

Key space visual.

SOCIAL NET

Social Net is a project aimed at combatting alarming rates of loneliness among young adult in today's digitalised world. It is a community centre for those looking to form connections in Edinburgh with people that share their hobbies and interests. The site - the Dalmeny Street Drill Hall, a Category-A listed 20th century building with a military history, is transformed into an informal open space that serves as a hub for fostering new friendships. The previously rigidly organised hall gets transformed through the insertion of a contrasting chainmail element inspired by the city. The organic and curved nature of the architectural feature sweeps up visitors to a series of social and play areas that through their design, explore the principles of privacy, visibility and interconnection, and encourage an increasingly isolated group to socialise in a physical environment.

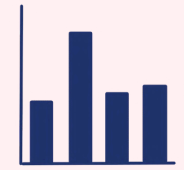
THEME

This project focuses on addressing loneliness in young adults - specifically those in their twenties.

LONELINESS



18-34-year-olds were worst impacted by loneliness in 2018.



16-24-year-olds reported a 48% rate of loneliness - 13% above average (2020).



Loneliness can increase the risk of Alzheimer's or other ailments later in life.



Loneliness negatively impacts mental health.

Facts and figures from www.gov.scot, www.nia.nih.gov, www.mentalhealth.org.uk.

USERS

This project is aimed at those in their 20's. These are expected to be working professionals in the Leith Walk area of Edinburgh. This is the most international area of the city and is filled with young people working in various employment areas.



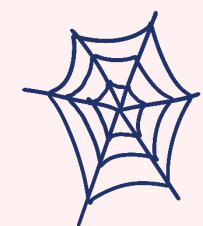
The users may be lacking a support net as they have likely moved away from home or may have moved to a different city or country entirely.



The users are no longer in education. It is harder to find friends outside of education.



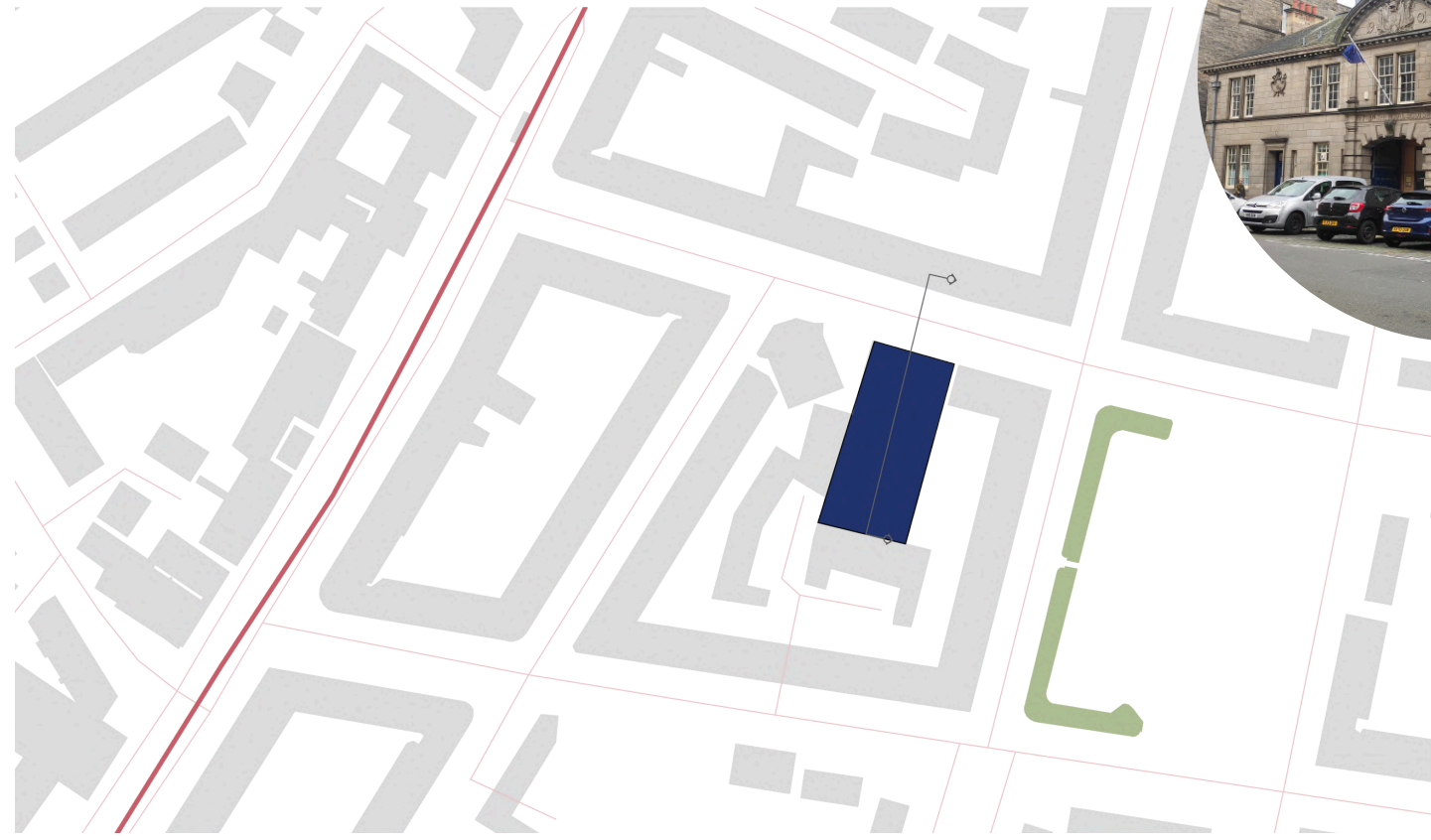
Though it is easy to be connected online, these connections can be seen as superficial and as contributing to isolation.



Young adults may be living alone for the first time and may need to find a new support net.

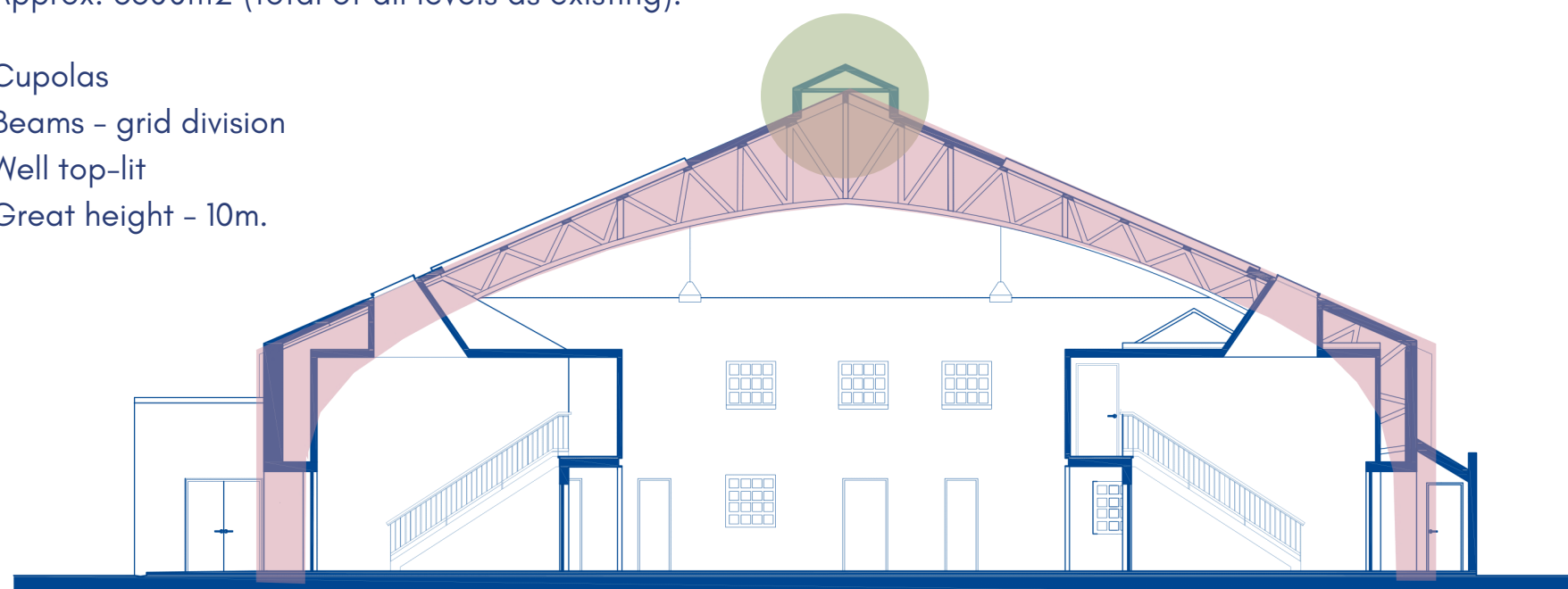
SITE

36 DALMENY STREET, EH6 8RG, EDINBURGH
Category A listed former military drill hall built in 1901.

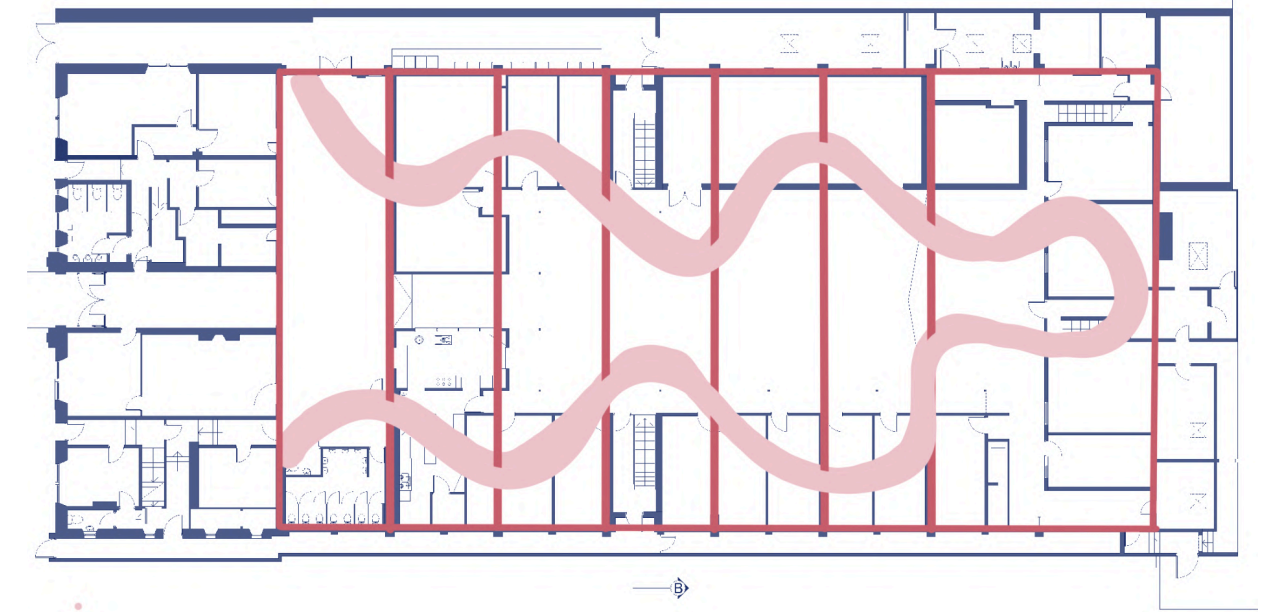
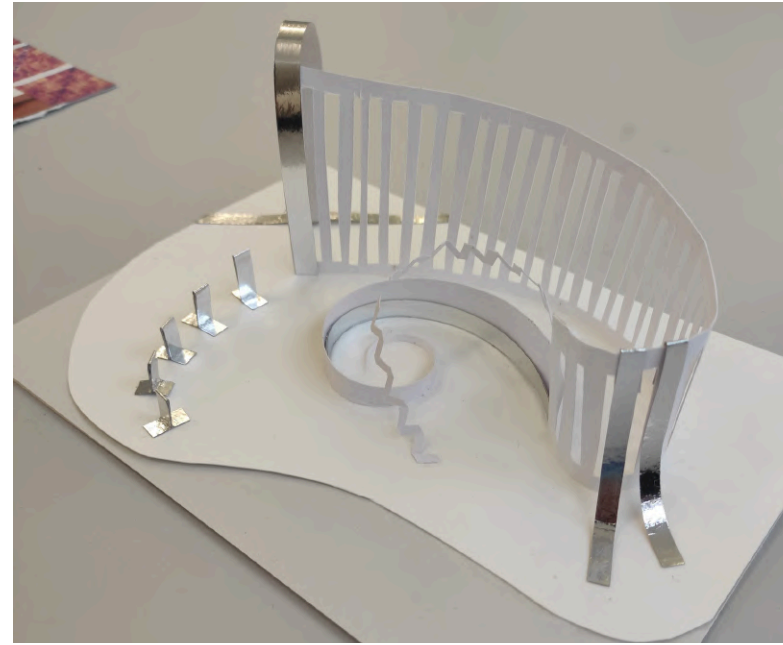


- Two major sections
- Open large back space
- Only detached from the front side
- Approx. 3300m2 (total of all levels as existing).

- Cupolas
- Beams - grid division
- Well top-lit
- Great height - 10m.



APPROACH



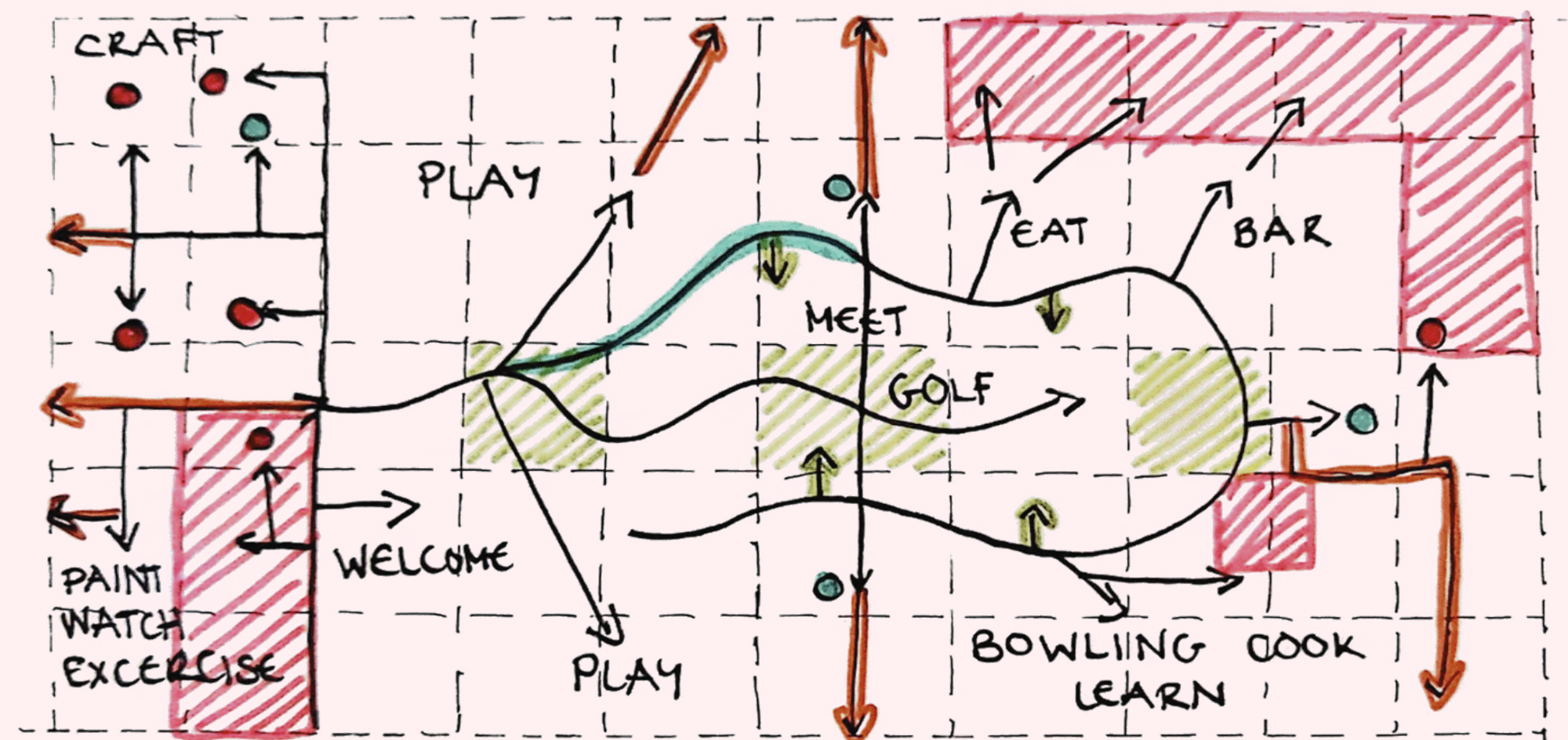
The existing site has quite a rigid structure. The roof beams provide a grid, which I originally wanted to follow for the design. As the brief developed, however, I decided to play around with the flow of the space and creating a sense of connectedness. I wanted activities and zones to flow into each other with few distinctions between spaces. This was done to promote connectedness between the users of the space.



BRIEF

Within the centre, there are lots of varied activities offered, which are aimed at promoting socialising between the users of the building. These activities were selected based on research into friendship spaces and activities, as well as popular hobbies. They include arts, sports, cooking, mini golf, bowling. Free-use social spaces are scattered throughout.

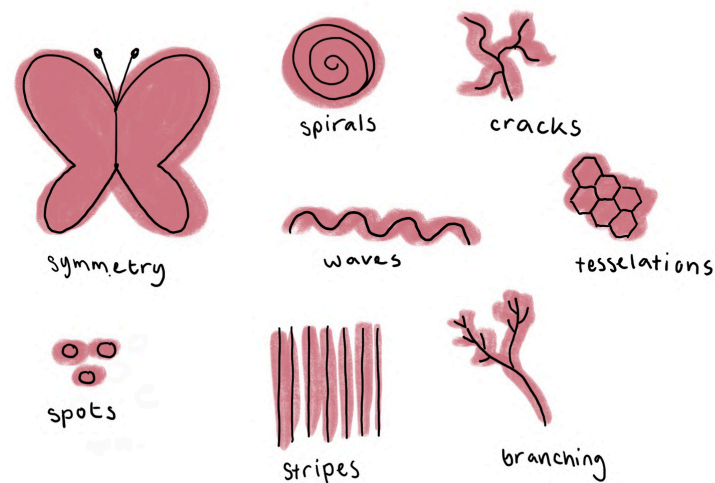
- Staff
- Exit
- Meeting
- Vertical
- WC/B.O.H.



DESIGN INFLUENCES

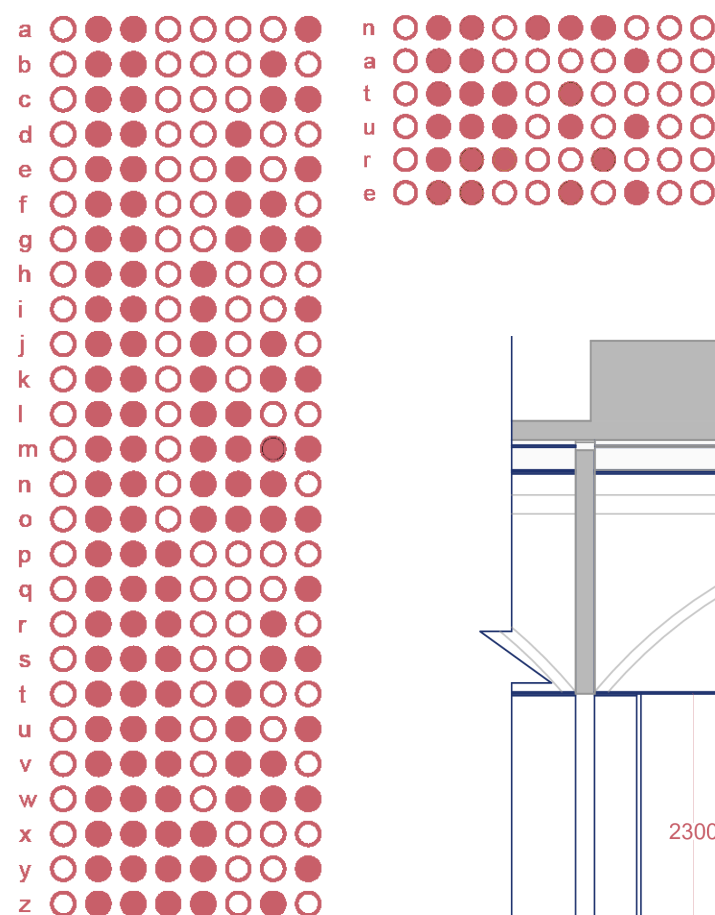
NATURE

Nature brings people together and makes us more comfortable. We feel at peace in it. Due to this, I looked at nature for inspiration when shaping the structure of the project as I wanted to create a space that would put people at ease.



THE ONLINE WORLD

Social media and other online platforms play a big role in modern day relationships. This project is inspired by some of the key elements of these platforms. There is a meeting wall with profiles that allow individuals to share a bit about themselves in an effort to find out who they have common interests with. There is also a pattern used throughout the project which reflects important friendship spaces or activities (from the survey I conducted) using binary code - a nod to friendship and its links to the online world.



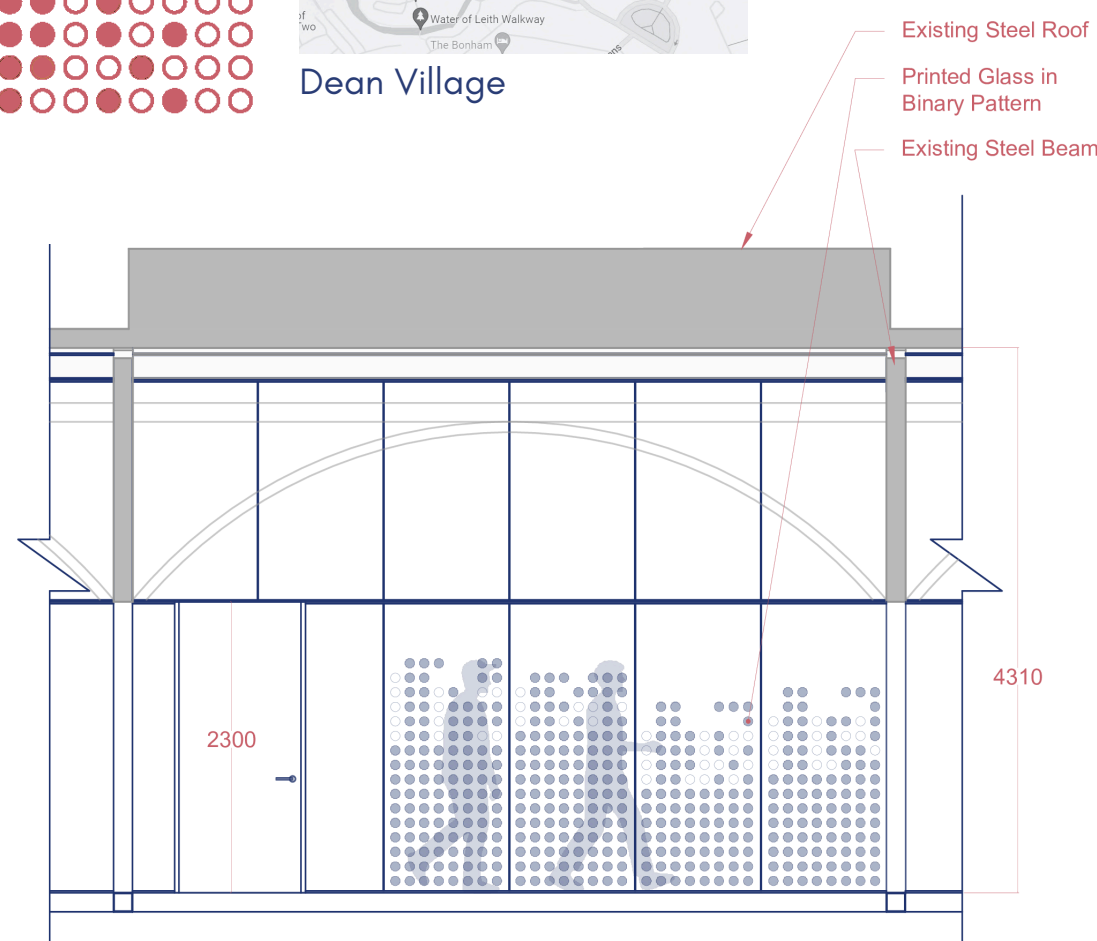
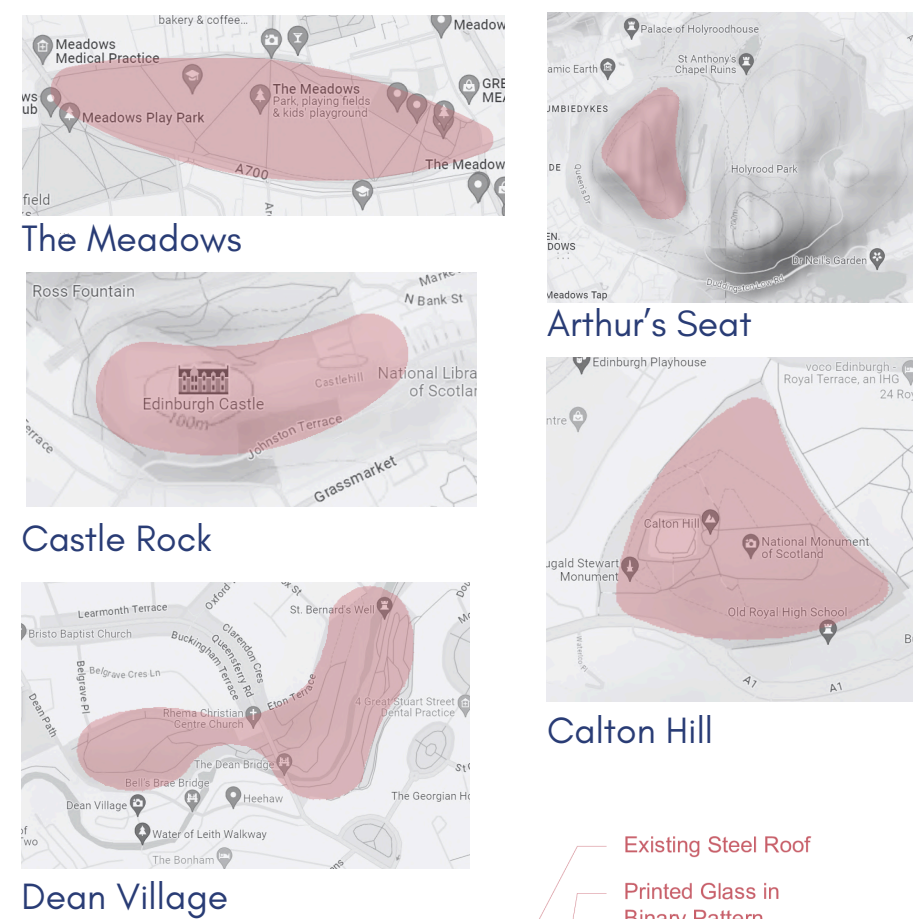
PLACES OF CASUAL MEETING

There are lots of different situations where we might meet someone new in very ordinary circumstances. These include the following that I have been looking into:

- planes - people quite often end up speaking to the person they are sitting next to on a plane. This, in combination with the importance of the limited things individuals can do on a flight, raises the importance of physical proximity or prolonged periods of time spent with someone in fostering socialising.
- dog parks - people walking their dogs in parks quite often end up talking to other dog owners while there. This raises the importance of shared interests.

EDINBURGH

Edinburgh is a place with lots of friendship spaces. The nature locations around the city are where people often meet up with friends or make new ones. These inspired the shapes of the mini golf area.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

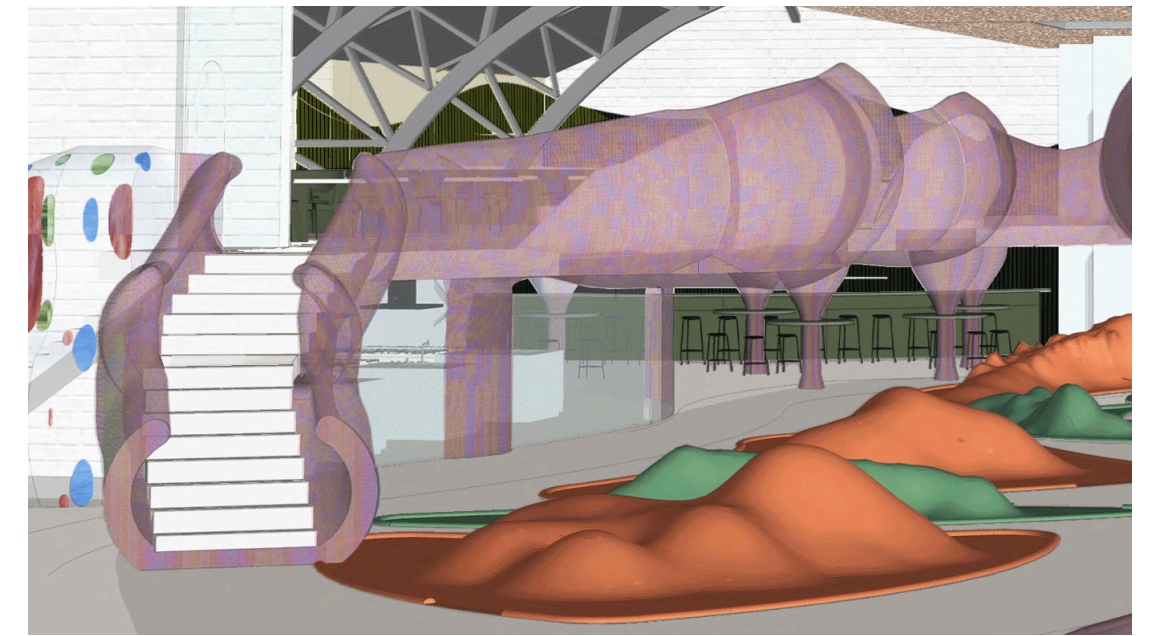
PRIVACY AND BEING SEEN

The space offers a sense of privacy but also being seen. The binary code pattern used throughout on glass panels provides a bit of opaqueness to hide behind. The balustrade is somewhat transparent but the areas which have integrated seating are covered.

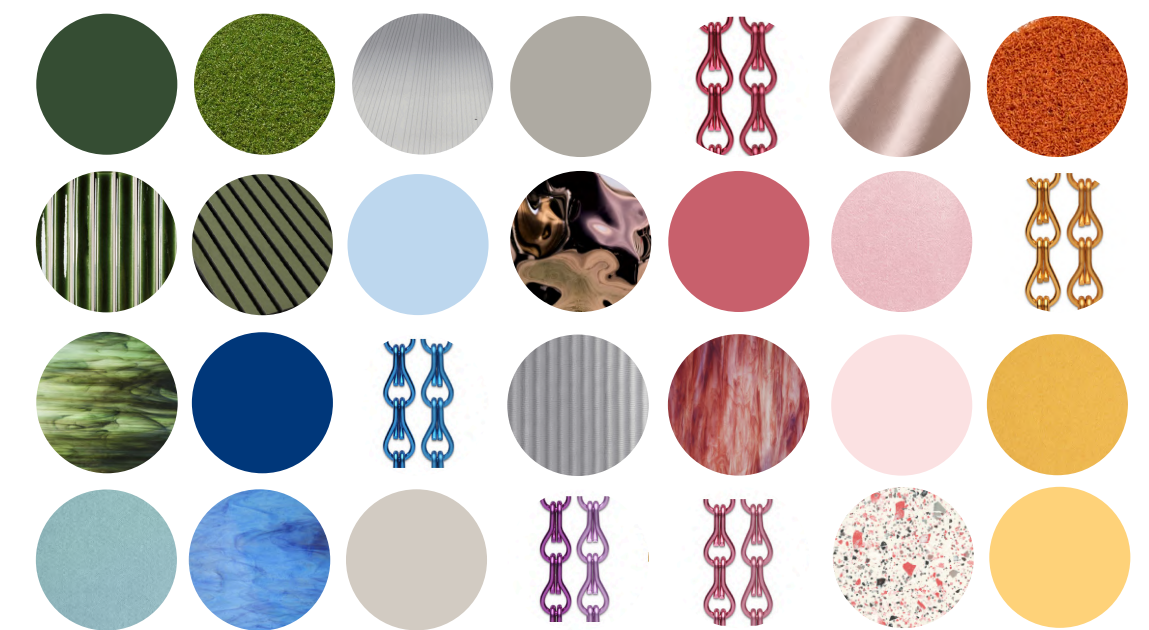
The wall in the screening room has windows behind the projector screen meaning that movies can be viewed from the other side of the wall - the idea of being seen.



The materials that have been chosen for the space - a large space of 3000m2 total are coherent in colour palette throughout. There is also extensive use of glass and chainmail (mainly on the curved balustrade) which allow for a visual connection. This is so that people feel safe around strangers.



MATERIALS



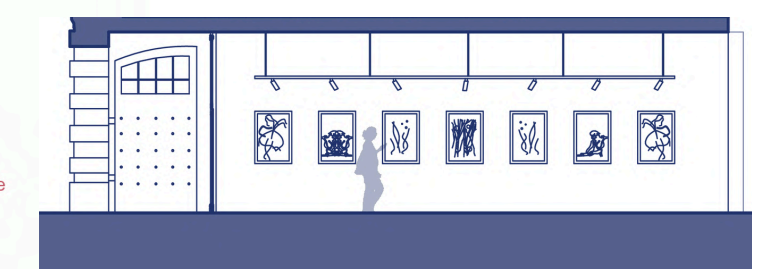
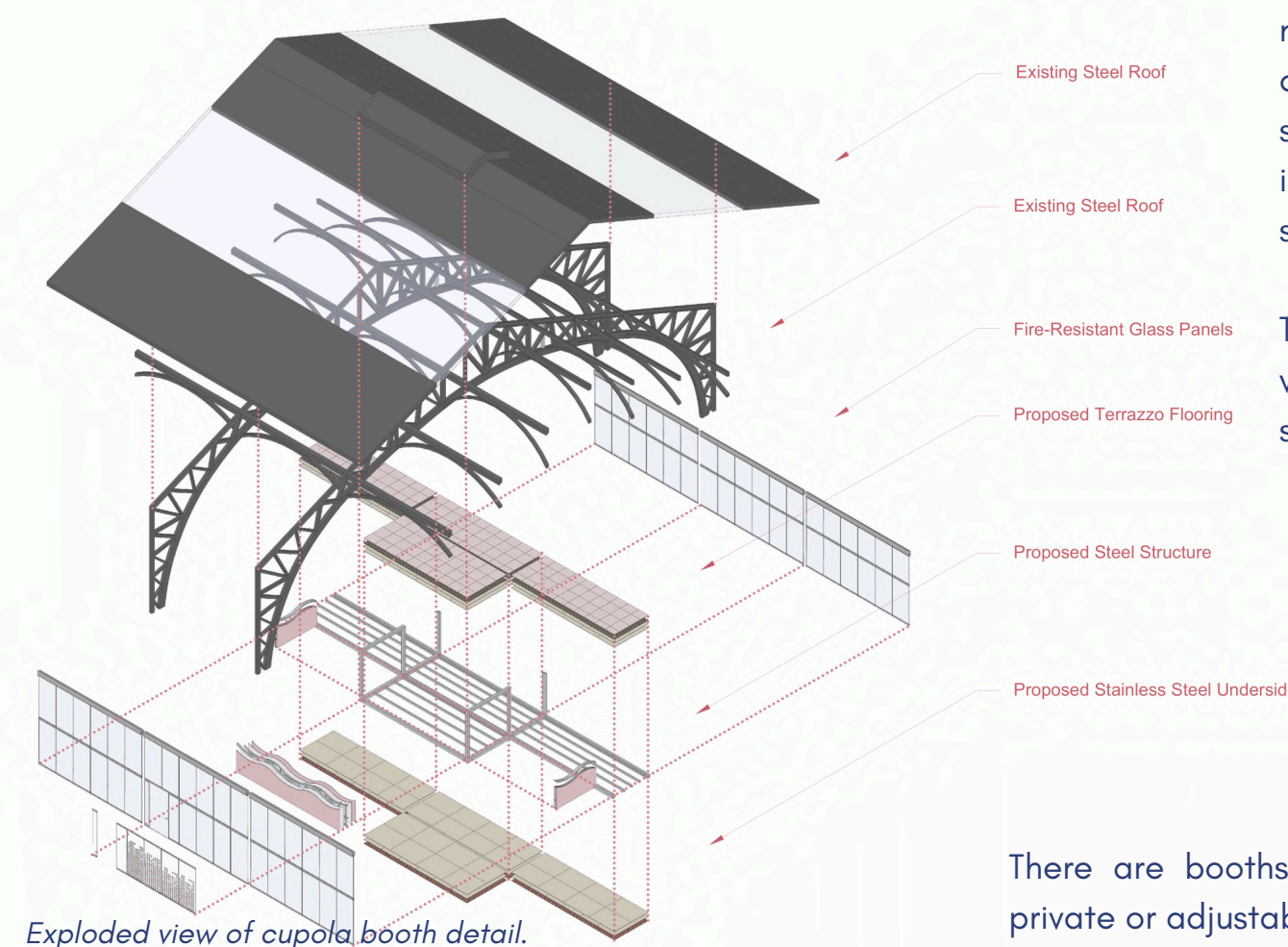
SHARED FOOD AND DRINK

Throughout my research, the importance of sharing food and drinks as part of socialising became evident. There are lots of areas to get food/drinks or to consume them throughout the space. Eating or drinking with someone makes us automatically more comfortable around them.

ARCHITECTURAL PSYCHOLOGY AND OWNERSHIP

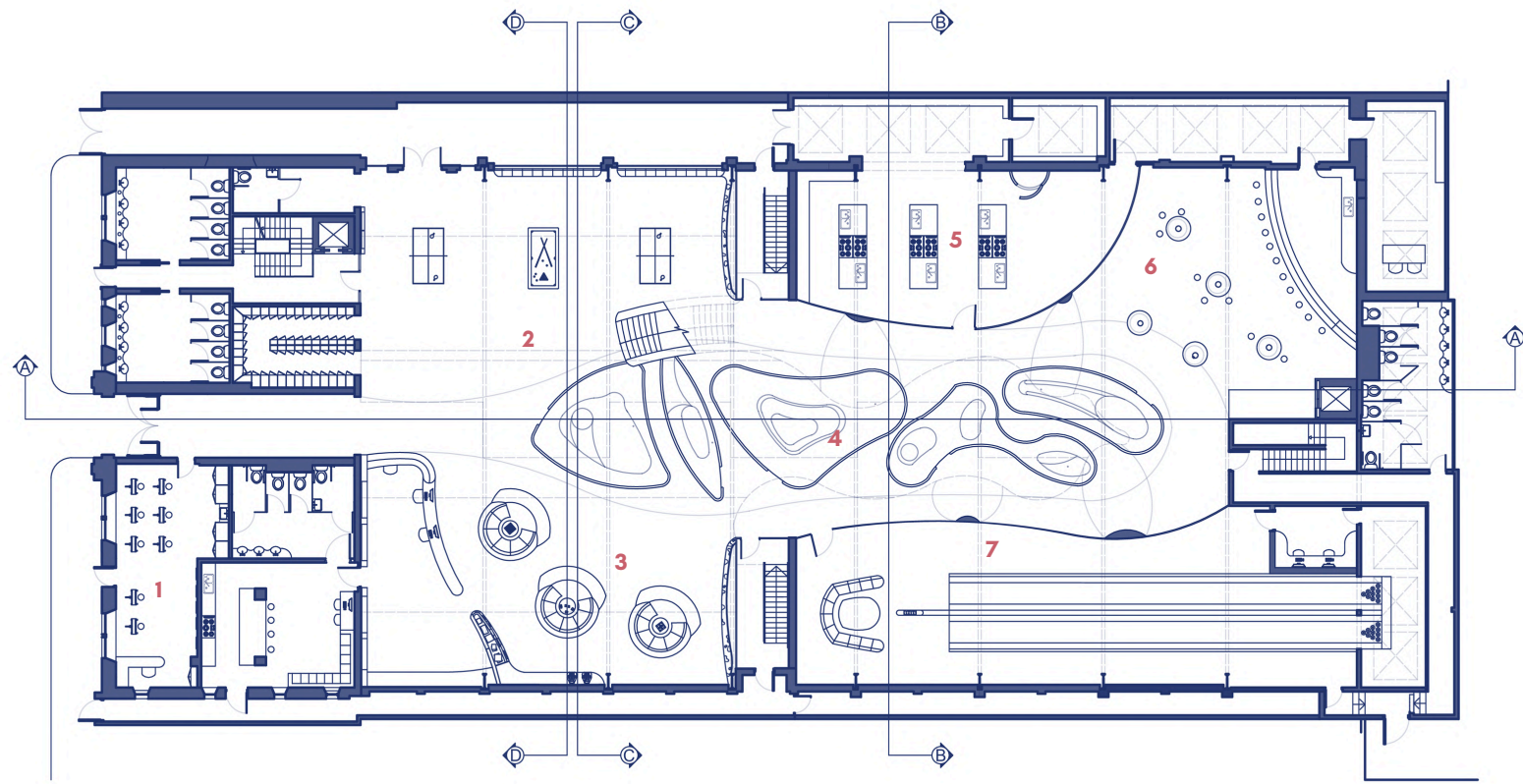
The space has been made as simple to navigate as possible. The main staircase is clearly visible and other staircases are surrounded by glass panels for easy visual identification. This is done in order to create a sense of comfort.

There are places to display profiles and art as a way to claim the site. An example of this is seen in the hallway pictured below.

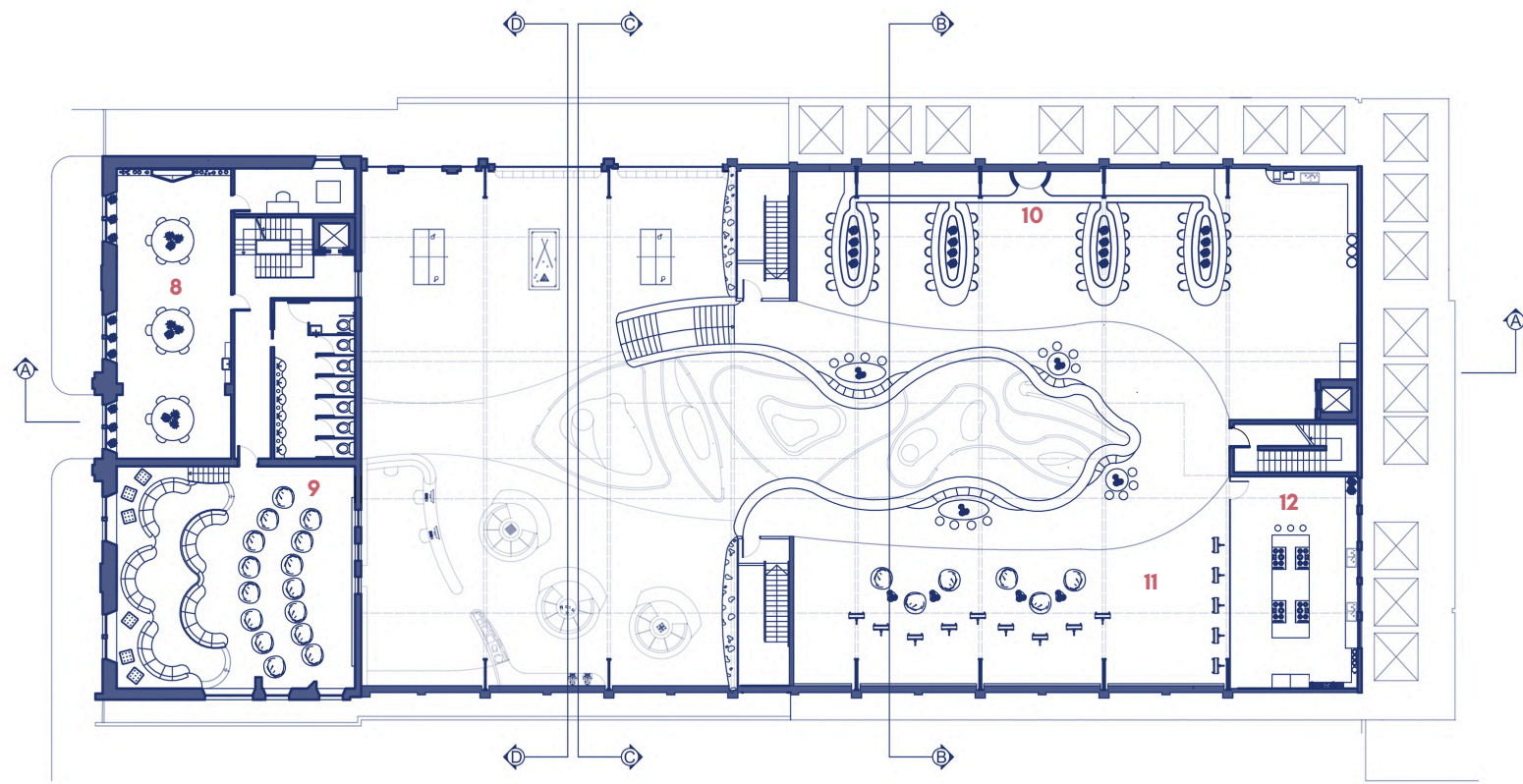


There are booths in the roof cupolas which allow for a more private or adjustable meeting experience.

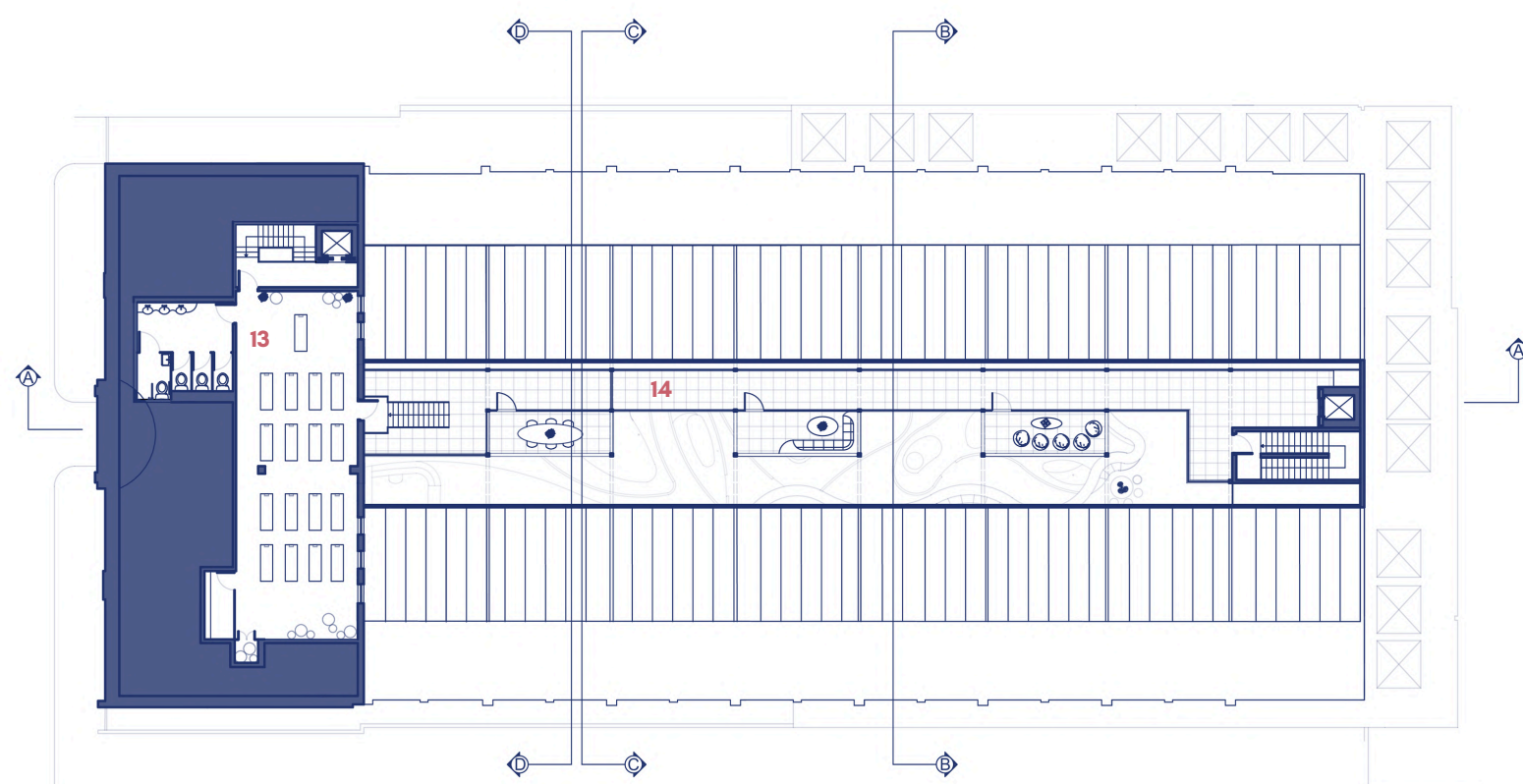
DESIGN PROPOSAL



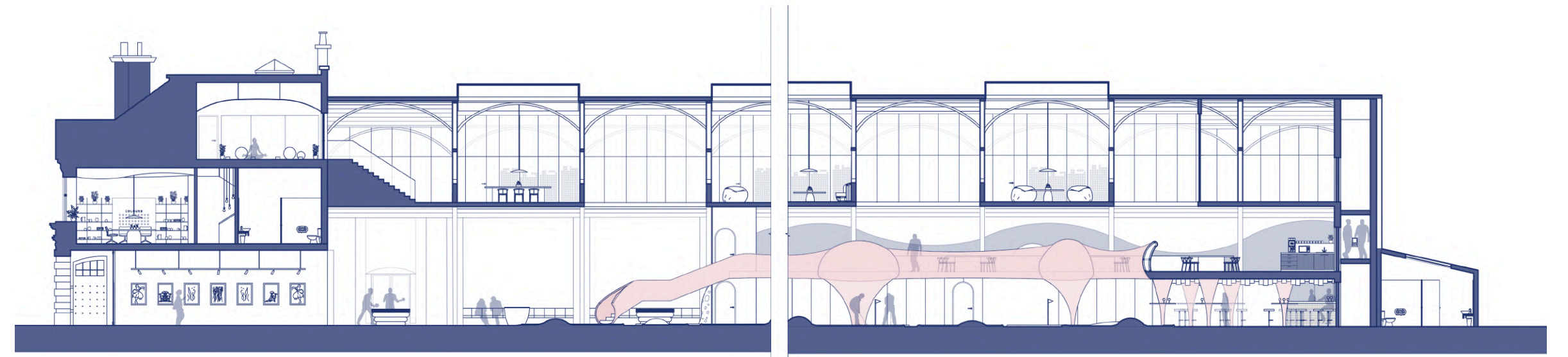
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor

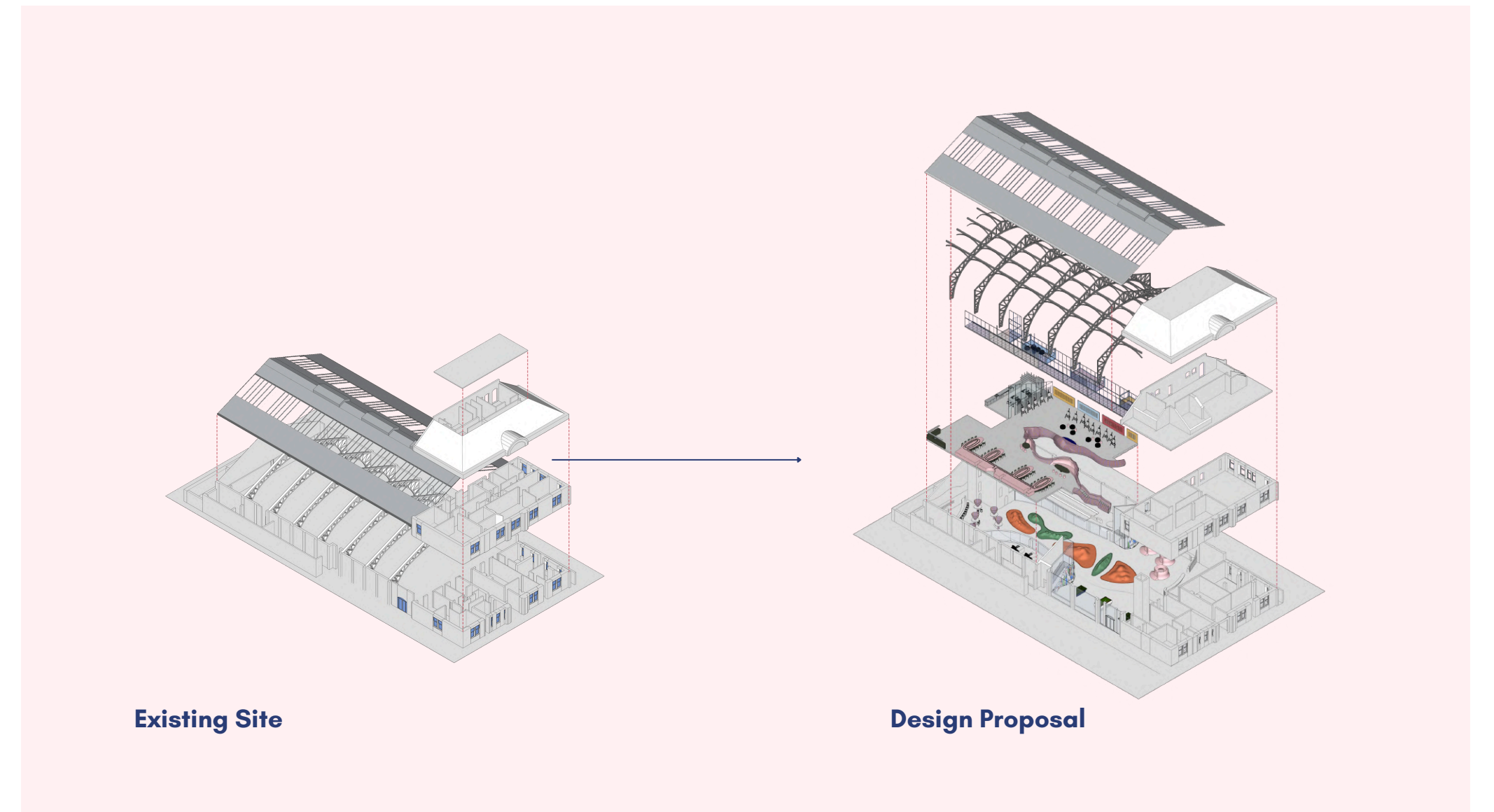


Section AA

- 1 - Art Room
- 2 - Ping Pong/Billiards
- 3 - Game Area
- 4 - Mini Golf
- 5 - Commercial Kitchen
- 6 - Bar
- 7 - Bowling

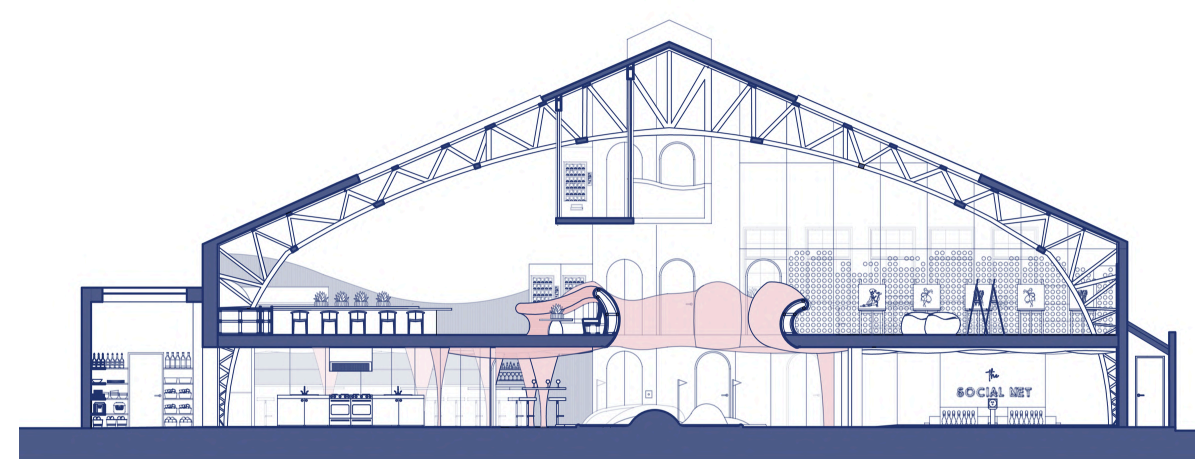
- 8 - Pottery Studio
- 9 - Screening Room
- 10 - Dining Area (Food Lift)
- 11 - Multi-Use Space
- 12 - Teaching Kitchen

- 13 - Yoga Studio
- 14 - Multi-Use Booths

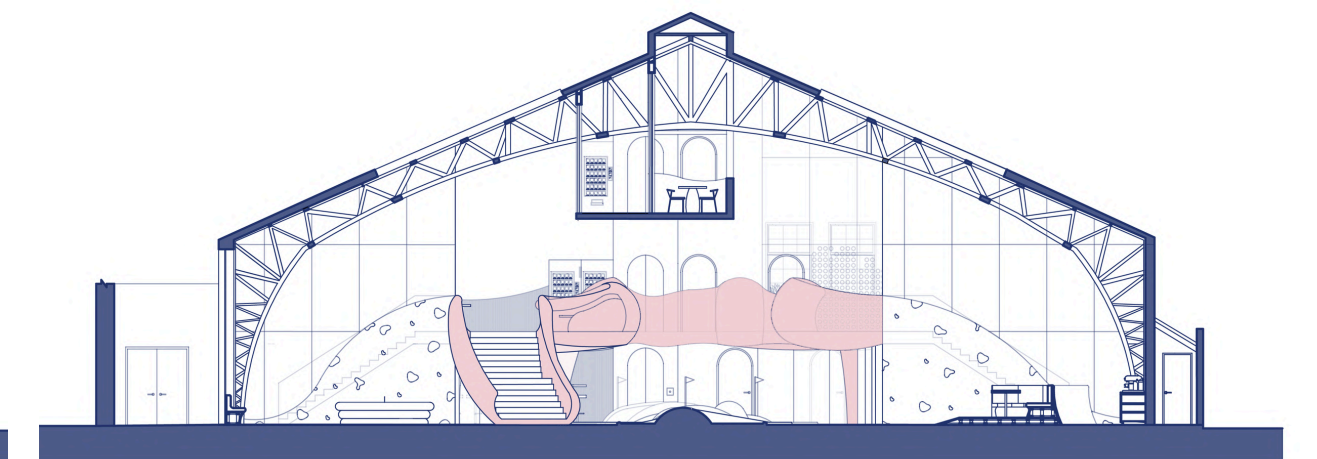


Existing Site

Design Proposal



Section BB



Section CC



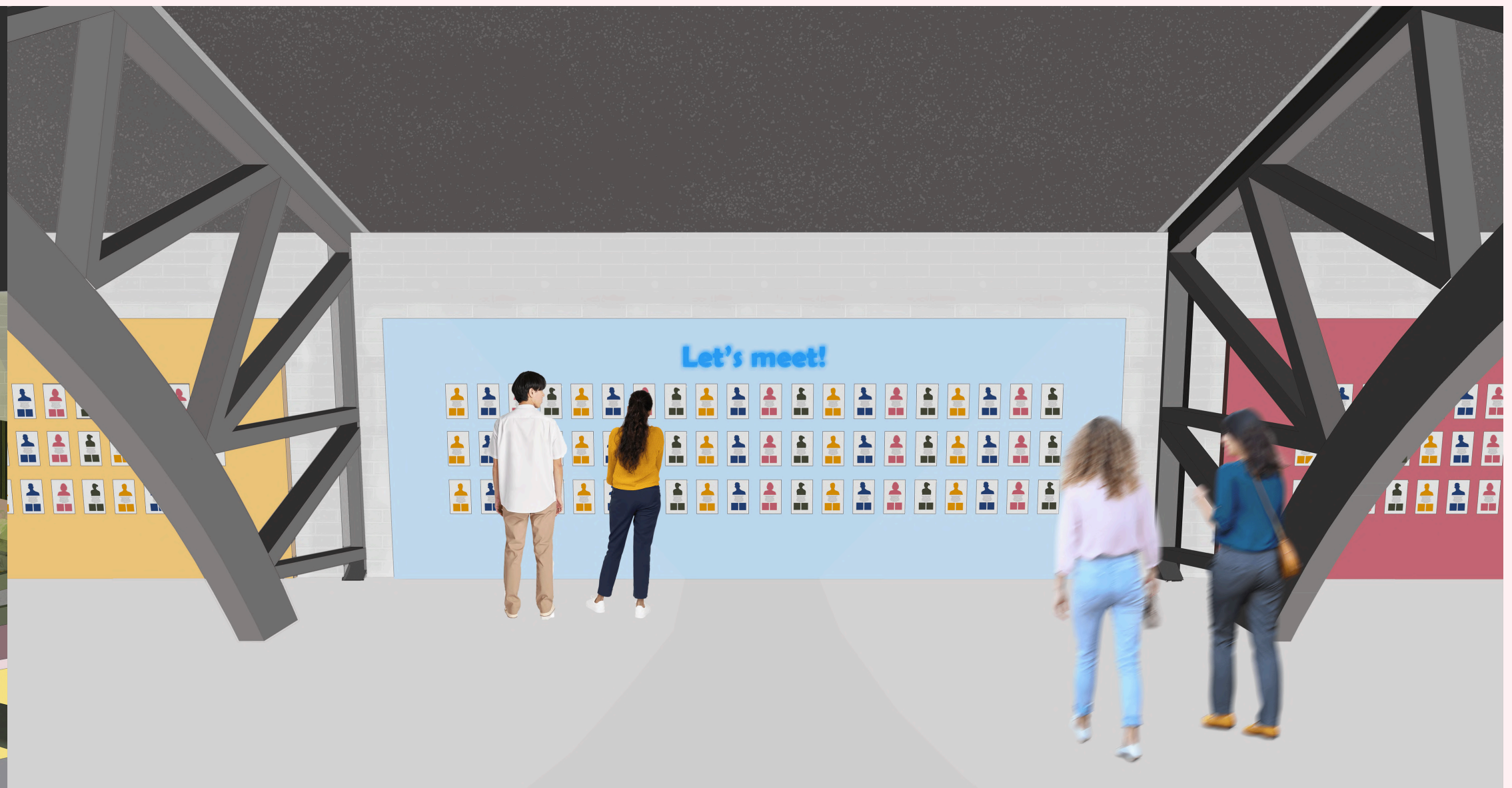
Visual of blue multi-use booth. This space can be used for smaller gatherings, as it offers an increased sense of privacy. The space is still visually connected to the rest of the building, but is high up and has its own door, offering a sense of control to those using it. The furniture within the space can be moved around to suit a wide range of activities.



Visual of teaching kitchen. This space allows users to take cooking classes or to lead classes. This means that the varied group expected within the space can share both their cultures and their passions. The space is open-plan and visually easy to navigate for newcomers. The space is also visually connected to adjacent spaces, allowing for a sense of approachability.



Visual of dining space. This space is located right above the commercial kitchen, meaning that food can be transported from the kitchen directly to the above tables through a food lift. This lift is connected to a conveyor belt which delivers the food directly to the seat from which it was ordered. The space is designed to encourage visitors to sit in groups, thus encouraging them to interact with each other, while already having something to focus on - food.



Visual of profile wall. This profile wall is based on social media. We are used to being able to search each other up and it makes us feel safe to know about each other before meeting. This wall allows users of the centre to put up profiles detailing information about themselves and their hobbies in efforts to simplify the act of finding individuals with similar interests.