



Communal Lounge

# ENCOMPASS

~ WE SENSE A CONNECTION ~

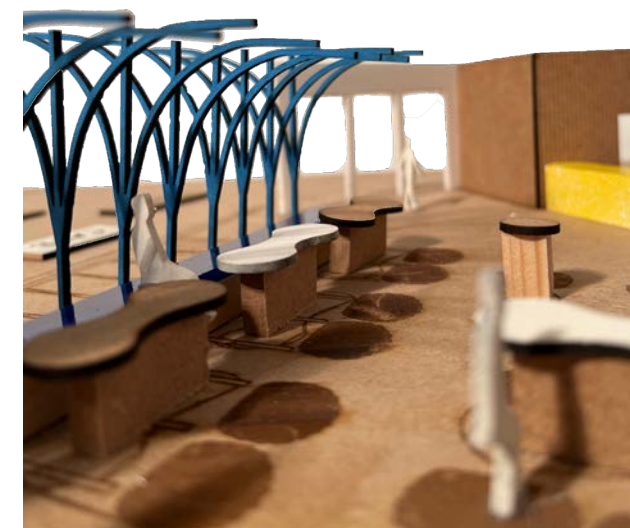
An inclusive multisensory space to connect through shared sensory experiences.

**Encompass** is a multisensory space in the former Zara building at 85 High Street, Dundee, designed to promote *social interaction, connection, and inclusivity* through shared sensory experiences. Operated by **Sight Support & Social Hub** and **North East Sensory Services**, the space is accessible to the public and to members of both organisations, which support individuals who are blind, partially sighted, and deaf. Encompass offers a calm environment where people of all ages and abilities can engage with taste, sound, smell, touch, and sight. It is specifically designed to support *independent navigation* and *communication* for those with sensory impairments, using a combination of textures, sounds, and scents.

Key features include a **public café** staffed by members of the societies with sensory impairments, a **members-only lounge** to encourage socialising and reduce loneliness, and a **music hall** showcasing performances by members. This project promotes **accessibility, empathy, and community** through inclusive, sensory-led design.

Cherie Shek

1:50 PHYSICAL MODEL



Café



Music Hall



Communal Lounge



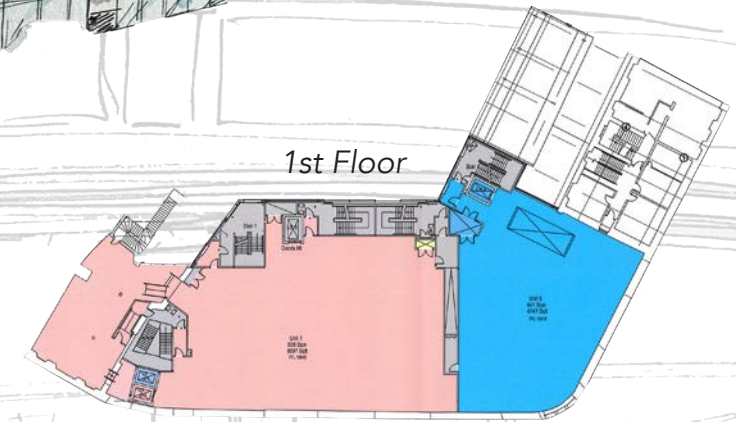
## Site Analysis

Former Zara building  
85 High Street, Dundee.

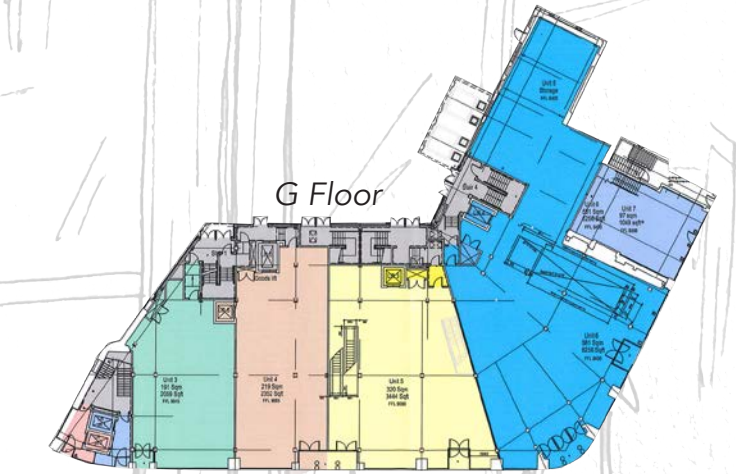


In 2022, NHS Tayside applied to Dundee City Council to convert the retail store into a vaccination centre for three years due to COVID-19.

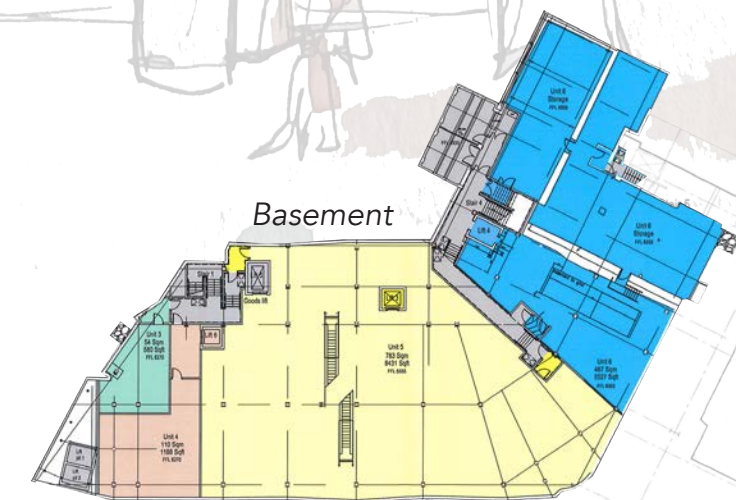
The site has **three floors**, coloured in blue in the plans shown on the right: the basement is 377.55 sqm, the ground floor is 593.17 sqm, and the first floor is 403.65 sqm.



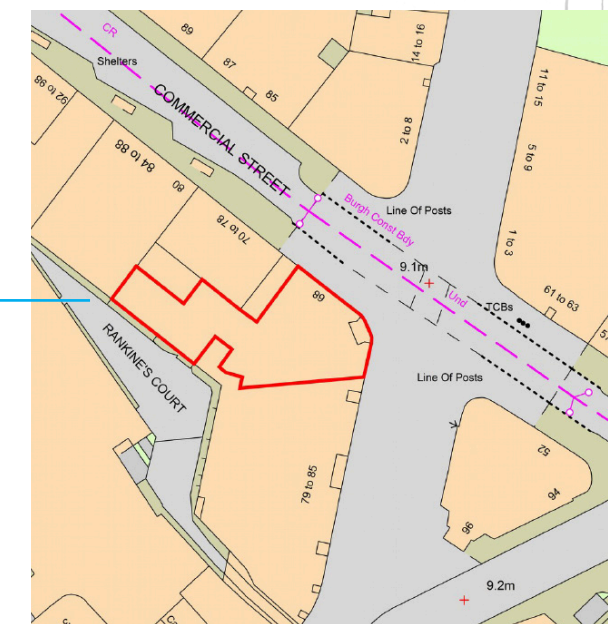
1st Floor



G Floor



Basement



Location Plan

It is in the corner of an intersection in the **City Centre**, where every direction leads to local amenities like shops, bars, etc, that enhance the *convenience* of users of the space.

OWN PHOTOS OF SITE



Tactile paving outside site



View from Entrance

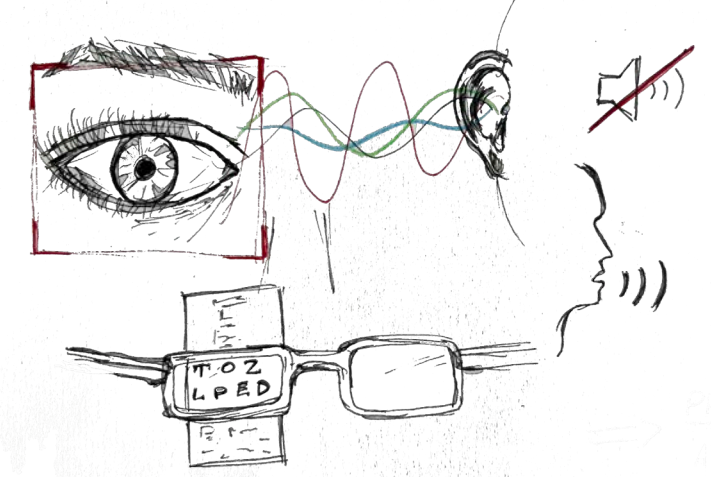
The entrance features **four textured pillars** made of wood, designed to manage the flow of crowds entering and exiting the building, and **level flooring**, making it **wheelchair-friendly** and **accessible** to everyone. Additionally, **three double doors** that open both ways facilitate easy access and **convenience**.



# Research

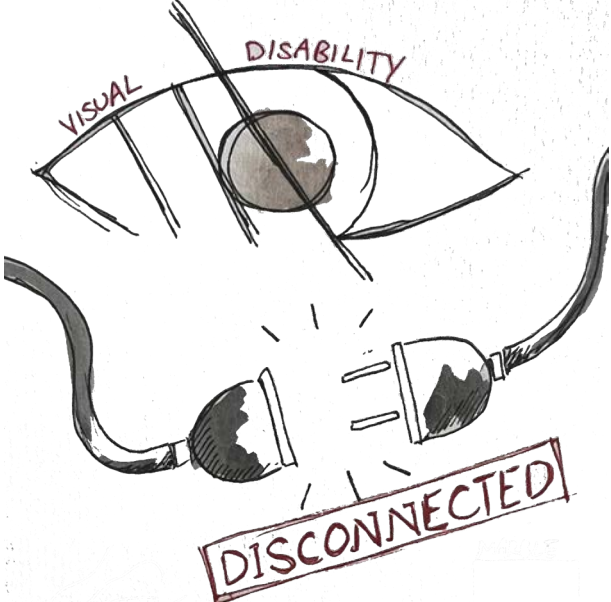
Many public spaces are **exclusive**, limiting access due to age restrictions, accessibility issues, etc. Not many places are accessible to the **visually impaired**.

**Vision loss** may lead to *reduced confidence*, *social isolation*, and *feelings of detachment* when most places or activities require vision for the full experience.



A meeting with Laura Lindsay, the service manager of **Sight Support & Social Hub**, which supports **blind and partially sighted** people, was organised to gain knowledge on designing for visually impaired users for **truly inclusive architectural accessibility**.

Applying **two-tone contrast** approaches enable users to differentiate objects.



According to RNIB, sight loss affects **more than two million people** in the UK, so more spaces are needed to cater to them.

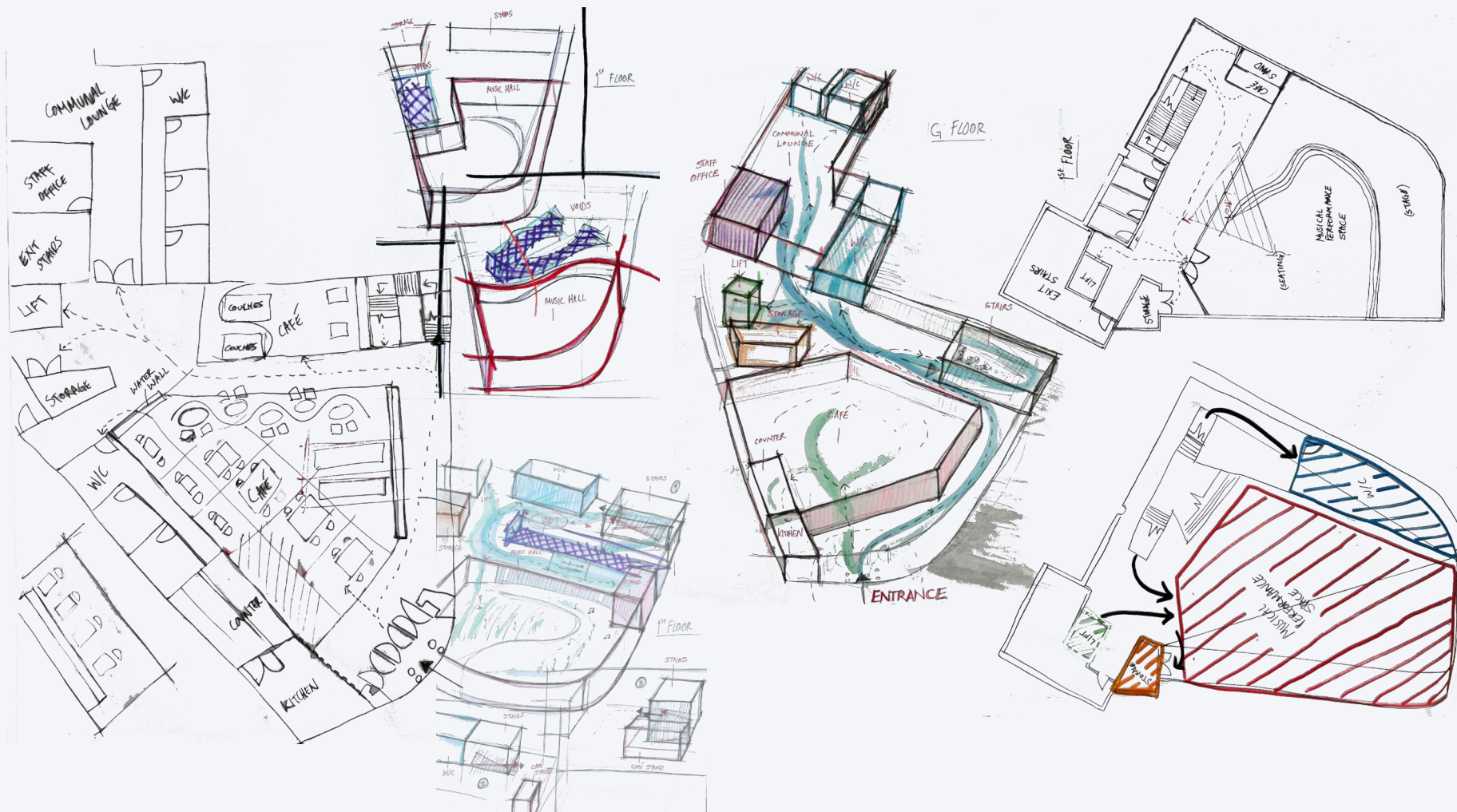
**Unemployment** due to **sight loss** creates a barrier to equality.

**'DISABILITY IS NOT THE SAME AS INABILITY.'**

~ Appeal board chair for Vision Foundation, Naqi Rizvi.

**North East Sensory Services** supports **blind and deaf individuals** of all ages by providing activities, social groups, and employment services.

# Development

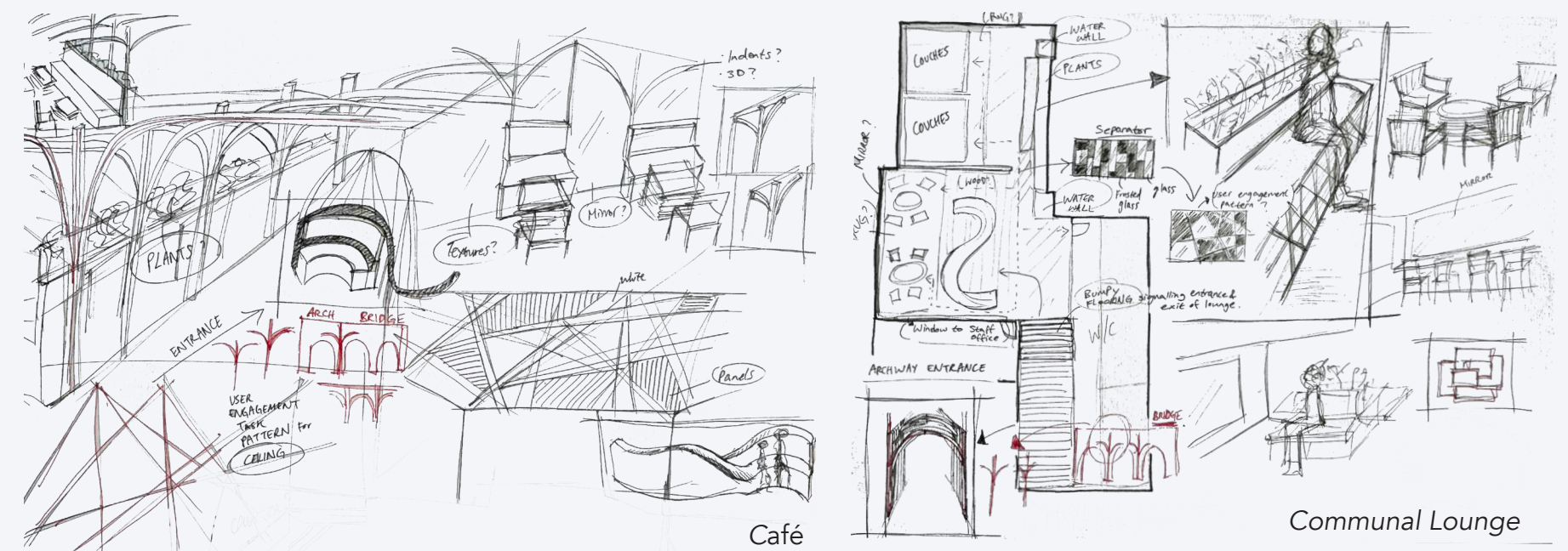


## Zoning

**Zoning sketches** and diagrams to experiment with the **layout**.

## Development Sketches

**Interior sketches** were developed to **generate ideas** for all the spaces, annotating details such as lighting positioning, etc.

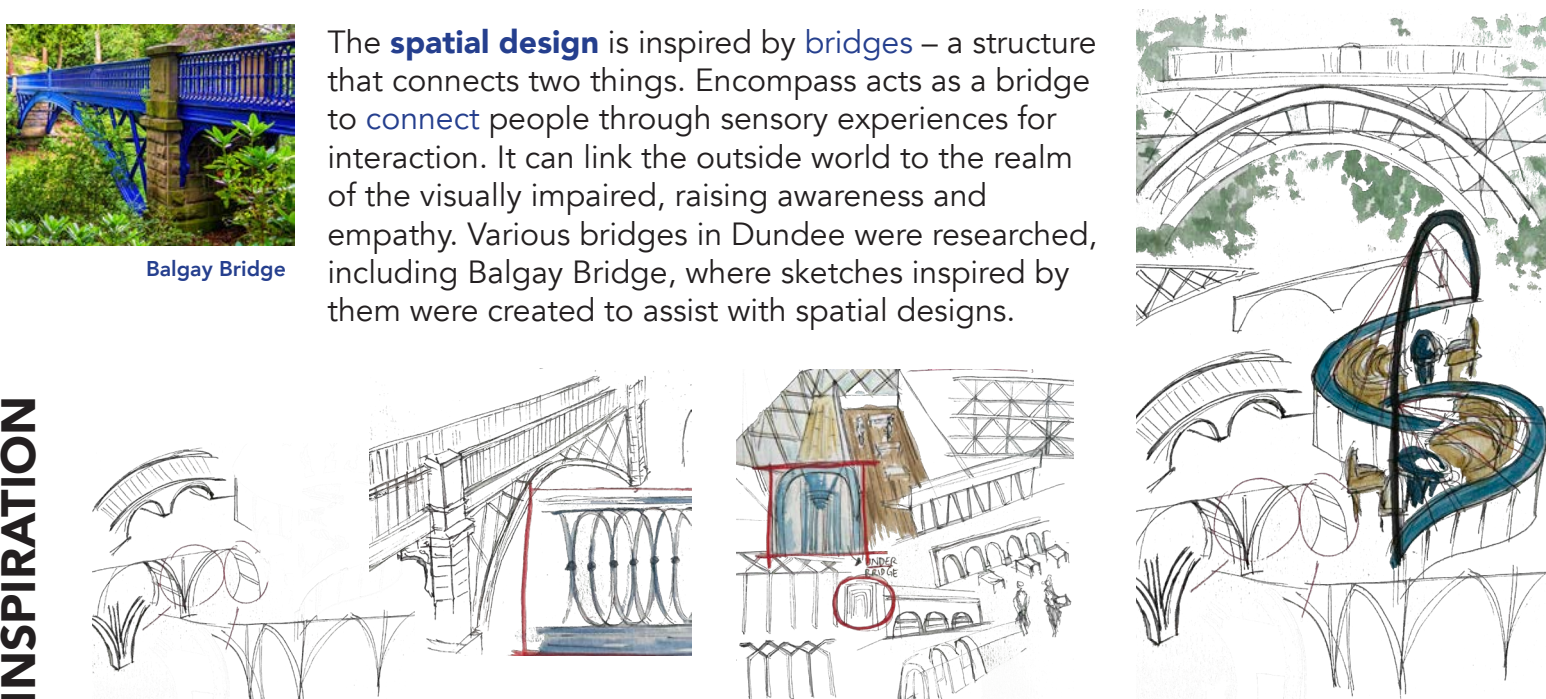


## CASE STUDIES

**White Top Centre** in Dundee includes a bumpy bridge that signals the arrival and departure of the building. It consists of sensory experiences and bright and colourful interiors.

**The Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired** in Mexico is a visually inclusive architecture. It consists of fragrant plants and a water channel to help with orientation. Various materials differing in size, light intensity, and weight help to make each space identifiable.

## INSPIRATION



## Sketch Models

Sketch models incorporating **repeated structures** and **shapes** derived from **bridges**.



## User Engagement

Potential users were asked to describe **how they connect** with others, tying strings in a frame to relate to the given options when answering, with the majority connecting through **socialising, food, and music**. People enjoy bonding over their favourite artists and watching their performances, connecting musically by listening to songs: *'music evokes an emotional connection through its melody, lyrics, or the memories attached'*. People also draw energy from socialising, connecting through stories about people's life experiences and recognising how it mirrors their own.

Therefore, I have decided to include a **café, communal lounge**, and a **music hall** in the multisensory space.

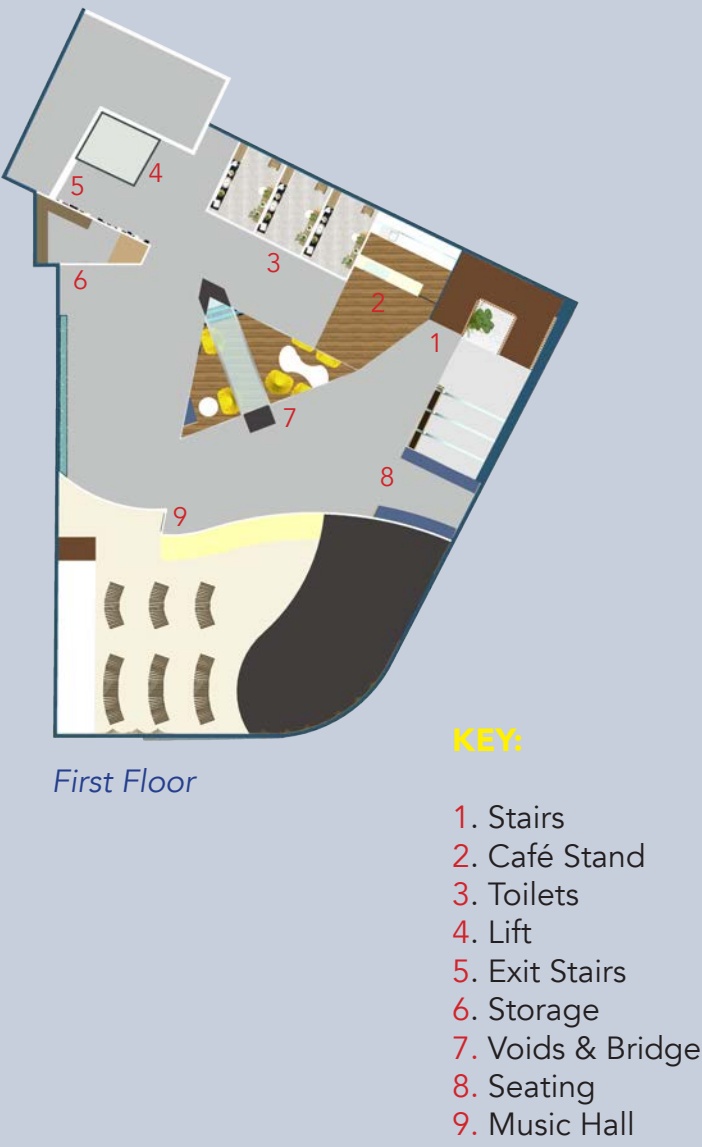
**HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH OTHERS/ WITH YOURSELF?**

**CONNECT** ..... **EXPLAIN**



# Final Design

## Plans



## Exploded Axonometric

Ceiling Design

Music Hall



Seating

Waterwall

Storage

Lift

Toilets

Café Stand

Toilets

Storage

Staff Office

Communal Lounge

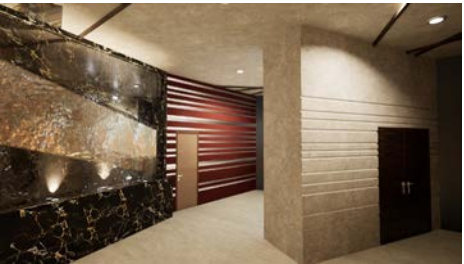


Kitchen

Café



Stairs



Textured Toilet & Storage Walls

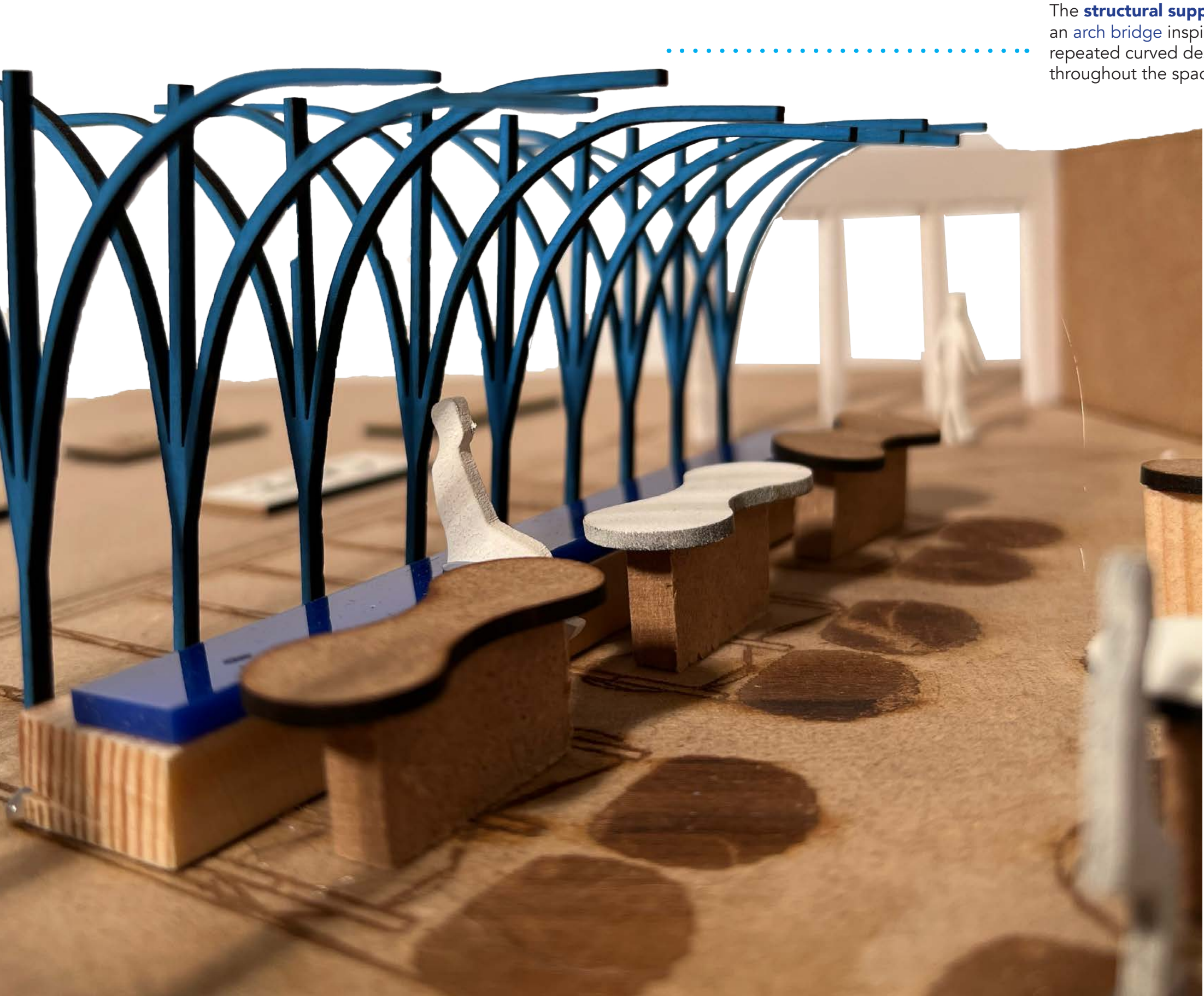


- An **adaptive reuse strategy**
- A multisensory space allowing the audience to escape and de-stress.
- Offers the **visually impaired** a sense of direction and access to information
- Promotes self-confidence and independence.

## A VISITOR EXPERIENCE CONCEPT



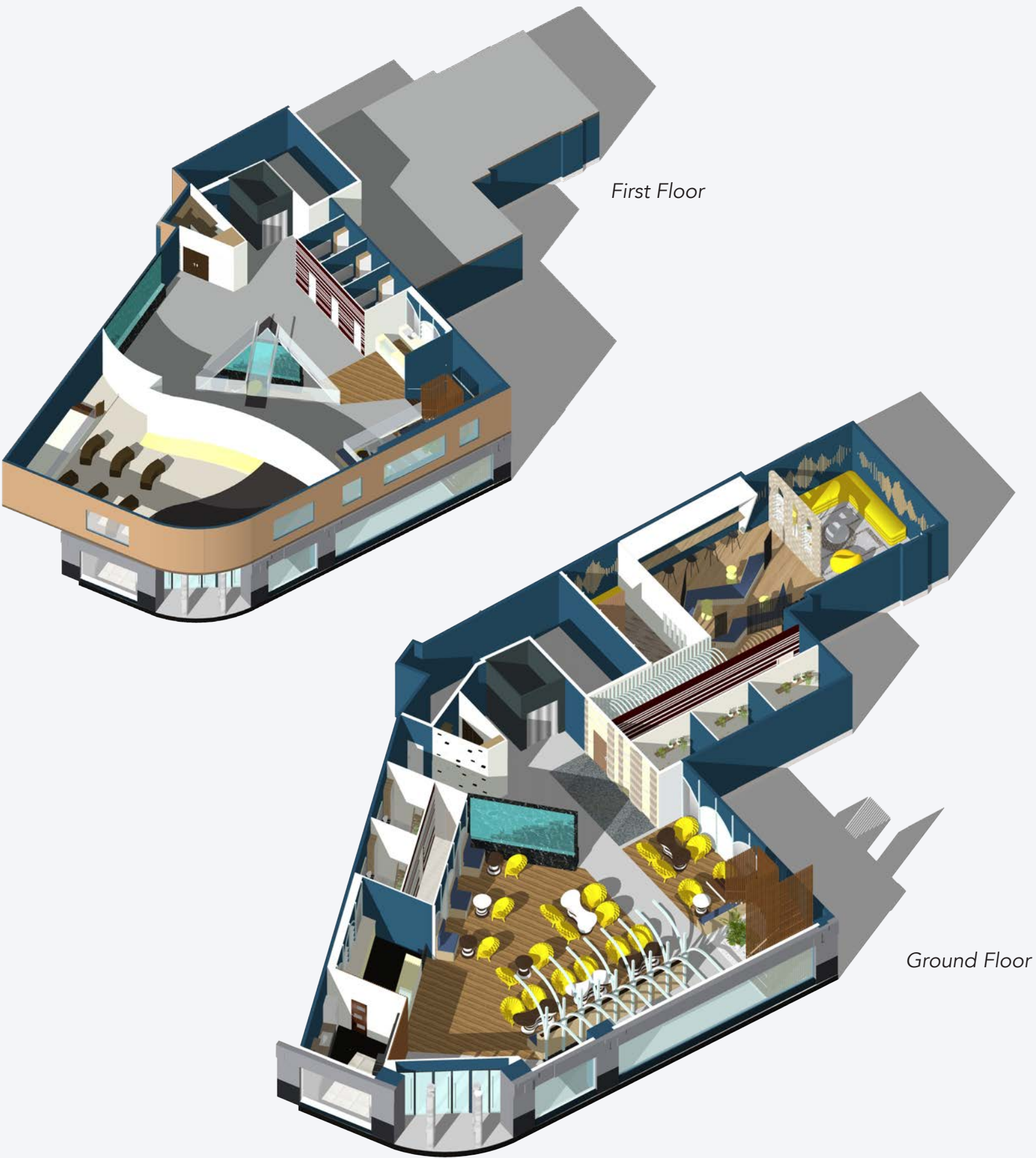
1:50 Physical Model



The **structural support** of an arch bridge inspired this repeated curved design throughout the space.

Café

Axonometric Views



Communal Lounge

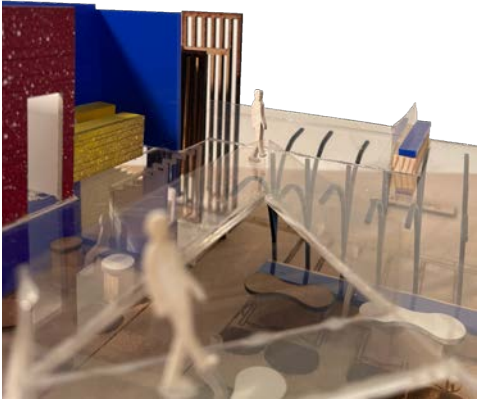


Music Hall

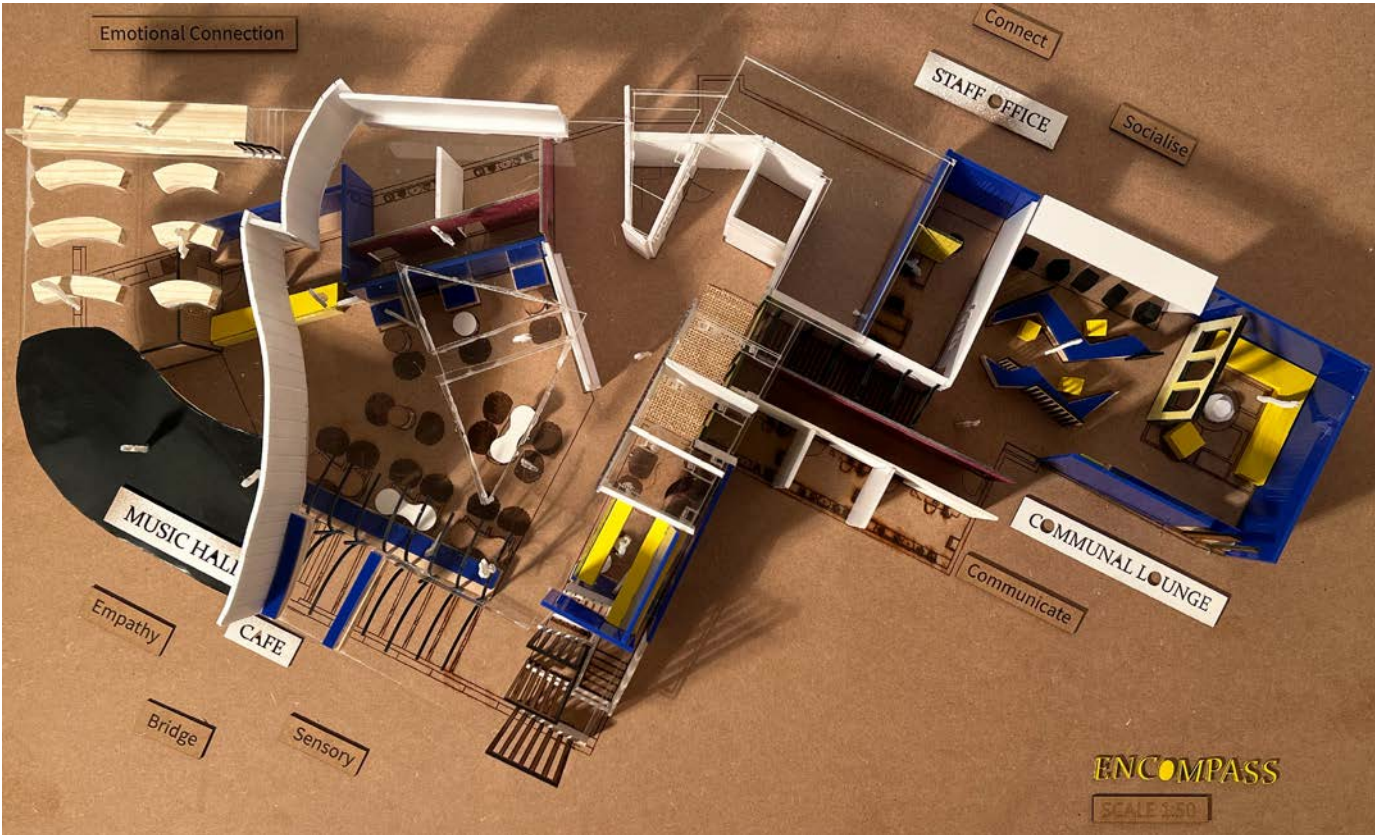
Taking inspiration from the user engagement task responses, the communal lounge incorporates seating designs inspired by 'energy', with mirrors placed throughout.



Music Hall



Voids & Bridge



Plan of 1:50 Physical Model



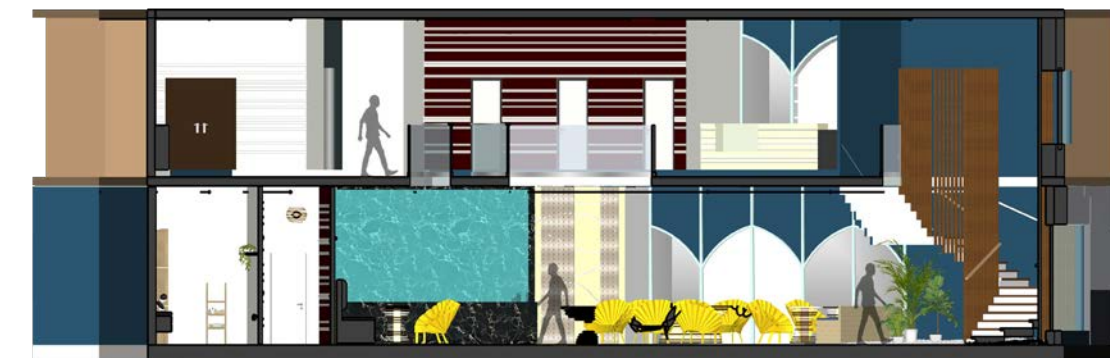
Sectional Elevations



Right Section



Left Section



Front Section

Spatial Design

**Plants** are included for their scent to aid users with orientation, and **water walls** guide the way to the toilets with the sound of flowing water. Spaces can be differentiated by varying **textured walls** for tactile engagement, including repeated wooden panelling and patterns. Upstairs consists of triangular-shaped **voids** with a bridge inbetween, facilitating navigation to the lift, toilets, café stand, stairs, and music hall.

The use of **blue** throughout the space promotes **calmness** and creates a **relaxing** atmosphere suitable for a sensory environment, while **yellow** fosters **energy** and **social confidence**, encouraging users to connect, interact, and communicate. These colours create a **high contrast** combination, which is vital for a space designed with the visually impaired in mind, aiding in the differentiation of walls, floors, and objects.

Each section of the space is identifiable by different **textured flooring**: bare concrete from the entrance guiding the way inside, and various types of wood for the floors of the café, communal lounge, and music hall. **Different materials** differentiate various objects; for instance, the yellow seats are made of **wool fabric**, while the blue benches are **leather**. **Small bumps** mark the entrance of the space and the communal lounge, signalling entry and exit.

Twinmotion Renders



Entrance to Café

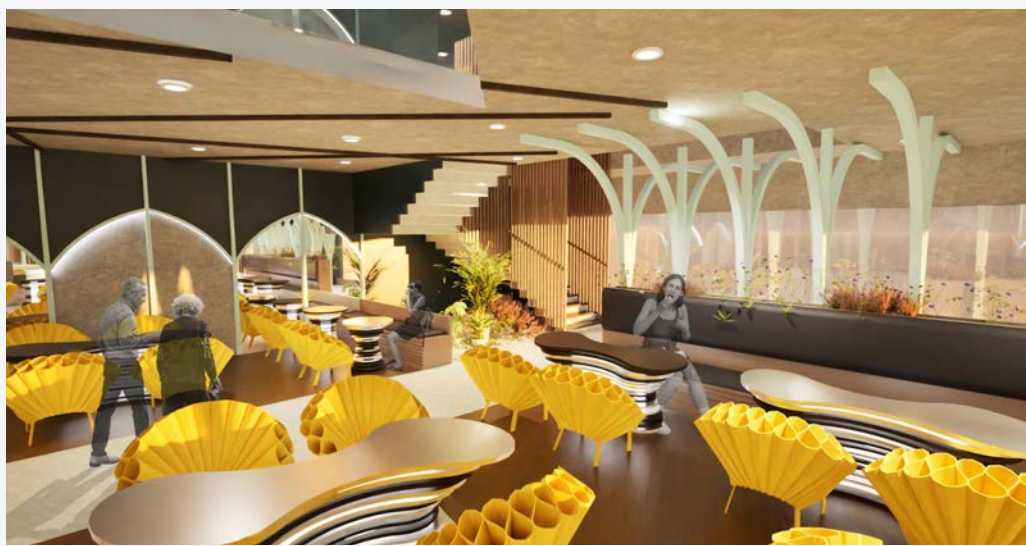
The **pattern** created by users connecting strings to their answers in the user engagement task frame inspired the **ceiling design**.



Communal Lounge



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Café



Textured Walls of Toilets & Storage



Corridor to Communal Lounge



Music Hall



Triangular Voids & Bridge