

OCCUPYING THE VOID

A Women's Forum in the Pretoria CBD

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OCCUPYING THE VOID

Architecture of the Feminine



EKSERP

Hierdie skripsie dokumenteer ondersoek ingestel op die argitektuur van die Vroulike. Dit is nie moontlik om definitiewe voorbeelde van die manlik en vroulik in argitektuur voor te gee nie. Hierdie is abstrakte konsepte en moet verstaan word as hoogs subjektief, beïnvloed deur kulturele, geslag, agtergrond en gelowige aspekte. Deur analise van teoretiese interpretasies van die Vroulike gevind in argitektuur word die maniere waardeur vrouens ruimte inneem en ontleed ondersoek tydens 'n soektog na interpretasies wat menigte letterlike interpretasies van assosiasies tussen die vroulike en argitektuur omlei. Hierdie leesstof sal gebruik word om besluitneming te beïnvloed gedurende ontwerp. Gedurende apartheid het die Vroue Beweging 'n verenigde doel gehad om die oppresiewe kragte van die regering te beveg. Sedert die val van die apartheid regering is die beweging ontmantel en sukkel om te mobiliseer om sodoende as verenigde groep aangespreek te word. Hierdie voorstelling het die intensie om n atmosfeer van dialoog en identiteit vir Suid-Afrikaanse vrouens te skep deur middel van n ontwerp wat vrouens die moontlikheid voorsien om ruimtelike verhoudings te onderhandel op hulle eie terme. Daar is eindelose maniere

waarop die idee van die vroulike geïnterpreteer kan word met betrekking tot argitektuur. Die ontwerp benadering interpreteer dus die informasie en laat die vroulike toe tot ekspressie deur die ontwerp van ruimte wat vrouens die moontlikheid gee om ruimtelike verhoudings te onderhandel op hul terme tussen die tussenin spasies binne die gebou.

Deur konseptuele ondersoek is die Leemte geïdentifiseer as n ruimte wat dimensie skep vir die herskryf van strukture van sosiale interaksie. Die inherente karaktertrek kan slegs verken word as die Leemte verstaan word as n spasie ontbreek van streng definisies waarin n dimensie van moontlikheid geskep word en in die proses vrouens verleen met n ruimte om die natuur van hul ruimtelike verhoudings te definieer op hul terme.

Om erkenning te gee aan die meervoudigheid wat so duidelik in (sosiale) ruimte is om erkenning te gee aan "die ander" - dit wat geïgnoreer word. Deur die "Leemte", gevind in die ruimte, in te neem en deur die fokus op die tussenin te plaas word n ruimte ontwerp vir die onderhandeling van ruimte sowel as identiteit en gesprekke binne in die gebou deur die geleentheid om die verhoudings tussen bewoners te herskryf.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation documents an investigation of an architecture of the Feminine. It is not possible to give definite examples of the feminine and masculine in architecture. These are abstract concepts and it must be understood that notions of the feminine are highly subjective, influenced by aspects such as culture, gender, background, context and religion. Through an analysis of the theoretical interpretations of the Feminine within architecture, the ways that women occupy and decode space is examined while seeking interpretations that bypass the many literal interpretations that are often associated with the Feminine and architecture. These readings will be used to inform decision making during design. During Apartheid, the Women's Movement had a unified goal of fighting the oppressive powers of the current government. But since the fall of the Apartheid government, this movement has been fractured and has not been able to mobilise to address needs as a unified group. The proposal intends to foster an atmosphere of dialogue and identity for South African women by creating space that that gives women the possibility to negotiate spatial relationships on their terms. There are a vast number of ways

that notions of the feminine can be interpreted with regards to architecture. The design approach thus interprets this information and allows the feminine to be expressed through the creation of space that gives women the possibility of negotiating spatial relationships on their terms, in the in-between or interstitial spaces in the building.

Through conceptual investigations, the Void is identified as a space that creates a dimension for rewriting existing structures of social interaction. This inherent characteristic can only be explored if the Void is understood as a space that lacks strict definition in which it creates the dimension of possibility, providing women with the space to define the nature of their spatial relationships on their own terms. To acknowledge the multiplicities that are evident within (social) space is to acknowledge 'the other' that has been ignored. Through occupying 'the Void' that is represented by the site, and by placing focus on the interstitial and in-between spaces in the building, a place is created for negotiation of spaces as well as a place for identity and discussion within the building through the opportunity to rewrite the relationships between occupants.

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An Introduction

'I have become convinced that the implicit assumptions that we make about space are important and that, maybe, it could be productive to think about space differently.'

Doreen Massey, For Space (2001:1)

AN INTRODUCTION: FOUNDATIONS FOR THOUGHT

The origin of this dissertation stems from an inquiry into a series of architectural and programmatic concepts that became apparent with the construction of a Women's Museum towards the end of 2014. Located on Lillian Ngoyi Square, previously Strijdom Square, the building presents an overpowering yet generic approach to the creation of architecture in such a prominent part of the city. The intention of the building is to represent the marginalised and sensitive topic of the mistreatment of women during the Apartheid era, which requires an investigation into the politics of gender and its subsequent translation into a public architecture of memory in South Africa. This missed opportunity of architectural exploration provides the springboard for investigation. This dissertation is an exploration of an alternative reading on space which is used as the foundation for an approach to the making of architecture, seen as a container of

space and social phenomena. If space and social phenomena are a consequence of social relations, and if those social relations are constitutive of power plays and political qualities, then gender relations serve as a fundamental social quality through which to explore the notions of space as 'stretched out' social relations.

It is through this alternative reading of space that power relationships in society will be unpacked. The subsequent expressions through architecture will then be explored through notions of the feminine and how they are represented in architecture. These findings are used to underpin the creation of an architecture that examines space-making in the contemporary South African context. Focus is placed on the way that society codifies the space that it occupies, influencing the types of spaces that are created and how they are used.

CHAPTER ONE

Normative Position

An Alternative Perspective on Space

'The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history (...) The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.'

- Michel Foucault, *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* (1984:1)

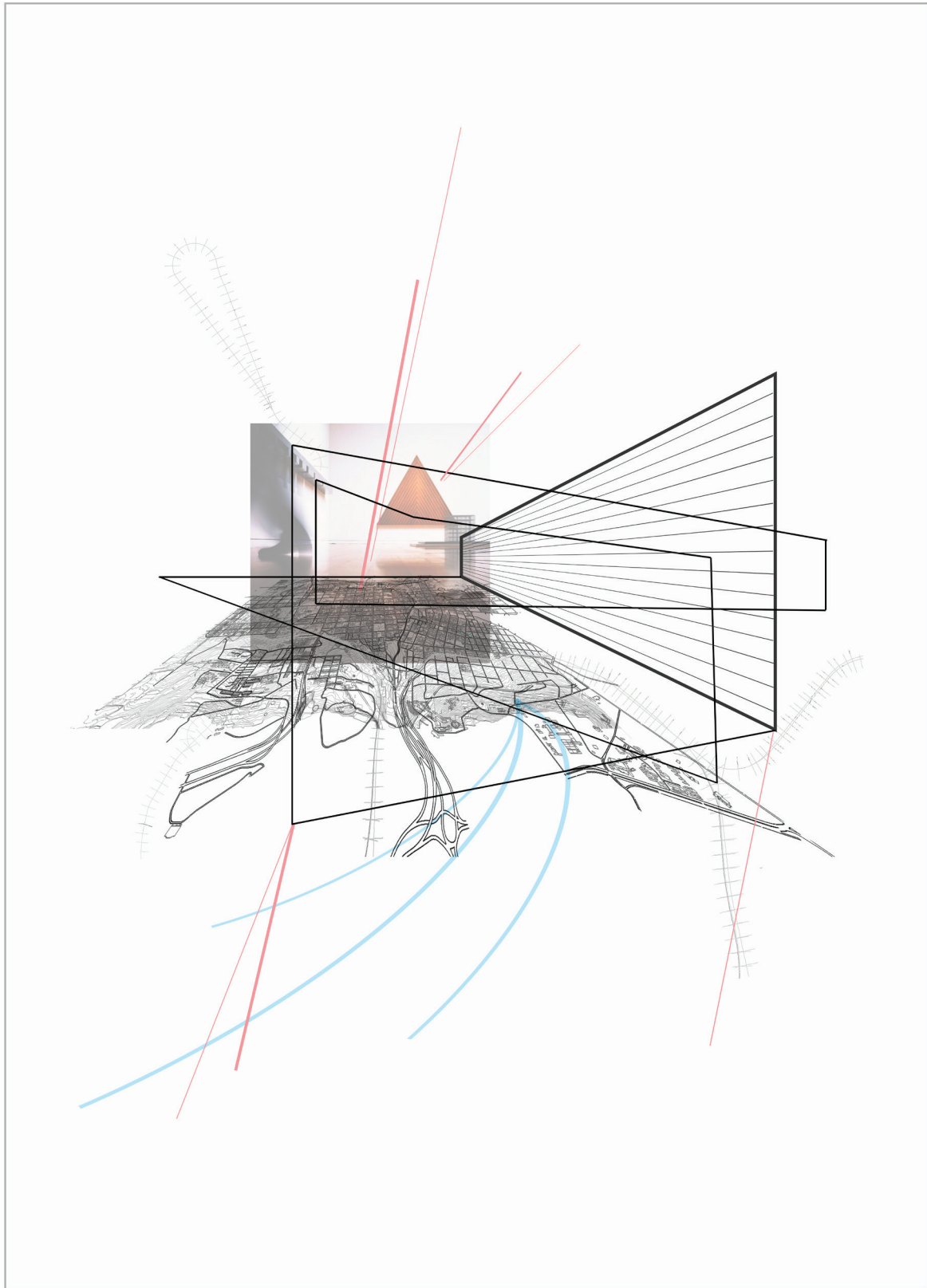


Figure 1.1 Space as a product of social relationships
(Source: Author, 2015)

INTRODUCTION

'Social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power, meaning and symbolism. To view space as a social product is a view of an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification.'

Doreen Massey, *For Space* (2001:185)

For space to be understood as a product of social phenomena, a new perspective on spatial theory is required. The understanding must move from Euclidian interpretations of space towards notions of space as multiplicitous, simultaneous and subjective. This allows for an interplay between the user and the space instead of the modernist and previous perceptions of space a static physical object. In order to understand how gender roles play out in space, a shift is required regarding the way that space is understood. As explained by Doreen Massey (2001:5), space is imbued with power, symbolism

and meaning, requiring a shift in understanding from space as a static, objective entity to a dynamic realm of interrelations, simultaneities and constant production. Spatial feminism draws its origins from this change in perspective and is therefore an examination of how the power plays within society are made manifest in space. As an introduction into these altered perspectives on space, Massey (2001) tells the story of the city of Tenochtitlán in current day Mexico. This story provides the foundation for a critique on contemporary views of space.

A SPATIAL ALLEGORY

In 1519 AD, the city of Tenochtitlán was the biggest in the world. It was the capital of the Mexica-Aztec Empire, located in the southern tail of what is now Mexico, and had been the location of centuries of power struggles (Massey, 2001:3). The current empire consisted of a coalition between three city-states: The Tenochtitlán, Texcoco and Tlacopan. They had joined together after a civil war against the previous ruling empire of the Azcapotzalco. The new empire intended to be equally powerful across the three city-states, but the Tenochtitláns had quickly overpowered the others to establish themselves as the dominant military power (Massey, 2001:3). During the Tenochtitlán's reign, neighbouring groups had become tired of operating under constant subordination and were looking to realign the power struggles once more.

The arrival of Spanish armies, led by Hernán Cortés, meant that the city of Tenochtitlán was about to become the location of another battle for power.

After two years of negotiation, miscalculation, bloodshed, retreat and readvance the Spanish finally achieved their goal and Cortés conquered the city of Tenochtitlán (Massey, 2001:4). Like many colonies, the Aztecs were heavily influenced by their new rulers.

Christianity was introduced and Spanish instituted as the main language. Confronted with the introduction of foreign diseases, weapons and agriculture the Aztec culture began to disappear. The massive city remained under Spanish rule until it was emancipated through the Spanish American wars of independence in the early nineteenth century. What remains today is a new culture, heavy with Spanish influence. Most of the Aztec culture has disappeared. This type of story is not new or novel. Numerous accounts exist of colonial powers bringing technology, religion and 'civilisation' to a 'primitive' nation. But what is specific to the story of the Spanish conquer of the Aztecs is that there are representations evident of the contrasting perspectives of the land that was conquered. At the time, maps were drawn up by both the Spanish and the Aztecs; comparison of which provides insight into the ways that each culture viewed and understood space and place. Spanish depictions of the city of Tenochtitlán are similar current Western perceptions of space. It depicts an aerial view of the city as an island in Lake Texcoco, surrounded by water and connected to the mainland. The city was laid out in a grid pattern with many canals running through it, The temple district



Figure 1.2 The city of Tenochtitlán.
(Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Murales_Rivera_-_Markt_in_Tlatelolco_3.jpg)

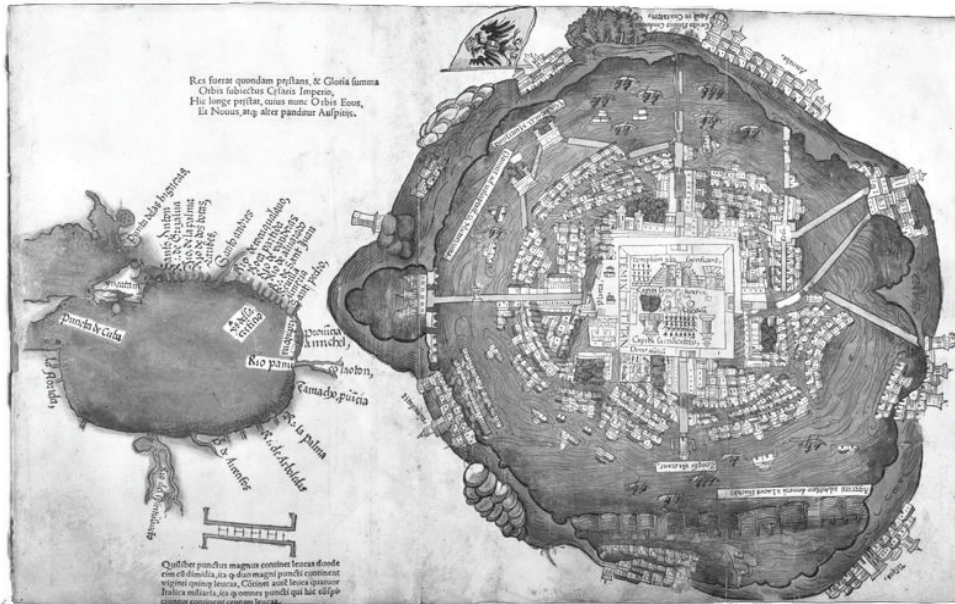


Figure 1.3 Spanish depiction of Tenochtitlán. The city is drawn from an aerial view (Source: <http://publications.newberry.org/aztecs/s2i1.html>)



Figure 1.4 Aztec depiction of Tenochtitlán. The maps tell stories that are intrinsically linked to their location. (Source: http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic200562.files/xolotl_1-2.jpg)

is indicated in the middle of the city and surrounded by housing. This portrayal is empirical and rational.

The Tenochtitláns depicted their places in different ways: Their depictions steer away from Euclidian notions of space and instead intertwine space and place with the additional concepts of time and event. Here, place is intrinsically linked to the events that unfolded within it, therefore, intrinsically linked to the time that they occurred. *'The manuscript is read by locating the origin of the footprints and deciphering the place signs as they occur on these itineraries'* (Harley, 1990:101).

Through a discussion of these contrasting readings of space and place, Massey (2001) discusses the fundamental ideas that still underlie the interpretations of spatial geographies today. She uses the story as an example of how these 'voyages of discovery' described space as something to be crossed and conquered. This is a perspective that differentiates and divides the players within space: Cortés is coined as the active maker of history, existing in the present. The Aztecs, on the other hand, are designated as the objects within the story; a primitive people who passively await the arrival of the Spanish

who will bring new technologies and the religions that will save them (Massey, 2001:4). This creates an implication that 'other' people, places and cultures are merely phenomena found 'on' the surface, lying in anticipation of our discovery of them and therefore lacking in their own historical trajectories. It is through this perspective that we disregard the histories and individual trajectories of 'other' cultures (Massey, 2001:5). Lefebvre (1974:273) argued that space is perceived in terms of left and right, and high and low rather than the dimensions of abstract, geometric, space. He continues to state that a geometric understanding of space only occurs when we abstract our natural perception of it. This abstraction of space underpins current global perceptions, allowing for divisions to be created between 'us' and 'them'. These are approaches that influence the current global movement and why they so often seem to benefit only some while at great disadvantage to others (Massey, 2001:7). Descartes formulated notions of space on the basis of extension. He viewed space as an element that is measured along three dimensions, in terms of co-ordinates, planes and lines within Euclidian geometry. Descartes' notion of space underlies the

'I have become convinced that the implicit assumptions that we make about space are important and that, maybe, it could be productive to think about space differently.'

Doreen Massey, For Space (2001:1)

perspectives demonstrated in the maps drawn of Tenochtitlán by the Spanish. But, as represented by the Tenochtitlán maps, this perspective separates people from the space that they inhabit: *'Space, like time, has been understood in a narrow, calculative, mathematical sense, which is divorced from our experience of space in our everyday dealings with the world'* (Elden, 2004:92). In presenting space within Euclidian principles, we inevitably reduce it to *'something that is quantitatively measurable, calculable, numerical'* (Elden, 2004:92). Heidegger (1971:212) contrasted these perspectives of space by propagating that space should be understood as the vessel for the relationship of all material objects. Space is a lived experience and should not only be viewed and understood in terms of its Euclidian geometry but as a container of life and all of the phenomena that it encompasses. This includes the tangible and intangible subjective connections

between the human and the inanimate. Space is subjectively experienced through the lens of culture and societal practices. Heidegger (1971:213) explained this through the example of the poetic dwelling of man, *'this notion of dwelling, wohnen, is precisely this way of inhabiting the world in a lived, experienced manner instead of one of calculative planning'* (Elden, 2004:98). But through acknowledging the social implications of space, we also imbue it with a political nature. *'The way we imagine space... carries with it social and political effects'* (Massey, 2001:4). Every society produces their own space due to their own specific political and social structures that negotiate the nature of the place. Power relations are played out within a spatial field and such a project of a spatial history is therefore inherently political (Elden, 2004:98). Lefebvre suggests that *'there is a politics of space because space is political'* (1974:192).

Considering these alternative perspectives, Massey discusses new perspectives to be adopted. She calls for space to be viewed as a consequence of social relationships and, therefore, in constant production.

Alternative understandings of space are proposed:

First, that space be recognised as the product of interrelations, as constituted through interactions.

Second, that we understand space as the sphere of possibility of the existence of multiplicity.

To understand that various trajectories coexist. This can be described as coexisting heterogeneity.

attributing it with an inherent political nature. One of the fundamental political dichotomies that exists within society is that of gender relationships and it is through this geometry of power relationships that architecture and space will be explored.

Architecture is always imbued with political agenda and it provides a visual narration of a culture. Whether intended or not, architecture provides commentary on the values and views of a culture, made evident through habitable form. The principles of Fordism and Modernism have been interpreted spatially with '*hierarchical,*

'The built environment is an expression of an established social order, meaning that space and the relationships it sustains reflect and reinforce existing gender, race and class relations in society'

(Weisman, 1981:65).

And thirdly, that we recognise space as always under construction. Space is a product of relations between. It is always in the process of being made; never finished or closed (Massey, 2001:9).

From this understanding of space, architecture becomes the vessel. Architecture embodies the spatial and expresses the social and political values of societies. Through its very existence, architecture creates boundaries which divide and exclude,

functional differentiation and serial repetition of the specialised units' (Schumacher, 2000). As has been discussed, there is a need to move beyond the representation of space as hierarchical and static, to that of space as fluid and multiplicitous. Many forces are at play simultaneously and it is important to reinterpret them in spatial terms so as to inform how we, as architects, understand and make space.

CHAPTER TWO

Place

Context Analysis

Chapter Two provides an analysis of the physical and social context of the project located in Central Pretoria.

The history of the site is discussed in order to provide an understanding of the various character changes that have occurred as a consequence of political and social influences.

A future vision is then proposed, along with an analysis of the site itself.



Figure 2.1 Project Location: Tshwane. (Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE

AREA OF INVESTIGATION: PRETORIA/TSHWANE

Pretoria, or Tshwane, is the administrative capital of South Africa and has been chosen as the city for investigation due to its position as a post-colonial African city in the throws of establishing a new identity.

The area of investigation is oriented around Lillian Ngoyi Square, previously Strijdom Square, which is a space with a politically charged history. As political power structures have shifted over time, these changes have manifested in the spatial character of the context, resulting in an environment comprised of dominating and isolated buildings that separate public spaces from one another and create a fractured experience of one of the few pedestrianised spaces in the city. This chapter seeks to understand the context as a consequence of these social and political influences as a means to inform appropriate tactics for future proposals for the context.

PLACE

HISTORY OF LILLIAN NGOYI SQUARE

Pretoria was established 1855 when the Voortrekkers left the rule of the British in the Cape to establish their own country of self-governance. Beginning as a rural village, it quickly developed into busy, eclectic town as the seat of government for the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek. Church Square was established as the central public space of the city, providing space for a variety of civic and public functions to play out (Bolsmann, 2001:13). Here, the Raadsaal was built where the parliamentary body of the Volksraad met to discuss issues relating to the newly established

republic (Bolsmann, 2001:9). Monthly markets were also held here, where farmers from neighbouring areas came together, traded goods, stocked up on supplies, met with friends and attended church services in the church in the centre of the square. Over time, the civic activities outgrew the space of Church square and in 1879, Jacob Daniel Cilliers was given a lease to build a set of market sheds on Market square (the current Lillian Ngoyi Square) located two blocks east of Church Square. This space, without the governmental functions of Church Square,

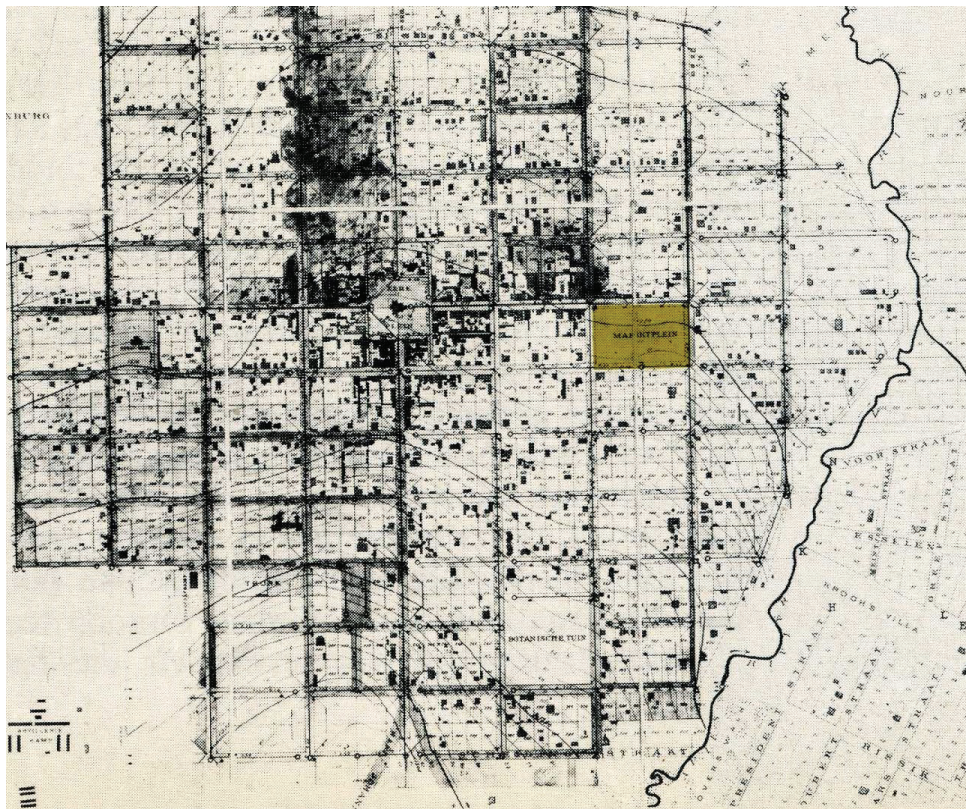


Figure 2.2 Lillian Ngoyi Square (Previously Market Square) is situated 2 blocks east of Church Square. (Source: Bolsmann, 2001:32)

PLACE



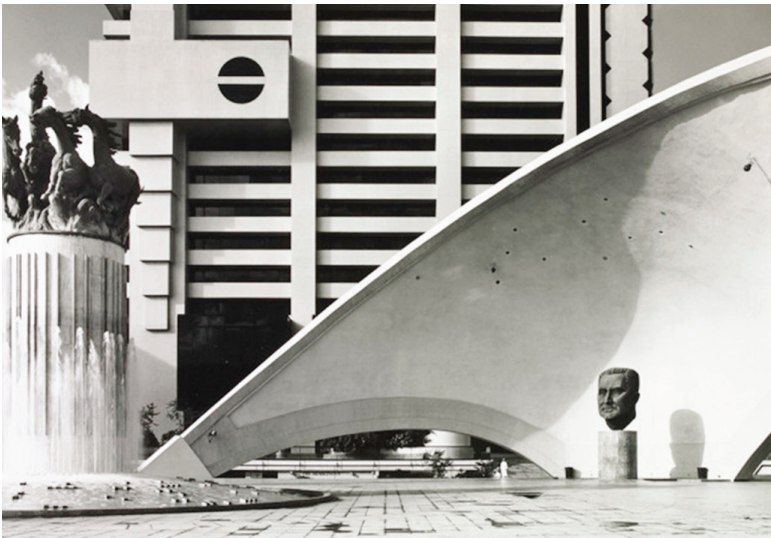
Figure 2.3 Church Square, 1880. Watercolour by Anderw A. Anderson (Source: Bolsmann, 2001:34)

provided a secondary open public space in the centre of the city, creating a vibrant cultural and civic space. Along with the open market, the first South African museum along with an Indian market were also built here. However, since its establishment, the site has been a place of tension between civic and governmental forces. When the time came for the new City Hall to be built in 1925, many Pretorians proposed for it to be built on Market Square, due to the central location and civic nature (Bolsmann, 2001:236). Yet despite 730 ratepayers presenting a petition to the council for the building to be located here, it was eventually built on Pretorius Square, on Paul

Kruger Street. Market Square continued to provide a place for daily urban activities into the 1950's: In 1956, the square served as the location for the meeting of 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings hand the Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom a petition signed by over 100 000 people protesting the pass laws imposed on black people in South Africa.

The first half of the 1900's had seen the Afrikaaners searching for a national identity (Bolsmann, 2011:8) and towards the end of the 1950's the ruling National Party, having been in power for almost twenty years, began plans to make its mark on the capital. Demolition of the Market hall

PLACE



PLACE

Clockwise, starting from top left:

Figure 2.4 Market Square, 1860.

Figure 2.5 New Market sheds are built on the square.

Figure 2.6 The National Government begins construction of the cupola.

Figure 2.7 The State Theatre is completed.

Figure 2.8 A Masterplan for the Strijdom Square precinct

Figure 2.9 The ABSA tower is completed and the bust and horse statue built in the square.

began in July 1966 to make way for the construction of the State Theatre and a large public underground parking garage that would accommodate 1500 cars. The remaining buildings on Market square were then demolished to make way for a new public square dedicated to the Prime Minister of the time, J.G. Strijdom. In 1972, a bronze bust of J.G. Strijdom was unveiled under a large cupola, along with a towering brass statue of horses running through water (Bolsmann, 2001:109). What had previously been a thriving market square was transformed into a large open space that functioned merely as a large plinth for a statue of the Prime Minister. Aside from the occasional wedding photos and work lunches eaten in the awkward landscaping to the side of the square, it never regained its lively civic nature.

'Many of the modern developments, like Strijdom Square, seem hell bent on destroying the city centre for people,' said Alan Konya, a prominent architect in Pretoria during the 1960's & 70's as well as a lecturer at the university of Pretoria (Rand Daily Mail, 23 November 1979).

Construction projects continued around the square, erecting buildings that reinforced the

nationalistic intentions of the current government. In 1978, the ABSA Tower (then known as the Volkskas Building) was completed on the south-west corner of the block. Designed by Samuel Pauw, it was the tallest building in the city until the Reserve Bank was built. Designed with an open retail podium and an underground retail corridor linking to the Standard Bank building, the tower *'served as a statement of nationalism, triumph and economic dominance'* - Melinda Silverman, Johannesburg Urban Designer & Heritage Expert (Schmahmann, 2013). The new State Theatre Building was completed and unveiled on 23 May 1981.

These buildings, while appearing to have city-dwellers at the heart of their purpose, in reality had the opposite effect on the context. While a building like the State Theatre's programming might suggest civic inclusion, the architectural resolution and style instead create an overpowering, monolithic and insular building that disregards its immediate environment. The ABSA Tower has a similar effect.

PLACE

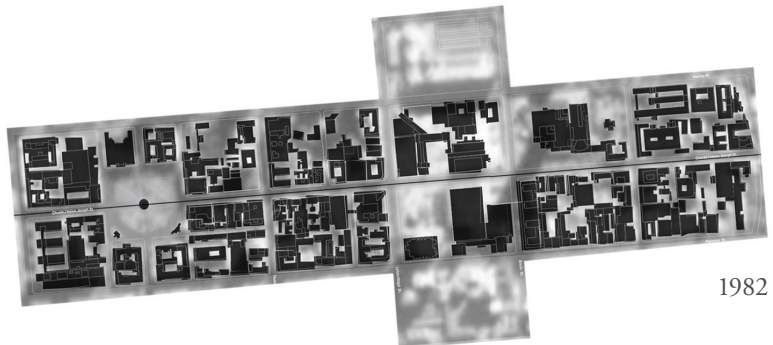
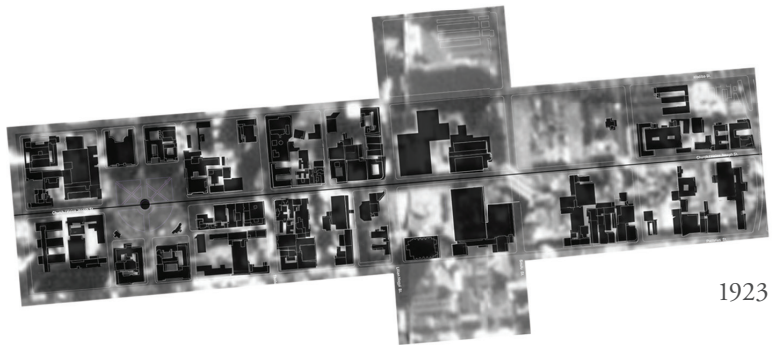
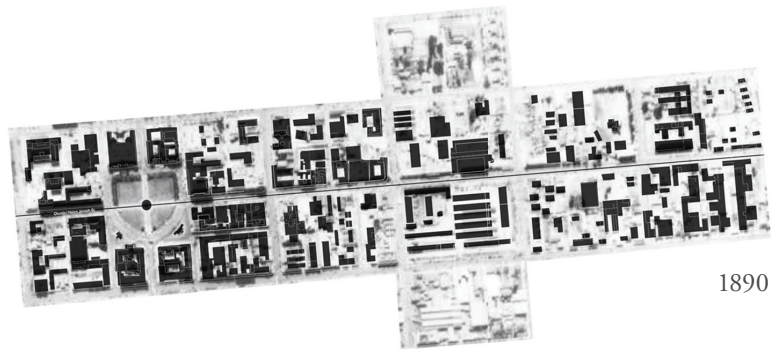


Figure 2.10 Evolution of the urban grain along Church Street
(Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE

EVOLUTION OF
LILLIAN NGOYI SQUARE

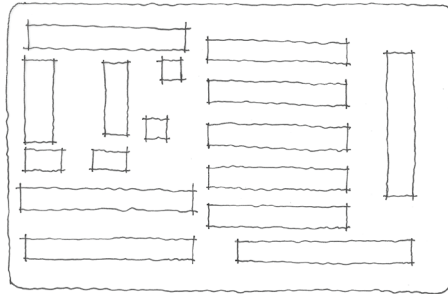


Figure 2.11 **A Civic Space**
Markets, exhibitions, political gatherings and court hearings were held on the square. It was the location of Pretoria's first museum, and it hosted many festivals, the opening of the Mozambique railway. (Source: Author, 2015)

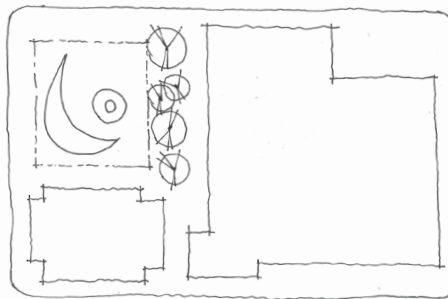


Figure 2.12 **A Time of National Grandeur**
From the 1970's, the square functioned as a nationalist monument to past Prime Minister, J.G. Strijdom. (Source: Author, 2015)

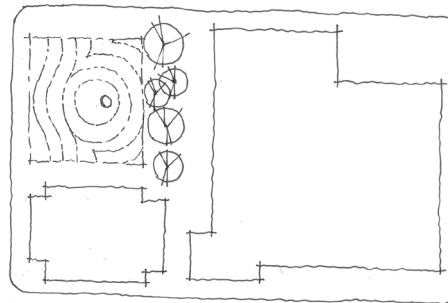


Figure 2.13 **A Forgotten Space**
After the fall of the cupola and the bust of J.G. Strijdom, the horse statue was moved. The square stood open, barren and awkward in the urban context. (Source: Author, 2015)

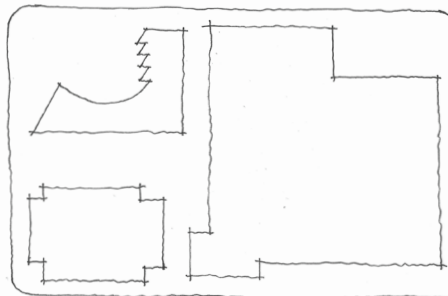


Figure 2.14 **Pendulum Swing**
A new national narrative is represented with the construction of a Women's Museum on the square that represents the struggle of the black women during Apartheid. (Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE

PLACE

CURRENT CONDITION

In 2001, the cupola on the square collapsed due to structural failure. The statue and the cupola were removed and the square was rebuilt. The bronze horse statue was unaffected but relocated to the University of Pretoria campus in 2007 (Schmahmann, 2013). Nothing was built in the place of these structures, leaving the square as an open, forgotten space. The Square has since been

renamed Lillian Ngoyi Square and the Women's Memorial has been built in its open space. The museum presents an opposing narrative to the buildings of its direct context but with a political agenda that is just as strong. As previously discussed, one is forced to question whether the political pendulum has simply not been swung in the opposite direction with the new construction.



Figure 2.15 A new national narrative is represented with the Construction

PLACE

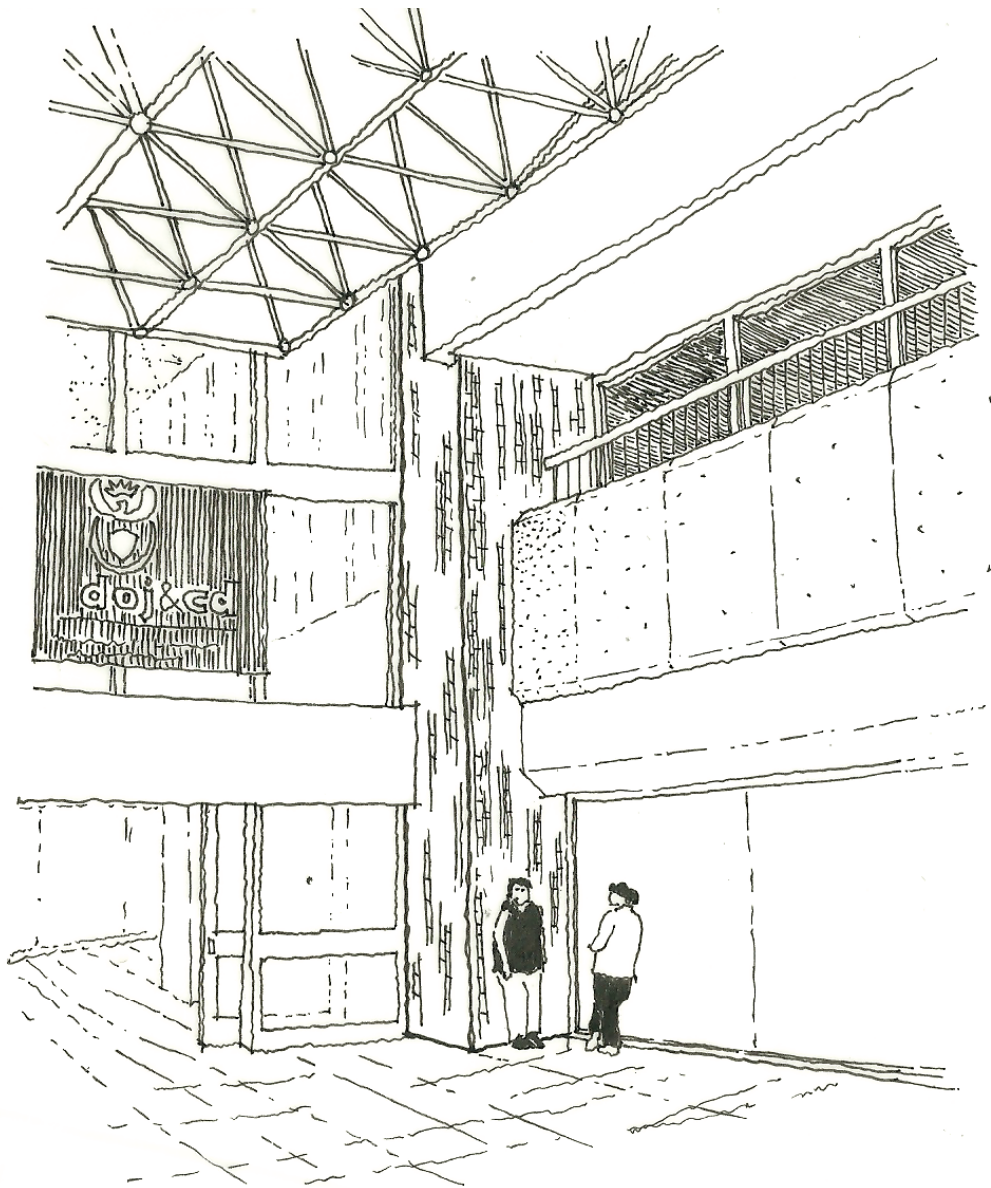


Figure 2.16 Intimate personal spaces are appropriated (Source: Author, 2015)

PERSONAL SPACE OF THE BODY IMPERSONAL SPACE OF THE CITY

As has been discussed, the surrounding context of Lillian Ngoyi Square has a harsh and dominating character. Extreme conditions of expansive and exposed spaces are contrasted with those of the small, intimate spaces that appropriated by city users as a means of creating human-scale spaces. It is the intention of this project to create an intervention that is able to mediate between these extreme conditions. Sketches were used as a medium by which to observe and understand the context. Attention was focussed on the way that people appropriate and react to their environment, giving clues as to the needs of daily city dwellers and to the built environment's accommodation and response to those needs. The surrounding context of the site is characterised by impersonal and exposed spaces and a lack of human scale. Due to the fractured evolution of this urban environment, buildings of the context operate independently of one another, providing few examples of cohesion within the urban fabric. Public and private

are starkly juxtaposed against one another, and thresholds between inside and outside, public and private are thin. A five-lane road separates the city blocks from one another, bringing high levels of noise, pollution and fast-moving traffic to the city centre. Pavements do little to separate this traffic from the pedestrian zones, aside from assigning car parking along the edge of the street. Ground level facades consist mostly of retail but the relationship between the shop fronts and the pedestrian zone is poor. Small elements can be found that allow for temporary rest, interaction, conversation and trade but these are the exception and not the norm. Much of the personalised space created along the pavement is created by the appropriation of urban elements intended for other purposes. Without spaces for rest along the pavement and with little connection to the facing retail from buildings, pavements behave simply as treadmills, bustling people along without opportunity for rest or social encounter.

PLACE

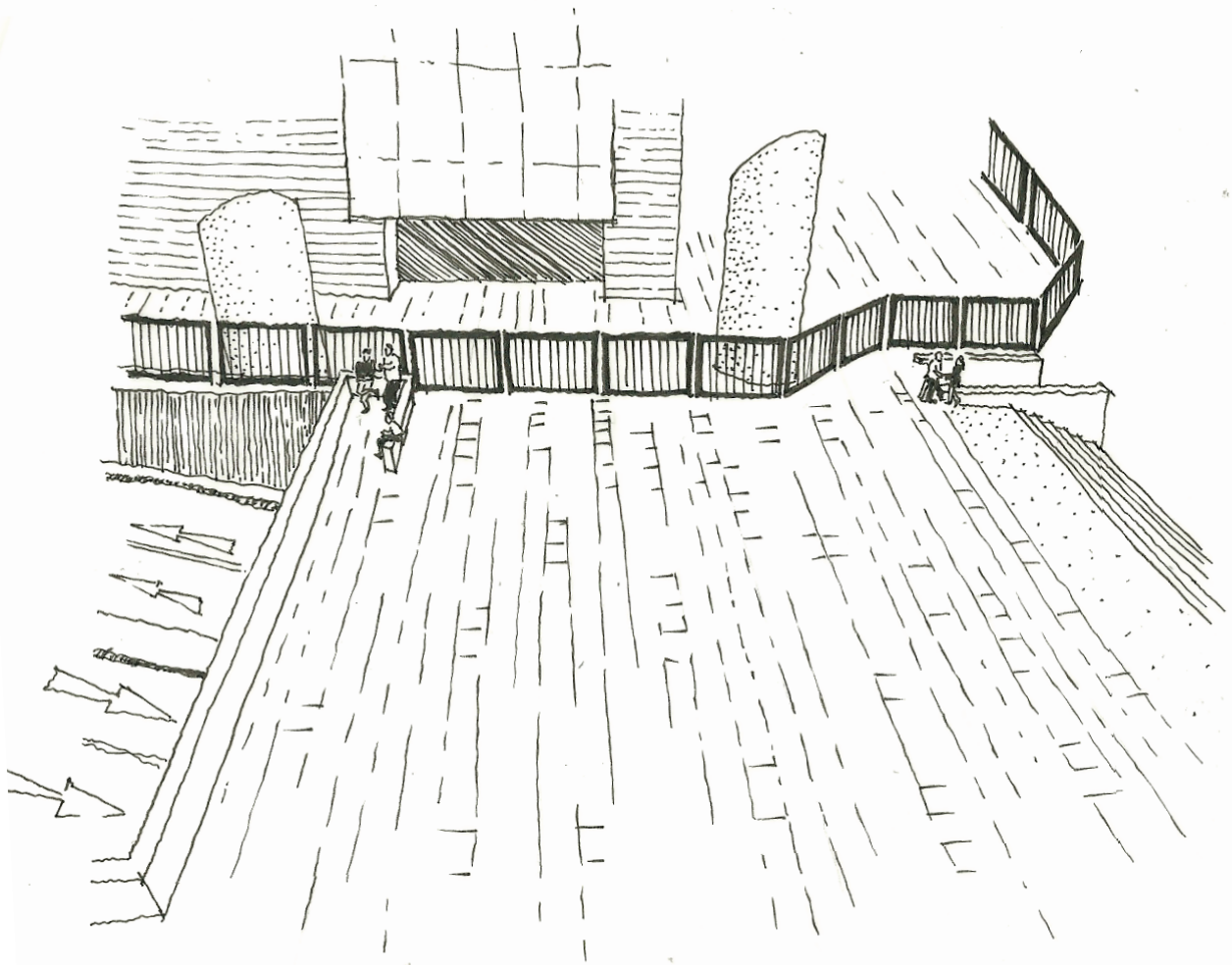


Figure 2.17 An expansive open space provides no human scale to relate to. People gather around accidental urban furniture such as balustrades and low walls. (Source: Author, 2015)



PLACE

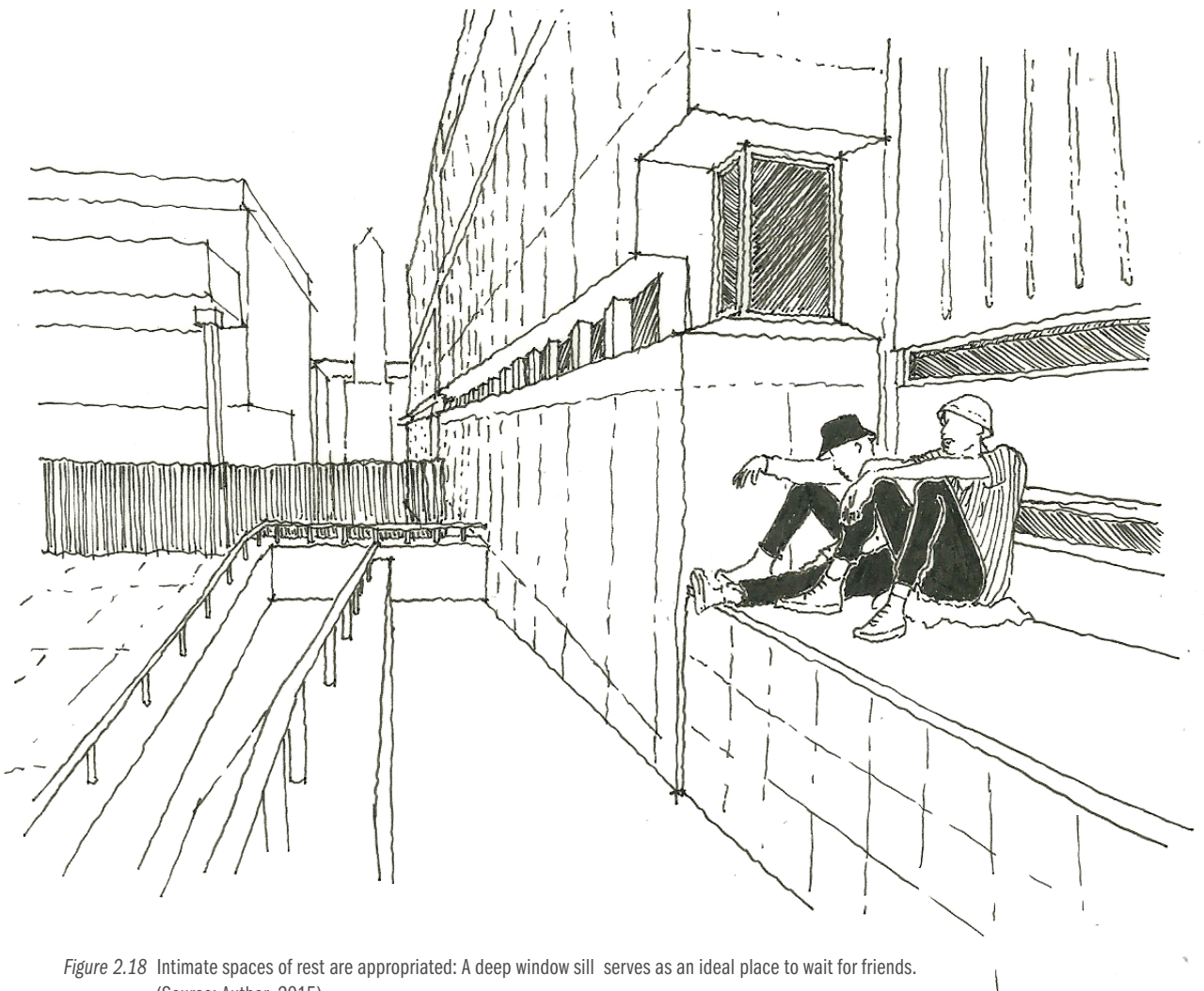
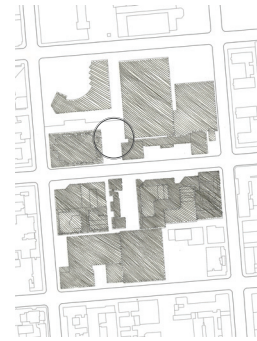


Figure 2.18 Intimate spaces of rest are appropriated: A deep window sill serves as an ideal place to wait for friends.
(Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE

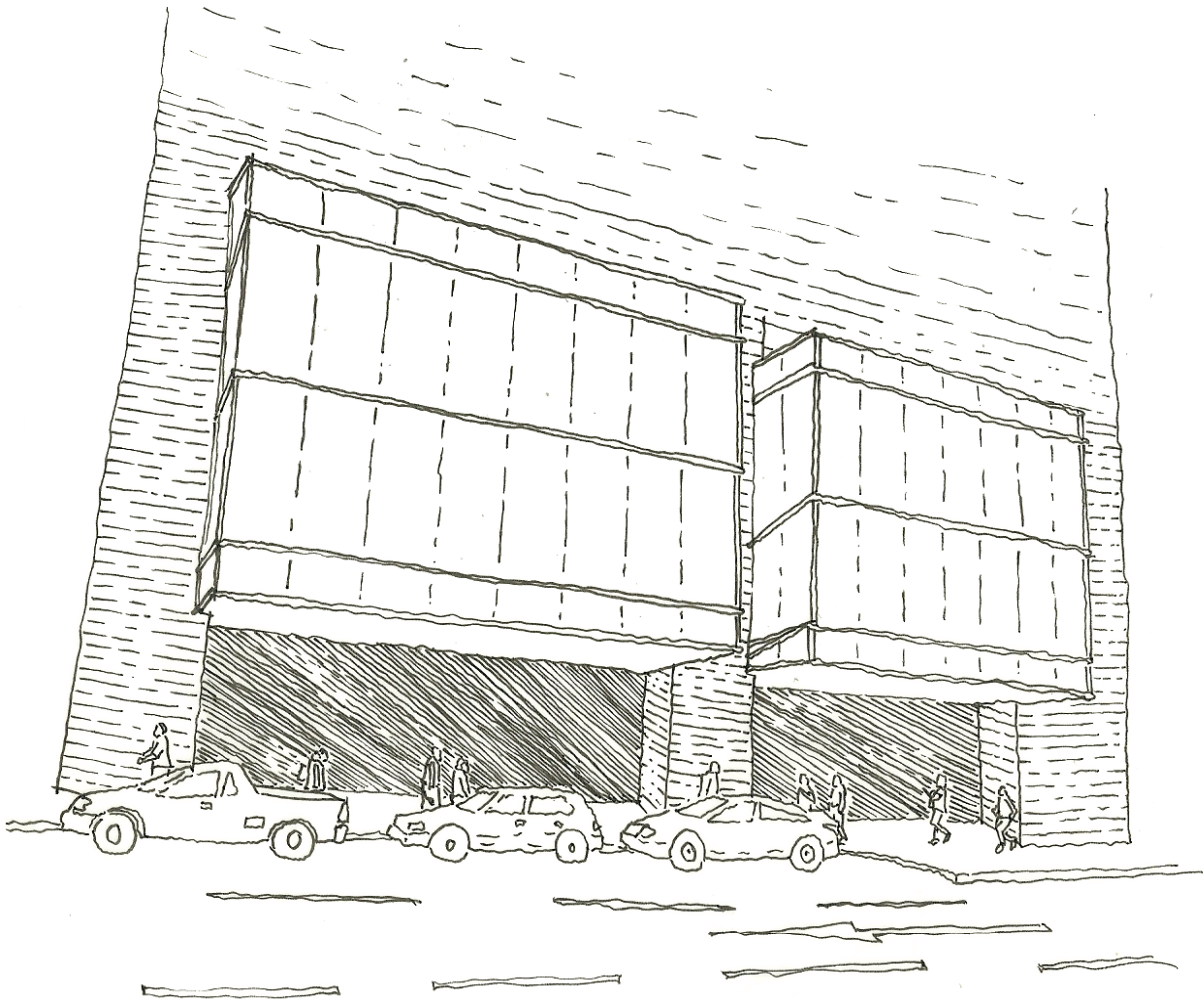
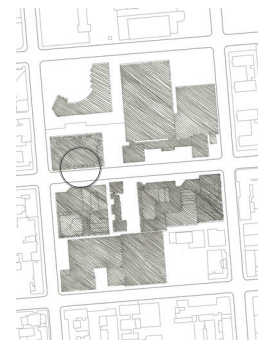


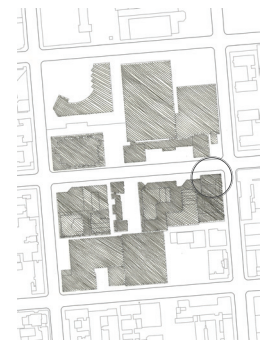
Figure 2.19 The ABSA Tower was originally designed with a retail podium that related to the pedestrian realm on the ground floor. But changes over time have closed up the podium, providing little connection between the tower and its context. (Source: Author, 2015)



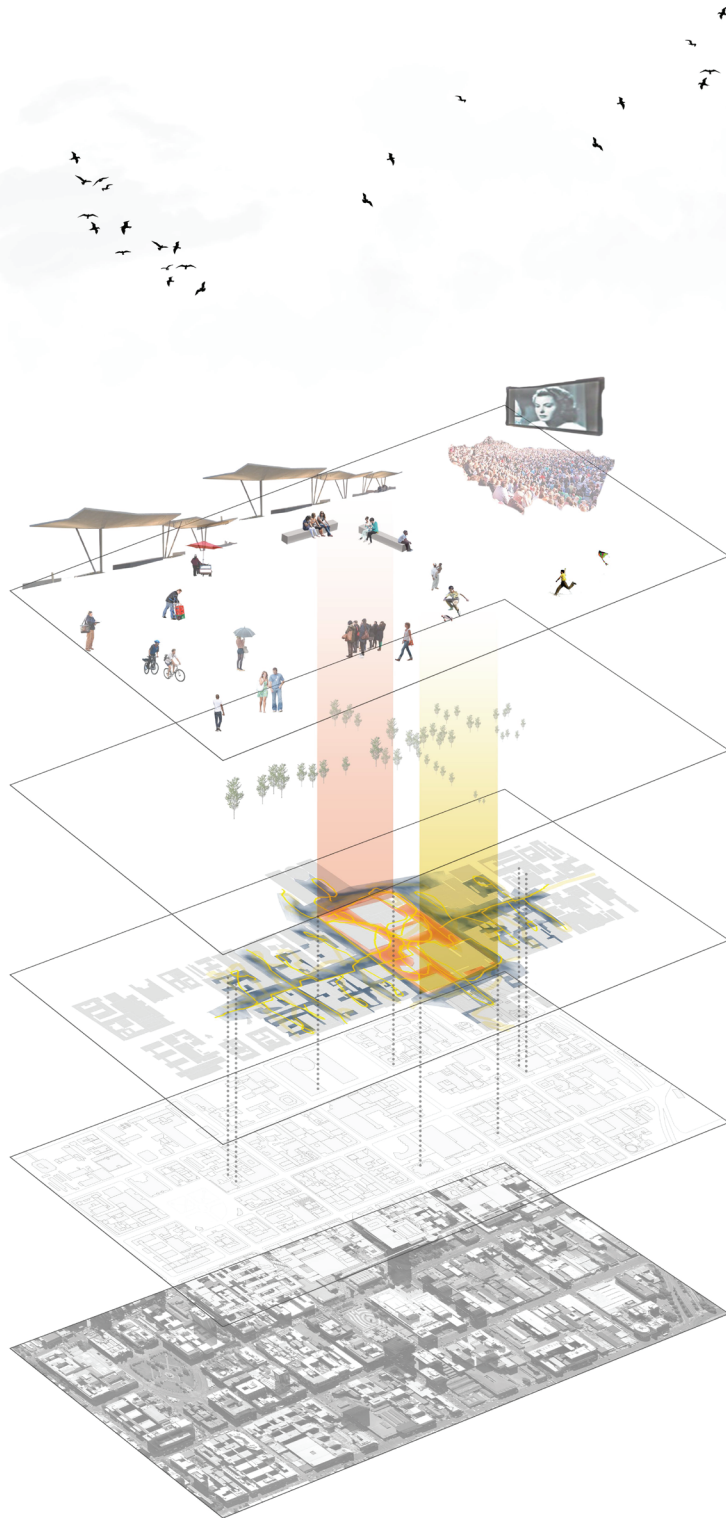
PLACE



Figure 2.20 Small design considerations such as canopies bring down the scale of the buildings along Pretorius Street, creating an appropriate relationship between the human scale of the pedestrian realm and the height of its context. (Source: Author, 2015)



PLACE



CIVIC LIFE RETURNED: THE URBAN VISION

As part of the investigation of the greater context of the site for the dissertation, an Urban Vision was proposed (Bester, Burger, De Veredici & Oosthuizen, 2015). The Urban Vision aims to return the civic nature to the centre of the city. A Cultural Precinct is proposed for the city block including Lillian Ngoyi Square with Church street runs through the precinct. Currently, the portion between Church square and Sisulu Street is pedestrianised. The linearity of this portion of the street is a primary obstacle to the integration of the various spaces into a unified public space. Church street is therefore dissolved into the block and the surface treatment and furniture of the street removed to allow for a cohesive open square to be created. Interventions are proposed which intend to break open the insular, dominating nature of the buildings of the context, opening them up physically and programmatically to the public. Pretoria's tradition of cutting through the large city blocks with arcades is continued, allowing the alleyway behind the new museum to become a linking arcade between the greater proposed area. This arcade continues into the site for this dissertation, creating continuous pedestrian movement from the cultural precinct into the smaller parts of the proposed area. Propose to create a network of these public spaces, allowing the links between the spaces to be designed to accommodate

as much public life as the open spaces that they connect. As with the theory relating to the notion of the street as public space especially within the African context, the pedestrianised Church Street becomes an important platform for the playing out of everyday public life. To the west, the already pedestrianised part of church street beginning at Church square and terminating in the cultural precinct is intended to become a vibrant and active market street, filtering through into smaller courtyards that are already present between the buildings lining the street. The courtyards will contain semi-public functions for restaurants, bars and other social programmes. On the eastern portion of the precinct, a didactic zone is proposed which exaggerates the current programming of the buildings in the area. Here, small courtyards are also created but serve a more private purpose by accommodating for the schools in the surrounding buildings. The many rooftops are integrated into the precinct through a third tier of semi-public space. This allows for a range of functions such as outside movie theatres and event spaces to be made use of. A grading from public to semi-public, semi private and private is created in the precinct. Particular sites were chosen for intervention, as a means of supporting and contributing towards the new civic precinct.

Legends

- Educational
 - Community
 - Commercial
 - Residential
 - Cultural
 - Transport
 - Nightlife
 - Commercial Offices
 - Health
 - Government
 - Craft Business
 - Religious
 - Weekend Activity
 - Week Activity
 - Night Activity
 - Day Activity
-
- Fenced Off
 - Accessible But Unused
 - Active
 - Inaccessible Green Space
 - Open Green Space
 - Trees
 - Existing Arcades
 - Proposed Arcade
 - Active edge
 - Exothermic: Release energy in the city
 - Inactive Edge
 - Endothermic: Removes energy from the city
 - Taxi Rank
 - BRT Stops
 - Taxi Stops
 - Taxi Routes
 - BRT Routes
 - Heavy Pedestrian Traffic

The mapping analysis recognises the existing spatial conditions, building edge conditions, use, land use, type of private or public activities, and the public flows and energy surrounding spaces within Church str.

This study maps the various activities that provide energy at night, day, week and weekend, giving insight into the spatial use of Church str. Overlapping the energy flows of people in and around buildings, and shows whether the buildings edge conditions and there programmes are exothermic (giving energy), or endothermic (taking energy) from Church str. The diurnal / nocturnal, and week weekend study shows how high energy spaces may fluctuate during night and day activities or visa versa.

Examination looks at transport networks and interchanges, the accessibility or inaccessibility of public and green spaces, as well studying the traditional pedestrian arcades that cut through Pretoria's Long City Blocks, also framing the rituals of people, and lastly it provides insight in possible cross-pollination of activities to revitalise Church Str.



Figure 2.21 Mapping of existing conditions of the precinct. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)



PLACE

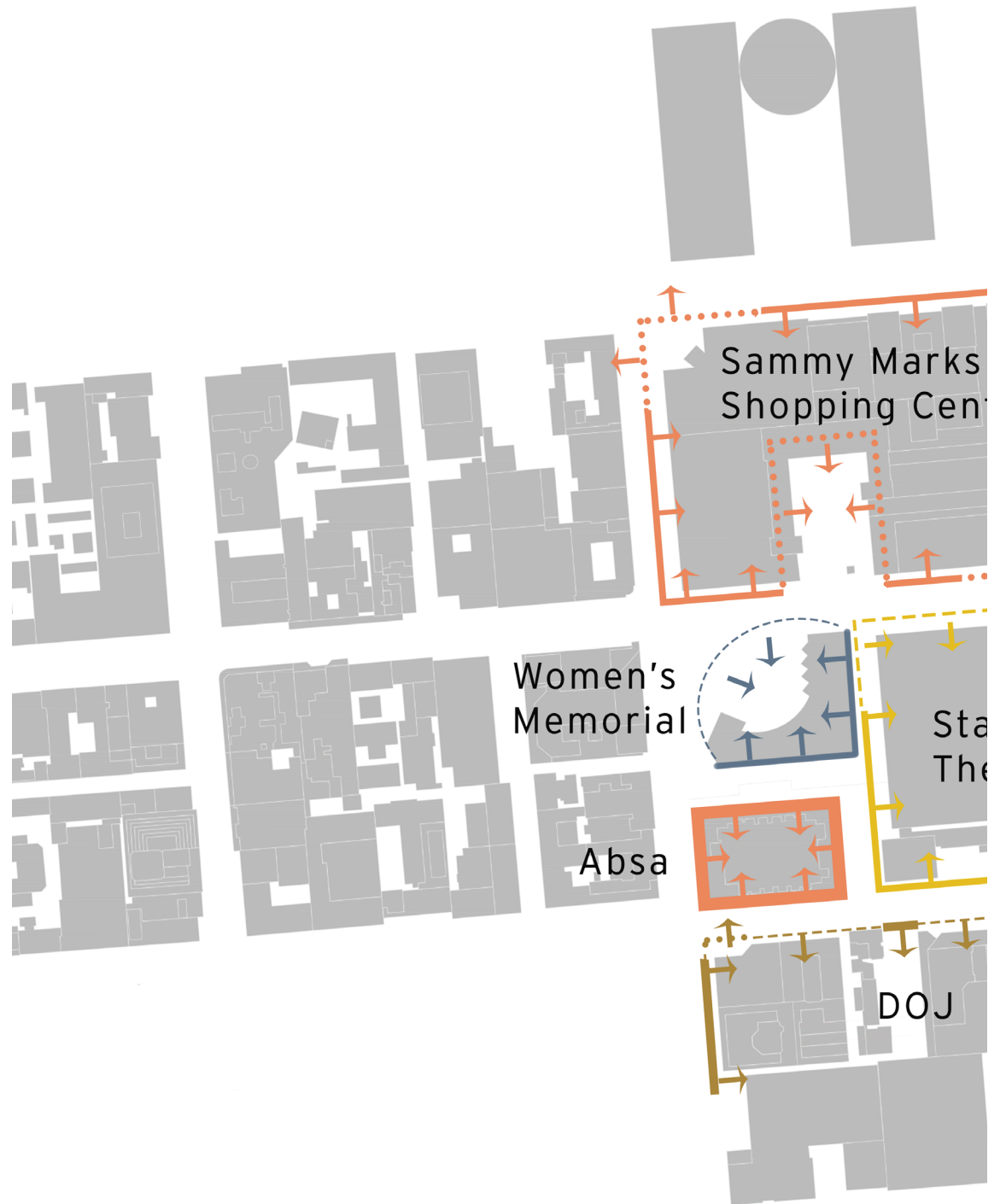
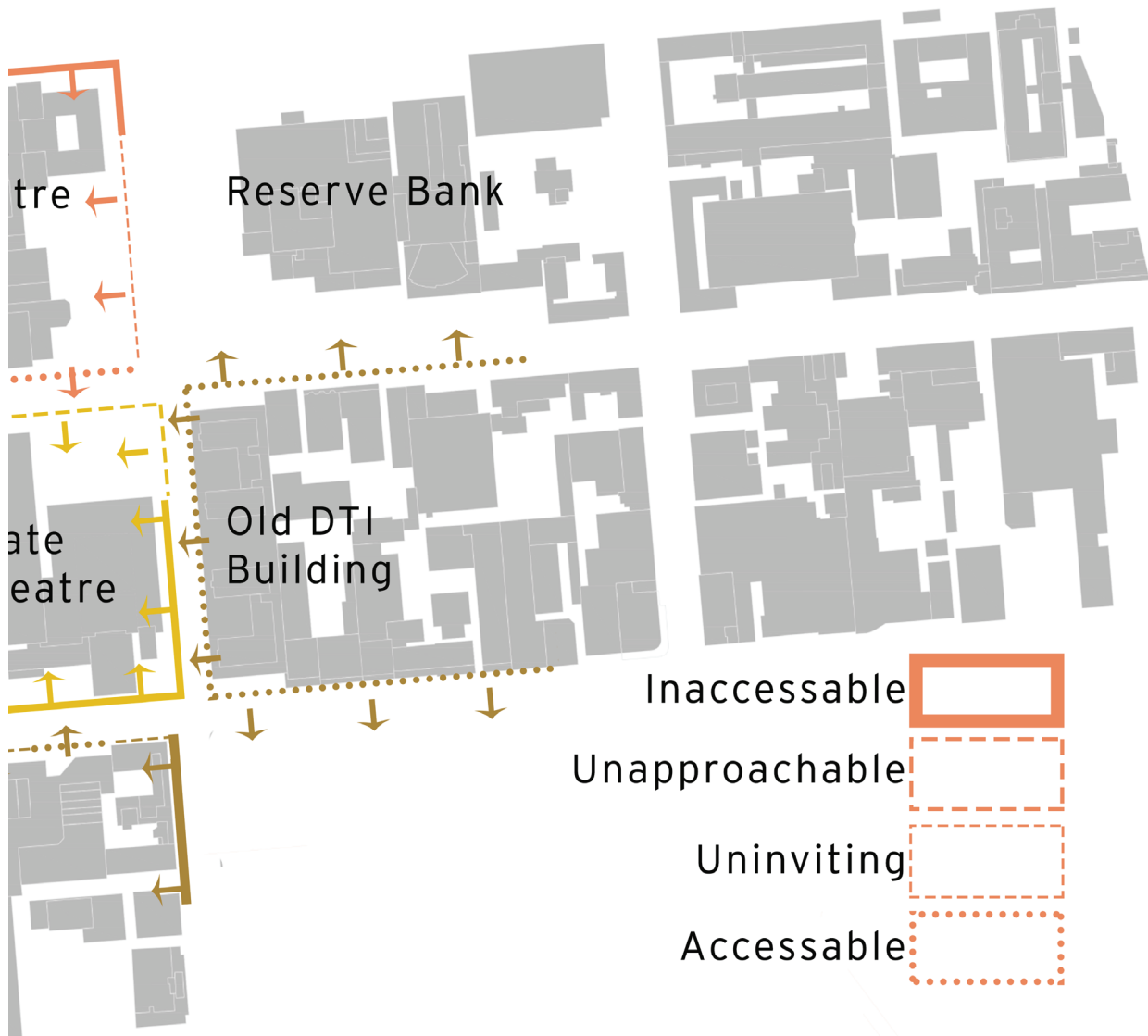


Figure 2.22 dominant, insular buildings of the context. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)

PLACE



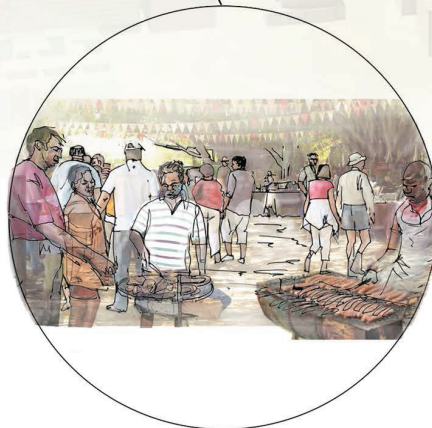
Roof Top Social Space



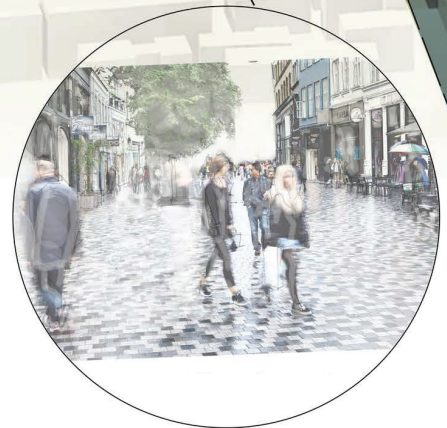
Intimate Social Space in The City's In-between Space



Designated Eating Space within Sammy Marks



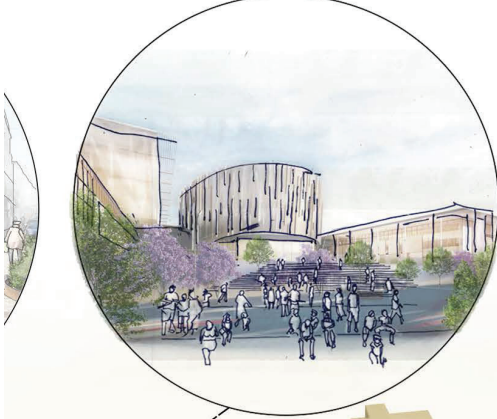
Braai Space for Vendors (Pedestrianised Street)



Commercial Street (Pedestrianised Street)

Figure 2.23 Urban Proposal: A cultural precinct in proposed. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)

Public Staircase to Newly Proposed Munitoria Building



First Order - Cultural



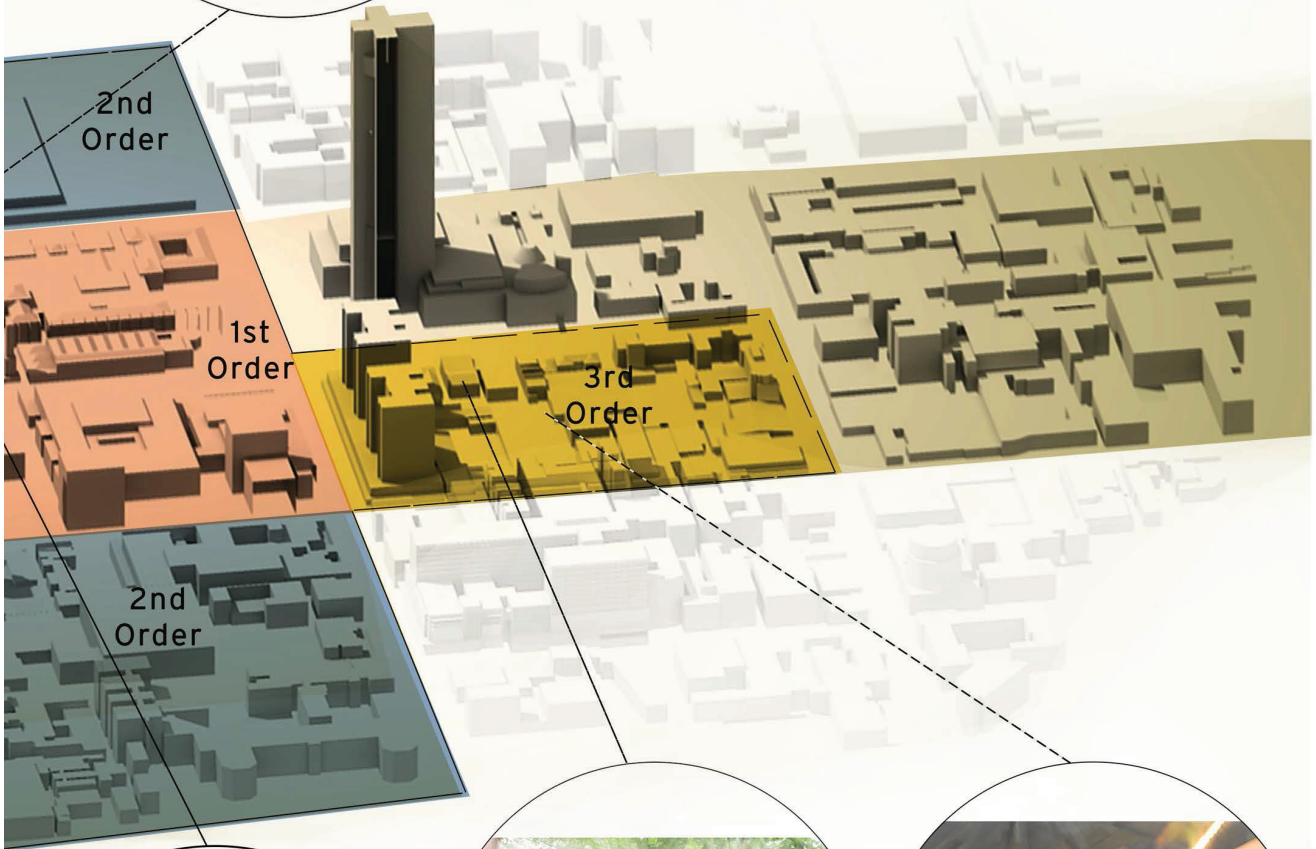
Second Order - Civic



Third Order - Cultural / Didactic



Supporting Colour - Commercial



2nd Order

1st Order

3rd Order

2nd Order



Space of Repose on Ngoyi Square



Intimate Social Space in The City's In-between Space



Intimate Social Theatre Space The City's Inverted Space





Figure 2.24 Site allocations for group members. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)



Marlette
| Continuation of pedestrian arcades
| Situated on the threshold of the Cultural, Civic and Didactic Precincts
| Mediates surrounding programmes
| Negotiates contesting architecture

Tian
| Programmatically the "Backstage" of State Theatre
| Connects the Cultural and Didactic Precinct
| Continuation of pedestrian arcade
| Mediates two extremely different urban scales

Lillian Ngoyi
Square

Women's Living Memorial

State Theatre

ABSA Tower

PRETORIUS STREET

Retail and
office block

SITE

Department
of Justice

The Tramshed

Parking



Figure 2.25 Site locality NTS.
(Source: Author 2015)

PLACE

THE SITE

Located on Pretorius Street, directly opposite the new museum building, an urban void exists between the Momentum and Pretmed buildings. Used as a parking lot for the surrounding buildings, the site has an indeterminate nature. It can only be assumed that the original intentions for the site were never realised, leaving the site to exist in this awkward in-between state. The Women's Forum is located in this interstitial urban space. The

Department of Justice is based in the two buildings that border the site, allowing the Women's Forum to operate alongside the governmental department that addresses many women's issues in South Africa. A network of existing pedestrian arcades are found around the site, providing a good opportunity for continuation of the public, pedestrian realm by creating a connected movement path through the site.

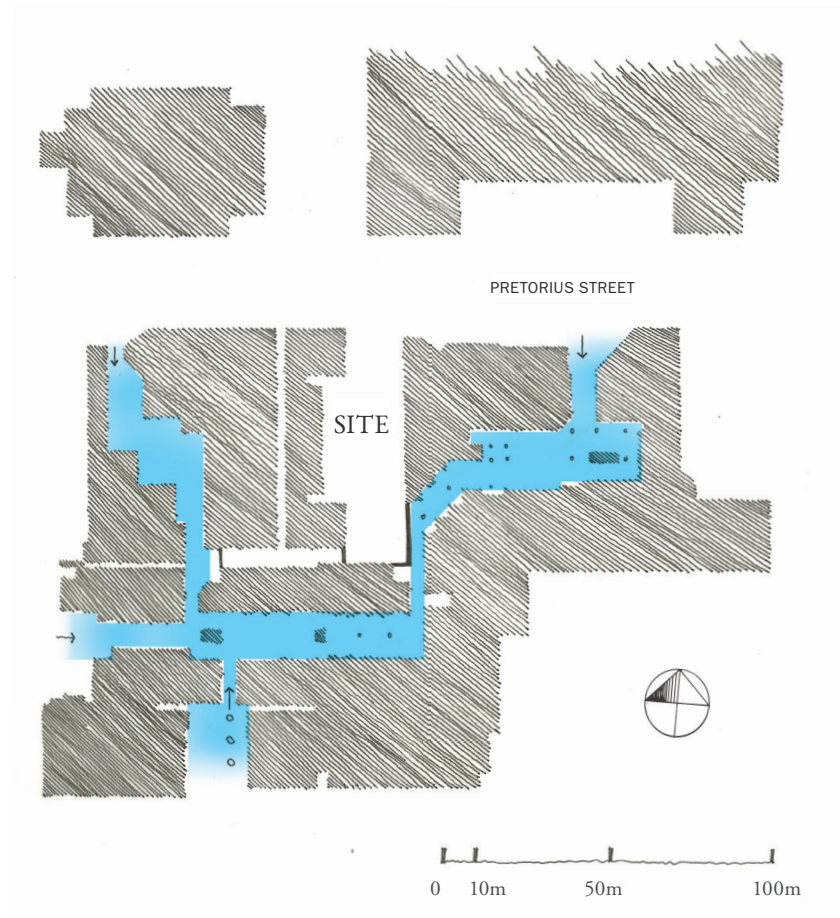


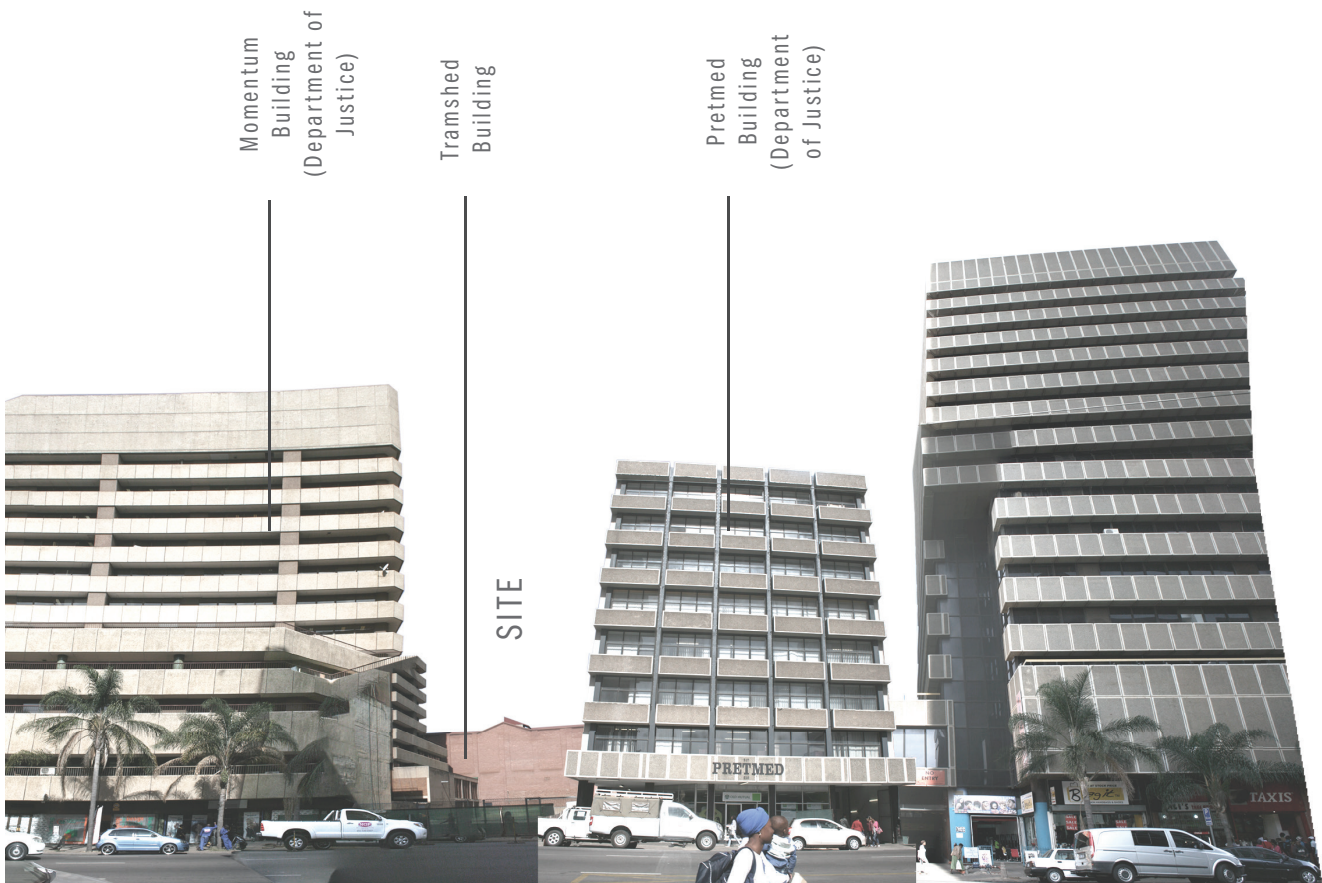
Figure 2.26 Arcade network on Pretorius Street. (Source: Author 2015)

PLACE



Figure 2.27 The southern edge of Pretorius Street. (Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE



PLACE

ABSA Tower

Women's
Living
Memorial



Figure 2.28 The northern edge of Pretorius Street. (Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE



State Theatre



PLACE

SITE: THE URBAN VOID

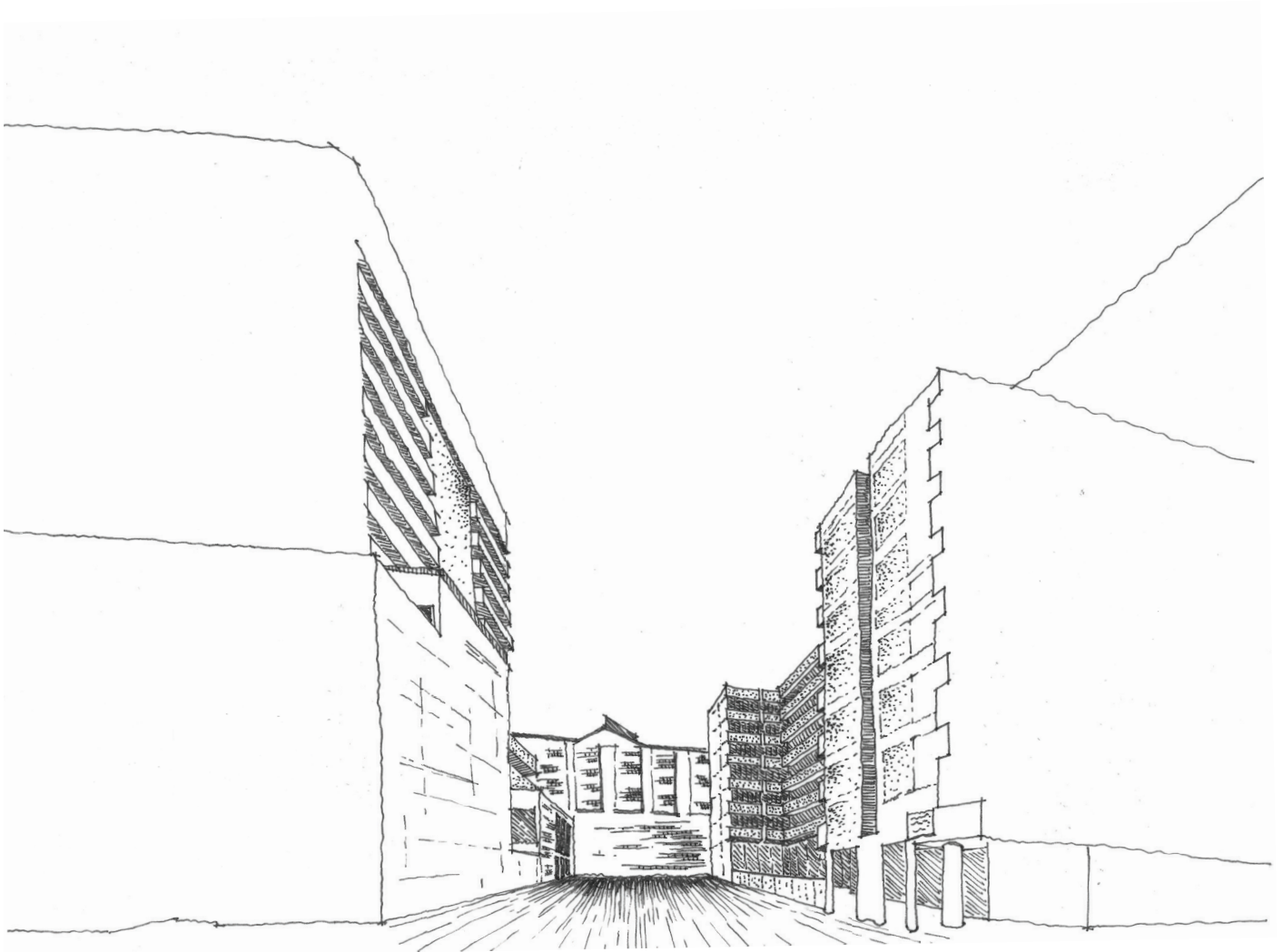


Figure 2.29 The Urban Void: An 'Other' Space. (Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE

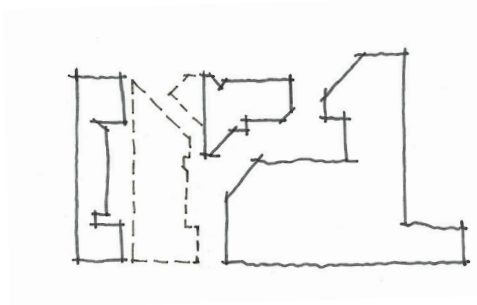


Figure 2.30 Dashed line indicating the footprint of the demolished building where the site is now. It contained a pedestrian arcade that met up with the arcade in the Momentum Building.

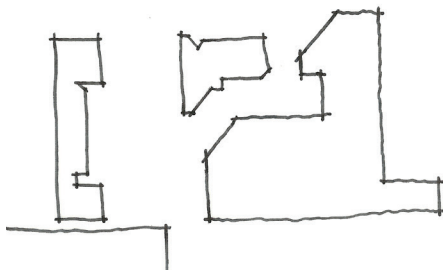


Figure 2.31 The site as it exists today. A thin masonry wall separates the pedestrian arcade from the site. (Source: Author)

The site identifies as a significant non-space within the city; an 'other' space; currently existing in limbo. Fragments exist on site, layered over time. The site was originally occupied by the western extension to the Momentum Building which has since been demolished (Department of Architecture Archives, Accessed 11 March 2015) but disconnected intentions for surrounding buildings have led to the creation of this indeterminate void within the urban fabric. Due to this lack of definition, the walls behave as membranes rather than walls between buildings. Unfinished intentions leak into the space. These membranes that line the borders contribute to its isolated nature. It is at these indeterminate borders to the site that the proposed building will puncture into the surrounding context. The qualities of the urban void are explored through documenting the fragments that compose its boundaries.

PLACE

Figure 2.32 The Urban Void



PLACE

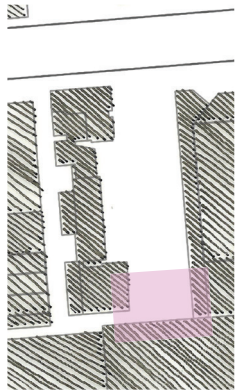


The 'second' facade of the Pretmed building creates the western edge to the site. Here, the possibility for dialogue space between new and existing is possible.

Figure 2.33 Figure 5.4: Western edge of the site. The 'second' facade of the PretMed building faces into the site.



PLACE



The southern-most edge creates the opportunity for public movement through the site. Puncturing through this wall creates a connection to the existing network of arcades that run through the city block.



Figure 2.34 Southern edge of the site.
The masonry wall of the Tramshed building
(Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE



The eastern border of the site is comprised of a variety of different walls, as a consequence of the demolition of a portion of the building. The unfinished character of the walls with the lack of intention for future use give the walls a membrane-like quality between inside and outside.



Figure 2.35 Eastern edge of the site. Unfinished concrete walls behave as membranes between the interior and exterior (Source: Author, 2015)

CHAPTER THREE

Shrine

A Discussion of the
New Memorial

Chapter Three provides a discussion of the new Women's Memorial which is currently under construction on Lillian Ngoyi Square. The museum commemorates the women's march of 1956 and provides a local precedent for the discussion of architecture that addresses the feminine from a programmatic as well as spatial perspective.

SHRINE

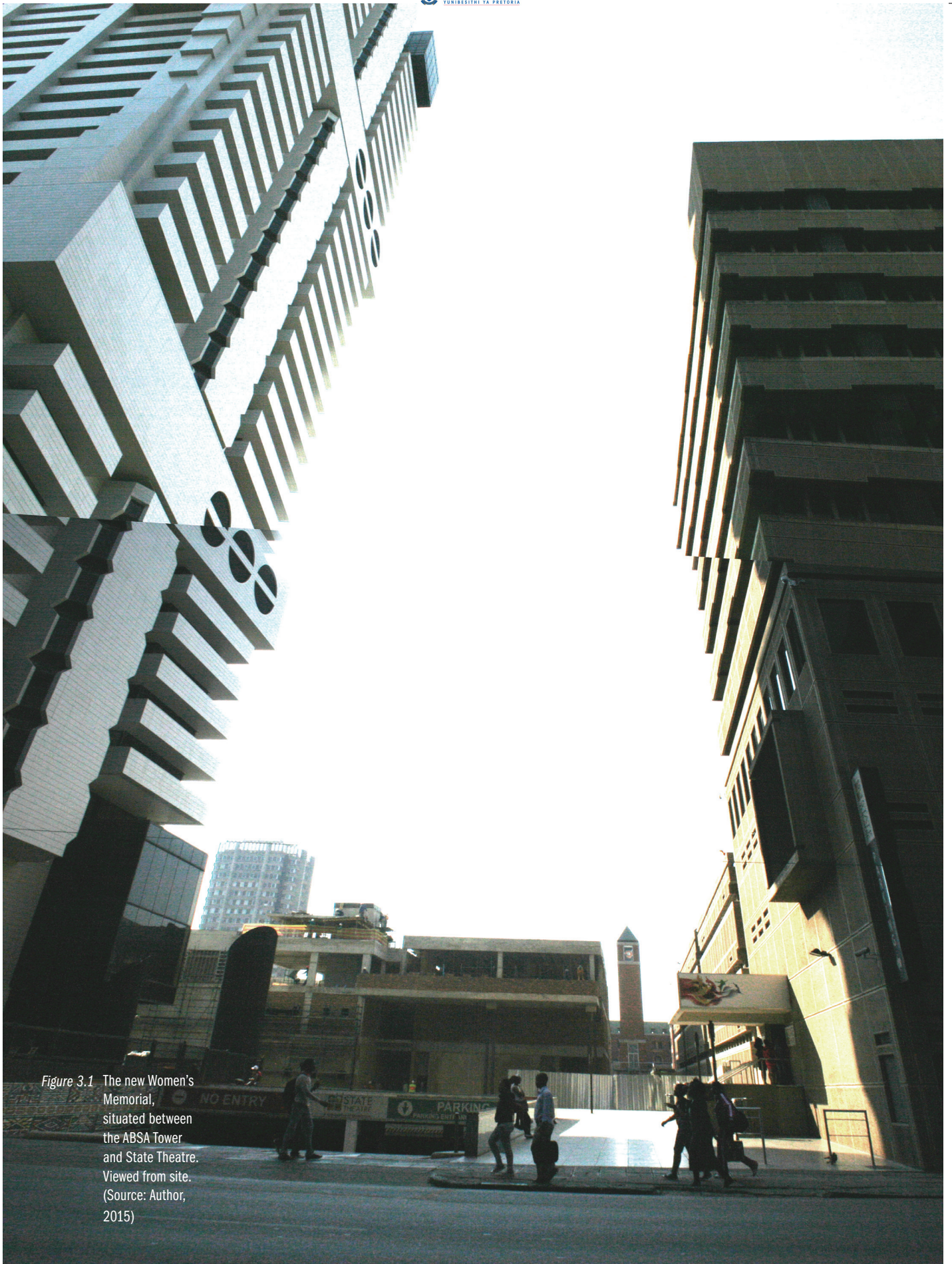
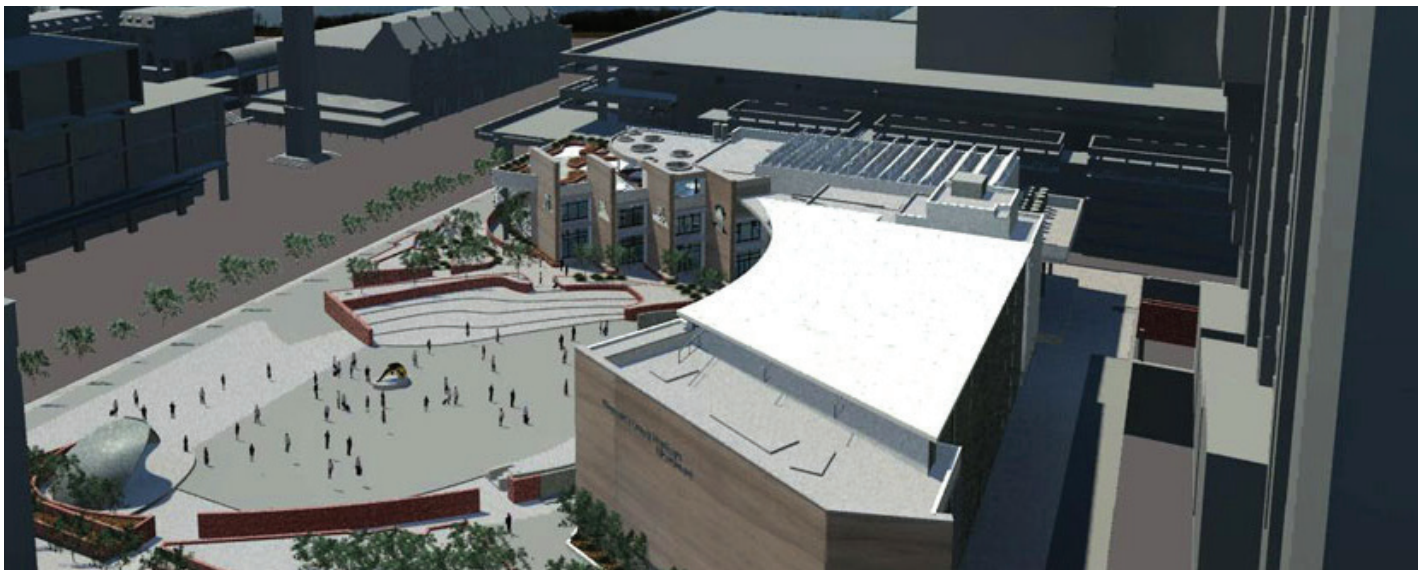
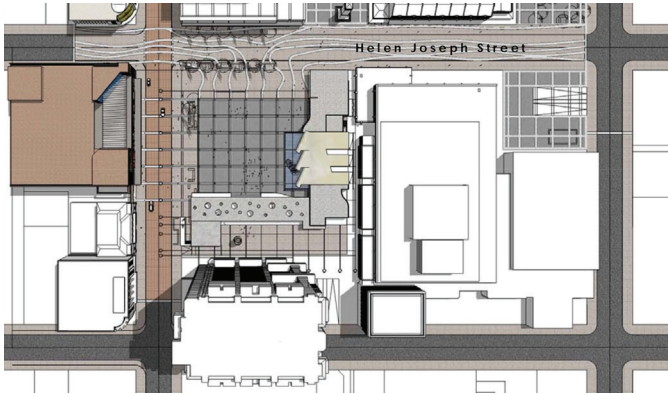


Figure 3.1 The new Women's Memorial, situated between the ABSA Tower and State Theatre. Viewed from site. (Source: Author, 2015)

SHRINE



SHRINE

Figure 3.2 Initial masterplan proposal by Mashabane Rose Architects. (Source: dbm Architects, 2015)

THE WOMEN'S LIVING MEMORIAL: A DISCUSSION

Figure 3.3 The Women's Living Memorial with public square (Source: dbm Architects, 2015)

Introduction

The new Women's Living Memorial, currently under construction at the time of writing, provides a starting point for discussions related to the expression of the feminine in architecture. The museum commemorates the women involved in the march against the pass laws during the Apartheid regime in 1956. The building presents an opportunity for the creation of an 'other' architecture through considerations of the feminine in space-making but despite these intentions, the building's success in translating notions of the feminine into architecture have not been successful. This is a disappointment in the context of post-Apartheid memorial architecture in South Africa. An analysis of the building from an architectural and programmatic

perspective is provided in order to understand the thinking behind decisions that were made.

Background

The Women's Living Memorial is located on Lillian Ngoyi Square, previously called Strijdom Square. The square served as the meeting point for a protest march in 1956, during which four women, including Lillian Ngoyi, led a group of 20 000 women to the Union Buildings. There, the women handed a note of resistance to the then Prime Minister, JG Strijdom in protest of the pass laws. The new museum has been dedicated to the memory of this march and to the women who participated in it. Construction began in mid-2014, with completion estimated for the beginning of 2016.

Figure 3.4 The Women's Living Memorial: View of the fifth elevation (Source: dbm Architects, 2015)

SHRINE

Unpacking the architecture of the new museum

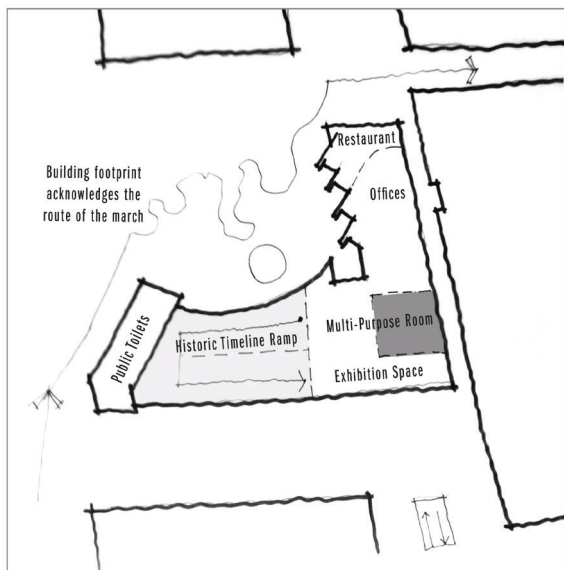
The museum is a three storey, white painted building with a glazed north facade. It has four western facing rammed-earth wall panels, each imprinted with the face of a different woman leader of the march.

An interview was undertaken with the architects of the new museum in order to better understand the architectural intentions (Goosen, 2015). Architecturally, the building is intended to create an edge to what has always been the awkwardly defined open space of the square. The inner curved wall is intended to be representative of the female as an organic and encompassing shape. Conceptually, the notion of time underpins the design,

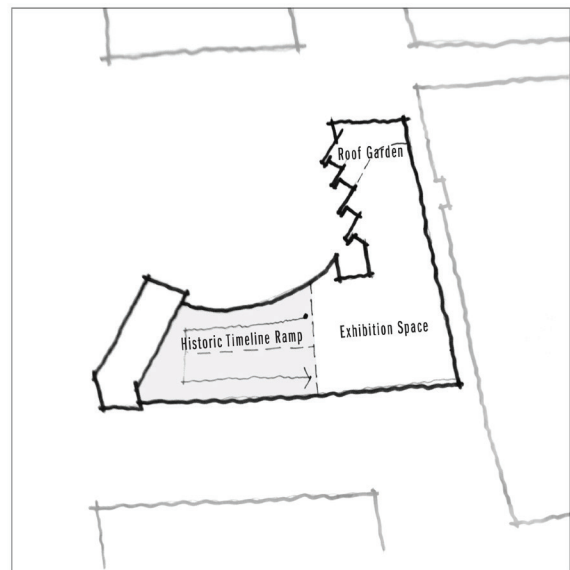
beginning in the new square and moving into the building. Starting at a speaker's corner at the edge of the site, the journey circles into the square, pulling one towards the entrance where a ramp moves through all three levels that contains exhibitions telling the stories of the women involved in the march as well as a chronological account of the plight of black women during the Apartheid Era. The ramp contains the main exhibition spaces with secondary, interactive exhibition spaces located on the ground floor (Goosen, 2015).

Community meetings were held to determine the best programmatic resolution of the building and the women involved expressed

Figure 3.5 A sketch analysis of the spatial arrangement of the memorial. (Source: Author: 2015)



Ground Floor Layout



First Floor Layout

SHRINE



Figure 3.6 Construction of the Women's Living Memorial, March 2015. (Source: Author, 2015)

the need for training spaces in addition to the exhibition spaces. A lecture room is provided, along with four retail stands intended for sales of goods created in the seminars. The aesthetics, design and construction time-frame as well as the programme of this building were all highly influenced by political and bureaucratic agendas.

In his book, *African Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Jonathan Noble discusses the need for African architecture to address new 'spatial types which

dethrone... symbols of power; as well as forms of public transparency through the creation of inclusive public spaces and participatory discourses' (Noble, 2011:264). The architectural resolution of the new memorial has not managed to convey the highly specific character needed for this subject matter. A building such as this, which is representative of a marginalised and delicate part of South Africa's history, should not have such a dominant yet generic character. A highly specific aesthetic and approach to space-making needs to become evident.

SHRINE



Figure 3.7 Construction of the Women's Living Memorial on Lillian Ngoyi Square, March 2015. (Source: Author, 2015)

The buildings in the immediate context of the new museum have hegemonic, oppressive natures. These surrounding buildings (the State Theatre, ABSA Office Tower and the Sammy Marks Shopping Centre) were all built with the intention of displaying their patron's economic or political power and each building asserts a strong agenda with a singular perspective. The Women's Memorial appears to

have continued this tradition. Its character is as dominating as that of its neighbours without fostering any kind of individual identity. The history of the square itself is one that is politically charged but the architecture of the new museum pays little attention to the events that have occurred here before, choosing instead to propagate the tradition of imposing a grand national narrative onto this space in the

SHRINE



centre of the city. The edges of the square were often seen as problematic, providing little activation for the open space. While the new museum intends to create an active edge to the square, the rigid boundary between inside and outside means that little activity occurs on these edges. What is created in reality, is another square with little programming and no edge conditions as means of activation.

In order to create a space of relations and interactions, the inner functions should extend outward and embrace the public realm, creating graded thresholds that invite the passer-by to enter. The new building's footprint on the square creates uncomfortable alleyways between the existing buildings and itself. Conceptually, the building has made use of generic tactics to resolve a brief with such a

SHRINE



Figure 3.8 Uncomfortable alleyways are created between the new memorial and the State Theatre and ABSA Tower. (Source: De Verediciis, 2015)

SHRINE



specific history and agenda. The lecture room and retail spaces do not interact spatially with the exhibition side of the building. In fact, the two wings seem to be unrelated to one another. Without a more established system of management for this section, the lecture rooms and retail spaces could easily lose their original intentions, appearing to be political lip-service rather than true agencies for change. In comparison to the rigorous process that was undertaken for the selection of the design for the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg, it is of great concern as to why a national design competition was not also held for this building. Lacking the input from appropriate and experienced architects, this museum is a missed opportunity in the context of memorial architecture in South Africa.

Programmatic Analysis

‘Post-modern perspectives in contemporary critical philosophy have wished to oppose grand and totalising narratives of history, [politics] and society’
 (Noble, 2011:263).

The women’s struggle during Apartheid must be understood as a sub-narrative to the grand narrative of Apartheid and it is essential that these sub-narratives are acknowledged when telling the stories of our past. The memorial does well to acknowledge this marginalised narrative and these intentions should be commended while more is done to expose the sub-narratives of our history for the future.

The predominant concern regarding the memorial is therefore the manner in which this narrative is expressed and communicated through the architectural and programmatic resolution. While it is of great importance that the (his)story of the women is told, memorials, by their very nature, do little to change the current condition or provide solutions for the future. The museum does well to shed light onto experiences of the past but this sub-narrative is told through a single, permanent exhibition. This kind of exhibition is not an activity that engages with the everyday activities of

city dwellers and it provides little invitation for repeat visits. While this is problematic, it also presents opportunities: The location of a memorial in such a central part of the city could create a place of memory that is easily accessible to city-dwellers. Many people cannot afford to take a trip to the outskirts of a city to visit a museum such as the Apartheid museum. By placing a museum in the city, it provides the opportunity for chance encounters that would have a broader effect. But through further analysis, the museum does not provide an holistic representation of this sub-narrative:

In her article about the memorial, Gail Smith of the Mail & Guardian discusses Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi’s TED talk (Smith, 2014). In the talk, Ngozi explains that reducing complex people, places and situations to a “single story” diminishes their complexity and thwarts our capacity to connect as human equals. In repeatedly telling a single story, she says, we “... *show people only as one thing, and that is what they become. Stripped of the complexity of their histories, their contexts and their other struggles, the full story of the women of 1956 has been rendered incomplete*” (Ngozi, quoted in

SHRINE

Smith, 2014). Jonathan Noble discusses how it is essential to realise that functionality in architecture is open to social contestation and it therefore becomes 'complex, multiple and divergent' (2011:263). The contemporary architecture of South Africa needs to acknowledge these multiplicities within its space making. Other stories that relate to the women's narrative should also be addressed by the memorial: In the Strydom massacre, which occurred on the square in 1988, the first person to be shot by Barend Strydom was a woman. This presents the opportunity for discussion of other factors that affected women in South Africa. This has the potential to be done through an event that occurred in the same space as the women's march but these other narratives are ignored. The building therefore does little to acknowledge the multiplicities of experiences of women in South Africa and it does so by creating spaces that are inflexible to future needs that the programme might require. Addressing space as a consequence of interrelations between people would have brought richness to the spaces which feel, instead, to be static spaces representing a singular, static story.

And so it is from this standpoint that this dissertation defines the primary questions for investigation.

How is architecture able to represent the feminine by addressing the ways that women use and understand space in the context of post-Apartheid South Africa? How does this building address these concerns programmatically, so that it is able to impact the future experiences of women in South Africa?





Figure 3.9 Construction of the memorial, April 2015. (Source: De Veredicis, 2015)

CHAPTER FOUR

Feminism and Women in South Africa

An Assessment of the
Experiences of Women in
Contemporary South Africa

Chapter Four discusses the current position of women in South Africa. A reading of historic and current standpoints of feminism will be undertaken and African Feminist views will be discussed in comparison to Western perspectives.

This research is used as a backdrop when examining the specific position of women in South Africa and will be used to inform theoretical and programmatic approaches to design.

FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

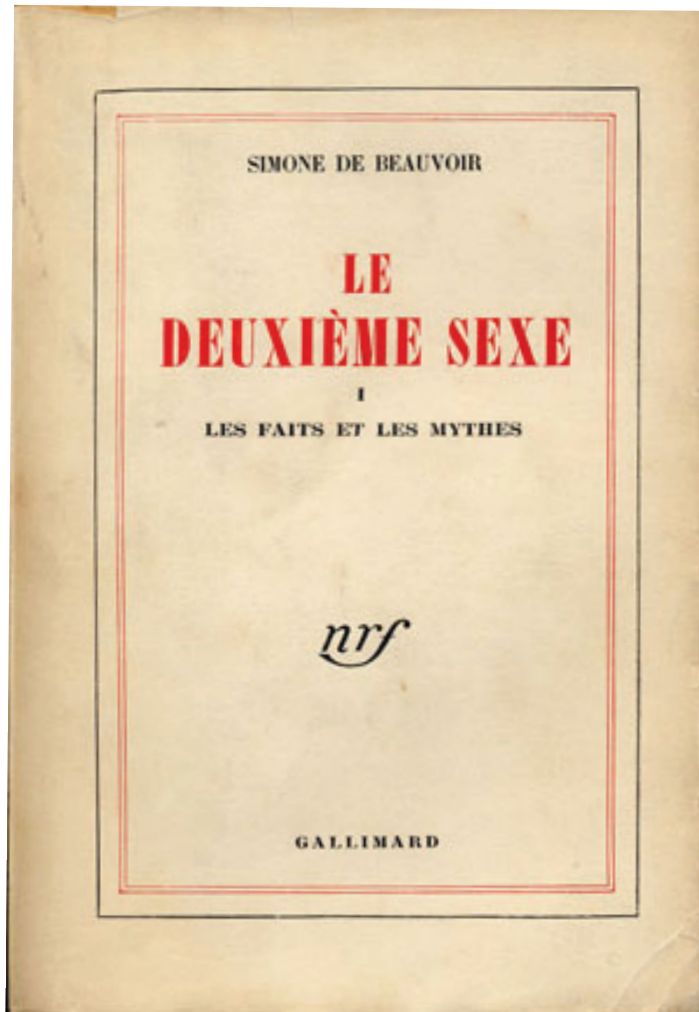


Figure 4.1 *Le Deuxième Sexe* (The Second Sex) by Simone de Beauvoir discusses the fundamental principles of Feminism. (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Second_Sex)

FEMINISM AND THE 'OTHER'

'[T]he task of feminism is to examine the particular ways in which power operates within and between the political, social and economic spheres of specific societies – in effect, it is a political project of transformation.'
(Hassim 2004:2)

In her book *'The Second Sex'* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir discusses the philosopher Hegel's theory that reality is made up of the interplay of opposing forces. To Hegel, the creation of an individual's identity is subject to this interplay of opposites: In order to define oneself, one must define something in opposition to oneself. While this is a natural process used by humans to define themselves, de Beauvoir (1949) claims that it is flawed in its application to gender issues. The 'Other' is presented in her book

as a term to describe women's secondary position within society. De Beauvoir explains that in society, women's identities exist only in relation to that of men. Man has asserted himself as the subject within society and the identity of women is created only in opposition to or as the 'Other' of the subject, man. The imbalances of power that lie at the heart of both African and Western Feminist theory are hinged on ideas of the 'Other' which provide a fundamental theme that underpins this dissertation.

AFRICAN FEMINISM AND WESTERN FEMINISM: A DISCUSSION

It is important to acknowledge that there is a difference between Western feminism and African feminist issues. Female identity differs between cultures and the histories and value systems of each society create conditions for gender issues that are specific to local contexts.

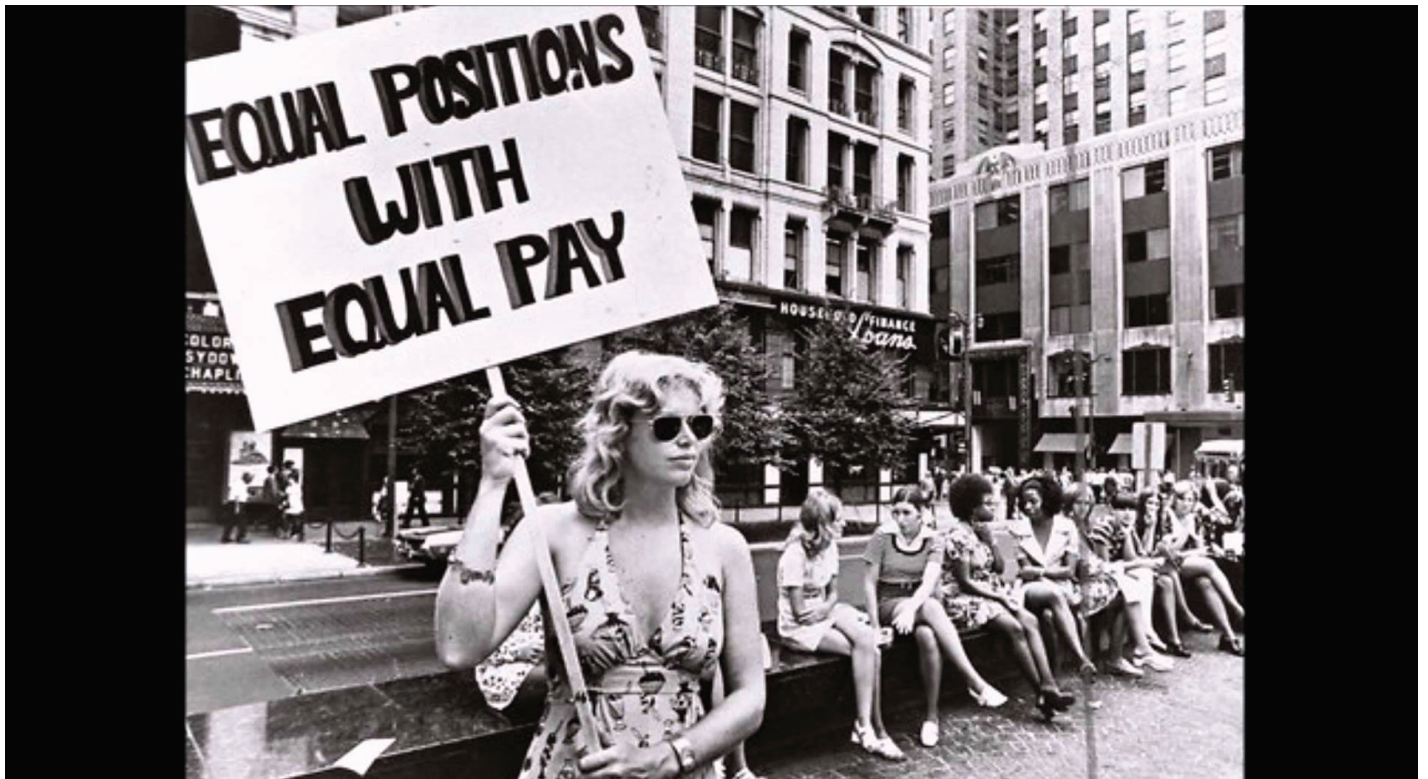
In the West, Feminist movements occurring in the United Kingdom, USA and countries across Europe found their roots in theoretically inflected politics occurring at the time and thus pursued similar concerns simultaneously (Lewis, 2002:1). These movements can be arranged into three chronological waves, each addressing a different agenda. The first wave in the 19th and 20th centuries addressed overturning legal inequalities, with women's suffrage as the fundamental issue to be addressed. This movement found expression in the UK and USA simultaneously, having originated in the Australasian colonies and

culminated with women being granted the right to vote in the UK and USA in 1918 and 1919 respectively. The second wave occurred from the 1960's to 1980's and it saw Western feminist movements address cultural, societal inequalities and gender norms in Western countries. The third wave from the 1990's onwards addressed more diverse issues as well as failed aspects from the second wave (Lewis, 2002:2). Western Feminism is thus understood as a single movement that addresses issues occurring simultaneously across western cultures.

Figure 4.2 The first wave of Feminism in the West addressed women's suffrage. (Source: www.borgenmagazine.com)

Figure 4.3 The second wave of Feminism in the West addressed societal inequalities faced by women. (Source: fightland.vice.com)

FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA



FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

However, in Africa it has been rarely possible to address gender issues specifically and separately from other issues affecting society. This is because gender issues have mostly been identified as sub-themes within the larger context of racial, colonial or imperial domination that occurred in Africa (Lewis, 2002:2). Due to these various forms of oppression, gender issues have also not been able to operate as a unified movement, operating instead as smaller, localised movements that address local issues within individual countries. Patriarchal systems are also still very prevalent in Africa and African feminist theory is now beginning to address these issues:

In the post-colonial context, writers, activists and academics spoke out over women's subordination during the years of nation-building that followed the fight against colonialism. African women experience a more extreme case of 'othering' due to their race. This, in combination

with cultural, political and economic differences, means that Western feminism is not able to fully understand feminist issues in Africa. In order to create a definition that is specific to the particular case of subordination of African women, many African gender theorists have adopted the term 'Womanist'. This is also in reaction to the belief that much Western Feminist terminology does not understand the experiences of women in Africa (Lewis, 2002:3).

'African women and feminism are at odds because despite the adjectives used to qualify feminism, it is Western feminism that inevitably dominates. ...The term feminism usually refers to historically recent European and American social movements founded to struggle for female equality. ... but the term feminist has a broader reach ... it describes a range of behaviour indicating female agency and self-determination'

(Oyewumi, 2003:43).

FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA



Figure 4.4 Feminist issues in Africa have had to contend with other forms of oppression than in the West. (Source: [http://www.anselm.edu/academic/history/courses/Web/Hi399Web%20\(Men%20and%20Women%20Colonial%20Africa\)](http://www.anselm.edu/academic/history/courses/Web/Hi399Web%20(Men%20and%20Women%20Colonial%20Africa)))



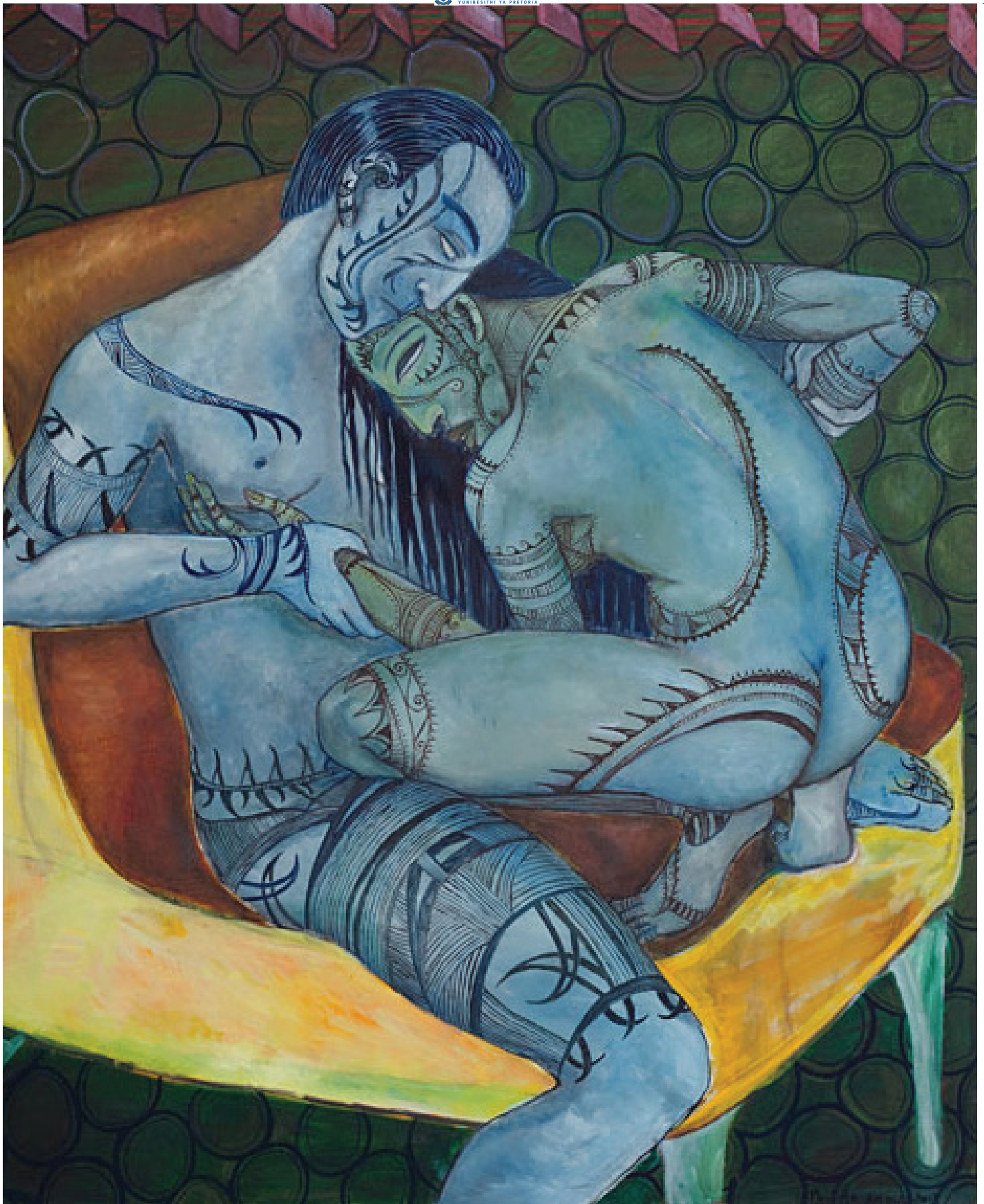
Figure 4.5 Contemporary African Feminism addresses the specific experiences of African women rather than adopting a global stance. Tim Okamura, "I Love your Hair". (Source: timokamura.com/)

The Paintings of Manuela Sambo: African Feminist Art

In most imagery, *'men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at'* (Berger, 1990:89). In the paintings of Manuela Sambo, a different dynamic is represented. When a male subject appears in her work, they exhibit a tenderness but gender roles are not reversed. What is shown is how a man can be in tune with his feminine side and a woman with her masculine.

The perspectives illustrated in Sambo's art provide an understanding of the basis of Feminism. Despite the popular beliefs of what the movement stands for, Feminism is not about being dominant. It is instead about creating a balance and equality of power between men and women.

Figure 4.6 Manuela Sambo, *Changing to Danger*.
(Source: <http://africanah.org/manuela-sambo-angola/>)



BLACK WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THEIR SPECIFIC CASE OF 'OTHERNESS'

As has been discussed, black women have experienced a double disadvantage due to society's outlook on race and gender, which is evident in our history. Apartheid systems furthered this disadvantage and exaggerated the dichotomy between male and female through legal structures. The discovery of gold in Johannesburg led to the recruitment of thousands of migrant labourers who were brought to work in the mines for eighteen months and then sent to work on the reserves and neighbouring British protectorates (Smith, 2014). The worker's wives and children were actively discouraged from following them. This feeling found expression in widespread attacks on the integrity and personhood of these women: From 1910 to 1950, newspaper articles, testimonies at commissions of inquiry, legislative debates, letters from concerned citizens, deliberations by well-intentioned missionary conferences, minutes of town-hall meetings and council minutes are littered with references to native women as prostitutes, beer brewers, carriers of disease, licentious threats to the purity of the white race, and as potential

contaminants of "white" towns (Smith, 2014).

Pass laws dictated that unless a black person (male or female) had legal employment within a city, they could not live there. This law inevitably meant that women who did not find work in the same cities as their husbands could not live with them and families were split up, leaving the responsibility of looking after the family on the women (Smith, 2014). In addition, during Apartheid, South Africa's common law deprived black women of guardianship and various economic rights.

The Women's movement during Apartheid sought to address many of these inequalities and the inclusion of gender issues in South Africa's Constitution can be seen as a direct result of their efforts (van der Westhuizen, 2015). This is stated in Section Nine of the Constitution:

'The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth' (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA



Figure 4.7 Black women in their homes in Soweto, 1958. (Source: www.theguardian.com)



FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

CONCLUSION

Despite the advances that are articulated in South Africa's Constitution, black women today are still economically disadvantaged: They make up a disproportionate section of the unemployed and tend to occupy more of the lower-paid jobs as domestic and farm labourers. In these positions, women's salaries often tend to be less than men for the same tasks. South African women also have to contend with extremely high rates of rape, work-place sexual harassment and domestic violence (Women's Rights, 2007). The effects that migrant labour had on families is still prevalent today. While the restrictive laws are no longer in practice, many families are

still split between cities due to the difficulties in finding work. Customary law in rural areas still allocates fewer rights to women and in extreme cases, provides women with the same rights as children (van der Westhuizen, 2015).

Women therefore occupy an in-between position in society; finding neither full representation nor entire disregard within the current societal and constitutional systems in South Africa. This in-between zone, the void, that is occupied, provides the conceptual approach for the design as it seeks to create a space of representation for women where these concerns can be addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE

Gender, Space, Architecture

The Feminine in Architecture

Chapter Five explores the theoretical investigations of the Feminine within architecture. The ways that women occupy and decode space is examined while seeking interpretations that bypass the many literal interpretations that are often associated with the Feminine and architecture. These readings will be used to inform decision making during design.

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE

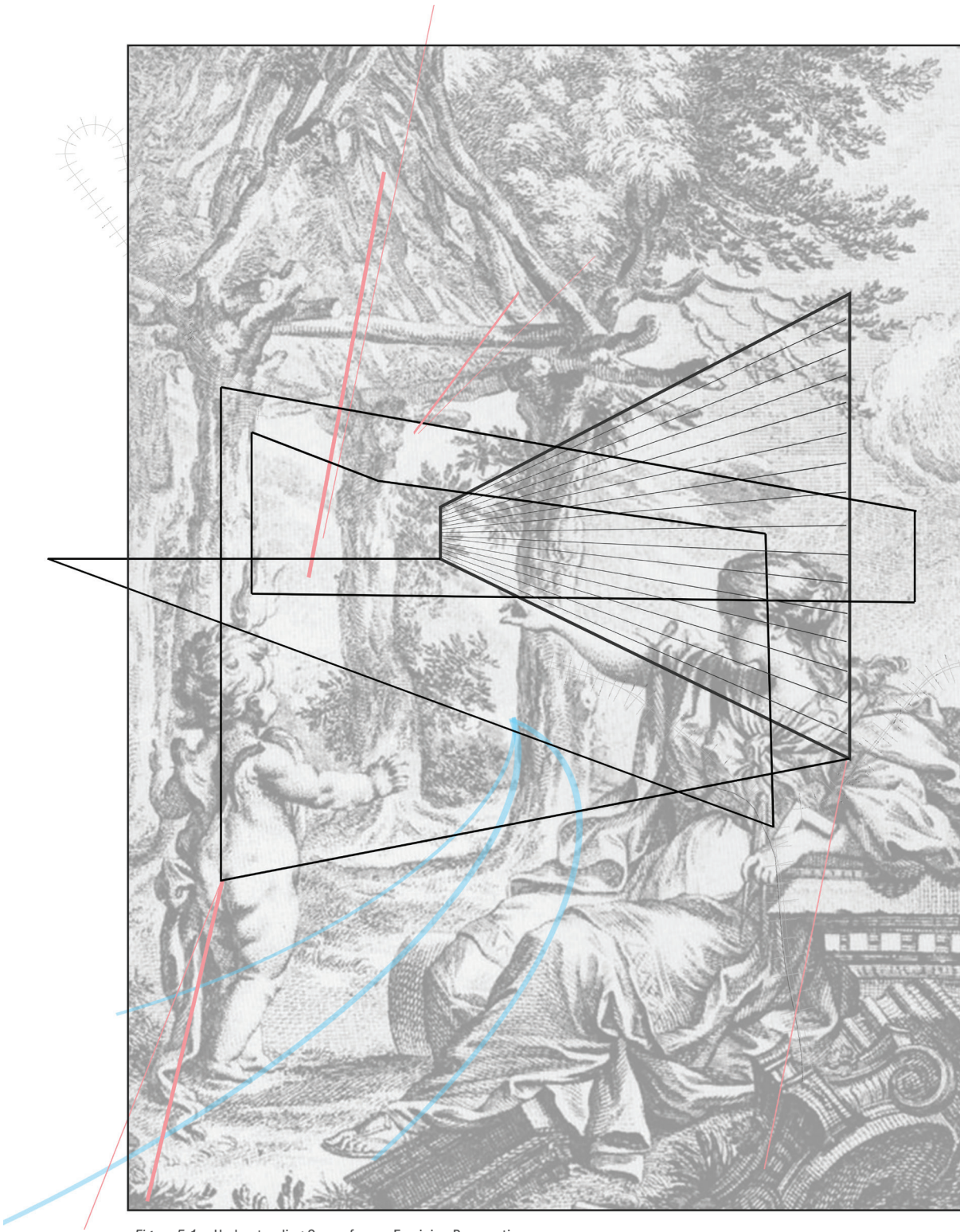


Figure 5.1 Understanding Space from a Feminine Perspective.
(Source: Author)

ARCHITECTURE AND THE FEMININE

'Architecture is a subject which demands to be understood in context: that is, within the context of its production (society, economics, politics, culture) and the context of its consumption, representation and interpretation... In the light of enormous and rapid shifts in theoretical, historical and critical debates, particularly with respect to feminism, understanding architecture in relation to gender demands an urgent contextualisation.'
(Rendell et al, 2000:xi)

It is not possible to provide definite examples of the feminine and masculine in architecture. These are abstract concepts and it must be understood that notions of the feminine are highly subjective, influenced by aspects such as culture, gender, background, context and religion. Consequently, this creates a vast number of ways that notions of the feminine can be interpreted with regards to architecture.

While this study does not claim to be an exhaustive and complete representation of all of these theories, it intends to provide an overview of the insights that are used to decode feminine perspectives of space. In order to allow for informed decision-making during design. The research that has been undertaken will be discussed under four categories:

- **Feminine Readings of Architecture**
- **Woman as the Creator of Architecture**
- **Feminine Uses of Space**
- **Representation of 'the Other' in Architecture**

FEMININE READINGS OF ARCHITECTURE

A reading of feminine perspectives of space can begin to decode space from a feminine perspective and provide an understanding as to the ways that architecture is able to positively and negatively affect the spatial experiences of the female. A selection of women's experiences of architecture will be discussed across a range of scales from the grand scale of the urban to the personal scale of the interior:

Grand Scale: The Woman and the City

Feminist Urban Theory makes use of historical models for analysis. Here, the private, interstitial, hidden spaces of the city are associated with that of the female, giving the impression that the open and publicly used parts of the city are still male-dominated. In her essay *Into the Labyrinth*, Elizabeth Wilson (1991) discusses how the city – as experience, environment, concept – *'is constructed by means of multiple contrasts: natural, unnatural; monolithic, fragmented; secret, public; pitiless, enveloping; rich, poor; sublime, beautiful. Behind these experiences lie the ultimate and major contrasts prevalent in society: culture, nature; city, country; male, female'* (Wilson, 1991:25).

These contrasts, she believes, have been disproportionately manifested in the city. She speaks

against the perception that the city is a dangerous and disorderly zone from which women – and others – must be kept safe. Typical city-culture, she says, is given to men and the woman's place is then seen as in the home. But these perceptions contrast her personal experiences of the city which she relates to a novel written by Chrisine Mallet also entitled *Into the Labyrinth*. The novel makes use of various inner places of the city as the setting for the secret events that unfolded in the story: bedrooms, hotels and theatres. The city is described as a set of boxes with, inside each box, yet a smaller and more secret one, as a continual labyrinth. And it is due to this labyrinth quality, in spaces of secrecy and anonymity, that Wilson believes women find liberation:

'The city is 'masculine' in its triumphal scale, its towers and vistas and arid industrial regions; it is 'feminine' in its enclosing embrace, in its indeterminacy and its labyrinth uncentredness'
 (Wilson, 1991:20).

In-Between Spaces of the City

In her book *Thresholds, Passages and Surfaces*, Jane Rendell (1999:174) explores the idea of these interstitial spaces of the city that have been attributed to women. This is done through a discussion of the the spatial and social nature of the arcade. Arcades give access to the interior of city blocks and provide semi-public routes through private property thus operating as places of transition through private buildings. Rendell (1999:175) examines how the nineteenth century arcade created a space for gender relations to play out in contrasting ways to the public spaces of the city:

The arcade represented a place of a more private nature, occupying the in-between spaces between public and private, allowing a woman to have more control over her surroundings. Because of this transitory state, occupying an interstitial space of the arcade, women are designated as the guardians of thresholds and when women are not treated as objects to be exchanged by men, the woman becomes the nomad: A transitory body in control of her own movements. Rather than cutting through, she goes between and bridges. She occupies the thresholds within these semi-public spaces (Rendell, 1999:176).



Figure 5.2 Burlington Arcade, London during the late 1800's.
(Source: <http://www.burlington-arcade.co.uk/media/1015/image-timeline.jpg>)

The Non-Sexist City

To begin speaking about the city as a place that is accommodating towards women and other minorities requires an inclusive approach to be adopted in planning and policy-making strategies. When it comes to feminist thinking related to urban environments, the need to realign power structures is the fundamental concern.

Delores Hayden (1981:264) examines how gender roles play out in the various parts of the city, from the dense centres to the suburbs on its outskirts. She asks what a non-sexist city would look like. Hayden (1981:266) explains how the term 'a woman's place is in the home' has dominated architectural design and urban planning over the last century but even after women began to join the workforce, the fundamental principles used for urban and, specifically, suburban design remained predominantly the same. While her article was written in 1981, many of the problems that she discusses are still prevalent today, more than 30 years later. Hayden (1981:275) calls for a new paradigm for home, neighbourhood and city designs that support, rather than restrict the activities of employed women and their families. She uses the Radburn Plan,

developed by Henry Wright and Clarence Stein, as an example of a suburban strategy that is able to negotiate between the public and private spaces of the suburb. Spaces in the suburbs are either entirely public or entirely private with little negotiation between them (Hayden, 1981:276). The Radbury plan makes use of the back lots of house stands and creates a semi-public community space that can be used by social, community amenities. Through this kind of suburban rezoning, the insular nature and function of many homes will be opened up, with certain domestic activities becoming shared between neighbours. The privatised economic basis of domestic work and the spatial separation of home and workplace begin to blur, which Hayden (1981:278) claims is the beginning of the transformation of the sexual division of domestic labour.

'Does the feminist or minority-friendly city yet exist? No. There are places in which women – and children, old people, people who belong to ethnic or sexual minorities, and people with disabilities – are enabled to thrive and included in decision-making processes. There are vastly more places where they are not' (Bergland, 2008:54).

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE

(a) Ten single-family houses
 (1) on ten private lots
 (b) The same houses
 (1) with smaller private lots
 (2) after a backyard rehabilitation program has created a new village green
 (3) at the heart of the block
 (c) The same houses
 (1) and many small private gardens
 (2) with a new village green
 (3) surrounded by a zone for new services and accessory apartments
 (4) connected by a new sidewalk
 (5) and surrounded by a new border of street trees
 In this diagram (4) could include space for such activities as day care, elderly care, laundry, and food service as well as housing, while (3) could accommodate a children's play area, vegetable or flower gardens, and outdoor seating. (5) may be a sidewalk, a vine-covered trellis, or a formal arcade. The narrow ends of the block can be emphasized as collective entrances with gates (to which residents have keys), leading to new accessory apartments entered from the arcade or sidewalk. In the densest possible situations (3) may be alley and parking lot if existing street parking and public transit are not adequate.
 (Hayden, 1981:275)

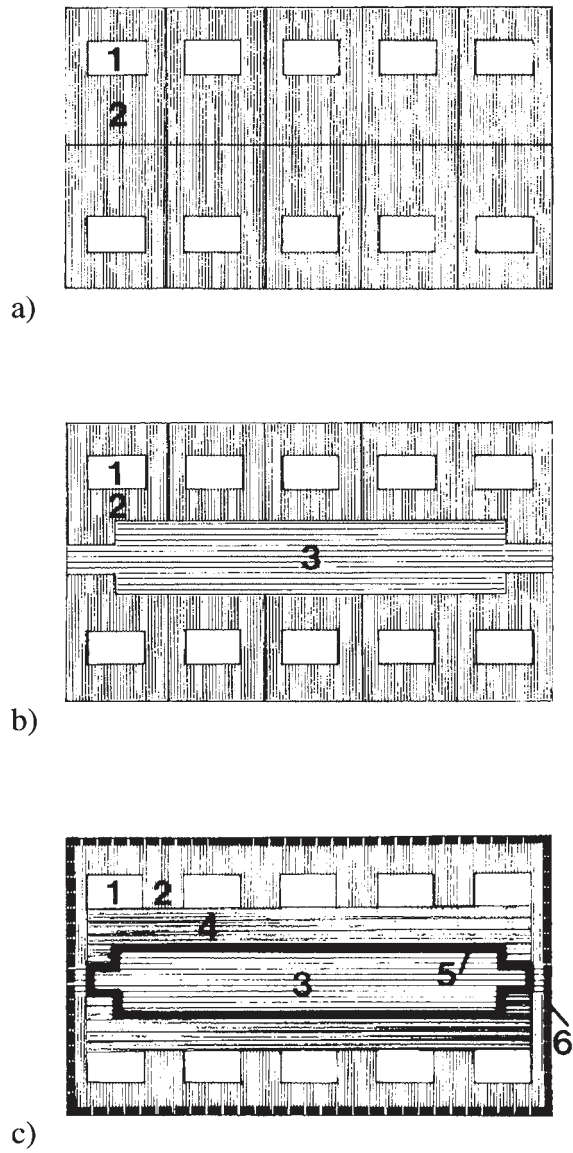


Figure 5.3 Diagrams showing some of the possibilities of reorganising a typical suburban block through rezoning and relandscaping.(Hayden, 1981:275)

**Medium Scale:
The Architecture of Adolf Loos:
An Interplay of Opposites**

Notions of male and female might not have been primary concepts of exploration for Loos, but through the writings of Beatriz Colomina and Anna Cheng, one is able to extract distinct themes pertaining to feminist spatial theory that ran through his work, whether consciously or sub-consciously.

Colomina (1992) provides an analysis of Loos' architecture from a feminist perspective. She explains how principle themes are found in Loos' works, all of which she relates directly to a deeper attitude towards the feminine. The first theme finds expression through 'the theatre box' which is found in many of Loos' houses. The use of this element allows for the constant interplay between subject and object: A person is able to sit in the theatre box and observe those entering the room, placing them on display. At the same time, the person in the theatre box becomes the object, unable to escape from whoever enters the room. Secondly, the stark contrasts between interior and exterior is often used as a reflection of Loos' belief that civilised people's activities were to be kept private and should not be displayed to

the outside world. But Colomina believes that these theoretical claims were contradicted in his built work: " ' The exterior of the house,' Loos writes, 'should resemble a dinner jacket, a male mask; as the unified self, protected by a seamless facade.' The exterior is masculine. The interior is the scene of sexuality and of reproduction, all the things that would divide the subject in the outside world." (Colomina, 1992:94). But Loos' Rufer House was designed with the use of a model that used dismountable walls so that the exterior and interior design to be worked out simultaneously. The interior emerges as more than simply a space to be hidden and enclosed by the facades. Without realising it, Loos has created an in-between zone, a place of negotiation, between the inside and the outside. 'A multiplicity of boundaries is established, and the tension between inside and outside resides in the walls that divide them (...). To address the interior is to address the splitting of the wall' (Colomina, 1992:94). This creates a convoluted relationship between public and private, inside and outside, object and subject.

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE

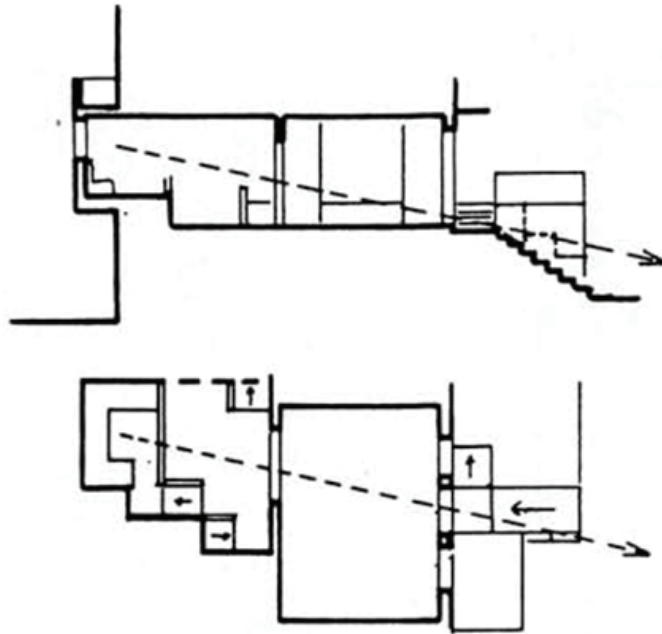


Figure 5.4 The Theatre Box: An Interplay between subject and object.
 (Source: <http://www.arquine.com/de-la-escalera-abierta-al-espacio-moderno-ii-la-oblicuidad/>)

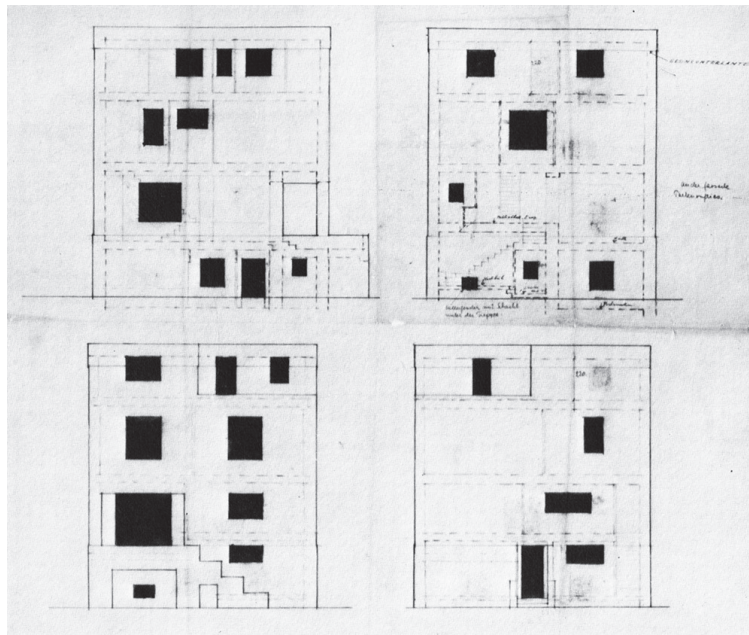


Figure 5.5 Four pencil drawings of the Rufier House facades with dotted lines indicating interior layout. The windows have no frame and are represented and black squares. 'These are drawings of neither the inside nor the outside. but the membrane between them' (Colomina, 1992:95).

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE

A more extreme example of these themes in Adolf Loos' work can be found in the house designed for Josephine Baker. Baker was a famous exotic dancer in France and in 1927, Loos designed a house for her which was never built. There is also no evidence to prove that Baker even requested the design or that the two ever met (Colomina, 1992:96). The house design employed the use of a black and white striped marble facade that is described as being used 'to lighten the size of the building's volume and to redirect the pedestrians' eyes to look around the corner' (Josephine Baker House, 2015), but Anna Cheng (2010) proposes that Baker's exotic identity combined with her almost nude appearances on stage embodied modern western society's obsession with the skin. Cheng (2010) believes that this obsession caused Loos to abandon his strong theoretical principles against ornamentation in order to decorate the facade with these 'zebra stripes'. Colomina (1992) creates a comparison between Loos' designs and claims that this house does not exhibit the interplay of subject and object found in Loos's other houses. Rather, the inhabitant, Josephine Baker, is designated as the permanent object who is placed on constant display for the the viewing subject or visitor. The house exposes his personal views of Baker's 'otherness' through architecture.



Figure 5.6 Josephine Baker in her famous banana costume from her show "Un Vent de Folie". (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephine_Baker)

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE

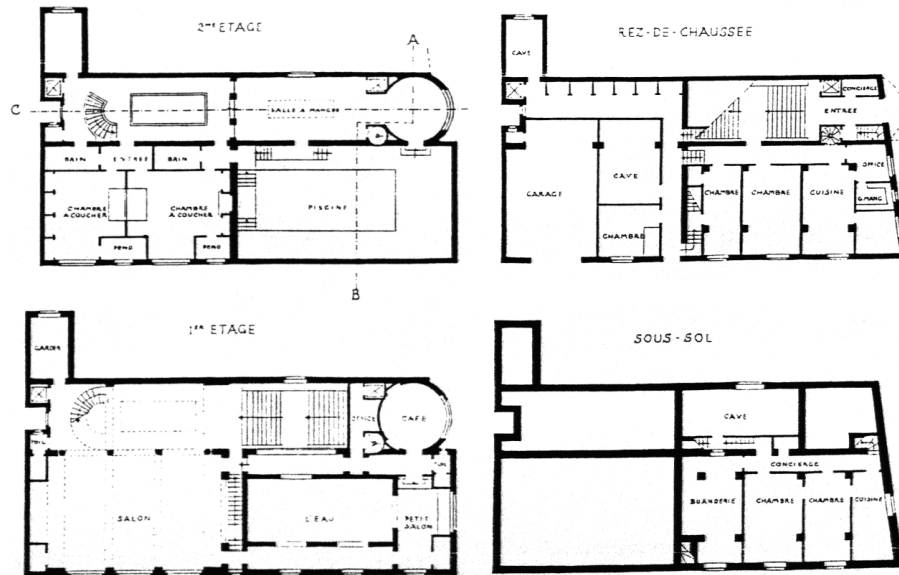


Figure 5.7 Plans of the unbuilt house for Josephine Baker.
(Source: <http://plansofarchitecture.tumblr.com/post/82017855049/adolf-loos-josephine-baker-house-1928-paris>)

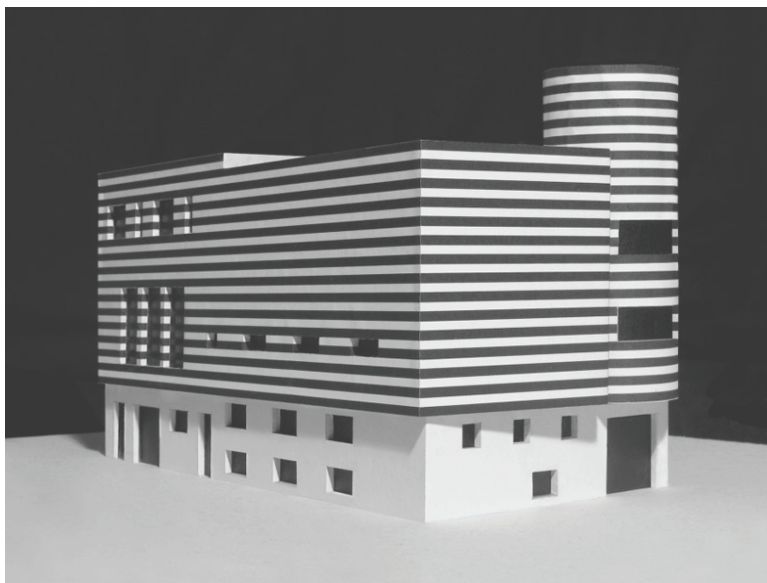


Figure 5.8 The zebra-striped facade of the house for Josephine Baker.
(Source: <http://www.designboom.com/architecture/em2n-draws-from-adolf-loos-for-persian-social-housing/>)

Small Scale: The Interior as Feminine

The Body in Space and the Private space of the Interior

'The inner space is seen to be the non-physical, soft space of thoughts and feelings, which grasps the world but is distinctive from the hard physical reality of the outside' (Madanipour, 2002:6).

The inner space of the mind is the most subjective; the most private, which Descartes (1968:54) argued is also free of 'place' or material things, is non-physical and separated from the body. The first boundary between the inner and exterior worlds is the human body, separating an inner self from the outside world. But from this initial boundary, exists personal space which is invisible and mobile and which exists around the body. While the mind is the innermost realm, the body and the space around the body are the extension of the inner, subjective space of the mind (Madanipour, 2002:19). The private interior space is therefore the most intimate space in architecture. This space is often hidden 'behind fixed, visible boundaries' (Madanipour, 2002:34) and creates a space of negotiation between the inner space of the mind and the public realm. The interior, private sphere provides the space for control

by the individual, away from public observation and control. Because of the intimate scale and level of subjectivity that the interior accommodates, it is often associated architecturally with the feminine.

The Problem with the Domestic

Architecturally, the interior is mostly represented in residential settings, often leading to the feminine in architecture to be connected to the domestic interior. 'The woman's place is in the home', a term made popular especially during the 1940's and 1950's, has only reinforced this connotation. While this is true in a practical sense, it is a condescending stance to take as it implies that the only architectural spaces that women can associate with are those of the domestic. This diminishes the complexities of women, rendering them less equal. As Ngozi discusses in her TED Talk (Smith, 2014), to associate a group of people with one event or place diminishes the complexity of their narratives, contexts and their struggles. In reality, the feminine presents a

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE



Figure 5.9 Sigmund Freud's Consultation room: Where the inner space of the mind is externalised. (Rice,2002:45)

complex agency that challenges this normative structure of the domestic.

Alternative readings of the domestic must be made through discussions of the interior, the tactile nature of the spaces, intimacy of scale and variety of negotiations of privacy. Charles Rice (2007:45) gives an example of the subjective nature of the interior and its connection to the psyche through an analysis of Sigmund Freud's Consultation room. This was an interior space where the inner psyche was externalised through psycho-analysis. The interior can then

be viewed as the place where the inner psyche of the mind is able to express itself. So much of our spaces are founded on principles of colonisation and domination, presenting space as an explorable, passive object. Rather, philosophically, the architectural interior represents notions of the inner space, the psyche and the personal. The interior presents a binary to that through allowing spaces of personal occupation, dwelling, being lived in, creating spaces where relationships are negotiated, allowing an atmospheric, gradient and transitory nature.

The Interior as the origin of Architecture

Gottfried Semper divides architecture into four elements: The hearth, roof, enclosure and mound. He states that the hearth or fire was the first element to exist but that the use of textiles draped over simple structures presented the origins of architecture. Beatriz Colomina (1992) uses this theory as a basis for her argument that the interior was created before architecture. To her, the use of textiles and animal skins for temporary shelter created an interior condition first due to their fragility and tactile nature (Colomina, 1992:94). Structure and exterior cladding came afterwards, creating the solid divisions of architecture. But the use of animal skins still created walls and divisions. Reyner Banham provides a further reading into the notions of the feminine as the origin of architecture. To Banham, the fire space occurred before any physical forms of enclosure and it is here where social and political organisations first became possible. He designates the fire space as the origins of architecture. By placing the fire as the origin of architecture, the social space of the psyche is placed at the centre.

In a contemporary origin story, Sou Fujimoto discusses *nest* and *cave* spaces as the place where architecture originated:

The *nest* is a space that is created for human habitation, with specific spaces designed for specific activities. Most architecture can be classified as a *nest* space.

The *cave* is a space that requires a creative act on behalf of its occupant by offering no clear way to use the space yet still being suitable for habitation. Fujimoto calls these two creative types of appropriation the beginning of architecture. He explains that social interactions cannot be fully predicted, therefore, they cannot be completely designed for. This can be seen as a contemporary continuation of Banham's notion. The soft, social space of the interior is where feminine ways find expression, which is then allowed self-defined methods of occupation and negotiation through cave spaces.

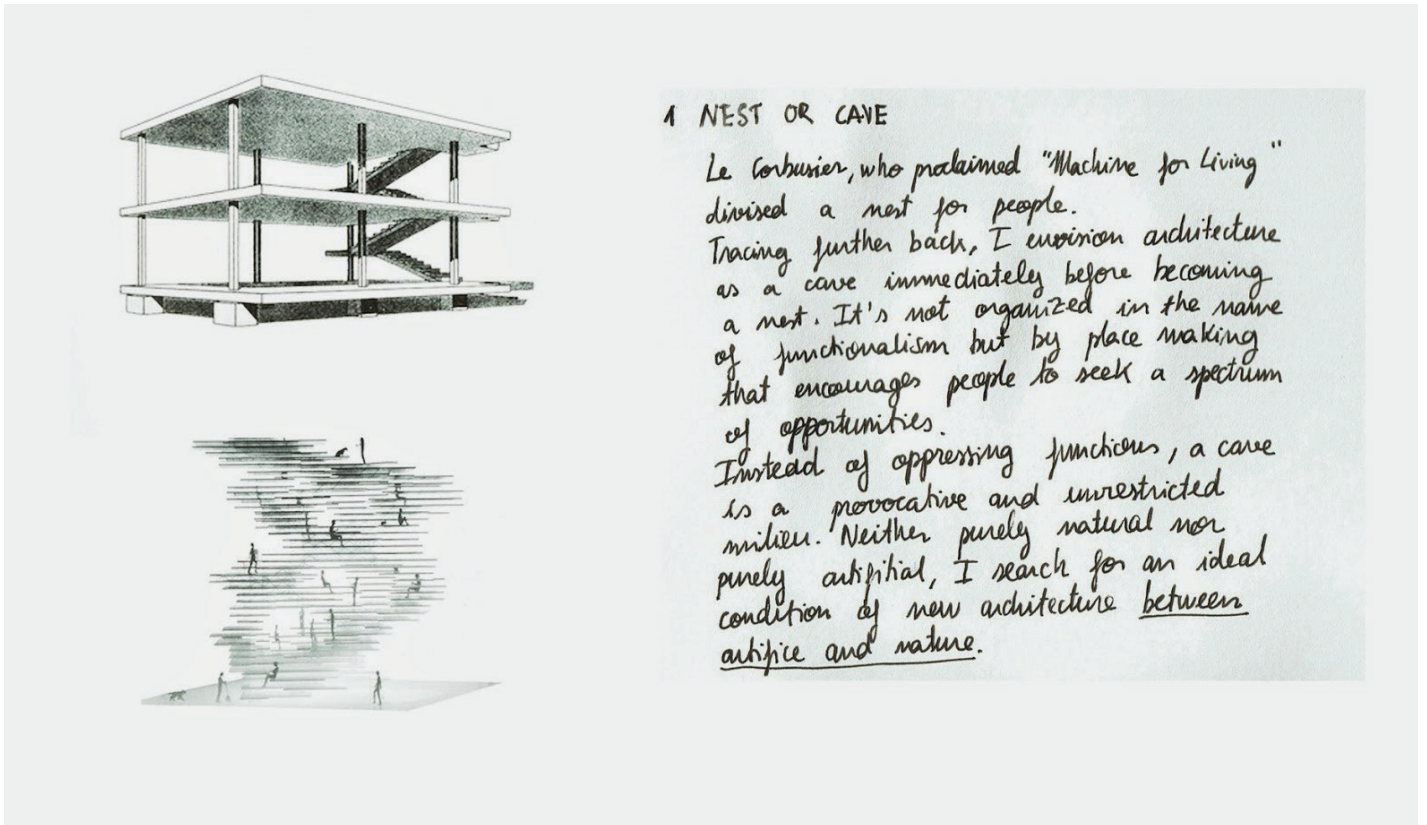


Figure 5.10 Sou Fujimoto's theories of the origin of architecture. Cave spaces are (Source: <http://manavid.blogspot.co.za/2014/05/primitive-future-sou-fujimot.html>)

WOMAN AS THE CREATOR OF ARCHITECTURE

The Exclusion of Women in Architecture

Looking back on architectural history, very rarely do we hear about the contribution made to the profession by female architects. Despite the many advances that women have made in the last fifty years regarding equality in the workplace, the architectural profession seems to be lagging behind. A few pertinent cases are discussed:

Eileen Gray

Eileen Gray has recently gained a new wave of fame due to a delayed recognition of her contributions to the modernist movement. She designed her most famous house, the E-1027, as a place where she and her partner could spend time together. The house has been credited as a prime example of modern architecture, something that Le Corbusier recognised as well. But Le Corbusier never acknowledged this and instead, after Gray and her partner split, he spent time in the house and painted a series of murals on its pristine white walls. Beatriz Colomina (1996) attributes this to a jealousy that Le Corbusier had over the design of the house and compares it to the equivalent of a male dog marking its territory. She goes on to discuss the patriarchal nature of the architectural culture of the time:

“The defacement of the house went hand in hand with the effacement of Gray as an architect. When Le Corbusier published the murals in his Oeuvre Complète (1946) and in L’architecture d’aujourd’hui (1948), Grey’s house was referred to as “a house in Cap-Martin” her name was not even mentioned. Later on, Le Corbusier actually got credit for the design of the house and some of its furniture” (Colomina, 1996)

Denise Scott Brown

Denise Scott Brown is another female architect whose work has gone unrecognised. Her husband and partner of the firm Venturi Scott Brown Architects and Planners, Robert Venturi, was awarded a Pritzker prize in 1991. The failure of the panel to

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acknowledge Scott Brown's equal contributions in Venturi's oeuvre of work has been a topic of debate ever since (Quirk, 2013). Recently, two girls from the Harvard Graduate School submitted a petition to the Pritzker committee that called for retroactive acknowledgement of Scott Brown's contributions. The petition was signed by, among others, Rem

Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid, Jacques Hertzog and Richard Meier. Ricardo Scofidio also signed the petition and stated "*When the work is the creation of two or more people, equal recognition is critical and demanded*" (Quirk, 2013). Despite these actions, the request was denied, proving that patriarchal systems are still present within the architectural profession.



Figure 5.11 A naked Le Corbusier painting murals onto the walls of the E-1027 house. (Source: Quirk, 2013)

Feminine Tactics in Architecture

Does a building designed by a woman have inherent characteristics that differentiate it from that designed by a man? Zaha Hadid has recently come under scrutiny for the design of the Al Wakrah Stadium in Qatar, with claims that it resembles female genitalia (Quirk, 2013). Zaha's response to this claim was that it was 'embarrassing' and 'ridiculous' and that 'if a guy had done this project,' these 'lewd' comparisons would not have been made (Quirk, 2013). These kinds of comparisons regarding the feminine in architecture need to be avoided at all costs. Instead, it is possible to extract finer nuances which differentiate the work of women architects to that of men. Collectivity: MUF architects in London are an architectural

practice who have made a significant contribution to feminist architecture 'while never referring to themselves as feminists' (Rendell, 2011:27). Their method highlights the importance of exchange across art and architecture and they believe that the process of creating architecture is the product, placing less focus on the final object. This method is exemplified in their design for street furniture in Stoke, UK entitled 'The Pleasure Garden of Utilities'. This furniture was '*made in collaboration with the fireclay team from the local Armitage Shanks factory. The ceramics make visible and celebrate the culture of potteries. The scheme brings to the public street a scale of intimacy and delicate detail*' (muf, 2015).

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE

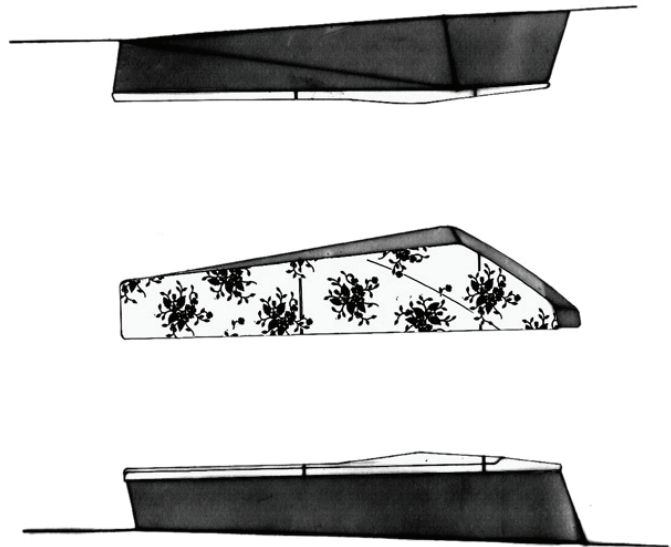


Figure 5.12 (top and above)
'The Pleasure Garden of
Utilities' by muf Architects
uses ceramic surfaces for
street furniture. Source: (muf,
2015)

FEMININE USES OF SPACE

This section addresses how women and gender related cultural practices have shaped space. Various codifications of space within various cultures are analysed and discussed. An investigation of this kind of space-making is able to provide an alternative reading into the notions of feminine space as an informant for design.

Andean Women and Space/Time

The Quechua people are an isolated group of South American Indians in Peru. To the Quechua people, space and time are not separate terms and are instead merged into a single conceptual unit, known as *pacha* (Skar, 1981:42). This world view is applied to all aspects of life, viewing many opposites that exist as merely two aspects of the same phenomenon: The mountain heights compared to the valley bottom; the rainy season as opposed to the dry (Skar, 1981:35). In daily life, men's and women's activities have defined physical spaces but are not viewed in hierarchies. They are instead viewed along the same principles assigned to the Quechua people's world view, that male and female are not better or worse but both equally important to the maintenance of society. Their nature as opposites is acknowledged yet they are viewed as inextricably linked and still equal (Skar, 1981:48).

Spatial Domains in Nigeria

The social structure in the Yoruba culture adheres to strict hierarchies, displaying class divisions of royal families, chiefs, and commoners and is expressed in the spatial layouts of the cities. Men control the external space, while women were expected to move from the place of their birth (their father's home) to the homes of their husbands (Callaway, 1981:184). Men are understood to 'own' the children that come from a marriage, thus giving them ownership of the internal space of a woman's womb. While this appears to give men full control over women, specific societal values and practices allow for a level of autonomy for women. The practice of polygamy, combined with the ease of divorce as well as the expectation of a woman to maintain her own independent economic activities promotes the independent enterprise of women. This provides women with a separate space of her own that is not classified under her father's or her husband's territory.

'If from one view, then, women are characterised as moving between and within the spatial domains controlled by men, from another perspective they can be seen as taking personal risk and exercising considerable freedom in fulfilling their destinies' (Callaway, 1981:185).

Gender spaces in Ndebele Architecture

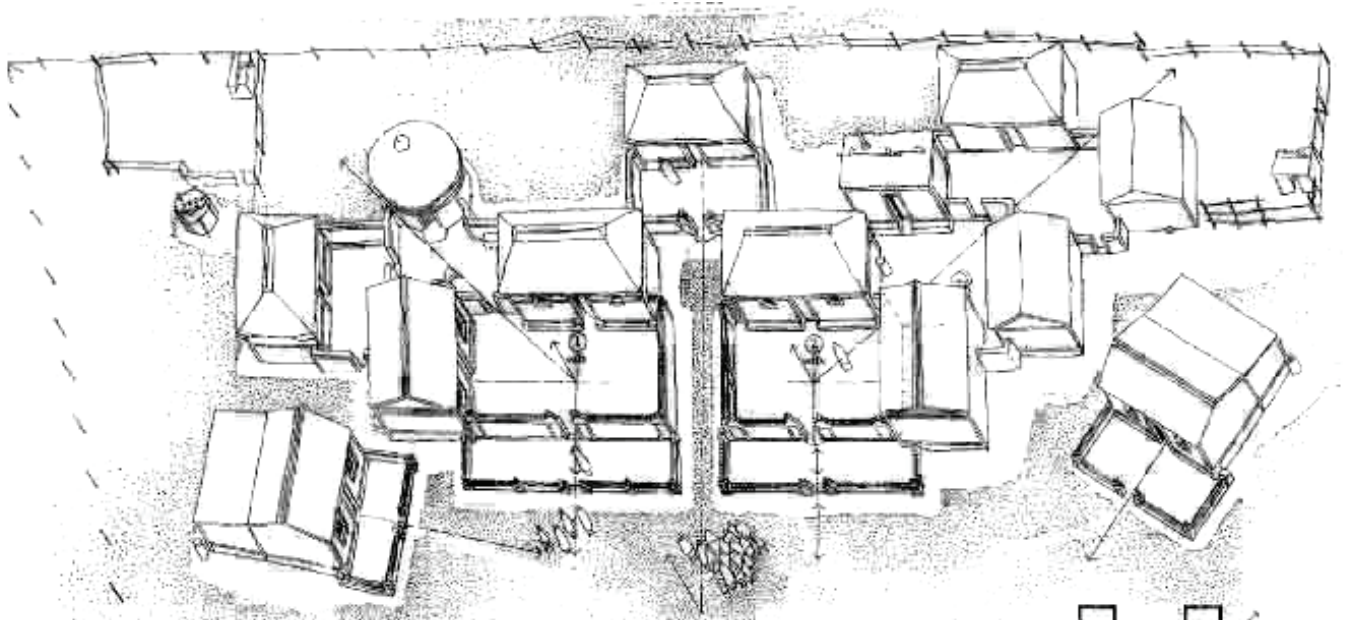
The arrangement of domestic Ndebele space is subject to strict social rules related to gender roles within the society. The origins of these spatial arrangements, *'lie in a pragmatic recognition that fundamental differences exist between the life of man and that of woman'* (Gender spaces in Ndebele homestead planning, 2015).

The spatial arrangements are indicative of the daily roles that each gender fulfils: The control of the domestic living space falls upon the woman. Within each homestead, the arrangement of the houses is related to the particular family situation. In polygamous families, the first wife's home is placed at the centre of the lelapa walls. The spatial arrangement of the homesteads are radial, with second and third homes placed in diagonal lines extending from the first home. When rebuilding

or repainting their homes, the design would be in keeping with the original style of the homestead, all the women paying careful attention to not upset the existing balance.

The Ndebele arrangement represents relationships between men and women that do not allocate more power to one than to the other. Instead, the differences between men and women are acknowledged and celebrated through the spatial arrangements of the homestead. The use of diagonal arrangements contrasts traditional linearities representative of hierarchical arrangements of power. Instead of the domination of one over the other, the domestic arrangement acknowledges the differences between gender without creating hierarchies.

Figure 5.13 Sketch by Peter Rich of the Ndebele Homestead indicating diagonal layout. (Source: Rich, 2011)



REPRESENTATION OF THE 'OTHER' IN ARCHITECTURE

'In the last 10-15 years the discourse of the architectural avant-garde was driven by the principle of negativity. Concepts like de-construction, dis-location, de-coding and deterritorialization have been dominating the scene. Key concepts like multiplicity, heterogeneity, otherness, indecidability and virtuality are defined in opposition to the key concepts of modernity (...) The total social process has become far too complex to be anticipated within a single vision and utopian image. Other strategies are called for.'
 (Schumacher, 2000:1)

'One of the primary preoccupations of contemporary architecture theory is the concept of 'other' or 'otherness' (...) that promote novelty and marginality as instruments of political subversion and cultural transgression'
 (McCleod, 1996: 182)

The notion of 'the Other' has been a widely discussed topic in philosophical, social and gender theory over the past few decades. It has also been a primary point of exploration in architectural theory through the Deconstructivist movement which originated from notions of 'Otherness' in the forms of *différance* and heterotopias: terms presented by Derrida and Foucault respectively. Mary Mcleod, a professor of architecture at Columbia University, has focused her research on contemporary architectural theory, examining issues concerning the connections between architecture and ideology. Mcleod (1996: 184) states that the notion of 'Otherness' in architecture has been advocated through the creation of a new

architecture that is somehow totally 'other', categorised broadly into a group of deconstructivist architects who are either proponents of Derrida's notion of *différance* or those without a collective identity who adhere to notions of 'heterotopia' through the writings of Foucault. In her article, *Everyday and 'Other' Spaces* (1996), she discusses the notion of 'Otherness' in architecture through the deconstructivist works of architects such as Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind and Coop Himmelblau. Mcleod argues that the theoretical language employed by these architects is often *'violent and sharp (...) like a boys' club'* (Mcleod, 1996:187) and through this it contrasts its own intentions of representation of the 'Other' through architecture.

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE



Figure 5.14 (above) Daniel Libeskind's Dresden Art Museum. (Source: <http://www.dezeen.com/2011/09/29/dresden-museum-of-military-history-by-daniel-libeskind/>)



Figure 5.15 (above right) Daniel Libeskind's Royal Ontario Museum. (Source: <http://libeskind.com/work/royal-ontario-museum/>)

She furthers her argument by stating that much of the architecture that dealt with 'Otherness' through deconstruction has done so in a superficial manner. McCleod's (1996:184) critique of these architects is that their architecture does not fully engage with all aspects of 'Otherness' by addressing, for example, social or political minorities through programmatic or formal strategies. Rather, she says, the focus remains at an aesthetic and sometimes technical level. She argues that this is the primary shortcoming of much of the deconstructivists' work. Mary Mcleod's ideas are vital for integration into design methodology through the idea

that architecture should not merely interpret intentions of 'Otherness' into aesthetic or spatially superficial tactics but rather that design should consider the perspective and experiences of those who will inevitably use the building. What Mcleod is essentially questioning is whether the 'Otherness' that is explored in the work of these architects is merely a personal endeavour, articulated through architectural notions of aesthetics, structure, facade and function. This questions whether the creation of this architecture is hinged on a notion of *seeing* instead of a deeper expression of spatial experience that engages with 'Otherness' of marginalised groups.

'Are there 'other' architectures to explore - ones that are less hermetic and more engaged in individual's emotional and physical lives?'
(McCleod, 1996:194)

GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE

CONCLUSION

The intention of feminism is not to eradicate male power but instead to find a means of balance. This finds truth in the expression of male and female qualities within architecture as well. The interplay between opposites becomes important in the discussion of the female, because there often exists an unbalanced hierarchy or domination of the male concept over the feminine concept. But these opposites are to be addressed through the creation of space that allows for multiplicities and the constant production of social space. An architecture of the feminine

than the types of spaces that are created for women. As has been discussed, the perspectives presented here that relate to notions of feminine spatiality must be understood as subjective. These perspectives are able to provide insight into the subtleties and interplays of power relations within space that become evident when understanding space from a gendered perspective.

The design approach thus interprets this information and allows the feminine to be expressed through the creation of space that gives women the

'Feminine tactics, do not necessarily deal with what can be 'seen' or understood through the act of 'seeing', but rather involve the act of mediation and relationships with others to transform a situation'
 (Troglal, 2003).

should explore spaces and places of negotiation between these opposites with a more subtle and graded quality. Women use and occupy space with subtle differences to that of men. These ways allow for interaction and socialisation without hierarchies and instead allow for mediation, negotiation and multiplicity. This dissertation will therefore approach feminine space-making by addressing the way that women use space rather

possibility of negotiating spatial relationships on their terms. These relationships play out in spaces that are not designed for specific activities but rather are designed as 'cave' spaces which accommodate a variety of unplanned social interactions. These spaces will be interspersed amongst programmed spaces that accommodate the daily activities of the building, allowing it to perform daily functions while allowing space for the unplanned.

CHAPTER SIX

Occupation

The Women's Forum

Chapter Six discusses the programme for the project, that of a Women's Forum, and it explores the real-world conditions that have led to the fractured nature of women's representation on South Africa. In order for architecture to address notions of the 'Other' at a deeper level, it is essential that the programme of the building engages with the daily experiences and activities of 'Other' groups of people in society.

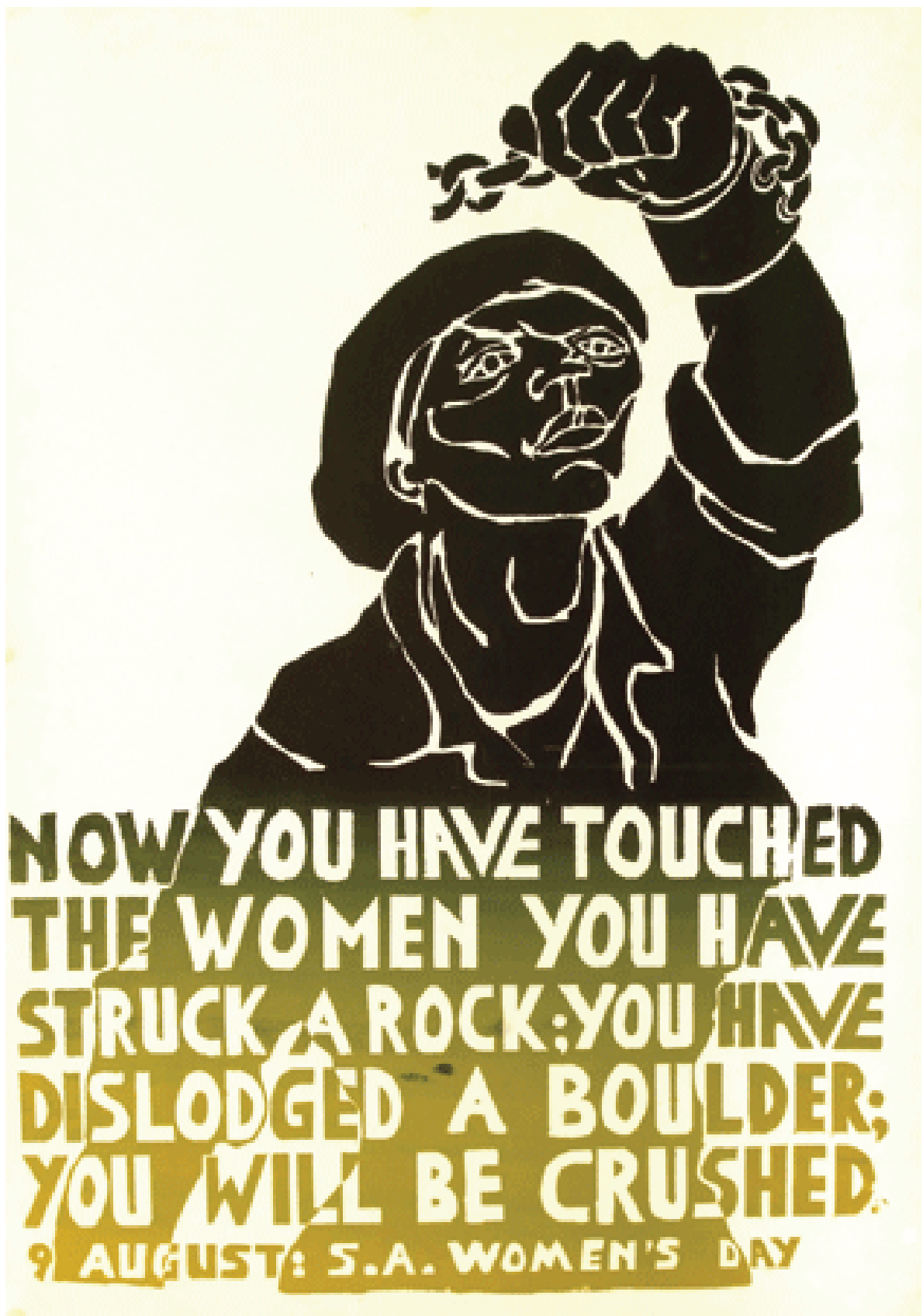


Figure 6.1 A print displaying the slogan used during the woman's March of 1956.

INTRODUCTION

[T]he women's movement [in South Africa] is currently too weak to ensure that constitutional commitments are acted upon in ways that will remove gender inequalities.'
 (Hassim 2004:2)

In a political climate where many of the issues concerning women are not being addressed by the government, space is needed where the current needs of women can be prioritised. As has been discussed, women in South Africa, especially black women, are still excluded and forgotten in contemporary South African society due to continued practise of many of the paralysing social conditions implemented by the Apartheid government (Van der Westhuizen, 2015). Migrant labour is still a reality for many black people in South Africa, creating broken families that rely on women and grandparents for financial and emotional support. The availability of adult educational institutions leaves much to be desired (Van der Westhuizen, 2015), making it difficult for women to mobilise themselves out of their current situations. Shireen Hassim's paper entitled *Voices, Hierarchies and Spaces*, discusses the women's social movements that occurred in South Africa during Apartheid and compares them to the state of the women's organisations today. During Apartheid, the Women's Movement had a unified goal of fighting the oppressive powers of the current government. But

since the fall of the Apartheid government, this movement has been fractured and has not been able to mobilise to address needs as a unified group. In Hassim's article, she states that 'the [current] South African women's movement must be understood as made up of heterogeneous organisations, rather than being viewed through the lens of a single organisation.' (Hassim, 2004:1). This indicates that the fundamental concern with women's organisations is their isolation from one another is making it difficult to implement valid and sustained change in society.

In a controversial newspaper article, Xolela Mangu, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Cape Town, claims that South Africans need to develop organisations that address the common concerns of the people in South Africa (Mancu, 2014). Using the Afriforum as an example but putting aside its negative connotations, Mancu (2014) discusses how South Africans with similar concerns need to create organisations that pool together money, articulate common concerns and work together towards achieving common goals.

PROGRAMMATIC INTENTION

'[T]he leadership of the women's movement has tended to operate with an overly narrow conception of the 'political', being focused on the public sphere of the state, while ignoring, for the most part, the spheres of economy and society.'
 (Hassim 2004:p22).

In response to these difficulties, it is proposed that a Women's Forum is established that will accommodate the women's social movement of South Africa in the post-apartheid context. From an understanding of the programmatic intention of the Women's Living Memorial as addressing the past of South African women, the building facilitates the current and future development of women in South Africa.

An interview with Christi van der Westhuizen was conducted in order to discuss the viability of the programme for the building (van der Westhuizen, 2015). Christi received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Cape Town and a Masters in Political Economy and South African Politics and she currently heads the centre for Gender and Sexuality Studies in South Africa at the University of Pretoria. She explained that the implementation

of a Women's Forum in South Africa has been attempted twice since the founding of the new constitution of South Africa but was never successful. She attributes this failure to the isolation of the the organisations involved in the founding of the forum (van der Westhuizen, 2015). The closest organisation that can be compared to a unified women's forum in South Africa is the Progressive Women's Movement who is backed by the ANC and the Women's League. Their mission statement states that they are comprised of a broad group of 'organisations, feminist groups, researchers and women involved in policy formation' (Background Information, 2015) but when the potential of this organisation was discussed with van der Westhuizen, she expressed that 'they don't represent women across political lines but rather just ANC aligned women' (van der Westhuizen, 2015).

OCCUPATION

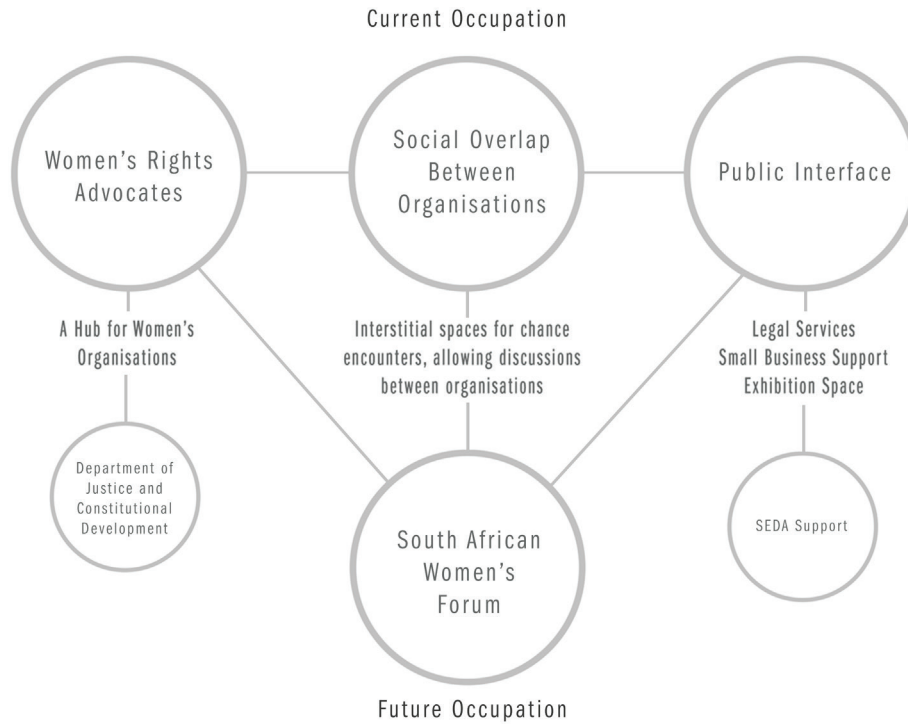


Figure 6.2 The programmatic components of the building. (Source: Author, 2015)

The building will provide accommodation for offices for a variety of existing women's organisations in South Africa and allow in-between spaces that operate as social devices for the dialogue and interaction between organisations, allowing for the development of a cohesive women's forum.

In order to create a building that effectively serves the everyday woman as well as those who work within the organisations, it is

important to provide a component to the building that addresses not only the political aspects of women's empowerment in South Africa but also programmes that address women's empowerment through economic means. The public component of the building therefore provides educational services such as a legal advice centre and small business support centre that can be freely accessed by the public.

OCCUPATION



OCCUPATION



Figure 6.3 Forums and marches addressing advocacy for women's rights in South Africa. (Source: <http://awdf.org/rural-womens-movement-rwm/>)

OCCUPATION

Future life/long term life of the building

The building is intended to accommodate a short term and long term programme: Firstly as a home-base for various women's organisations, with the provision of interstitial social spaces that allow dialogue and interaction to occur which allows a more cohesive movement to develop. Secondly, the building will accommodate the establishment of a Women's Forum of South Africa. Office spaces can be re-purposed as needed, while social spaces now provide space for meetings, forums and lectures to take place.

Client:

The African Women's Development Fund describes their mission as follows: 'To mobilise financial, human and material resources to support African women.' (ref) They believe that if women and women's organisations are empowered with skills, information, sustainable livelihoods and the opportunities to fill their potential, then vibrant, healthy, inclusive communities can be built.' (ref) This organisation will be tasked with the overall management of the building for the first phase of occupation.

Funding:

The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA). The government levies money from the formal economic sector and channels it through the SETAs who allocate it for training and development. Each organisation will use their private funding for day to day running of the individual branches within the building.

Schedule of Accommodation

- Office space for 5 women's organisations
- Ground Floor:
 - Reception, Coffee Shop, Exhibition Space, Public Arcade
- Forum Space
- Interstitial Spaces between offices containing meeting spaces, kitchenettes and social spaces of various privacy levels
- Offices and appropriate facilities for a Small Business Support Centre, run by LAMOSA
- Offices and appropriate facilities for a Legal support Centre, run by the Women's Legal Centre.

OCCUPATION

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development occupies the two buildings on either side of the site. It states its duties as... (website ref). Here, the new building will literally be enveloped by the governmental branch that deals with constitutional issues affecting women in South Africa. The organisations will benefit from the close proximity to this department because many of the organisations in South Africa who are lobbying for change are doing so through the Department of Justice.

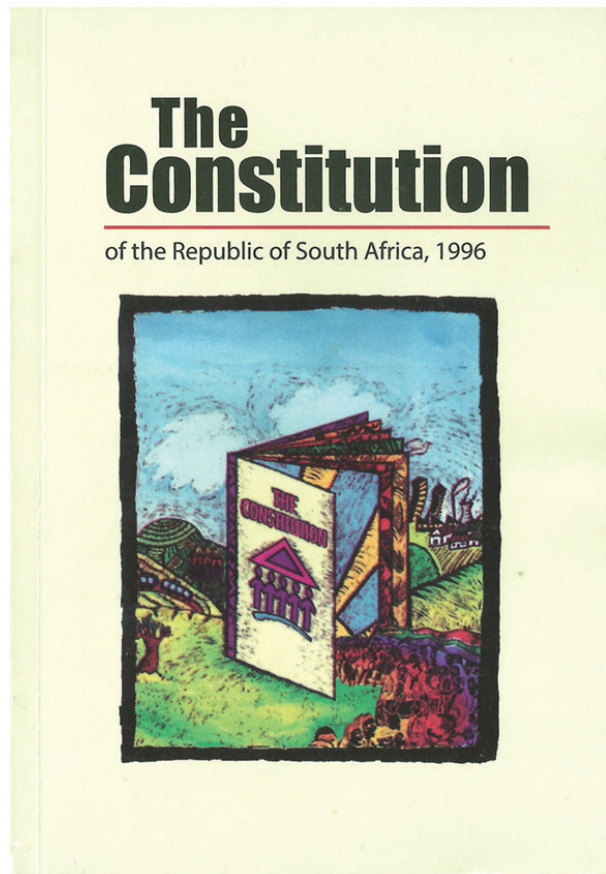


Figure 6.4 The South African Constitution. Free booklet available from the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPATION

Organisations to be accommodated in the building:



RWM Rural Women's Movement

- Rural Women's Movement

The Rural Women's Movement (RWM) is based in KwaZulu Natal and is an independent non-profit rural women's land and property rights organization. They seek to eliminate poverty through programs designed to provide training on women's land and property rights and enhance women's participation in local governance. They have rallied against parliamentary plans such as the Communal Land Rights Act of 2004 which allows traditional leaders to revoke land rights of women in traditional communities (RWMSA, 2015).



- LAMOSA

The Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA) was formed to collectively fight discriminatory colonial and apartheid forced removals, racial and gender discrimination, and to play an active role in contributing towards the redress, dismantling and eradicating apartheid poverty and its manifestations. LAMOSA was established in 1991 to mobilize disposed communities to collectively fight discriminatory colonial and apartheid land laws, racial and gender discrimination and poverty (LAMOSA, 2015).

OCCUPATION



WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

- **Women's Legal Centre**

The Women's Legal Centre (WLC) litigates cases which advance women's rights and are in the public interest, particularly constitutional cases. They also produce briefs to assist courts in constitutional cases which concern women's rights and gender equality. In addition, where resources permit, the WLC aims to provide women's organisations with technical legal assistance in making submissions to parliament and other institutions (Women's Legal Centre, 2015).

18twenty8

- **18twenty8**

18twenty8 is a women-led No-Profit Organisation that empowers young women between the ages of 18 and 28 by developing strategies for their educational and personal development. Their activities include:

- Facilitating life-skills workshops for girls in Grade 11 and Grade 12 at high schools in marginalised communities
- Providing mentors for young women at tertiary-level through their Big Sister Network
- Providing financial assistance for the higher educational needs of deserving young women (18twenty8, 2015).



- **Forum for the Empowerment of Women**

The Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW) is a national non profit organisation based in Johannesburg dealing with issues of discrimination, stigmatisation and marginalization against people in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community. The focus is placed on social space and service provision, including counselling, information, education and communication on key issues, health and related realities of life in the LGBT community (FEW, 2015).

OCCUPATION



Figure 6.5 An architectural programme that addresses the everyday experiences of women.
(Source: <http://www.msafropolitan.com/>)

Pretoria as the location for a National Women's Forum

The question of whether Pretoria is appropriate as the location for a Women's Forum was raised during the proposal crit.

There is significance in locating a hub for organisations in Pretoria, South Africa's administrative and executive capital. It is here where bills are initially drafted and after being passed by parliament in Cape Town, they are finally signed through by the president. Many of the organisations have offices in Cape Town where they are able to access parliament. Pretoria would provide an alternative approach to constitutional issues as it is close to the seat of the president, providing the opportunity for direct interaction should they not have success with parliament. A significant proportion of poor households in South Africa, many headed by women, are located in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North West Province (Government Report, March 2014). These women would greatly benefit from the public services offered in the building. While Johannesburg is currently the location for more women's organisations than Pretoria, Pretoria's northern location gives it better placement in relation to these three northern provinces of South Africa.

In response to the notion of 'othering'

During the first design crit, it was questioned whether the creation of a facility that caters for a marginalised group of people is only furthering their difference or 'Otherness'. It could be argued that by creating a space that addresses highly specific concerns, the separation between the mainstream and its 'Other' is reinforced. This presents two arguments common to feminist theory: One perspective proposes that the very act of discussing women as the 'other' reinforces the notion of difference that women have been fighting against, while another group is of the belief that the difference between male and female is fundamental and cannot be equalised to one generic playing field. To this notion, van der Westhuizen (2015) remarked: 'Women are a subjugated group in South Africa and are still presented with many inequalities in comparison to men. Due to this, it is entirely justified to create a space that is aimed at furthering their specific issues. Power concedes nothing without demand. No one will give it to them.' (van der Westhuizen, 2015) .

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Void

An Introduction to
the Design Concept

Chapter Seven serves as a theoretical introduction to the primary architectural device used in the design, informed by the in-between state occupied by women in South Africa. The Void is used as a means of expression for this state but the intention is to subvert typical notions of the Void, often associated as a negative space, and instead use its innate characteristics to create a space of opportunity. This provides a space of expression for women, who are able to make use of the in-between or 'Other' position of occupation within society and use it to their advantage to create a space of their own that can be used for the pursuit of advocacy for equal representation for women in South Africa.



THOUGHTS ABOUT NOTHING

'Space is nothing, yet we have a kind of vague faith in it.'
- Robert Smithson (1996:6)

Figure 7.1 Anish Kapoor: The Origin of the World, 2004. 'The whole exhibition space is the work, with a gigantic void in a slope that rises up from the floor. The void appears endless, broadening into its depth, and seems to encroach upon the observer, controverting conventional concepts of space.' (Source: <http://www.field.io/inspiration/kapoor-turrell/>)

In this dissertation, conceptual explorations of the potential of the architectural space of the Void are discussed as an introduction to the concepts used in the design. The Void is explored as a space that *'challenges existing forms of occupation'* (Ahmed & Jameson, 2013), requiring a shift of perspective that views the Void as a negative space of nothingness to that of a space of possibility. Due to its lack of definition, the Void provides the opportunity for simultaneous trajectories to exist and enables interactions and relationships to redefine themselves as needed. The Void has use value beyond its minimalistic quality as its 'lack' offers a space of creation and sensation. In modern western philosophy, the void and emptiness are often portrayed as

negatives, with a nihilistic quality of 'nothingness manifested' and understood as an 'other space' (Ahmed & Jameson, 2013). However, in ancient eastern philosophies, the void is attributed with alternative meanings. Nothingness or zero is the origin. In Japanese philosophy, life is made up of five elements: water, air, earth, fire and void. Here, the Void is understood as the immaterial yet essential part of the physical world. Instead of nothing, the Void is something that accommodates imagination and possibility. It is the space in-between or the hollow contained within. It suggests both absence and presence and is a process involving negation – towards nothing, zero, entropy, erasure, tabula rasa (Ahmed & Jameson, 2013).



LEAP INTO THE VOID

Yves Klein and *Le Vide*

Yves Klein was an artist in post-war Europe. His works began as a reaction to abstract art, which was popular at the time. He believed that in viewing abstract art, the viewer invests their own feelings into the piece, leaving little work to be done by the artists themselves. His first works were monochrome canvasses and were presented as satires on abstract art, for not only did the pictures carry no motif, but Klein insisted there was nothing there at all, only “the void.”

From here, his work evolved to express the various meanings to be found within notions of the Void. He explored the Void as a space that ‘*frees us from thought or sensory information, thus providing peace and inspiration*’ (Maloney, 2013). To Klein, the void was the place for infinite possibility, part of an essential process of creation and sensation.

During his most famous exhibition, Klein painted the entire gallery, including all furniture, white and presented the empty spaces as his exhibition.

“My paintings are now invisible and I would like to show them in a clear and positive manner...”

-Yves Klein

Figure 7.2 Saut dans le vide, (Leap into the Void), by Yves Klein. (Source: Maloney, 2013)

THE VOID

Something from Nothing

'The Hunting of the Snark' is a nonsense poem published by Lewis Carroll in 1876. It follows a crew of ten, sailing the oceans trying to hunt the 'Snark', who turns out to be a very dangerous 'Boojum' or monster. In the poem, the crew consult a map of the ocean to help them find the legendary creature. The map is an 'Ocean Chart' owned by the Bellman, one of the main characters in the book. It helps him and his crew to cross the ocean and arrive at a strange land. The absurdity of the map is that it only shows ocean, literally illustrating nothing, and therefore cannot be a very helpful navigating tool. The map plays with ideas of something and nothing, presenting the vastness of the ocean as a nothingness, yet still serving a purpose.

An Extract from the poem:

“He had bought a large map representing the sea,
Without the least vestige of land:
And the crew were much pleased when they found it to be
A map they could all understand.
“What’s the good of Mercator’s North Poles and Equators,
Tropics, Zones, and Meridian Lines?”
So the Bellman would cry: and the crew would reply
“They are merely conventional signs!
“Other maps are such shapes, with their islands and capes!
But we’ve got our brave Captain to thank:
(So the crew would protest) “that he’s bought us the best —
A perfect and absolute blank!”

-Lewis Carroll, The Hunting of the Snark (1876)

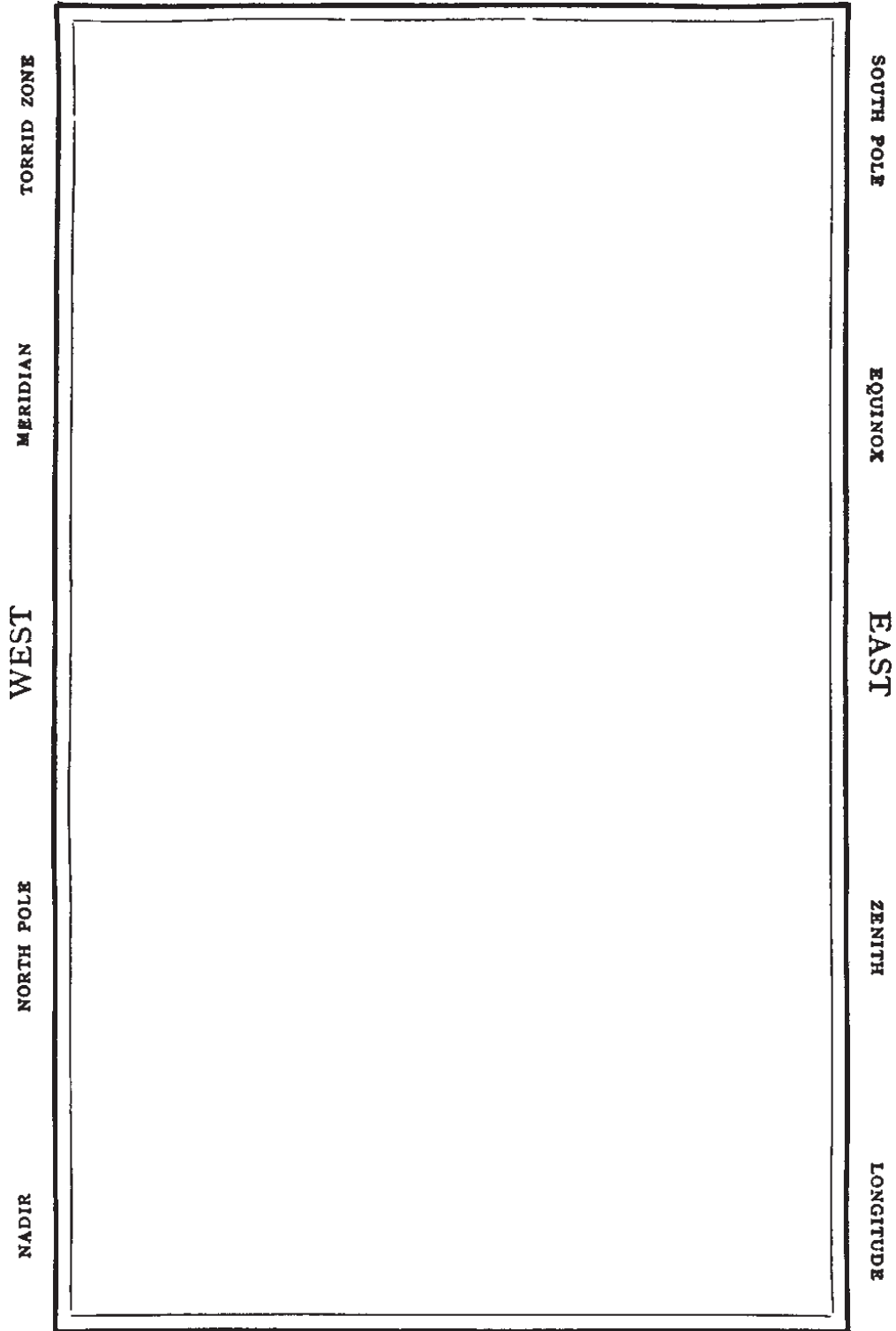
Figure 7.3 'Ocean Chart' by Henry Holiday for The Hunting of the Snark' by Lewis Carroll, 1876. (Source: Maloney, 2013)

THE VOID

LATITUDE

NORTH

EQUATOR



TORRID ZONE

MERIDIAN

WEST

NORTH POLE

NADIR

SOUTH POLE

EQUINOX

EAST

ZENITH

LONGITUDE

.....
Scale of Miles.

Ocean chart

THE VOID

The Void as Urban Device: The Nolli Map

Considering the spatial theories that are discussed in chapter 1 of this dissertation, parallels can be drawn with that of Giambattista Nolli and his map of Rome, drawn in 1748. What both of these approaches have in common is an understanding of the social nature of space as an alternative to the static, impartial character of space presented by Euclidian perspectives. These perspectives are also evident in the figure-ground maps that are used in contemporary urban design. In figure-ground maps, voids are depicted as leftover spaces, in between the objects of buildings. The Nolli map, rather than distinguishing between interior and exterior space, distinguishes between private and civic space. Buildings can be perceived as either figure or ground due to their natures as either civic or private. The Nolli map reverses

the focus from solid, as typically done in the figure-ground map, and places the emphasis on the void. Furthermore, it adds an additional layer of understanding by allocating the 'voids' or white spaces of the map with a social quality. We read the city not only as interior/exterior or built and unbuilt but are able to understand it in terms of its social nature. Focus is placed on the voids between buildings as social space, rendering the actual footprints of buildings as less important than the public, civic spaces that surround them. Here, the void is viewed not simply as an open space but as the primary space with social and civic purpose. The void is given a dimension of the social, instead of being represented as a static and accidental. The void presents itself as the object rather than the subject.

THE VOID

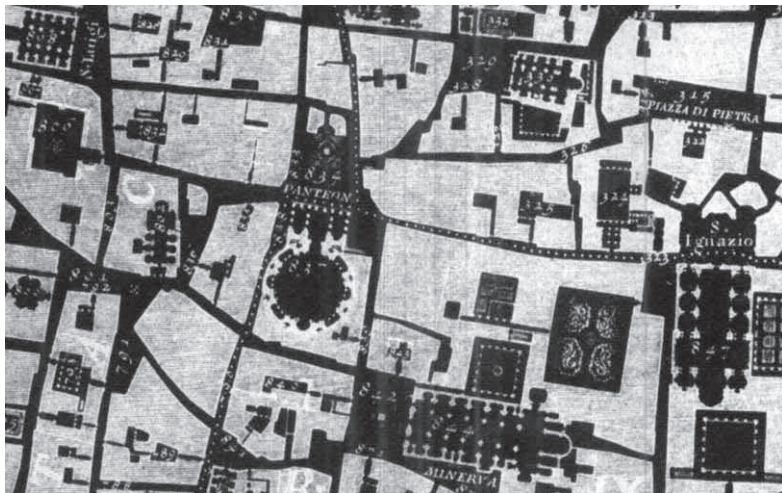
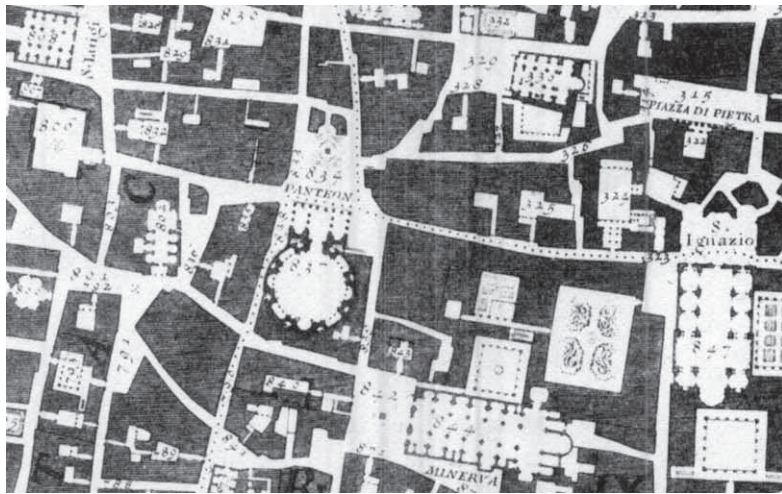


Figure 7.4 A Portion of Giambattista Nolli's map of Rome and the inverted map below. (Source: <http://tsarchitect.nsfanagan.net/?p=1116>)

CHAPTER EIGHT

Occupying the Void

Design Development

Chapter Eight explains the design of the Women's Forum as a process of translating theory into architecture. The design process is to be understood not as a linear process but rather as an exploratory journey, moving back and forward as architectural expression of the concepts are tested and refined.

Notions of the feminine within architecture are abstract and subtle and this chapter documents the search for appropriate architectural expressions of the feminine within the particular context.

DESIGN DRIVERS

'All spaces are socially regulated in some way, if not by explicit rules (no ball games, no loitering) then by the potentially more competitive (more market-like?) regulation which exists in the absence of explicit (collective? public? democratic? Autocratic?) controls. 'Open Space' is [therefore] a dubious concept.'

Doreen Massey, *For Space* (2001:120)

As a primary design focus, the interstitial is explored as the space of feminine expression. Space can never provide a neutral place of occupation but interstitial or in-between spaces, through their very lack of defining identity, provide the spatial dimension for unplanned social interaction. The interstitial provides the space for subverting traditional social structures, allowing women to define the nature of their spatial relationships on their own terms.

Primary Design Drivers were determined as responses to the conceptual, programmatic and contextual requirements for the building.

The Void is used as an architectural expression of the interstitial. It is approached as a positive space of occupation and

presents opportunities for the creation of a non-hierarchical space for interaction within the building.

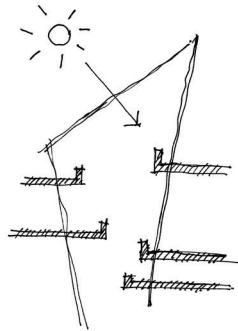
Spaces between the offices provide secondary interstitial spaces that accommodate chance encounters and unplanned interaction between women from different organisations.

The facade is used as a mediator between interior and exterior.

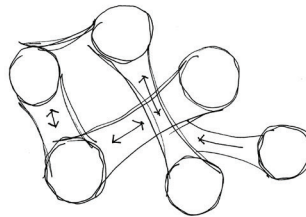
Expanding the facade with the use of screens creates exterior spaces of privacy.

The ground floor is separated from the rest of the building and is treated as a continuation of the public realm. A connection to the existing pedestrian arcade is made which creates opportunities for negotiation between the public realm and the building interior

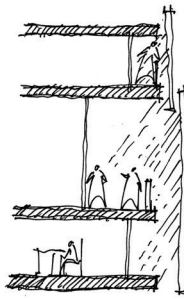
OCCUPYING THE VOID



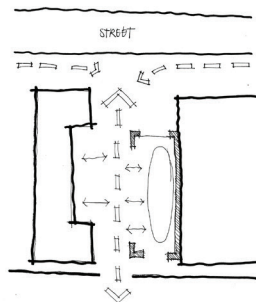
THE VOID AS POSITIVE SPACE OF OCCUPATION



SEPARATE OFFICES FOR EACH ORGANISATION,
WITH IN-BETWEEN SPACES ALLOWING FOR
SPONTANEOUS INTERACTION

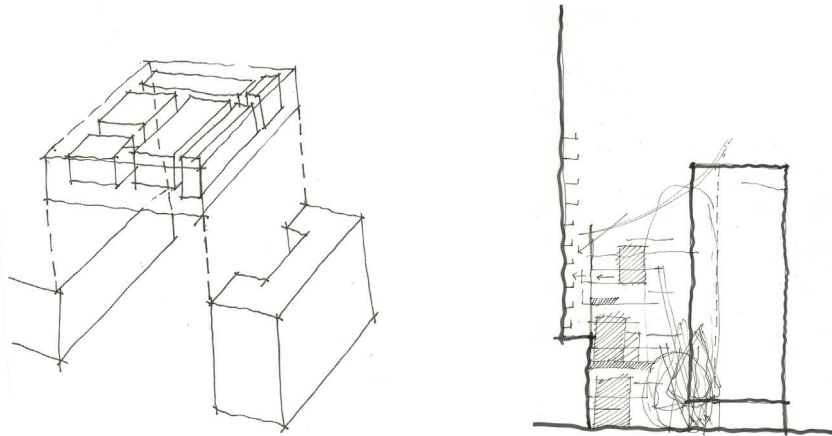


FACADE CREATES INTERSTITIAL ZONE
BETWEEN INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR

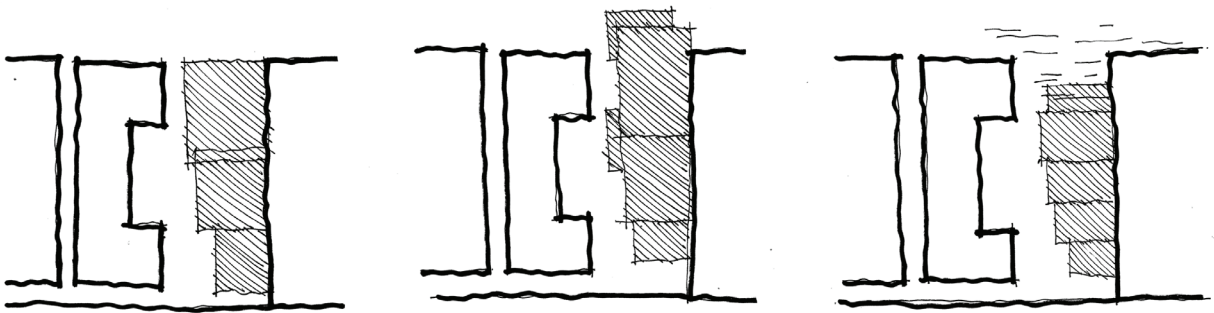


NEGOTIATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE:
GROUND FLOOR AS CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC REALM

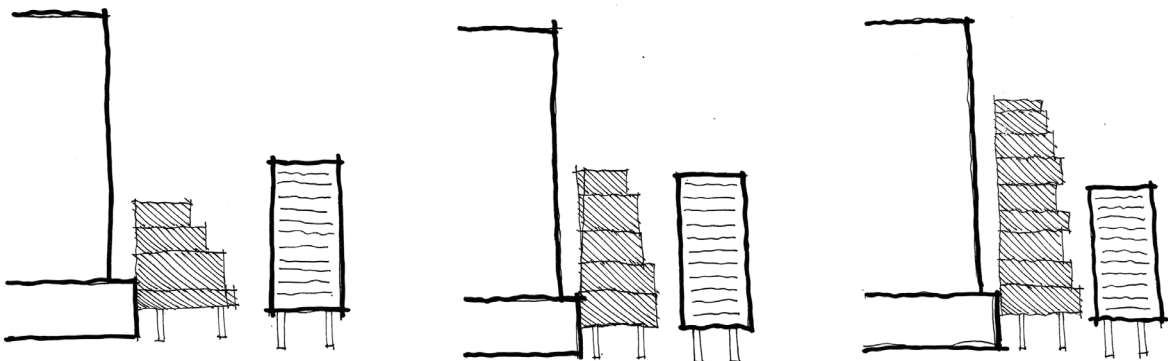
OCCUPYING THE VOID



Filling the Void



Street Edge Condition



Height Exploration

INITIAL CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION

The Urban Void Massing and Dialogue

The initial design decisions addressed the nature of occupation within the site. This involved developing a response to the way that the building occupies the urban void as an ‘Other’ space. Volumetric studies through models provided a deeper understanding of the qualities of the urban void and how the massing of the building should respond to these conditions: A conventional approach that makes use of a solid mass to simply ‘fill the gap’ could not be used. For the building to convey the notion of occupying the ‘Other’ space of the void, the massing of the building should instead read as a series of loose elements that are placed within the space. This allows in-between or leftover spaces to be created between the existing buildings and the new insertion, allowing the site to still read as a void.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

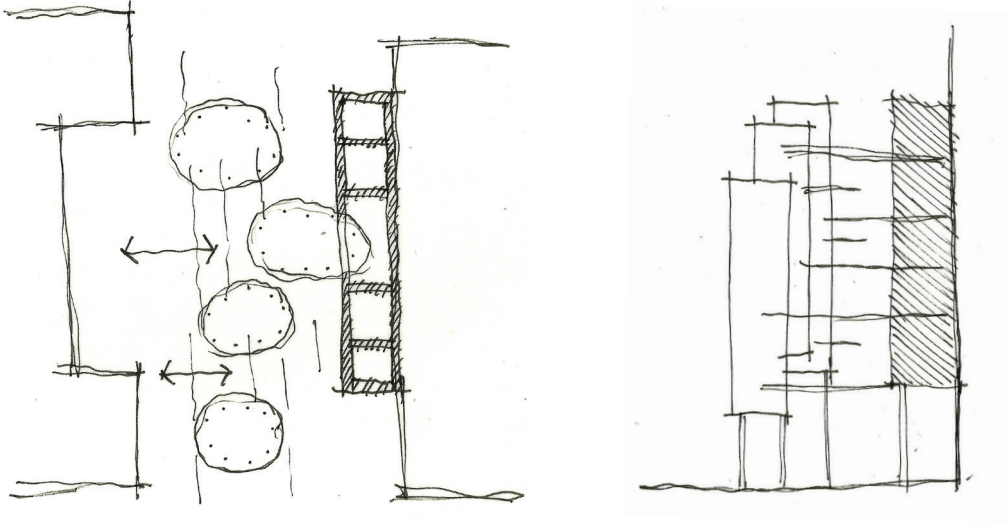


Figure 8.1 Early proposals for placement of solid volumes against eastern wall of site. (Source: Author, 2015)

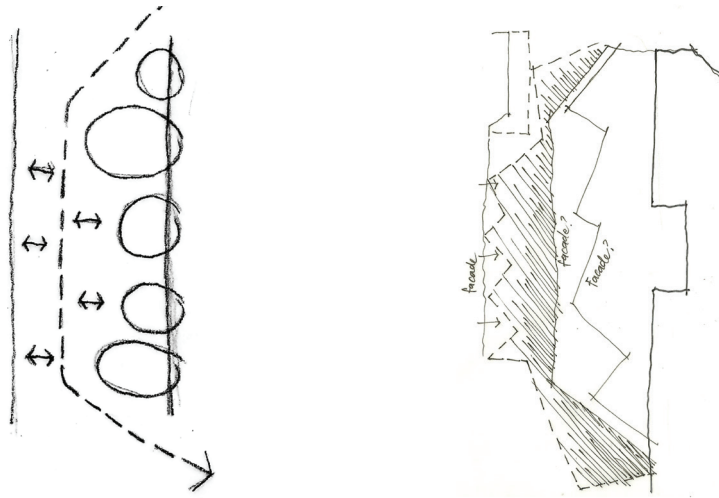


Figure 8.2 Conceptual diagrammes exploring 'Splitting the Wall' (Source: Author, 2015)

INITIAL DESIGN PROPOSALS

The Interstitial Space

'Communication systems are primarily associated in our minds with words' (Ardener, 1981:13) but there are other implicit social codes other than language that govern human interaction.

'We might visualise a semiotic system that depends, in the absence of power of speech, upon the appreciation by the human participants of contextually defined logical relationships between themselves in space. Let us say: the relevant position of each participant to another... and to items in a fixed environment' (Ardener, 1971:xlili-iv).

An exploration of the the architectural representation of the Interstitial within the building was undertaken. Various concepts were explored and tested within the constraints of the site.

As taken from the literature reviews of feminist readings of space, initial conceptual ideas explored notions of 'Splitting the Wall' as an expression of breaking through harsh boundaries between the private interior, associated with the feminine, and the public exterior. This found architectural expression through layering of the

facade so as to allow for graded negotiation between interior and exterior.

Stemming from the approach that was adopted for the massing of the building, it was decided to use the solid masses to contain the fixed, programmed spaces of the offices of the organisations, while allowing the in-between spaces to provide the interstitial social spaces for interaction between women.

The initial concept placed these solid volumes against the eastern edge of the site, freeing up the circulation and social spaces towards the western edge, allowing them to interact with the dialogue space through the layered facade. While conceptually strong, this posed problems during detailed resolution due to the proportional constraints of the site. The narrow width of the site meant that vertical movement cores as well as ablution cores fill up almost the entire width of the site, making it difficult for placing the office spaces up against the eastern edge and thus leaving little room available for social spaces.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

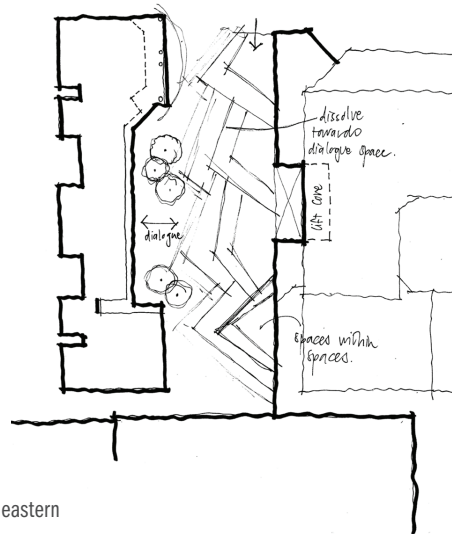


Figure 8.3 Building anchored against eastern edge with dialogue space created with Pretmed Building. (Source: Author, 2015)

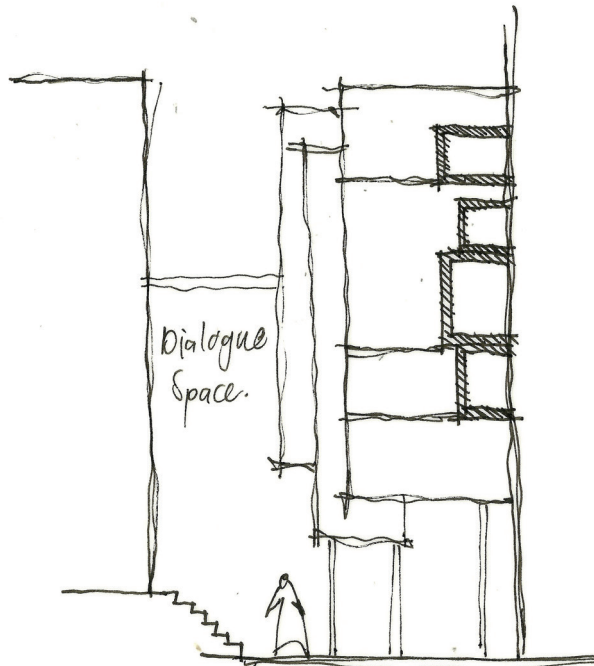


Figure 8.4 Early proposal for sectional relationship between the Women's Forum and the Pretmed Building. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

The ‘Second’ Facade

As the intention for the building is to create positive spaces for dialogue between women, the building itself needs to represent an aspect of dialogue with its context. The unusual condition of a ‘secondary’ facade exists on the Pretmed building which faces into the western edge of the site and this facade presents an opportunity for dialogue between new and existing. A sensitive approach must be adopted in response to this facade so as to not block out all light and connection to the windows and balconies. Through creating a ‘secondary’ facade of the Forum, a Dialogue Space is created. This also provides the opportunity for more natural light to penetrate the Women’s Forum, as little opportunity for this is provided due to the narrow northern face of the site. While creating dialogue within its context, the Women’s Forum must also assert its own presence within the context and contend with the dominant surrounding structures. The surrounding buildings have considerable differences in height. The Pretmed building is 9 storeys tall and the Momentum building is 22 storeys tall. The new building should mediate between the heights of the two buildings, so as to not disappear within its context while also not overpowering any of the buildings in the context either.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

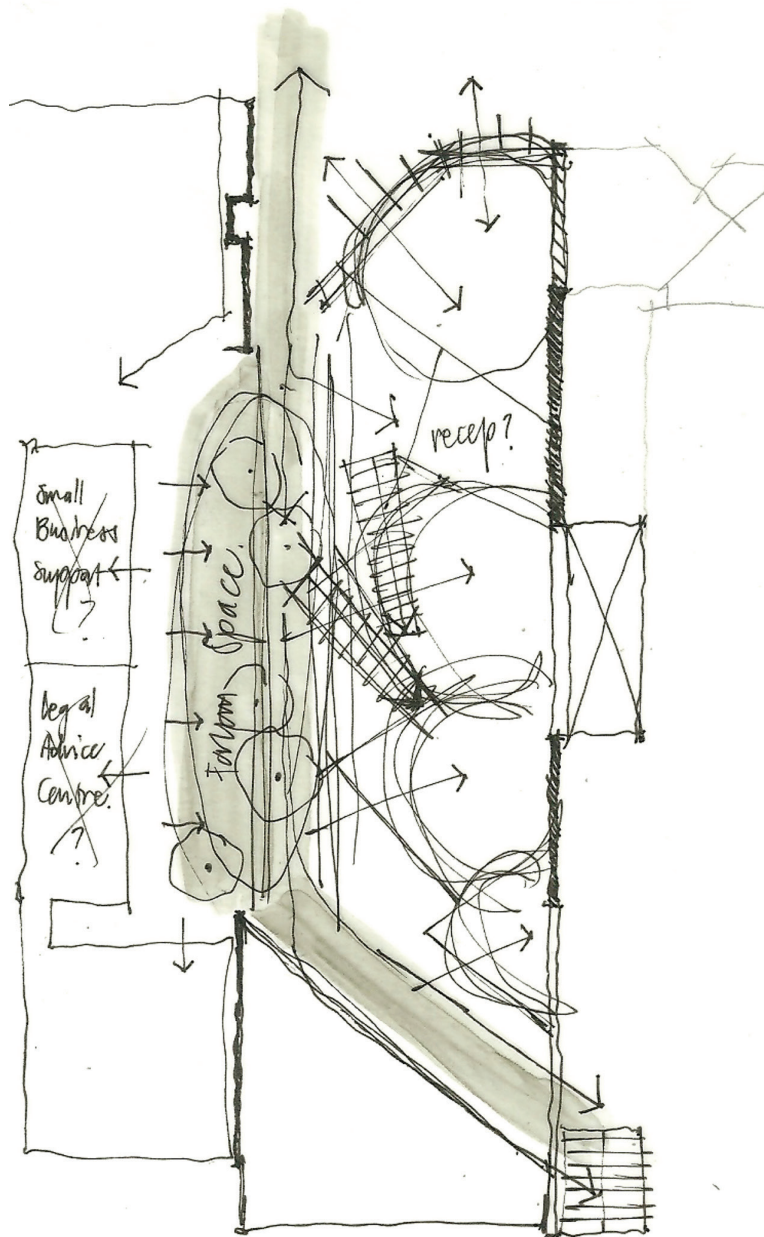


Figure 8.5 Early plan exploration. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

May - June Critique

During the design crit, it was questioned whether 'Splitting the Wall' was the only means of addressing the feminine. This concept didn't explore notions of the feminine at a deep enough level. While the building occupied the urban void of the site, the building itself and the arrangement of its spaces did little to acknowledge the concept. The building itself therefore needed to address the figurative void within society that women occupy. It was suggested that further conceptual investigations be explored that would give better expression to the primary concept of the interstitial as the space of unplanned social interaction between women.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

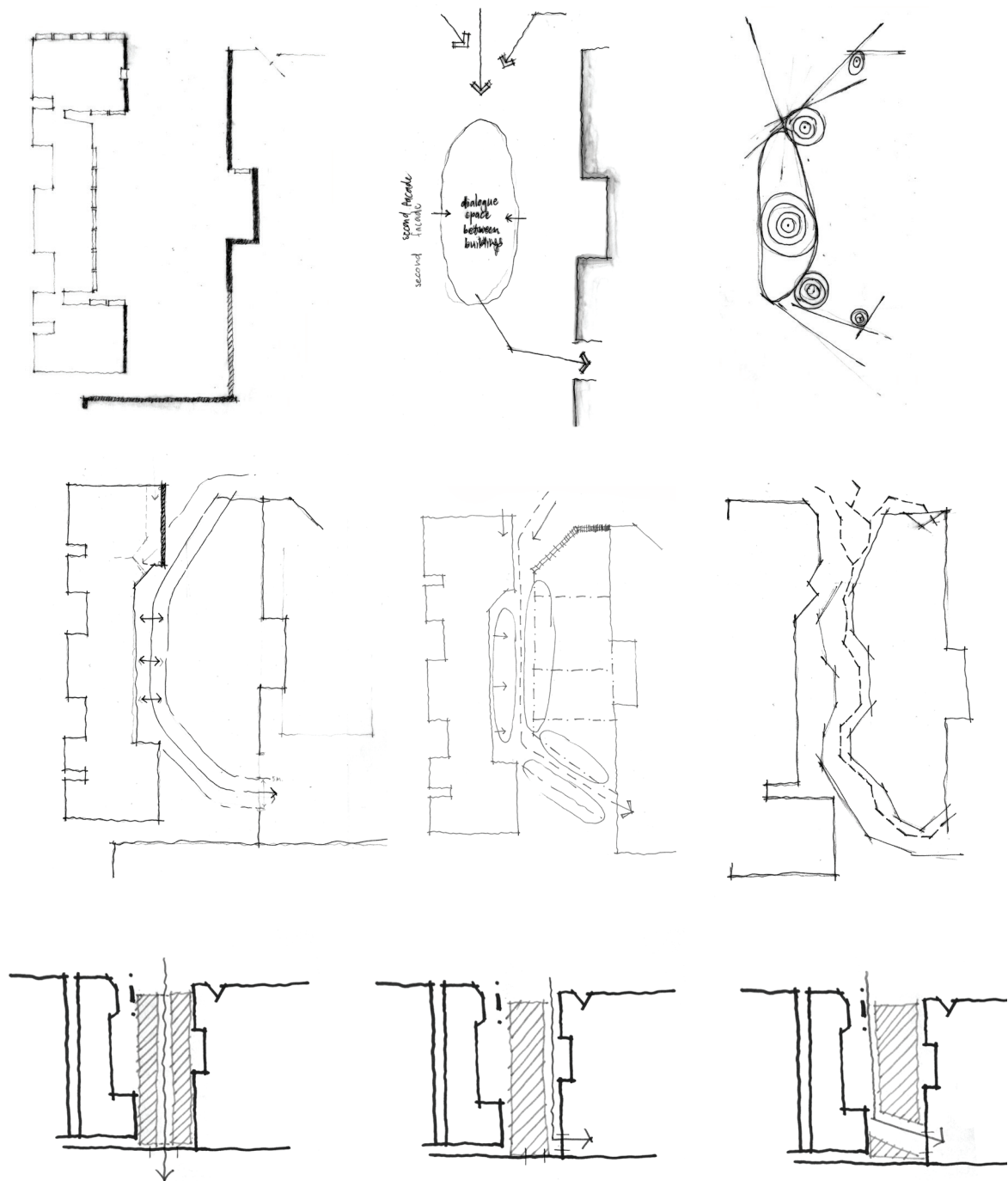


Figure 8.6 Exploration of ground floor movement paths for the arcade and placement of programmed spaces. (Source: Author, 2015)

The Ground Floor

From the onset, the ground floor of the building required a public aspect which would allow the private and specific functions within the building to connect with the public realm.

In *S,M,L,XL* (1995), Rem Koolhaas rejects the architect's fixation on the objectivity of a building, which disconnects it from its responsibility to the greater urban context. Where a figure ground map indicates the 'fabric' of architecture that is woven together to create an urban environment, Koolhaas claims that many buildings do not consider this aspect, creating the ubiquitous, disconnected urban environments that are evident in many of our cities. It is with this approach that cities become collections of objects that have no relation to one another. In his book *Collage City* (1978), Colin Rowe presents similar theories by calling for a transcendence from space and object fixation in order to create cohesive urban environments with a balance between solid and void.

A public ground floor for the Women's Forum allows for programmatic mediation between public and private. The building is raised off of the ground in order to allow a continuation of the public realm into the site. As explored in the site analysis, the nature of the context along Pretorius street presents harsh and inconsiderate conditions for users of the city. Few social spaces or places of rest are provided along the pavement. The ground floor of the building presents the opportunity for spaces of dialogue and public occupation for women and for negotiation between the private interior of the building and the public realm. In order to accommodate public occupation and movement through the ground floor, a new arcade is created in the dialogue space between the Women's Forum and the Pretmed building. This arcade connects to the existing network of arcades on the block through a new opening into the Tramshed building.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

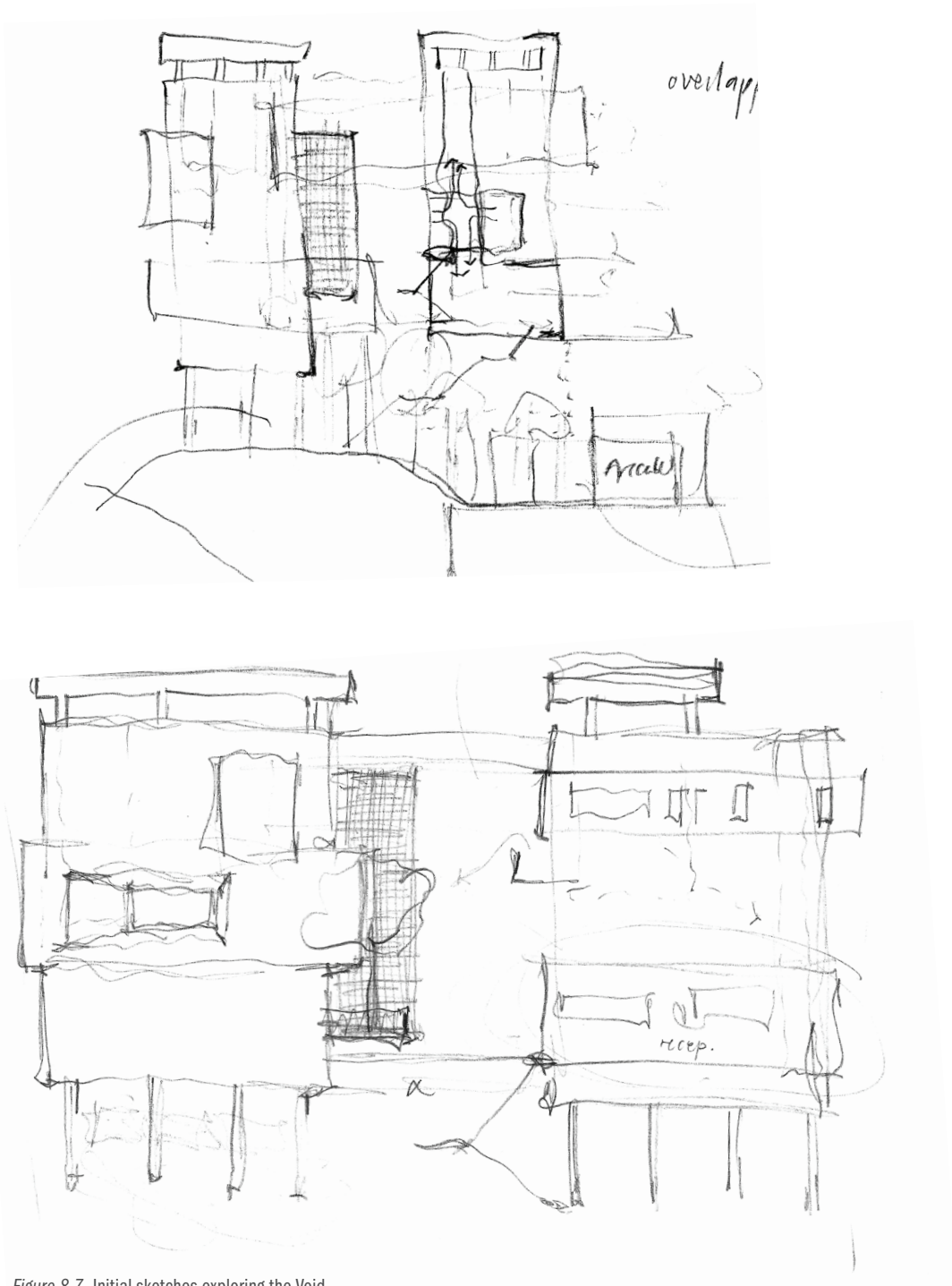


Figure 8.7 Initial sketches exploring the Void
(Source: Author, 2015)

DEVELOPMENT AND FORMALISATION

The Void

The notion of the Void therefore emerges as an architectural means of creating interstitial space. The Void presents the opportunity for an undefined space of positive occupation by women. Notions of 'Splitting the Wall' were not discarded but rather added to. A graded negotiation between interior and exterior must be created, while allowing the Void to act as the primary conceptual driver.

Conventional associations of the Void and the interstitial as 'left-over' and as 'Other' spaces are challenged by the design and the focus placed on the Void rather than the solid. Various arrangements of the volumes were explored in order to create the inner void space. Instead of placing design focus on the solid volumes, they are instead treated as elements that shape the void space.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

Evolution of the Void

Throughout the design refinement of the Void, various other aspects of the building evolved and matured alongside. These elements will be discussed in tandem with the discussion of the primary design element of the Void.

First Iteration

From the conceptual diagrammes, the evolution of the void is explained.

Initially, the building was split into two vertical volumes. The first containing the public programmes of the Small Business Support Centre and Legal Aid Centre, and the second containing the private offices of the organisations. The ground floor was also divided into two spaces, with a restaurant run by local women placed at the front of the site and an exhibition space at the back. The facade of the building made use of layering of solid walls over the walls of the volumes. Holes were punched into the walls at strategic spaces, adding to the layered effect of the building facade. The intention was for the walls to create a heavy, protective exterior to the private interior, while relating

to the existing materiality of the context. This approach created a heavy aesthetic for the building and it was decided that a light and contrasting aesthetic was needed instead. The Void was defined as a vertical in-between space between the public and private components of the building. A grand staircase leading into the building was positioned on the ground floor of the Void which led into the reception of the building on the first floor. Vertical circulation that connected the two components ran through the Void. But this interpretation didn't allow for any actual occupation of the Void other than through the transitory use of circulation and the reception space of the building felt hidden away when placed on the first floor and in the middle of the building.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

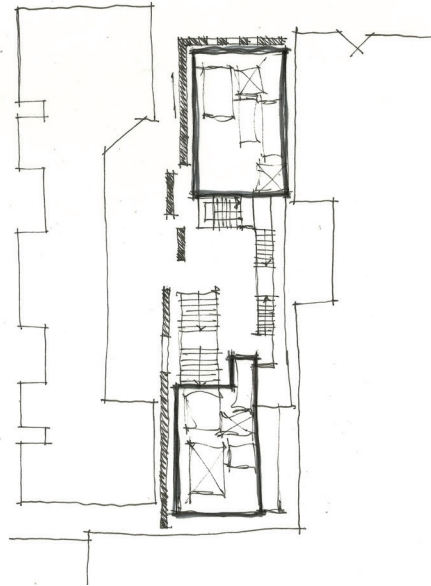
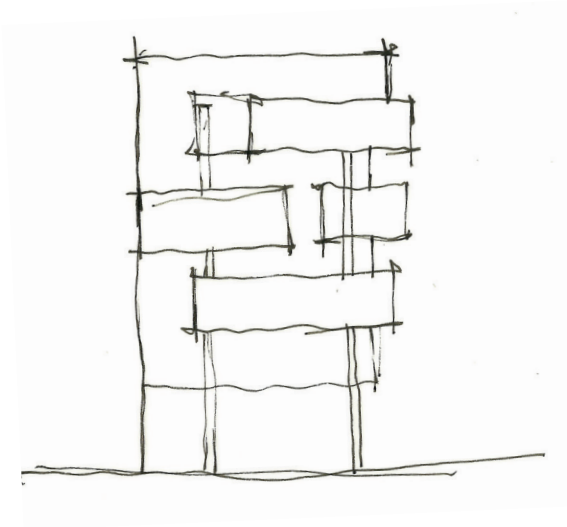


Figure 8.8 Initial sketches for the Void as mediating space between public and private sections of the Women's Forum.
(Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Second Iteration

The second iteration sought to develop the singular, vertical nature of the Void into a more dynamic space. The solid, vertical volumes were broken into smaller horizontal volumes, each one providing a separate space for the offices of an organisation and allowing each organisation to occupy its own space, creating space for individual identity. This allowed for a variety of void spaces to be created which changed the nature of the void from a singular vertical space to a range of various horizontal spaces which could become occupiable social spaces with varying privacy levels and characters. While this iteration brought more dynamic character to the interstitial spaces, the Voids had become disconnected due to their horizontal nature. Further adjustment was needed.

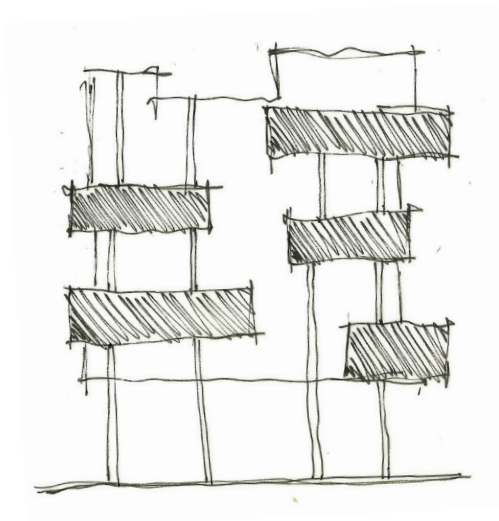


Figure 8.9 The Void is broken into various horizontal spaces. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

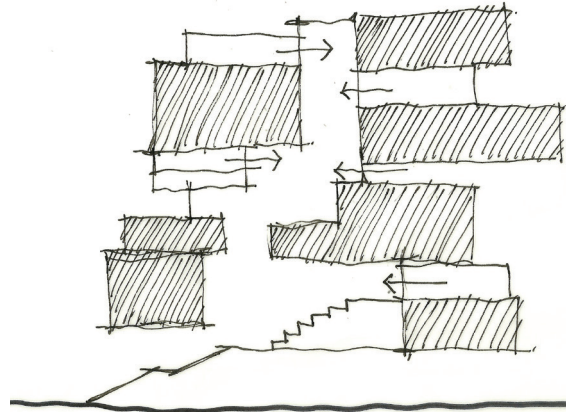


Figure 8.10 Evolution of the Void in order to create a network of connected social spaces. (Source: Author, 2015)

Third Iteration

The Void was readdressed in order to connect the various interstitial spaces and begin to create a network of social spaces rather than a collection of disconnected spaces. The programmed boxes were rearranged and broken apart in order to allow for a central void within the building to connect the smaller voids. In retrospect, this arrangement can be understood as a combination of the first two designs of the Void. During this time, the ventilation strategies for the building were being addressed and it was suggested that the Void could provide the opportunity for stack ventilation to assist the mechanical ventilation in the building. Arrangement and programming for the ground floor was then

finalised. The entrance to the building was moved out of the arcade and placed at the front edge of the site and the reception moved to the ground floor, allowing it to directly address the street front and be immediately accessible to the public. For this reason, the restaurant was reprogrammed as a sandwich and coffee shop. Without direct access to the street front, a restaurant would not be able to draw enough business for it to remain a viable option. The coffee shop and reception space therefore simultaneously occupy the front facade of the building, removing a level of formality from the reception space while creating activity on the street front, inviting people into the arcade.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

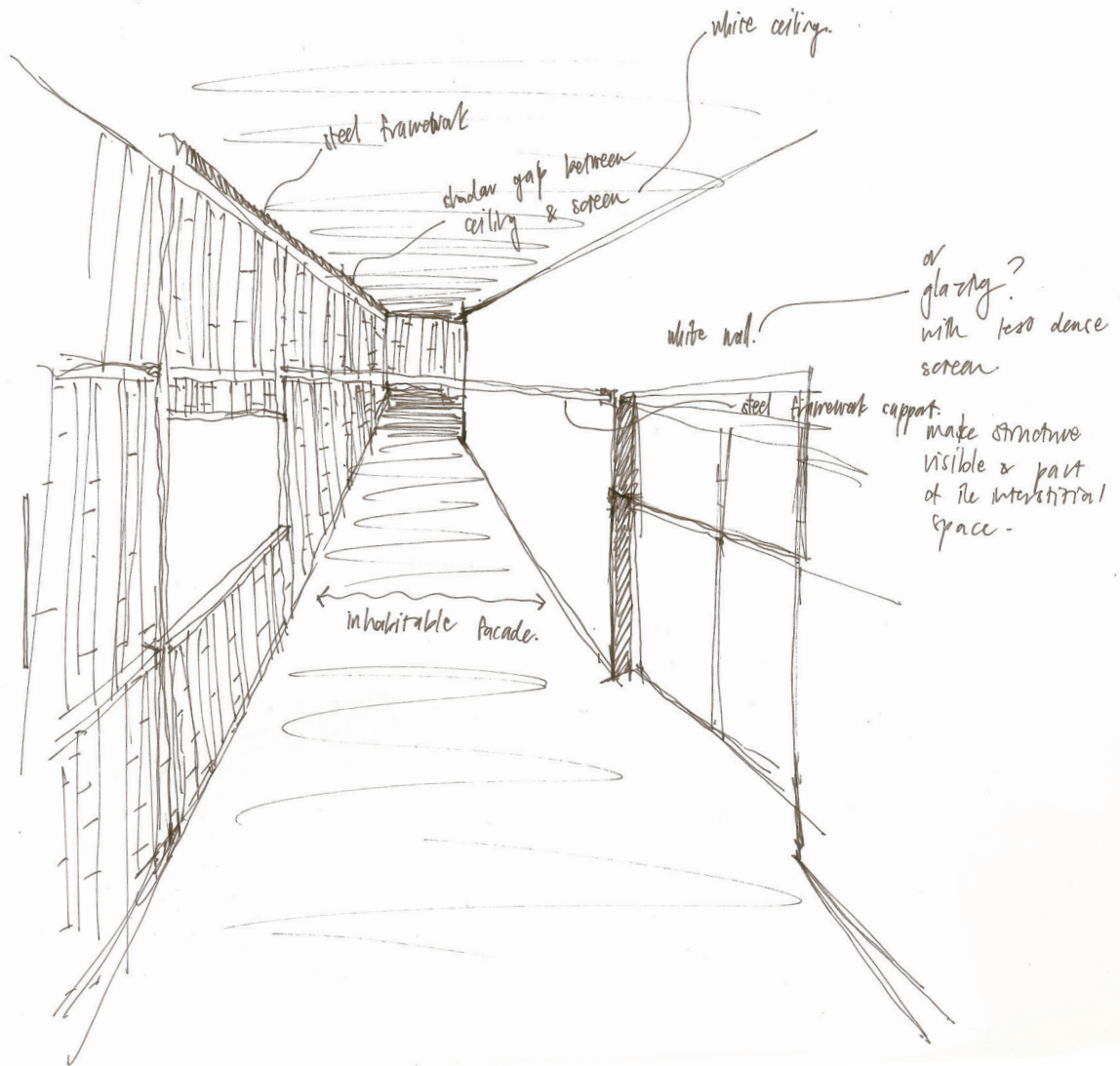
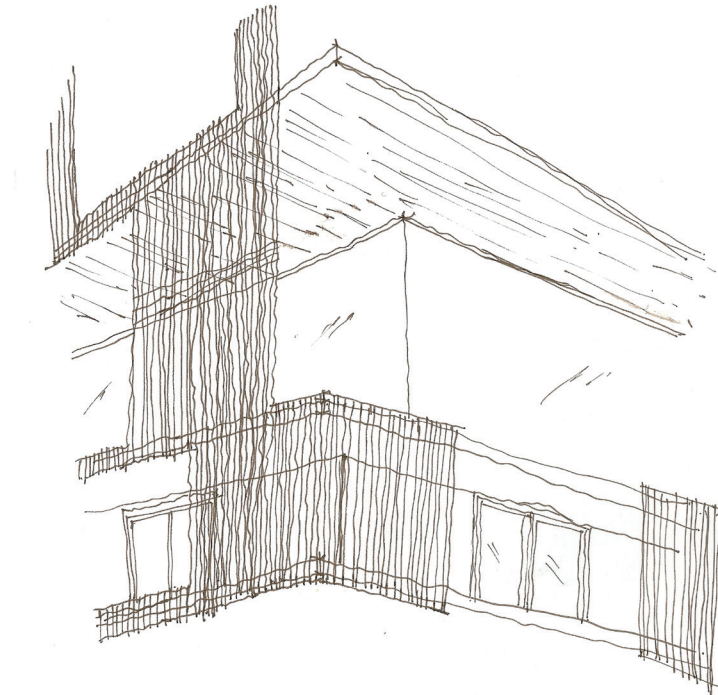


Figure 8.11 Exploration of facade materiality and form.
(Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



The last aspect of the third iteration involved readdressing the facade. Aside from the massing arrangement within the site, the materiality of the facade would provide an important method by which the Women's Forum is able to contrast its surroundings. Timber screens would provide privacy while still allowing light penetration and an aesthetic that would contrast that of the context. The concern could be that privacy screens would limit the amount

of light entering the building. But due to the proximity of the 'second facades' of the Forum and the Pretmed building, privacy is needed. Without the use of screens, fenestration openings would have to be relatively small, controlled and covered. But by using moveable privacy screens, fenestration openings on the western facade of the building can be much larger, allowing more light in, with the screens providing privacy when needed.



OCCUPYING THE VOID

The building has begun to compose itself as a unified whole of the various components that encompass the Void. The various components of the building are discussed in their finalised conditions.

The Women's Forum Space

The Forum space is located on the first floor of the building and at the base of the central void. Amphitheatre stairs play host to a range of different activities while forming part of the main movement path on the first floor. Daily social interactions are accommodated while also providing seating for lectures or forums to occur when needed. Floors at higher levels and the central staircase look into the void, providing additional connection to the forum space.

Into the Void

The Void in the building has finally found a form of expression. All of the solid volumes for offices connect to smaller void spaces creating opportunity for interaction between various organisations and between women. The ground floor staircase from the Reception forms the main entrance point into the building and it is from this point that the journey into the void begins. From the Main staircase, one enters the Forum Space which

sits at the base of the Void. An unoccupiable central void creates a cavern-like space within the building, connecting the smaller social voids within the building and to the forum space below. The social spaces form a network, linking to the void, creating a social space of connection throughout the building. The smaller social spaces provide various forms of publicness. These intimate spaces branch off to the sides of the central void space. Connections to the outside through balconies are also provided. More public spaces of appropriation are provided where people feel comfortable to appropriate for a limited space of time in order to have a conversation. A meeting or take a break between classes or from work.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

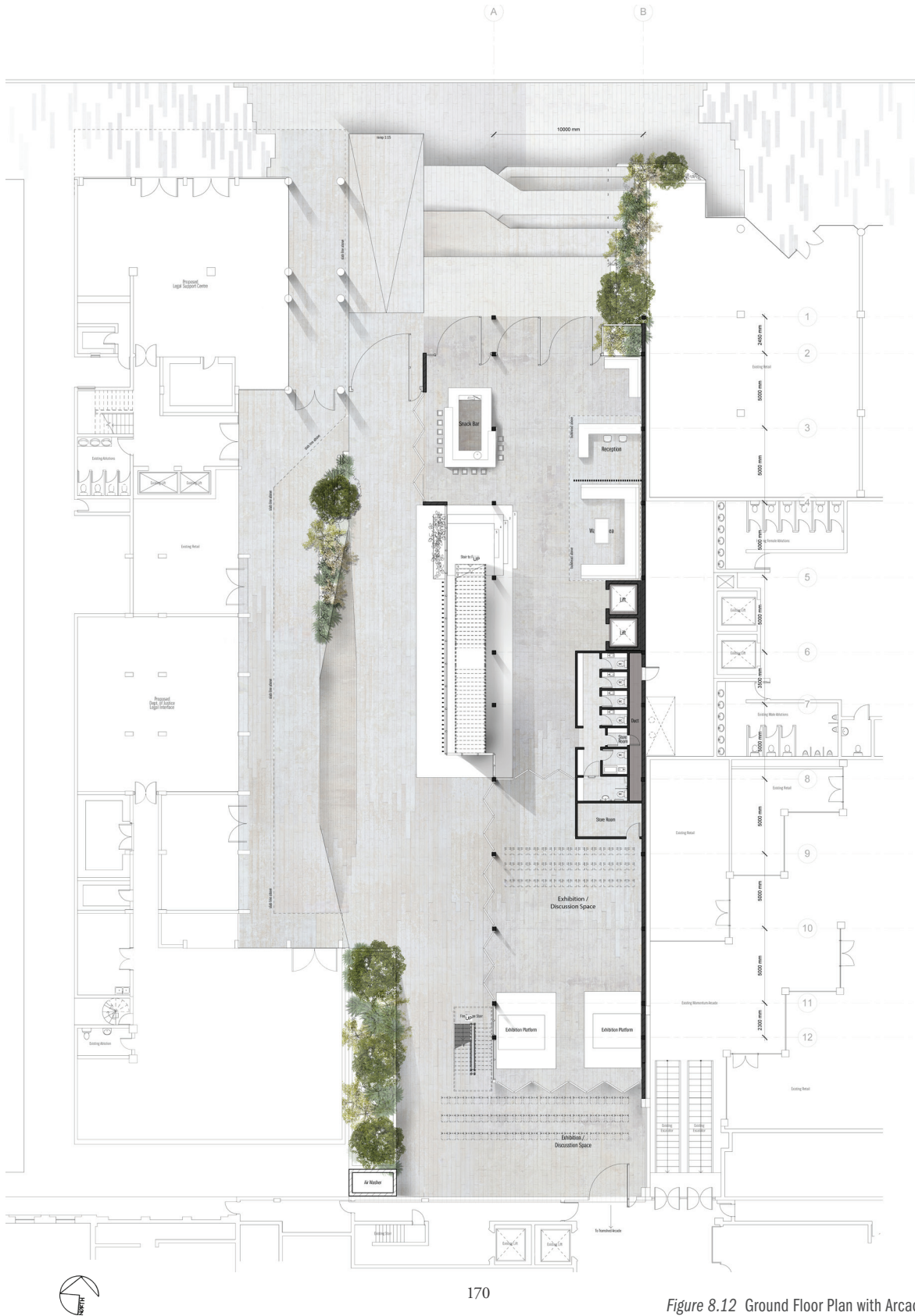


Figure 8.12 Ground Floor Plan with Arcade NTS. (Source: Author, 2015)

Places of Publicness and Places of Invitation: The Ground Floor

'Architecture is not simply about space and form, but also about event, action, and what happens in space.' - Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, 1976-1981

The public ground floor creates a space for identity and dialogue. Places of publicness and places of invitation are created. Cross-programming of spaces allows for a variety of events to occur. Paving used on the ground floor within the site extends outward onto the pavement, making the first announcement of the building's presence. Low, wide steps combined with seating space as well as planters are positioned inside the site. This open space provides the opportunity for public gatherings or marches to assemble on the steps of the Women's Forum.

There is no hierarchy between the reception space and the coffee stand, adding to the informal, welcoming nature of the entrance. The interior extends into the public realm. An exhibition space

is able to be arranged according to a variety of needs, ranging from exhibitions to lectures to outside movie screenings. The ground floor is therefore able to accommodate public discussions in the exhibition space as well as the space for gatherings for marches or rallies at its entrance. At specific points, the facade is able to open up completely or close up while still allowing views into the interior, depending on the time of day, weather conditions or the nature of event occurring in the space. This also allows spaces on the ground floor to maintain a level of security while providing possibility for interaction with the public realm.

The southern end of the site is where the connection to the Tramshed is made. It allows for continued movement through the site yet is not boldly visible or announced from the pavement. This allows for a level of privacy and seclusion from busy city life.

OCCUPYING THE VOID

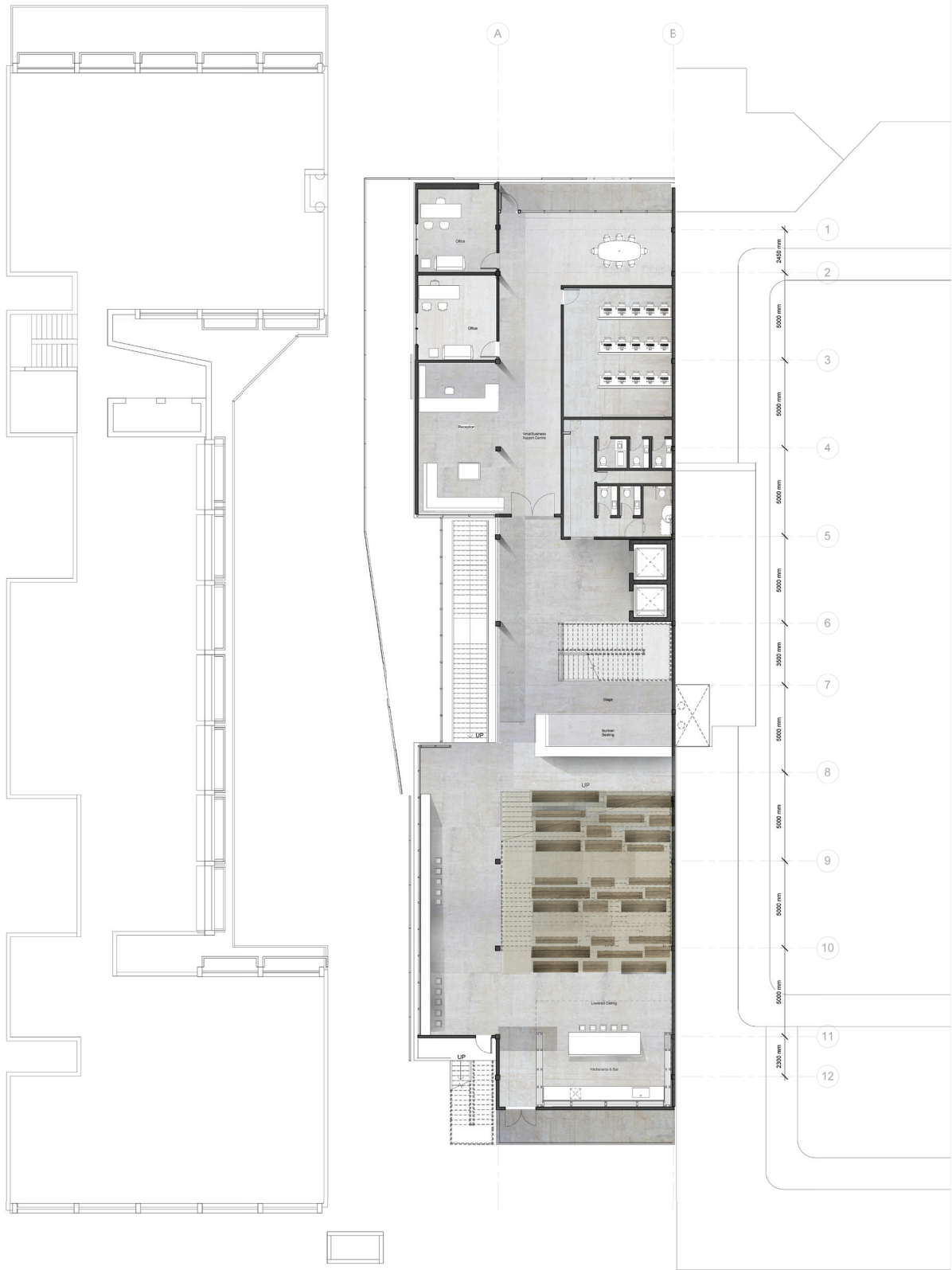


Figure 8.13 First Floor plan with Small Business Support Centre and Forum NTS. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

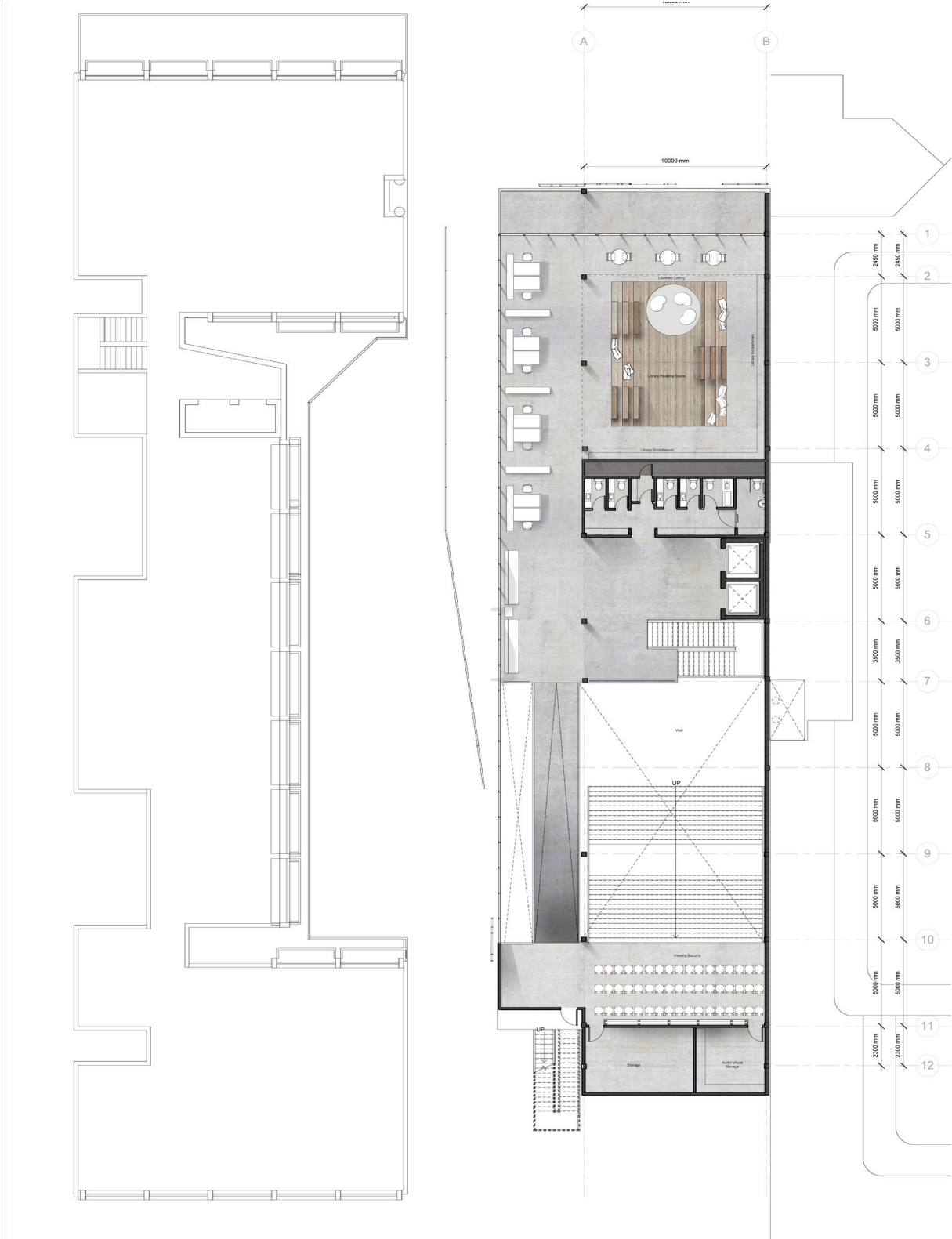


Figure 8.14 Second Floor plan NTS. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

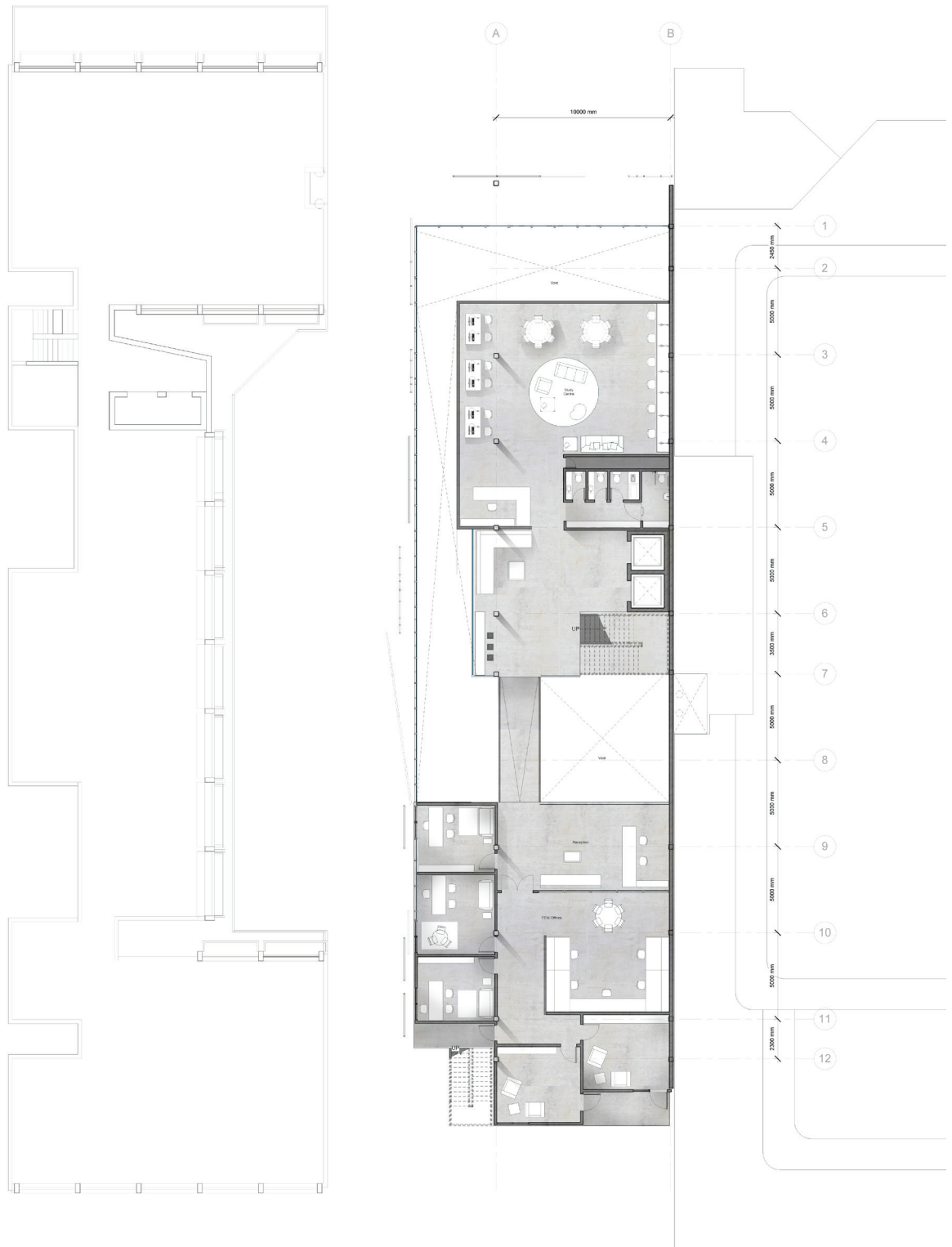


Figure 8.15 Third Floor Plan. NTS. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

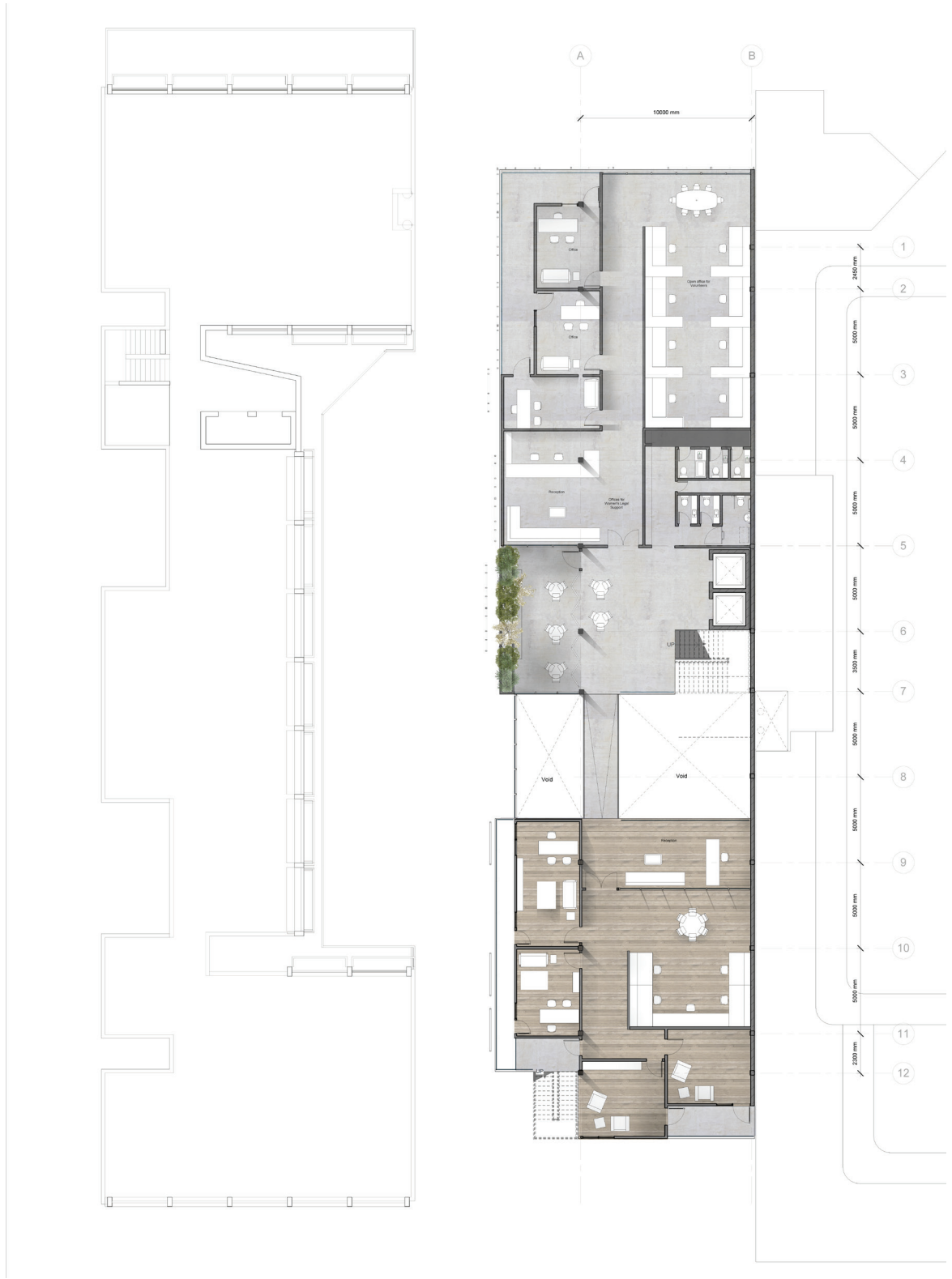


Figure 8.16 Fourth Floor plan. NTS. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Figure 8.17 Fifth Floor Plan. NTS. (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

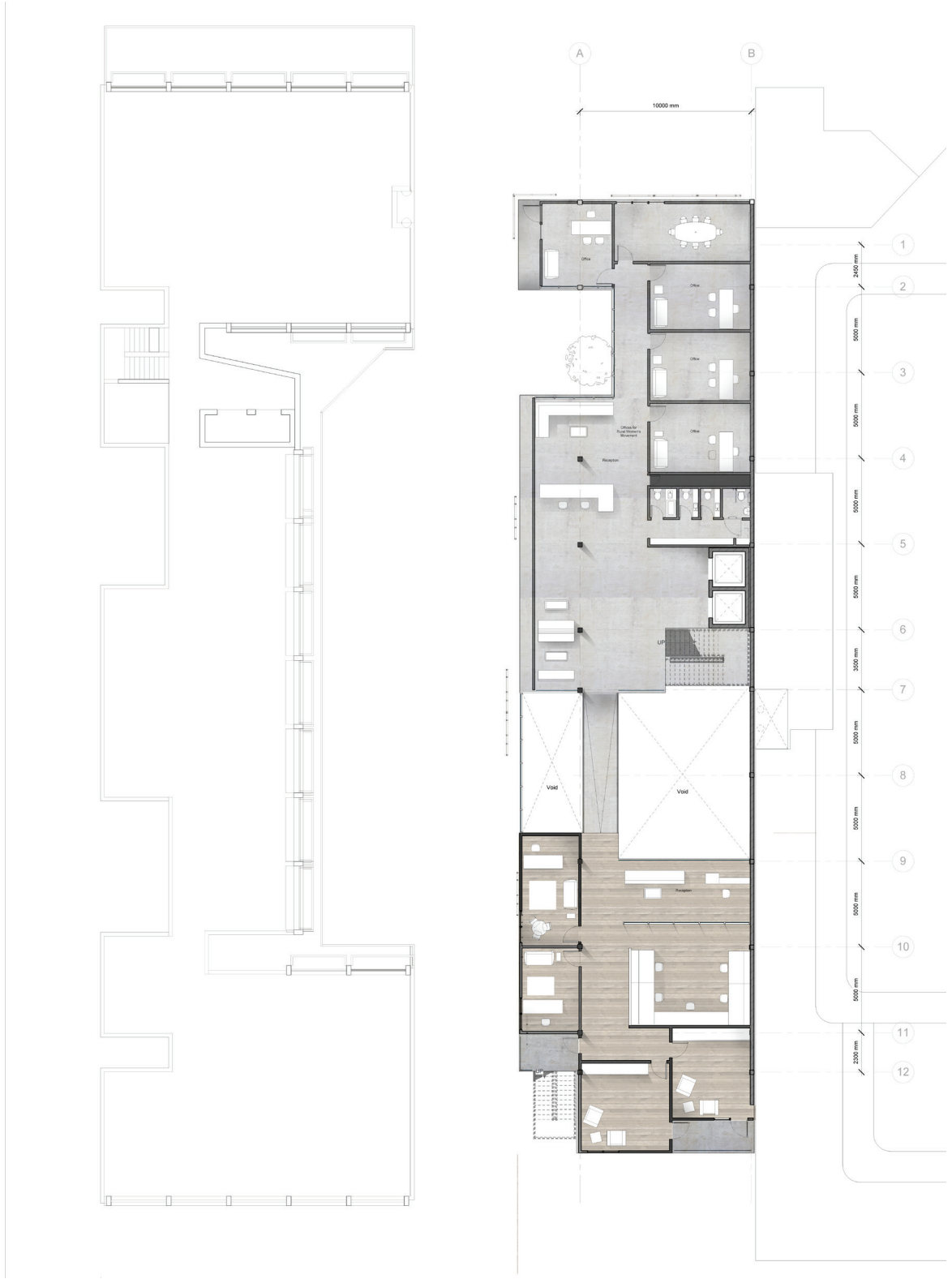
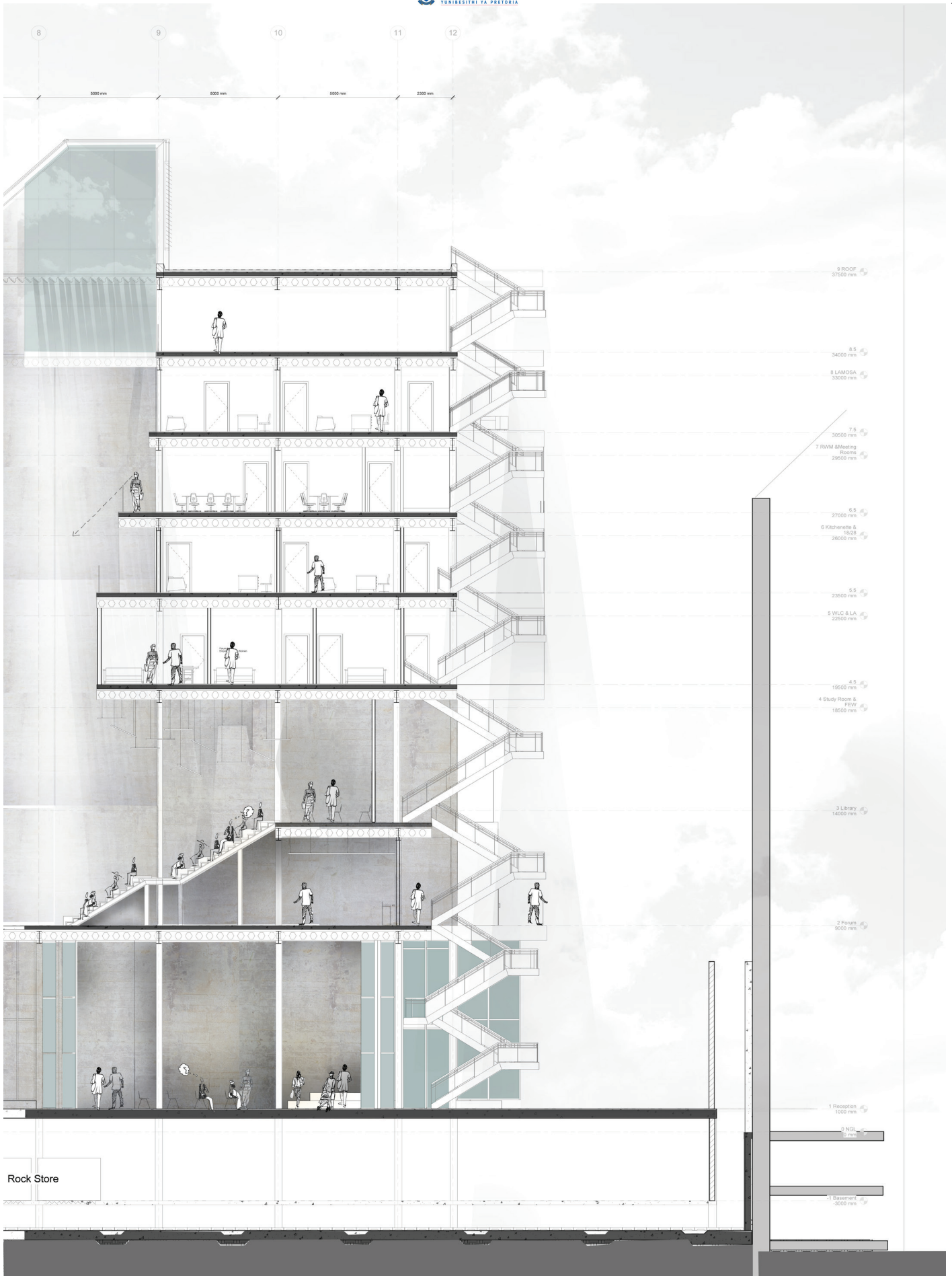


Figure 8.18 Sixth Floor plan. NTS. (Source: Author, 2015)





OCCUPYING THE VOID

The Facade

“The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside.”

Deleuze – Foucault p.96-97

By inhabiting space, we separate and order it. Through this, we categorise people and objects as either within these borders or outside of them; as either ‘x’ or ‘not x’. The inhabitation of space is the process of including and ‘othering’. Architecturally, walls are seen as the boundaries between the inside and the outside: elements that hold or maintain the tension between interior and exterior. Therefore, the facade is expanded and graded in order soften this boundary. This creates inhabitable spaces within the the interstitial spaces between

the facade and the building walls. Latticed timber screens create the facade of the Forum. Timber gives a tactile nature and contrasting the materiality of the context. The screens relate to the functions within, leaving large gaps where public activity occurs on the interior, while providing visual protection for more private functions on the offices. Screens are moveable, creating an animated, living character on the facade.

The screens create an animated, living character on the facade and wrap around the building, continuing into the site and articulating the ‘second’ facade in the Dialogue space.

The timber elements of the facade continue into the building, bringing exterior elements inside, softening the distinction between inside and outside.

Figure 8.19 (Previous Page) Long Section through building showing central vertical Void and smaller horizontal Voids (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Figure 8.20 Arcade with Second Facade above (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Figure 8.21 Arcade with Second Facade
(Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID

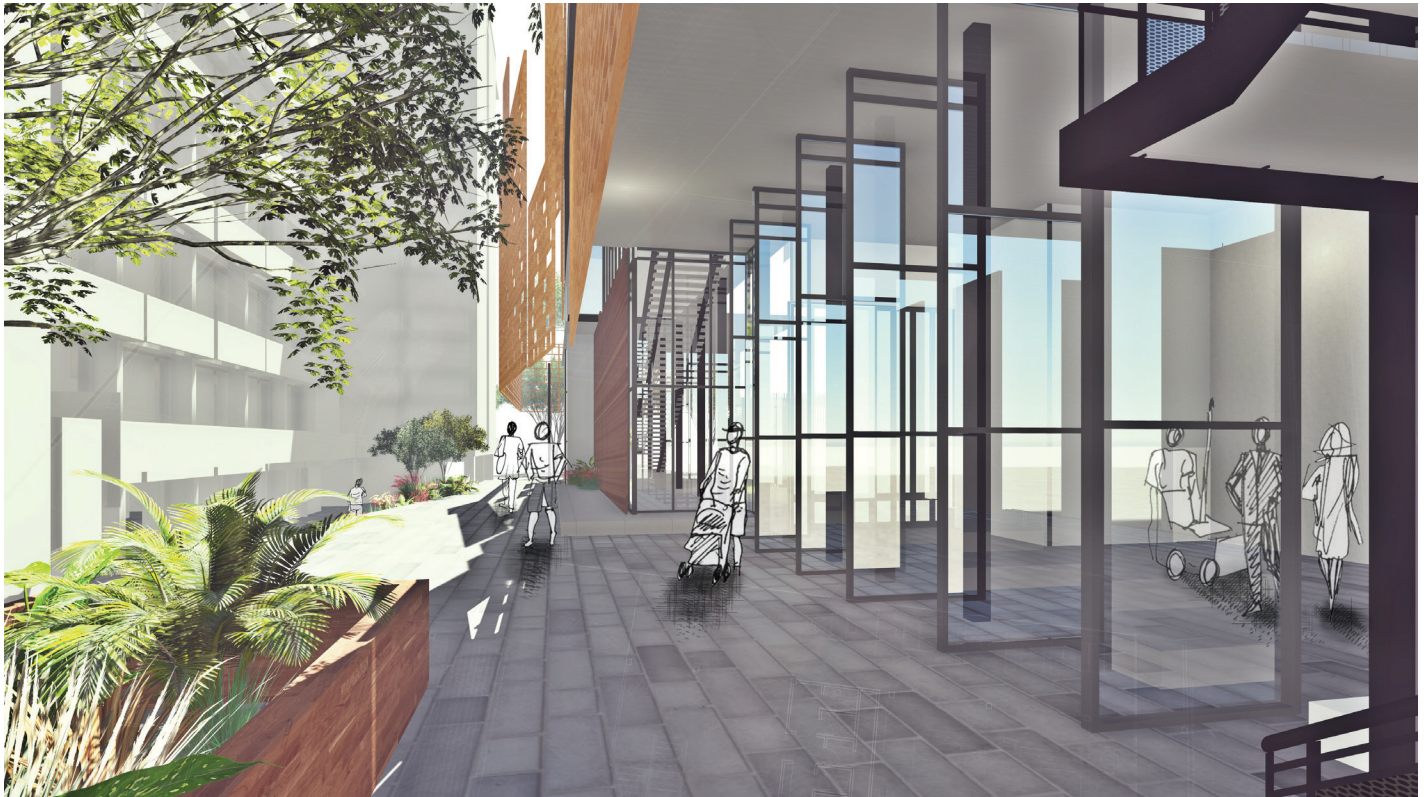


Figure 8.22 Arcade with Second Facade
(Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Figure 8.23 Arcade with Second Facade
(Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Figure 8.24 North Elevation (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



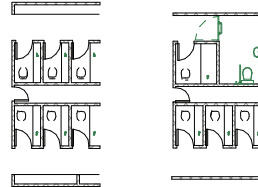
Figure 8.25 Reception with Coffee Bar (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Figure 8.26 Void viewed from Forum Amphitheatre (Source: Author, 2015)

OCCUPYING THE VOID



Ablutions in the Building

Architecturally, the ablation facilities in a building present a subtle way in which architecture forces its users to conform to preconceived structures of society, in extreme cases, creating architectures of exclusion. While this doesn't have an effect on the majority of users, for those who struggle with gender identity, such as people in the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender) community, explicitly gendered ablation facilities can be problematic. Due to the smaller levels of occupation in the Women's Forum, as well as to the specific type of visitors and occupants of the building, unisex ablation facilities are provided that do not require specific decisions to be expressed regarding gender. Sufficient facilities for baby changing are also provided in gender-less cubicles.

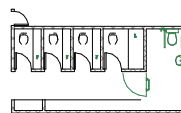
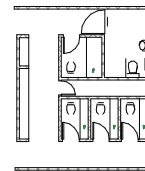
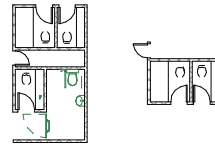
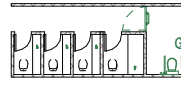


Figure 8.27 Iterations of unisex bathroom layouts.
(Source: Author, 2015).

Conclusion

The design development that was documented in this chapter sought to explore the architectural representation of the feminine within architecture. Through conceptual investigations, the Void was identified as a space that creates a dimension for rewriting existing structures of social interaction. This inherent characteristic can only be explored if the Void is understood as a space that lacks strict definition in which it creates the dimension of possibility, providing women with the space to define the nature of their spatial relationships on their own terms.

It is not the intention of this dissertation to argue that one can design spaces that are inherently feminine as opposed to those that

are masculine. This is a shallow interpretation of the notion of femininity in architecture. Instead, the notion of representing the feminine in architecture is done through an analysis of relationships and social codes. To acknowledge the multiplicities that are evident within (social) space is to acknowledge 'the other' that has been ignored. Through occupying 'the void' that is represented by the site, and by placing focus on the interstitial and in-between spaces in the building, a place is created for negotiation of spaces as well as a place for identity and discussion within the building through the opportunity to rewrite the relationships between occupants.

CHAPTER NINE

Composition
Technical Resolution

COMPOSITION

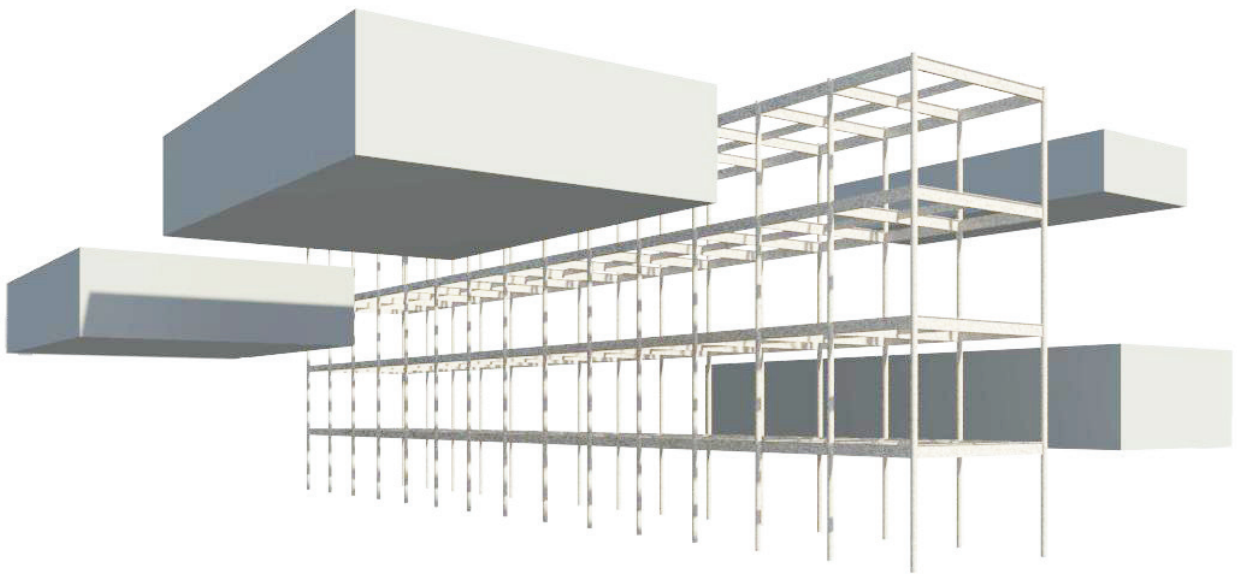


Figure 9.1 Technical concept: A rigid grid as organising structure for solid volumes. The leftover space becomes the in-between/social space.(Source: Author)

COMPOSITION

TECHNICAL CONCEPT

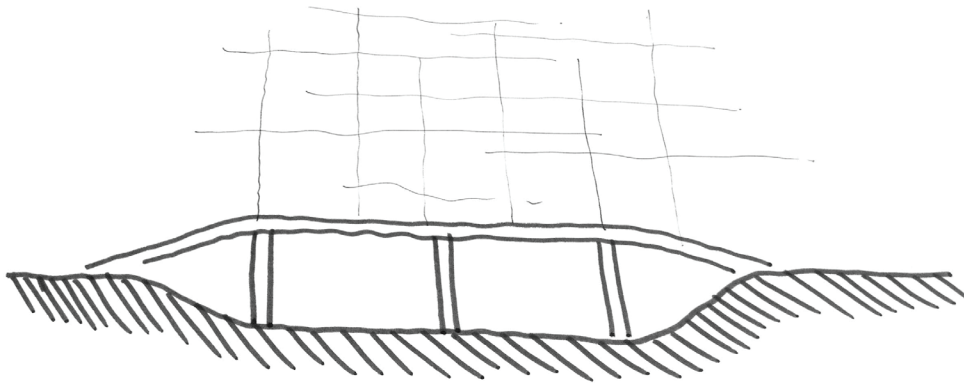


Figure 9.2 Lightweight steel structure grounded on concrete public surface.
(Source: Author)

The surrounding context of the Women's Forum presents an oppressive, dominant identity. The architecture of the Women's Forum needs to contrast this hegemonic character.

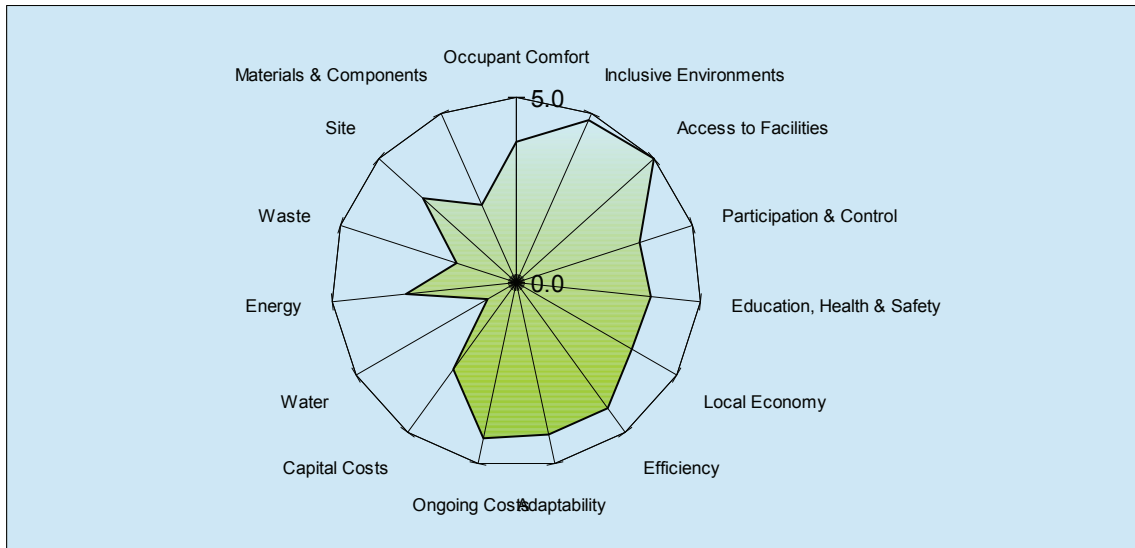
The technical resolution for the Forum needs to convey a light and bright contrast to the surrounding context while still accommodating a language of boxes 'inserted' into the structure, allowing in-between spaces to be created.

A lightweight steel framework is inserted into void, creating an alternative to the heavy contextual materiality while behaving as the organising structure for solid

boxes of program. The 'voids' created in between the solid program boxes form a network of social spaces within the building. Material difference between solid and void is to be expressed through a range in opacity and transparency of material. Solid materials are chosen to express solid program boxes while varying opacities of glass as well as screens are used in the voids. Assembly methods consider the expression of secondary structure, the exterior and interior walls, to the primary structural columns. Steel beams and columns are expressed where possible, and are used to express the edges of solids in relation to the void.

COMPOSITION

INITIAL ASSESSMENTS:
SBAT RATING



Social	4.2	Economic	3.8	Environmental	2.3
Overall		3.4			

An SBAT (Sustainable Building Assessment Tool) Rating was done on the building.

Due to the nature of the design, and to the fact that social interaction forms a fundamental aspect to the building, the rating is high for social performance.

As can also be expected, the energy consumption score is low. This is predominantly due to the nature of the site and the

difficulties that come along with its awkward proportions and hard edges. These restrictions make it difficult for natural light and ventilation, which will have to be artificially supplemented.

As the technification evolves, these scores will improve slightly but it is not possible to achieve a large change in rating due to the implicit restrictions of the site.

COMPOSITION

SHADING ANALYSIS

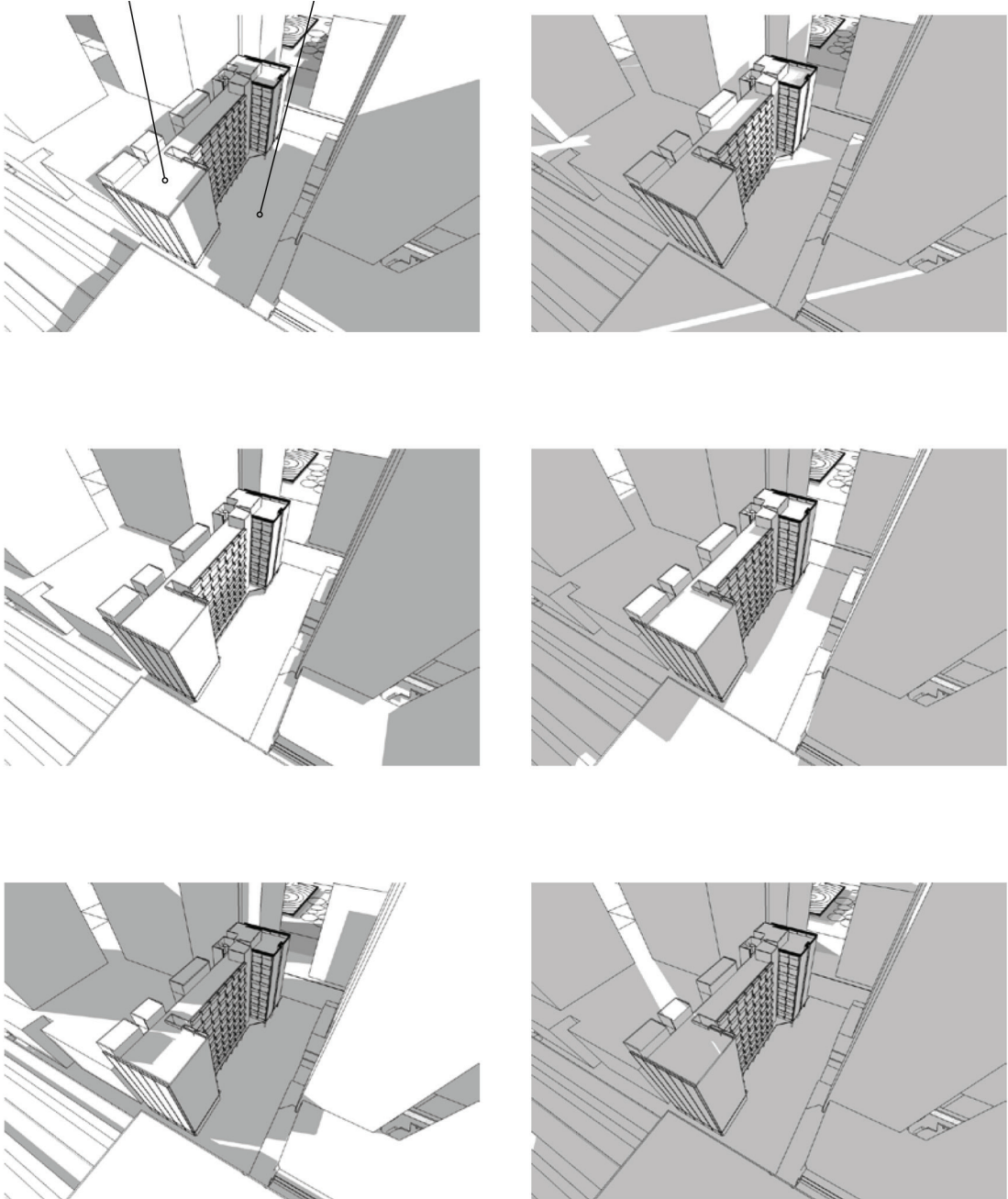


Figure 9.3 Sun Studies indicate that the site receives very little direct sunlight.

COMPOSITION

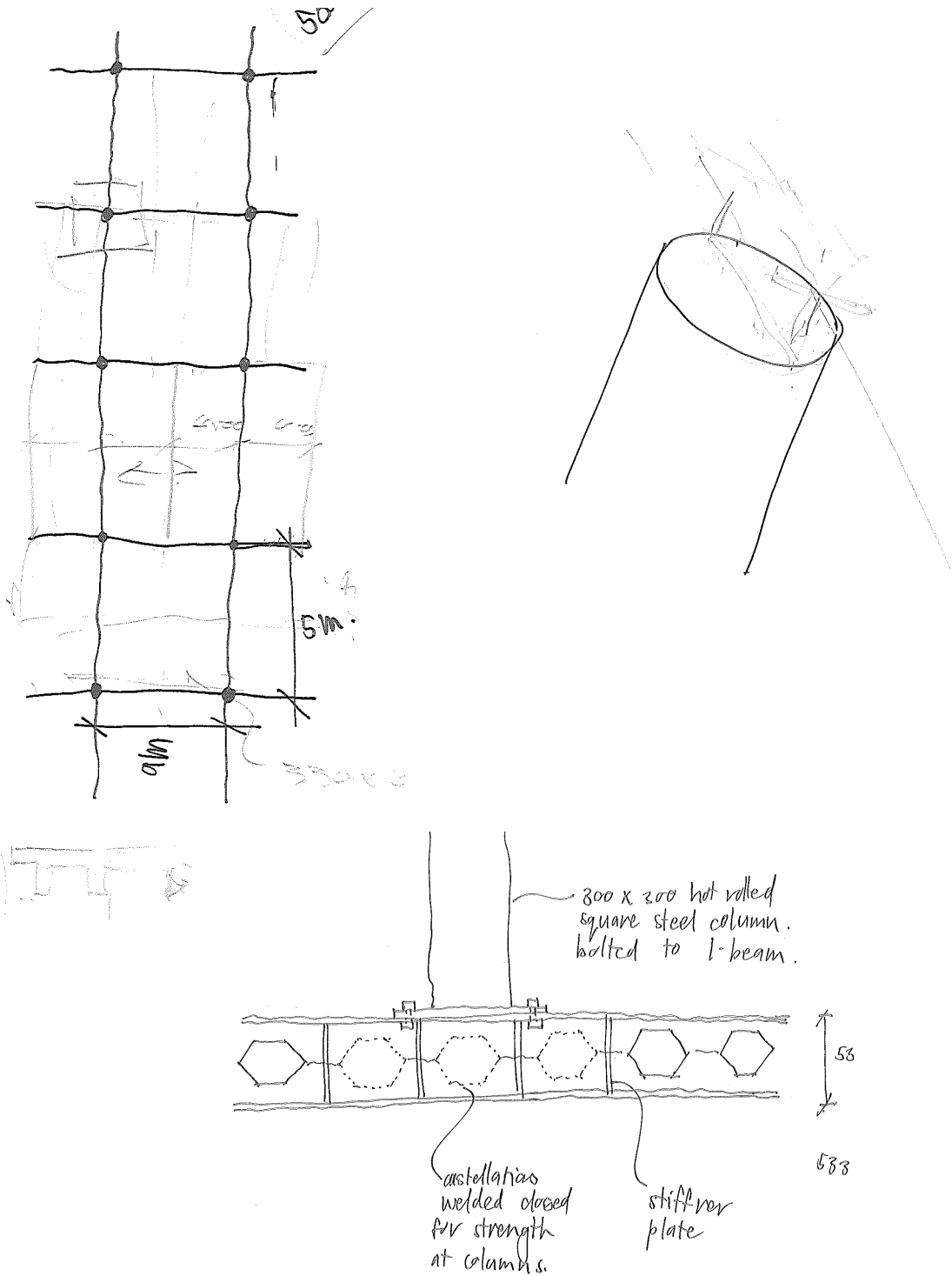
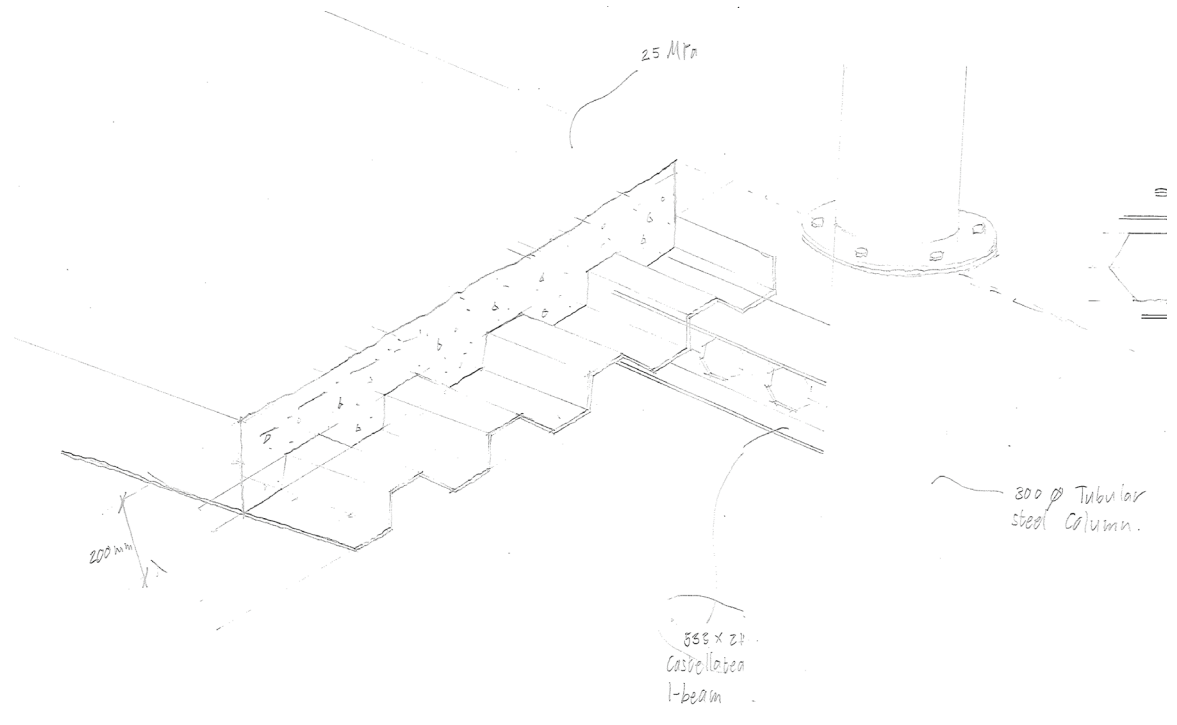
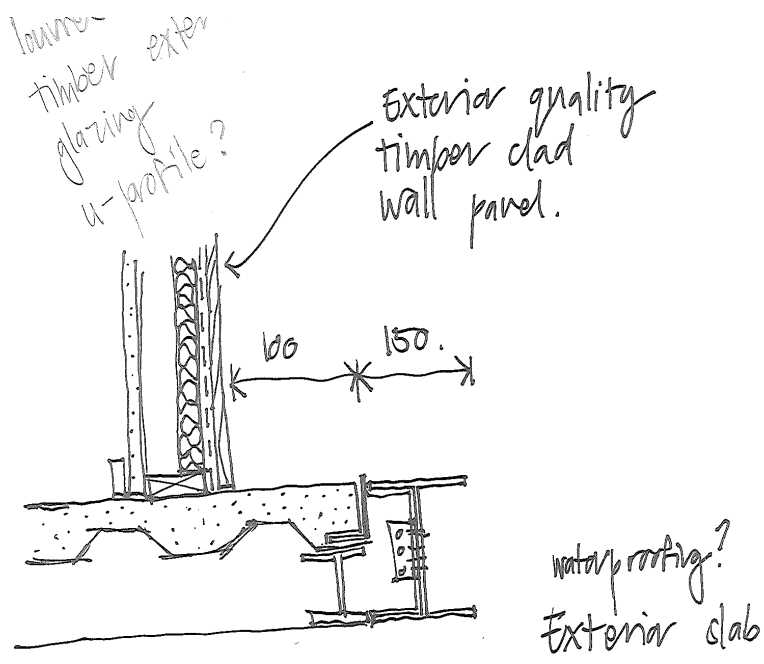


Figure 9.4 Exploration of structural connections

COMPOSITION

EXPLORATION



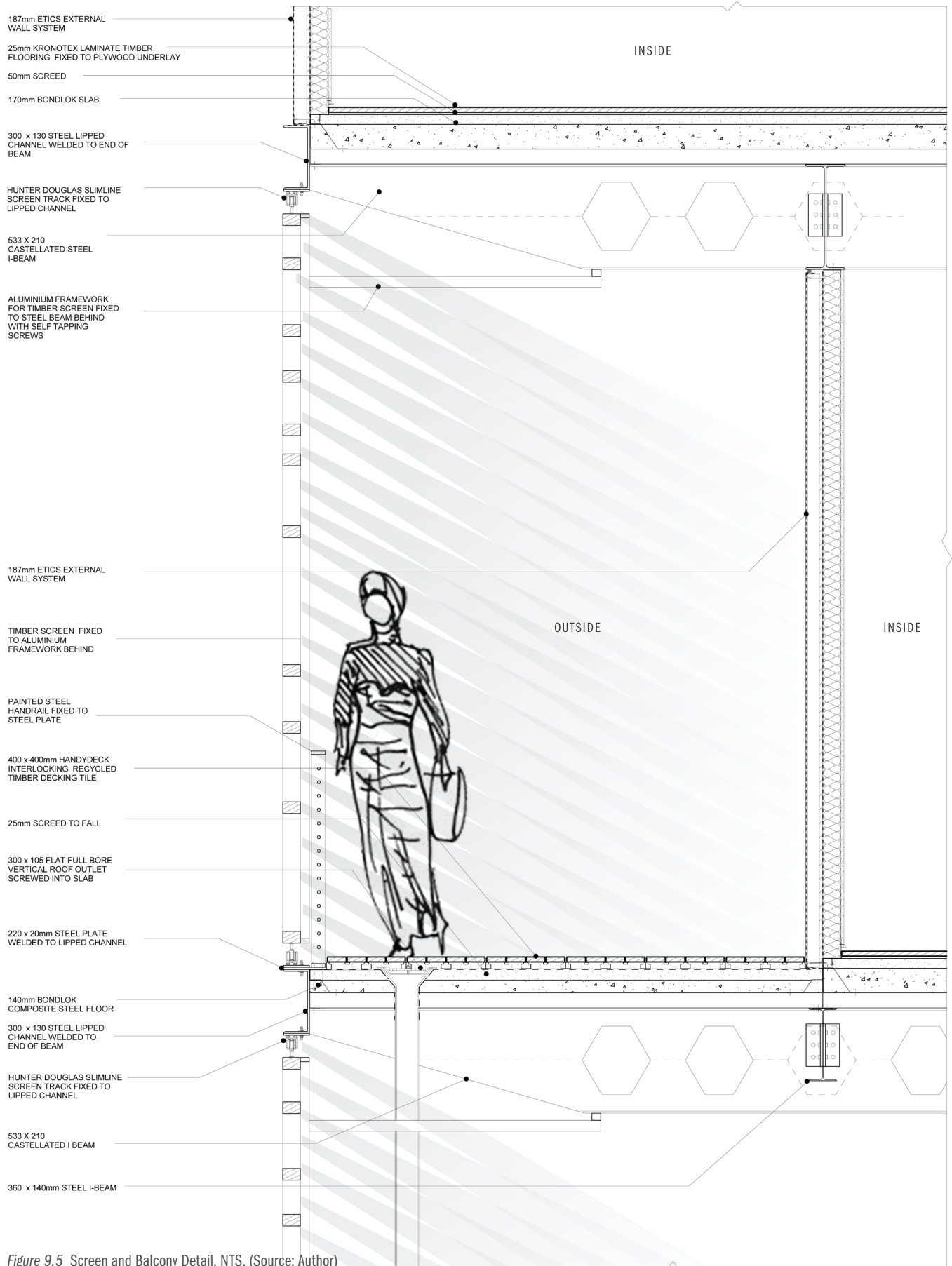


Figure 9.5 Screen and Balcony Detail. NTS. (Source: Author)

COMPOSITION



Figure 9.6 Existing Materiality. (Source: Author)

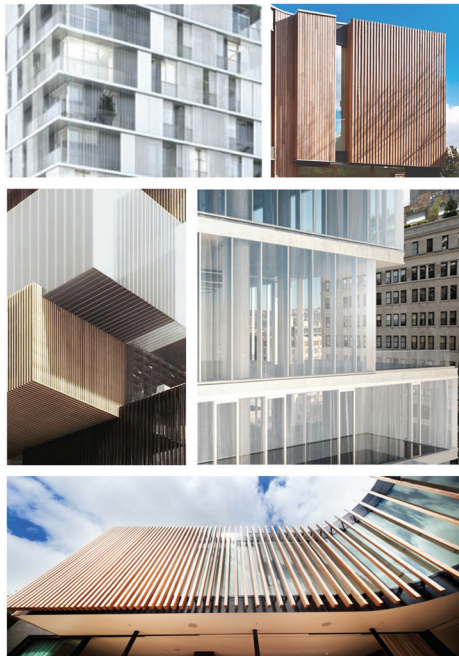


Figure 9.7 New Materiality. (Source: Author)

COMPOSITION

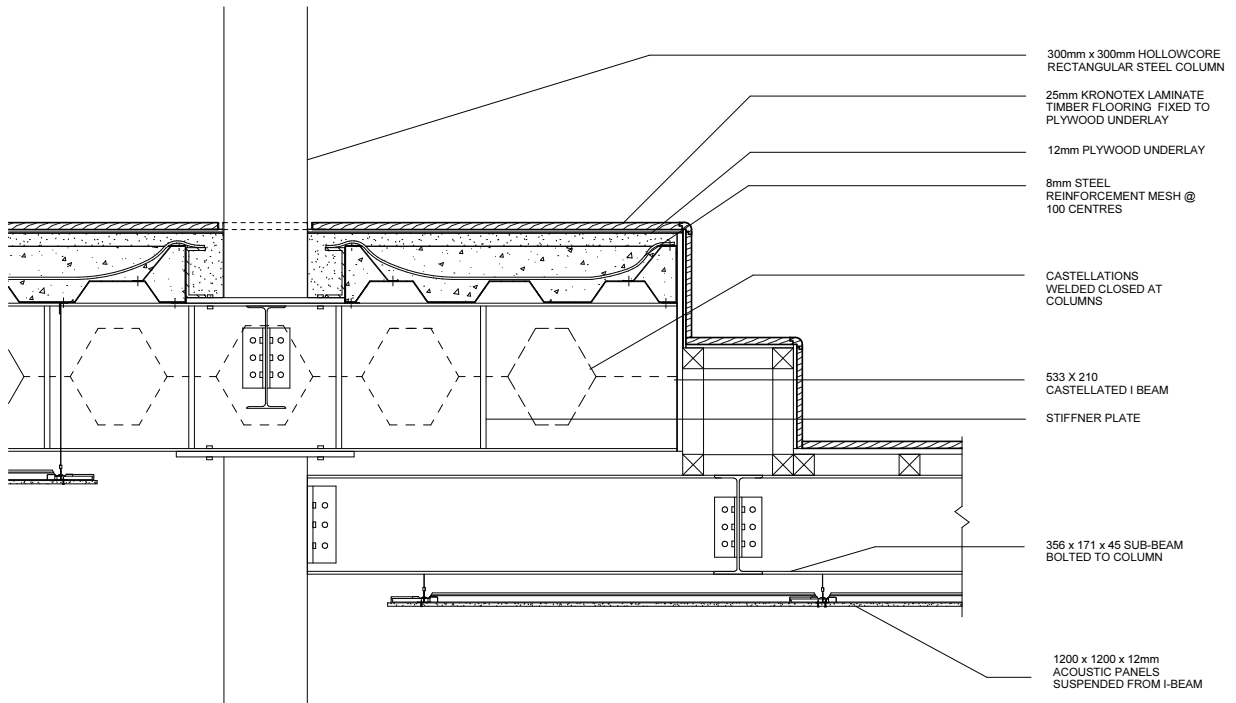


Figure 9.8 Detail of Lowered Library Seating. NTS. (Source: Authior, 2015)

COMPOSITION

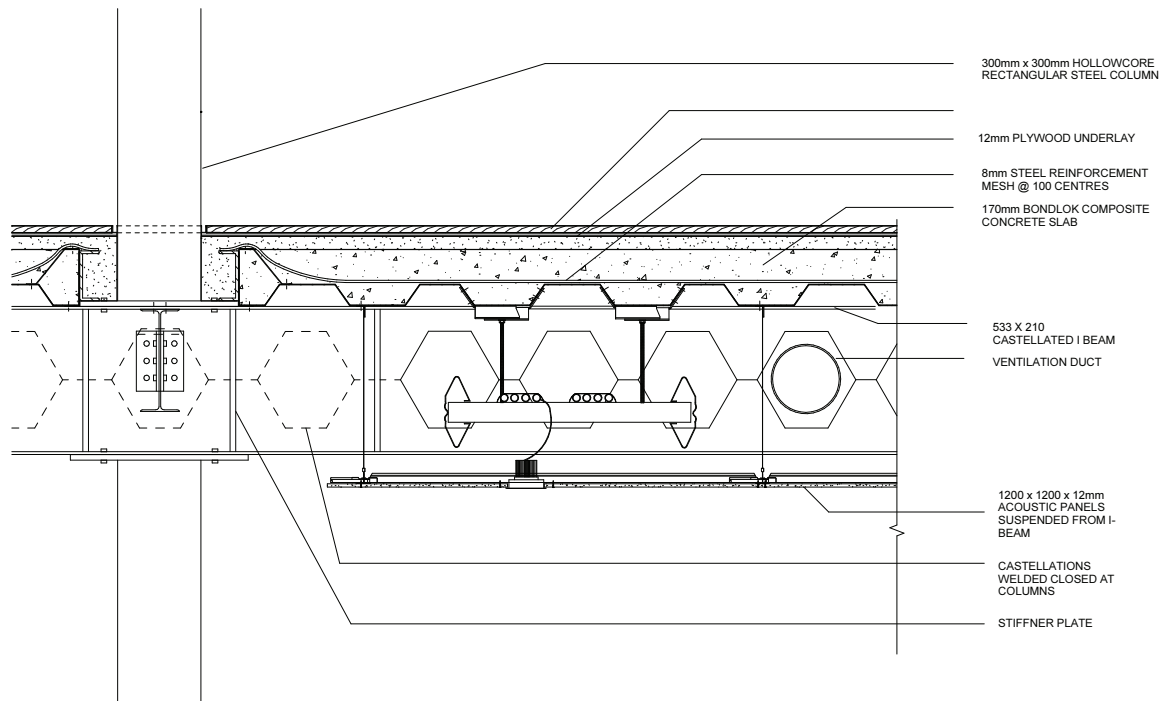


Figure 9.9 Detail of Cloumn to Beam Connection and Ceiling Void. NTS.
(Source: Authior, 2015)

COMPOSITION

Ventilation

A cavity is created on the western edge between the new facade and the existing secondary facade of the Pretmed building. This cavity allows for natural ventilation on the western edge of the building. Natural ventilation is not possible in all parts of the building and is thus supplemented with hybrid systems: Geothermal strategies make use of temperatures below ground to cool or heat fresh air which is then circulated through the building.

Fresh air is pulled in through

The main consideration for ventilation in the building is in the program boxes which contain small office spaces. In section, the interstitial social spaces in the building are connected, creating one continuous space where stack ventilation principles can be used to assist in ventilation.

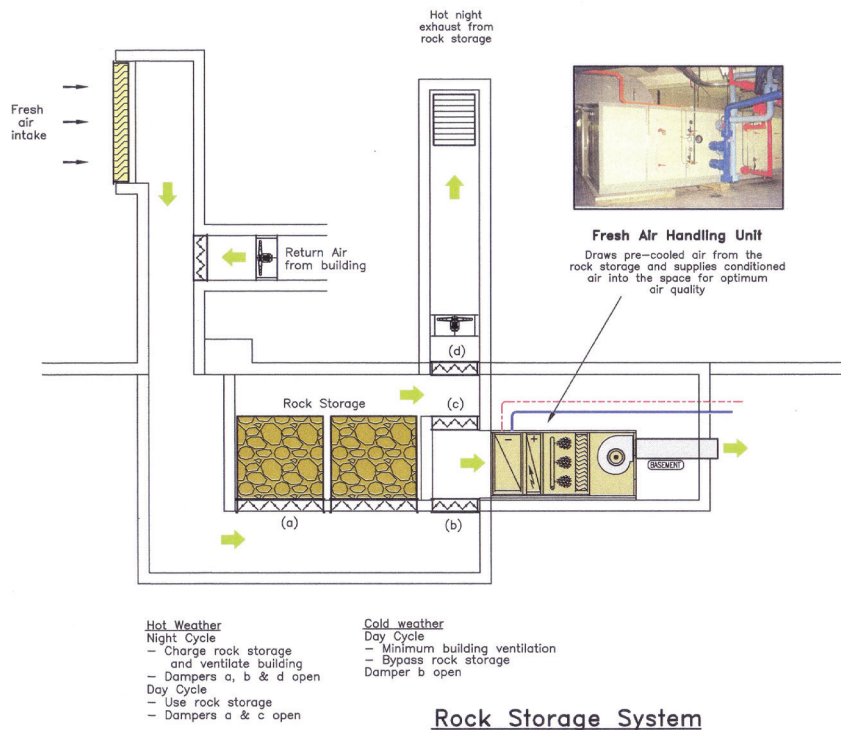
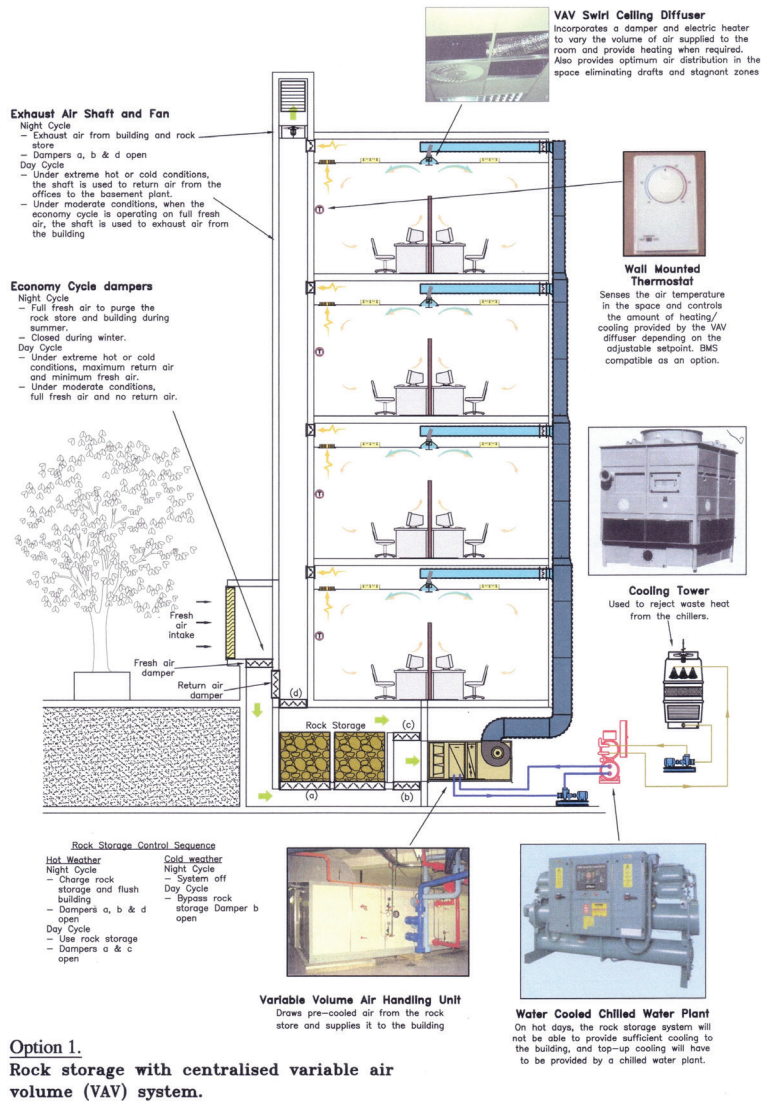


Figure 9.10 Rock Storage Principles (Source: Dieter Claasen, 2015)

COMPOSITION



Option 1.
Rock storage with centralised variable air volume (VAV) system.

Figure 9.11 Hybrid Ventilation system using rock storage. (Source: Dieter Claasen, 2015)

COMPOSITION

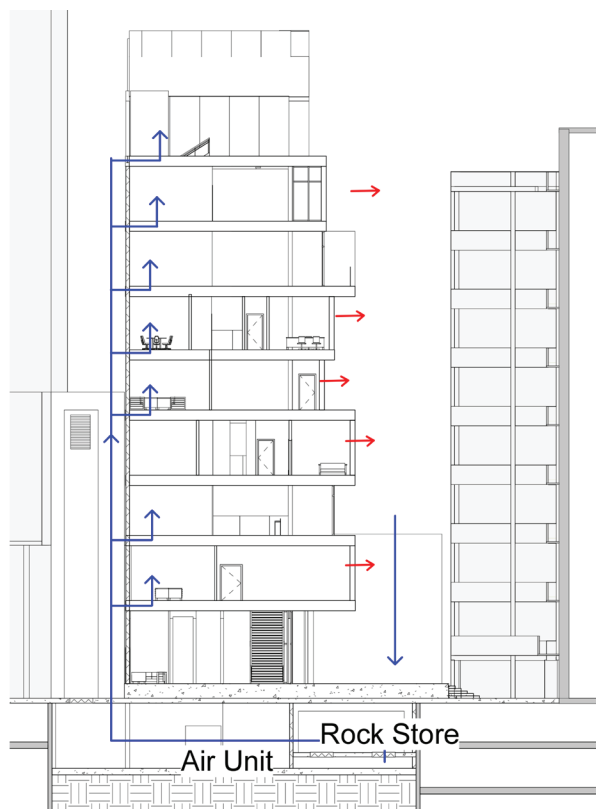


Figure 9.12 Short Section Indicating Fresh Air distribution (Source: Author, 2015)

COMPOSITION

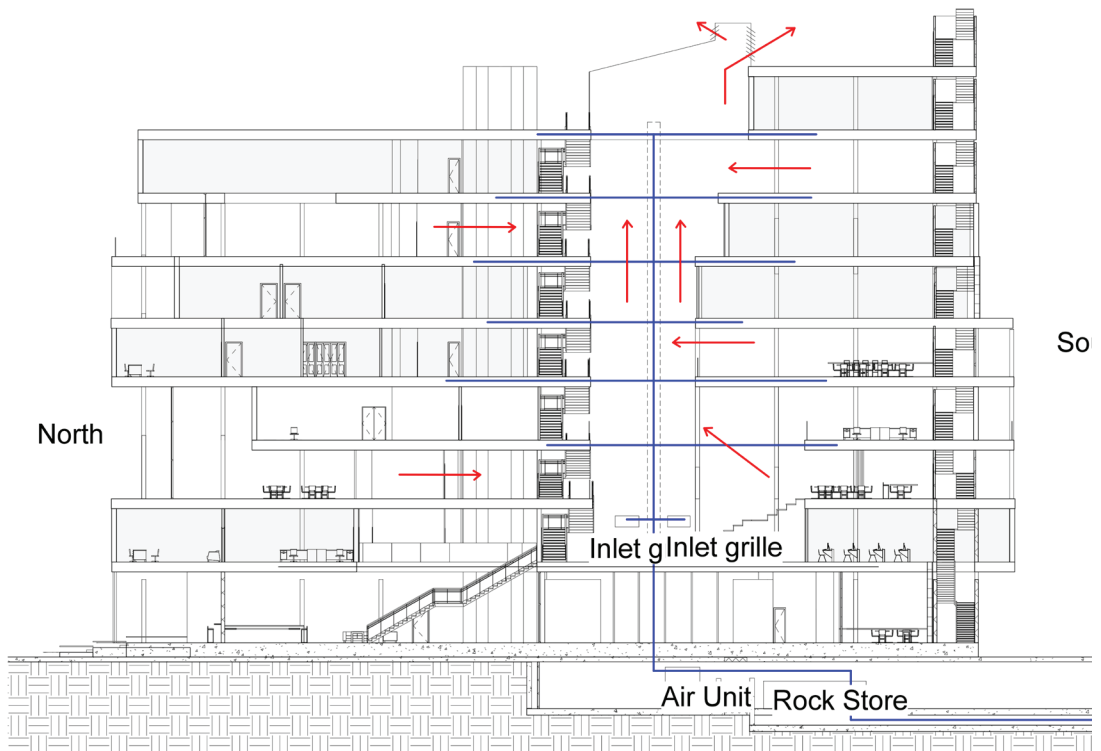


Figure 9.13 Long Section Indicating Fresh Air distribution (Source: Author, 2015)

APPENDIX

With thanks to my parents and my sister
To Rudolf for his undending wisdom and patience
Arthur for constant guidance
Kristen and Tash for your help and support
Everyone in studio

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