BACK TO BASICS

Designing a Greener Future Through Slow and Intentional Living

THE ISSUE

Our world is moving at an increasingly fast speed and we are struggling as a society to keep up. The relentless pace is contributing to host of challenges that are becoming more prevalent in today's society. The constant push for productivity and connectivity often leaves little room for balance , reflection and meaningful connection to our surroundings.These are some of the challenges faced that this project aims to resolve:

Technology Overuse

Technology has helped us tremendously in certain aspects however, it has also negatively impacted our ability to problem solve and think critically. It also effects relationships and often makes us feel more isolated.

Overconsumption

We are consuming more and more items than ever before as things are no longer being repaired just thrown and repurchased. This is adding to the landfill and waste issue and increasing the speed or climate change.

Burnout

9-5 working hours have become the norm and is having a negative toll on our psychological, social and mental well-being. Days start feeling really monotonous and unispiring. It is also having a detrimental effect on our creative thinking

THE BRIEF

The intention of the project is to create an immersive and educational retreat designed to empower individuals to **break away from the relentless cycle of work, stress and overconsumption**. It provides a transformative experience, encouraging guests to engage with ways of living more sustainably while also building a sense of **community**. They will produce their own food, learn new skills and engage in closed-loop systems. **Education, mindfulness and sustainability** is key to the concept. This allows people to experience a living example of a space that is run using purely self-sufficient and sustainable practices to live off of and offers a **model of intentional living**. Importance is placed on the blend between **old and new and indoor and outdoors**, playing on the **contrast** between these different elements.

This project falls under the Creative Re-Use category due its **careful approach to repurposing and preserving the history of a destroyed site**. The design centers in mindfulness and sustainability, aligning with the site's unique story and character. Once a grand manor house with fascinating history, the site was tragically devastated by a fire in 2015, leaving only fragments of its original structure intact. It was therefore **essential that the design honoured the history and brought the space back to life.** These remnants became integral to the design and were **showcased through innovative and respectful interventions.**

Given the Grade 1 listing of the site, the **concept prioritizes minimal physical impact, ensuring the original architecture remains preserved.** Suspended elements became a vital role in the design, allowing the site to be used once again without compromising its historical integrity. The designs temporary nature ensures that **all interventions can be removed, restoring the site to its original state if desired.**

Perforated corten steel features prominently throughout the design, **enabling unobstructed views** of the remaining historical details while blending in harmoniously with the sites aesthetic. Pathways and furniture have been **carefully positioned to highlight and complement the surviving architectural features**. Notably, a single room left untouched by the fire remains preserved, offering the guests a glimpse of the manor's original grandeur.

The **material and colour palette was thoughtfully derived from the history of the manor**, drawing inspiration from the materials and finishes that were once part of the building, as well as those that still endure today. This considered approach ensures that every design choice pays homage to the site's legacy while supporting its sustainable reuse.

CAN INTERIOR DESIGN PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY AND SLOW-LIVING IN A FAST-PACED WORLD?

Fig 1. Harmony Hall. Showing the remains of the original features highlighted by the design

Fig 2. The Shared Table. Where all the guests come together to share a meal, also highlighting the original features

CONCEPT AND STRATEGY

Fig 6. Self-made physically burnt paper to demonstrate the effect of the fire on the original features and what it left behind

WHAT'S THE LEAST YOU CAN DO TO CREATE THE BIGGEST IMPACT?

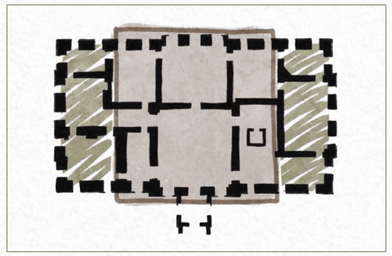
Just as Clandon House was completely stripped back by the fire, the project aims to rethink what life would look like if everything was stripped back to its purest form and only gave us what was necessary for living. This goes from the activities that occur within the space to the materials used in the design.

Due to Clandon House being Grade 1 listed, preserving the building was a top priority so trying to leave as small a footprint as possible was essential in the design concept.

CONCEPT MODEL

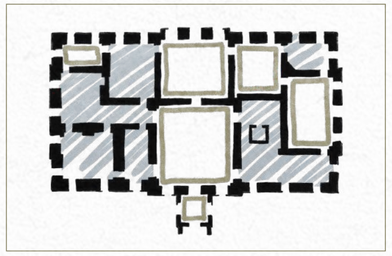
1:150 SCALE, 3MM POPLAR
Showing how the existing building works alongside the new temporary overhead structure and suspended liners.

STRATEGY DIAGRAMS



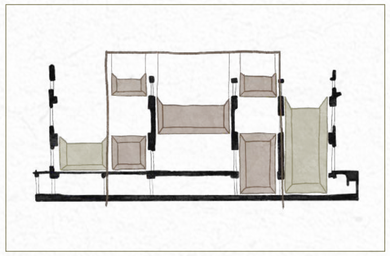
INDOOR VS OUTDOOR
Some spaces within the building are sheltered from the natural elements whereas other spaces are open to them

INDOOR
OUTDOOR



OLD VS NEW
Due to it being a historically rich site, some areas are left as they are to preserve the history and story. Other areas will have new structures implemented

OLD
NEW



A section view showing what spaces are sheltered and what are not and how each of the spaces sit in relation to one another. It also shows where the external structure will sit

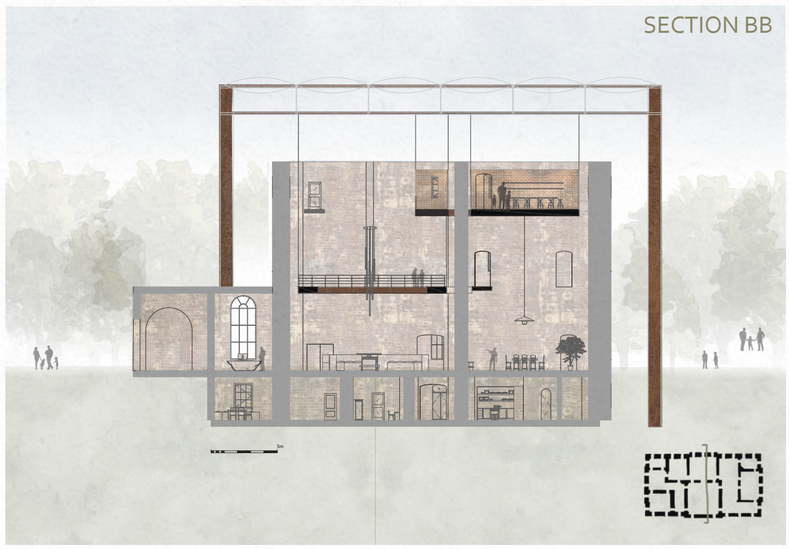
OUTDOOR
INDOOR

CONCEPT MONTAGE
Exploring how the destroyed site can be used to host a model of a self-sufficient and sustainable lifestyles through traditional practices

SECTIONS

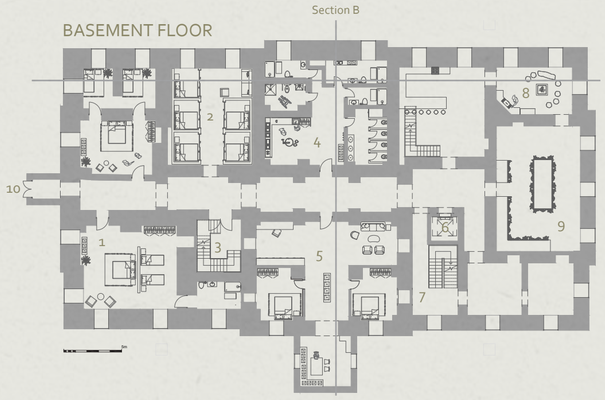
SECTION AA

SECTION BB



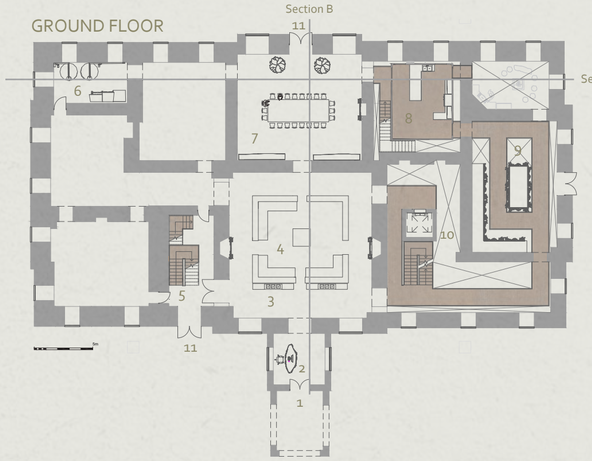
FLOORPLANS

BASEMENT FLOOR



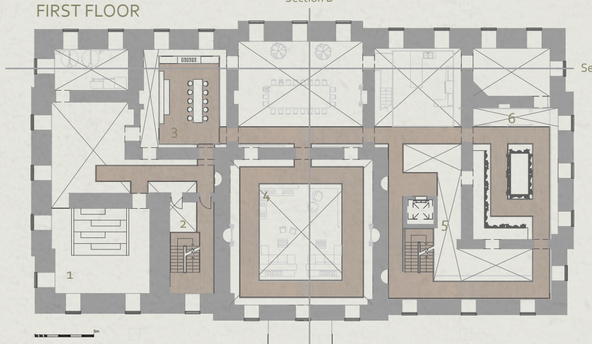
1. Family Rooms
2. Pod Dorm Room
3. Fire Stairs
4. Bathrooms and Utilities
5. Staff Dorms and Living Space
6. Lift
7. Stairs
8. Fire Circle
9. Living Grove
10. Exit

GROUND FLOOR



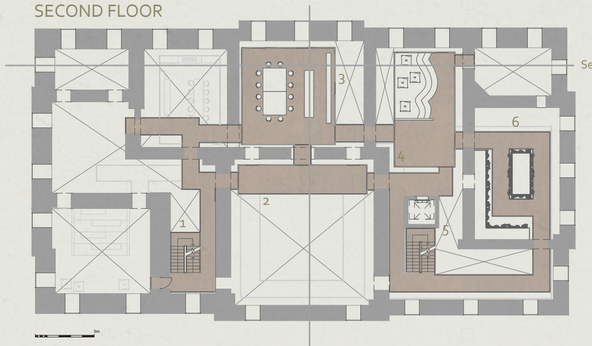
1. Entrance
2. Check in Desk
3. Entryway Seating
4. Harmony Hall
5. Fire Stairs
6. Water Collection and Compost/ Recylcing
7. The Shared Table
8. Food Preparation
9. Living Grove
10. Stairs and Lift
11. Exits

FIRST FLOOR



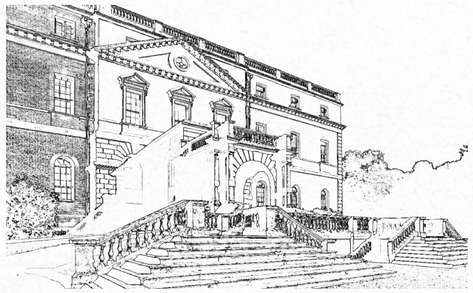
1. Reflection Corner
2. Fire Stairs
3. Artisans Nook
4. Walkway over the Harmony Hall
5. Stairs and Lift
6. Living Grove

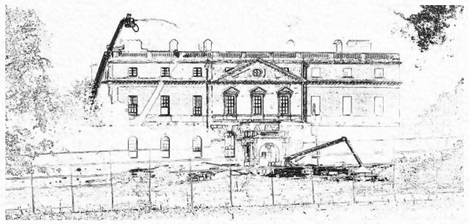
SECOND FLOOR



1. Fire Stairs
2. Balcony over Harmony Hall
3. Makerspace
4. Reflection Corner
5. Stairs and Lift
6. Living Grove

THE SITE





Clandon House
West Clandon
Guildford, Surrey
GU4 7RQ

Built in: 1730's

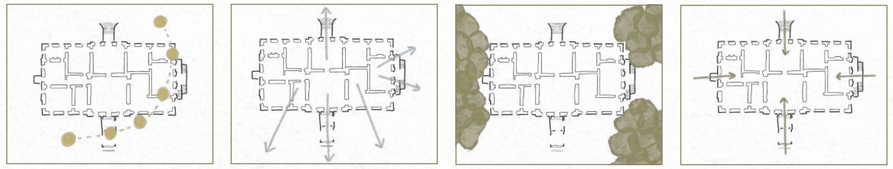
Listing: Grade 1

Floors: 4

For this design project, the site chosen was a pre-existing site that had been previously destroyed so is not in current use. This was because it allowed for the opportunity to repurpose the site and make it usuable once again which aligns with the sustainability ethos behind the project. **Clandon Park House is located in Guildford, South-West of London**, in a **rural area with extensive land surrounding** (a key feature of the concept is living off the land and forming a connection to nature).

Being **about an hour's drive from London**, it offers a convenient escape for those with busy city lives. Its rural setting also ensures **minimal noise and light pollution**, creating a peaceful and restorative environment. The combination of accessibility and tranquility makes it an excellent location for a project centred on sustainability and connection to the natural world.

SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS



FIRE DAMAGE DIAGRAMS

HISTORIC TIMELINE

1730's
Clandon House was built. Designed by Architect Giacomo Leoni

1914
Was transformed into a military hospital in the First World War

1919
Hospital remained open to treat victims of the deadly spanish flu. Last patients were discharged

1939
Used to provide safe storage to precious documents from the Public Record office in WW2

1950
Clandon House was opened to the public

1956
It was then given to the national trust

2015
A fire broke out destroying important treasures, historic paintings and a lot of the architecture of the building

PROS

- Rural location with plenty of surrounding land
- Lack of floors and ceiling allow for a more creative approach to design
- Close commuting distance from Guildford town centre and also close to London
- Lots of amazing history behind it

CONS

- Grade I listed building so can't make any changes to the pre-existing structure
- No weather protection
- Building is in poor condition


Fig 3. Historical Image of Site

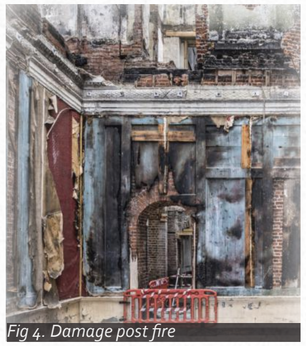


Fig 4. Damage post fire


Fig 5. Context Map

THE USERS

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

"We need a **fun and engaging** place that will be appealing for our kids to enjoy.It also needs to be **child friendly and safe** so we don't need to constantly worry what they're up to. We'd also love it to have some sort of **educational, interactive elements** that we can all enjoy together as a family."

YOUNG COUPLES

"We'd love this to be a place with **plenty of resources** that we can go through in our own time as well as group learning.
Having some **private areas** that we could go and reflect in would also be great!
We are keen to **learn some new skills** that we can take back home with us to begin a new, more sustainable lifestyle for our future"

INDIVIDUALS WORKING CORPORATE JOBS

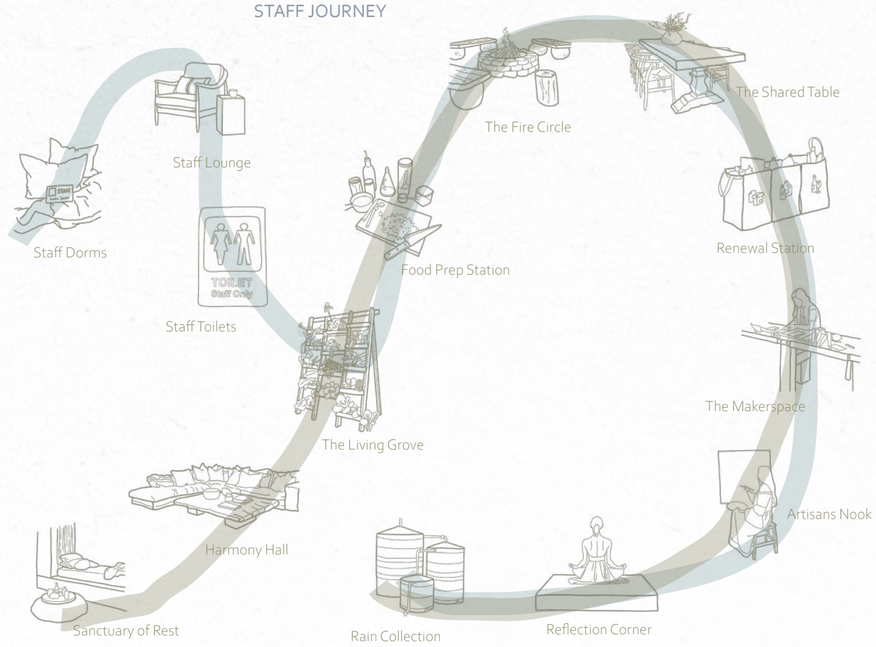
"I am super overhwhelmed all the time with how much I work and my never ending to do list so I would love to have a break where I get to **reconnect with nature** and have that be the core of everything. Having **low pressure activities that aren't too strenuous** would be great to allow me to slow down, and it being a **tech free space** would force me to put down all my work and relax."

STAFF

"As we will be **living on site** at times, we would like an area that is dedicated to us so we can have some space to get away. We also will need some **private bedrooms** for us to stay in when were working on site. Finally, as we are running the space we will need **areas to store all the necessary equipment** and things."

USER JOURNEYS

GUEST JOURNEY
STAFF JOURNEY



SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is at the core of this retreat, shaping every aspect of its design, function and purpose. Built with reclaimed and locally sourced materials, powered by renewable energy, and designed with minimal waste, the retreat actively reduces its environmental impact while **promoting better lifestyles and habits.**

Beyond environmental sustainability, the retreat builds a strong sense of community by **supporting local artisans, farmers and educators.** Workshops and hands-on experiences empower guests with the skills to adopt sustainable, slow-living practices in their daily lives.

Economically, the retreat prioritises long-term sustainability by **sourcing locally, hiring from the community and maintaining a self-sufficient model** through renewable energy and food production. A diverse range of offerings ensures financial stability while keeping the experiences accessible.

The retreat is more than just a getaway - it's a **living example of sustainability in action,** designed to inspire meaningful change and a deeper connection to the environment, community and mindful living.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Working closely with local artisans, farmers, and craftspeople to create workshops and job opportunities, the retreat supports inclusivity, accessibility, and community empowerment. It also serves as an educational space for sustainable living while honouring and preserving the site's cultural and historical heritage.

ECONOMICAL SUSTAINABILITY

Supporting the local economy by sourcing materials and food from nearby suppliers and generating income through regular on-site markets selling homegrown produce. The use of recycled and low-maintenance materials helps reduce long-term costs, while guests are encouraged to contribute by bringing items to reuse and recycle.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Reflected in the use of carefully chosen reclaimed, recycled, and existing materials, reducing the need for new resources. The design avoids overdevelopment, instead prioritising composting and recycling systems to support a circular economy. Native planting encourages biodiversity and supports local wildlife, while rainwater collection and solar panels help minimise energy and water waste.

MATERIAL BOARD

MATERIAL AND FF&E STATEMENT

The material palette is rooted in a back to basics approach - **a conscious return to raw, natural elements** that support sustainable living and reflect a more grounded way of life. **Inspired by the untouched beauty of the site**, the original materials have been preserved and celebrated where possible, using the buildings original features as the foundation to my material direction. This allows to preserve the history while also **strengthening the connection between past and present.**

Material choices have been made carefully, **chosen for their simplicity, authenticity and connection to the natural world.** A key concept throughout the project is around the four natural elements, earth, fire, water and air, each interpreted through materials that evoke their qualities visually and texturally.

This philosophy continues through the fixtures, furnishings and equipment (FF&E), where the main focus remains on **raw finishes, organic forms and honest textures.** The choices are minimal and purposeful, with each element serving a specific function, aligning witht the projects ethos of sustainability and simplicity.

MATERIAL SPECIFICATION

SHOU SUGI BAN CHARRED PLYWOOD

USE: Fixtures and furniture pieces
SUSTAINABILITY: Requires less chemical treatment to conventional wood treatments and can be made using locally and sustainably sourced plywood

RECLAIMED WOOD

USE: Furniture pieces
SUSTAINABILITY: Reduces the need to cut down more trees as its repurposing used wood and it continues to store the carbon it has captured

TERRACOTTA

USE: Kitchen tiles
SUSTAINABILITY: Can be locally sourced and readily available, it's also recyclable and durable

CORTEN STEEL

USE: Stairs, structural liners and pathways
SUSTAINABILITY: Long-lasting so won't need replacing regularly (lasts 8x longer than ordinary steel), it's highly recyclable and forms a natural protective patina

ORIGINAL MATERIALS

ORIGINAL BRICKWORK

The original brick walls remain, though damaged by the fire - their worn appearance holds the memory of the building's past. The brick is remaining untouched but being layered by other elements to celebrate the sites history

ORIGINAL STONE FLOORING

Much of the original stone flooring still exists. It has been worn by the fire however, will remain as it is also key to the story of the site and in keeping it as preserved as possible

ORIGINAL MARBLE FLOORING

The original marble from the Marble Hall survuved by slightly damaged. Its presence shows a faded grandeur which I aim to echo in my design

Fig 7. Corten steel suspended pathways through the space, allowing guests to see both the old and new

Fig 8. Protected/sheltered cooking in space if bad weather prevents fire circle from being in use

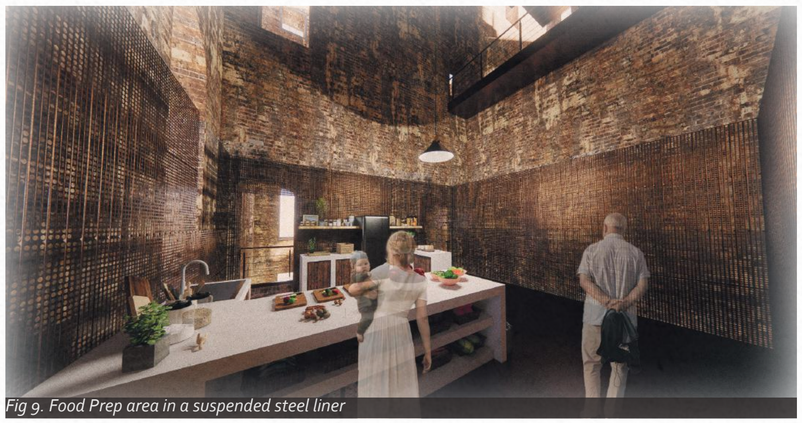
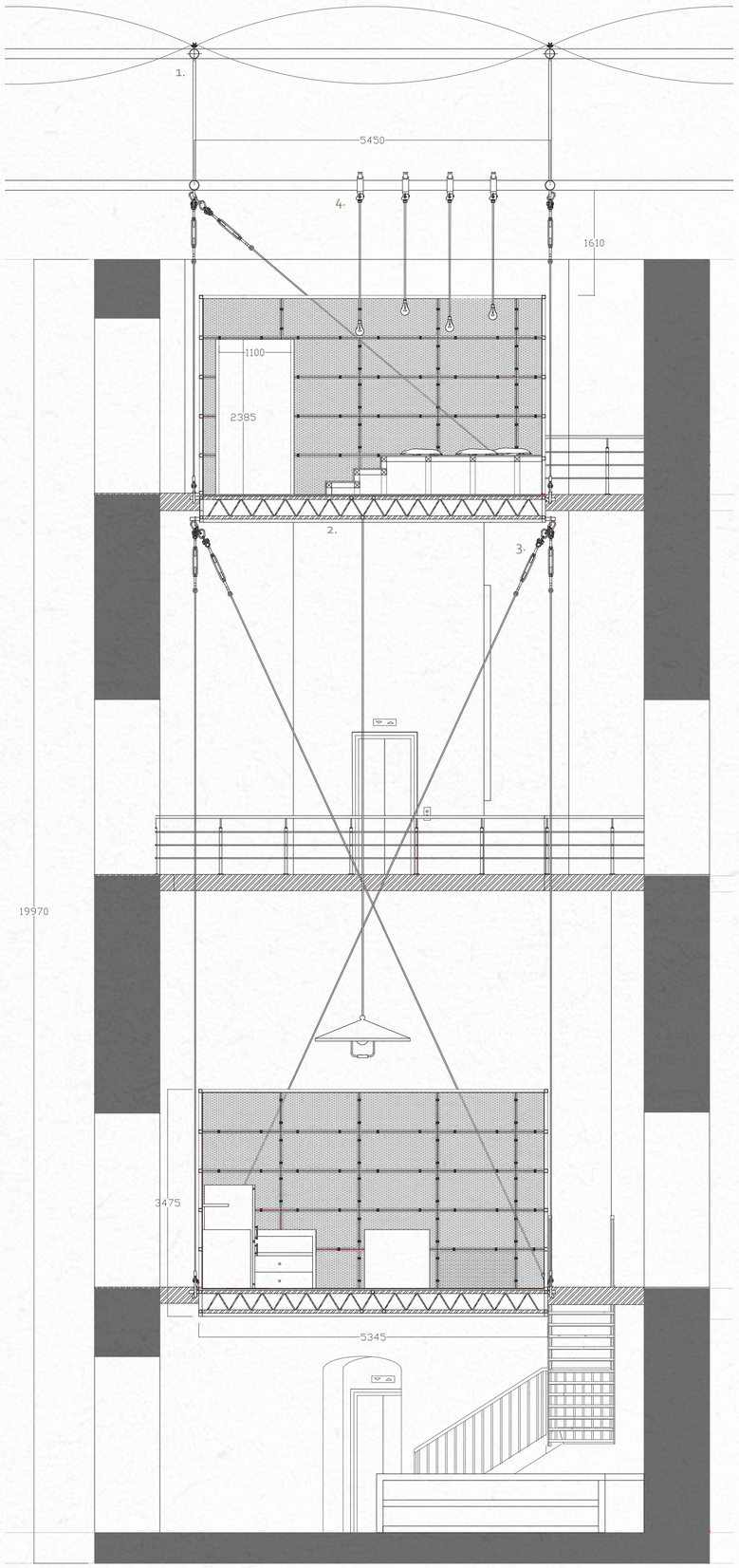


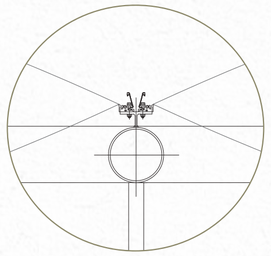
Fig 9. Food Prep area in a suspended steel liner

Fig 10. Balcony from Food Prep area looking down into the fire circle, creating exciting viewpoints

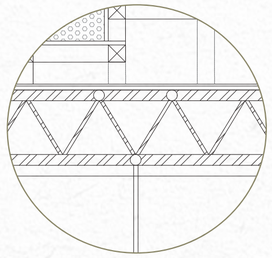
TECHNICAL SECTION



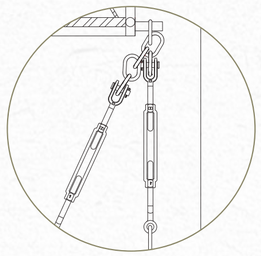
This technical section demonstrates how the roof structure sits over the original remains of the site. Showing how each of the steel liners are suspended from it into the space to leave as small a footprint on the site as possible. It also shows how lighting can be hung from the structure and how the liners and pathways sit thoughtfully within the building.



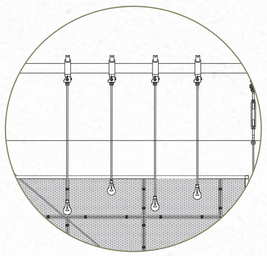
1. E.F.T.E Pillow
   This is used to suspend the structural rooms that sit within the site.
   They can be adjusted to get the correct tension to balance the structures.



2. Truss Floor Support
   The flooring is made up of 4 layers. It has a steel base and then a truss support above that which is holding supporting the load of the structure. Above that sits a plywood flooring with a steel floor laying over the top as the floor finish.



3. M26 Stainless Steel Turnbuckle/Rigging Screw
   This allows the steel cables that hold up the structures to be tightened to the desired amount to stabalise the structures and keep them from swaying.



4. Suspended Lighting Fixture
   Lighting is suspended from clamps that attatch ariund the structural roof beams.
   The wiring is to be concealed above the structural connections.

Fig 11. Perspective section cut through. Showing the overhead roof structure and the liners that are hung from it

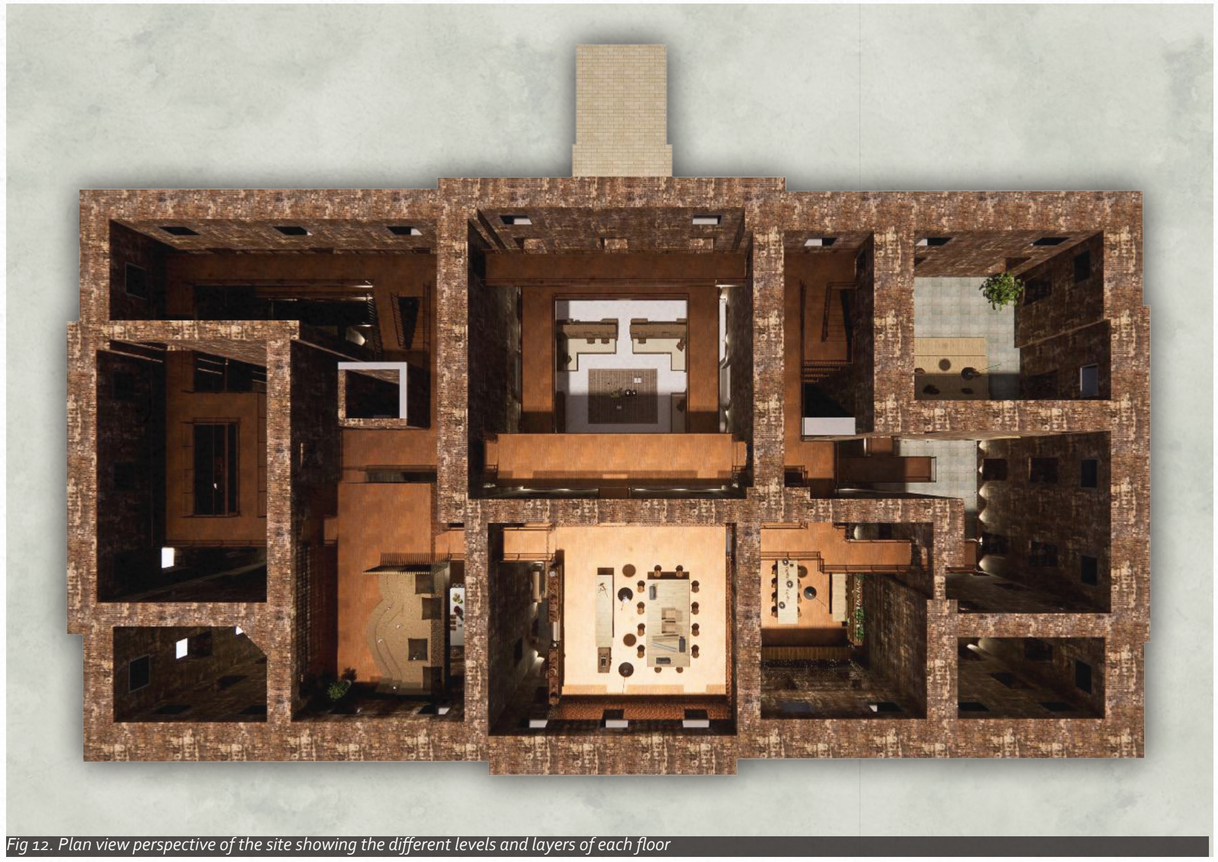


Fig 12. Plan view perspective of the site showing the different levels and layers of each floor