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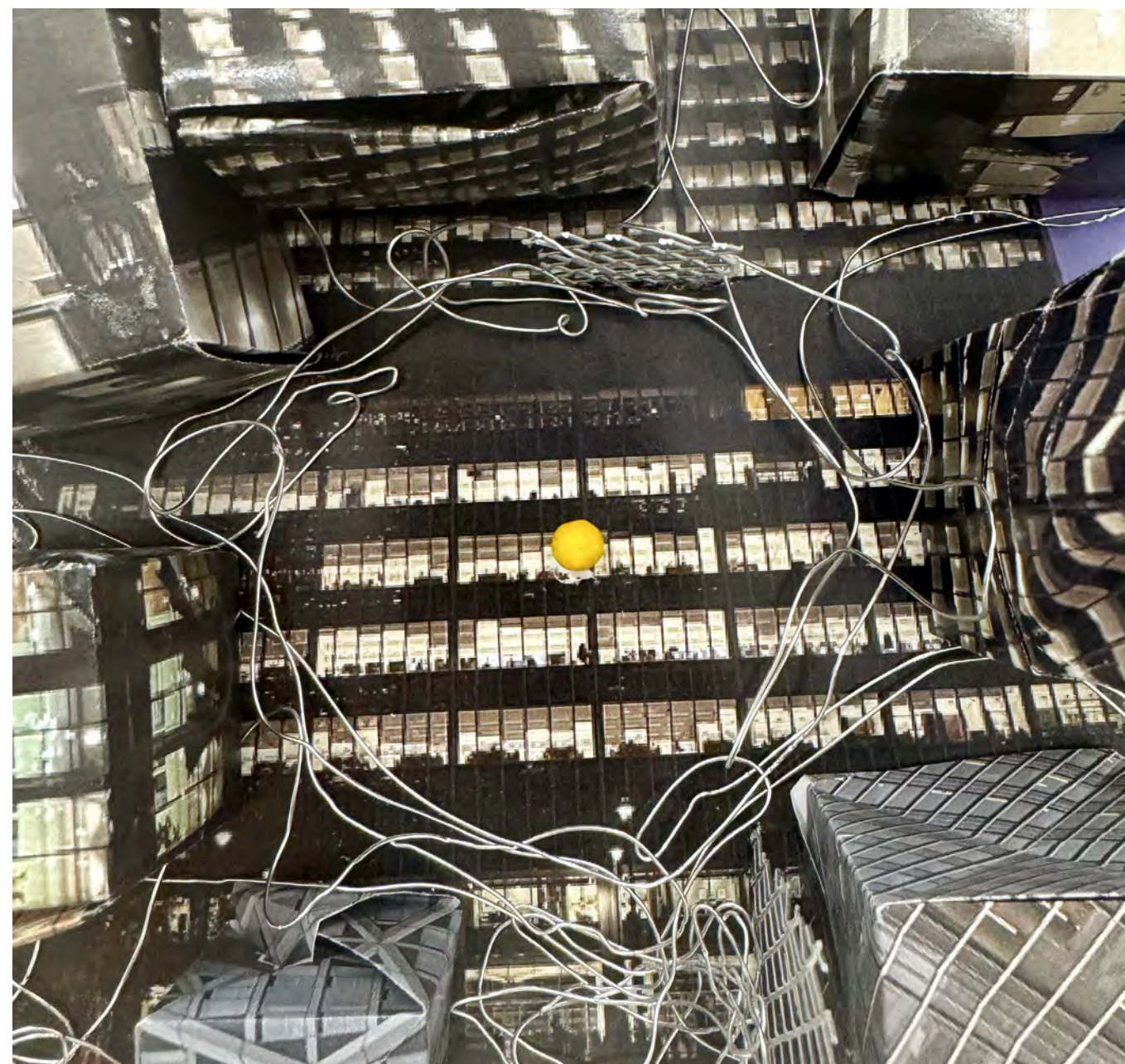
## Initial response

Based on my personal experience—and the feelings of loneliness, isolation, dullness, and even misery I often have in Canary Wharf—I wanted to understand whether these impressions were shared. I began researching broader trends in office culture and growing mental health concerns among corporate workers. I found consistent data showing rising levels of anxiety and depression, along with a notable decline in life and job satisfaction.

The lifestyle typical of Canary Wharf's workforce—comprising mainly corporate professionals—leaves little space for personal life, rest, or healthcare. High expectations, long hours, and digital over-connectivity contribute to a stressful and often unsustainable working culture.

These patterns are evident in both the culture and the built environment. Uniform layouts, harsh lighting, and impersonal materials reflect a productivity-driven logic that often treats people as resources. These spatial arrangements tend to amplify stress rather than relieve it.

In my early models, I began to explore this sense of isolation and constraint, searching for ways to subvert it. I aimed to break away from the cold, oppressive materiality of the area by introducing a language of softness, warmth, and human-centred design. The culture I propose centres on care and connection—interrupting Canary Wharf's rigid rhythms and offering a more inclusive, life-affirming alternative. Through this lens, the site at 15 Westferry Circus becomes an intervention that opens up space for another way of being.

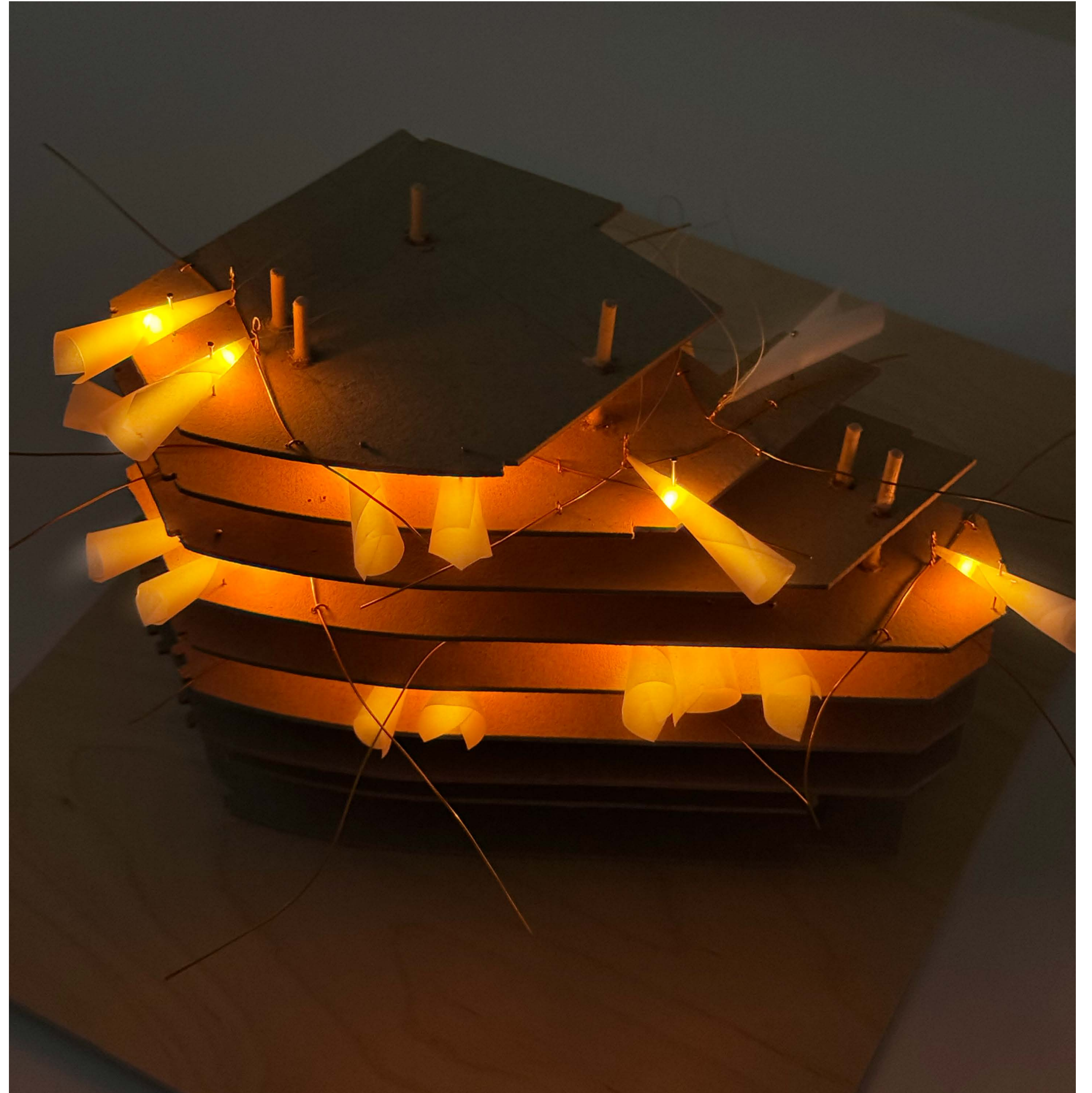


## Compression artefact

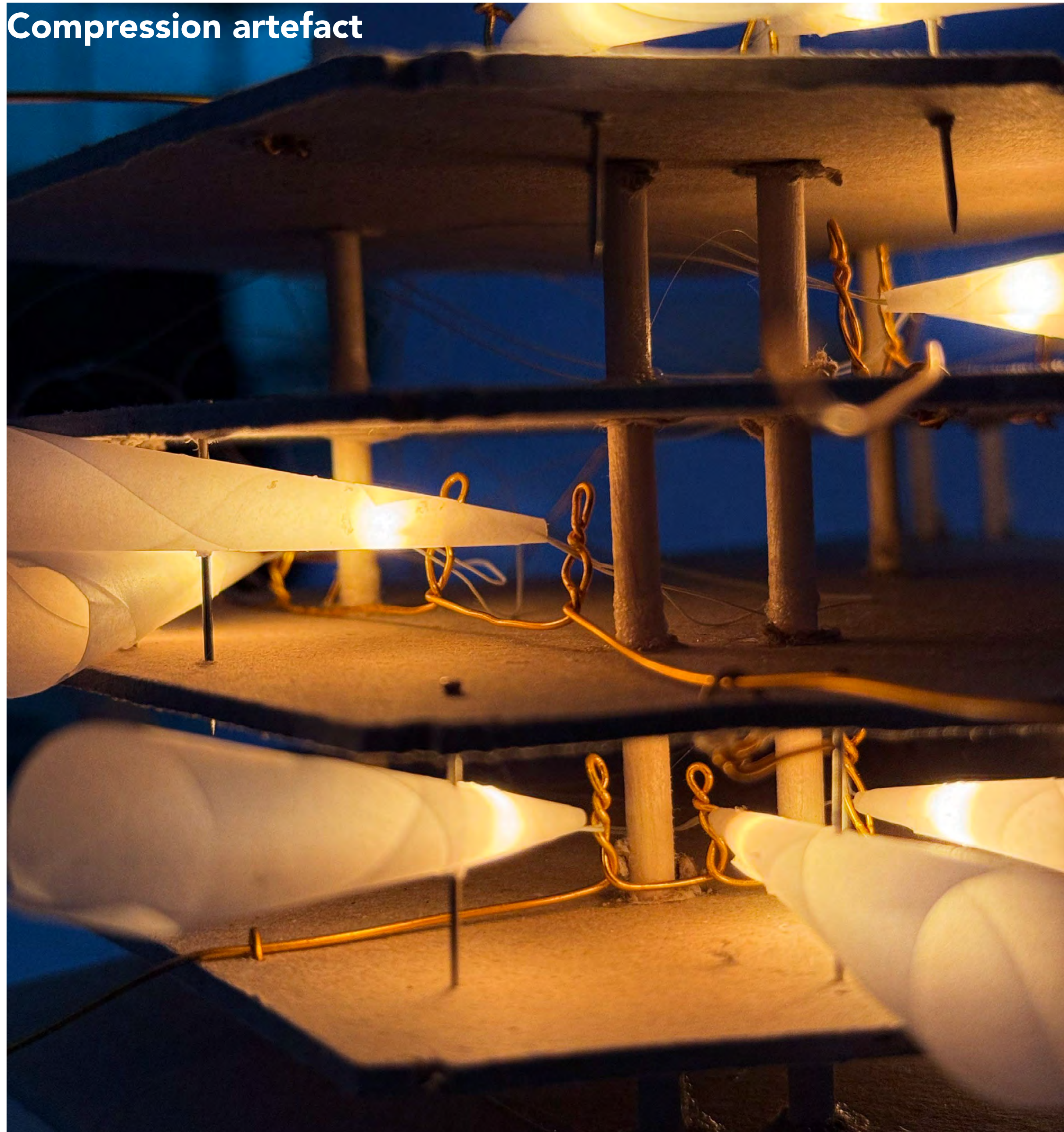
As a further exploration, I developed the Compression Artefact—a conceptual model that introduced the core idea behind — The Lighthouse: light as both a metaphor and a building element within a broader system. It reflects a proposed shift—from the consistent, controlled lighting of corporate spaces, which contributes to light pollution and suppresses natural rhythms, toward light as a symbol of human agency. In contrast to the standardised and impersonal environments shaped by capitalist logic, this project imagines individuals as sources of light—each shaping space through presence, intention, and creativity. It proposes a move from systems of control toward a culture rooted in individualism and human-centred design.

This concept raises critical questions and forms the foundation for a transformative intervention—one that redefines Canary Wharf's spatial and emotional identity.

What is missing from the existing culture of Canary Wharf? Why does the environment feel so unwelcoming and controlled? How can the building at 15 Westferry Circus become an intervention—improving the lives of office workers? What role can design, architecture, and materiality play in this transformation? And how might a building embody a new, human-centred narrative?

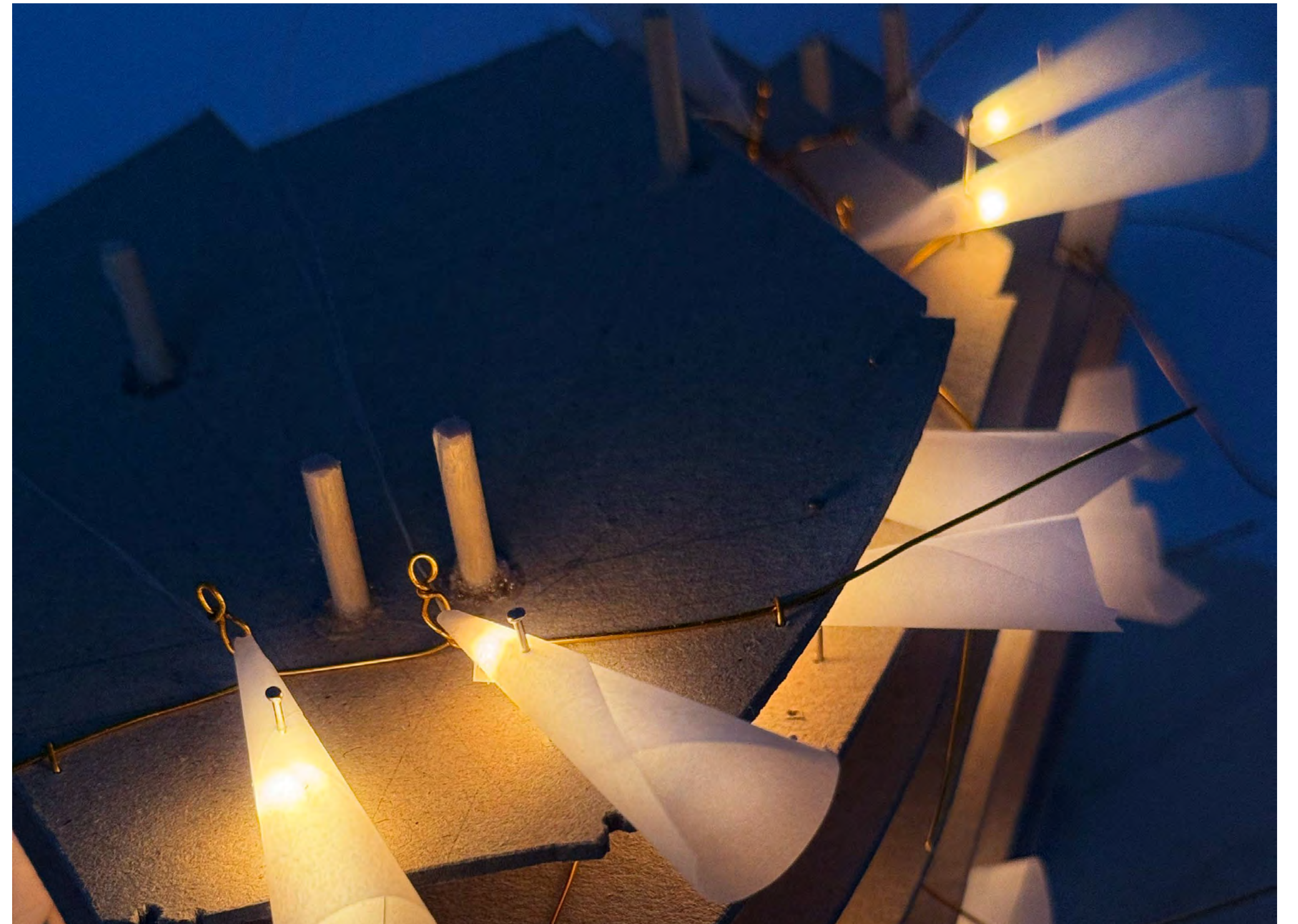


## Compression artefact



My Compression Artefact acts as both critique and proposition. It metaphorically places power in the hands of individuals—portraying them as “light holders.” Symbolic torches, connected by movable wires, can be switched on and directed freely. In this vision, light is not infrastructure—it is presence. It moves with people. It is shaped by intention. It becomes a symbol of cultural agency and care.

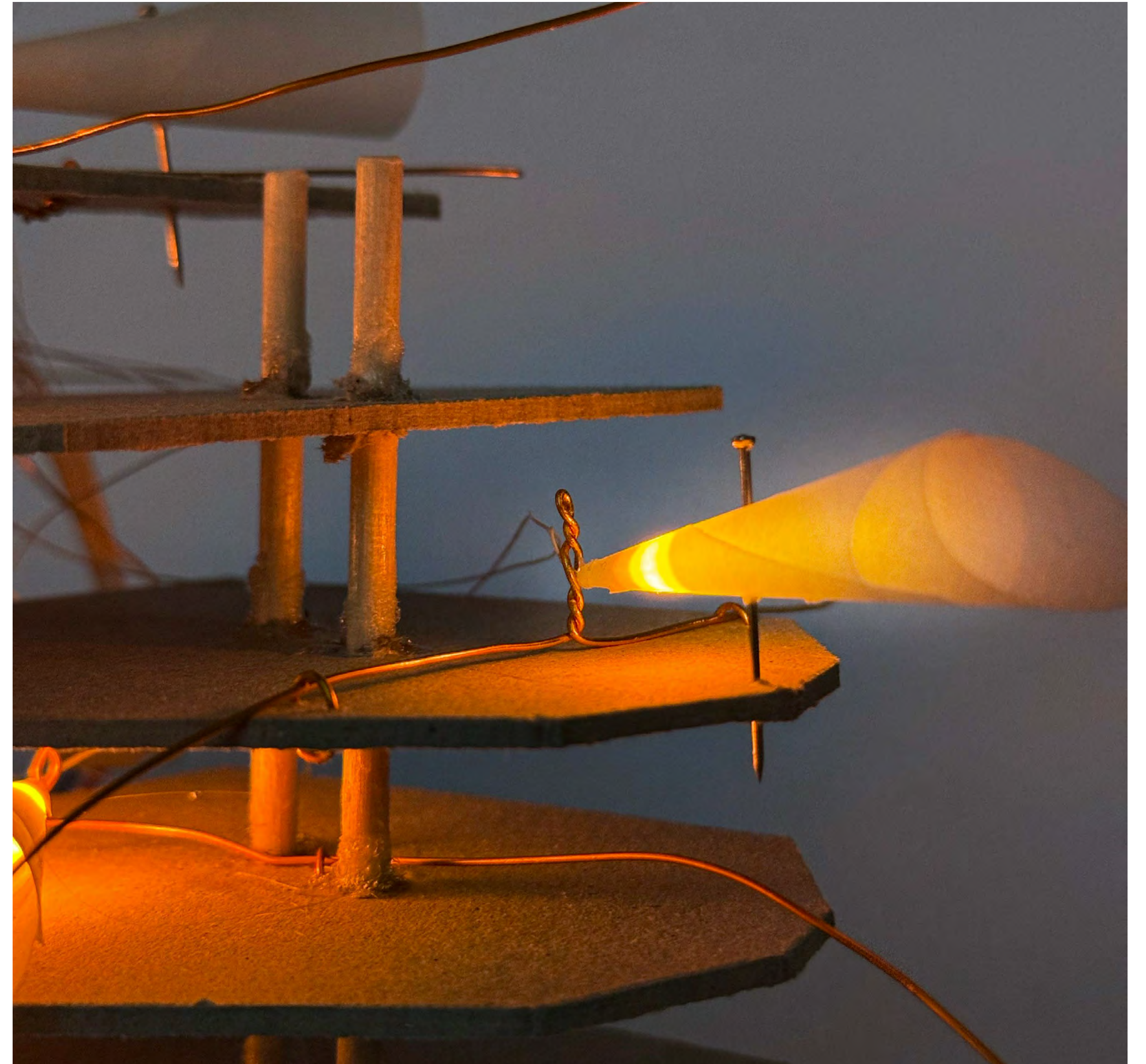
The model represents the building in an exposed, “undressed” state. All facades are removed, revealing its raw, honest structure. This gesture frees the building from its former narrative, preparing it to be filled with new meaning. It becomes a frame for transformation—open to reinterpretation and ready to carry a different culture.



## Compression artefact



The artefact is interactive. The viewer can move the wires and torches, actively engaging with the concept. This act reinforces the central idea: architecture is shaped not only by design, but by human involvement. Light responds to people. The building becomes a container for change.



## Research question

Located at the edge of Canary Wharf and facing the river, 15 Westferry Circus occupies a unique threshold—both geographically and symbolically. While not one of the earliest structures, it was part of the expansion that followed Canary Wharf's initial development phase. Its slight separation from the dense high-rise cluster gives it the potential to become something different: a spatial and emotional bridge between the rigid corporate world and a more human-centred culture. Just steps from the Thames Clipper ferry station that connects the area with the south bank of London, the building can become a symbolic and cultural connector—like a lighthouse guiding those in search of sanctuary. A beacon on the edge of the financial “island,” pointing toward a softer, more reflective way of being.

This led to my central research question:

**How can interior architecture challenge the emotional and spatial constraints of corporate environments and offer a retreat that restores human connection, mental well-being, and a sense of presence?**



## Design Methodology

As a response to the prevailing atmosphere of the Canary Wharf office environment—with its emphasis on exclusivity, enclosure, and security, often paired with a surface-level, materialistic understanding of luxury—I began by exploring the philosophy and original meaning of the term. Rather than relying on popular associations with excess or status, I aimed to strip back those layers and return to the essence of luxury: something rare, deeply valued, and specific to context.

I studied its historical and philosophical dimensions, including ideas such as scarcity, pleasure, well-being, craftsmanship, aspiration, creativity, and self-perception.

From this foundation, I applied a three-filter methodology to define a contemporary concept of luxury and translate it into design:

**Filter 1:** Environmental context – what is scarce or valued in today’s urban life: time, space, silence, nature, calm, clean air, and nourishing food.

**Filter 2:** Psychological and behavioural context – what contemporary urban professionals lack or seek: mental clarity, personal rhythm, emotional presence, peace of mind, and genuine human connection.

**Filter 3:** Design and functional response – how space, light, and materiality can meaningfully offer these experiences in a responsible and emotionally resonant way.

This approach allowed me to define a contemporary luxury that is rooted in philosophical, environmental, and psychological values, rather than consumerist or aesthetic excess. It reframes luxury as an atmosphere of care and presence—one that restores what is often missing from corporate culture—and became the foundation for the programmatic and spatial direction of the project.



## Design Brief

The programme was shaped through the emotional and sensory experiences I wanted the building to offer. Instead of starting from fixed functions, I followed a narrative of human needs—what one might come here to do, feel, or restore.

The vertical zoning reflects a journey through states of presence:

**Ground floor:** A public art gallery—a space to arrive, slow down, observe, and absorb. Open and quiet, it sets the tone for retreat.

**First floor:** A quiet space—designed for stillness, deep conversations, reflection, and inner pause. A threshold between the public and personal.

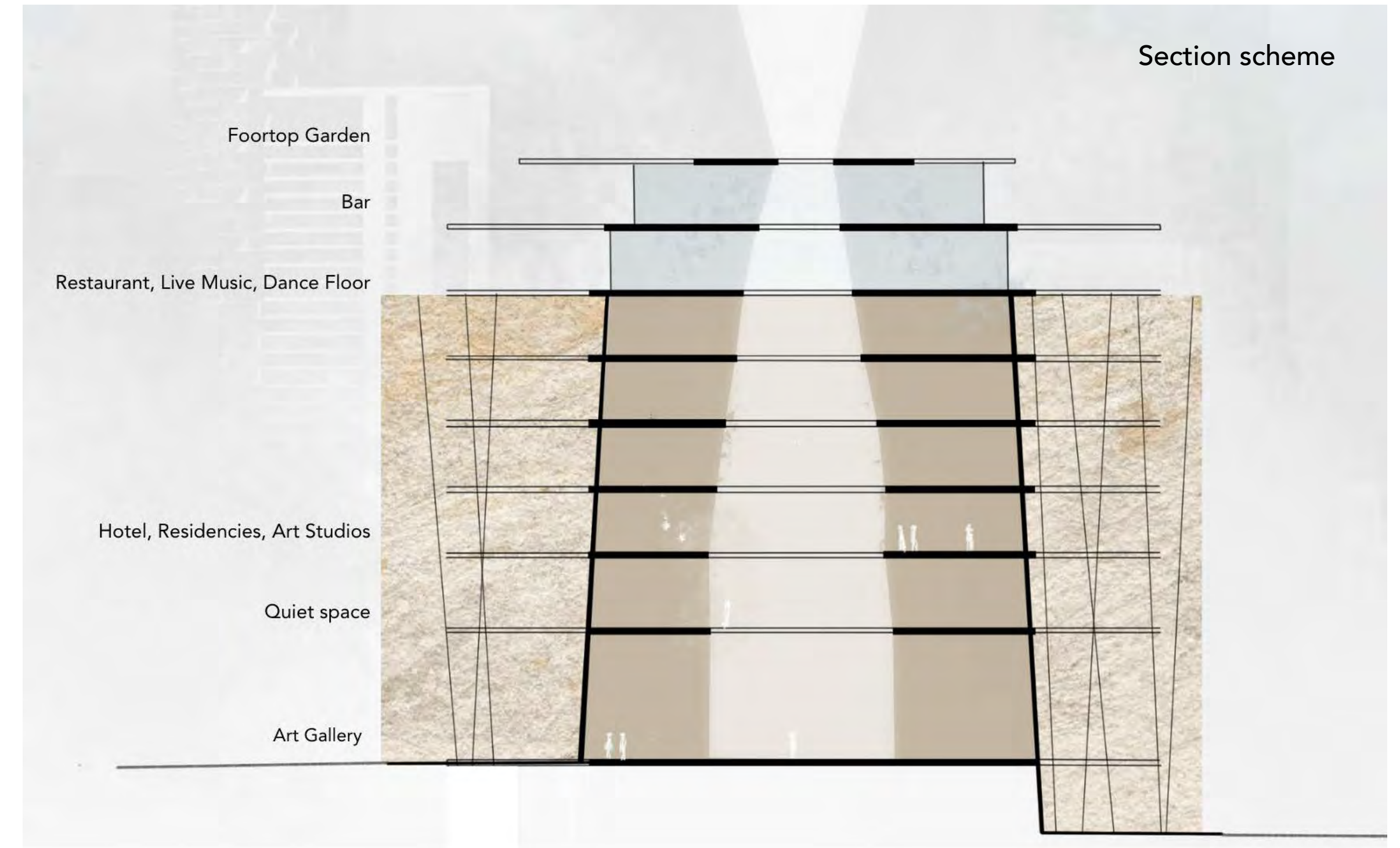
**Floors 2–5:** Residencies and studios—a place to restore and create. These levels are intimate, with a slower rhythm and natural light that supports personal routines, rest, and artistic work.

**Floors 6–7:** A space to connect, celebrate, and enjoy life. Restaurant, live music, dance, and a bar—all designed not for performance, but for warmth, expression, and togetherness.

**Rooftop:** A garden with views over the Thames—a quiet connection to nature, the city, and the sky. A place to breathe, to be alone or together, and to look up.

Each level is defined by mood rather than typology. The programme is built around the rhythm of a day, a life, a retreat—a sequence of mental and sensory states that respond to what is lacking in corporate culture: silence, connection, reflection, presence, joy.

This spatial brief sets the tone for an experience-based journey through the building—guided by light, rhythm, and feeling. It frames the building as a place to transition between inner states, offering space to pause, reflect, create, and reconnect.

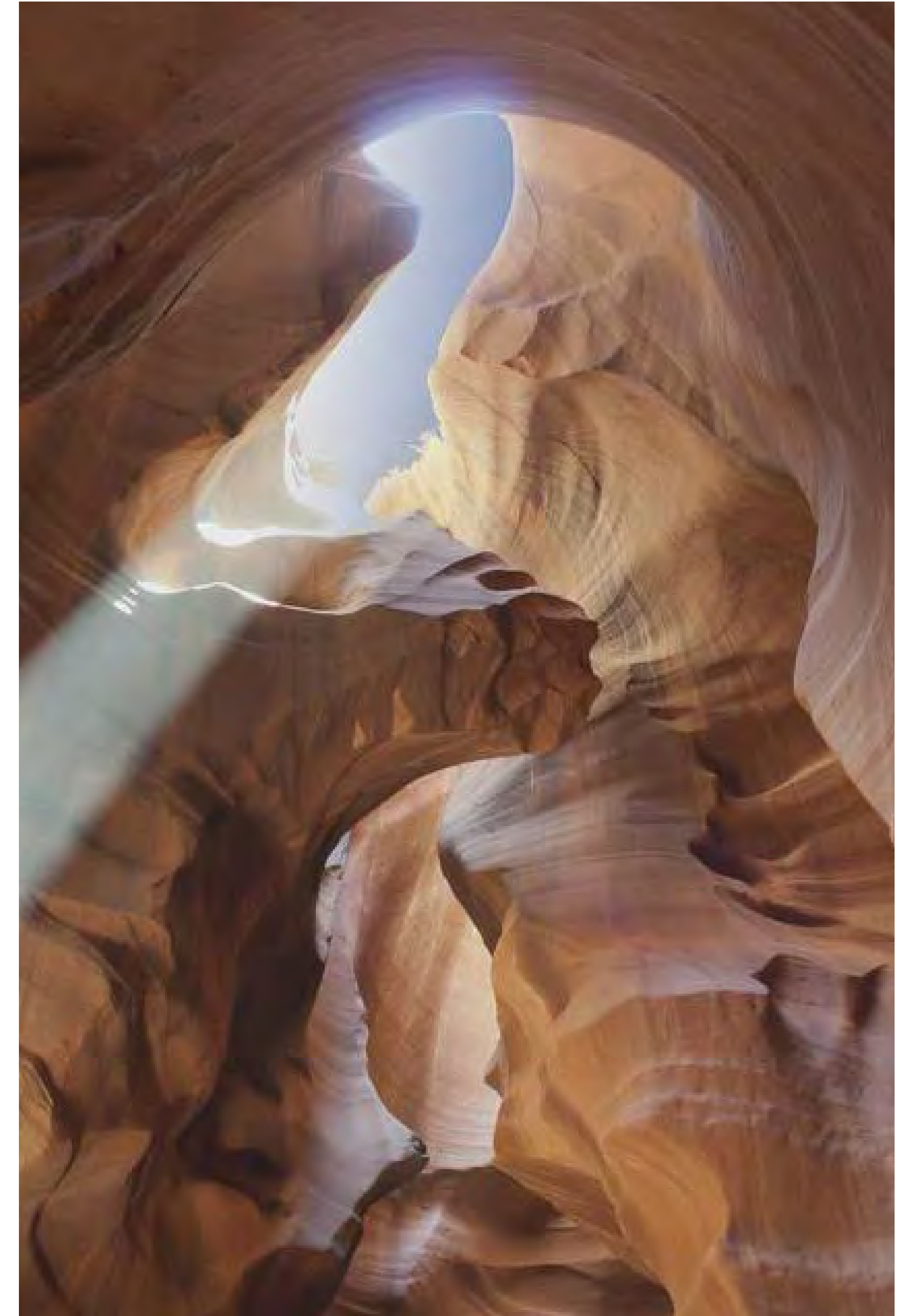
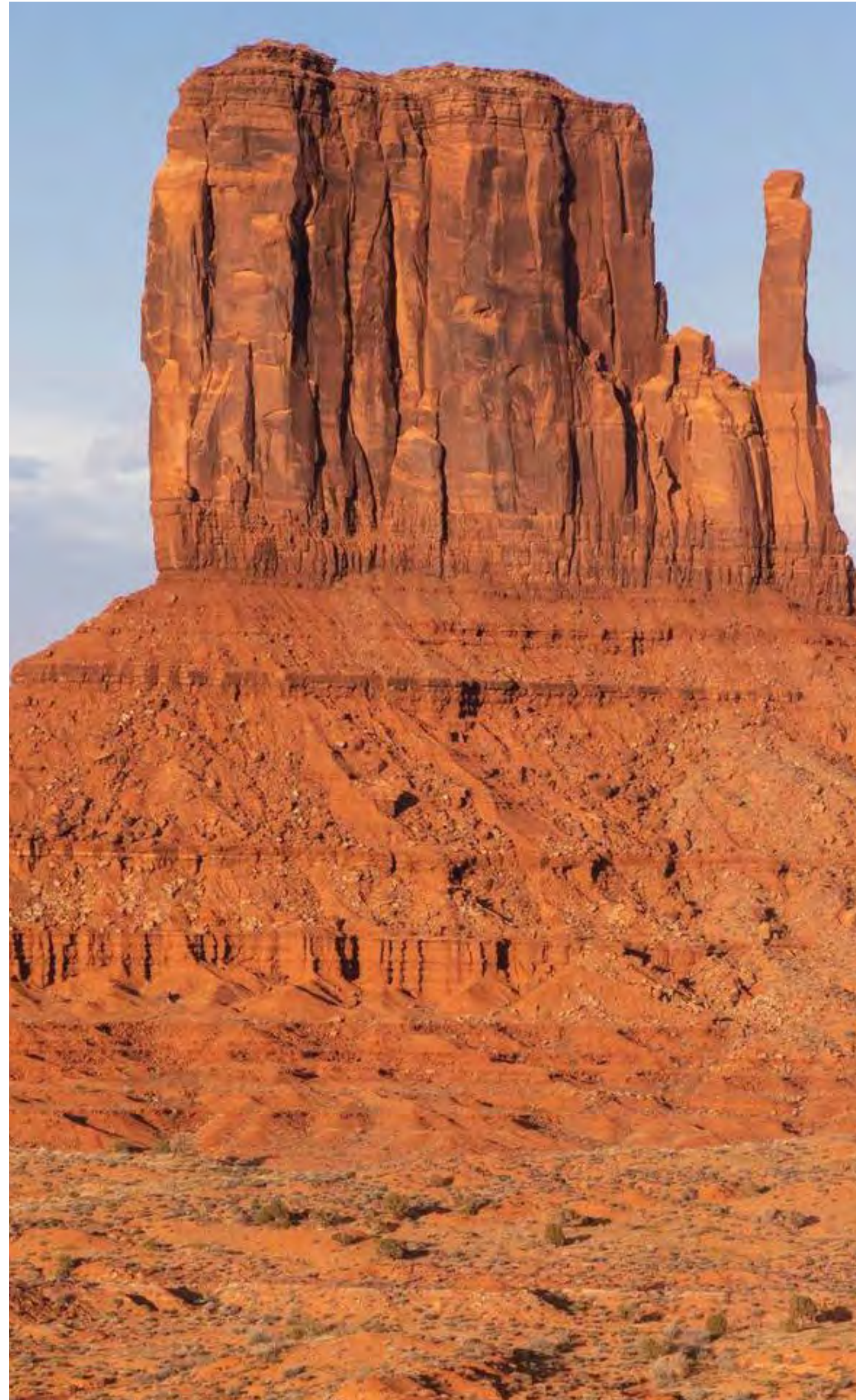


## Concept Development

The emotional and philosophical foundation of the project gradually took form through metaphor and material. One key visual and conceptual idea emerged early in the process: the rock. As a metaphor, the rock held a quiet power—it is grounded, slow, textured, shaped by time and erosion. It resists speed and readability. It is still, massive, protective. These were the very qualities missing from the Canary Wharf context.

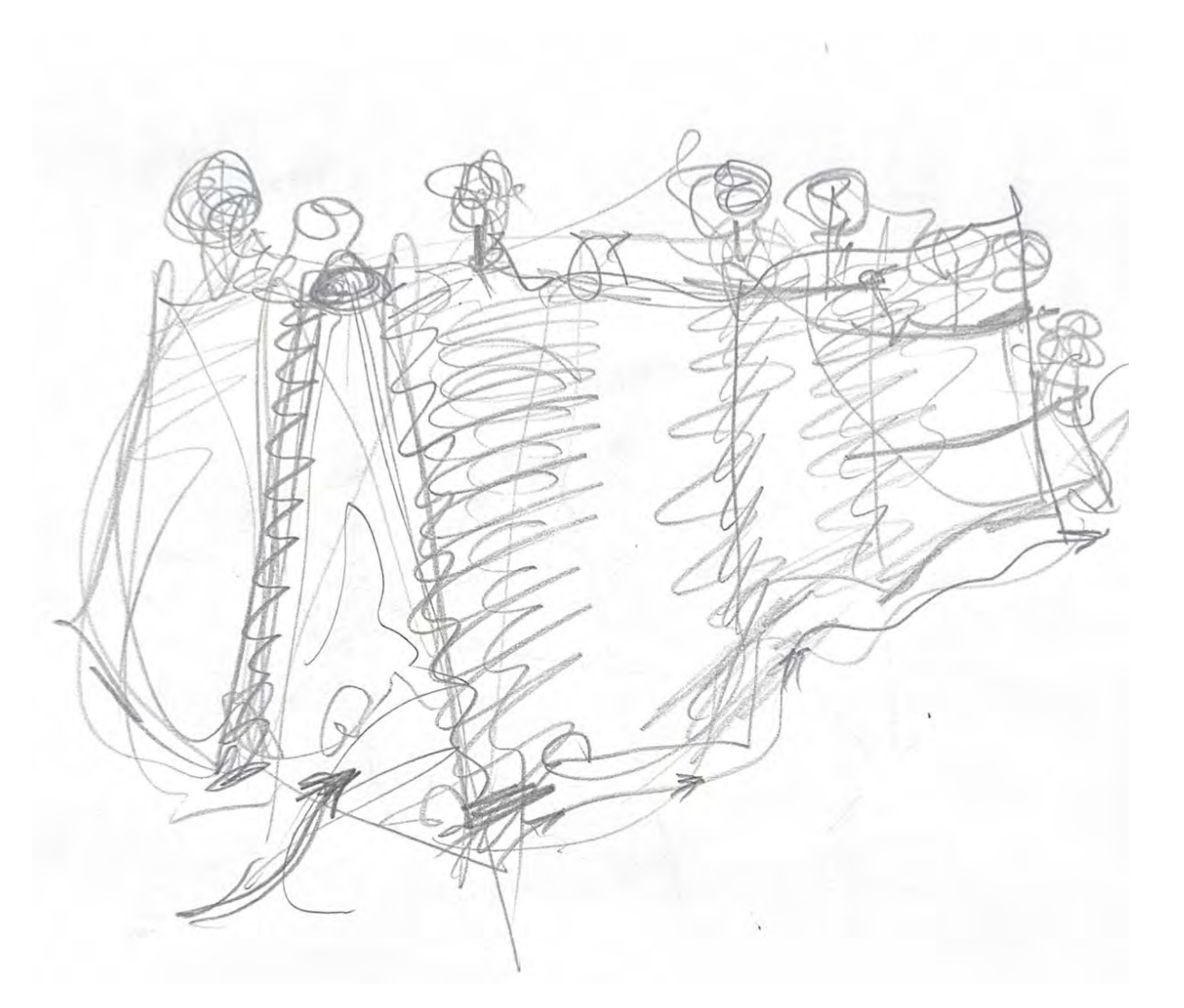
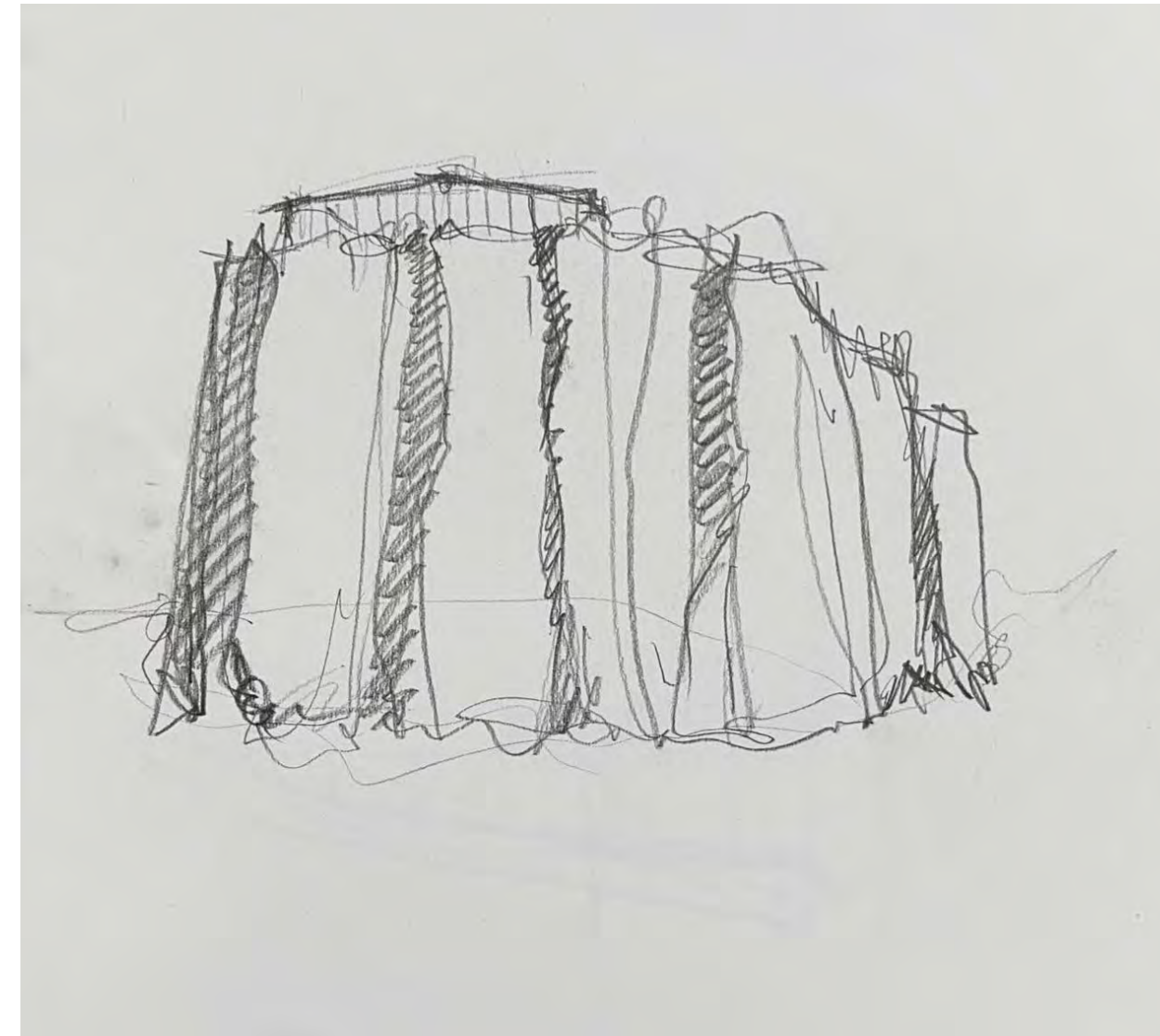
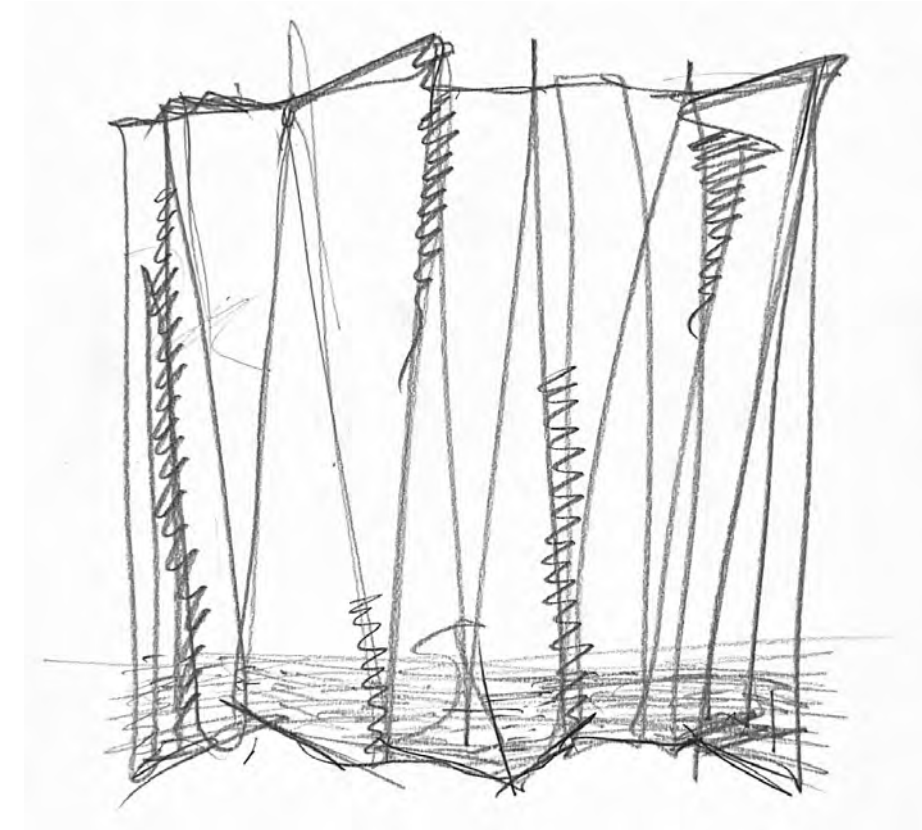
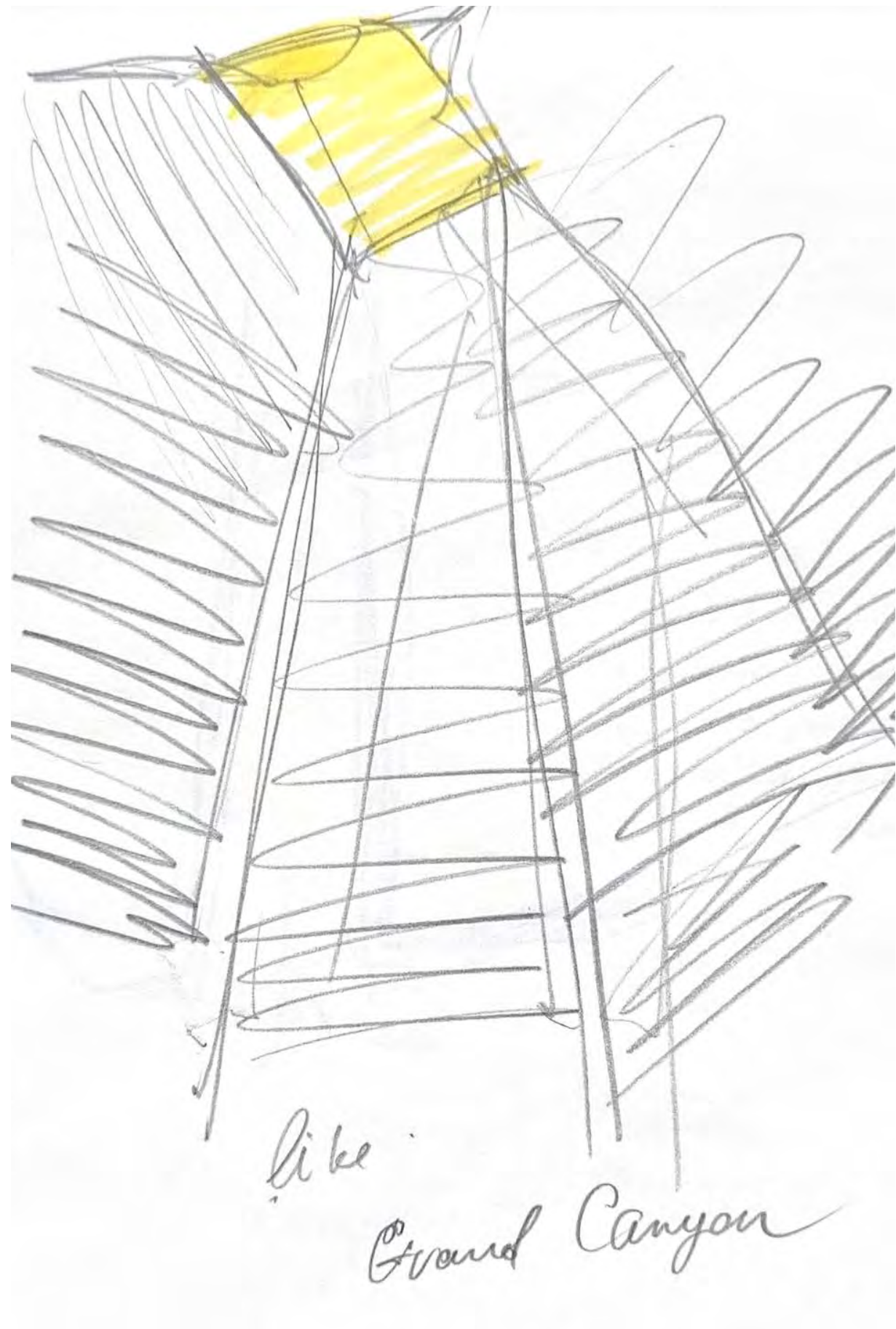
Through researching sacred architecture and natural landscapes—particularly formations like Monument Valley and Antelope Canyon—I was drawn to spaces where light and surface interact in quiet, profound ways. These places evoke humility and presence. They offer a different sense of time and invite reflection rather than urgency.

I began exploring how architecture might be shaped from mass, not assembled from surface. What if the building wasn't simply filled with rooms—but carved like a stone? What if voids, layers, and textures created a spatial experience that mirrored being inside a cave or canyon?

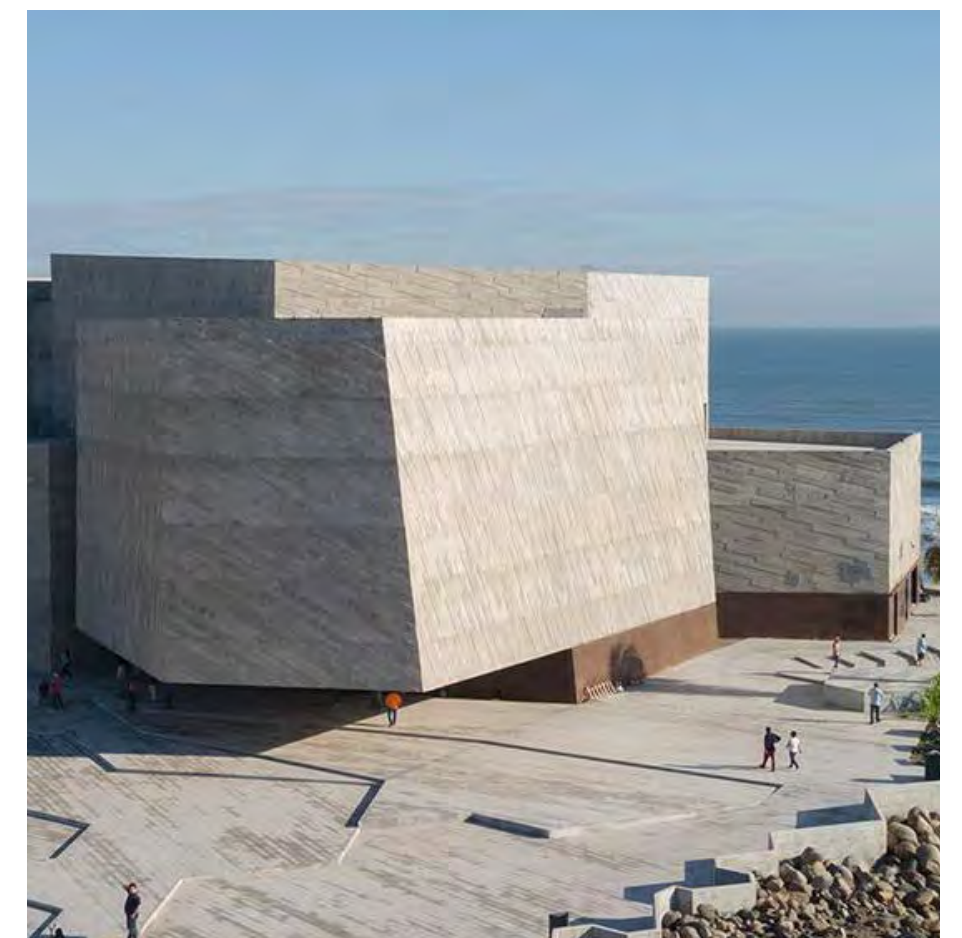
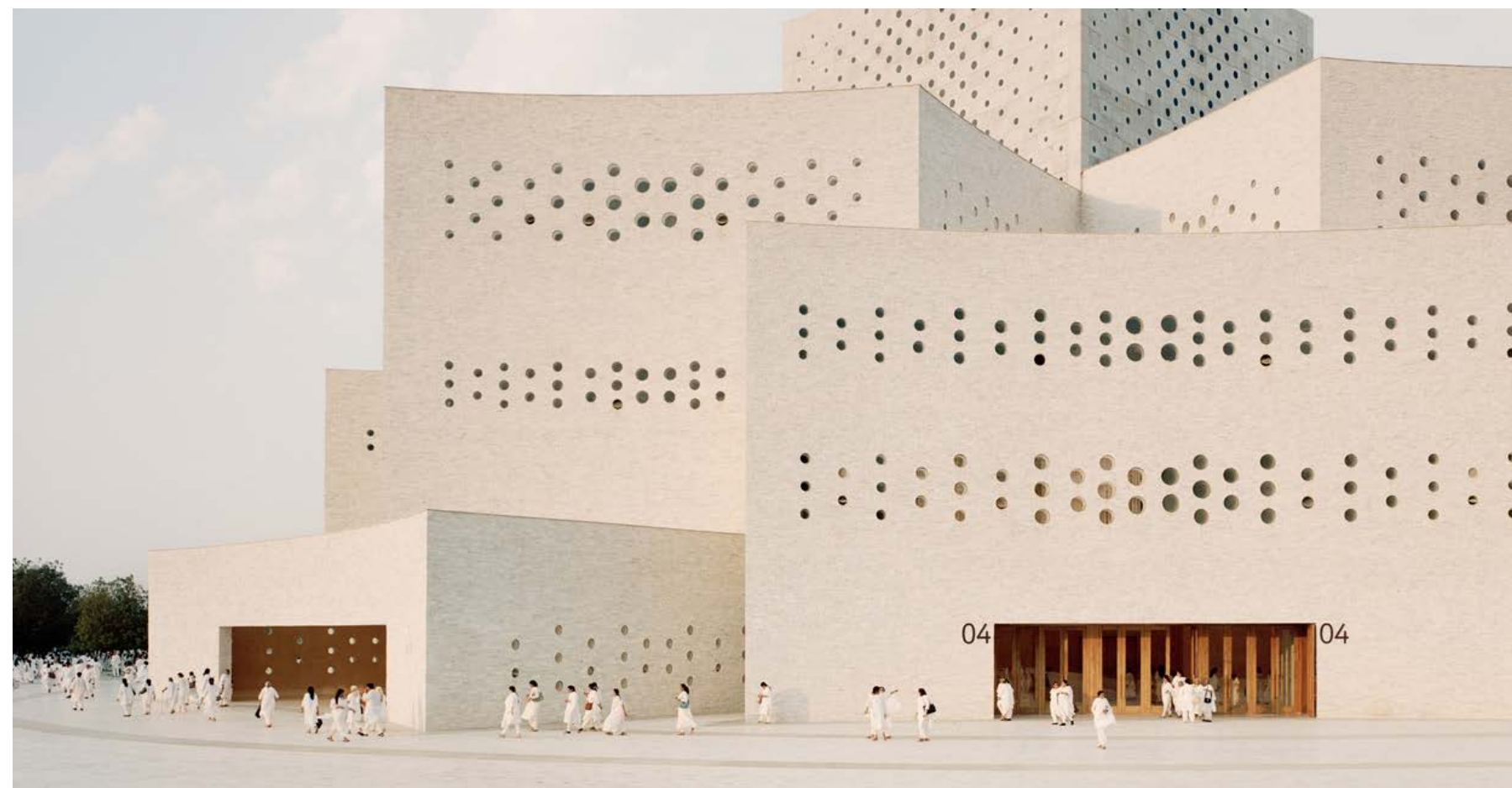
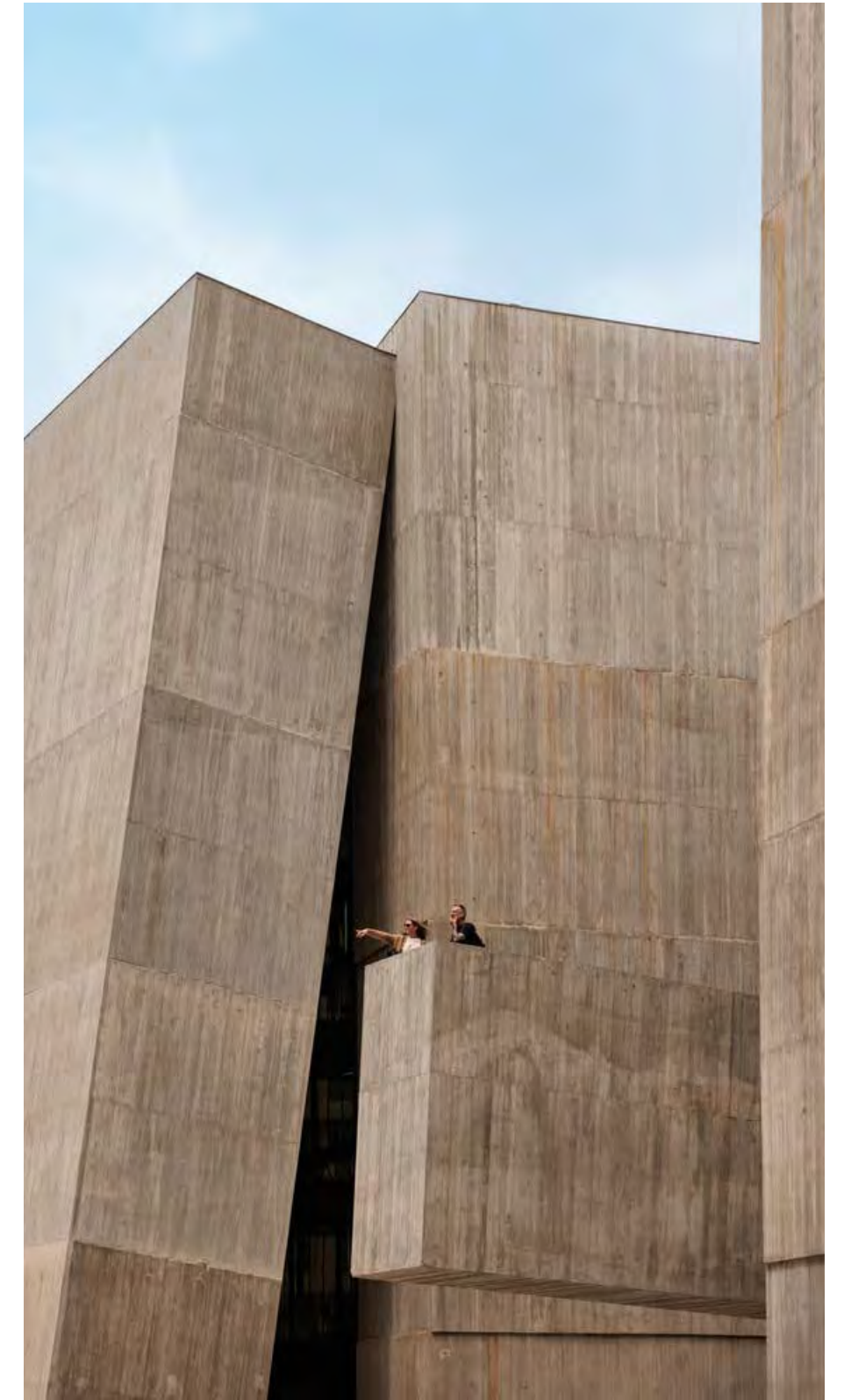
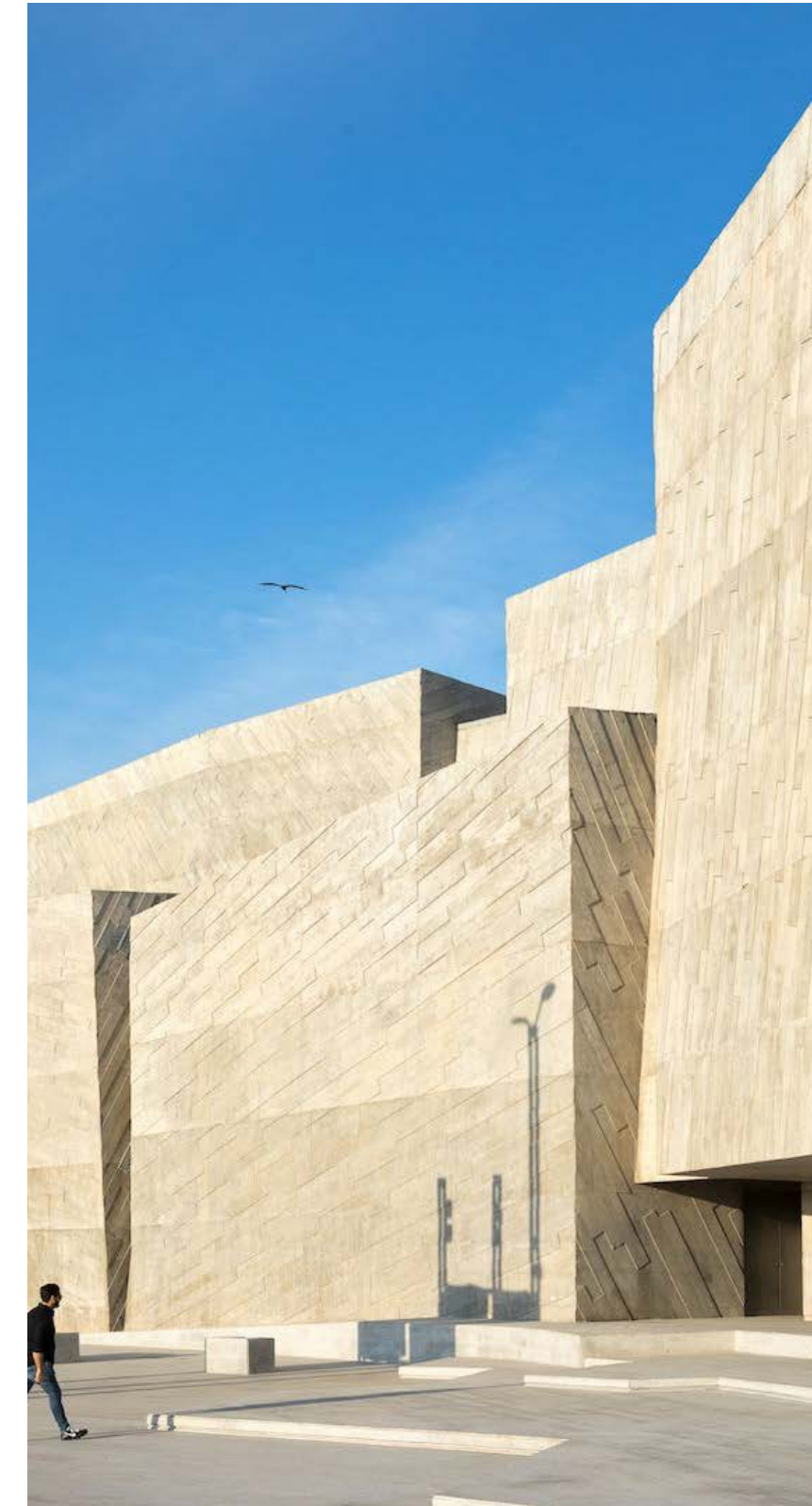


In early sketches and models, I experimented with how to transition from exterior hardness to interior calm. I tested entrances as thresholds, vertical voids as canyons of light, and zoning strategies that follow emotional rhythm rather than just function.

This process allowed me to begin sculpting the Lighthouse—not as a typical building, but as a carved retreat. A rock that holds light, time, presence, and care.



I studied architectural precedents that explore mass, light, material, and sensory presence—projects where form is shaped by light, texture, and time. From sacred spaces to contemporary monoliths, these works helped define my architectural language. They showed me how light can choreograph emotion, how stillness can be spatially designed, and how surfaces can speak in silence. These references became part of my internal vocabulary, helping me imagine a building carved from experience rather than constructed from function.





## Reuse Approach

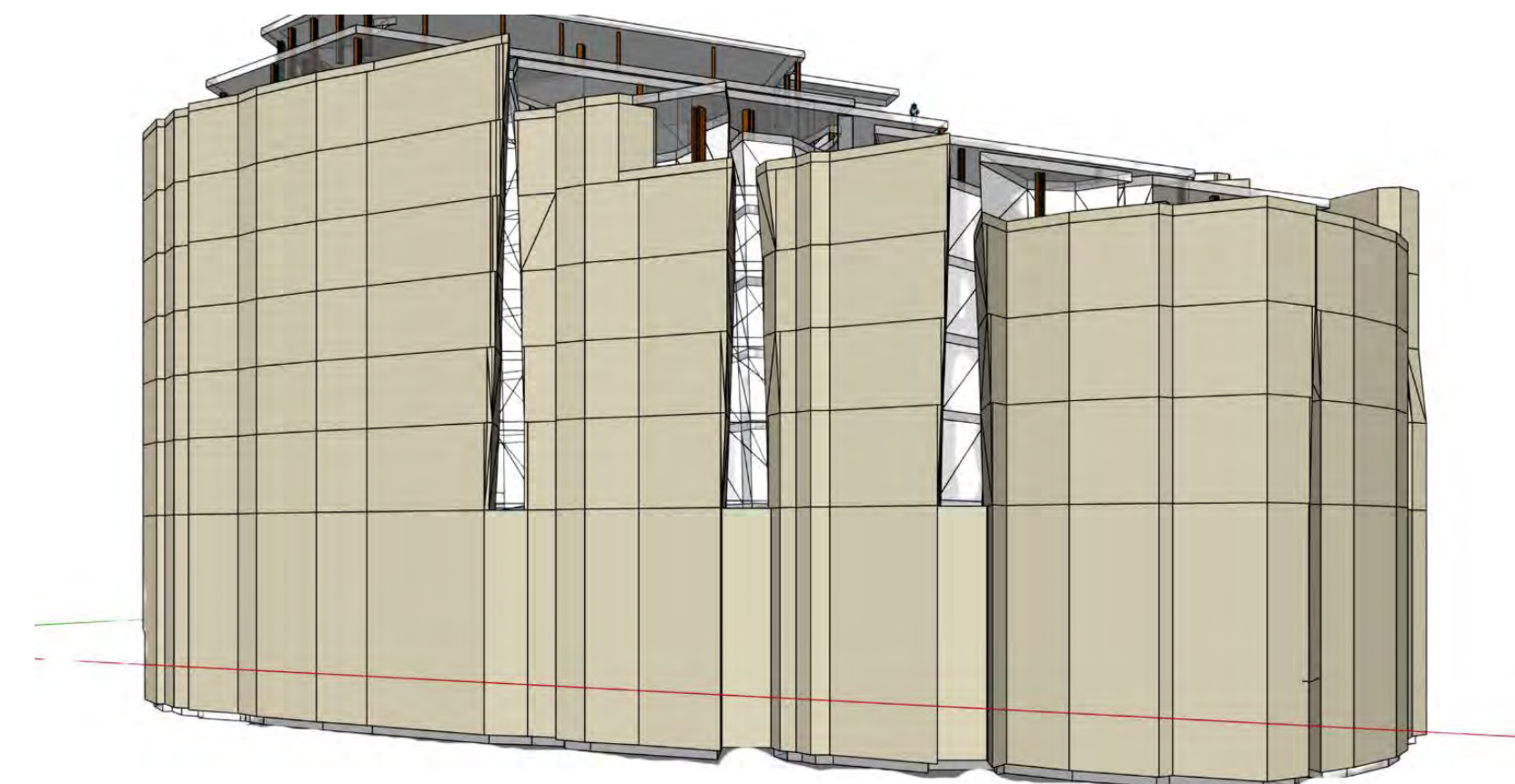
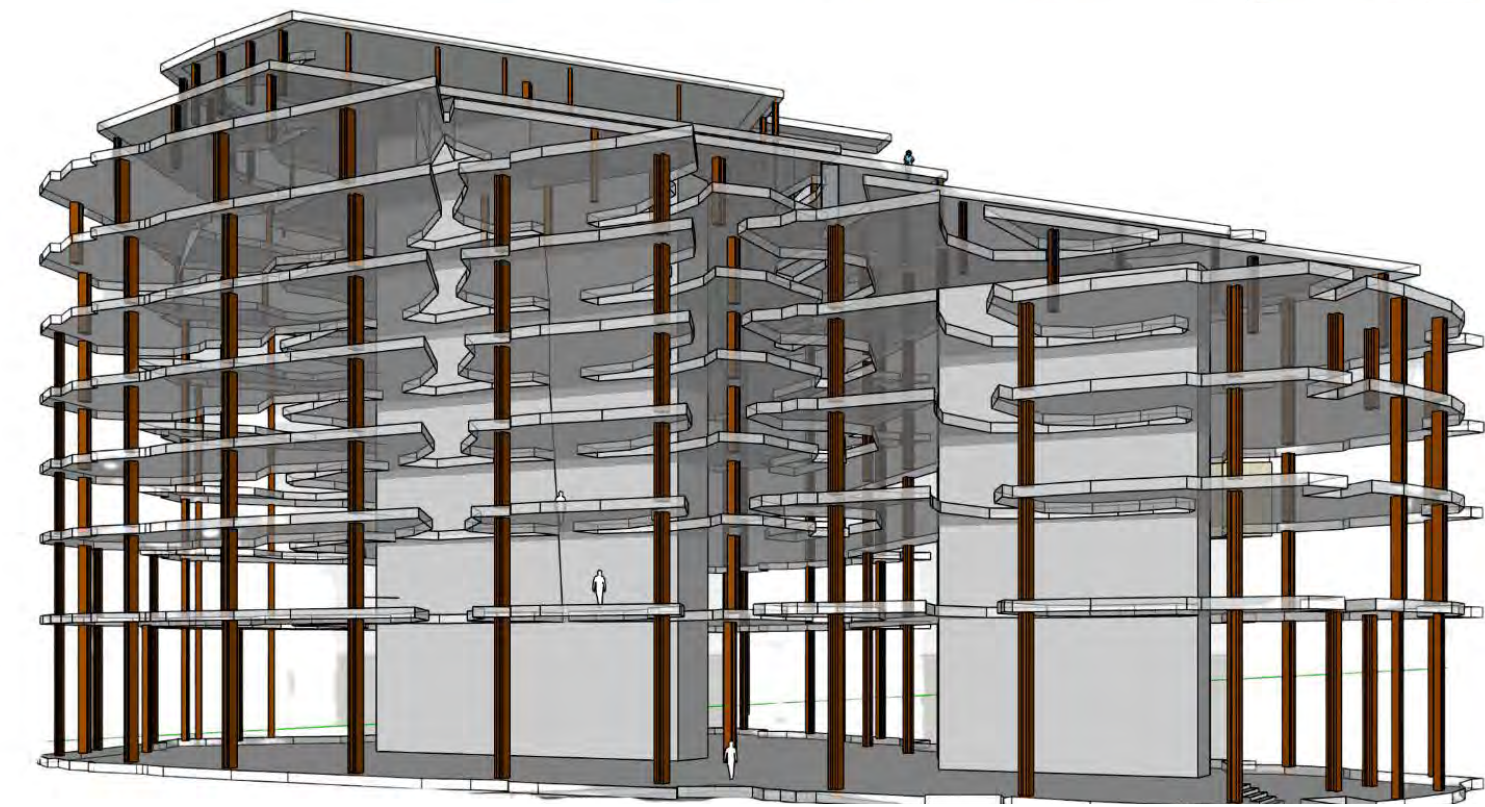
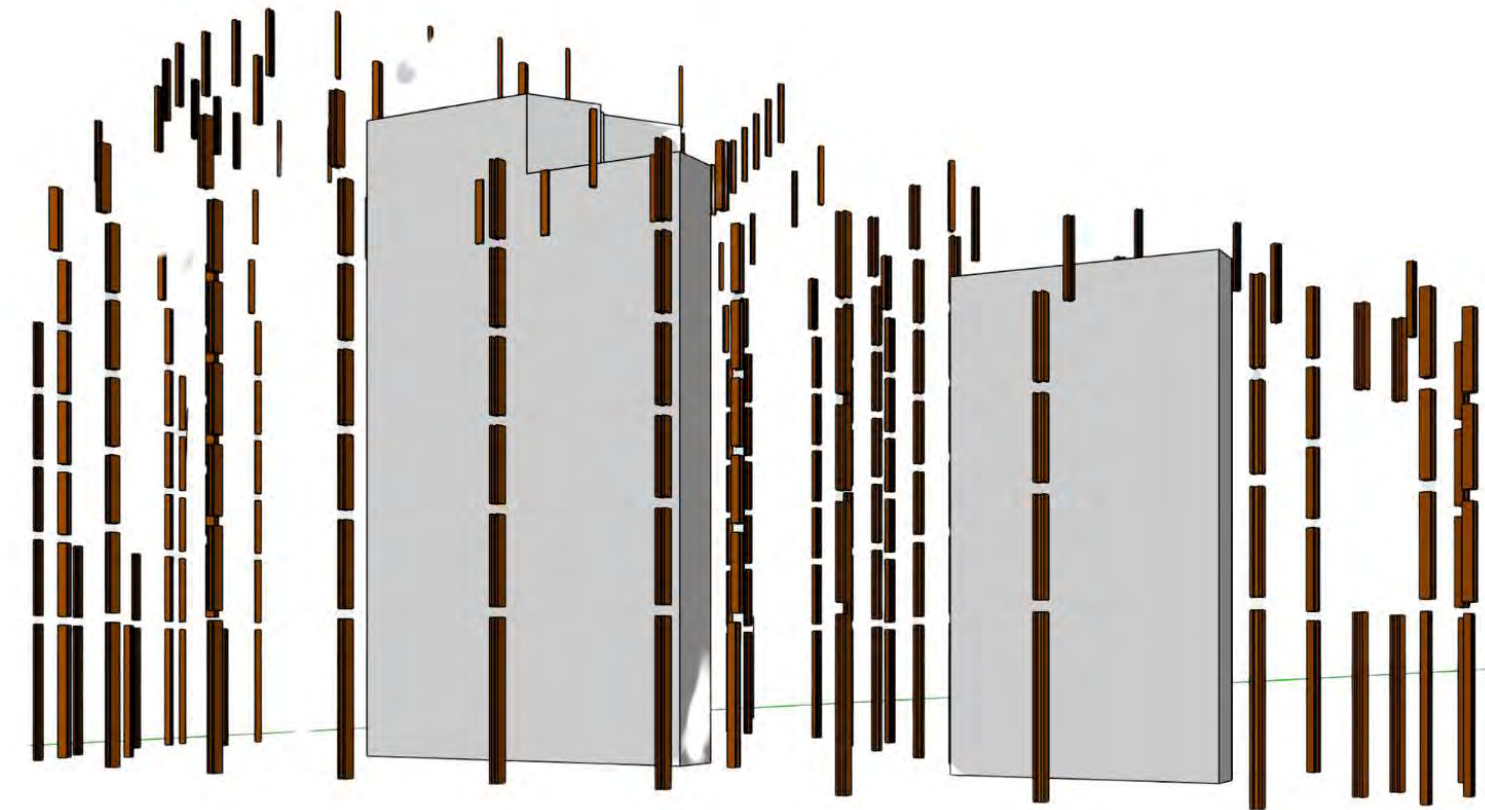
With the rock as my central metaphor, I began exploring the reuse strategy for the 15 Westferry Circus building—studying its structure and architecture. The goal was to retain the structural core while reimagining everything around it, treating the existing frame as a skeleton within a newly carved form.

I removed all original facades, exposing the bare structural system. The new envelope—a layered construction of concrete, void, and internal lining—was designed to evoke the texture and presence of a monolith, while allowing light and air to enter through cuts and slits that behave like erosions in a rock.

Internally, the reused structure becomes a hidden framework within new, layered walls. These walls carry the new architectural language: heavy, textured outer shells and smoother, more intimate interiors. The preserved grid allowed for architectural freedom while keeping the core of the building intact. It became not a constraint, but a quiet, load-bearing partner in redefining what the building could be.

I worked through 3D models and physical studies to test how light would move through these openings, and how interior zones could shift in character—from heavy and protective to open and expansive. The building's mass was not added to, but subtracted from—creating voids that act as spatial reliefs and emotional pauses, bringing light deep into the interior.

The result is a structure that no longer behaves like a conventional office block. Instead, it becomes a series of spatial experiences shaped by light, texture, and rhythm—like moving through a rock formation, where each space holds its own atmosphere.



## Material Strategy

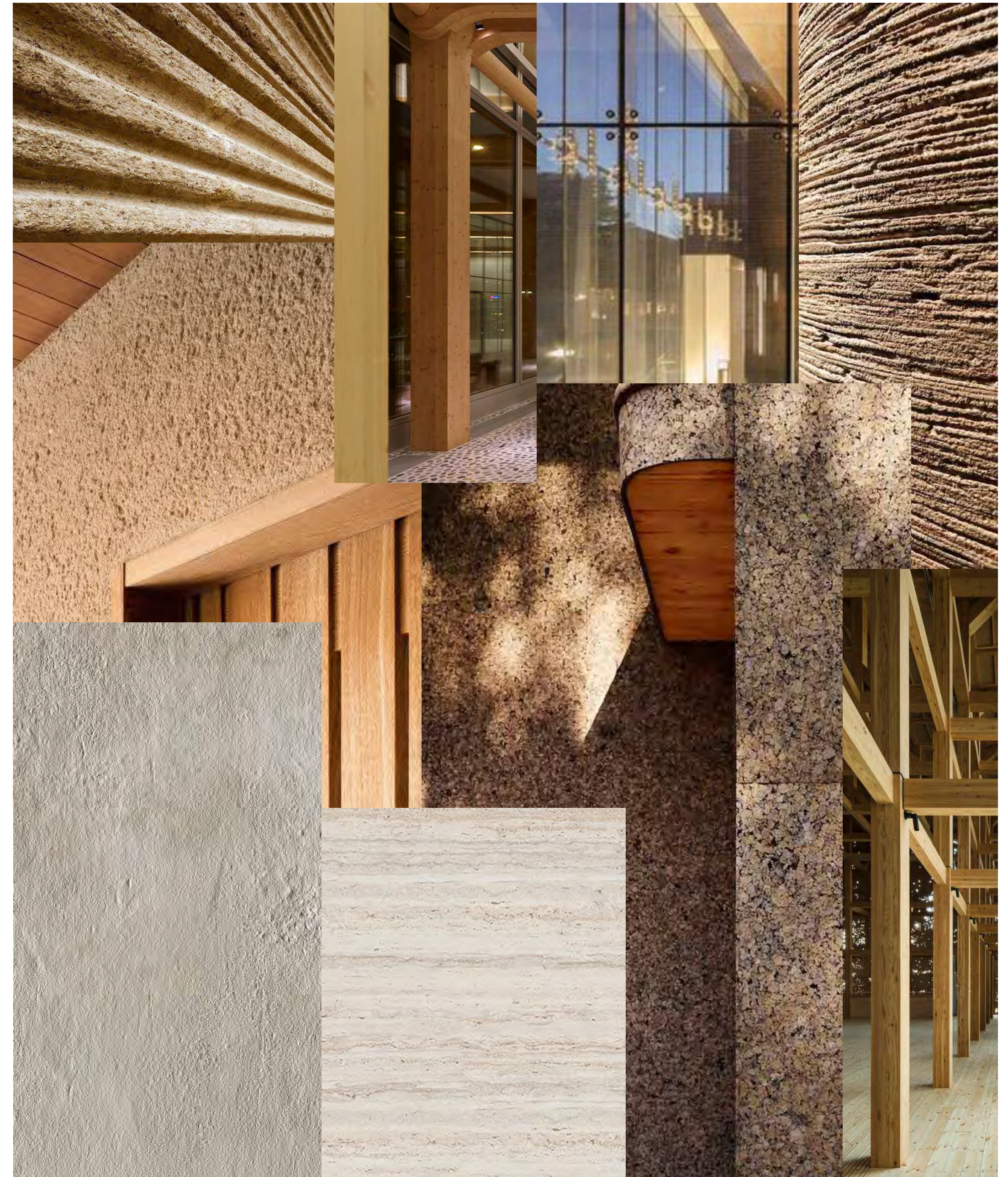
Materiality in Lighthouse is central to creating the shift from corporate sterility to emotional presence. The material palette was selected not only for its aesthetic and tactile qualities but for its ability to support the spatial rhythm—grounded, protective, and gradually opening toward lightness and connection.

The outer shell is envisioned in **Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC)**, allowing for intricate textural articulation while remaining structurally efficient in the context of adaptive reuse. Its surface evokes the mass and grain of carved rock—deliberately heavy, opaque, and coarse. This roughness resists the sleek, reflective façades of Canary Wharf and instead offers a quieter, more geological character. The choice draws inspiration from the atmospheric weight of structures like Zumthor's Therme Vals, where stone becomes both envelope and emotion—but reinterpreted here through contemporary material innovation.

Internally, a second layer of smoother, warmer materials softens the transition. **Stone, timber, cork** and **glass** are introduced in careful balance—each supporting a different spatial quality. Timber wraps around columns and thresholds, offering a sense of intimacy and tactility. Stone floors absorb light and contribute to a cave-like calm. Glass becomes a mediator between enclosure and openness—used both for partitions and, on the upper levels, as a primary façade element.

At the top of the building, where the architecture opens fully to the sky, the material expression becomes lighter and more transparent. The upper floors are framed in structural glass, in direct contrast to the carved opacity below. Here, light is no longer filtered—it floods the space. This shift in material weight supports the emotional gradient of the building: from solitude and reflection to openness and celebration.

All materials were selected with environmental and sensory responsibility in mind. Nothing is decorative for its own sake; everything serves a spatial, tactile, and emotional purpose. The aim was to offer a sensorial experience that feels both ancient and contemporary—timeless, quiet, and deeply human.



## Spatial Logic

The spatial organisation of Lighthouse is guided not by function alone, but by mood, rhythm, and light. The building unfolds as a vertical journey—moving from introspection and grounding at the base, toward openness, interaction, and lightness at the top. This progression is shaped by emotional states rather than conventional zoning, aligning with the natural arc of retreat, restoration, and return.

At the ground level, visitors arrive into a double-height (7700mm) public gallery. This is the slowest, most monumental space—designed for stillness, observation, and absorption, preparation for the next phases. Light enters through vertical voids carved into the mass, creating an atmosphere of quiet pause and symbolic transition from city to sanctuary.

The first floor continues this tempo with quieter, smaller-scale spaces for reflection, conversation, and stillness. These are areas to think, listen, or simply rest—spaces that support inner life.

Floors 2 to 4 support restoration and creativity. Artist residencies and studios are organised by orientation: the north side offers consistent daylight and direct courtyard access for the studios; the south side provides more privacy and warmth for residential units. The north part is supported by a separate stair and lift core that allows fluid access without disturbing the building's contemplative rhythm.

Floors 5 to 7 shift the mood again—here, the architecture opens out. A restaurant, live music space, and observatory invite social interaction, celebration, and shared experience. Each terrace hosts a rooftop garden, with external stairs linking the levels to encourage movement, surprise, and outdoor gathering.

To support this emotional and spatial rhythm, the existing floor plates were strategically cut and reconfigured—not simply to open space, but to carve out a rock-like interior. These voids run vertically through the building, breaking the rigid logic of stacked office floors and introducing a spatial flow that mirrors erosion or excavation. The cuts allow light to reach deep into the core, creating visual continuity and layered depth. Rather than stacking disconnected rooms, the building now unfolds as a connected, sculpted mass—where each floor plate participates in the formation of voids, light wells, and transitions. This carved interior not only brings light to the base but also evokes a sense of being inside a geological formation—massive, shaped by time, and full of atmosphere.

This vertical zoning reflects a rhythm of experience—moving from deep inward presence to collective joy. It is not a hierarchy of importance, but a choreography of emotional states. Each floor is designed to hold a different kind of presence and to transition gently from one to the next.

The circulation system supports this logic: public access flows upward through light-filled voids and stairways, while service routes remain discreet and peripheral. The central void acts as an anchor, guiding light and people through the heart of the building—both spatially and emotionally.

The main entrance remains, while three more secondary entries are added from the south side walkthrough, as well as an access point to the courtyard from the north side to serve the studio part of the building.

## Light Strategy

Light is the central narrative and shaping force of the Lighthouse. It guides the architecture not only in a visual or environmental sense, but as a cultural and emotional medium. It defines spatial rhythm, atmosphere, and psychological presence. Rather than functioning merely as utility, light in this project becomes a tool of care, perception, and transformation—enhancing natural rhythms and deepening the connection to time and place.

Several vertical voids pierce through the building from roof to ground, cutting through the floor plates to bring light deep into the structure. These continuous shafts act as vertical light columns—beams that travel uninterrupted from the sky to the gallery below. They break the rigidity of typical floor sequencing and create visual and spatial continuity across levels, transforming light into a structural and emotional element of navigation.

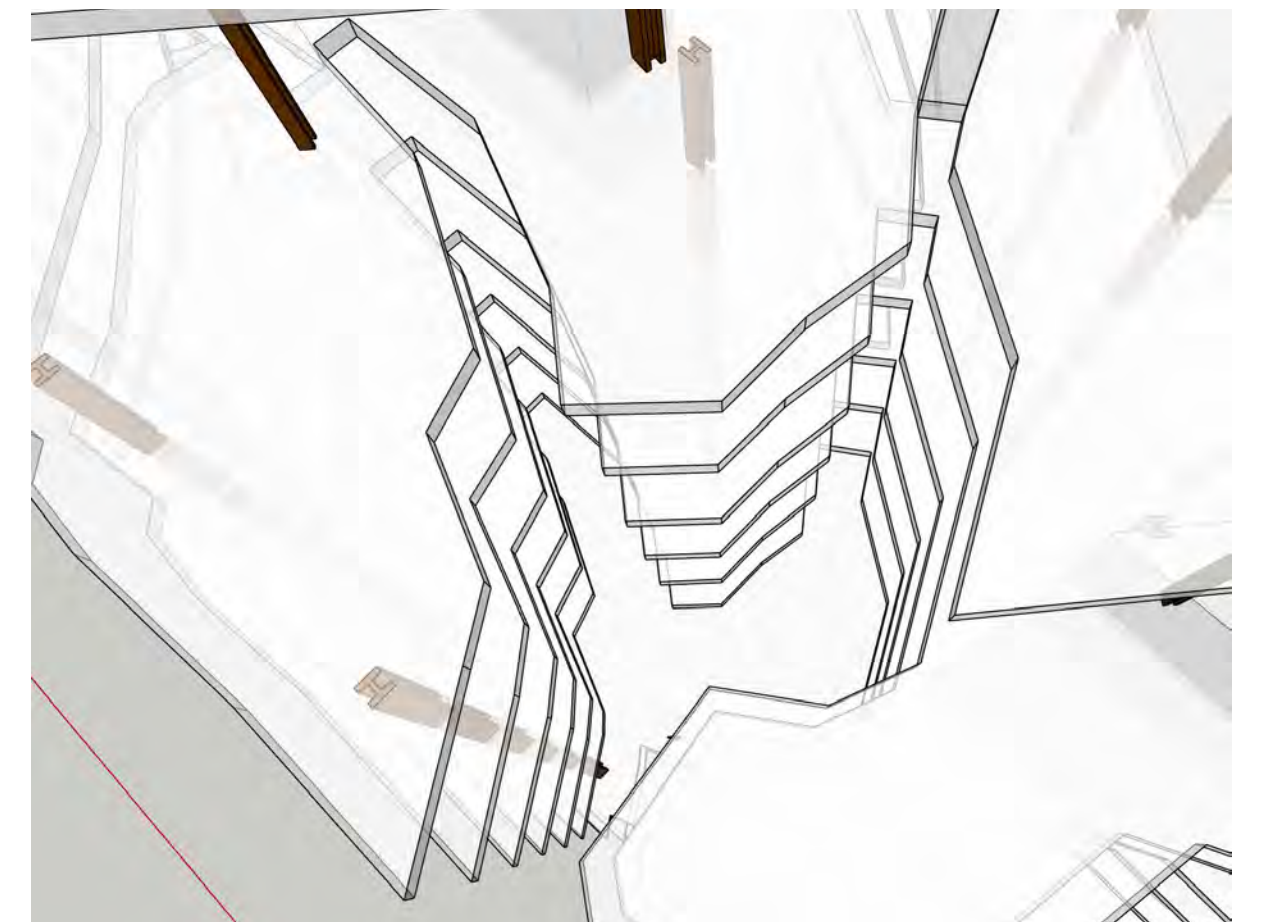
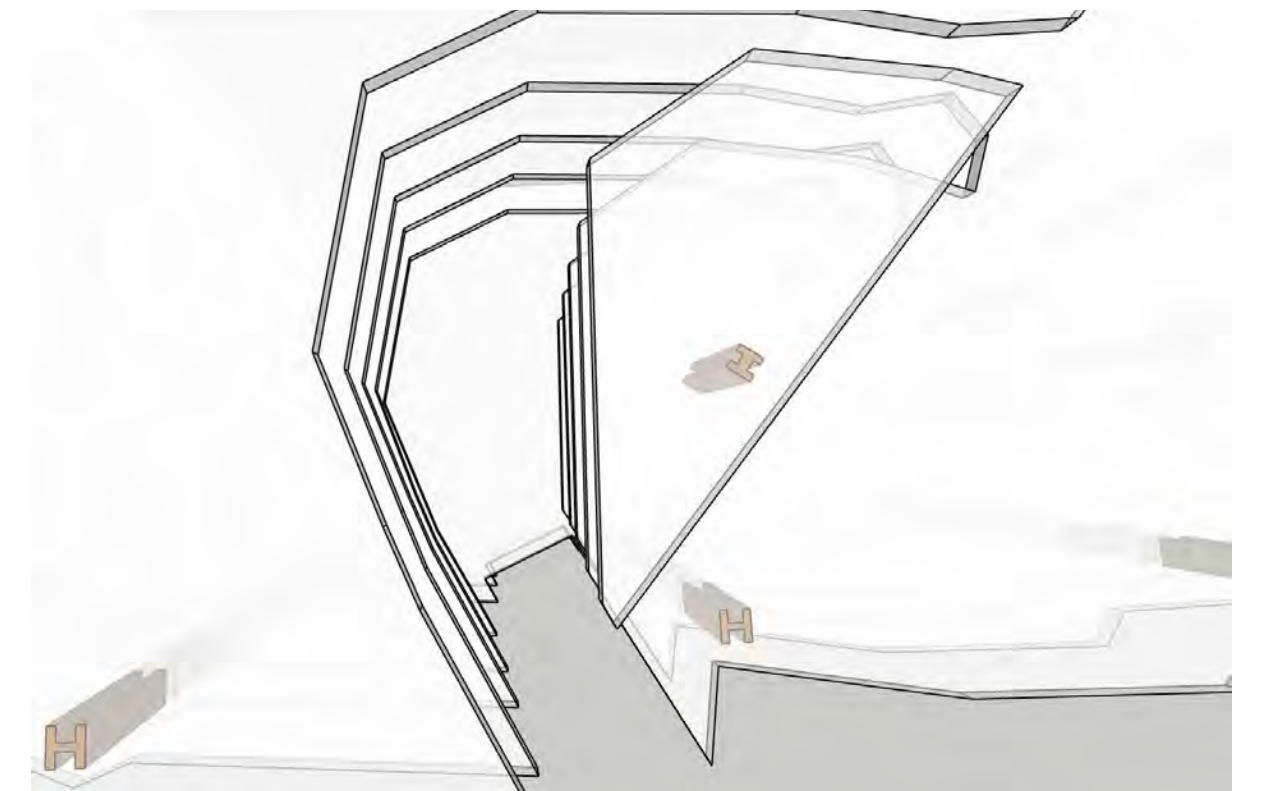
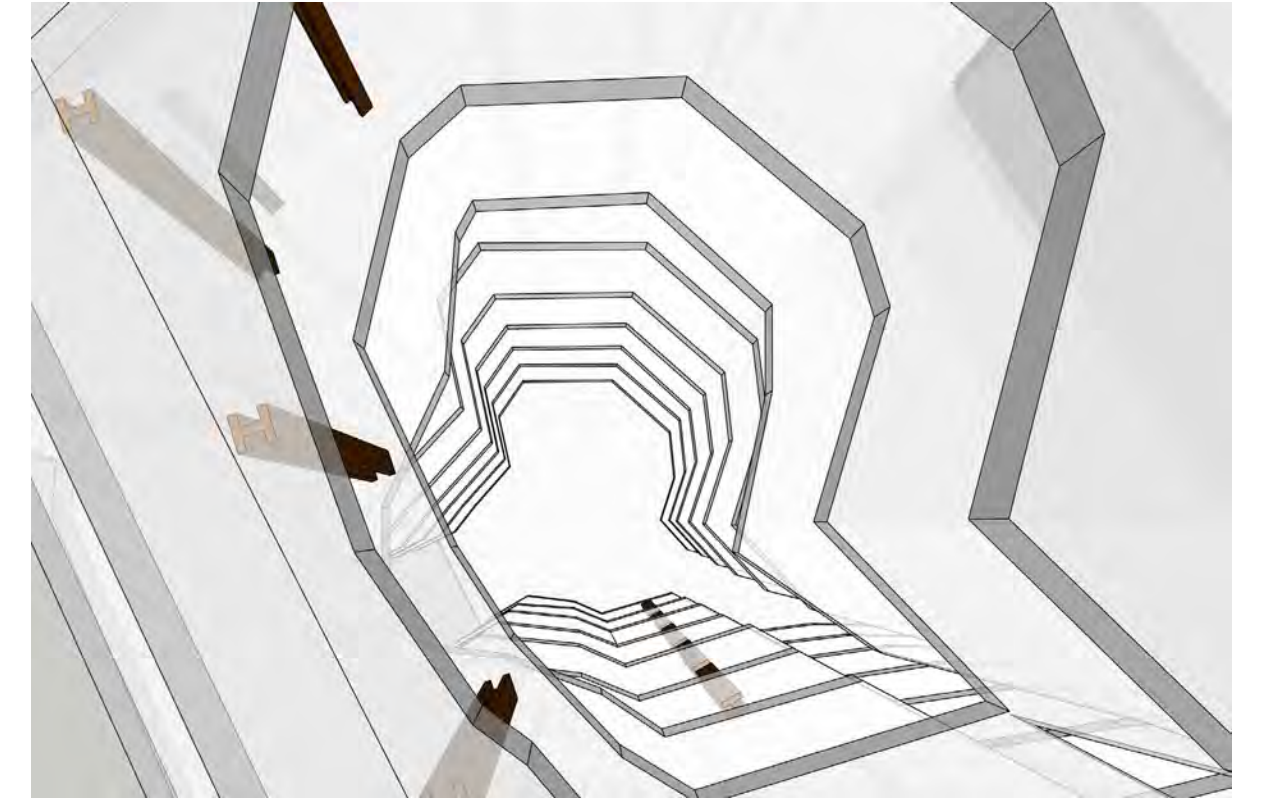
The journey of light is vertical. On the lower levels, it enters through deep voids carved into the thick outer envelope—filtered, soft, and directional. These openings, like eroded fissures in stone, introduce light gradually, grounding the visitor in stillness and introspection. This quiet light slows the pace, supports contemplation, and symbolises a passage from the external world to an interior sanctuary. Its pattern evokes the dappled rhythm of light filtering through tree branches.

As the building rises, the character of light changes. Floors 2 to 6—dedicated to restoration and creativity—receive carefully modulated daylight. Studios on the north benefit from diffuse, consistent illumination through slender vertical cuts; the residences to the south are warmed by sunlight entering through narrow horizontal windows, which frame river views and create a strong visual connection to the landscape. Glass walls on the southern terraces enhance this openness, offering a sense of standing atop the rock.

The top floor (7) is fully glazed—open to the sky and suffused with natural light. Here, transparency supports celebration, connection, and freedom. This level marks a release from the heavy grounding mass below. Daylight becomes expansive, bringing in the weather, the seasons, and the changing sky.

Artificial light is minimal and responsive. Subtly integrated systems adjust according to use and human presence, avoiding over-illumination. Where natural light fades, warm, discreet artificial light supports rest, reflection, and interaction—reinforcing daily rhythms without overwhelming the space.

This light strategy—treating light as both architectural material and emotional presence—choreographs the building's spatial journey. It shapes transitions, carries meaning, and becomes a gentle guide from shadow to openness, from stillness to sky.



# Floor Plans



- 1 Art Gallery
- 2 Auction / Lecture Hall
- 3 Café
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Wardrobe
- 6 Staff Room

Upper Floor Cut-Out

Ground Floor

# Floor Plans



- 1 Yoga and Meditation Studio
- 2 Daydream Caves
- 3 Screening Theatre
- 4 Café
- 5 Piano Music Area
- 6 Library
- 7 Sound Therapy Cave
- 8 Tea Ceremony Cave
- 9 Fireplace Cave

 Upper Floor Cut-Out

 Current Floor Cut-Out

 **First Floor**

# Floor Plans



- 1 Art Studios
- 2 Hotel / Residency
- 3 Staff Room

Current Floor Cut-Out



Second Floor

# Floor Plans



- 1 Art Studios
- 2 Hotel / Residency
- 3 Staff Room

 Current Floor Cut-Out  Third Floor

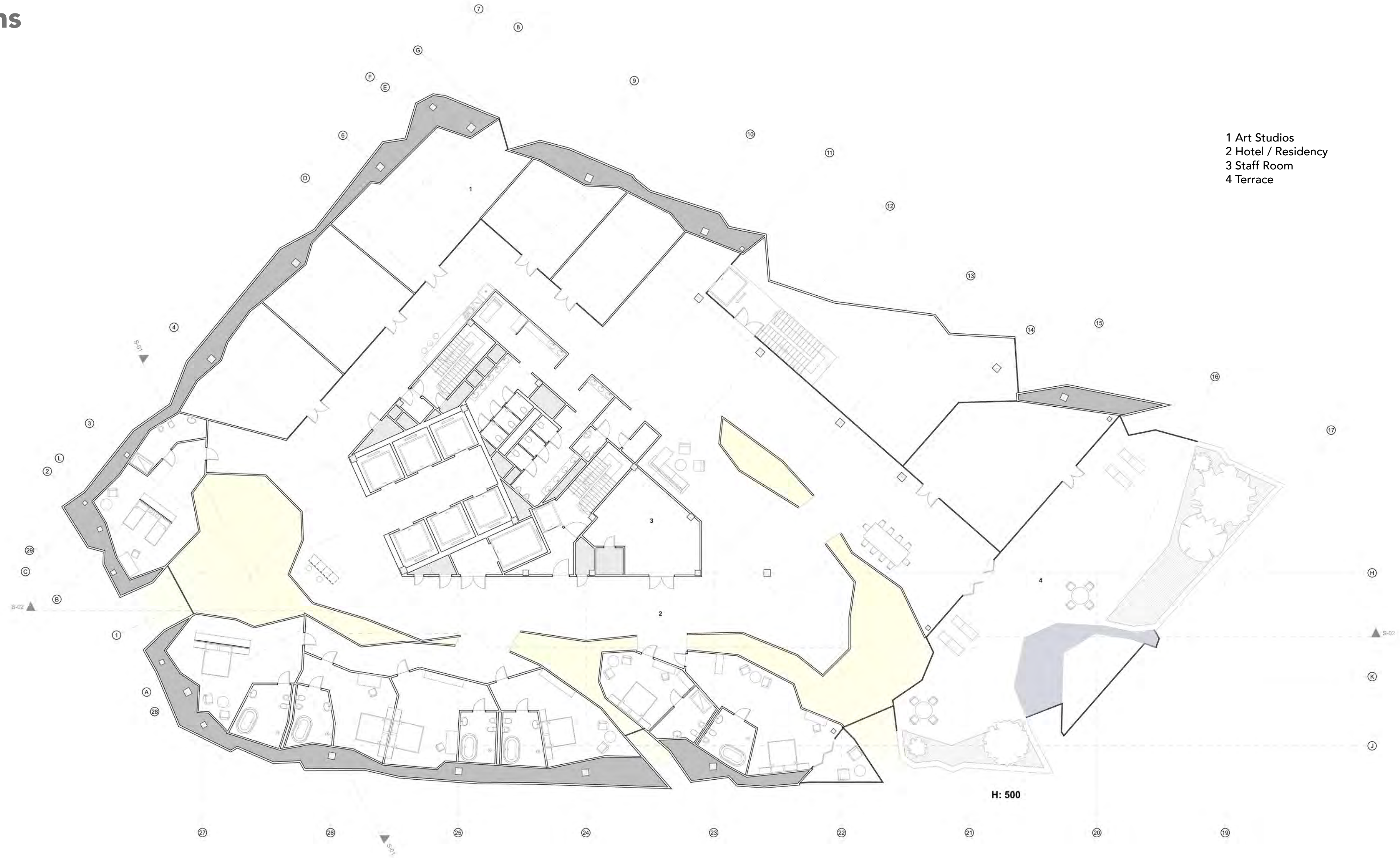
# Floor Plans



1 Art Studios  
2 Hotel / Residency  
3 Staff Room

Current Floor Cut-Out      Forth Floor

# Floor Plans



- 1 Art Studios
- 2 Hotel / Residency
- 3 Staff Room
- 4 Terrace

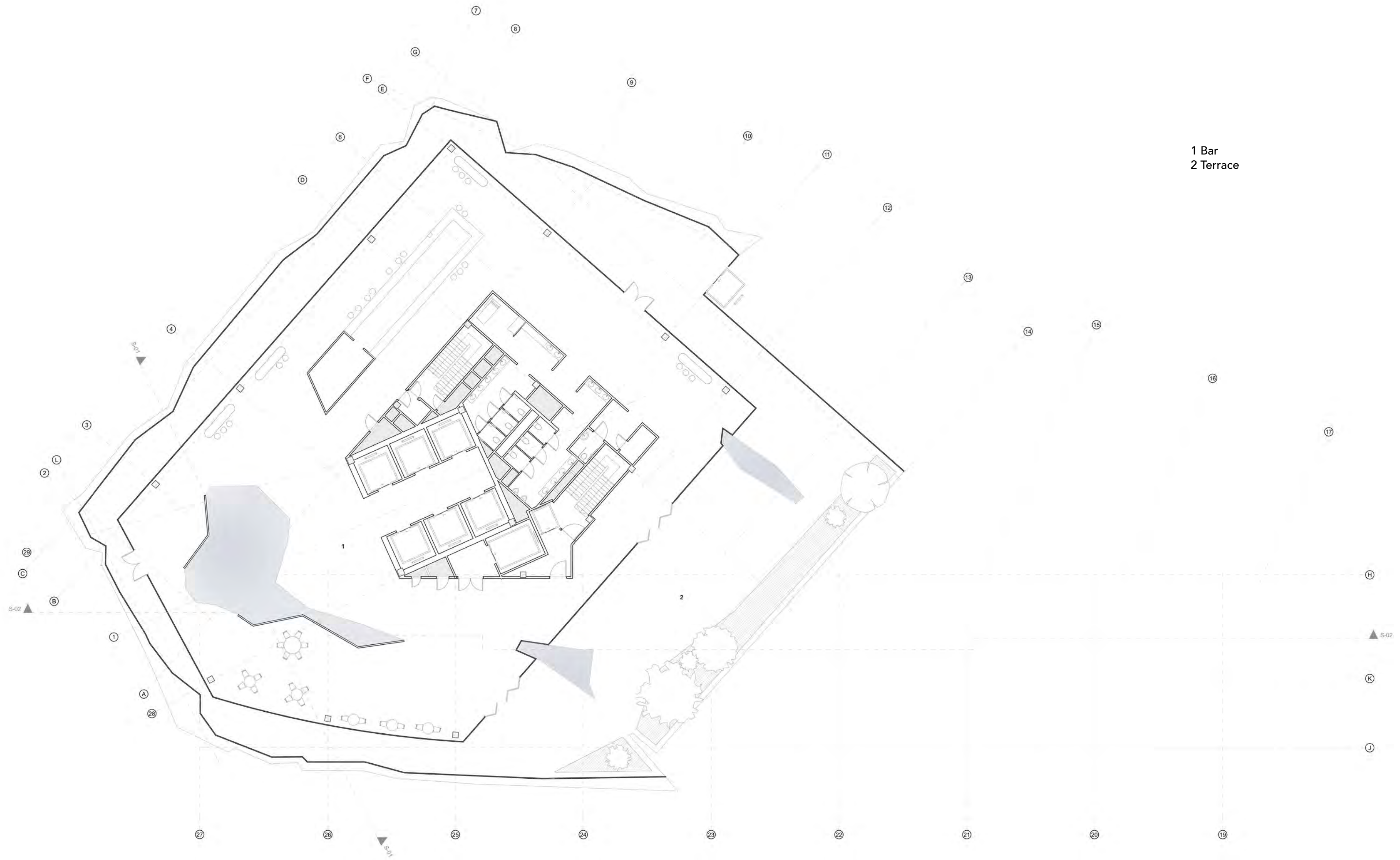
Legend:

-  Current Floor Cut-Out
-  Glass Floor
-  Fifth Floor

# Floor Plans



# Floor Plans



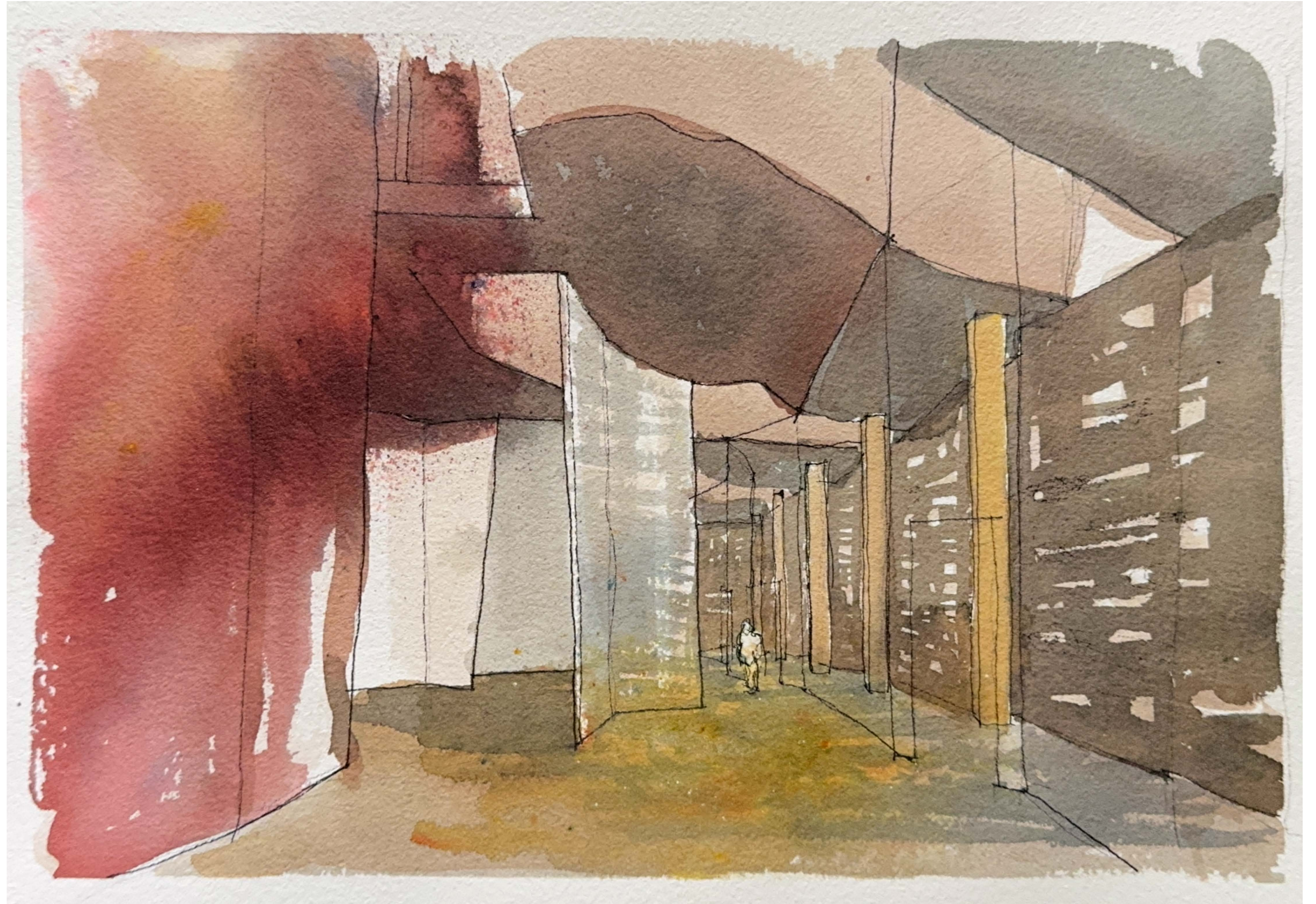
1 Bar  
2 Terrace

 Glass Floor

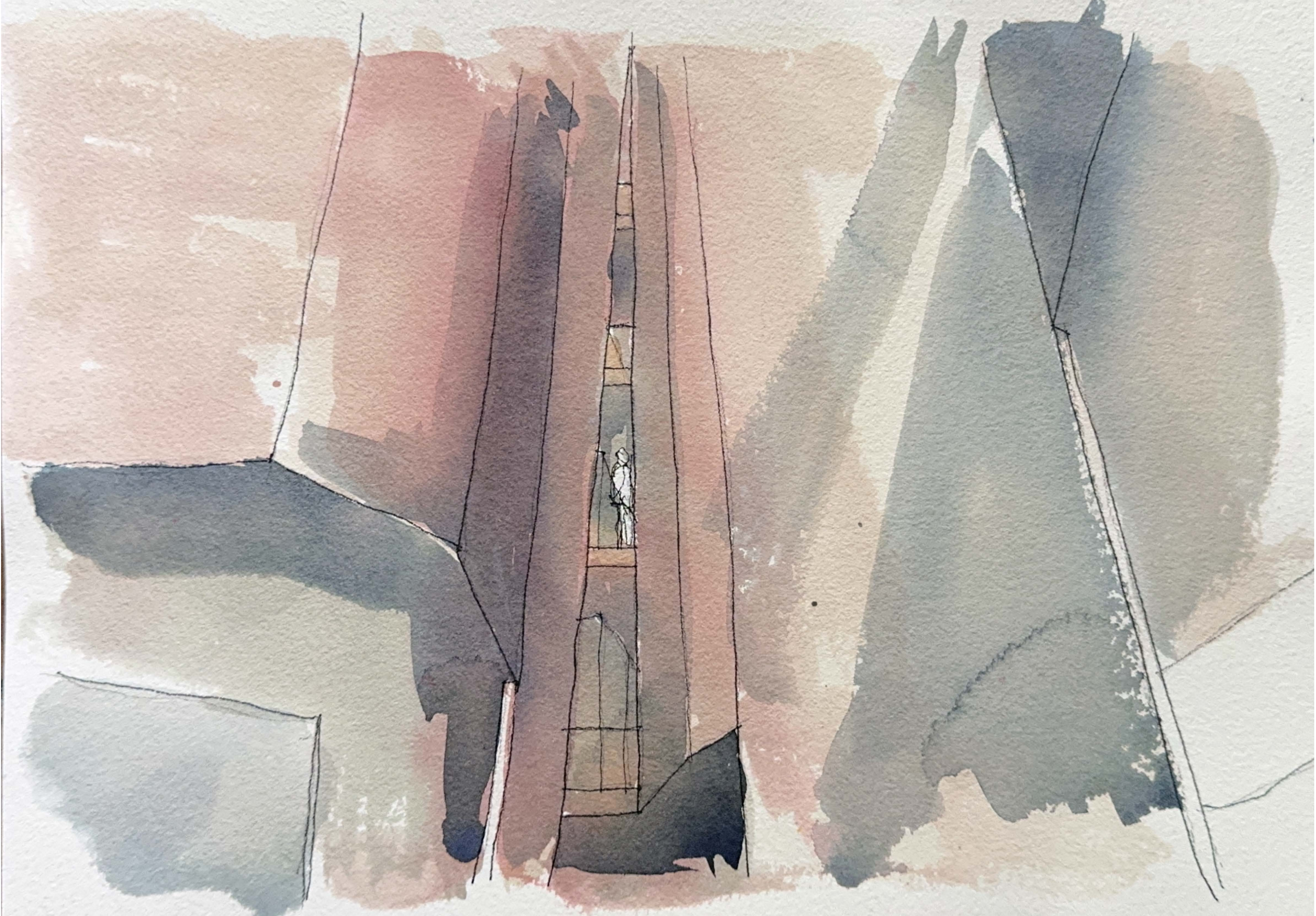
 Seventh Floor

## Interior Views Watercolour Studies

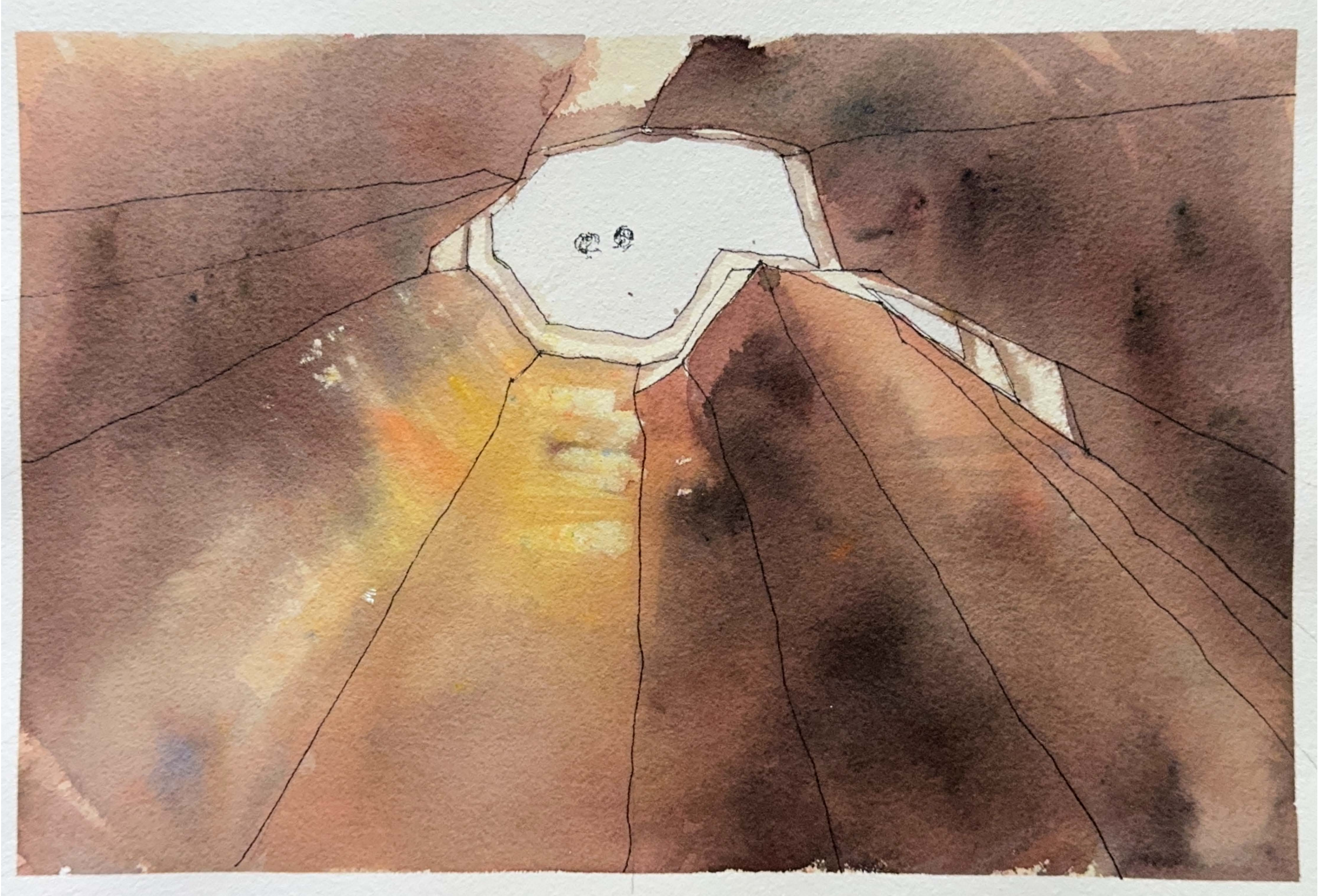
These early spatial studies were created using powdered watercolour to explore atmosphere, colour, and the material behaviour of light. Each drawing focuses on the emotional tone of the interior—testing how carved surfaces, textured enclosures, and filtered light contribute to the overall experience of the Lighthouse. By working with loose, layered washes, the studies capture qualities of softness, warmth, and geological grounding—offering a sensory impression of what the space might feel like, rather than prescribing it precisely. They were instrumental in shaping the project’s material palette and spatial rhythm.



**Interior Views**  
**Watercolour Studies**



**Interior Views**  
**Watercolour Studies**

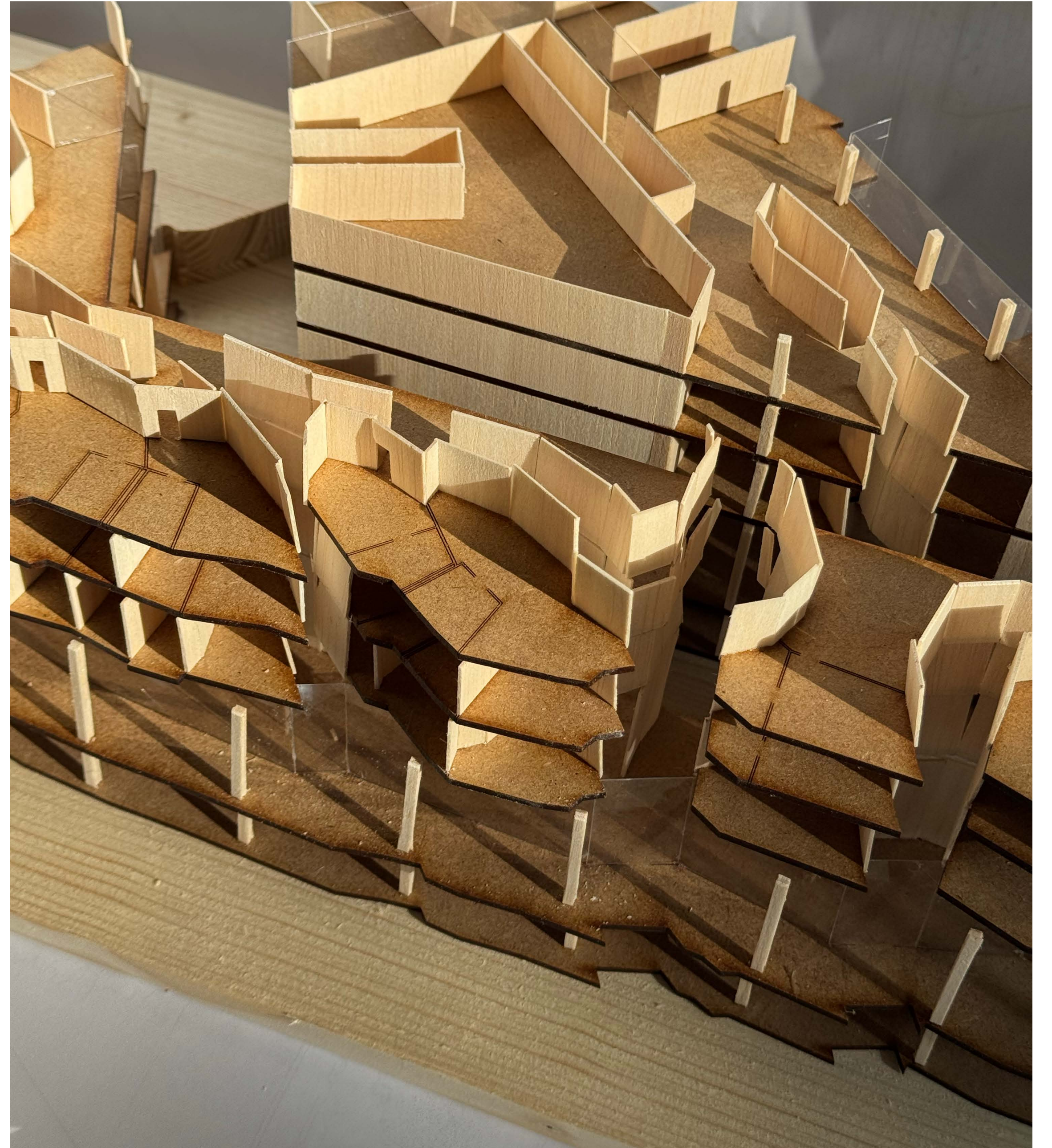


## Physical Model WIP

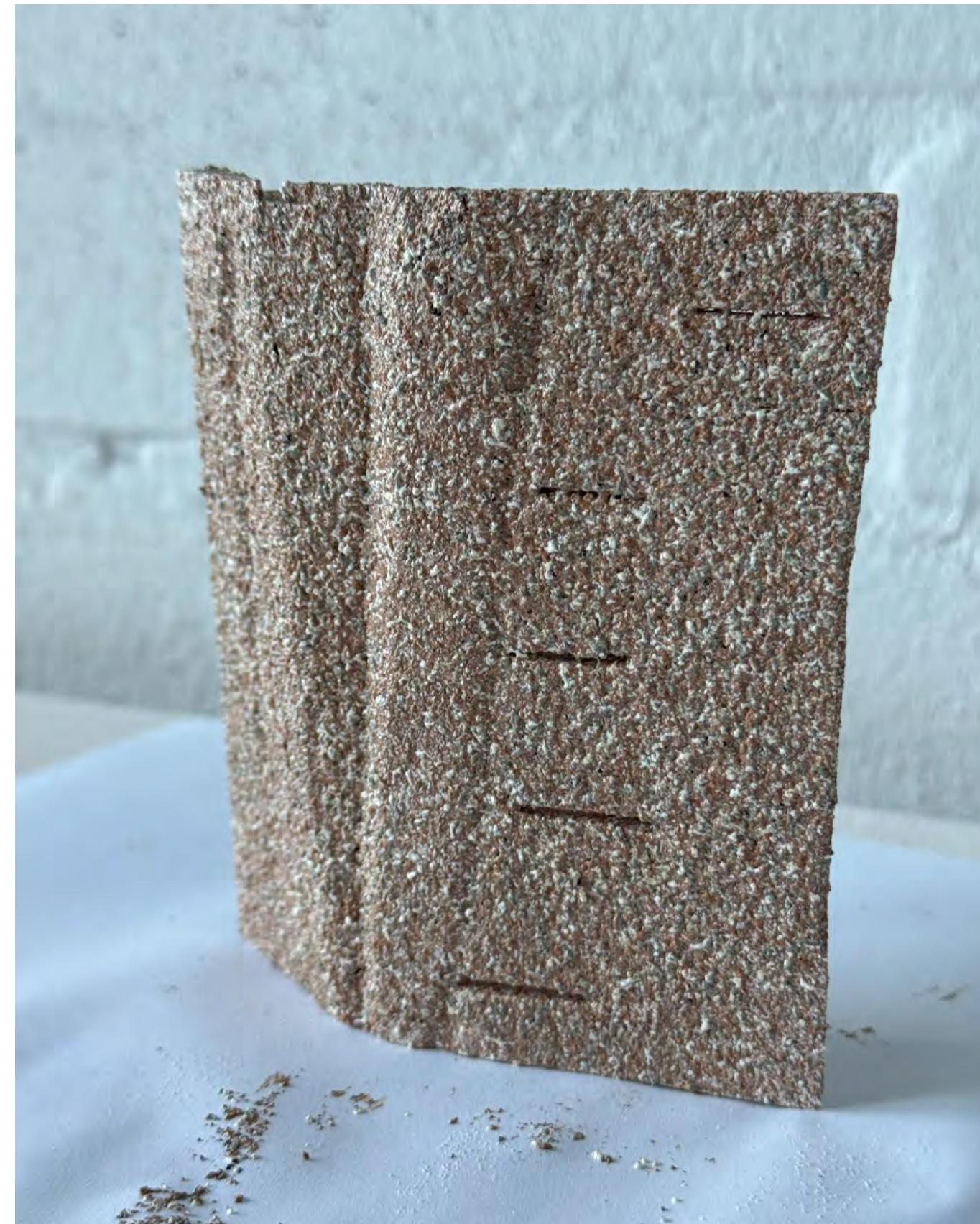
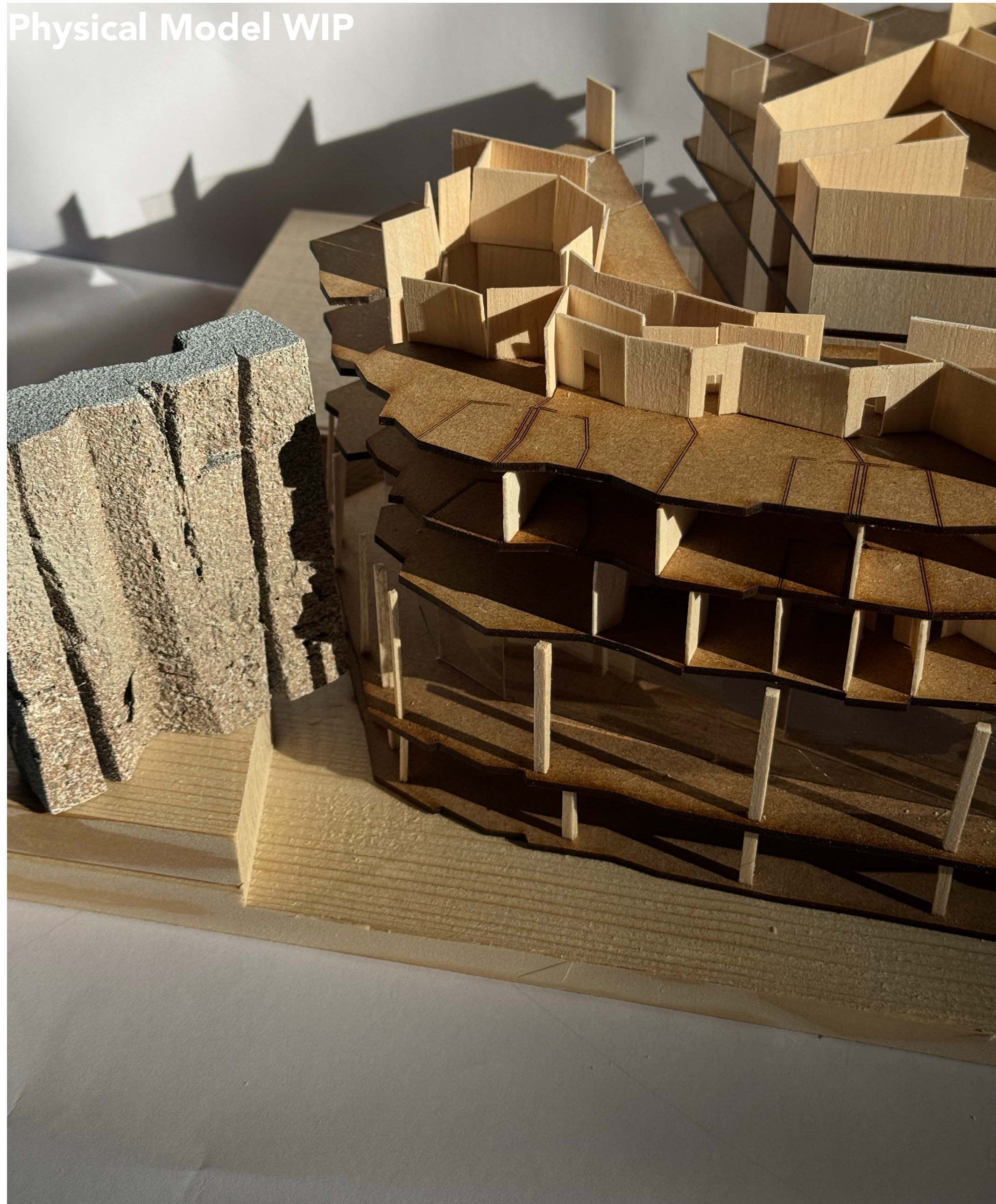


The physical model during development. Built at a 1:200 scale, it represents a sectional cut of the building in its intended final form—revealing the internal spatial organisation. I will complete it with the facades.

Physical Model WIP



Physical Model WIP

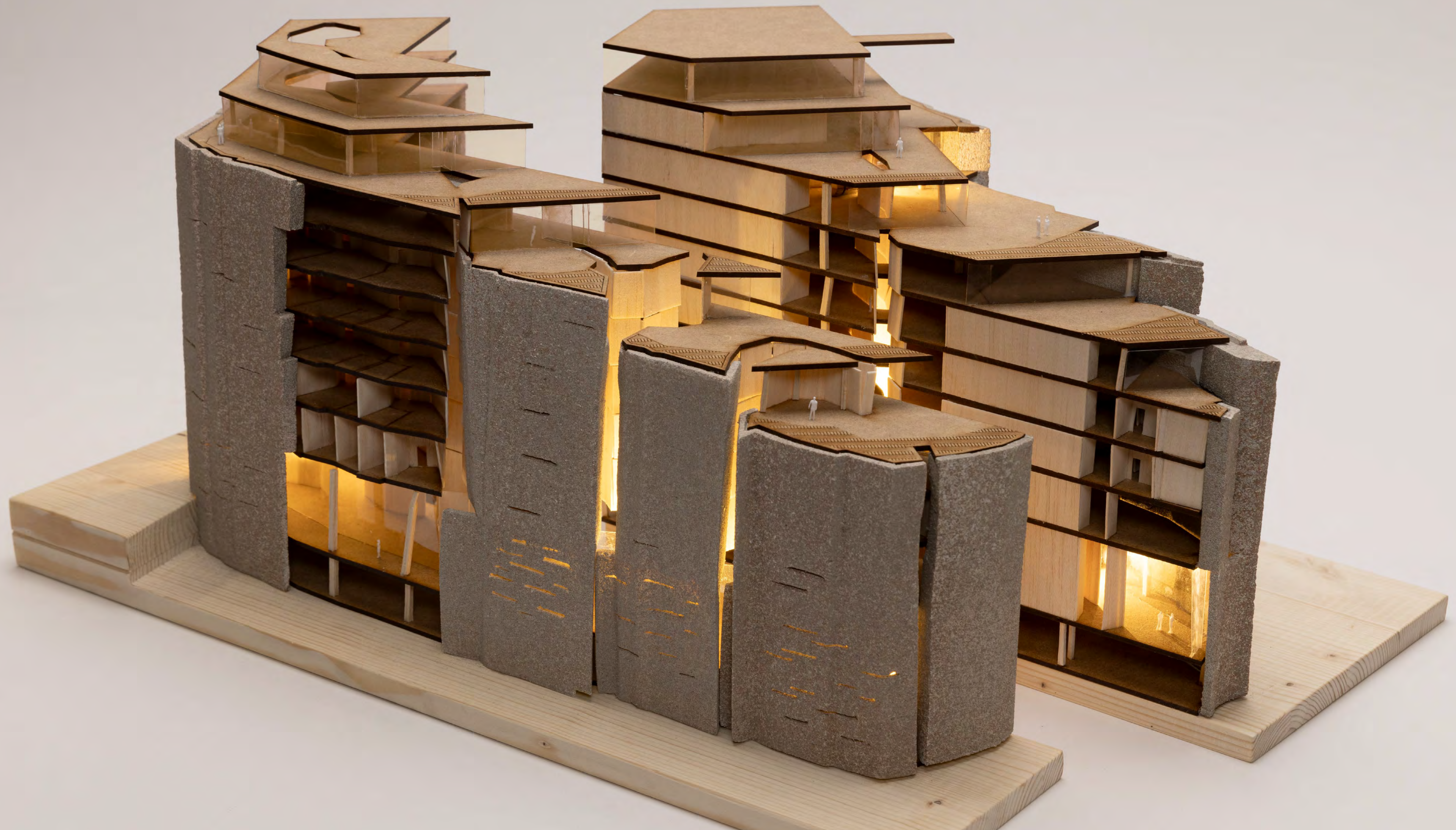


These elements are part of the final section model and explore the material expression of the outer envelope. They test texture, thickness, and the interplay of light on carved surfaces, contributing to the overall language of the rock-like façade.

# Physical Model



# Physical Model



# Physical Model



## Physical Model



Final 1:200 sectional model of the Lighthouse. Cut through the core, it reveals the reuse strategy: preserved columns, sculpted floor plates, and a triple-layered envelope. Interior lighting expresses the spatial rhythm—from grounded stillness to light-filled openness above.

## Interior Views: Graphite Drawings

These hand-drawn perspectives investigate the spatial experience of the Lighthouse from within. Rendered in graphite, the drawings focus on material depth, scale, and light behaviour across carved interior forms. Each view highlights specific spatial qualities—monumentality, verticality, enclosure, and visual porosity—emphasising how light interacts with surface texture and geometry. Together, they convey the building's architectural intention: to shift from corporate rigidity to a space of reflection, presence, and emotional resonance.

