

ALLFORD
HALL
MONAGHAN
MORRIS

The Alder Centre

Information
Pack

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THE ALDER CENTRE

The Alder Centre was established in 1989 by a small group of health care professionals in partnership with bereaved parents who identified a gap in the services available. The Centre is unique within the NHS and internationally, providing bereavement counselling for families who have had a child pass away as well as a national telephone helpline and general counselling for hospital staff.

A series of rooms configured like a big house, set inside a secret garden can be a familiar place for parents to meet, talk, grow things and have a cup of tea. The architecture is easy to use and simple to understand, informed by a conversational process with the counsellors, users and bereaved parents. The building is arranged with a large communal space in the centre that is 'the heart' with a lounge and kitchen from which seven counselling rooms unfold, each with their own private garden. There is a flexible training room, office and dedicated room for the 'Child Deathline' where volunteers answer phone calls from parents to a national helpline.

Sector:	Healthcare
Location:	Liverpool, UK
Address:	Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Eaton Road, Liverpool, L12 2AP
Client:	Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
Construction cost:	£1.6m
Start:	April 2019
Completion:	August 2020
Contract type:	JCT Traditional

PROJECT TEAM

Client :	Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
Architect :	Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
CDM Coordinator:	Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Structural/Civil Engineer:	Elliott Wood
Cost Consultant:	PT Projects
MEP Engineer:	David Stillman Associates
Landscape Architect:	BBUK
Main Contractor:	Whitfield and Brown

AREAS

Gross internal	320 sq.m
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ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS TEAM MEMBERS

Paul Monaghan, Susan Le Good, James O'Neill, Dora Felekou, James Smith, Peter Shelton, Patrick Crocock, Craig Robertson, Julia Yao, Matthew Drewitt, Ramon Acha Valls, Rochelle Dalphinis, Simon Allford, Jonathan Hall and Peter Morris.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The Alder Centre was established in 1989 by a small group of health care professionals in partnership with bereaved parents who identified a gap in the services available. The Centre is unique within the NHS and internationally, providing bereavement counselling for families who have had a child pass away as well as a national telephone helpline and general counselling for Trust staff. The Alder Centre provides a mixture of services by a range of staff - both paid and volunteers - including the following:

- Bereavement Care Service
- Counselling
- Volunteer Befriending - offered by bereaved parents
- Therapeutic Family Breaks
- The Child Death Helpline

COMPETITION

In late 2016 the Trust launched an open architecture competition which was advertised in OJEU (Journal of the EU) and organised by the RIBA. From an impressive list of entries AHMM won the contract for the scheme in July 2017.

THE OLD ALDER CENTRE

The previous Alder Centre comprised a mixture of rooms shoehorned into an existing hospital building. The Remembrance Tree and Remembrance Stone, two items of symbolic importance for the Centre and parents, have been moved into the new building.



Remembrance Stone at the entrance

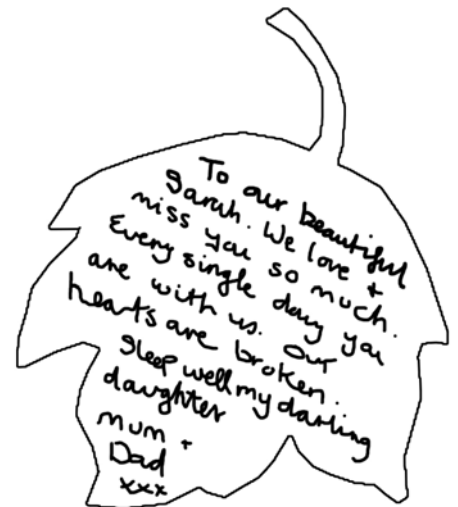


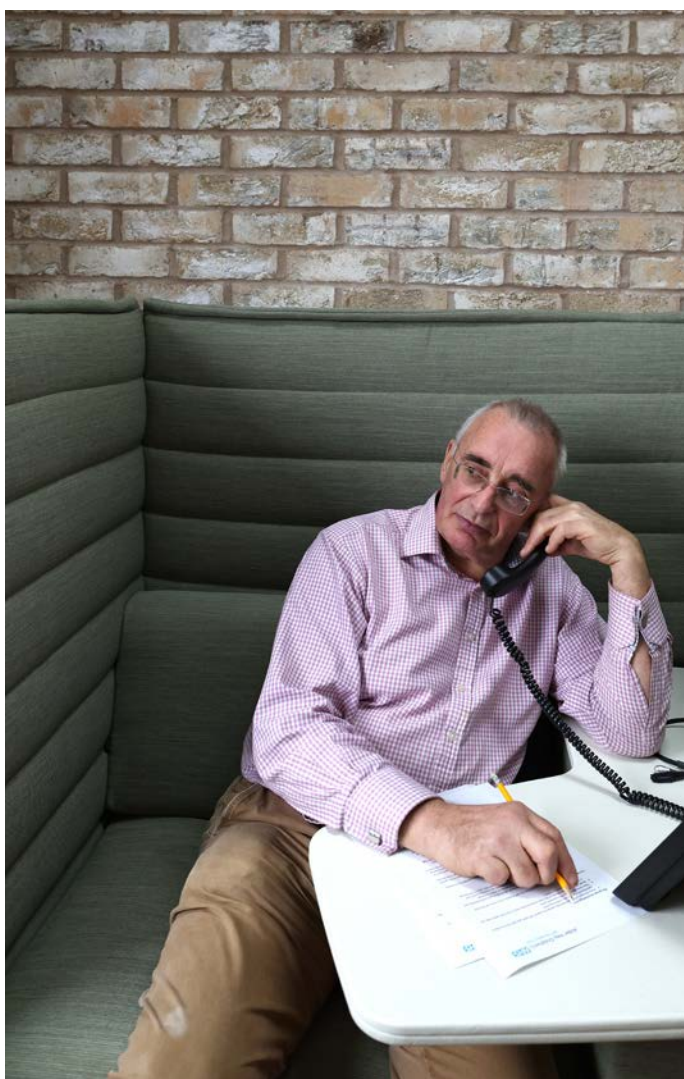
Remembrance Tree

WHO IS IT FOR?

Each year messages are written on leaves by families to their lost children and the leaves are hung from branches on the Remembrance Tree. During a service around Christmas time in the Liverpool Cathedral, the leaves are taken down to signify renewal and then the hanging starts over again. The messages are from mums and dads, grandparents and siblings.

The centre provides a mixture of spaces for different people and therapy types. Contemporary therapy theories around this sort of care suggest that the traditional one on one counselling sessions don't work for everyone. Some people are more likely to open-up in an informal setting, some within group sessions, some things work differently for men and women. The building and its gardens have been designed with this sense of inclusivity in mind.





Counsellors and bereavement team staff in the heart space

The Alder Centre provides bereavement counselling for parents, and anyone affected by the death of a child. It is an essential service that has been associated with the Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool for more than 30 years.

It is said that losing a child is something that you never recover from – you just learn to live with it, and so the care that the centre provides is often ongoing and takes many forms. The bereavement team and counsellors that provide the service is roughly half professionals and half volunteers who are in fact bereaved parents themselves.

John Ashton is one of the founders, here on the Child Death Helpline
Photos by Gareth Jones

THE ALDER HEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

HISTORY

1910

The Board of Poor Law Guardians purchases Alder Hey, a mansion set in 25 acres of land in West Derby, with the intention of building a new workhouse for the city's poor. The plans include an area dedicated to caring for the paupers' sick children.

World Wars I and II

The doors of Alder Hey are opened after the outbreak of the First World War so the building can serve as a military hospital. But the wards designed for caring for children retain their purpose. An American military camp is also established in the grounds.

1944

Penicillin is first tested at Alder Hey to save the life of a child with pneumonia, a ground-breaking moment in medical history.

1950s

Alder Hey opens a neonatal unit to treat sick babies that has since saved thousands of lives. This was the first neonatal unit in the country.

1964

Alder Hey celebrates its jubilee year with a ceremony at Liverpool Cathedral.

1990

Princess Diana visits Alder Hey to meet parents and patients.

1993

Ronald McDonald House opens to provide a home away from home for the families of sick children being treated at Alder Hey.

2013

After the plans to rebuild Alder Hey on the neighbouring Springfield Park are approved, work begins to create a new £237m hospital. The new Alder Hey will contain 270 beds in total. There will be 48 beds for children in the intensive care, high-dependency and burns units. There will be 16 digitally enhanced operating theatres to provide life-saving treatment to thousands of children a year. 70% of children at the hospital will be given their own private, en-suite bedrooms.

2015

The new Alder Hey is officially unveiled on October 1.



Alder Hey, 1910



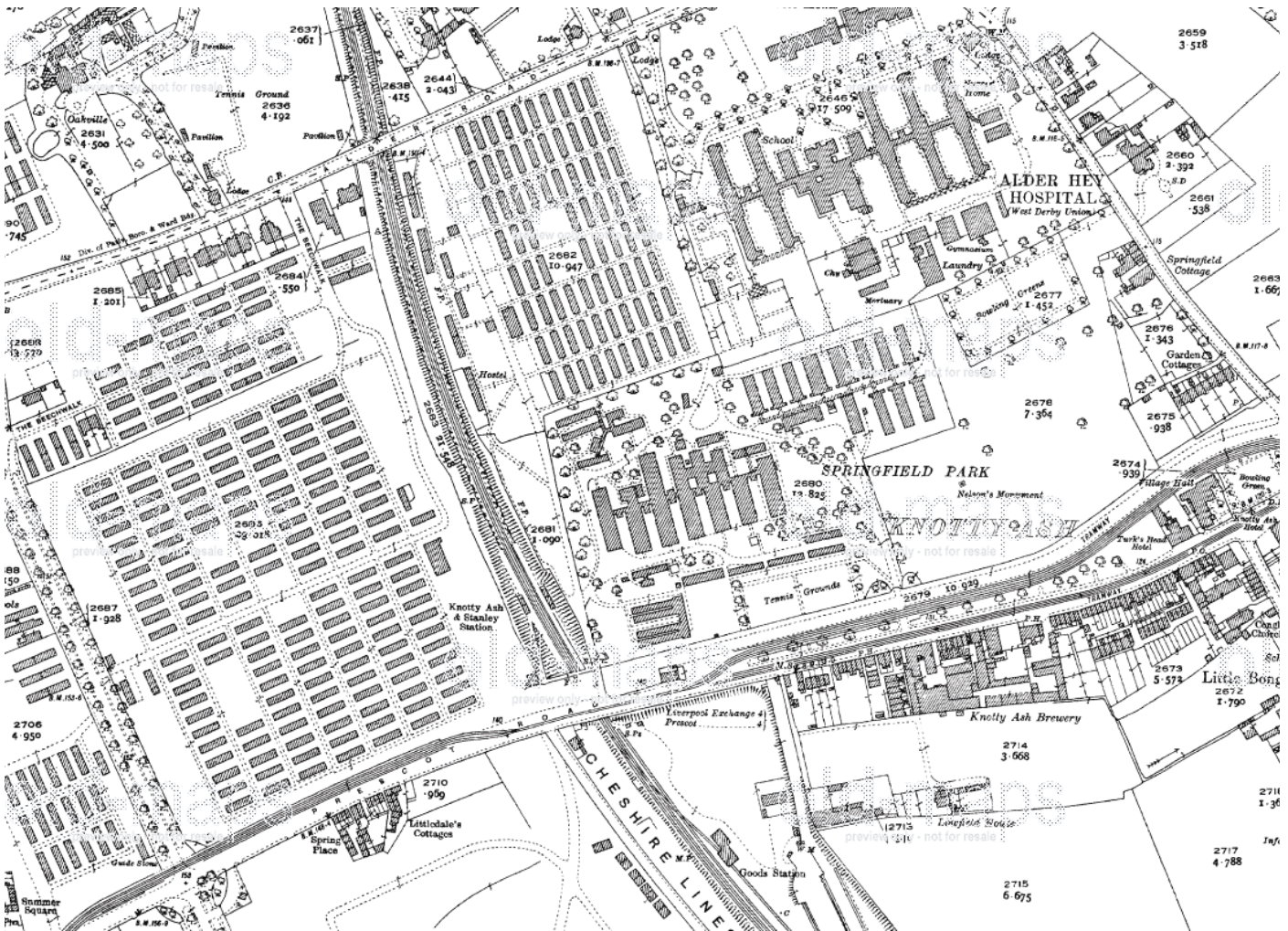
Alder Hey military ward from WW1



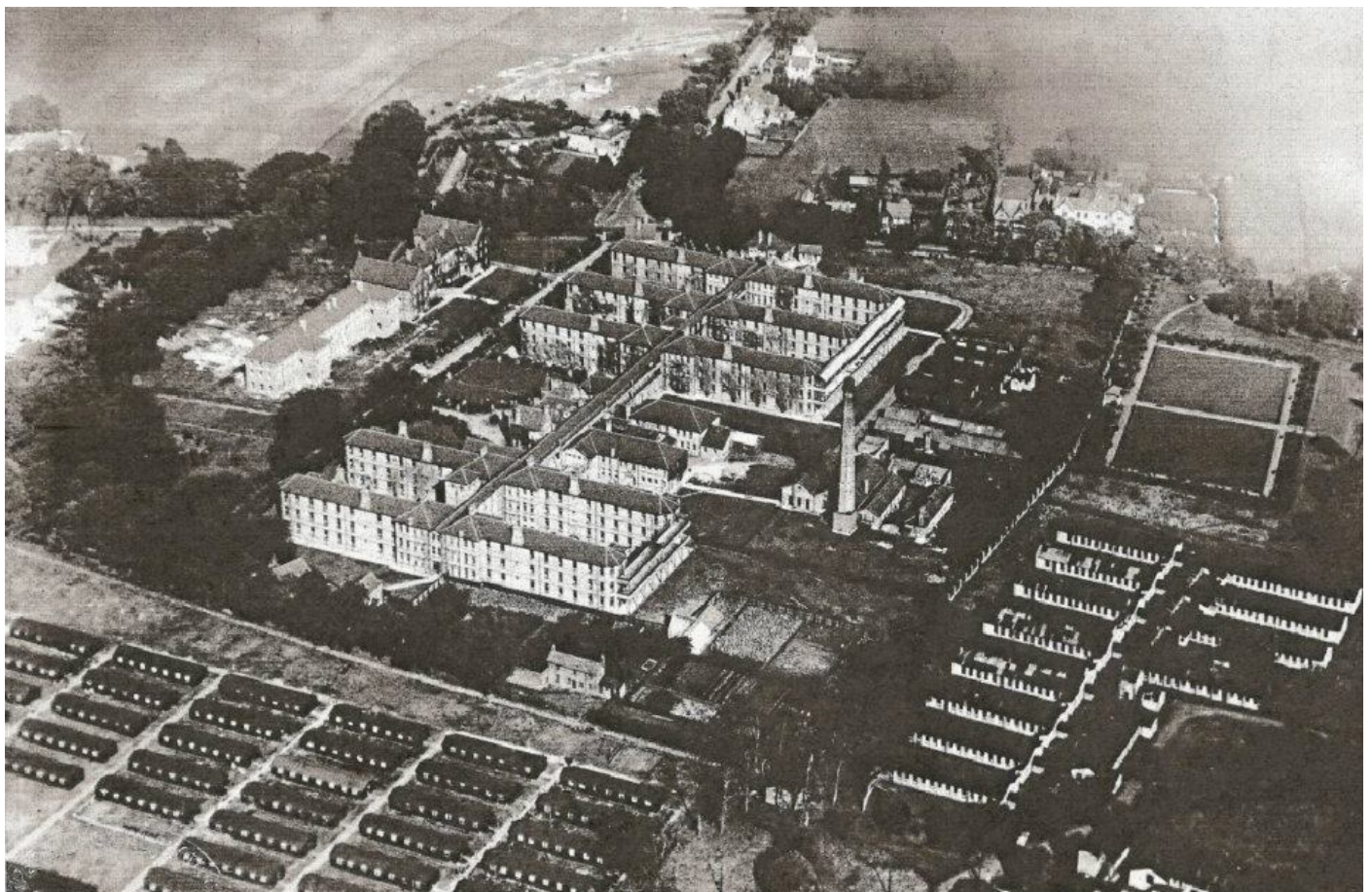
Princess Diana in 1990



Wayne and Coleen Rooney in 2006 opening a new neurology unit



'Alder Hey camp', 1918



The hospital in 1926

A VISIONARY HEALTHCARE CAMPUS



Demolition of the old hospital in 2017

LOCATION

Alder Hey Children's Hospital is located in West Derby, Liverpool, approximately 7 km (4.3 miles) east of Liverpool city centre. The site is situated adjacent to East Prescott Road (the A57) which is a major arterial route into the city providing good access to the M62 and the M57, as well as to the city centre.

Alder Hey in the Park opened in October 2015 and was built to replace the old Alder Hey Children's Hospital, which by the early 2000s had become no longer fit for purpose. This new circa £300m hospital was required to provide world class healthcare and research facilities to deliver the highest standard of specialist medical care for the children of Liverpool and beyond. BDP's multi award-winning design - which sought inspiration from children - is a first in Europe in terms of the treatment and care of children with a hospital built entirely in a park setting.



The Alder Hey Children's Hospital, BDP Architects



The Institute Building, Hopkins Architects

MASTERPLAN

The Alder Centre site is located towards the north of a group of ancillary buildings to the main hospital facility. The Institute Building and forthcoming Community Cluster are two such buildings as well as a multi-storey car parking facility and other future expansion facilities which can be located on plots in close proximity.



The Catkin Centre and Sunflower House, Cullinan Studio
Image: courtesy of Cullinan Studio

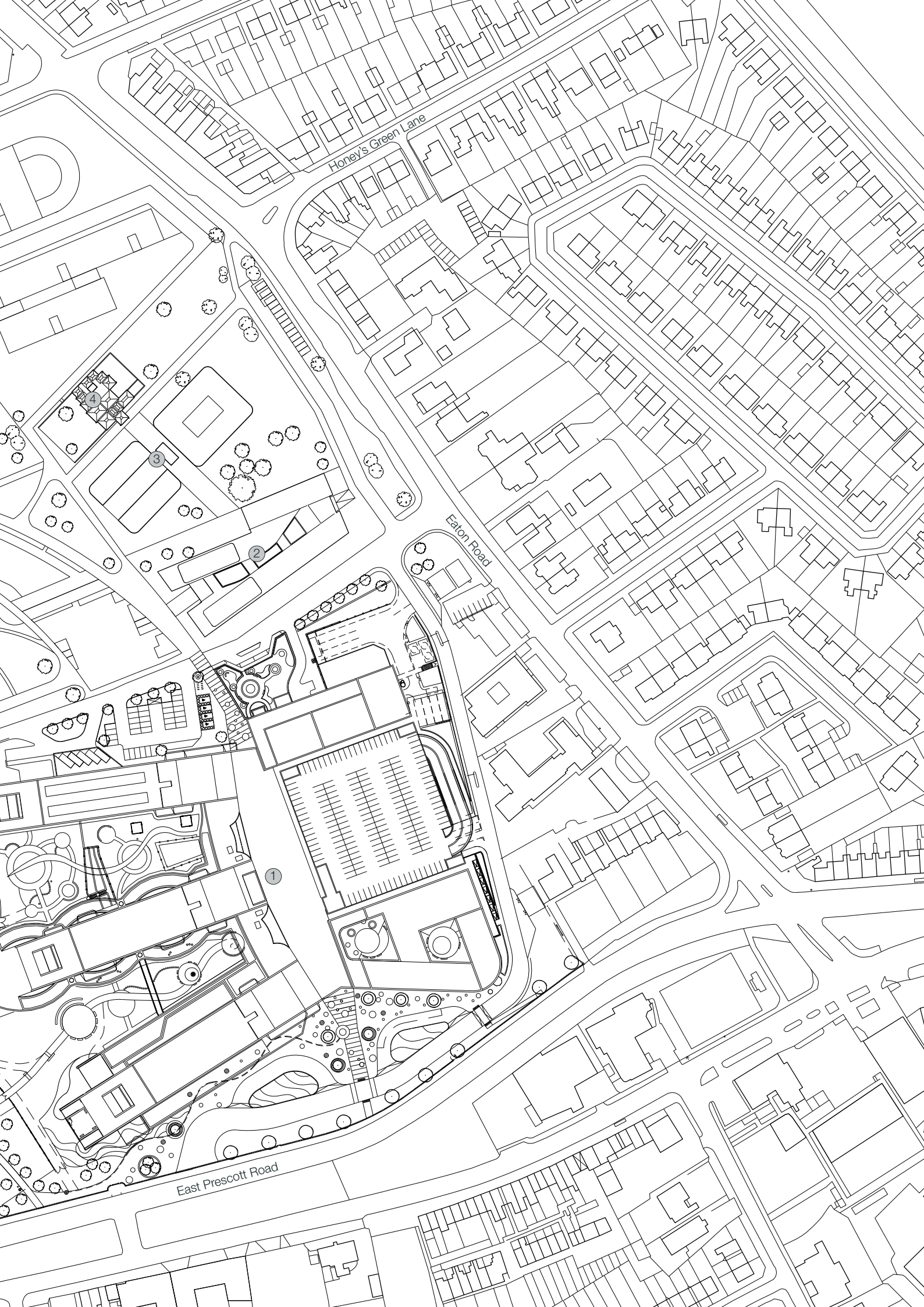
SITE

Construction of the new hospital - on part of Springfield Park adjacent to the old hospital buildings - was made possible by an innovative land swap agreement between Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Liverpool City Council. This agreement was made under the condition that an equivalent area of parkland (circa 9 hectares) would be created once the old hospital buildings are demolished. Demolition commenced in March 2017.

Being taller and more densely planned, the new hospital occupies less land than the original hospital buildings. This means that there will be residual land development opportunities alongside the re-instated park and the new hospital. A residential development is proposed that will overlook the park, with proceeds from the land sale contributing towards a sustainable funding solution to create high quality landscape parkland, with destination attractions and improved public realm managed by a newly established community interest company. Ongoing contributions from the proposed residential units will contribute towards the future maintenance of the park.

1. Alder Hey Children's Hospital
2. Institute Building
3. Community Cluster Building
4. The Alder Centre
5. Springfield Park
6. New residential plots





Honey's Green Lane

Eaton Road

East Prescott Road

1

2

3

4

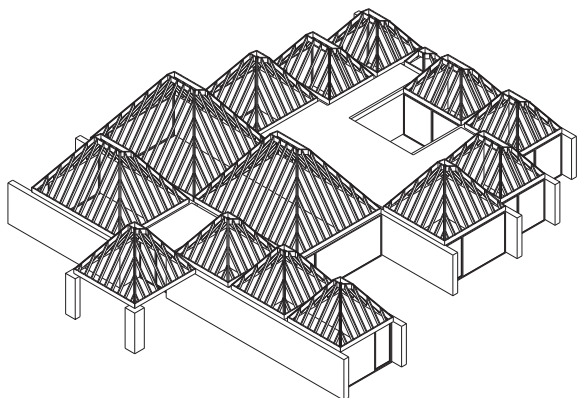
BRIEF

The Alder Centre building is a small but key component in the continued development of the Alder Hey Health Park Campus. The brief for the Alder Centre building was to create 'A Place Like No Other' that promotes companionship and a place of sanctuary. Previously, the service offered by the Alder Centre was carried out in an old building, with the counselling services shoehorned into administrative offices that looked out over a car park.

The new building offers for the first time the opportunity to provide purpose-designed, dedicated internal and external spaces to meet the needs of this highly specialised and sensitive service.

The focus is a welcoming multi-use open space alongside private counselling rooms and office support space for Alder Centre staff. The external space is an important feature of the design and the relationship with adjacent buildings and outlook is critical to the success of this space and the building overall.

The design team set out to focus on the quality of the setting and the desire to produce a building which is recognisable to users, but discreet in its purpose, and that does not advertise its function to the public. The client body has been determined to create a facility which continues the design aspirations of the recently completed main hospital and Institute Building, and which utilises natural materials to provide a place of sanctuary and comfort that encourages companionship for users.

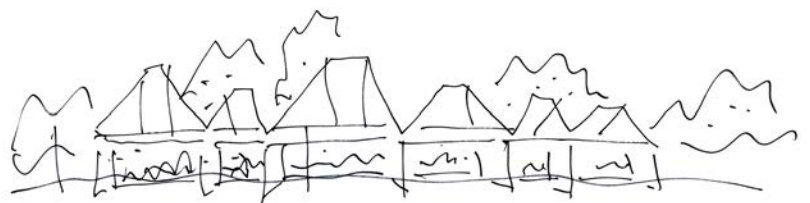


Axonometric view

Collage boards made by counsellors and families forming the brief



The walled gardens

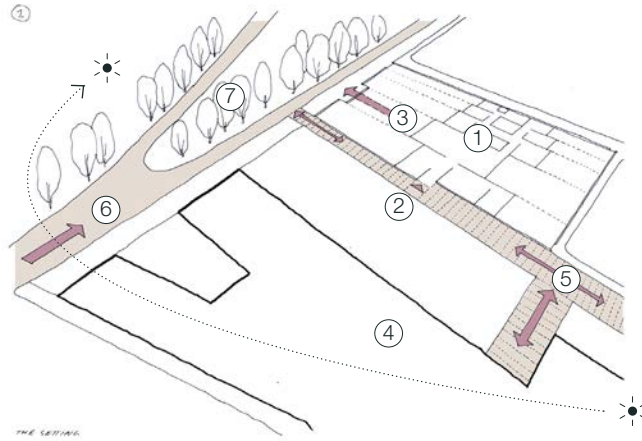


Early section sketch

DESIGN RESPONSE

SETTINGS, CONNECTIONS

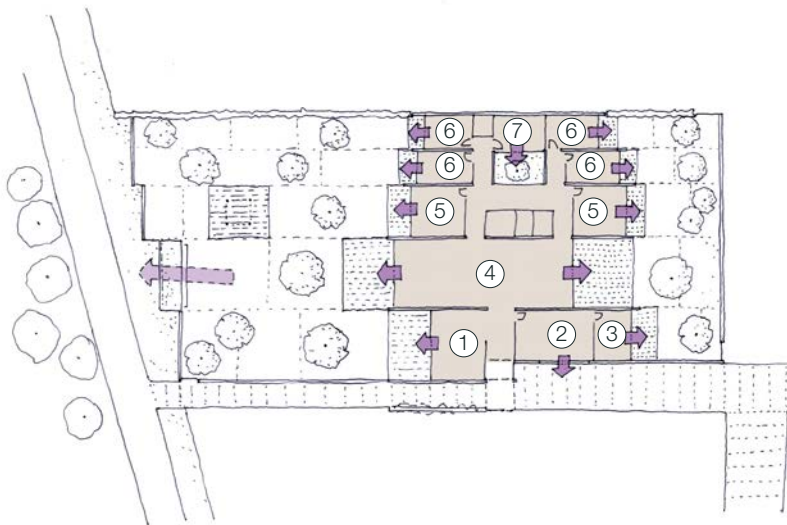
The site is on the northern edge of a connection between Eaton Road at the east where most visitors will arrive by car and the new park to the west. To the south is the Institute Building with the Alder Hey Hospital further beyond, accessed from a north-south route at the west.



- 1. The Alder Centre
- 2. Entrance
- 3. Park views
- 4. The Community Cluster Building
- 5. Pedestrian route to Eaton Road
- 6. Pedestrian route from Alder Hey Hospital
- 7. Future park

EVERY ROOM WITH A VIEW

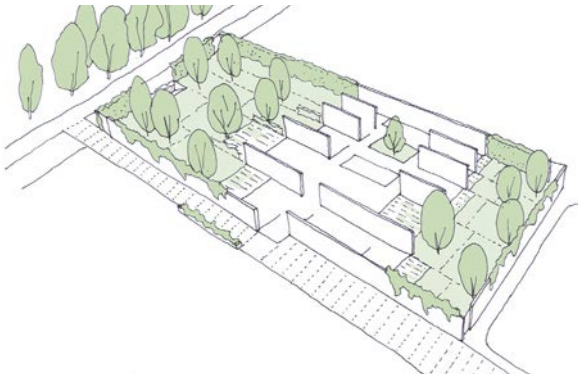
Each room has an entirely glass wall to frame garden views. The staggered arrangement, with windows that step back and the walled garden, gives privacy to particular rooms as required. The garden wall is open at the west, allowing views of the park with a Ha-ha providing security.



- 1. Flexible training and lounge space
- 2. Staff office
- 3. Helpline
- 4. Heart space
- 5. Larger counselling room
- 6. Smaller counselling room
- 7. Holistic room
- 8. Views to the park
- 9. Ha-ha

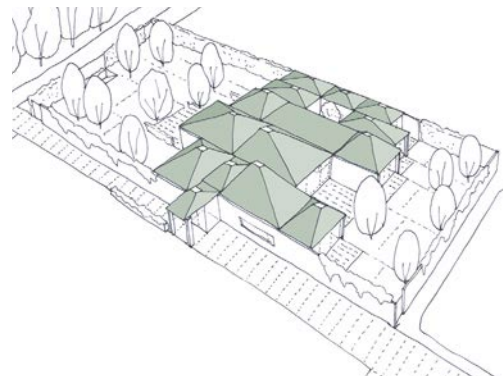
SECRET GARDEN

Rich landscapes with varied character, trees, grasses and native flowers.



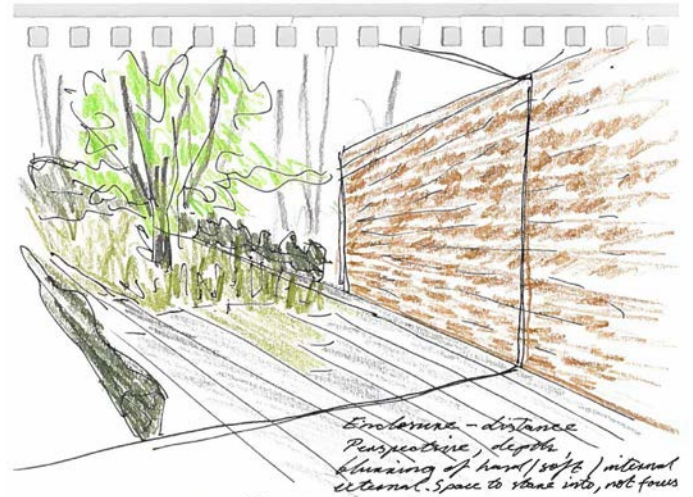
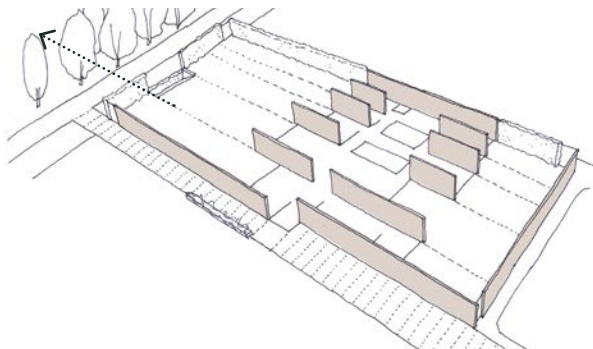
VILLAGE ROOFS

Each room has its own sculpted roof, skylight and vent for natural ventilation.



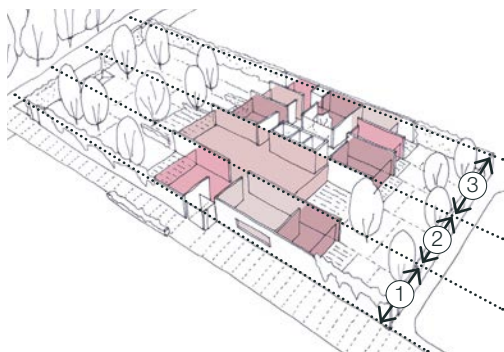
WALLED GARDEN

Walls run east-west within a garden enclosed on all sides.

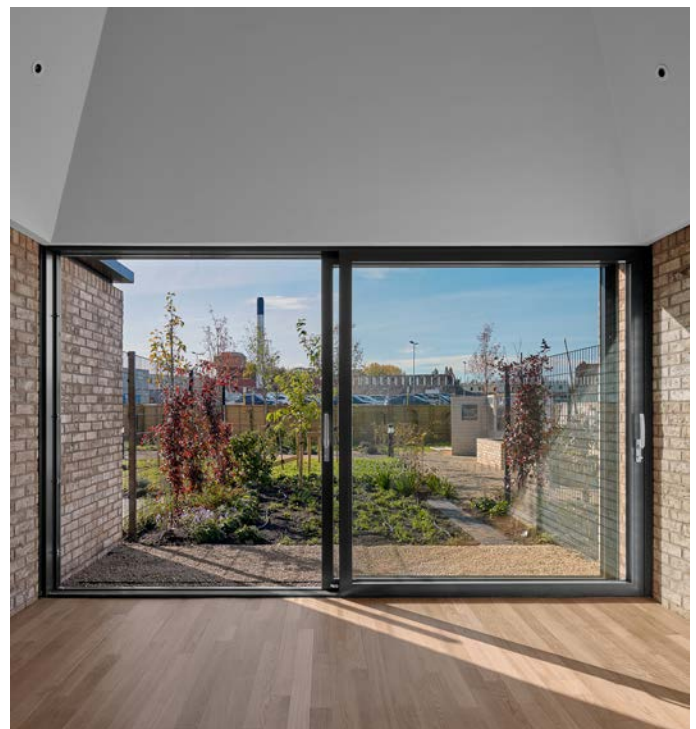


GARDEN ROOMS

With a heart at the centre, the more open parts of the brief unfold to the more private counselling suite.



- 1. Meet and greet
- 2. Heart space
- 3. Counselling suite





“Sometimes since I’ve been in the garden I’ve looked up through the trees at the sky and I have had a strange feeling of being happy as if something was pushing and drawing in my chest and making me breathe fast. Magic is always pushing and drawing and making things out of nothing. Everything is made out of magic, leaves and trees, flowers and birds, badgers and foxes and squirrels and people. So it must be all around us. In this garden - in all the places.”

Frances Hodgson Burnett
The Secret Garden

THE SECRET GARDEN

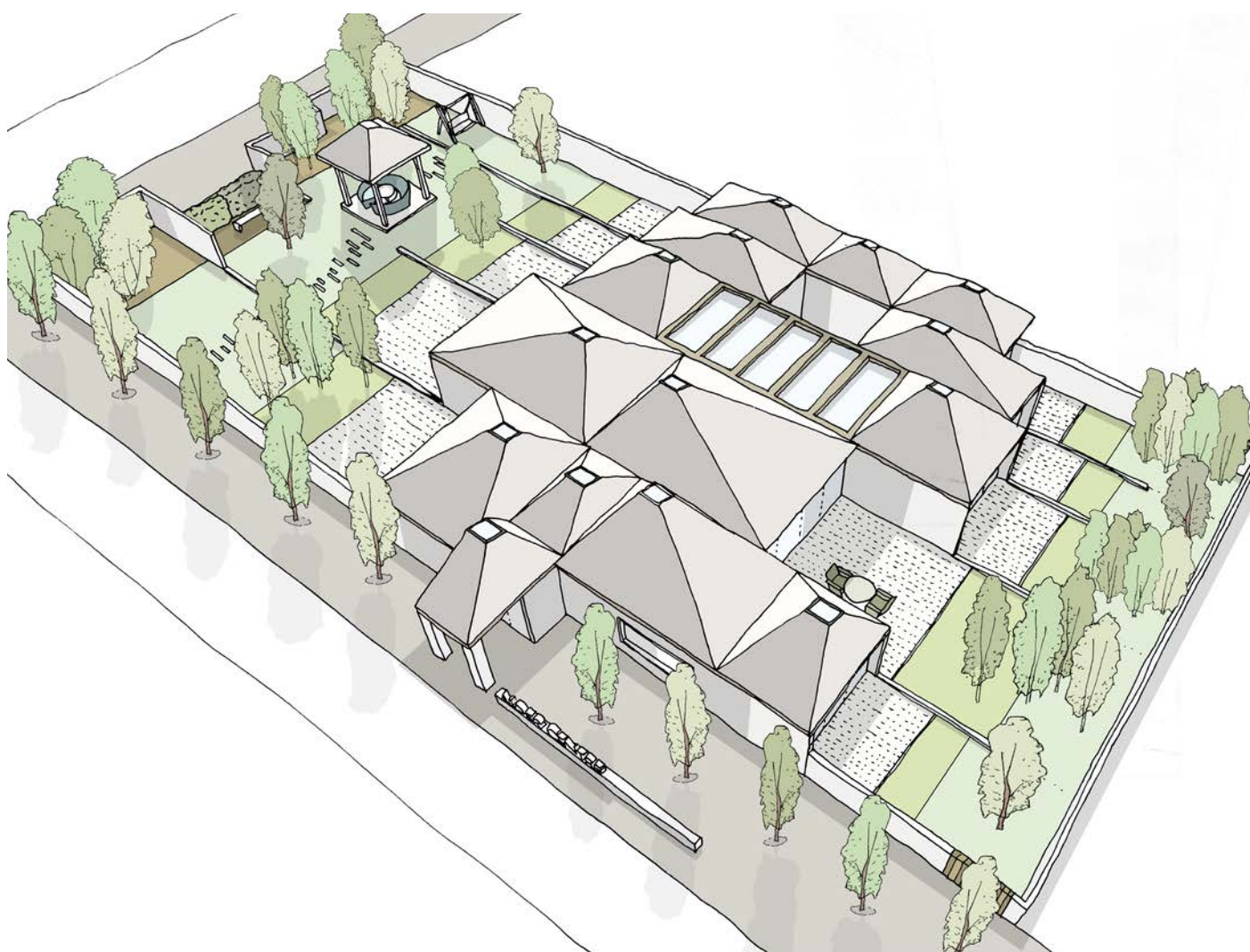
Our vision for the Alder Centre is of a Secret Garden, inspired by the children's book.

The book is about a young girl whose parents pass away and she discovers a wild garden that was once her uncle's. Mary tends to the overgrown garden and confronts the loss of her parents. The book has themes of healing, nature and rejuvenation.

These themes resonate as a metaphor for the new Alder Centre, and the counsellors and parents who use the building have found this vision compelling.



*Room with
a view...
the secret
garden...
sense of ownership
of need... my
garden... for a
while*

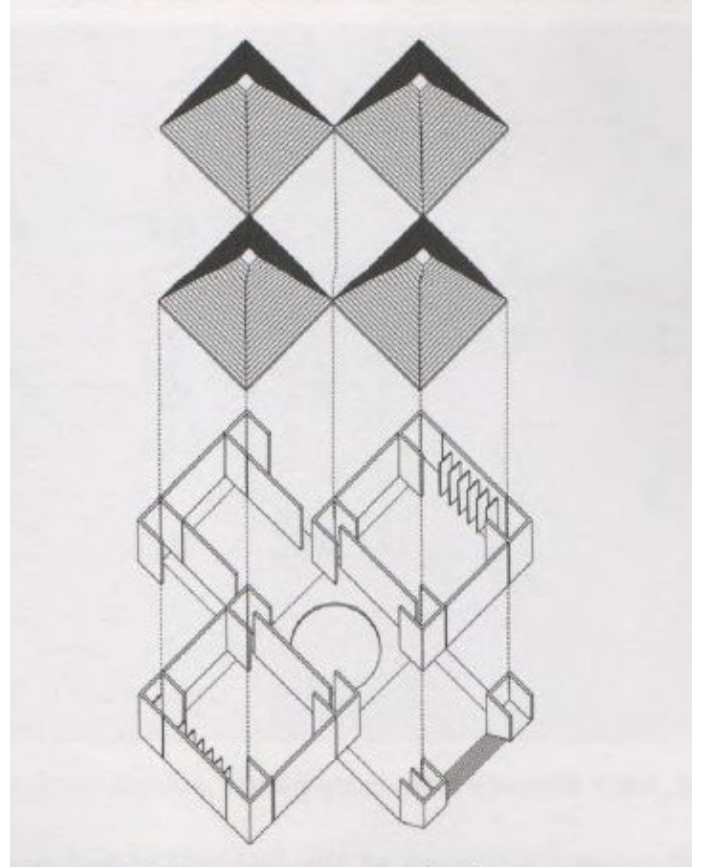


Axonometric view

INSPIRATION: LOUIS KAHN AND CHARLES CORREA

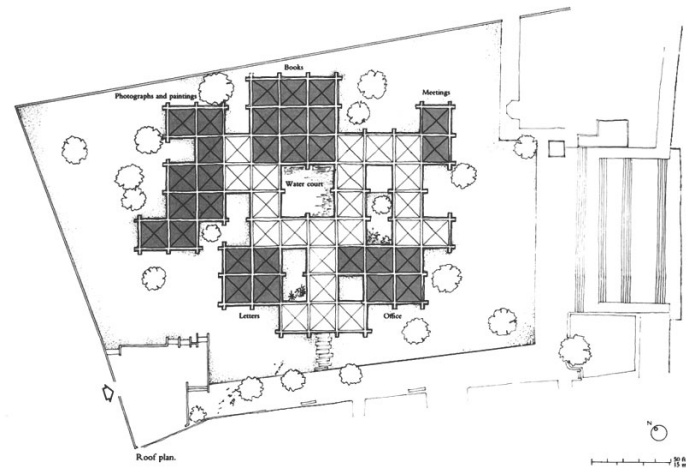
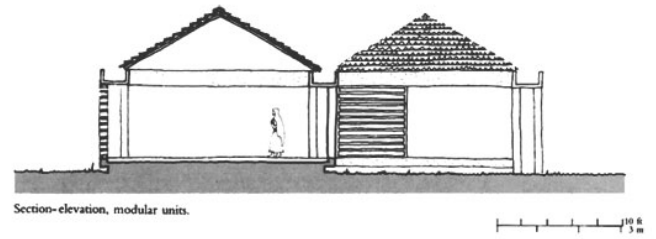
TRENTON BATHHOUSE, LOUIS KAHN,
1955

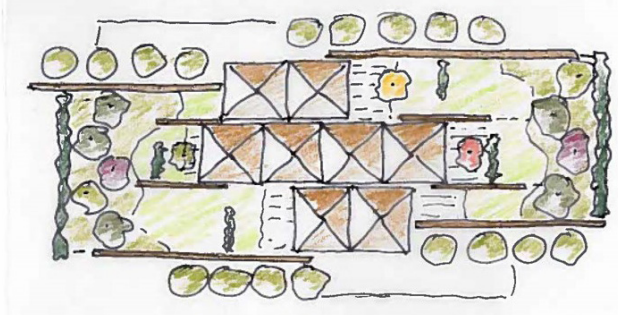
The Trenton Bathhouse has a clear diagram: a collection of tiled roofs rests on masonry walls. We have attempted to mimic that feeling with roofs resting on the brick walls as well as the sense of privacy. The full height block walls in the Bathhouse enclosing the changing rooms are at a height that feels secure but not overbearing in scale. Then the oculus at the top of the roofs gets light into the pitches, soaring upwards.



GANHDI MEMORIAL MUSEUM, CHARLES CORREA, 1963

We have been influenced by The Ganhdi Memorial Museum and is a repetitive collection of roofs on a 6 x 6m grid. The arrangement creates a series of internal and external spaces for a contemplative brief. Robust materials are used including concrete, wooden doors, stone floors, ceramic tile roofs and brick columns.





Early sketch plan



Entrance view from a physical model



Entrance elevation



View through the heart space from the east

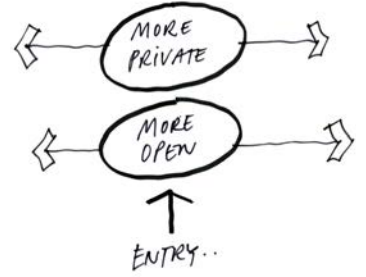
LAYOUT

MORE OPEN AND MORE PRIVATE

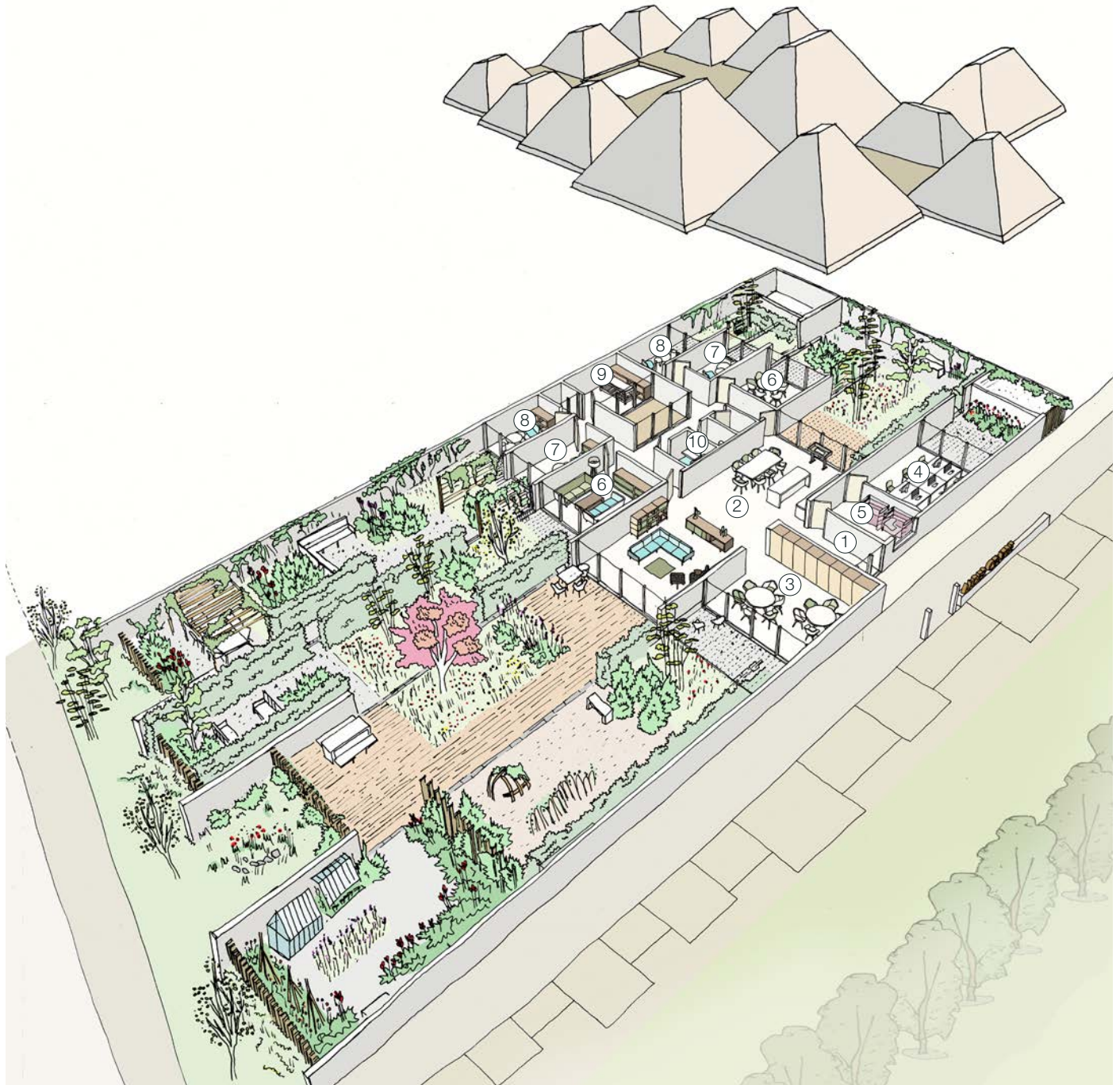
We can think about the building like a big house. Each of the rooms has doors which open directly onto gardens for fresh air and for people to go outside.

There are two key parts to the accommodation brief - the more open parts and the more private parts. The more open parts include contemporary therapies like informal everyday activities, encounters and interactions. On the other hand, the more private parts relate to traditional therapies like counselling - within rooms at dedicated sessions.

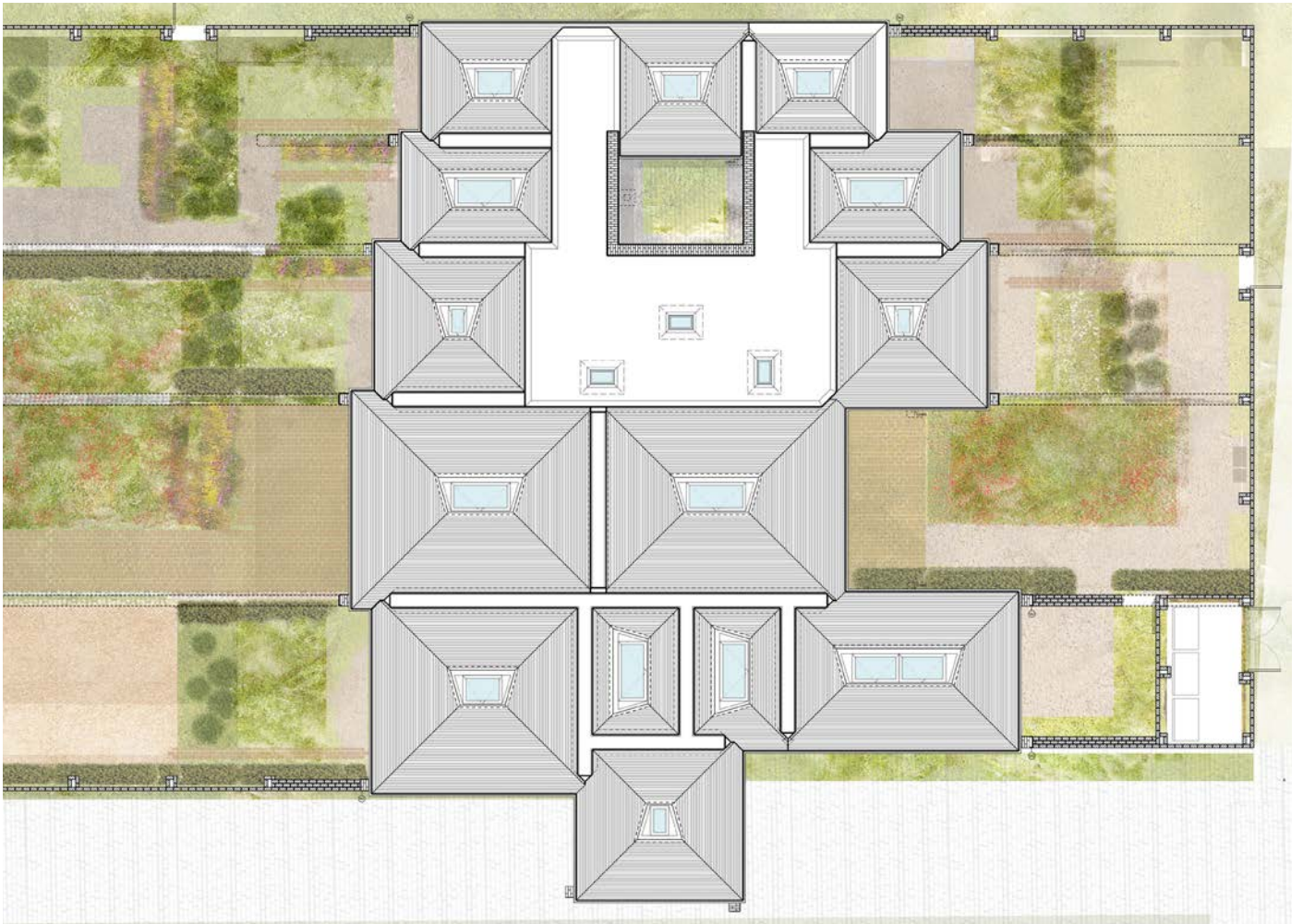
At the front of the building there are the more open, communal parts with the entrance, office suite, flexible training room and the heart space. Further into the plan unfold the counselling rooms.



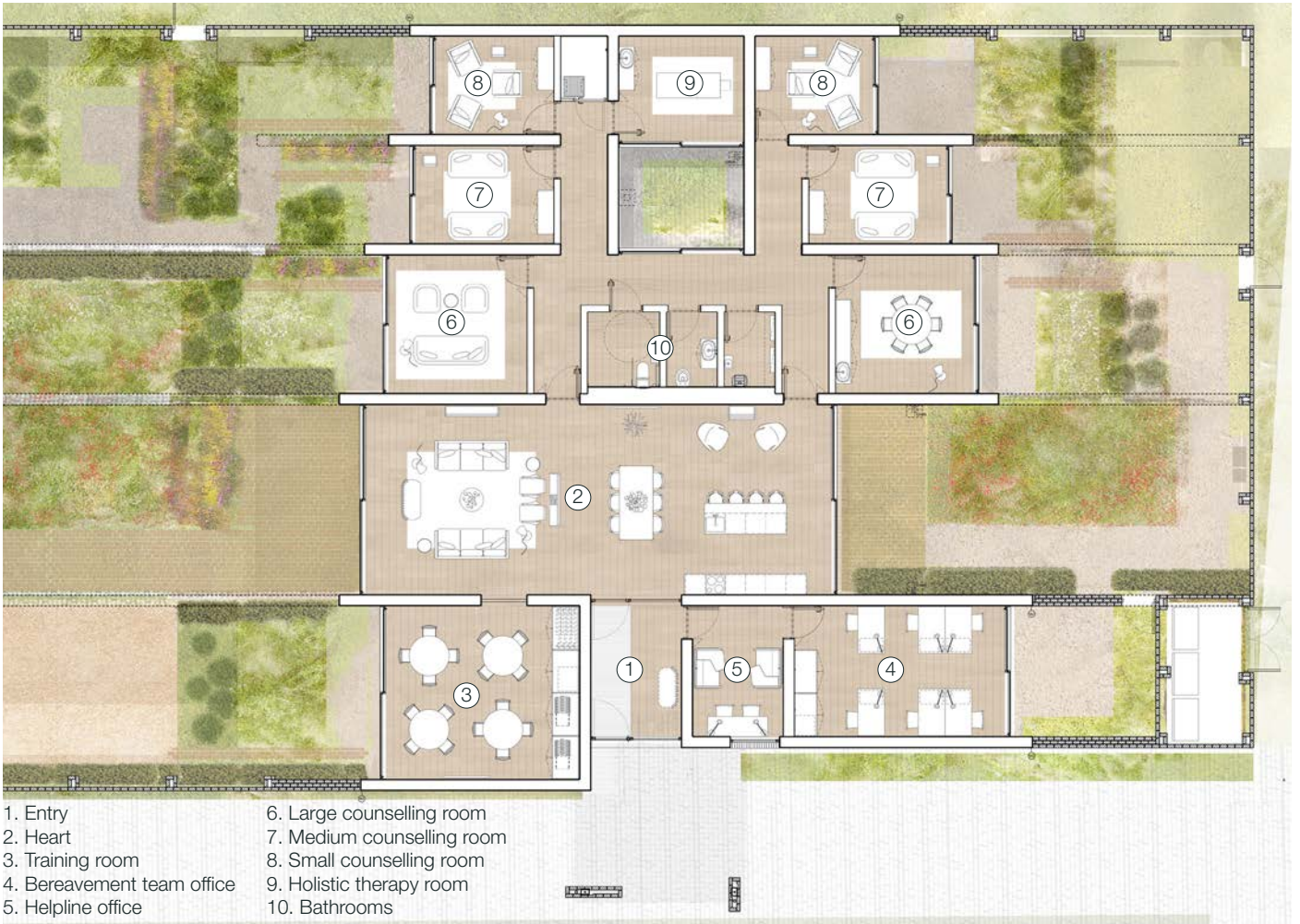
1. Entry
2. Heart
3. Training room
4. Bereavement team office
5. Helpline office
6. Large counselling room
7. Medium counselling room
8. Small counselling room
9. Holistic therapy room
10. Bathrooms



Axonometric view



Roof plan



- 1. Entry
- 2. Heart
- 3. Training room
- 4. Bereavement team office
- 5. Helpline office
- 6. Large counselling room
- 7. Medium counselling room
- 8. Small counselling room
- 9. Holistic therapy room
- 10. Bathrooms



Floor plan

THE ROOMS

THE HEART

The heart, with its rooflights 7m above the floor, has a kitchen and communal table on one side and a lounge space on the other.

The materials depart from normal clinical healthcare environments and try to be more domestic, universal and familiar. We used healthy, raw materials as much as possible. The robustness of the brick walls is softened with furnishings and rugs which in turn, also enhance acoustics. Lamps supplement natural light for intimacy and furniture is mostly timber framed so that it is warm to touch.



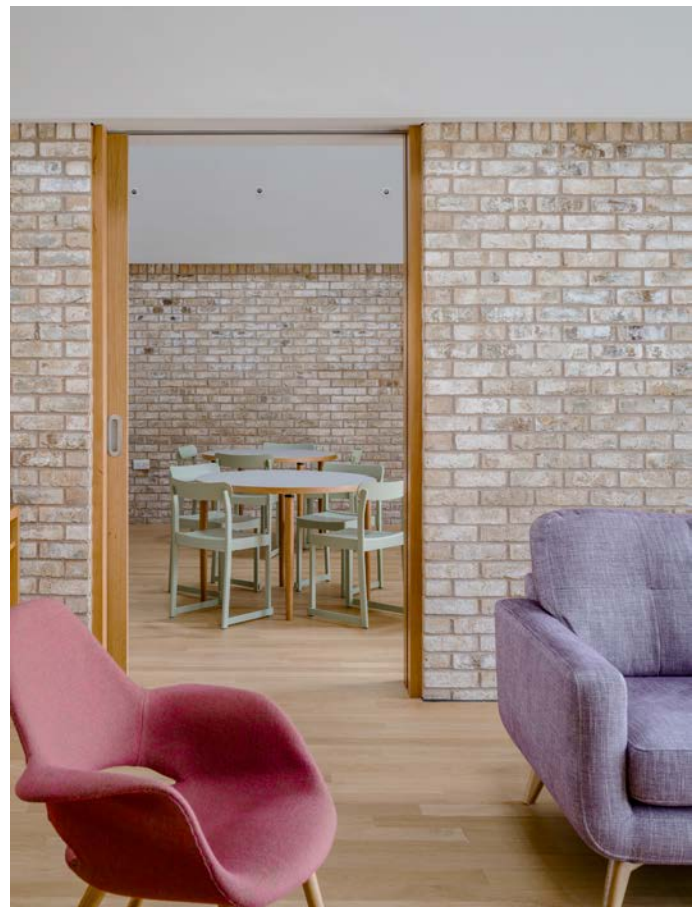
Sketch of the heart space



The kitchen table



The kitchen and gardens beyond



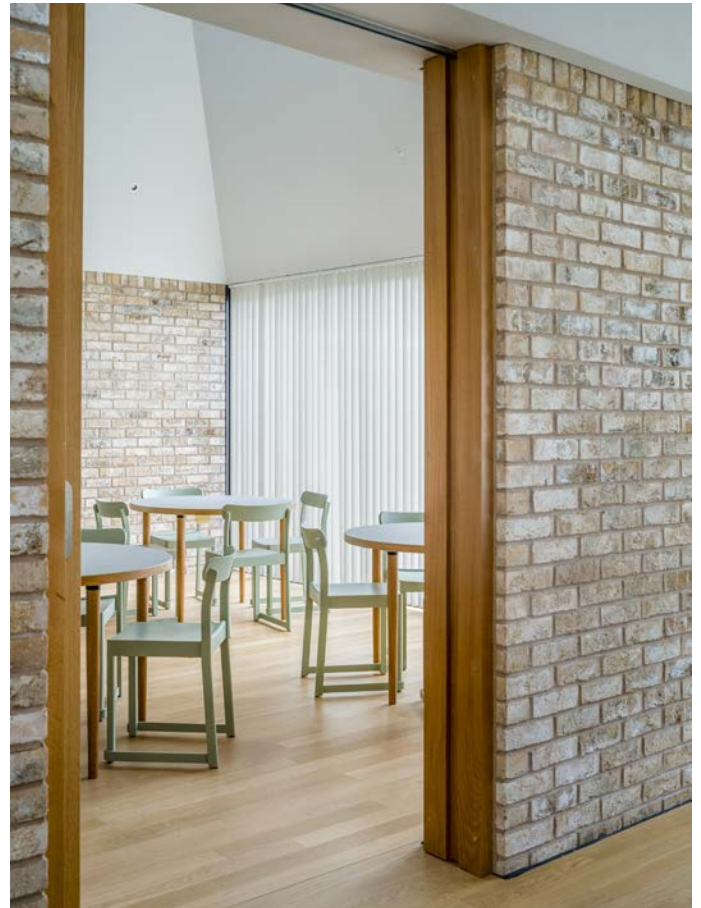
Connection from the heart to the training room

TRAINING ROOM

The training room connects to the heart space. It has stacking chairs and folding tables which are stored in cupboards to make the space flexible for a range of uses like events, staff training, or even yoga.



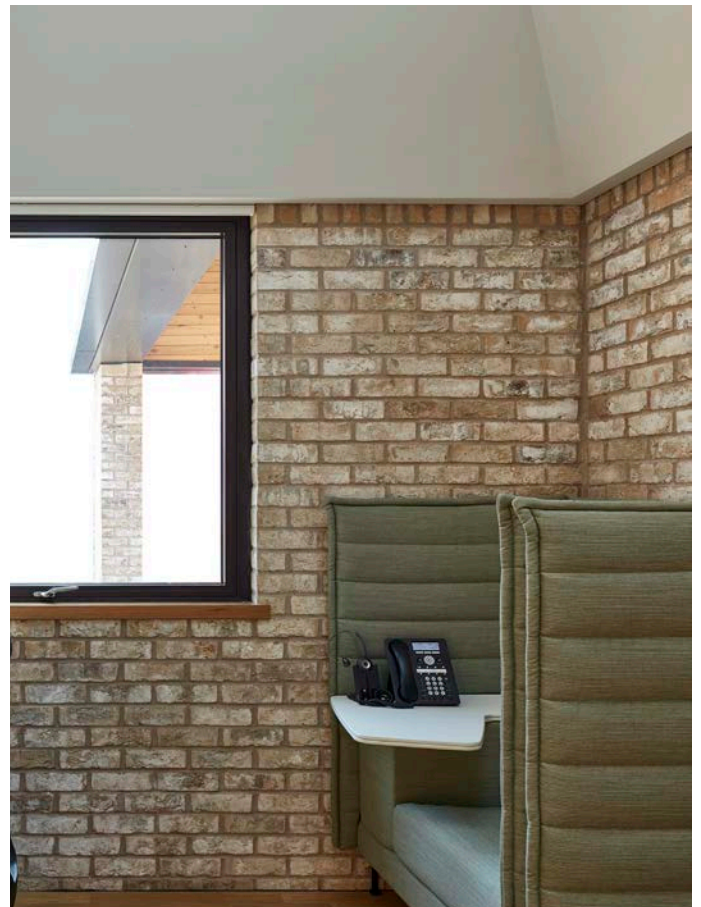
Sketch of the training room



View into the training room

CHILD DEATH HELPLINE

The furniture selection was made with input from the users and counsellors. The Child Death Helpline – open 365 days of the year for bereavement support – has two alcove booths which were selected on a trip to London with the counsellors.



The Child Death Helpline

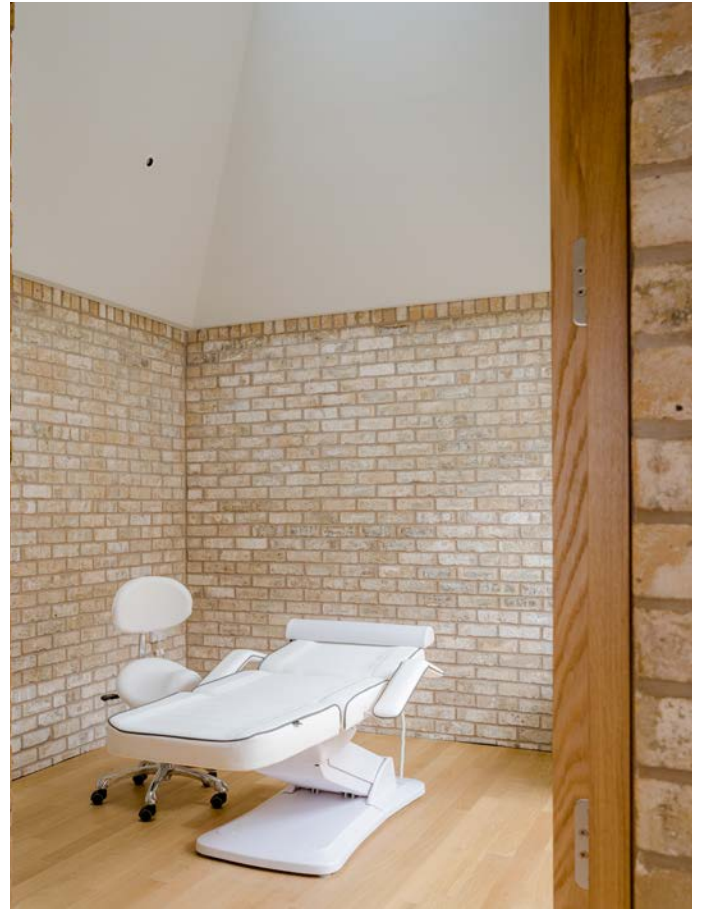
THE ROOMS

THE COUNSELLING ROOMS

For the private parts of the building and using the analogy of the house, these rooms are like the bedrooms in their size and private nature. There are six counselling rooms as well as the holistic therapy room and the bathrooms. The small rooms are intimate, with three armchairs, and open out onto smaller gardens. The medium counselling rooms are more generous with two small sofas, as is the holistic therapy room which is for massages, aromatherapy and the like. The large counselling rooms are 4m by 4m and for families or groups and the bathrooms are designed to places that feel very secure and peaceful.



Competition stage sketch of the counselling rooms



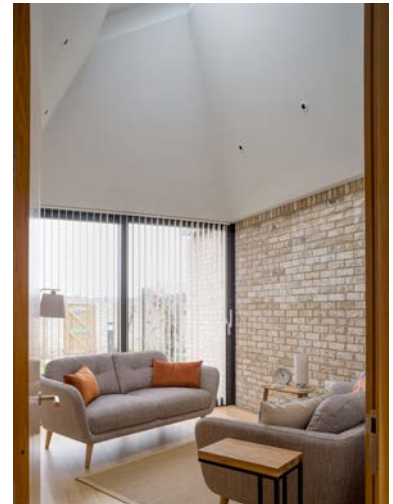
The holistic therapy room



A skylight in the bathrooms



Small counselling room

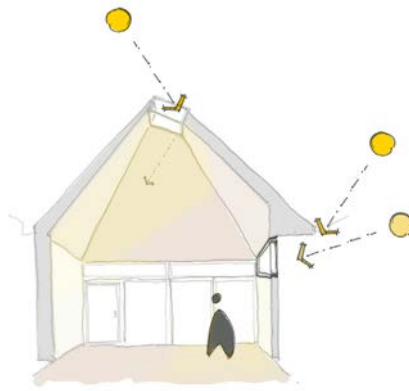


Medium counselling room



Large counselling room

SUSTAINABILITY



Sunlight control



Thermal mass

PRINCIPLES

As well as the changing proportions of each room governed by the number of people that will inhabit them, their design is intrinsically driven by a set of sustainability themes to reduce carbon consumption.

Sunlight control, natural ventilation and thermal mass are the main principles setting the quality of the internal environment and making it comfortable.

On a micro level, the environment of each room is individually controlled by the people who use it, while on a macro scale, there is a future connection to the wider campus for rainwater harvesting as well as an energy hub.

Heating is through low energy underfloor distribution, putting users in direct contact with the source of heat for maximum comfort.



Natural ventilation



North facing light



User control



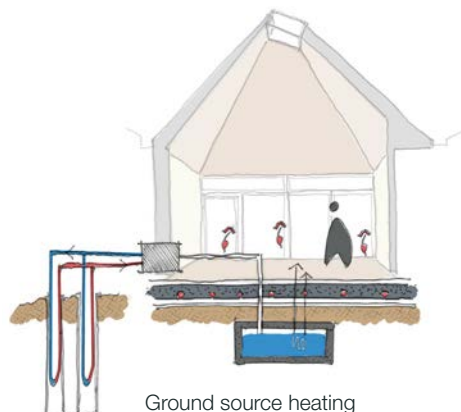
Stack effect venting



Underfloor heating

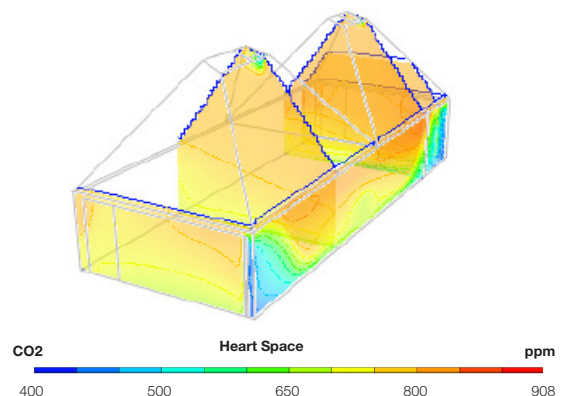
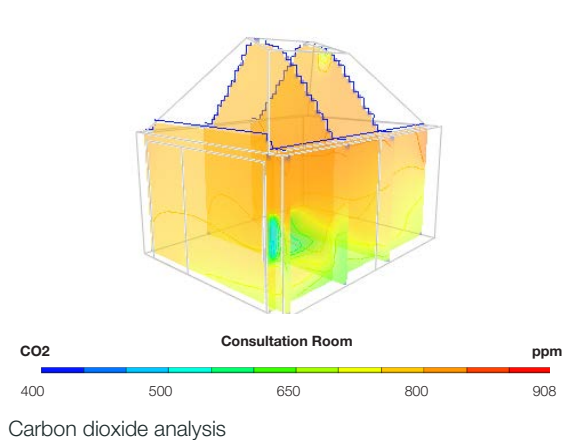
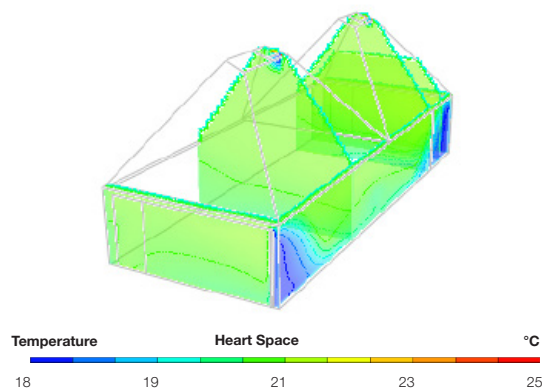
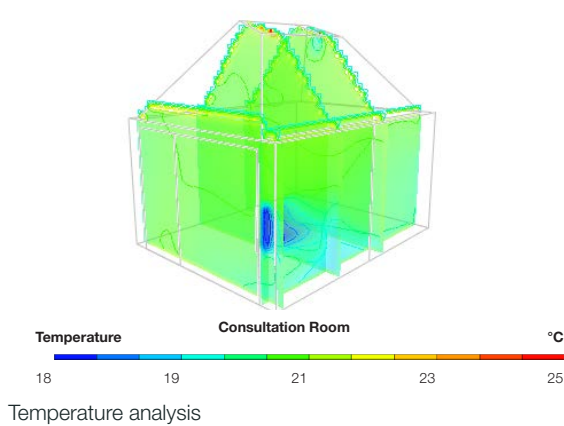
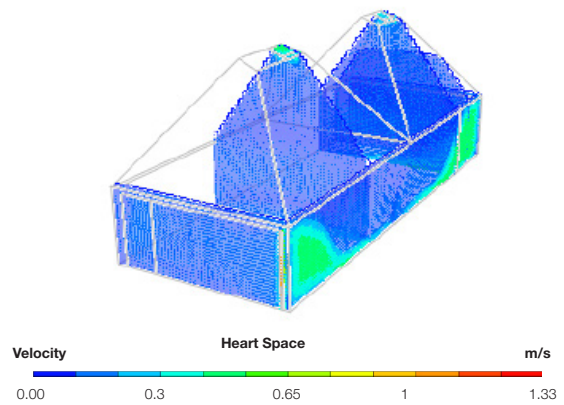
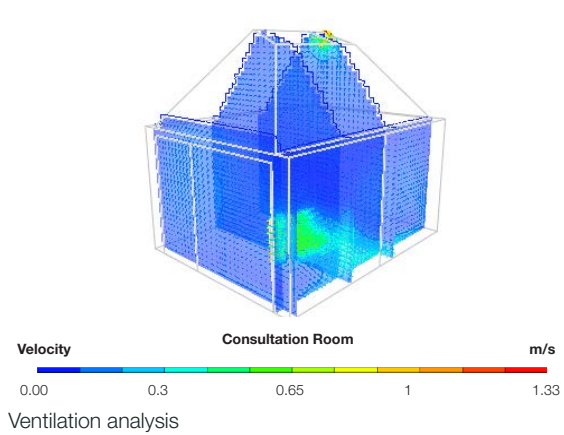


Biodiversity



Ground source heating





The outcome: sliding doors working in conjunction with opening rooflights

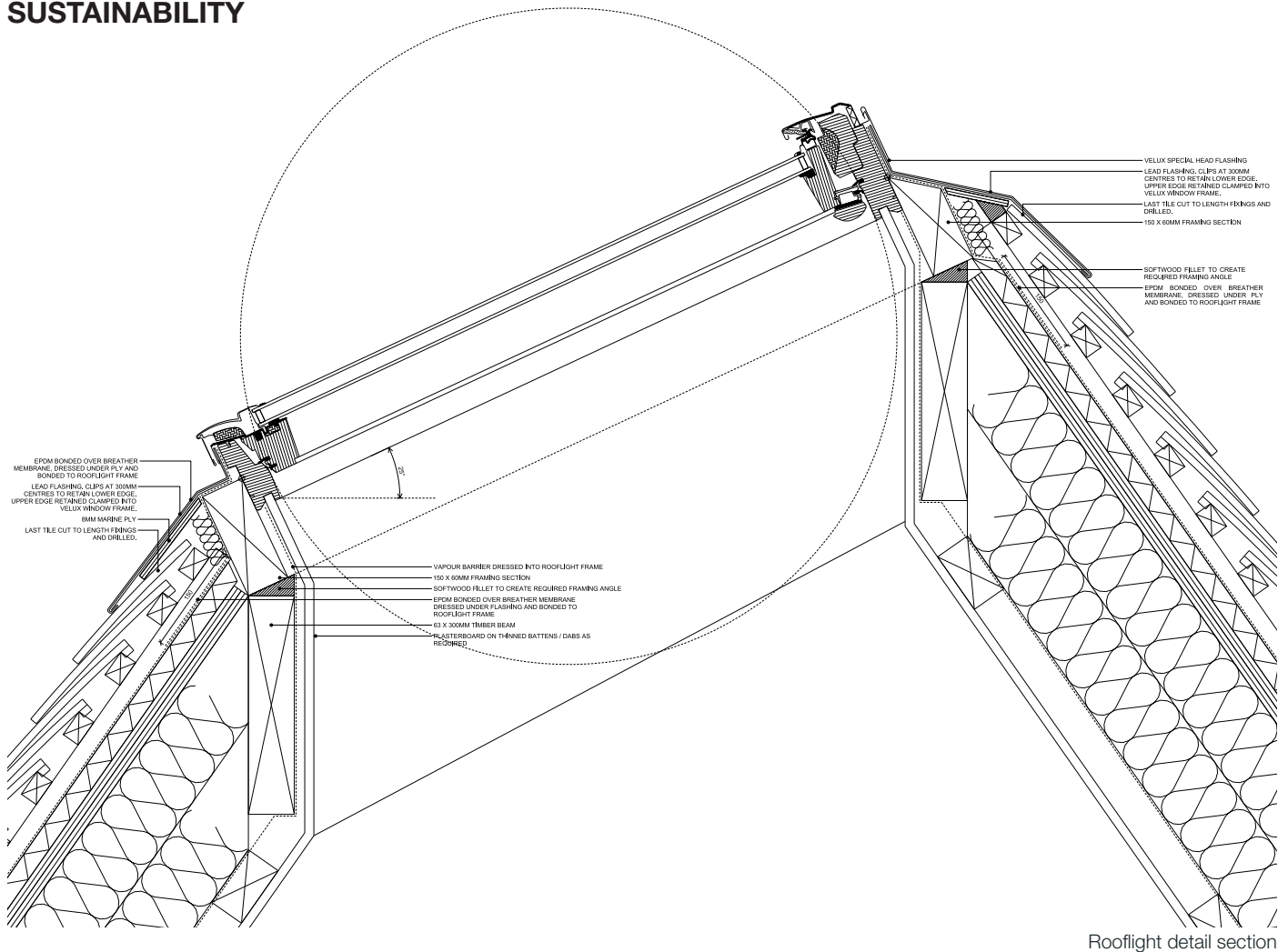
IMPLEMENTATION

To better understand light and temperature, we modelled the rooms with software to analyse internal comfort, temperature, ventilation and CO₂ and then adjusted these in the design.

The outcome is sliding doors and rooflights that open to control temperature and CO₂ levels. Rooflights are sized and oriented to almost eliminate artificial lighting entirely throughout the daytime whilst also removing glare.

A stack effect driven by cross ventilation between the sliding doors and the rooflights ensures that the rooms aren't stuffy or hot.

SUSTAINABILITY



Rooflight detail section



THE ROOFLIGHTS

The rooflights at the top of the pitches are one of the main points of innovation for comfort. They are all pitched at 25 degrees and north facing to get loads of soft light.

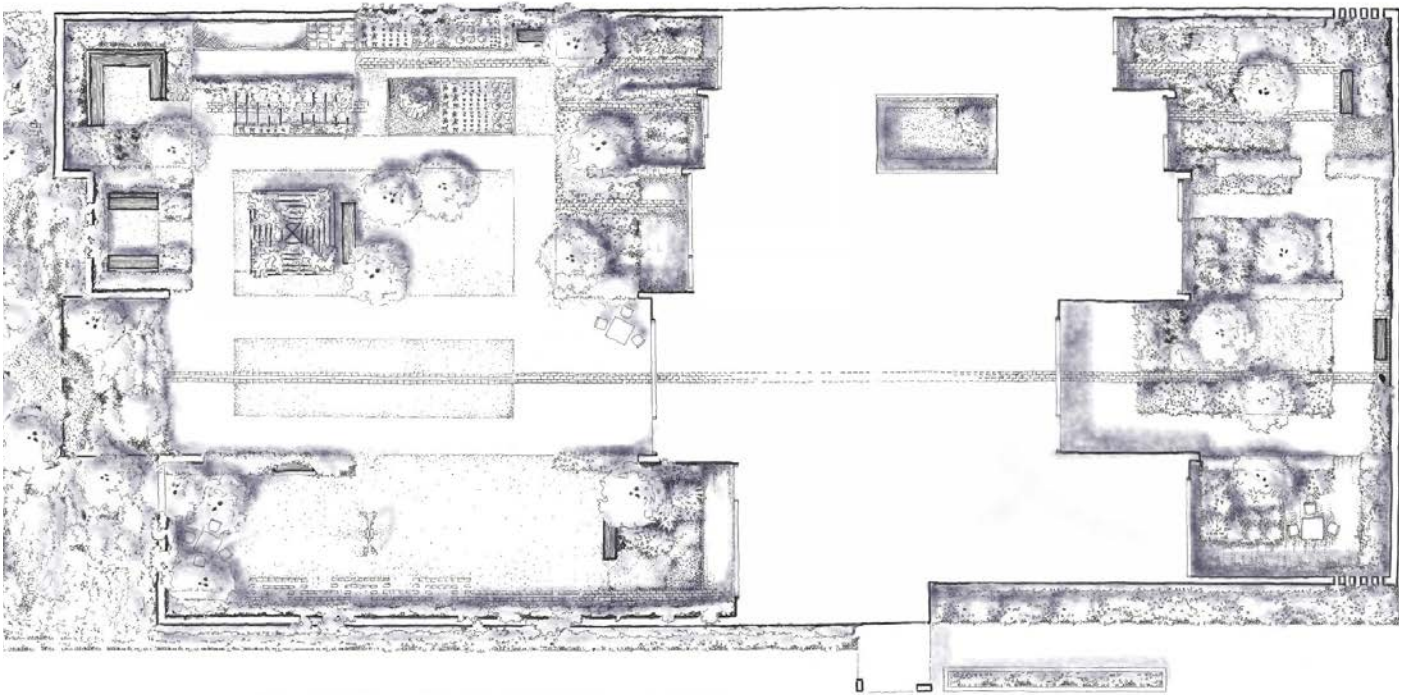
We worked with Velux - who donated the rooflights - to select one of their systems which controls lights to open and close depending on internal temperatures and carbon dioxide levels.



Looking upwards from the holistic therapy bed



LANDSCAPE DESIGN



A WALLED GARDEN

The building is contained by a walled garden which gives privacy, security and allows outdoor therapy which is something very important to the centre.



Trellises outside the heart and training room

PRIVACY VERSUS OPENNESS

Like the interiors, the gardens have been designed so that some areas are communal and other parts are private. The lines of brick walls extend out into the gardens with trellises which give visual and physical privacy to the rooms. The planting obstructs views into the counselling rooms.



End of season planting



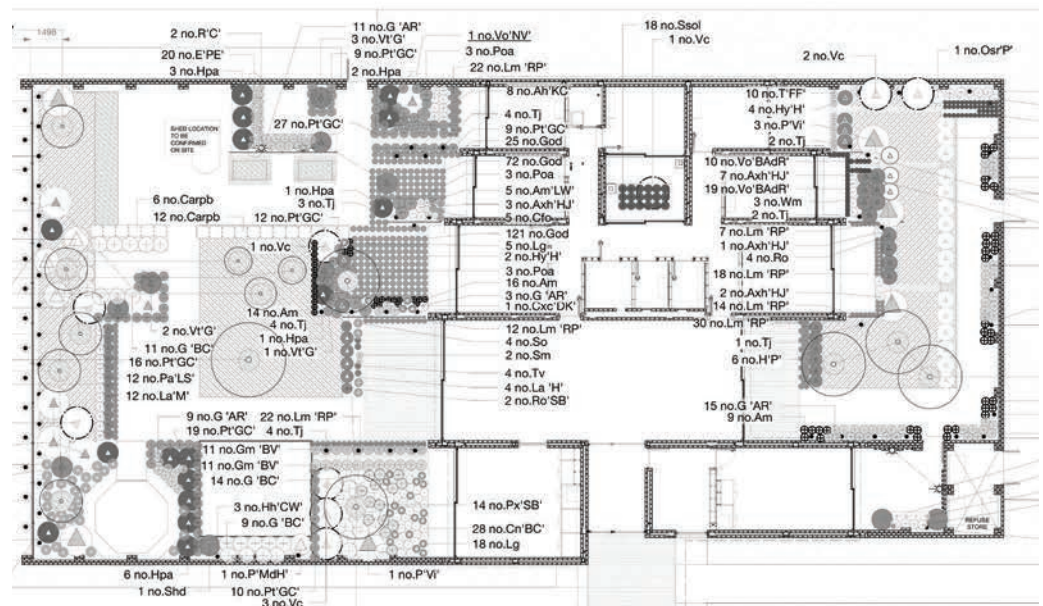
Staggered walls and planting provide privacy between counselling rooms.

ECOLOGY

Planted areas in the gardens not only contribute to building users' experience and provide therapeutic space for outdoor activity but they also improve the ecological value of the site.

Seasonal planting and variable spaces create habitats for birdlife and insects.

The planting creates a connection with the rest of the hospital campus, the proposed park to the west and the Knotty Ash area further afield.



Planting plan showing the variety and density of plants

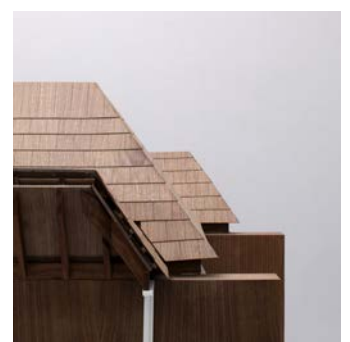
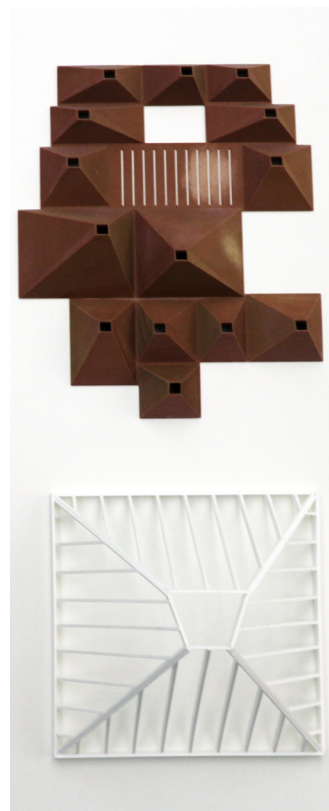
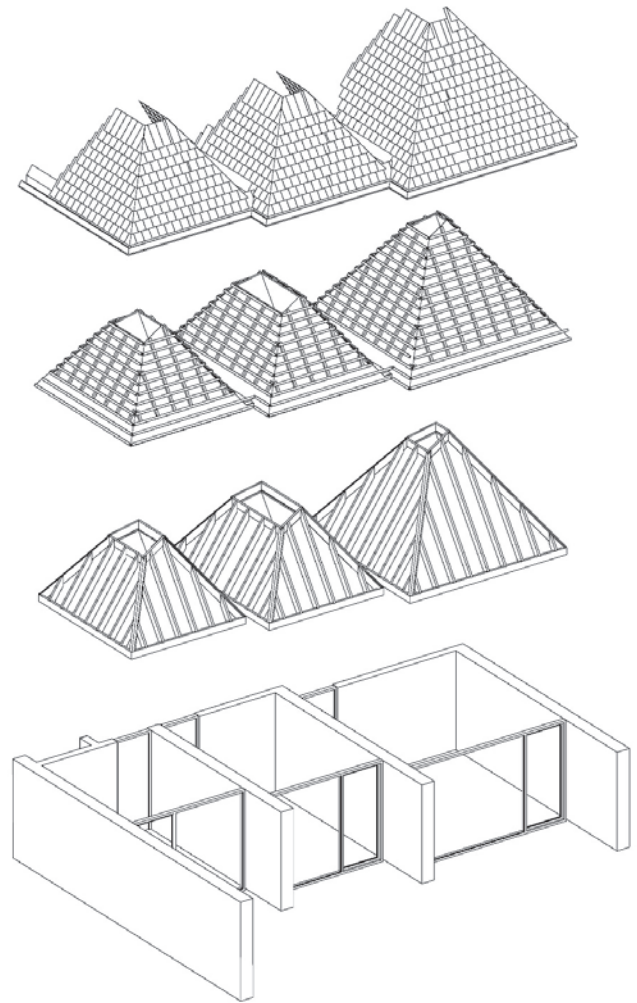
CONSTRUCTION

APPROACH

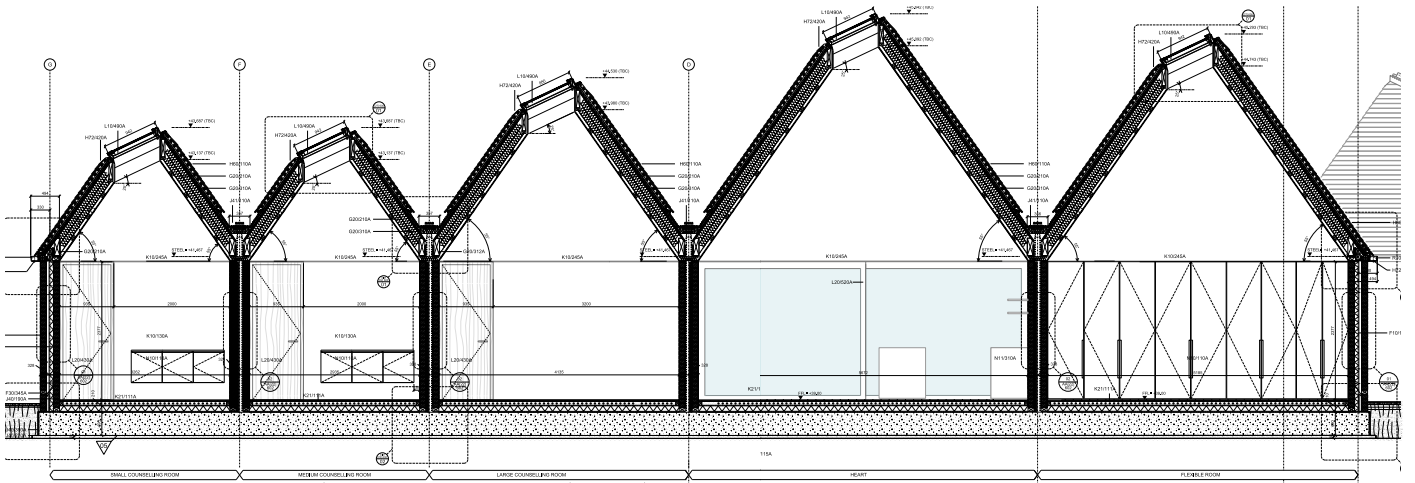
We aimed to design a simple structure that is easy to build. There is a concrete slab beneath a steel frame that goes up to the eaves level. The structure is finished with pitched roofs which are framed with timber.

The building has a simple section with uniform roof pitches at 55 degrees and brick walls run between the rooms for acoustics to protect the sensitive conversations within.

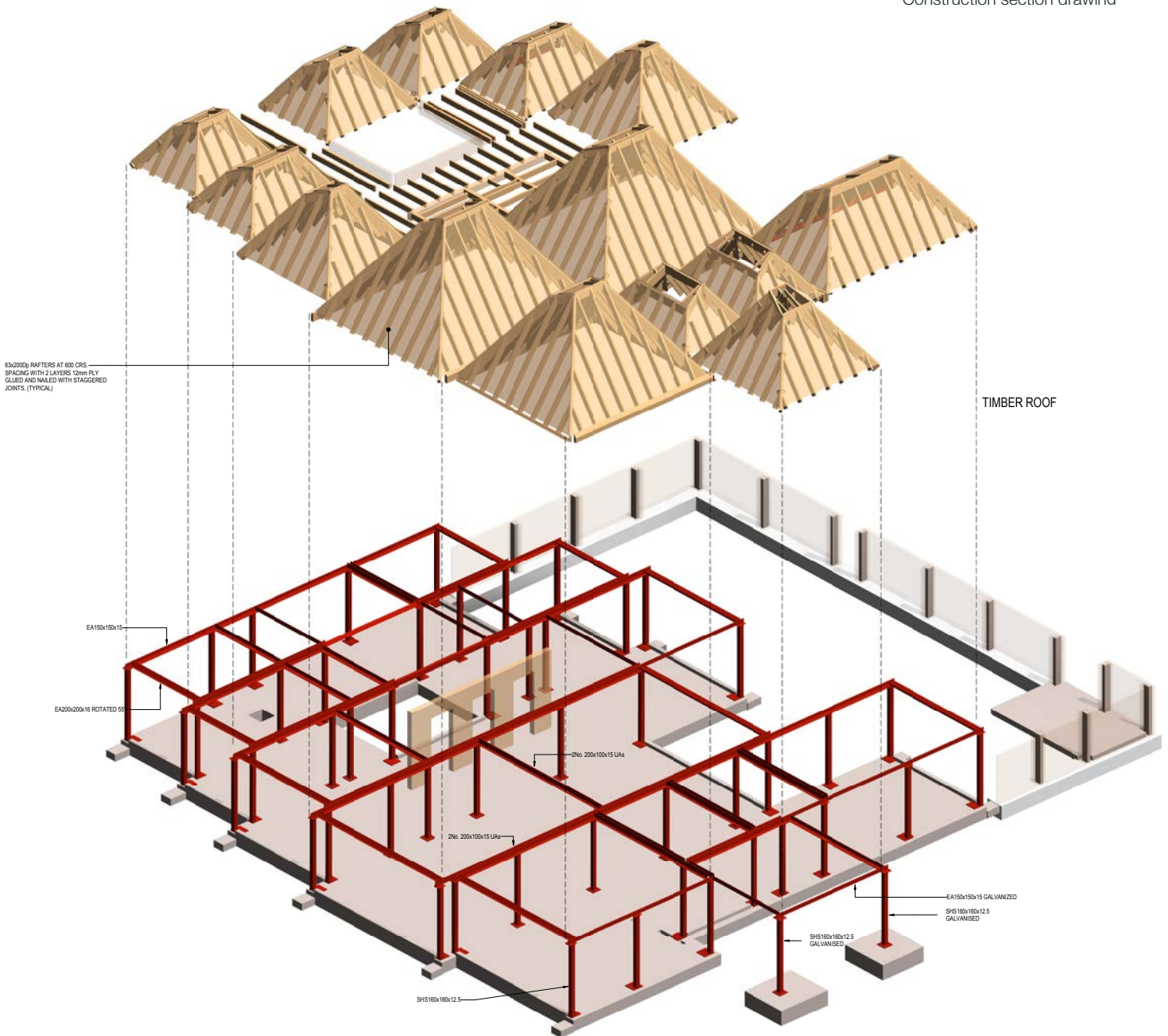
Finally, the structure was built by local hands, with the roofs assembled on site next to the building and hoisted into place with a crane.



Model studies for the roofs



Construction section drawing



The structural assembly



The view from above during construction



One of the roofs being lifted onto the steel frame

GOODWILL

We would like to acknowledge the generosity of suppliers who helped to deliver the project to the highest standards. Velux donated skylights, Vitra donated toilets and hand basins, Dornbracht donated the taps, SCP supplied furniture at discounted rates, and RB12 supplied floorboards, kitchen, cupboards, wardrobes and appliances. Senate, the electrical subcontractor, donated heating equipment for the building. Caro Communications also supported the team in securing donations and fundraising.

We would also like to acknowledge the team's commitment to delivering the project, and many of them were directly involved in fundraising for the building. The team contributed over £100,000 in donations and goodwill gestures through fundraising events from quiz nights and cake sales to sporting endeavours and raffles.



Alder Centre Cycle Classic map



32 cyclists at the end of the Alder Centre Cycle Classic, from London to Liverpool, raising money for the Alder Centre



Photography

