

KOILIA: Community beyond gluten

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease that affects 1 in 100 people in the UK. It causes the immune system to mistakenly attack the bodies healthy tissues whenever gluten is ingested, resulting in a depletion in the bodies nutrient intake. When untreated the condition has severe consequences from nutrient deficiency, extreme fatigue, infertility and in extreme cases cancer. There is no cure for the condition as of yet, however adhering to a strict gluten free diet is effective in controlling symptoms and long term complications.

The condition is a very internalized one, and people with the disease report feeling a massive burden of illness which results in a decline in mental health. The amount of misinformation on the topic of coeliac disease only causes further physical and psychological harm to those diagnosed with the disease.

Through thorough research it was found that there is significant need for more sufficient psychosocial support for patients with coeliac disease. This is further supported by the significant gap found in current guidelines providing actual psychosocial support, apart from generalised recommendations.

My major project aims to provide psychosocial support to those with coeliac disease by providing support, education and building community. To achieve this my project aims to expand knowledge on the disease through an interactive exhibition. Within the exhibition you'll find the experience library; a living, interactive archive of peoples' personal experiences with coeliac disease. A gluten free restaurant provides a safe space to eat out as well as cooking classes for individuals and local businesses in the food and hospitality industry. A food hall gives these local businesses an opportunity to showcase their gluten free options after completing training in the restaurant.

Educating and spreading awareness of coeliac disease increases safe spaces for coeliacs to eat out by providing courses for local businesses in the food and hospitality industry. This will in turn benefit local businesses by expanding their customer base, resulting in severely decreasing the harm caused to those living with coeliac disease.



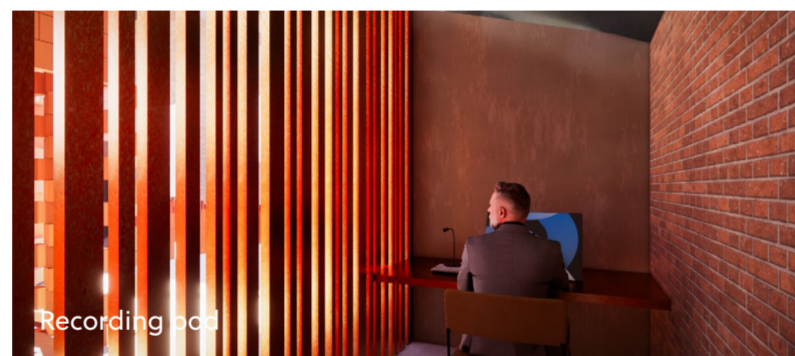
Sectional model of the restaurant and experience library scale 1:50



Model at scale 1:100



Sectional working model of speaker



Recording pod



Experience library archive



Model - exhibition view into kitchen

Speaker detail

The speakers became an integral part of the project as they are the main form of storing and showcasing the experiences within the experience library, while also representing a core part of the of the concept. The design of the speakers are inspired by the sound waves they produce and the intestinal villi.

The model was mainly constructed from MDF which was laser cut and painted to demonstrate materiality. It was fitted with a speaker, and an acrylic button. Visitors accessed the stories by pressing the button which were played in order of upload.

Listen to stories from real people here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13deL-Zsneqk_X0GWvreUXRtp2rG5li2B



Exhibition entry

The journey

It has been found that learning from other people's experiences with coeliac disease can be extremely beneficial in feeling less alone and burdensome. To help with this the experience library became an important part of the design.

The experience library is an exhibition and living archive of people's experiences with coeliac disease. Visitors are invited to record their own journeys which are then added to the library for others to learn from. The library is also used in conjunction with the wellness centre, which offers psychosocial support and consultation sessions, and is used as a tool for self-exploration and coming to terms with the diagnosis.

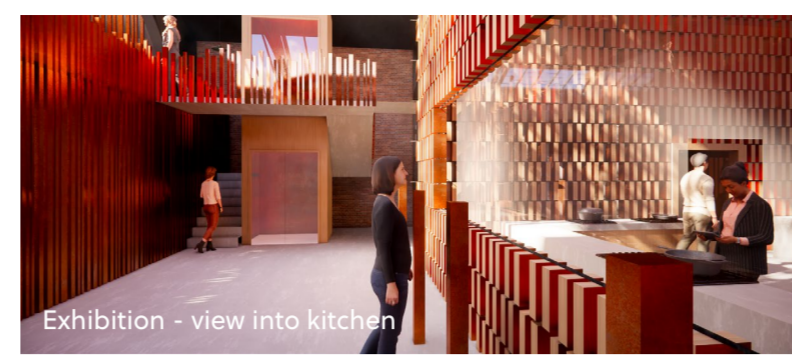
The ground floor is designed to be more confusing, leading visitors on a journey of exploration on the topic. Once they reach the first floor the chaos of the ground floor becomes clearer as they rise above and gain a new perspective, and are able to navigate their surroundings better and find community and clear communication. This journey is meant to simulate the process of navigating a life altering diagnosis.

The restaurant is an open concept kitchen & dining experience where the kitchen is in the open, at the heart of the restaurant and serves as a way for people to learn through seeing, as well as highlighting the importance of trust and transparency by being open about food preparation and cooking methods. In the restaurant there are also available cooking classes, open to individuals and families as well as local businesses in the food and hospitality industry.

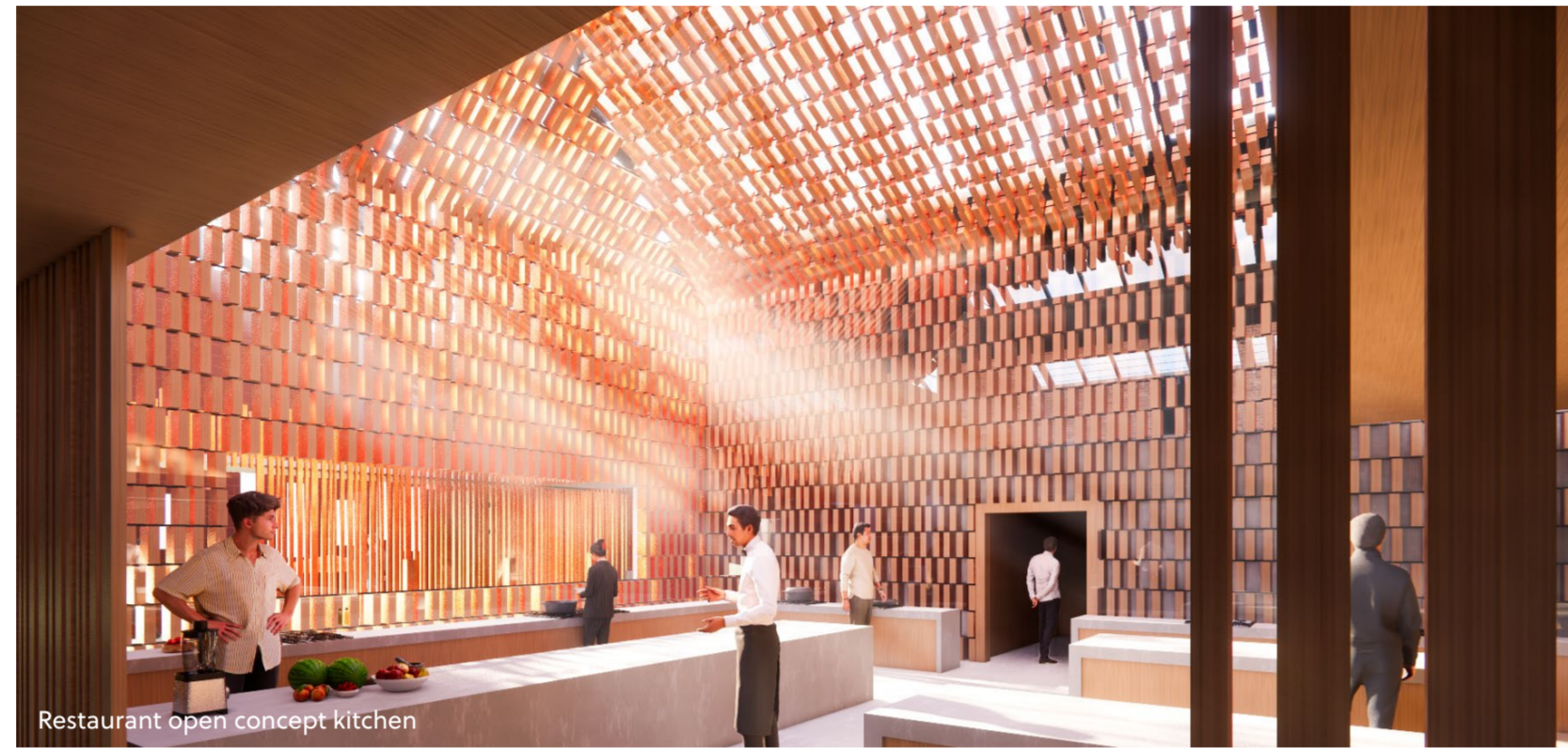
The food hall is a completely gluten free space where local businesses can promote their gluten free options, after undertaking training in the restaurant, expanding both the Businesses' customer base as well as the number of places that can accommodate people with coeliac disease.



Exhibition - immersive video

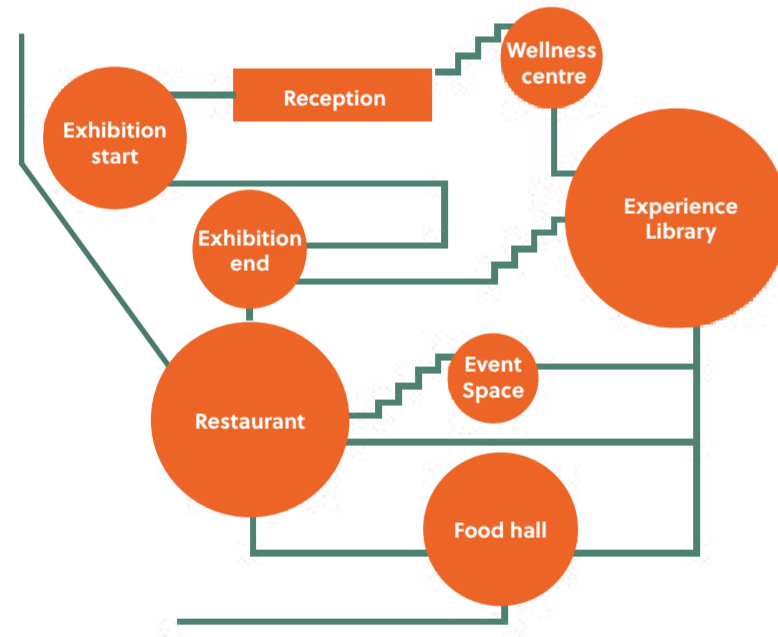


Exhibition - view into kitchen



Restaurant open concept kitchen

Visitor journey



Food hall in the evening



Long section - not to scale

Concept development

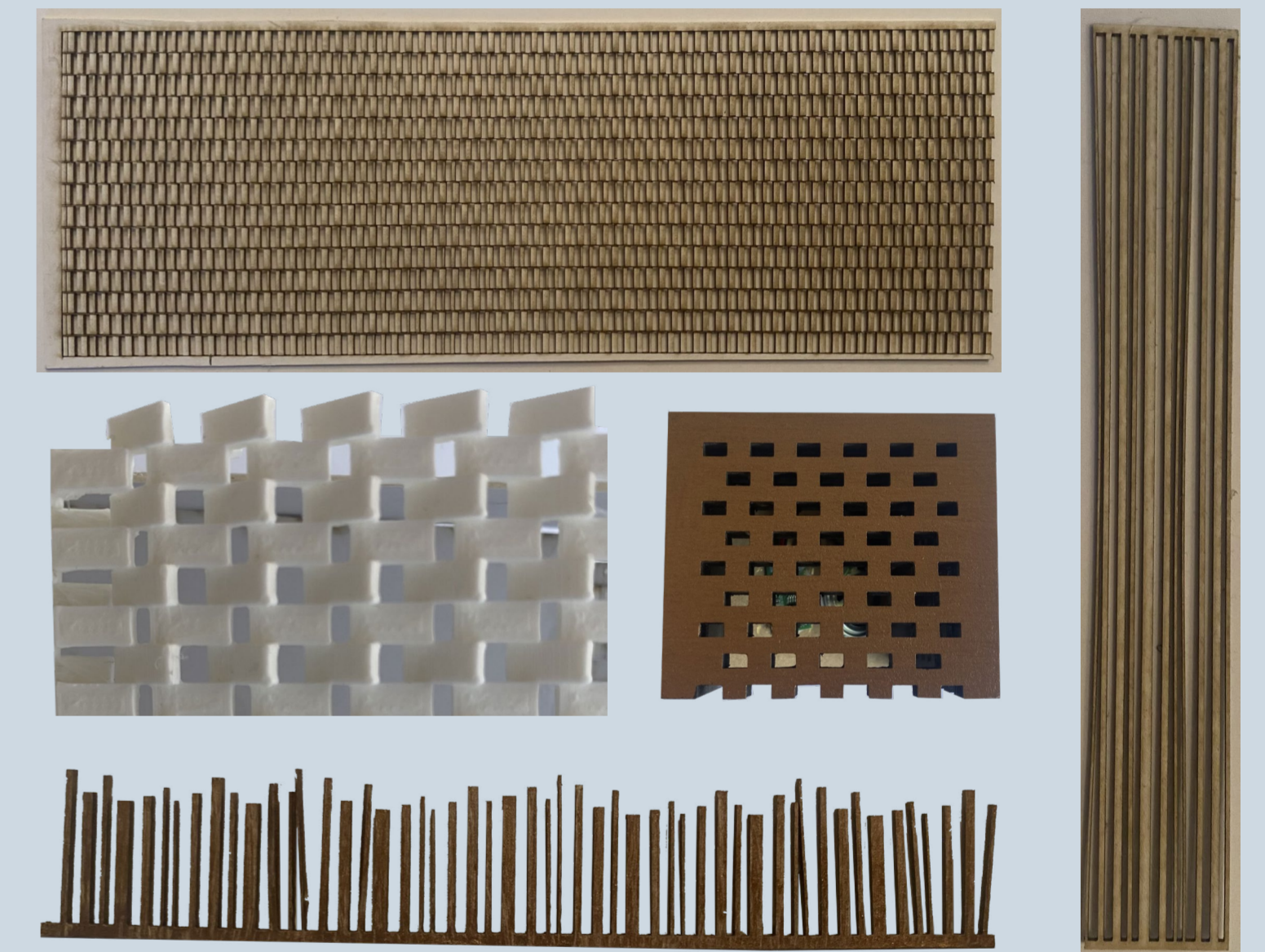
Creating inclusivity through the built environment

As host building is an old military drill hall, the building has a strict rhythm to it. When designing my project, I wanted to be strategic in adhering to that rhythm while also choosing key places to strategically break with said rhythm. This reflects the chaos and order that is involved in the journey after diagnosis.

Another key part of my concept development came from transparency. Transparency became an important architectural principle that plays an important role in many aspects of my design. Openness and clear communication are important when tackling a topic that has so much misinformation and relies so heavily on trust. I explored this idea through openings, cut outs and transparent materials.

Combining these two key conceptual principles I developed a series of patterns which all related to each other. These patterns created openness and transparency in the materiality of the design and acted as a way to express individuality while creating revelations which guides visitors through the space on a journey of self-discovery. The patterns created unity between each zone while also giving each area its own visual identity, creating a unique language throughout the building.

PATTERN DEVELOPMENT



Materiality and model making

As a designer my heritage and upbringing has played a significant role in my development. Growing up in Norway has meant that Scandinavian design principles have massively influenced my design approach, and the visual language of my design showcases that influence through the use of natural materials and clear forms and concepts.

The materiality exploration of my project stemmed from the existing materials within the building, primarily brick, which I aimed to incorporate in my own way while also complementing the existing materiality.

Model making became a key way for me to understand and engage with my project as the tactile nature of modelmaking added to the craftful approach to my design.

