

**Maggie's  
Cancer Care Centre,  
Cheltenham**

Maggie's Centres are unique environments that aim to support anyone affected by cancer and their family and friends. They have grown from the ideas of Maggie Keswick Jencks who formulated a vision of a cancer caring centre that could make the experience of diagnosis and treatment easier to bear.



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- 01. Kitchen area
- 02. Dining room area
- 03. Building model
- 04. Ground floor plan

The new building has been conceived as a piece of inhabited furniture which, through the extraordinary craftsmanship of the joiners, conveys a very special sense of care.

**New building - response to context**

The new facility has been formed by renovating a grade II listed Victorian lodge, next to the river Chelt, and adding a large new single storey extension.

The new building sits between the lodge and the river, creating a variety of intimate external spaces: informal entrance approach, a 'secret garden' at the front and a terrace with a view over the river. Glass links between the lodge and the extension and connecting the free-standing 'pods' to the main building allow axial views to the outside.

**Domestic intimacy**

The new centre provides a free drop-in service for cancer sufferers and their families, offering information, emotional and psychological support both individually and in groups, courses and stress reducing strategies.

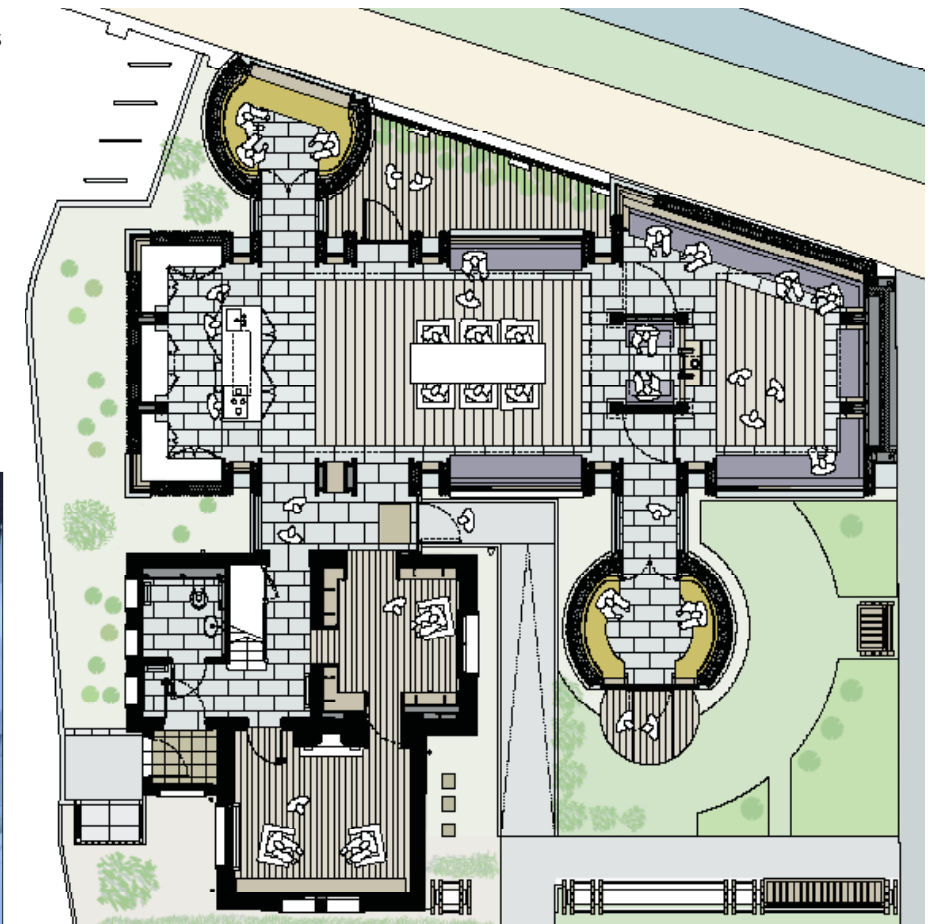
The extension building gathers together spaces of differing scale: larger, more formal - kitchen, dining room, and snug; and the more intimate - pods, alcoves and inglenook.

Thanks to openable timber screens, internal spaces can be sub-divided and enclosed to adapt to the needs of groups and individuals. The snug behind the inglenook can be enclosed to create a room for tai chi.

Maggie's Cheltenham, with its combination of openness and intimacy, communal and private contemplative spaces, is intended to provide an inspiring and welcoming place for all of its visitors.



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- 01. Kitchen area - view into the lodge
- 02. Library - view into the entrance area
- 03. View through the kitchen area into the pod
- 04. Built-in seating

**Inhabited Furniture**

The new building has been conceived as a piece of inhabited furniture which, through the extraordinary craftsmanship of the joiners, conveys to those who come to this centre, a very special sense of care.

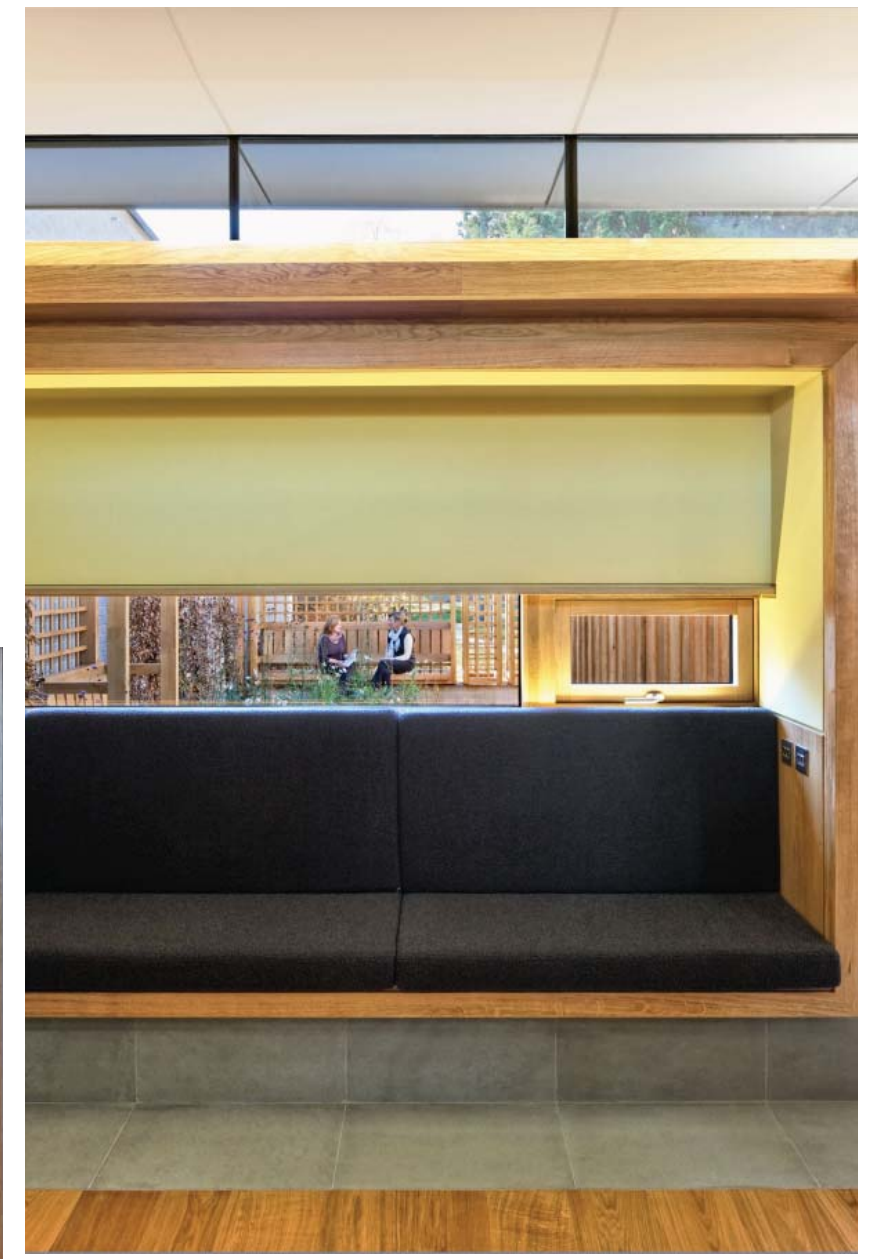
The interior is defined by distinct oak 'cabinets' – containing bookcases, storage and comfortable bench seating - which enclose the major space, a kitchen and dining area with a large table providing a social focus.

The floating roof is disengaged from the timber 'cabinets' by the continuous clerestory glazing, allowing natural light to flood the space.

Two cylindrical 'refuges' offering views onto the river and the garden and providing more secluded spaces are expressed as free-standing external pieces of furniture.



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- 01. Front garden
- 02. 'Secret garden'
- 03. River terrace
- 04. Inglenook structure
- 05. Column detail

**A timber pergola next to the lodge creates a more intimate space between the Victorian building and the new pavillion.**



01.

**Garden - gradation of privacy**

A monumental Wellingtonia tree dominates the front garden of the lodge. A timber pergola next to the lodge creates a more intimate space between the Victorian building and the new pavillion, introducing the gradation of space from semi-formal, through semi-private entrance approach, to the private 'secret garden'.

The terrace opening onto the river Chelt benefits from a landscape of mature trees along the river, while maintaining its quality of an intimate external space located in a 'pocket' behind the new building.



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**Roof and External Wall**

The structure supporting the steel and timber roof consists of 8 cruciform steel columns supporting longitudinal composite i-beams formed with channels. This enables the roof to float over a non loadbearing external envelope conceived as series of pieces of furniture which form alcoves capped by a continuous cornice. This gives rigidity to the whole assembly, and reflects daylight under the roof. The joinery envelope perches on the upstand at the edge of the concrete raft framing and ensuring externally that the oak cladding stops short of the ground.

**Inglenook Structure**

The focus of the interior is the inglenook which is conceived as a small room within the larger scale of the main space. This enables the main space to be subdivided by two large hinged screen doors which fold into the sides of the structure. Sliding folding shutters above the stove serve the same purpose. A concealed clerestory provides acoustic separation between the cornice and the underside of the roof.

Like the alcoves at the perimeter, this structure is articulated as a framed enclosure separate from the oversailing cornice. The cruciform steel columns supporting the roof are embedded in the joinery from which they emerge through apertures in the cornice. The intricacy of this was inspired by images of trellises and screens in Maggie Keswick's 'The Chinese Garden'.

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