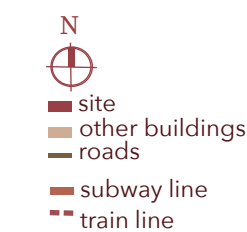


# SHADES

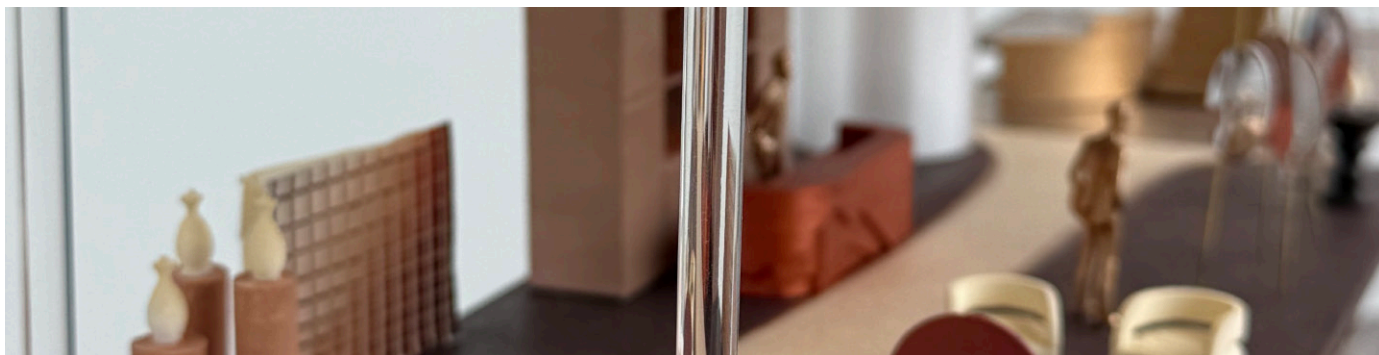
## Users

- For the Shade Seekers, who have struggled to find makeup that truly matches, the ones whose needs have gone undiscovered, the ones who long to feel seen: You now have a place where technology meets artistry, where every shade is celebrated, and where finding your perfect match is not just a possibility, but a guarantee.
- For the Identity Explorers, who yearn to connect with their heritage, the ones who seek knowledge and belonging, the ones who know that understanding the past shapes the future: You now have a space to learn, share, and celebrate your unique story. This is a community built on cultural exchange and the power of shared experience.
- For the Product Minimalists, who value efficiency and demand seamless solutions, the ones who know exactly what they need and refuse to waste time: You now have a streamlined experience designed for speed and precision. Scan, select, and go: your essentials, effortlessly obtained, so you can focus on what truly matters.

## Location



## Teaser



## Site



Shades is located at 158 Argyle Street. As a central shopping destination, the site is surrounded by the Glasgow Central Station, the Saint Enoch Subway Station, carparks and bus stops, making it highly accessible.

The curved windows are honouring the 1926 history of the building, and making it welcoming.



The Forgotten Textures: Mixed Hair in the Beauty Industry

## Shades: Where You Truly Belong

“Where are you from?” The question rings,  
“But where are you \*really\* from?” the subtle sting.  
Lost in shadows, a spectrum untold,  
“Where do I fit?” a story unfolds.

Shades, a haven, a vibrant embrace,  
To see and be seen, find your place.  
Not lost between worlds, but whole and defined,  
Roots celebrated, heart and mind.

Understand yourself, in mirrors so clear,  
A journey of self, banishing fear.  
Shades: where identity takes flight,  
Bathed in belonging, shining so bright.  
Celebrate roots, in every hue,  
A tapestry woven, uniquely you.

“Beauty shops could have been  
a hell of a place to ferment a  
revolution.”

– Mixed Race Post-Race, Suki Ali



## Echoes of Heritage: A Memorial in Furniture

This design serves as a memorial, honouring the history and roots of mixed heritage individuals, including those who fought for equality and acceptance. Each piece is a tangible memory, reflecting the diverse experiences and journeys that shape identity. By integrating cultural symbols and historical references, the furniture becomes a tribute to resilience, belonging, and the complex tapestry of mixed ancestry, celebrating the legacy of those who paved the way for a more inclusive future.



Beyond Beige: The Foundation Shade Gap

## A Space to See Yourself

A transformative beauty experience where mixed heritage is not an afterthought, but the foundation. A retail journey designed to empower, reflect, and include—shifting beauty from product-centered to person-centered.

## A Space for Belonging

Shades is more than a store. It is a space of identity discovery, designed for mixed-heritage individuals who often feel invisible in traditional beauty environments. Instead of simply offering products, Shades offers understanding—through personalised technology, inclusive services, and cultural storytelling.

Rooted in the experience of being “in-between,” the design challenges the industry’s surface-level inclusivity and reimagines retail as a site for belonging. Each floor unfolds a new layer of identity: from discovering your shade to celebrating your roots.

## Design Intent

I aim to:  
GET mixed heritage individuals  
WHO struggle to find the right products  
TO feel confident, empowered, and educated  
BY designing a personalised, inclusive retail experience.

What You’ll Find at Shades  
On-site services (hairdressers, beauty advisors with shared heritage)  
Advanced technologies (face scanners, magic mirrors)  
A swatch system replacing cluttered shelves with tactile discovery  
Workshop spaces for community, education, and confidence building

## Transforming Retail, Reclaiming Identity

The future of Shades is more than physical space – it is a model for what beauty retail can become when it listens, reflects, and responds. Through a blend of cultural storytelling, technology, and community, Shades becomes a prototype for an inclusive, experience-led industry.

The project’s layered output offers a vision that is both grounded and speculative. From detailed interior drawings to immersive branding and spatial storytelling, Shades balances the poetic with the practical – a tactile narrative that can travel across cities and evolve into a global brand.

This is not just a store, but a statement:  
Mixed heritage deserves visibility. Personal beauty deserves discovery.  
And design has the power to build belonging.





East Section  
1:100

Brass Staircase Highlight

Physical Model Scale 1:50

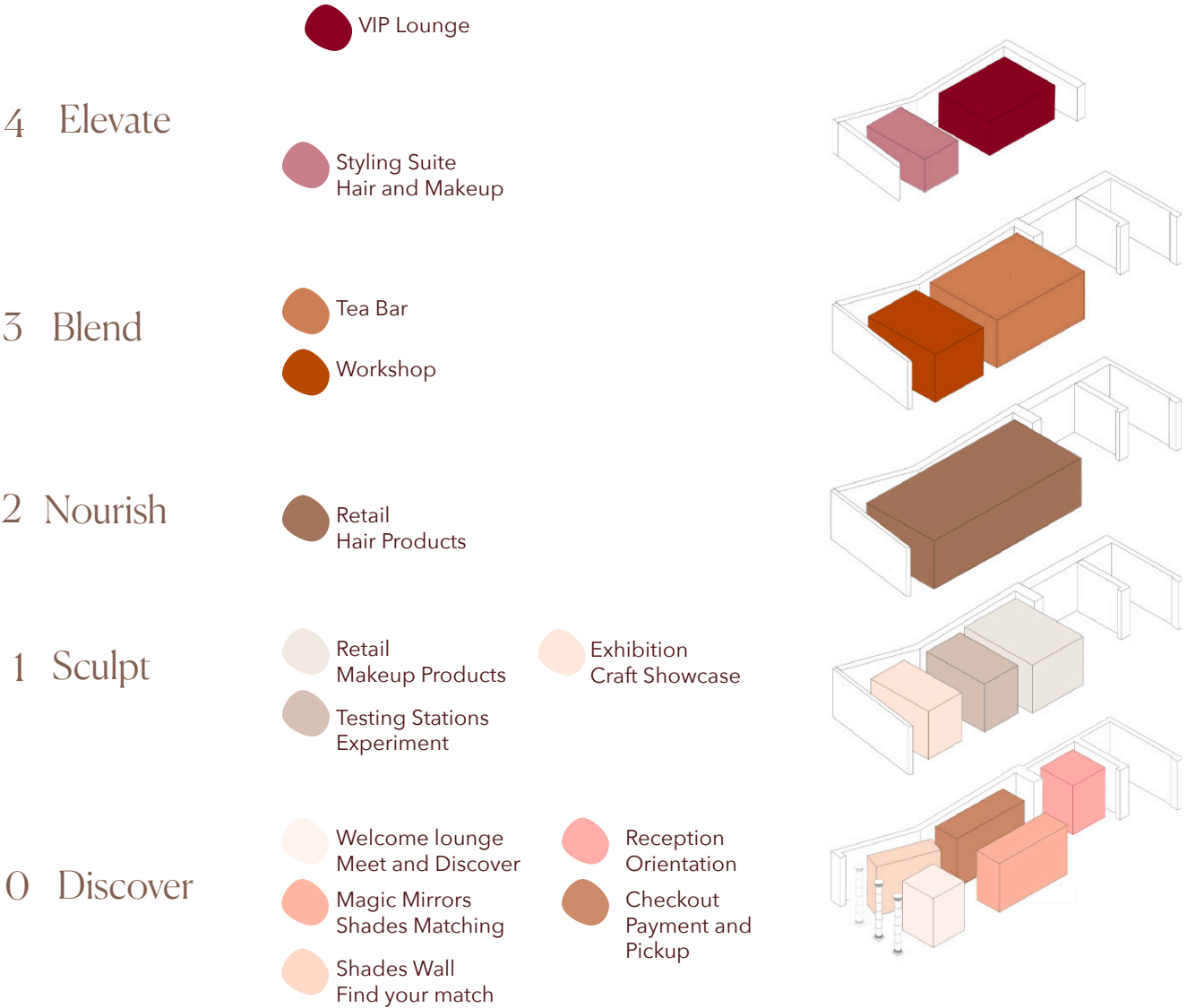


Each floor represents a distinct layer of identity, reflecting the multifaceted nature of human, especially mixed-heritage, experiences. Though each layer differs in materiality, colours, and scents, they are unified by a consistent playlist (see QR code and the presence of brass. The brass staircase connects all levels and appears in subtle details throughout. As an alloy of two metals, brass symbolizes the blending of mixed heritage.



## Conceptual Zoning of Identity

Exploring spatial storytelling through cultural layers



## Materials

### Discover (Ground Floor)

- Porter Pink Paint, Claybrook, Emulsion Paint, Walls
- Orient Tile, Fired Earth, Tumbled and Unfilled, Flooring
- Copper, Metal Sheets, Satin Waxed Finish, Lina Cash Desk
- Rattan, NaturAssistant UK, Cane Webbing, 'Find Your Shade' Wall
- Oak, Direct Wood Flooring, Natural, Lina Product Lift Shelf
- Assisi Antique Mirror, Saligo Design, Lina Product Lift Shelf
- Couleur Primaire, Les Eaux Primordiales, Scent

### Sculpt (First Floor)

- Isabel's Bloom Paint, Claybrook, Emulsion Paint, Walls
- Oak, Direct Wood Flooring, Walnut, Testing Stations Desk and Door and Window Frames
- Shoji Rayon Paper, Sheperds London, 45gsm, White, Testing Stations Backlit Wall
- Bosphon Tile, Fired Earth, Honed and Filled, Flooring (Covered With Resin)
- Calacatta Gold Marble Tile, Star El, Sink Unit
- Santal Greenery, Dries Van Noten, Fig & Santal, Scent

### Nourish (Second Floor)

- Sweeney Brown Paint, Claybrook, Emulsion Paint, Walls
- Tinto Les Forêts Wall Covering, Arte, Chocolate, Wall Panelling
- Peach Microcement, Epodex, Medium Grain, Exhibition Flooring
- Titan Monochrome Diamond Tile, Sencillo, 9mm Thick, Hair Oil station Flooring
- Calacatta Viola Marble, Fired Earth, Honed, Hair Oil station Counter (Stained)
- Antique Brass, CTO lighting, Walls and Shelves Panelling
- Brass, Metal Sheets, Brushed, Melba Shelf (Hammered for textures)
- Voodoo Chile, Dries Van Noten, Rosemary Patchouli, Scent

### Blend (Third Floor)

- Arcilla Rosa Tile, Fired Earth, Walls
- Checkerboard Rosso & White Marble Mosaic, Star El, Audre Bar Flooring
- Pine, Direct Wood Flooring, Walnut, Audre Bar and Doreen Banquette
- Tan-Tan Adobe Tile, Claybrook, Audre Bar Paneling
- Brass, CTO Lighting, Satin, Audre Bar Rods
- Kiwi Boost Fabric, The White Window, Velvet, Doreen Banquette
- Blesses Bakara, Initio Parfums Privées, Scent

### Elevate (Fourth Floor)

- Wine Bar Paint, Claybrook, Emulsion Paint, Walls
- Rosso Levanto Polished Marble Tiles Cut, Star El, Bar Countertop, Coffee Table
- Crimson Depth Fabric, The White Window, Velvet, Curtains and Sofa
- Ambre Super Fluide, Les Eaux Primordiales, Scent



Elevate



Blend



Nourish



Sculpt



Discover

Prioritizing longevity, repairability, and symbolism, the material choices include long-lasting terracotta and travertine-effect surfaces, marble, and oak veneers for their timeless appeal and waste reduction, minimize waste, while textured fabrics are deliberately chosen to represent diverse skin tones and hair textures, promoting visibility and celebrating inclusivity within the space.

“It felt like this place was made for me”

“I’ve never seen so many shades of beauty in one space.”

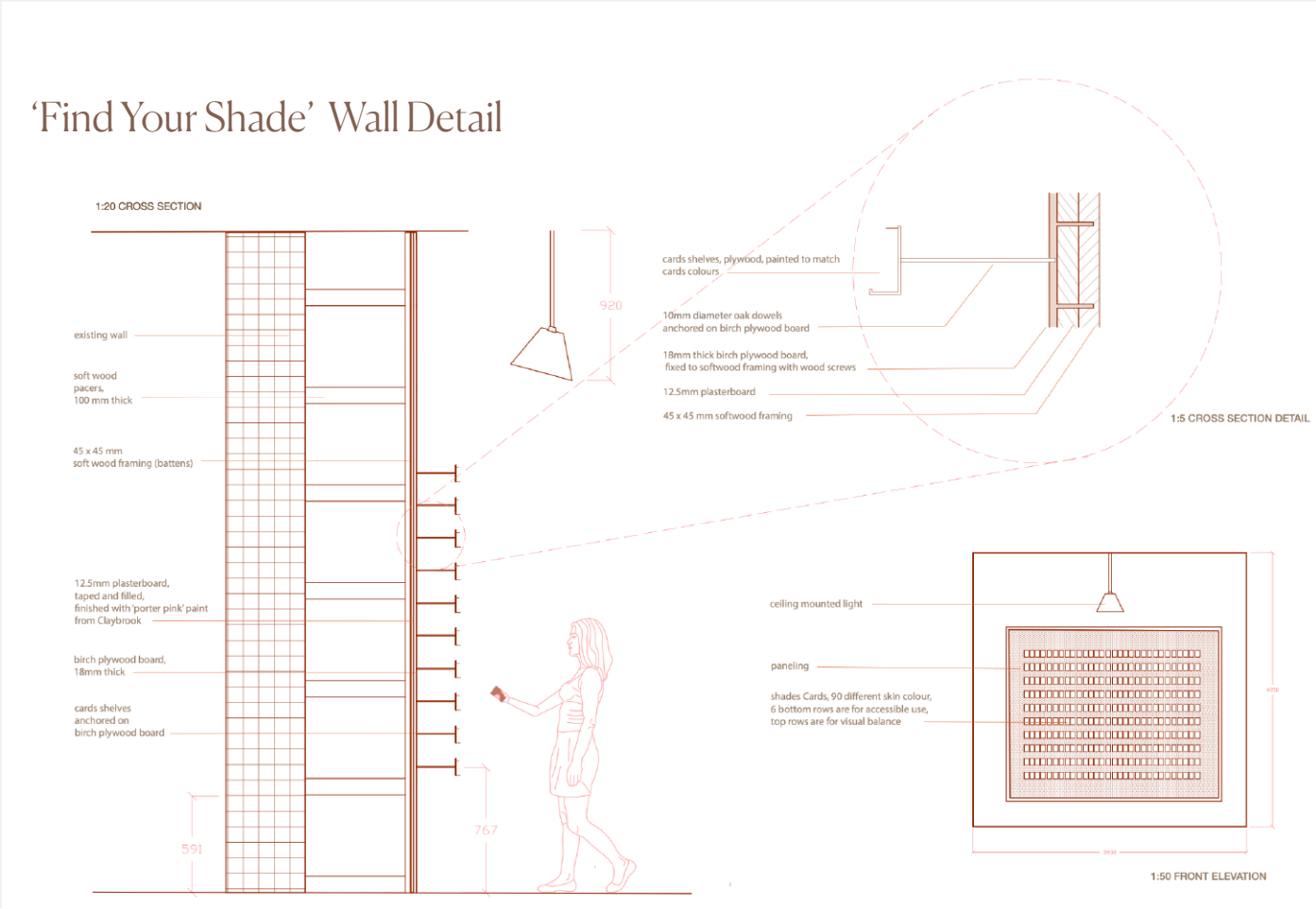
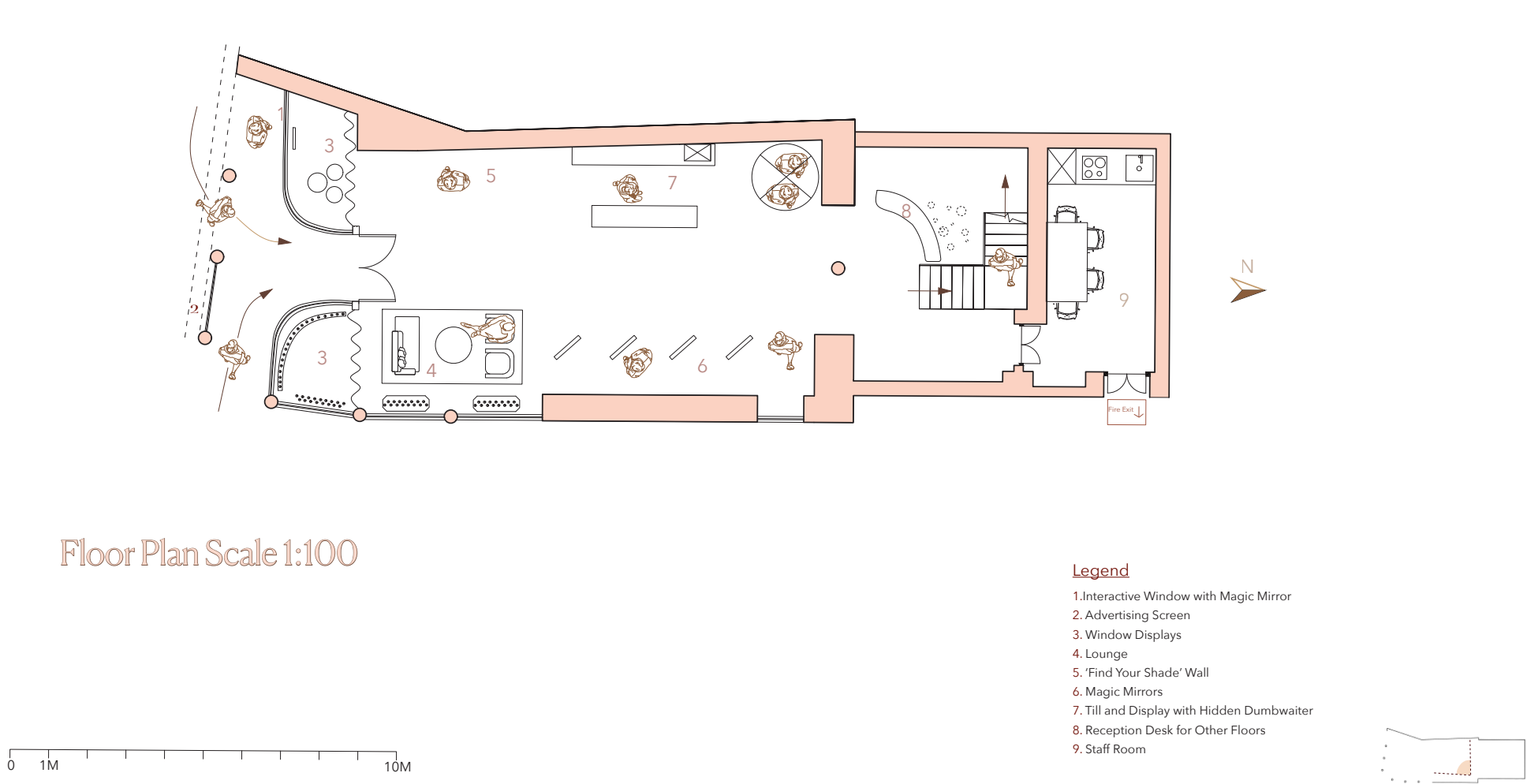


Discover

The ground floor, named Discover, is where customers begin their journey by uncovering their unique skin and hair needs while exploring what Shades has to offer. Soft peach-pink tones and a calming cotton-inspired scent create a welcoming atmosphere. A mini lounge provides space to speak with staff about personal needs, while magic mirrors and face scanners assist in identifying complexion and hair concerns. Swatch cards with skin-like textures support accurate shade matching.

After browsing, customers can check out at the cash desk, where a product mini lift system delivers items efficiently from storage. An additional reception desk, tucked beneath the staircase, helps direct customers to services and appointments on the upper floors.

The space is welcoming, inclusive, and designed for smooth navigation.



This isn't a display – it's a protest.

Each of the 90 skin-tone cards challenges a beauty system built to exclude. Arranged by depth and undertone, the cards sit on minimalist shelves, waiting to be claimed. No logos. No branding. Just your shade, your skin, your power.

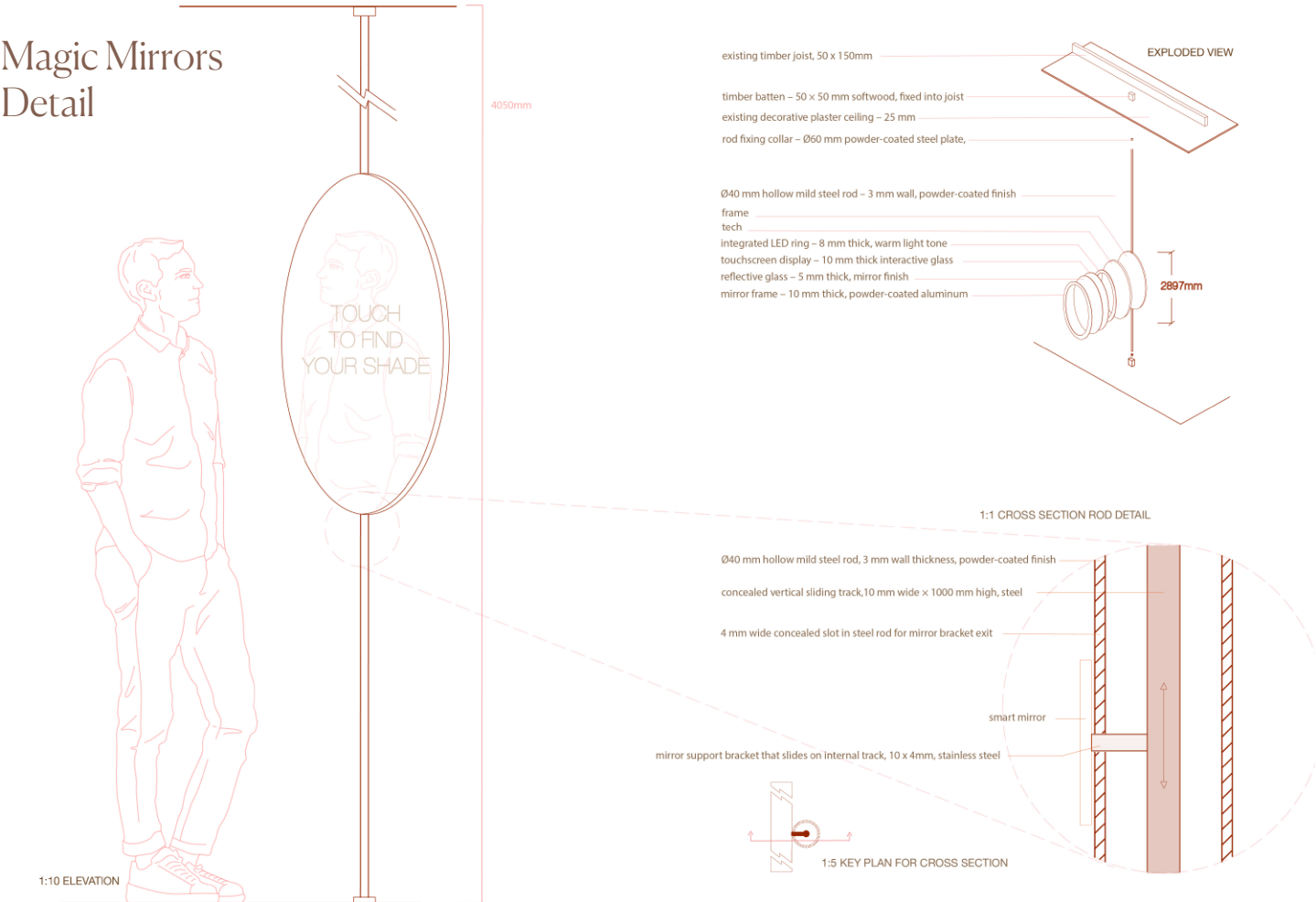
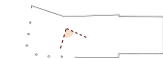
Every card has a sample patch that activates with water – a quiet innovation that replaces the overwhelm of fluorescent-lit testers and limited ranges.

In a world that tells mixed people to blend in, this wall tells them to belong.



Magic Mirrors

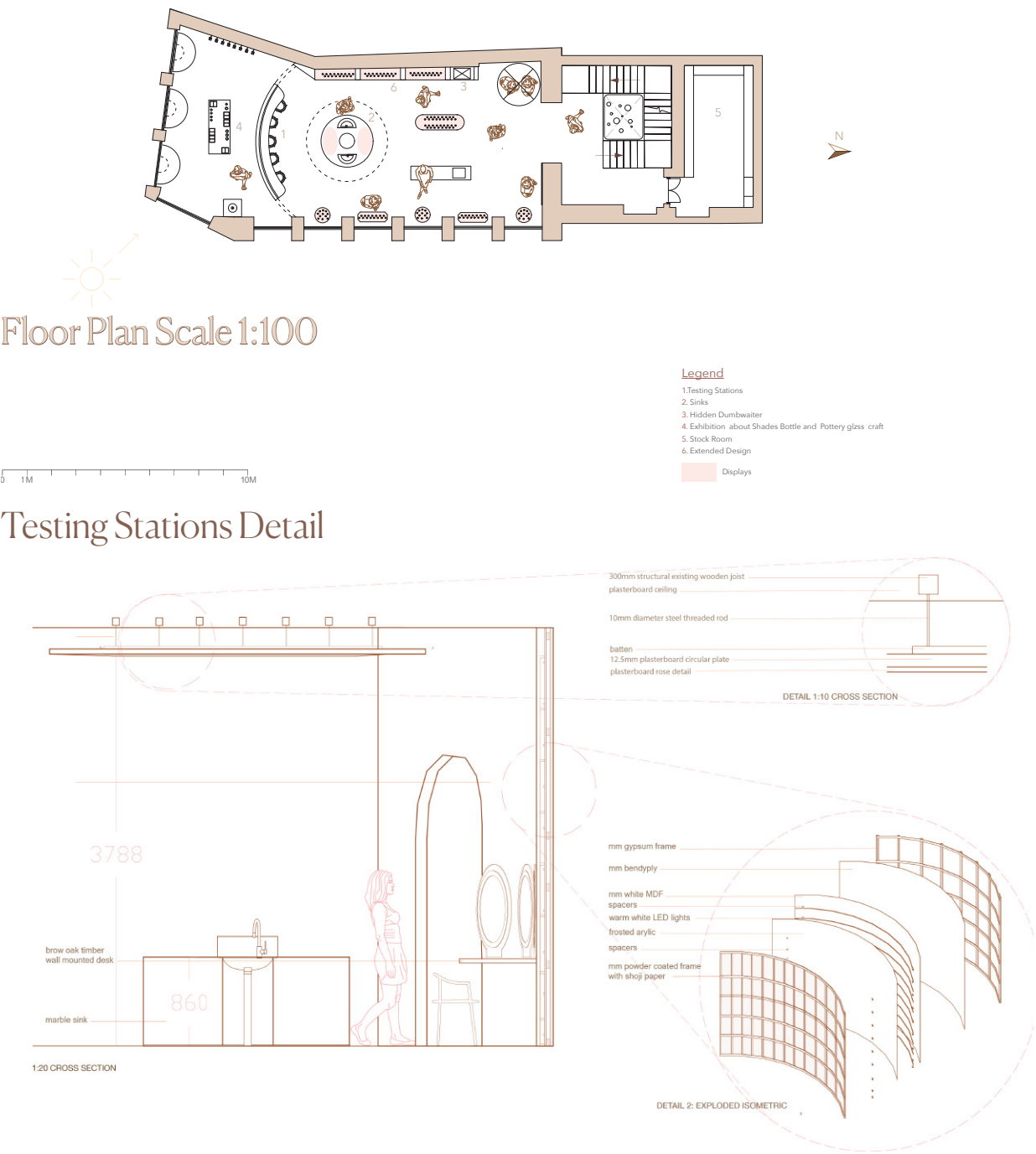
The magic mirrors, suspended delicately from the ceiling, activate through touch to scan and analyze each user's skin tone and undertone using AR technology. Flowing fabric partitions—light curtains that drift between and behind the mirrors—enhance the sense of privacy and softness within the space. This textile installation draws inspiration from Soft Measures by Kapwani Kiwanga, whose work explores themes of colonial legacies, gender, and diaspora. The mirrors, framed by these gentle veils, invite moments of quiet introspection and recognition, allowing each individual to engage with their reflection in a way that is both personal and quietly radical.





Sculpt

The first floor, “Sculpt,” immerses visitors in the world of makeup, offering an extensive range of shades through a variety of testers. Smart mirrors in the central testing stations allow customers to experiment physically or digitally. The neutral beige palette highlights the products, and the design blends Japanese-inspired elements with Caribbean references and natural materials. With a focus on inclusivity, the floor features numerous testers and ensures a plentiful stock in the back, guaranteeing that every shade is always available.



Testing Stations Detail



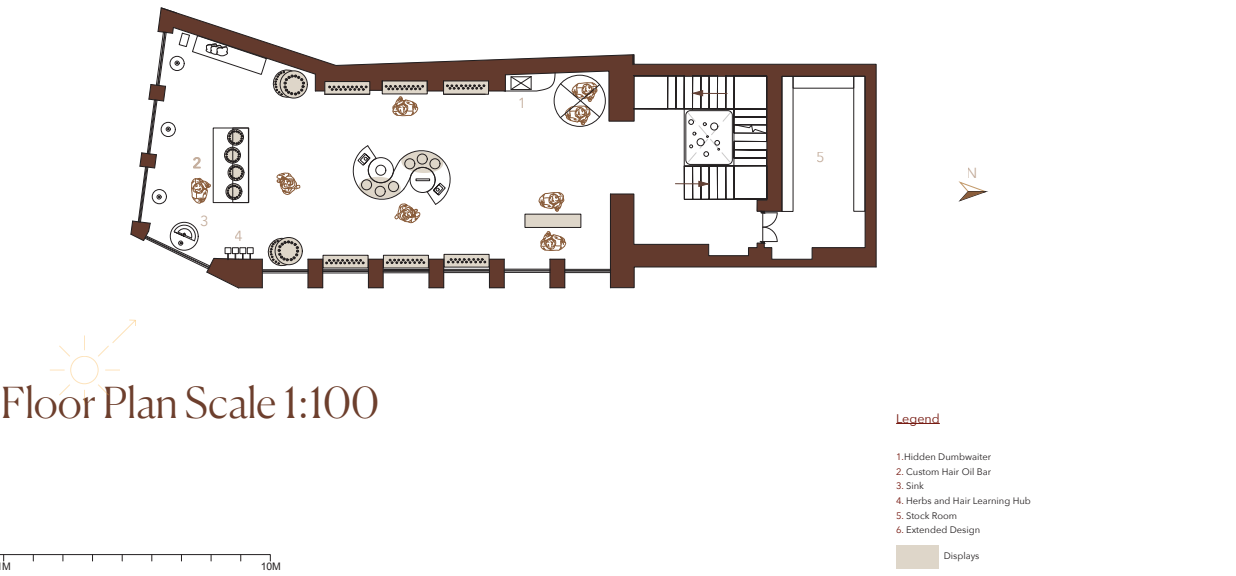
Claudia is named in honour of Claudia Jones, the Trinidad and Tobago-born Caribbean activist, journalist, and founder of Notting Hill Carnival, who gave voice to the Windrush generation and fought for justice, culture, and dignity. Like her work, this furniture trilogy holds memory through form—each piece a tribute to journey, identity, and the quiet strength of Caribbean heritage.

Inspired by Yinka Ilori’s storytelling through variation and repetition, these three furniture pieces powerfully comment on the migrant experience. The first, Peyi Mwen (My Country), uses natural materials and Martinican madras to honor the Caribbean’s cultural identity before displacement, reclaiming a sense of belonging. Traversée (Crossing) embodies the Atlantic journey, drawing from the Art Deco of the RMS Queen Elizabeth and the layered decks of the Windrush, acknowledging both the luxury and the historical weight of these voyages. Arrivée (Arrival) confronts the complexities of adapting to a new identity, using immigration documents, luggage, and postal stamps to highlight the bureaucratic hurdles and emotional toll of settling in a new land. The modular suitcase shelves are designed to fit neatly into cube-shaped boxes, symbolizing how immigrants are often expected to fit into pre-defined roles and spaces, challenging us to recognize and dismantle these systemic expectations.



Nourish

The second floor, ‘Nourish,’ envelops visitors in a warm, brown-themed ambiance that celebrates hair in all its diversity. A wide range of products and tools—such as combs, brushes, and accessories—ensures inclusivity for every hair type. This commitment is echoed in the materials and forms, inspired by curls, braids, and textures. Beyond representation, the space offers education and personalization: a rod-mounted wall of small display cubes introduces visitors to the benefits of various herbs, while a custom oil bar allows them to create treatments tailored to their unique hair needs.



Floor Plan Scale 1:100

Herbal Cubes, Hair Education

These sealed glass cubes showcase individual herbs known for their natural benefits in hair care traditions from around the world. Each cube contains a preserved plant—such as hibiscus, fenugreek, or rosemary—accompanied by a clear description of its properties and purpose. The display invites visitors to learn which herbs align with their specific hair needs, from fine to coily textures, offering guidance rooted in ancestral knowledge and holistic care.

This educational moment reconnects individuals with nature’s role in everyday rituals of nourishment and self-respect.



These bottles tell a story of cultural memory and resistance. The ceramic ones, meant for sales, honor traditional craftsmanship, especially from places like Martinique. The glass testers remind us of shared resources and accessibility. Their design nods to Caribbean heritage, echoing the Windrush generation’s journey and resilience. Each bottle is also a personal tribute, connecting to broader themes of identity, justice, and remembering where we come from.





# Blend

The third floor, 'Blend,' is a celebration of cultural exchange, community, and creativity. Warm terracotta tones and natural materials set the mood for workshops and shared experiences. At the heart of the floor is a global tea bar, where visitors can pause and connect over teas from around the world. A continuous bespoke banquette wraps around the space, encouraging conviviality while keeping the center open for modular use. This central zone transforms into a catwalk during events promoting new beauty products, offering visibility through curated gatherings with influencers and creatives. During these moments, the back workshop becomes a backstage prep area, reinforcing the blend of performance, craft, and culture.

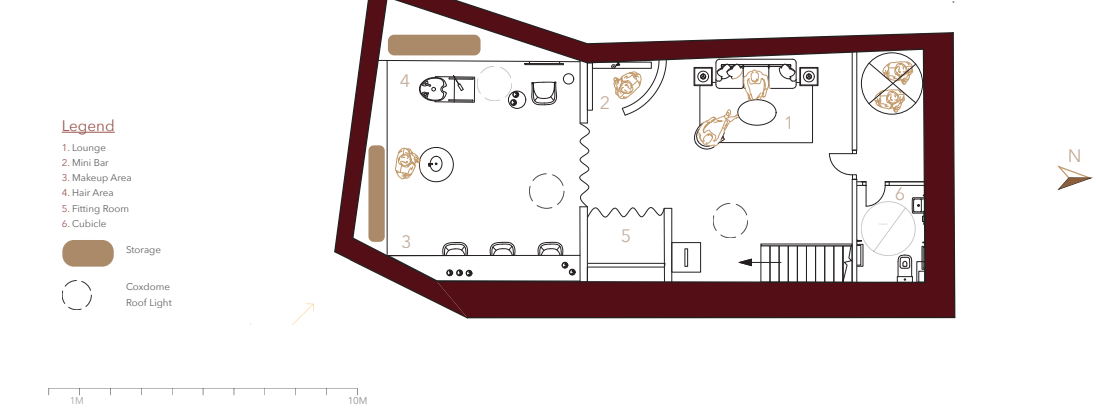


# Elevate

An exclusive, appointment-only space designed for rest, ritual, and reflection. The VIP suite offers a private setting where guests can prepare, unwind, or receive tailored services in comfort. From its deep burgundy palette to its curated layout, every element evokes intimacy and self-celebration. The space reinterprets codes of luxury through a multicultural lens—quietly asserting that visibility and beauty rituals belong to everyone.



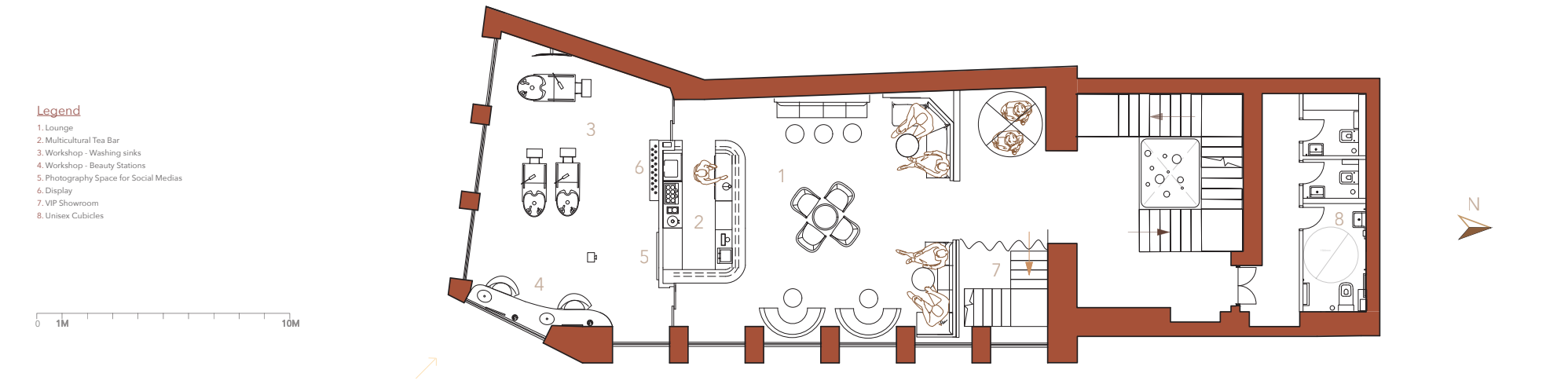
Floor Plan Scale 1:100



## Architecture of Belonging

The suite flows like a private flat, blending a styling area with a lounge and minibar. During exclusive events, it becomes a space for shared preparation—whether for a shoot, a celebration, or a moment of pause. On top of attentive staff, an Elever mirror by Seymourpowell—using facial recognition and 3D spray technology to replicate makeup looks—quietly supports these rituals of self-expression. The large-scale fresco was created from an original photoshoot organized for Shades, featuring individuals from diverse backgrounds. Digitally reworked into a Renaissance-inspired composition, it celebrates the architecture of the building, echoing its classical proportions and cornicing details. POC subjects take central place, reimagining historical portraiture through a lens of visibility, heritage, and care. Here, luxury is quiet, personal, and rooted in cultural reclamation.

Floor Plan Scale 1:100



## To Know, To Care

The workshop offers guidance on how to care for different hair types, whether for personal confidence, parental learning, or professional development. Open to anyone—from individuals exploring their own routine to parents of children with different textures, and stylists seeking a more inclusive practice—it provides practical knowledge in an approachable setting.

During events, the space doubles as a backstage area for catwalks hosted in the tea bar, where makeup and hair looks are showcased in collaboration with artists. A discreet in-store camera documents moments from these workshops and events, supporting marketing while also raising awareness around hair acceptance and representation.