

# STEEL WARRIORS

## FIRST INDOOR GYM - FOR WOMEN

### Context & Aim:

Steel Warriors unveils its first-ever indoor gym - a bold space crafted exclusively for women. With a curated audience, the focus is on designing an environment where strength meets privacy, and where every woman can feel secure and respected. By redefining visibility and restricting the gaze, the space empowers its members to reclaim control, challenging gender-based inequalities in public and fitness spaces, and fostering confidence and safety in every movement. Located in the heart of busy Oxford Street, it functions as a sanctuary from urban overstimulation, addressing the growing demand for safe, health-conscious spaces while responding to the urgent need for equitable, culturally-sensitive, and inclusive spaces within dense city environments. Here, women of all backgrounds will find a safe space where they can encourage each other to rise, thrive and own their space - all while breaking a sweat!

### Concept:

The proposed design challenges the traditional perceptions of gym spaces by embracing the concept of “controlling the male gaze” - allowing women to regulate their visibility and interactions. It's structured to maintain exclusivity, with limited, controlled viewing areas that foster curiosity without compromising privacy.

Unlike most gyms in London, where women-only sections are rare, this gym offers an entire space dedicated to women, with no lack of equipment and tailored to meet their unique needs, creating a safe, equal, comforting and health-enhancing atmosphere. Members will find an environment where they can work out with confidence, support and empowerment - proving that movement and mindfulness can coexist.

### Design Philosophy:

Drawing inspiration from Steel Warriors' ethos of transformation, social activism, and resilience, this gym features steel as a primary material, symbolizing strength and adaptability. This design scheme blends the interior with exterior space, there's an interplay of open and enclosed zones that mirror the concept and dual need of freedom and security, stimulation and rest.

Architectural elements like perforated screens, angled wall panels and private workout areas reinforce the theme of controlled visibility; a metaphor for the right to privacy, agency, and self-expression.

### Objective:

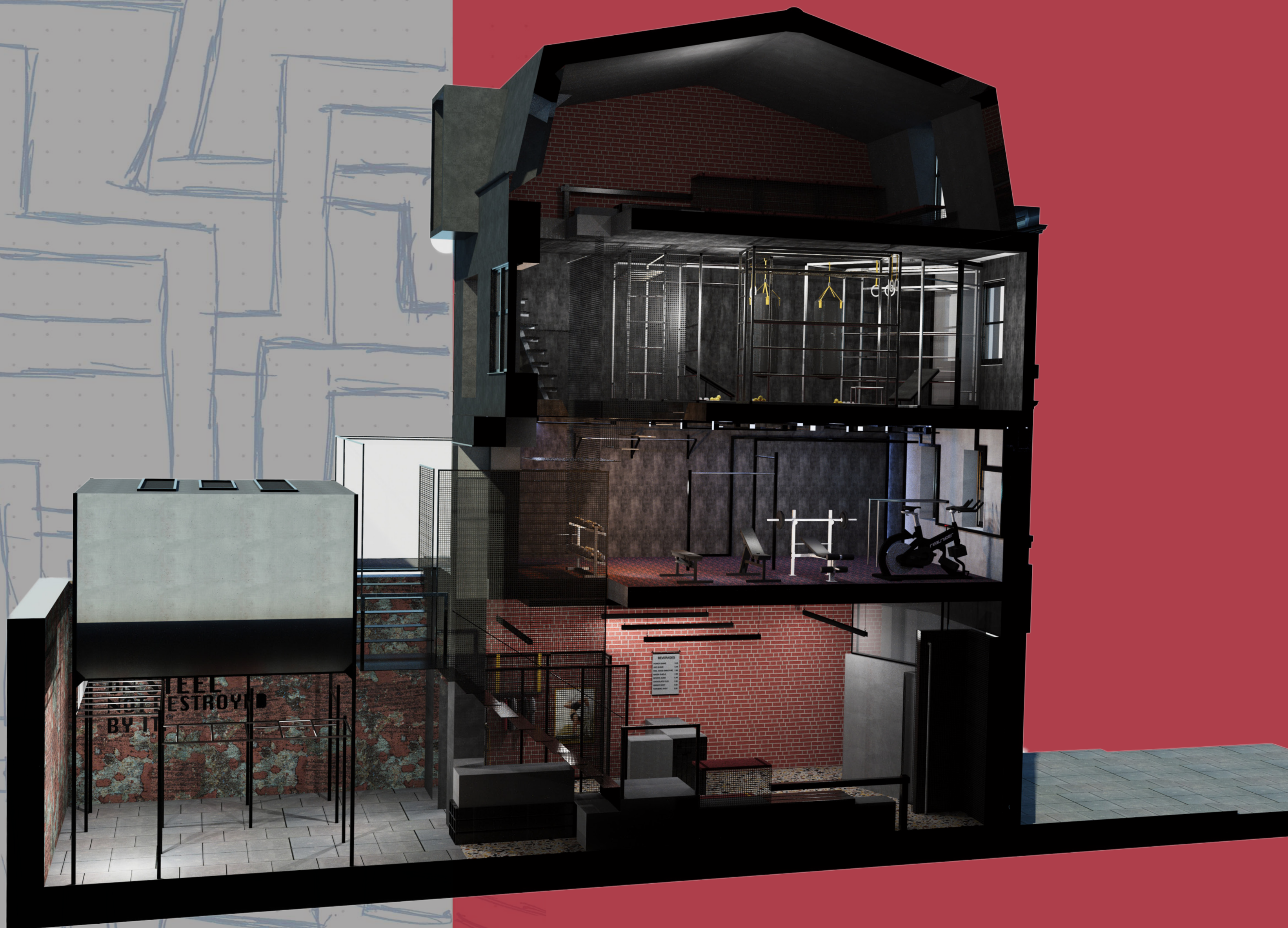
Steel Warriors' Women-Only Gym is not just a fitness centre but a cultural statement rooted in social justice. It's a response to the lack of inclusive gym areas in London and an initiative grounded in health equity, social care and the right to safety and dignity. It aims to create an environment where women can reclaim their autonomy, build confidence, and connect with like-minded individuals from all walks of life.

This space is as much about building emotional and mental fortitude as it is about physical strength. Through innovative calisthenics equipment, dynamic training zones, more private workout areas, and thoroughly curated interiors, Steel Warriors' first indoor gym redefines what a women-focused gym can be, breaking free of cliché stereotypes, and embracing inclusivity, diversity and holistic well-being as central to design.

The project entails acquiring a four-floor building on Oxford Street with the aim of transforming it into Steel Warriors', an anti-knife crime charity, first indoor gym.

The space will cater exclusively to women, their needs and special requirements, providing them with a one-stop destination for equitable access to fitness, health, well-being, and dignity in a safe and affirming space.

More than a gym, this is a therapeutic and empowering environment designed to support both physical and mental health through inclusive, restorative spatial design that prioritises fundamental human rights for all women.







## ABOUT STEEL WARRIORS

### Their Story:

Established in 2017 by Ben Wintour and Pia Fontes, Steel Warriors is a pioneering charity that transforms **confiscated knives into outdoor gym equipment to combat knife crime**. Their goal is to **transform violence into strength**.

### Their Vision:

Everyone deserves to feel safe and secure within their own body, without feeling the need to carry and rely on a weapon for protection and to defend themselves. **"A nation where young lives are built on steel, not destroyed by it."** This vision is grounded in the belief that dignity, opportunity and physical autonomy are basic rights.

### Their Fitness Approach:

Centered on **calisthenics**, using **body weight to build muscle, endurance and mental discipline**. Their outdoor gyms feature simple steel equipment like bars and benches for a versatile, accessible, inclusive workout.

### Their Target Audience:

**Young people affected by knife-crime** and broader **urban communities seeking safe, supportive spaces**. The aim focuses on prevention through empowerment - replacing fear with physical confidence; prevent violence through healing and healthy alternatives and community resilience to realize full potential.

### Their Mission:

Establish a UK-wide **network of street gyms that empower at-risk youth, promote well-being**, and foster a strong sense of community, belonging and social equity.

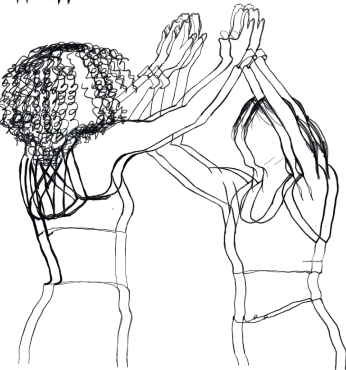
### Their Locations:

There are currently **5 Steel Warriors outdoor gyms around London** with a 6th one opening soon.

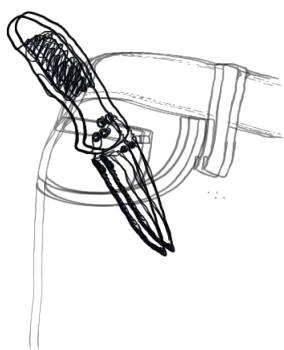
BEGINNERS



WOMEN OF ALL BACKGROUNDS



WOMEN WHO FEEL THE NEED TO CARRY A KNIFE



People who are just beginning their gym journey. This gym eases the pressure of starting out, free from intimidating crowds and mixed large spaces. It allows them to build confidence at their pace.

All women - beginner or advanced, young or old, from any background, age, identity - are welcome.

A supportive, motivating community of strong women, including those practicing religious modesty.

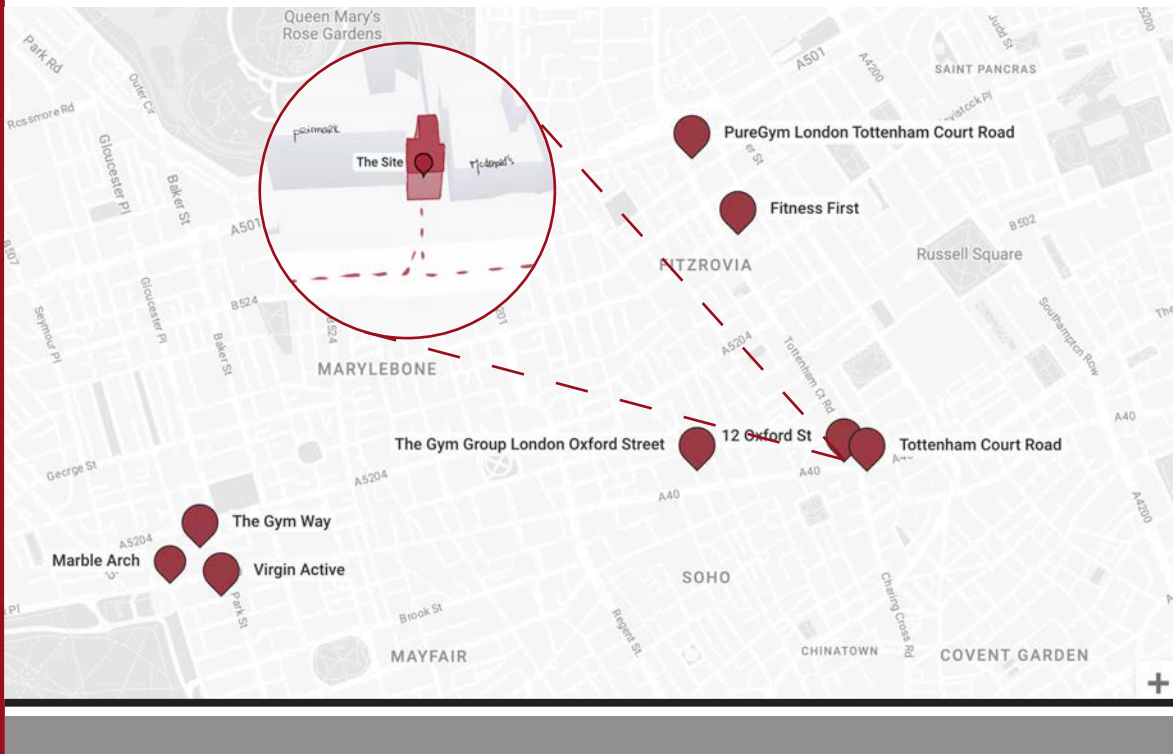
Anyone who lives in fear and doubts their strength, lacks self-confidence, relies on weapons for a solution and out of self-protection. This place proves otherwise: you are strong enough without it.

This gym will become a safe, empowering space for women of all ages and identities, aligning with Steel Warriors' mission to reduce knife crime. Shifting the focus from supporting and rehabilitating potential offenders to protecting and empowering potential victims, it offers a sanctuary for women who feel vulnerable, helping them build confidence and reclaim control over their own body. A new place where **women can feel strong, move, and thrive physically and emotionally without fear** of judgement or intimidation.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

## SITE STRATEGY & SOCIAL POTENTIAL

During a walk from Marble Arch to Tottenham Court Road, I came across 5 gyms - plenty of options for fitness enthusiasts. While this reflects a thriving fitness market and the high demand for such facilities, none cater to the needs of women or specialize in calisthenics, revealing a major gap in inclusive, strength-focused spaces. This also highlights an opportunity to stand out and address these unmet and specific needs.

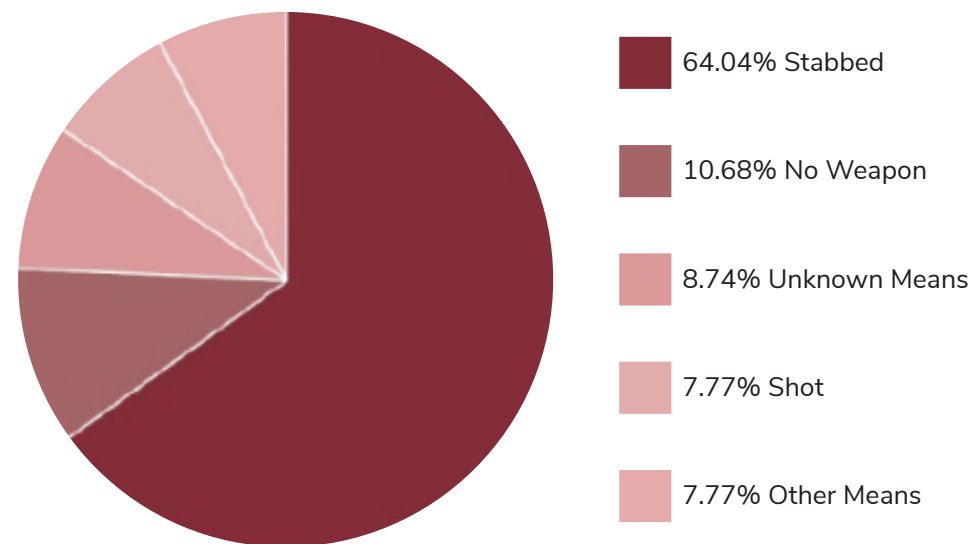


Why would this gym work?

**This gym will offer something different - fresh and new.**

Unlike the general focus of nearby gyms, this women-only gym specializes in calisthenics and women's well-being with a health-first approach. By focusing on self-improvement, it empowers users to rely on their own body weight for strength training - no external weights, no machines. **Just your own strength - harness inner strength to fuel progress.** Aligned with Steel Warriors' mission of championing resilience, growth and self-sufficiency, it fosters mental clarity, physical transformation and confidence. This gym delivers a targeted, minimalist approach for a unique and effective fitness experience - all in a prime location on a busy street, offering what no other gym in the area does. **By honing in on this single area and continually improving it, the gym is no doubt set up for success.**

## THE REALITY OF KNIFE CRIME



Unfortunately, it's no secret that **knife crime in the UK is on the rise**, with London at the forefront of this worrying problem. **Stabbings remain the highest form of violence** in London, accounting for **65.04%** of homicides in 2024 (MurderMap). Knife offences **increased by 4.7%** from the previous year, with 50,500 recorded incidents. Crime rates vary by borough. Oxford Street's borough, City of Westminster **has a count of 1656 offences**. While both men & women face significant threats, the impact on women is particularly alarming. **Women often face unique vulnerabilities, especially in public spaces at night**. In 2022, although representing the minority, **women accounted for 24% of total victims** (~1,858), highlighting a growing need for safe spaces. An all-women gym in central London would be a step in the right direction, recognising the problem and its possible solutions. Addressing these vulnerabilities offers empowerment and support. Steel Warriors' initiative is a **direct response to these urgent challenges**.

## HOW CHANGE IS MADE



With the help of the police, knives confiscated from off the streets are collected and then melted down and repurposed into steel in order to create equipment for free outdoor street gyms.

**"Turn steel into something that gives people more confidence in their bodies. A story of changing attitudes and maybe changing lives."**

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD UNDERGROUND STATION



PRIMARK

OUTERNET

CHANGE MONEY SITE

MCDONALD'S

SELFRIDGES

BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE

PRIMARK

OUTERNET

CHANGE MONEY SITE

MCDONALD'S

SELFRIDGES

BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE

The site is on Oxford Street, one of London's busiest commercial areas. It's positioned between two major retail giants: McDonald's and Primark. Currently occupied by a currency exchange shop, "Change Money", it once housed a Boost smoothie store. "Change money" stores are currency exchange services catering to tourists and locals needing quick cash exchanges, which are very common in high-traffic areas. Built in the 1950s, this compact building contrasts with its taller, modern facade of neighbors.

**S**  
STRENGTHS

**W**  
WEAKNESSES

**O**  
OPPORTUNITIES

**T**  
THREATS

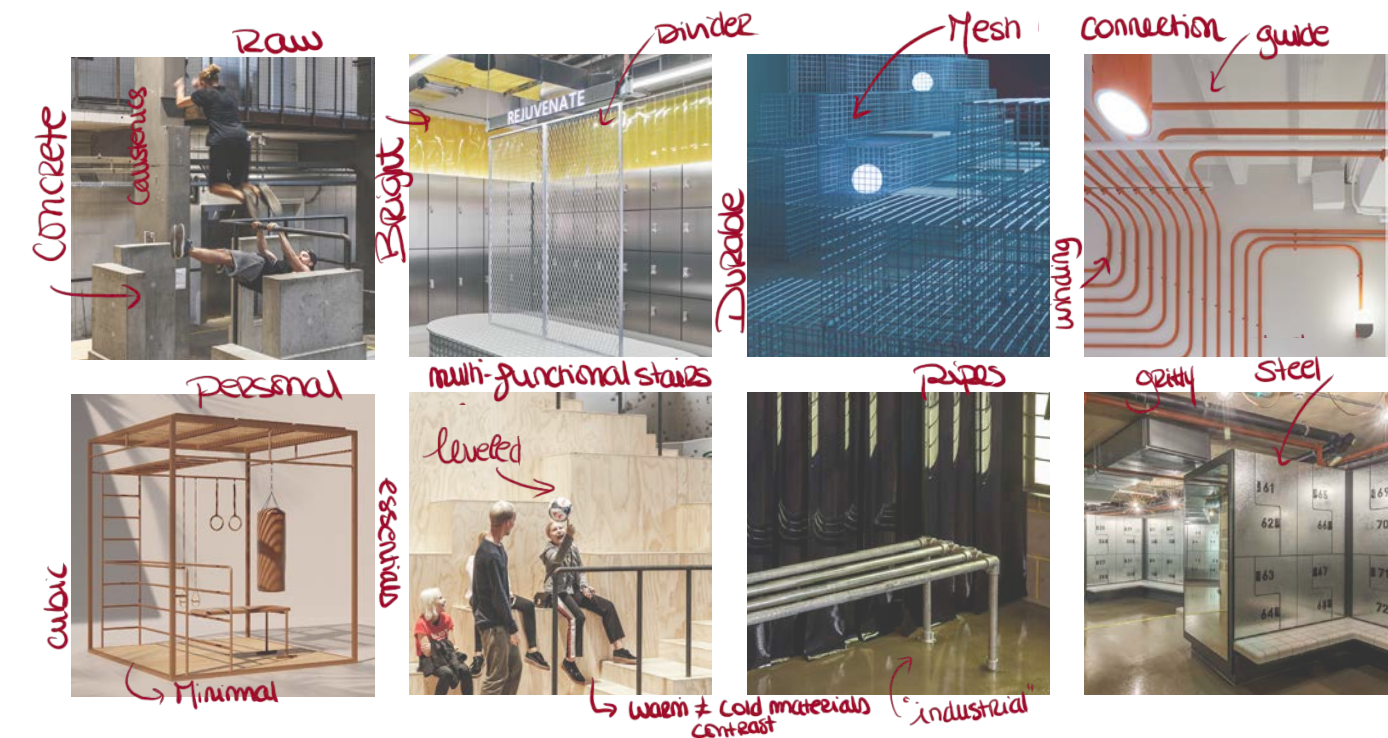
Prime location with high visibility and foot traffic. Easily accessible, 2 minutes away from Tottenham Court Road Station. Well-maintained 4 leveled building with mansard roof and high ceilings. Ample sunlight from 5 front and 4 rear windows. Includes a backyard for outdoor use.

The space is small and narrow, unsuitable for a retail due to its limited floorplan. The deteriorating facade suggests neglect / old site. Each floor fits only about 12 people comfortably. High Oxford St. rent demands better capacity.

Building offers creative potential with a backyard for outdoor space or floorplan extensions. Multi-level design allows structured use per floor, fostering dynamic spaces for different purposes. High ceilings enhance versatility. Opportunities include targeting underserved market, integrating sustainability, hosting events to promote brand and community engagement.

Area's high knife crime rate may raise safety concerns at night: all-women gym could be vulnerable at night. Busy street location brings noise pollution, with unclear impact. Small footprint and limited floor space could constrain design scheme, while the prime location may increase construction costs.

## KEY INSPIRATIONAL TRENDS





## STORYBOARD

ENTERING THE SPACE  
FACADE



MERCH SHOP  
SMOOTHIE BAR



SEATING SPACE  
STAIRCASE TO 1F+CHANGING ROOM



LOCKERS  
CHANGING ROOM + W/C



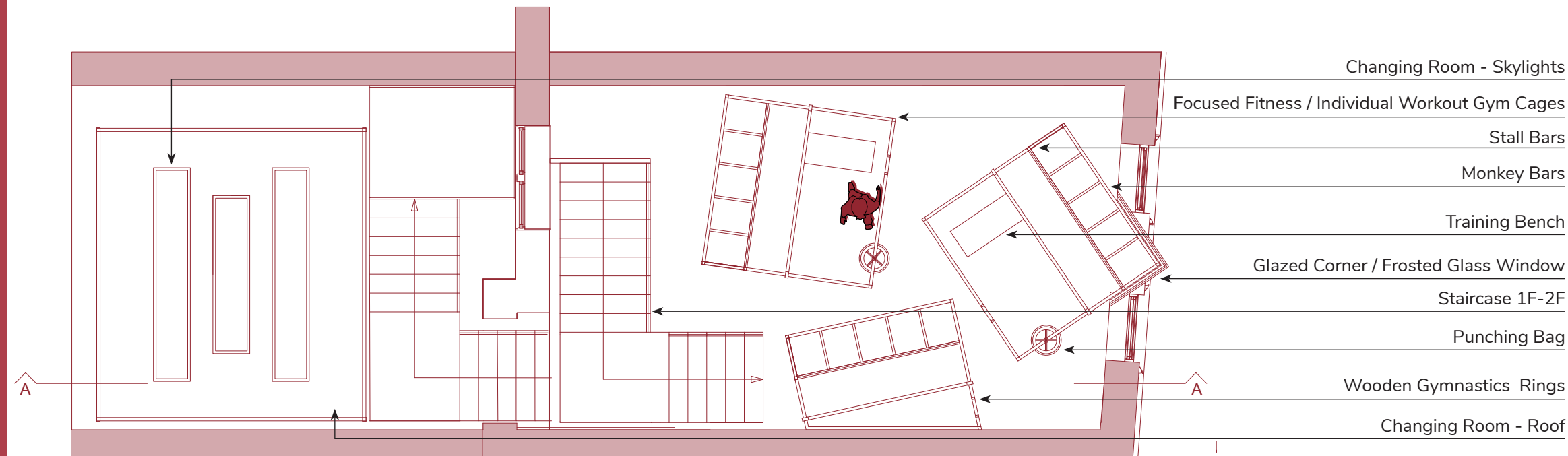
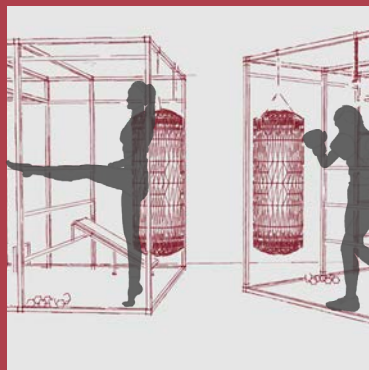
BACKYARD  
OUTDOOR GYM



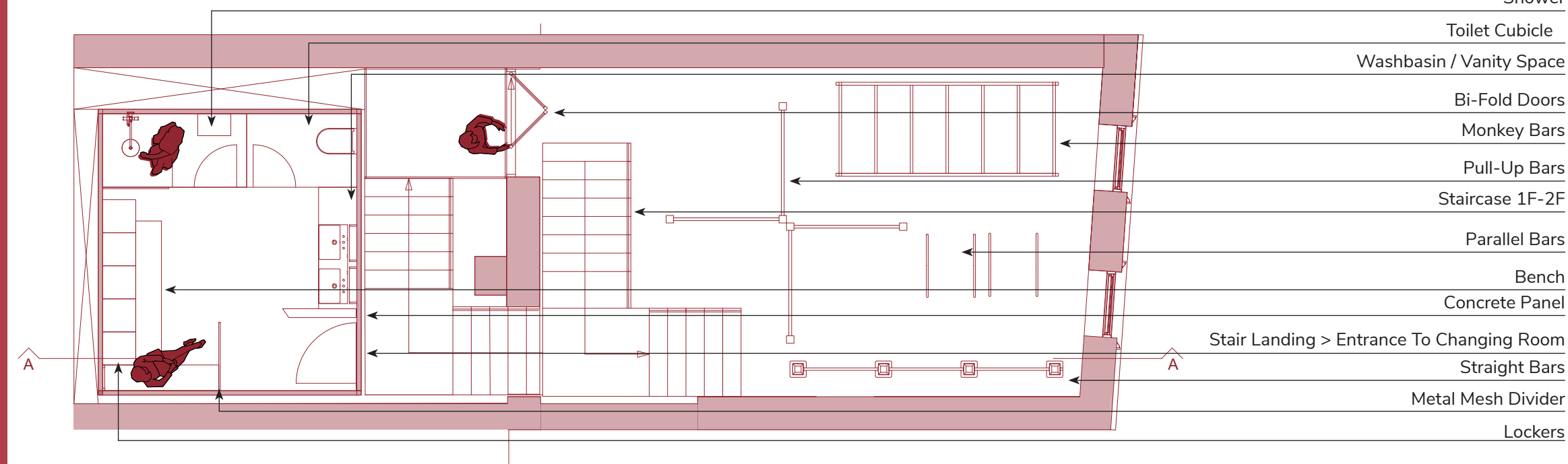
FIRST FLOOR  
GENERAL GYM



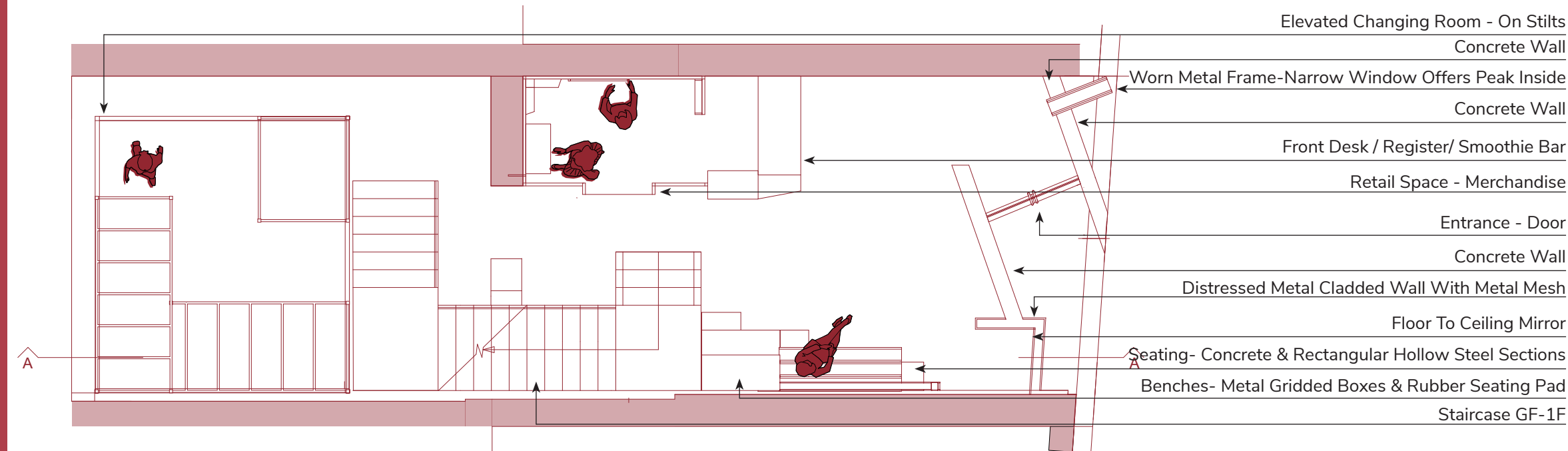
SECOND FLOOR  
FOCUSED GYM



## SECOND FLOOR



## FIRST FLOOR



## GROUND FLOOR



## EXPLORING MATERIALITY

These compositions bring materials to life by imagining how bodies interact with them. Each image suggests a spatial experience, showing how textures, forms, and finishes contribute to movement, support, and atmosphere within the gym. It's a tactile storyboard of strength, stillness, and flow.

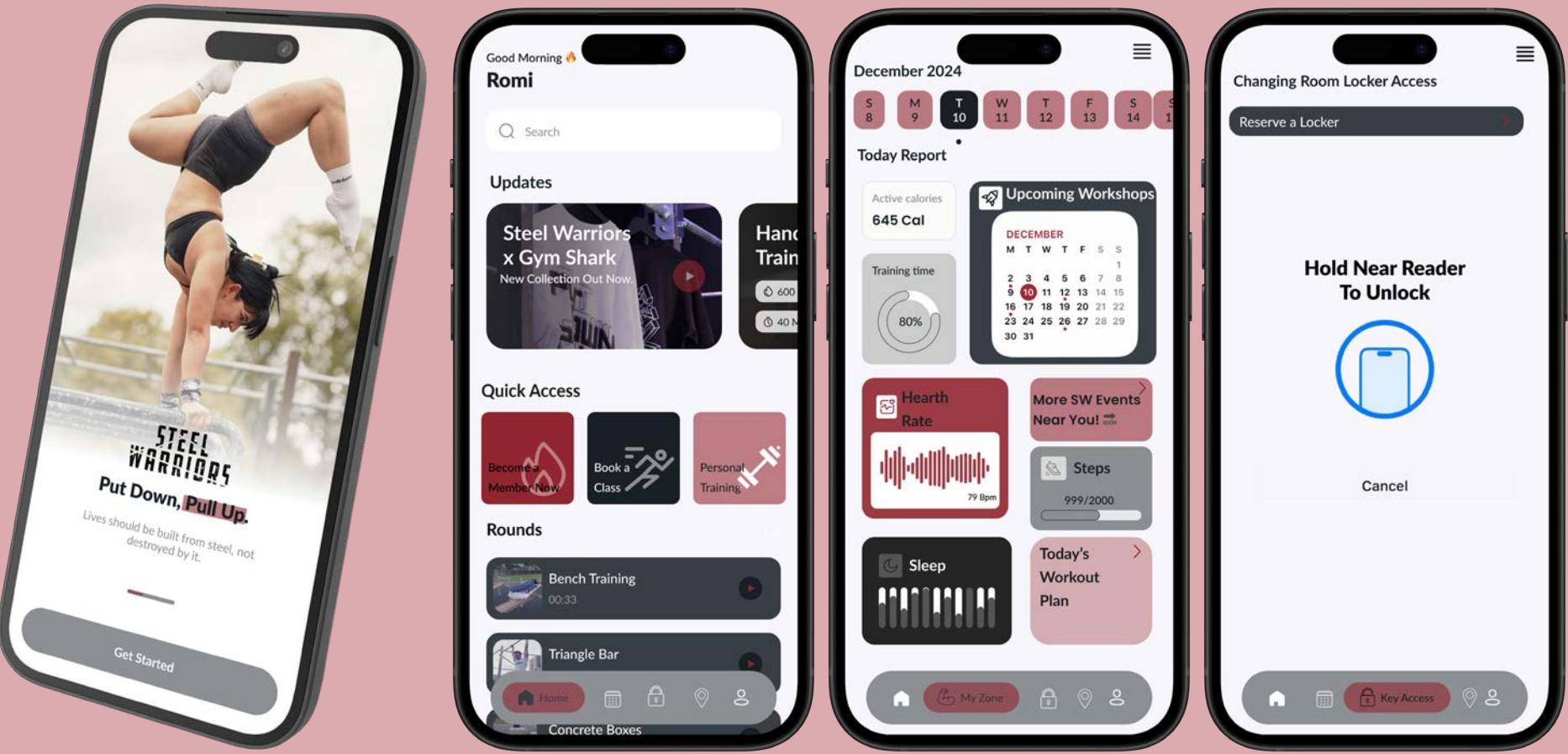
## FACADE - FRONT VIEW OF SPACE

The facade is clad in cement panels, grounded in raw, urban aesthetic. Black steel sections frame the windows, visually extending the interior design language outside. One of the 1-1 gym cages on the 2nd floor subtly protrudes from the facade, breaking through the surface as a symbol of pushing boundaries. The angled entrance walls create a discreet entry and break from typical street-facing format, guiding visitors through a subtle U-turn to enter: limiting views while inviting curiosity. A slit window, carefully angled, offers passerby a controlled glimpse into the space, hinting at the staircase and outdoor equipment beyond, sparking intrigue without compromising privacy.

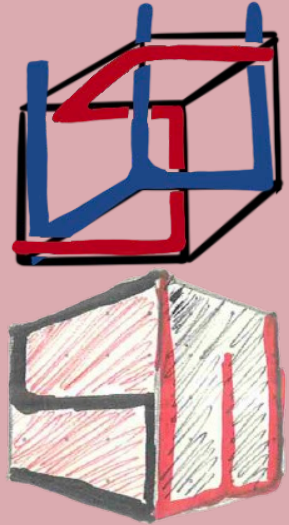




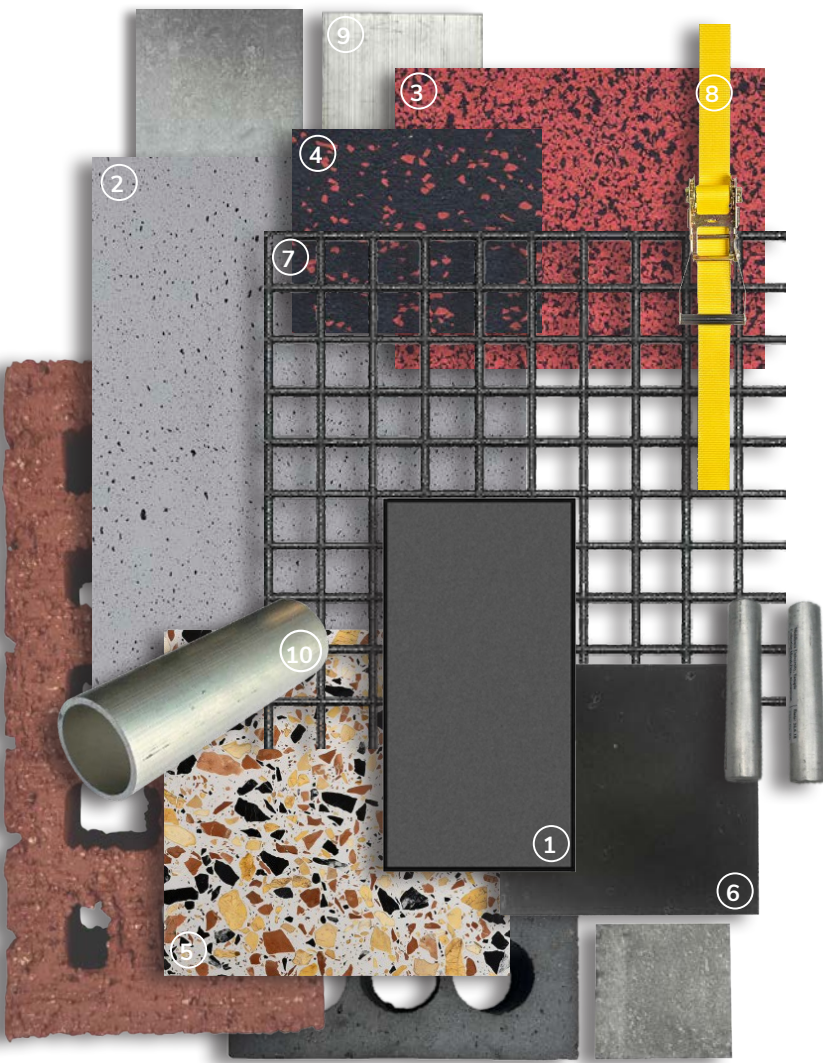
THE STEEL WARRIORS APP



LOGO PROPOSALS



To enhance the user experience and create a seamless connection with the gym, an app has been developed. The app serves as a central hub for everything they need—whether it's accessing schedules, brand updates unlocking lockers, fitness tracker, or staying informed about classes and workshops.

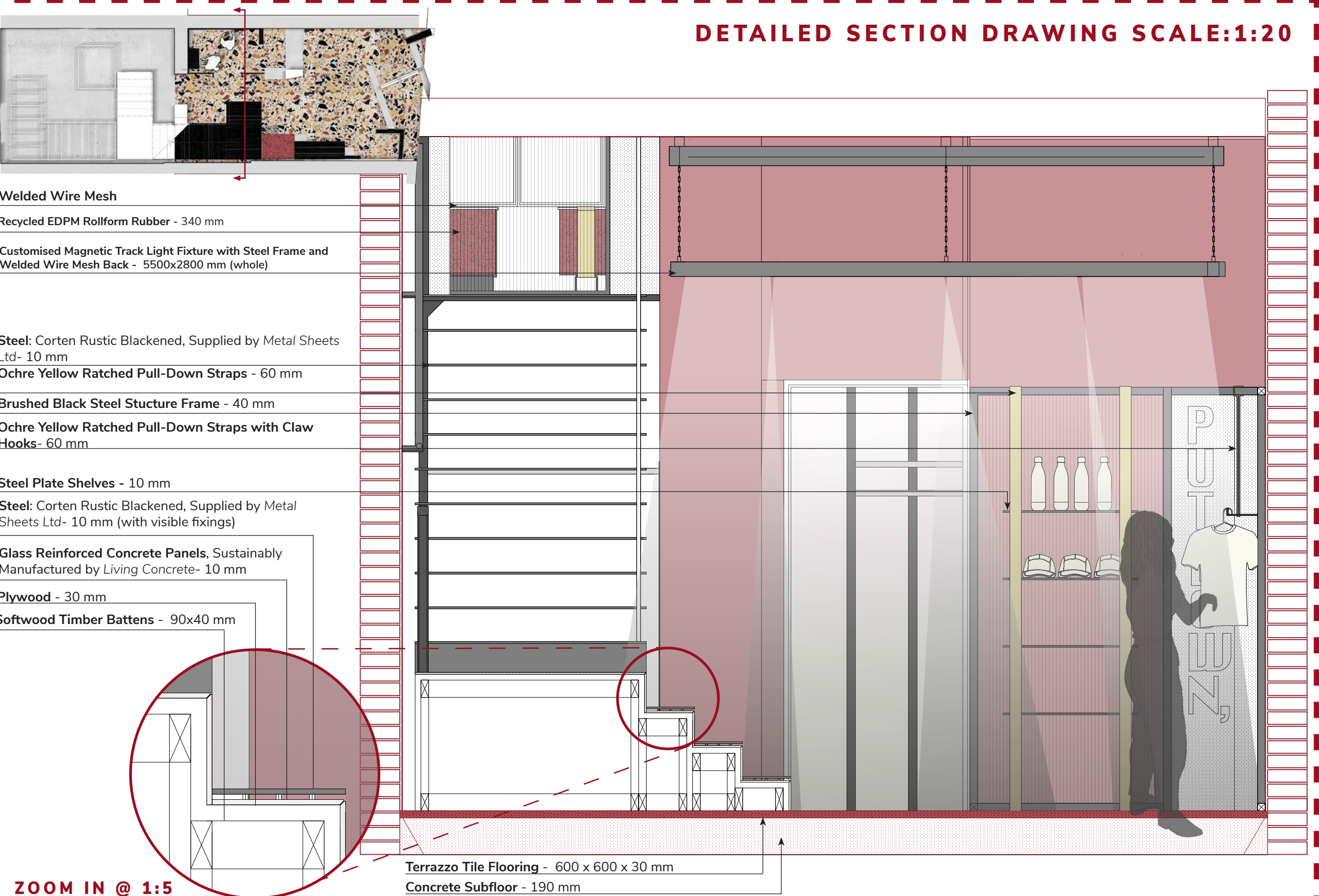


- 1. Material:** Fibre Cement Facade Tile  
**Finish/Shade:** [natura] / "Anthracite" (N251)  
**Supplier:** Equitone  
**Sustainability Credentials:** Produced using 95% locally sourced materials, with a focus on reducing carbon emissions during manufacturing. EQUITONE is designed for resilience and durability, is weather resistant and is manufactured using the minimum amount of materials and energy usage.
- 2. Material:** Light Concrete Wall Panel  
**Finish/Shade:** Classic Slimbeton/"Natural Grey" (200) / Medium Pitted  
**Measurements:** 1200 x 800 mm, 7 mm thick  
**Supplier:** Concrete LCDA  
**Sustainability Credentials:** Use of recycled materials, low embodied carbon options, energy efficiency from thermal mass properties. Durable. Slim design reduces material usage, lowering environmental impact during production and transport.
- 3. Material:** Recycled EDPM Rollform Rubber Flooring  
**Finish/Shade:** DalZone / "Brique"  
**Supplier:** Dalhaus  
**Sustainability Credentials:** DalZone combines 85% coloured EDPM granules with 15% fine-grained recycled black rubber for both sustainability and visual appeal, minimizes waste and promotes circular economy practices.
- 4. Material:** Recycled EDPM Rollform Rubber Flooring  
**Finish/Shade:** DalChoc / "Braise"  
**Supplier:** Dalhaus  
**Sustainability Credentials:** SBR Rubber with EPDM FlecksManufactured using post-industrial rubber waste, with energy-efficient production methods
- 5. Material:** Terrazzo Floor Tiles  
**Finish/Shade:** "Honed" / "San Marco"  
**Supplier:** Hyperion Tiles  
**Supplier Credentials:** Crafted from recycled aggregates, waste marble materials, and low-VOC binding agents.
- 6. Material:** Rough Metal Tile  
**Finish/Shade:** "PureTiles" / "Aged Iron" (VO)  
**Supplier:** Dauby  
**Sustainability Credentials:** Obtained through traditional production process, handcrafted using upcycled metal waste, ensuring reduced material waste + energy use.
- 7. Material:** Galvanised Welded Metal Mesh  
**Finish:** Mild steel base / Hot Dip Galvanized/ durable zinc coating.  
**Supplier:** Metal Mesh UK.  
**Sustainability Credentials:** In collaboration with Steel Warriors, repurposes confiscated knives into steel materials for innovative applications in the space beyond the calisthenics equipment. Durable and recyclable at end-of-life.
- 8. Material:** Ratched Pull-Down Straps Claw Hooks  
**Finish/Shade:** Ochre Yellow  
**Supplier:** UKRatchetStraps  
**Sustainability Credentials:** Made from sustainably sourced nylon or polyester materials.
- 9. Material:** Aluminium Plate  
**Finish/Shade:** Brushed Aluminium  
**Supplier:** Metal Supermarkets  
**Sustainability Credentials:** Ability to be endlessly recycled in a closed loop. Fully recyclable and lightweight, reducing transport energy consumption. Recycling aluminum conserves over 90% of the energy needed compared to manufacturing fresh metal.
- 10. Material:** Stainless Steel Rod  
**Finish:** Polished Steel / Textured Powder Coated  
**Supplier:** The Metal Store UK  
**Sustainability Credentials:** In collaboration with Steel Warriors, repurposes confiscated knives into steel materials for innovative applications in the space beyond the calisthenics equipment. Endlessly recyclable and corrosion-resistant, ensuring longevity and minimal environmental impact.

Feature Materials. For Full Materials Details Refer to Workbook.

MATERIALS BOARD

DETAILED SECTION DRAWING SCALE:1:20



ZOOM IN @ 1:5

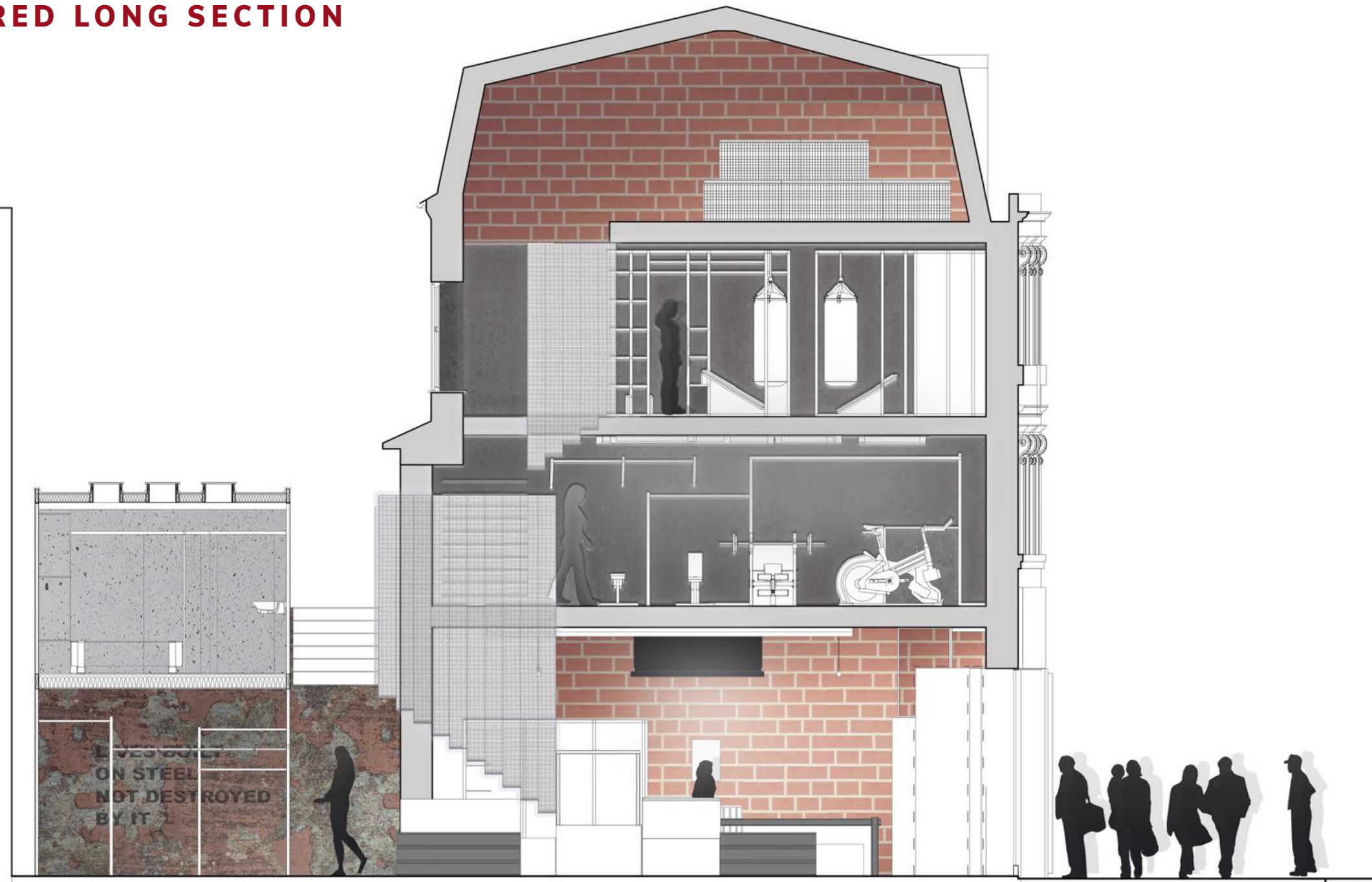
GROUND FLOOR: RETAIL, SEATING, SATIRCASE



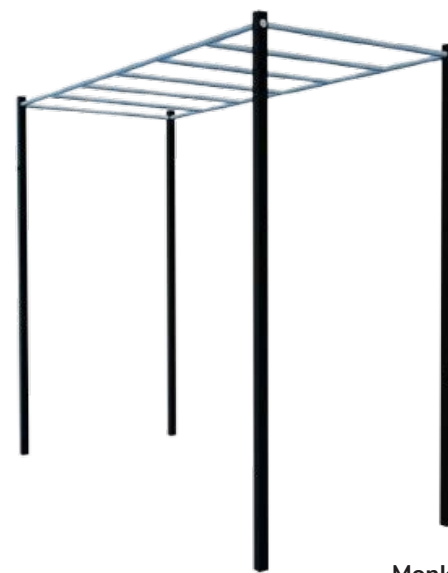
View of the Ground Floor from the entrance: exposed benches lead to the staircase, subtly revealing the changing room beyond. To the right, a retail and smoothie bar corner to draw people in and activate the space, which encourages movement on the floor as users flow between the outdoor equipment, upper floors, and entry. Glimpses of the outdoor gym in the backyard extend the activity beyond the ground floor.



# RENDERED LONG SECTION



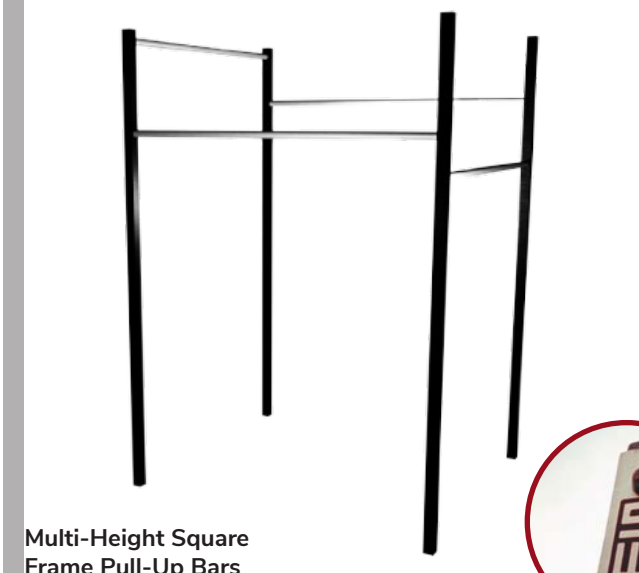
ISOLATED EQUIPMENT



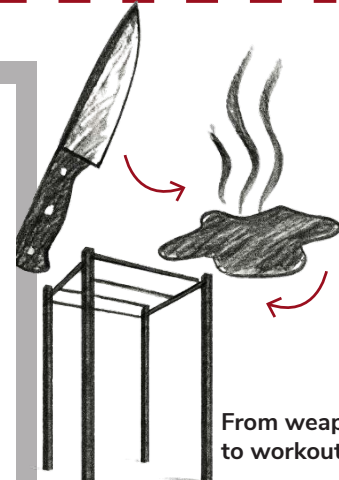
Monkey Bars



1-1 Focused Training Cages



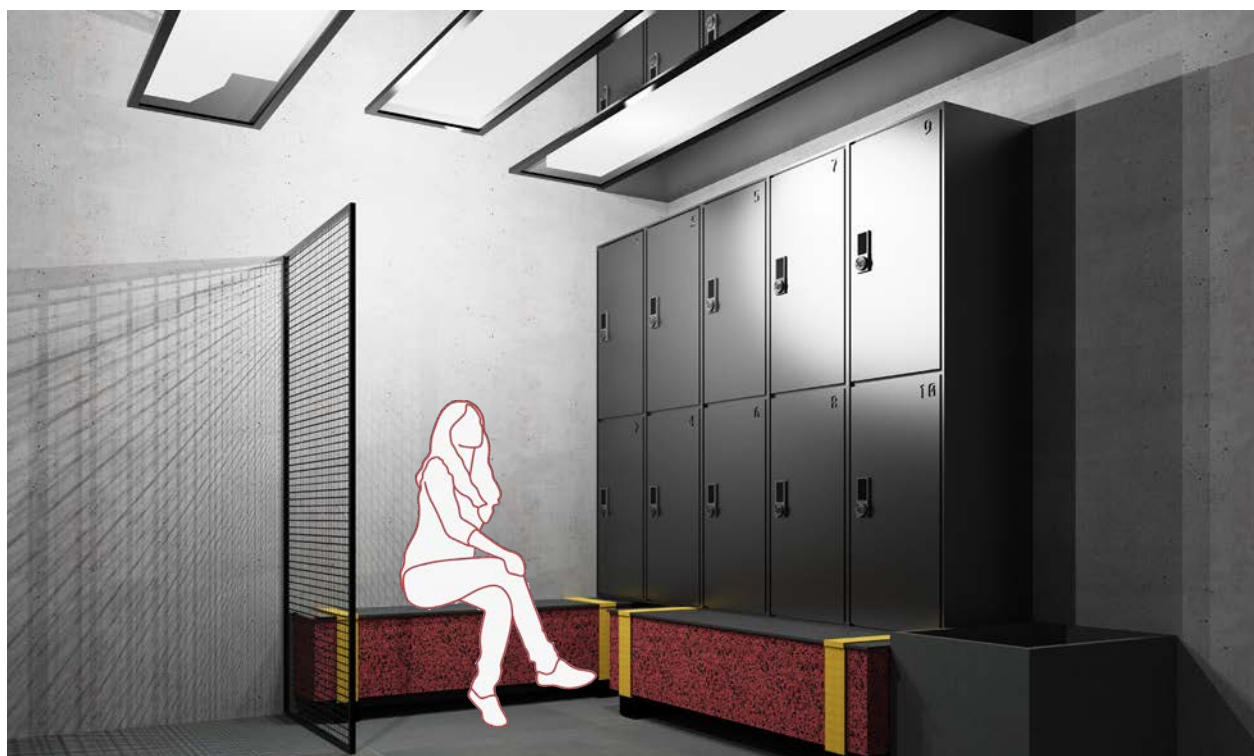
Multi-Height Square Frame Pull-Up Bars



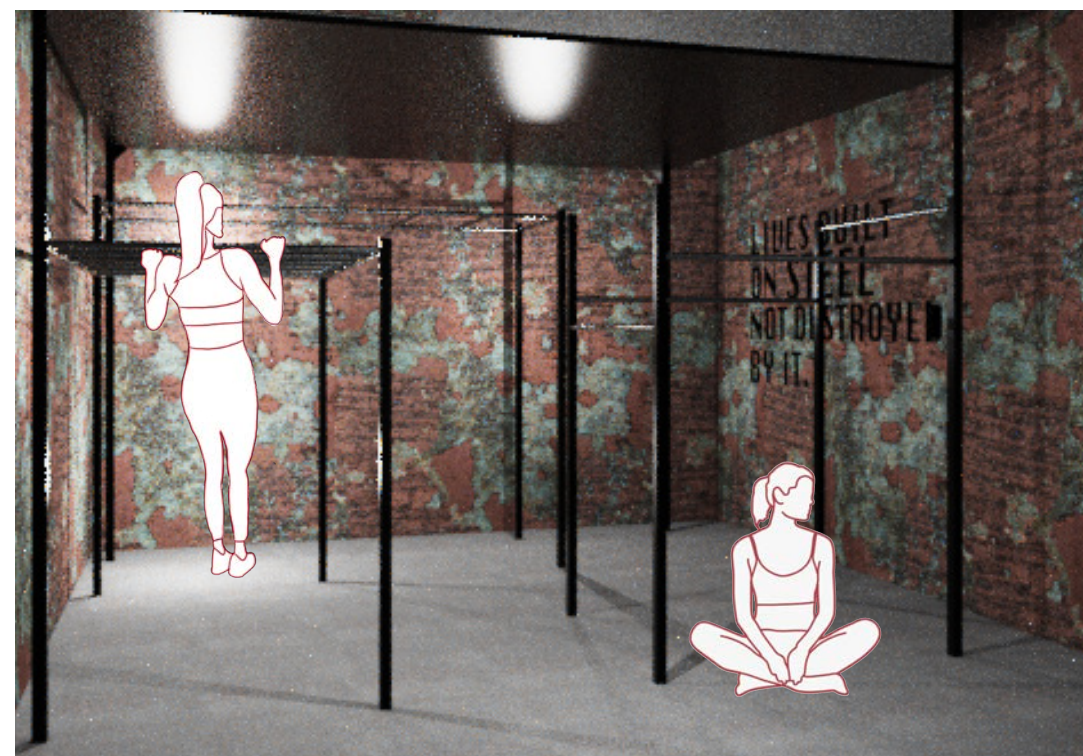
From weapon to workout:

Isolated views of the equipment forged from confiscated knives reinforces the project's core message. Each piece is a physical reminder of change; turning violence into strength.

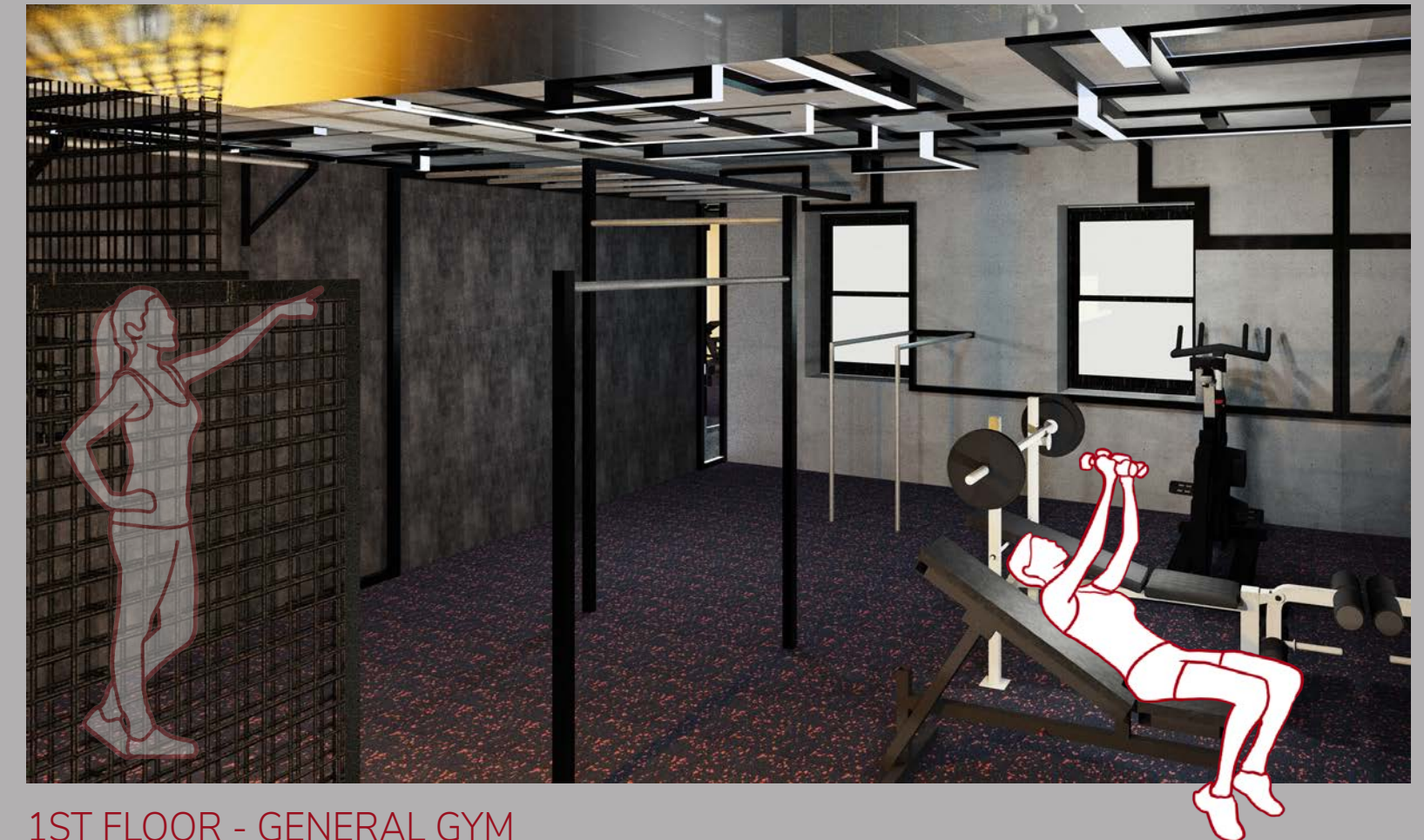
## CHANGING ROOM LOCKERS



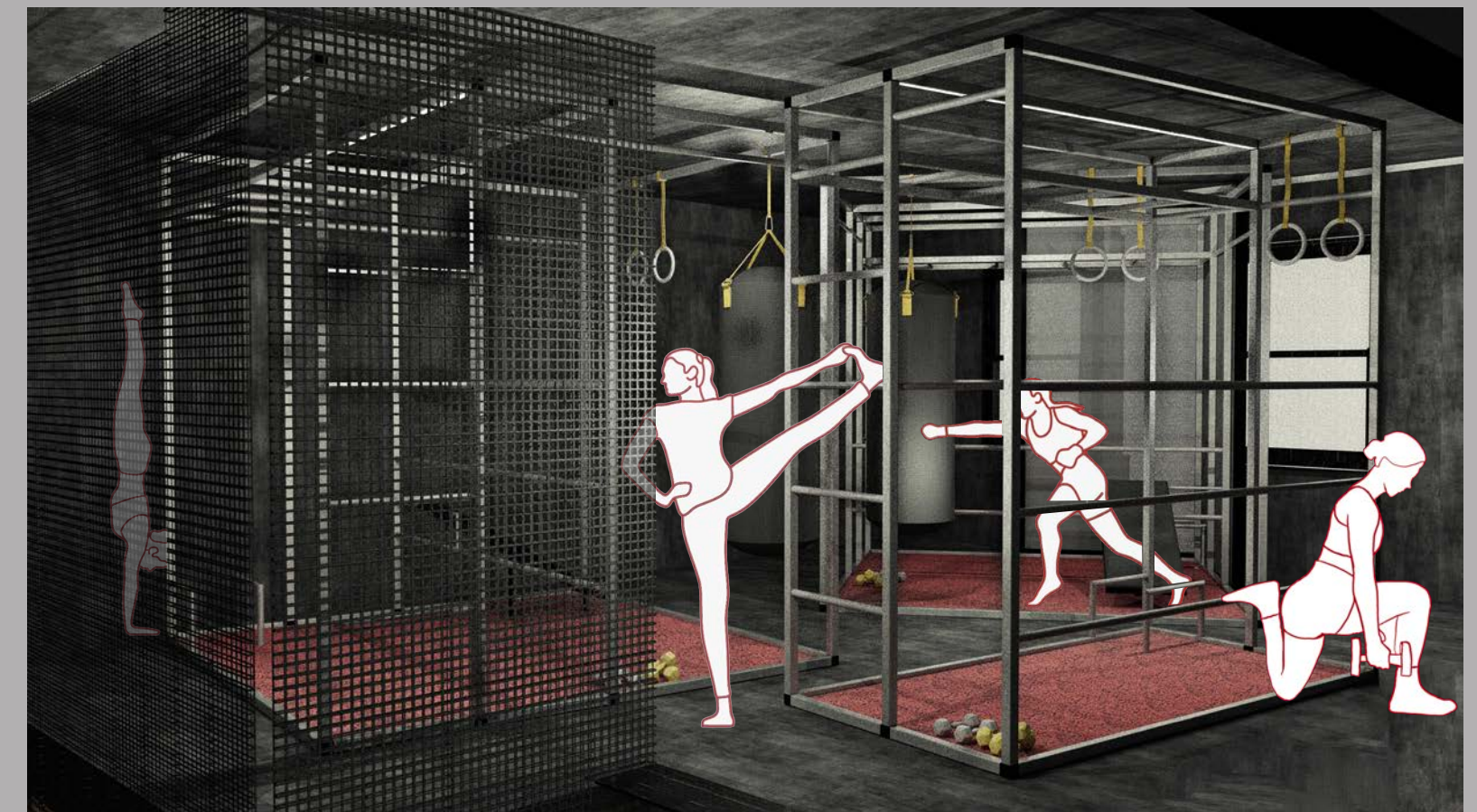
## BACKYARD - OUTDOOR GYM + ELEVATED CHAGING ROOM



FACADE - NARROW WINDOW OFFERING SNEAK PEAK OF INSIDE



1ST FLOOR - GENERAL GYM



2ND FLOOR - GYM CAGES / FOCUSED FITNESS