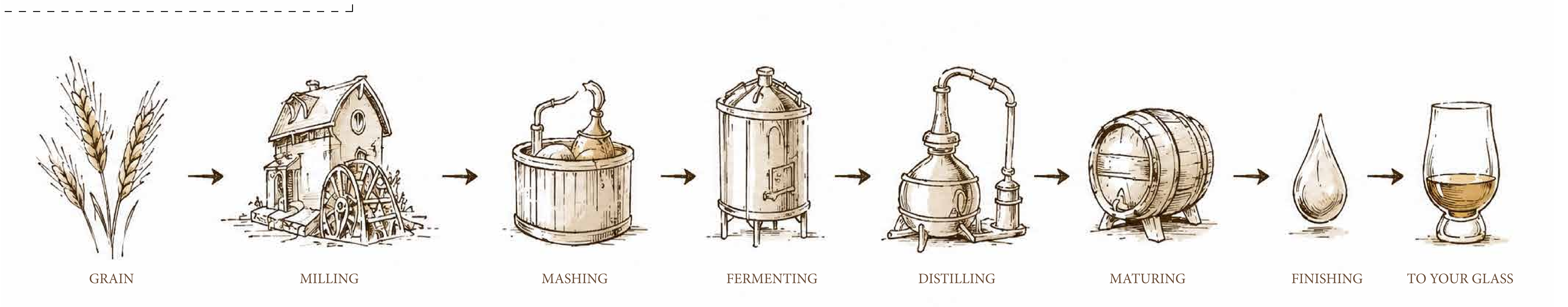
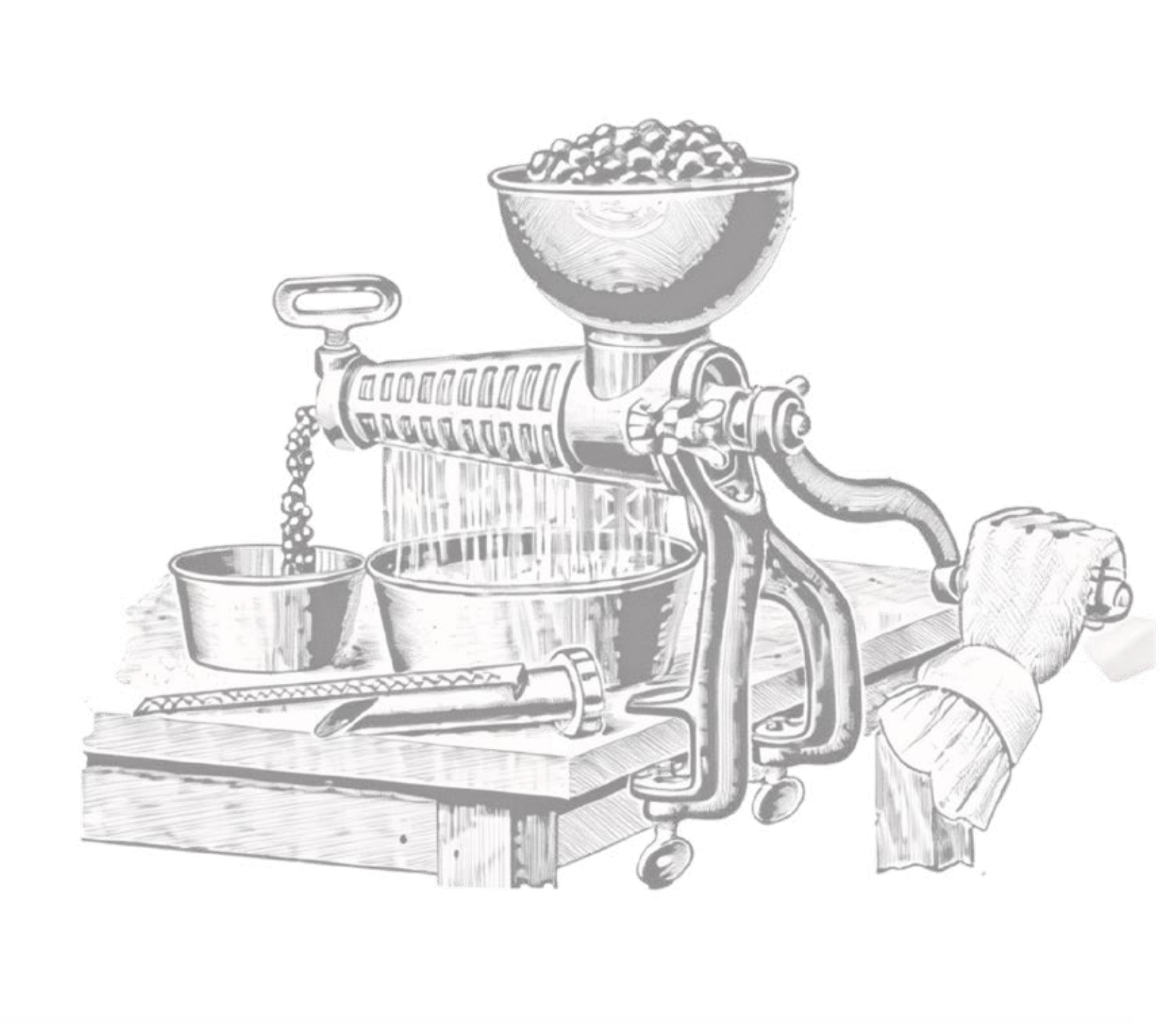


# From Grain to Glass

## Reconnecting the Historic Mill



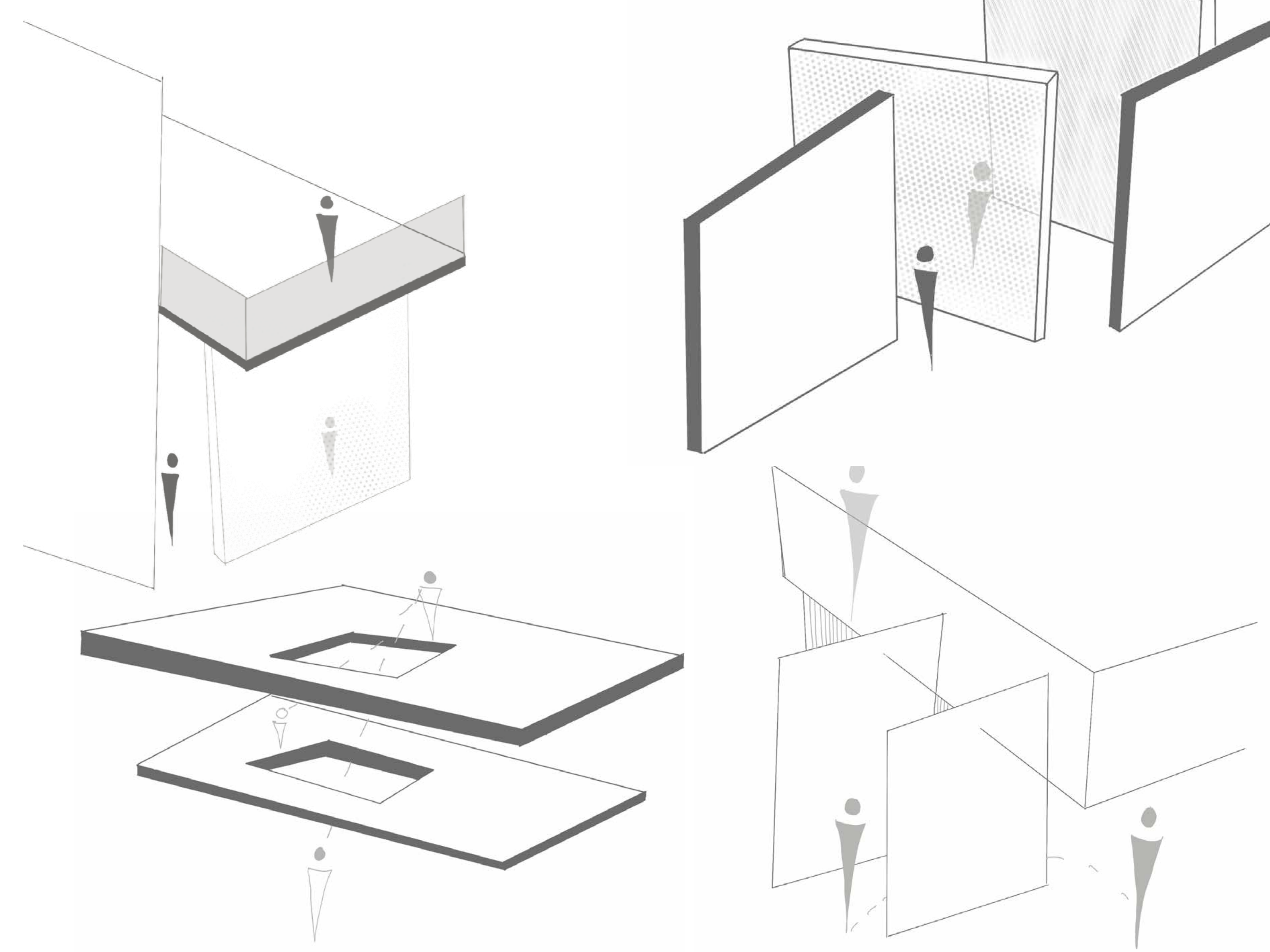
### CONCEPT

The concept for this project emerged through an exploration of the site's industrial heritage. Historical context, and relationship to the wider network of mills historically located throughout Riverstown. Once connected both physically and economically through the movement of grain, production and trade, these mills were powered by the Glasahavy River, which acted as a vital source of energy and infrastructure within the area. This notion of connection, between buildings, water, industry, process, and community became a central driver of the architectural proposal. Originally operating as both a corn mill and distillery, the building transformed raw agricultural material into a social product shared within the local community. The journey from grain to glass therefore became the primary narrative informing the adaptive reuse strategy, reinterpreting the site's forgotten industrial identity through a contemporary visitor experience centred on learning, making, tasting, and social interaction.

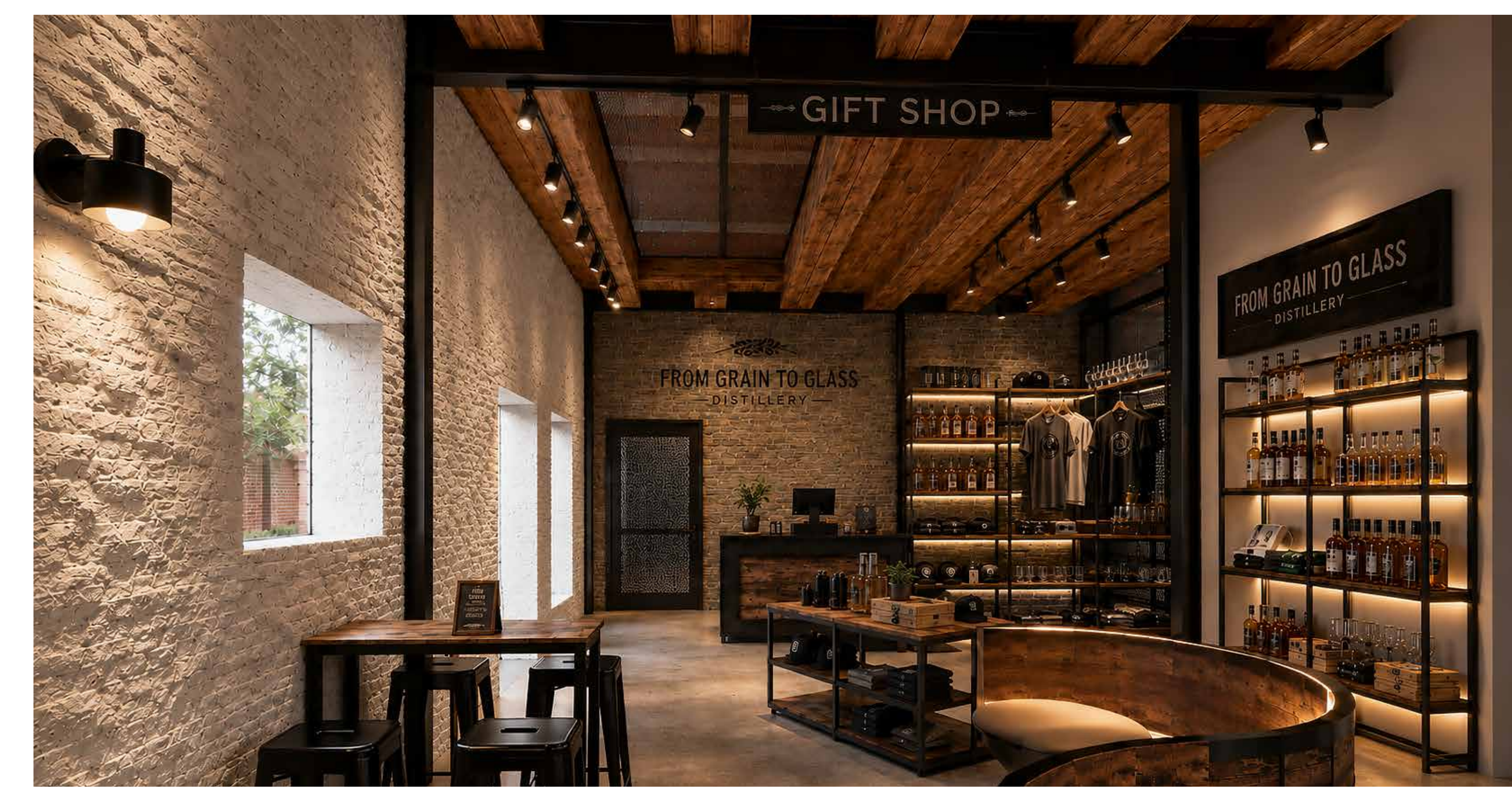
The building is organised as a vertical journey reflecting the stages of distillation. Visitors begin at ground level within exhibition and cafe spaces centred around a reconstructed mill wheel and the existing mill race, reconnecting users to the water systems that once powered the surrounding mills of Riverstown. The first floor focuses on participation and craft through bottling, packaging, ingredient exploration, and cocktail making, while the upper floor transitions into a bar lounge and pizzeria centred on tasting, gathering, and hospitality. This progression symbolises the transformation of raw material into finished spirit, reinforcing the relationship between production and social experience.

A key architectural strategy throughout the proposal is visual connectivity and layered transparency. Perforated metal screens, open floor sections, and framed internal views create continuous visual relationships between floors, allowing visitors to remain aware of movement, activity, and occupation throughout the building. This permeability references the interconnected nature of the historic milling network while encouraging curiosity and exploration within the space itself. Material choices including random rubble stone, timber, perforated metal, exposed structural elements, and warm ambient lighting establish a balance between industrial heritage and contemporary hospitality, allowing the building's original character to remain visible within its new function.

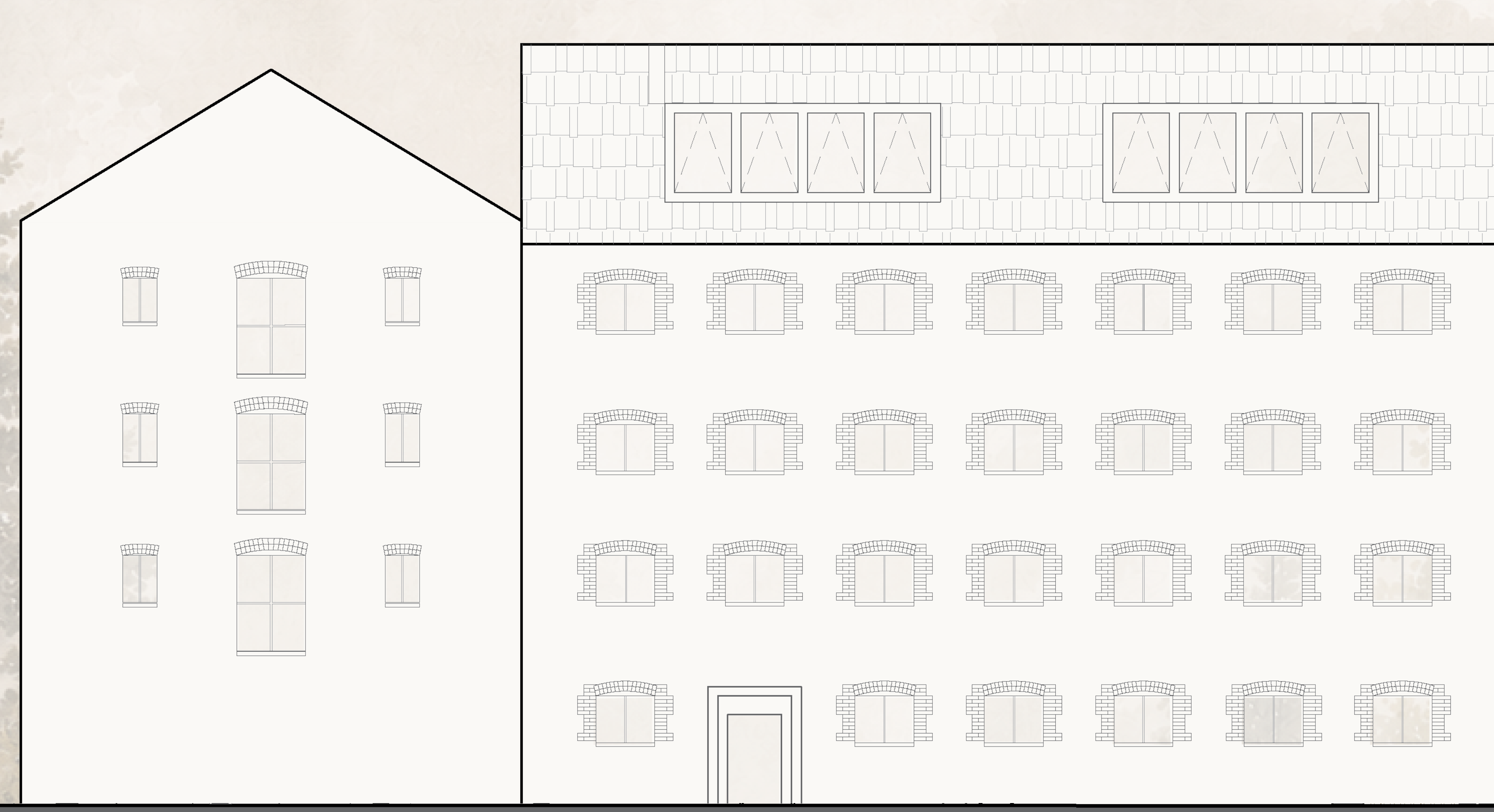
The proposal also uses sensory experience as a method of storytelling. Sound, smell, touch, sight, and taste are embedded throughout the building through flowing water, changing material textures, exposed processes, whiskey tasting, cocktail making, and social dining experiences. Together, these interventions transform the building from a static preservation project into an immersive architectural experience that reconnects visitors to the industrial heritage, social rituals, and river-powered history that once defined Riverstown.



Concept Sketches



Gift Shop



North Elevation

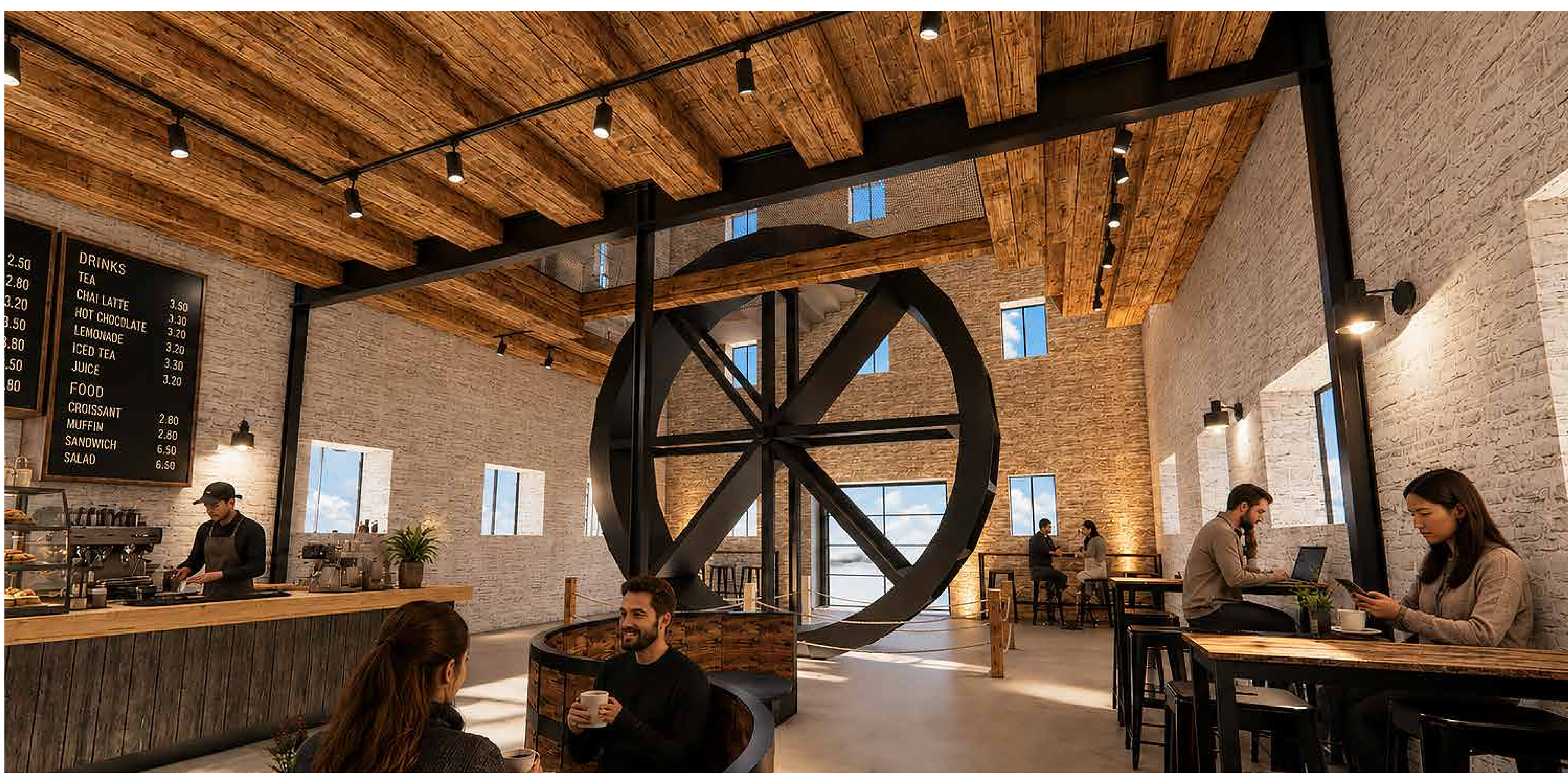




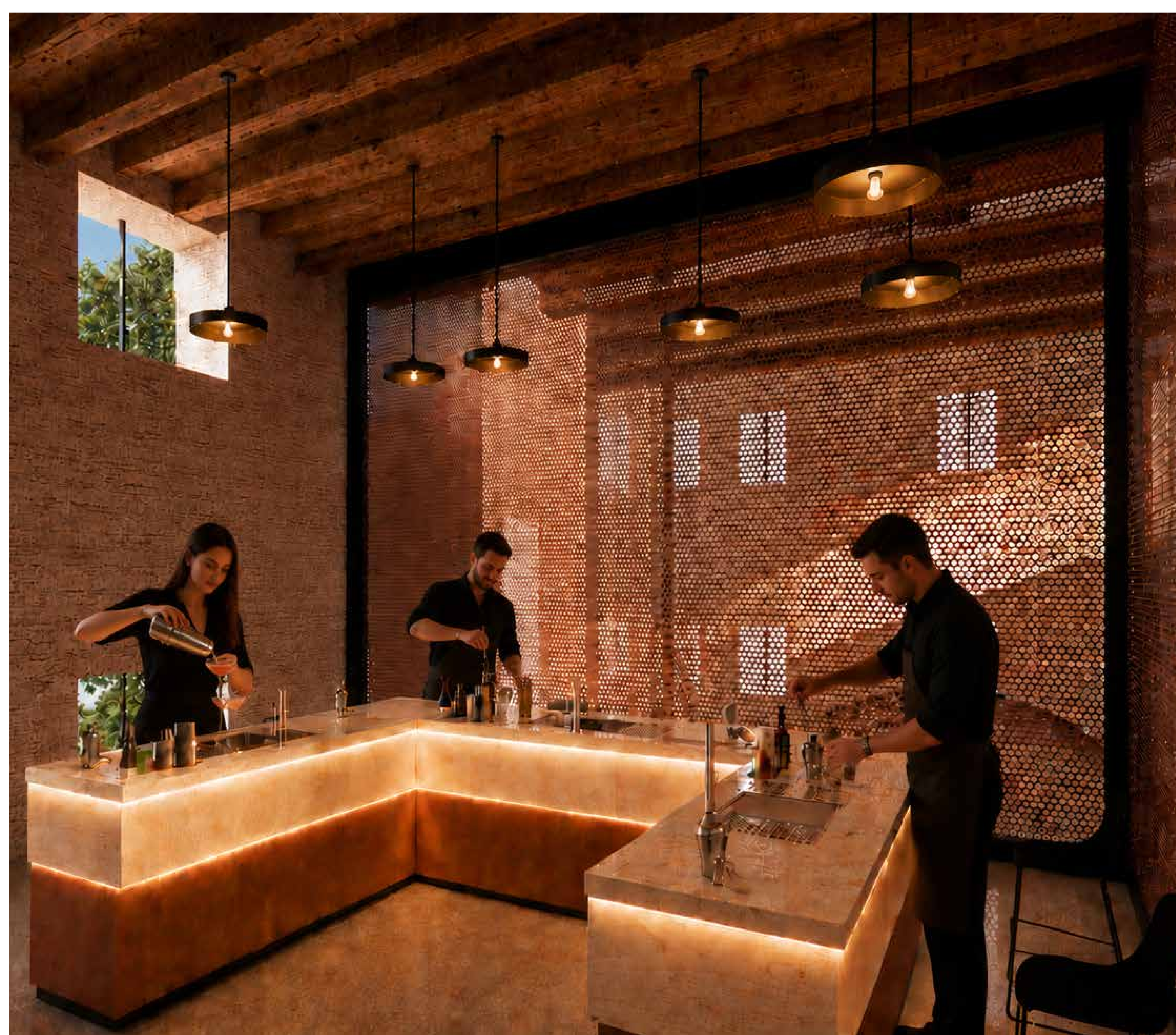
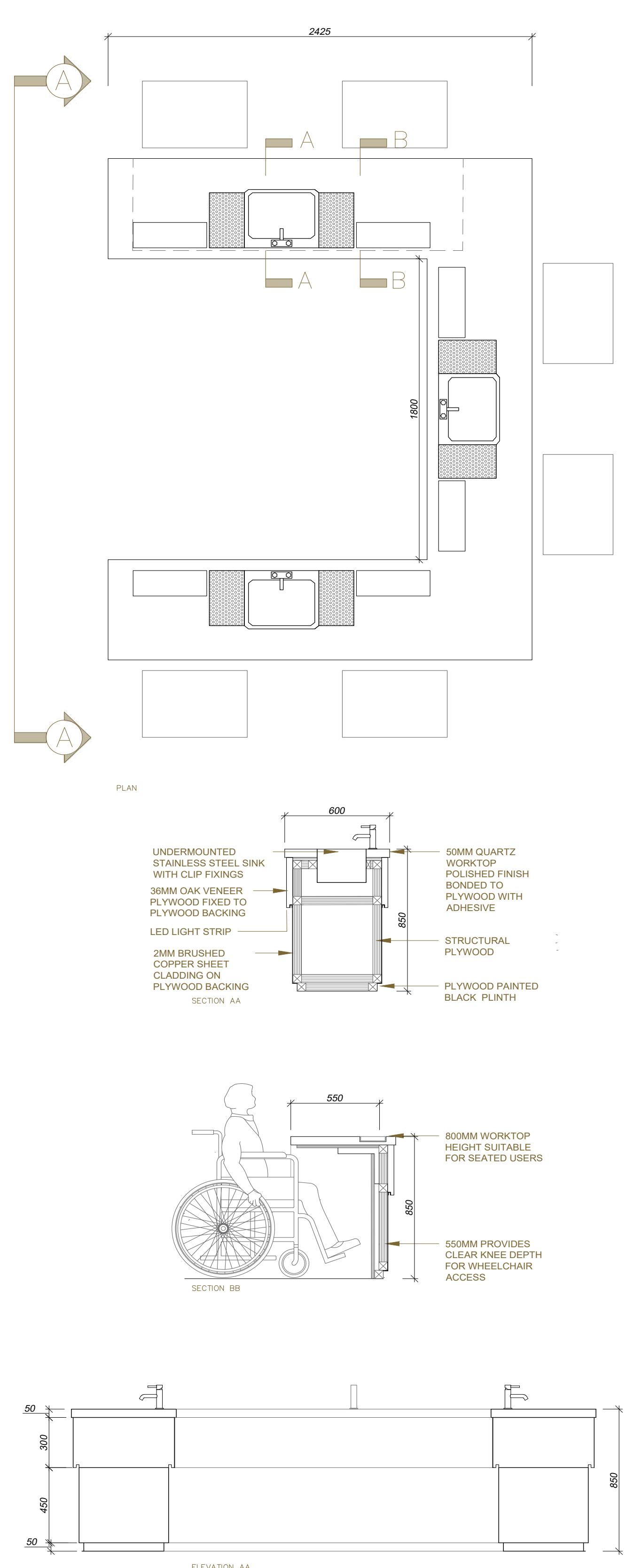
Pizzeria and Bar Area



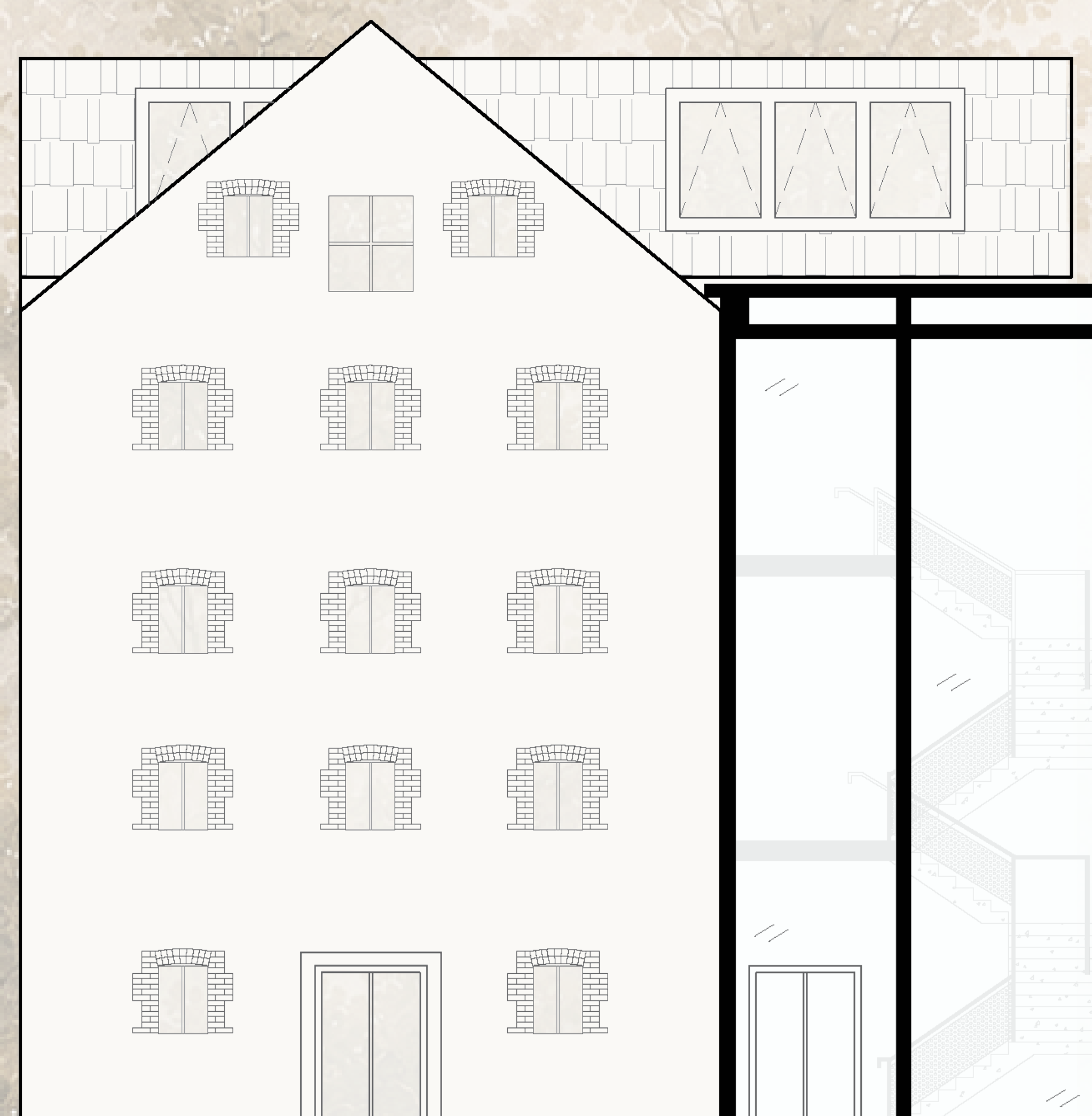
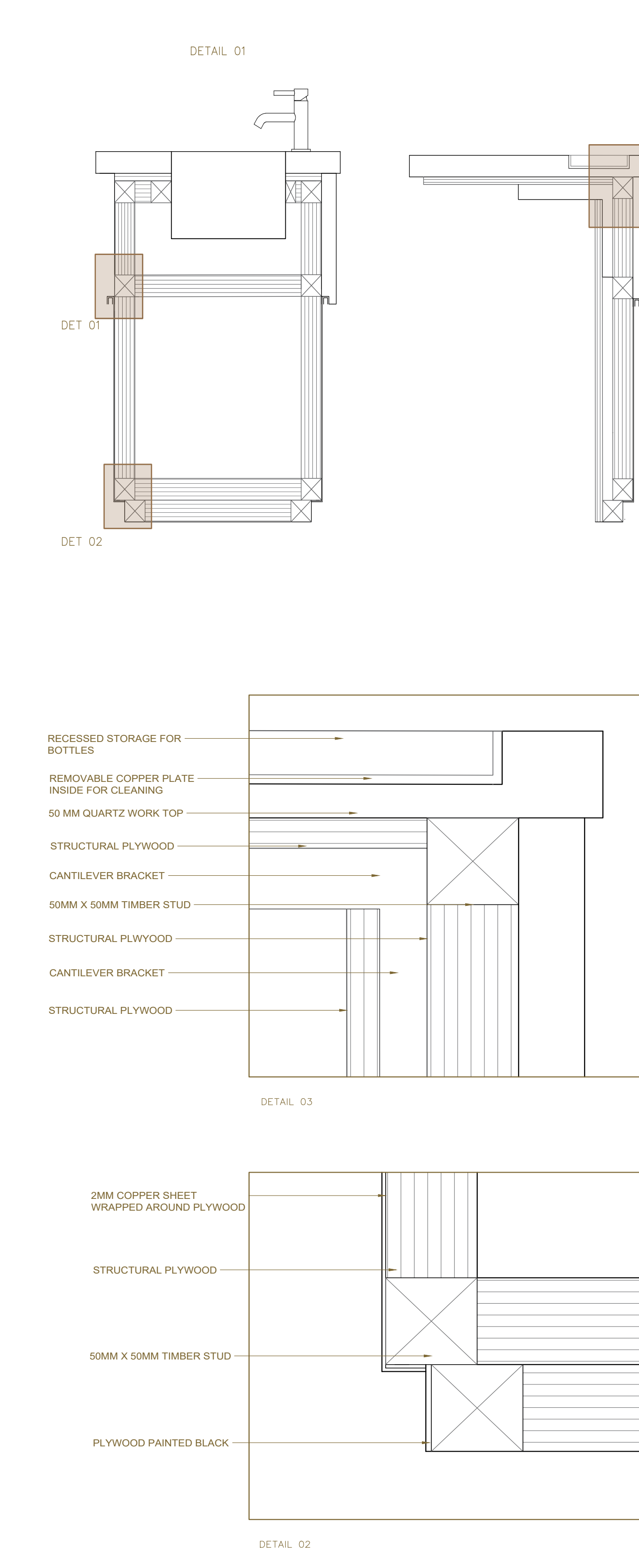
Distillery Exhibition Space



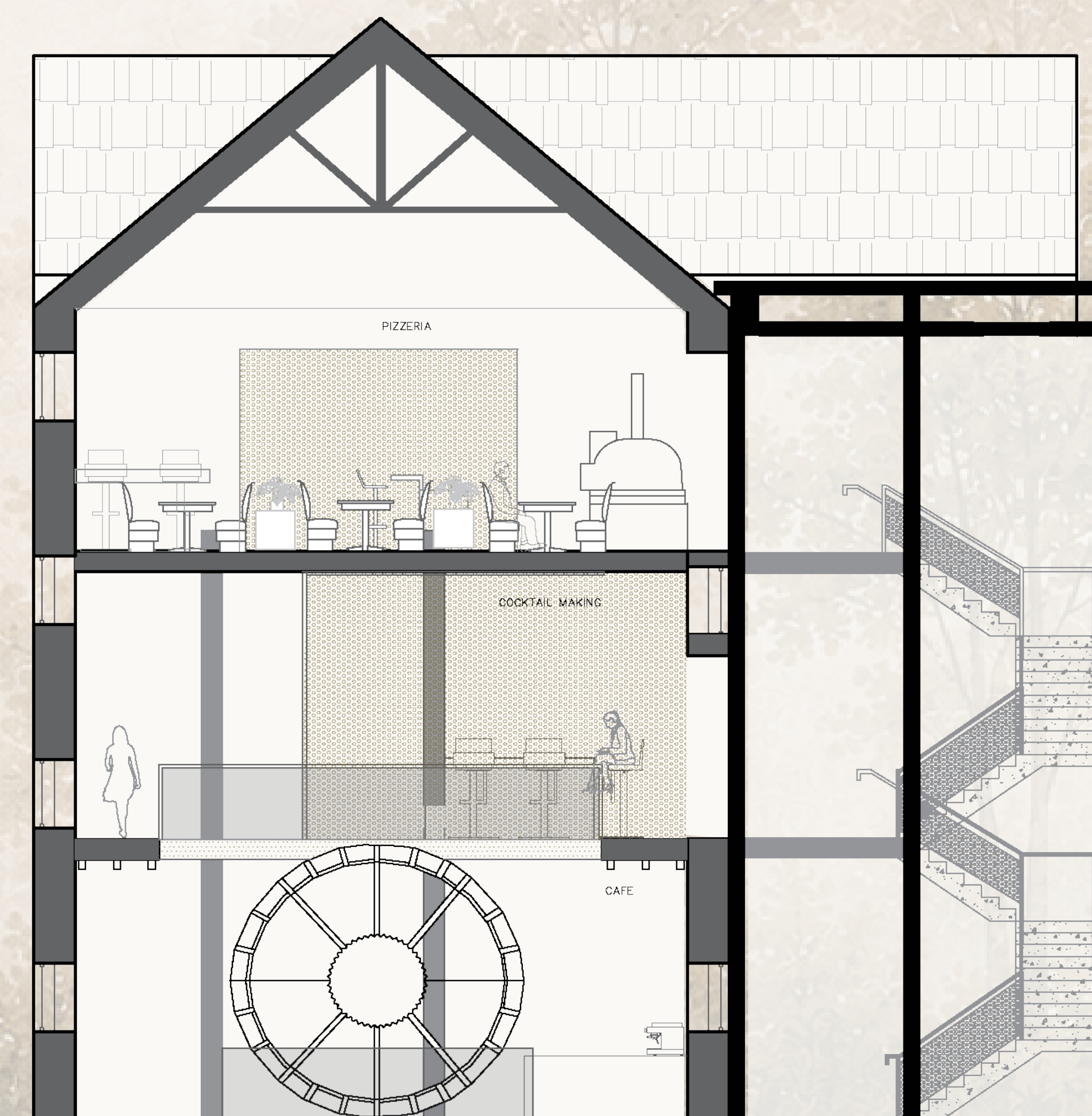
Cafe and Main Entrance



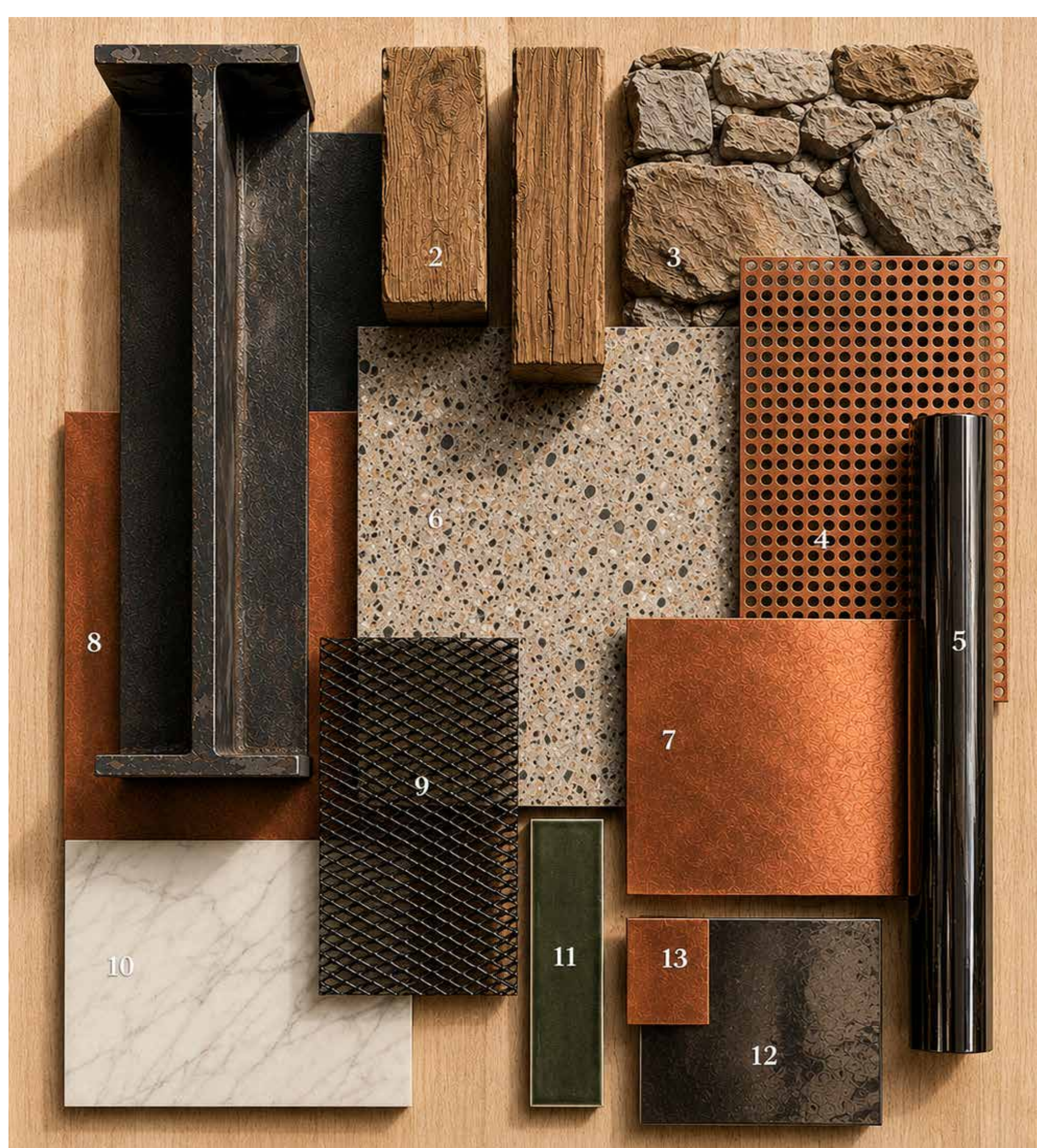
Cocktail Making Classes



West Elevation



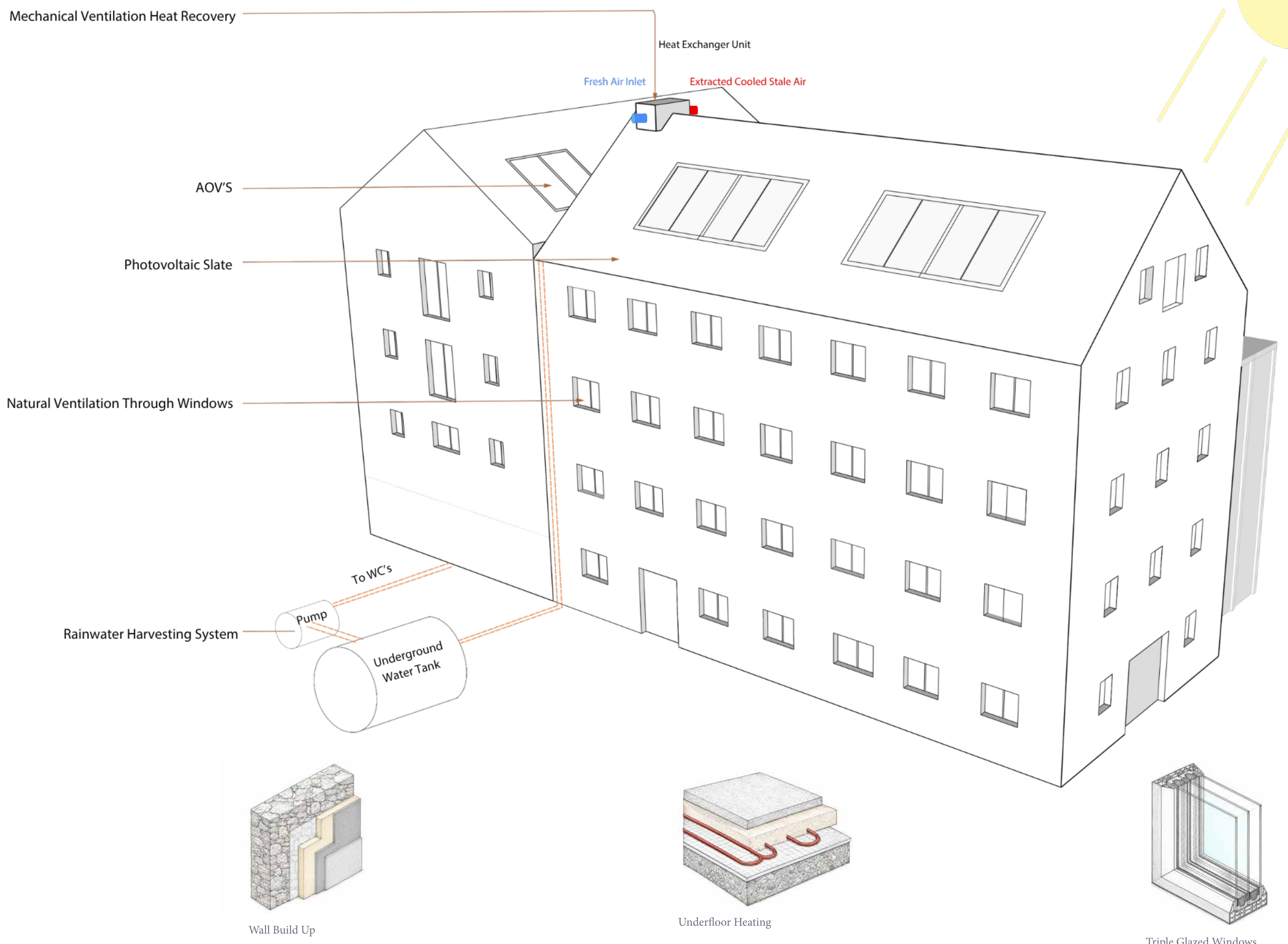
Section BB



Material Board

- 1 - Steel beams & columns
- 2 - Timber joints
- 3 - Random rubble stone wall
- 4 - Copper perforated metal
- 5 - Black chrome
- 6 - Terrazzo flooring
- 7 - Copper sheet
- 8 - Copper backing panel

- 9 - Perforated metal mesh
- 10 - White marble
- 11 - Green rectangular tile
- 12 - Black chrome metal plate
- 13 - Copper accent panel



#### ACCESSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Accessibility is embedded throughout the proposal to ensure the building provides an inclusive and welcoming experience for all users. As the project is organised as a vertical journey, lift access is introduced to connect each floor, allowing visitors of all mobility levels to fully engage with the learning, making, and tasting experiences within the building. Circulation routes are designed to remain clear and intuitive, while open floor layouts and visual connections between spaces improve wayfinding and spatial awareness. Seating areas of varying heights and arrangements are incorporated throughout the café, exhibition, and lounge spaces to support comfort and flexibility for different users.

The project also considers sensory accessibility as part of the overall visitor experience. Changes in material texture beneath the feet help subtly define transitions between spaces, while warm lighting, layered transparency, and framed views assist with orientation throughout the building. Interactive installations are designed to encourage participation through touch, smell, sound, and movement, ensuring the experience remains engaging and immersive for a wide range of visitors. Together, these interventions create an environment that is not only accessible in function, but also inclusive in atmosphere and experience.

Sustainability is approached through the adaptive reuse of the existing mill structure, preserving the embodied carbon, cultural value, and material character of the historic building while reducing the need for demolition and new construction. The proposal retains and restores key architectural features including the existing random rubble stone walls, original window openings, and natural slate roof in order to preserve the building's industrial identity and connection to place. This strategy allows the project to celebrate the heritage of the mill while extending its lifespan for contemporary use.

Alongside preservation, a series of sensitive upgrades improve the environmental performance of the building. Additional insulation, upgraded glazing, roof repairs, and improved lime-mortar pointing enhance thermal efficiency while respecting the original fabric of the structure. Natural materials including timber and stone are used throughout the interior, reinforcing the project's connection to the surrounding landscape and industrial heritage. The continued presence of the mill race and water systems further strengthens the project's relationship to the site's historic sustainable infrastructure. Collectively, these interventions demonstrate how historic industrial buildings can be reimaged through contemporary design while balancing conservation, functionality, and environmental responsibility.

