

# DRIFT

## A NEW MODEL OF URBAN HOSPITALITY, WHERE SOLITUDE, CHOICE AND CONNECTION COEXIST

The design moves gently upward from the **fast-paced rhythm** of Oxford Street to **quiet spaces of reflection** and **retreat**. This vertical sequence mirrors a shift in pace and mindset, from **overstimulation to presence**. By layering public, semi-private, and personal zones, the hotel invites guests to **slow down, choose their own rhythm**, and **engage** with the city on **quieter, more intentional terms**.

### Spaces for Personal Retreat

Spaces crafted to **support emotional rest** and **independence**. Guests can be **alone without feeling isolated**, with solitude framed not as absence, but as presence. Whether recovering from change or seeking stillness, each space offers **calm, autonomy**, and the **freedom to disconnect**, or **gently connect**, as needed.

### A Shared Zone of Quiet Energy

This middle layer holds a **soft, ambient sense of community**. It is a space where **interaction is possible but never expected**. Light movement, shared presence, and casual moments of connection **unfold naturally**, offering an **alternative** to louder, more performative social spaces.

### The First Point of Stillness

Serving as the **initial threshold** between the city and the sanctuary, this space **slows** the guest down. It **softens the transition** from the intensity of the street, inviting a **reset in pace** and atmosphere. It is the first cue that this is not just a hotel, but a space designed for **intention, reflection**, and **quiet care**.

## A Sanctuary for the Solo Traveller

Drift **reimagines** the inner city hotel as a spatial response to urgent political, economic, and social shifts. As **retail declines** and commercial buildings sit **underused**, it proposes **adaptive reuse** for a **growing demographic**, the solo traveller. Set against **rising burnout** and **loneliness**, Drift offers **more than hospitality**, it suggests a new urban typology rooted in **emotional sustainability, autonomy**, and **mindful engagement** with place. Rooted in **wellness** and **introspection**, the project responds to **shifting societal values** around **independence, presence**, and **self-defined identity**. It **challenges the conventional hotel** as a transactional or commercial space, instead proposing a **layered design** that gently **supports solitude, soft connection**, and **personal retreat**. By **transforming** surplus city infrastructure into spaces of care, Drift positions hospitality as civic infrastructure, a **quiet, socially responsive intervention** within a city flux. It reimagines consumption-driven environments as **sanctuaries for rest, reflection, and reset**.







Hotels within the 500m radius of the site

### The Site

Oxbourne House, located at 354 Oxford Street, sits in a **prime position** within London's renowned retail district, directly above and opposite Bond Street Station. With **direct access** to the Central, Jubilee, and Elizabeth Lines, along with multiple bus routes, the site benefits from **exceptional connectivity** and **high daily footfall**, averaging 500,000 visitors. Surrounded by over 300 retail outlets, cultural landmarks, and a wide range of dining and hotel options, the area attracts a diverse mix of tourists, shoppers, and business travellers.

Completed in 2023 by Fletcher Priest Architects and Hines, Oxbourne House is a **contemporary mixed-use development**. It comprises 460 sqm of premium retail space, currently occupied by luxury fashion brand Manière De Voir, and 11 serviced apartments offering one to three-bedroom layouts. A 26-meter glazed frontage enhances **street visibility**, while the refined brick façade and energy-efficient shutters combine modern aesthetics with **functionality**. The building reflects a thoughtful integration of retail, residential, and urban design in one of London's most **dynamic** locations.

### The Users

Drift responds to the rise of **modern, introspective travellers**, individuals seeking more than convenience or luxury. These users view the city as part of a **personal journey**, valuing spaces that **support emotional well-being, meaningful pause, and intentional solitude**.



#### Wellness Seekers

Urban dwellers and visitors looking to **disconnect from stress** and **reconnect with themselves** through **mindfulness, movement, and sustainable living**.



#### Introspective Adventurers

Solo travellers who **explore at a gentle pace**, immersing themselves in culture, creativity, and quiet moments of self-reflection.



#### Life Transition Travellers

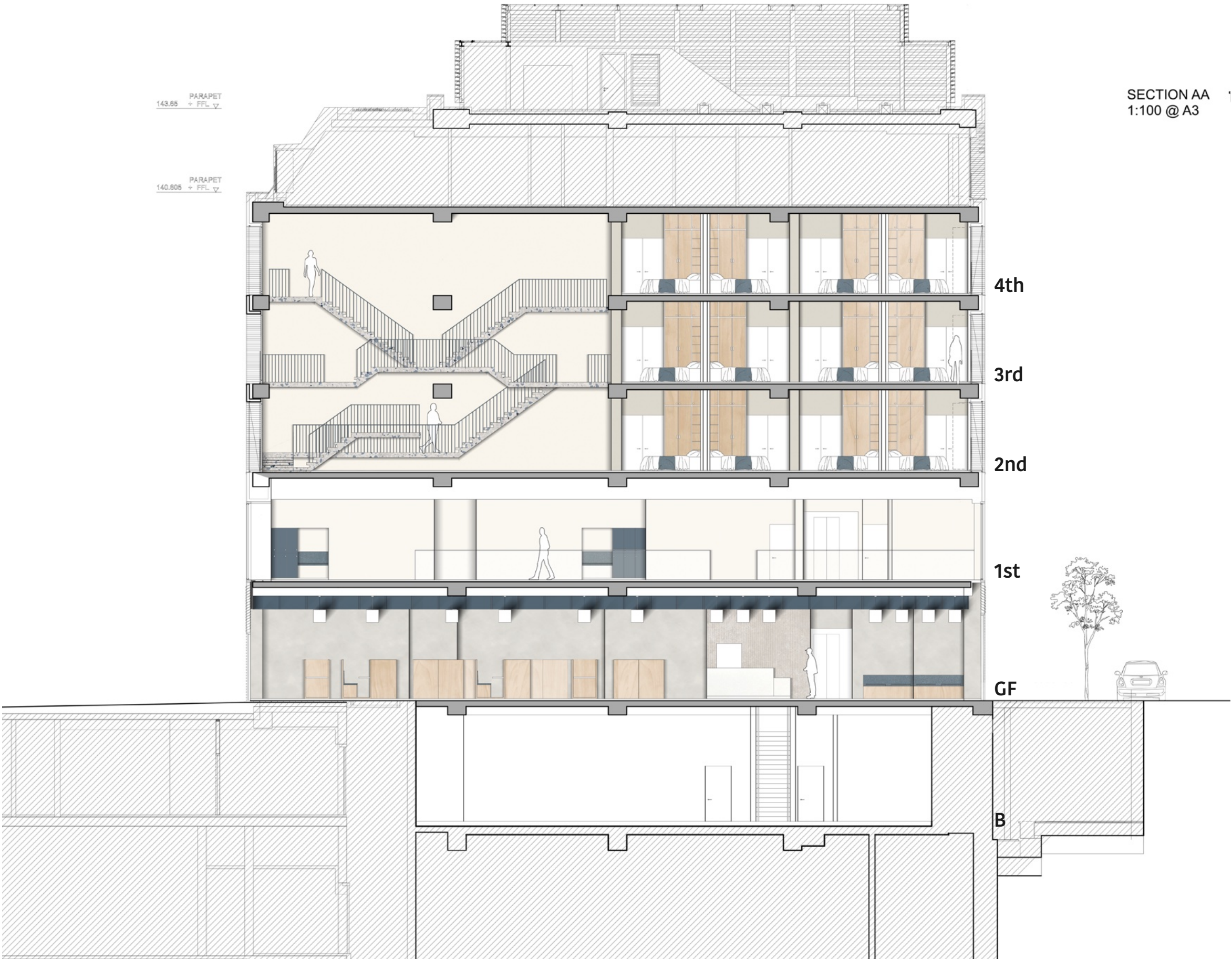
People navigating moments of **personal change** who seek **restorative, emotionally attuned** environments that enable **stillness, reset, and inspiration**.



### The Concept

#### Solitude as Empowerment

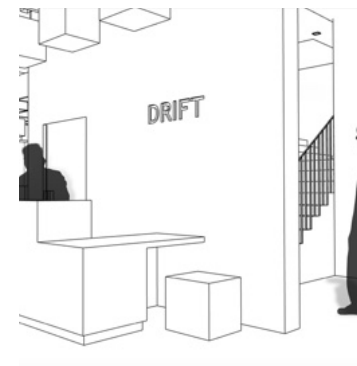
'Alone but never lonely' - Drift rethinks hospitality for a future where **solitude is no longer stigmatised but celebrated**. Set against the sensory overload of Oxford Street, this urban sanctuary creates space for **autonomy, presence, and calm**. Guests are invited to **retreat inward or gently connect, with no pressure, just possibility**. This future-focused design proposes a shift in how we define hospitality, not just as a service, but as **spatial support for emotional and social transformation in a rapidly changing world**.



### Storyboard - Guest Journey



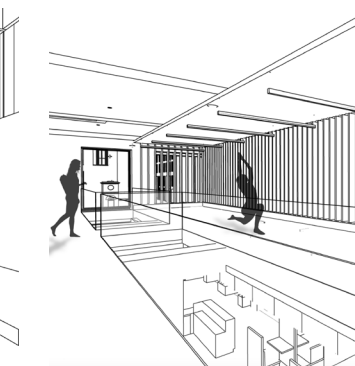
A quiet arrival. The traveller steps away from the **overstimulation** of Oxford Street into a sanctuary of **stillness**, a **threshold space** that invites **slowing down, recalibrating**, and beginning a **more mindful spatial journey**.



Guests are given **autonomy** from the start, choosing a **conventional** check-in or a **slower, seated alternative**. This **adaptive approach** supports **diverse needs** & acknowledges the **shifting expectations** of hospitality users.



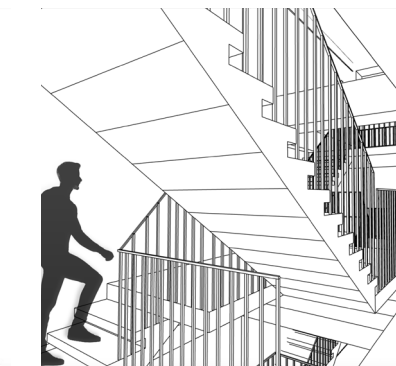
Guests control how **private or connected** their environment feels, adjusting spatial elements to create a **bespoke rhythm of solitude and interaction**. **Autonomy** and **emotional agency** are designed into the space.



A yoga and tai chi studio anchors the building's heart, elevated yet visually connected, offering **embodied stillness** within an otherwise **dynamic structure**. It **integrates wellness** into the building's core function.



Rooms are designed to **extend** into the **shared realm**. Encouraging guests to leave hotel room doors open becomes a **soft invitation**, not a demand, for **connection**, supporting a culture of **optional community**.



A vertical journey through staggered communal platforms **fosters unforced encounters**. These shared spaces challenge traditional hotel typologies by embedding opportunities for **quiet, spontaneous belonging**.





### Lobby & Reception Area

A first moment of stillness. More than a reception, this space acts as an **intentional threshold**, transitioning guests from the overstimulating energy of Oxford Street into a **slower, quieter rhythm**. Offering both rapid and seated check-in options, it reflects a shift toward **more adaptable, emotionally attuned** hospitality experiences.



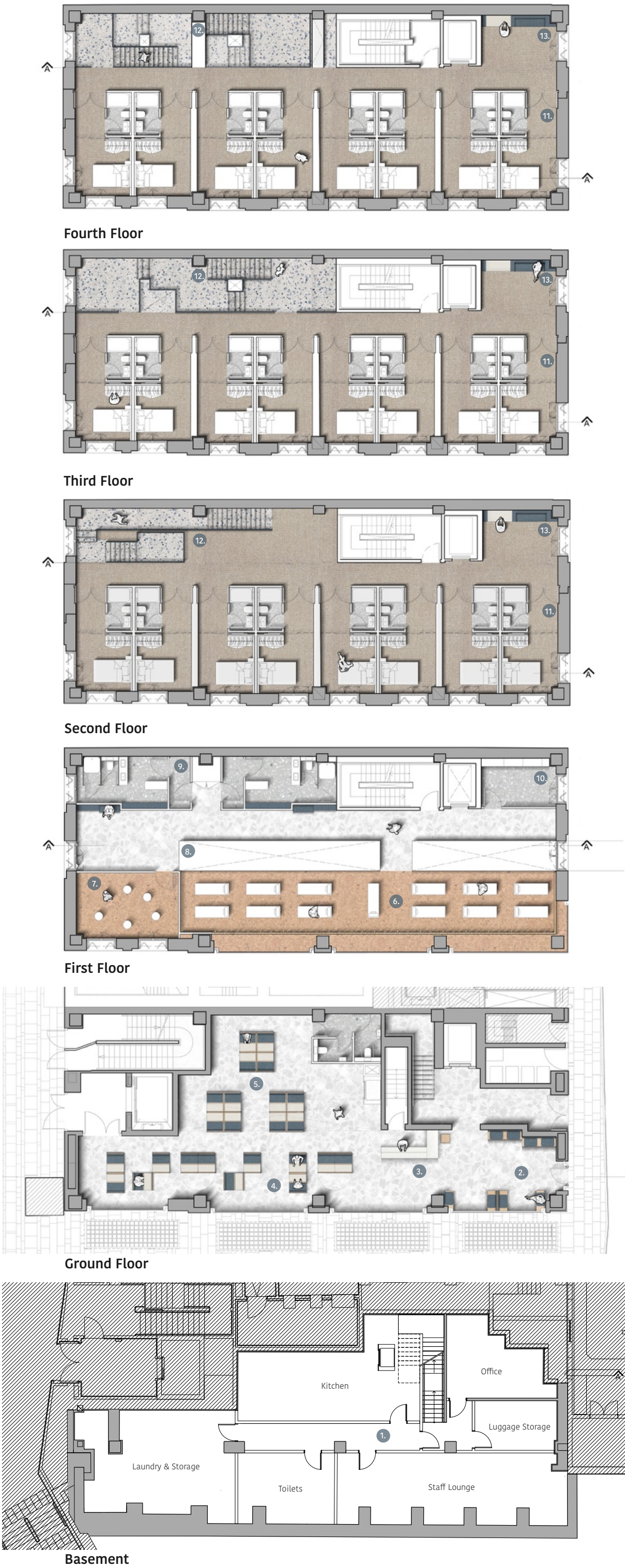
### Approach

A **soft invitation inward**. The design resists spectacle, opting instead for **subtlety and softness**. This **spatial quietude** sets the tone for **introspection**, offering a design response to the growing need for **restorative experiences in urban environments**.



### Yoga Studio

A **light space for slow movement**. Designed for **mindfulness** and **collective stillness**, this studio is **open and adaptable**. It supports **gentle connection** and **individual calm**, embedding wellness infrastructure into the hotel's core rather than treating it as an add-on.



## TRANSFORMATION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING INTO A ‘SANCTUARY FOR INTENTIONAL SOLITUDE AND GENTLE CONNECTION’

### 13. COFFEE & TEA STATION

Self-serve coffee and tea station promoting independence and moments of personal ritual.

### 12. COMMUNAL PLATFORMS

Shared space designed to foster spontaneous interactions, gatherings, and community-building among guests.

### 11. HOTEL ROOMS

Private rooms for solitude, with an open-door culture that encourages gentle connection among guests when desired.

### 10. STORAGE

Dedicated storage for yoga, tai chi, and meditation equipment to support guest activities.

### 9. LOCKERS & CHANGING ROOMS

Secure spaces where guests can change and store personal items before participating in wellness activities.

### 8. VOID

An open atrium overlooking the ground floor entrance and solo dining booths, creating a visual connection to the ground floor.

### 7. MEDITATION ROOM

A more secluded studio designed for quiet meditation or private wellness sessions.

### 6. YOGA STUDIO

An open, flexible space for yoga and tai chi that supports slow, mindful movement and community connection.

### 5. 4-PERSON DINING BOOTHS

Flexible dining booths for four, featuring sliding panels that allow guests to choose privacy or connection.

### 4. 2-PERSON DINING BOOTHS

Dining booths with a pivoting mechanism let guests adjust their seating, forward-facing for solitude, angled for casual interaction, or fully aligned for shared meals.

### 3. RECEPTION

Guests can choose between a traditional check-in or a slower, seated check-in experience for a more relaxed arrival.

### 2. LOBBY

A side entrance offers a more intimate, slow-paced arrival experience, creating a calming buffer from the busy street outside.

### 1. BOH

Basement level dedicated to hotel operations, including kitchen, storage, laundry, and staff facilities.



Overall Scheme



Material Board



The hotel is centred on **emotional well-being** and **sensory restoration**. Natural textures, soft muted tones, and understated craftsmanship create a **calming spatial language**, offering guests a **quiet refuge** from the overstimulation of Oxford Street. Every surface **invites slowing down, grounding, and reconnection**. **Minimal yet warm**, the design proposes a shift from performative luxury to **honest, nurturing** materials that foster **presence, autonomy, and quiet joy** in the heart of London.



Yoga Studio

**Connecting solitude and social flow.** The vertical **openness** of the yoga studio links **personal retreat** to **communal life**. A visual dialogue between floors fosters a **soft awareness of others**, allowing **connection without intrusion**, proposing a new model for an **integrated, emotionally intelligent space**.



Communal Platforms

**An informal landscape of belonging.** The staggered platforms offer space for **rest, quiet observation, or light interaction**. By allowing both **solitude** and **spontaneous encounters**, they rethink social space as **gentle, optional, and emotionally inclusive**, aligned with evolving urban needs.



Open Door

**Soft boundaries, optional connection.** This view frames the open-door living model, a subtle but powerful design move that **invites fluid movement** between **privacy** and **shared experience**. It reflects a shift away from rigid zoning, offering a **spatial metaphor for connection without obligation**.





**A Dining Booth**  
Scale: 1:10

