

PLACE OF ATTACHMENT

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“Place of Attachment” is a long-term social housing alternative inspired by the psychological theory of place attachment, situated in the historic listed building of Blackness Primary School, Dundee. Place Attachment is described as the relationship between people and places and how their emotions react to these factors. Within a social housing setting, positive place attachment can often be lost due to lack of stability or design. “Place of Attachment” aims to tackle these feelings of attachment towards place and create an environment where positive place attachments can be formed, and community can be reinstated. Through the use of spatial, social and temporal elements such as adaptable spaces, designated personal space and a diverse interior, the design provides a stable and nurturing, long-term home for people within social housing criteria, while taking the existing geometry and spatial elements of the historic Blackness Primary School.



SITE VISIT

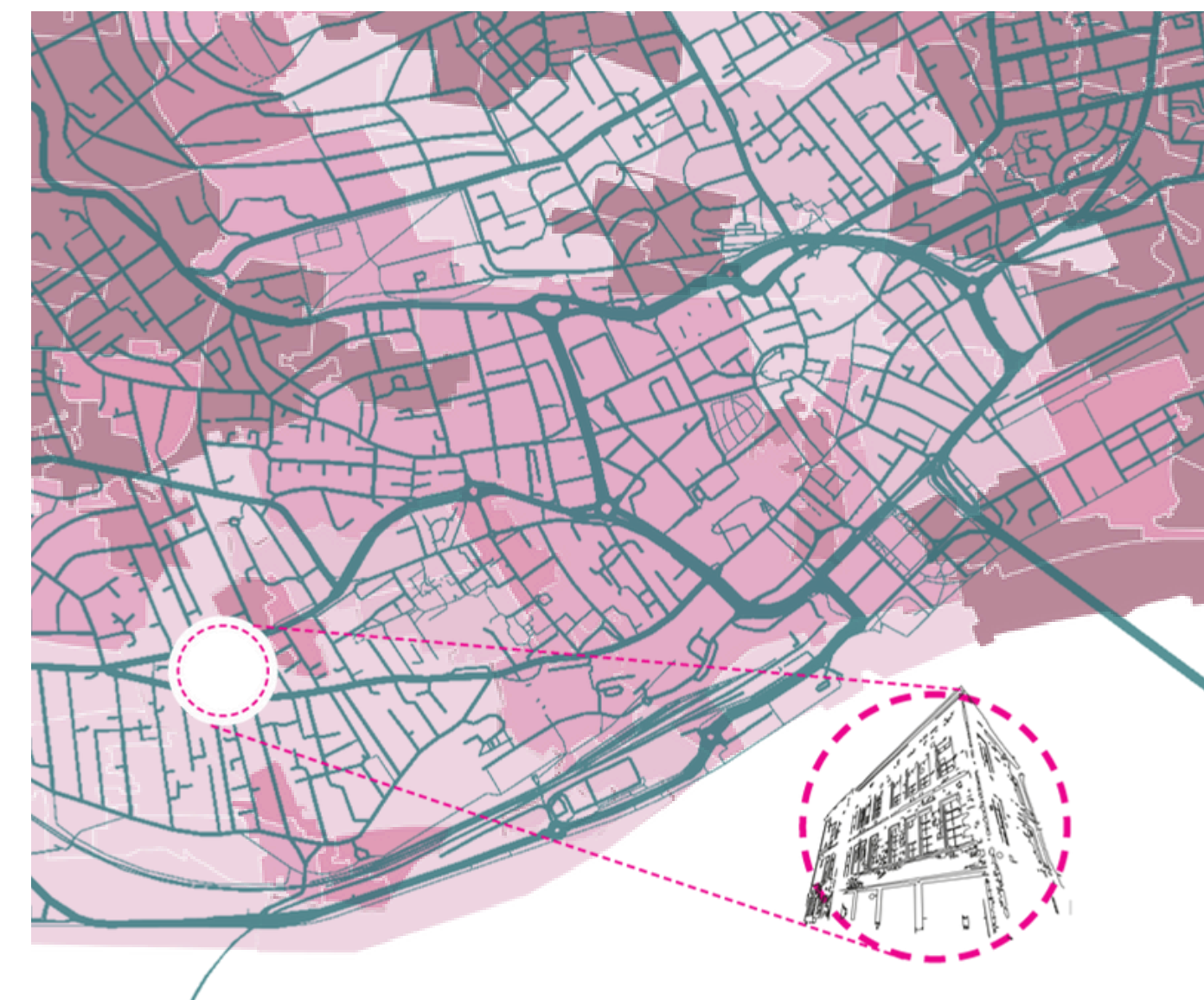
During a site visit to Blackness Primary School, it became apparent through talking to one of the school’s activities coordinators that although the school seems to be functioning on the outside, there are various problems within. For example, the number of pupils within the school is growing at a vast rate which the building is struggling to accommodate, with the school’s canteen located on the current ground floor having to serve pupils in rotation due to not being able to house everyone at once. The activities coordinator also spoke about how parts of the building cannot currently be accessed by the school, such as the basement floor which parts of serve as storage for the school, despite there being a vast underneath to the school which goes unused. These issues make this building ideal for an adaptive reuse project to be turned into social housing to be able to use this historic building to its upmost potential.

The atrium on the attic floor allows those on the mezzanine to look down onto the gymnasium within the school, allowing for an open learning environment which could translate into a community driven zone in a social housing environment.

SITE ANALYSIS

Blackness Primary School is situated on Pennycook Lane, Dundee, in the centre of the busy and popular Perth Road. Dundee can be categorised into different social neighbourhoods such as Cosmopolitan, Urbanities and Hard Pressed Living. Blackness Primary School is in a Cosmopolitan area, hence why it is ideal for social housing as most social housing in Dundee is situated in Hard Pressed Living social neighbourhoods.

This would give an opportunity for individuals who may often be categorised as “Hard Pressed Living”, defined as people who may often not have as many resources as others, to live in an area considered “Cosmopolitan” which can be defined as having wide international sophistication and a greater cultural diversity, an area these individuals may not be able to get the chance to live in without social housing.



SOCIAL CONTEXT

60%

rated social aspects highly

53%

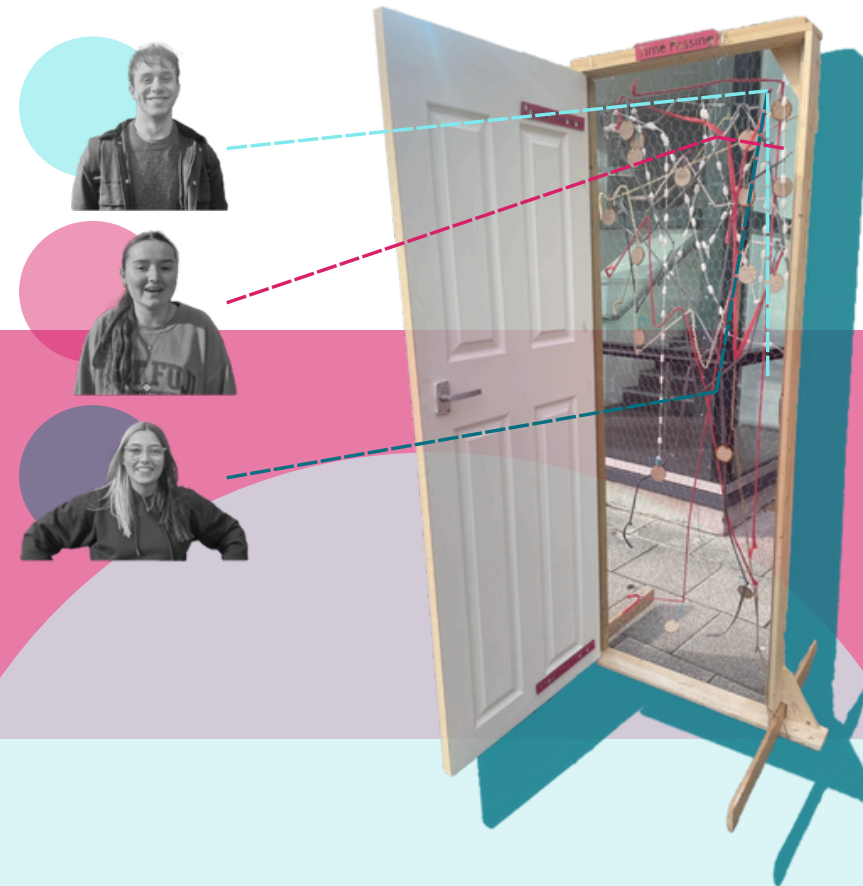
rated temporal aspects highly

47%

rated spatial aspects highly

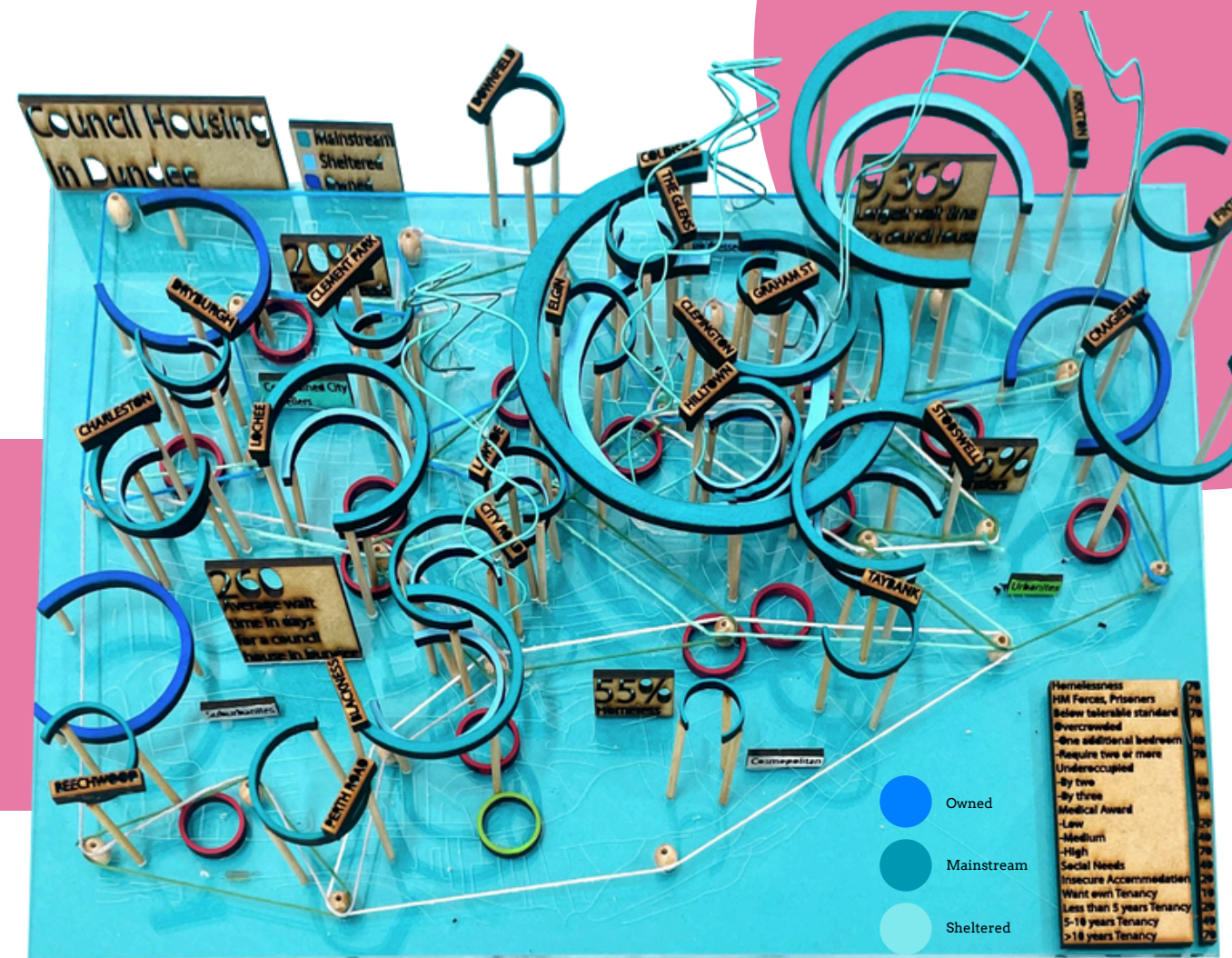
As part of my user engagement, I created a version of a line graph using a door prop to gain insight from the public about places they're attached to and why. I created this task using wire mesh to frame around the door for people to place coloured string into in the shape of a line, stretching from the left side to the right side to represent the passing of time when related to their place of attachment, and up and down when relating to emotion, with up being positive and down being negative.

I used the door prop as the placeholder for the information gained as a playful nod to the view that a lot of council housing have white front doors, helping to categorise them but also stigmatise in a way.



Through analysing the responses of my user engagement task, I found that each person's response could be categorised into the three elements of the place attachment model, social, spatial and temporal.

I categorised the responses based on if the person's experience based on how highly it rated within these three elements and visualised this in the form of a sketch model using acrylic, wooden dowels and thread to gain forms and insight into the importance of each element of the place attachment model to take forward into the design.



260 days

average wait time for council housing in Dundee

When researching the current state of council housing in Dundee, I found that there is often a long wait time council housing to be awarded to those in need, with 260 days (around 8 and a half months) being the average wait time in Dundee and 9,369 days (around 25 and a half years) being the longest wait time.

Council housing in Scotland follows a points system (as shown on the right-hand side of the pictured model), with homelessness, HM forces and prisoners and housing being below the tolerable standard being what gains the most points within the system.

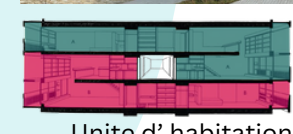
Although overcrowding does gain up to 40 points in some cases, its often not enough to gain the interest of the council, with 70 points awarded for the three reasons mentioned above being enough to gain access to temporary housing, but individuals need more than one reason to move into council housing to be able to get to the 70 point mark if they don't meet these top three criteria.

The wait for council housing can be tedious and unhappy for many people who need it, hence why this design aims to combat this with being an alternative to the points system within council housing, allowing anyone in need of social housing to be eligible, regardless of points priority.

"Home within House" by AtArchitecture is an affordable housing unit for low-income workers and their families. The project makes optimum use of every square inch of the available area, with most of the spaces being shared either functionally or visually, making the project space efficient. For instance, the corridor leading to the apartments is also shared as a veranda overlooking the open-to-sky courtyards, and similarly, on the other side, the boxing for recessed windows is shared as a storage cabinet.



Bevan Road

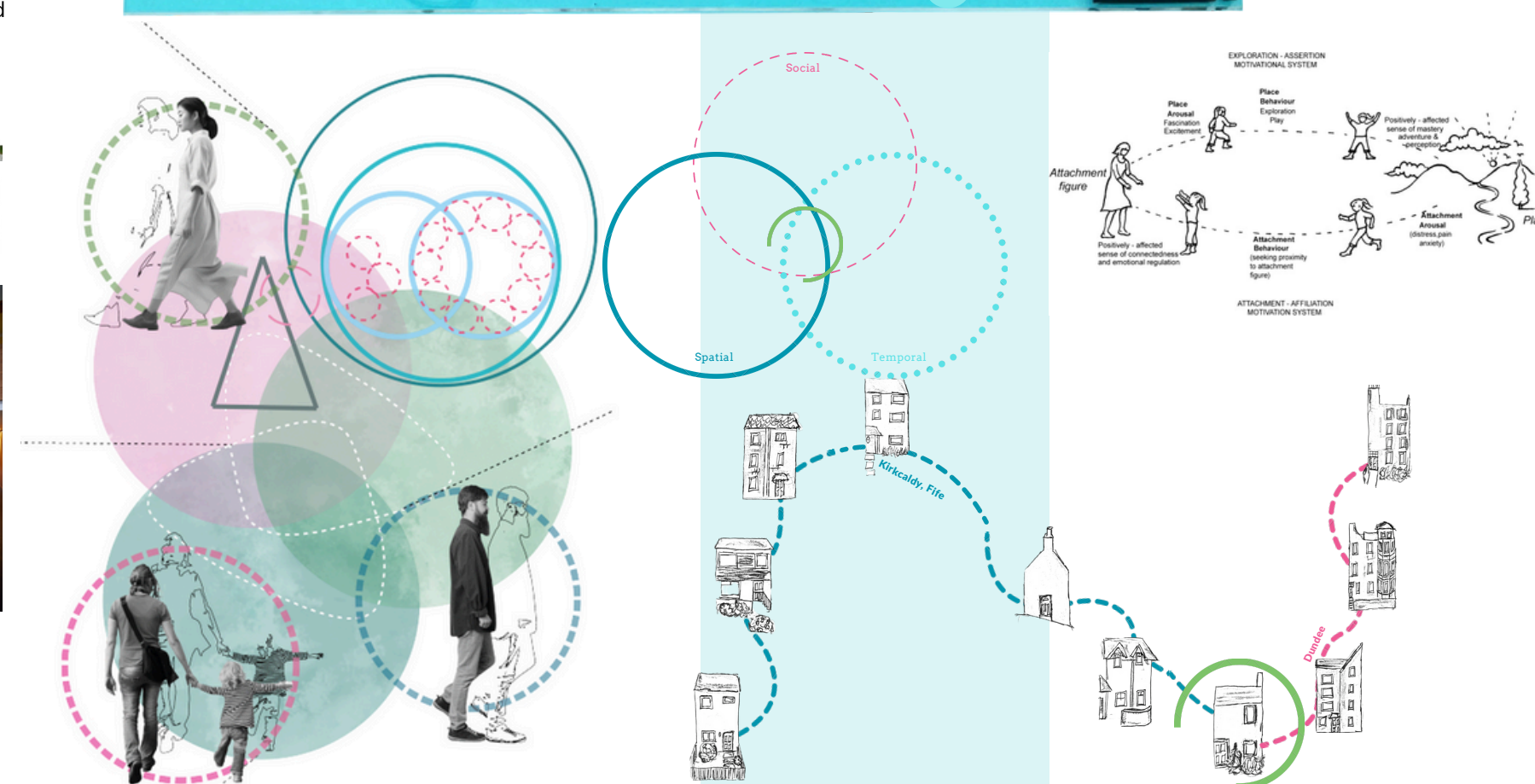


Unite d' habitation



"Bevan Road" by Peter Barber Architects is a social housing complex that provides eleven new homes and a community space on a steeply sloping sliver of land between flats and neighboring gardens. The new building stretches up to the site and along with the existing flats, frames and characterfully planted new footpath that gives access to each new homes' front door. It helps to inspire community and safety throughout the tactical design.

"Unite d' habitation" by Le Corbusier was a trailblazer in social housing design with nearly 1,600 residents divided among eighteen floors, the design requires an innovative approach toward spatial organization to accommodate the living spaces, as well as the public, communal spaces. Interestingly, most of the communal aspects do not occur within the building; rather, they are placed on the roof. This gives the design an edge which sets it apart from other social housing design.



Place attachment can be defined "an integrated concept that encompasses the interaction between affection and emotion, knowledge and trust, behavior and actions related to the place" by Purwanto and Rochma Harani in their 2020 research paper. Place attachment can be made up of three attributes: social, spatial and temporal, with place attachment being the part in the middle where all three meet.

People often attach specific thoughts or feelings to a place, which sometimes correlates with a certain situation that has happened in that place. Emotional bonds with place can be related to various situations, for example, associating the place a person grew up, whether it be their home environment or where they are from, with a personal life event such as a significant birthday is a fair conclusion to make when attempting to associate a place with a sentiment.

Many people relate their home environment to feelings of safety, warmth and happiness, feelings that they may not associate with other places in their lives such as their place of work, with Anton and Lawrence stating that "The longer a person stays in a place the greater the likelihood of the place being incorporated into the identity structure, especially if that place also provides the individual with feelings of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy" in their 2014 research paper

53%

of children enjoy school

68%

of children enjoy learning at school

Taking place attachment into account would be ideal when designing a social housing environment due to the stigma of social housing being insecure and not fit for purpose, but by creating an environment which inspires a positive place attachment within people, this could be combatted.

DEVELOPMENT

These are various sketches showing the process of thought through planning the model of council housing in Dundee, the engagement task and how it would work and initial planning of the types of spaces to be included in the design, taking the existing building and forms into account as well as drawing inspiration from the engagement task.

SKETCHES



Sandstone can be used for interior walls due to its durable nature and link to Dundee's history of using the material, while also being a common material to be used in Victorian times, when the site was established. Leather can be used for seating and soft furnishings in communal areas to be easy to clean and durable. Existing features of the building such as railings and windows can be kept and adaptively reused to help keep and establish the connections to the existing history of the site. A colour scheme made of calming tones of blue and green help the brain to produce alpha waves which induce relaxation, aiding with positive place attachment.

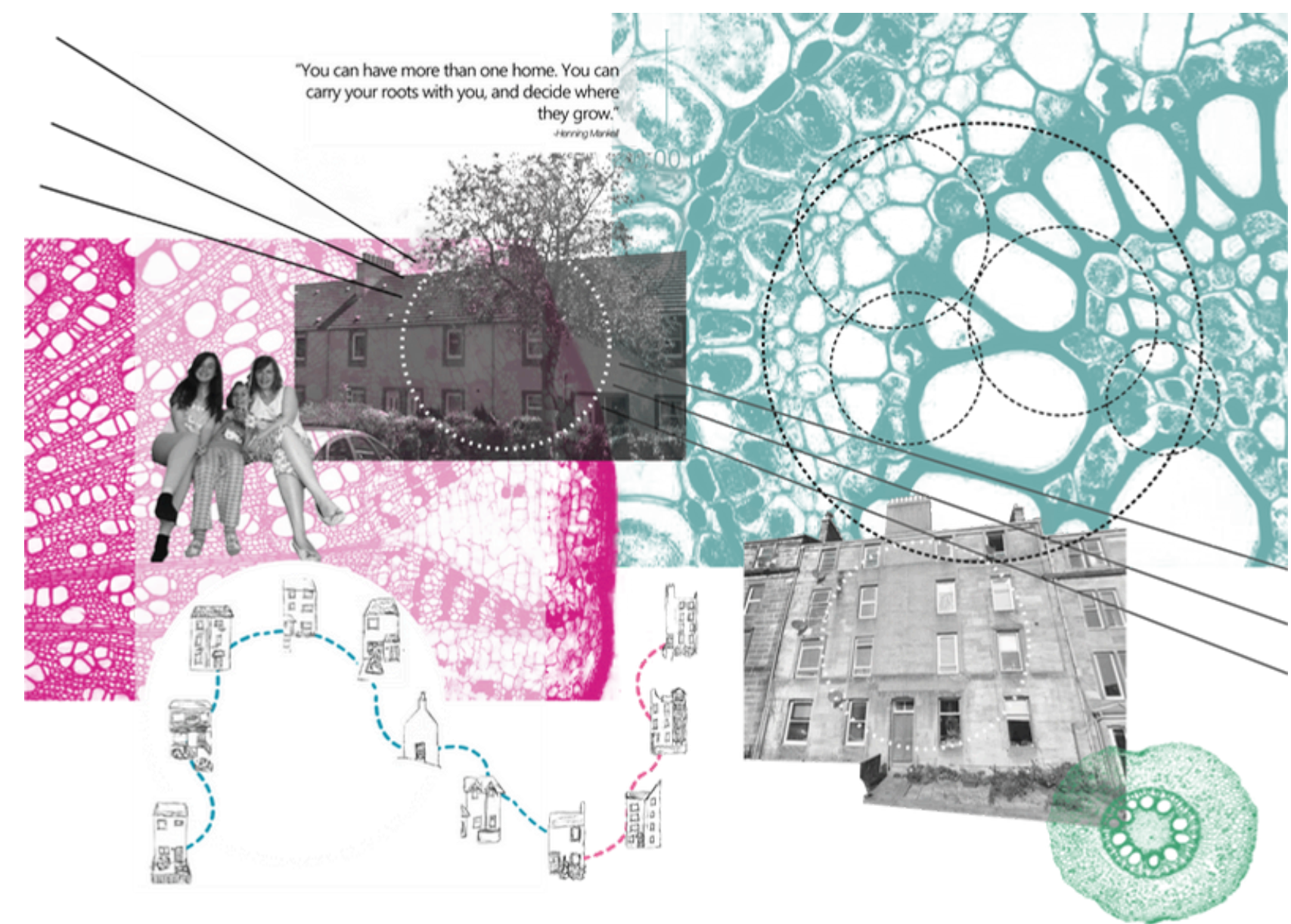
MATERIALITY

With place attachment and brain waves in mind, I turned to nature to gain more inspiration for the design. People are often described as laying down their "home roots" when talking about moving house to their "forever" home.

Taking the idea of these roots and relating them to the cross-section view of plant roots helped to inspire forms and shapes to take forward into the final design, with the curved and circular forms in the plant root cross section being reminiscent of the curved interior geometry of the site of Blackness Primary School.

I chose to explore these forms through sketching using pen and watercolour and sketch models using laser cut MDF shapes and various colours of string to explore patterns within the patterns.

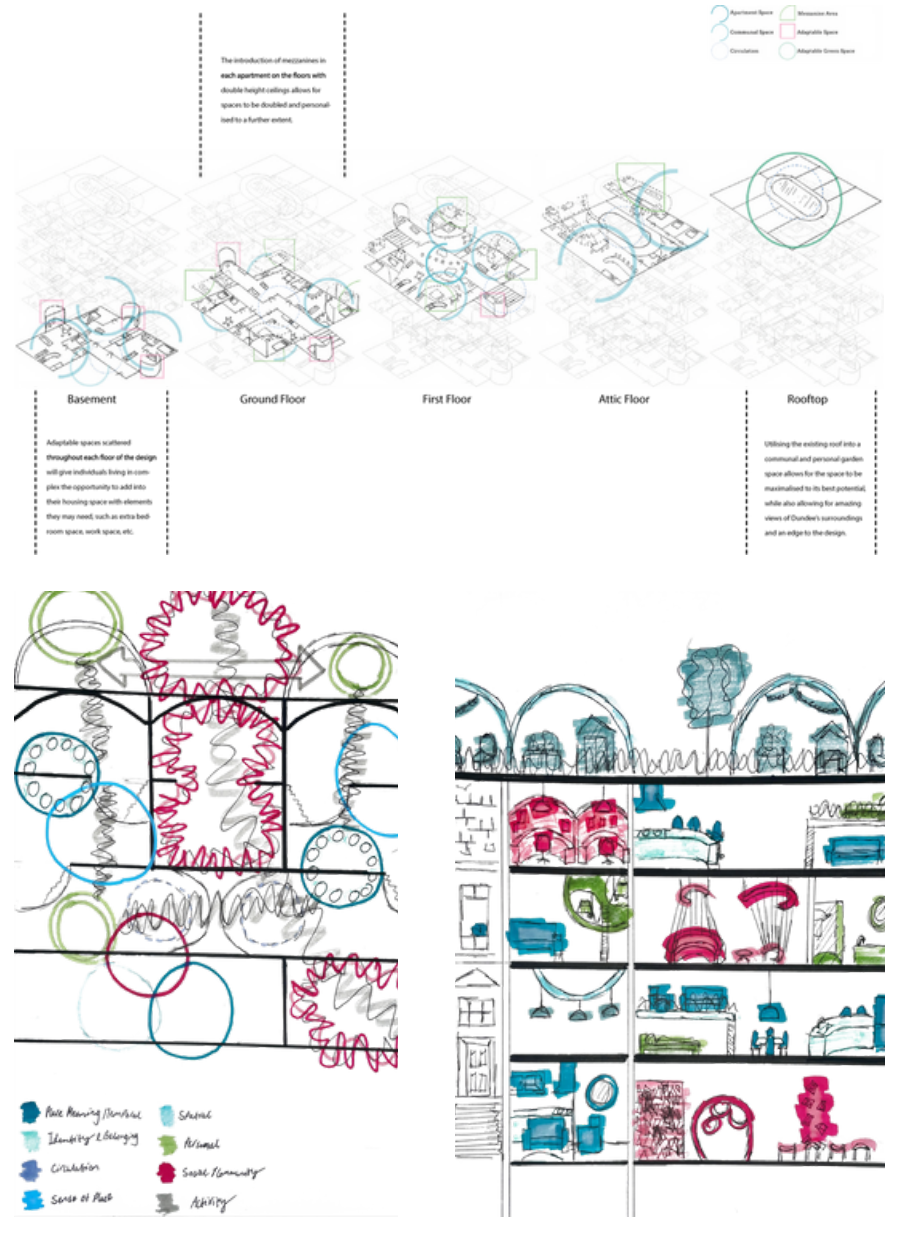
INSPIRATION



MODEL MAKING



ZONING

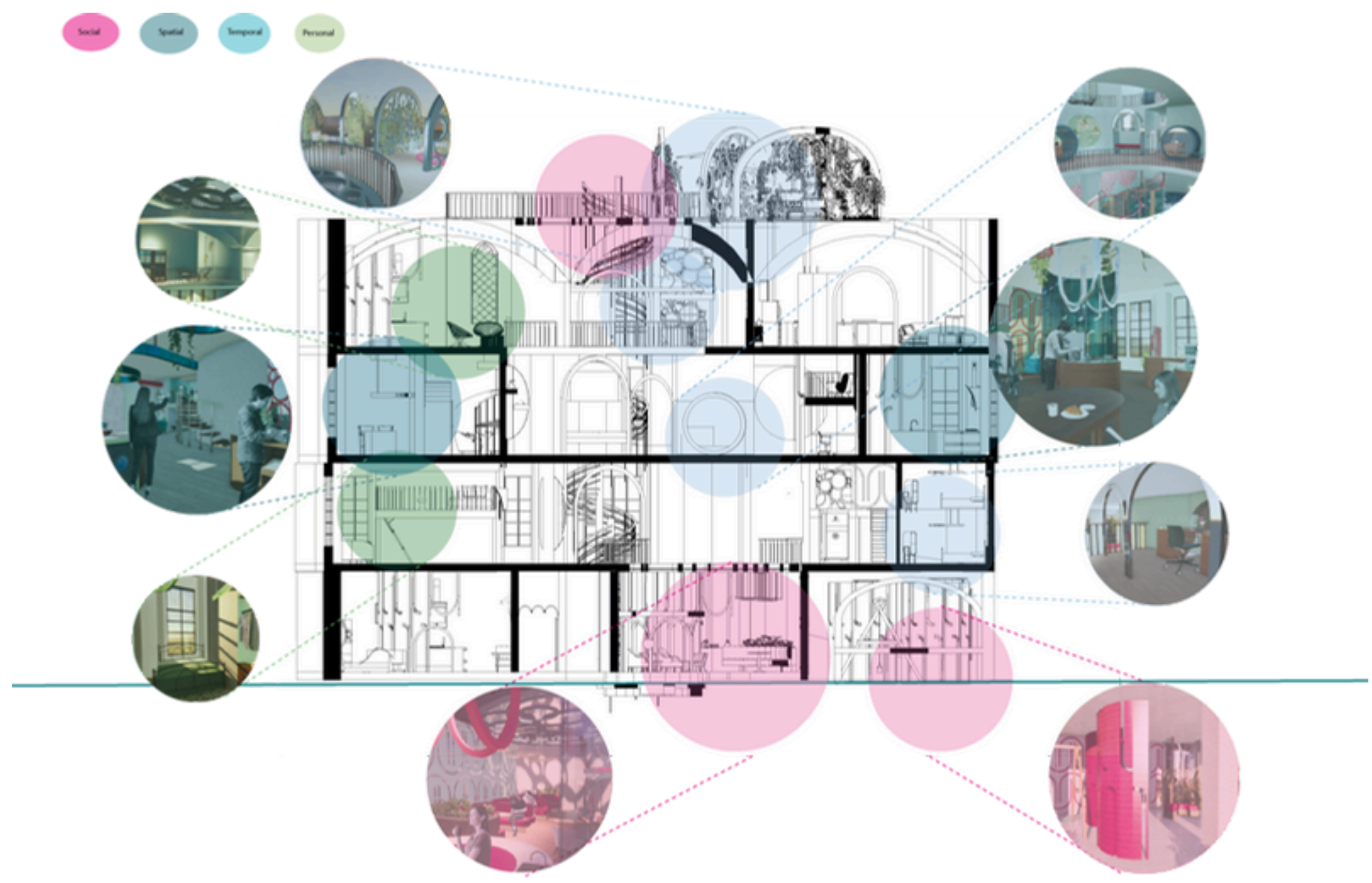
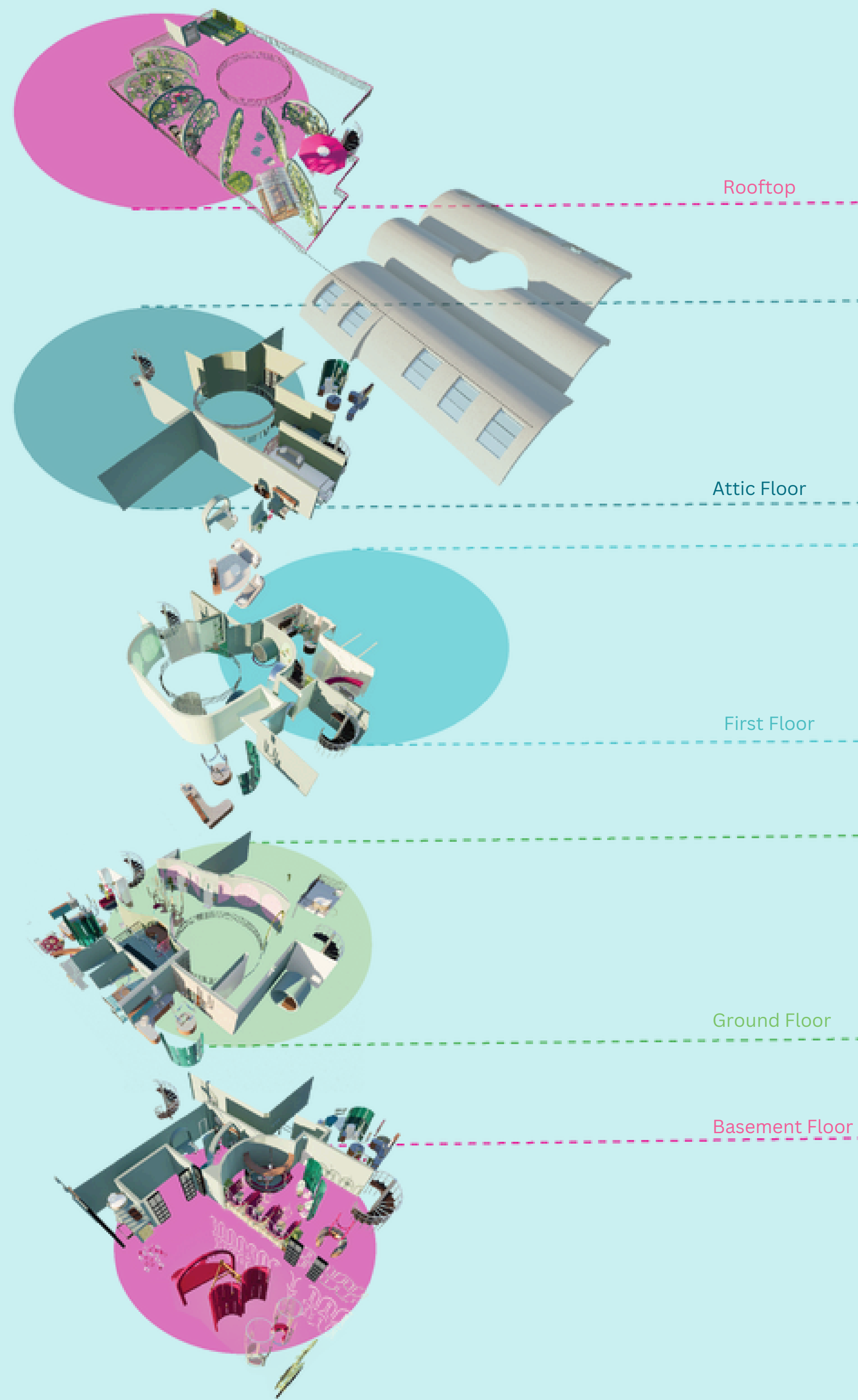
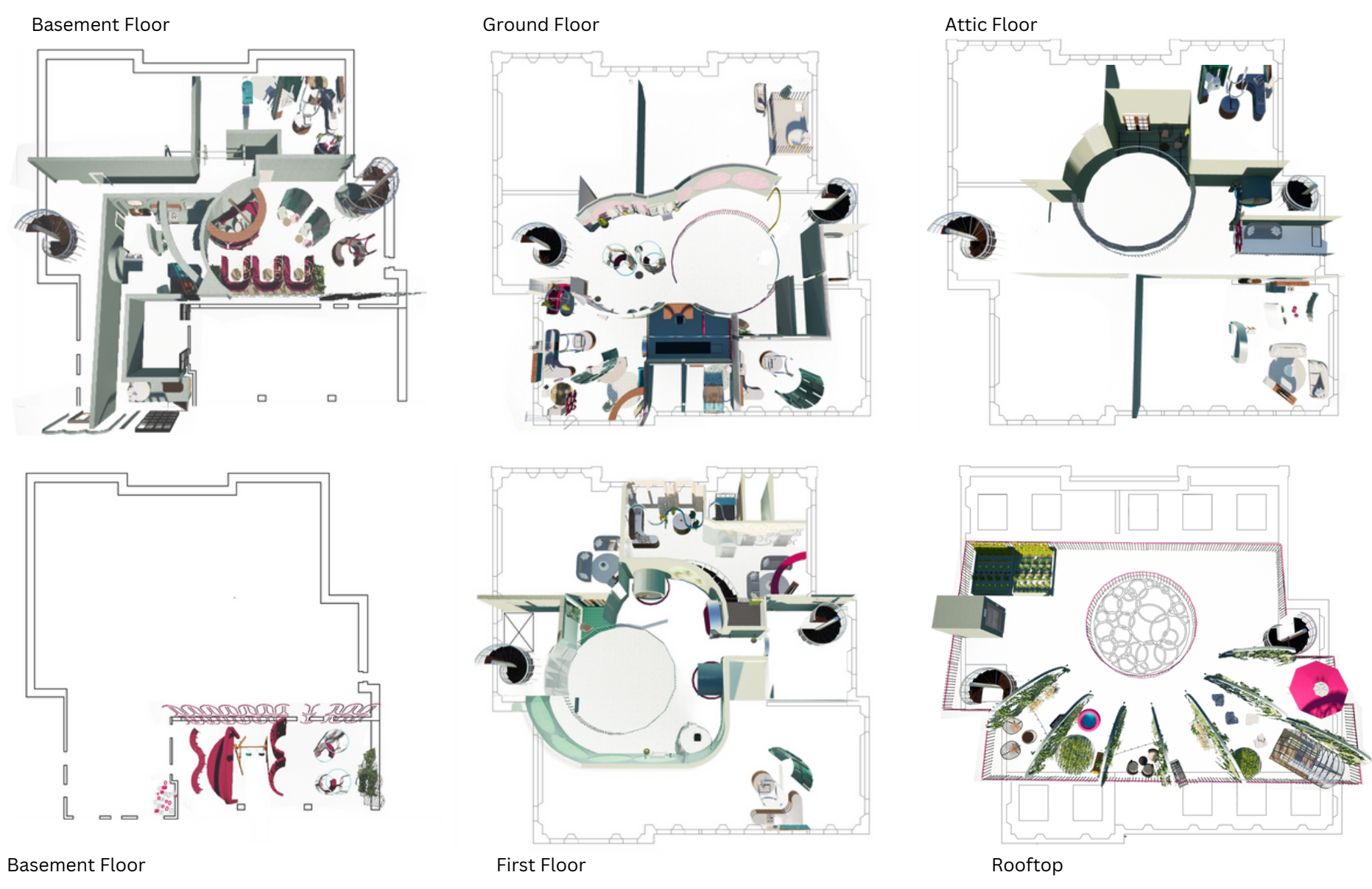


OUTCOME

Adaptable spaces scattered throughout each floor of the design will give individuals living in complex the opportunity to add into their housing space with elements they may need, such as extra bedroom space, work space, etc.

The introduction of mezzanines in each apartment on the floors with double height ceilings allows for spaces to be doubled and personalised to a further extent.

Utilising the existing roof into a communal and personal garden space allows for the space to be maximalised to its best potential, while also allowing for amazing views of Dundee's surroundings and an edge to the design.



OUTCOME

This space has been designed with young people at the forefront, giving them a space to relax, unwind and hang out with their peers away from their home environment, but still in close proximity and in the city centre. Many people who fall under the "Hard pressed living" category may come from low-income families, so this space provides a budget-friendly place for young people living in the building to go to hang out with their friends. The space features a kitchenette complete with tea and coffee facilities, for people of the building to use. The transparent walls housing the armchairs can also be moved to create different variations of the space.



The design takes inspiration from the curved patterns of the place attachment model and the existing interior geometry of the site, using curves in different ways for various elements to create patterns and visual interest. The ceiling decal acts as a starting point for the atriums leading up to the rooftop floor but also as a sound barrier for the rest of the building, with the design taking on the extracted forms of plant roots.

This first floor hallway provides visual access through each floor through the circular atriums leading to each floor, reminiscent of the place attachment model when in a plan view. This helps to create a community feel all the way throughout the building, with individuals standing on each floor able to see through the building from any angle. This space also provides extra room for the circular adaptable spaces in the flats on this floor to be moved in and out freely, with circles on the floor to cover out space for this.



The first-floor hallway also provides a small communal work/leisure space on two levels, offering people in the building a space to work and relax away from their home environment.

The rooftop allows space for individuals living in the building to have their own private garden space, which can be on rotation to allow each household access to a private garden space of their own. The rooftop also has space for communal outdoor elements such as vegetable patches, plants and space for engagement with others. Another feature of the rooftop floor is the central plant root inspired decal, which has a glass insert allowing visual access to the interior of the building.

