

CAVENDISH SPACE

A psychologically and sensory safe environment where people can focus, rest, and collaborate on their own terms — and shape their surroundings together. It is our name for lived context: bodies and nervous systems, sensory conditions, social rules and power, tools and layouts, history and memory, all shaping each other at once.

SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON CONDITIONS, NOT WILLPOWER.

SPACE SHAPES PEOPLE · PEOPLE SHAPE SPACE

CAVES

Quiet, low-stimulation places for withdrawal and recovery. Safety and regulation. Somewhere to be unobserved and stop performing — not a reward for finishing, and not a place you have to earn.

CAMPFIRES

Small-group places for storytelling, learning and reflection. Meaning gets made here, between a few people, at a pace a nervous system can follow.

WATERING HOLES

Open places for gathering, exchange, resource sharing and mutual aid. Where you find out what is going on and who has what.

“Healthy systems need all three — not just productivity zones. And Cavendish Space is never neutral. It is always co-created.”

STIMPUNKS FOUNDATION · CAVENDISH SPACE

WHO THE CONDITIONS LAND ON

People differ in how strongly a place shapes them, and the difference is the whole reason to design carefully.

- **Dandelions** tend to be resilient across many conditions.
- **Tulips** do best in supportive contexts and can cope in moderate ones.
- **Orchids** are deeply shaped by conditions — they *thrive* in the right environment and *struggle* in a harmful one.

Design for all three by shaping the context, not by forcing everyone toward a single norm. **An environment that only works for dandelions is not a neutral environment. It is a filter.**

WHAT IT DOES, AND DOESN'T

- ✓ it does treat access as environmental work
- ✓ it does make care structural rather than optional
- ✓ it does centre lived experience over theory
- ✓ it does **not** frame difference as deficit
- ✓ it does **not** expect people to push through harm
- ✓ it does **not** pretend space is neutral or fair

HOW YOU BUILD IT

- **Niche construction, done together.** Reshape the place to suit real bodies and minds. Do not treat context as fixed, and do not leave adaptation to the person it costs most.
- **Lily pads.** Small deliberate supports placed inside the space: pause points and landing zones that reduce transitional harm and hold pacing, memory and attention. They turn change into a series of survivable steps.
- **Clear paths between the three places,** and predictable rhythms of activity and rest. Safety comes from pattern, not from constant novelty.

If we ignore lived context, we blame individuals for structural harm. If we name it, we can build conditions where people actually survive.

INDIVIDUAL COPING → SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE · FORCED ADAPTATION → MUTUAL DESIGN

Adapted from the *Cavendish Space Why Sheet* at stimpunks.org/why/cavendish-space, which carries the full detail. *Where the name comes from is on the glossary page, not on this sheet.* Caves, campfires and watering holes are long-standing patterns for withdrawal, small-group meaning-making and exchange — called **primordial spaces** not because they are primitive but because they are deeply familiar to human nervous systems. **Lily pads**, **collaborative niche construction**, and the dandelion / tulip / orchid sensitivity framing are all set out in full on the Why Sheet and across stimpunks.org, along with *Designing Sensory-Safe Spaces* and *Create a Neurodiversity Inclusive Environment*.