

creating

Bright Futures

for little ones & their mums





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introduction

This Design Report presents all of the initial stages of this Comprehensive Design Project, including clarifying my Critical Position as a designer, useful research, and relevant, inspirational case studies. Also included are my project brief, outlining my concept with target user profiles, research and my chosen site analysis.

For this project, my brief will be looking at designing a space for a residential and support centre for new teen mothers and their babies and toddlers. I think designing for babies and young children has it's own rules and can be very different than designing for older people. I also think it can be really exciting as children see the world differently to adults and embracing this can lead to interesting outcomes. I have been inspired by looking at some contemporary and alternative designs from places as diverse as Los Angeles, The Netherlands and China.



section 1

critical position

critical position

When assessing my critical position as a designer, it was easy to think about what I am passionate about, and how that always finds a way of coming through in my design projects. I believe strongly in compassion and respect for everything; for an individual, for the community, for the planet, and all that our planet is home to. This includes people's mental happiness and wellbeing, living mindfully, the necessity of living with a connection to nature, and respecting and caring for our planet. These are all ideas and concepts which I automatically consider in any design project that I approach.



The Link?

Mental wellbeing and environmental consciousness are concepts that, in my opinion, go hand in hand very well as both are about love and compassion; for both yourself, the people around you and the planet you live on.

When looking at various case studies of either of these themes, many crossovers and similarities can be seen, which is why I think they should be considered together.

Who am I as a designer?
What am I passionate about?
How do I approach a design project?



What has influenced my critical position?

In my life I have lived and grown up in two very contrasting environments. I was born in the city of Dubai; the epitome of an urban environment. I lived there until I was six years old and, although I was young, I have clear memories. It was a place that tried to have the best of everything; the biggest or most glamorous. It purported to have everything you could want, but I felt myself fundamentally opposed to its supposed attractions, the shiny, tall buildings, the gleaming expensive cars, the endless shopping malls. One of my favourite memories of Dubai was going camping in the desert, which we did every weekend. We drove into open nothingness and left the city, with its buildings, business, crowds and noise behind us. Although it was barren, it was natural; land left as it should be, and peaceful. I remember coming to England every summer to visit my grandparents on Bodmin Moor. Every time it rained I got so excited I would rush to put my wellie boots and rain coat on and run outside to play in the rain. My grandparents thought I was quite mad, but that connection to nature is something I have always felt. When I was six years old my family moved from Dubai to the Devon village of Whimple, which resonates so much better with my soul. Since then I have grown up surrounded by countryside (specifically apple orchards!) with garden space for my pet cats and rescue chickens and orchards to go on long walks in.



well-being

The term 'wellbeing' is used in reference to an individual's general physical and mental health.

The dictionary defines well-being as: "Well-being *noun* The state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. 'an improvement in the patient's well-being'" -oxford dictionary

"Well-being is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, and a sense of meaning or purpose. More generally, well-being is just feeling well."
-Tchiki Davis, Ph.D.

According to Tchiki Davis, Ph.D., well-being is in decline. High stress lifestyles, influence from social media and certain cultural 'norms', and poor diets and inactive lifestyles are all increasing issues for people today and contribute to poor well-being. It is an obvious 'goal' to try and improve ones-self's well-being.

In an article in Psychology Today, (psychologytoday.com) Tchiki Davies summarises the key components of well-being. Davies founded The Berkeley Well-Being Institute to provide tools and information to people to help them improve their well-being.

She identifies five different types of well-being, all of which are areas that need to be worked on in order to achieve a state of good well-being. Emotional (for example stress-management), Physical (a 'healthy' body due to good diet and exercise), Social (to do with one's relationships with others), Workplace (well-being at work includes doing something with your life that feels full-filling and gives you purpose) and Societal (which is all about functioning within a community).

How to improve well-being

The NHS's "5 steps to mental well-being" (which has been backed up by extensive scientific research):

- The first one is to have good relationships with other people and spend time connecting with others. Whether this be with friends and family over dinner, a coffee, or a day out, or volunteering at a school or community group.
- The second step is to be active (physically) by simple trying to lead an active lifestyle (cycling to work, going for walks in leisure time etc.) as scientific evidence shows that being active can be very beneficial for mental well-being as well as physical.
- The third step is to learn a new skill. Whether it be taking on a new responsibility at work or a hobby such as a craft. Again, research has proven that this has multiple benefits including building self-confidence and sense of purpose, as well as being a means to connect with new people
- The forth step is to "Give to others". "Giving" to someone else whether by volunteering, donating, offering help or support etc. can benefit your own mental well-being as it often feels rewarding and creates positive feelings. It can increase your self confidence and worth.
- The final step is to be mindful, meaning to 'be in the moment'. Practicing mindfulness can make you more aware and in touch with your feelings and can make you appreciate the things that go on in your life more. "It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges."

-NHS website



why is sustainability so important?

Sustainability is important for a very simple, very straightforward reason: we cannot maintain our quality of life as human beings, the diversity of life on Earth, or Earth's ecosystems unless we embrace it. There are indications from all quarters and from the smallest to the largest scale that sustainability is something we must address. We will run out of fossil fuels. Thousands if not millions of animal species will become extinct. We will run out of lumber. We will damage the atmosphere beyond repair. If we don't change.

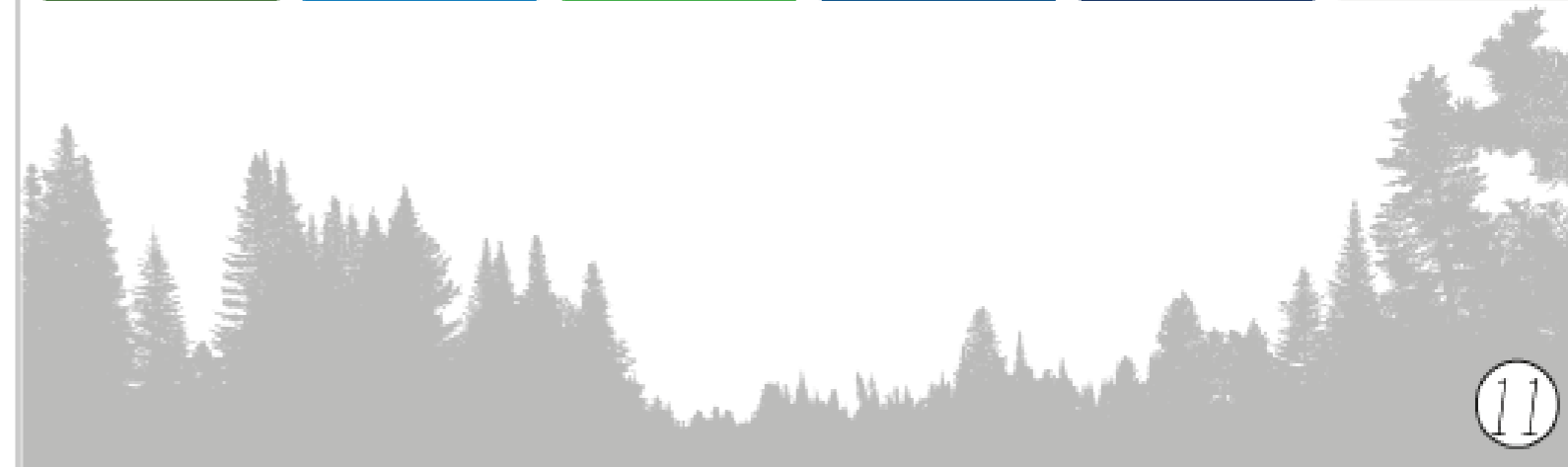
"And the root of that change lies in understanding and striving for sustainability—in our own homes, in our communities, in our ecosystems, and around the world."
-Megan H. Permaculture News, Permaculture Research Institute

The answer (why is sustainability so important) is very straight forward; our planet cannot sustain life in the future if humans go on treating it the way that they currently are. This is no unknown fact and this has been proven time and time again. Living sustainably means to find a way of meeting out needs now without compromising the needs of those in the future. There are three main categories of sustainable living: Economic, Social and Environmental. This includes eradicating social inequalities and poverty, as well as looking after the planet, its resources and its capability to sustain life.

There are also many ways that sustainability can be easily considered within interior design and architecture. To name a few ways; the selection of materials and finishes —look for more environmentally friendly options such as non toxic finishes, formaldehyde free plywood, upcycled materials or materials which have been made from recycled products and/ or can be recycled at the end of their life. The creation or enhancement of a community and the support of individuals mental well-being. The use of biophilia such as green roofs, trees, potted plants and living walls. Energy efficient heating, lighting and electrical systems, which can include things as simple as using dimmer switches in replacement of normal switches so that energy for lighting isn't being used unnecessarily and wasted.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





core kensington pilates studio

What: Boutique Pilates studio *Where:* Kensington, London *Designer:* Studio Wolter Navarro

“The space contains references to both Mexican and Norwegian design, such as the inclusion of a celosia — the traditional perforated breeze walls common to Mexican houses — as well as Douglas fir timber, which is synonymous with Scandinavian interiors.” Ali Morris

“The main aim for their new premises in Kensington High Street was to create a high quality, inspiring calm and bright space that would allow the customers to focus. Pilates is a mind-body exercise that requires deep concentration.” Studio Wolter Navarro

- The studio offers an experience as well as regular classes.
- Careful special planning, design and material selection creates an airy space within what is a relatively small square meterage
- The main two materials used across the whole space are terrazzo and timber. (Terrazzo for the floors and ‘wet’ spaces, which has been balanced out with the neutral and warm timber)
- The designers took inspiration from the Pilates practice when designing the space. For example, Pilates is a very controlled discipline, which they tried to interpret into the space by creating an architectural interaction between the two materials
- Playful design of the space —for example the use of cut out circles in the wood to create storage.
- The designers worked closely with the brand to create and develop their identity and image.



Not only do I love the aesthetic of this interior but the methods used of design for well-being, and the very clever blend of different design styles to achieve this. The entire space has been designed to evoke a sense of calm and mindfulness, as well as being bright and airy, and not to mention that the purpose of the space to house a form of exercise which is essential for well-being. Pilates is a physical activity which, similarly to yoga, has a very large focus on mental well-being as well as physical.



section 2

brief & research

exploratory question

can
interiors
support
teen mums
and their
children?





brief

What:
For this project, I want to create a space that offers a suitable environment, support, and even a home, for new teen mothers and their babies. The site will have two primary functions: residential units and day care facilities. The space should provide suitable facilities and a desirable environment for raising a baby in, which teen mothers will not likely have access to otherwise (due to lack of money, knowledge or unsupportive families). The space should provide a comfortable, homely space for the teenagers. It will work as a community centre for the young mother and their babies, with various support services in place, childcare facilities and short term and medium term accommodation and living facilities.

Why:
Teen mothers can find themselves in a situation without the appropriate support in place to help them maintain their own, and their babies' well-being. Issues such as loneliness, struggles with money, and a lack of adequate support to ensure that both baby and mother are well cared for are common. Some people desire to resume (or start) education or work which can be tricky without adequate support or childcare in place. The mum can then have opportunities such as resuming their education.

Where:
The old Electrical Works building by the quay in Exeter, (currently in use as a climbing centre, 'Climbing by the Quay'). The location within Exeter is convenient as it is a short distance from the centre of Exeter, so easily accessible via public transport and easy to find, whilst being away from the main Highstreet. Also, research shows that teen pregnancies are at a relatively high rate in Exeter compared to other places.

Who:
The primary user of the space will be babies, toddlers and young children, from the ages of new-born up to 4 years old, which is the age that they start at primary school. The secondary user of the space will be 'teen mums' (new mothers up to age 20).



wegrow

What: School for children aged 3 to 9

Where: New York City

Designer: BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group) architecture

“Playful and transparent, yet homelike and structured, WeGrow will nurture the child’s education through introspection, exploration and discovery.” BIG

- WeWork has expanded beyond co-working, and now has gyms and schools —this was the first WeGrow.
- Central to the design of this space are “Nature and futurism” as well as the use of rustic materials. This includes exposed brick and polished concrete, as well as neutral timber and ‘river stone’ structures (made from soft, tactile material) for sitting and climbing on.
- BIG wanted to try and design from the perspective of the child, to create a ‘universe’ for them that fostered inquisitiveness, imagination, play and learning.

I love the aesthetic of this design; the use of a neutral palette to create a calm space, a bit like a ‘blank canvas’ for the children to imagine into. I also love the design language of the pods and slatted features. The designers have thought a lot about catering to all of a child’s needs; a space to foster creativity and play, as well as focus for a learning environment, and well-being for the children.



designing for babies

Designing for a baby, or small child, can be very different to designing a space for an adult. Not only are there many different practicalities to consider, such as different essential facilities (e.g. nappy changing), different safety precautions, different level of physical development, there are also different aesthetics that come into play. A space for a child or baby needs to be 'soft' and gentle, as well as aiding their development (e.g. striking colours to help their eyesight develop) and supporting their imagination. Children perceive the world in a very different way and it can seem very magical, and this needs considering when designing for a child to not only keep their interest and keep them entertained and stimulated, but also to aid the growth of their imagination and creativity. These are both essential considerations.

These are some rules and pointers to consider when designing for babies:

- Practical spaces such as changing and feeding facilities are needed.
- Using materials which are not only soft and tactile (for both safety and aiding development through stimulation) but also cleanable and easily sanitised. In addition to this it has been shown that certain materials such as some plastics can release chemicals into the air which could potentially make a baby ill. So choosing chemical free material options of timber and fabric are not only more sustainable, but also safer for the baby.
- Nightlights are highly recommended as they provide safety when moving around with a baby at night time, i.e. soothing a baby or feeding them.
- It is a good idea to decorate the ceiling as babies spend a lot of time lying on their backs looking upwards, so a decorated ceiling of mobiles above them helps keep them stimulated therefore helping their development.
- As children get to an age where they become mobile (crawling and walking), it is important that safety precautions such as hard surfaces that they could fall on, corners that they could hurt themselves on, stairs, cupboards, plug outlets etc. are all considered.
- Young children are incredibly inquisitive so it is important that the designed environment is 'highly stimulating and 'exciting', with plenty to see, do and explore. 'Space' to play is very important as well as lots of storage solutions.



Here are some ideas from Cynthia Bowman:

- Add a dimmer to lighting. It's an easy strategy that will allow you to adjust the mood of the room as needed
- Select durable, washable fabrics and rugs that can be easily cleaned
- Think about furniture placement and safety as baby starts getting mobile. Some good baby-proofing ideas include covering wall outlets, keeping the crib away from window treatments and cords and placing valuable items on higher shelves
- Focus on creating an uncluttered nursery with plenty of storage options that make clean-up while holding a baby easy
- Allow for plenty of floor space so baby can have floor playtime

the issue

National statistics show that there has been a successful campaign to reduce the number of unplanned teenage pregnancies in the UK. According to the Nuffield Trust the number has fallen from 47.7 per 1000 in 1990 to 17.9 per thousand in 2017. However, this is still a significant number, and the teen parents and their babies need help and support so they can have the best chance of living fulfilled and happy lives.

The following quotes show why this is an important social issue:

"Research has shown that teenage pregnancy is associated with poorer outcomes for both young parents and their children. Teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education, are more likely to bring up their child alone and in poverty, and have a higher risk of mental health problems than older mothers. Infant mortality rates are 60% higher for babies born to teenage mothers. As children they have an increased risk of living in poverty and are more likely to have accidents and behavioural problems." Nuffield

"Like all parents, teenage parents want to do the best for their children and some manage very well; but for many their health, education and economic outcomes remain disproportionately poor which affects the life chances for them and the next generation of children." Public Health England

Importantly, research shows that with appropriate support a much brighter future can be offered:

"Evidence and lessons from local areas show that poor outcomes are not inevitable if early, coordinated and sustained support is put in place, which is trusted by young parents and focused on building their skills, confidence and aspirations." Public Health England

"Getting support right for teenage mothers can transform the lives of individual young parents and their children, enabling them to fulfil their aspirations and potential. At a strategic level good support; is integral to safeguarding, the Early Help agenda and improving life chances; is key to giving every child the best start in life; breaks intergenerational inequalities; reduces future demand on health and social services; contributes to Public Health and NHS Outcomes" Public Health England

The Public Health England Framework for Supporting Teenage Mothers and Young Fathers is an extensive guide for how best to support teen mums. Of the many areas it highlights as important, the provision of appropriate accommodation/housing is identified as key. Refer to Appendix 1.



Case Study: BBC news story, a girl, age 16, was disowned by her family in Dublin when she told them she was pregnant. She moved to Liverpool to try and receive support from a cousin who was living there. She was penniless and feared that she wouldn't be able to keep the baby once it was born. A local charity posted her story online with a plea for donations and received enough items to cloth and feed the baby and to get her a cot and pram.

"Being a parent is one of the loneliest places I've been. You lose a lot of your friends, they don't want to focus on this little baby." Shannon age 16, mum at 14 (BBC news story)

In a video interview Shannon also talked about how she received a lot of negative comments and treatment because of her age. Not only has she received judgmental comments from strangers and 'friends', but even from a nurse who turned her away from the hospital not believing her worries about stomach pains she was experiencing before her due date ('Oh you wouldn't know what labour feels like, you're too young'). (Shannon found out three days later at a visit from the midwife that her water had in fact broken and the baby had been without water for three days).



the issue *in exeter & devon*

“Devon Teen Pregnancy 10 Year High”
-Heart



“The latest official figures show the UK still has some of the highest proportion of births to teenage mothers in Europe, almost five times higher than those in Switzerland and Italy.”

-Katie Alston, BBC



A 2018 article in Devon Live provides data on how various areas of Devon have teenage pregnancy rates which have risen, in contrast with national data, which has seen a significant long term fall.

The figures also show that Exeter has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in Devon (with Torbay at the highest, and Plymouth very similar to Exeter). Exeter is also the only rate in Devon which hasn't changed over the last few years, all of the others have gone down (with the exception of Torbay, which is an anomaly as has gone up).

(statistics sourced from Devon Live; <https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/shocking-new-teen-pregnancy-figures-1393488>)

USERS

what are their needs?

From research, I have concluded that these are the users' main needs and design rules to follow.



M

um:

- support services
- 'parenting' teaching/ learning
- childcare
- (potentially) accommodation
- socialising with others in same situation
- resume education (tutoring or childcare so they can go back to school)



B

aby:

- changing, feeding and sleeping facilities
- play space
- baby clinic



design rules

B

aby:

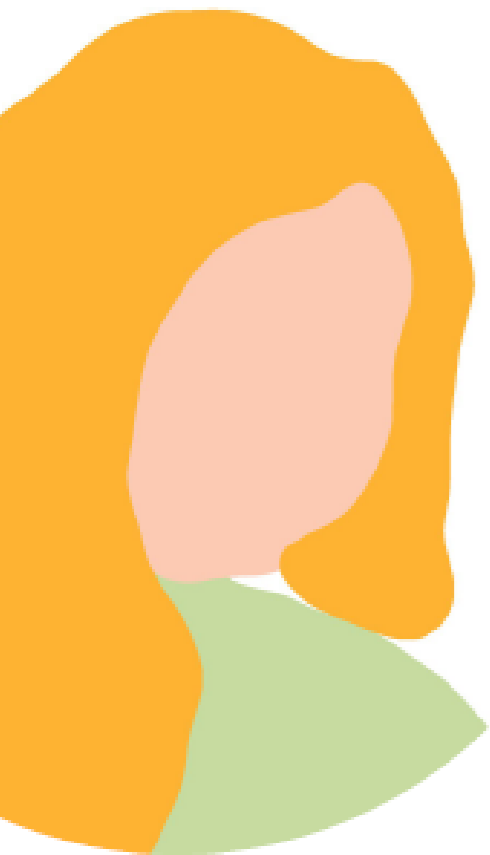
1. Design should be centred around the children and babies; playful and enchanting
2. Must be safe (baby proofed) -stair gates, rounded corners, carpeted areas/rugs, safe play spaces etc.
3. Must aid development by being tactile and stimulating
4. Is desirable to use materials such as wood and fabrics over plastics as these can be safer and more tactile
5. Space must be hygienic —all surfaces and items must be easy to clean, i.e. wipeable or able to put in a washing machine

user profiles



Grace
16 Years old
8 months pregnant

Grace still lives at home with her parents but is quite anxious about raising her child. She has been afraid to go to other antenatal classes and postnatal classes as she knows that she will be a lot younger than the other people there. She wants to be able to have these same experiences but with people who are in the same situation as her and can sympathise with her rather than judge her. She is also keen to continue her education but isn't sure about returning to her old school.



Lizzie
18 years old
New born baby

Lizzie doesn't have a particularly close relationship with her parents and isn't receiving any support from them in regards to the baby. She wishes to live independently with her child but cannot afford to. Lizzie was doing well at school and had hoped to go to university, but the baby prevented her from being able to sit her A level exams. She wants support and guidance so that she can complete her A levels and eventually get a university degree.

Cara
17 years old
9 month old baby

Cara has been struggling over the past year as she has been very lonely as has felt cut off from all her old friends. She has not been able to get out very much as has very little help from anyone in regards to looking after the baby. Although she has been living with her mother in their council flat, her younger siblings are making it difficult for her to continue to live there. She therefore desires a place to live and the opportunity to socialise and interact with people her own age again, and who are sympathetic of her situation as can relate.



Hannah
19 years old
2 year old child

Hannah works part time in an inner city office in Exeter. While she works, her son is looked after by her mother, but when Hannah is not working and looking after her son, she feel very isolated and wants somewhere where she can interact with other young mothers, and where her child can have a stimulating and sociable experience. In addition to this, her mother has recently been taken ill and can no longer cope with caring for the child, so Hannah desperately needs another childcare option.





old electricity building
exeter

Haven Road,
Exeter, Devon,
EX2 8AX



about

Introduction to the building

The building that I have selected is a 1800 square metre site located in the historical quayside area of Exeter. It is currently The Quay Climbing Centre and is made up of three parts: "Quay Climbing" with bouldering room, "Clip n' Climb", and a cafe. There are a number of other spaces including therapy rooms, yoga space, WCs and offices. It is the South West's largest indoor climbing wall. The site became a climbing centre in 2008.

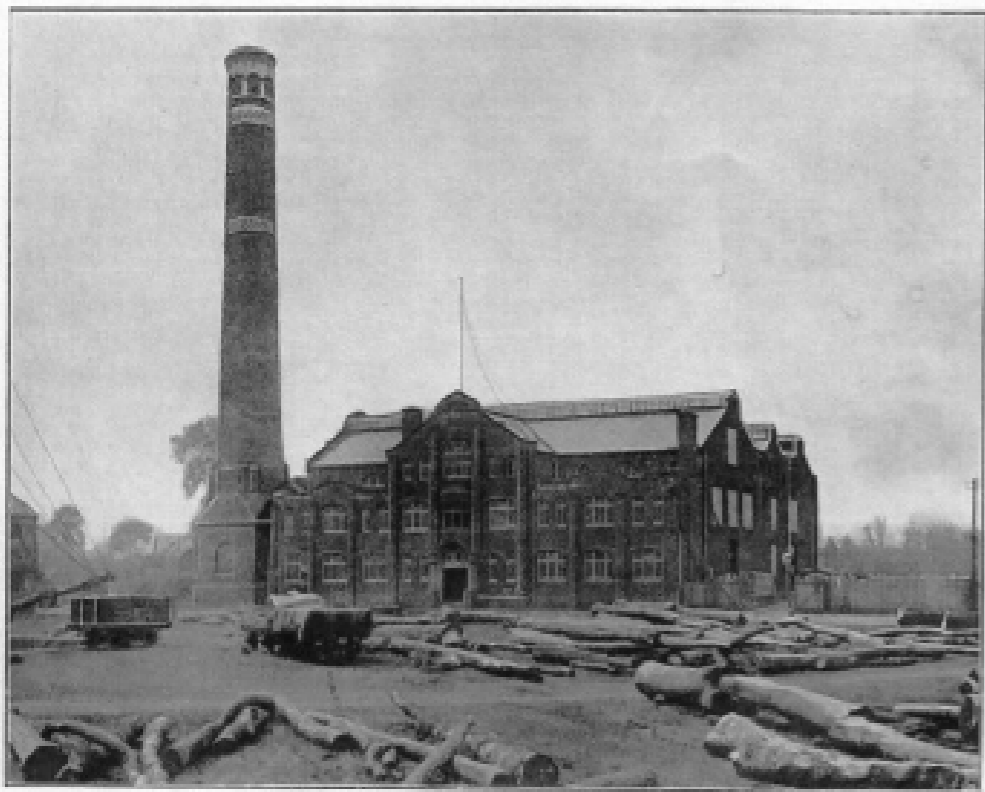
The main atrium space is a vast area that is approximately 15m high. It is a brick building, with tile and wood finishes inside, and large exposed metal structural beams inside. There are also iron staircases and balustrade details inside.

The building was constructed at the start of the 20th century and its original function was as an electricity generating station. It was known as the Electrical works, or The Haven Road Generating Station, or simply the 'Old Electricity Building'.

Introduction to the location

Exeter is a city in the heart of Devon. It is located at the end of the M5 and has an international airport as well as mainline train and road connections to Bristol, Birmingham and London. Exeter has a large prestigious university as well as a sizable FE college. Hence there is a large student population. Exeter also has a cathedral, museums, a large shopping centre and is a regional centre of lots of large companies. There are therefore a lot of office buildings providing employment for local people. In 2005 the Met Office relocated from Bracknell in Berkshire to Exeter and is a significant regional employer. In addition to the more well off areas there are also areas of Exeter with old housing, high unemployment and areas of social deprivation. The quayside area of Exeter is an ancient harbour and warehouse centre which has been extensively redeveloped over the last twenty years. It now houses a lot of river frontage apartment buildings, restaurants and cafes. It is a vibrant area of the city with many leisure activities including bowling, water sports and a large swimming pool and leisure centre. There are a number of large car parks in the area. It is very conveniently located being only a 15 minute walk from the city centre.



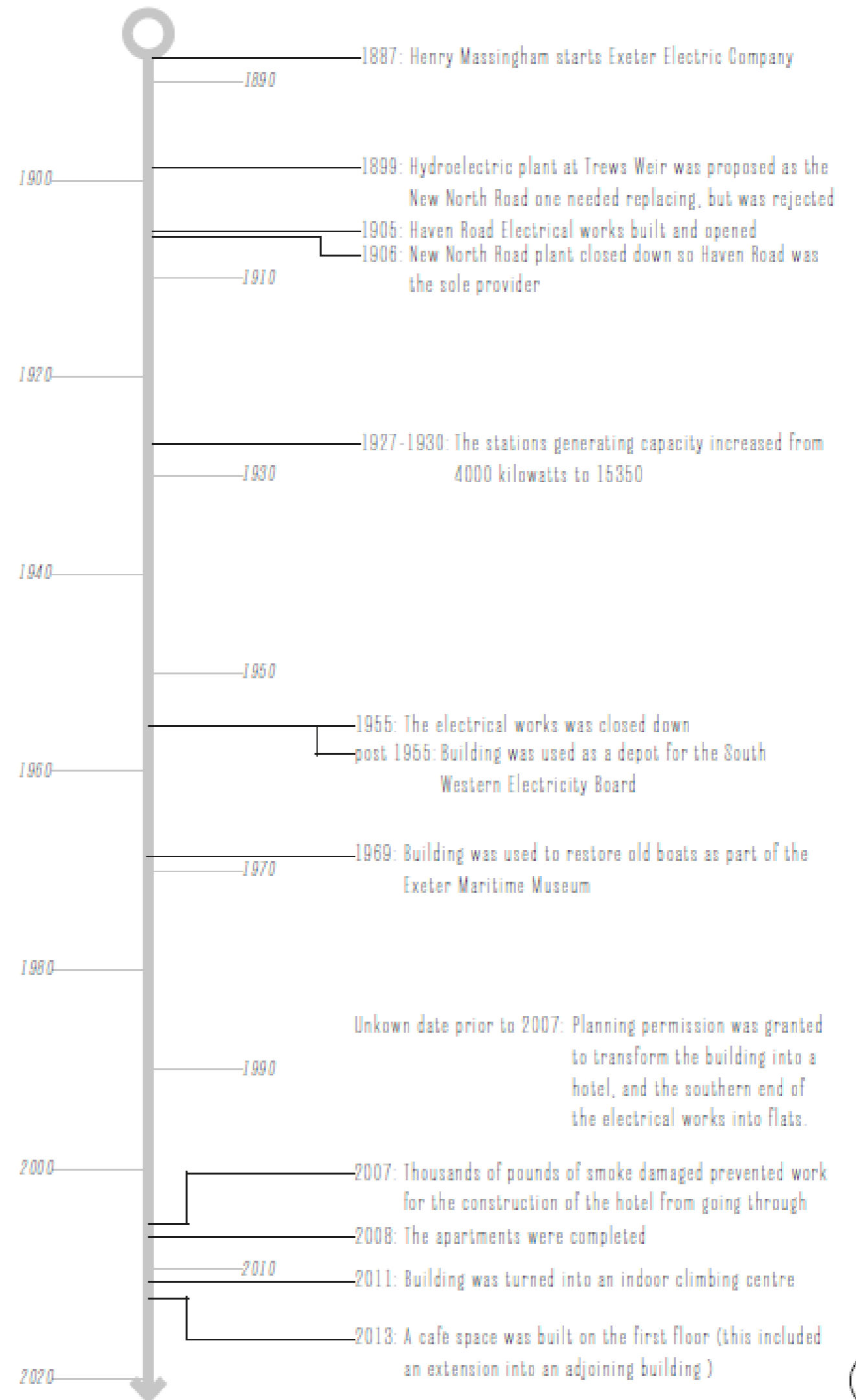


history

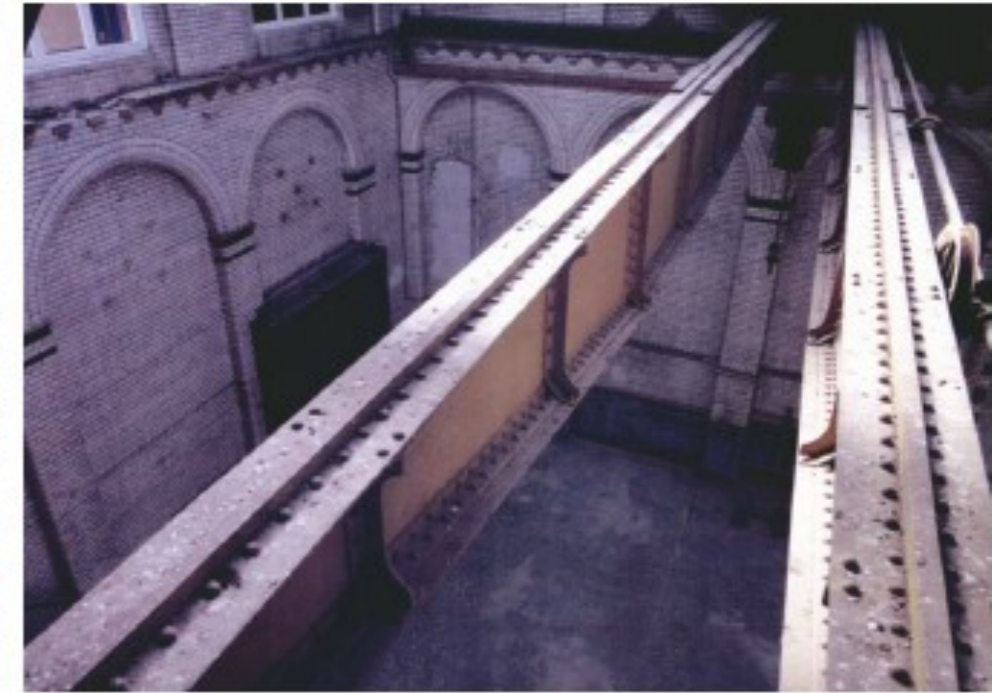
The Electricity Works has over a hundred years of fascinating history. It began with the emergence of an electric tram system in Exeter which produced a surge in demand for electricity. The existing power generation in New North Road was inadequate so the Haven Road power station was conceived and by 1905 it had been built and opened by the current mayor. The plant was designed as coal fired power station and was built by the Exeter building firm W Bready. The main feature of the plant was a 31 metre by 17 metre boiler room. In addition there were offices, an annexe for economisers and at one end there was also a distinctive 47 metre high chimney. The boiler room was lined with glazed bricks and was constructed with a terrazzo marble floor. As mentioned this was coal fired operation and the site had bunkers that could hold 500 tons of coal. The

coal was delivered to the station via the River Exe and Exeter canal as well as by rail. A gravity bucket conveyor system took the coal from barges and railway sidings into the bunkers. An automatic system removed the ash from the furnaces. A major overhaul led to an increase in generating capacity from 4000 kw to 13,500 kw to meet extra demand between 1927 and 1930.

The Electricity Works produced its last electricity in 1955. For the next 14 years the building was used by SWEB (south West Electricity Board) as a depot. In 1969 the site was taken over by a local maritime museum which used the space primarily for renovating old boats. By 2007 plans were made to turn the site into a hotel, but this never materialised and the building was converted into its current function in 2011.



'old' photos of the site



(pre-climbing wall, photos sourced from the Exeter City Council Planning Portal)

location

Train Station, Exeter St Thomas Station: 0.5 miles, 10 min walk

Bus Stop: Directly outside building

Main route Bus Stop: 0.3 miles, 7 min walk

Bus and Coach Station: 0.9 miles, 18 min walk

Car Park: nearest car park is next door, 1 min walk. Second nearest car park 500 yards, 2 min walk

Primary School, St Thomas Primary School: 0.6 miles, 12 min walk

Secondary School, West Exe School: 1.0 miles, 21 min walk. ISCA Academy: 1.7 miles, 32 min walk

Exeter Collage: 1.2 miles, 23 min walk

Exeter Mathematics School (sixth form college): 1.0 mile, 18 min walk

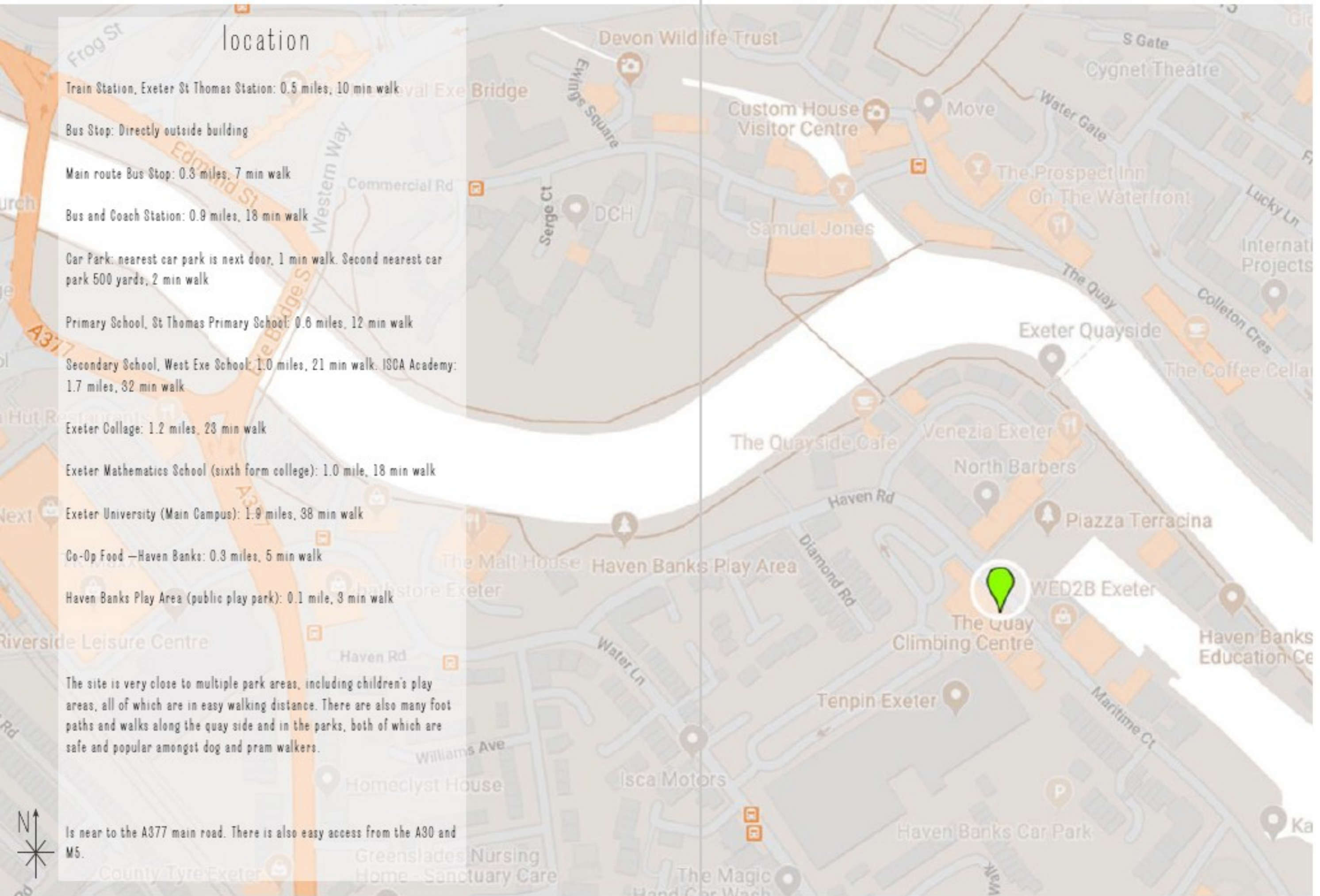
Exeter University (Main Campus): 1.9 miles, 38 min walk

Co-Op Food —Haven Banks: 0.3 miles, 5 min walk

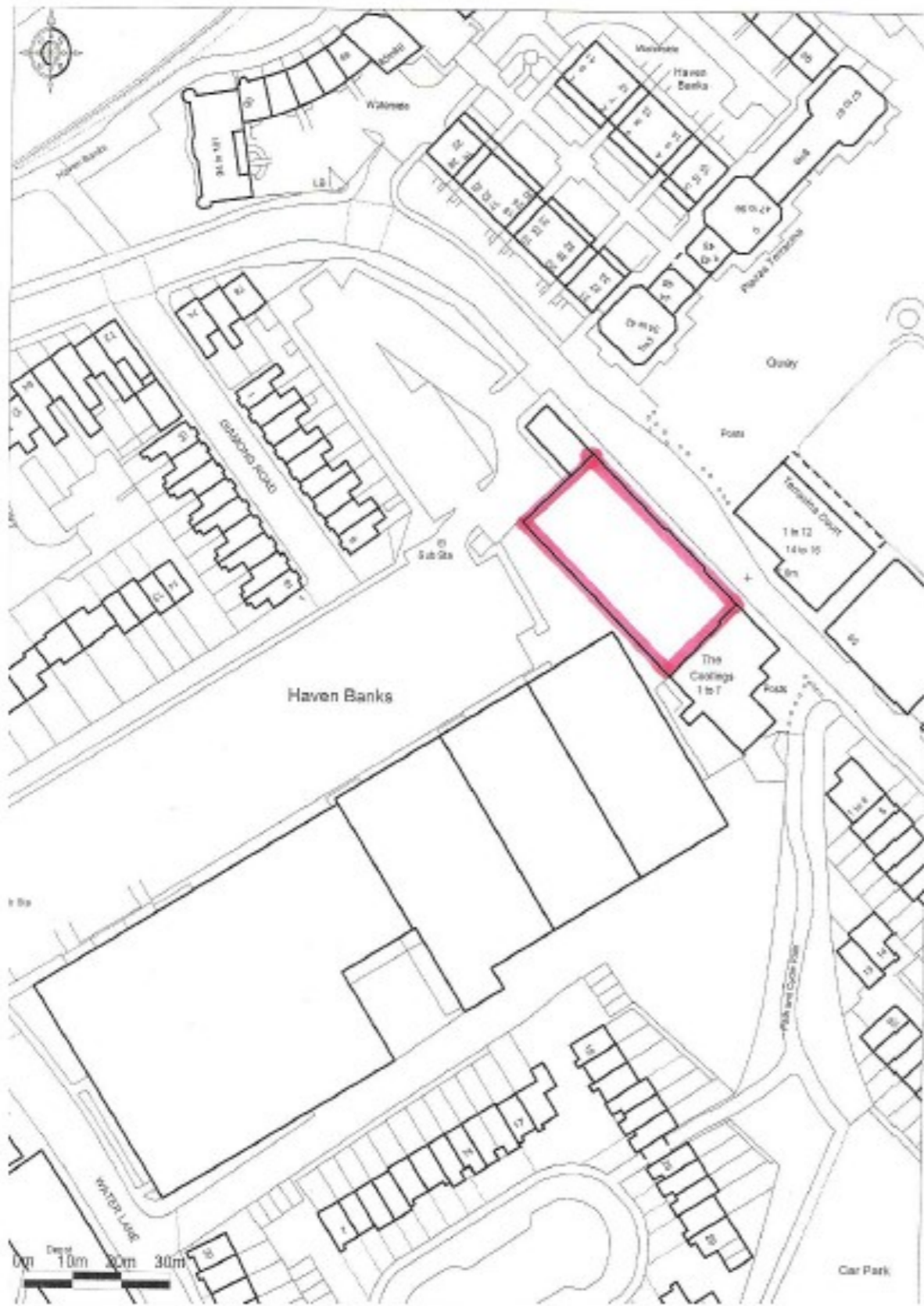
Haven Banks Play Area (public play park): 0.1 mile, 3 min walk

The site is very close to multiple park areas, including children's play areas, all of which are in easy walking distance. There are also many foot paths and walks along the quay side and in the parks, both of which are safe and popular amongst dog and pram walkers.

Is near to the A377 main road. There is also easy access from the A30 and M5.

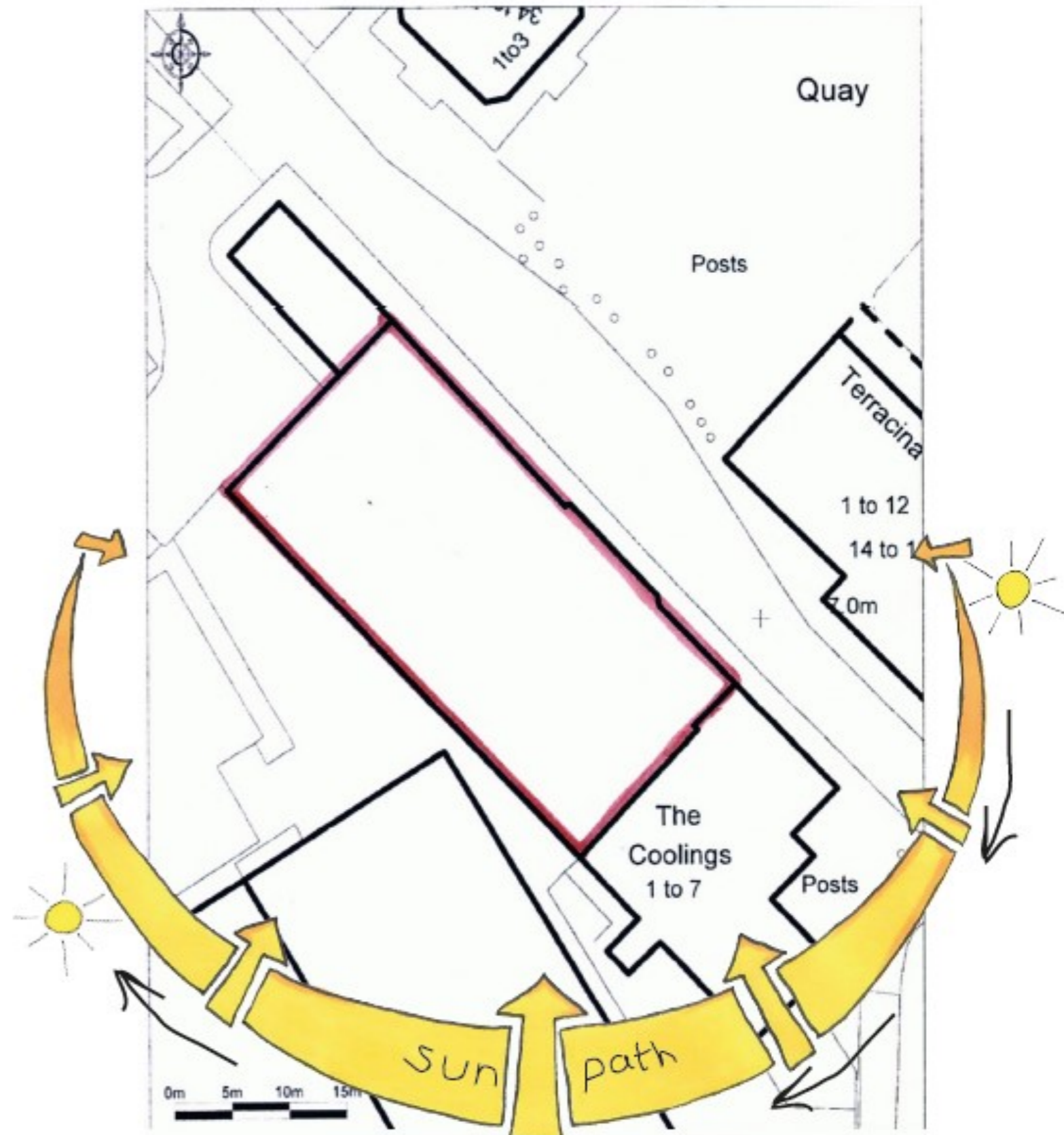


site plan



Crown copyright Exeter City Council 100025345

sun path



Crown copyright Exeter City Council 100025345

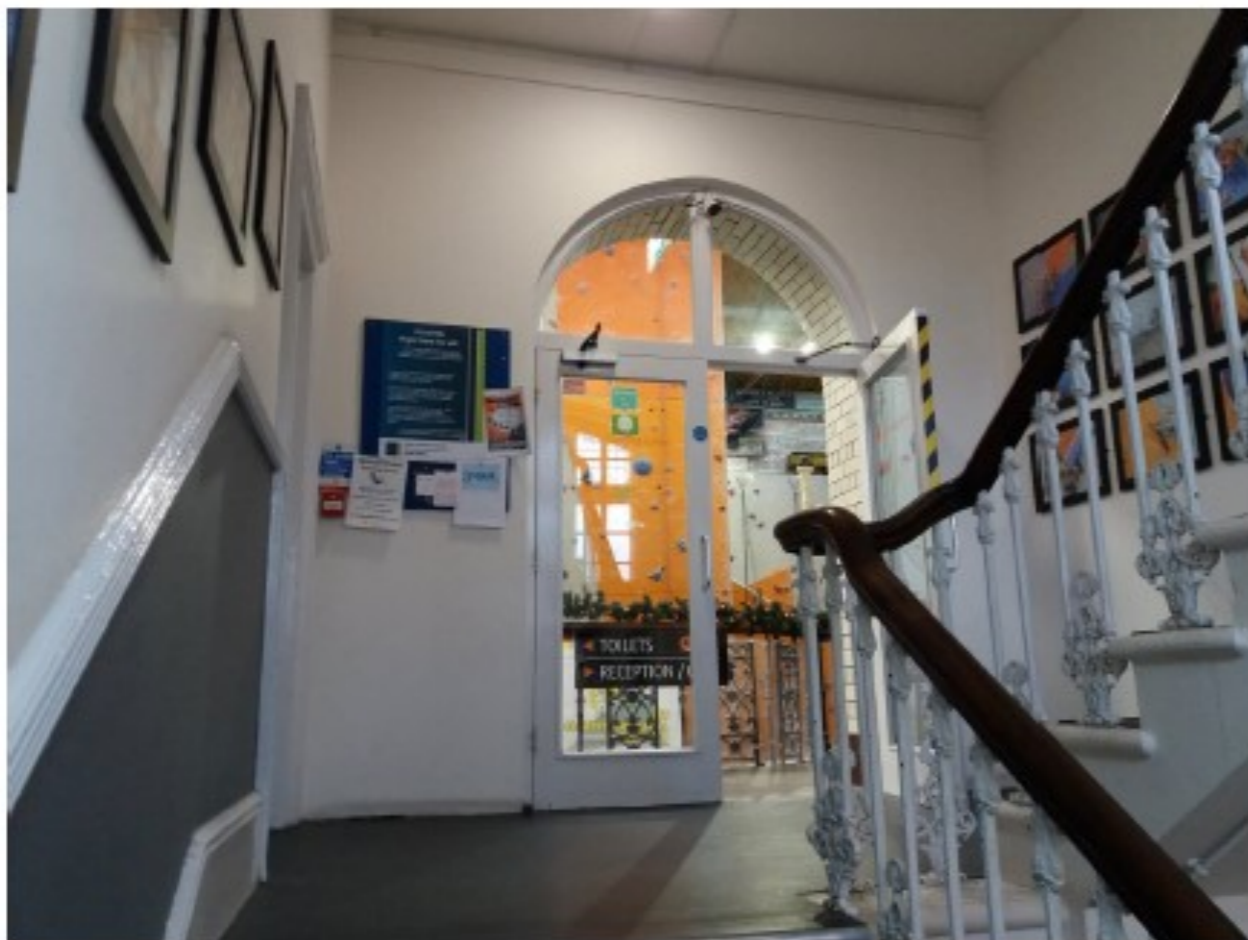
Positives:

- Large, open, double height atrium space lends itself for a lot of different potential possibilities
- Heritage features such as stair balustrades, support beams, tiled walls and archways from the original building, but are not listed, so could be of interest
- The building is not listed so free from listing restraints
- Car park directly next to it
- Easy access—easy walk from the centre of Exeter, and within walking distance from train stations and bus stops
- Near (within walking distance) to secondary schools, colleges and Exeter University—all of which could be of use or interest to the mothers using or living at the site
- As the building was converted in 2011, it means that the building is compliant with current building and safety standards

photos

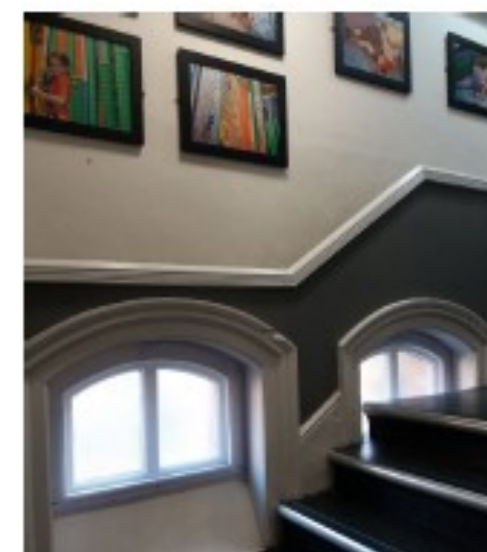
my site visit





Negatives:

- Large, open, double height atrium space could potentially be difficult to work with and fill.
- Current interior is very 'hard' - iron stair cases, brick and ceramic tiled walls and floors —all very industrial and harsh and would need 'softening' for use for young children.
- Building is directly on the road.
- There is no garden space —there is outdoor space next to the quay but it is public space.
- The building is fairly close to open water (across the road from it), most of which is unprotected.
- All the windows are at the front of the building —the side and back don't have many windows. Would need to try and find other ways of bringing light into the space, such as skylights.





section 3

conclusion & initial design strategy

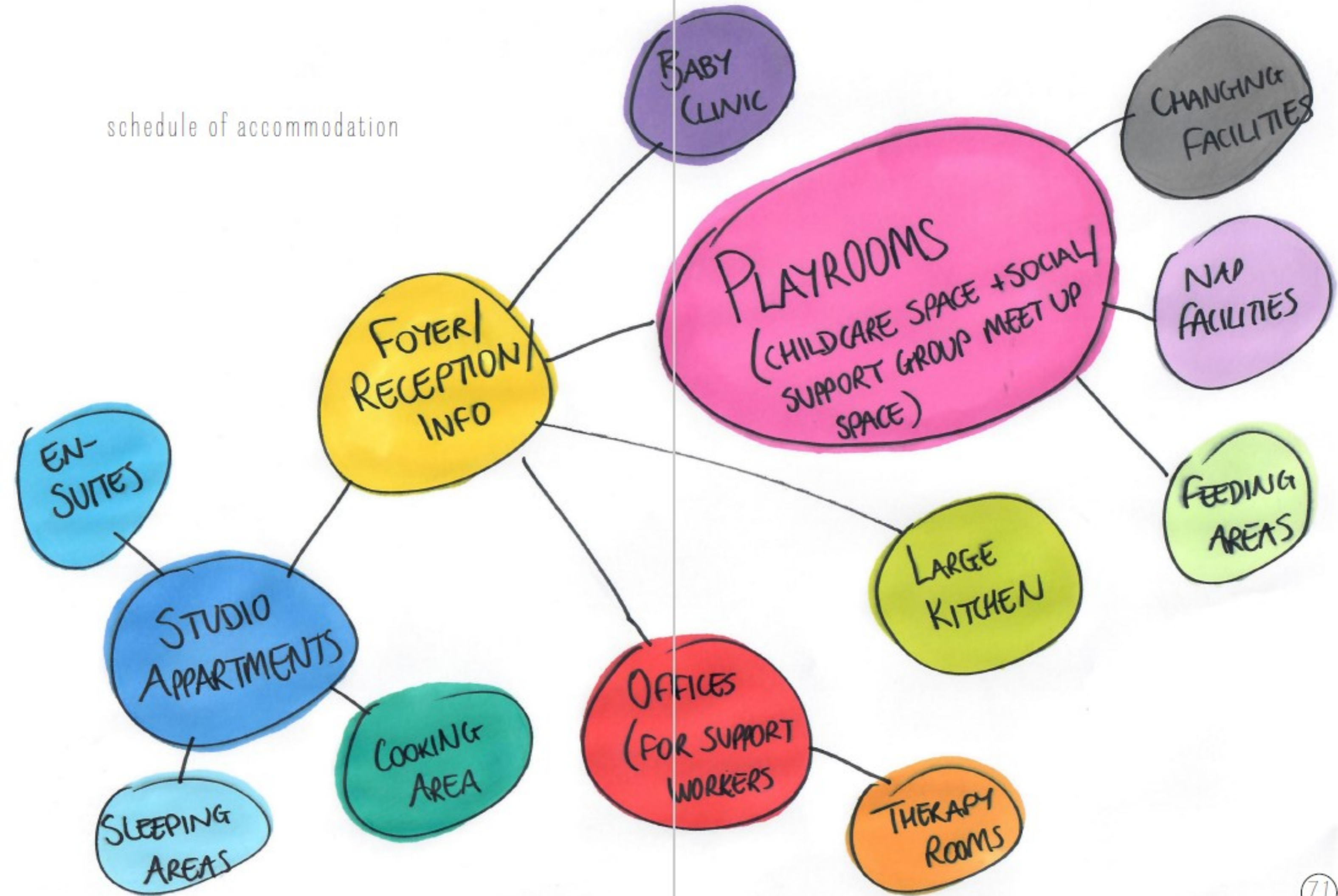
conclusion

My research and reading has shown that although teen pregnancies are falling, there are still a significant number of unplanned teenage pregnancies. Many young mothers find the first few years difficult and babies of teenage mums are more likely to develop behavioural and development issues than children born to older parents. Research shows however that early and well directed support can really help. One of the main problems for young mums is the isolation they feel and their lack of experience. Throughout the UK there are day centres and residential centres which give young mums a place to bring their children and socialise with other people in a similar situation. I have found a building that would provide a perfect location to provide the kind of support that the young teen mums of Exeter need. With my understanding of the needs of both the parent and the child, I intend to create a space that will provide the security and stimulation that is needed.

As part of my scheme, I think it is important to have some kind of accommodation option available to those who want or need it. Initially I was thinking along the lines of a 'house', with private bedroom areas and large communal, family style kitchen and living areas. However, my research suggests that teenagers in this situation would prefer the independence of having their own space i.e. their own apartment. What I do not want to risk is people ending up spending all of their time in their own apartment and, again, becoming isolated. Because of these factors, I think that the best solution is good sized studio flats.



schedule of accommodation





design strategy

My intention is to create a place which will provide for the needs of teenage Mums in Exeter. There are many young mothers who simply need a space to bring their children to, a place where there will be a stimulating and safe environment for babies and toddlers to play, as well as being a place where the mothers can meet other people in the same situation as them. For these people a large open space with its sensitively designed and planned play areas will be ideal. Some of the young parents need practical and emotional support. The space I plan will have a large 'home-style' kitchen where people can learn to cook and prepare nutritionally rich food for themselves and their babies, as well as just making a tea or coffee. Expert help will be available. Counselling and advice will be available in smaller break out therapy rooms.

Finally, a significant portion of the building will provide accommodation in the form of small self contained units that young mums can live in while they learn to become independent mothers who can move on to more permanent accommodation. The residential side will be closely linked so the open play area and the catering facilities will always be available for residents of the centre. The idea of this is that the mothers who are residents there will make advantage of the communal spaces and use them regularly so that they are learning independence without become isolated and cut off from friends and socialisation.

schedule of accommodation explained

foyer / Reception / Information. This will be the first space the you enter into and can supply all the information required upon entering the space, including directing (new) people to the space that they require. Most importantly, it is essential for safeguarding reasons. This is a space that is dealing with and being used by a lot of vulnerable people, the vast majority of whom are minors. It is therefore essential that there is some kind of barrier between the interior of the space, and outside to prevent young children from 'escaping', and to protect the users inside the space.

Playrooms. This (or these; there might need to be more than one playroom space e.g. for different types of play, targeted at different age groups or simply to break down the space so that it's more manageable and less intimidating to its users, as a single, very large play space could become very noisy and create an undesirable environment.) is one of the core areas to the space. Babies and children need play space as, apart from the smaller amounts of time that they spend doing necessities such as eating and sleeping, they are playing. Playing is how babies and small children grow, learn and develop. The playroom space of this building will be multi functional as it will host a childcare service, as well as being a space that teen mums can come to with their babies for them both to socialise – this includes both residents of the space and visitors to the space.

Baby facilities. Essential for a space with babies is changing facilities, nap facilities and feeding areas. These are all spaces that will be supplied in the building coming off the playroom space, as it will be for the use of all visitors to the building, including visitors to the baby clinic, therapy rooms etc.

Kitchen. There will be a large family style kitchen that will be open to all users of the space throughout the day. Visitors and residents (residents will have their own kitchen space in their accommodation, but are free to use this space as well for a more communal experience if they wish) will be able to keep food in the fridge and heat it up in a microwave, make teas and coffees etc. The kitchen will also host 'baby and me' type cooking classes every lunch time. There will be classes on making a healthy meal for themselves and their baby, so both come away with a healthy meal that the mum has prepared.

Offices. There will be a series of offices for all the various support workers based in the building. This includes workers and managers of the space, and other types of specialists and experts that will be based on site to offer support to those who need it. This could include anything to do with finance, education, health care etc. As part of this, I think it would be a good idea to offer on site tutoring. It also would include therapy and counselling rooms for those who desire or need it.

Baby clinic. There will be a small but fully functional baby clinic on site. It is practical and convenient to offer this facility at this site so that the mothers don't have to travel elsewhere for it. It also means that it can be a baby clinic specifically for the teenage mothers.

Studio flats. My research showed that people in this kind of situation desire their own space rather than shared accommodation so the space will offer functional and comfortable studio flats. The flats will use room division techniques rather than actually being made up of multiple rooms. This is so that separate spaces can be created as opposed to the all open plan typical studio flat as living in 'one' space with a baby or child could be overwhelming. These will have en-suite bathrooms (baths needed for washing small children), and separated bedroom areas, a kitchen and living area.





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