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Motherscare

Babies, Bonding and Boundaries

This project aims to explore the interior future of the maternity healthcare environment, and the possibilities of reimagining a retail space. My design envisions a future facing sanctuary and community hub for new mothers, creating an experiential rebrand of Mothercare, aimed at fostering open conversation around the often silenced challenges of early motherhood and matrescence. Set within a reimagined retail environment that is supported by online sales through Boots (Mothercare's current retailer), the space addresses broader societal needs by rethinking the roles of retail and healthcare environments. It supports mothers as they navigate bonding with their newborn 'strangers', while also affirming the importance of self-care and normalising time apart. The project aims to provide small wins in identity reclamation and everyday wellbeing, representing a thoughtful response to ever evolving expectations of space, support, and motherhood.

Matrescence

[ma tres ens] noun
The process of a woman becoming a mother.

The issue we can help to resolve:

“Our own members tell us they are struggling to give women the time and quality of care they need and deserve.” – Gill Walton.

Chief Executive Officer of the Royal College of Midwives

A midwife's priority is to provide care and advice during pregnancy, to ensure the best possible care for mother and baby during labour and birthing, and to support for a period after the baby is born. Unfortunately, with the NHS being significantly understaffed, especially in midwifery, this vital element of support, post birth, during **matresence** stages, is something that is being compromised.



Branding: Re-brand

With Mothercare joining the scene in the mid-sixties, a refresh of the brand felt like a necessary step, elevating the brand for the 21st century. The first step was to establish a new logo for the company. The original logo was constructed with a sans-serif font, using an enlarged 'm,' housing a child, overarching the store name.



Mothercare's Current Logo

New Motherscare Logo

The original logo representing care and security for a child. With the space being established to support new mothers, I have tweaked the logo to reflect a silhouette of a pregnant woman, shifting the focus towards the mother.

The Mothercare and Boots branding has always featured a royal blue colour pallet, signifying trust, loyalty, and wisdom. I will incorporate this well-established colour association, as well as merging this with new orange and gold tones, gold being commonly known as a precious metal, symbolising new life and compassion.

Site and Site Analysis:



Entrances

The site currently has two entrances to the building. One at the front of the building (west side), and the other at rear (east side).

Pathways

There are many pathways that link The Hub to the hospital and the parking zones. This diagram indicates the main pathways linking to the site.

Sun Path

This diagram shows how the sun will orbit around the building from the east to the west.



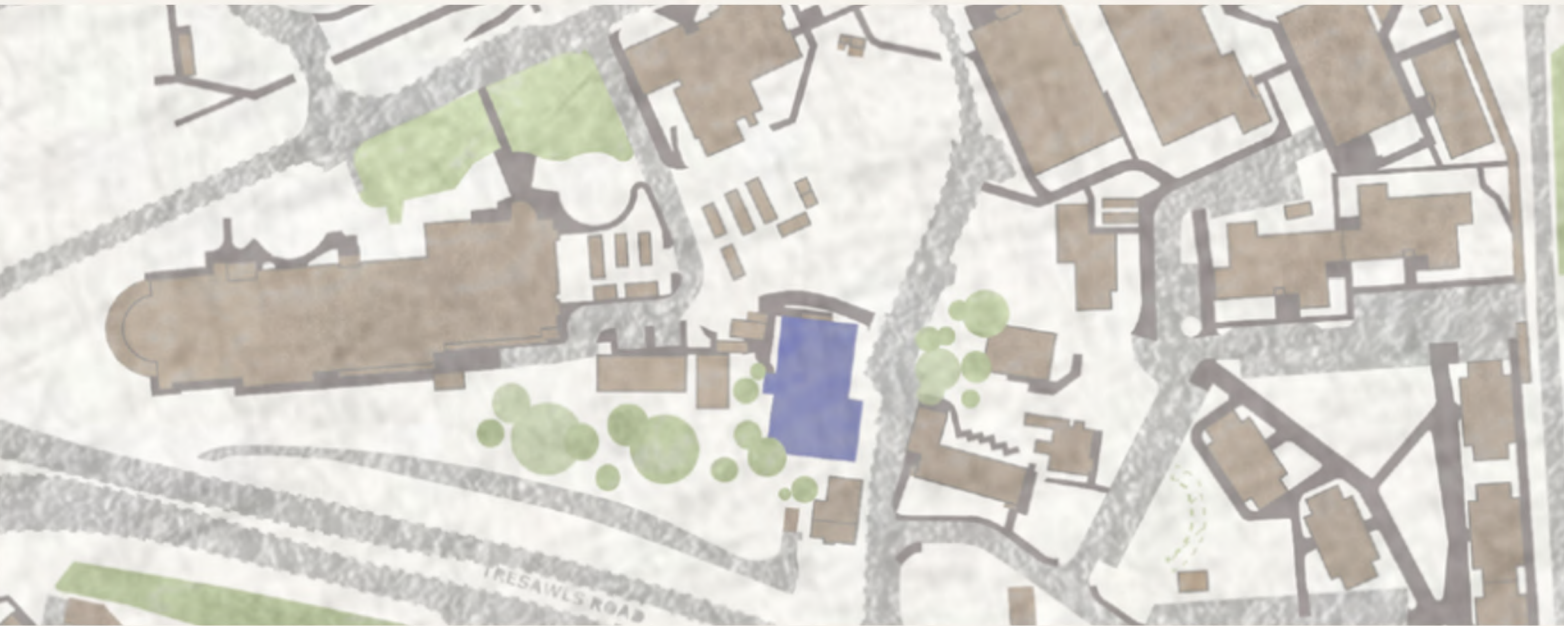
Noise Pollution

The diagram shows where the noise pollution could have an effect on the building. The site is off a main road (Tresawls Rd.) so there is potential to hear traffic in the distance.

Transport

The site is surrounded by many large car parks and bus stops. With the hospital being such a well connected area, this gives mothers easy access to the site.

- Key:
- Parking spaces/ small parking areas
 - Bus Stops
 - Large pay and display car park



The Hub, Treliske, Truro

The site was designed fit for purpose in 2006. The Hub was designed to be a sexual health clinic for Cornwall, offering confidential advice with issues such as STI's and HIV, via the NHS. The building is linked to the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Treliske, and therefore benefits from the same transport networks, both of which will be valuable connections for my design.

Although it will not be affiliated with the NHS, it will be ideally situated to foster connections with the maternity department and to promote awareness of the services.



The Push Pull Aspect Of Matrescence:

PULL

Oxytocin, also known as the love drug, is released by the mother after birth and is produced as a result of skin-to-skin contact (this will be released even if the parent did not give birth to the baby). Oxytocin can help maternal instincts to kick in and can help bring the baby to the forefront of the mother's brain, putting the baby at the centre of her world, and encouraging strong bonds with her newborn. This is the pull aspect.

PUSH

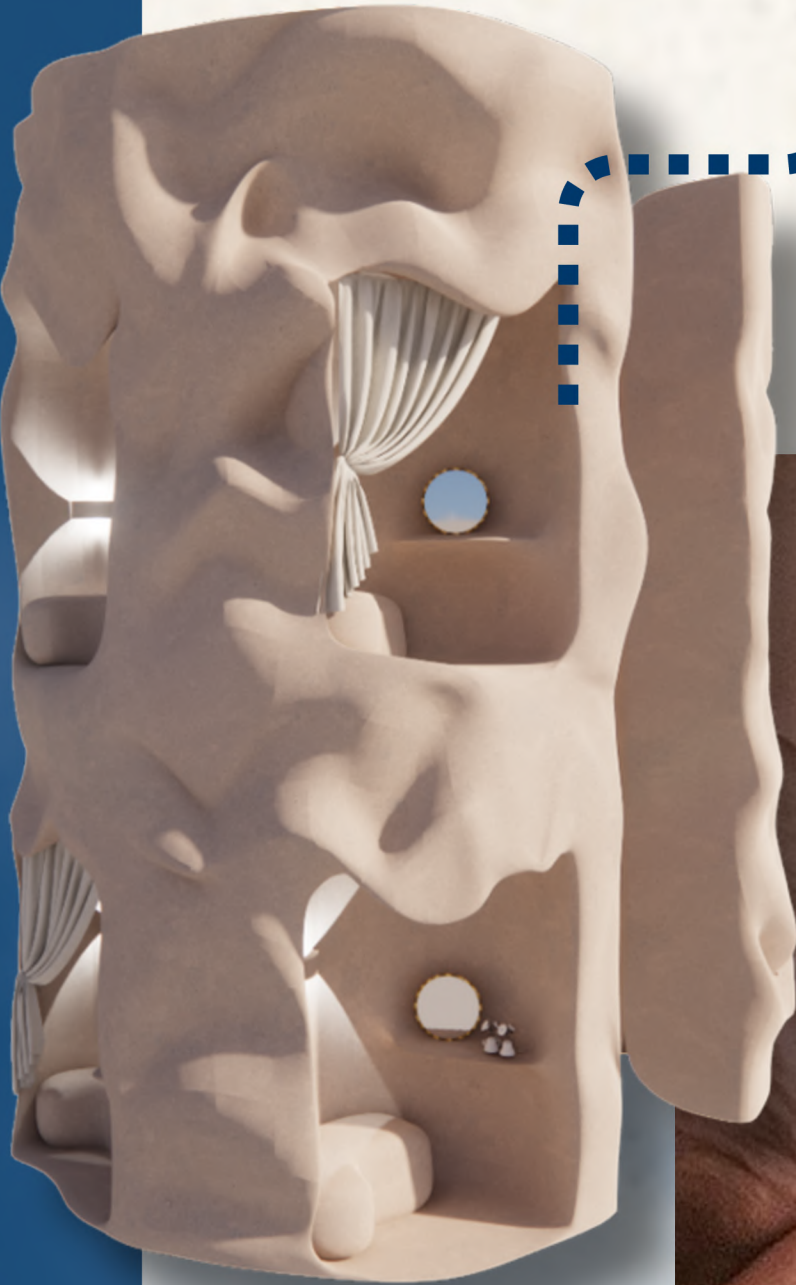
This brings us to the push aspect of the theory. Whilst the pull aspect may have been initiated, and the baby has become her priority, she is remembering her past life. A life where she would put herself first, her hobbies, her work, her relationships, and she begins to push the baby away. Sacks describes this as the "emotional tug of war of matrescence." (Sacks, 2018)

CONCEPT

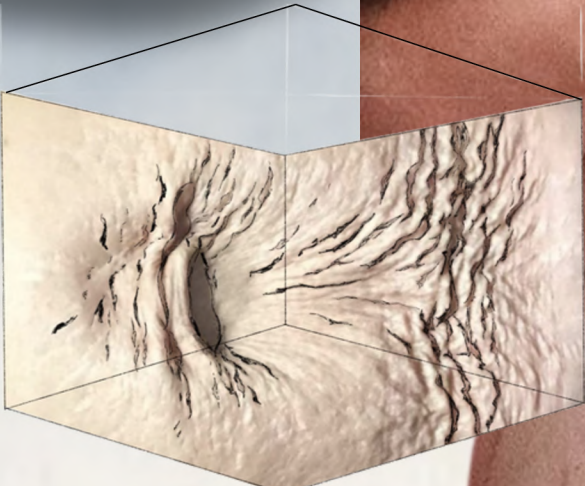
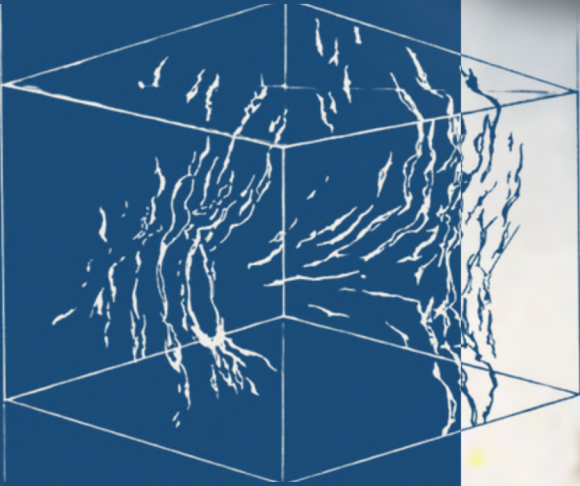
The concept for the space will be centered around the push pull theory of matrescence. By designing the space in to differing segments, each element will seek to breakdown the stigma around how much time a mother spends with her newborn baby. The push pull elements will be combined with a creche, giving mothers the choice to explore the space with or without their baby. This is a space that will aim to give mothers a glimpse into how they can implement new bonding styles, as well as being able to continue with previous self care routines.

Concept Design:

Skin to skin contact is scientifically proven to be one of the best ways to bond with a newborn baby. The contact releases oxytocin (love drug) which helps parents to bond with their newborn baby, even if they weren't the one to give birth. Post birth, many mothers deal with body image issues, whether that is from weight gain or stretch marks. These changes to a woman's body are a reflection of how she carried and brought a new life into the world and are something that should be celebrated.

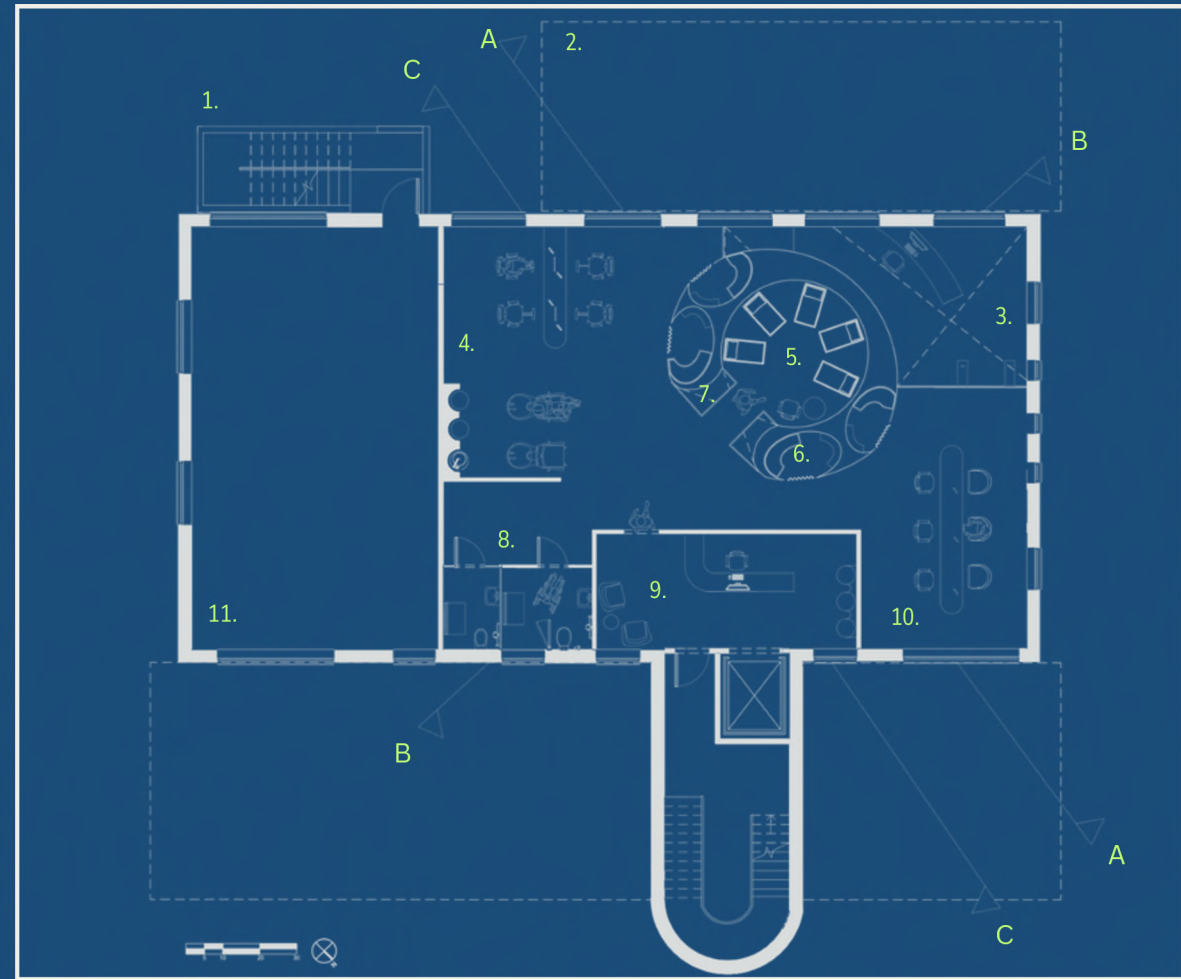


Skin to skin cylinder



first floor

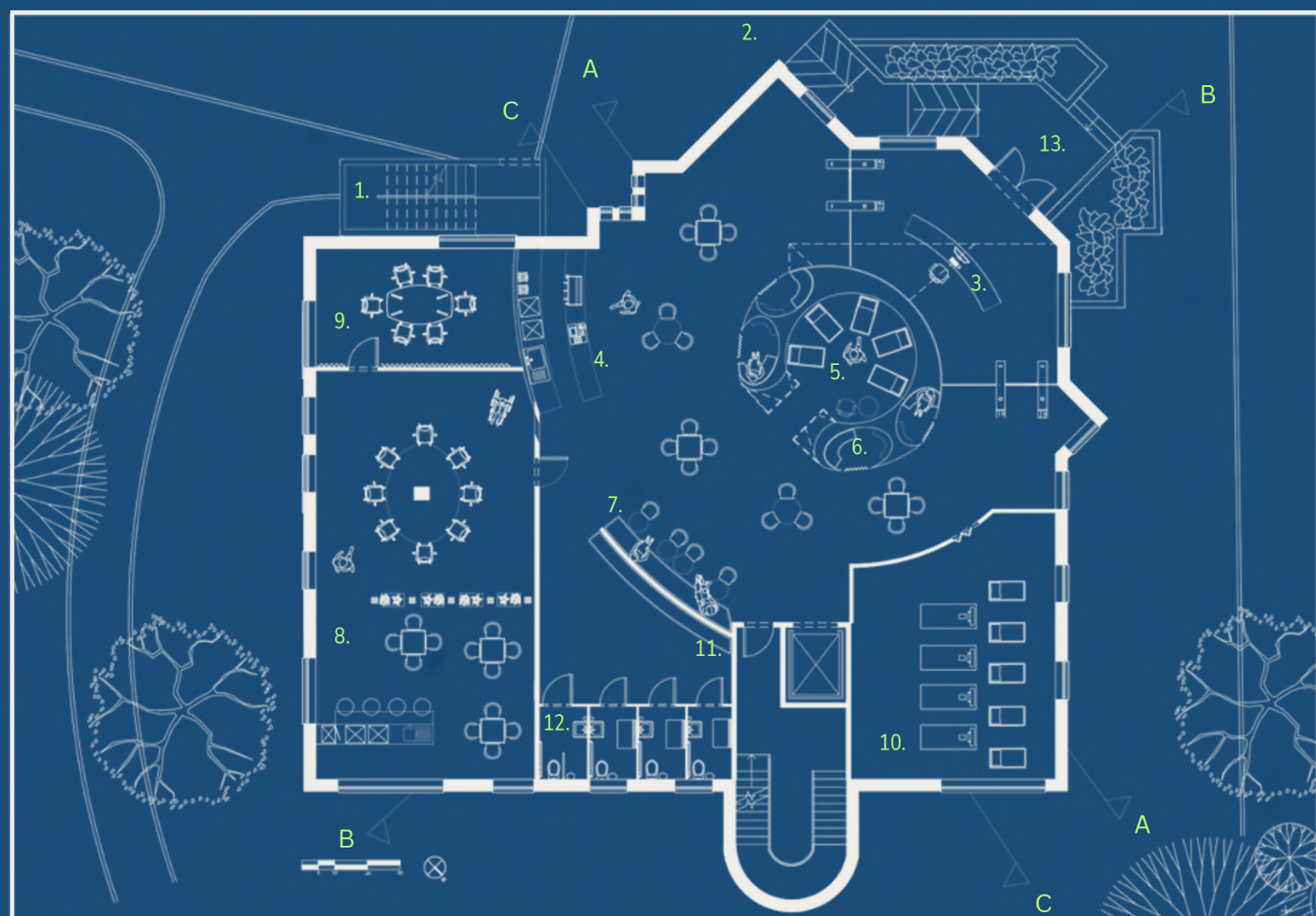
The first floor symbolises the ‘push’ theory, offering self-care experiences for the mothers, and features a hair salon and nail studio. With the creche being the central focus, they can take time to relax and recharge, safe in the knowledge that their baby is close by, and the assurance they are being well looked after.



- Key:
- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. External fire stair | 6. Breast feeding pods |
| 2. Roof | 7. Void |
| 3. Void to entrance below | 8. Bathrooms |
| 4. Hair salon - integrated baby monitors | 9. Waiting area |
| 5. Creche | 10. Nail salon - integrated baby monitors |
| | 11. Phase 2 |

Ground floor

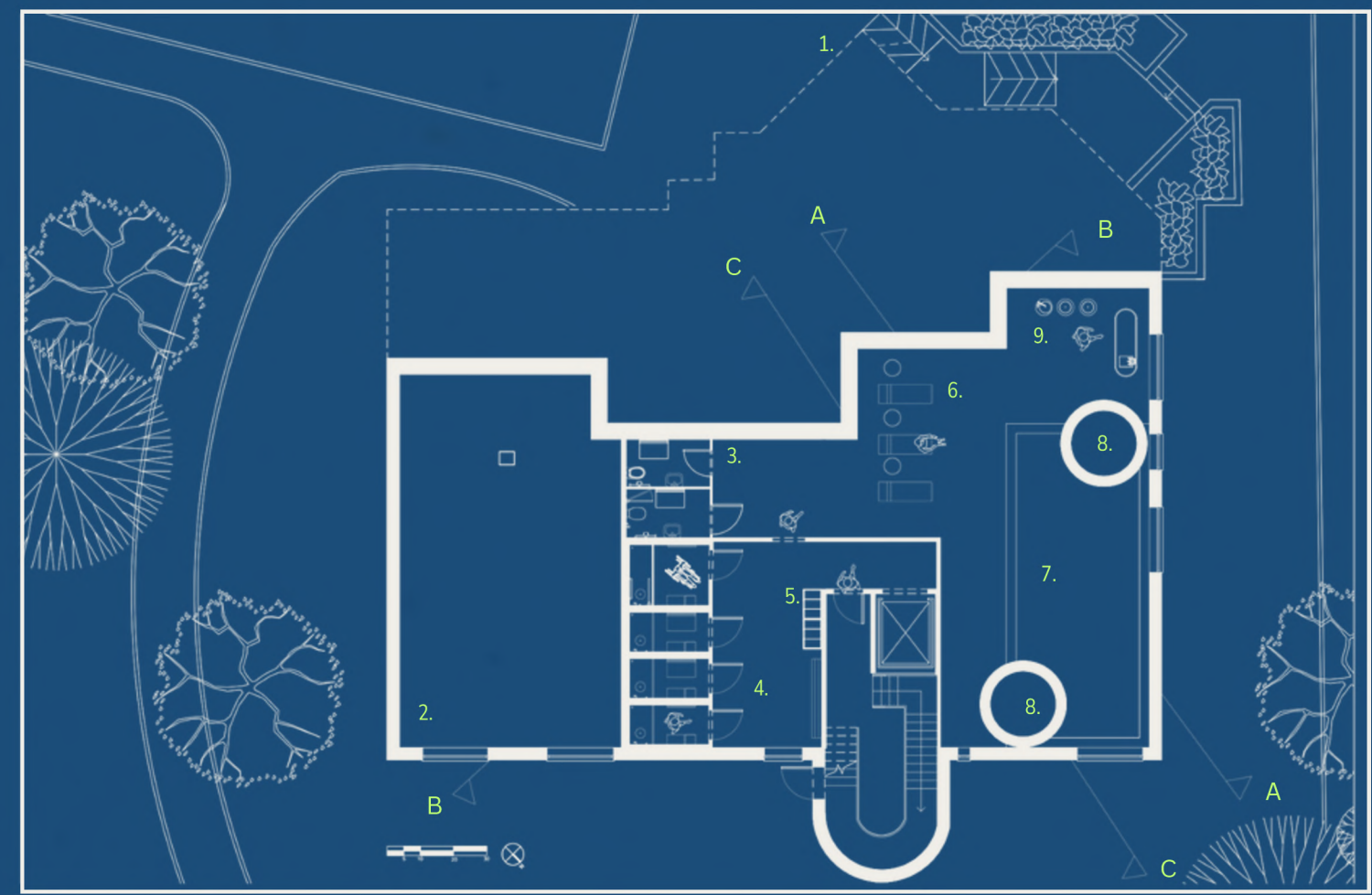
The ground floor is designed to revolve around the central creche cylinder, which offers a café, an inviting space where mothers and expectant mothers can connect, foster a strong sense of community, and benefit from mutual support. This floor also houses the baby massage studio, a space designed to promote and advocate one to one bonding, using proven techniques and trusted products.



- Key:
- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. External fire stair | 6. Breast feeding pods | 11. Baby changing bench |
| 2. Exterior context | 7. Bespoke banquet seating | 12. Bathrooms |
| 3. Bespoke front desk | 8. Staff room | 13. Main entrance |
| 4. Café | 9. Meeting room | |
| 5. Creche | 10. Baby massage and relaxation zone | |

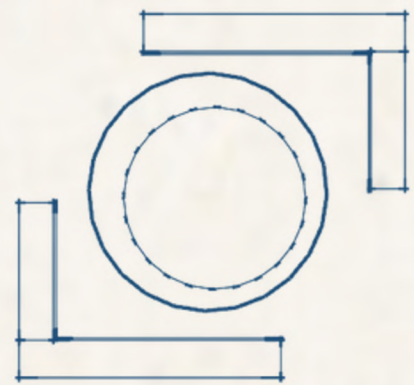
Lower Ground floor

The lower ground floor hosts the water bonding experiences. With its shallow pool and individual paddling pools, it offers the perfect environment to further support mother and baby bonding, as well as offering multiple cognitive and physical benefits for the baby.



- Key:
- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Exterior context | 6. Loungers |
| 2. Phase 2 | 7. Shallow pool |
| 3. Bathrooms | 8. Individual bonding pools |
| 4. Changing and shower cubicals | 9. Hydration station |
| 5. Lockers | |

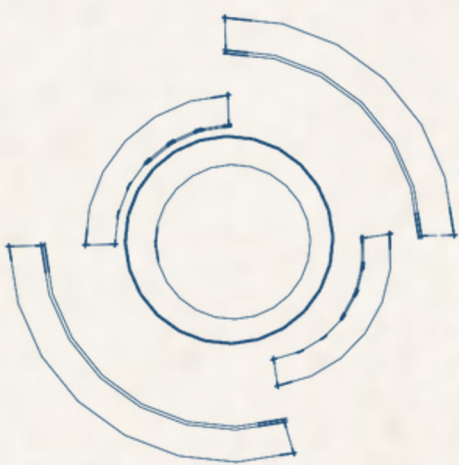
Strategy Diagram:



First Floor

The first floor is a ‘push zone’, offering self-care for mothers.

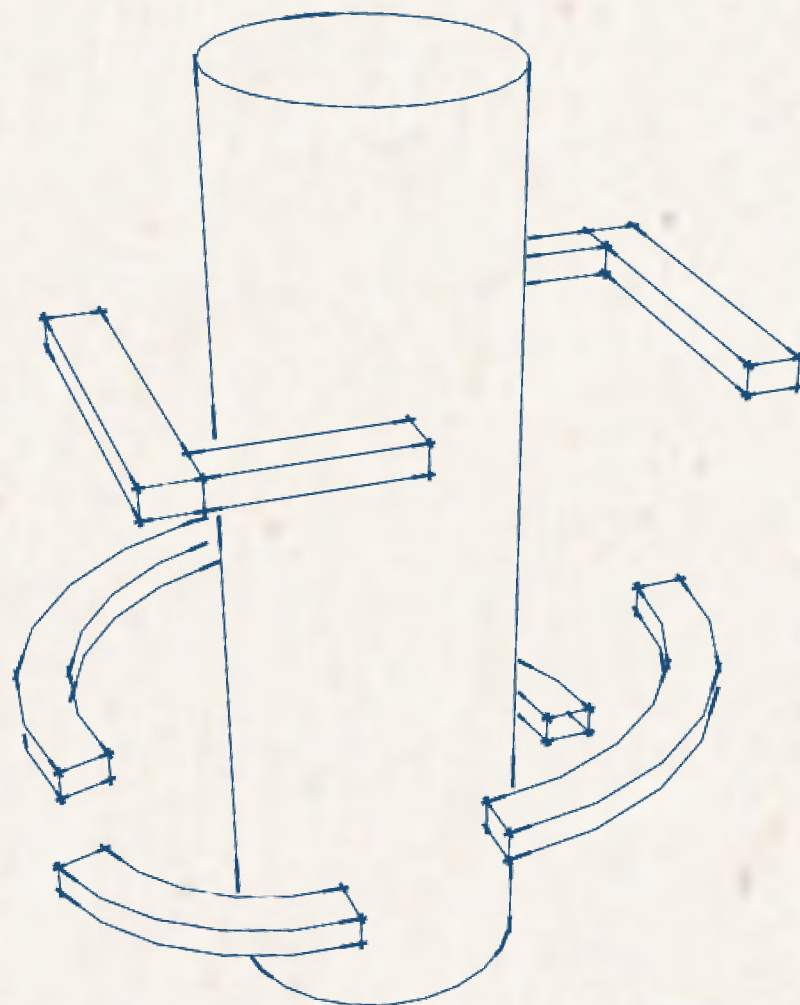
The layout for the ground floor is in a linear sequence around the central ‘skin to skin’ cylinder, symbolising that although the newborns are at the heart of the space, it doesn't completely revolve around them.



Ground Floor

The ground floor is a ‘pull zone’, meaning that it is centered around spending time with, and bonding with, their newborns.

The ‘pull floors’ are laid out in concentric circles, with the layout of these floors designed to have the cylinder as the central focus. Circles also hold deep spiritual and cultural significance and, for many, symbolise unity and togetherness, so it seemed fitting for the design to have circles incorporated at the core of this space.



Baby massage studio ground floor



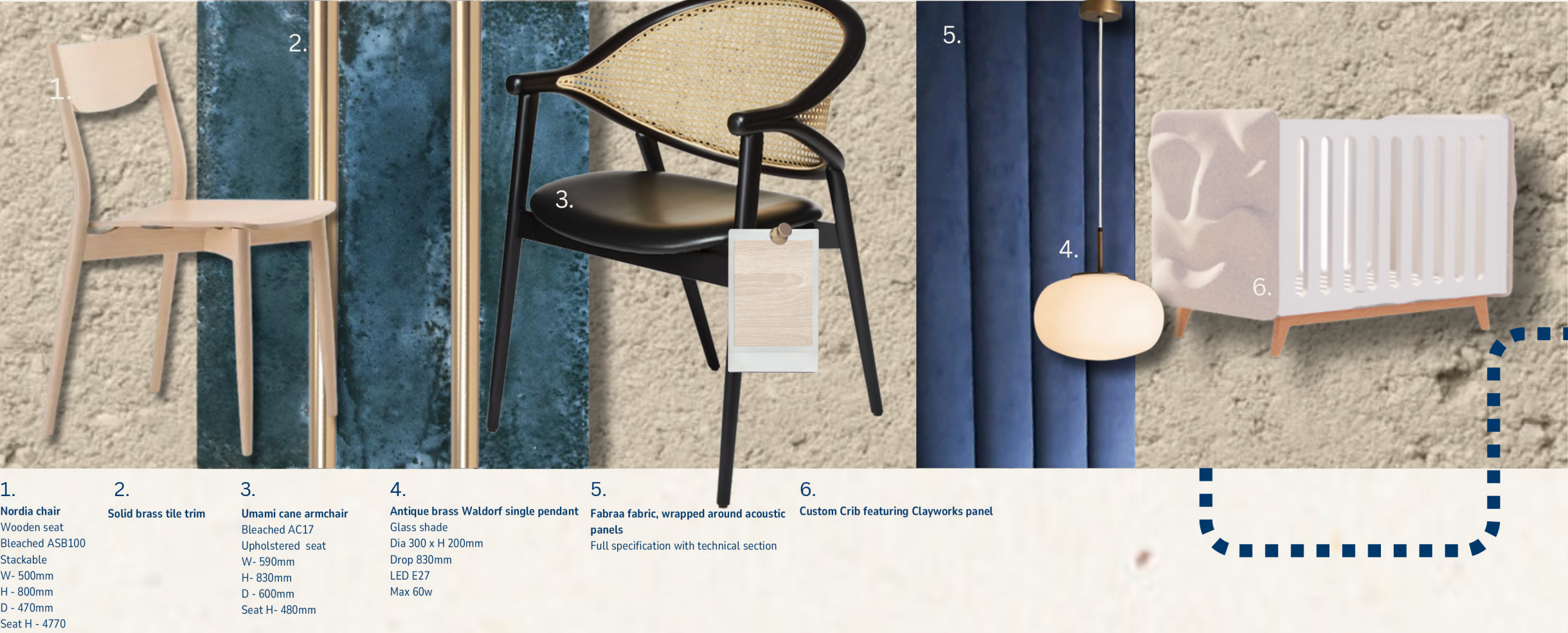
Bonding pools lower ground floor



Atmosphere Board:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Skin to skin contact | 6. Little Green Slaked Lime paint |
| 2. Clayworks demi-rustic finish | 7. Fabraa indigo recycled fabric |
| 3. Canadian oak impervia flooring | 8. Clay |
| 4. Reflection teal tiles | 9. Mirror with gold hardware |
| 5. Plants and greenery | 10. Relaxed baby in branded ring |

Materiality and f&E

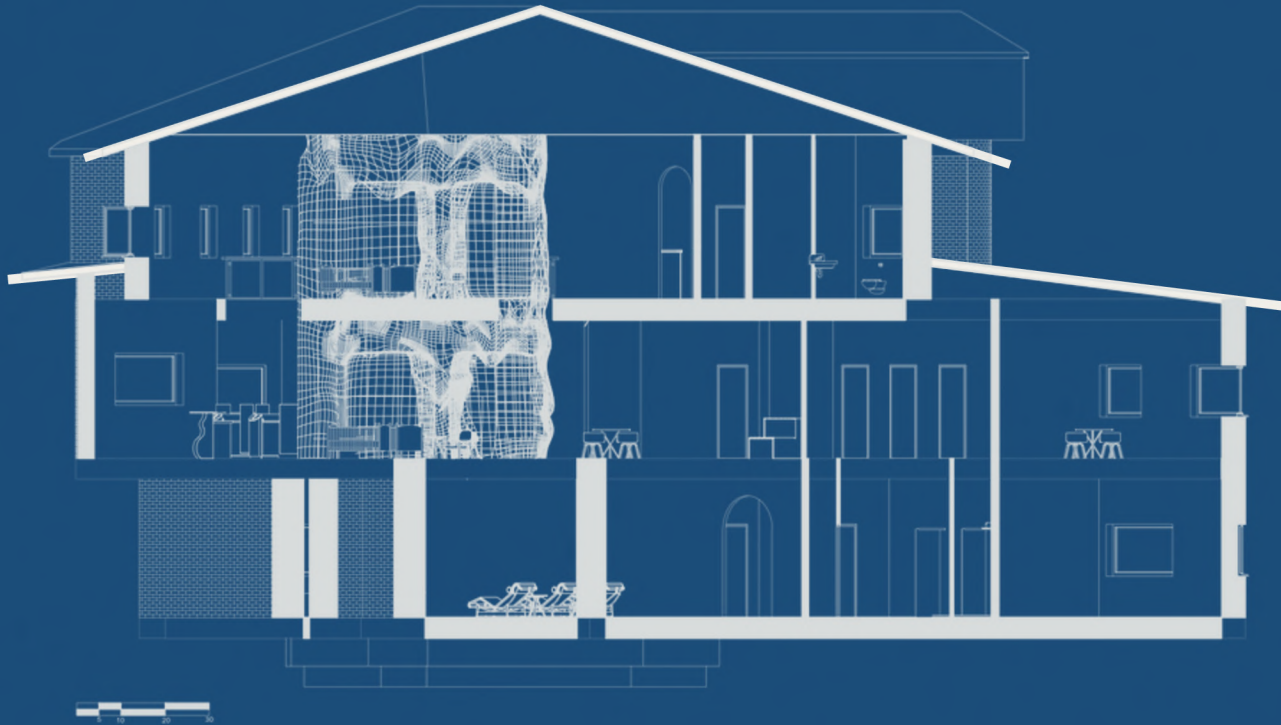


Section A A:

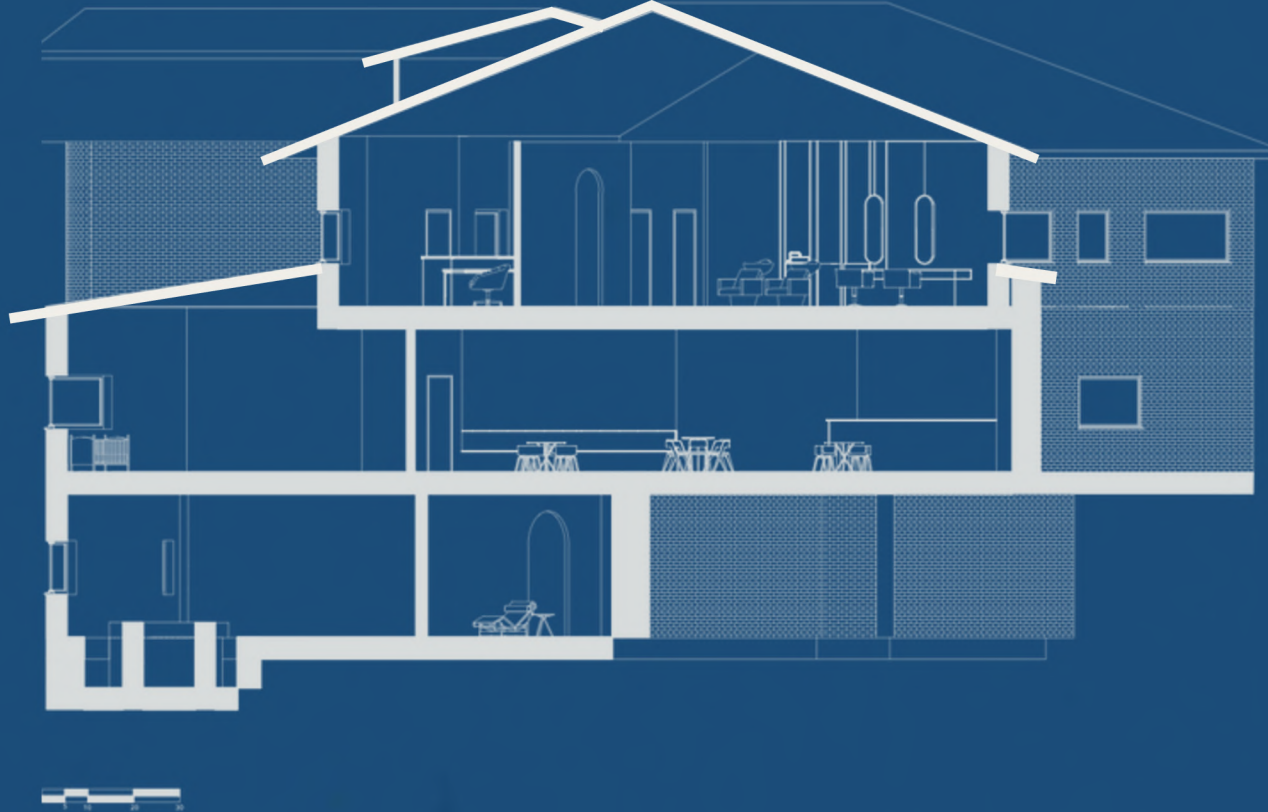
With rendered strip:



Section B B:

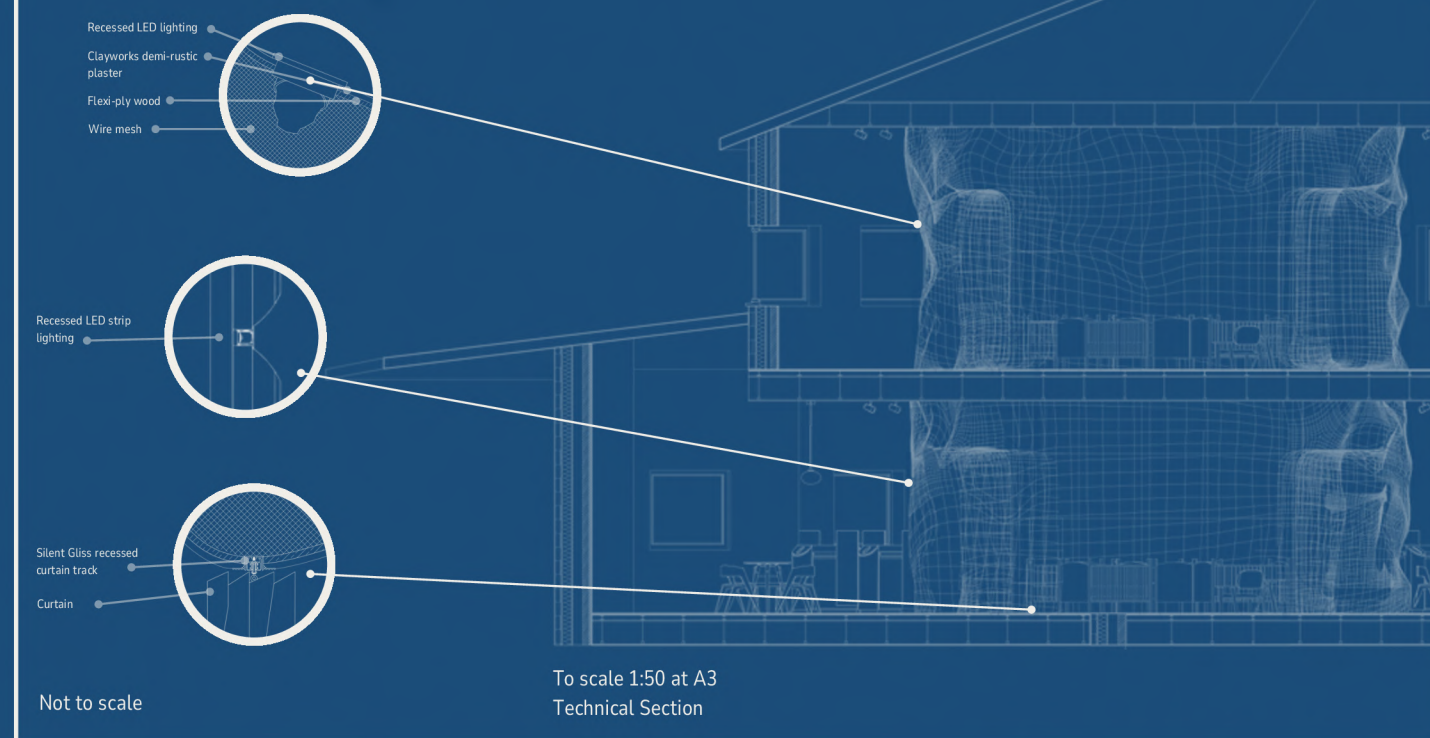


Section C C:



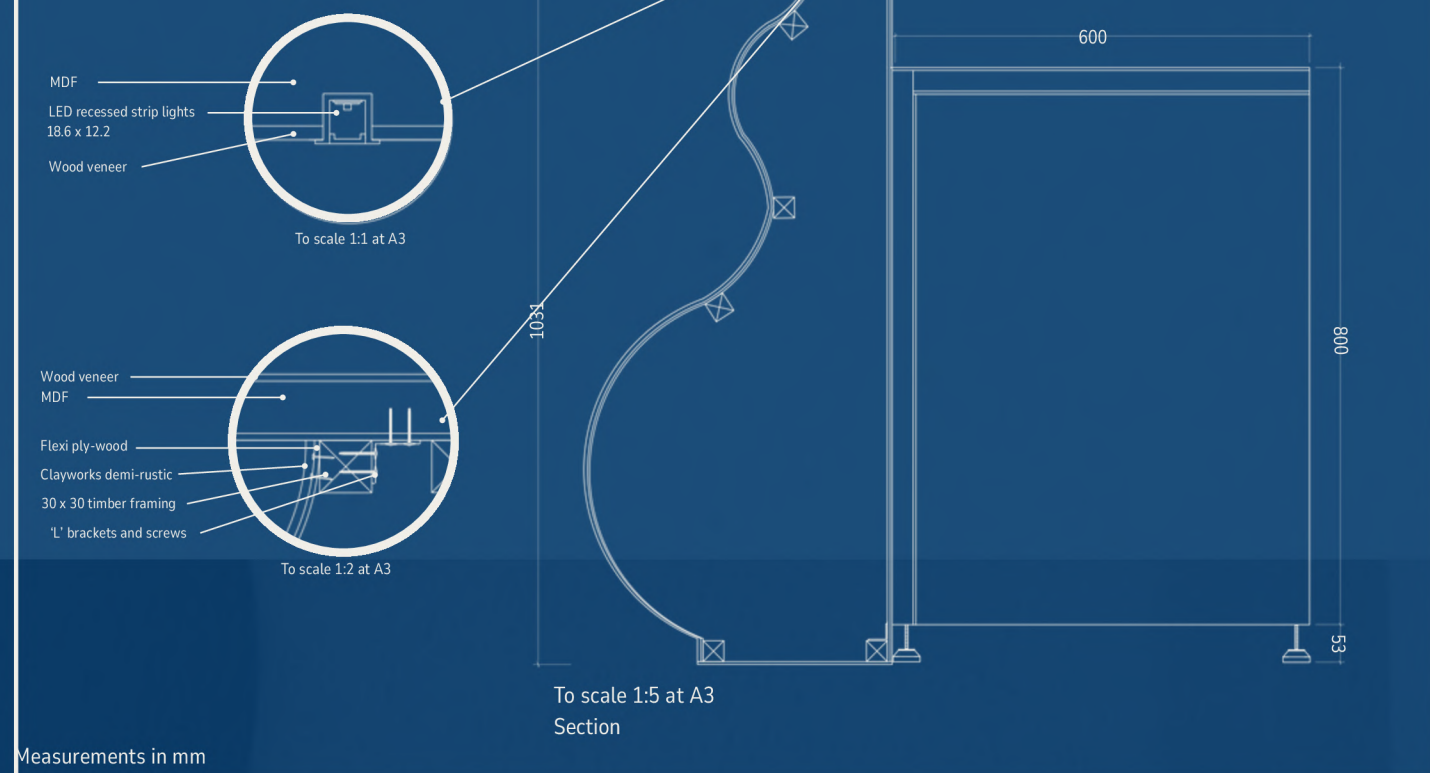
Technical Section:

Skin to skin cylinder



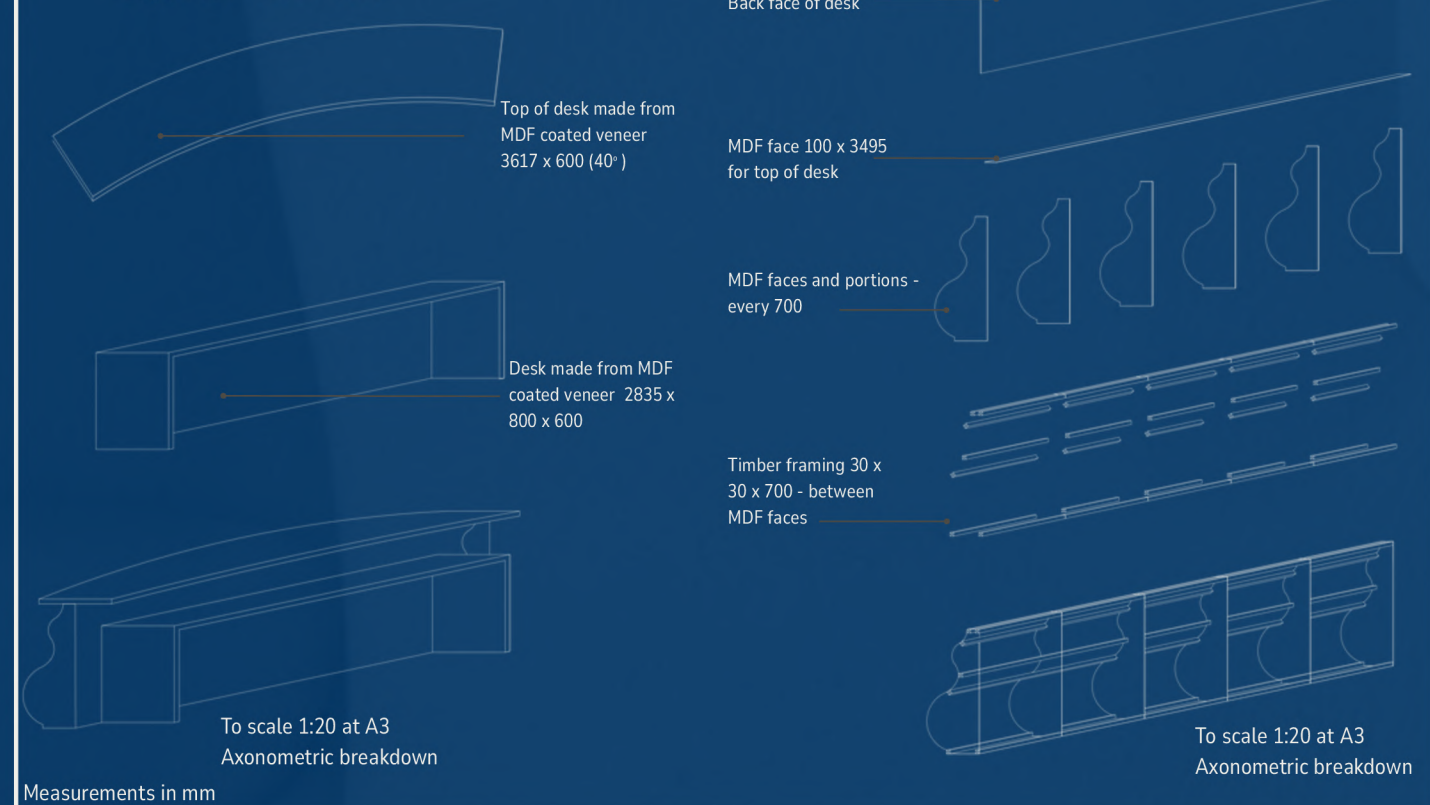
Bespoke furniture:

Logo desk - technical section



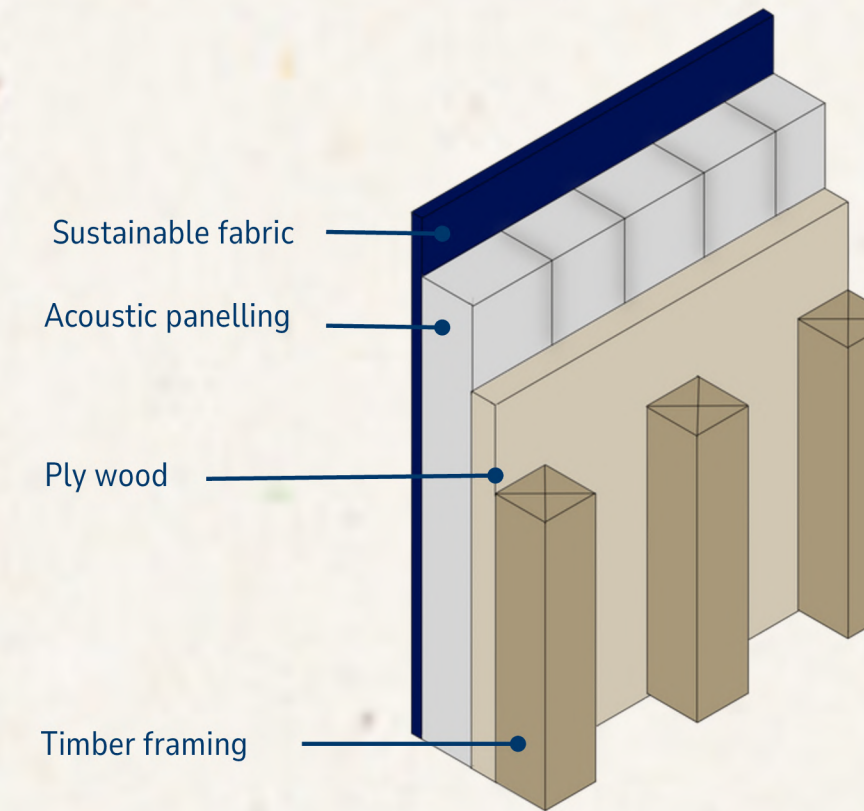
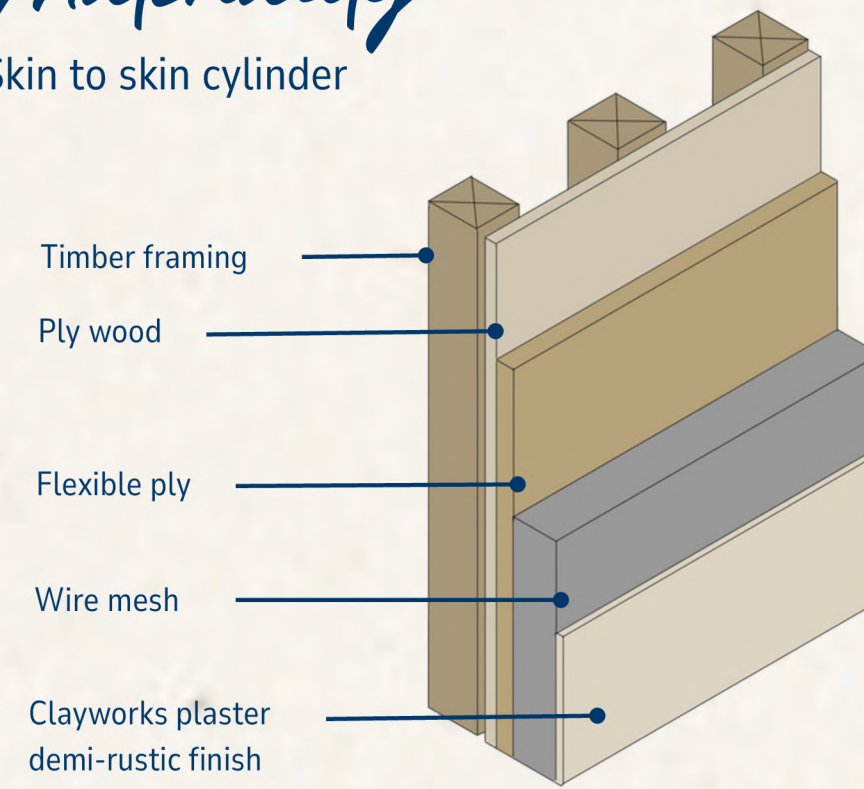
Bespoke furniture:

Logo desk - breakdown



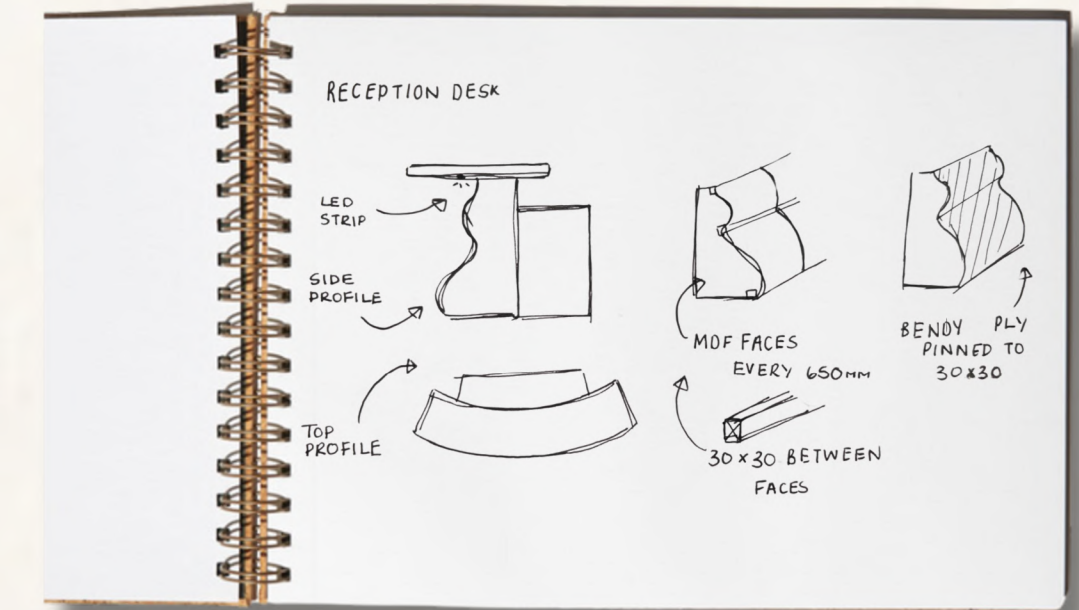
Materiality:

Skin to skin cylinder



Bespoke furniture:

Front desk - logo incorporated



Welcome to
Motherscare

