

# GATEWAY CANINE TRUST

CHANGING LIVES, ENDING HOMELESSNESS.

"Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works".<sup>1</sup>

Steve Jobs, 2003.

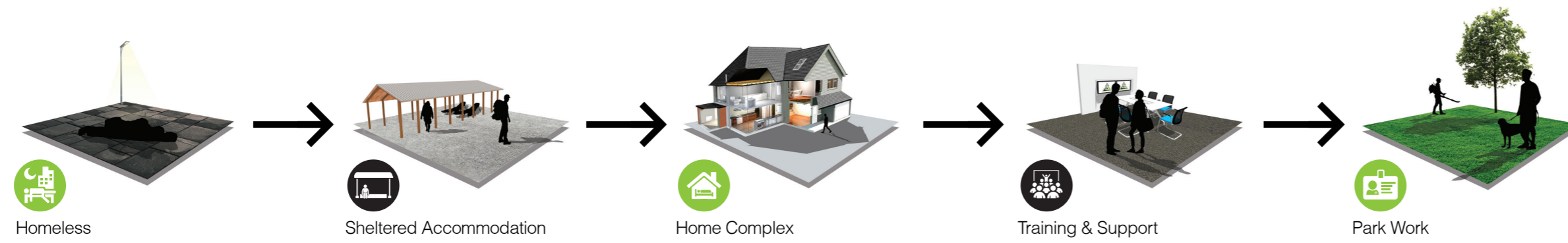


Fig. 1  
The process.

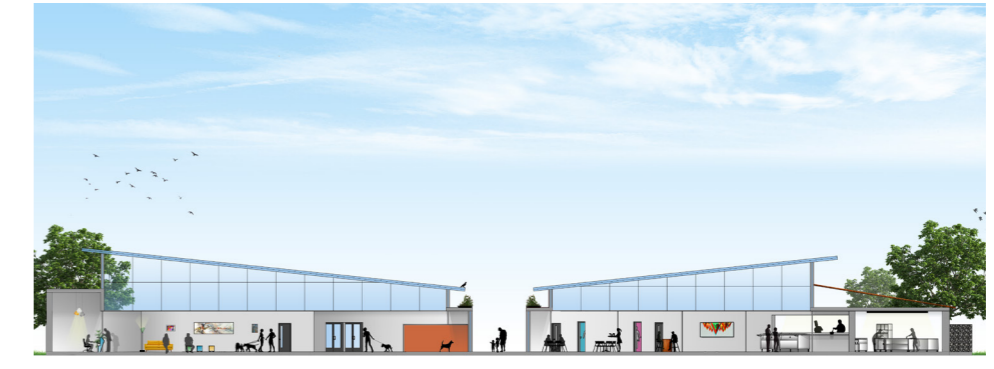


Fig. 2  
Park cafe kennel section.



Fig. 3  
Home complex's ground floor communal area to encourage social interaction.



Fig. 4  
Park cafe kennel buildings open to the public, with vets on site.

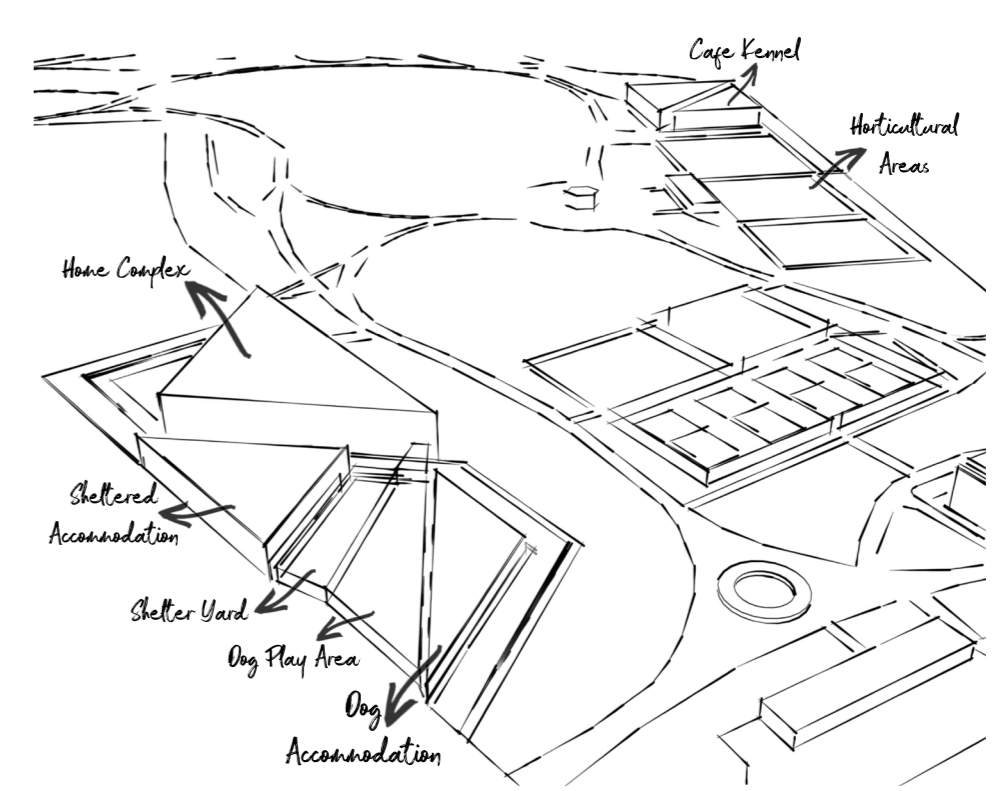


Fig. 5  
3D site plan.

**While there are a small minority of 'aware' designers who recognize their social and environmental responsibilities. Many designers still continue to produce work that has little if any benefit to people's lives. 'Gateway Canine Trust' is a project tackling social issues using design as the solution with a focus upon homelessness, loneliness, mental health and addiction.**

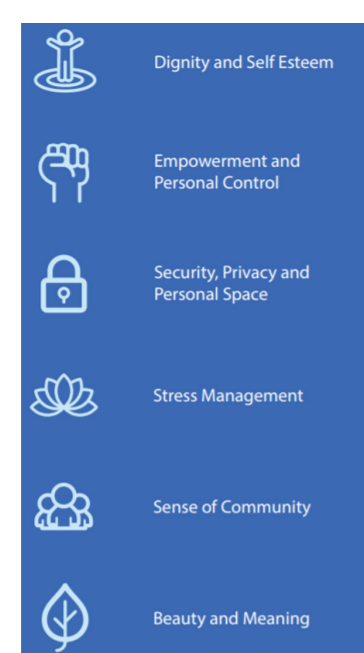


Fig. 6  
Design Resources for Homelessness key



Fig. 7  
GCT logo.



Fig. 8  
Home complex 2nd floor internal garden.

## Background

Homelessness is a condition of detachment from society characterized by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures.<sup>2</sup> The cause of homelessness cannot be pin-pointed to one specific issue, although there are reports that loneliness, addiction and mental health play a key role in this devastating crisis. However, much to people's surprise, relationship breakdowns are one of the main causes of homelessness.

## Context

Homelessness is on the increase with rough sleeping numbers in England rising for the seventh year running.<sup>3</sup> However, no matter how big the problem grows, we often choose to ignore the issue even when we pass it in the street every day. Through design, GCT will raise awareness of homeless issues, while breaking the stigma often attached. The project is open to the public as it is in the heart of Victoria Park. This allows the project to be funded and is also a great opportunity to educate people about this crisis.

"Can design solve social issues?" I believe GCT proves that it can with the correct model and structures put in place. Gateway Canine Trust intends to help individuals develop through a structured guided series of gateways. The project has many stages and each step comes with responsibilities and rewards. For example at the stage of residents living on the 1st floor of the home complex, a shared kitchen and lounge is for everyone to use. Whereas residents who have developed through to the 2nd floor stage have a complete independent flat with perks of computers, social areas and internal gardens. The development of residents is assessed by professionals.

## Rationale

I have had first-hand experience of substance abuse, which is a major social issue in today's society. This experience has pushed me into the direction of wanting to change this and other issues like this, in order to improve people's lives. I understand not all people will have had experience of such issues and therefore not acknowledge these areas of our society that need working on. The GCT project will therefore spread awareness about the issues in question and be a creative way to tell a story, getting a message across and raising funds. The spaces designed are my design solutions for these issues.

## Ideas & Development

Through semester 1 and 2, I completed my ideas of a poster campaign and café kiosk pop up shop to raise awareness and funds. This then led me to my final idea of a home for respite and recovery. The first two semester projects where an introduction into my bigger idea of designing spaces that house

and support people affected by homelessness, loneliness, mental health and addiction. Although this project is for people suffering and recovering from these issues, I also knew I had to make it appeal to the public since it is located in such a publically accessible place. Engaging the public to be open to understanding how important this project is was key. Often people are more willing to give to animal charities than they are human ones as they are more likely to feel empathy for a victim if we consider them to be helpless and unable to look after themselves, much like an infant or toddler, and we view dogs in the same way — ultimately defenceless and requiring assistance.<sup>4</sup> However that just doesn't seem to be the case for people suffering from homelessness, mental health and addiction problems, the stigma around these issues in fact portrays that these people are not victims. This allowed me to explore another avenue of homelessness experienced by dogs, which ultimately led to my project development. Gateway Canine Trust focusses on the care of dogs where people in the rehoming recovery project responsibly provide them with love and support & vice versa.

## Research

Key areas of research have included support structures, communities, homelessness, loneliness, addiction and mental health. Volunteering at the YMCA in Runcorn allowed me to give back and speak with those who have dealt with similar issues first hand. Speaking with professionals within the design industry who are tackling similar issues was a game changing development in my research when I visited Third Avenue Apartments, supportive housing for formerly homeless residents in the Bronx, New York. I met with the owner, architect and interior designer to get their take on why design is so important when addressing these issues. The trip was very beneficial to my studies and underpins much of my research work. Along with my YMCA work and conversations with my dad (a recovering alcoholic who has previously been homeless) informed my research first hand. My research has enabled me to put together what I believe to be a solid solution for these issues, using design as my tool.

## Outcomes

My intended outcomes for the project are first and foremost to answer my initial project question: Can design solve social issues? I believe it can through the structure, hierarchy, progression through recovery and hybridisation of clients explored in the design of GCT. Secondly I hope to have designed spaces to improve people's lives dealing with these issues first hand and recovering from them. Finally I aim to engage the public through the shared spaces of the park, while helping the dogs and people alike. I would like for all my work to be communicated through my banners, books and models at my degree show. I would also like for all my work to be presented to local authorities and homeless organisations to see if the project could become a reality.



Fig. 9  
Third Avenue Apartments, The Bronx, New York.

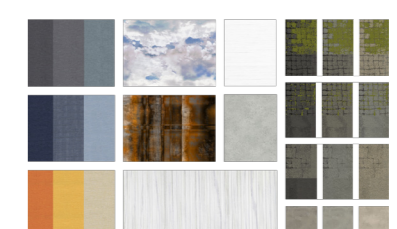


Fig. 10  
Project colour palette/scheme. Bringing the outside in, furniture, wallcovering and flooring finishes.

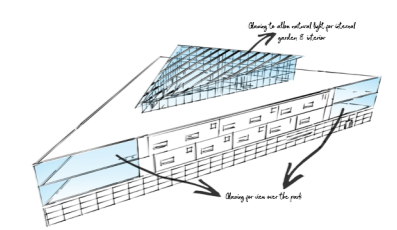


Fig. 11  
3D sketch home complex.

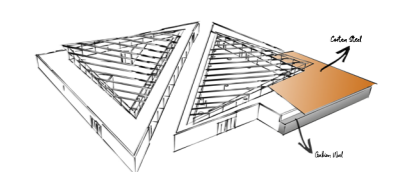


Fig. 12  
3D sketch park cafe kennel.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Walker, R and Jobs, S. (2003). The Guts of a New Machine. The New York Times Magazine . National Edition (1), 6006078.

<sup>2</sup> Bahr, H and Caplow, T. 1974. Old Men Drunk and Sober. New York: New York University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Butler, P. (2018). Rough sleeper numbers in England rise for seventh year running. Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jan/25/rough-sleeper-numbers-in-england-rise-for-seventh-year-running>. Last accessed 07th Mar 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Coren, S. (2017). Why People Sometimes Care More About Dogs Than Humans. Psychology Today. 25 (1), 1-16.

Fig 6 - <http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/>

Fig 9 - <http://www.bronxprogroup.com/portfolio/mnq70e70hkikjprc0hvbv1ryxtmi>