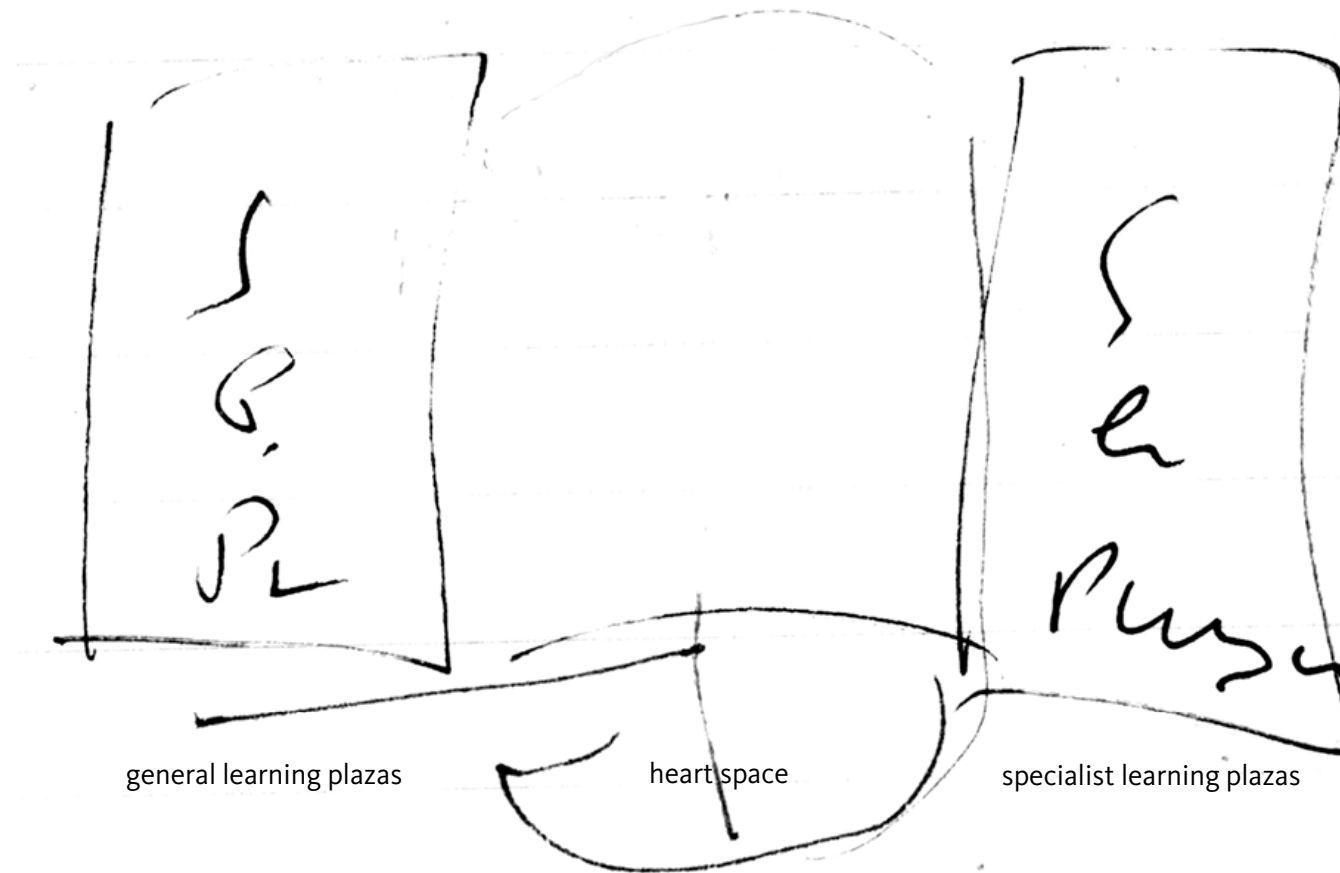


'Most heroin addicts in this country are well educated people.

What does that say about our education system?

That it is failing our students and is **not preparing** them for the challenges life sets them...'

Dr. Chris Gerry



In parallel with a Yale University research study on emotional intelligence the aim is to create an integrated re-engineered hi-tech model of learning.

Project Brief

New Line Learning is an Academy whose transformational learning vision is based upon a risk/resilience model, whereby pupils are individually evaluated over a 6 week period through curricular, emotional and social competencies, enabling assessment beyond predictive educational needs, aiming to provide alternative life outcomes for a deprived community.

To accommodate this vision and reinforce NLL's learning approach; a new spatial use model was developed. The 'Plaza' concept was devised with the Academy to provide a higher degree of collaboration between teachers and pupils through an IT rich, flexible environment that promotes and enables a variety of static and fluid learning settings to occur simultaneously within the physical fabric – from individual personalised learning, to group based activities and a whole plaza scenario of 120 pupils – whilst providing a safe and secure home base.

As a test bed, Gensler have designed a Plaza Prototype, on site, for 90 year 8 students (13 yrs). This conveys the key attributes of the space on one level utilising technology such as 360° projection and large display areas, biometric lighting techniques to control and vary the ambience of individual spaces, and flexible and adaptable furniture to allow a variety of work mode settings orientated around sizes of user groups and activities being undertaken.

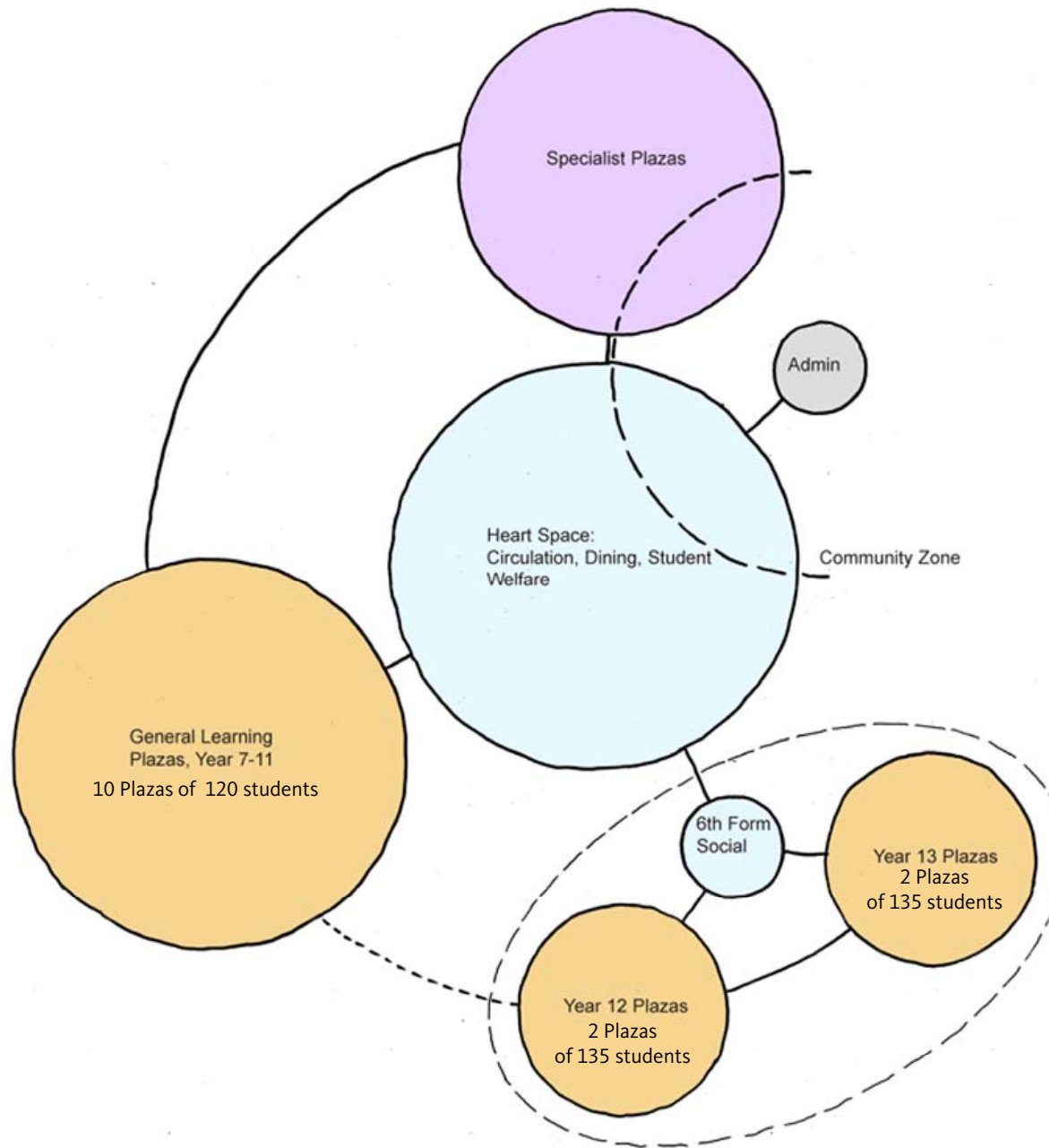
Designed to impact both mood and behaviour, the prototype has already seen dramatic success with attendance levels up by 90%. Whilst different to the final design, it offers an opportunity for post occupancy evaluation from teachers, students and community members, prior to final construction.

Client sketch of Academy Lay out (Dr. Chris Gerry)

Overall Learning Context

The complete Academy composition is fairly traditional, providing students with:

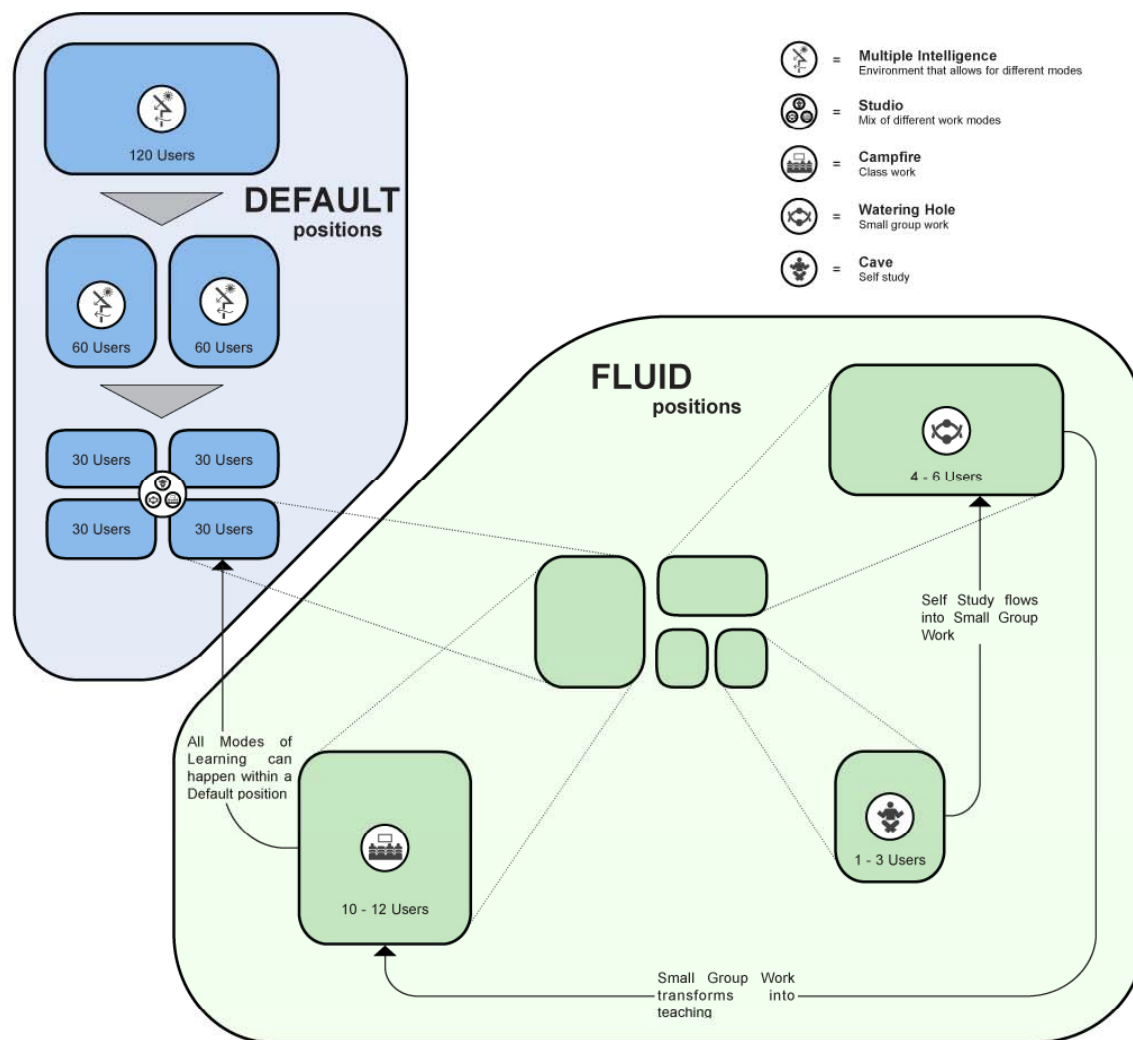
- a clear organisational structure
- a safe environment
- a homely feel
- a supported structure
- a focused learning approach

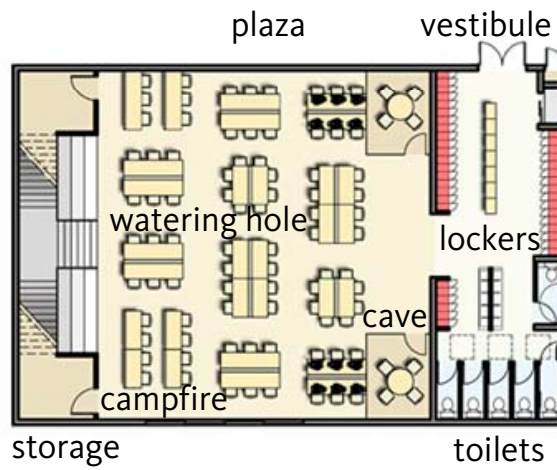


Academy Organisational Diagram

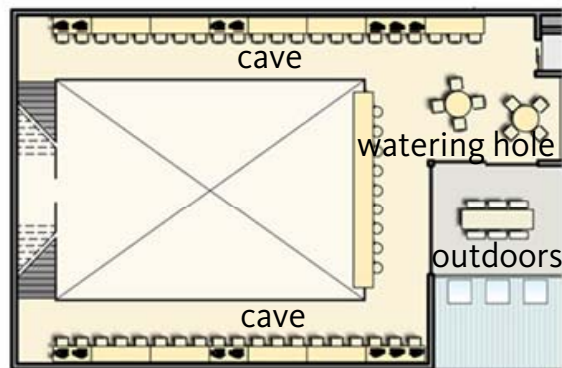
Detailed Learning Context

Activities define space which is influenced by the number of pupils and the degree of collaboration undertaken.





Part plan of the ground floor of a '120' student Plaza



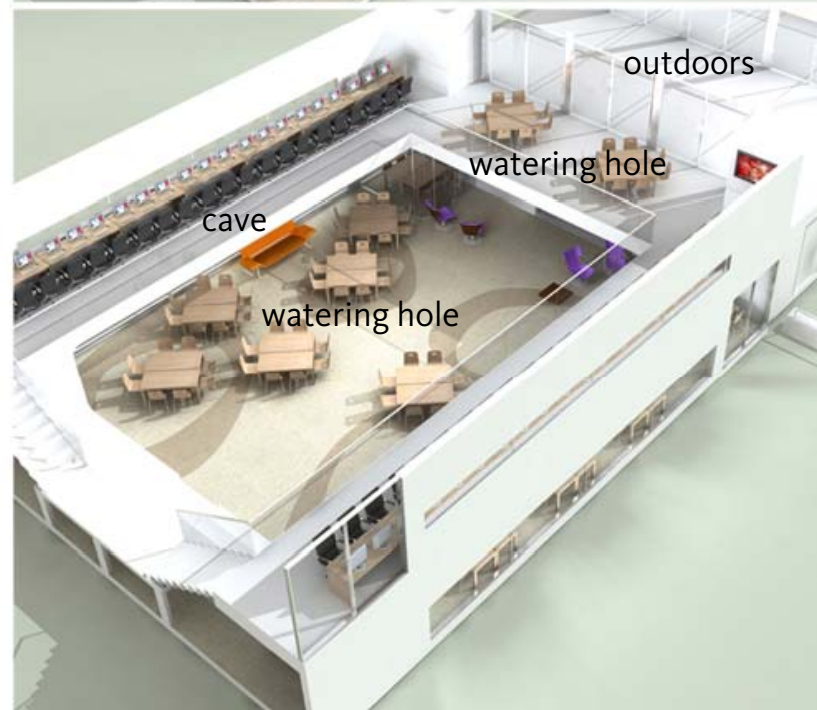
Part plan of the mezzanine of a '120' student Plaza



Plaza ground floor

- Project based learning
- Group work
- Lectures
- Breakout areas
- Vestibule

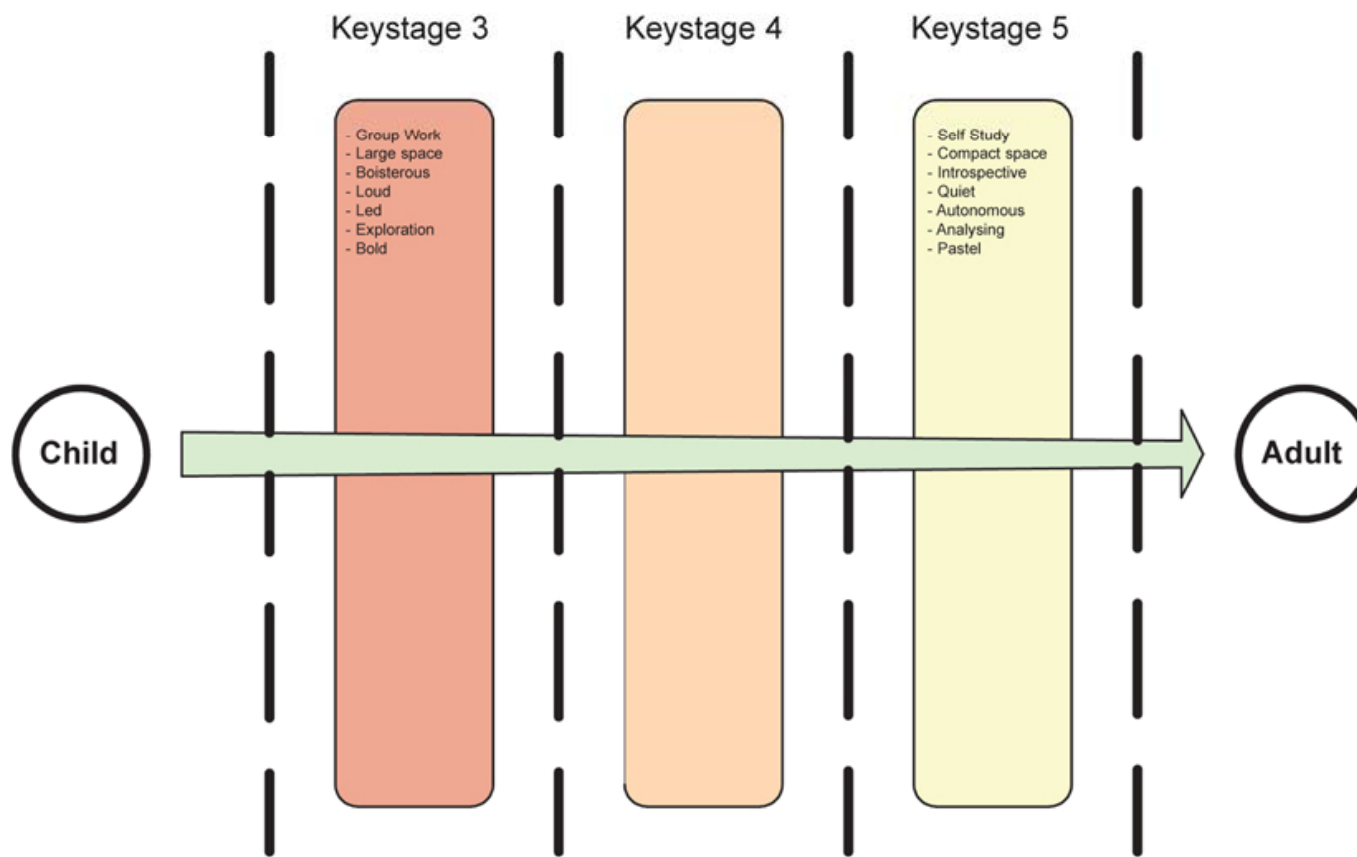
3D view of '120' student Plaza



Plaza mezzanine

- Independent learning
- Small group work
- Balcony spectators for project based learning
- Outdoor classroom

3D view of '120' student Plaza

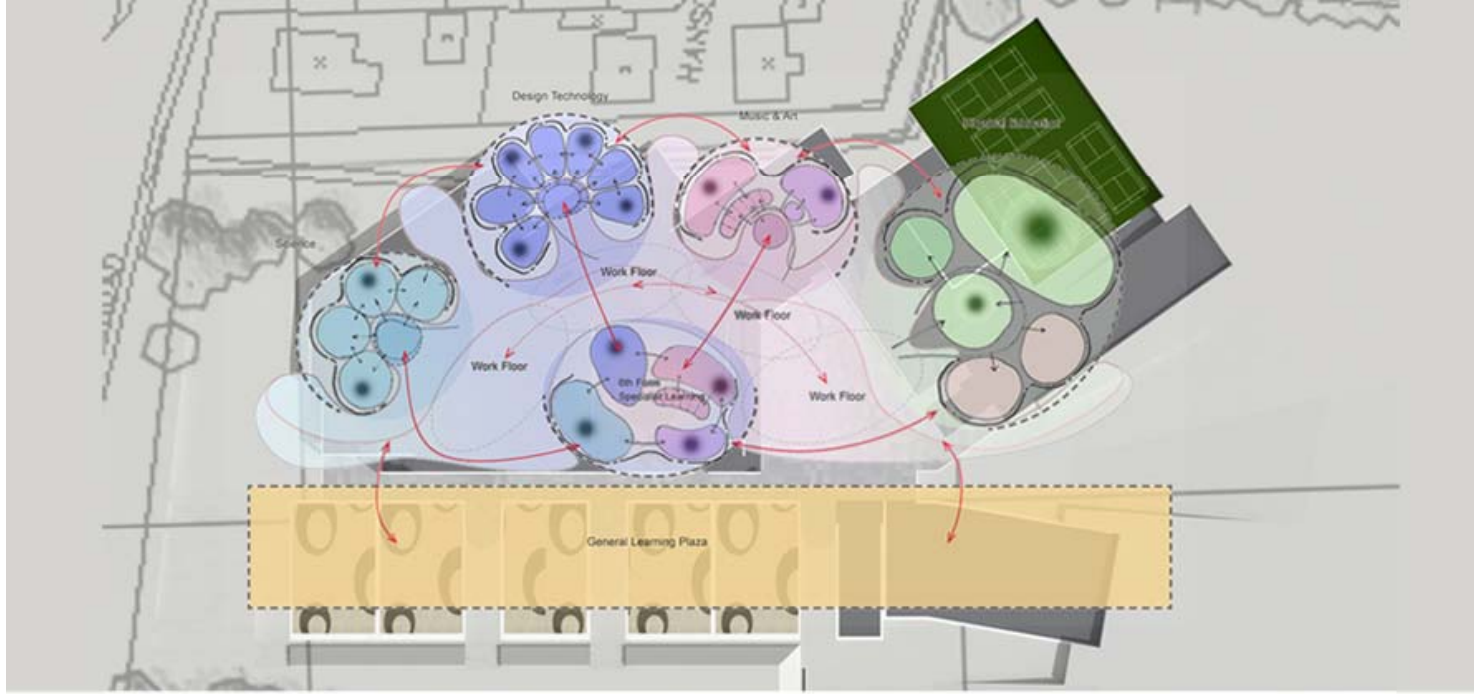


Plaza Transitions

Although the main building blocks of the general plazas are the same, the interior detailing and look of them should cater for students growing from children to young adults.

- Individuals progress at own speed, 'stage, not age'
- Plazas vary by age due to project based learning requirements of 120 students versus personalised learning of 1 student
- Plaza environment changes by year group to reflect not only the learning needs of the students (group vs selfstudy), but also their social requirements as they progress through the Academy into adulthood.





Specialist Plazas

The specialist Plazas are located across the Heart space and include Science, Technology, Art and PE.

- Open plan
- Work floors for any subject
- Adjacency of key specialist areas
- Fluidity of informal to formal type spaces
- Lateral connections between specialist plaza and work floors



Overall Plaza Massing

Back to back module sets up massing of Plazas, the Heart space and the Specialist Plazas as key building elements.



Plaza Prototype Brief

The realisation of a Learning Plaza Prototype for South Maidstone Academies into an existing, disused sports hall.

The brief is multidisciplinary, from Architecture, Interior Design and Product Design to Graphics and Branding.

The purpose of the Prototype is to test new features that will aid the curricular activities within the new Plaza environment:

- Vestibule
- Discrete, unisex toilets
- Open hand wash areas
- Flexible, high spec furniture
- Mobile Lecture Seating
- Biometric lighting
- Large Scale projection
- New materials

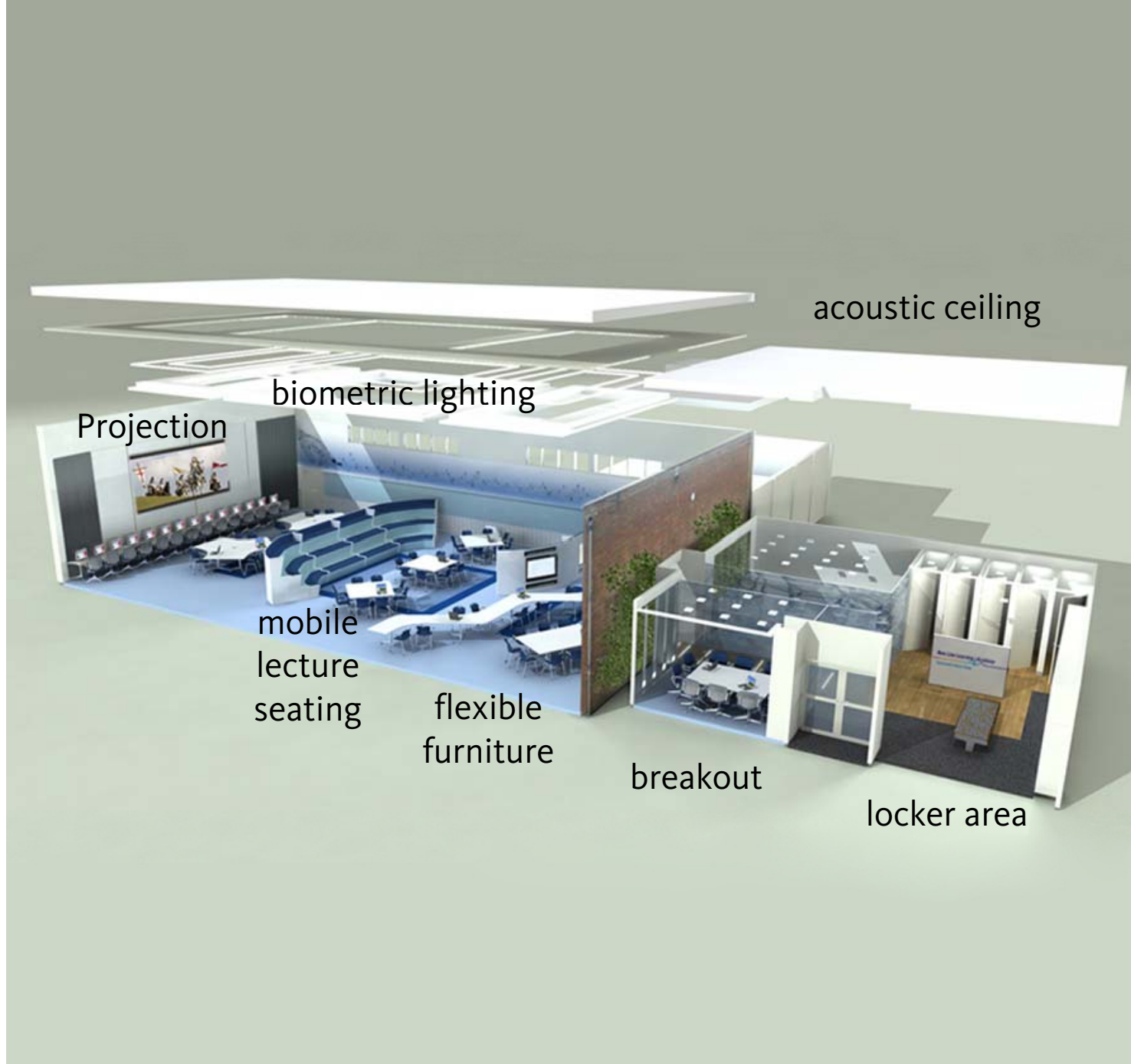
Transformation of the existing, 1950's sports hall to the Learning Plaza

Gensler

South Maidstone Academies

South Maidstone, Kent, United Kingdom

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
brief			design			prototype			



Plaza Prototype Features

- Creation of a **vestibule** with a locker for each student, discrete toilets, an open hand wash area to prevent bullying and breakout areas.
- The vestibule was created in a **temporary building** as the existing structure was not large enough to house both the Plaza Prototype and the vestibule.
- Use of **flexible, high spec furniture** to allow for the easy and fast creation of new patterns within the Plaza to aid different teaching techniques.
- Development of a new modular and **mobile lecture style seating** to accommodate larger groups and use as space dividers..
- Use of spatial and textural features to suggest space divisions.
- Use of **Biometric lighting** to influence the mood of the occupants of the Plaza.
- The introduction of large, cinema style **projection** that integrates with the **pervasive ICT** environment of the Plaza.
- The use of high spec acoustic ceiling and wall coverings. **Professional acoustics** and the ability to create different acoustic areas within the same space are key for teaching and learning in the Plaza.

3D overview of the Plaza Prototype



Prototype – Vestibule

The entrance sequence of the Plaza creates an environment in which students can undergo a change in their state of mind. By taking off their shoes and moving through the space, they move from a school environment to a home environment, allowing them to settle down for learning.

The vestibule also houses personal lockers, breakout areas and unisex toilets with an open handwash area, promoting passive and peer supervision.

- 1 Vestibule Entrance Area
- 2 Corporate Branding
- 3 Locker Area
- 4 Open Hand wash Area
- 5 Seating
- 6 Link into Plaza, flanked by break out areas



1



2



3



4



5



6

Prototype – Learning Plaza

Due to the pervasive technology and the flexible furniture the Plaza can be set up in many different configurations to aid the learning process.

The Plaza Prototype opened for ninety 13-year boys and girls in September 2008. Gensler and New Line Learning are carrying out a post-occupancy evaluation to determine the success of the key issues prior to constructing the new Academy.

- 1 Entrance into Learning Plaza
- 2 Small group Work
- 3 Multiple Lectures
- 4 One large lecture
- 5 Mobile Lecture Seating
- 6 Individual Learning