

Resonance mill

- *A library of sound and memory* -



Resonance Mill is an immersive interior architecture project that reimagines an unused historic mill in Newark-on-Trent, transforming it into a vibrant hub for musical exploration, collaboration, and community connection. Situated along the water's edge, the mill's robust industrial fabric provides a rich backdrop for a new kind of library—one that trades silence for sound and solitude for shared experience.

At the heart of Resonance Mill is a curated vinyl library where visitors are invited to browse, discover, and listen—Resonance Mill is an immersive interior architecture project that reimagines a historic mill in Newark-on-Trent, transforming it into a vibrant hub for musical exploration, collaboration, and community connection. Located along the water's edge, the mill's robust industrial structure provides a rich backdrop for a new kind of library—one that values sound over silence and promotes shared experiences instead of solitude.

At the heart of Resonance Mill is a curated vinyl library where visitors are invited to browse, discover, and listen—whether in quiet solitude or in connection with others. Listening becomes both a personal and social experience, offering a space where musical tastes can be expressed, exchanged, and celebrated. In addition to listening, the library features practice and performance areas where musicians of all skill levels can bring their instruments or hire from the collection to create and collaborate. These flexible spaces foster spontaneous performances, informal jam sessions, and structured rehearsals, transforming the library into a living, breathing space of sound.

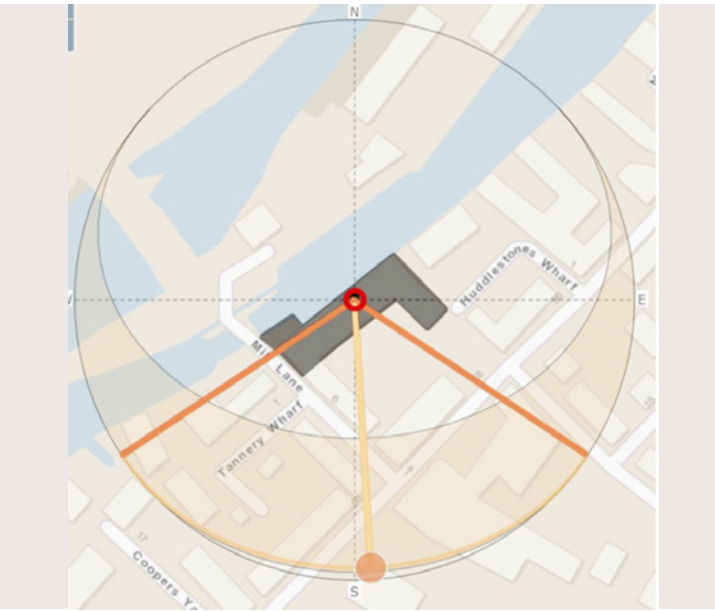
Resonance Mill is more than just a place to hear music; it's a place to feel it, play it, and connect through it. It bridges the past and the present, honouring the mill's industrial heritage while carving out a progressive cultural space rooted in communication, creativity, and collective resonance. either in quiet solitude or in connection with others. The act of listening becomes both personal and social, offering a space where musical taste can be expressed, exchanged, and celebrated. Beyond listening, the library extends into practice and performance areas, where musicians of all levels can bring their instruments or hire from the collection to create and collaborate. These flexible zones foster spontaneous performance, informal jamming, and structured rehearsals, transforming the library into a living, breathing space of sound.

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Interior visual of vinyl storage shelving

Site & context



Nestled along the banks of the River Trent, the unused mill in Newark stands as a silent monument to the town's industrious past. Constructed in the 19th century, the mill is a robust example of industrial architecture, with red brick facades, tall arched windows, and weathered timber beams that speak to decades of production and labour. Though now dormant, the structure retains a powerful presence—its expansive interior volumes, high ceilings, and rhythmic column grid offering a raw and atmospheric canvas for transformation. This can be seen in the interior visual situated on the left.

Surrounded by traces of the town's historic trade routes and positioned near the water's edge, the mill once thrived as part of Newark's milling and transportation network. Today, it sits quietly amid encroaching vegetation and echoing emptiness, its worn materials and patina of age telling stories of time, use, and potential. This mill is more than a relic—it is a space rich with texture, memory, and opportunity. Its disused state invites reinterpretation, offering a unique foundation for a contemporary intervention that honours its heritage while reactivating it as a cultural and communal landmark. Nestled along the banks of the River Trent, the unused mill in Newark stands as a silent monument to the town's industrious past. Built in the 19th century, the mill is a strong example of industrial architecture, featuring red brick facades, tall arched windows, and weathered timber beams that speak to decades of production and labor. Although it is now dormant, the structure maintains a powerful presence; its expansive interior volumes, high ceilings, and rhythmic column grid create a raw and atmospheric canvas ready for transformation.

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Newark-on-Trent, though modest in scale, holds a surprisingly rich and diverse musical culture that pulses beneath its historic streets and riverside setting. Known for its deep-rooted appreciation of the arts, Newark has long supported a thriving music scene—one that blends tradition with a passion for contemporary expression.

At the heart of this culture are Newark's independent record stores, which serve not only as retail spaces but as vital community hubs. These shops celebrate the physicality of music—vinyl in particular—offering curated collections that attract audiophiles, collectors, and curious newcomers alike. They provide a space where conversations around sound, taste, and discovery unfold naturally, keeping the ritual of music listening alive in an increasingly digital age.

Equally significant is the town's nationally renowned Newark School of Violin Making, a world-class institution dedicated to the craftsmanship of stringed instruments. Here, the art of making violins, violas, and cellos is preserved and passed on through meticulous handcraft techniques. The school draws students from around the globe, adding an international dimension to Newark's music scene and ensuring a continued legacy of excellence in instrument making.

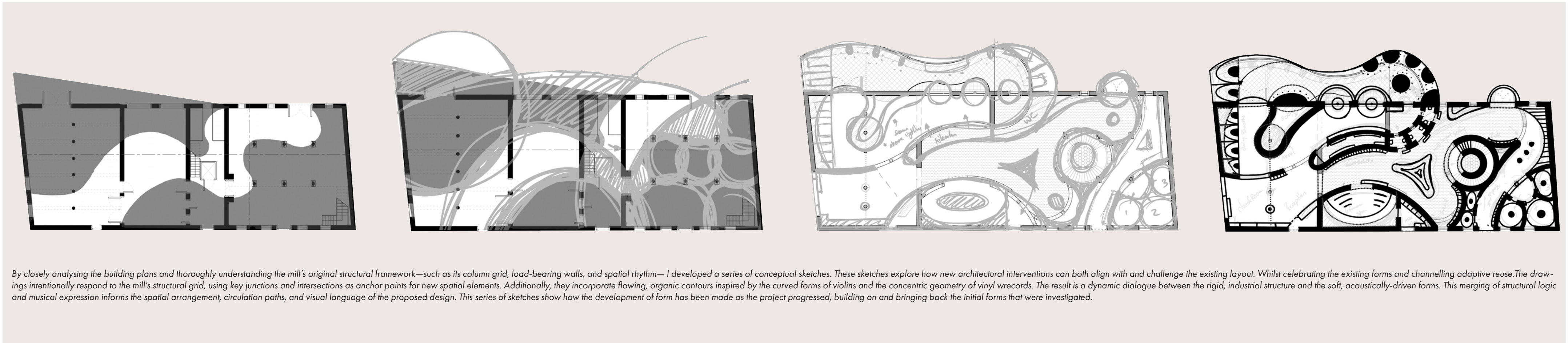
Together, these elements form a unique cultural identity for Newark—one rooted in listening, making, and sharing music. From the artisan's bench to the turntable, the town nurtures both the tangible and intangible aspects of musical life, making it an ideal setting for a project that aims to celebrate and elevate sound as a form of connection and creativity.



The development process started with the discovery of Newark's music culture, which produced investigations that revolved around a deep appreciation for the crafted shapes of musical instruments—specifically violins—and the unique geometry of vinyl records. These objects, while functional, are also sculptural, shaped by acoustics, tradition, and human craftsmanship. The violin, characterised by its elegant curvature, delicately arched body, and scroll-like head, represents centuries of refined artistry. Every component—from the sweeping bouts to the f-holes—serves a sonic purpose and contributes to its iconic, instantly recognisable silhouette. By closely examining the anatomy of the violin, it's flowing contours and structural logic become a rich source of architectural inspiration, offering opportunities to inform spatial gestures, material treatments, and acoustic design elements within the project. Vinyl records, on the other hand, present a different kind of beauty—circular, rhythmic, and precise. Their concentric grooves and radial symmetry evoke notions of repetition, motion, and time. When abstracted, the surface of a vinyl record transforms into a visual and textural language in itself—patterns that can be mapped, layered, or translated into architectural motifs, wayfinding elements, or acoustic treatments. Newark-on-Trent boasts a rich architectural heritage shaped by its geography, industry, and historic status as a market and river town. The buildings that define the town's character—ranging from medieval structures to Victorian industrial sites—share a robust material palette that reflects both local availability and practical function.

A key material in Newark's historic construction is red brick, produced from local clay and widely used from the Georgian period onward. These bricks, often handmade, vary subtly in tone and texture, lending a warm, earthy quality to the town's facades. In industrial buildings such as mills and warehouses, brickwork is typically laid in robust patterns like English or Flemish bond, giving strength and rhythmic visual detail to large-scale structures. Limestone is another material deeply embedded in the town's built fabric. Quarried from nearby regions, this stone appears prominently in Newark Castle and other medieval structures, prized for its durability and light, golden hue. It is often paired with ashlar detailing for refined edges around windows, arches, and doorways. Timber framing also features in the older vernacular architecture, particularly in Newark's Tudor and post-medieval buildings. Oak beams and exposed timber structures speak to a craftsmanship-driven approach to construction, while the infill panels—traditionally wattle and daub or later brick—reflect evolving material technologies. Iron and steel emerged during the industrial era, notably in the construction of bridges, warehouse interiors, and mills. These materials introduced longer spans and lighter construction techniques while complementing the town's brick-dominated streetscape. Together, these materials form a richly textured and enduring architectural language. Contemporary adaptive reuse projects, like Resonance Mill, offer both historical context and tactile inspiration—creating a dialogue between past and present that informs material choices, structural interventions, and atmospheric qualities.





Model Photos at 1:100

The material palette of the design carefully bridges the industrial character of the existing mill with the refined craftsmanship found in musical instruments. By preserving and celebrating the mill's original materials—such as exposed red brick, aged timber beams, and cast iron columns—the project maintains a strong connection to the building's industrial heritage. These raw, time-worn surfaces provide a rich, textured backdrop for new interventions. In contrast, materials drawn from the world of musical instruments introduce a sense of precision, warmth, and acoustic sensitivity. Polished woods like maple and spruce, commonly used in violins, guitars, and pianos, are introduced in key touchpoints—such as seating, shelving, and wall panelling—to bring a tactile and tonal quality to the space.

Oak-Piano

Exposed White brick

Walnut-Acoustic Guitar

Aged timber beams

Spruce-Violin

Limestone

Brass-Saxophone

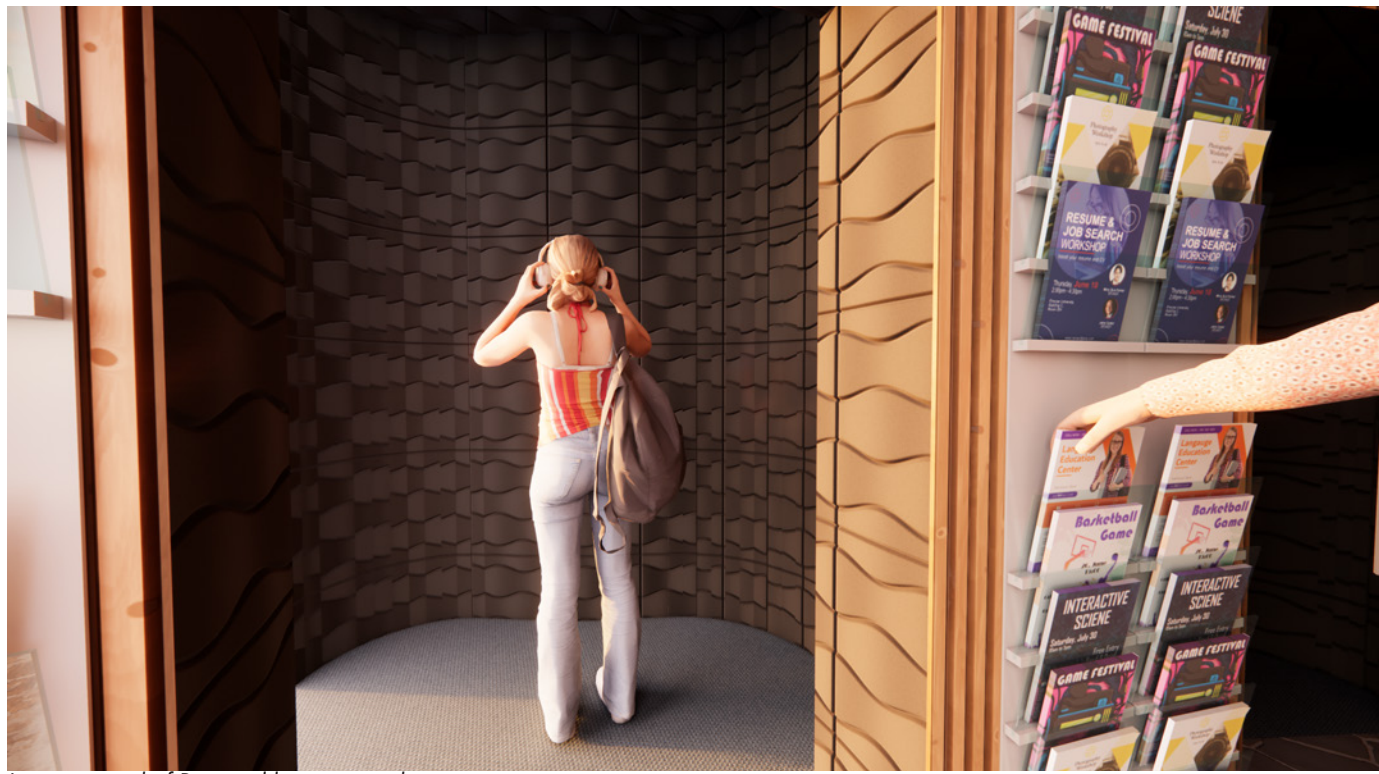
copper-Trumpet

Exposed red brick

Maple-Guitar FretBoard

Mahogany-Acoustic Guitar

The lustrous surfaces of brass and brushed metal, referencing wind and brass instruments, are used in lighting fixtures, handrails, and detailing to add subtle highlights and rhythm. The interplay between the mill's robust, industrial materials and the elegant, finely crafted materials of instruments creates a dialogue between strength and delicacy, echoing the relationship between structure and sound. This layered material approach not only enhances the sensory experience of the space but also deepens the conceptual link between music, architecture, and craftsmanship.



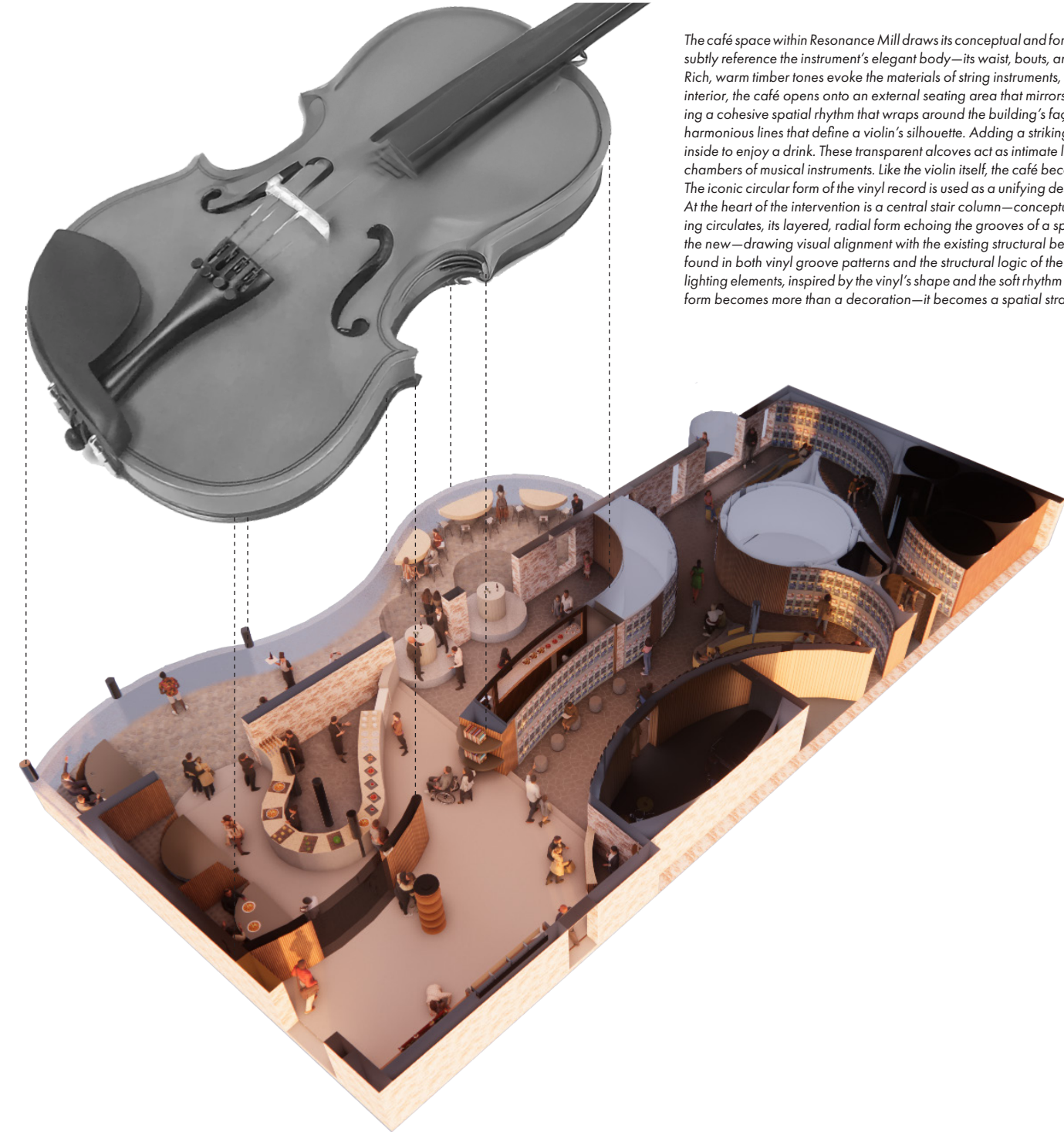
Interior visual of Personal listening pod



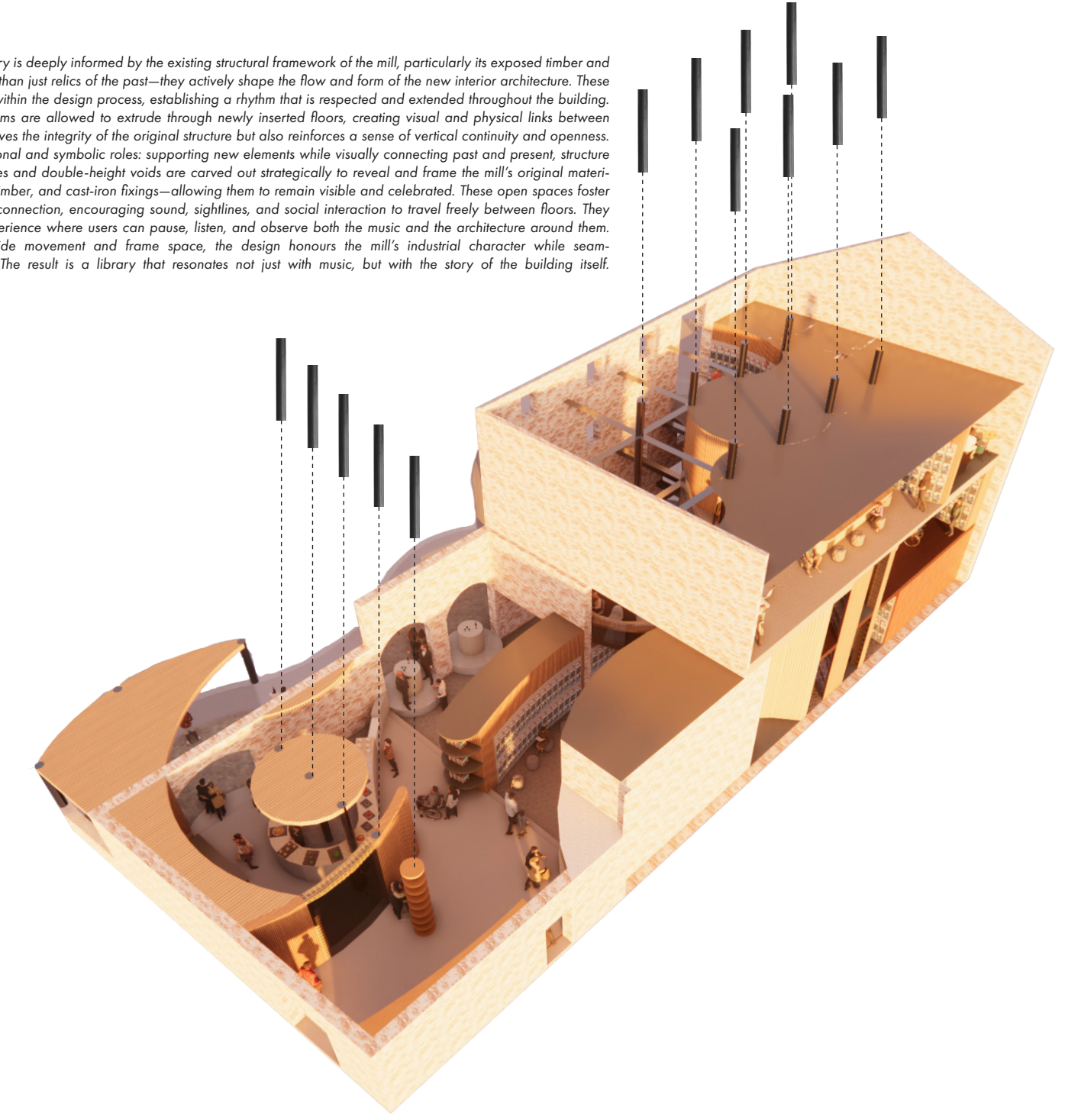
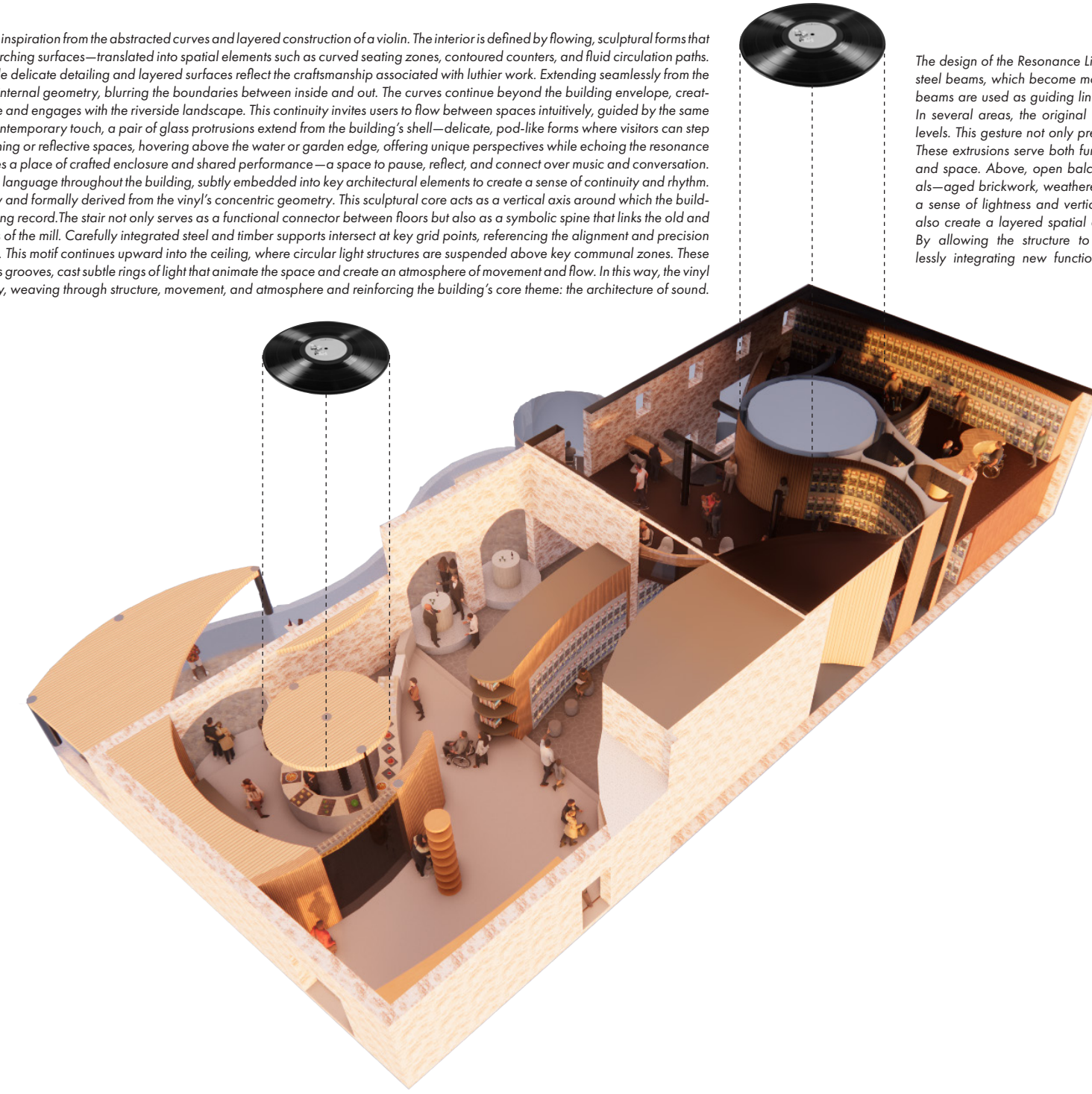
Interior visual of exterior dining area



Interior visual of desk balcony area



The café space within Resonance Mill draws its conceptual and formal inspiration from the abstracted curves and layered construction of a violin. The interior is defined by flowing, sculptural forms that subtly reference the instrument's elegant body—its waist, bouts, and arching surfaces—translated into spatial elements such as curved seating zones, contoured counters, and fluid circulation paths. Rich, warm timber tones evoke the materials of string instruments, while delicate detailing and layered surfaces reflect the craftsmanship associated with luther work. Extending seamlessly from the interior, the café opens onto an external seating area that mirrors its internal geometry, blurring the boundaries between inside and out. The curves continue beyond the building envelope, creating a cohesive spatial rhythm that wraps around the building's façade and engages with the riverside landscape. This continuity invites users to flow between spaces intuitively, guided by the same harmonious lines that define a violin's silhouette. Adding a striking contemporary touch, a pair of glass protrusions extend from the building's shell—delicate, pod-like forms where visitors can step inside to enjoy a drink. These transparent alcoves act as intimate listening or reflective spaces, hovering above the water or garden edge, offering unique perspectives while echoing the resonance chambers of musical instruments. Like the violin itself, the café becomes a place of crafted enclosure and shared performance—a space to pause, reflect, and connect over music and conversation. The iconic circular form of the vinyl record is used as a unifying design language throughout the building, subtly embedded into key architectural elements to create a sense of continuity and rhythm. At the heart of the intervention is a central stair column—conceptually and formally derived from the vinyl's concentric geometry. This sculptural core acts as a vertical axis around which the building circulates, its layered, radial form echoing the grooves of a spinning record. The stair not only serves as a functional connector between floors but also as a symbolic spine that links the old and the new—drawing visual alignment with the existing structural beams of the mill. Carefully integrated steel and timber supports intersect at key grid points, referencing the alignment and precision found in both vinyl groove patterns and the structural logic of the mill. This motif continues upward into the ceiling, where circular light fixtures are suspended above key communal zones. These lighting elements, inspired by the vinyl's shape and the soft rhythm of its grooves, cast subtle rings of light that animate the space and create an atmosphere of movement and flow. In this way, the vinyl form becomes more than a decoration—it becomes a spatial strategy, weaving through structure, movement, and atmosphere and reinforcing the building's core theme: the architecture of sound.



The design of the Resonance Library is deeply informed by the existing structural framework of the mill, particularly its exposed timber and steel beams, which become more than just relics of the past—they actively shape the flow and form of the new interior architecture. These beams are used as guiding lines within the design process, establishing a rhythm that is respected and extended throughout the building. In several areas, the original beams are allowed to extrude through newly inserted floors, creating visual and physical links between levels. This gesture not only preserves the integrity of the original structure but also reinforces a sense of vertical continuity and openness. These extrusions serve both functional and symbolic roles: supporting new elements while visually connecting past and present, structure and space. Above, open balconies and double-height voids are carved out strategically to reveal and frame the mill's original materials—aged brickwork, weathered timber, and cast-iron fixings—allowing them to remain visible and celebrated. These open spaces foster a sense of lightness and vertical connection, encouraging sound, sightlines, and social interaction to travel freely between floors. They also create a layered spatial experience where users can pause, listen, and observe both the music and the architecture around them. By allowing the structure to guide movement and frame space, the design honours the mill's industrial character while seamlessly integrating new functions. The result is a library that resonates not just with music, but with the story of the building itself.



Interior visual of vinyl storage shelving



Interior visual of Dining area



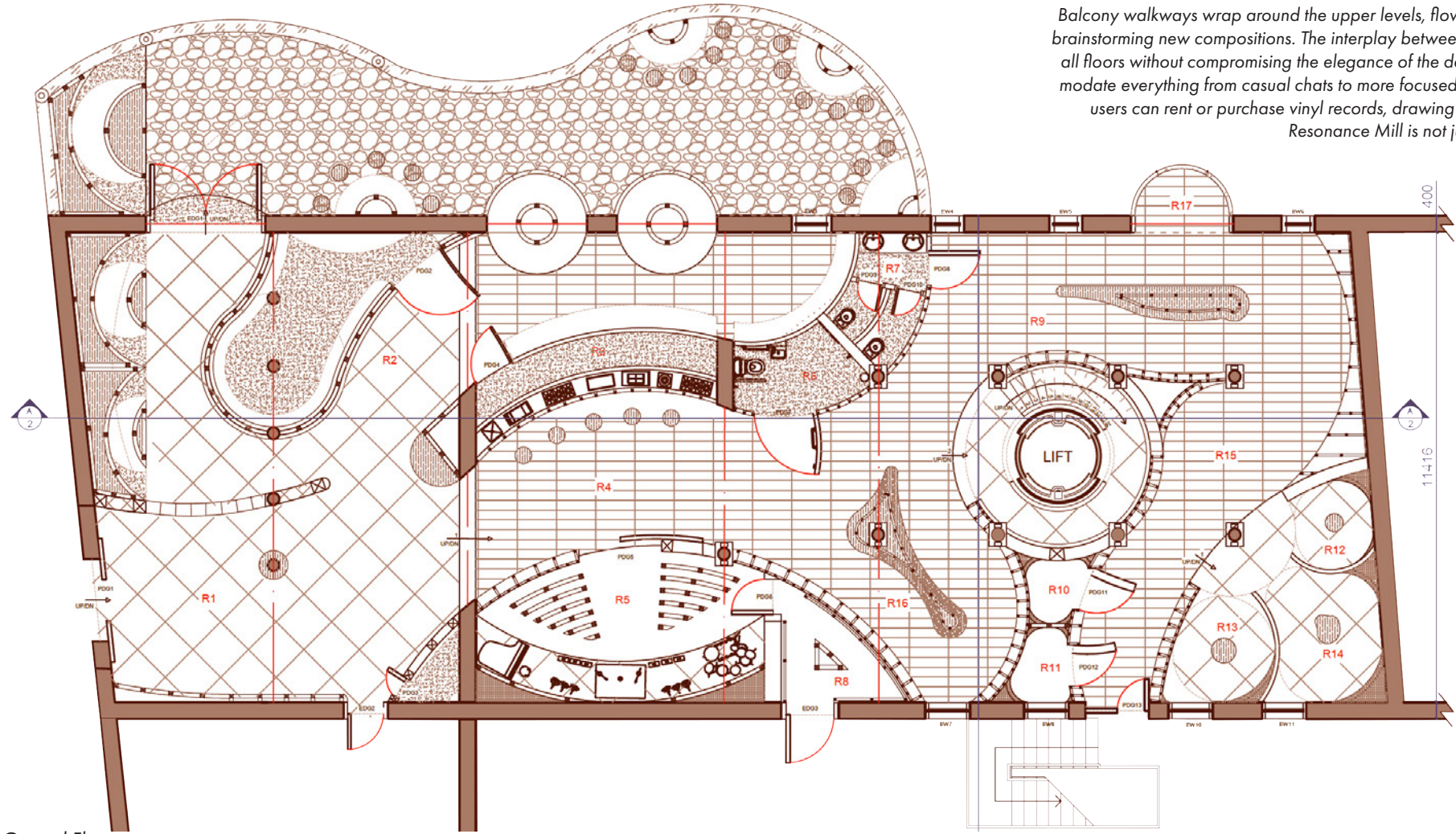
Interior visual of Music collaboration space



Interior visual of vinyl storage shelving and seating

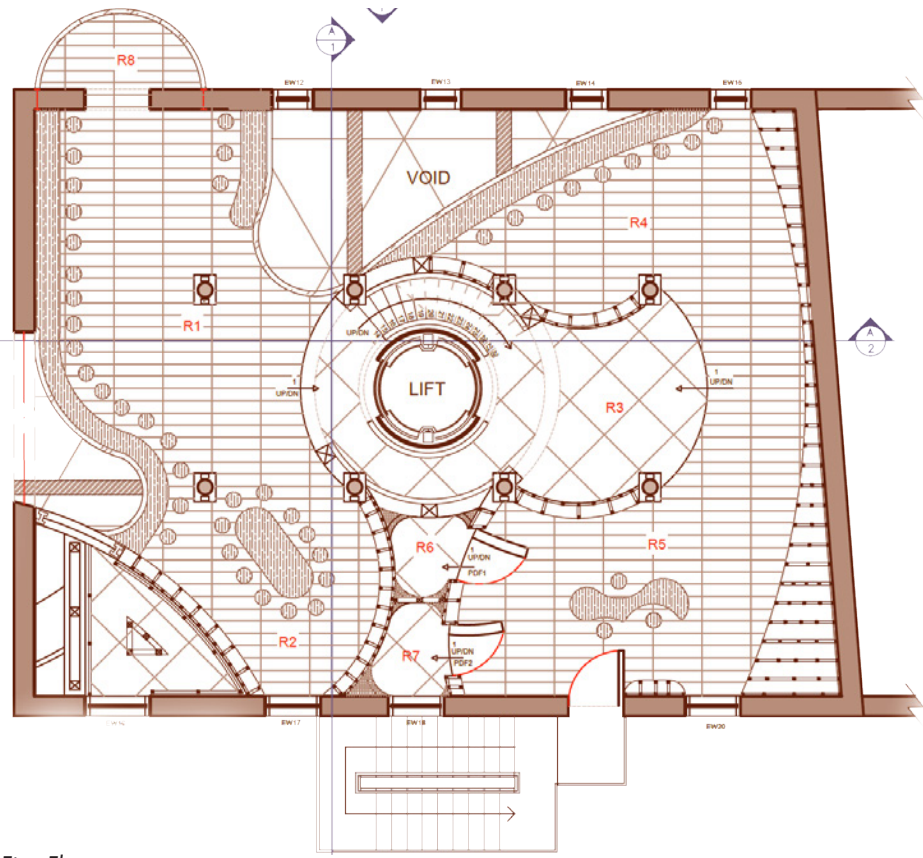


Interior visual of vinyl storage shelving and seating

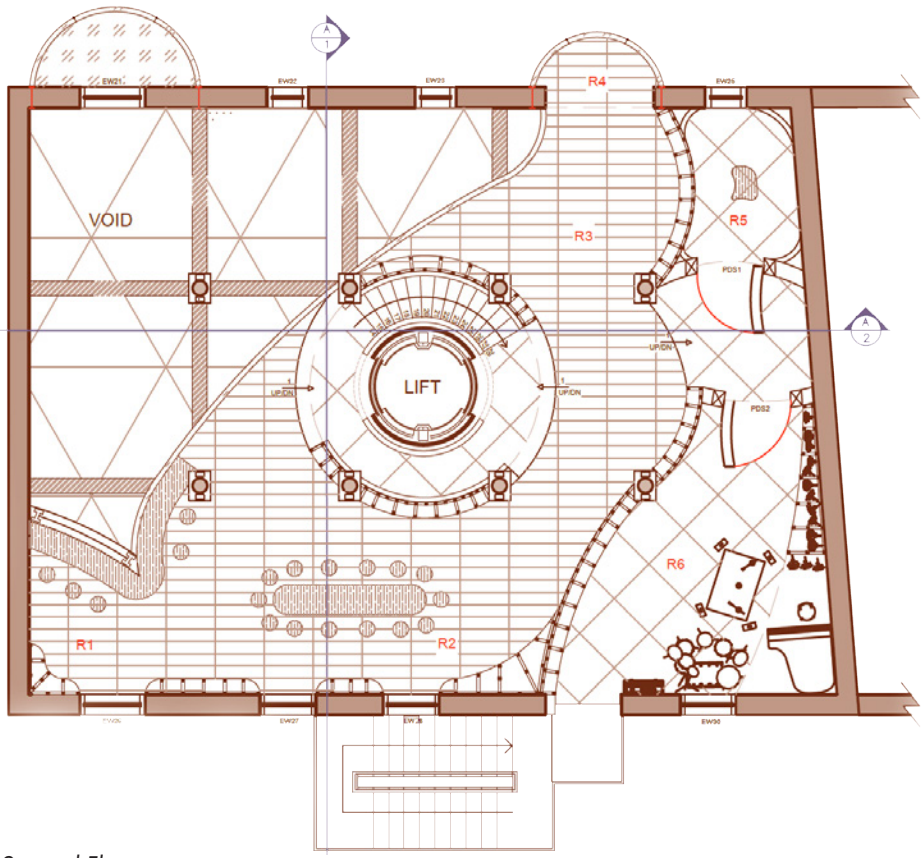


Ground Floor

Balcony walkways wrap around the upper levels, flowing outward into a series of pod-like glass protrusions that extend from the building's facade. These semi-enclosed spaces overlook the river, offering tranquil spots where users can sit alone or with others, sipping coffee, swapping vinyl recommendations, or brainstorming new compositions. The interplay between interior and exterior here is intentional—celebrating both the meditative nature of listening and the communal spirit of collaboration. Central to the building is a circular lift, positioned at the heart of a sculptural spiral staircase, ensuring full disabled access to all floors without compromising the elegance of the design. This core vertical circulation not only provides inclusivity but reinforces the building's central motif of flow—of movement, of sound, of connection. Scattered throughout the library are discussion tables and collaborative workspaces designed to accommodate everything from casual chats to more focused musical ideation. These zones foster spontaneous exchange and creative interaction, making the library as much a place to make music as it is to listen to it. At the ground level, the reception area serves as both an entry point and a point of exchange. Here, users can rent or purchase vinyl records, drawing from a curated collection that spans genres, eras, and cultures. Staffed by music lovers and archivists, the reception also serves as a knowledge hub—offering recommendations, organising events, and connecting users with instruments or practice rooms. Resonance Mill is not just a space for music—it's a space for people. It invites listening as both a solitary act and a shared ritual, encouraging interaction, learning, and creation in a setting where the architecture amplifies the rhythm of the community.



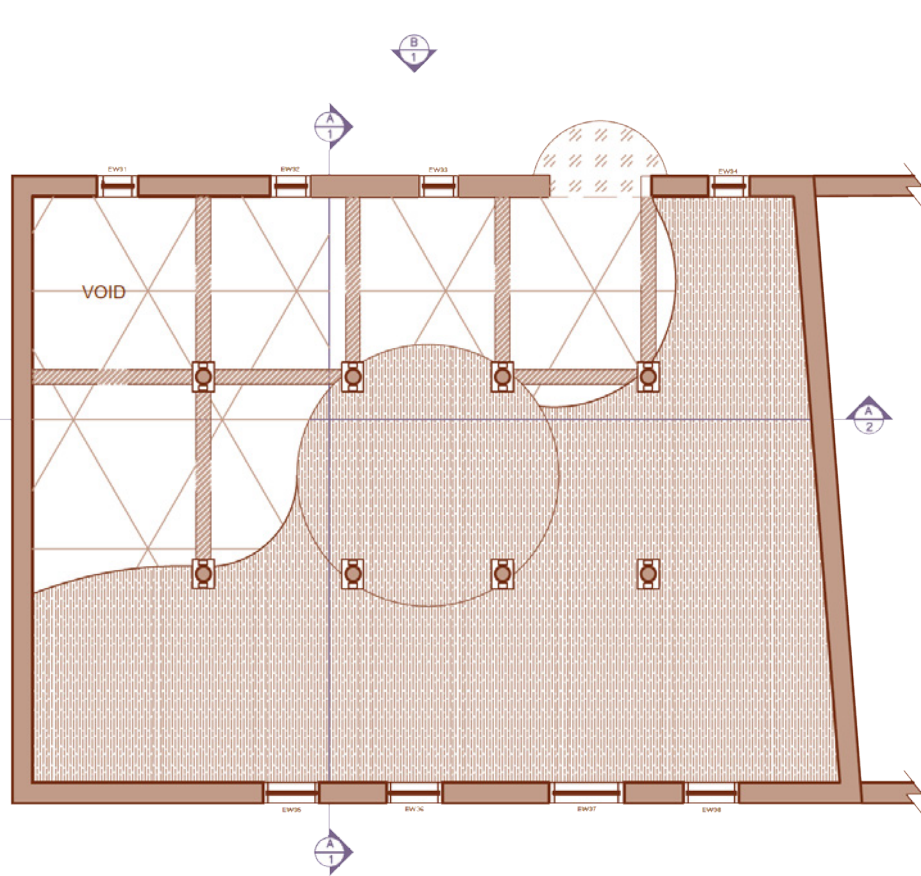
First Floor



Second Floor



Exterior Visual riverside



Third Floor