

THE OASIS CENTRE - A DESIGN TOOLKIT FOR INTEGRATION

IN COLLABORATION WITH REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN MANCHESTER, UK

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INTRODUCTION

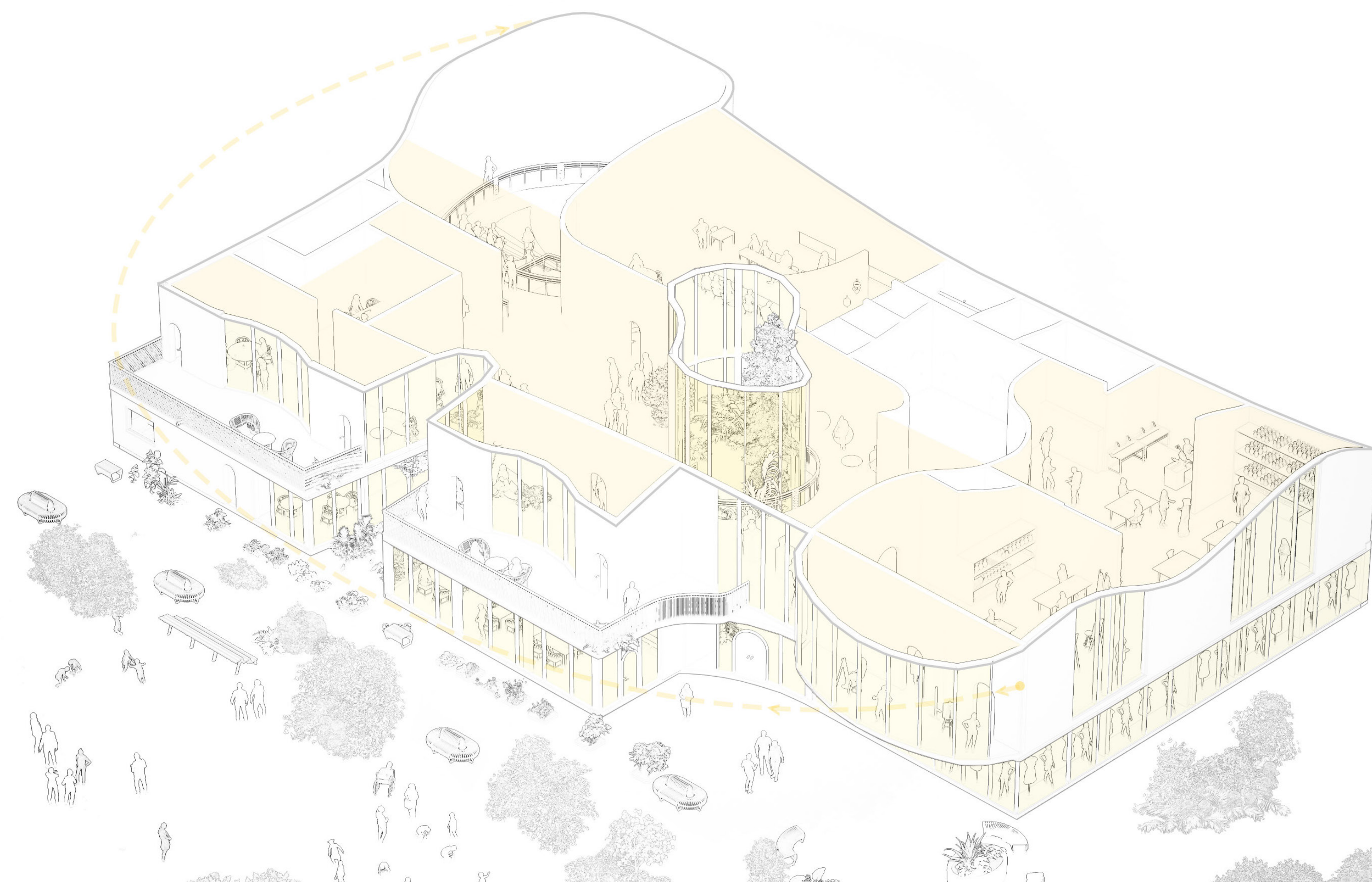
This live brief research project is a collaborative study that explores how architectural interventions and spatial design elements can respond to the identified needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Conducted between 2021 and 2022 as part of a Masters of Architecture thesis research project, the study used St Peters Parish Centre as a test bed to develop interventions in continuous collaboration with asylum seekers and refugees.

Over the course of eight engagements, key spatial elements that impact the physical and emotional experiences of refugees and asylum seekers were identified. These elements include: the role of light, nature, access, materiality, programme requirements, and circulation. The study also highlighted qualities that promote their confidence and autonomy for better integration and active participation in their local community.

The role of daylight is important to the experiential qualities of the space to allow visitors to have a continuous relationship with the outdoors, promoting a sense of freedom.

The light rays are diffused in the south facade with an external structure on the ground floor and roof overhangs. The courtyard opening allows light to penetrate the interior, whilst maintaining visibility across the different spaces so visitors can get an idea of what is going on in each room without physically entering.

The circulation route and visibility of light and nature is a key element of designing for comfort and safety. The activities and conversations the visitors take part in on this journey can be emotionally difficult and trauma inflicting, therefore the physical spaces they undergo these emotional journeys needs to respond: to evoke comfort, warmth and safety.



From engagement with the user group, many told me how they spend their days cooped up in a hotel room or in dated offices and buildings that makes them feel unpleasant. This is why it is important that the building evokes calmness to enable people to feel safe and comfortable when sharing their problems and taking steps to integrate into a new society.

Timber is used as a primary construction material and finish to create an uplifting and warm environment that evokes safety and calmness. In this building visitors experience many emotions from grief, to longing and anxiety as they reflect and plan for a new future in the UK. It is important that the building fabric further enhances the programme available.

- Oak Handrail
- Timber Panelling
- Wood flooring
- Timber Gridshell



Career and Learning Library



Growing Garden



Classroom and comfort nook



Exhibition walls and circulation on first floor

CONTACT

Please get in touch for questions regarding this research and future collaborations

