

6 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: Architecture Must Blaze

Goal 2: People and Place

Goal 3: The Neutral Line

Goal 4: Transformation

goal 1 : architecture must blaze

FROM ICON TO CATALYST

The underlying principle for this goal is to **renew interest and interaction** with the surrounding existing cultural institutes so that a greater appreciation of South Africa's unique identity of a nation under transformation can be achieved. This approach involves the use of the PLUG-In festival to form a series of smaller, temporary interventions to be paired with heritage icons. The festival framework will serve to engage the public with existing places of cultural value.

The diagram (Figure 6.1) conveys the concept of 'recycling' the intangible significance of a heritage site by providing opportunity for new relevance without demolishing the existing structure. Previously static icons such as the statues of political leaders currently on the site as well as the City Hall itself are used as focal points around which new programmed activities or unprogrammed resting places are created. The addition of a mix of functions and user participation activity will lend a wide range of users to the site. The multi-functional approach and arrangement of spaces is aimed at including and integrating the icons as objects within a dynamic landscape. The objects themselves remain as they were originally created as the tangible connection to the ideals and achievements of the past, while the redevelopment of Pretorius Square provides a juxtaposition expressive of contemporary and future development.

The new Cultural Centre is programmed in order to induce an outflow of activity from users. This is achieved by including publicly engaging activities such as, multi-purpose communication and workshop rooms, a gallery showcasing samples of the larger museum institutes as well as contemporary art and a tour management office to run the centre and organise educational tours stipulated previously in the framework.

The new function of Pretorius Square as a Cultural Centre serves to **promote the Museum Mall** as a marketable district and to strengthen public participation and awareness of this cultural component of the city. The new tourist and allied exhibition facilities will involve both local and foreign tourists in the visible expression of Pretorian identity by **showcasing both heritage and contemporary art as accessible cultural activities**.

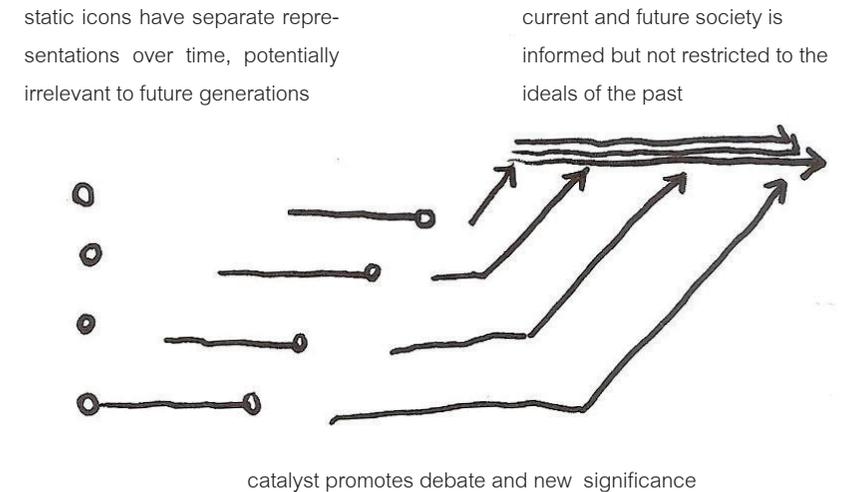


Figure 6.1: Conceptual diagram of an icon's transition into catalyst
Author 2010

goal 2 : people and place

CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR DIALOGUE

Due to Land Acts passed during the apartheid regime, communities of people were excluded from living in the inner city. Today the scars of the segregated past are visible as derelict sites bordering the city edge, separating adjacent residential areas from the inner city. The principle of this informant is to seek out excluded neighbourhoods of Sunnyside and Marabastad in order to re-integrate the residential aspect with the economic and social structure of the CBD. In this way the voices of the contemporary citizens can find cultural expression and ownership over the city's historic fabric.

The initial concept for the proposal was to develop Pretorius Square as a series of platforms (Figure 6.3). These platforms would serve as the more accessible counterpart to the ideals of democracy expressed in the neoclassical aesthetic of City Hall. As the square is currently one of only two open spaces along the major axis of Paul Kruger Street, the main focus of this concept was to maintain the heritage of an outdoor arena for public gathering.

The injection of programming into the current recreational public space of Pretorius Square will serve as a platform for public engagement with the heritage and cultural institutes of the Museum Mall district. These include the Museum of Science and Technology, the Transvaal Museum and the National Cultural History Museum all situated along Visagie Street.

The City Hall once housed the City Council of Pretoria's art collection, before being moved to the Pretoria Art Museum in 1964. By reclaiming Pretorius Square as a platform for art exhibition, a link to the heritage of the site as a gallery can be renewed. The program will also provide opportunity for sustainable social development through education workshops hosted by local artists and heritage associations on the creation, value and maintenance of cultural artifacts.

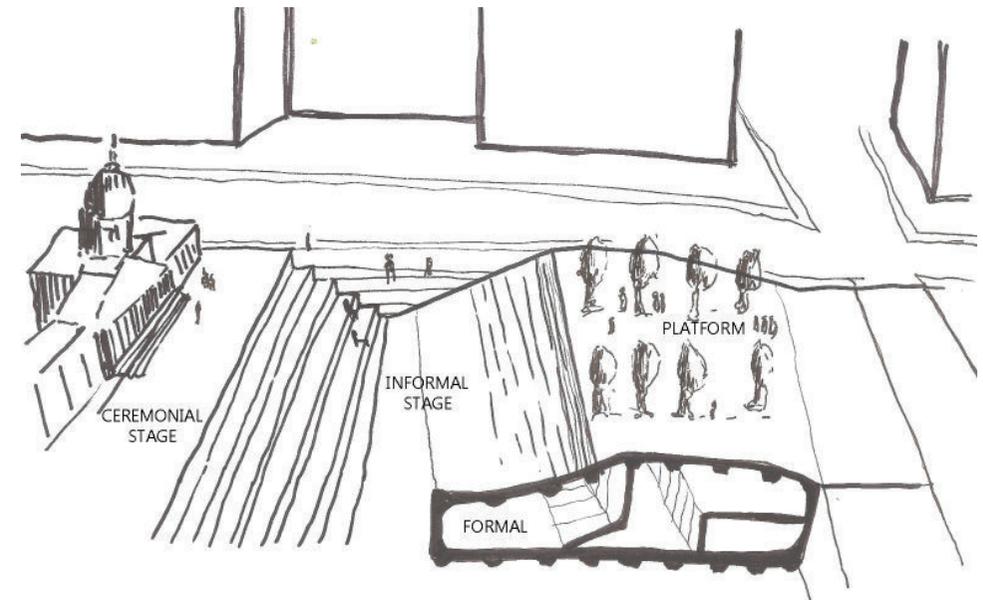


Figure 6.2: Conceptual sketch showing the early approach of the square as a series of platforms for public interaction

Author, 2010

goal 3 : neutral line

INTERACTIVE BOUNDARIES

The street edges of Minnaar and Visagie function as a parking lot, currently separating the street from the park. In order to provide total accessibility to the pedestrian, these lots are removed and boundaries treated as thresholds rather than barriers. The street edge now belongs completely to the public domain and is programmed with activities grouped into the three categories of **COMMUNICATION, EXHIBITION** and **EDUCATION**.

Figure 6.3 conveys the conceptual approach to the idea of the boundaries created by the adjacent streets of Visagie (north), Paul Kruger (east) and Minnaar (south). In phase A, the high pedestrian interface with Paul Kruger Street is pulled across the road to connect with the Transvaal Museum directly opposite. This will be achieved by creating new paving following the original granite pattern on the Pretorius Square site. The edge currently acts as an entrance threshold to the square, sometimes occupied by vendors catering to the movement of pedestrians between the Pretoria Station in the south and Church Square in the north.

New developments along Minnaar and Visagie will include the removal of the public parking facility as this activity separates the pedestrian access from the inner site. The increased interface on Visagie to north of the site will be carried across Paul Kruger Street in order to establish a pedestrian orientated route connecting the museums along this major road.

Phase B shows the continuation of the increased interface through the primary axis of the site. This will include reclaiming and reactivating the once ceremonial entrance space now tarred and used as a vehicle parking lot.

Phase C explores the idea of multiple new pedestrian public access points in relation to the major dividing axis of the site. With the implementation of many intersecting paths providing uninhibited access, the site is once again reclaimed by the pedestrian and user. Between the paths are spaces of low movement and each can be programmed as a smaller part of the complex. The promotion of mobility by pedestrians speaks of a truly inviting space, with the programming of inner areas explored further later as **POCKETS OF ACTIVITY**. This concept involves the further stimulation of the circulation of pedestrians in and through the site.

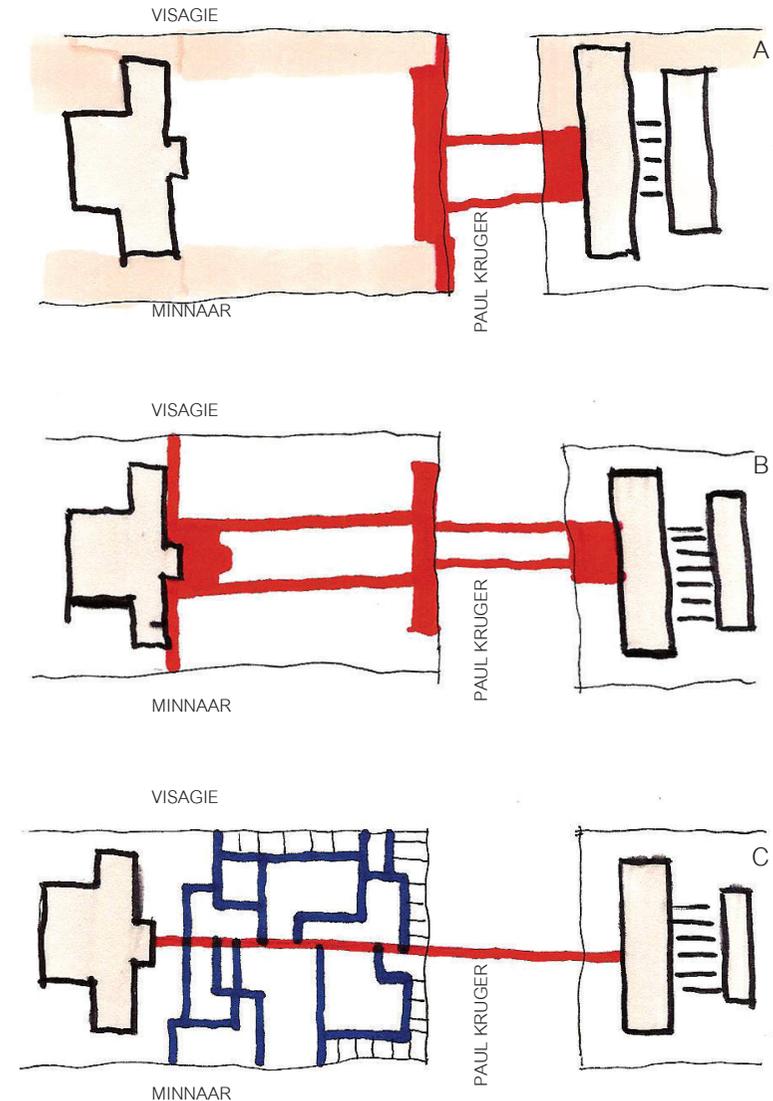


Figure 6.3: Boundaries and Movement
Author 2010

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CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Activate boundary streets with pedestrian related activity supportive of existing recreational function.

Maintaining the original east west axis on existing ground level to be used as a point of departure for new development.

Maintain the forecourt to the City Hall as a rally point for major events.

Create a new line of access juxtaposed to the strong axis, indicative of the freedom of pedestrian motion across the site.

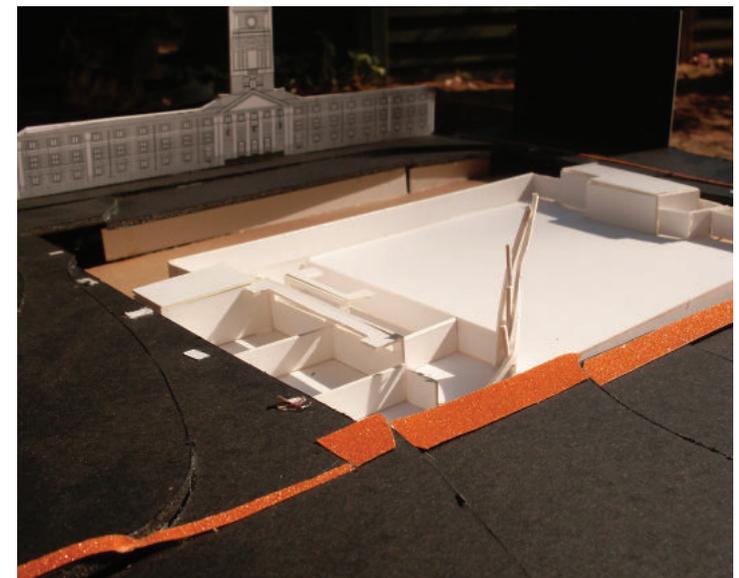
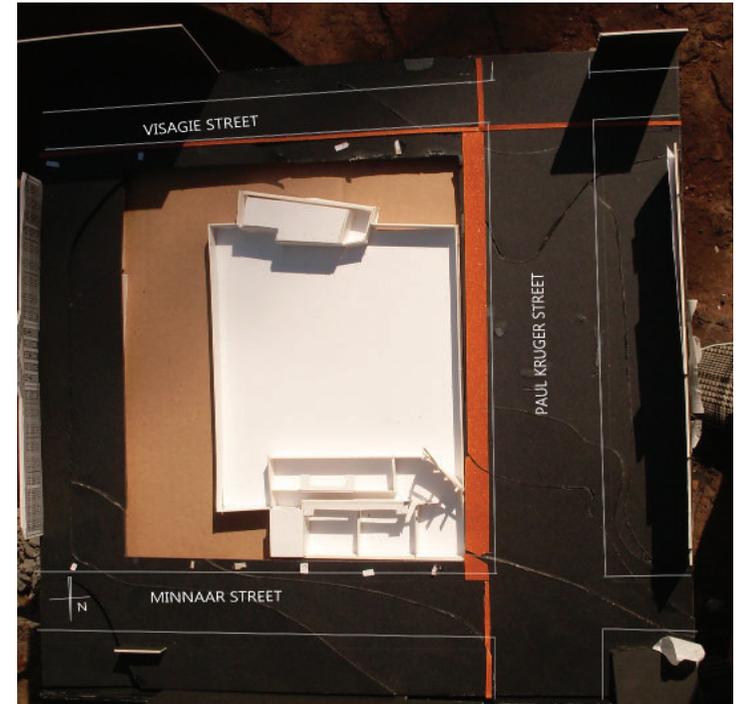


Figure 6.4: Model determining which heritage aspects to preserve as the NEUTRAL LINE
Author 2010

POCKET ACTIVITY

In order to remain widely accessible, the centre itself embodies the notions of **NEUTRALITY** and **TRANSPARENCY**. The program is not static however and is aimed at inducing experiential and interactive activities in order to stimulate the engagement with both objects on exhibit and between visitors themselves.

The new Cultural Centre has been sunken below street level with the main approach maintained off Paul Kruger Street. The decision to submerge the Cultural Centre underground was based partly on the respect for the vista between the City Hall and Transvaal Museum and partly on the importance of maintaining the heritage of Pretorius Square as a public open space.

A large portion of the site remains as an open space as Pretorius Square remains an important gathering space in times of political activism today. However, instead of remaining as a mono-planar surface, the site has been excavated and new levels created in order to induce dynamic flow of people into the new voids and enclosures created within the square.

An aspect integral to the concept of juxtaposition is the retention of certain forms in order to give context to the new design. In the case of Pretorius square, the question of how to respond to the strong central axis of the site resulted in an experimentation of level and form.

Earlier concepts maintained the axis as a ceremonial concourse connecting the Transvaal Museum and City Hall at ground level (Figure 6.5 and 6.6). However this solution was abandoned as it only served to restrict the development of the site as a fluid, inviting space.

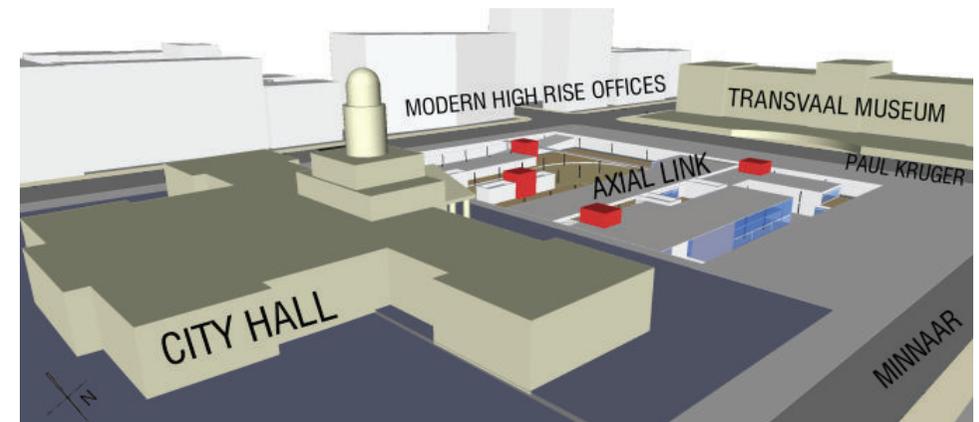


Figure 6.5: Conceptual approach - maintaining the axis at original ground level
Author 2010

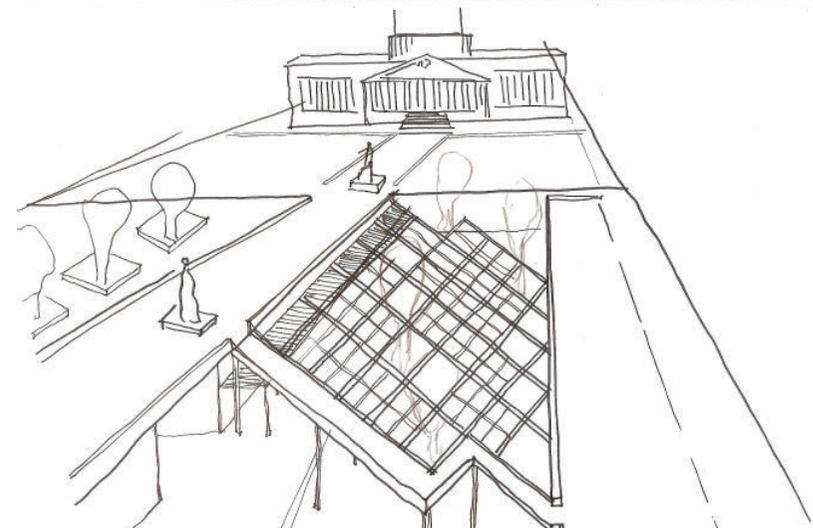


Figure 6.6: Conceptual sketch showing the early approach of maintaining a ceremonial axis at existing ground level
Author 2010

ROOF OF BUILDING ACTS AS LANDSCAPED SURFACE, ACCESSIBLE FROM STREET LEVEL WITH PROGRAMMED EVENTS BELOW

PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY OVER THE SITE AS A SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF CONCEPTS TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGING DIALOGUE

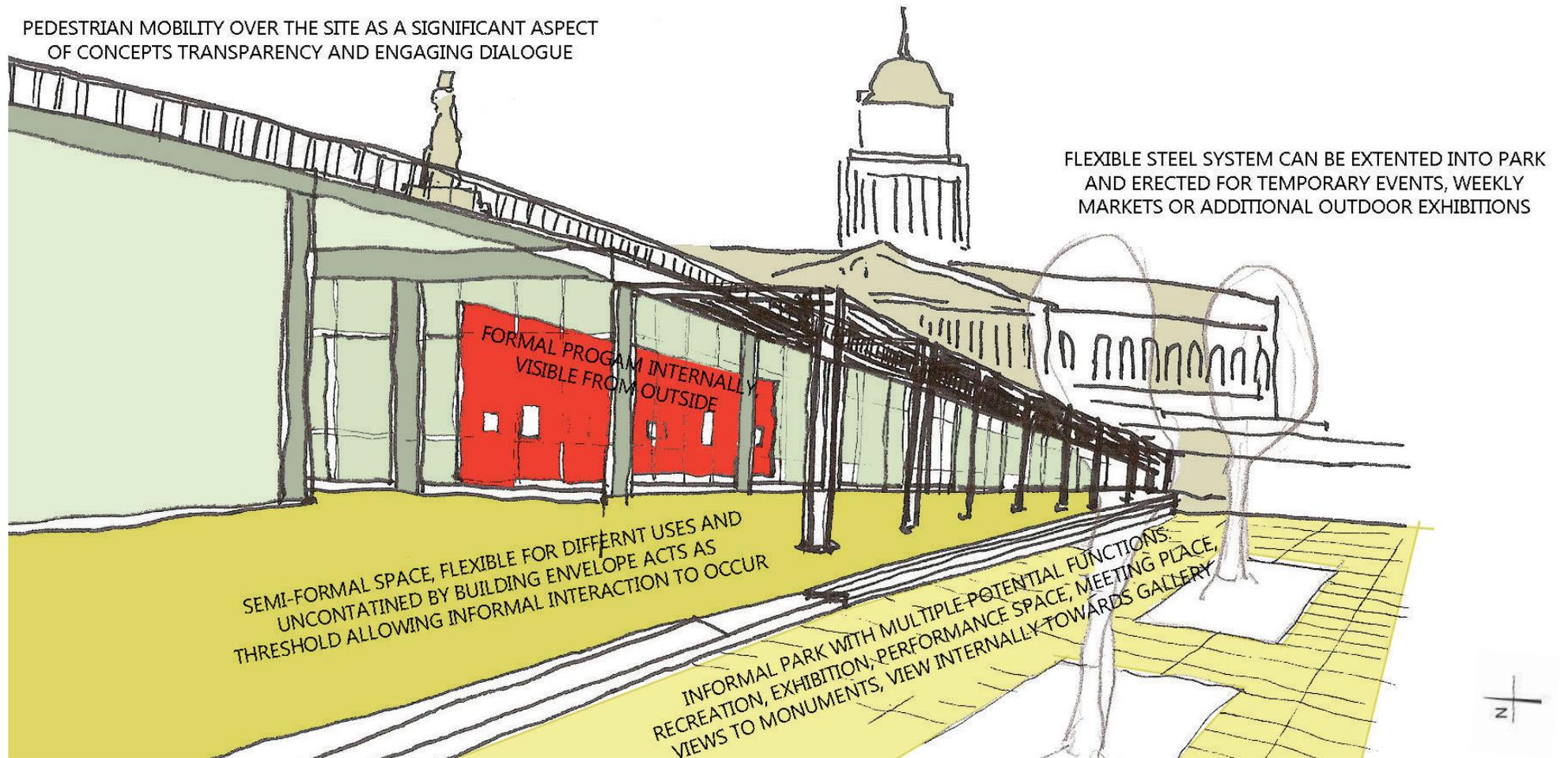


Figure 6.7: Exhibition Platform acts as concourse overlooking recreation park on the right and providing views into the transparent gallery to left
Author 2010

COMMUNICATION

The ground floor level of the site is the landscaped roof surface of the Cultural Centre. The site is accessible from the street level while all programmed activities occur on Basement Level -1 or Basement Level -2. The northern portion of the site has been organized and developed along the principles of transparency and public debate. Clusters of planted trees will be used as focal points for activity zoning while all visible structures are publicly accessible and lend to the recreation and social functions of the new plaza.

The formality of the historic context is echoed in the design of new seating stairs as access to the centre below ground level. The gradual level change with use of low rise stairs allows for the visual communication between passers-by and the activities occurring below. These stairs act as viewing platforms for the landmarks of City Hall, Transvaal Museum and statues on the site. The stairs also serve as outdoor auditoriums which can function as a rally point or informal outdoor meeting place for the city's residents and workers.

EXHIBITION

As many Pretorians deem existing galleries 'inaccessible' or perceive the institutes as exclusive, the new Cultural Centre provides an exhibition space as an introduction gallery to the existing museums of the district. This will act as a free 'sample gallery' supported by the local museums and contemporary artists and serve to make the current cultural district more accessible to local citizens.

The functions housed in Basement Level -1 (Figure 6.6) are the exhibition gallery run by the tourist office. The space can be subdivided to form smaller meeting rooms for hire or can be opened and extended into the outdoor space to form an outdoor exhibitions or an artist trade market on weekends. The exhibition rooms will be used in conjunction with local artists during the framework festival, during which time the artists themselves will occupy the rooms and showcase the production process off their work. The galleries will encourage participation of local and foreign tourists and stimulate economic development to outlying regions with creative skills development workshops and by providing new trade opportunity.

EDUCATION

The southern half of the site is to be used by a tour management and promotional office occupied and run by the Tshwane's tourism department. The space is centered on the goals of information exchange and will primarily manage the routes marked out in the urban framework for group tours such as schools and cultural associations. A subdivision of the promotional office is the management of workshops located on Basement Level -2 (Figure 6.7). These workshops are multi-purpose work and creative production spaces used to support local artists. The workshops are open to public viewing and act as an exhibition of the process of the creative processes of artists.

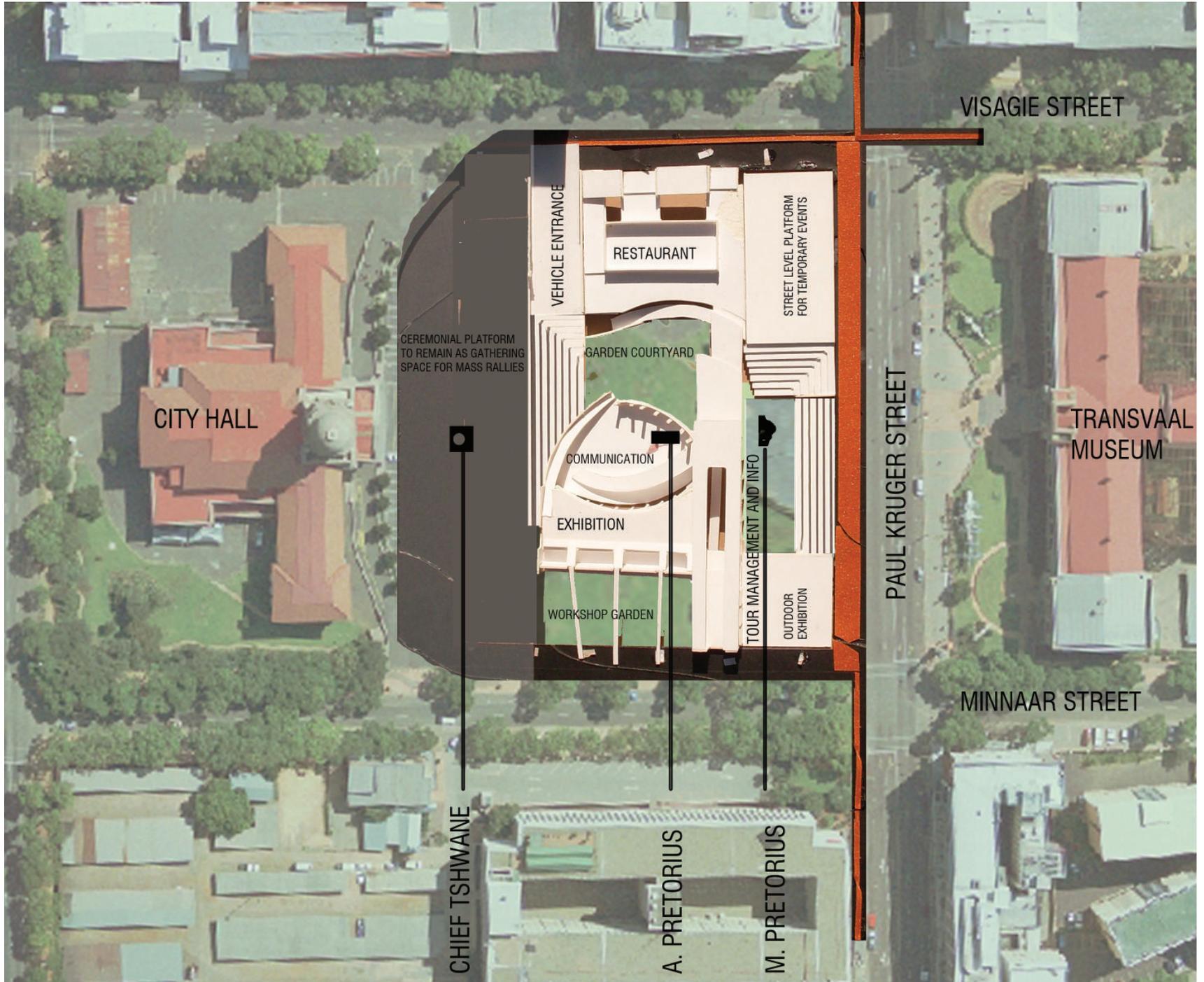
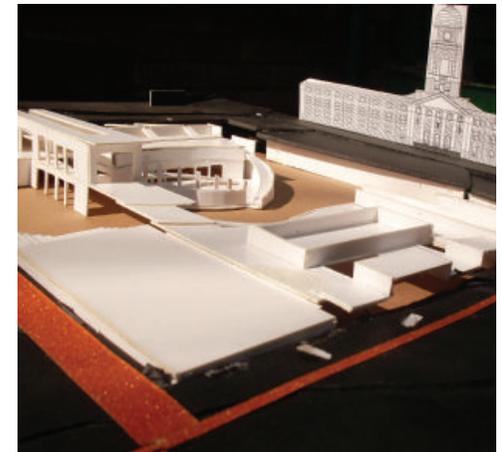


Figure 6.8: Site Plan
 (Reduced scale to fit)
 Author, 2010

The central axis has been re-examined and developed as a point of departure from the classic form rather than a preservation of the original. This east-west axis, once a strong division line in the proposal, is now memorialized as a negative space that forms a public path connecting the City Hall to Paul Kruger Street. The line thereby becomes an expression of the fluid motion of public activity around and through the centre, connecting the **pockets of activity**. The path is modulated with tactile paving, created by artists in the Centre workshops. The paving is representative of the motion along the new winding axis, hard in high traffic areas, permeable in low activity zones and dissolved into planting and water features in places of rest. The main axial route now connects the open air auditorium off Paul Kruger Street, the main entrance to the multi-purpose communication rooms on Basement Level-2 and finally curves gently around the outdoor informal performance space to rise once again onto the 'ceremonial stage' preserved as the entrance to City Hall.

This deviation is aimed at inducing the movement of pedestrians even further into the voids representative of the 'lost narrative' of people previously excluded from the city. It also represents an organic response to the intuitive motion of pedestrians and the activation of flexible spaces. The juxtaposition of the rigid symmetry of the City Hall and Transvaal Museum with the new Cultural Centre, effectively conveys the transition of old to new, making the Centre expressive of a multifunctional approach to public space. The organic form is representative of the non-functional social aspect that a public park represents in the urban environment.

In treating the functioning of the building as a transparent process, the central void serves to provide visual access from levels above into the communication and workshop rooms below (Figure 6.11). Visual access can also be acquired from the roof level above as integrated landscape bench and skylight elements modulate the surface of the gallery roof. The courtyard acts an informal stage, a potential meeting space, platform for creative expression and an opportunity for group debate. It embodies the African heritage of communal space discussed in **PEOPLE AND PLACE** as it remains flexible to many functions and is unconfined by conventional forms. The space acts as a threshold between the fluid external environment and the programmed internal spaces.



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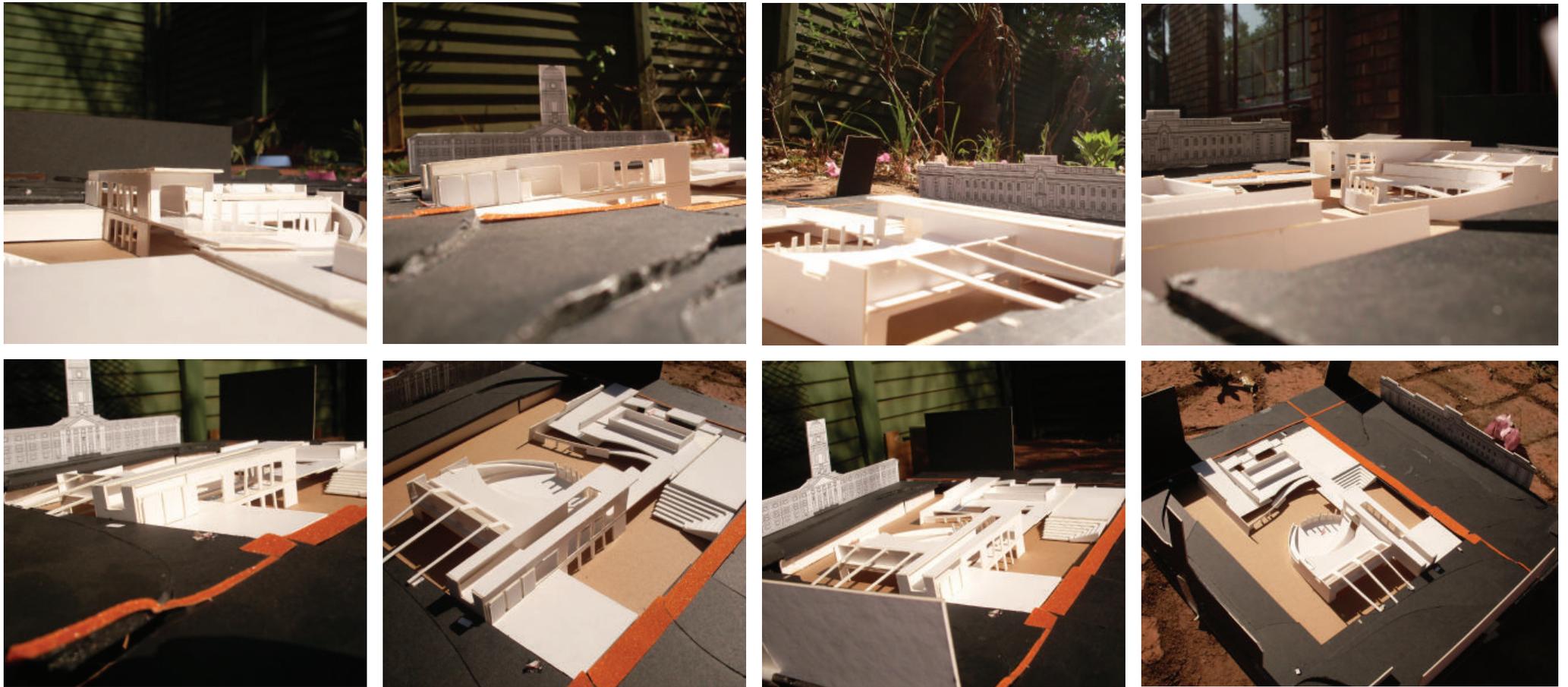


Figure 6.9: Images from the latest design development employing an organic approach to forms linked to the axial path
Author, 2010