between sets.

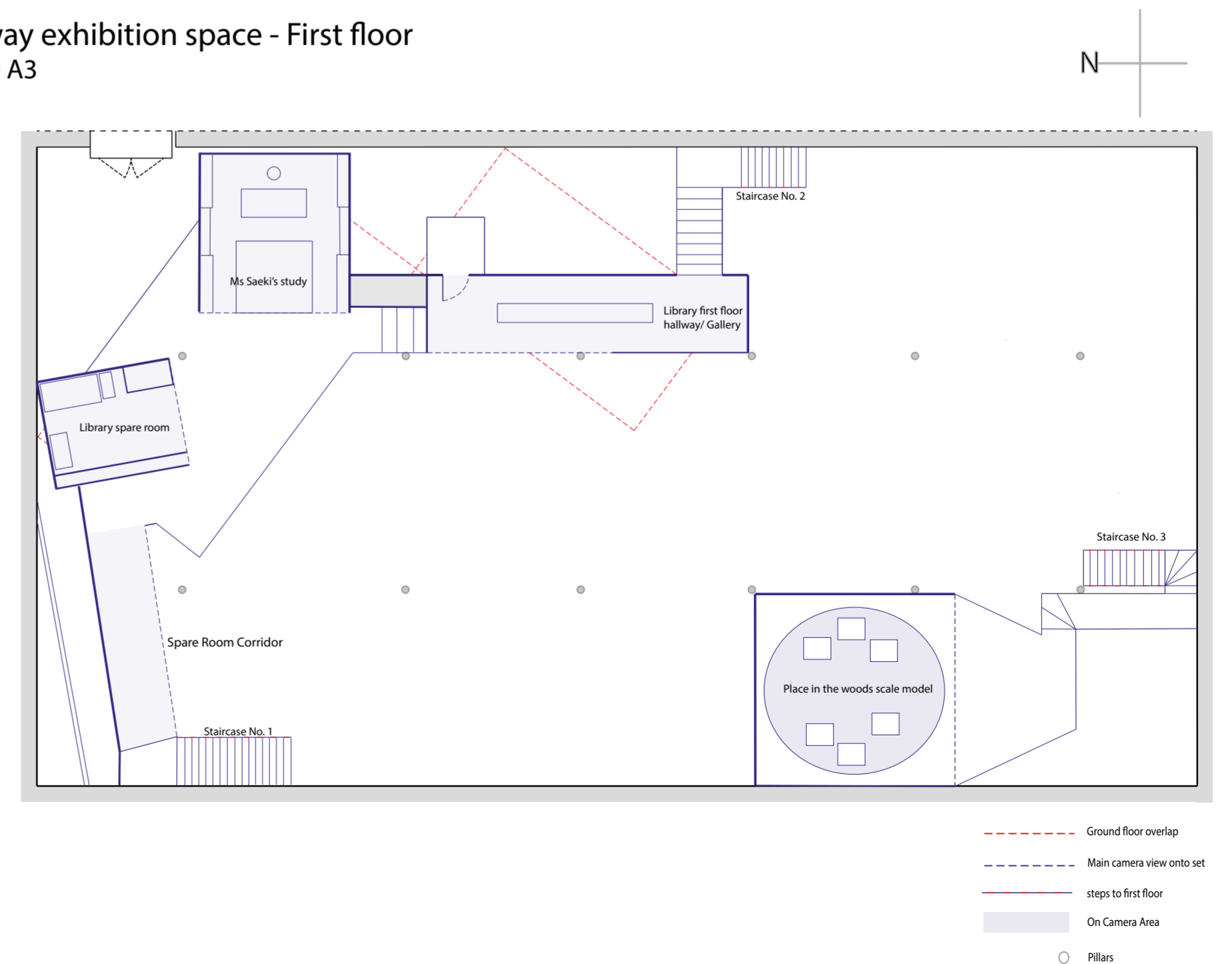


Tramway exhibition space - ground floor
1:125 @ A3



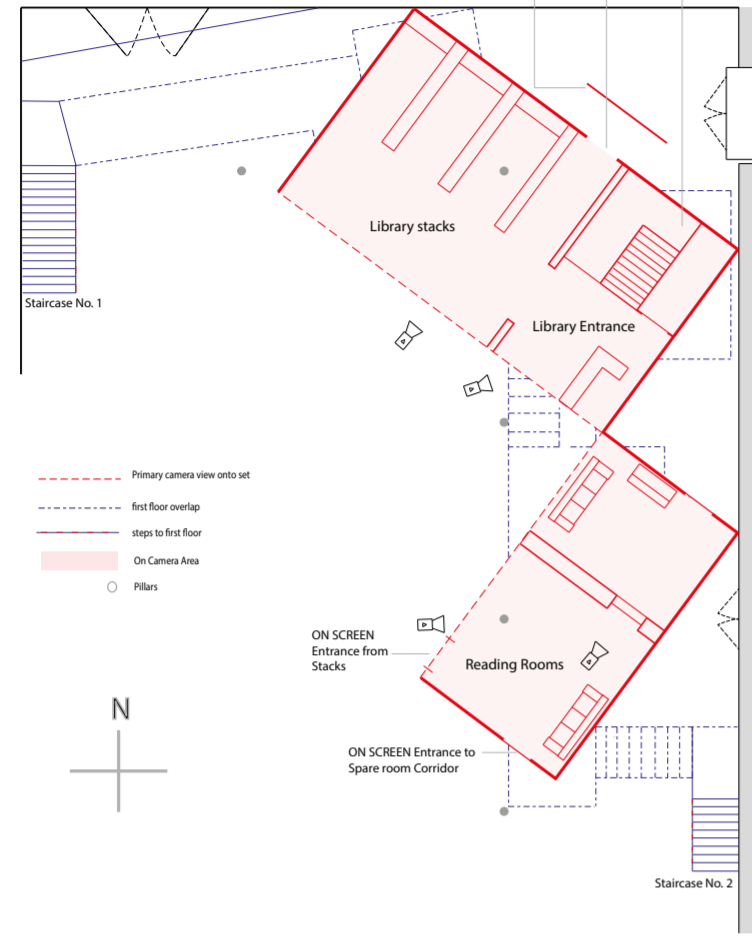
Plans showing the layout of my sets within the site

Tramway exhibition space - First floor
1:125 @ A3



A Selection of Visuals

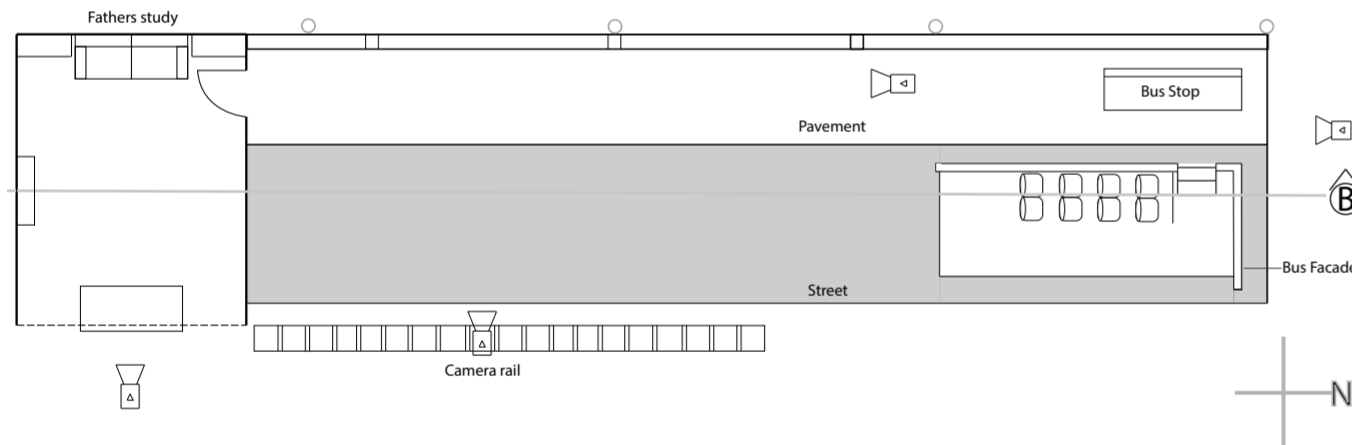
Library Plan



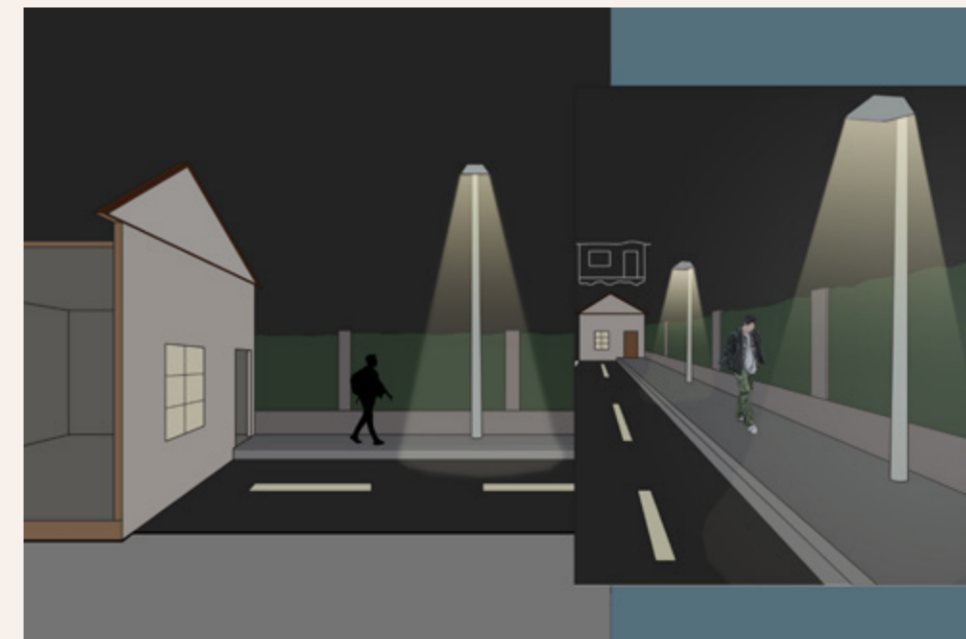
Library Visuals



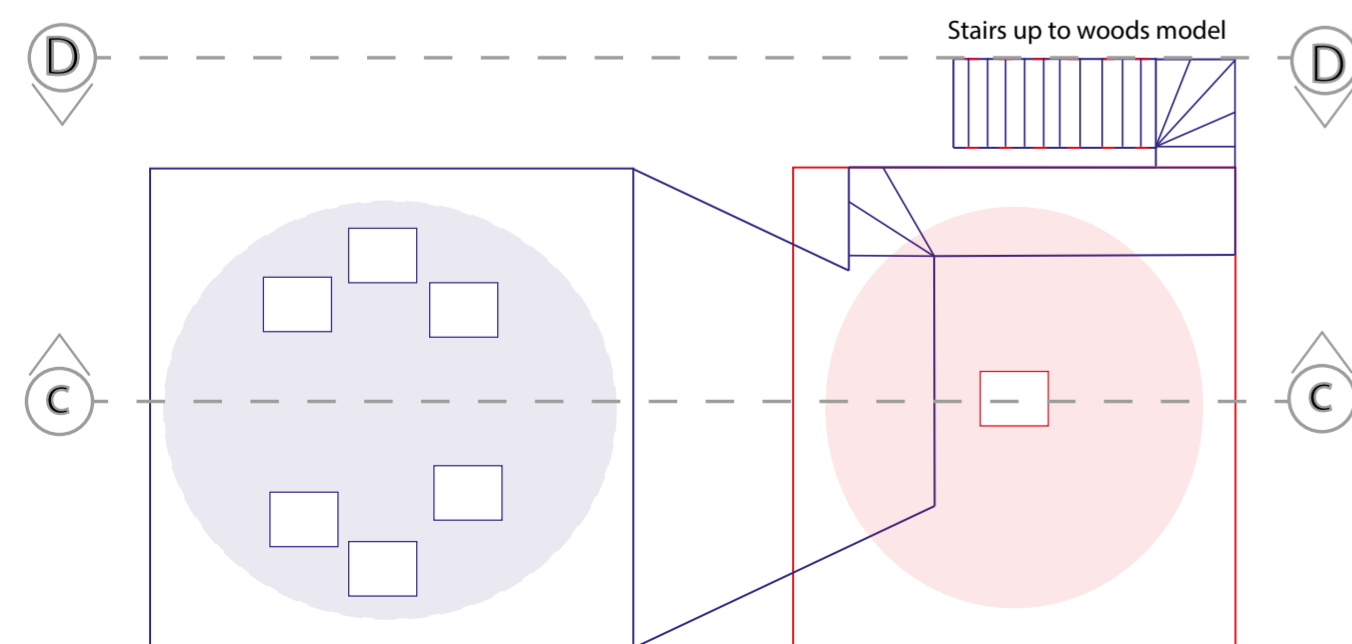
Street Scene Plan



Street Scene Visuals



Scale Models Plan



Scale model Visuals

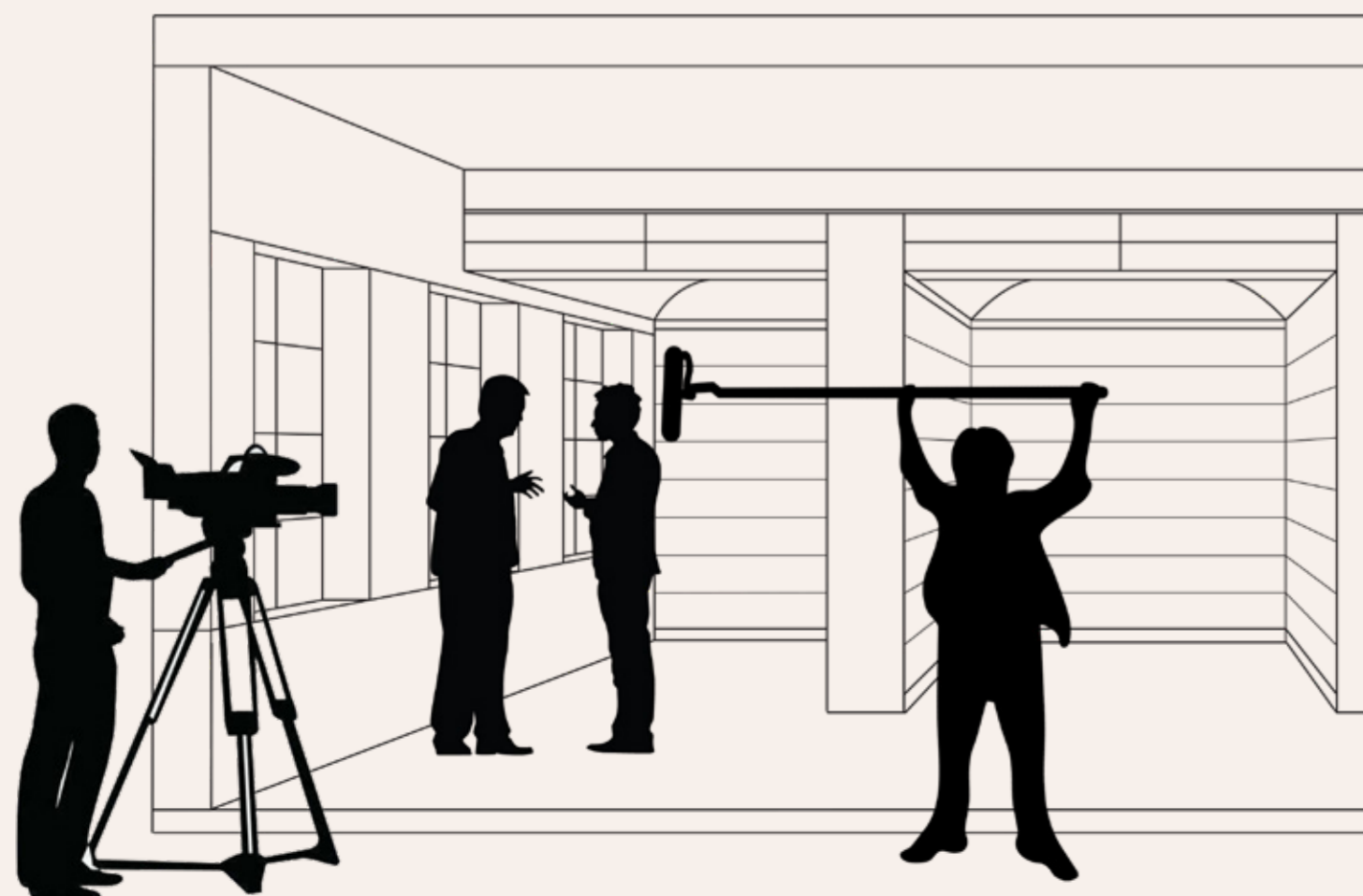
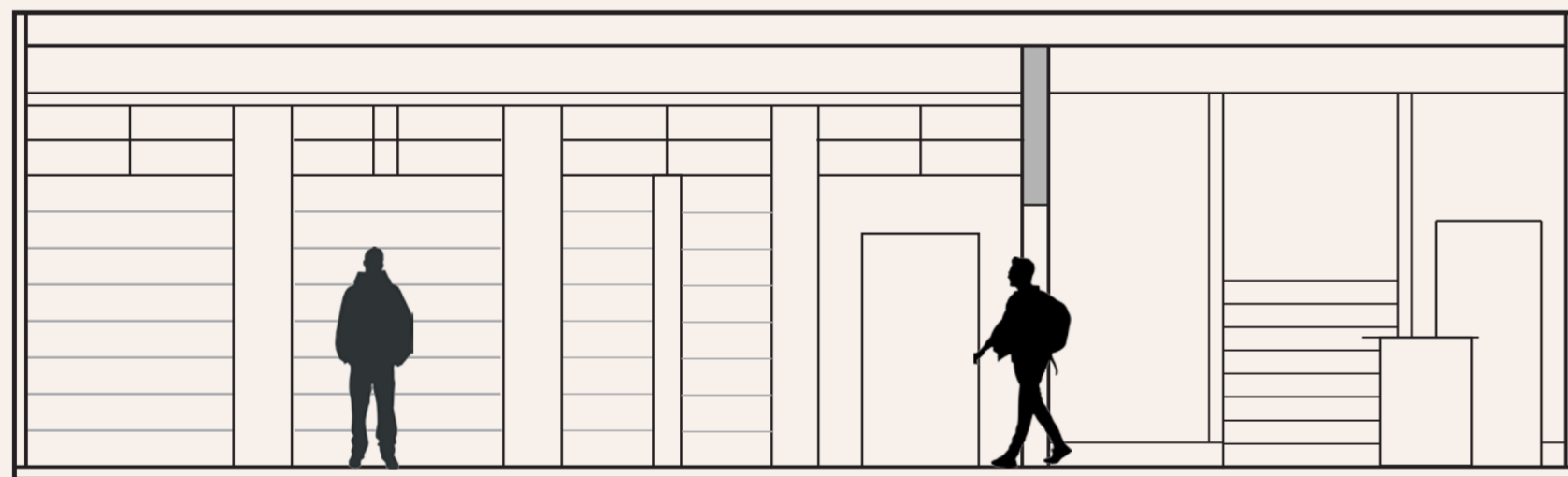
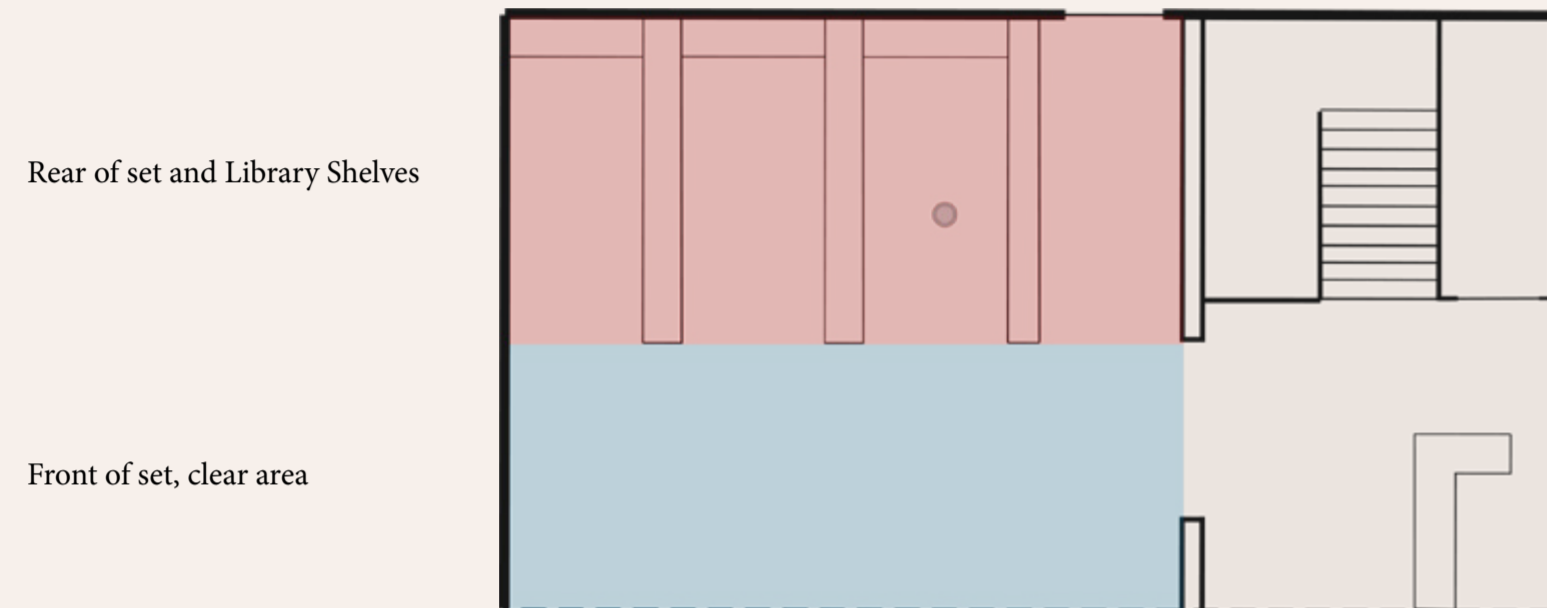


Focal points and backgrounds on set

One of the most significant portions of work in my project was organising my sets to function on camera. This required balancing a few important aspects which needed to be included in each set.

A particular example of this is the 'Stacks Set' from the Library portion of the book. The set is split into two distinct areas, front of set which is open and unobstructed allowing for clear shots of cast members interacting within a scene.

The Rear of the set contains the shelves which give the set its character and creates the boundary between the two areas. The shelves both create an interesting focal point and depth for the scene while also functioning as a cohesive and relatively simple backdrop. The camera can also be brought onto set and scenes can be recorded more intimately within the shelves portion of set.



'Library Stacks' Final Visual

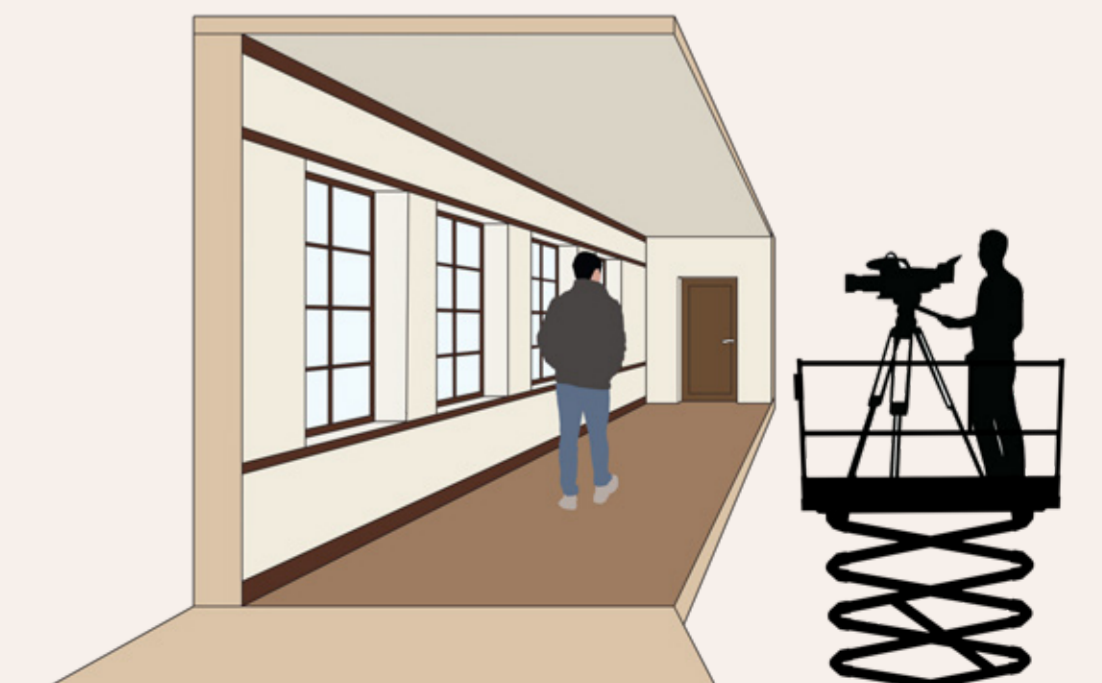


Further Ways Sets can be Filmed upon

For smaller and more intimate sets the cameras can be brought onto the set itself to capture a scene or angle within the space, like shown here in one of the reading room sets within the Library.



Additionally for sets on the first floor of the Library, shown in the my plans on the first page, scissor lifts can be used to capture scenes raised off the ground. Like shown here in the Spare Room Corridor set.



Temporary sets and Materiality

A further topic I approached looking set design was the temporary nature of this project. Particularly coming from past interior design projects this required a different approach.

A large part of this difference was found in the materiality of the sets. As film sets are only built for the length of the production materials need to be used which are cheap and function purely for their aesthetic.

The materials shown here are what the majority of the sets would be decorated with and would be used in some way to mimic the look of the intended material. For example, carved foam, painted to appear as a thick wooden beam in the Library stacks set.

The diagram below, which I created for a range of sets within the production, shows largely the intended end aesthetic for the production, displaying the materials which inspired the design.

Geo Foam



Wallpaper



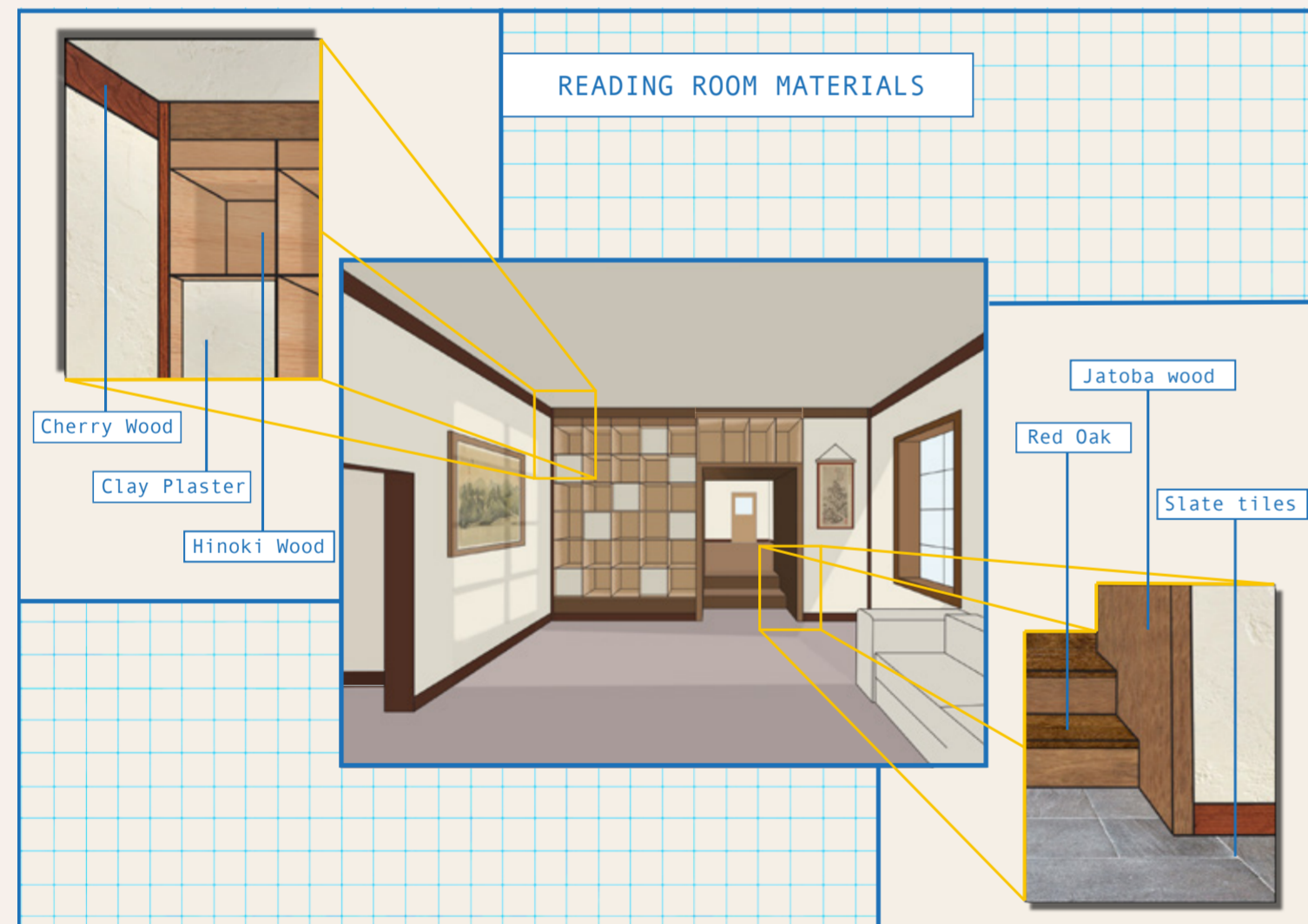
Plywood



Plaster



Paint



However, as this practise is quite wasteful, as it is throughout the film industry, I have attempted to make steps to limit this for my project. After the production is over the film set will be opened up to the public as an exhibition. This not only allows periodically for the continued use of the sets but also open up the opportunity for the set walls to be auctioned off and purchased by members of the public or potentially donated to places like schools or Libraries. Giving what would have been a waste product of the film a new purpose.

Library Sets Scale Model

For my project I created a 1 : 25 scale model of the Library portion of my project and attached simple graphics of my set interiors to the walls of the model.

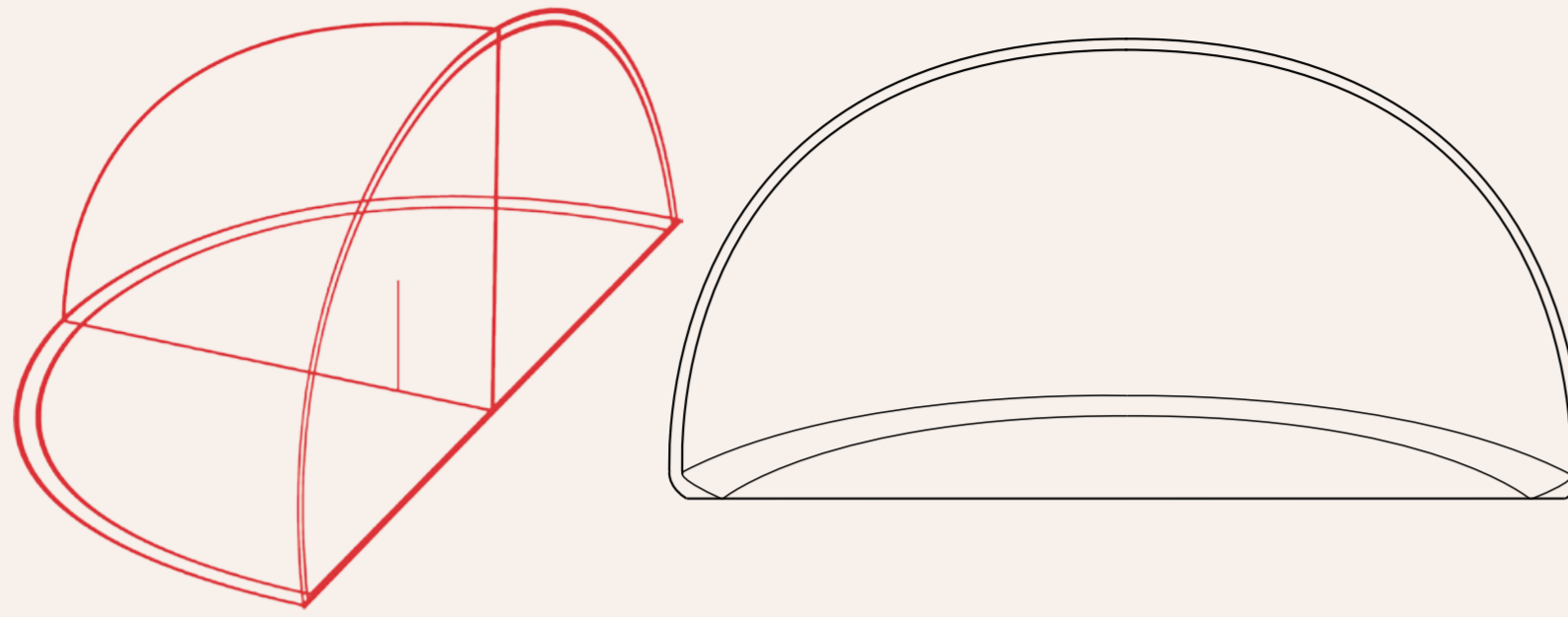
This is common practise in set design and is done to give, cast, crew and anyone else working on the production a clear view of how the finished sets might appear before construction is finished.



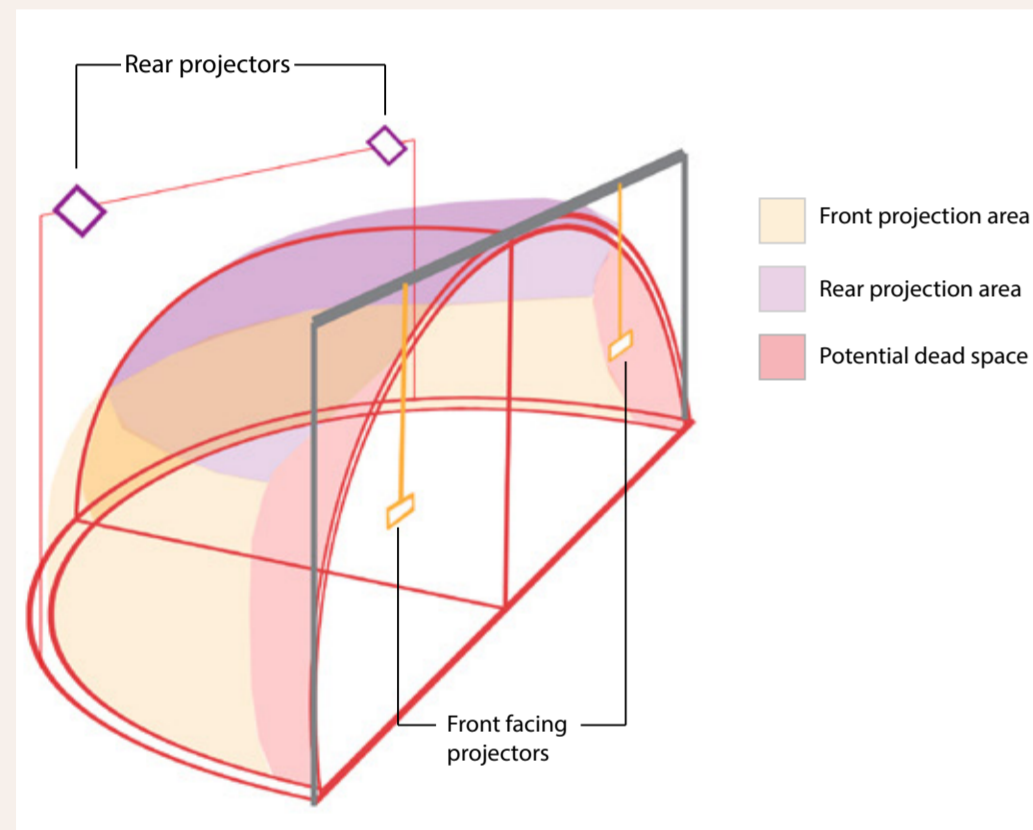
Dome Space and Film Backgrounds

Within my project, as part of a 20 Credit research segment on an area of special interest, I designed and created a domed space within my site. Which would allow projections to be cast within it, allowing for the creation of artificial backgrounds.

My reasoning for choosing this topic stemmed from a long held interest in practical effects in cinema; special effects without the use of computer generated graphics. This is also what initially influenced my interest in set design and hand built sets as well.



Dome Drawings
(Not to scale)



This area of the project involved a lot of research into how a realistic projection could be achieved along with how backgrounds have been used in film both traditionally and in more modern contexts. From Rear projection to green screens.

The diagram shown here is one of my attempts at speculating how a projection in the 'Dome' could be achieved.

The 'Dome' creates a range of new possibilities on set including being able to create a background for a shot where a full scale build was not possible. Allowing an actor standing within the dome to be placed within a host of new scenes.

The 'Dome' also allows space for small scale builds, allowing partially built set pieces to be placed inside the space which could then have visuals cast begin them.

Like shown here, the set for 'Ms Saeki's study' required a view of the beach behind the Library. So by moving one of the set walls from that space the dome allows for a close up of the window casting visuals of the coast behind it. This creates a moving backdrop with a better sense of depth than what could be achieved with a normal background.



Ms Saeki's Study



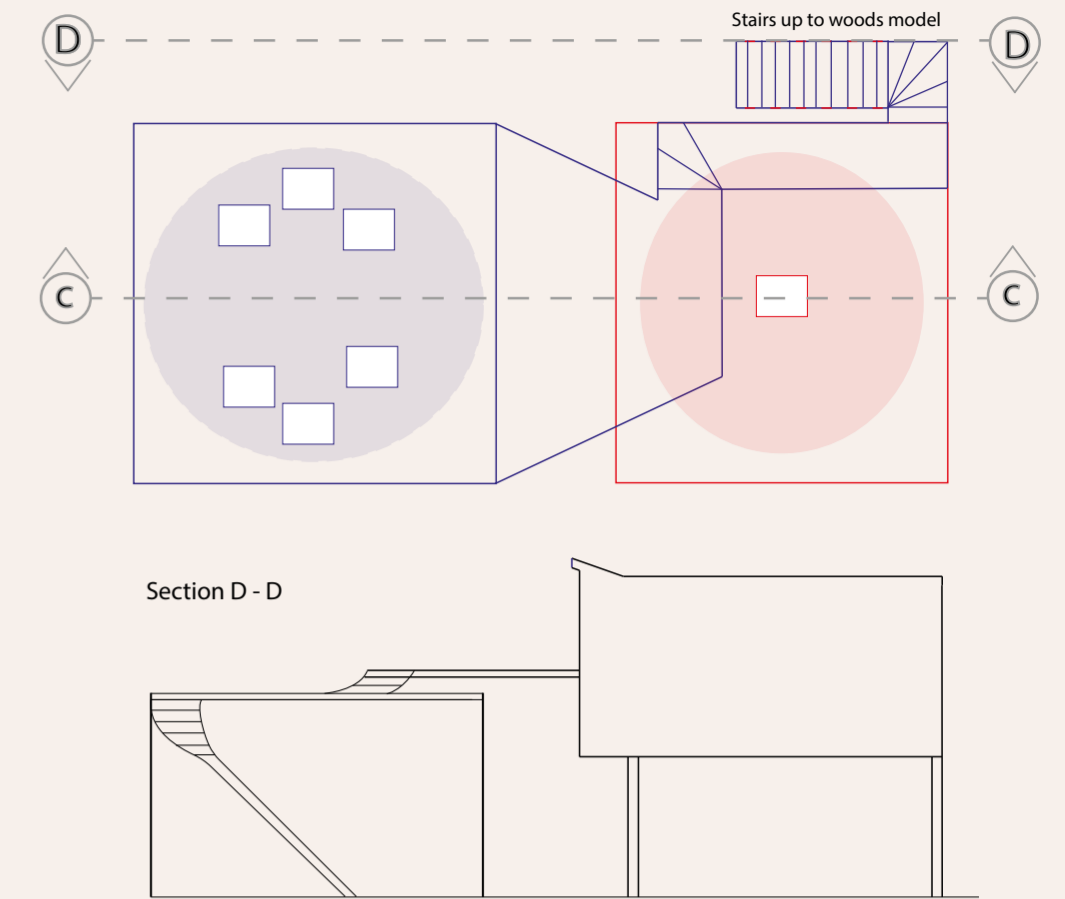
Scale Model Sets

Another significant portion of my project, which ties in with the Domed space, are my Scale Model sets.

Again taking inspiration from classic practical effects from film, the scale models are used to capture an establishing shot for scenes which would be difficult or not possible to make a full set build for.

At one to five scale both of the models capture a valuable story location which would be a failing of the production, in my eyes, to not have included. The model provides considerable control over the aesthetic of the end product and a feeling of authenticity that isn't usually seen in computer generated alternatives.

To visualize the two scale models I painted a water-colour of each set mostly to capture the atmosphere I wanted out of each of these spaces. Partially inspired by painted matte backgrounds used in old films.



Shots taken of the model sets can then be projected into the domed space allowing an actor to be placed inside the scene as well. Turning the small scale model set into a fully realised scene.

