

ESTABLISHING **SIGNIFICANCE** THROUGH **RELEVANCE**



ESTABLISHING SIGNIFICANCE THROUGH RELEVANCE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Magister in Architecture(Professional) Department of Architecture,
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Dedicated to
Charlotte

Full Dissertation title: Establishing Significance Through Relevance

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Degree: Masters in Architecture (Professional)

Department: Department of Architecture

Faculty: Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

University: University of Pretoria

Project Summary

Programme: Life Science Centre

Site Description: Old ZAR Staatsmuseum on Boom Street, Pretoria

Client: The National Research Foundation

Users: Members of the general public with specific focus on children between the ages of 7 and 16

Address: Cnr. Boom and Thabo Sehume Streets, Pretoria

GPS Coordinates: 25°44'19.35"S 28°11'23.52"E

Architectural Theoretical Premise: The investigation of how adaptive re-use can be used to give a let a building contribute to its urban context, while allowing the building to be preserved

Architectural Approach: Developing a life science centre as new program for the old Staatsmuseum in order to let the building have a relationship with its context which restores

Research Field: Heritage and Cultural Landscapes

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G5.7) for dissertations and theses, I declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

I further state that no part of my thesis has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.

I Further declare that this thesis is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

Riaan W. Hollenbach

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Thank you Charlotte Hollenbach for taking each step with me and thank you for carrying me with

prayers. There could not have been a better

person to share this year with than you.

Thank you Jesus for sending us on this path and for never letting us go.



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ABSTRACT
SAMEVATTING

The study investigates the relevance of public, historic buildings in an urban context with specific focus on the old ZAR *Staatmuseum* in Pretoria. The project aims to find a way, to re-establish the *Staatmuseum* as a significant building, a building with dignity, through making it relevant within the urban context, once again.

The heritage response that will be investigated is an adaptive re-use approach, which refers back to the statement of significance of the building, as formulated as part of this study.

The programmatic response is associated with the initial program of the building, as a Life Sciences museum will be introduced in the building.

The concepts of plinth, entrance, exhibition (including light and movement) and courtyard are specific design drivers, that will be investigated and responded to as part of the design process.

Hierdie studie doen navorsing oor die relevantheid van publieke, historiese geboue in 'n stedelike konteks, met spesifieke verwysing na die ou ZAR Staatmuseum. Die projek is gemik daarop om 'n oplossing te vind om die Staatmuseum relevant te maak as 'n betekenisvolle gebou, 'n gebou met waardigheid, deur die gebou relevant te maak in die stedelike konteks, soos dit vandag is.

Die erfenis aanslag is om 'n aanpasbare-hergebruik studie te doen, met spesifieke fokus op die verklaring van betekenis van die gebou, soos deur hierdie studie voorgesit word.

Die aanslag tot die nuwe program van die gebou is om te assosieer met die aanvanklike program, deur 'n Lewenswetenskap Sentrum in die gebou te ontwerp.

Die konsepte van plint, ingang, uitstalling (insluitend lig en beweging), en binnehof word ontwerp drywers, waarop gereageer word as deel van die ontwerp proses

TERMINOLOGY

Conservation:	The act or an instance of conserving or keeping from change, loss or injury. Protection, preservation and the careful management of natural resources and of the environment.
Conserve:	To keep or protect from harm, decay, loss. To preserve.
Dignity:	The state or quality of being worthy of honour. To have importance and a high rank, especially in government or in the church.
Heritage:	Anything that has been transmitted from the past or handed down by tradition. The evidence of the past, such as historical sites, buildings, and the unspoilt natural environment, considered collectively as the inheritance of present-day society. Something that is reserved for a particular person or group.
NRF:	National Research Foundation
NZG:	National Zoological Gardens of South Africa
Preservation:	To protect from decay or dissolution and to maintain. To keep safe from danger or harm.
Relevance:	Having direct bearing on the matter in hand; relating to the matter at hand. Being pertinent.
Significance:	To have importance. Something that is signified, expressed, or intended. The state or quality of being significant.
Significant:	To have or express a meaning. Being important, notable, or momentous.

01

INTRODUCTION

As an introduction to this study this chapter identifies a point of departure and a problem within the city which needs investigation. The problem is investigated on different levels before a methodology is set out on how to approach the problem.

INDEX

- 1.1. Point of Departure
- 1.2. Identifying the Problem
- 1.3. General Issue
- 1.4. Urban Issue
- 1.5. Architectural Issue
- 1.6. Research Questions
- 1.7. Research Methodology
- 1.8. Project Intentions
- 1.9. Program and Client

INTRODUCTION

1.1 POINT OF DEPARTURE

In a city, such as Pretoria, there exists multiple layers of rich history, which manifest in a constant hierarchical tug of war, shouting to be seen and respected, whispering to be remembered.

These historical layers are woven together with many other physical and metaphysical characteristics, such as infrastructure and ritual, to form the urban tapestry of the city. The edges of this tapestry were initially defined by the natural topology of the landscape, in which Pretoria was established, as a closed grid system. Today, these edges in the city (see Figure 1.1), creates a specific urban condition in the way the formal city dissipates into and interacts with, the natural (nature) landscape at various places. This condition occurs in various peripheral facilities such as Pretoria Station to the south; the National Zoological Gardens (NZG) to the north and the Tshwane University of Technology to the west to name a few.

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1.1 The setting of the city in the landscape with some of the peripheral facilities indicated

INTRODUCTION

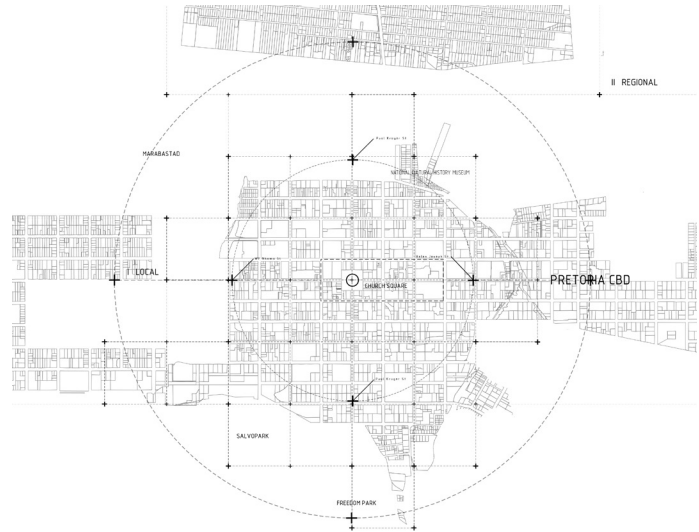


Figure 1.2 The grid and edges of the inner city as the city has developed over time into its topographic setting

The Apies River to the north and east and the Magalies ridge to the north of the city forms the topographic edge of the inner city (see Figure 1.2). The grid was however, fringed as a result of the outlying farms next to the Apies River to the north. Erven were set out around the water channel (R, Swanepoel, 2005) running alongside the farm boundaries from East to West. Along the northern most water channel a street which we today know as Boom Street later developed. As seen on the historic map from R Swanepoel's October newsletter (2005) (see Figure 1.6), and aerial views of the area today, it is evident that Boom Street forms the entire northern edge of the inner city of Pretoria.

One of the buildings on this northern city edge of Boom Street, is the old *Staatmuseum* building (see Figure 1.7). The museum is an example of the northern edge as a terminating edge of the urban fabric, as it is the terminating point to Thabo Sehume Street. The museum is centred at the end point of the street at a 90 degree angle to Boom Street (Figure 1.3). Even though the building was one of the very first civic buildings in this precinct, it has been neglected as having a possible design influence on the evolving context around it, leaving it like many other buildings in the vicinity, isolated.

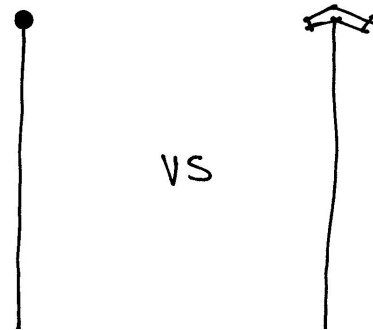


Figure 1.3 Conceptual termination of movement versus continuous movement

Current Condition

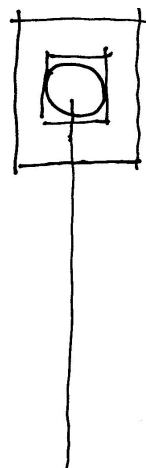


Figure 1.4 Building as Terminating Point

Proposed Condition

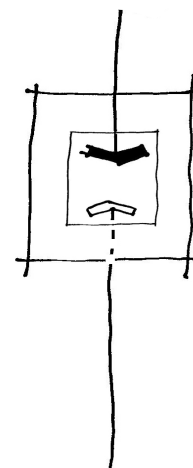
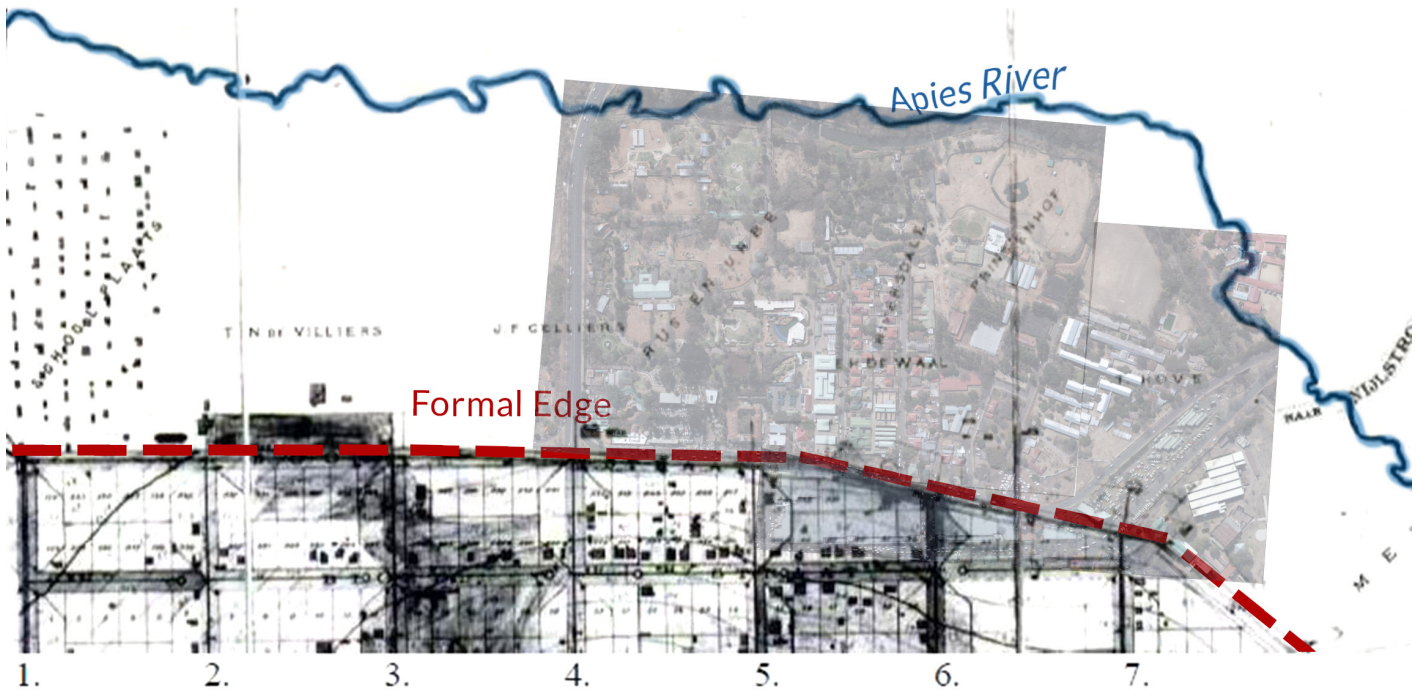


Figure 1.5 View into the building through the existing entrance, while opening the building to the back

INTRODUCTION



- 1. Potgieterstraat 2. Schubartstraat 3. Kochstraat [Bosmanstraat]
- 4. Markstraat [Paul Krugerstraat] 5. St. Andriesstraat [Andriesstraat]
- 6. Van der Waltstraat 7. Prinsloostraat

Figure 1.6 The grid and edges of the Northern precinct

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1.7 Southern entrance facade of the Staatsmuseum from Boom Street

INTRODUCTION

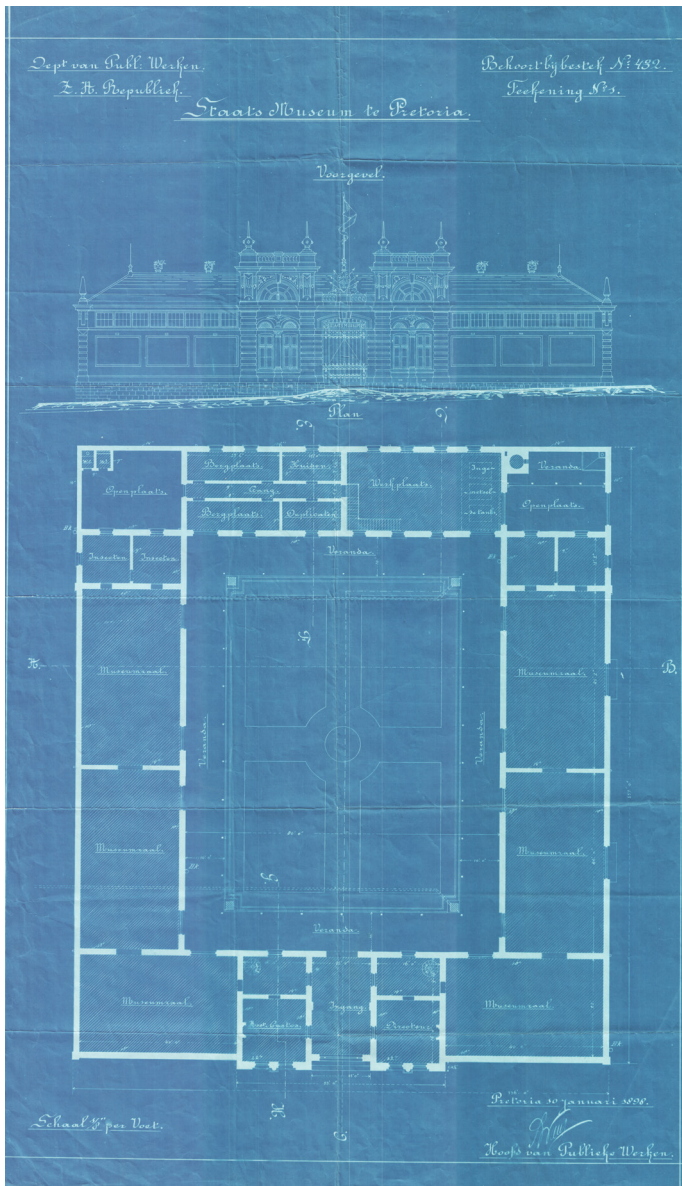


Figure 1.8 Original Elevation and Plan of the Staatsmuseum 1899

The *Staatsmuseum* can be defined as culturally and architecturally significant. In terms of history, as one of the first museums of Pretoria, and in terms of space, its contribution to the street edge of Boom Street over more than a century. Clarke (2014:165) states that the way in which the building is positioned, in relation to the larger urban context, and the way it was designed and set out by the *Departement van Publieke Werken* (Department of Public Works); the museum, as an important civic building, was given a sense of dignity.

Despite the way the building was designed to sit significantly in the landscape, and despite all the regulations that were set to protect the building structure, the building has been empty since 1992. The development of the context around the building has been done without any sensitive response to the building, stripping the building of its dignity and meaning, in terms of its original contribution it used to make in the precinct and the city.

The building is also protected under SAHRA's (South African Heritage Resources Agency) regulations as a building older than 60 years. The building has also been declared a national monument (University of Pretoria, 2015) and has a grade 2 provincial heritage rating.

1.2 IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

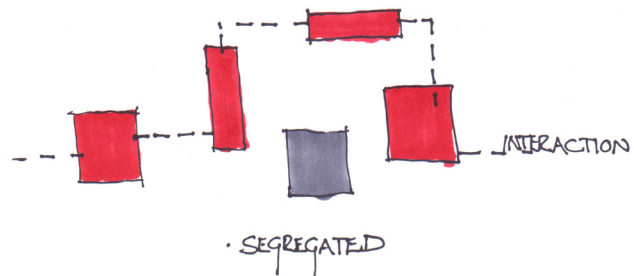
The premise of the problem as identified by the study is then to find a fit between historic significance and a relevant contemporary use or function.

state and not usable (University of Pretoria 2013). If left as such, the building might decay to the point that it no longer exists.

1.2.1 Problem Statement

The *Staatmuseum*, as it finds itself in its current context and resultant condition, is unappreciated, it is segregated from its context, stripped of its dignity, its worthiness and its respect (see Figure 1.9 and Figure 1.10). The building is in a derelict state due to water damage and normal weathering. Some old collections and display cabinets are still evident in the building but because of a lack of maintenance, the building is currently in a static

Figure 1.9 Diagram illustrating the problem statement



A MONUMENT WITHOUT DIGNITY

Figure 1.10 What the future Staatmuseum might look like if it continues to decay

1.3 GENERAL ISSUE

Through the development of cities, certain places, buildings or artefacts over time, might become redundant for the initial intention, or need, it was created for. As stated by Doratli (2005:750), it has been recognised, that if historical elements are not correctly integrated in daily life, protection efforts would fail and urban centres would continue to empty: the past would simply become both a cultural stumbling block and burdensome to the public.

Furthermore, according to *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICCOMOS Charter for places of cultural significance 1999* (1999:1), places with cultural significance, enrich people’s lives and these places provide a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and to landscape and reflect a multiplicity of community.

The question then: should places with heritage significance only be leftovers of times that passed, or can such places act as design informants for the precincts they are situated in?

By introducing appropriate uses in buildings with heritage value it allows for such places to be integrated with the urban fabric through design and will ensure that they are preserved and maintained.

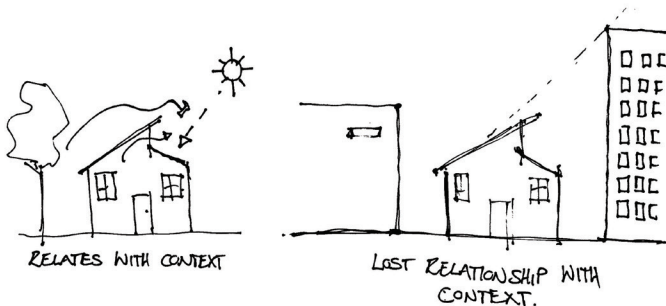


Figure 1.11 Diagram illustrating lost relationship as a result of development of the context existing without responding to what is existing

1.4 URBAN ISSUE

Pretoria is a city with large focus on urban revitalisation (Tshwane, 2015), as part of future development strategies for the city. Open spaces in Pretoria are not only limited, but there are various derelict and empty buildings throughout the city, that through adaptive re-use can be re-integrated with the urban fabric. Correctly integrating the historical elements into daily life, inevitably calls for positive change.

Although the city has developed in a way that is integrated with its natural landscape, the zoo (see Figure 1.12) interacts with the city bluntly, and is to a certain degree segregated from the city in the way it is fenced off. The *Staatmuseum* is on the premises of the zoo to the southern edge. Through adaptive re-use, the *Staatmuseum* can be re-integrated with the urban fabric to a place of public recreation and having historical significance. This will create an opportunity for better interaction with the zoo as well as interaction with the city.

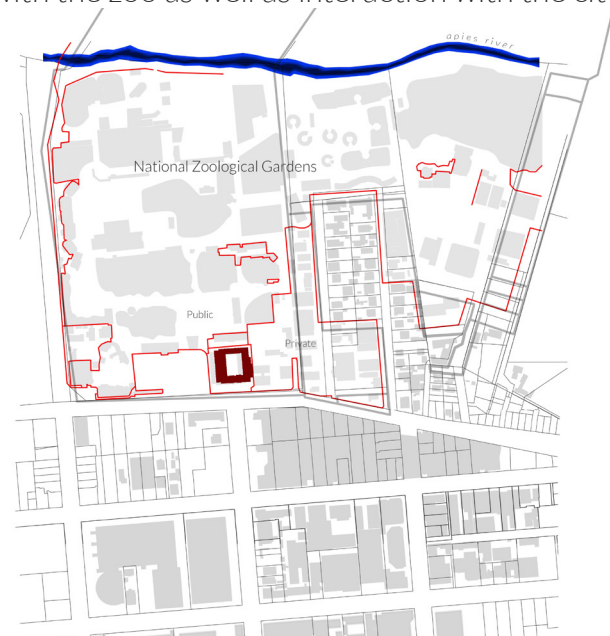


Figure 1.12 Diagram illustrating the fence of the zoo, which creates a boundary between the city and the zoo

1.5 ARCHITECTURAL ISSUE

Buildings such as the *Staatmuseum* were designed with very specific programmatic intention and within a very specific cultural context. The museum however finds itself, a century later, within a context, stripped of its relevant dignity; a building that had historical, spatial and cultural relevance to the urban fabric of Pretoria. The context lacks any response to the museum through the way it has developed around the museum without making use of the museum as a design generator. The *Staatmuseum* is as a result, a decomposing monument with very little spatial contribution to its context, other than the street front, deposed and floating in an urban landscape and needs to be re-connected to the landscape once again.

With the technological advancement during the past century, many new opportunities can be identified in the way a building is appropriated and re-used.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that evolve from these issues are the following:

- i. How can a historic building that has lost its relevance, be re-appropriated in its context?
- ii. How do you allow a decomposing civic building to spatially contribute to, and form part of, the city once again?
- iii. How does program or use, affect the preservation of a building?

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data would be obtained through qualitative, historical and analytical research methods. An analytical study, of the micro-urban context of the building, including the NZG and the surrounding area, will be carried out, in order to determine the current relationship between the *Staatmuseum* and its surroundings.

A building analysis would be done on the *Staatmuseum* building in order to analyse and understand the building in terms of its history, its spatial order and spatial design, the significance of the building fabric, its current condition, its tolerance for change and the building's technical capability in order to determine the building's potential to contribute to its context and to the city.

From here, a qualitative study would be carried out in order to position the architectural response within conservation best-practice. Case studies would be carried out in conjunction with this process, to understand such theories in practice, and to determine how previous projects could influence the response of this study.

A programmatic study would be carried out, in order to determine the effect of a program intervention on the use of the building.

1.8 PROGRAM AND CLIENT

The dissertation will investigate the dignity of place and how new dignity can be given to a building that has lost meaning and significance, with specific reference to the *Staatmuseum* and its relationship with the National Zoological Gardens.

The National Research Foundation (NRF) has a current proposal to host a life science centre in the building, with likely new additions such as a possible new public entrance to the National Zoological Gardens (NZG).

1.9 PROJECT INTENTION

For this dissertation, the possibility of hosting a Life Science Centre in the *Staatmuseum* will be explored. A new entrance to the *Staatmuseum* will be designed and the spaces inside the *Staatmuseum* will be re-appropriated so that the museum will find relevance to its surroundings.

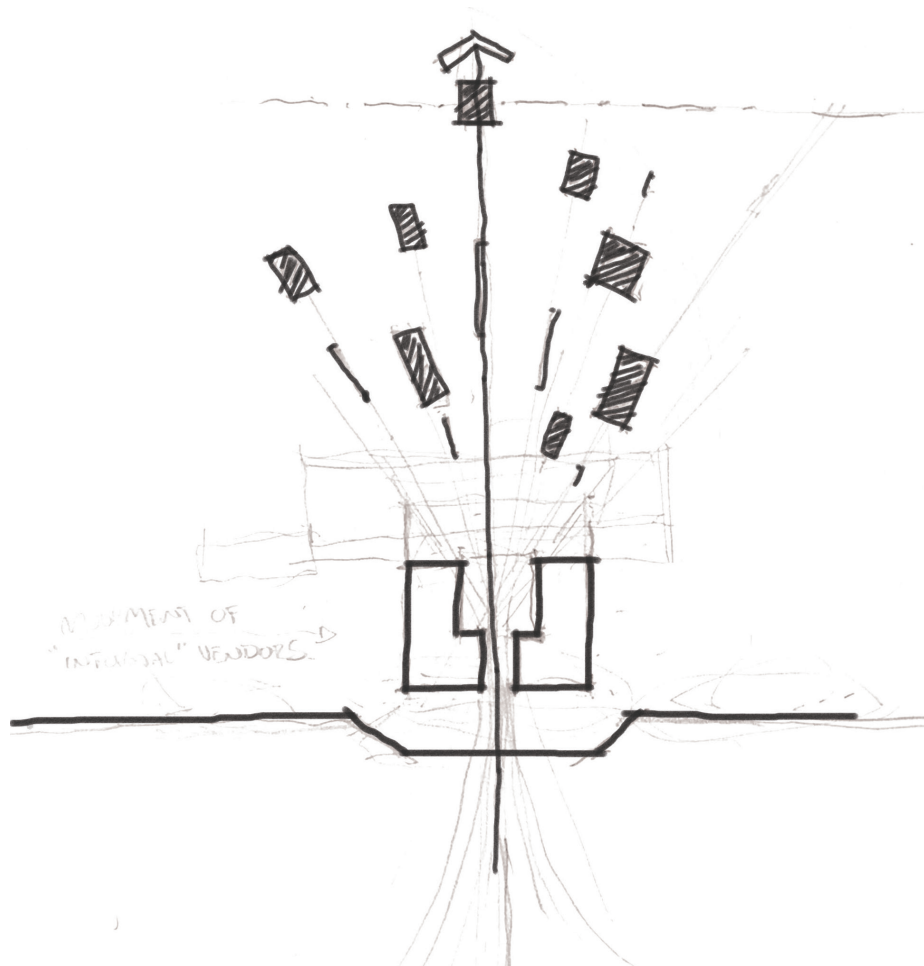


Figure 1.13 Diagram illustrating the project intention