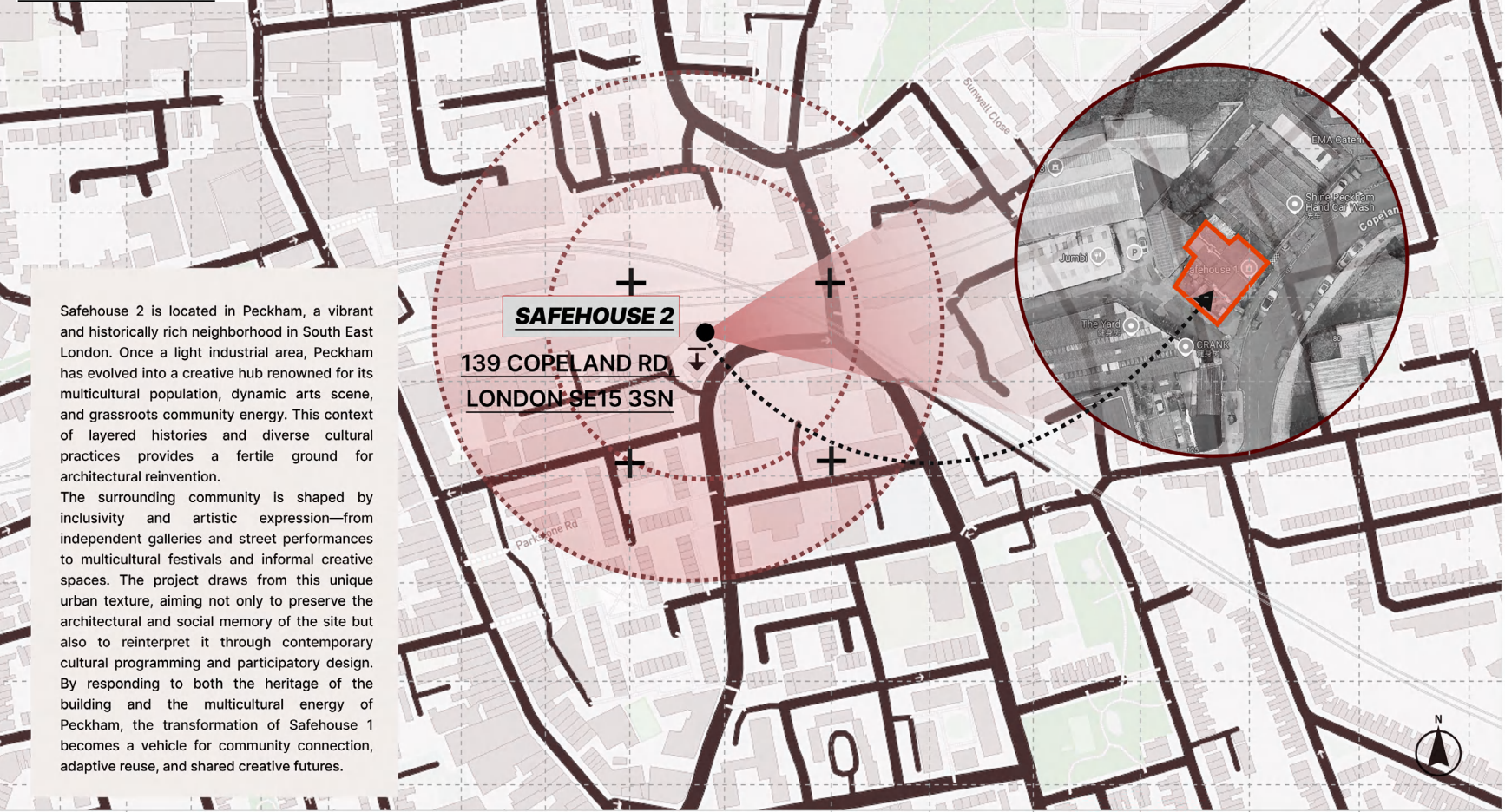# REFRAME: THE THIRD SPACE AT SAFEHOUSE 2

*Adaptive Reuse of Safehouse 1 through Modular Architecture and Media*

*Yuhan Yang*



This project reimagines Safehouse 2 in Peckham as a dynamic cultural hub through a strategic and respectful transformation of its existing structure. By preserving the historic red brick walls and timber textures while integrating modular architectural elements — such as a reconfigurable stage, auditorium, and projection systems — the design builds a dialogue between past and future.

Inspired by mobile architecture and traditional craft techniques, the modular design supports diverse cultural uses while responding to the site's layered history. A rooftop extension contrasts gently with the original structure, while TouchDesigner-powered projections activate the building's facade at night, blending memory with media.

Situated in one of London's most multicultural neighbourhoods, the project enables evolving community needs through flexible, adaptive reuse.

It is both architectural and social: a respectful reinvention that transforms a disused structure into a living, expressive platform for exchange, performance, and creative continuity.



## SITE ANALYSIS



Safehouse 2 is located in Peckham, a vibrant and historically rich neighborhood in South East London. Once a light industrial area, Peckham has evolved into a creative hub renowned for its multicultural population, dynamic arts scene, and grassroots community energy. This context of layered histories and diverse cultural practices provides a fertile ground for architectural reinvention.

The surrounding community is shaped by inclusivity and artistic expression—from independent galleries and street performances to multicultural festivals and informal creative spaces. The project draws from this unique urban texture, aiming not only to preserve the architectural and social memory of the site but also to reinterpret it through contemporary cultural programming and participatory design. By responding to both the heritage of the building and the multicultural energy of Peckham, the transformation of Safehouse 1 becomes a vehicle for community connection, adaptive reuse, and shared creative futures.

**SAFEHOUSE 2**
**139 COPELAND RD,**
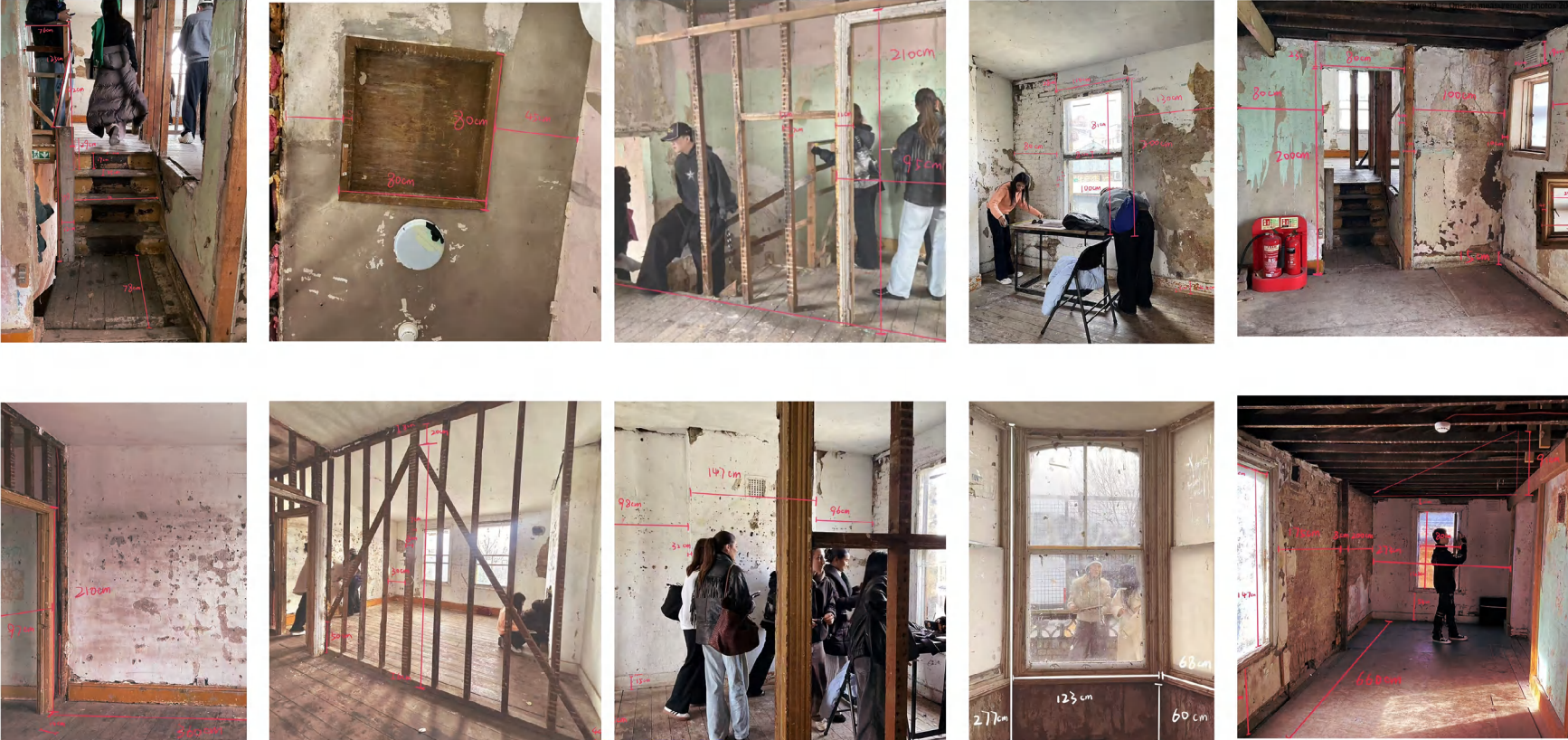**LONDON SE15 3SN**

## EXISTING SITE CONDITION



The existing red-brick façade and street context of Safehouse.
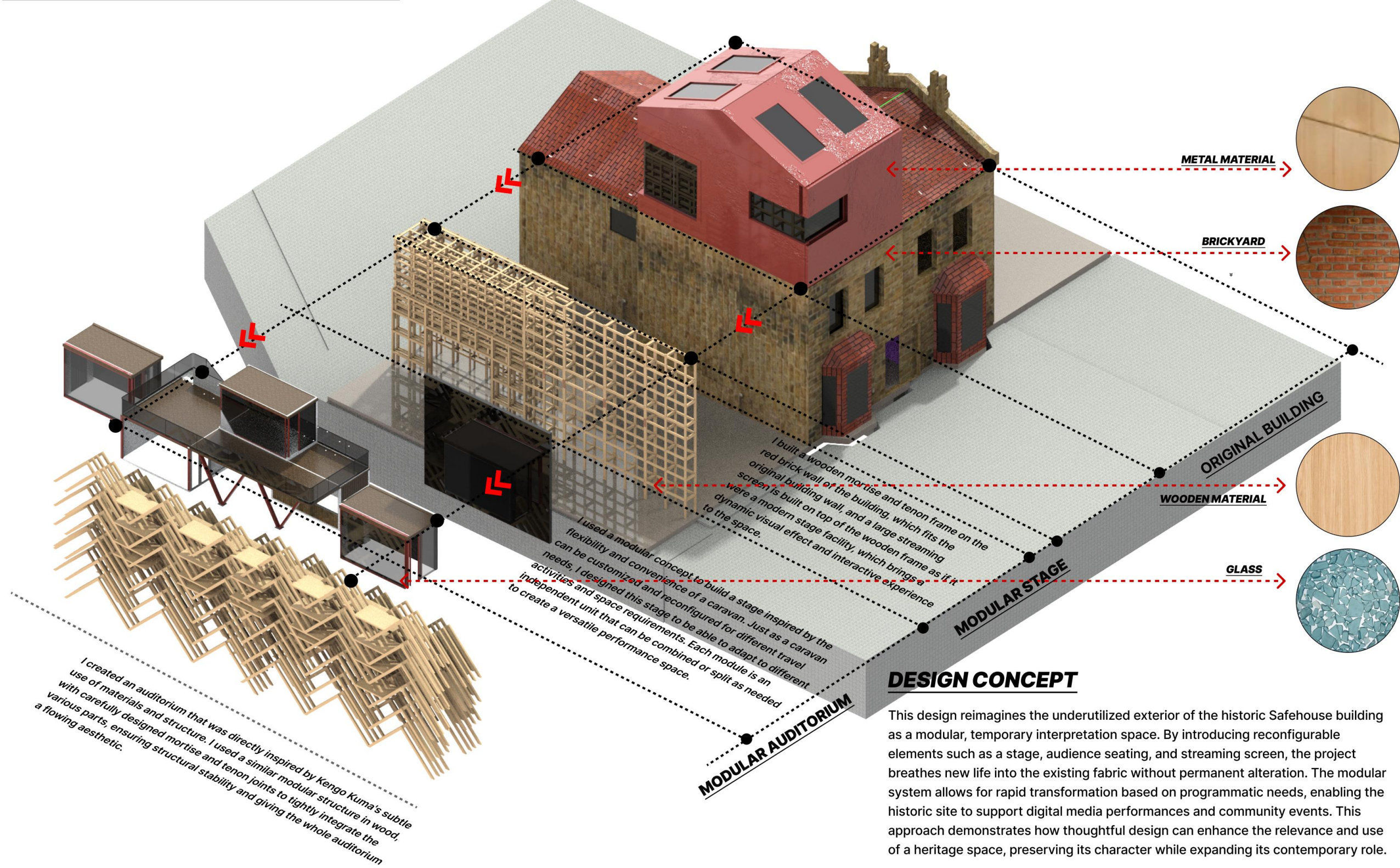


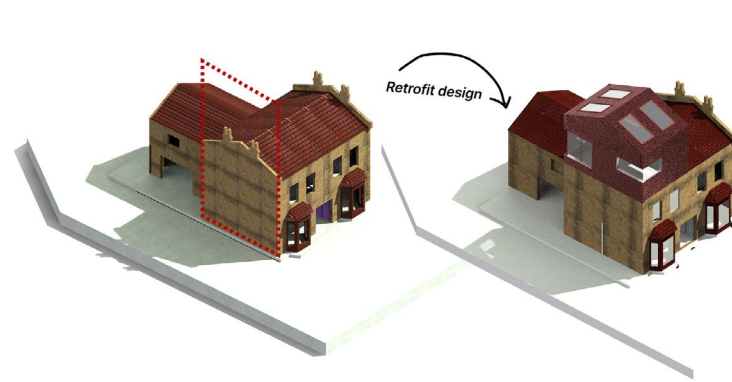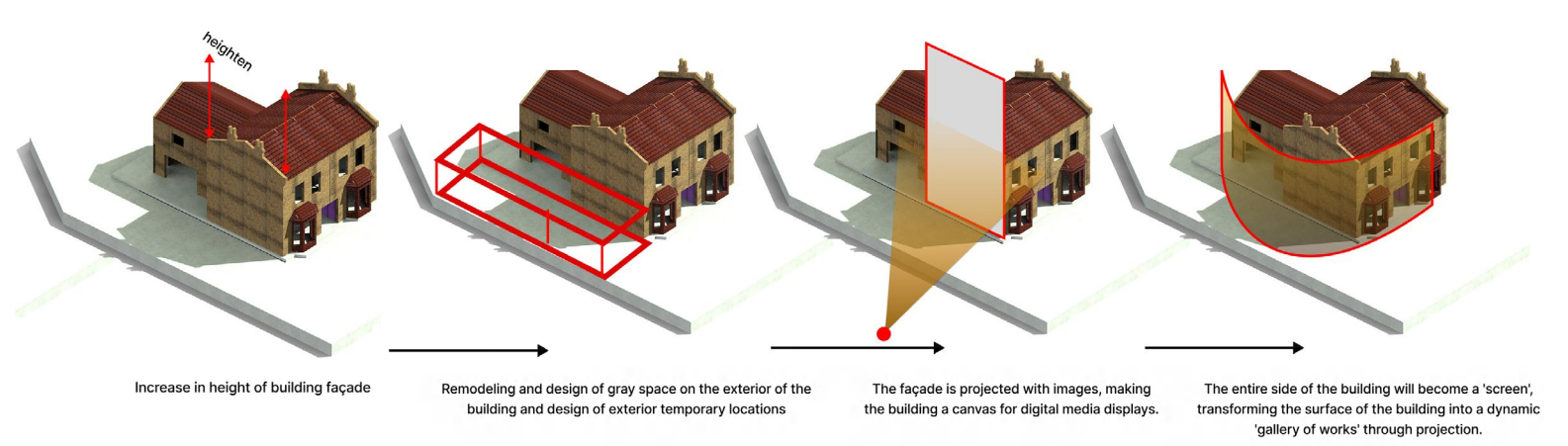Layers of aging material showing past uses and textures worth preserving.





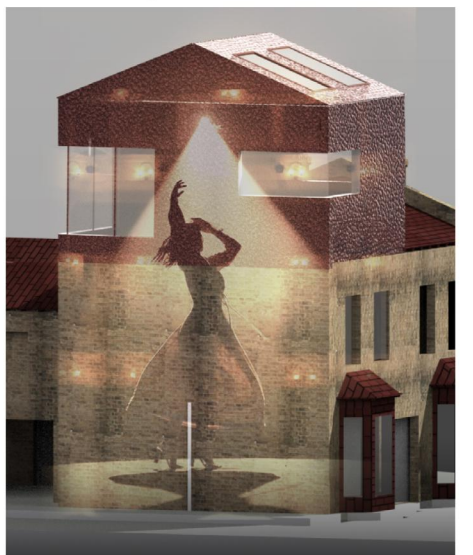Original interior with worn timber floors and exposed concrete surfaces.

# DESIGN ANALYSIS AND DISASSEMBLY



METAL MATERIAL

BRICKYARD

ORIGINAL BUILDING

WOODEN MATERIAL

MODULAR STAGE

GLASS

MODULAR AUDITORIUM

I built a red brick wall of wooden mortise and tenon frame on the original building wall, and a large streaming screen is built on top of the wooden frame as if it were a modern stage facility, which brings a dynamic visual effect and interactive experience to the space.

I used a modular concept to build a stage inspired by the flexibility and convenience of a caravan. Just as a caravan can be customized and reconfigured for different travel needs, I designed this stage to be able to adapt to different activities and space requirements. Each module is an independent unit that can be combined or split as needed to create a versatile performance space.

I created an auditorium that was directly inspired by Kengo Kuma's subtle use of materials and structure. I used a similar modular structure in wood, with carefully designed mortise and tenon joints to tightly integrate the various parts, ensuring structural stability and giving the whole auditorium a flowing aesthetic.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

This design reimagines the underutilized exterior of the historic Safehouse building as a modular, temporary interpretation space. By introducing reconfigurable elements such as a stage, audience seating, and streaming screen, the project breathes new life into the existing fabric without permanent alteration. The modular system allows for rapid transformation based on programmatic needs, enabling the historic site to support digital media performances and community events. This approach demonstrates how thoughtful design can enhance the relevance and use of a heritage space, preserving its character while expanding its contemporary role.

## SPACE FORM DEVELOPMENT



Increase in height of building façade.

Remodeling and design of gray space on the exterior of the building and design of exterior temporary locations

The façade is projected with images, making the building a canvas for digital media displays.

The entire side of the building will become a 'screen', transforming the surface of the building into a dynamic 'gallery of works' through projection.

Retrofit design

The design retains and elevates the character of the original building by expanding upward in a respectful yet expressive way. This new extension uses a contrasting material palette — red brick and reflective metal — to celebrate the intersection of heritage and contemporary innovation.

Old

New

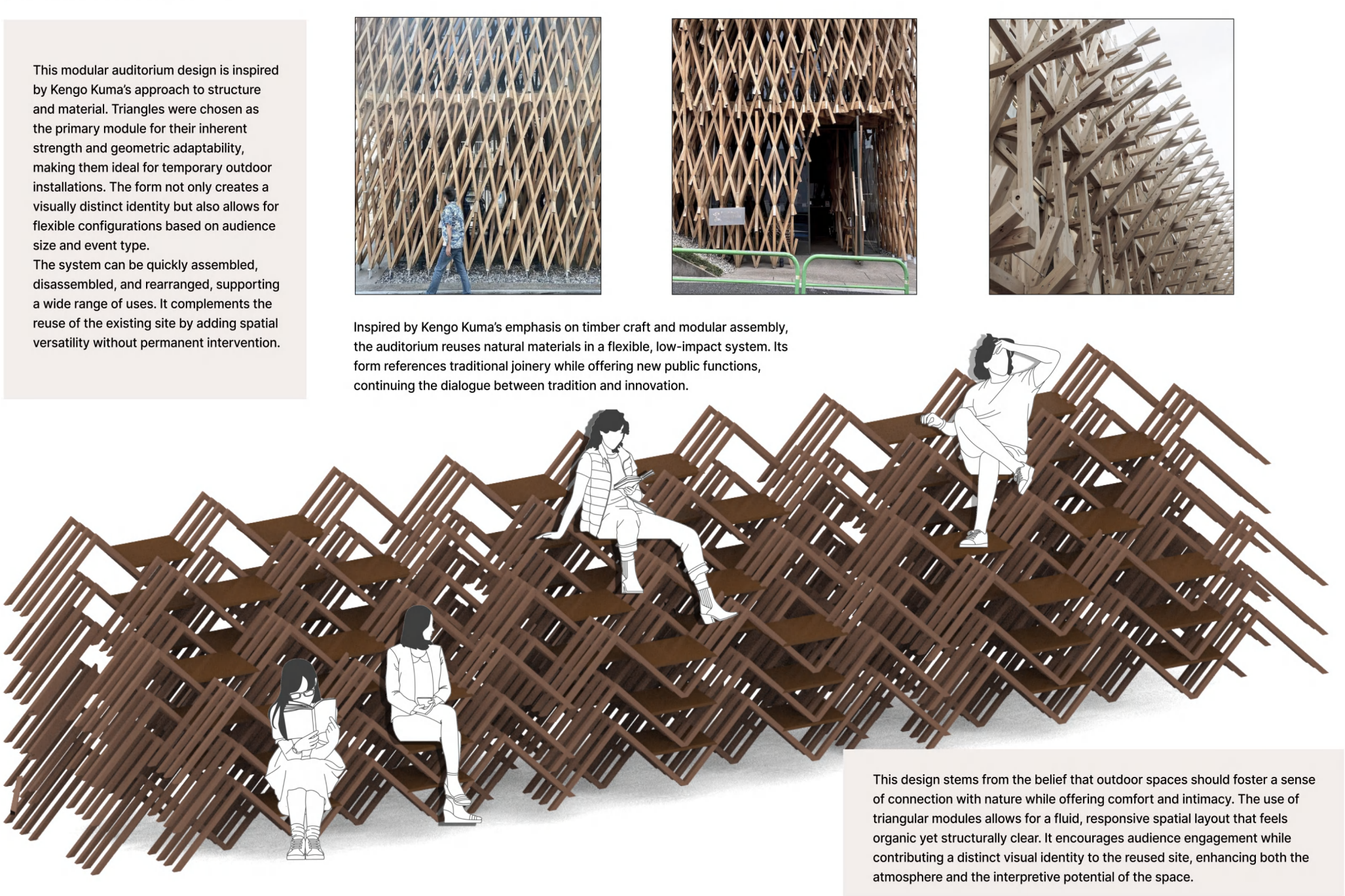Original building materials

New building materials

### Materials and Light



Rather than conceal the past, the added rooftop structure highlights it. The interplay of old and new materials enhances the building's visual identity and supports its transformation into a vibrant cultural platform. The reflective cladding is not only a design gesture but a tool — amplifying the effects of projected digital art, adapting dynamically to time, light, and movement. This is an architecture of reuse that engages with memory, invites participation, and anticipates new forms of collective storytelling.

## MODULAR AUDITORIUM DESIGN

This modular auditorium design is inspired by Kengo Kuma's approach to structure and material. Triangles were chosen as the primary module for their inherent strength and geometric adaptability, making them ideal for temporary outdoor installations. The form not only creates a visually distinct identity but also allows for flexible configurations based on audience size and event type.

The system can be quickly assembled, disassembled, and rearranged, supporting a wide range of uses. It complements the reuse of the existing site by adding spatial versatility without permanent intervention.



Inspired by Kengo Kuma's emphasis on timber craft and modular assembly, the auditorium reuses natural materials in a flexible, low-impact system. Its form references traditional joinery while offering new public functions, continuing the dialogue between tradition and innovation.



This design stems from the belief that outdoor spaces should foster a sense of connection with nature while offering comfort and intimacy. The use of triangular modules allows for a fluid, responsive spatial layout that feels organic yet structurally clear. It encourages audience engagement while contributing a distinct visual identity to the reused site, enhancing both the atmosphere and the interpretive potential of the space.

## NODAL ANALYSIS AND STRUCTURE

The stage is composed of modular elements designed for rapid reconfiguration and reuse. Inspired by caravan systems, these modules enhance the adaptability of the reused building exterior, enabling the space to accommodate changing community programs while preserving the integrity of the original architecture.

The flexibility of the modular design reflects a strategic rethinking of how historical spaces can adapt to contemporary communal needs. Inspired by the site's rich cultural context, the stage is designed as a reconfigurable system that accommodates everything from small gatherings to large-scale public performances. Its adaptability enables the site to remain responsive to the rhythms of community life, transforming a formerly static exterior into a dynamic cultural interface that evolves with time and activity.
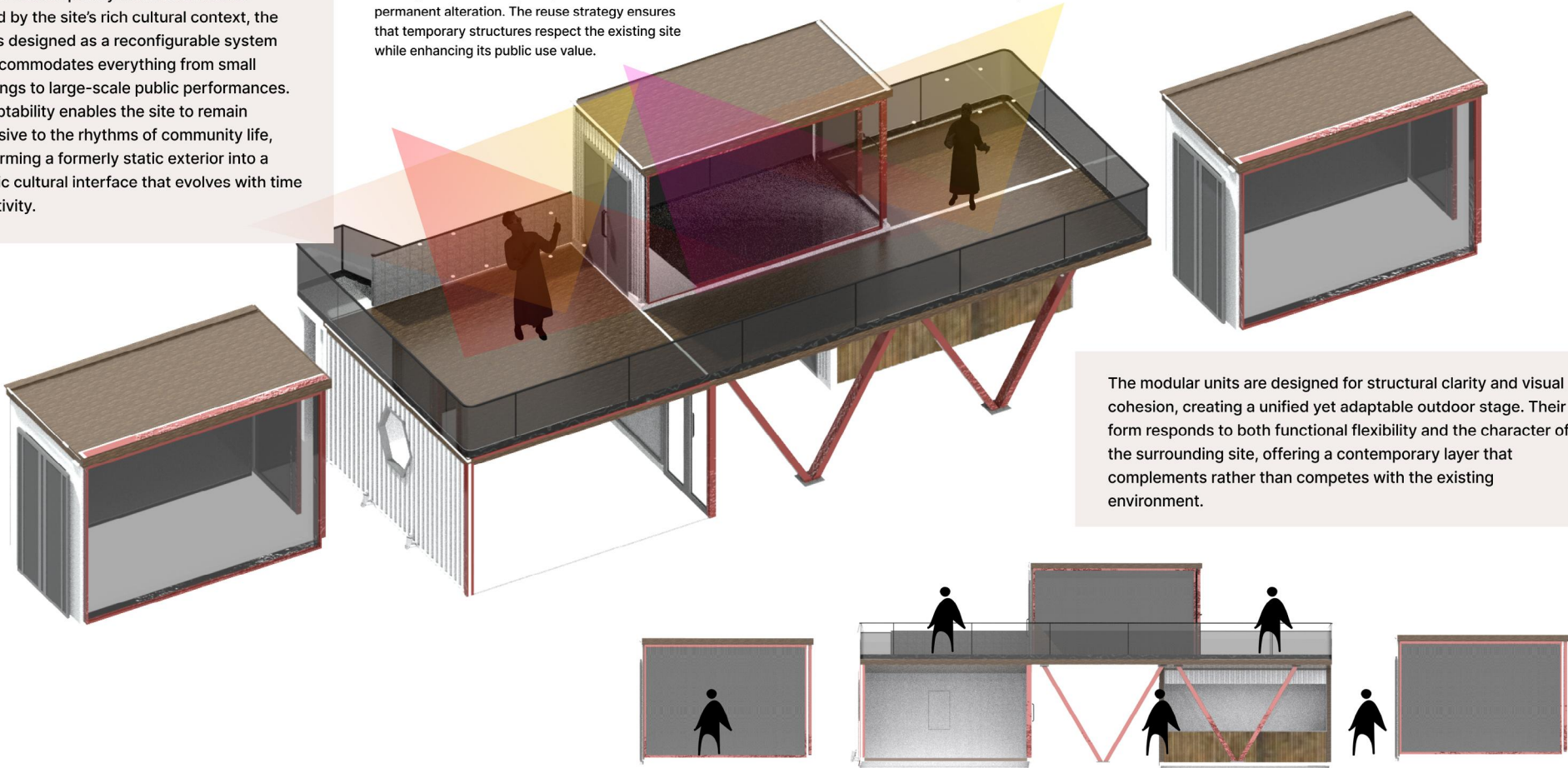


Drawing from the flexibility of RV modularity, this adaptive stage system enables the heritage building to host contemporary events without permanent alteration. The reuse strategy ensures that temporary structures respect the existing site while enhancing its public use value.
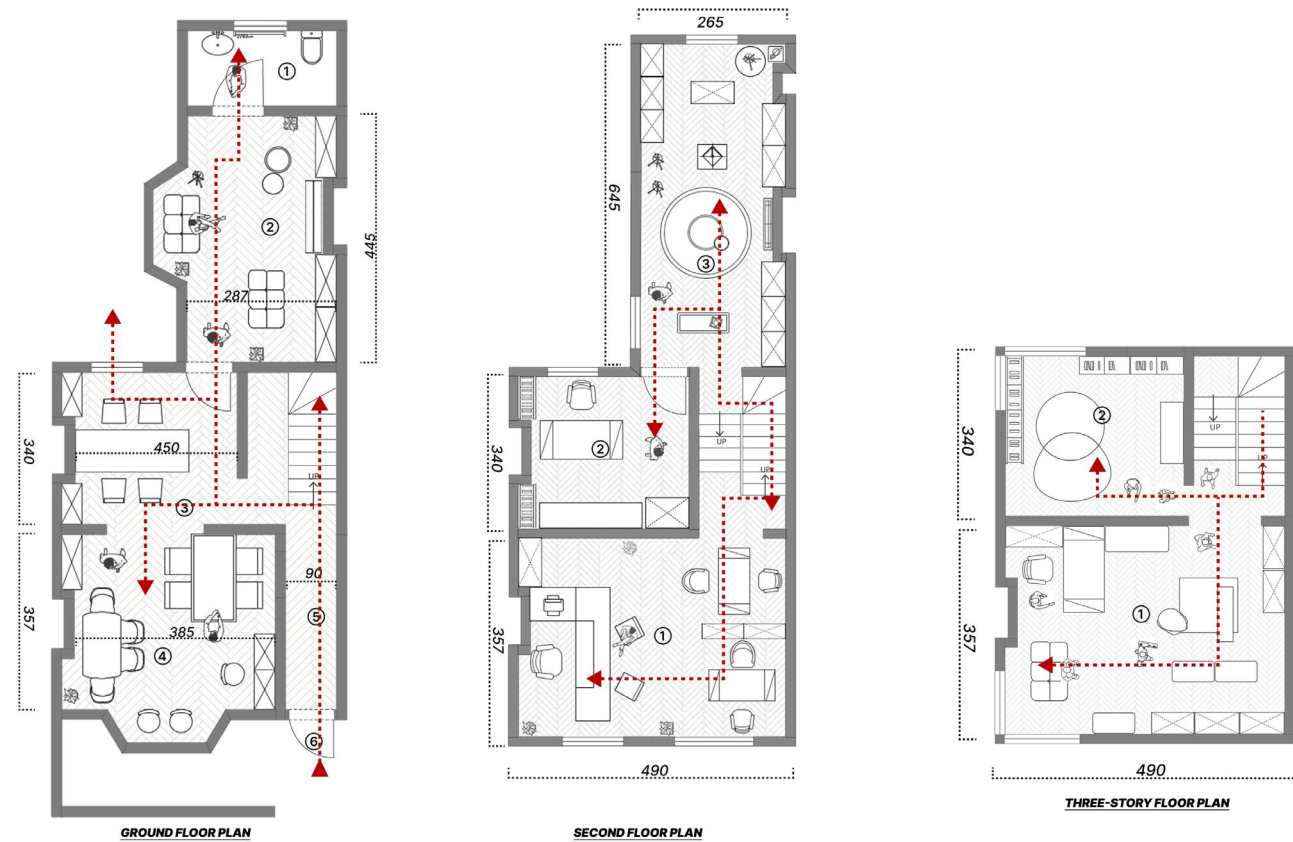
Further expanding the range of applications for modular design. By transforming industrial modules such as containers into functional outdoor spaces.
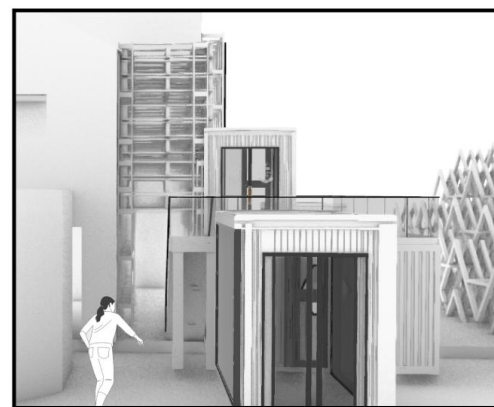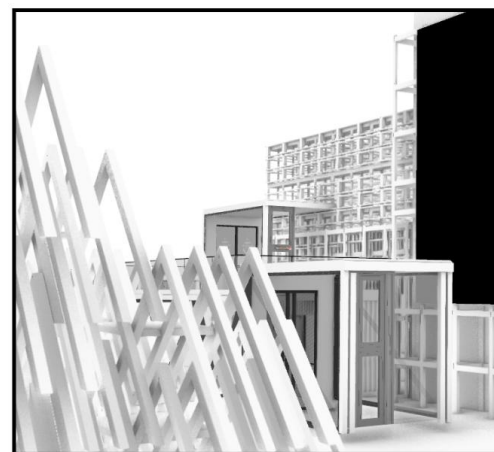


The modular units are designed for structural clarity and visual cohesion, creating a unified yet adaptable outdoor stage. Their form responds to both functional flexibility and the character of the surrounding site, offering a contemporary layer that complements rather than competes with the existing environment.

## SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF BUILDING INTERIORS



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

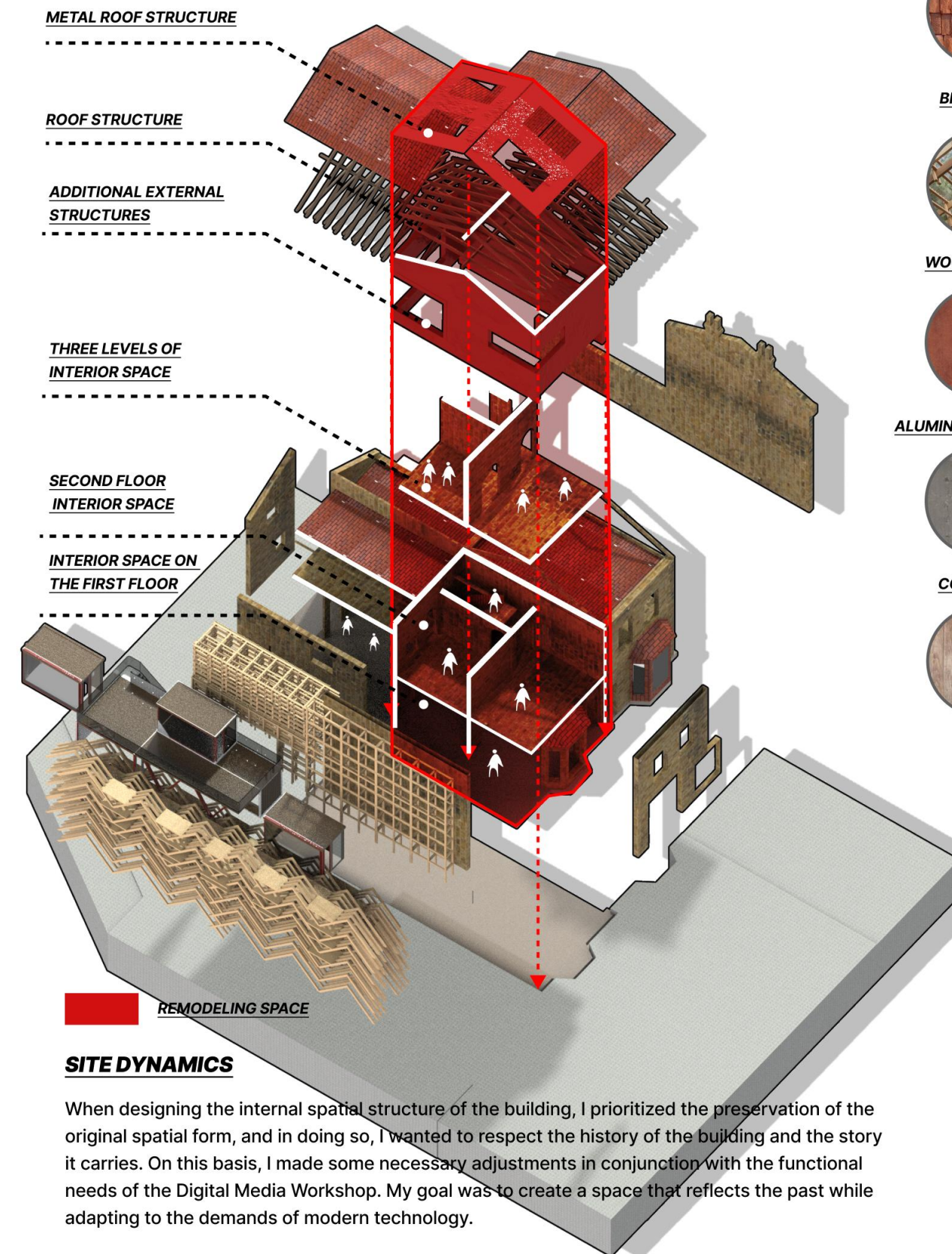SECOND FLOOR PLAN

THREE-STORY FLOOR PLAN

This project carefully reorganizes the internal structure of Safehouse 1 to support diverse creative functions while preserving its original architectural character. The spatial planning responds to the building's layered history by retaining aged surfaces, wooden textures, and spatial traces, transforming them into a canvas for modern use. Across three floors, distinct zones for digital media production, exhibitions, and community interaction are clearly defined, supporting both flexible programming and efficient circulation. Through thoughtful zoning and movement design, the space becomes a platform that balances historical reverence with modern functionality — offering opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and cultural continuity.
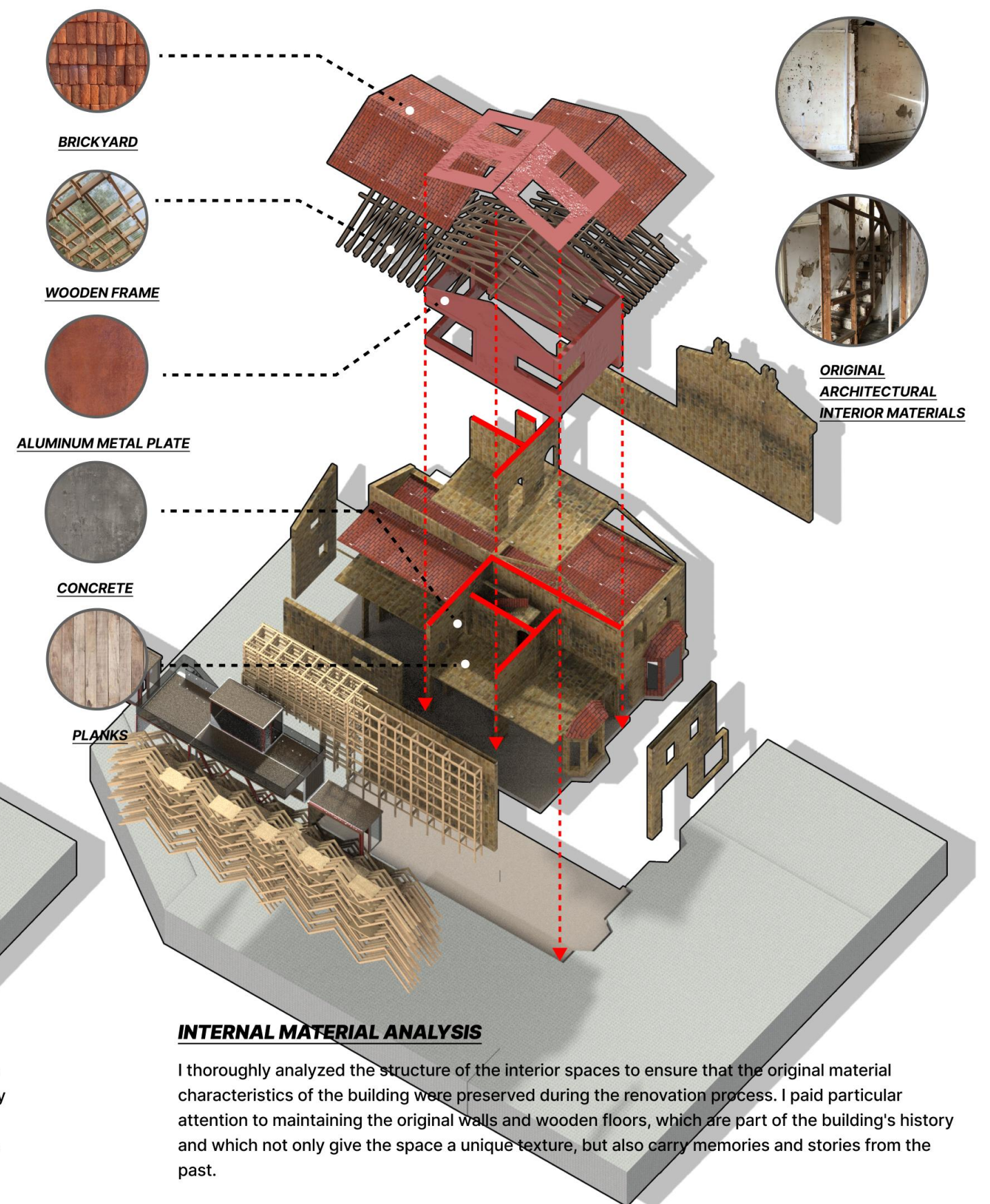
METAL ROOF STRUCTURE

ROOF STRUCTURE

ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL STRUCTURES

THREE LEVELS OF INTERIOR SPACE

SECOND FLOOR INTERIOR SPACE

INTERIOR SPACE ON THE FIRST FLOOR

■ REMODELING SPACE

### SITE DYNAMICS

When designing the internal spatial structure of the building, I prioritized the preservation of the original spatial form, and in doing so, I wanted to respect the history of the building and the story it carries. On this basis, I made some necessary adjustments in conjunction with the functional needs of the Digital Media Workshop. My goal was to create a space that reflects the past while adapting to the demands of modern technology.

BRICKYARD

WOODEN FRAME

ALUMINUM METAL PLATE

CONCRETE

PLANKS

ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL INTERIOR MATERIALS

### INTERNAL MATERIAL ANALYSIS

I thoroughly analyzed the structure of the interior spaces to ensure that the original material characteristics of the building were preserved during the renovation process. I paid particular attention to maintaining the original walls and wooden floors, which are part of the building's history and which not only give the space a unique texture, but also carry memories and stories from the past.
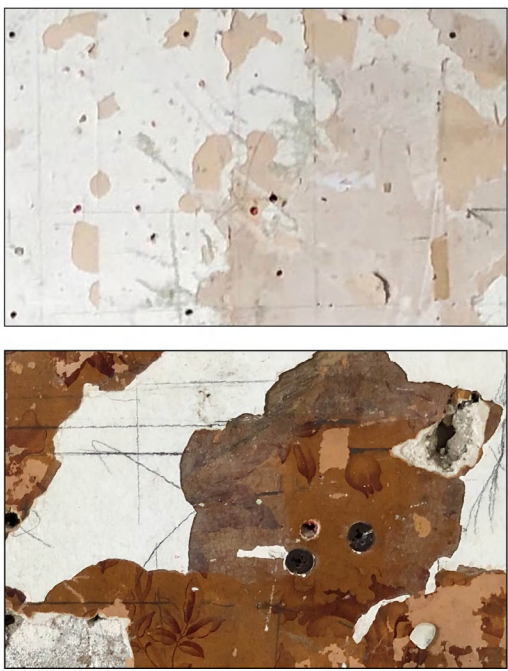
I presented a design concept for the exterior of the building that synthesizes traditional and modern elements, reflecting a clever use of materials and thoughtful design. I retained the building's original red brick walls, a material that not only pays homage to history but also adds a classic and warm texture to the building. At the same time, I introduced modern metallic materials, a contrast that not only creates visual layering, but also functionally provides additional structural support and durability.

ELEVATION

LEGEND
① Artistic creation and stage preparation area
② Exhibition hall
③ Editing room
④ management office
⑤ Recording studio

A-A' SECTION

The interior is reimagined as a flexible platform for exhibitions and creative engagement. Through subtle interventions in material, light, and display, the space becomes a vessel for both remembrance and reinvention —where heritage supports future cultural activity.
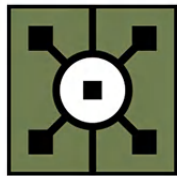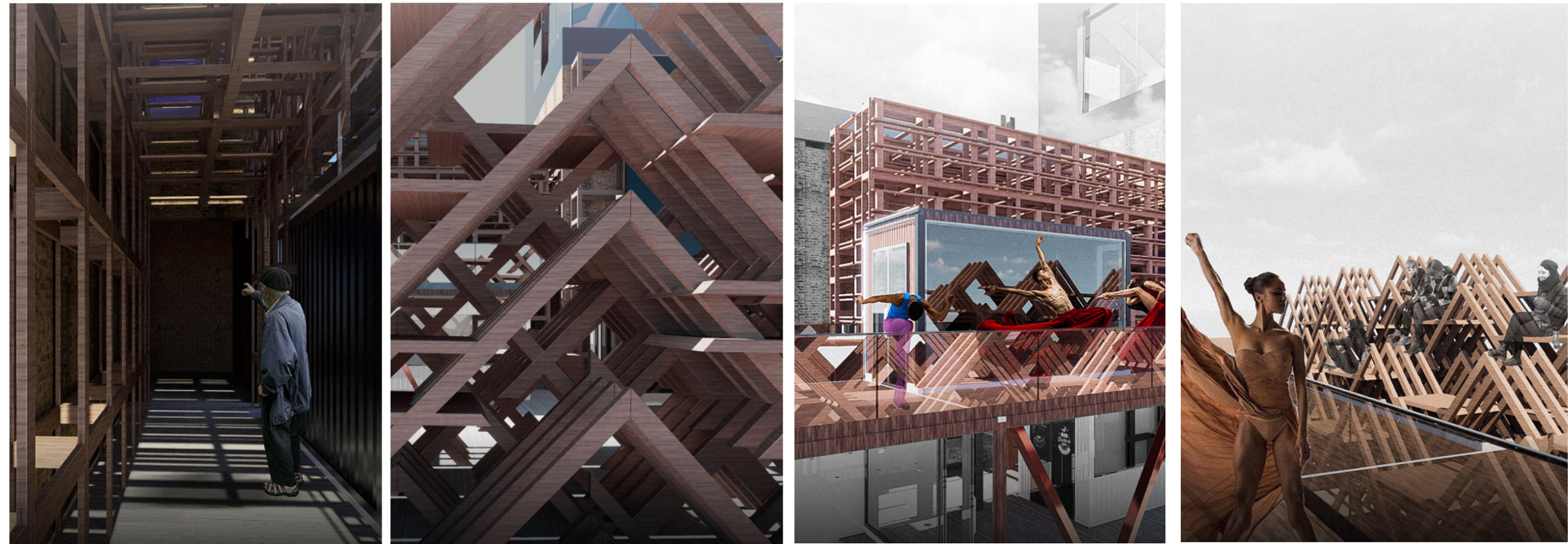


The design preserves the building's aged concrete walls and wooden floors, allowing visible traces of time—cracks, textures, and faded finishes—to remain as part of its identity. These materials are not restored to perfection, but retained to highlight the building's layered past and unique narrative.
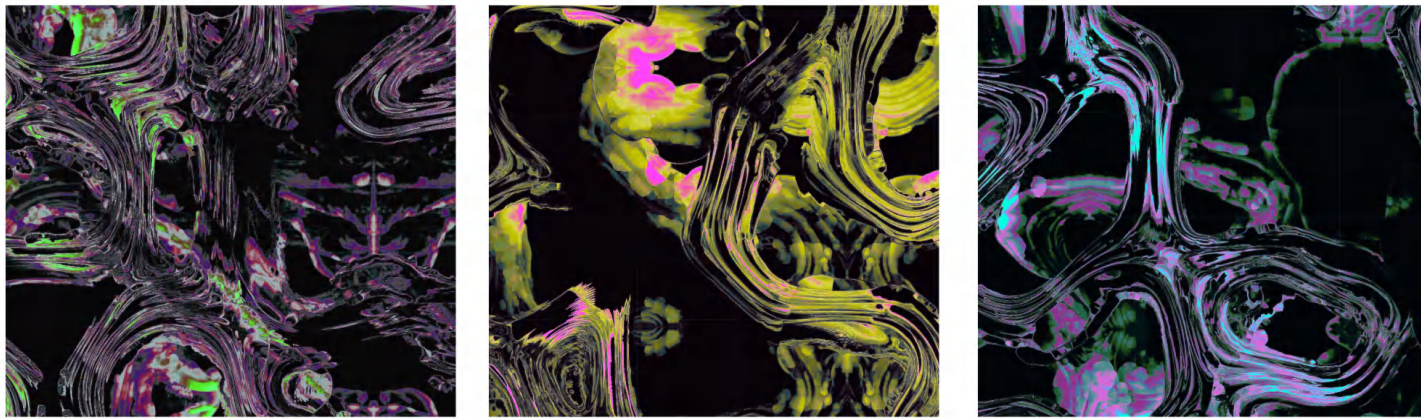
Original timber partitions are carefully restored and reintroduced as spatial elements, offering both warmth and historical continuity. Digital artworks are integrated with restraint, allowing old and new to coexist without overpowering the original fabric.

# *THE LIVING FAÇADE: BRIDGING PAST AND FUTURE THROUGH PROJECTION*



At night, the historic façade of Safehouse is reactivated as a vibrant digital canvas. A large projection screen embedded into the building's structure showcases dynamic media art, turning the exterior into an ever-changing surface for local stories, cultural expression, and community interaction.

This transformation does not erase the building's past, but enhances it—bridging the industrial character of the original red brick with the energy of contemporary digital media. By blending architecture with real-time visual storytelling, Safehouse becomes more than a preserved structure: it becomes a stage for community engagement and cultural reinvention.







Touchdesigner · Video results · video process

Using TouchDesigner software and advanced projection technology, I plan to transform the building walls into a giant digital canvas. Through this innovative approach, I hope to enliven not only the building itself, but also bring a visual feast to the surrounding community.

I envision dynamic images and videos mapped onto the surface of the building through projectors at night time, which could be artworks, cultural displays, or interactive information relevant to the local community. This design not only revitalizes the Safehouse at night, but also makes it a bridge between the past and the future, between tradition and innovation.