

The Third Place .

“RIVER BANKS” URBAN BLOCK LIBRARY



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The IDEA - fuelling creativity

Whilst roaming around Waterloo station in London with family in 2018, we stumbled across what looked like a dark and eerie tunnel. People were entering and leaving the tunnel with a buzz of excitement on their faces. Curiosity took the better of us and we entered, shocked to uncover what I can only call as an oasis of beautiful street art. Endless walls were painted in vibrant murals which radiated creativity and passion. It felt like a cool and edgy place to be in, where anyone could leave their mark with just a can of spray paint.

Something I particularly enjoyed was how this “open art gallery” connected people from all backgrounds together. This public space allowed anyone to exhibit their skills and creativity, for the world to see. The art on these walls continuously changes with no two days being the same: just like the cultural and social climate of the world.

Street art is an incredibly diverse and varied art movement, one that is growing in popularity, as the work being exhibited on streets continues to develop in terms of size, style, and sheer skill. It grants people with “a voice” in a world where people often feel unheard.

There is something in the flow of lines and the play of geometries in graffiti that particularly appeals to the architectural side of me. I always thought about how interesting it would be to design a building encapsulating a piece of graffiti, where the architecture starts to encompass the character of a graffiti tag. And so an idea began.



Leake Street (London's Largest Legal graffiti tunnel) Source: /lcrproperty.co.uk



Source: /lcrproperty.co.uk



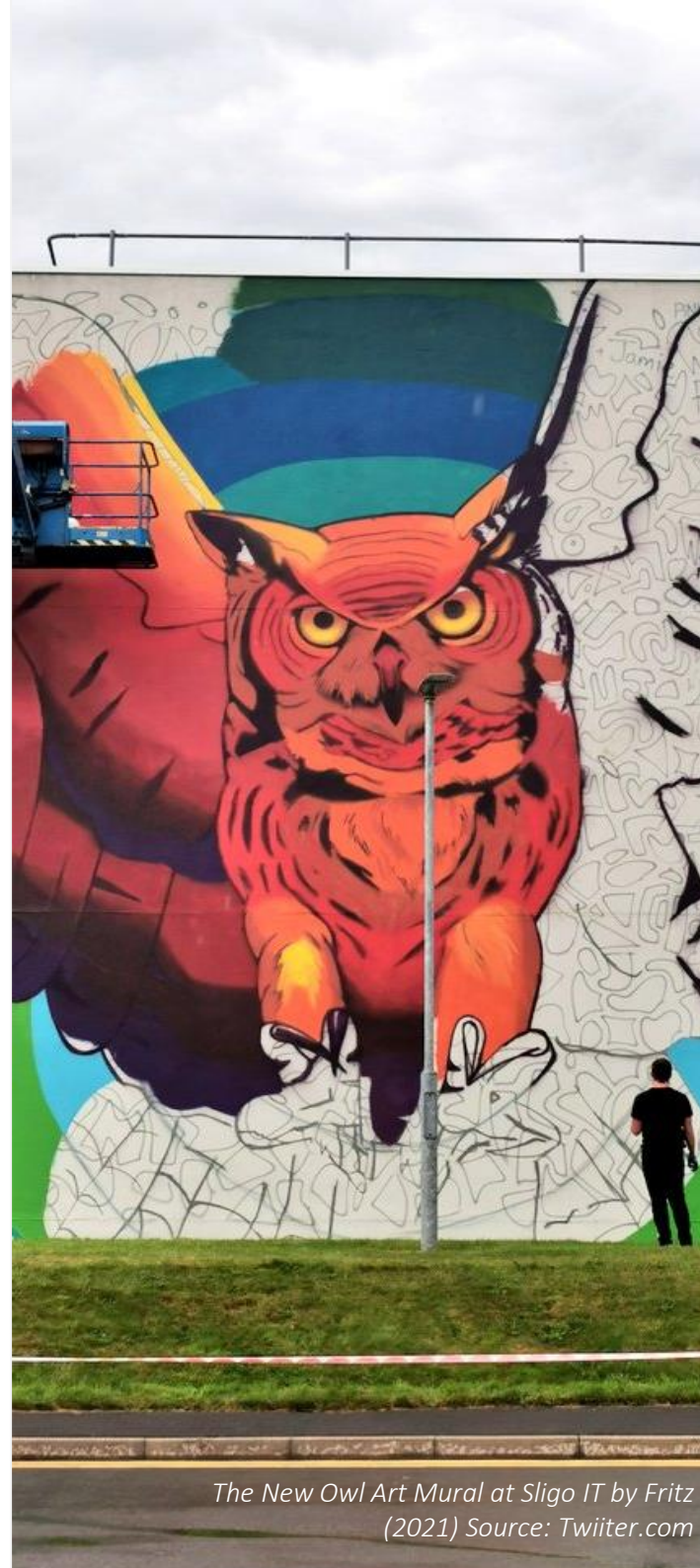
Leake Street Tunnel, Source nultylighting.co.uk

Urban art does not exist in a vacuum. The built fabric of cities and towns provides the canvas on which street artists exhibit their creations, indistinguishably linking it to its environment. For street artists, the influence of the environment by which they are surrounded, whether physical or social, is undeniable. The process is not just about finding an empty space to fill, but about consciously merging art and architecture to elevate the relationship between the two. (O'Higgins, 2021)

When undertaking my urban analysis, I couldn't help notice how urban art fills the streets of Sligo. Car parks, cul-de-sacs and walkways; its everywhere! The artwork is amazing and showcase some truly phenomenal talent such as the renown Sligo born "Fritz". I couldn't help be reminded of the time I uncovered "Leake Street Tunnel" and the creativity and vibrancy I felt in that space.

This thesis seeks to propose a new building typology for libraries in Ireland- a cultural centre, anchored in a library aimed exclusively for the youth of Sligo. The project revolves around the city of Sligo and its street culture and Graffiti art. In doing so it reimagines the library, no longer as a definitive source of knowledge; but instead as a facilitator. An extended space that integrates multiple functions and serves as a creative, social hub for teenagers.

This youth library is imagined as a public place which is vibrant, relaxed and open to all; fitted with modern digital technology which encourages learning. It aims to make education fun and accessible to all, ultimately reducing unemployment and unsocial behaviour in the area. It will offer a 'safe space' for the youth of Sligo to hang out in after school; ultimately acting as a 'third place'- somewhere for them to go in-between school and home. The building is representative of youth, thus giving youngsters a much needed sense of space and identity to express themselves.



*The New Owl Art Mural at Sligo IT by Fritz
(2021) Source: Twitter.com*

02 | PRECEDENT'S

02.1

Library on the Quay/ ATA studio

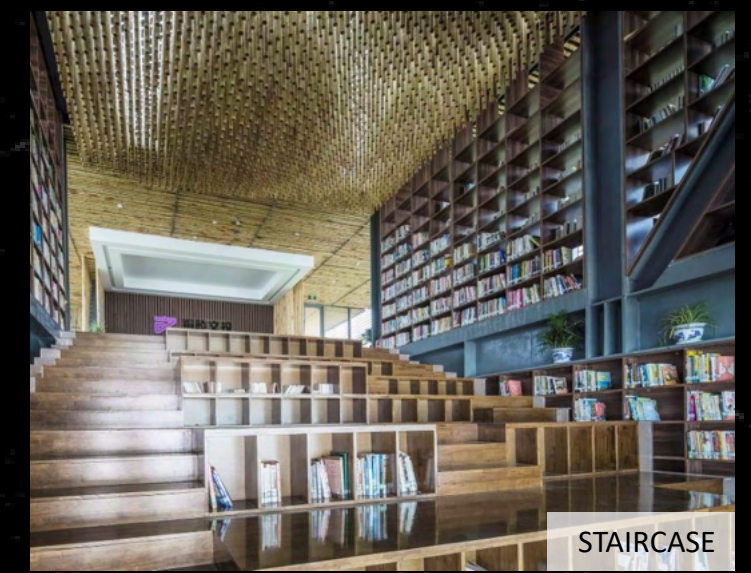
Location: Tongling, China
Architects: ATA
Area: 500 m²
Year: 2014

This project is a library built on an abandoned quay by the riverside. The library is an important part of the riverside park that was converted from an industrial wharf, preserving the historical memory of the place. Acted as an urban catalyst for regeneration to the quay.



POSITION

Dramatic position above water capturing views of water and coast. Based on looking outwards- towards the ocean utilising its site.



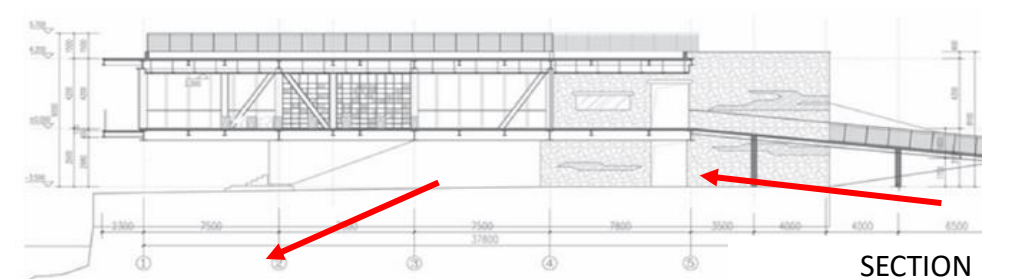
STAIRCASE



PLAZA

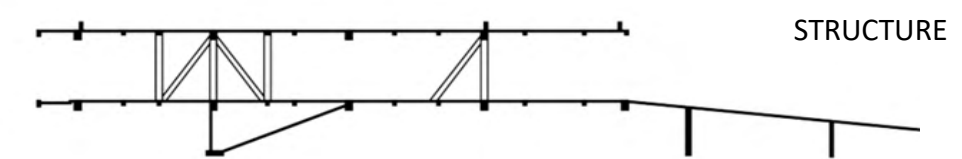


SITE PLAN



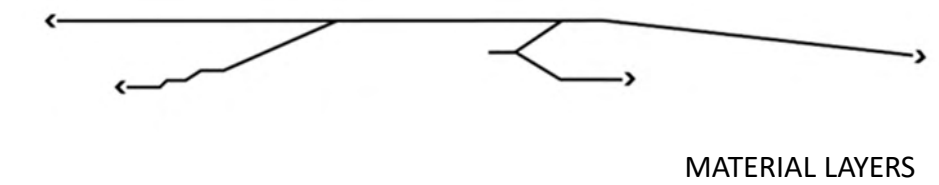
SECTION

Library centred on a single rectangular volume. Absence of changes in vertical space, emphasis on horizontal movement. Users access the building via a ramp.



STRUCTURE

Main library floor as a cantilevered bridge. Steel structure contrasting with stone foundation below.



MATERIAL LAYERS

Material palette reveals levels of transparency that mediate the transition of the coastline. Building radiates between stone and glass; symbolic to earth and water.



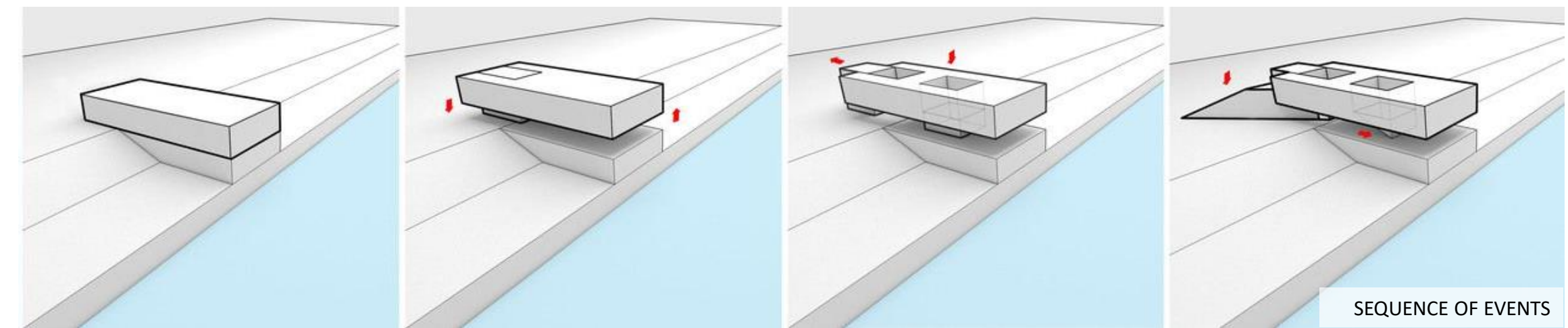
CIRCULATION

Linear nature of the library, creates a sense of direction that points to the water and relates to the massing and direction of the quay below.

The staircase acts as a reading room, descending to the quay. Intimate small space. Walls act as bookshelves.

The overhead structure frames views of the coast. Offers a space for users to sit and enjoy the views, protected under shelter

Meandering pathway following the sites contours leads to the library. Nestled in the site. Regenerated the area greatly enhancing its former dead public realm.



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

In order not to dominate the older quay, once used for shipping access, the library is raised above the stone. The plaza sheltered by the cantilever and the ramp leading to the entry condition, blurs the interior and exterior spaces.

02.2

Viipuri Library / Alvar Aalto

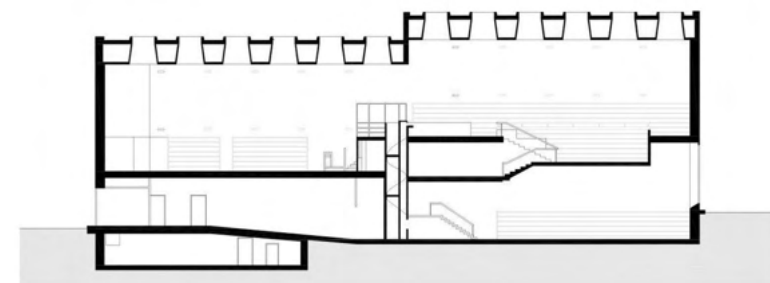
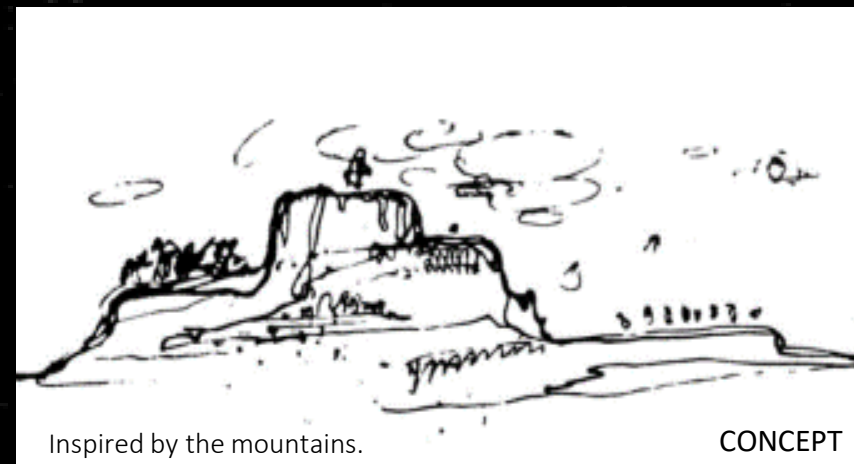
Location: Viipuri, Finland

Architects: Alvar Aalto

Size: 2500 m²

Year: 1935

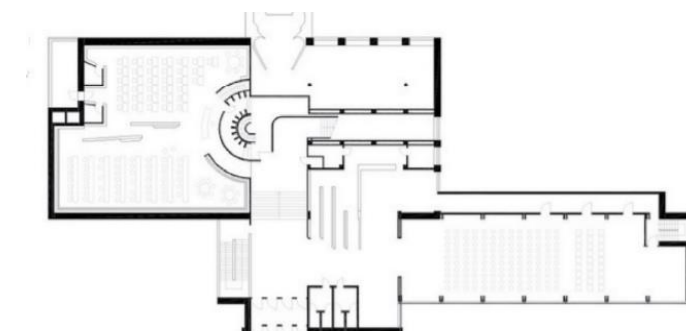
Aalto won the competition to design the library in his native country in 1997. The building is a world famous masterpiece of 20th century modernism.



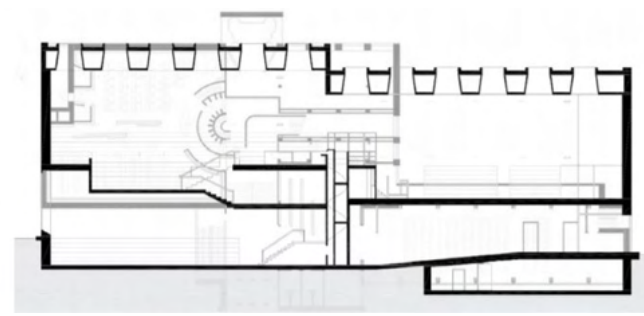
The library's architectural core consists of reading and lending areas at different levels and plateaus. Circulation at the peak.



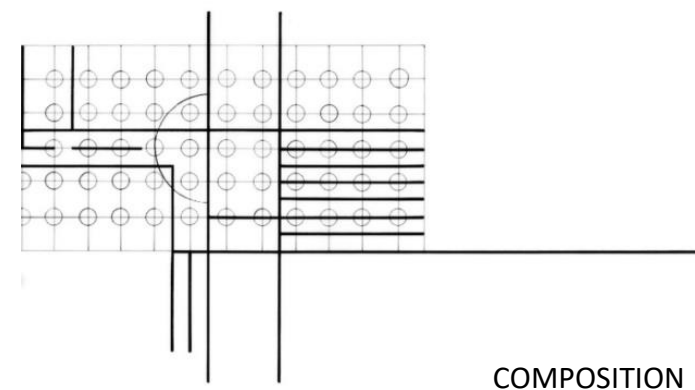
Simple massing comprised of two rectangular blocks offset horizontally. Reading spaces behind the administration and community spaces in the entrance block.



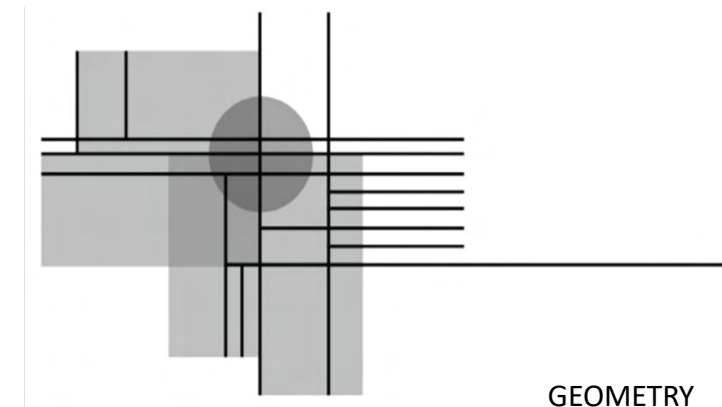
Floor plan accommodates easy movement through the library. Creates a seamless, continuous journey that meanders through the entirety of the building.



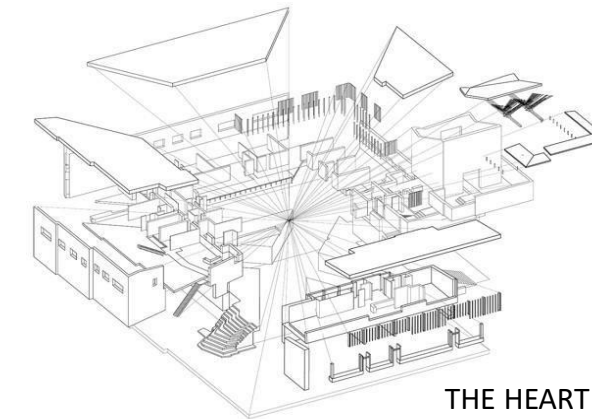
Reveals the complexity of the spaces. The centre and control area forms the high point above the different levels



Composition determined by a rigorously logical process, driven by scalar grids and proportional relationships



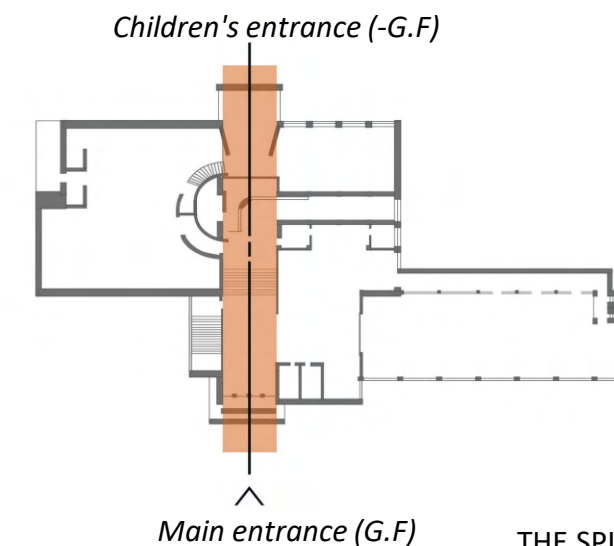
Introduction of a contrasting circle as the geometric heart of the building emphasizes the importance of the reference desk within the plan.



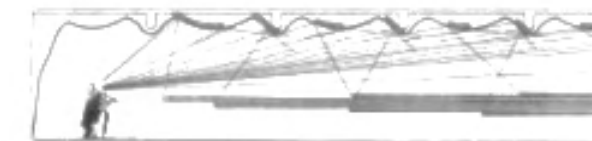
At the heart is the circular reference desk. A powerful circular motif in an orthogonal system.



Reading spaces are daylighted by a grid of skylights above. No direct sunlight enters, it is reflected in thousands of lines of reflection- result of the conical shape of the skylight; reducing glare and shadows distracting users.



The main entrance is at the spine of the building. A separate children's entrance located on the lower floor. Volumes are completely separated corresponding to the functional differentiation program.



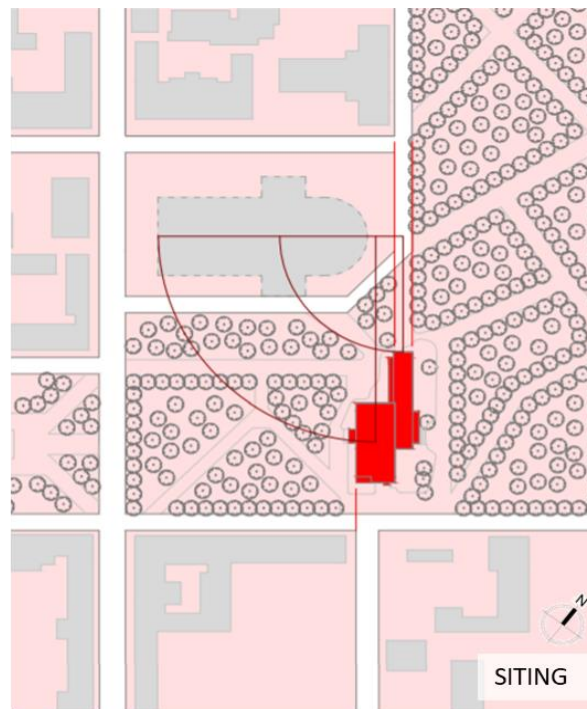
In the conference room the architect solved the acoustics of the space with ripples in the roof.



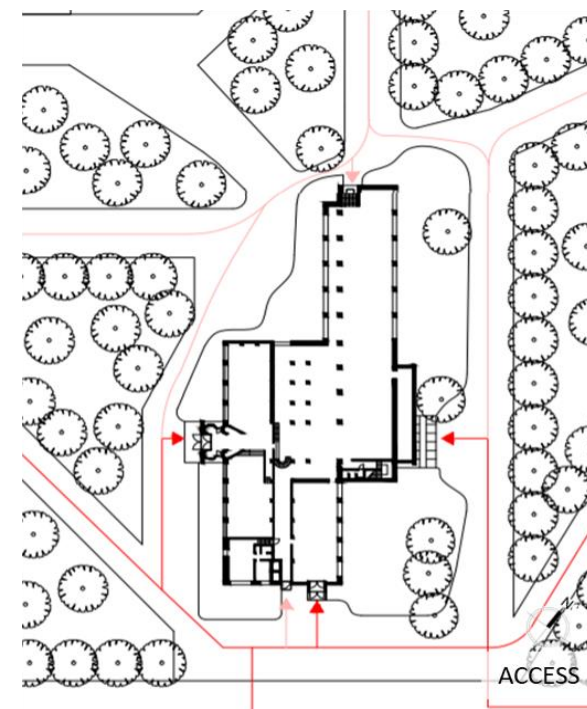
In 1933, Viipuri was a thriving industrial and commercial port city. Library is not located next to any other buildings. Large open space northeast of the building and a lot of trees surrounding the building. Open space allows natural light to enter the building and provides a quiet, relaxing environment for users in a busy city. Trees act as sound barriers.



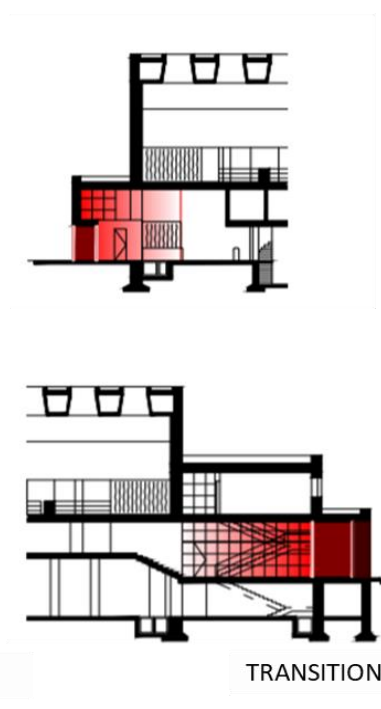
Designed on the city axes; embedded in the park and city pattern. Followed the present plot and street grid.



Directly related the library to the cathedral. Centrelines and different radiuses intersect the library and church at fixed positions.



Different directions of approaching, due to organic routes through the park. Consequently, different entrances were created by Aalto.



Visitors guided through an entrance zone. Creates a smooth transition from interior to exterior.

02.3

Lincoln Inn Library/ MICA studio

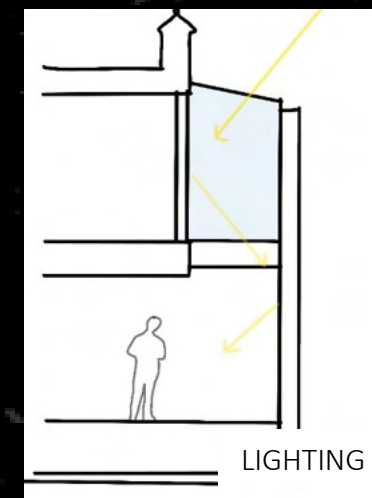
Location: London, UK

Architects: MICA

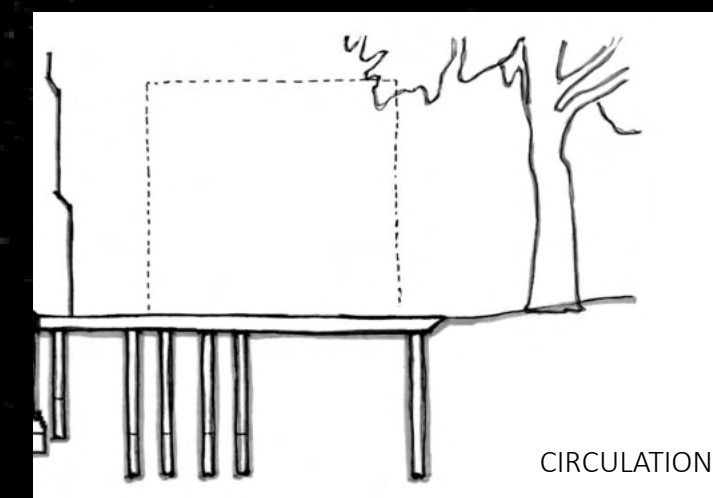
Size: 1850 m²

Year: 2019

Part of MICA's 2014 masterplan for the Inn's historic estate. The architects took a holistic approach and made a series of largely discrete developments. This historic building is Grade I and Grade II-listed, therefore any alterations had to be carefully considered and sensitively integrate with the rich heritage of the site.



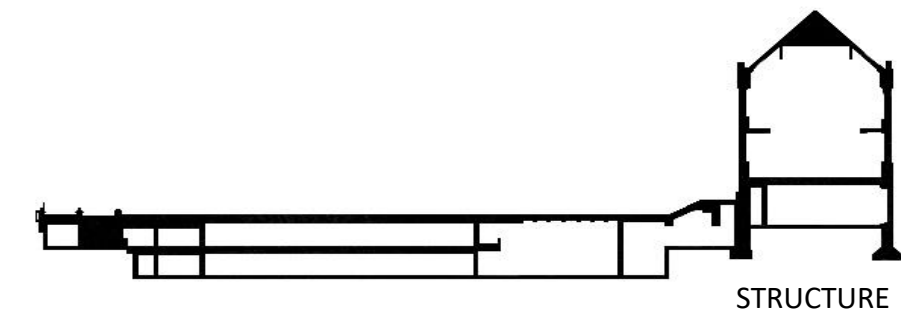
Angled windows penetrate the spaces with tonnes of sunlight



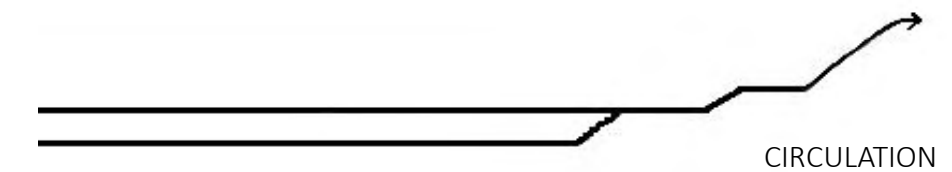
Extension replaced a poor quality 1960's domestic building. The scale is respectful to the height of the previous building.



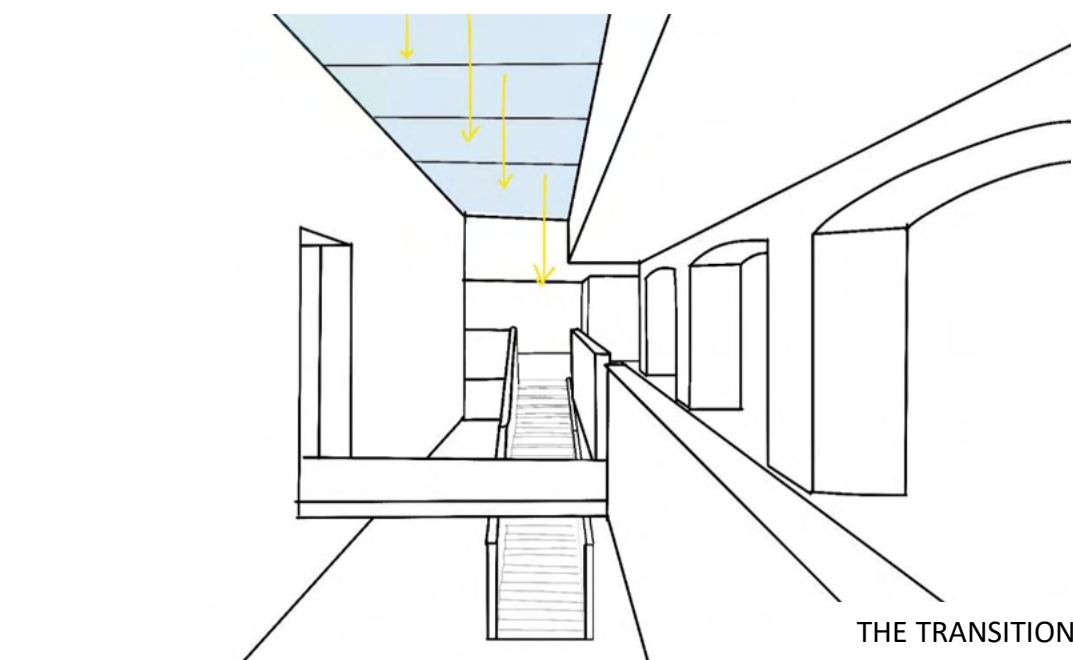
Largely discrete additions with the majority of new space massed underground-hidden from the user. Simple form complimentary in scale.



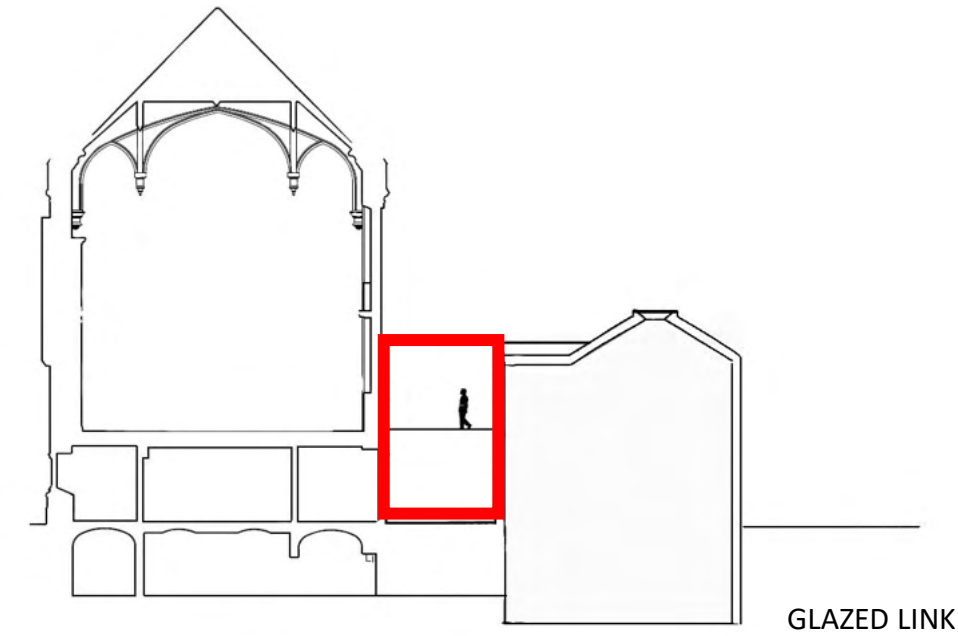
Perimeter piles with reinforced steelwork form the permanent structure. Measures taken to ensure the long-term stability of the structure-important in a such a historically important building .



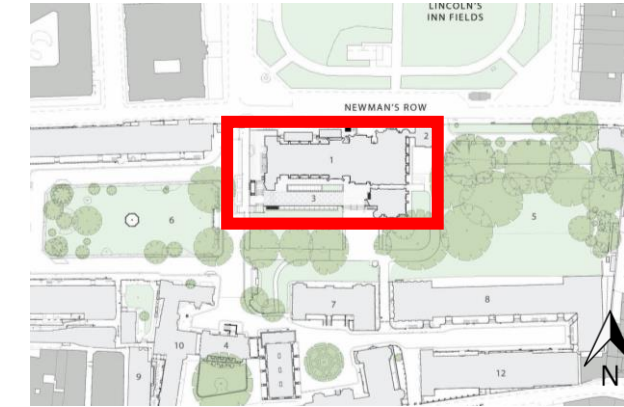
Few partitions, makes wayfinding easy.



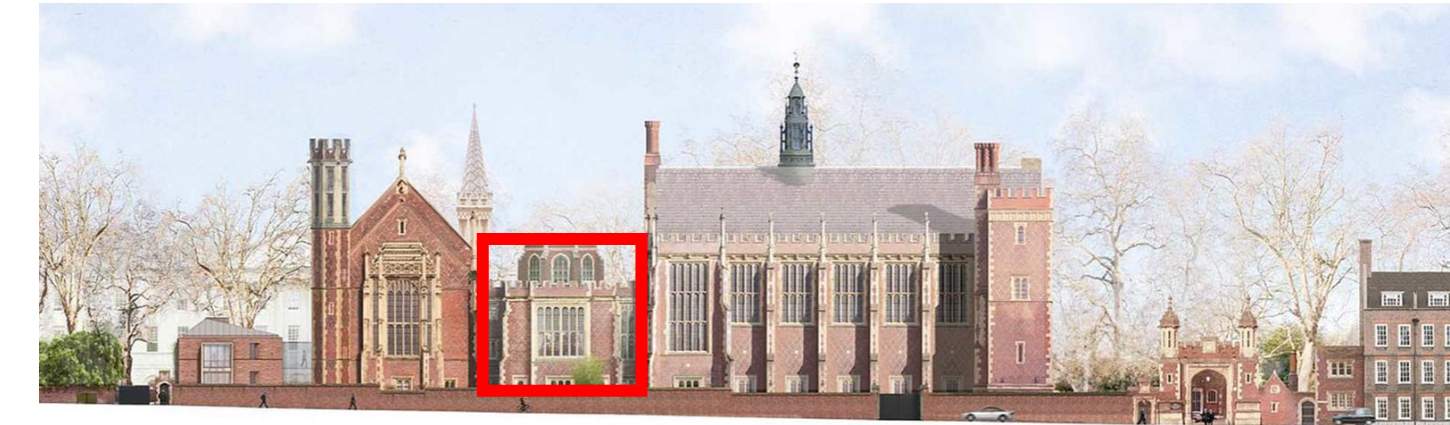
Clever use of windows and light wells draw daylight in at all levels. Raised roof lights flood the underground spaces with natural daylight. Carved out of the original subterranean brick arches making a smooth transition from the old to new.



A seven-metre-tall frameless glass link structure connects the existing structure to the new library building. Balsa wood lines the walls creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere.



The central London site is bounded by Chancery Lane, High Holborn, Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Royal Courts of Justice. There is also multiple pedestrians pathways to the building, ensuring easy flow of users to and from the site.



The inn is situated on a large estate of historic buildings, contemporary facilities and tranquil grounds in central London. The additions by MICA enhance the public realm of the space. Existing, new and public realm all integrate seamlessly due to their common materiality and haptic qualities. Additions are modest and minimal.



Advocacy Rooms designed to allow multiple space configurations. Retractable partitions allow the sub-division of space to facilitate everything.



Large double height spaces bring natural light in. As a result the space has a light and airy feeling- which you would not expect in a basement.



Roof lights set in a stone surround which double as external seating, allowing exterior places of contemplation



The basement roof is a walkable surface where users can conjugate and socialise, key in this rich historical setting. Landscaped gardens also incorporated.



Accessibility is limited, due to the high profile exclusivity of the site. Bordered by a surrounding wall.

02.4

Biblo Tøyen: no adults allowed!

Location: Oslo, Norway

Architects: Aat Vos

Size: 585m²

Year: 2016

Biblo Tøyen is a library exclusively for children aged between 10 and 15. Philosophy- working with young people to create a space they can own. For kids, by kids. The goal- to create an atypical culture house that would speak to this target audience in as many ways, shapes, colours, props and forms as possible. To motivate and instil a love of reading and learning in young people through fun and educational activities such as drama, music, cooking, computer programming, 3-d printing, and Lego building.

Unexpected props and striking visuals make the library come alive. Wavy mirror walls, a truck as a tea booth and wheel barrels as chairs are just some of the creative details. The space is filled with a sense of weightlessness and ease due to the many floating elements, including bookshelves hanging on rails which makes it easy to rearrange the space for different functions and events. The library is decorated with reused materials throughout and has a warm atmosphere. The informal interior design helps de-institutionalizing the library institution.



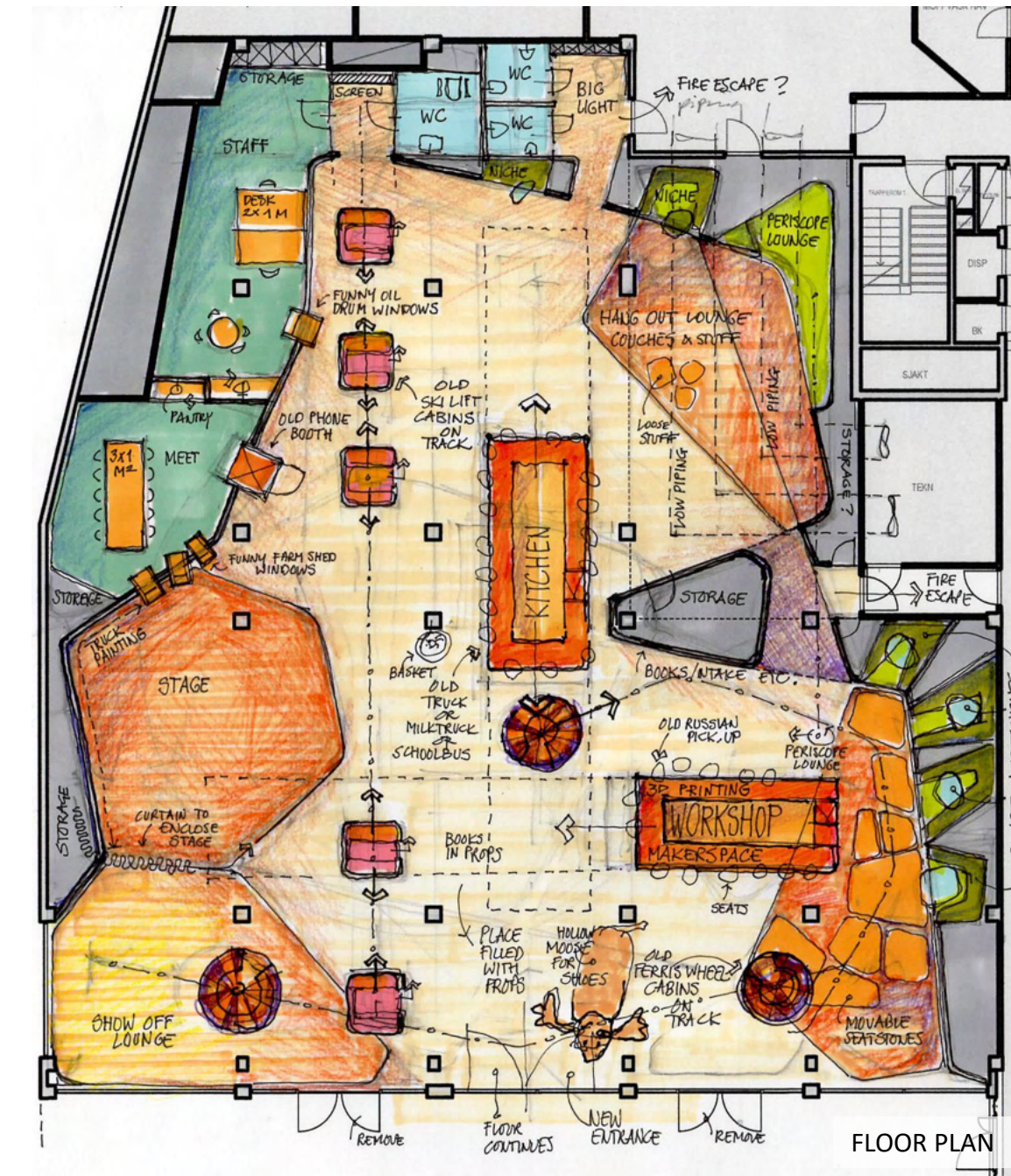
All books have radio tags on their covers and every night a drone fly's over the bookshelves to scan and locate each book for easy access the next day. Books are grouped by themes or features such as 'animals' or 'short and good' so a science fiction book may be next to a book about robots to encourage discovery in a more natural way.

"In the centre of the library is an old Volvo truck, nicknamed Teddy, pimped out with a functional kitchen in the back and a sofa in the hood. Members can read while lounging in a wheelbarrow, work on homework inside a converted tuk-tuk, or discuss group projects in an old ski gondola hanging from the ceiling. The entire library embodies and encourages creativity and imagination."

This library is located at Tøyen Square in Oslo, an area being modernized to compensate for the removal of the Munch Museum from the quarter. It has a high population density with many low-income citizens and social problems. The library offers a safe space for children to hang out for free under the supervision of adults. Greatly enhances the public realm and lifts the area up.



SATELLITE



03





SITE SELECTION

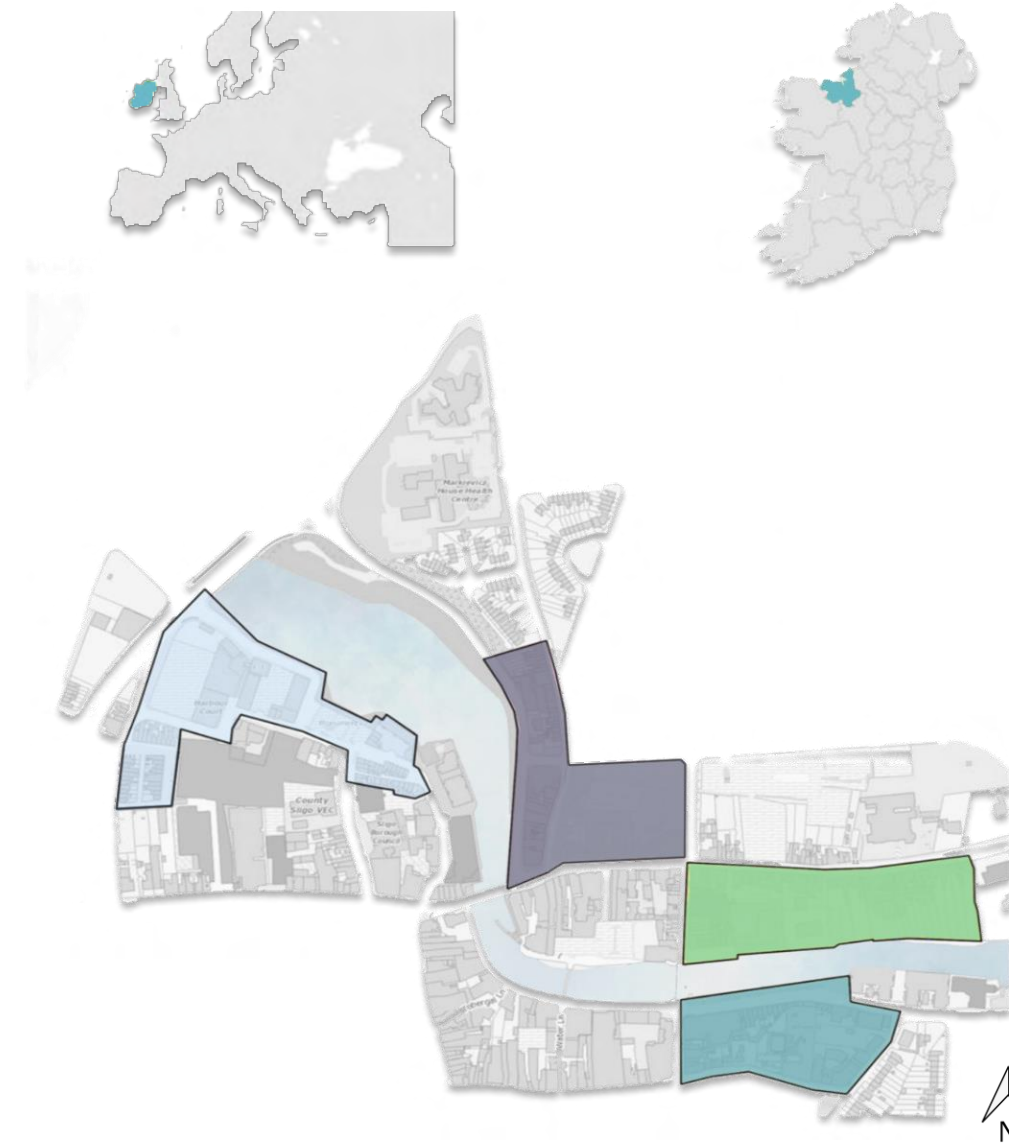
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

To make an informed decision on which site is most appropriate to the brief, I must review previous research conducted in Semester 1. During the urban analysis conducted in the first project we assessed the strengths and weaknesses of four key blocks in Sligo town .These blocks are all allocated along the river banks in the Sligo public realm action plan. Each block has a unique relationship with its context and the Garavogue river.

A SWOT analysis was conducted to get a brief overview of each block focusing on;

- History & Contextual
- Urban Morphology
- Architectural Form
- Stakeholder needs and aspirations

-  CUSTOMS HOUSE QUAY BLOCK
-  STEPHEN STREET BLOCK
-  THE MALL TO THE RIVER BLOCK
-  ABBEY QUARTER BLOCK



STRENGTHS

- The most underutilised area in Sligo despite its prime location, falling between the town centre, the new dock and the periphery neighbourhoods across Hughes bridge. It is in close proximity to the main high street, which provides strong retail and commercial potential.
- Ample number of open spaces wasted on vacant plots and carparking, with tremendous wide vistas and atmospheric qualities of the Garavogue river.
- Contains a large site with direct access to river frontage with a low wall. Features heritage ladders/steps and a slipway which all lead to the water. Huge potential to reconnect users and the town with the Garvogue and nature. Perfect to be redeveloped into a docklands quarter/a water-sports activity centre.
- As the main northern entrance to the town the site acts as a gateway to the city. It has the potential to uplift the character of the townscape and catalyse future development along the river.
- Relatively flat topography in this block offers the most in terms of circulation and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.
- Has a deep cultural connection with the historic famine port. Could inspire a swathe of development relating to a heritage docklands quarter.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Vacant plots and buildings located on the Customs house road junction could be redeveloped into a green urban park/civic space with river frontage and fantastic gateway qualities. This could act as a catalyst for future regeneration of this quarter.
- Vacant plots either side of the dual carriageway could be used as landing points for a pedestrian footbridge which the area really requires. It would re-establish links between the east and west of Sligo, important due to the location of the bus and train station (for college students) and Ursuline college school, and aiding their movement to the town centre.
- Footpaths could also be widened to aid pedestrian movement through the space.
- The previous famine port could inspire the development of a community centre in honour of the challenges Irish families persevered through during the famine and the uniting of communities. Would also be an ideal location for a museum/pavilion in memory of the Irish famine and the lives it claimed.
- Famine monument could be moved to a much more appropriate space

WEAKNESSES

- Ultimately this block lacks “life” and a sense of community in spite of its historical context.
- Due to its close proximity to the N15 the space receives some noise pollution from on coming traffic.
- The block borders a significant problem area for the pedestrian realm due to poor connections between the quay and port.
- Poor walkability and permeability through the block due to a lack of footpaths, signposts and excessively high walls. Gates and walls hinder circulation and wayfinding through the vacant plots for people passing through from the town centre.
- The block possesses spaces which appear derelict and run down due to lack of public lighting/ general maintenance. Overgrown bushes, lack of landscaping and abandon buildings creates an unsafe atmosphere which encourages anti-social behaviour.
- There has been no development of green space or public realm despite numerous previous attempts being made. This is the historic engine of Sligo however there is no evidence of that.
- Quayside shopping centre is a massive complex which has a negative impact of the Victorian imprint of the block
- Seagulls tend to dwell in this block near the waters edge, which can be a nuisance and deterrent to users. Mess from their droppings can pollute the space and gulls can damage roofing and nest in gutters..

THREATS

- The lack of people living in the area and number of derelict buildings could result in an unsafe area, encouraging antisocial behaviour. Future developments would need to address this issue and inspire future housing projects to put eyes on the streets at night.
- With modern industrialisation the area could be redeveloped into an unsightly large factory or fishing port which would not respect or cultivate the historical context of the block.
- The river can expose an unsightly riverbed at low tide. Occasional dredging would be required to maintain an appealing character for the new park.

STRENGTHS

- The Mall was once the primary northern route into town before the N4 inner relief road was built in 2005. A long and wide throughfare with extensive sightlines and impressive buildings of cultural and historical value.
- South of the Mall, the sharply sloped river bank is undeveloped and underutilised. It is one of the few remaining natural banks in the urban townscape, making it a vital ecological conservation site. Beautiful historic trees have remained in this site untouched for hundreds of years.
- At the Malls peak, Georgian-esque townhouses have panoramic views and private access to the Garavogue river and Sligo’s skyline to the south.
- Kempten promenade is in direct contact with the Garavogue river, possessing beautiful views and river frontage with great potential.
- Identified as the cultural quarter this block is central to the economic, cultural and social growth of Sligo as a gateway to the North-West of Ireland.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Large number of students commuting between IT Sligo and the town centre both day and night, provide a sustainable niche market to develop for.
- The one way system in place ensures the street is never congested with vehicles. Landscaping and widening footpaths could enhance this asset, improving the public realm.
- A civic block in close proximity to both third level, secondary and primary educational facilities provides a consistent user to the area. Offers the potential to develop an “after school” club for the towns youth, enabling them to socialise, study and find a sense of community. They can avail of resources and recreational facilities outside of college hours.
- The large open green space to the south of the Mall has great potential to be developed into a public community space which the town is currently lacking in.
- The model library is an important cultural building, which can work in conjunction to an after school club to offer a creative program to users.
- The mall has a natural slope towards the river, which offers exciting opportunities for development.

WEAKNESSES

- The high culture status of the Model gallery makes it difficult for buildings pertaining to the working class to gain a foothold.
- A footbridge crossing the weir awkwardly connects the Grammar school to the Abbey block and is an area prone to unsocial behaviour by secondary school kids.
- Bridge street bridge only posses one narrow pedestrian footpath, affecting accessibility to the abbey block and vice versa.
- Lack of public seating on Kempten promenade to enjoy the views of the river from.
- The Mall possesses a one way road which makes accessibility to the block difficult particularly to those who don’t know the area well.
- Edge conditions and land ownership make it difficult to break through the terrace edge and find views of the river. The vast majority of views are hidden behind the tall townhouses.
- Furthermore the high rising townhouses also block a lot of the natural sunlight to the block, creating dark cold spaces.
- This areas popularity has significantly decreased since the completion of the N4 in 2005, resulting in the block almost becoming a forgotten part of the town.
- The narrow walkway towards the footbridge crossing at the south of the block is bordered by tall walls with a lack of lighting creating an unsociable space, where youth tend to dwell.

THREATS

- The south of the Mall currently possesses a forest biodiversity, which many locals may be objecting to disrupting for the establishment of a new building.
- The natural riverbanks must be conserved with any new additions, whilst still capturing the picturesque Sligo skyline for the proposal design.
- The historic value of the street must be maintained, with any new interventions having a minimal impact to the existing historic streetscape.

03.3 THE ABBEY BLOCK S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Footbridges spanning the Garavogue provide the block with adequate foot traffic and act as primary circulation routes through the town centre.
- JFK parade is a busy social node where attempts have been made at creating a public realm, as landscaping and seating are evident.
- In close proximity to a number of popular bars and restaurants, attracting people to the block creating a sustainable niche.
- Houses the Dominican abbey, the historic remains of a former friary built in 1252 by the Dominicans. It originally overlooked the wooden crossing over the Garavogue river and is of deep cultural meaning to the town.
- Relatively flat topography in this block makes the space accessible for people of all ages and abilities.
- Large car park to the south of the block ensures user accessibility to the abbey.
- Picturesque views of the Garavogue can be enjoyed along the rivers edge due to a lack of buildings obscuring the view.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The abbey offers great potential to the block and has a deep rooted connection to the town. Offers prospects to be redeveloped into a historical museum or heritage based public plaza. Removing the restricted access and reintroducing views and access from the north of the town would be necessary to fulfil this aim.
- Creative technology could also be used to offer a new and exciting way to undertake heritage storytelling.
- The goal would be to protect, preserve and showcase the Abbey as a landmark of Sligo's cultural heritage.
- The parade and its views could be enhanced further into a cultural plaza with sheltered space to attract more users to the area.

WEAKNESSES

- The Abbey is underutilised and hidden behind buildings. Blocked off from the river and often locked to the public. Only opens seasonally to the public through a small visitors centre. There is also poor pedestrian pathways and wayfinding towards the abbey, with a lack of signage and footpaths which have fallen into disrepair.
- This block has some of the worst traffic congestion in the town during peak times, particularly at its key junctions.
- A general lack and poor positioning of public crossings has resulted in J-walking being a common problem in this area.
- A footbridge crossing the weir awkwardly connects the Abbey block to the Mall and is an area prone to unsocial behaviour by secondary school kids.
- Bridge street bridge only poses one narrow pedestrian footpath, affecting accessibility to the abbey block and vice versa.
- The riverside flats to the north east of the block are an eyesore to the streetscape, particularly when considered alongside the abbey and historic mills in the area.
- The one way system along the promenade can prove difficult to new users to navigate along, as it is not clearly highlighted.

THREATS

- An ill-conceived design has the possibility to damage the abbey, particularly when work is carried out on a building this old. Serious consideration would need to be given to protect the masonry carvings and structural integrity of the Abbey.
- The proximity to residential neighbourhoods brings the risk of the site becoming an area for underage drinking and antisocial behaviour without the intervention of some deterrent which doesn't restrict access

03.4 THE CHOSEN SITE WITHIN ITS BLOCK

Following the feasibility study, the Mall to River block was selected as the chosen site for the thesis project. Within this block I choose an open green space which is in direct contact with the river banks and currently lies unutilised.

Site Area: Approx. 1300m²

Site description:

- The site slopes towards the Garavogue river and is unutilised, offering exciting potential.

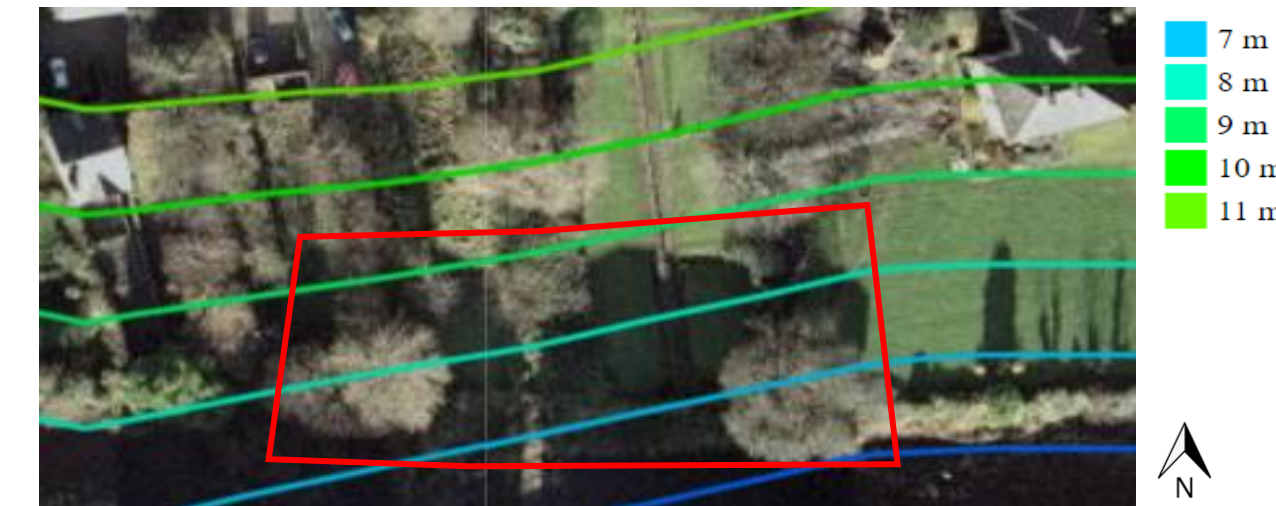
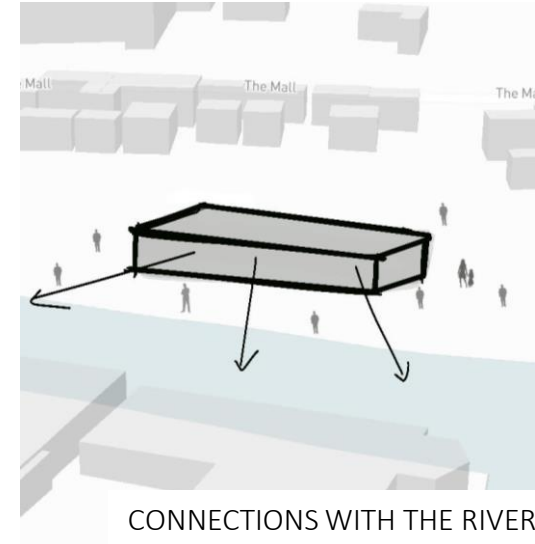
- In close proximity to Sligo Grammar school and Carbury

National School offering a sustainable niche market to

develop for. Falls within a civic zone, making it a suitable

site for this building typology.

- Panoramic views and direct private access to the Garavogue river and Sligo's skyline to the south.



WHAT IS A LIBRARY?

“A library is a curated collection of sources of information and similar resources, selected by experts and made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing, often in a quiet environment conducive to study.”- Oxford Dictionary

- It is no longer a repository of books as knowledge of the past is going through digital preservation. Knowledge is constantly being created due to general knowledge transfer. Relevant and timely information is key. We should re-envision the modern day library. Instead of a place to absorb or find knowledge it should be a place of creation which puts knowledge in practice.
- Norway, like many other countries in Europe, is redefining the whole concept of libraries; changing them from being a place for books – to becoming a place for people. A place where people meet and exchange thoughts and ideas, and collect new information. a social space free for all.
- Making connections to community and outside. Not just accessing outside information, but also from each other.



04

SECONDARY RESEARCH

“Public libraries have been a familiar feature of the Irish cultural and community landscape for over 150 years. As the Library Council states: ‘Their purpose is to provide access to the world of the imagination; to the cultural memory of communities and society at large, and to sources of information and knowledge.’

Public libraries perform a valuable community service, democratising access to reading, information and learning. They provide a focal point for community, and enable access to learning and an ever-expanding range of information. Libraries have always catered for children and families, as well as for individual readers of all ages. But they have frequently struggled to maintain the interest of young people and young adults, from teenagers to those in their early 20s. It is often at this age that usage shows a sharp decline and this is reflected in the experience of public libraries nationally and internationally (Define Research and Insight, 2006). In many ways, this is not surprising.

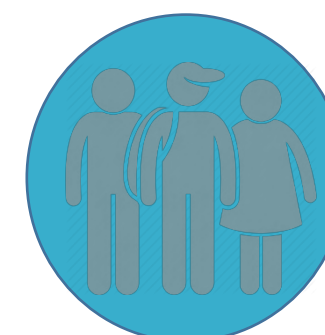
Internationally, there is a recognition that reconceptualising public libraries might mean moving away from the traditional mode of library operation, (a culture of silence) to seeing them as venues for a ‘cultural hub’. International research shows that reading continues to be important in young people’s lives, but increasingly includes a wider range of media than books alone. In the Irish context, it has been found that the highest percentage of people who had ever been library members (88%) was in the 15-19 year-old age bracket. However, in Ireland a relatively small amount of public library space is allocated specifically for young people’s stock and services. While more space is available in newer library buildings, half the library authorities surveyed estimated that less than 10% of their space was allocated to stock and services specifically for young people. All of the focus groups investigated felt that libraries could, and should do more to encourage usage by young people. At no time was a view expressed that libraries were irrelevant or not of value to young people, although the word ‘boring’ did feature frequently in comments. Restrictions on talking, eating, access to the popular social networking websites and generally not being ‘allowed’ to do things that are otherwise seen as normal practice in young people’s lives were cited as barriers to library use for youth.”

Young People and Public Libraries in Ireland: Issues and Opportunities Report- office of the minister for children and youth affairs. Children’s Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin (2010) Accessed 14/02/2021

MOTIVATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO USE LIBRARIES:



reading material and other media of specific interest and cultural relevance to young people;



allocated space;



attractive décor and comfortable furnishings;



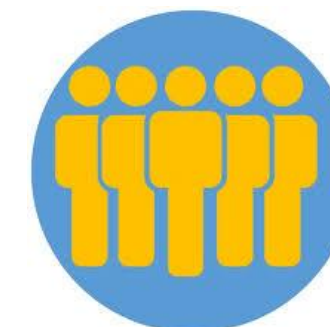
adequate provision of ICT equipment and more extensive on-line access;



the provision of refreshments.



more provision of recreational reading and multimedia material of interest to their age group;



greater participation and involvement in the planning and running of libraries;



access to creative pursuits, such as creative writing and music-based activities;



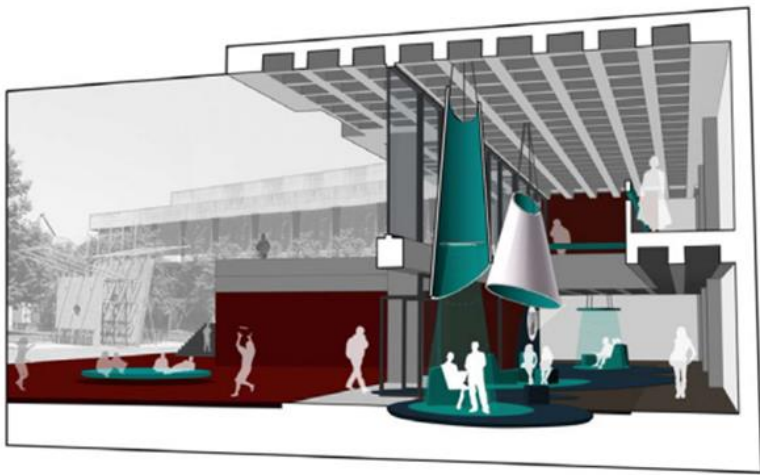
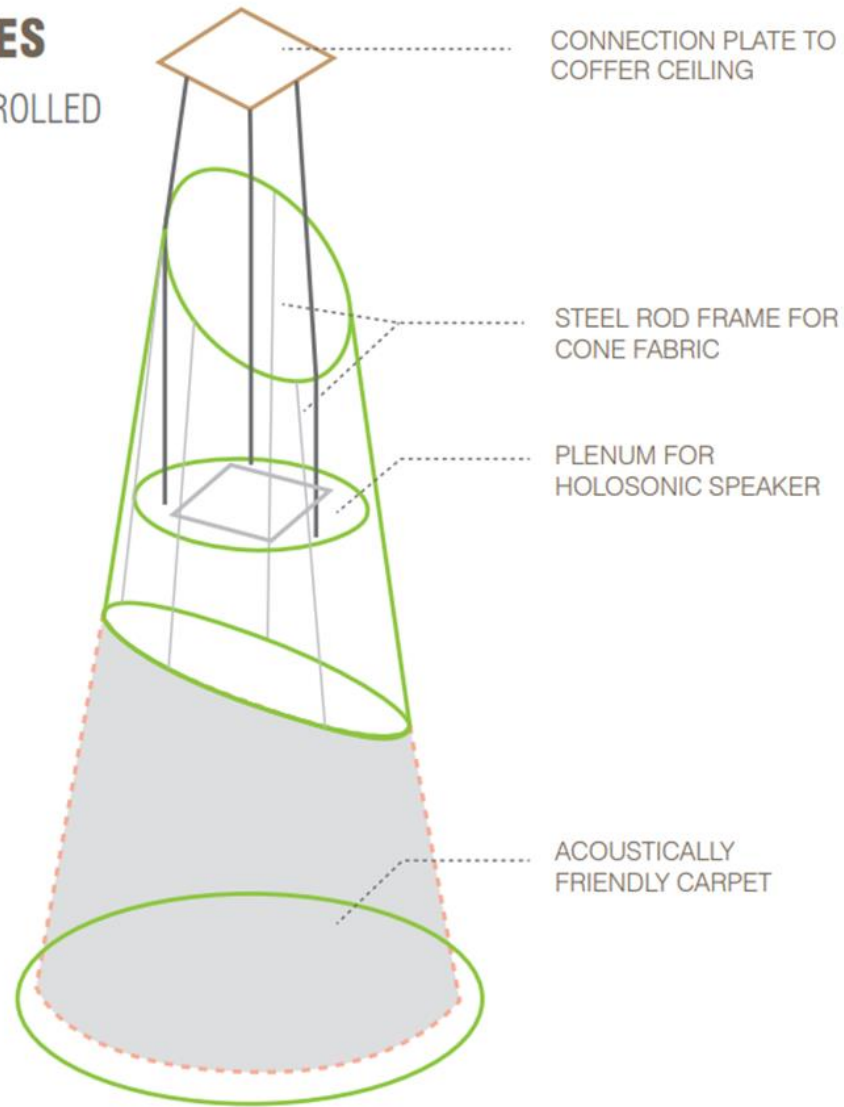
the availability of school text books and study supports;



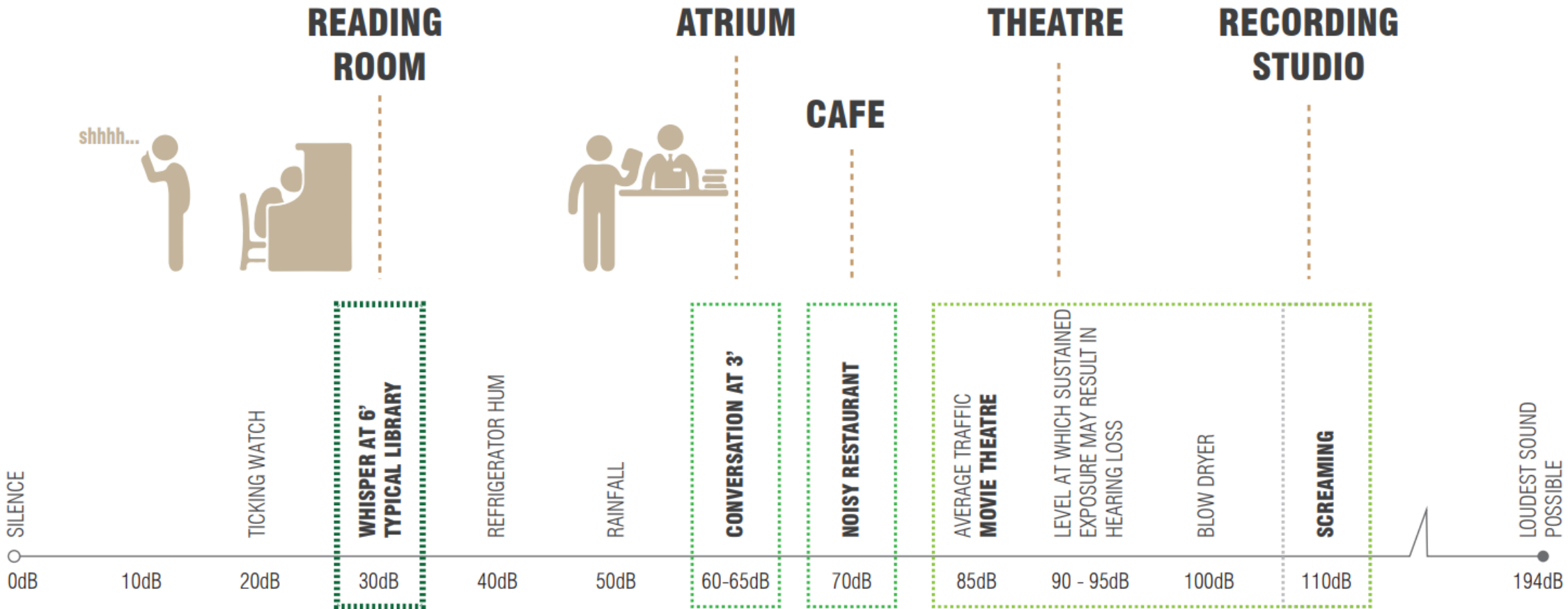
the opportunity to ‘hang out’ with friends in a comfortable and youth-friendly public space

SOUND LOUNGES

ACOUSTICALLY CONTROLLED
VISUALLY OPEN

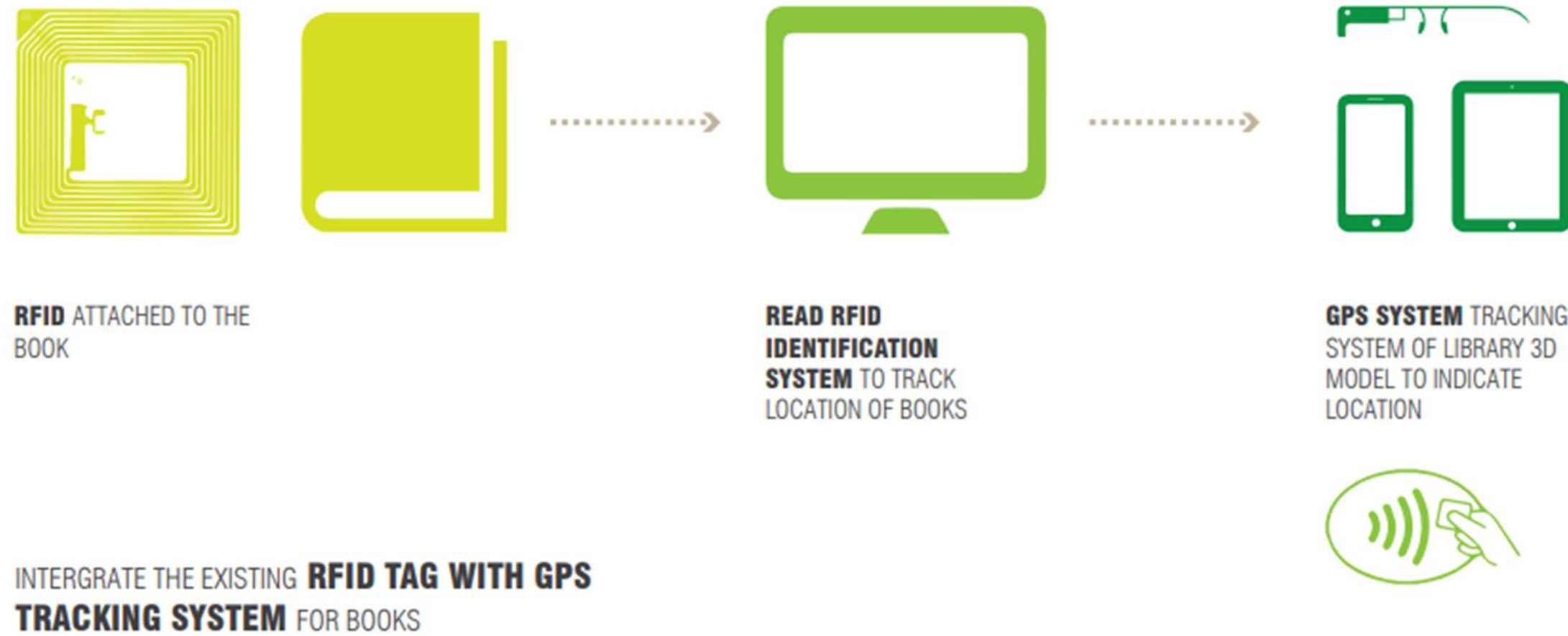


Sound Lounge. Digital image. Architizer. Architizer, n.d. Web. 14 Apr. 2014.



SOUND VARIATIONS

ACOUSTIC VARIATION of zones for quiet reading and zones for activity and conversation



“Bad Libraries Build Collections.
Good Libraries Build Services.
Great Libraries Build **Communities.**”

- David Lankes

05

Library Proposal

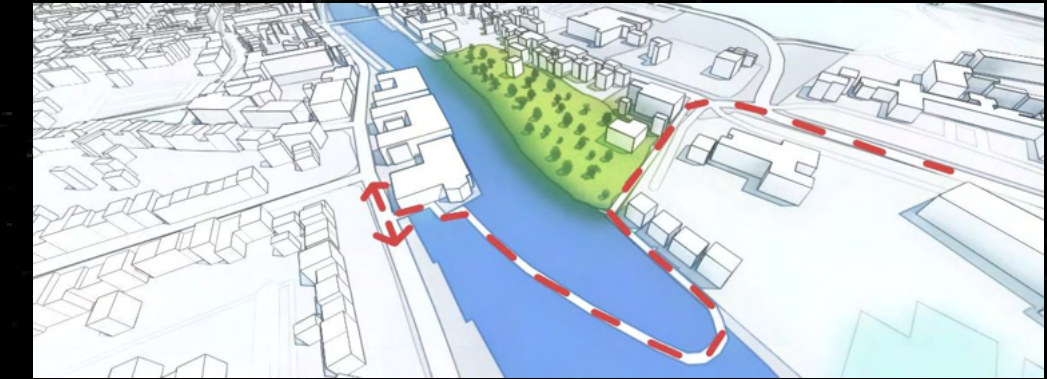
05.1

THE ISSUE

It was during my “urban analysis” in project one, when I began to envision the possibilities of my library. I was visiting the “Abbey Block” when suddenly streams of school kids began to cross the John Fallon Bridge and descend upon the area. What was once a peaceful setting soon became home to the loud noises of chattering school kids running wild. Finally free from adult supervision, they were simply bored and had nowhere to go. However in such a culturally significant area, it felt inappropriate and was ultimately acting as a deterrent for those trying to enjoy the abbey.

Locals didn’t appear alarmed by the presence of these teens and carried on with their daily activities, heads down, staying out of their way. It became clear this was a daily event for the block and had become the established place for youth to “hang out” at after school. This is probably due to a clear lack of recreational areas aimed solely at teenagers in the city centre resulting in loitering.

Young people use public spaces just as much as anyone else if not more. And yet, too often young people are not included in the process of placemaking. Communities often frown upon loitering which creates a negative image of young people, contributing to the stigma surrounding them,. By being actively engaged in youth-friendly spaces, young people can feel like they have investment in their community, developing a strong sense of ownership in these places. Therefore the importance of public youth spaces in urban planning cannot be disputed.



The current route students take to the Abbey block via the John Fallon Bridge (from the nearby schools).





Students are currently loitering around the Abbey block which is a deterrent to those visiting the abbey

Divergence

Often youngsters diverge from society because they feel excluded and experience stigmatisation in their city, thus spurring on their need to find some sort of identity and sense of place. This often results in them embracing in rebellious activities as a way to “fit in” and find a sense of belonging. They see opportunity in what others might just see as a wall or a bench. ,

It is this deviation and outlook that allows youngsters to identify opportunities in their surroundings and exploit these opportunities to pursue a sense of identity. One can therefore start to diverge from the normal thinking of what a “library” is in Ireland. We can rethink the youth library by using clues of what youth truly need from their city.

We can adopt a holistic approach in combining youth culture and architecture to create a place that not only provides youngsters with adequate learning and recreational opportunities but which is also representative of them and interests them as a place where they can be free to express themselves.

An architectural response to youth and these issues is not an easy task. Young people often don’t want to be told what is good for them or what to do. The youth library is possibly the most distinguished architectural typology as a response to the needs of the youth, but the reality in Ireland is that these libraries are not necessarily achieving their objectives or engaging with the youth as best they could.



A SPECIALISED LIBRARY AIMED AT THE YOUTH OF SLIGO BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12-17.

EXISTING STRATEGIC/PLANNING/SOCIETAL SHORTCOMINGS/LIMITATIONS OF THE MALL:

- The riverbanks area has not been well developed as a whole, it has been pieced together over time and ended up very fragmented throughout. Does not read coherently to the user.
- The high culture status of the Model gallery makes it difficult for buildings pertaining to the working class to gain a foothold.
- A footbridge crossing the weir awkwardly connects the Grammar school to the Abbey block and is an area prone to unsocial behaviour by secondary school kids.
- Bridge street bridge only posses one narrow pedestrian footpath, affecting accessibility to the Abbey block and vice versa.
- Lack of public seating on Kempten promenade to enjoy the views of the river from.
- The Mall possesses a one way road which makes accessibility to the block difficult particularly to those who don't know the area well.
- Edge conditions and land ownership make it difficult to break through the terrace edge and find views of the river. The vast majority of views are hidden behind the tall townhouses.
- Furthermore the high rising townhouses also block a lot of the natural sunlight to the block, creating dark cold spaces.
- This areas popularity has significantly decreased since the completion of the N4 in 2005, resulting in the block almost becoming a forgotten part of the town.
- The narrow walkway towards the footbridge crossing at the south of the block is bordered by tall walls with a lack of lighting creating an unsociable space, where youth tend to dwell.
- There is a general lack of gathering spaces/public space present within this block.
- Too many cars and parking spaces along the riverbanks creates an anti pedestrian environment.
- Due to the number of vacant buildings and lack of public space its hard to create a good amount of footfall along the riverbanks. People who visit the area tend to not stay very long.
- The existing proposal site is a good example of a large area located on the mall being underutilised; currently lies derelict and overgrown with vegetation despite offering beautiful views of the southern Sligo skyline and being in direct access to the riverbanks.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES ASPIRATIONS OF THE MALL:

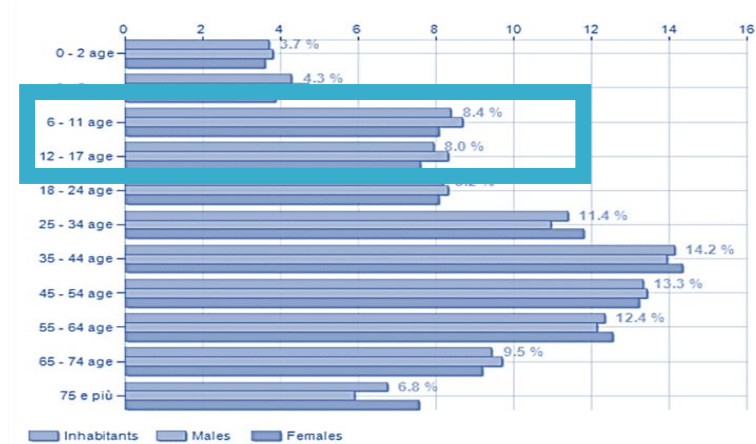
- The Sligo Public Realm Action Plan 2018 includes a detailed plan of the "Stephen street cultural plaza"- A strategy to improve the public realm and connections with the riverbanks. I aim to incorporate some of these themes within the free space and public realm area of my chosen site.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES ASPIRATIONS OF THE MALL (CONTINUED):

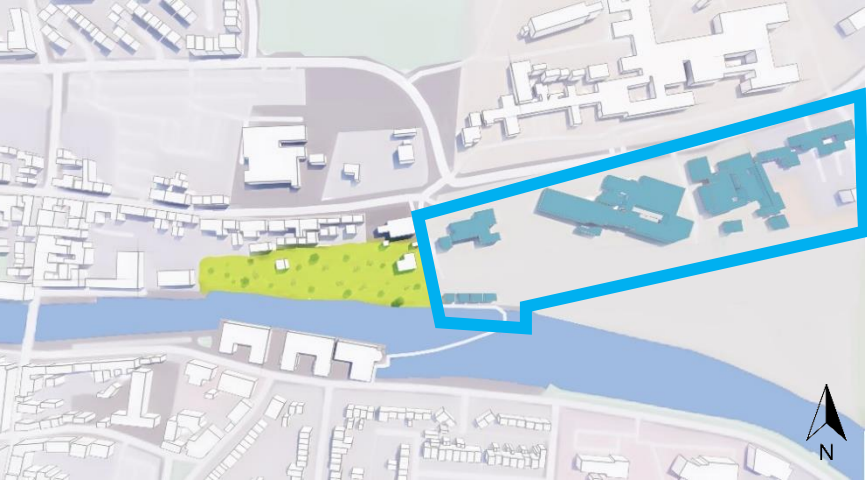
- Large number of students commuting between IT Sligo and the town centre both day and night, provide a sustainable niche market to develop for.
- The one way system in place ensures the street is never congested with vehicles. Landscaping and widening footpaths could enhance this asset, improving the public realm.
- A civic block in close proximity to both third level, secondary and primary educational facilities offers the potential to develop an "after school" club for the towns youth, enabling them to socialise, study and find a sense of community. They can avail of resources and recreational facilities outside of college hours.
- The model library is an important cultural building, which can work in conjunction with nearby educational facilities to offer a creative after school club.
- South of the Mall, the sharply sloped river bank is undeveloped and underutilised. It is one of the few remaining natural banks in the urban townscape, making it a vital ecological conservation site. Beautiful historic trees have remained in this site untouched for hundreds of years. It has a natural slope towards the river, which offers exciting opportunities for development. It has panoramic views and private access to the Garavogue river and Sligo's skyline to the south.
- Kempten promenade is in direct contact with the Garavogue river, possessing beautiful views and river frontage with great potential.
- Identified as the cultural quarter this block is central to the economic, cultural and social growth of Sligo as a gateway to the North-West of Ireland.



Stephen street cultural plaza masterplan accessed via Sligo Public Realm Action Plan 2018



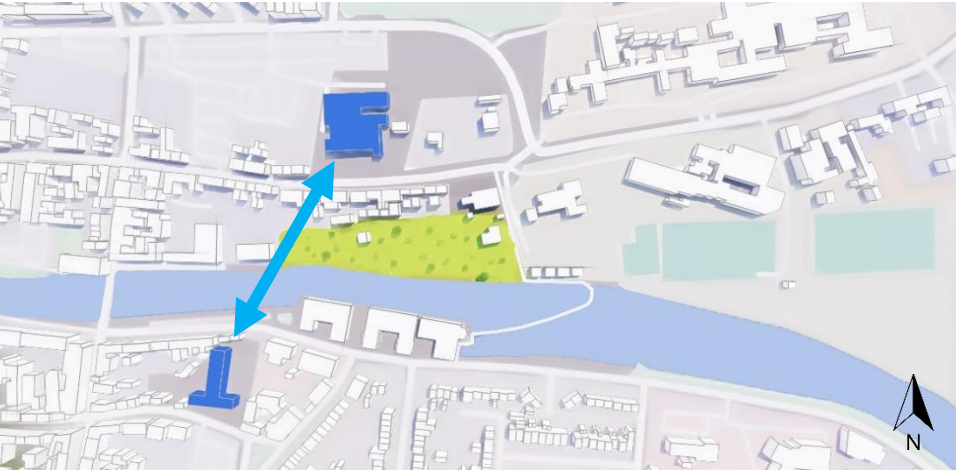
Of the 19,199 residents in Sligo, 16.4% of these fall within the age ranges of 6-17 years. This library therefore will be catering to a large proportion of Sligo’s culture.



The site is adjacent to two of Sligo's main multi-denominational schools- The national Cadbury school and the Grammar school (ranked fourth in Connaught). A specialised library for youth within this area is therefore very relevant as a sustainable niche is evident.

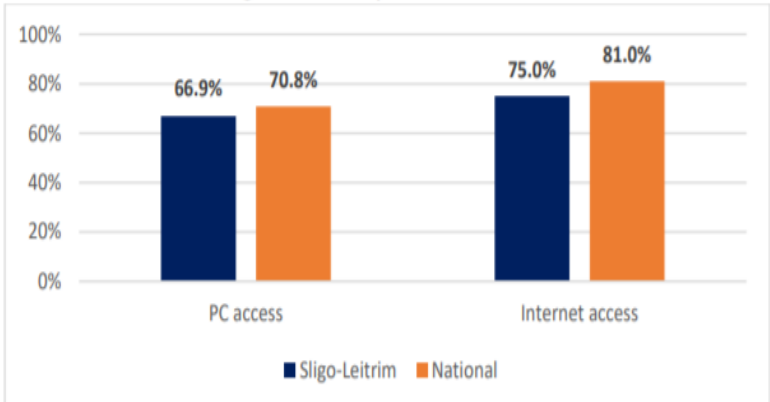
Families by family cycle		
Family cycle	Number of families	Number of family members
Pre-family	423	846
Empty nest	480	960
Retired	481	962
Pre-school	442	1,344
Early school	498	1,808
Pre-adolescent	436	1,644
Adolescent	527	2,000
Adult	1,036	3,316
Total	4,323	12,880

Of the 12,880 people in families 42% of them fall within the cycle of early school, pre-adolescent, adolescent.



The proposal site falls between the model and the abbey; two of Sligo’s most cultural buildings. Therefore proposals have the ability to reconnect these two historic monuments together again, redefining the mall as the cultural quarter bringing character back to this block.

Figure 14: PC and internet access in Sligo-Leitrim compared with the State

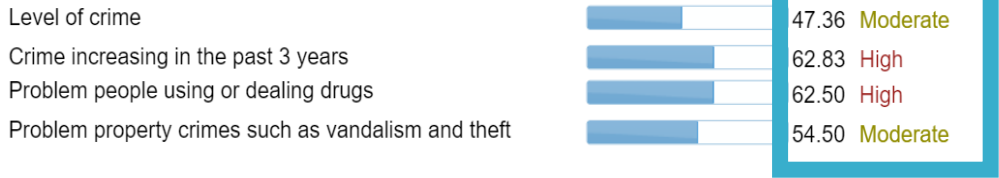


Only 66.9% of Sligo have access to a personal computer and 75% to the internet, both lower then the state’s average. The library will therefore be an important resource for allowing youth to access this resource.



This location was once home to Sligo's fjord- a central crossing for the people of Sligo; allowing different communities of Sligo to mix. Therefore commemorating and reconnecting to this part of Sligo's history is integral to the design. Without this precise location of the fjord, Sligo would not be the way it is today.

Crime rates in Sligo, Ireland



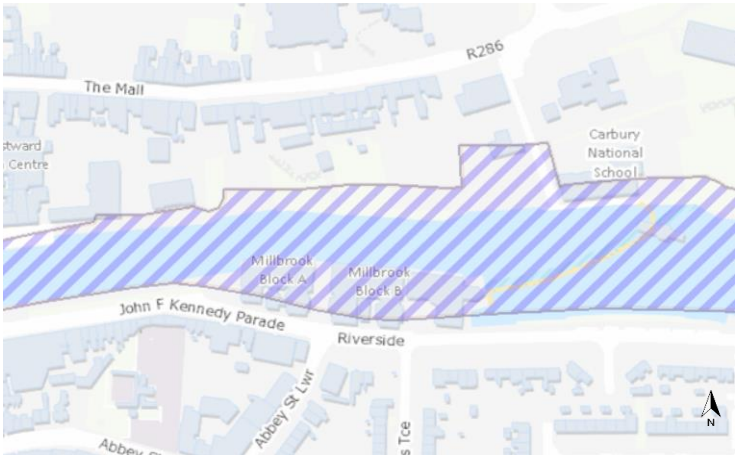
Crime levels in Sligo have increased to a “high” amount in the last three years. Furthermore the city has a high level problem of people using or dealing drugs. This is a worrying uncovering, which highlights the need for a safe space for youth, to deter them from substance abuse and criminal behaviour.



Offering a cultural plaza and sheltered space for large events within the proposal will allow the mall to increase its footfall and enhance Sligo’s public realm. It will directly fulfil the public realm action plan (2018).

SPECIFIC DETAILED ISSUES AS ABOVE RELATING TO YOUR CHOSEN SITE:

- Being located close to the riverbanks can create limitations during the building process.
- The sites position to the back of the mall may make it hard to develop a steady footfall throughout the year.
- Land ownership along the waters edge will cause issues when developing a public realm connection between the chosen site and the current pedestrian walkways.
- The south of the Mall currently possesses a forest biodiversity, which many locals may be objecting to disrupting for the establishment of a new building. Will involve eradicating many natural habitats.
- The natural riverbanks must be conserved with any new additions, whilst still capturing the picturesque Sligo skyline for the proposal design.
- The historic value of the street must be maintained, with any new interventions having a minimal impact to the existing historic streetscape.
- The busy junction between Stephen street and the mall may prevent footfall as it is hard to navigate through for pedestrians.
- The site is located in a “Proposed Natural Conservation area” and “Special Area of Conservation” by Sligo COCO, therefore any alterations to the land must be sensitively done in order to conserve and protect the surrounding wildlife and their habitats.



SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION



PROPOSED NATURAL CONSERVATION AREA

RATIONAL FOR THE CHOICE AND ISSUES KEY TO THE PROPOSAL

- Sligo city is currently lacking in recreational activities and spaces for youth, with no safe place for teenagers to “hang out” in. This is resulting in an accumulation of teens loitering about the abbey block after school, encouraging unsocial behaviour in this area; which is a deterrent for locals and those attempting to visit the historic abbey. It may give visitors a negative impression of both the block and the city to being a space over run by ill-mannered and unsupervised teens.
- A youth library can provide a “third place” for them, a space in-between home and school. They can explore new creative mediums and aspects to their future, allowing them to find a sense of identity and community within the chaotic city life. 33.15% of households in Sligo don’t have access to a personal computer and 25% don’t have access to the internet. The library will therefore be an important place for many to have access to these resources for their education and academic learning.
- Worrying Sligo’s drug use and levels of crime in the last three years were ranked “high” in 2020. A safe space where kids can be educated and free from the influences of drugs and crime is vital to lower these statistics and create a safe community in the area.
- Unemployment rates in Sligo currently lie at 18.1%. Promoting education and the well being of school kids will help counteract this level, particularly for those struggling in mainstream education. A library offering vocational training in practical skills and creative practices can present new career paths many would not have explored.
- There is a clear divide between the urban blocks of Sligo and its cultural buildings. Pedestrian movement between the north and south blocks of the town is difficult due to poor pathways across the Garavogue. Developing a new pedestrian bridge along the former fjord will reunite two of Sligo's most cultural buildings together (the Model school and the Abbey) along with respecting the surrounding sites historical past.
- Developing a public plaza along the waterfront will invite city residents and tourists to the site, building a sense of community and enhancing its public realm. It will fulfil the public aspirations for a civic space in the area, as outlined in the public realm action plan (2018). A river banks walkway will elevate this measure, driving users into the main city centre, whilst also inviting them to explore the riverbanks.
- The site is engrossed in nature; possessing trees which have remained untouched here for over two centuries. Therefore it is important to conserve and respect this rich setting and be influenced by its characteristics. The steep slope running south to the river provides an interesting sectional profile which offers great potential for multiple planes and capturing certain views, which the development aims to utilise. Sited near so many civic buildings, a youth library in this area feels appropriate given the context.



THE OVERALL AIM:

This thesis seeks to propose a new building typology for libraries in Ireland- a cultural centre, anchored in a library aimed exclusively for the youth of Sligo. The project revolves around the city of Sligo and its street culture and Graffiti art. In doing so it reimagines the library, no longer as a definitive source of knowledge; but instead as a facilitator. An extended space that integrates multiple functions and serves as a creative, social hub for teenagers.

This youth library is imagined as a public place which is vibrant, relaxed and open to all; fitted with modern digital technology which encourages learning. It aims to make education fun and accessible to all, ultimately reducing unemployment and unsocial behaviour in the area. It will offer a ‘safe space’ for the youth of Sligo to hang out in after school; ultimately acting as a ‘third place’- somewhere for them to go in-between school and home. The building is representative of youth, thus giving youngsters a much needed sense of space and identity to express themselves.

OBJECTIVES:

- To design a building encapsulating a piece of graffiti, where the architecture starts to encompass the character of a graffiti tag.
- To reduce loitering and unsocial behaviour of children and adolescents in the town area; particularly around J.F.K parade after school. This in turn will preserve the historic context of the Abbey.
- To promote after-school activities which enhance the education and wellbeing of school kids lowering unemployment and crime rates.
- To bring life back to the mall, allowing it to fulfil its potential as a “Cultural Quarter”. To create a place of culture and knowledge, where youth are brought closer to architecture and themselves.
- To break down the divide present between the city blocks, reuniting two of Sligo's most cultural buildings together- the model school with the abbey.
- To build a sense of community within the area and enhance its public realm.
- To re-envision the modern day library; instead of being a place to absorb or find knowledge, it will be a place of creation which puts knowledge in practice. To make connections to community and outside; not just accessing outside information, but also from each other.

KEY STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVING THIS AIM:

- Create a dynamic and playful space designed to capture the attention of Sligo's youth.
- Redefine the concept of libraries; changing them from being a place for books to a place for people. To put the user first and design spaces to encourage social interaction and development instead of simply the storage of books.
- To incorporate the needs and wishes of the youth; an open and welcoming space to hang out in, relax in, escape from their problems, feel safe, socialise, express themselves, be creative, explore mystery and be free from social divides.
- Make a modern day library relevant to the 21st century, through incorporating the latest digital technology along with appropriate books.
- Improve pedestrian movement between the north and south of the town, redeveloping the pedestrian bridge into a landmark structure, intriguing visitors to explore its spaces.
- Design a public plaza along the waterfront with sheltered space and an auditorium capable of hosting large music and culture events.
- Develop a riverbanks walkway along the waters edge, reconnecting the town with the Garavogue and encouraging them to explore the city and its surrounding spaces.
- Retain the existing mature trees on the site and develop a children’s play area in the city, allowing the user to become immersed in nature.

FUNCTIONS TO BE OFFERED:

- | | |
|--|--|
| - Reception | - Music space |
| - Atrium | - Rock climbing wall |
| - Study zone | - Café |
| - Reading zone (with book storage, reference desk) | - Graffiti space- external |
| - Social zone | - Skateboard area- external |
| - Computer access (with photocopiers/printers) | - Community garden with play space- external |
| - Amphitheatre | - Shelter from weather |
| - Toilets- disabled, boys, girls, staff | - Access to Local Transport |
| - Counselling/careers room | - Space for frequent youth events to occur |
| - Art space | - Access to power/electricity |

Internal	External
Reception (with elevator)	Graffiti Space (highlighting the artwork rather than hiding it)
Atrium (rock climbing wall)	Skateboard area
Study Zone	Amphitheatre (sheltered)
Social Zone	Play Park
Reading Zone (with book storage/ reference desk)	Community Garden with green house, (children taught how to grow fruit and veg- vital life skills. Can be used as a food resource for the poor)
Computer access (with printers/scanners/photocopiers)	Pedestrian Footbridge (a landmark bridge like the London garden bridge)
Toilets (Public/disabled/staff)	
Counselling/careers room	
Art zone	
Music zone	
Cafe	

PROPOSAL OF USER GROUPS

- Outdoor- Families, Teenagers, Children, Artists, Residents of Sligo City, Visitors
- Public Space- Teenagers, children, Local educators, library staff (public café may be used by the general public)
- Private Spaces- Library staff

Internal	Area S.q.m (Approx.)	Adjacency	Public Access	Lighting	Qualities	Special Considerations
1.Reading zone with book storage	150	2, 3, 7, 8, 11	Yes- to youth only	Daylight	Variety of seating, capturing views of riverbanks to inspire, open and airy, few partitions to be visually open and inclusive, spaces are welcoming and inviting, create a sense of community = connected to one another, bright and colourful interior with funky furnishings, playful forms and spaces. Works in conjunction with a library app for the booking of computers, study rooms/spaces, specific books etc.	Comfortable seating with different variations (beanbags/sofa's etc), haptic materiality, book storage is low and on wheels (moveable) so space is flexible/transformable, RFID tagging in system, visual display of book covers instead of textual display of book titles, in close proximity to help desk, drone scans book location every night for easy book finding, quiet space, kindles on offer, Wi-Fi with eBooks available, self check in/out scanner.
2.Social Zone	250	1, 3, 7, 8, 11	Yes- to youth only	Daylight		Sound controlling through acoustic lounges, gaming spaces fit with Xboxes/ PlayStation on large screens for multiplayer, socialising is permitted but must be controlled- librarian can see all/is in close proximity, access to computers/Wi-Fi/ electrical outlets for phone charging/ informal seating such as bean bags/sofas.
3. Study zone with private study rooms	150	1,2,7,8,11	Yes- to youth only	Daylight & Artificial		Quiet space, peaceful, access to computers/Wi-Fi, comfortable seating, few distractions, talking limited, intimate spaces yet inclusive to the library, calming, bright lighting- mostly natural to improve focus, whiteboards and sound proofing in private study rooms- different people learn in different ways i.e. talking it out loud/writing on boards.
4. Art zone	110	7,8,11	Semi- lecturer/tutor permission must be sought prior to youth access. Access to dangerous equipment e.g. kilns is restricted..	Daylight & Artificial	Neutral colour scheme e.g. white- the art is the focus and forms the decor, lots of storage/dry racks/display spaces, views to inspire creativity, access to outdoors as many students like to do work outside when weather permits.	Ventilation for fumes of paints etc, temperature controlled, sinks available, wooden tables for model making, ceramic space with kiln, flooring in sealed- not carpet, projectors, interactive whiteboards, computers and printers available, black out blinds, large tables with generous space for working on, electric outlets for camera charging etc.
5. Music/ Dance Zone	100	7,8,11	Semi- lecturer/tutor permission must be sought prior to youth access	Artificial	Creative space with music inspired décor, storage space for musical instruments- some instruments provided by council for socially deprived youth, correct balance between overly “live” room (too many reflective surfaces and “dead” room with too many absorptive properties.	Sound proofing/controlled space with few openings to disrupt sound waves: “ideal music room is an unbroken box with no openings”, wallboard covered with foam padding (e.g. prism flatted foam) or carpet to deaden wall vibrations/ sound reflection, flooring is also carpet, acoustic ceiling tiles, soft furnishing to act as acoustic deadeners, electric outlets for keyboards, few tables/partitions.
6. Reception/ Office	70	All	Yes	Daylight & Artificial	Open and accessible, friendly, warm, inviting, the centre of the library, help desk for students/ queries/check out of books, private office for staff, bright and airy.	Reception must be welcoming and open to all, located near all other spaces- the centre of the library, near main entrance, easy to find, check in services, signs for wayfinding.

SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION (continued)

7. Cafe	90	7,11,12,13	Yes	Daylight & Artificial	Ambient cafe, warm, inviting, snacks/baked goods, refreshments, comfortable variety of seating- e.g. bar seating/ fixed tables, background music, wooden fixtures, dim lighting, Outdoor space to enjoy coffee with views of the river	Smells can transfer to other spaces, needs to be accessible to deliveries and waste services, ventilation, fire escapes, food storage, fridge/freezers/cookers, fans, controlled temperatures, washing up space, affordable for youth, accessible to general public, displaying products while customers queue- maximise sales, clear signage.
8.Councelling/ Careers room	40	7, 11	Semi-	Artificial	A safe space, calming, relaxing, private, clutter free, bright, airy,	Private entrances/exits, open space- user doesn't not feel closed in, storage of user files, computer access for staff, sound proofing, visual privacy,
9.. Ladies/men and disabled WC	40	All	Yes	Artificial	Easily accessible and connected to building	3 different types: 1 male 1 female (with baby changing facilities) 1 – disabled
10. Cleaning/ storage room	40	All	No- staff only	Artificial	Sink, hand basin, storage for cleaning products/equipment, nearby central circulation space to aid servicing of many spaces without interruption,	Natural ventilation, slip resistant and waterproof floor, locked door, low maintenance interior, racking storage for tools, nearby waste bins, no windows required, visual privacy.
11. Plant	40	N/A	No- staff only	Artificial	<div>-Air handlers</div> <div>- Boilers</div> <div>- Chillers</div> <div>- Heat exchangers</div> <div>- Water heaters and tanks</div> <div>- Water pumps (for domestic, heating/cooling, and firefighting water)</div> <div>- Main distribution piping and valves</div> <div>- Sprinkler distribution piping and pumps</div> <div>- Back-up electrical generators</div> <div>- Elevator machinery</div> <div>- Other HVAC (heating, ventilation and air-conditioning) equipment</div>	Natural ventilation, slip resistant floor, low maintenance interior, locked door.
12. Lift	10	All	Yes	Artificial	Easy access, located near entrance, services all floors, bright,	Handrail, mirrors- space appears larger.
Total floor space	1400m2 approximately					

06

Site Analysis

OVERVIEW

The chosen location (The Mall to River Block) serves as a good space for this youth library to be sited in. It is almost an “in between” space in the city; located between the educational facilities of the Mall and the cultural presence of the Abbey. This is reflective of where many youngsters are in their lives; an in-between space of trying to find themselves and their true identity.

The redundant site acts like a blank canvas, allowing the library to develop a sense of style; allowing it to stand out from its surrounding. The site itself is highly accessible for youth, being a short walk from nearby schools and bus stops.

The chosen area is filled with pulses of youth activities. Street art can be seen scattered along the nearby site walls and skateboarders are often seen gliding down the sloping pathway towards the John Fallon bridge.

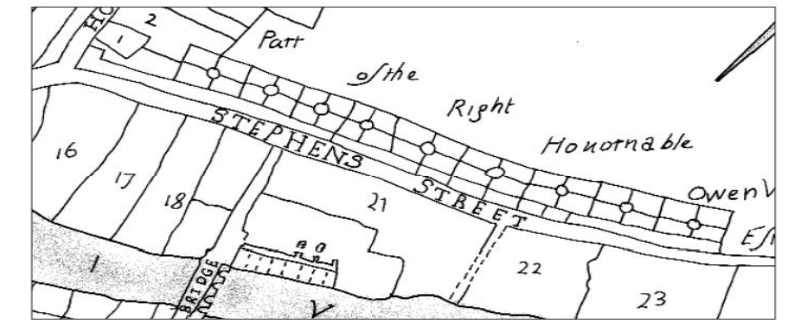
The site has a natural slope towards the river which offers exciting opportunities to develop an interesting building within the hillside.



THE MALL TO THE RIVER BLOCK

The Mall quarter represents one of the most historic and important areas within Sligo town. It comprises a mix of land-use functions with a number of noteworthy buildings including several key cultural and landmark sites. Recent developments in the infrastructure and layout of the town have led to a decline in the Mall however significant developments are planned which will clearly influence the future usage and amenity of the area.

The low plot density present offers the possibility for new public amenity space and the development of river frontage. It is bound by Bridge street (to the west), and the Rathquarter Road (to the north). In the late 18th and early 19th centuries it was one the more select areas of Sligo, home to the rich.



Stephen Street and Gore Street C. 1750



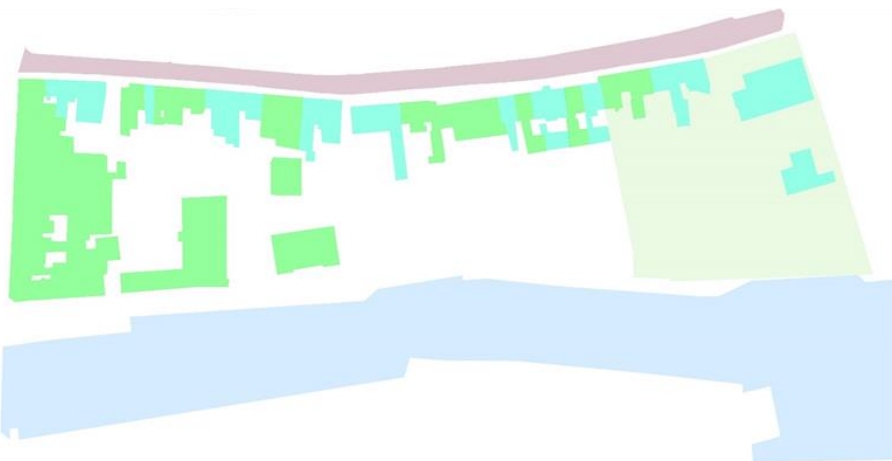
Gore Street and The Mall 1858



*Terrace of early 19th century houses, The Mall 1977
Accessed Streets of Sligo pg. 713-735, (2008)*



- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Street, vehicular access | Housing | Greenery |
| Sidewalk, pedestrian access | Public Building | River |
| Public parking | Business | Back/front garden |
| Open space | Rear access, backroom | Vacant, abandoned |



- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE



- 1 storey
- 2 stories
- 3 stories
- 4 stories
- 5+ stories



Located on the North eastern side of the city
The block is not directly serviced by any of the Sligo town bus routes.
Vehicular traffic access is limited from the North and West due to a one way system in place.
Pedestrian traffic feeds from the East, coming down from the IT, Grammar School and Hospital. The centre of the Mall foot traffic feed in from the car park which extends up to Connaughton Road.
The T-Junction at the Mall and Stephen Street has pedestrian crossing lights but people tend to cross at the bottom of the hill coming from the north as this was the original Zebra crossing for that junction.
Eastern side of the Mall beside Calry Church a footpath grants access to a foot-bridge across the Garavogue which links back over to Abbey Quarter. This area becomes very busy at half three to four with secondary school students.

- Node of Pedestrian activity
- Area of high pedestrian traffic
- Bus Stop
- Bus service
- Vehicle access



East elevation of bridge street.; The street edge is very hard and dense with continuous eaves and roof lines along its entirety with general 1800’s Urban Irish style architecture. The facades have been renovated to suite their new uses. Horizontal and vertical lines break down the volume to the human eye, creating a softer impact at street view.



South elevation of The Mall St ; There is a sense unity and place on this street considering building openings, consistency of window size, roof lines, and architectural style. The buildings step gracefully moving east up the hill.



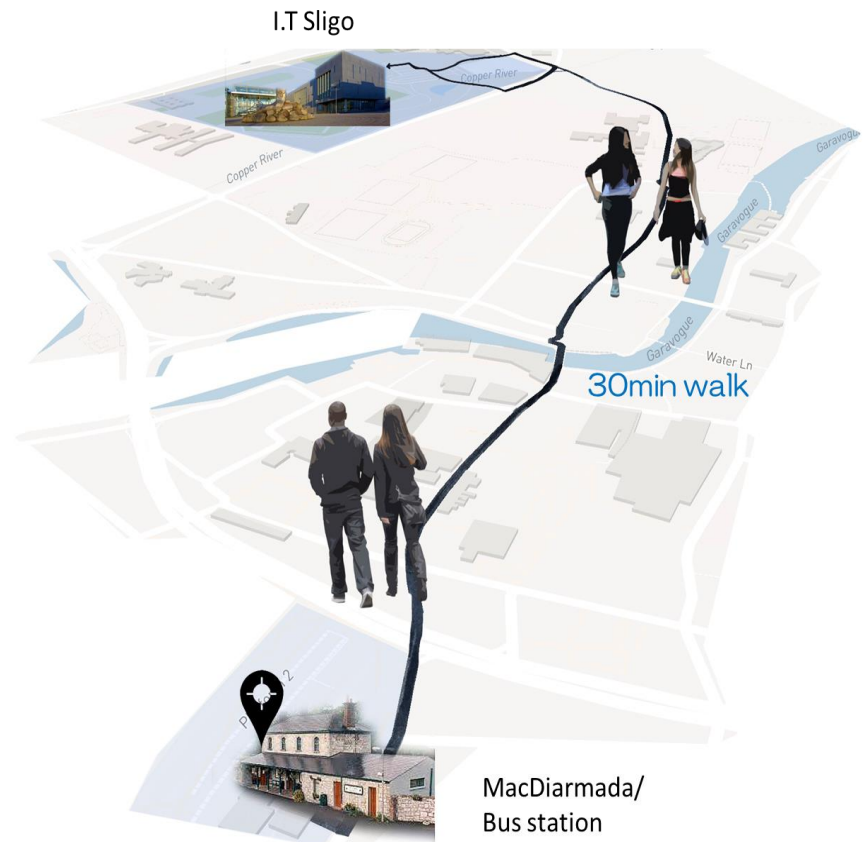
North elevation of mall block; Take note of the 1800’s Victorian architectural style with the pointed arced windows and doors a part of the gothic styling that found its way into the Victorian architecture in Ireland . As well as the original windows, in what is now Andersons.



The model and masonic hall are both key buildings to Sligo’s streetscape. The Model was designed by James Owen and was built back in 1862 in a palazzo style. The model’s detailed stonework exhibits high-quality workmanship and its location set back from the mall on an elevated site gives it a civic presence.

The masonic hall is a detached 2-storey red brick house built in 1895. The building was designed by Belfast man Henry Seaver and built by Sligo native George Kerr. The main feature of the house is the tower with it's beautiful glass windows and red tiled roof.

	Sligo Grammar	N.C.S
School Start	9.00 AM	8.45 AM
School End	1:40PM junior and senior infants. 2:40PM 1 st to 6 th class.	15:25 Mon & Wed. 14:45 Tues, Thurs & Frid.

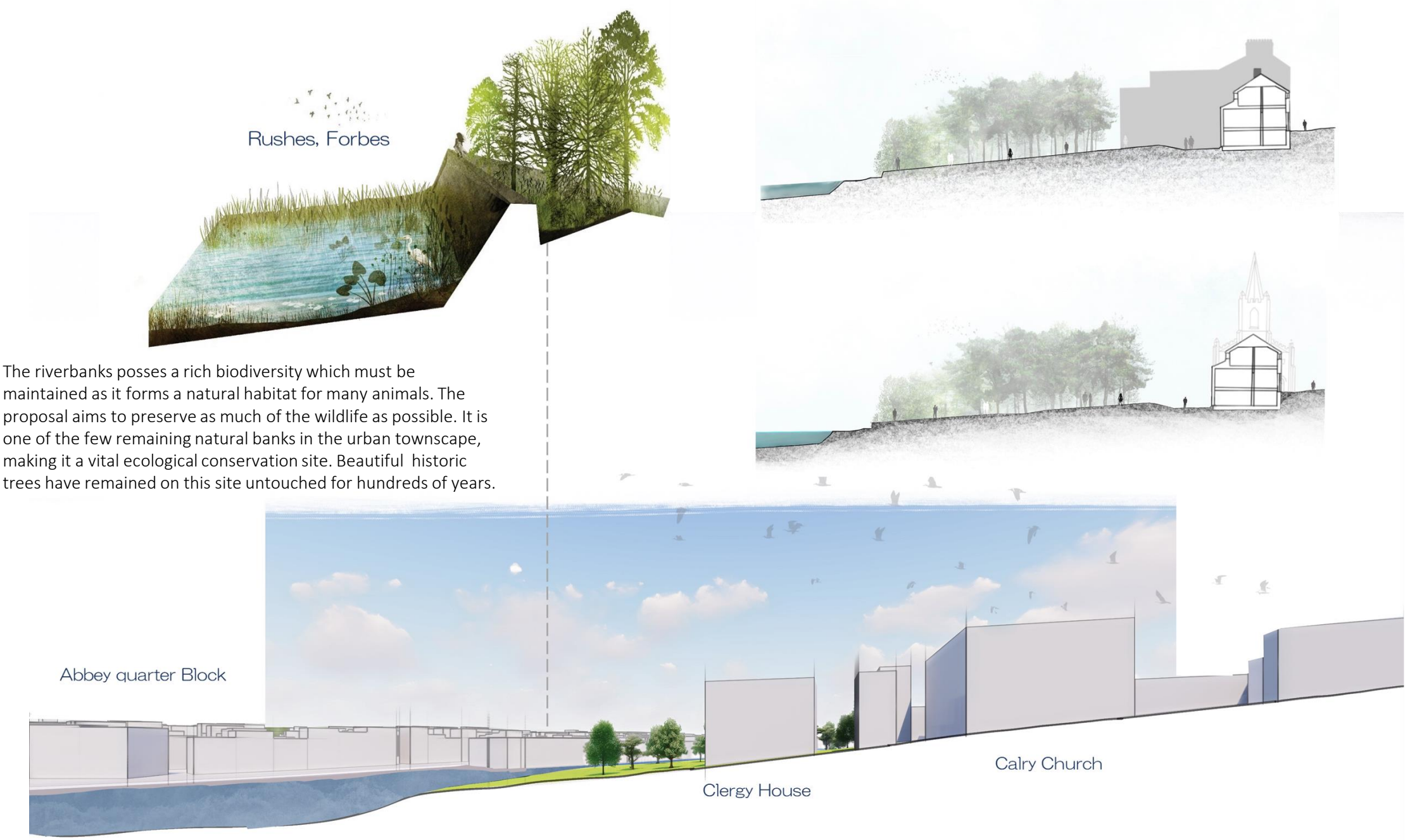


USERS

This block forms one of the main access routes for pedestrians travelling into the city centre from the east. The largest proportion of these are students. Sligo Grammar school and the national Cadbury school are located to the south east of the mall block and thus form a large part of the user group. They currently have 450 students enrolled between the ages of 11 to 18, with approximately 120 of these students boarding. Between the school’s start and end times (listed to the left), the block is very busy and congested with both staff, students and their associated families. This block is also one of the main walking routes for college students travelling to and from Sligo IT into the city centre (for shops/housing/public transport etc). Furthermore city workers and shoppers also circulate through the space. A small proportion of the blocks users are tourists visiting the Model Niland gallery as well as people going for walks/ exercise along Kempton promenade.



The proposal will be anchored in-between two of largest native trees on the site which have existed for hundred of years.



The riverbanks posses a rich biodiversity which must be maintained as it forms a natural habitat for many animals. The proposal aims to preserve as much of the wildlife as possible. It is one of the few remaining natural banks in the urban townscape, making it a vital ecological conservation site. Beautiful historic trees have remained on this site untouched for hundreds of years.

Sloping riverbank currently lies unused and is underutilised. Overgrown with trees and natural vegetation. A rich biological community is currently already located on the site.



1.

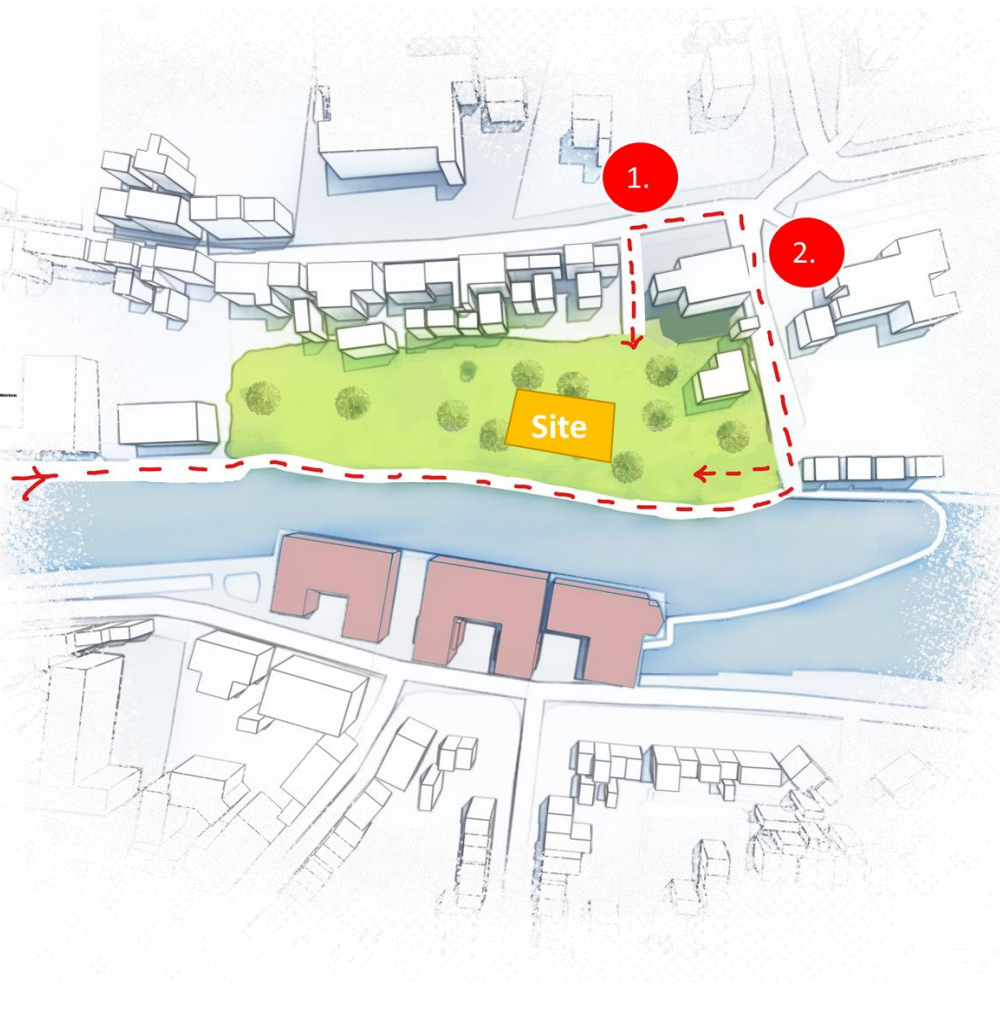


2.



SKETCHES OF POTENTIAL ACCESS POINTS.

The site has an intimate connection to Calry Church- a significant cultural building to the streetscape of Sligo. The project aims to highlight this noteworthy architectural building, allowing users to dwell in its beauty. Users will be allured into landscaped walkways with this building forming the foreground.



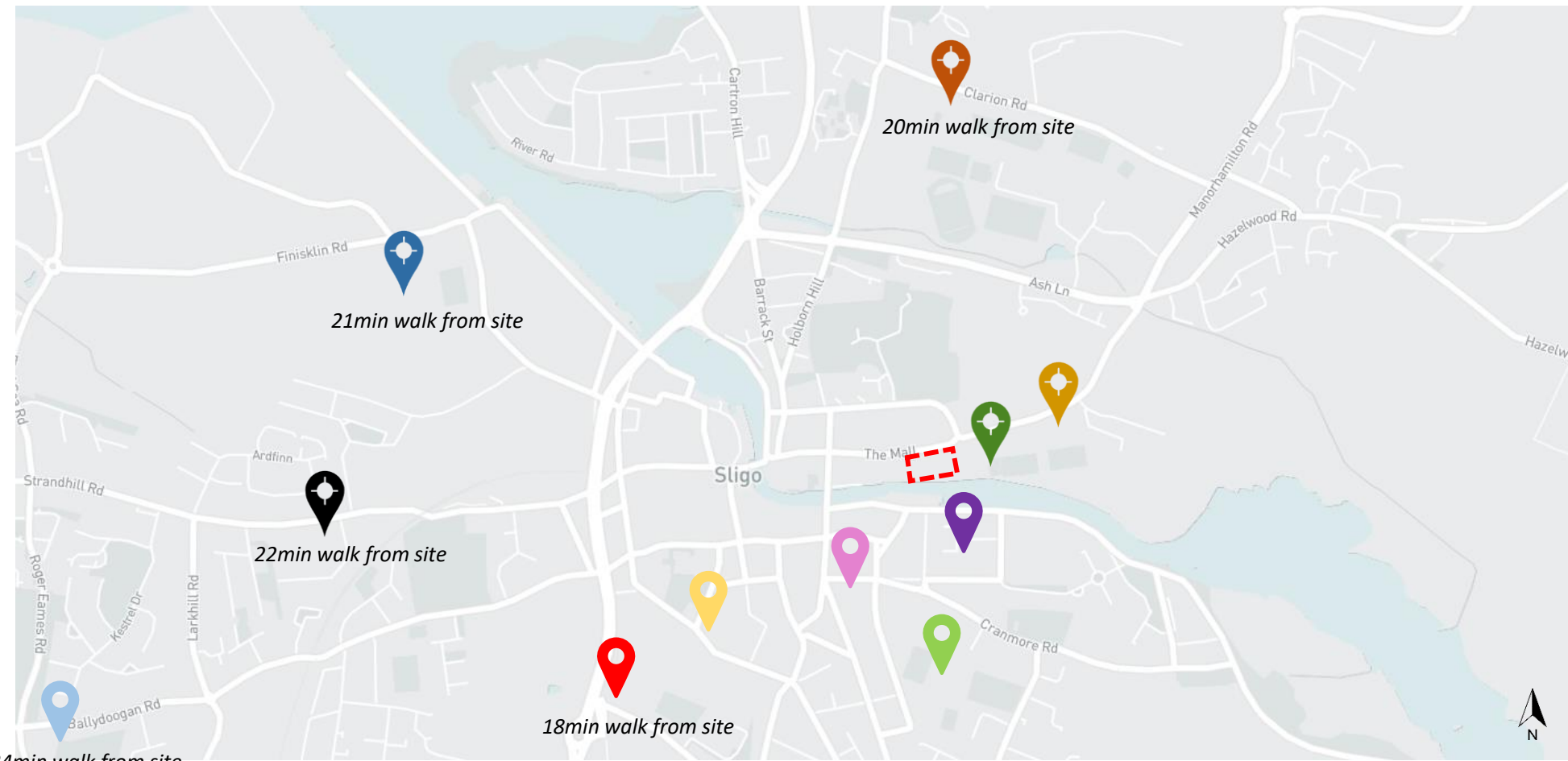


The site is near: the town centre, a large residential area and two schools. This provides a sustainable niche market to develop for. Two bus stops located beside the site also ensures its easily accessible to the public- particularly the young who cannot drive themselves.



BUS STOP (HOSPITAL RD.)
4min walk

There is approximately 4505 primary and secondary students within the city context.



- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| St. Edwards NS
138 pupils | Ursuline College Sligo
707 pupils | Sligo Grammar School
450 pupils | Carbury National School
222 pupils | Scoil Ursula
439 pupils | Sligo School Project PS
24 pupils |
| Our Lady of Mercy PS
456 pupils | St John's National School
246 pupils | Mercy College
525 pupils | Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré
237 pupils | College of the Immaculate Conception, Summerhill
1001 pupils (18min walk from site) | |

07 Architectural Intentions & concept

07.1 ARCHITECTURAL INTENTIONS:

- The aim of this thesis project is to offer a ‘third place’ for the children of Sligo; a place for them to go when they are not at home or in school.
- To create a timeless building, which does not age. It will continuously evolve to meet the current trends amongst youth (which constantly change).
- To allow youth to reconnect to their surroundings thus giving them a much-needed sense of place and identity within the ever-changing city. The building will act as a urban catalyst, reducing loitering and unsocial behaviour of adolescents around J.F.K parade. This in turn will preserve the historic context of the abbey and reduce Sligo’s “High” crime rates.
- To build a sense of community within the area and enhance its public realm. Users will not just access outside information but also from each other.
- To be greatly influenced by nature and the surrounding riverbanks, ensuring its successful integration into the urban fabric. The site already currently possesses a rich biological community- the aim is to integrate Sligo’s population into it bringing people closer to the river and nature. Use native trees and flora to maintain the ecosystem along the rivers edge.

CONCEPT:

‘CONNECTIONS NOT COLLECTIONS’

The principle of connecting people to place by creating an alternative space within a city to allow community interaction and establishment. Based on the idea of an ecotone connecting city and waterfront, whilst acting as a designed transitional space of cultures. The building will be centred around the user’s, and them making connections with each other. Libraries are more than mere repositories of books — they are symbols of cultural knowledge and wealth. An important public place of social interaction, where people from diverse backgrounds and age groups can interact and exchange ideas.

The building will be timeless, changing to current trends to remain relevant amongst teens. The building becomes the foil of the expression- flexible to respond to the creative urges of youth. I intend to design a space which is representative of youth culture in Sligo. Art is a way of understanding our emotions and contemporary issues. Youth continue to choose the arts as the form of their expression. This building will tackle the contemporary issues of the youth in Sligo through its architecture; using Irish art and culture as its driving force.

YOUTH CULTURE

There is no denying that the youth are very important in the development of a country. They are after all, the future. It is never easy being a teenager.

“Scientists believe that adolescence is universally a time of stress and strife” (Furnam & Gunter, 1989, p.8). Adolescence brings a “crisis of identity, during which the young person must struggle to establish their own self-concept in the face of social, physical and emotional changed.” (1989, p.9). The term identity is a major aspect of youth and youth culture. At the heart of human experience lies an essential yearning for self-definition and self-understanding. “Developing a conception of who we are, for what purpose we exist, and how we should live our lives is a basic impulse of human consciousness.”

(<https://www.onecountry.org/>).

We try to construct a sense of place and identity for ourselves through various means and there is evidence of this 40,000 years ago where rock paintings told stories and lay claim to spaces. Even the Ancient Romans and Greeks wrote their names and protest poems on buildings. Humans have always tried to identity through their environment and youth do this in the most unique way. They are constantly exploring their sense of belonging and place within their everchanging city, carving out spaces to express themselves.



Prehistoric cave paintings, Magura Cave, 6300 BC



Ancient Roman wall painting, Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii, Second Style, 60-50 BC



Berlin Graffiti wall, 2017

The modern world is changing rapidly and so does the culture of youth. Like no other generation, today’s teens are facing unique difficulties and experiences, and are influenced a lot by the internet and social media. Teenagers are constantly in search of acceptance and finding a sense of identity, where they fit in and belong- a community. It is the “fear of missing out” – FOMO, which pushes most teenagers to pick habits or fall into the traps of peer pressure.

- Technology is youth culture. Technology is part of their ideology, their language, everything they do. The forms of communication across digital technology:
 - Social Media- Modern youth tend to connect with peers digitally, spending hours interacting with friends via social media sites.
 - Gaming- Video Teens today often spend hours playing online games, forming bonds with gamers that they get to know in a virtual world. It allows them to become part of a community and “escape reality”. Two of the most popular games amongst youth right now is Minecraft and Fortnite. Minecraft and Fortnite both allow users you to create, build, and manage their own buildings or architecture.
- How teens express themselves:
 1. Art
 2. Dance
 3. Music

How do teens in Sligo express themselves creatively?



STREET ART

The street artist sees the walls of a city as canvases, transforming the city into their own personal art gallery for all to enjoy and relate to. Street art can bring life and a sense of identity to a space and more importantly to the individual creating it. It comprises of a whole range of works and styles ranging from spray painted murals, tags stick up and stencils. Sligo has some truly amazing artwork hidden on its narrow alleyways, which makes use of bright and vivid colours. Art itself a form of self-expression and nurtures creativity. Young children can often be unsure of how to accurately communicate their thoughts and feelings, and art can be a useful prop to help them do so. When a child begins to explore their artistic side, their problem-solving skills improve too. I began looking at some of this art hidden, so as to inform a colour palette for the youth centre that could create a sense of vibrancy and excitement for the teens.



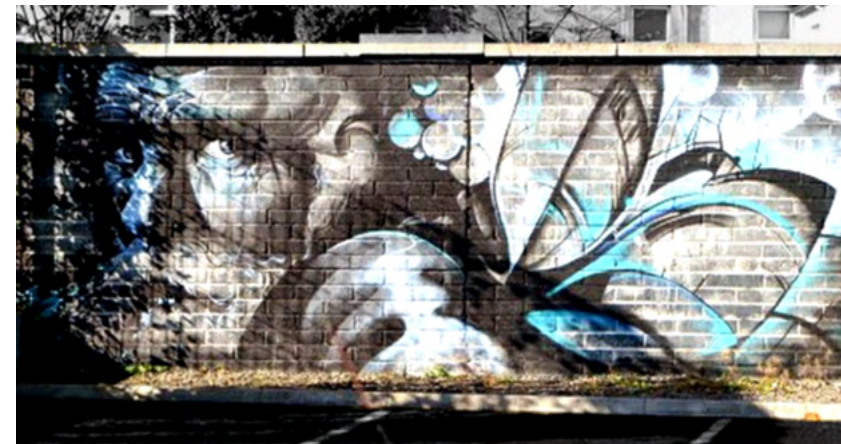
Marian Noone aka FRIZ



PUKA



Artist Unknown



JMK



Marian Noone aka FRIZ



Blowdesigns (Nik purdy)



Artist Unknown



Marian Noone aka FRIZ



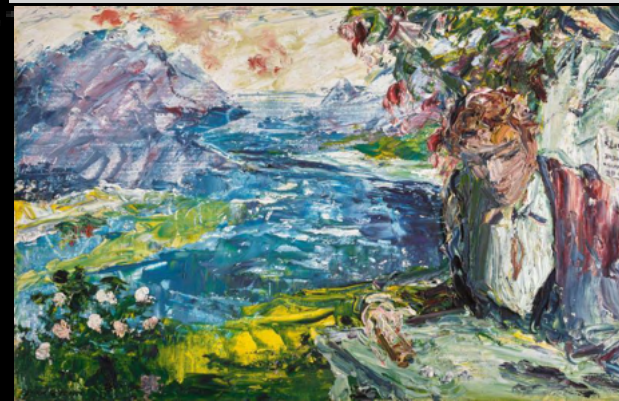
THE FIGHTING DAWN, 1945



Similar colours can be seen in the paintings of Jack Butler Yeats, whose artwork is housed in The Model Niland Collection. Many of his paintings convey the freshness and colour of a place where land and the sea come together. The vibrant and complex surfaces in which layers of paint intersect and overlap create a sense of movement. The paintings almost have a life of their own due to the extremely free and loose brushstrokes—similar to the Garavogue river and its fluidity. Rivers are moving forces and as such they represent the unending progress of life and nature.



AGAINST THE STREAM, 1945



THE BONES, 1942



FRESH AND SALT 1944

“There are no strangers here; Only friends you haven’t yet met,”

— W.B. Yeats

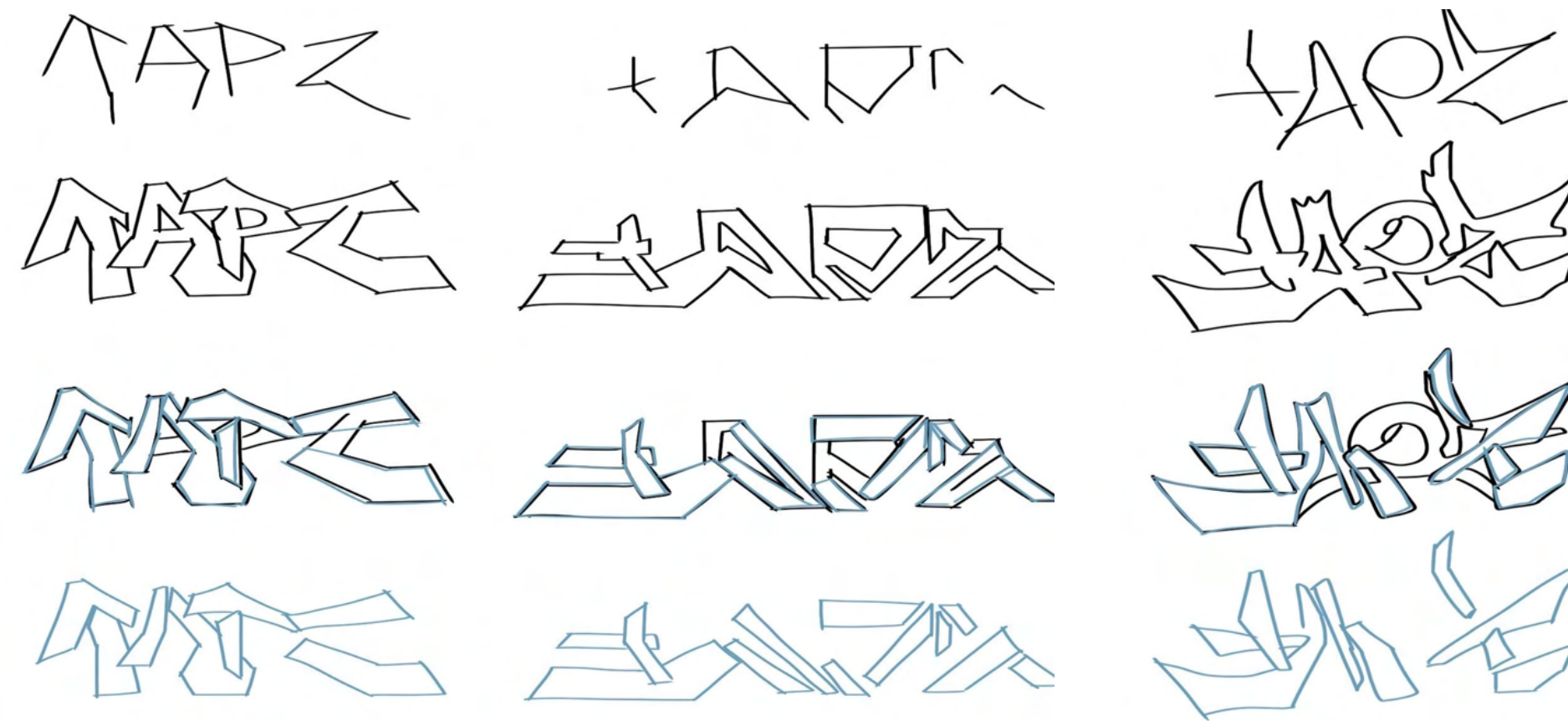


Blowdesigns (Nik purdy)

Developing the form and aesthetic of the library is perhaps one of the most crucial parts of the creation process as it is the appearance of the building which will captivate the attention of the youth and communicate with them. I feel it is crucial that the form and aesthetic of the building comes not only from the spatial requirements needed for these activities but also from the spirit of these activities. I began to look for inspiration in these activities and started to analyse various aspects of them in greater detail. What sparked my interest in this topic was how the idea of a piece of street art could be translated into a three dimensional form. I began analysing graffiti tags to investigate possible forms.



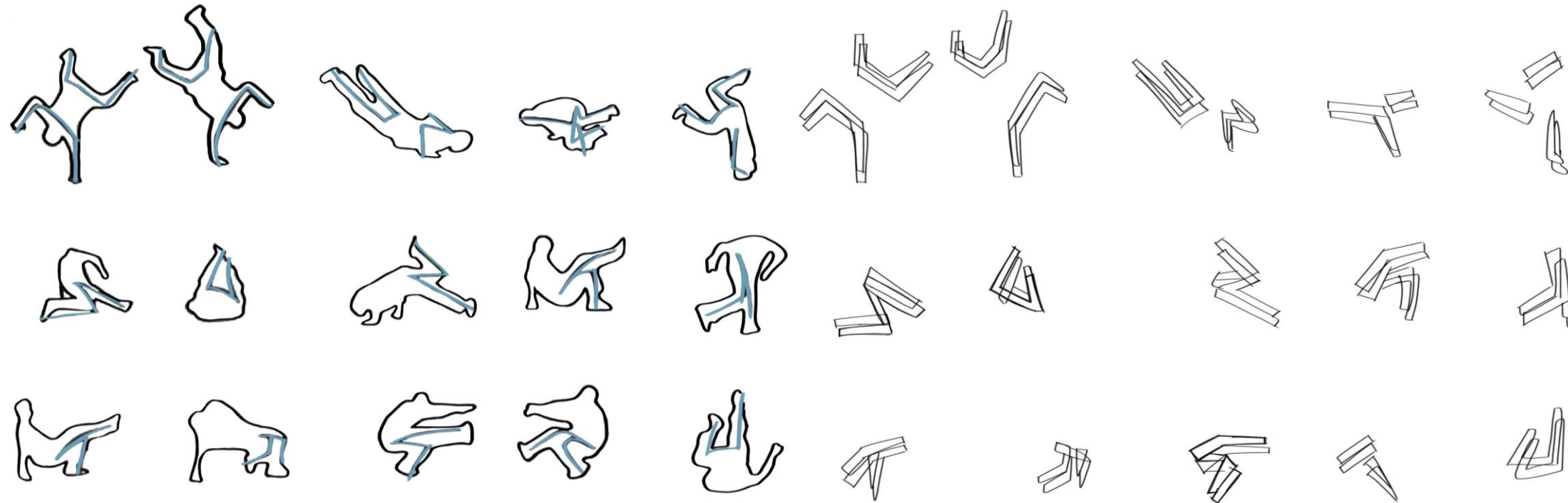
Graffiti forms are not arbitrary but are sophisticated forms developed through a process of sketching, layering, and “building-up”, similar to architecture and the method of painting by Jack Butler Yeats. If all detail is stripped away, all that would remain is the primitive skeletal structure of that piece, or building. I deconstructed a series of graffiti tags from the internet into a series of interesting primary geometries. This process uncovered a series of intriguing geometries largely made up of distorted rectangles and convoluted shapes. It began to reveal distinctive geometries which could be adopted into the design of the youth library to create a building which is reminiscent of the graffiti pieces which surround it.



07.4

DANCE

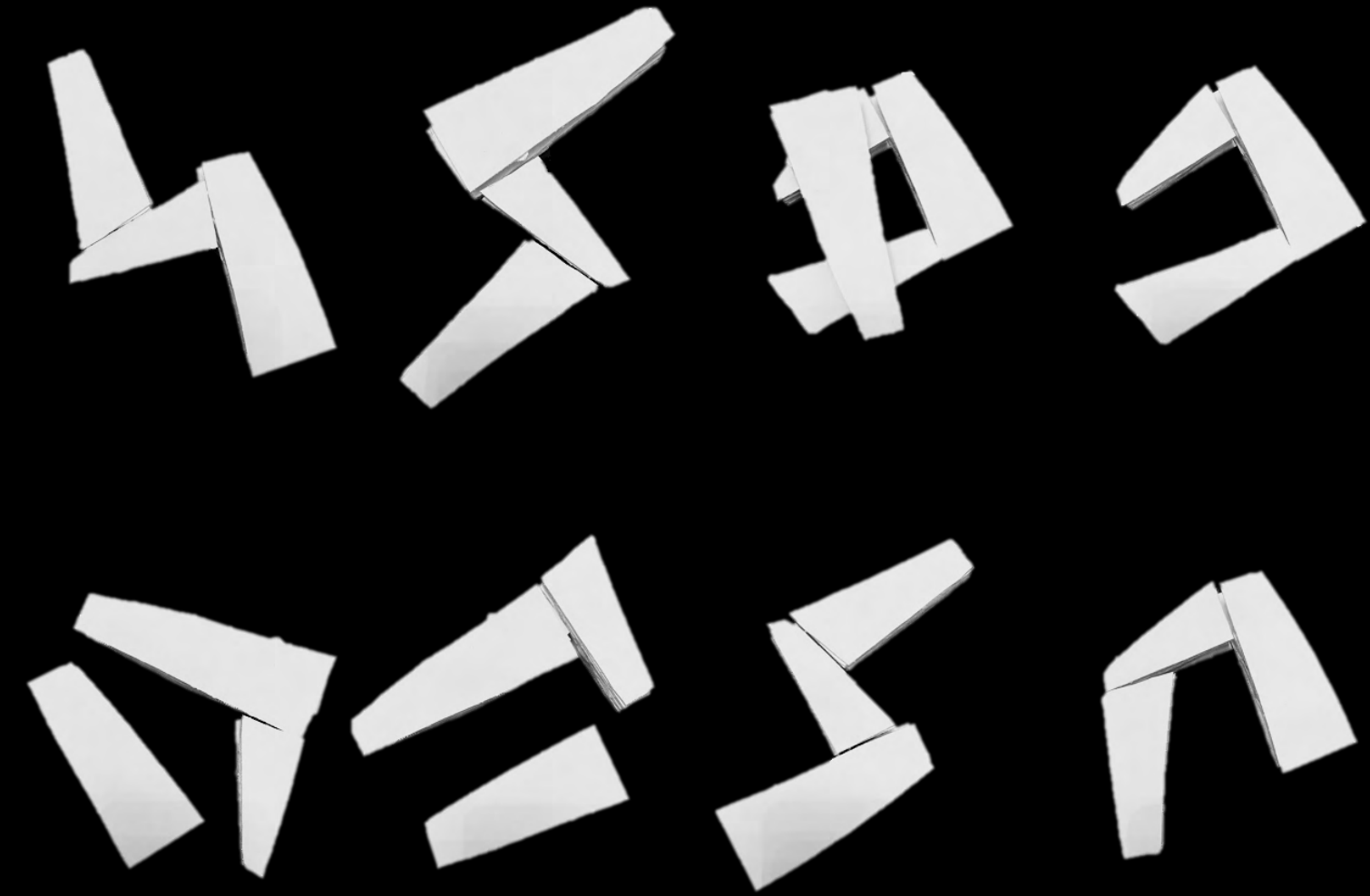
Tiktok was the most downloaded app of the year in 2020/21 and is now one of the most popular social media platforms amongst youths. It became famous for its dances challenges. Dancing is another form of self expression and teaches children about music, rhythm and beat and key social skills. I began to look at the different forms of dancers and the expressive structures they create with their own bodies. I tried translating these poses into a series of geometrical forms and spatial arrangements which could generate an expressive form on the site. The study generated a series of interesting geometries similar to those found in the graffiti tags.



07.5

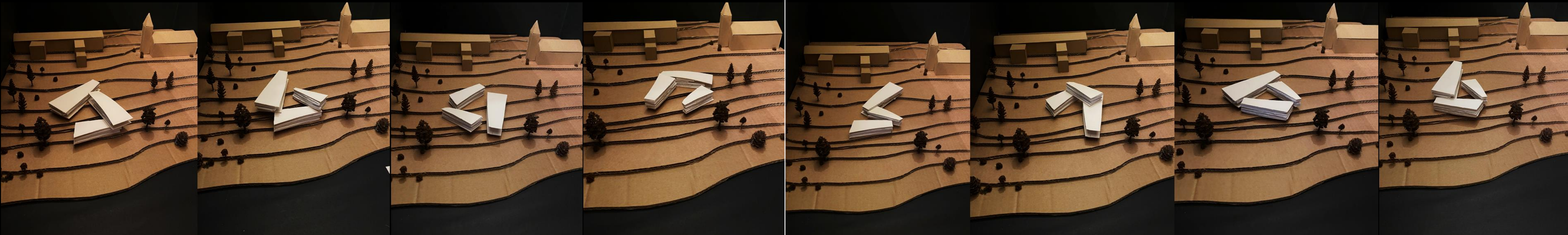
CONCEPTUAL MODELS

I then developed conceptual models based upon the sketches I had created.



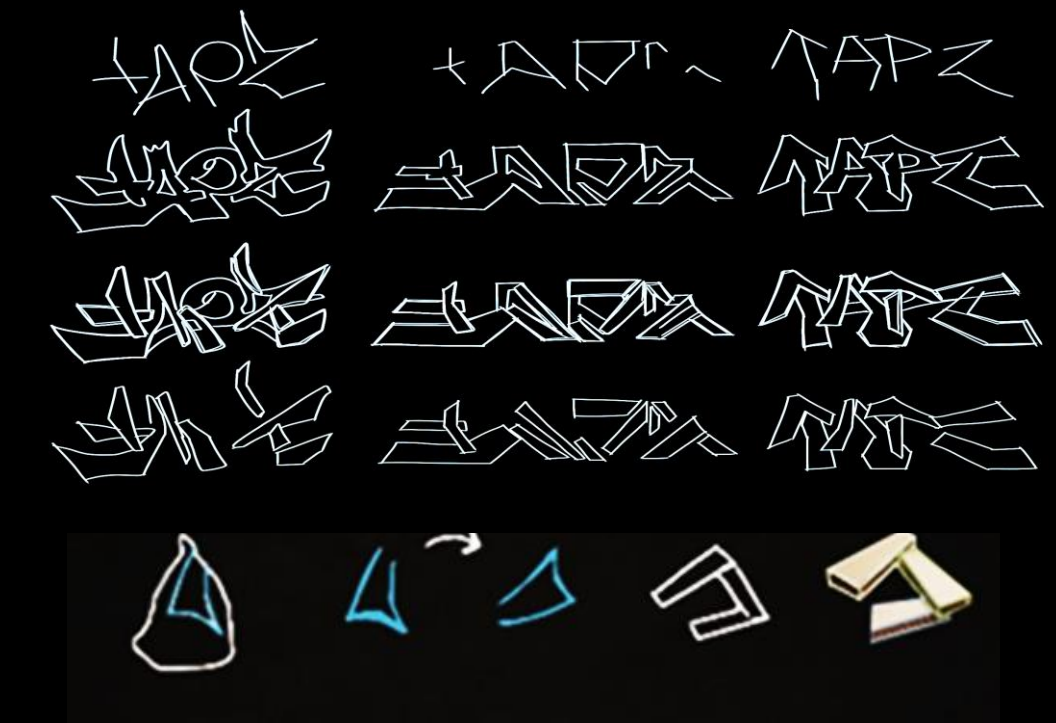
I transferred these conceptual models onto a site model to explore the various possibilities of geometries, forms and spatial arrangements that could shape the youth library.

These models demonstrated a series of ways in which interesting geometries could be arranged on the site to create evocative forms and functional spaces indicative of the findings in the previous explorations. After considering the pros and cons of each model, I began to narrow down the selections to a model I felt satisfied the various requirements highlighted throughout the project.

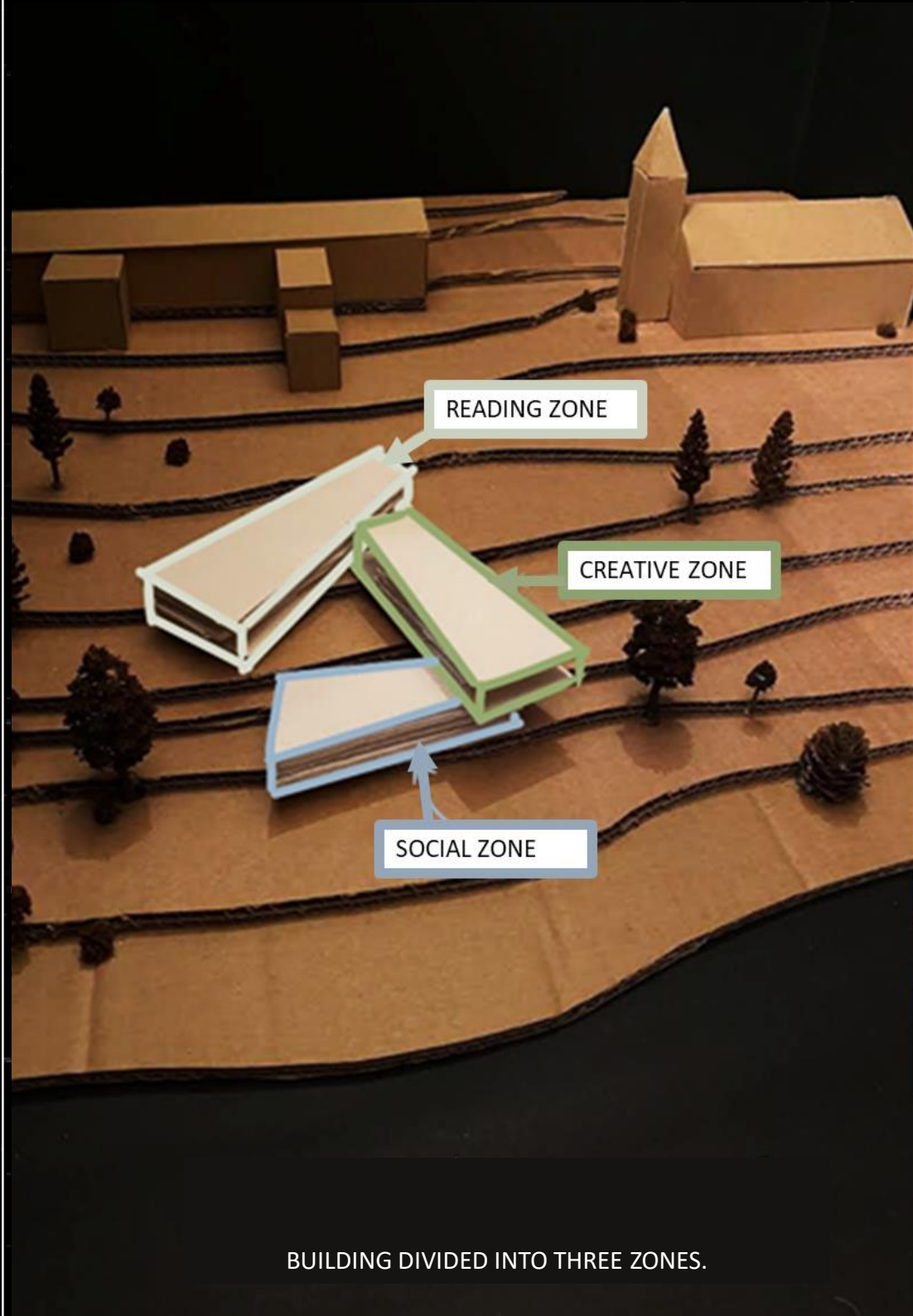
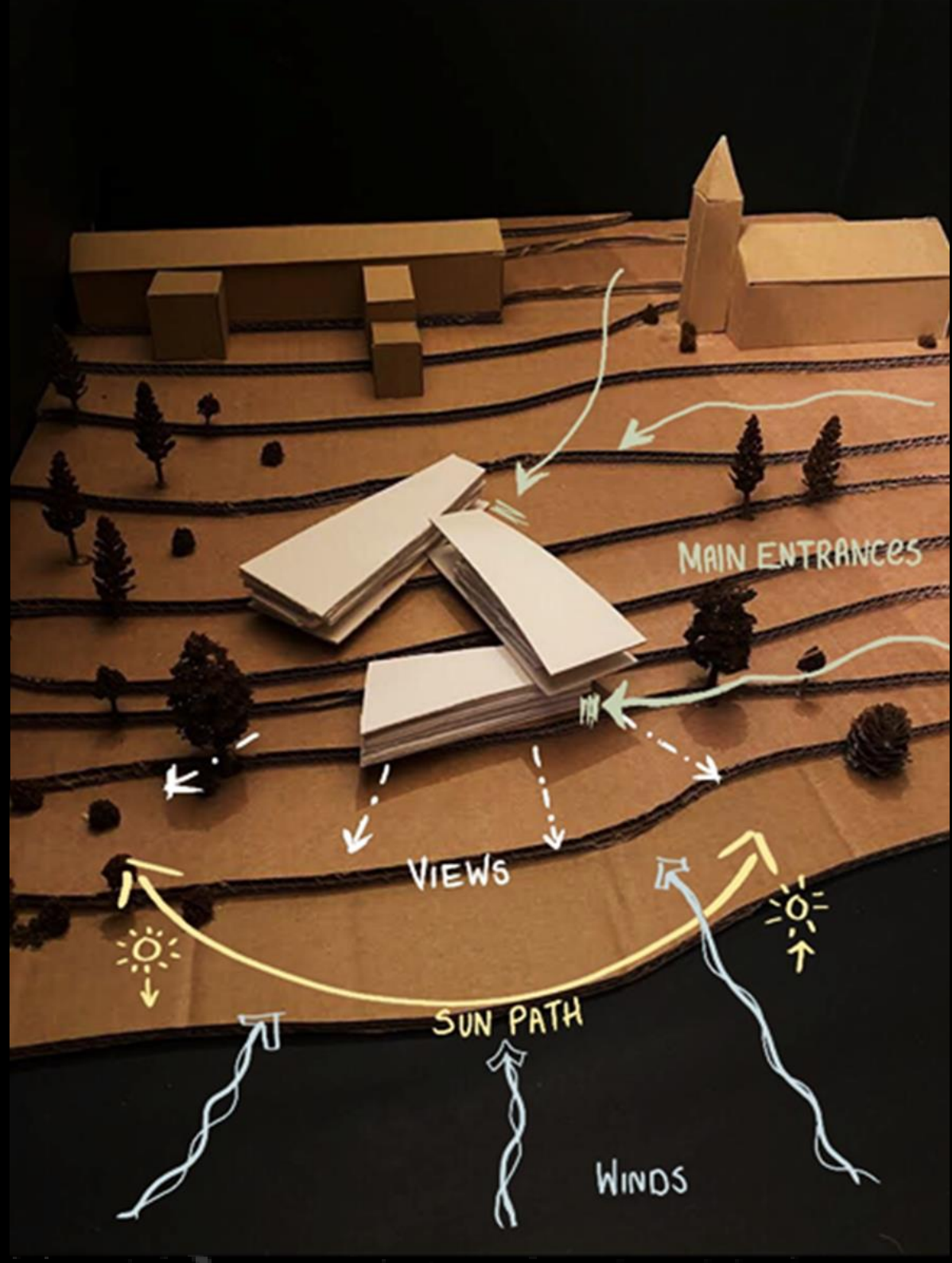


LIBRARY MASSING

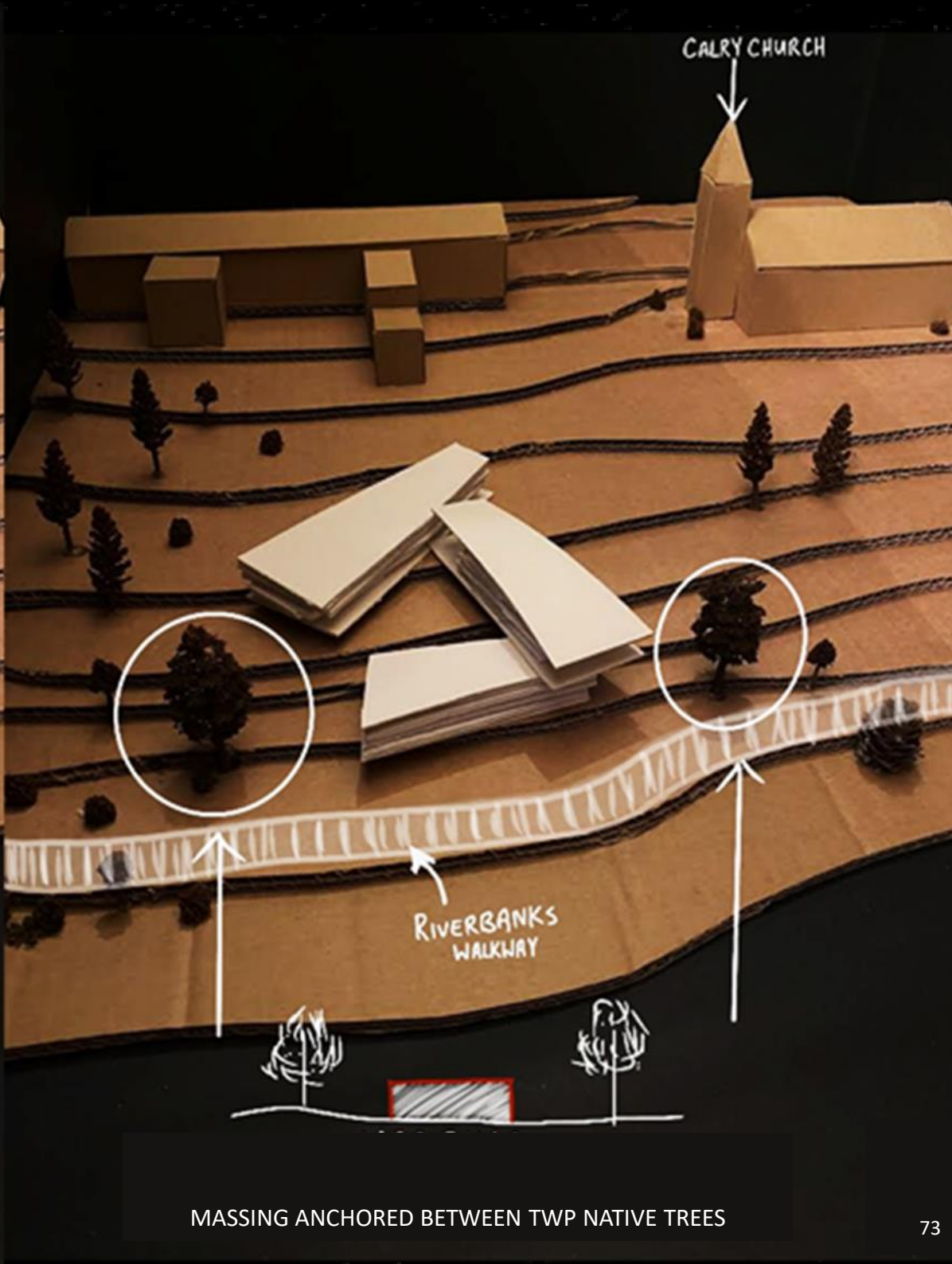
I began to sketch and assess how the form would best function



FORM DERIVED FROM THE GEOMETRIES OF DECONSTRUCTED BREAKDANCERS AND GRAFFITI



BUILDING DIVIDED INTO THREE ZONES.



MASSING ANCHORED BETWEEN TWP NATIVE TREES

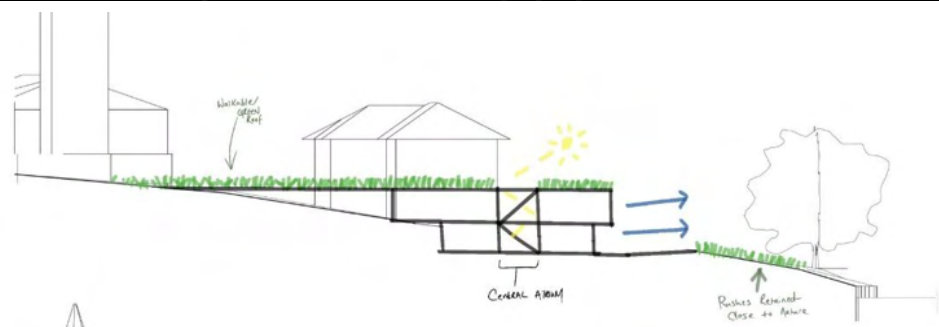
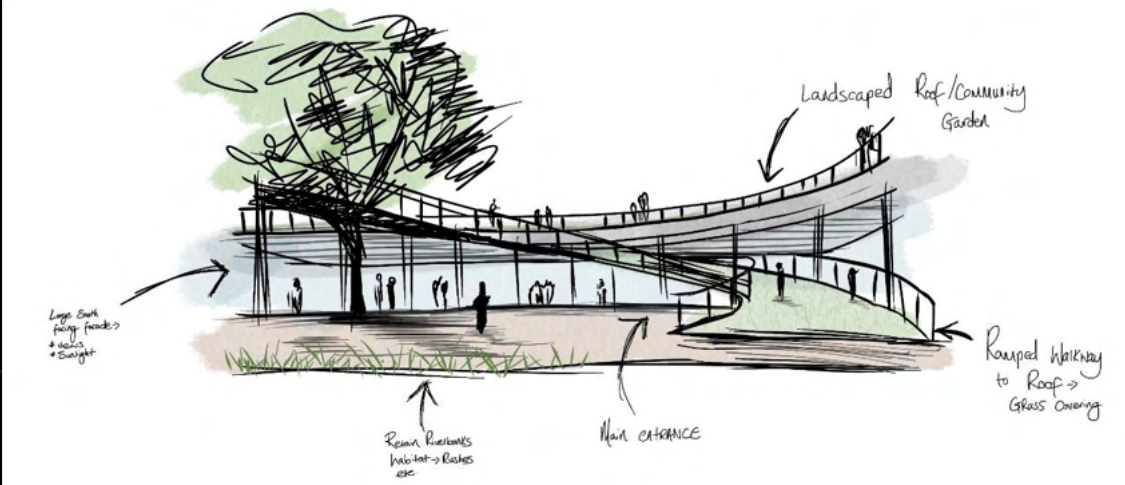
08

Sketch Design

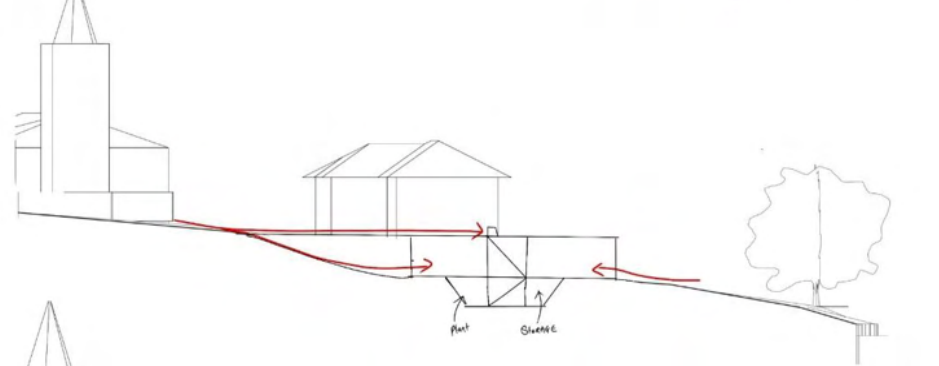


How do you want people to access the building?

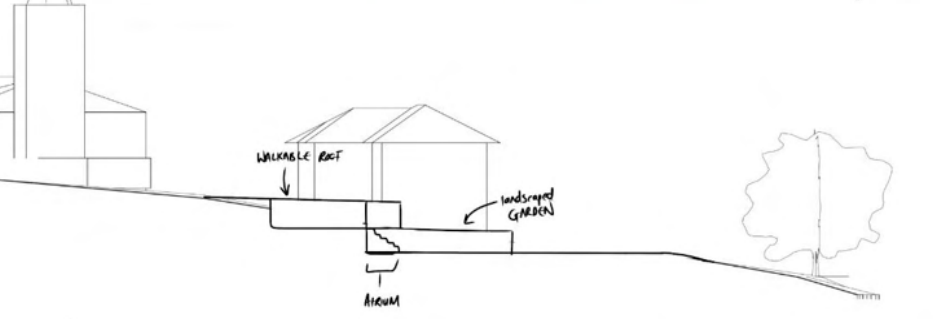
→ Two Access Points:
Top level
Bottom level is main entrance



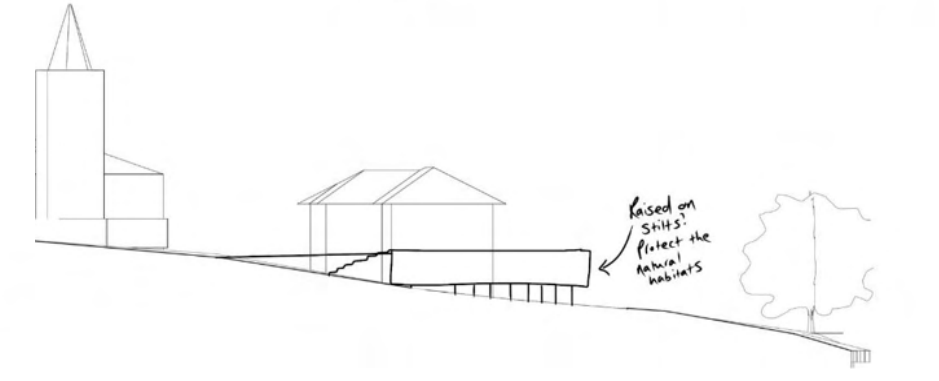
Excavate



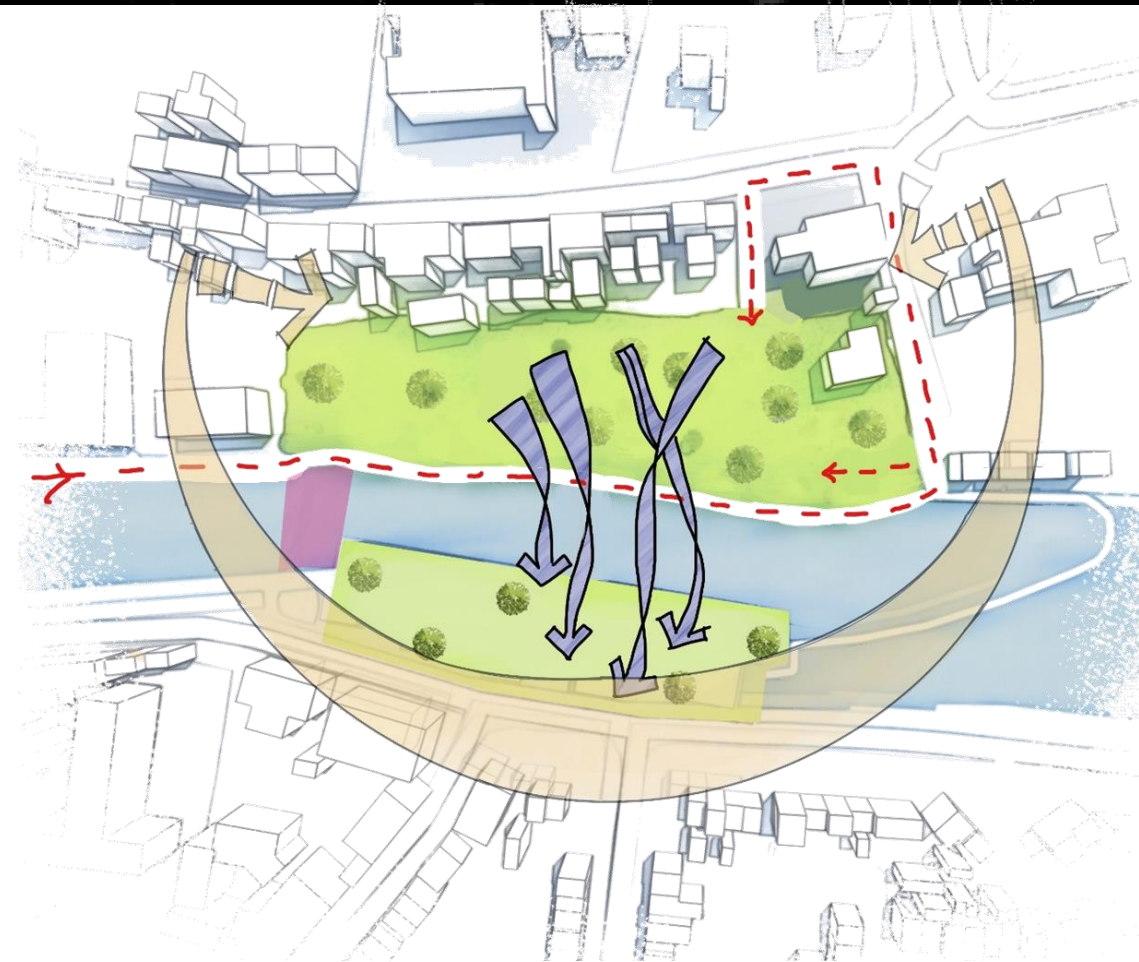
Basement



Platform

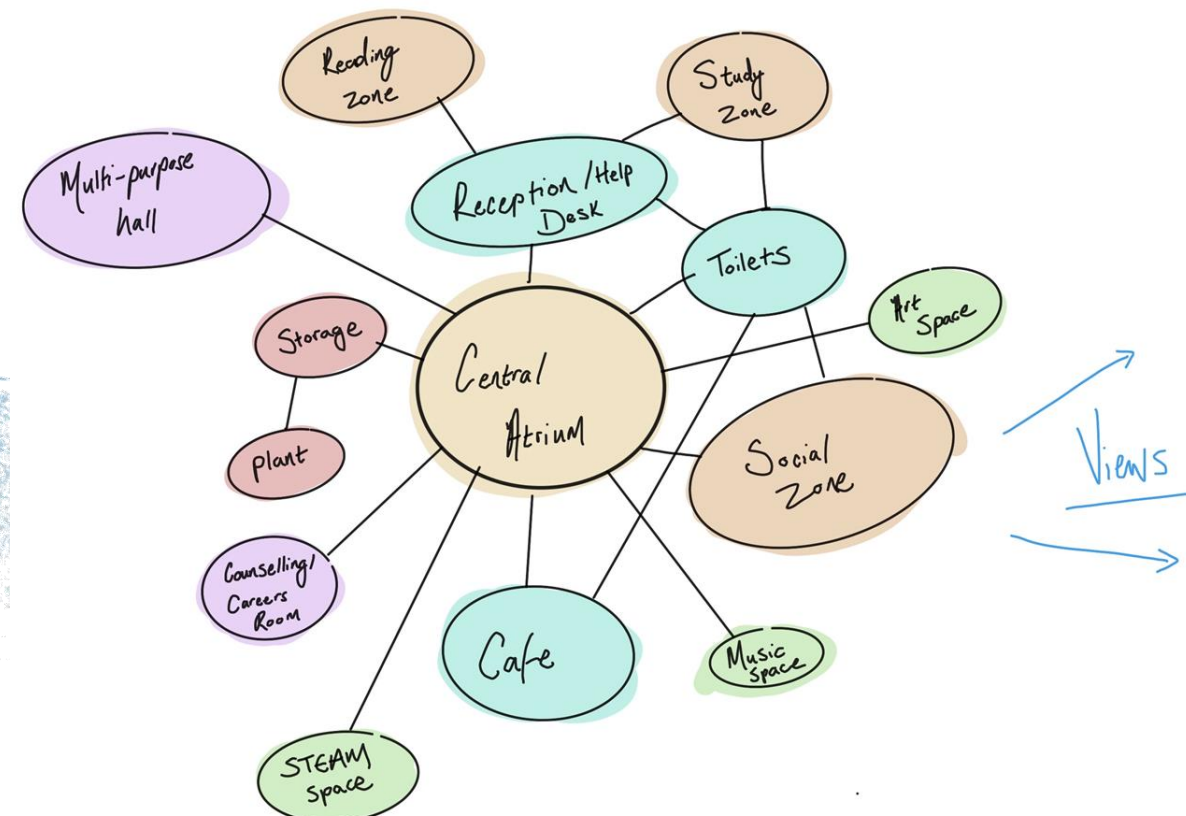


Stilts



KEY DESIGN STRATEGIES

1. To create a "stylish" building which is relevant and appeals to the youth of Sligo.
2. The theme of nature is integral to the design- the building is sited near an area categorised as a "Special Area of Conservation" by Sligo COCO. Thus the design intends to conserve and enhance the riverbanks, not damaging it but showcasing it. Any changes will have to be sensitively integrated into the space so as to not lose the natural beauty of the site.
3. To drive users down towards the riverbanks allowing them to enjoy its natural beauty and highlighting the Garavogue river as a significant natural feature of Sligo- Users become immersed in nature. A pedestrian "river banks" walkway will aid circulation through the block and provides users with an intimate connection to the river.
4. To enhance the overall public realm, creating a sense of community in the area and development of a social hub. This will be achieved through landscaped gardens, a public plaza and outdoor skateboard space.
5. To maximise views and solar gain of the site- creating a warm inviting library which maximises youth learning.
6. To create a pedestrian footbridge which spans across the Garavogue river across the former fjord location. Makes connections to the historical past of Sligo and links two of Sligo's must cultural buildings together- The model and the Abbey. Removal of apartment blocks will enhance the streetscape and allow better views to the abbey quarter block, bridging the divide between the north and south.



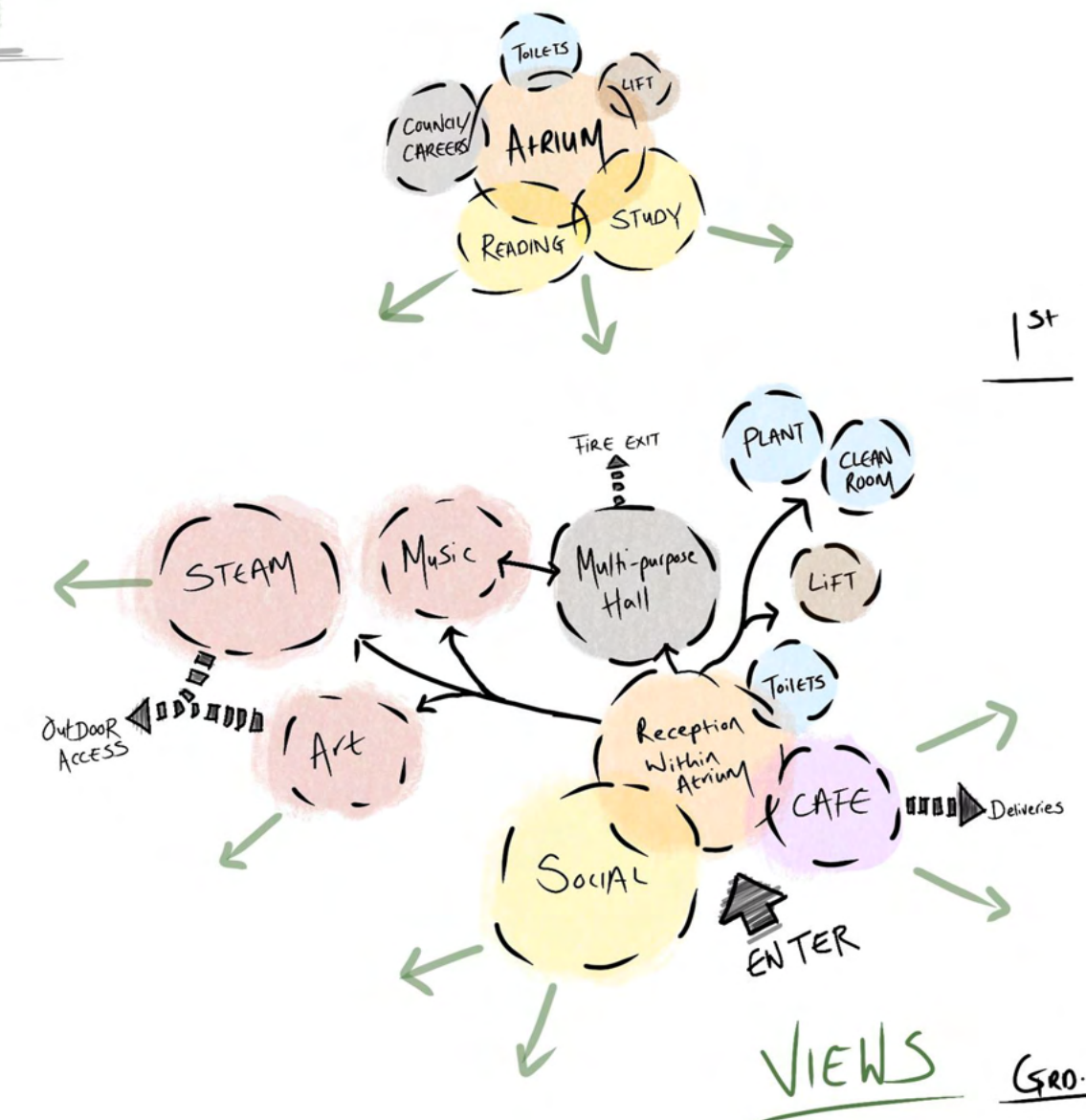
SCHEDULE ACCOMMODATION

1. Social - 250m²
2. READING - 150m²
3. STUDY - 150m²
4. CAFE - 90m²
5. ART - 110m²
6. MUSIC - 100m²
7. STEAM - 150m²
8. RECEPTION - 70m²
9. COUNCIL/CAREERS - 40m²
10. W/C - 40m²
11. Multi-Purpose Hall - 160m²
12. CLEANING - 40m²
13. PLANT - 40m²
14. Lift - 10m²

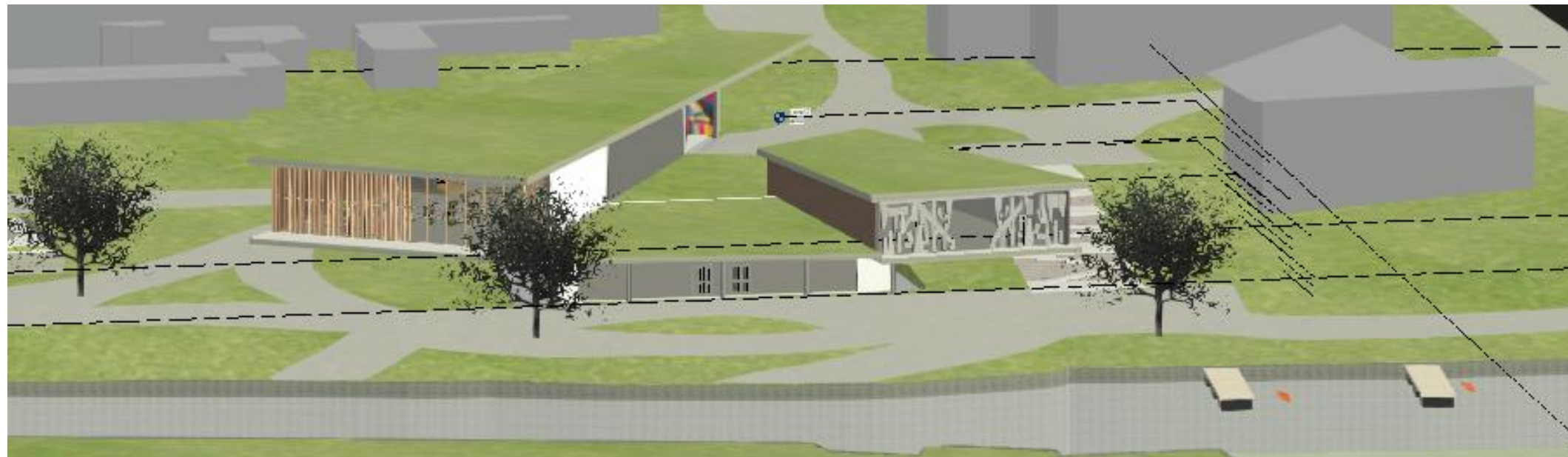
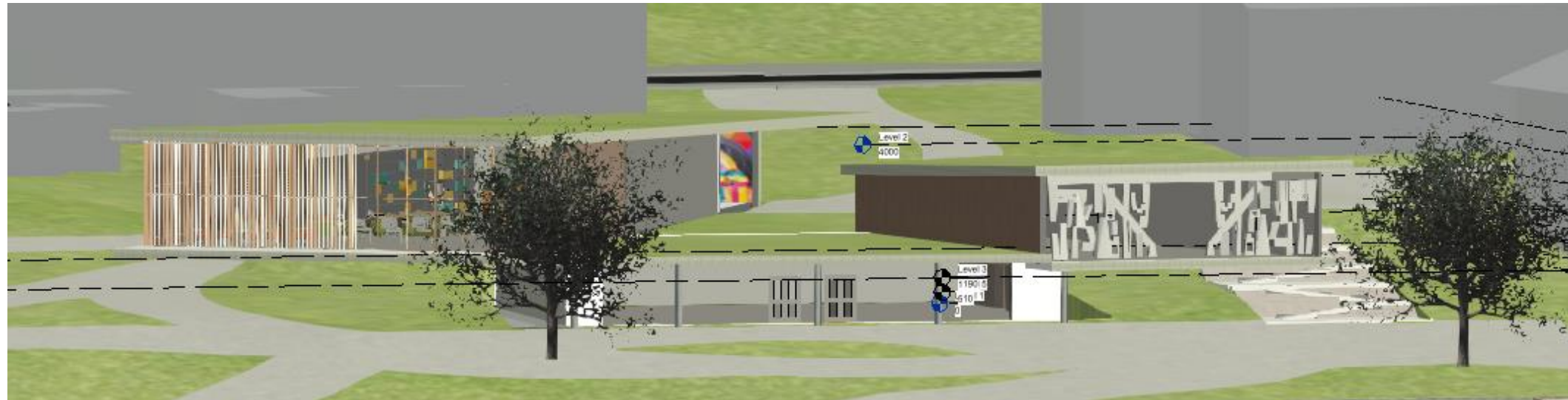
LOUD

- ▲ Social
- CAFE
- MUSIC
- RECEPTION
- Multi-purpose HALL
- STEAM
- ART
- W/C
- Council/Careers Rm.
- LIFT
- PLANT
- CLEANING RM.
- READING
- STUDY

QUIET



Rendition one



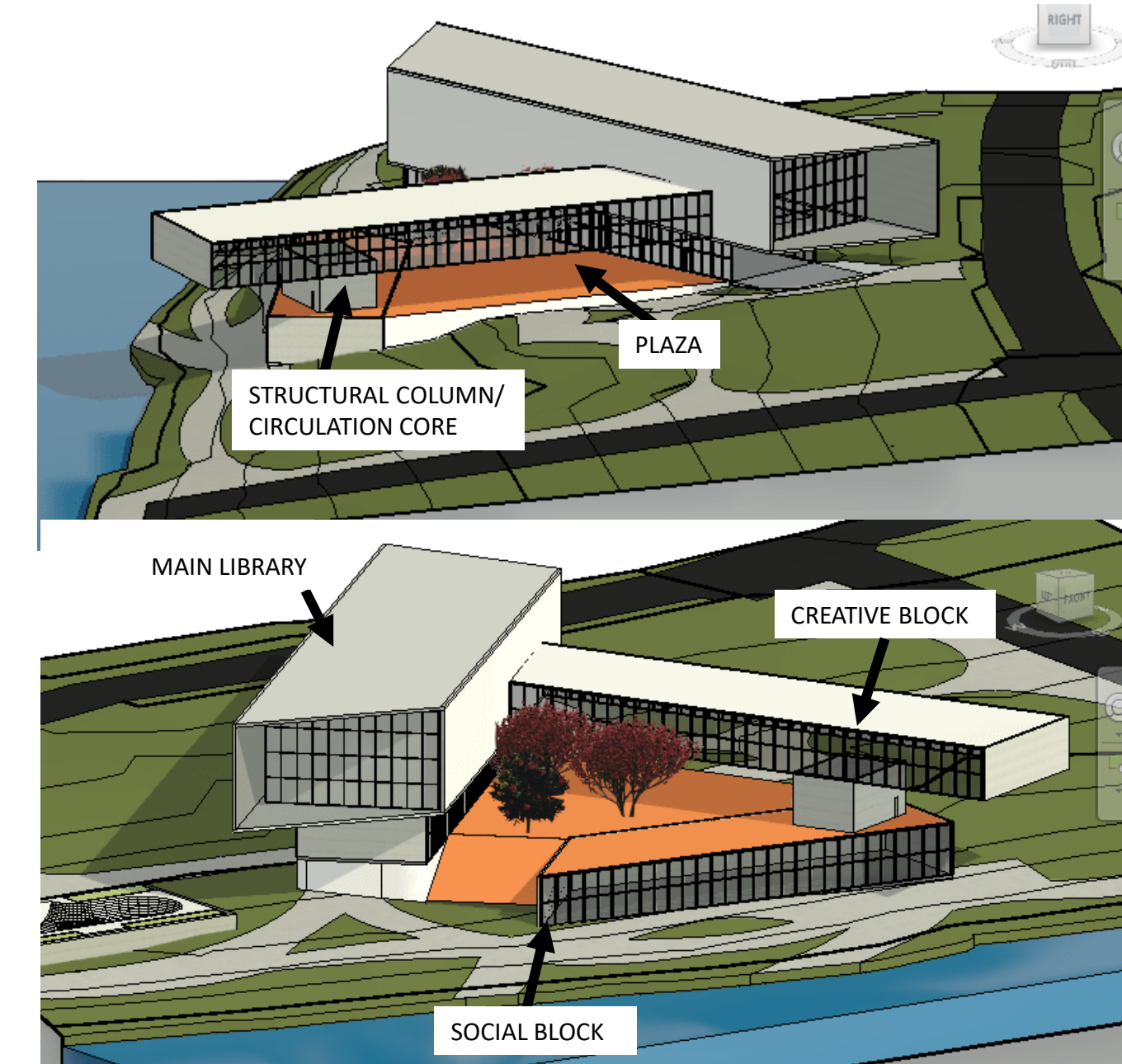
Rendition two

The idea was to retain the three blocks as visualized, however I began to play with the sizes and heights based on the hierarchy of functionality. The library which is the anchor space is double volume, followed by the creative block and finally the social block. This further accents the nature of the terrain.

I then decided to raise the creative block to ensure a seamless connection and a visual connection between the plaza, the river, and the approach.

For the roof, the ideas are to have the social block roof extend to the plaza and the creative block roof accessed via a rock climbing wall.

The structural column holding the creative block serves not only as structural element but as a vertical circulation core linking the creative, the social block and the plaza together.



GF 1



GF 2

GF 3



