

05 | DESIGN DISCOURSE

5.1 THE USER GROUP

The viewer

The viewer is the non-arts students who have been invited, or spontaneously come across the Precinct from passing through. Everything they see or hear is an educational experience. What they see is not a foreign object in the landscape, but an integrated entity within the functional space. Not only will they view, but will also participate.

The users are:

- Students from other faculties;
- Invited task-orientated guests;
- Guests/ groups using the venue to view specific performances/talks/ and/or coming in to learn;
- Spaces that are rented; and
- The general public coming for special performances.

The Drama Scholar

Within the Precinct, every space is either a learning, rehearsal (process) or exhibition space for the drama student.

The spaces will allow the student to be educated at an optimum level with regards to facilities. The spaces are designed for utilisation, exploration, education and research through performing. Spaces will be specifically dedicated to the students' education. Rehearsal spaces will be integrated within the buildings and the landscape.

The people using the spaces in this category are:

- Students of the Dramatic Arts Faculty;
- Lecturers; and
- Guests.

(Refer to Appendix 2 for Accommodation Schedule)

5.2 DESIGN INTERVENTION

In order to design a viable Dramatic Arts Precinct the design should consider the needs of both the user and the visitor. In addition to this, the **main criteria used in the design** decision making of the interior space should be **applied to both the landscape and the architectural interventions** in order to make the Precinct a unified space.

The Drama building and Die Masker are to be used as a basis point for further development. Die Bok and Die Lier require major redevelopment, as the proposed changes require greater architectural intervention than interior intervention.

5.3 PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT

As a starting point for creating the Precinct, the design investigation began with an analysis into the existing spaces and routes of circulation. This aids in designing to increase the pedestrian movement over the site [fig 5.1.2]. Furthermore, the relationship between the buildings and their surroundings is enriched. Another design factor explored is how to incorporate the theatrical education into the landscape without it seeming imposing; this involves taking the existing buildings and restructuring them to communicate with the external space and each other.

From this, the preliminary conceptual layout is derived and refined to develop the interior of the chosen building to which the interior intervention would be explored to detail level. The other spaces, the Drama Building and Die Lier are designed to a specific level. Die Lier is conceptually designed to communicate what functions it would house and how it creates a boundary that would act as a pocket for performance for the Precinct, and the basic layout of the Drama Building is designed to proposal level.

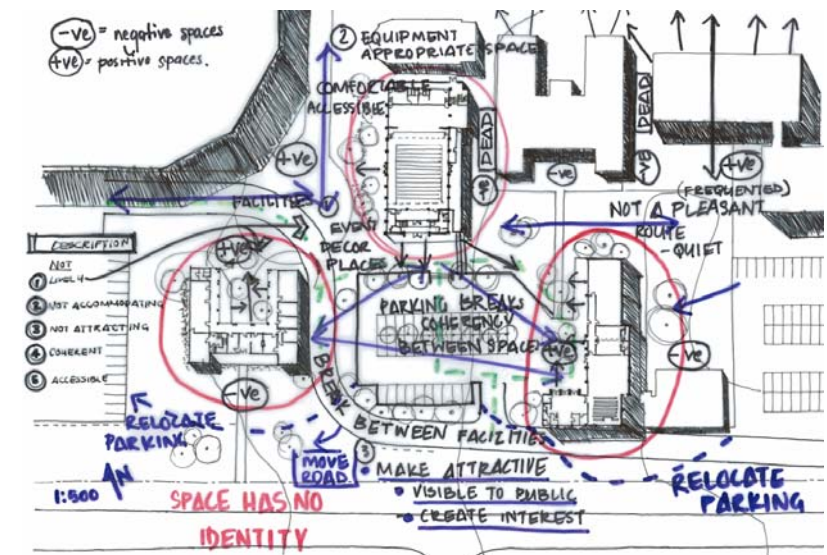


Figure 5.1.1: Spatial analysis with pedestrian paths and building relation analysis.

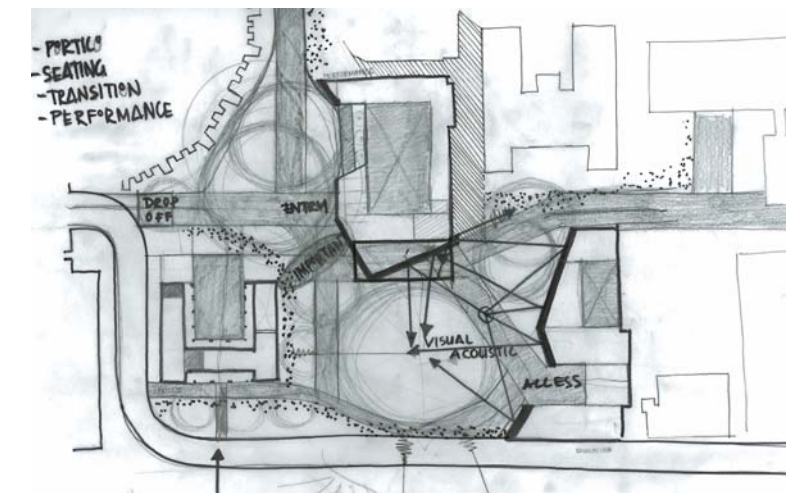


Figure 5.1.2: Edge configuration and social space configuration with pathways increasing pedestrian access.

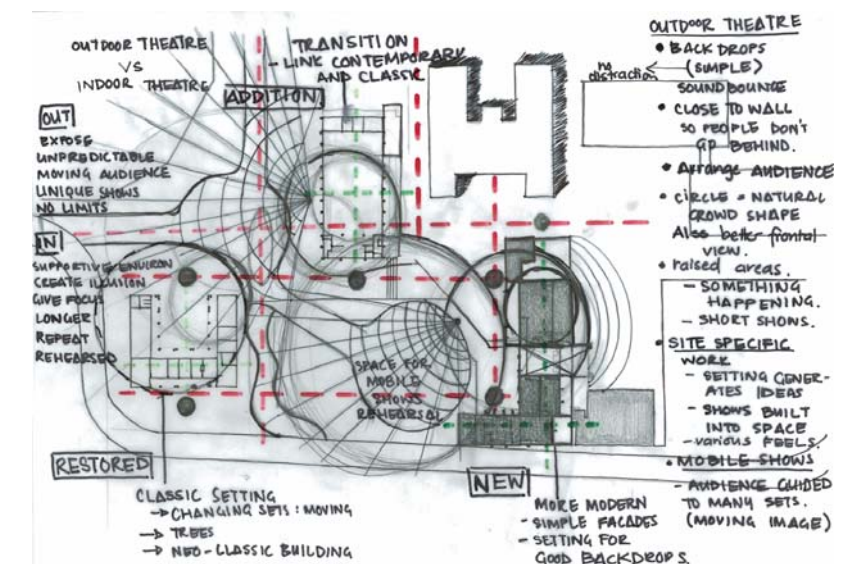


Figure 5.1.3: Identification of external and internal performance spaces that link interior to the exterior.

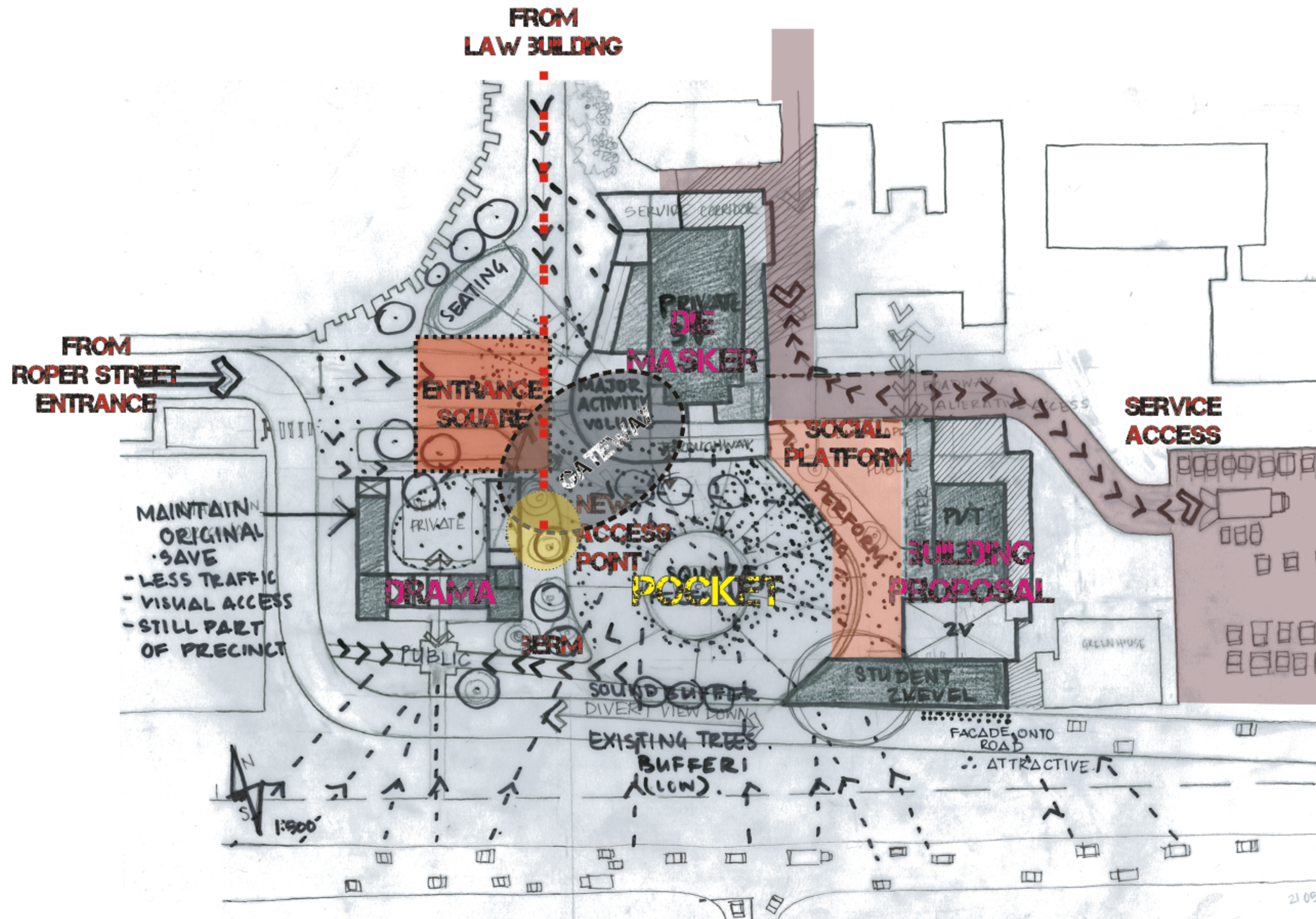


Figure 5.1.4: Sketch of conceptual site development with access paths, service passages, public areas, and building relation.

5.4 SITE DEVELOPMENT

It was decided that the piece of the Ring Road that cuts through the site, separating the Drama Building from the other buildings is proposed to be moved to circulate around the western side of the Drama building. This allows for cohesion of the entire space. The parking from the centre of the site the middle is relocated along the new roadway as well as to the existing adjacent parking areas to supply for sufficient parking for staff and visitors. It is assumed from the proposed framework for the University that these parking spaces are going to be developed to provide a structured parking system.

With these alterations the access of vehicles would be restricted, thereby allowing for an increase of interaction space, a square for performance. It acts as the central point where pedestrian paths from within the campus converge. This space is enveloped by the existing buildings that act as the edges for the space. The buildings would be developed to respond to each other around a common space [fig. 5.1.3].

The fourth edge of the square is a natural boundary that is determined by the row of existing trees that separate the space from the Ring Road. This un-built barrier allows for visual access from the Ring Road as well as from Lynwood Road. It creates the opportunity to design a landscaped square that encourages interest from the public in transit. This layer of existing trees functions as a buffer between the street and the contained space, differentiating the “exterior” space from the “interior” space. The trees also create a sound barrier allowing for the space to be intimate yet still public [Fig. 5.1.4].

The conceptual design of the landscape included the theoretical idea of transition from reality to an abstracted space. This occurs in the transition of the

pedestrian from the public realm into the performance realm. The pedestrian paths all converge at the point where the Ring Road is to be removed, the space between the Drama Building and the western façade of Die Masker. This would be a public entranceway into the main space. This “entrance square” allows for easy circulation into the Drama Building from the Ring Road as well as from the intersection pedestrian paths. The convergence point is located at a focal point seen just off the entry into the University’s main entrance. This space can be seen from the western end of the Ring Road, therefore it lends itself to great possibilities.

From that entry point circulation into the square is aided by means of an unseen gateway. The two buildings; the Drama Building and Die Masker, create the visual access from the entry point by opening up their interior spaces into the landscape. This creates a certain sense of accessibility into each building.

The main square forms a pocket for performance, rehearsal, and social interaction. No specific landscape design is proposed but a conceptual proposal is made with regard to what the design should entail. The square should allow for various performances as well as rehearsals to take place using platform areas and focal points.

In this square the planted areas are to be retained because it creates a buffer between the road and the Precinct as well as supplying protection to the Drama Building by decreasing the pedestrian movement on the south side as well as in the courtyard. The planted area would be retained as a grassed landscape that could act as both a seating area looking into the square, but also as a backdrop to the assemblage of temporary stage set in the square.

Where the landscaped edge intersects the Drama Building is where the new access point into the

building is from the square. This point links the building directly into the square. It is a pivotal point of intersection in the design because this is where the pedestrian path from the Law Building ends, thus creating an end of the north-south axis, between the Law Building and the Drama Precinct [fig. 5.1.4].

Directly across the landscaped area is another focal point embedded in the heart of the performance pocket. It is proposed to be situated where the paths from Die Masker and the new building converge. This gives rise to an opportunity for outdoor performance to take place. The idea is to have a permanent meeting point built between the three buildings in that area, creating a public platform and meeting space. When needed, the platform could be used as a stage, using the new building as a backdrop, and it can be rigged for performances.

Service passages are necessary to feed equipment such as props, scenery and costumes into the precinct. This equipment should be transported with ease from the vehicle to the service spaces. It is made possible by creating a link from the parking behind the new Die Lier building into the site which feeds into the service passage between Die Masker and the Visitor’s Administration building [fig. 5.1.4].

There is no particular detail design for the square, but the conceptual intention is to design the space in such a way that it would facilitate for any configuration of performances: be it an end stage, an arena stage, or even a thrust stage. The landscape should be designed to create spaces of opportunity, where the students can rehearse outdoors. All the spaces become possible site specific stage sets, thus linking performance into the landscape. With this type of vibrancy and interaction the site starts functioning as a unified space.

5.5 THE ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

The proposed Dramatic Arts Precinct is located on the boundary of the University and the suburb of Brooklyn. Around the Drama Precinct, the surrounding buildings form recesses that create areas for social opportunity. The buildings present a range of historical styles. Similarly, the architecture on the chosen site for the Drama Precinct varies in stylistic context. The contemporary architectural language of the re-design of what will be the Drama Precinct is in contrast to the existing context. This is in terms of its materials and form as the intervention seeks to place itself firmly in the present day.

The aim of the Precinct is to expose the Drama Department and its activities to the public by integrating the internal functions into the landscape. The language between the buildings then becomes a crucial matter if they are to make the space perform as a single entity. Each building needs to be approached individually because of its particular significance and history, but the language of the new needs to have commonalities that show that the space works as one.

5.6 BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

DIE LIER:

The idea is to use similar contemporary building language between the three buildings based on materials used and a similar architectural language in the specified interventions. The new building would be used to define the eastern edge of the Precinct. The current building is insufficient in space and volume to suite the required needs for dramatic rehearsal and performance; therefore a new architectural intervention is required to enrich and complete the Precinct. The building is described to envelope the facilities that the current Drama department shares with other faculties, such as rehearsal spaces and studios.

The proposed new building would be designed for high public and student use by supplying spaces such as a new smaller multi-purpose theatre, movement and

rehearsal studios, an exhibition space, a coffee shop and spaces where the drama students can rehearse after hours in safety with access to amenities such as change rooms and a kitchenette.

The building would open up its western facade directly into the square which creates for direct access and movement onto the square. The entrance point would be the link between the buildings due to their proposed location, which would create a visual intersection point in the square between the three buildings. The proposed building volumes are recommended for a design. The platform would link Die Lier and Die Masker by creating for a large purpose made meeting space and stage area. The coffee shop and new entrance lead directly onto this platform which is also the access point for the existing building adjacent to Die Masker, which houses lecture halls currently used by the Drama Department.

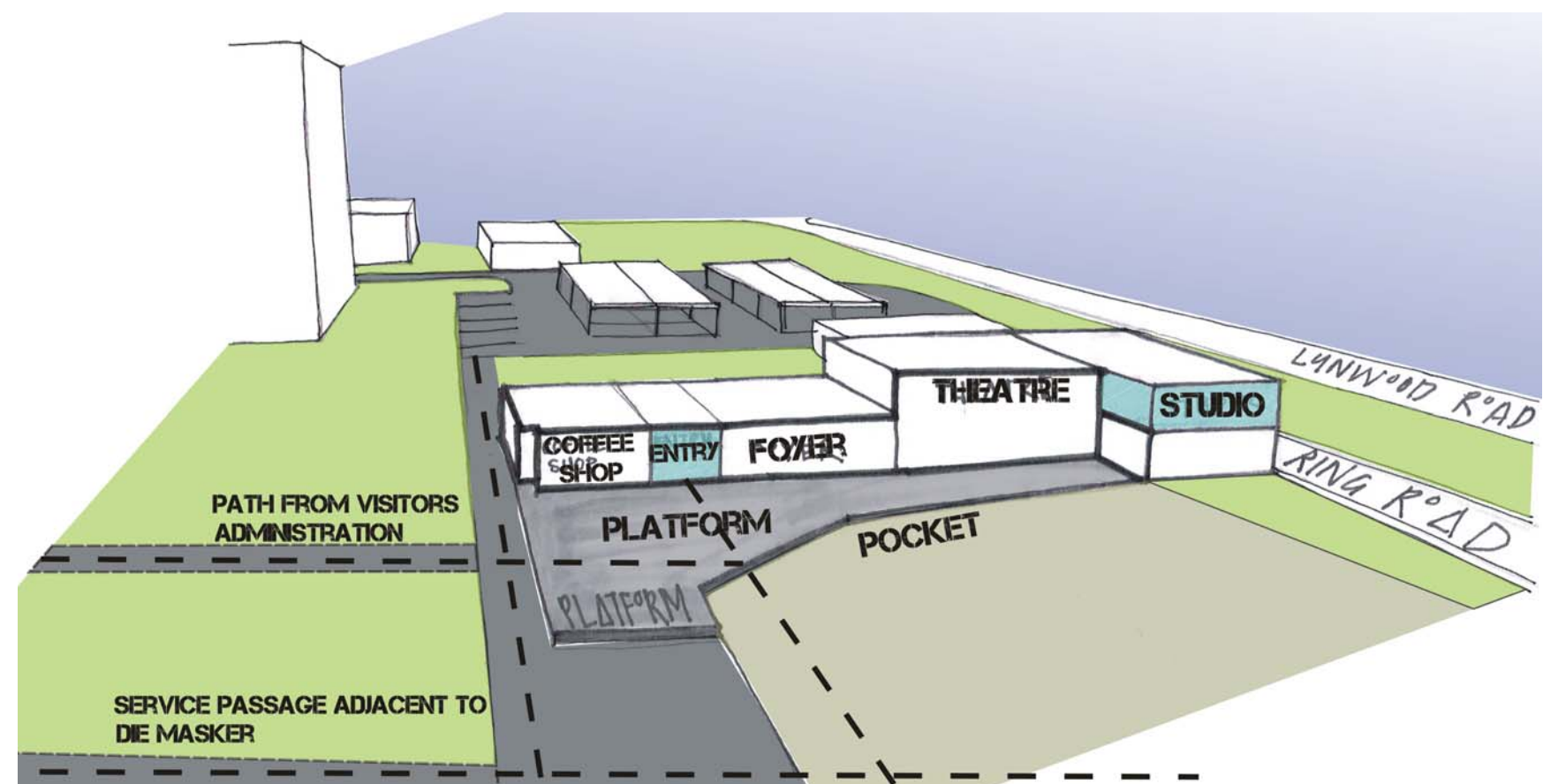


Figure 5.1.5 Concept development of the proposed new building for the Precinct.

DRAMA BUILDING:

The Drama Building is the oldest building in the Precinct; the design developed has to be dealt with in a certain manner in order not to disrupt the integrity of the existing fabric due to its heritage status (see appendix 1). The design proposal for the Drama building, or Old CBC, maintains most of the important original external aesthetic. The southern façade is restored to its original state taking into consideration its proportions.

The building is protected by means of restricting public movement through the spaces. It is designed to house facilities that are mainly staff and drama-student oriented, such as smaller rehearsal areas that double as classrooms, seminar rooms, media facilities, recording studios and staff facilities. The upper level is to be restricted to staff and students utilising the film studios and the voice facilities and offices. Access to the upper level is separated from the main circulation for this reason. In order to accommodate disabled users, as well as the transportation of equipment, a lift is to be installed.

The proposed design is based on the concept that theatre can be both internal and external; therefore the space within the courtyard is designed to accommodate performances **sketch**. This space breaks out from its confined structure into the main square, creating the new access point into the building. This breaks the eastern wing open to the public.

The ground floor is designed for student use with rehearsal rooms and/or classrooms, a recording studio and discussion rooms. These allow for a constant use of the space, creating vibrancy within the building and the landscape. The courtyard and the new entrance are designed with a tensile structure that breaks out from within the courtyard into the main square. The courtyard remains somewhat contained from the

entrance pathway by means of retaining the existing trees **[fig]**. This relates to the building and planted space across the main walkway. The courtyard space still feels intimate and retains its natural acoustic properties. In essence the building becomes lighter and movement through it is easier as it links easily to the surrounding spaces.

The design does not harm the existing building; rather, the new elements are lightly attached to the old structure in a contemporary fashion that breaks away from the rigid form of the existing. Certain internal walls are reconfigured, and the removed wall's memories are retained through retaining the watermark at floor level **[fig]**. Many of the new elements of the interior are inserted and attached to the existing structure, such as the sliding stacking doors and the lighting grid systems in the rehearsal rooms.

These spaces have been designed with the black box theatre in mind. The space is adaptable by the use of moveable elements within the space. The classrooms have been designed to be reconfigured using sliding stacking doors. These panels can be used as separators of space, backdrops, and projection screens. The room is divided into a space with lighting grid structures lightly attached to the existing soffit, this would allow for the space to be separated into various spaces and used for a variety of training and rehearsal activities. There are glass box seminar rooms inserted into the larger open spaces **[fig]**, and facilities such as projection screens and lighting are lightly hung from the existing interior. The finishes are to be simple and light in order to maintain simplicity to the space to maintain a simple austere integrity to that of the Christian Brothers College.

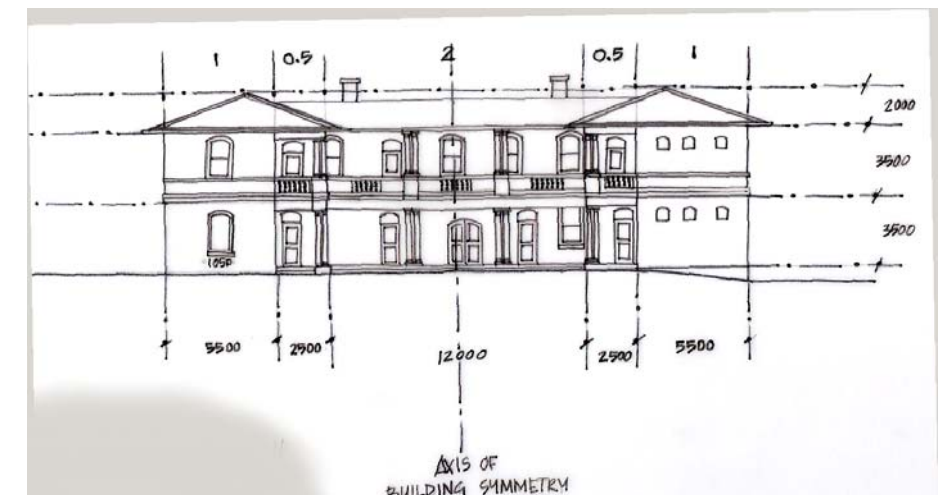


Figure 5.1.6: Sketch diagram of the proportions of the classical Drama Building.

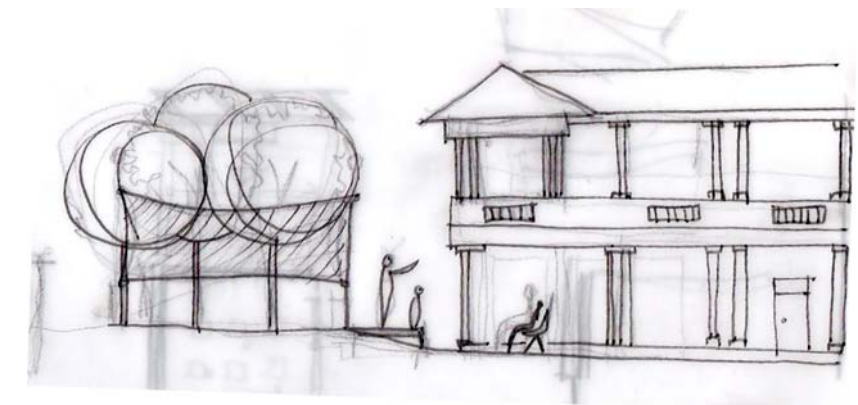


Figure 5.1.7: Sketch of outdoor performance in the courtyard

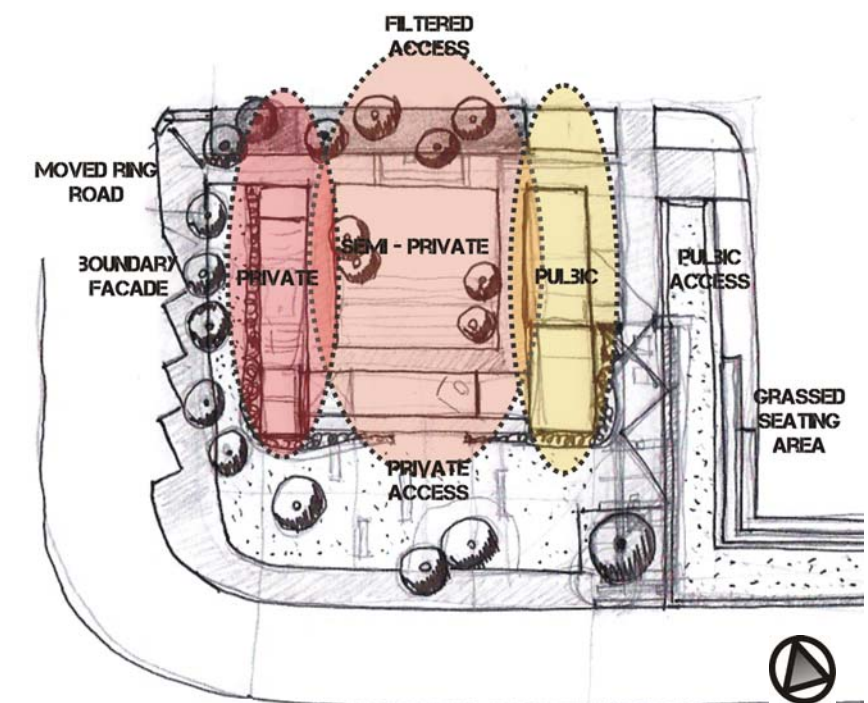


Figure 5.1.8: Sketch diagram of the Drama Building showing move from public to private spaces.

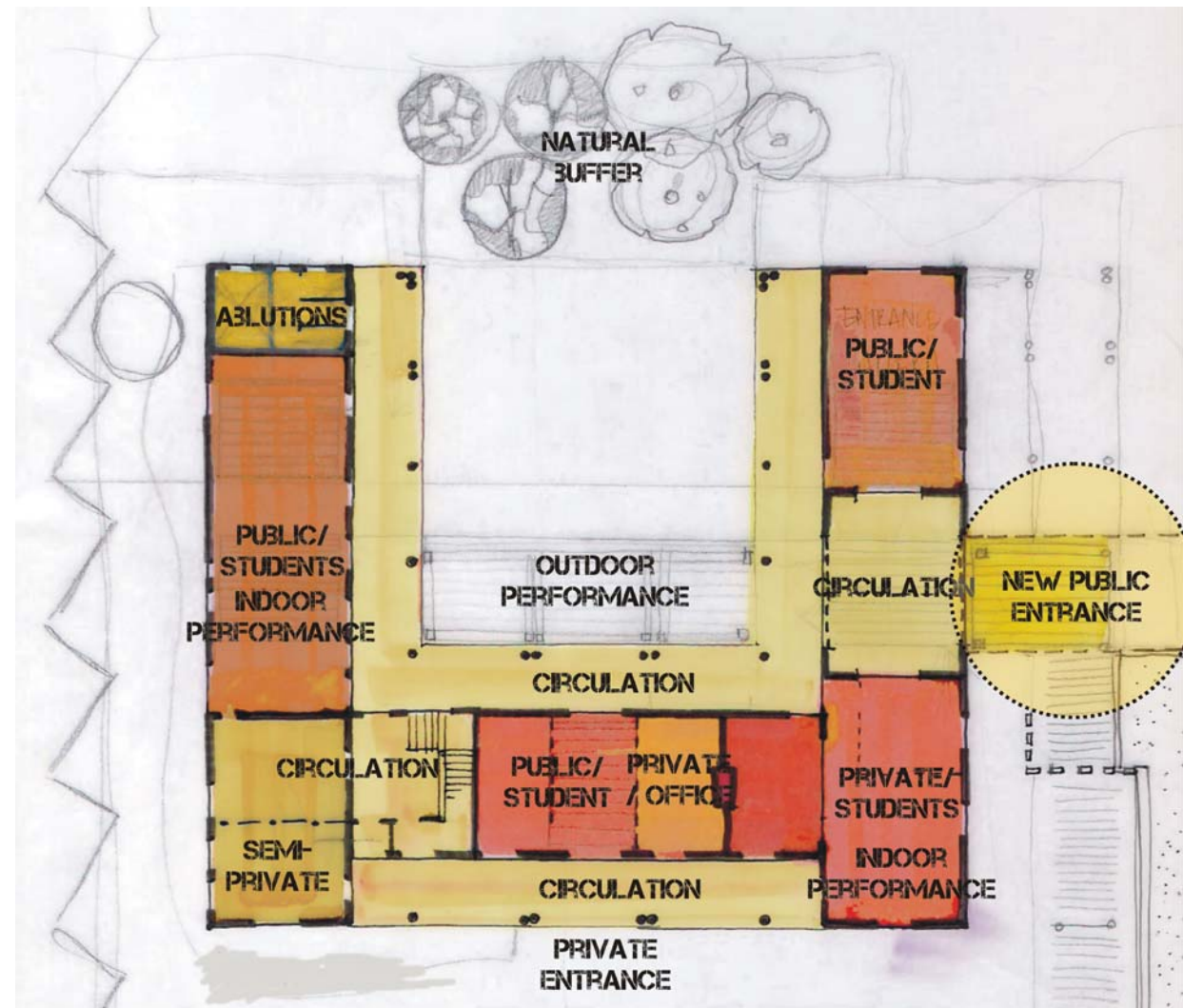


Figure 5.1.9: Spatial configuration sketch of the ground floor of the Drama Building.

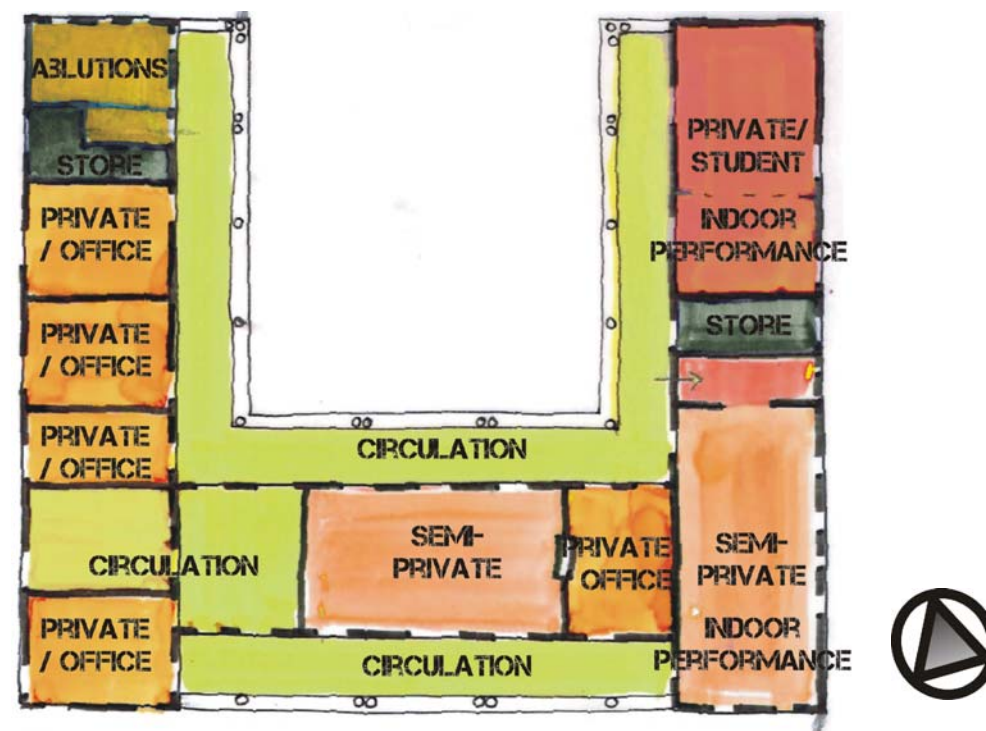


Figure 5.1.10: Spatial configuration sketch of the first floor of the Drama Building.

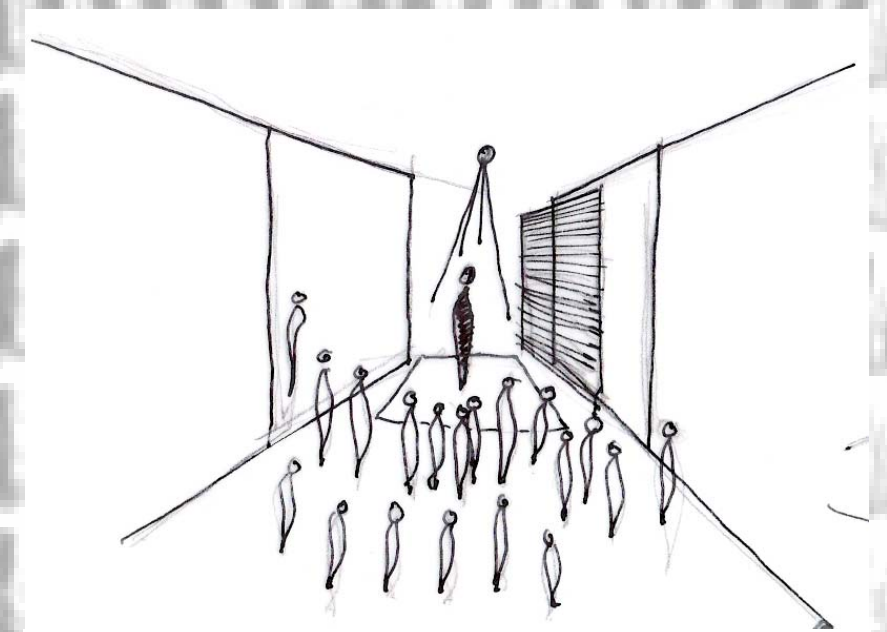


Figure 5.1.11: Concept sketch of the convertible classroom used for performance.

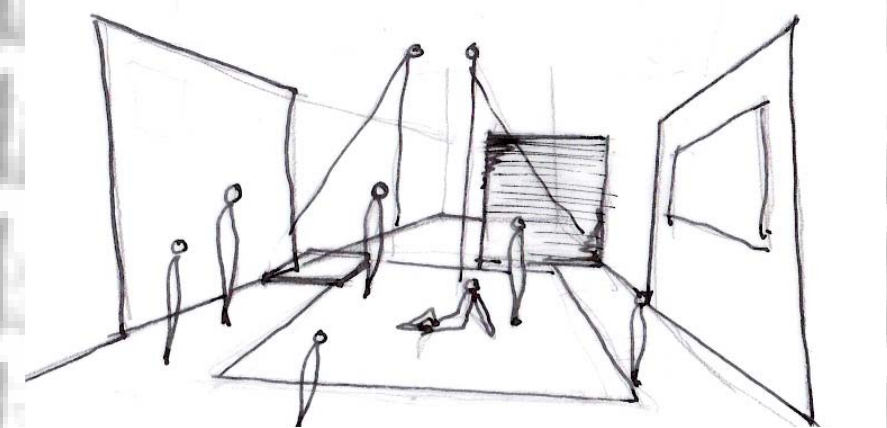


Figure 5.1.12: Concept sketch of the convertible classroom used for rehearsal.

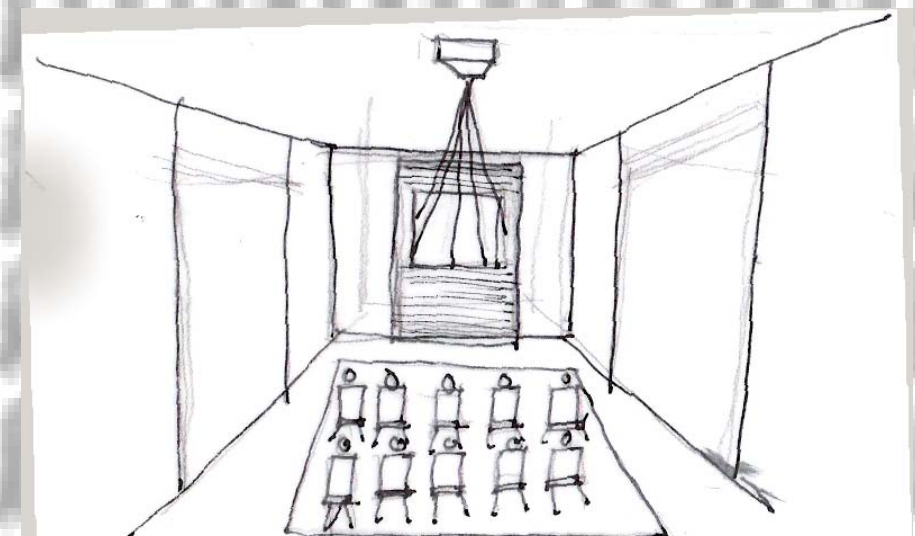


Figure 5.1.13: Concept sketch of the convertible classroom used for education.

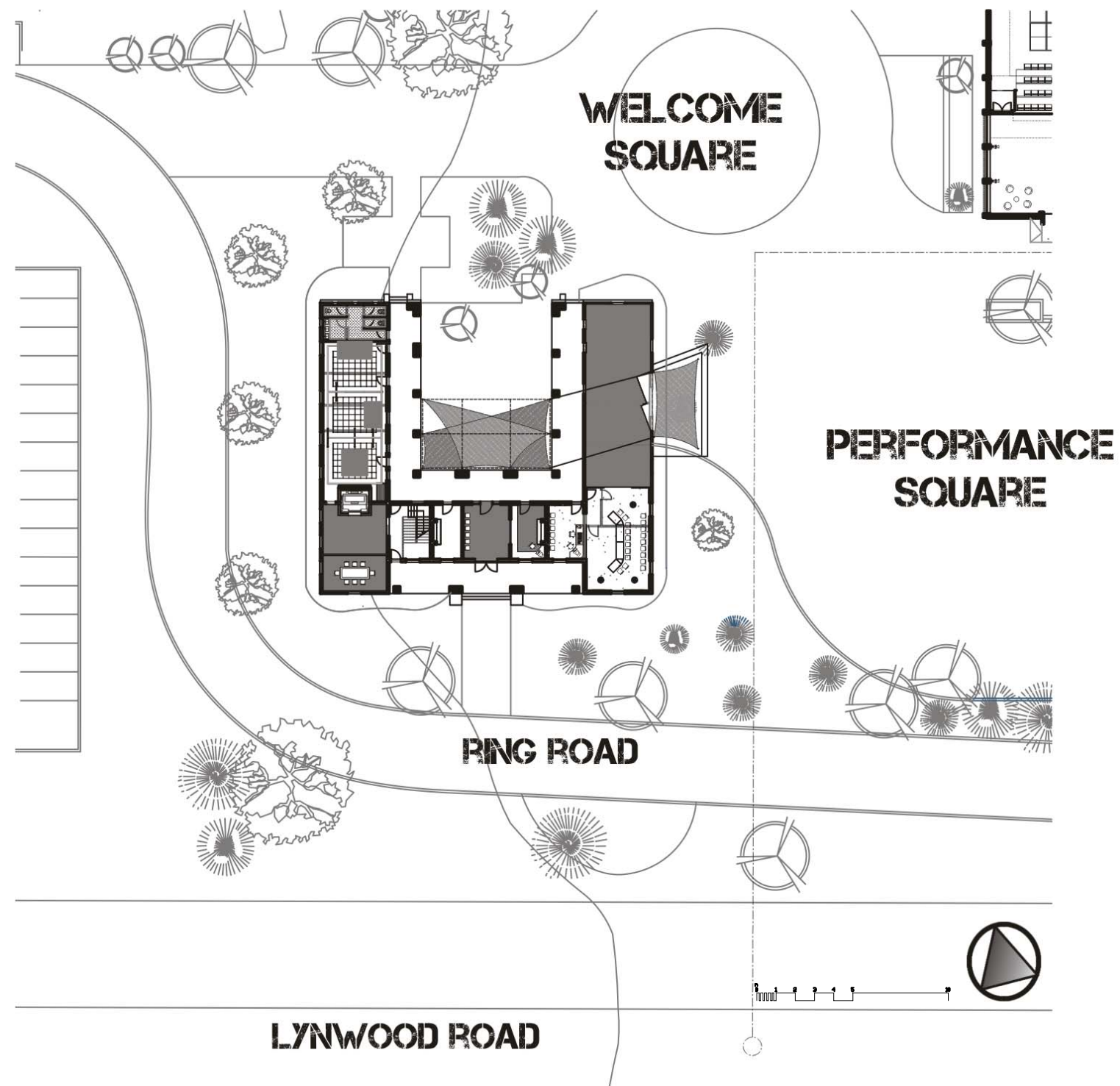


Figure 5.1.14: Site plan for the proposed design of the Drama Building. Chita M

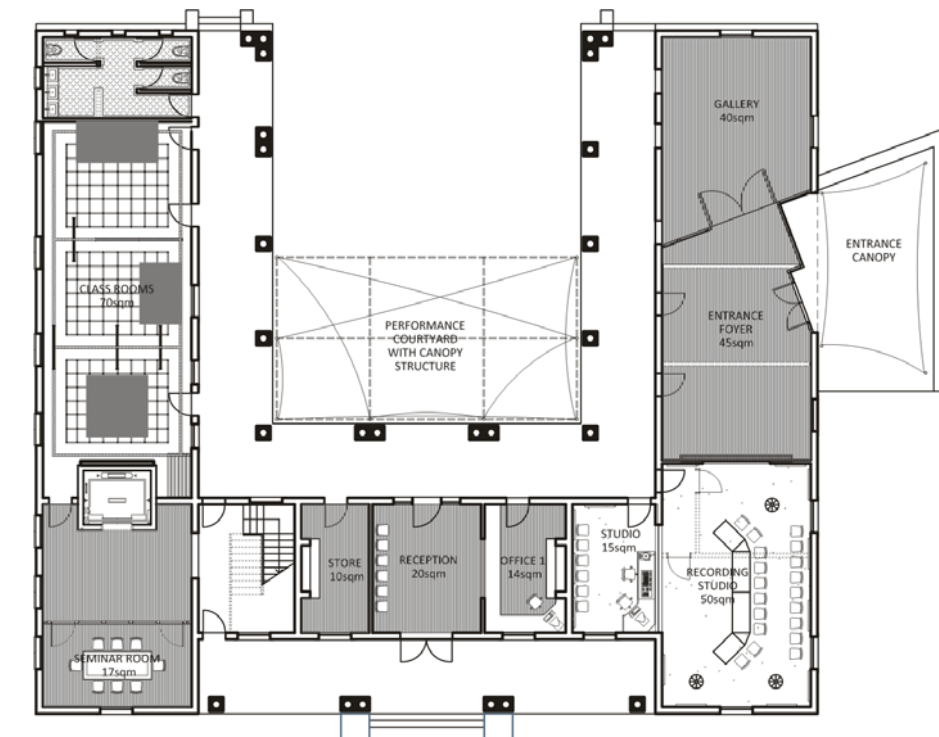


Figure 5.1.15: Ground floor plan design for the Drama Building.

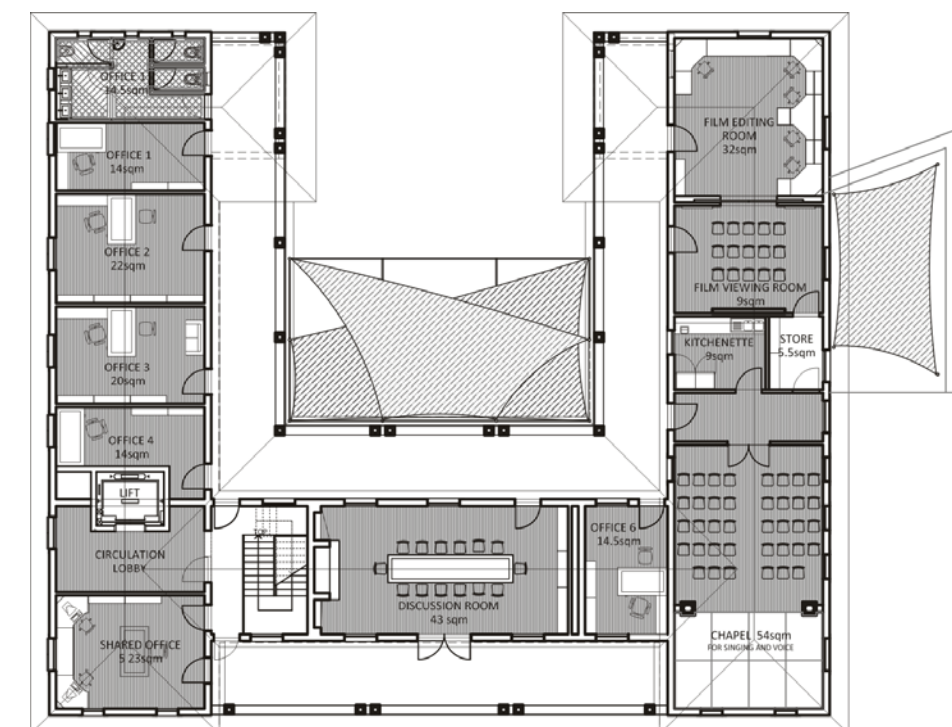
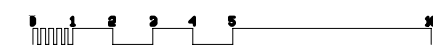


Figure 5.1.16: First floor plan design for the Drama Building.



DIE MASKER:

Die Masker theatre is the focus design intervention of the project. The building has to be treated specifically in order to maintain its existing structure due to its historic background. The idea behind Die Masker is to be a functional iconic building that allows for the education and performance of the many forms of theatre, current and historical. The essence of Die Masker's intervention basically encapsulates the ideas and criteria to which the rest of the Precinct has been designed. It plays the architectural link between the old and the new

Die Masker is a converted school hall (c.f. Context study chapter two). The additions were comprised of a service passage along the east façade, which is to be demolished as it is too small and is subsequently dysfunctional [fig.]. Additionally, internal equipment such as rostra, the light bridges, the lighting rigs and the curtains over the walls in the theatre were installed around the same time (c.f. Technical drawings chapter seven). The concepts investigated in the re-design of Die Masker were determined by a comparison of the theatres and auditoriums available on campus, as well as the form required for the theatre to function efficiently as a tool for drama education.

5.7 DESIGN CONCEPT

Typically theatre design is concerned with both with the performer and the spectator. Traditionally each has had specific spaces demarcated for them during the performance. For the entertainer, it moves from the rehearsal area, to the preparation area and finally to the performance area. From the onset, the spectator is detached from the performer. Even during the performance, they passively view the show from beyond the proscenium.

The approach to the design of a Drama Precinct seeks to challenge traditional notions of performance (c.f. Theory Chapter three). Die Masker's re-design breaks away from the notion of passive performance. Due to its context within an institute of learning, the aim of the re-designed theatre is to create an integrated space that focuses on education as well as performance. It is based on the hypothesis that a transfer of knowledge can be assisted by interaction and invited observation to actions that are normally concealed (c.f. Theory Chapter three). It is for this reason that the format of the proscenium arch has been discarded in the theatre design as the primary stage set.

Furthermore, dramatic arts training and performance is rapidly evolving and to be considered progressive, the theatre should allow for a multitude of training practises and methods (c.f. Theory Chapter three). This allows for maximum exploration and flexibility and therefore produces actors that constantly push the boundaries of the space. The existing spatial configuration and orientation of the building is derived from configurations used regularly in theatres. Die Masker theatre is the second of the three buildings of the Drama Precinct, which form boundaries that frame the central public square

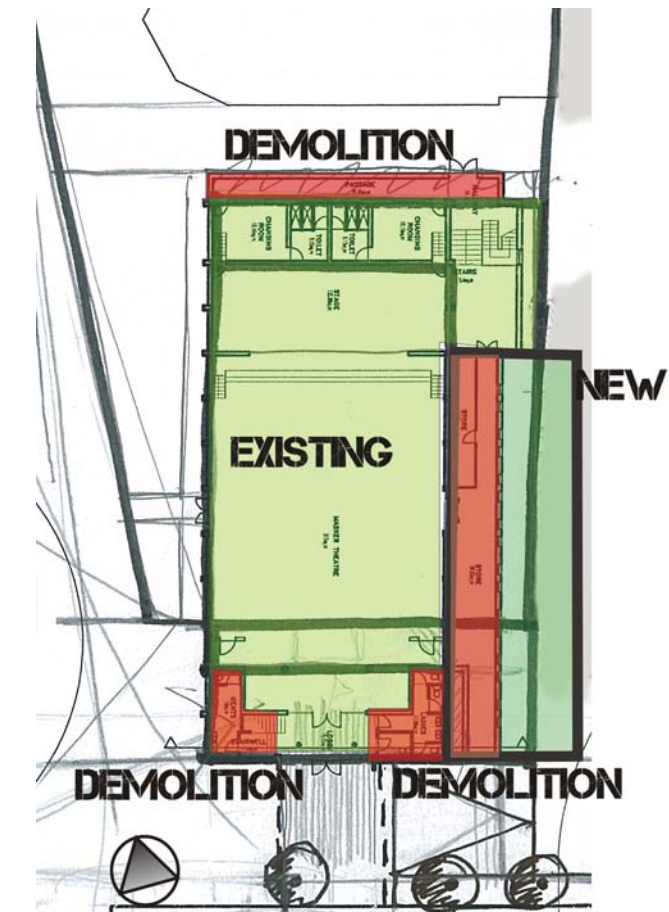


Figure 5.1.17: Sketch diagram of Die Maskers building development

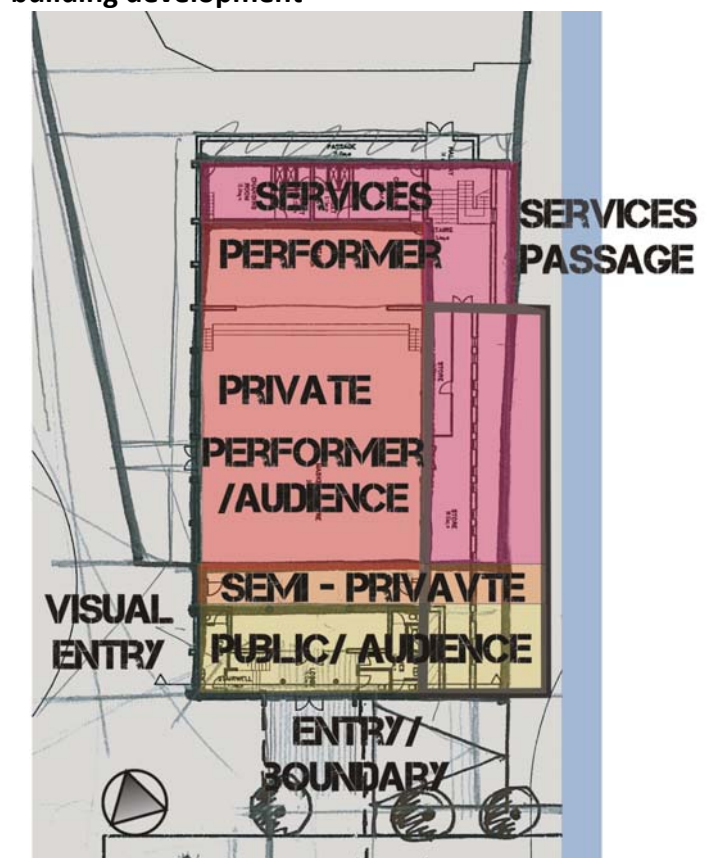


Figure 5.1.18: Concept diagram of the spatial configuration for Die Masker.

of the Drama Precinct. The southern façade of the Die Masker is the most visible of the three from Lynwood Road and the Ring Road; it is a focal point and has the potential to attract the general public. Die Masker is approached from the converging pedestrian paths on the west. It is also seen on entering the campus from Roper Street. Therefore, it plays a pivotal role in creating interest as a visual stimulus. These two façades are the points of focus that link the building to the site and create aesthetic interest, the west and the south façades.

The building is accessed from the south directly off the proposed square. In order to maintain the integrity of the existing building the south façade and the existing concrete portal frame structure are restored and maintained respectively. It is proposed that six brick infill panels (c.f. Demolition plan chapter seven) are removed from the external skin of the building to create a sense of transparency into the space and open up the building to its surroundings. The existing paint on the structure is to be stripped to reveal the natural properties of the concrete underneath. The soffit of the portal frame is to be painted a bright red to differentiate the entrance façade. The floor from within the foyer is extended to create a platform as entrance and a brushed steel canopy structure is fitted over the main entrance doors [fig. 5.1.21].

This canopy will have Die Masker Laser Cut near the long edge. Lighting that will be built into the new entrance platform will light up the canopy from below so that at night the words “Die Masker” will light up the large bricked façade; making the theatre a spectacle at night. During the day the light from above will cast a shadow in the form of “Die Masker” onto the entrance platform. The daytime image of the building is demure and inconspicuous compared to its exciting night-time demeanour and consequently the building develops a dramatic persona [fig. 5.1.19 & 20].



Figure 5.1.19: Photograph of the lighting effect of the entrance canopy during the day. Silhouette created by natural light



Figure 5.1.20: Photograph of the lighting effect of the entrance canopy during at night for performances. Silhouette created by lighting from below light.

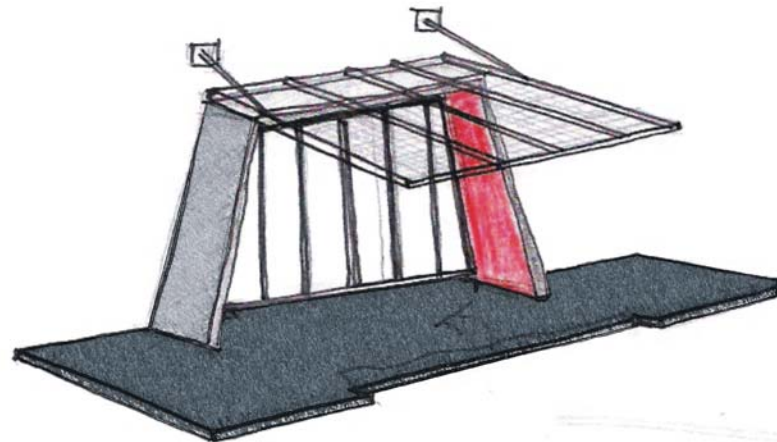


Figure 5.1.21: Sketch of the entrance canopy and existing concrete portal with internal soffit painted red.

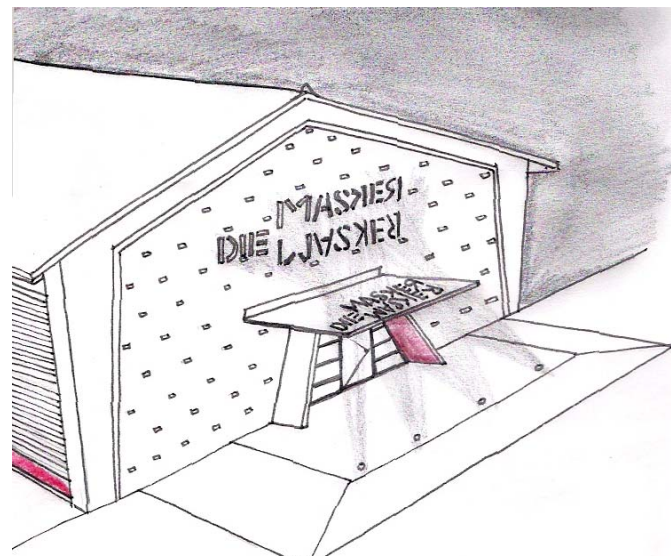


Figure 5.1.22: Sketch of existing south façade with new entrance.

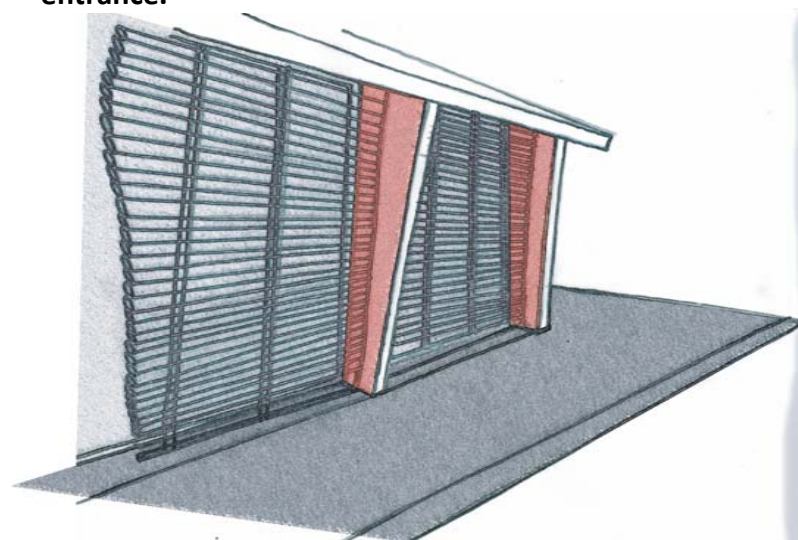


Figure 5.1.23: Sketch of louvre system on the western façade. With concrete frames painted red to create a focal point.

On the west façade, the intervention proposes the removal of the walls and brise soleil that screens the interior where one set of ablutions is currently located. The two brick panels next to that are also removed. These voids will then be fitted with glazing to create a sense of visual access into the building. The concrete portal frames where the glazing has been placed, will be painted the same bright red as the soffit of the entrance portal to differentiate the space and create a focal point showing both physical and visual access. The new glazed portions on the west are to be fitted with an aluminium computer controlled louver system, which reacts to daylight angles and opens and closes accordingly to maintain a comfortable internal environment [fig. 5.1.23]. The louvers are visible from the Roper Street entrance and are to be screen printed with a single image on each panel, so when they are open, the image is unseen, but when they are closed the images are revealed, thereby adding interest to the façade and becoming a focal point on entry into the “welcome square” [c.f. Tech drawings, west elevation west, chapter seven].

The remaining portion of the west façade will be altered by the removal of the window frames. The openings will be bricked up with concrete blocks [c.f. Demolition plans, chapter seven]. These sections of the wall will be fitted with hand-painted cement board panels and faced by a steel mesh that appears metallic during the day and is illuminated from below at night.

The north façade will be restored back to its original state. This will expose the ablution pipes from below, but as the north façade is one of two service passages, it will not be in public view. The removal of the structure will also allow for the windows into the existing change rooms to be exposed, aiding day-lighting and ventilation.

The east façade shows the addition of a new structure that grows out of the existing structure. The addition is a light steel, glass and concrete block extension that houses the two facilities. The extension is extended far enough into the service passage to retain a gap of five meters between itself and the Visitor’s Administration Building. The extension is a steel structure with concrete block walls nearer to the north façade. This is a double volume area that is fitted with a platform and a ramp that leads up to the receiving doors near the stage access. This is because the receiving door has to be at stage height (800mm above finished floor level). There are two service doors that lead onto the interior platform.

The block work facade is bag-washed and painted dark grey. This wall finish continues towards the south and terminates when it collides with the protruding dance studio. The studio space is extruded from above. There is a 3.5m walkway below a red aluminum-clad dance studio.

[Sketch of east façade]

The dance studio has a glazed section that wraps around to the south façade to create visual access into the space from the square and the proposed building. The height of the adjacent existing building casts a shadow onto the east façade and functions as solar control in the mornings. It is therefore unnecessary to have a shading system on this side. For that reason, the design intervention takes the opportunity to create visual stimulus using an extensive glazed system over the entire east side of the rehearsal studio.

An accentuated part of the extension is a light glass box that houses the new staircase and elevator.

[C.f. plans and elevations, chapter seven]

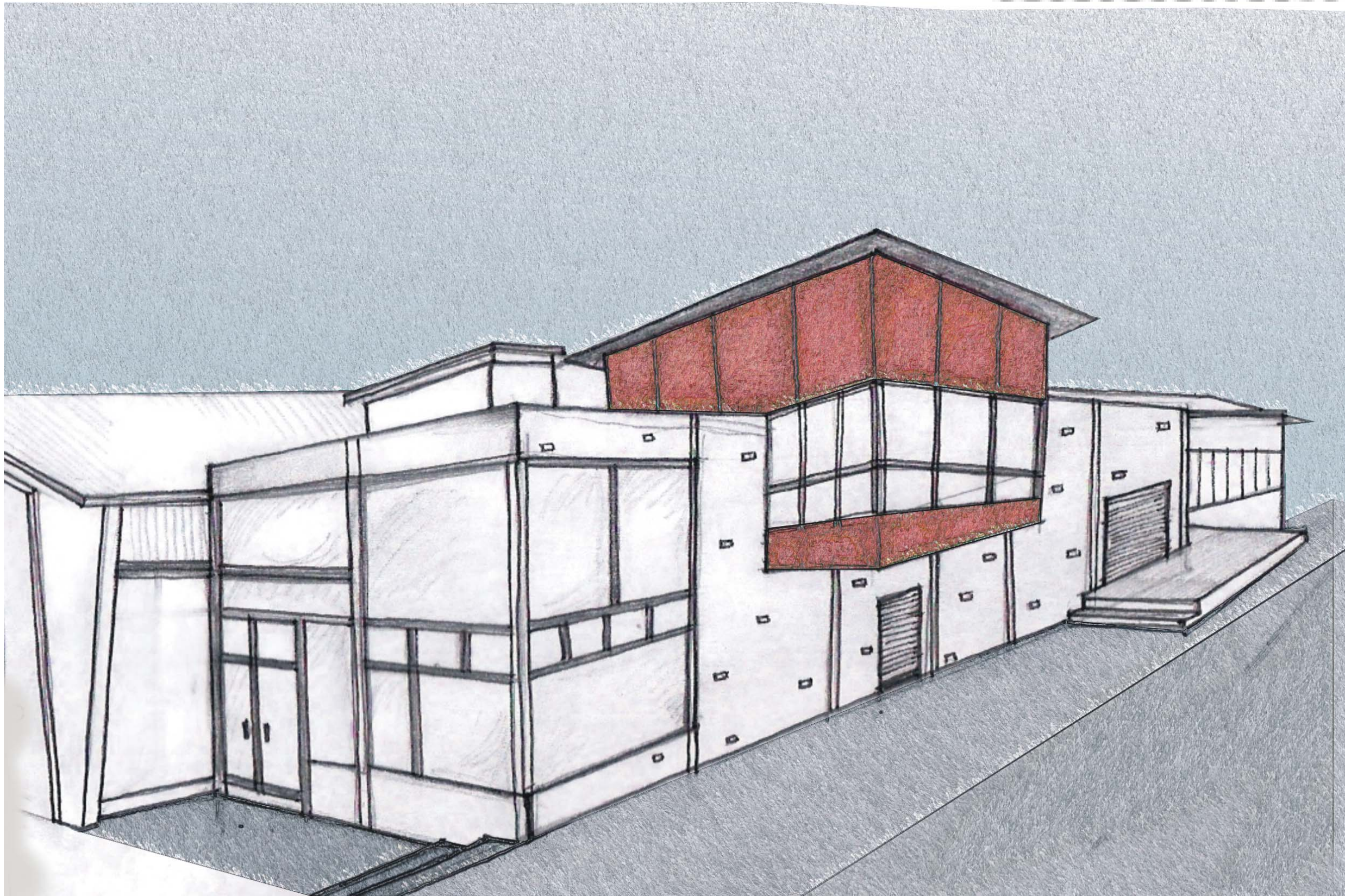


Figure 5.1.24: Sketch perspective of the new addition on the east of the existing Masker Building.

5.8 INTERIOR

Zoning of the spaces:

Hierarchical zones of use have been determined through the building. They relate to the spectator and the performer and move from public, extroverted spaces to private, introverted spaces. The first zone is a public zone where the public move freely through the space. This area includes the entrance, the foyer area and service areas. This is the space that has direct correlation with the external spaces and communicates with the other 2 buildings. This represents the first stage of transition into the building [fig.5.1.18].

In the new proposal, as one enters the building from the covered main entrance, there is a double volume space created by the removal of the slab above. There is a seating area with an obelisk seating element near the new glazing on the west. On the east there is a view to the extension that looks directly onto a glass lift and timber stairwell. The foyer is a large space with a ticket box directly across the entrance. The ticket box is built in under a suspended timber and steel cable bridge that is suspended from I- beams fitted between the portal frame above. The ticket box is a permanent glazed insert with media mesh screen for signage and advertising. The ticket box houses the controls for the louvers as well as the controls for the permanent lighting rig that illuminates the foyer. The ticket box and bridge create a threshold from the public space into a semi-private space.

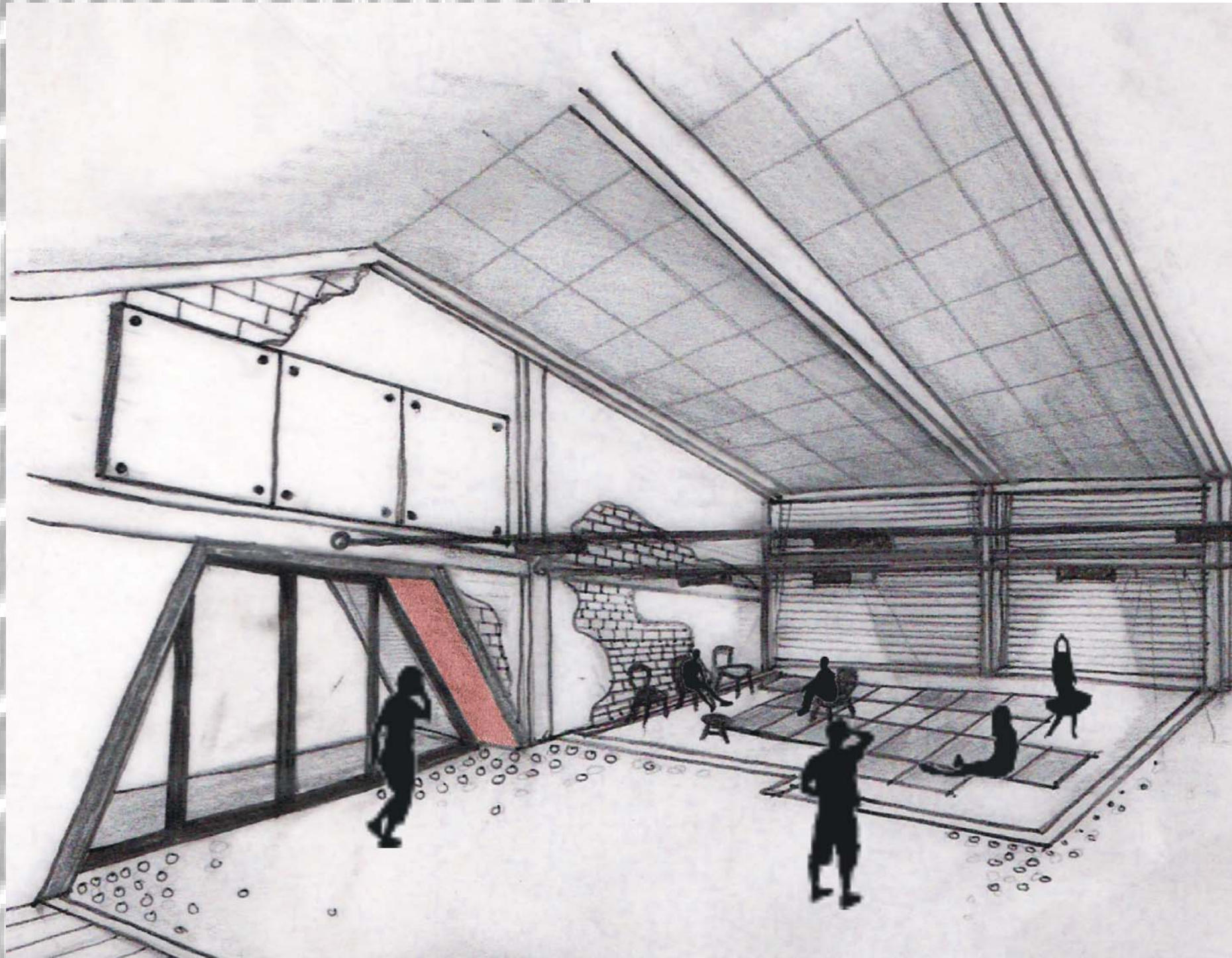
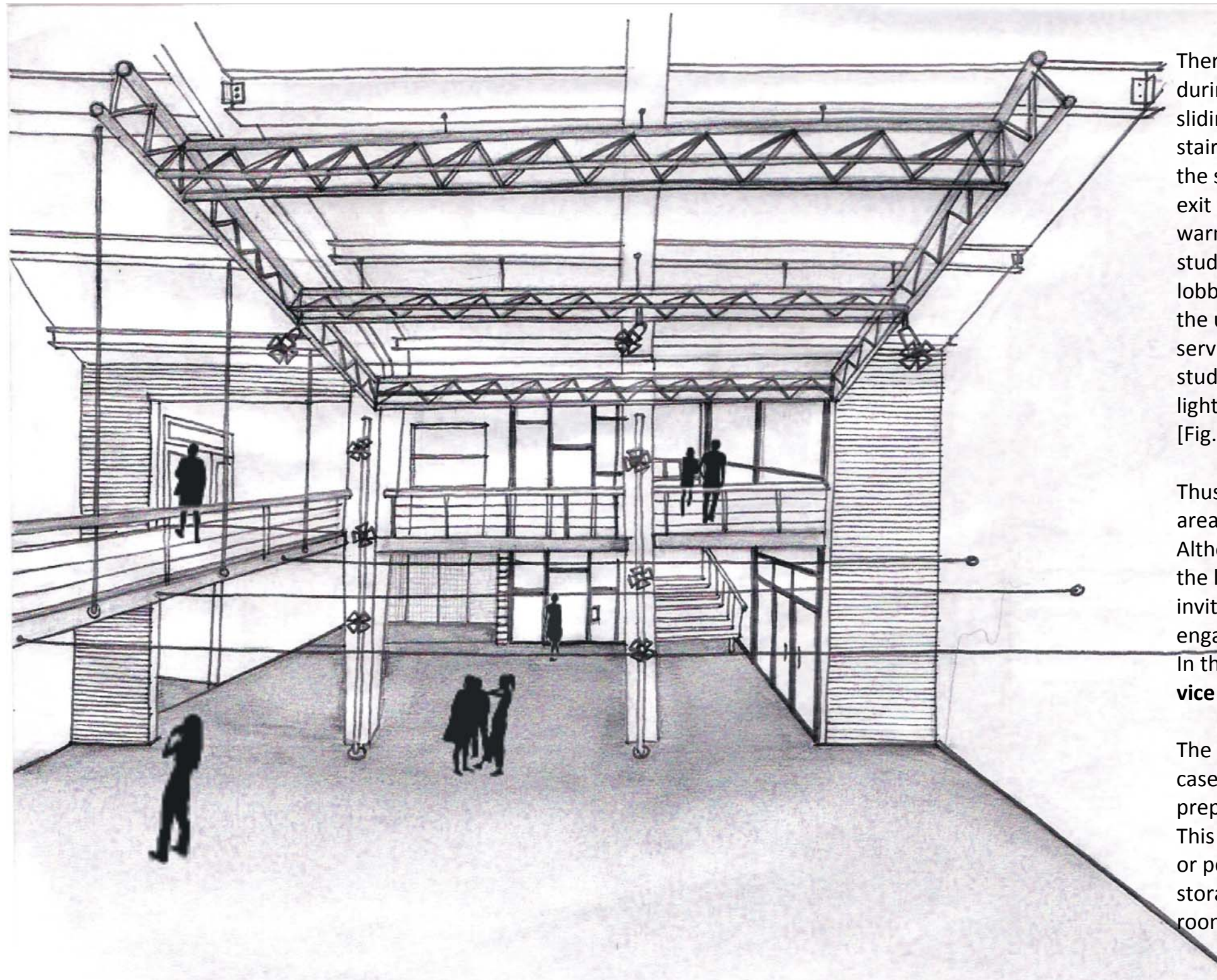


Figure 5.1.25: Sketch interior perspective of the foyer, looking at the new louvered glazing panels and seating area.



There is a small kitchenette that doubles as a tuck-shop during performance hours; this is done by means of sliding stacking doors that reveal a service counter. The stairwell and elevators are used by students going to the studio on the first floor. There is a lobby area on exit from the stairwell and lift, as well as a seating and warm-up space for students before they enter the studio. The light bridge can also be accessed from this lobby. Although it is clearly visible, the bridge is not for the use of the general public, because it leads to the service level within the theatre. It is intended for student and staff to access the control room and lighting rigs in the theatre.

[Fig.5.1.25]

Thus the first floor is considered as semi-public; this area acts as a threshold between students and visitors. Although the space is demarcated for drama students, the lightness and transparency of the construction invites the public and students from other faculties to engage and observe actions that are normally hidden. In this way, **the process becomes the performance and vice versa.**

The fourth and final zone is the private zone; as is the case with theatres, these are the spaces where the preparation and storage areas are; the “backstage”. This zone is the final transitional point for the student or performer. This space consists of dressing rooms, storage and receiving areas, backstage and the control room.

Figure 5.1.26: Sketch interior perspective of the foyer, looking towards the staircase and glass lift to the new mezzanine level where the dance studio can be accessed.



THE THEATRE

The theatre is the focal point of the building. Access is from two sound proof doors on either side of the ticket box in the foyer. The spectator moves through a sound lobby curtained off from the large dark theatre. The theatre has been designed to enable many forms of theatrical configurations. The rostra and existing lighting rigs and equipment have been removed. The theatre floor is level up until the stage at the end. There is a 1.5 meter wide bridge that is built along the lengths of the theatre that is of the same material as the bridge in the foyer. These bridges need to be sound absorbent in order to reduce the noise of footsteps. The bridges in the theatre extend from the new level where the control booth is located and creates access around the periphery of the theatre for maintenance and lighting. The lighting bridges and rigs have been replaced by a suspended tension grid system hung from I-beams fitted between portal frames. This new structure allows for easy access to various lighting fixtures and easy installation of lighting rigs. The tension grid is accessed via ladders from the bridges on either side. The tension grids allow for human access (c.f. refer to Technical Chapter six).

The lighting rig pipes are fixed to the tension grid suspension structure using clamps. These can be changed and moved when needed to allow for flexibility of design. There is also a projection machine fixed from the tension grid, and this can be accessed via panels adjacent to it so that it can be opened for maintenance. The lighting is powered by outlets along the walls of the second level. Speakers are hung from the tension grid above near the balustrades of the bridges. There is one speaker on each side of the stage and at the halfway point, another two. They are all angled at just below 90 degrees towards the theatre entrance to allow for proper sound distribution (Burris-Meyer & Cole, 1964: 156).

Figure 5.1.27: Interior perspective of the rehearsal studio

THE STUDIO

The studio is located on the first floor. It is accessed via the main entrances. The studio is fitted with sprung-board floors, mirrors and dance rails. There is a store room particularly for the rehearsal studio. The studio is designed to be a projected element from the building that suspends itself within a red box that can be seen from the eastern pathways and the north and south. The idea was to have a space which projects outwards as a place for preparation of the performance contrasting to the closed off box next adjacent, showing what goes into theatre training that is not usually seen. The interior depicts a light almost “exterior” feel with an all around glazing to the south and east and a transparent ceiling that radiates ambient light throughout rehearsal times. Colour changing LED lighting above the translucent ceiling panels were used to radiate atmospheres when

needed for performances. The mirrors reflect the outside and enlarge the space. This space can also adapt itself to being a space for performance as it is viewed from the passer by, hence becoming a focal point of the internal space viewed from the outside.

Since the studio is located adjacent to the theatre, it requires acoustic insulation. The space is acoustically controlled with panels above the mirrors on the northern wall. The wall adjacent to the theatre are clad with the Envirodeck timber wall cladding and a sound absorbent backing to separate and absorb sounds penetrating into the theatre. This studio becomes a pull out from the existing to be a focus which highlights that the dramatic arts training is actually also a visual stimulus for the passer by and it creates the vibrancy within the square through the use and movement within being displayed to the public [fig. 5.1.24].

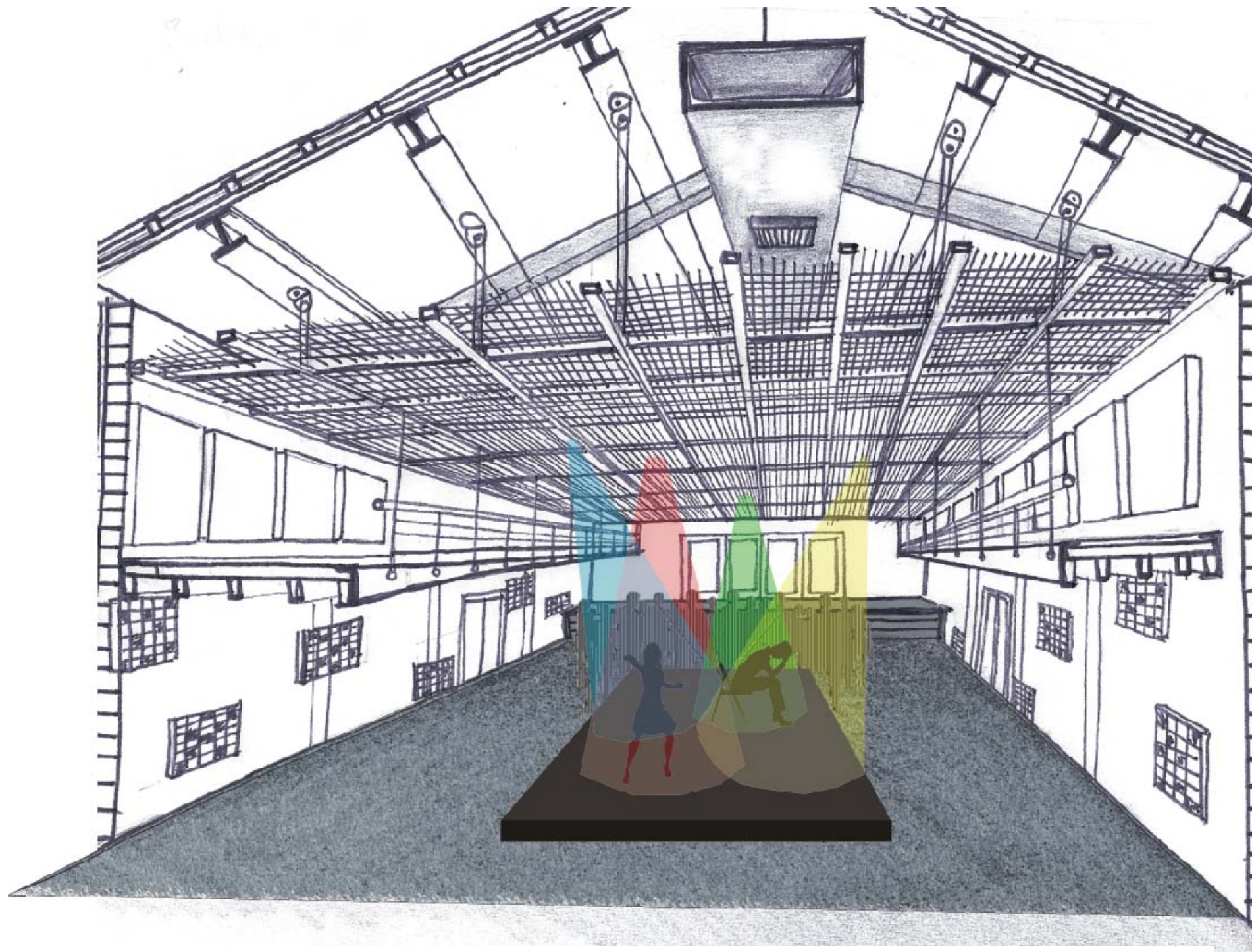


Figure 5.1.28: Interior perspective of the multi-purpose theatre

Most of the spectator access is on the ground level. This space is a level area with retractable seating elements designed to fit under the stage extension and in the recess between the two sound lobbies. These are specially designed retractable seating elements that can be moved to create various theatre configurations and are designed to theatre auditorium specifications, creating correct sight lines and comfort. There is also assembled stage equipment is stored away, and can be wheeled into the theatre and assembled for the various theatre configurations. The stage on the end has been extended with voids beneath that house the retractable seating. The proscenium has been retained, but the curtain system has been removed. This will be replaced by motorized sliding stacking doors that are acoustic barriers for when the backstage is closed off as well as the edge of the theatre when the configurations do not require the space behind.

BACKSTAGE

The backstage area begins where the sliding stacking doors separate the theatre and the service area. The proscenium is retained for the use of the theatre in proscenium configuration. The service areas consist of dressing rooms, storage and receiving spaces, and maintenance and ablution facilities for the performers and staff. The storage, receiving and maintenance spaces are located in the extended part of the building. These spaces are accessed via the external service path where sets, props, equipment and costumes can be brought in and temporarily stored on site in specific storage spaces.

The existing dressing rooms have been reconfigured with access to a single ablution facility between two dressing rooms. The ablution facilities are designed to adapt to the existing water and waste services. This happens on the ground and first floor. The remaining areas are retained for a chair store on the ground level

and a costume store on the first floor, which is accessed via existing steel staircases on each side of the stage. The structure acts as a back wall for the proscenium.

The existing stage space can be activated when the end stage configuration is used. This space is fitted with lighting pipe rigs and a cyclorama.

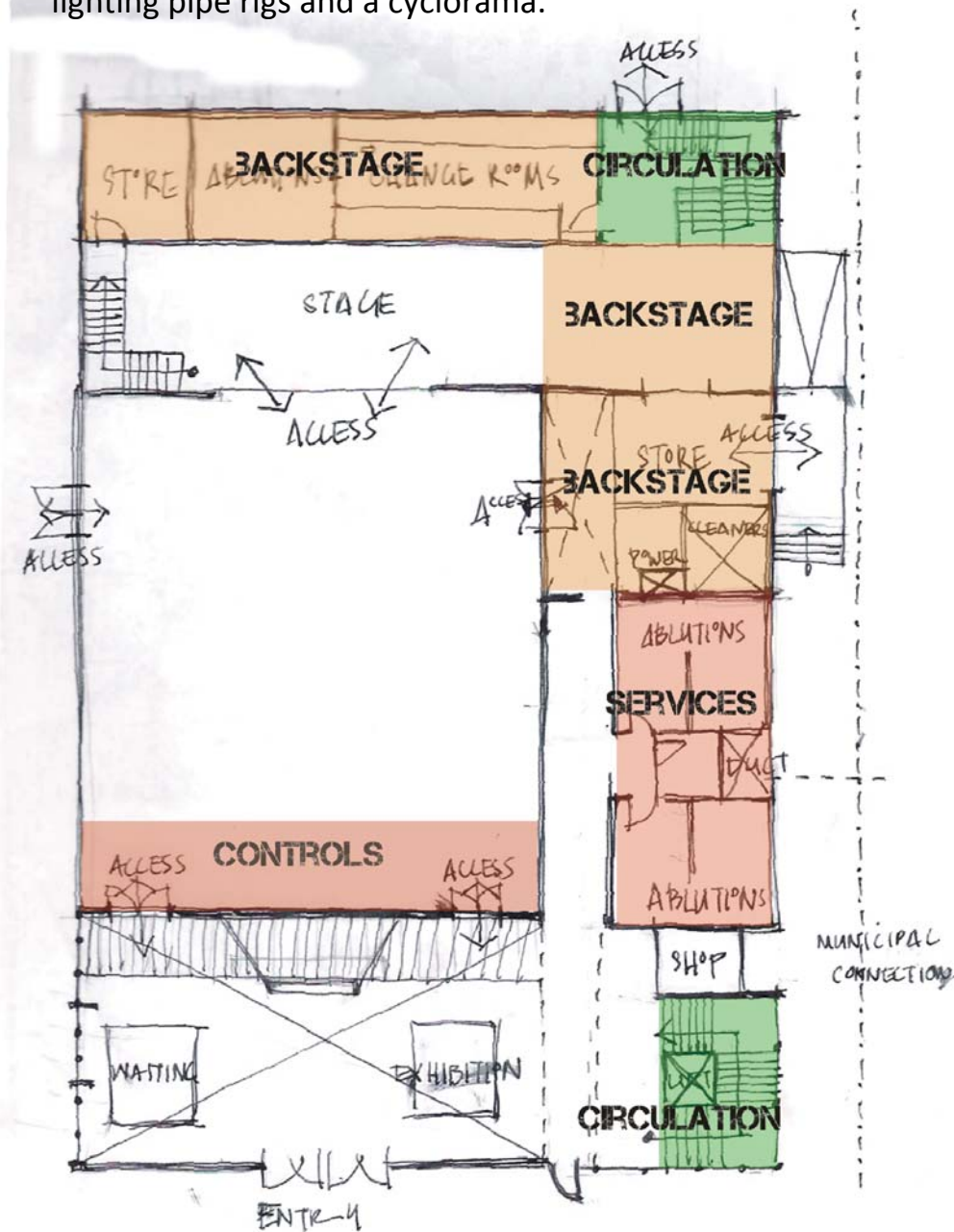


Figure 5.1.29: Spatial configuration for the backstage and service areas

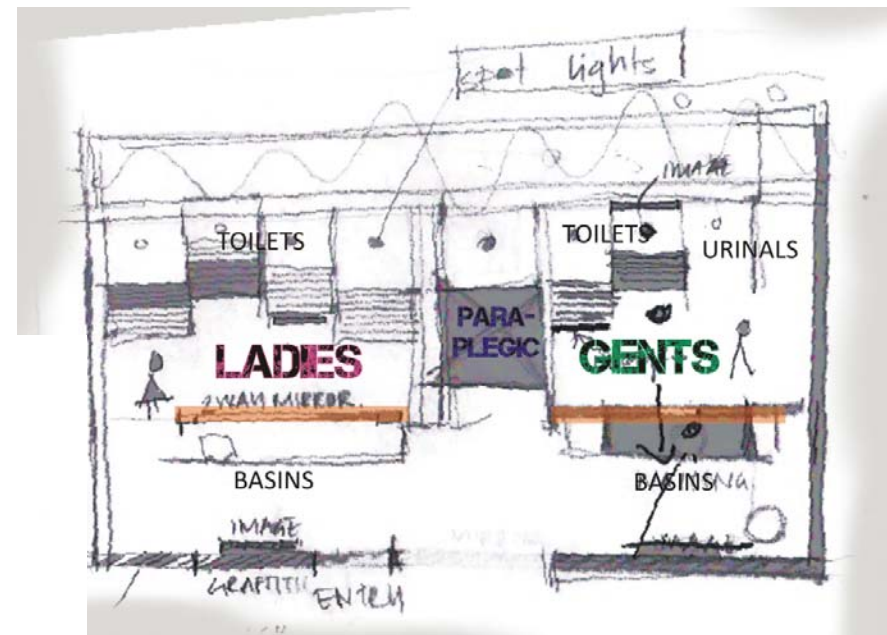


Figure 5.1.30: Concept plan of the ablution facilities.

PUBLIC ABLUTIONS

The public ablutions are located in between the store and the kitchenette. With the aid of a two way mirror that separates the basins and passage to the toilet cubicles, making use of the facilities is a tongue in cheek experience that simultaneously pushes human boundaries and plays on the idea of a performance: every act of life can be a performance. The people washing their hands or fixing their make-up at the basins are unaware that they are being watched by others in the room behind the two way mirror. Conversely, the people walking into the cubicles are under the impression that they are being watched when in fact, they are not. To expand the concept, feature walls display rows of toilet paper mounted onto holders in a playful tactic that blurs the boundaries between ordinary life and dramatic art. [Fig.5.1.30 & 31]

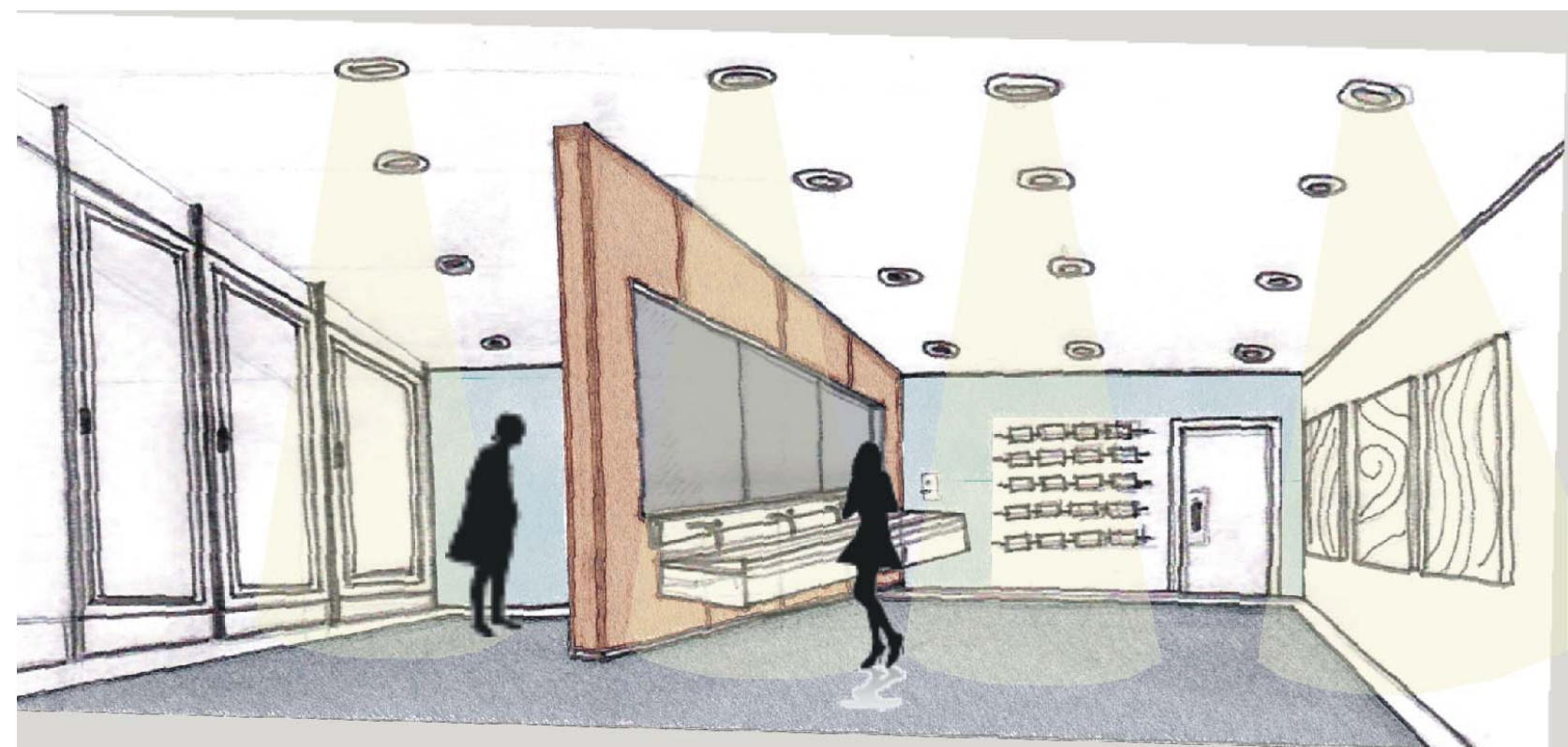


Figure 5.1.31: Sketch Interior perspective of the ablution facilities.

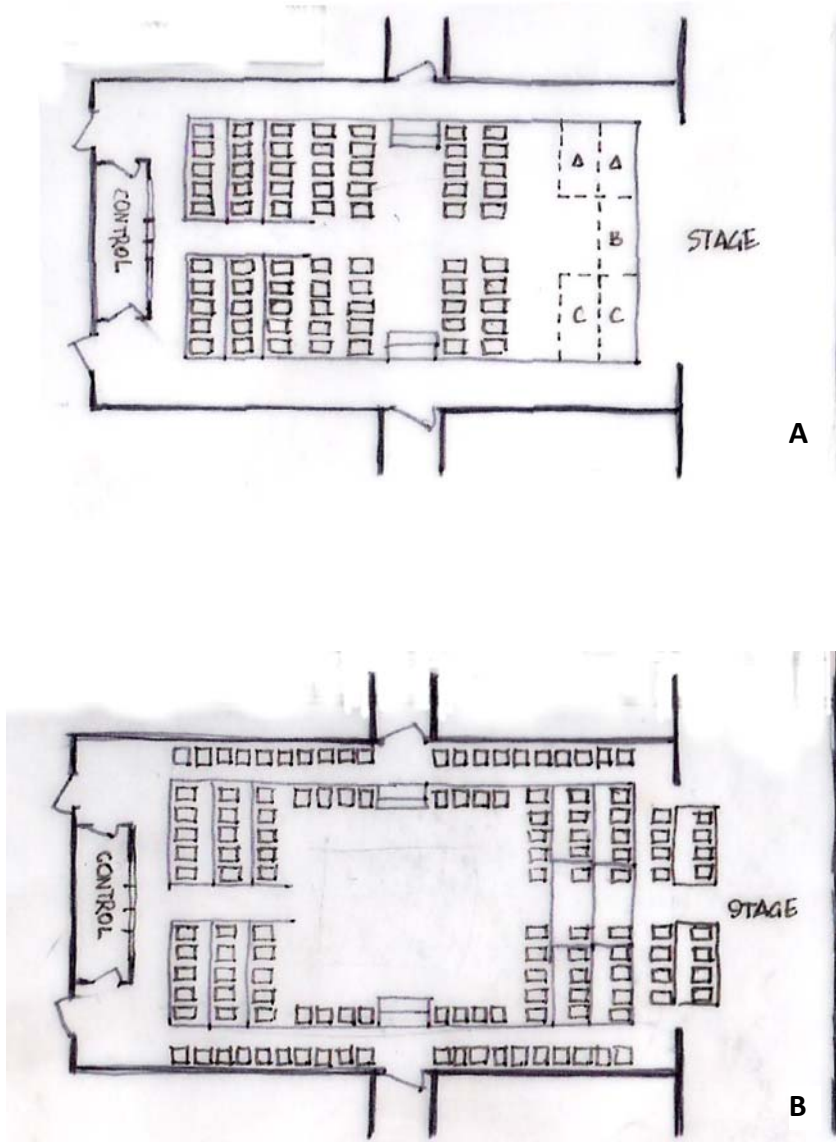


Figure 5.1.32: Concept theatre configurations which aid in the variation of use of the theatre space with regard to education as well as performance. A. thrust stage, B. theatre in the round.

PERFORMANCE AREAS

All spaces are to be considered as potential performance spaces. They are spaces where one watches and gets watched. Moreover, they have the capacity to be interpreted in a multitude of ways. The foyer area, for example, has retractable ladders that facilitate performance in the foyer space before the audience even enter the seating area. In this way, the audience is transformed from passive spectators into interactive members of the performance.

ACOUSTICS AND LIGHTING

The acoustics of the spaces are designed to be textured neutral backdrops in the theatre space. Mounted on the wall, at 3 meters above finished floor level, are a series of absorbent acoustic panels that can be constructed and repaired on site. They are timber-framed panels, sponge-covered and lined with black fabric. Mounted on the wall at floor level are sound diffusing panels. Some have lighting fixtures mounted behind them and serve to diffuse the house lights. The sound diffusing panels are a neutral colour and are therefore not imposing elements during the performance.

The theatre lighting rigs have been provided for and the lighting will be located according to lighting design. Outside of the main theatre ambient lighting is used as well as LED down lighters on live wire.

COLOUR AND TEXTURE

The existing brick and concrete structure is contrasted by the use of steel, glass and timber elements in the new structure. These elements act as attachments to the existing structure, and are either hung or clipped onto it, for example the glass stairwell, the aluminium louvers, and the suspended timber bridge. The idea behind the design is to have a system of exposed structures that can be used and configured for direct view and access as it is a performance education centre. The materials are to be strong and versatile enough to allow for high traffic and concentrated use of every space. The industrial finishes with the lightness of the glass and the use of timber create a space that feels useable. The dark interior colours provide for a neutral backdrop for performance and lighting.

