



## Chapter 3

### Precedent Study

### 3.1 : Local design precedent

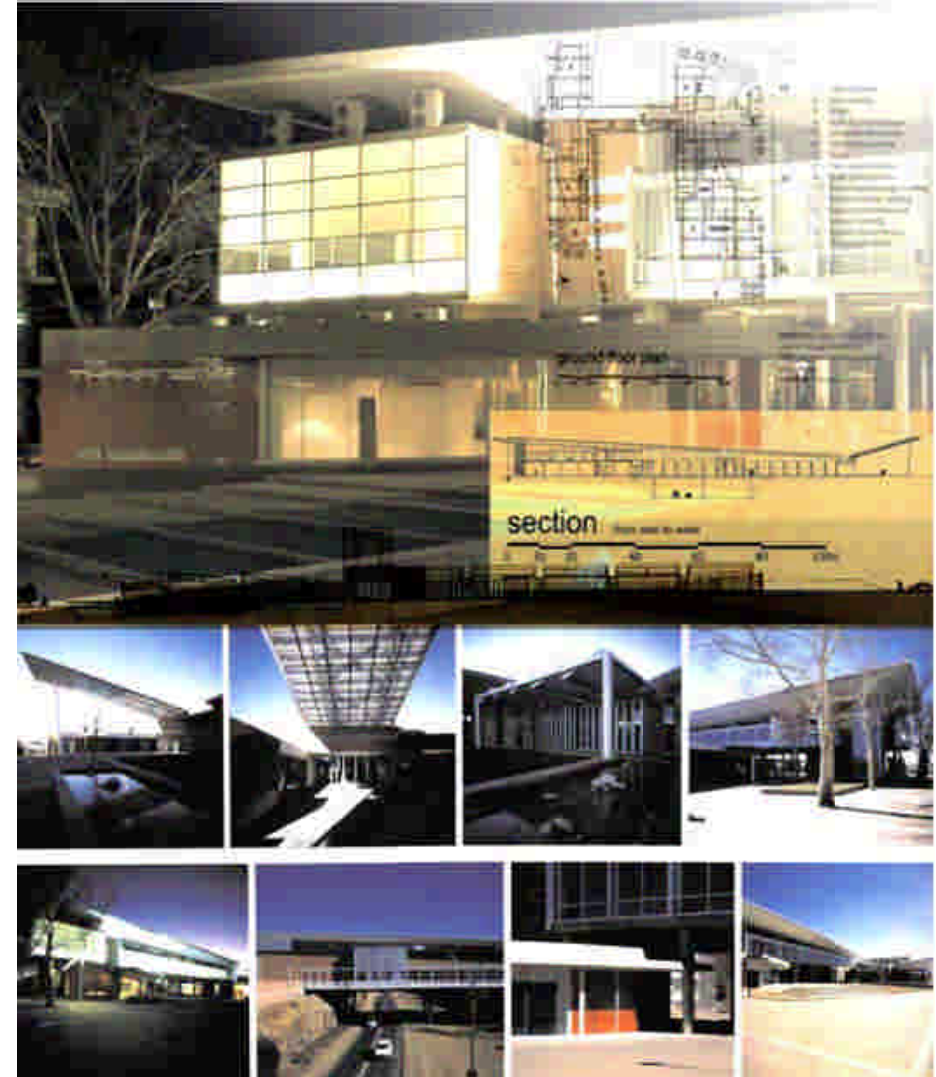
Thakaneng Bridge Student Centre

Location : University of The Free State  
Bloemfontein  
South Africa

Architects: Bannie Britz & The Roodt Partnership

Thakaneng Bridge student centre is a suitable precedent for this project because it addresses numerous similar issues that allow any designer to pose relevant questions to the UP Main Campus student centre. In *Contemporary South African Architecture in a Landscape of Transition* (Decker, Graupner, Rasmus ,2006) Thakaneng Bridge student centre was designed to respond to transition routes as a primary factor. Bannie Britz's initial design unintentionally, but effectively addressed the main north/south and east/west axes. There was clear intention of the use of urban design principles to create the numerous public realms of a macro metropolis, such as public squares, streets, forecourts and so on.

Britz paid attention to pedestrianisation of the routes, landscaping, as well as the marking of gateways through the structure that may seem to hinder transition. He acknowledged the need for creating pleasant outdoor places for all users of this space by use of street furniture such as seating, bollards, information stands and so on, but it was executed in a subtle manner such that the result was not municipal and visually intrusive.

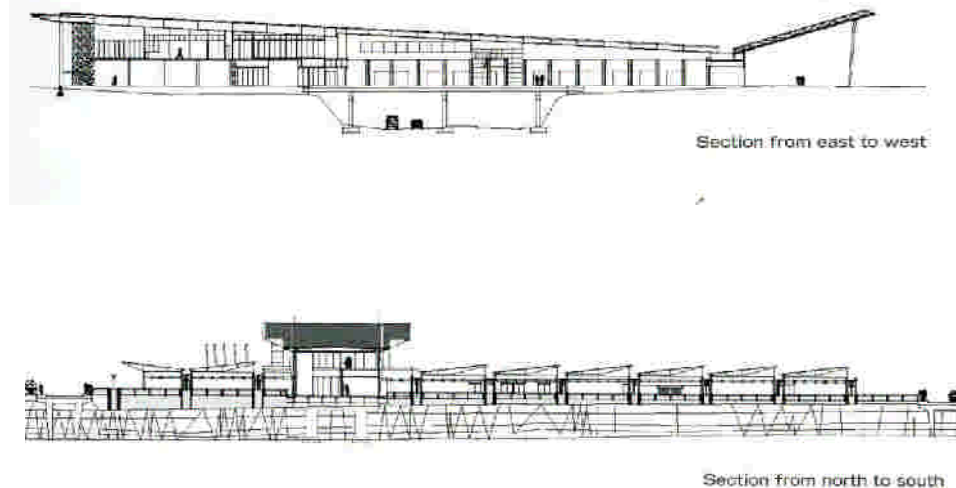


Thakaneng Bridge Student Centre

Figure 3.1

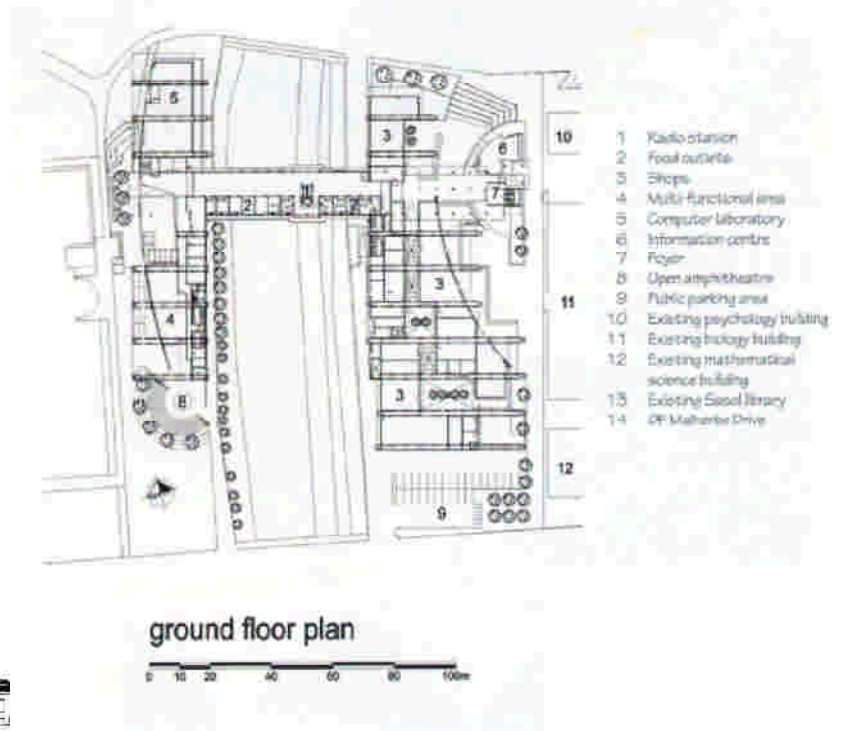
PG Raman (Raman, 2002) notes, Anton Roodt of the Roodt Partnership had a worthy contribution to the Thakaneng Bridge student centre by introducing the concept of an inhabited bridge. While there is no application of the bridge as specific precedent to this project, the facilities in a building designed to address transition routes from and to public spaces aids in the design approach.

Roodt's concept was to extend the east/west axis to link the east and west sides of the campus by an inhabited bridge. The bridge includes fast food outlets on the ground floor and offices for student services on the first floor. The flanks of the bridge house a media centre and cafeteria on the east and a host of commercial facilities on the west.



Sections through Thakaneng Student Centre

Figure 3.2



Plan and model through Thakaneng Student Centre

Figure 3.3

### 3.2: Branding in architecture precedent

High Performance Centre - HPC

Location: University of Pretoria  
Hatfield Campus, Pretoria  
South Africa

Architects: Don Albert and Partners

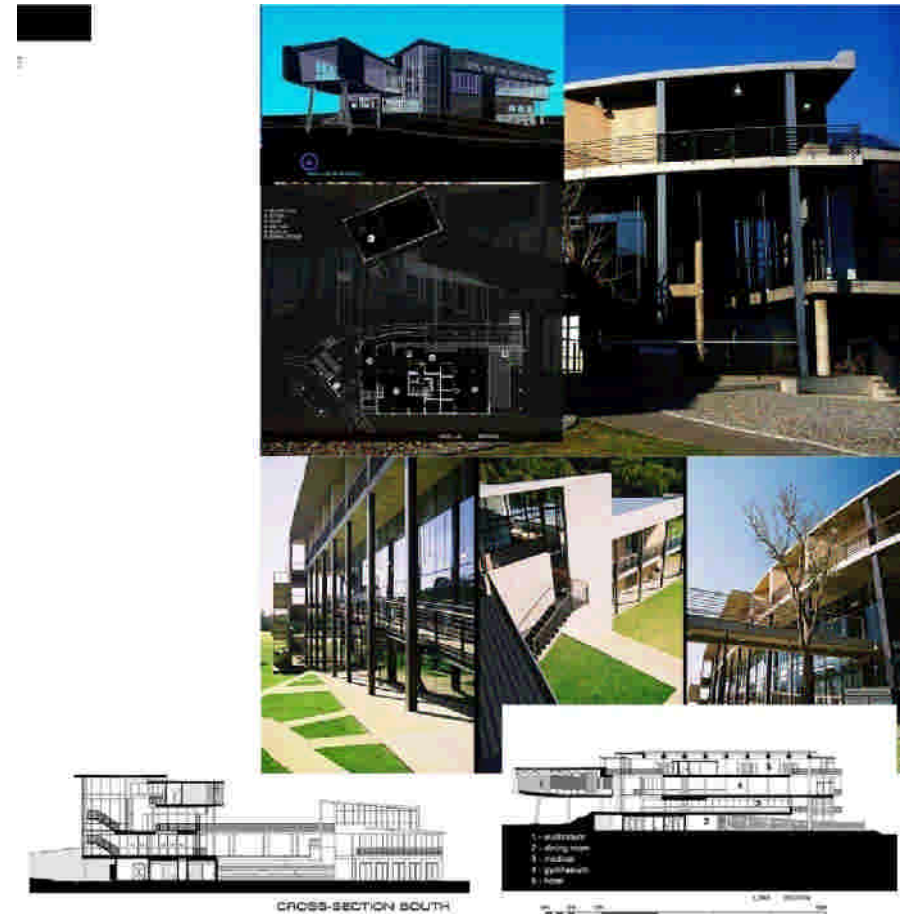
As a public-private partnership between the University of Pretoria, Benstra and the ICON Institute of Professional Rugby (PTY) LTD, the 5000m<sup>2</sup> phased project called for an innovative planning approach to the many ICON branded functions and special business entities that were to occur on the university's sports campus, while infusing an institutional character through the use of an appropriate architectural language. (Decker, Graupner, Rasmus ,2006)

Indeed the conceptual design found commonality between the following abstract notions:

*SPORT INSTITUTION MEDIA CAMPUS*

The design called for the building to complement the purpose of the HPC, as well as the functions and events that would be associated with the HPC brand identity. The notions of sport, institution, media and campus were the drive behind the concept for the design of the building.

Cutting edge design that echoes the developments and innovations that are born at the HPC was the order of the day.



High Performance Centre – University of Pretoria

Figure 3.4





### 3. International interior design precedent

The McCormick Tribune  
Campus Center

Location: Illinois Institute of Technology  
Illinois  
United States of America

Architects: Rem Koolhaas

McCormick Tribune Campus Centre provides good precedent for planning and interior solution to this project. The environment is dynamic, in that it has the ability to change with time by way of the frame building system that has been applied.

The finishes are modern and the facilities have a synergy with the spaces around them. The layout of the interior was inspired by existing pathways that were used by students as they walked under the railway track that has now been integrated into the roof of the building. The paths used from the design concept allowed the architect to design plazas, 'streets' and urban islands to assist in articulating the location of services to essentially group them into neighbourhoods.

The interior spaces (Figure 3.6) show the use of modern but practical materials. Glass and steel are used in simple and functional applications. Warm colour tones are used in to mitigate the potential hardness of steel glass and screed. Notably, the warm tones of red and orange are well suited for educational institutions as they stimulate focus as well as energy based positive emotions such as passion in users of the spaces.

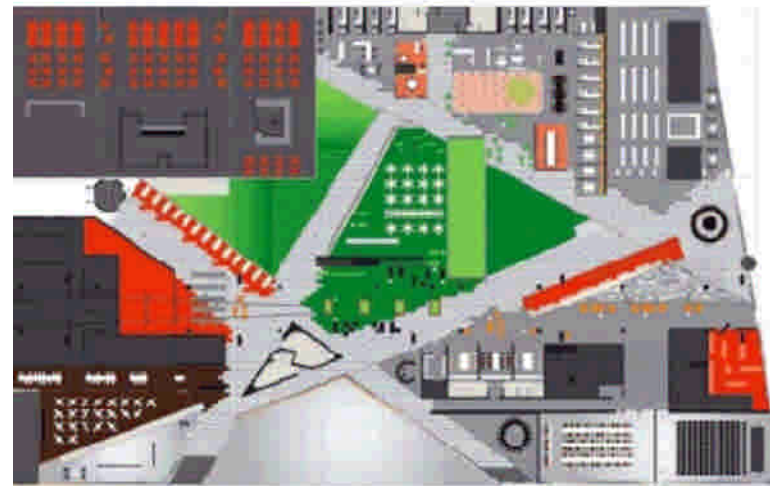
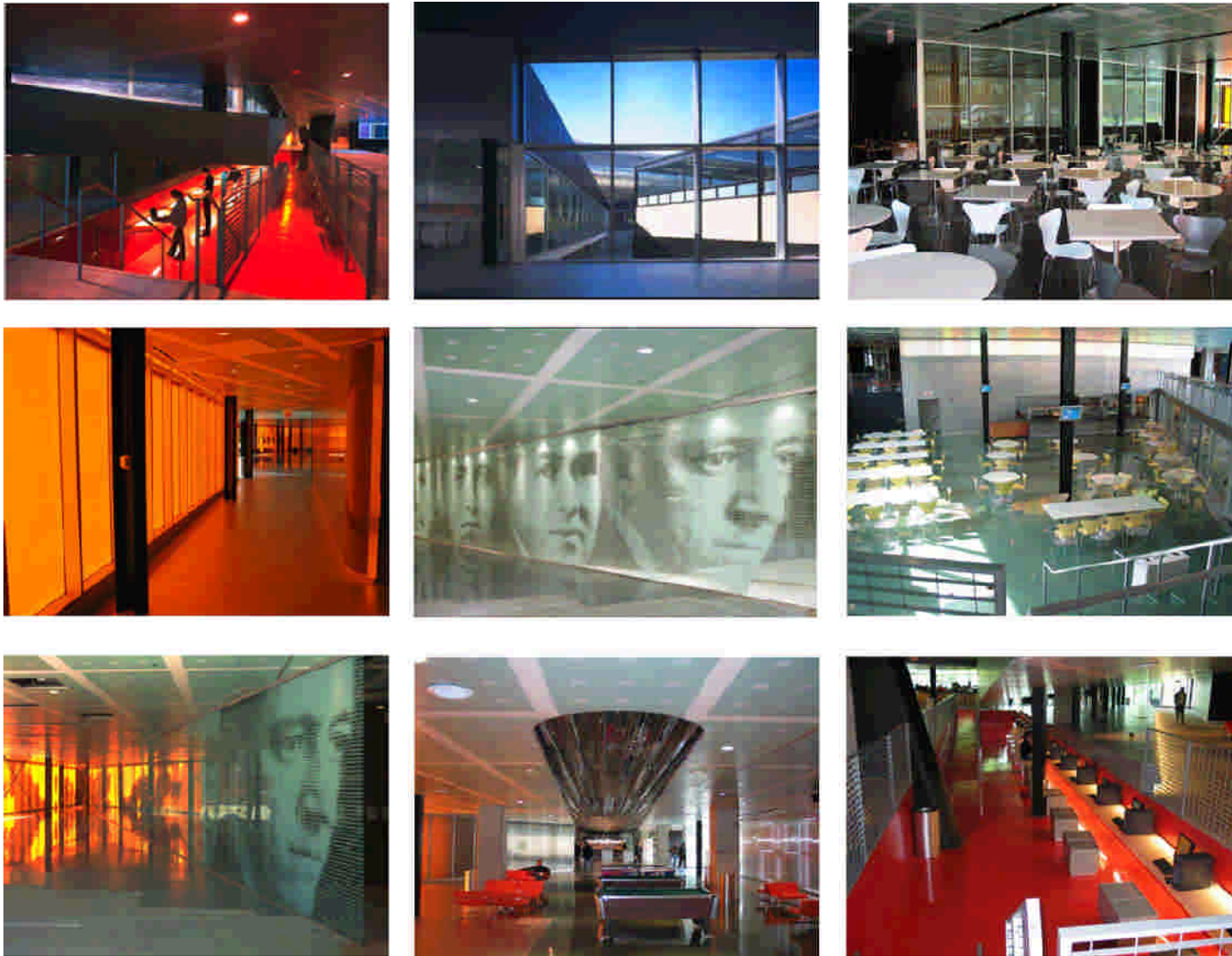


Figure 3.5  
The McCormick Tribune Campus Centre – Illinois Institute of Technology



The McCormick Tribune Campus Centre Interior- Illinois Institute of Technology

Figure 3.6



## Chapter 4

### Design Discourse

## 4.1 The 'CORE' brand

### Target market

**Primary target:** the student (extrovert, introvert, all races, academic, socialite and so on).

**Secondary target:** potential students, university visitors, staff, marketers, promotions agents, sponsors, advertisers, service contractors.

### Brand values

The core brand belongs to students not only as a student campus lifestyle brand, but also in its physical manifestation as the new student centre, which will be appropriately named The Core. Brand ownership should be at the forefront of its success. Students should feel that The Core belongs to them. The students of Main Campus should feel like they can identify with all users of The Core Student Centre in one way or another. The student centre's environment is geared to facilitate the engagement of its users and to accommodate various character traits, as well as personalities through the "meeting place" nature of the design.





## 4.2 Brand Ethos and Logo

*I am who I am and this is my core....*



Figure 4.1

Core Student Centre Logo

The logo is a basic text font that mimics the canvas on which each student becomes as they pass through the centre, having their own unique way of interacting with regards to the different facilities and environments they will encounter. The different rings of the "O," which is the chosen centre of the text, represent each student's different personality and character which will serve as metaphoric paint on their canvas of the centre. Each time they engage with the centre a splash of their identity will be on their canvas of the centre yet everyone will be part of one daily exhibition of student life, showing different unique pieces in the gallery that is The Core Student Centre.

### 4.2.1 Strategy

Core brand aligns itself with the University of Pretoria branding and marketing strategy and identifies itself as a student campus lifestyle brand. The focus of the brand is to enhance student life by addressing their needs outside of the lecture room, as well as introducing innovations that allow them to explore their potential as successful members of a larger out-of-campus population. The new student centre will be the hub of the activities and facilities of the Core brand. Indirectly, The Core Student Centre will become the starting point for interaction and informal life skills lessons for all students on the campus.

### 4.2.2 How it works

In the new student centre there will be a central office for brand administration. The office will house the facilities management, branding and marketing, events co-ordination, recruitment agents and retail space co-ordination. Each of these offices will have student assistants working alongside qualified professionals in the different departments.

The Core brand governs the activities and facilities of the new student centre in conjunction with the existing university regulations, for example, leasing of rental spaces to contracted retailers, the municipal regulations on fast food and food service facilities, commission payments on monthly profits included in the retail rental agreement and any other applicable national or municipal regulations.



### 4.2.3 Student Recruitment

The recruitment agents will be responsible for student recruitment at the new student centre, as well as seeking vacancies for students on main campus, or on the other campuses of the University of Pretoria. All subcontractors will have a clause in their lease/contract that requires them to hire students as casual labour if they are to rent retail space or food service outlets in the new student centre.

### 4.2.4 Events management

This department will be responsible for the co-ordination of events which will happen in The Core Student Centre. There will be a central events stage on the student centre site which will serve as the most prominent location for events, performances, promotions, public talks and so forth. For structured events from off-campus clients the events manager in the administration office would have to be contacted. This department will also be responsible for organising events and promotions around the centre, working very closely with the branding and marketing department.

### 4.2.5 Retail space co-ordination

There will be spaces to let in The Core Student Centre provided for student entrepreneurs, as well as professional retailers and food service companies. These spaces will be co-ordinated by the retail space co-ordination department in the administration office.

All information pertaining to lease agreements, spaces available and regulations to be adhered to, will be available from this office. This department will be working closely with The Core's facilities management and the university's existing facilities managers.

### 4.2.6 Facilities management

The facilities management will be responsible for maintenance of The Core Student Centre. They will work in conjunction with the university's existing facilities management contractor, as well as security services.



## 4.3. Design Concept

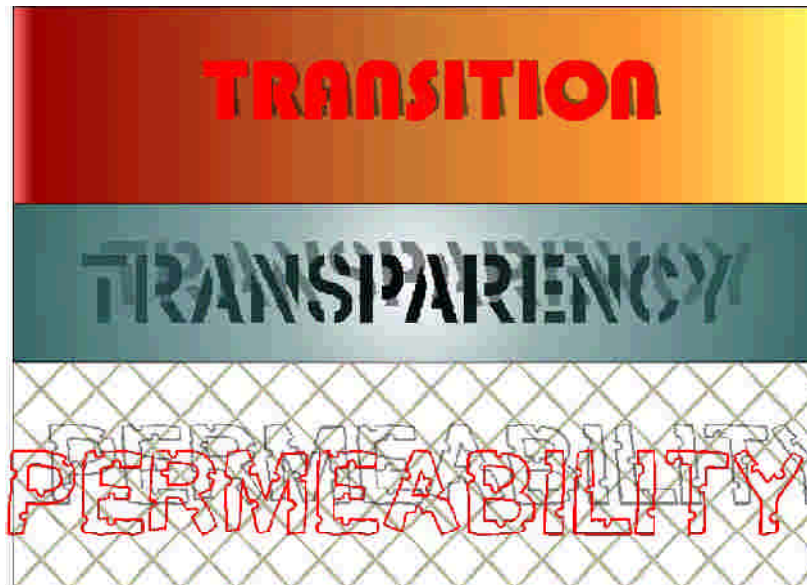


Figure 4.2

Concept key phrases

### 4.3.1 Transition

The existing student centre is located on the intersection of major transition routes. The university community inevitably encounters the student centre as they move along transition routes because the building is located directly on the routes.

Movement through the building allows for maximum exposure to the facilities and features within. It also keeps the distance between the departure and arrival points on the opposite side of the building as short as possible.

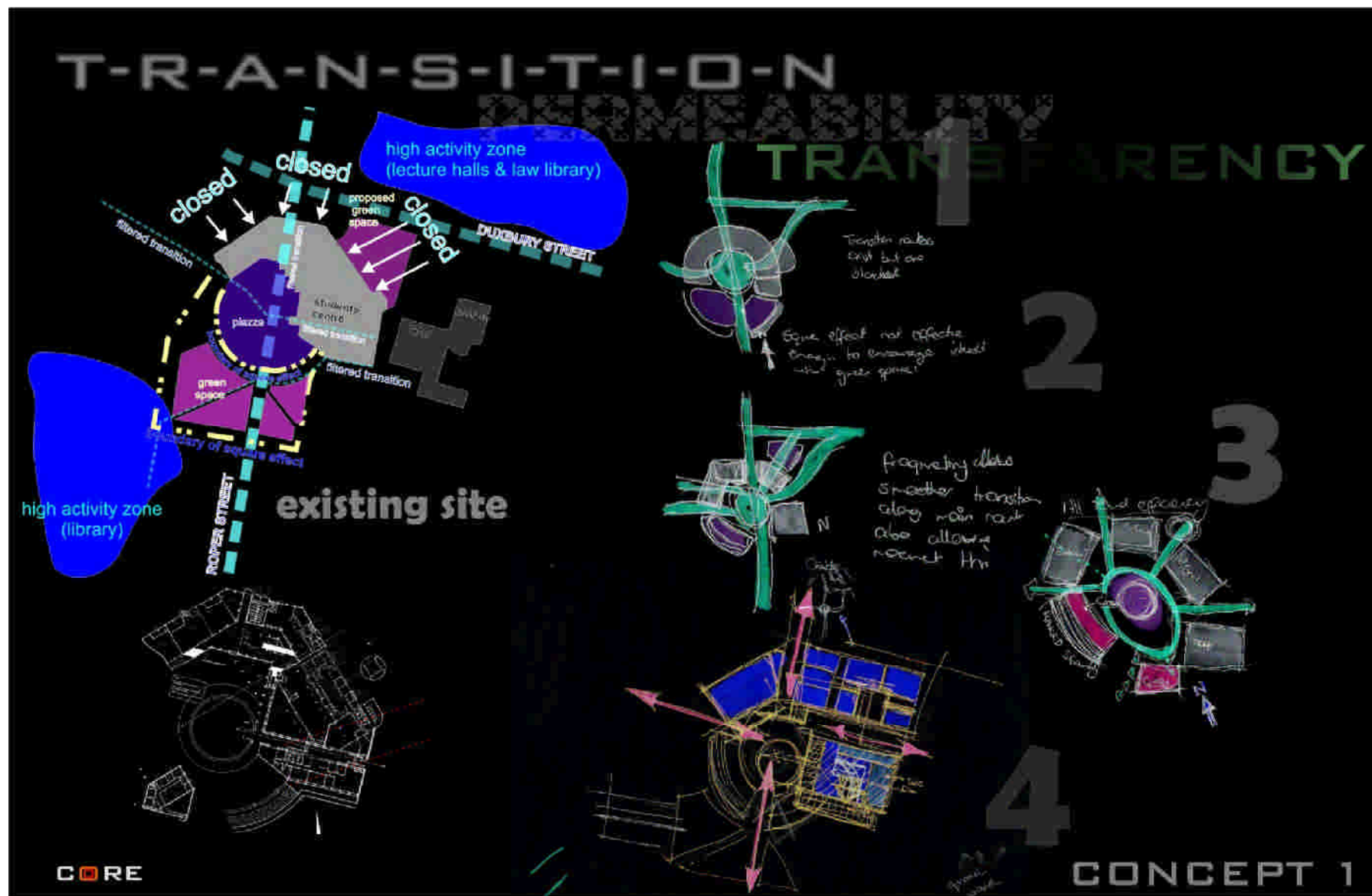
### 4.3.2 Transparency

The Core Student Centre interior should be visually linked to its site and its users. Visual activity draws attention, enlivening both the location and providing security through passive surveillance. Transparency of the building will, therefore, enhance design factors such as light and orientation.

### 4.3.3 Permeability

Users of the building should not only be able to move easily through the building, but also in and around it. A user should also be able to sense activity within the building. This concept leads to the consideration of internal transition routes, ventilation and light.





Concept 1

Figure 4.3



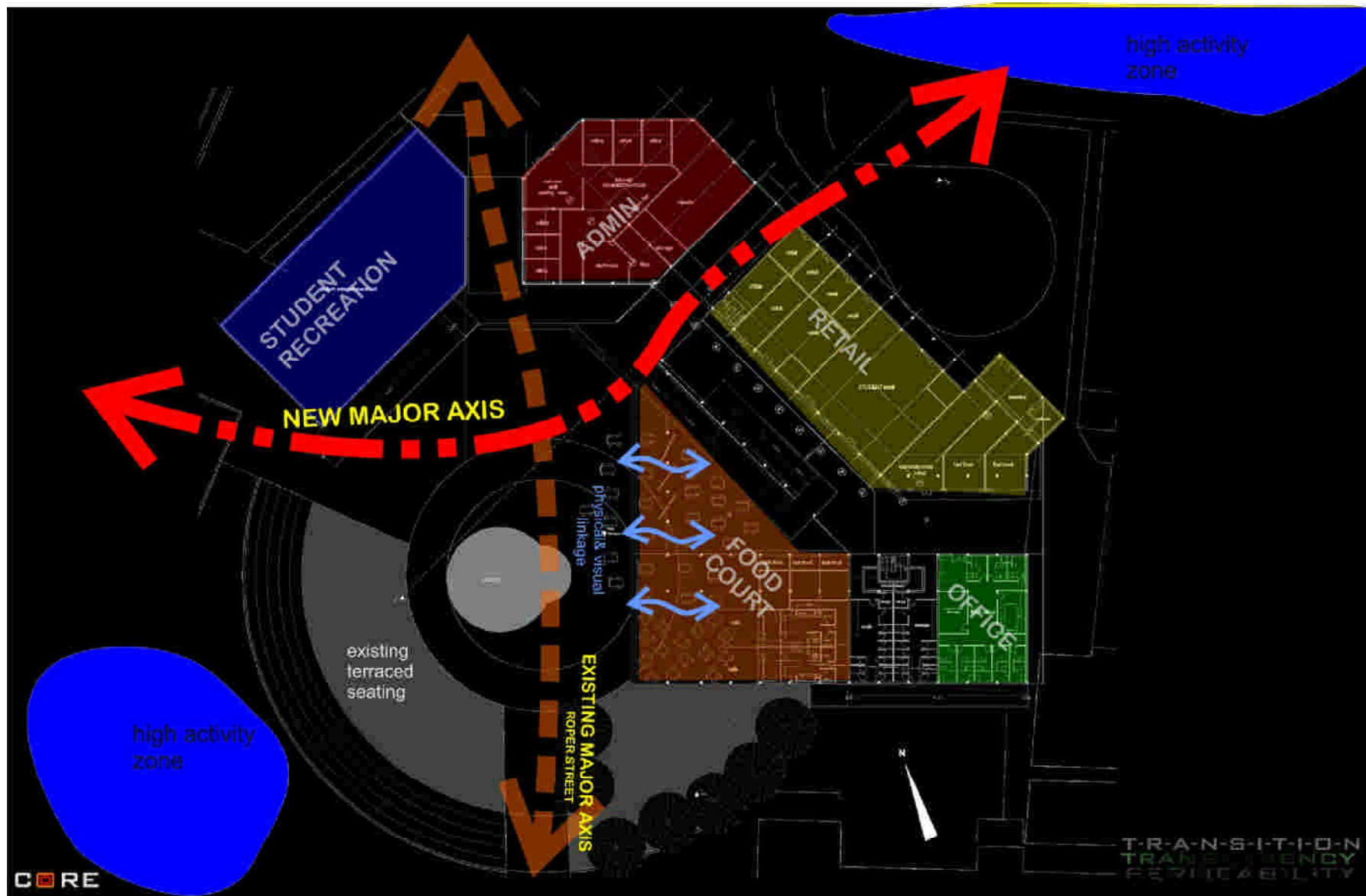


Figure 4.4

Concept 1 development

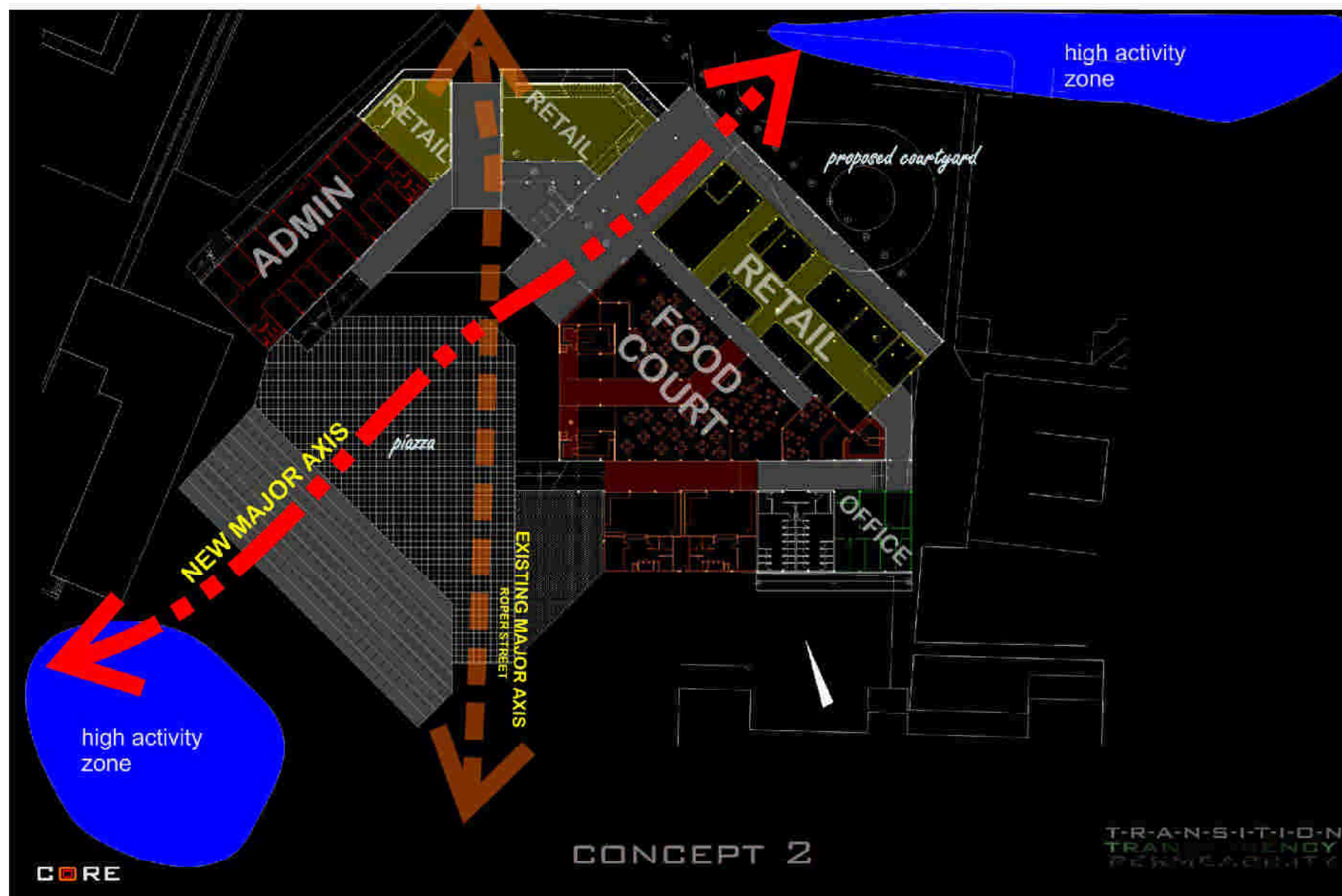


Figure 4.5

Concept 2 development



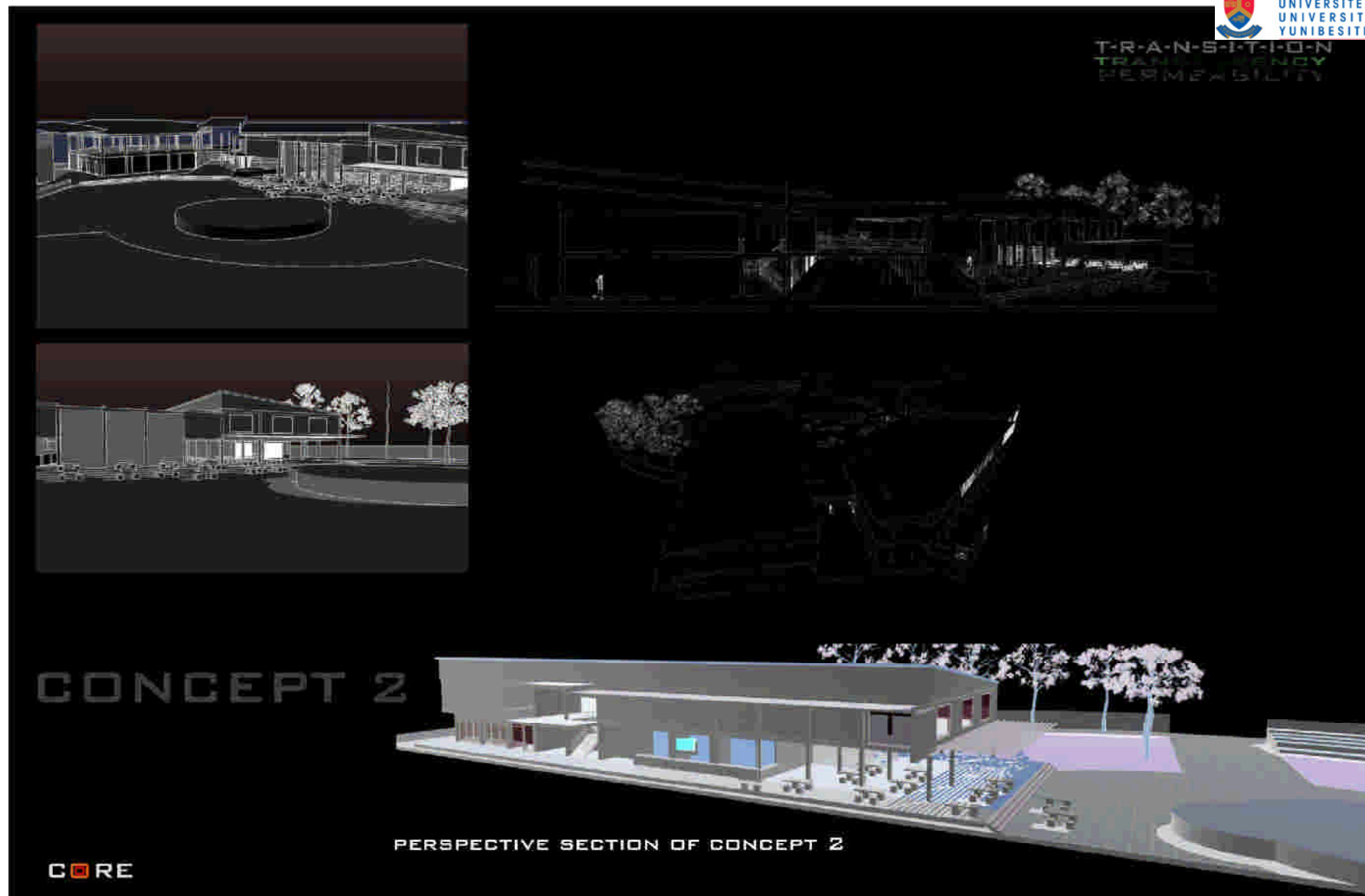


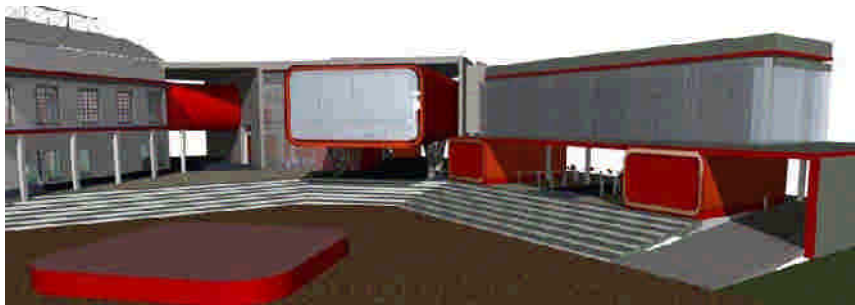
Figure 4.5a

Concept 2 development (2)

## 4.4 Design discussion

The atmosphere of the new student centre is established through a combination of raw finishes, such as off-shutter textured concrete juxtaposed with industrial technology, steel, aluminium and glass, coupled with oversized fixings to exaggerate detail. It is designed for easy transition through the space, maximum exposure to facilities and an appreciation for design detail that will cause people to engage with the space, whether they are just moving through it or are there for a purpose.

The building has large concrete block gateways to define major entrances. Within each block gateway is a red aluminium tube designed in the profile of the 'O' of the word CORE in the logo. This form informs a lot of design detail throughout the space. Red aluminium, concrete with a red line through it for horizontal continuity, expanded steel mesh and steel are used as parts of the design language articulating the spaces of the core. (Figure 4.7)



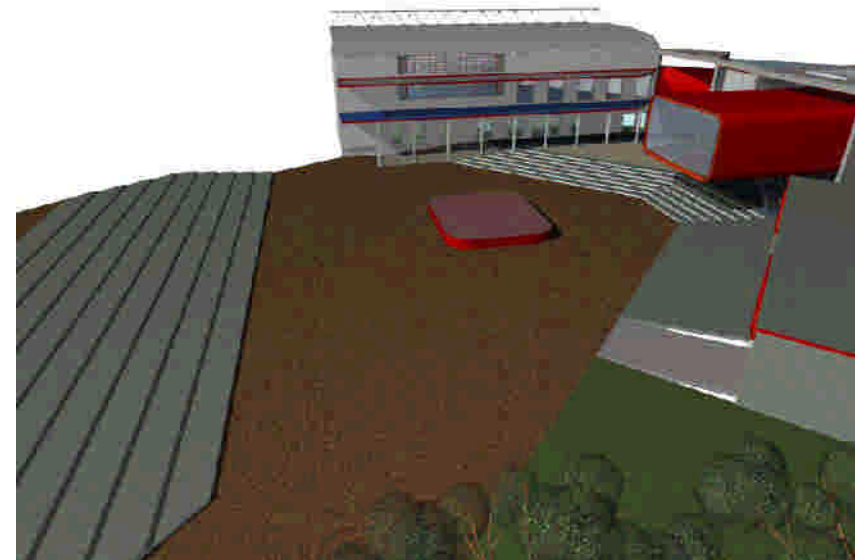
Concrete gateways viewed from piazza

Figure 4.6

### 4.4.1 Piazza

To enter the piazza one walks down a flight of terraced steps. The steps are designed not only to usher large volumes of people into the piazza, but can also be used as informal seating.

This allows students to sit in the piazza area to rest or to watch a performance that may take place on the stage. The stage in the piazza is operated by a hydraulic system that allows it to rise up from the ground whenever it is needed (Figure 4.7).



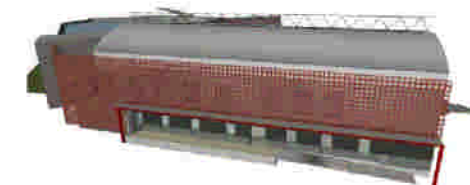
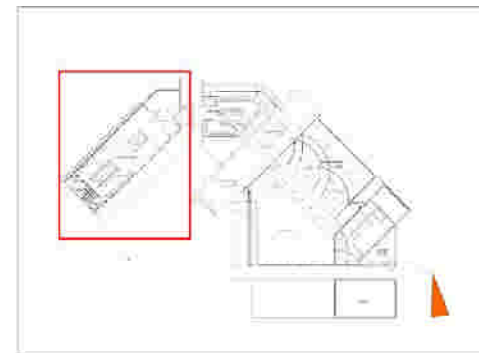
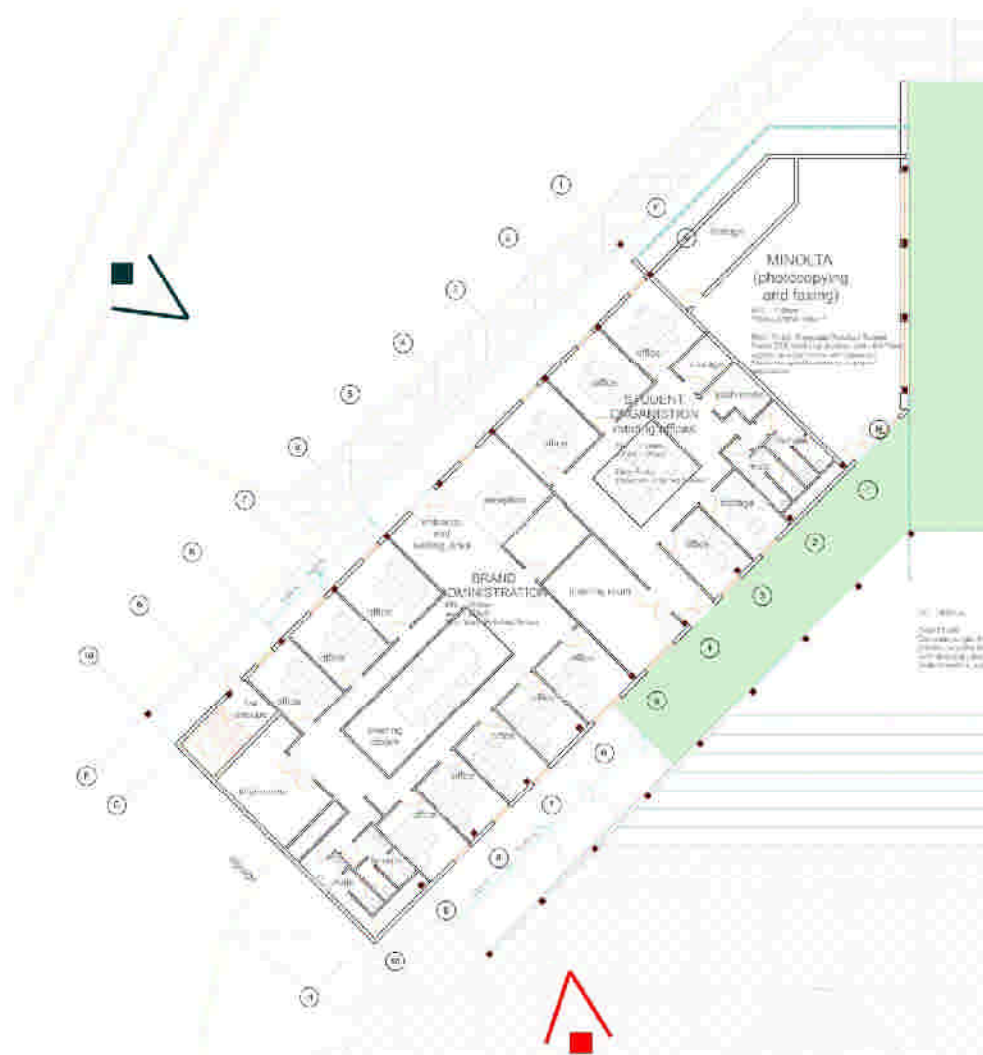
Piazza

Figure 4.7



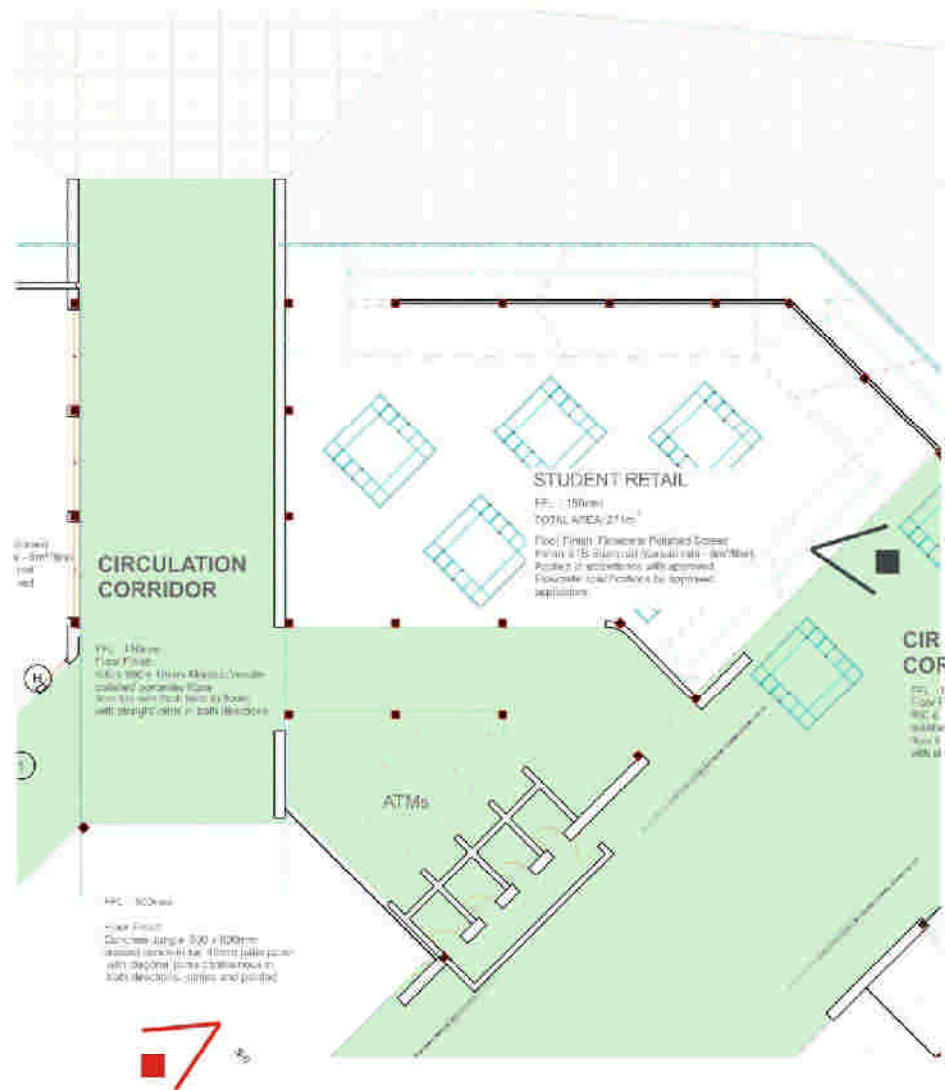


## 4.5 Ground floor



Administration Block

Figure 4.8



Student Retail and ATM court

Figure 4.9



#### 4.5.1 Administration

On the north-western side of the building is the administration block. In this section of the building, there are a number of administrative departments housed in offices. Firstly, the brand administration office is open to the northern façade of the building to allow for privacy and define itself as the more formal side of the core student.

In the brand administration office there is an information desk and offices for building facilities management, student recruitment, brand marketing, event management and retail space co-ordination.

#### 4.5.2 Student Organisations

Next to the brand administration office is the student organisation rotating offices. Student organisations and societies on campus do not have a central location that is easily accessed by students. The new student centre is the ideal location to accommodate them. The offices are leased to each organisation at no charge for a short period of time to allow them to do their administration. Criteria as to which organisations or societies use the offices are determined by brand administration.

The student organisation rotation offices are open to the south, which is the high traffic side of this part of the building.

Design language elements are seen here in the large concrete overhang for solar control, detailed by the horizontal red line. This section of the building has walkways on both sides. On the piazza side, a ramp leads up to the main circulation walkways which are all on the same floor level (Figure 4.8)



#### 4.5.3 Minolta

Next to the student organisation rotation offices is the Minolta photocopying and faxing centre. Minolta is located in the same part of the building as it is in the existing building. The entrance is on the south, facing the piazza. Large glazing allows for natural light to flood the space. It complements the feel of activity when one arrives at the junction of the two walkways which are visually exposed to people inside the copy centre.

Moving eastward from the Minolta centre is the Roper Street axis gateway, which is on an existing transition route that allows students to exit the building and get to Roper Street on the north side of campus. The walkway has been enlarged as it is congested in the existing building. Within the gateway is a bridge that links the wi-fi centre to the study centre, both on the first floor. The bridge is clad completely in the fiery red aluminium. (Figure 4.9)

#### 4.5.4 ATMs and Retail Space

When continuing eastwards along the walkway that links the Roper Street gateway to the new major axis gateway, there is the ATM court on the right and the student retail area on the left. The ATM court is covered and the prominent wall that separates it from the busy piazza is a long two and a half storey high expanded metal mesh. This allows for light and air circulation, as well as a better sense of security because the space is not entirely enclosed. (Figure 4.9)

On the left of the walkway is the student retail area. This is a space for the mobile retail units where students who want to explore entrepreneurial ventures can hire a unit.



The student retail area is an open plan area that allows the retail units to be arranged in different configurations. The units are arranged in the space to allow for easy movement between them and they also spill out onto the main circulation space under the Core Tube. While in the student retail area, one can see people ascending the ramp to go to the first floor because it is enclosed in a glass enclosure, allowing people to see each other. The graffiti graphics wall adds to the ambience of the space being designed for students (Figure 4.9).

#### 4.5.6 Courtyard and Piazza

On exiting the connecting walkway, one enters the new major axis gateway. This is the most prominent entrance of the building. It is the largest gateway and tube. This gateway is accessed from all sides, but the main entrances run along the west-east axis. When one moves west to east, in other words from the piazza to the quieter, smaller courtyard, you have to move under the Core Tube. On this axis, the entrances on the left will lead you to the ATM court, the student retail area and the ramp respectively. On the right, the entrances will lead you into the food court and the retail area.

At the eastern exit point of the gateway, one terminates ones transition through the building by arriving at a quiet courtyard. The courtyard is set to balance green space and public square design on the eastern side of the building as does the piazza on the western side of the building (Figure 4.10)

The courtyard connects the functions of the building to the outdoors so that barriers between the outdoors and indoors are eliminated.



Figure 4.11

Section from courtyard through to piazza

#### 4.5.7 Fast Food Outlets

Food services for the Core Student Centre are zoned to the eastern section of the building where the entrance from the piazza shares a gateway with the north-west to south-east axis walkway (Figure 4.10). When entering the food court from the main axis walkway, the staircase is to the left and the retail area and the fast food kiosks are to the right. The staircase is designed to have design features and elements of the design language of the building.

The food court is a double volume space. The food court has communal seating that is serviced by the fast food kiosks and fast food outlets. It has a specific Flowcrete floor finish to define it as a single space. The furniture is also generic and is in Core brand colours.



On the southern side of the food court is a private café space that is let to sub-contractor café owners. The café is not restricted to furniture and styling of Core brand, but should compliment it.



Figure 4.12

Fast food kiosks



Figure 4.13

Food court

The café's seating area within the food court is on a raised platform to differentiate it from the communal seating of the food court. The interior space of the café is also at the same floor level and opens out into the food court seating.

The university managed fast food kiosks are located in miniature versions of the Core Tube. They flank the entrance into the food court from the piazza. Each fast food kiosk has a queuing area in front of it. People entering the food court can divert into the queues and still exit onto the food court.

#### 4.5.8 Retail Space

The retail area of the Core Student Centre is an important design factor that ties the conceptual approach of the design to reality. When one enters the food court from the piazza and is walking along the defined walkway to exit at the courtyard, the retail section allows for visual realisation of transparency and permeability. This is achieved, firstly, by the walkways.

These transition routes are designed to draw people into the retail area even if they have no intention of buying anything because they can see the courtyard from within the building. Secondly, the walls of the retail spaces are made of safety glass, embodying the notion of transparency.





Interior retail space

Figure 4.14

## 4.6 First Floor

To access the first floor one may either use the ramp that starts in the new major axis walkway under the Core Tube, or use the staircase located in the food court. In discussing the first floor, it will be suitable to use the staircase as the chosen vertical circulation starting point.

### 4.6.1 Staircase

Users of the staircase are exposed to elements of the building on a miniature scale and with familiarity they will pick up on the same features of the same design elements on a larger scale around the building.



Staircase design

Figure 4.15

The staircase stringer is made of reinforced concrete which has a raw unpainted finish. The nosing of the treads are a fiery red 20mm x 20mm aluminium angle channel to mimic the red paint line on the building overhang and minor gateway to the food court. The use of the aluminium angle is a statement touching on the fiery red aluminium cladding of the Core Tube which is a major design element in the Core Student Centre.

The stair posts of the staircase are custom bent 'I' sections taking the form of the framework of all the tubes in the gateways. They almost form a tube framework that has been cut to place a staircase inside it. A reflective stainless steel fixing plate attaches the handrail to the framework.

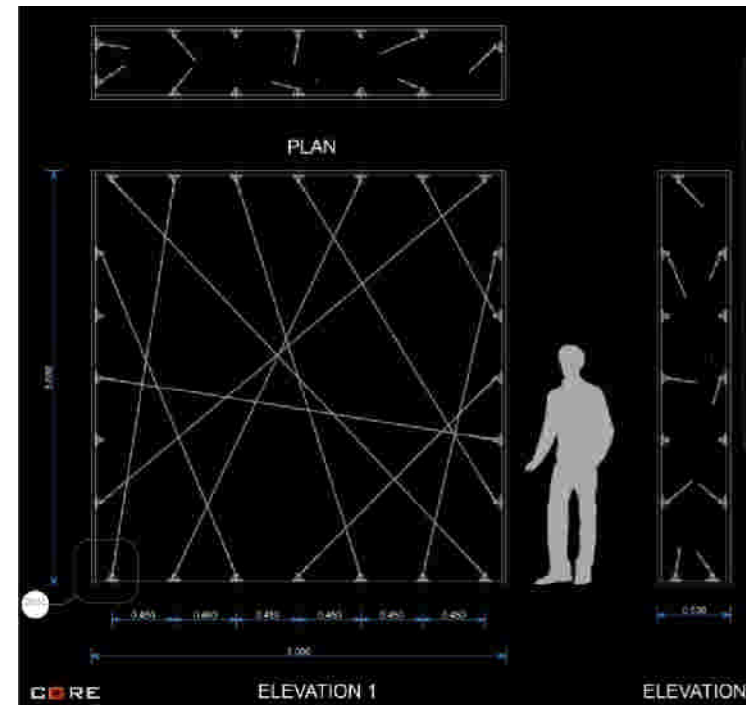
The use of oversized bolts and nuts to fix the fixing plate to the stair posts is deliberate so as to celebrate boldly the detail. The handrail of the staircase is a dark polished African Blackwood timber handrail, the form is an extrusion of the 'O' in the logo. The logo is at the end face of the handrail to add colour to the staircase and, more importantly, as a subtle branding stamp (Figure 5.18). Finally, the balustrade is the same expanded metal mesh used as a screen for the ATM court, solar screening for the food court and study centre. This balustrade detail is continued throughout the Core.

On reaching the top of the staircase, one arrives at a seating platform that is a prelude to the student recreation hall. This seating area overlooks the food court and is designed as an intimate seating area with seating cubicles as the furniture for this space. While the furniture in the building may vary in form, the brand is maintained through the use of colour.

#### 4.6.2 Recreation Hall

The recreation hall is a large 1½ volume high open space. It is a Recreation Hall that can be used for a variety of functions (once the freestanding furniture is moved to the storage at the back of the hall).

Students come to the hall to play and relax. There are coin operated pool tables, foosball tables and two sections for electronic gaming. As this space will be a high congestion area, movement pathways are defined by their floor finish.



Free standing screen

Figure 4.16

Free-standing woven steel cable screens separate the electronic gaming and non-electronic gaming into two different zones so as to restrict the number of entry points (Figure 4.11). Large windows that are in the form of the logo allow light into the recreation hall and are detailed with African Blackwood benches between each window. The distant southern wall in the recreation hall is a graphics wall such as the one in the student retail area.





### 4.6.3 Core Tube



Figure 4.16a

Perspective section of focus area

The Core Tube includes the student lounge, vending court and a coffee spot. Walkways are continued through the tube and have the same finish as they have in the recreation hall so as to maintain consistency for users of the building.

The student lounge provides a subdued environment that is designed for relaxation and conversation. Acoustic panels are designed into the space so that conversation noise is isolated to the seating space from which it emanates. The floor finish for the space is a blend of industrial carpet and vinyl, which becomes the wall finish.

Variations of reds and oranges are the colours used in moderation throughout the tube. Reds tend to stimulate metabolism, joy and passion, while oranges encourage appetite, happiness, stimulate mental activity and can even

increase oxygen supply to the brain. ([www.colour-wheel-pro.com/colour-meaning.html](http://www.colour-wheel-pro.com/colour-meaning.html)). The student lounge has two digital screens at each end. The larger screen faces the piazza so that people walking outside can view it. If there is an event in the piazza it is screened on this big screen. The screen closest to the entrance is integrated into the stained glass screen that separates the student lounge with the vending court.

### 4.7 Conclusion

The proposed design endeavours to create a place that students can feel is designed for them. The existing building was stripped of all its layers except the skeleton and essentially had a new breathe of life blown into it. It is also considered that students who would experience the old student centre as well as the new Core Student Centre have layers of memories to preserve as part of what gave them an identity as a student at UP.

Therefore while taking away their familiarity with the student centre in its previous state; the Core Student Centre is a place that will be the beginning of new and fulfilling experiences. Keeping the double volume as an eating area a way of keeping a familiar place where social interaction thrives as well as a physical statement of ushering in a new student centre yet keeping a memory of the previous building.

