

*name of project:* GUARD & GRACE - HOUSTON

*type of project:* interior architecture - restaurant

*program summary:* Guard & Grace Houston showcases chef Troy Guard's vision for a modern steak house. The restaurant creates a new focal point at One Allen Center, a mid-century office complex in Downtown Houston. Spread over 15,000 square feet on two levels, with three bars, and four private dining rooms, the architects were challenged to create intimacy and a coherent architectural vision within this expansive space and program.

*completion date:* november 2019

*project location:* houston, texas



*project narrative:*

The raw space on the ground floor of One Allen Center presented a myriad of challenges. The 15,000 square feet of floor space was spread over two disconnected levels. Soaring 30-foot tall ceilings were awe inspiring, but out of scale with an intimate dining experience. The vastness of this existing space seemed at odds with Troy Guard's desire for a world class dining destination filled with intimate and unique experiences.

Several design interventions were key in transforming the space.

4,600, 18-foot long bronze rods are hung from the high ceilings to reduce the apparent volume of the space, while also creating visual interest to an otherwise empty volume. They provide a constant datum throughout the space, with dining areas located in their relationship to this singular intervention – adjacent, below, or within.

The main space of the restaurant is organized into two elevations, with half of the ground level dining area raised up three feet. This architectural move brings patrons closer to the installation, and provides a sense of intimacy beneath the array of rods.

At the restaurant perimeter, tables sit low, embraced by rippling sheer draperies covering the 30' tall curtainwall that looks over the surrounding plaza. Plantings inside the restaurant make the dining room feel like an extension of this outdoor space. Patrons look up to and through the wall of the bronze rods above.

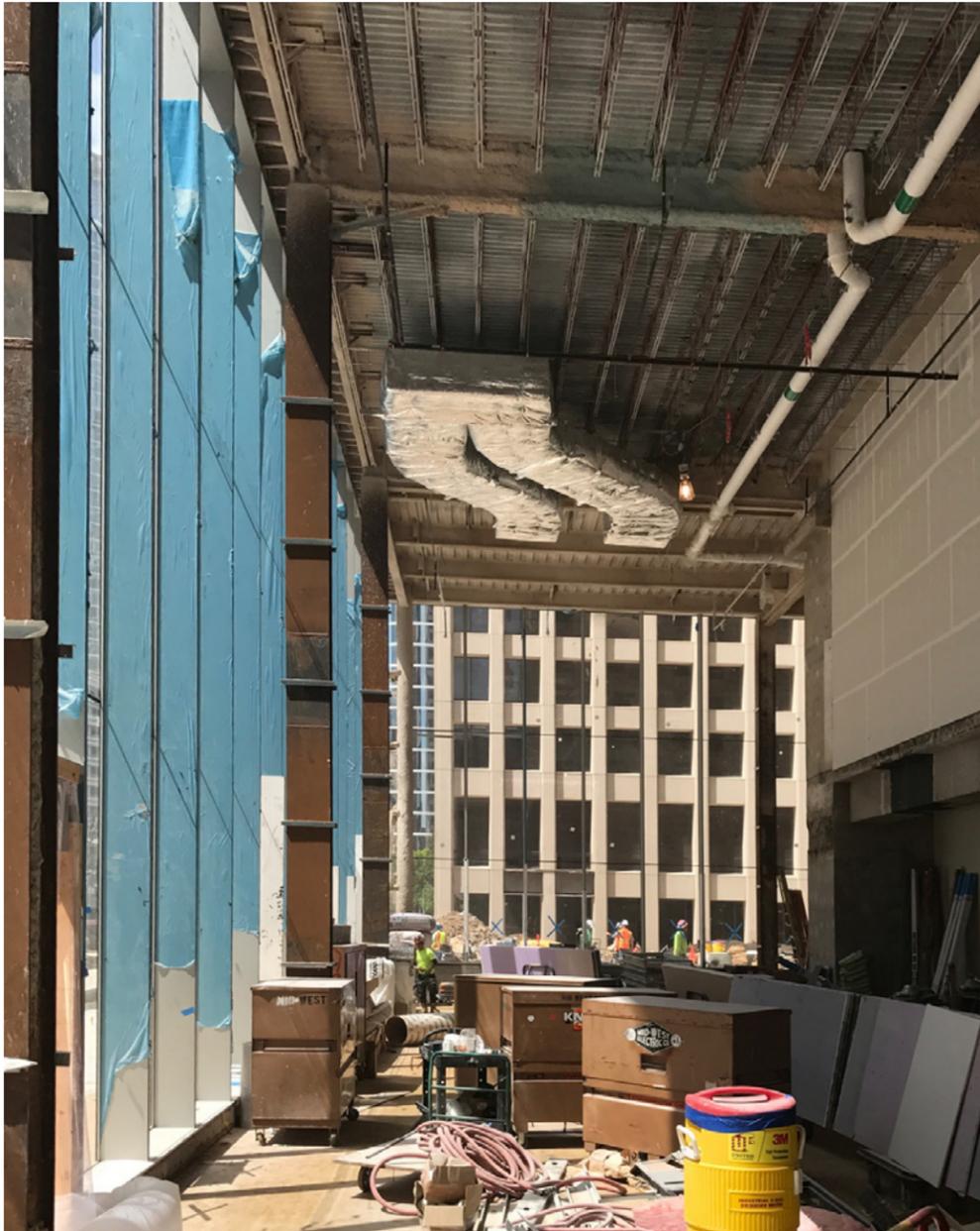
Away from the windows, the raised dining platform wraps around two sides of the kitchen, creating a voyeuristic view of the chefs at work, while also creating edges for different dining experiences... from romantic two-top booths, to a lemon shaped booth for a party of 12.

The sinuous wall surrounding the platform is crafted in hand troweled plaster. This rough texture provides a grounding counterpoint to the rods hovering overhead, and harkens to the massive concrete columns that support the tower above.

A new staircase and balcony slides behind the rods and over the main bar, to connect guests with the private dining rooms on a second level, while providing a dynamic aerial view of the restaurant. As guests ascend the staircase and walk along the balcony, they are surrounded by the rods and experience a moiré effect as they look through them. On the second level, private dining rooms with retractable partitions, and an additional bar give the flexibility to serve parties from 20 to over 100.

Furniture and material selections play to the mid century 'mad men' era history of building's corporate office architecture, with warm bronze tones and walnut finishes. The ceiling rods evoke Richard Lippold sculptures of the 1960's, and the softly illuminated liquor bottles at the three bars tempt guests to linger with that perfect martini.

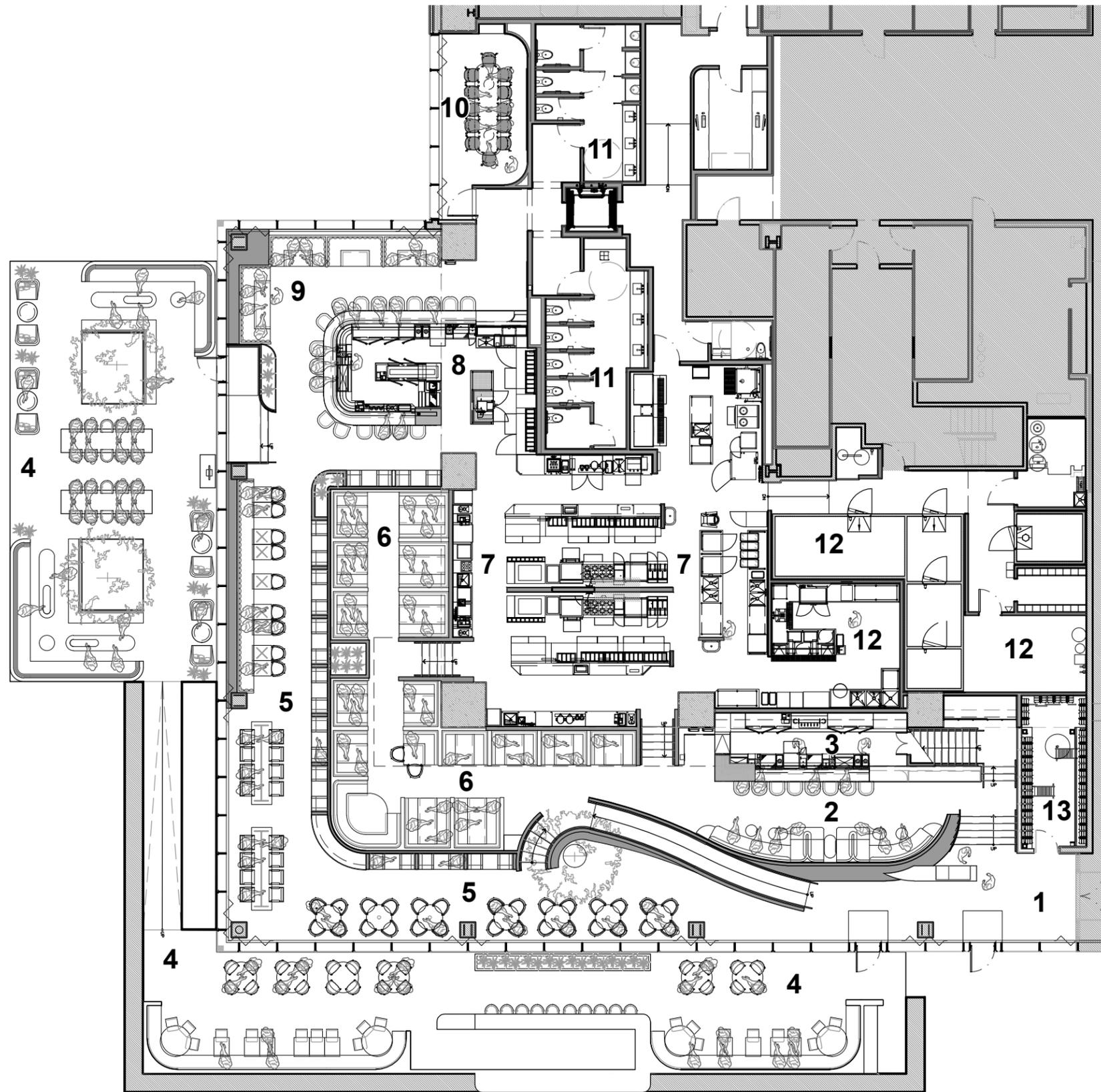




**ONE ALLEN CENTER  
EXISTING CONDITION**



**GUARD & GRACE  
INTERIOR RENOVATION**




**LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN**  
 1:1/16"

TRUE




**LEVEL 2 FLOOR PLAN**  
 NTS

TRUE

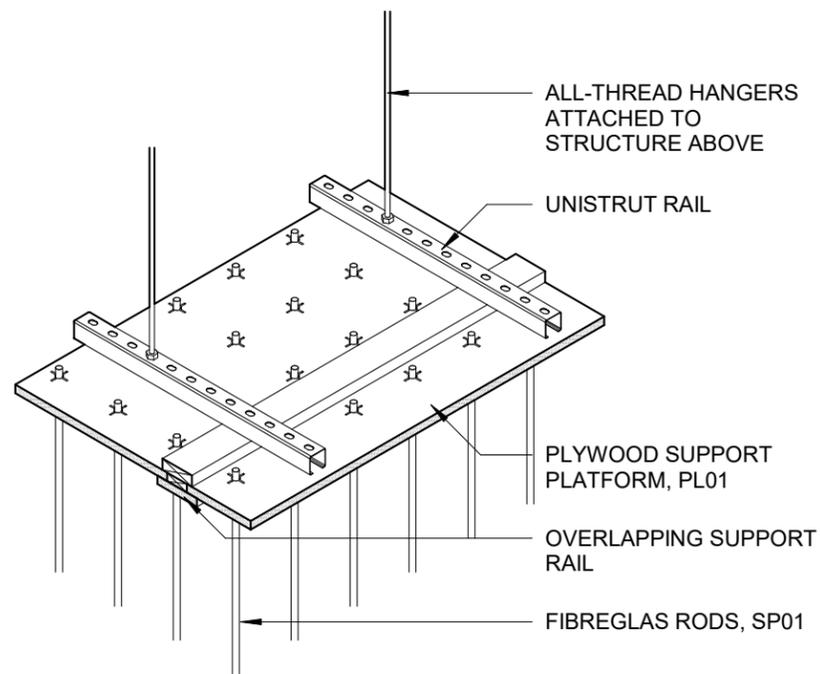
**KEY**

- |                     |                         |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. FRONT ENTRY      | 6. UPPER DINING         | 11. RESTROOMS     |
| 2. FRONT LOUNGE     | 7. KITCHEN              | 12. BACK OF HOUSE |
| 3. FRONT BAR        | 8. REAR BAR             | 13. WINE ROOM     |
| 4. PATIO DINING     | 9. REAR LOUNGE          | 14. LEVEL 2 BAR   |
| 5. PERIMETER DINING | 10. PRIVATE DINING ROOM | 15. BRONZE RODS   |

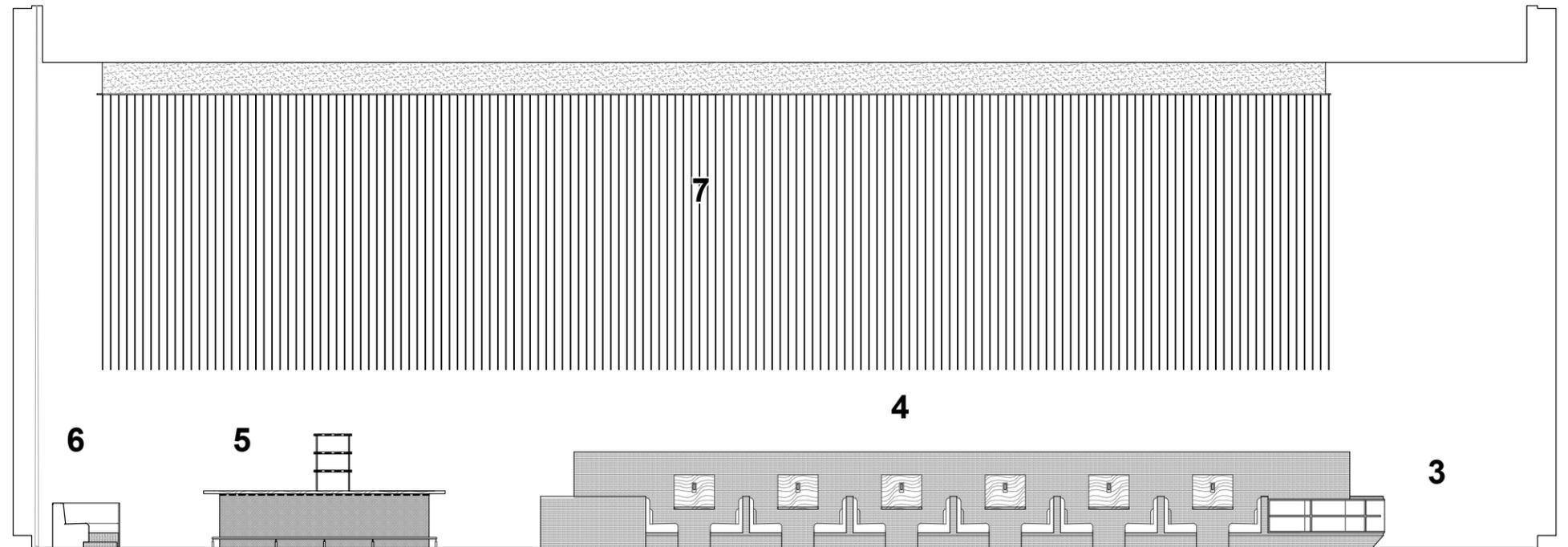




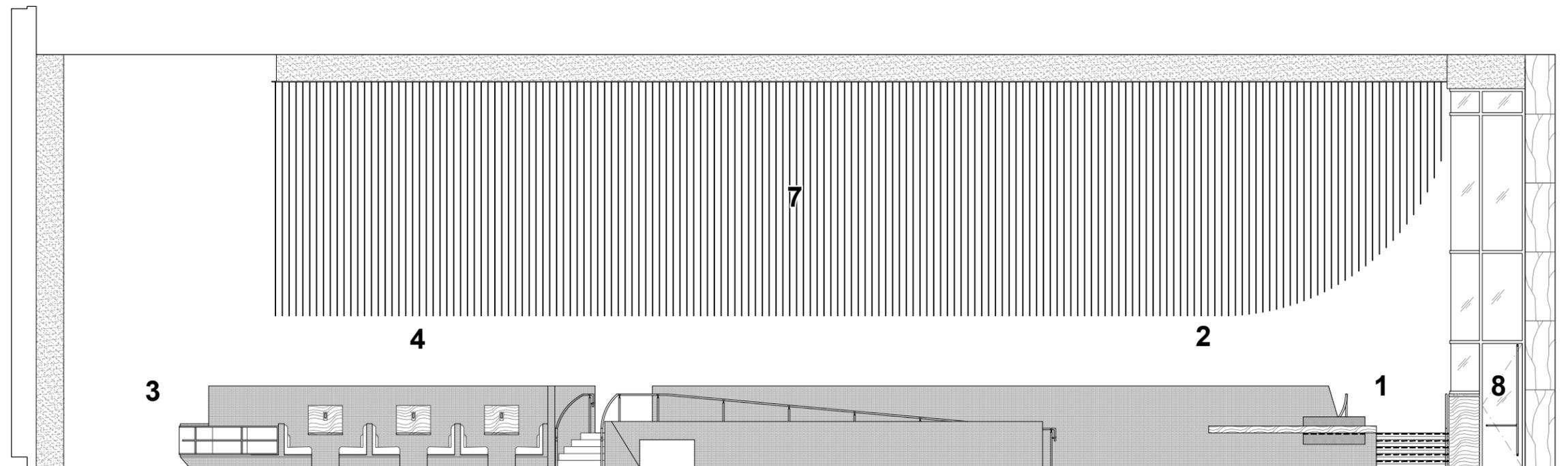




**BRONZE ROD ASSEMBLY  
AXO DETAIL**  
NTS



**PERIMETER DINING ROOM  
INTERIOR ELEV.**  
NTS



- KEY**
- 1. FRONT ENTRY
  - 2. FRONT LOUNGE
  - 3. PERIMETER DINING
  - 4. UPPER DINING
  - 5. REAR BAR
  - 6. REAR LOUNGE
  - 7. BRONZE RODS
  - 8. WINE ROOM

**PERIMETER DINING ROOM  
INTERIOR ELEV.**  
NTS



