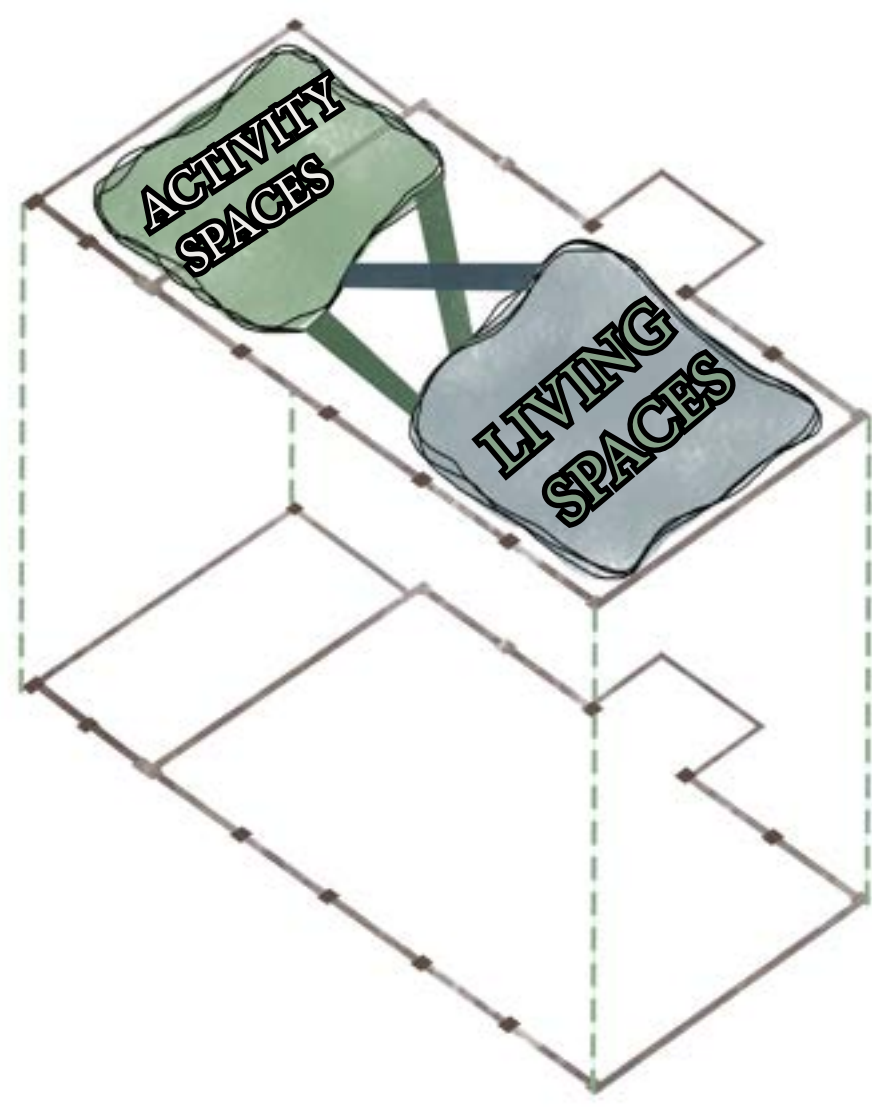


THE CONNECTING POINT

BY CRISTINA FERARU

MANIFESTO

Unite Students is recognised as the largest student accommodation provider, assisting in housing 70000 students across the UK. In their Applicant Index for 2022, the organisation recorded that out of 2038 applicants that applied for an undergraduate degree for the 2022-2023 academic year, 7% of the applicants reported having ASD (autism spectrum disorder) and 8% reported having ADHD/ADD. Overall, 59% of the university applicants reported not having a disability or mental health condition. Presently, there are zero student accommodations built that are designed to assist neurodiverse students. We aspire to create a student accommodation that serves as a microcosm of an ideal society where neurodiverse and neurotypical students live together in harmony, learning from each other and growing together. The goal of this project is to design a living environment that meets the diverse needs of all students, as well as encourage mutual understanding, respect, and collaboration. We can build a future where student housing sets the standard for inclusivity and support, empowering all students to reach their full potential and contribute positively to society. This inclusive and interconnected approach will enrich the lives of students during their academic journey and will also prepare them to be compassionate, understanding and inclusive members of society in the future.

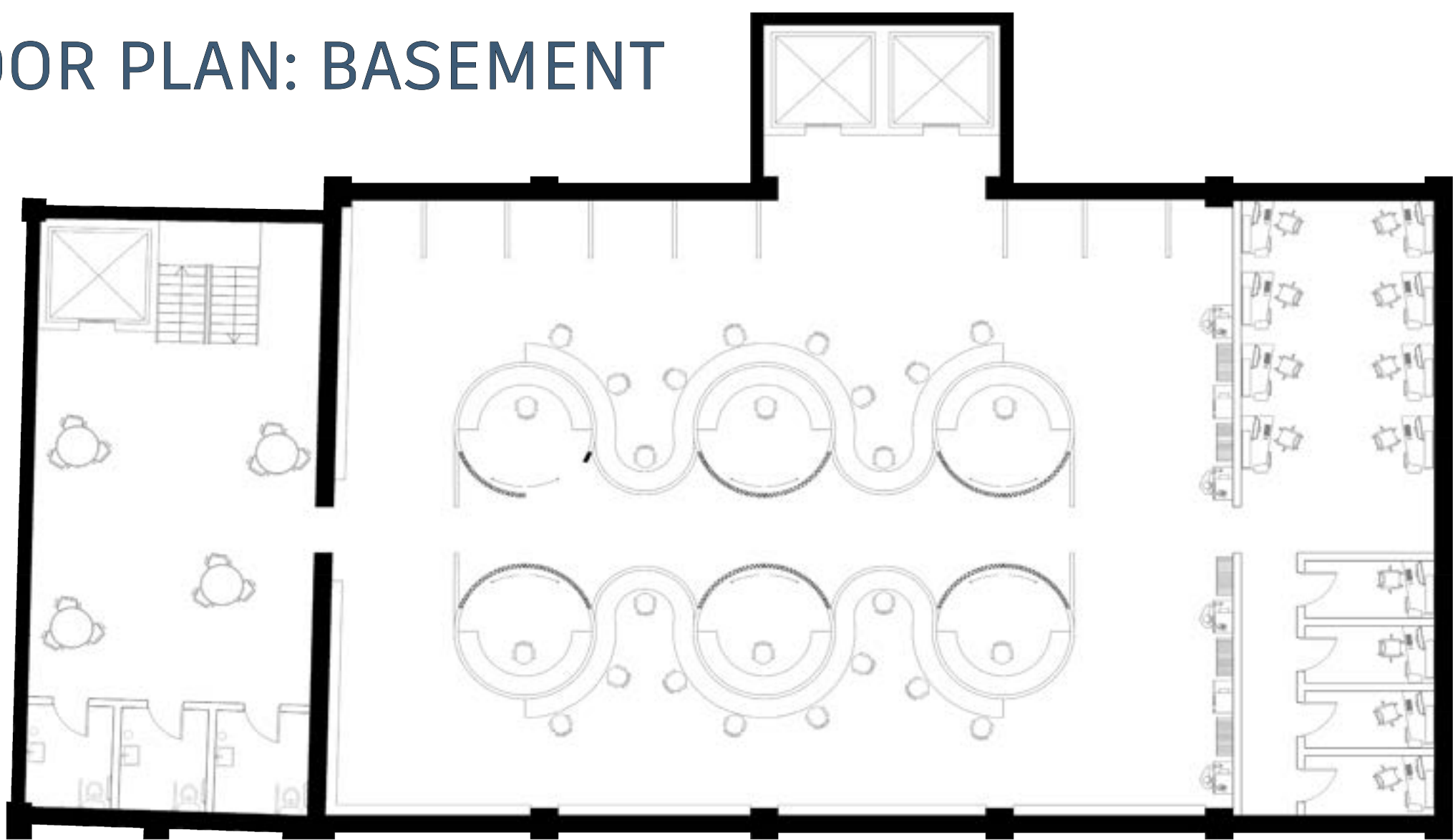


CONCEPT

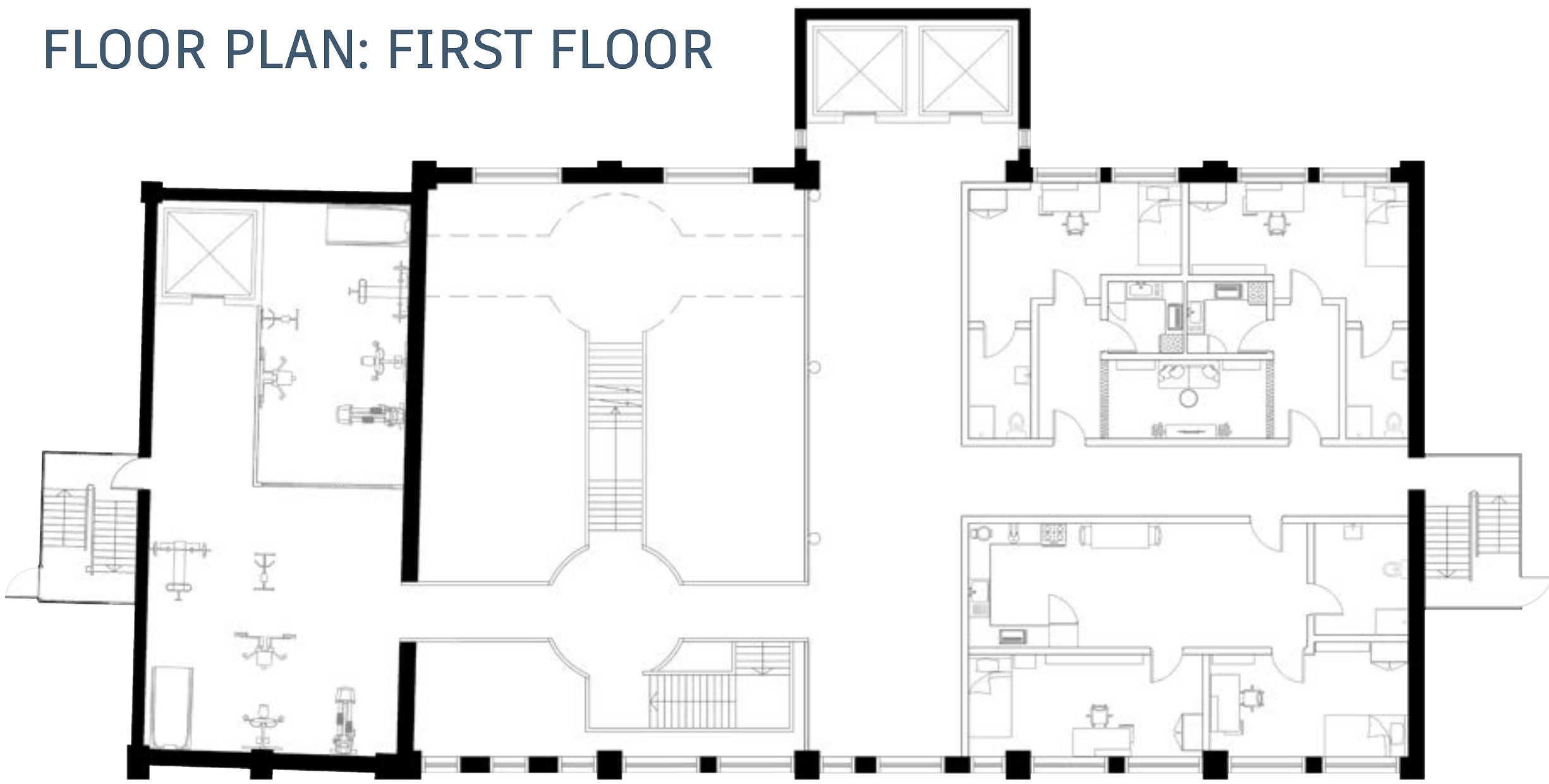
The design layout for The Connecting Point was achieved by dividing the building into two sections; the residential area and the activity zone. The concept for this accommodation began with interconnectivity, with the purpose being to unite neurodiverse and neurotypical students into one building.



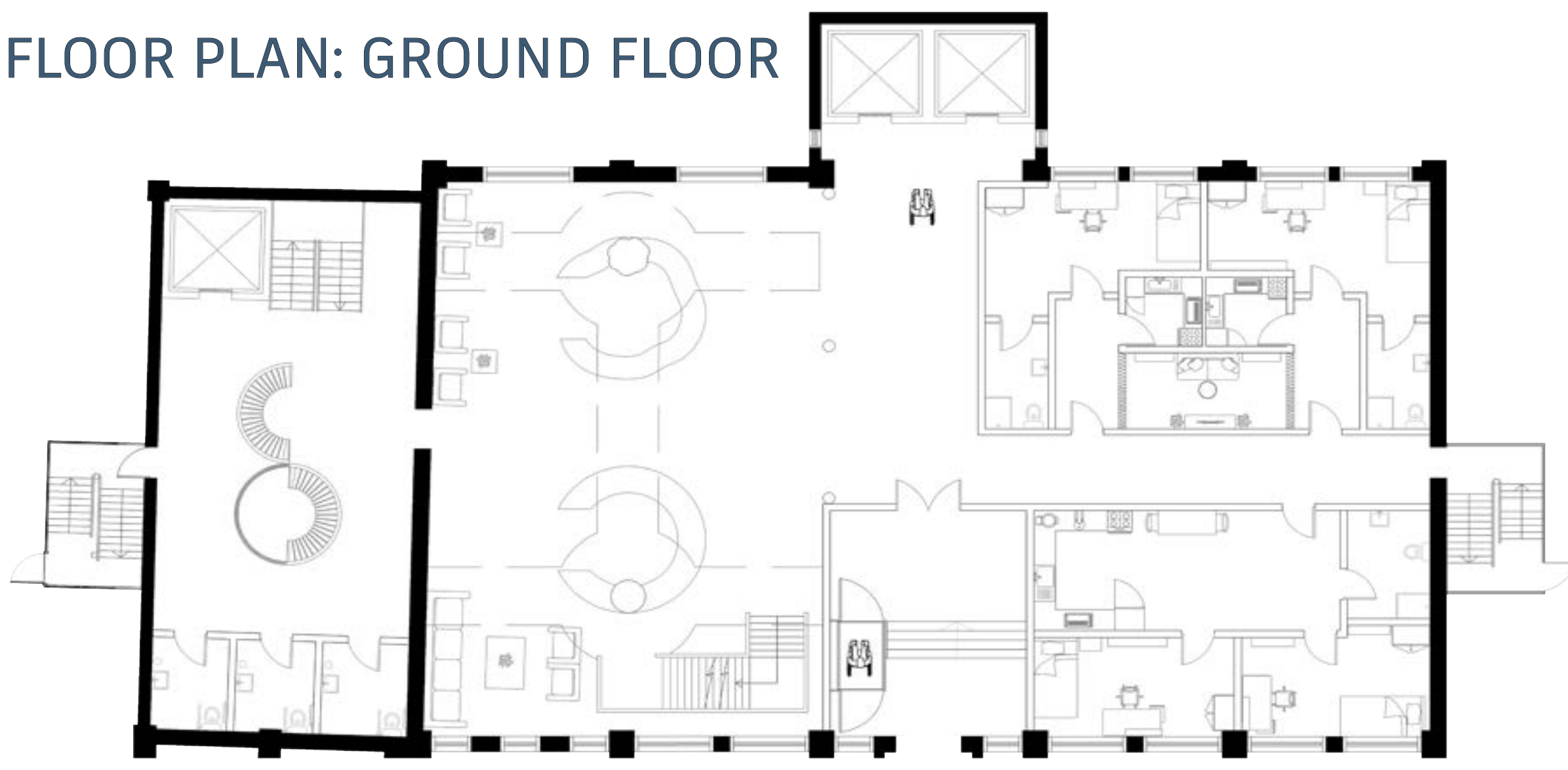
FLOOR PLAN: BASEMENT



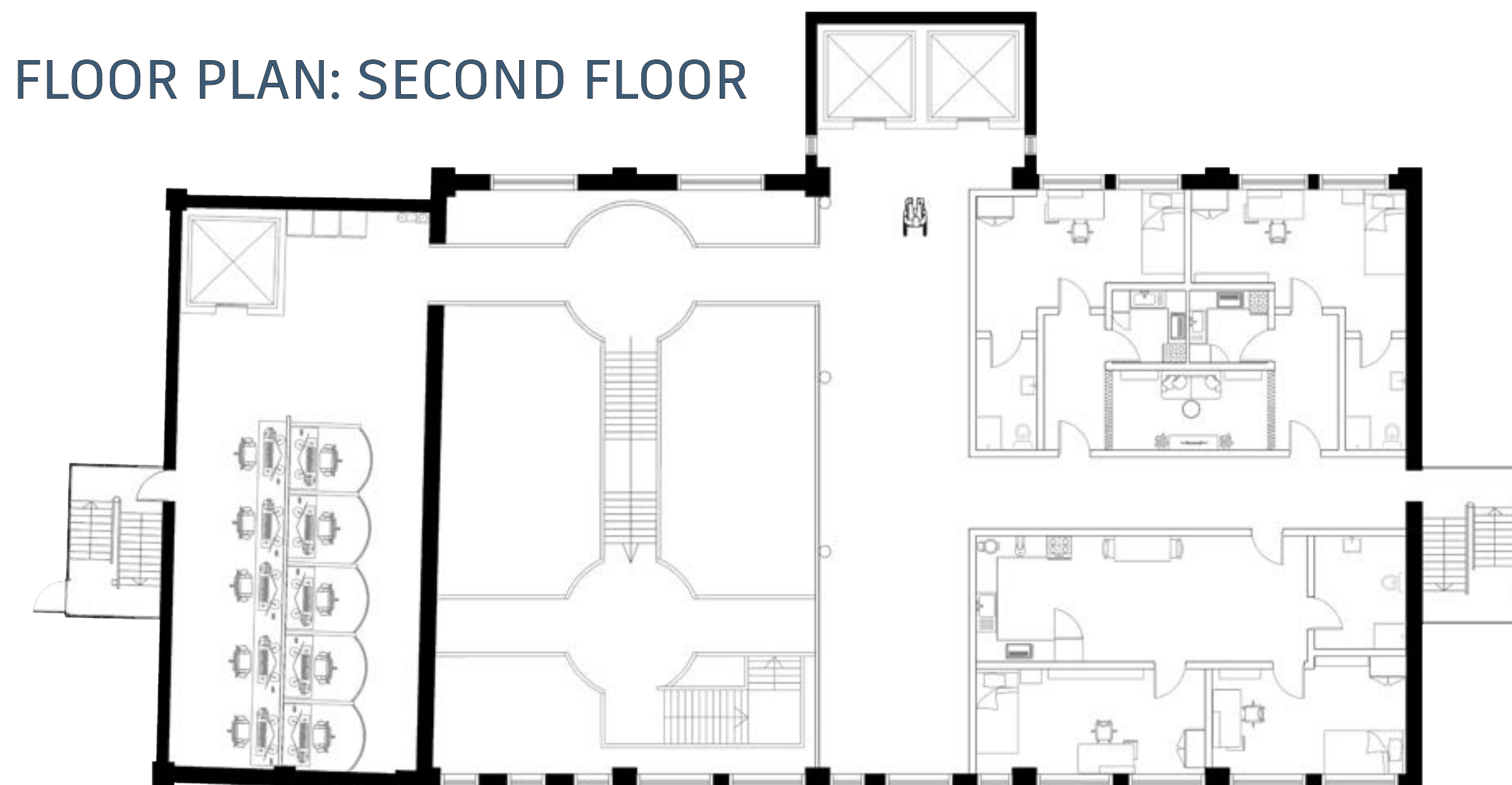
FLOOR PLAN: FIRST FLOOR



FLOOR PLAN: GROUND FLOOR



FLOOR PLAN: SECOND FLOOR

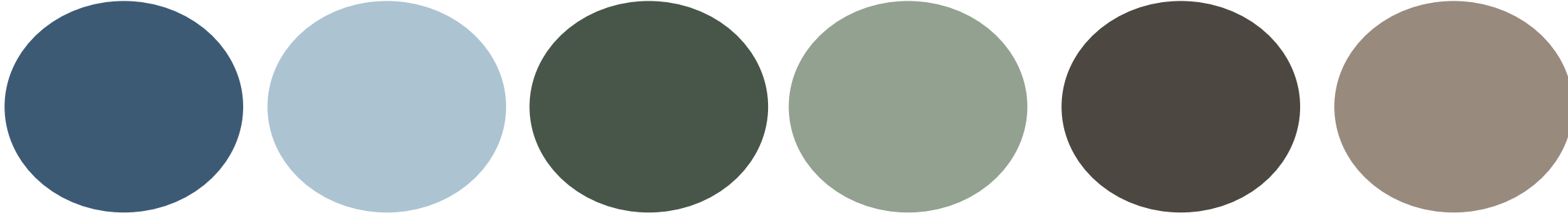


The Connecting Point accommodation was designed to meet the needs of neurodiverse and neurotypical students. Therefore, different features were implemented throughout the whole layout design. One of the main features of the building are the flats, where one side was designed with neurodiverse students in mind, whilst the opposing side was for neurotypical students. Privacy was an important factor when designing for neurodiverse spaces and thus, the kitchen and bathroom are separated and the only shared space within the flat is the living room, which has a flexible wall on each sides of the rooms that can be closed when a busy environment is not desired. Contrastingly, the neurotypical side allows for a more social environment by extending the use of shared spaces. The concept within the flats was carried throughout the whole building, with features such as study pods where people who prefer a quiet space when learning can use, as well as having an open space right outside the pods for students who prefer learning in a social environment.

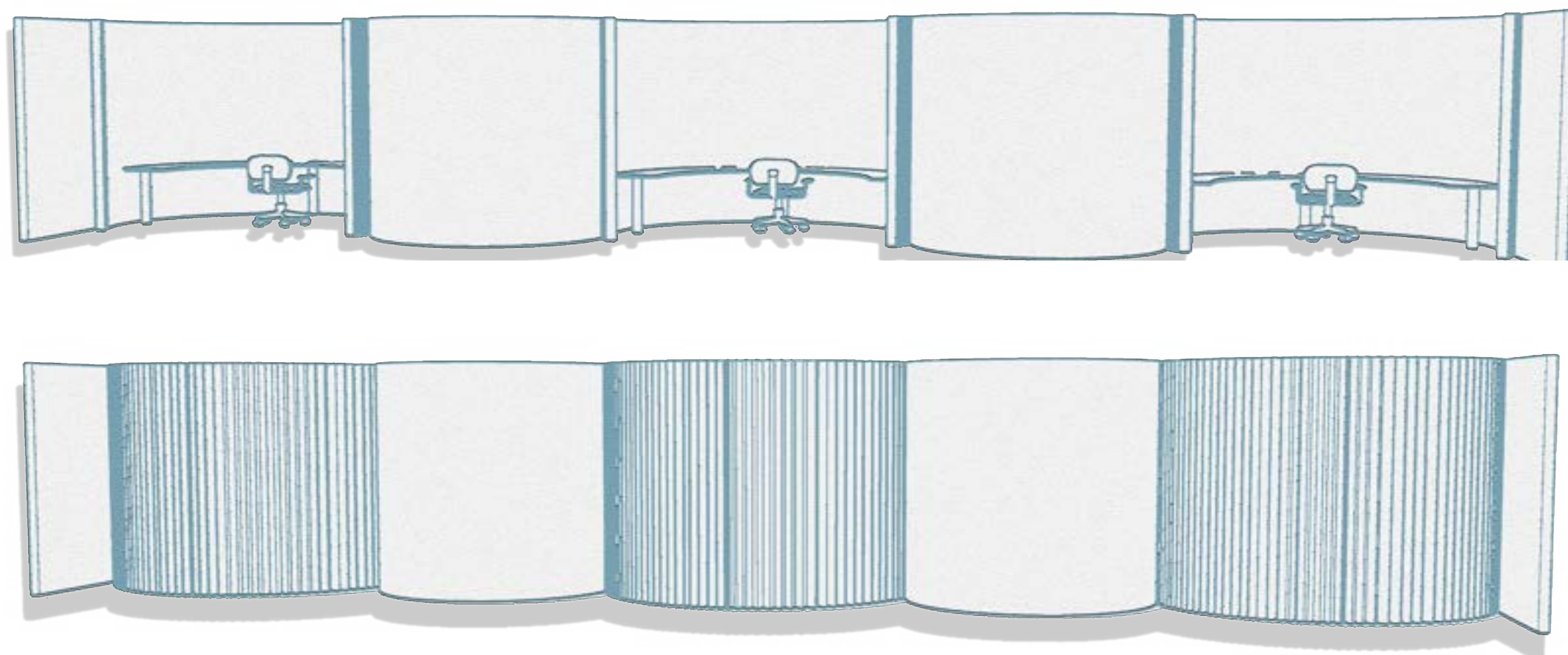
Although these spaces were designed with these groups in mind, the main purpose of this accommodation was to encourage all students to interact and utilise any feature of the building to which they find suitable. Thus, if a neurotypical student wished to live in the flat designed for neurodiversity, they would be able to do so, and vice versa.

COLOUR PALETTE

A student accommodation should be reminiscent of a safe environment, where people feel calm and relaxed. A significant feature of the interior of a building that could greatly impact the residents are colours, as studies have suggested that different shades and hues could affect people's emotions. Thus, when designing a student residence that acknowledges the needs of both neurological groups, researchers have found that both neurodiverse and neurotypical people may share some common colour preferences, such as cool shades of green, blue, and neutral earth tones, which evoke a calming effect due to serving as a reminder of nature.



STUDY PODS



The study pods, which are located in the library, feature a flexible partition wall that allows for privacy, as well as a quiet space for students that prefer this type of environment when learning.

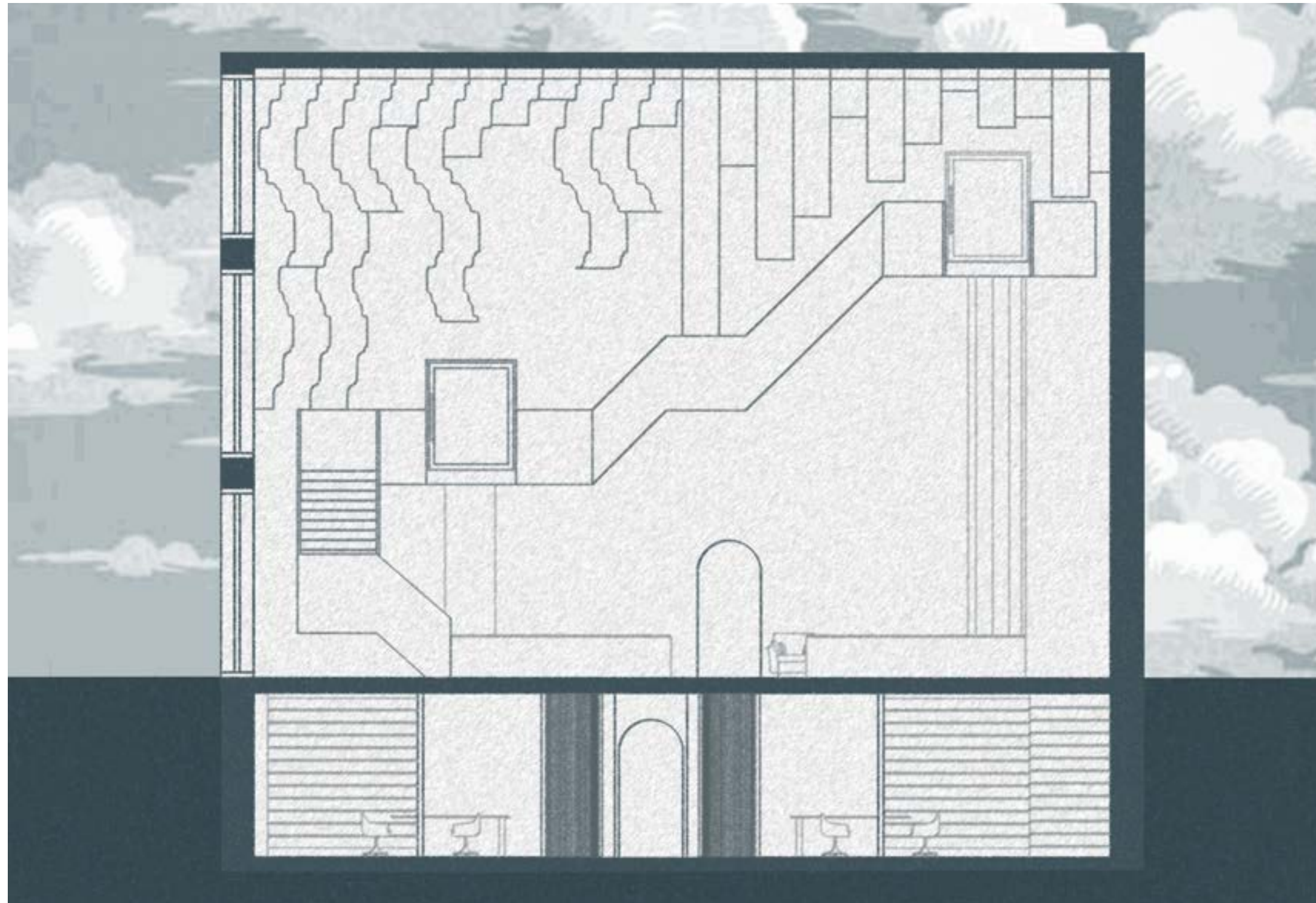
SECTION A



MATERIALS



SECTION B



VISUALS

