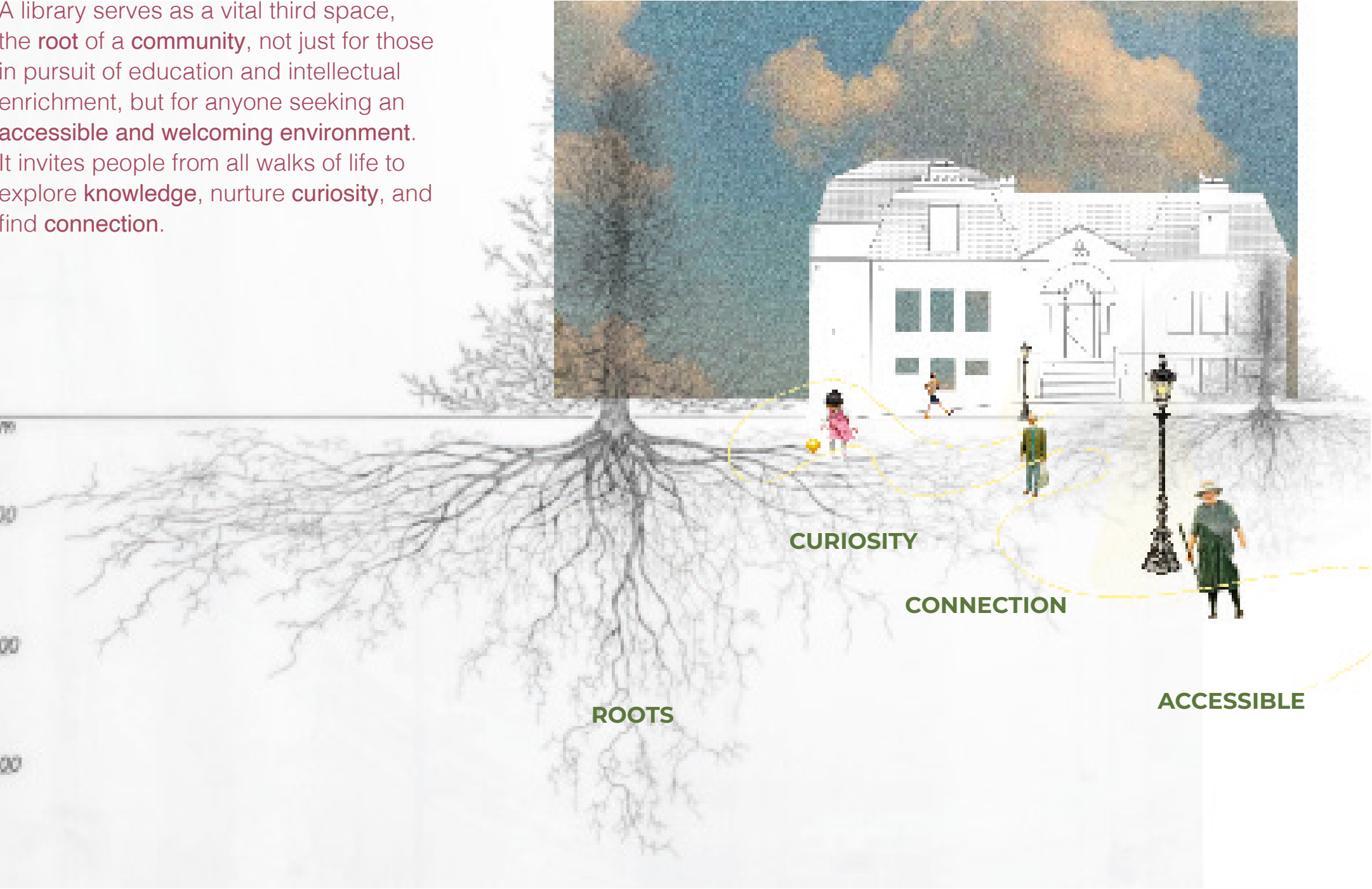
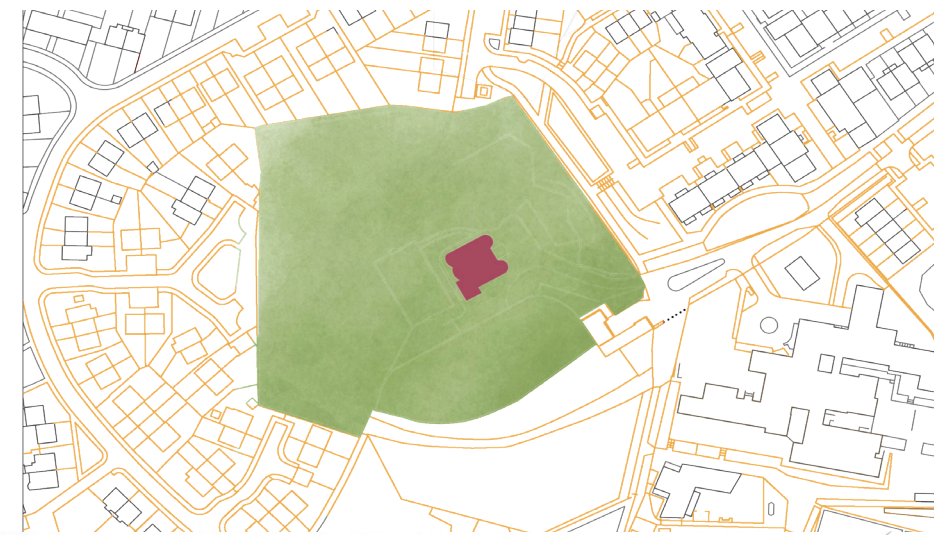


GRACEMOUNT MANSION WILDERNESS LIBRARY

A library serves as a vital third space, the **root** of a **community**, not just for those in pursuit of education and intellectual enrichment, but for anyone seeking an **accessible and welcoming environment**. It invites people from all walks of life to explore **knowledge**, nurture **curiosity**, and find **connection**.



SITE ANALYSIS



Current context -

Gracemount Mansion, currently closed and boarded up due to vandalism and structural decay, is now the focus of a community-led restoration effort. Lead by the Gracemount Mansion Development Trust and supported by the Scottish Land Fund, the initiative aims to transform the site into a vibrant community hub through architectural restoration and public engagement.

Historical context -

Built around 1780, Gracemount Mansion has undergone several significant alterations (1800, 1890, c.1932). Originally a private residence, it was sold to Edinburgh Corporation in 1920 and later served as a nursing home and community centre. Over the years, it hosted a wide range of local activities.

CREATIVE RE-USE NOMINATION:

This project has been nominated in the progressing student creative re-use category, as an exemplary project which demonstrates incredible rigour, thoughtfulness and creativity in its approach to the re-use of this vacant Georgian mansion house. The project brief is generated through carefully analysed research which combines a narrative of the building origins and the cast of characters who played a role in its past, to build a contemporary story which connects nature and structure with a practical change of use. The design appropriately considers what may be retained, removed and added to challenge preconceptions of conservation and introduces new forms and materials in an ambitious design proposal, presented to an exquisite standard at pre-honours level.

THEME RESEARCH



Figure 2: Crag points in the surrounding Edinburgh area (OS Maps, 2025.)

Figure 2: Trig points in the surrounding Edinburgh area (OS Maps, 2025.)

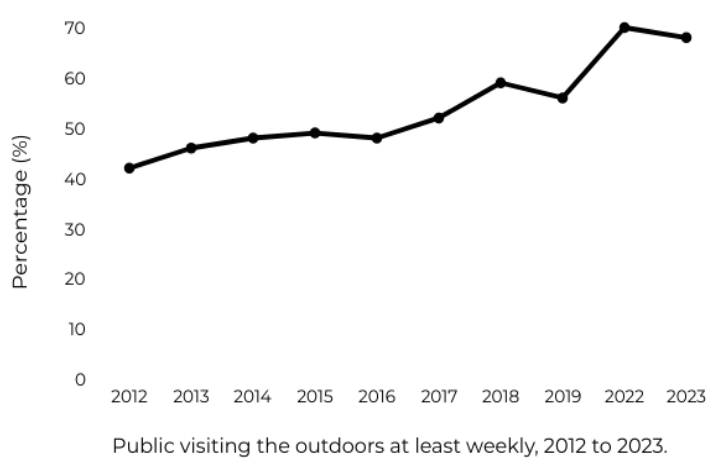
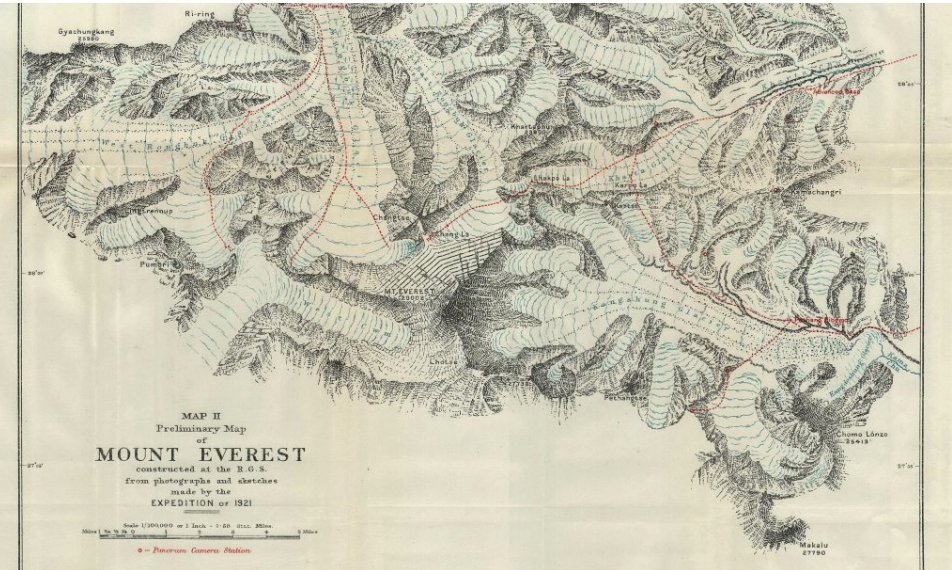


Figure 1



I have chosen the theme of a Wilderness Resource Library, drawing inspiration from my collage on the top right, where roots emerged as a powerful symbol of knowledge, connection, and growth. Just as roots anchor and nourish, this library will serve as a foundation for exploration, grounding people in the landscapes around them while expanding their access to the outdoors.

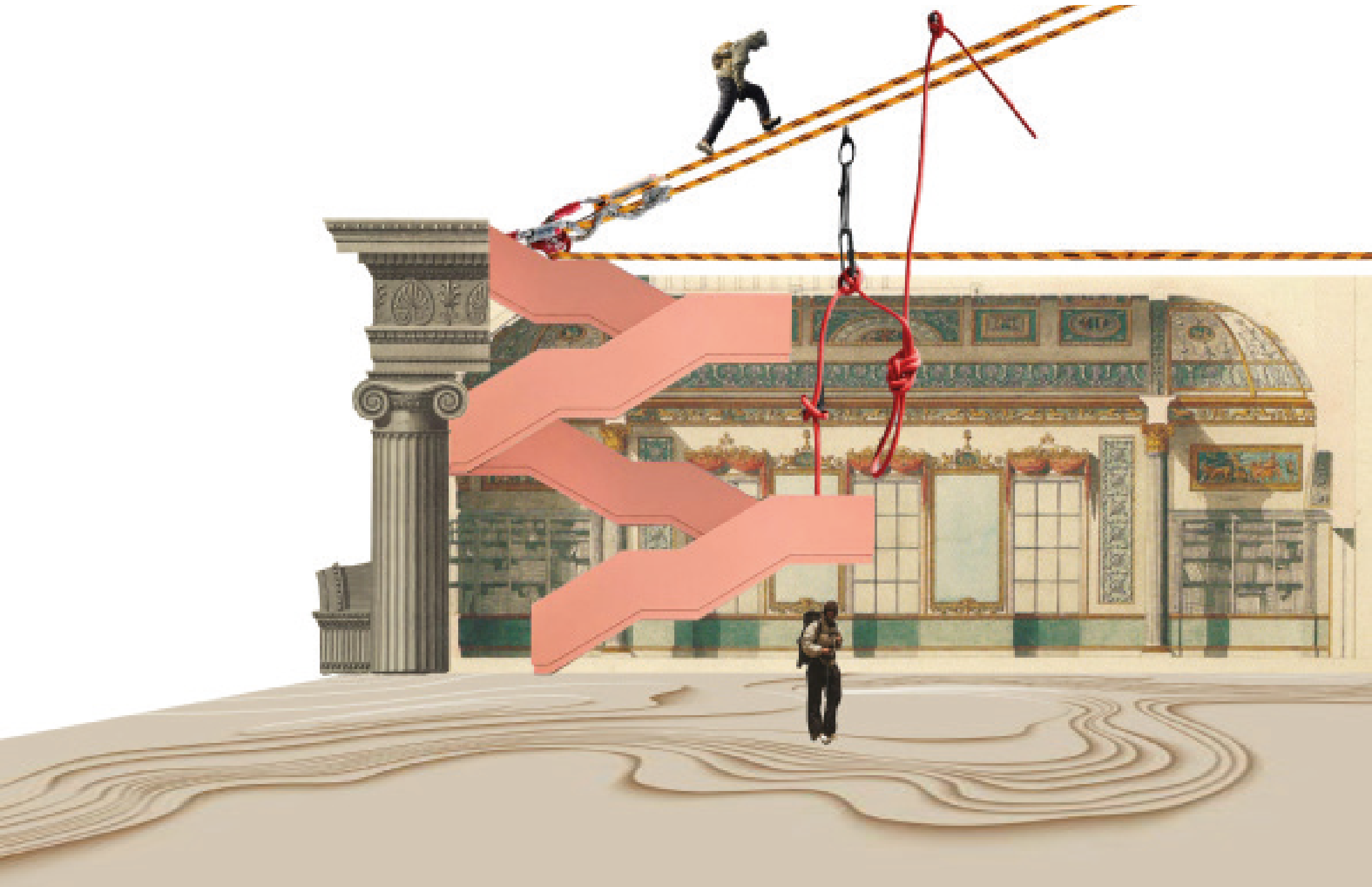
Surrounded by nature from the trees and walled gardens to the seven hills of Edinburgh and the Pentlands, this library will embody the deep relationship between knowledge and the natural world. It will include an outdoor equipment lending library alongside a map and guide collection, ensuring that everyone, regardless of experience or background, has the tools to engage with the environment. By making the outdoors more accessible, the library will act as a gateway, inviting people to take root in nature and branch out into new adventure.

In figure 1, data from the Scottish government (The Scottish Government, 2024) shows that the interest and demand for outdoor spaces is increasing every year, especially after the covid 19 pandemic. Evidenced by figure 1 and 2 which shows Crag and Trig points, Edinburgh has no lack of outdoor spaces and connection to the wider scottish highlands.

Historical -

Built between 1788–1796 by Lieutenant Colonel Gilbert Waugh, Gracemount Mansion carries historical significance through the Waugh family. His grandson, Sir Andrew Scott Waugh, later succeeded George Everest as Surveyor-General of India and named Mount Everest in his honour.

DESIGN DIRECTION

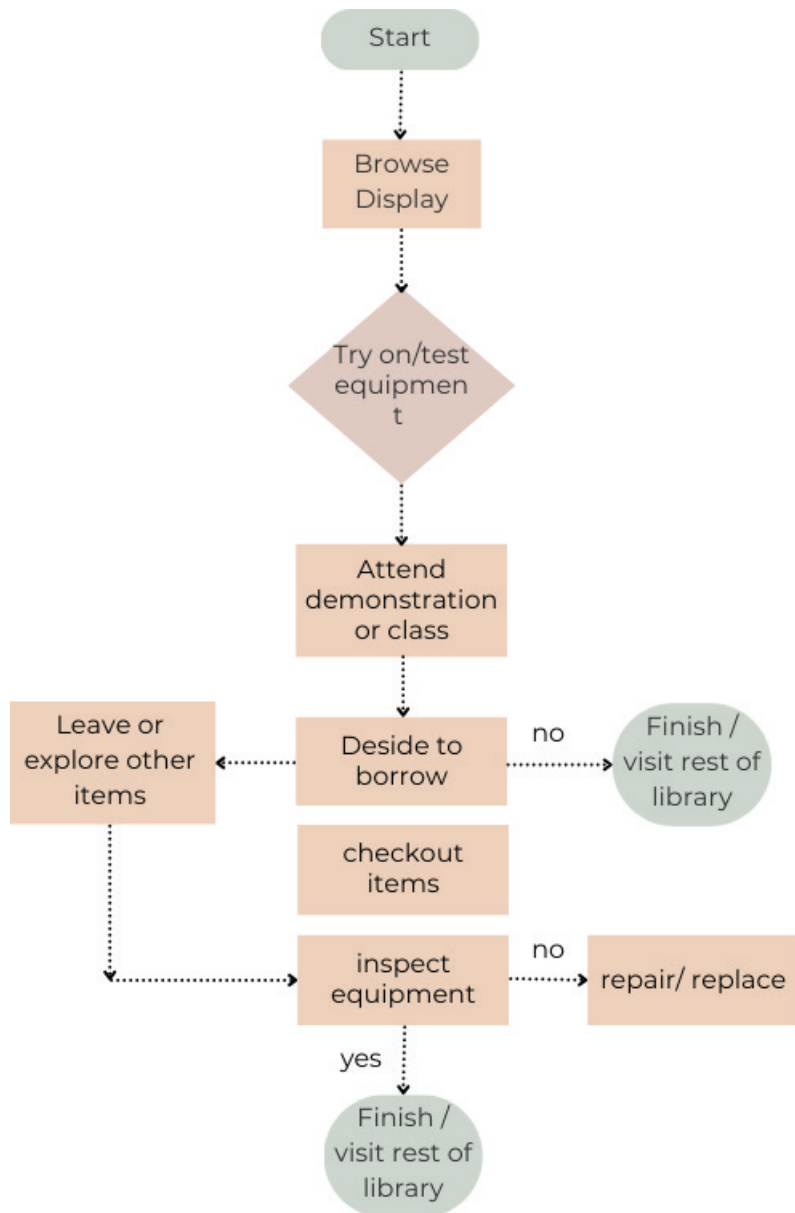
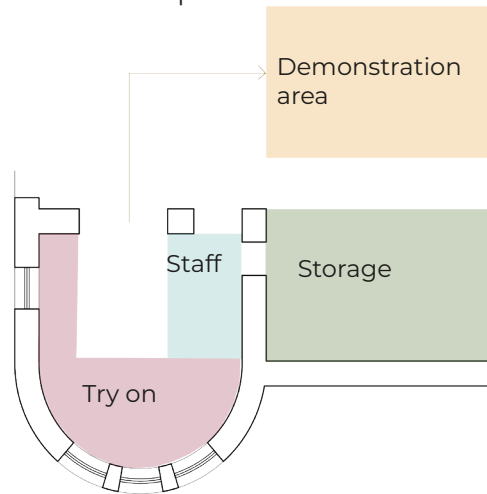


LENDING LIBRARIES

Libraries are expanding beyond books to include tool and equipment lending, encouraging resource-sharing and community engagement. Jonas Söderholm’s study “Borrowing Tools from the Public Library” (2016) explores how these services support sustainability and accessibility. Tool-lending libraries promote a circular economy by reducing waste and helping people avoid buying items they rarely use. They also create inclusive spaces where resources are available to all, regardless of income. However, challenges like inventory management and maintenance require careful planning. This research has informed my design for the Outdoor Map & Equipment Library, ensuring it is both practical and sustainable.

Below, I’ve created a flow chart based on the reading to map out the key functions needed for an effective service.

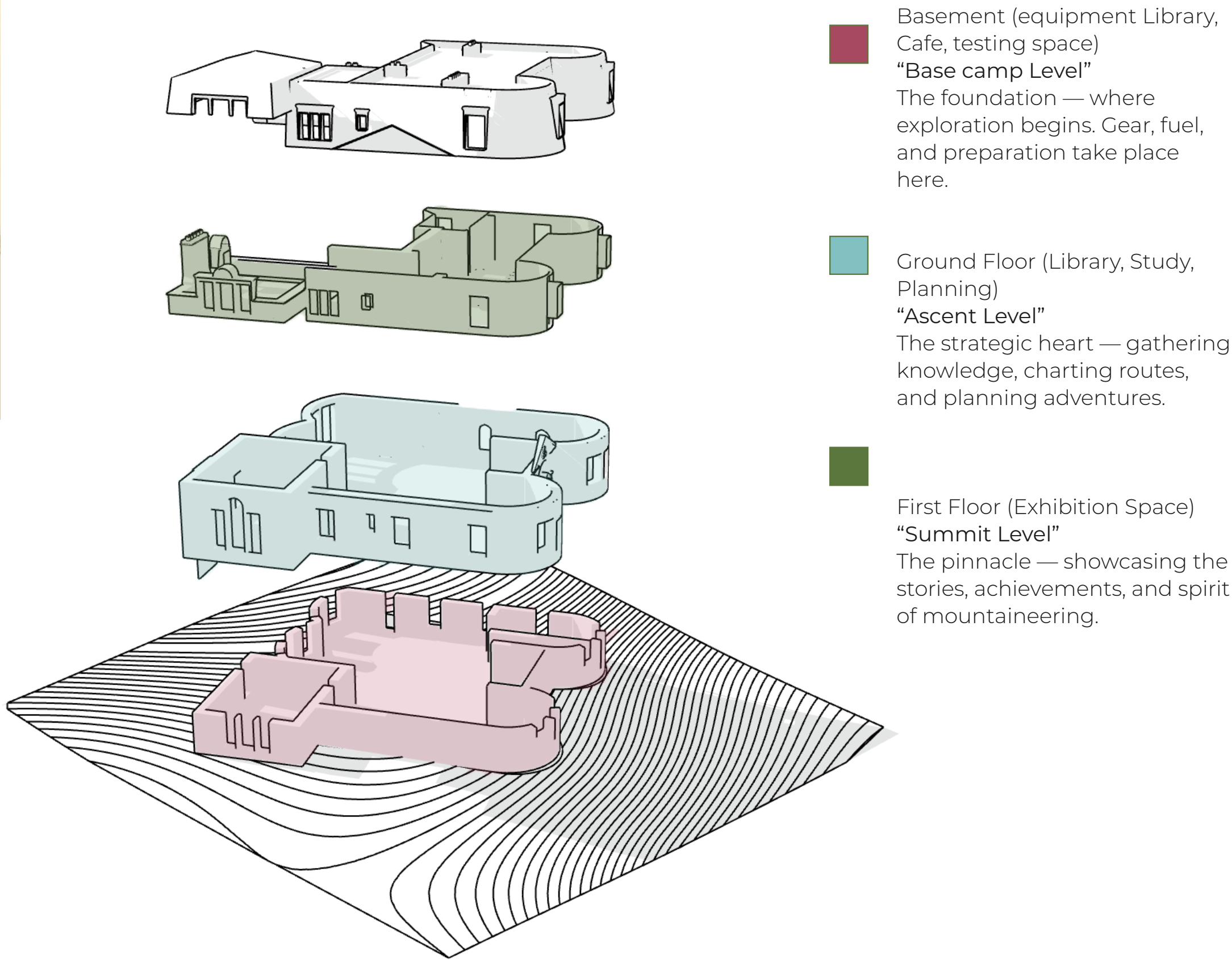
Equipment library intended space on the Basement level :



Design Direction Manifesto

This redesign of Gracemount Mansion into an outdoor-themed library will preserve its Georgian heritage while integrating sustainable materials and re-purposed outdoor gear. Traditional elements like panelling and cornicing will be reinterpreted using modern, low-impact materials, ensuring durability without compromising historical character. Salvaged climbing ropes, weather-resistant composites, and reclaimed wood will shape the space, reinforcing a connection to the outdoors. By merging historical craftsmanship with contemporary sustainability, this project will create a functional, resource-conscious environment for learning and exploration.

3 FLOOR SPATIAL CONCEPT



Connection to Gracemount

I was inspired by the three-part structure of Georgian architecture, which reflects the journey of an explorer. The rusticated stone base symbolizes the Base camp Level—solid, grounded, and foundational. The smoother middle level represents the Ascent Level, a space for planning, learning, and progression. Finally, the decorative roof line echoes the Summit Level, marking achievement and discovery. This historic architectural form naturally supports a narrative of preparation, journey, and triumph. To reinforce this concept, a triple-height void featuring a mountainous wall will visually and spatially connect each floor, accelerating the experience from Base camp to Summit.

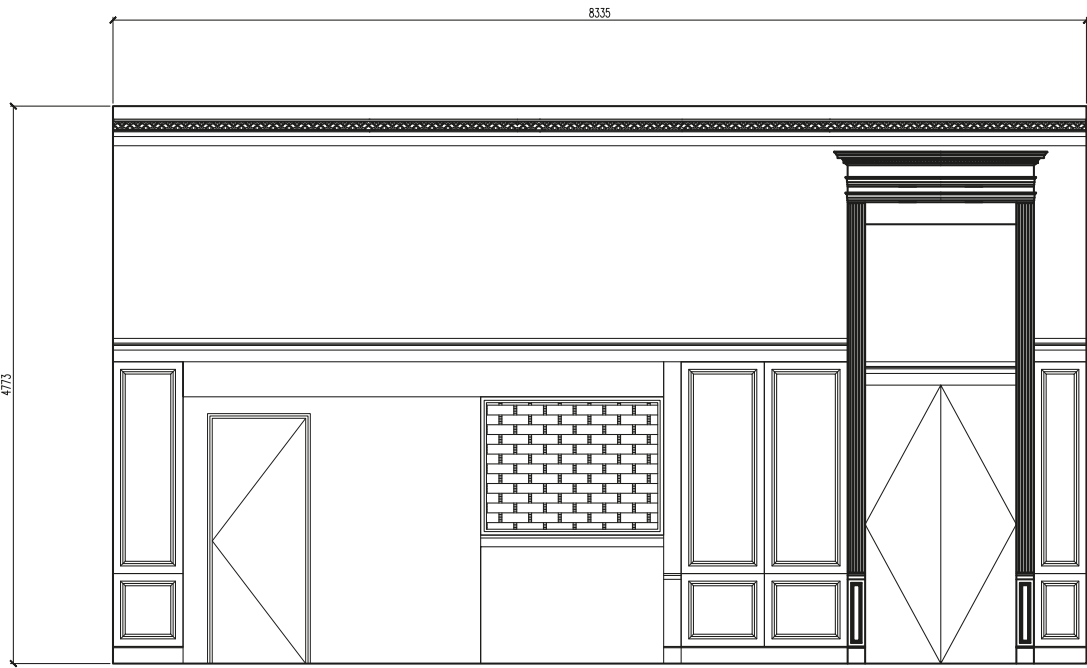
HISTORICAL RETAINED ROOM

Within my retained room, I will aim to re-purpose existing fixtures to suit my theme. I intend to make the space a map room, inspired by residential Georgian living rooms and libraries, featuring globes, maps, and walls painted to resemble rich dark woods.

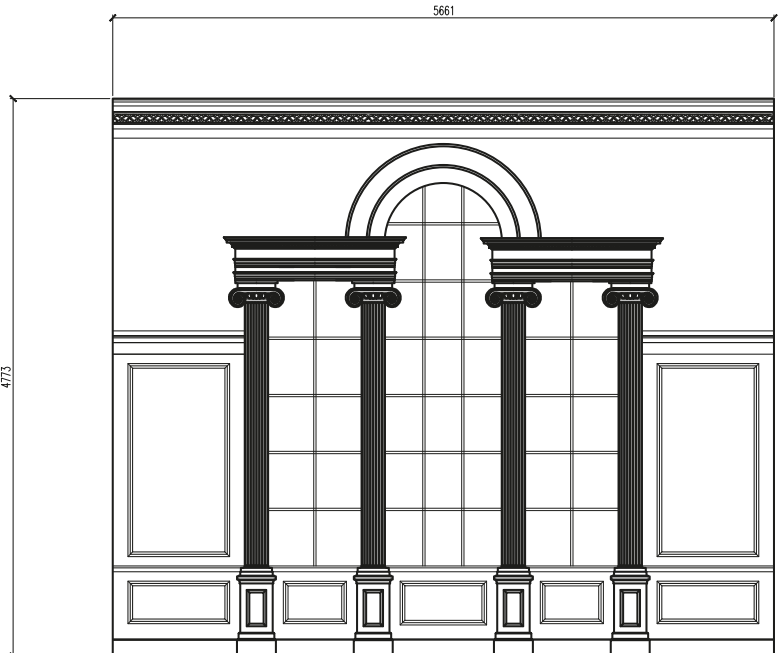
Exploring Fixtures

The Shelving:
For my retained room, I will be re-purposing the original panelling in line with the Gracemount Restoration and Master Plan. Due to wood rot and water damage, a lot of the timber needs to be either replaced or heavily altered. Instead of discarding it, I plan to give it a new purpose by turning the salvaged wood into built-in shelving and custom map drawers—keeping its historical look while making it practical for modern use.

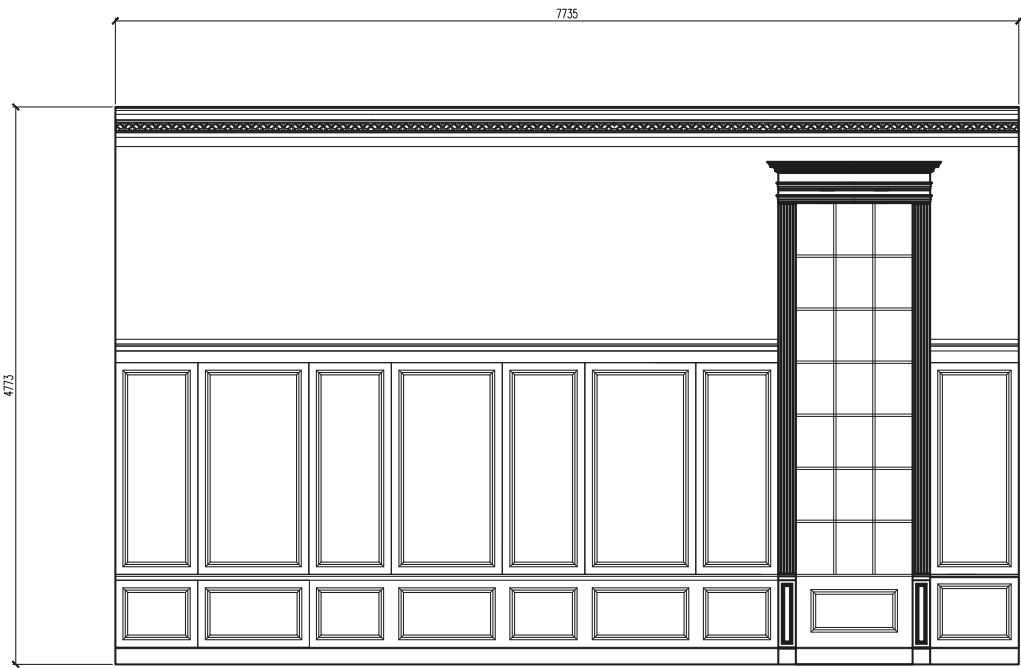
Tables:
For the tables, I will be using antique Georgian cartographer’s tables. To make sure they meet current safety standards, reinforcements and renovations will be carried out during the manufacturing stage.



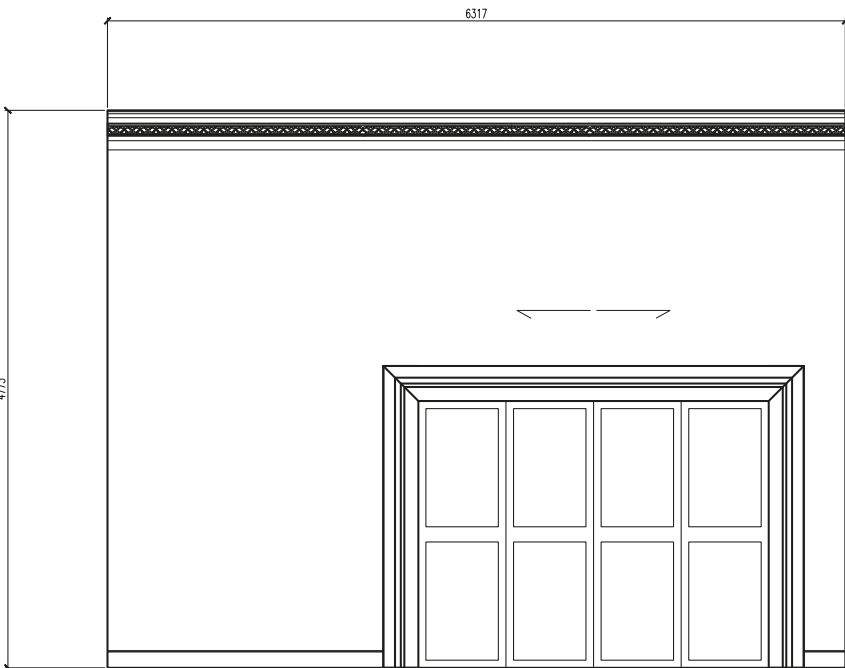
EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

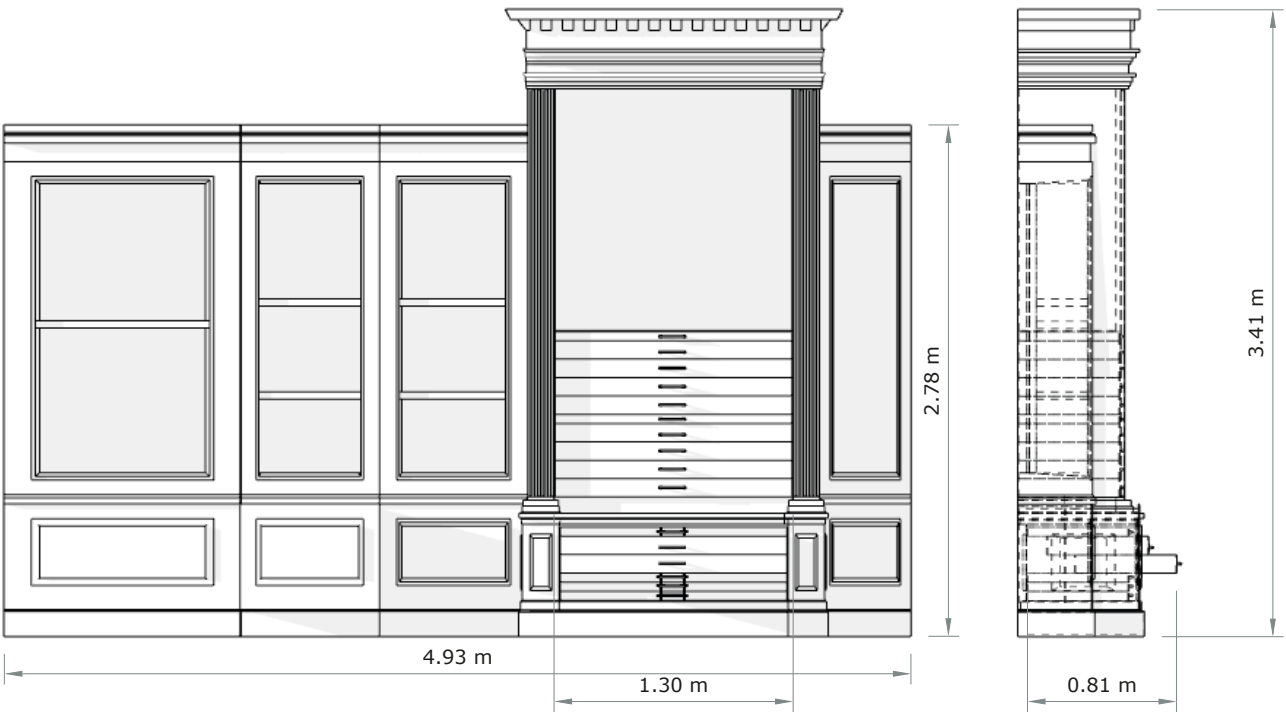


WEST ELEVATION

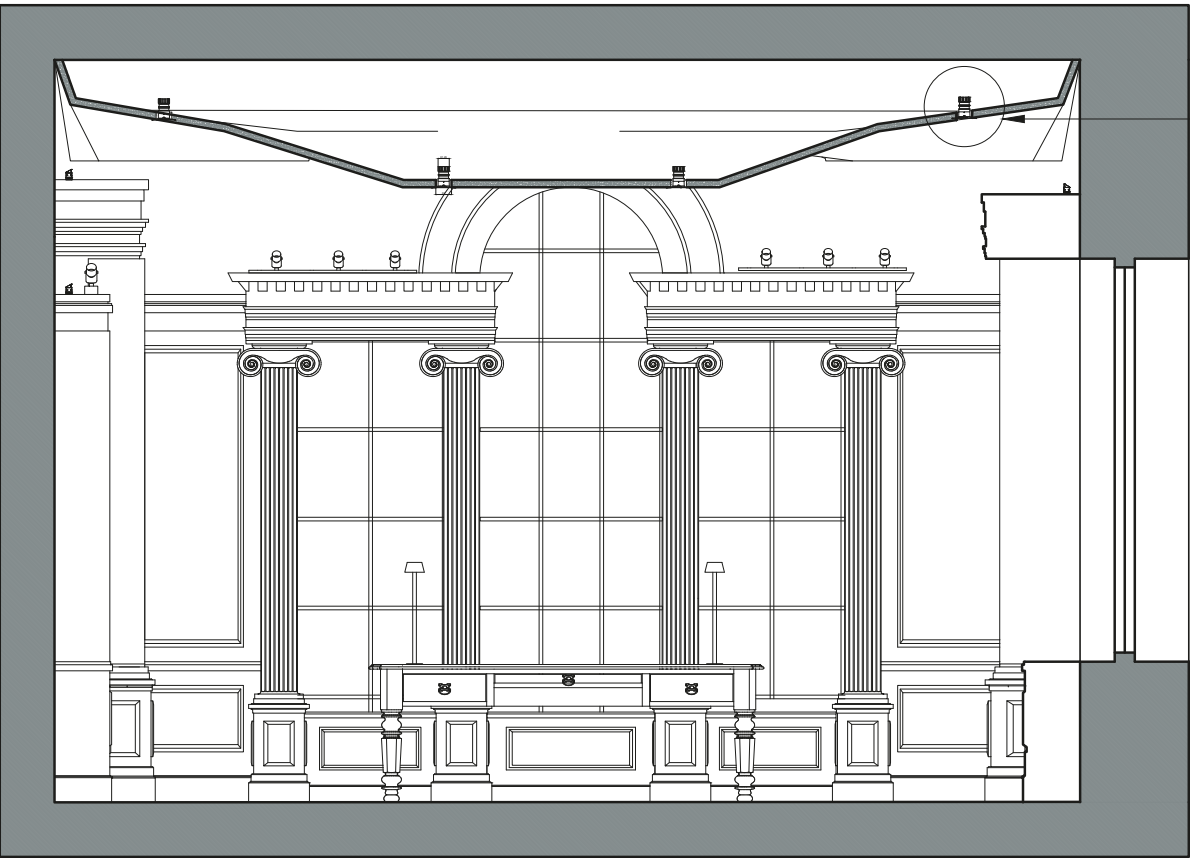


NORTH ELEVATION

DESIGN SOLUTIONS



This example illustrates how panelling will be re-purposed throughout the design, serving as a reference framework for subsequent interventions.



Retained room section (BB)
Gracemount Mansion wilderness resource library



I prioritised material choices with a focus on environmental sustainability and acoustic performance, both vital for a library setting. Historical integrity was also central to my approach, preserving the Georgian character of Gracemount Mansion. Colours linked to the reigns of George I, II, and III helped blend modern interventions with heritage, ensuring continuity and respectful contrast.

Marmoleum
3120 rosato

Flooring

Mogu Acoustic
RGB no : 808989





Cieling feature in G7
Retained room

Gypsum plaster
Tinted white


Mountainous wall in
Triple height void

Oak
Dark Oak


Panelling and
shelving




George I and II colours




Clove




Lute




Inferior Grey



Wash Stop




Tinted White




Paris Grey


George III colours




Sky Blue




Vert de Mer




Celadon



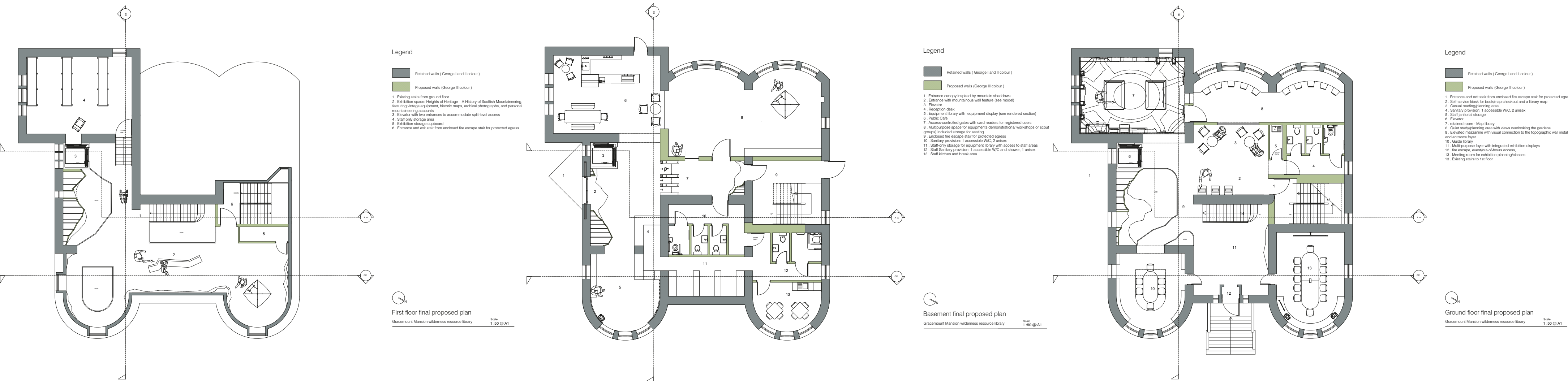
Pomona



Laylock



Jonquil



SECTION BB MODEL

EXHIBITION SPACE

GUIDE LIBRARY

EQUIPMENT LIBRARY

TRIPLE HEIGHT VOID WITH MOUNTAINOUS WALL. REPRESENTATION OF GLASS BALUSTRADE

STORAGE

RETAINED ROOM - MAP LIBRARY

CAFE

ENTRANCE AND LIFT AREA



Render 2 view : Mezzanine Render



RENDERS



RETAINED ROOM



TRIPLE HEIGHT VOID

ADAPTIVE REUSE STATEMENT

Through adaptive reuse, this project transforms Gracemount Mansion from a derelict Georgian structure into a Wilderness Resource Library a vibrant, sustainable hub that reconnects people with nature and community. By integrating an outdoor gear lending library, the design promotes circular use and environmental accessibility, while a historically inspired map room honours the building's past as a place of knowledge and exploration. This project celebrates the mansion's architectural legacy while rooting it firmly in the future.