



Maggie's Centres

Background

In 1995, our founder, Maggie Keswick Jencks, wrote this about her experience of cancer:

"A diagnosis of cancer hits you like a punch in the stomach... No road. No compass. No map. No training... At one time, I could not sit, or lie, or stand, listen or speak coherently because my shattered mind vibrated so violently through my body I felt I might disintegrate."

Over the course of seven years, Maggie experienced cancer diagnosis, treatment, remission and recurrence. During that time, she took the insight and experience she had gained and transformed it into a pioneering approach to cancer care.

Among Maggie's beliefs about cancer treatment was the importance of environment to a person dealing with cancer. She talked about the need for "thoughtful lighting, a view out to trees, birds and sky," and the opportunity "to relax and talk away from home cares". She talked about the need for a welcoming, reassuring space, as well as a place for privacy, where someone can take in information at their own pace.

We've taken Maggie's blueprint for a model of cancer care and grown it into a network of Centres across the UK, supporting and empowering hundreds of thousands of people with cancer, as well as their families and friends.

Maggie's Centres give people with cancer, their families and friends somewhere to turn to at an extremely difficult moment in their lives. Always close to a major cancer hospital, they are informal "domestic" buildings where people can draw on practical, emotional and social support when they need it, without the need for a referral or an appointment.

They are calm, friendly places whose object is to help ordinary people who have cancer find the hope, determination and resources they need to cope with one of the toughest challenges any of us is likely to have to face.

Maggie's has learned to ask a lot of its buildings and their landscapes, and hence a lot from its architects and garden designers. Our buildings are special, not for some luxury add-on value, but because we need them to do so much for us. They set the scene and the tone for everything that happens at Maggie's.

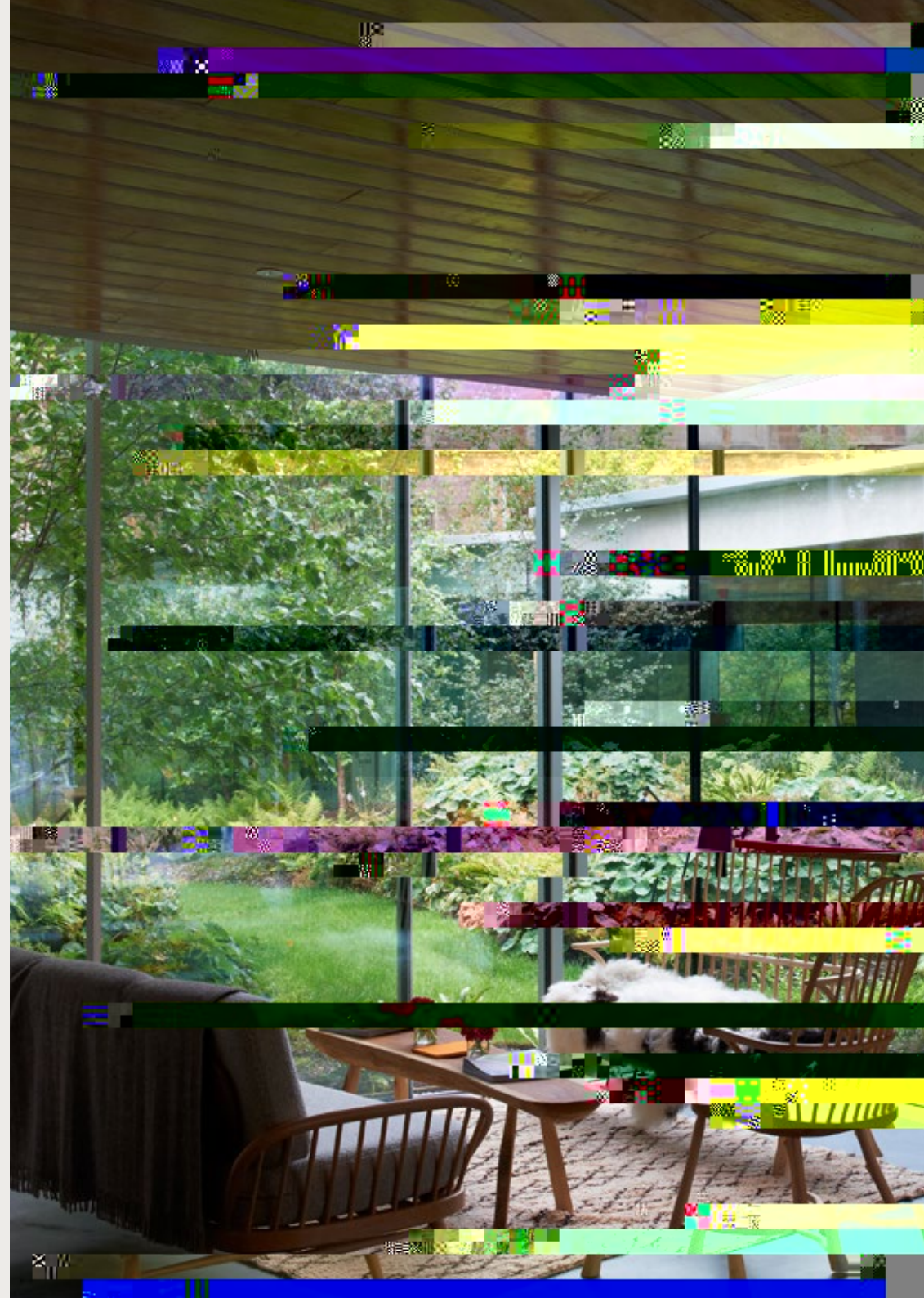
The job of those who work at Maggie's, is to help people work out how to live with cancer. Each person needs to find the way that is right for him or herself, but most people will need some help, at some stage, in finding out what their own way is. Maggie's has a carefully worked out series of options, a "set of tools" to choose from... from individual to group support, workshops on different aspects of living with cancer, relaxation strategies and help with information.

We ask our landscape designers and our architects to work closely together from the beginning of a project. It would be wonderful if we could work with a particular artist from the very beginning of the project too. The interplay between outside and inside space, the built and the "natural" environment is an important one. Sheltered inside, it helps to be reminded by a seasonal and changing scene outside, that you are still part of a living world.

We hope that our landscape gardeners will use their planting plans to incorporate scent as well as sight, to think about how their planting will behave in the rain as well as in the sun, to create areas which will have filtered privacy, to plant bulbs which will come up each year, trees and shrubs that bud and blossom and berry, plants that even "die well" before returning next year.

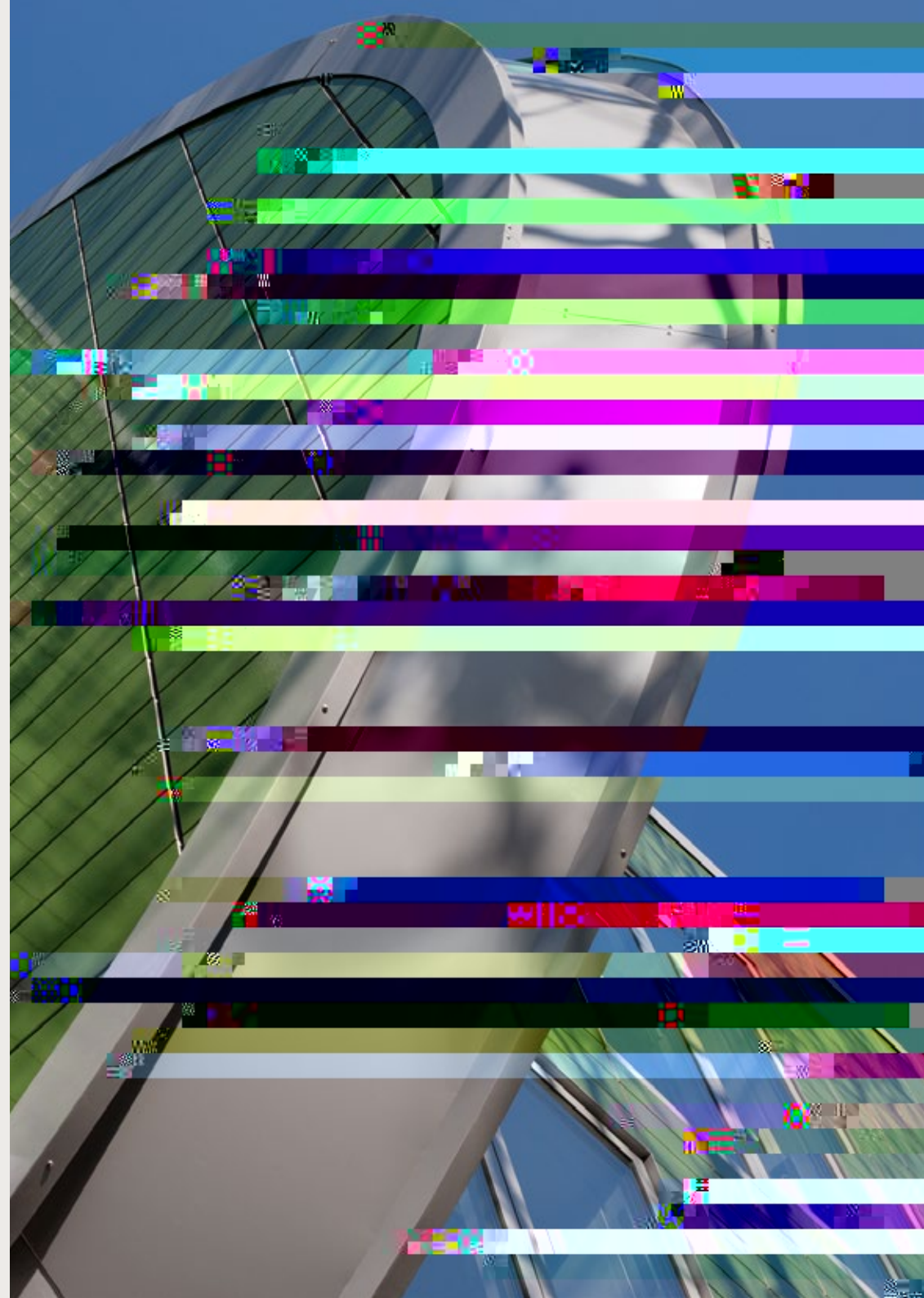
Sometimes, all that a person can bear, if they are in acute distress, is to look out of the window from a sheltered place, at the branch of a tree moving in the wind. We would like there to be as many opportunities as possible to look out from wherever you are in the building, even if it is to an internal planted courtyard.

We want our buildings to coax people out of their feeling of isolation and to help them feel less locked in. We need spaces that make it easy for people to talk to each



Maggie's and its local community

Each Maggie's Centre is unlike any of the others. We need the local community to





Spatial Requirements

We want the ethos to be domestic. There should be as much natural light as possible.

Entrance: The entrance should be obvious, welcoming, and not intimidating, with a place to hang your coat and leave your brolly. The door should not be draughty, so perhaps there should be a lobby.

Entrance/welcome area: We think of this as a "pause" space, in which a newcomer can see and assess what's going on without feeling they have to jump right in. The first impression must be encouraging. There should be somewhere for you and a friend or relative to sit, a shelf with some books and an ability to assess, more or less, the layout of the rest of the building.

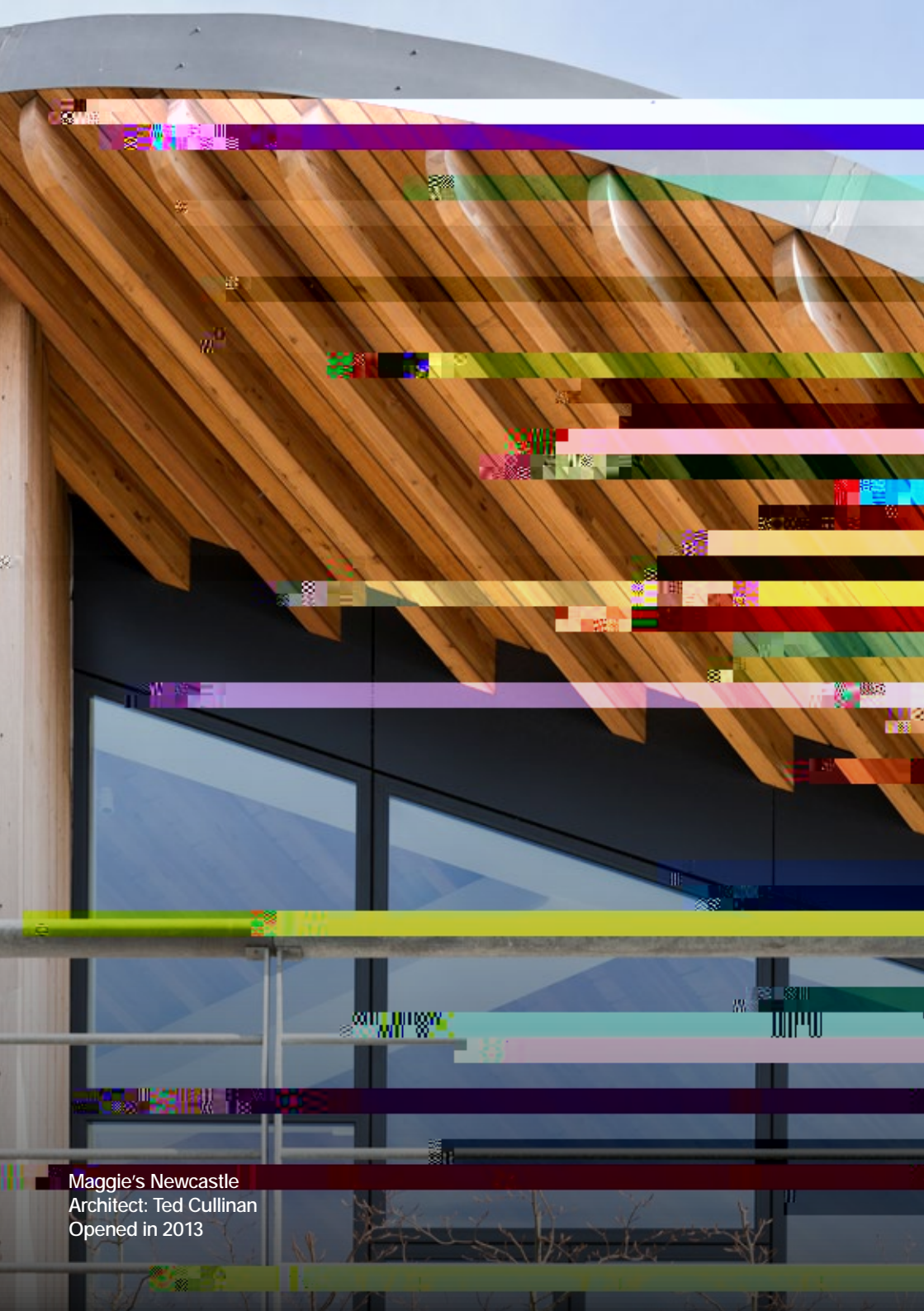
Office: The office space should be discreet but positioned so that a member of staff working at their desk can spot somebody new coming in to the Centre, (there will be no reception desk). There should be generous storage room for stationery and leaflets. Space will be needed for a photocopier, printer, server etc. Each of the three main workstations needs a telephone, computer point and light, shelf and drawer space. As well as the main ones there should be six smaller workstations.

Kitchen: The kitchen area should have room for a large table to seat 12 and is usually the main hub of the building. A fairly large "island" with additional seating for two or three people is essential for nutrition workshops, and extra space for setting up food or drinks. You need to be able to move around the table, and between it and the island. The layout of the kitchen should encourage people to help themselves to tea and coffee. We need ideally two dishwashers (or one large and one small), a large fridge or two smaller ones, one and a half sinks, an oven and a hob.

Computer desk: We need two computer areas for people visiting the Centre who want to access information online, and these need to be within shouting distance of the office area for help if needed...the two areas don't have to be side by side.

Notice board: There should be space for a notice board to include fundraising and programme messaging – somewhere subtle, not too "in your face" but visible.

Library: A place to find books and information and be able to sit and look at them comfortably. Some part of the library needs to have shelving for leaflets and booklets.



Maggie's Newcastle
Architect: Ted Cullinan
Opened in 2013

Budget

Our buildings need to be built as economically as possible, without compromising what we are trying to achieve. We know that any kind of "complex" building costs more to build, but it will have to be borne in mind, at design level, that we have a finite building budget and that subsequent building maintenance and cleaning should be as economical as possible. We don't want to have to assemble scaffolding to change a light bulb, for instance. We won't be employing full time gardeners.

This brief is a generic one. Each new Centre will vary in size in proportion to the local cancer population, and there will be site specific variations.

What will not vary is the requirement to build a beautiful, small, humane building, which raises your spirits when you walk into it.

Client Team

Maggie's has a small client team and we like to be involved at every stage of the design from the commissioning of the building right through to the opening and beyond. This is a personal not a "committee" project.

As clients, we see our job as trying to imagine, at every level, how these buildings will work for the people who will be using them. We want to enjoy ourselves, and for you to do so too. We think we will get a better result if we do. We want to be surprised and delighted. If we are, the people who come to them will be too.



www.maggiescentres.org

Maggie's Keswick Jencks Cancer Caring Trust (Maggie's) is a registered charity, No. SC024414

