

# Rochdale Reimagined Workbook

## Site 03 : Champness Hall



# Rochdale Reimagined

Rochdale Reimagined is a project which looks at new ways to use historic buildings and spaces in Rochdale. Last year the project was completed by students of Manchester School of Architecture and this year it will be completed by students from three primary schools in Rochdale.

If you are reading this booklet then you are one of the school children who has been chosen to reimagine Rochdale and you will be working in a small group as your own “architectural practice” on one of five sites in the “Heritage Action Zone” in Rochdale. It is your job to dream up something amazing for these old buildings and vacant sites to make your town centre a vibrant place for everyone.

## About Rochdale

Rochdale is a place that boomed during the industrial revolution, while the town was first mentioned almost 1000 years ago in the Domesday Book, it is a settlement shaped by the needs of manufacturing. Rochdale is on the border of both Lancashire and Yorkshire and that is reflected in the building materials, while red brick embellished with hard gritstone is mainly used around the town centre, you can equally see many buildings built using Yorkshire stone. It is situated in the valley of the River Roch which proved to be a great asset to manufacturing, with the slowly climbing Rochdale Canal following in 1804 and the railway in 1839.

The town is distinct; the structure of the landscape means that key buildings are clustered into the compact town centre, focussing upon the river. The magnificently Gothic Town Hall, the mediaeval parish church St Chads, the Riverside Offices, bus station and shopping centre are situated within the valley, while the skyline is dominated by a line of great tower blocks called the Seven Sisters.

Rochdale town centre has been undergoing impressive regeneration in recent years with the opening of the new council offices, new transport infrastructure including the Metrolink trams arriving in the town centre, while investment into public spaces including re-opening the river and historic bridges has brought new life to the town. A new market opened recently and more and more independent businesses choose Rochdale for their home base. The regeneration programme is continuing with the impressive Riverside Centre to be opened in 2020. Despite these significant changes there are parts of the town centre that have continued to decline or face challenges; these include Rochdale’s historic high street and one of the main gateways to the town centre, Drake Street.

## What is a Heritage Action Zone?

The sites which you will be looking at are in an area that was awarded “Heritage Action Zone” status in 2017 by an organisation called Historic England. Heritage Action Zones are areas of historic interest which have been selected for a targeted regeneration project. Historic buildings which have deteriorated through decades of neglect will be restored and put back into use, and unsung places will be recognised and celebrated for their unique character and heritage, helping to instil a sense of local pride.



Site 05 : Bell Street

Site 04 : Fashion Corner + Waterside

Site 03 : Champness Hall

Site 02 : The Retail Park

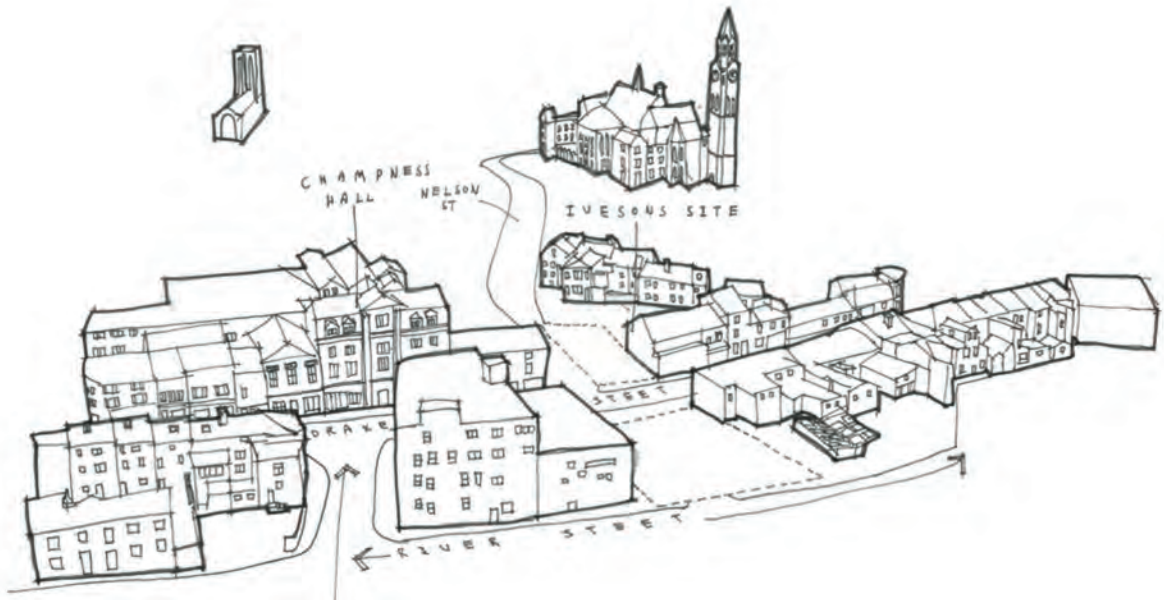
Site 01 : The Railway Station

# Champness Hall

Champness Hall is a former Methodist meeting hall and significant locally listed building, which is only partially used today and has lost many of its original architectural features.

It is situated on Drake Street which is the heart of the Heritage Action Zone. The loss of heritage buildings close by was significant to the Conservation Area and the unique character of Drake Street. Reimagining buildings like Champness Hall creates an interesting opportunity for landmark development at the entrance to the town.

One of the big challenges is coming up with a new use for the building, which could be retail, leisure, music, events, offices or even an indoor market, greenhouse or funhouse!



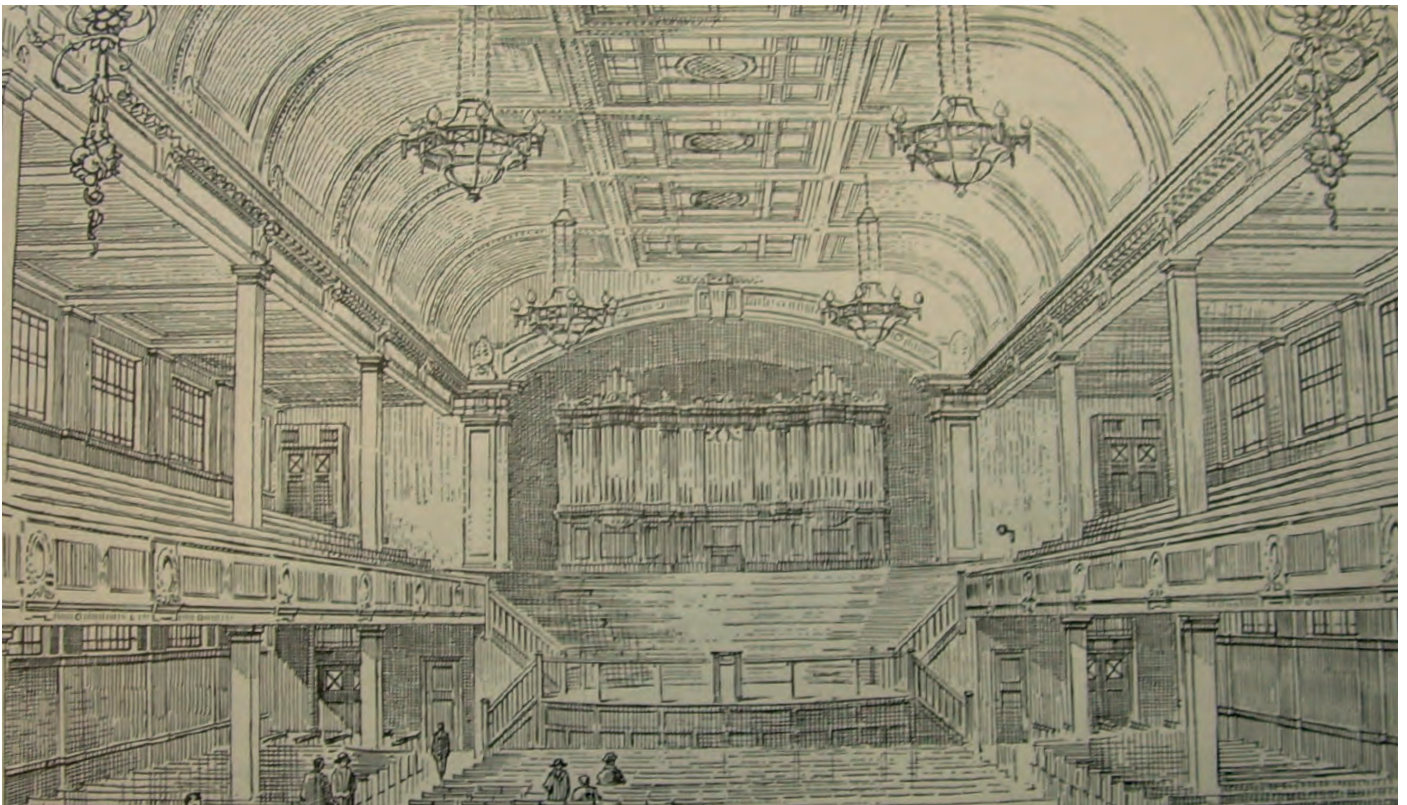
These drawings show what Champness Hall is like now and the buildings that surround it.

# History

Champhess hall was built on the location of a former Methodist chapel in 1925 and was designed to combine religious function with community uses. The building has a secular almost 'cinema-like' character quite unlike a church. This was a deliberate design approach of the time, as Methodist halls were meant to appeal to both believers and non-believers alike. The large windows and 2,000 seat auditorium are both of the impressive Art Deco style. The hall itself was the centerpiece of the building and was beautifully detailed. It was available for use for free and was used for Christian worship as well as for public meetings like concerts or festivals.



These historic photos show the hall with an impressive dome as it was built in 1925.

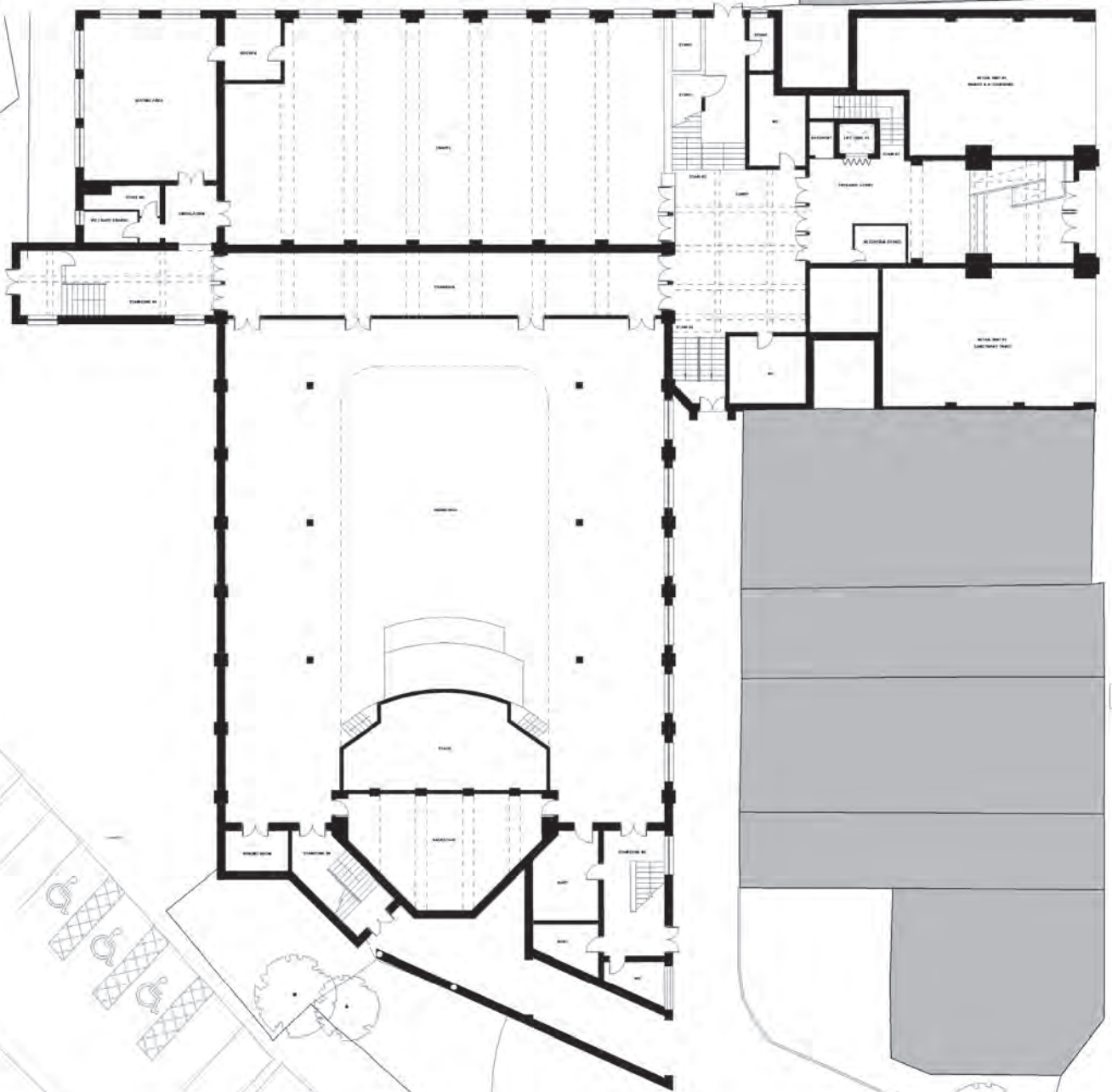


This historic drawing shows the impressive hall inside the building.

This 3D plan shows Champness Hall from the rear. Perhaps you could try adding on an extension in this location or making a garden or park.



This drawing is an existing plan and it shows the inside of the building as it is now. It shows the large hall and lots of smaller rooms like shops and toilets. You can remove walls or add new ones to make new functions work inside.



Some of the architecture students made new façades for the building to make it look more attractive from the outside. Do you think this is a good idea? What would you add to the building to attract more visitors?

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Some of the architecture students used the building to grow vegetables like a big greenhouse? Do you think this is a good idea? What changes would you need to make to the building so you could grow things inside?

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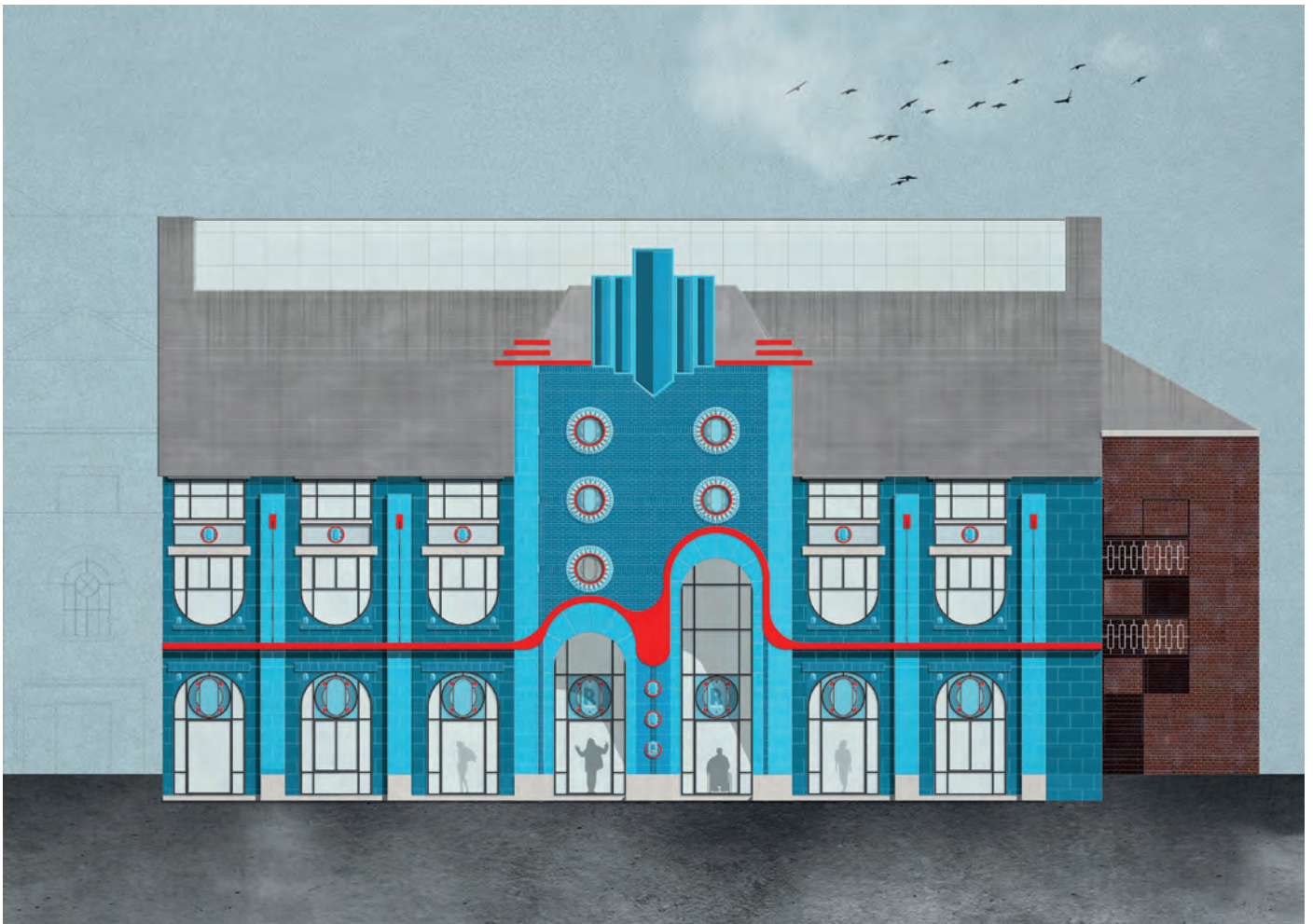
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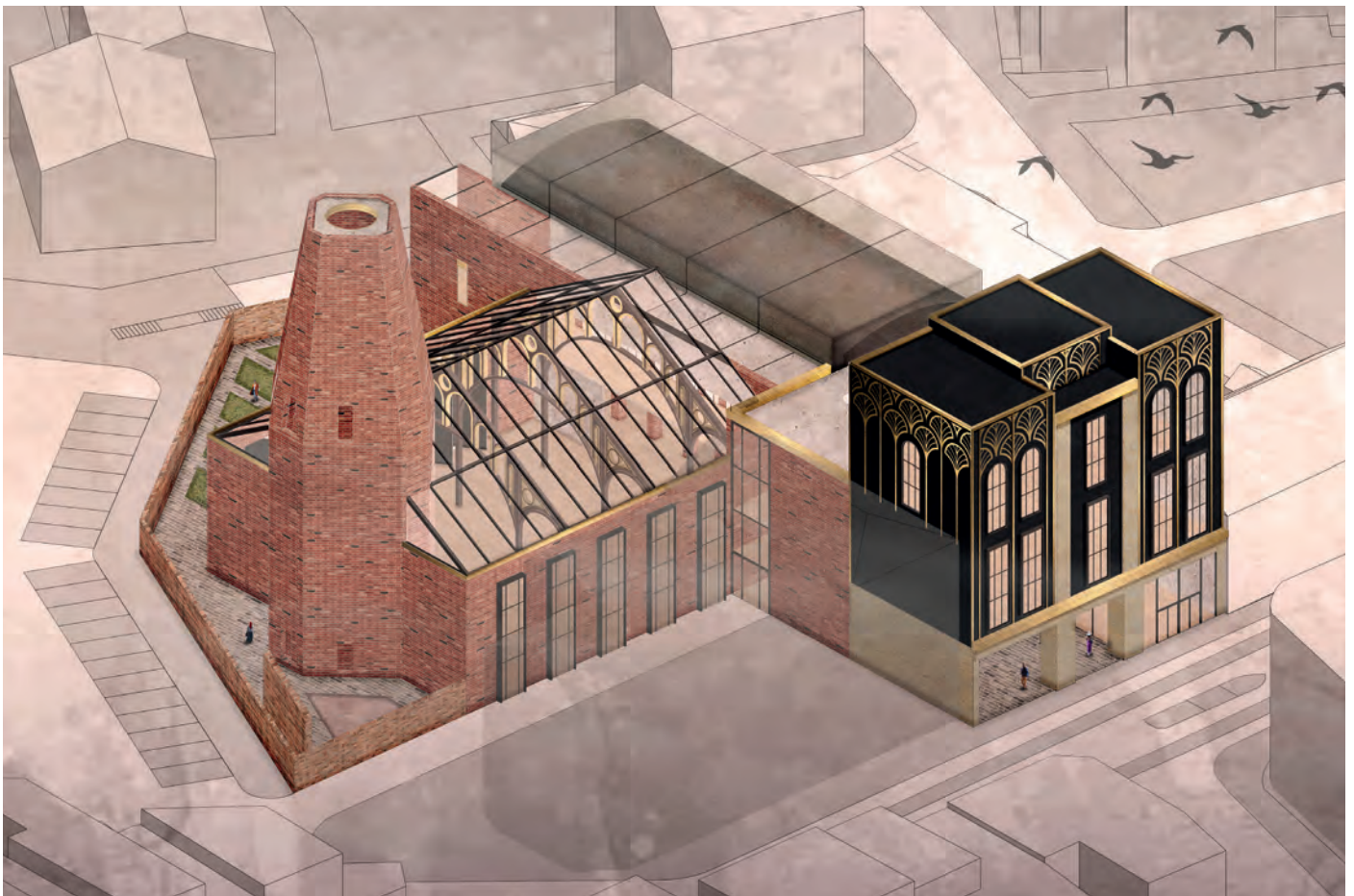
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Project for a new Art Deco façade to the rear of the hall by Natasha.



Project for new greenhouse and market by Justin and Daria.

Some of the architecture students used the building to make a new school right in the middle of Rochdale. Would you like to go to school in the town centre? What things would you add to make it a good school?

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Some of the architecture students added a new dome to the building to replace the one that was removed. Do you think it is a good idea to add back things that have been taken away?

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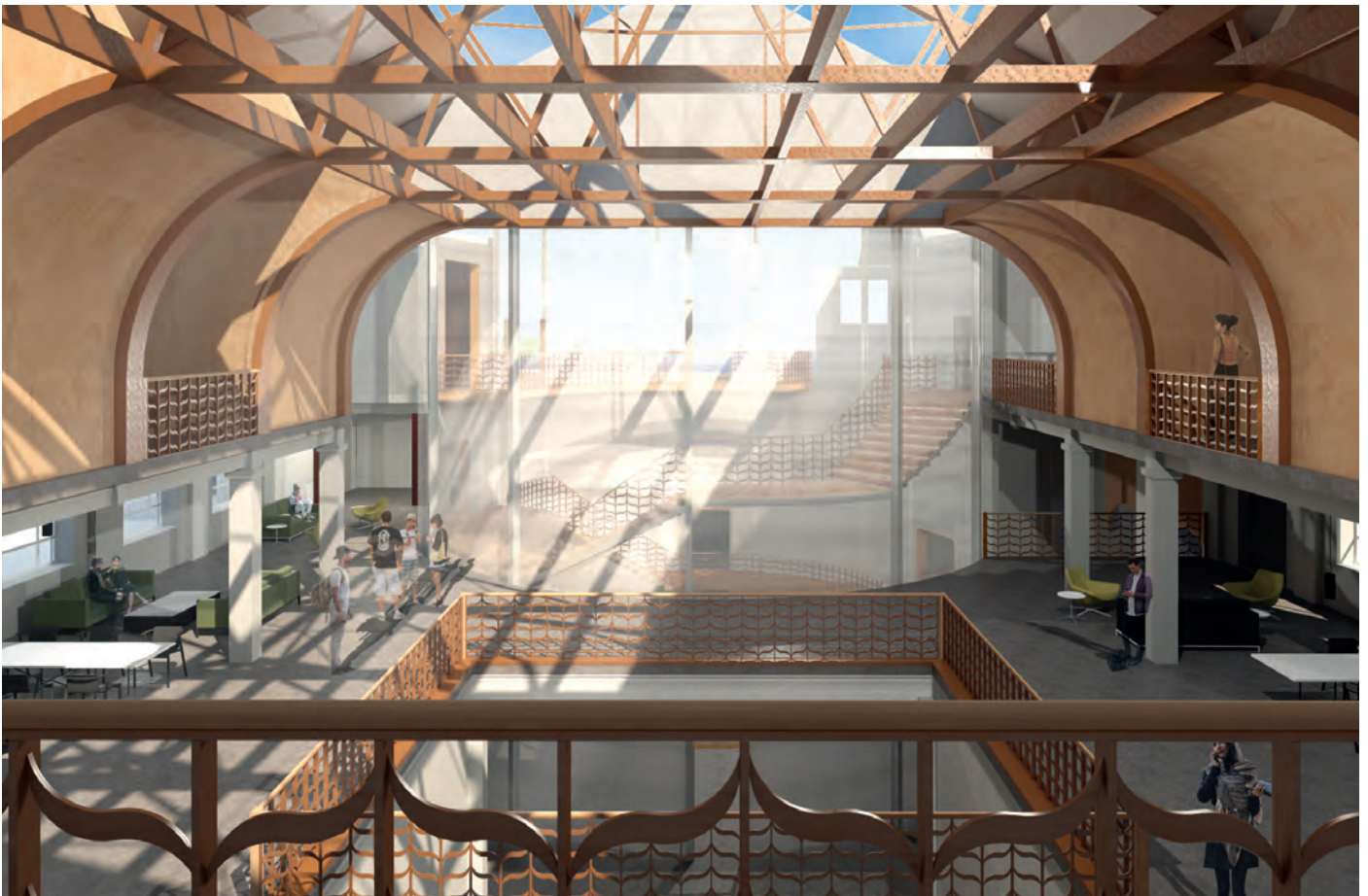
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Project for a new secondary school by Shad and Olivia.



Project for a music hall with a glass dome by Zhivka and Vasi.



CHAMPNESS HALL

Sanctuary Trust  
Supporting the homeless  
STOREHOUSE  
Tel: 04 9988

PIANOS & ACCOR

Your Names : \_\_\_\_\_ Your School : \_\_\_\_\_

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL  
OF ARCHITECTURE**



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1824  
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**ROCHDALE**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Historic England

Rochdale  
Development  
Agency

