



# Choreographing Guest Confidence

a COVID-responsive  
hospitality design  
playbook

by  DLR Group

Welcome to  
design that  
gives guests  
control of their  
travel destiny.



# dining



# lounge



# arrival



# play book



## Hello!

Over the past few months, we've taken the time to pause, listen, and reflect. In conversations with our hospitality industry clients, we hear a resounding pattern. While needs range from emotional to medical, the single largest concern facing travelers in the wake of COVID-19 is the unknown: a lack of control and inability to independently reduce perceived risk in their surroundings. In response, we must offer design solutions that build, nurture, and cultivate guest confidence. Our transformative playbook places guests firmly in control of their travel destiny, while restoring the vibrant social fabric that is the hallmark of a great hospitality experience.

Here, we explore the common spaces of a model lifestyle hotel where this game plan comes to life – and the solutions sing for not just months, but years.

*Edward J. Wilms* *Staci Patton*

Ed Wilms  
Global Hospitality Leader  
Principal

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Hospitality Leader  
Principal

It's a beautiful thing to put the experience of space into your guests' hands.



The essentials for  
a choreographed  
guest experience.

**play book**



## 1 spatial flexibility

Anticipation of the unknown is balanced by a sense of choice. The social and physical experience is controlled by guests: adaptable furnishings address the uniquely personal continuum of the desire to be social but the need to be physically distant.

# choreography essentials

## 4 protection to connection

From intimate structures that obscure, to dappled motion through translucency, a full spectrum of transparency options matches guest's varying comfort levels. The dynamic slide, pivot, and connecting movement of adaptable furnishings amplifies the contrast between veiling and revealing.



## 2 invisible service

Inspired by the Japanese concept of wholehearted care of guests – Omotenashi – a discrete, predictive “invisible service” model leverages seamless technology integration to reduce guests’ perception of transfer exposure. High-traffic self-service and social hotspots are diffused and separated, creating hidden destinations where guests feel a connected buzz, but with more personal space.

## 3 cleanliness in style

A nature-driven sense of wellbeing emanates. From the entry sequence on, a feeling of warmth and care builds. Lush plants incorporated architecturally, soft lighting, and the soothing sounds of water offset the necessary increase in easily sanitizable hard surfaces.





# from day to night

## defining self through surroundings

Fueled by personalization, the pulse of activity unfolds as guests expand and contract spaces – within the same footprint. From morning to night, the space and the experience within it continually transforms.

### 1 ARRIVAL: MOBILE CHECK-IN AND HAND WASH STATION

*Short-term: renovate: YES*

*Long-term: build new: YES*

### 2 SPATIAL FLEXIBILITY: ADAPTABLE WALLS

*Short-term: renovate: NO*

*Long-term: build new: YES*

### 3 MOVABLE SOCIAL SEATING

*Short-term: renovate: YES*

*Long-term: build new: YES*

### 4 THE JACKET: NOTICE A MOVE?

*Short-term: renovate: NO*

*Long-term: build new: YES*

### 5 TUCKED-AWAY BAR

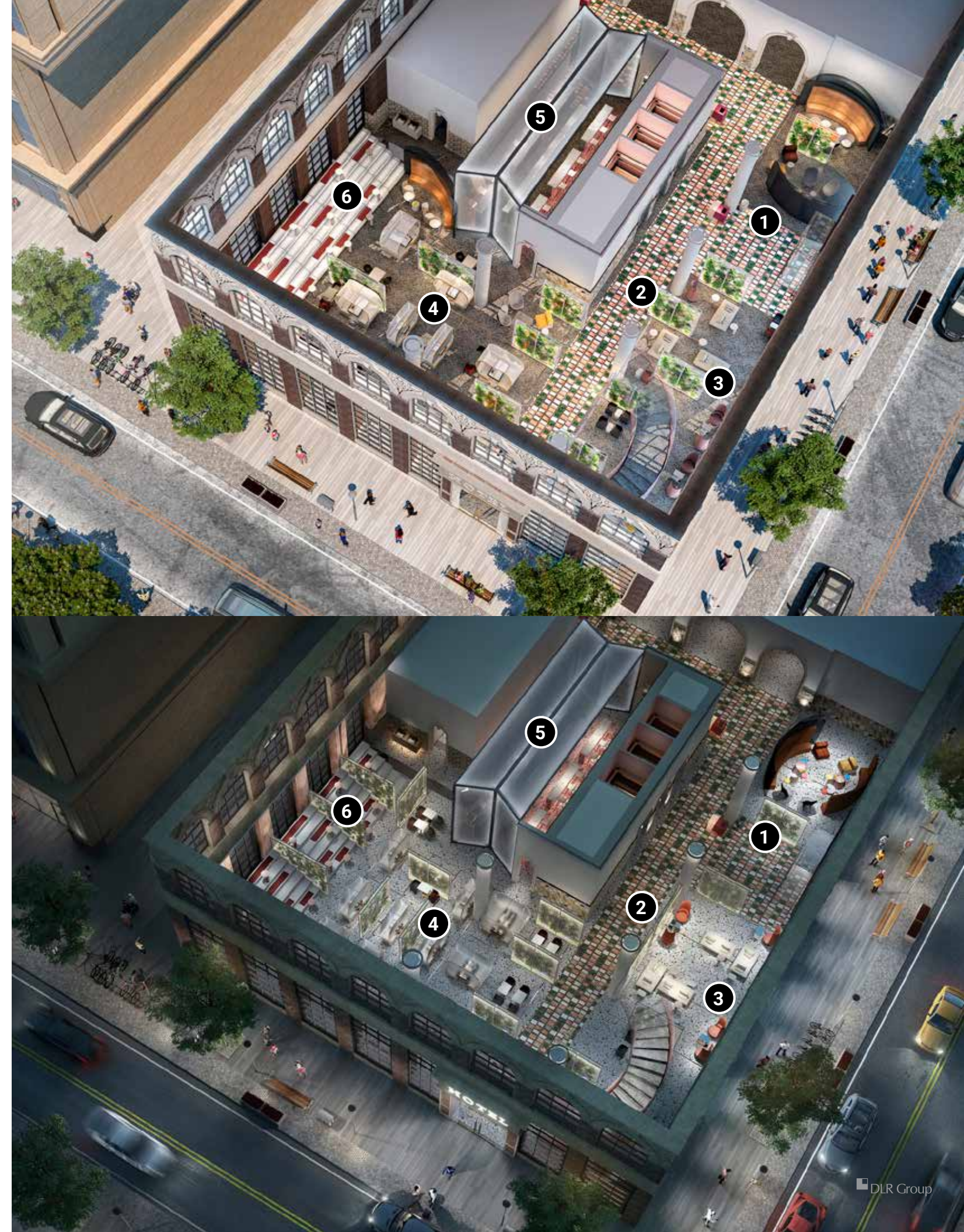
*Short-term: renovate: NO*

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### 6 CHANGE IN LANDSCAPE

*Short-term: renovate: YES*

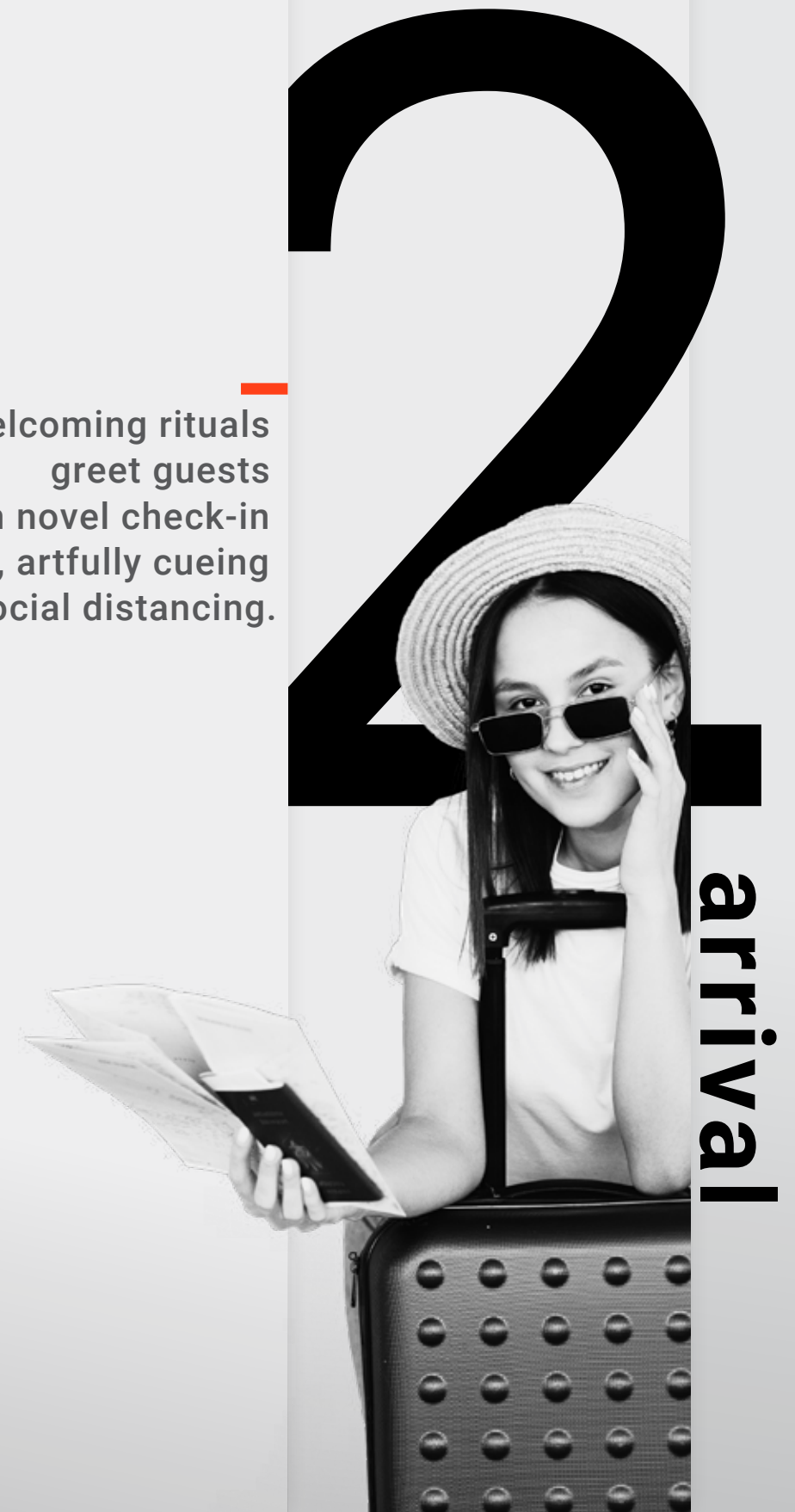
*Long-term: build new: YES*





Reassure  
guests  
with design  
that exudes  
identity  
and trust.

Welcoming rituals  
greet guests  
with novel check-in  
options, artfully cueing  
social distancing.





## 1 ARRIVAL: MOBILE CHECK-IN AND HAND WASH STATION

Short-term: renovate: **YES**  
Long-term: build new: **YES**

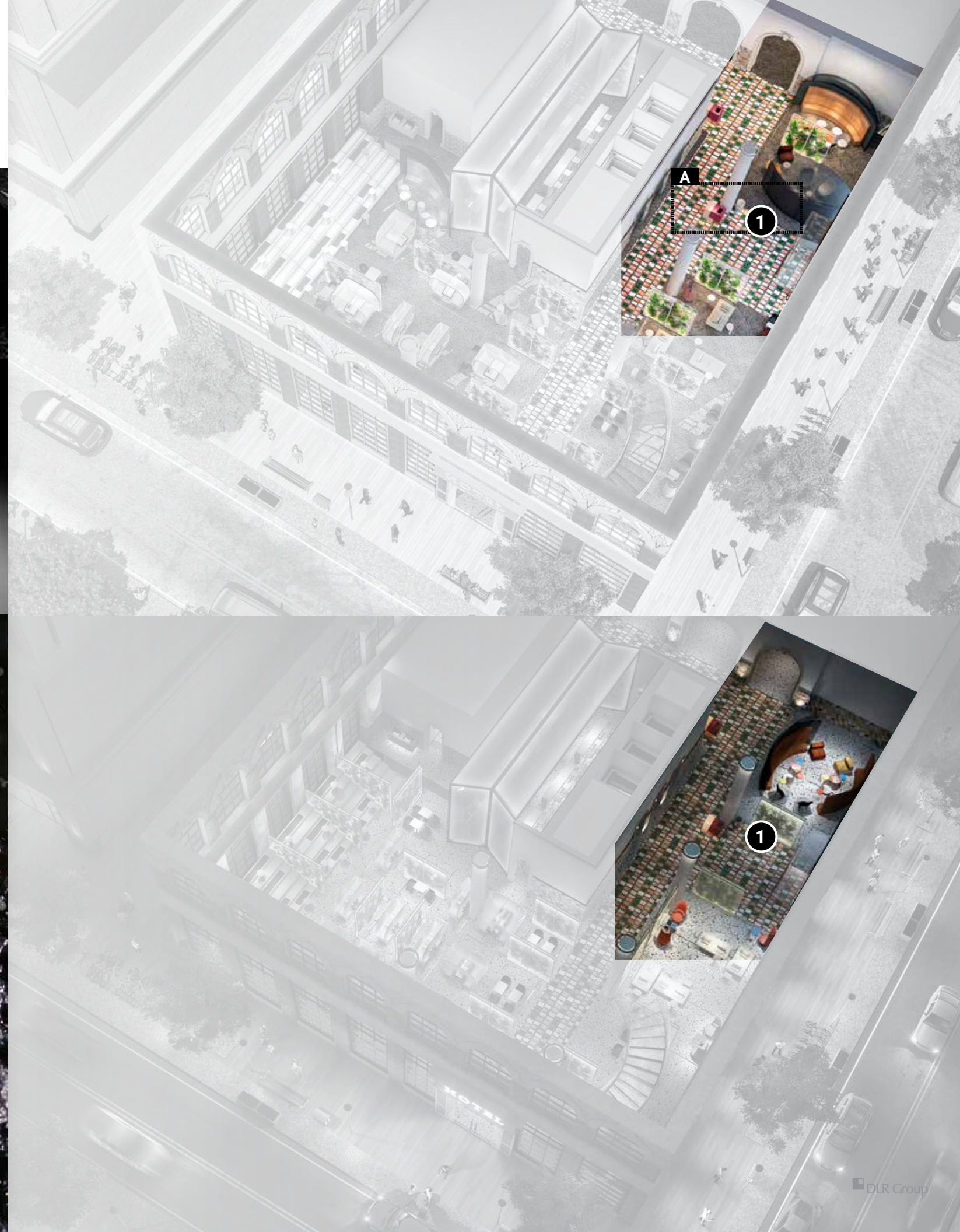
Check-in kiosks function much like an airport gate scan with mobile-device functionality. Here, a voice-activated digital host provides keys and guides guests through requested information for their stay, from interactive maps to local suggestions.

An artfully designed handwashing installation becomes a part of the everyday experience in this new lobby landscape. A perception shift around cleanliness comes from imagining a more ceremonial approach to welcome, where handwashing is an experienced embraced in plain view. Guests build confidence seeing arriving and departing guests partake in this new cleansing experience.

### IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

For both the handwash station and mobile check-in kiosk owners, developers and designers can embrace this design today with a kit-of-parts housed in a designed millwork surround. Nearby electrical and Wi-Fi data are leveraged for a touchless experience. Handwash stations do not require hard plumbing, as an internal reservoir provides fresh water and collects the used water for periodic disposal. In new build designs, plumbing could be provided with a floor drain for low maintenance. Included is a towel dispenser and collection bin for housekeeping to service once or twice a day. Hand wash soap can be matched to each hotel's scent or amenity program, building further sensorial loyalty to the hotel brand.

**A** see our furniture design spotlight!





Ceiling-projected distance markers and interactive screen enabled glass barriers welcome tech-savvy guests while protecting them and their hosts.

>>> RENOVATION-FRIENDLY

# the techie





# the green thumb

Air-filtering plants spill out of planters that indicate distancing. A protective screen enables safe interaction while biodegradable cling signage educates environmentally conscious guests.

>>> RENOVATION-FRIENDLY





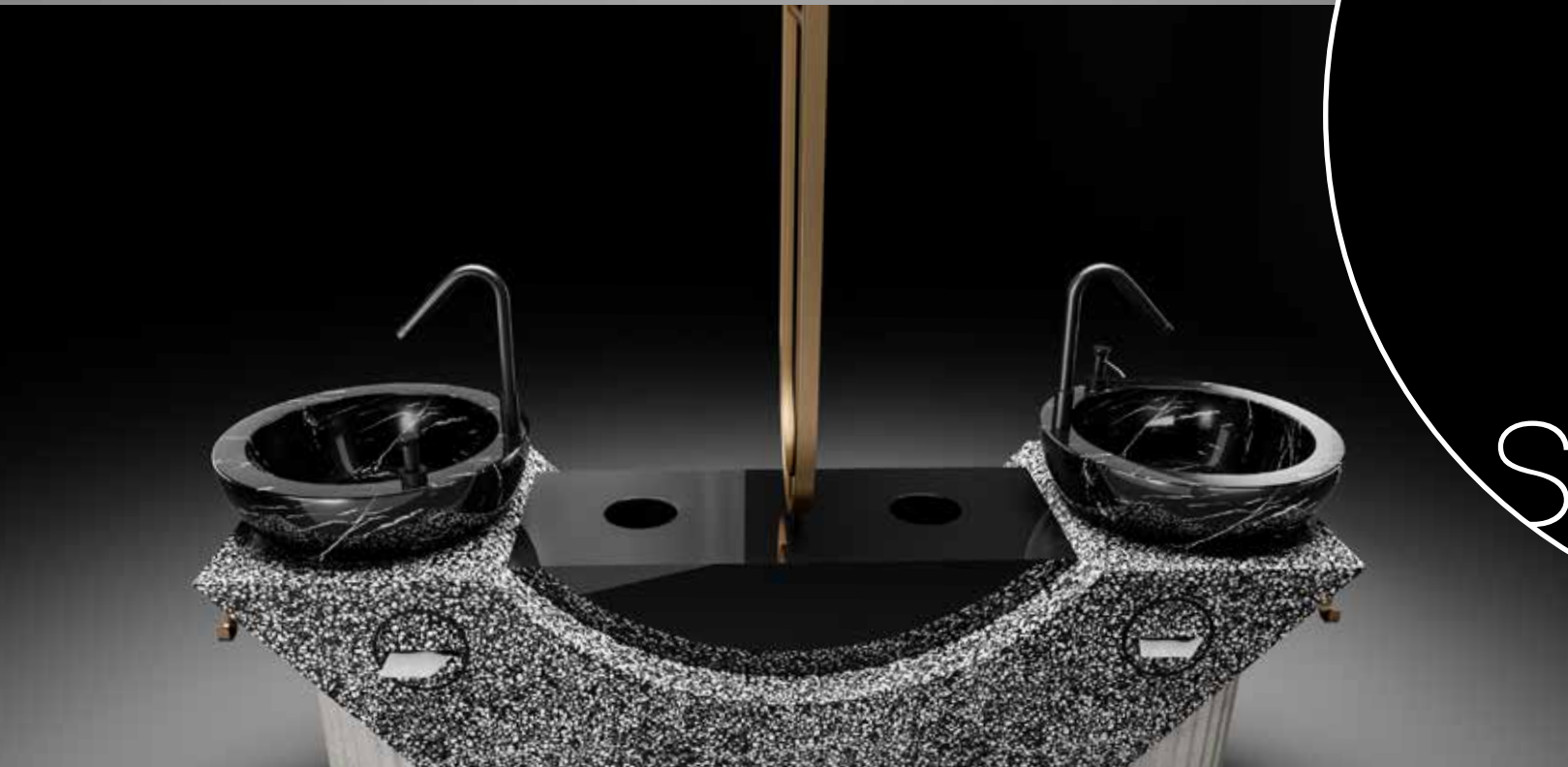
Diaphanous fabric screening  
sparks an air of mystery and  
separates check-in lanes.  
Bespoke countertop screens  
feel intimately appealing to  
the bohemian guest.

>>> RENOVATION-FRIENDLY

# the veil







# furniture design spotlight

## the duo

The Duo is an artfully designed mobile handwashing installation inspired by the relaxing Japanese ritual of ablution. Two basins find separation through canted arms. With every detail considered — including an onboard water supply and touchless faucets, soap dispensers, towels, and waste bins — the guest can concentrate on the therapeutic act of washing away the stress of their travels. Communal areas of all sizes are accommodated with an axial four-basin solution and a trim single-basin solution in addition to the two-basin model.



Empower  
guests  
to curate  
the landscape  
of their own  
unique  
experience.

The effortless  
adaptability of movable  
furnishings and  
partitions puts guests  
in control of their  
interactions.

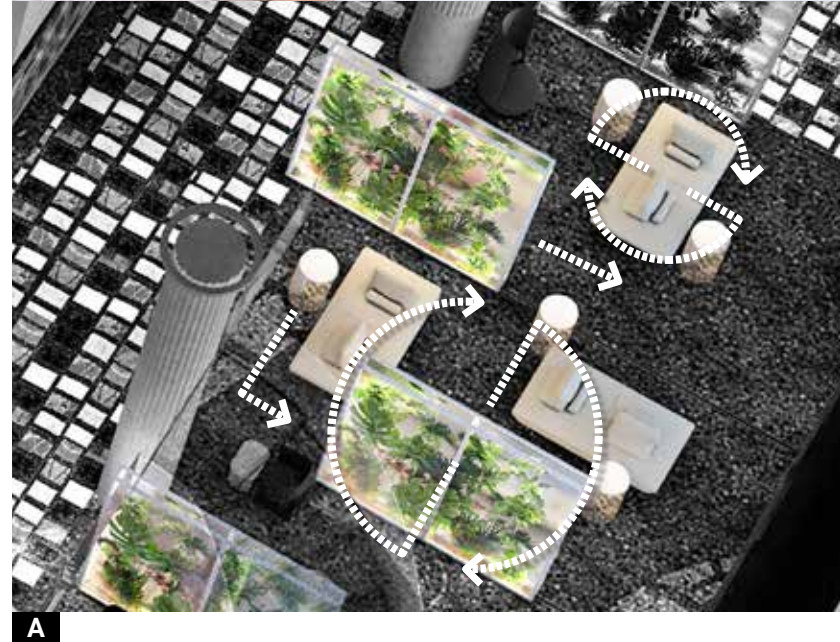




## 2 SPATIAL FLEXIBILITY: ADAPTABLE WALLS

Short-term: renovate: **NO**  
Long-term: build new: **YES**

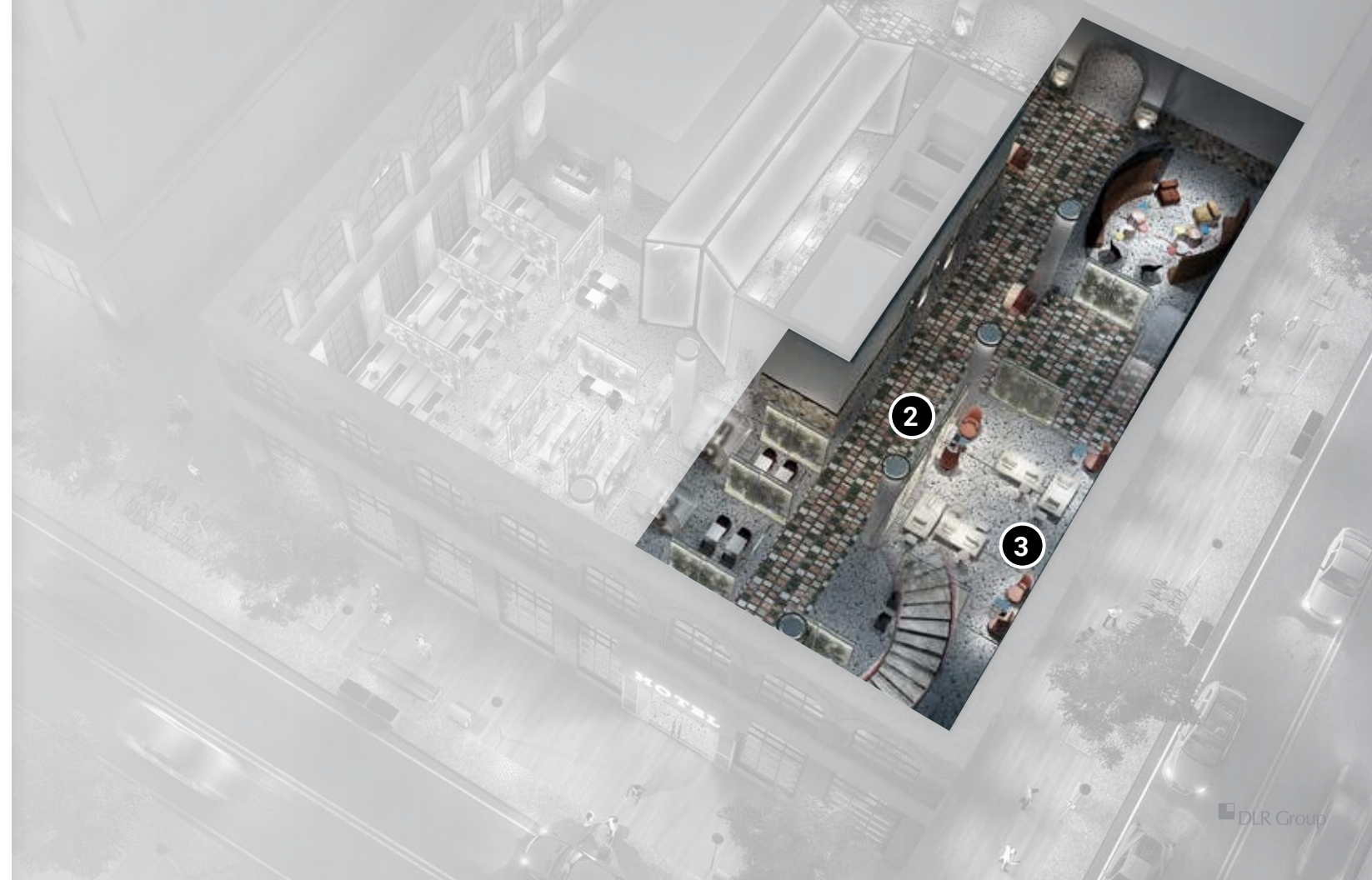
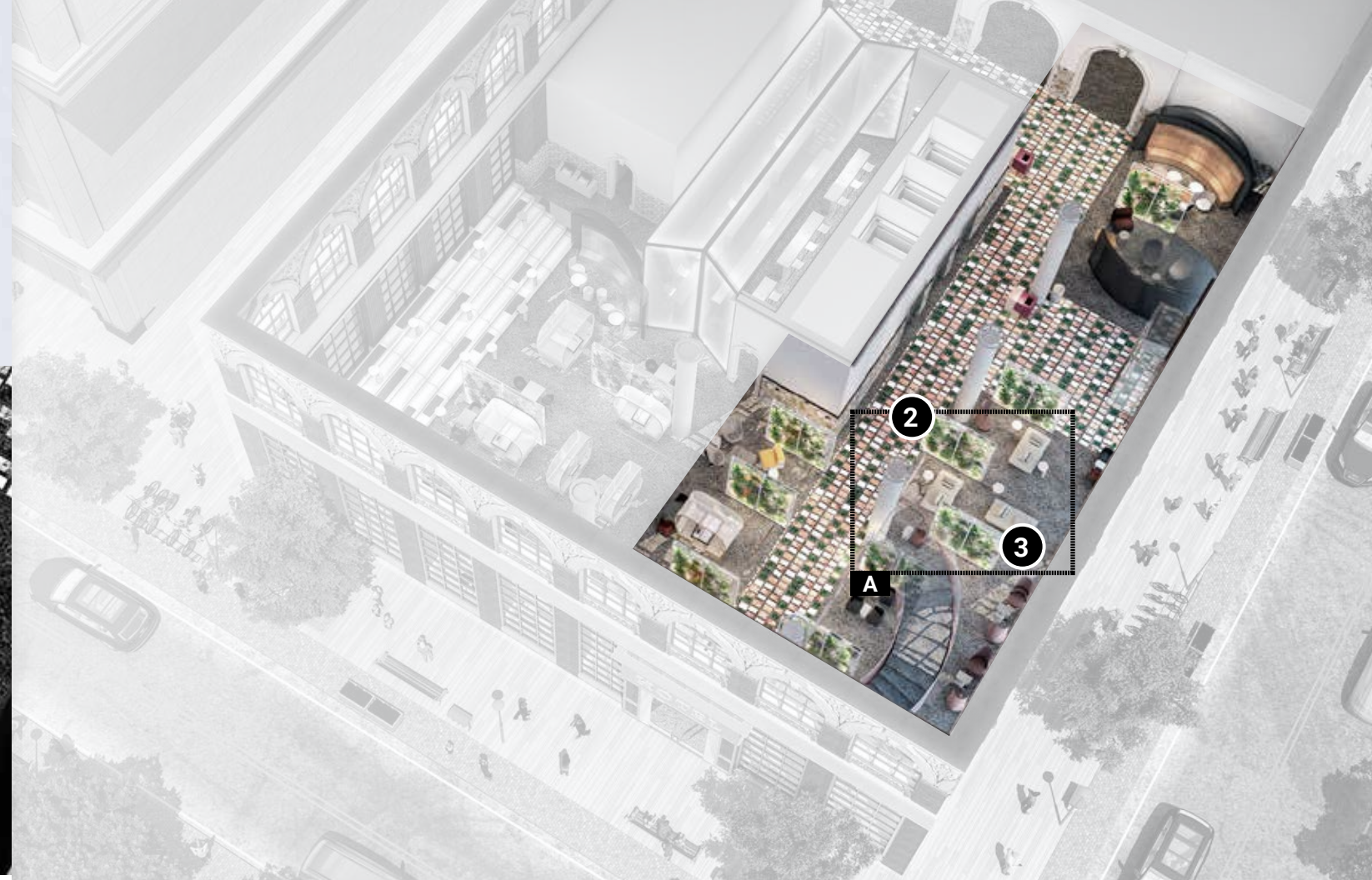
By introducing the amenity of adaptability, each guest will have the choice of multiple configurations, each personalized to create more protection or more connection. Semi-transparent movable divider walls are crafted with electrostatic glass panels that support live plants. They pivot and glide across a floor-track system to create a small social gathering area, a small huddle meeting, or to simply divide a crowd of ten or more. These adaptable walls entice a guest to create smaller spaces within the larger bustling social landscape, feeding a need for interaction. Giving guests direct agency in expanding and contracting the physical space around them as a means of controlling exposure is an unprecedented hotel concept. Guests will be more comfortable in an enclosed interior environment knowing they direct the options to be alone, yet together, safely distanced, yet still “in the scene” and connected to the pulse of community.



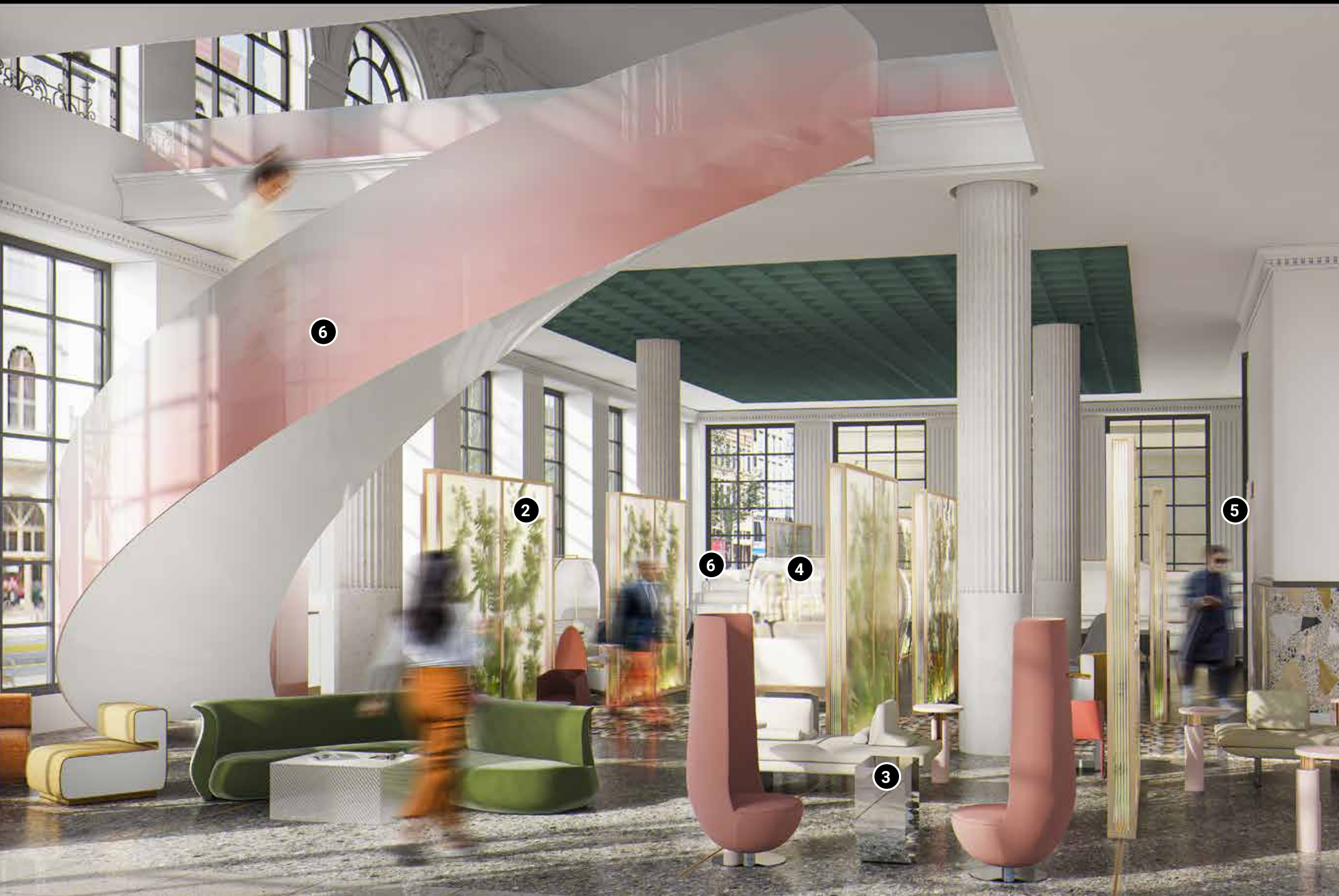
## 3 MOVABLE SOCIAL SEATING

Short-term: renovate: **YES**  
Long-term: build new: **YES**

Gathering areas are articulated by a vast landscape of choice that includes and extends beyond the adaptable walls. Lightweight yet comfortable furnishings are purposefully planned to invite guests to move them to meet their needs, and for easy, thorough cleaning by hotel teams that will service these spaces several times a day. Sophisticated guests are educating themselves on emerging studies around viral transfer and airborne particle movement. By scaling personal space up or down, and self-selecting furnishings and even vertical planes to occupy, guests can capture the mood of their moment with unconventional, motivating design.







The lounge's open space, which could easily overwhelm, has now become a vessel that delivers a new experience every time a guest makes it their own. Semitransparent movable screen walls fluidly anchor the space. Much more than simple functional pieces, these add to the ambiance with live air-purifying plants between electrostatic glass panels. Lightweight and manageably sized, guests themselves are empowered to control their social landscape by sliding, pivoting, and connecting the panels to create smaller or larger spaces. Designed with data from air flow studies, the walls help to mitigate the spread of airborne viral particles. While cleaning teams service this social space several times a day, built-in sanitizing encourages direct guest interaction. Comfortable furnishings with wipeable surfaces are likewise movable, contributing to the orchestration of experience.

- ② SPATIAL FLEXIBILITY: ADAPTABLE WALLS
- ③ MOVABLE SOCIAL SEATING
- ④ THE JACKET: NOTICE A MOVE?
- ⑤ TUCKED-AWAY BAR
- ⑥ CHANGE IN LANDSCAPE



Offer  
guests  
connection  
through  
discrete  
personal  
space

Distancing  
doesn't mean  
doing away with  
intimate connections.





#### 4 THE JACKET: NOTICE A MOVE?

Short-term: renovate: **NO**  
Long-term: build new: **YES**

The Jacket is DLR Group-designed furniture solution that provides a protective cloak around guests of smaller numbers. Each Jacket seats two, and with combination can accommodate up to six. The Jacket features a gesture-based user interface, anti-viral finishes, a HEPA air-filtration system, and UV sanitizing between uses. Jackets move along the same recessed floor track as the adaptable walls. Guests can cluster walls and Jackets to their liking, and the hotel staff can transform the space in preparation for programmed activities day to night.

#### 5 TUCKED-AWAY BAR

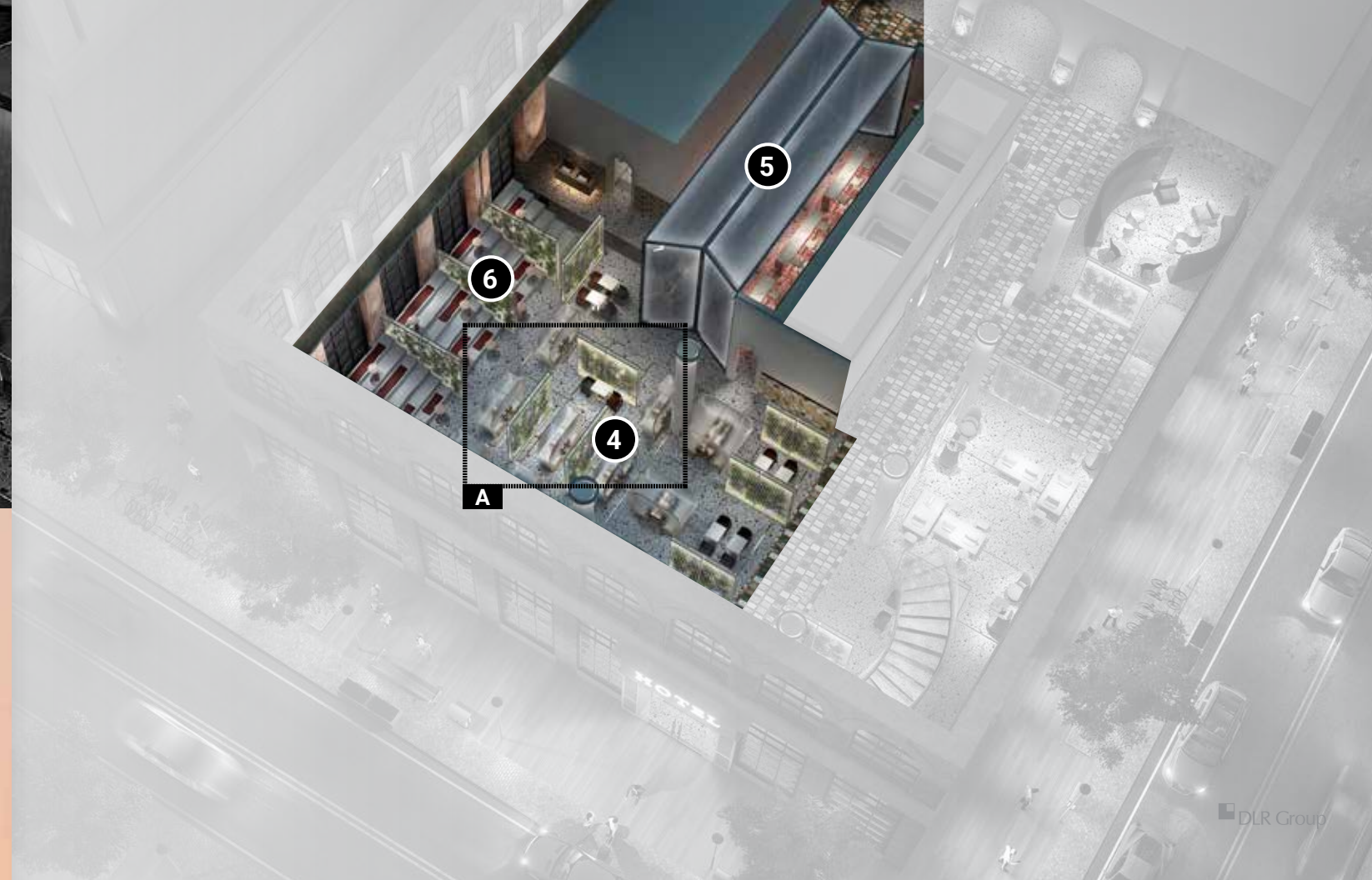
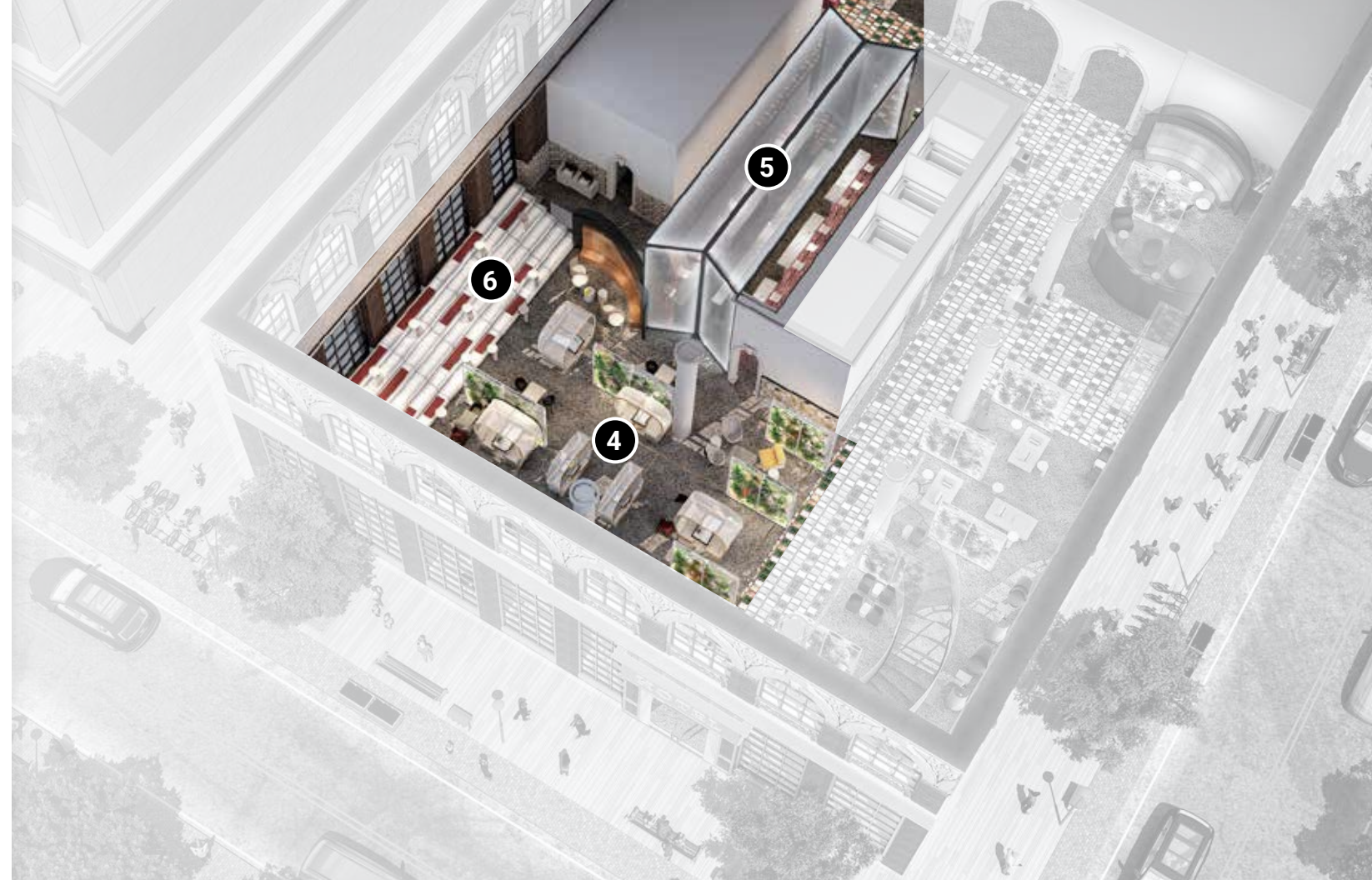
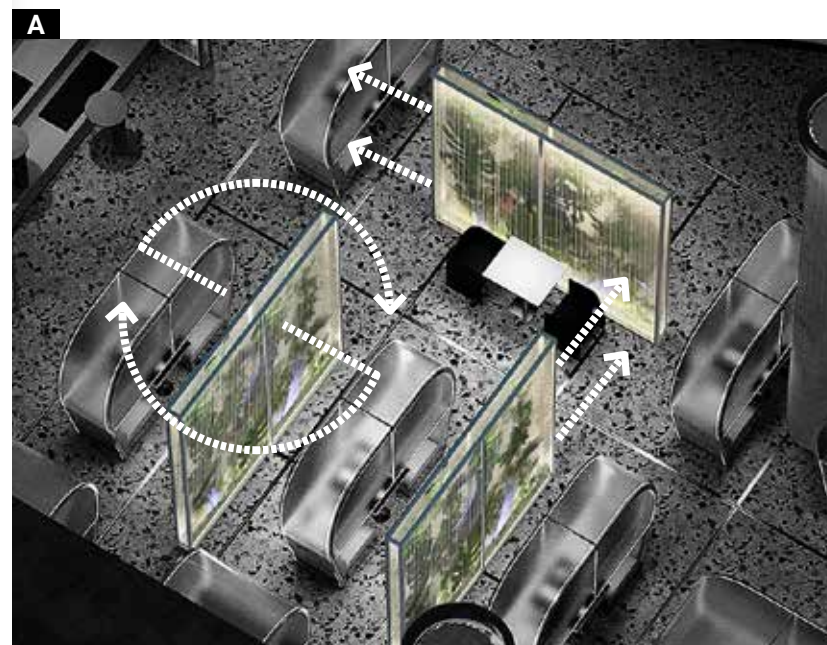
Short-term: renovate: **NO**  
Long-term: build new: **YES**

High-traffic areas call for intentional strategy around spacing. Separating the bar experience from the main arrival is one example of how you can still feel connected to the social lobby but have personal space. At the tucked away bar the long, monolithic structure is segmented, allowing for some breathing room. By separating the bar, new space is introduced for the staff to navigate and for the guest to distance. With careful consideration to materiality and carefully planned technology, this experience will also be seamless. Guests are tended to when needed without a lingering presence, permitting staff to focus their efforts where used best. Bridging some elements from the lobby and lounge, an ethereal interpretation of biophilia is an unexpected use of art for mental calming and large-scale romanticism tied to guests' travel inspiration.

#### 6 CHANGE IN LANDSCAPE

Short-term: renovate: **YES**  
Long-term: build new: **YES**

Defining a higher place to go suggests a change in air. We know from studies related to COVID-19 spread, and proof that elevated social areas are highly attractive for conversation, that a raised social area can offer yet another perceived hurdle to airborne particles. In the day time, the social stair offers a place to spread out and maximize footprint. In the evening, it offers a unique dining experience for quick, casual drinks and small plates. Here the social stair can be divided by adaptable walls that nest into the stair, creating additional personal separation from large groups and serving as a reservable area for evening dining operations.







A packed restaurant will no longer be a sign of a local hot spot. Now, discerning guests will seek out a dining experience that offers a sense of personal space and “invisible service.” Air flow separation and physical distancing go vertical with a raised stair that lifts from the ground plane, mirroring the grand stair in the lounge. Movable walls and booths make their way in from and back out to the lounge, fluidly transforming the dining space in concert with guest needs.

- ② SPATIAL FLEXIBILITY: ADAPTABLE WALLS
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## the jacket

Across the floor, an unobtrusive track crisscrosses the hotel's communal space. Along this track system travels the Jacket: a transformable seating solution. The Jacket mimics an intimate booth that shields the guest from the outside world – yet connects them with an immersive experience. Designed for two guests, Jackets can be combined to create up to six-seat pods: converging for daytime socialization, co-working, or happy hour gatherings, and splitting apart for more intimate evening dinners, solo work sessions, or sensitive business conversations. From morning to night, the Jackets are repositioned throughout the hotel's social spaces to adaptively meet guest needs. The Jacket features electrostatic glass, antimicrobial metal and vinyl surfaces, and integrated gesture control technology. An elegant but functional glass shield is raised or lowered with a wave of the hand, providing a physical barrier from airborne particles. Once inside, an interactive surface-embedded menu display permits easy touch-free ordering. Taking cues from healthcare environments, an air system with HEPA filter quietly circulates and purifies the air inside the Jacket. At any time, guests can gesture toward a call button for personal assistance.

## furniture design spotlight

### HIGH TECH

#### GESTURE CONTROL

Through crises come innovation, and COVID-19 is prompting accelerated technologies that stand to improve the guest experience. Gestural technology gives people the power to control technology without touch. Complex mathematical algorithms paired with depth aware cameras interpret hand gestures to perform predefined functions or record user input. Gesture interfaces have proven hygiene benefits in public interactive displays.





In contrast to the standard front-and-center bar placement with direct adjacency to arrival, a separated, deconstructed bar becomes a tucked away destination. This strategic positioning diffuses high-traffic, high-transfer activities, giving staff space to navigate without infringing on the guest.

SPATIAL FLEXIBILITY:  
ADAPTABLE WALLS ②

THE JACKET:  
NOTICE A MOVE? ④

TUCKED-  
AWAY BAR ⑤



**BIOPHILIA**

HIGH TOUCH

As people collectively slowed down during isolation, nature became a healing touchstone of enchantment. As we reenter shared spaces, this life altering awareness is extended by themes of hope and growth embodied in biophilia. Infusing life into the built environment not only brings a vital energy to the space, it also has scientifically-supported psychological benefits including lowered heart rates and stress, as well as air purifying potential. Beyond the live plantings, an oversize biophilic art installation at the bar illustrates nature's powerful healing force with magical realism, inviting guests' minds relax into a sense of quiet awe.







Questions?  
Want to talk?  
Give us a ring!

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