

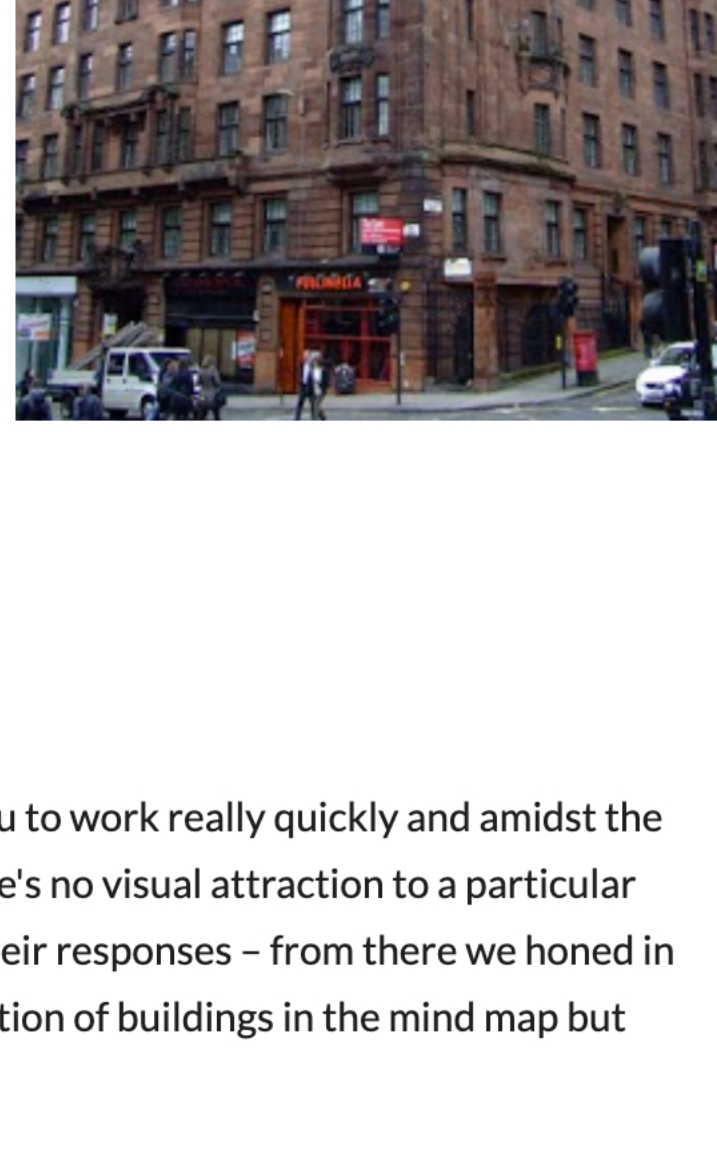
Glasgow office mural

My friend went to Glasgow and all I got was this lousy mural...

Learning Pool acquired MediaCorp in June 2018. Their offices were situated in Hamilton which is about 13km east of Glasgow city centre. As of Monday 10th December the Scottish team started to operate out of a lovely new office space in Turnberry House – an impressive red sandstone building located in Glasgow's city centre.

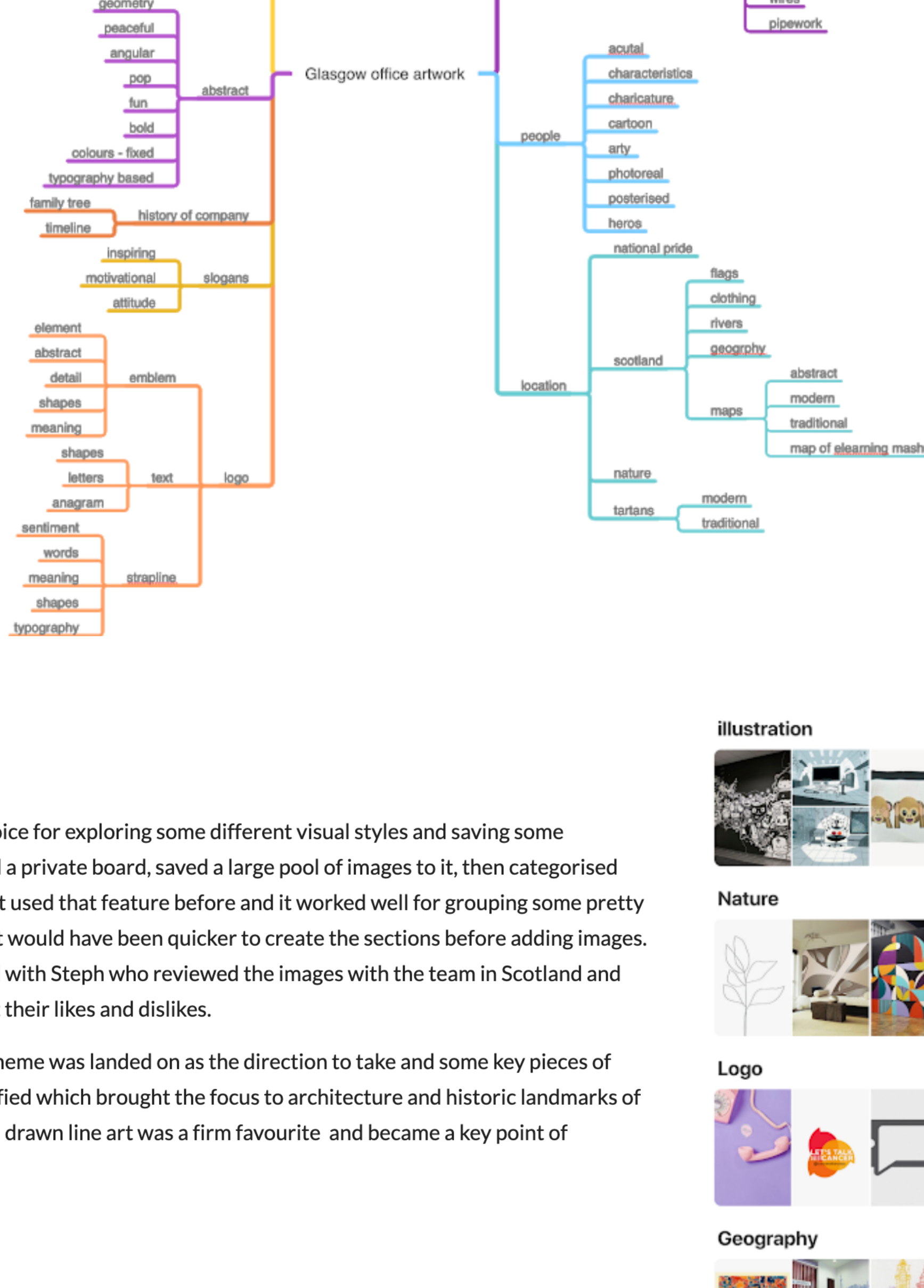
Steph Wood, who project managed the move, asked me to help design some artwork for the office walls to which I immediately said YES! I was excited at the opportunity to design work on a large scale, honoured to have that trust placed in me, and keen to honour the creative spirit of those talented folk up North. The enormous blank canvases opened up before me and I was reminded of how exciting fear can be and with that in mind I got started thinking about how to fill up that canvas.

This project was a unique experience for me so I thought I'd jot down a few words and share some of that experience and how things came together.



Mind Map

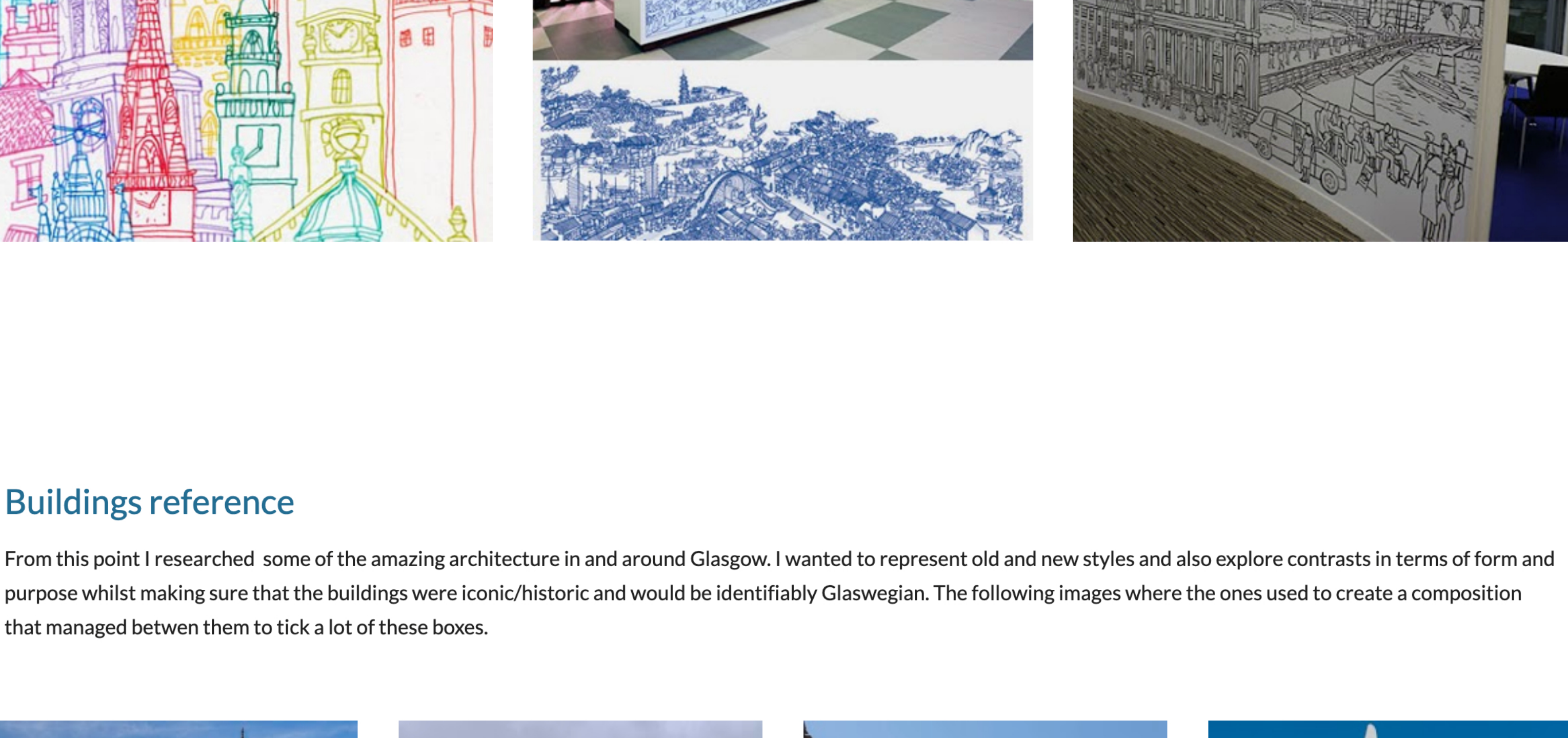
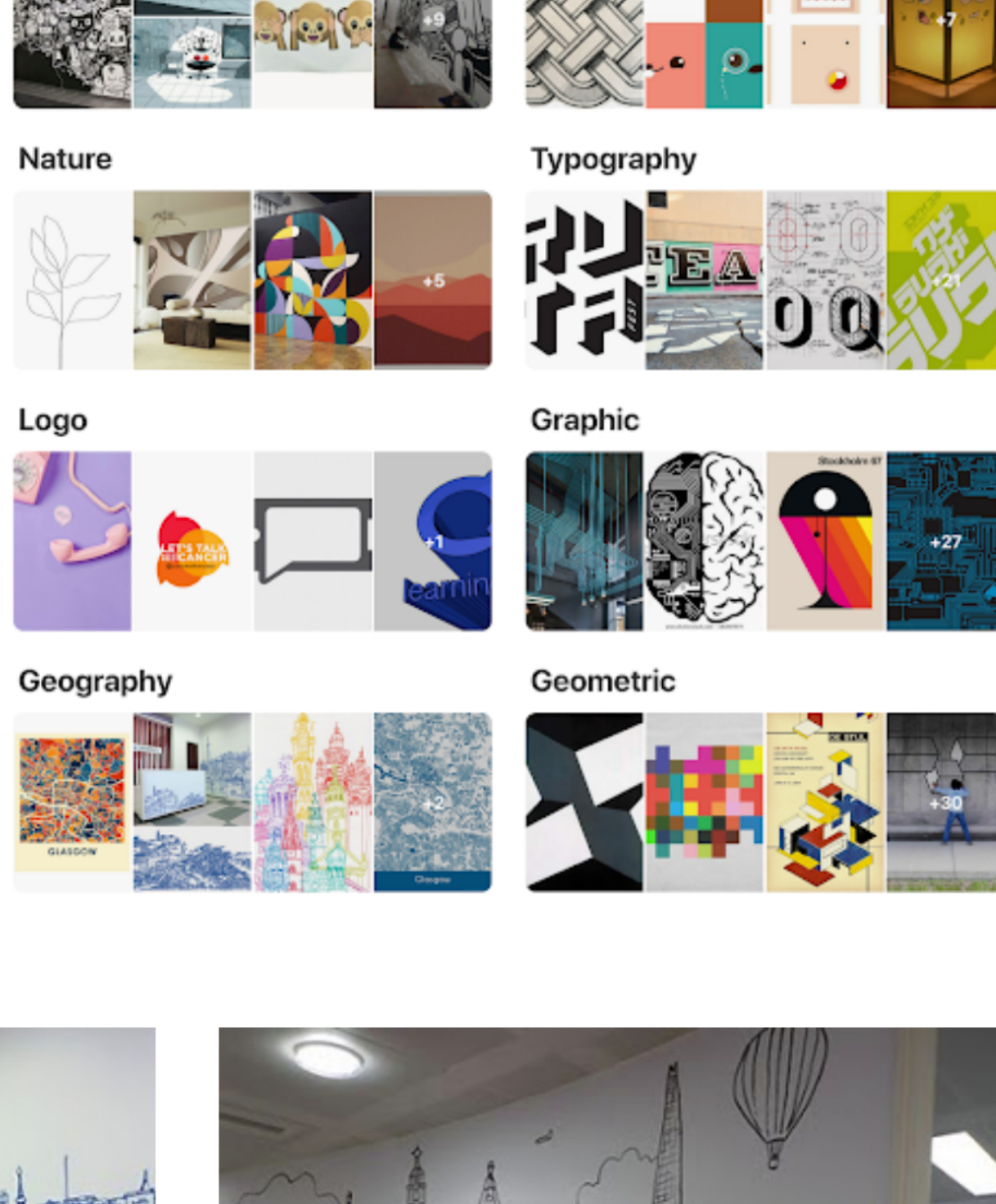
So first things first I put down some ideas in a mind map. For me this is always a really useful way of exploring associations. It enables you to work really quickly and amidst the really obvious ideas that flow out there can be found some seeds of more interesting ideas. I really like the fact that by using words there's no visual attraction to a particular idea and also that there are no wrong answers. I talked over the mind map with Steph who liaised with the Scottish team and collated their responses – from there we honed in on the concepts that had resonated and used them as jumping off points for visual research. (It's interesting to note that there's no mention of buildings in the mind map but that's not to say that it didn't lead to lead the way there.)



Visual Research

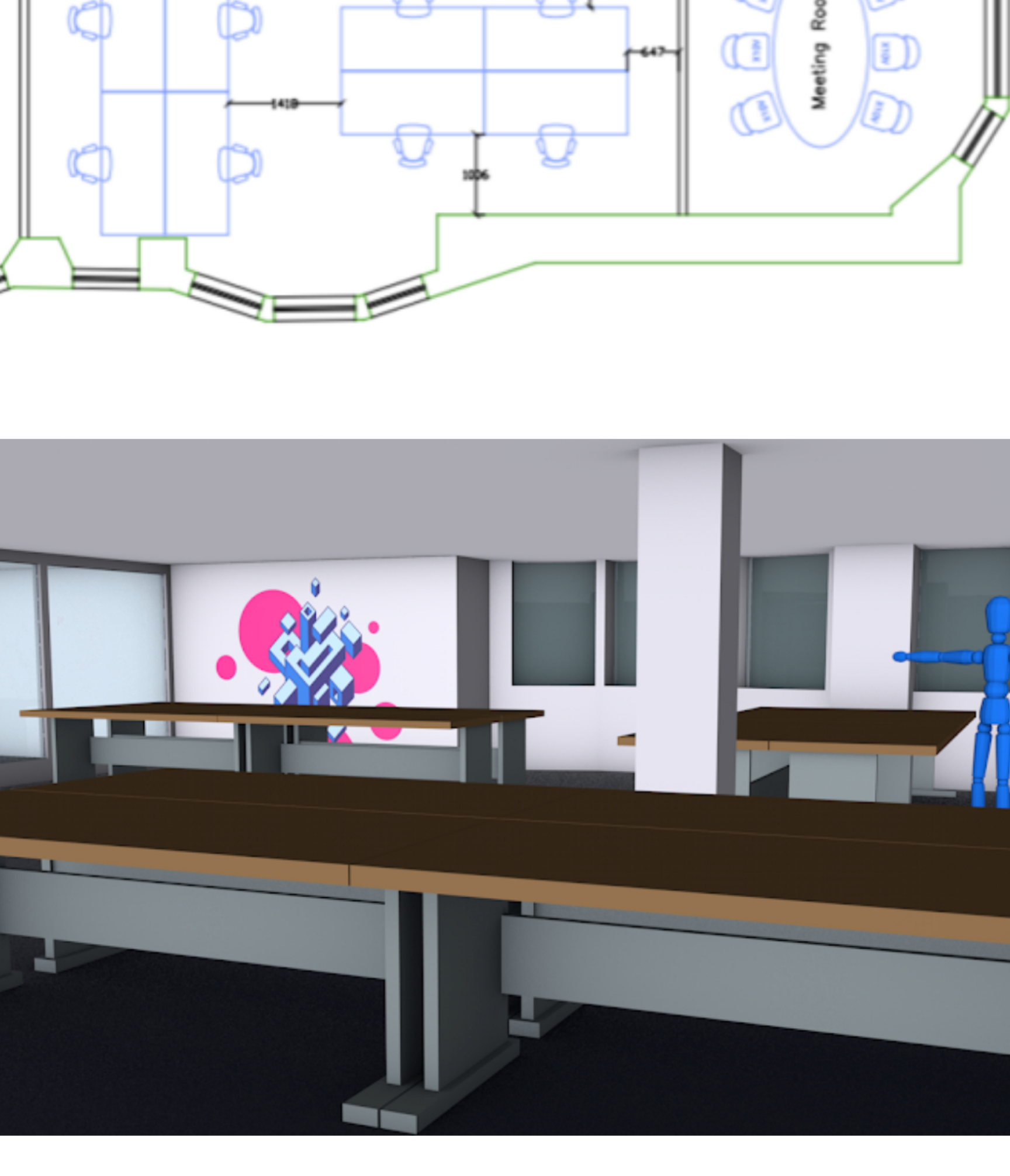
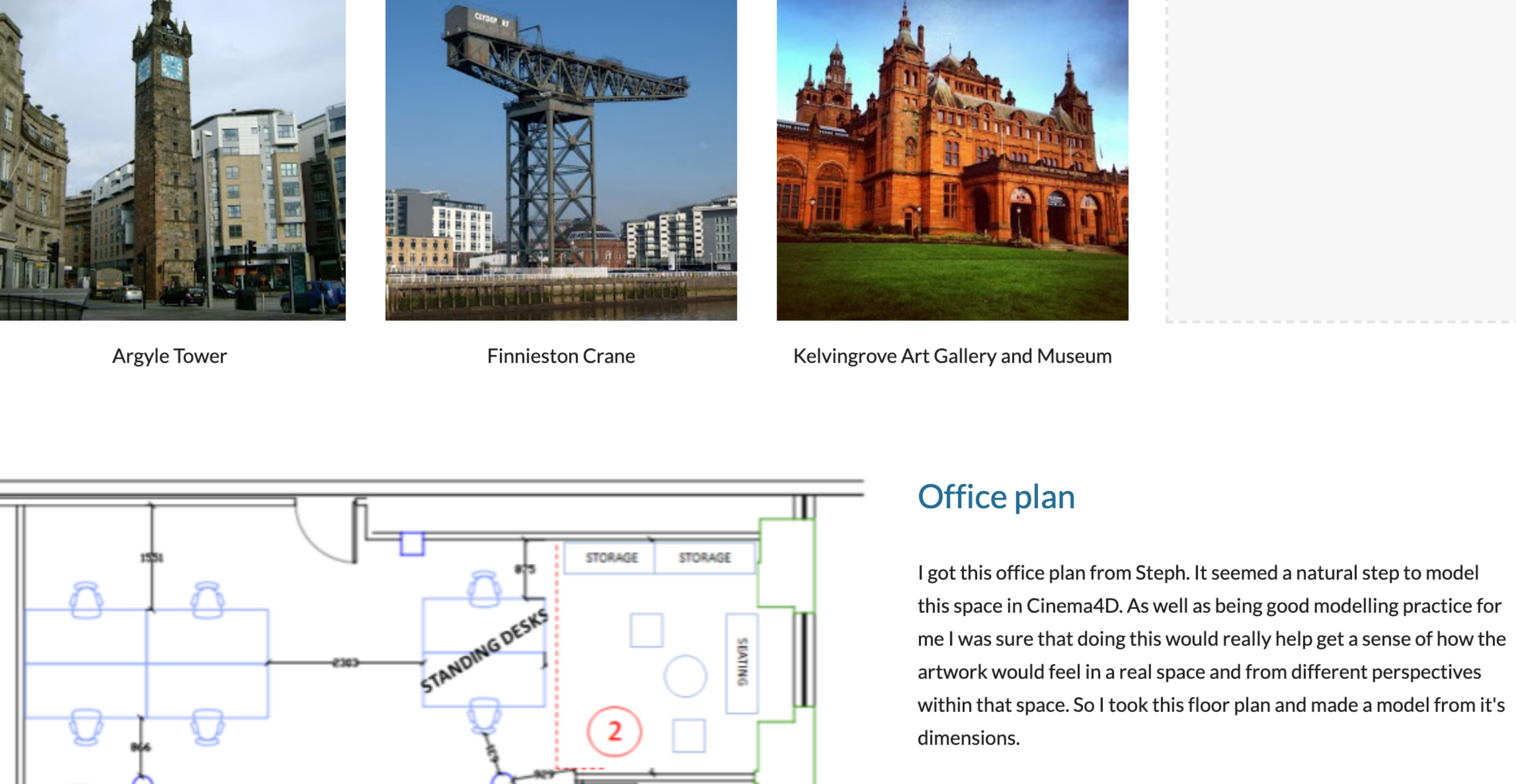
Pinterest was the tool of choice for exploring some different visual styles and saving some reference material. I created a private board, saved a large pool of images to it, then categorised them using 'sections'. I've not used that feature before and it worked well for grouping some pretty disparate images, although it would have been quicker to create the sections before adding images. I shared this Pinterest board with Steph who reviewed the images with the team in Scotland and made comments to highlight their likes and dislikes.

Some kind of geographical theme was landed on as the direction to take and some key pieces of visual reference were identified which brought the focus to architecture and historic landmarks of Glasgow. The colourful hand drawn line art was a firm favourite and became a key point of reference.



Buildings reference

From this point I researched some of the amazing architecture in and around Glasgow. I wanted to represent old and new styles and also explore contrasts in terms of form and purpose whilst making sure that the buildings were iconic/historic and would be identifiably Glaswegian. The following images were the ones used to create a composition that managed between them to tick a lot of these boxes.



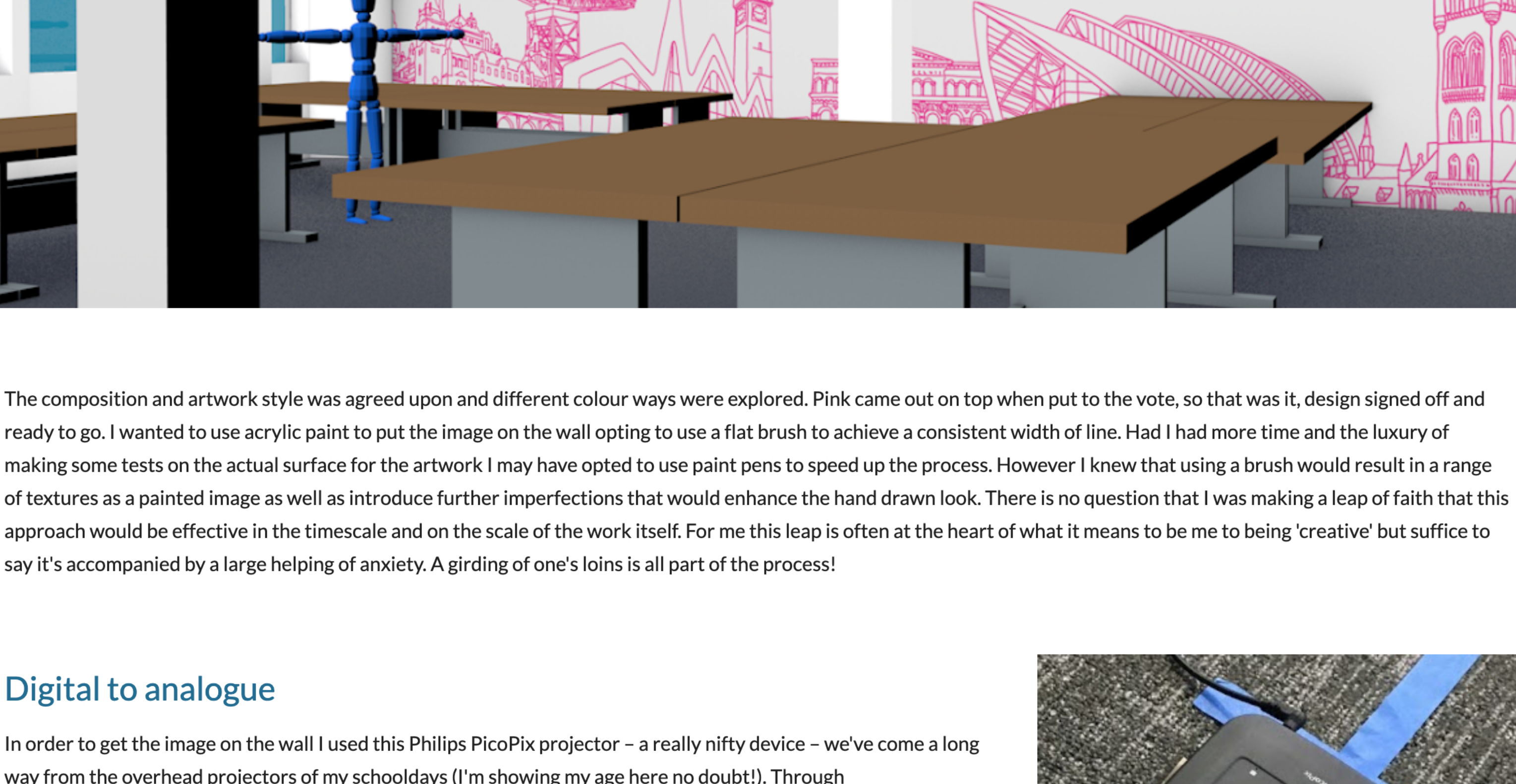
Office plan

I got this office plan from Steph. It seemed a natural step to model this space in Cinema4D. As well as being good modelling practice for me I was sure that doing this would really help get a sense of how the artwork would feel in a real space and from different perspectives within that space. So I took this floor plan and made a model from it's dimensions.



This is the first render I made – it's the view from the door as you enter the office. I mapped a piece of artwork as a material to one of the wall panels to make sure I was able to map the UV correctly to the geometry of the room. Also at the time I made this the theme of iconic buildings hadn't been decided upon and I was pushing a geometric style of design which apart from looking cool I thought would be fairly straightforward to execute (nice try Neil!).

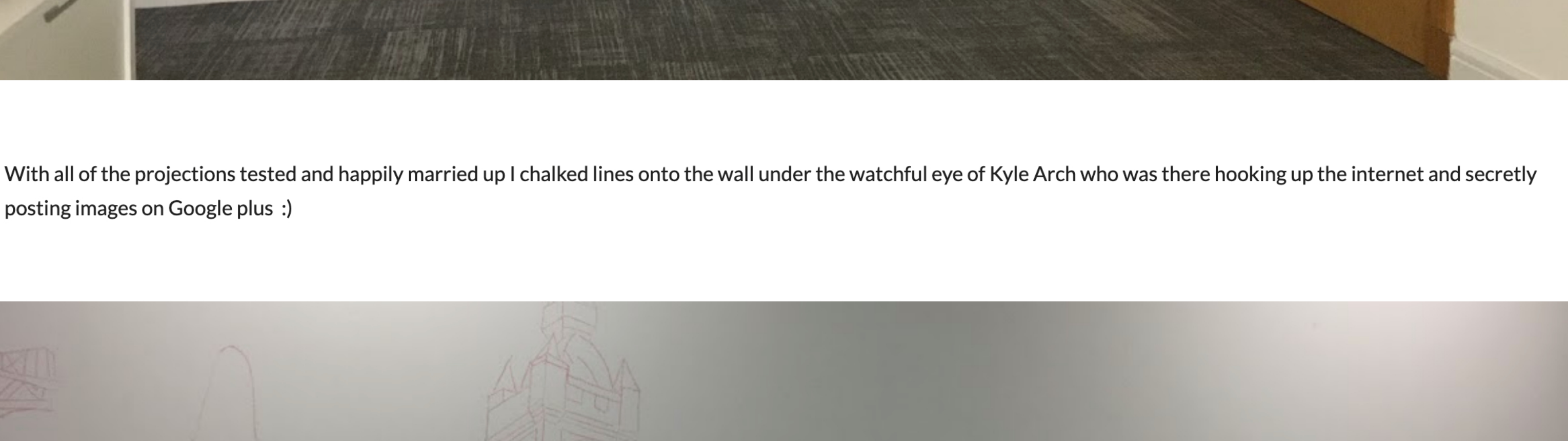
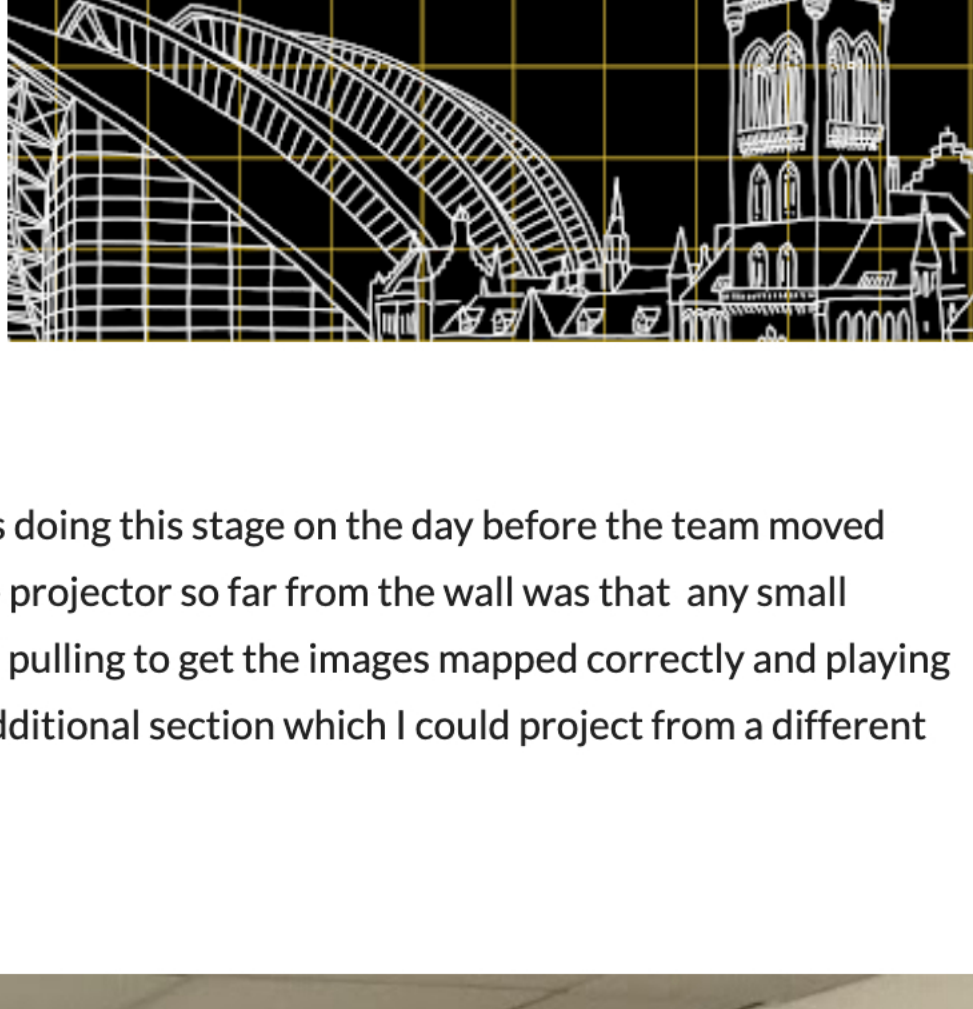
Having agreed to focus on the longest wall of the office (approx 9m long) I photobashed a lot of buildings reference images to come up with a composition that adhered to some loose rules of perspective, had some interesting relationships between the forms of the buildings, and fitted the space.



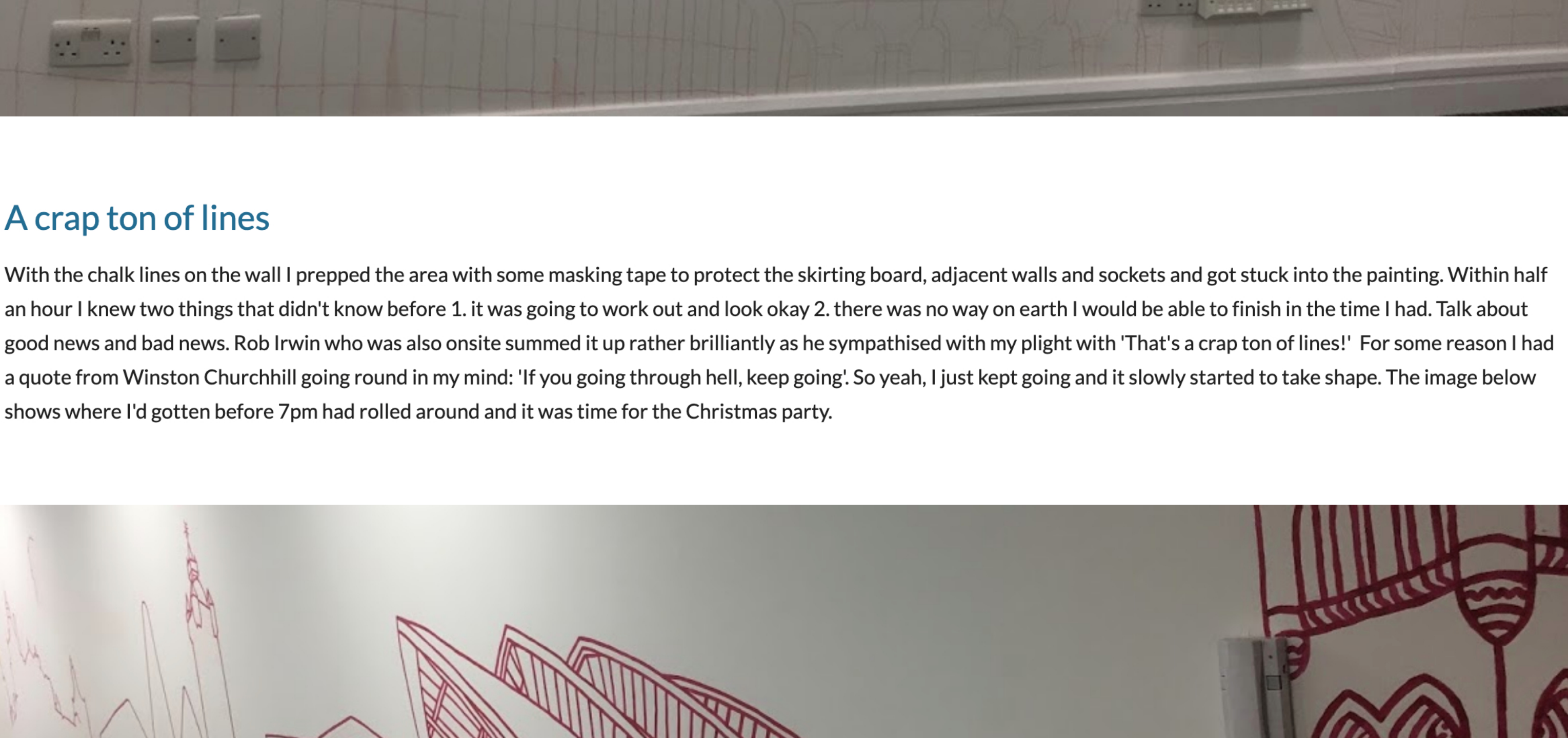
The composition and artwork style was agreed upon and different colour ways were explored. Pink came out on top when put to the vote, so that was it, design signed off and ready to go. I wanted to use acrylic paint to put the image on the wall opting to use a flat brush to achieve a consistent width of line. Had I had more time and the luxury of making some tests on the actual surface for the artwork I may have opted to use paint pens to speed up the process. However I knew that using a brush would result in a range of textures as a painted image as well as introduce further imperfections that would enhance the hand drawn look. There is no question that I was making a leap of faith that this approach would be effective in the timescale and on the scale of the work itself. For me this leap is often at the heart of what it means to be me to being 'creative' but suffice to say it's accompanied by a large helping of anxiety. A girding of one's loins is all part of the process!

Digital to analogue

In order to get the image on the wall I used this Philips PicoPix projector – a really nifty device – we've come a long way from the overhead projectors of my school days (I'm showing my age here no doubt!). Through experimentation I found that making a negative of the image gave the best result in terms of visibility in what was a fairly bright environment. I split the image into HD sized art boards in Illustrator to match the projector's widescreen aspect ratio and also added a grid so I could more easily stitch together the images.

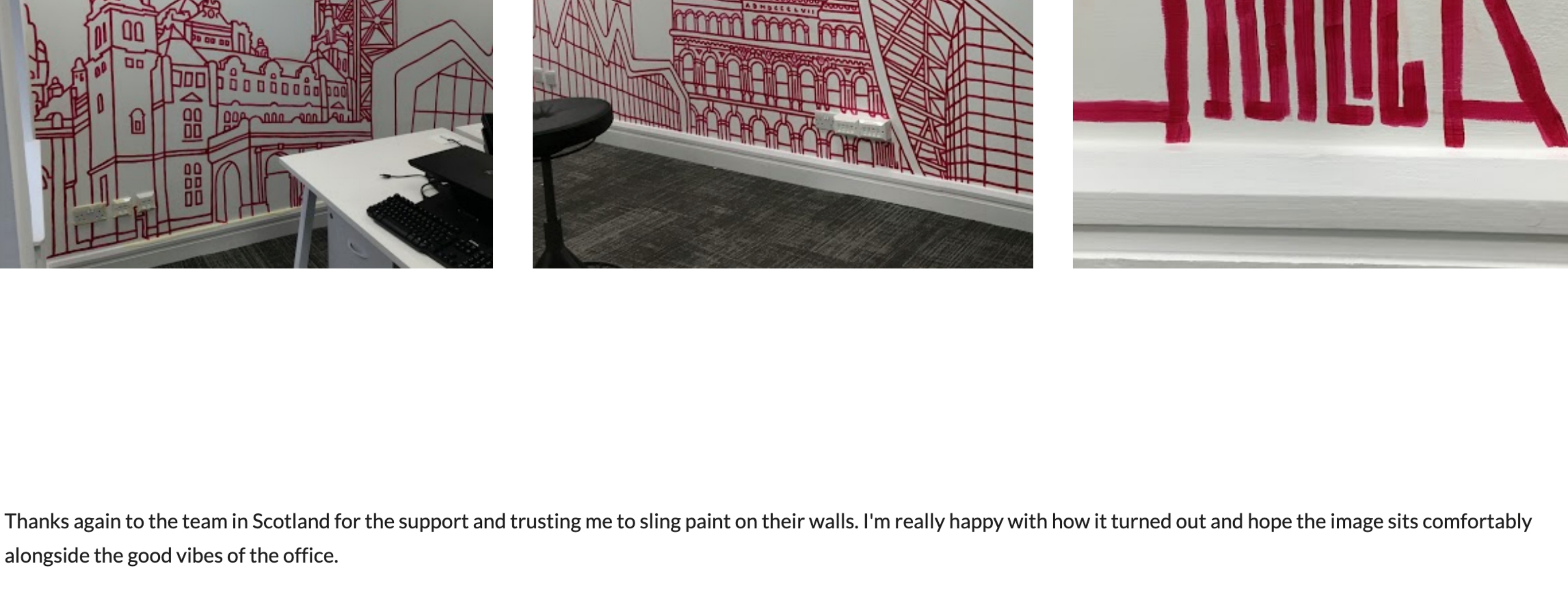
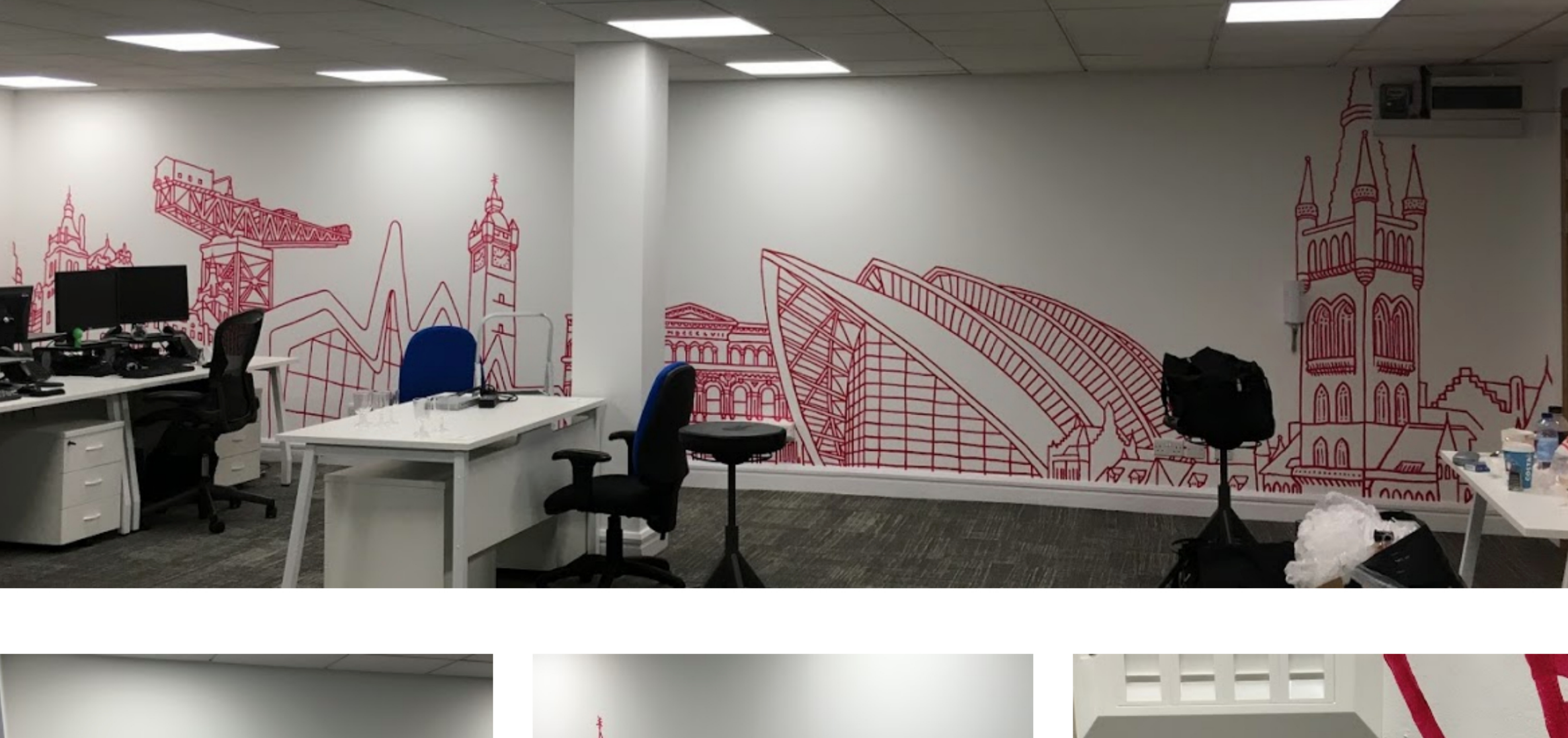


With all of the projections and happily married up I chalked lines onto the wall under the watchful eye of Kysle Arch who was there hooking up the internet and secretly posting images on Google plus :)



A crap ton of lines

With the chalk lines on the wall I prepped the area with some masking tape to protect the skirting board, adjacent walls and sockets and got stuck into the paint. Within half an hour I knew two things that didn't know before 1. It was going to push it as far as I could go, even if I couldn't finish I decided I'd get as far as I was humanly possible. So after the meal with the team I headed back in to the office and got stuck in again for a late night shift. By about 3am I could actually see a finish line so I decided to get a few hours sleep then get up early and hit the wall again – I would take a later train and just keep at it. With about an hour to spare I finished painting, exhausted but victorious, cleaned up and headed to the train station for the ride back to London. Mission complete!



Thanks again to the team in Scotland for the support and trusting me to sling paint on their walls. I'm really happy with how it turned out and hope the image sits comfortably alongside the good vibes of the office.

There is no way to happiness, happiness is the way