

KINSTEAD

A STUDENT ACCOMMODATION FOR
FAMILIES IN THE HEART OF BOURNEMOUTH

This project reimagines student accommodation to truly support the lives of student parents and their children. At its heart is a belief that family and education shouldn't be at odds—and that children deserve spaces designed with their wellbeing in mind. Drawing on both personal experience and research, the design places parents and children's comfort, creativity, and security at the centre of the student living experience.

Located in Bournemouth's Grade II listed Echo Building—an Art Deco landmark—this project transforms a historic newspaper headquarters into a vibrant home for learning, growing, and belonging. It features two- and three-bedroom flats, a welcoming community hall, cosy child-friendly study rooms, and a playful outdoor area, creating a balance between privacy and shared connection.

Biophilic design runs throughout: soft natural materials, reconstituted foam furnishings, and warm daylight support calm, focus, and cognitive development—especially for young children. Every design decision respects both the building's heritage and the future these families are building.

More than just housing, this is a statement against the barriers faced by student parents—a space that celebrates resilience, nurtures community, and makes room for family in the story of higher education.

PROBLEM

Student parents are largely overlooked in the HE system. The lack of affordable, family-friendly housing creates significant barriers, forcing many parents to delay or abandon their pursuit of education. Existing student accommodations are designed for single students, offering little to no support for those with children. This results in increased stress, social isolation, and difficulty balancing academic responsibilities with parenting.

OPPORTUNITY

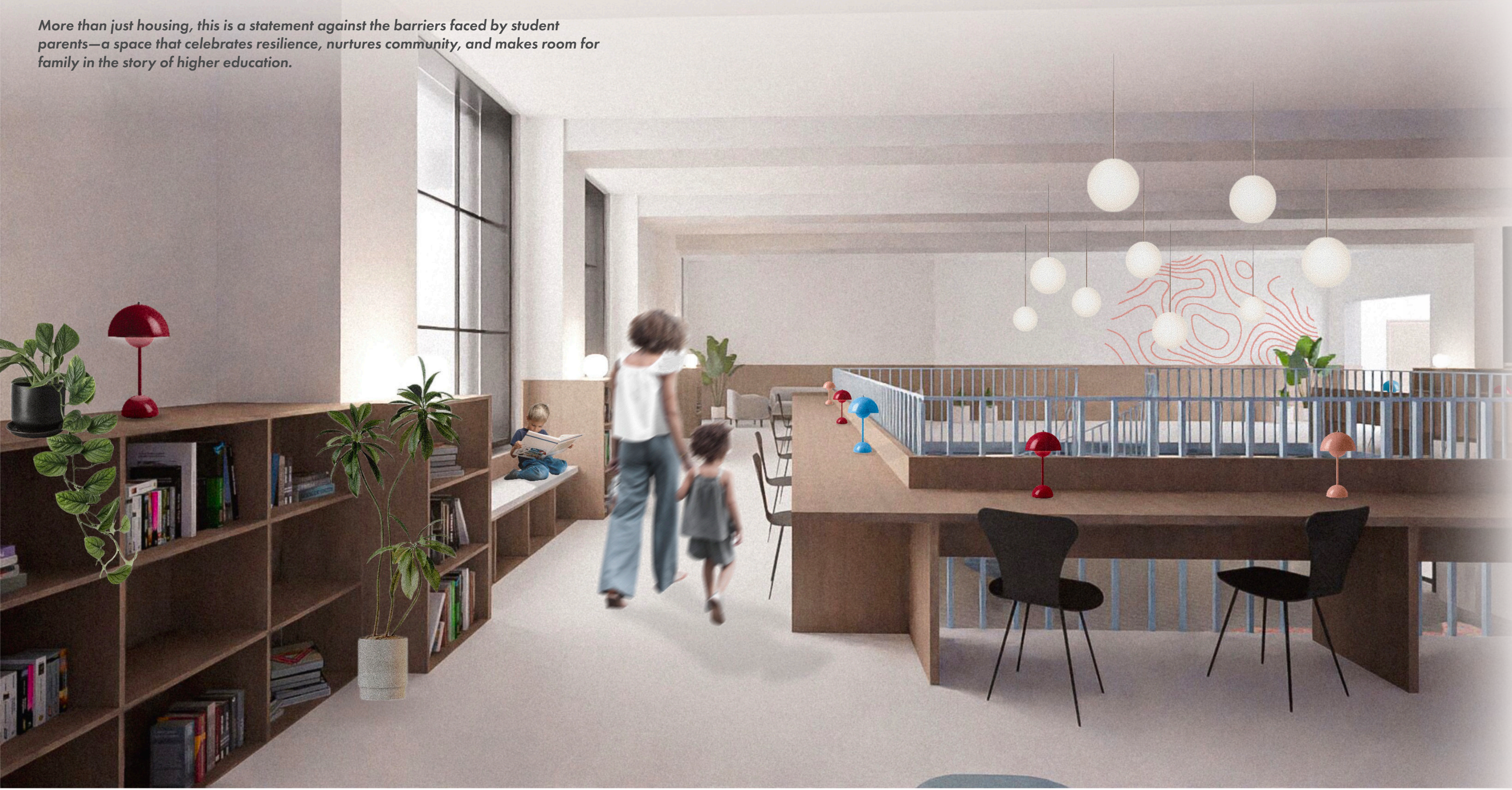
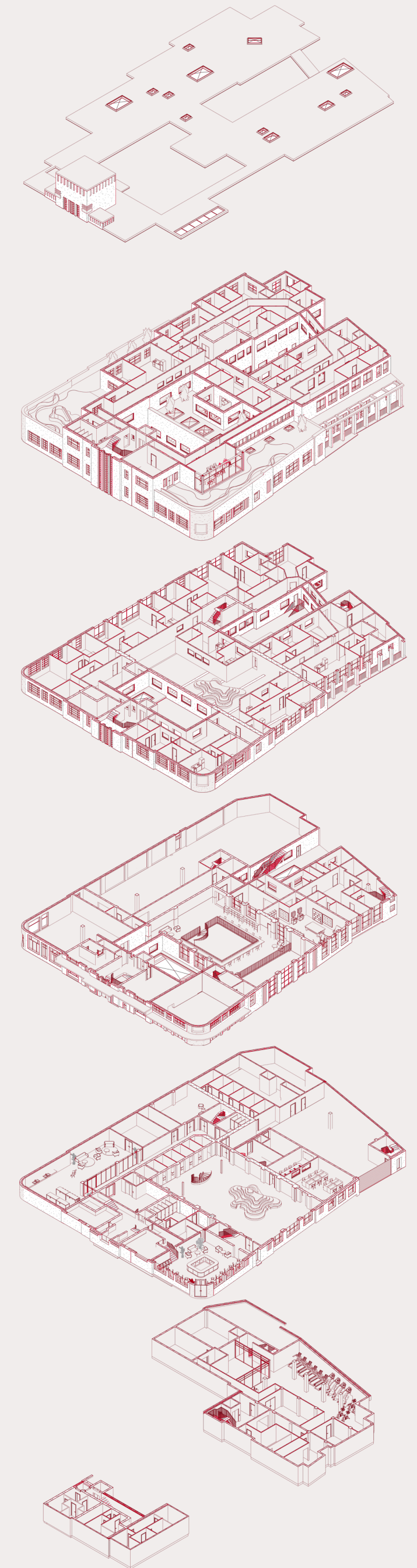
Create a purpose-built student accommodation that integrates family-friendly features. Promoting a supportive community by incorporating shared spaces like a community hall and child friendly study spaces.

SOLUTION

Design 2-3 bedroom flats with functional layouts, child-friendly study rooms, and communal areas to encourage interaction and support. Incorporate green spaces, natural lighting, and sustainable materials to improve the living environment.

IMPACT

Help students success by reducing housing stress and providing a supportive environment. Improves child development through safe play areas and engaging communal spaces. Fosters community connections, reducing isolation among student parents. Promotes sustainability, setting an example for future student housing designs.



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE...



26% of all undergraduate students, or **4.8 million** students, are raising dependent children.



Parents in a relationship make up **46%** of the student parent population.

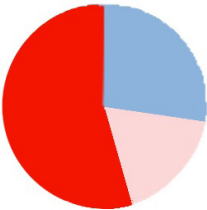


Single mothers make up **43%** of the student parent population. (**2 million**)

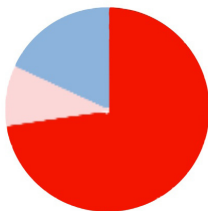


Single fathers make up **11%** of the student parent population.

SURVEY FOR PARENTS AT AUB

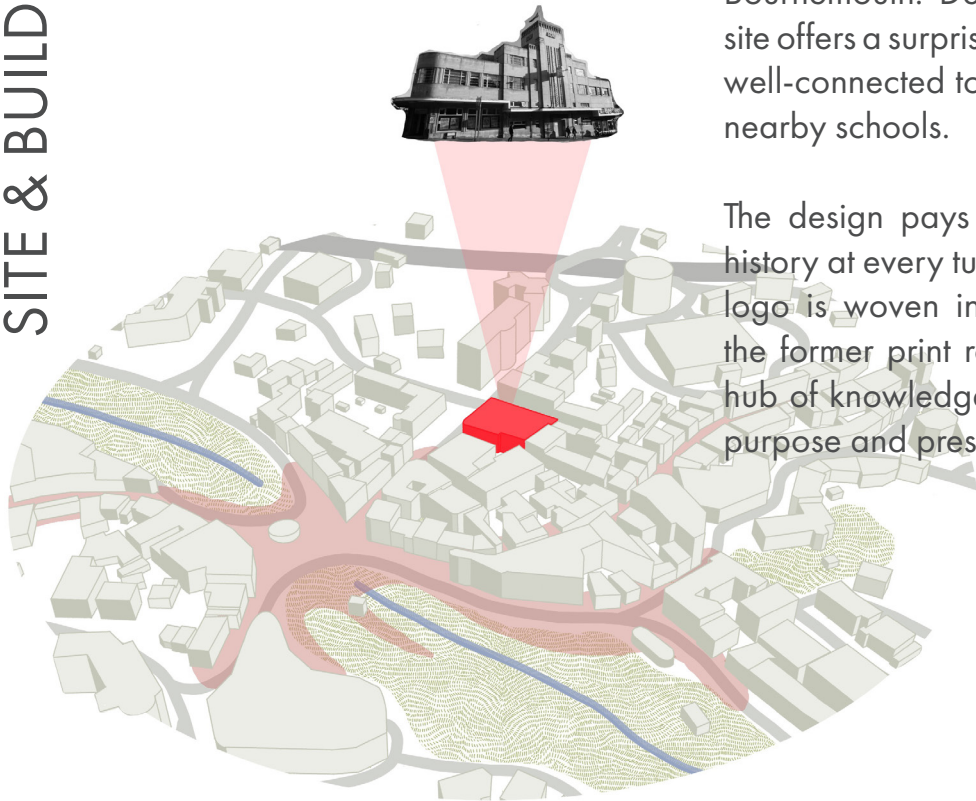


At the start of your degree, would you have considered moving into a family-friendly student accommodation?
Yes: 54.5%
No: 27.3%
Maybe: 18.2%



Did having a child effect your decision-making when it came to pursuing a university degree?
Yes: 72.7%
No: 18.2%
I had grown children: 9.1%

SITE & BUILDING



Built in 1932, the Grade II listed **Echo Building** is an Art Deco landmark in the heart of Bournemouth. Despite its central location, the site offers a surprisingly peaceful surroundings—well-connected to nature, public transport, and nearby schools.

The design pays tribute to the building's rich history at every turn. The iconic blue of the Echo logo is woven into the interior palette, while the former print room is reimagined as a new hub of knowledge—honouring its past through purpose and presence.



USERS

PARENTS

CHILDREN

VISITORS



Research shows that student parents are often invisible in UK higher education policy, despite growing numbers. Balancing studies, childcare, and finances places intense pressure on them—especially single parents and women. Limited childcare, financial stress, and isolation make academic life harder to navigate. **True inclusion means better childcare, family-friendly housing, and targeted support for student parents.**

STUDENT HOUSING

- Only 30% of institutions offer family accommodation.
- Family accommodation represents just 0.7% of student housing.



Chloe is a 26-year-old single mother raising her 5-year-old son, Noah. She has always been passionate about architecture and design, but financial and personal circumstances delayed her university journey. Now, she is determined to build a better future for herself and her son by pursuing a degree in Architecture at AUB. The availability of family accommodation played a significant role in her decision to apply.

Tracy (27) and Alex (28) are a young family with a 3-year-old daughter, Evie. They recently moved from Oxford to Bournemouth so Tracy can pursue a degree in Costume Design at AUB. Alex works remotely as a graphic designer, which allows him to support the family while Tracy studies.

COMMUNITY-CENTRED THINKING

Community-centred thinking has guided every phase of this design. Research highlights that student parents often experience isolation due to limited free time. By creating spaces that encourage interaction and support, the design aims to foster a sense of belonging—transforming isolation into connection and building a lasting community.

GAINING COMMUNITY



Residents begin to connect; individual experiences start to intersect.

COMMUNITY IN ACTION



Active participation, collaboration, and a shared life and experiences.

BEGINNINGS OF SMALL COMMUNITY



Identity starts forming; rituals, trust, and shared values emerge.

COMMUNITY CREATES BIG-PICTURE IMPACT

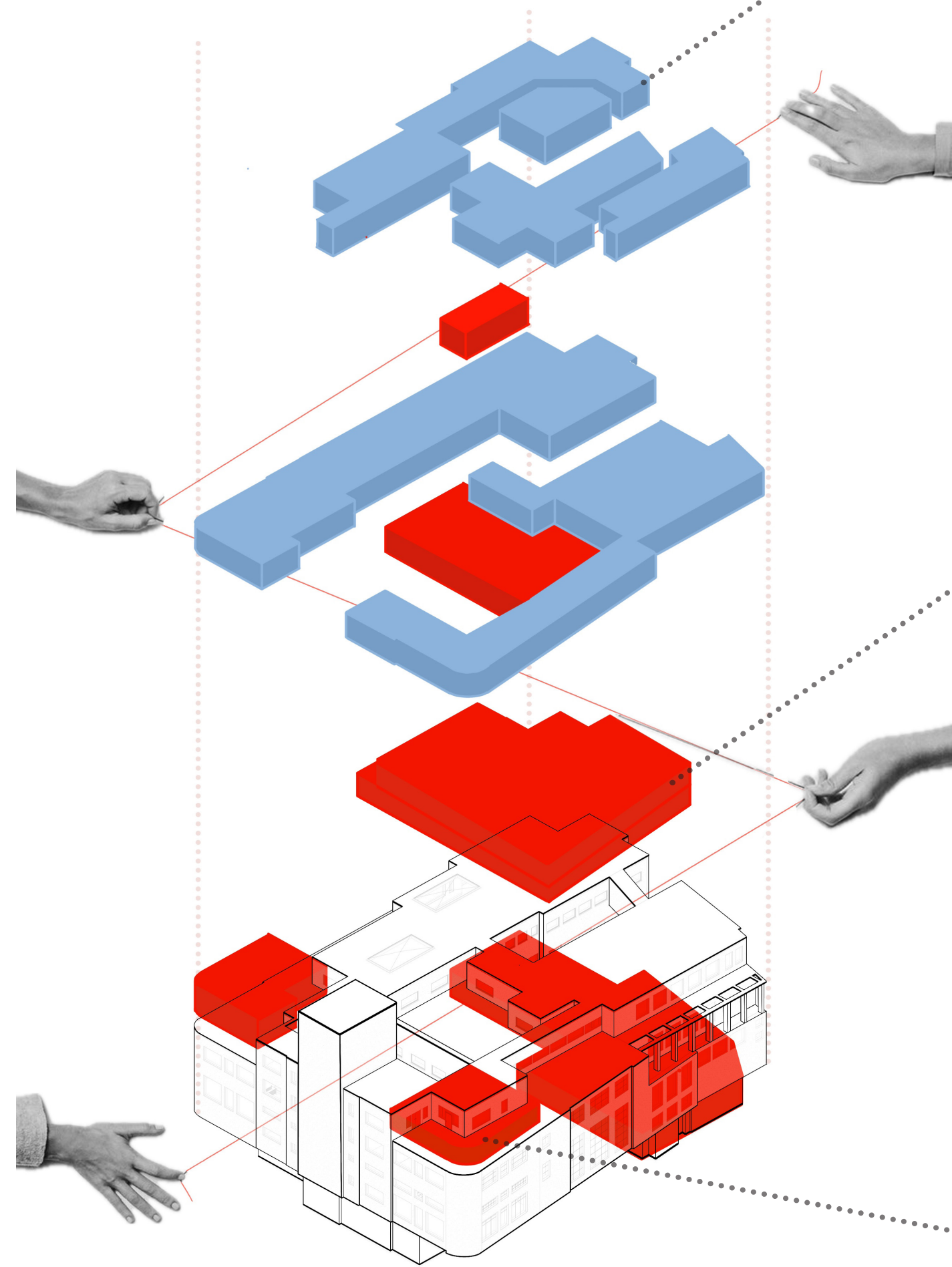


The community becomes a model of resilience, support, and positive change—locally and beyond.

SYSTEMS THINKING



...DESIGNING THE SOLUTION

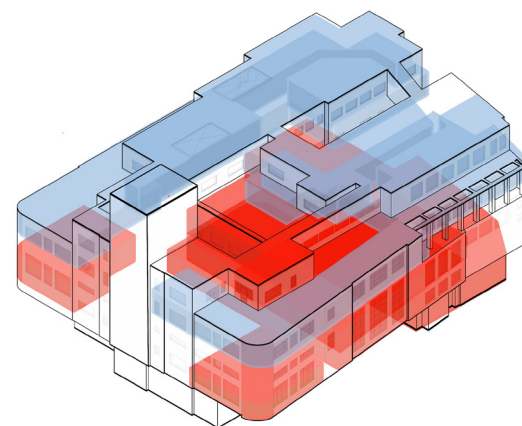


LIVING AREAS

1-3 bedroom flats

COMMUNITY AREAS

Gym
The old print room / Study hall
Communal spaces
Community hall
Sun Lounge



LIVING AREAS

conceptual visualisation



THE OLD PRINT ROOM / STUDY HALL

conceptual visualisation

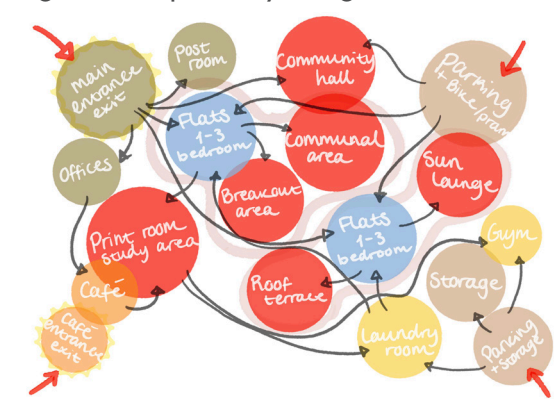


COMMUNITY-LED CAFÉ

conceptual visualisation

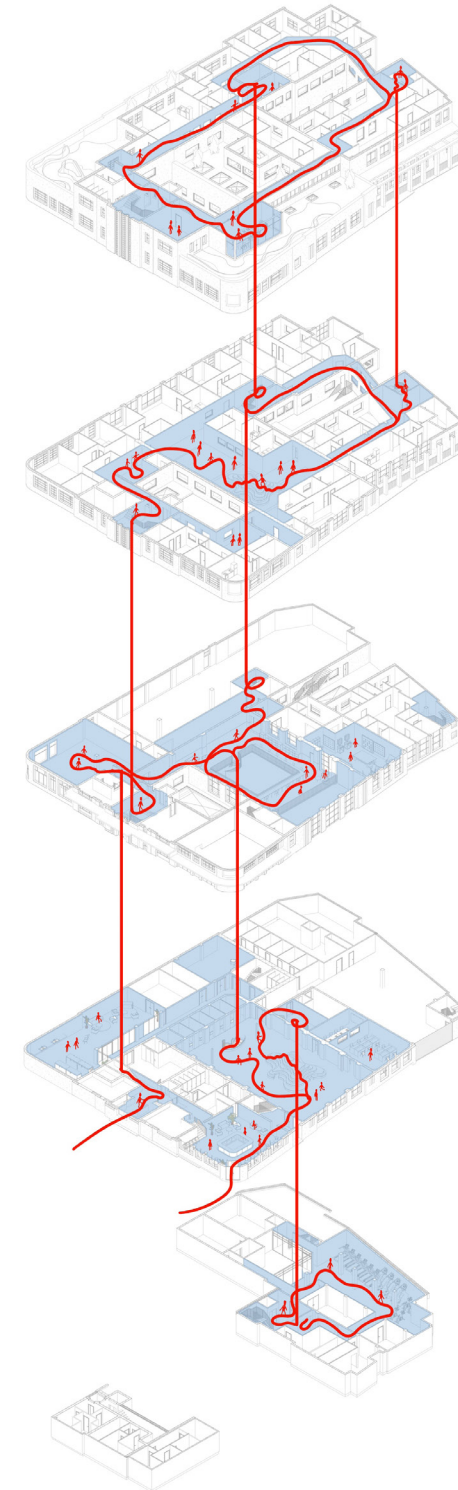


Zoning and adjacency diagram



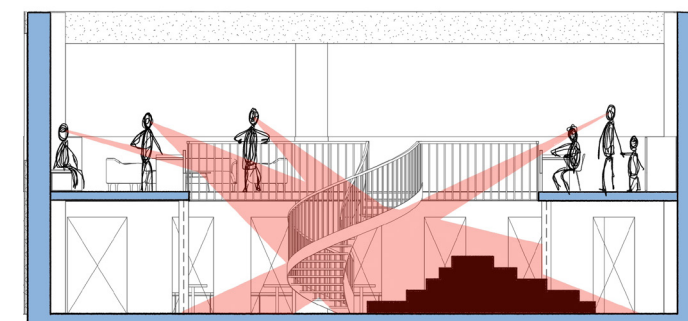
CIRCULATION

Designing effective circulation was key to encouraging spontaneous interactions. With student parents' limited time, it was essential to create opportunities for connection through thoughtfully planned movement and flow, helping even the busiest users feel part of the community



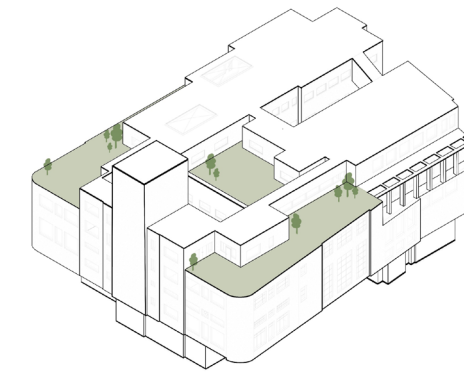
VANTAGE POINT

It was essential that parents studying in the hall could keep an eye—and ear—on their children. The mezzanine level was designed to maintain clear view of the play area, allowing parents to stay focused while feeling reassured.



ROOF TERRACE

The roof terrace plays a vital role in the design, offering a child-friendly, nature-connected space that supports social development. As children play and interact, their parents naturally gather too—strengthening the sense of community at Kinstead.



TEST MODELS

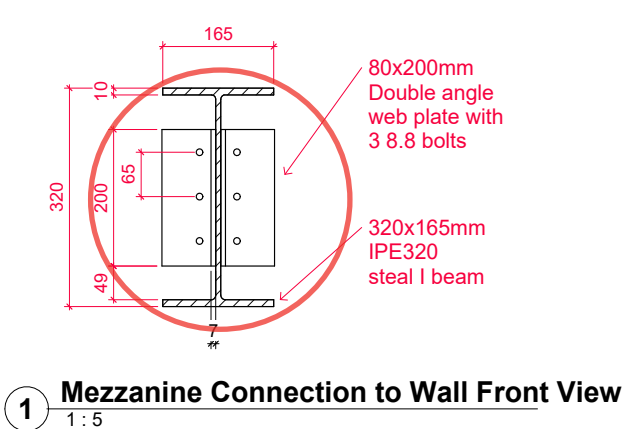
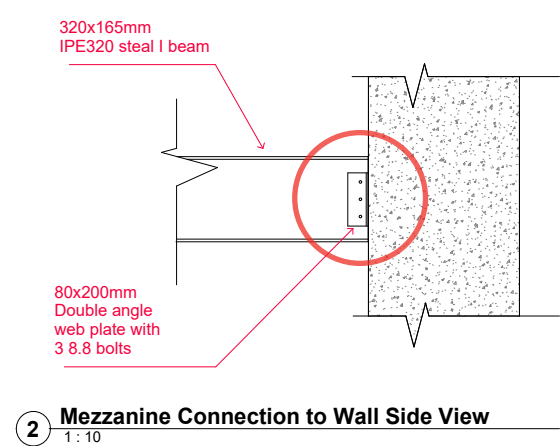
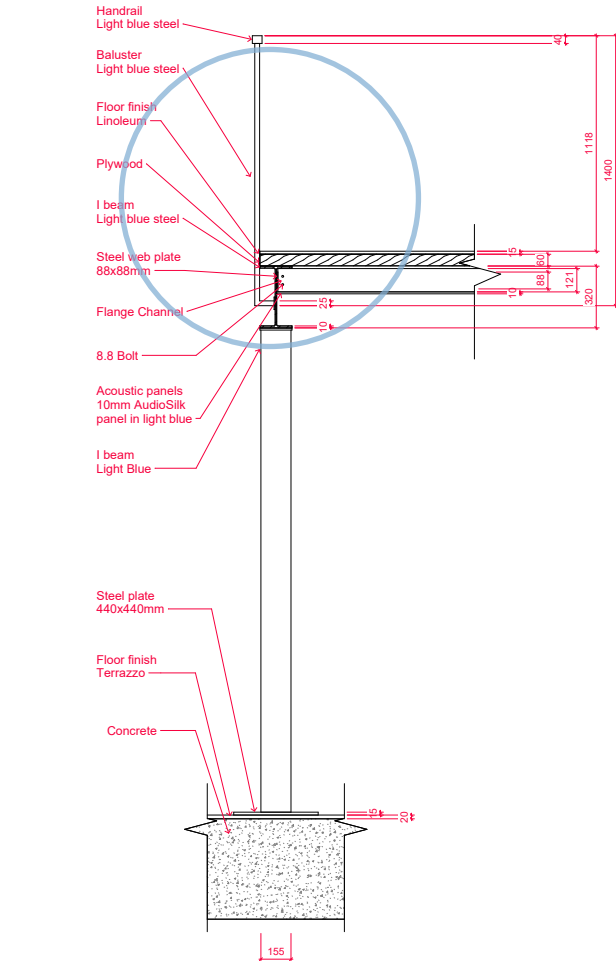
Test models for the former Print Room study area. Exploring the spatial potential was essential to ensure an inclusive design. A simple rectangular mezzanine proved most effective, offering maximum additional space, clear accessibility, and an ideal vantage point for parents to supervise their children below



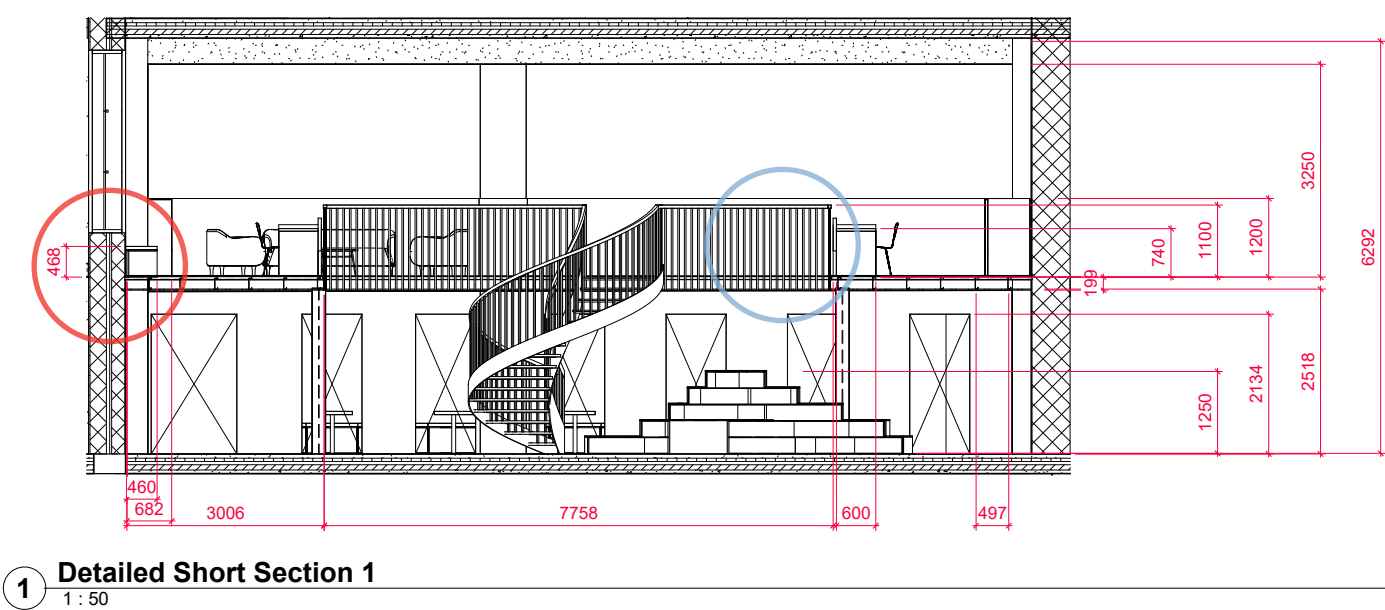
DETAILED AREA

THE OLD PRINT ROOM

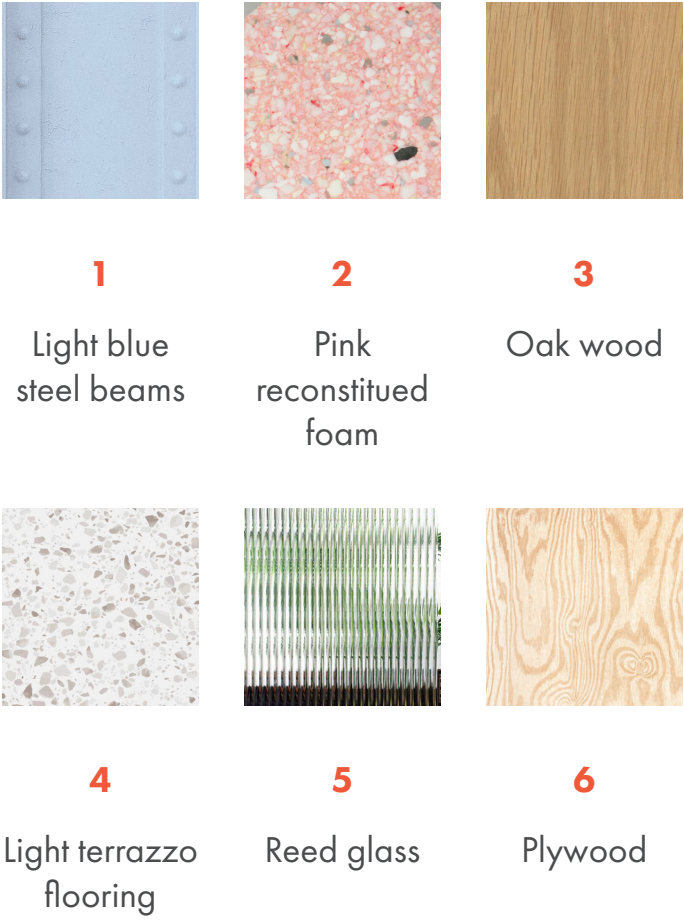
Once alive with the rhythmic hum of printing presses sharing news and knowledge, the historic print room will now echo with the laughter of children and the shared learning of families—honouring its legacy through a new kind of knowledge exchange.



MEZZANINE FLOOR

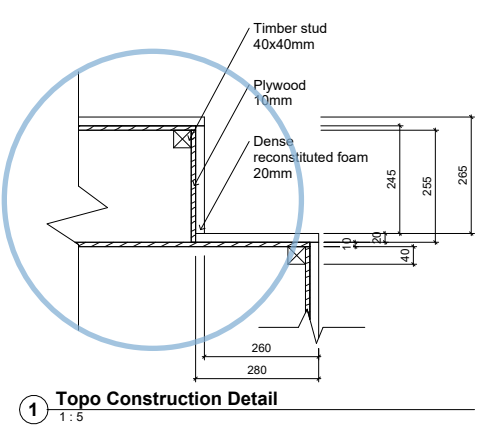
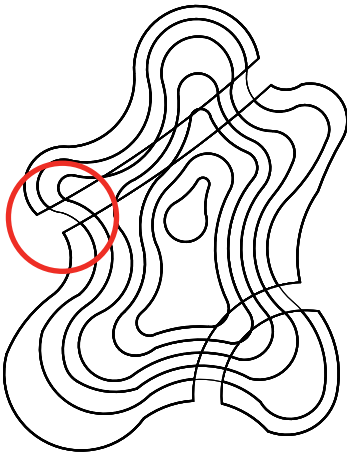
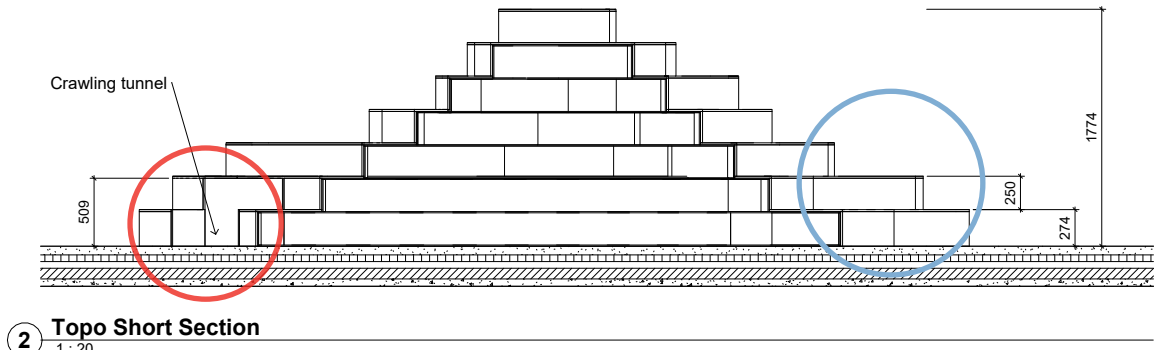
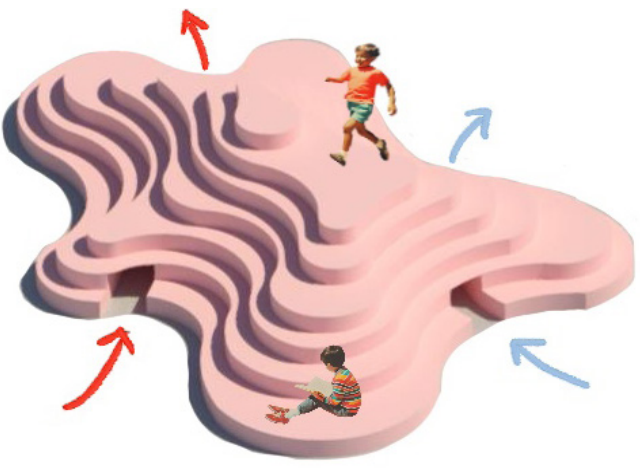
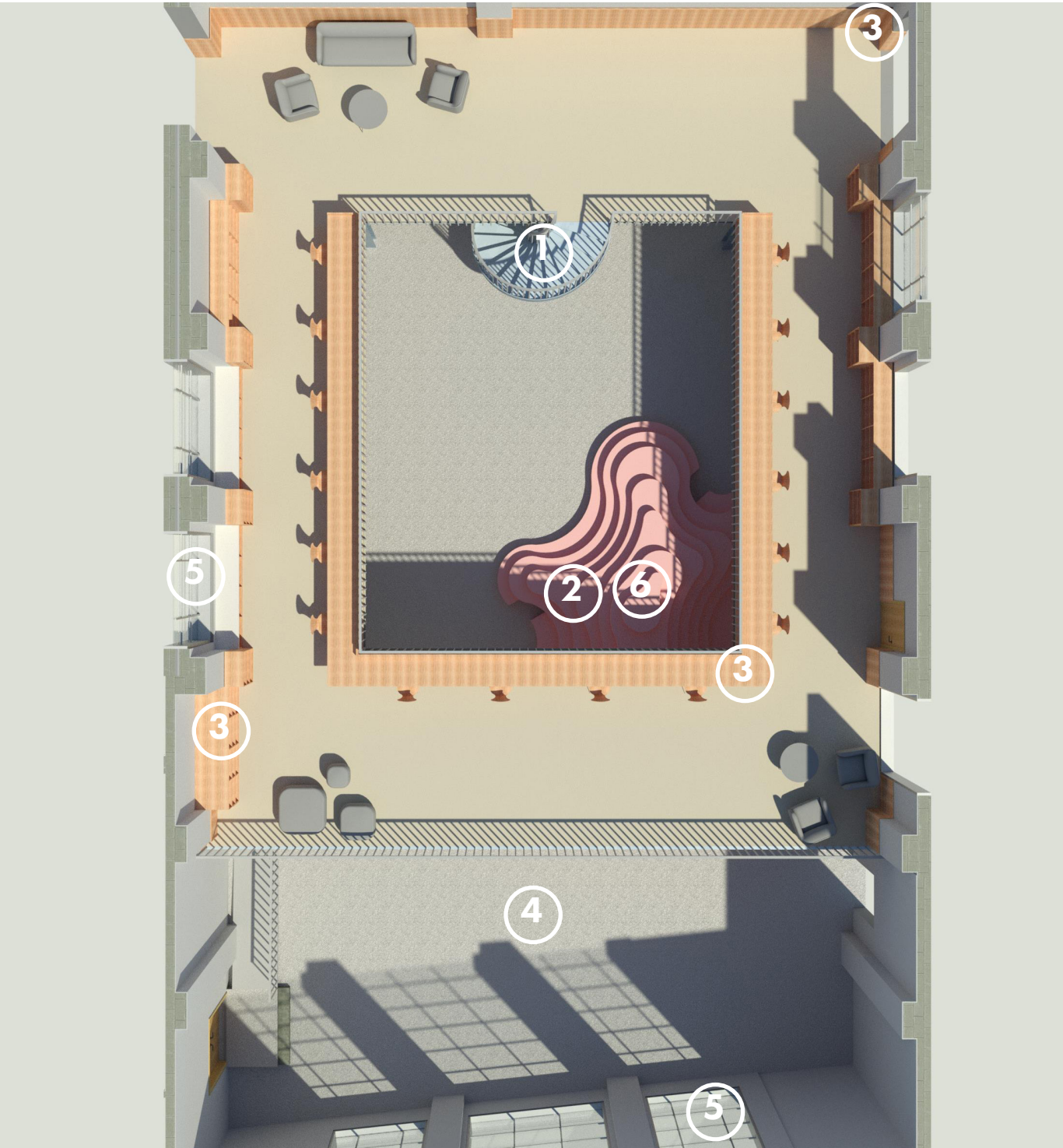


The detailed study focuses on the mezzanine and topographic play area. The mezzanine follows building standards while respecting the listed building. The structure is built using light blue steel frame to add brightness, playfulness and it mimics the blue in the Echo logo. The play area, built from plywood and reconstituted foam, offers acoustic and shock absorption. Its tiered design and tunnels invite exploration, creativity, and safe play.



TOPOGRAPHIC PLAY SCULPTURE

The play sculpture draws inspiration from natural forms, based on an observation during a day outdoors with my son: children often engage in more independent play in natural settings. This insight shaped a design that encourages self-directed play, giving parents valuable time to focus on their studies.

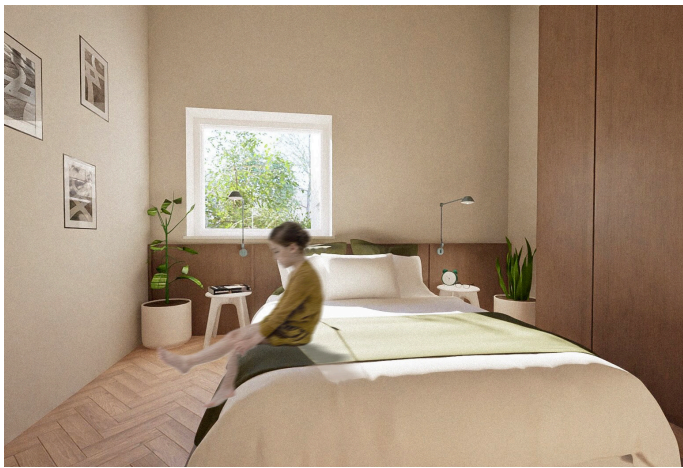




KITCHEN & DINING IN
FLAT ON THE SECOND
FLOOR

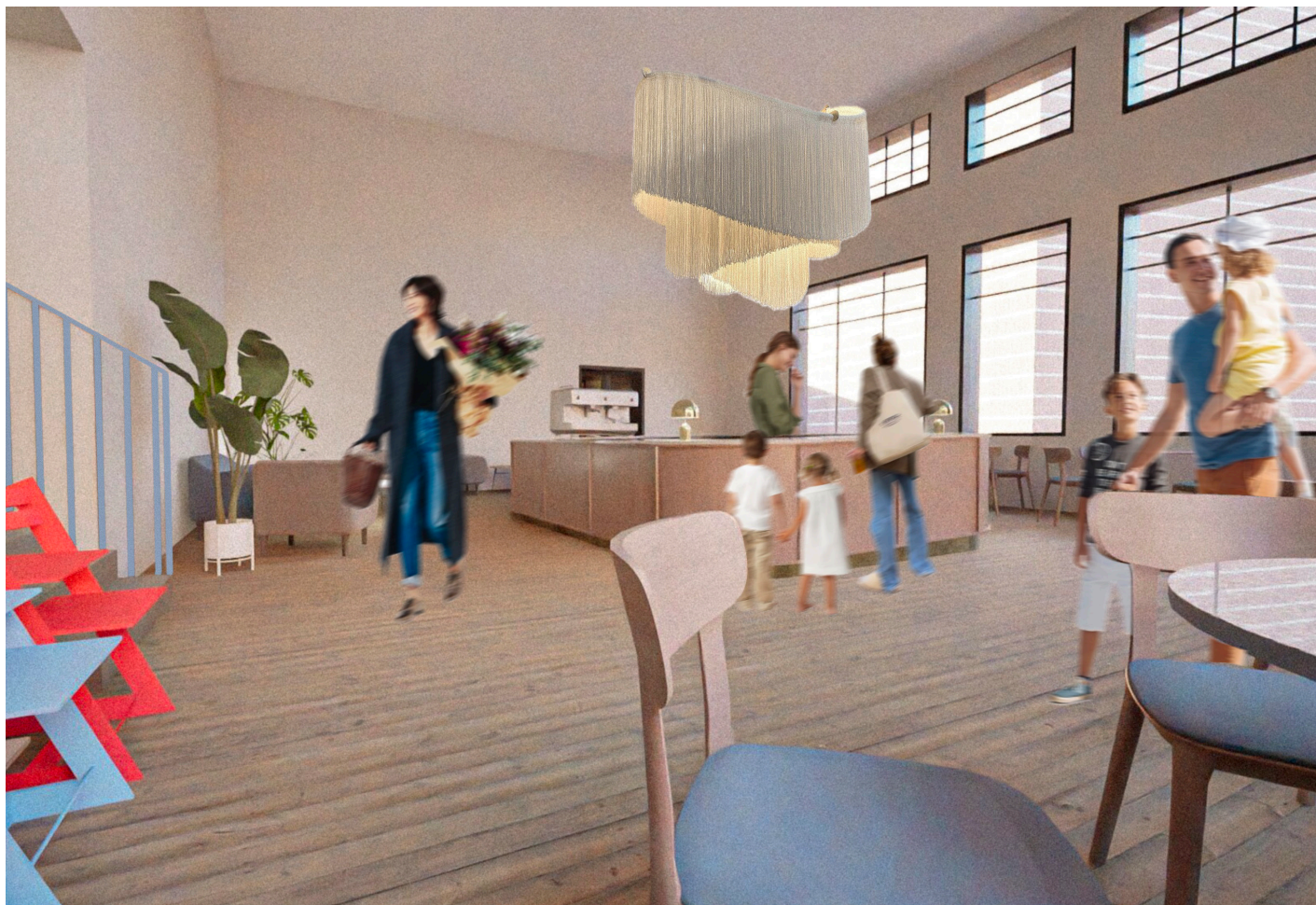


ROOF TERRACE /
PLAYGROUND ON
SECOND FLOOR



COMMUNITY HALL ON
UPPER GROUND FLOOR

BEDROOM IN FLAT ON
SECOND FLOOR



COMMUNITY-LED CAFE
ON LOWER GROUND
FLOOR

.....	Main Entrance	Community-led Café	Living Area
.....	Mail Room	Parking / Pram storage / Bike park	The Old Print Room
.....	Community Hall	Sun Lounge	Roof Terrace / Playground
.....	Vegetable Garden	Communal Area	Creative Studio
.....	Storage	Quiet Area	Gym

