
MAKING BYKER

Hobby Furniture



Introduction

This zine contains a series of designs for specific elements of hobby furniture inspired by residents of Byker, and present an exploration of an alternative expression of the Byker hobby rooms.

The designs are a response to the lack of accessibility of the hobby rooms in the Byker redevelopment in Newcastle upon Tyne, designed by Ralph Erskine during the 1980s.

The hobby rooms were designed as an extension of domestic space, to give residents space for individual hobby activity, but also offer space for collective social interests. They have hosted a wide range of fascinating and inspiring hobby activity in the years since their completion including; pottery making, a sewing circle, photography, a ladies dart club, a 'mice club', production of the *Byker Phoenix* and a model maker whose mask of Tutankhamun is on display in the Great North Museum in

Newcastle city centre.

Lack of maintenance and management has left many of the hobby rooms in poor condition, vacant, underused and inaccessible to Byker residents.

Yet this underuse is not reflective of a lack of demand for hobby space across Byker, many residents today pursue interesting and varied hobbies, involved in music, making, crafting and collecting.

Most hobbies involve the use of particular equipment that support its pursuit. Some of this equipment is specific to the hobby in question, like sewing machines and musical instruments, while many simply use existing home equipment such as ovens, kettles and irons. This equipment is usually positioned within the home to provide space for the hobby practice. Sometimes it is laid out in a spare room, ready for use, for

others the equipment borrows space temporarily before being packed away to make space for other everyday activities.

The elements of furniture question the definition of hobby space. Is it defined by the typology of the Byker hobby rooms, the provision of formal space, or is it enabled through the occupation of space by equipment and the activity it supports?

The designs for activity specific items of furniture aim to explore the latter, focussing on supporting hobby activity by facilitating the inhabitation of a range of spaces, internal and external, by the equipment used by hobbies. In doing so, they speculate on the relationship between the provision of equipment and the spaces of hobby occupation.

The range of proposals presented draw from observations of the occupation of public spaces in Byker, surveying of residents who pursue particular hobbies and incidental

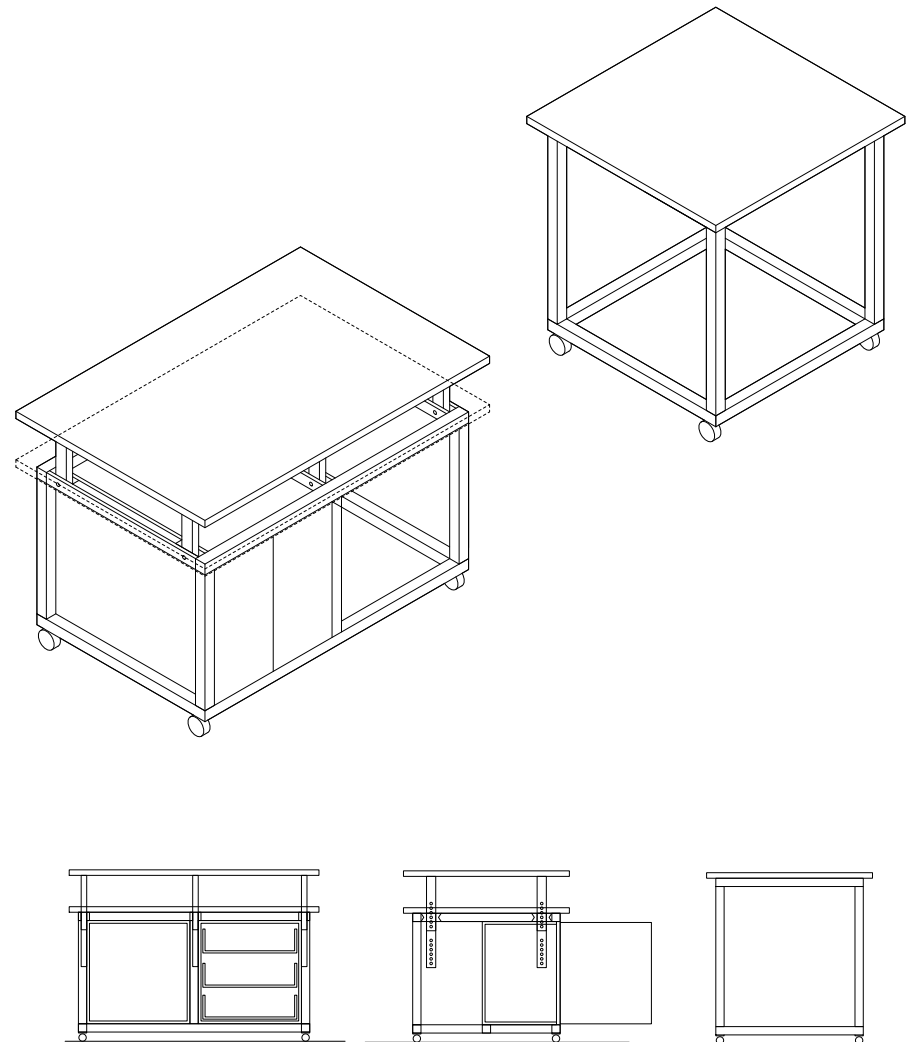
conversations with neighbours, residents and friends in and around Byker. Accordingly, they are a visual index of interested based potential and capital for inhabiting public spaces and revitalising the hobby rooms.

The designs of specific elements of furniture provide a record of this potential as the Byker Community Trust prepares to invest money in repairing and upgrading the hobby rooms. As such, they present an argument for the retention of the hobby rooms as spaces for interest based activity, as opposed to their conversion and privatisation for residential use.

Beyond the use of the hobby rooms however, it is hoped that the designs will provide an inspiration to other Byker residents to take up new hobby interests.

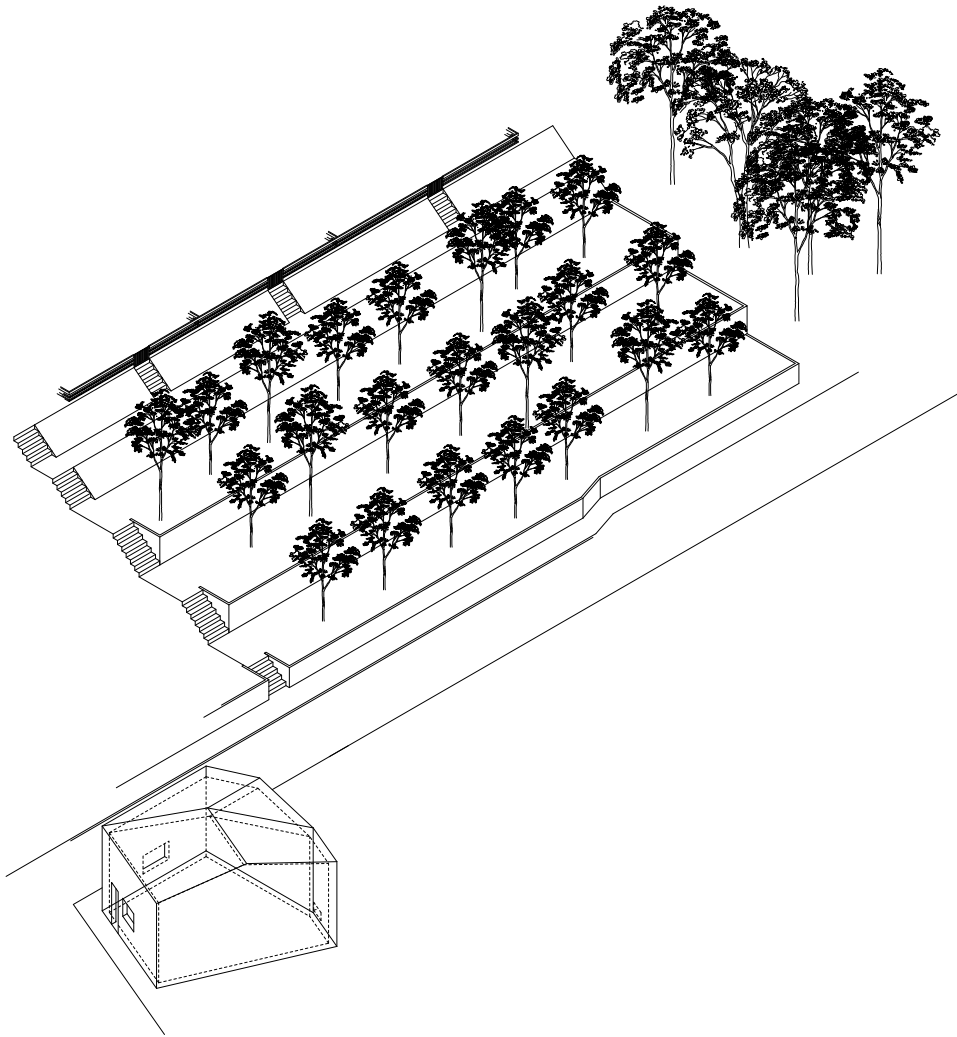
Joinery Workbench

How is all this furniture going to be made? With the joinery workbench of course. With tools and workspace for constructing all manner of new additions to Byker, adapting the softwood timber details of the redevelopment, the workbench is a must for the amateur builder. What will you construct?



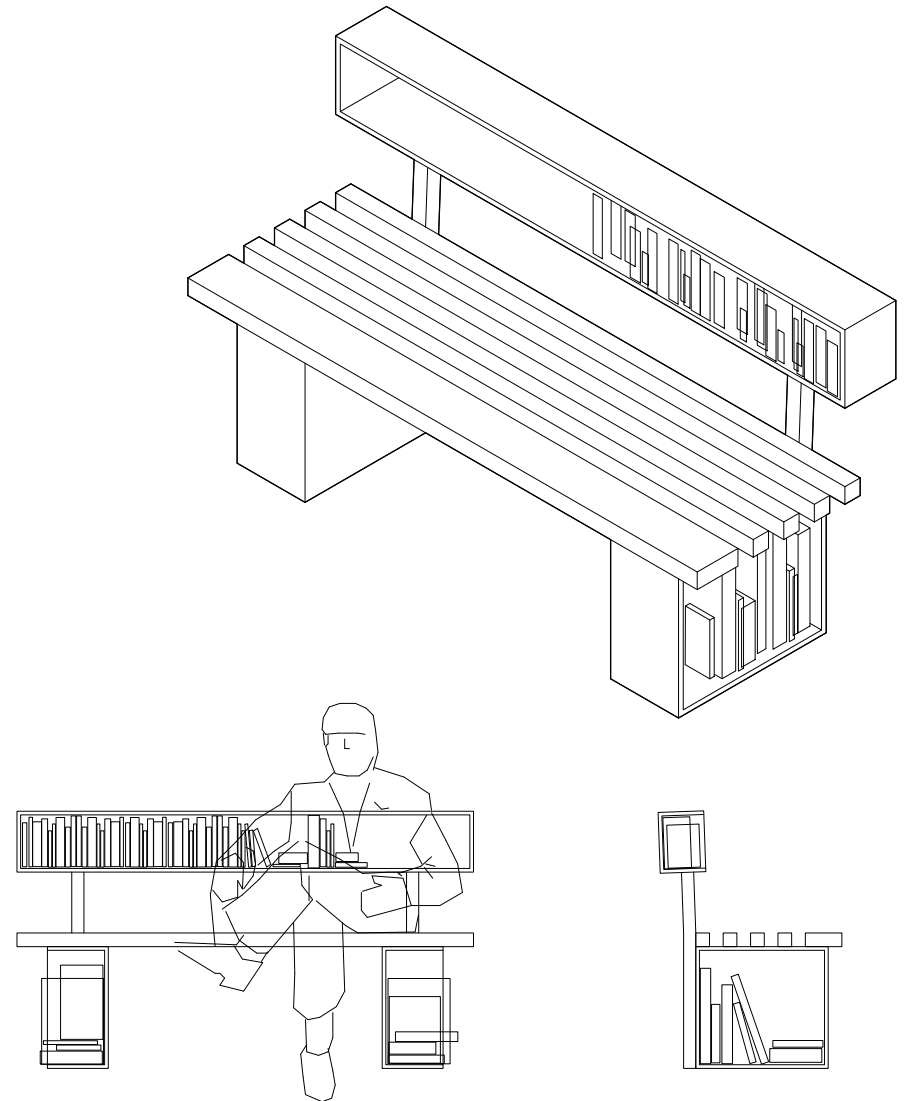
Avondale Orchard

Not a piece of furniture per-se, the idea of a community orchard came from resident Andy pointing out the suitability of a series of terraces on Avondale Rise. Facing south-east and sheltered by some tall trees the terraces offer the ideal conditions for growing fruit. A nearby hobby room offers a great place for making jams or juices.



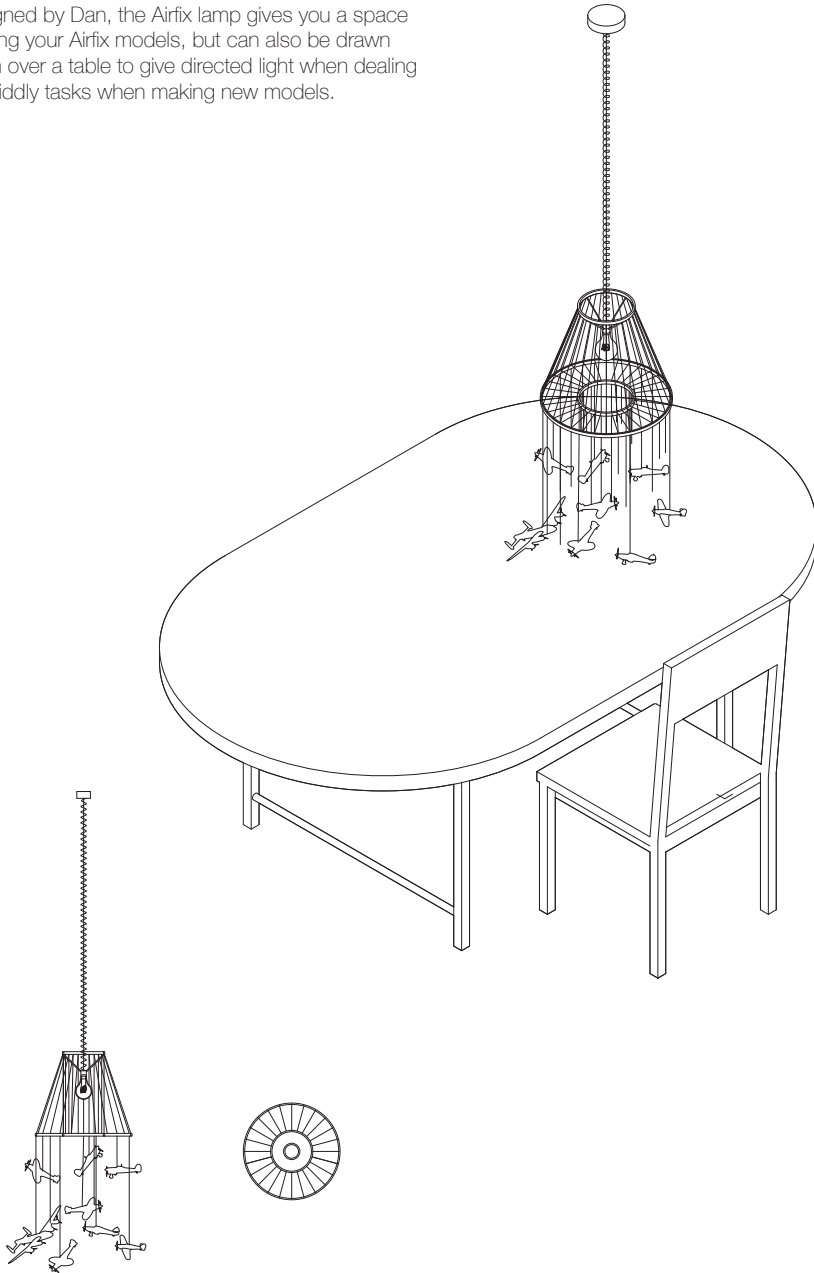
Reading Bench

With libraries across the city closing, the reading bench proposes a more radically local approach to the provision of reading material. Positioned out in public spots, the reading bench encourages residents to swap books to keep a rolling provision of interesting reading.



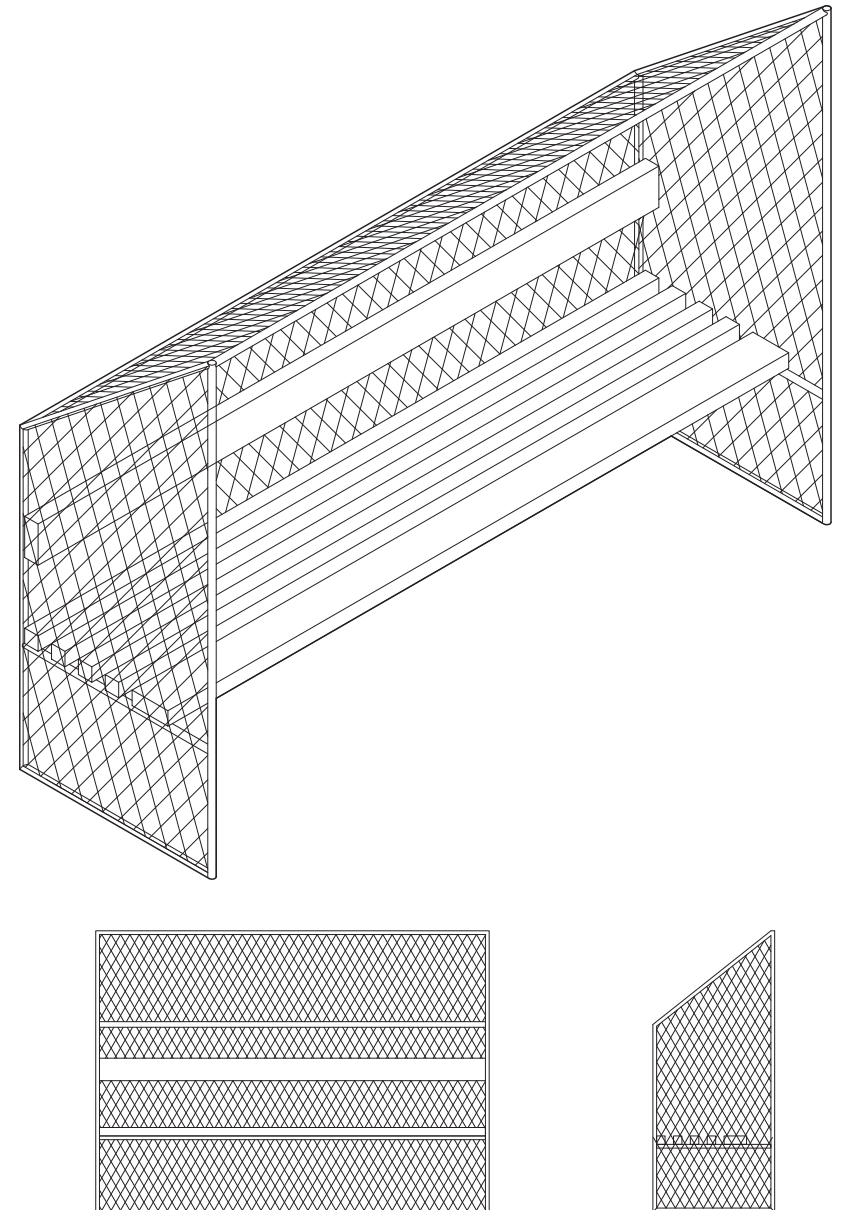
Airfix Lamp

Designed by Dan, the Airfix lamp gives you a space to hang your Airfix models, but can also be drawn down over a table to give directed light when dealing with fiddly tasks when making new models.



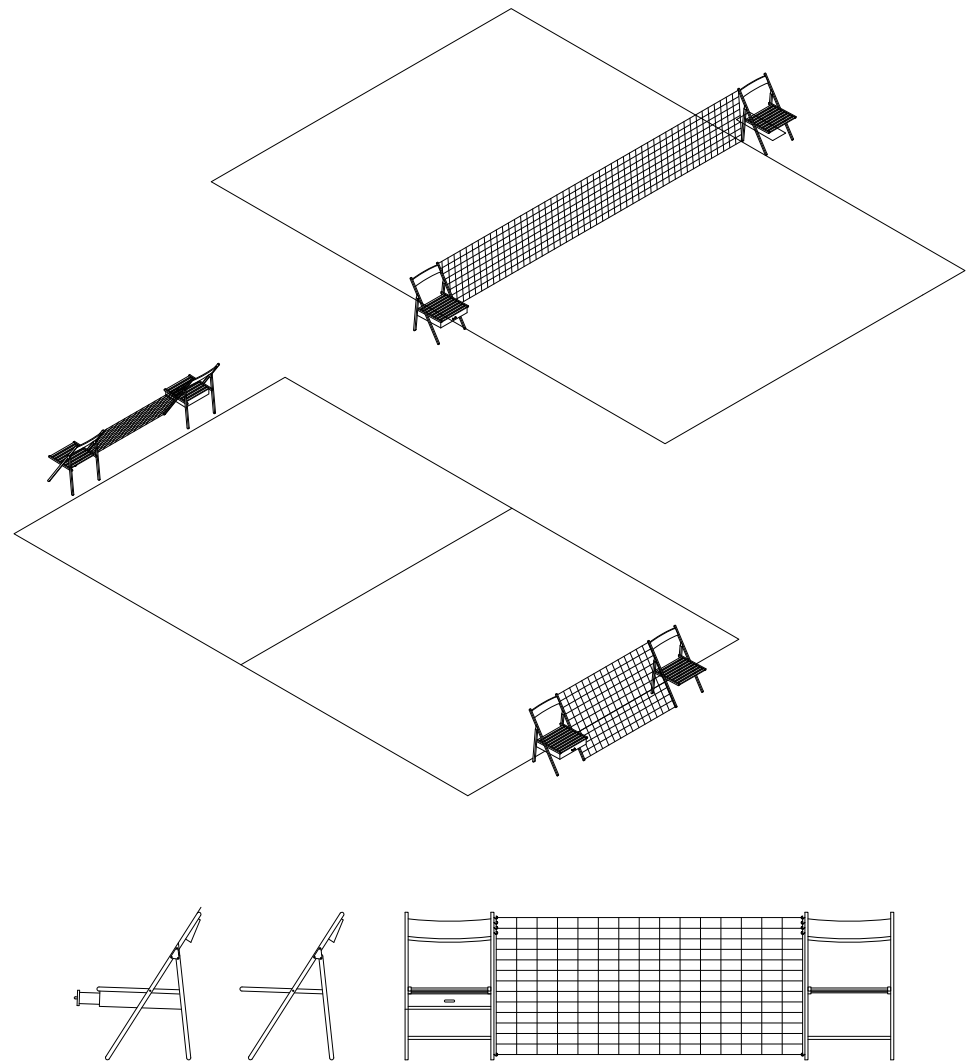
Goal Bench

Football is popular in Byker...!



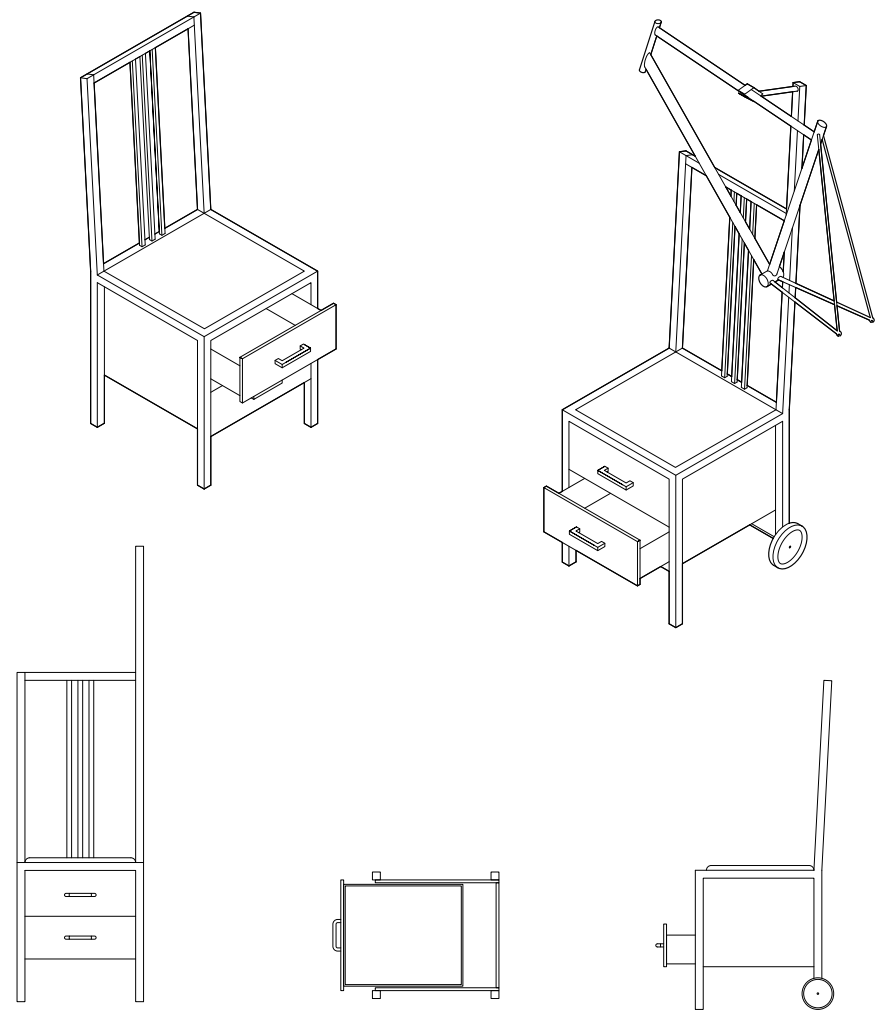
Chair Goals

The chair goals were designed and made to entertain Lacey, Tash, Taylor, Bailey and their friends on Tuesday afternoons outside the Byker Lives shop at Raby Cross. Made with old Ikea chairs and some salvaged orange safety netting, which only lasted two uses.



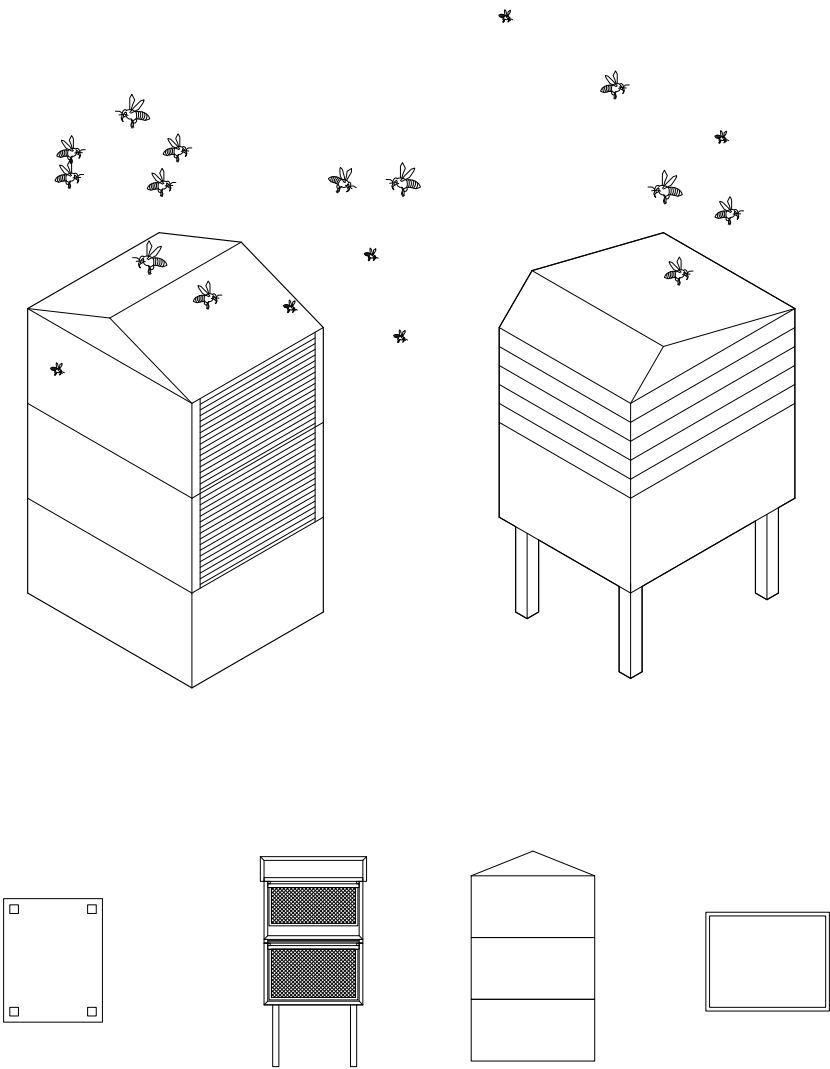
Bike Maintenance

Through interest or neccessity, many Byker residents own bikes. The maintenance chairs were inspired by a conversation with Les, a resident who uses a hobby room for fixing and selling bikes. For general use at home, the chairs also provide space for storing tools and act as a bike stand when neccessary, enabling residents without garages the means to work on their bikes at home.



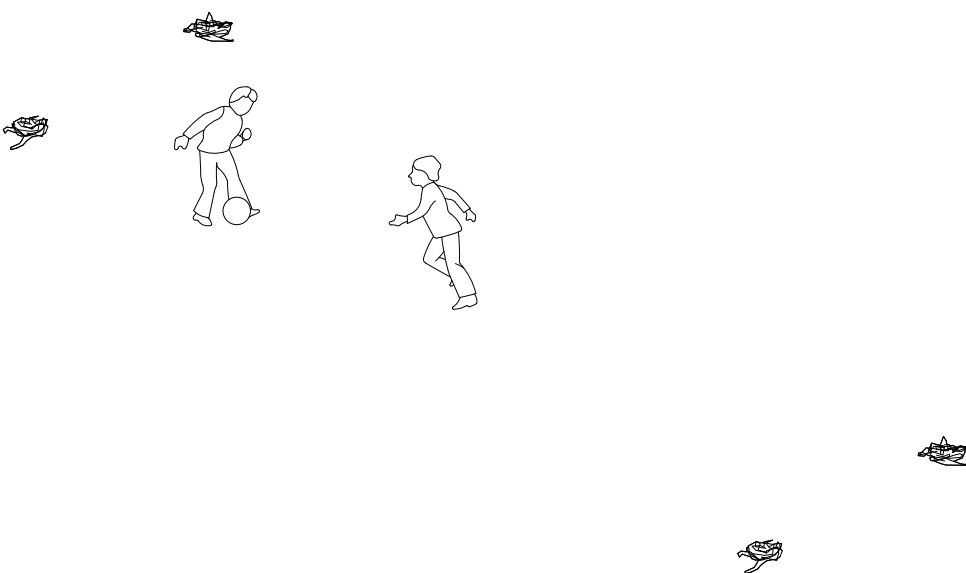
Bee Keeping

Did you know that there are bee hives on the roof of Fenwicks department store in Newcastle? A conversation with Andy about the declining bee population informed me of this fact, and inspired the idea of 'Byker Bees', kept in hives on the roof of the Wall so as to be out of residents' way.



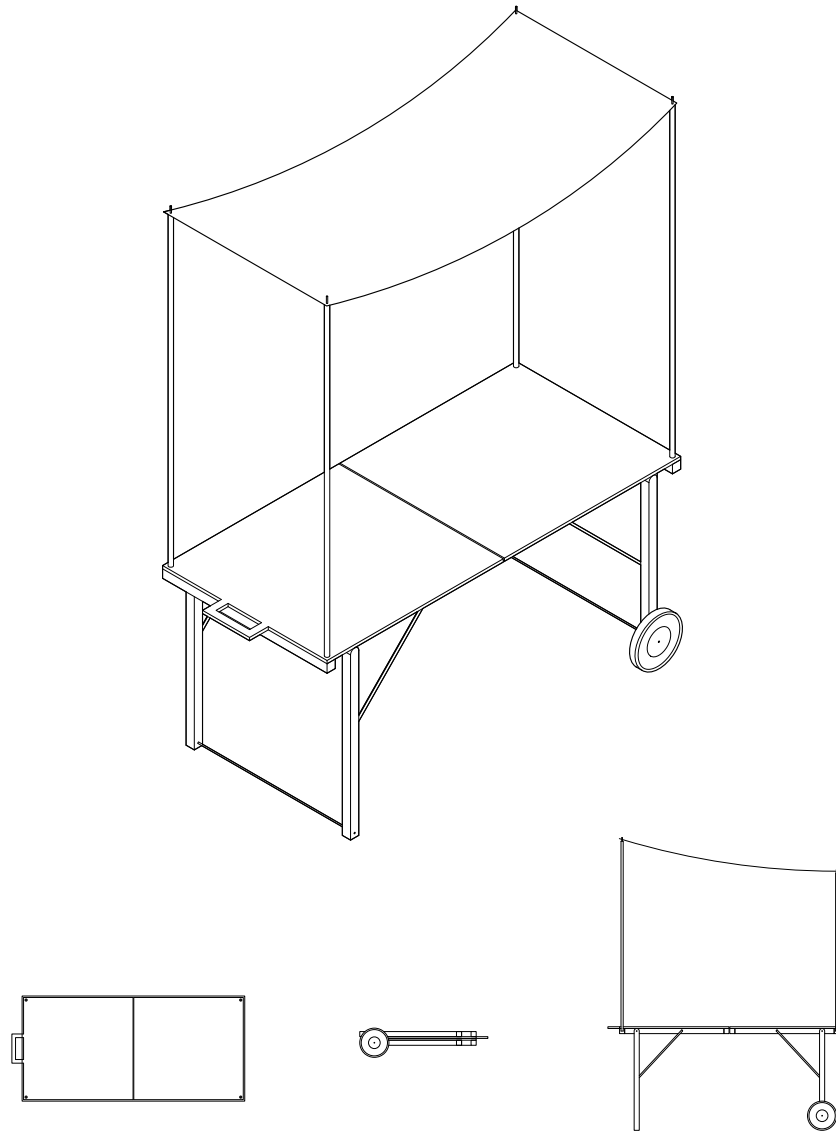
Jumper Goals

Create a pitch anytime anywhere with no more than a few jumpers. Shamelessly borrowed from the football mad children who play outside my kitchen window!



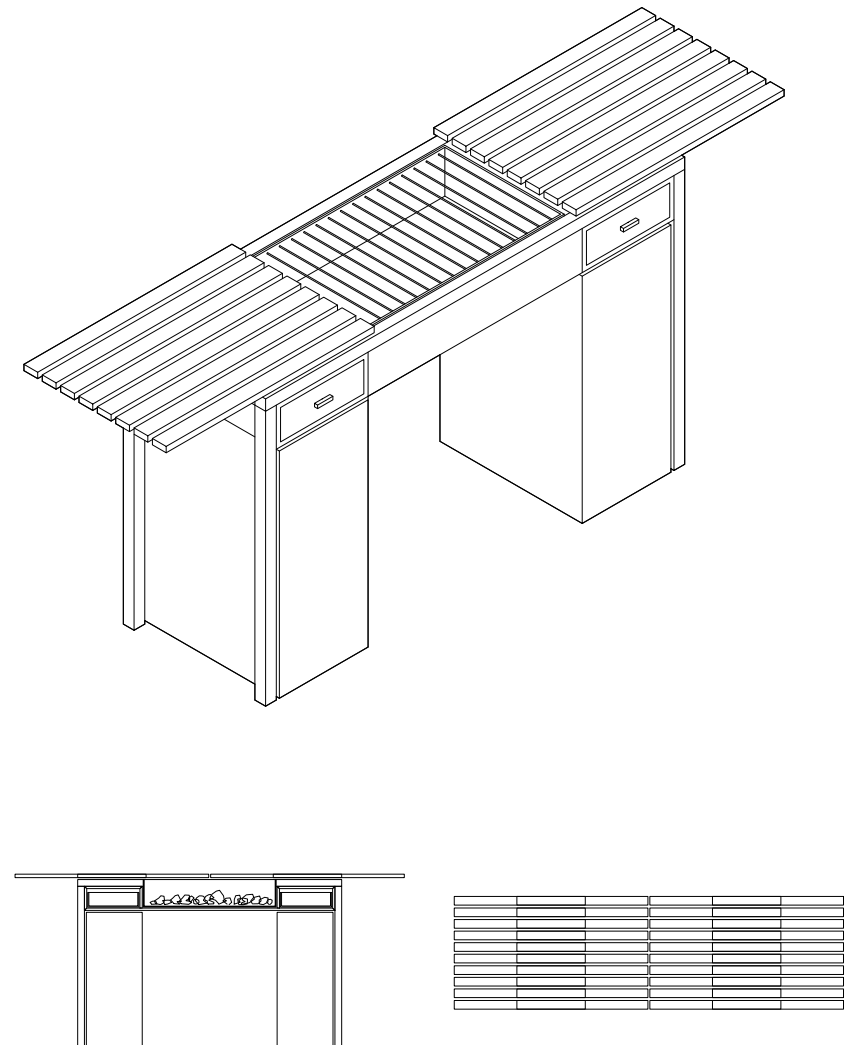
Jewellery Desk and Stall

The mobile desk and stall was inspired by Chloe, a local jewellery maker who designs and makes her own jewellery at home, and regularly attends local markets and fairs to sell her home-made pieces.



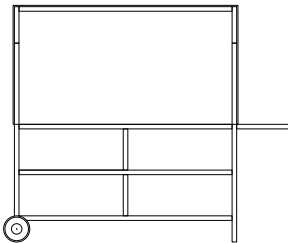
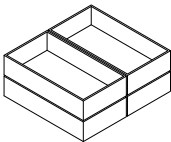
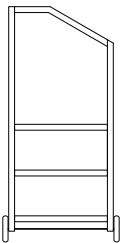
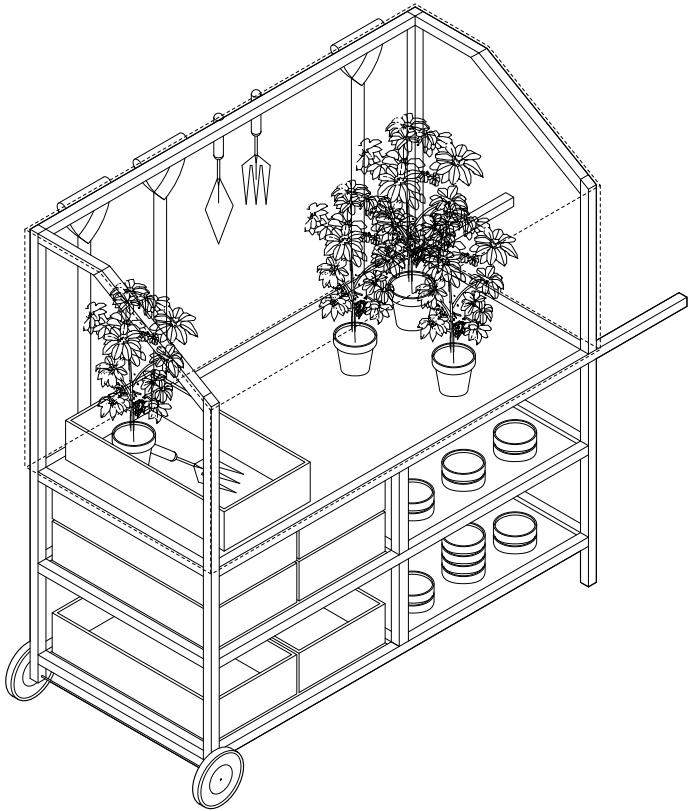
BBQ Table

In summer the smell of barbeques around Byker is unmissable, cooked out in public spaces they are a feature of Byker life. The BBQ table proposes replacing some of the public picnic tables with facilities for barbequing with friends and family so that more residents can enjoy the summer spirit. No doubt during winter they'll be commandeered to warm a few cold hands, and let's not mention bonfire night!



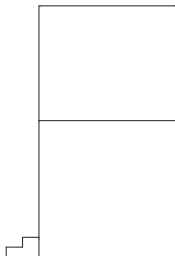
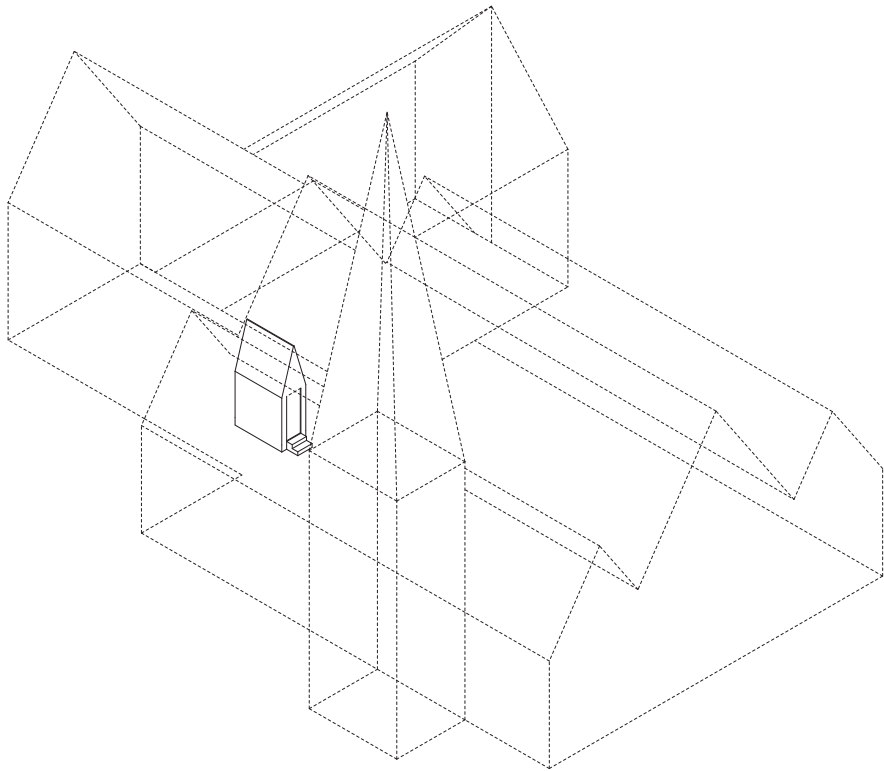
Potting Bench

The potting bench was designed after a conversation with Anna, a local resident who runs a community garden. Noticing all the neglected planters and gardens around Byker, Anna suggested a mobile bench that could be used to grow plants and then plant them out across the redevelopment, making use of the planters to grow flowers, fruit and vegetables.



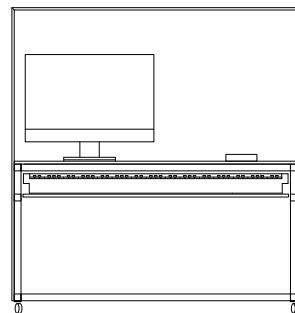
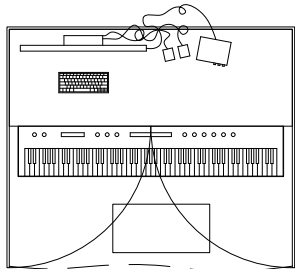
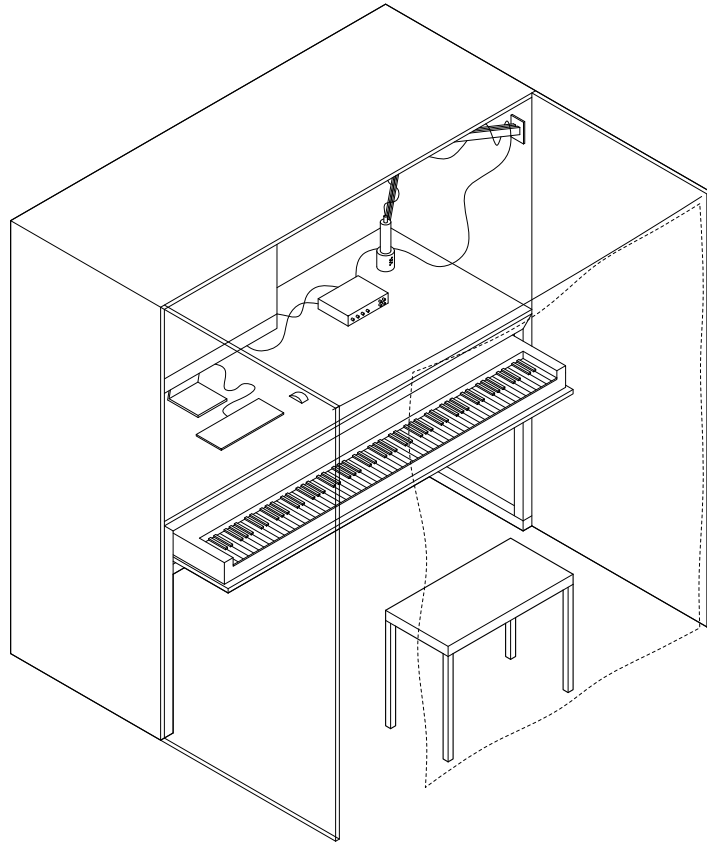
Prayer Chapel

To be located within St Michael's church, the prayer chapel was designed by Dan after a conversation with Phil the church priest. It is intended to offer residents a private and cosy space for quiet contemplation and reflective prayer within the church which currently lacks heating!



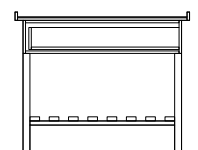
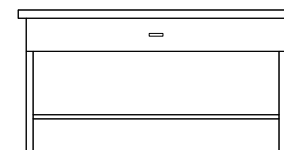
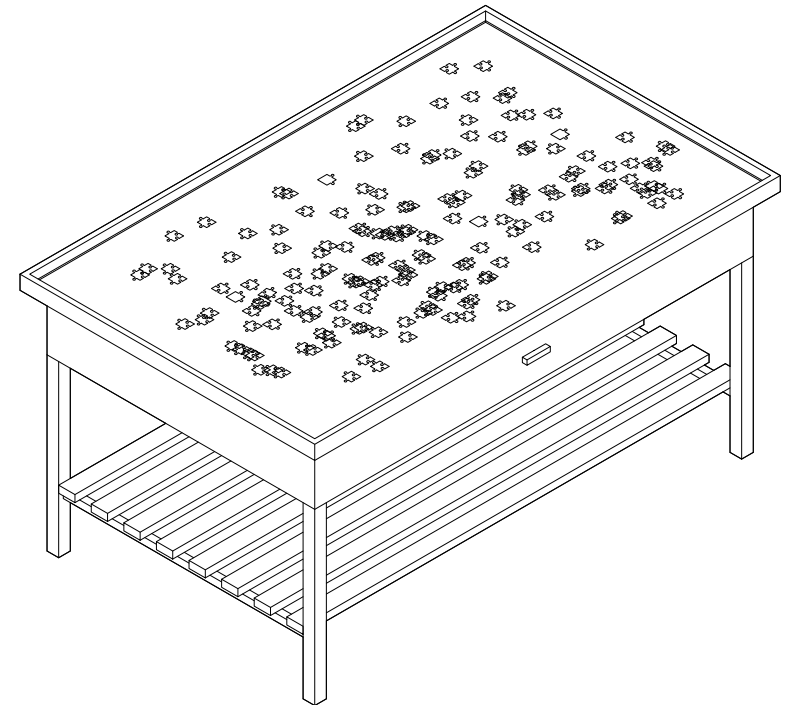
Recording Cabinet

The recording cabinet was designed to enable Jenny to pursue her passion of being a recording artist and record producer. Providing all of the necessary equipment, and able to be closed away when not in use, the cabinet is the ultimate home studio.



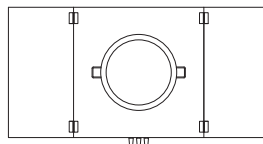
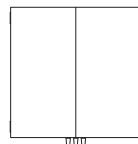
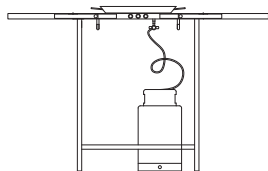
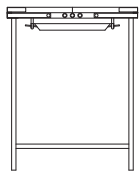
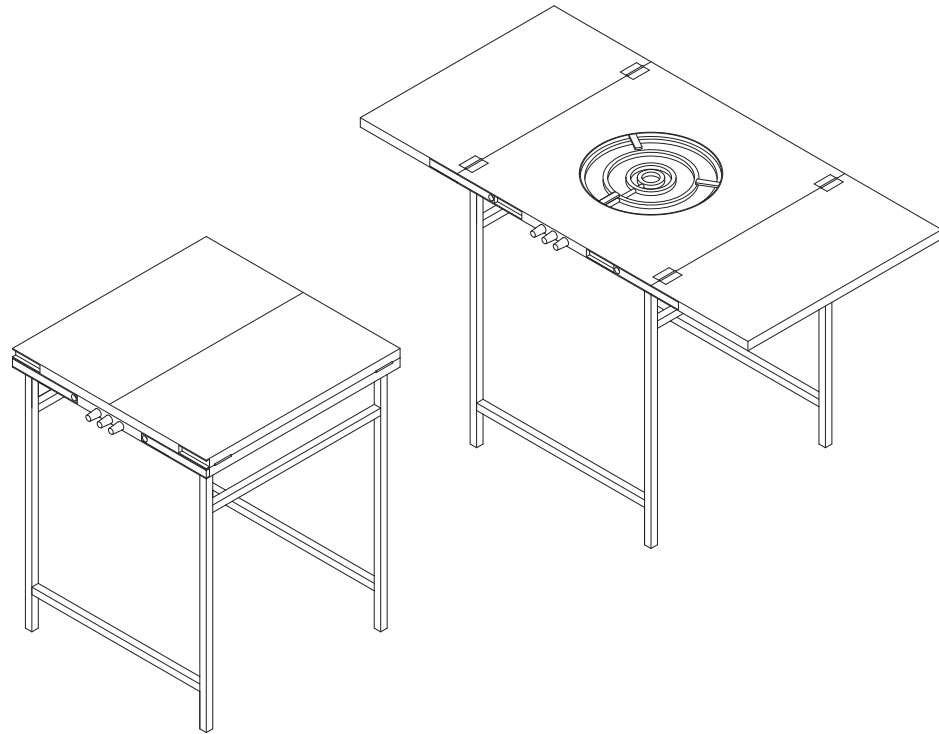
Jigsaw Table

A keen jigsaw puzzler, my neighbour John regularly has a half completed puzzle out on the coffee table. the jigsaw table provides space for puzzle storage, while a lip around the perimeter prevents your puzzle pieces from falling off the edge.



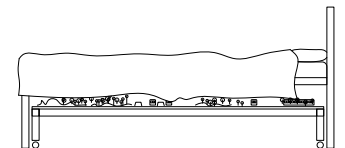
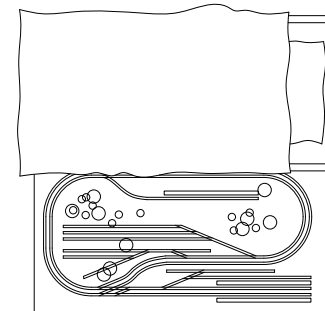
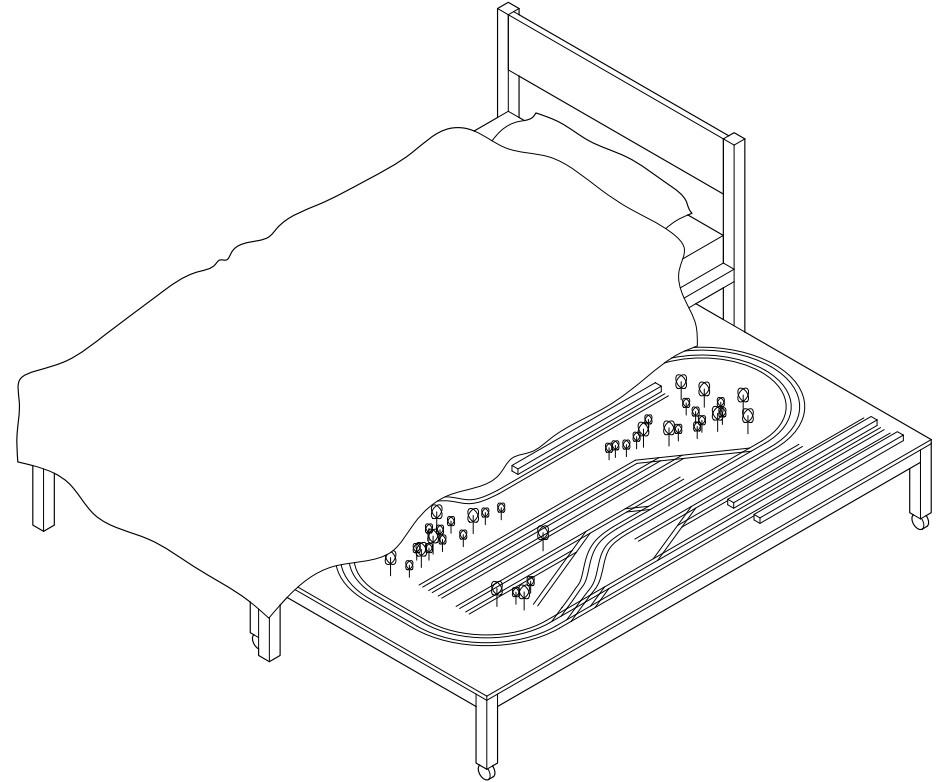
Paella Table

A large gas ring on this collapsable table provides space for a huge paella dish. It can also be used for large stews, biryani or any dish for a large meal of friends and family. Designed by local resident Dan Dyer.



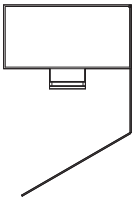
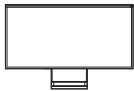
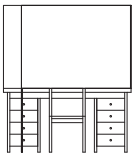
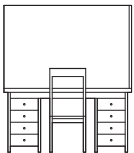
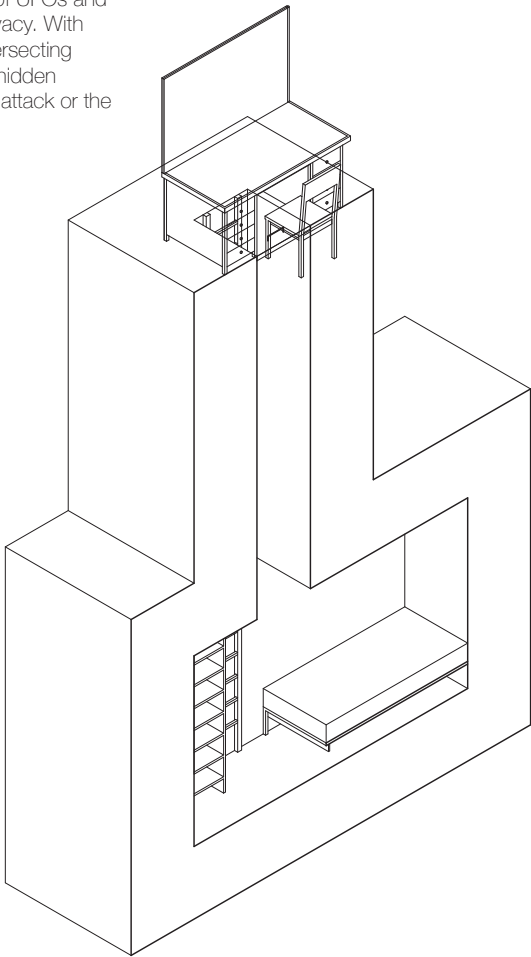
Hornby-trainset Bed

Mike's passion for trainspotting inspired this proposal for a hidden trainset. For those who lack the luxury of a loft, garage or spare bedroom, storing your trainset can be a problem. The train bed offers a solution, allowing you to keep the trainset set-up without marital tension. Just slide it away under the bed at night.



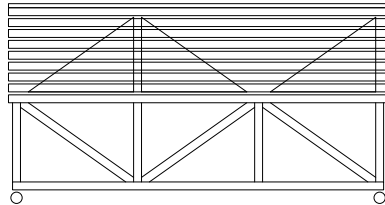
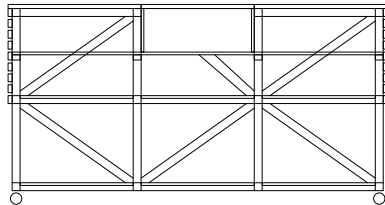
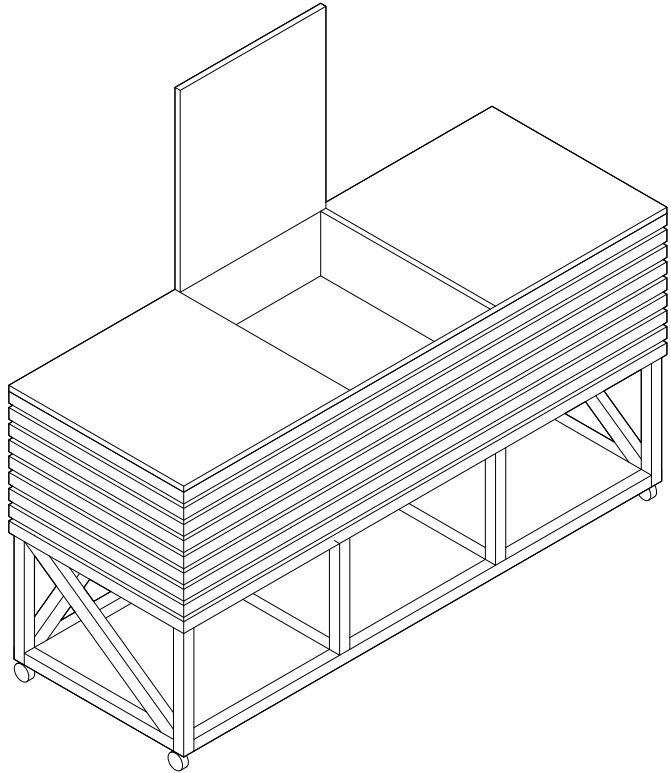
Conspiracy Desk

Who shot JFK? Which world leaders are part of the illuminati? Inspired by conspiratorial chat with Richard, Dan designed the conspiracy desk to provide a place to uncover the secrets of UFOs and the moon landing under a shroud of privacy. With ample display space for discovering intersecting information and hidden patterns, and a hidden chamber to keep you safe from nuclear attack or the end of the world.



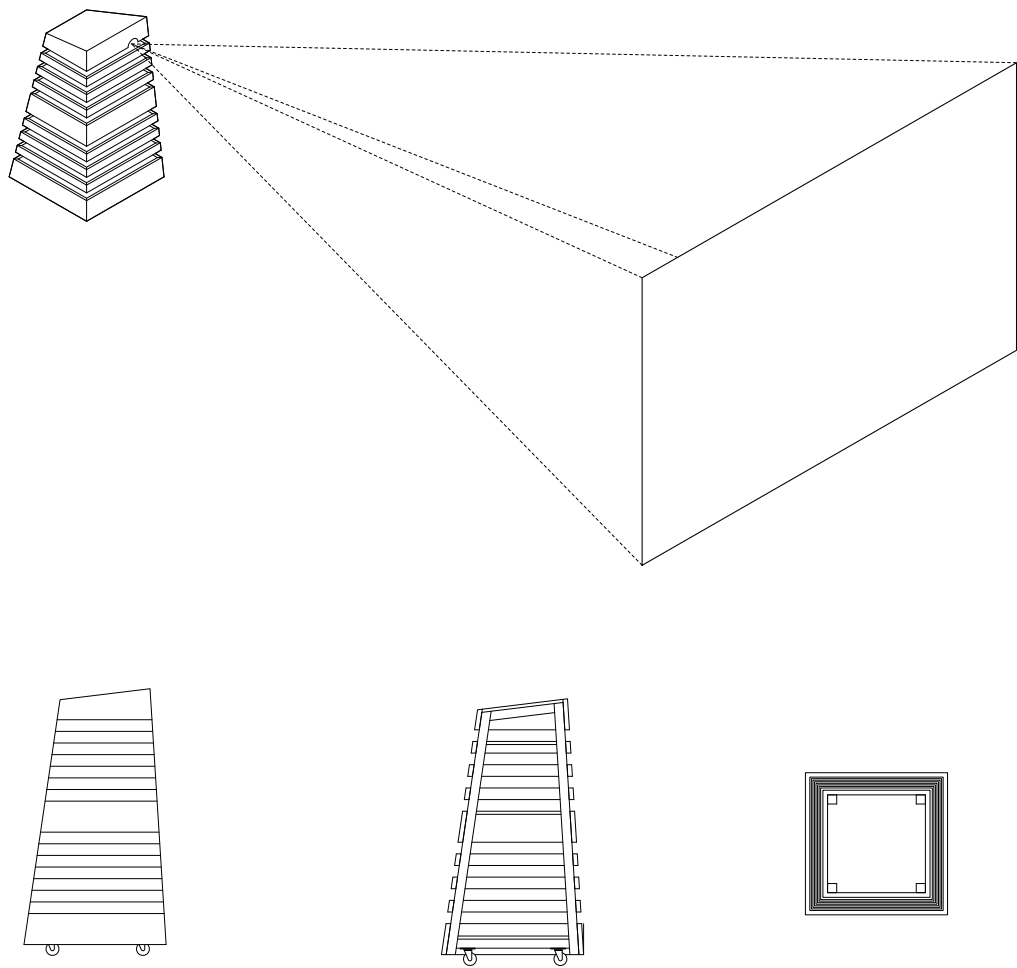
DJ Sideboard

Dan is a closet DJ, that is he DJs for an audience of 1 - himself at home. The DJ sideboard takes a classic piece of living room furniture and re-configures it with the necessary DJ equipment, with space for speakers, records and turntables. Now Dan can DJ at home to his heart content, all thanks to an innocuous sideboard.



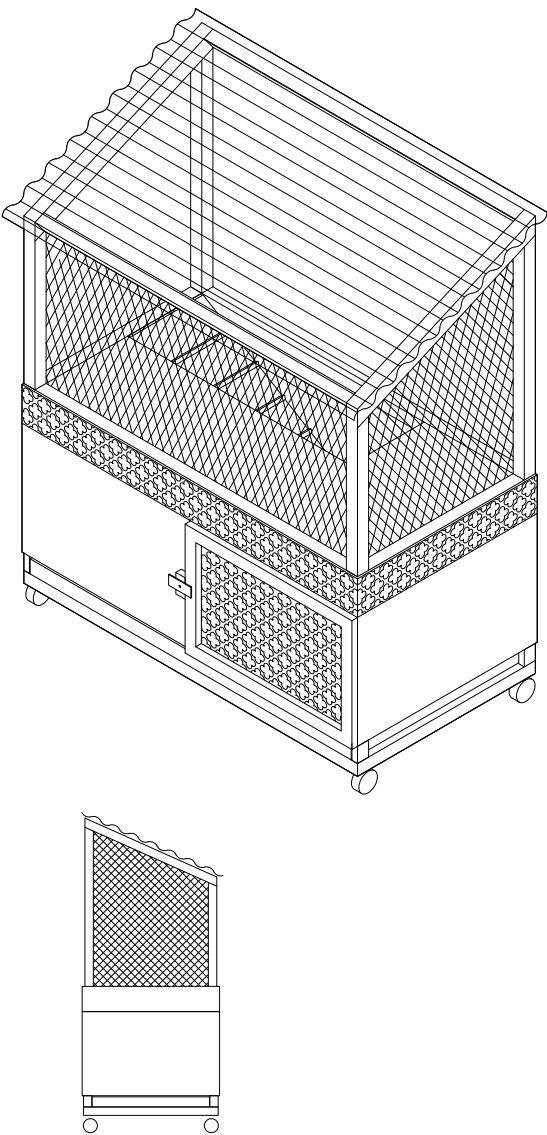
Film Dalek

The film dalek is inspired by Byker's lost cinemas, there used to be 7 in total before they closed one by one. Today there is no longer a local cinema. The film dalek was conceived after impassioned chats about films with Richard. Mobile, and hosting all the equipment necessary to screen films, the film dalek can be wheeled around Byker to create a mini cinema where ever it stops, just don't ask about the stairs...



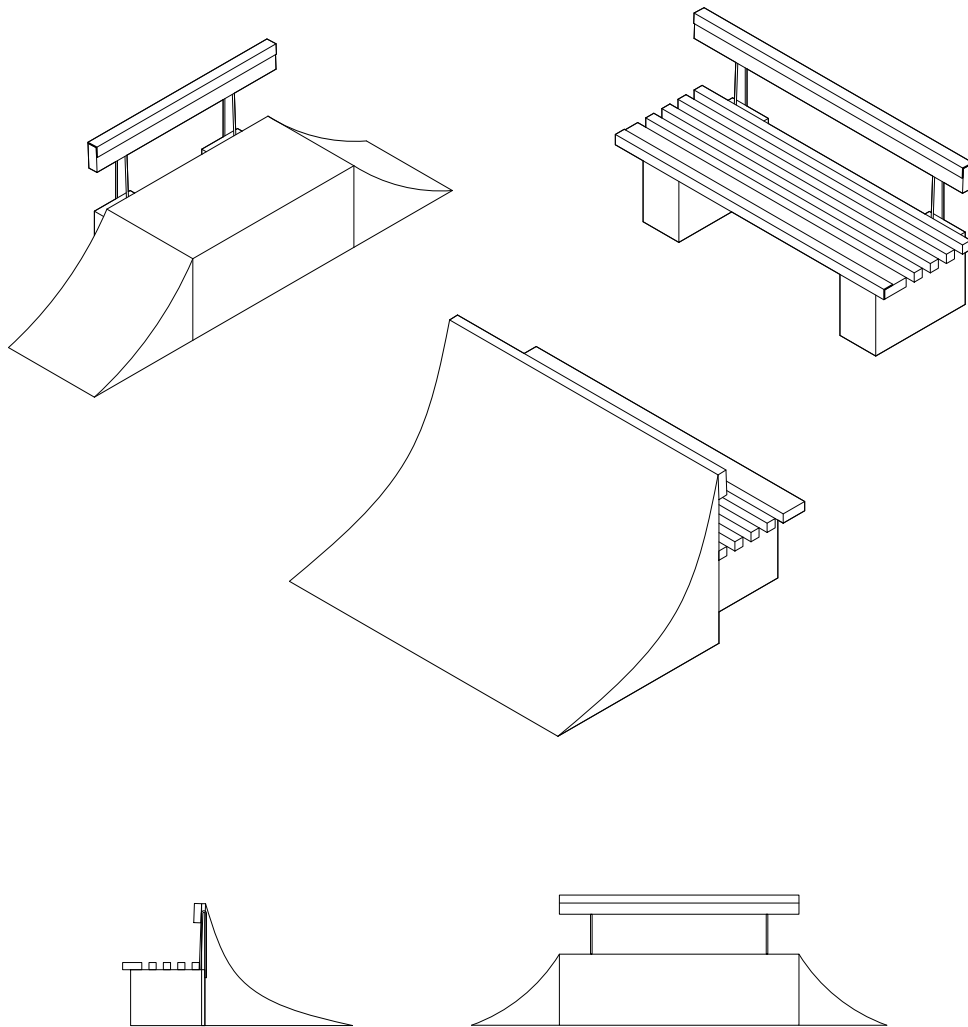
Rabbit Hutch

The rabbit hutch was designed for Jenny so she could keep a house rabbit. Inspired by the balconies on the Wall, the rabbit hutch comprises of two levels with an openable lid to aid cleaning. Two years after its construction, it was given to Rachel to keep house rabbits in her flat.



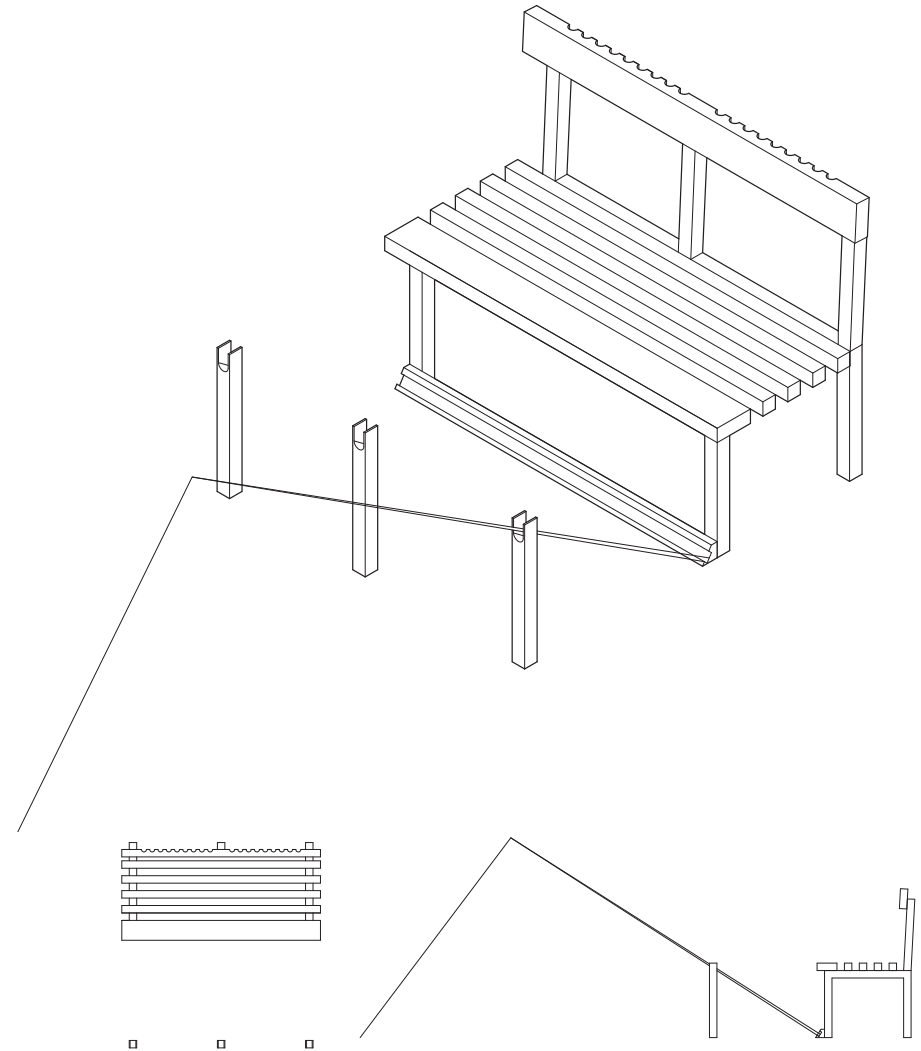
BMX/Skate Ramps

I first saw my neighbour Rob in a BMX film years before I moved to Byker, so imagine my surprise when I met him in our local corner shop shortly after moving in. Inspired by his skills and a favourite scene from Napoleon Dynamite, the ramps were designed to enable residents to convert benches into skate ramps. Causing the neighbours bother? Just find another bench.



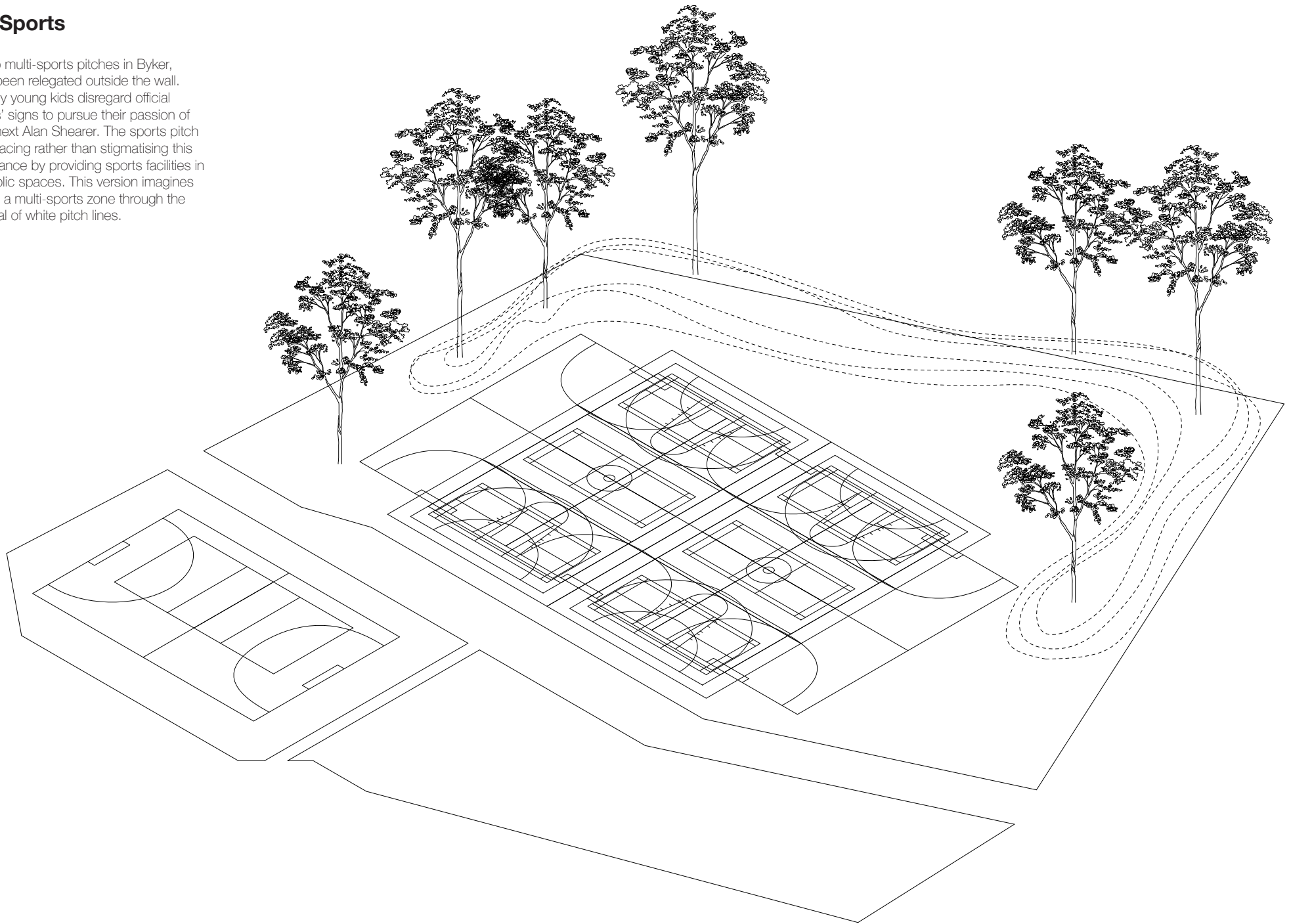
Fishing Bench

Fishing is a popular past-time in Byker, with its proximity to the Tyne, many an hour is spent with line in the water. Designed by Dan, the fishing bench offers a place of comfort from which to fish. Set-up your rod, and settle in for a few hours, watch for the bite.

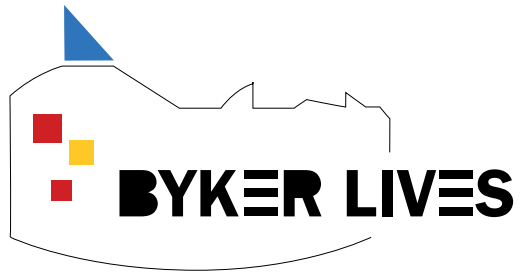


Outdoor Sports

There are a two multi-sports pitches in Byker, but both have been relegated outside the wall. As a result many young kids disregard official 'No Ball Games' signs to pursue their passion of becoming the next Alan Shearer. The sports pitch proposes embracing rather than stigmatising this youthful exuberance by providing sports facilities in appropriate public spaces. This version imagines Priory Green as a multi-sports zone through the simple additional of white pitch lines.



BYKER





Byker Lives began as a way to celebrate the architectural heritage and community life of the Grade II* listed Byker redevelopment in Newcastle, through the creation of a community history archive.

Initiated by residents, supported by Northern Architecture and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, we have gathered a wide range of material about the history of the Byker area, from prior to the 1970s redevelopment, through to the present day. Many of the photographs, oral histories and artifacts contained in the archive have been donated by residents past and present, and provide valuable insights into life in this unique part of the city.

Material from this archive is being uploaded to our website, where it is accessible to everyone. However, in addition to the material available on the internet, we have copies of journal articles, architectural drawings and films which we are unable to upload, but can be viewed on-site in Byker.

The archive offers a rich source of material for those interested in the fascinating history of Byker and the recent housing development, whether from personal or professional interest.

As well as reflecting on the past, we aim to use this valuable archive to inspire ideas and inform debate about Byker's future.

As a part of the project we have produced a 'Discovery Walk', which offers residents and visitors an introduction to the history of the redevelopment by way of a self-guided walking tour.

We are always keen to share our passion for Byker, so if you'd like to learn more, please feel free to contact us. We are also looking for new supporters to help us manage and promote the archive, if you share our interest then do get in touch:

Email: bykerlives@gmail.com

Tel: 07515110968

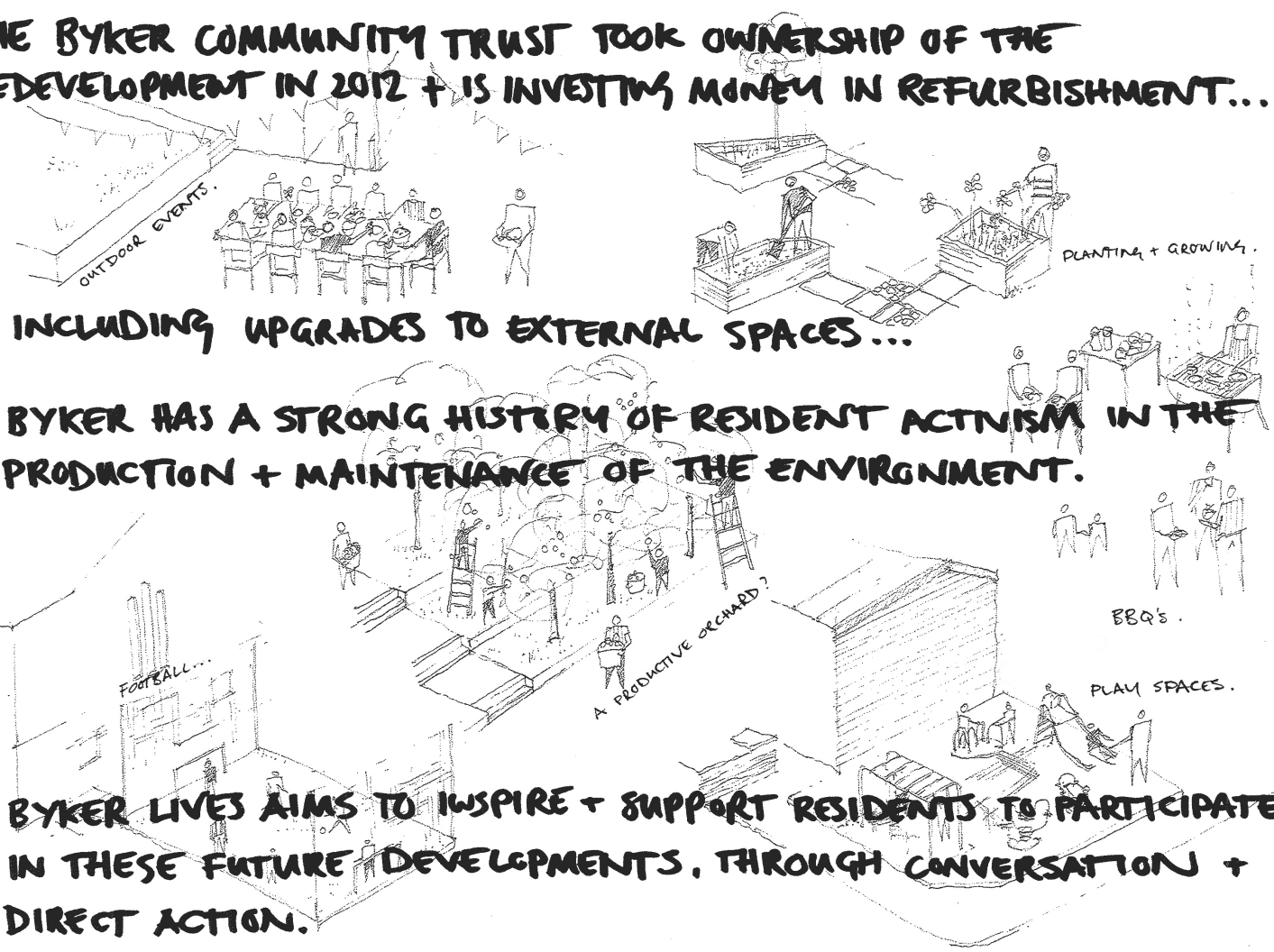
Web: www.bykerlives.com

THE BYKER COMMUNITY TRUST TOOK OWNERSHIP OF THE REDEVELOPMENT IN 2012 + IS INVESTING MONEY IN REFURBISHMENT...

... INCLUDING UPGRADES TO EXTERNAL SPACES ...

... BYKER HAS A STRONG HISTORY OF RESIDENT ACTIVISM IN THE PRODUCTION + MAINTENANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

... BYKER LIVES AIMS TO INSPIRE + SUPPORT RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS, THROUGH CONVERSATION + DIRECT ACTION.

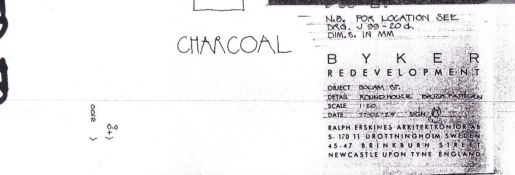
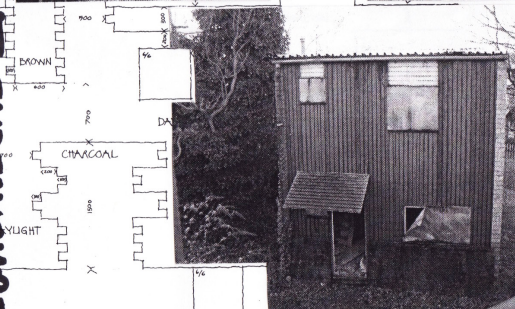
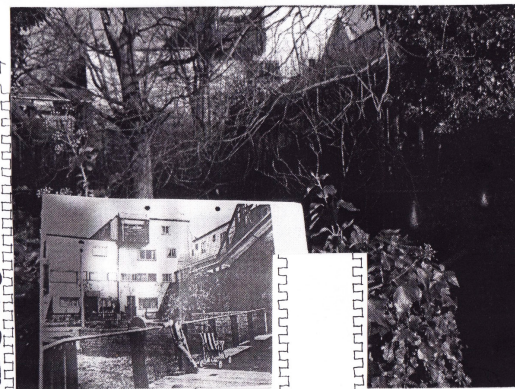


THE CREATION OF A LANDSCAPE...



BOLAM COMBE FELL INTO BAD DISREPAIR + WAS SCHEDULED FOR DEMOLITION...

... A GROUP OF RESIDENTS ENDEAVOURED TO MAINTAIN THE AREA + OBJECTED TO THE DEMOLITION.



THE ARCHITECTS WORKED WITH LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS TO CREATE A



HUGE RANGE OF PUBLIC SPACES WITH LOTS OF VARIED PLANTS



BEFORE BYKER WAS REDEVELOPED IN THE 1970s THE ONLY TREES WERE IN THE CHURCHYARD...

A black and white aerial photograph of a residential street in Byker, Newcastle. The street is lined with terraced houses, and a white van is parked on the left. In the background, a churchyard is visible on a hill, with a large tree in the center. The text at the top of the image reads: "BEFORE BYKER WAS REDEVELOPED IN THE 1970s THE ONLY TREES WERE IN THE CHURCHYARD..."

... GROUND TO THE VARIOUS RELEVANT LEVELS. ...
+ INCLUDED A NEW LANDSCAPED COURTYARD.
 SK 17-03-26
 B Y K R
 REDEVELOPMENT
 DETAIL: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

SECTIONS OF THE 'MOAT' AROUND BOLAM COYNE.

GRANTED GRADE II * LISTED STATUS IN 2007...

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

BABY STREET BATHHOUSE

FEAR OF CRIME LED TO THE
REMOVAL OF OVERGROWN
PLANTS + SHRUBS
IN 2000S...
+ THE INSTALLATION OF CCTV.

BABYGATE 1980S
↓
2014

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THE INSTALLATION OF CCTV.

BABYGATE 1980s
↓
2014

A hand-drawn map of a village layout. The map features several buildings and roads. The buildings are labeled: DUNN TERRACE, KENDALL, THE WALL, CARTWELL, SCAPE LANE, GORDON, ARCHITECT, CHURCH, CLYDEDALE, BOLAN, AYTON, JANET CROFT, and HARBOTTLE. The roads are labeled: DUNN ROAD, BOLAN ROAD, CLYDEDALE ROAD, and HARBOTTLE ROAD. The map is drawn on a grid of dashed lines.

see ground at level

2

see above, if possible show the floor line 1/2 in. high at least.

see base building column and the (columns) (columns) 1/2 in. high at least.

ELEVATION

Process - Screen print black halftone, callmark sh.
and white background for glove numbering.
Hand plate with column and glove.
Apply white lettering and arrows in "Seftonal
Knee" to finished item for woven and re-woven.

* N6

NEW-USE NETWORK IS BE APPROVED BY
BIAH RESOURCES OFFICE BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION.

This is a hand-drawn architectural floor plan of a large, irregular building complex, likely a military installation or industrial site. The plan shows multiple interconnected structures, courtyards, and surrounding terrain. Key features include a large central rectangular building with internal divisions, a long narrow structure to the right, and a small square building at the top right. The drawing is annotated with numerous measurements (e.g., 100', 50', 25') and labels (e.g., 'Main building', 'Courtyard', 'Gate'). The terrain is indicated by wavy lines on the left and top edges.

[illegible]

B Y K E R
 REDEVELOPMENT
 DIRECT: JEFF LAMMORGAN 1850/A
 STEVE ROSEGRADEN - DORIN TERRACE
 ED SIGN *Jeffery R. R.*
 ALPH ERKINS ARKITEKONTOR AB
 170-31 DROTNINGHOLM SVEDEN
 S-47 BRINKHURN - STREET
 ... AND

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

SEED IN CONNECTION WITH
R40-20/1 & R40-20/2

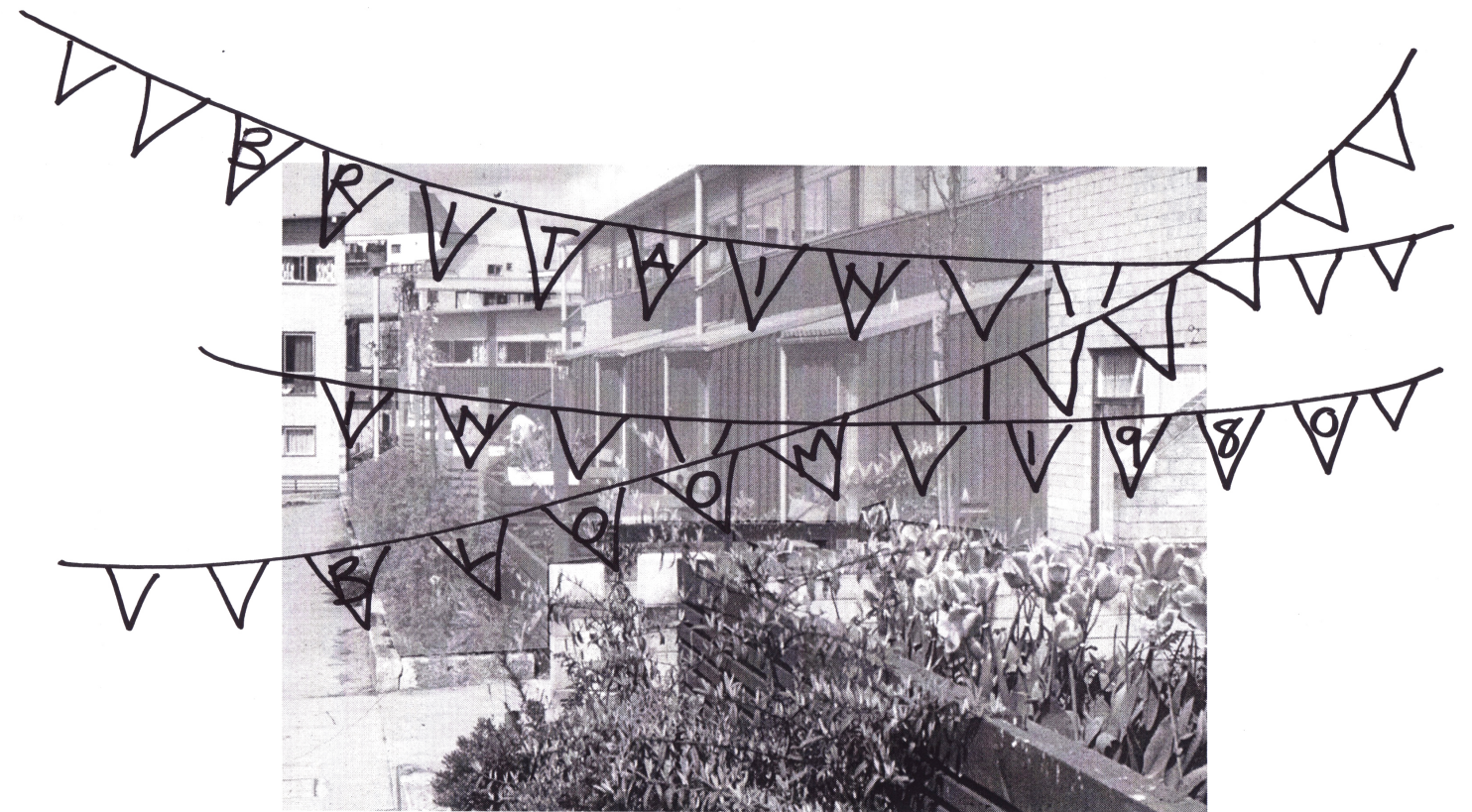
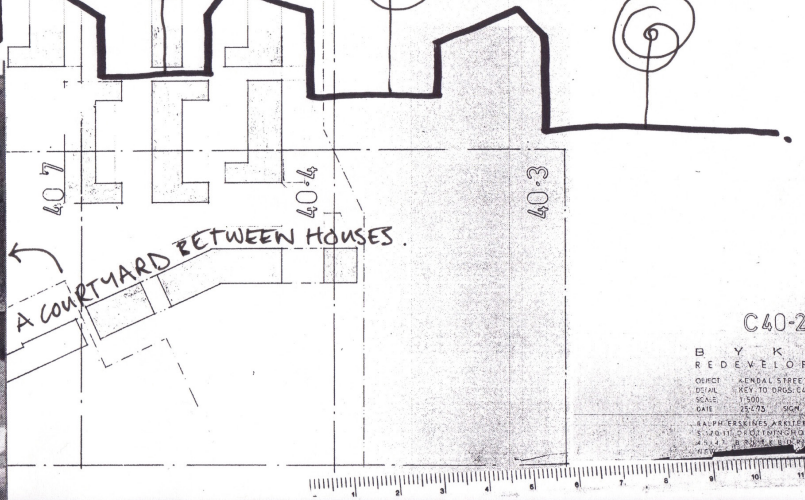
FG 40-20/3

B Y K E R
REDEVELOPMENT

OBJECT *GLASS ST/ANDER RD*
DETAIL *OVERHALL WORKS - FIVE CUS*
SCALE *1/100* *RESTROOM COVER*
DATE *14.10.75* *SIGN T-14*

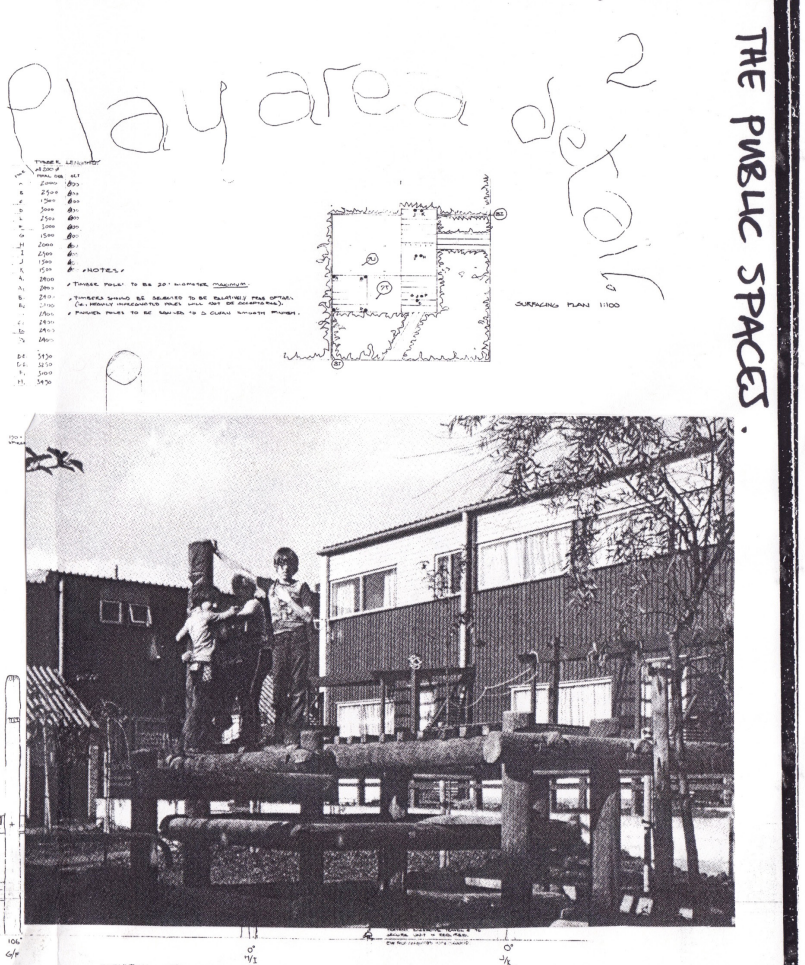
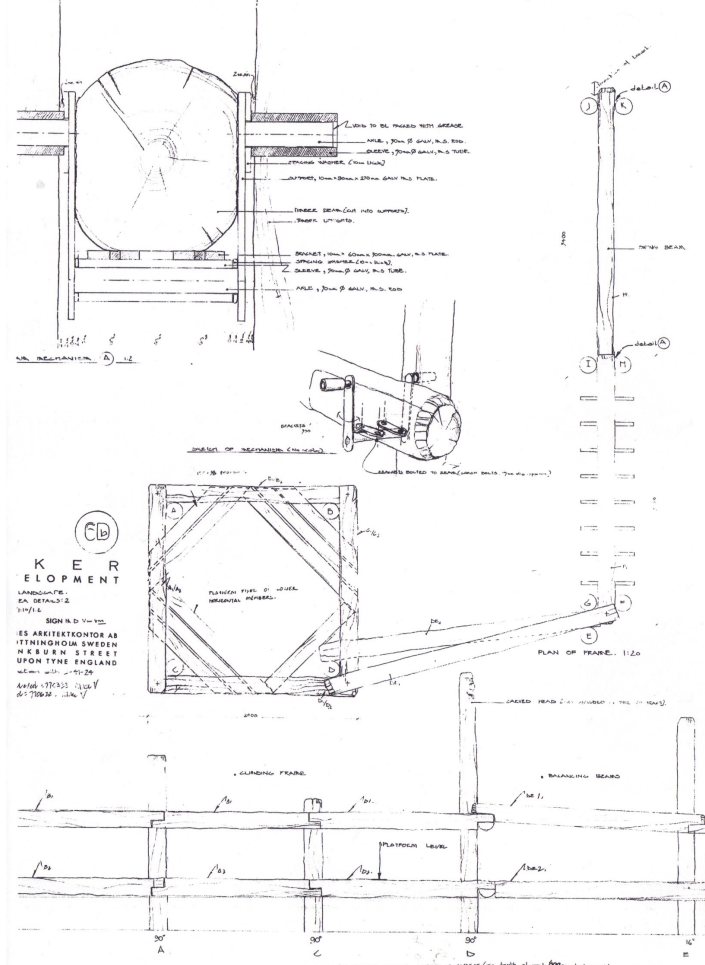
RALPH ERKINSKIE ARCHITECTKONTOR AB
S. 370 11 DROTNINGHOLM SWEDEN
43-47 BRINKBURN STREET
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE ENGLAND

THE WALL SHELTERS BYKER FROM COLD
NORTHERN WINDS CREATING A WARMER
MICRO CLIMATE AMONGST THE HOUSES...

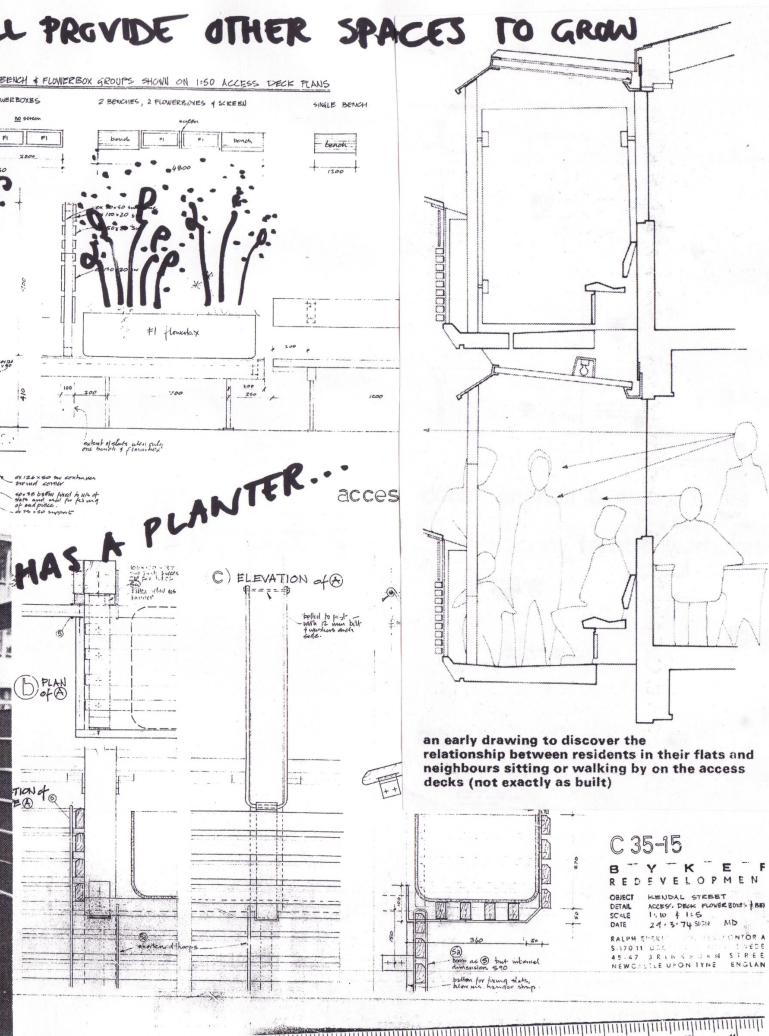
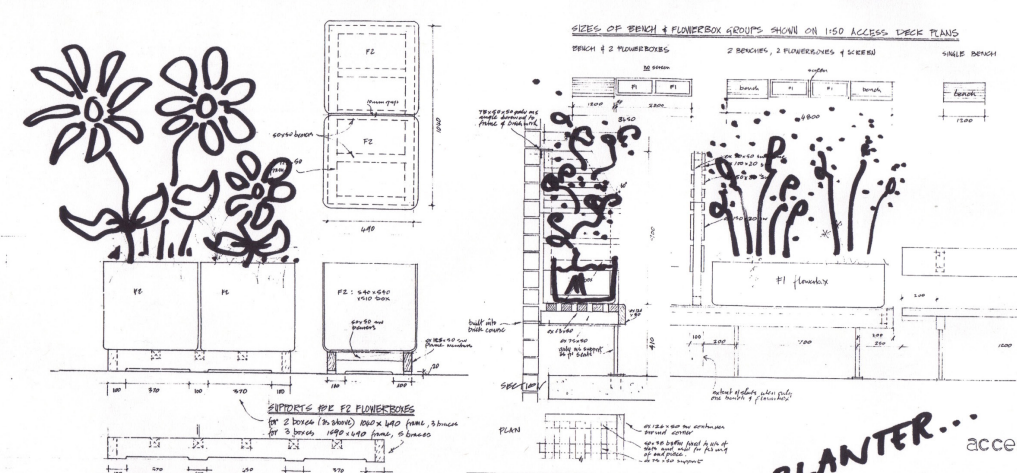


THE ENTHUSIASM FOR GARDENING WAS SO
HIGH THAT BYKER WON 'BEST KEPT VILLAGE'
IN A NATIONAL 'BRITAIN IN BLOOM' COMPETITION IN 1980

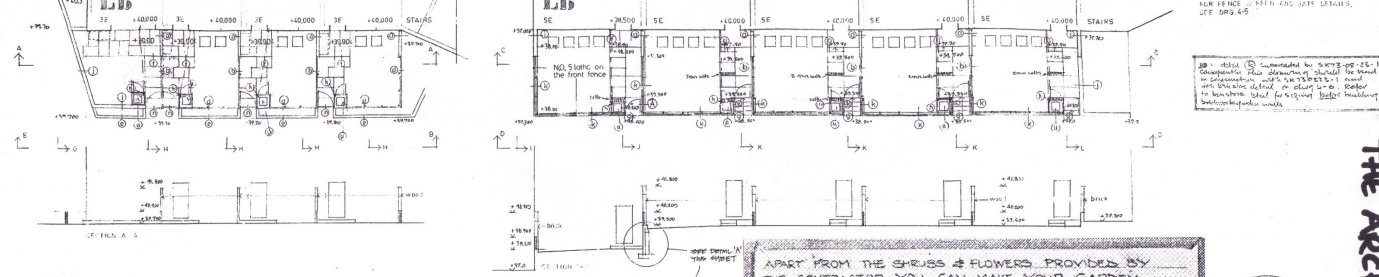
THE ARCHITECTS DESIGNED PLAY FEATURES FOR THE KIDS TO PLAY ON IN
THE PUBLIC SPACES.



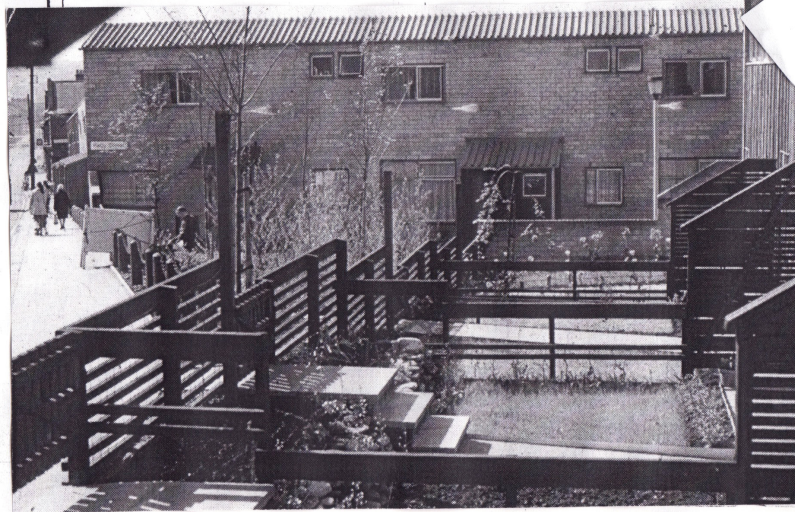
FLOWER BOXES + PLANTERS IN THE WALL PROVIDE OTHER SPACES TO GROW



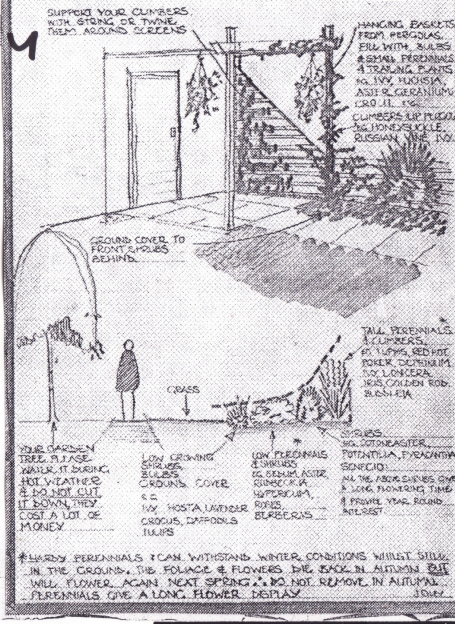
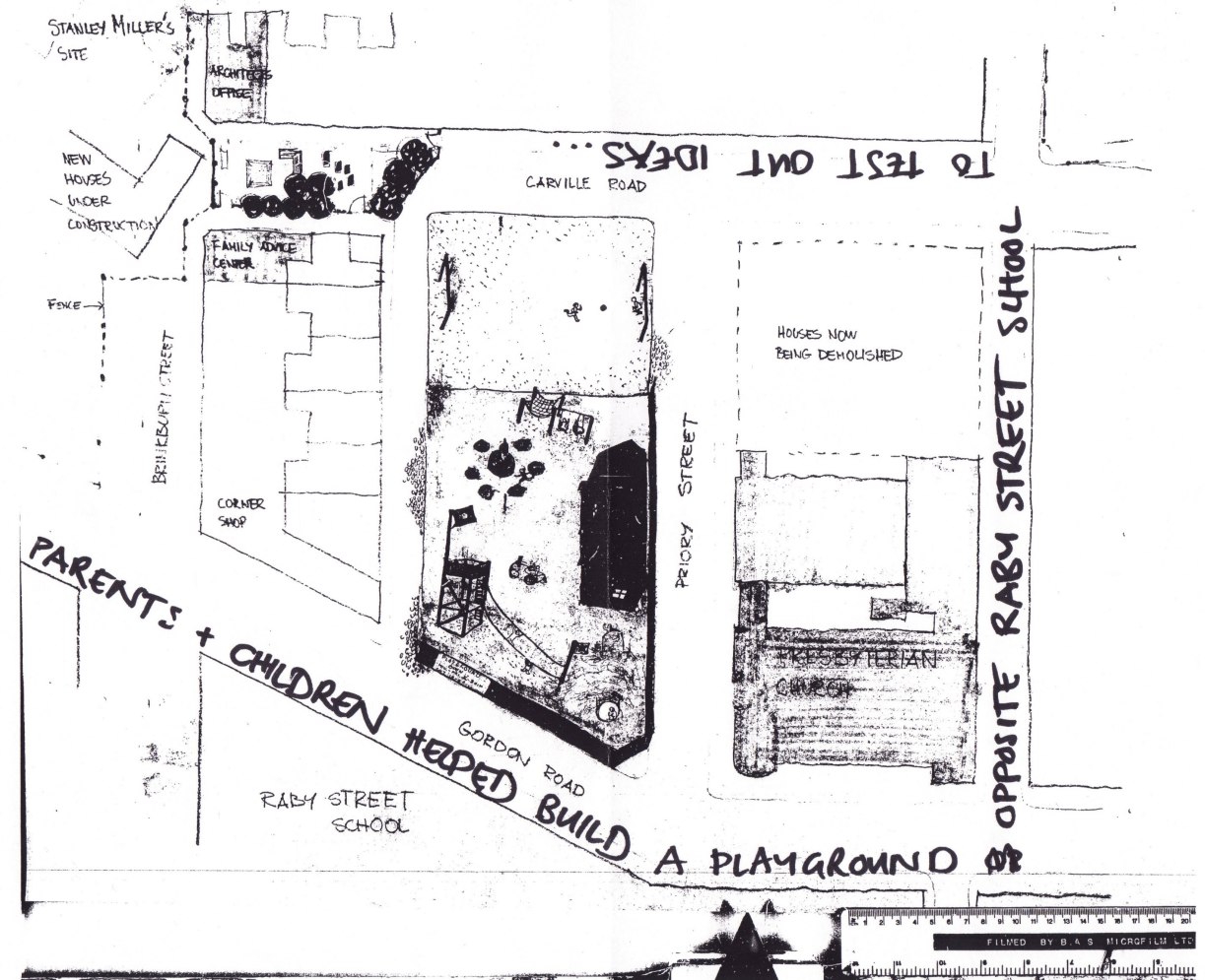
THE OLD TERRACED HOUSES IN BYKER ONLY HAD YARDS BUT THE MAJORITY OF HOUSES IN THE REDEVELOPMENT WERE GIVEN GARDENS.



TO GET RESIDENTS STARTED WITH THEIR NEW HOBBY
THEY WERE GIVEN PLANTS TO GROW.



APART FROM THE SHRUBS & FLOWERS PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTOR YOU CAN MAKE YOUR GARDEN MORE BEAUTIFUL BY SOME SIMPLE ADDITIONS.

[illegible]

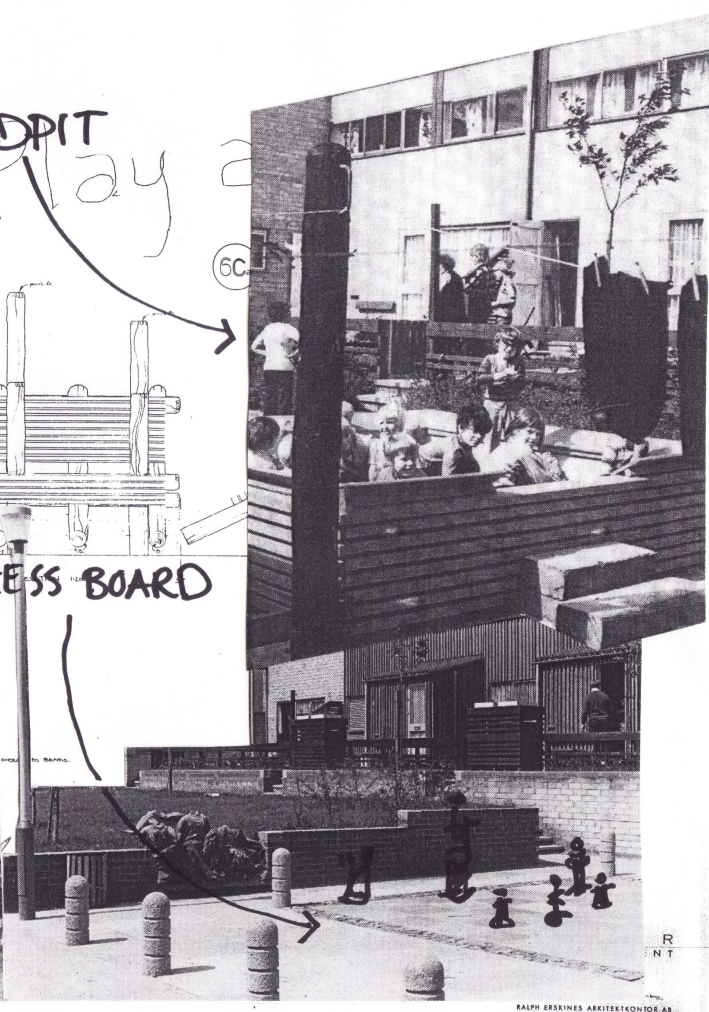
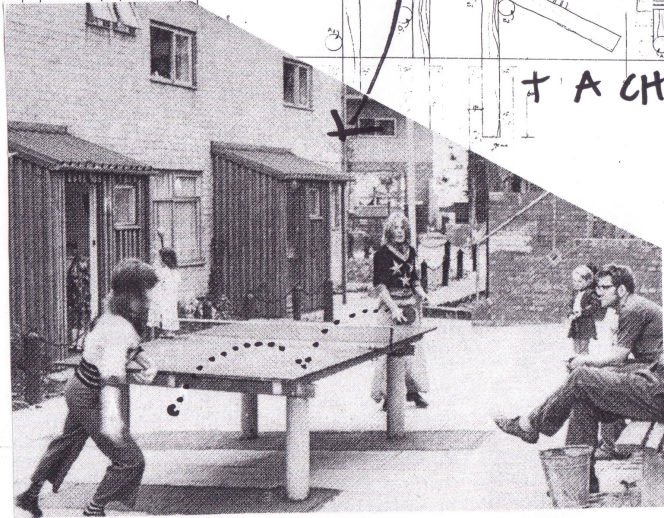
OTHER FEATURES INCLUDED...

A TABLE- TENNIS TABLE.

A SANDPIT

Play 2

+ A CHESS BOARD



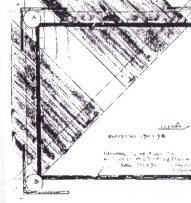
RALPH ERKINER ARCHITECTS
6, 10 & 11 BROTHINGHAM STREET
GLASGOW G1 1 1L

BUT NOT EVERYONE WAS HAPPY....

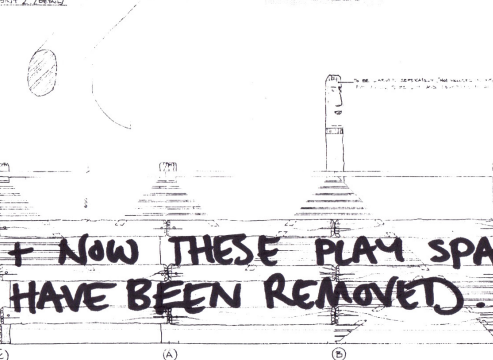


THE PING (THAT WENT)
A stone as big as my ear is to the ground I still cannot determine (do I want to) who was responsible for the illicit removal of the table tennis top. However I suppose while it was a good idea, it was seemingly a bad one because while solving one problem you create another. It would have been a good idea for the installers to have consulted the nearest residents first, who no doubt suffered some discomfort by the yobs who misused this amenity, before erecting it. We venture to say thought we don't condone the illegal removal of anything placed on our new estate. There are democratic ways of doing

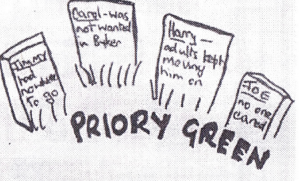
EXTRACTS FROM BUKER PHOENIX



this.



+ NOW THESE PLAY SPACES HAVE BEEN REMOVED....



PRIORY GREEN
By virtue of a petition to Councillor Mrs. Collins and Councillor Mrs. Russell from some of the residents of the Priory Green Area a meeting was held at Baby Street School on Tuesday, 17th February, 1976 to discuss this Stonehengeian Monstrosity. As it was described by some residents although in a more proletarian form and the removal of the 'high rise' swing poles after a brief harangue it could hardly be termed a discussion, a proposal (without a seconder), that the stones be removed and a fence erected was carried by a majority of 18-4.

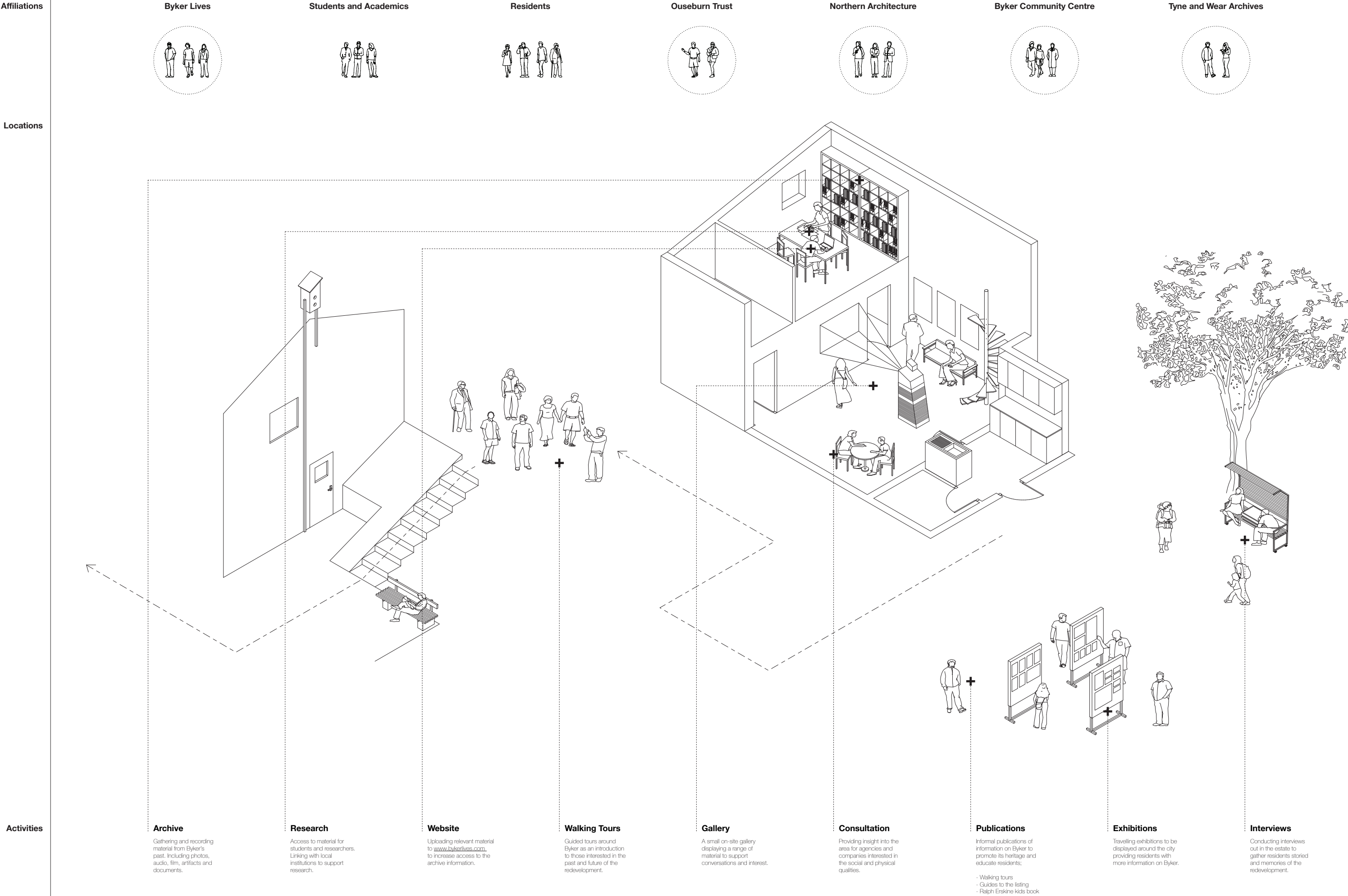
It was also decided by common consent that the huge poles be dispensed with for a more conventional type of swing. The salient point was that the stones were unsafe for children and that they would come to grief and injure themselves by falling. We wonder if the petitioners were really sincere about the children's welfare or did they really not want the bairns playing near their homes. It appeared that the majority at the meeting no longer had children living with them and was it a coincidence that the only families living in Priory Green were not invited to sign the petition after the meeting our conclusions were:

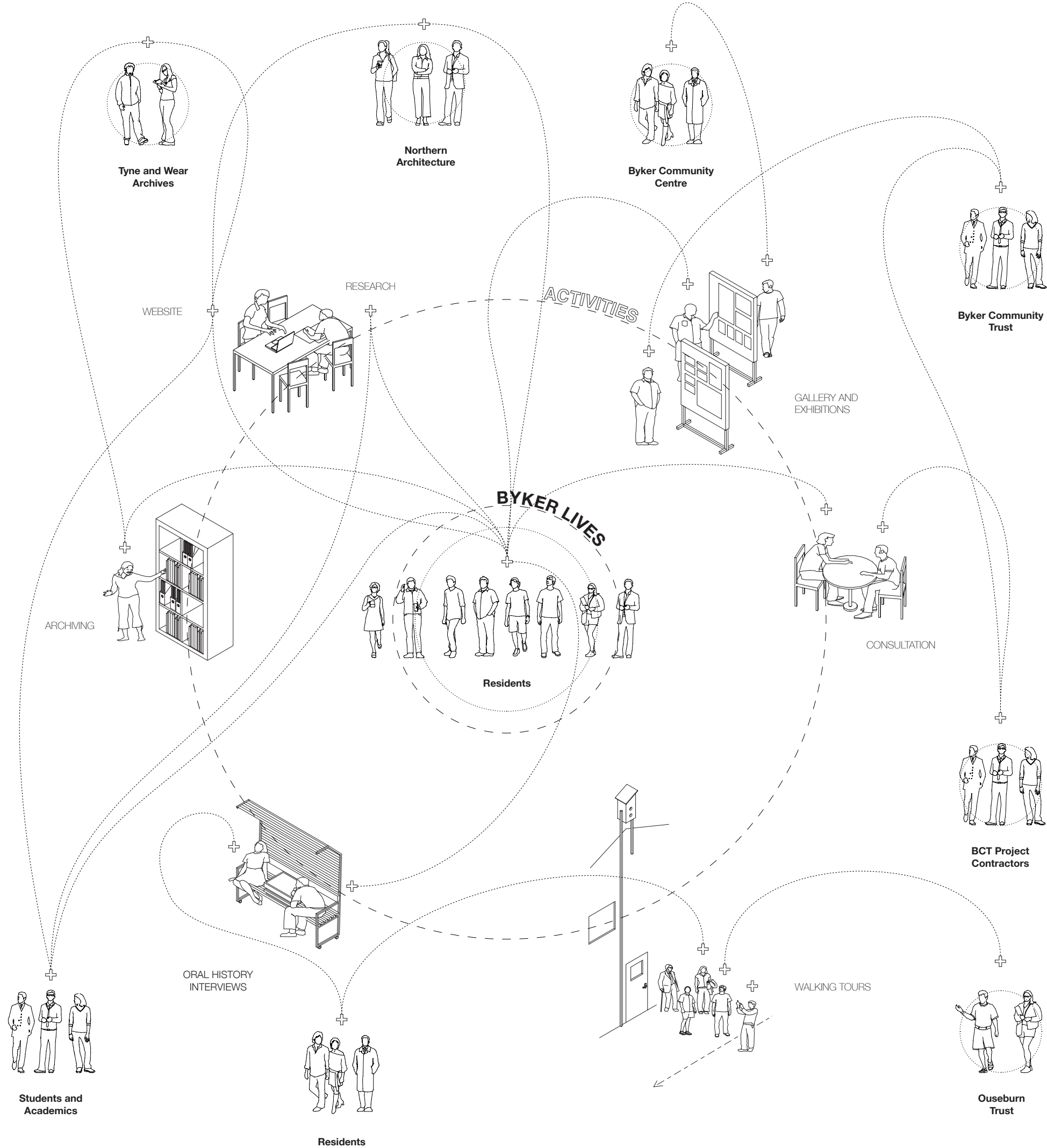
1. Consultation ought to have taken place with the residents regarding the layout before a lot of money was spent laying the stones.
2. Future petitions could arise if the replacement fence is not to the liking of the residents or the wrong colour and so on ad infinitum.

BY K. E. R
REDEVELOPMENT

OBJECT: PLAY AREA, DESIGN - J. K. E. R.
SCALE: 1/2500
DATE: 15.10.76
SIGN: M. K. V. M. M.
RALPH ERKINER ARCHITECTS
6, 10 & 11 BROTHINGHAM STREET
GLASGOW G1 1 1L

BYKER LIVES





MAKING BYKER

Hobby Agencies: Byker Lives

MEN'S SHED

Affiliations

St Michael's

Residents

Joiner

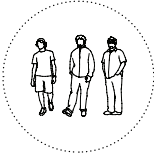
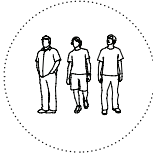
Avondale House

Byker Lives

Byker Community Trust

Under the Bridge Workshop

Locations



Activities

St Michael's Project

Construction of a semi-permanent timber structure to create a heated and lit space within St Michael's church.

Public Space Maintenance

Joinery skills gained through the St Michael's project could be used to build new pieces of furniture in public spaces.

Social Support

Building projects and learning new skills provides a way for men to mentor and related to one another sociably.

Construction Skills

Elements of the St Michael's project could be constructed by residents to teach building and joinery skills

Avondale House

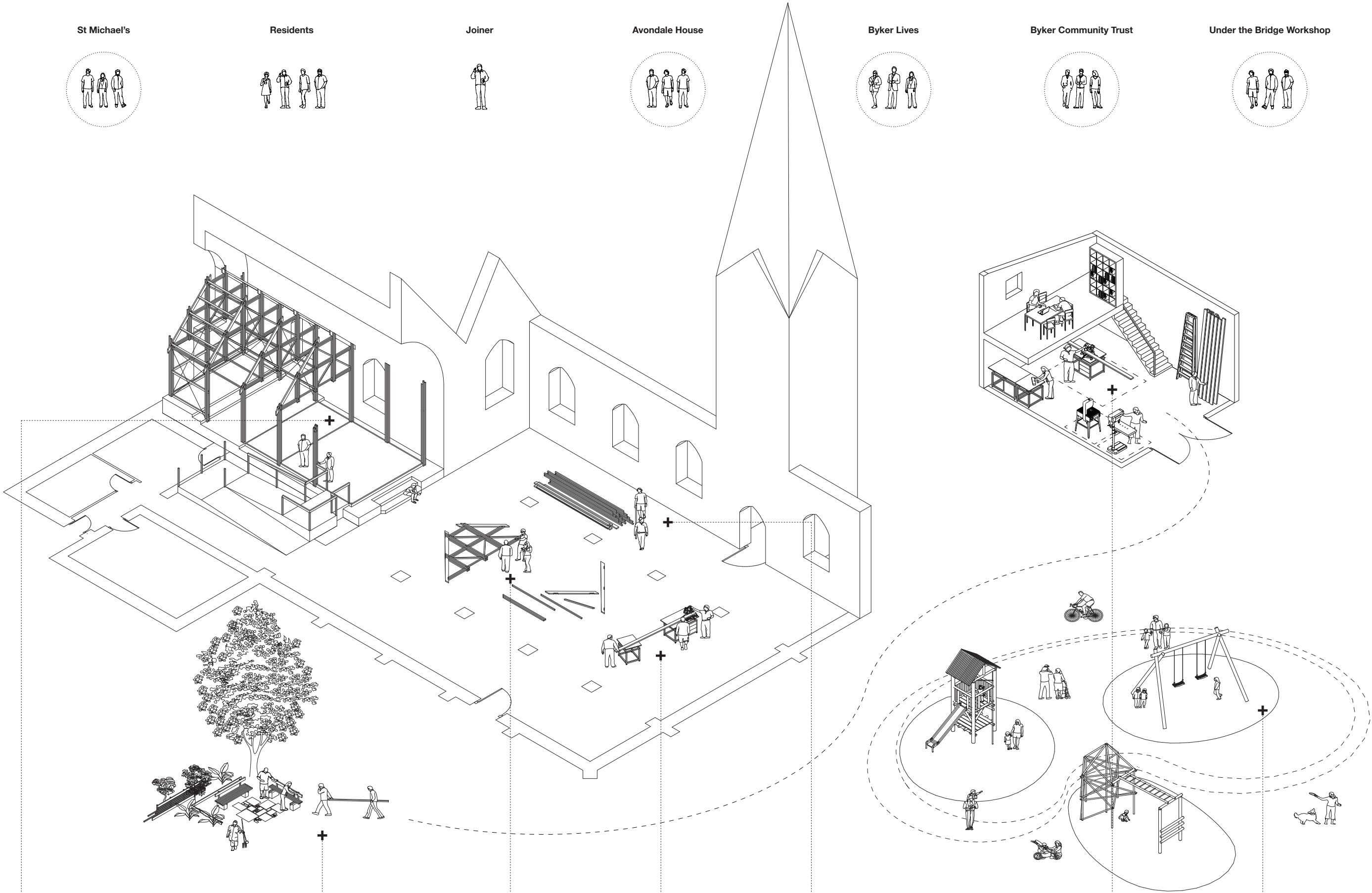
Construction projects offer a way for army veterans at Avondale House to share skills and engage with the community.

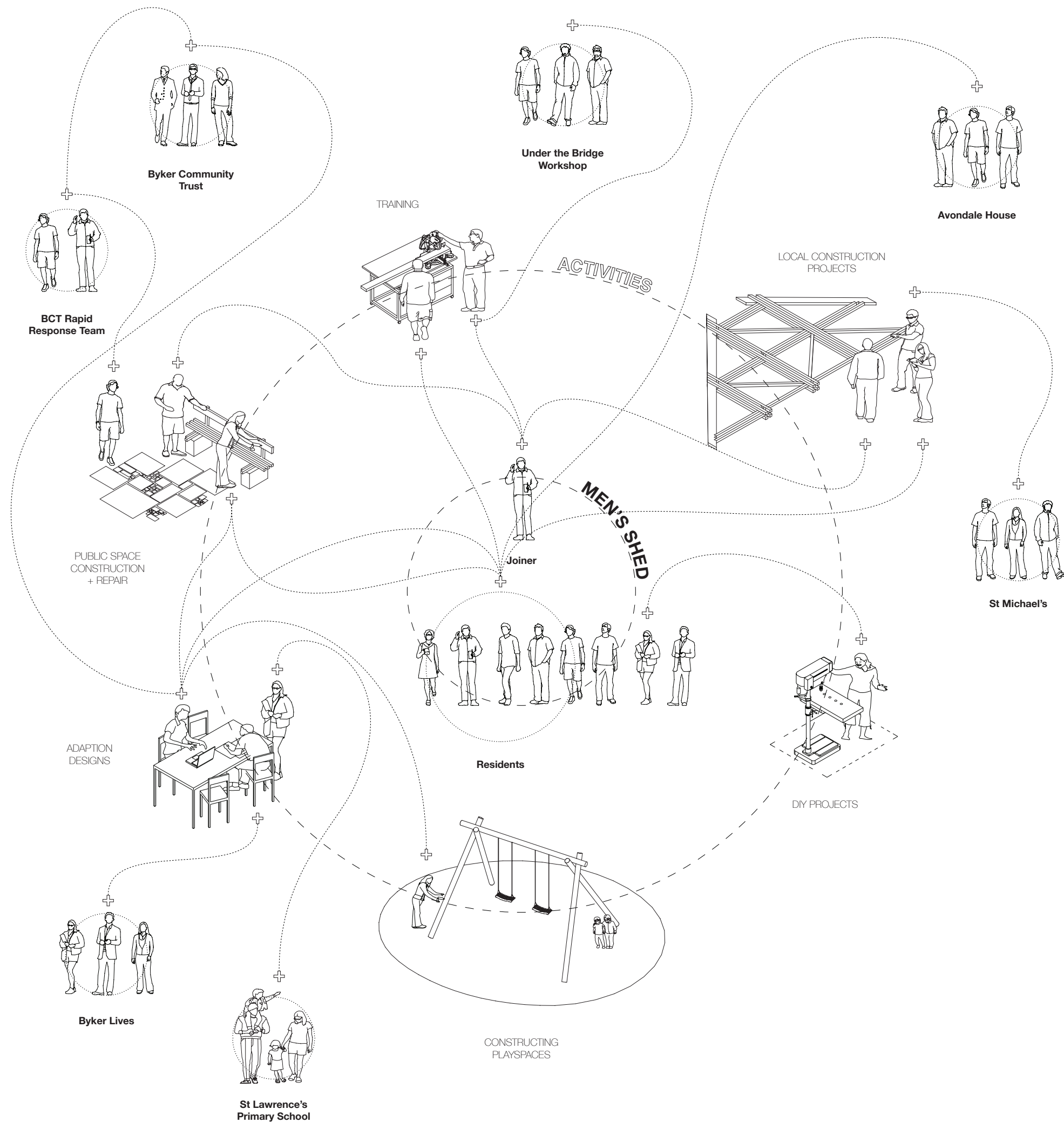
Local Workshop

A social enterprise workshop, offering access to training and equipment to residents for DIY projects, and small enterprises, enabling skills and routes into employment

Playspaces

Playspaces within Byker's public spaces could be designed and constructed by trained residents.





MAKING BYKER

Hobby Agencies: Men's Shed

BYKER COMMUNITY GARDENS

Affiliations

Byker Community Gardens

Residents

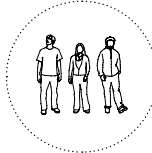
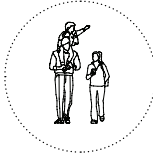
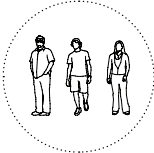
Ouseburn Farm

YMCA Byker

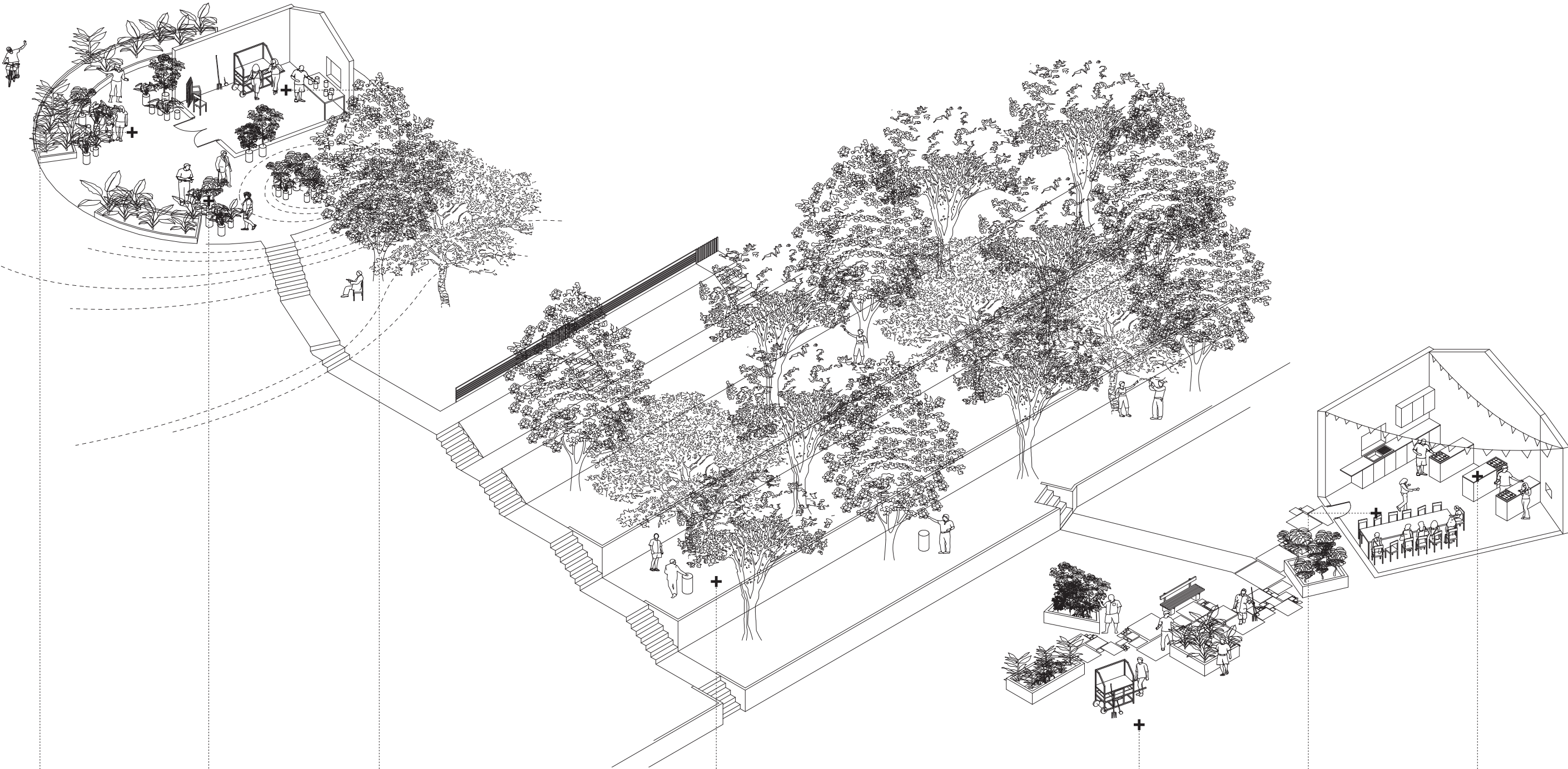
Storehouse

Horticulturalist

Byker Community Trust



Locations



Activities

Education

Engaging with the two primary schools to educate children on growing plants and care for the environment.

Productive Growing

Growing fruit and vegetables in the Byker Gardens and around the estate. Food grown can be used for shared meals.

Horticultural Training

Training and teaching new horticultural skills to residents to help people improve their gardens or pursue employment.

Community Orchard

The south facing terraces of Avondale Rise lend themselves to a small community orchard, growing a range of fruit.

Tending Public Spaces

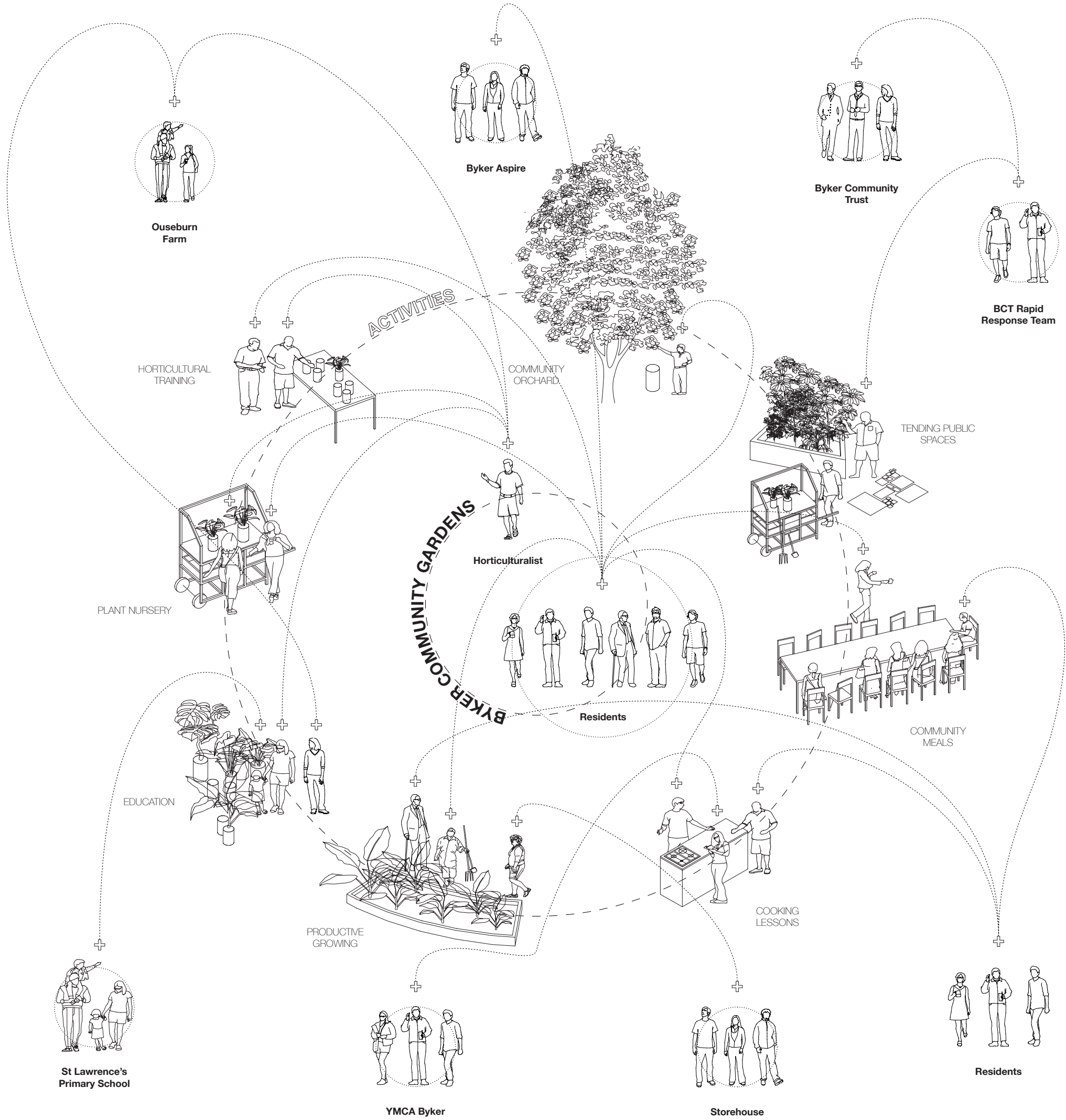
Residents employed to plant and maintain the public spaces around Byker, including planters, beds and hedges.

Community Meals

Shared meals between residents developing relationships and providing the opportunity for new social connections.

Cooking Lessons

Utilising fruit and veg grown around the redevelopment to teach residents about healthy eating and cooking.



MAKING BYKER

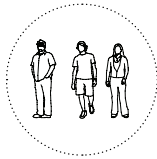
Hobby Agencies: Byker Community Gardens

CINEMA CLUB

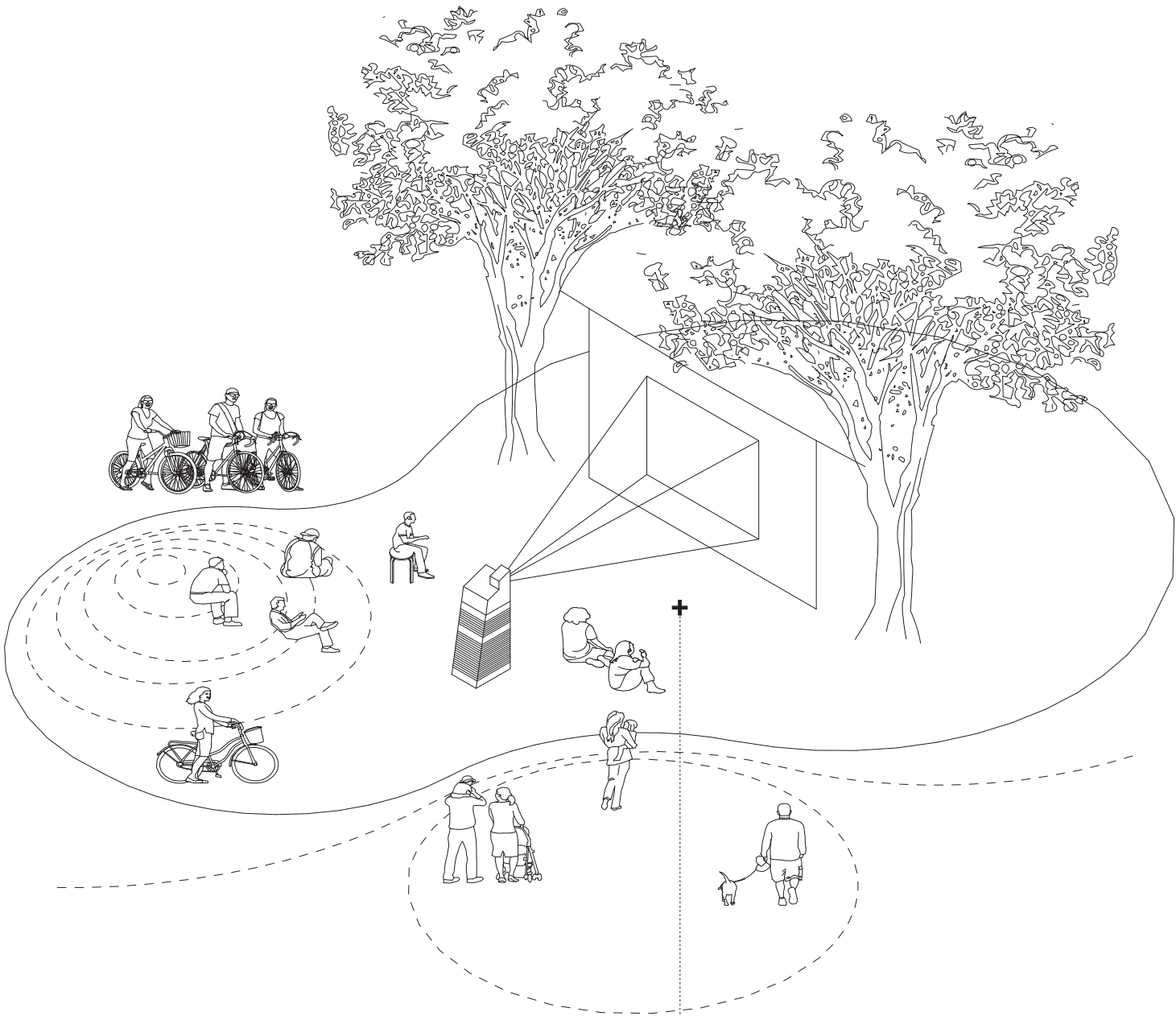
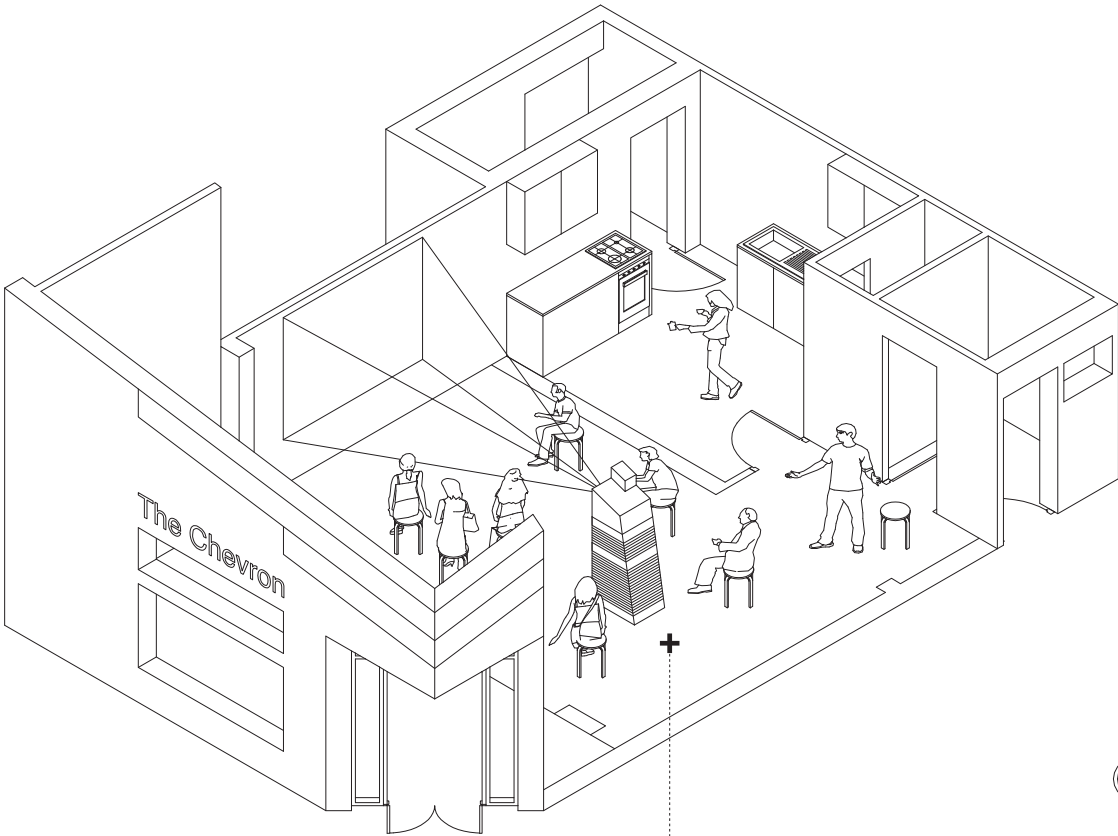
Affiliations

Residents

Byker Lives



Locations



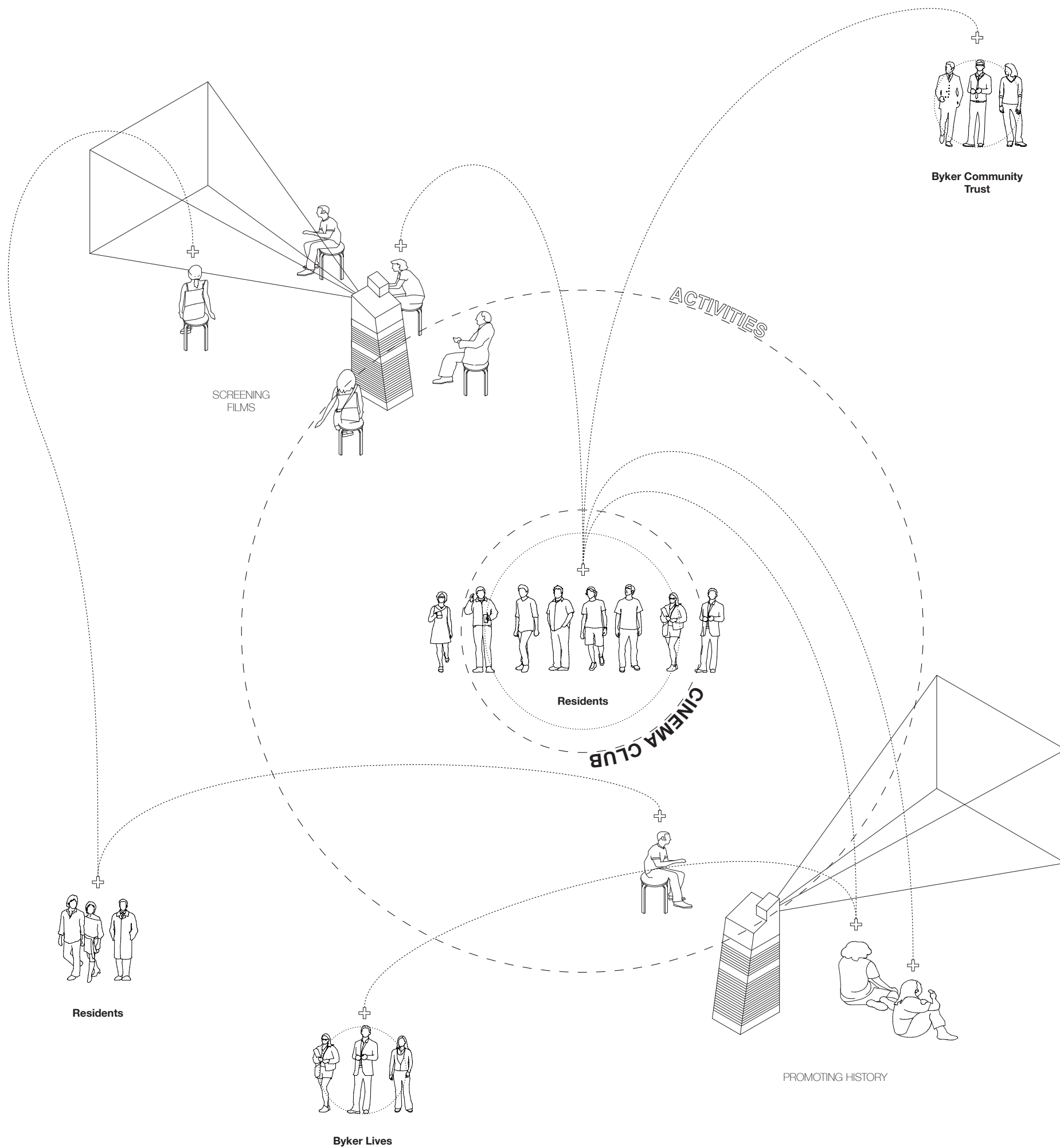
Activities

Cinema

Use of a hobby room for a regular cinema club offering a space for residents to meet and socialise.

Films Outdoors

Outdoor films and other material about Byker during the summer months, using the Byker Lives Film Dalek.



MAKING BYKER

Hobby Agencies: Cinema Club

MAKING BYKER

An Ethical Reflection



Introduction

As outlined in the introductory chapter, the methodology of the Ph.D pursued a tactical and indeterminate approach which, in the words of Tatjana Schneider, 'means starting out from an open playing field and making a case for not knowing, not assuming to know what the outcome might be.'

Beginning with my move to Byker as a resident, the operations of the research emerged out of my engagement with the area, and in particular concerns around the hobby rooms, as such, the participants that contributed to the research were not pre-selected, but arose from conversations and chance encounters with other residents of Byker and those involved in the area. Furthermore, there was a variety of engagement from residents in the area, from passing conversations that informed a line of enquiry, to six residents who volunteered to have their hobby practices surveyed and recorded.

Due to the novel approach to the intersection between research, practice and everyday life that the thesis explored, this short addendum to the Ph.D thesis aims to outline the steps that were taken towards ethical considerations through the course of the research, and to offer a critical reflection that identifies key concerns that can be taken into consideration for future research that might follow a similar approach.

The Ph.D methodology led to three particular ethical considerations within the production of the research: issues of invitation and consent, the transactional nature of research relationships and the approach to selecting participants in the study.

1. Research from 'within': Invitation, boundaries and consent

The practice of informed consent is central to social research,¹ and refers to the process of informing participants and respondents of their role within a research project, and to securing their consent to this involvement. Though not following its particular methodology this section suggests that my approach - in terms of my relationship as researcher to a particular community - shares similarities to that adopted in action research, where the researcher is operating 'within' as a participant and playing a specified role in the process. This proximity reduces divisions between the researcher and participants who are invited to be involved in the activities of the research, making it difficult to draw clear distinctions regarding the contributions of each. Particularly within my own work, many of the activities that informed and enabled the research were not limited solely to the research investigation, but were also expressions of my engagement

in Byker as a resident, socially and through distinct projects. Though these activities contributed to my research, through a process of critical reflection, and theorising within a broader, it is not possible to clearly distinguish the research boundaries independent from these wider social connections.

The process of asking co-residents to contribute to the research, and the desire to gain the informed consent of these participant set against the diffuse and varying levels of participant contributions was addressed by adopting distinct approaches depending on the level of engagement from different contributors.

For low and level and incidental engagement, such as passing conversations - such as that with Herbie Storey that was pivotal to locating the hobby rooms early on in the research - the research

subject was only mentioned if it came up or felt pertinent, such as in discussions about the hobby rooms like the one with Herbie. Where these engagements led to more formalised activities - like the mapping of hobby practices on the tablecloth - where participants were asked to contribute, these individuals were informed of the aim of the activity within the context of the research, but contributions were anonymised -for example highlighting only the type and location of hobby activity pursued, but not further information about the individual.

Where it was clear that my interaction with residents would be incorporated more substantially into the research I undertook particular steps to outline this contribution. In particular key contribution of residents to the study was the five hobbyists whose hobby practices and the spaces that these practices occupied I surveyed, with the help of MA students Daniel Dyer and Lam Tran. Initially I asked these

five residents whether they were willing to have their hobby activities observed and recorded, and then held a longer conversation outlining of the aims of the research and the contribution of the surveys within the context of the investigation into the issues underpinning the neglect and possible future use of the hobby rooms across Byker. This survey material, comprising of measured drawings and short films, was shown, and made available, to them afterwards. All participants of the research were also invited to the final exhibition of the work on display in Byker. It was also the case for those directly involved, or implicated, in project work, including members of the congregation at St Michael's church and staff at the Byker Community Trust, who were informed of my role as a researcher, and the associated research agenda that intersected with the projects at key moments.

¹ Ransome, R., 2013. Ethics and Values in Social Research. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. pg.33.

Where appropriate, permission was secured for the incorporation of photographs and other material from the individuals to whom this material pertained either at the time of surveying or later on.

Though the research activities and aims were clearly articulated to those participating to a greater degree, written consent for the use of their contributions was not secured as the work arose through relational connections, building on social trust and common concern, rather than an officially formulated dataset. As such the 'informal contract'² of a form was felt to be unnecessary, however, on reflection I would suggest that it would not take away from the research were this to be undertaken.

Finally, though the majority of my engagement was with adults, the brief involvement of local children at certain points in the research was facilitated through other local organisations, firstly with Byker Lives,

run by Northern Architecture, and latterly through Byker Community Gardens, overseen by Byker Aspire, and in conjunction with St Lawrence's Primary, each of which had safeguarding procedures in place to protect both the children and myself.

Related to this issue of consent, one of the questions underpinning the presentation of my activities and research reflections was whether to anonymise the individuals, participants and contributors to the research. In this particular case, the decision to record the names of people and places was influenced by my discovery of an extract of the day-book that the architects kept in the Byker office. The day-book record was one of the clear, and early, indications of the relational approach pursued by Erskine and his team, and represented a key way that their situatedness augmented and shifted their approach to architectural practice. Those who were named

within the research were made aware of the research interest that intersected my residency in the area.

Though central to the presentation of my own practice-based approach, I would argue that this approach - of naming key participants - may not always be so integral to undertaking research in a similar manner, and the decision to anonymise of some names would have to be taken individually depending on the context of the research. As such, it should remain a consideration to be addressed in the preparation of the research approach.

2. Ransome, R., 2013. Ethics and Values in Social Research. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. pg.136.

2. Concerns around research being a one-way transaction - who benefits?

Another contribution, and ethical consideration, provided by the framework of action research, is the role way in which outputs from the research are shared with and owned by participants in the process.³ This is also an ethical consideration for community and participatory art practice.⁴ A distinct aspect of my research, that can be seen to distinguish it from some action research approaches, was the focus of the research on the contribution of my own participation in Byker's social life. Accordingly, to an extent other residents could be considered less as participants to the research themselves, and more as co-participants in local projects.

Accordingly, many of the project based activities, including the construction of hobby furniture to be used by particular residents and groups, and my work with St Michael's church, involved a two way engagement where I offered my own

contributions through the research to local residents. It could be suggested then, that due to the productive nature of creative practice research, and its capacity to contribute a tangible effect in the contexts in which it is produced,⁵ this particular approach offers a clear way for research to become a reciprocal exchange, rather than a one-way transaction, giving residents ownership and use of some of the products of the research.

In the case of my work at St Michaels, the research provided a series of design proposals and drawings that has served to support the ongoing and incremental refurbishment of the building, while the dining table drawing was later re-configured as an altar and donated to the congregation for use within the reoccupied church building. The transactional nature of the research was also apparent in the creation of the short films of the hobbyists practices, particularly in the case of Mick who said that the film

had made him 'really proud of what he did,'⁶ and later uploaded it to his website to promote the radio show.

This opportunity was also realised particularly through my engagement with the Byker Lives community history project, as a volunteer. While the project provided a framework for engagement with residents, it also offered a way to make the research findings and practices available to residents, and later to others thanks to the creation of the online archive - bykerlives.com. However it also extended to other local groups, including the Ouseburn Trust, St Lawrence's Primary School and others. Out of my research, both creative and historical, I was also able to participate in directing walking tours of the redevelopment for visiting academics as well interested locals.

Although my involvement was theorised and articulated as research, the activities and relationships that

enabled the research investigation stretched beyond a singular role as research to become social contributions more broadly.

3. Stringer, E. T., 1999. Action Research. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications. pg.177.

4. Bishop, C., 2012. Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship. London: Verso.

5. Rendell, J., 2004. Architectural Research and Disciplinarity. Architectural Research Quarterly. 8(2), pg.142.

6. Field Notes. No.1. Date: 31.05.2013

3. The role of the researcher and relational practice in engaging participants

A final ethical consideration that emerged in reflection on the particular relational approach adopted in the research, is the role of the position - socially and geographically - of the researcher to inform and effect the make-up of the participants of the survey. As previously noted, participants, particularly those involved in the hobby surveys, were not pre-selected but typically engaged in the project through incidental conversations - chance discussions or meetings during which the subject of Byker or the hobby rooms arose - and through my expanding social connections with neighbours and other residents. Some of these participants were well known to me, while others were introduced for the purpose of the investigation. Closest to home, as a fellow resident, my wife's hobby practice was surveyed, while I was put in touch with other hobbyists in the area by other residents as I discussed the hobby project. A brief discussion with

Chloe when she visited the Byker Lives shop revealed her interest in jewellery making, while I was introduced to Caroline, whose hobby of dressmaking I also surveyed, by Natalie after a separate conversation about the hobby project.

There was also an element of self-selection in this process, as residents with an existing interest in hobbies or the hobby rooms were often quick to engage in conversation around these issues, as was the case with Ian who uses a hobby room for bike maintenance whom I met at a local 'police awareness' day, or Yassen who was participating in a workshop about social enterprise and told me about his interest in wet-plate photography.

As a result of this relational establishment of contributors, as well as recognising the rich insights that these contributions made to an understanding of the hobby rooms

and their contemporary occupation, it is also possible to identify certain limitations on the extent to which the class, gender and ethnicity of participants reflects the wider social context of the research. Accordingly, the ethnic make-up of the hobbyists that were surveyed are predominantly white, and so do not reflect the increasingly diverse ethnic make-up of Byker, representatives of which may be able to open up new and complimentary insights into the research subject - in this case the ways in which members of other class or ethnic backgrounds might interact with the hobby rooms in Byker.

The process of selection was contingent, letting me engage with situated insights as I encountered them through my position in Byker, and enabling the participation of individuals who would not have been identified at the start of the investigation. However, it is suggested that this embedded approach could in

the future be complimented by other means of participant engagement that enabled the involvement of a more diverse set of participants.

Action research is an inherently reflective process,⁷ formalised in a cyclical action of planning, action, reflection and revision.⁸ As outlined in Chapter 1, the methodology of creative practice also draws heavily on reflexivity to inform its actions and to theorise the outcomes of these outputs within a broader context. Within creative practice methodology, this process of reflection and action may not be as clearly defined to the same extent, however this summary presents a reiteration of the ethical responsibility of the embedded researcher to maintain an ongoing reflexivity with regards to the personal, political and ethical implications and outcomes of their involvement with such a project, as well as the representation of broader social groups - particularly those who may

7. Ransome, R., 2013. Ethics and Values in Social Research. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. pg.137.

8. Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R., 1988. The Action Research Planner. 3rd ed. Victoria: Deakin University Press. pg.11

be typically underrepresented or overlooked - within the operation of practice and research.



FIG.1. A visualisation of the design for a new set of 'legs' for the dining table to convert it into a new altar for St Michael's church.

Conclusion

The particular methodology that emerged out of my engagement as a resident in Byker, and the intersection of these practices and the formation of research project, has highlighted a number of key and distinct ethical considerations behind this approach that should be addressed in pursuing a similar methodology. In particular, the mechanisms for the participation of individuals and groups within this research needs to be taken into consideration to establish a balance between formal and informal modes of engagement within a project, depending on the level of contribution. In inviting the participation of others within the context of research, it is important to ensure that these participants are aware of, and consent to, their contribution to a research project, and that the outcomes of such a project are accessible.

The methodology adopted within this creative practice thesis allowed for the inclusion of information that

might be excluded from a more formally organised study, such as that arising from chance encounters and through repeated engagements with individuals who also became friends through the process. In addition, the research also reveals how the transformational aspect of creative practice approaches with its many tangible outcomes is able to establish a transactional approach to research where both researcher and participant can benefit from an engagement in a project, or series of projects. Accordingly, I suggest that the research contributes towards understanding the particular value of a situated approach to both practice and research.