

# ROOTS

Located in the Art Deco Albany Theatre in Coventry, ROOTS can be a library, a sensory museum, a lecture or concert hall, an escape... All in all it is a place shaped by people, an educational centre that focuses on raising awareness about sustainability and environmental issues by reconnecting people with nature in an inclusive, immersive and empowering way. It aims to challenge the idea of the “21st Century Library” that balances both digital and analog learning methodologies and creates a centre of ever-expanding knowledge presented in an ever-changing environment.

Based on Cedric Price’s concept of flexibility (Fun Palace), ROOTS is a reaction to the rigidity of the urban landscape as opposed to the natural environment which reacts and is malleable around the presence of people, making an interior space closer to what one would experience in a journey in the wilderness. The library offers the users control over their surroundings, resulting in a human-centric design, responsive to visitors’ needs and the activities intended to take place. Therefore, ROOTS is a space shaped by its inhabitants.

## CHAPTER 1 - “FORM FOLLOWS FICTION” [THE JOURNEY BEGINS]

No.1 A Walk in the Woods  
[linocut print]



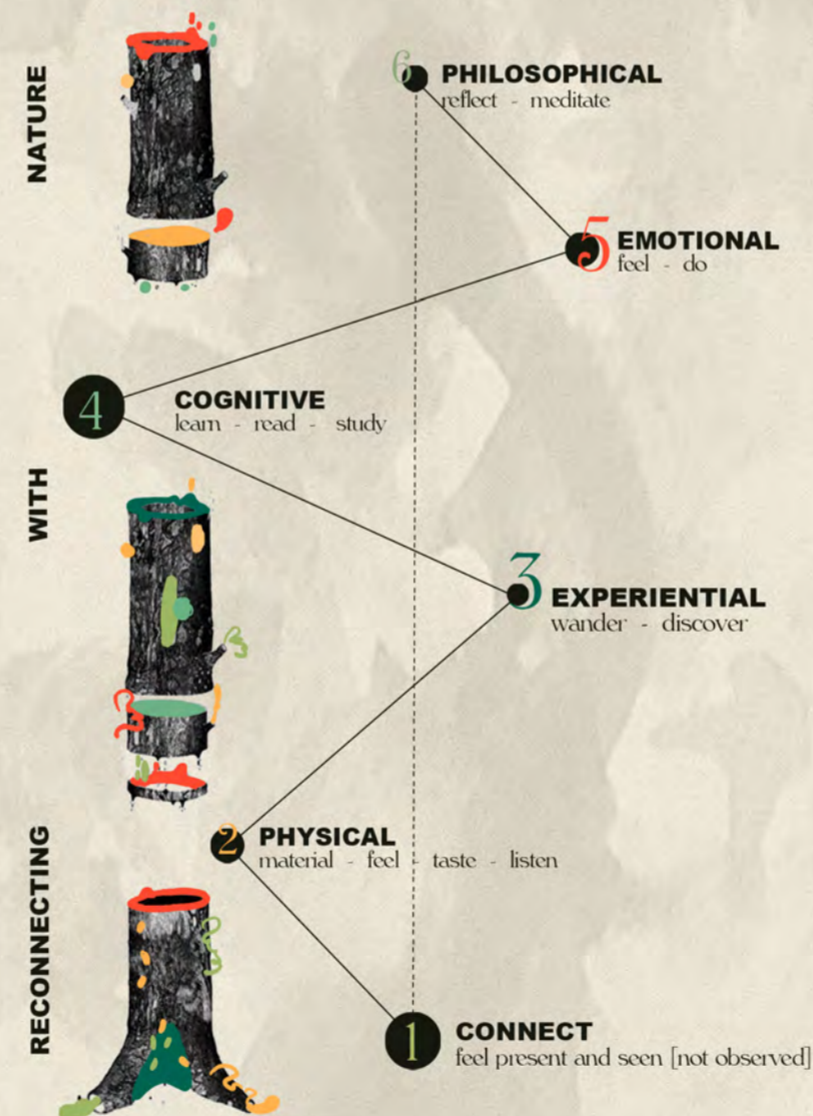
The storyline follows a metaphorical journey into the woods that provokes curiosity, thoughts, ideas and mimics (biomimicry) certain aspects from reality in order to create a subtle sensorial experience that immerses the user in the space.

No.2 Analysing the Narrative  
[charcoal study]



The walk in wilderness influences the design choices in terms of recreating the change in atmosphere, colour & lighting, density and circulation in every step of the way, adding sensorial depth to the user journey through space.

No.3 Psychological Steps  
[research]



In order to create an interest and raise awareness about environmental issues people must firstly reconnect with nature following these 6 steps which determined the use of each space by determining people’s needs to fulfill each step.

No.4 Transformative User Journey  
[fineliner storyboard illustration]



In literature, this journey is symbolically transformative for the character taking it, filled with tasks, adventures and magic. In this particular narrative, the user immerses themselves into the space, being guided by their curiosity. They follow the library’s curved paths exploring in depth the ever-changing volumes of the space, they follow the light and the shadows it creates and so on. Each journey of “going back to one’s roots” is different.

ALBANY THEATRE, COVENTRY  
52°24'19"N 1°31'34"W







SITE ANALYSIS

The analysis of the natural elements & green areas and the biodiversity study will further influence the design in terms of the use of natural light and energy saving, circulation and user journey.

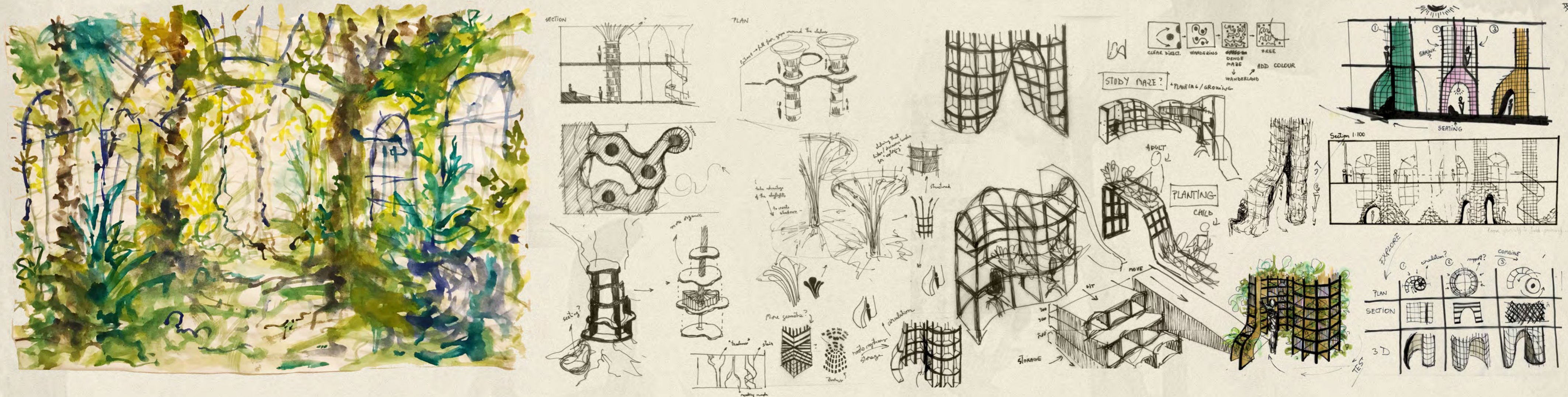
Although the site is not listed, this project's aim is to respect not only the historic educational purpose of the building, but to also preserve the Art Deco detailing that creates a captivating narrative and immerses the public into the building. By keeping most of the existing features and only making interventions when needed not only does it lower the costs of building but it also responds to the project's sustainability goals.



	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
LIBRARY	 <p>OLD TYPOLOGY: THE JOHN RHYLANDS LIBRARY</p> <p>The old typology of the library presents little to no flexibility, creating a rigid and not accessible environment.</p>	 <p>MODERN FLEXIBILITY: THE SEATTLE LIBRARY</p> <p>Confronting the traditional view of flexibility in modern architecture which makes spaces more generic. Instead, OMA proposed the "compartmentalized flexibility", which identifies a number of places that, even if an activity is prominent, it can be ensured a spectrum of multiple functions.</p>	<h1>ROOTS</h1> <p>THE NEW LIBRARY: ROOTS</p> <p>Taking further the idea of a highly flexible space, as a reaction to the rigidity of the urban landscape, while creating an immersive-sensory and therefore inclusive space. Following the future trend of Natureverse, the library will provide a mix between technology/organic, digital/analog, in order to cater for everyone's needs and preferences.</p>
NATURE		 <p>SAME ETHOS: THE EDEN PROJECT</p> <p>Their mission: "There is a planetary emergency. Only by deepening our collective understanding of the interconnections between all living things and seeing them as a whole can we protect the Earth and engender environmental harmony and social equity."</p>	 <p>TREND FORECASTING: NATUREVERSE</p> <p>Imagining new worlds, new aesthetics and new solutions through the immersive powers of nature and technology. The digital world might seem far removed from nature, but could it be the key to helping us imagine and build a better, more regenerative world? NatureVerse explores the beautiful and surprising symbiosis between the technological and the organic.</p>

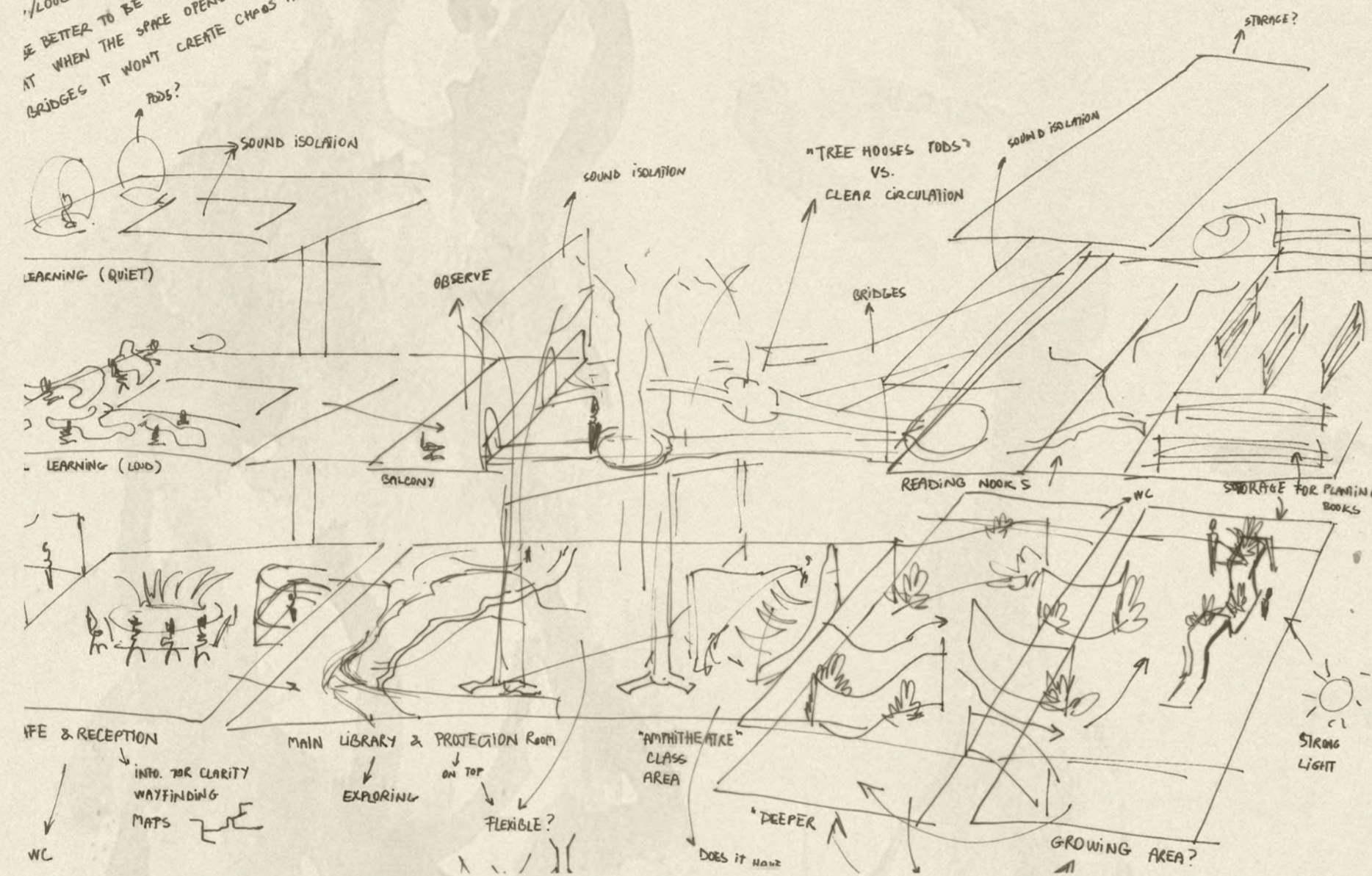
BIOPHILIA & BIOMIMICRY

The sketches explore the concepts of biomimicry and biophilia by imitating the shapes, volumes, textures and curvatures of trees in order to create a familiar looking space that brings comfort and wellbeing, immersing the users into a surreal library. The structure in which trees are growing naturally influences the design and offers support, not only for storage, but for the bridges that connect the library as well. The prototypes are investigating ways to create a circulation that encourages and provokes people into exploring the space as heroes in a journey that leads them to reconnecting with nature. The following have been taken into consideration: playing with different transparencies (either by material or by structure - framework vs solid), finding sustainable and low waste solutions, inclusivity in ergonomics & circulation etc.

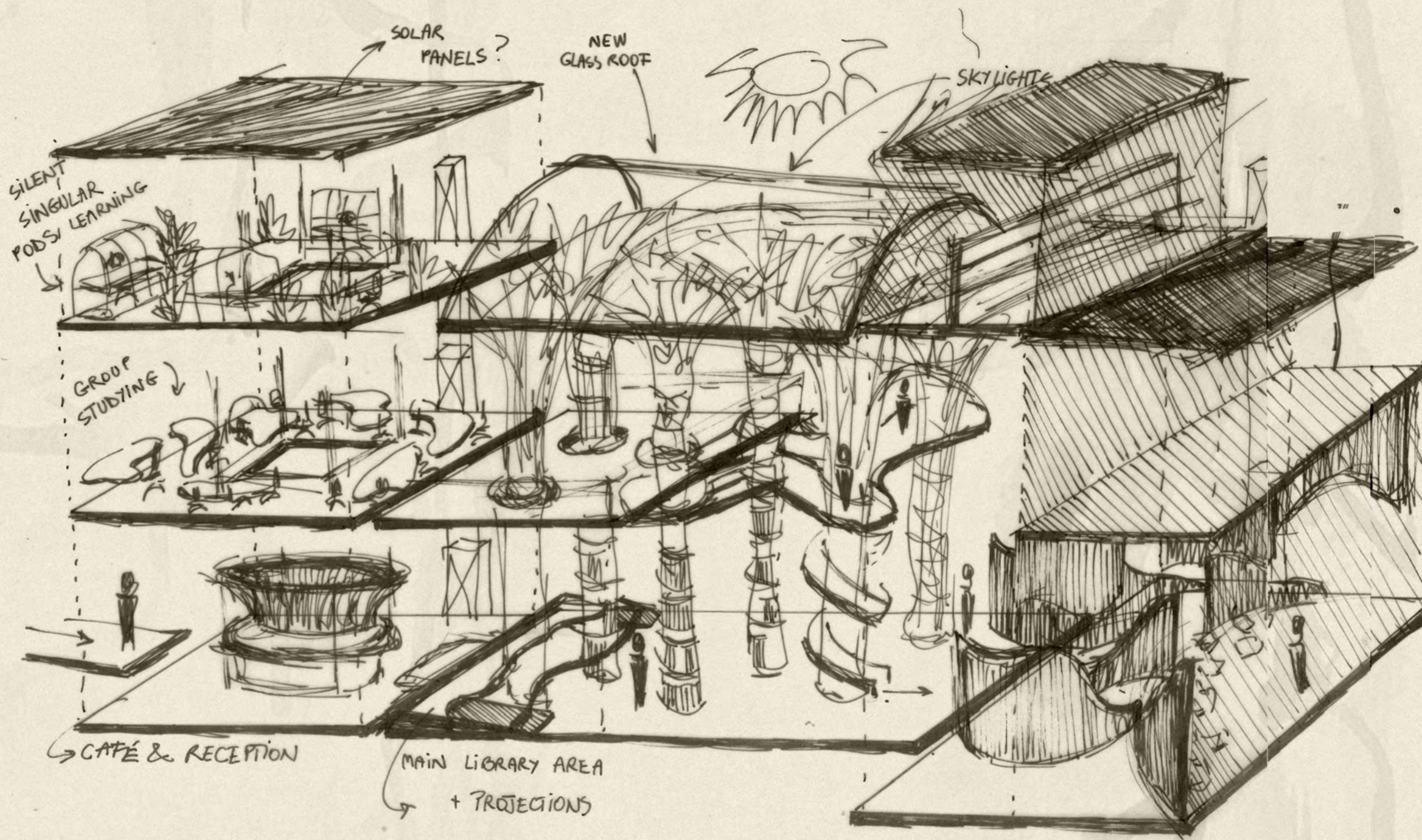


# CHAPTER 2 - EXPLORATION

LOAD UPSTAIRS  
 IS BETTER TO BE QUIET DOWNST.  
 AT WHEN THE SPACE OPENS UP IN  
 BRIDGES IT WON'T CREATE CHAOS IN THE MAIN LIBRARY AREA

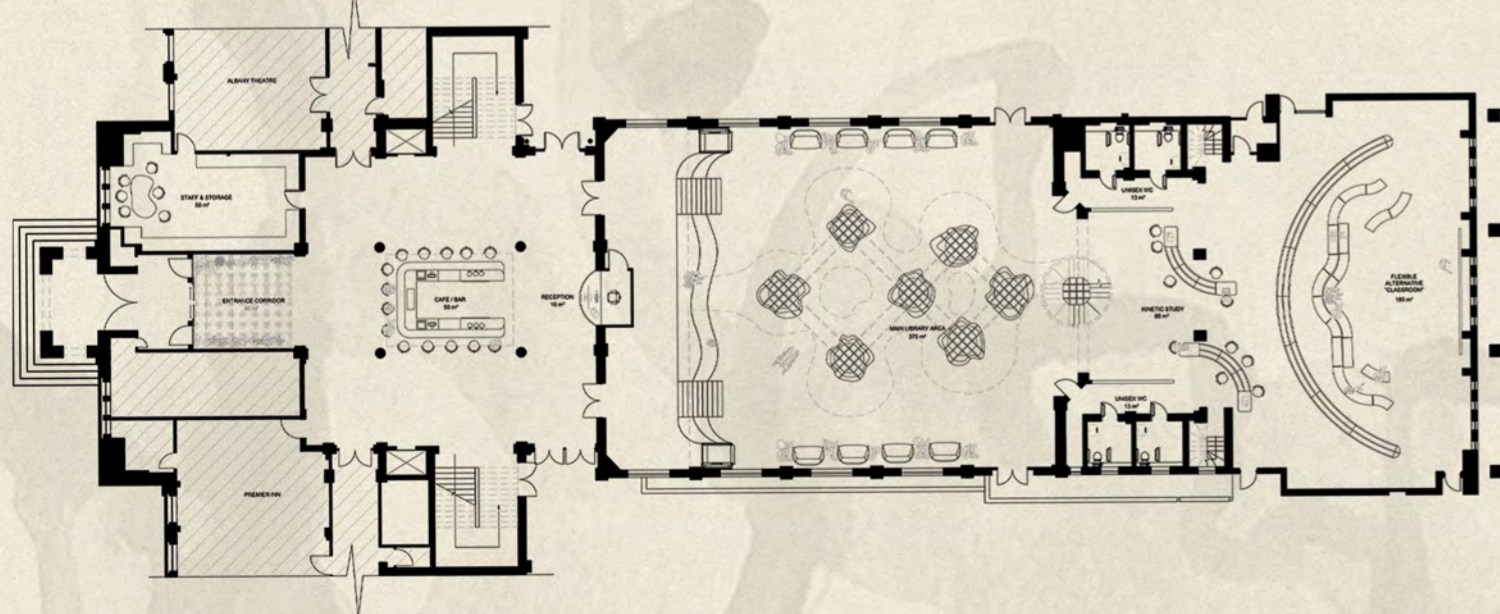


# CHAPTER 3 - DISCOVERY



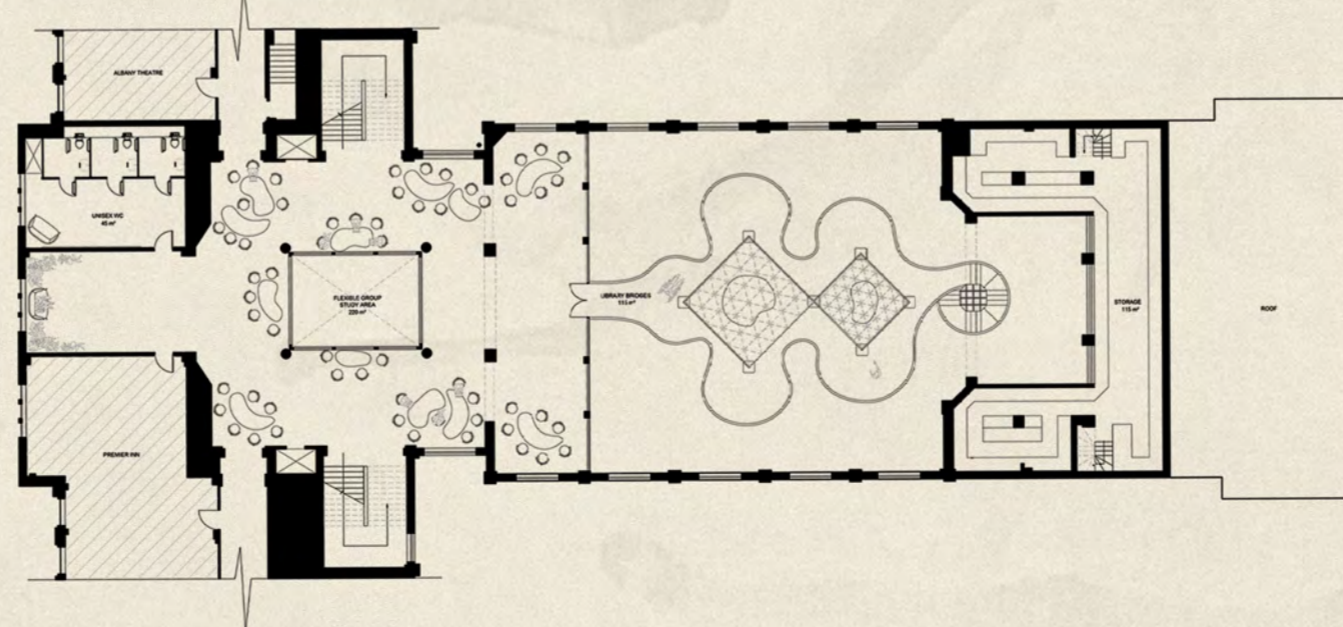
## GROUND FLOOR PLAN

not to scale



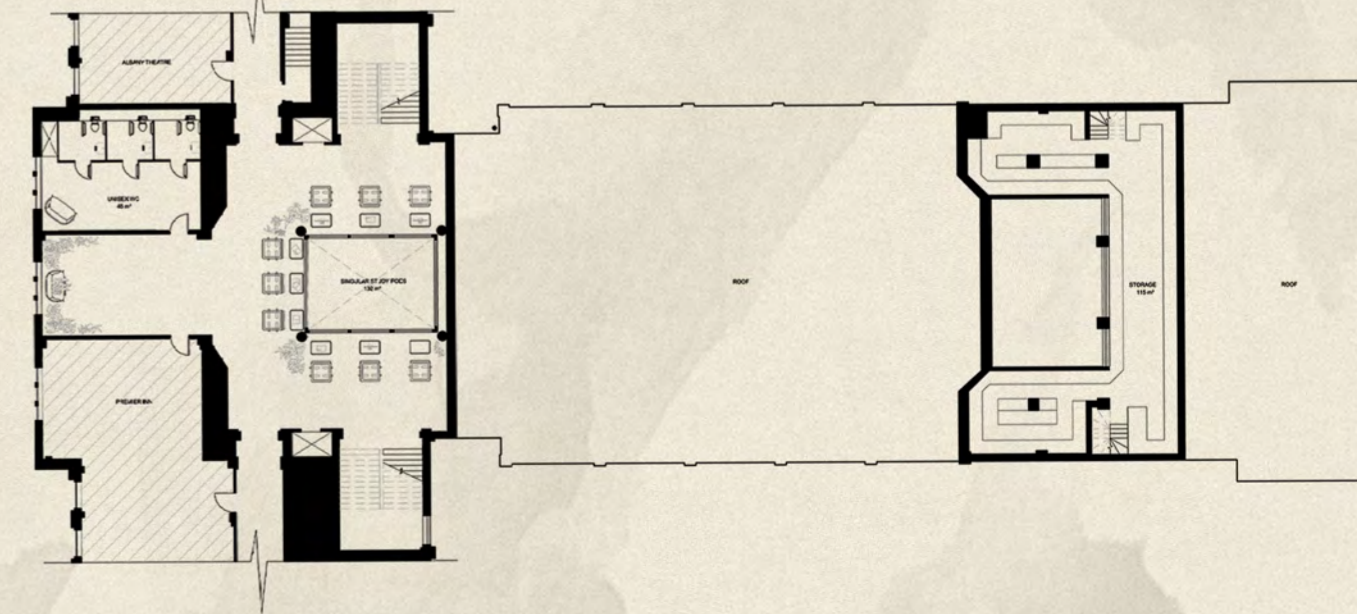
## FIRST FLOOR PLAN

not to scale



## SECOND FLOOR PLAN

not to scale



# CHAPTER 4 - THE END

## No.1 Singular Study



This space was created in mind with the ones who prefer to study by themselves but as well to soothe and isolate in case someone would get overstimulated by all the sensory input of the space in general, therefore it was isolated on the second floor.

## No.2 Group Study



This space was created for the ones who thrive in social spaces when learning featuring bespoke curved tables (it has been proven that they encourage socialising, increase productivity) that are on wheels so that they can be moved around the space, according to their needs.

## No.3 Bar / Cafe

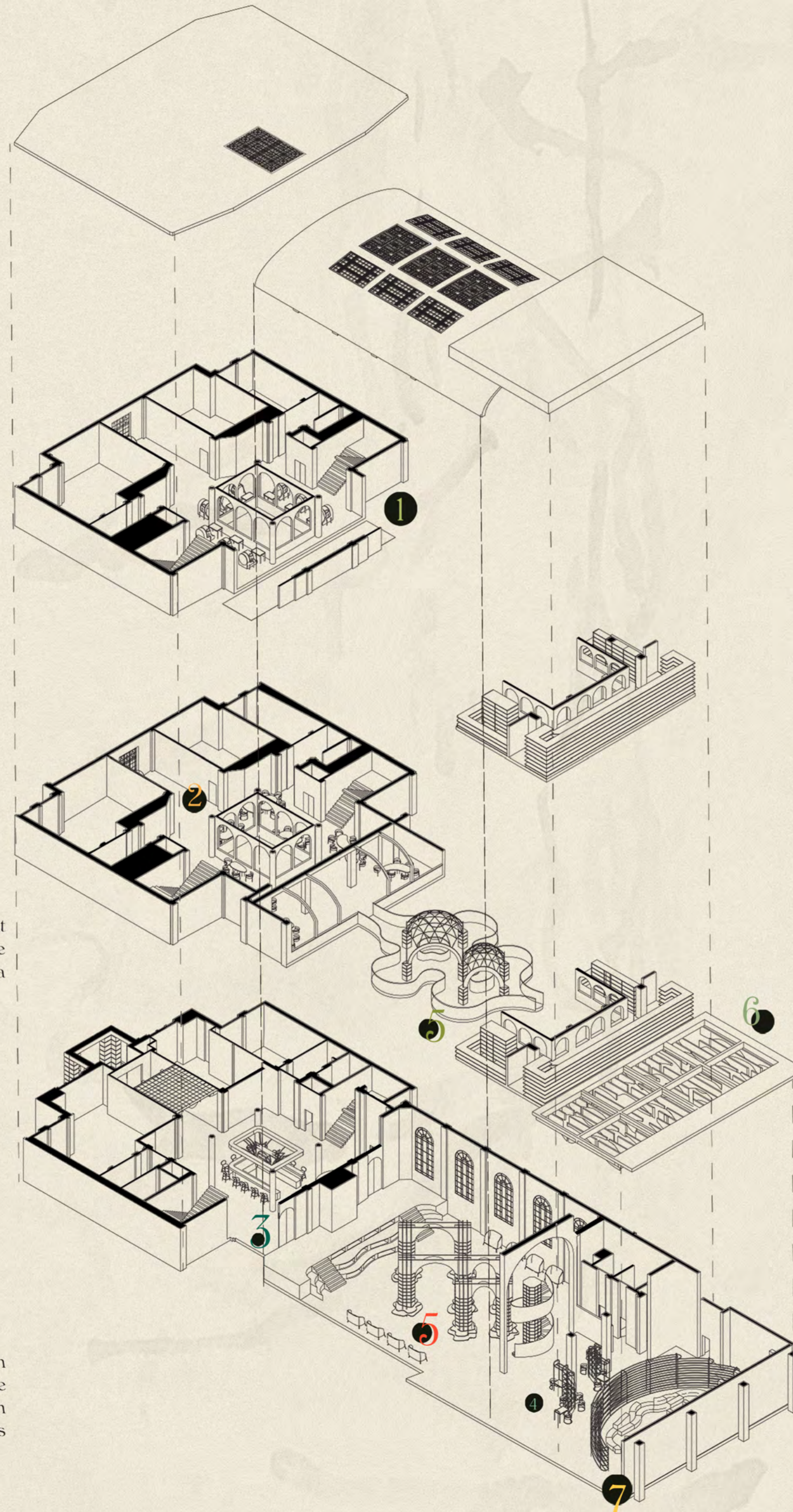


The bar's structure, colours and materiality are influenced by the theatre's Art Deco style but with a more contemporary atmosphere. The brass sculptural branches not only support the upper structure but also filter the natural light coming from the skylight above, creating a vertical connection in the atrium.

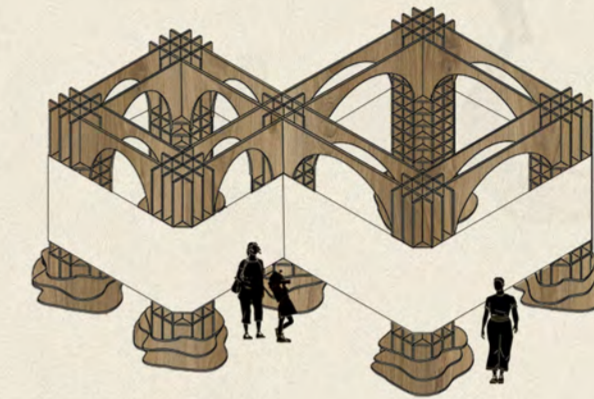
## No.4 Study Maze



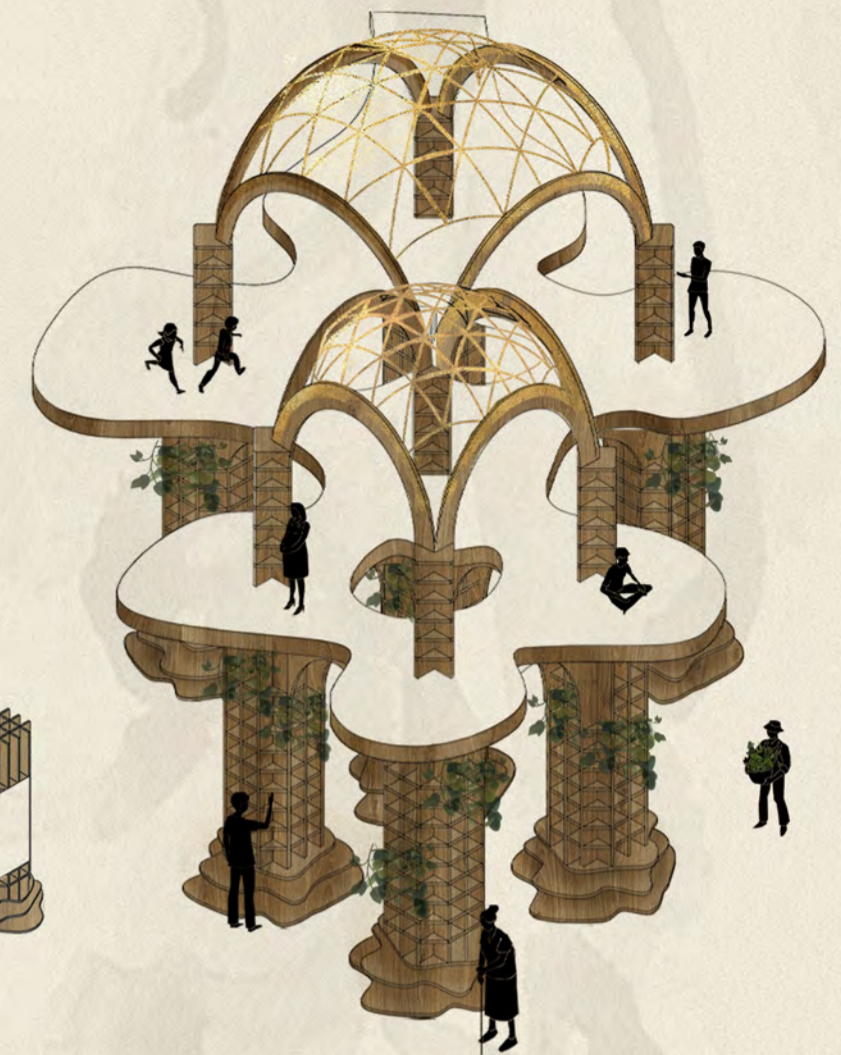
Going past the library, the journey into the meaphorical woods reaches the point of maximum density and minimum lighting. This was achieved by creating a bespoke structure with multiple rows of "pipes" that create the effect of a twisted maze of verticalities and transparencies. In terms of functionality, this "maze" offers multiple working spots with comfortable armchairs and incorporated tables.



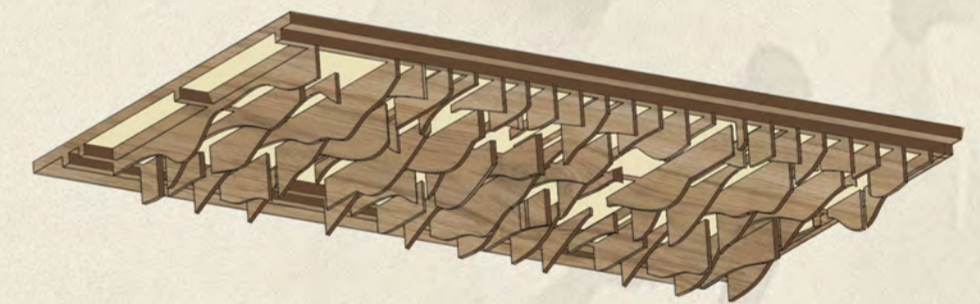
## No.5 Library



The library is the "Axis Mundi" of the microcosmos. Build as a series of interlocking glulam boards. Although in the daytime it acts as a library, after the sun sets, the atmosphere shifts to a more mysterious one. The flexibility of the space allows it to transform into an extravagant bar, serving drinks and socialising between the tree trunks or even allows it to become a digitally immersive installation, bringing together the old and new ways of learning.



## No.6 Acoustic Canopy



The original ceiling has been replaced by a timber waffle structure with skylights, acoustic fins to shape the "canopy" and an incorporated AuReuscoloured window cladding in which waste crops are turned into brightly coloured cladding that can generate clean energy from UV light.

## No.7 Alternative Classroom



This partition acts as a barrier; as the end of the dense and dark woods and marks the beginning of the end of the journey: the clearing. With an airy and bright atmosphere, this open space can hold any type of activities, from classes to workshops to concerts to all kinds of activities by only changing the shape of the modular seating according to one's needs.

LIBRARY (FF)



SINGULAR STUDY



STUDY MAZE



LIBRARY MODEL



LIBRARY (GF)



BAR / CAFE



ALTERNATIVE CLASSROOM



SECTION  
not to scale

