

# BETWEEN PRESENCE

## Project Concept

In today's world the boundaries between work and personal life are becoming increasingly blurred. Digital hyper-connectivity, remote work and constant accessibility through social media mean that people exist simultaneously within public and private spheres.

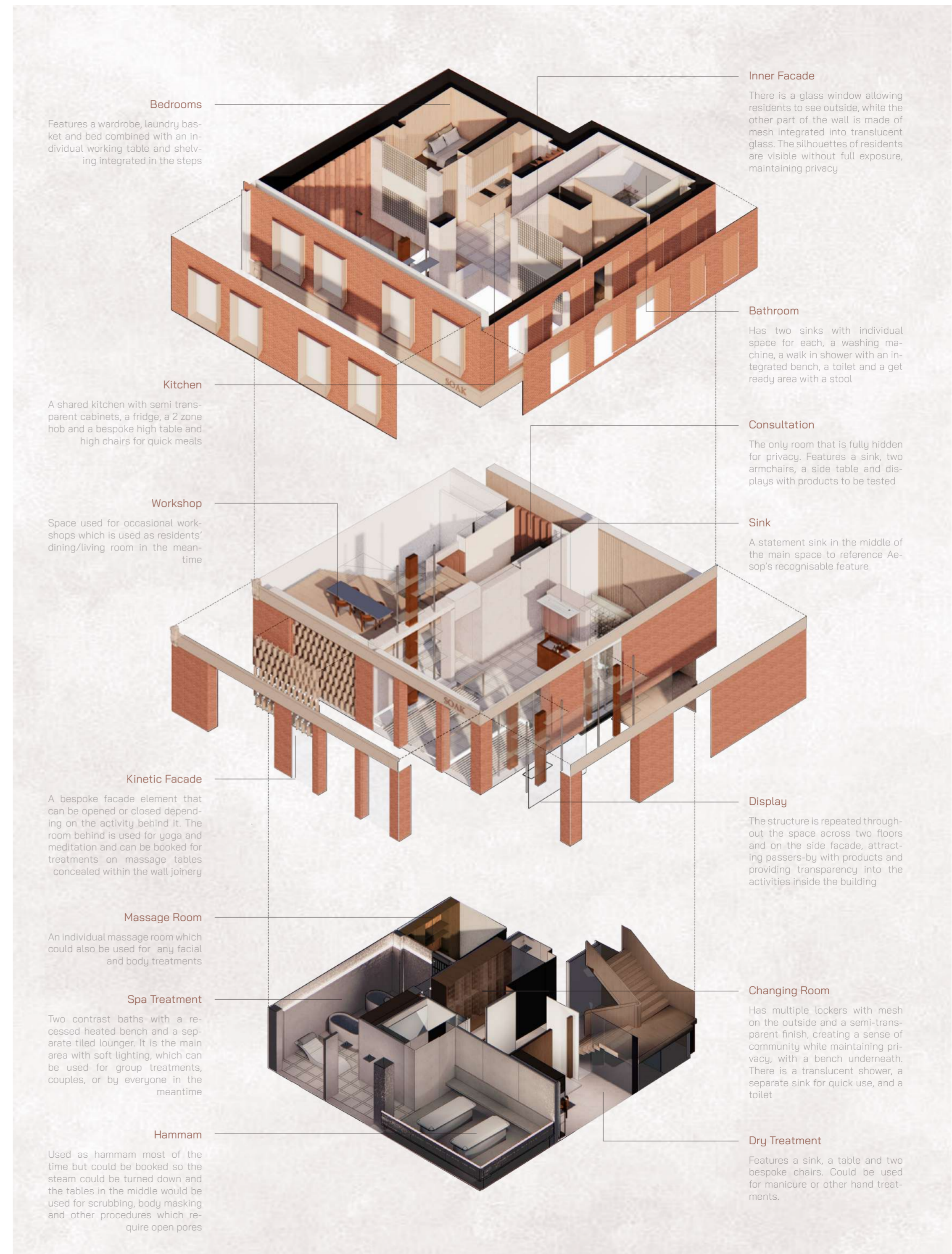
This project acts as a response to this condition, proposing an environment where privacy and openness are not the opposites, but a continuous spectrum of experience. Through controlled visibility, layered thresholds and a constant yet subtle awareness of others within the building, I tried to establish a sense of community built on human presence, and shared but carefully moderated coexistence.

## Experience with Movement

Inside the three-storey wellness space sponsored by Aesop, the two recent graduates live and work while building their careers within the wellness industry. One of the issues I wanted to address with my design was the lack of trust often faced by graduates at the beginning of their professional journey, by stimulating a sense of openness, honesty, and connection instead of exclusivity.

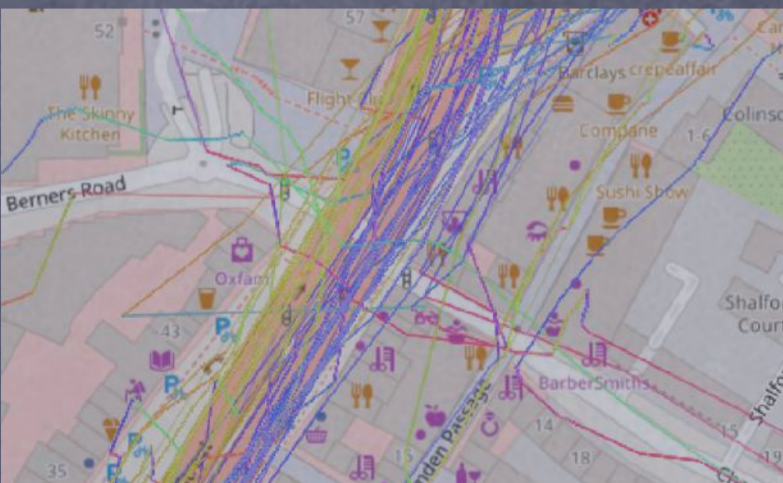
Experiencing the space begins from the outside and is made to feel as a journey of shifting visibility and presence. The glass entrance and a semi-transparent kinetic facade which acts as a breathing skin, subtly reveal movement, light, and silhouettes inside the building. Rather than hiding the work and routines of the residents, I made them partially visible when entering the building to build trust and show dedication and learning process that they go through, while still ensuring they have enough privacy. Subtle references to the human body are also embedded throughout the design, to foster a sense of familiarity and comfort that help make the space feel more welcoming.

As visitors move through the building, the filtered light and translucent materials, allow them to feel included within the atmosphere from the beginning while still remaining external observers. The sequence culminates in the spa below, where visitors become fully immersed in the collective environment, shifting from observing silhouettes to transforming into one of them and becoming part of the atmosphere and presence perceived by others around them.





SOAK



'Soak' is a concept inspired by spa rituals, steam, and wet treatments. The name also implies the idea of "soaking into" the residents' early career paths, emphasizing process, openness, and shared experience. The visual identity comes from the idea of 'softness', transparency, and fluidity within the space, and I kept it minimalistic to make it feel familiar and welcoming

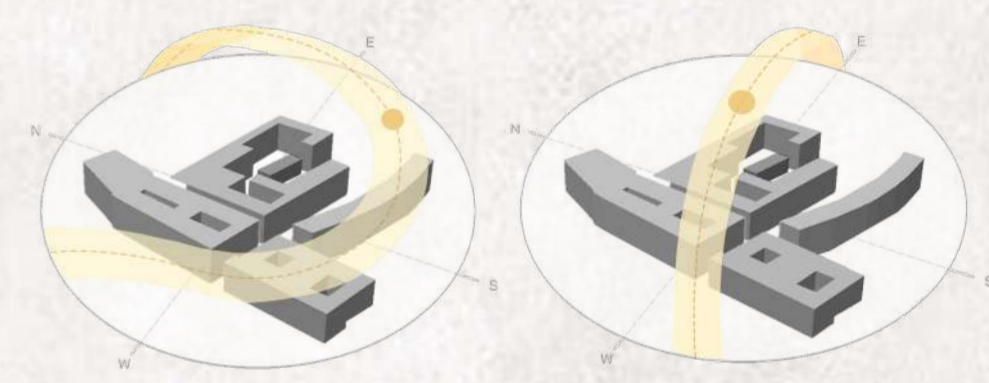
This collage shows the surrounding area of Islington and its context, including local residents and regular passers-by. The district preserves its history, and the new buildings fit in with the old ones which became the main argument for me while designing the facade of the building

The main flow of people originates from the high street making the front facade the primary point of engagement and visual connection with the public realm.

The area's artistic identity naturally shapes the culturally aware visitors that the building attracts and reduces the need for it to overstate its presence



While researching I found that the site's history is dating back to the 1870 so considering the age and history of the building, my main goal was to respect its heritage while making it contemporary enough to attract new visitors. I preserved the original brick facade but redesigned the windows to appear more minimalist and modern. Glass elements were added to support the concept of community, inviting people inside, alongside a bespoke kinetic facade feature



15th June 15th December

The direct summer sunlight on the side facade informed the creation of a warm and welcoming social space, where light filters through layered fabric above the sink area and produces a softer, more atmospheric environment.

The front facade receives strong evening sunlight, influencing the placement of the yoga and treatment room, where a bespoke kinetic facade transforms changing light into shifting interior pattern



Ground floor



The visual shows a treatment room on the ground floor during the afternoon, between booked sessions, being used for meditation and yoga. The position of the sun creates patterns inside the space, reflecting the open kinetic facade panels



The visual shows a workshop located on an additional split-level floor created on the staircase landing, which is used as a living room for residents after their shifts

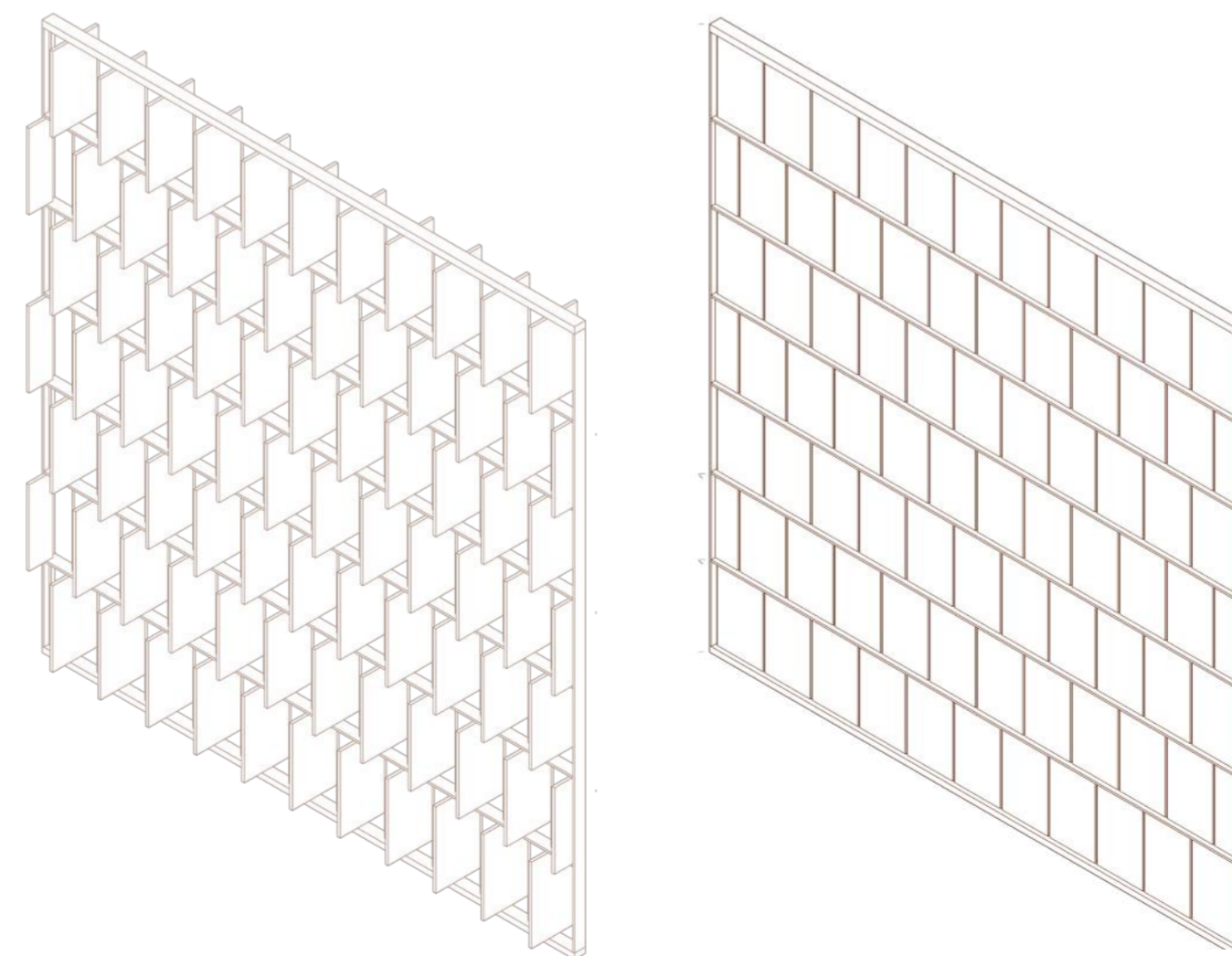
Basement Spa



An individual treatment room designed for massage or scrubbing therapy. It can also be used as part of a group booking session

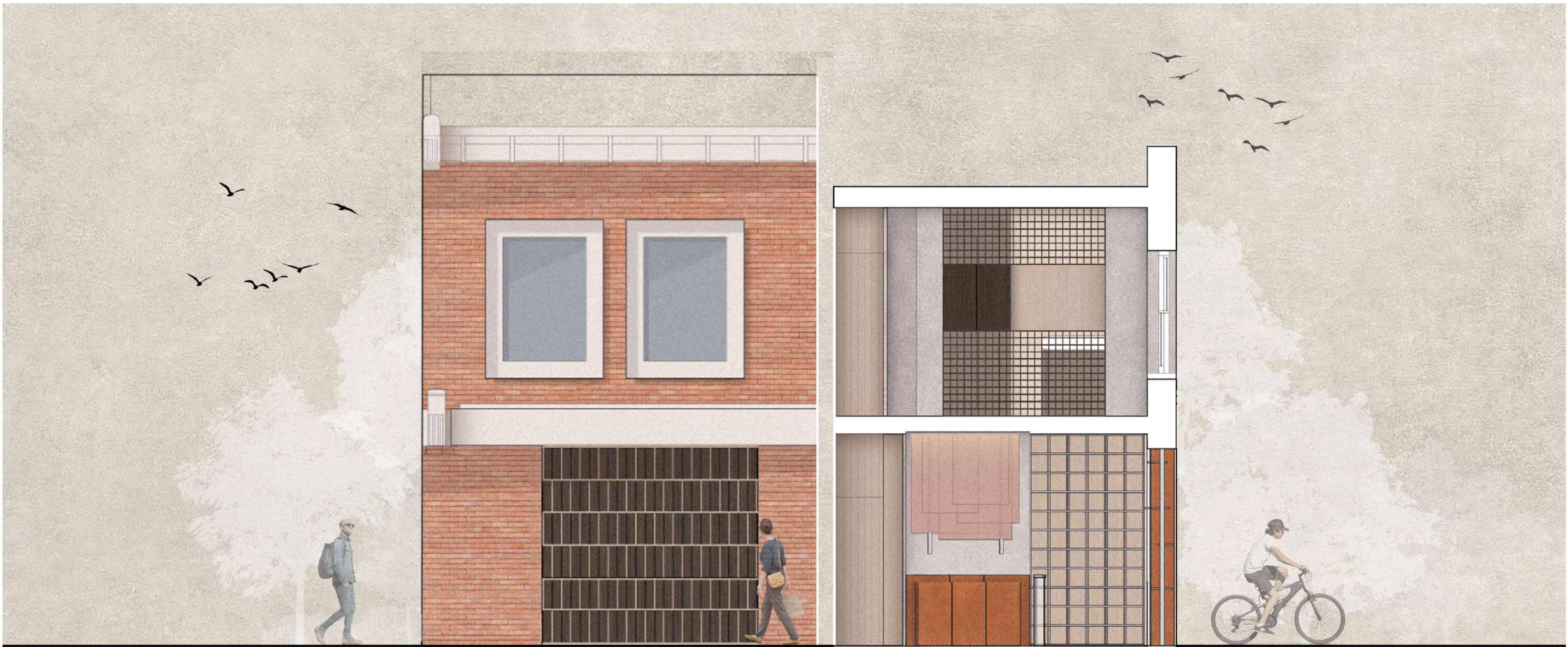


The main spa area features contrast temperature baths and a heated bench, with a space behind it that could potentially be used for display



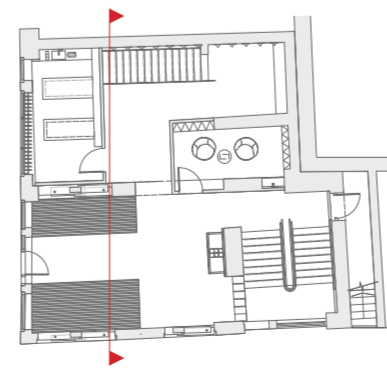
A technical drawing showing the bespoke kinetic facade in both its open and closed states. I took inspiration from human lungs, so opening the panels corresponds to inhalation allowing light, air and subtle visual connection to enter the space, and closing corresponds to exhalation, creating moments of enclosure, privacy and protection.

Therefore to support the flexibility of the space, the facade allows the room to function as an open environment for yoga and meditation while transforming into a more private treatment room for booked massage sessions

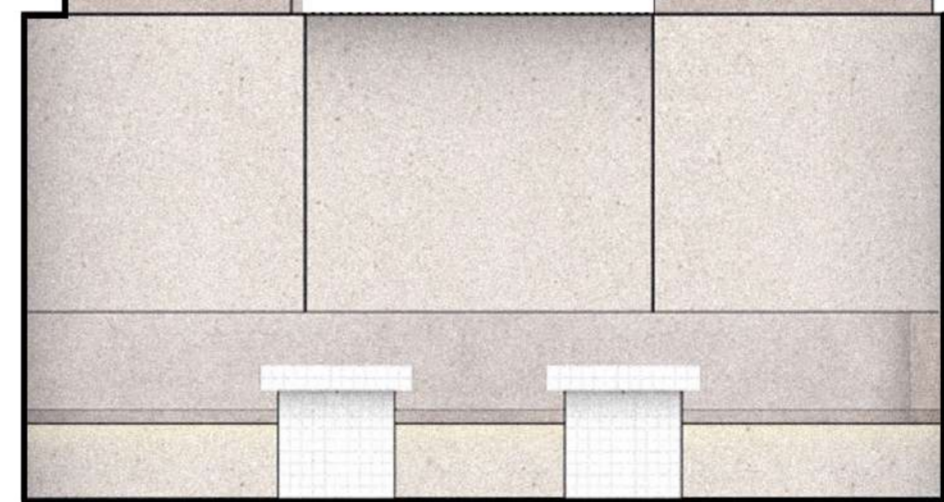


The visual of the sauna showing how light from above shapes the atmosphere of the interior below.

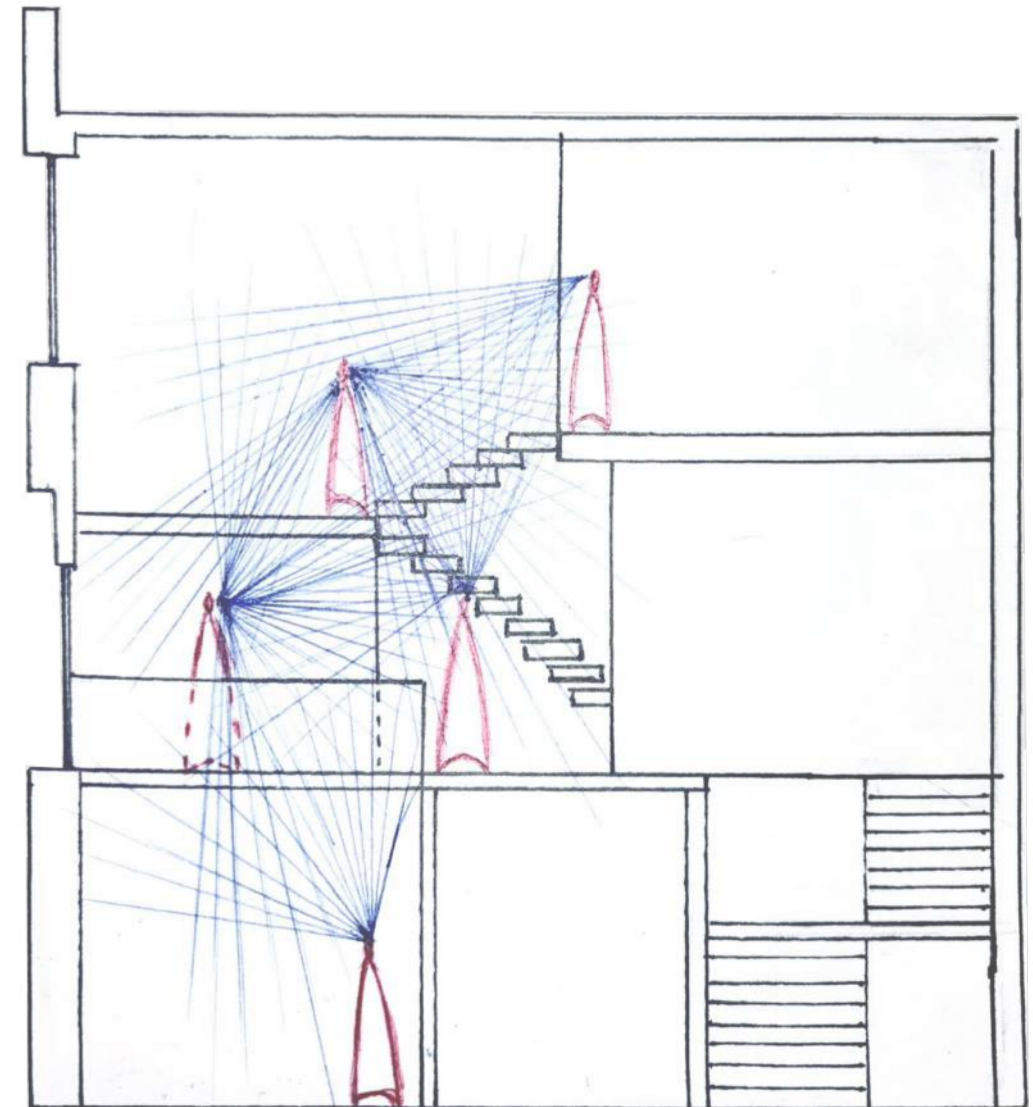
The translucent glass layer separating the floors was chosen to allow light to filter through while maintaining the privacy of the hammam users. It creates a subtle connection between people across the different levels, while preserving visual separation and the transition between the functions of each space.

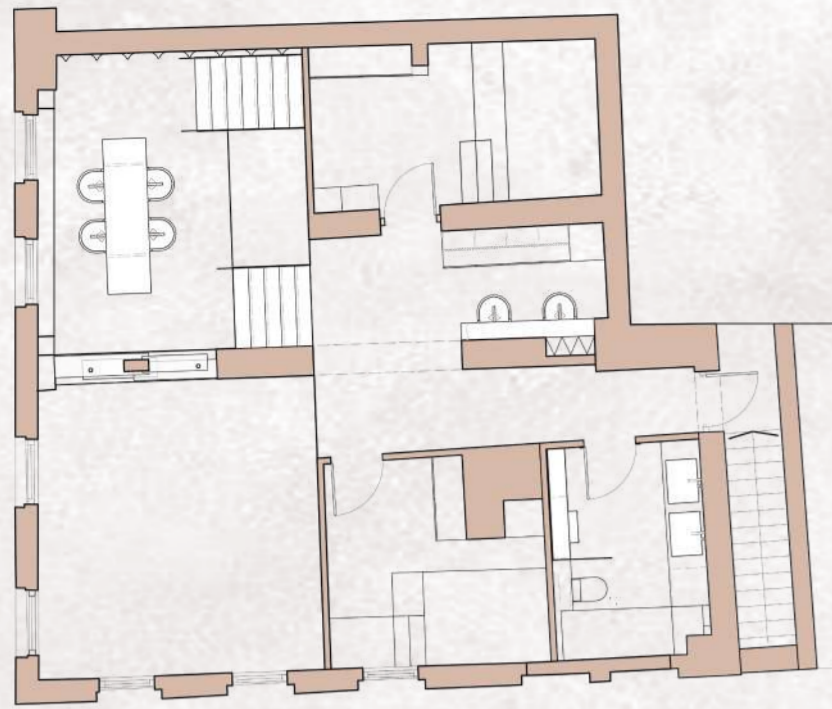


Ground floor plan shows where the section on a visual was cut



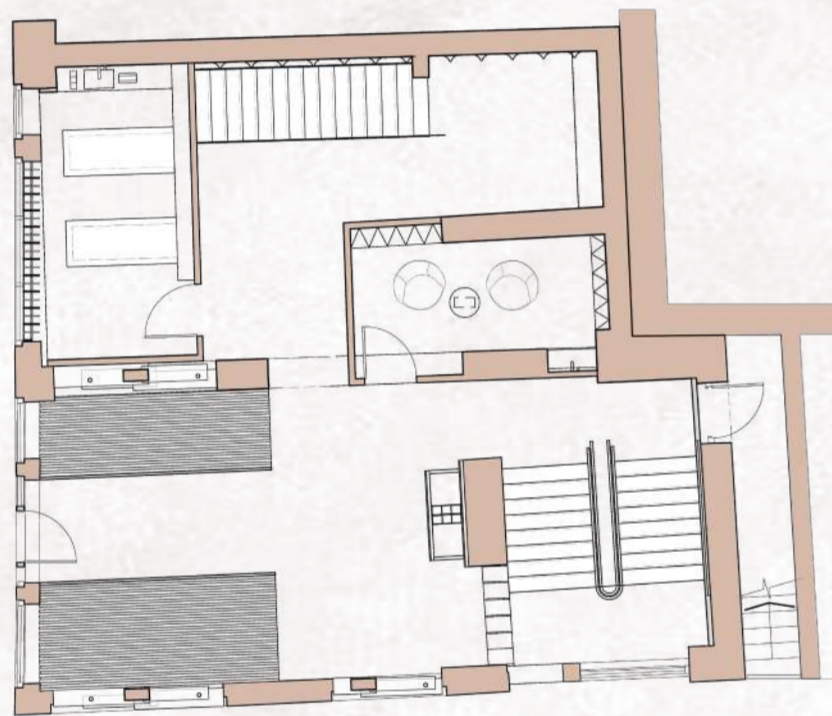
A section illustrates the main concept of the building: connecting people across different floors to create a shared sense of community. The spatial arrangement allows users to perceive one another, while also revealing that the wellness practitioners do not only work in the building but also inhabit it. This was inspired by the human circulatory system, where blood vessels form a complex network that sustains the body, just as visual links within the building shape a continuous, collective experience of place.





First Floor Plan

The main area is used for residents, however, I introduced an additional level that also functions as a staircase landing which functions as a public workshop and can be used as a living room for residents after the shift



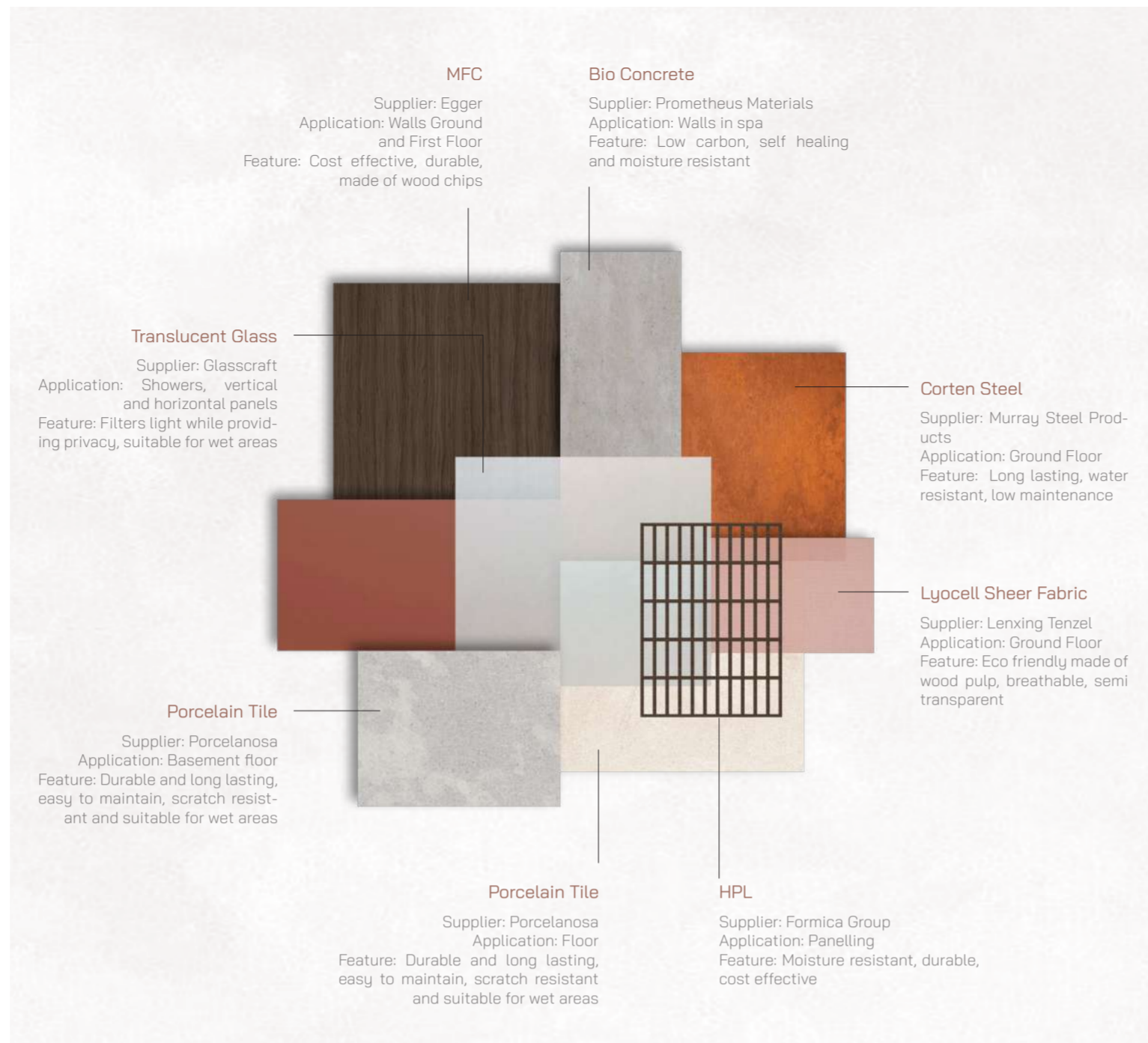
Ground Floor Plan

An in-between space where the visitor acts as an external observer, combining retail and treatment functions and including a private consultation area



Basement Floor Plan

A moment of inclusion in the local community. The floor has dry treatment area, changing room, contrast baths, a heated bench, and a hammam (could be used for wet treatments)



Spaces used by graduate residents



The reception area on the basement floor where the atmosphere exists in an in-between state between the dry and wet spa zones. Clean lines and simple shapes create a sense of cleansing and renewal. Behind the receptionist is a display inspired by organic forms and body structures, featuring a neutral and familiar colour palette



Individual bedrooms have a desk integrated into a double bed to use a small amount of space more efficiently. The stairs can function as shelving or additional seating. I included clean forms, a neutral colour palette, and warm materials to create a calm and restful environment after work

The main sink is inspired by Aesop's signature sink design and subtle references to the human body, making it seem more familiar and welcoming for users

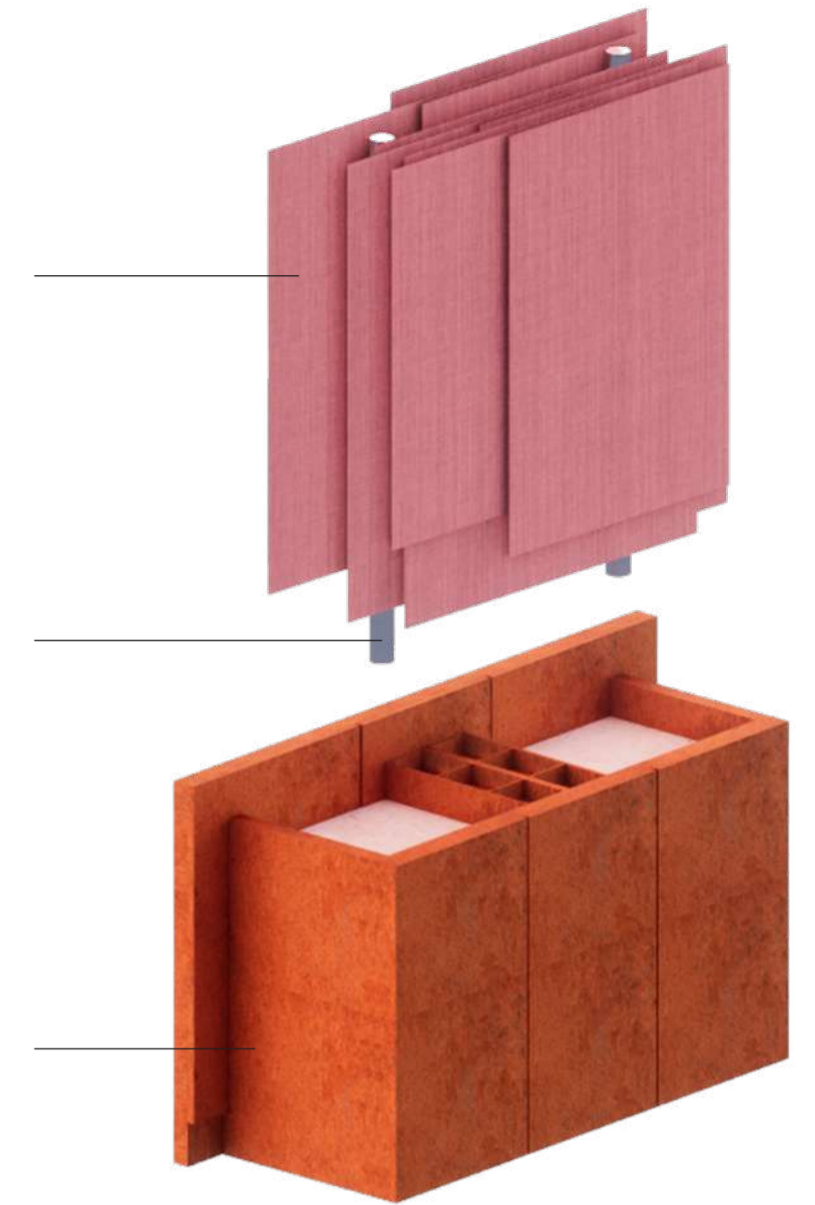
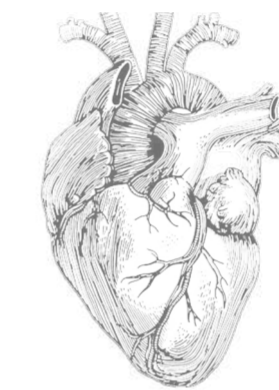
Fabric as a reference to skin and muscles - a sensitive vulnerable surface that filters light and conceals what inside



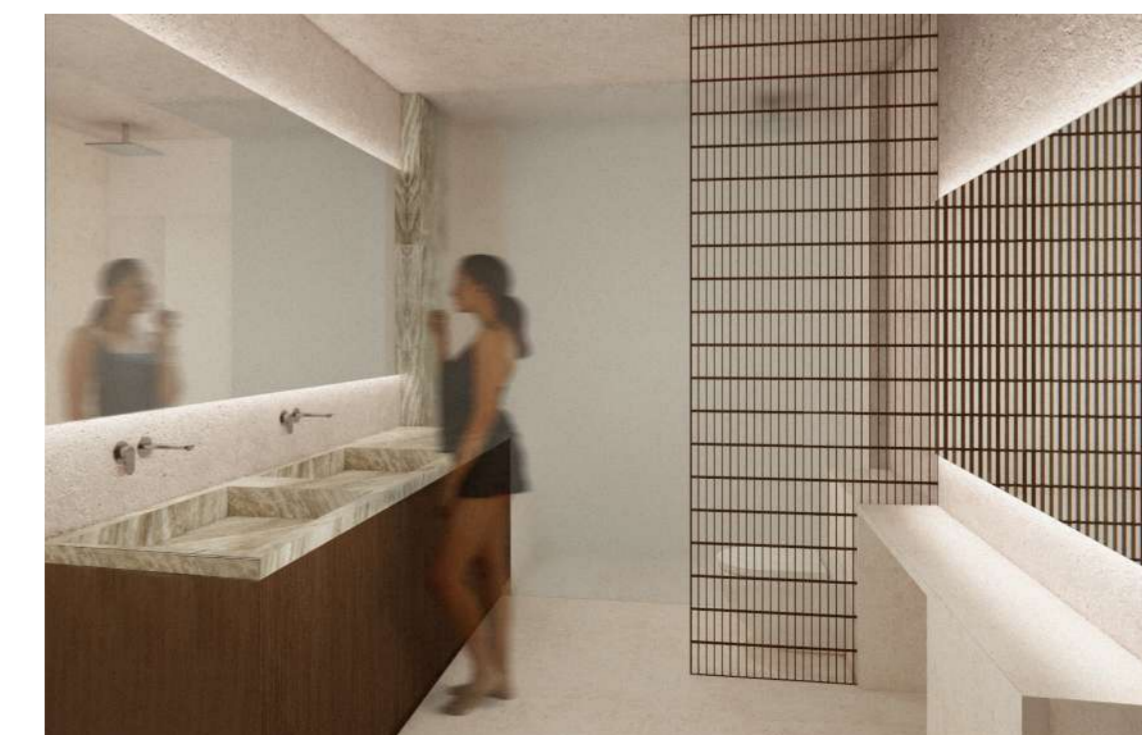
Metal tubes that act as taps that run through fabric reminisce a spine and bone structures inside the body



A corten steel block combines a sink and a display, referencing an internal organ of the body. Its warm orange tone suggests something living, an abstract heart which is heavy, stable and vital



The visual shows the residents' kitchen, where the idea of panelling and partial transparency, loosely inspired by human eyelids, continues across the upper cabinets. A high table with bespoke seating creates a casual space for quick meals and informal moments between shifts



A spacious shared bathroom for residents, featuring two sinks with generous individual space and a dedicated get-ready area with a stool. The toilet is partially concealed behind a panel to reduce visual distraction. The shower area includes a built-in bench and is enclosed with translucent glass for privacy while maintaining a sense of openness